

TOWN OF WEST BOYLSTON

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

2009 UPDATE

March 6, 2009

Prepared by:

West Boylston Open Space Advisory Committee

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SECTION 1 - PLAN SUMMARY

The West Boylston Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) is an advisory committee to the Board of Selectmen with responsibility to update the Open Space & Recreation Plan, and to increase awareness of local citizens and public officials to the benefits of acquiring, preserving and managing open space. Open space represents more than lands simply set aside for aesthetic beauty and recreational use. More importantly, this Open Space and Recreation Plan (1) ensures public health and safety, (2) maintains West Boylston's character, (3) provides a wide range of recreational opportunities, (4) promotes agriculture, (5) protects wildlife habitat, and is done in a fiscally-responsible manner.

West Boylston is at a crossroads; feeling the cumulative pressures of urban development and industrial expansion, population increases, crumbling infrastructure including deteriorating municipal buildings, and budget shortfalls. Furthermore, given the small amount of town-owned land, there is a dire need to preserve open space threatened by development. In order to secure and protect valuable parcels of open space, it is essential to bring forth today's issues and concerns regarding development, land exchanges and open space and recreational needs. If the town does not take significant steps in the next decade to preserve open space in West Boylston, it may be too late. Once developed, open space is essentially lost forever. Thus, this second revision of the Five Year Open Space Plan stands as an important landmark document for town officials and the future of West Boylston.

The OSAC compiled all available documents relative to the open space protection and recreation uses in the Town of West Boylston. The central themes running through this document are to provide open space and recreation opportunities together with land conservation programs that enhance the health and safety of its citizens and preserve the character of the Town. Specifically, the plan discusses and makes recommendations on the following issues:

- critical environmental issues surrounding the town's drinking water supplies.
- public health and safety issues of developing existing town-owned properties.
- the significance of protecting open space near existing and potential town water sources.
- potential impacts of state-designated affordable housing.
- collaboration with the Town officials, State agency staff and university researchers on privately owned open space relative to disaster preparedness and training.
- integration of strategies to assess publicly and privately owned open space resources.
- opportunities to benefit from the area's natural and cultural resources, which include sensitive ecological habitat, and historical and cultural inventories.

Section 9 of this update provides a detailed five-year action plan with specific recommendations to attain each goal. The information included in this 2009 update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan is intended to update and replace the Open Space Section contained within the 2005 West Boylston Master Plan.

SECTION 2 - INTRODUCTION

2.A. Statement Of Purpose

This is the second revision of the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP 1996). The original and the latest revised OSRP plan (OSRP 2002) laid the groundwork for this updated Open Space and Recreation Plan. The purpose of this update is to evaluate current conditions, issues and concerns, and to plan for the future. The mission of OSAC is to conserve natural, cultural, and agricultural resources and to advise town officials about conservation and public uses of open space and recreation that reflect sound resource management and community values.

To differentiate between open space and those lands used for recreational facilities, we are using the following definitions. This by no means is intended to prioritize one aspect over the other within this report.

When the term "Open space" is used in this document, it refers to undeveloped land, both publicly and privately owned. It is land in a predominantly natural state or altered for natural resources-based uses (i.e., farming, orchards, forestry, hunting and fishing, walking-type parks and trails), and may include, but is not limited to agricultural lands, fields, wooded areas, forests, wetlands and water bodies. Examples of publicly owned open space would be Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) land, Water District land, and county/state land associated with the House of Corrections. Examples of privately owned open space include farms, forest lands, and passive recreation areas; along with publicly-owned areas like the Rail Trail, or the Pine Grove Exercise Trail.

The term "recreational open space" or "recreation" refers to land used for active recreational purposes, such as Woodland Park, athletic fields, or golf courses. Land used for active recreation does not qualify technically as open space because, for example, these parcels are often covered with paved surfaces such as that for tennis courts, basketball courts and parking lots. In addition, athletic fields require regular fertilizer applications and are usually installed with fencing and outbuildings. Since this plan deals with both open space and recreation, we have presented an approach to obtain the benefits of developing new and maintaining existing recreational facilities, without losing valued environmental assets; i.e., critical open space. In addition, grants and partnerships between federal, state and local agencies are often based on recommendations the applicant community makes in its Open Space and Recreation Plan. Hence, we recognize and embrace opportunities for healthy outdoor activities, be it hiking along forest trails or a competitive soccer or football game.

2.B. Open Space Advisory Committee Vision

Imagine driving around West Boylston 20 years from now. What will you see? Will our town be an attractive and affordable place to live and work? Will it be distinguished by a safe and healthy environment, development that promotes creative and efficient uses of our natural resources, with a historic village center that sustains its connection to the past, and a sense of place for families seeking a quieter alternative? Or will you see an uninviting community characterized by haphazard urban sprawl, crumbling municipal infrastructure, and unfriendly business/industrial

development with the resultant degradation of public health, air, and drinking water?

Although West Boylston is no longer a rural farming community, a desire to remain a semi-rural and close-knit community is the reason many people choose to live here. However, West Boylston's location abutting the City of Worcester generates significant development pressures. In step with national trends, development has taken place here and chewed up open space. The town has undergone significant transformation from a rural community of small farms in a close working relationship with the land into a growing suburban bedroom community composed of a mixture of small business and light industry. However, in recent years the pace of residential, commercial and industrial development has quickened dramatically and now threatens our town's public health and safety, Town character, rural landscape and overall quality of life.

Town officials state that we need to bring more business and development (residential, commercial and industrial) to West Boylston to provide economic opportunity and jobs, provide additional revenue and bring down property taxes. Although there are exceptions, the general rule is that the larger the town/city, the higher the taxes.¹ This is because development requires town services, i.e. water, sewage treatment, road maintenance, police and fire protection, emergency medical services and trash disposal.



Studies cited in Section 4.G, provide more detail and have shown that urban/suburban residential growth rarely pays its own way. This begins a cycle of: development and loss of valuable open space which leads to more infrastructure, this increases municipal burdens to pay for the infrastructure new roads, schools, public safety and emergency services, then once again there is a need to raise taxes to pay for it all. West Boylston is on the edge of this precipice, and this development strategy needs to be reassessed in the next update of the Town-wide Master Plan.

West Boylston is facing a critical crossroads. How will we respond to the demand to consume our open space to become more developed? How will we protect our watersheds that maintain clean and ample drinking water for our community? The OSAC does not want to sit back and

accept the status quo, but intends to work to systematically and effectively realize a future where public health and safety, fiscal stability, and a managed development program that reflects the common and sensible values of our community is attained. The OSAC believes that the majority of townspeople want to preserve these aspects of life in West Boylston, as well as retain and expand its unique community character.

Though noted as a ‘Vision Statement’, the first page of the Master Plan is a wish list and does not provide a concise collective vision that reflects the qualities that make our community unique. A long-term community vision will help guide our town’s short term strategic decisions. Each immediate decision made by any Town Board or Commission should fit in the plan to reach the overall goal. Short-sighted, special interest-driven planning and decisions need to stop and cooperative actions taken to move forward for the community’s good. The 2009 revised Open Space and Recreation Plan, through its implementation strategy is our best chance to preserve the very best of West Boylston and check those actions that would diminish it as a special place.

The Town has to shift away from arguments that pit growth against preservation. Rather, we need to protect our natural resources and improve our quality of life WHILE we grow! The challenges currently facing the Town demand that we do both. Open space needs to be recognized as enriching and not impeding growth and development. This plan is an effort to hold onto the best of West Boylston, while responding to the pressures in a rapidly changing world; and ensuring public health and safety decisions are made in a fiscally-sound manner.

2.C Planning Process and Public Participation

In 1994 the Board of Selectmen created the Open Space Sub-Committee as part of the Town-Wide Planning Committee. It became an independent committee in 2004. A detailed history and timeline of the evolution of the committee are presented in the previous revised plan (OSRP 2002).

The West Boylston Open Space Advisory Committee 2009 consists of 7 members from a wide arena of commitment, each bringing to the meetings their own area of expertise. From 2004 until 2007, they met once a month on Thursday at 7pm at the Town Hall (Mixer Building). In September 2007 they began meeting twice monthly, at the Mixer Building until that building was no longer safe, then at the Veterinary Hospital on Central Street. In addition to these meetings, the Committee participated in the annual Sterling Agricultural Fairs with a staffed information booth; and some members attended several Town-wide Planning Committee meetings. Members also attended a Parks Facilities Committee meeting, a Municipal Building Committee meeting, and members met with the Water District, the Town Clerk, the Building Inspector, the Director of the DPW, and received valuable assistance from the Town Administrator’s Assistant. Mr. Leon Gaumond, Town Administrator and Chairman of the West Boylston Town-Wide Planning Committee attended some of the meetings as well. Members discussed critical open space lands with individual Town Selectmen, State representatives and agency staff from the Department of Conservation and Recreation, university researchers from Harvard Medical School and University of Massachusetts, and private individuals.

The following are the members of the committee (group represented):

- Dr. Robert Tashjian--Chair (Citizen Rep) Doctor of Veterinary Medicine,
- Brian Bjorklund (Citizen Rep) Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Department of Agriculture

- Brenda Bowman (Citizen Rep) Environmental Activist
- Raymond DeSanti (Citizen Rep) local Business owner, Environmental Activist
- Jim Edmundson (Citizen Rep) Professor and Aquatic Biologist
- Vincent Vignaly (Planning Board) Environmental/Civil Engineer
- Barbara Wyatt (Town-wide Planning Committee) Educator, Life-long Resident
- Carol Cotter (Citizen Rep)
- Michael Peckar (Wachusett Greenways and West Boylston Land Trust)

This Plan is a working document intended to focus and direct the efforts of many boards and commissions in West Boylston to provide safe and varied opportunities for recreation.

In preparation of the Public Hearing held by the OSAC, the committee posted the draft OS&R Plan on the town's web site and had a linked comment submittal icon to simplify the process. The committee made updates and posted these to allow public comments for a period of a total of three months. Formal notices of the hearings and opportunities for public comments were sent directly to all persons who have subscribed on the Town of West Boylston's website to receive hearing notices.

The members of the OSAC presented the plan and received feedback directly from members of the Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Parks Facilities Committee, Parks Commission, Planning Board and Town-wide Planning Committee at separate meetings with each of these boards.

On Thursday, June 12, 2008, the West Boylston Open Space Update Committee hosted a Public Hearing for Community Comment to for all aspects associated with the 2009 Update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. The meeting was attended by one interested citizen and involved brainstorming through the areas of greatest interest to the Update efforts - Environmental Concerns (Watershed Protection, Wetlands, Wildlife), Trails, Athletic Facilities, Parks, and the Scenic and Historic Sites. While this exercise was extensive for a small audience, it is part of this committee mission to provide information to any citizens who are interested. Priorities were identified and reviewed through the Action Item implementation section and approved by all participants.

The Committee also solicited public input from Town Boards and Commissions, neighborhood groups, and environmental groups through the posting of the plan on the Town Website and distribution of draft versions of Open Space and Recreation Plan Update. An official notice was sent to all individual citizens who have subscribed to notices of any public hearings in West Boylston. While response was limited, the information was used as one of many methods of gauging the public's needs and desires.

Subsequent to the OSAC's Public Hearing, the Board of Selectmen posted and held two separate hearings on the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update. This allowed for another month of time available for public comments.

Though no formal survey of townspeople was conducted, this extensive communication effort has provided input to the OSAC that represents the wishes of the community. Since a formal survey is planned for the update of the West Boylston Master Plan in 2009, and the lack of funding available, the OSAC could not justify conducting another survey.

During 2006-7, the Open Space Advisory Committee met with Gregory Ciottone, M.D. director of Harvard Medical School's Operational Medicine Institute (OMI) and discussed scenarios of disaster medicine response. The OMI provides medical training by some of the leading national and international experts in this field. His comments and concerns warranted an effort by the Open Space Advisory Committee to assist with collaborating Town efforts on this issue. The American Veterinary Medical Frontiers, Inc. (AVMF) has a proposal to build municipal infrastructure within West Boylston to accommodate an emergency facility and diagnostic laboratory off Prospect Street. It was stated that the laboratory would identify any agent causing a public health threat and act as a link between emergency responders, hospitals, and public health agencies. It is not a testing lab where harmful agents would be brought in, but act as a center of operations once an incident occurs.

SECTION 3 - COMMUNITY SETTING

3.A. Regional Context

West Boylston is a small residential suburb of Worcester, Massachusetts, the second largest city in New England. It is located in central Massachusetts, north of Worcester, west of Boylston, south of Sterling and east of Holden. Although often referred to as a "bedroom community" of Worcester, West Boylston has approximately 300 businesses including retail, service, and light manufacturing companies. Businesses are mainly located on Route 12 and industries are located mainly in the Hartwell Street Industrial Area.

Similar to the five other towns that are within the Wachusett Reservoir Watershed, housing is generally single-family in traditional residential areas and subdivisions. Within this region most retail businesses are located in strip commercial developments or in shopping plazas.

The town is accessed by State Routes 12, 140, and 110 as well as Interstate 190. A railway track also traverses the town and is utilized daily for the transport of freight.

Most of the town is located in the Wachusett Reservoir's watershed and twenty percent of the Wachusett Reservoir (the Reservoir) is located in West Boylston. The watershed offers beautiful scenery for both residents and visitors and the Reservoir presents a fishing challenge to many sports enthusiasts. Limited types of passive recreation around the Reservoir are popular for the residents and many visitors. Preserved natural areas abound around the Reservoir, but utilization is limited somewhat due to protections necessary for water quality.

Utilization of the Town's existing athletic facilities is such that there is a pronounced need for additional facilities, both regionally and specifically in West Boylston.

3.B. History of the Community

The area now known as West Boylston was once populated by Native Americans. The land was rich open fields, with hills and valleys. The many streams and springs made it an ideal location along a Native American trail to Mt. Wachusett. Near the rivers are indications of Native American settlements and corn patches.

The original European settlers arrived in West Boylston around 1720 as part of the Lancaster

Plantation grant. As more families came to settle in the community, political recognition was desired. But, it took until 1808 and the determined efforts of the artful businessman and politician Ezra Beaman for the town of West Boylston to become a political reality. Unwilling to travel to the Congregational Church in Boylston for church services and town meetings, a minority of families, led by Ezra Beaman, constructed a church three miles west of Boylston on the site of the present Common in West Boylston. The state legislature was petitioned and precinct status was granted in 1796. Finally, in 1808 the legislature incorporated West Boylston as a town.

At its incorporation in 1808, the town took parts of territory from Boylston, Sterling, Shrewsbury and Holden. An important factor in the town's development was its location - at the site where the Quinapoxet River joined the Stillwater River and formed the southern branch of the Nashua River. The original inhabitants were farmers, but with an abundant water supply a few businesses were started along the waterways. A grist mill, saw mill and blacksmith shop soon appeared. A number of different small mills were built in response to the growth in the population. These evolved into larger and more varied industries. Since the first mills were wooden structures, fire was a constant danger and as a result many of the rebuilt buildings were made of stone or brick.

By the mid 1800's, the Worcester and Nashua Railroad came through town, and in 1880 the Central Mass. Railroad and the Boston to Northampton came through the Oakdale section of town. With the advent of the railroads, large quantities of farm products were shipped to Boston on a daily basis. Crops including corn, rye, wheat and oats, as well as milk and cider, contributed to the prosperity of West Boylston. Manufacturing continued to grow with cotton, wool and wire products being made, as well as scythes, boots and baskets. One well known manufacturer from this time was Erastus Bigelow. Bigelow Mills was where the first power loom for weaving carpets was invented.

By 1890 the town had approximately 3,000 residents with five churches, ten schools and several meeting halls. At that time, Boston was seeking to increase its water supply and the Metropolitan Water Board was created under the provisions of Chapter 488 of the Acts of the year 1895. The Board selected West Boylston as the best place to construct a reservoir and soon land-taking began. The Town's center along the river was lost. Over 1,500 residents were displaced, as well as eight schools, three churches, most of the farms and all of the mills. The construction of the Reservoir cost \$11 million and required over 750 people. Most of the laborers were immigrants from Italy. Following completion of the Wachusett Dam in Clinton, flooding of the valley took place in 1905 and the Wachusett Reservoir was formed. The Reservoir encompasses over one square mile out of the nearly 14 square miles of the town. The lovely Old Stone Church stands as the last reminder of the town that once existed in the valley.

Agriculture, dairy farming, and timber harvesting were some of West Boylston's agricultural base with high quality fertile soils, some of the best in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Although the West Boylston landscape has hills and rocks, the agriculture was productive. Small family farms especially prior to postwar World War II included dairy farms, with other agriculture especially fruit trees and vegetables. After World War II there was a steady loss of these farms to subdivisions and commercial development. The farms and related open space were especially significant for the town's water supply protection providing both underground recharge and safeguarding the surface waters.

Today West Boylston is mostly a residential "bedroom" town. If the Reservoir had not been built,

we might have faced the fate of many mill towns with abandoned mills and high unemployment. Although the Reservoir was a disaster for the town at the time, today it is a picturesque landmark which provides passive recreational opportunities and scenic beauty. See Section 4.F. - Scenic and Unique Environments for additional historic information and for properties that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

3.C. Population Characteristics

To plan for West Boylston's open space and recreation needs, the size, density, age and composition of the town's population must be considered. In the 60 years from 1940 to 2000, the town's population more than quadrupled, growing from 1,822 to 7,481. If one discounts the approximately 1,300 inmates at the county jail,¹ then the population more than tripled during this period. The greatest period of **growth** occurred in the 1950s, when the population grew 115 percent. In the 1960s, the population grew 15 percent, and in the 1970s it actually decreased by 2.6 percent. The 1980s, however, reversed this trend and the population grew 6.6 percent, reaching a total of 6,611 in 1990 (including 841 inmates at the county jail in West Boylston). From 1990 to 2000, the town's population grew even faster, reaching 7,481. This was a 13 percent increase for the past decade, exceeding the growth rates that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. Even if inmates are discounted, the population increased by 7 percent during the past decade. (See **Population Table 3.1**).

Population Table 3.1 West Boylston Population Data

<i>YEAR</i>	<i>POPULATION - federal census²</i>	<i>POPULATION CHANGE</i>	<i>% INCREASE (DECREASE)</i>
<i>1940</i>	<i>1,822</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>1950</i>	<i>2,570</i>	<i>748</i>	<i>41.1</i>
<i>1960</i>	<i>5,526</i>	<i>2,956</i>	<i>115</i>
<i>1970</i>	<i>6,369</i>	<i>843</i>	<i>15.3</i>
<i>1980</i>	<i>6,204</i>	<i>(165)</i>	<i>(2.6)</i>
<i>1990</i>	<i>6,611</i> <i>5,770 - without 841 inmates</i>	<i>407</i>	<i>6.6</i>
<i>2000</i>	<i>7,481</i> <i>6,181- without 1,300 inmates (Sheriff's Office estimate, Fall 2000)</i>	<i>870</i> <i>411 - without inmates</i>	<i>13</i> <i>7 - without inmates</i>

The **number of households** (2,413) has been growing at a faster rate than the population. During the 1980s, the population grew at a rate of 6.6 percent, while the number of households grew by 8.1 percent. This indicates that the number of people per household has been decreasing (from 3.03 people per household in 1980 to 2.56 in 2000). While the population grew 7 percent (not counting

inmates) in the 1990s, new development increased the number of households by 8.1 percent, from 2,214 to 2,413, according to the 2000 federal census data.

With a total of **12.9 square miles of land** (excludes Reservoir area) in West Boylston, there were 580 people per square mile in 2000. This **density** is higher than in all the communities surrounding West Boylston, except for Shrewsbury and the city of Worcester. It is also higher than the overall density of Worcester County. (See **Population Table 3.2**). If inmates are excluded, then the town's population density is slightly less than the county average, but still more than Holden, Boylston, and Sterling.

Population Table 3.2 Population Density Comparison - Year 2000

COMMUNITY - Population (Federal Census - Year 2000)	PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE
Worcester - 172,648	4,596
Shrewsbury -31,840	1,536
West Boylston - 7,481	580
Without inmates – 6,181	479
Worcester County Average - 750,963 (1,513.11 sq. mi).	496
Holden - 15,621	446
Boylston - 4,008	250
Sterling – 7,257	238

The population within the town is **unevenly distributed**. In 1990, in the two square mile area along Route 12, between Maple Street and Prospect Street, there were 1,406 people per square mile and 2,812 people total. In the remaining 10.9 square miles, there were only 349 people per square mile and 3,799 people total. In 2000, there were 4,307 people in the southern portion of town and only 3,174 people in the much larger northern area.

Part of the reason the northerly area is less densely populated is because of the large amount of DCR-owned land. The **DCR** now owns 2,736 acres (4.3 square miles) in town, not including the 622 acres of land under water. From 2002-2007 the DCR purchased 9.5 acres in town (Bethlehem Baptist Church). From 1996 to 2001, the DCR acquired about 196 acres in the southern area, including the 63-acre Gallo tract on Prospect Street, 4 acres behind Walmart on Worcester Street, 100 acres off Route 140 (Anthony's land), 8 acres off Shrewsbury Street (Baldarelli's land), and 15 acres owned by Digital. The total acreage owned by the DCR in the southern area of town is 226.5 acres, while their acreage in the northern area amounts to 2,490 acres.⁴

The distribution of various **age groups** in West Boylston has changed considerably since 1960 as displayed in **Table 3.3**. In 1960, those aged 15 and younger comprised 35.8 percent of the population and those 65 or older comprised only 7.1 percent, while in the 1990 census those 15 and

younger made up only 15.8 percent and those 65 or older had increased to 16.3 percent. The federal census done in 2000 shows that the "15 and under" age group increased slightly from 1990 so that they now make up 17.6 per cent of the town's population. Those 64 and older now comprise 14.7 per cent of the town's population. This "senior citizen" age group is expected to continue to grow significantly as the large "baby boomer" generation (born after World War II) joins this "senior citizen" age group.⁵ Those 75 and older jumped from 418 in 1990 to 519 in 2000, a 25 percent increase. Additionally 249 units of over-55 housing was permitted between 2002 and 2007. So the population of older adults in town is anticipated to be significantly higher in the 2010 census.

The largest age group in town is between 25 and 44 years old. This group makes up 32.7 percent of the population. Those aged 45 to 64 make up 22.8 percent. Together, these two large groups, whose ages range from 25 to 64, make up over half the town's population.

Table 3.3 Population By Age Group

Age Group	1960		1970		1980		1990		2000 ²	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 15	1,980	35.8	1,843	28.9	1,152	18.6	1,047	15.8	1,323	17.6
15 - 24	501	9.1	1,005	15.8	1,097	17.7	907	13.7	913	12.2
25 - 44	1,664	30.1	1,407	22.1	1,653	26.6	2,217	33.5	2,446	32.7
45 -64	990	17.9	1,573	24.3	1,573	25.4	1,359	20.5	1,698	22.8
Over 64	391	7.1	567	8.9	729	11.7	1,081	16.3	1,101	14.7

The median household **income** in West Boylston in 1990 was \$42,830. This is 15.9 percent above the state average and a large increase over the 1980 average of \$22,721. In 1990, 3.4 percent of the population, 195 people, were below the poverty level, which compares to 8.9 percent statewide, and 4.3 percent in 1980. In 2000, the median income had risen to \$57,000. Those persons living below the poverty line was comparatively unchanged in town.

According to the Division of Employment and Training in Massachusetts, in November 2008, the Town of West Boylston had a labor force of 3,327. Of these 3,142 were employed and 185 were unemployed contributing to an unemployment rate of 5.6%, roughly on par with the state unemployment average of 5.9%. As a result of a challenging economic period, this rate is a high for the year and is also higher than the preceding 8 years.

According to the 2007 employment and wages, there were 253 establishments with an average employment of 3870. The largest number of establishments is in the construction industry (41), however, 10 manufacturing establishments contribute the largest amount to the local economy via employee wages at almost \$15,300,000. Few changes occurred in this make up from 2006 to 2007 with only a net increase of 5 new businesses from year to year.⁶

Table 3.3A Employment and Unemployment Averages

Laborforce, Employment and Unemployment

Laborforce, Employment and Unemployment (Not seasonally corrected)					
	Year	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unempl Rate
Average	2008	3,327	3,142	185	5.6
Average	2007	3,357	3,196	161	4.8
Average	2006	3,373	3,199	174	5.2
Average	2005	3,304	3,146	158	4.8
Average	2004	3,301	3,131	170	5.1
Average	2003	3,339	3,150	189	5.7
Average	2002	3,302	3,144	158	4.8
Average	2001	3,297	3,194	103	3.1
Average	2000	3,276	3,189	87	2.7

3.D. Growth and Development Patterns

3.D.1. Patterns and Trends

Since the Wachusett Reservoir flooded the town center at the turn of the twentieth century, West Boylston has been mainly a residential community. By the year 2000, about one-third of its land was owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). As mentioned in the prior section on population, the greatest period of growth was in the 1950s and 60s.

Since 1946, West Boylston's growth has been guided by **zoning**. This first set of zoning bylaws specified that single family residential (SR) lots had to be a minimum of 10,000 square feet. Lots for multifamily dwelling units had to be a minimum of 7,500 square feet per unit. The minimum sizes for lots increased gradually until 1984, when the town increased the required single family residential lot size from 30,000 square feet to 40,000 square feet and the multifamily dwelling lot size from 15,000 square feet per unit to 20,000 square feet per unit. In 1986, the town passed Aquifer Protection District Zoning to protect the recharge areas of the town's wells. In this overlay zone, lot sizes must be 50,000 square feet. The June 2008 Zoning Map is shown as **Figure 1**. However, residences have been permitted to be constructed on pre-existing lots due Zoning "grandfathering" provisions and state mandates. In addition, under the state's affordable housing law, Chapter 774, the town's Zoning Board of Appeals granted a Comprehensive Permit in 1990, that allowed single family homes with septic systems to be built on lots as small as 8,737 square feet (1/5 an acre) at Lancaster Commons, which is only about half a mile from Wachusett Reservoir.

According to the town's 1988 Land Use Plan (page 6), out of the 1,662 single family housing units in town, 865 (52 percent) were located on lots smaller than 20,000 square feet. Four hundred and twenty-six (25.7 percent) were located on lots 20,000 - 39,999 square feet. Three hundred and seventy-one (22.3 percent) were located on lots 40,000 square feet or larger. With about half the single family homes located on lots of less than

half an acre, septic problems occurred. When septic systems failed on these small lots, there was often no suitable space for constructing a new system.

Because these failing septic systems were thought to be polluting the Reservoir's tributaries, the state agreed in 1996 to pay about two-thirds the cost of **sewering** the more densely populated sections of West Boylston. About 50 - 60 per cent of the town's area is sewer²ed in a project which began in 1996 and was completed in 2005. The availability of sewers has promoted development because land that could not accommodate septic systems could not be developed. Since sewers have become available, this development limitation has been lost.

See Section 3.D.2.c. for more information about the town's sewer system and Figure 2 for the areas in West Boylston that have sewers available.

Of the town area, 79.4% (7012 acres) is zoned for **Single Family Residential (SR)** development. Zoning for multifamily housing (**General Residence - GR**) accounts for 4.9 percent (433 acres) of the land. **See Figure 1** for the location of the town's zoning districts.

The **Business Districts** cover 3.2 percent (283 acres) of the land. Much of this business-zoned land is a strip bordering both sides of the southern section of Route 12. The other areas zoned for business are smaller and very scattered. They are located in Oakdale at the intersection of Laurel Street and Route 140 (North Main Street), at the intersection of Prospect and Woodland Streets, at the intersection of Route 110/Prescott Street/Route 12, along the very northern part of Route 12, at the intersection of Hartwell and Shrewsbury Streets, and at the intersection of Route 12 with Prospect/Goodale Streets up to Central Street.

Industrial District makes up 6.3 percent (557 acres) of the land. All of this land is located in the southeastern part of town off of Hartwell, Shrewsbury, and East Mountain Streets. **Commercial/Limited Industrial** District land makes up 3.9% (348 acres). This is the area located north of I-190 abutting Holden and Sterling. This new district was voted to be added to the Zoning Map at the October 2007 Town Meeting.

Only 2.3 percent (203 acres) of the land in West Boylston is zoned **Conservation**. This land is located where the county/state jail and the former county hospital are sited. This conservation zoned land is almost completely surrounded by industrially zoned land. The county jail expanded into the nearby former county hospital land. The town's Municipal Light Plant acquired 61 acres of this conservation-zoned former county land. Approximately 25 acres will be used by the Municipal Light Plant and approximately 36 acres would be used by the town for open space or municipal services.⁶ In 2007 the town considered allowing a waste transfer station on a portion of this land. They are currently planning to locate a multipurpose field and the DPW building and a solar cell facility for electricity generating operations at this site.

Table 3.4 Zoning District Areas Summary

Zoning District	Total Area (Acres)	Portion Owned by DCR (Acres)	Percent of Town	Percent of District Owned By DCR
Single Residence	7,012	3,008	79.4	43
General Residence	433	57	4.9	13
Business	283	12	3.2	4
Industrial	557	52	6.3	9
Conservation	203	0	2.3	0
Commercial/Limited Industrial	348	229	3.9	66
Total	8,836	3,358	100	38

Percentages are based on Table 3-4 in the Master Plan, 2005

In the October 2005 Town Meeting, the town voted to change the zoning map to expand the CCRC District to the east of Angell Brook. In 2005, the Planning Board revised the subdivision regulations to reduce impervious areas, increase open space, and to encourage “Low Impact Development” methods. The Incentive Zoning Bylaw passed in May 2006 created density bonuses while requiring some affordable units.

The actual **amount of residential development** that has occurred since the 2002 Open Space and Recreation Plan can be assessed by the number of building permits issued. These data clearly show the impact of the creation of CCRC Development on previously industrially zoned land. There were 191 building permits issued for CCRC units since 2002, which is 67% of all the residential permits issued, 287. These units are within the Hillside Village and Angell Brook Developments, which are over-55 communities and provided housing with preference given to West Boylston citizens who wished to downsize from larger homes. This provided a significant increase in the tax base while it did not add school-aged children to town. It also is considered to be a contributor to the increase in ambulance calls (which were noted at the spring 2008 Town Meeting to be a revenue source for the town), but also utilized the services of the Counsel on Aging and the Worcester Regional Transit Authority’s Elder Services Van.

Table 3.5 Residential Building Permits Issued

Calendar Year	CCRC	40B	ANR	SUBD	INFILL	MFD	TOTAL
1995	0	9	2	3	1	0	15
1996	0	4	4	5	0	0	13
1997	0	2	8	6	0	0	16
1998	0	2	7	4	0	4	17
1999	0	1	9	3	0	0	13
2000	0	1	5	0	0	0	6
2001	0	0	2	3	0	0	5
2002	9	0	4	2	0	0	15
2003	32	0	9	0	1	0	42

2004	51	0	7	4	0	0	62
2005	35	0	8	9	0	0	52
2006	36	0	8	2	0	7	53
2007	28	12	10	4	1	4	59
TOTALS	191	31	83	45	3	15	368

CCRC – Continuing Care Retirement Community

40B – Comprehensive Permits Under the State Affordable Housing Laws (Afra Terrace)

ANR – Approval Not Required under the West Boylston Subdivision Control Regulations

SUBD – Subdivision under the West Boylston Subdivision Control Regulations

INFILL – Existing undeveloped lots

MFD – Multi-family dwellings

During 1987 - 1994, the building "hot spots" were the Brooks Crossing/Lee Street/Goodale Street area, the Almanac Way/Lisa Circle/Hosmer Street area, and the Lancaster Street (Route 110)/Fairbanks Street area. From 1995 to 2000, 111 dwelling units were added to the town, including 34 units for the elderly at Briarwood Retirement Community and 17 units (Lancaster Commons/Heritage Lane) that were created under Chapter 40B, the state's "Affordable housing" law. These 17 Affordable lots no longer qualify because they were not required to remain as Affordable in perpetuity.

These building permit numbers indicate the actual amount of residential development that has occurred. To estimate the amount of residential development that was approved but not necessarily built, one must look at the number of **subdivision lots** and the number of subdivision "approval not required" (**ANR**) **lots** that were approved by the Planning Board. "Approval not required" or "ANR" lots are lots which are located on a public way and have the road frontage required in the town's zoning. The Planning Board must approve such plans, but they often only shift existing lot lines and do not always create new lots. ANR lots, however, are not required to meet other requirements in the town's zoning. To get a building permit, though, they must meet these requirements, as well as the state septic code if they are not in the sewer district, as well as the DEP Wetlands Protection Act requirements if they are near wetlands or streams. This means that some ANR lots may in fact not be new lots OR be buildable. The numbers compiled since 2002 have been verified to include only those ANRs that created new buildable lots. **Table 3.6** shows the subdivision lots and ANR lots approved by the Planning Board since 1985.

As shown in **Table 3.6**, approximately 71 residential lots were created from 2002 - present. Residential development has included substantial additional units within Continuing Care Retirement Communities(CCRC): 118 condominiums in Hillside Village CCRC off Hartwell Street and 128 in the Angell Brook CCRC off Shrewsbury Street. The Zoning Board of Appeals issued Comprehensive Permits for 52 units (13 Affordable) at Afra Terrace off Shrewsbury Street, and has permitted 124 rental units for the Village at Oakdale off North Main Street. The addition of these 426 units to the 71 newly created lots which are noted in Table 3.5 as ANR, SUBD, INFILL, and MFD, computes that 497 potential dwelling units are available since 2002.

In addition to residential development, there has also been significant **commercial**

development. Although no large malls have been built in West Boylston, several small malls have been upgraded and single lots developed.

In the **Industrial** District expansion has occurred along Hartwell Street with the Waste Management facility, but the remaining development in that area has been limited to the CCRCs noted previously. A portion of the Industrial District located in the southern part of town, Worcester Corporate Center, has constructed four significant lots; unfortunately one was sold to a non-profit so that the full benefit predicted with development of this property was not realized. One lot in this office park off East Mountain Street remains to be sold. Water and sewage disposal are provided for the four sites by Worcester, not West Boylston.

Table 3.6 Subdivision and ANR Lots Approved by the Planning Board (1985-2007)

Year	Subdivision	Subdivision Lots	ANR Lots	Total Lots
1985	Almanac Estates Stillwater Heights	15 14	22	51
1986	Brooks Crossing	38	24	62
1987	Bagdis	2	21	23
1988	Hampshire Acres DiPietro Lost Oak	16 2 15	23	56
1989	Laurel Acres/Rivington	24 (- 10 to DCR)	6	20
1990			14	14
1991			5	5
1992			14	14
1993	Pinewood	4	9	13
1994	Oakwood DiPietro	43 (- 43 to DCR) 1	7	8
1995			11	11
1996			13	13
1997			10	10
1998			-1	-1
1999			4	4
2000	Timberwood	6	11	17
2001			13	13
2002	--	0	9	9

2003	Merrimount	2	8	10
2004	Chino Ave.	4	4	8
2005	Olde Century Farm	18	16	34
2006	--	--	6	6
2007	--	--	4	4
Total		127	185	312

This table does not include residential units in CCRCs for Hillside Village, Briarwood, and Angell Brook; or 40B for Afra Terrace and Village at Oakdale. Refer to Table 3.5 for the number of building permits issued.

Along Hartwell Street in the Industrial Zone, three upgrades of existing sites have also occurred in the past five years, encouraged by the completion of sewers in this part of town. All of these projects went through Site Plan Review by the Planning Board, as required under Section 3.6 of the town's zoning bylaws.

3.D.2 Infrastructure

a. Transportation

The town's growth has been guided not only by its zoning and Master Plan, but also by its transportation infrastructure. The Town Administrator has created and appointed a Transportation Committee, as recommended in the Master Plan, to assess and focus attention on these issues.

Route 12 provides for the town a vital major highway which by virtue of its heavy traffic volumes is the primary setting for local commercial activity. This is particularly true along the southernmost portion of the route, which feeds directly into Worcester and also onto Interstate 190. The opening of I-190, however, has resulted in a reduced demand for Route 12 as the preferred link from Worcester to points north, and vice versa.

It was once thought that I-190 would impact land use in the northern part of town where just over the Sterling border there is an interchange (#5), leading onto Route 140. Nothing has occurred to date, but in 2007 West Boylston changed the zoning on 348 acres of land north of I-190 to be Commercial/Limited Industrial uses, to encourage clean industry or retail and expand the tax base. The DCR owns all but approximately 119 acres in this area. Sterling changed its zoning along this part of Route 140 to allow Performance-based zoning for businesses.

Other major roads serving both through and local traffic exist in West Boylston. Most notable are Routes 140 (Temple, North Main, Beaman and West Boylston Streets) and 110 (Lancaster Street), which converge with Route 12 near the Reservoir. These minor highways receive traffic from the less-traveled roads and residential streets. As these state-numbered routes disperse in different directions in the northern section of town, the concentration of dense traffic along Route 12 becomes less heavy. Most of the major roads

run north/south, with fewer east/west linkages. Major roads are shown on **Figure 1**.

The town upgraded Shrewsbury Street (to the Worcester City line) in 1996 and installed sewers at the same time. It was hoped that this upgrading would reduce the number of trucks using Maple Street, which is zoned for single family residential use, but this has not occurred because the access to some highways is shorter via Maple Street.

Pedestrian walkways exist in the center of town near the Commons, the Library, the Light District building, and the schools; however, many of these are in dangerous condition. It is also very difficult to walk to the commercial center along Route 12. New sidewalks and improvements to existing sidewalks are needed to provide safe venues for school children, facilitate pedestrian traffic to the Route 12 Walmart shopping plaza, where the movie theater is located, as well as throughout the rest of the commercial area along this heavily traveled state highway. In 2007, the Town Administrator appointed a Sidewalk Review Committee which has been working hard to provide an assessment of the existing sidewalks in town. Their mapping is included as **Figure 13**.

The only officially-designated state bike trail in West Boylston is the Rail Trail off of Thomas Street. However, when Route 140/Temple Street was repaved by the state in 2002, it was widened so that bicycles could more safely travel.¹

The Worcester Regional Transit Authority provides bus service to the town from Worcester. Traveling on Route 12, this bus service presently goes as far as WalMart. If the bus went a little bit further, to Oakdale, it could connect with Wachusett Greenways trails, such as the Rail Trail. Since these buses now have bike racks, these transportation corridors could be connected.²

3.D.2.b. Water Supply

The availability of ample high quality water is essential for the growth and development of any community. The West Boylston Water District, an independent governmental body, is the primary supplier of water to the town. The District services 99 percent of the town's water users, and only one percent gets its water from private wells. All of the District's water is derived from groundwater sources, rather than from surface water sources.

As shown in **Table 3.6 and Figure 3 Water Resources**, the District obtains its water from three well fields. The Lee Street well field has one active well and two inactive wells, which were closed in 1986 due to high levels of iron and manganese. Iron and manganese are not considered to be health threats in water, but they may produce aesthetically unpleasant colors in drinking water and treatment is required to remove them. The Pleasant Valley and Oakdale well fields each contain one well. The Water District is only allowed a registered withdrawal from MassDEP of 0.56 MGD from all sources, although the wells have been approved to pump a much higher number as noted in Table 3.6. The total withdrawals are based on gallons pumped/365 days. The total adds up to 0.58 MGD (Million Gallons per Day) so is exceeding the registration by only 0.02 MGD. The last time the District was at 0.56 MGD was 1996.

The Oakdale and Pleasant Valley wells are activated simultaneously based on storage tank

water levels. The Lee Street #4 well operates between 8 to 16 hours per day depending on demand.

Table 3.6 Well Yields³

Characteristics	Well Fields			TOTALS
	Oakdale	Pleasant Valley	Lee Street #4	
Size	36" x 24"	24" x 18"	24" x 16"	
Percent of Town Usage	19	47	34	100
Safe Yield (gpm)	2500	800	250	3,550
DEP Permitted Capacity (gpm)	725	500	250	1,475
Pumping Capacity (gpm)	600	500	250	1,350
2007 Total Withdrawal (MGD)	0.11	0.27	0.20	0.58

The largest peak day demand in 2006 was 1.12 million gallons per day (mgd), which is approximately 58 percent of the 1.94 MGD pumping capacity of the system. The average day demand (ADD) for 2006 was 0.63 mgd, which is within the capacity of the system, but which exceeds the state permitted ("registered") withdrawal limit of 0.56 mgd. Total permitted ("registered") withdrawal for the entire system is 204,400,000 gallons per year; in 2006 the actual use was 228,995,100 gallons. The District has exceeded its permitted ("registered") withdrawal volume for the past several years (since 1995) and may need to submit a Water Management Act permit application to the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to increase the amount of water it is permitted to withdraw from its wells.³

Prior to submitting this application, the District must reduce the amount of unaccounted-for water in the system. Unaccounted-for water consists of unmetered water, that has not been confidently estimated, used for system flushing, meter losses, unauthorized water uses, fire fighting and leakage in the distribution system. The amount of unaccounted-for water in the system over the past four years ranges from a low of approximately 7 percent in 2004 to a high of approximately 10 percent in 2003. Currently, the amount of unaccounted-for water is approximately 8.3 percent. (The American Waterworks Association considers up to 15 percent reasonable.) Actions being taken by the District to reduce the amount of unaccounted-for water include a water conservation plan, water audit study, leak detection survey and a meter replacement program. Upon completion of the above-mentioned tasks, a Water Management Act permit application, as well as an Interbasin Transfer Act permit application, will be submitted to the state DEP and the Massachusetts Water Resources Commission for review and approval.³

There appears to be a sufficient reserve supply to meet future needs into the next several years, but by the year 2020 a deficit of 0.25 mgd will exist with the current pumping capacity. The average day demand (ADD) projected for the year 2020 is 0.91 mgd. The

projected maximum day demand (MDD) for 2020 is 2.19 mgd. In order to be considered adequate, the sources must be able to meet the projected 2020 ADD with the largest source off-line, as well as the projected 2020 MDD with all sources on-line. Currently, the combined operational capacity of the existing sources is 1.94 mgd, while the combined safe yield of the sources is 2.09 mgd. If the largest supply (Oakdale Well) were to be off-line, the District has adequate capacity to meet the projected ADD. However, upon comparison of the projected MDD with the current operational capacity of the existing sources, one can see that a water supply deficit of 0.25 mgd will result by 2020. If one compares the projected MDD with the safe yield of the existing water sources, one can see that a water supply deficit of 0.10 mgd will result in 20 years.³

The DEP approved pumping rate for the Oakdale Well is 725 gallons per minute (gpm), while the existing pumping capacity is 600 gpm. Therefore, Tata & Howard, the Water District's engineering consultant, has recommended that the District maximize the available yield of the Oakdale Well in an effort to mitigate the projected water supply deficit. Additionally, the reported safe yield of the Pleasant Valley Well is greater than the DEP approved pumping rate of 500 gpm. Therefore, it is recommended that the District also pursue maximizing the yield of the Pleasant Valley Well in an effort to mitigate the projected water deficit.³

Although the District has rights to withdraw up to 2 mgd from the Wachusett Reservoir, there are issues regarding surface water sources, such as compliance with the Surface Water Treatment Rule (SWTR) and the upcoming Enhanced SWTR. Due to the costs associated with the construction of a treatment facility to comply with the SWTR and ESWTR, it is recommended that the District pursue maximizing their existing supply sources rather than taking water from the Wachusett Reservoir.³

Residential water consumption is estimated by Tata and Howard to be 60 percent of total usage. All connections are metered, offering an incentive to customers to conserve water since billing is directly related to consumption. To reduce water usage, the District placed a moratorium on the installation of new in-ground irrigation systems in March 2001, but enforcement is difficult. The District is investigating locations for new sources.

According to the West Boylston Water District Superintendent, the water does not exceed the safe levels of contaminants established under the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Sodium, nitrate and nitrite, organic pollutants, such as solvents or toxic metals and arsenic are well below safe contaminant levels required by the Federal and State governments.¹ The District has also installed emergency chlorination at their existing supply sources due to the presence of total coliform bacteria detected in routine sampling rounds within the distribution system. The construction of the emergency chlorination systems was funded through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loan program administered by DEP.

Recent water quality reports have also shown that the manganese concentration at the Oakdale Well was 0.85 mg/l, which exceeds the Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (SMCL) of 0.05 mg/l. As mentioned earlier, manganese is not considered a health threat but may produce aesthetically unpleasant colors in drinking water and treatment is required to remove it. In order to maximize the available yield from the Oakdale well and to meet

drinking water standards, mitigation of the high levels of manganese will be required at this well. Considerations underway are cleaning, replacement, and/or treatment of the source.

Concerned with protection of its water supplies, the town first passed an Aquifer and Watershed Protection District Zoning Bylaw in 1986. The Bylaw was amended in 1994, when the state and federal drinking water regulations were made more stringent. Within this Aquifer Zone, lots must have 50,000 square feet, 150 feet of frontage, and can only have 15 percent impervious coverage (including half of the abutting roadway), whereas in other areas the minimums are 40,000 square feet, 120 feet of frontage, and no limit to impervious coverage. (These more stringent aquifer zoning requirements have not, however, always been upheld by the town.) The Aquifer and Watershed Protection Zoning District is an overlay, superimposed on the existing zoning districts, and it applies only to future uses. Certain activities, which are considered potential threats to the water supply, are prohibited within the District. Such activities include landfills, open dumps, and storage of hazardous waste, liquid hazardous materials and petroleum products except under rigidly controlled circumstances. Other activities are allowed only with a special permit. The Town of West Boylston's bylaw was recently reviewed by a consultant (Earth Tech, Inc.) and was found to be largely in compliance with State Drinking Water Regulations. However, before a new source can be approved, there are a few areas that need to be updated and brought into compliance with the State regulations.

The Federal Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 require every state to examine existing and potential threats to public water supply sources and to develop a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP). The Water District has participated in this project and was fortunate to have received a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) grant to delineate the recharge area of the two remaining wells. So, in 1999 and again in 2000 the West Boylston Water District delineated the Zone II around the Pleasant Valley Well and the Oakdale Well. Zone II refers to the land area that contributes water to the well under the most severe pumping and recharge conditions that can be realistically imagined, i.e., pumping a well at its full capacity for 180 days without rainfall.¹

Also, the Water District along with its engineers, Tata & Howard, are currently doing a town-wide analysis of its distribution system. In 2004, the District applied for some DWSRF money and was approved for \$938,500. This money will be used to upgrade areas of the system, such as new water main and booster pump station on Laurel Street.¹

Changes in state law that have affected the town's water supply include the state Watershed Protection Act, which has helped protect the town's water supply by directing development away from many of the town's streams, aquifer recharge areas, and other sensitive areas; and the DEP designating the Nashua River basin as a "stressed basin". A stressed basin is defined as a basin or sub-basin in which the quantity of stream flow has been significantly reduced, or the quality of the stream flow is degraded, or the key habitat factors are impaired. The Nashua River basin, of which the Wachusett reservoir is a part, is designated as a "Medium Stressed Basin".

3.D.2.c. Sewers

The discussion of sewers in West Boylston is included as background. The major concerns

of this plan relative to sewers are the potential loss of open space, the loss of groundwater flow to recharge the aquifer for the town wells (see the previous paragraph's comments noting that West Boylston is within a DEP-designated Stressed Basin), and the need to be aware of the system flows and capacity so that as new development is proposed the existing system continues to operate adequately.

The sewer system that was installed in West Boylston in cooperation with the DCR has eliminated the contamination from many failing septic systems, which should have a very positive effect on water quality. But, this major sewer project has also decreased ground water recharge and increased development, which could have a negative impact on available water supply.

Until recently, West Boylston did not have sewers. However, at a special town meeting held on October 30, 1995, the voters of West Boylston voted 527 - 3 to authorize the Board of Selectmen to borrow \$11,668,000 to construct sewers so as to assist the DCR and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) to comply with the July 11, 1993 Consent Order issued by the federal EPA.² This consent order was issued to protect the water quality of the Wachusett Reservoir. Failing septic systems in West Boylston and Holden were polluting some of the tributaries to the Reservoir, so sewerage was recommended. Led by the DCR and its sewer consultant, Weston & Sampson Engineers, a Wastewater Advisory Committee had been formed by the town in 1991. Town boards and citizens served on this committee, and the effort resulted in the Holden/West Boylston Sewer Facilities Plan.¹ Funded by the DCR, the Plan was completed by Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. in December 1994. It recommended sewerage many parts of West Boylston and Holden.

This Sewer Facilities Plan identified the areas that needed to be sewerage. The septic systems that needed to be replaced by sewers were identified as either historically known problem systems (using Board of Health data on failing septic systems), or those systems in densely developed areas with unsuitable or marginally suitable soils. Sanitary surveys and tributary water quality data were also used to identify the areas that needed to be sewerage.³ Lot owners who were not included in the areas to be sewerage could petition the DCR to be included. Petitions to include 19 additional streets were submitted and four - Applewood Road, 163-217 Goodale Street, 95-107 Prospect Street, and 271-382 Prospect Street - were accepted. The petition period ended June 20, 1996.⁴ However, a number of new lots have been added since then. **Figure 2** shows this expanded sewer district.

The Sewer Facilities Plan set out a program for phased construction and design to serve the areas of greatest need first. The Phases in West Boylston are described as follows:²

Phase I - The "fast-track" sewer included the Industrial Area in West Boylston and the Pinecroft area of West Boylston and Holden.

Phase II – This Phase was a “design phase” for system components to be constructed in Phases III, IV, and V.

Phase III – This Phase includes sewerage of the Route 12 commercial strip, and Meadowbrook, Prospect Street (near I-190), Maple Street, Worcester Street, Shrine Avenue,

Bunker Hill Parkway, and Pleasant Valley sections of West Boylston.

"Final Phase" – This area was the remaining areas in town, originally planned as Phase IV and Phase V. Phase IV includes sewerage of Colonial Hill, Thomas Basin, Crescent Street, Temple Street, and part of Goodale Street. Phase V includes sewerage of the Sterling Street area and parts of Oakdale. The design of Phase V was changed from using local package treatment plants that were originally proposed, to constructing a sewer pipe that crosses the Reservoir to reach the Oakdale and Sterling Street sections of West Boylston.

As of January 1, 2008, 1,515 properties have connected to the municipal sewer system. The magnitude of the sewer project can be seen by looking at the following data. It is estimated that 50 - 60 % of the town's land area is being seweraged.² Approximately 56% of the town's population will be switching from septic systems to sewers, according to the 1994 Facilities Plan.² This document estimated that 347,737 gallons per day (gpd) of residential wastewater (plus infiltration from ground water) will be going into the sewers. In addition, 134,188 gpd of commercial/industrial wastewater will be discharged to the sewer.⁵

All of this wastewater going into the sewers will be piped through Worcester to the Upper Blackstone Water Pollution Abatement District's treatment plant in Millbury. Here, it will be discharged into the Blackstone River, which is more than 8 miles away from West Boylston town wells. This means that a tremendous amount of water will be taken out of our watershed. As shown in Table 3.7, by 2020, it is expected that 587,000 gpd of wastewater (plus ground water infiltration) will be going out of West Boylston.⁵ By full build-out in 2050, 614,000 gpd of wastewater will be leaving our watershed via the sewers.⁵ We do not know how this water transfer will affect the recharge of our wells, groundwater, wetlands and streams as no studies of this inter-basin transfer were done prior to the sewer project's adoption.

Table 3.7 Sewer Project Estimated InterBasin Water Transfer from Wachusett Watershed to Blackstone Watershed⁵

Year	Total Average Flow-including Infiltration
2007	481,000 gpd
2020	587,000 gpd
Full Build-out 2050	614,000 gpd

The sewer construction has eliminated much of the contamination from failing septic systems. The flows noted in Table 3.7 (approximately 500,000 gallons per day) are being transferred from the ground in town to the sewage treatment plant in Millbury. This has decreased ground water recharge to the local wells. This will have a negative impact on available water supply, and since sewers have also increased development, the water must be monitored closely to provide the needed flow without negative impacts to current users.

The 1988 West Boylston Land Use Plan (p.59) stated, "The most obvious impediment to housing development (and for that matter commercial and industrial growth) is the absence of Town sewerage." Weston & Sampson, Inc. predicted that the number of people living in the areas to be seweraged will increase from 3,773 today to 5,115 in the year 2020, a 40 percent increase. How this new development will impact the quantity and quality of our

water supply has not been assessed. Extension of sewers into areas not sewered will increase development. An undeveloped lot (22 Malden Street) that was outside the original Sewer District has been allowed to connect to the sewer.⁶ This caused the Board of Sewer Commissioners to adopt a policy that restricted connections outside of the original sewer area.¹⁰ The development that sewers have brought points to a need to protect key open space parcels. Also, the reduction in ground water recharge that results from the reduction in flow from hundreds of septic systems points to the need to protect recharge areas.

The construction cost of the entire Holden/West Boylston sewer project was estimated to be \$72 million (\$72,562,779). The original cost estimate was \$52 million. The actual cost for West Boylston users' portion did not increase and was \$ 8.13 million, based on information from John Westerling, West Boylston Director of the DPW. Operating costs will be borne by the sewer users in the Town where the facility is operating.

3.D.3. Long Term Development Patterns

In 1999, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission conducted a **build-out study** of West Boylston showing new development that could occur under the zoning once the sewer project is complete. See **Figure 4**, which is a summary of the 1999 Build-out Statistics for West Boylston.¹ Financed by the state Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, this Build-out Study showed that 3,823 new residents could be added to the town's population if build-out were to occur. In other words, build-out could bring a 59 percent increase in population. The number of acres in town that could still be developed totaled 2,548. Since there are 8,836 acres in town, this means that about 29 percent of the town's land could still be developed, even under the constraints of the Watershed Protection Act. 1,318 residential dwellings could be added, as well as 3,523,066 square feet of commercial or industrial floor area. And, there could be almost 600 new students added to our schools if total build-out were to occur.

In a more targeted study of the southern Route 12 commercial corridor, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission found that there is the potential to almost double the existing 633,225 square feet of commercial and industrial floor space along this road. This CMRPC study concluded that although only 20 of the 78 existing properties in this Business District have expansion potential (because of small lot sizes and constraints of the Watershed Protection Act), these 20 properties could add 581,719 square feet of commercial or industrial floor space. The potential could be even higher if two-story buildings are built. This study, which was done for the Townwide Planning Committee in April 2000, clearly shows that there is growth potential along the heavily traveled Route 12 commercial corridor.

In its study of how the sewer project would affect the town, the engineering firm Weston & Sampson predicted that the number of people living in the areas to be sewered would increase from 3,663 to 5,115 in the year 2020, a 40 percent increase for the sewered area in just 30 years.

Looking at the population projections for the whole town, Tata & Howard, the Water District's engineering consultants, have estimated that the town's population would increase to 8,681 by the year 2020. The Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research

(MISER) projects a lower figure (about 8,000), but the MISER estimates were consistently low relative to existing data, according to Tata & Howard.³

Obviously, there is still a lot of potential for growth in the town according to these most recent studies. Looking at the sewer project in a general way, one can see that it certainly raises the potential for increased development density and loss of open space. The need for planned open space and recreation in the densely developed sewer areas becomes more important as infill lots that previously could not meet Title 5 requirements have become developable due to sewer availability. And, if sewers are extended into outlying, open areas that are not currently included in the area to be sewer, this will also cause additional growth and loss of open space. The Board of Sewer Commissioners have adopted two policies that prohibit the extension of sewers into non-sewered areas in an attempt to limit this impact.³ It should be noted, though, that the DCR put policies in place to comply with Executive Order 385, the state's directive ordering its agencies not to take any action that will increase sprawl. For instance, the DCR limited the number of sewer stubs to undeveloped land.⁴

West Boylston's proximity to Worcester, to I-190, I-290 and Route 495, and the new sewers are all factors that will encourage growth in the town. The Boston area's economy has triggered tremendous growth along Route 495, which is pushing westward toward West Boylston. Although the DCR has already acquired about one-third of the town's land to protect the Reservoir, its purchases in West Boylston have slowed down and its acquisition program is now focusing more on towns located further upstream from the Reservoir.⁵ Certainly, the CMRPC Build-out Analysis has shown that even with the DCR's ownership of one-third of the town, there is still much potential for growth. See the lavender and pink areas on **Figure 4** for areas where this growth could occur.

SECTION 4 - ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

4.A. Geology, Soils and Topography

Most areas of town have slow percolation rates because the land consists of glacial till (hardpan), with up to one hundred feet covering bedrock. The remainder of town is covered by fluvial or lacustrine stratified drift (sand/silt/gravel), especially along Malden Brook and the southern areas surrounding the Reservoir. The stratified drift ranged in depth from five feet to one hundred and thirty feet. These deposits are very permeable and therefore susceptible to function as a contamination transport pathway, see **Figure 5 – General Soil Map**. Much of this information was obtained from the DCR sanitary surveys of the town done to evaluate water quality and water resources.

The general classes of soils found in West Boylston are Hinckley-Merrimac-Windsor (north) and Paxton-Woodbridge-Canton (south). There are over twenty specific soil types, with five predominating; Chatfield-Hollis-Rock outcrop, Hinckley sandy loam, Paxton fine sandy loam, Canton fine sandy loam, and Merrimac fine sandy loam. Based on the SCS soil survey, all these soil types are severely limited for subsurface sanitary disposal.

Chatfield-Hollis-Rock outcrop is a well-drained soil with moderate to rapid permeability

with many stones. Bedrock is generally encountered between ten and forty inches from the surface and may restrict septic system installation.

Merrimac and Canton series consist of very deep, well-drained soils on glacial outwash plains, eskers, and stream terraces. Permeability is rapid which makes these soils poor filters for septic system leach fields. Seepage of effluent through the substratum may cause groundwater contamination. Merrimac is the predominant soil type along Gates Brook.

Paxton series consists of very deep, strongly sloped, well-drained soils with many stones. The permeability is slow to very slow. The limitations to soil absorption systems are the slow permeability and the seasonally high groundwater tables.

Due to the soil types and hilly nature of the town, erosion potential in town is low to moderate on the average slopes and moderate to high on slopes greater than fifteen percent.

The terrain of West Boylston ranges from rolling hills to steep slopes with some areas of exposed bedrock and three large flat swamps, the headwaters of Waushacum Brook along Route 12 in the North end of town, the headwaters of Malden and Gates Brooks off Prospect Street and lastly the headwaters of Muddy Brook in the industrial area located in the southern area of town. Elevations range from 386 feet above sea level at the shore of the Reservoir to 870 feet above sea level (Malden Hill). About fifteen percent of the area has slopes in excess of fifteen percent, located mostly in the west around Malden Hill or at the edge of the Reservoir. The vegetative cover is primarily hardwood and mixed hardwood/softwood forest.

4.B. Landscape Character

The Wachusett Reservoir and its surrounds is West Boylston's most distinctive feature. The diversity of landform, with the rolling hills and forested upland, add beauty and character unique to West Boylston. As shown on **Figure 6**, the town is amply endowed with streams and open space, but few farms remain as most have been subdivided or sold to the DCR for watershed protection. The town's many scenic resources and unique environments are shown on **Figure 9** and are discussed in Section 4.F.

4.C. Water Resources

West Boylston is blessed with many water resources, including the Stillwater and Quinapoxet Rivers, which meet at the Thomas Basin and form the main tributary to the Wachusett Reservoir. **Figure 3** shows the location of these water resources, which are described below.

Wachusett Reservoir - Eight miles long, 6.5 square miles in area, with 37 miles of shoreline. Covers the central region of West Boylston and parts of Boylston, Sterling, and Clinton. It is the water supply for Metropolitan Boston, supplying 2.5 million people in 61 cities and towns. Its two main tributaries, the Stillwater River and the Quinapoxet River, enter the Reservoir at the Thomas Basin in West Boylston. In addition, water is piped from the Quabbin Reservoir, entering the Quinapoxet River before it reaches the Thomas Basin.

Stillwater River - Flows north to south through the northwest area of W. Boylston entering the Wachusett Reservoir in the north central region of West Boylston at the Stillwater Basin.

Quinapoxet River - Flows west to east into the Wachusett Reservoir at Thomas Basin in the northwest corner of West Boylston.

Waushacum Brook - Flows southerly from West Waushacum Pond in Sterling, and merges with the Stillwater River, then enters the Wachusett Reservoir through the Stillwater Basin.

Malden Brook - Flows north into the Thomas Basin at the western-central area of West Boylston.

Muddy Brook - Flows from north to south near the town landfill, and discharges into the Reservoir's South Bay.

Gates Brook - Flows south to north through the central, business section and the densely developed residential section of West Boylston. Discharges east of the Route 12 causeway over the Reservoir.

Angell Brook - Is located in the southeastern part of West Boylston and flows southerly into Worcester, to Poor Farm Brook, and to City Farm Pond in Shrewsbury. It is the only stream not tributary to the Wachusett Reservoir in West Boylston.

West Boylston Brook- is located in the center of town and flows northeast to the Reservoir.

Three Lily Ponds - Located in the east central region of West Boylston, north of the Reservoir at the base of French Hill, the ponds are approximately 2 acres in area and only discharge to the Reservoir under extreme flooding.

Carroll's Pond - Located on Prospect Street very close to the center of town, this one acre pond was a farm pond, and is a site of much wildlife activity.

Edward's Pond - Located at the base of Malden Hill in the northwest corner of West Boylston on Malden Street, the pond is less than an acre in area, but there is a small animal path that local walkers utilize.

The majority of West Boylston is located in the Nashua River Watershed, except for the most southern section of town, which is in the SuAsCo watershed. This section of the Nashua River flows to the Wachusett Reservoir and therefore the majority of town is located within a drainage basin leading to an Outstanding Resource Water, being the reservoir, which is a surface water supply.

The Flood Hazard areas in town are delineated on maps that have been compiled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and are located at the DPW office in town. Areas that flood regularly are limited to those locations in close proximity to the larger streams noted in the list above.

The areas of town within the Aquifer Protection Districts are the areas that are mapped aquifers in town. The Zoning map depicts these areas and the associated regulations limit potentially hazardous activities that can occur in these areas.

4.D. Vegetation

Most of the undeveloped land within the town is covered with transitional hardwood and pine forest except for the areas adjacent to the Reservoir which were planted with a heavy growth of red pine around the turn of the century. The DCR has been thinning these forests the past few years so that an undergrowth of small shrubs has appeared. The areas around the Reservoir are accessible for hiking, snow-shoeing, cross country skiing and other non-motorized forms of recreation due to numerous fire lanes through the stands of pines.

The fields around the few remaining farms are located along Prospect, Lancaster, and Fairbanks Streets. They are either planted with corn, hay or are used as pasture land. Scattered throughout the town are small abandoned fields populated with wild shrubs and young trees such as poplar and birch. There are also three Christmas Tree farms in town.

Most of the few remaining farms, with their open fields, have been bought by the DCR. During the past decade, the DCR bought the 102 acre Giobellina Farm on Fairbanks Street, which was formerly under the Chapter 61A agricultural tax exemption program. The DCR also acquired approximately 85 acres of the Antinarella Farm, including 25 acres of open fields, on Prospect Street. Much of the Smith Farm on Prescott Street, which was also under Chapter 61A, has also been acquired by the DCR, but some haying is still done here.^{1,2,3} See Section 5.A and **Figure 6** for Chapter 61, 61A, and 61 B lands in West Boylston.

Most homes are surrounded by well-maintained lawns and the Wachusett Country Club is one of the most picturesque and manicured golf courses in the State. Public lands, such as parks, ball fields, cemeteries and lawns are well-maintained and very attractive; however, the landscaping of the commercial and industrial areas in town leaves much to be desired.

4.E. Fisheries and Wildlife

The most important areas of West Boylston to protect to maintain known biodiversity are the areas in and around the 2006 Priority Habitat, BioMap (2001), and Living Waters (2003) cores shown on **Figure 8 and Figure 8A**. Any management plans in these areas need to include management of the rare species and their habitats. Priority and Estimated Habitats (PH/EH) and BioMap cores (C625 and 710,) extend around the Wachusett Reservoir and Quinapoxet and Stillwater Rivers, which with their surrounding areas are of biodiversity importance. This is also the site of the southern-most population of self-sustaining land locked salmon

The list of all rare species currently known to occur in or to have occurred in West Boylston has species protected under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), Certified Vernal Pools (one in West Boylston), and other, not regulated, indicators of local biodiversity, including Watch Listed plants, delisted species, and priority natural communities is shown in Table 4.1. Any MESA listed species with a most

recent observation date within the past 25 years is considered to be current. Older dates may be species occurrences that have not been recently inventoried, or lost from Town as land use has changed. Fact Sheets describing many of the MESA listed species and their habitats are available at http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/species_info/mesa_list/mesa_list.htm .

Table 4.1 - Rare Species and Natural Communities as of 2/5/2008

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>MESA Status</u>	<u>Most Recent Year</u>
VERTEBRATES			
<i>Clemmys guttata</i>	Spotted Turtle	delisted	1994
<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle	SC	2005
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	E	1999
INVERTEBRATES			
None			
VASCULAR PLANTS			
<i>Arceuthobium pusillum</i>	Dwarf Mistletoe	SC	1899
<i>Isotria verticillata</i>	Large Whorled Pogonia	WL	
<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	Wild Lupine	WL	
<i>Ophioglossum pusillum</i>	Adder's-tongue Fern	T	1932
<i>Polygala verticillata</i>	Whorled Milkwort	WL	2006
NATURAL COMMUNITIES			
None			
CERTIFIED VERNAL POOLS			
Certified Vernal Pool (1)			1997

KEY TO MESA STATUS: E = Endangered. T = Threatened. SC = Special Concern. WL = unofficial Watch List, not regulated. Some Watch List dates are not available. Delisted – species no longer protected under MESA. Natural Communities are not regulated. S (state abundance) ranks are on a 1 to 5 scale, with S1 being considered vulnerable, generally having 1 to 5 good occurrences, and S5 being demonstrably secure. Community types ranked S1, S2, and S3 are priority for conservation protection

The currently known rare vertebrate animal species in West Boylston are associated with rivers and the Wachusett reservoir, and the wetlands around them. Wood Turtles spend time in streams and upland and riverside forests, but over-winter in the river (or stream) bank. The turtles also use uplands for much of their lives including for foraging for food. Detailed guidelines for management of the species are available at http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/conservation/herps/species_protection_guideline.s.htm .

The Wachusett Reservoir and surrounding undeveloped lands provide habitat for wintering Bald Eagles. A pair of eagles has been nesting on an island in the reservoir, which means that West Boylston is part of their habitat. Common Loons also nest in the Wachusett Reservoir, making the whole reservoir part of their habitat as well.

There is habitat for rare invertebrates in West Boylston: the state Threatened Orange Sallow Moth is known from just over the line in Sterling, and the open oak forest habitat continues into West Boylston. The Orange Sallow Moth (*Rhodoecia aurantiago*) inhabits dry and open oak woodland on rocky uplands (ridges, hilltops, and steep slopes), and the edges of old fields, power line cuts, and other openings within such habitat.

Several of the rare plants of West Boylston were more common when pastures and open fields were more common: Wild Lupine (WL), Adder's-tongue Fern (T), and Whorled Milkwort (WL) are plants of such open areas and now grow on roadsides, railroad embankments and other places where there are periodic disturbances that keep the land open. Large Whorled Pogonia (WL) is an orchid of acidic, usually oak, forests, where it is generally uncommon. Dwarf Mistletoe (SC) grows on spruce trees, usually around the forested edges of bogs.

NHESP has no records of uncommon natural communities in West Boylston. Because of the historic record of Dwarf Mistletoe and the presence of bogs in surrounding towns, bogs would be a possibility. However, the Mass DEP Wetlands datalayer on MassGIS does not include any bogs, although the 'shallow marsh, meadows and fens' data could include unidentified peat lands.

West Boylston has one Certified Vernal Pool (CVP) and many Potential Vernal Pools (PVP) (identified from aerial photographs, needing verification on the ground). Areas of swamps also provide habitat for vernal pool species. The PVP data are available as a datalayer from MassGIS at <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/pvp.htm> and shown on **Figure 7**. Certifying the PVPs would provide additional protection to these wetlands and the species that use them. There are several clusters of PVPs, which provide extra habitat value for the species that use them since each pool is somewhat different and provides alternate habitats in different years and seasons. Any such lands already protected are good sites for biodiversity and good cores for larger properties. At least one of the clusters noted on the enclosed map appears to be only partially on protected land; protecting the land with the remaining vernal pools in that (or any other) clusters, and some of the surrounding forest, would provide good focus areas for conserving the biodiversity of the town and region. Large linked conservation land provides the best opportunities to maintain populations of species and limit species loss from the Town. Land protection that ties in with open space in other municipalities, and other protected open space, public or private is one way to provide important large areas of biodiversity protection. Even with so much of West Boylston being protected by DCR to protect the watershed, there are fragments that if connected to other pieces would provide better habitat.

Figure 8 shows the BioMap and Living Waters core areas. The report can be downloaded from the NHESP website at <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhESP/nhtwnreports.htm>. BioMap and Living Waters cores were produced by NHESP to identify the areas of most importance for biodiversity: they are based on known locations of rare species and uncommon natural communities, and incorporate the habitats needed by rare species to maintain the local populations. BioMap focused on species of uplands and wetlands; Living Waters focused on aquatic species. BioMap and Living Waters polygons are also available from MassGIS at <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/biocre.htm> and

<http://www.mass.gov/mgis/lwcore.htm>.¹ Note that the descriptions of the BioMap cores include lists of species that occur anywhere in the Core areas: species not actually known from West Boylston may also be listed. These species can be expected anywhere in the core areas shown in **Figure 8**.

In West Boylston, there are several BioMap core areas. These are the areas of most importance to protect in order to maintain the biodiversity of the Town, region, and state, as discussed above. Protecting land within the core areas will enhance the habitat value of existing conservation land and protected open space. The large BioMap Cores and Priority Habitat along the Wachusett Reservoir (PH122/EH861 and C710 C625) include the Reservoir, which provides very important areas for biodiversity protection, and continues into neighboring towns with nice large corridors of land. There are no Living Waters cores in West Boylston.

To differentiate the BioMap core areas from the Priority and Estimated Habitats: BioMap core areas identify areas particularly important for conservation planning purposes, while Priority and Estimated Habitats are regulatory and are updated regularly. The BioMap/Living Waters report is static (data from 2001 and 2003), so misses some of the most recently identified rare species areas.

Fisheries: The Town of West Boylston has diverse and abundant aquatic habitats consisting of cold water and warm water streams and small ponds. These habitats are home to many fish species, both native or introduced and stocked. Many angling opportunities are available on DCR lands, except for the area within 100 feet of the shaft where water from Quabbin Reservoir flows into the Quinapoxet River.² Fishing from bridges is also prohibited.

- Warm water: There are a few small warm water ponds in West Boylston. These ponds have similar fish species such as bass, pickerel, perch, sunfishes, bullhead, various minnows, dace and shiners. Water depth, chemistry, and aquatic vegetation vary from pond to pond. This results in different quality and quantity of fish species composition. Some shallow smaller ponds are subject to oxygen depletion during winter months and breeding stress in spring/summer results in some fish mortality. Generally, the town's ponds have good fish production capability.
- Cold water: There are many small brooks in West Boylston, having both wild trout and native char. Eastern Brook Trout is the prime species.
- Wachusett Reservoir: This 6.5 square mile water supply creates an exceptional fisheries habitat. The 37 mile shoreline is mostly open to fishing. Dates are set annually by the DCR depending on ice conditions. The Reservoir has abundant warm water and cold water species of fish. The warm water catch is dominated by smallmouth bass and yellow perch, with good numbers of white perch, rock bass, bluegills, pumpkinseeds and bullheads also harvested. Analysis of creel census data conducted at the Reservoir reveals a limited harvest period of lake trout, brown trout and rainbow trout. Landlocked salmon fishing is popular during spring and fall. Thousands of salmon spawn each fall up the Stillwater River. Unlike Atlantic salmon, which is protected by law, the Stillwater Salmon offer a unique fishing opportunity in Massachusetts.²

Abundant numbers of prey species such as rainbow smelt are an important element contributing to the size and condition of trout and salmon. Many state record fish have been caught at Wachusett Reservoir.

- **Stocked Trout:** Division of Fisheries and Wildlife stocks trout in the Quinapoxet and Stillwater Rivers, as well as in other brooks such as Gates Brook. Species stocked are brook trout, rainbow trout, and brown trout.

Pollution in some of the waters such as Gates Brook, has caused some deformities in some species of brook trout. There is some evidence that the pollution is due to failing septic systems, storm water runoff and street drainage. During the installation of the sewer system in parts of town, there was an increase in sedimentation, particularly in Gates Brook. This increase in sedimentation impacted the small pools and raised the level of the bed such that native and stocked trout as well as salmon had difficulty migrating upstream to previous spawning areas. This may have contributed to declining fish numbers. Additionally, the removal of trees, shrubs, and underbrush along the brooks has caused changes in the water temperature and oxygenation of the brooks, further resulting in fish decline. The Town worked with the state Fisheries and Wildlife Division to selectively restore some of the natural habitats.³

Wildlife: Diversity and variety of wildlife habitat are the strong points of the environment of West Boylston. Wildlife habitat includes upland forested areas, many different wetland types, early successional brushy fields, active agricultural fields, and suburban backyards. All these habitats are high quality and wildlife production reflects this. Hunting is a popular activity that brings revenue to the local communities. It also maintains a healthy wild game population by preventing overpopulation, spread of zoonotic disease, reduces crop and property damage, as well as livestock and pet predation.

Private Lands: Most of the wildlife habitats consist of suburban backyards and farmland. Raccoon, whitetail deer, cottontail rabbit, grey squirrel, red fox, eastern coyote and various species of songbirds are found in this diverse environment. The abundant wildlife species are ones that can adapt to this changing habitat. This adaptability to humans can present problems at times. Crop damage, livestock predation, property damage, and health and safety concerns result from the interaction of people and wildlife, with the potential for car accidents from deer and the transmission of diseases, such as rabies, from raccoons.⁴

Public lands: A large portion, approximately one third, of West Boylston is owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Much of this land is forested. Wildlife species such as whitetail deer, ruffed grouse, grey fox, coyote, turkey, and fisher⁴ benefit from forest habitat management conducted by this state agency. Wachusett Reservoir is home to an increasing resident Canada goose population. The large open water expanse coupled with protected shorelines and small islands create good waterfowl habitat. Other waterfowl such as loons, cormorant, dabbling and diving ducks, and gulls are seen in many areas around the Reservoir.

Wildlife Species: The wildlife species found in West Boylston are common to all of central Massachusetts. Occasionally, uncommon animals are seen in West Boylston. Moose, turkey vulture, American bald eagle, black bear, and bobcat populations are expanding and

have been sighted in town.⁴ A complete listing of wildlife species including mammals, birds, fishes, reptiles and amphibians is too extensive to be noted here. There are many excellent field guides available for reference.

An overabundance of gulls and geese in the region has caused water quality problems in the Reservoir. The DCR has a program to reduce the populations and limit the public's feeding of these birds.

The areas in town that remain in their natural condition provide habitat for State endangered and threatened species, including the common loon, spotted turtle, dwarf mistletoe, and the Adder's Tongue fern. **Figure 8** depicts the areas designated as habitat for these species.

4.F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

The existing open spaces in West Boylston create a unique mixture of conditions that have been recognized by State and Federal experts. The conditions are an expansive open space surrounding the Wachusett Reservoir and the undeveloped corridors for wildlife migration in all directions radiating from the central Reservoir area. This situation provides a unique opportunity to utilize these corridors to monitor environmental quality. Many sentinel animals (indicators of the health of an ecosystem) currently populate these areas and provide a mechanism to monitor the environment for threats to humans, similar to the 'canary in a coal mine' situation. The opportunities to utilize this system should be further investigated for the benefit of the whole northeast region.

The town of West Boylston is situated on the high ground surrounding the Wachusett Reservoir, just south of Wachusett Mountain. The many spectacular views of the mountain and the valley below are a principal asset of this region. **Figure 9** shows the scenic resources and unique environs in Town. One hundred years ago the site of the village center (referred to as the "Lower Common"), with its factories and farms, churches and homes, is today the site of a great lake held back by the Wachusett Dam in Clinton. Two rivers, the Quinapoxet, rushing down a narrow gorge over its boulder filled stream bed, and the aptly named Stillwater meet at the historic village center of Oakdale. From there they flow into the Thomas Basin to begin what was once the South Fork of the Nashua River and is today the Wachusett Reservoir.

The Old Stone Church, standing next to the Route 12 causeway, is one of the most photographed scenes of the region. It has been left as a monument to the scores of buildings removed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts when the Reservoir was built, and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The one third of West Boylston owned by the DCR is held as tightly regulated open space. Fishing, but no boating or swimming, is allowed in the Reservoir and limited recreational use of the surrounding lands is allowed but not encouraged. On DCR land, near where Lancaster Street joins Route 12, are located three beautiful Lily Ponds (see **Figure 3**). Hidden from public view, they are one of the town's best kept secrets. However, at one time these ponds were centers of recreational activity. In 1876, the town celebrated the nation's centennial at the Lily Ponds.¹ During the 1930s and 1940s, the town's bathing beach was located here.² Even as late as 1937, the Park Commission's Annual Report wrote that "The maintenance of Lily Pond bathing beach, being a recreational activity, was supervised by the Park Commission. An attendant,

or life guard, was appointed for duty during certain hours daily from the middle of June until Labor Day...A new float was built and the beach improved through the addition of sand....”³ The DCR lands and waters are undoubtedly the town’s most scenic resource, but there are other areas that deserve mention as well.

A view such as the one from Wachusett Country Club, with its lush green fairways, is a major asset for the town. From this high spot, one gets a panoramic view looking down on the blue waters of the Reservoir. It is truly spectacular. Other high elevations with beautiful views include the top of the hill near Pleasant Street with its view east all the way to Marlboro.⁴ At 870 feet, Malden Hill is the highest spot in town and commands views of Mt. Wachusett, Thomas Basin, and Wachusett Reservoir. The view of the Old Stone Church from High Plains, where the cemetery in Oakdale is located, is also quite beautiful. Heading south on Route 110/Lancaster Street, the view over the Reservoir is quite good, but is somewhat marred by the many power lines located here.

The Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) is located on the abandoned line of the railroad of the same name, which once ran a 104 mile east-west route between Boston and Northampton. The Oakdale section opened in October 1997 and runs from Thomas Basin to the town line along an easement of land owned by the town of West Boylston. Beyond that, it runs over 2 bridges installed in 2001 and 2002 to River Road along DCR-owned land. Just over the town line in Holden is the Springdale Mill River Walk, which was completed in 2005. See www.springdalemill.org for more information. Along the Oakdale section of the Rail Trail, one can see ruins of the old Whiting Mill, as well as the Quabbin Aqueduct outfall and dam. The Oakdale section is the most popular section of the MCRT and in 2006, the DCR built a new parking lot in cooperation with the Town per an order from the DEP to the West Boylston Water District to comply with federal rules to keep parking areas 400 feet from the Oakdale well.

The West Boylston DPW provides regular maintenance for the portion within town. Wachusett Greenways (www.wachusettgreenways.org) provides trail clearing and maintenance, planned outdoor activities, and direct development of 32 miles of the proposed MCRT through the towns of Oakham, Rutland, Holden, West Boylston, and Sterling. Wachusett Greenways plans to develop the MCRT east from Oakdale to Pleasant Street along Beaman Street and Prospect Street. Pleasant Street is a former town road that has been closed off for years and runs north from Beaman Street just east of the bridge dividing Stillwater Basin from the Thomas Basin. A large impediment to the development of that trail is that the bridge mentioned above, which was rebuilt in 2002 does not have an adequate sidewalk along its full length for safe pedestrian access.⁴

Another nice area for shaded walks is the pine grove in Goodale Park. Given to the town in 1911 by Aaron Goodale, this historic park includes a tall stand of red pines, which provides a lovely shaded area above the athletic fields that have taken over much of the park. This park has included a grove since at least 1922. Around that time, the grove’s chestnut trees were dying, so many evergreen trees were planted to replace them. The “summer or shelter house” near the pine grove was added at this time.⁶ In 1930, the park’s neighbor, Major Victor Edwards, donated 5 ½ acres of his land to the park’s original 3.53 acres² so that the park was extended to the current location of the high school. At this time Major Edwards also donated the land across Crescent Street for the construction of Edwards School.

During World War I, Goodale Park was used as a drill field for the Massachusetts State Guard. Over the years many town events have been held here, including the town's centennial celebration in 1908, where prizes were awarded to the best decorated coaches.² Fourth of July celebrations featuring some of the best fireworks in the region were held here in the 1960s.¹

Pine Glen is located on Goodale street just east of Marsh Hawk Way on the south side of the street and is owned and maintained by the West Boylston Land Trust (see section 5.B) The small wooded lot has a short trail which leads to a quiet spot with wood benches that is great for family picnics or small gatherings.

The town has not had a Town Hall since 1917. Town offices are currently situated in rented space at 127 Hartwell Street, in the Industrial District.

The Town Commons are well-maintained and planted with many flowers and shrubs. It is surrounded by many old homes, two churches, Beaman Memorial Library, two fraternal buildings, and a very attractive cemetery. The three sections of the Town Common provide a pleasant setting for many community activities. A new bandstand on the Common is host to summer concerts and other activities, such as church festivals, yard and craft sales. Many of the older historic buildings around the Common remain, some moved up from the valley before the Reservoir was built.

Just north of the Town Common is the Bigelow Tavern Historic District, where the old tavern serves as headquarters for the West Boylston Historical Society. In 1992, the Bigelow Tavern Historic District, which includes the properties at 60, 64, and 65 Worcester Street, was established. These properties include the Bigelow Tavern, the distillery across the street, which was once owned by the tavern, and the Seth White General Store next to the distillery. This store building once served as both a store and a place where town meetings were held.

In 2006, the West Boylston Historical Commission was able to procure the historic, circa 1780 Jacob Winn Barn from the DCR, when they decided to demolish the building. It was then moved to the West Boylston Historical Society property from its original site at 77 Lancaster Street.

Some people believe that the village of Oakdale is the best preserved section of West Boylston and shows what the town looked like before the Reservoir flooded the town's center in 1905. It has a number of homes basically unchanged from the time it was a busy mill town over 100 years ago. These homes are now part of the Oakdale Historic District, which was established in 1996 by the West Boylston Historical Commission. The District includes 39 historic properties in Oakdale on North Main Street, May Street, Green Street, High Street, and Waushacum Street.

This part of town is essentially as it was in the period 1850 - 1900. Included in the town's Oakdale Historic District is the town's oldest surviving church building, the Oakdale Methodist Church, which was built in 1858. Also located in this historic district are two of the town's four remaining 19th century schoolhouses. Oakdale was the largest of the four mill villages that grew up around the textile mills that were the town's chief livelihood

during the 19th century. Today, Oakdale is West Boylston's only surviving mill village, although the southern section of the village, including the site of the mill and its related mill housing, no longer exists.

Other historic properties included on the National Register of Historic Places by the West Boylston Historical Commission include: The Quinapoxet River Bridge, which is part of the DCR's water supply system at Thomas Basin, which was listed in 1990. The Old Stone Church, which is mentioned above as one of the most scenic sites in West Boylston, was listed in 1973. And recent, August 2008, additions to the Register include Mount Vernon Cemetery and Holbrook Chapel on the east Town Common.

4.G. Environmental Protection Challenges

By far the greatest challenge to protecting and enhancing open space and recreation is the perception that it is too expensive or that someone else is doing it. The site-specific environmental challenges will follow after a discussion of this most important Fiscal factor.

Fiscal Challenge

So, what's open space worth? This is a key question in debates surrounding development impacts versus conservation efforts. State and federal governments have long recognized the need to preserve certain open space because it provides significant public good. However, decisions regarding open space preservation are increasingly being made at the local level by Towns or local land trusts. Local government officials and land trusts are developing fiscal capacities and experience in land management and stewardship, supplementing the services provided by state and local governments.¹ Local governments operate within an increasingly tight fiscal environment and are heavily dependent on the property tax for operating revenue, so the fiscal and economic implications of open space preservation decisions are of paramount consideration.

As discussed throughout this Plan, open space supports natural ecosystems that provide direct benefits to human society, though it is difficult (but not impossible) to estimate the monetary value of such benefits. It is difficult to argue against the aesthetics of open space but this discussion will not even consider that value. Town officials and developers tend to focus only on open space values of direct interest to humans (i.e., community budgets), and of those, only values that can be expressed in economic terms.

Population growth and real estate development do not necessarily provide net fiscal benefits to local governments. That is, providing and maintaining infrastructure (e.g., sewer and water systems, roadway and drainage systems) and other services (e.g., police enforcement, medical and emergency response, public schools, trash collection, snow removal,) to accommodate new development usually cost more than the development generates in property tax and other revenues.⁷ In recent years, fiscal impact analyses have been conducted that compare the net effects on municipal budgets of open space (including lands used for agriculture and forestry) to other forms of land use (residential and commercial).

The Northeastern Office of the American Farmland Trust⁸ studied six rural towns in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York State and found that, on average, residential development required \$1.13 in municipal services for every \$1 of revenue received in

property taxes. Farm, forest and open space land required only \$0.29 in services per dollar of revenue (see **Table 4.2**). Other cost-benefit studies have been done in the region by Commonwealth Research Group and show further regional comparisons and the results are in good agreement.

Table 4.2 Fiscal Cost Associated With Different Land Uses

Land Use Type	For This Much Tax Paid (Revenue Incoming)	Use This Much In Town Services (Costs to Town)
Residential	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.13
Commercial	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.43
Open Space	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.29

Although the OSAC does not have the resources to analyze data specifically for West Boylston at this time, general findings from these studies show:

- (1) residential development typically incurs a net fiscal cost,
- (2) commercial development typically generates a net fiscal surplus, but attracts more residential development, and
- (3) open space, forests and farmlands typically generate a net fiscal surplus AND are fiscally better than residential development and equal to or better than nonresidential development.

Many other studies have confirmed that significant increases in land value are associated with proximity to open space lands.⁹ This is an additional increase in property value which is not included in the cost computations in **Table 4.2**.

It should also be noted here that though the DCR does not pay taxes, they DO pay the Town a Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT payment) which is currently \$569,752.24 paid annually. This amount would greatly affect the calculations in West Boylston and make the return on DCR property even more beneficial to the town than any other typical open space. PILOTs are further discussed in Section 5.B.

Site-Specific Environmental Challenges

The DCR impact in town shows that DCR has acquired most of the farms in town. But neither are there any abandoned mills with their hazardous wastes. That part of old West Boylston was taken down to make way for the Wachusett Reservoir a hundred years ago. The sites currently identified as environmental threats are depicted on **Figure 10**.

The town does not know what chemicals and/or nuclear materials are being transported on the railroads that pass through West Boylston. Since the railroad travels over the Reservoir at Thomas Basin and right through the town, there is some concern regarding potential spills. The Guilford Railroad has been contacted, but respond that release of the information is a security risk.

The town wells in Oakdale and Pleasant Valley have had high manganese levels. The West Boylston Water District has talked with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority about the possibility of getting water from Wachusett Reservoir in the future, but as noted in Section 4 this

appears to be cost prohibitive. In addition, since most of this water would eventually be discharged into the town's sewers, it would mean water being transferred out of our watershed and would probably need state approval under the Interbasin Transfer Act. As discussed in the section on water (Section 3.D.2.b.), the town is pumping more water from its wells than its state registration allows, but the amount of unaccounted-for water has been reduced to under 10 percent, which is good. There is concern that withdrawal up to the old safe yield of the existing wells will result in a water supply deficit of 0.10 mgd under a maximum day demand (MDD) in 2020.³ The Inter-basin transfer and its repercussions had been brought to the Town's attention early in the sewer planning and again when the mandatory connection decision was made. The Board of Selectmen, Board of Health, and Sewer Commission had no response. The sewer use in 2007 transports an average of 481,000 gallons of water per day from the ground in West Boylston to the treatment plant in Millbury. This reduced volume of recharge to the town wells is a significant concern. It is estimated to increase to 587,000 gallons per day in 2020.

The sewer project should reduce pollution of small backyard streams from failing septic systems, but no public documentation of this has occurred to date. When residents voted approval of the sewer project at town meeting, they were told that connections would not be mandatory if their septic system met Title 5 regulations. As a result of the low hookup rate, however, the Sewer Commissioners encouraged the Board of Health to require connections for all lots within the service area so that there will be adequate revenue to operate the sewer system.⁴

Sewer service access pipes (stubs) were provided without consulting the landowners, so assumptions that were made relative to development potential were not always correct. The landowners who had intended to keep existing open land as unsewered and undeveloped have been faced with a situation that was forced upon them and they had no opportunity for input into the decision. This has increased the value of these lots that now have sewer service. The increased value is then taxed at a higher rate, and owners are required to pay the increased taxes. These owners, who had intended to simply hold onto the open lot, are now forced to sell the land to developers due to the higher taxes. There should be an alternative to keep these lots reasonably valued if a commitment is documented to keep it as open space.

With the installation of the sewer system, small "grandfathered" lots may now be developed in these areas and may create other environmental problems, such as increasing the amount of development and impervious area, thus increasing runoff and the potential of flooding and pollution. For example, flooding complaints increased in the Bunker Hill Parkway/Trenton Lane area following construction on 'grandfathered' lots. When old plans of the area were found during relocation of an office, the site where a new home was built and the rear yards that had been filled in were intended to function to hold runoff. There is also increased use of fertilizers and pesticides when development occurs, which degrades water quality. The high density of development and its related heavy traffic in the sewered southerly section of town will reduce the availability of open space and increase the potential for pollution and contamination of both land and water.²

The DCR has aggressively acquired land in particularly sensitive areas, thus increasing open space, but unfortunately not necessarily allowing some recreational uses of its land. Although active recreational use is not permitted on most of the DCR-owned land in town, there has been a problem of All-terrain vehicles (ATV) using DCR-owned land near Lee Street. Carving trails through this protected land, ATV users have actually ridden down the stream bed, causing erosion and harming fish.⁵ This area included sections of Malden Brook, which flows into the Reservoir. ATVs have

also been a problem on privately-owned open space, such as Malden Brook Farm.

There has also been a problem of Rail Trail users leaving their dogs' feces on the trail and on the adjacent DCR-owned land. Dogs are required to be leashed and to stay on the town-owned Rail Trail. Owners are required by Town Law to pick up their dogs' feces, but some dog walkers do not abide by these rules.⁶ More aggressive enforcement of these regulations is needed.

There are few areas of erosion and flooding that impact areas within the town of West Boylston. There is minor flooding of the roadways at the intersection of Worcester Street and Franklin Street, but the town recently installed new piping to transfer this water into the wetland to the east.

The former Texaco Station on Routes 12 and 110 was noted in past plans as a known site of a petroleum release. The release at the former Texaco station at the intersection of Routes 12 and 110 has been addressed. A certification from the DEP has been issued on that site which is now owned by the DCR.

The Shell Tank Farm on Shrewsbury Street is currently in the remediation process due to a release of thousands of gallons of petroleum into the ground in the late 1970's. A ground water treatment system has been in place and the below ground storage tanks have been removed. The cleanup is about 90 percent complete, with the remaining items being monitoring of test wells for low level contamination. The small concentration of petroleum that remains is being treated through phytoremediation. This involves planting fast growing hybrid poplar trees that draw up the pollutants with the ground water and retain the pollutants in the wood. This is the first time that phytoremediation is being used to clean up a hazardous waste site in central Massachusetts.⁶ The potential future use of the property, based on 5 year old conversations between Shell and the DCR discussed options to exercise following submittal of a Class A Response Action Outcome (RAO). These were: 1) purchase by the DCR of the wooded land east of the railroad easement and outside of the disposal site boundaries; 2) placement of a DCR-owned conservation restriction for a portion of the site east of the railroad, and 3) restricted industrial use for the portion of the disposal site west of the railroad. A risk characterization needs to be considered for any future land uses, which must take into consideration any Activity and Use Limitations that may be included in the RAO.¹⁰

5 INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST

The OSAC goal and thrust of this revised plan is to compile all issues and goals of organizations within West Boylston for a comprehensive document. The OSAC is not anti-development; rather, they support investing in Open Space and recreation that will improve public health and safety, improve the overall quality of life in West Boylston, support diverse agriculture and native ecosystems, encourage environment based economic systems, and provide resilience to bio-catastrophe and environmental contamination.

Protecting the remaining open space provides many fiscal benefits as discussed in Section 4.G. Studies confirm that open space places a minimal burden on local services, increases nearby property values, thereby increasing the property tax base, and encourages tourism and recreational dollars being spent at local establishments.

The definition of “Protected” can be subjective, so within this Plan it is intended to mean parcels of land that have some limitations from the development of structures on the property through public, non-profit, or private mechanisms. This means the properties are managed primarily for preservation or recreation purposes. These include properties owned by or with deeded restriction owned by the DCR for water supply protection; properties owned by the local Land Trust or back lands owned by the County of Worcester, and properties under Chapter 61 that require notice to the town before any development occurs.

The benefits of open and recreational spaces, whether privately or publicly owned are numerous. They contribute to the Towns quality of life and community character, provide a center for community activities, protect and enhance nearby property values, attract businesses, and do not burden the town with excessive expenses. It also provides natural areas for stormwater infiltration, and wildlife corridors, improves air quality, and reduces localized flooding.

On April 4th, 2007, the citizens of West Boylston adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), a state law that went into effect in 2000. The law provides state matching funds for money collected by the town. Town Meeting approved an article to collect a property tax surcharge of 2%, with exemptions for the first \$100,000.00, low income, low or moderate income elderly, and reductions for properties with abatements or exemptions. Shortly after the adoption of the CPA, the Town Administrator established the Community Preservation Committee whose duties are to plan, gather and present recommendations at town meetings to allocate and spend the surcharge funds. The law stipulates that at least 10 percent of the funds must be spent on each of three purposes: open space, historic preservation and affordable housing. The remaining 70 percent can be spent on parks, recreation, or any of the three previously noted purposes. The adoption of this act by the town will provide concrete benefits to the open space needs of the town, but it is imperative those funds are allocated in fair proportions to open space needs and to the needs addressed in this document. In order to meet this goal, all town committees and citizen organizations that have an interest in open space or recreation must work together to assure that spending proposals brought to town meeting are publicly-approved and championed by sincere interests.

The Wachusett Working Landscapes Partnership has provided communities in our region some geographic information and assistance to manage the growth. **Figure 11** - Wachusett Greenprint Map identifies resources that town wants to preserve, as well as places that are suitable for development. The map indicates developed areas, roads, recreational trails and major water bodies. Portions of the maps in red or orange indicate important natural resources that are not permanently protected and which have absolute (red) or partial (orange) development constraints. These areas with partial constraints often are the most important to protect from future development pressures. White areas show lands that lack these development constraints and which may be more suitable for development.

An inventory of the municipally-owned conservation and recreational properties is included in Appendix C. It lists properties currently held by the town and other municipal agents used or potentially usable for open space or recreation. Each parcel description includes ownership, management agent, current use, condition, recreation potential, type of grants used to purchase or renovate the property, zoning, and degree of protection.

The OSAC has reviewed properties and received suggestions from town boards and the public to consider specific properties for protection or for future fields or active recreation development. The

properties that are currently under the Chapter 61 programs are of primary importance and keeping them in an open condition is a priority of the Committee. The following table lists potential properties for consideration of concerns or recreation potential. The recommended use is based upon its protection, acquisition, or the institution of development restrictions:

Table 5.0 Properties of Interest

Property	Action	Future Use
5.4 Acres Lee St. @ Town Well	Acquisition	Protected Open Space
7.5 Acres Prospect St. @ Town Well	Acquisition	Protected Open Space
Existing DCR Fields Beaman St.	Cooperation	Playing Fields
15.5 Acres Laurel St. @ Keyes St.	Chapter 61 or 61A	Protected Woodland/Field
5 Acres of 60 Acres Sterling St.	Acquisition	Playing Fields
10.5 Acres Crescent St. @ Pine Arden	Chapter 61A	Protected Agriculture
14.5 Acres Malden St. to Town Pool	Chapter 61 or Acquisition	Protected Woodland or Playing Field
14 Acres Prescott St. N. End	Chapter 61A	Protected Agriculture
21 Acres Pierce St. and Maple	Chapter 61	Protected Woodland
29 Acres Lancaster St.	Chapter 61A	Protected Agriculture
29 Acres Fairbanks St.	Chapter 61	Protected Open Space
49 Acres Top of Goodale St.	Chapter 61	Protected Woodland
11.5 and 7 Acres Shrewsbury St.	Chapter 61	Protected Woodland

Section 5.A. Private Parcels

Although the DCR owns most of the open space lands in town, there are still some significant tracts in private ownership. Large, privately-owned, open spaces are shown on **Figure 6**. The only large, privately-owned, operating farm left in town, Malden Brook Farm, is one of these. It is located at 363, 378, 404, 405, 152 Prospect Street and 77 Lee Street. Malden Brook Farm contains 202 acres of fields and woods. In the year 2000, the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture recognized it as a "Century Massachusetts Family Farm" in recognition of its having been owned by the same family for over 100 years. Its barn was constructed with wood from houses down in the valley when they were being torn down to make way for the Reservoir. Another barn was known as "Warren's Tavern," which was a stage coach stop for the stage coach road that ran behind Malden Brook Farm and has now been mostly replaced by I-190.¹

Today, Malden Brook Farm operates as a horse and haying farm, harvesting about 7,000 bales of hay a year. Malden Brook originates on this rural site and traverses Lee Street near the town wells. The farm is presently under **Chapter 61A**, which is a state law that allows for reduced local property taxes on agricultural and horticultural lands in order to preserve the state's valuable farmland. In exchange for these benefits, the town is given the right to recover some of the tax benefits afforded the owner if it is to be sold, and an option to purchase the property should the land be sold or used for any purpose other than to continue raising farm products.²

There are significant lands in town that are held in open condition and gain tax benefits for this through the "Chapter laws" within the state. All three Chapter Laws function similarly. The

owners are encouraged to either preserve and enhance forests (under the Chapter 61 law); preserve valuable farmland and promote active agricultural and horticultural land use (Chapter 61A); and/or preserve and promote open space and recreational uses (Chapter 61B). The tax benefits gained under these laws can be summarized as follows with particular penalties and requirements within each program. The Chapter 61 landowners are required to pay taxes at a rate of only 5% of the fair market value; the Chapter 61A landowners are required to pay taxes at a rate set by Farmland Valuation Advisory Commission, which is estimated for this discussion to be around 15% of the fair market value; and the Chapter 61B landowners are required to pay taxes at a rate of no more than 25% of the fair market value. **Table 5.1** lists all Chapter Lands within the Town of West Boylston.

Table 5.1 West Boylston Chapter Lands

CHAPTER	LOCATION	ACRES
61	FAIRBANKS STREET	58.3
61	HOSMER STREET	15.0
61	LANCASTER STREET	44.1
61	LANCASTER STREET	11.6
61	LAUREL STREET	22.8
61	MALDEN STREET	13.4
61	PHELPS PLACE	11.9
61	RAYMOND HUNTINGTON	61.0
61	RAYMOND HUNTINGTON	14.4
	SUBTOTAL	252.5
61A	FAIRBANKS STREET	33.0
61A	FAIRBANKS STREET	19.1
61A	LANCASTER STREET	16.6
61A	LANCASTER STREET	42.0
61A	LANCASTER STREET	15.0
61A	LEE STREET	32.4
61A	PROSPECT STREET	162.4
	SUBTOTAL	320.4
61B	LAUREL STREET	16.0
61B	PROSPECT STREET	165.0
61B	SHREWSBURY STREET	40.1
	SUBTOTAL	221.1
	TOTAL	793.9

Near Malden Brook Farm on Prospect Street is an even larger privately-owned tract of land that is undeveloped and provides spectacular views of the Reservoir. Wachusett Country Club's 18 hole golf course provides much open space at a high elevation. It is presently under **Chapter 61B**. This land classification program is designed to encourage preservation of the state's open space and promote recreational land uses. It offers reduced property taxes to property owners willing to make

a long term commitment to preserving land in an undeveloped condition or for use for outdoor activities. In exchange, the town is given the right to recover some of the tax benefits afforded the owner and an option to purchase the property should the land be sold or used for any purpose other than to maintain it as open space or for recreational use.³

In addition to the land that DCR owns in fee, the DCR has also purchased Conservation Restrictions on a few parcels within West Boylston. A Conservation Restriction (CR) is a deeded sale of the development rights on a parcel of property. The DCR typically pays approximately 80% of the full purchase property value for these rights. This method allows the current owner to retain ownership, but protects the open space by restricting development on the property. Typically, the limitations are that buildings or roadways cannot be constructed on the property and restrictions on other potentially pollution-generating activities are also included. The list of parcels that DCR has purchased CRs is included in Table 5.2

Table 5.2 DCR - Owned Conservation Restrictions

Location	Area (acres)
Laurel Street	13.6
Phelps Place	16.8
Prospect Street	24.4
Prospect Street	27.9
TOTAL	82.7

Malden Brook Farm was an early model for a type of cooperative agreement between DCR and agriculture. Malden Brook Farm signed a conservation restriction on its 23 acres around Carroll’s Pond with the DCR, but this restriction allows the farm to continue farming the land under DCR guidelines. These guidelines require no- till agriculture (e.g. haying) and limit chemical fertilization and lime application. This model agreement has allowed this land to continue as productive open space in a wetland environment rather than having the land convert to trees and scrub foliage. The DCR monitors this land under conservation restrictions annually and according to the owner the results have been excellent.⁴

Malden Brook Farm represents the last lonely frontier of the agricultural open spaces that were common around the turn of the last century. It is planned that Malden Brook Farm will continue into the 21st century as an operating farm under the auspices of Malden Brook Heritage Foundation so that future generations may better understand and appreciate the early community life of West Boylston. Its owner is developing plans so that it will serve as a model for open space, agriculture, conservation, and community participation on a national and international level.⁴

There is no agricultural land in West Boylston under the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture - Agriculture Preservation Restriction (APR) program.⁴

Other opportunities to protect open spaces and maintain a rural character in town are through local Zoning and General Bylaws. Creation of language to require Buffer Zones (protected vegetated setbacks that provide visual and auditory screening from roadways and/or existing residential areas) should be considered by local officials. The Planning Board should consider a mechanism to allow developers to present an open space as well as a conventional plan of development for all

residential projects of more than five lots, and permit reduced lot areas if significant open space is permanently protected.

In addition the Conservation Commission should consider establishing a local wetlands protection bylaw that would provide stronger protection than the state wetland regulations in order to protect isolated wetlands, vernal pools and provide protective buffer zones.

Section 5.B. Public and Nonprofit Parcels

Much of the land that is protected within the Town of West Boylston is owned by the **DCR**. As mentioned earlier, the DCR owns thirty-one percent (31%) of the land in town, or about 2,736 acres. If the land under the Reservoir is included, 622 acres, the DCR owns 3,358 acres, which is about thirty-eight percent (38%) of West Boylston, 8,878 acres. The House of Correction owns two and four tenths percent (2.4%) of the land in town, or about 210 acres. The combination of these two State Agencies' ownership results in just over forty percent (40%) of the town, or about 3,568 acres.

The DCR-owned property is protected in a manner similar to "Article 97" lands. To change the ownership or use of DCR land is difficult. A petition must be submitted to the Department of Conservation and Recreation, who must approve the change in use or ownership. The DCR Commissioners must then submit a request to the State legislature for a two-thirds majority vote to formally approve the change.

Although the DCR does not pay taxes on the land that it owns, it is required under Chapter 59, S. 5G, of Massachusetts General Laws to make Payments-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOT) to the town. This amount was \$569,752.24 in 2007. In FY2000, the PILOT was \$253,873.81, then following the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's (DOR) 2000 revaluation the FY2001 PILOT was increased to \$569,752.24, and it has been thus ever since. Table 5.3 also includes a column of the potential tax revenues (assuming the DOR valuation) if the land had remained owned by a private party as open space.

The PILOT payment from DCR has remained the same for several years now, because the law states that the amount can never go down. This has worked significantly in the Town's favor, since the 2000 Revaluation figure was much higher than the number set in 2005 revaluation that would have reduced the PILOT to approximately \$286,000.00. The next revaluation is in 2009 and will be effective in FY2010, but it is doubtful that the DOR valuation will rise to the level set in 2000. These amounts reflect the Dept. of Revenue's policy that land under water has no value, which is why it is often noted that DCR owns 3,358 acres, with 622 acres under water leaving 2,736 acres of 'land'. This information and the actual valuations by the Dept. of Revenue are shown on Table 5.3.

The Town of West Boylston appealed the Department of Revenue's valuation in 2005 in 2005, but did not receive a positive outcome. There were some changes made within the calculations, but the bottom line still shows a significant reduction in value from the previous valuation. Note the (*) asterisked line in Table 5.3 with almost an \$8.5 million reduction in value in Fiscal Year 2005, but the payment to the town stayed the same.

Table 5.3 DCR Property Valuation and Payments to West Boylston

Fiscal Year	Dept. Of Revenue Valuation	Tax Rate per \$1,000 Valuation	Potential Taxes if Privately Owned	DCR PILOT Payment to Town
2001	\$29,566,800.00	\$19.27	\$ 569,752.24	\$ 569,752.24
2002	\$29,566,800.00	\$16.20	\$478,982.16	\$ 569,752.24
2003	\$29,566,800.00	\$15.29	\$452,076.37	\$ 569,752.24
2004	\$29,566,800.00	\$14.55	\$430,196.94	\$ 569,752.24
* 2005	* \$21,112,200.00	\$13.55	\$286,070.31	* \$ 569,752.24
2006	\$21,112,200.00	\$12.13	\$256,090.99	\$ 569,752.24
2007	\$21,112,200.00	\$12.57	\$265,380.35	\$ 569,752.24

The DCR’s protected open space land is valued as if it is developable property, though much is considered rear land with some prime lots. That figure is then multiplied by the highest tax rate (the commercial tax rate) to determine the PILOT amount. West Boylston now receives an average of \$170/acre (including water areas) from the DCR for permanently protected open space, or \$240/acre of ‘land’. The justification for this low number is that the majority of this land is wetland and backland. Since the town has chosen to have the same tax rate for both commercial and residential property, the town has not received as much in PILOT payments as it could if it had adopted a tiered tax rate.¹

The DCR had a very active acquisition program from 1992-2002. This was due to the legislation enacted along with the Watershed Protection Act (Cohen Bill) in 1992. This required that approximately \$8 million be budgeted for acquisition of impacted parcels to offset the development limitations to property owners. In this time period, 1992-2002, the DCR purchased 1,244 acres of land in West Boylston. Since 2002, the DCR has only purchased 9.5 acres. This parcel was purchased in 2007 and owned by the Bethlehem Baptist Church, located at 309 Lancaster Street.

West Boylston contains many wetlands, the DCR has purchased significant acreage, including Chapter 61A farmland. Some of this farmland is now in the state Department of Agriculture’s farmland program for state/DCR-owned lands. Working in conjunction with the DCR, farmers have been allowed to bid on farming some of these lands that are now owned by the DCR. For example, in 1997 the DCR purchased a 21 acre hay field adjacent to Wachusett Country Club and near Malden Brook Farm. This field on Prospect Street has been maintained by Malden Brook Farm as a hay field for the past two years. Like the Smith Farm, it is an example of cooperation between an operating farm, the DCR, and the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture. In 1999 the DCR purchased the Giobellina Farm on Fairbanks Street and about 12 acres of this farm are still in the DCR-Massachusetts Department of Agriculture program.

In 1995 the DCR developed a **Public Access Plan** for its lands and updated it again in 2005. The Plan endorsed the DCR’s historic policy of “limited public access” on DCR lands in West Boylston. Passive recreational uses, such as hiking, picnicking, shore fishing, and cross country skiing, are allowed in all areas of West Boylston, except the restricted access area (approximately 10 acres) within 100 feet of the Quabbin Aqueduct discharge point on the Quinapoxet River. Animals, such as dogs and horses, however, are not allowed access on DCR land, which some residents resent. As in the past, direct contact with the Reservoir, including boating, is prohibited. Swimming in the Reservoir or its tributaries is not allowed. Snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles are not permitted to use DCR lands. The DCR Public Access Plan allowed increased public access

in one area. Along a small portion of the town's western border with Holden, hunting and mountain biking are allowed on DCR land. In this area noted as Tributary Headwaters Zone (which is located mainly in Holden and Sterling beyond I-190), canoeing is allowed on the Quinapoxet River.³

The Public Access Plan for the DCR land in West Boylston was not that different from earlier DCR policy, but today enforcement is much stronger, with the DCR now employing rangers for the first time to help enforce its regulations. Today, many residents feel that the town is in need of a focused effort to assure that DCR land is available for more recreational uses and that the town should negotiate with the DCR for reasonable and minimally-polluting use of their lands such as athletic fields. If the DCR were to totally prohibit public access to its lands, as Worcester has done on its vast watershed lands in Holden, West Boylston would be severely impacted. At public hearings on the original 1995 Public Access Plan and on the Updates in 2000 and 2005, the town did not offer any input into the Plan.⁴ **Table 5.4** lists the amounts of protected open space by property owner. As shown in **Figure 6**, town-owned land is very limited and fragmented. **Figure 6** also shows that much of the open space is located in the northern half of West Boylston.

Table 5.4 Protected Open Spaces By Ownership Type⁵

OWNERSHIP TYPE	AREA (Acres)*
(Public) Dept of Conservation and Recreation**	3,358
(Public) House of Correction	310
(Public) MA Division of Capital Planning and Operations	32.3
(Public) West Boylston Water District	53.5
(Public) West Boylston Schools	18
(Public) West Boylston Cemeteries	16
(Public) West Boylston Parks	46.7
(Public) West Boylston Library	0.4
(Public) West Boylston Historic Society	0.9
(Public) West Boylston Housing	27.3
(Public) Town of West Boylston (Offices, Landfills)	27
(Private) Under Conservation Restrictions (DCR)	82.7
(Private) Under Chapter 61 (Forestry)	252.5
(Private) Under Chapter 61A (Agricultural)	320.4
(Private) Under Chapter 61B (Recreational)	221.1
(Private) West Boylston Land Trust	1
TOTAL	4,735.5

* Areas were calculated based on GIS-mapped areas of assessors' data (not surveyed).

** Of the 3,358 acres owned by the DCR, 622 acres are the water surface.

The Parks Commission in the past maintained a lease with the DCR to use DCR property located in the Oakdale section of town. This land consisted of the property that contained a men's softball field and the land used for practice fields on the opposite side of Thomas Street. Although the lease had expired in 1992, the Parks Commission continued to maintain these properties and schedule activities there until 2005. At that time, the DCR was pressured by the EPA to limit all activity within 400' of the Reservoir, and since no official contact from the Parks Commission had occurred, notice was made to the Town that the use of this property was no longer allowed.

Most of the property that is owned by the town is specifically owned by the Parks Commission. There is no "Article 97" property in the Town of West Boylston. The schools own the land that is under the buildings, an area for future expansion of the high school, and some of the parking necessary for those buildings. There are parcels of Publicly owned land under the West Boylston Municipal Lighting Plant and the West Boylston Housing Authority, but these have not been included in **Table 5.4** because these do not contain "open spaces or recreational" opportunities.

One large tract of open space owned by the town is the town's former landfill, which has been closed and properly capped. Located on the southern part of Route 140, this land had been considered by the Parks Commission as a possible site for a golf driving range, but due to concerns with landfill testing and sampling costs it is suggested that no further effort be expended for this.

As one can see from **Table 5.4** and from **Figure 6**, the House of Correction land along Shrewsbury Street is a large tract. The town and the West Boylston Municipal Lighting Plant (WBMLP) obtained approximately 70 acres of this land for municipal use. The WBMLP has transferred control of approximately 36 acres of this land to the Selectmen. The WBMLP had considered relocating to this site, but decided to remain at Crescent and Prospect Streets. The Board of Selectmen tried to negotiate for a Solid Waste Transfer Station to be constructed on a portion of this property, which included construction of the DPW building, and an athletic field on this site. These talks ended, so other options for field construction should begin. The Sheriff, Guy Glodis announced in April, 2008, he has been in negotiations to allow the Town to use Jail property for recreational purposes.

Near the Sterling town line, the Smith Farm occupies a scenic high location on Prescott Street beyond the Mixer Municipal Building. The farm has a history of being a highly productive wetland farm, with excellent hay crops. The animals were sold many years ago and it was continued as a hay crop by Mr. James Smith until his death. In the past, Malden Brook Farm also harvested hay from this farm, and during a number of summers, cows from Malden Brook were pastured on this farm during the summer months. The DCR has purchased two significant parcels of land from the original farm, each about 23 acres. This land is in the state Department of Agriculture program for farming on state/DCR-owned land, and haying occurs here.²

In March 2000, the West Boylston Land Trust was formed by private citizens to save open space from development and to protect natural resources. It has been granted 501c 3 status by the Internal Revenue Service, so that gifts of land or conservation restrictions to the Trust are tax deductible. The Trust received its first donation of land, a 1.07 acre parcel of woods and an intermittent stream located adjacent to 117 Goodale Street, in 2001. The parcel was named Pine Glen and has been

used for educational purposes. The Land Trust has preserved and maintained the parcel well, ridding it of invasive species and preserving interesting ones. Initially, the West Boylston Assessors would not grant non-tax status to the property. After The Land Trust made an appeal to the state on their ruling in 2005, the assessors granted non-taxable status in 2006. In 2007, the Board of the Land Trust was primary driving force in promoting and seeing through to passage of the Community Preservation Act, about which more can be read in Section 6. As of 2008, the land trust was working with certain land developers in the town to acquire conservation restrictions on parts of lands being developed for housing. The Land Trust's Web Site is www.wblt.org.

Section 5.C. Parks and Recreation Commission Recreational Facilities

The Board of Selectmen, in November 2006 created the Parks Facilities Committee (PFC) to work on a parallel track as the Municipal Building Committee, and remove the parks facilities from the MBC planning and discussions. The initial thrust of the Parks Facilities Committee was discussion regarding the building of a pool and renovations and expansion of athletic fields. The role of the PFC is to have a separate committee to make recommendations for the long range planning of the Parks facilities. It is not a sub-committee of the Parks Commission, but a seven-person committee made up of two members of the Parks Commission, two Selectmen and three citizens. The PFC mission statement is:

“It is the mission of the Parks Facilities Committee to assess and develop a plan to address the infrastructure needs for the Town of West Boylston in accordance with the open space and recreation section (Chapter 7) of the Master Plan of 2005 in the areas of pool and summer recreation program facilities, land acquisition for the development of additional fields (soccer, baseball, softball and football), the town's track and stadium area, the town's courts (basketball and tennis), and any other parks facilities needs as they may arise. The Parks Facility Committee will carry out this mission by working in conjunction with the West Boylston Parks Commission and other town boards, Commissions and Committees as necessary.”

Many of the improvements to the Parks facilities have been through cooperative efforts with the Boy Scouts and the Eagle Scout Projects. Among these have been the recent improvements to the benches in the East Common around the gazebo; the exercise trail in the Pine Grove behind the old pool and high school; the handicapped fishing platform and access path along the Quinapoxet River; the stairway and erosion protection along the Rail Trail and down to the Quinapoxet River; the nature trail beside and behind Major Edward Elementary School, painting the snack shack and refurbishing the bleachers at the all-purpose field, clean up and placement of an informational kiosk at the Old Stone Church.

The following information regarding the Town of West Boylston's recreational facilities has been compiled from information supplied by the West Boylston Parks Commission and the Parks Facilities Committee. This information has been reviewed by the Building Department with the assistance of Parks during the week of February 11, 2008 and consisted of an on-site inspection of each facility as weather and conditions permitted.

Existing Facilities:

Pool:

The existing pool was opened in the summer of 1953 and was closed due to safety concerns

in 2005. It consists of a 25 meter, 6 lane main pool, a ten meter intermediate pool. This is a lighted, outside structure located southwest of the High School.

Basketball Courts:

Goodale Park: There is one full size court and one half court. Lights are available for the full court only.

Woodland Park: There is one undersized court.

Tennis Courts:

Goodale Park: There are two full courts and one undersized practice courts with lights, except that one court is not completely fenced and is not adequate for competition.

Woodland: There are two full courts without lights.

Trails:

Rail Trail – This is a section of the Wachusett Greenways trail system that runs from Holden to Sterling, through West Boylston. Currently, a 1.5 mile section of the trail has been completed from the Holden Town Line, to the intersection of Beaman and Thomas Streets. There are discussions to extend this trail another mile to Sterling along Pleasant Street.

Pine Grove Exercise Trail – A 0.3 mile exercise trail was constructed with 10 professionally designed and built exercise stations along its path. The trail is located within the Pine Grove in the Goodale Park complex accessible from the pool parking lot and southwest of the high school and provides shaded walking along a rolling trail.

Walking trails – Every day hundreds of townspeople and visitor utilize the sidewalks and streets surrounding the schools and the Thomas Basin, and the Central Street, Newton Street areas to provide exercise loops of varying lengths and difficulty.

Fields:

The All Purpose Field is a 100 yard field, across from Major Edwards School and the main use is for football and soccer games but also provides an area for school recess. The field is encompassed by a macadam track and also houses a discus pad and long jump pit. There is lighting and an underground, timed watering system.

Townsend (Goodale A) field, which is located in Goodale Park at the northeast corner of the intersection of Goodale and Crescent Streets; and Goodale B field, which is located between Goodale A and the All Purpose field are used by the schools and for Little League, high school girls' softball, women's softball, community league, and youth soccer has an underground timed watering system without lights.

The High School Baseball field is south of the High School: It is used by the High School, Babe Ruth and American Legion, boy's/men's baseball and has an underground, timed watering system, but no lights. AAU Baseball, Senior Ruth, youth soccer, high school football, girls' high/middle soccer, basketball camps, men's 30+ softball, and summer recreation program.

Woodland field is located south of Woodland Street at Shrine Avenue. The field is a full

sized soccer field and services youth soccer, high/middle school soccer, and private soccer clubs.

Mixer Building field is located off Prescott Street and services the Little League, girls' and women's softball, t-ball, and soccer, and has no lights.

The girl's softball field is located northeast of the Goodale Street/Crescent Street intersection. The field is used by middle/high school and women's softball, and youth soccer, without lights.

The Oakdale field and the Men's softball field south of the Beaman Street/Thomas Street intersection are owned by the DCR and their use has been disallowed to protect the Reservoir which is within 400 feet of these fields.

Commons:

Center Common is at the Town Center and contains the current flagpole and veterans memorial monuments.

West Common is located west of Route 12/140 at the Town Center and has an underground watering system.

East Common is located at the Town Center off Worcester St., east of Route 12/140. It has a gazebo and memorial benches.

Seasonal:

Snack Shacks: one is located at Townsend Field (Goodale A) and operated by the Little League, and one is located at the girls softball field. Another is located at the All Purpose field and is operated by the High School football and soccer teams and youth soccer and youth football.

Field Usage:

Coordination of usage of the fields is an exhausting responsibility because there are too many requests for too few fields. It is difficult because no record of this information is kept, but an estimate of the number of games played in Goodale Park and Mixer Field is 400 from the Parks Facilities Committee. This does not include any school teams or town soccer games or practices.

Pop Warner season is 15 weeks, with 5 to 6 games per week, for about 80 games.

Little League season lasts from April to July. Daily games total about 200 at Goodale A and B Fields. T-Ball League has a 6 week season from April to July 1 and is made up of various teams of both boys and girls, which play 60 games at the Mixer Field. American Legion Baseball league has an eight week season from June 1 to August 1, and play 30 games at the High School Baseball Field.

Women's Softball league plays from April 20 through September 4, the teams play more than 36 games at the Goodale A and B, Mixer, and the girls softball field.

Programs:

Summer Recreation program is a four week program offered during the month of July, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Over 225 children (ages: entering kindergarten through 6th grade) participated. A fee is charged to support the program. Activities offered include tennis, arts and crafts, swimming and field sports. Facilities used are the tennis courts, basketball courts, fields adjacent to the High School/pool area and high school classrooms. For swimming, students are bussed to Shrewsbury.

Youth Soccer League plays from August 15 through November 1, with over 300 players) that play over 250 games. The Fields used include the Goodale A and B, All Purpose field, the outfield of the high school baseball field, T-Ball, Mixer, Girls Softball, Woodland, Oakdale and Men's Softball fields.

Walkers and Joggers utilize the All-Purpose field which is encompassed by a newly resurfaced 440 yd. track. To make this facility available for year round use, two security lights were installed and walkers/joggers of all ages are able to use the track year round. A timing device provides light from 4:30 to 9:00 p.m. during non-daylight savings months. No fee is charged.

Middle School Jr./Sr. High School Athletics Program for the Junior Varsity and Varsity athletes are given priority scheduling and use all the facilities extensively. Athletic programs include track and field, girl's soccer, boy's football, cross-country, boys' and girls' softball and tennis, boys' baseball.

Section 5.D. Parks and Recreation Commission Handicapped Access Evaluation

An evaluation was conducted as part of this Open Space and Recreation Plan Update for the Parks Commission. The administrative aspects were accomplished through the Town's designated 504 Coordinator, Mr. Leon Gaumond. Mr. Gaumond is currently the Town Administrator and has attended seminars to learn and improve the performance of his actions in this position. Mr. Gaumond is assisted by the Inspector of Buildings, Mr. Mark E. Brodeur.

The issues of fair and equitable employment are defined within the Town of West Boylston's General Bylaws, Article XXI. This section is the Personnel Policy, and stipulates that there be no bias in regard to employment or promotion because of physical handicaps. Article XXI is included in Appendix D., and contains the language regarding the town employee's grievance procedures. All policies of the Town's employment structure are described in Article XXI, and are applicable to all employees regardless of handicapped status.

The public notification of the Town's commitment to fair employment policies for the handicapped is permanently posted on the board that serves to notify the public of hearings and meetings to be held in the town. It is also posted in the Selectmen's and Treasurer's offices.

The Handicapped Access Survey has been completed by the Inspector Of Buildings, as noted above; with the assistance of the Parks Department for all facilities under their control. The Conservation Commission has no recreational facilities and at this time runs no programs that are subject to this regulation. Both the Parks Commission and the Conservation Commission meet at the Town Offices, located at 127 Hartwell Street, which is handicap accessible. The Handicapped

Access Survey is included in Appendix D.

The Board of Selectmen has adopted an Equal Access Grievance Policy, which is included in Appendix D along with the Town's ADA Self Evaluation, and the town's personnel policy.

As a result of this self evaluation, the following Handicapped Access Transition Plan has been approved by the Town.

Handicapped Access Evaluation and Transition Plan

WOODLAND STREET PARK

INVENTORY

- Regulation full size soccer field
- Two fenced tennis courts
- Paved drive next to both tennis courts

TRANSITION PLAN

1. Physical Obstacles include:

- Tennis court gates not accessible
- Provided walkway/sidewalk to courts exceeds allowable slope for non-guarded sidewalks and qualifies as a ramp.
- There is no accommodation for viewing of soccer games by persons with mobility issues.

2. Necessary Changes:

3. Schedule:

4. Responsibility:

The Department of Streets and Parks is responsible for the maintenance and new construction of park buildings and lands.

TOWN COMMON

INVENTORY

- Three separate parcels in center of Town
- Park benches on lawns and in front of the Bandstand
- Bandstand
- Veterans Memorial Flagpole and Monuments

TRANSITION PLAN

1. Physical Obstacles included:

- Bandstand itself is completely accessible but there is no paved path to the Handicap ramp.
 - There is no parking other than one improperly signed spot on the street that otherwise does not allow parking.
 - There is no parking provided for the Veteran’s Memorial Flagpole and monuments.
 - There are no paved pathways to the flagpole or the bench/seating areas.

2. Necessary Changes:

The Commons are flat and firm well maintained lawns that are very accessible. The path to the Bandstand will be constructed as soon as funds become available.

3. Schedule:

Handicap parking spaces were marked in 2002. The path will depend on funding being made available.

4. Responsibility:

The Department of Streets and Parks is responsible for the maintenance and new construction of park buildings and lands.

OAKDALE PARK – This area no longer exists. It was removed by the DCR for watershed protection reasons.

GOODALE PARK

Goodale Parks consists of two parcels east and west of Crescent Street. It contains the majority of the town’s recreational facilities. The western parcel lies to the south of the Middle/High School buildings and the eastern parcel lies to the south of the Edwards Elementary School. The playing fields are used by both the school and town athletic and recreational programs.

INVENTORY EASTERN PARK AREAS

- Pride Park children’s playground with swings and climbing equipment, etc.
- Regulation, fenced softball field
- Concession Stand
- Two picnic tables either end of Pride Park
- Parking available at Edwards School

WESTERN PARK AREAS

- Two Little League baseball fields
- Concession stand
- Two fenced in tennis courts
- One tennis court fenced at ends only

- Basketball court
- Basketball and tennis courts lighting system
- Summer house (a roofed, open sided stone structure)
- Large pine grove
- Bandstand
- A regulation football-soccer field
- A paved regulation running track (around football/soccer field)
- Other track facilities - Shot Put, High Jump, etc.
- Concession stand/storage building
- Free standing bleachers - eastern side of playing field
- Permanent bleachers built into side of steep slope - West side
- Two electric scoreboards -football and baseball
- Baseball field
- Swimming pool
- Pool parking area
- Free standing bleachers - baseball field
- Parking available at Middle/High School

TRANSITION PLAN

1. Physical Obstacles Include:

EASTERN PARK AREA

- Access to Pride Park from Edwards School entrance only.
- No handicap playground equipment.
- Paved 30” path goes through park but the rest of the area covered with loose sand.
- Handicap parking and drop off area only at Edwards School end.

WESTERN PARK AREA

- Ramp to basketball court too steep.
- No handicap parking and/or drop off area for tennis and basketball courts
- Concession stand door not accessible
- Tennis court gates not accessible
- Paved walkways need repair
- New paved walkways needed for access to tennis courts
- Drinking fountain not accessible
- No handicap parking and/or drop off area at “B” field. Summer house not accessible
- Football/soccer/track concession stand not accessible
- West bleachers not accessible
- No handicap parking and/or drop off area for football/soccer/track field
- Swimming pool not accessible
- No marked handicap parking and/or drop off area for baseball field

2. Necessary Changes:

EASTERN PARK AREA

Pride Park – The construction of a Handicapped parking and drop off area that will service both facilities is needed. This will make Pride Park accessible from both ends. The handicapped

playground equipment is being investigated and a cost estimate will be prepared.

WESTERN PARK AREA

Paved existing walkway needs to be repaired and a new handicap parking and drop off area will be constructed near the tennis courts and basketball facilities. A new walkway system will connect the parking/drop off area to the tennis courts, basketball courts, "A" little league field and the concession stand. A new accessible drinking fountain will be installed. Handicap parking and drop off area will be constructed for the "B" little league field. A Handicapped accessible door is to be installed in concession stand.

A designated handicap viewing area will be marked. Construction of the exercise trail in the pine grove has made the upper side of the existing playing fields, the Summer House and the concession stand handicap accessible, if it is maintained by town personnel. In the meantime a student aide program during school athletic and other events was instituted to help handicap persons purchase refreshments from the concession stand.

When the reconstruction of the Middle/High School was completed in 1997, marked handicap parking was provided for the baseball field and a paved path designed to access the field. Designated parking has since been moved to the far side of the Major Edwards parking area, furthest away from the parks facilities. No complete pathway currently exists and the parking is non-compliant for park use.

The swimming pool, built in the 1950's, is no longer in use.

3. Schedule

The handicap parking and drop off area for the tennis and basketball courts, the walkway system, the access road to football field with the associated parking, and the "B: field parking, will require funding be made available starting in 2003. Some of the work will be done by the Streets and Parks Department in 2003. Two handicap spots are on site but not compliant. There is no van accessible space as required by AAB and no accessible path to the courts.

4. Responsibility:

The Department of Streets and Parks is responsible for the maintenance and new construction of park buildings and lands. The Parks Commission is responsible for doing the pool study and planning for the exercise opportunities in Town. The School Committee is responsible for starting the student aide program. The Town Administrator and the ADA Coordinator are responsible for overseeing ADA compliance.

MIXTER FIELD

Mixer Field is a softball little league field next to the Mixer Municipal Building.

INVENTORY

- One regulation softball/little league field

- Parking area shared with Mixter Municipal Building

TRANSITION PLAN

1. Physical Obstacles Include:

- No marked handicap parking spaces
- Access to the field could be improved with the construction of a paved path connecting the parking area and the field.

2. Necessary Changes:

Handicap parking space will be marked on the ball field side of the parking lot. The repair or reconstruction of the Mixter Building is presently being studied. One plan calls for the demolition of the building and a new building being constructed on the site of the present ball field with new recreational facilities built on the site of the present Mixter Building. Therefore any plans for capital improvement on this site are on hold until the reconstruction plans are finalized.

3. Responsibility:

The Department of Streets and Parks is responsible for the maintenance and new construction of park buildings and lands. The Board of Selectmen are responsible for the Mixter Building reconstruction plans.

SCHOOLS

Both the Middle/High School and the Edwards Elementary' School which are used for some recreation programs by the Parks Commission have been completely reconstructed (a 12 million dollar program) and comply with all ADA requirements.

Section 6 - COMMUNITY VISION

6.A. Community Conditions

The West Boylston Open Space and Recreation Committee that prepared this 2009 update believes that a balanced approach to open space and recreation is needed to provide safe opportunities for all types of recreation, to provide a safe and adequate water supply, to enhance the Town character, and to support opportunities for agriculture and wildlife to flourish in a fiscally-responsible manner.

Preservation of open space and recreation facilities benefit the citizens by providing opportunities for passive and active recreation which keeps citizens vibrant, active and engaged in the community. Open space also combats air pollution, attenuates noise, prevents erosion, and provides protection from storm damage and flooding. Furthermore, one of the most effective ways to help protect human health and safety from naturally occurring disease outbreaks, bioterrorism attacks and chemical contaminants is through protection of open space.

Strategically-located open space protects surface and ground water resources by allowing naturally-occurring systems to provide water quality treatment and enhanced recharge to the water supply, which is significantly less expensive than constructing and operating a local water treatment plant. Open space also provides a significant buffer of protection in the event of an accidental or intentional release of a contaminant that could get into the town water supplies.

The Town's character is closely associated with the amount, location, and condition of the open space within its boundaries. It provides the backdrop of our historic villages and residential clusters that are threatened by suburban style sprawl. Open spaces within our community are the things that visitors remember and want to return to and share with others, which provides opportunities to build small businesses to cater to these visitors.

The benefit of agricultural activity in town is associated with the rural characteristics that are desirable locations to live, but are valued for their scenic beauty and for their economic potential. The rising demand for locally-grown food provides significant opportunities to provide for West Boylston as well as the Worcester markets.

Fields, forests and their wildlife habitats are becoming fragmented across the state. Diversity and variety of wildlife habitat are the strong points of the current environment of West Boylston. Wildlife habitat includes upland forested areas, many different wetland types, early successional brushy fields, and active agricultural fields. All these provide high quality habitats for wildlife, which in turn benefit West Boylston through our enjoyment of them, and in providing opportunities for financial gain from others who similarly would like to enjoy them.

6.B. Description of Process

The West Boylston Open Space and Recreation Committee was formed by the Board of Selectmen in September of 1994. It has been active since that time. To fill vacancies that occur, the Town Administrator posts a notice on the local cable Television Channel and on the town website, and asks for volunteers for the committee. The committee is made up of a representative of the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Parks Commission, and the public.

The committee invited members from the Historical Society and the Parks Commission to meetings to work on the update. The committee generally met twice monthly from September of 2007 until the plan was completed. No new surveys were conducted, because a survey is anticipated to be done in association with the Master Plan Update for 2010.

A more detailed description of opportunities for public input are included in Section 2 Planning Process and Public Participation.

6.C. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

The town of West Boylston has a wealth of open space surrounding the Wachusett Reservoir, but some recreational uses are restricted by the DCR. Most of the town's unrestricted recreational areas are in constant demand, currently overused, and with the projected population growth, the burden on these areas will increase. The town requires a plan that addresses the needs for increased recreational space, as well as recreational areas and activities that are accessible to the elderly and

disabled. Cost-efficient recreational opportunities should be available to town residents of all ages and capabilities. The Plan should preserve the aesthetics of the Town's environment and West Boylston's small town character.¹ The purity of the Town's water supply and the DCR waters must be preserved and new water supplies may be needed. Access to DCR lands must be preserved and expanded.¹

Comments from townspeople in attendance at public meetings and information from the Parks Commission reflected little change from previous plan goals. Walking or hiking remain to be the most frequent activities of residents.

Although the DCR has acquired one-third of the land in West Boylston and many people resent the apparent loss of property taxes this has meant for the town, West Boylston's residents seem to appreciate having this open space. They would also like increased access rights to the DCR's vast land holdings and increased annual PILOT payments (\$569,752.24 in 2007).

The goals for this update are to protect the drinking water supplies, improve coordination among town officials and the community to preserve existing and protect additional open spaces, maintain and enhance active recreational opportunities, promote expanded agriculture, and protect wildlife.

Section 7 - ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

The Town of West Boylston is lucky to have abundant natural open spaces where walking and hiking is allowed, and the roadway network provides reasonably good opportunities for road bicycling. The comments we have received indicated that the greatest demand is for field-based activities and swimming facilities.

The regional needs assessment compiled by the Department of Conservation Services in 2006¹ was reviewed for regional needs. Analysis at the regional level is required to consider when applying for grants under the Land and Water Conservation Fund and state Self-Help and Urban Self-Help programs.

“When asked what new facilities would most benefit them, residents of the Central Region showed the highest interest in facilities for walking (16.4%), swimming (17.0%), hiking (14.4%, the strongest interest in the state), road biking (12.1%), and playground activity (10.2%).”² These data from the Central Region indicate that the targeted areas of critical need are significantly different than those represented by local residents. The miles of trails at the Wachusett Reservoir and along the Central Mass Rail Trail provide exceptional walking and hiking opportunities. The roadways in the area provide bicycling opportunities and the two playgrounds in town have received high praise from the public.

The preferences noted in the Massachusetts Outdoors 2006 report for Central Region residents regarding new funding initiatives showed strongest support for maintaining existing facilities (93.9%), followed by the acquisition of new recreation areas (81.1%), and support of additional park staff (78.8%) ranked high as well. The maintenance and acquisition preferences agree, but we heard no suggestion that preference for additional park staff are warranted, but the presence of the Wachusett Watershed Rangers are significant in town.

This section is a systematic examination of what is needed to achieve the goals stated in Section 6 and incorporates the implications of the information presented in the previous chapters. Potential actions and potential solutions will be presented in Section 8, then specific responsibilities are assigned in Section 9.

7.A. Resource Protection Needs

1. Protection of the town's water supply.
2. Preservation, maintenance and enhancement of town-owned open space.
3. Protection of privately-held open spaces i.e. Land Trust properties, Chapter 61 (Forestry), 61A (Agricultural), and 61B (Recreational) lands.
4. Maintenance and enhancement of linkages to access open spaces and recreation facilities through creation of greenway corridors (naturally vegetated pathways) and improve existing non-vehicular accesses and parking facilities.
5. Maintenance and enhancement of recreation facilities for all age groups.
6. Reduction of erosion and sedimentation of streams and minimization of pond eutrophication.
7. Protection of special wildlife and rare or endangered species and their habitat.
8. Protection of State House of Correction land and Wachusett Reservoir lands, and assurance of recreational use and fair compensation to town citizens.
9. Protection of historical sites on town-owned property (e.g., historical sites along Rail Trail) and existing natural features on town-owned land. Integration of historical sites into protected open space.

7.B. Summary of Community's Needs

1. Preservation of existing town-owned open space and natural resources.
2. Provision of safe pedestrian access to open spaces and recreation areas, especially sidewalks within a mile of the schools and along the commercial section of Route 12 and the Stillwater River Bridge.
3. Maintenance and expansion of existing passive and active recreational facilities.
4. Maintenance and expansion of open spaces within the densely developed southern area of town.
5. Creation of additional town-owned open space.
6. Assurance of access to DCR-owned open space parcels in perpetuity, unless access to a

particular parcel is determined by town and DCR to be detrimental to water quality.

7. Increase in available recreational facilities for very young children and the elderly.
8. Creation of areas for swimming and picnicking.
9. Upgrade of existing recreational facilities to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.
10. Expansion of amount of gym and indoor recreational space.
11. Increase in parking and provision of sanitary facilities at high usage recreation sites.
12. Increase in revenue from the House of Corrections and DCR Water Supply Protection.
13. Increase ADA compliance at all Town facilities.

7.C. Management Needs

1. Coordination of town efforts to protect, improve, and expand town open space.
2. Support and encouragement for private landowners to retain open spaces and/or provide recreational opportunities on their property.
3. Maintenance and expansion of sidewalk system and open space.
4. Coordination of town efforts to maintain, improve, and expand recreation facilities.
5. Communication with DCR and House of Corrections to maintain or expand open space and recreational opportunities on their properties.
6. Education of town officials and citizens about the available recreational opportunities and benefits of open space.
7. Professional and consistent implementation and enforcement of land use regulations.
8. Equitable and responsible utilization of available Community Preservation funds.

8.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

8.A. Resource Protection Goals

1. Protect town water supply:
 - a. Protect environmentally sensitive areas through Zoning controls, restrictions on development or acquisition of development rights.
 - b. Coordinate work with town departments and state agencies to protect existing and potential water sources and natural features in town.

- c. Promote water conservation and continue improvements to reduce the amount of “unaccounted for” water.
2. Maintain and improve town open spaces.
 - a. Preserve and maintain town-owned open space.
 - b. Add to the available open space land in town.
3. Protect privately-owned open space and recreation facilities.
 - a. Support the work of the West Boylston Land Trust.
 - b. Preserve existing farmland and encourage additional property owners to enroll in Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B programs.
4. Establish access to and between open spaces and recreational facilities.
 - a. Review assessment of existing sidewalk system and develop protocol for maintenance and expansions.
 - b. Provide new accesses to and between town-owned open space and recreation facilities.
 - c. Expand the Rail Trail system in town.
 - d. Assess and expand wildlife greenway corridors along streams or wetland system.
5. Maintain and improve town-owned recreation facilities.
 - a. Preserve and maintain town-owned recreation facilities.
 - b. Add to the available recreation facilities in town.
 - c. Provide additional recreational facilities for toddlers and elders.
6. Protect streams and ponds in town.
 - a. Support efforts to reduce streambank erosion such as Gates Brook and slow eutrophication of ponds, such as Carroll’s Pond.
 - b. Advertise and support efforts to promote alternatives to polluting land use practices, such as excessive fertilizer use.
7. Protect special wildlife and botanical areas in town.
 - a. Increase certification of vernal pools.
 - b. Support actions that protect special areas of interest for plants and animals.
8. Protect historical sites in town.
 - a. Coordinate open space preservation activities with historical preservation.
 - b. Support historic interpretive trail development along Rail Trail.
9. Provide access, usage, and fair compensation of state and quasi-state property in town.
 - a. Assure that the Town documents and publicizes its open space and recreation concerns to provide input into decisions regarding the future uses of DCR and House of Correction lands.
 - b. Ensure active representation to the Wachusett Greenways activities and planning program.
 - c. Preserve fisheries in Reservoir and its tributaries.

8.B. Community Goals

1. Preserve existing town-owned open space and natural resources.
 - a. Maintain the town's open spaces, protected streams, and special habitats.
2. Provide safe pedestrian access to open spaces and recreation areas.
 - a. Develop and improve sidewalks and walking trails to facilitate pedestrian traffic.
3. Maintain and expand existing passive and active recreational facilities.
 - a. Establish a protocol for maintenance of all lands and make it accessible for public review.
 - b. Establish adequate funding for maintenance needs.
 - c. Provide additional fields to supplement high use fields.
4. Maintain and expand open spaces within the densely-developed southern area of town.
 - a. Maintain zoning standards in order to keep undeveloped the existing areas that are open,
 - b. Compose an inventory of available open spaces for consideration of town acquisition.
 - c. Preserve small town character of town.
5. Create additional town-owned open space.
 - a. Establish list of desirable properties to expand town-owned open space and recreation facilities.
 - b. Prepare a protocol to implement acquisition when a desirable property becomes available for purchase/donation.
 - c. Develop both North-South and East-West trail links for walkways and wildlife corridors, and develop links to trails and wildlife corridors in abutting towns.
 - d. Make funds available for purchase of open space.
 - e. Coordinate with West Boylston Land Trust to acquire desirable parcels or create development restrictions to keep parcels in undeveloped condition.
6. Ensure access to DCR-owned open space parcels in perpetuity.
 - a. Town residents and officials should work with the DCR and state legislature to ensure local access to DCR-owned parcels for passive recreation and, where suitable, for active recreation.
 - b. Continue discussions to expand uses on DCR property.
7. Increase available recreational facilities for very young children and the elderly.
 - a. Provide additional recreational facilities for very young children at Woodland Park and in the north end of town.
 - b. Increase opportunities for passive recreation on town-owned land, especially for the elderly.
8. Provide areas for swimming and picnicking.
 - a. Continue investigation of alternatives for providing swimming opportunities to town residents.
 - b. Establish a list of possible picnic areas.
 - c. Proceed with contacting the owners to request use of their land for picnicking.

9. Upgrade existing recreational facilities to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.
 - a. Upgrade existing recreation facilities so they are handicapped accessible.
 - b. Investigate funding opportunities for ADA improvements.
10. Expand amount of gym and indoor recreational space.
 - a. Compile list of available indoor recreation facilities.
 - b. Approach owners for use of their facilities.
11. Increase parking and provide sanitary facilities at high usage recreation sites.
 - a. Provide safe and adequate number of parking spaces for athletic events and recreational facilities.
12. Increase revenue from the House of Corrections and DCR Water Supply Protection.
 - a. Obtain compensation from the House of Corrections for community services used.
 - b. Increase payment-in-lieu-of-taxes from DCR Water Supply Protection.
13. Increase ADA compliance at all Town facilities.
 - a. Monitor and upgrade town-owned facilities not in full compliance with ADA requirements.

8.C. Management Goals

1. Coordinate town efforts to protect, improve, and expand open space in town.
 - a. Include all applicable boards and commissions in discussions regarding open space land use decisions.
 - b. Provide public information about availability and location of existing open space areas by use of maps, pamphlets, etc.
 - c. Encourage public users of DCR land to respect DCR rules and regulations.
2. Support efforts for private landowners to retain open space or share use of their property.
 - a. Provide innovative programs to allow private land owners to preserve their property in open space condition.
 - b. Increase lands within the Chapter 61 Program.
 - c. Support the work of the West Boylston Land Trust.
 - d. Support the Wachusett Greenways efforts to increase trail use and size.
3. Prioritize maintenance and expansion of sidewalks and open space.
 - a. Preserve and maintain town-owned open space and recreation facilities, including sidewalks.
 - b. Expand sidewalk system in town.
 - c. Add to the available lands and recreation facilities in town.
 - d. Provide additional recreational facilities for toddlers and elders.
4. Coordinate town efforts to maintain, improve, and expand recreation facilities in town.
 - a. Include all applicable boards and commissions in discussions regarding open space and recreation land use decisions.

- b. Provide public information about availability and location of existing recreational facilities by use of maps, pamphlets, etc.
 - c. Encourage public users of DCR land to respect DCR rules and regulations.
5. Communicate with DCR and House of Corrections regarding opportunities on their properties.
 - a. Assure that the Town documents and publicizes its open space and recreation concerns and provides input into decisions regarding future uses of DCR and House of Correction lands.
 - b. Improve town officials' coordination and cooperation with local and state legislators, DCR and House of Corrections.
 6. Educate town officials and citizens about opportunities and benefits of open space.
 - a. Establish a plan to familiarize local officials and residents about the benefits of open space.
 - b. Consistently enforce laws and regulations relating to land use.
 - c. Provide education for local officials and boards dealing with issues regarding land use, open space, and recreation, and the impacts of these on the town's tax base.
 - d. Provide public service notices regarding general health and wellness.
 7. Implement and enforce land use regulations professionally and consistently.
 - a. Improve coordination among local boards and officials.
 - b. Provide professional assistance and training for local officials and boards.
 - c. Establish and enforce attendance and training policies for appointed positions.
 8. Utilize available Community Preservation funds equitably and responsibly.
 - a. Establish criteria and priorities that will provide transparent information regarding decisions of the Community Preservation Commission.

9.0 FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN

9.A. Actions to Achieve Resource Protection Goals

1. Protect town water supply
 - a. The Water District shall assess the potential impacts of the sewer construction which significantly reduced water volume flowing to the town's aquifers.(2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Planning Board shall propose amending the local Zoning Bylaws to include provisions to create an Open Space/Cluster zoning bylaw to protect water quality and to maintain open space, especially in sewerred areas. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Planning Board will assess the current Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to determine if there are opportunities to revise them to protect the town's aquifers. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Town Administrator, through the Building Inspector, shall continue enforcement of bylaws designed to protect the environment, such as Aquifer Protection Zoning. (2009, No New Funding Needed)

- e. The Water District shall continue to work to reduce the amount of unaccounted-for-water and increase water conservation. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - f. The Water District shall obtain DEP permits, if needed, to increase the amount of water it is permitted to withdraw from its wells, and work to reduce the violations of bacterial standards and to remove high levels of manganese in its water. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - g. The Water District shall investigate and coordinate its land protection efforts and future land purchases with other Town Departments to assure an adequate supply of water in the future. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - h. The Water District shall continue to investigate and establish new wells for a safe water supply, with specific consideration in the medium yield aquifer area near the Lily Ponds off Route 110. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
2. Maintain and improve town open spaces.
- a. The Parks Commission shall protect the areas of open spaces in town to the maximum extent practicable. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Parks Commission and the Schools shall work to restore, encourage usage, and maintain the Nature Trail at the Major Edwards School. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Parks Commission and the Town Administrator shall encourage assistance from community organizations to maintain and enhance Town facilities, such as the Scouting organizations and the Garden Clubs. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Parks Commission and the Town Administrator shall reaffirm the commitment to protect the Pine Grove; and clearly define if the Pine Grove extends to the pine trees next to the high school. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
3. Protect privately-owned open space and recreation facilities.
- a. The Town will support the West Boylston Land Trust who shall acquire (by purchase or by gift) open land and acquire development rights and/or restrict development with conservation easements in sensitive areas. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The West Boylston Land Trust shall acquire easements and corridor parcels (by purchase or by gift) to link open space parcels via natural corridors for hiking and wildlife routes. (2009, Gifts and CPA funds)
 - c. The Open Space Advisory Committee shall, with the aid of the Board of Assessors, establish a long range plan to ensure the preservation and encourage additional lands under Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Agricultural Commission shall encourage the agricultural use of DCR land under Massachusetts Department of Agriculture guidelines. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
4. Establish access to and between open spaces and recreational facilities.
- a. The Town Administrator and the DPW Director shall publish the recent assessment of the existing sidewalk system in town for public comments and ideas to protect school children and encourage walking enthusiasts. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Town Administrator and DPW Director shall propose a sidewalk maintenance policy to define town and resident responsibilities for Selectmen approval. (2009,

No New Funding Needed)

- c. The Town Administrator and DPW Director shall prepare a plan for maintenance and improvement of the sidewalk and trail system in town. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Town Administrator and DPW Director shall provide safe and maintained sidewalks within 1 mile of the schools and in areas where there is high pedestrian traffic in town. (2010, MA Chapter 90 Funding)
 - e. The Open Space Advisory Committee shall work with Wachusett Greenways to extend the Rail Trail along the Quinapoxet River and up to Sterling, possibly along Pleasant Street. To enable this extension, the town shall investigate options to fund the addition of a walkway on the Route 140 bridge over the Stillwater River in Oakdale. (2011, No New Funding Needed)
 - f. The Open Space Advisory Committee and the West Boylston Land Trust shall encourage greenway connections throughout the town, such as wildlife corridors and walking trails. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
5. Maintain and improve town recreation facilities.
- a. The Parks Commission shall provide additional recreation facilities for toddlers and senior citizens. (2009, MA Self-Help Funding)
 - b. The Parks Facilities Committee shall proceed with renovation of the tennis and basketball courts in Goodale Park.(2010, CPA Funding, State and Federal Grants)
 - c. The Parks Commission shall investigate the desire and options for the town to provide swimming facilities.(2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Parks Facilities Committee shall proceed with drainage improvements and creation of sanitary facilities at Woodland Park (2011, State and Federal Funding)
 - e. The Parks Facilities Committee shall develop a maintenance and operation plan for existing and new facilities. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - f. The Parks Facilities Committee shall develop options to construct a new practice field that will have the least impact to existing open space. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - g. The Parks Commission shall renovate the All-Purpose Field, baseball field, and softball field. (2012, State and Federal Funding)
6. Protect streams and ponds in town.
- a. The DPW Director shall implement storm water protection measures to reduce contaminant discharges to tributaries. (2009, State and Federal Funding)
 - b. The DPW Director shall ensure adequate street cleaning and maintenance so that trash and other pollutants do not enter wetlands and waterways. (2009, Town DPW Budget Funding)
 - c. The Planning Board shall review new development and redevelopment projects to ensure no increase in flooding, which causes stream bank erosion and stresses local streams. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The DPW Director shall publicize alternatives to polluting land use practices, such as excessive fertilizer use and hazardous material usage, including poisonous cleaners, paints, etc. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - e. The DPW Director shall aggressively publicize the annual household hazardous waste disposal opportunities available to residents. (2009, No New Funding Needed)

7. Protect special wildlife and botanical areas in town.
 - a. The Conservation Commission shall consider establishing a local wetlands protection bylaw that would provide stronger protection for isolated wetlands, vernal pools and provide more protective buffer zones. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Conservation Commission and the Schools shall work to better protect privately owned wetlands by encouraging certification of vernal pools, utilizing students and volunteers such as Scouts. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The School Department will support programs that protect and educate about biodiversity. (2009, No New Funding Needed)

8. Provide access, usage, and fair compensation of state and quasi-state property in town.
 - a. The Board of Selectmen with the aid of the Open Space Advisory Committee and the Parks Commission shall document and publicize the towns' needs and wishes, and decisions regarding future uses of DCR and former county-owned land to ensure that parts of these remain open and accessible for recreational use. The usage of DCR lands shall understandably, be contingent upon the need to protect the water quality of the Wachusett Reservoir. (2011, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Board of Selectmen shall review and submit comments on draft documents when they are being updated by the DCR. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Board of Selectmen shall verify the process for representation and, if necessary, appoint a representative to the Wachusett Greenways who will regularly participate in activities and planning program. (2009, No New Funding Needed)

9. Protect historical sites in town.
 - a. The Town Administrator, through the Open Space Advisory Committee, with the aid of the Historical Commission, shall coordinate open space preservation with historical preservation efforts. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The West Boylston Land Trust and the West Boylston Historical Commission shall investigate the possible use of grants from the state Department of Conservation and Recreation's Heritage Landscape Inventory Program to preserve historic and treasured landscapes, which recently provided area communities \$35,000 with no matching funds. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Wachusett Greenways and West Boylston Historical Commission shall work together to leverage grants and expand historic sites along the rail trail. (2010, No New Funding Needed)

9.B. Actions To Achieve Community Goals

1. Preserve existing town-owned open space and natural resources.
 - a. The Parks Commission and DPW shall continue to provide adequate maintenance of the town's open spaces, protected streams, and special habitats. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Community Preservation Committee and the West Boylston Water District shall place a high priority on preserving existing contiguous undeveloped land along Prospect Street through fee acquisition or development rights. (2009, No New Funding Needed)

- c. The DPW shall publicize the availability of the public composting area and expand hours of operation for litter and debris disposal and for pick-up of compost. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Director of the DPW shall publicize the availability and correct use of products for townspeople to compost their own food wastes. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - e. The Parks Commission shall maintain the Nature Trail at Major Edwards, the Pine Grove, and the exercise trail in the scenic pine grove in Goodale Park. (2011, No New Funding Needed Utilize Scouts and DPW)
 - f. The Parks Commission and the Planning Board shall develop mechanisms for adequate buffers between parks used for active recreation and residential zones. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
2. Provide safe pedestrian access to open spaces and recreation areas.
- a. The Town Administrator shall facilitate the development and improvements to sidewalks and walking trails to provide safe pedestrian traffic within one mile of the schools. (2009, State and Federal Funding)
 - b. The DPW and Selectmen should establish and advertise for comments a clear policy for maintenance of sidewalks so that the responsibilities and anticipated costs are clearly explained before any expansion occurs. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Town-wide Planning Committee and the Board of Selectmen shall work for better pedestrian access, especially to commercial areas, including the installation of sidewalks along the southern part of Route 12. (2011, State and Federal Funding)
 - d. The DPW with the assistance of the Parks Commission shall update and implement the operation and maintenance plan to include sidewalk maintenance. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - e. The DPW shall establish a system of pedestrian and bicycle routes for safe access to existing and future recreational facilities and prepare and distribute maps of these routes. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - f. The Parks Commission and the DPW shall produce and provide maps showing availability and location of recreational facilities. (2012, State and Federal Funding)
3. Maintain and expand existing passive and active recreational facilities.
- a. The Parks Commission with the Parks Facilities Committee shall establish and publish a protocol for maintenance of all Town parks. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Parks Commission shall work with the Board of Selectmen to assess and establish adequate funding for maintenance needs. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Parks Facilities Committee and the Parks Commission shall work with the Board of Selectmen to renovate the tennis and basketball courts at Goodale Park. (2009, CPA and State and Federal Funding)
 - d. The Parks Facilities Committee and the Parks Commission shall work with the Board of Selectmen to renovate the soccer field at Woodland Park. (2010, State and Federal Funding)
 - e. The Parks Facilities Committee and the Parks Commission shall work with the Board of Selectmen to renovate the All-Purpose field and running track in Goodale Park. (2009, State and Federal Funding)
 - f. The DPW shall enable and coordinate neighborhood/citizen committees for

- involvement to act on general or parcel-specific issues in their neighborhoods. (2012, No New Funding Needed)
 - g. The Parks Commission shall develop and implement rules/regulations and fees for use of Park facilities. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - h. The Parks Facilities Committee and the Parks Commission shall work with the Board of Selectmen to expand active recreational facilities on land off Tivnan Drive. (e.g. athletic fields, public gardens, walking trails) (2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - i. The Parks Facilities Committee and the Parks Commission shall work with the Board of Selectmen to expand active recreational facilities at the Mixter Building site. (2011, State and Federal Funding)
 - j. The Parks Facilities Committee and the Parks Commission shall investigate acquisition of potential active recreational field lands and construct new facilities, such as on a portion of the gravel pit on Sterling Street. (2011, CPA, State and Federal Funding)
 - k. The Parks Facilities Committee and the Parks Commission shall work with the Board of Selectmen to expand active recreational facilities and obtain additional land to be used for recreation such as the fields and gym at the DCR's Beaman Street property, which is owned by the Department of Capital and Asset Management. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - l. The Parks Facilities Committee and the Parks Commission shall work with the Board of Selectmen to expand active recreational facilities and obtain additional land to be used for recreation such as the County/State-owned land off Shrewsbury Street. (2011, CPA, State and Federal Funding)
 - g. The Town Administrator and the Police Department shall take an active role in enforcement of violations where dumping of trash and yard wastes occur, particularly near streams and wetlands. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - h. The Town Administrator shall determine if a revision is needed to Town By-laws to authorize the Police Department to issue dumping violation citations, and if none exists act to establish it. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
4. Maintain and expand open spaces within the densely-developed southern area of town.
- a. The Planning Board and Selectmen should maintain current minimum area requirements in the zoning standards in order to keep undeveloped areas open. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Parks Commission shall compose an inventory of available open spaces for consideration of town recreation facilities. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Planning Board and Selectmen should preserve small town character of town through development controls. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
5. Create additional town-owned open space.
- a. The Parks Commission, Community Preservation Committee, Open Space Advisory Committee, and Parks Facilities Committee shall establish a list of desirable properties to expand town-owned open space and recreation facilities. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Town Administrator shall ensure that there is a fair protocol for the Community Preservation Committee to utilize to implement acquisition of a desirable property when it becomes available for purchase/donation. (2009, No New Funding Needed)

- c. The Town-wide Planning Committee shall develop both North-South and East-West trail links for walkways and wildlife corridors, and develop links to trails and wildlife corridors in abutting towns. (2011, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Board of Selectmen and the Community Preservation Committee shall establish administrative protocols and work with the OSAC to be prepared to respond quickly when options to purchase property or development rights become available. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - e. The Parks Committee and Town Administrator shall coordinate with the West Boylston Land Trust to acquire desirable parcels and/or appropriate development rights so that they remain as open space and/or to provide linkages to other facilities. (2011, State and Federal Funding)
 - f. The Parks Commission shall support efforts by Wachusett Greenways to develop historic interpretive side trails along the Rail Trail. (2012, No New Funding Needed)
6. Ensure access to DCR-owned open space parcels in perpetuity.
- a. Town residents and officials should work with the DCR and state legislature to ensure local access to DCR-owned parcels for passive recreation and, where suitable, for active recreation. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Parks Commission shall seek additional recreational access on DCR land and comment on the DCR's Plans when they are updated in 2009. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Town Administrator and the OSAC should open discussions to allow bicycles on designated trails within the DCR property. (2011, No New Funding Needed)
7. Increase available recreational facilities for very young children and the elderly.
- a. The Parks Commission and the Parks Facilities Committee shall provide additional recreational facilities for very young children at Woodland Park and in the north end of town. (2010, State and Federal Funding)
 - b. The Parks Commission shall review its facilities for use by seniors and shall increase opportunities for passive recreation. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Parks Commission, Municipal Building Committee and the Board of Selectmen should consider utilization of the land along Sterling Street (where the Mixer Building's septic system currently is located) as a site to provide additional recreational facilities for toddlers or as community gardens. (2009, State and Federal Funding)
 - d. The Parks Commission and DPW shall assess and implement opportunities to increase the usage by the disabled and senior citizens of walking trails and sidewalks. (2011, No New Funding Needed)
 - e. The Parks Facilities Committee, Parks Commission, Municipal Building Committee and the Board of Selectmen should consider utilization of a portion of the Mixer property (off Prescott Street) as a site to provide additional passive recreational facilities for elders, since the Senior Center is anticipated to be located here. (2010, State and Federal Funding)
 - f. The Parks Commission shall assess interest in formation of community gardens and look for an appropriate site, such as former farmland or DCR land. (2011, No New Funding Needed)

8. Provide areas for swimming and picnicking.
 - a. The Parks Commission, Community Preservation Committee, and Parks Facilities Committee shall continue to investigate alternatives for providing swimming opportunities to town residents. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Parks Facilities Committee shall secure a grant to create a new or expanded town pool facility. (2012, State and Federal Funding)
 - c. The Parks Commission shall review lands in town and produce a list of possible picnic areas, then develop them, possibly in the Pine Grove and/or Mixter Septic System land off Route 12. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Parks Commission shall proceed with contacting the owners to request use of their land for picnicking. (2011, No New Funding Needed)

9. Upgrade existing recreational facilities to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
 - a. The Parks Commission shall review the needs at all town recreation facilities for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and prepare an implementation plan. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Parks Commission and the DPW shall investigate funding opportunities for ADA improvements. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Parks Commission and the DPW shall upgrade existing recreation facilities to be handicapped accessible. (2012, State and Federal Funding)

10. Expand amount of gym and indoor recreational space.
 - a. The Parks Commission shall compile a list of available indoor recreation facilities. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Parks Commission and the Board of Selectmen shall approach owners for use of their facilities. (2009, No New Funding Needed)

11. Increase parking and provide sanitary facilities at high usage recreation sites.
 - a. The Parks Commission shall investigate grant opportunities and construct sanitary facilities at high use public areas, such as Goodale Park, Woodland Park, and the Rail Trail. (2011, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Parks Commission and DPW shall provide safe and adequate number of parking spaces for athletic events and recreational facilities. (2011, State and Federal Funding)

12. Increase revenue from the House of Corrections and DCR Water Supply Protection.
 - a. The Board of Selectmen shall investigate, through local politicians, ways to obtain compensation from the House of Corrections for community services used. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. In lieu of payment from the House of Corrections, the DPW Director should prepare an extensive list of work in town that can be performed by inmates and increase the usage of this program that Sheriff Glodis has made available to West Boylston. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Board of Selectmen shall investigate, through local politicians, ways to increase payment-in-lieu-of-taxes from the DCR Water Supply Protection. (2010, No New Funding Needed)

13. Increase ADA compliance at all Town facilities.
 - a. The Building Inspector, with assistance from the Town Administrator, shall monitor and coordinate upgrades to town-owned facilities not in full compliance with ADA requirements. (2011, No New Funding Needed)

9.C. Actions To Achieve Management Goals

1. Coordinate town efforts to protect, improve, and expand open space in town.
 - a. The Board of Selectmen shall hold a public hearing to get public input whenever a use change is proposed for any open space owned by the Town. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Town Administrator shall rename and appoint a permanent Open Space Implementation Committee to develop overall plans and implementation strategies for open space, including implementation of the non-recreational aspects of the updated Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Open Space Implementation Committee shall have input into town decisions that affect open space, parks and resource protection; and provide the updates to the Open Space and Recreation Plan when needed. All references in this document to the Open Space Advisory Committee shall be understood to refer to the Open Space Implementation Committee once the change is affected. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The OSAC shall attempt to obtain a commitment from the Town Board of Selectmen to preserve and expand the current amount of town-owned open space land. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Town Administrator shall provide coordination of opportunities among parks, open space, water supply, and other town agencies for grants and other programs available to protection town resources. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - e. The Town-wide Planning Committee shall update the Open Space Section contained within the 2005 West Boylston Master Plan with this 2009 Update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan so that this document will supersede the recommendations made in the Master Plan. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - f. The DPW and the Parks Commission shall provide public information about availability and location of existing open space areas by use of maps, pamphlets, etc. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - g. Town Officials shall encourage public users of DCR land to respect DCR rules and regulations. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
2. Support efforts for private landowners to retain open space or share use of their property.
 - a. The Board of Assessors shall work with the OSAC to establish a mechanism to minimize tax valuation similar to those within the Chapter Lands program for lots that are below these thresholds, when the owner commits and documents the limitation that the land will not be developed and will remain as open space. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Agricultural Commission shall contact land-owners who could potentially benefit from the Chapter 61 Program, and assist them in filing for the benefits of Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Town Administrator shall require notification of the OSAC, Parks Commission, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission (in addition to Board of Selectmen) when land under Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B is being considered for

- removal from this program. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Town Administrator shall support the work of the West Boylston Land Trust. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - e. The OSAC, with the assistance of the Town Administrator, shall present a warrant article to Town Meeting to create an Agricultural Commission. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - f. The Agricultural Commission shall investigate/incorporate the “Last Frontier” idea into town planning and educate the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - g. The Town Administrator shall promote and encourage Chapter 61/61A program on private lands through town agents. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - h. The Agricultural Commission shall investigate establishing projects on private lands or DCR property, where model agricultural BMPs and crops can be piloted. (2011, No New Funding Needed)
 - i. The Agricultural Commission shall attempt to implement cooperative college internship and/or training programs for private or DCR lands. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
 - j. The Agricultural Commission shall present a “Right to Farm” bylaw at Town Meeting. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - k. The Board of Selectmen shall encourage collaboration with American Veterinary Medical Frontiers, Inc. (AVMF) and Operational Medicine Institute (OMI) as a potentially viable alternative to develop some of our municipal building plan and address the need for emergency response facilities. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - l. The Board of Selectmen and Town-wide Planning Committee shall encourage collaboration and investigation of the benefits of implementing the ‘Sentinel Animal’ monitoring associated with the AVMF and OMI programs being discussed for the Prospect Street area to provide an early warning system. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - m. The Planning Board shall consider developing a Cluster Zoning Bylaw option that provides buffers and protects open space. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - n. The Town Administrator shall support the Wachusett Greenways efforts to increase the number and use of these trails. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
3. Prioritize maintenance of sidewalks and open space.
- a. The DPW with the assistance of the Parks Commission shall update and implement a Town operation and maintenance plan to include sidewalk maintenance. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The DPW shall establish a system of pedestrian and bicycle routes for safe access to existing and future recreational facilities, and prepare and distribute maps of these routes. (2010, State and Federal Funding)
 - c. The DPW and Selectmen should establish and advertise for comments to a clear policy for maintenance of sidewalks so that the responsibilities and anticipated costs are clearly explained before any expansion occurs. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The DPW shall enable and coordinate neighborhood/citizen committees for involvement to act on parcel-specific issues in their neighborhoods. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - e. The Municipal Building Committee, the Parks Commission, and the Board of

- Selectmen should consider utilization of the land along Sterling Street (where the Mixer Building's septic system currently is located) as a site to provide additional recreational facilities for toddlers. (2009, State and Federal Funding)
- f. The Municipal Building Committee and the Board of Selectmen should consider utilization of a portion of the Mixer property off Prescott Street as a site to provide additional recreational facilities for elders, since the Senior Center is anticipated to be housed there as well. (2009, State and Federal Funding)
4. Coordinate town efforts to protect, improve, and expand recreation facilities in town.
 - a. The Selectmen shall assess the benefits of continuing to utilize the Parks Facilities Committee to advise and monitor long range planning projects for the recreation facilities in town. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The OSAC shall attempt to obtain a commitment from the Town Board of Selectmen to preserve and expand the current amount of town-owned recreational land. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Parks Commission shall reassess the rules and regulations for use of parks and recreational facilities at least every five years. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The DPW and the Parks Commission shall provide public information about availability and location of existing recreational facilities by use of maps, pamphlets, etc. (2009, State and Federal Funding)
 - e. Town Officials shall encourage public users of DCR land to respect DCR rules and regulations. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 5. Communicate with DCR and House of Corrections regarding opportunities on their properties.
 - a. The Board of Selectmen shall deal openly and in good faith with the DCR and House of Corrections and coordinate an annual meeting to discuss the status of issues of mutual concern. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Town Administrator shall compile the Town's comments and provide input into decisions regarding future uses of DCR and House of Correction lands. These documents should be publicized to generate public interest for open space and recreation concerns. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Board of Selectmen shall continue to negotiate with the House of Corrections to gain the needed recreational facilities for town residents. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Agricultural Commission shall coordinate with USDA, DCR, and area college resources to encourage utilization of land for agricultural uses. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - e. The Agricultural Commission shall establish a program for model agricultural best management practices and crop treatments on private and DCR lands. The Commission shall schedule a meeting to discuss this with the DCR. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - f. The Agricultural Commission shall contact colleges for unpaid internships/projects; and implement Cooperative College Programs. (2010, No New Funding Needed)
 6. Educate town officials and citizens about opportunities and benefits of open space.

- a. The West Boylston Land Trust shall educate town officials and citizens about tax and other benefits of open space through use of the American Farmland Trust brochure and other educational materials. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Parks Commission and DPW shall develop maps, pamphlets, and informational packets about town-owned open space and recreational facilities, and develop an outreach campaign for distribution to the public noting what activities are allowed. (2009, State and Federal Funding)
 - c. The Open Space Advisory Committee will investigate the opportunity to utilize local college students and university staff to provide an evaluation of the cost benefits of the different land uses specifically for the Town of West Boylston. (2011, No New Funding Needed)
 - d. The Town Administrator shall encourage public service notices regarding general health and wellness. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - e. The Town Administrator shall advise the Municipal Building Committee to review and assess the opportunities for the Town provided by the cooperation and/or acceptance of the AVMF Strategic Master Plan. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
7. Implement and enforce land use regulations professionally and consistently.
- a. The Town Administrator shall monitor communications from the DPW and Water District managers to permitting agents so that the existing town resources are not overextended. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Town Administrator shall monitor communications from the town departments to reviewing boards to ensure that clear information is provided during review of development proposals. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Town Administrator shall obtain necessary professional assistance and training for local boards and officials dealing with open space, recreation, water, and the town's tax base so that laws relating to land use are consistently enforced. (2009, Local Board's Budget Funding)
 - d. The Town Administrator shall establish and enforce attendance and training policies for appointed positions. (2009, Local Board's Funding)
8. Utilize available Community Preservation funds equitably and responsibly.
- a. The Community Preservation Commission shall establish criteria and priorities that will provide transparent information regarding decisions and advertise a hearing for public comments. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - b. The Community Preservation Commission shall create and maintain a public prioritized list of parcels to acquire once CPA money is available. (2009, No New Funding Needed)
 - c. The Community Preservation Commission shall circulate for comments the list of potential parcels of interest to acquire and projects under consideration before the posting of the Town Meeting Warrant. This should go to open space, recreation, and planning agents in the town for their suggestions and recommendations. (2009, No New Funding Needed)

Section 10 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Multiple draft versions of this update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan were distributed to the

Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, Conservation Commission, and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC). Section 2 discusses the public participation process that was followed to gain municipal and public input. A distribution list, letters of support, and a more detailed discussion of public comments are included in Appendix B. Requests for comments on this update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan were distributed on May 29, 2008 to the Board of Health, Water District, Department of Public Works, Building Inspector, Zoning Board of Appeals, Economic Development Committee, Parks Facilities Committee, West Boylston Historical Committee, West Boylston Land Trust, and Wachusett Greenways.

The Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan Update was made available for review on the Town's web site for over 90 days. The draft plan was downloaded 103 times. Various figures were downloaded too for a total of 527 times, with no comments submitted to a special mailbox set up by the town for this purpose.

The June 12, 2008 public hearing notice and the minutes noting all comments received are included in Appendix B. This Update was reviewed during another public hearing with the Board of Selectmen and received their vote of support on July 16, 2008.

Section 11 – REFERENCES AND FOOTNOTES

All information in this Update was obtained from the 2002 West Boylston Open Space & Recreation Plan, the 2005 West Boylston Master Plan, and from the new informational sources listed below. Footnotes are listed numerically within each Section. When a reference is used more than once, the same footnote numeral will be used to refer to it.

Section 1 – PLAN SUMMARY

Section 2 – INTRODUCTION

Section 2.B. – OSAC Vision – Information obtained from:

1. The Trust for Public Land (TPL). 1999. Long-term relationship between development and property tax bills. TPL New England Region Report.

Section 3 – COMMUNITY SETTING

Section 3.A. – Regional Context

Section 3.B. – History of the Community – Information obtained from:

1. Edgar Whitcomb, West Boylston Historical Commission, 1996
2. Worcester Area League of Women Voters, "Know Your Town," 1977
3. "Transformation of a mill town," The Banner, January 8, 1987
4. Ron Borjeson, West Boylston Historical Commission, 2000-2002

Section 3.C. – Population Characteristics – Information obtained from:

1. Sheriff's Office, Worcester County/State Jail, West Boylston, October 10, 2000
2. U.S. Census Data for Year 2000, Bill Grant, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), Worcester
3. West Boylston Town Clerk, December 2, 2000 and September 27, 2000
4. Jim French, Land Acquisitions Director, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Division of Water Supply Protection, West Boylston, 2000
5. Bill Grant, CMRPC, op. cit.
6. Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training/CMRPC

Section 3.D. – Growth and Development Patterns

Section 3.D.1. – Patterns and Trends – Information obtained from:

1. Vincent Vignaly, West Boylston Planning Board, 2008
2. Paul Guida, Town Administrator, August 14, 2001
3. West Boylston Planning Board files
4. “An Examination of Land Use Controls for Protection of the Wachusett Watershed,” UMass – Amherst, August, 1990
5. West Boylston Land Use Plan – 1988, page 10
6. West Boylston Special Town Meeting Warrant, April 9, 2001
7. Maureen Mahoney, Building Inspector’s Office, Town Hall, October 4, 2001

Section 3.D.2.a. – Transportation – Information obtained from:

1. Steve Wallace, CMRPC, April 2, 2002
2. Mike Peckar, Wachusett Greenways

Section 3.D.2.b. – Water – Information obtained from:

1. Michael Coveney, Water District Superintendent, December 11, 2007
2. Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Worcester
3. Tata & Howard, Inc., Consulting Engineers for West Boylston Water District, T&H No. 1360, December 6, 2001, and December 12, 2001 Draft comments

Section 3.D.2.c. – Sewers – Information obtained from:

1. Department of Conservation and Recreation, DCR Project No. WM93-001-S1A, Final Report, “Wastewater Facilities Plan, West Boylston – Holden, Wachusett Reservoir Watershed,” Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc., December, 1994
2. Paul Guida, Town Administrator and former Acting Superintendent of Sewers, August 2001
3. “Final Environmental Impact Report, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Wastewater Facilities Plan, West Boylston – Holden, in the Wachusett Reservoir Watershed, EOE #10459,” Submitted to Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs – MEPA Unit, Prepared by: Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. and Rizzo Associates, Inc., January 30, 1998.
4. Joseph McGinn, Director, Division of Water Supply Protection, DCR, March 27, 2001
5. Jonathan Gulliver, West Boylston Sewer Project Coordinator, DCR, March 27, 2002, and April 3, 2002.
6. West Boylston Board of Selectmen/Sewer Commissioners Meeting Minutes, March 21, 2001
7. West Boylston Board of Selectmen/Sewer Commissioners Meeting Minutes, January 9, 2002
8. Linda Rochleau, “Sewer Commission urges hookups,” The Banner, September 20, 2001, page 2
9. Linda Rochleau, “Towns not flush with revenues from sewers,” The Banner, January 17, 2002, page 11
10. West Boylston Planning Board, Letter to Board of Selectmen/Sewer Commissioners re connection to West Boylston sewers from outside the Sewer District, July 23, 2001
11. John Westerling, West Boylston Superintendent of Sewers and Drains, March 4, 2002

Section 3.D.3. – Long Term Development Patterns – Information obtained from:

1. "Summary Buildout Statistics – West Boylston," 1999, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), Worcester
2. "Route 12 Corridor Study – Preliminary Land Use Report, June 6, 2000," CMRPC, for West Boylston Town-wide Planning Committee
3. Tata & Howard, Inc., "Open Space Plan – Water Supply, T&H No. 1360," December 6, 2001, Draft Attachment – Section 3-Population Projections
4. Jonathan Gulliver, Sewer Project Coordinator-West Boylston, DCR, March 27, 2002
5. Jim French, op. cit.

Section 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Section 4.A. – Geology, Soils and Topography – Information obtained from:

1. Vincent Vignaly, P.E., Environmental Engineer, DCR, Division of Water Supply Protection

Section 4.B. – Landscape Character – Information obtained from:

1. Vignaly, op. cit.

Section 4.C. – Water Resources – Information obtained from:

1. Vignaly, op. cit.

Section 4.D. – Vegetation – Information obtained from:

1. Dr. Robert Tashjian – Co-chair, Open Space and Recreation Plan Update
2. Barbara Wyatt – Co-chair, Open Space and Recreation Plan Update
3. Joel Zimmerman, Regional Planner, DCR, April 30, 2002 Memo

Section 4.E. – Fisheries and Wildlife – Information obtained from:

2. Brian Bjorklund, Wildlife Specialist, USGS
3. Vignaly, op. cit.
4. Carolyn Padden, Chair, West Boylston Conservation Commission
5. Dan Clark, Wildlife Biologist, DCR, Division of Water Supply Protection

Section 4.F. – Scenic Resources and Unique Environments – Information obtained from:

1. Ron Borjeson, West Boylston Historical Commission, May 4, 2002
2. Helen Maxwell Hamilton, The History of West Boylston, 1954, with a chronology of events from 1954 to 1999, West Boylston Historical Society, 2000.
3. Town of West Boylston, Annual Town Report, Years 1922, 1923, 1930, Report of the Park Commission
4. Mike Peckar, op. cit.
5. Town of West Boylston, Annual Town Report, 1937, Report of the Park Commission
6. Town of West Boylston Annual Town Report, 1922 & 1923, Report of Park Commission

Section 4.G. – Environmental Challenges – Information obtained from:

1. Greater Yellowstone Coalition. 1993. The fiscal and economic impacts of local conservation and community development measures: a review of the literature, and Fausold, C. J. and R. J. Lilleholm. 1996. The economic value of open space. Working Paper from the Lincoln Land Trust, Land Lines Vol. 8, No. 5.
2. Carolyn Padden, op. cit.
3. Tata & Howard, Inc., op. cit.
4. Elise Wellington, Secretary, West Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

5. John Monahan, "ATVs mar sensitive land," Worcester Telegram & Gazette, June 13, 2001, page A1
6. Mike Peckar, op. cit.
7. Ladd, H. 1992. Effects of Population Growth on Local Spending and Taxes. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy working paper, Cambridge, MA. 53 pages.
8. Freedgood, J., and R.C. Wagner. 1992. Cost of Community Services Studies: Snapshots of Net Fiscal Impacts of Different Land Uses in Towns. Northeastern Office, American Farmland Trust.
9. Lacy, J. 1990. An Examination of Market Appreciation for Clustered Housing with Permanent Open Space. Center for Rural Massachusetts, Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA. 14 pages.
10. Shell Oil, Shrewsbury Street West Boylston, Site Remediation Plan, 2001.

Section 5 – INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST

Section 5.A. – Private Parcels – Information obtained from:

1. Vignaly, op. cit.
2. Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, Property Tax Bureau, "Taxpayer's Guide to Classification and Taxation of Agricultural/Horticultural Land in Massachusetts–Chapter 61A"
3. Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, Property Tax Bureau, "Taxpayer's Guide to Classification and Taxation of Recreational Land in Massachusetts-Chapter 61B"
4. Dr. Robert Tashjian, op. cit.

Section 5.B. – Public and Nonprofit Parcels – Information obtained from:

1. Joel Zimmerman, Regional Planner, DCR, December, 2007 Email
2. Dr. Robert Tashjian, op. cit.
3. "Wachusett Watershed Public Access Plan," DCR, November, 1995
4. Public hearing on Update of "DCR Wachusett Watershed Public Access Plan," June 19, 2001, DCR Wachusett Watershed Division headquarters, Beaman Street, West Boylston
5. Vignaly, op. cit.

Section 5.C. – Parks and Recreation Recreational Facilities – Information obtained from:

1. Patrick Inderwish, West Boylston Parks Commission, 2007.

Section 5.D. – Parks and Recreation Handicapped Access Evaluation – Information obtained from:

1. Mark Brodeur, West Boylston Building Inspector, 2007.

Section 6 – COMMUNITY VISION

Section 6.A. Community Conditions

Section 6.B. – Description of Process

Section 6.C. – Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals – Information obtained from:

1. James Edmundson, op. cit.
2. American Farmland Trust-Farmland Information Center, "Fact Sheet – Cost of Community Services Studies," April 2000, Northampton, MA
3. Joel Zimmerman, op. cit., April 30, 2002

Section 7 – Analysis of Needs

1. Massachusetts Department of Conservation Services, Massachusetts Outdoors 2006, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).
2. Massachusetts Department of Conservation Services, Massachusetts Outdoors 2006, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), p. 76.

FIGURES ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES

APPENDIX A
MINUTES OF THE
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION
PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

APPENDIX B
PUBLIC COMMENTS

APPENDIX C
MUNICIPALLY-OWNED PROPERTY INVENTORY

APPENDIX D
SECTION 504
ADA ACCESS SELF-EVALUATION

