

2026 Weston Open Space and Recreation Plan



Prepared for:

Town of Weston

Prepared by:

*The Committee on Open Space and Recreation Planning
with technical assistance from
Barrett Planning Group, LLC*

May 2026

2026 Committee on Open Space and Recreation Planning

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Acknowledgements

The Committee on Open Space and Recreation Planning (COSRP) extends its sincere appreciation to the following Weston boards, committees, and departments for their valuable input and support of the preparation of this plan: the Select Board, the Planning Board, Community Preservation Committee, Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works, Historical Commission, Recreation Commission, Traffic and Sidewalk Committee, and the Weston Forest & Trail Association, whose thoughtful stewardship has long supported the Town's open spaces. COSRP also thanks Barrett Planning Group LLC for its expertise in GIS mapping, guidance throughout the planning process, and leadership of public outreach efforts. Finally, we are grateful to the residents of Weston, both past and present, whose stewardship and foresight have preserved the Town's rich natural heritage and ensured the continued availability of cherished recreational facilities and programs.

Cover photo: Jordan McCarron

Back photos: Michele Grzenda, Ryan Locke, Nicole Mordecai

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Section 1 – Executive Summary

The Town of Weston has prepared this Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) in accordance with the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services' 2025 OSRP Workbook to guide community decision-making for the next ten years. This plan reflects Weston's commitment to land conservation, outdoor recreation, environmental stewardship, accessibility, and resilient planning for current and future residents. It documents progress since the Town's last OSRP in 2017, identifies current and emerging needs, and positions Weston to remain eligible for state funding opportunities to support open space and outdoor recreation improvements.

The 2026 OSRP was developed through a collaborative effort led by Town staff and the Committee on Open Space and Recreation Planning (COSRP), representing boards, commissions, and community members. Between 2025 and early 2026, the COSRP met regularly to guide the plan's development, supported by a project webpage (www.westonosrp.com) that provided information, updates, and opportunities for public input. A townwide community survey, available in English and Simplified Chinese and completed by 654 respondents, gathered valuable feedback on priorities, facility needs, and land protection interests. Additional engagement included two public forums (in-person and virtual) and targeted outreach to ensure broad participation, along with input from Town boards and committees through presentations and an online form. Together, this planning and engagement process ensured that the plan reflects community values, needs, and goals for Weston's open space and recreation resources future.

The data analysis from the Analysis of Needs were synthesized and expanded to create a comprehensive set of goals and objectives.

1A. Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1: IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND CONNECTIVITY AMONG OPEN SPACES, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, AND OTHER IMPORTANT TOWN RESOURCES

OBJECTIVES

- A. Enhance opportunities to travel throughout town without a motorized vehicle by exploring the feasibility of initiatives such as:
 - Coordinate with the forthcoming Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan to ensure a thoughtful and consistent approach to all aspects of off-road pedestrian and bike trail development.
 - Identify town-wide pedestrian/bicycling routes that travel on trails, sidewalks, and safe streets (such as Lexington's ACROSS program).
 - Collaborate with Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to pursue Feasibility Study for Fitchburg Line Rail with Trail concept.
- B. Improve user experiences on trails.
- C. Improve parking at select recreation facilities.

GOAL 2: PROMOTE THE USE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE

OBJECTIVES

- A. Increase usability of recreational facilities and trails for users with mobility, sight, hearing, and other impairments, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and following the lead of other organizations such as Mass Audubon and Trustees, and also nearby communities that have implemented similar initiatives.
- B. Provide better awareness of and access to the Charles River.
- C. Continue to provide and support appropriate recreational services targeting all populations, exploring ways to enhance services targeting teens and those over seventy without sacrificing service to other populations.
- D. Seek ways to distribute trail maps and other open space-related information to the public through kiosks, social media, apps, websites, local media outlets, and other means.

GOAL 3: MAINTAIN, STEWARD, AND RESTORE EXISTING NATURAL RESOURCES, OPEN SPACES, AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

OBJECTIVES

- A. Continue to reduce the impact of stormwater on local water bodies via the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Municipal Separate Sewer Storm System (MS4s) and the Stormwater Permitting Authority.
- B. Maintain conservation land and conservation restriction property baseline inventory and encroachment monitoring program.
- C. Evaluate the effectiveness and explore the expansion of the Deer Management program.
- D. Monitor and explore treatment options for invasive plants and pests when they threaten sensitive or important resources.

- E. Explore the possibility of providing a dog park as a way to meet the needs of dog owners while reducing the negative impact of dog use at other open spaces.
- F. Continue to partner with Animal Control Officer (ACO) and mountain biking community to enforce trail user compliance, particularly with regard to illegal trail cutting and dog walking.
- G. Re-establish data collection program from long-term habitat plots in Weston's forests.
- H. Encourage native species populations through long-term native plant and wildlife restoration projects.
- I. Continue to implement Weston's Climate Adaptation Plan *Weston Ahead*.¹
- J. Transition Forest Management Program to new climate resilience and habitat improvement model.

GOAL 4: PRESERVE THE SEMI-RURAL CHARACTER OF WESTON BY PROTECTING OPEN SPACE, PRESERVING SCENIC AND HISTORIC FEATURES, AND IMPLEMENTING THOUGHTFUL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

OBJECTIVES

- A. Support the Affordable Housing Trust in providing more affordable housing options in town per the Housing Production Plan.
- B. Acquire parcels in fee, easements, or conservation/agricultural/preservation restrictions on parcels that are important from an environmental, recreational, historic, or scenic perspective (see **Appendix A: Lands of Open Space Interest List**).
- C. Support the Case Estates Master Planning process to provide for the best combination of agricultural, historic, recreational, conservation, and other uses.
- D. Permanently protect Green Power Farm and the Community Gardens.
- E. Continue to restore field edges, maintain stonewalls along field edges, and retain meadow habitat and scenic views.
- F. Develop a plan for continued use of Dickson Riding Rings at Jericho Town Forest.
- G. Maintain and protect Weston's tree canopy.
- H. Follow through with the remaining goals of the Recreation Master Plan as appropriate.
- I. Consider adding playgrounds to strategic spaces in northern and southern sections of town, as well as the areas identified in **Section 5C: Parks and Open Space Equity**.
- J. Support the preservation and development of the Historic Heritage Overlay Designation as it applies to appropriate properties, including the Wellington/Gateways Farm Historic Heritage Overlay and Wellington/Gateways Farm Heritage Loop Trail at the Blainey Aquifer.

GOAL 5: IMPROVE COORDINATION AMONG DEPARTMENTS, COMMITTEES, AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TOWARD COMMON GOALS FOR OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, AND OTHER RELATED TOPICS.

OBJECTIVES

- A. Host semi-annual Open Space and Recreation Summit with participation from the Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission, Planning Board, Select Board, Weston Forest and Trail Association, Land's Sake, Agricultural Commission, Traffic and Sidewalk Committee, Sustainability Committee, associated Town staff, and others as deemed appropriate to coordinate around

¹ More information on *Weston Ahead* can be found at <https://www.westonma.gov/1486/Weston-Ahead>.

projects such as:

- Stewardship and management of open spaces and recreational facilities.
 - Updates to and progress on parcels and easements shown in **Appendix A: Lands of Open Space Interest List**.
 - Advancing trail connectivity through new development permitting, easement acquisition, pedestrian/bicycling long-haul routes, new sidewalks, and other means.
 - Expanding public outreach, involvement, and programming efforts.
 - Improving ADA accessibility on open spaces and recreational facilities.
 - Coordinating with other local and regional open space and recreational initiatives.
 - Monitoring progress on this Action Plan.
- B. Continue seasonal coordination of playing fields among recreational groups.
- C. Continue and enhance where necessary maintenance practices for recreational fields, facilities, and open spaces.
- D. Enhance collaboration of like-minded recreation-related service providers to better service resident needs.



Section 2 – Introduction

2A. Statement of Purpose

The Town of Weston’s Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) 2026 Update provides a focused, community-informed framework to guide the ongoing protection and stewardship of the Town’s natural and recreational resources. This plan represents a required update to Weston’s long-standing OSRP, prepared following the expiration of the previous plan; this update allows Weston to remain eligible for state and federal funding and reflects current community needs and conditions.

Since the 2017 OSRP, Weston’s open space and recreation-related achievements include the following highlights:

- Upgraded the Town Pool facility.
- Developed the Weston portion of the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT).
- Completed Invasive water chestnut efforts on the Charles River at Kingsbury Cover.
- Completed the Coburn Meadow field edge restoration management plan.
- Completed the Weston Community Gardens expansion & rehabilitation project.
- Analyzed the need & ability of the Town to support additional active recreation facilities, resulting in new pickleball and cricket facilities.
- Entered into a 30-year lease with Land’s Sake to ensure the continued use of the 40-Acre Field for agriculture.
- Installed accessible Legacy Trail at Case Estates.
- Installed kiosks at select trailheads and improved kiosk signage.
- Expanded off-road biking opportunities.
- Improved tick and poison ivy management.
- Explored opportunities for increasing staffing for conservation land/open space initiatives and recreation facilities maintenance.
- Continued to manage and expand the Town’s off-road trail network.

- Permanently protected a portion of Parcel 9 at the Case Estates.
- Enhanced recreational facilities and services for teens and aged 50+ by adding or renovating outdoor pickleball, tennis and basketball facilities, and developing recreational programs targeting those populations.

The reason for the 2026 Update is both the routine renewal of an expiring plan and the desire to thoughtfully respond to evolving priorities, including increased use of conservation lands and a shift from land acquisition to land stewardship, attention to climate resilience, and planning for the future of recreational assets, ensuring these resources remain protected and valued for generations to come.



2B. Planning Process and Public Participation

Committee on Open Space and Recreation Planning (COSRP)

The people who led the 2026 OSRP Update for the Town of Weston included town staff and an eight person committee.

Town Staff

Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator

Christopher Fitzgerald, Recreation Director

Emily Schadler, Conservation Stewardship Program Coordinator

Committee Members

Beth Marshdoyle, Co-Chair, Resident At-Large Member

Hannah Peters, Co-Chair, Resident At-Large Member

Emily Wu, Resident At-Large Members

Glenn Butcher, Conservation Commission

Drew D'Amaro, Recreation Commission

David Banks, Weston Forest & Trail Association

Shawn Lanier, Planning Board

Kent Lundberg, Agricultural Commission

Committee Meetings

The Committee on Open Space and Recreation Planning (COSRP) met regularly throughout the development of the plan. The meetings were held via Zoom and were hosted by the Town of Weston Conservation Administrator. The meetings were held on the following dates and times:

- June 16, 2025, 7:00pm
- June 23, 2025, 7:00pm
- July 28, 2025, 7:00pm
- August 18, 2025, 7:00pm
- September 11, 2025, 7:00pm
- October 6, 2025, 7:00pm
- October 23, 2025, 6:00pm
- November 3, 2025, 6:00pm
- January 26, 2026, 6:00pm

Project Webpage

A project webpage was created at the beginning of the project by Barrett Planning Group within the Town's Zencity platform. The webpage contained an overview of the project along with project updates, links to supporting documents, and prompts to solicit public input to help inform that plan. The webpage also provided a link for people to provide their email address and sign up to receive notifications regarding the project.

Survey

The 2026 OSRP Community Survey ran from July through September of 2025. In total, 654 people completed the survey, 605 in English and 49 in a translation to Simplified Chinese. The survey was primarily available and taken through the platform Survey Monkey. Written surveys were also available at several locations across Weston, including Brook School Apartments, the library, the Community Center, and Town Hall. The COSRP and Town staff conducted extensive outreach to solicit wide community participation in the survey, such as tabling at community events, putting flyers in local newsletters, and posting on social media.

To analyze all survey responses comprehensively, Town staff and COSRP members input received written surveys into Survey Monkey. Responses to the English & Chinese surveys are also combined in the final results shown in **Appendix B: Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey Questions and Results**. The OSRP survey categorized questions into three sections: open space and recreation facilities, land protection, and demographics. It solicited input through a mix of multiple choice and open-response questions. Several multiple choice questions also have an “other” option for respondents to write in a response if they did not feel their answer was present in the options provided.

For each question, a summary chart displays responses and a short overview describing results is provided. If the question had an “other” write in option, a summary of open responses is provided. When possible, the results of each question are compared to a similar question from the 2017 OSRP survey, noting instances of similarity and difference. However, the 2026 OSRP survey has some additional questions not included in 2017.

Public Forum

Weston residents were invited to attend the first round of community meetings for the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), with events held in-person on October 26, 2025, and virtually on October 27, 2025. The forum was advertised in the Weston Observer newspaper, the Weston Hub weekly online news, sandwich boards, and paper flyers posted at key locations in town. Sixteen community members attended the in-person event at the Weston Recreation Center, with two BPG staff members assisting with group discussions. Nine community members joined the virtual meeting on Zoom, along with three BPG staff members facilitating discussion. Facilitators took notes on Miro, an online whiteboard platform that imitates a visible note-taking board for the participants.

Town of Weston Conservation Administrator Jordan McCarron introduced both meetings by welcoming participants and leading introductions. Consultant Barrett Planning Group then presented an overview of the OSRP process and timeline. The presentation then led into a whole group discussion about a vision for Weston’s Open Space and Recreation, followed by a conversation around Weston’s Scenic Landscapes and Unique Environments and OSRP goals. The Public Forum Summary compiles comments from both forums by discussion topic and can be found in the **Appendix G**.



Input from Town Boards and Committees

Barrett Planning Group attended the Conservation Commission meeting on September 20, 2025 and gave a brief presentation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan update. An online form created by Barrett Planning Group and distributed by town staff to various boards and committees, collected meaningful input on their vision for open space and recreation resources in 10+ years, an opportunity to note lands of open space interest in town, and an opportunity to answer this question, “As you advocate for the interests and resources represented by your board or committee and its constituents, is there anything you would like Weston's Conservation and Recreation staff to know that could help improve collaboration and successful outcomes for our community?” Responses were provided by nineteen individuals representing 8 different boards and committees in Weston. A summary can be found in the ***Appendix F: Open Space & Recreation Questionnaire for Boards & Committees Results.***

- Conservation Commission
- Select Board
- Affordable Housing Trust
- Council on Aging
- Merriam Village Board
- Traffic and Sidewalk Commission
- Recreation Commission
- Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee

Final Public Presentation

Weston residents were invited to attend the second public forum for the Open Space and Recreation Plan, a virtual presentation of the final draft plan at 7:00pm on February 10, 2026. The forum was advertised in the Weston Observer newspaper, the Weston Hub weekly online news, and email messages sent via various contact lists and channels including to all those that subscribed to the project webpage indicating interest in project updates. Twenty-one community members attended the virtual event.

Town of Weston Conservation Administrator Jordan McCarron introduced the presentation by welcoming participants and leading introductions. COSRP Committee Co-Chairs presented an overview of the committee members and their involvement in this process as well as a summary of community engagement that was carried out throughout the project. Recreation Director, Christopher Fitzgerald, shared what has been accomplished since the 2017 OSRP and highlighted several projects most familiar to residents. Consultant Barrett Planning Group then presented an overview of the final draft plan. Time for public comments took place, and meeting attendees inquired about the demographic representation of the survey, lauded the COSRP and town staff for their successful outreach and collaboration efforts throughout the planning process, and shared hopes for community support of the action plan's implementation.





Section 3 - Community Setting

3A. Regional Context

The Town of Weston is a high-income suburb of Boston located in eastern Massachusetts in Middlesex County. At the time of the 2020 decennial census, Weston had a population of almost 12,000 residents and a relatively low population density of 680.1 people per square mile.² Weston's conservation efforts over the years have protected a large amount of open space for a town so close to a major urban area. Of Weston's six neighboring communities—Newton, Waltham, Lincoln, Wellesley, Natick, and Wayland—only Wayland and Lincoln have a similar population density and percentage of open space to total area.³ Weston is among the most affluent towns in Massachusetts and the country, with a median home value of \$1,586,100.⁴

Weston's strategic location in the Metrowest Boston area provides easy access to both Boston and surrounding towns via two major roadways, Interstate 95/Route 128, which runs north/south along the eastern side of town, and Interstate 90 (the Massachusetts Turnpike, or "Mass Pike"), which runs east/west through the southern portion of the town (see [Map 1: Regional Context](#)). In addition, several state highways running through Weston, notably Route 20, Route 30, and Route 117, receive increasingly heavy use as alternate routes for those living in and commuting from surrounding towns and cities, as do the town roads connecting these thoroughfares. Traffic conditions have become notably more congested on virtually all such roads over time, as increasing numbers of commuters seek to optimize their commutes from western suburbs. Continued development along the 128/95 corridor will intensify this

² U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2020, Table PI; U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2010, Table PI; U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2000, Table DPI; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2023, Table SE: A0002.

³ Census 2020, PolicyMap, "Population Density"; MassGIS "Protected and Recreational Open Space."

⁴ ACS 2023 (5-Year Estimates), PolicyMap, "Median Home Value."

congestion. The Fitchburg/South Acton commuter rail line on the north side makes two stops in Weston: Silver Hill (flag stop) and Kendal Green.

I. Physical Characteristics

The Town of Weston lies between the Charles and Sudbury Rivers on a relatively rugged upland plateau in South-Central Middlesex County at 42.22N Latitude, 71.18W Longitude. The town contains about 17 square miles of land and about half a square mile of water within its bounds. Numerous smoothly rounded hills, small meandering streams, and low wetland areas comprise Weston's landscape character. Some topographical points of importance include the town's high points, such as the summit of Cat Rock at 365 feet above sea level and Doublet Hill at 360 feet. The lower points are concentrated along the southeastern border with Waltham and Newton, in the Charles River drainage area, where elevations can be less than forty feet above sea level (**Map 4A: USGS Topography**).

The hills and ridges of Weston have no general pattern. The valleys are drained by small streams and drainage ditches dug during the era when much of the town was in agricultural use. Weston is the location for major components of the water supply system of Metropolitan Boston, including the Weston and Hultman Aqueducts and Weston and Norumbega Reservoirs—all prominent physical features of the town. Other important water resources include Stony Brook and the Stony Brook Reservoir, Hobbs Brook, Cherry Brook, Duck Pond, and College Pond. Weston's water resources play a crucial role in the water supply system of Cambridge and, to a lesser extent, Wellesley. Most of the northern portion of Weston, including Stony Brook Reservoir, is in the Cambridge water supply district, and water quality here is carefully monitored. In addition, some ponds and brooks on the south side flow into Morse's Pond, where there are nearby drinking water wells for the Town of Wellesley.

Most of Weston falls in the Charles River watershed, but a small area on the northwestern edge of town is part of the SuAsCo (Sudbury-Assabet-Concord) River watershed. See **Map 5: Water Resources** and **Map 5A: Vernal Pools and Outstanding Resource Waters**.

II. Climate

Weston's climate is typical for New England, with four distinct seasons: a cold winter; a wet, cool spring; a warm, humid summer; and a wet or dry fall. The warmest month is typically July, and the coolest month is typically January. Precipitation averages 48 inches annually with the average wettest month being November and the average driest month being February. Weston is frost free for an average of five months, and the mean annual temperature is fifty-one degrees Fahrenheit.⁵

III. Open Space Regional Context

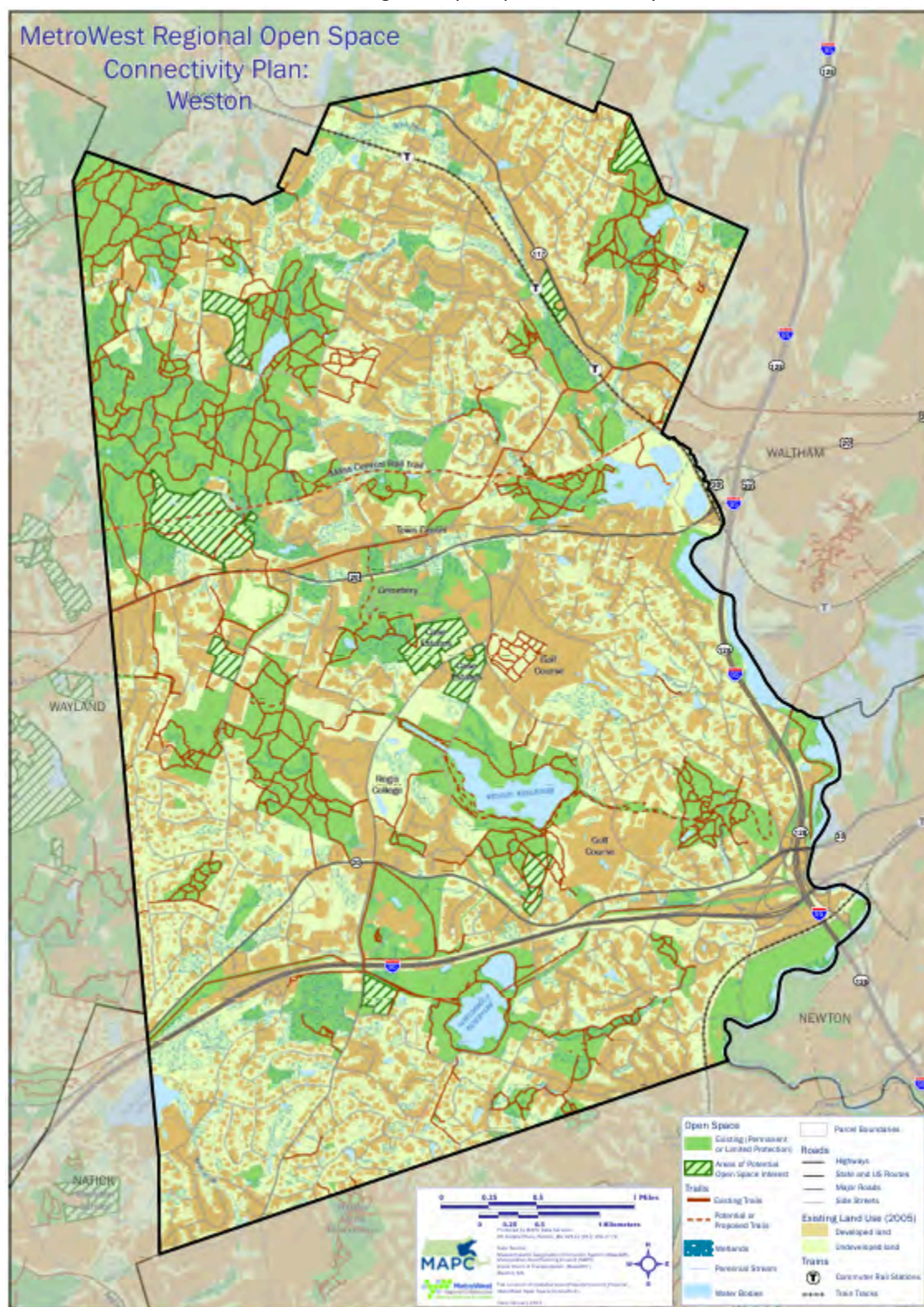
Weston's richness of open space is beneficial to both the more densely developed communities to the east as well as to the abutting open space-rich communities of Lincoln and Wayland. For wildlife and people traveling from the east, Weston provides a quantity and quality of open space not found in nearby more urbanized communities, such as Waltham, Watertown, Cambridge, Boston, Natick, and Wellesley.

⁵ "Climate and monthly weather forecast Weston, MA," Weather Atlas, accessed November 19, 2025, <https://www.weather-atlas.com/en/massachusetts-usa/weston-climate>.

Weston is part of the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC), a sub-organization of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) that also serves Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, Marlborough, Natick, Southborough, Wayland, and Wellesley. MWRC focuses on issues of land use, transportation, municipal governance, mitigation of development impacts, and coordination of municipal services. In 2011, MWRC prepared a MetroWest Open Space Regional Connectivity Plan that illustrates how the open space and trails in each town can become linked into an interconnected regional network, crossing municipal boundaries and connecting to other trails and open space in the surrounding communities. The plan also identifies unprotected land of potential conservation interest that would enhance the connectivity and conservation value of the existing open space. Many of the areas of potential conservation interest identified in MWRC's MetroWest Open Space Regional Connectivity Plan have either been protected since the plan's release or are included in **Appendix A: Lands of Open Space Interest List** (see **Figure 3.1**).

Figure 3.1: MetroWest Regional Open Space Connectivity Plan: Weston

Source: MetroWest Regional Open Space Connectivity Plan, 2011



A number of Weston's trails and open space areas connect with abutting open spaces in neighboring towns. Ogilvie Town Forest, located in the northwest corner of Weston, connects with trails in Wayland (Hazel Brook Conservation Area) and Lincoln (Van Leer Land and Massachusetts Audubon Society's Drumlin Farm), helping to form a large open space block in the Metrowest region. The open space along the Charles River in the southeastern corner of town connects with other Charles River Reservation land in Newton. Several pedestrian bridges cross the Charles River, including one that leads to a pathway to the Riverside T station and the Boston Greenbelt.

In addition, three miles of the former Mass Central Railroad corridor run through the north side of Weston, now part of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation's (DCR) Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) system. The MCRT will eventually provide a multi-use trail link from Berlin to Waltham, and Weston's portion passes through town roughly parallel and north of 5 Boston Post Road (Route 20). Moreover, Weston's MCRT connects with north-south trails, such as the Metacomet, Midstate, Bay Circuit Trail, and the East Coast Greenway. The Bay Circuit Trail and Greenway (BCT) is a permanent recreational trail and greenway corridor extending over 200 miles long through 37 towns from Plum Island and Ipswich to Duxbury and Kingston. A segment of the BCT south of Walden Pond was rerouted into Weston, Lincoln, and Wayland. In Weston, the new BCT segment follows existing trails in Jericho and Ogilvie Town Forests and a short section of the MCRT right-of-way to the Wayland town line. See **Map 8: Open Space and Recreation Land Inventory**.

Several regional conservation organizations have interests in Weston. The Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) is an active advocate for that watershed, which includes most of Weston's land area along with that of many other communities. Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT), a regional land trust, owns Hazel Brook Conservation Area in Wayland, which abuts Ogilvie Town Forest. The City of Cambridge owns land in Weston around Stony Brook Reservoir, which is part of the Cambridge water supply. See **Map 8: Open Space and Recreation Land Inventory**.

Trustees (formerly The Trustees of Reservations), Massachusetts Audubon Society, and Lincoln Land Conservation Trust all hold conservation restrictions on parcels in Weston.

Land owned by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) in Weston serves as open space and provides connections with other communities. The MWRA's Weston Aqueduct travels across town from Wayland on the west to the Charles River in Newton on the east. A formal trail along that aqueduct, part of MAPC's LandLine, now stretches from Framingham to Newton. The MWRA land surrounding Weston Reservoir provides a popular trail network that is open to the public thanks to a partnership between the MWRA, Weston Forest and Trail Association, Weston Conservation Commission, and Friends of Weston Reservoir. The MWRA's Norumbega Reservoir on the south side also features trails that are open to the public. See **Map 8: Open Space and Recreation Land Inventory**.

This OSRP aims to complement the objectives outlined in *MetroCommon 2050*, the official long-range regional plan of the Greater Boston area.

MetroCommon 2050 Goal (https://metrocommon.mapc.org/)	Aligning Goals in Weston's 2026 OSRP <i>(see Section 7)</i>
Getting around the region: traveling around Metro Boston is safe, affordable, convenient, and enjoyable	Goal 1: Improve access to and connectivity among open spaces, recreational facilities, and other important town resources 1A. Enhance opportunities to travel through town without a motorized vehicle by exploring the feasibility of alternatives 1C. Improved parking at select recreation facilities
Homes for all: all residents of Metro Boston have places to live that meet their needs, and that they can afford	Goal 4: Preserve the semi-rural character of Weston by protecting open space, preserving scenic and historic features, and implementing thoughtful development strategies 4A. Support Affordable Housing Trust in providing more affordable housing options 4C. Support the Case Estates Master Planning process to provide for the best combination of agricultural, historic, recreational, conservation, housing, and other uses
Climate-resilient region: Metro Boston is prepared for—and resilient to—the impacts of climate change	Goal 3: Maintain, steward, and restore existing natural resources open spaces, and recreational facilities 3H. Encourage native species populations through long-term native plant and wildlife restoration projects 3I. Continue to implement Weston's Climate Adaptation Plan <i>Weston Ahead</i> 3J. Transition Forest Management Program to new climate resilience and habitat improvement model Goal 4: Preserve the semi-rural character of Weston by protecting open space, preserving scenic and historic features, and implementing thoughtful development strategies 4G. Update Conservation Commissions's Tree Removal Policy to strengthen mitigation requirements and protect Weston's tree canopy
Dynamic and Representative Governments: local governments and regional agencies have the capacity and resources to deliver the services and supports our residents deserve, and to maintain and invest in our built and natural environments	Goal 5. Improve coordination among departments, committees, and local organizations working toward common goals for open space, recreation, and other related topics
A healthy environment: Greater Boston's air, water, land, and other natural resources are clean and protected—for us and for the rest of the ecosystem	Goal 3: Maintain, steward, and restore existing natural resources open spaces, and recreational facilities 3A. Continue to reduce the impact of stormwater on local water bodies via the NPDES General Permit for MS4s and the Stormwater Permitting Authority.

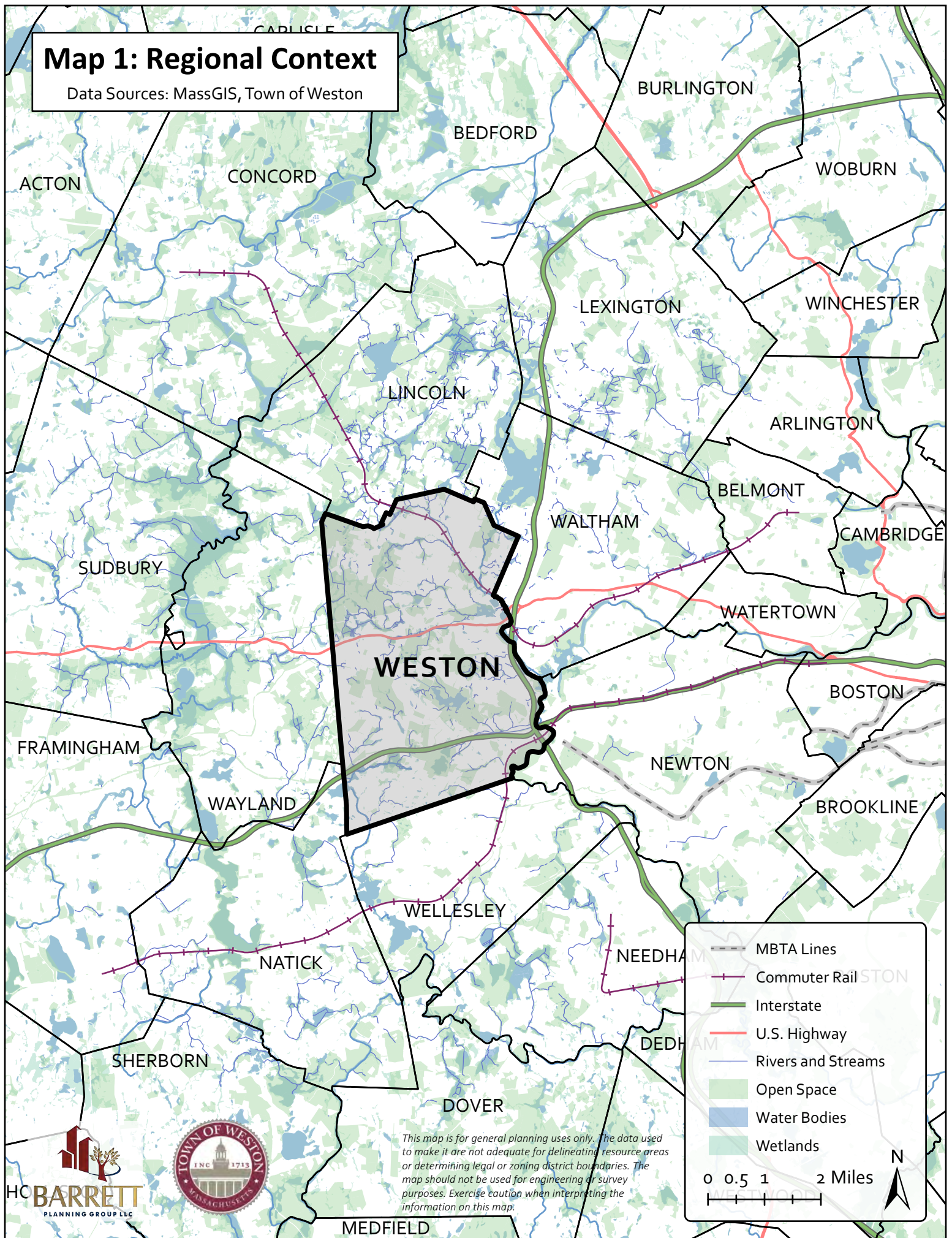
MetroCommon 2050 Goal (https://metrocommon.mapc.org/)	Aligning Goals in Weston’s 2026 OSRP (see Section 7)
	• 3C. Evaluate the effectiveness and explore the expansion of the Deer Management program • 3D. Monitor and explore treatment options for invasive plants and pests when they threaten sensitive or important resources • 3H. Encourage native species populations through long-term native plant and wildlife restoration projects

As of July 1, 2025, the neighboring communities of Natick, Newton, and Wellesley have currently valid Open Space and Recreation Plans; Waltham, Wayland, and Lincoln do not.⁶

⁶ Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services, “Open Space and Recreation Plan Status,” [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-space-and-recreation-plan-status-2/download), updated July 1, 2025, <https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-space-and-recreation-plan-status-2/download>.

Map 1: Regional Context

Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Weston



3B. History of the Community

I. Early Years

Originally part of the Watertown settlement of 1630, Weston's lands were primarily used for cattle grazing until the end of the 17th century. In 1698, "The Farms" was set off as a separate precinct with its own meeting house; and in 1712-13, the "Farmers' Precinct" was incorporated as a separate town, Weston.

Early settlers discovered that the amount of useful agricultural land was limited, as was the potential for water-powered industries. Weston did have one advantage: its location along the main route west from Boston. By the 18th century, residents were providing services to travelers on the Boston Post Road. Two taverns of great historical and architectural importance remain today: the Josiah Smith Tavern and the Golden Ball Tavern, now a museum. North Avenue served as an important route to the northwest and, like the Post Road, hosted shops, blacksmiths, and taverns serving travelers.

The beginning of the 17th century saw grist and sawmills established on Stony Brook and in the Crescent Street area. Two important manufacturing enterprises began during the Colonial period: the Hews redware pottery on Boston Post Road and Hobbs Tannery on North Avenue. By 1776, Weston's population of 1,027 spread throughout town on scattered farms along major roads, with some consolidation within the village center around the meetinghouse, along the length of the Post Road, and on North Avenue.

The opening of the Worcester Turnpike in 1810 (now Route 9) drew some commercial traffic from the Boston Post Road, but dry goods merchants continued to supply neighboring towns until about 1830-40. The Boston and Worcester Railroad was built through the southeast corner of town in 1834, and the Fitchburg Railroad (later the Boston and Maine) was built along Stony Brook on the north side of town around 1844. Weston's population continued to grow, supported in part by small industries such as the pottery, tannery and related boot and shoe making, school desk and chair factory, tool factories, and shops making machinery for cotton and woolen mills. The Hook & Hastings Company organ factory, Weston's largest industry, moved to the North Avenue area in 1888 and served as a major town employer until closing during the Great Depression. The Mass Central Railroad, the third to serve Weston, commenced service in 1881. Its tracks ran east-west through the center of town.

The semi-rural landscape of Weston and convenience to rail transportation also made the town attractive as a summer resort area. The shingle-style Drabbington Lodge, once a popular summer resort, remains on North Avenue, now a senior living community.

II. The Estate Era

Development of country estates in Weston began on a small scale in the 1860s and was widespread by 1900. Weston attracted wealthy businessmen with its convenience to Boston, quiet country atmosphere, and low taxes, as well as the beauty of the area and that same rocky topography that in earlier years had proved unsuitable for farming. By the turn of the century, Weston was described as a "country town of residences of the first class."

Population growth and the influence of large estate owners led to the construction of new institutional buildings, such as the fieldstone First Parish Church (1888), designed by the nationally-known Boston firm of Peabody and Stearns and located on the site of earlier church meetinghouses. The first library (1899), central fire station (1914), and present town hall (1917) were also built during the estate era. Coinciding with the town's Bicentennial in 1913, an ambitious Town Improvement Plan began the process of creating the Town Green by draining and landscaping an existing wetland.

Suburban development began in the early 20th century and increased with the advent of the automobile. Two prominent estates, the Winsor estate on Meadowbrook Road and Hubbard estate on the south side, were subdivided after World War I. In the 1910s and 1920s, estates were purchased for educational use (Regis College and Weston College/Campion Center) and as golf courses (Weston Golf Club and Pine Brook Country Club). Many other large properties remained as open farm fields or woodlands through the Great Depression and World War II.

Major public works projects constructed as part of the water supply system for Greater Boston include the Weston Aqueduct and Reservoir (1901-03) and Hultman Aqueduct and Norumbega Reservoir (1938-40).

III. Post-War Growth

After World War II, construction of Routes 128 and the Massachusetts Turnpike, along with pent-up demand for housing, led to subdivision of former estate properties and farms throughout the town. Exponential growth and proactive efforts to control and guide this growth to preserve the Town's rural character characterized the postwar period. In the early 1950s, the Selectmen initiated two important growth-control measures: a zoning bylaw increasing the amount of land needed to build and a land-acquisition policy reducing the amount of developable land by purchasing it for the town (see next section). The new bylaw, passed in 1954, established four residential classes, including the new "A" district of 60,000 square feet.

The town constructed more than half of its housing stock in the thirty years between 1950 and 1979, consisting largely of single-family houses on increasingly expensive land. Population growth brought increased demand for town services including schools, and five new schools were constructed between 1950 and 1969. In recent years, the major trend is for many of these post-war houses to be replaced by much larger houses.

IV. History of Conservation Efforts

As is the case in many Boston suburbs, acquisition of land for conservation purposes began in the 1950s in response to the post-World War II building (and baby) boom. Prior to that time, there was little publicly-owned land in Weston, particularly for passive open space purposes – the 1950 Town Report lists just 38 acres of parkland and 25 acres of general use municipal land. However, between 1942 and 1960, as the town's population nearly doubled from 4,375 residents to 8,261, the need to protect public land for passive recreation, active recreation, forestry, and wildlife became apparent. Weston responded to intense suburban development pressure by purchasing hundreds of acres of conservation and municipal-purpose land and acquiring conservation restrictions and trail easements.

Weston's process of acquiring land for conservation began in 1953 with the establishment of the Town Forest Committee. The new committee developed proposals to acquire land on Highland Street and in the Jericho Town Forest area. Initially, the guiding philosophy was to acquire backland at a bargain price, with the idea that proximity to the town forest made the frontage more valuable to the owner. In his 1996 publication *Walks on Weston Conservation Land*, Elmer Jones discusses other criteria used over the next decades to decide what to buy:

"Hilltops were purchased as they are usually bedrock outcrops and require great engineering efforts to establish a house site. Wetlands and streams were purchased as they are catchment areas for the water supply of Cambridge and of Wellesley. Wetlands and streams are esthetically attractive and important habitat for flowers and wildlife. In the 1990s, there has been an effort to preserve important viewsapes." - *Walks on Weston Conservation Land*, Elmer Jones (1996)

1955 was a milestone year in the history of Weston land conservation. The Town made its first purchase, from the Trustees of the Charles J. Paine Estate, of 147 acres on Highland Street to establish the Highland Town Forest. That same year, Marion Farnsworth donated 40 acres to begin the Jericho Town Forest, which would become the town's largest. In 1960, the Town bought 48 acres off Sudbury Road from the family of Beriah L. Ogilvie to begin Ogilvie Town Forest, the third largest.

To foster development of open space and a trail system in the Town of Weston, the Weston Forest and Trail Association (WFTA) also formed in 1955. WFTA was one of the pioneer organizations in Massachusetts dedicated to the preservation and conservation of open land. WFTA began producing town-wide trail maps as early as 1964 and continues this service today (available for purchase in the Conservation Office at Town Hall and at its office in the Josiah Smith Tavern). WFTA owns over 200 acres of conservation land, conservation restrictions, and trail easements, and since the 1970s, maintains all of Weston's trails⁷. Throughout its history, WFTA has offered nature walks and conservation-themed lectures for the public.

In 1960, the Town voted to establish a permanent Open Areas Committee to "study and advise on all aspects of the matter of open areas in the Town, including land acquisition."⁸ Following allowance from State legislation, Weston established the Weston Conservation Commission in 1961, taking over the function of the Open Areas Committee. The Commission's charge was to acquire and manage open space as well as to uphold new statewide wetlands regulations.

In 1972, the Town adopted the Germeshausen-Uyterhoeven proposal authorizing bond issues of up to \$2.8 million for acquisition of land for conservation purposes. In 1974, the Town voted for an additional \$1.3 million for open space preservation. In 1977, the former Weston College seminary became the Campion Center, and in the process, the Town purchased 146 acres of former college land, including College Pond and fields on Merriam Street, with the help of the Massachusetts Self-Help Grant (now

⁷ Starting in 2021, the WFTA and Conservation Department entered into a more collaborative trail management arrangement, with the Conservation Department running monthly stewardship work events, the WFTA convening a volunteer "chainsaw brigade" to deal with downed trees on trails, and in 2024, both organizations funding the creation of a seasonal paid trail crew program.

⁸ 1960 Town of Weston Annual Report, Weston: Town Clerk.

called LAND Grant- Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity) — the first time that outside funds were sought for assistance with land protection in Weston.

The Town took another major step in preserving Weston’s open space in 1986, authorizing a \$3.8 million bond issue to purchase Case Field, the centrally located 36-acre parcel of former Case family land owned by Harvard University’s Arnold Arboretum. Since its inception in 1981, the local non-profit organization Land’s Sake had been farming this land, which is known as the “40-Acre Field.” Land’s Sake has been a regional leader in sustainable land management, organic agriculture, and farm-based education since that time. Land’s Sake currently engages thousands of youth each year through a variety of school and farm-based programming, in addition to running its farming and forestry operations on a number of Town-owned properties. From 1981 to 2012, Land’s Sake also maintained 32 Town-owned open fields. A private contractor hired by the Conservation Commission now manages this work.

In 1989, care of all Weston town forests was transferred from the Town Forest Committee to the Conservation Commission, and the Town Forest Committee dissolved. Since that time, no administrative distinction between town forests and other Town-owned conservation land exists.

In 1997, by vote of the Massachusetts State Legislature, twenty-two acres of conservation land along the Massachusetts Turnpike was taken by eminent domain for construction of the 115-million-gallon Norumbega Covered Water Storage Tank. The town received \$3 million in compensation, using part of the funds to purchase open fields on Highland Street near the corner of Love Lane. The Town also received land on Ash Street adjacent to Weston Reservoir.

In 2001, Weston passed the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which allows the Town to raise funds through a property tax surcharge matched by distributions from the State’s Community Preservation Trust Fund. CPA funds can be used for acquiring open space, preserving historic resources, developing affordable housing, and acquiring or developing recreational facilities. Since its passage, Weston Town Meeting has approved CPA money for a wide variety of open space and recreational projects.

In 2006, Town Meeting voted to purchase the 62.5-acre Case Estates property from Harvard’s Arnold Arboretum for conservation, municipal purposes, and other uses. Prior to closing, however, environmental contaminants were discovered, and ensuing disagreements on financial implications and remediation plans delayed the closing for many years. An agreement was finally reached in 2015 and remediation efforts began. The Town of Weston closed on the property in 2016. See **Map 6: Unique Features** for more information about the Case Estates.

Purchases of land for conservation purposes have slowed over time as land values have escalated and larger tracts have been protected or developed. Consequently, conservation efforts have shifted focus. The Conservation Commission and WFTA continue to work independently and together to protect trail easements and conservation restrictions and to acquire parcels in fee as they become available. At the same time, increasing efforts are directed toward the maintenance and stewardship of already-protected open space, such as field edge restoration, boundary marking, encroachment monitoring, pond preservation, invasive species management, and native habitat restoration projects. Since the last OSRP, major open space progress in Weston includes the purchase of Wellington Gateway Farm, formerly privately owned, and the construction of three miles of the Mass Central Rail Trail.

V. Historic Preservation

Weston is proud of its historic resources, scenic roads, and rural ambiance. Concern for architectural preservation can be dated to the turn of the 20th century, when the mid-18th century Elisha Jones house was moved twice, remaining at its present location at 22 Church Street. The Weston Historical Commission formed in 1968 and began an inventory of historic buildings along Boston Post Road and North and South Avenues.

Presently, Weston has one Local Historic District (Crescent Street), eighteen historic resources protected by perpetual preservation restriction and several more in progress, nine multi-property districts listed on the National Register Historic Districts, and seven houses individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. See **Section 4F: Scenic Resources and Unique Environments** and **Map 6A: Historic Resources** for more information about these resources. The Town of Weston owns historically significant structures including the Town Hall, Old Library, Josiah Smith Tavern, Isaac Fiske Law Office, Case House, Central and Kendal Green Fire Stations, and Melone Homestead.

The Town designates thirty-seven roads in Weston as “Scenic Roads” due to their aesthetic value and historic significance. Two types of bylaws related to scenic roads, one protecting stone walls and street trees and the second requiring Planning Board review of proposed new construction on scenic roads. See **Section 3D: Growth and Development Patterns** for more information.

Weston’s passage of the Demolition Delay Bylaw in 1998 created a review process whereby houses constructed before 1945 are evaluated by the Weston Historical Commission for significance and, if so determined, can be protected from whole or partial exterior demolition for six months. In 2015, Weston extended the delay to twelve months. The Demolition Delay process has helped in protecting historic resources, such as the 1934 early modernist house located at 74 Sudbury Road and 317 Glen Road, which dates to 1812. In both cases, the delay resulted in locating a buyer who wanted to preserve the house rather than demolish it.

The Weston Historical Commission uses Community Preservation Act funds for various historic preservation projects, such as renovation of two Town-owned buildings, the Melone Homestead and Fiske Law Office; restoration of the exterior of two other Town-owned buildings, the Josiah Smith Tavern and Old Library and town cemeteries; purchase of preservation restrictions on several significant privately owned houses; creation of a town archive in the basement of Town Hall; and funding for the Town Center Improvement Study.



3C. Population Characteristics

The following section uses information from the U.S. Census Bureau as reported in the Weston Unified Plan, a concurrent planning effort in Weston.

Certain population characteristics described below may influence open space and recreation needs in Weston, such as a need for opportunities for young adults and adults over 70, improved language accessibility in the distribution of OSR information and signage, and preparation for an uptick in usage of OSR lands and facilities overall as the population grows.

I. Population Density & Growth

With almost 12,000 residents in 2020,⁹ Weston has been growing slowly since 2000. Compared to surrounding communities like Wellesley (29,550), Wayland (13,943), and Sudbury (18,934), Weston is smaller than its neighbors. Further, Weston's population density (680.3 people per square mile) is lower than county estimates (1,984.3 people per square mile) and state estimates (896.4 people per square mile).¹⁰ According to the 2020 Decennial Census, Weston has a total population of 11,851. This shows a slight increase from 2010, when Weston had a population of 11,261, and 2000, when Weston had a population of 11,469. In recent years, the town experienced a dip in growth. According to estimates from the American Community Survey, Weston's population in 2023 is 11,443.¹¹ Weston has also become more diverse over time, although it still has less diversity than the county and state. 76.1 percent of Weston's residents are white, compared to 69 percent of Middlesex County residents and 70.7 percent of Massachusetts residents. In 2013, an estimated 84.2 percent of Weston residents were white.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2020, Table P1; U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2010, Table P1; U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2000, Table DP1.

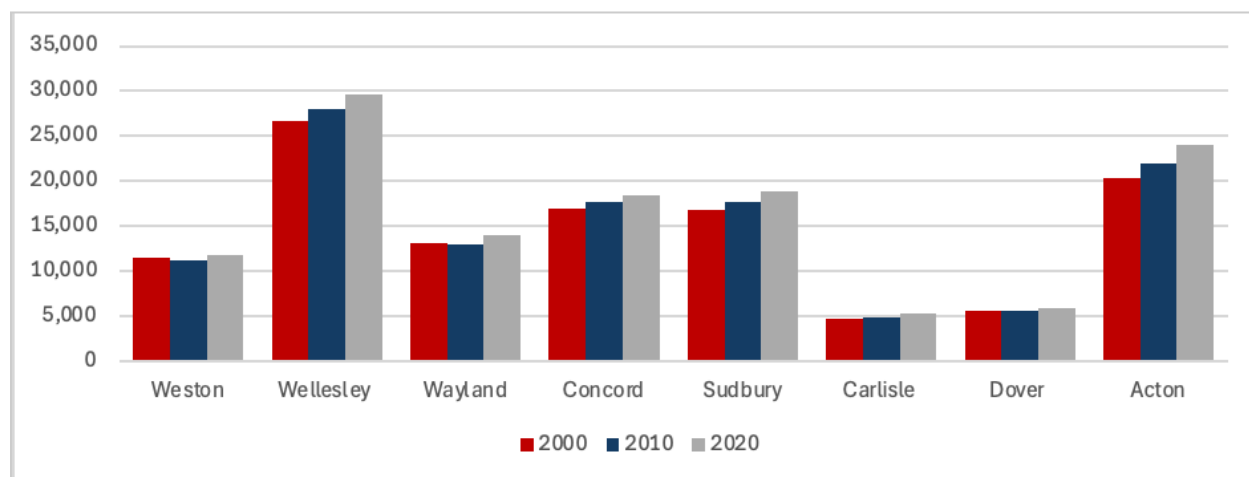
¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2023, Table SE: A0002.

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2023, Table SE: A0001.

Compared to surrounding communities, Weston has seen less population growth between 2000 and 2020 (**Figure 3.2**). Weston is also growing more slowly than its neighboring communities, with only a 3.22% increase in population between 2000 and 2020.

Figure 3.2: Population Change 2000-2020

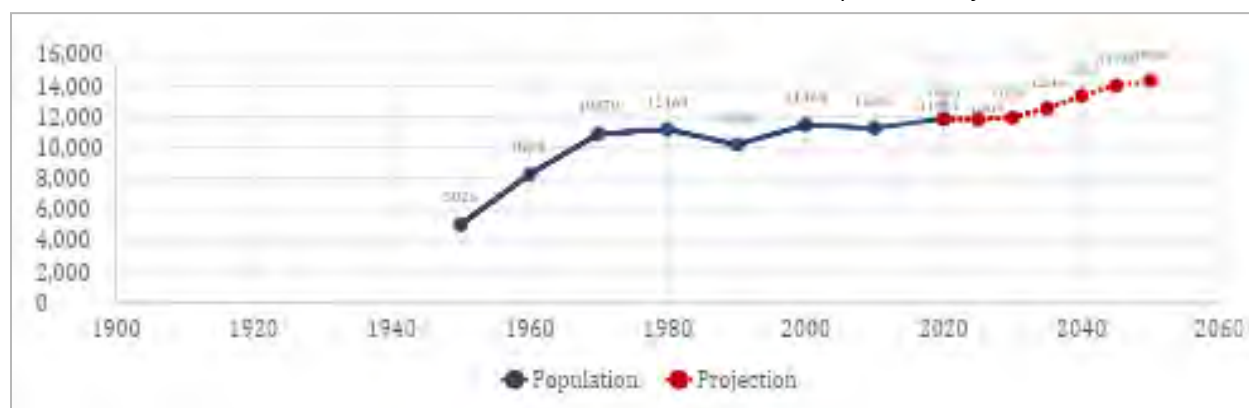
Source: US Census Bureau Decennial Census



The Donahue Institute¹² at the University of Massachusetts estimates that in the coming decades, Weston's population is expected to increase to 14,236 by 2050 (**Figure 3.3**).¹³ Most recently updated in 2024, this projection accounts for any potential post-pandemic population changes that have been seen in and around Boston and surrounding towns.

Figure 3.3: Weston Population, Historic and Projected

Source: US Decennial Census, 1950-2020; UMass Donahue Institute, Population Projections 2030-2050



¹² UMass Donahue Institute produces population projections for all municipalities in Massachusetts, modeling future growth based on assumptions about how past or recent trends may influence it. These calculations include fertility, birth dates, mortality, and net migration.

¹³ UMass Donahue Institute, 2024.

II. Population Age Distribution

Weston's population is older than the county and the state.¹⁴ Almost one fifth (19.1%) of Weston is older than 65, compared to 16 percent for Middlesex County and 17.5 percent in Massachusetts.¹⁵ More than a quarter of Weston's population (26.2%) is younger than 18. In comparison, only 10% of Weston's population is aged 18-24, and 13.9% of Weston's total population is between 25 and 44 years old. Nearly half of Weston's population (49.8%) is 45 or older, with 30.7% aged 45 to 64.

Across age cohorts, from 2013 to 2023, Weston residents aged 18 to 24 and 65+ experienced positive population growth. Those aged 0-18; 25-44; and 45-64 had negative population growth from 2013 to 2023 (**Figure 3.4**).¹⁶

Figure 3.4: Weston Population by Age, 2013-2023

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2013, 2018, 2023 Table A01001



III. Family Income

Income in Weston is higher than the county and state estimates for both mean and median income. In families with two workers (spouses), the mean income in Weston is estimated at \$520,266. For families with two workers (not spouses), the mean income is estimated at \$327,895. Families with one worker have an estimated mean family income of \$505,984, and families with no workers have an estimated

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2013-2023, Table A03001.

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2013-2023, Table B01001.

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2013; 2018; 2023, Table A01001.

mean income of \$185,020.¹⁷ In Middlesex County, the median income is estimated to be \$91,725, and the mean income is estimated at \$123,541. At the state level, the 2023 median income is \$78,387, and the mean income is \$106,233.

IV. Environmental Justice Populations

Environmental Justice (EJ) populations are defined by one or more of the following criteria:

- The annual median household income is now more than 65 percent of the statewide annual median income,
- Minorities comprise 40 percent or more of the population,
- 25 percent or more of households lack English proficiency, and/or
- Minorities comprise 25 percent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 percent of the statewide annual median household income as determined by the Secretary in accordance with 2021 An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy.

No environmental justice populations lie within the town of Weston (**Map 2: Environmental Justice Populations**). However, Weston borders EJ communities along its eastern border with Waltham, and many communities near Weston have one or more EJ populations. With the quality and quantity of open space and recreation areas in Weston, members of EJ populations may utilize these resources.

¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2023, Table S1902.

CONCORD

Goose Pond

Map 2: Environmental Justice Populations

Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Weston

Environmental Justice Populations

MBTA Lines

Commuter Rail

T

MBTA Stations

Water Bodies

Rivers and Streams

0

0.5

1 Miles

N

This map is for general planning uses only. The data used to make it are not adequate for delineating resource areas or determining legal or zoning district boundaries. The map should not be used for engineering or survey purposes. Exercise caution when interpreting the information on this map.

LEXINGTON

BELMONT

WALTHAM

WATERTOWN

WESTON

WAYLAND

NEWTON

NEEDHAM



Note: There are no environmental justice populations within the Town of Weston. However, Weston neighbors EJ populations in many surrounding towns.

3D. Growth and Development Patterns

Note: This section includes data from the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) data available at the time of writing (2023). During the OSRP's completion and review period, new ACS data became available and the town adopted zoning changes to comply with the MBTA Communities Law. The section was updated to include reference to these zoning changes, but data from ACS and assessor's records (specifically in the zoning and housing sections) was not updated and do not reflect these changes.

Weston is a sought after place to live, which can be attributed in part to open space and community character, along with other desirable features and its location in the Boston metro area. However, there is a continuing discussion between the homeowners who are looking for large, grand homes and those residents who wish to preserve a sense of place that includes more modest homes that blend into the landscape. Weston is working to integrate its "semi-rural and pastoral character" with the desire for more affordable and diverse housing types. Many Town employees cannot afford to live in Weston, and many young people who grew up in Weston cannot afford to buy homes and raise their children here.

I. Long-term Development Patterns

Weston began as a rural farming community and grew slowly by supplementing the farm economy with small mills and commercial businesses serving travelers. The town lacked sufficient waterpower for the large late 19th century mills that contributed to the growth of nearby communities like Waltham. Beginning in the 1860's, farmland was bought up by Boston businessmen who established large estates, thus preserving the rural landscape. Some estates were later sold to institutions that preserved the large tracts of land. The few early suburban neighborhoods were within walking distance of the town center or one of the three railroad lines. Weston's opposition to street railways in the early 20th century, along with its reliance on septic systems instead of public sewers, were two factors that prevented more dense development. Much of the town remained undeveloped until after World War II.

Today, single-family housing accounts for 5,137 acres of Weston's total 11,108 acreage, with an average of over 1.5 acres per lot. Coupled with land dedicated to open space – over 2,300 acres – much of Weston is either single-family houses or open space. Over 60% of land in Weston is currently tree-covered, wetland, or cropland. Much of the remaining land left for development is marginal and contains wetlands, steep slopes, or ledge.

Two patterns of development are occurring with some frequency. One trend is toward major enlargement of existing structures. A second trend is the replacement of older, smaller houses with new houses much larger than the original "tear-downs." Often the new larger homes come with extensive formal landscaping, expanses of lawn, backyard "playscapes," pools, and even tennis or basketball courts.

Zoning

Previous Bylaws Zoning in Weston

In the early 1920's, Weston, along with other Massachusetts communities, took the first steps toward a comprehensive zoning plan. The need for planning was due in large part to rapid changes brought about by the increase in motor vehicles. Already, the 1924 Town Report noted that most cars driving through Weston were using it as a "gateway" to Boston. Interestingly, the report also notes that the Town might

wish to acquire "lands of scenic interest like those upon some of the high hills... and along the borders of ponds, streams and meadows, where land-portions have depended to a considerable degree for attractiveness upon natural landscapes ... As the town builds up more closely, the question will arise to what degree the townspeople are willing to allow these landscapes to disappear as land is cut into house lots."

Weston's first zoning bylaws, enacted in 1928, established the pattern for development of Weston as a community of single-family homes. Almost the entire land area of the town was reserved for single-family use. Double houses and boarding houses were allowed in only a few small areas where such housing already existed. Similarly, only a small part of the town was set aside for business and industrial use; and, again, these uses were permitted only where small businesses and industries were already in operation. In this first zoning bylaw, the required lot size was only 10,000 square feet, but the ordinance also included a requirement that the square footage of the first floor of a house could not exceed 40% of the lot area. Later zoning changes increased required lot size and dropped regulations about the ratio of house to lot size. Presently, there is a size trigger for residential gross floor area (RGFA) review (see below), but it is not a strict cap on house size.

The construction of Routes 128 and the Massachusetts Turnpike in the early 1950s, combined with the post-war demand for housing, led to increased development. The creation of the two town forests, begun at that time, was part of a strong citizen effort, using both Town and private funds, to buy land and thus preserve the semi-rural atmosphere. In 1954, the Town revised its zoning bylaws, establishing the four residential districts that still exist today. One specific goal of the revised bylaw, as stated in the Town Report of that year, was to "prevent overcrowding of land and undue concentration of population."

Current Zoning Bylaws in Weston

Weston's zoning bylaw remains rooted in the mid-twentieth century framework described above. Although the zoning bylaw now includes additional zoning districts, they largely reflect the same use categories established in 1928, and the minimum lot size requirements for single-family districts remain those adopted in 1954 (see [Map 3: Zoning](#)). Today, the zoning bylaw provides for:

- Four single-family residential districts
- Two multi-family residential districts
- Two business districts
- A commercial district
- Two office, research, and development districts
- Six overlay districts related to wetlands and flood plains (two), aquifer protection, renewable energy, and personal wireless services (two)
- MBTA Communities Act overlay zones (four)

See [Map 3: Zoning](#) for more information about the location of the zones discussed below.

Despite this range of districts, Weston's zoning is fundamentally structured to support single-family residential development and land conservation. Single-family housing and some combination of open space, parks, and playgrounds predominate in Weston. However, notable diversions from this prevalence exist in Weston, largely due to state laws. The newly adopted MBTA Communities Act overlay districts will represent a notable shift from this pattern by allowing multi-family housing by right in designated

areas. Weston is also home to a number of large institutions who have built under the Dover Amendment, a state law that exempts certain high-priority land uses, such as religious and educational uses, from some forms of local regulation.¹⁸ Due to the Affordable Homes Act, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are now allowed by right in all of Weston's zoning districts that allow single-family homes by right. Moreover, developments constructed under the state statute Chapter 40B, which enables local Zoning Boards of Appeals to approve affordable housing developments under more flexible rules if at least 20-25% of the units have long-term affordability restrictions, will continue to be allowed anywhere in Weston until the town meets state affordable housing requirements.¹⁹

Single Family Residence Districts A, B, C, and D

Weston zoning provides for four single-family residential districts. The Single Family Residence A district includes seventy percent of the community's land; the other three districts comprise 18%, 7%, and 2% of the community's land, respectively, for a total of 97% of Weston's land zoned for single-family houses. All four districts allow single-family dwellings by right and accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Dimensional regulations differentiate the four Single Residence Districts. District A provides for the largest lots and deepest setbacks, decreasing with each district down to District D, with the smallest lot and setback requirements. District A, again the land use zone with the highest percentage of parcels in Weston, requires over an acre of land for each lot – 60,000 square feet, with 60-foot front and 45-foot side setbacks. The dimensional regulations for all four Single Residence Districts are shown in **Table 3.1**. In addition to the lot dimensional regulations, the four Single Residence districts are limited in height to the lesser of 37.5 feet or two-and-a-half stories for pitched roofs, or 32 feet or three stories for flat roofs. This does not include ornamental or accessory features, which can extend up to an additional twenty feet.

Table 3.1: Single Residence Districts Dimensional Regulations				
	District			
	A	B	C	D
Minimum lot area in sq. ft.	60,000	40,000	30,000	20,000
Minimum street frontage, and minimum lot width at street setback line	250 ft.	200 ft.	175 ft.	150 ft.
Minimum setback from street side line	60 ft.	50 ft.	40 ft.	30 ft.
Minimum setback from street center line	85 ft.	75 ft.	65 ft.	55 ft.
Minimum setback from lot line	45 ft.	35 ft.	25 ft.	20 ft.

¹⁸ Dover Amendment Protection of Religious and Educational Land Uses, Mass.gov, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dover-amendment-protection-of-religious-and-educational-land-uses>.

¹⁹ Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, "Chapter 40B Planning and Information," Mass.gov, <https://www.mass.gov/chapter-40b-planning-and-information>.

Flexible Development

The zoning bylaw allows for some dimensional relief in all four Single Residence Districts through the Flexible Development Special Permit process. Flexible Development allows for a subdivision to create the same number of lots for single-family dwellings as would be allowed under a conventional subdivision drawn to match the dimensional requirements shown in **Table 3.1**. However, the Planning Board sets the actual dimensions of the lots within the Flexible Development subdivision as part of the Special Permit process. A perpetual restriction must be recorded at the registry of deeds or with the land court preventing future development of areas the flexible development leaves open.

The zoning bylaw notes that this process allows for the preservation and protection of existing natural features, historic resources, and the “semi-rural appearance” of Weston. Adopted in 1994, the bylaw recognized that as more of Weston was subdivided, traditional subdivisions on the remaining land might impact unique features the Town wishes to preserve. Historic buildings constructed before zoning and natural features are often in the “wrong” place on a lot when modern zoning and subdivision regulations are applied. Dimensional relief processes like Weston’s Flexible Development Special Permit process outline a clearer path to preservation for property owners looking to subdivide their property.

Multiple Dwelling Districts A and B

Weston also has two Multiple Dwelling Districts with requirements shown in **Table 3.2**. Notably, both Multiple Dwelling Districts do not allow multi-family developments by right. Developments of four units or less require site plan approval, while those of more than four units require site plan approval and a special permit. Other uses allowed include landscape management and single-family dwellings (by right), privately owned and operated parks and playgrounds (site plan approval), philanthropic and charitable institutions (site plan approval and special permit), and long-term care facilities (site plan approval and special permit).

The zoning map does not currently include Multiple Dwelling District A. Multiple Dwelling District B covers two parcels, the Stonegate condominium development on Jericho Road and the Merriam Village apartments.

Table 3.2: Multiple Dwelling Districts Dimensional Regulations		
	District	
	A	B
Minimum lot area in sq. ft.	240,000	600,000
Minimum street frontage on existing public way	200 ft.	100 ft.
Minimum setback from street side line of existing public way	100 ft.	65 ft.
Minimum setback from street center line of existing public way	125 ft.	NA
Minimum setback from lot line	100 ft.	65 ft.
Square feet of land per unit	30,000	10,000
Number of units per building	2 to 8	4 to 8
Buffer maintained in natural state, or landscaped, around perimeter of lot	50 ft.	25 ft.
Minimum garage distance from lot line	65 ft.	45 ft.

Table 3.2: Multiple Dwelling Districts Dimensional Regulations		
Minimum setback from side line of road located within the lot	20 ft.	20 ft.
Minimum setback from center line of road located within the lot	45 ft.	45 ft.
Maximum average number of bedrooms per unit	2	NA
Minimum floor area of living space in square feet	750	750

Multi-Family Districts

Multi-family housing is now allowed in Weston by right in four areas (described below). This Zoning Bylaw Amendment was introduced to comply with the state MBTA Communities Act.

In January of 2021, Governor Charlie Baker signed the MBTA Communities Act into law. This mandated that all communities served by the MBTA, or adjacent to a community served by the MBTA, have zoning that allows for multi-family housing by right. The Law sets a minimum gross density of 15 units per acre for a district no more than 0.5 miles from the community's MBTA station. For communities with commuter rail service, including Weston, the district must include a minimum of 50 acres. The MBTA Communities Act does not mandate that communities build housing.

The MBTA's Fitchburg Commuter Rail line stops at the Kendal Green station in Weston.²⁰ The town previously did not have any land use zone that allows multi-family housing by right. The MBTA Communities Act requires Weston to zone for 750 units of multi-family housing by right, with 40 percent of the parcels with this zoning located within a half-mile of the Kendal Green MBTA station. Throughout 2024, the Town's planning staff and Planning Board worked to develop zoning that would be compliant with the state law. However, in December of 2024 Weston Town Meeting rejected the zoning that was presented shortly before the community's compliance deadline of December 31, 2024. Due to other issues surrounding the state law, Weston's new compliance deadline to rezone for the 750 units was extended to July 14, 2025.

In October, 2025, Town Meeting approved the 3A zoning changes to comply with the new law and submitted to the state. The Town created four 3A overlay districts:

- Merriam Village - site of the Merriam Village senior living development;
- 751 Boston Post Road, with 172 units already under construction;
- CharlesRiver Recover/75 Norumbega Road - the site of an assisted living and rehabilitation facility; and
- BPX/133 Boston Post Road - which recently completed permitting for a phased multi-unit residential development.²¹ This district has a development agreement on the parcel's deed

²⁰ Reopened in late 2024, the Silver Hill stop on the same line is considered a "flag" stop by the MBTA and thus not counted as part of the MBTA Communities Act. Per the Planning Board's January 28, 2025 letter to the Select Board, <https://www.westonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/39610/Planning-Board-Statement-to-Select-Board-Final-Report-1-28-25-PDF>.

²¹ "3A MBTA Multifamily Zoning," Town of Weston, accessed November 6, 2025, <https://www.westonma.gov/1884/3A-MBTA-Multifamily-Zoning>.

setting design parameters like setbacks, height, and number of units with the current owner which will apply to all future owners.

Commercial & Business Districts

Weston's two Business Districts are located in or adjacent to historic zones, with the exception of the land at the Route 20/Route 128 interchange. These districts do not allow businesses by right, only open space and privately owned and operated parks and playgrounds. Additional uses require site plan approval or site plan approval and a special permit.

Business District A, the main Town Center, covers properties on the south side of Boston Post Road between Concord Road and Town House Road. Business District B includes a few properties in the same area, a large parcel on the east side of town at the Route 20-Route 128 interchange, and a single parcel on North Avenue with some neighborhood commercial buildings.

The Business Districts cover Weston's limited historic commercial area along Boston Post Road, a traditional "downtown" area of walkable shops. The dimensional requirements of the districts mandate that at least 25 percent of individual lots in the districts remain open space and require front and side setbacks that many of the historic commercial buildings in the area likely do not meet (**Table 3.3**) but give the town the ability to maintain the historic viewscape and density.

Table 3.3: Business Districts A and B Dimensional Regulations				
	District			
	A		B	
Minimum street frontage	50 ft.		50 ft.	
Minimum street setback	15 ft.		25 ft.	
Minimum lot line setback	10 ft.		10 ft.	
Maximum building coverage	25%		25%	
Maximum floor to lot ratio	1:2		1:2	
Maximum parking coverage	50%		50%	
Maximum height	< 35 acres	> 35 acres	< 5 acres	5 to 35 acres
(based on lot size within the district, the lesser of the given amounts)	35' or 2 ½ stories	52' or 4 stories	35' or 2 ½ stories	45' or 3 stories

Some minor use and dimensional changes distinguish the Commercial District from the two Business Districts. It does not allow businesses by right, only open space and privately owned and operated parks and playgrounds. The district currently includes only two parcels, both on Warren Avenue, the former long-time home of the B. L. Ogilvie & Sons lumber yard and a private indoor gun club.

The Office and Research & Development Districts A and B limit by right uses to open space and public parks and playgrounds. Combined, these districts cover four parcels in the community, one in the northeast corner of town inaccessible via roads in Weston (District A) and three in the southeast corner of town alongside the Mass Pike-Route 128 interchange (District B). Dimensional regulations distinguish

the two districts (**Table 3.4**). District A is for larger projects, while District B has no minimum lot size and smaller setbacks.

Table 3.4: Office and Research & Development Districts A and B Dimensional Regulations		
	District	
	A	B
Minimum street frontage	400 ft.	50 ft.
Minimum street setback	150 ft.	25 ft.
Minimum lot line setback	200 ft.	10 ft.
Maximum building coverage	15%	25%
Maximum floor to lot ratio	1:2.5	1:2
Maximum parking coverage	25%	50%
Minimum lot size in square feet	600,000	NA
Natural or landscaped buffer	65 ft.	NA
Maximum height	40 ft.	45 ft.

Residential Gross Floor Area (RGFA) Limits and Review

In response to the increasing size of new single-family houses, and the expansion of existing houses, in 1997 the Town adopted a zoning bylaw amendment that requires a Planning Board site plan review of single-family houses and their accessory structures based on the residential gross floor area (RGFA) of the house if it exceeds 10% of the lot size per zone. The RGFA calculation includes any finished built area above grade, including garages, accessory buildings, and enclosed porches.²²

For any house constructed after October 29, 1998 to qualify for by right construction, the RGFA cannot exceed the greater of 3,500 square feet or ten percent of the lot area, up to a maximum of 6,000 square feet. If above this limit, the proposed house will need site plan approval through the Planning Board. This review process also applies to houses which exceed the 10% due to demolition and replacement of more than 50% of a house's walls, 75% of the roof, or any addition to a house constructed after October 29, 1998 which increases the RGFA to more than 10%.

Scenic Roads Bylaw

In recognition of and as a way to protect the semi-rural nature of the community, the Town of Weston has adopted two scenic roads bylaws. Article XXIII of the Town's General Bylaws is a Scenic Roads Bylaw adopted under G.L. c. 40, §15C. This state legislation allows communities to designate scenic roads, along which activities such as the removal of trees and stone walls requires review by the Planning Board. Weston's Scenic Roads Bylaw classifies thirty-six of the roads in the community as "scenic roads" under the bylaw.

²² Town of Weston, Zoning Bylaw Information, RGFA Setbacks "Structure," Brochure, <https://www.westonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/281/RGFA-Setbacks-Structure-PDF?bidId=>; Planning Board comments received April 3, 2026.

Separate from the state-enabled Scenic Roads Bylaw, Weston's Zoning Bylaws contain separate provisions for reviewing the construction of buildings along defined scenic roads. While the two lists of defined scenic roads are almost identical, the distinction comes at the state-designated numbered routes. Under the state legislation for scenic roads (G.L. c. 40, §15C), communities cannot designate a state-numbered route as a scenic road unless the entire route lies within the community. Thus, major routes such as routes 20, 30, and 117 are excluded from review under the general by-law (trees and stone walls), but are included in review of the zoning by-law (new construction and additions).

Active Adult Residential Development and Active Adult Residential Cluster

The zoning bylaw allows for two different development opportunities for age-restricted residential development. These districts provide increased density in exchange for open space on the parcel. They require Town Meeting approval of a Concept Plan and then a special permit through the Planning Board.

- Active Adult Residential Developments (AARD) must have at least forty acres and age-restricted to 55+ residents and must set aside 10 percent of the units for low-income residents with no age restriction. AARD projects are allowed in Single Family Residence Districts A and B and Business District B.
 - The sixty-nine unit Highland Meadows development on the west side of town was permitted under this bylaw.
- Active Adult Residential Cluster (AARC) projects must be two-and-a-half to four acres and located within 500 feet of an MBTA Commuter Rail station. However, these projects cannot be within one-and-a-half miles of another multi-family residential development. Units are also age-restricted, and 12.5 percent of them must be income-restricted with no age restriction. All four Single Family Residence Districts allow AARC projects.
 - The same Town Meeting that established this district also approved its use for the Village at Silver Hill, eight condominium units at 255 Merriam Street and 11 Hallett Hill Road. The project included the preservation of the historic Charles E. Peakes House within the Silver Hill National Register of Historic Places District.

Special Overlay Districts

Weston's zoning bylaw includes two zoning overlay districts to protect or regulate certain categories of resources pertaining to the OSRP.

- **Wetlands and Flood Plain Protection Districts**

Adopted in 1988, Weston's Wetlands and Flood Plain Protection District zoning overlay requires additional review and protections for work near waterbodies and wetlands. The overlay district was updated at Annual Town Meeting 2025 to incorporate new FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and a Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for Weston. The updated FIRMs and FIS became effective in July 2025. Additionally, the updated overlay district incorporated new FEMA definitions and review standards.

The overlay includes two separate districts, the first focused on waterbodies in the town (District A) and the second based on FEMA flood maps (District B). All work in these areas requires a special permit from the Planning Board. The overlay district does allow for and encourages the maintenance of natural areas and low-chemical uses. District B requires additional compliance

with state and federal regulations and guidelines on flood hazard area construction. See [Section 4C: Water Resources](#) for more information about Weston’s Wetlands Protection Bylaw.

- **Aquifer Protection Overlay Districts**

The Aquifer Protection Overlay District provides additional regulations covering several parcels in the southwest area of town. The overlay district allows the underlying zoning and some additional uses, with special permit requirements geared towards protecting surrounding wetlands, aquifers, and drinking water sources. The special permit process includes additional application materials and more detailed review by Town boards such as the Board of Health, Conservation Commission, and Board of Water Commissioners. The overlay district expressly prohibits a long list of intensive, chemical-related, and noxious uses.

Housing

Weston is a community of single-family homes, with many homes too large and expensive, even compared to adjacent towns, for people who prefer a smaller house or who cannot afford an expensive house. According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 2023 Five-Year Estimates, detached single-family houses make up nearly 88 percent of all houses in Weston, while multi-family units make up fewer than 10 percent. Weston’s share of single-family homes greatly surpasses that of the County (46.9%) and the State (51.4%).²³

This percentage is likely to change considerably in the next few years with the construction of several developments with multiple units within the new 3A districts, which will be reflected in future ACS data.²⁴ In addition, senior housing is being proposed for several large developments on institutional land currently operating under the Dover Amendment. These developments will also increase the number of rental units available dramatically. The increase in Weston’s housing inventory based on the pending new housing units will be discussed and examined in the revised Housing Production Plan currently underway.

II. Open Space-based Infrastructure

During public engagement efforts for this OSRP update and the concurrent Weston Unified Plan, community members stated a desire for more connectivity for non-vehicular travel in town is a top priority and that both the lack of and poor condition of sidewalks is a primary source of dissatisfaction. Residents said they enjoy Weston’s trails for biking and walking, but that other roadways feel unsafe for active transportation.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility

Many of the roads in Weston are narrow, winding, busy, and lacking sidewalks, which makes walking and biking on roadways difficult. Many parents do not feel safe letting their children walk or bike on Weston streets. Together with the town’s low-density development, this often means that children have to be

²³ Social Explorer Tables: ACS 2023 (5-Year Estimates) (SE), ACS 2023 (5-Year Estimates), Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau.

²⁴ List provided by the Weston Planning Board in comments on April 3, 2026: 179 BPR (189 MF units), 133 BPR (380 MF units), Drabbington Inn)17 age-restricted affordable units), 0 Wellesley (6 affordable MF units).

driven to friends' houses and activities and those seeking to enjoy Weston's open space and recreation areas must drive and park.

As they have done for over 30 years, the majority of local residents commute to work in Boston and surrounding areas using private automobiles or the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority commuter rail. More importantly, Weston's main east-west roads are used by commuters from throughout the Metrowest area. Traffic has become one of the major "quality of life" issues for residents as well as for commuters trying to cross Weston at rush hour.

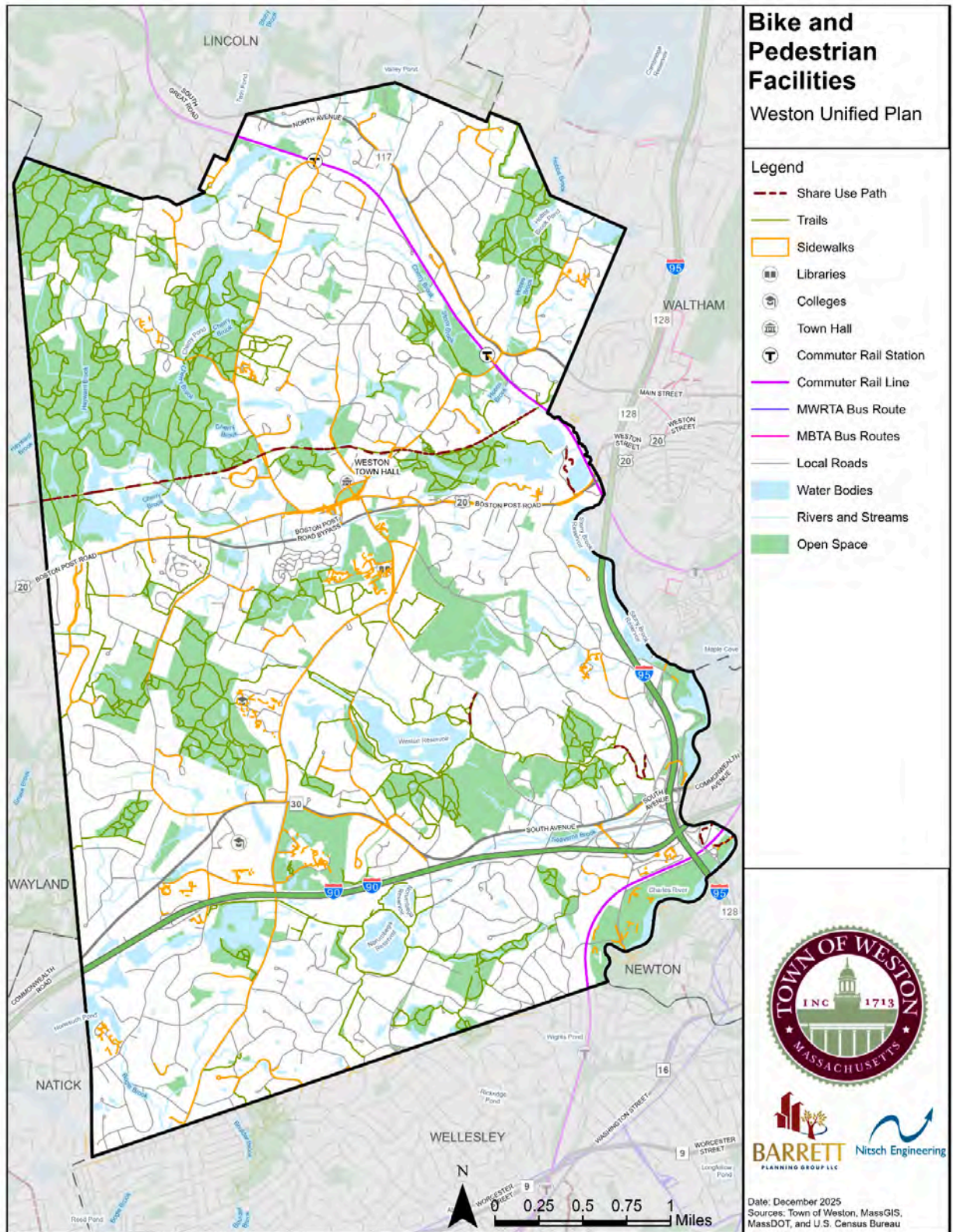
The three major east-west regional arteries (Routes 117, 20, and 30) physically divide Weston into four sections, due to the speed, volume, and noise of commuter traffic and to the width of the roads and highways. These arteries have become obstacles to residential vehicle passage between sections, since only four stoplights mediate arterial crossings in all of Weston. The most injurious effect has been to render bicycle and pedestrian crossing difficult and unsafe at almost any location.

In addition to isolating sections of Weston, all of Weston's secondary and many of its tertiary roads have become "feeder" roads for commuter traffic to and from the arteries. While commuter traffic can be dangerous, the Weston Police Department has the capacity to enforce speed limits only sporadically.

This road infrastructure in Weston means the active transportation infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians is primarily limited to recreational facilities with trail systems (see below). Four of every five of Weston's roadway miles do not have pedestrian facilities. These gaps in the pedestrian network pose barriers for residents who want to walk to their destinations but may not feel safe to do so without designated infrastructure. **Figure 3.5** illustrates the current bike and pedestrian facilities throughout Weston.

As of the writing of this OSRP, a comprehensive Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan for Weston was underway by the Traffic and Sidewalk Committee and Beta Group, Inc. The recommendations of that plan will provide a roadmap for improving non-vehicular transportation in Weston and increase connectivity as desired by the public who participated in this OSRP.

Figure 3.5: Bike and Pedestrian Facilities
Source: Weston Unified Plan, Barrett Planning Group LLC



Regional Trails

The MWRC's ongoing LandLine/MetroWest Trails and Greenways project works on advancing planning, design, and construction of trails and greenways across several communities in the MetroWest. LandLine includes projects in Weston at all phases: complete, in design or construction, envisioned, and network gaps.²⁵

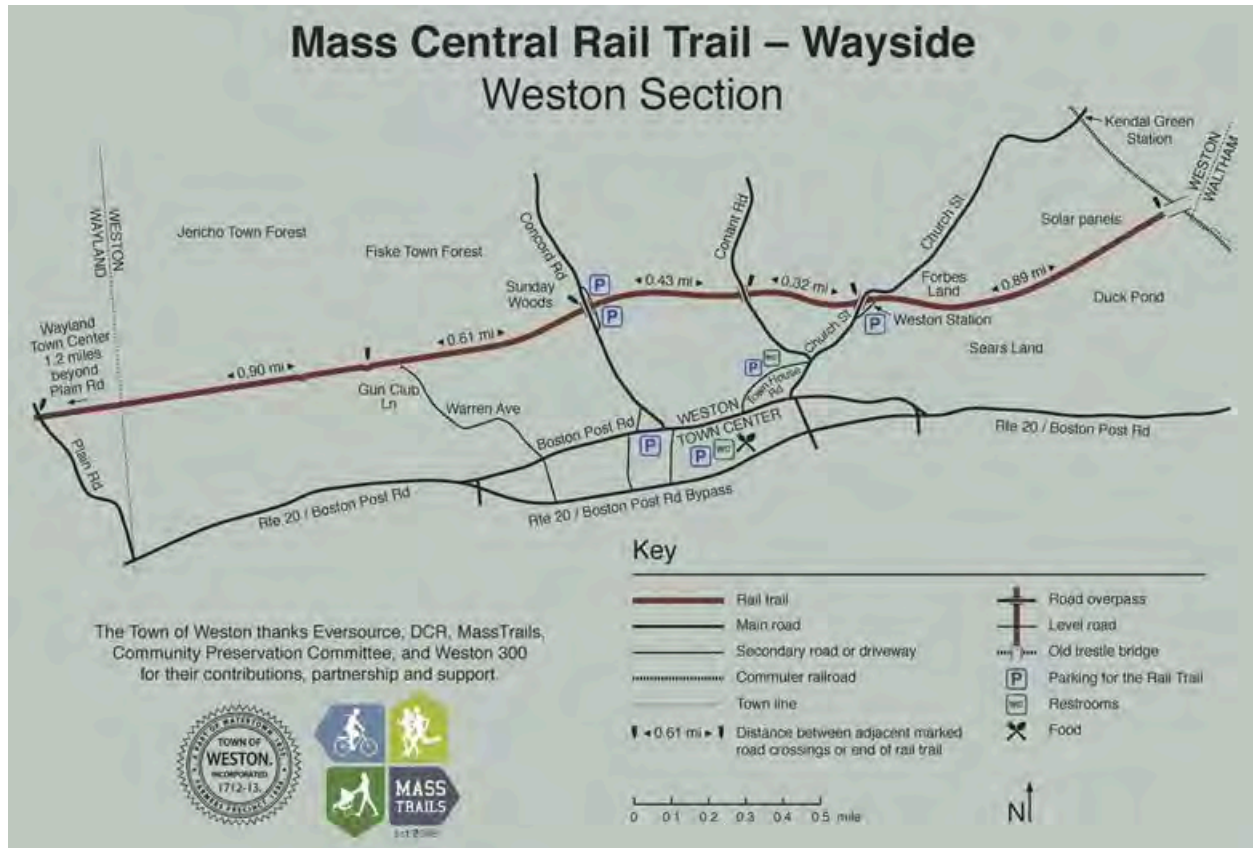
- Mass Rail Trail (completed shared use path)
- Weston Aqueduct (completed foot trail)
- Bay Circuit Alternate (completed foot trail)
- Charles River (envisioned foot trail)
- Charles River (partially completed, partially designed shared use path)
- Charles River (in design/construction bike lane)
- Route 30 (designed shared use path)
- Shared street running north to south from Weston Station along Montevale Road (designed and completed portions along Conant Road north into Lincoln)
- Winter Street into Natick (envisioned shared street)
- Network gap between Route 30 and Norumbega Road
- Network gap across the Charles River into Waltham

The Massachusetts Central Rail Trail (MCRT) is a key component of regional and statewide greenway networks, and the full vision intends to connect pedestrians and bicyclists from Northampton to Boston. Currently, out of the original 104-mile railroad that the trail follows, sixty-three miles are formally open to the public; approximately three miles of the trail run through the northern half of Weston (**Figure 3.6**). Development of the MCRT through Weston is a major improvement for Weston's open space and recreational offerings since the last OSRP. This segment was built as the MCRT Wayside Branch from the Wayland Freight House/Wayland Station to the MassCentral railroad bridge over the Fitchburg commuter rail line. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, with support from local communities including Weston, owns and maintains the trail. Many of the gaps in the full route are in planning and design phases to complete the full route. The segment linking the eastern end in Weston to the continuation in Waltham was complete as of November 2025. The MCRT provides recreational and practical connections between towns, with direct links to over eighteen other multi-use trails.

²⁵ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, "LandLine - Our Plan for a Connected Greenway Network," accessed December 12, 2025, <https://www.mapc.org/transportation/landline/>.

Figure 3.6: Mass Central Rail Trail – Wayside (Weston Section)

Source: Town of Weston



Water & Sewer System

Today, nearly all of Weston gets its drinking water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) system. As is the case for most MWRA communities, Weston's drinking water originates at the Quabbin Reservoir. It travels to the Wachusett Reservoir via the Quabbin Aqueduct. Water from the Wachusett Reservoir is treated at the John J. Carroll Water Treatment Plant in Marlborough, then sent eastward through the MetroWest Water Supply Tunnel to covered storage tanks at Norumbega Reservoir (built in 2004, holds 115 million gallons) and Loring Road (built in 2001, holds 20 million gallons). These covered storage tanks are located at key elevations to maintain appropriate pressure throughout the system. They provide better protection of treated drinking water than the older system of open-air reservoirs.

Since the turn of the century, Weston has played an important role in the Boston metropolitan water supply system. The Weston Aqueduct, built in 1901-3, extends over 12 miles from the Sudbury Dam near Shaft 4 in Southborough to a terminal chamber just west of the Charles River near the Route 128/Mass Pike interchange in Weston. The gravity aqueduct was initially constructed to transport water from the Sudbury Reservoir, but starting in 1940, it supplied water from the Wachusett Reservoir. At present, the Weston Aqueduct and Reservoir are a back-up rather than primary system.

In the 1930's, additional water was needed to supply the growing Boston metropolitan area. Weston was chosen as the site of a second water storage and distribution reservoir, called Norumbega Reservoir (completed in 1940), due to its proximity to the city and its high elevation. The water supply source was still the Wachusett Reservoir. The Hultman Aqueduct, built at this time, extends from the Wachusett Reservoir to Norumbega Reservoir and from there to the metropolitan Boston supply area.

In the 1990s, MWRA began planning to take the Hultman Aqueduct offline, due to significant leaking and aging valves. Failure of the Hultman could have caused nearly complete interruption of Boston's water supply. In November 2003, MWRA completed the Metrowest Water Supply Tunnel and activated it, thereby freeing up the Hultman Aqueduct for repairs. On April 21, 2012, the Hultman Aqueduct repairs were completed and the line was reactivated, providing full redundancy from Southborough to Weston for the first time. This arrangement allows for either line – the Metrowest Water Supply Tunnel or the Hultman Aqueduct – to be taken offline for repairs with little or no interruption of service.

Since 1890, Stony Brook Reservoir in Weston has been part of the water supply system for the city of Cambridge. Hobbs Brook, which runs through Weston, joins Stony Brook to connect the Cambridge Reservoir in Waltham with Stony Brook Reservoir in Weston. Approximately two-thirds of Weston's land area functions as a watershed for the Stony Brook Reservoir. The protection of water quality in the Stony Brook Reservoir was one of the main goals in the acquisition of conservation land from the 1950's to the 1970's.

Conservation land along the banks of local streams and brooks continues to help protect water quality for important regional water supplies in Weston. Agreements between the MWRA and the town allow public access to trails surrounding the Weston Reservoir and the Norumbega Reservoir. See **Section 4C: Water Resources** for more information.

Weston has no municipal sewer system, and the lack of one significantly affects development in Weston. Some of the remaining open land in Weston cannot be developed because it does not pass percolation tests.

Most commercial, governmental, and residential properties in Weston are served by individual septic systems. Title V regulations have resulted in the replacement of old septic systems for many existing homes, a process that is slowly helping to eliminate pollution of groundwater caused by active cesspools and failing septic systems.

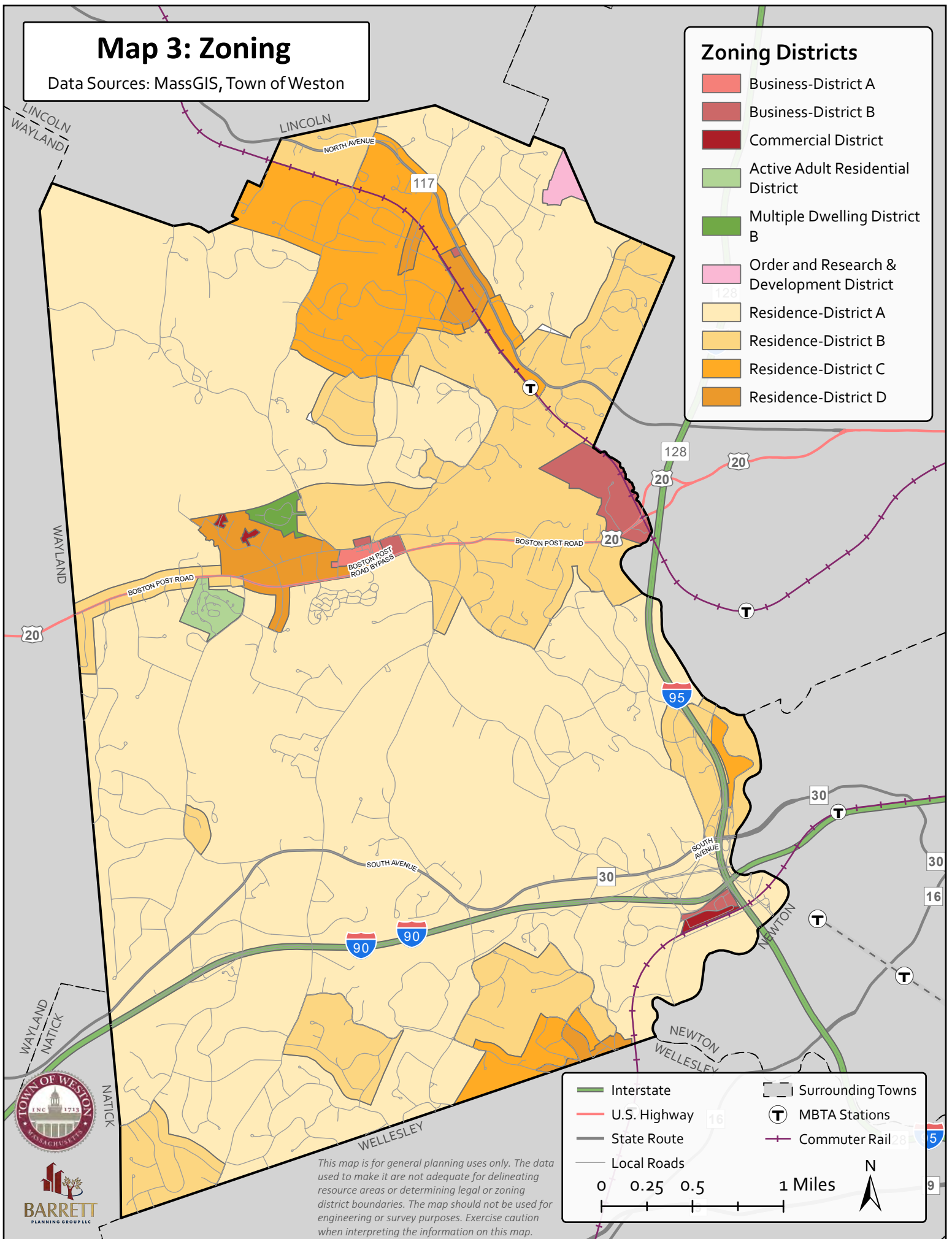
Septic problems in the town center continue to be of concern, particularly due to its location in the watershed for Stony Brook Reservoir, Cambridge's water supply. Environmental constraints, including high groundwater, ledge, and proximity to wetlands and Three Mile Brook, present challenges for preventing groundwater contamination from septic systems. Additionally, there are a myriad of historic drainage conveyance systems in the town center area, and not all of their locations are known.

Map 3: Zoning

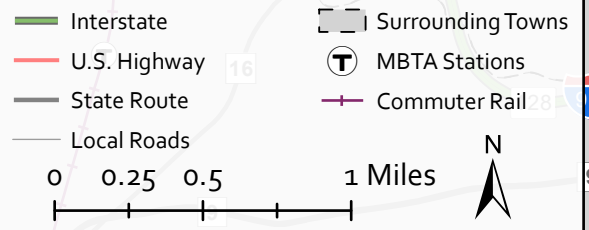
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Weston

Zoning Districts

- Business-District A
- Business-District B
- Commercial District
- Active Adult Residential District
- Multiple Dwelling District B
- Order and Research & Development District
- Residence-District A
- Residence-District B
- Residence-District C
- Residence-District D



This map is for general planning uses only. The data used to make it are not adequate for delineating resource areas or determining legal or zoning district boundaries. The map should not be used for engineering or survey purposes. Exercise caution when interpreting the information on this map.





Section 4 – Environmental Inventory and Analysis

4A. Geology, Soils, and Topography

*The following section contains information from the 2017 OSRP verified for its relevance and accuracy during this 2026 update. **Map 4: Soils & Geologic Features**, **Map 4A: USGS Topography**, and **Map 4B: Soil Drainage Class** correspond to this section.*

The bedrock geology underlying Weston and the topology formed by the last remnants of glaciation processes result in Weston's hilly terrain. The bedrock geology of Weston dates back to the Precambrian era and consists of felsic (rich in feldspars and lighter minerals such as quartz) igneous rocks dated 1.5 billion years of age. Approximately 720 million years ago, subduction occurred, and the rocks were pushed down under another continental mass. As the rocks were subducted, they melted. This period of deformation and melt is manifested as granodiorite intrusions (igneous rock with a composition between that of granite and diorite) and Mafic dikes (denser, darker igneous rocks such as basalt, rich in heavier metals). Appearing as chimney-like conduits, these dikes date back 700 million years. As a result of further faulting 650 million years ago, some of the rocks became mylonitized, a process by which the chemical strength of minerals keeps rocks from breaking and instead causes minerals to stretch into fine bands. Further intrusions of the Dedham granite dating 620 million years ago and more mylonitized granodiorite dating 373 million years ago indicate additional periods of tectonic activity.

Excellent examples of all these geological stages remain across Weston. Outcrops behind the former Walgreens Pharmacy, along the Town Green, and along Route 20 display metamorphosed bedrock rich in feldspars and quartzite. The outcrops on the Town Green and at Boston College's Weston Observatory show gabbro diorite intrusions from the earliest period of deformation. On Bear Hill Road, the outcrops

are large enough to show folding. Basaltic dikes can be seen along Route 128 and in the outcrops at 293 Boston Post Road. The outcrops at Cat Rock exemplify the most recent granodiorite intrusions and deformation. The quarries at the former Massachusetts Broken Stone site exhibit the boundary in an area where deformation occurred. The rocks of the front of the quarry have been deformed and mylonitized, while the rocks in the rear quarry have not.

The most recent significant geologic process in the area is the last period of glaciation, the Wisconsin, occurring 1.5 to 2 million years ago. As it advanced, the giant ice sheet stripped the area of its previous soils. Upon melting, the ice sheet left behind two different types of deposits distinguished by their sorting. Glacial till, or non-stratified, unsorted glacial drift deposited directly by the glacial ice sheet covers the majority of Weston. Ground rock carried south and continually pulverized by the ice sheet comprises the glacial till. The thickest deposits of till appear as hills or drumlins, with three drumlins across Weston—the largest on the east side of Wellesley Street opposite Regis College and another between Ridgeway and Orchard Avenue. These deposits align their axis with the north-south movement of the glaciers. Also prominent in this area are glacial erratics, large boulders carried by the ice and left behind during glacial retreat. **Map 4: Soils & Surficial Geology** shows both thick and thin till across Weston.

Retreating ice sheets also left behind a second type of glacial deposit in Weston, glacio-fluvial soils. Stagnant masses of ice or meltwater streams of glaciers deposited well-sorted sand, silt, and gravel. These deposits manifest in the form of eskers (long ridges of gravel), kames (steep-sided hills), kame terraces (deposits against a valley wall), and kettle holes (depressions often filled with water). Associated with the glacio-fluvial soils are the glaciolacustrine, or lake-bottom, deposits.

During the final stages of the Wisconsin glacial period, the Glacial Lake Sudbury covered much of central Weston. The ice sheet left different glaciolacustrine deposits as it retreated. The majority of the soils deposited in Glacial Lake Sudbury accumulated during the Cherry Brook Stage, so named because the stagnant ice sheet remained over the area around Cherry Brook today for a period of time. Spillage from this lake drained into many streams such as Stony and Hobbs Brooks. Glacial Lake Sudbury has many natural dams made of large rocks and boulders carried and deposited by flowing water. When the pressure behind these natural dams became too great, they gave away, creating spillways. Weston High School, Weston Middle School, and their associated athletic fields lay on part of an outwash plain of Glacial Lake Sudbury.

Evidence of these glacial processes includes the many glacial erratics around town, the best known of which lies in front of the Case House. Further evidence of glacial movement can be observed in the form of glacial striations, or gouges, created as the ice moved south during glacial advance. Outcrops on the north/northwest side of Weston Reservoir and the southeast side of Norumbega Reservoir show such striations.

Weston Golf Club lies on what was once the bottom of Glacial Lake Sudbury, as does much of the land west of Wellesley Street along Route 20 including the town center. At 40-Acre Field, several flat terraces stacked one above the other show the former beaches of Lake Sudbury. Other glaciofluvial deposits include a kame on the Coburn property west of Church Street and eskers at the bottom of the Dickson land on Highland Street, on the Regis property north of the drumlin, and near Recreation Road and the

Leo J. Martin golf course. Spillways from Glacial Lake Sudbury are visible from Three Mile Brook north of 293 Boston Post Road, on the northeast side of Pigeon Hill, and on the northwest side of Doublet Hill.

The highest points in Weston stand at 360 feet above sea level, the western summit of Doublet Hill, and 365 feet above sea level, the summit of Cat Rock. Three other sites lie above 355 feet: the eastern summit of Doublet Hill, Mount Lemuel in the Pine Street town forest, and part of Sanderson Hill just south of the water tank in Highland Forest. The lowest natural elevation in Weston runs along the banks of the Charles River. A dam in Waltham maintains the water level of the river at a mean of 45 feet. The bottom of human-made quarry pits at the former Massachusetts Broken Stone site, now 133 Boston Road owned by Boston Properties, lies below sea level. **Map 4A: USGS Topography** shows waterbodies, wetlands, open space, and contour lines indicating steep areas in Weston.

Geological conditions influence outdoor recreation opportunities in Weston. In many areas with abundant outcrop and shallow bedrock, “ledgy” land has been protected as open space over the years, due in part to its lack of development potential. Examples include Ogilvie Town Forest, Highland Forest, Doublet Hill/Elliston Woods, and Cat Rock. Rocky outcrops contribute to the “wild” aesthetic of trails that wind through them. At Cat Rock, the terrain allowed for a ski slope that operated between 1948 and 1978. Today, the Town mows this old ski slope to keep it open as a popular sledding spot. High points also provide opportunities for scenic views, particularly where the viewpoint is kept clear, such as at Cat Rock, Mount Lemuel, Doublet Hill, and Sanderson Hill.

The Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, passed in 1972, protects wetlands from extensive development. This protection paired with the historic undesirability of wetlands for development leads to a disproportionate amount of open space including wetlands. Examples include Blaney Aquifer, College Pond, Jericho Town Forest, Sears Land, and the areas around Norumbega and Weston Reservoirs. Trails crossing these low, wet areas present challenges for trail users and managers due to soggy conditions that result in rutting, erosion, unusable trails, and negative impacts to wetlands themselves.



Weston Observatory provides a unique geological facility in Weston. The Weston Observatory is a geophysical research and science education center at the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Boston College. The Observatory, which has been recording earthquakes since the 1930s, conducts basic research on earthquakes and related processes, provides public information after significant earthquakes occur, contributes to earthquake awareness to help reduce tragic effects, and educates future generations of geophysicists, geologists, environmental geoscientists, and scientifically literate citizens. Weston Observatory also houses seismic instruments for the New England Seismic Network and the World-Wide Standardized Seismic Network.²⁶

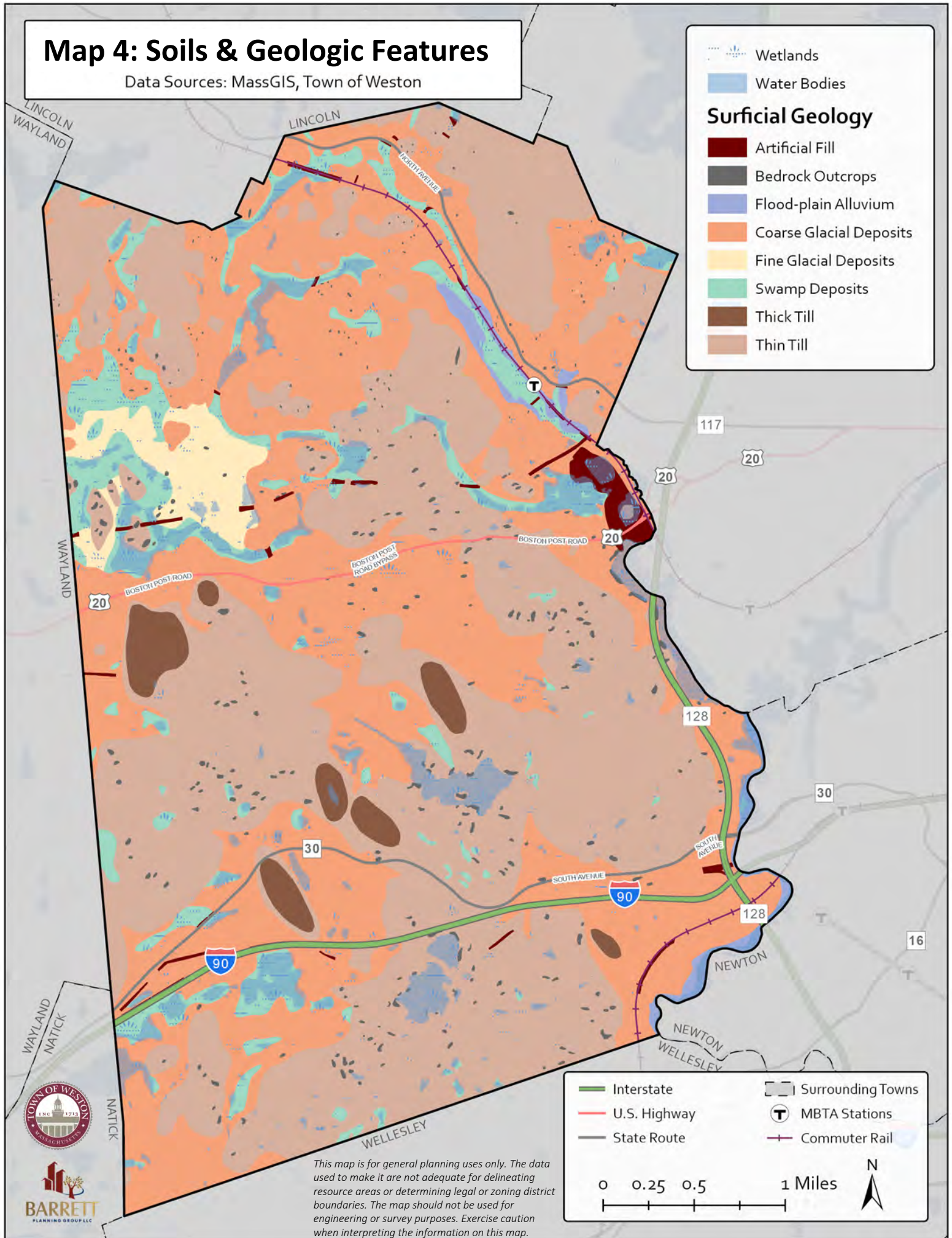
Economically, sand and gravel from glacio-fluvial and glacio-lacustrine deposits are the most important deposits in Weston. Although no longer operational, the quarries of Massachusetts Broken Stone yielded rock by-products for years from two pits, both of which were of igneous origin.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) classifies the majority of Weston's soils as well-drained with pockets of poorly drained soils primarily surrounding wetlands and waterbodies. Weston is also home to prime farmland soils that are of statewide importance. See **Map 4B: Soil Drainage Class**.

²⁶ Weston Observatory, "About," Boston College Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences, accessed July 14, 2025, <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/morrissey/sites/weston-observatory/about.html>.

Map 4: Soils & Geologic Features

Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Weston



- Wetlands
- Water Bodies
- Surficial Geology**
 - Artificial Fill
 - Bedrock Outcrops
 - Flood-plain Alluvium
 - Coarse Glacial Deposits
 - Fine Glacial Deposits
 - Swamp Deposits
 - Thick Till
 - Thin Till

Interstate

U.S. Highway

State Route

Surrounding Towns

MBTA Stations

Commuter Rail

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

N

This map is for general planning uses only. The data used to make it are not adequate for delineating resource areas or determining legal or zoning district boundaries. The map should not be used for engineering or survey purposes. Exercise caution when interpreting the information on this map.

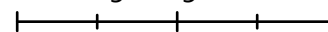




4A: USGS Topography

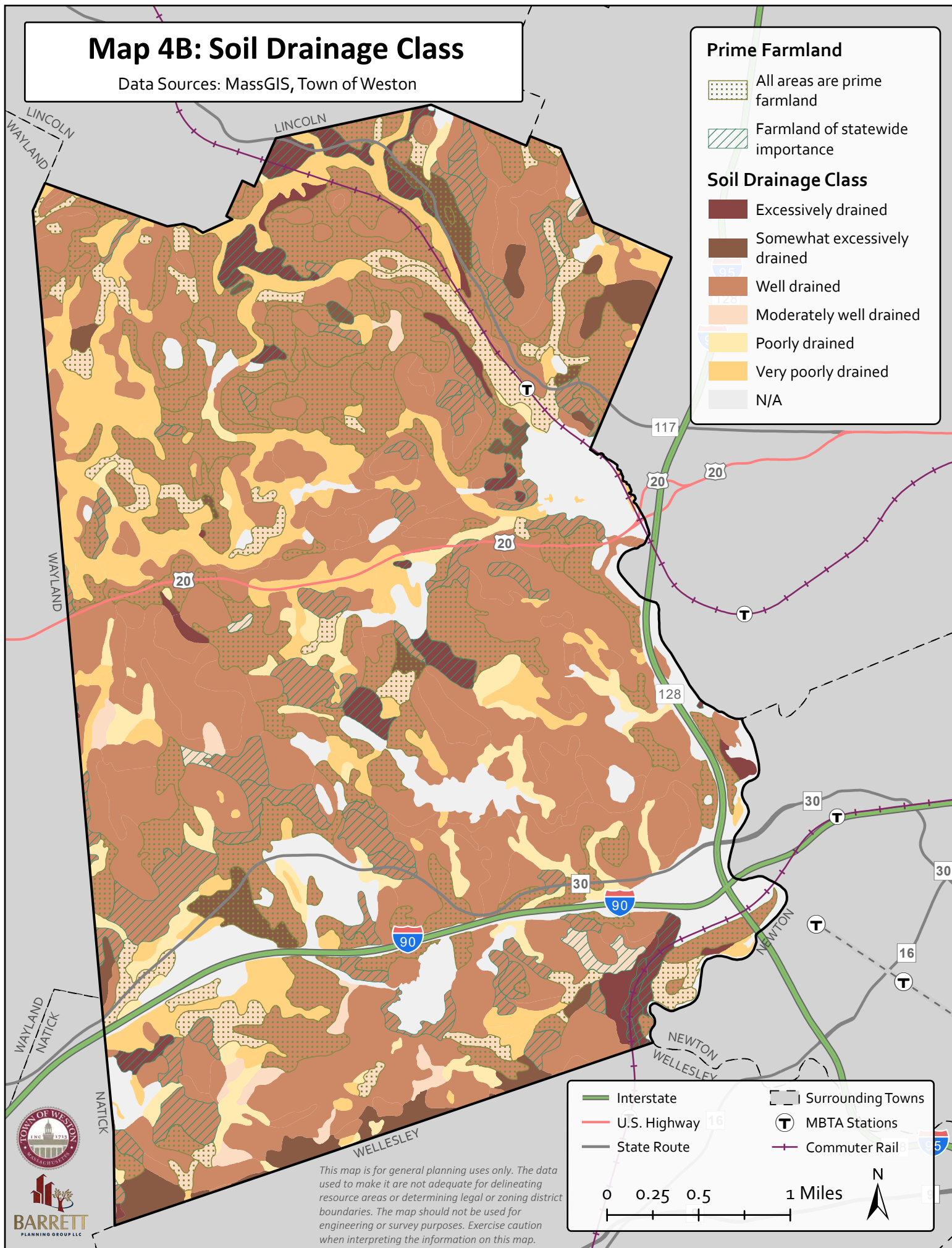
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Weston

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



Map 4B: Soil Drainage Class

Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Weston



4B. Landscape Character

I. Elements of the Semi-Rural Landscape

The term "semi-rural" has been popular to describe the open space-rich, low-density residential suburban landscape of Weston. Despite its location within the densely developed metropolitan Boston area, Weston retains some of the "flavor" of a rural New England town. It is this quality that residents would like to preserve and which is endangered with the development or potential development of the last remaining farms, open meadows and forests, often accompanied by the destruction of historic houses or barns. In addition to preserving select remaining parcels of open space in Weston, the community also seeks to connect existing tracts to create wildlife corridors and enhance recreational values.

Topography

The topography of Weston is typical of New England, with gently rolling forested hills that give way to large expanses of low-lying wetlands and former farm fields. The variations in topography provide for distant views from higher elevations. These distant views are valued for their contrast to the otherwise closed landscape. Examples familiar to local residents include the view of the Coburn Barn from Church Street, the sweeping expanse of the Pine Brook Golf Course from Newton Street, Sunset Corner offering a distant view of Wachusett Mountain from an outlook off Highland Street near Love Lane, and the view across 40-Acre Field from Newton Street. With the addition of the Case Historic Corridor and other Case Estates municipal land, this agricultural and semi-rural feel will surround the elementary schools, public library, and community center. Because of the foresight of conservation-minded residents, most of the hilltops in Weston have been preserved as conservation land, thereby contributing to a semi-rural viewscape. See **Section 4A: Geology, Soils, and Topography** for more information, as well as **Map 4A: USGS Topography**.

Scenic Roads

Weston's narrow, winding, scenic roads contribute to the town's semi-rural character. Weston's Scenic Roads Bylaw (Article XXIII of the General Town Bylaw) and the Zoning Bylaw (Article VIII of the General Town Bylaw) both help to preserve the beauty of scenic roads, which are often lined with trees and old stone walls. See **Section 3D: Growth and Development Patterns** for more information.

Contrast between Forested and Open Areas

The beauty of Weston's semi-rural landscape lies, in part, in the contrast between different types of vegetation. This is particularly true in the contrast between forested and open areas such as meadows and farm fields— a contrast between tall, long-lived trees and short, seasonal grasses, between dark and light, and between the closed and solitary nature of the forest and the open fields where a large expanse of land is revealed at a single glance. Weston is fortunate to have many forested areas protected in fee or by conservation restrictions, along with many large wooded house lots where trees and forested areas have been incorporated into residential landscaping. Protected land in town also includes 32 meadows that are regularly mowed to prevent their regeneration as forest. Examples of important meadows protected as conservation land include Coburn Meadow on Church Street, French's Field in Jericho Forest, Blaney Field at 555 Wellesley Street, and meadows at Chestnut and Wellesley Streets, Orchard



Avenue, and in the area of Hobbs Brook Pond. Regis College also maintains open fields and woodlands on its campus on the east side of Wellesley Street, and the Campion Center's open areas contrast with bordering forests.

Last Remaining Working Farms

Weston also has a number of properties where the land has continued in agricultural use for the production of hay, pasturing of animals, or, in some cases, for active market gardening. Many of these farms are in private hands and are under Chapter 61 protection. This tax incentive program for working farms and forests provides the Town with the right of first refusal should these properties be put up for sale. Their protection is of critical importance in retaining the rural landscape.

These last remaining working farms provide a link to the town's history as an agricultural community of farms and later estates that continued the farming tradition. Farm fields, set off by stone walls and entered through wooden paddock gates, again provide much needed visual contrast to natural, forested areas and to the suburban house lots that line many of our streets. See [Section 4D: Vegetation](#) for more information on Weston's farmland.