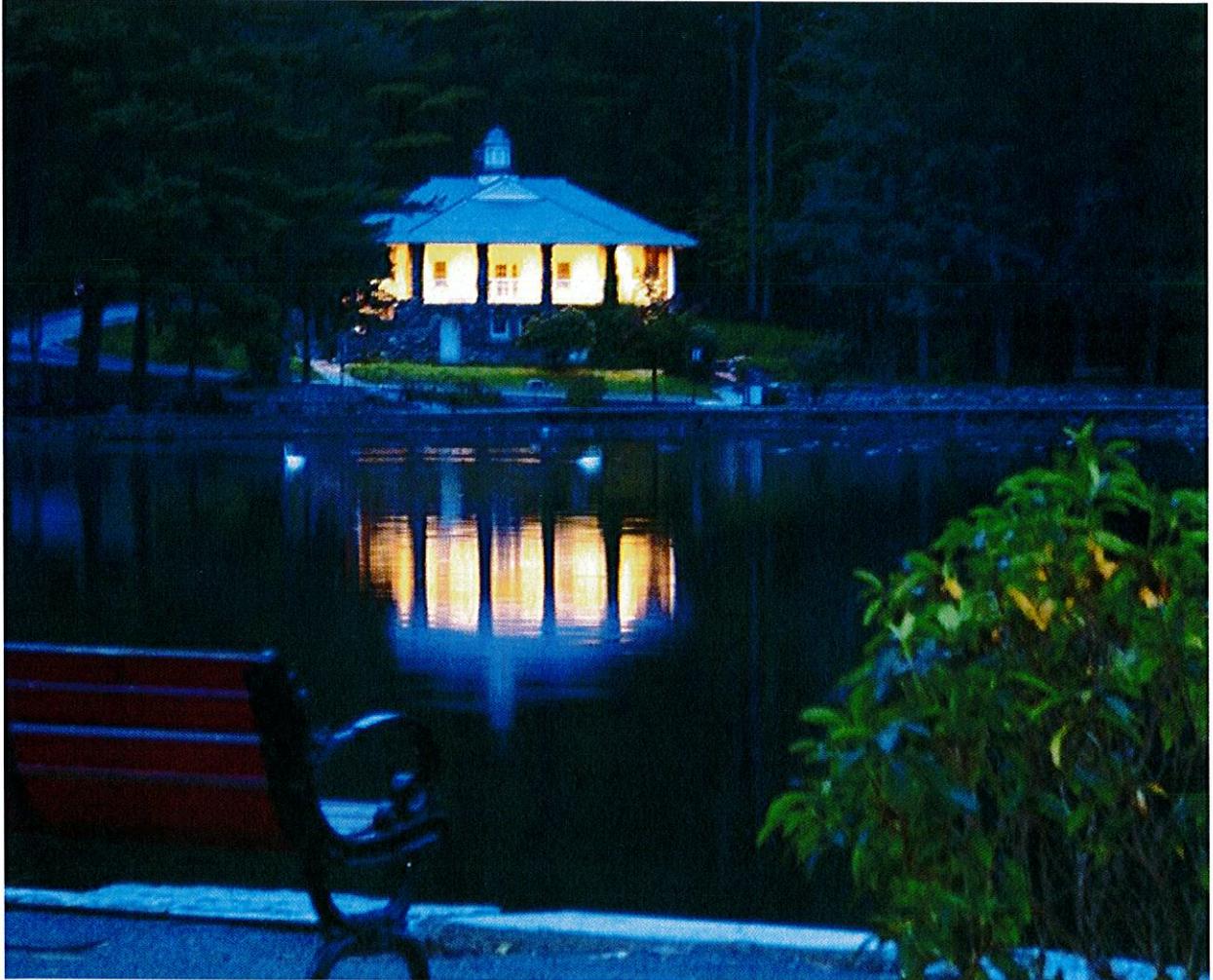


Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

Fitchburg, Massachusetts



2014-2021



TABLE OF CONTENTS
City of Fitchburg, Open Space Plan
2014 - 2021

<u>SECTION I, PLAN SUMMARY</u>	<u>#1</u>
<u>SECTION II, INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>#2</u>
<u>SECTION III, COMMUNITY SETTING</u>	<u>#4</u>
<u>SECTION IV, ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS</u>	<u>#12</u>
<u>SECTION V, INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST</u>	<u>#25</u>
<u>SECTION VA, PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM OVERVIEW</u>	<u>#32</u>
<u>SECTION VI, COMMUNITY GOALS</u>	<u>#36</u>
<u>SECTION VII, ANALYSIS OF NEEDS</u>	<u>#38</u>
<u>SECTION VIII, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</u>	<u>#42</u>
<u>SECTION IX, SEVEN YEAR ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>#46</u>
<u>SECTION X, LETTERS OF REVIEW</u>	<u>#54</u>
<u>SECTION XI, REFERENCES</u>	<u>#55</u>
<u>APPENDICES</u>	<u>#57</u>
<u>MAPS</u>	<u>#58</u>

SECTION I PLAN SUMMARY

The City of Fitchburg's 2014 - 2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan includes open space, conservation, and recreation goals and objectives of the city, and provides a seven-year action plan for the preservation of open space and the development and maintenance of recreational facilities. A seven-year parks improvement schedule is included in this plan.

As with earlier plans, this document emphasizes the preservation of the natural and rural assets of the northern, western and south-central areas of the city, and the provision of recreational opportunities within the city's older urban neighborhoods. These themes are supported by six goals that were developed during the public participation phase of this plan. These goals include the following

1. Develop and maintain a safe and sought after park system in Fitchburg that provides a variety of recreational activities for all residents.
2. Provide walking and biking paths for recreation and commuting.
3. Provide better access to recreational opportunities.
4. Protect and promote Fitchburg's watershed.
5. Protect, promote, and preserve open space and wildlife habitat.
6. Develop and promote green space in the urban core.

Specific objectives and tasks for accomplishing these six goals have been outlined in Section IX of this document. Over the next seven years we will strive to accomplish the goals by completing specific actions. At the same time, we will use the themes identified in this plan to provide direction as decisions are made and new projects are undertaken that will affect the quality of life for Fitchburg residents.

SECTION II INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose: This update of the City of Fitchburg's Open Space and Recreation Plan builds on knowledge gained through the work of developing and following through on earlier versions of the plan and adds insight gained through a thorough review of the current circumstances of the City. As a part of the process the goals and vision outlined in earlier plans were revisited and revised to meet the needs of the City as it is today and what we now envision for the future. The purpose of this document is to provide a well thought out guideline for the City's decision making related to the provision, protection, enhancement and promotion of open space and recreational assets.

Prior Open Space Plans have focused on two broad themes: The need for preservation of Fitchburg's natural and rural assets and the provision of recreational opportunities in the City's urban neighborhoods. These main ideas have not changed and still provide direction for the more specific goals developed through the update process. This document outlines these goals and presents a new seven year action plan for accomplishing them, including detailed steps, timeframes and responsible parties.

Public Participation and Planning - The City of Fitchburg recently surveyed its residents to solicit input on needs and concerns related to our open space and recreation areas. (See attachments B and C). The survey was developed in cooperation with MOC's Fun n' FITchburg team and members of the Open Space and Recreation Update Committee. It was sent to City boards and commissions, distributed via City and community-based organization's mailing lists, made available at many agencies within the City, placed on the front page of the City's website and made available at the front counter of the Municipal Offices. The Community Based Organizations who assisted the city to distribute the survey are each located within an Environmental Justice (EJ) Neighborhood of Fitchburg and the clientele they serve are residents of these same neighborhoods. The outreach they provided ensured that the City was able to provide enhanced outreach to EJ neighborhoods when undertaking this survey.

With the assistance of multiple community stakeholders, the City also undertook several facility reviews of many of the City's Parks and Playgrounds to determine current conditions, needs and opportunities. These park evaluations also considered the parks' accessibility and usage. In some instances, users of the parks were interviewed on site.

In 2011, over the course of two days, City Employees and Parks Commission Members joined landscape architects from Weston and Sampson to tour twelve City parks. This tour generated an extensive park evaluation sheet for each park including neighborhood and usage, facilities, safety issues and opportunities. Cost estimates were developed for immediate and less pressing safety concerns.

Also in 2011 volunteers (City residents), City Employees and employees of the Montachusett Opportunity Council (MOC) and other community-based institutions including schools and healthcare toured City parks on foot and by trolley over the course of several months. Interviews with Park users occurred during this process. Walk audits were undertaken to determine how safely and easily parks could be accessed by foot or bike. MOC employees developed documents outlining

their findings from this extensive process which provided information that was extremely helpful during the goal and objective setting phase of this process.

It is well documented the residents who are minority, speak limited English and/or are low-income are at highest risk for chronic conditions including obesity and lack opportunities to engage in an active lifestyle. To ensure health equity, Fun 'n Fitchburg's assessment work concentrated heavily on three neighborhoods (both built environment and people) where residents face the greatest barriers due to compromised social determinants of health. Each of these neighborhoods (Cleghorn, Elm St. and Green Acres) are recognized as areas of environmental justice (EJ) in the city. This focused attention included six walk audits, four park audits and eight focus groups with youth and parents to better understand assets and barriers that residents face around the built environment related to healthy eating and active living. Strategy implementation has also made it a priority to be inclusive of youth and residents living in these neighborhoods via concentration of changes to the built environment in parks, open spaces and streets located in these (EJ) areas.

Finally, in March of 2012 members of the City's Capital Facilities Committee joined the Mayor and other City employees, Park Commission Members, MOC Fun 'n FITchburg (Fitchburg Mass in Motion) employees, City residents and two members of the press on another site review of City parks. While this tour was essentially to determine capital needs of the parks, it was also an opportunity to discuss how the City can ensure that the parks best serve the community through programming and improvements.

An Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee was established. The Committee consisted of representatives from the Montachusett Opportunity Council, the Fitchburg Greenway Committee, the Nashua River Watershed Association, the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, the Fitchburg Board of Park Commissioners, the Fitchburg Energy Commission, the City of Fitchburg's Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Planning and Community Development Departments and received substantive input from the City's Water, Wastewater and Recreation Departments.

The committee and a subcommittee devoted to the development of goals, met over a period of several months in 2012 and 2013 to analyze the results of the resident survey and the significant amount of information gleaned through the three extensive facility evaluations. The Sub-Committee utilized these results and other available information to develop draft goals and objectives for the next seven year plan. The information gleaned was presented for comment at a public meeting on April 1, 2014. Comments from this meeting were taken into account to finalize the goals and objectives. This public meeting was advertised via social media outlets, the City's webpage and was a formally posted and advertised public meeting. The Board of Park Commissioners voted to accept these goals at their April 2014 meeting. The final goals that came from this process are included in Section VIII. Many members of the advisory committee also provided valuable input into the updating of the other sections of the Open Space and Recreation plan.

SECTION III COMMUNITY SETTING

A. Regional Setting: Fitchburg with a population of 40,318 is the third largest city in Worcester County, behind Worcester (181,045) and just behind Leominster (40,739) which abuts to the south. Gardner is a small city to the west, but other abutting municipalities are small (< 10,000 population) towns. Route 2 runs along most of the City's southern border with Leominster. By car, Fitchburg is approximately 30 minutes to Worcester and 60 minutes to Boston. The MBTA commuter rail from North Station in Boston currently terminates at the Intermodal Transportation Center on Main Street in Fitchburg. The Fitchburg commuter rail line enables residents to commute from downtown Fitchburg or Leominster to Boston and environs. A new station on this line is under construction in West Fitchburg, four miles west of the Intermodal Center. This new end of the Fitchburg Line, which will be known as Wachusett Station, is expected to be complete by the end of 2014.

The North Nashua River is the physical and historic heart of the City. This river runs from the southwest corner of Fitchburg, where it is formed by the confluence of Flagg Brook and the Whitman River, northeast through the City's center, and then southeast, exiting near the airport at the Leominster City line. Fitchburg is one of 18 communities in the Nashua River Watershed.

Many of Fitchburg's recreational facilities support a regional user base. These include parks, sites for cultural events, and athletic facilities. One of these, the Wallace Civic Center, was assured of economic viability through a transfer of control to Fitchburg State College. Others, such as Coggshall Park, are maintained and improved with City funds, adopt-a-park groups, and whatever other resources can be secured.

B. History of the Community: Fitchburg was founded as an agricultural settlement and incorporated as a town in 1764. Remnants of the City's agricultural past can be seen in the numerous farms on the periphery of the City, the fieldstone walls crisscrossing through second-growth forest, and the occasional granite foundation. Fitchburg's location on the Nashua River led to its development as an industrial center where mills were built to take advantage of the readily available waterpower. The construction of rail lines passing through Fitchburg on the Boston to Albany line increased the City's position as a manufacturing center. Heavy industries such as machine and tool works, clothing, and paper mills were the engines of significant growth throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.

As a relatively large and prosperous city in a mainly rural area, Fitchburg developed into the primary commercial center for the region during the first half of the 20th century, with the downtown area growing into a popular shopping and entertainment zone. The demand for housing located within walking distance of Fitchburg's places of employment led to the development of a dense multifamily housing stock in the center of the City. Just over half of Fitchburg's housing units were built prior to World War II.

Since the 1960s, there has been a general trend of heavy industry migration away from the northeastern United States, and, more recently, out of the country. The paper industry, one of

the oldest and historically the largest industries in Fitchburg, has increasingly chosen to locate its pulp-to-paper mills closer to its northern pulping plants in order to reduce transportation costs. The erosion of the manufacturing base led to a less prosperous population, which in turn took its toll on Fitchburg's commercial sector. During this same period, the rise of the regional shopping center further diminished the role of downtown Fitchburg as a commercial center.

The loss of heavy industry, which dates back to World War II and continues to this day, has been painful for the City. Fitchburg has however been successful at diversifying its economic base into areas such as medical equipment, tool and die makers, plastic molders, and specialty papers, and is not as dependent as other communities on manufacturing sectors getting battered by competition from overseas.

The creation of dense urban areas in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and the abandonment of those areas by the economic engines which produced them, has left a number of urban neighborhoods which look to public facilities to fulfill the recreational needs of their residents. Since the 1970s, suburban style development in outlying areas of the City has greatly increased. In more recent history, a succession of high density condominium projects have appeared, adding over a thousand housing units to Fitchburg's total. Most of this development occurred on former agricultural land, either on parcels which were converted directly from agricultural use, or in second growth forest which was at one time used for farming.

C. Population Characteristics: The heavy industries which developed in the City created a demand for labor which attracted large numbers of European immigrants to Fitchburg. The families that came seeking work usually chose to settle close to others with the same background, producing ethnic neighborhoods which retain much of their identity today. Already a diverse City, Fitchburg has seen its ethnic and racial diversity increase even further over the last decade. In addition to the groups which came to Fitchburg during the Industrial Era (notably Irish, Italian, Finnish, German, French-Canadian, and Greek), there has been a more recent influx of Hispanics, Asians, and African Americans. For example, in 1980, the percentage of non-white City residents was only 2.0%, and people of Hispanic origin constituted 2.8%. According to the 2010 census, Fitchburg's population was 21.6% Hispanic or Latino (of any race) and 31.8% minority. Blacks totaled 5.1% and Asians totaled 3.6%. Fitchburg has a significantly lower black and Asian population than the statewide average (at 6.6% and 5.3% respectively) but a higher proportion of Hispanics than the statewide average (9.6%).

The 2010 Census showed that Fitchburg's population has increased slightly since 2000, from 39,102 to 40,318. Fitchburg is 28.1 square miles with 1,448.8 persons per square mile, up from 1,391.5 persons per square mile in the 2000 census. This number cannot be said to be illustrative of Fitchburg, however, as the center of Fitchburg is densely settled, and rural sections are sparsely settled, with a significantly different character.

The population of people under the age of 18 in Fitchburg (22.9%) is slightly higher than for Massachusetts as a whole (21.7) and its percentage of residents age 65 and over (12.4%) is slightly lower than the state as a whole (13.8%). This trend is a reversal of the population characteristics under the 2000 census. We had expected to see the over 65 population continue to rise with the aging of the "baby boomer" generation, however the 2010 census did not support that supposition.

Based on the 2010 Census, Fitchburg's population of 40,318 consisted of 51.4% female and 48.6% male. The median age was 34.7 years. Of all households, 61.7% are families. 32.4% of households had individuals under 18 years of age; and 23.8% of all households had individuals 65 years and over.

Employment data showed that 64.6% of the population 16 years of age and older were employed. Only 2.0% of the work force used public transportation to commute to work. In 2010, the trend was towards management/professional jobs at 30.5% followed by sales and office jobs at 25.2%. Service occupations followed at 19.6% with production/transportation occupations coming in at 17% of the working population. Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations rounded out the working population at 7.7%.

The American Community Survey 5 Year estimate outlines the current industry in Fitchburg. Educational services, health care and social assistance tops the current industry at 25.6%. This is followed by manufacturing at 16.6% and retail trade at 12.6%. Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services are at just under 10% and professional, scientific, management and administration and waste-management services come in at just under 9%. Construction businesses account for 5.7% of the industry in the City. Finance, insurance and real estate follow at 5% and public administration at 3.8%. Transportation, warehousing and utilities also account for 3.8% of the industry in Fitchburg. Other services including wholesale trade, agriculture and information round out the types of industry that is currently operating in the City.

The City of Fitchburg has a large Environmental Justice (EJ) population (see attached EJ Map). To be defined as an EJ neighborhood the residents must meet **one** of the following criteria:

1. The median annual household income is at or below 65 % of the statewide median income.
2. 25% of the residents are minority.
3. 25% of the residents are foreign born, or
4. 25% of the residents are lacking English language proficiency.

Fitchburg neighborhoods which are designated as EJ areas all meet 1, 2 and 3 of these criteria.

As you can see on the attached Environmental Justice map, the EJ area in Fitchburg is made up of the densely populated urban area encompassing and extending from the central city. While Fitchburg is almost 18,000 acres in size, the EJ area is just 3,765 acres equaling just under 21% of Fitchburg's land mass. It is striking that according to data published by the MA Executive Office of Environmental Affairs in 2010, over 60% of the residents of Fitchburg live in this small EJ area.

D. Income

According to the 2010 census, Fitchburg has a per capita income of \$22,972, compared to the state average of \$33,966. Fitchburg also has a significantly higher percentage of persons living below the poverty line, 19.4%, compared to 10.5% statewide. Fitchburg's median household income from 2010 is \$47,019, compared to \$64,509 for the state. Median household income in Fitchburg varies considerably by location, similar to density. The northern part of Fitchburg, census tract 7111 with a population of 5,712 spread out over 13.17 square miles, has a median household income of \$71,194 while tract 7105, located in the central part of Fitchburg, with a population of 3,246 in just .36 square miles, is \$31,075.

Table #1, below shows that this income is not evenly distributed by race. Non-Hispanic whites have the highest per-capita income. Hispanics in Fitchburg are significantly lower income than the general population.

Table #1: Fitchburg Medium Household Income by Race 2006-2010*

White (non-Hispanic)...	\$50,445
Black.....	\$40,938
Hispanic.....	\$24,259
Asian/Pacific Islander...	\$50,658

*US Census American Community Survey

E. Growth and Development

Patterns:

Fitchburg can be envisioned as a dense urban core surrounded by suburban and rural areas. The inner City is characterized by a mix of single and multifamily homes on small lots, with commercial, industrial, and institutional uses located on major arteries near the residential neighborhoods, and occasionally within the neighborhoods themselves. Main Street is located in the center of the City, and remains a major commercial and business area, although its focus has changed from primarily retail businesses to primarily business offices and services.

The Massachusetts Audubon Society has prepared a series of reports starting in 1991 entitled “*Losing Ground*”, demonstrating development trends, especially sprawling residential development patterns that are leading to loss of open space. This report states that over the past 40 years, the landscape of Massachusetts has been transformed by new residential and commercial development. Eastern and southeastern Massachusetts have undergone the most change, but virtually every community in the Commonwealth has experienced rapid growth driven by economic and demographic factors.

The 2009 version of *Losing Ground* has an online database with land use statistics of Massachusetts broken down by different geographies, including municipalities. Along with these land use statistics, *Losing Ground* has ranked municipalities in relation to each other.

The following land use statistics and rankings compared to the state’s 351 municipalities are given for the City of Fitchburg:

Land Use Statistics (2005):

- Acres of Developed Land – 4,776
- Acres of Natural Land – 10,921
- Forested Land Acreage – 10,402
- Acres of Agricultural Land – 929
- Percent Developed – 26.5% (rank 133)
- Percent Natural Land – 60.7% (rank 206)
- Percent in Upland Forest – 57.8% (rank 128)
- Percent in Agriculture: 5.2% (rank 131)
- Total acres: 17,995 (rank 92)

Recent Development Land Use Statistics (1999 and 2005)

- Natural Land Converted to Development: 238 acres (rank 51)
- Acres of Forest Converted: 156 (rank 43)
- Acres of Agricultural Land Converted: 52 (rank 59)
- Percent of homes built between 1999 and 2005 (as a total of housing units) – 5.6% (rank 186)

Land Protection:

- Overall Protected Acres: 1,876 acres (rank 199)
- Overall % Protected: 10.4% (rank 263)
- Acres Protected 1999-2005: 129 (rank 158)
- Acres of Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program (NHESP) Priority Habitat: 1,127 (rank 210)
- Acres of NHESP Priority Habitat Protected: 193 (rank 225)
- % of NHESP Priority Habitat Protected 17.8% (rank 218)
- Acres of Natural Land: 10,921 (rank 127)
- Acres of Natural Land Protected: 1,470 (rank 203)
- % of Natural Land Protected 13.5% (rank 283)
- Acres of Agricultural Land: 929 (rank 106)
- Acres of Ag Land Protected: 175 (rank 101)
- % of Ag land Protected: 18.8% (rank 133)

While residential construction has been on the downturn for the last few years, much of the residential growth in the last 10 years has been on the periphery of Fitchburg to the west and south. This trend is expected to continue, as the area's proximity to Route 2 and the large amounts of vacant, unprotected land makes it attractive to developers. Multifamily homes in the inner City are being demolished. The 2000 Census showed more owner-occupied housing units than rental units for the first time in Fitchburg's history as a City. This is consistent with data from 2006-2010 showing a homeownership rate of 57.1%. Revitalization efforts in the inner City are beginning to pay off, with significant residential and institutional development planned or recently completed south of the Fitchburg State University campus and in the downtown area. Among the most recent development are two off-campus privately owned student housing developments in renovated mill buildings south of the campus. These two student housing projects can house 199 students.

The City has developed three industrial parks in order to retain its economic base. The 231 Industrial Park and the Montachusett Industrial Park are located near Routes 2 and 2A along the City's western boundary, and the third is adjacent to the Fitchburg Municipal Airport. These parks have been very successful at attracting an assortment of industrial operations. The need to develop additional sites for modern industrial facilities is acknowledged throughout the City, and is included in the Vision2020 Master Plan. A petition to rezone land to the north of the Montachusett Industrial Park was defeated in January 1997, due to abutters' concerns about the loss of open space and the impact of industrial operations. In 2000 the City approved an urban renewal plan, the *Fitchburg Downtown Urban Revitalization and Development Plan*. This plan calls for an area near downtown and the commuter rail station on Main Street to be developed as an industrial park. Otherwise, no additional suitable industrial land has been identified.

In 2000 the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission prepared a build out analysis for Fitchburg, using their Geographic Information System, existing development information, and development requirements in our zoning ordinance. Their analysis showed that population was likely to increase to 65,801 and the number of households would almost double, from the then current 15,804 to 26,001 upon full build out. While full build out would tax many of the City's infrastructure systems, our water system is able to meet the projected demand at full build out. Water use was projected to increase from the then current 5.95 million gallons per day (MGD) to 10.008 MGD, an amount that can be met with the City's water system.

While water use may not be an issue, ecological considerations such as wastewater treatment, air pollution control, waste management, recycling, soil preservation, noise protection, habitat and open space protection, power generation and energy efficiency will likely be difficult.

1. **Infrastructure:**

- a. **Transportation System:** Downtown Fitchburg is extremely walkable, with mixed use areas in many neighborhoods and residential zones located near Main Street or other older commercial areas. The Intermodal Transportation Center is located on Lower Main Street within walking distance of Fitchburg State University and its surrounding neighborhoods, as well as the numerous commercial, governmental, and service businesses on Main Street, and is currently the terminus of the "T", the train from Boston. This will change with the opening in late 2014 of the new Wachusett commuter rail station four miles to the west at the 231 Industrial Park in West Fitchburg. The City is a member of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) which provides fixed bus route service within Fitchburg and to Leominster and Gardner. MART also provides paratransit services within the region and a limited shuttle service to Worcester and Boston.

Radiating out from the urban core are a number of arterial roads. One of these, Route 12, runs from downtown Fitchburg, across Route 2, to downtown Leominster, and has seen substantial strip development in the period after World War II. A large portion of Route 12 was widened in recent years to handle higher traffic volumes, as a substitute "downtown connector" to achieve faster access to the vital Route 2 highway. Downtown Fitchburg is approximately two miles from the highway, but access is poor, as traffic and congestion increases travel times during most hours. Those areas of the City with good access to the highway have seen the majority of the industrial development that has occurred in the past forty years. Much of the industrially-zoned land along the Nashua River away from the Rt. 2 is either marginal industry, vacant or underutilized mill buildings, or has been proposed for residential use.

The City has recently emphasized non-vehicular transportation alternatives through the development of walking and bicycle trails, many along the Nashua River. The West Fitchburg Steam Line Trail, bordering Flagg Brook & the Nashua River, was constructed in 2006. Negotiations continue to extend the trail. The City also continues to negotiate with the CSX Corporation to purchase the abandoned rail line that will connect downtown Leominster to an area near the Fifth Street Bridge in Fitchburg to develop an intercity rail trail. This trail has been designated as a Regional Priority Preservation Area (PPA). The proposed 4.5 mile Twin Cities Rail Trail would connect the downtowns of Fitchburg & Leominster. Approximately two miles of the rail trail would be within the City of Fitchburg.

In 2011 the Sheldon Street Gateway Park was developed which includes a pathway along the river. A private developer across the river from Gateway Park has installed a pathway along the back of his development to form a half mile walking loop with the Gateway Park trail.

The city has also made strides to implement policy and systems changes to integrate all users into the transportation system including: a Pedestrian Generator Checklist and Complete Streets administrative policy to support safer walking and bicycling, with an emphasis around parks and schools.

- b. **Water and Sewer:** The older areas of Fitchburg City are served by City water and sewer. Sewer extensions are commonly built when subdivisions are constructed in outlying areas. The City's zoning ordinance contains a density bonus for developments that are served by municipal sewer. The map "Sewered Area" shows the sections of Fitchburg served by the municipal wastewater system. New subdivisions are shown on this map to demonstrate the relationship between the two. Some areas in northern Fitchburg have homes that were built with septic systems, and failure of these systems is a significant concern, especially in areas near the City's reservoirs. At the same time, the City recognizes that the extension of sewer lines to unsewered areas will allow increased density of development, and increase the likelihood that open space will be lost to development.

- c. **Long-Term Development Patterns:** Fitchburg adopted its Zoning Ordinance in 1945, and has modified it numerous times since. The Ordinance underwent a major re-write in 2001; it has since had several amendments through 2011. There are 12 zoning districts designated in the Fitchburg Zoning Ordinance, as displayed on the attached Zoning Map. The Zoning Ordinance stipulates dimensional requirements and restrictions on uses for each zoning district. The Ordinance also regulates signs, provides use definitions, establishes zoning enforcement procedures, sets parking requirements and regulates other elements related to land use. There are five different residential zones, reflecting the diversity of Fitchburg's neighborhoods, which range from Rural Residential to RC, which correspond to the City's dense urban neighborhoods, and allows smaller lot sizes and multifamily homes. The majority of the homes and lots in the RB and RC districts were made nonconforming in 1987 when the dimensional requirements were increased.

Fitchburg's Zoning Ordinance contains several provisions designed to promote more efficient growth. The Cluster Development and Planned Unit Development provisions allow greater density and a more creative mix of uses than would be achieved by a standard subdivision. Also, the minimum lot size provision for each district is increased to 65,000 square feet if municipal sewer is not provided (85,000 sq. ft. in the Limited Industrial District.) This feature encourages development near existing infrastructure, provides an incentive for developers to construct sewer lines, and guarantees that there will be adequate space for septic systems when homes are built without sewer service. At the same time, this "sewer density bonus" has the potential to increase the rate, volume, and amount of growth.

The 2001 Zoning Ordinance and later amendments include other provisions to encourage more efficient growth. Single family "infill lots" are permitted by special permit with a minimum 5,000 sq. ft. This section was adopted to encourage the redevelopment of smaller,

primarily demolition lots into single-family owner-occupied dwellings on a reasonably-sized lot. Approximately 50 infill lots have been created under this provision. The Ordinance also includes a Mill Conversion Overlay District, which allows the conversion of buildings classified as mills into any type of mixed use, by special permit. This provision has also been used several times to allow redevelopment of mill buildings on River St., Broad St & Sawyer Passway.

A “Smart Growth” Overlay District under MGL c. 40R was adopted in 2009 covering the River St. - Broad St. corridor. This provision encourages by right high-density residential & mixed use development near transit nodes.

The City also has an Expedited Permitting provision for two industrial areas, the former waste lagoons in West Fitchburg, and one in the Airport Road – Intervale Road area. To address the unmet need for more student housing, a Student Housing Overlay District, around most of the downtown & college neighborhood, was adopted in 2011 in order to encourage privately developed student housing. Two private student housing developments came on line within this District in 2012. Simonds hall with approximately 140 beds and Dillon Hall with 45 beds.

SECTION IV ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

A. Geology, Topography and Soils: Fitchburg is a City of hilly upland terrain, bisected by the Nashua River and its floodplain. A number of tributaries feed into the Nashua, most of which run in a southerly direction. Bordering vegetated wetlands are often associated with these streams. Elevations in Fitchburg range from 340 feet above sea level at the municipal airport in the City's southeastern corner to 1,200 feet on the top of Brown's Hill, one of the seven hills distributed throughout the City. Fitchburg's geology came about as a result of glaciers which covered New England approximately 10,000 years ago. The advance and retreat of the glaciers formed features of drumlins, moraines, kames, eskers, kettles, and erratics. Rollstone Boulder, which was originally located on top of Rollstone Hill, is an example of an erratic. The nearest source of the type of stone of which this boulder is comprised is located in central New Hampshire. It is surmised that this stone was carried south with an advancing glacier and deposited on top of Rollstone Hill as it retreated.

Outside of the Nashua River Valley, much of the City is located on steep slopes. There is also a great deal of ledge throughout the City. The combination of these two features makes much of Fitchburg's land area difficult to develop. Of the areas of Fitchburg which have good access to Route 2, most are undeveloped sites constrained by steep slopes, ledge, or wetlands. Fitchburg's farms are an exception to this trend. Farms are typically located in flat areas with deep, good soil. In fact, prime agricultural soils are found in many areas of Fitchburg. The attractiveness of this land for development, and the relative lack of other easily developable sites, has caused many of Fitchburg's farms to be lost to residential development.

The "Soil Types" map and accompanying chart show the location and preponderance of soil types in Fitchburg. According to a 1985 Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resource Conservation Service) study, there are seven major soil associations in Fitchburg. These associations are shown on the following chart.

Soil Series	Description	Land Area	Use	Slopes
PAXTON	Well drained, underlain by impermeable hardpan, generally rocky	31% 5,625 acres	agriculture, woodlands, some limitations for commercial uses	3% - 35%
HINKLEY	Rapidly drained, may be stony	20% 3,587 acres	depending on slopes, residential, commercial, industrial, roads	0% - 35%
HOLLIS	Highly drained, thin glacial till, deposits of schist and granite underlain by bedrock	17% 3,050 acres	development limited by bedrock	3% - 25%
WOODBIDGE	Moderately drained, evolved into compacted stony glacial till	13% 2,260 acres	severe limitations for on-site sewer	0% - 15%
CANTON	Well drained sandy layer over gravelly loam sand glacial till	8% 1525 acres	limitations depend on slope	3% - 35%
URBAN LAND	Developed land: buildings, roads, parking lots, etc.	8% 1444 acres	requires on-site investigation	
RIDGEBURY	Poorly drained	3% 640 acres	severely limited by wetlands, environmentally valuable	0% - 8%

B. Landscape Character: Much of Fitchburg's character is defined by the variety of different landscapes found in close proximity to each other. Green spaces located directly adjacent to densely developed areas, including Rollstone Hill, Coggshall Park and the banks of the Nashua River, are, or could be, aesthetic and recreational resources for the City. The rural sections of the City boast working farms and scenic roads, and are within a five-minute drive of neighborhoods with population densities as high as 10,000 people per square mile. While there are large areas of protected open space in Fitchburg, including watershed lands in the rural northern section and parks, cemeteries, and farms enrolled in the Agricultural Protection Program, many of Fitchburg's important green areas, including Oak Hill Country Club and Rollstone Hill, have no formal protection. Most of the land along the Nashua River is privately owned and zoned for industrial uses.

Fitchburg's residents recognize that the City's urban landscapes are as valuable as its scenic rural areas, and that they go beyond the revered Upper Common with its fountain and statues and

Monument Park with its historic cannons to lesser known but still important heritage landscapes that may lack formal protection. In 2006 the City of Fitchburg, in partnership with the Freedom's Way Heritage Association, conducted a Heritage Landscape Inventory as part of the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. This document describes Fitchburg's priority heritage landscapes, discusses planning issues identified by the City, identifies planning tools that are available and concludes with preservation recommendations for Fitchburg's important heritage landscapes. Among the features identified by this report were the Academy Street School - The Annex, Coggshall Park, Dean Hill Cemetery, Mt. Elam Road, the Nashua River, the Upper Common, Prichard and Pleasant Street neighborhoods, Waite's Corner, the Rapids footpath system, and Rollstone Hill. The Freedom's Way National Heritage Corridor is made up of 45 Cities and Towns within Massachusetts and New Hampshire that share unique historical, natural and cultural resources. The Corridor was designated as a Regional Priority Preservation Area by the Commonwealth in 2011.

- C. **Water Resources:** A number of tributary streams, both seasonal and perennial, are located in the City. Most of those in the northern two-thirds of the City lead eventually to the Nashua River, while those in the south commonly drain into the Notown Reservoir or other bodies of water outside the City's southern boundary. Besides the Nashua, the longest waterway in the City is Falulah/Baker Brook, which starts in the City's northwestern corner and eventually meets the Nashua near Fitchburg Municipal Airport. The floodplains of the Nashua and other streams constitute 2.2% of the City's land area, nearly 400 acres. Floodplain elevations range from 712 to 334 feet sea level. Bordering vegetative wetlands are often associated with the City's streams.

<u>Waterway</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Length</u>
Flagg Brook	Westminster	3.0 miles
Whitman River	Lake Wampanoag	8.1 miles
Phillips Brook	Ashburnham	7.5 miles
Wyman Brook	Wyman Pond	2 miles
Scott Brook	Brown's Hill	5 miles
Falulah/Baker Brook	Ashby	8.6 miles
Nashua River, North Branch	Confluence of Flagg Brook & Whitman River, West Fitchburg	18.6 miles
Sand Brook	Parkhill Park	.25 miles

Fitchburg’s water supply comes from local reservoirs. The Ashby (Willard) Compensating Reservoir is not currently in operation, although it is still owned by the City, and could be brought on line if necessary. Marshall Reservoir was retired and was filled in by the City in 2003. Overlook Reservoir is no longer as a water supply.

<u>Reservoir</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Scott*	35.07
Falulah*	3.0
Lovell*	39.0
Meetinghouse Pond, Westminster	152.7
Wachusett Lake, Westminster	134.0
Fitchburg Reservoir, Ashby	153.36
Mare Meadow, Westminster	300
Bickford Pond, Westminster	70
Ashby Compensating Reservoir	40.8
* Reservoirs within City limits	

Since Fitchburg’s drinking water is provided by surface reservoirs, the City has a significant public health and economic interest in maintaining the environmental integrity of the watersheds of these reservoirs. A watershed is defined as the land area which drains into a particular water body. The entire watershed of the reservoirs in Fitchburg is protected through a Watershed Protection Overlay zoning district. The Watershed Protection district also extends to the southern part of the City, in the watershed of Leominster’s Notown Reservoir. The Fitchburg Water Department, recognizing the value of these lands for protection of its water supplies has aggressively pursued acquiring additional parcels in the watershed.

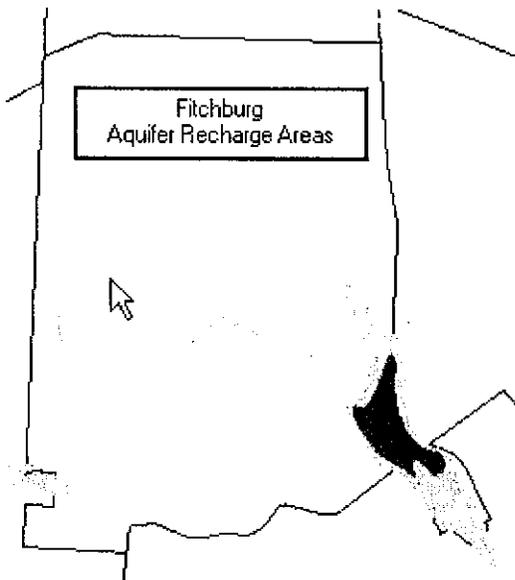
In June of 2009, the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) purchased a conservation restriction (CR) from the City of Fitchburg to assure permanent protection of its northern drinking water supply watershed. This 1,875 acre CR also protects the property’s important wildlife habitat resources and provides quality non-motorized outdoor recreational opportunities for the general public and is part of a larger network of contiguous protected open spaces totally over 2,765 acres. A Land Management Plan is in place to control the use of this parcel. Fitchburg’s northern drinking water supply watershed supplies 3 million gallons per day of high quality drinking water to approximately 15,000 users.

In the spring of 2012 the City of Fitchburg accepted a \$50,000 USDA Forest Legacy Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to purchase 23 acres of wooded land known as the “Donelan Property” on Billings Road. This property is part of the watershed for the Lovell Reservoir. Two nearby parcels were purchased in 2010 for the same purpose.

The City of Fitchburg is recently worked with the North County Land Trust and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to secure 163 acres of Fitchburg Reservoir Watershed in Ashby and Ashburnham. The owner of the property was very interested in conserving the land and protecting the wildlife there. According to the NCLT the protection of this vital watershed property will also open it up for passive recreation, education and nature study. The conservation restriction was contingent on the receipt of a grant from EOEEA to reimburse 50% of the purchase

cost of the land and 25% of the fees associated with the sale. The owner agreed to donate \$50,000 back to the Water Enterprise fund and the NCLT has agreed to donate \$71,250. The City's Water Enterprise Fund will have a net expense of \$63,975 for protection of this 163 acre parcel. The grant award from EOEEA was announced in late November 2013.

Remaining areas within the Watershed Overlay District are an important priority for protection. Areas nearest the tributary streams should be the first priority, due to their value for wildlife habitat and water quality. Areas that provide connections between existing protected open space and watershed landholdings should be the next priority. Within the Watershed Protection Overlay District in South Fitchburg are tributaries that feed the NoTown Reservoir in Leominster. These areas contain a region that is identified as priority habitat for State-protected Rare Species and Estimated Habitat for Rare Wildlife. This region overlaps the 100-meter riparian corridor identified in the *Montachusett Regional Strategic Framework Plan (MRIP)*, which was adopted by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission in August 2012 as a priority for protection. This portion of the watershed should be a focus for protection efforts.



Fitchburg has aquifer recharge areas in several parts of the City, according to data obtained from Mass-GIS. Principally located in the southeast corner of the City near the airport, there are also small aquifer areas near the southwestern corner of the City bordering Westminster, and along the Nashua River and the Whitman River. These recharge areas are not located near either Fitchburg or Leominster surface water reservoirs, nor are they currently used as drinking water supplies by any municipality.

Several ponds are found in Fitchburg, most of which were created by mill dams built on streams to supply power and water supply. Other dams, such as Mirror Lake Dam, were designed specifically to create a recreational resource. Many of these dams are decades old. The City's major ponds are listed below. Ponds less than a half-acre in size are not listed here.

<u>Pond</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Fed By</u>
Sawmill Pond	Westminster/Fitchburg line	75 acres	Flag Brook/Wyman
Snow's Mill Pond	Westminster/Fitchburg line	40 acres	Whitman River
Mirror Lake	Coggs Hall Park	10 acres	Coggs Hall Park
Saima Pond	Northeast Fitchburg	1 acre	Falulah/Baker Brook feeds Saima, Green's, Putnam and Coolidge Ponds

Green's Pond	Northeast Fitchburg	18 acres	Falulah/Baker Brook
Putnam Pond	Northeast Fitchburg	5 acres	Falulah/Baker Brook
McTaggart's Pond	West Fitchburg	8 acres	Phillips Brook

In accordance with recent changes in the dam safety regulations, dam owners are now responsible for registering, inspecting, reporting inspection results to the Office of Dam Safety and maintaining their dams in good operating condition.

The City of Fitchburg owns eleven dams in the City. Six of those are under the care and custody of the Water Department, as they exist to impound drinking water reservoirs. These are Falulah Reservoir dam, Lovell Reservoir dam, Lovell Reservoir dike, Overlook Reservoir dam, Overlook Reservoir dike, and Scott Reservoir dam. Dams owned and operated by the Fitchburg's DPW are Greene's Pond dam, McTaggart's Pond dam, Mirror Lake dam, Putnam's Pond dam and the Wastewater Treatment Plant dam near the West Plant.

The City has extensive dam inspections performed periodically by a registered professional engineer. These detailed reports are filed with the Office of Dam Safety in the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The frequency of inspections depends on the classification of the dam. All of the dams are up to date on inspections. The most recent and next inspections for dams under the control of the DPW are shown below:

- Overlook Dam and Dike 07/05/12
- Lovell Reservoir Dam and Dike 08/20/12
- McTaggart's Pond Dam 12/4/13
- Falulah Reservoir Dam, Reclassified by DCR on 3/12/13 (downgraded to "significant") next inspection not due until 11/22/15
- Scott Reservoir Dam 12/12/12
- Mirror Lake Dam 5/17/10 (next inspection 5/17/15)
- Greens Pond Dam 7/10/11 (next inspection 7/10/21)

Over the past few years, the City has concentrated on clearing vegetation from all of its dams as required by the state. In addition, the upstream masonry wall at Mirror Lake Dam was repaired and repointed in 2011. Major repairs were made to the Lovell Dam outlet in 2008, and the Overlook gate house roof was repaired in 2007.

In 2012 the Emergency Action Plan for Lovell Reservoir Dam and Dike was rewritten. Additionally in 2012, DCR granted the City's request to downgrade its hazard classification on McTaggart's Pond Dam and Greene's Pond Dam from "high" to "significant". Emergency Action Plans are no longer required for these dams. DPW, with assistance from the Mass. Division of Ecological Restoration, is currently investigating the feasibility & cost effectiveness of a partial removal of McTaggart's Pond Dam, which would help restore a free-flowing Phillips Brook. The penstock gate at McTaggart's is jammed 5" in the open position, causing the water level in the pond to fluctuate due to steady flow through the gate opening. This needs to be fixed during the dry season in 2014.

Wetlands are found throughout Fitchburg. Most of the larger wetland resource areas are associated with streams. The urbanized areas along the Nashua River and Baker Brook are the only areas of

the City with a noticeable lack of wetlands, due to hundreds of years of human alteration, including channelization, filling, and the construction of retaining walls. Smaller wetlands are generally produced by groundwater and stormwater. FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps show the location of the 100-year floodplain. For the most part, the floodplain is limited to the banks of the Nashua River and Baker Brook. Streams, wetlands, floodplains, and other information related to Fitchburg's water resources are found on the map "Water Resources."

As part of an EPA Consent Decree, the City is continuing the implementation of the Combined Sewer Separation (CSS) Remediation Plan developed to relieve the problem of combined sanitary and storm sewers that pollute the Nashua River during storm events. Work is ongoing to identify the next phases of separation work. In the next few years the City will be separating an additional 6.2 miles of combined sewer lines. The City will spend approximately \$17 million on this work. The work will take place in three key areas of the City including Boutelle/Lunenburg/Summer Streets, Water/Albee/Granite/Railroad Streets, and Walton/Forest/Milk Streets. The City has also been targeting areas that introduce large volumes of extraneous infiltration into the sanitary sewer system which also leads to combined sewer overflows. This will also reduce the amount of relatively clean stormwater runoff, which does not require treatment, from reaching the treatment plant.

D. Vegetation: Although Fitchburg is an older, industrial mill City, over two-thirds of its land area is undeveloped forest, field, water, or farmland. The majority of the extensive woodlands are found in the northern area of the City, and in a few isolated spots in the south.

Most of Fitchburg's woodlands are mixed, second-growth forest which was at one time cleared for agricultural use. The majority of trees are 80 years or older, and between 40 and 60 feet in height. Wooded wetlands are found throughout the City, along with other vegetated wetlands such as marshes, riverbanks, and open water.

Fitchburg's forests serve a number of purposes, including habitat for plant and animal species, absorbing and storing water to minimize flooding and erosion, protecting drinking water by providing a buffer around the City's reservoirs, improving air quality through natural processes, and providing recreational opportunities for City residents. While not all parcels of open space can, or even should, be protected, it is essential that the wooded areas which are important to the above interests be identified and preserved. The City of Fitchburg has a Watershed Protection Ordinance which controls activities likely to have a significant or cumulative effect on resource areas. One of the purposes and goals of this Ordinance is to protect rare species habitat, including rare plants. The two areas of Fitchburg shown on the state Priority and Estimated Habitat maps as being important for rare species are both within the watershed area and protected by this ordinance.

Bay State Forestry Services, Inc. completed a Forest Management Plan in 2005 for Coggshall Park and the adjacent Conservation Lands and Bird Sanctuary located on approximately 288 acres in southern Fitchburg. Mirror Lake, which sits in the middle of the park, is home to Canada geese, ducks and swans. The dominant timber species in the park is white pine, followed by red oak, hemlock, red maple, black birch, red pine and black oak, providing habitat for amphibians, reptiles, birds such as red-tailed hawks and mammals. Norway maple and burning bush were noted to be invasive species that have made inroads at Coggshall. Flying squirrels and barred owls have been seen in the park. However, this Plan reports that the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas indicates there are no Rare, Threatened, or Endangered (RTE) species anywhere in this area of Fitchburg. Furthermore, Bay State Forestry staff did not see any RTEs during its survey of the park for the purpose of writing a Forest Management Plan. Timber harvesting, overseen by Bay State Forestry,

took place in 2006-2008 on the forested areas of the park. Timber harvest and biomass removal helps establish a healthier ecosystem, and generated revenue to compensate for the cost of the management plan and the perimeter survey of the property. Five years later, the harvested areas at Coggs Hall are well on their way to generating new productive timber.

In 2013, DCR held a statewide Massachusetts City & Town Forests Conference celebrating the centennial of municipal forests: Fitchburg was the site of the first City forest in Massachusetts. Conference attendees toured Coggs Hall Park and several Water Dept. parcels to showcase a well-managed municipal forest.

In 2012-13 a Forestry Improvement Project was undertaken at the Crocker Conservation Area. The harvest followed a Forest Cutting Plan approved by a Massachusetts State Forester. The project was funded in part by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Environmental Quality Incentives Program. The objective of this project was to improve habitat diversity for wildlife, produce a healthy forest and maintain a good recreational experience for visitors. In 2014 two City-owned parcels under the jurisdiction of the Parks Board (Parkhill Park) and the Cemetery Commission (across the street from Forest Hills Cemetery) were selectively harvested under the direction of Bay State Forestry, to order to improve the long-term health of the forest, and to generate revenue for those two Boards. Also, each year the City's Conservation Commission receives about 8-10 Forest Cutting Plans from private property owners seeking to improve the long-term health of their woodlands.

Public Shade trees are located throughout Fitchburg in parks and as street trees. Each year some of these trees become ill or damaged and reach a point where they become a hazard. The City's Tree Warden holds a public hearing in such cases, before the tree is removed. The city is seeking to more thoughtfully select the species and locations where we plant new and/or replacement trees. For example, several new trees will be planted through the state's new Our Common Backyards grant program at Lowe Playground in the EJ neighborhood on Elm Street. These trees will be selected based on maintenance, shade quality and line of site issues. Recently the city undertook a master plan of the down town area encompassing Main Street and Boulder Drive. Street trees in this area are currently in poor shape. We will select trees that enhance and soften the streetscape and are hardy enough to thrive in an urban environment when we undertake the elements of this master plan. Phase I of this work is currently being awarded which will result in approximately 20 street trees being planted. Additionally, the Urban Ecology Institute undertook research on the state of the trees in Fitchburg and developed a report on the "State of the Urban Forest" for the City which will be a valuable resource making decisions on tree removal and plantings going forward. Also, the local public utility (Unitil) continues the task of removing and/or trimming street trees near their powerlines through their Storm Resiliency Project. Unitil's Staff Arborist will replant Public Shade Trees at the request of homeowners.

E. Fisheries and Wildlife: Large tracts of woodlands in the City's northern section provide habitat for numerous plant and animal species. This area is a combination of protected open space and privately owned parcels, which have not been heavily developed. Fitchburg's new Watershed Wildlife Conservation Easement protects a wildlife corridor in the northern part of the city and in adjacent Ashby, MA. White tailed deer, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hares, grey and red squirrels, red tailed hawks, woodchucks, beaver, ermine, skunk, red fox, fishers, Canada geese, wood ducks, and a variety of owls and songbirds are found regularly in this area. There have also been reports of moose, fishers and black bear. While tracts of open space are found in southern and central

Fitchburg, they are smaller and more isolated. As a result, the biodiversity of these areas is less than that of the northern section of the City. Commonly found are deer mice, raccoons, opossums, skunks, and a variety of amphibians and songbirds. The exception in South Fitchburg is the priority habitat for State-protected Rare Species in the Watershed Protection Overlay District near NoTown Reservoir.

In June 2009, The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) received grants from OSI's Western Massachusetts Land Protection Fund and OSI's Saving New England's Wildlife initiative for the purchase of conservation restrictions in the Eastern Ashburnham Reserve Conservation Corridor of Western Massachusetts. This complex project encompasses the Department of Fish and Game's purchase of a conservation restriction on 1,750 acres of the City of Fitchburg watershed lands, the City of Fitchburg's purchase of a conservation restriction on 165 acres, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation's purchase of a conservation restriction on 840 acres.

This project protects over 2,700 acres of forest land at the eastern edge of the Worcester-Monadnock Plateau eco-region and state designated Ashburnham Habitat Reserve. Comprised of upland forest, wetlands and cold-water streams, the lands expand conservation of the north-south corridor from Fitchburg Massachusetts to New Hampshire's Wapack Range and provides important wildlife habitat for state-threatened species, such as Blanding's turtle and the Incurvate Emerald dragonfly. The conservation of the Ashburnham lands will also improve protection of Fitchburg's water supply and increase recreational opportunities in Western Massachusetts by providing the public with access to miles of trail networks. This is part of an effort to protect wildlife corridors in the Monadnock region. The protected areas of the City's southern watershed in Hubbardson, Princeton & Westminster, the protected open space of Coggshall Park, Bird Sanctuary and the protected Water Dept. land in northern Fitchburg, Ashby & Ashburnham provides a flyway for several bird species.

The City's wetlands and water bodies provide habitat for wood ducks, mallards, geese, great blue herons, egrets, kingfishers, and green winged teal. Many of the City's streams and ponds sustain communities of fish and other aquatic creatures. Fishing is popular at McTaggart's Pond, Snow's Mill Pond, Putt's Pond and Green's Pond, as well as in the City's larger streams and some portions of the Nashua. Formerly a highly polluted river teeming with industrial pollutants from the mills along the river, the Nashua's water quality has made substantial progress, and wildlife is making a comeback. A 2006 study by the Army Corps of Engineers in the section just upstream of the dam at the Central Steam plant showed approximately ten species of fish present. Despite these positive trends, the 2012 Waterbody Report for the two segments of the North Nashua River that flow through or near Fitchburg's densely populated urban neighborhoods indicate that the overall status of this 8.6 mile section of the River is impaired (maps MA81-01 and MA 81-02) with waters too polluted or degraded to meet state water quality standards. Primary recreational contact such as swimming and secondary recreational contact such as fishing or wading is not advised. Fish consumption has not been assessed for either segment but for MA 81-02, assessment of wildlife, fish and aquatic life shows that it, too, is impaired. For both segments, one cause of impairment is E. Coli with probable sources being combined sewer overflows and non-point sources during wet weather events, urban related runoff, illicit connections/hook-ups to storm sewers and other unknown causes.

The Department of Fisheries and Wildlife lists rare species in Fitchburg. Spotted Turtles and Blanding's Turtles have been observed in Fitchburg as well as a large population of Eastern

Pearlshell in Phillips Brook. Also, Eastern Pearlshell (*Margaritifera*), an unusually fecund freshwater mussel that inhabits cool waters where trout are found, is also present. A population of Common Loons, a species of Special Concern species, has taken up residence in the Fitchburg Reservoir in Ashby.

F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments: Fitchburg's undulating terrain, agricultural resources, and water bodies create numerous scenic resources and special places. The Fitchburg 2006 Reconnaissance Report states:

“The City of Fitchburg’s developmental history is linked to its geology. The hills and valleys - the steepness of the hills and the river (Nashua) running through the valley - have shaped the way in which the City grew. The bowl shaped area in which the City was built was formed in the Ice Age and is part of the geological story of this area. There are several types of rocks in Fitchburg, including gneissic rock in the northwest section of the City; Merrimack schist in the southeast part of the City; and the granite of Rollstone Hill. Fitchburg’s geology is evident throughout the City in the many stone retaining walls and bridges that have come from the quarry on top of Rollstone Hill”.

The Reconnaissance Report lists Rollstone Hill and the Nashua River as Priority Heritage Landscapes worthy of protection. Another essential part of City’s visual character are its cemeteries. Laurel Hill Cemetery is located near Rollstone Hill. Besides the excellent views it provides, its winding granite walls and historic markers make it an aesthetic resource unto itself. Significant volunteer efforts in the past few years have restored the landscape of this cemetery to approach its former glory. Historic locations such as South Street Cemetery and the Revolutionary War Cemetery on Caswell Road, both dating from the Revolutionary War, are visual reminders of the City’s past and important historical landscapes.

Five of Fitchburg’s roads are designated Scenic Roads in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 15 C. These are Mt. Elam Road, Pearl Hill Road, Williams Road, Caswell Road, and Rindge Road from John Fitch Highway to North Street. These roads are notable for their rural charm, including field stone walls and ancient hardwoods. Alterations to these roads or removal of roadside trees require Planning Board approval. Several portions of these roads, notably Mt. Elam Road, have undergone selected tree trimming and removal due to the aftermath of the 2008 ice storm. Several other roads in the more rural areas of the City merit designation as Scenic Roads, as well.

In northern Fitchburg, the view from Flat Rock Road and Pearl Hill Road has long been noted. On clear days, Manchester, New Hampshire is visible to the north and Boston to the east. Though the peak of this vista is privately owned, the Massachusetts Audubon Society owns a large parcel of land off Flat Rock Road and the North County Land trust owns a large adjacent parcel.

As previously mentioned, Fitchburg’s residents recognize that the City’s urban landscapes are as valuable as its scenic rural areas, and that they go beyond the revered Upper Common with its fountain and statues and Monument Park with its historic cannons to lesser known but still important heritage landscapes that may lack formal protection. In 2006 the City of Fitchburg, in partnership with the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association, conducted a Heritage Landscape Inventory as part of the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. This document describes Fitchburg’s priority heritage landscapes, discusses planning issues identified by the City, identifies planning tools that are available and concludes with preservation recommendations for Fitchburg’s important heritage landscapes. Among the features identified by this report were the Academy Street School - The Annex, Coggs Hall Park, Dean Hill Cemetery, Mt. Elam Road, the

Nashua River, the Upper Common, Prichard and Pleasant Street neighborhoods, Waite's Corner, the Rapids footpath system, and Rollstone Hill. The Freedom's Way National Heritage Corridor is made up of 45 Cities and Towns within Massachusetts and New Hampshire that share unique historical, natural and cultural resources. The Corridor was designated as a Regional Priority Preservation Area by the Commonwealth in 2011.

Fitchburg has one documented ancient Native American site of an unknown date and 12 documented historic archaeological sites. Because of the known information about this region as well as the apparent Native American activity in Fitchburg, it is assumed that there is significantly more archaeology potential in the city.

Fitchburg has two historic districts: the Crocker Field Historic District and the Monument Park Historic District. This designation helps to preserve the historic character and culture of these areas of the city.

Recently, there has been a growing recognition that the Nashua River has tremendous potential as a scenic resource. The River crosses through the densest areas of the City, and provides an almost unbroken route between intown Fitchburg and Leominster. Found along its banks are numerous historic features, including brick mills, granite retaining walls, arched stone bridges, and other legacies from Fitchburg's 19th century history. The City has improved the access and views of the river in recent years through the development of three new parks: Riverfront, Gateway and the Steamline Trail.

G. Environmental Problems: Fitchburg faces environmental problems, some of which are common to older, industrial cities. The numerous industrial sites often have real or perceived issues of soil and groundwater contamination. Since many of these sites are located along the Nashua River, the danger exists that the contamination may spread downstream. In addition, Fitchburg suffers from surface water contamination caused by runoff from impervious surfaces, such as roads, roofs, and driveways. According to the Department of Environmental Protection, storm runoff is the single greatest source of water pollution in the state. As mentioned earlier, the entire 8.6 mile section of the North Nashua River flowing through Fitchburg (maps MA81-01 and MA 81-02), is impaired and does not meet state water quality standards.

A number of industrial "brownfields" are found in Fitchburg. A dilapidated industrial property off Sawyer Passway owned by Unitil (Fitchburg Gas and Electric), the local electric utility company, was once used as a gasification plant, in which natural gas was produced from coal. Petroleum products, cyanide, asbestos and other hazardous materials have been identified on the site, and the presence of abandoned transformers indicated the possibility of PCB contaminated soil. This property abuts the Nashua River, raising significant concerns about pollution downstream. Unitil has demolished all the buildings on the site; the former gasification plant was taken down in 2009. Clean-up of the remaining contaminated soil on site, at Unitil's expense is expected to be complete by 2014. Much of the Sawyer Passway site will be placed under an Activity & Use Limitation (AUL) that specifies the allowable and prohibited uses of the property.

In June 2012, an unexpected release of oil into the Nashua River occurred in an area adjacent to the former Central Steam plant owned by the City. This parcel abuts the Fitchburg's new Steam Line Trail. To contain the release, the Mass Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) mobilized

an emergency work crew to install oil recovery booms in the river. A series of emergency meetings were held between the City, DEP and EPA, during which a plan to conduct initial investigations into the cause of the release was developed and implemented by all three parties; the DEP to address containment; the City to engage a contractor to clean up several locations within the Steam plant where oil was found leaking from old machinery which had recently been vandalized; and the EPA to install a recovery well adjacent to the building and river to intercept additional oil being discharged from the plant.

Since these actions have been implemented, it appears that the leak has largely been contained and there is little or no evidence of additional oil being discharged into the river. The City has engaged a Licensed Site Professional (LSP) to file the required reports under the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP). Funding from MassDevelopment to demolish the building and remove any underground sources (pipes) which may be transporting the oil has been obtained. This project will be bid in late 2014 or early 2015. Once demolition and cleanup occurs, the site will be secured and final environmental clearances will be obtained. It is anticipated that, upon completion, the property will become a "pad ready" site available for potential redevelopment.

The EPA is currently undertaking a project adjacent to the Central Steam Plant and the parking area for the Steam Line Trail. They have hired contractors who are removing a 420,000 gallon underground storage tank (UST) which held fuel oil for the plant when it was in operation. The City is working with the EPA to reduce the costs associated with this work by providing backfill after the clean-up is accomplished.

Contamination issues at the former General Electric Plant on Boulder Drive were remediated by the company prior to the complex being turned over to the City in 1999. In 2010 two underground storage tanks, which held fuel for the now retired high-pressure steam boilers on the site were removed and a new access drive into the site was added at that location. The site was redeveloped into Putnam Place, a business incubator and job creation center in the early 2000s and became home to Fitchburg's Municipal Offices in late 2012. Recently work was undertaken on the abatement of asbestos and PCB's within buildings one and four and these two buildings (which are connected by an interior elevator hall) are now being demolished. A landscaped parking area will be developed on the space.

Petroleum contamination was identified at the Nagy Spring building on Westminster Hill Road. In 2010 this building was determined to be structurally unsound. The City demolished the building and remediated the environmental concerns.

An old sawmill on Willow Street has been redeveloped into privately owned student housing associated with Fitchburg State University. The building came on line in 2012. EPA Brownfields grants were used to fund phase I, phase II and supplemental assessments to initiate the privately funded redevelopment process.

The Fitchburg landfill, located just over the town line on Rt. 31 in Westminster, is managed by Waste Management and overseen by the Board of Health. However, an old landfill site at Coolidge Park caused problems during renovations of the park in 2008. The entrance road off of Pearl Street was built over a former landfill, which caused problems for the road's reconstruction. Exploratory holes were dug and remnants of this former landfill or dumping ground at the site were found. Testing found reportable conditions, specifically, high levels of lead/antimony and aromatics, and a

site assessment was undertaken. During construction of the new driveway over 4,000 cubic feet of contaminated soils were removed from the site and disposed of properly.

Large amounts of Fitchburg's land area contains slopes, shallow bedrock, and silty or clay soils. All of these factors increase the likelihood that the disturbance of soil and removal of vegetation, which accompanies development, will lead to erosion and sedimentation problems. The more easily developed areas of the City have largely been developed. Therefore much of the new development which the City is seeing occurs on difficult sites. In response to these concerns, an Erosion and Sedimentation Ordinance was adopted by the City in 1998, requiring the filing of an Erosion Control Plan with the Conservation Commission when substantial amounts of soil will be disturbed, or when the disturbance occurs on a slope. Despite that ordinance, and despite new EPA regulations requiring an EPA Stormwater Permit for disturbance in excess of one acre, the City is occasionally plagued by siltation and run-off from development sites with inadequate erosion control measures.

A large portion of the City's older neighborhoods until recently had combined sewers, which handle both stormwater and wastewater. During large rain events, the amount of stormwater often overloads the systems, causing contaminated water to overflow. The City is under a Consent Agreement with the EPA to separate combined sanitary and storm sewers that pollute the Nashua River during storm events. Significant progress has been made in separating storm and sanitary sewers in Fitchburg's older neighborhoods.

Construction in floodplains was common for most of Fitchburg's history. The most evident case of this is John Fitch Highway, Fitchburg's primary commercial strip. Most of the properties along both sides of the road are within the 100-year floodplain of Baker Brook, which was diverted to allow the construction. Flooding of the parking lots adjacent to the brook is a frequent occurrence, resulting in property damage, pollution of the brook, and erosion. The City is now trying to address this issue. The DPW commissioned a Baker Brook Flood Reduction Study to identify measures that would potentially reduce the severity and/or frequency of flooding by Baker Brook along John Fitch Highway. Preliminary results of this study were available in the Fall of 2013. Further evaluations of the hydraulic benefits of potential solutions will occur after stakeholder input is received. Sections of downtown Fitchburg, Cleghorn, and the industrial area around Airport Road are also in the 100-year floodplain, as is most of the airport property.

**SECTION V
INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION
AND RECREATION INTEREST**

The protection of open space land has recreational, historical and aesthetic importance to people and is essential to the survival of wildlife, vegetation and forests. Protection of open space is smart environmental planning.

Fitchburg has numerous parcels dedicated to open space or recreational use. A variety of mechanisms are used to protect these lands. Protected open space and unprotected areas of environmental or recreational interest can be found on the map entitled "Open Space".

Some of Fitchburg's largest privately owned parcels have been subdivided for residential development. Unfortunately, this includes large amounts of agricultural land. Although state programs such as the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program and Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B restrictions are available to provide an incentive for property owners to preserve their land from development, funding for APR projects is severely limited, and Chapter land designation provides limited protection. When development does occur, the use of the Cluster Development provision of the City's zoning ordinance can preserve open space, while still allowing the property owner to realize a profit. Unfortunately, too often the preserved open space is of limited utility. While each of these options provides benefits to the owner, they are all voluntary, and are not necessarily well known. Therefore, the City must take an active role in promoting them before the owner proceeds with development.

A. **Protected Parcels:** Approximately 4,652 acres of Fitchburg's land area is permanently protected for conservation and recreational uses (see attachment B). The method of protection varies widely including City and state ownership, permanent deed restrictions, ownership of land, and conservation and preservation easements by private organizations. During the late 1800's, large parcels were deeded to the City for parks, Coggshall and Parkhill Parks being the most notable of these. Protected lands are listed below by category. The acreage figures are approximate, and based on measurements from the City's Geographic Information System.

Table # 2 LAND PROTECTED FROM FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

OWNERSHIP/RESPONSIBILITY	LAND AREA (ACRES)	LAND AREA % TOTAL
City Parks	479	10%
Conservation Commission	160	3%
DWW- Water Division	1,200	26%
Conservation Restrictions (private & public land)	2,065	45%
Mass Audubon Society	361	8%
Agricultural Preservation Restrictions	387	8%
TOTAL	4,652	100%

Source: Green Fitchburg - Opportunities, Strategies & Visions for the Future, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, May 2009

Parks: Fitchburg is fortunate to have a number of large parcels dedicated to public use near its most densely populated areas. The character of these properties varies greatly, including tracts of forest, play areas such as Howarth Park, passive parks such as Gateway and Riverfront Parks, athletic facilities such as Crocker Field, historic urban green spaces such as the Upper Common, and monuments such as Moran Square and Monument Park. In addition to the parks and playgrounds, many of the City's schools also provide playgrounds, fields, basketball courts and gymnasiums for neighbors.

Providing adequate park facilities for inner City residents and promoting environmental equity is a priority for Fitchburg. The City is fortunate to have a variety of parks, playgrounds and other open space within the urban center, and throughout the densely populated Environmental Justice area of the City. These green spaces include a multitude of neighborhood playgrounds, passive parks, unprotected open space such as Rollstone Hill, sport fields and one of the City's largest parks, Parkhill. In recent years the city has developed two new parks in the EJ area, Gateway and Riverfront Park. The city also is looking for ways to develop abandoned lots within the urban center into quality green space. This is discussed further under the Summary of Community Needs.

Fitchburg appropriates Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds each year to improve CDBG-eligible parks and playgrounds, among which are most of the parks and playgrounds in the central part of the City. The City has applied for additional funds from various grant programs to update eligible recreational areas over the years with much success. Most recently, the City was awarded funds from the State's Our Common Backyards grant program to replace aging play equipment and safety surfacing and install benches and shade trees at Lowe Playground near the downtown.

Since the submission of the 2007 - 2012 Open Space and Recreation Plan, park improvements have included the following: further development of Riverfront Park including removing the floodwall and providing better access to the River both physically and visually; design and development of Sheldon Street Gateway Park; installation of a BMX Park at Parkhill; renovations to Coolidge Park including drainage improvements, a new driveway, parking lot and playground; improvements to Howarth Park, including renovating the basketball court and access improvements to the lower level of the park; installing fencing at Nikitas Field; resurfacing the running track at Crocker Field and renovating a baseball field at Parkhill Park; and consistent signage in 18 of Fitchburg's Parks that deem that parks as 'Safe Zones' with adopt-a-park information and the Police Department's phone number to report any suspicious activity in real time. A splashpad, benches and shade structure were installed at Crocker Playground in Fitchburg in mid-2013. This work is a step toward completing projects outlined in a master plan for this park which was completed in early 2013. The DPW will complete phase one of the master plan work with the completion of the walking path, installation of granite benches and replacement of fencing in 2014.

These projects improved recreational opportunities for residents in Fitchburg and brought play areas into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Consumer Product Safety Guidelines. A new 7-Year Park Action Plan has been developed as part of the process for updating this Open Space and Recreation plan which will be used as a tool when developing projects and making other decisions related to open space and recreation in the City. (Please see Section IX.)

The DPW is responsible for the maintenance of the City's parks and playgrounds. In addition, private groups, notably the Friends of Coggs Hall Park, provide volunteer labor and limited funding

for park projects, and several sports groups such as Pop Warner football and Little League baseball have “adopted” certain fields and provide maintenance and upkeep. Groups like The Trustees of Reservations and the Greenways Committee have also taken a special interest in some of the City’s parks and provide assistance with such elements as community gardens and invasive species control.

The City of Fitchburg recently launched an official Adopt a Park program. Sixteen parks have been adopted under this program since its inception. The following is taken from the programs flyer:

What is Fitchburg’s Adopt-a-Park Program?

Fitchburg’s Adopt-a-Park program allows groups, businesses, and individuals the opportunity to give back to their City, by taking care of one of the City’s 39 parks. The idea was inspired in 2011 at a Parks Board meeting when another local community group asked the Board if they could help them take care of Riverfront Park by cleaning it up once a week. Fun ‘n FITchburg, a diverse partnership of over 75 community stakeholders representing policy makers, professionals, residents, and youth heard the idea of ‘Adopting-a-Park’ and thought that other community groups may also interested in helping to take care of a park in their neighborhood.

The Adopt-a-Park program is a collaboration through the City of Fitchburg’s Parks and Recreation Department, Department of Public Works, Board of Health, City Police, and Fun ‘n FITchburg. Activities through Adopt-a-Park lead to: reduced litter and vandalism in parks; enhancement of the park environment; and beautification of the green space. Your commitment through a Parks Adoption helps increase City resources by reducing man hours for City Departments and helps to create safe and sought after spaces for Fitchburg’s residents.

The parks adopted are Riverfront Park, Elm Street Park (Lowe Playground), Gateway Park, Stanley Park, Crocker Playground, Green Street Park, Parkhill Park, Monument Park, Daniels Park, Coolidge Park, Bartley Nolan/Salem Street Park, Howarth Playground, Coggshall Park, Phillips St. Playground, Caldwell/Hellenic Park, and Goodrich Street Park. Parks have been adopted by individuals, churches, area agencies and organizations, as well as businesses.

Conservation Parcels: The Conservation Commission owns over 26 parcels in the City, comprising approximately 160 acres, as follows:

- **Green’s Pond Area** - Located on both sides of Ashby State Road, approximately 1,000 feet north of the intersection of John Fitch Highway and Route 31, the conservation area comprises 28.5 acres. The pond, originally built for harvesting ice, covers approximately 14 acres. Today the pond can be used for fishing, walking, bird watching, and picnicking. A trail goes around about two-thirds of the pond.
- **Putnam Pond** - Located at the corner of John Fitch Highway and Pearl Hill Road, only half the pond, commonly referred to as Putt’s Pond, is owned by the City. Erosion and runoff from winter sanding operations on John Fitch Highway as well as nearby construction increase eutrophication in Putts Pond. The Conservation Commission and DPW have recently worked to clear nuisance vegetation and brush from around this water body.
- **Littlefield Conservation Area** - These parcels on either side of Ashburnham Hill Road, comprising 32 acres are located approximately halfway between the intersections of Caswell Road and Williams Road in northwest Fitchburg. The heavily wooded parcel is a good example of Fitchburg’s scenic quality

- **Dolloff Conservation Area** - Located near Coggshall Park and the Bird Sanctuary, this 14.04 acre parcel is a stand of mixed hard and softwoods with an understory of Mountain Laurel.
- **Gillman Conservation Area** - This 13.3 acre gently rolling upland area also abuts the Bird Sanctuary near Coggshall Park.
- **Airport Conservation Areas** - Two parcels, comprising a little more than 20 acres, abut the Nashua River and Baker Brook confluence near the Fitchburg Municipal Airport in southeast Fitchburg.
- **Brown Land Conservation Area** - Located across John Fitch Highway from St. Bernard's Cemetery, this 12 acre parcel is in the marsh and flood plain area of Baker Brook. Use of the land by dirt bikes and ATVs has led to significant erosion.
- **DeNeufville Conservation Lands** - These 16 acres of wooded lowland and wetlands border Falulah Brook downstream from Greene's Pond. When the parcels were donated to the City in 1970, it was stipulated that the lands would be used in perpetuity exclusively for conservation.
- **Rollo Property** - This 1.96 acre parcel was donated to the Conservation Commission in 1993 to serve as a buffer to Falulah Brook. It is adjacent to the DeNeufville property, and will serve to protect the scenic quality of the southern end of Rindge Road.
- **Westminster Hill Properties** - These parcels are located on the periphery of a subdivision south of Westminster Hill Road. One parcel, approximately 9 acres, is located along Westminster Hill Road. Another parcel, approximately 1/3 acre, is located behind the homes at the end of Almont Terrace. Both parcels were donated by the developer of the subdivision to the Conservation Commission.
- **Valley View Properties** - These three parcels of 15.3, 1.8, and 0.2 acres located north of Westminster Hill Road and south and west of the Valley View Estates Planned Unit Development were donated in 1990 by the developer, and serve as a buffer for an unnamed stream, which flows into the Nashua River.
- **Central Nashua River** - This 1 acre parcel on the southern bank side of the Nashua between Rollstone & Circle Streets serves as a break in the surrounding industrial land.
- **Cressey Conservation Area** - This half acre parcel is located near Falulah Brook off Rindge Road.
- **Southern Nashua River Areas** - These two parcels comprising a half acre, border the Nashua River off Airport Road.
- **Triangular Conservation Area** - This .61 acre parcel located off Flat Rock Road is completely surrounded by Mass. Audubon Society Land.
- **Viewig Conservation Area** - This triangular .11 acre parcel, borders Phillips Brook on Ashburnham Street at the Westminster town line.

Watershed Land: Approximately 1,800 acres in Fitchburg are owned by the City and managed by the DPW, Water Division. Protecting the land around the City's reservoirs and the streams that feed them is part of the City's two-tier approach to drinking water protection. In 2001 the City adopted a revised zoning ordinance which included a watershed protection overlay district providing additional protection for approximately 2,300 acres of land in the northern watershed, protecting Fitchburg's water supply, and in the southern part of Fitchburg, protecting the watershed of the Notown Reservoir in Leominster. The watershed protection district is shown on the attached Zoning map. This overlay requires a more in-depth review of proposed development within this district. Special Permits are required for certain uses in this area which may have an adverse impact on the drinking water supply. In 2005 the City amended its zoning ordinance to increase the minimum lot size and lot frontage in the watershed protection overlay district in a further attempt to reduce the density of potential development in order to protect the City's drinking water.

After the federal government mandated that the City treat its surface water supply with filtration plants, two plants were constructed -- one in Westminster and one in Fitchburg. Since clean water costs much less to filter than polluted water, protecting the reservoirs saves the City money by reducing the cost of operating the filtration plants.

A matrix that shows all of the City-owned recreation and open-space parcels is Appendix D to this report.

Conservation Restrictions: Parcels in private ownership can be permanently protected without the City taking ownership via conservation restrictions and easements. Conservation Restrictions (CRs) are written into the deed for the property, and limit the uses which are allowed, usually allowing only conservation and recreation. CRs allow a party other than the owner to restrict the property to a certain use, in this case, conservation. The developers of cluster subdivisions and PUDs often use conservation restrictions to protect the project's common land, which is owned by the homeowners association. Two land trusts own CRs on land in Fitchburg: the North County Land Trust, which protects over 200 acres around the former Marshall and Overlook Reservoirs on Pearl Hill Road, and the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust which has a CR on over 47 acres at the end of Sheldon Road. In addition, a restriction was recently placed by the National Park Service on an 18 acre parcel owned by the Commonwealth near the Routes 2 & 31 interchange, adjacent to Leominster State Forest, limiting the property to park and recreational purposes. In June of 2009, the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) purchased a 1,875 acre conservation restriction (CR) from the City of Fitchburg to assure permanent protection of its northern drinking water supply watershed.

In November of 2013 the City was awarded a Water Supply protection grant in the amount of \$178,525 by the Massachusetts Executive office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. This grant will enable the city to conserve 163 acres of privately owned land in the Fitchburg's northern water supply watershed, located in Ashby and Ashburnham. Of the 163 acres, 110 acres will be acquired by the City Water Division and the remaining 53 parcel will be protected by a CR.

Audubon Land: The Audubon Society owns 361 acres north of Health Alliance's Burbank Hospital, bordered on the north by Water Department land and on the southwest by Water Department and North County Land Trust land.

Agricultural Preservation Restrictions: There are currently three farms in Fitchburg under the APR program: the Marshall Farm, which protected 99 acres off Marshall Road, the Hertel Farm, 207 acres on Ashburnham Hill Road, and the 67 acre Rossbach Farm on Stickney Road. Also, two City-owned parcels totaling 14 acres are protected under this program. One parcel near the intersection of Alpine and McIntire Roads, and one parcel near the intersection of Ashby West and Scott Roads were placed into the APR program as mitigation for the loss of agricultural land when the new Fitchburg High School was built in 1999. Under this program, the state purchases the development rights, to prevent the land's conversion to residential or commercial use and keep the land in agriculture. This allows the owner to realize a profit from the sale of the rights, while still owning the land and using it for farming. The City benefits by preserving agricultural land for agricultural use, without expensive land purchases.

B. Unprotected Parcels: A number of important recreation and open space resources in Fitchburg have little or no formal protection, and could succumb to development unless action is taken to preserve them. In addition, increasing demand for new housing will endanger the large rural areas in Fitchburg's northern and south-central areas. The map "Open Space" shows important open space parcels which lack formal protection.

Watershed Land: A Watershed Protection Study was completed in November of 1993 to identify critical parcels in the watershed of Fitchburg's reservoirs. Data on lands within Fitchburg and surrounding towns were analyzed using the City's GIS, and each parcel was rated on its priority for protection. This information was updated in early 1999, and again in 2005. Unprotected watershed parcels within the City limits are shown on the map "Open Space." While some parcels have been acquired, most are unprotected.

Farmland: Although there are over 300 acres of farmland enrolled in the APR, and therefore protected from development forever, this represents only a quarter of the City's total agricultural acreage. Although 689 acres of farmland are enrolled in the 61A program designed to preserve agriculture, Fitchburg continues to see farmland subdivided for residential development. Since agricultural land usually has deep soil, little bedrock, few wetlands, and gentle slopes, and is located in rural areas, it is attractive for residential development, so developers too often repay the tax subsidy or take the land out of the program for five years to eliminate the restrictions imposed by the Chapter 61A program.

Private Clubs: Two private organizations, the Finnish American Club of Saima and the Oak Hill Country Club, own large tracts of land in the City that are classified as Recreational Land. Saima Park located off Richardson Road, has served as a gathering place for the City's Finnish population since 1912 for festivals, dances, track and swim meets, etc. Saima Park is adjacent to the protected open space created by the Candlewood Park and Stoneybrook Village subdivisions. Saima Pond is located on the 51 acre property, 33 acres of which is in the Chapter 61B program. Saima also has includes a 350 meter stone dust track, hiking and cross-country skiing trails, a baseball field, and a gathering hall. Oak Hill Country Club an 18-hole golf course established in 1918 on 311 acres in south central Fitchburg, is also in Chapter 61B. While neither of these organizations plans to sell or develop any land in the near future and have been working to acquire property, no permanent preservation restriction is in place for either of them.

Riverfront Property: The importance of taking advantage of the urban Nashua River is discussed in the Economic Development, Transportation, Land Use, Open Space and Recreation, and Natural,

Cultural and Historic Resources elements of the Vision2020 Master Plan. With the abundance of historic mills, bridges, and walls along the river, and its close proximity to dense areas, the Nashua has the potential to become a real asset to the City's economy and the quality of life for its residents. The City recently developed Riverfront Park, located along a section of the River adjacent to downtown on a former brownfields site. In addition, the City developed the Steamline Trail Park in West Fitchburg along the Nashua River and Flagg Brook. These two, with a small, inaccessible Central Nashua River conservation property, constitute the full extent of riverside land currently protected. A trail system linking these features has been proposed along the River and the abandoned CSX Railroad line between the downtowns of Fitchburg and Leominster.

One property owner opened a sandwich shop and farm stand along the Nashua in West Fitchburg (Mill #3), and restored the riparian area for outdoor dining. Further conversion of riverfront property for conservation and recreational purposes, or sensitive commercial and residential development, will allow Fitchburg to take advantage of this unique resource.

Rollstone Hill: The City owns approximately 75 acres of woodlands and former quarry on Rollstone Hill, in the center of the City, between Cleghorn and the South Side. This property is primarily used for hiking and the painting of the granite face by the senior class of Fitchburg High School. It has been a prominent part of Fitchburg's landscape since before the first English settlers, and continues to be a defining characteristic of the City. Despite its importance and the ease with which the City could permanently protect it, Rollstone Hill has no formal protected status.

Table # 2 LAND PROTECTED FROM FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

OWNERSHIP/RESPONSIBILITY	LAND AREA (ACRES)	LAND AREA % TOTAL
City Parks	479	10%
Conservation Commission	160	3%
DWW- Water Division	1,200	26%
Conservation Restrictions (private & public land)	2,065	45%
Mass Audubon Society	361	8%
Agricultural Preservation Restrictions	387	8%
TOTAL	4,652	100%

Source: Green Fitchburg - Opportunities, Strategies & Visions for the Future, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, May 2009

SECTION VA PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Recreational Programs

The Parks and Recreation Department makes numerous programs available throughout the year and sponsors many programs in conjunction with other community organizations.

During the summer, the Recreation Department provides a summer parks program at various playgrounds throughout the City. During the summer of 2012 there were six sites at which neighborhood children are able to participate in arts and crafts, sports games, utilize playground equipment and other recreation programs. The summer parks program also takes children on a field trip every Friday of the program, including Southwick Zoo, Boston Museum of Science, Pawtucket Red Sox, Patriots training camp, Salisbury Beach, and a Fenway Park tour. On average 300-350 children attend this program every day. This program also provides a free lunch to every child who attends, sponsored by the summer food service program funded by the Department of Education and the Fitchburg Recreation Department. This program is open to any child under the age of 18, from after the Fourth of July to the end of August. To support this activity, the Recreation Department hires 14 playground instructors and a supervisor. Playground instructors are also asked to help assist with Civic Days Activities, including the City softball tournament, the block party, doll and carriage parade, and the Fourth of July parade.

Summer Recreation programs also include the opening and staffing of the J. Robert Crowley Swimming complex at Coolidge Park, and the Splash Park at Parkhill Park. One head lifeguard, eight lifeguards, and a supervisor/lifeguard/maintenance person are hired to oversee patrons at the pool. Swimming lessons, senior swim, family swim, and lap swim are offered at the pool for 6-7 weeks. Two or three staff are hired to be attendants at the Splash Park during the hours of operation.

Another highly attended summer program is the Ryan C. Joubert skate camp at the skate park in Parkhill Park. The Recreation Department in conjunction with the Joubert Memorial Foundation, hires 5-6 skateboard instructors. The skateboard camp runs during the month of July, starting after the Fourth. An average of 50-75 children attend this free program.

A recent addition to what the summer program offers is a men's softball league. The league is held at Coolidge Park, with roughly 6-8 teams from Fitchburg and the surrounding communities.

The Recreation Department also offers a concert on the common series. The concerts take place over a 6-7 week program, every Wednesday after the Fourth of July at the Upper Common on Main Street. The concert series is sponsored by the Recreation Department and Workers Credit Union. Scheduling and day of preparations are done through the Recreation Department.

The Recreation Department offers basketball programs for men, women, and children. The men's and women's programs take place during both the summer and winter. Youth basketball takes place during the winter. The youth leagues currently have 24 teams broken up into 5 different divisions: boys and girls grades K-2 instructional, girls grades 3-5, girls grades 6-8, boys grades 3-6, and boys grades 7-8. Registration fees are paid by the participants and the Recreation Department acquires

sponsors to fund the program. One to two seasonal league coordinators assist the Recreation Director in taking care of game day operations for each league; all coaches are volunteers.

In addition to the basketball program, in the winter, the Recreation Department has a walking and jogging club. Passes are obtained through the Recreation Department (at no cost to participants) and Fitchburg State University is utilized for the program. Another indoor recreation program is Zumba; the Recreation Department hires a private instructor, paid through registration fees, to provide classes for seniors and adults. There is also a ski club/program, through which the Recreation Department provides reduced fee passes to Wachusett Mountain. The Greater Fitchburg Track & Field Club runs a summer youth track program on two evenings a week in July & August at the newly resurfaced Crocker Field, where youth are introduced to a regimen of training, including a dynamic warm-up, stretching exercises, technique drills, a track workout, and cool-down. Participants are also provided with information on proper diet and hydration.

Along with running leagues, summer camps, and other recreational activities, the Recreation Department plays an active role in the City's annual Halloween party and trick or treat on Main Street. Over 100 people attended this free event this year. The Recreation Department also hosts an Easter egg hunt at Coggshall Park.

The Recreation Department works closely with City and non-City organizations and recreational groups, such as Fun 'n FITchburg, Fitchburg public schools, Fitchburg State University, Lassie League, Cal Ripken league, Babe Ruth League, Fitchburg Pop Warner, Fitchburg Street Hockey, Fitchburg Youth wrestling, and Fitchburg Youth soccer. The Recreation department is responsible for scheduling and programming of all parks and fields throughout the City.

A year-round program that was started recently, co-sponsored with Fun 'n FITchburg, is the Adopt-a-Park program. The Recreation Department and Fun 'n FITchburg reached out to the community to get involved in the care of parks within the City. This program provides the opportunity for a member of the community or a community organization to clean up and watch over a park of their choice. The Recreation Department and DPW provide the tools and equipment needed. The person or organization who adopts the park provides regular updates and communication to the key city departments and act as their 'eyes and ears' in the parks.

Fun 'n FITchburg has also worked to increase usership and awareness of Fitchburg's vast parks system over the past two summers via Parks Days. In 2013, 443 unduplicated youth visited Fitchburg's parks during this event. 112 of these youth said it was their first time visiting a park. Parks Days has helped galvanize multiple community stakeholders to see the City's parks as a major community asset and is an economical and accessible way for youth and residents to have fun and get active in their own neighborhood.

The Recreation Department also reaches out to and tries to work with non-profit organizations such as LUK, MOC, Seven Hills, and ARC to offer programs to disadvantaged youth and youth with disabilities.

The Challenger Little League is for children with special needs; the league takes place from April-June at Coggshall Park. A buddy system is used with a family member or friend accompanying each player onto the field. In addition to little league, special recreational activities are available throughout the summer at various parks.

Other Recreational Programs

Starting in 2012, thanks to many partnering organizations and grants from both the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts and the Fieldstone Foundation, Massachusetts Audubon was able to spend time developing and expanding programming in Fitchburg.

In collaboration with the North County Land Trust and the Nashua River Watershed Association, Mass Audubon began offering more public programs as well as assisting with school programs for the elementary and middle schools.

Also, in cooperation with Health Alliance Hospital located at the former Burbank Hospital site along with the Community Health Center, Mass Audubon began a program to welcome more people out on the trails at the Flat Rock Wildlife Sanctuary -- 361 acres located right behind the hospital and health center. A new kiosk was built behind the former hospital building at the access point to the trails.

Park Management and Coordination

The utilization and upkeep of the City's parks is handled through many departments and boards. Policies and procedures for City parks are developed by the Board of Parks Commissioners. The DPW handles the maintenance of City Parks. The Recreation Department programs the parks and provides additional recreational activities for City residents. The Community Development Department manages most capital improvement projects in City parks funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and other grant sources.

These separate entities work closely together when determining park priorities and projects. Periodically, Parks Board members get together to tour parks around the City to see what past improvements have worked well and what additional improvements are needed. In 2011 Park Board Members and City Officials toured the parks with a consultant from the design firm of Weston and Sampson. From this survey the group acquired a better understanding of the immediate and long term needs of each of the parks.

Each time capital improvements are planned, each of these groups play an active role in determining what would best suit the site depending on the users of the park, how the park is programmed and how to address maintenance concerns. Members of each of these groups also become involved in the public participation process, which is a key element in the planning of capital improvements in the City's parks.

Park maintenance is handled through the City's Department of Public Works. Staffing includes a foreman, three equipment operators and temporary help.

Currently Crocker Field operation and maintenance is handled by the School Department. The City is currently looking into whether or not this is the best option for this historic, Olmstead Brothers facility. Over the past 25 years 1.5 million in repairs and improvements have been undertaken but much more needs to be done to reach the goal of restoring this facility and providing better public access to its features. Oversight of a dedicated committee may open up the opportunity for more grant funds.

The Community Development Department manages grant programs that fund capital improvements. Over the last several years, the Mayor has allocated CDBG funds for improvements at various parks. This current year \$50,000 was allocated and \$70,000 has been recommended for the next round. Unfortunately with the continuing cuts to the CDBG program, this amount continues to decrease. In the past the City was often able to allocate upwards of \$150,000 each year. Luckily, funds have also been received over the years from the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Division of Conservation Services, the Department of Environmental Management, Office of Historic Resources and the National Park Service. This work is always undertaken in close cooperation with the DPW, the Recreation Department and the Board of Park Commissioners.

SECTION VI COMMUNITY GOALS

A. Description of Process

In 2011 the City of Fitchburg hired the firm of Weston and Sampson (W&S) to survey the most heavily used parks and playgrounds in the City. Members of the Board of Park Commissioners, and representatives from the DPW and Community Development offices, joined landscape architects from W&S on a park tour. W&S then provided information to the City on the current condition of the facilities, the resources and amenities available at each location, long and short term safety concerns, and finally, improvement opportunities. This review included neighborhood context and level of usage of the parks and provided a good starting point for setting goals for the future.

In 2011 a separate review of many of Fitchburg's parks was undertaken by Fun n' FITchburg, a youth obesity reduction initiative funded through Mass. Dept. of Public Health via Mass in Motion and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities. This group is a partnership between the City of Fitchburg and the Montachusett Opportunity Council (MOC) working with over 85 individuals including residents, City councilors, the mayor, businesses, environmental groups, youth and many others. One of the goals of this partnership is to increase the usage of Fitchburg's parks. Over the course of three years individuals from Fun n' FITchburg have conducted an in-depth analysis of the parks system in Fitchburg including: a trolley tour of Fitchburg parks; walking audits and sidewalk inventories to determine any barriers to walking to Fitchburg's most popular parks and speed and traffic count studies around Lowe Park. Fun 'n FITchburg members also interviewed key stakeholders and conducted focus groups with youth, parents, policy makers and City staff and officials. After auditing many of the parks to determine their positive and negative aspects they put together a list of assets at each park and conducted park observation audits in all active parks to establish a baseline for usage. These audits provided information on what activities park goers are participating in when utilizing the parks. Documents and summaries were developed outlining the information gleaned from each of these activities.

In March of 2012 the City of Fitchburg's Capital Improvement Commission toured City parks to determine the needs of the parks, including grounds, facilities, utilities, playground equipment etc. In addition to the review of all the City parks by various departments, commissions, consultants and volunteers, the City of Fitchburg also developed an Open Space and Recreation Plan survey to solicit further public input on needs and concerns related to Fitchburg's open space and recreation areas. (See attachments A and A1) The survey was sent to City boards and commissions, distributed via City mailing lists, distributed at and through many agencies within the City, placed on the front page of the City's website and made available at the front counter of the Municipal Offices. A subcommittee of the Open Space Plan Update Committee reviewed the results of the park tours and the survey, to help develop goals and objectives for the City's next seven year open space plan, meeting many times over the course of several months in 2013.

The entire Open Space Plan Update Committee consisted of representatives from Fun n' FITchburg, the Montachusett Opportunity Council, the Fitchburg Greenway Committee, the Nashua River Watershed Association, the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, the Fitchburg Board of Park Commissioners, the Fitchburg Energy Commission, and the City of

Fitchburg's DPW and the Planning and Community Development Departments. The committee met periodically during the development of this plan. A public meeting was held on April 1, 2014 to outline the goals that were developed based on the results of the various surveys of the parks and to solicit even further public comment and input. This public meeting was advertised via social media outlets, the City's webpage and was a formally posted and advertised public meeting. The Board of Park Commissioners voted to accept these goals at their April 2014 meeting.

Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals: Fitchburg is a community with significant public open space and recreational resources. Protecting, maintaining, updating and utilizing these resources appropriately is essential to the City's efforts to provide a good quality of life for current and future residents, attract and retain businesses and promote the health of the environment and the community. The City should work to realize the following goals:

1. Develop and maintain a safe and sought after park system in Fitchburg that provides a variety of recreational activities for all residents.
2. Provide walking and biking paths for recreation and commuting.
3. Provide better access to recreational opportunities.
4. Protect and promote Fitchburg's watershed.
5. Protect, promote, and preserve open space and wildlife habitat.
6. Develop and promote greenspace in the urban core.

SECTION VII ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs: Fitchburg continues to face many of the same environmental challenges identified in the previous Open Space and Recreation Plan. The magnitude of these problems and a continuing lack of adequate resources make complete solutions elusive. However, incremental progress has been made on almost all of them. Resource protection needs are listed below.

1. **Continue to Protect Watershed Land.** Protecting the water quality of surface water and stormwater runoff in areas which drain into the City's reservoirs is essential for the provision of safe drinking water to residents. Targeting these lands for protection also preserves large wildlife corridors along perennial brooks. Many steps have been taken in this process since the development of the last Open Space Plan including an 1,875 acre conservation restriction in the northern watershed, and the purchase and protection of key parcels in the watershed area.
2. **Improve the Quality of the Nashua River and other water bodies.** Runoff from roads and buildings along the River and effluent from combined sewers harm the Nashua and the species that live in it. The ongoing extensive Combined Sewer Separation project is an important part of this improvement effort. Additionally, recreation projects like the Steamline Trail, the removal of the flood wall at the Riverfront Park and the new river vista at the new Gateway Park bring people to the river and focus attention on the river. These types of projects are important, because when people are aware of the river, they are more likely to want to keep it clean. Ongoing testing of the Nashua River in Fitchburg by the Nashua River Watershed Association has shown that the City's efforts to improve water quality are proving successful. The City has also been working to clear vegetation and debris from Putts Pond, Greens Pond and McTaggart's Pond.

B. Summary of Management Needs:

1. **Provide Adequate Resources for Park Maintenance.** Many of the City's parks and playgrounds are heavily used and do not always receive sufficient maintenance. The extensive number of parks within the City and the small DPW staff and budget available to care for them does not always allow for the most adequate care. For example, many parks are only mowed once a month during the season. Often, the amount of safety bark mulch at playgrounds falls below the recommended levels, which may pose a hazard for children. The City needs to continue to strive to provide adequate funding for the ongoing maintenance of our recreational assets.

One way the City looks to minimize the need for additional funding is to **continue and increase opportunities for volunteerism.** The Friends of Coggshall is an example of a successful long term volunteer group. Recently the City has instituted an "Adopt a Park" Program and policy that allows groups, businesses, and individuals the opportunity to give back to their City, by taking care of one of the City's 39 parks. The Adopt-a-Park program is a collaboration through the City of Fitchburg's Parks and Recreation Department, DPW, Board of Health, City Police, and Fun 'n FITchburg. Activities through Adopt-a-Park lead

to reduced litter and vandalism in parks, enhancement of the park environment, and beautification of the green space. The City also holds periodic clean up days where volunteers and the City work together.

The City also maintains partnerships with groups that can assist with the maintaining elements of the City's green space such as the Rotary Club, the North County Land Trust, MOC, the Fitchburg Greenway Committee and many others.

2. **Research the Over-site and Management of Crocker Field.** Crocker Field is situated on a 5.5 acre site near downtown Fitchburg, and includes a football/soccer/field hockey field, a baseball field (no longer in use), a rubberized running track, facilities for jumping and throwing events, and an asphalt tennis court. Also included are reinforced concrete grandstands, a building with locker rooms and a concession stand. The complex is enclosed by a wrought iron fence on a concrete base with concrete pillars and ornamental gates. Crocker Field was dedicated in 1918 and was designed by famed landscape designers, Olmsted Brothers. It is on the National Register of Historic Places. Years of weathering and overuse have taken its toll. Over the past 25 years, over \$1.5 million in repairs and improvements have been made utilizing grants and donations, but much more remains to be done. The goal is to provide more recreational and athletic opportunities by restoring the facilities and increasing the hours that it is open to the public. Currently the Field is under the jurisdiction of the School Department. This limits the grant opportunities available for the site. The city needs to review this current oversight to determine if this important resource would be better served by a different management structure.

C. Summary of Community's Needs: The recreational needs of Fitchburg's residents are largely met by the extensive public park system in the City, and by the easily accessible open spaces near downtown. The City has a full-time Recreation Director to provide and coordinate activities, but recreational needs still remain:

1. **Increase Opportunities for bicycle and walking recreation.** In any urban area, the public sidewalk is one of the most important recreational resources. In addition, the trails which the City has developed, such as the Parkhill/Coggshall Bikeway and the Steamline Trail Park, have become popular with residents and visitors. The new Gateway Park offers a walking loop that includes sections within the park, sections over a newly installed City sidewalk and a section on the property of a new housing development property which was an old mill conversion. Walking trails are especially important for elderly residents, many of whom no longer drive. Safe biking and walking routes are also important for the residents of the City's EJ neighborhoods, many of whom lack access to a vehicle. Biking and walking paths with strong anchors, such as parks, large subdivisions or downtown areas would meet both transportation and recreation needs.

While the skateboarding community is well served by the Joubert Skate Park at Parkhill Park the City noted a need to serve the BMX bicycle enthusiast. Through a Bikes Belong Grant and CDBG funding the City was able to build a facility dedicated to this audience. This facility is adjacent to the skate park at Parkhill Park. Additionally the Open Space Plan survey showed overwhelming support for the City to pursue the development of the Fitchburg/Leominster Rail Trail. The City is continuing its efforts to make this trail a reality.

2. **Improve Access to the Nashua River.** The creation of riverwalks and riverfront parks enhances recreational opportunities for the residents of Fitchburg's older neighborhoods, and produces destinations for visitors, improving the economy of intown Fitchburg by bolstering its attractiveness for entertainment and tourism businesses. The West Fitchburg Steamline Trail, the Riverfront Park, and the City's new Gateway Park are great accomplishments towards this goal. Access to the Nashua at the Riverfront Park was recently improved by the removal of the flood wall and terraced access closer to the river. The new Gateway Park also opens up a new connection to the river.
3. The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2012, has **the provision of water based recreation** as one of its four goals. Tough economic times left the City of Fitchburg unable to open the swimming pool at Coolidge Park for several years. The City recognized the void this left for the residents of the City and made reopening the pool a priority beginning in the summer of 2011. The City also just completed a new splashpad at Crocker Playground to serve young children in the West Fitchburg area of the City. This is in addition to the water-based recreation facility at Parkhill Park in Upper Cleghorn (which is slated for new surfacing in 2014) and the State Pool, located on the south side of town near the South Fitchburg Playground and the Normandy Rd/Leyte Rd. housing project. These facilities largely meet the needs of City residents for outdoor water-based play areas. However, if the City can work toward an effective stormwater management plan, then the impaired water status of the North Nashua River flowing through the City can provide added opportunities for residents to swim or wade.

4. Improve the built environment to support walkability and bikeability to parks and other recreational opportunities: Through Fun 'n FITchburg's assessment of the parks, the City has realized there are still areas where access to existing parks can be improved. Sidewalks, curbcuts, bikelanes, traffic calming measures, signage and crosswalk striping is inconsistent. Our assessment work within the EJ neighborhoods of the city brought to our attention that many residents do not have access to cars and must access recreational opportunities by foot or by bike. They will only do so if the way is safe and accessible. A recent meeting held at the Fitchburg Senior Center in May 2014 focusing on healthy aging communities stressed the need for good quality, accessible sidewalks and walking trails for this population as well. They also had as a goal to form a walking club with its base at the Senior Center.

To improve active transportation infrastructure around parks, Fun 'n FITchburg and the City are working to implement a Safe Routes to Parks program to prioritize streets around parks in the street construction/reconstruction process. The City of Fitchburg is also currently working to adopt a Complete Streets Resolution which will enhance the safety and accessibility for all users of roads trails and transit systems in the City. The Fitchburg DPW has made significant progress with these efforts by adopting the Resolution as an internal Administrative policy.

5. Increase the number of high quality green spaces in the City's urban core: The City has many vacant lots in the densely populated central city that have potential to be transformed into neighborhood assets including: passive and active recreation, natural open spaces, butterfly way stations, and urban agriculture. Each of these strategies also has the potential to integrate green infrastructure for stormwater management into their design in

certain cases. Youth and parent focus groups and the OSP survey have shown that residents are interested in developing these lots into high quality green spaces.

Another strategy the city is exploring to reclaim vacant, blighted lots and improve the inner city area is the Side Yard Sales program. This allows property owners to purchase adjacent vacant lots to expand their property for several eligible uses such as gardens, side yards and off street parking if appropriate. Preference will be given to homeowners with a proven track record of maintaining their property.

6. Improve the perception of safety in parks: As shown through crime data, Fitchburg's parks are no more unsafe than other parts of the City, but residents perceive the parks as unsafe given vandalism and poor sight lines in and out of parks. Through Fun 'n FITchburg, City staff, youth and residents have been trained to use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to improve safety measures and standards in the design or redesign of parks. These principles will be applied as part of the parks planning, design and redesign process on future projects.

8. Build a Dog Park: The lack of this one specific recreational facility within the City continues to be raised by many people and groups when talk turns to the City's parks. Over the next year or two the Board of Park Commissioners needs to work with the DPW to determine the best location for this activity and how best to construct the facility to make it user and maintenance friendly.

9. Address the Recreational Needs of Seniors in our community. A meeting was held in May 2014 at the Fitchburg Senior Center with over 30 seniors in attendance. The attendees addressed many issues including what they feel are the needs of seniors in Fitchburg related to active, healthy living.

- Super market in Cleghorn
- Sidewalks/ signage/ crosswalks
- More community gardens
- Free/ more parking
- Fresh and fast food restaurants
- Healthy menu choices
- Smaller portions
- Shoveling sidewalks
- Walking groups
- Public restrooms
- Water fountains
- Access to information/ healthy promotion
- More effective and better transportation system
- Trash pickup

While many of these items are outside the purview of this document, the City needs to be cognizant of the fact that the sidewalks and paths of travel throughout the city play an important role in the health and independence of this core population and are a key element of their recreation.

SECTION VIII GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A number of the objectives contained in the previous Open Space Plan have been accomplished.

- The City has successfully instituted an “Adopt a Park” Program in coordination with MOC. This helps to better maintain the existing recreational facilities in the City. The new Gateway Park has a Trust Fund in place, managed by the Trustees of Reservations and the North County Land Trust. The City’s Riverfront Park has a similar endowment fund to ensure its care.
- A BMX facility has been developed at Parkhill Park.
- The Sheldon Street Gateway Park has been developed which opens up new vistas and walking opportunities along the Nashua River and provides five more acres of parkland for passive recreation. A private developer has opened up the view of the Nashua, opposite the park and installed a walking path along that side of the river as well. Residents of the private development (“Riverside Commons”) and others are now able to walk a loop by the river crossing at River Street and Sheldon Street.
- MRPC developed a map of walking and hiking opportunities in Fitchburg.
- Riverfront Park was developed and renovated to provide access and view of the Nashua River and improved flood storage.
- A walking trail has been installed at Lower Howarth Park along with accessibility improvements, installation of a small parking lot and resurfacing of the basketball court.
- Coolidge Park underwent significant renovations – a new driveway and parking area were installed which required the removal of soils that were contaminated from an old dump that had been on the site. A new playground and new utilities were also a part of this work. The playground has poured in place safety surfacing which is accessible and significantly easier and less expensive to maintain than traditional mulch safety surfacing.
- The City has provided a new recreational opportunity for residents with the development of an 18-hole disc golf course at Coggshall Park.
- The City added a spray pad and shade structure to the facilities at Crocker playground to better serve the neighborhood.
- The City was able to resurface the track at Crocker Field, replace the gutters and downspouts on the grandstand, and repair the roof of the field house.
- Many additional acres of the City’s watershed land have been protected by conservation restriction or by purchase. The City has also adopted a local wetland protection ordinance & regulations.
- Significant progress has been made and continues on the City’s Combined Sewer Separation project. Recent NRWA monitoring shows continuing improvement in the water quality of the Nashua River.
- The City has also developed a Master Plan for the Downtown which includes replacement of all the street trees in the downtown area with the proper species. The trees will also be planted in the appropriate fashion for the environment. Funding has been applied for MassWorks funding to undertake phase one of this project. Additionally, the Urban Ecology Institute undertook research on the state of the trees in Fitchburg and developed a report on the “State

of the Urban Forest” for the City which will be a valuable resource making decisions on tree removal and plantings going forward.

- The City of Fitchburg has an ongoing program in place to have dams inspected by a registered Engineer on a routine basis. The City has taken steps to clear vegetation from all dams. Mirror Lake Dam was repaired in 2011 and recent repairs have been made to Lovell Dam Outlet and the Overlook Gatehouse. The City is looking into repairs to Putts Pond Dam next.
- The City maintains a timber management program on Water Department Land and at Coggshall Park. A forest management plan is being prepared for Parkhill Park and for other forested Cemetery Dept. land.
- The City has taken steps to have vegetation removed from several ponds including McTaggart’s, Putts and Green’s Ponds.
- The City sponsors annual City clean ups organized by Ward which gets residents involved in cleaning up their neighborhood. Additionally, neighborhood clean-ups are a goal of one of the City’s CDBG subrecipients.
- The City has participated in many private/public partnerships. The City collaborated with the Fitchburg Greenway Committee, The Trustees of Reservation and the property owner to develop Gateway Park and work on other collaborative efforts. The NRWA undertakes ongoing stream monitoring and provides the results to the City. The Montachusett Opportunity Council has on-going, extensive collaboration with the City through the Mass in Motion, Fun ‘n FITchburg program. The North County Land Trust, Mass Audubon, Community Health Connections and MOC have worked to provide better access and markings for existing trails. A trailhead kiosk has been installed adjacent to the trails behind Burbank hospital.
- The City continues to make improvements to the accessibility of the sidewalk system. Three recent rounds of Community Development Block grant funds were applied for and received and the DPW is in the process of installing curbcuts in dozens of locations throughout the City. Additionally sidewalks were replaced or added along Rollstone Street, Elm, Broad, Roosevelt and Temple streets.
- A 2.5 mile section of Rindge Road was repaved and bike lanes were added to both sides of the street.

The following goals and objectives have been developed after careful review of the Open Space Plan survey results, information gathered on the many different park tours that have been undertaken as part of this process, and interviews held with park users. The items under each goal are listed by priority, with “low hanging fruit” considered in this designation.

GOAL: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A SAFE AND SOUGHT AFTER PARK SYSTEM IN FITCHBURG THAT PROVIDES A VARIETY OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS.

1. Maintain existing playgrounds and open space areas.
2. Upgrade facilities to current standards as funds allow.
3. Continue recreational opportunities at City parks for individuals of all abilities and ages.
4. Establish a Dog Park.
5. Continue to include resident input, including youth, in the park renovation and design process.
6. Develop City-owned vacant lots into high quality green spaces.
7. Consider safety and security when park improvement plans are developed

GOAL: PROVIDE WALKING AND BIKING PATHS FOR RECREATION AND COMMUTING.

1. Develop the Twin Cities Rail Trail, connecting Leominster and Fitchburg along Route 12.
2. Maintain and improve sidewalks and walking paths in developed areas, including accessibility improvements.
3. Finalize Fitchburg's Complete Streets Resolution and integrate the Pedestrian Generator Checklist into the park design and review process.
4. Install sidewalks and bike lanes where they do not exist, particularly those areas that access schools, parks, trails and shopping clusters and design thoughtful connections between highly used areas?
5. Keep the map of Citywide walking trails in Fitchburg updated and create good "take away" trail maps for trail users.
6. Complete the Steamline Trail in West Fitchburg for walking and bicycling.

GOAL: PROVIDE BETTER ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

1. Improve marketing to increase awareness of Fitchburg's park and open space system.
2. Improve marketing of organized recreational and cultural opportunities provided at Fitchburg parks and open space.
3. Improve public transportation to City park system.
4. Ensure access and promotion of parks that reflects the City's demographics.
5. Improve signage to and within City parks.

GOAL: PROTECT AND PROMOTE FITCHBURG'S WATERSHED.

1. Protect Fitchburg's watershed land within Fitchburg and adjacent communities
2. Routinely assess the condition and protect dams, ponds and reservoirs within Fitchburg.
3. Restore distressed and degraded ponds.
4. Continue efforts that result in improved water quality of the Nashua River and its tributaries.
5. Strive to integrate green infrastructure for stormwater management.
6. Continue to improve access to and awareness of the Nashua River and other waterbodies as City assets.
7. Promote a citizen education campaign to educate about water issues and collaborate with other groups such as the Massachusetts Watershed Coalition.

GOAL: PROTECT, PROMOTE, PRESERVE OPEN SPACE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT.

1. Properly maintain City owned forested areas.
2. Implement or enforce regulations to limit sprawl.
3. Work with local, regional and state organizations to preserve open space and wildlife habitat.
4. Continue and expand environmental programming in parks and trails.
5. Work to eradicate invasive species.

GOAL: DEVELOP AND PROMOTE GREENSPACE IN THE URBAN CORE.

1. Continue to support/promote the City's Vacant Lot Initiative.
2. When street trees are planted, ensure the proper species is selected and that they are planted properly for sustainability.
3. Support community garden efforts and expand urban agriculture.
4. Work to increase biodiversity in the urban core particularly in City owned vacant lots.

**SECTION IX
SEVEN YEAR ACTION PLAN**

GOAL: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A SAFE AND SOUGHT AFTER PARK SYSTEM IN FITCHBURG THAT PROVIDES A VARIETY OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	SCHEDULE	DEPARTMENT and PARTNERS	STATUS	FUNDING
Maintain existing playgrounds and open space areas.	Continue to coordinate and support volunteer efforts such as the City's adopt a park program and neighborhood clean-up days. Support increased resources for DPW. Research creation a of Crocker Field Commission	On-going	Recreation Dept., MOC, DPW, School Department, BOH	16 parks have been "adopted"	This work will be done with volunteers and existing city staff and budget.
Upgrade facilities to current standards as funds allow.	Seek discretionary grants and commit City funds and entitlement grants for the renovation of parks. Investigate options for low-cost sustainable play spaces as parks are updated. Review Fun 'n FITchburg park audits for recommendations for upgrading facilities and schedule periodic audits Continue to have the Disability Commission review park improvement plans so that opportunities for accessible elements are not overlooked.	On-going	Community Development, Park Board, Disability Commission	A small project was recently completed at Crocker Playground, A project is underway at Lowe Playground and the splashpad at Parkhill will be improved in 2015.	CDBG funding, Our Common Backyards grant. Look into PARC and other grant opportunities.
Continue recreational opportunities at City parks for individuals of all abilities and ages.	Continue to provide and promote organized recreational opportunities at City parks.	On-going	Recreation Dept., Fun 'n FITchburg	The Recreation Dept. plans a wide variety of programs at the parks in the summer and various programs throughout the year. Fun'n FITchburg has a "Park Day" program.	The city funds the majority of these programs and the Recreation Dept. applies for state grants to supplement and to provide a summer lunch program.
Establish a Dog Park.	Work with DPW, Park Board, ward councilors to find the appropriate location. Search for grant or donation opportunities.	3 year plan	Planning/DPW	Various sites have been proposed but the best location has not been determined.	A source of funding has not been identified for construction.

Continue to include resident input, including youth, in the park renovation and design process.	Continue to hold public meetings in the planning stage of projects. Develop systems with CBO's to increase awareness of public meetings.	As needed	Community Development	A public meeting was held at Crocker Playground prior to the start of a current project. Residents provided input on a master plan for the park as well as the current project. A very well attended public meeting was held prior to the development of the Lowe Playground project. Plans were sent to a nearby youth group for discussion and input.	City staff will undertake most of this work, supplemented by consultants which will typically be funded by CDBG. MOC Fun n Fit Staff and other area agency staff will assist.
Develop City-owned vacant lots into high quality green spaces.	Continue efforts of and support the Healthy Zoning Vacant Lot Work Group to create high quality green spaces in City owned vacant lots.	On-going	Fun n FITchburg, Planning Board, Healthy Zoning Vacant Lot Work Group	EPA grant has been applied for that would create a green infrastructure outdoor museum on one city-owned vacant lot	EPA grant funding potential. City and Volunteer staff will undertake the work.
Engagement of schools and other agency's to raise awareness and appreciation of parks and open space.	Support efforts to foster outdoor learning and community service projects involving parks.	On-Going	School Dept., Recreation Department, Audubon Society, FGC, Fun 'n FITchburg	Engaged schools and CBO's in Park Days to promote City parks in 2012 and 2013. City partnered with area agencies for distribution of OSP survey.	Area agency and City staff will work to meet this goal.
Encourage beautification efforts and other private investment in public facilities.	Develop models to engage local organizations/businesses in park upkeep and beautification. Connect to Adopt a Park program.	On-Going	Park Board, Fun 'n FITchburg	Big field project underway by FIA and Fun 'n FITchburg. Natural play space. Adopt a Park MOU includes guidelines for adopters to beautify parks.	CDBG, Private Donations, Volunteers
Improve perception of safety in public parks.	Use CPTED, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, principals to improve safety measures & standards in the design/redesign process in parks.	On-going	DPW, Fun 'n FITchburg	Through Fun 'n FITchburg, City staff, youth and residents have been trained to use CPTED. DPW, police, Parks Dept. and Fun 'n FITchburg developed and posted signage deeming the parks as 'Safe Zones'.	Mass in Motion grant funding.

GOAL: PROVIDE WALKING AND BIKING PATHS FOR RECREATION AND COMMUTING.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	SCHEDULE	DEPARTMENT and PARTNERS	STATUS	FUNDING
Develop Twin Cities Rail Trail, connecting Leominster and Fitchburg along Route 12.	Work with the City of Leominster and CSX to agree to terms, seek out funding opportunities. Collaborate with Montachusett Regional Trail Coalition to help raise support for the project.	Aligned with funding availability.	Community Development, MRPC, City of Leominster, MRTC	There is momentum at the state level for this project via the Transportation Bond Bill and Trail Coalition. Funding is currently listed on the proposed Transportation Bond Bill.	State Transportation funding is being sought
Maintain and improve sidewalks and walking paths in developed areas, including accessibility improvements	Continue to utilize pedestrian generator checklist. Continue to seek grant funds for additional projects. Review the work that has been done to classify sidewalks (map if possible) to help prioritize work to be done. Refer to Park audits around parks.	On-going	DPW, IT	Sidewalk to Lowe playground was redone 2012/2013. A Downtown sidewalk improvement project is underway	CDBG funding is allowing installation of curbscuts and installation of new sidewalks in key locations. MASSWORKS funding is improving downtown. City Funding provides some improvements.
Finalize Fitchburg's Complete Streets Resolution and integrate the Pedestrian Generator Checklist into the park design and review process	Present resolution to City Council for adoption. Investigate which city departments should review the Pedestrian Generator Checklist during the park design and street upgrade process around parks and open spaces	January 2014	Council/DPW/Fun 'n FITchburg	DPW has provided edits to the Resolution and adopted the Resolution as an internal administrative policy. The Mayor adopted a WINs Proclamation to make the city's neighborhoods more walkable	Mass in Motion
Install sidewalks and bike lanes where they do not exist, particularly those areas that access schools, parks, trails and shopping clusters.	Design thoughtful connections between highly used areas (areas have already been prioritized). Review all streetscape projects for suitability of adding sidewalks or bikelanes.	On-going	DPW, Community Development	A 2.5 mile section of Rindge Road was repaved with Chapter 90 funds and bike lanes were added to both sides of the street. Projects are regularly reviewed using complete street policies.	Chapter 90, MassWorks, CDBG, City Funding.

<p>Keep the map of Citywide walking trails in Fitchburg updated. Develop good “take away” maps for trail users.</p>	<p>Work with MRPC and MTC to see if they can assist with this effort.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>MRPC and MTC</p>	<p>MRPC and MTC are updating trails maps in region including Fitchburg as a first step.</p>	<p>Work will be done by MRPC staff</p>
<p>Complete the Steamline Trail for walking and bicycling, located in West Fitchburg.</p>	<p>Work with rail line to sort out easement issues, seek out grant opportunities to expand trail and work with/engage community groups to assist with the process.</p>		<p>Community Development, MRPC</p>	<p>MTC and MRPC are aware of need to complete the Steamline Trail and is included in the Wachusett Corridor Study as an area of interest</p>	<p>Funding for construction has not been identified.</p>

GOAL: PROVIDE BETTER ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	SCHEDULE	DEPARTMENT and PARTNERS	STATUS	FUNDING
Improve marketing to increase awareness of Fitchburg's park and open space system.	Develop a system for better promotion through CBO's, schools, senior center.	On-going	Recreation/Parks/Fun n Fit	Semi-annual recreation brochure disseminated by Rec. Dept. via website and social media. A Park Map brochure was recently developed and distributed	Mass in Motion, City Funding
Improve marketing of organized recreational and cultural events provided at Fitchburg parks and open space.	Integrate cultural competency into marketing plans.	On-going	Recreation/Parks	MOC has provided translation for Park and Rec. brochures.	City Funding, MOC Staff time.
Improve public transportation to City park system.	Work with MART to improve routes to parks and advertise new routes.	This is being implemented for Summer programs. Monitor success.	City/MART	Fun 'n FITchburg requested that the Parks Summer program sites are added to the MART summer schedule	
Improve signage to and within City parks.	Review existing. Consider integrating language diversity. Secure funding for new signage.	Fall 2015	Park Board, FGC Signage Sub-Committee	Steps are underway to develop unified signage for all City parks, a logo has been chosen.	CDBG

GOAL: PROTECT AND PROMOTE FITCHBURG'S WATERSHED.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	SCHEDULE	DEPARTMENT and PARTNERS	STATUS	FUNDING
Protect Fitchburg's watershed land within Fitchburg and adjacent towns.	Continue efforts to protect properties that have been identified as important. Ensure compliance with the land management plan(s) in place for land that is already protected.	On-going	Water Dept.	Most recently, (11/26/2013) the City was awarded a grant to protect an additional 163 acres in the northern water supply watershed.	Water Supply Protection grant
Routinely assess the condition and protect dams, ponds and reservoirs within Fitchburg.	Continue regular inspections by a registered professional engineer of dams that are the City's responsibility. Keep dams clear of vegetation. Work to clear vegetation from City ponds.	Schedule inspections as required by individual dam's classification. On-going work to clear dams and water bodies of vegetation.	DPW	A set schedule is followed for this work.	City Funds
Continue efforts that result in improved water quality of the Nashua River and its tributaries.	Continue CSS project. Promote citizen education. Maintain collaboration with NRWA for protection of the Nashua River.	5-10 yrs.	Wastewater Dept.	A large CSS project is underway paid through by the City's Enterprise Fund	Enterprise Funding
Strive to integrate green infrastructure for stormwater management into new and existing projects.	Consider options for integrating rain gardens, permeable paving and other green infrastructure when park projects are undertaken.	As park projects are undertaken.	DPW, Community Development, Parks Board, Fun 'n FITchburg	EPA grant applied for that would create an green infrastructure outdoor museum on one city-owned vacant lot	EPA
Continue to improve access to and awareness of the Nashua River and other waterbodies as City assets.	Work with Nashua River Watershed Coalition and MA Watershed Coalition to educate the public and promote awareness. Hold events at the Riverfront and Gateway park that showcase the Nashua.	On-going	Recreation Department, Park Board, Conservation Commission, Greenway Committee	City staff attend Fitchburg Greenway committee meetings and collaborate on events and issues	City Staff time, Volunteer time

GOAL: PROTECT, PROMOTE, PRESERVE OPEN SPACE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	SCHEDULE	DEPARTMENT and PARTNERS	STATUS	FUNDING
Properly maintain City owned forested areas.	Continue to develop and follow Forest Management Plans for appropriate areas	On-going	DPW, Water Dept., Parks Board	The City maintains a timber management program on Water Department Land and at Coggshall Park. A forest management plan is being prepared for Parkhill Park and for other forested Cemetery Dept. land.	The timber programs provide income for addressing needs related to this issue.
Implement or enforce regulations to limit sprawl.	Continue to implement smart growth tactics when developing or updating plans and bylaws.	On-going as projects arise	Planning Board		City Staff time
Work with local, regional and state organizations to preserve and enhance open space and wildlife habitat.	Support efforts of the NCLT and other agencies to purchase and protect open space in the City. Research potential for development of butterfly way stations.	On-going	Water Dept. DPW	BOEBA recently awarded the City a Water Supply Protection grant to protect additional watershed land which will also allow passive recreation and protect a core habitat.	Water Supply Protection grant
Continue and expand environmental programming in parks and trails.	Allow groups to use City property. Promote activities on City Web page, etc.	On-going	Audobon, NCLT, Greenways, Recreation Department		Related agency resources, existing city staff
Work to eradicate invasive species.	Partner with groups such as the Fitchburg Greenway Committee to work toward eliminating knotweed & other invasives in parks. Educate volunteers on invasive species. Ensure new plantings are selected appropriately.	On-going	Fitchburg Greenway Committee, DPW	Local environmental groups annually plan events to eradicate invasive plants such as knotweed from Gateway Park. Fitchburg Greenways committee is discussing ways to address the problem in coordination with City staff.	Volunteer and City Staff Time and resources

GOAL: DEVELOP AND PROMOTE GREENSPACE IN THE URBAN CORE.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	SCHEDULE	DEPARTMENT and PARTNERS	STATUS	FUNDING
Develop City-owned vacant lots into high quality green spaces.	Continue efforts of and support the Healthy Zoning Vacant Lot Work Group to create high quality green spaces in City owned vacant lots.	On-going	Fun 'n FITchburg, Planning Board, Healthy Zoning Vacant Lot Work Group	EPA grant applied for that would create a green infrastructure outdoor museum on one city-owned vacant lot.	EPA, City Staff and Agency time
Create urban shade and a biodiverse urban forest system.	When street trees are planted, ensure the proper species is selected and that they are planted properly for sustainability. Work with healthy zoning work group.	As projects and funding opportunities arise.	DPW, Community Development, Healthy Zoning workgroup.	Consultants reviewed tree choices for Main Street and Lowe playground projects.	CDBG, MassWorks, Our Common Backyards
Support community garden efforts and expand urban agriculture.	Partner with growing places garden project and work with healthy zoning work group.	On-going	Community Development, DPW, Fun n Fit	Community gardens have been installed in two parks - Lowe and Gateway – to increase perception of safety thru community engagement and to provide opportunities for healthy eating via urban agriculture	Growing Places Garden project

SECTION X
LETTERS OF REVIEW

1. Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)
2. Mayor Lisa Wong
3. Mass in Motion, Fun 'n FITchburg
4. Fitchburg Planning Board



April 11, 2014

Amy LeBlanc
Engineering and Planning Division
Community Development
Department of Public Works
166 Boulder Drive
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Re: City of Fitchburg Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Leblanc,

The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) staff completed a review of Fitchburg's Open Space and Recreation Plan (OS&RP). Staff used the Open Space Guidebook published by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEOEA), Division of Conservation Services (DCS) "Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements" to determine if the local planning document contained the required sections.

Fitchburg's Plan is an excellent document, thorough and put together very well. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all local residents and officials for completing a well prepared document.

Sincerely,

John Hume
Planning & Development Director



CITY OF FITCHBURG
MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

LISA A. WONG
MAYOR

NATHAN LaROSE
ASSISTANT TO THE MAYOR

IRENE HERNANDEZ
CONFIDENTIAL ASSISTANT

4/2/2014

Melissa Cryan
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: City of Fitchburg's Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

Dear Ms. Cryan:

I have reviewed the City's draft Open Space and Recreation Plan Update for 2014-2021, and I fully endorse its goals and recommendations. This document will serve as an important guide for the development of policies by this and future administrations.

I feel strongly that it is important to provide a variety of recreational opportunities for the health and wellbeing of Fitchburg's residents. As you know, this office has long supported the development of trails in Fitchburg and the acquisition of open space to protect our water resources and the natural beauty of the City's outlying areas. The Open Space Plan's inventory of open space and delineation of the challenges and goals still outstanding for the City, will encourage a greater protection and appreciation of our open space assets. I trust the state will concur and approve this document.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Wong
Mayor

April 7, 2014



To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept this letter of review and endorsement for Fitchburg's 2014-2021 Open Space Plan on behalf of the MA Dept. Of Public Health's Mass in Motion initiative, *Fun 'n FITchburg*.

Fun 'n FITchburg is a partnership of over 85 city stakeholders across diverse sectors including: youth and residents, the Mayor, the Board of Health, the Parks and Recreation Department, City Police, the Community Health Center, Fitchburg Public Schools, non-profit organizations, businesses, daycares, environmental groups, and many others who are updating local policies, systems and the environment to make it easy for Fitchburg residents eat healthy and be physically.

One of *Fun 'n FITchburg's* strategies specifically focuses on increasing usage of our 41 parks through evidenced-based strategies that make parks safer and more sought-after places for youth and families. Toward this end, *Fun 'n FITchburg* conducted an in-depth community assessment including parks audits to identify assets and barriers of the city's parks system, a parks tour via the Fitchburg trolley to increase awareness of parks for partners and the community-at-large, focus groups with youth and adults, and formal presentations of assessment results to the Parks Board via youth peer educators.

In response to assessment findings, the Fitchburg Parks Board, Recreation Department and DPW adopted and implemented an adopt-a-park program where residents and organizations help care for and watch over the parks. Resident mobilizers have outreached to residents and community organizations resulting in 16 of the 18 active parks formally adopted and regular monitoring and clean-ups. In collaboration with the DPW, Parks Board and police, 18 parks in Fitchburg were deemed Safe Zones with signage including the police phone number, adopt-a-park contact information, and recognition of park adoptees. Peer educators conducted the SO PLAY direct observation audit at 18 parks to assess physical activity and use of parks in the summer of 2012 and 2013. Other improvements were made including: clearing sight lines on a path connecting Park Hill Park to Memorial school; filling a sink hole and replacing a fence at Park Hill Park; and installing community gardens at Lowe and Gateway Park. As a result of these efforts per feedback from the police, DPW, Planning Department and Parks Board, the parks in Fitchburg are cleaner with increased utilization.

Other efforts relating to open space that are being pursued by the partnership include:

- creating high quality green spaces in city-owned vacant lots that may include community gardens, urban agriculture and biodiverse habitat
- working with the Montachusett Regional Trail Coalition to highlight Fitchburg's trail system and support efforts to create a rail trail between Fitchburg and Leominster

- integrating green infrastructure for stormwater management into vacant lot and other initiatives.

Partners provided data for the Fitchburg Open Space Plan including walk and park audits and SO Play assessments. We also helped develop the community survey tool used by the Open Space Committee to gather data from the public regarding Fitchburg's open space and helped conduct a public meeting to present Fitchburg's draft plan. Based on the community input and concerted effort to weave *Fun 'n FITchburg's* work into the plan's goals and objectives, we can certify that the current Open Space Plan reflects community desires for its open space and recreational assets and compliments efforts already underway in the community to create a safe and sought after parks system for all to enjoy.

Thank you for your continued support of Fitchburg's open space and opportunities for active living for the city's youth and residents. Please feel free to contact me at 978-345-8501 ext 222 with any questions about our initiative or participation in the Open Space Plan that I would be happy to answer.

Sincerely,



Mary Giannetti

Fun 'n FITchburg Director and Steering Co-Chair



CITY OF FITCHBURG
PLANNING BOARD
301 BROAD STREET
FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS 01420

(978) 829-1891
PHONE

(978) 345-9687
FAX

October 28, 2014

Amy LeBlanc
Community Development Department
610 Main St.
Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420

Re: Open Space & Recreation Plan Update

Dear Amy:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Open Space & Recreation Plan. The Fitchburg Planning Board has reviewed the draft Open Space & Recreation Plan update and have no objections to its adoption. It will serve as a guide for the Board's land use policy decisions in the coming years.

Thank you for your efforts on this project.

If you have any questions, please free to call me at 978-829-1891.

Sincerely,

Michael J. O'Hara
Principal Planner

RECEIVED

PLANNING BOARD
OCT 30 2014

SECTION XI REFERENCES

2010 Federal Census

City of Fitchburg/MA Wildlife Northern Drinking Water Supply Watershed Conservation Restriction, Land Mgmt. Plan, 2009

Creating a Vibrant Park System in Fitchburg, Fun 'n FITchburg, 2010

Department of Housing and Community Development, Community Profile, Fitchburg, 2012

GREEN FITCHBURG Opportunities, Strategies & Visions for the Future, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, May 2009

Preservation Through Bylaw and Zoning Ordinances, Christopher Skelly, Mass. Historical Commission, May 2003

"Losing Ground", MA Audubon Society, 2009

Montachusett Regional Strategic Framework Plan, adopted by The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, August 2012

City Parcel Data from City of Fitchburg Engineering Maps, Source scale 1:480 and 1:2,400. Automated in-house and available as GIS layer

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Floodplain Maps, Zone A and Zone B. Automated in-house and available as GIS layer

Fitchburg Zoning Ordinance, as adopted on July 17, 2001 as Ordinance #272-01
With amendments through April 6, 2011

Fitchburg's Urban Renewal Plan; City of Fitchburg, 2000

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update 2007-2012. City of Fitchburg, 2007

Fitchburg Town Forest Management Plan, 2004

Coggs Hall Park Forest Management Plan, 2005

Fitchburg Reconnaissance Report, Freedom's Way Landscape Inventory, 2006

Soil Survey of Worcester County Massachusetts, Source scale 1:25,000, 1983. Automated in-house and available as GIS layer

Soil Conservation Service, 1985 Study

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) *Massachusetts Outdoors 2006*
State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2012 Draft

The Open Space Planner's Workbook. Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Revised 2008

Vision 2020, City of Fitchburg's Master Plan. City of Fitchburg, 1999

John Fitch Highway Redevelopment Plan, Urban Land Institute, 2011

Baker Brook Flood Reduction Study, Preliminary Findings, September 2013

Brownfields Success in New England; Fitchburg, MA: Leveraging EPA Brownfields Grants to Achieve Community Redevelopment Goals, August 2011

Fitchburg Main Street, Cultural District Application, Power Point Presentation, December 2012, MRPC

APPENDICES

- A. Park and Playground Priority Action Plan
- B. OSP Survey
- C. OSP Survey Results
- D. Matrix of City-Owned Recreation and Conservation Lands
- E. Fitchburg Self Evaluation Plan

Appendix A

PARK AND PLAYGROUNDS PRIORITY ACTION PLAN 2014

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Scope of Work</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Status</u>
#1	Crocker Park	Spray Park and Shade Structure	\$160,000	complete
#2	Parkhill Park	New Surfacing at spray Park	\$50,000	in design
#3	Coolidge Park	Re-grade and Seed soccer fields	\$100,000	Future Project
#4	Goodrich	Softball Field Renovation	\$180,000	Future Project
#5	Crocker Park	Edge Improvements	\$50,000	Future Project
#6	Lowe Playground	Toddler Swings and Updated play equipment	\$200,000	underway*
#7	Lowe Playground	Safety surfacing	\$145,000	Future Project*
#8	Parkhill Park	Little League Field Renovations	\$100,000	Future Project
#9	Parkhill Park	BMX Fixtures	\$45,000	Future Project
#10	Steam Line Trail Pedestrian Bridge and extension to Fifth Mass Turnpike		TBD	Future Project

Other projects under consideration:

Fitchburg/Leominster Rail Trail Acquisition
(Note: Sales negotiations with CSX Corp.)

Fitchburg/Leominster Rail Trail Tunnel Project & Pedestrian Bridge Project to connect Rail Trail to Intermodal Train Center via Sawyer Passway.
(Note: Subject to successful negotiations with CSX for above project).

*Received a Commonwealth of Massachusetts Our Common Backyards grant to replace the play equipment. Some safety surfacing being installed.

CITY OF FITCHBURG OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

This survey is being conducted in order to understand the needs and concerns of Fitchburg's residents related to recreation and open space. **Your voice is important!** The information you provide will be used to update the City's Open Space and Recreation Plan. This plan is required so that the City can qualify for grants to obtain or fix parks, playgrounds and other open space. We appreciate your time in completing this survey. Large type or Spanish versions of this survey are available by calling 978-829-1893. Thank you!

1. How important is it to you to preserve and protect (please check the appropriate box):

	Very Important	Important	Not important
Forest Land			
Shade trees			
Conservation land and wildlife habitat			
Farmland and pastures			
Scenic views and/or land			
Nashua River			
Natural Resources (ponds, wetlands, streams, habitat, etc)			
Hiking, biking and walking trails			
City-owned recreation areas (sports fields, playgrounds, parks, swimming areas, skating areas, etc)			
Organized recreational/athletic activities (sports leagues, etc.)			
Cultural/art events			
Other (please specify i.e. state pool, Saima park, FSU)			

2. Identify locations in Fitchburg that you think are important for the City to protect and preserve.

3. How often do you or members of your household participate in the following activities in Fitchburg?

	Regularly (once a week or more)	Occasionally (once a month or less)	Rarely or Never
Hiking, walking, running			
Birding, wildlife observation			
Swimming			
Biking			
In-line skating/skateboarding			
Ice-skating			
Athletic team activities (baseball, soccer, etc)			
Organized recreational activities (yoga, aerobics, etc)			
Pick-up games or informal activities with friends (disc golf, basketball)			
Children's playground areas			

4. Where do you usually go in Fitchburg for recreation? (list names of parks, trails, playgrounds)

5. How old are you? less than 18 18-35 36-65 66+

6. What could Fitchburg do to increase your usage of the parks, trails and playgrounds? What barriers do you face in using the parks, trails and playgrounds? PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

Safer/wider sidewalks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Better/more signage	<input type="checkbox"/>
More sidewalks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Signage in different languages.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better handicapped accessibility.	<input type="checkbox"/> If so, where?	More parks/playgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/> If so, where?
Safer existing bike lanes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participation in organized team sports costs too much	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bike racks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Better public transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better maintenance and less trash	<input type="checkbox"/>	Create dog friendly parks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	More bike lanes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduce inappropriate activity (drinking/drugs etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> Which parks have you observed this in?	More programming in parks	<input type="checkbox"/> Examples:
Other (please specify):			

7. Do Fitchburg's recreational programs and facilities meet the needs of the following groups? If not, why?

Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If no, reason:
Teenagers	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If no, reason:
Adults	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If no, reason:
Seniors	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If no, reason:
Mobility impaired (wheelchair, walker, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If no, reason:
Other impairment	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If no, reason:

8. What type of facilities/spaces do you feel are needed and where? (bike trails, rail trail, conservation areas, children's play areas, neighborhood parks, basketball courts, soccer fields, spray parks, etc)

Type: _____ Where: _____

Type: _____ Where: _____

9. Would you support:

A Rail Trail in Fitchburg	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Working with nearby cities to develop a regional trail system	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

CITY OF FITCHBURG OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

1. How important is it to you to preserve and protect (please check the appropriate box):

	Very Important	Important	Not important
Forest Land	70	42	1
Shade trees	63	43	5
Conservation land and wildlife habitat	73	36	4
Farmland and pastures	61	42	8
Scenic views and/or land	58	43	9
Nashua River	70	34	6
Natural Resources (ponds, wetlands, streams, habitat, etc)	74	34	4
Hiking, biking and walking trails	66	40	5
City-owned recreation areas (sports fields, playgrounds, parks, swimming areas, skating areas, etc)	70	40	2
Organized recreational/athletic activities (sports leagues, etc.)	62	44	3
Cultural/art events	60	45	4

2. Identify locations in Fitchburg that you think are important for the City to protect and preserve.

Burbank land		Nashua River	3
Agricultural areas		Natural Resources	
Apple Farm		Northern Orchards, Streams, forest land	
Basketball Courts		Old Courthouse	
Biking Trails		open lots (kept clean and maintained)	
Boulder		Parkhill Park	4
Churchs		Parks	13
City Hall		Parks near housing complexes	
City's Park System	6	pools	4
Coggshall	16	Quarries	
Coggshall Disc Golf		Rail Trails	
Conservation land	2	Reservoir	
Coolidge	14	Revolutionary Cemetary	
Cleghorn Neighborhood Center		River Trails	
Crocker		Riverfront Park	
Demo lots, plant a tree, add a bench		Rodney Wallace House	
Dog park		Rollstone Hill	2
Eagle Rock		Saima park	3
Expand Rail Trail		Schools	
Farm Land		Schools	2
Fitchburg High School		Sidewalks	2 (in particular around schools)
Flat Rock	2	State Parks	
forest land		State Pool	13
Forest view		Street lights	
FSU	2	Tennis Courts	
FSU Fields	3	Trails behind Crocker School	
Gardens		The Boulder	
Green space in multi family neighborhoods		swimming areas	
Gyms		Upper Common	
Historic Buildings, Main Street		Walking trails	4
land and water		watershed areas	2
Library		West Fitchburg	
Main Street		Wildlife	2
Marshall Farm	2	Wooded Trails	
Mctaggart Pond stream/waterfall		YMCA	2
Monuments			

Appendix C, Survey Results

3. How often do you or members of your household participate in the following activities in Fitchburg?

	Regularly (once a week or more)	Occasionally (once a month or less)	Rarely or Never
Hiking, walking, running	57	37	18
Birding, wildlife observation	14	37	60
Swimming	28	43	38
Biking	24	45	41
In-line skating/skateboarding	14	22	44*
Ice-skating	39	25	67*
Athletic team activities (baseball, soccer, etc)	39	23	45*
Organized recreational activities (yoga, aerobics, etc)	26	33	50
Pick-up games or informal activities with friends (disc golf, basketball)	35	36	38
Children's playground areas	37	36	30

*important for kids

4. Where do you usually go in Fitchburg for recreation? (list names of parks, trails, playgrounds)

Ashby West Road trails	1	Memorial Middle School Field	1
Burbank Hospital Trails	7	Moran	1
civic center	1	Overlook Reservoir	1
Cleghorn Neighborhood Ctr	1	Park behind St Bernards School	1
Coggshall	36	Parkhill	29
Coggshall Disc Golf	2	Parkhill Skatepark	2
Coolidge	46	Playgrounds	3
Crocker Playground	3	Quarries	1
Ehn Street Park	1	Reingold School park	2
Fitchburg Senior Center	1	Rindge Rd Area	1
Flat Rock Sanctuary	3	Riverfront park	8
FSU	3	Riverfront trails	1
Gateway Park	7	Rollstone	1
Goodrich Street	3	Saima	2
Goose Park	1	Salem Street	1
Green Street	5	School Gyms	1
Golf Course	1	State Pool	2
Hmong Church	1	Steam Line Trail	3
the Legion	1	Steamline Trail	1
Lowe Playground	1	trails	1
MA Audobon	1	Trails around reservoirs	1
mall	1	Willard Brook	1
many different parks	5	Wooded areas/orchards near Marshall Rd/Pearl Hill	1
McTaggerts Pond	1	YMCA	8

5. How old are you?	less than 18	18-35	36-65	66+	no answer	total
	39		25	36	9	5 114

**6. What could Fitchburg do to increase your usage of the parks, trails and playgrounds?
What barriers do you face in using the parks, trails and playgrounds?**

Safer/wider sidewalks	71	Better/more signage	31
More sidewalks more and plowed better, rindge road to mckay	61	Signage in different languages.	18

Better handicapped accessibility. 14	where? All park and rec areas, everywhere, parkhill, coolidge (2)	More parks/playgrounds 31	If so, where? At River and Railways, everywhere, near Main St., Simonds st., Blossom St., Mt. Veron, near schools, near Country Pizza, Lower Cleghorn, Cleghorn, West Fitchburg
Safer existing bike lanes		58 Participation in organized team sports costs too much	25
Bike racks fsu/main st/library; downtown, at parks		46 Better public transportation	45
Better maintenance and less trash overflow trash on wkends		67 Create dog friendly parks	47
Better lighting		60 More bike lanes	38
Reduce inappropriate activity (drinking/drugs etc) 51	Which parks have you observed this in? center of town, Caldwell (2), Ashby West, Riverfront, Monument, Coolidge (2), Crocker, Gateway, Lowe (2), Parkhill (15), Coggs Hall	More programming in parks 17	Examples: orienteering, wilderness training, activities, things for visually impaired, planned activities for children that encourage movement, outdoor yoga and exercise classes, more/btr activities for young children, guided trail walks, tennis, mens softball, art,

Need later bus service
fines for dogs off leashes in other parks

7. Do Fitchburg's recreational programs and facilities meet the needs of the following groups?

If not, why?

Children	Yes 76	No 11	If no, reason: Need better programming, dirty
Teenagers	Yes 62	No 19	If no, reason: need activities to keep kids out of trouble, boring, lame, need more hangout spots, more tennis, better fields needed
Adults	Yes 64	No 21	If no, reason: unaware of any programs, need swings for adults, more softball leagues, there are some nice places to get exercise but limited facilities for adult activities. Tennis would be nice at Coolidge.
Seniors	Yes 53	No 19	If no, reason: more places to sit are needed along walkways, more curbs and sidewalks needed, better transportation needed
Mobility impaired (wheelchair, walker, etc)	Yes 44	No 17	If no, reason: need more activities for disabled, need ramps, too many steps, not accessible enough
Other impairment	Yes 34	No 10	If no, reason: Need universal accessibility, auditory signals at crosswalks

*Provide better information about what programs are available for all groups

*For all ages, not enough advertisement of programs and deadlines are too short

8. What type of facilities/spaces do you feel are needed and where?

What?	Where?
Baseball Field	Coolidge
Basketball Court	West Fitchburg, Crocker elementary, anywhere, btr crts at Parkhill, stoneybrook, lights at coolidge crt 6

Better ground cover	Coolidge walking path	
Bike Lanes	Everywhere	2
Bike Racks	major roads, parks and public buildings	
Bike Trails	Around popular businesses, main roads, recreational areas	7
	connecting to areas along 2a would be great for commuting purposes	
	bike trail would be amazing if could connect to Ayer/shirley rail trail	
Bring more greenspace and connections with urban centers to our rural trails and wooded spaces		2
Camping	parks or wooded areas	
Childrens play areas	around Main St, West Fitchburg, near stoneybrook	4
Complete the Steamline Trail	West Fitchburg	
Conservation land	wherever feasible	pollinator corridors
Conservation Areas		2
Dance Studio	Anywhere	
Dog Park	City Center, Parkhill Area, Coggshall, coolidge	3
Food Store	parkhill park	
Garden	Waites Corner (crocker playground), Laurel/Walton (howarth)	
Hiking Trails		
Indoor play spaces for children		
Johnsonia Park! With kids sculpture		
More Benches	Everywhere	
Music Studio	Anywhere	
Nature parks	Arn How Road or Cleghorn	
Neighborhood Parks		
New Park	Colony Road, Mt Vernon, Simonds, Blossom, Main, South	
Outdoor Classes/Activities	Anywhere	
Passive areas	wherever there is space	
Pool		
Rail and Forest Trails	along Nashua, conservation land, abandoned rail lines	3
Rail/Bike Trails	Connecting Fitchburg and Leominster, Ayer	btr connectivity of trails
Rollerskating		6
Sidewalks	leading to parks	
Skate parks		
Soccer Fields	at the parks	near reingold
Sports Arenas		2
Spray parks	near downtown	anywhere
Tennis	Coolidge	anywhere
Trail	Around McTaggerts Pond	5
Volley Ball	Coolidge park	2
Youth Centers		2

9. Would you support:

A Rail Trail in Fitchburg	Yes 83	No 14	*
Working with nearby cities to develop a regional trail system	Yes 81	No 14	

10. To preserve open spaces, Fitchburg should:

Purchase land with tax revenue	28	Apply for outside funding/grants to fund land purchases	61
Accept donated land	69	Encourage/support community and regional land trusts	56
Accept the CPA locally	33		

11. Would you be interested in helping to take care of a local park, trail or playground?

How many responded yes?: 34
informally 7

Other Comments, Concerns or Suggestions:

More employment	No more splash parks
Affordable daycare	Extend steam line trail across stream to access 31 or 5th ma
Solicit land donations	Preserve/reuse BF Brown and adjacent Field
Conservation land where dogs on leash are welcome	I hate fitchburg
Finish Restoration of Crocker Field	Please make Fitchburg better

Upgrade walking path at Coolidge

Update high use parks that are on public transportation routes

Need to work on eradicating evasive species.

Keep up the work of greening of Fitchburg. You are doing good and important work.

Utilize the bigger fields and parks like Coolidge for events, cultural fairs, etc.

I believe fitchburg is doing a great job. Regular maintenance is key

Need unified signage clearly outlining rules, history, map etc

People who use parks to walk their dogs should be expected and told to pick up after their dogs. Please put up signs and bags

Upper North Street should be a paved sidewalk. The Unpaved walk turns to mud.

There should be a paved sidewalk from North St down JFH to the Civic Center where FSU students park. Walking this stretch is very dangerous.

Trash: Trash is being left in Gateway Park, graffiti/tagging@ Gateway and other parks, illegal activity Gateway park

Plant trees on vacant lots. Vacant lots will only promote overcrowding if built on. A backyard for a child is rare in Fitch. A simple tree and cut grass will allow kids a place to use their imaginations in their neighborhood where a playground may not be as local

Fitchburg already has a significant system of parks throughout the city, including a couple of jewels in Coggshall and Coolidge Parks. However, the city's existing parks are falling into disrepair and often have not been well maintained. Available resources should be used to keep up our existing park network rather than developing new facilities that will further stretch the city's ability to maintain them. It may make more sense to even reduce the number of parks to more efficiently use the city's resources to take better care of the best parks in the city.

Fitchburg is a city that can be very beautiful, however, people, residents and the community need to have more faith. First this no night life in the city that represents cultural or class. Unfortunately Fitchburg "Main St." has beautiful buildings but no night life or life (period).

In addition, create more activities/events that will encourage residents to be proud to live in Fitchburg. Also expand your mind (cultural) events, not cultural defined by your assumptions but cultural through reaching out to the communities of color.

Parks need to be clearly marked as to their use and patrolled. Monument park for example should not be used as a playground. It should be an historical destination for students, residents and tourists.

Fitchburg is a very dangerous and boring city to start and raise a family. There are drug dealings and homeless people everywhere you look.

I donate clothing frequently to Our Fathers House. I will always help those in need. For young teens and teenagers there is not enough to keep their minds and energy levels occupied. Fitchburg has dramatically gone downhill. Even the 4th of July events. Boring parades. Fireworks and other activities are not advertised enough. Economy is at a very high standpoint and people are depressed. Free concerts, along with the good band concerts already need to increase.

Better maintenance of Coolidge walking path, add a separate bike path, finish fixing along the bank

Fitchburg should obtain buildings that are abandoned, landlord and owners that do not pay their taxes or owe taxes, if the taxes are more than the property is worth you know the owner is not going to pay. Take the property from the owner and demolish the building to make parking for residents community gardens, small childrens parks etc.

Stop building houses and preserve what is left of the woods for wildlife and fresh air

It would be great to involve families in taking care of our community. I know for my kids when we have gone to Riverfront Park, Coggshall or Parkhill my son especially will see trash and throw it away. I think it would make children feel proud of themselves to help parents clean up parks, weed around plants. Also its nice for the kids to be recognized in some small way for their good deed. It makes them feel special. This doesn't need to be a big event day. Get the word out. Put up some signs. Lets keep our community clean. Be proud of where you live. Please dispose of trash, pick it up, throw it out. Maybe have some hand sanitizers at the parks.

*improve the condition of what we already have the soccer field at coolidge is terrible, rocky,dirty dusty we visit other towns for soccer and ours is hands down the worst

Parks are in serious need of repair for the safety of the children from broken equipment to sharp cement at the bottom of slides, not enough mulch. not Enough places for families to sit down on tablesto have an outdoor picnic.

Leominster's Rec Program has a huge selection of activities and camps for kids and adults. All are fee-based so I wonder why Fitchburg doesn't offer similar opportunities. I know many families that use leominsters programs in the summer because Fitchburg doesn't offer anything other than the playground program. The parks are wonderful but get very dirty. Lots of trash. Bathrooms are very dirty in the summer. The Soccer fields at Coolidge are a mess. They are uneven and grass gets very long.

Appendix D
CITY-OWNED RECREATION AND CONSERVATION LANDS

Name	Ownership	Location	Acres	Management Use	Potential	Recreation Access	Public Access	Protection	Condition	grants	zoning
Greene's Pond	City of Fitchburg	Ashby State Rd	28.5	Cons Comm	open space	med	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RR
downstream Greene's Pond	City of Fitchburg	Ashby State Rd	7.3	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RR
adj Greene's Pond	City of Fitchburg	Ashby State Rd	0.6	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RR
Putnam Pond (1)	City of Fitchburg	John Fitch Hwy & North St	1.6	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	shoreline clearance	gift	RR/RA-2
Putnam Pond (2)	City of Fitchburg	North Street	1.9	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	shoreline clearance	gift	RR/RA-2
Littlefield Conserv. Area (1)	City of Fitchburg	Ashburnham Hill Rd	12.1	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RR
Littlefield Conserv. Area (2)	City of Fitchburg	Ashburnham Hill Rd	21.4	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RR
Dolloff Conservation Area	City of Fitchburg	Mt Elam Rd	4	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RA-2
Gillman Conservation Area	City of Fitchburg	St. Martin St	13.3	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RA-2
Airport Conservation Area (1)	City of Fitchburg	Crawford St	16.6	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	I
Airport Conservation Area (2)	City of Fitchburg	Crawford St	4.4	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	I
Brown Conservation Area	City of Fitchburg	John Fitch Hwy	12	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	CBD
DeNeufville Conserv Area (1)	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	3.2	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RR
DeNeufville Conserv Area (2)	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	5.4	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RR
DeNeufville Conserv Area (3)	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd & Westminster Hill Rd	0.3	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RR
Westminster Hill Properties	City of Fitchburg	Wallace Road	7.5	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RA-2
Valley View Properties (1)	City of Fitchburg	Westminster Hill Rd	2.1	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RA-2
Valley View Properties (2)	City of Fitchburg	Westminster Hill Rd	0.2	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RA-2
Valley View Properties (3)	City of Fitchburg	Westminster Hill Rd	15.6	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RA-2
Rollo Property	City of Fitchburg	John Fitch Hwy	1.96	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	CBD
Central Nashua River	City of Fitchburg	Circle Street	1	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	I
Cressey Conservation Area	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	0.5	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RR
Southern Nashua R. Areas (1)	City of Fitchburg	Airport Rd	0.6	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	I
Southern Nashua R. Areas (2)	City of Fitchburg	Airport Rd	0.4	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	I
Triangular Conservation Area	City of Fitchburg	Flat Rock Road	0.61	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RR
Viewg Conservation Area	City of Fitchburg	Ashburnham St	0.11	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RR
Rollstone Hill	City of Fitchburg	Rollstone Hill	10.7	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	***	gift	RB
Rollstone Hill	City of Fitchburg	Rollstone Hill	26.5	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	***	gift	RB
Rollstone Hill	City of Fitchburg	Rollstone Hill	38.1	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved	gift	RB
Rollstone Hill	City of Fitchburg	Rollstone Hill	13.4	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved	gift	RB
Rollstone Hill	City of Fitchburg	Rollstone Hill	5.5	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved	gift	RB
ss Nashua River	City of Fitchburg	Airport Rd & Bemis Rd	0.8	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	I
near Independent Clinns	City of Fitchburg	Wallace Rd	2.2	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	C&A
High Rock Rd	City of Fitchburg	High Rock Rd	0.9	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	RR
Franklin & Kimball	City of Fitchburg	Franklin St & Kimball St	0.1	Cons Comm	open space	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved*	gift	I

Name	Ownership	Location	Acres	Management	Use	Current		Recreation		Public Access	Protection	Condition	grants	zoning
						Potential	Potential	Potential	Condition					
Bartley-Nolan Playground	City of Fitchburg	Providence St	0.46	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	CDBG	RB			
Bird Sanctuary	City of Fitchburg	Cogshall Park	50	Parks Board	park	med	Y	Art 97	unimproved	gift	RA-2			
Brigham Park	City of Fitchburg	off Holt Street	0.4	Parks Board	park	med	Y	Art 97	good	gift	RB			
Caldwell Park	City of Fitchburg	Caldwell & Main Streets	3.12	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	CDBG	RB			
City Forest	City of Fitchburg	off Rindge Road	31.9	Parks Board	park	low	Y	Art 97	unimproved	gift	RR			
Cleghorn Pocket Park	City of Fitchburg	Daniels St. And Allen Pl	0.08	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good		NBD			
Cleghorn Square	City of Fitchburg	Daniels and Fairmount Streets	0.19	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good		NBD			
Cogshall Park	City of Fitchburg	Electric Ave & Mt. Elam Rd	212.7	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	gift	RB			
Coolidge Park	City of Fitchburg	Pearl St. & John Fitch Hwy	63.8	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	very good	CDBG, USH	RB			
Crocker Field	City of Fitchburg	Broad & River Streets	1.55	School Dept.	park	high	Y	Art 97	very good	CDBG, school choice	C&A			
Crocker Playground	City of Fitchburg	Wachuset & Westminster Streets	1.38	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	very good		RB			
Dextraze Circle	City of Fitchburg	Cleghorn Rotary	0.18	Parks Board	traffic island	low	Y	Art 97	good		NBD			
Falulah Park	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Road	1.4	Parks Board	park	low	Y	Art 97	good	gift	RA-1			
First & RR Park	City of Fitchburg	First & Railroad St	0.33	Parks Board	park	low	Y	Art 97	very poor		RC			
Forest Park	City of Fitchburg	Forest Hill Rd & Forest pk	0.43	Parks Board	traffic island	low	Y	Art 97	good		RB			
Franco Park	City of Fitchburg	Oak Hill Rd & Madison St	0.14	Parks Board	traffic island	med	Y	Art 97	good		RB			
Gateway Park	City of Fitchburg	Sheidon and West Street	5.3	Parks Board	park	med	Y	Art 97	good	Gateway Cities, CDBG	I			
Goodrich Playground	City of Fitchburg	Goodrich St & Boutelle St	3.97	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	CDBG, Community Partnership Grant	RB			
Grant Park	City of Fitchburg	Daniels St & River Street	0.24	Parks Board	park	low	Y	Art 97	good	gift	RC			
Green Corners Park	City of Fitchburg	Green St & North St	1	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	fair-good	CDBG	FSC			
Heritage Park	City of Fitchburg	Main St & Boulder Dr (east)	0.24	Parks Board	park	med	Y	Art 97	very good	private funding	I			
Howarth Park	City of Fitchburg	Walton St & Laurel St	2.48	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	CDBG	RA-1			
Litchfield Park	City of Fitchburg	Upper Common - Main St	0.1	Parks Board	park	low	Y	Art 97	good	gift	CBD			
Lowe Playground	City of Fitchburg	Elm Street	4.15	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	CDBG, Our Common Backyards	RC			
Monument Park	City of Fitchburg	Main, Hartwell, Elm, Grove Sts	0.64	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	URA, DCR, CDBG	CBD			
Moran Field	City of Fitchburg	Ashburnham St	15	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	gift	RA-1			
Moran Square	City of Fitchburg	Main St & Lunenburg St	0.01	Parks Board	park	low	Y	Art 97	good		CBD			
Parkhill Park	City of Fitchburg	Pratt Rd & Beech St	46.4	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	CDBG, USH	RA-2			
Phillips Playground	City of Fitchburg	Westm Hill Rd & Phillips St	0.4	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	fair-good	UDAG repayment funds	RB			
Riverfront Park	City of Fitchburg	Boulder Dr & Commercial St	1.63	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	very good	CDBG, USH, P ARC	I			
Sadie Quatrele Playground	City of Fitchburg	Middle Street & Cetrino Drive	0.37	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	CDBG	CBD			
S. Fitch Playground	City of Fitchburg	Wanoosoc Rd & Water St	11	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	fair		RB			
Salem Street	City of Fitchburg	Beekman St & Cliff St	1.5	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	USH	RB			

Name	Ownership	Location	Acres	Management	Current Use	Recreation		Public Access	Protection	Condition	grants	zoning
						Potential	Use					
Stanley Park	City of Fitchburg	Westminster St & Simonds Rd	0.69	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	UDAG loan repayment	RB	
Upper Common	City of Fitchburg	Main St & Mechanic St	1.04	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	very good	CDBG	CBD	
W. F. Steam Line Trail	City of Fitchburg	Westminster St & Ward St	3.74	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	CDBG.LUSH	I	
Woods Haven Park	City of Fitchburg	Lincoln St & Rice St	0.76	Parks Board	park	high	Y	Art 97	good	gift	RC	
59R 2 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	11.3	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district	
59R 1 0	City of Fitchburg	Casewell Rd	66.2	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district	
60R 25 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	3.9	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district	
60R 24 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	8.3	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district	
60R 23 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	8.6	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district	
60R 12 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	13.9	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district	
60R 11 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	10.7	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district	
60R 9 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	16.6	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district	
60R 26 0	City of Fitchburg	Bennett Rd	12.3	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district	
60R 10 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	17.3	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district	
60R 13 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	12.1	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district	

Name	Ownership	Location	Acres	Management Use	Current Recreation			Protection	Condition	Grants	Zoning
					Use	Potential	Access				
60R 8 A	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	11	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
60R 13 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	12.1	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
59R 3 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	40	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
60R 28 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	28	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
59R 4 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	15	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
60R 22 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	88	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
59R 5 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	9.2	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
S10 18 0	City of Fitchburg	Casewell Rd	10	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
60R 18 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	45.6	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
59R 6 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	25	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
60R 22 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	88	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
60R 21 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	14.7	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
69R 34 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	7	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
69R 19 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	6.5	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district
69R 18 0	City of Fitchburg	Bennett Rd	14	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		RR, watershed overlay district

Name	Ownership	Location	Acres	Management	Current Use	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Protection	Condition	grants	zoning
69R 33 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	37.4	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
69R 44 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	41.7	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
S4 8 A	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	78.4	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
69R 20 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	10.8	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
69R 32 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	8	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
69R 20 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	10.8	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
69R 26 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	79	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
78R 55 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	100	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
78R 66 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	37.5	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
78R 62 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	69.3	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
78R 65 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	73.6	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
78R 42 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	3.4	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
78R 56 0	City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd	3.8	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
78R 64 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	1.4	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
78R 63 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	1.6	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
78R 61 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	52	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
78R 41 0	City of Fitchburg	Ashby West Rd	8.7	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
87R 64 0	City of Fitchburg	Flat Rock Road	28	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district

Name	Ownership	Location	Acres	Management	Current Use	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Protection	Condition	grants	Zoning
8 2 0	City of Fitchburg	Caldwell Road	3.9	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
60R 8 0	City of Fitchburg	Billings Rd	33.9	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved		watershed overlay district
Crocker/Rice	Conservation Restriction City of Fitchburg	Rindge Rd Russell Hill Rd	175	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved	Open Space Institute & MA Watershed Grant	watershed overlay district
Kulkkula/Permaa/Continental	City of Fitchburg	Billings Rd Piper Rd	96	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved	Fed. Forest Legacy Grant	watershed overlay district
Donelan	City of Fitchburg	Billings Rd	24	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved	Fed. Forest Legacy Grant	watershed overlay district
Kirby	City of Fitchburg	Wilker Rd	164	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved	MA Watershed Grant	watershed overlay district
Zins	Conservation Restriction City of Fitchburg	Rhodes Rd	7.4	Water Dept.	watershed	passive**	N	Art 97	unimproved	Donation	watershed overlay district

*Parcels under the control of the Conservation Commission are to be "forever retained in a predominantly natural, scenic and open condition, and to forever to be used for purposes of Conservation and Passive Recreation"

**Northern Watershed land is open to passive recreation. Hiking, snow shoeing, cross country skiing, hunting, fishing on Fitchburg Reservoir and Scott Reservoir etc.

*** there is an old quarry on Rollstone Hill which is unimproved but provides and interesting place to explore

****The city maintains a radio tower upon Rollstone Hill

Attachment #4 of the City of Fitchburg's ADA Access Self Evaluation
 Facility Inventory - Park and Conservation Land Fitchburg, Massachusetts
 July 2002, updates 2006, 2012
 Complete Facility Review 2014

Location:	Bartley Nolan/Salem Street Playground		
Type of Facility:	Active		
<u>Activities Provided</u>	<u>Notes</u>		
Play Areas	Updated in 2001 - designed to meet or exceed accessibility standards of the time. * Fibar surfacing needs to be supplemented. One toddler swing is missing. Good access throughout with level path.		
Walking Path	Accessible Bituminous Concrete		
Shade Structure	on Accessible route, flat/solid surfacing		
Benches and tables	2 standard picnic tables with clear space under and around 4 benches, backs no arms		
Half Court Basketball	Adjacent to accessible path	level, smooth surfacing	
Actions Required	supplement fibar	*	replace swing

Location:	Bird Sanctuary		
Type of Facility:	Passive		
<u>Activities Provided</u>	<u>Notes</u>		
None	Unimproved woodland. The city has no plans for improvements to this property other than potential future timber management activities		
Actions Required	None		

Location:	Brigham Park		
Type of Facility:	Passive		
<u>Activities Provided</u>	<u>Notes</u>		
Walkway	This is a small green space in the middle of a secluded residential neighborhood.		
Actions Required	Two curbuts must be installed to make the pathway accessible.		

Actions Required While there is unimpeded access into the park and a stable surfaced path of travel, the sloped nature of the site some cross slopes exceed optimum. The park is functionally accessible but when sidewalks are replaced care should be taken to improve the slope.

Location: **Cogshall Park**

Type of Facility: Active

Activities Provided

Notes

Play Area

Most recent play features installed to code in 2002 *
 Wood fibar safety surfacing was noted to be low impeding safety and accessibility. Entrance to area has rough surfacing.

Walking Paths

The majority of the pathways in the interior of the park are accessible. There are numerous hiking trails throughout the wooded area of the park on sloped and rough terrain.

Stone House

The stonehouse was destroyed by fire a few years ago. It was rebuilt to all current codes including access. The AAB did grant a variance request to allow the two floors of the building to be accessed independently with no access between floors. The only thing on the basement level is bathrooms and a bathroom was installed on the first floor.

Ballfield

Access to the field is provided

Disc Golf

Course is through wooded trails and is not accessible.

Parking

There are adequate HP spaces

Patio

Volunteers installed a patio behind the stonehouse
 The DPW installed an accessible path
 One of the three picnic tables is designed with long "accessible" ends
 One of the three grills is at the lower height
 (easily accessible from wheelchair)

Actions Required

The City is currently working on installing an accessible walkway to the new patio. Complete 2013
 Install additional wood fibar safety surfacing at playground
 Regrade entrance to the play area to improve surface condition.
 Investigate funding options for installation of an accessible walking trail.

Bathrooms	The womens restroom is accessible, the mens is not.
Field House	This building is used by players and coaches only. There is access only to the ground floor, the rest of this three story facility is not accessible. Bathrooms are not ADA compliant.
Entrance	There is no parking on this site and no accessible parking on the adjacent street. Some areas of entrance path exceed cross slope requirements and have some areas where the surface is not smooth. Curb cut is missing in one area.
Actions Required	Research possible adaptations to provide better seating for wheelchair user. Update restroom facilities to provide better access. Options for making the field house accessible should be considered under future renovation plans. Entrance path needs to be improved and accessible space located on adjacent street.

Location:	Crocker Playground
Type of Facility:	Active
<u>Activities Provided</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Play Area	Equipment was updated in 2000 to meet or exceed the accessibility standards of the time.*
route of travel	In 2014 an accessible pathway was installed that provides access from one end of the park to the other.
Basketball Court	Adjacent to sidewalk. Surfacing has some uneven surfacing.
Shade Structure	Installed in 2014, fully compliant .
Picnic Tables	one of three has the accessible long end
Splashpad	Installed in 2014, fully compliant
Actions	* This park is in good shape. Must maintain fibar surfacing. The only outstanding issue is refurbishing the basketball court to improve the surfacing.

Location:	Dextraze Circle
Type of Facility:	not meant for active or passive recreation
<u>Activities Provided</u>	<u>Notes</u>
None	Landscaped traffic island.
Actions Required	None

Location: **Gateway Park**
Type of Facility: **Passive**

<u>Activities Provided</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Walkways	All pathways meet running and cross slope guidelines
Community Gardens	Gardens are on an accessible route of travel
Picnic Tables/Benches	Tables and benches are immediately adjacent to accessible route. One (of three) picnic table is designed to be accessible.
Parking	Parking for 5 cars, one appropriately marked HP space.
Actions Required	This is the City's newest park and was built to today's standards. Survey found electrical outlet with exposed wires which needs to be addressed.

Location: **Goodrich Street Playground**
Type of Facility: **Active**

<u>Activities Provided</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Play Areas	New in 1998 - designed to meet or exceed the accessibility * standards of the time. Equipment is still in decent shape. Fibar surfacing adequate as of December 2014 but should monitor. Two benches with backs on accessible path.
Walking Path	Paths in play area are accessible bituminous. Access is level off of sidewalk.
Softball Field	Infield is overgrown with grass. Field Access is level off of sidewalk on to stonedust. 2 players benches
Tennis Courts	These courts have been abandoned by the city and are in unusable condition.
Actions Required	Accessible path to courts must be installed if they are ever recommissioned.

Location: **Grant Park**
Type of Facility: **Traffic Island, not meant for active or passive recreation**

<u>Activities Provided</u>	<u>Notes</u>
None	Landscaped island.
Actions Required	None

Location: **Howarth Park**
Type of Facility: Active

<u>Activities Provided</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Play Area	Installed in 1996, upgrades in 2006- designed to meet or exceed accessibility standards of the time. There are two structures, swings, picnic tables, benches Accessible concrete paths connect all components.
Basketball Court	Accessible pathways into the lower level of the park including this court were installed in 2012.
Actions required	none at this time Ensure that wood safety surfacing is kept at an appropriate level for safety and access.

Location: **Litchfield Park**
Type of Facility: This area is not meant for active or passive recreation
Traffic island.

<u>Activities Provided</u>	<u>Notes</u>
None	This is the home of the Fitchburg "Boulder"

Location: **Lowe Playground**
Type of Facility: Active

<u>Activities Provided</u>	<u>Notes</u>
baseball field	Access from adjacent lot is flat but over stonedust which needs regrading. 2 players benches (no arms or back) one bench with back.
Basketball Court	Basketball court area and surrounds are flat and smooth, however access point from the sidewalk is too steep. Reconstruction of a curb. needs to occur. Players benches at courtside
Play Equipment	All new play equipment was being installed at the time of park survey in December 2014. Equipment will meet current standards. Access via ramp with compliant slope and railings. Within park walkways are level concrete.
horse shoes	adjacent to concrete walkway
Picnic tables	3 tables along accessible path. One with long end.
Actions Required	reconstruct curbcut to access basketball court. regrade stonedust approach to baseball field

Location: **Parkhill Park**
 Type of Facility: **Active**

Activities Provided	Notes
Play Areas *	Installed in 2000, designed to meet or access access standards. The concrete bases that held the poured in place safety surfacing became exposed several years ago so the city replaced it. The wood fibar appears low as of this survey. One toddler swing is missing.
Splash Pad	Fully accessible, however the bituminous concrete in the spray area has heaved in some areas and needs replacement for the safety and access of all users. At the time of this survey, a LA had been hired to design an update of the splashpad surfacing, repair of all spray heads and repainting of the features.
Bathhouse	Renovated in 2000 to bring into compliance with access and building codes.
Basketball Courts	Renovated in 2006, an accessible path of travel was added.
Skateboard park	Located off accessible path of travel
Tennis Courts	Renovated in 2006, accessible path to court was added.
Babe Ruth Field	The pathway to the spectator seating on one side is too steep. There is no pathway to the seating on the other side of the field.
Baseball Field	Field is located adjacent to parking lot, while no barriers exist between parking and field, there is also no formal path. A bituminous path should be added and extended to the spectator seating. A pad should be added under seating with room for a chair adjacent to the bench.
BMX Park	Off of accessible pathway
Walking path	Bituminous, flat, level, provides access through the park past the majority of features.
Parking	Needs restripping and upright signs added at both lots
Multi use field	There are no curbcuts onto the sidewalk near entrances. The field, while flat and level has no formal path of travel. Pop Warner maintains a small storage, media building at this field which is not open to the public.

Gazebo	Access to the Gazebo is provided by the pathway but the gazebo itself is not accessible (stairs).
Bocce	There is no formal access to this court. Users must cross an open grass area to access
Actions Required	This park is rarely used and the gazebo seldom programmed, none the less the feasibility of making this feature accessible needs to be explored. Also a formal pathway should be installed to provide access to the bocce court.

Location: **South Fitchburg Playground**
Type of Facility: Active

Activities Provided	Notes
Baseball Fields	Park has two little league size ball fields. One has seating, one does not.
Driveway/parking	Driveway into site is steep. Driveway has some areas where surface is broken up. There is no stripping in the parking area and no accessible signs. There is a level place adjacent to the field entrance where HP parking could go.
Actions Required	If improvements are made to this area investigate the feasibility of installing accessible pathways and formalizing the parking area.

Location: **Upper Common**
Type of Facility: Passive

Activities Provided	Notes
Walkways	Walkways provide access throughout the two separate sections of this park. The area with Monuments and the area with the fountain, Gazebo and benches are not connect for any users within the park but the adjacent sidewalk provides an accessible connection. The entrance and walkway in one section is concrete, the walkways in the other section are brick.
Gazebo	The gazebo is not accessible, stairs provide the only access
Benches	14 benches with backs and arms are located along the pathway.
Fountain	Can be reached via the pathways. Benches are adjacent
Actions Required	Ensure the brick pathways are well maintained to ensure no lips form between pavers. Research options for making the gazebo accessible.

CONSERVATION PARCELS:

Airport Conservation Area	Gillman Conservation Area
Bilotta Parcels/Burma Road	Green's Pond Area
Brown Land Conservation Area	High Rock Road
Central Nashua River	Putnam Pond
Cressney Conservation Area	Rollo Property
Deneufville Conservation Lands	Southern Nashua River Areas
Dolloff Conservation Area	Triangular Conservation Area
Falulah Brook	Valley View Properties
Falulah Park	Viewig Conservation Area
Littlefield Conservation Area	Westminster Hill Properties
Gillman Conservation Area	

Watershed Parcels

Northern Watershed land is unimproved but open to passive recreation. Activities such as hiking, snow shoeing, cross country skiing and some hunting are allowed. Fishing is allowed on Fitchburg Reservoir and Scott Reservoir.

Crocker/Rice	59R 2 0
Kulkkula/Pernaa/Continentel	59R 1 0
Donelan	60R 25 0
Kirby	60R 24 0
Zins	60R 23 0
60R 8 A	60R 12 0
60R 13 0	60R 11 0
59R 3 0	60R 9 0
60R 28 0	60R 26 0
59R 4 0	60R 10 0
60R 22 0	60R 13 0
59R 5 0	69R 20 0
S10 18 0	69R 32 0
60R 18 0	69R 20 0
59R 6 0	69R 26 0
60R 22 0	78R 55 0
60R 21 0	78R 66 0
69R 34 0	78R 62 0
69R 19 0	78R 65 0
69R 18 0	78R 42 0
69R 33 0	78R 56 0
69R 44 0	78R 64 0
S4 8 A	78R 63 0
87R 64 0	78R 61 0
8 2 0	78R 41 0
60R 8 0	

*Funding options for replacing play equipment need to be explored as all the play equipment the city installed under its multi year park capital improvement project begins to age.

ADA Access Self Evaluation

Appendix E to the City of Fitchburg's Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

It is the continuing goal of the City of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, to provide equal access and opportunity to all persons, regardless of physical or mental capacity, in all of its facilities and programs. It is the policy of the City of Fitchburg to meet this goal through aggressive compliance with the spirit and intent of related Federal and State laws.

During the winter and spring of 2002, City Staff, in coordination with the City of Fitchburg's Disability Commission, reviewed the properties under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission and Recreation Department, the programs provided at these sites, and the Administrative and Employment practices of the City. In the fall of 2006 City staff, in consultation with the Disability Commission, reviewed new park properties and properties that had issues in 2002. The city again reviewed these properties and updated this document in 2012. Under consideration was compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

What follows is the outline of our findings regarding each of these facilities, programs and practices.

Part I: Administrative Requirements

On January 17, 1984, then Mayor, Bernard F. Chartrand designated Richard N. Sarasin, City Auditor, as the City's 504 Coordinator. Since that time this designation has not changed and Mr. Sarasin continues to serve in this capacity. A copy of the original appointment letter is Attachment # 1 of this document.

Also attached (Attachment #2) is a copy of the official grievance procedures adopted by the City to handle related complaints.

The City of Fitchburg does not discriminate on the basis of disability. This fact is posted on public bulletin boards within City Hall and an "EEO" clause is included on all recruitment material.

Part II: Program Accessibility

The City of Fitchburg continues to make progress on improving the accessibility and usability of its parks and playgrounds. Since 1995 the city has spent over \$4,500,000 on park development, upgrades and renovations. The majority of these improvements were funded with CDBG dollars, Urban Self Help Funds and other federal and state grants. As work has been and continues to be done on these parks, the renovated areas are brought into compliance with current accessibility guidelines.

In the early spring of 2002, City Staff and members of the City's Disability Commission reviewed City owned parcels under the control of the Conservation Commission or Parks Department and created a facilities inventory of these parcels. This inventory was reviewed and updated in the fall of 2006 and again in 2012. Attachment # 4 is a copy of this updated facilities inventory.

The City's recreation department runs a park program each summer at various locations throughout the city. Only parks that have undergone renovations, including accessibility improvements, are chosen as sites for these activities. Over the summer the city also staffs both a spray park and a city pool. These facilities meet accessibility standards and provide a great recreational opportunity for all users. The city responds on an individual basis to requests to further accommodate participants in the programs offered at our parks and at other city sponsored activities.

Part III: Employment Practices

The City of Fitchburg does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in any of its employment practices, including job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. The city also does not discriminate in employment practices related to recruitment, advertising, tenure, layoff, leave, fringe benefits, and all other related activities.



City of Hitchburg

MASSACHUSETTS

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

- A. A formal complaint (should be in writing - or could be written up by 504 coordinator) must be filed with the Town or City's Section 504 Coordinator designated to handle compliance with federal handicapped regulations.
- B. Within 10 days, the Coordinator will either (1) resolve the complaint through reasonable accommodation, (2) dismiss the complaint as not relevant to the handicapped regulations, or (3) refer the complaint to the self-evaluation team for review. The complainant, the self-evaluation team and the legislative body must be notified of which ever action is taken, either in writing or by other appropriate formal notification.
- C. If complainant is dissatisfied with the coordinator's action, within 10 days they may file the formal complaint with the self-evaluation team.
- D. Within 10 days of formal notice to the complaint, the self-evaluation team will meet to review the complaint. The Section 504 Coordinator shall not participate as a member of the team. The complainant must be notified of such meeting and may be present with counsel if they so choose.
- E. Within 10 days of their meeting, the self-evaluation team (without the Section 504 coordinator) will either (1) resolve the dispute through reasonable accommodation, (2) dismiss the complaint as not relevant to the handicapped regulations; or (3) devise a plan for the needed structural or program changes to reach compliance and immediately notify the legislative body of such plans. The complainant, the Section 504 coordinator and the legislative body must be notified, either in writing or by other appropriate formal notification.
- F. If the complainant is not satisfied with the self-evaluation team actions, within ten days they may file a formal complaint with the legislative body.
- G. Within 10 days of formal notice of the complaint, the legislative body will meet to review the complaint. The complainant must be notified of such meeting and may be present with counsel if they so choose.
- H. Within 10 days of their meeting, the legislative body will either (1) resolve the complaint through reasonable accommodation, (2) dismiss the complaint as not relevant to the handicapped regulations, or, (3) adopt plans for needed structural changes to reach compliance. The complainant, the self-evaluation team, and the Section 504 coordinator must be notified, either in writing or by other appropriate formal notification.
- I. The decision of the legislative body shall be final.



CITY HALL
FITCHBURG, MA 01420
(617) 345-9550

CITY OF FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS

Executive Department
BERNARD F. CHARTRAND
Mayor

KATHY M. COULSON
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

LORRAINE T. ROUSSEAU
SECRETARY

January 17, 1984

Mr. Richard N. Sarasin
City Auditor
City of Fitchburg
Fitchburg, Ma. 01420

Dear Mr. Sarasin:

In accordance with Federal Revenue Sharing Handicapped Regulations, you are hereby appointed as Section 504 Coordinator for the City of Fitchburg.

Very truly yours,


Bernard F. Chartrand
Mayor

BFC:lr



CITY OF FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS

Executive Department

JEFFREY A. BEAN

Mayor

CITY HALL
FITCHBURG, MA 01420
(508) 345-9550
FAX# (508) 345-9595

DENISE M. BARBER
SECRETARY

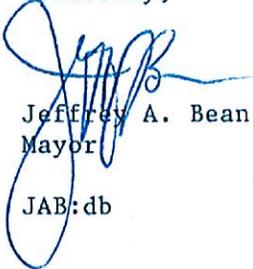
January 22, 1993

Mr. Richard N. Sarasin
City Auditor
City of Fitchburg
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Dear Mr. Sarasin:

In accordance with the guidelines set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 Regulations, you are hereby appointed as the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator for the City of Fitchburg.

Sincerely,

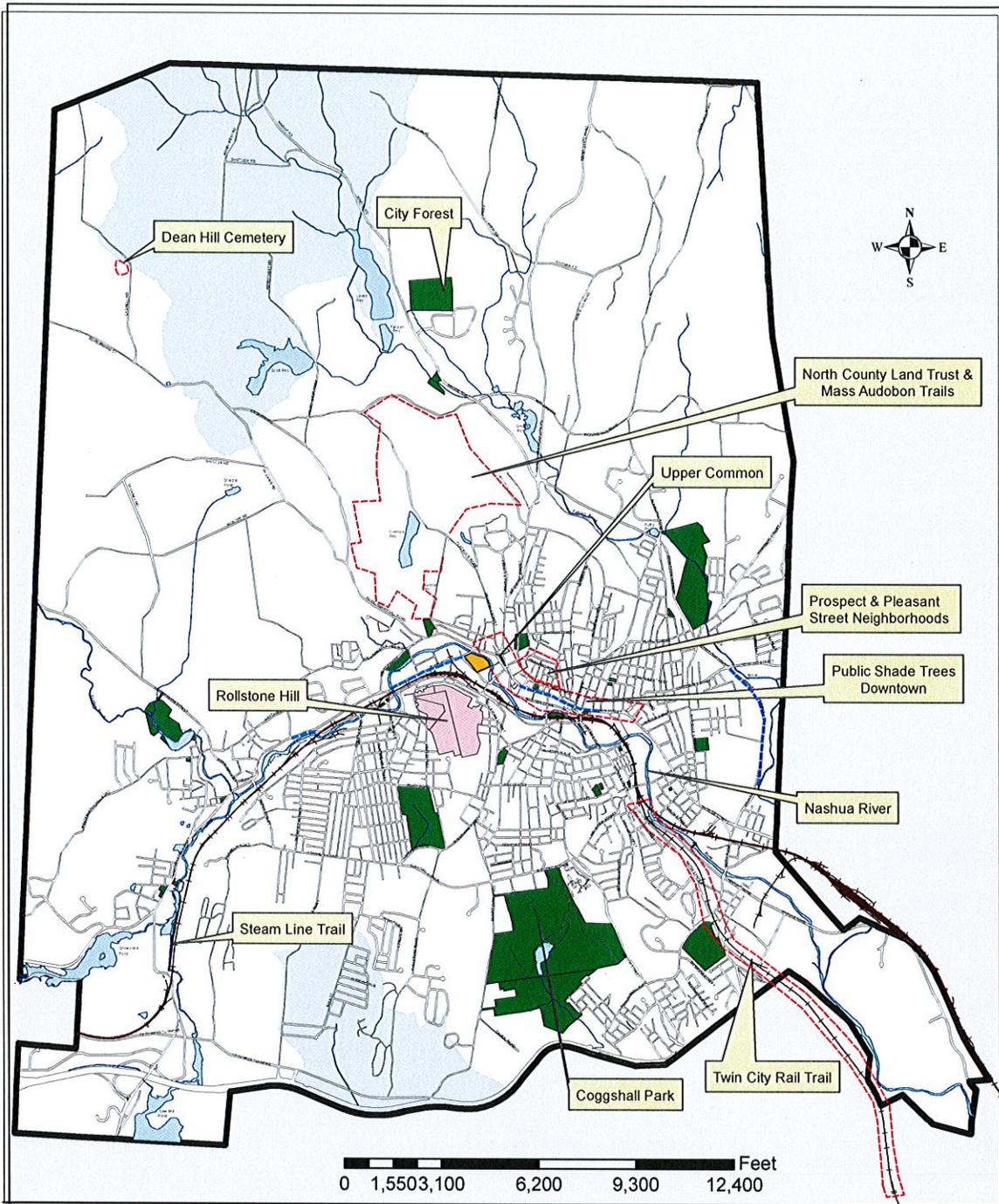


Jeffrey A. Bean
Mayor

JAB:db

MAPS

- A. Action Plan Map
- B. Map of Sewered Areas
- C. Zoning Map
- D. Map of Soil Types
- E. Map of Water Resources
- F. Map of Open Space
- G. Environmental Justice Map
- H. Regional Context
- I. Scenic and Cultural Resources Map
- J. Fitchburg MA Trail Inventory Map, 2009, MRPC
- K. Fitchburg MA Cultural Assets Map, MRPC
- L. Fitchburg Park Information Map



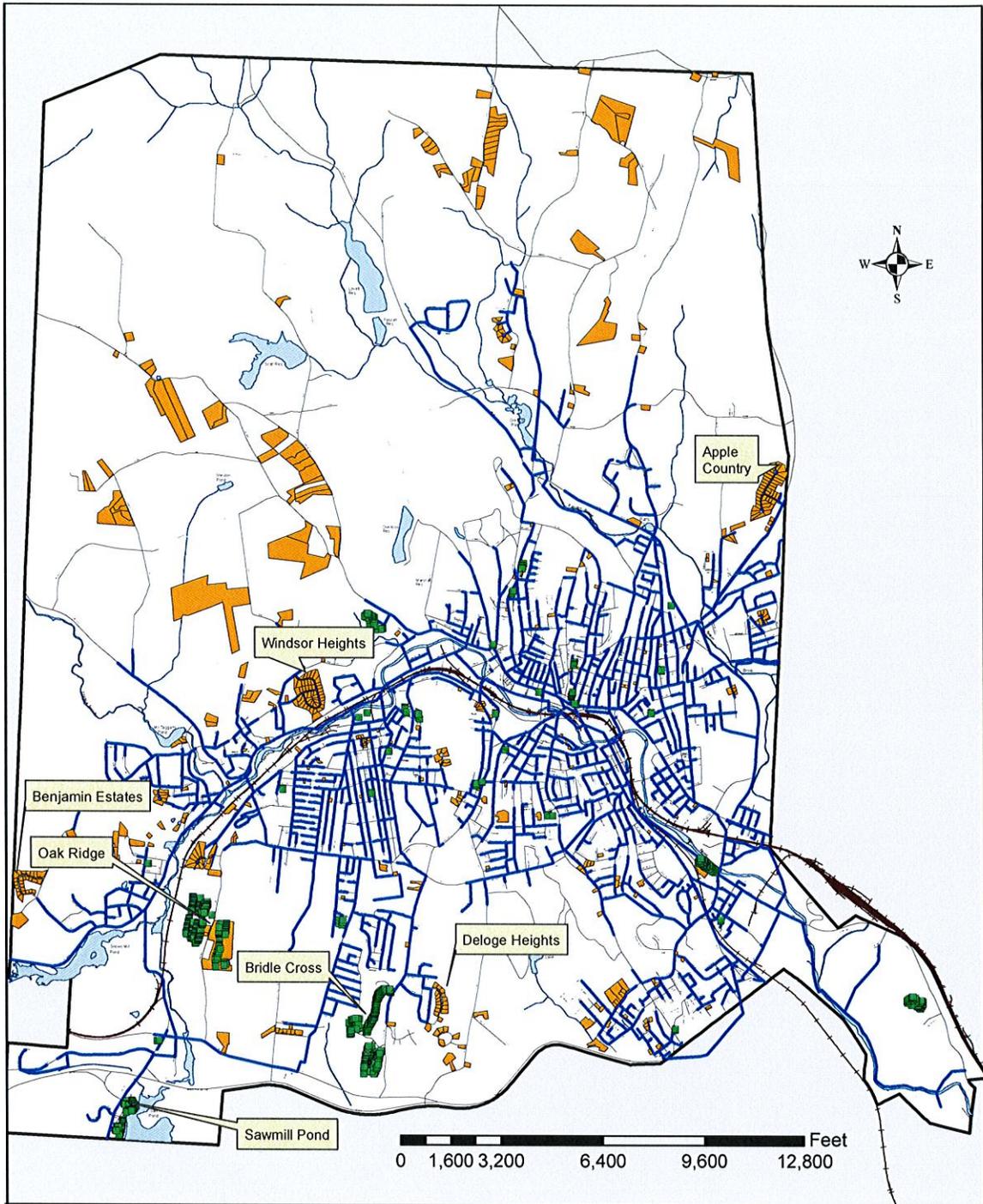
**City of Fitchburg
Open Space and Recreation Plan
2014**

Action Plan Map

Prepared by the Information Technology Department
City of Fitchburg, MA June 28, 2013
This map is intended for planning purposes only.

Legend

-  Proposed Sidewalk Improvements
-  City Parks
-  Water
-  Crocker Field
-  Watersheds
-  Roadways
-  Railroad



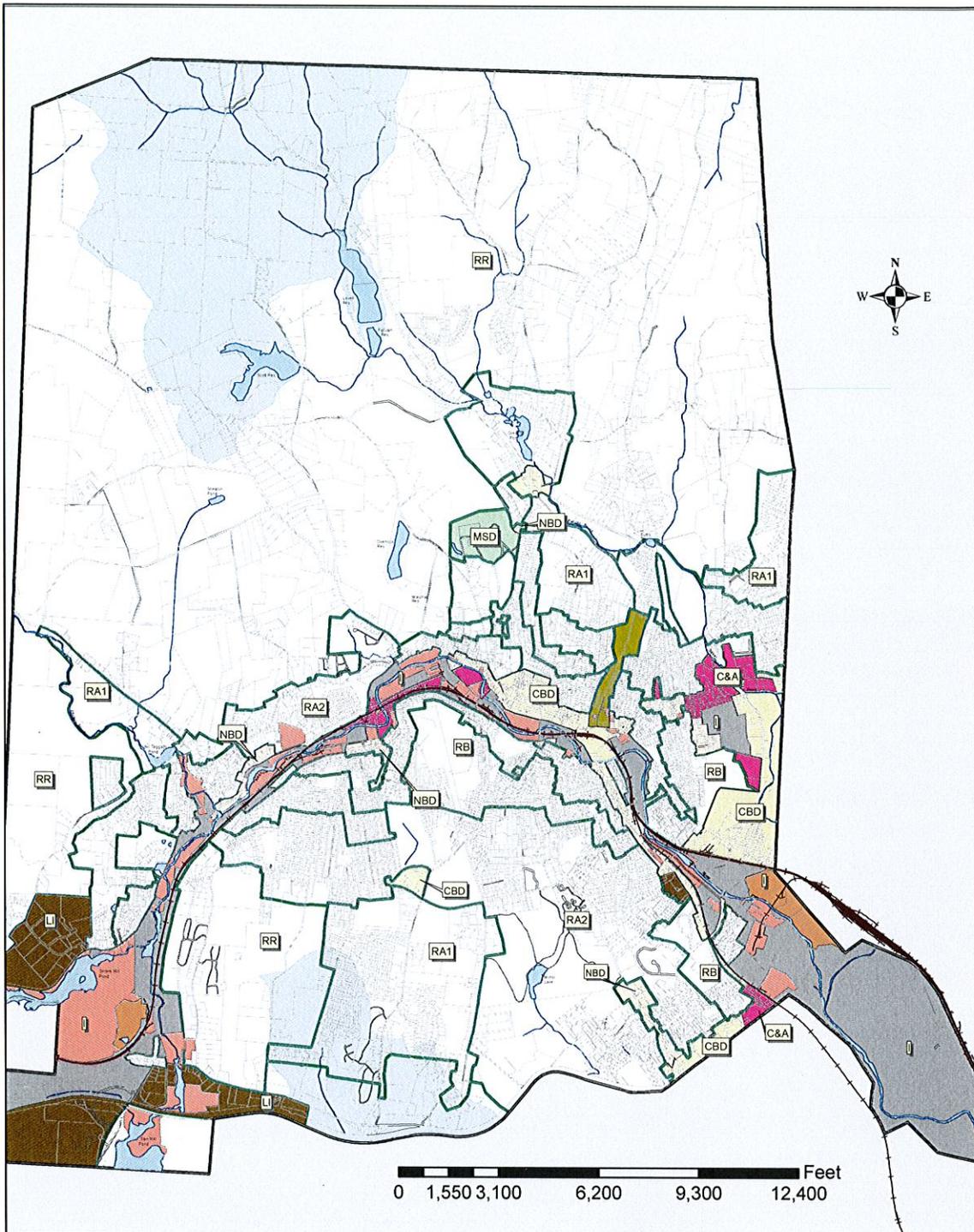
**City of Fitchburg
Open Space and Recreation Plan
2013**

**Sewered Areas with
New Residential Development**

Prepared by the Information Technology Department
Fitchburg, MA Dec. 27, 2012 - This map is intended
for planning purposes only.

Legend

- Residential Development After Yr. 2001
- Condo Development After Yr. 2001
- Sewer System
- Roadways
- Railroad
- Water



**City of Fitchburg
Open Space and Recreation Plan
2013**

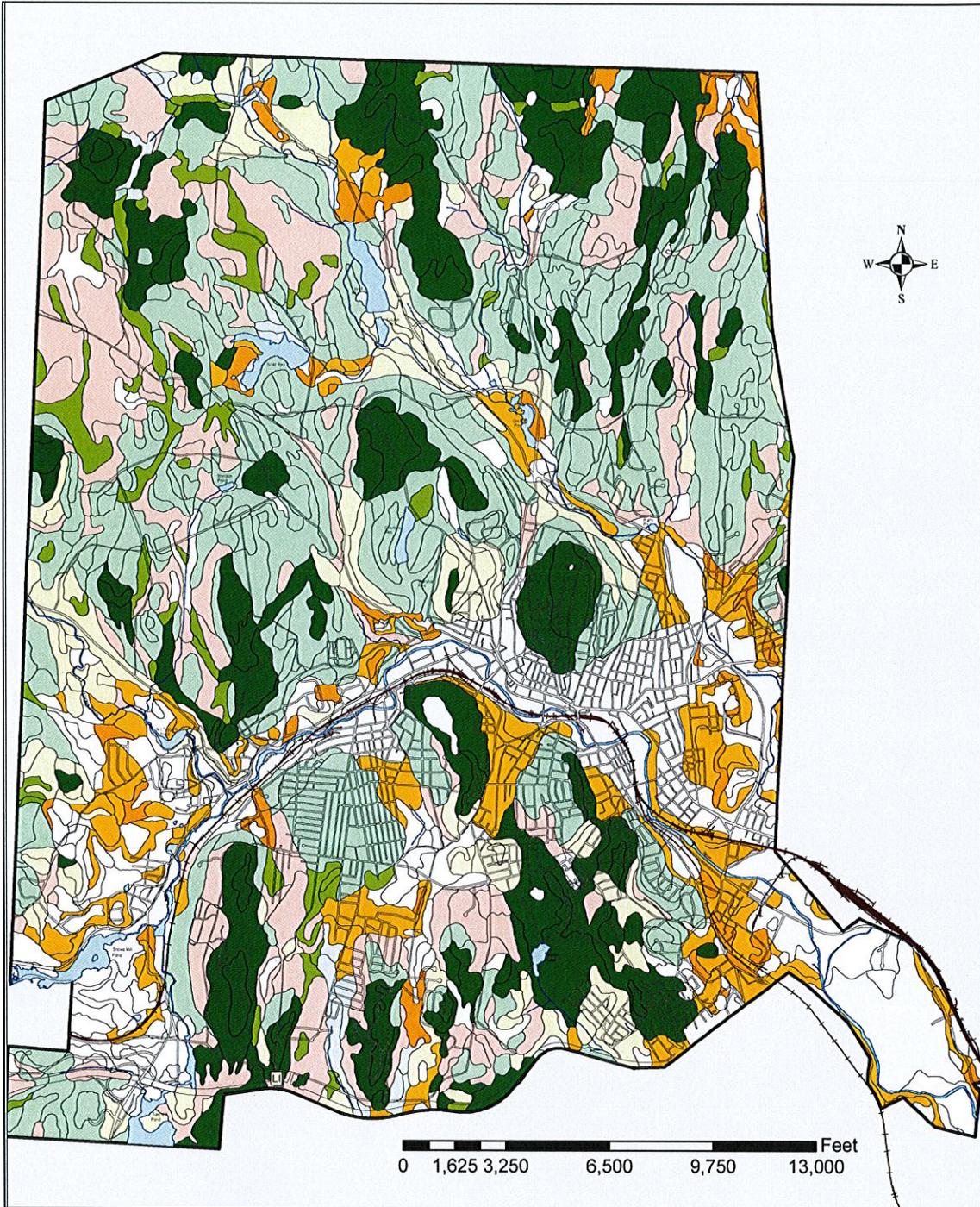
Zoning Map

Prepared by the Information Technology Department
City of Fitchburg, MA Feb. 15, 2013
This map is intended for planning purposes only.

Legend

Zoning

- Commercial/Automotive
- Central Business District
- Fitchburg State University
- Industrial
- Light Industrial
- Mill Conversion District
- Medical Services District
- Neighborhood Business District
- Priority Development Sites
- Res A-1
- Res A-2
- Res B
- Res C
- Rural Res
- Hydro
- Railroad
- Watershed



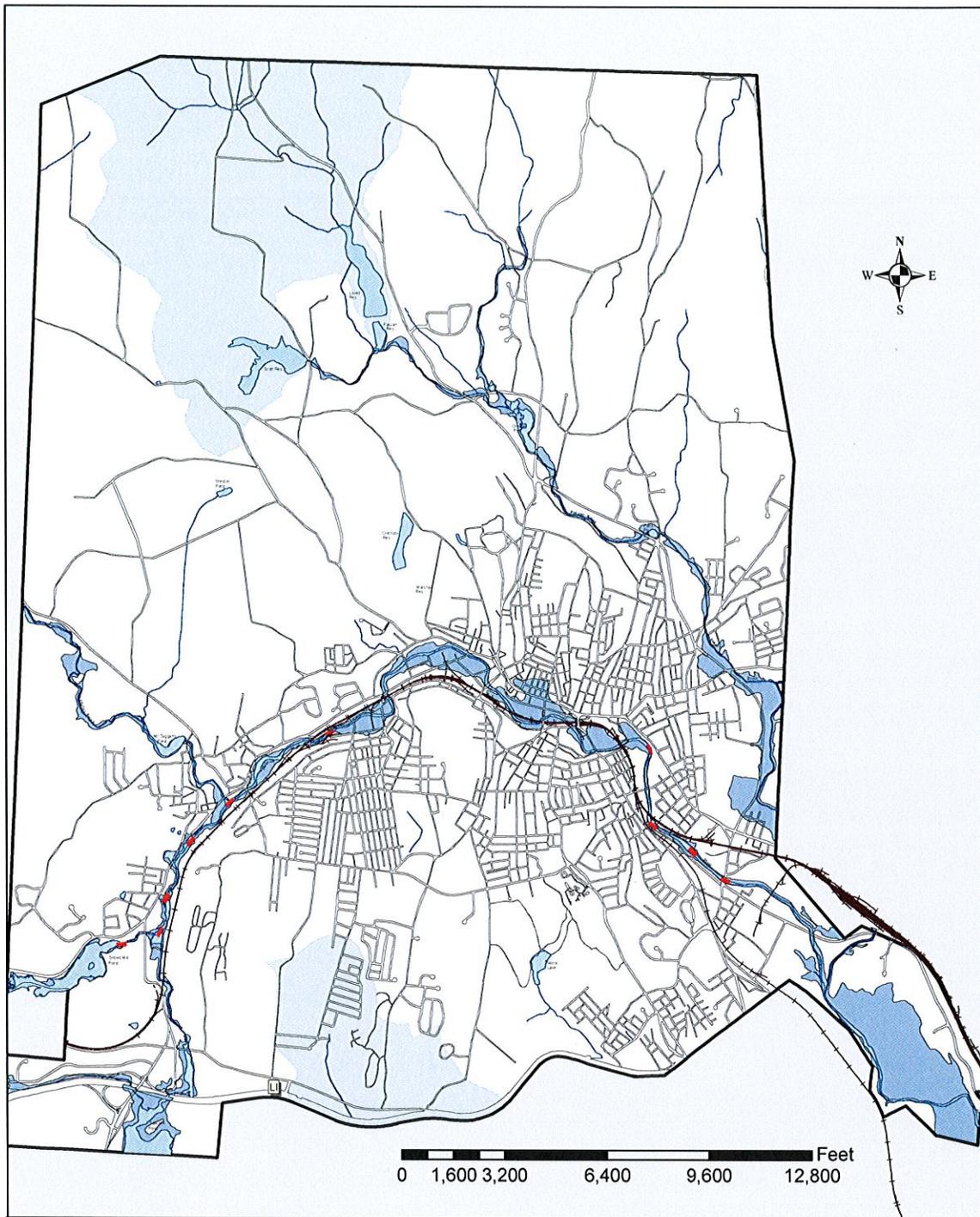
**City of Fitchburg
Open Space and Recreation Plan
2013**

Soil Types

Prepared by the Information Technology Department,
City of Fitchburg, MA Dec.27, 2012 - This map is intended
for planning purposes only.

Legend

- Paxton
- Canton
- Hinckley
- Hollis-Chatfield
- Ridgebury
- Urban Land
- Woodbridge
- Roadways
- Water
- Railroad
- Cityline



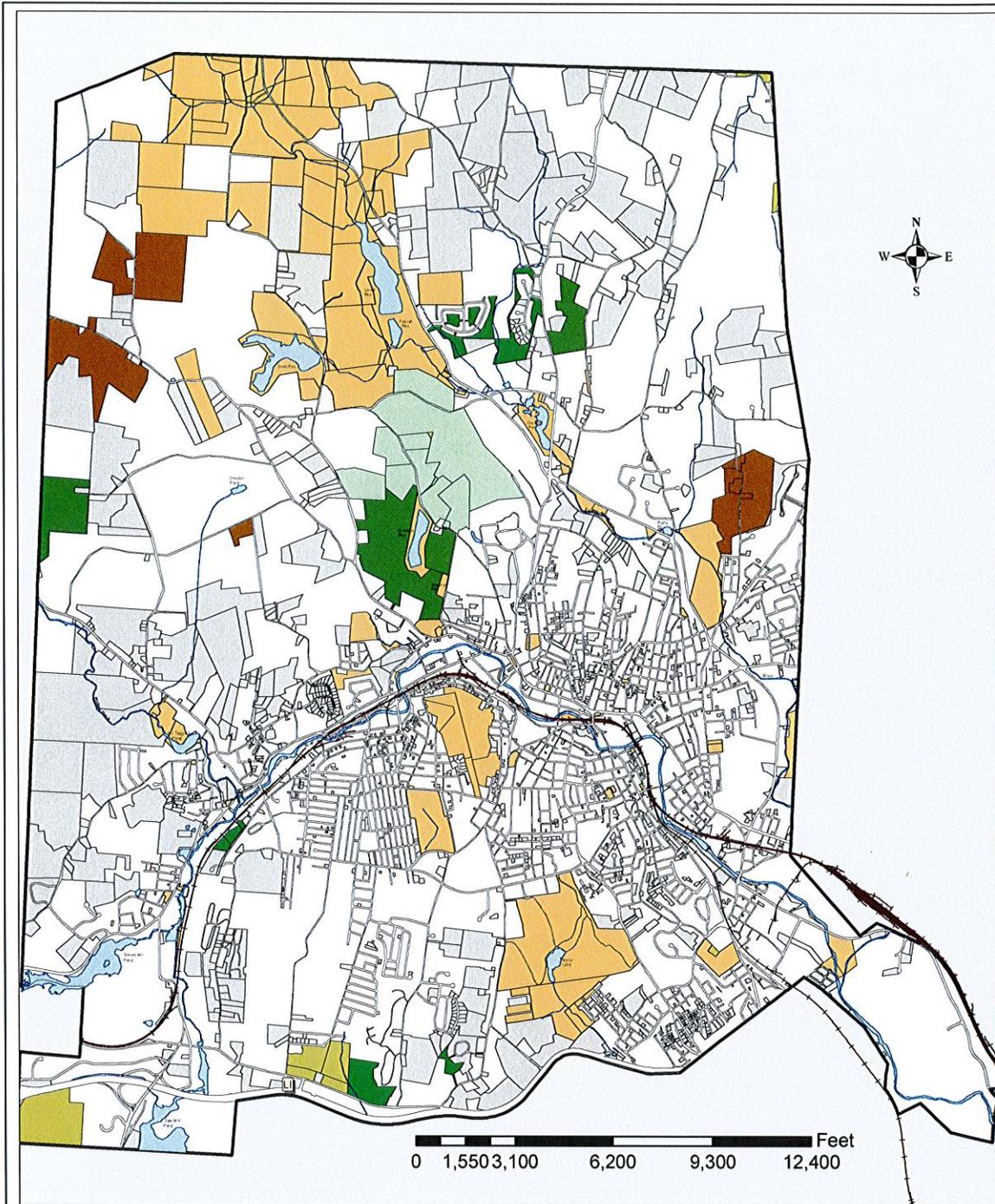
City of Fitchburg
Open Space and Recreation Plan
2013

Water Resources
Map

Prepared by the Information Technology Department,
 City of Fitchburg, MA Dec.27, 2012 - This map is intended
 for planning purposes only.

Legend

-  Watershed
-  Reservoirs, Rivers, and Ponds
-  Railroad
-  Cityline
-  Roadways
-  Flood Zone A
-  Dams



**City of Fitchburg
Open Space and Recreation Plan
2013**

**Open Space
Map**

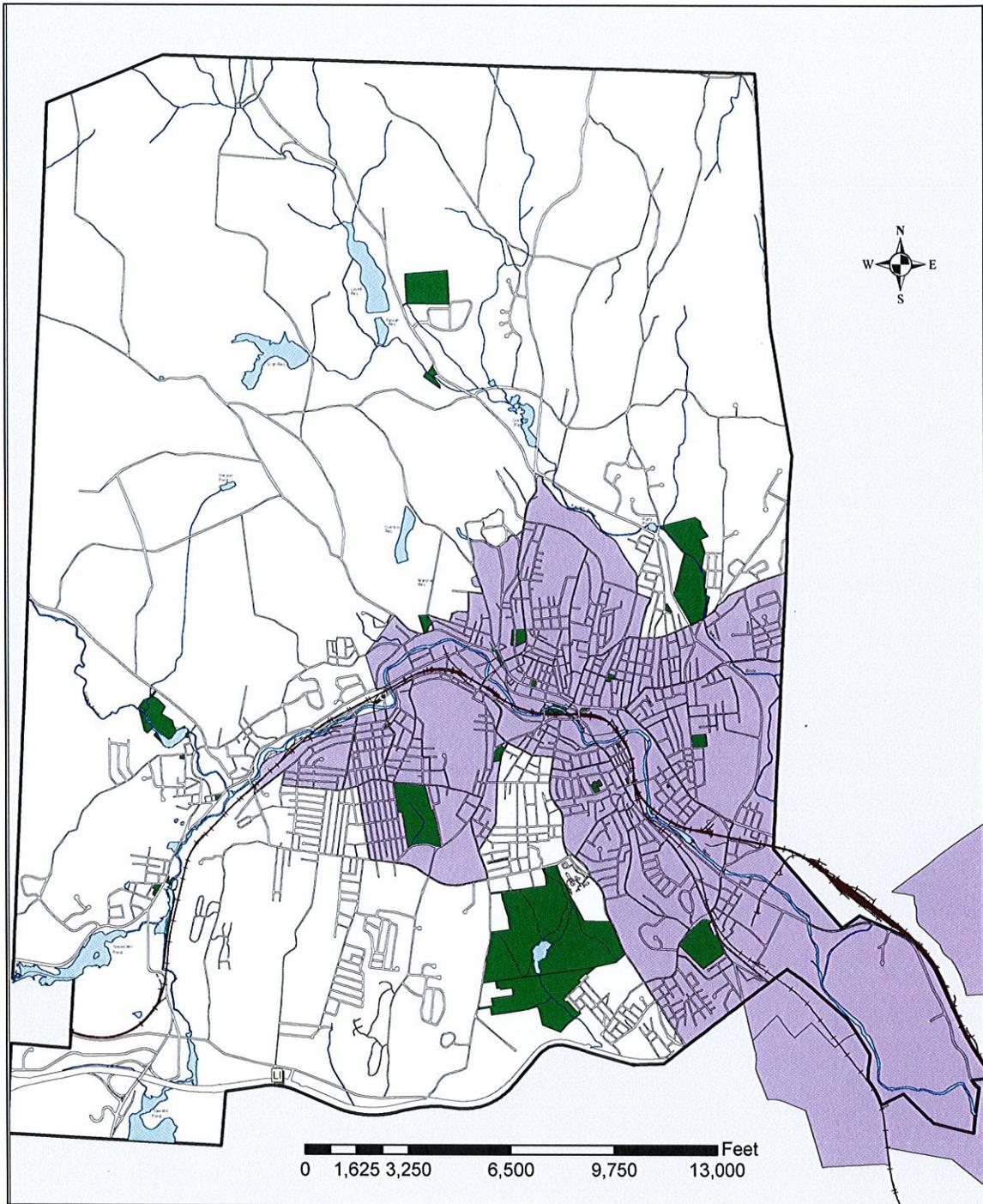
Prepared by the Information Technology Department,
City of Fitchburg, MA Dec.27, 2012 - This map is intended
for planning purposes only.

Legend Protected Open Space

- Mass Audubon
- City of Fitchburg
- Conservation Restriction
- Deed Restriction
- North County Land Trust
- Commonwealth of Mass.

Unprotected Open Space

Water Railroad



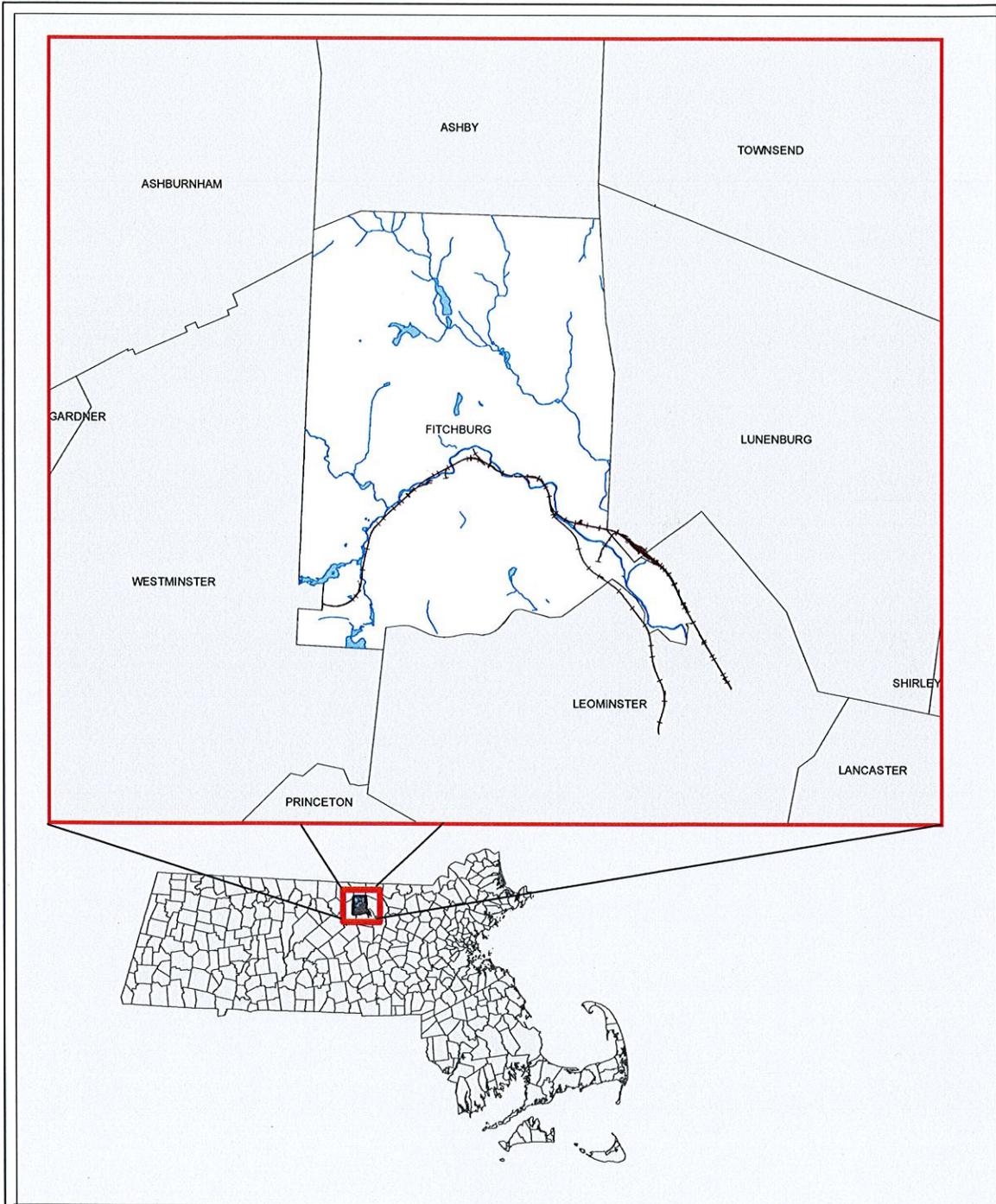
**City of Fitchburg
Open Space and Recreation Plan
2013**

**Environmental
Justice Map**

Prepared by the Information Technology Department,
City of Fitchburg, MA Dec.27, 2012 - This map is intended
for planning purposes only.

Legend

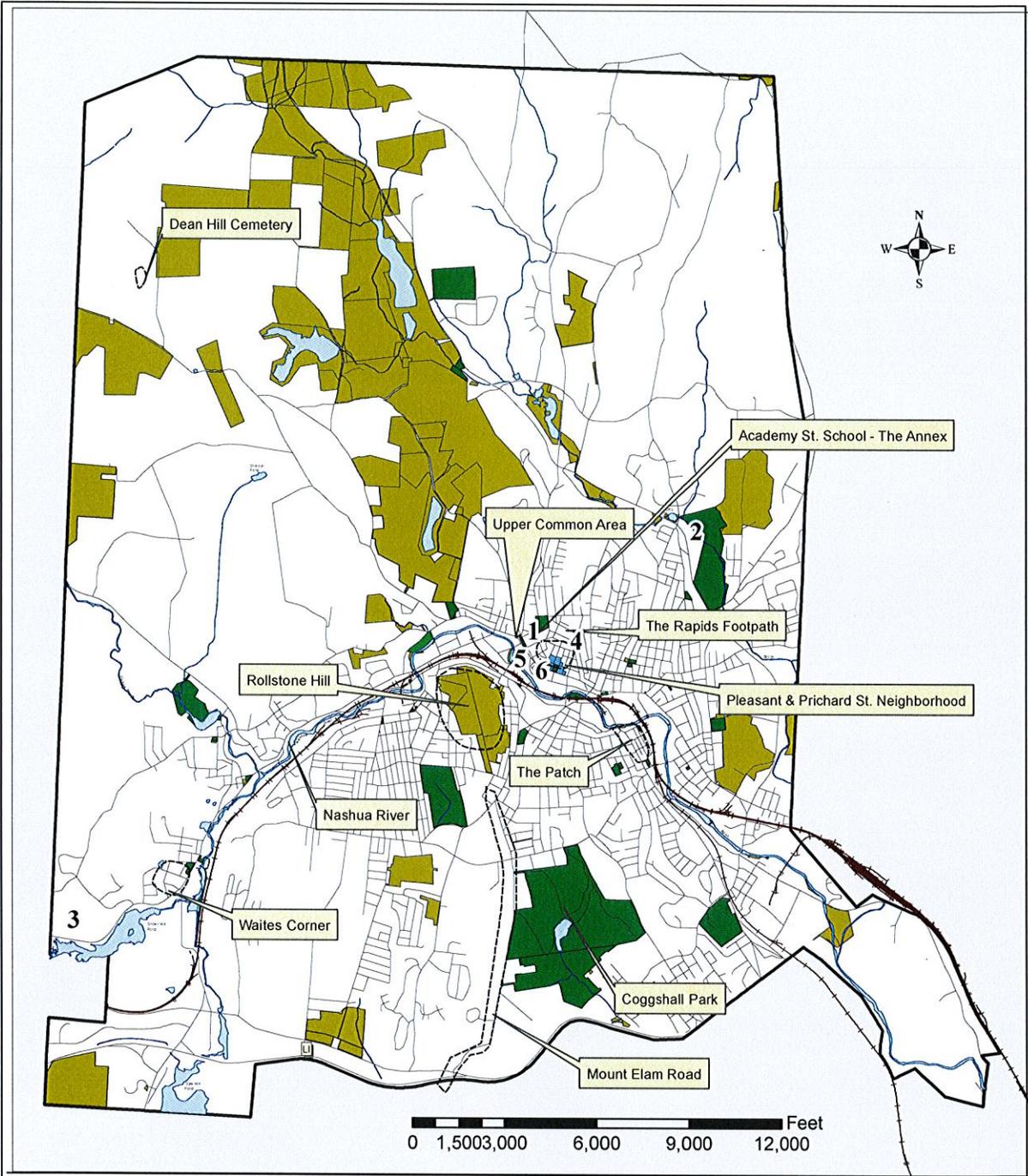
-  Environmental Justice Area
-  Parks
-  Water
-  Roadways
-  Railroad
-  Cityline



**City of Fitchburg
Open Space and Recreation Plan
2014**

**Regional Context
Map**

Prepared by the Information Technology Department,
City of Fitchburg, MA Dec.27, 2012 - This map is intended
for planning purposes only.



**City of Fitchburg
Open Space and Recreation Plan
2013**

**Scenic and Cultural
Resources Map**

Prepared by the Information Technology Department
City of Fitchburg, MA Feb. 15, 2013
This map is intended for planning purposes only.

Legend

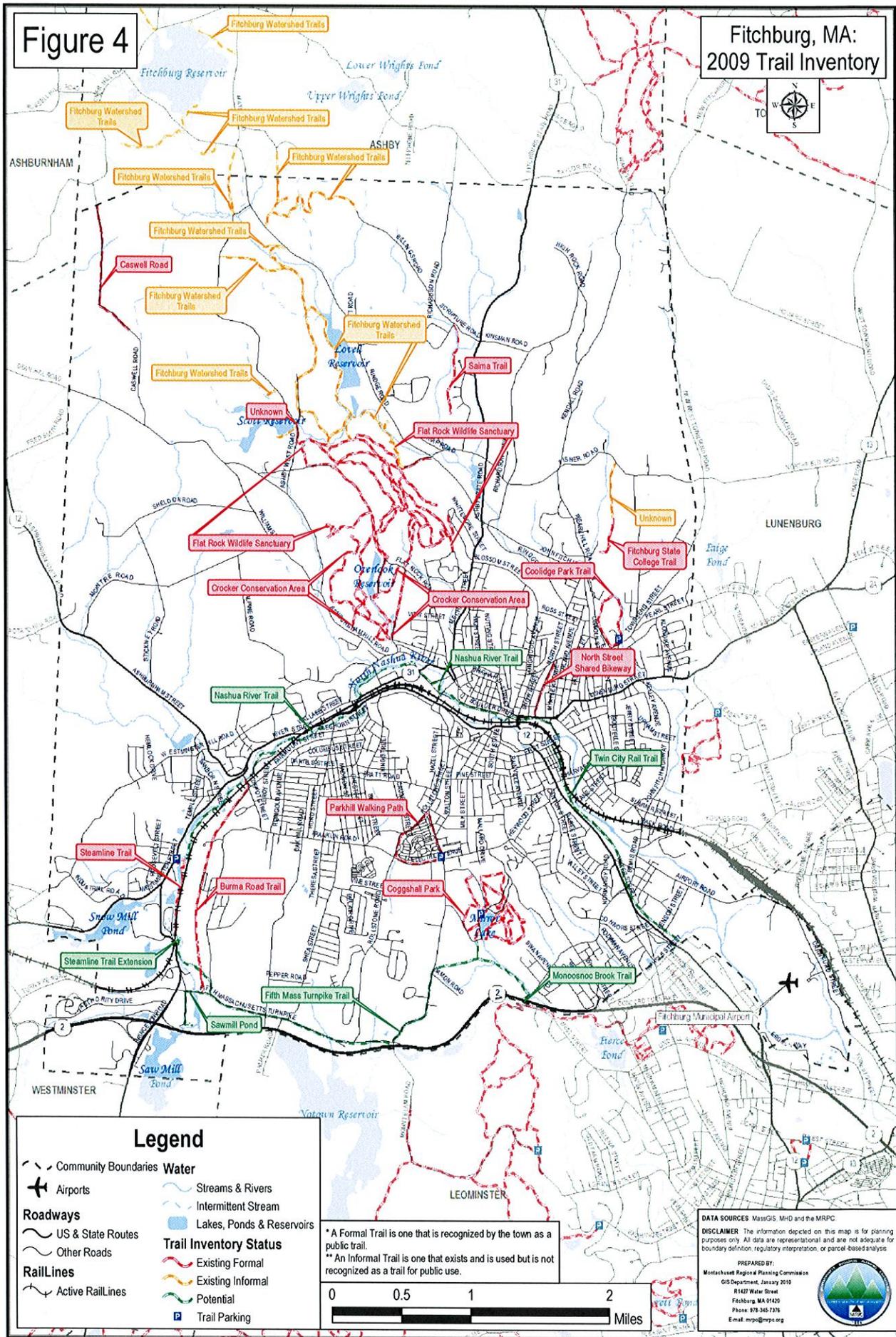
- Parks
- Open Space w/ Public Access
- Roadways
- Railroad
- Water
- Text
- Historic & Scenic Resources

Cultural Resources

1. Fitchburg Art Museum
2. Wallace Civic Center
3. Dukakis Performing Art Center
4. Fitchburg Theater Co.
5. New Players Theater Guild
6. Stratton Theater (Future)

Figure 4

Fitchburg, MA:
2009 Trail Inventory



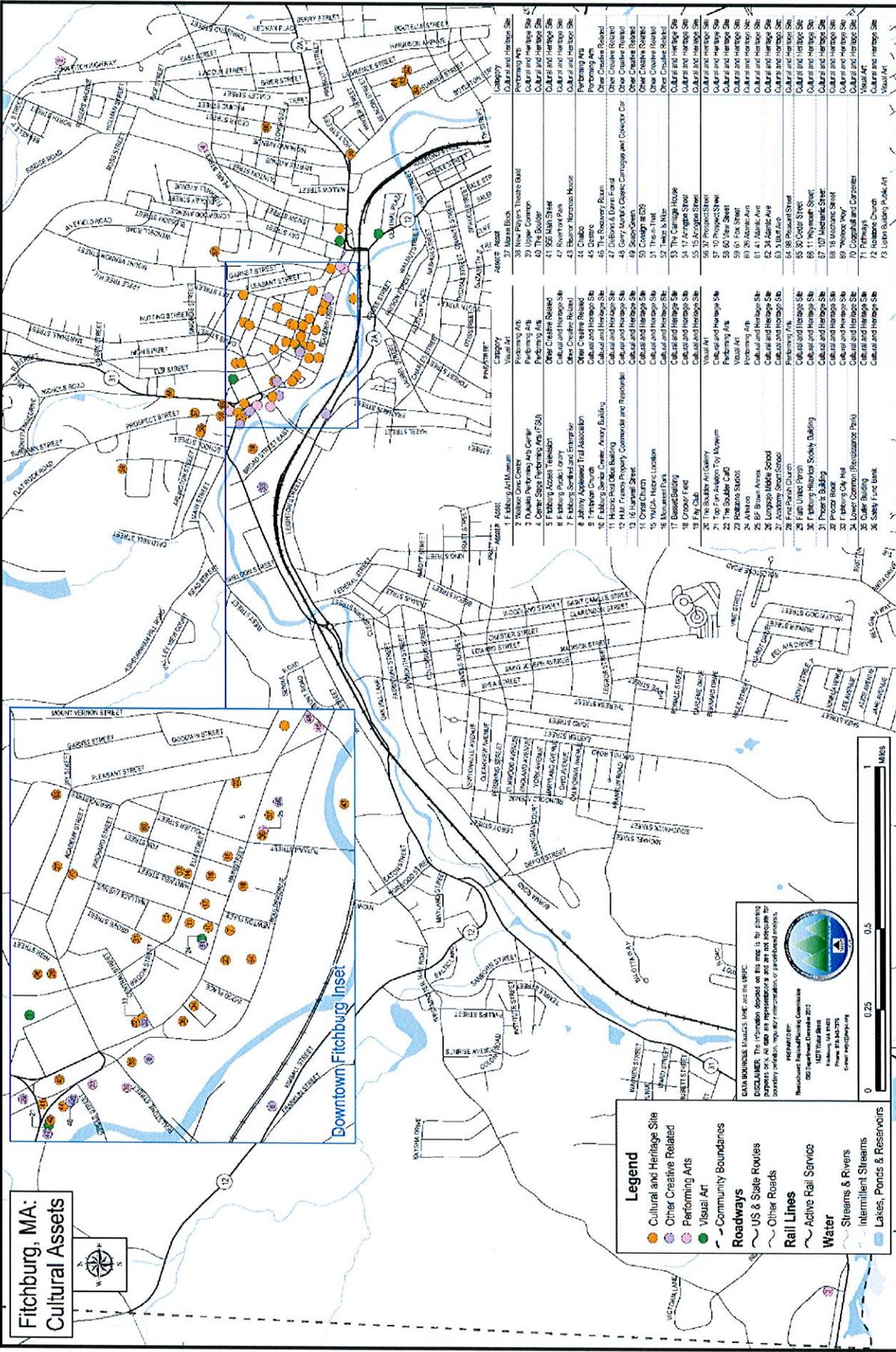
Legend

- Community Boundaries
- Airports
- Roadways
 - US & State Routes
 - Other Roads
- RailLines
 - Active RailLines
- Water
 - Streams & Rivers
 - Intermittent Stream
 - Lakes, Ponds & Reservoirs
- Trail Inventory Status
 - Existing Formal
 - Existing Informal
 - Potential
 - Trail Parking

* A Formal Trail is one that is recognized by the town as a public trail.
 ** An Informal Trail is one that exists and is used but is not recognized as a trail for public use.



DATA SOURCES: MassGIS, MHD and the MRPC
 DISCLAIMER: The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. All data are representational and are not adequate for boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-based analysis.
 PREPARED BY:
 Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
 GIS Department, January 2010
 11427 Water Street
 Fitchburg, MA 01420
 Phone: 978-345-7376
 Email: mrpc@mrpc.org



Fitchburg, MA: Cultural Assets



Legend

- Cultural and Heritage Site
- Other Creative Related
- Performing Arts
- Visual Art
- Community Boundaries

Roadways

- US & State Routes
- Other Roads

Rail Lines

- Active Rail Service

Water

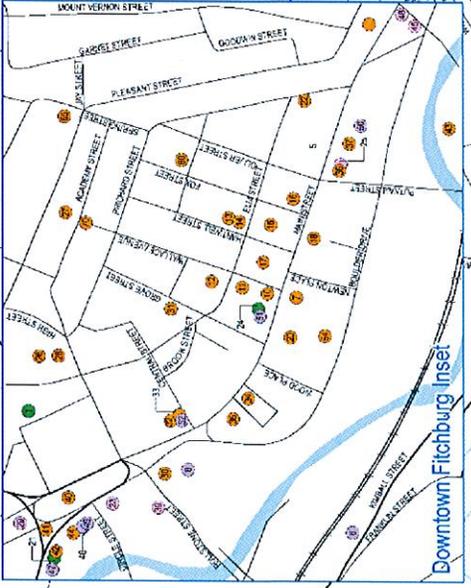
- Streams & Rivers
- Intermittent Streams
- Lakes, Ponds & Reservoirs

DISCLAIMER: This information depends on the data provided by the City of Fitchburg. It is not intended to be used for any purpose other than the intended purpose. It is not intended to be used for any purpose other than the intended purpose.

PREPARED BY:
MapSource
1077 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA 01525
Phone: 978-343-3376
Email: info@mapsource.com

Asset #	Category	Address
1	Visual Art	Fitchburg Art Museum
2	Visual Art	Walker Civic Center
3	Visual Art	DuPont Performing Arts Center
4	Visual Art	Center Stage Performing Arts (FSU)
5	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
6	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
7	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
8	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
9	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
10	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
11	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
12	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
13	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
14	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
15	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
16	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
17	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
18	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
19	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
20	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
21	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
22	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
23	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
24	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
25	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
26	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
27	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
28	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
29	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
30	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
31	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
32	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
33	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
34	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
35	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
36	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
37	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
38	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
39	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
40	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
41	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
42	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
43	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
44	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
45	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
46	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
47	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
48	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
49	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
50	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
51	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
52	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
53	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
54	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
55	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
56	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
57	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
58	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
59	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
60	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
61	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
62	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
63	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
64	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
65	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
66	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
67	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
68	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
69	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
70	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
71	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
72	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access
73	Other Creative Related	Fitchburg Access

Downtown Fitchburg Inset





Fitchburg Parks & Playgrounds Map



Brought to you by Fun 'n Fitchburg & Mass in Motion Kids

FITCHBURG'S PARK INFORMATION



<p>1 CALDWELL PARK Caldwell Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basketball in lower area and large play structure with swings and a small play field in the upper level of the park. 	<p>2 COGGSHALL PARK 224 Mann Elm Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive walking/running trails, playground/structure with swings, ice skating as weather permits, gazebo and stone house for events, softball/baseball, and frisbee golf 	<p>3 COOLIDGE PARK - Pearl Street & John Fitch Highway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swimming pool, walking loop along the river, soccer, street hockey, softball/baseball, beach volleyball, modern playground/structure, basketball, and open fields
<p>4 GROCKER PLAYGROUND & DAVID M. WHITNEY MEMORIAL COURT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basketball court with bleachers, playground, spray pad, walking path, swing sets, open field and picnic tables 	<p>5 DANIELS PARK 27 Fairmount Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benches and open space 	<p>6 GATEWAY PARK 19 Sheldon Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large field, walking loop and path, community gardens, beaches and picnic tables
<p>7 GOODRICH PLAYGROUND 100 Goodrich Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play structure and swings, walking pathway, softball/baseball, and large field 	<p>8 GREEN CORNERS PARK 75 Green Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basketball and playground structure 	<p>9 HERITAGE PARK Main Street and Boulder Drive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open space with hot dog stand
<p>11 LOWE PLAYGROUND - 240 Elm Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play structure, swings, seesaw, horseshoe pits, softball/baseball, large open field and basketball 	<p>12 MICHAEL, BABE, DICONZA MEMORIAL PARK/BARTLEY-NOLAN/SALEM STREET PLAYGROUND 35 Beekman Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benches, basketball, playground, picnic area, walking area, field, and swings (baby and toddler also available) 	<p>13 MIDDLE STREET PLAYGROUND/ SADE QUARTALE PLAYGROUND 129 Middle Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground, small track, swings (for baby and toddler), and benches
<p>10 HOWARTH PLAYGROUND 320 Holliston Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern play structure with swings in the upper section, Rollstone St and a basketball court and softball field in the lower level (Walton St) 	<p>14 MONUMENT PARK 595 Main Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memorial statue to Fitchburg's fallen war heroes with benches 	

19 RIVERFRONT PARK - Cushing St, off Boulder Dr

- Fitchburg Farmers Market on Thursdays in the summer and fall, large open spaces to play and relax, benches, and a short walking path along the river



20 SOUTH FITCH PLAYGROUND
Abbott Ave & Water St.

- Herman J. Bourque Field and Gus Johnson Field for youth baseball/softball

21 STANLEY PARK
164 Westminster Street

- Horseshoe pits, a gazebo, benches, and a bocce court



22 UPPER COMMON - 890 Main Street

- Water fountain, sculptures, benches, gazebo, and hosts concerts once a week in the summer

15 MORAN FIELD - Off Ashburnham Street

- Soccer field

16 NIKITAS FIELD
27 Franklin Rd

- Football field, field house, and walking path



17 PARKHILL PARK/SPLASH PARK - 235 Pratt Road

- Splash park, bath house, playground, Ryan Joubert Share Park/BMX, softball/baseball, basketball, open field, swings, tennis courts, and a walking path



18 PHILLIPS STREET PLAYGROUND
60 Phillips Street

- Play Structure with swings and basketball



Brought to you by Fun 'n Fitchburg & Mass in Motion Kids

Adopt-A-Park Program

Help keep Fitchburg's parks safe and sought-after by adopting a park. Activities include, but are not limited to:

- Beautifying parks through clean-ups
- Keeping a watchful eye on the park
- Communicating information to the Parks Department

Contact the Parks and Recreation Director at 978-829-4818 to learn more.



www.fitchburg.ma.us
Parks & Rec: 978-829-4818

facebook.com/funnfitchburg



Mass in Motion Kids

Mass in Motion Kids (MIM Kids) is a partnership between the Cities of Fitchburg and New Bedford, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Harvard School of Public Health, Massachusetts General Hospital for Children/Harvard Medical School, and the National Initiative for Children's Health Care Quality. MIM Kids is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Childhood Obesity Research Demonstration (CORD) grant. MIM Kids works with the places where kids learn, grow, and play to help children and families grow up with a healthy weight.

Fun 'n Fitchburg

Fun 'n Fitchburg was started in 2009 as a City of Fitchburg initiative to reduce obesity and risk for subsequent chronic conditions (diabetes, heart disease, stroke, asthma, and certain types of cancer) through increased opportunities for youth and families to eat healthy and live active lives. Fun 'n Fitchburg is a program of the Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc.

