

Charles River Meadowlands Initiative  
and the Towns of Franklin, Bellingham, Medway, Massachusetts

# Findings and Recommendations Report

Public Access and Management Strategies  
January 2020



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## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

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Prepared for: The Charles River Meadowlands Initiative  
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January 2020

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## 1.0 Charles River Meadowlands Initiative

The Charles River Meadowlands Initiative (CRMI) effort was launched in early 2015 to support stewardship and improve access to portions of the Charles River Natural Valley Storage Area (CRNVSA) lands, Municipal lands and Conservation lands within the Towns of Bellingham, Franklin and Medway. To a much smaller extent, privately owned parcels, such as Chapter 61 Properties, (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleIX/Chapter61>) that abut these undeveloped lands are also considered since towns can assign the right of first refusal to a state agency or non-profit land trust. CRNVSA lands are owned by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) has a long-term license with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to manage the land owned by USACE in Massachusetts. The Charles River Meadowlands Initiative web site can be viewed at <https://www.charlesrivermeadowlands.org/>

From its conception CRMI has been given advice, assistance and sponsorship from the Metacomet Land Trust (MLT). The MLT is a non-profit organization that works with landowners, Towns, and State Agencies to permanently protect land through ownership and conservation restrictions. It serves the communities of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Franklin, Mendon, Millbury, Millville, Norfolk, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge and Wrentham. The Metacomet Land Trust web site can be viewed at <https://metacometlandtrust.org/>

## 2.0 Project Goals

This Findings and Recommendations Report is intended to build upon previous work produced by the Charles River Meadowlands Initiative. Much of the background information described within is taken from CRMI documents that can be found on the CRMI web site. The goal is to provide recommendations for potential trail areas that respect the natural resources, USACE lands and their mission and those living nearby while providing opportunities to connect and unify the Meadowlands in the three towns. Potential trails that are most feasible will be noted so that the Charles River Meadowlands Initiative and the Towns of Bellingham, Franklin and Medway can move forward to implement their goals to increase public awareness and opportunities for passive recreation.

## 3.0 Project Scope and Process

Consultant, BETA Group, Inc. has been hired through a grant procured by three area Legislators and managed by the Town of Franklin, to “provide planning services related to improving public access to and management of the Charles River Meadowlands” as quoted from the Scope of Work for the project found in Appendix C . A Working Group comprised of the Initiative’s primary supporter and Franklin resident, Alan Earls; the Metacomet Land Trust Treasurer, Susan Spears; Franklin Planning and Community Development Director, Bryan Taberner and the assistance of Bellingham Town Planner, James Kupfer, Bellingham Conservation Administrator, Anne Matthews and Medway Planning and Economic Development Coordinator, Susan Affleck-Childs guided the consultant and

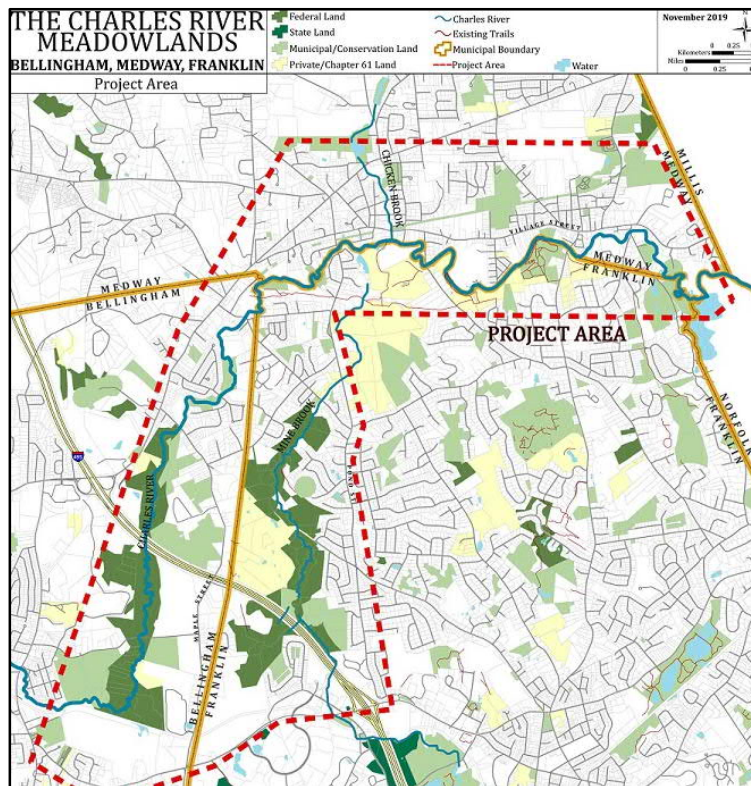


Figure 3.0.1 Project Area Map

reviewed materials that were discussed routinely as the project proceeded. The BETA team comprised of Landscape Architects and Engineers, reviewed the history and supporting documents of the project, visited accessible areas of the site in all three towns, obtained GIS files and mapping files of the project area and proceeded to assess the gathered information. (See Figure 3.0.1: Project Area Map.)

This resulting draft report provides an assessment of the three Towns in terms of resources, access, linkages, reports the findings and makes recommendations, mainly for trails, that may then be used for passive recreational purposes. Those determined to be the most feasible at the time of this report are shown on the mapping and described in this report with a brief description of those considered less feasible.



Figure 3.0.2: Public Meeting in Medway

A presentation was given of findings and recommendations at three public meetings, one for each of the three towns. CRMI and BETA met with The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife). Later, CRMI, BETA, the Franklin Conservation Agent, and MassWildlife walked portions of the site in Franklin. Comments from all meetings were considered and incorporated into this report. (See Figure 3.0.2: Public Meeting in Medway.)

This report is only a step in the process of moving forward. After this writing, other locations not considered in this report may become available for passive recreational use while some trails shown on the maps may be deemed unfeasible and recommended to be eliminated.



## 4.0 Project Area Analysis Maps

### 4.1 RESOURCES MAP

Environmental Resources were assessed on project area lands. Resources present on the lands are shown on the Resource Map. (See Figure 4.1.1: Resources Map). Environmental resources assessed including those that were assessed and not found on project lands are: water bodies, rivers and brooks, wetlands, FEMA floodplain areas, NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species, NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife, and NHESP Certified Vernal Pools. Public lands including USACE, Conservation and Town owned lands, roadways and Town boundaries are also on the map as reference points.

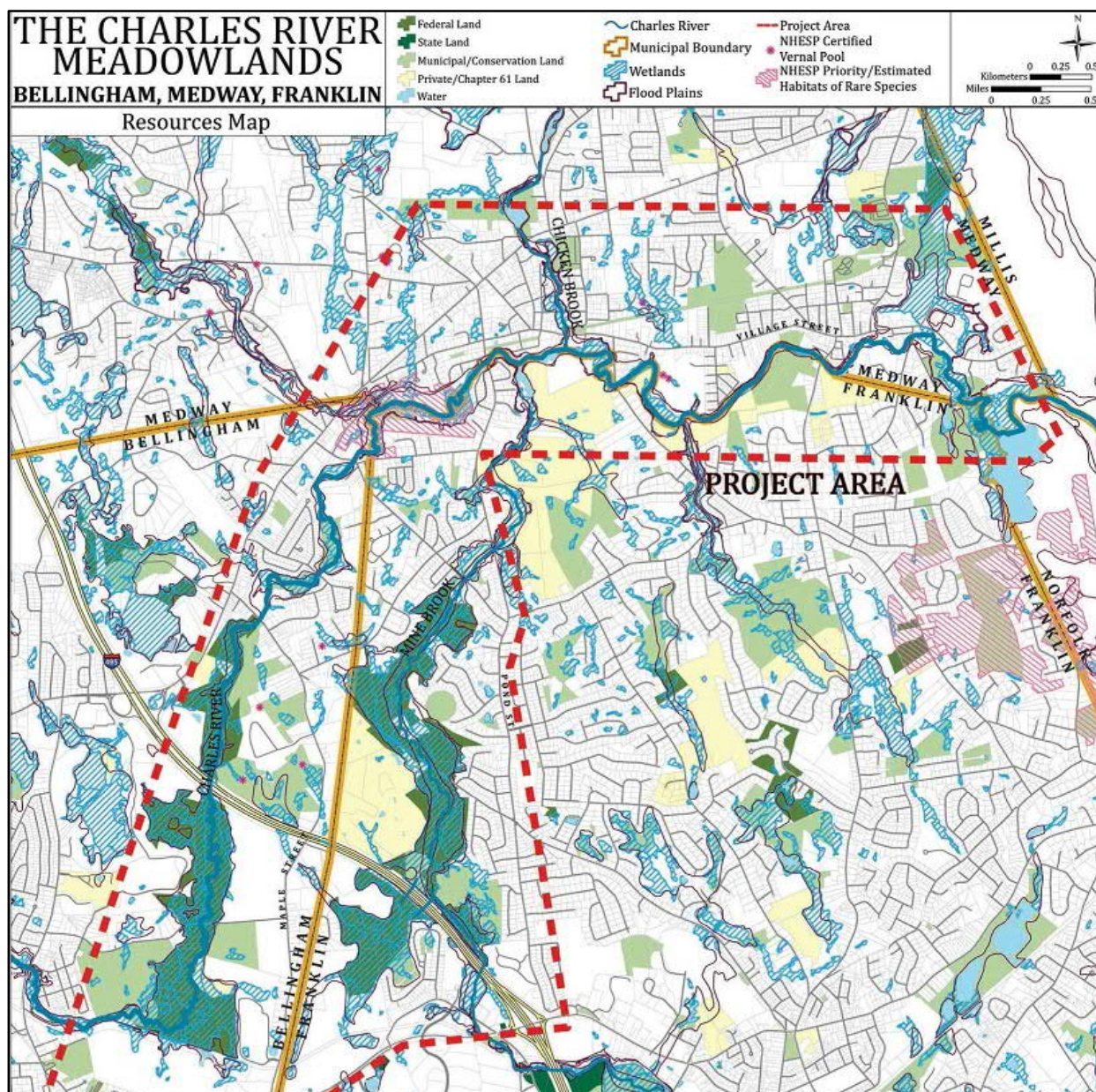


Figure 4.1.1: Resources Map



Findings: Much of the USACE land in the three Towns is comprised of wetlands. Almost all the lands lie within the FEMA floodplain. There are no NHESP Certified Vernal Pools in Franklin but there are four in the Bellingham project area north of Interstate 495 between the Charles River and the Franklin line. Two of them fall on public lands. Vernal pools were avoided when mapping potential trails. There are two vernal pools in the Medway project area, but they are on private land and not considered in this project. There are not any NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species within the project area. There is an area of NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife Access where the three Towns meet north of Pearl Street in Bellingham, north of Plain Street in Franklin and south of the eastern part of Village Street in Medway. It is not recommended to pursue passive recreation in NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species areas. (See Figure 4.1. 2, Area of NHESP.)

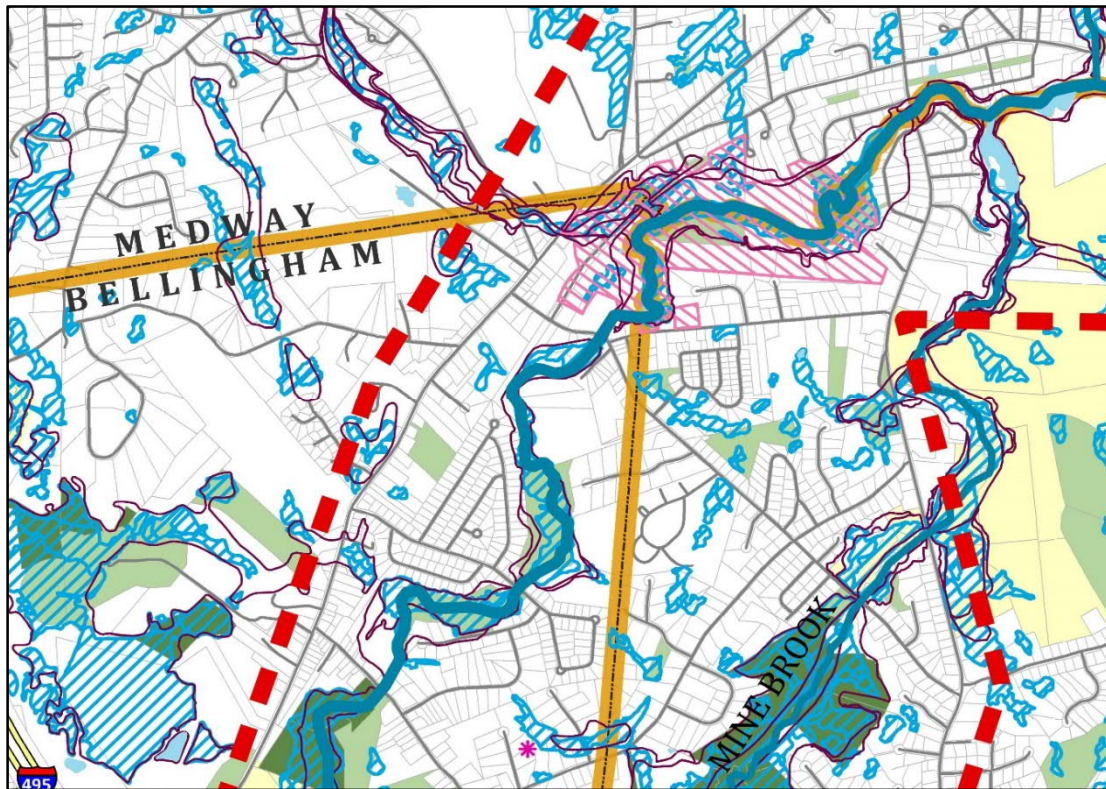


Figure 4.1.2: Area of NHESP

## 4.2 ACCESS AND LINKAGES MAP

An analysis map was made showing potential access points and linkages. (See Figure 4.2.0 Linkages Map on the following page.) Access points for potential passive recreation were assessed on public lands within the project area. Potential access areas within current Chapter 61 lands are discussed in this report, for conceptual purposes only, to illustrate the general potential value of a regional trail system. They are not shown on some town maps because they are currently not in public ownership and, based on past situations in the towns involving Chapter 61 lands, may not be acquired by a municipality. Access points, potential trail parking, existing kayak launches, existing trails and public historic points are shown on the map. Public lands including USACE, Conservation and Town owned lands, roadways and Town boundaries are also on the map as reference points. The Linkages show the relationship between access points, potential trails, historic points and the locations of the Town



Centers and schools with a ½ mile and one-mile radius band around them. The Town Center bands are shaded in. This helps to show the approximate walking distance to potential access points and

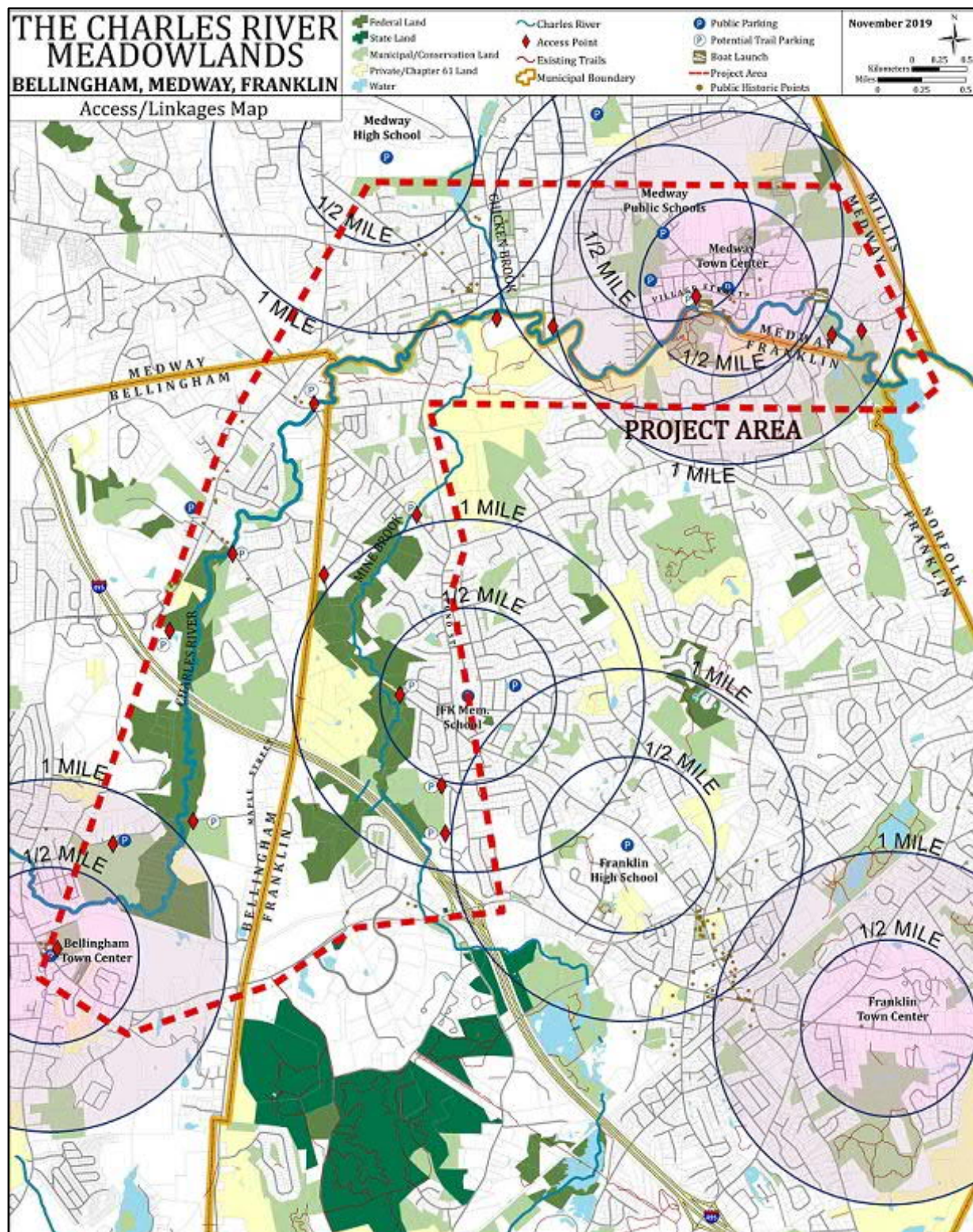


Figure 4.2.0: Linkages Map

Findings and recommendations: Findings and recommendations for these access points and linkages are discussed in each individual Town Trail Map section.



Quoted from the MassWildlife web site: "The Walking Trails Policy addresses the proliferation of unauthorized trails and trail maintenance on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). It was adopted as part of MassWildlife's statutory mission to both conserve wildlife and its habitat and to provide opportunities for wildlife-related recreation.

In response to increased and unauthorized trail development activities as well as requests for new trails on its lands, the Fisheries and Wildlife Board approved a Wildlife Lands Policy and a Walking Trails Policy in August 2016. Together these policies support MassWildlife's statutory mission of conserving wildlife habitat and providing wildlife-related recreation. MassWildlife lands generally include simple, gravel or dirt parking lots with unmarked footpaths and woods roads. This minimal-development management approach keeps "wild places wild," while allowing access to nature with an "off-the-beaten path" experience.

MassWildlife's land management mission and approach differs from other protected conservation lands in that wildlife and wildlife-related recreation are the agency's main priorities. Other public open space such as properties managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, municipalities, and private land trusts that promote public recreation on their lands are guided by very different missions. This distinction is central to MassWildlife's core mission to conserve a diversity of wildlife and to promote wildlife-related recreation such as hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife observation. The Walking Trails Policy is designed to encourage the public to see MassWildlife lands through a different lens, focusing on diffused public access that offers a different, "wilder" visitor experience."

Municipal and Conservation lands were chosen as most feasible locations for trails in each Municipality. Further assessment is needed for the potential trails shown on the maps that fall within USACE land (See Appendix D, Sources and Relevant Links for more information).

## 6.0 Individual Towns

### 6.1 CRITERIA FOR POTENTIAL TRAIL LOCATIONS

General criteria used when laying out the conceptual locations for trails within the three Towns is discussed in this section. It must be noted that the trail layouts are conceptual, for planning purposes and the encouragement of public discussions only. More work will need to be done in order to fully assess and design them. They will need to go through a design process that may involve federal and state agencies, various town departments, working group participation and public meetings. There will need to be on site assessments, the land will need to be surveyed, have wetlands flagged and resources noted on the surveys before final design and construction documents can begin. For this reason, the trails on the maps are being noted as "potential" and not yet as "proposed".

Several factors were considered when plotting the potential trails shown on the maps. They are shown on conservation lands, municipal properties and USACE lands. Some potential trails are shown on private land such as parcels with unknown ownership, properties where the owner has expressed an interest in selling to the town or properties currently under Chapter 61. Some private properties are not shown on the maps but discussed under each respective town should there ever be a possibility for the town to purchase them.



Figure 6.1.1: Charles River Meadowlands

Sensitive resource areas were avoided as noted in the previous Resources section. Wetland areas were also avoided as much as possible, but wetlands were crossed where necessary in order to make connections or complete trail loops. For minimal impact to the wetlands, crossings are shown to be constructed as boardwalks. Known existing trails, old railroad bed and sewer line right of ways were used to overlay potential trails whenever possible. Steep slopes were avoided. Trails were laid to take advantage of viewing areas and, where there is sufficient room, in loops for walking interest.

## 6.2 TOWN OF BELLINGHAM

### 6.2.1 GENERAL

The Project Area of Bellingham is shown in two maps; Trail Map I encompasses the north side of Mechanic Street to Interstate 495 between North Main Street and the Franklin Town Line. (See Figure 6.2.1: Bellingham Trail Map I.) Trail Map II covers the north side of Interstate 495 to the Medway line between Hartford Avenue and the Franklin town line. (See Figure 6.2.4: Bellingham Trail Map II.)

#### Bellingham Trail Map I

Starting from the southern-most section of the project area, the town owns a parcel of land behind the Town Hall. There is potential for an approximate one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) mile trail that loops around the parcel. As a trailhead, the Town Hall has parking and is about a three quarter ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) mile walk from the Bellingham Memorial Middle School on South Main Street. There is a sidewalk on the eastern side of the road between the school and Town Hall.



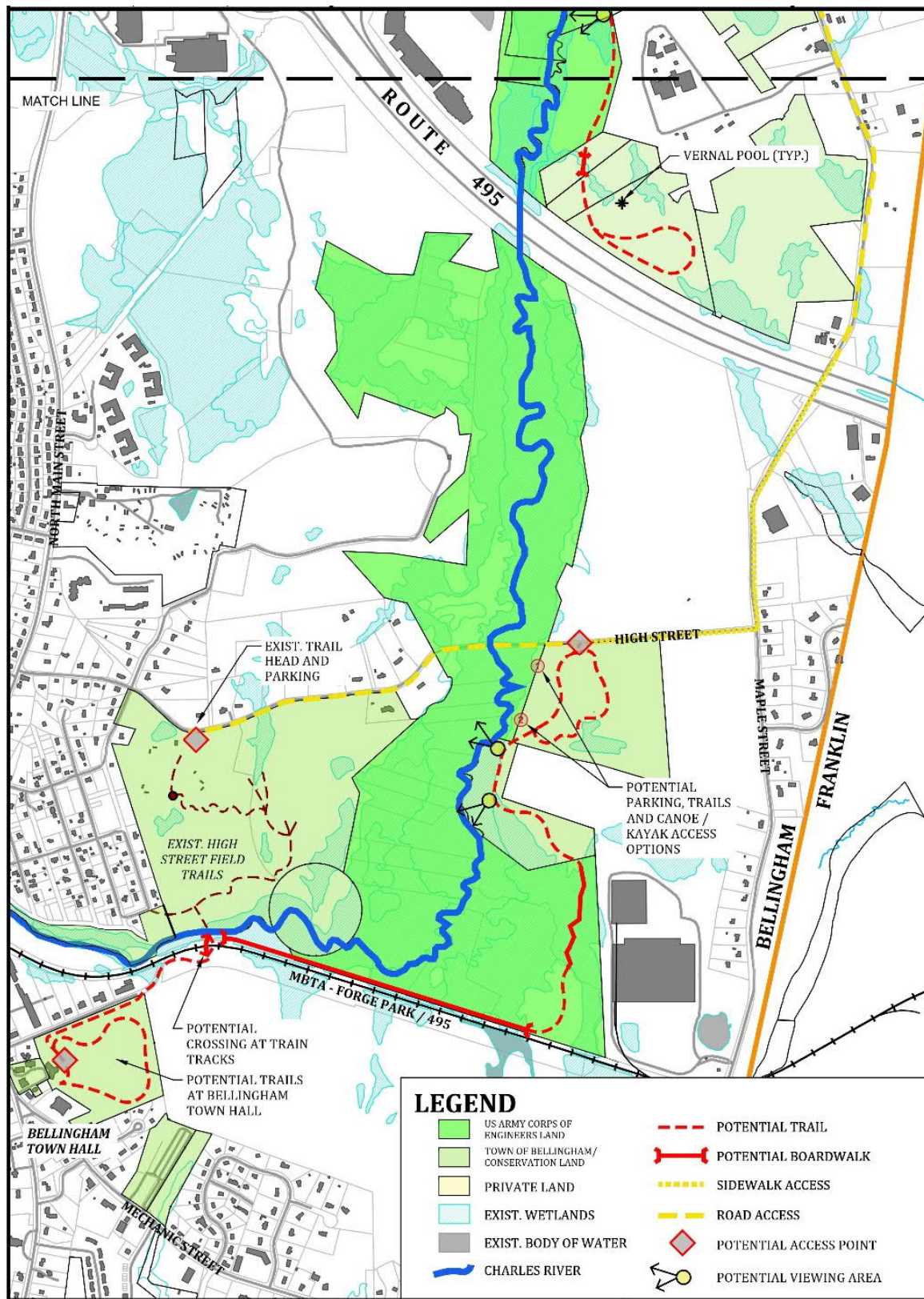


Figure 6.2.1: Bellingham Trail Map I



the Mill Street Right of Way for a quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) mile and crosses the MBTA track and the Charles River, there is potential to connect to the existing trails at the High Street Fields and the adjacent neighborhood. The obvious constraints for connecting to the High Street fields are crossing the tracks and the river. The MBTA can be contacted to investigate current usage and future plans for the tracks, regulations, crossing feasibility and potential for a trail on a small portion of the MBTA ROW should also be discussed. The USACE and MassTrails can be contacted regarding crossing the Charles River. This link has even more potential if there can be a trail that follows the MBTA line until it can turn north into the USACE meadowlands and connect to potential trails on conservation land on the southeast side of High Street. The obvious constraints for this link would be the width of the MBTA right of way, the embankment, the proximity to the track and the amount of USACE wetlands needed to cross to get to the conservation land. Detailed information was not studied to ascertain the feasibility of this link. If it were to be removed, then the conservation parcels would be accessed from High Street only.

The deed for the conservation land on the south side of High Street allows for parking and a Kayak launch. A trail loop on this parcel could be about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile with a trailhead just off the road. Several trails appear to exist on aerial photographs. Since many of the trails are not visible due to tree cover and the existing trails weren't mapped, a potential trail on the Bellingham Map is shown to convey the possibility of a loop that encircles the parcel adjacent to the road and leads south into the second parcel. Existing trails should be mapped as part of the trail design process. These two parcels are thought of by the Town of Bellingham as being the most feasible to develop further.



Figure 6.2.2: Viewing Area

#### Bellingham Trail Map II

A potential trailhead location is at the south side of Maple Street as it crosses over the Charles River. On the west side of the bridge there is potential for parking and a viewing area. (See Figure 6.2.2: Viewing Area). On the east side of the bridge there is an existing path on town land that is marked by a sign. (See Figure: 6.2.3: Conservation Property Sign at Maple Street.)

This path can follow south for almost  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a mile and loop back up to Maple Street or the trail can continue  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile further south through the USACE lands and form a smaller  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile loop on conservation land, before heading back on the same trail. Unfortunately, the only sidewalk is on the north side of the road. The street would have to be crossed twice to reach the trail from the potential parking area. Another potential trail could run south on the USACE land, on the same side as the parking, and possibly connect to the cemetery on Hartford Ave then divert back into the USACE land to connect to a potential trailhead at the shopping area. Potential trails on Map II total approximately three miles (3 mi.).



Figure 6.2.3: Conservation Property Sign at Maple Street



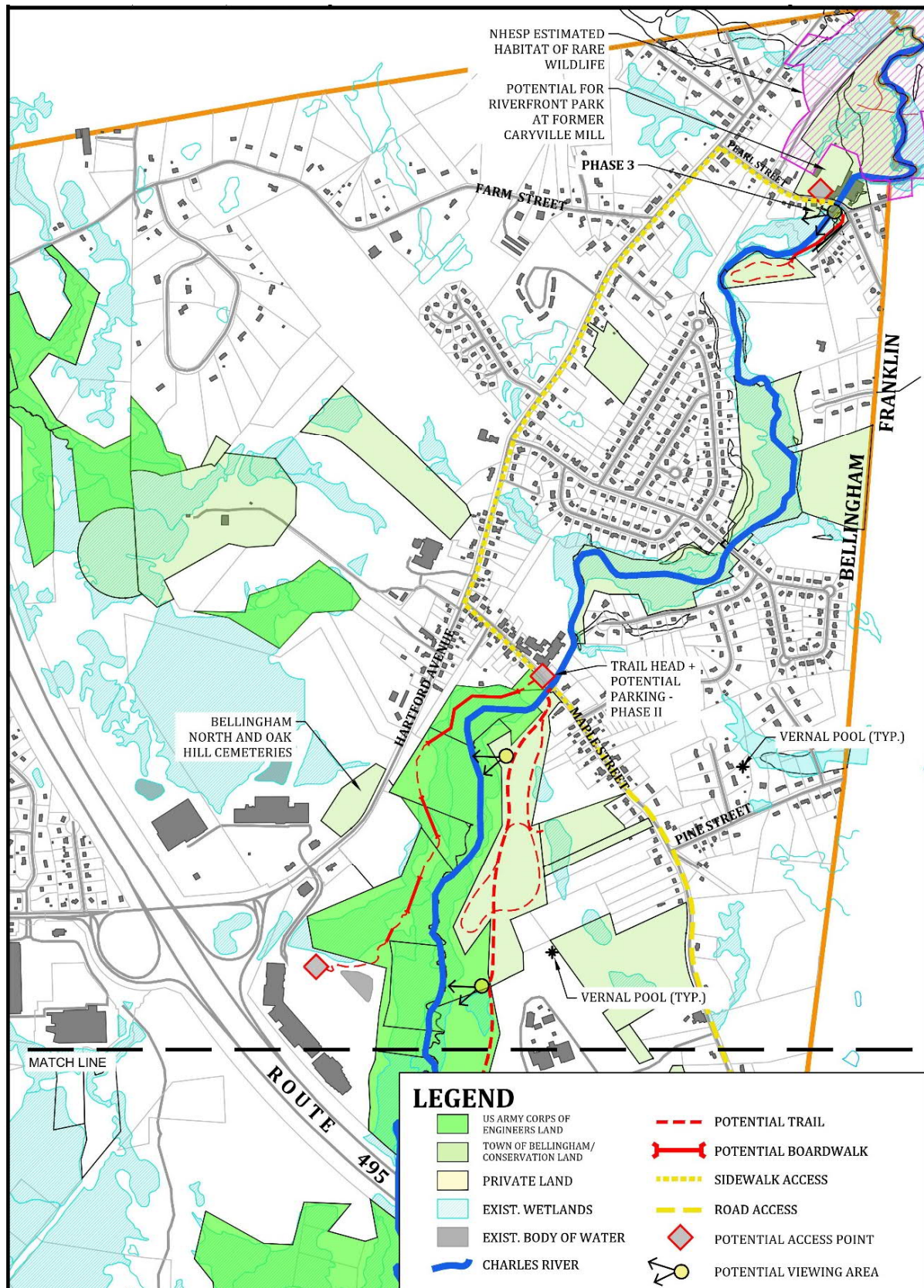


Figure 6.2.4: Bellingham Trail Map II

There are no trail links between Trail Map I and Trail Map II because I-495 bisects the land. However, Maple Street does allow a roadway connection over I-495. The Maple Street section south of the highway has a sidewalk on the eastern side that could serve as a pedestrian connection to High St., but High Street does not have sufficient right of way for a sidewalk. North of I-495, Maple Street has a few areas that don't have sidewalks. Currently the Town doesn't have plans to continue the sidewalks because of right of way constraints. A sliver of USACE land off Pine Street, could serve as a link to the meadowlands in Franklin but pedestrian access would be limited since there is no room for parking and the road is too narrow for a sidewalk.

The Bellingham conservation land north of Maple Street, on both sides of the Charles River, has physical access constraints and is not considered for trails in this report. The next area to the north is at the old Caryville Mill site that was recently demolished on Pearl Street. This property, owned by the Town of Bellingham is also shown on Medway Trail Map I. An area of NHESP Estimated Habitat of Rare Wildlife lies on the northern boundary of the site and is not being considered at this time. There is, however, great potential for a riverwalk or riverfront park, especially on the south side of Pearl Street, west of the river. East of the river can be assessed for a walking trail that would lead to conservation land further up the river. (See Figure 6.2.5 Caryville Mill Area.)



Figure 6.2.5 Caryville Mill Area

#### 6.2.2 BELLINGHAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Pursue Phase I parking, kayak access and trails on Conservation land at south side of High Street. (Trail Map I)
- Pursue Phase II parking, riverfront trail or park on Municipal Land at Old Caryville Mill Site. (Trail Map II)
- Further assess feasibility of trails south of Maple Street, west of the Charles River. (Trail Map II)
- Further Assess potential trail at Town Hall and connection to High Street Fields. (Trail Map I)

### 6.3 TOWN OF FRANKLIN

#### 6.3.1 GENERAL

The Project Area of Franklin is shown in two maps; Trail Map I encompasses the Mine Brook area from just north of Route 140, at the Montage Development on Brookview Drive off of Pond Street, extending northward past Oak Street Extension to Beech and Pine Streets, with I-495 at its western boundary and Pond Street at its eastern boundary (see Figure 6.3.1 Franklin Trail Map I). Trail Map II is a blow up of the southern portion of Trail Map I from the Montage Development to White Ave (See Figure 6.3.4: Franklin Trail Map II). The northern part of Franklin along the Charles River is shown on the Medway Maps (See Figures 6.4.1. and 6.4.4).



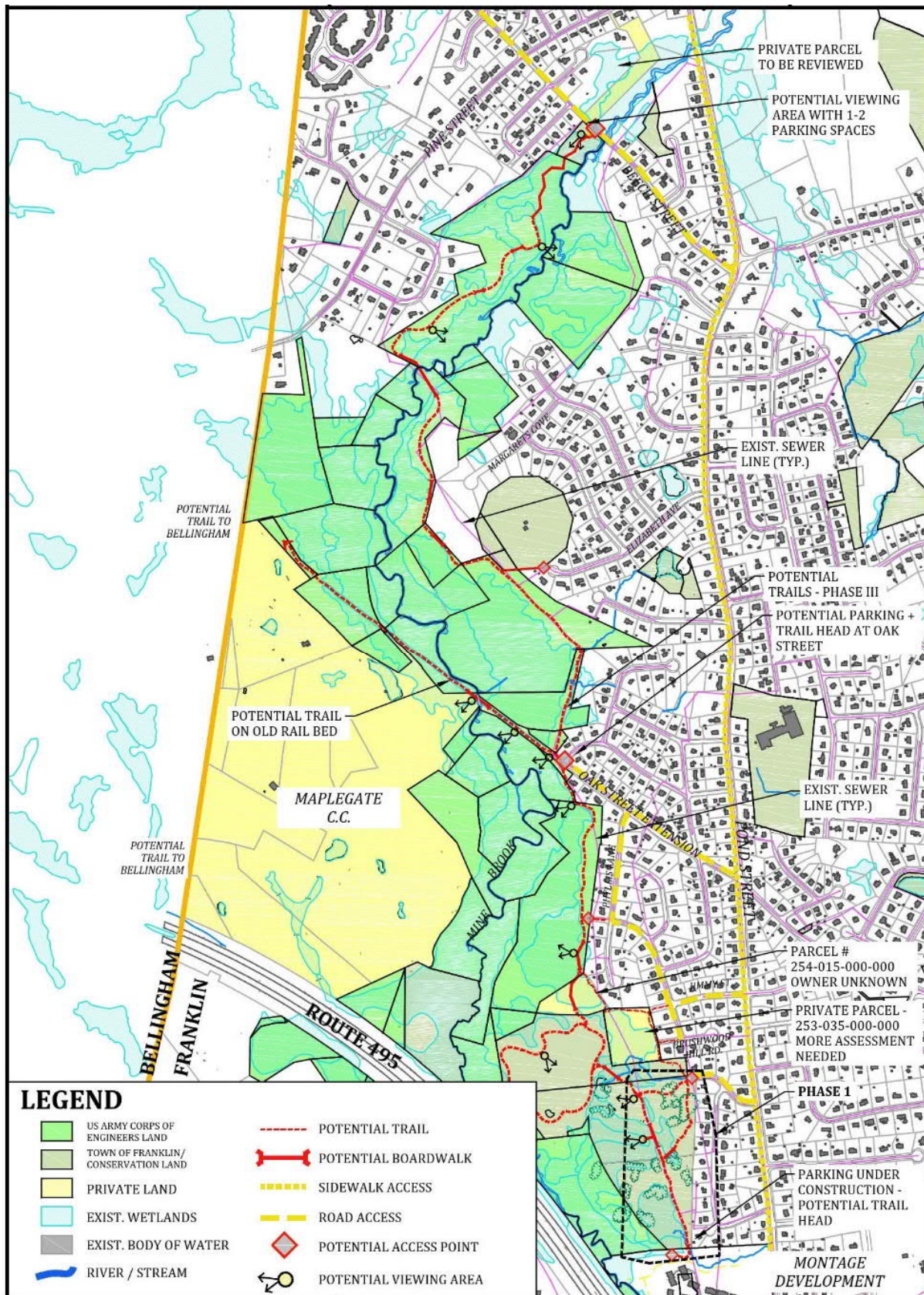


Figure 6.3.1: Franklin Trail Map I



Franklin Trail Maps I and II: As part of the Montage Development Deed a 12-car parking lot, open for public trail use, is being built. Trail Map I utilizes the parking lot as a southern trailhead (See trail design recommendations). It connects to a potential trail system on adjacent Conservation Land. The primary trail of the system follows the existing sewer line bed. (See Figure 6.3.2: Existing Right of Way along trail at Sewer.) Use of the existing bed minimizes impacts to the conservation land and would require a minimal effort to construct because it is evenly graded and in parts already appears as a trail. This section of the trail has great potential for being ADA accessible if the slopes leading from the parking lot to the old sewer line bed aren't too steep, one or two parking spaces could be designated as accessible. A survey and wetlands delineation will be necessary to design the best route. The accessible portion can lead to two viewing areas; one of wetland meadows (See Figure 6.3.3: Viewing Area) and the other of a forested area. One non-accessible loop is shown that spurs off the main trail leading to a secondary trailhead at White Ave. This area is shown at a larger scale as Phase I in Trail Map II (See Figure 6.3.4: Trail Map II). A second loop can be incorporated into phase 1 or constructed later in phase 2 that runs around the perimeter of more conservation land. From there the trail can possibly link through a parcel of unknown ownership and skirt northward along the edge of USACE land shown on Trail Map I.

The trail would then cross a short distance of boardwalk, where there is potential for a viewing area, and then meet another neighborhood secondary trailhead on Phyllis Lane where there is a small parcel of Town owned land directly across Besso Street. Another possible but less feasible route is to utilize private land; one of which the owner is unknown that would then allow for two more possible neighborhood connections; one at Brushwood Hill Road and the other at Jimmy Street. The trail continues northward outside of the wetland until it approaches two houses at the end of Oak Street Extension. The possibility of setting the trail a bit further back from the last few houses on Oak Street Extension could be explored to create a buffer to the houses (see public meeting comments in Appendix B) but this may create greater impacts on the wetlands. Note that wetlands are only crossed when necessary by means of a boardwalk to minimize impacts to the wetland. There is an old rail bed at the fourth trailhead at the end of Oak Street Extension that continues in line with the street until it ends at what used to be a crossing over Mine Brook. The pathway is raised above the wetlands on each side but is worn with many exposed roots. The surrounding wetlands offer plentiful views to the meadowlands.



Figure 6.3.2: Existing Right-of-Way at Sewer



Figure 6.3.3: Viewing Area



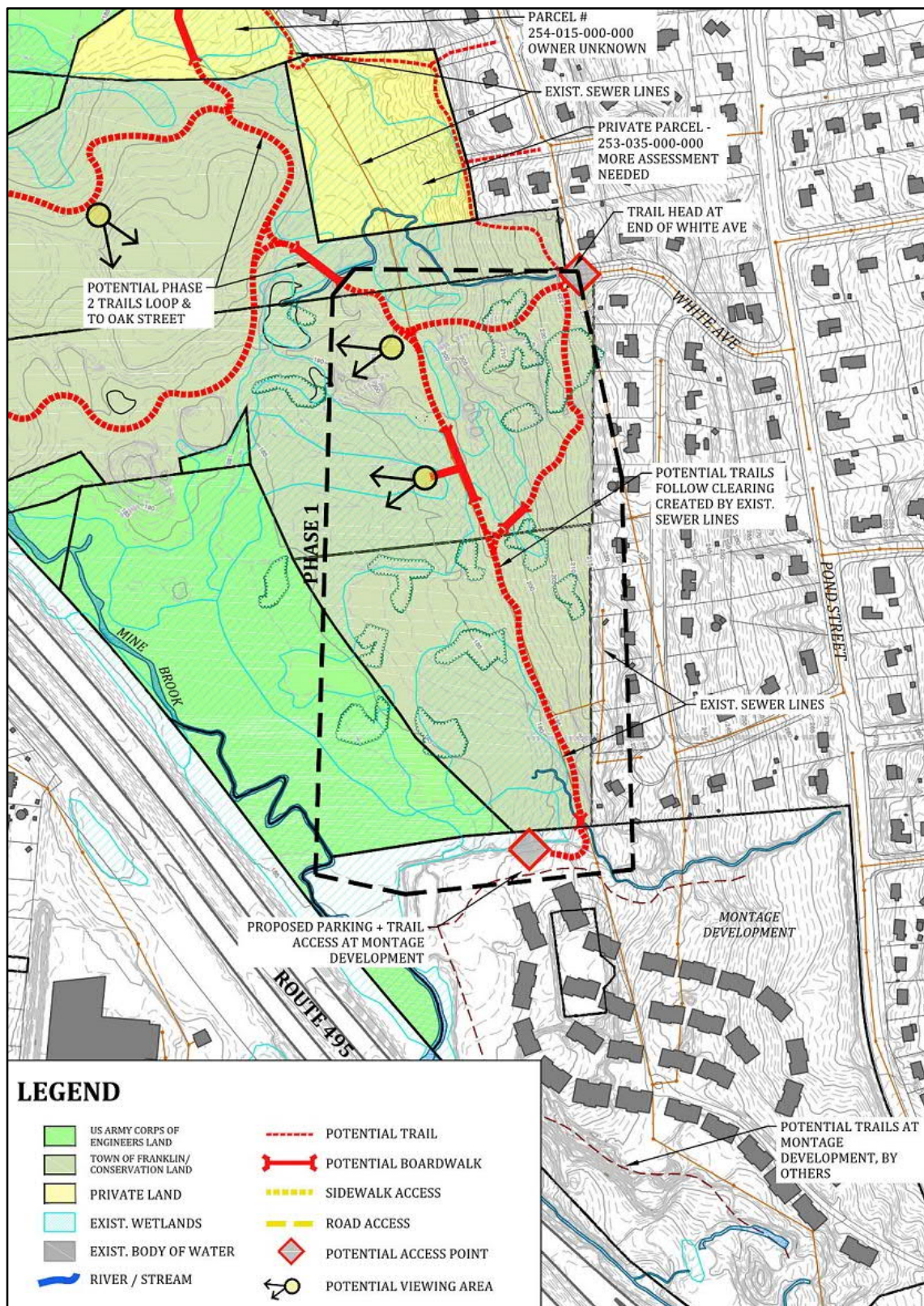


Figure 6.3.4: Franklin Trail Map II



If a crossing is reinstated over the brook, the trail has potential for connecting to Bellingham. A boardwalk could be constructed on the existing bed to provide an accessible trail for that could offer fishing and viewing areas while protecting the path from erosion and the trees from further root damage.

To get from Oak Street Extension northward to Beech Street the trail would need to pass on USACE lands and is therefore considered less feasible. The connection is shown extending outside of the wetlands for much of the way until it meets the outskirts of a municipal well parcel. At this location there are several privately-owned undeveloped parcels at the end of Margaret's Cove that could be assessed for possible connections at a later date. From there the trail would need to cross Mine Brook at some point to connect to the viewing area on Beech Street.

There is a small elevated area off Beech Street that could possibly be used as an accessible viewing area where one parking space could be designed at the road's edge and a short path constructed to lead to an overlook with a bench and possible viewing fishing area. (See the possible view on Figure 6.3.5: Viewing Area at Beech Street). Although the connection from the southern side is less feasible, it could stand alone and possibly connect to private land across the street that may be available for the Town to purchase. That land would then link up to Pine Street and the Veterans of Foreign Wars property on Pond Street.



Mine Brook then flows under Pond Street and follows adjacent to private property until just south of Plain Street where it can be viewed on the Medway Trail Map I. Mine Brook meets the Charles River just south of Medway's Ohnemus Picnic area. Franklin lands following the Charles river are all privately owned but may have potential to develop for passive recreation at a future date and would offer connection opportunities between Medway and Franklin.

Figure 6.3.5: Viewing Area at Beech Street

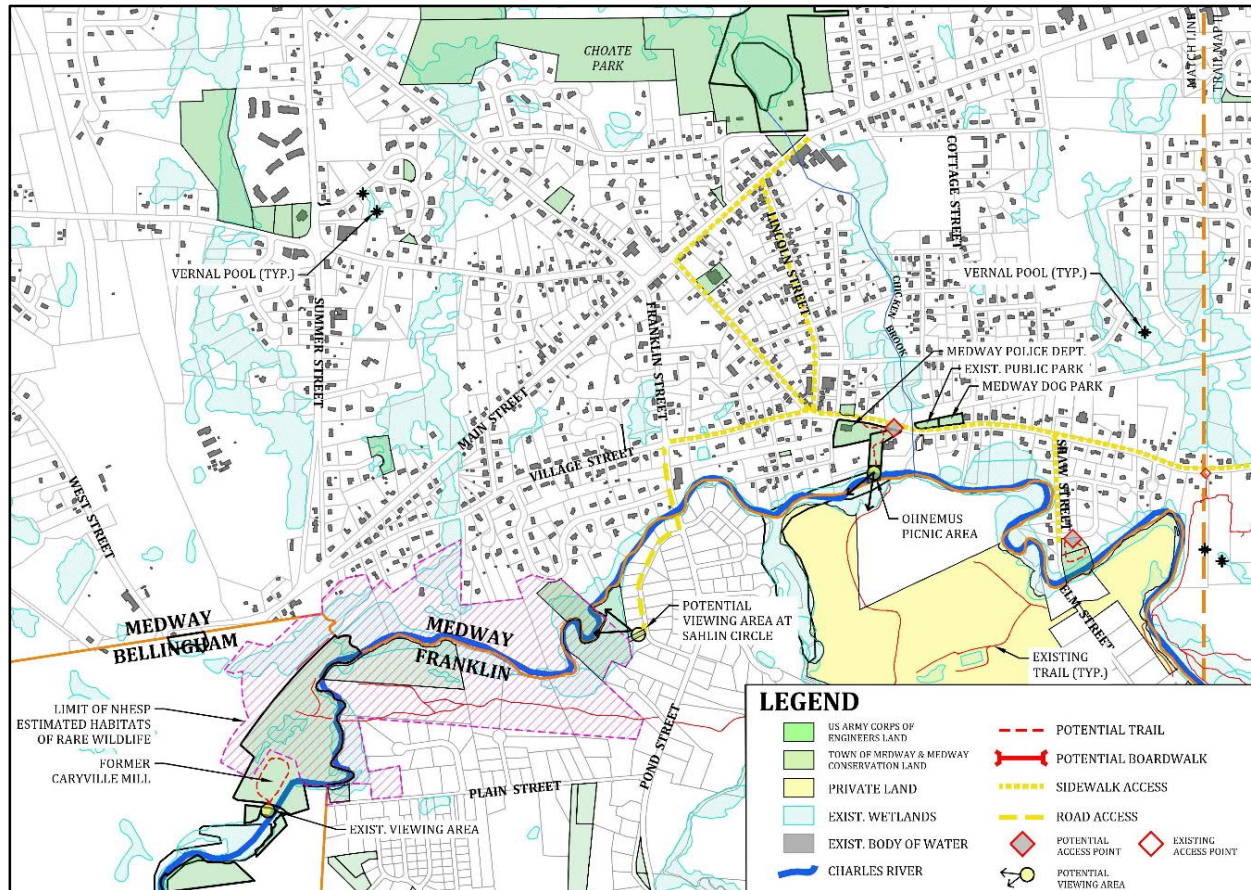
#### 6.3.2 FRANKLIN RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Pursue Phase I trailhead at parking on Brookview Drive, with a trail and one loop on conservation land that connects to White Ave. Further study if a portion of the trail can meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards.
- Pursue a second loop on conservation land to the northwest of White Ave. in either Phase I or II.
- Pursue Phase II on the old rail bed at the end of Oak Street Extension with limited parking and a boardwalk for fishing/viewing access.
- Further assess feasibility of trails on USACE Land between White Ave. and Oak St. Extension.
- Further Assess potential for acquiring or deeding rights for trails on private land.
- Further assess a viewing area on Beech Street.
- Further assess neighborhood viewing area with pathway and benches on Sahlin St. (See pg. 16,17)

## 6.4 TOWN OF MEDWAY

### 6.4.1 GENERAL

The Project Area of Medway is shown in two maps; On both maps, the open space areas and trails are essentially to the south of Village Street and extend to the Franklin Town line at the Charles River. The Northern tip of Bellingham is on Trail Map I (See Figure 6.4.1: Medway Trail Map I) and the northern section of Franklin is on both Map I and II. Trail Map I begins at the southern end of West Street and the southern intersection of Main and Village Streets and continues to approximately 1200 feet beyond the intersection of Village Street and Shaw Street. Trail Map II (See Figure 6.4.4: Medway Trail Map II) starts where Map I ends and continues to the Norfolk Town line. Note that there are no USACE lands on either of these maps.



**Figure 6.4.1: Medway Trail Map I**

The Town of Medway has been promoting passive recreation on Municipal, conservation and private lands in several places in the project area. While it is impossible to plan large trail systems in these areas, there is great potential to design a walking system along Village Street that these areas can link to. Then greater connections can be made northward, via the sidewalks of Lincoln St and High Street, to neighborhoods and recreation areas such as Choate Park, Medway High School and the Chicken Brook Corridor Trails. To the south; Franklin St., Shaw St., Sanford St. and Populatic St. have the potential to link to existing and future trails in Franklin. These roadway/sidewalk connections are shown as a yellow dashed line on the maps. Clear wayfinding and a unified signage



at the points of interest discussed under Trail Map I and II would promote access and connectivity for passive recreation.

South of the Main and Village Street intersection at the Medway/Bellingham town line and on both sides of the Charles River and in the corner of all three towns, is a large area of protected NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife that extends eastward in Medway and Franklin for about one mile. It includes about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Caryville Mill parcel. A sidewalk connection from Village Street and Main Street exists that could lead to the Caryville Mill Site should the vacant parcel on Pearl Street be developed for a riverside park or trail. No other connections are shown until beyond this protected area. Franklin owns a small piece of land on Sahlin Circle (off Pond St.) that has potential for a neighborhood viewing area with a walkway and a few benches. Franklin Street turns to Pond Street at the Franklin town line and both have sidewalks for a connection to Sahlin Circle. Continuing east on Village Street for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile is the Medway Police Department and next to that, a town owned parcel with an existing trail that leads to the Ohnemus picnic area overlooking the Charles River. The trail is not visible from the roadway (See Figure 6.4.2: View of Trail from Roadway).

Adding a few parking spaces in the grass area off the road or utilizing a few police station parking spaces and designing a clearer entry to the trail will make the trail more visible and accessible to the public. The trail could then be improved and maintained.

A few hundred feet east is an existing public park and the town dog park.

Shaw street is the next roadway connection to public land on the Charles River. The two parcels on the east side of the street could be developed to have parking for a few cars and a trail loop and viewing area on the site. (See Figure 6.4.3: Potential Viewing Area.) Shaw Street turns to Elm Street as the roadway crosses the river into Franklin. There are some existing trails on private land that could offer potential connections for trails in the future.

Approximately 1400 feet east of Shaw Street is the entrance to the Salmon Health & Retirement Community. The development has a Conservation restriction in their deed that allows for public



Figure 6.4.2: Existing trail not visible from the roadway



Figure 6.4.3: Potential Trail and Viewing Area

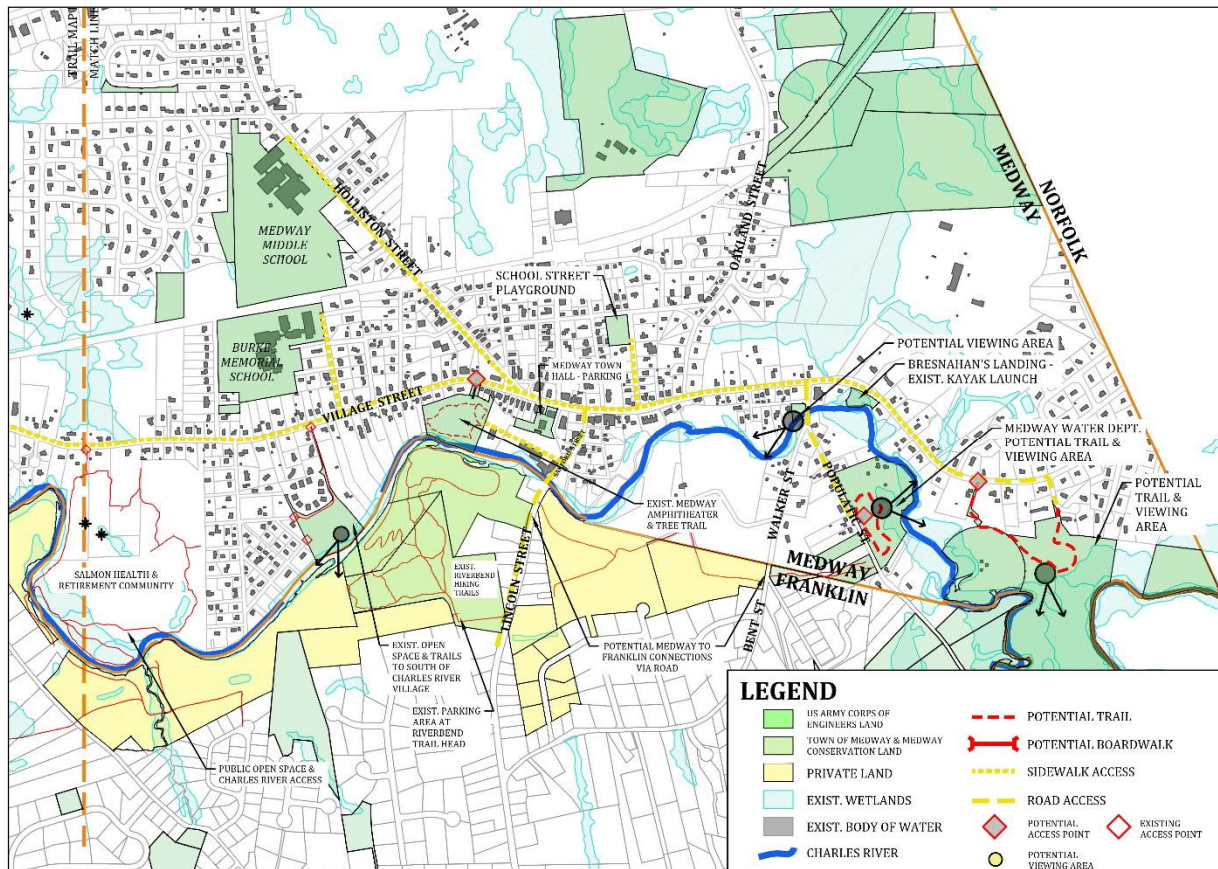


Figure 6.4.4: Medway Trail Map II

open space and a trail system is being developed around the perimeter of the property with access along the Charles River. The town owns land fronting the Charles River that can be accessed from Neelan Lane off Village Street about 2,200 feet further east. This parcel can also be accessed from two other locations adjacent to the Charles River Village development and Massapoag St. Another 1600 feet from Neelan Lane is a small parcel of land owned by the Town that has an unmaintained footpath leading down a steep slope to the existing Medway Amphitheater and an existing trail system. The park can be accessed on a public right of way going through the Sanford Mill Condominium parking lot. Sanford Street doesn't have a sidewalk, but it does have a widened shoulder. Note that there is parking available at the Town Hall. As one crosses the Charles River and enters Franklin, Sanford Street becomes Lincoln Street. On the west side in Franklin there is the Riverbend Conservation Area and Hiking Trails.

Another 2200 feet east of Sanford Street, Walker Street leads to the Charles River where there is a short footpath to the water's edge and potential for a viewing area. At this location a fork in the road becomes Populatic Street. A few hundred feet down Populatic Street is a parcel belonging to Medway that houses the Water Department. At the southern end of this parcel, away from the facility there is potential for a short trail loop and viewing area of the Charles River. (See Figure 6.4.5 Potential Viewing Area of Charles River.)



A few hundred feet East of Walker Street on Village Street is the entrance to Bresnahan's Landing, a small park on the Charles River with parking and a kayak/canoe ramp where one can paddle downstream 1.5 miles to Norfolk's Populatic Pond and another 1.8 miles to Norfolk's River Road Launch and Fishing Area.

Continuing eastward from Populatic Street, another 2000 feet there is an entrance drive to a large parcel of Medway Water Department land, much of which is wetlands. (See Figure 6.4.6) Water Department Entrance) There is potential for a trail through this entrance that can skirt around the well setback to an overlook and loop back to Cynthia Circle before reaching the wetlands. Another 1000 feet is the Medway Town line. Note that the Village Street sidewalk ends at Island Road before reaching the Water Department land entrance and Cynthia Circle, making that connection less feasible if a sidewalk isn't constructed.



Figure 6.4.5 Potential Viewing Area of Charles River



Figure 6.4.6: Water Department Entrance

#### 6.4.2 MEDWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Design a walking trail that utilizes Village Street and its connecting streets to link the various public open spaces along the Charles River. Design wayfinding mapping and uniform signage along with trailheads and entrances that are clear to see from the road.
- Assess the feasibility of parking and trail improvements for the Ohnemus Picnic Area.
- Assess parking and improvements to the footpath that leads to the Amphitheater from Village Street.
- Consider linking to trails and open space in Franklin should the opportunity arise.
- Consider designing a viewing area at the small lot at the corner of Walker St., Canal St. and the Charles River.
- Assess the feasibility of trails and viewing areas at the Medway Water Department Parcels.

## 7.0 Project Implementation

This Findings and Recommendations Report is a step in the ongoing process of providing opportunities for passive trail recreation, education and access to the beautiful resource of the Charles River Meadowlands within Bellingham, Franklin and Medway.

Trail planning will be an ongoing process. This section outlines funding opportunities, the design process, important components of trail design and trail management.

### 7.1 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

To Move forward with the recommendations noted in Section 6 for each town, funding for design and/or construction will be critical. There are several potential funding sources for trail projects. Each has their own application filing date and requirements. Some are listed below along with their web site link:

- MassTrails Grants, <https://www.mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants>
- Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funding, <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/community-preservation-act>
- Parc Grant Program, <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/parkland>
- Mass DEP Section 319 Grant collaboration, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial>

When filling out applications for trail or recreational grants, basic questions to answer will include: a description of the project, what user groups are expected (walkers, runners, hikers), what the grant will be used for such as; project development, design development (engineering, permitting) and construction, maintenance; the type of trail such as natural woodland or ADA accessible; and applicable estimated costs for project development, design, construction or maintenance. It will be important to note that the project is a section within a larger endeavor that offers access and connectivity encompassing the three towns and greater region. The remainder of this section touches on considerations to make before answering the questions. Note that some grants will require matching funds in monetary form, through material donations or volunteer work. There is information on the web sites including guidelines for planning and links to resources and grant administrators that can offer help. CRMI is thankful to the Legislators that obtained the grant to fund this report.

### 7.2 DESIGN PROCESS

The design process will involve coordination with various town departments and permitting with the Town's Conservation Agent. If it is on USACE land coordination will also involve federal and state agencies. Depending on the complexity of the project, work will involve a hired design consultant, working group participation and public meetings. Trails may also be designed and built by various groups such as the Boy Scouts and trail clubs. Note that the trails at the High Street Fields in Bellingham were designed and constructed as an Eagle Scout Project. If the trail project involves



ADA accessibility, structures such as boardwalks and fishing/overlook platforms and grading or permitting challenges, then it is best to hire a landscape architectural or engineering design consultant. (See Figure 7.2.1: Crossing)

Steps or phases in the design development process include, Conceptual/Preliminary Design, Final Design, and Construction Bidding. The survey and environmental resource assessment are usually done during design development. Estimates for construction can be developed at the conceptual level and fine-tuned as the design proceeds.



Figure 7.2.1: Crossing

### 7.3 TRAIL COMPONENTS

Knowing what type of trail is being planned is helpful when determining the efforts needed in determining design and construction needs and costs. A sampling of trail components to consider for the Charles River Meadowlands Project are listed below:

- Trails: For the purposes of the Charles River Meadowlands Project, the trails will most likely be pedestrian only with no bike or motorized vehicles and fall into two categories:
  - Woodland Trail: Consists of natural materials: mown grass, wood chips, pine needles/shredded leaves. (See Figure 7.3.1: Woodland Trail.)
  - Accessible Trail: meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Trail must comply with specific material requirements such as dense Graded Crushed Stone or pavement. (See Figure 7.3.2: Crushed Stone.) For example: It is preferable to be a minimum of 5' wide but can be a minimum of 3' wide if there is a 5' area to turn around in at a minimum of every 250'. The slope must be less than 5% and there shall be no obstacles below 6'-8" from the ground.



Figure 7.3.1: Woodland Trail



Figure 7.3.2: Crushed Stone

Boardwalks or small bridging structures may be necessary in either of the above types of trail if there is a wetland that needs crossing. Boardwalks and crossings must be ADA compliant on an accessible trail. (See Figure 7.3.3 ADA.)



Figure 7.3.3: ADA

- Trailheads: Trailheads are where there are access points to the trail. They can simply be a marker at a neighborhood access point or be at a main access point with features and elements such as parking, wayfinding signs, rules, educational elements and other site furnishings such as kiosks for posting information, rules and maps, picnic tables benches and trash receptacles. (See Figure 7.3.4 Kiosk.)



Figure 7.3.4: Kiosk

- Signage: Signage uniformity and cohesiveness within the Charles River Meadowlands of the three towns should be considered to make clear connections within the area and for clarity of knowing the entity/entities responsible for running and maintaining the trails or recreational areas. Various types of signage may include: Entry, Wayfinding, or Interpretational (educational).
- Viewing areas: Viewing areas give a chance to pause while viewing a special feature of the site. They can be at or very near an access point or deeper into the trail. In considering access to all



ages and abilities to the beauties of the Charles Meadowlands, viewing areas have been noted that are close to access areas and have potential to be ADA compliant and have room for benches and other amenities such as interpretive signage.

- Access to water for fishing or kayaking: There were few areas that were viewed in this study as being most feasible for a new kayak launch or fishing area except for Bellingham's conservation land on High Street. Kayak areas need room for parking and kayak drop off and an area suitable for launching. If kayak and fishing areas are to be ADA accessible, then the route to and the launch itself or fishing platform will need to meet ADA standards. The Department of Conservation and Recreation has information through their Universal Access Program, [www.mass.gov/dcr/universal\\_access](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/universal_access) that will be helpful in planning for accessibility. MassWildlife is looking to provide accessible fishing areas and is willing to design accessible platforms for fishing and possibly acquire land for this purpose.

## 7.4 GENERAL COSTS

Trail costs can vary greatly depending on the site conditions, subsurface material, site access, site preparation requirements, trail components and what machinery/labor is used. Estimates are often produced at the planning phase (from preliminary or conceptual plans), design development phase and bidding phase when a very detailed construction estimate is produced. Below are some budgetary material/installation costs for constructing a boardwalk and various trail material types that can be used for planning purposes only.

Budgetary Estimate Cost Chart (2019)	
Trail Material Does not include engineering/design, permitting and site amenities	Cost
Boardwalk (6' wide)	
Treated southern yellow pine decking with (8') helical piles Does not include borings	\$90 to \$100 per square foot
Prefabricated southern yellow pine decking with spread footing	\$40 to \$50 per square foot
Natural Surface	
12" to 18" wide - Includes trail flagging, corridor clearing and hazard tree removal, tread definition and trail blazing.	\$10,000 to \$15,000 per mile
48" wide - Includes trail flagging, Corridor clearing and hazard tree removal, tread definition and trail blazing.	\$20,000 to \$30,000 per mile
Accessible Crushed Stone	
6' wide - Includes flagging, staking, corridor prep, tread prep, gravel & geotextile placement and grading, compacting and finish side dressing & seeding.	\$110,000 to 125,000 per mile

## 7.5 MANAGEMENT

For the project to be successful, it is important for it to be maintained and managed. Trash removal, trail/boardwalk maintenance, policing, management of invasive/ unwanted vegetation should all be factored into a Management Plan and considered during the design phase. Costs for maintenance

should be included in estimates. Trails on USACE lands are managed by MassWILDLIFE and must have a Trail License Agreement. A Management Plan is required for projects on USACE lands. The Management Plan requirements on the MassWILDLIFE Walking Trails Policy include copies of proposed signage and marketing materials, a description of how trail conditions will be monitored and maintenance protocol including persons responsible for maintenance activities and communications with MassWILDLIFE.

The maintenance of USACE trails and those on municipal, conservation properties or private properties may need input and help from community and user groups. It was recommended at a public meeting for this project to follow successful precedent examples for management strategies that work such as that planned for the Arcand Park in Bellingham or Del carte Conservation Area in Franklin.

## 7.6 SUMMARY

USACE/MassWildlife and Towns' views and goals for passive recreational activities within the Charles River Meadowlands are similar in that they both recognize the value of passive recreational trails on the lands, but they vary in the degree of use. MassWildlife may permit trails for use by hunters and anglers to a very limited extent and they are interested in providing ADA accessible

areas for this purpose, but their conservation ethic takes precedence over passive recreational activities. We must keep in mind that the USACE lands are here for the purpose of flood control, something that is increasingly valuable in today's world of climate change and sustainability. Regulations for Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MGL Ch. 131, Sec. 40) must be followed. The Act prohibits any work that alters the land's surface, water levels or vegetation within wetlands, floodplains, riverfront areas, regardless of ownership, without a permit from the local Conservation Commission. Trails must be designed to meet current regulations and standards.

The three towns have been acquiring conservation lands and promoting passive recreational access to the Charles River Meadowlands and plan on providing more recreational opportunities in their Open Space Plans that emphasize both conservation and recreation. Recommendations align with these plans and focus mostly on Conservation land. Maps show routes that connect and provide access to the USACE lands with the understanding that many may not be feasible but work and coordination with MassWildlife should continue with the hopes that the goals of both MassWildlife and the Towns can be met.

A walking trail system that connects neighborhoods and points of interest to the Meadowlands and the Towns to each other is feasible as more conservation land is acquired and streets, preferably with sidewalks are utilized.



Figure 7.6.1: Wildlife Habitat



# APPENDIX A

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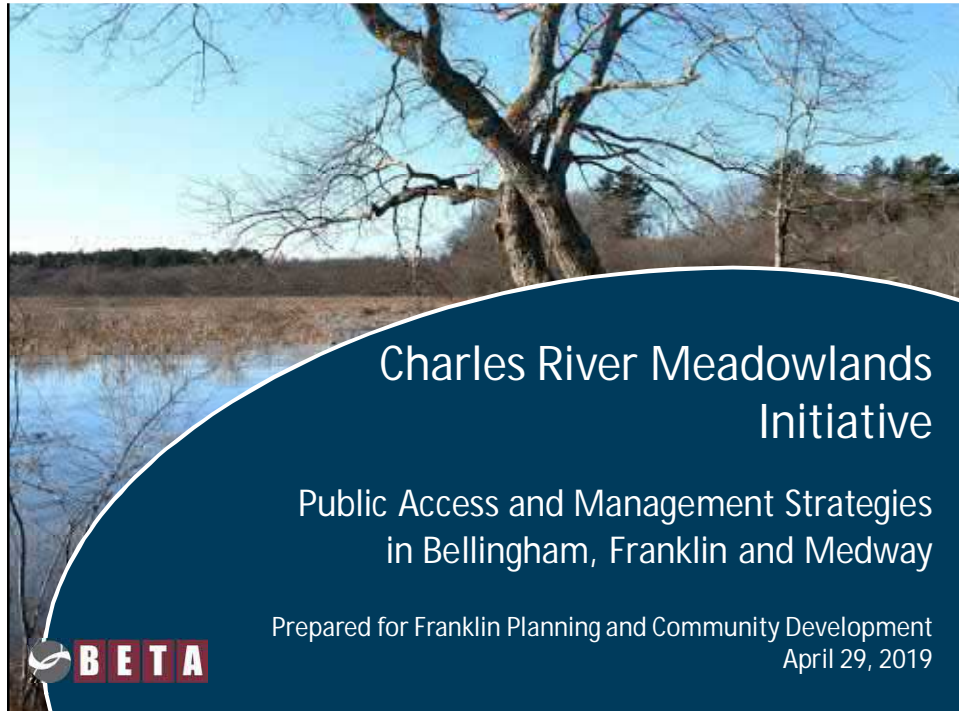
- **Public Meeting Presentation**
- **Meeting Notes**
- **Sign-in Sheets**

Note: All presentations were the same with the exception of the order in which the Town information was presented and a slide on maintenance was added after the Franklin meeting. Dates of presentations are as follows:

Franklin-April 11, 2019

Bellingham- April 16, 2019

Medway- April 29, 2019



## Tonight's Agenda

- Informal Viewing of Maps 6:30-7:00 PM
- Introduction by The Meadowlands Initiative
- Presentation of Maps by BETA Group, Inc.
  - Regional
  - Trail Maps: Medway, Bellingham, Franklin, Trail Design: Precedent/Inspirational Images
- Questions and Answers, Informal Discussion

Charles River Meadowlands Initiative



## Charles River Meadowlands Initiative

The towns of Bellingham, Franklin, and Medway are host to more than 500 acres of land protected by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as part of the Charles River Natural Valley flood control project.

Charles River Meadowlands Initiative is an effort among citizens and local officials to work together and to work with Federal and State officials, to improve access to and management of this beautiful natural resource.

<https://www.charlesrivermeadowlands.org>

## Purpose of this Effort

To increase public environmental awareness and provide opportunities for connectivity and passive recreation within the area.

Scope includes :

- Assess USACE, Municipal, Conservation and Private lands environmental and recreational resources
- Assess access and linkages within the site and to Town features
- Provide concepts for potential trails including visual images of trail and boardwalk materials, signage and amenities
- Provide phased priority for feasible improvements
- Public meetings, one in each town. Recorded and incorporated comments
- Provided a final Summary Report

Charles River Meadowlands Initiative

## Project Area Map

- Federal and State Land
- Municipal and Conservation Land
- Private Land
- River
- Town Boundary

Charles River Meadowlands Initiative



## Access and Linkages

- Access Points
- Public Parking
- Potential Parking
- Existing Kayak Launch
- Historic Points
- Town Centers
- Schools

Charles River Meadowlands Initiative





# Resource Mapping

- Wetlands
- Flood Plains
- Vernal Pool
- Rare Species Habitat

## Charles River Meadowlands Initiative



# Medway Trail Map I



## Medway Trail Map I Area Photos



- Improve access to Ohnemus picnic area
- Access and trail at Shaw Street

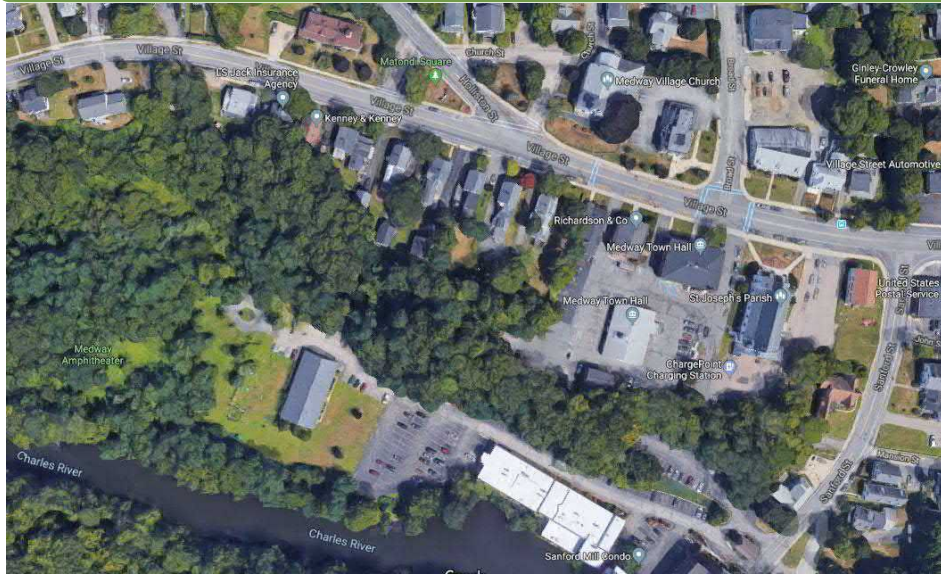


## Medway Trail Map II



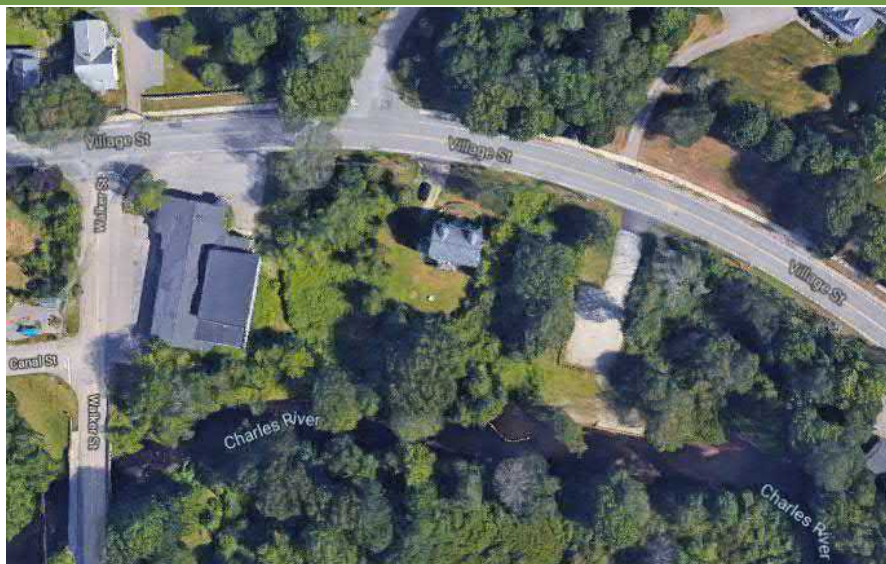


## Medway Trail Map II Area Photos



Access from Village Street to the Amphitheater

## Medway Trail Map II Area Photos



Improvements to Bresnahan's Landing

## Medway Trail Map II Area Photos

Town land at Village St.



Town land at Populatic St.

## Bellingham Trail Map I

### Mechanic St. to I-495

- Access and trail at Town Hall
- Crossing at MBTA
- Crossing at Charles River
- Connect to High St. Field Trails
- Continue adjacent to MBTA
- Connect north to Conservation land at High Street
- Access at High St.
- Potential parking and Kayak Access at High St.





## Bellingham Trail Map I Photos



Town Hall potential trail and connections



Potential connections to High Street Fields

## Bellingham Trail Map I Photos

Conservation land at  
High street.  
Possible Phase I.







## Bellingham Trail Map II Photos



Caryville Mill site: Potential access, viewing area and riverfront trail. Opportunity for interpretation and park

## Franklin Trail Map I

North of I-495 to north of Beech Street

- Phase I Montage to White Ave.
- Phase II White Ave. to Oak St.
- Phase III Oak Street to north of Beech St.



## Franklin Trail Map I Area Photos



View from trail at Oak Street

## Franklin Trail Map I Area Photos



View from Beech St. potential viewing area



## Franklin Phase I Trail

### Montage to White Ave.

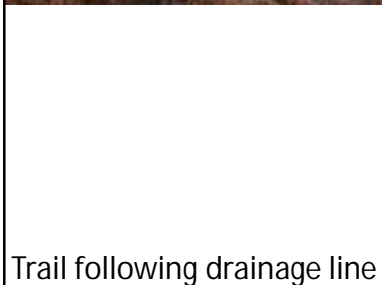
- Parking at Montage Development
- Main trail follows existing drainage line
- Lower loop to the west
- Views to meadow
- Upper Loop to White Ave.
- Access at White Ave.



## Phase I Trail Area Photos



Phase I viewing area



Trail following drainage line



## Trail Types

Overlook Pier



Pervious Pathway



Boardwalk

## Trail Layout



- Follow Existing Trails when possible
- Various Widths
- Layout based on existing trees, wetland resources, grades, etc.

Charles River Meadowlands Initiative



## Trail Materials



Dense Graded Crushed Stone  
ADA Compliant



Mown native grasses



Woodland path (pine)

## Boardwalk

Boardwalk where cross  
wetlands



# Americans with Disabilities Act

## ADA and Multi-Generational



Charles River Meadowlands Initiative

## Signage



Mile marker and  
interpretive signs



Entry Sign/ Kiosk with map





## Habitat



## Maintenance and Management

- Trash, trail maintenance, policing, manage invasive/ unwanted vegetation
- Management Plan -
  - Required for projects on USACE lands
  - Work with each town for municipal and conservation properties
- Look at precedent examples for management strategies that work



## Community Forum Dates

- Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 6:30 PM  
Franklin Fire Department, 600 King St.
- Tuesday, April 16, 2019 at 6:30 PM  
Bellingham Town Hall, 10 Mechanic Street
- Monday, April 29, 2019 at 6:30 PM  
Thayer Homestead, 2B Oak Street, Medway

Charles River Meadowlands Initiative

## What's Next?

- Meet with USACE and Fish and Wildlife
- Update maps based on comments from meetings
- Identify potential trails to pursue as projects
- Summary Report
- Seek funds and grants
  - Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funding
  - Parc Grant Program
  - Mass DEP Section 319 Grant collaboration
  - Mass Trails Program



## Questions and Answers

Thank You for Being Here!



## RECORD OF MEETING

Client:	Town of Franklin, MA	Date:	April 11, 2019
Meeting Date:	April 11, 2019	Prepared By:	Kelly R. Carr, RLA, ASLA
Meeting Location:	Franklin, MA	Job Number:	6316
Meeting Topic:	Charles River Meadowlands Initiative		

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**ATTENDEES:** SEE SIGN-IN SHEET

### QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Question: What is the protected habitat?

Comment: Medway is Exploring Connections to Rail Trail. North/south connection – consider connecting to this.

Question: Is there a website we can go to?

Answer: Yes, [charlesrivermeadowlands.org](http://charlesrivermeadowlands.org)

Question: Are there going to be restriction on how to use the trails concerning bikes or ATVs?

Answer: No Motorized vehicles or bikes.

Question: Has anyone done any population research on who would be using this in the town?

Answer: Conservation Commission captured passive recreation in their 5 year plan.

Comment: Meadowlands have been open for years, ATV's have used it, ATV's are gone now.

Trail system will prevent ATV users and fires in people's backyards.

Comment: Use ART Park on Plain Street Bellingham/Franklin Line, south of police station, former recycling and dumping facilities as precedent in public process.

Question: Any plans for trash receptacles along trails? Trash is a concern for the existing wildlife, plastic bags, cans, etc.

Answer: Will use other successful projects as precedent such as DelCorte Conservation Area – study the process

Comment: Pleasant Street how do they handle trash? People trashed it initially. Community rose up and protected.

Question: Will there be a Management Plan?

Answer: If we are going to use Federal Lands, we're going to need to prove we are going to be protecting wildlife and habitats. A Management Plan is required.

Comment: Property owner concerned over connection at cul-de-sac just north of Montage at Brookview. Additional concern about trash ... Bud Lights ...self-policing. Cost to build the trail but there



needs to be a plan to police, control trash, etc. Exposing people to nature is a good thing. Concern with hunting ----- hunter had a trap set up in the woods.

Comment: There is an opportunity for community service for students, public to appreciate the trail and garner support.

Comment: Pets --- concerns of dog feces, clean up. Concern over proximity of Route 495.

Question: Possibility for Mine Brook, Boat Launch?

Answer: Most of Mine Brook is not navigable; opportunities are more feasible along Charles River.

Comment from two abutters: Trail runs too close to the three properties at the end of Oak Street Extension

Comment from two Beech St. Abutters: Not for boardwalk connecting to Beech Street. Not for viewing area. The road is too narrow for parking and not safe for walking.

Written Comments from Franklin Abutter:

View from Fannie way – Beach Street North West Section p to Stanwood Drive taken around 11/18.  
Board walk proposed between Mine Brook and Fannie Way – Concerns –

1. Too Close to either or nine homes. Trees too Few and sparse to block. (Many died due to high water.)
2. These Streets are very narrow. Cars parked on both sides would prevent trucks, fire engines or ambulances from entering.
3. Area considered fragile by town.
4. Viewing Stations close to migrating ducks and geese. May disrupt cycle. (Especially if Fed by walkers.)
5. No Parking. People may park on Fannie, Kathleen or Toni Lane.
6. Sound carries across brook
7. Trash
8. Traffic – narrow bridge, no sidewalks
9. Cost?

Any Questions - Peter Ballantine 508-533-7578 and [petejanis@verizon.net](mailto:petejanis@verizon.net)

# MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

**Project:** Charles River Meadowlands - Franklin

**Meeting Date:** April 11, 2019

**Location:** 600 King Street, Franklin, MA

Name	Address	E-Mail
Serry Langelan	18 PLAIN ST Franklin	
PETER BALLANTYNE	8 FAIRVIEW WAY FRANKLIN	
Larry Pettman	Metacomet	
Kevin Balcom	182 Pine St. Franklin	
Henry Zhou	32 Oak St. Ext.	
Paul Sagan	225 Pearl St Franklin	sbill@comcast.net
Bryan Taberner		btaberner@franklin.ma.gov
Mr. + Mrs. Stilianczyk	196 Crossfield Road	hydrus135@aol.com
Jath Determan	86 Palomino Drive	determan - 4@comcast.net
Rose Determan	86 Palomino Drive	determanrose@gmail.com
Bob LeCant	29 Daniels St Franklin	slecount331@gmail.com
Susan Speers	Metacomet Land Trust	
JEFF LIVINGSTON	68 Daniels St.	jrl.pharmagenie@gmail.com
Jeff Roy	6 Lydia Lane	Jeffrey.Roy@MAHOUSE.gov

Date: July 09, 2019 Job No.: 6316

To: Bryan Taberner

Cc: Attending: Bryan Taberner; Franklin Director of Planning and Community Development, Patricia Huckery; Northeast District Supervisor, MassWildlife, Alan Earls; Charles River Meadowlands Initiative (CRMI), Susan Speers; CRMI, Kelly Carr; BETA Group

From: Kelly Carr

Subject: Charles River Meadowlands- meeting with MassWildlife

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) has a long term license with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to manage the land owned by USACE in the Charles River Meadowlands. The land can be fished and hunted for a fee. There is very little restricted land in this area.

#### MassWildlife Policies and Information:

They promote protecting wildlife habitat and wildlife dependent recreation.

There are six major walking trails in MA, one of them being the Bay Circuit Trail.

Comply with the MA Endangered Species Act.

Norfolk County has a large deer population and deer hunting is important to control populations.

Preserve access to USACE Lands.

Interested in Maple Gate Country Club Land- Bryan will send information to Pat. Zoned industrial.

Developers are looking at the property.

In general, Wildlife is effected 250' on each side beyond the trail.

"Trail spaghetti" (too many trails) is not desirable because of impacts.

No motorized vehicles allowed on USACE land.

Leashes are required on dogs when on USACE land.

Check out Biomap II on Oliver- compilation of various resources developed by MassWildlife

Follow MassWildlife Trail Guidelines in USACE lands

Check out web platform: I Naturalist

Use existing trails or "woods roads" when designing trails

'Edge effect' from highways is 150' and from properties is 500'. Trails extend the edge effect.

#### Comments on Maps:

Differentiate State and Federal lands on the maps.

Keep trails off of USACE Lands if there is an alternative location.

Work with hunting communities so trails do not impact ability to hunt such as Norfolk County League.

There is value in providing places for visitors stop, look and take time to enjoy vista points

MassWildlife is actively seeking to buy land to protect in the Charles River Meadowlands area and in Norfolk county.

Best places for Franklin trails going through USACE land is at the old causeway at the end of Oak Street Extension.



Date: November 19, 2019 Job No.: 6316

To: Bryan Taberner

Cc: Attending: Patricia Huckery, Northeast District Supervisor, MassWildlife; Alan Earls, Charles River  
Meadowlands Initiative (CRMI); Jennifer Delmore, Franklin Conservation Agent; Kelly Carr, BETA  
Group, Landscape Architect

From: Kelly Carr

Subject: Charles River Meadowlands- Site walk with MassWildlife on 11/5/2019

A site walk was conducted, as a follow-up to the previous meeting with Pat Huckery of MassWildlife, to get feedback on the potential for passive recreational trails in and around USACE land. New Franklin Conservation Agent attended to become familiar with the project and because the site walk was in Franklin. Note that MassWildlife will be willing to conduct a similar walk in Bellingham. Medway doesn't have USACE lands in the project area. Notes are as follows:

There is the potential for limited hunting and fishing trails on USACE land. Areas viewed had heavy grazing damage from a population of deer eating the forested undergrowth. One deer was spotted.

- Remove section of trail on USACE land at the Montage Development. Franklin Conservation Agent could possibly stake wetlands around the trail head to allow for considering access to potential trail along existing sewer line ROW.
- Existing old rail bed at the end of Oak Street Extension, where the rail used to cross Mine Brook, has good potential for an ADA accessible fishing platform but it is a R.O.W private Chapter 61 Land (see photo to the right). MassWildlife is interested in providing ADA access to fishing on USACE Land. Engineers from the Office of Fishing and Boating Access could possibly do the structural design.
- There is potential for the trail behind the Franklin Drinking Water Facility Well #7 with neighborhood access from Margaret's Cove and Elizabeth Ave. along what appears to be a sewer line ROW (see photo to the right). There were survey stakes for possible development at the end of Margaret's Cove. Check on new development and possible ROW.



## APPENDIX B

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- Scope of Work

## Scope of Work

Below is a Preliminary Scope of Services to be used for procurement of Consultant Services; once a Consultant Services contract is executed, the Working Group will meet with the Consultant to further refine the scope of work to be performed.

In general, the consultant will be required to perform the following professional planning service:

**Public Input Process.** Working with the Working Group, plan and implement a public input process, including informational hearings in each of the three towns, to be conducted before the end of 2018.

**Charles River Meadowlands Initiative Meetings.** In addition to the three informational hearings noted above, the Consultant will be required to attend at least two Meadowlands Initiative meetings, one early in the planning process, and one at the end of the project to present findings.

**Meetings with Working Group.** The Consultant will communicate regularly with the Working Group, and attend meetings with Working Group at regular intervals to address project progress and findings, and to obtain guidance on next steps.

**Assessment of USACE Lands and Related Resources.** The Consultant will assess the USACE Lands and adjacent town-owned and private properties environmental and recreational resources  
Perform site visits to determine and map current environmental conditions, and location of existing trails and related resources

### **Access to USACE & Adjacent Property**

Identify existing and potential access points to USACE Lands and adjacent town-owned parcels. Determine issues and challenges for each.

Develop Inventory of existing and potential public access.

Provide concepts for improving existing and potential access points.

### **Linkages**

Identify existing trails on USACE and other contiguous or nearby parcels.

Identify potential linkage points between USACE and other contiguous or nearby parcels.

Identify where roadways could be utilized to improve connections.

Identify potential greenways that could be created for public access and regional connectivity.

Report on general feasibility (or infeasibility) of trail linkages, and determine which USACE land and adjacent property is appropriate for walking trail, bike path, and boardwalk development.

Provide concepts on how these linkages could be accomplished.



**Management**

Assess current land management regulations and policies related to the USACE Lands and adjacent town-owned parcels. Identify challenges, and strategies to mitigate challenges. Identify best practices and appropriate land management models that have worked elsewhere.

**Proposed Projects**

Provide a list of feasible improvements that should be implemented, including development or improvement of access points and trail development projects. From the list of feasible projects provide a short list (two or three) of priority improvements, with preliminary labor and cost estimates.

**Management Recommendations**

Propose an ongoing structure for management of open space areas in or contiguous with the USACE properties involving town governments and other stakeholders. Management recommendations shall ensure consistency between recreation and resource protection, and will include guidelines for operations, land stewardship, and protection of natural and cultural resources.

**Final Summary Document**

The Consultant will create a final document that summarizes the work performed, and includes recommendations to guide short and long-term actions related to potential recreational opportunities within the project area. Most importantly the document will provide a recommended next steps/action plan for the Meadowlands Working Group.

## APPENDIX C

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- Sources and Relevant Links

## Sources and Relevant Links

Relevant links to municipal web sites for the three towns, local representatives and US agencies are listed on the Charles River Meadowlands web site. Links cited in this report are listed below along with other web sites with applicable references, materials and supporting documents such as those produced by the USACE, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), DCR's Division of Fish and Game, the Charles River Watershed Association.

- <https://www.charlesrivermeadowlands.org/>
- <https://metacometlandtrust.org/>
- <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Flood-Risk-Management/Massachusetts/Charles-River-NVS/>
- USACE, Charles River Valley Natural Storage Area Eastern Massachusetts Draft Master Plan: [https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Portals/74/docs/Civil%20Works/Charles%20River/Charles\\_River\\_Natural\\_Valley\\_Storage\\_Draft\\_Master\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Portals/74/docs/Civil%20Works/Charles%20River/Charles_River_Natural_Valley_Storage_Draft_Master_Plan.pdf)
- <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/masswildlifes-trails-policy>
- <https://www.mass.gov/welcome-to-masstrails>
- <https://www.mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants>
- Department of Conservation and Recreation, Trails Guidelines and Best Management Practices Manual, updated October 2014:  
[https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/sg/dcrguidelines.pdf?\\_ga=2.145274429.883292153.1552070298-1128379514.1393339636](https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/sg/dcrguidelines.pdf?_ga=2.145274429.883292153.1552070298-1128379514.1393339636)
- Charles River Watershed Association: <https://www.crwa.org/>

Documents for the MassWildlife Trails Brochure and Frequently Asked Questions for the MassTrails Grant are also within this Appendix.





## Sustainable Trails for Recreation and Wildlife

MassWildlife recognizes the value of trails. Trails help people get exercise while spending time with family exploring and learning about the natural world. Trails are sometimes used by hunters and anglers to access their favorite spots. These experiences cultivate an appreciation of the outdoors and a conservation ethic. However, conservation science has shown that recreational trails can fragment and degrade habitat, disrupt wildlife behavior, and compromise biodiversity. Improperly designed and unauthorized stream and wetland crossing structures can alter water flow, degrade water quality, and adversely affect aquatic life. Some kinds of wildlife and habitats are particularly sensitive to disturbances by trail users or trail work. The value of trails and the associated experiences need to be weighed against adverse effects.

### TRAIL SITING CONSIDERATIONS

- Habitat type
- Species in the area
- Surrounding land use
- Proposed trail location
- Intensity of trail activity (walking vs. mountain biking)
- Location of activity
- When will the trail be used (season, time of day, duration of disturbance)
- Avoid creating multiple loop trails

### PROTECT HABITAT AND WILDLIFE DURING AND AFTER TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

- Closing trails during breeding season
- Keep trails away from banks along shorelines
- Maintain a buffer along water bodies
- Avoid wildlife corridors leading to uplands
- Plan for water level fluctuations
- Avoid water crossings
- Stay on field edges
- Keep dogs leashed

### RESOURCES

**Priority and Estimated Habitat Maps:** Information on habitat of state-listed species. These maps can be used to help guide trail construction away from important habitat.

[Mass.gov/service-details/regulatory-maps-priority-estimated-habitats](https://mass.gov/service-details/regulatory-maps-priority-estimated-habitats)

**BioMap2:** This tool guides strategic biodiversity conservation by focusing land protection and stewardship on the most critical areas to ensure the persistence of rare species and their habitats.

[Mass.gov/dfw/nhesp/biomap2](https://mass.gov/dfw/nhesp/biomap2)

**View MassWildlife lands:** Map showing Wildlife Management Areas and Conservation Easements.

[Mass.gov/dfw/wildlife-lands](https://mass.gov/dfw/wildlife-lands)

**Rare species by town:** List of all documented MESA-listed species observations.

[Mass.gov/service-details/rare-species-by-town-viewer](https://mass.gov/service-details/rare-species-by-town-viewer)

**Oliver:** Make or view a map using virtually all MassGIS data.

[Tinyurl.com/OliverMap](https://tinyurl.com/OliverMap)



## COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

### 2019 MASSTRAILS GRANTS PROGRAM

#### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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##### **What is MassTrails?**

MassTrails is an inter-agency initiative of the Commonwealth lead by the Governor's Office, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Department of Transportation and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. MassTrails seeks to expand and connect the Commonwealth's networks of off-road, shared use pathways and recreational trails for all users across Massachusetts by providing matching grants, technical assistance and resources to individuals, municipalities, non-profits, and other public entities to design, construct, and maintain high quality Massachusetts trails.

##### **What is the MassTrails Grants Program?**

MassTrails provides matching grants to communities, public entities, and non-profit organizations to design, create, and maintain the diverse network of trails, trail networks, and trails experiences used and enjoyed by Massachusetts residents and visitors. Applications are accepted annually for a variety of well-planned trail projects benefiting communities across the state.

##### **Who can apply for a MassTrails grant?**

Eligible applicants include municipalities, state or federal agencies, and non-profit organizations. Two or more entities can apply jointly, with one acting as the fiscal agent. MassTrails grants can be in addition to other forms of secured local, state, and federal assistance that the applicant will receive.

##### **What can MassTrails funds be used for?**

MassTrails provides federal and state capital grant funds to eligible communities to pay for project development, design, engineering, permitting, construction, and maintenance of trails in Massachusetts. A "trail" is defined as an off-road linear corridor with varied surface type, width, length, and terrain. It can be primarily recreational in nature and/or serve the purpose of connecting communities and people to distinct destinations. Eligible project activities can include:

- Trail planning, design, engineering, and permitting;
- Construction of new trails;
- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails;
- Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead amenities;
- Purchase and lease of trail-related construction and maintenance equipment;
- Acquisition (in limited cases) of easements and fee interest in property for trail corridors;

\*Sidewalks and/or road improvements are not eligible as trail projects under this program.

**What types of trails can be funded under MassTrails?**

Types of trails can include shared use pathways (i.e.: Charles River Pathway, Mystic River Greenway); rail trails (i.e.: Mass Central Rail Trail, Norwottuck Rail Trail, Clipper City Rail Trail); natural surface trail systems (i.e.: Appalachian Trail, Worcester East-West Trail, Stone Farm Trail System in Brockton); community/accessible trails with various surfaces (i.e.: Riverwalk in Great Barrington, Watertown Riverfront Park and Braille Trail, New Bedford Harborwalk); water trails (i.e.: Connecticut River Paddlers Trail, Alewife Brook Greenway), off-road motorized trails (i.e.: accommodate ATV's, off-road motorcycles, snowmobiles).

**When is the grant deadline?**

MassTrails grants are due on February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

**What is the maximum grant amount that can be requested?**

Grant amounts are dependent on the project and its needs, with a minimum grant award of \$10,000 and a maximum grant award of \$300,000 awarded to high priority projects. The grant amount requested should realistically align with the proposed project, with details supported within a submitted budget.

**MassTrails is a reimbursement grant program – what does this mean?**

MassTrails grantees must first pay for expenditures themselves and then submit for reimbursement using the required documentation. Costs eligible for reimbursement include all approved project costs incurred on or after Grantee's contract execution date up to the end date of the contract. Documentation includes invoices, receipts, time sheets, and other acceptable records along with proof of payment for those expenditures.

**Is there a match requirement?**

MassTrails grants are MATCHING grants and require that proponents provide a minimum of 20% of the total project cost. The source of match can vary dependent on the project type, but can include cash match (can be obtained from other state or federal grants, CPA funds, donations, etc.), donated services, and volunteer labor. The project application must include estimates for the matching portion of the project cost. The match must cover a minimum (greater amounts are encouraged) of 20% of the total value of a project. For example, an \$100,000 grant funding request would require at least \$25,000 in matching contributions, for a total project value of \$125,000 (80% of \$125k = \$100k, 20% of \$125k = \$25k).

**How long do grantees have to complete the project?**

Most project development and design projects will have one year to complete all spending and match under the grant, with the funding available within the state fiscal year (July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year). Trail construction and maintenance projects may be permitted a longer timeframe of up to two years, dependent on the scope and specifications of the project. For more details, contact the MassTrails Program Manager.

**How will my application be evaluated?**

A grant review team uses the grant criteria to assess, score and rank proposals. MassTrails seeks strong projects that:

- 1) Plan, design, or construct off-road shared-use pathway and recreational trail connections between where Massachusetts residents live, learn, work, shop, and recreate,
- 2) Serve the diversity of Massachusetts residents,
- 3) Allow for efficient use of grant funds,
- 4) Are ready for the proposed phase,



- 5) Adequately address safety,
- 6) Adequately address accessibility, and
- 7) Create diverse, high quality recreational experiences and connect users to the natural and cultural wealth of Massachusetts.

A detailed listing of grant criteria can be accessed on the MassTrails Grants website.

### **What is the program looking for in terms of trail connections?**

MassTrails prioritizes building out the longer distance trail networks across the state, filling in critical gaps in existing networks, and overcoming current barriers to connectivity while taking into consideration the number of people that will potentially access a given project.

### **Who will review and approve the applications?**

All applications are reviewed by the Inter-Agency Trails Team or the Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Board (MARTAB) depending on the scope and specifications of the project. The Inter-Agency Trail Team consists of representatives from the Governor's Office, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Department of Transportation and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. MARTAB is made up of representatives from each major trail user group in Massachusetts, appointed by DCR, with the purpose of advising and making recommendations for grant projects funded through the federal Recreational Trails Program. All feedback and review notes are gathered and evaluated to determine score and rank for each project. Grant funding recommendations are submitted to the Secretary for review and approval and final decisions are confirmed by the Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

### **How do I submit an application for a MassTrails grant?**

All applications must be submitted through the online application portal at [www.mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants](http://www.mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants). No paper applications will be accepted. There is no log in ID or password required. The application can be saved while working on it. Click "Save and Resume Later" and then click on "Save and Get Link". A link to that application will be provided which must be copied and saved in order to return to the application. A good way to ensure that the link is not lost is to email it to yourself. Please note that any forms which have been downloaded in Section VI of the application will not be saved and must be downloaded again before the application is submitted.

It is recommended that applicants review the "Application Template" provided on the MassTrails Grants website and fill in all fields before beginning the online application process. The template covers all questions and information can be copied and pasted into the online application when ready.

### **If my project was not funded in a previous MassTrails round, and I want to submit the same project again, will I need to reapply to be considered in the current MassTrails round?**

Yes. If you wish to resubmit a previously unfunded project for consideration in the next funding round, you are required to submit a new application.

### **Can I apply for more than one project in the same grant round?**

Yes. Eligible applicants can submit funding requests for more than one project in the same round. However, a separate application is required for each project. Each proposal will be evaluated independently against the criteria.

**Do I need to obtain permitting or complete other regulatory reviews before I can apply to MassTrails?**

No. A project does not need to be fully permitted or have all required permissions in place before applying for a MassTrails grant. However, the project must have all required permitting and permissions in place before construction, and those documents must be on file at DCR. For information on what permit and permission are required, see the MassTrails Grant Application.

**When will the MassTrails Grants be awarded?**

Notification to applicants on the status of their grant application is expected to be on or about 100 days after the grant application deadline. All applicants will be notified by email and informed of the status of their proposed project (approved or not). The effective start date of a contract (grant award) shall be the latest of the following dates: the date the Standard Contract Form has been executed by an authorized signatory of the contractor and the procuring department; the date of secretariat or other approval(s) required by law or regulation; or a later date specified in the Standard Contract Form. The earliest start date for a MassTrails grant project will generally be on or after July 1<sup>st</sup>.