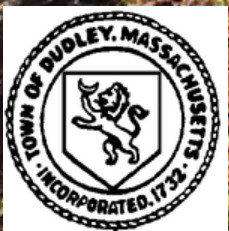




Dudley 2024 Open Space and Recreation Plan



Produced by the Dudley Open Space and Recreation
Planning Committee and the Central Massachusetts
Regional Planning Commission

TOWN OF DUDLEY OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN, 2024

This plan was prepared for:

Town of Dudley
71 West Main Street
Dudley, MA 01571

This plan was prepared by:

The Town of Dudley Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee
&
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)

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Select Board
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Conservation Commission



Section 1: Plan Summary

Produced by the Dudley Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee
and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission



SECTION 1- PLAN SUMMARY

The Town of Dudley embarked on this planning process to preserve and expand upon the open space and recreation opportunities in the Town. In the past few years, Dudley has undergone various planning processes to improve the quality of life for their residents. Through these different exercises, the Town and its residents recognize that protecting and conserving natural resources will be key to its resilience now and in the future.

This 2024 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) serves an updated version of Dudley's previous OSRP, which was initially completed in 2003, with a limited update in 2010. This plan has been updated through an extensive review of available data, public participation from Town stakeholders, and thorough review and inclusion of current regional issues related to open space preservation. Dudley is a community actively engaged in open space and resource protection. To this end, the goals included in the OSRP focus on: creating and improving passive recreation resources for all, enhancing passive recreation resources for all, preserving environmental resources in town, cultivating resources to aid in open space and recreation improvements, maintaining the character of the Town, continuing to develop and promote agricultural resources, and curating the development of the French River and Quinebaug River as destinations. This plan seeks to assess the status of open space in Town by inventorying existing land uses as they relate to open space and recreation opportunities.

The 2024 Dudley Open Space and Recreation plan centers around preserving, enhancing, and creating new methods to sustain the ecological and cultural integrity of the Town while simultaneously meeting an increased demand for active recreation facilities. The residents of the Town of Dudley consider open space, recreation, and the preservation of the natural features of the Town to be of the utmost importance. Dudley's scenic agricultural landscapes contribute to the Town's aesthetic beauty and have helped inform the Town's development patterns. Major features of Dudley's landscape are the two north-to-south waterways composed of streams and rivers connecting natural and manmade ponds, which in turn established the mill areas of town.

Open space has numerous social benefits and ecosystem services which contribute to increased quality of life at a local and regional scale. Open spaces provide peaceful areas, pleasant vistas, wildlife habitat, active and passive recreational opportunities and safety from flooding and groundwater contamination. They also sequester CO₂ and contribute to clean air. Conserving farmlands can help to protect healthy, locally grown foods. From a community perspective, improving and expanding recreation opportunities and natural amenities is important for physical and mental well-being.

Municipal action is required to protect these features and benefits. Dudley has been under constant developmental pressure over the past few decades and has been proactive and innovative in preserving open space. This plan will help the Town as it continues to face this issue. The new growth contributes to a sense of suburbanization without regard to vistas, coordination, or neighborhood character. Without continued and intensive action by the Town to remove fragile land from potential development, Dudley will likely lose much of its scenic and environmental resources. Along with the need to continue to actively seek out and preserve

land, the Town has identified that it currently lacks sufficient field space and other necessary active recreation facilities. There is also a lack of maintenance and awareness of some of the existing facilities. In addition to identifying land for conservation purposes, the Town should develop a strategy for better maintenance and promotion of existing facilities while seeking innovative means of acquiring new locations.

Dudley is situated in the line of westward development from Interstate 395, and southerly development from the Massachusetts Turnpike and Worcester. Development activity is rapidly depleting open space and limiting natural resources. The loss of open land to development can lead to increases in surface water runoff and negative impacts on groundwater resources. Continued development can be expected to contribute to landscape fragmentation as well, which will limit available habitat and has the potential to reduce critical wildlife corridors.

The goals, objectives, and action items contained within the Seven-Year Action Plan were developed by the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee. Committee members discussed items with other Town Boards, Commissions, and Departments, and utilized public engagement activities to gather input from the Town's residents, Town staff, and other local stakeholders. Based on this input, the following goals have been established:

- Create and Improve Active Recreation Opportunities for All
- Enhance Passive Recreation Opportunities for All
- Preserve Environmental Resources in Town
- Cultivate Resources to Aid in Open Space and Recreation Improvements
- Maintain the Character of the Town
- Continue to Develop and Promote Agricultural Resources
- Curate the Development of the French River and Quinebaug River as Destinations

These goals will be further discussed in Section 8 and Section 9 of this Plan.

As stated above, Dudley previously addressed open space and recreation issues with a comprehensive OSRP in 2003 and a limited update in 2010. The 2003 Plan is still valid in many respects; however, there have been many changes in Town and there is an even greater sense of urgency towards preserving Dudley's natural resources. The changes and additions to the 2003 Plan and 2010 update primarily relate to updated data and new programs and regulations to protect the character of the Town.

DEFINITIONS

The term "open space" in this document refers to either public or privately-owned land that is undeveloped. It is land in a predominantly natural state or altered for natural resource-based uses (i.e., farming, orchards, forestry, hunting and fishing, walking-type parks and trails). Examples of privately owned open space might include farms, forest lands, and passive recreation areas.

The term "recreational open space" or "recreation" refers to areas specifically designated for leisure and recreational activities. These spaces are designed to provide opportunities for physical activities, relaxation, social interactions, and enjoyment of nature. Common examples

include parks, playgrounds, sports fields, green belts, and community gardens. Since this plan deals with both open space and recreation, we have presented an approach to obtain the benefits of developing new and maintaining existing recreational facilities, without losing scarce valued environmental assets. In addition, grants and partnerships between federal state and local agencies are often based on recommendations the applicant community makes in its OSRP. Hence, we recognize and embrace opportunities for healthy outdoor activities, be it hiking along forest trails or competing on a soccer or football field.



Section 2: Introduction

Produced by the Dudley Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee
and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

SECTION 2- INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The development of the 2023 Dudley Open Space and Recreation Plan has been a coordinated effort between various Town Departments, Boards and Committees, landowners, residents, and other local stakeholders. It builds on past and recent planning processes to provide an overlapping and all-encompassing outline for priority concerns, needs, and action items. This 2023 update of the Dudley Open Space and Recreation Plan is part of a Town-wide effort to manage growth and protect the natural and built resources that Dudley has to offer. The Town has worked aggressively to protect its open space and will greatly benefit from an updated plan to refer to for direction and coordination. By having an updated Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Town also qualifies for funding from the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services and becomes more competitive for other State department funding programs. These funding programs could provide capital for acquisition, protection, and development of conservation, open space, and recreational facilities.

The past two decades have contributed to continued growth and land development. Through their goals and objectives, as well as the larger narrative, the 2003 Plan and 2010 update identified many tracts of land to be protected, most of which remain important today. In addition, the Plan developed a five-year action plan in accordance with its goals and objectives. While efforts have been made to achieve the goals in the 2003 Plan and 2010 update, much of the action plan has not been realized. The 2023 update includes a current action plan that builds on the 2003 plan and 2010 update and has been adjusted to reflect changes in and around Dudley that have occurred over the past 20 years. The primary purpose of this plan is to realize the Town's vision where open space preservation is integral to the Town's character, where pastoral landscapes are valued and where natural and historical resources are protected and retained.

With a combination of different interests and perspectives from various groups, in addition to updated statistics and environmental data, this Plan provides a clearer view of the conditions and direction of the Town over the next seven years. This Plan should be continuously referenced over the next seven years to ensure the goals and objectives developed during this planning exercise are implemented. In addition, this Plan can and should be updated periodically to ensure it maintains an accurate representation of the Town's interests.

PLANNING PROCESS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Planning Process

To accurately determine citizen preferences regarding open space and recreation, the Town of Dudley distributed a town-wide citizen survey, held a public workshop, and convened a series of public meetings. The Town formed an Open Space and Recreation planning committee (hereafter the Committee) comprising of representatives from the Planning Board, Highway Department, Agricultural Commission, Recreation Commission, Cultural Council, Historical Commission, Library Board of Trustees, French River

Connection, and the Dudley Conservation Land Trust. The Committee met monthly at public meetings in the Dudley Municipal Complex throughout the planning process.

The Town contracted with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) to work alongside the Committee to develop this document. CMRPC provided research and assistance with public outreach. Dani Marini, Associate Planner and Sam Carter, Assistant Planner from CMRPC served as the principal consultants with William Scanlan, Linda Lorkiewicz, Nicole LeBlanc, Jeffrey Murray, Edward Bazinet, and David Harrigan serving as staff for the Town. Town residents played an integral role in this planning process as well via survey responses and public forum attendance.

This OSRP builds an understanding of Dudley's current place in the region, its history and sense of self, its demographics, and its growth and development patterns. A thorough review of the geology, landscape, water resources, vegetation, wildlife and fisheries, unique and scenic resources, as well as environmental challenges was necessary to develop a clear picture of the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Working with the State's Geographic Information Systems (MassGIS) database, the Dudley Town Assessor's Office and others, an inventory of public and private lands of conservation and recreation interest was compiled. This Plan identifies special areas that town residents enjoy and sets out a strategy for improving open space and recreation opportunities in a manner that is sustainable for future generations. Central themes included in this plan include protection of existing resources, providing open space and recreation opportunities, enhancing land conservation programs, and preserving town character. The Seven-Year Action Plan included in Section 9 outlines progressive steps to increase community information dissemination and involvement, to improve recreational opportunities for Dudley's residents and visitors, and to foster economic growth by promoting its open space and recreation opportunities. It stipulates detailed action steps, time frames, and suggests responsible parties intended to help Dudley move forward with open space planning.

Public Participation

The Committee first convened in July of 2022 and began working on a town-wide survey. The survey was completed by September 2023 and was open to receive responses over the Fall and Winter of that year. The survey received 103 responses or a response rate of around 1%. For comparison purposes, the 2003 survey received more than 500 responses. The differences between the two are accounted for largely in the differences in delivery method. The 2003 survey contained only 11 questions and was mailed to every household in town. The 2017 survey contained 28 questions. Because of the length of the survey and the costs associated with delivery, surveys were not mailed to every household. Instead, a PSA was printed in the local paper and hard copies were distributed to the Senior Center, Library and Town Clerk's office in the Town Hall, and it was posted to a message board outside the Town Hall. Surveys were also promoted online using social media. Despite receiving fewer responses, the level of specificity and detail included in the 2022 survey allows for increased analysis. This analysis will be presented in Section 7.

The Committee also planned and held a public forum to engage the community in a true dialogue centered on open space and recreation needs in Dudley. This public forum was held the evening of March 22, 2023, at Dudley's Pearl L. Crawford Memorial Library. At the forum, residents were briefed on the Town's open space and recreation resources, and the proposed goals and objectives of the new OSRP were reviewed to see if they were valid or warranted modification. In addition to the survey and forums, the Committee met monthly throughout the duration of this project starting in July of 2022. All Committee meetings were open to the public.

Enhanced Outreach to EJ Communities

The most direct outreach methods for reaching residents were the insertion of the community survey and public workshop PSAs in the newsletter and social media with hard copies distributed in the Senior Center, Library and the Town Hall. Pearl L. Crawford Memorial Library and the Town Hall/ Senior Center are

within Census Tract 7551, Block Group 2, which meets the Income requirement for an EJ population, with a median household income of \$30,576, 36% of the Massachusetts median household income. The Open Space committee held regular meetings open to the public in the Town Hall and the Public Forum was also held in the library.

Produced by the Dudley Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee
and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission



Section 3: Community Setting

SECTION 3- COMMUNITY SETTING

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Dudley is located in Southwestern Worcester County along the Connecticut state line, 59 miles southwest of Boston and 22 miles south of Worcester. Comprised of 14,003 acres, the Town is roughly rectangular in shape, with average dimensions of 3.8 miles north to south and 5.6 miles east to west. The Town is bordered on the north by the Towns of Charlton and Oxford, on the east by the Town of Webster, on the west by the Town of Southbridge, and on the south by the Towns of Woodstock and Thompson, Connecticut.

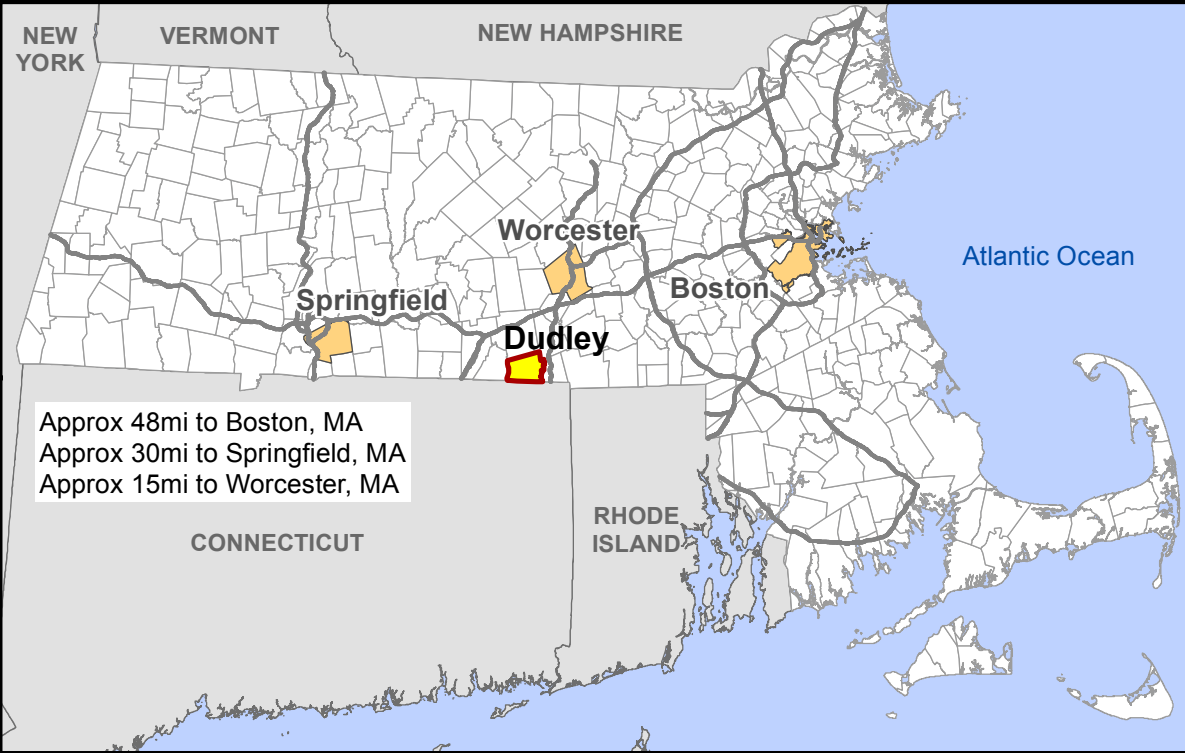
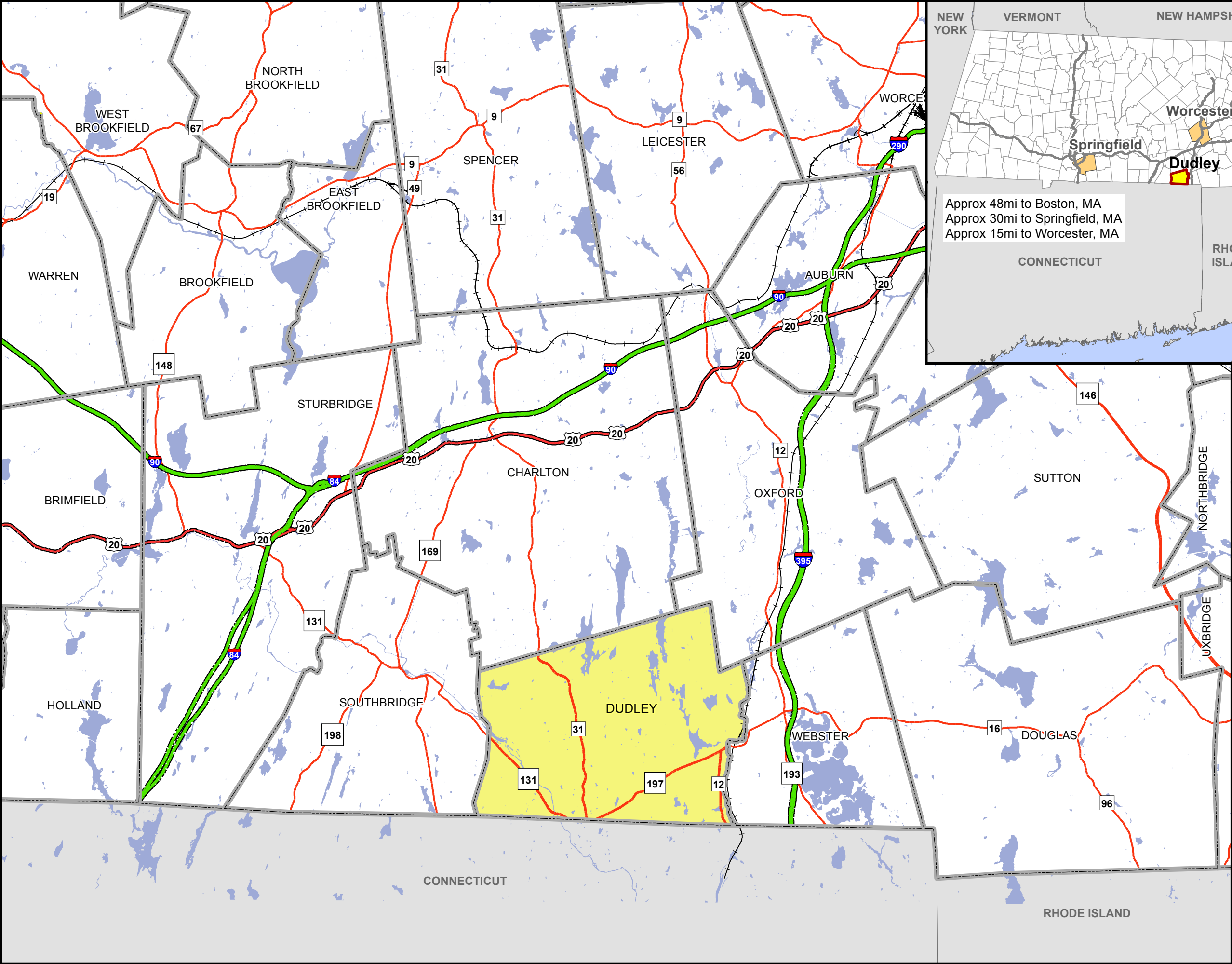
The historic Town Center is located on Center Road, and most of Dudley's commercial activity occurs along Routes 12 and 197. State Routes 131 and 31 run north-south through the west side of Town, with Route 197 being the east-west connection between Routes 131 and 31 to Route 12. Outlying villages are known as Sunnyside, Chaseville, West Dudley, Quinebaug Village, and Jericho. Route 31 is a main travel route that connects Dudley to Charlton and other points north.

As with other New England towns located on major rivers, Dudley experienced heavy industrial development in the 1800s. This development was centered on rivers and streams, which were used to supply power to industries. As the Industrial Revolution slowed, the town was left with a smaller number of mills. Many ponds are located in Town, primarily as a result of damming small streams. Gore, Blood, and Pierpont Meadow Ponds are all shared with Charlton to the north.

Dudley's terrain features many north-south ridges along with the lower lying areas displaying little relief. The hills are interspersed with numerous brooks, ponds, fields, and forests. Dudley is within the Southern New England Coastal Plains and Hills Ecoregion. The town has many local farms that are permanently protected under Agricultural Preservation Restriction, preserving a large component of open space in Dudley. Over time, the town's rural qualities have been maintained. There are active farms in Dudley and the neighboring towns.

The western side of Town contains important wildlife habitats. The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program has produced a BioMap that shows Core Habitat of rare species and Supporting Natural Landscapes Habitat in areas that span Dudley, Southbridge, and Charlton.

The French River and the Quinebaug River are important resources that are shared with adjacent communities. Slightly more than half of Dudley lies within the Quinebaug River watershed (11.4 square miles), with the remainder in the French River watershed (10.4 square miles). The French River forms the east boundary of Town, between Webster and Dudley downtown areas, then flows south past the state line to its confluence with the Quinebaug River in Connecticut. The Quinebaug River bisects the west side of Town, flowing southeast to Connecticut, where it joins the French River. While there was abundant industrial development of the French River, the Quinebaug has seen significantly less development. Several smaller waterways are also found in town, which eventually flow into the French and Quinebaug Rivers.

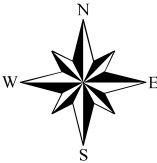


REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP

Town of Dudley, Massachusetts

Legend

- Town Boundary
- Active Railroad
- Interstate
- U.S. Route
- State Route



1 in = 2 miles

Source: Data provided by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution interpreting positional accuracy.

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2 Washington Square, Union Station Worcester, MA 01604

HISTORY

English settlers made their way to Dudley in the early 1670s. Settlement occurred near Dudley Hill, which was occupied by a branch of the Nipmuck people. The area occupied by the indigenous people traversed parts of Dudley, Oxford, Webster, and Thompson Connecticut. In 1731, Dudley settlers petitioned for incorporation as a township, which occurred on June 1, 1732. The Town was named after one of the early governors of Colonial Massachusetts, Thomas Dudley. Dudley was the first town incorporated after the establishment of Worcester County.

Dudley's first town meeting was held on June 20, 1732, at the William Carter House located north of Dudley Hill. Dudley was primarily a farming community, due to its abundance of productive soils and gentle terrain. In the early 1800s, Dudley's economy began to shift away from its agrarian ways and towards the textile industry. The banks of the French River were utilized for textile manufacturing in multiple areas of town. Merino Woolen Mill (later known as the Stevens Mill), Amasa Nichols Cotton Mill (the Chase Mill), and the Dudley Woolen Mill were the main textile mills in East Dudley.

Originally part of Dudley, the Town of Webster was incorporated in 1832. As a result, Dudley's population decreased by more than one third and the town lost many businesses, including five cotton mills, three woolen mills, and related enterprises. With the building of the Norwich and Worcester Railroads in the 1840s, Dudley was able to capture new markets.

In 1846, Henry Hale Stevens bought the old Merino Mill and began a large-scale expansion. Still present are the monumental four-story stone buildings that were constructed with local granite in the 1800s. Stevens Linen Works prospered during and after the Civil War, leading to the construction of the mill workers housing district in Merino Village. Stevens Linens moved from its original site to Schofield Road (Route 12). In addition to the mills in East Dudley, smaller manufacturing centers grew in the northeastern and western parts of town. The Quinebaug River also had manufacturing activity with the Eben Stevens Jute and Satinet Mill in 1872 and the Gleason and Weld Paper Mill in 1864. Dudley's mills flourished until the Great Depression, with several mills relocating to the southern US and several mills closing completely.

Dudley's landscape has seen modest changes in the last half century. The Stevens Linen Mill and the Chase Mill survived the Great Depression and continued operating until the late 1990s to early 2000s. Nichols College continues as a four-year college at its original location on Dudley Hill. The construction of the nearby Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90) and Interstate 395 has not significantly increased Dudley's economic base. The Gentex Corporation, and optics manufacturer employing approximately 250 people, is the most significant new industry to come to Town in the last 50 years. Gentex recently expanded its employee base by 25%. Other small industries include Webco, Henke Sass Wolf, and Shields Manufacturing. The town is looking at establishing a mixed-use area by re-invigorating the now dormant Stevens Mill with new apartments and ground floor retail. Additionally, Dudley has two former mill sites, the Chase Mill building and the Stevens Linens site. The Chase Mill is currently being used as a marijuana establishment and the Stevens Linens site is available for industrial use.

Dudley has maintained a moderate amount of agriculture over the years, with numerous small farms located in the northern and western sections of town. During the 1950s and 1960s, many

small vacation houses were built around Dudley's ponds, particularly in the northeast part of Town. Many of these homes have been converted to year-round residences.

Residential development, along with Dudley's population, has steadily increased over the last 50 years. In 1970, Dudley's population was 8,087. The population has increased by about 75 residents per year, with a population of 11,890 as of the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS). The last few years have had a much faster population growth rate, which is reflected in the large increase in building permits issued since the late 1990s. Dudley's rural character, quality schools, and low tax rate have made the town a desirable place to live.

Dudley typifies a small New England town where municipal officials work part-time, and volunteerism is strong. Manufacturing and farming are still viable economic options, although the service industry has shown the largest increase in recent years. History excerpts were pulled from the *Dudley Master Plan 2000*.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

During the past 30 years, Dudley's population has grown at varying rates. The characteristics of this growing population are important in planning for the open space and recreation needs of the Town residents. Statistics in this section were compiled from several sources, including the US Census Bureau, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, and the Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

Population Statistics

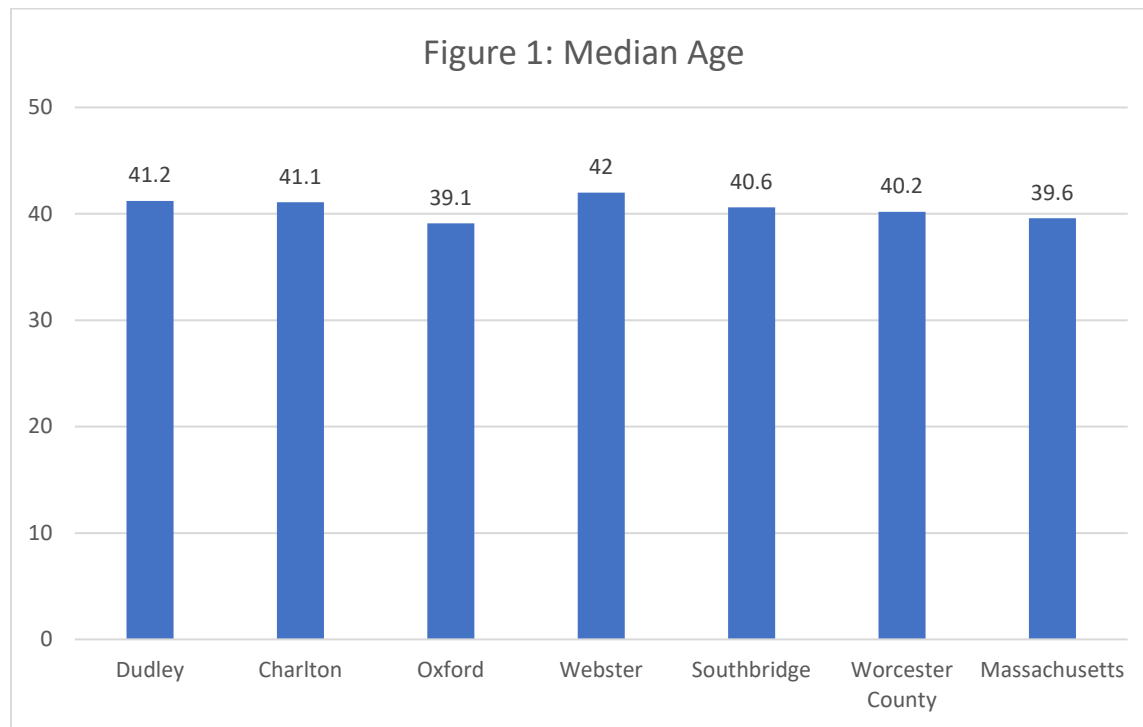
From 1950 to 1970, Dudley's population increased 53%, from 5,261 to 8,087. From 1970 to 1980, Dudley's population increased from 8,087 to 8,717, at a slower rate of 7.8%. This growth remained relatively steady over the next decade, with the population increasing to 9,540 by 1990. In subsequent years, Dudley's population grew from 10,036 residents in 2000, 11,390 residents in 2010, and 11,921 residents in 2020. According to Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission population projections, Dudley is expected to continue a small growth trajectory from 11,921 in 2020 to 12,140 in 2030, 12,462 in 2040, and 12,823 in 2050.

These statistics show that the population density of Dudley's 21.9 square miles of land has increased from 458 people per square mile in 2000 to roughly 544 people per square mile in 2020. Looking forward, it's suggested that by 2050, the town will have 586 people per square mile, although it's likely that most of the population will continue to be clustered around existing neighborhoods and major roads. There are several factors to explain the growth in town over the last 20 years, but it is most likely due to persons migrating from the eastern part of the state in search of more affordable housing, especially due to more flexible work abilities that arose out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

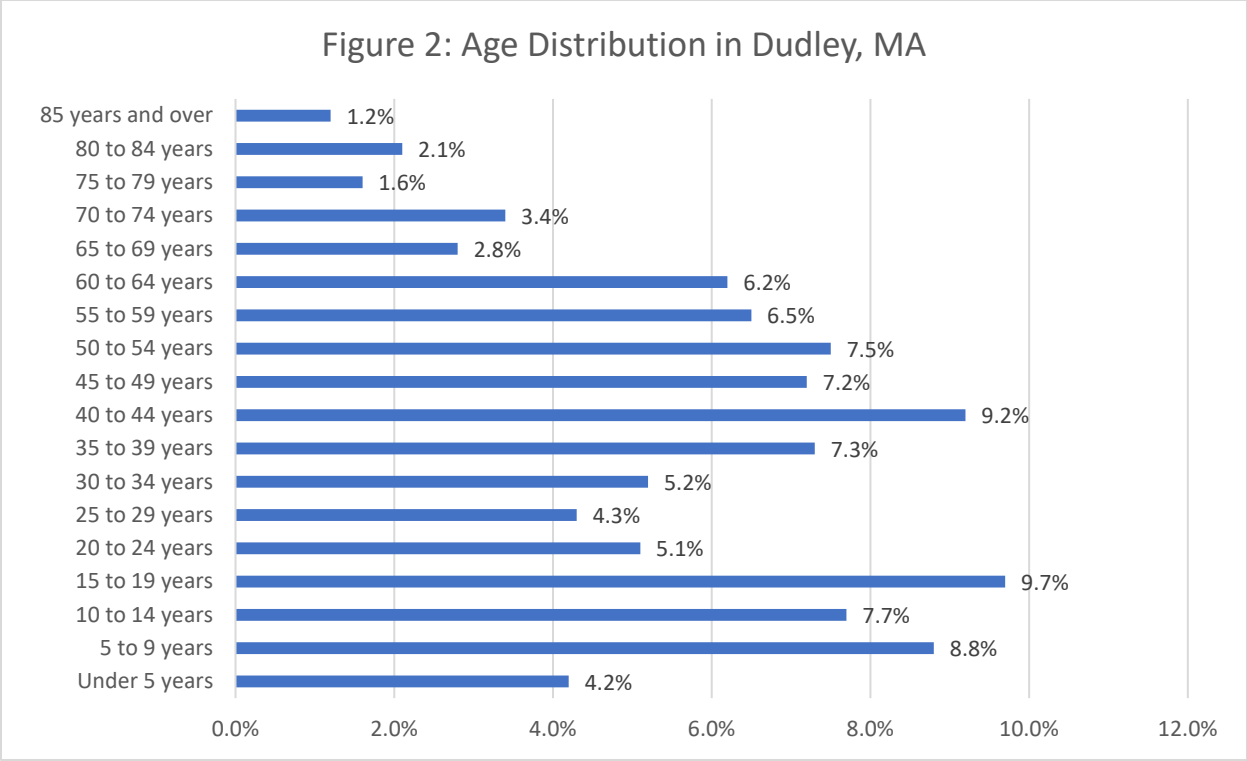
Age Statistics

The median age of Dudley is 41.2 years according to the 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Median age can be helpful in displaying how age distribution has changed over time. Over time, the median age in Dudley has been increasing, showing that the Town is trending towards an aging community. In 2010, the median age was 38.9 years. Dudley's median age is

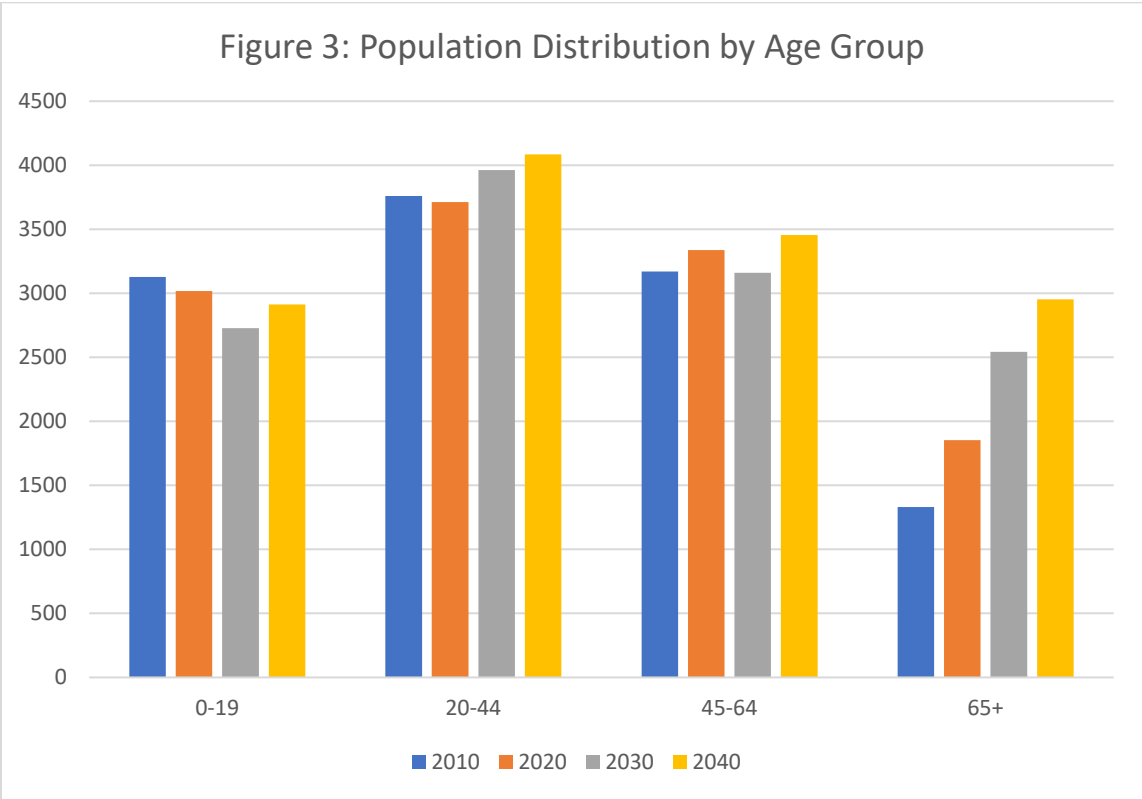
also relatively older than the state and county medians. Figure 1 below displays the median age of Dudley and several surrounding or similar communities.



Another important factor to consider in open space and recreation planning is the age distribution of a community. The age distribution of a community can give a glimpse of what recreation facilities and programs may be needed currently and in the future. In the Town of Dudley, 30.4% of people are under the age of 19, and 11.1% of people are 65 years and over. Figure 2 below shows the age distribution for Dudley across all age brackets.



Using population projections derived from previous census years and utilizing trends in available data, CMPRC was able to look at how the town's population will change with age over time. Figure 3 depicts these projections.



The Dudley population forecasts suggest that from 2020 to 2040:

- Children under the age of 19 are likely to decrease by 3.5%;
- Town residents between 20-44 years of age will likely increase by 10%;
- Residents between 45 and 64 years will increase by 3.5%; and
- Residents over the age of 65 will see the largest increase by 59.3%

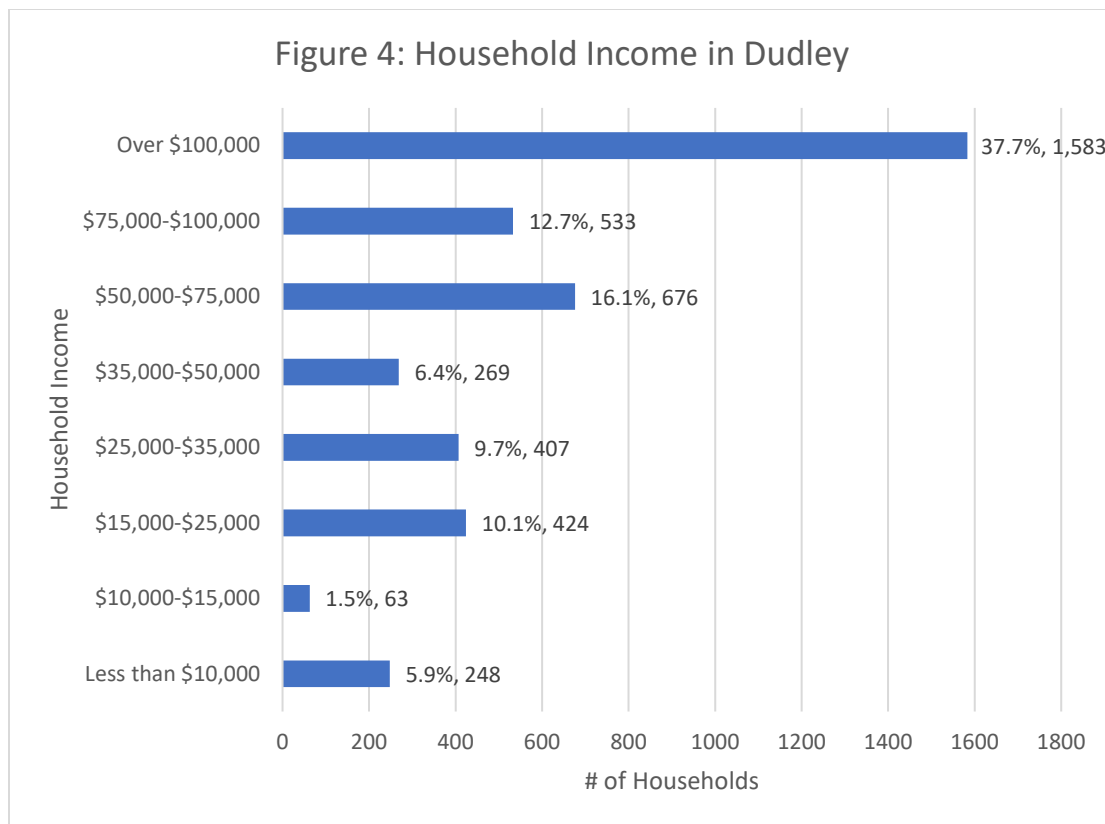
Income Statistics

Federal Census data (2021 ACS) show that the median household income for Dudley was \$75,465 for 4,199 households, while in 2010 the median household income was \$64,782 for 3,931 households. The median household income of Dudley as compared to surrounding communities is displayed in Table 1 below.

The American Community Survey 2021 income distribution for Dudley is displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Comparison of Median Household Income to Surrounding Communities

Town	2010	2021	% Change
Dudley	\$64,782	\$75,465	16.5
Charlton	\$87,758	\$106,558	21.4
Oxford	\$65,845	\$94,298	43.2
Webster	\$48,640	\$64,305	32.2
Southbridge	\$47,234	\$50,414	6.7
Worcester County	\$64,152	\$84,952	32.4
Massachusetts	\$64,509	\$89,645	39.0



This data indicates that the majority of households (37.7%) in Dudley are earning over \$100,000. Another 28.8% are earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Notably, 5.9% are earning less than \$10,000.

Environmental Equity

Addressing environmental injustice necessarily involves community participation and empowerment. It requires meaningful engagement of all stakeholders, especially those from marginalized communities, in decision-making and planning processes related to environmental issues. The Town should collect and analyze data on environmental conditions, public health indicators, and demographic information to identify and work to address disparities. The below map shows the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA) 2020 data on Environmental Justice populations. These areas meet one of the four criteria listed here:

- The annual median household income is not more than 65 percent of the statewide annual median household income;
- Minorities comprise 40 percent or more of the population;
- 25 percent or more of households lack English language proficiency; or
- Minorities comprise 25 percent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 percent of the statewide annual median household income.

The Town of Dudley has three block groups with environmental justice characteristics. Block Group 1, Census Tract 7552.02 is located in south central Dudley. Block Group 1 meets the

“Minority” criteria, as the minority population is 49%. The median household income is \$83,929, and 4% of households have language isolation. In 2020 this block group had a population of 1,846 in 440 households.

Block Group 2, Census Tract 7551 is located in east Dudley. Block Group 2 meets the “Income” criteria, as the median household income is \$30,576. The minority population is 19%, and 4% of households have language isolation. In 2020 this block group had a population of 1,795 in 793 households.

Block Group 3, Census Tract 7552.02 is located in west Dudley. Block Group 3 meets the “Income” criteria, as the median household income is \$51,688. The minority population is 13%, and 0% of households have language isolation. In 2020 this block group had a population of 1,088 in 442 households.

Town of Dudley
2022-2029
Open Space & Recreation Plan

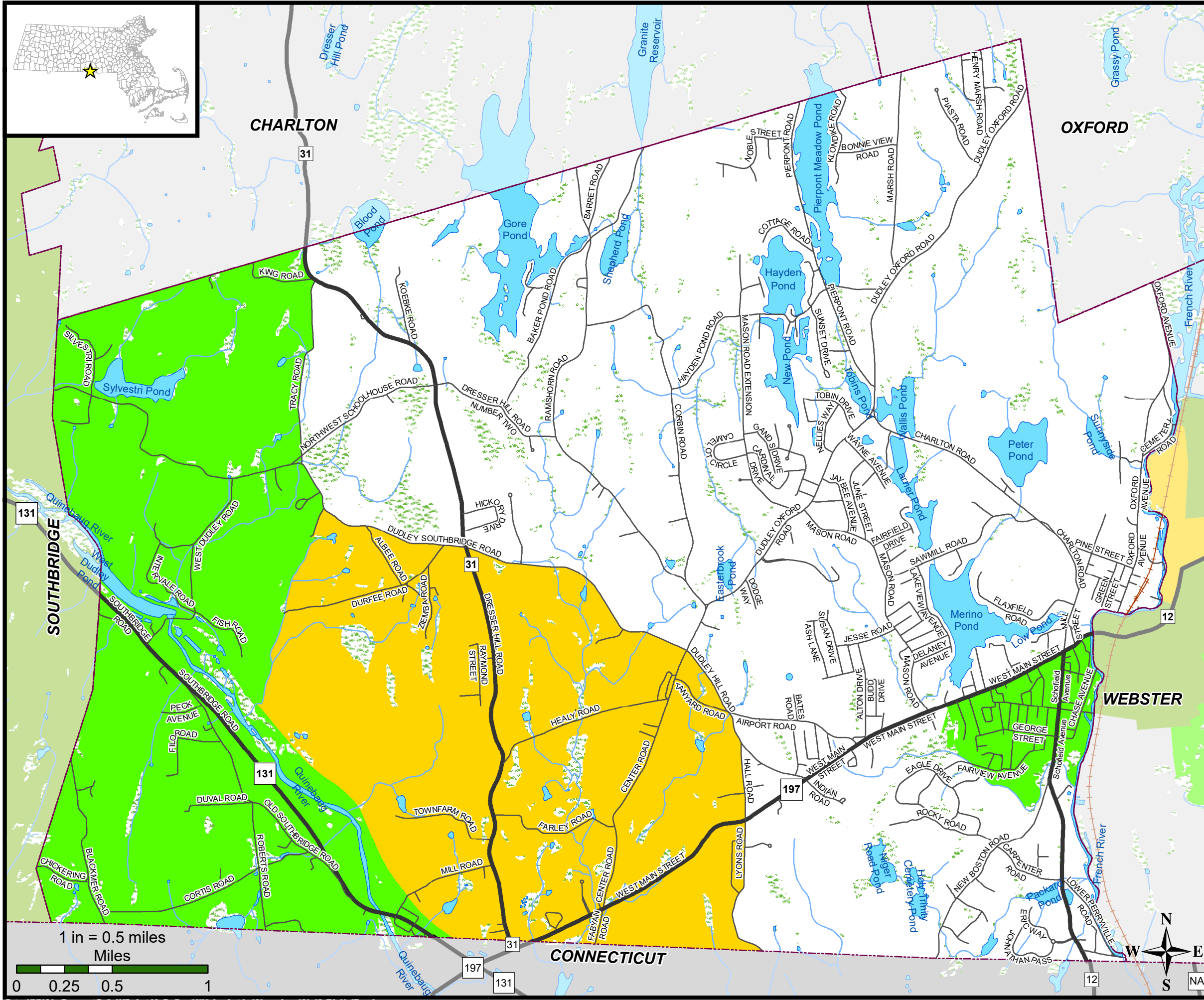
Legend

- Town Boundary
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Active Rail Service
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Environmental Justice 2020 Populations
- EJ Criteria
 - Minority
 - Income
 - Minority and Income

Source: Data provided by the Town of Dudley, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA), massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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Worcester, MA 01608



Employment Statistics

According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, there were 6,444 eligible residents for the workforce in May 2022 and 6,321 residents in May 2023. There were 250 unemployed residents in May 2022, which dropped to 149 in May 2023. This represents a 3.9% unemployment rate to a 2.4% rate, which is roughly in line with Massachusetts numbers of 3.6% to 2.3% in May 2022 and May 2023, respectively.

Industries

The 2022, 5-year American Community Survey data for Dudley reveals that the Town had 6,431 people in the labor force, and 6,042 were employed in some fashion. The 5-year unemployment rate was 6.0%. Residents were engaged in the following occupations:

Occupation	Employment	Percent
Management, professional, and related	2,198	34.2%
Service	1,176	18.3%
Sales and office	1,391	21.6%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0	0.0%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	562	8.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving	715	11.1%
Total employed civilian pop. 16 years and over	6,431	100.0%

The largest employers in Dudley include:

- Gentex Optics
- Nichols College
- Shepherd Hill Regional High School and Middle School
- Park n Shop Supermarket
- Webco Chemical Co.
- McGee Toyota Dealership
- Tri-Valley, Inc.
- Southbridge Tool & Manufacturing
- Dudley District Court
- Universal Tag, Inc.

Dudley has few large industries, and prospects for large industrial expansion are slim. It is more likely that new industrial development will occur along the Route 197 and Route 12 corridors, which already have a significant amount of older industrial uses. This kind of growth will not impact Dudley's open space tracts in outlying areas. While agricultural employment is low, Dudley still has large areas in fields and meadows, which greatly add to the Town's bucolic quality. Like everywhere else in Massachusetts, farmers struggle to make a viable living, and the threat of sale to development is ever-present; fortunately, many farmers opted-in to the state's Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program, which provides permanent protection from development. Dudley also has several large earth extraction operations in rural areas, and occasional expansions remove natural landforms and disrupt wildlife habitat. As noted elsewhere, forestry is not an important industry in Dudley, and most cutting operations are small and associated with new development.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Patterns and Trends

Over the years, Dudley has changed from a primarily agrarian community to an industrial community to its current state of primarily residential land, some remaining agricultural land, and some industrial land. The eastern part of Town was readily utilized by industry due to available waterpower and ponds. Mills were constructed on the Quinebaug River for the same reasons. Today, Dudley maintains much of its rural quality because of extensive protected agricultural land found in the central area of Town. The west and northeast portions of Town have large areas of land that add to the rural quality as well. State highways passing through town allow easy access to Worcester to the north and Boston to the east.

The Land Use table below shows the Town's primary land uses/ land cover in acres and total percentage of land area derived from MassGIS data from 2016. As noted in the table, most of the land in Town is "Deciduous Forest" at 45.83%, "Evergreen Forest" at 10.26%, and "Developed Open Space" at 10.26%. It should be noted that much of what falls under the land cover classification of "Developed Open Space" has a land use classification of "Residential – Single Family." The existing abundance of open space represents an invaluable asset to the community. However much of this land is still unprotected and vulnerable to development pressure.

Table 2: Land Use/ Land Cover Classifications by Acreage and Percentage

Land Cover/ Land Use	Acres	Percent
Aquatic Bed	122.79	0.88%
Bare Land	48.2	0.34%
Commercial	47.66	0.34%
Cultivated	278.37	1.99%
Deciduous Forest	6419.04	45.83%
Developed Open Space	1344.17	9.60%
Evergreen Forest	1436.55	10.26%
Forested Wetland	1014.4	7.24%
Grassland	447.02	3.19%
Industrial	52.47	0.38%
Mixed Use - Primarily Residential	1.34	0.01%
Non-forested Wetland	203.76	1.45%
Other Impervious	83.71	0.60%
Pasture/Hay	1096.75	7.83%
Residential - Multi-Family	43.34	0.31%
Residential - Single Family	276.02	1.97%
Right-of-way	316.74	2.26%
Scrub/Shrub	244.26	1.74%
Unconsolidated Shore	0.03	0.00%
Water	528.46	3.77%

Town of Dudley 2022-2029 Open Space & Recreation Plan

Legend

- Town Boundary
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Active Rail Service
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands

Zoning Distict

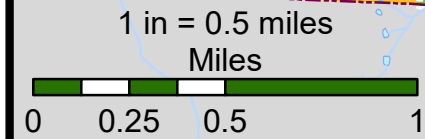
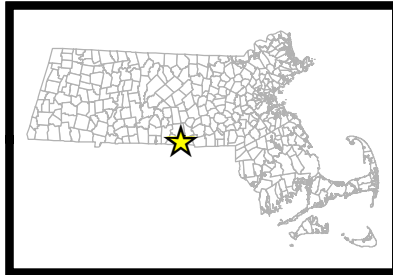
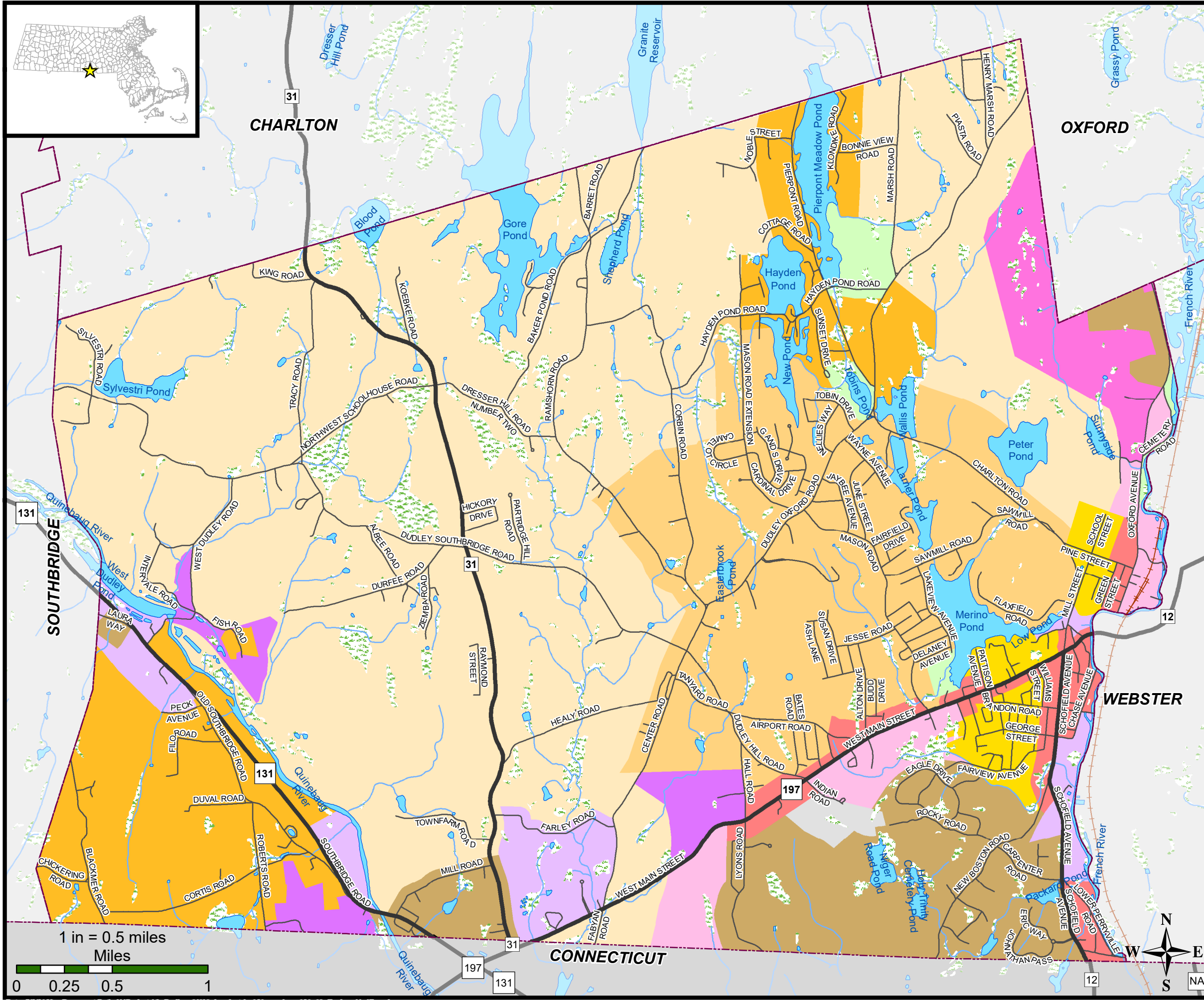
- General Residential
- Residential 15
- Residential 30
- Residential 43
- Residential 87
- Business / General Residential
- Industry 43
- Industry 130
- Light Industry 43
- Light Industry 87
- Town Refuse Disposal
- Conservation

Source: Data provided by the Town of Dudley, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA), massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution intrepreading positional accuracy.



Produced by
One Mercantil Street
Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608



Conservation needs continue to be great as residential development reduces the Town's open spaces. Dudley still has considerable undeveloped land, so it is increasingly important to preserve its rural landscape and manage growth to minimize environmental, fiscal, scenic, and transportation impacts. Map 3 displays the current zoning in Dudley.

Long Term Development Patterns

The long-term development outlook for Dudley is one of slow growth. The Planning Board receives one or two subdivision applications per year, and these are typically under 20 units per project. Building new subdivisions is an arduous undertaking and requires assuming a large financial risk, both in terms of the cost of constructing new roads and utilities within budget and potential housing busts, which cannot be predicted with any accuracy. The less risky and more common form of residential development is Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan land divisions that may create two-four new lots on existing public ways which meet the zoning district's minimum frontage and area standards. Dudley still has considerable undeveloped road frontage and this ANR trend is likely to continue for some time. In outlying areas without public water and sewer systems, development on one- and two-acre lots will gradually diminish the open space character of the Town's many rural roads. It will also foreclose opportunities to purchase large contiguous tracts of open space.

Dudley's old mills are currently the focus of significant redevelopment. The former Chase Mill (35-37 Chase Ave.) recently added a retail marijuana facility, and the owner has plans for additional renovation for marijuana cultivation and manufacturing. The former Stevens Mill has an approved special permit to construct 159 apartments, 16 of which will be affordable for low and moderate-income households. This project should spur redevelopment of the old housing stock in the surrounding neighborhoods. The vacant and decaying Packard Mill on Schofield Avenue was recently purchased with the developer contemplating a mixed-use development with construction of new apartments supporting commercial uses. Each of these mill projects has sought to take advantage of the Mill Conversion Overlay District zoning bylaw, which permits multiple opportunities for reuse other than that which traditional industrial zoning allows.

The Town has a small commercial and industrial base, and local officials have sought to broaden the tax base. Dudley received a Community One-Stop planning grant to conduct a feasibility study of Town-owned land south of Route 197 near the Connecticut – Massachusetts state line. The feasibility study indicated the potential to build up to 300,000 square feet of new non-residential uses. The Town intends to study this site further, but actual development is years away. Other vacant industrial land has limited potential for development, either due to environmental constraints or lack of suitable infrastructure.

With a lack of good developable land, the Town is focusing efforts to redevelop its older commercial plazas and dense residential neighborhoods. The Town recently received a Community Planning Program grant to analyze the eastern Gateway in the area along West Main Street near the Webster Town line. Dudley lacks a true Town Center, and the study will look at zoning changes and necessary infrastructure investments to transform this mixed-use area into a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented village.

A great deal of Dudley is in agricultural use, and it has a high percentage of protected open space. With several large tracts still in private hands, there are opportunities to acquire additional open space to preserve land with ecological value, which will also maintain the open character of outlying rural areas. As previously noted in the infrastructure section, the Town has

miles of aging water and sewer mains that must be replaced to eliminate constant line breaks and overcome bottlenecks from undersized pipes. The Water and Sewer Department is prioritizing these repairs over new extensions to undeveloped areas. For the foreseeable future, the lack of water and sewer service in undeveloped areas will lessen development pressure there. This provides some time for the Town to purchase additional open space; however, lack of municipal funding precludes the Town acting on its own, but partnerships with conservation organizations and state grants can overcome financial obstacles.

Infrastructure

Transportation Systems

Major Roads

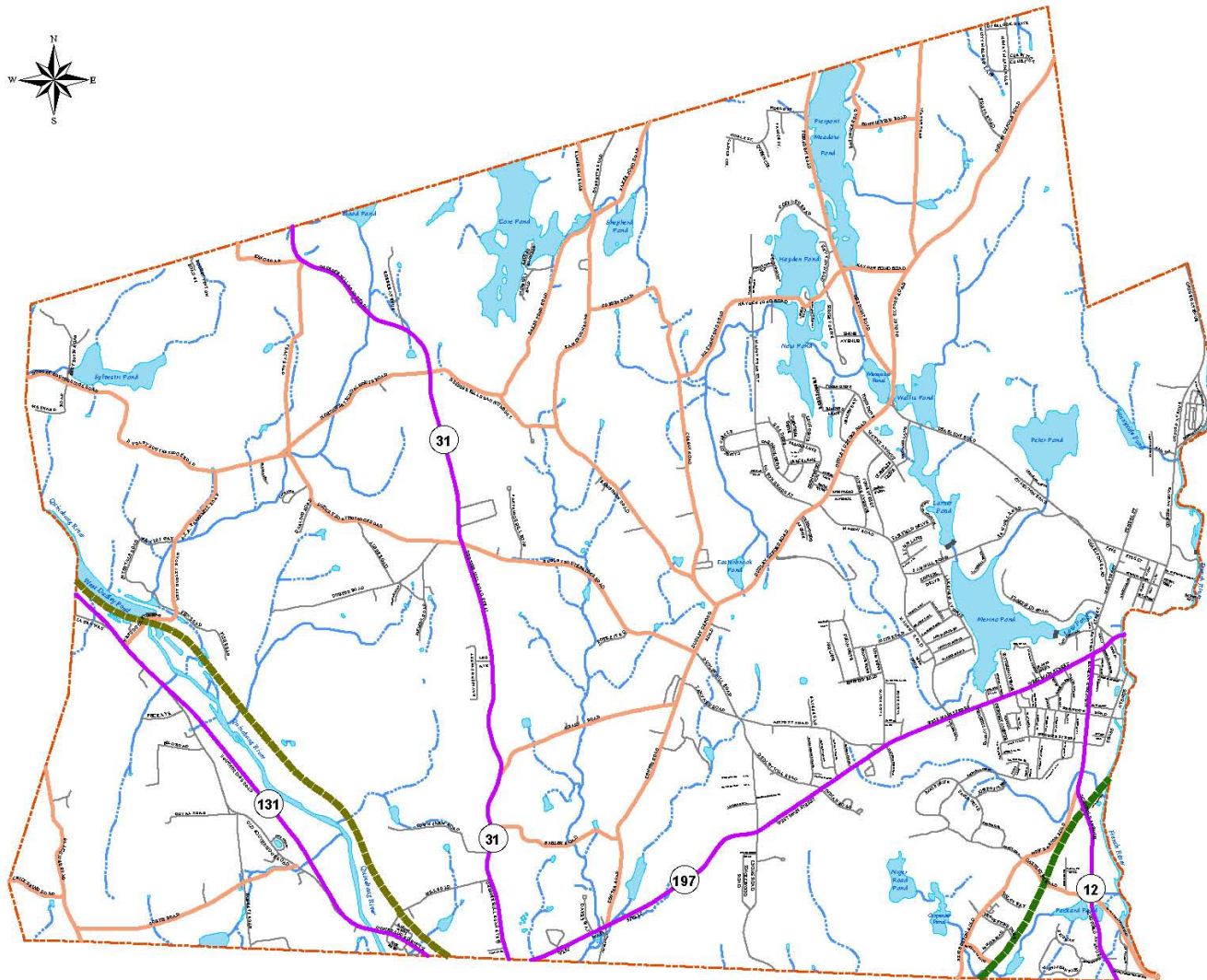
Dudley's transportation system consists of four state highways and numerous local roads. From West to East, the main thoroughfares in Town are Southbridge Road (State Route 131), Dresser Hill Road (State Route 31), Dudley Center Road, Dudley Oxford Road, West Main Street (State Route 197), and Schofield Avenue (State Route 12). The extensive road system in the eastern section of town resulted from higher density of residential development. The industrial lands in Dudley are along state highways except for Route 31, which has industrial land on its southern end in Town. Oxford Road is also heavily used as a fast connection to Interstate 395 to the east.

Bicycle Network

Dudley has many rolling, rural roads that make for enjoyable, if somewhat strenuous bicycling. Low-traffic-volume roads in the rural western and southern parts of town provide enticing views of farms, fields, and historic homesteads. State roads, including West Main St. (Route 197) and Schofield Ave. (Route 12), are part of a regional network of long-distance routes. No specific accommodations have been made for bicycling on these roads, but they typically have wider shoulders to separate bicyclists from high-speed traffic. They are generally used by more experienced riders who enjoy long-distance workouts. The Bicycle Options map on the following page shows an extensive network of bicycling opportunities throughout the Town.

Dudley is fortunate to have an excellent rails-to-trails project known locally as the Quinebaug Rail Trail (QRT). As shown on the Quinebaug Rail Trail map, there are two sections in the eastern and western parts of town. MassDOT acquired the abandoned rail corridor from the Providence and Worcester Railroad in 2004. A local trail committee was instrumental in constructing a uniform surface for pedestrians with off-road parking lots and trail amenities such as picnic tables and benches adjacent to scenic views. The QRT is heavily used in Dudley. The eastern section of the trail runs for 1.2 miles from the Webster-Dudley town line at the French River to the Connecticut-Massachusetts state line. An old railroad bridge was renovated for bicycles and pedestrians to cross the River into Webster. The western section runs for 2.7 miles and roughly parallels the Quinebaug River from the state line to the Dudley-Southbridge town line. The route continues into Southbridge Center, and plans are underway to improve the trail in Southbridge. The Connecticut section has not yet been developed into an off-road trail, but when completed the QRT sections will provide a continuous track of 11 miles from Webster to Southbridge.

Bicycle Options, Dudley, MA



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

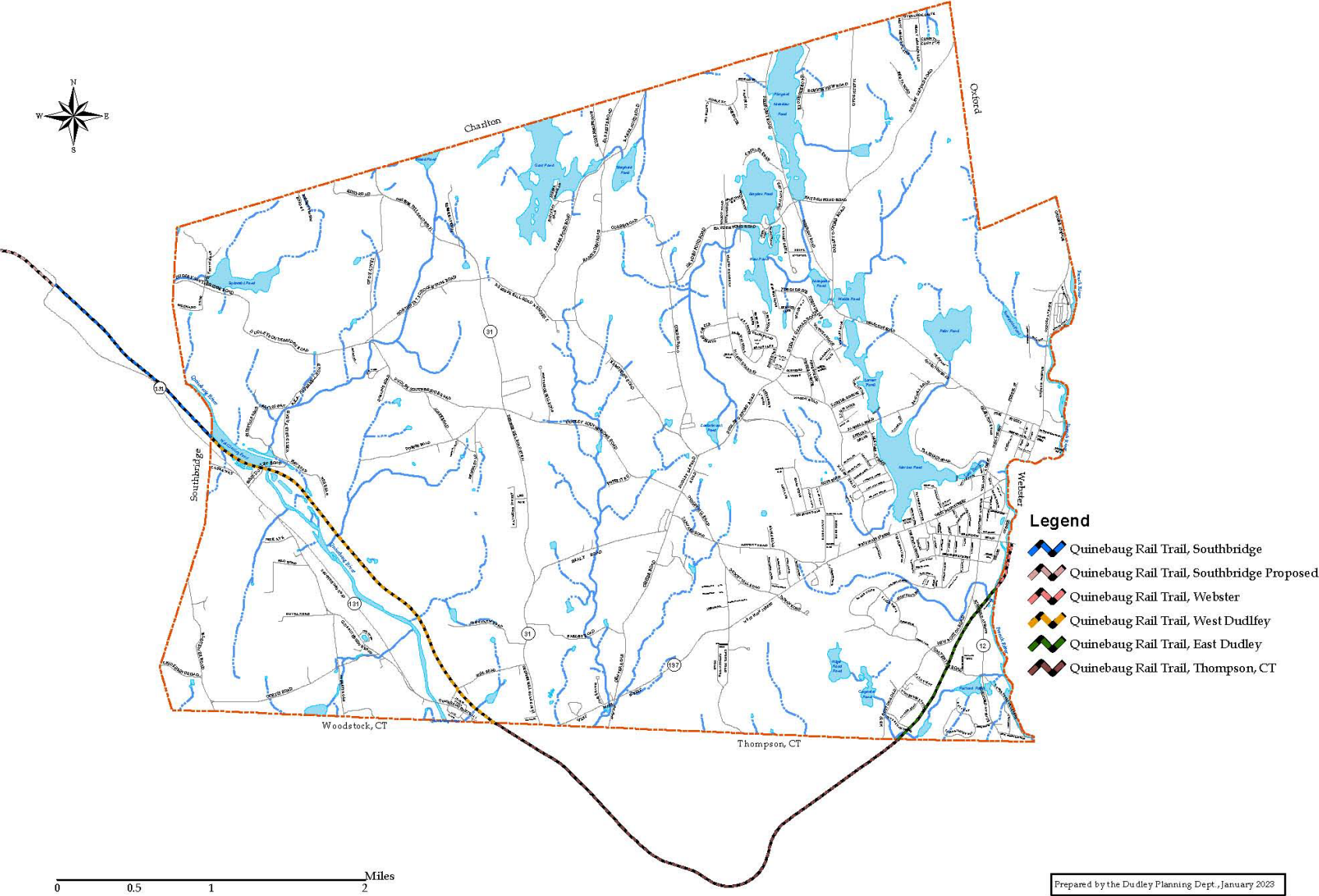
Legend

- State Routes, Regional Connectors
- Country Roads
- Quinebaug Rail Trail, East
- Quinebaug Rail Trail, West

Notes:
 1. CMRPC's Regional Bicycle Plan, 2018, recommends converting state routes with excess shoulder width into Complete Streets with bicycle facilities in place. At present, high traffic volumes in some locations may present hazards.
 2. Country Roads offer many miles of pleasurable bicycling. Care should be taken on narrow, winding roads with no paved shoulders. Grades are generally moderate, but steep sections present challenges.
 3. The east and west sections of the Quinebaug Rail Trail offer off-road tracks with gentle grades. Surface is rough at present, but the Town will seek grant funds for improvements.

Prepared by the Dudley Planning Dept., 2022

Quinebaug Rail Trail Near Dudley, MA



Furthermore, Dudley received a MassTrails grant of \$500,000 in 2023 to pave the two sections in Dudley. The QRT will provide an exceptional off-road trail for use by children, recreational bicyclists, and by wheelchair users. Dudley will complete the project in the spring of 2024.

Pedestrian Issues

In recent years, Dudley has become highly motivated to improve its pedestrian network. Center Road dividing Nichols College was the first location to receive new sidewalks due to the many Nichols students traveling from dormitories to classrooms. With the assistance of CMRPC, the Town developed a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan in 2021 that targets numerous locations for renovating existing sidewalks and creating new sidewalks to fill in gaps in the network. Most of these locations are in densely developed areas with high traffic volumes. New and improved sidewalks will offer safe passage for pedestrians off dangerous roadways and shoulders. Dudley received a \$400,000 Complete Streets grant in 2021 and constructed a new sidewalk in 2022 along Mason Road. This will improve safety for parents and children walking to the Mason Road Elementary School. The work extended from the back of the Dudley Fire Station on West Main Street to Meadow Lane for a distance of just under a half-mile.

The Town is now working with the developer of the Stevens Mill to improve the sidewalk system in the densely populated area around the Mill. As part of the traffic mitigation plan, the developer will construct a new sidewalk along Ardlock Place from the Mill to West Main Street. In addition, the developer plans to construct a new Riverwalk along the French River adjacent to his property. The Town hopes to eventually create a continuous walking path along the River in Dudley and connect to trails in Webster and Oxford. To complement this work, the Town received a MassWorks grant in 2023 to build new sidewalks on streets adjoining the Mill to improve the safety of the new apartment dwellers seeking commercial services from the nearby West Main Street merchants. The new sidewalk work will be completed in 2025.

Public Transportation

Dudley is a member community of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA). Dudley is removed from the densely developed core communities, but it does receive one transit service from the Webster - Dudley – Southbridge Shuttle. The shuttle runs from Southbridge Center, crosses into Dudley, and travels down Route 131. It veers north on Healey Road to reach Nichols College, then turns south to access Route 197 (West Main Street) with stops at the Dudley District Court and the Dudley Housing Authority. It passes by many of the Town's commercial services and large employers. It crosses into Webster and traverses Main Street, which also has many retail and service businesses. It then travels down Lake St. and Thompson Road before terminating at Harrington Hospital. There are 12 inbound and 12 outbound trips per day.



Section 4: Environmental Inventory & Analysis

SECTION 4- ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

GEOLOGY, SOILS & TOPOGRAPHY

The geology of Dudley heavily influences the natural and man-made landscape we see today. Geology affects topography by creating the elevations that form rolling hills and valleys. It affects soils by providing the underlying parent materials with different fertility and drainage characteristics. The soils determine the vegetation that grows, as well as the limitations for land uses that can occur. Geology, soils and topography all determine how surface waters and ground waters function, which is highly important to the natural and built environments.

Bedrock Geology

The bedrock underlying Central Massachusetts was formed 350-400 million years ago, when sediments deposited in ancient seas were hardened by geologic processes. Later, tectonic events folded and heated this sedimentary rock, changing it into metamorphic or igneous rock formations. Generally, there is a north-south alignment of these bedrock formations. Some of the bedrock is soft and can break down into clays that hold water tightly making it less available to residential wells.

Most of the town overlies bedrock aquifers and most private wells are bedrock artesian wells. Well yields are generally adequate for residential development. The average residential well is around 100 to 150 feet deep, although well depths can be much deeper if low yields require additional storage capacity. There are also sand and gravel deposits underlying local streams that can produce higher yields of water. However, most Dudley residents have access to Town water, with the Dudley Water Department providing over 8,000 residents with high-quality drinking water, approximately 550,684 gallons per day in 2021. Threats to drinking water wells in Dudley include stormwater runoff, road salting, and improper handling of/disposal of hazardous materials. Water quality samples has also revealed that PFAS is a major issue in Dudley drinking water supplies.

Bedrock geology has little effect on land development in Dudley, except a few scattered locations where ledge is close to the surface or there are bedrock outcrops. Bedrock faults are inactive and pose no threat to homes or businesses.

Surficial Geology

The deposits from mile-high glaciers that covered New England during the Pleistocene Epoch are more variable than the bedrock. This glacial period ended about 16,000 years ago, and created the surface geology that shaped the topography, soils and hydrology of Dudley. River and stream patterns are influenced by landforms created by north-south travel of the glacier, large deposits of sand and gravel are common from the outwash of glacial melt-water, and huge boulders carried from mountain tops to the north are strewn across town.

MAP 4 SOILS & GEOLOGIC FEATURES

Town of Dudley
2022-2029
Open Space & Recreation Plan

Legend

Town Boundary

Major Road

Local Road

Active Rail Service

River, Stream

Lake, Pond

MassDEP Wetlands

MassDEP Tier 21E Sites** (12/2021)

AUL Location* (12/2021)

SSURGO-Certified NRCS Top 20 Soils: Prime Farmland Soils (11/2021)

All Areas are Prime Farmland

Farmland of Statewide Importance

SSURGO-Certified NRCS Top 20 Soils: Drainage Class (11/2021)

Excessively drained

Somewhat excessively drained

Well drained

Moderately well drained

Poorly drained

Very poorly drained

Source: Data provided by the Town of Dudley, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA), massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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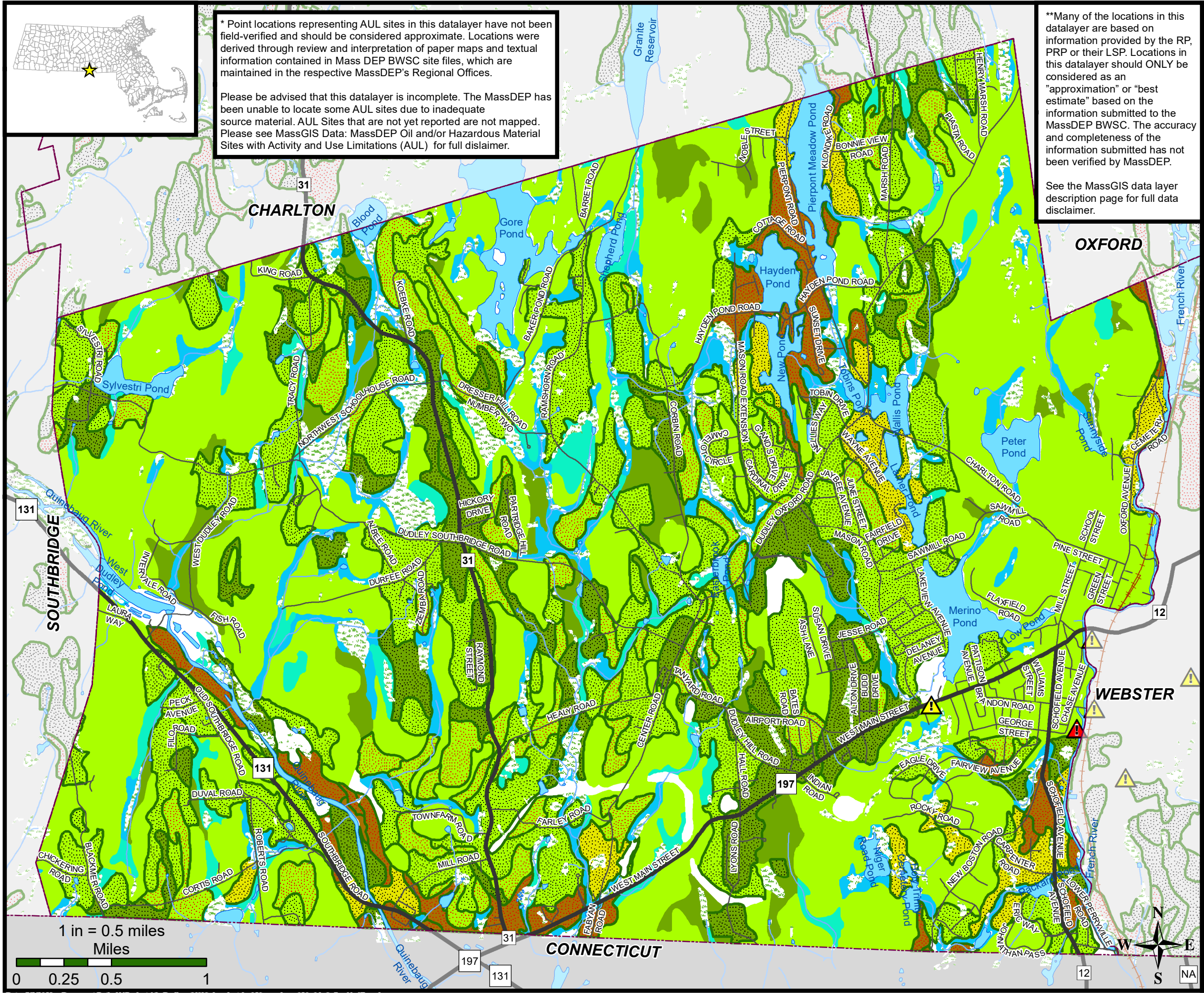
Produced by
One Mercantil Street
Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608

* Point locations representing AUL sites in this datalayer have not been field-verified and should be considered approximate. Locations were derived through review and interpretation of paper maps and textual information contained in Mass DEP BWSC site files, which are maintained in the respective MassDEP's Regional Offices.

Please be advised that this datalayer is incomplete. The MassDEP has been unable to locate some AUL sites due to inadequate source material. AUL Sites that are not yet reported are not mapped. Please see MassGIS Data: MassDEP Oil and/or Hazardous Material Sites with Activity and Use Limitations (AUL) for full disclaimer.

**Many of the locations in this datalayer are based on information provided by the RP, PRP or their LSP. Locations in this datalayer should ONLY be considered as an "approximation" or "best estimate" based on the information submitted to the MassDEP BWSC. The accuracy and completeness of the information submitted has not been verified by MassDEP.

See the MassGIS data layer description page for full data disclaimer.



Most of Dudley is covered by unsorted rocks, stones and “till” soils that formed on materials deposited as the glacier melted. Where the glacier scoured the surface, bedrock outcrops remain. Where the glacier slid over loose materials on top of bedrock, rounded hills called “drumlins” formed. Depressions carved out by the glacier also created today’s ponds, bogs, wetlands, and stream valleys. Wind and water erosion continued to add deposits along flood plains. Sand and gravel deposits located beside Schofield Avenue, Merino Pond, and New Pond are sources of groundwater for existing and potential Town wells.

Soils

Dudley has 20 soil types that are grouped according to similar characteristics. The four general soil associations in Town include:

- Paxton-Woodbridge-Ridgebury soils;
- Canton-Montauk-Scituate soils;
- Merrimac-Hinckley-Windsor soils; and
- Freetown-Swansea-Saco soils.

These soils associations can be used to compare the suitability of large areas of town for planning of general land uses. More detailed maps and site investigations are required for determining the suitability of specific parcels of land for uses such as roads, home building and farming.

The western and northern parts of Dudley consist mostly of the Paxton-Woodbridge-Ridgebury soils, which are suited to forestry and farming. This association is characterized as very deep, well- drained to poorly-drained soils in glacial till uplands. Slopes generally range from three percent to 25%; and stones may cover up to 15% of the surface. Steep slopes, stoniness and seasonal high-water tables can pose limitations for cultivation. Steep slopes, wetness, frost action and slow permeability can pose limitations for septic systems and building foundations (See Map 4).

Canton-Montauk-Scituate Soils

These soils are located on upland hills and rolling glacial flats in the southeast part of Town. Canton and Montauk soils are well-drained areas on the upper slopes of hills and ridges. Scituate soils are moderately well-drained areas on the lower slopes. Permeability in these soils ranges from moderately rapid on the surface to moderately slow in the substratum. These soils are suited to forestry and farming, but some areas with steep slopes and/or surface stones can limit cultivation. While these soils are also suited for most non-farm uses, the Canton soils are limited for septic tank absorption fields due to poor filtering in the substratum which can cause groundwater pollution. In addition, the sides of excavations in Canton soils are unstable.

The Merrimac-Hinckley-Windsor Association

This soil association, found near waterways on the east side of Dudley, is characterized by deep soils that formed on nearly level to steep deposits of glacial outwash. Merrimac soils are well drained and found on level parts of the outwash plains. Permeability is moderately rapid or rapid, and these soils have two feet of loamy material underlain by sand and gravel. Hinckley and Windsor soils are excessively drained and are found on ridges in the outwash plains. Permeability is rapid or very rapid.

Merrimac-Hinckley-Windsor soils are suited to agricultural and forestry uses, although tree seedling mortality can be high because of the lack of available moisture. Slope is a limitation for buildings and roads because the sides of excavations are unstable, and the steeper sides commonly collapse. Poor filtering capacity of these soils is a severe limitation in septic tank absorption fields. Effluent from septic tank absorption fields can pollute groundwater.

Freetown-Swansea-Saco Soils

The Quinebaug River corridor on the west side of Town consists of Freetown-Swansea-Saco soils that formed on organic materials and floodplain deposits. Freetown and Swansea soils are very poorly drained areas in depressions adjacent to rivers, and Saco soils are very poorly drained areas along river channels. Most of these soils are suited for farming, although wetness and flooding are management concerns. Flooding and high-water tables in Freetown and Saco soils limit timber production for all but water-tolerant species of trees. High water tables, flooding and low strength make these soils unsuitable for building site development.

The USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service has published a Soils Report for Southern Worcester County, which has extensive details of the soil composition of Dudley. Many prime farmlands are part of the general associations described above including the Woodbridge, Paxton, Canton, Montauk, Scituate and Merrimac soils, which are less than eight percent slope and lack surface stones. Sutton, Charlton, and Paxton loams (otherwise known as the Paxton loam series) are found on top of drumlins provide the Town with rich, agricultural soil, while land bordering the French River is gravelly glacial till.

Topography

Dudley's topography is primarily comprised of small hills, gently sloping fields and meadows, and low-level valley areas. Dudley has many hills and ridges, oriented in a north-south direction, which dip to winding valleys of small streams. There are areas of relatively level land occurring throughout the Town, which include large wetlands and the floodplains of the French and Quinebaug Rivers. Forty-eight percent of the Town of Dudley reside within the French River watershed and 52% of the Town fall within the Quinebaug River watershed. An unnamed hill near the northwest border with Charlton is the highest point in Town, 837 feet above sea level. The lowest spot is 350 feet where the Quinebaug River flows out of Dudley into Connecticut. Slopes range up to 35% with three to 15% slopes predominating, and most of the steeper slopes are on the west side of Town. Slopes greater than 15% are susceptible to soil erosion and can have severe limitations for septic systems and buildings. The town buildout analysis prepared by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission has identified steep slopes that are unsuitable for development, and this analysis subtracted these areas from the total land that is available for future growth.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Dudley's terrain of rolling hills, babbling brooks, quiet ponds and river valleys is interspersed with fields and forests. Winding stonewalled roads, historic homes and small farms add to the beauty of the town. A 1982 survey of the Commonwealth's scenic areas, prepared by the Department of Environmental Management, identified the entire Route 31 corridor and the central portion of Dudley as providing "... some of the finest pastoral scenery east of the Connecticut Valley." The Nichols College campus and other vantage points offer scenic views of the charming landscapes found throughout the town. As shown by the community survey,

most people who live in Dudley value these open spaces and rural qualities. The town is growing, and proactive planning is increasingly important to preserve the special places that residents enjoy and cherish.

Dudley has the eighth highest amount of agriculturally protected lands within its boundaries in Massachusetts. This protected farmland only confirms Dudley's commitment to its agricultural roots in the community by passing the Dudley Right to Farm Act in 2016. The conservation of open space and agricultural land arose in response to the trend of low-density development along the metropolitan fringe in Dudley.

WATER RESOURCES

Dudley's surface drainage network of streams, ponds and wetlands is the direct result of its topography and soils. These surface waters are the most important feature to consider in open space planning. Phil Lewis, who based Wisconsin's open space plan on drainage networks, refers to them as a "string of pearls" where rivers and brooks are the "string" that connects the "pearls" of ponds, wetlands, wildlife habitats, rich flood plain soils, historic sites and other important community resources.

Watersheds

The network of rivers and streams in town can be divided into drainage basins, also known as watersheds. A watershed is the land from which rain or snow melt flows to a waterway. Drainage basins can be subdivided into smaller sub-watersheds of the tributaries to a larger river system. Slightly more than half of Dudley lies within the Quinebaug River watershed (11.4 square miles), with the remainder in the French River watershed (10.4 square miles). Dudley's portion of the Quinebaug River watershed has a parallel drainage pattern of elongated landforms that constrict and direct the drainage pattern while the French River watershed has "dendritic" drainage. This drainage pattern can be further divided into the five sub-watersheds outlined below.

1. Several unnamed brooks drain most of the town west of Route 31 (4,685 acres) and flow directly into the Quinebaug River. Silvestri Pond and Blood Pond are in this drainage.
2. Tufts Brook drains 2,632 acres in the middle of town and then flows to its confluence with the Quinebaug River in Connecticut. Conant Pond is in this drainage.
3. Gore Pond is replenished by 688 adjacent acres and it overflows into Shepard Pond, which discharges to a small brook that flows across the town line to the South Charlton Reservoir.
4. Several small brooks that drain 3,698 acres in the northeast corner of Dudley, and which flow in a southerly direction through a series of ponds to the French River. Merino Pond, Peter Pond, Larner/Sawmill Pond, Wallis Pond, Hayden Pond, Mosquito/Tobins Pond, Easterbrook Pond, New Pond, Low Pond and Pierpont Meadow Pond are in this drainage. Pierpont Pond has a dike on its southern end that results in water flowing north into Charlton.

5. Several streams, including Potash Brook, flow southeasterly into the French River. This 2,301-acre drainage in the southeast corner of Dudley includes Packard Pond and Perry Pond.

Waterways

Several small streams in Leicester are headwaters of the French River, which then flows through Oxford to form Dudley's eastern border with Webster. The French River flows beside downtown areas in both communities, then south past the state line to its confluence with the Quinebaug River in West Thompson, Connecticut. There are two dams on the French River in Dudley and shoreline development ranges from moderate to light.

The Quinebaug River headwaters are in Warren and Brimfield. The Quinebaug flows in a south easterly direction past Sturbridge Village and former mills in Southbridge, then diagonally across the southwest corner of Dudley to the Connecticut state line. After joining with the French River, the Quinebaug flows southerly and into the Thames River. There is one dam near West Dudley and there has been little development of the Quinebaug shoreline.

In addition to these rivers, Tufts Brook and Potash Brook are the largest streams in town. Tufts Brook begins in the middle of town and flows southerly to its confluence with the Quinebaug in Connecticut. Potash Brook begins near the Shepherd Hill Regional High School, flowing south easterly to join with the French River just downstream of the railroad bridge. Both brooks are free-flowing. There has been light development along Tufts Brook, and more intensive building in the Potash Brook corridor.

Water Bodies

Prepared by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, the Dudley Master Plan (2000) identified 14 water bodies greater than 10 acres in size, as well as smaller ponds. Many small ponds and reservoirs were created in the 1800s to provide waterpower to the Town's mills. The plan provided data and descriptions of all named water bodies in Dudley. This report also identifies ponds in Ardlock Acres and Sunnyside Pond. All three ponds are in the French River sub-watershed. Significant waterbodies are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Significant Waterbodies in Dudley

Name	Sub-watershed location	Size in acres	Free-Flowing or Dammed	Shoreline Development Activity
Gore/Baker Pond	Gore	169 (94 in Dudley) (74 in Charlton)	One dam	Light
Pierpont Pond	Merino	90 (82 Dudley) (5 Charlton)	One dike	Moderate-to-light
Shepherd Pond	Gore	18	One dam	Light
Hayden Pond	Merino	41	Free-flowing	Moderate
New Pond	Merino	30	One dam	Light
Wallis Pond	Merino	23	One dam	Minimal
Larner/Sawmill Pond	Merino	25	One dam	Light
Peter Pond	Merino	44	One dam	Light
Merino/High Pond	Merino	72	Two dams	Heavy
Blood Pond	Quinebaug	21 (6 in Dudley) (15 in Charlton)	Free-flowing	None
Sylvestri Pond	Quinebaug	18	One dam	Minimal
Mosquito/Tobins Pond	Merino	9	Free-flowing	Minimal
Easterbrook Pond	Merino	5	Free-flowing	Minimal
Packard Pond	French	6	Free-flowing	Light
Conant Pond	Tufts	1	Free-flowing	Minimal
Perry Pond	French	8 (3 in Dudley) (5 in Thompson)	One dam	None

Source: MA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and dam data provided by the former Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Division of Dam Safety.

Some of the dams pose a significant risk of loss of life and property damage if dam failure occurs. Since 2000, two Merino Pond dams had a “high hazard” designation. The Town accepted ownership of these dams, which were previously under private ownership. New state regulations will require owners to conduct engineering inspections of their dams and prepare emergency response plans. In 1998, Dudley received funding to repair the Merino Pond dams and the Wallis Pond dam.

The 2000 Dudley Master Plan explains that Dudley's ponds rarely exceed 10 feet in depth and are subject to sedimentation and high nutrient levels. This plan notes the town's three deepest water bodies, as identified by the University of Massachusetts Water Resources Research Center in 1972: Hayden Pond with a maximum depth of 33 feet; Merino Pond, with a maximum depth of 20 feet; and Pierpont Pond, with a maximum depth of 14 feet.

Shorelines of ponds are mostly privately owned, but visitors occasionally use non-motorized boats/canoes on some of the ponds. Most ponds in Town have weed problems, which occur when extra nutrients act as fertilizer and cause too much plant growth. This condition upsets the balance of the pond ecosystem and results in less diverse aquatic life. Most of Dudley's ponds are undergoing eutrophication, which is a process of increased nutrient loading into a waterbody.

Variable Millfoil, Water Chestnut and Elodea are three problem weeds affecting ponds in town. Benthic matting is somewhat effective for weed control in shallow spots but is difficult to install in deeper water (matting covers weeds and blocks sunlight). Herbicides are an effective control at all depths but are expensive and need to be reapplied every two to three years by licensed applicators. Mechanical removal of weeds is another control measure, but this method is labor-intensive. Weeds remain a persistent issue in town and consulting with aquatic specialists or local environmental agencies can provide valuable guidance in selecting the most appropriate weed control methods.

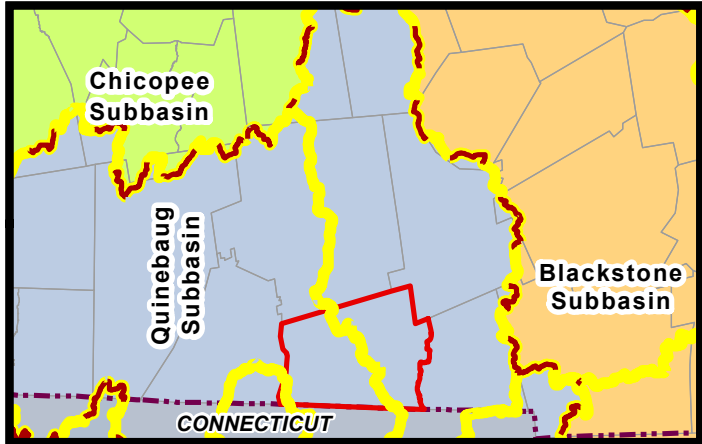
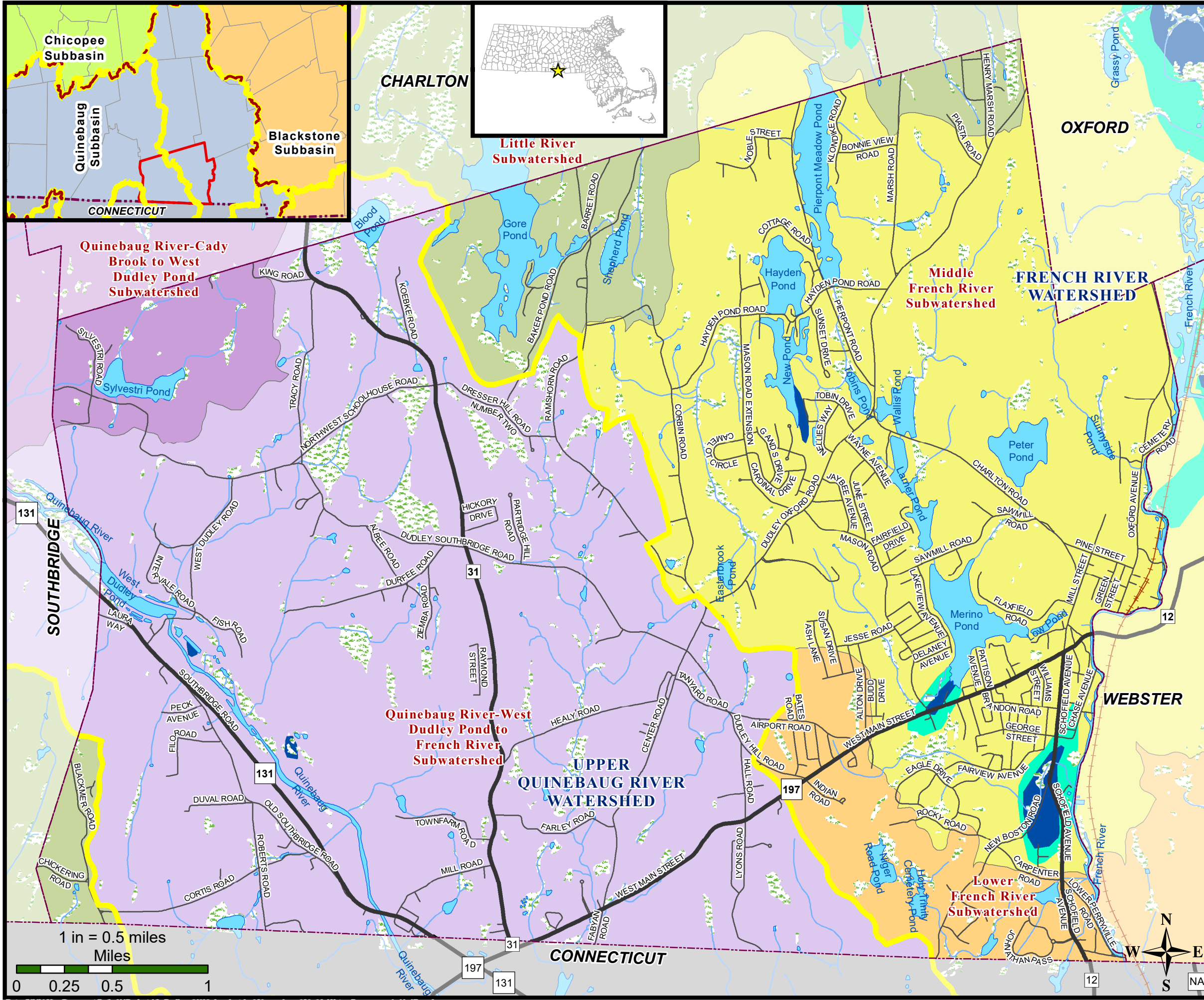
Land uses and stormwater controls greatly affect the quantity and quality of water that drain into ponds. Municipal wastewater, industrial discharges, non-point source pollution, and the Millenium Power Plant in Charlton negatively affect and cause water quality issues within Dudley. These existing and future development patterns also determine the condition of waters that flow from Dudley, which affect the health of rivers, ponds and water supplies in downstream communities. State agencies can provide information and expertise to help prevent damage to the town's water resources. Additionally, there are citizen groups working to protect and restore waters in the Dudley area, including the Central Massachusetts chapter of the Congress of Lakes and Ponds (COLAP). These groups can serve as additional resources.

Flood Hazards

Dudley is mainly upland, and most of the town is located away from rivers and ponds. Westville Lake in Southbridge and Sturbridge also helps to prevent flooding on the Quinebaug. However, narrow, 100-year floodplain areas occur along many of the towns streams and ponds (see Map 7). There are 939 acres (6.7% of the Town's total land area) that lie within the 100-year floodplain. The most extensive floodplain areas are found along the French River and Quinebaug River, but the Hodges Village Flood Control Dam in the Town of Oxford has mitigated flooding problems on the French River. Widths of flood hazard areas vary according to the topography and land uses. Effective drainage controls for proposed developments in town can avoid local flooding problems downstream.

Numerous flooding events have occurred in Dudley over the years. Potash Brook is an area of concern and has a history of flooding. Major areas of Dudley, such as West Main Street, Route 197, Route 131, and Route 12 are areas surrounding Potash Brook are also at a higher risk of flooding. Frequent draining issues and history of flooding create a variety of safety concerns, especially as critical infrastructure such as the police station and firehouse are more susceptible to flooding events.

Town of Dudley
2022-2029
Open Space & Recreation Plan



Legend

- Town Boundary
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Active Rail Service
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands

Aquifers

- High Yield (> 300 gpm)
- Medium Yield (100-300 gpm)

NRCS HUC Subbasin Boundary

- NRCS HUC Watershed Boundary

NRCS HUC Subwatersheds

- Little River
- Lower French River
- Middle French River
- Quinebaug River-Cady Brook to West Dudley Pond
- Quinebaug River-West Dudley Pond to French River

Source: Data provided by the Town of Dudley, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA), massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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Wetlands

Science has found that wetlands have important functions and are especially valuable resources. Wetlands store water for recharge of aquifers and reduction of flood damage and serve as natural filters that remove pollution from water sources. These highly productive areas provide food for sport and commercial fisheries, as well as habitats that support many kinds of wildlife.

The reintroduction of beavers has created many new wetlands. Wherever a suitable site exists, beavers may build dams. The flooding of water behind beaver dams and their cutting of trees within approximately fifty feet of their ponds creates areas where there are no live trees. Increased sunlight and water promote the growth of wetland plants. After several years at one site, available food is usually consumed, and the beavers move to a new place. Gradually the dams rot away, the wetland dries up and another succession of vegetative types moves toward a mature forest. Beavers usually return and begin the cycle again before a fully mature forest develops. This process maintains a rich and varied wildlife habitat next to streams and provides all the other benefits of wetlands as well.

There are about 510 acres of wetlands in town, covering roughly 3.6% of the total land area. The amounts of wetlands in each of Dudley's five sub-watersheds are:

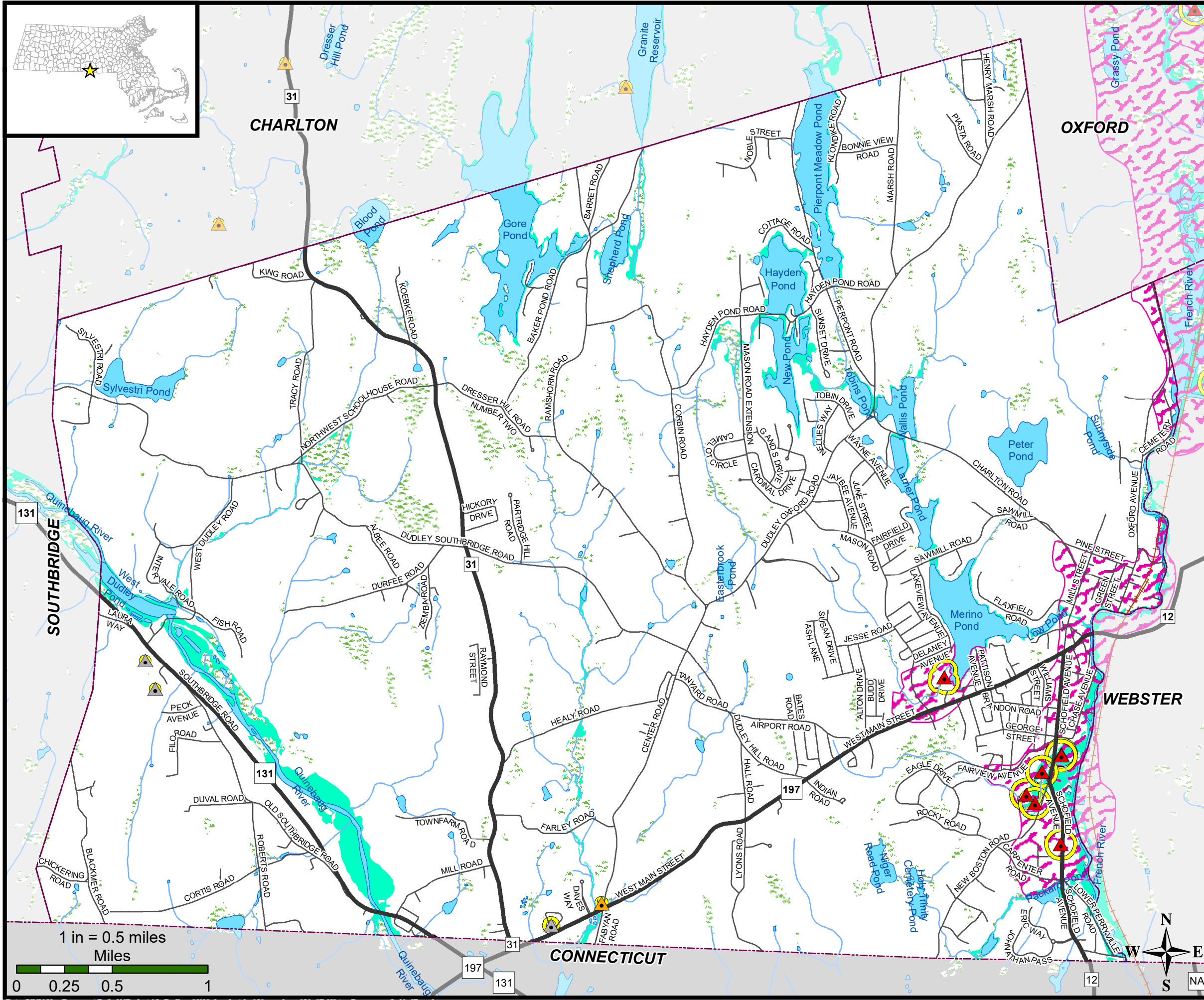
- 207 acres in the Quinebaug River drainage area;
- 89 acres in the Tufts Brook drainage area;
- 37 acres in the Gore Pond drainage area;
- 112 acres in the Merino Pond drainage area; and
- 64 acres in the French River drainage area.

These wetlands are commonly found on the floodplain areas along perennial brooks. They help to maintain stream flows and preserve the quality of water resources. There are several large wetlands located near Route 31 in the northwest corner of Dudley (see Map 6).

Wetlands acreage in town has increased due to increased dam activity.

The state's Wetlands Protection Act affords protection for wetlands, streams, open water bodies and land subject to flooding. Any proposed alteration of these resources or land within 100 feet requires review by the Dudley Conservation Commission. Some alteration of the 100-foot buffer may be allowed by issuance of an Order of Conditions by the Commission. Additionally, the Rivers Protection Act amends the Wetlands Protection Act, MGL Chapter 131 Section 40, and provides protection of perennial waterways within the Riverfront Area. In most municipalities, the Riverfront Area is 200 feet wide on each side of the river, as measured from the mean high-water line. In Dudley, no permit shall be granted for work in the Riverfront Area that would result in significant adverse impact, and no permit shall be granted if there is a substantially equivalent economic alternative with less adverse impacts on the Riverfront Area. In 2008, Dudley adopted the Conservation Commission by-law to further protect wetland areas and enforce more stringent bylaws than the Wetlands Protection Act.

Town of Dudley
2022-2029
Open Space & Recreation Plan



Legend

- Town Boundary
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Active Rail Service
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- DEP Approved Zone I (03/2022)
- Approved Wellhead Protection Areas- Zone II (03/2022)
- FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer
- 100-year Flood Area (FEMA DFIRM 6/21/2023)
- Public Water Supplies (03/2022)
- Community Groundwater Well
- Non-Transient Non-community
- Transient Non-Community

Source: Data provided by the Town of Dudley, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA), massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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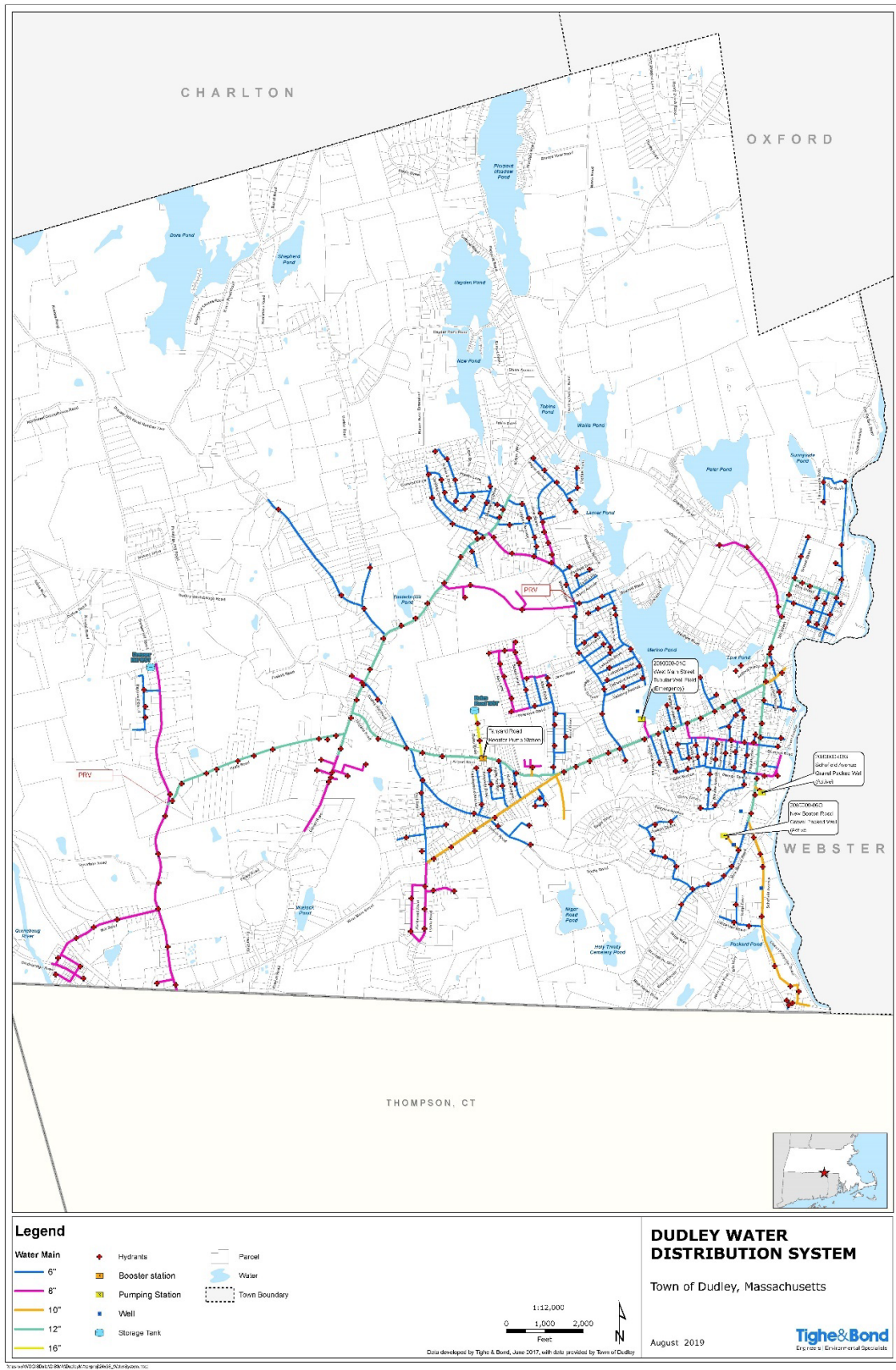
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Water Supply

Dudley's water supply comes from three Town-owned wells that are situated on glacial sand and gravel deposits, which form aquifers containing large quantities of groundwater. One well field is located at the southern end of Merino Pond, near West Main Street and Mason Road, and two well fields are located off Schofield Avenue, south of West Main Street. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has identified five medium-to-high yield aquifers in Dudley. High yield aquifers can produce more than 300 gallons per minute and medium yield aquifers range between 100 to 300 gallons per minute. The Schofield Avenue aquifer is the source for two Town well-fields, and has 62 acres of medium-yield and 48 acres of high-yield aquifer. Another sand and gravel deposit at the south end of Merino Pond supplies the third well-field and has 28 acres of medium-yield and 7.5 acres of high-yield aquifer.

The Dudley Water Department provides approximately 650,000 gallons per day to 2,200 residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional customers, which is about two-thirds of the system's capacity. The current extent of the water system in Dudley is shown on the map prepared by the Town's engineering consultant, Tighe & Bond. Areas served by the Water Department include the older mill neighborhoods in the eastern part of Town and post war subdivisions that radiate out into the central part of Town. In summer, peak demands of 1,000,000 gallons per day equal the current capacity of the Town wells. The Zone II areas of contribution to the three well-fields have been delineated (see Figure 7). The Water Department owns only a portion of these recharge areas but can deny a proposed land use in the Zone II if it poses a threat to water quality. In 2002, the Dudley Water Department adopted a Water-Restriction bylaw. In 2020, standard drought monitoring and permitted withdrawal limits from water supply were enforced (Dudley Water Department 2021 Consumer Awareness Report).

There has been a moratorium on water connections since 1987, and the Water Department continues to investigate potential groundwater sources. Elimination of leaks allowed the Town to provide 50 new connections over the past year, but additional permits will not be issued until a new source is obtained. There are three small high yield aquifers in other parts of Town. One is located on the south end of New Pond, and two are found adjacent to the Quinebaug River. Dudley's largest aquifer is the Schofield Avenue aquifer. The *Dudley Master Plan 2000* notes that these aquifers may be too small to be used for future water supply sources.



VEGETATION

The vegetation in every community is largely determined by land use, climate, elevation and aspect, and soils types. 55% of the Town of Dudley is considered forested, while another 15% is classified as vegetated. Dudley is situated in the Southern New England Coastal ecosystem, which includes diverse wildlife habitats ranging from forest covered hills, open fields, riverbanks, and wetlands. The landscape is dominated by secondary growth forests that have grown back from times when nearly all of the land was cleared for agriculture and timber. Most of these forests are on upland sites that are fairly dry and well-drained. Deciduous trees, such as oak and hickory, and conifers, such as white pine and hemlock, are common in upland forests. Understory shrubs include witch hazel, striped maple, blueberries, and a variety of herbaceous plants. In addition to upland sites, forested wetlands are found throughout the town.

Open fields exist in all parts of Dudley. There are more than 2,000 acres of pasture and cropland and hayfields. Numerous fruits are grown, including squash, pumpkins and blueberries, and there are several Christmas tree farms in town. Hayfields and other agricultural areas offer important habitats, especially for songbirds and waterfowl. Species like bobolink and killdeer rely on open fields for nesting sites. Many declining populations of songbirds use recently abandoned cropland for nesting, and these areas provide cover and food sources. Since most of these open lands are privately owned, working with their owners is important to sustaining these resources. There are 2,494 acres of permanently protected open space in Dudley.

This combination of open and wooded land adds to the rural beauty of the town. Many acres of woodlands are managed by private owners under the Chapter 61 program. The Conservation Commission has an opportunity to enhance conservation of town resources using these managed lands as examples of the benefits of good forestry practices. The Commission can also institute programs to promote sound forestry practices on all lands. Consultation is available from state foresters with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and Town departments can obtain this help to enhance management of Dudley's Forest resources. In addition, the Dudley Conservation Land Trust protects 350 acres of conservation lands. Forestry is an important part of the regional economy. Eventually, most private or publicly owned forested areas are logged. This supports a complex of forest-related industries. There is at least one sawmill in Town, and some homes in Dudley use cordwood as an important part of their heating.

Public Shade Trees

Dudley has a plethora of public shade trees. Over twenty species of shade trees are native to Dudley, including the Red Maple, Paper Birch, Copper Beech, and White Oak. Located all across Dudley, public shade trees can be found along the sides of streets, in Town-owned cemeteries, and on parcels of Town-owned land. Public shade trees cannot be trimmed, altered, or removed by members of the public. Instead, public shade trees are the responsibility of the Highway Superintendent, who serves as the Tree Warden. This allows the Town to control the number of public shade trees. There are numerous benefits to having public shade trees. These trees create a healthier environment for people to live and work in. Public shade trees provide shade from

sunlight and absorb rainwater. They also absorb emissions from automobiles. Public shade trees create a more aesthetically pleasing place to work and live, while also providing benefits to overall health and quality of life.

FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife

Dudley's scenic landscape of farms, forests, wetlands, ponds, streams and rivers help assure diverse habitats that sustain a healthy wildlife population. "Habitat" is a term used to describe an area suitable for a wildlife species, and refers to available food, shelter, nesting or reproductive areas, and access to water. The greater the diversity of habitats, the greater the variety of wildlife the Town can support.

As noted in the *Dudley Open Space and Recreation Plan, 1988-92*: "The uplands in Town range from rocky, wooded forests to rich agricultural land. Each type of habitat is inhabited by different species of wildlife. For example, pheasants and woodchuck are found on open land and brushy areas, foxes are found in woodlands and agricultural areas, deer are in wooded areas and grouse are found in areas of early forest succession." This document also notes that: "Tobin or Mosquito Pond ... is especially important for waterfowl and muskrats."

Common mammals found in Town include: White-tailed deer, Coyote, Red Fox, Raccoon, Fisher, Mink, Bobcat, Striped Skunk, Porcupine, Opossum, Eastern Cottontail Rabbit, Beaver, Muskrat, along with squirrels, moles, voles, bats, shrews and mice. Reptiles including various snakes and turtles are common, as well as frogs and several types of salamanders. Many species of birds are abundant, including game birds (such as Pheasant and Woodcock), waterfowl (such as Wood Duck and Canada Geese) and an array of songbirds. Fishing birds such as Osprey, Kingfisher and Great Blue Heron frequent the waters of Dudley, and raptors such as Northern Harrier and Red-Tailed Hawk hunt for rodents and frogs in open fields and marshes.

It is often the lack of an appropriate habitat that makes a species of plant or animal threatened or endangered. Dudley is rich in wildlife partly due to the large tracts of natural areas with little human activity that degrades the habitats. The habitat is naturally varied by slopes of varying grades and orientations, varying soils and the activity of beavers. The habitat is artificially varied and enriched by wildlife management and some agricultural practices.

Hunting of game species provides recreation opportunities for Dudley sportsmen and women. State-owned lands in nearby towns are open for hunting, and many acres of private property are also accessible. Stocking programs of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife augment upland game birds and other species at popular hunting areas throughout the region.

Wildlife Corridors

Wildlife corridors are natural habitats for wildlife to migrate along. The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) is the state agency responsible for protecting the approximately 190 species of animals and 258 species of plants that are listed as Endangered, Threatened or of Special Concern in Massachusetts. The NHESP identifies several core wildlife habitats in Dudley, including 2 Exemplary or Priority Natural Community Cores, 2 Forest Cores, 1 Wetland Core, 1 Aquatic Core, and 7 Species of Conservation Concern Cores. Over 1,000 acres of core habitat land is present in the Town. These core habitats are typically

found near streams, rivers, and ponds. These core habitats are vital to preserving the wildlife in Town. It is important to not only protect the NHESP habitats and the core habitats, but also to protect corridors between these habitats for species to travel without disruption. These would include perennial and intermittent stream corridors, power transmission lines, open fields, and large tracts of open space, especially those remaining in private ownership. There lacks a clear identification of wildlife corridors in the Town of Dudley. Therefore, it is recommended that the Town work with wildlife specialists to more accurately delineate wildlife corridors. This would allow the Town to take further action to protect wildlife and endangered habitats.

Fisheries

Dudley's streams, rivers and ponds offer excellent fishing. Stocking programs of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) annually release trout into the French River. Smaller wild Brook Trout can be found in back woods streams with a little effort, and the DFW listing of wild and holdover trout streams includes Tufts Brook, as well as brooks in neighboring towns. The many fertile ponds in Dudley are not stocked but offer opportunities for anglers to pursue warm water species such as bass, pickerel, perch, sunfish and horned pout.

The 2003 Audubon publication, *Inland Fishes of Massachusetts*, provides an inventory of all freshwater species in the state. This Audubon guide shows fish found in Dudley waters include: Common Shiner, Golden Shiner, Blacknose Dace, Fallfish, White Sucker, Creek Chubsucker, Yellow Bullhead, Brown Bullhead, Channel Catfish, Northern Pike, Chain Pickerel, Brook Trout, White Perch, Pumpkinseed, Bluegill, Smallmouth Bass, Largemouth Bass, Black Crappie, Swamp Darter, Tessellated Darter and Yellow Perch.

Special Habitats

The NHESP provides maps of "priority habitats" that show the habitats of rare plants and animals, as well as "estimated habitats" where rare wildlife have been observed over a 25-year period. The maps of "priority" and "estimated" habitats coincide for most locations.

The NHESP maps show four important habitats in Dudley (see Map 9), which include:

- An area beside the Quinebaug River that extends across the Dudley-Southbridge line;
- A narrow corridor along most of the French River in Dudley;
- An estimated habitat that includes a small wetland east of Gore Pond; and
- An area northeast of Sylvestri Pond that extends into Charlton.

Rare species found in Town include: Marbled Salamander, Spotted Turtle, Triangular Floater mussel, Creeper mussel, and two vascular plants – Bristly Buttercup and Culver's Root. To protect these species, their exact locations are not made available to the public.

The Massachusetts Endangered Species Act provides protection for priority habitats and requires review by the Town Conservation Commission of proposed land uses that can affect these areas. Estimated habitats of rare wildlife identified by the NHESP are also regulated by the Wetlands Protection Act. NHESP will determine if an area to be altered by a development will have an adverse impact on a state-listed species and recommend measures needed to protect the habitat.

In addition, NHESP has prepared a statewide BioMap that identifies "Core Habitat" areas of rare species, and "Supporting Natural Landscape" areas that buffer Core Habitat and provide habitat for common species in Massachusetts. There is a small "Core Habitat" area

beside the Quinebaug River at the Dudley-Southbridge line, and a large “Supporting Natural Landscape” area between the Quinebaug River and Route 31 (see Map 9).

Vernal Pools - These small ponds occur in early spring and usually dry up in summer. Vernal pools host a unique biotic community because they are fish-less and allow salamanders, frogs, and other species to breed undisturbed by predators. Additionally, animals that live entirely on land often use these pools for watering holes, grazing on emergent vegetation and nesting materials. These temporary pools form in depressions on frozen ground and store water, which slowly percolates into the soil to replenish the ground water.

Map 9 shows likely locations of vernal pools identified from aerial photographs. Certification of pools by the state enables these habitats to be protected from impacts of land development. While there are many potential vernal pools in Town, most of these have not yet been confirmed. The NHESP relies on local investigation of vernal pools and has published guidebooks to assist Town boards and residents in documenting their occurrence.

Town of Dudley 2022-2029 Open Space & Recreation Plan

Legend

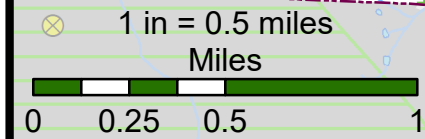
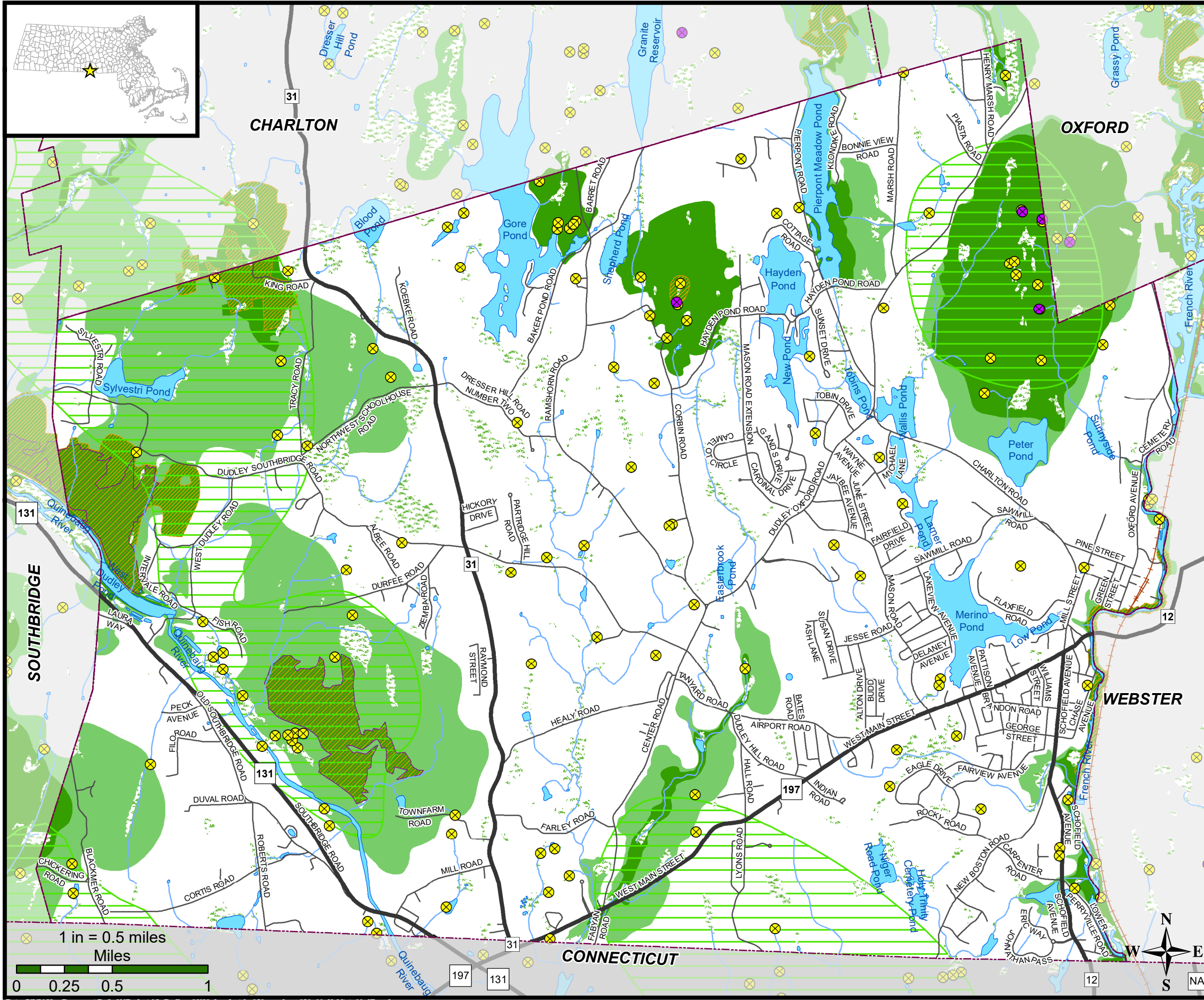
- Town Boundary
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Active Rail Service
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- NHESP Certified Vernal Pools (12/2022)
- NHESP Potential Vernal Pools (NOT equivalent to Certified Vernal Pools)
- NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species (2017)
- NHESP/TNC BioMap Elements
 - Core Habitat
 - Critical Natural Landscape
- NHESP/TNC BioMap Regional Components
 - Regional Rare Species
 - Regional Connectivity

Source: Data provided by the Town of Dudley, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA), massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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Management

Wildlife and fish are impacted by the loss or degradation of their habitats. The Town can have a positive effect by protecting habitats, including wetlands that are important for many animals and birds. By storing water, wetlands also reduce flooding and keep stream flows at higher levels during dry times, improving the habitats of fish and other aquatic species. The wetlands protection review process offers a key means to avoid unnecessary damage to Dudley's aquatic ecosystems from proposed land uses.

Management will also be needed to manage invasive species. Two invasive insects, the gypsy moth and emerald ash borer have been a concern in Dudley. If these invasive insects are not managed, the trees that are impacted by these species – primarily oak, birch, and ash trees – will be more vulnerable and susceptible to intense storm events and drought, which will only exacerbate in the future due to climate change. Street trees will also be impacted by climate change and invasive species, and pose further risks to overhead powerlines, which is of critical concern as Dudley does not have a sufficient tree trimming fund.

As it grows, Dudley will be faced with the challenge of meeting the increased recreational needs of its population. In addition to acquiring land to preserve habitat and provide outdoor recreation opportunities, steps can be taken to manage these resources. These include enhancement of existing habitats, water management practices, stabilization of streams, pollution abatement and other conservation measures. Guidance and information on these matters is available from many state and federal agencies, as well as non-profit organizations.

SCENIC RESOURCES AND UNIQUE ENVIRONMENTS

Scenic Landscapes

Dudley is a beautiful, quiet town with a pleasing rural character defined by its rolling hills, farm fields and forested areas. As noted previously, the central part of town was cited as an especially scenic landscape in the 1982 *Massachusetts Landscape Inventory: A Survey of the Commonwealth's Scenic Areas*, which was prepared by the Department of Environmental Management (see Map 5). Historically, most of Dudley's hills were dotted by its numerous farms, underscoring its rural character. Although some farm fields have vanished, many are under Agricultural Preservation Restrictions and remain as they were earlier in the century. In various locations, there are unobstructed views of pastoral countryside. This picturesque setting makes Dudley an attractive fall foliage destination.

Many local roads are winding lanes with woods, fields, stone walls, flower gardens and historic homes that enhance the Town's rural qualities. Dudley has listed Baker Pond Road as a "scenic road" with the state, and Marsh Road, Healy Road and Center Road also merit this designation. Moving forward, Dudley can work with the Town of Charlton to designate Route 31 as a scenic highway along its entire length in both towns.

Several locations in town offer scenic views, including Nichols College, Low Pond, part of West Main Street, and protected farmland along Dudley-Southbridge Road. There also is an overlook near Southbridge Road that provides scenic views of Connecticut landscapes.

Other landscape types add to the pastoral charm of Dudley. The many beautiful ponds are popular resources that have been cherished by generations, although these are now experiencing serious problems. Clear streams splashing over rocks, signs of deer and wild turkey foraging, beaver lodges, and sunset views of thick woods are other pleasant scenery found in town. These scenes may be taken for granted but are slowly disappearing. Private farm and forest lands contribute many public benefits, so it is important to work with landowners to ensure the future of Dudley's scenic landscapes.

Town of Dudley
2022-2029
Open Space & Recreation Plan

- Scenic Features**
- | ID | Name |
|----|----------------------|
| 1. | French River |
| 2. | Black Tavern |
| 3. | Stevens Mill |
| 4. | Quinebaug River |
| 5. | Quinebaug Rail Trail |
| 6. | Old Record Factory |
| 7. | Grand Trunk |
| 8. | Old Stagecoach Trail |

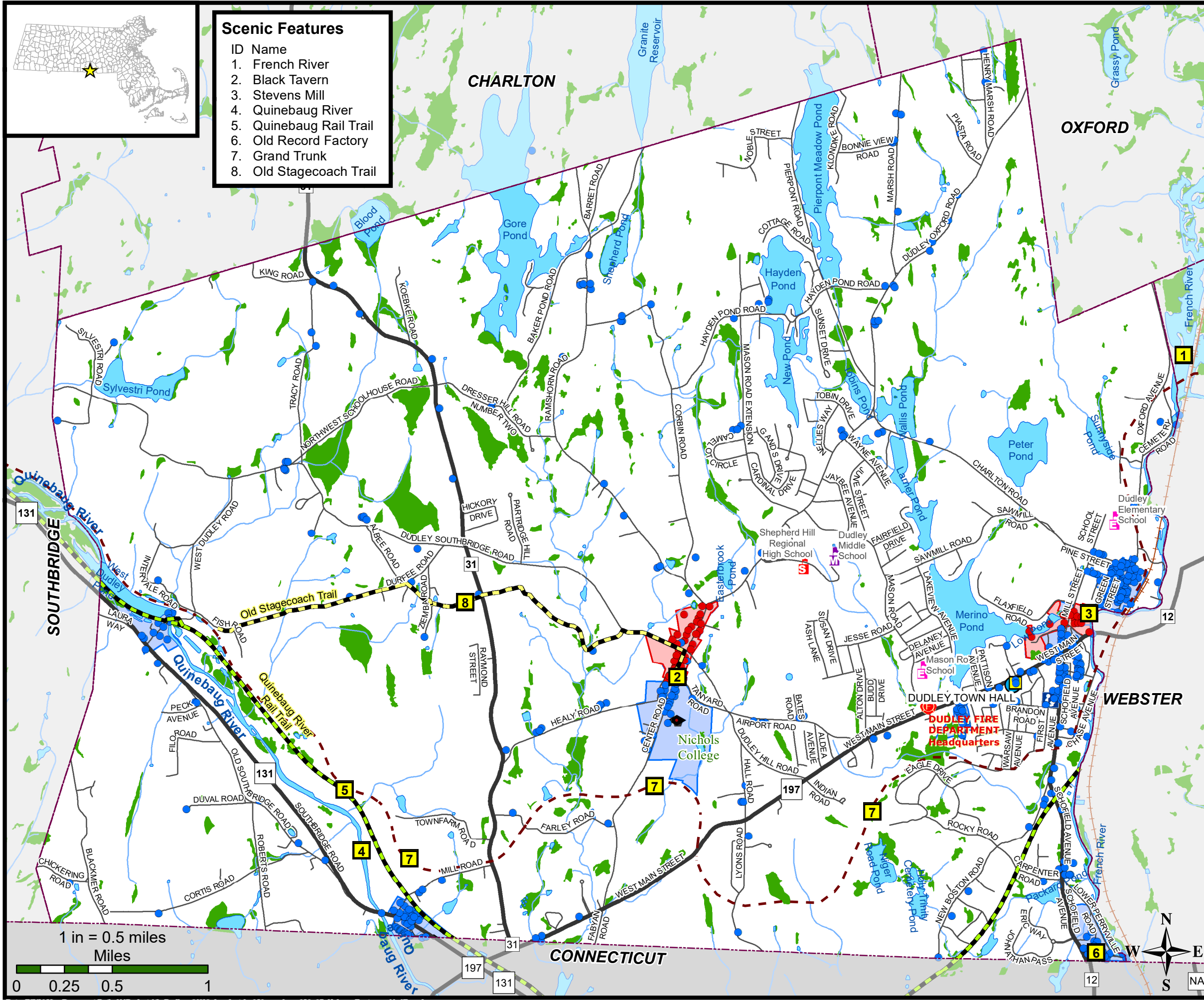
Legend

- # Locally Identified Unique Sites
- Town Boundary
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Active Rail Service
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Town Hall
- College or University
- Public Library
- Police Station
- Fire Stations
- Schools (Pre-K through High School) (05/2022)
 - Public Elementary
 - Public Middle
 - Public Secondary
- MHC Historic Inventory (7/2022)
 - Nat'l Register of Historic Places
 - Inventoried Property
 - Nat'l Register of Historic Places
 - Inventoried Area

Source: Data provided by the Town of Dudley, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA), massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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Cultural, Archeological and Historic Features

Dudley currently has two historic districts designated as National Register Districts:

- **Stevens Linen Works Historic District:** Home to the first and last flax-spinning and linen-weaving factory in the United States, centered around the impressive granite mill constructed by linen manufacturer Henry Hale Stevens during the Civil War. The district encompasses a range of industrial and storage buildings, as well as structures associated with the mill's operations, situated near ponds, a river, and sparsely developed land surrounding the mill.
- **Dudley Hill Historic District:** A compact, medium-density neighborhood with a mix of civic and residential buildings, characterized by its linear village layout along Center Road and Dudley Oxford Road, encompassing two blocks of a Colonial-era Road. The district features various historical landmarks such as old houses, schools, a cemetery, a church, and open fields, representing the area's three centuries of growth and serving as the geographic, religious, and political center of Dudley since its incorporation in 1732.

Many other building and sites in town have historical significance, including these inventoried areas, most of which are eligible for National Register nomination:

- **Perryville District:** A mill village in Dudley, Massachusetts, established around the Josiah H. Perry Woolen Factory in the 1820s, featuring worker residences, and components of mill infrastructure, with Greek Revival and Victorian Eclectic style houses, canals, raceways, and dams. The area served as a smaller industrial residential area similar in size and population to West Dudley.
- **Progress Avenue Area:** Also known as Chaseville, this area consists of 16 early 20th-century houses on a cul-de-sac, along with three brick houses on West Main Street. The area is characterized by flat topography, with houses primarily made of wood with elements of Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, English Revival styles, and Cape Cod form, with some modifications such as re-siding and modern windows. These buildings occupy regular parcels of land along with a well-preserved collection of brick houses. The subdivision maintains architectural consistency.
- **Merino Village:** Bordered by Mill Street, Pine Street, and the French River, this area features 19th and early 20th-century vinyl-sided residential and commercial buildings in Greek Revival, Victorian Eclectic, and Colonial Revival styles. The area forms a company-planned village street grid with streets like Green Street, Chestnut Street, and Oak Street, while retaining a former rail passenger station, freight storehouse, social hall, and approximately 130 resources, with the Boston and Albany Railroad right of way and the French River serving as its eastern boundaries.
- **Dudley Center:** This area is adjacent to the Dudley Hill Historic District and has its own historical significance. Situated on Dudley Hill at the town's Colonial Period hilltop linear settlement, features approximately 40 historic resources along Center Road, serving residential, academic, religious, and civic purposes since the 18th century. The buildings represent various architectural styles, including Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, and Victorian Eclectic, surrounded by residential yards, open fields, and forested parcels, with notable features such as barns, outbuildings, stone walls, fences, a cemetery, war memorial, small common, and offering expansive views of the surrounding hills.
- **Quinebaug Village:** Located on Southbridge Road near the Connecticut state border, is a ca. 1870 industrial workers' residential area comprising 34 wood-framed houses, a mill owner's house, a war memorial, and the site of the demolished Eben S. Stevens Intervale Mill. The area features one and one-half-story duplexes and single-family residences,

with some Victorian Eclectic elements, though often modified with modern materials, and including non-architectural resources such as an athletic field and a war memorial.

- West Dudley: A 30-acre industrial area situated along the Quinebaug River, characterized by a concrete and brick mill complex, residential buildings including a Greek Revival style example, a former Victorian schoolhouse, steel truss and railroad bridges, a dam and powerhouse, and a rural intersection. This area is smaller and newer than other industrial areas in Dudley like Chaseville, Perryville, and Merino Village.

There are numerous other sites with historical significance throughout Dudley, which are mapped above.

Unusual Geologic Features

There are no remarkable geologic features to be seen in Dudley. Several buried faults exist in underlying bedrock formations, but none would seem to pose a threat of significant earthquakes. Numerous bedrock outcrops occur throughout the Town in shallow till soils. The unfinished Grand Trunk Railroad bed contains several locations where bedrock layers are visible.

It was noted that there is a large amount of arsenic in Town, which is part of a large vein running through New England. The arsenic levels are mitigated through standard water treatment procedures and were not cited as a threat to the water supply.

Unique Environments

There is no state-designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in Dudley. However, the Zoning Bylaws have created Conservation Districts to protect certain natural features. These special use regulations require land within the District to remain primarily undeveloped. Permitted uses include: farming, conservation, historic feature, hunting preserve, park, parkway, playground, wood lot, reforestation area, wildlife reservation, watershed and water supply protection area, and nature center. The four locally designated Conservation Districts are:

1. Pierpont Pond/Marsh Road District - an 80.5-acre area that includes Massachusetts Audubon Society land, a 16.5-acre privately-owned property, and two properties managed by the Dudley Conservation Commission.
2. Town Beach District - approximately 14 acres on Merino Pond that includes the Town Beach.
3. French River District - a narrow 18.7-acre strip of privately owned land that runs parallel to Oxford Avenue.
4. Mosquito Pond District - a 32-acre area that includes an 11.5 acre privately-owned parcel that is permanently protected by a conservation restriction.

The French River and the Quinebaug River are other unique places. They played a prominent role in the development of local water-powered industries. Due to public investments in wastewater treatment facilities, water quality has steadily improved and now offers opportunities for Dudley residents to enjoy the amenities of the French and Quinebaug Rivers. Recreation activities along these rivers are largely promoted by The Last Green Valley nonprofit stewardship organization, which stewards the 35-town Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor of Eastern Connecticut and South-Central Massachusetts.

Several regional features are closely associated with the French and Quinebaug corridors, including the former Grand Trunk rail line, the Quinebaug Rail Trail (formerly the P & W Southbridge rail bed), and the Old Stage Coach Trail. The Quinebaug Rail Trail is active and well-used. The historic Grand Trunk rail line and the Old Stage Coach trail also offer exciting prospects for creating new hiking/biking ways that can link the French and Quinebaug Rivers with existing open spaces such as the Ardlock Acres conservation area.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

There are several concerns regarding water resources in Dudley, including sewage treatment, storm water management, and community water supplies.

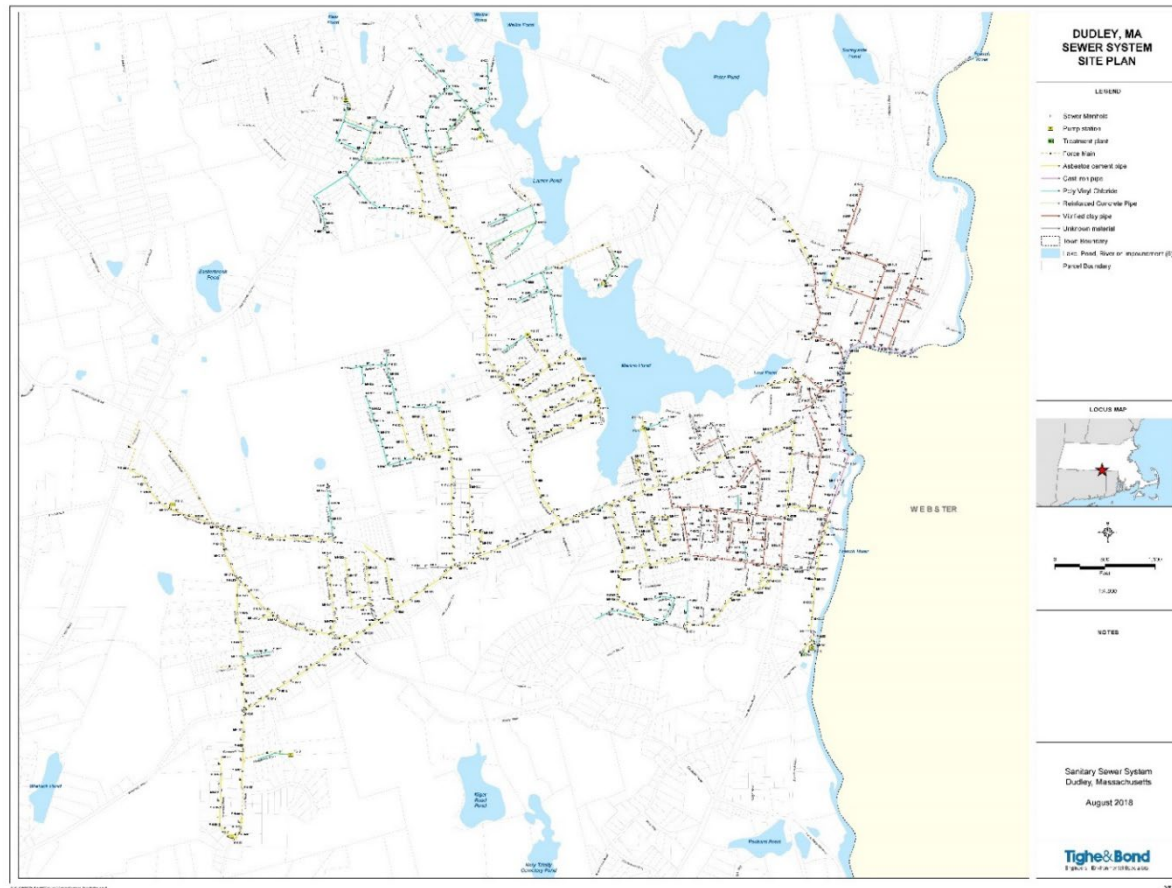
Sewage

Dudley's sewage is treated at the Webster Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) located at 38 Hill Street in Webster. Treated wastewater is discharged into the French River approximately one mile north of the Connecticut-Massachusetts state line. The WWTF is permitted to discharge 6.0 mgd, but typically treats about 3.6 mgd on an average day.

About half of Dudley residents are connected to the Dudley-Webster sewage treatment plant. Sewer lines on the east side of Dudley service about one-eighth of the total land area in town, and the other half of the population uses on-site disposal systems. The sewer system is plagued by high rates of infiltration due to extreme age of sewer mains and pipe materials that are prone to breakage. The Sewer Department is addressing the most pressing problems as funding permits. There is the possibility of the town re-stating a sewer betterment program if there is enough interest from residents.

The town's Sewer Department recently prepared an Infiltration/Inflow Study which identified numerous sewer mains that are in poor condition and need to be replaced. In 2022 Dudley contracted Tighe & Bond, Inc. to complete an Infiltration/Inflow (I/I) Mitigation Construction Project. The "Sewer and Manhole Rehabilitation Project" focused on sewer sub-systems one, two, and six in town. The town expects that this work will reduce the amount of infiltration/inflow affecting these sewer sub-systems.

The extent of the Dudley sewer system is shown below. The system was originally established to serve the older mill villages but has since expanded to include Nichols College in Dudley Hill, the commercial and industrial area along West Main Street, and north to include the Shepherd Hill High School and Middle School and adjacent neighborhoods. The sewer system consists of 20.7 miles of gravity mains, 0.5 miles of low-pressure force mains, and 571 manholes. There are currently approximately 1,800 sewer connections in the Town.



Many parts of Dudley are not suited to septic systems because there is groundwater near the surface, or the soils have poor filtering capacity. Failing septic systems are a problem for waterways and water bodies, and the *Dudley Master Plan 2000* notes this is an ongoing challenge, especially for unsewered areas in zoning districts that permit small lots.

The 2002 *Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP)* included a field survey of 109 residential properties to identify areas with failing on-site systems or marginal conditions that indicate the potential for system failures. This study found 10 failing systems and 14 marginal systems of 109 properties surveyed. The pre-1970 structures with failing or marginal systems were slightly more than the post-1970 structures. The CWMP explains that “...dense development has generally not occurred in areas of extremely limiting soils types; hence, widespread problems... have been avoided.”

This report also indicates there is need for “...additional septic system control measures, such as establishment of a Wastewater Management District regulating the timely maintenance and repair of systems.” In addition to the field survey, the CWMP reviewed Board of Health records between 1996-2002, which show there were 59 septic system failures and another 21 suspect systems. Based on the recent field survey information “... the most critical areas are the Dresser Hill, Leo Avenue, Raymond Avenue and Hickory Drive areas.” In addition, the CWMP points out that lakefront areas are also critical “... due to their proximity to recreational waters.”

Septic tanks need to be pumped out every two years. Increasing disposal costs may discourage people from doing this even though routine maintenance is much cheaper than replacing a failed septic system. The *Dudley Master Plan 2000* included recommendations to increase community awareness of proper maintenance and funding assistance available for repairing septic systems.

The *2021 Dudley Water Department Consumer Awareness Report* states that the Dudley Water/Sewer Department has encouraged residents in Water Supply Protection areas to take measures in the proper maintenance of septic systems, such as the aforementioned pumping out septic systems every two years, not using septic system cleaners, and not dumping hazardous substances down into septic systems.

The Dudley 2020 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan recommended that the town create a program to apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to construct new private septic systems as well as conduct preventative maintenance on, rebuild infrastructure within, and assess system vulnerability within septic systems townwide. It also recommended that the town invest in engineering, repairing, and replacing failing infrastructure within the public sewer system. Town residents who attended the MVP workshop stated that they would like more public education regarding flooding and drainage issues in homes with septic tanks.

Storm Water

“Non-point” pollution (i.e. common widespread sources rather than a single location) includes fertilizers, pesticides, erosion from land disturbances, road runoff, and other storm water discharges. The development of fields and woodlands for more intensive uses has increased impervious surfaces, which affect the quantity and quality of storm water draining into nearby streams and ponds. During summer months, the “first flush” of a passing thunderstorm is likely to release heated water, sediments and toxic pollutants at road drainage locations, which can prove lethal to aquatic life. Over time, cumulative impacts will reduce the populations and diversity of the insects, fish and other organisms found in aquatic ecosystems.

The Town adopted regulations in 2003 requiring storm water management plans for proposed subdivisions. Stormwater management plans are now routinely filed for proposed developments in town. They accomplish their intended purposes of eliminating sedimentation of water bodies and improving water quality of runoff. Dudley has also adopted an Erosion and Sediment Control Bylaw which mandates that there will be no direct discharge of storm water from Town roads into waterways. A storm water committee could be formed to work with Town boards to identify low-cost measures, such as vegetated buffers along roads and catch-basin inverts, which can mitigate existing problems. In addition, a storm water committee can be formed to work with Town boards to identify low-cost measures, such as vegetated buffers along roads and catch-basin inverts, which can mitigate existing problems. Environmental agencies, including the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service and the state Department of Environmental Protection, have publications that offer detailed information on storm water control measures.

Heavy rainfalls frequently overwhelm culverts in town because they are undersized to accommodate runoff. The Highway Department often must repair them as a result. The Town has applied for grants to improve this situation in certain locations

Shoreline development is a related concern affecting streams and ponds. Lawn care products and other household activities can add to other nutrient sources and overwhelm water bodies with nutrients that cause excessive algal blooms and other issues. Community education programs along with local bylaws such as the town's Erosion and Sediment Control Bylaw, and state regulations, such as the Wetlands Protection Act and the Rivers Protection Act, are important tools for ensuring healthy water for current and future generations.

Erosion and Sedimentation

Erosion can be a localized concern when vegetation is removed from development or during forest cutting, but it is generally not a widespread problem in Dudley. All developments are required to submit an erosion control plan to contain disturbed soil on-site and prevent sedimentation of water ways. The Conservation Agent inspects erosion control measures throughout the construction process and will order corrective measures if heavy rainfalls overwhelm protective barriers. The Planning Board's site plan and subdivision reviews contain strict requirements to prevent soil from moving off-site, and professional peer reviews of erosion plans ensure compliance with regulations. Upon completion of construction, bare soil is topped with vegetative cover to prevent future erosion.

Most developments today include detention ponds to collect rainwater to store runoff and minimize downstream flooding. These facilities store sediment-laden water during construction and can quickly amass a considerable amount of matter. The Town's development inspectors, including the Conservation Agent, Highway Superintendent, and the Planning Board's consulting engineer, will require a clean-out of these basins to insure they function properly until construction is complete. In addition, Dudley recently adopted a provision to require that new subdivisions provide easements to allow the Town access for maintenance of stormwater facilities. Detention basins must also be located on separate lots before the streets and utilities are brought forward for acceptance by the Town.

Chronic Flooding

With the French and Quinebaug Rivers flowing through Dudley, the Town experienced significant flooding in the past. However, the Hodges Village food control structure in Oxford has provided greater protection to downstream communities on the French River. Similarly, the Westville Lake flood control project in Sturbridge and Southbridge on the Quinebaug River protects the western side of Dudley from large flooding events.

Several areas of localized flooding can present hazards to property and affect emergency services. The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan adopted in 2020 identified flooding as one of the top four hazards to affect Dudley. (The other three are wind events, winter storms, and extreme weather.) The Plan instructs that with increasing temperatures due to climate change, the Town should expect increased precipitation in all seasons, which will increase the risk for flash floods. The Plan identified several spots in Dudley that have experienced chronic flooding:

"Flooding. Extreme weather in recent years demonstrates how the various hazards impact the town. There have been numerous flooding events over the years. Potash Brook is a town-wide area of concern and has a history of flooding. Areas surrounding Potash Brook, including West Main Street, are at higher risk of flood events. Specific areas with critical infrastructure have been shown to be prone to flooding, thereby creating a variety of safety concerns. Areas with frequent drainage issues include Route 197, Route 131, and Route 12." (page 10)

It should be noted that Dudley has submitted an application under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) to replace three under-sized culvers on Potash Brook. The Plan referenced data from the Massachusetts Climate Clearinghouse to reinforce the point that climate change will have consequences in terms of increased risk of flooding.

“For the Quinebaug and French River Basin, where Dudley is located, projections show an expected increase in precipitation overall, with the greatest increase during winter. The number of days with more than 2” of rainfall, potentially leading to inland flooding, is also expected to increase with the average expected to be close to 15 days by the year 2100 compared with approximately 10 days now. Consecutive dry days and days above 90 degrees Fahrenheit are expected to increase, leading to drought. Days at the wintery-mix level of cold are also expected to increase, leading to a greater likelihood of freezing rain in the winter. Higher wind in the summer and storm severity increases with warmer temperatures.”

Forestry

As shown in Table 2 in Section 3 above, a 2016 land cover analysis shows that 46% of the Town is in deciduous forest and 10% is in evergreen forest. Forests in Dudley are not well suited for commercial cutting operations. Land will be cleared for new growth, but with mostly small-scale developments and ANR land divisions, there has not been a large reduction in forest cover. The extensive forest cover in private ownership and poor development suitability in many locations means that opportunities still exist to acquire large tracts of forested land for hiking and natural resource protection.

Waste Disposal

A growing population will generate increased waste, including more hazardous household materials. The Dudley Recycling facility constantly seeks opportunities to contract with vendors and increase the amount of waste that is recycled. Recently, the facility has struggled to stay open as much as it would like due to a lack of funding; it is currently only open on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Dudley has had a history of recycling a high percentage of materials for many years; through increased funding and effort, this could remain the case in the future.

The Town would like to appoint a hazardous waste coordinator so that household hazardous waste collection days can be restarted. Hazardous waste recycling originating in the town currently can be brought to a facility in Sutton. The Town aims to better inform residents about hazardous waste drop-off sites near town which are available to the public.

Town Landfill

The Town Landfill at 7 Indian Road was closed and capped in 1999. State policy permits development of solar farms on closed landfills provided the integrity of the cap is maintained. The Town partnered with a private solar company and entered into a long-term lease to use the site for this purpose. In January 2023 MassDEP issued a post closure use permit to construct a 1,830 kw DC ground-mounted solar array and 1,250 kw AC battery energy storage system on the landfill. The Planning Board granted site plan approval for the project. Construction began in the summer of 2023 and will be completed in 2024.

Unfortunately, groundwater monitoring around the landfill revealed levels of PFAS that exceeded the allowable safe drinking water limit. The Town has had to conduct additional testing in the surrounding area, which revealed that several private wells in the Rocky Hill Estates subdivision

have concentrations above the standard. The Town has installed point of entry treatment (POET) systems in several homes. The exact source of the contamination has not been pinpointed but the landfill and an adjacent industrial use are potential sources. The Town is considering extending a water main to the development to ensure safe drinking water for all the homes in the subdivision.

Water Supply

The current well-fields in Town are very near capacity on peak demand days. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection ordered the Water Dept to implement a non-essential outdoor water restriction between May 1st and September 30th of 2023. Prior rapid growth makes additional water sources a pressing issue today. The town's growth in terms of new residential buildings has slowed in the past twenty years and especially in the past three years. However, to prepare for the possible resurgence in rapid growth, an extended period of slow growth, or prolonged droughts, it will be necessary to develop an additional supplementary water source as a precautionary measure. The Town should prepare its water infrastructure for more homes and residents if the number of building permits issued increases in the coming decade. Along with additional supplies, the Water Department and Town boards will need to prevent impacts to existing water supply aquifers from land uses and development activities.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection prepared a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) Report for the Dudley Water Department in 2002, which includes an analysis of land uses located in the Town's water supply protection areas. This analysis found that wells in town were at a high risk of contamination due to a lack of hydrogeologic barriers as well as existing land uses in the water supply (Zone II) areas. Another concern cited in the report was unsewered residential areas and road drainage systems contaminating the groundwater that supplies town wells. The SWAP Report recommended specific actions to protect the Town's water including the formation of a wellhead protection committee, the review of current Aquifer Protection District bylaws, the preparation of a Wellhead Protection Plan, and the creation of more educational programs for homeowners and businesses located in Zone II areas. The Town adopted a new Groundwater (Aquifer) Protection Overlay District in 2022.

The community survey for this plan found that respondents rated water supply protection as a very important concern for town residents. Over 50% of survey respondents reported that the degradation of drinking water supplies is a "most critical" issue for the town, and over 90% of survey respondents stated that they support the town protecting, acquiring, and/or improving town-owned land to preserve water resources in town. The Dudley Sewer-Water Commission is the special permitting authority for the Town's Groundwater Protection Overlay District.

Continued growth of homes and businesses will also reduce the open spaces in Dudley and place increasing pressures on the town's land, water, and wildlife resources. As recommended by the housing element of the 2004 Dudley Community Development Plan, there are several ways for the Town to jointly respond to its housing and open space needs. Dudley now has an Open Space Residential Development zoning bylaw. It has been used on a few occasions and it seems to work well.

Environmental Equity

Map 2 in Section 3 shows that Dudley has an Environmental Justice neighborhood south of West Main Street and west of the French River, which is defined as block group 2 in census tract 7551.

This is a densely developed area that developed in the 19th century to provide a source of labor for the Chase Mill. It meets the EJ criteria for income. There are no developed playgrounds or public open space lands in this neighborhood. But the Town is actively working to develop two parks in this area. Two additional Environmental Justice block groups cover large swaths of the eastern half of Town. The easternmost block group, block group 3 in census tract 7552, has a median household income of \$51,688 and meets the EJ criteria for income. The next group is in the southeast central portion of Town, encompassing the southeastern portions of Dresser Hill Road, Dudley Oxford Road, and West Main Street. Defined as block group 1 in census tract 7552, 49% of the residents in this group are minorities, meeting the EJ criteria for minority population.

The Fun Zone at the Town Hall provided a small park with playground equipment for young children, but it had to close due to a contaminated rubber surface. The Town is working on plans to develop a new park that will combine recreation facilities, passive sitting areas, a performance space, and an exploration trail for children. The park will be fully accessible for handicapped individuals. The second park is a passive, contemplative space at the Pearl L Crawford Library. The Vision Statement notes: "The outdoor space will be a beautiful, natural space that will provide the Library flexibility for a range of opportunities for gathering, learning, relaxation, and exploring nature, to be enjoyed by families, children, and community." These two parks should alleviate the discrepancy in access to recreation facilities in the EJ neighborhood.

Other Concerns

Exhaust gases from motor vehicles and large industrial uses in the Midwest are damaging local forests and lakes. Some local waters are becoming more acid, and this can impact fish populations. Although our forests have not been killed by acid rain, it may be retarding their growth by 10 or 20%. When translated into 10 or 20% less production of cordwood or timber for wood products, acid rain can be viewed as a serious regional problem.

Dudley is also currently experiencing high levels of PFAS in the public water supply. PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are slowly degrading, long-lasting chemicals widely used in stain resistant, water resistant, and non-stick products. They have spread throughout nature, including into water bodies. Scientific studies have found evidence that PFAS can be harmful to human health and Massachusetts has strong PFAS standards. The Town has embarked on an aggressive remediation plan to correct the problem at a cost of approximately \$12.0 M. A new 1.3 million gallons per day (mgd) PFAS filtration plant is under construction in 2023 and is expected to come on-line in 2024. In addition, the Water Department is constructing 11,000 linear feet of new water main to mix water from different well fields to lower PFAS concentrations.

Beaver populations are present in communities across central Massachusetts. While beaver ponds can provide benefits, such as groundwater recharge and wetlands habitats, their activities can flood roadways, damage trees, result in septic system problems and basement flooding due to raised water levels. Beavers can be a vector for *Giardia*, which is a public health concern for water supply reservoirs. The Town can help residents cope with these problems by providing information about these interesting creatures and requesting management assistance from state agencies and local trappers.



Section 5: Inventory of Lands of Conservation & Recreation Interest

Produced by the Dudley Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee
and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

SECTION 5- CONSERVATION & RECREATION LANDS INVENTORY

Dudley's conservation areas, recreation lands, and extensive agricultural lands enhance its rural character and environmental quality. These areas offer Town residents many recreation opportunities, provide essential habitat for wildlife, and help maintain the health of streams, ponds, and water supplies.

Open spaces in Town can be categorized as either protected or unprotected. Fully protected lands are permanently committed for conservation and recreation uses, while other areas may have only limited or temporary protection. Appendix C includes definitions of the types of protected and unprotected lands. Table 5 summarizes the amount of conservation and recreation lands according to ownership and level of protection. Town properties range from less than an acre to around 100 acres in size. Other important open spaces are privately held, including the many parcels of farmland under the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program. Currently, the Town of Dudley is eighth in the state in terms of permanently protected agricultural land.

TABLE 5: Land Ownership and Protection Summary

Description and status	Acres	% of Land in Total
<i>Total land area of Dudley</i>	13,472	100.00%
Town-owned, limited protection		
Parks, recreation lands, schools, cemeteries	124	0.92%
Town-owned, permanent protection		
Town forests and other conservation lands	220	1.63%
Private-owned, permanent protection		
Agricultural Preservation Restrictions	1,493	11.08%
Conservation Restrictions, Massachusetts Audubon Society Lands, and land trust lands	768	5.70%
Private-owned, limited protection		
Chapter 61, 61A and 61B	2,985	22.16%
Cemeteries	17	0.13%

Town of Dudley 2022-2029 Open Space & Recreation Plan

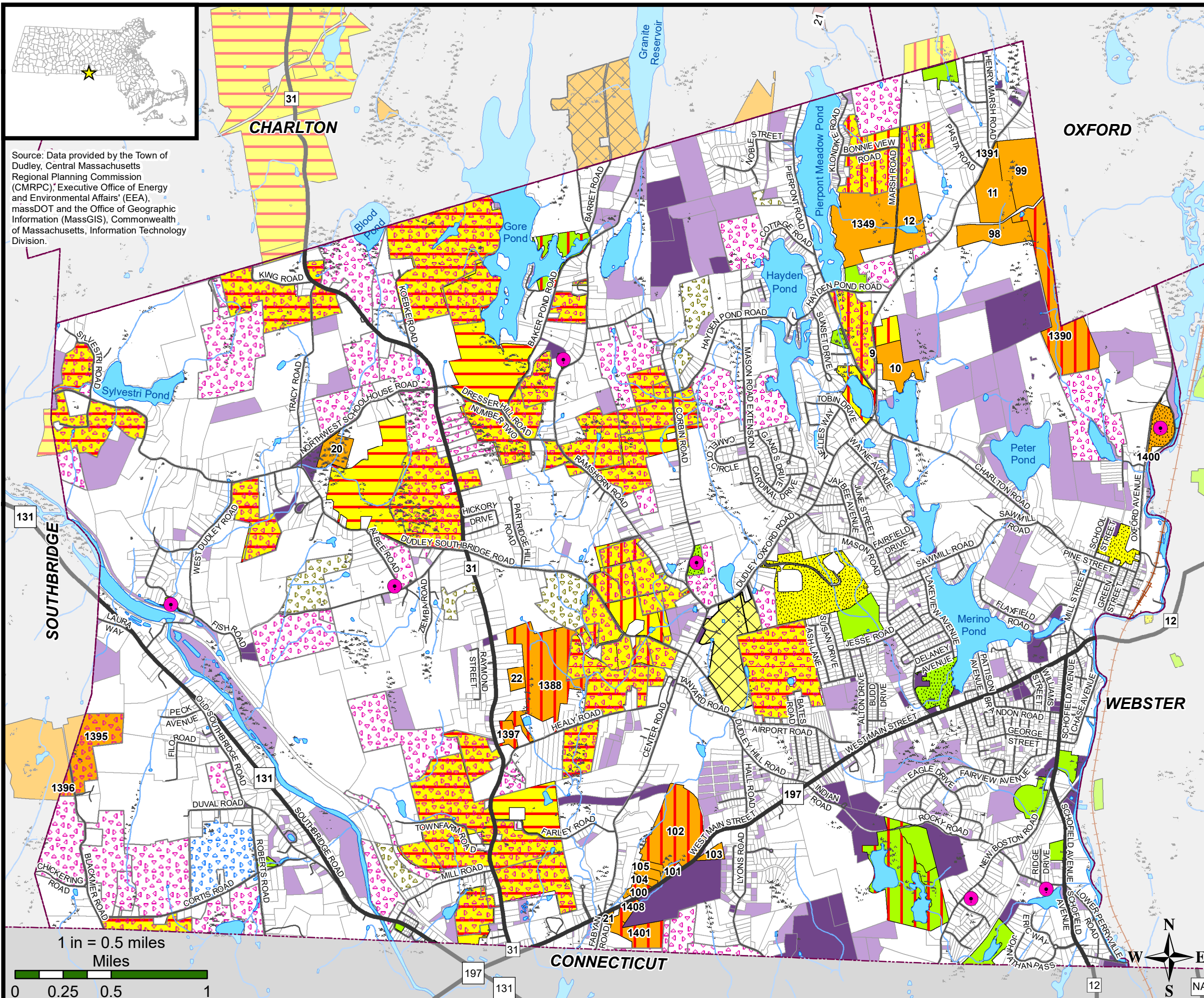
Legend

- Town Boundary
 - Major Road
 - Local Road
 - Active Rail Service
 - River, Stream
 - Lake, Pond
 - MassDEP Wetlands
 - Cemetery
 - Town Owned Land (FY2022)
 - Undevelopable Land (FY2022)
 - Conservation Restriction
 - Agricultural Preservation Restriction
 - Chapter Land (FY2022)
 - Chapter 61
 - Chapter 61A
 - Chapter 61B
 - Open Space Ownership (08/2022)
 - Federal
 - State
 - Municipal Conservation
 - Municipal Recreation
 - Municipal Other
 - Private
 - Non-Profit
 - Level of Protection (08/2022)
 - Perpetuity*
 - Limited
 - None
- * Open space listed as "Perpetuity" will only show a solid Ownership color.

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution interpreting positional accuracy.



Produced by
One Mercantil Street
Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608



Source: Data provided by the Town of Dudley, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

Ownership Summary

The open space lands in Dudley are owned separately by various groups. The specifics of ownership of Dudley's open space properties and a collection of other details are provided in the tables below.

Public Parcels

The State does not currently own any open space properties in Dudley. The Town of Dudley owns 105 parcels of land.

Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest													
Town-Owned Lands													
Description	Acres	Protection	Street	Fee Owner	Manager	Zoning	CR or APR?	Primary Purpose	Public Access	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential (specific activities, active or passive)	Type of Grant (if any) Used to Purchase
Albee-Durfee Cemetery	1.053684	Limited	Albee Rd/ Durfee Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Highway Department	RES-87	No	Historical/Cultural	Yes	Cemetery	Good	None	NA
Ardlock Acres Conservation Area	106.80	In Perpetuity	New Boston Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Conservation Commission	RES-30	CR	Conservation	Yes	Hiking, dirt biking, passive recreation	Good	Same as Current Use	Donation
Baker Pond Conservation Area	18.51	In Perpetuity	Baker Pond Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Conservation Commission	RES-87	CR	Conservation	Yes	Hiking, passive recreation	Good	Same as Current Use	Donation
Blackmer Cemetery	2.065983	Limited	Intervale Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Highway Department	RES-87/ IND-130	No	Historical/Cultural	Yes	Cemetery	Good	None	NA
Corbin Cemetery	5.927126	Limited	Corbin Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Highway Department	RES-15	No	Historical/Cultural	Yes	Cemetery	Good	None	NA
Dudley Elementary School Playground	72.99277	Limited	School St	Dudley-Charlton Regional School District	Dudley-Charlton Regional School District / Town of Dudley Recreation Commission	RES-10/BUS-15	No	Recreation	Yes	School playground	Good	Same as Current Use	NA

Description	Acres	Protection	Street	Fee Owner	Manager	Zoning	CR or APR?	Primary Purpose	Public Access	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential (specific activities, active or passive)	Type of Grant (if any) Used to Purchase
Dudley Water Supply Land	7.652278	In Perpetuity	Schofield Ave	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Water Department	RES-30	No	Water Supply Protection	Unknown	Water Supply Protection	Good	None	NA
Dudley Water Supply Land	8.689566	In Perpetuity	New Boston Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Water Department	RES-10	No	Water Supply Protection	Unknown	Water Supply Protection	Good	None	NA
Dudley Water Supply Land	5.064846	In Perpetuity	Schofield Ave	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Water Department	BUS-15	No	Water Supply Protection	Unknown	Water Supply Protection	Good	None	NA
Dudley Water Supply Land	8.121073	In Perpetuity	New Boston Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Water Department	IND-43	No	Water Supply Protection	Unknown	Water Supply Protection	Good	None	NA
Hayden Pond Road Conservation Area	8.277325	In Perpetuity	Hayden Pond Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Conservation Commission	CON	No	Conservation	Yes	Hiking, passive recreation	Good	Same as Current Use	Donation
Mason Road Elementary School Playground	23.34317	Limited	Mason Rd	Dudley-Charlton Regional School District	Town of Dudley Conservation Commission / Dudley-Charlton Regional School District	RES-15/ BUS-15/ CON	No	Recreation	Yes	School playground, Town Beach	School equip-ment-Good Beach facilities-Poor	Plans in design for Beach ADA upgrades	NA
Oakview Estates Conservation Area	2.675759	In Perpetuity	Courtis Rd/ Roberts Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Conservation Commission	RES-43	No	Conservation	Yes	Vacant	Good	Small Neighborhood Park	Donation
Peter Amorello Sr Memorial Conservation Area	18.26328	In Perpetuity	Blue Heron Dr	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Conservation Commission	RES-30	No	Conservation	Yes	Hiking, passive recreation	Good	Same as Current Use	Donation
Piasta Road Conservation Area	9.465876	In Perpetuity	Piasta Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Conservation Commission	RES-87	No	Conservation	Yes	Hiking, passive recreation	Good	Same as Current Use	Donation

Description	Acres	Protection	Street	Fee Owner	Manager	Zoning	CR or APR?	Primary Purpose	Public Access	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential (specific activities, active or passive)	Type of Grant (if any) Used to Purchase
Pierpont Road Conservation Area	3.451908	In Perpetuity	Pierpont Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Conservation Commission	RES-43	No	Conservation	Yes	Hiking, passive recreation	Good	Same as Current Use	Donation
Shepherd Hill Estates Conservation Area	23.50511	In Perpetuity	Jesse Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Conservation Commission	RES-15	No	Conservation	Yes	Hiking, passive recreation	Good	Same as Current Use	Donation
Shepherd Hill Regional High School and Dudley Middle School Athletic Fields	15.80589	Limited	Dudley Oxford Rd	Dudley-Charlton Regional School District	Dudley-Charlton Regional School District	RES-15	No	Recreation	Yes	HS & MS Recreational Complex	Good	Same as Current Use	NA
Stevens Park	0.986958	In Perpetuity	Quinebaug Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Recreation Commission	RES-30	No	Recreation	Yes	Small park	Fair	Needs upgrades	NA
Waldron Cemetery	1.717249	No	Dudley Oxford Rd	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Highway Department	RES-87	No	Historical/Cultural	Yes	Cemetery	Good	None	NA
Former Stevens Mill Bleachery Property / Proposed Centennial Park	7.41	Limited	Ardlock Place	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Board of Selectmen	RES-10 / BUS 15 Overlay / MCOD	No	Historical/Cultural	Yes	Mill removed, grass cover, fishing	Good	Community Park	Donation
Municipal Complex	4.3523	Limited	71 West Main Street	Town of Dudley	Town of Dudley Board of Selectmen	BUS-15 / RES 10	No	Municipal Offices / Fun Zone	Yes	Town Offices/ Playground	Poor, Disrepair	Proposed park with playground	NA
Quinebaug Rail Trail	No	Limited	N/A	MassDOT / Town of Dudley	MassDOT / Town of Dudley Highway Department	NA	No	Rails to Trails Corridor	Yes	Hiking, bicycling, canoeing	Good	Proposed Paving	NA

Non-profit Parcels

Non-Profit Owned Lands								
Description	Acres	Protection	Fee Owner	Manager	Zoning	CR or APR?	Primary Purpose	Public Access
Wieloch Pond Conservation Area	37.09	In Perpetuity	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	RES-87	CR	Conservation	Yes
Wieloch Pond Conservation Area	42.30	In Perpetuity	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	IND-130	CR	Conservation	Yes
Tufts Branch Valley Wildlife Sanctuary	87.52	In Perpetuity	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	RES-87	CR	Conservation	Yes
Slater Woods WCE	72.62507	In Perpetuity	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	Dudley Conservation Land Trust		CR	Conservation	Yes
West Main Street Conservation Area	21.33	In Perpetuity	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	RES-87	CR	Conservation	Yes

Description	Acres	Protection	Fee Owner	Manager	Zoning	CR or APR?	Primary Purpose	Public Access
West Main Street Conservation Area	8.47	In Perpetuity	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	LI-43	<Null>	Conservation	Yes
Keith Conservation Area	15.15135	In Perpetuity	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	RES-87	<Null>	Conservation	Yes
Keekamoochaug Wildlife Sanctuary	6.356457	In Perpetuity	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	Dudley Conservation Land Trust	RES-87	CR	Conservation	Yes
Pierpont Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary	214.0664	In Perpetuity	Massachusetts Audubon Society	Massachusetts Audubon Society	RES-87/RES-15/RES-43/CON/LI-87	<Null>	Conservation	Yes
Blackmer Road Conservation Area	43.56122	In Perpetuity	The Opacum Land Trust	The Opacum Land Trust	RES-43	<Null>	Conservation	Unknown

Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B Lands

Chapter 61	
Acres	Street
81.60	Cortis Rd

Chapter 61A	
Acres	Street
81.60	Cortis Rd
34.4996	136 Dresser Hill Rd
184.44	30 Fish Rd
13.24	54 Dudley Oxford Rd
25.25	Albee Rd
101.68	Bates Rd
127.7	Blackmer Rd
10.05	Bonnie View Rd
161.46	Corbin Rd
142.07	Cortis Rd
36.17	Cottage Rd
348.93	Dresser Hill Rd
95.83	Dresser Hill Rd #2
81.63	Dudley Oxford Rd
173.05	Dudley Southbridge Rd
183.07	Durfee Rd

Chapter 61A Cont.	
Acres	Street
14.05	Fabyan Rd
20.99	Foskett Rd
126.82	Healy Rd
58.83	King Rd
153.43	Koebke Rd
8	Lyons Rd
10.68	Marsh (Rear) Rd
89.85	Marsh Rd
33.62	Mason Rd
79.91	Mason Rd Ext
22.2	Mill Rd
60.47	Nw Schoolhouse Rd
11.94	Old Southbridge Rd
170.76	Ramshorn Rd
83.45	Robert Vinton Rd
23.46	Silvestri Rd
28.31	Southbridge Rd
44.91	Town Farm Rd

Chapter 61B	
Acres	Street
9.16	230 Dresser Hill Rd
36.67	Dudley Southbridge Rd
40.00	Durfee Rd
34.73	Hayden Pond Rd
16.78	Mill Rd
5.66	Pierpont Rd

Private, APR, or CR Lands

Private, APR, or CR Lands									
Description	Acres	Protection	Street	Fee Owner	Manager	Zoning	CR or APR?	Purpose	Public Access
Bates Howard K APR	102.02	In Perpetuity	Airport Rd	Bates Howard K and Sylvia J	Bates Howard K and Sylvia J	RES-15	APR	Agriculture	None
Czaczkes Harry APR	7.175051	In Perpetuity	<Null>	Czaczkes Harry	Czaczkes Harry	RES-87	APR	Agriculture	None
Dudley Hill Golf Club	61.52049	None	Dudley Oxford Rd	Webster Dudley Country Club Inc	Webster Dudley Country Club Inc	RES-15	no	Recreation	Limited
Easterbrook Richard L APR	195.3626	In Perpetuity	Baker Pond Rd	Easterbrook Richard L and Debra L	Easterbrook Richard L and Debra L	RES-87	APR	Agriculture	None
Gatzke Stella V APR	79.3561	In Perpetuity	Corbin Rd	Gatzke Stella V	Gatzke Stella V	RES-87/ RES-15	APR	Agriculture	None
Hall Elliot D APR	126.5915	In Perpetuity	Farley Rd	Hall Elliot D and George W	Hall Elliot D and George W	RES-87/RES-30/IND-43	APR	Agriculture	None

Description	Acres	Protection	Street	Fee Owner	Manager	Zoning	CR or APR?	Purpose	Public Access
Hubbard CR	82.28371	In Perpetuity	Dudley Southbridge Rd	Hubbard Edwin L and Elizabeth M	Hubbard Edwin L and Elizabeth M	RES-87/RES-15	CR	Conservation	None
Hubbard Edwin L APR	72.0001	In Perpetuity	Dudley Southbridge Rd	Hubbard Edwin L and Elizabeth M	Hubbard Edwin L and Elizabeth M	RES-87/RES-15	APR	Agriculture	None
Kallgren Victor P APR	89.94071	In Perpetuity	Ramshorn Rd	Kallgren Victor P and Linda J	Kallgren Victor P and Linda J	RES-87/RES-15	APR	Agriculture	None
Koebke Henry L APR	150.0514	In Perpetuity	Koebke Rd	Koebke Henry L and Virginia L	Koebke Henry L and Virginia L	RES-87	APR	Agriculture	None
Kulisa CR	126.6622	In Perpetuity	<Null>	Kulisa Chester T	Kulisa Chester T	RES-87/RES-43/CON	CR	Conservation	Limited
Kuper Arthur APR	19.20658	In Perpetuity	Cortis Rd	Kuper Arthur and Phyllis	Kuper Arthur and Phyllis	RES-43	APR	Agriculture	None
Lavoie Fields	8.584293	None	Dudley Oxford Rd	Dudley Youth Soccer League Inc	Dudley Youth Soccer League Inc	RES-15	no	Recreation	Limited

Description	Acres	Protection	Street	Fee Owner	Manager	Zoning	CR or APR?	Purpose	Public Access
Meyer Frederick W APR	135.6896	In Perpetuity	Dudley Southbridge Rd	Meyer Frederick W	Meyer Frederick W	RES-87	APR	Agriculture	None
Peckham APR	101.8947	In Perpetuity	Townfarm Rd/ Dresser Hill Rd	Peckham Stewart and Barbara A	Peckham Stewart and Barbara A	RES-87/RES-30	APR	Agriculture	None
Peckham Stewart APR	51.21454	In Perpetuity	Townfarm Rd	Peckham Stewart and Barbara A	Peckham Stewart and Barbara A	RES-87/RES-30	APR	Agriculture	None
Robert E Maynard Land Trust APR	56.4492	In Perpetuity	Dudley Southbridge Rd	Robert E Maynard Land Trust	Robert E Maynard Land Trust	RES-87	APR	Agriculture	None
Rozenas Adolph W APR	17.56144	In Perpetuity	Baker Pond Rd	Rozenas Adolph W and Edna M	Rozenas Adolph W and Edna M	RES-87	APR	Agriculture	None
Rozenas APR	1.329469	In Perpetuity	Baker Pond Rd	Rozenas Adolph W and Edna M	Rozenas Adolph W and Edna M	RES-87	APR	Agriculture	None
Tobin Farm Estates CR	11.00491	In Perpetuity	Pierpont Rd	Slingo Wendy L and Vallee Suzanne J	Slingo Wendy L and Vallee Suzanne J	RES-15/CON	CR	Conservation	None

Description	Acres	Protection	Street	Fee Owner	Manager	Zoning	CR or APR?	Purpose	Public Access
Walker Allen E APR	93.39985	In Perpetuity	Dresser Hill Rd	Walker Allen E and Priscilla	Walker Allen E and Priscilla	RES-87	APR	Agriculture	None
Williams APR	115.5859	In Perpetuity	Healy Rd	Williams Kathleen E	Williams Kathleen E	RES-87/RES-15	APR	Agriculture	None
Wood Charles K APR	77.98466	In Perpetuity	Dresser Hill Rd	Wood Charles K	Wood Charles K	RES-87	APR	Agriculture	None

Highlighted Locations

As displayed above, there are many properties of conservation or recreation interest in Dudley. Some notable properties and locations are described in further detail below:

Conservation or Passive Recreation Areas and Facilities

Ardlock Acres

Of particular importance is Ardlock Acres. This land is owned by the town and managed by the Conservation Commission. Prior to Town ownership, the land's development rights were donated by the Crawford Family to Dudley for protection of natural resources and watershed protection. This tract of land is 92 acres in size and surrounds Niger Road Pond and Holy Trinity Cemetery Pond. It is available for hiking and other passive recreation uses.

Town Beach

The Town Beach is located at the southern end of Merino Pond and is open to the public from Memorial Day to Labor Day. This active and passive recreation site is described in more detail under the **Local Ponds** heading below.

Conservation Districts

In 1969 the Town created four conservation districts. Conservation Districts are established to protect certain natural features in Dudley. The intent of this provision is to prevent the use of land within the Conservation District from inconsistent or unaccepted conservation practices for woodlands or park areas (Town of Dudley Zoning Bylaws, 2002). These areas are primarily comprised of private lands that have a Conservation District zoning designation. A brief description of these districts can be found below.

Table 6: List of Conservation Districts

District #	District Name	Description
District 1	Pierpont Pond/Marsh Road Conservation District	This district consists of 80.5 acres and is located on the eastern side of Pierpont Pond, extending east to Marsh Road and Dudley-Oxford Road. The district's northern end covers a large parcel owned by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. The District also contains a 16.5-acre privately-owned property. The Dudley Conservation Commission manages two properties, totaling eight and a half acres, along Hayden Pond Road. Both these properties fall within the district. The potential exists to permanently protect more land within this district.
District 2	Town Beach Conservation District	This district consists of roughly 14 acres and is located along the southwest shoreline of Merino Pond, just off West

		Main Street and Lakeview Ave, and behind the Mason Road School. The Town Beach within this district consists of a third of an acre and is actively managed by the Dudley Recreation Commission.
District 3	French River Conservation District	This district consists of 18.7 acres located between the river to the east and the following roads to the west: Oxford Avenue, Cemetery Road, and Old Oxford Road. The district consists entirely of privately owned land.
District 4	Mosquito Pond Conservation District	This district consists of 32 acres and is located just north of the intersection of Charlton Road and Dudley-Oxford Road. The district covers almost all of Mosquito Pond, as well as wetlands and land adjacent to Mosquito Pond. This district also contains an 11.5-acre privately-owned parcel that is permanently protected by a conservation restriction.

Active Recreation Areas and Facilities

Shepherd Hill Regional High School

The towns of Dudley and Charlton share this high school, which is managed by the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District. It is on the eastern side of Dudley, at 68 Dudley-Oxford Road, south of the Mason Road and Dudley-Oxford Road intersection. There are two indoor gymnasiums, which are used during the school year for physical education classes and after-school athletic programs. The main gym holds basketball courts, volleyball courts, and a weight room, while the auxiliary gym holds gymnastics and wrestling facilities. By arrangement, the gymnasiums are available in the evenings for activities such as adult volleyball. The grounds have areas for soccer, football, baseball, softball, field hockey, tennis, and basketball.

Dudley Middle School

This middle school serves students from Grades 5 to 8 and is managed by the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District. It is on the eastern side of Dudley, at 70 Dudley-Oxford Road, adjacent to the Regional High School. There is a playground and one indoor gymnasium, which are used during the school year for recess, physical education classes and after school programs such as soccer and gymnastics. By arrangement, the gymnasium is available in the evenings for activities such as adult volleyball. The grounds have two soccer fields and a baseball/softball field.

Dudley Soccer Association Fields

The Dudley Soccer Association purchased approximately 8 acres of land in 2005 to create multiple full size soccer fields. The land is located across the street from the Shepherd Hill Regional High School.

Nichols College

This private college had its origin as Nichols Academy in 1815, with the College (as seen today) founded in 1971. Throughout its history, the school has been closely tied to the Town. Its facilities include: an outdoor volleyball court, 6 outdoor tennis courts, 2.5 outdoor basketball courts, baseball/soccer fields, field hockey/lacrosse field, and a fieldhouse with weight room, basketball court and pool. The outdoor fields and courts are used by Town residents. The College also does allow organized sports groups in town to use their baseball and football fields on occasion.

Dudley Hill Golf Club

The Dudley Hill Golf Club is a 70-acre public golf course owned by Nichols College. It is located near the campus.

Dudley Sportsman's Club

The Sportsman's Club has approximately 35 acres located in the center of Town, along Dudley-Southbridge Road, east of the Partridge Hill Road intersection. This Club is active, with a stocked pond for fishing and land for hunting.

J. M. Crawford Veteran's Memorial Field

This field is located next to Dudley Elementary School and provides a total of four youth softball and baseball fields, as well as a small section of playground including swings, slides, and jungle bars. It is operated by the Dudley Little League Association.

J. M. Crawford Veteran's Memorial Park (Pine Street Park)

Also located next to the Intermediate School, this property is under the jurisdiction of the Dudley Parks and Recreation Committee. It has an outdoor full-size basketball court and walking paths along with the potential for a winter outdoor skating rink.

Eben Stevens Park

This public park is located on River Street, near the bank of the French River. Just under an acre, the field here was formerly used by the Dudley Soccer Association and now managed by the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Kid Zone/Mason Road School Playground

This early elementary school (pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and 1st grade) located on Mason Road has a popular playground that is relatively new. The main parking area and public access for the Town Beach are located here. There are also unofficial dirt walking paths in the wooded area next to the parking lot and playground, as well as a path to the Water Department land.

Dudley Elementary School Playground

Another playground is located at the local elementary school (Grades 2, 3 and 4), adjacent to J.M. Crawford Veteran's Memorial Field. The playground has swings, slides and climbing equipment, is in very good condition and is managed by the School Department.

Fun Zone

The Town used to have a Fun Zone, a large playground designed especially for small children and toddlers, located at 71 West Main Street, the former West Main Street School. It was installed in 2001 but has unfortunately been discontinued due to contamination. As one of the most popular facilities in Dudley, residents were very upset when the Fun Zone closed. The Dudley Women's Club operated a successful fund-raising campaign to generate revenue to be used exclusively to redevelop the property. The Town is moving forward with developing plans for a new facility dubbed the "Town Commons". Radner Design Associates has generated schematic design plans to envision a multi-purpose park with active play structures for children, a farmers' market space, handicapped accessible trails, passive seating, a performance area, and a Nature Exploration space."

In addition to these properties, there may be lands the Town holds title to because of owners defaulting on property taxes. Tax-title lands have little protection but may abut conservation and recreation areas. These lands can be useful to leverage open space investments by state agencies. An inventory of tax title lands can identify potential conservation and recreation areas for Dudley residents at very low cost.

Local Ponds

The following ponds have recreational use or have significant lands surrounding them. The Town has accepted ownership of the dams for many of these former mill ponds.

Gore Pond

The western and southern sides of Gore Pond are surrounded by large parcels of Agricultural Preservation Restriction land. There are two parcels of Town owned conservation land located on the eastern side, totaling approximately 19 acres.

Merino Pond

The public Town Beach is located on the southwest shore of the pond, at 1 Lakeview Avenue, and is managed by the Dudley Recreation Commission. No entrance fees are charged; there is a lifeguard during the summer, bathroom facilities, a small playground, and picnic tables. Access to the Beach is from either the Mason Road School parking lot or from 1 Lakeview Avenue. No parking is available at the Lakeview Avenue entrance. This area is also a public water supply, with a town well in operation; a large dirt path leads from the Beach to the Water Department land. Much of the land surrounding the pond is residential.

Low Pond

Public access was obtained when the Town acquired the former Stevens Bleachery property containing 7.4 acres. The Historical Commission is proposing a town park here to honor the Town's 300th anniversary in 2032.

Mosquito Pond

The developer of the Tobin Farm subdivision preserved an 11.5-acre parcel including Mosquito Pond by granting a Conservation Restriction to the Town of Dudley. However, the CR prohibits public access. Due to the large amount of plant growth in the pond, the primary potential use is as a wildlife viewing area.

Pierpont Meadow Pond

This linear pond runs in a north-south direction and is in the northeast part of town, sharing the northern portion with the Town of Charlton. A large parcel of Massachusetts Audubon Society land abuts the eastern edge of the pond. The Town also owns a 9.7-acre parcel adjacent to the southern side of the Pond that is managed by the Conservation Commission. As there is Town-owned land present, there is potential for community access.

West Dudley Pond

Located roughly parallel to the Quinebaug Rail Trail and Route 131, this pond lies in both West Dudley and the Town of Southbridge. The Quinebaug River flows through the pond. Recreational opportunities include the Rail Trail, canoe-launch, picnic area, and parking lot.

The shorelines of the following ponds are privately owned, and community access is very limited:

- **Hayden Pond:** located southwest of Pierpont Meadow Pond, Hayden Pond is privately owned and almost surrounded by residential land;
- **New Pond:** New Pond is situated directly south of Hayden Pond. In 2022, the developer of Tobin Farms Subdivision donated a 3.5-acre parcel to the Town to maintain the dam holding the Pond.
- **Shepherd Pond:** Shepherd Pond is found to the east of Gore Pond;
- **Sunnyside Pond:** located in the eastern side of town, near the French River;
- **Sylvestri Pond:** mostly surrounded by forest, this pond is in the northwest area of Town;

- **Wallis Pond:** Wallis Pond straddles the Dudley-Oxford Road, southeast of New Pond;
- **Larner Pond:** Larner Pond is located south of Wallis Pond and north of Merino Pond;
- **Blood Pond:** Blood Pond is located on the Dudley-Charlton border; and
- **Peter Pond:** Peter Pond is located between Wallis Pond and Sunnyside Pond.

Wielock Pond formerly existed in town on the Tufts Brook just northeast of the intersection between Center Road and Northwest Main Street, but the dam creating it was removed. The area is now a wetland.

Private Lands

Dudley Conservation Land Trust- The DCLT owns 15 parcels encompassing approximately 301.9 acres in Dudley. This includes Slater Woods in the northeast area of Town, Tufts Branch/Keekamoochaug off Rt. 31 in the center of Town, Keith Lands off NW Schoolhouse Rd., and Wielock Woods in south-central Dudley off W Main St.

Massachusetts Audubon Society – The Massachusetts Audubon Society owns eight parcels in Town, encompassing approximately 203.7 acres. This includes the Pierpont Meadow Sanctuary, located to the east of Pierpont Meadow Pond. They are also co-holder of the Chester T. Kulisa Conservation Restriction for six parcels containing 114.7 acres.

Many farms remain in Dudley and a large percentage of them carry Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR). 28 parcels, which include portions of 16 farms, have been protected by the state Agricultural Preservation program. The Town of Dudley has one of the highest percentages of protected agricultural land in the state.

Some landowners participate in voluntary Chapter 61 programs that benefit forestry, agriculture, or open space uses. Owners of ten acres or more acres who manage their land for forestry uses can enroll in Chapter 61, which allows a 95% reduction in property taxes. Owners of five or more acres can enroll in Chapter 61A if they use their land for agriculture, or they can enroll in Chapter 61B if their land is used for open space/recreation purposes. Chapter 61A and 61B programs also allow a reduction in property taxes. Communities have the right of first refusal on Chapter 61 lands if owners sell or convert to residential, commercial, or industrial uses (unless it is a residential use for a family member).

There is one parcel in Dudley which is assessed under Chapter 61, as well as 111 parcels under Chapter 61A and 7 parcels of land under Chapter 61B. Owners who sell their property for development must pay the Town a portion of the lower taxes paid while participating in Chapter 61. The ownership and acreage of these lands are listed in Appendix C.

Private stewardship of lands preserves open fields, productive forests, and scenic stream valleys throughout the Town. Often, Chapter 61 lands have been owned by families for generations and have important places in Dudley's history. The Town's right of first refusal is an important conservation opportunity. To be prepared, the Town should have a policy and a well-defined process for working with a Chapter 61 landowner who decides to divest the property.



Section 6: Community Vision

Produced by the Dudley Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee
and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

SECTION 6- COMMUNITY VISION

DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS

The Dudley Open Space and Recreation Committee (Committee) was formed in July 2022 to guide the process of updating the previous Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Committee sought to gauge the residents' priorities through two principal methods: a survey, conducted from September 30, 2022, to January 1, 2023, and direct public outreach via open community forum. The survey allowed a chance for residents to answer detailed questions related to open space and recreation needs, while the public forum allowed residents and various other stakeholders to engage in a more nuanced dialogue. In addition to these two main public outreach efforts, the Committee has met regularly throughout the duration of the project in public meetings. Public meetings were typically held on the first Wednesday of the month. These meetings were held at the Dudley Municipal Complex and were open to the public. All meeting notifications and other news were posted on the Town of Dudley website, <https://www.dudleyma.gov/>.

The Committee worked to develop and distribute survey questions that would provide significant insight into how the goals listed below should be defined. The survey referenced above was developed between July and September of 2022 during regular meetings held by the Committee. The survey had 28 questions in total and was launched in September. While creating the survey, the Committee put considerable attention into the type of question and wording to elicit substantial input. A similar process was conducted when producing the 2003 OSRP. Questions from this previous survey were used as a starting point to develop questions for the updated plan. New questions were added and adjusted as needed based on input from the Committee and Town Administration. The survey was conducted online via the Survey Monkey platform. Hard copies were also distributed in the Senior Center, Library, and the Town Hall. The Committee advertised the Community Survey on several different platforms including social media, the Town's website, and a PSA in the local newspaper. The survey received 103 responses with a 66% completion rate.

A public forum was held in March 2023. As indicated, the public forum allowed residents to meet with each other, Town staff, and CMRPC employees to discuss the direction of the plan and to refine data. The Town advertised the public forum through social media and through the town website. The public forum was attended by 19 residents. During this forum, a presentation was given on the status of the plan and background research that was conducted. Participants were asked to identify important natural resources, open spaces, recreation areas, and cultural landmarks in Dudley and then identify associated issues, conflicts, or opportunities. Based on this conversation, participants then identified their open space and recreational needs or desires for the community. The participants' comments were reviewed and incorporated into this plan. A more detailed description of the public forum and its process can be found below.

The meeting was broken into two (2) phases:

1. Introductory Presentations
2. Open discussion

Presentations

A presentation on the OSRP process was provided by Sam Carter, Assistant Planner at CMRPC. This presentation reviewed the work done to date, as well as the ultimate goals and agenda for the evening. Another presentation was offered by consultant Michael Radner of Radner Design Associates, Inc. featuring the results of the New Town Commons concept plan. The presentations lasted around 25 minutes in total and included time for questions.

Open Discussion

The rest of the meeting was free form and allowed attendees to visit various stations related to different sections of the plan. The station themes were:

- **Environmental Station:** this station included a habitat map depicting core environmental habitats in the town, including vernal pools, wetlands, and important landscapes. When interacting with participants, attendants asked what environmental issues they have seen in the town. Participants were encouraged to mark up the map with their feedback, highlighting areas of environmental concern.
- **Recreation Station:** this station included an open space inventory map depicting all the open space and conservation lands in the town organized by ownership and protection level. When interacting with participants, attendants asked them what facilities/properties in town they enjoyed the most, what areas they visited the most, what areas they have never visited before, whether any areas need upgrades, or if there are any areas in town that don't have good access to open space and recreation resources. Participants were encouraged to mark up the map with their feedback.
- **Agriculture Station:** This station included agriculture materials for display. Participants were asked what they enjoy about agricultural opportunities in Dudley and what could be improved.
- **Positive Feedback Station:** This station had a sticky pad so that participants could share what they enjoyed about open space and recreation in Dudley, what their favorite facilities and programs are, and how often they visit. They were also asked what they consider unique about Dudley.
- **Improvement Station:** This station had a sticky pad for attendees to share their improvement ideas. Participants were asked what they dislike about open space and recreation opportunities in Dudley; what their least favorite facilities, properties, and/or programs are; and what areas they never visit. Specifically, they were asked what areas need improvements, upgrades, and/or maintenance. They were also asked what opportunities are missing in Dudley, and if there are any suggestions for where these new opportunities could be constructed.

After the public forum, notes from each station were compiled and reviewed at the next committee meeting, before being incorporated into the plan.

STATEMENT OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS

This plan is an update from a previous 2003 OSRP. Therefore, the overall goal of this plan is to assess the relevance of goals created during that planning process, identify new goals as needed, and to set a roadmap for future work that will enhance recreation opportunities, ecological connectivity, and make Dudley a more vibrant place to live, work, and play in. Themes of the goals presented in this plan revolve around preserving and enhancing existing characteristics that provide ecological and recreation services to residents.

Additional recreational facilities may be needed to support the needs of the growing local population. A desire for better connectivity between existing and proposed open space resources will allow for critical linkages to continue to exist and provide benefits to wildlife and to residents. Based upon public input and feedback as described above, the Committee formulated the following goals for this updated OSRP:

- Create and Improve Active Recreation Opportunities for All
- Enhance Passive Recreation Opportunities for All
- Preserve Environmental Resources in Town
- Cultivate Resources to Aid in Open Space and Recreation Improvements
- Maintain the Character of the Town
- Continue to Develop and Promote Agricultural Resources
- Curate the Development of the French River and Quinebaug River as Destinations

While the new open space and recreation goals are similar to the goals of the 2003 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the issues of environmental preservation, and the preservation of rural character are perennial concerns for Dudley residents. Additionally, the proposed strategies to address these issues have changed in many ways since the last update. The Committee, through this plan, has developed a set of action items aimed at addressing the above goals (see the Action Plan presented in Section 9 of this document).



Section 7: Analysis of Needs

Produced by the Dudley Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee
and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

SECTION 7- ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

The following chapter presents resource protection needs, community needs, and management needs that were gathered through an examination of the data and trends presented in Sections Three through Five, the 2022 OSRP Survey, the Community Forum, and input from the Committee and staff. This section will provide an overview of resource protection needs, summarize community needs as indicated via several public outreach efforts, and conclude by describing management needs and potential changes in use. While this analysis of needs has considered a variety of perspectives and expertise, it is important to note that this assessment reflects the current conditions of Dudley and the estimated conditions projected for the future. Therefore, the Town should continue to evaluate its resource protection, community, and management needs as improvements are made or new concerns arise.

SUMMARY OF RESOURCE PROTECTION NEEDS

Water Supply Protection

There was much discussion in the Community Survey results and during the public forum regarding the protection of the Town's water resources. In general, there was a desire to ensure that all water is free from harmful pollutants, bacteria, and other contaminants that can be harmful to human and wildlife health. Regarding water infrastructure, there is a need to regularly monitor these resources to ensure that no contamination has occurred, or that proper measures are taken to mitigate existing contamination. Additionally, there was expressed interest in locating additional drinking water resources with concerns of drought, future development, and anticipated population growth limiting supplies.

Regarding the water quality of ponds, rivers, and other surface waters, there is a need to protect from nutrient pollution, bacterial contamination, heavy metal pollution, and pesticide and herbicide pollution. Excessive levels of nitrogen and phosphorous in the water can lead to the growth of harmful algal blooms, which can be toxic to fish and other aquatic life and can also affect water quality and clarity. Bacteria such as E. coli and other pathogens can be present in the water and can pose a health risk to humans, especially if the water is used for swimming or other recreational activities. Heavy metals such as lead, mercury, and cadmium can be present in the water because of industrial activity. These pollutants can also be toxic to aquatic life and human health. Pesticides and herbicides used in agriculture and lawn maintenance can run off into nearby water bodies, degrading these resources further. Overall, water quality concerns can have a significant impact on the health of aquatic ecosystems and the quality of water for human use.

It is important that the Town of Dudley continues to monitor its water resources to ensure safe use now and for future generations. A water quality plan should be in place for all town water bodies that is actively maintained and implemented. A Lakes and Ponds Commission could be established to oversee the sustainable management and protection of the Town's water bodies, including supporting the development of water quality plans. The Planning Board can also explore opportunities to update bylaws and regulations to enhance protection of water resources, particularly in relation to reducing stormwater runoff. Dudley can also benefit from

regional coordination in water protection strategies with neighboring municipalities, relevant agencies, and nonprofit organizations that share common watersheds.

Preservation and Protection of Open Space

Throughout the public process residents expressed the need to protect open space land from development. Protecting these areas will be challenging as Dudley continues to add new housing units and the population grows. Much of this new development may occur on former farmland as it has already. As mentioned earlier in this plan, there are numerous benefits to preserving open space. They provide critical ecosystem services, such as filtering air and water pollutants, regulating temperature, sequestering carbon dioxide, and protecting biodiversity. They reduce flood risks and replenish groundwater by absorbing and filtering stormwater. They provide recreational opportunities and attract tourism. They also contribute to the aesthetics and visual appeal of the community, which further serves to draw in businesses, residents, and investment.

There are many locations in Town that are currently being considered for preservation opportunities, emphasizing the need to develop funding strategies for their protection. Future protection measures should prioritize parcels that protect ecologically sensitive lands and increase landscape connectivity, which is important for the dispersal of wildlife across habitats. The Planning Board should also continue to review the Zoning Bylaws, potentially with the assistance of outside consultants to ensure that they balance the need for development with the desire for publicly accessible open space.

Climate Change and Resiliency

The Town of Dudley, along with the other communities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have been and will continue to feel the effects of climate change. Dudley lies mostly in the Quinebaug River Basin and the French River Basin, and should projections for the watersheds hold true, by mid-century, annual average temperatures will increase in the range of 3 to 6.4 degrees from the historical baseline. Hot days over 90 degrees will increase 9 to 30 days annually; days below freezing will fall 19 to 38 days annually; annual precipitation will increase 1.2 to 6.3 inches. Seasonal drought conditions will become more frequent as precipitation becomes more concentrated in extreme intensity events and winter snowpack is reduced.¹ As temperatures rise and the frequency of drought increases, these months could be at more risk from wildfires or negative impacts to the public water supply. Energy usage will also increase during these months as air conditioning will need to be used more to cool buildings and protect residents from negative heat related health impacts. The ecosystem is also projected to be impacted by climate change, as changes in temperature and precipitation will force native species to move north out of their range to find a climate better suited to their survival. As native species move north, invasive species and pests will continue to move into the regional environment, disrupting ecosystem processes.

To combat these challenges and negative effects, the Town of Dudley needs to proactively plan for the impacts of climate change. The Town is an MVP Designated Community and has already gone through the initial step of identifying its most vulnerable areas. In the coming

¹ Dudley MVP

years, the Town should work to improve the resiliency of the Town by completing the recommended actions identified during the MVP Planning process. Seeking funding from MVP Action grants could assist in these resilience building efforts.

Protection of Agricultural Lands

Dudley has a rich agricultural history, which is still a source of pride for the community. The community still holds among the highest amount of protected agricultural land in the state. Despite this, the threat of development pressure is still a major concern. Skyrocketing land values, competition from large- scale industrial farmers, and a lack of younger farmers preventing transfer of ownership are all threatening the survivability of farms in Dudley.

There are several strategies the Town can utilize to support farmland preservation. The Agricultural Commission should continue to revise regulations that inhibit the growth of new or existing farms. They can also promote sustainable gardening and farming strategies to preserve valuable farmland soils, lower costs, and potentially increase yields. The Town could also help establish an area for a Farmers' Market, providing local farmers with a platform to sell their produce directly to residents and visitors.

The Agricultural Commission, potentially in collaboration with other Boards or Commissions, can also promote the use of coordinated farming events and agritourism to diversify revenue streams for farmers. By organizing events such as farm tours, workshops, or seasonal festivals, the town can attract tourists and highlight the agricultural heritage of the community. The Agricultural Commission should also continually promote state programs such as the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program, which offers to pay farmland owners the difference between the "fair market value" and the "agricultural value" of their farmland in exchange for a permanent deed restriction which protects the farmland for future agricultural use. A further objective of preserving farmland through programs such as APR is to ensure the community has land available to grow its own food and to make available local products to encourage healthy eating. Along with promotion of state and federal resources, the Agricultural Committee should continue to serve as a liaison between the town and local farmers, including clarifying details of town bylaws, which was cited as a need in the OSRP survey. The survey additionally cited the need for other educational initiatives, such as presentations on composting, beekeeping, or the use of native plants.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

Conditions of Existing Recreational Resources

Though there are several existing recreational facilities, areas, and programs in Dudley, many of these resources have not been well maintained or have suffered a degradation in quality and use due to negative impacts from development or the environment. The soccer and baseball fields, the town beach, and the basketball court on Pine St. are some of the most notable resources that have suffered from a decline of functionality. Additionally, invasive aquatic growth and contamination of the ponds has impaired the public water bodies and reduced their usage.

The Town could benefit from a coordinated maintenance strategy for the existing recreation fields, grounds, and courts. Tasks and responsible parties can be established in a management plan for each facility. With a strategy in place, potential hazards can be addressed promptly, minimizing the risk of injuries or accidents to users. Additionally, a proactive maintenance approach extends the lifespan of the facilities, reducing the need for costly replacements or major repairs in the long run.

Most of the recreational resources in Town are also inaccessible to walkers, bikers, and to individuals with disabilities. Due to a lack of sidewalks or bike lanes throughout Town, many residents utilize the recreational facilities that are closest to them, leaving gaps in recreation access. This is discussed further below.

Better Utilization/Advertisement of Existing Recreation Opportunities

Despite the concern of a lack of recreational and natural resources in Town, it was also noted that many resources are currently underutilized or could be better publicized. The effective marketing of these resources can help in elevating the Town's visibility as an appealing destination for both visitors and potential residents. The additional tourism, through better promotion, can contribute to the growth of local businesses, create job opportunities, and generate revenue for the town. Thus, along with increasing maintenance of recreational facilities in town, existing locations should be further promoted to increase their usage. Signage and wayfinding could be improved across town for both conservation and recreation lands. The Town Website, Social Media, and local newspapers should be consistently updated with information on existing opportunities. Coordination with land trusts and other passive recreation landowners can ensure publicly available data on trails is posted on the same platforms and in the same formats to make the information more easily accessible.

Walkability

A frequent concern identified throughout the planning process was the lack of sidewalk and trail connectivity in the town.

Improvements in this area would have numerous benefits for the community and the environment. When towns create pedestrian-friendly environments with well-designed sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian infrastructure, they encourage people to choose walking as a viable mode of transportation. This emphasis on walkability not only promotes physical activity and better health outcomes but also enhances social interactions, as people have more opportunities to engage with their surroundings and connect with others in their community. Moreover, walkable neighborhoods contribute to reduced traffic congestion and improved air quality, as fewer vehicles on the road lead to decreased emissions.

The community should continue implementation of its Complete Streets Project Prioritization Plan and target areas identified to be heavily in need of sidewalk connectivity such as around the schools and the entire length of West Main St. and sections of Dudley Oxford Rd.

Trail connectivity serves as an additional walkability concern in Town. The desire for additional well-maintained hiking and biking trails in Town was expressed throughout the public process.

This can be achieved through the establishment of a Trails Subcommittee within the Conservation Commission to plan and implement future trail projects and maintenance. This committee can help raise awareness of trails and passive recreation opportunities in town by creating and posting trail information and maps on the Town Website and other platforms.

Teens

The recreation needs of teenagers in Dudley were considered by the Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee. Some key considerations for meeting the recreation needs of teenagers include:

- **Physical Activity:** Adolescents need regular opportunities to engage in physical activity, such as sports, fitness classes, or outdoor adventures like hiking, biking, or rock climbing.
- **Socialization:** Teens also need opportunities to connect with their peers and join groups. Recreation that provides opportunities for socialization, such as team sports, clubs, or youth groups can help teenagers form friendships and develop a sense of community.
- **Adventure and Risk-Taking:** Teens are at a stage in their development where they are looking to push the boundaries and test their limits. Recreational opportunities that offer a sense of adventure and risk-taking, such as hiking, rock climbing, or team sports, can be particularly appealing to teenagers.
- **Creative Expression:** Adolescents are going through a stage in which they are trying to find their own identity, and many are looking for opportunities to express themselves creatively, whether that be through music, art, or other creative outlets.
- **Self-Discovery:** Teenagers are often searching for their place in the world and their purpose in life. Recreational opportunities that provide opportunities for self-discovery and personal growth, such as wilderness trips, leadership programs, or volunteer work can be beneficial.

It's important to keep in mind that teenagers have different interests and abilities than other age groups when planning recreational opportunities. The Town should also consider accessibility, availability of transportation and affordable fee structures, as well as hours of operation, as many teenagers may have work or school obligations.

A few teens attended the public forum in March, where they were vocal about the need for new athletic fields and improved maintenance of existing fields. The teens were also vocal about wanting new kinds of recreational activities in Town. 51% of respondents to the OSRP survey reported that they were not satisfied with the quantity of recreational activities for teens, with 46% remaining neutral. 42% of respondents reported that they were not satisfied with the quality of existing recreational programs/ opportunities for teens, with 50% remaining neutral or having no opinion. When asked to rank priorities for recreation expenditures on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest, 36% of respondents gave "expanding recreation opportunities for residents under the age of 18" a score of 10. More respondents gave this recreation need a rank of 10 than any of the other options. This data indicates that there is a noticeable need to better accommodate teens in Dudley.

Aging Adults

The Open Space Committee also considered the recreation needs of aging adults in the community. Recreation needs of aging adults can vary widely depending on the individual, but in general, they tend to have certain physical, social, and psychological needs that must be addressed. Some key considerations for meeting the recreation needs of aging adults include:

- **Accessibility:** As people age, they may experience physical limitations that make it difficult to participate in certain activities. Therefore, it is important to ensure that recreational opportunities are designed to be accessible to older adults, with features such as ramps, wide paths, and handrails.
- **Socialization:** Many older adults may experience feelings of isolation and loneliness. Recreational opportunities that provide opportunities for socialization, such as group fitness classes or organized outings, can help to combat these feelings and promote a sense of community.
- **Physical Activity:** Regular physical activity is important for maintaining good health and well-being, particularly as people age. Recreational opportunities that provide opportunities for physical activity, such as walking trails, golf, swimming, or fitness classes, can be beneficial for older adults.
- **Cognitive Stimulation:** Recreational activities that challenge the brain, such as puzzles, games, or learning new skills, can be beneficial for aging adults.
- **Life Enrichment:** Many older adults are looking for opportunities to learn, grow and feel fulfilled. Programs that offer educational and cultural opportunities or that encourage self-expression through arts or creative writing can be beneficial.
- **Nature Connections:** Many aging adults enjoy the tranquility and beauty of nature. They may benefit from outdoor recreational activities such as gardening, bird watching, or hiking, as well as indoor activities that incorporate nature elements, such as tai chi or yoga in a park.

It's important to keep in mind that older adults may have different interests and abilities than younger adults, so it's important to consider their unique needs when planning recreational opportunities. Additionally, it's important to keep in mind that older adults may have limited access to resources such as transportation, time, and finances, so the recreational programs and spaces must be designed with this in mind.

In the OSRP Community Input Survey, 30.43% of respondents were 55+ years of age. 36% of respondents reported being unsatisfied with the quantity current recreational programs/ activities for aging adults with 58% remaining neutral or having no opinion. 39% of respondents reported being unsatisfied with the current quantity of recreation programs /opportunities for aging adults, with 52% remaining neutral or having no opinion. When asked to rank priorities for recreation expenditures on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest, 25% of respondents gave “expanding recreation opportunities for aging residents” a score of 10. This data indicates that there is a noticeable need to better accommodate aging adults in Dudley.

Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Regional and statewide open space and recreation needs were considered throughout this planning process. The Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) served as the basis of this analysis. The SCORP seeks to address available recreational services throughout the Commonwealth and identify potential gaps in access, services, and needs

accommodated. Much like this Town-specific OSRP, the SCORP relies heavily on public input to develop actionable goals and objectives. The goals identified in the 2017 SCORP include:

1. Providing access for underserved populations
2. Supporting the statewide trails initiative
3. Increasing the availability of water-based recreation
4. Supporting the creation and renovation of neighborhood parks

The findings of SCORP connect directly into many of the challenges and opportunities for Dudley cited throughout this plan. Environmental Justice populations exist throughout Dudley and neighboring towns and many of the recommendations in this plan will need to prioritize access to these groups. Dudley is also involved in active or developing regional, statewide, and interstate trail projects such as the Quinebaug Valley Rail Trail and the French River Greenway. The two major rivers and many of the ponds in Town were noted as having significant recreation potential and Dudley will need to capitalize on these and other open space amenities to meet the needs of its growing population.

MANAGEMENT NEEDS, POTENTIAL CHANGE OF USE

Like many Massachusetts towns, funding and available staff time are likely the two most limiting factors related to open space and recreation needs in Dudley. Open space and recreation areas require ongoing maintenance and management, such as trail maintenance, trash removal, and park security. Without adequate staffing, these areas are unable to be kept safe and clean, which can limit their use and enjoyment by the public. These efforts also require significant funding to acquire land, develop and maintain facilities and infrastructure, and to pay for staff. Funding decisions are often made based on priorities, and open space and recreation improvements may not be a high priority for other Boards, Committees, and stakeholders in the Town. And further, the Town of Dudley has a limited budget, and may not have the resources to consistently devote to open space and recreation improvements and maintenance.

The actionable goals included in this plan will require high levels involvement from staff, board members, and volunteers. The Town should continue to work to recruit dedicated, passionate citizens to its boards to serve in these important roles. Dudley can also propose new groups such as a Friends of Dudley's Parks group to aid in funding and implementation of these goals. In addition, to recruiting new volunteers, the Open Space and Recreation Committee must remain active. Should the Open Space and Recreation Committee lapse and meet irregularly, Dudley risks failing to meet any number of goals and objectives. The Town should actively seek to work with various land trusts and watershed associations as well as it seeks to improve the integrity of open space in Dudley. Dudley can also work with CMRPC to partner with neighboring communities to help fund maintenance programs.



Section 8: Goals and Objectives

Produced by the Dudley Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee
and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

SECTION 8- GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The preservation of open space and recreation is a fundamental concern for the Town of Dudley. To preserve and enhance open spaces and recreational opportunities, and to protect the environmental quality of the town, the Committee has formulated a set of objectives that complement the overarching goals outlined in Section 6 and Section 1 of this plan. The goals and their respective objectives are as follows:

Goal 1: Create and Improve Active Recreation Opportunities for All

Objectives

- A. Develop New Active Recreation Facilities and Programs.
- B. Maintain Existing Active Recreation Opportunities in Town.
- C. Increase Awareness of Active and Passive Recreation Opportunities.
- D. Improve Accessibility of Active Recreation Opportunities for All, Particularly Those with Physical Limitations.

Goal 2: Enhance Passive Recreation Opportunities for All

Objectives

- A. Maintain Existing Passive Recreation Opportunities in Town.
- B. Develop New Passive Recreation Opportunities.
- C. Improve Accessibility of Passive Recreation Opportunities for All, Particularly Those with Physical Limitations.

Goal 3: Preserve Environmental Resources in Town

Objectives

- A. Protect Water Resources Throughout Town.
- B. Conserve Wildlife Habitats and Ecosystems Throughout Town.
- C. Build the Climate Resilience of the Town.

Goal 4: Cultivate Resources to Aid in Open Space and Recreation Improvements

Objectives

- A. Build Partnerships with Local, Regional, and State Stakeholders.
- B. Tap into Available Funding Mechanisms to Facilitate Open Space and Recreation Projects.
- C. Foster Community Outreach to Harness Citizen Volunteers for Open Space and Recreation Projects.

Goal 5: Maintain the Character of the Town

Objective

- A. Identify and Protect Scenic Resources in Town.
- B. Preserve and Highlight Historic Resources for Future Generations.
- C. Improve Cultural Opportunities.

Goal 6: Continue to Develop and Promote Agricultural Resources

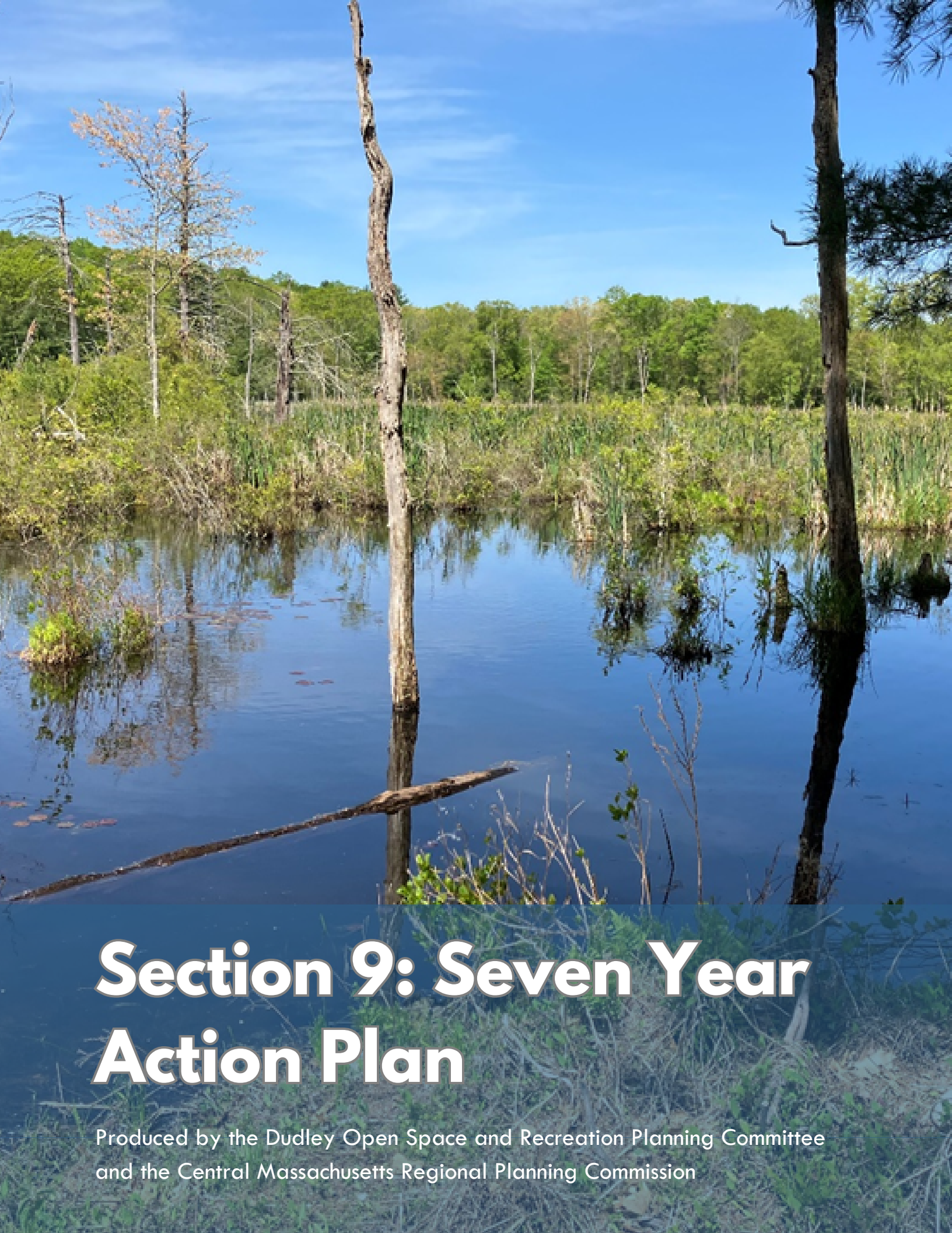
Objective

- A. Preserve Existing Agricultural Resources.
- B. Develop Agriculturally Focused Community Events.
- C. Expand Community Involvement in and Awareness of Agricultural Resources.

Goal 7: Curate the Development of the French River and Quinebaug River as Destinations

Objective

- A. Improve recreation opportunities and enhance aesthetics and tourism on and around the rivers.
- B. Preserve the Water Quality and Ecosystems of the Rivers.



Section 9: Seven Year Action Plan

Produced by the Dudley Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee
and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

SECTION 9- SEVEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The Dudley 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan listed in this section encompasses the goals and objectives of the prior sections, along with concrete or detailed action items to help implement the vision of this Plan. Each action item listed in this plan will identify a party, or parties, such as various Town Boards, Committees, Departments, or nonprofits who could be responsible for implementing that particular action. Some action items also suggest the formation of groups that are then listed as responsible parties in subsequent action items.

The abbreviations used to represent responsible parties in the Action Plan are defined as follows:

- AC: Agricultural Commission
- BOH: Board of Health
- BOS: Board of Selectmen
- CC: Conservation Commission
- CIPC: Capital Improvement Planning Committee
- DCLT: Dudley Conservation Land Trust
- DCRSD: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District
- EMD: Emergency Management Director
- HD: Highway Department
- PIO: Public Information Officer
- RC: Recreation Commission
- TA: Town Administrator
- TSC: Trails Subcommittee
- W/S: Water and Sewer Department

Each action also lists the priority and estimated timeframe to facilitate achievement of these steps. Priority rankings and are defined as follows:

- **Very High (VH)** – These actions are those that cannot be delayed in implementation. These actions will help to address a large issue or concern that might be impacting other resources or preventing access to other resources.
- **High (H)** - These actions could have a large impact on other resources, and they may help to address large areas of concern but are slightly less critical than “Very High” priority items.

The timeframe can be listed as taking anywhere between 1 and 7 years. Some actions will occur on a continuous basis and are listed as on-going.

Town of Dudley 2022-2029 Open Space & Recreation Plan

1 Goal 1: Create and Improve Active Recreation Opportunities for All
• Active recreation open space facilities

2 Goal 2: Enhance Passive Recreation Opportunities for All
• Passive recreation open space facilities

4 Goal 4: Cultivate Resources to Aid in Open Space and Recreation Improvements

Goal 4: Maintain the Character of the Town
• Historic areas
• Scenic roads

3 Goal 3: Preserve Environmental Resources in Town
• Vernal pools and biomap areas
• Conservation districts

Source: Data provided by the Town of Dudley, MassGIS and MassDOT.

Legend

- Town Boundary
- NHESP Certified Vernal Pools (Jan 2024) (3)
- MHC Historic Inventory Areas (5)
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Scenic Roads (5)
- Active Rail Service
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Public Open Space (1, 2)
- Conservation Area (3)
- Conservation Restriction
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (6)
- NHESP/TNC BioMap Elements
- Core Habitat (3)
- Critical Natural Landscape
- Chapter Land (FY2022) (6)
- Chapter 61
- Chapter 61A
- Chapter 61B

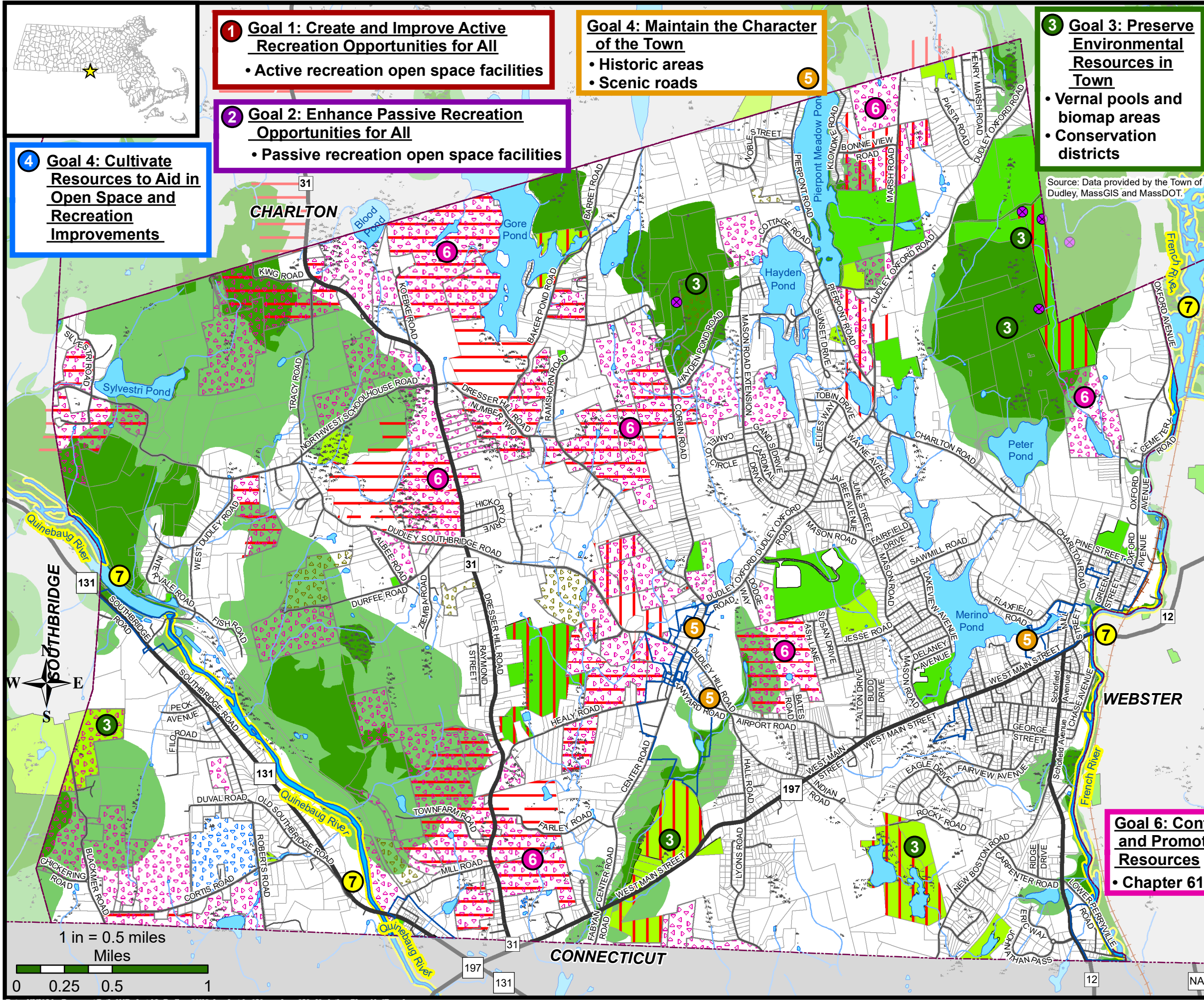
Goal 6: Curate the Development of the French River and Quinebaug River as Destinations
• French and Quinebaug rivers (7)

Goal 6: Continue to Develop and Promote Agricultural Resources
• Chapter 61 and APR lands (6)

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution interpreting positional accuracy.



Produced by
One Mercantil Street
Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608



Goal 1: Create and Improve Active Recreation Opportunities for All							
Objective		Action		Responsible Party	Priority	Timing	Possible Funding Sources
1.1	Develop New Active Recreation Facilities and Programs.	1.1-A	Consider opportunities to construct a Disc golf course on a wooded property- possibly at or near the town beach.	RC	H	5 to 7	LWCF grant, PARC grant, CPA Funds
		1.1-B	Construct dedicated softball fields that are not shared with Little League.	RC	VH	3 to 4	LWCF grant, PARC grant, CPA Funds
		1.1-C	Construct additional Basketball courts.	RC	H	3 to 4	LWCF grant, PARC grant, CPA Funds
		1.1-D	Develop better play areas for kids.	RC	VH	1 to 7	LWCF grant, PARC grant, CPA Funds
		1.1-E	Develop a multi-use field.	RC	H	5 to 7	LWCF grant, PARC grant, CPA Funds
		1.1-F	Develop a pickleball court - across from St. Andrews church potentially.	RC	VH	1 to 3	LWCF grant, PARC grant, CPA Funds
		1.1-G	Develop a swimming program for the youth.	RC	H	3 to 4	Allocation of Town Funds
		1.1-H	Develop more places and programs for the youth.	RC	H	5 to 7	LWCF grant, PARC grant, CPA Funds
		1.1-I	Develop a stable funding source for recreation.	BOS	VH	On-going	Allocation of Town Funds
		1.1-J	Develop priority list of parcels for immediate and future acquisition of land based on risk, proximity to existing resources and other factors.	RC	H	2 to 3	MVP Action grant
1.2	Maintain Existing Active Recreation Opportunities in Town.	1.2-A	Develop a maintenance strategy for the existing recreation fields, grounds, and courts.	RC, BOS	VH	On-going	DLTA, Town Funds
		1.2-B	Maintain baseball fields and soccer fields.	HD	VH	On-going	PARC Grant
		1.2-C	Maintain and improve accessibility and appearance of the town beach- such as improving grading of the path to the beach.	HD	VH	1 to 3	MassTrails grants
		1.2-D	Develop 5-year capital improvement plan for all recreation facilities.	CIPC	VH	2 to 3	Community Compact: Financial Management Best Practices
		1.2-E	Develop a multi-year funding plan to finance better management of conservation and recreation lands.	TA	H	4 to 5	Community Compact: Financial Management Best Practices
		1.2-F	Develop management plans for Dudley's active recreational facilities.	HD	VH	2 to 3	DLTA, Allocation of Town Funds
		1.2-G	Coordinate with responsible parties on the stocking of fish at Dudley's water bodies.	TA	H	3 to 4	Town Funds
		1.2-H	Develop a plan to make all publicly available data on fishing opportunities accessible on Dudley's town website.	CC	H	1 to 2	Town Funds
		1.2-I	Develop a map or other tool that identifies and prioritizes underserved recreation facilities.	RC	VH	1 to 2	DLTA
1.3	Increase Awareness of Active and Passive Recreation Opportunities.	1.3-A	Prepare paper and digital resources detailing the town's recreation facilities, public open spaces, trail systems, and other resources to publicize Dudley's special places to new residents and visitors.	RC, PIO	VH	1 to 3	DLTA
		1.3-B	Continue updating town website, social media, and post events in local newspapers.	RC, PIO	VH	On-going	Town Funds
		1.3-C	Advertise activities and events on Town website, social media, and other outreach platforms.	RC	H	On-going	Town Funds
		1.3-D	Improve signage and other wayfinding, identifying the location/access points for all conservation lands that are open to the public.	RC, HD	VH	1 to 3	MassTrails grants
		1.3-E	Hang road banners at road races.	RC, HD	VH	On-going	Town Funds
		1.3-F	Develop a plan to ensure coordination between land trust and other agencies/organizations to make data on trails publicly available on the same platforms and in the same formats.	DCLT, CC TSC	VH	1 to 2	Town Funds
		1.3-G	Develop and promote programs for all age groups and user groups within the population, such as swimming lessons and trail walks.	RC	H	5 to 6	Town Funds
		1.3-H	Create and re-establish more town fundraising opportunities.	RC	VH	On-going	Town Funds
		1.3-I	Initiate community events at existing recreation facilities such as the rail trail.	RC	H	On-going	Town Funds
1.4	Improve Accessibility of Active Recreation Opportunities for All, Particularly Those with Physical Limitations.	1.4-A	Improve access to town beach.	BOS, HD	VH	1 to 3	LWCF grant, PARC grant, MassTrails grants
		1.4-B	Implement the recommendations of the ADA plan for conservation lands and recreational facilities.	BOS, HD	VH	1 to 7	LWCF grant, PARC grant, MassTrails grants
		1.4-C	Install a handicap accessible bathroom at the Town Beach.	BOS, HD	VH	2 to 3	LWCF grant, PARC grant, MassTrails grants

Goal 2: Enhance Passive Recreation Opportunities for All							
Objective		Action		Responsible Party	Priority	Timing	
2.1	Maintain Existing Passive Recreation Opportunities in Town.	2.1-A	Pave the rail trail and improve rail trail accessibility.	State Grant, HD	VH	1 to 2	LWCF grant, MassTrails grants, PARC grant
		2.1-B	Maintain rail trail.	HD	H	On-going	MassTrails grants
		2.1-C	Add sidewalks in high traffic pedestrian areas and implement the Town's Complete Streets Plan.	HD, PB	H	On-going	Program, Complete Streets Funding Program, MassWorks, RAISE grant, RCN grant
		2.1-D	Turn some roads, such as Perryville Access Road, into one-way to reserve space for biking or walking.	HD	H	4 to 5	Program, Complete Streets Funding Program, MassWorks, RAISE grant, RCN grant
		2.1-E	Coordinate with Dudley Land Trust to explore maintenance needs.	CC	H	On-going	MassWildlife Habitat Management grant
		2.1-F	Create Trails Subcommittee via Conservation Commission.	CC	VH	1 to 2	N/A
		2.1-G	Increase available parking space and improve condition of parking at conservation properties.	HD	H	3 to 5	LWCF grant, MassTrails grants
		2.1-H	Inventory and map all open space trails identifying their current condition and maintenance needed.	TSC	VH	2 to 3	DLTA
		2.1-I	Develop plan to ensure all coordinated trails data is made available to emergency services personnel.	TSC	H	On-going	Town Funds
2.2	Develop New Passive Recreation Opportunities.	2.2-A	Develop New "Town Commons" at the Municipal Complex.	BOS	VH	1 to 3	LWCF grant, PARC grant
		2.2-B	Develop Connections between existing trails on Town Land, and land of the DCLT and MassAudubon, to create a long-distance trail network in town.	CC	High	On-going	MassTrails grants, MassWildlife Habitat Management grant, Conservation partnership grant, LAND, LWCF, Landscape Partnership grant
		2.2-C	Develop public access and prepare a plan for a new Town Park on the old Bernier Tree Farm property. The site is on the Conn. Line and is landlocked. Seek to develop connections with the Ardlock Acres Conservation Area.	BOS, CC	VH	1 to 7	LAND grant, LWCF grant, MassTrails grants, PARC grant
		2.2-D	Acquire additional open space in vicinity of Shepherd Pond for conservation purposes.	BOS, CC	H	On-going	Community Forest grant, LAND grant, LWCF grant, MassTrails grants, MVP Action grant, Conservation partnership grant
		2.2-E	Acquire additional open space in vicinity of Peter Pond for conservation purposes.	BOS, CC	H	On-going	Community Forest grant, LAND grant, LWCF grant, MassTrails grants, MVP Action grant, Conservation partnership grant
		2.2-F	Examine properties the Town has acquired over the years from tax foreclosure that were placed under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen to determine if they have value as permanent conservation land under the Conservation Commission.	PB, CC	H	On-going	DLTA
		2.2-G	Contact landowners who own property assessed as undevelopable land to determine if they would be willing to donate the land to the Town for conservation purposes.	Assessors, CC	H	On-going	Brownfield Program (MassDEP), Brownfields Program (EPA)
		2.2-H	Develop contemplative outdoor space at Pearl Crawford Library.	Trustees	VH	1 to 2	LWCF grant, PARC grant
		2.2-I	Develop Public Access and prepare plan for new town park along the Grand Trunk Trail off of Lyons Road.	BOS	H	1 to 7	LAND grant, LWCF grant, MassTrails grants, PARC grant
		2.2-J	Work with landowners of property containing the bed of the Grand Trunk railroad to acquire easements or rights to develop a long distance trail from Fish Road to Perryville.	PB	H	1 to 7	MassTrails grants,
		2.2-K	Annually Evaluate existing tax title properties and where appropriate, seek to place under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.	PB	H	On-going	DLTA
		2.2-L	Prioritize land acquisitions that increase connectivity and protect ecologically sensitive lands.	DCLT, TSC	H	On-going	Community Forest grant, LAND grant, Landscape Partnership grant, LWCF grant, MVP Action grant, Conservation partnership grant
		2.2-M	Develop an outreach program when planning the town-wide trails to secure cooperation of affected landowners.	TSC	VH	On-going	DLTA
2.3	Improve Accessibility of Passive Recreation Opportunities for All, Particularly Those with Physical Limitations.	2.3-A	Improve sidewalks by the Village Cemetery on Dudley Oxford Road.	HD	H	3 to 4	Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program, Complete Streets Funding Program, MassWorks, RAISE grant, RCN grant
		2.3-B	Add more dog friendly areas to attract more residents to be more active in town recreation events. Assess citizen desire for a dog park.	BOS, RC	H	4 to 5	LWCF grant, PARC grant
		2.3-C	Develop a welcome packet with info on wildlife interactions, insect-diseases, etc., helpful hints on Town website.	Town Planner	H	2 to 3	DLTA
		2.3-D	Add benches and picnic areas along trails.	HD	H	4 to 5	MassTrails grants
		2.3-E	Construct bike lanes in high traffic areas of Town to allow for safe and protected biking opportunities.	HD	H	On-going	Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program, Complete Streets Funding Program, MassWorks, RAISE grant, RCN grant
		2.3-F	Update signage at trails and parks around Town to include other languages.	HD	H	4 to 5	MassTrails grants

Goal 3: Preserve Environmental Resources in Town							
Objective		Action		Responsible Party	Priority	Timing	Possible Funding Sources
3.1	Protect Water Resources Throughout Town.	3.1-A	Develop a new public water supply well to guard against drought and eliminate water use restrictions.	W/S Com	VH	1 to 4	Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant, Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program, MVP Action grant
		3.1-B	Acquire land around the new well as required by DEP to protect the water supply.	W/S Com	VH	1 to 4	Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant, Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program, MVP Action grant
		3.1-C	Continue to support regional efforts to improve the water quality of the waterways in town by establishing points of contact, developing working relationships, participating in regional conferences and other activities.	CC	H	On-going	Section 604(b) Water Quality Management Planning Grant, Section 319 Nonpoint Source Competitive Grants Program
		3.1-D	Reassess town stormwater regulations alongside Subdivision Rules and Regulations to ensure consistency and enhance protection of land and water resources.	PB	H	On-going	DLTA
		3.1-E	Conduct outreach efforts to homeowners and business owners regarding nonpoint source pollution reduction practices.	BOH, CC	H	On-going	Section 604(b) Water Quality Management Planning Grant
		3.1-F	Encourage monitoring and repair of individual septic systems by property owners through education actions.	BOH	H	On-going	Town Funds
		3.1-G	Inspect sewer system and identify contingency plans for spills and leaks.	W/S	VH	On-going	Town Funds
		3.1-H	Ensure there is a water quality plan in place for all of town water bodies that is actively maintained and implemented.	Lake Associations, CC	H	5 to 6	MVP Action grant
		3.1-I	Establish a Lakes and Ponds Commission.	BOS	H	6 to 7	Lakes and Ponds program
3.2	Conserve Wildlife Habitats and Ecosystems Throughout Town.	3.2-A	Many important pollinators are in serious decline due to development and loss of habitat. Work with regional, state, and national organizations to eliminate invasive species and plant vegetation that pollinators need.	All	VH	On-going	Grassroots Fund grant programs, Community Compact Agriculture Best Practice
		3.2-B	Certify additional vernal pools in town to provide greater protection from development.	CC	VH	On-going	Lakes and Ponds program
		3.2-C	Amend Dudley Subdivision Rules and Regulations so that they require the retention of open space for wildlife corridors on all parcels located between or adjacent to open space.	PB	H	3 to 4	DLTA
		3.2-D	Provide information to landowners regarding available mechanisms to permanently protect open space parcels.	CC	H	2 to 3	DLTA
		3.2-E	Proactively monitor and audit existing conservation lands to prevent encroachment and ensure conservation restrictions are having their intended effect.	CC	H	On-going	Town Funds
		3.2-F	Develop enforcement protocol for encroachment.	CC	H	2 to 3	Town Funds
		3.2-G	Secure conservation restrictions for the town owned open space properties where protection is appropriate.	CC	H	3 to 4	LAND Grant, Conservation Partnership Grant Program
		3.2-H	Further incorporate low impact development (LID) requirement language in the Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Regulations.	PB	H	2 to 3	DLTA
3.3	Build the Climate Resilience of the Town.	3.3-A	Replace substandard culverts in town that pose a threat to near-by properties and replace with new ones that meet the State's stream crossing standards, which remove barriers to species migration and preserve natural stream channels.	HD	VH	On-going	Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program
		3.3-B	Assess the potential of dams to produce hydropower.	TA/ HD	H	1 to 7	MVP Action grant
		3.3-C	Develop an education campaign regarding climate change risks and preparedness, building off of the MVP Program (advertising shelters, risks, etc.)	EMD	H	2 to 3	MVP Action grant
		3.3-D	Develop bylaw/language to mitigate solar development harm to wildlife corridors.	PB	H	3 to 4	DLTA, Town Funds
		3.3-E	Implement the recommendations of the MVP Plan.	TA/EMD	VH	On-going	Town Funds, MVP Action grant
		3.3-F	Update the MVP Plan every five years and work to address climate vulnerabilities.	TA/EMD	VH	On-going	Town Funds

Goal 4: Cultivate Resources to Aid in Open Space and Recreation Improvements							
Objective		Action		Responsible Party	Priority	Timing	Possible Funding Sources
4.1	Build Partnerships with Local, Regional, and State Stakeholders.	4.1-A	Collaborate with various stakeholders such as Boys + Girls Club, and local businesses to advance the projects in this plan.	RC, CC	VH	On-going	Grassroots Fund grant programs
		4.1-B	Communicate with educational institutions such as Nichols College to explore opportunities for collaboration.	TA	VH	1 to 2	Agriculture Innovation Center Program
		4.1-C	Continue regional partnerships with surrounding/similar communities to address overlapping environmental issues.	Town Planner	H	On-going	Town Funds
		4.1-D	Utilize CMRPC as a resource to collaborate with surrounding Towns.	PB	H	On-going	Town Funds
		4.1-E	Establish a standing Open Space and Recreation Plan Implementation Committee OR Establish a standing Action Plan Implementation Committee.	BOS	H	1 to 2	Town Funds
		4.1-F	Provide more opportunities for inclusion of a youth voice in planning for open space and recreation opportunities.	RC, CC	VH	On-going	Grassroots Fund grant programs
4.2	Tap into Available Funding Mechanisms to Facilitate Open Space and Recreation Projects.	4.2-A	Apply for state, federal, and nonprofit grants to implement this Action Plan, such as PARC, LAND, MassTrails, MVP, Culvert Replacement Program, Dam and Seawall Repair, Community One-Stop for Growth, etc.	BOS, PB	VH	On-going	Town Funds, CMRPC LPA funds
		4.2-B	Identify overlapping actions in this plan, the MVP Plan, and other similar planning documents and apply for joint funding for projects.	Town Planner	H	On-going	Town Funds, CMRPC LPA funds
4.3	Foster Community Outreach to Harness Citizen Volunteers for Open Space and Recreation Projects.	4.3-A	Promote the Dudley Agricultural Commission Annual Plant Hop "Dudley Grows Together."	AC	VH	On-going	Community Compact: Agriculture Best Practice
		4.3-B	Publicize information on how to promote biodiversity on residential properties (i.e. "Homegrown National Park").	DCLT, AC	VH	On-going	Town Funds, DLTA
		4.3-C	Promote environmental education opportunities.	DCRSD, RC	VH	On-going	Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Forest Stewardship Program, Foresters for the Birds
		4.3-D	Establish a Friends of Dudley's Parks group to aid in funding and implementation of these goals.	RC	H	1 to 2	Grassroots Fund grant programs
		4.3-E	Create a Town-sponsored clean up and maintenance crew for the Town's various open space and recreation areas.	HD	H	On-going	Town Funds
Goal 5: Maintain the Character of the Town							
Objective		Action		Responsible Party	Priority	Timing	Possible Funding Sources
5.1	Identify and Protect Scenic Resources in Town.	5.1-A	Improve sidewalks and landscaping along the entire length of West Main St.	BOS, HD	H	4 to 5	Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program, Complete Streets Funding Program, MassWorks, RAISE grant, RCN grant
		5.1-B	Update and maintain Town inventory of scenic lands and special places.	CC	H	2 to 3	DLTA
		5.1-C	Develop design guidelines, outside of those required by Site Plan Review, to articulate aesthetic preferences for architecture, landscaping, materials, and other design elements.	PB	VH	2 to 3	DLTA
5.2	Preserve and Highlight Historic Resources for Future Generations.	5.2-A	Coordinate with the Historic Commission and other relevant organizations to help build awareness of the historical significance of Dudley's historical and cultural places.	HC/ Other Orgs	VH	On-going	Town Funds
		5.2-B	Explore Zoning Bylaw Amendments and other land use policies and programs that encourage the preservation of the character of Dudley's historic districts.	PB	H	On-going	DLTA
		5.2-C	Promote and update information at Town historical sites.	HC	VH	On-going	DLTA
5.3	Improve Cultural Opportunities.	5.3-A	Develop plans for park on the site of the old Stevens Mill Bleachery property off Ardlock Place as a venue for community events, cultural programs, and passive enjoyment of nature. Seek funding to develop the park before the Town's 300th anniversary.	HC	VH	1 to 7	LWCF & PARC Grants, CPA Funds
		5.3-B	Assist the newly formed Recreation Commission as it seeks to add new recreation facilities and programs for citizens of all age age groups and user groups within the population.	BOS	VH	On-going	Town Funds

Goal 6: Continue to Develop and Promote Agricultural Resources							
Objective		Action		Responsible Party	Priority	Timing	Possible Funding Sources
6.1	Preserve Existing Agricultural Resources.	6.1-A	Change town regulations to remove barriers that inhibit new farmers from acquiring land to start up new farms on once-productive agricultural land.	AC	VH	On-going	Community Compact: Agriculture Best Practice
		6.1-B	Provide resources for sustainable gardening and farming.	AC	VH	On-going	Farm Viability Enhancement Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Last Green Valley Grant
		6.1-C	Connect farmers who need farm land to lease or rent with relevant resources (i.e. Land for Good).	AC	H	On-going	Community Compact: Agriculture Best Practice
		6.1-D	Work closely with the agricultural commission to explore and develop mechanisms for the protection and maintenance of working farms in Dudley.	TA/BOS/PB	VH	On-going	Community Compact: Agriculture Best Practice
6.2	Develop Agriculturally Focused Community Events.	6.2-A	Locate an area for a weekly Farmer's Market during the growing season.	AC	VH	On-going	Community Compact: Agriculture Best Practice
		6.2-B	Coordinate the Dudley Agricultural Commission's efforts to support local farmers by hosting community events (stargazing, music, farm to table dinners, etc.).	AC	H	On-going	Community Compact: Agriculture Best Practice
		6.2-C	Remove barriers to agricultural tourism and encourage the production of non-traditional crops that meet a niche market.	AC	H	On-going	Community Compact: Agriculture Best Practice
6.3	Expand Community Involvement in and Awareness of Agricultural Resources.	6.3-A	Tie in agriculture with the school curriculum and add a school garden space at the schools.	DCRSD, AC	VH	On-going	Community Compact: Agriculture Best Practice
		6.3-B	Establish a community garden.	AC	H	5 to 7	Grassroots Fund grant programs, CPA Funds
Goal 7: Curate the Development of the French River and Quinebaug River as Destinations							
Objective		Action		Responsible Party	Priority	Timing	Possible Funding Sources
7.1	Improve recreation opportunities and enhance aesthetics and tourism on and around the Rivers	7.1-A	Develop the French River Greenway in Dudley to complement efforts in Oxford and Webster along their portions of the river.	BOS, PB	H	On-going	LAND grant, LWCF grant, MassTrails grants, PARC grant, CPA Funds
		7.1-B	Develop a new canoe launch on the French River to advance long distance canoeing and kayaking with other River towns.	BOS, PB	H	4 to 5	LAND grant, LWCF grant, PARC grant, CPA Funds
		7.1-C	In conjunction with the construction of the Riverwalk by the developer of the Stevens Mill project, seek to extend the trail along the French River and connect to developed sections on the Webster side of the river.	BOS, PB	VH	1 to 3	LAND grant, LWCF grant, MassTrails grants, PARC grant, CPA Funds
		7.1-D	Prioritize land acquisitions that secure land in a green belt for conservation along various waterbodies in Dudley.	Town Planner	H	On-going	Community Forest grant, LAND grant, LWCF grant, MVP Action grant, Conservation Partnership grant, CPA Funds
7.2	Preserve the Water Quality and Ecosystems of the Rivers	7.2-A	Where feasible, remove old, deteriorated dams to prevent catastrophic failure, restore natural watercourses, increase wildlife habitat, and remove barriers to species migration.	BOS, HD	H	On-going	MVP Action grant
		7.2-B	Encourage volunteer efforts to clean up waste along the rivers.	CC/HD	H	On-going	Lakes and Ponds Program, Grassroots Fund grant programs



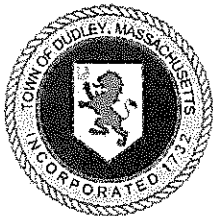
Section 10: Public Comments

Produced by the Dudley Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee
and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission



SECTION 10- PUBLIC COMMENTS

Letters of support are being solicited from the following entities: Dudley Board of Selectmen and Dudley Planning Board. A letter of support for this Open Space and Recreation Plan has been provided by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission and can be viewed on the following page.



Town of Dudley Massachusetts
Board of Selectmen
Office of the Town Administrator
71 West Main Street, Dudley, MA 01571

Kerry Cyganiewicz, Sr.
Chairman

John Marsi
Vice Chairman

Mark Landry
Clerk

Jason Johnson
Selectman

Steven Sullivan
Selectman

Jonathan Ruda
Town Administrator

Tel: 508-949-8001
www.dudleyma.gov

March 28, 2024

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

Re: Town of Dudley 2024 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan:

The Dudley Board of Selectmen is pleased to offer this letter of support for our 2024 Open Space and Recreation Plan, as prepared by our Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee with assistance from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.

Through public meetings, community-wide surveys, and meetings with other boards, this working document has benefited from substantial community input. Overall, the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee has done a terrific job preparing this plan.

Many Town committees, including our Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Recreation Committee will benefit from having this document as a resource when considering future acquisitions and opportunities for passive and active recreation. We are confident that the Open Space and Recreation Plan will serve as a valuable resource for many years and help guide our decision-making and future investments.

We thank you for considering this Plan and supporting our open space and recreation efforts.

Sincerely,

Kerry Cyganiewicz Sr., Chair
Dudley Board of Selectmen

TOWN OF DUDLEY
MASSACHUSETTS
PLANNING BOARD
DUDLEY MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, ROOM 308
71 WEST MAIN STREET, DUDLEY, MA 01571

DUDLEY PLANNING BOARD
Guy Horne, Chairman
Daniel Edmiston, Vice Chairman
Thomas Chojnacki, Clerk
Richard Clark, Member
David Durgin, Member



DUDLEY PLANNING STAFF
William Scanlan, Acting Town Planner
Ora Finn, Clerk

planner1@dudleyma.gov
Phone: 508-949-8014

April 2, 2024

Melissa Cryan
Grant Programs Supervisor
Division of Conservation Services
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Dudley Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan:

The Planning Board strongly supports the 2024 Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Plan was prepared under the direction of the Dudley Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee, which consisted of a diverse group of Dudley officials and citizen volunteers. The Plan thoroughly documents the existing conditions of the Town's natural resources and open space and recreation assets. The Action Plan sets forth an ambitious agenda to improve recreation opportunities for Dudley residents, and it proposes a thoughtful agenda to protect valuable resources. We look forward to working with other boards and departments to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the Plan.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Guy E. Horne, Jr.".

Guy Horne, Chair



1 Mercantile Street – Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608
P: 508.756.7717 F: 508.792.6818
www.cmrpc.org

April 10th, 2024

Melissa Cryan
Division of Conservation Services
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge St., Ste. 900
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Town of Dudley 2024 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan;

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) is sending this letter in support of the Town of Dudley and its recently-finalized 2024 Open Space & Recreation Plan. The Town and its Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee (Committee) are to be commended for their time and effort in completing this Plan.

The Committee and its consultant, CMRPC, have discussed a wide variety of open space and recreation needs in town, and the final document appears compliant with your office's standards for Open Space and Recreation Plans. The plan emphasizes the need to ensure that recreation opportunities in town are accessible to people of all capabilities and ages and the need to enhance tourism, recreation, and historic and natural resource preservation in town through innovative strategies and greater use of regional, state, and federal resources. The plan also describes how improving connectivity between open spaces and through walking and biking infrastructure can benefit town residents.

Dudley's Open Space and Recreation Plan provides the Town with the specific action steps and visioning needed to achieve its goals and objectives, all informed with community input. The Plan also recognizes the need for partnerships with public and private entities to make its goals and objectives a reality. To this end, several groups, such as land trusts and private landowners, are included in the plan and referenced in several objectives, with recommendations for partnerships.

The Town of Dudley will benefit from having a State-approved Open Space and Recreation Plan, as the Plan will allow it to better manage its recreation facilities and programs as well as better conserve and protect its vital open spaces and natural resources.

Please consider this letter as a demonstration of CMRPC's support for the Plan and the process which led to its development. We find Dudley's Plan to be wholly aligned with the goals and objectives outlined in the Town's recent comprehensive planning projects, CMRPC's Regional Open Space and Recreation Plan, CMRPC's 2020 Growth Strategy for Central Massachusetts (2000), Dudley's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Plan, CMRPC's current regional planning efforts (Imagine 2050), and the Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. While these plans help provide Dudley with a comprehensive picture of the wider region, this OSRP has the unique and important role of guiding the Town with the vast amount of local knowledge that it contains.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sam Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sam Carter, Comprehensive Planner
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission