

City of Methuen

Open Space & Recreation Plan for the 2020s

Mayor Neil Perry
Spring 2021



An Open Space & Recreation Plan for the 2020s and A New Century for Methuen

This Methuen Open Space & Recreation Plan Update process has taken place during the worst pandemic in more than a century. The Covid-19 crisis has upended plans and routines, created stress in daily lives, interrupted school calendars, forced event cancellations, caused prolonged economic disruptions and changed how we interact with each other as a community. Everyone has been affected in some way. One year after the initial lockdowns and closures in mid-March 2020, the pandemic toll in the U.S. surpassed more than 500,000 deaths. In Methuen, as of the beginning of March 2021, 13% of the City's population were infected, a total of 6,502 cases, and we have mourned the loss of 71 residents.

After a year of Zoom meetings, hybrid remote/in-person school schedules, work from home mandates, business restrictions and social distancing, Covid fatigue has long settled in and a yearning for a return to normalcy is universal. Open spaces and walking trails provided some needed relief after the initial Covid wave as Methuenites were encouraged by late Spring 2020 to get outdoors, mask up and stay six feet apart. With the rollout of vaccine distribution at the end of 2020 and early 2021, Methuen looks forward to a safe reopening and once again booking community calendars with sports events, band concerts, recreation activities, parades and celebrations.

Later this decade in 2026, Methuen will be marking the 300th anniversary of our founding as a community. We will move beyond this pandemic time. We will gear up for a more celebratory tricentennial year. And as we prepare our City for its fourth century, the value of community for us is reinforced as is the commitment to a common purpose in making Methuen an even better place for the generations that follow. It is in that spirit and with hope for the future that this Plan sets an ambitious and achievable agenda for rejuvenating our parks and conservation areas.

-Mayor Neil Perry



Acknowledgements

Mayor Perry and the Methuen planning team are grateful for the participation of the Advisory Committee members:

- Sarah Boehm, Merrimack River Watershed Council Board
- Bill Bryant, Methuen Boosters
- Brad Buschur, Groundwork Lawrence
- William Castro, community advocate
- Joel Faretra, Methuen City Council, Central District
- Laura Gomez, Methuen Arlington Neighborhood
- John Hadley, Methuen Historical Society
- Beth Henrick, Methuen Boosters
- Matt Kraunelis, Methuen Arts Initiative
- Eileen Lee, Methuen Commission on Disability
- Adam Marino, Methuen Pop Warner
- Ryan McVann, Methuen Branch YMCA
- Jordan Normandia, community advocate
- Danielle Osorio, Methuen Youth Soccer
- Sue Riccio, Methuen Senior Center
- Mike Rossi, environmental advocate & resident
- Cara Seaman, Methuen Conservation Commission
- Octavien Spanner, Melita Farm
- Tim Vermette, Methuen Rail Trail

City of Methuen Planning Team:

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Department of Public Works

- Patrick Bower, Director

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- William Pare, Director (retired April 2021)
- Stephen Angelo Jr., Director (as of Spring 2021)
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- Matthew Curran, Athletic Director

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

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Special thanks to GreenBelt staff: David Heacock, Abby Hardy-Moss and Maggie Brown

Section 1: Executive Summary & Contents

A Methuen Open Space & Recreation Agenda for the 2020s



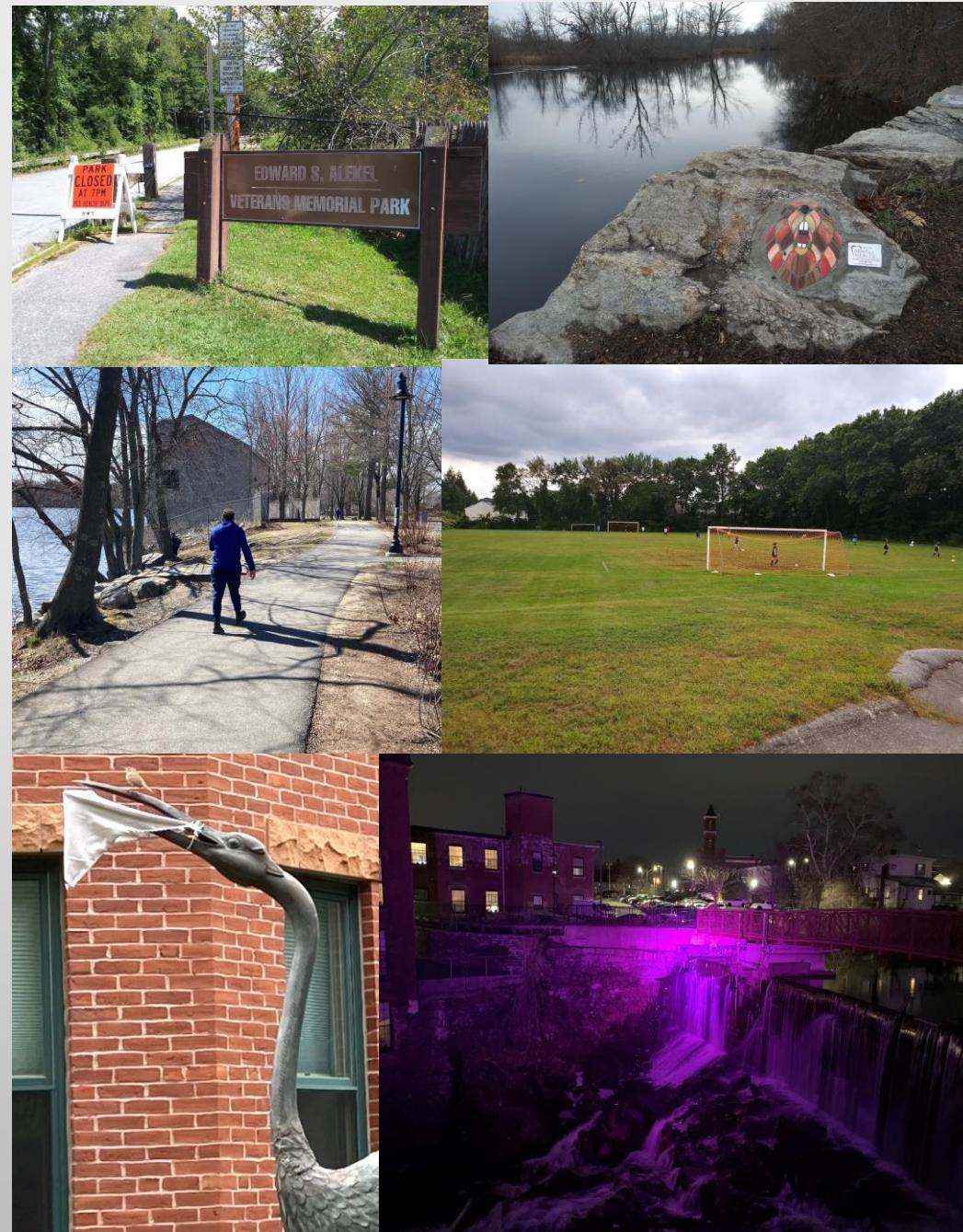
Methuen in 2019 began the process of updating its 2012-2013 Open Space & Recreation Plan. Over the past two years, the planning team has undertaken ADA self assessment of the City-owned recreation areas, conducted resident outreach through on-line survey and Advisory Committee meetings (held “virtually” via Zoom because of the pandemic), completed mapping & inventory of public and private lands, and set goals & objectives for accomplishing our vision of a revitalized open space and parks system.

The planning process culminated with development of an action plan of prioritized projects. The action plan is intended to guide project selection and grant funding applications needed as the City takes steps through acquisitions, planning partnerships, design and construction to implement a proactive open space preservation and recreation improvement agenda for the 2020s.

In a few short years Methuen will begin its fourth century as a community. This plan is prepared with renewed appreciation of the legacy resources and places built or preserved by those who came before us. The ambitious agenda we set here is a commitment by the current generation of Methuenites to make our community an even more special place for the generations who follow.

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Section 2: Introduction

Purpose of Methuen's Open Space & Recreation Plan Update for the 2020s

Our parks, open spaces and natural resources are what distinguish us as a City and bring us together as a community.

The capacity of City government to maintain what we have and to build and improve for the future is an increasing concern in a period of municipal finance constraints.

Those constraints make it more imperative than ever that Methuen decisions on programming and capital spending investments be strategic and founded on community needs-based planning.

This Open Space & Recreation Plan Update for the 2020s is designed to provide the framework and outline priorities for this new decade's capital spending plans in parks & conservation. Its purpose is not only to maintain the City's eligibility for state & federal funding to supplement our limited local capital outlays. More importantly, this Plan is an effort to solve pressing problems and define the vision, goals and priority actions for a quality network of parks and conservation areas. In doing this-as our tricentennial year approaches-through a planning process that reflects the multiple perspectives and interests of our diverse community, we aim to build a better Methuen ready to take on the environmental challenges of a growing and healthy community.



How'd We Do 2013-20?



Issues and Actions Since the 2012-13 Plan

Accomplishments:

- Riverside Park Upgrades Completed (2018)---Accessibility & lighting upgrades to gazebo; walking path & parking improvements, addition of tot lot; drainage bioretention area constructed.
- Nicholson Stadium upgraded including new turf, accessibility improvements and new clubhouse (2015-16)
- Soccer field upgrade with artificial turf at MHS (2015-16)
- Bea's Boat Ramp and parking area completed. (2016)
- Ivy Island (located off Bea's boat landing and Riverside conservation land) acquired by City (2019)
- Methuen Rail Trail constructed and formally opened Fall 2019
- MHS Track rehabilitated after years of being unsuitable for track meets because of disrepair (Fall 2020)
- Public Art installations including mosaics and poetry banners & markers installed at locations including Spicket Falls bridge & Methuen Rail Trail. (2018-2020)

Issues and Actions Since the 2012-13 Plan

Accomplishments:

- Tot lot upgrade including accessibility equipment upgrades at CGS.
- Potter Field improvements including dugout, backstop and addition of bleacher seating.
- Splash Pad at Gill Avenue Playstead Installed 2015
- Addition of community garden area at DeGaspe Park (2019)
- Tenney St. Playground Upgraded with New play equipment 2015
- Veterans Park playground equipment upgrade
- Weekly water quality testing is ongoing at Forest Lake beach and boat ramps during the summer season. Management and monitoring of aquatic vegetation at Forest Lake continues as well as seasonal drawdown of Forest Lake water levels
- MA Fish & Wildlife undertake program stocking trout & salmon at Forest Lake and trout at Bartlett Brook and Spicket River

Issues and Actions Since the 2012-13 Plan

Accomplishments:

- Conservation Land donations included riverfront parcels at Lowell Boulevard (Willis property .85 acres and 4 acres of park land and wetland habitat on Prospect Street. (Dr. McCoul)
- More than 250 acres of open space have been preserved as part of Open Space Residential Developments (OSRD) and other housing projects such as The Preserve and Emerald Pines (165 acres), Liam's Lane (16 acres), Maple Park (14 acres) and Great Oaks (64 acres). The Open Space is preserved through a combination of Conservation Restrictions at the state and local level and land held by the Conservation Commission. These projects preserve critical habitat, provide the opportunity to continue the city's trail networks, and maintain the rural character of the City.
- MassDOT constructed wetland restoration area at former Loosigian Nursery property on Lowell Boulevard 13.25 acres along the Merrimack River.
- Methuen received designation as a Green Community by Mass. Dept. of Energy Resources as City commits to reduce municipal energy consumption by 20% over 5 years through efficiency upgrades in lighting, mechanical systems and vehicle fleet(2018).
- Methuen's Hazard Mitigation Plan part of the Merrimack Valley regional plan is updated and endorsed by FEMA (2016). The City also completed planning to become designated a Municipal Vulnerability Partnership community earning eligibility for state funds to implement climate resilience projects.(2019)

Issues and Actions Since the 2012-13 Plan

Issues of Concern:

- EPA issued the updated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit effective 2018. The new permit prescribes expanded operation, maintenance and monitoring requirements for Methuen and eastern Massachusetts communities in managing municipal stormwater systems and preventing pollution in the region's rivers, streams and water bodies.
- Presentation of Mary Academy closed in June 2020 after more than 60 years operating at the Searles Estate. The property is subdivided and the school facility sold to Notre Dame Cristo Rey High School which began operation on site Fall 2020. Remainder of the landmark estate property which includes residences and infirmary is on the market.
- Youth Soccer Leagues discontinue use of Hampshire Road Soccer Fields which since 1990s had been used as soccer field play under agreement with owner Faith United Methodist Church (2018)
- Approximately 125 acres removed from Chapter 61A Program agricultural land preservation incentive, including Garabedian property off Hampshire Road near the Town Forest.
- Cuts in DPW budget of more than \$1 million result in labor force reduction from staff of 100 to 57 by FY21.

Planning Process & Participation:

The City of Methuen Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) guided the outreach and plan development process.

In preparation for plan development, Environmental Planner Joseph Cosgrove worked with the Methuen Commission on Disabilities in completing the ADA self assessment inventory of park and recreation areas completed in January 2020.

Mayor Perry after taking office in 2020 named the 20-member Advisory Committee to assist DECD staff. The broad-based committee representing neighborhood, environmental, sports and recreation interests, began meeting in Summer and into early 2021 in plan review and development. Because of the pandemic, meetings were held by Zoom videoconference.

Gearing up for the Plan update, the DECD planning team prepared a resident survey of open space & recreation needs. The survey was prominently posted on the City website and notices were distributed by recreation newsletters and e-mail blasts to athletic league representatives, organizations and neighborhood groups. The survey generated 661 responses and included thoughtful comments that are included as an appendix to this plan.



Project maps were prepared by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission. Greenbelt, Essex County's land trust, also provided additional mapping support in including Methuen within regional conservation priorities.

A public meeting to review the draft plan is scheduled for Spring 2021.

Section 3: Community Setting

Regional Context

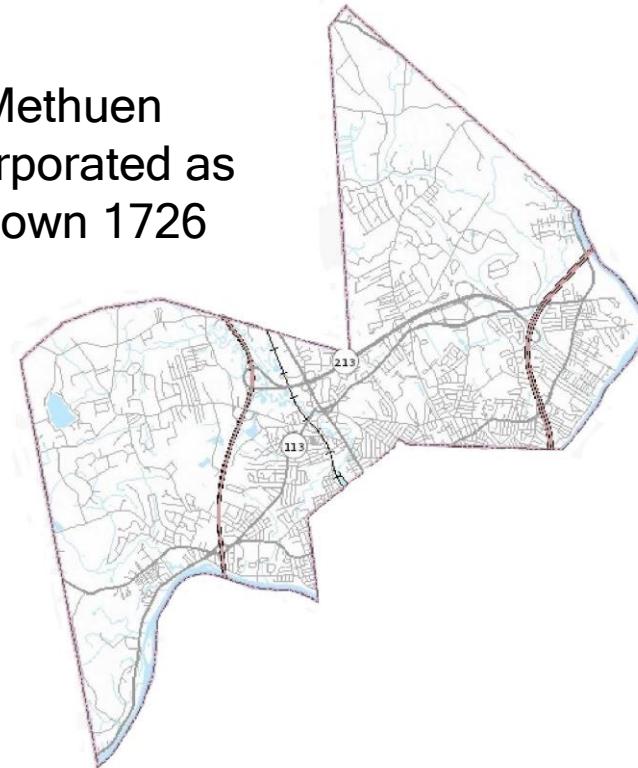
The City of Methuen is located in the lower Merrimack Valley of northern Essex County. Methuen is a border community to New Hampshire. It is located on the north bank of the Merrimack River and bounded to the west by Dracut, to the south by the Merrimack River and Lawrence and to the east by Haverhill. Abutting Methuen to the north are the New Hampshire communities of Salem and Pelham.

Methuen, located 27 miles north of Boston, boasts convenient highway access via Interstates 93 and 495 which both traverse the City and are linked by the state connector Route 213. The City has a total area of 23.1 square miles and is within the Lawrence-Haverhill Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). It is a member community of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission regional planning district.

Methuen lies entirely within the Merrimack River Watershed, the fourth largest watershed in New England. The 115-mile Merrimack River, environmental resource habitat and public drinking water source for Methuen, has headwaters in Franklin, New Hampshire and flows to the Atlantic Ocean at the river outlet in Salisbury and Newburyport, Massachusetts.



**Methuen
Incorporated as
a Town 1726**



Brief History of Methuen

Methuen was originally part of Pentucket Plantation first settled by Europeans in 1640 and incorporated in 1645 as Haverhill. It was considered the wild border section of town, sparsely populated by proprietors granted large land tracts for farming. The Indian wars and epidemics of the 17th century reduced the Pawtucket (also referenced to Penacook) Indian population who fished, hunted and traveled along the Spicket and Merrimack rivers to fewer than 25 to 50 individuals by the early 1700s.

On December 9, 1725, the Massachusetts colonial legislature, at petition of Lt. Stephen Barker and other residents, enacted an Order that the west end of Haverhill be organized as a separate Township to be known as Methuen. Governor Dummer signed the act establishing the town, named for Sir Paul Methuen, a friend of the Governor and member of the King's Privy Council. At the time of the town's establishment, population was about 200 settlers.

The first Annual Town Meeting, moderated by Lt. Barker, took place March 9, 1726 and marked the official incorporation of the new town with five Selectmen and a Town Clerk chosen. Land was identified for the town's first meeting house, a subject of heated debate. Ultimately, the first meeting house was completed in 1728 on property now site of Meeting House Hill Cemetery.

By 1736, residents of Methuen's north parish petitioned for a separate meeting house and, following adjustment of the Massachusetts/New Hampshire border, the Town of Salem, NH in 1750 was incorporated and formed from land once part of Methuen. The town's land area was further changed in the 1840s when land in Methuen as well as Andover was ceded to form the planned mill city of Lawrence.



Brief History of Methuen

From its beginnings as an agrarian and craft trade community, Methuen grew to become part of the industrial engine fueling the Merrimack Valley's and nation's growth in the 19th century. By the Civil War, manufacturing replaced farming as the Town's lead employment source.

Water power of the Spicket River and Falls, the only naturally occurring waterfall in Essex County, spurred development of textile, shoe and hat factories in Methuen. Central to the town's economic health in the 1800s was the Methuen Company. The mill along the Spicket encompassing properties on Osgood and River streets manufactured duck, ticking and other cotton goods.

Economic growth and immigration sparked Methuen to become the fastest growing community in Essex County during the late 19th/early 20th century. Legacies of this period are the grand estates and civic buildings constructed by the Tenney, Nevins and Searles families.

After World War II, Methuen and the region experienced sharp decline in its manufacturing base. In 1940, almost 2,600 people worked in Methuen textile mills; by 1952 with closure of mills, the textile worker employment in town dropped by 90% to 250 people.



Highway construction in the 1960s and 1970s along with sewer & water infrastructure investments in the decades since have opened Methuen up to suburbanization marked by growth of residential commuter households, creation of retail plazas and the Methuen Mall (transformed in the 1990s into The Loop), development of office/industrial parks and an increasing service and retail economic base.

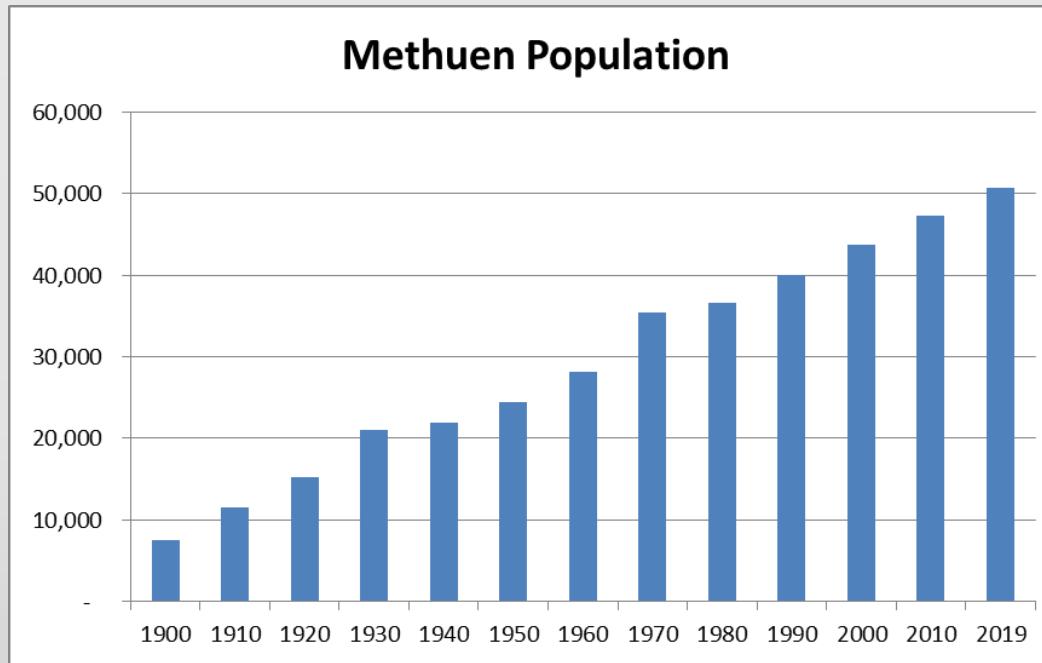
Source: MHC Reconnaissance Town Survey Report, 1986 (update 1997)

Key Summary Points - Growth & Population Characteristics



- Methuen is a mature suburban small city approaching buildout based on current zoning blueprint.
- City has experienced moderate, steady commercial & housing growth during period of significant economic & demographic change.
- City has become increasingly diverse in terms of race, culture & ethnicity.
- Social equity is a concern with low income and racial/ethnic minorities concentrated in central neighborhoods that have experienced disinvestment over decades.

Population Characteristics

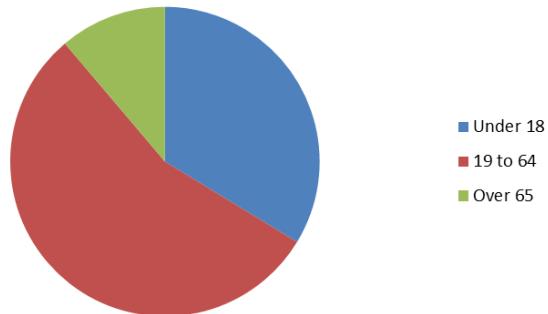


Methuen's population in the 2010s surpassed the 50,000 threshold. With a referendum to change the form of government in the 1990s, Methuen officially became a city. It began the 20th century Reconnaissance as a small town of fewer than 10,000 people and has grown over the decades with suburban development, successive waves of immigration from Europe and since the 1970s from Latin America and Asia.

Population Growth has been at a consistent 7-10% rate each decade since 1980. With growth has come some significant changes in the local economy, land use and household demographics.

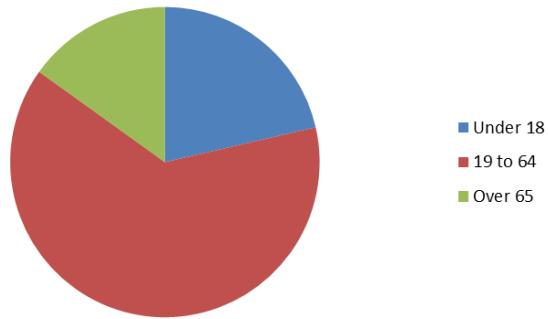
Population Change -Age

Age Breakdown 1970



Methuen has been getting older. Median age of Methuenites was 31.7 in 1970; today it is 39.7. There are almost twice as many seniors in Methuen as there were 50 years ago...and more than 1,000 fewer children.

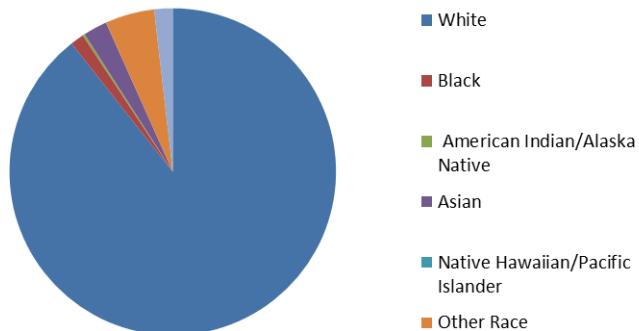
Age Breakdown 2019



	1970	2019
Under 18	11,949	10,851
19 to 64	19,536	32,198
Over 65	3,971	7,657

Population Change -Race & Ethnicity

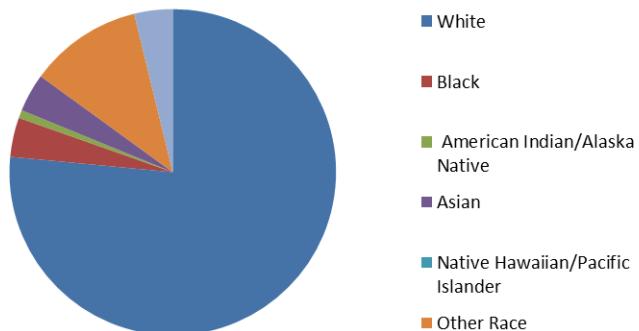
Race Breakdown 2000



Methuen's population is rapidly becoming more diverse.

At the start of this century, the City's residents were 89% White. With population growth and change over the last two decades, Methuen's population is now 76% White and 24% racial minority.
(source: American Community Survey)

Race Breakdown 2019



The change is most pronounced in Methuen schools where the racial/ethnicity breakdown of the 6,958 students in 2019/2020 is

- 44.9% White
- 44.1% Latino/Hispanic
- 3.2% African American
- 3.7% Asian
- 4.1% Multi Race

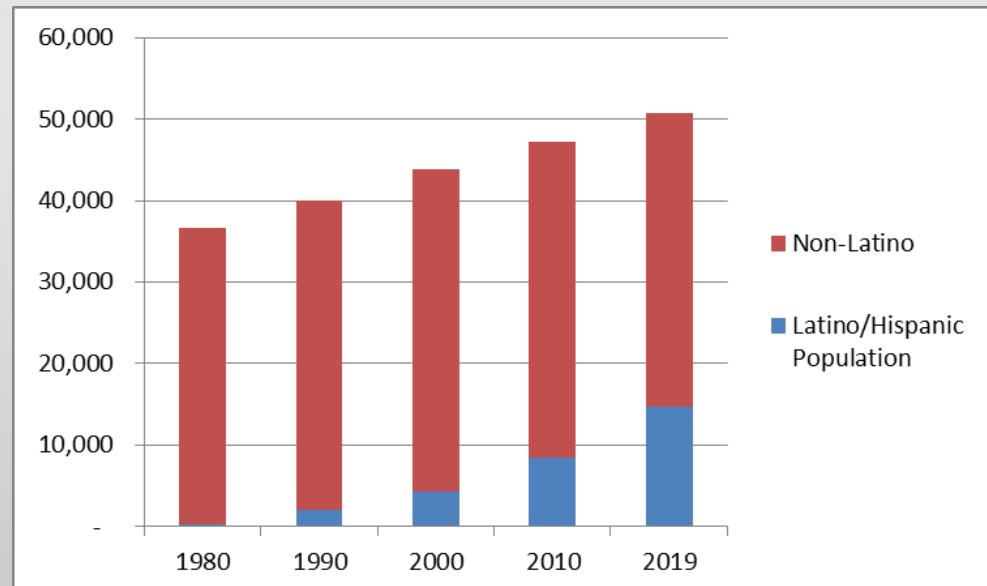
(source: MA Dept. of Education school district profile)

Population Characteristics -Race & Ethnicity

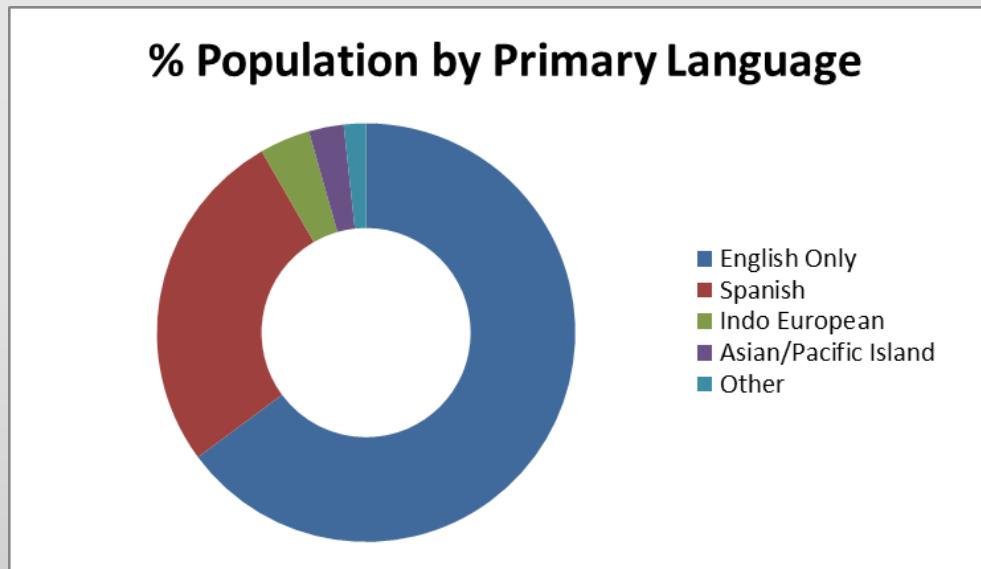
A large segment of Methuen's population growth in the last five decades has been among Latinos.

The 1980 census counted 266 residents of Hispanic background in Methuen; today 14,706 Methuenites, 29% of the City's total population, boast Latino heritage.

Latino/Hispanic Population Growth in Methuen



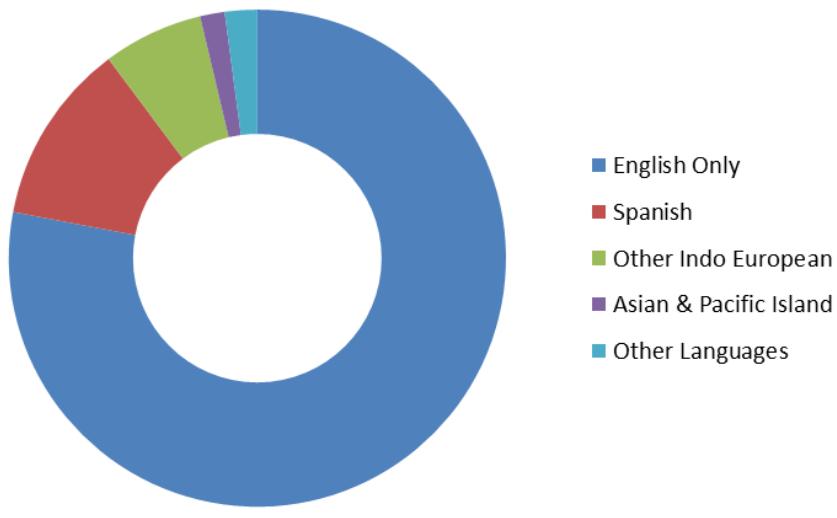
Population Characteristics -Languages At Home



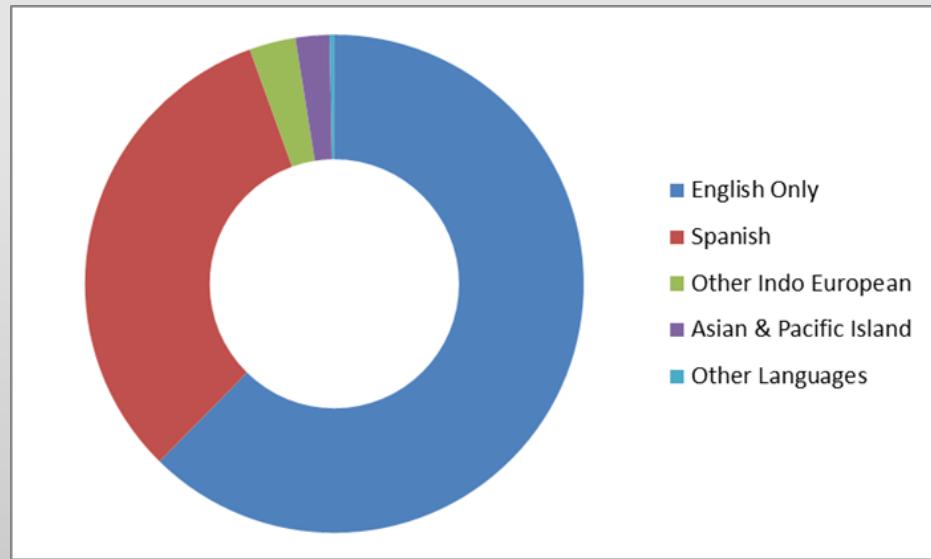
One indicator of Methuen's increasing diversity is the variety of primary languages spoken in Methuen homes. Today, according to the most recent census estimates, 1/3 of Methuen residents use a language other than English. Primary language for 27% of residents is Spanish.

Population Characteristics -Age by Language

Methuen Seniors

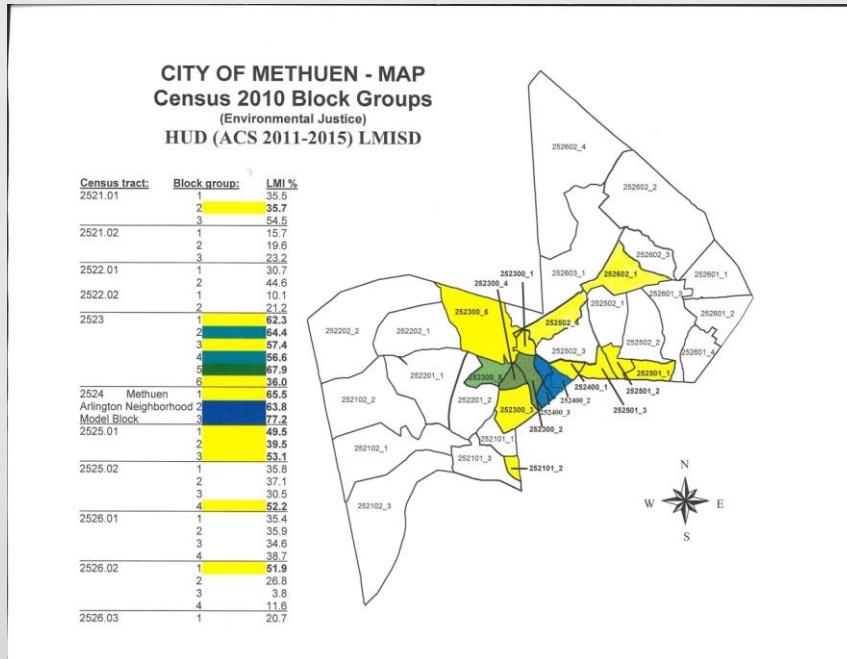


Methuen Youth



The language use profile is markedly different for different age groups. While 22% of Methuen seniors use a language other than English as primary language, 38% of Methuenites between ages 6 - 18 speak Spanish or another non-English language at home.

Growth and Development Patterns -Environmental Justice



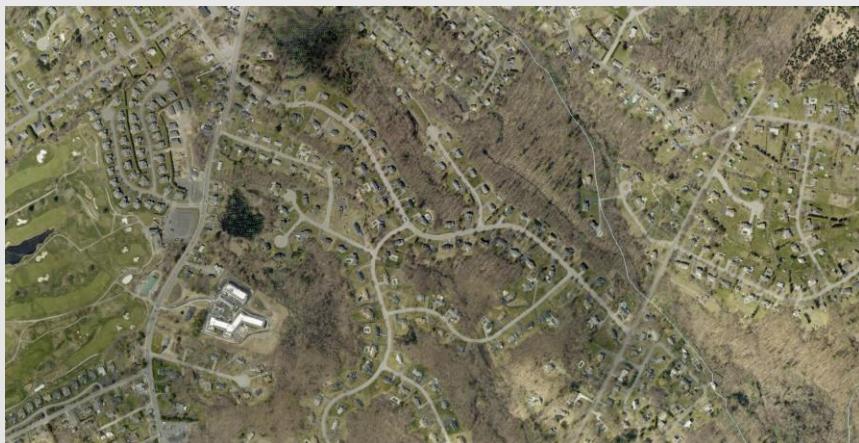
37% of Methuen residents live within the 15 census block groups in central Methuen that meet the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs criteria as Environmental Justice (EJ) areas. (see Appendix Map #2) In Massachusetts a neighborhood is defined as an Environmental Justice population if any of the following criteria are met:

- Block group with annual median household income equal to or less than 65 percent of the statewide median (\$62,072 in 2010); or
- 25% or more of the residents identify as a race other than white; or
- 25% or more of households have no one over the age of 14 who speaks English only or very well.

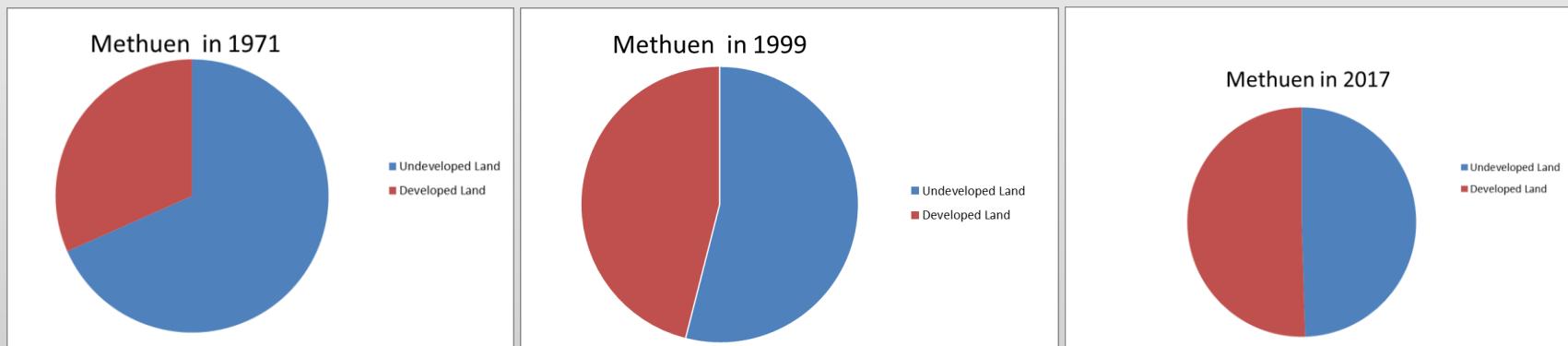
Methuen is a Gateway City, one of three along with Lawrence and Haverhill in the Merrimack Valley, and 26 throughout the Commonwealth designated under Chapter 23A, Section 3A of the Mass. General Laws. Gateway cities are mid-size Massachusetts urban communities that have been traditional industrial job centers and gateways to the American dream for generations of immigrants and blue collar workers.

As defined in the Commonwealth's Environmental Justice policy updated in 2017, Environmental Justice (EJ) is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. EJ is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits.

Community Growth -Land Use & Development



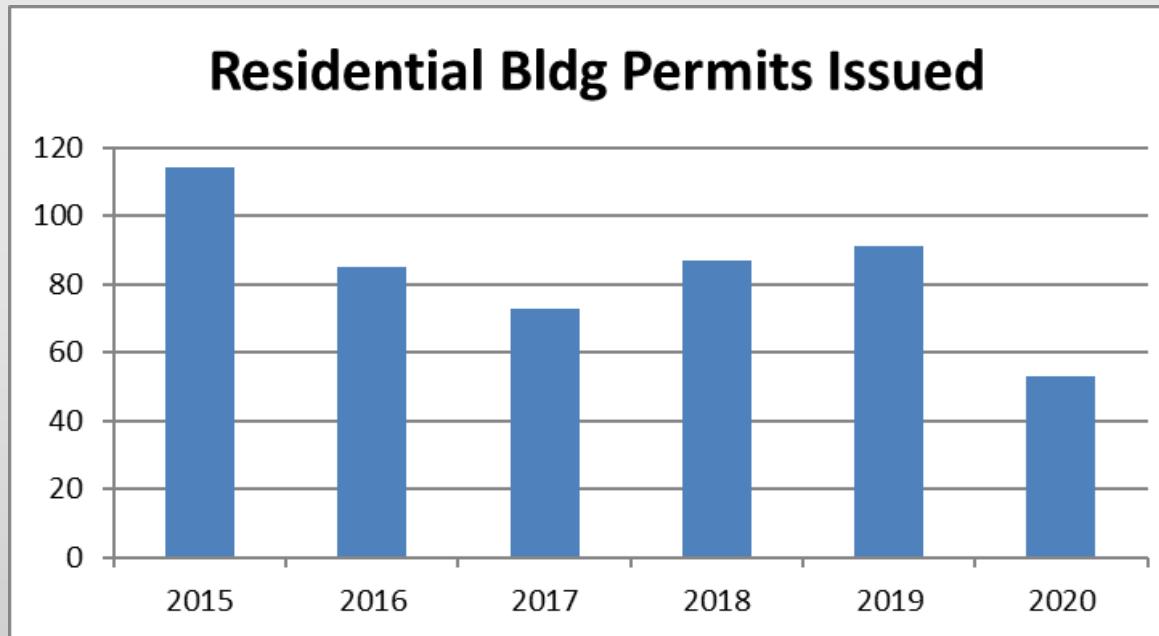
Suburban growth and subdivision development has changed Methuen's land use profile, particularly in the East and West ends of the City. Fifty years ago, Methuen's undeveloped acreage was 68% of the City land area; today open, undeveloped land makes up less than 50% of Methuen.



Compared with other Massachusetts communities, Methuen has among the lowest supply of protected conservation acreage. The City ranks 348th of 351 cities & towns in percentage of land area protected as open space; About 3% of Methuen's land area is protected conservation land. (source: "Losing Ground 2020, Mass. Audubon Society)



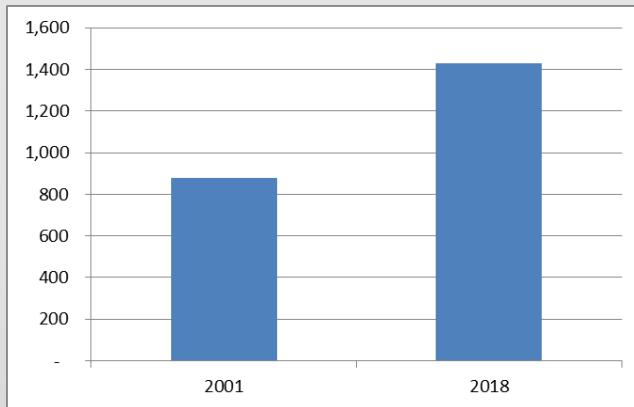
Community Growth & Development Patterns -Housing



Methuen has maintained a healthy, moderate level of new housing construction. In recent years, the City has averaged about 80 new construction permits annually. Decrease in building permit activity during 2020 is attributed to economic disruption accompanying the Covid-19 pandemic starting in Spring 2020.(Source: Methuen Inspectional Services)

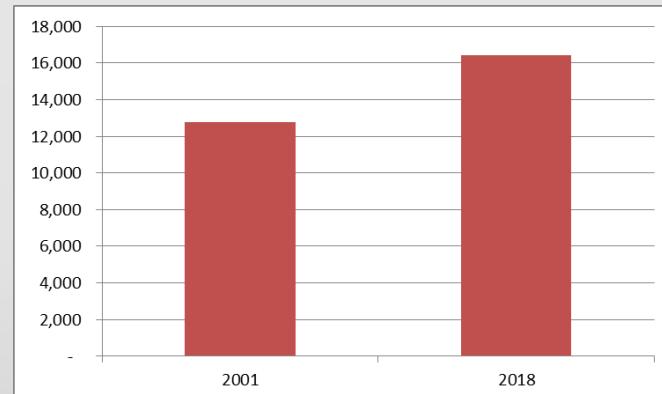
Growth & Development Patterns -Economy

Methuen Business Establishments



↑ 63%

Methuen Employment



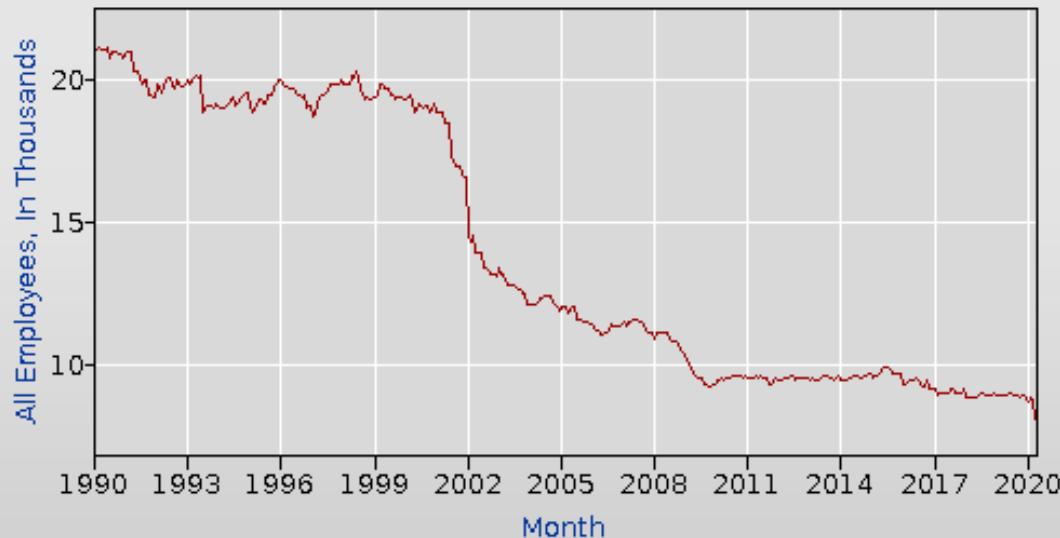
↑ 29%

Prior to the 2020 pandemic, Methuen in the 21st century has experienced steady economic growth with 63% increase in business establishments and 29% increase in jobs based in the City. (Source: MA Workforce Development ES202 file 2018) The 2020-21 pandemic public health emergency necessitated restrictions on group activities and business functions. It is unclear what the long-term impact will be, but in the wake of the Spring 2020 lockdowns, Methuen's labor force unemployment rate soared from 3.2% to more than 20% mid-Summer. By December 2020, Methuen had an 8.3% unemployment rate, still higher than the state unemployment rate of 7.1%. (Source: MA Exec. Office of Labor & Workforce Development)

Growth & Development Patterns -Economy

Manufacturing Employment 1990-2020 (Lawrence/Methuen/Salem)

(Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics)



Methuen's identity throughout the 20th century was one of a blue-collar mill town. Manufacturing has been one of the largest job sectors in the City and the Merrimack Valley region but has experienced sharp employment decline of more than 50% since the end of the 1990s. Professional services including health and education sectors are an increasing employment base for the City and region.

Section 4: Environmental Inventory & Analysis



A. Topography, Geology & Soils

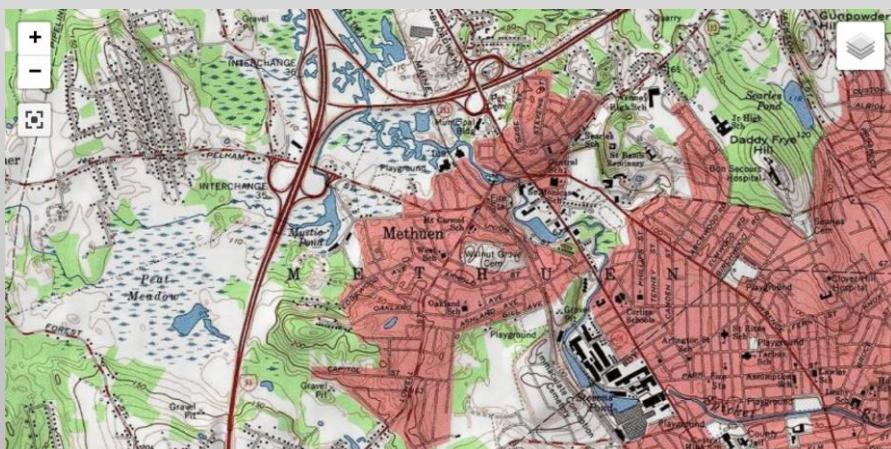
TOPOGRAPHY

Methuen's land area of 22.4 square miles is marked by undulating uplands and low-lying wetlands.

Highest point in the City at 378 feet above mean sea level is Poplar Hill in the City's northwest corner at the Dracut line. Lowest point at 10 feet above sea level is along the banks of the Merrimack River at the Haverhill border. 18% of the City area is within 100-year or 500-year floodplain as designated in FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps last updated in 2012.

GEOLOGY

Methuen's landscape bears the marks of glaciers that covered New England more than 12,000 years ago. The advance of the mile-thick glacial ice scraped some hills to bedrock and in retreat left extensive deposits of till, a mix of stones, clay, silt, sand and gravel. Till covers 60% of Methuen, and in some areas was molded by moving glacial ice into distinctive hills or drumlins including Reservoir Hill and Pie Hill. Glacial till tends to have moderately or poorly drained soils with many stones and rocks.



As the glaciers melted and retreated, areas of sand and gravel were deposited as outwash between the till deposits and exposed bedrock. Sand and gravel deposits known as kames and kame plains are located in central Methuen and similar deposits called kame terraces are situated along the Merrimack River. At lower elevations, floodplain alluvium deposits settled out into flat areas and wetlands, such as Peat Meadow, the vast wetland lying west of I-93 between Pelham St. and Forest St.

A. Topography, Geology & Soils (cont'd)

SOILS

The U.S. Dept of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service published "A Soil Survey for Essex County MA - Northern Part" in February 1981. The following inventory of soil conditions found in Methuen is from the report and a 1969 study by the Soil Conservation Service and the Essex Conservation District. Most of Methuen's unaltered soils fall into the Hollis-Canton and Hinckley-Merrimac-Windsor groupings.

Canton fine sandy loam - These soils, predominant in about 15.7% of Methuen, have severe limitations for septic systems because of poor filtration and slight limitations for roads, residential or commercial development except in areas with slopes greater than 8%.

Swansea and Freetown mucks - These soils have severe limitation for all types of development because of wetness. 7.3% of Methuen is classified as Freetown of Swansea mucks.

Windsor loamy sand - These soils also have severe limitations for septic systems because of poor filtration but slight limitations for roads and other development except in areas of 8% slopes or greater. 7.2% of Methuen is classified as Windsor loamy sand.

Hinckley loamy sand - These soils have severe limitations for septic systems because of poor filtration and few limitations for other development except steep slope areas. 4.7% of Methuen is classified as Hinckley loamy sand.

Scituate fine sandy loam - These soils have severe limitations for septic systems because of wetness and moderate limitations for roads and development. 4.3% of Methuen is classified as Scituate fine sandy loam.

Rock Outcrop - Charlton-Hollis complex - These soils, predominant in 4.3% of Methuen's area, have up to 90% rock outcrops and are generally unsuitable for most types of construction.

Sutton fine sandy loam - These soils have moderate to severe limitations for development because of wetness. 4.1% of Methuen is classified as Sutton fine sandy loam.

A. Topography, Geology & Soils (cont'd)

SOILS (cont'd)

Montauk fine sandy loam - These soils have severe limitation for septic systems because of wetness and slow percolation. They also have moderate to severe limitations for roads, residential or commercial development. Methuen area classified as Montauk fine sandy loam is 4%.

Ridgebury and Leicester fine sandy loam- These soils have severe limitation for development because of wetness. 3.8% of Methuen is classified as Ridgebury and Leicester fine sandy loams.

Deerfield loamy fine sand - These soils have moderate to severe limitations for development because of high water table. 3% of Methuen's land area is classified as Deerfield loamy fine sand.

Paxton fine sandy loam - These soils also have moderate to severe limitations for development because of slow percolation and wetness. 2% of Methuen is classified as Paxton fine sandy loam.

Scarboro mucky fine sandy loam- These soils have severed limitations for development because of wetness. 1.7% of Methuen is classified as Hinckley loamy sand.

Other Soils with Severe to Moderate Development Limitations found in Methuen - These include Sudbury Whitman, Winooski, Walpole and Woodridge soil types. Limitations include high ground water which can impede installation of basements and septic systems; stones and boulders which can increase construction costs; step slopes or shallow soils over bedrock which may limit construction and increase costs. There are few undeveloped areas in Methuen without limitations.

B. Landscape Character

Methuen's natural features and landscapes are defining elements of our community's quality of life and environmental diversity.

We are a Merrimack Valley community with a landscape of riverfront, woodlands and a network of brooks, streams, ponds and wetlands. Methuen boasts the only naturally occurring waterfall in Essex County at Spicket Falls in the central business district. The Merrimack River forms our City's southern border—4 miles in the West End and 3.4 miles in the East Ends--, segments separated by the City of Lawrence.

Commercial development (including the Methuen Mall at Pleasant Valley St. in the 1970s) and residential subdivisions throughout the community built within the lifetime of today's senior Methuenites replaced many of the active dairy, vegetable and tree farms that once dominated the agrarian landscapes of the West and East Ends. Though reduced in number, some of those farms and orchards still exist and provide food stands, plant nurseries as well as scenic vistas along corridors including Baremeadow, Merrimack Street, Pleasant Valley Street and Hampshire Street.



C. Water Resources



Rivers & Streams in Methuen

The Merrimack River is the defining natural feature binding East and West Methuen and connecting our City to the Merrimack Valley region and beyond. The Merrimack flows 117 miles from the confluence of the Pemigawasset and Winnepausaukee rivers in Franklin, NH to the Gulf of Maine at Salisbury/Newburyport, MA. The river's 5,010 square mile watershed area is the 4th largest in New England encompassing Methuen and about 200 communities in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. The river is public water supply source for Methuen (and for about 550,000 in communities throughout NH and Mass.). Methuen's water intake pump located at Riverside Park directs raw water to the nearby City Water Treatment Plant at Burnham Road for processing and distribution to Methuen households and businesses. The Merrimack is the critical economic, recreation and environmental resource for the City and region. Water quality, while much improved since the 1970s, continues to be a concern. Mass. Dept of Environmental Protection has identified impairments at the river's Methuen segments including Ecoli, PCBs and mercury in fish tissue and phosphorus. (source: Mass. Year 2016 Integrated Water List, Dec. 2019, Mass. DEP)

C. Water Resources

Rivers & Streams in Methuen

The Spicket River is a 17.7 mile tributary of the Merrimack that flows south from Island Pond in Derry, New Hampshire through dense, urban neighborhoods of central Methuen and Lawrence to the river's mouth at the Merrimack River by the North Canal in Lawrence. Completion of the 2.2 mile Methuen Rail Trail in 2019 has expanded public access to the Spicket watershed which includes the Nevins Bird Sanctuary and conservation viewing areas installed with trail construction. The Methuen Rail Trail has connections north to the Granite State Rail Trail and south to the 3.5-mile Spicket River Greenway in Lawrence built in 2013. Planned rail trail extension to the North Canal along the rail right-of-way in Lawrence is in design. Alignment of the Spicket was significantly altered with construction of Route I-93 in the 1960s. Flooding is a hazard concern particularly in areas of Hampshire Road, Cross St., Broadway and Morrison Court. Essex County's only naturally occurring waterfall is at the Spicket Falls at Lowell St. The dam built above the Falls is now used in operation of a hydroelectric plant. A second dam on the river is the ornamental dam located by the Broadway Searles Bridge at the Methuen Memorial Music Hall. Impairments to the Spicket identified by Mass. DEP include trash debris, habitat alteration, metals including copper, E. coli bacteria, nutrients accelerating plant growth and benthic macro invertebrates.



C. Water Resources



Rivers & Streams in Methuen (cont'd)

Hawkes Brook is an expansive wetland system that begins in northeast Methuen and joins **Baremeadow Brook** prior to entering the Merrimack River near the Haverhill city line. Much of the brook and tributary streams have undeveloped swamp areas important for flood mitigation which is an issue given downstream drain system capacity. Erosion problems at nearby Pie Hill have caused severe siltation impacting the brook system. Mass. DEP has identified Baremeadow Brook as an impaired waterway for E. coli, sedimentation and turbidity.

Bloody Brook, a source of long-standing flooding concerns at Jackson/Swan streets, flows from Searles Pond southeast through Lawrence to the Spicket River.

Harris Brook in west Methuen forms in neighboring Pelham, NH and winds from the Forest Lake area toward the Spicket River. Harris Brook, which adjoins several large wetland and sparsely developed areas, receives water from several unnamed tributaries and **Policy Brook**.

Bartlett, Sawyer and Griffin Brooks are all in Methuen's West End and flow into the Merrimack River. Bartlett Brook includes large swampland unlike nearby Sawyer and Griffin brooks which lack extensive bordering wetlands.

C. Water Resources

Lakes & Ponds

Forest Lake, a large groundwater-fed pond of approximately 52 acres abutting the Town Forest, is Methuen's only pond large enough for general recreation use. The Forest Lake recreation area is open to Methuen residents, with a parking pass fee at the beach area. Amenities include two boat ramps, a fishing area, picnic pavilion and grills, beach area and playground equipment. Most recent upgrades to the beach recreation area in the late 1990s/early 2000s with pavilion construction and accessible walkway installation. Methuen Recreation Dept. oversees programming at the beach park; maintenance is done by DPW Environmental Management Division and water management is by Methuen Conservation Commission. In response to eutrophication concerns at the lake, the City in the 1980s extended public sewer to area cottages and homes. In 1991, an outlet structure was installed and a management system put in place for controlling invasive plant growth by regulating lake drawdown each year in early Fall by DPW overseen by the Conservation Commission.

The lake is stocked annually with rainbow trout by the Mass. Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Water from Forest Lake empties into Forest Lake Brook which flows into Harris Brook, the Spicket and eventually the Merrimack River.

Mystic Pond abuts Shorty DeGaspe Park, the City DPW maintenance yard and the busy I-93 North off ramp onto Pelham Street. Peat Meadow and area springs feed the pond.

Hills Pond is actually two small ponds on the former Hill's Farm property on Pleasant St. and Milk St. It has been a popular outdoor skating area for Methuen youth, but in recent years has been infrequently used because of plant growth limiting access and a dearth of good ice conditions with warmer winters. The pond is part of the Baremeadow Brook watershed and receives runoff from nearby subdivisions and commercial development including The Loop. Surface runoff contamination from fertilizers, pesticides, road salt and petroleum products has led to degradation of Hills and other Methuen water bodies.

Searles Pond on Jackson St., once a large pond and source of Bloody Brook which flows south to Lawrence, had been filled in almost to the point of non-existence, but was restored as a Self-Help conservation project in the 1970s. It is again in need of restoration because of plant overgrowth and neglect. It functions as stormwater catchment and flood retention for the Jackson St. and Methuen High School area.



Fishing at Forest Lake

C. Water Resources

Wetlands

Wetlands are water-saturated lands and depressions, often located within floodplains. They include marshes, swamps, wet meadows and bogs. Wetlands serve a variety of ecological functions including flood mitigation, pollution filtration, and fish and wildlife habitat. In recognition of their environmental importance, Methuen's wetlands are resources protected by both the MA Wetlands Protection Act and the City of Methuen's Wetlands Protection ordinance. Prominent wetlands in Methuen include:

Peat Meadow, a large perennial marsh over more than 200 acres bounded by Interstate 93, Forest St. and Pelham St., feeds the Spicket River via Mystic Pond. It is a prime habit area that should be protected and preserved from development impacts. Located within Peat Meadow are two small ponds, formed by gravel removal in construction of Route 93. The ponds serve as nesting area for migratory birds and provide habitat for several species of fish. Wildlife including turtles, ducks, geese, beaver, muskrat and songbirds are found within Peat Meadow.

In the **East End**, two large wetland marsh areas extend from New Hampshire into Methuen. The first lies west of Howe St and bounded to the south by Route 213. The other is bounded to the east by the Merrimack Valley Golf Club. Both these significant wetland systems drain into Salem, NH.



Vernal Pools are important but vulnerable wetland resources in Methuen. They are small, dispersed seasonal water bodies ideal as breeding habitat for amphibian species. Local conservation volunteers inventory vernal pools and biologists from the Massachusetts Wildlife Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program review and certify these pools. According to the database maintained Mass Wildlife NHESP, Methuen has 30 vernal pools certified (23 in West Methuen and 7 in East Methuen). The Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act protects Certified Vernal Pools for their wildlife habitat value, provided they are large enough to constitute "Areas Subject to Flooding". However, the Act coverage does not extend protection to small Certified Vernal Pools or those not yet inventoried. The protection of Methuen's vernal pool habitat is vital for continued survival of wildlife species that depend on these unique habitat areas.

C. Water Resources

Flood Hazard Areas

Significant sections of Methuen lie within floodplains of the Merrimack River and Spicket River, and are subject to recurring flooding hazard during extreme precipitation events. A GIS analysis of the City's FIRM flood hazard maps done through the 2016 Merrimack Valley Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, showed that 2,664 acres, 18% of Methuen's land area, were located in either the 100-year or 500-year flood zones and vulnerable to flood hazard events.



Aquifers

An aquifer is an underground geologic formation, typically a coarse-grained deposit of sand, gravel or fractured bedrock, that is capable of yielding a significant, reliable volume of groundwater to a water supply well.



Four small aquifers are identified in Methuen and mapped by the U.S. Geological Survey. The largest of these aquifers is located west of I-93 in the Hampshire Road areas near the Salem, NH border. The others, all very small, are located at:

- Lyndale Avenue area;
- Off Lowell Boulevard (Route 110) in southwestern Methuen by the Merrimack River;
- East of I-495 at the Haverhill-North Andover junction by the Merrimack River.

None of the four aquifers yields groundwater in sufficient quantity to service as a reliable public water supply source.

D. Vegetation and Wildlife Resources

Biodiversity is an indicator of ecologic health and found within the variety of Methuen's natural resource areas - forests & woodlands, meadows, agricultural lands, wetlands & waterways.

To inventory and protect the Commonwealth's biodiversity in the context of climate change, the MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) and The Nature Conservancy developed BioMap2.

As identified in the 2012 BioMap2 report for Methuen, the City contains:

- **Core Habitat area of 2,699 acres** of which 60 acres (2.2%) is protected.
- **Critical Natural Landscape area of 1,083 acres** of which 16 acres (1.5%) is protected

Species of Conservation Concern identified are:

- Birds - Bald Eagle (Threatened)
- Reptiles - Wood Turtle (Special Concern)
Blanding's Turtle (Threatened)
- Amphibians - Blue-spotted Salamander (Special Concern)
- Insects - Dragonflies
 - Arrow Clubtail
 - Cobra Clubtail (Special Concern)
 - Umber Showdragon (Special Concern)



Photo Credit: U.S. EPA

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also identifies the Northern Long-eared Bat as a Threatened mammal found in Methuen and other eastern Massachusetts communities.

In addition, to the Bald Eagle, other migratory birds identified as of Conservation Concern are:

- Black-billed Cuckoo
- Bobolink
- Canada Warbler
- Eastern Whip-poor-will
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Prairie Warbler
- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Rusty Blackbird
- Seaside Sparrow
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- Snowy Owl
- Wood Thrush

E. Scenic Resources and Unique Features

Methuen has an abundance of special features and resources. Our City's inventory of priority heritage landscapes, architecture and resource areas are shown on Appendix Map #6 and include:

- ***Forest Lake & Town Forest*** - Methuen's largest conservation and recreation area, home of the Town Beach and abutting forest preserve established in the early 20th century.
- ***Sands Bridge and Robert Rogers Homestead Site*** - Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Sands Bridge is an early double arch stoned bridge off Hampshire Road and near the birthplace of Robert Rogers, leader of a British irregular force in the French & Indian War.
- ***Merrimack River Corridor (East & West)*** - Ecological habitat, recreation amenity and source of Methuen's water supply, the City seeks to expand waterfront visual and physical access and build connections to a regional greenway network along the river.
- ***Pine Island*** - An 11-acre Merrimack River island in West Methuen owned and managed as conservation land by the Merrimack River Watershed Council.
- ***Peat Meadow*** - Methuen's largest marsh area ecosystem.



Sands Stone Arch Bridge off Hampshire Road

E. Scenic Resources and Unique Features

- **Spicket River and Falls Area** - Listed as a National Register District and within the local historic district, the 40' Falls and 1880 Dam powered the Methuen Company Cotton Mills. Pedestrian bridge over the dam and connecting the Mill Fall Apartments and Hampshire Street area was constructed in the early 2000s.
- **Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District** - Local historic district established in the early 1990s includes the Memorial Musical Hall, home of the nation's first concert hall organ, the landmark granite walls and turrets surrounding the former Searles properties, and the state-owned Greycourt Park, former estate of the Tenney family.
- **Searles Estate** - Developed from 1880 to 1920 as home of Methuen benefactor Edward Searles, the former estate includes several historic and architecturally significant structures designed by Henry Vaughn in the Gothic/Renaissance Revival styles.
- **Arlington Neighborhood** - Densely developed neighborhood listed as a National Register Historic District in central Methuen of mixed residential/industrial/commercial structures including homes originally built as housing for mill workers.
- **Daddy Frye Hill** - Also known as Meeting House Hill, site of Methuen's first meetinghouse and Holy Family Hospital.
- **Pie Hill** - Prominent hill vista from Route 213 and I-495



Spicket Falls & Dam

E. Scenic Resources and Unique Features

- **MSPCA at Nevins Farm** - The 55-acre complex was established in 1917 on property donated by Harriette Nevins as the MSPCA's first permanent animal shelter and was originally designed to care for retired police horses and working animals. Today the farm is open to the public and provides care and adoption services for pets and farm animals.
- **Pleasant Valley Area Farms** - The "Valley" section in Methuen's southeast corner along the Merrimack River includes prominent farms, reminders of the community's agricultural legacy.
- **Baremeadow area/Nimmo Farm** - Baremeadow Street and the former Nimmo Farm, now under recent new ownership, provide some of Methuen's most scenic, pastoral vistas.
- **Mann Orchards** - Located within one of Methuen's most prominent commercial areas and hailed as Methuen's oldest active business, Mann's features more than 25 acres of apple and peach trees and a popular farm store and bakery.
- **Raymond's Turkey Farm** - Since 1950, the Rischer family has been raising and selling turkeys at the 57-acre farm on Hampstead Street.



Farmland at Baremeadow in winter

F. Environmental Challenges

As Methuen approaches our Tricentennial in 2026, we confront both new and continuing environmental challenges.... and more than a few opportunities.

Supporting A Healthy Community

A year of event cancellations, travel restrictions and social distancing mandates has fostered a renewed appreciation among today's Methuenites of the role parks and public spaces bear as an integral part of a community's public health infrastructure. The myriad communication, data collection, administrative, care and support challenges encountered in municipal response to the most significant public health crisis in a century attest to the urgent need for rebuilding our public health system.

But the problem of public health goes deeper than pandemic response. As noted in the 2018 Holy Family Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment, lack of physical activity is a risk factor for chronic diseases including obesity, diabetes and heart disease. Reducing incidence of these chronic diseases, according to the report, compels communities to invest in parks and public spaces and provide an environmental and opportunities for people to live a health lifestyle and participate in physical activity.



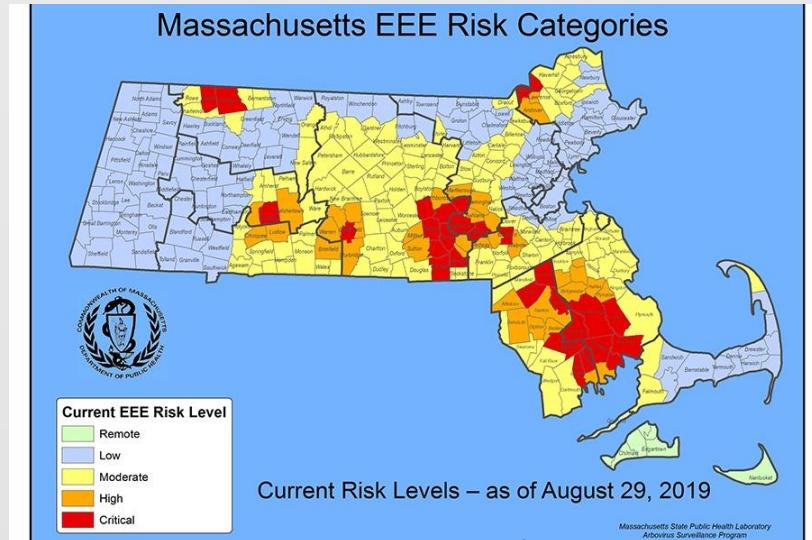
Signs of the Times: Covid 19 Pandemic forced closure of schools and parks in Spring 2020. Parks reopened by Summer with restrictions in effect into 2021.



F. Environmental Challenges

Adapting to Climate Change & Mitigating Hazard Impacts

Climate change is bringing more frequent and intense weather events - winter storms, floods and heat waves - that jeopardize not only public health, buildings and infrastructure, but also our environmental resources and habitats. According to the Massachusetts State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan (2018), our City by the end of this century can expect a 16% increase in annual precipitation (7.3 inches) and average annual temperatures rising 23% (10.8 degrees Fahrenheit). The changing climate burdens on Methuen and all other communities to develop resilience capacity for emergency response, mitigation and adaptation. Changes to our ecosystem related to climate change create vulnerabilities in the composition of our resource area habitats and impact how we should manage and use our conservation areas. Invasive plants and wildlife pose threats to the health and integrity of our ponds, streams and woodlands. Even prior to the pandemic, we in Methuen in recent years have had to post notices, reduce park hours and cancel outdoor events because of incidences of insect-borne illnesses Eastern equine encephalitis and Lyme's disease. We can expect more such responses in the years ahead.



Climate Change Ecological Impacts - Extreme Weather Events, Invasive Species and Insect-borne diseases



F. Environmental Challenges

Rebuilding Capacity for Parks/Open Space Management

It is impossible for Methuen to have a system of safe and quality parks and recreation facilities without adequate staff and resources for maintenance and management.

The DPW Environmental Management Division is currently staffed by an Acting Superintendent, a Tree Surgeon responsible for street trees and four laborers who as two two-man crews undertake the landscaping, maintenance and trash removal at Methuen's 29 active park/recreation facilities.

DPW budgets and staffing has been reduced significantly over a short period of time. The FY21 DPW budget of \$6.075 million is \$1.28 million less than it was only four years ago; Staff positions have been cut from 100 to 57. The management and labor force reductions impact municipal capacity to maintain safe and quality public spaces.

Fostering a Culture of Environmental Stewardship

Methuen generated a record amount of trash in 2020. With people staying at home during the pandemic, the City collected more than 19,000 tons of household garbage, about 10% more tonnage than the previous year. Our recycling participation is low in comparison with similar-sized communities. Roadside dumping and littering in our parks & public spaces are perpetual sources of complaints and community frustrations. Building environmental awareness and a sense of stewardship are prerequisite to tackling problems and aligning Methuen's actions and policies with Commonwealth environmental goals in waste reduction, decarbonization, water quality improvement and habitat preservation.



Trash after busy, socially distant weekends at Forest Lake & Riverside Park: Summer 2020



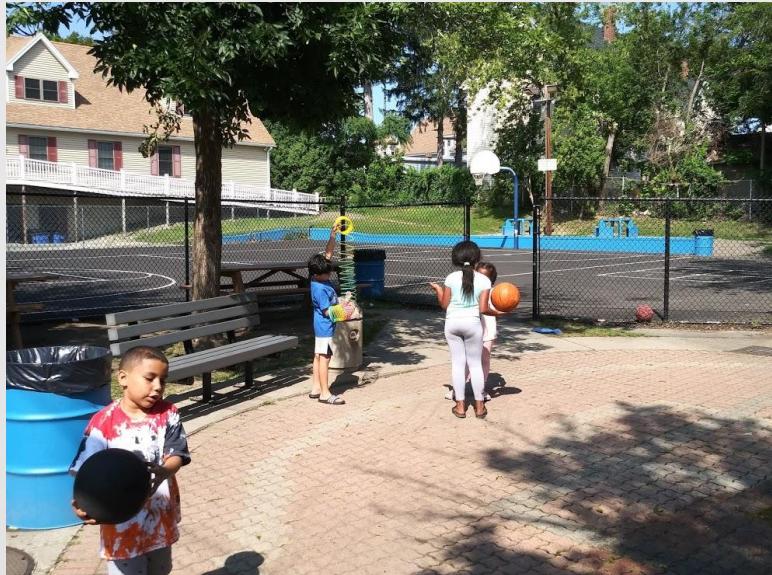
F. Environmental Challenges

Implementing Sustainable Growth Policies

Building a healthy community demands getting the right balance among priorities and competing needs for housing, economic growth and environmental protection. Municipal service levels and budgets hinge on having a strong commercial and residential property tax base. The challenge for Methuen and other maturing suburban small cities facing increasing development pressures on scarce and marginal lands is in guiding development that can sustain the community's character and quality of life. In the past decade, 127 open green acres in Methuen that were partially protected through the Chapter 61A Agricultural tax incentives were withdrawn from the program. Meanwhile, MA Dept. of Environmental Protection reports 291 sites in Methuen with a history of hazardous material or petroleum contamination. Many of these so-called Brownfield sites while supported by good road/water/sewer infrastructure are neighborhood blights with development impediments of potential liability and/or cleanup costs. Steering growth to redevelopment target areas and protecting greenfield priority land areas will continue to be a challenge in the decade ahead as available land becomes more scarce and development demand for housing and new commercial opportunity increases.



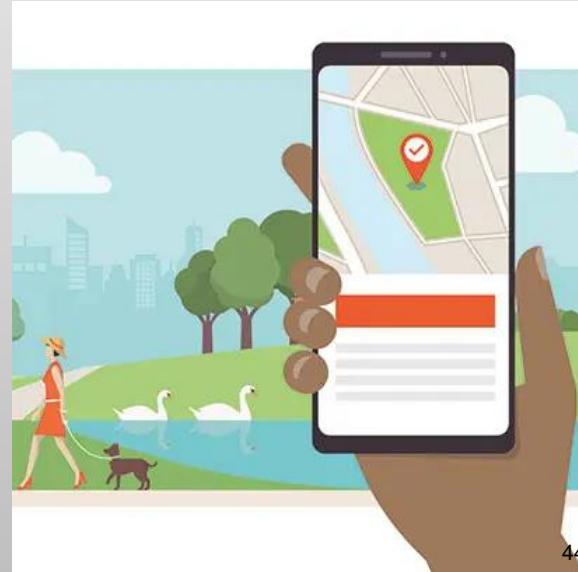
F. Environmental Challenges



Striving for Equity & Innovation

Meeting the recreation and quality of life demands of a diverse and changing Methuen is a long-term challenge. Thirty years after passage of the American with Disabilities Act, we are still working to update and retrofit our facilities and equipment.

Low-income and minority households are concentrated in central neighborhoods of the City. Making quality recreation facilities and open space convenient and accessible for all regardless of neighborhood or status is a high need priority and involves tradeoffs and coordination among many interests. Environmental justice compels Methuen to work toward equitable allocation of capital improvements and programming. Ensuring access for all Methuenites will be heightened in the coming decade with the promise of new technologies and mobility innovations such as virtual programming, electric vehicles and interactive communications.



Section 5: Inventory of Lands of Conservation & Recreation Interest



School Department

Methuen School Athletic Director oversees organized school sports programming at Methuen school facilities including the 30 varsity and subvarsity programs at Methuen High School. The School Department Facilities Division also operates the MHS ice rink and maintains school playgrounds and assists DPW in school fields and MHS tennis court maintenance.

DPW Environmental Management

Management of Methuen's open space areas and active recreation parks are shared by multiple agencies. Primary responsibility for maintenance (mowing, trash collection, field preparation, snow clearance) of Methuen's 28 parks and playgrounds is with the Department of Public Works Environmental Management Division. Facilities include Forest Lake recreation area, Rail Trail, sports fields, MHS fields and stadium complexes.





Nevins Bird Sanctuary access off Methuen Rail Trail

Recreation Department

Methuen Recreation Dept. organizes programs and activities at parks and manages use permits for sports field scheduling. Recreation Dept also supervises summer activities at the Forest Lake beach area and is responsible for staffing of lifeguards. Properties under Recreation Department management include the 7.8 parcel at Varnai St. acquired by the city in 2003 from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston.

Conservation Commission

Methuen Conservation Commission owns and manages more than 870 acres accepted as open space conservation land. These properties included the Town Forest, and abutting Ski Hill property, Nevins Bird Sanctuary, Searles Pond conservation area, Schruender Park along the Merrimack River in the East End and numerous open space parcels donated as part of open space residential developments. Recent conservation acquisitions include open space parcels donated through the City Open Space Residential Development zoning tool at Great Oaks, Graceland Park and Maple Park.



Schruender Park conservation area



Bicentennial Park @ Nevins Library

The **Methuen Treasurer's Office** maintains an inventory of parcels many of them acquired through tax title foreclosures. Current inventory of Treasurer's parcels total 68.65 acres. Most of these parcels are unbuildable lots less than $\frac{1}{4}$ acre. There are, however, several undeveloped larger parcels that are unprotected yet significant habitat areas including 12.8 acres off Atkinson St.

The **Methuen Historical Commission** maintains the City's historical collection and archives currently stored at the former Pleasant Valley School. With plans for reuse of the former school as a community youth center, the City will have to identify a new location to house the historic collection. The **Historic District Commission** provides design assistance and regulates signage, architectural renovations and new construction in the Searles Tenney Nevins Historic of Methuen central business district.

Other Methuen Municipal Management Organizations

Nevins Memorial Library is a center of community activity and forums. Methuen's historic public library, a legacy of the Nevins family, in addition to lending books and audio/visual material provides active programs in arts, education, crafts and hobbies open to all residents.

Bicentennial Park is the passive park next to the Library. The park, acquired in the nation's bicentennial year (and Methuen's 250th), is maintained by the Library's facility management.

Methuen Senior Center has been in operation at its 77 Lowell St. facility since 1984. It was built with funds raised by the Center's non-profit organization at the site of Methuen's former West School. The Center offers a range of community programs and assistance services for seniors and organizes popular events and activities throughout the year.



Methuen Senior Center



Courtyard at Tenney Castle, Greycourt Park



Historic Tenney Gatehouse at the entrance of Greycourt Park

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Properties in Methuen

Agencies of the Commonwealth own and operate for public use 63.6 acres in Methuen. The most prominent state-owned property in the City is the 26-acre Greycourt Park and Tenney Gatehouse. Under an early 2000s operating agreement with the state Department of Conservation Resources, the non-profit Methuen Historical Society has been operating the Gatehouse as the Methuen Historical Museum; the Methuen DPW through service contracts has been maintaining the grounds and landscaping at the park which features architectural remnants including the promenade overlook and castle ruins of the Tenney estate.

Other state properties include MassDOT right-of-way segments of the Methuen Rail Trail. Construction of the trail in 2018-2019 was done under long-term lease arrangement by the City. Maintenance of the trail is by the Methuen DPW with active assistance of the community group Rail Trail Alliance.

Also owned by MassDOT is the 13.25-acre former Loosigian Nursery property along the Merrimack River at Riverside Boulevard. MassDOT installed stormwater controls on the property in 2018 as a wetlands mitigation measure associated with the Route I-93 rotary replacement construction project.



Fields ready for planting at Melita Farms (formerly Nimmo Farms)



Practicing drives at Whirlaway Driving Range

Agricultural Land in Methuen

Methuen has a current inventory of 341.19 acres of farmland in the Chapter 61A agricultural use tax incentive program. This acreage includes the 99.26 acres protected through state acquisition of Agricultural Preservation Restrictions at Baremeadow and Pleasant Valley area farms--DeLucia Farm, the former Borgesi and Simone Farms (now owned & operated by DFF Group/Mann's Orchards off Merrimack St.) and the former Nimmo Farm (now Melita Farms).

Private Recreation Properties

Methuen includes properties throughout the City that are privately owned but are available for public use. These include the walking path in the woods surrounding Holy Family Hospital, (Until the 2000s, the path since at least the 1980s included exercise trail features.)

Methuen properties in the Chapter 61B recreation and forestry use tax incentive program total 379.7 acres. Both public use golf courses -Hickory Hill in the West and Merrimack Valley Golf Court in the East are in the 61B Program as are the Methuen Rod & Gun Club at Tyler St. and the Whirlaway Driving Range off Merrimack St.

A number of non-profit & church-owned properties include significant recreation/civic uses including the sports fields at St. Ann's Home and Fellowship Bible Church. From the 1990s until 2018, Methuen Youth Soccer used and maintained sports fields at Hampshire Road on property owned by Faith United Methodist Church. Since 2018, the fields have been unused and have become overgrown with vegetation and are habitat area for quail, deer and other wildlife.

Methuen Conservation Commission Property Inventory

(1 of 3)

ASSESSORS PARCEL ID	SITE_NAME	LOCATION	ACQUISITION DATE	ACREAGE
112-128-130C	Town Forest & Ski Hill	Hampshire Road		
112-128-129	Town Forest & Ski Hill	Ridgewood Ln. 0		131.5
218-130-58	wetland area off North Lowell St.	North Lowell St.	1/16/2005	6.7
1008-78E-65	ConCom property-off Old Ferry Road	off Old Ferry Road	3/28/2000	4.7
1008-79-11L	ConCom property-Maple Ridge Road	Maple Ridge Road	9/24/1998	0.4499
1012-108-254	ConCom property - Bower St.	Bower Street	1/6/2003	0.1138
1012-108-257	ConCom property - Erie Road	Erie Road	1/6/2003	0.0689
1113-109AK-4A	ConCom property - Sorbo Parcel-riverfront	Aberdeen Rd.	2/9/1999	0.2939
1113-109AM-1	ConCom property - Riverview Blvd-riverfront	Prides Crossing entr	9/12/1972	0.2155
1113-109W-21C	ConCom property - Schruender Park-riverfront	Riverview Blvd. 0	9/12/1972	3.58
1210-110B-13A	ConCom property - Columbus St. (Merrimack River)	Columbus St. Lot 4B	2/26/1998	6
1212-110C-8	ConCom property at Merrimack River	Pine Grove Ave & Meriline Ave.	3/29/2011	1.11
212-126A-54	ConCom property - Salem St. - Bridle Path Lane	Salem St.	12/11/1986	3.97
212-127-20A	ConCom property - Salem St. - Pelham St.	Salem St.	4/21/2006	7.41
212-128-103	ConCom property - Pelham St. rear	Pelham St.		16.6
214-129B-35C	ConCom property rear Thomas Road	West St.	10/2/2002	8.03
310-125-3	Landry Parcel	Hampshire Road	1/4/1995	16.31
310-126A-53S	ConCom property off Salem St	Kristen Lane	1/26/2007	5.75
312-126A-115	Bridle Path Lane/Sevoian	Bridle Path Ln. 75 -	12/11/1986	0.6297
316-130-46	ConCom property Pheasant Hill Lane	Pheasant Hill Ln. Lo	2/3/1995	1.27
316-130-47	ConCom property off Tyler St./ StoneCastle (former Hovanasian chicken coop property)	Tyler St.	5/27/2010	17.4
318-165A-36	ConCom property Walbrook St.	Tilton St.	2/21/2002	0.5567
318-166-9P	ConCom property at Merrimack River across from Griffin Brook Drive	Lowell St. 658	8/29/2001	50 2.777
410-126B-56	ConCom property Canobieola Heights	Tedesco Rd.	4/21/2006	0.5739

Methuen Conservation Commission Property Inventory

(2 of 3)

ASSESSORS PARCEL ID	SITE_NAME	LOCATION	ACQUISITION DATE	ACREAGE
412-126B-238F	ConCom property at Rogers St. (paper street)	Rogers St. (paper street)	10/1/2002	0.2525
412-126B-55	ConCom property at Clifton Road	Clifton Road	6/30/1983	0.9183
414-131-126G	ConCom property off Forest St.-rear of Lyndale & Danton Drive	Forest St.	5/30/2002	30.21
414-131-126H	Con Com property Forest St.	Forest St.	5/26/1983	24
510-124-4	ConCom Property - Cross Street (and rear of Village Mall, Broadway)	Abuts Methuen Rail Trail	4/2/1991	6
512-124-17	ConCom property off Cross St.	Cross St.	8/4/2005	7.38
512-126B-3	ConCom property off Cross St. (beyond Aegean Dr.)	Cross St.	8/4/2005	24.44
512-131-5F	ConCom Property - Pelham Street	Pelham St.	10/16/1975	5.04
516-151-30A	Lowell Street	Lowell St.	12/6/1988	1.06
516-151-31A	Lowell Street	Lowell St.	12/6/1988	0.53
612-123-44A	Bird Sanctuary	Hampshire St. rear 90		11
612-124-40A	Bird Sanctuary	Hampshire St. rear 90	6/12/1969	28.07
618-162-61	ConCom property off Barry Ave.-Volger Parcel	Barry Ave.	3/29/2000	0.3986
704-71-4AA	ConCom Property - North Street	North St. Lot A	3/27/1995	6.96
704-72-30E	ConCom property off Ayers Village Road	Ayers Village Road	12/31/2017	18.93
708-69-10AA	Con Com property Balmoral Drive	Balmoral Dr.	12/6/1988	0.1865
708-69-11AA	ConCom property Homestead Acres & Tennis Court	Copley Dr. 0	12/6/1988	48.97
708-69-50	Coachman Lane	Coachman Ln. 10	6/3/1985	2.04
712-59-20N	ConCom property Kimball Circle	Kimball Circle 30	3/1/1982	1.15
712-59-23A	ConCom property off Cochrane Circle	Nevins Road	11/19/2003	1.82
806-74-21B	ConCom property off Hawkes Brook Lane	Hawkes Brook Lane	5/22/2000	3.85
806-75-28	ConCom property Hawkes Brook	Maple St.	11/9/1998	6.25
808-77-67H	ConCom property Rolling Ridge Lane	Rolling Ridge Ln.	10/31/1990	0.4136
808-77-68N	ConCom property Rolling Ridge Lane	Rolling Ridge Ln. 18	10/31/1990	1.11
808-77-69D	ConCom property Rolling Ridge Lane	Rolling Ridge Ln. 17	10/31/1990	0.8234
810-77E-1	ConCom property off Washington St	Mary Lou St. & Druid Hill Ave.	5/20/2003	51
810-77E-2KK	ConCom property off Archibald St.	Archibald St. rear	5/20/2003	7.47

Methuen Conservation Commission Property Inventory

(3 of 3)

ASSESSORS PARCEL ID	SITE_NAME	LOCATION	ACQUISITION DATE	ACREAGE
812-41-102	ConCom property off Pleasant St./rear Jefferson Road	Pleasant St.	7/8/1982	4.14
814-41-23G	ConCom Property Searles Pond	Jackson St.	5/7/1973	8.7
814-41-23R	ConCom property off Dearborn Road	Eagle Lane	9/20/2006	0.956
908-76-50E	ConCom Property Sable Run	Washington St.	3/19/1996	31.94
908-78E-64	ConCom Property Old Ferry Road	Old Ferry Rd. Lot D ; Judith E. Lane	4/26/1995	26.3
908-79-19RR	ConCom Property - Olympic Village Drive	Olympic Village Dr.	10/31/1990	27.74
912-80-30	ConCom Property - Hills Pond	Milk St.	6/1/1988	9.69
914-100-54	ConCom property off Dewey St.	Dewey St.	10/4/2011	1.025
418-162-18	Ivy Island	off Bea's Boat Ramp	2019	0.55
516-154-41E	Leone Parcel	Lowell St. 0		0.8
616-150-89XX	Emsley Terrace rear	Emsley Terr/ Deborah Ave. - landlocked		3.2
418-162-19	ConCom Property - Riverside Drive Conservation Area - Includes Boat Ramp drive entrance & dock	Riverside Dr.		2
812-80-10C	Macoul Parcel	Prospect St. 593	pending Nov. 2020	4.194
1006-78E-	Emerald Pines			101.48
416-154-6	Margaret's Way Confirm with KB & JG this municipal	Margaret's Way off Forest St		5
806-74-16	Great Oaks - Conservation Restriction			63.8
906-74-71	494 Howe St.	Liams Lane		15.9
906-76-11M	Maple Park _ Conservation Restriction Confirmed 2019	Maple St. Extension		13.72
310-126A-50	Hampshire Road rear - undeveloped to Sevoian and Canobieola merged parcels including Leone parcel donation-Harris Brook	Hampshire Rd.	merged parcels	61
224-166-33	ConCom property at Lowell Blvd Merrimack River (former Willis property-donation)	Lowell Blvd	2020	0.7432
224-165B-1	ConCom property at Lowell Blvd Merrimack River (former Willis property-donation)	Lowell Blvd	2020	0.0356
224-166-29	ConCom property at Lowell Blvd Merrimack River (former Willis property-donation)	Lowell Blvd	2020	0.1236
1111-110C-113	ConCom property at Daisey Dell Ave.	Daisey Dell Avenue	2020 (pending Dec)	

Methuen DPW Property Inventory (1 of 2)

MAP_PAR_ID	SITE_NAME	LOCATION	ACQUISITION DATE	ACREAGE
112-128-130C	Town Forest & Ski Hill	Hampshire Road		
112-128-129	Town Forest & Ski Hill	Ridgewood Ln. 0		
218-130-58	wetland area off North Lowell St.	North Lowell St.	1/16/2005	6.7
1012-108-160A	Sargent School ballfield	West Ayer St.	1/11/1935	2.89
1014-101-74A	Ashford School Fields	Ashford St. 46	6/4/1953	3.2
1109-78E-45	former Pleasant Valley School	Pleasant Valley St. 180	7/1/1914	1.96
212-128-127	Pelham Street (pump station)	Pelham St. & Hampshire Road		33.64
312-126A-112	Bridle Path Lane	Bridle Path Ln. 0	12/11/1986	2.3
316-165A-96	Elmwood Cemetery	North Lowell St. 120	9/15/1908	52.09
318-165A-45	Glen Essex Plan - Elmwood	Winstead Ave.	11/19/1981	0.1309
318-165A-56	rear Elmwood	Winstead Ave.	12/6/1988	0.1335
410-124-13	Water Department	Cross St.		5.8
410-126A-1	Water Department Maintenance Bldg. & Yard	Cross St. 124	3/26/1897	15
612-121-12	Parking lot at former Andrew's service station	Lowell St. 2	8/16/2001	0.2012
612-121-21	Parking Area	Osgood St. 0	3/10/1978	0.3811
612-122-18A	Parking lot at Methuen downtown	Hampshire St.	8/16/2001	0.1321
612-123-14	Appleyards open space/parking at Spicket River	Lowell St. 7	12/4/1998	1.0011
612-123-43	Police Station - Quinn Building	Hampshire St. 90	1950	10.58
612-53-4	Lawrence Street Parking	Lawrence St.	4/15/1988	0.478
704-71-18A	Water Tank Spicket Hill	off Hampstead St.	10/20/1987	2.13
709-59-106A	rear of landfill & transfer station	Adams Avenue	12/22/1970	38.27
710-68A-12	Transfer Station area - by leaf collection	Regent Ave.		
710-68A-13	Transfer Station area - by leaf collection	Regent Ave.		
710-68A-135		Huntington Ave.		
710-68A-13A	Transfer Station area - leaf collection	Regent Ave.		
710-68A-15	Transfer Station area - by leaf collection	Dartmouth Ave.		
710-68A-16	Transfer station	Dartmouth Ave.		
710-68A-27A	Transfer Station area by Preble St.	Chilton St.	5/13/1943	0.0826
710-68A-7	Transfer Station Area - brush collection	Dartmouth Ave.	5/22/1936	0.7342
710-68A-8	Transfer Station Area -open	Dartmouth Ave.	5/22/1936	0.6933
710-68A-9	Transfer Station Area	Dartmouth Ave.	5/22/1936	0.8402

Methuen DPW Property Inventory (2 of 2)

Methuen School Property Inventory

MAP_PAR_ID	SITE_NAME	LOCATION	ACQUISITION DATE	ACREAGE
312-126A-59E	Marsh K-8 School	Pelham St. 309	7/2/1965	15.06
612-52-1	Central School Administration Bldg	Ditson Place 10	9/29/1924	2
712-41-123A	Tenney K-8 School & fields	Pleasant St. 75	1955	26
810-68B-47A	Comprehensive Grammar K-8	Howe St. 100	12/16/1986	34.8
814-41-102A	MHS & Timony K-8 Schools inc. MHS Baseball & Tennis Courts	Ranger Road 1	12/31/1971	49.52
914-105-63	Currier School - Adult Learning Center	Boylston St. 36	1923	0.4327

Other Municipal Dept. Property Inventory

MAP_PAR_ID	SITE_NAME	LOCATION	SITE_OWNER	MANAGEMENT DEPT.	ACQUISITION DATE	ACREAGE
218-130-58	wetland area off North Lowell St. Bicentennial Park & Nevins Memorial Library	North Lowell St.	Municipal	City Council	1/16/2005	6.7
612-57-19	Recreation Dept.	Broadway 299 & 305		Nevins Library Recreation Department		8.02
214-128-44	Methuen Senior Center	Varnai St. (by Forest Lake)	Municipal Methuen Senior Citizens Building Committee Inc.	Senior Center	12/19/2003	7.8
614-134-1		Lowell St. 77			3/25/1983	1.07

Commonwealth of MA Property Inventory in Methuen

MAP_PAR_ID	SITE_NAME	LOCATION	MANAGEMENT DEPT.	ACQUISITION DATE	ACREAGE
320-166-10	former Loosigian Nursery - MassDOT parcel	Lowell Blvd. 18	MassDOT	11/16/2012	13.25
712-41-123AA	Tenney Gatehouse & Greycourt Park (Tenney Estate)	Pleasant St. 37	Div. of Capital Planning	8/17/1984	26
224-166-32	Lowell Blvd. - Merrimack Riverfront @ Dracut Line	Lowell Blvd.	DEP		2.2
224-166-30	Lowell Blvd. - Merrimack Riverfront	Lowell Blvd	DEP		1.2
320-165A-7	Mass. National Guard Armory	Lowell St. 679	MA National Guard JT Force HQ	1867 built	5.5
612-121-13	historic canoe launch parcel at Spicket River; Lowell St. bridge	Lowell St.	MassDOT	10/14/1999	0.0624
910-79-23A	Parcel at ramp onto Route 213E	Pleasant Valley St.	DPW Right of Way Bureau	3/19/1993	2.62
1109-110A-1	Merrimack River riverfront shoreline parcel at Haverhill line	Merrimack St.			2.56
716-115-31	Methuen Rail Trail (South Segment -Oakland Ave to Lawrence Line)	Railroad St.	MBTA	1/1/1903	10.2
612-121-17A	Osgood/Lowell St. ROW parcel including Fire Dept. Monument location/ bridge decking over Rail ROW	Lowell/Osgood St.	MassDOT		
STATE ACREAGE TOTAL					63.5924

Commonwealth of MA Property Inventory in Methuen

MAP_PAR_ID	SITE_NAME	LOCATION	MANAGEMENT DEPT.	ACQUISITION DATE	ACREAGE
320-166-10	former Loosigian Nursery - MassDOT parcel	Lowell Blvd. 18	MassDOT	11/16/2012	13.25
712-41-123AA	Tenney Gatehouse & Greycourt Park (Tenney Estate)	Pleasant St. 37	Div. of Capital Planning	8/17/1984	26
224-166-32	Lowell Blvd. - Merrimack Riverfront @ Dracut Line	Lowell Blvd.	DEP		2.2
224-166-30	Lowell Blvd. - Merrimack Riverfront	Lowell Blvd	DEP		1.2
320-165A-7	Mass. National Guard Armory	Lowell St. 679	MA National Guard JT Force HQ	1867 built	5.5
612-121-13	historic canoe launch parcel at Spicket River; Lowell St. bridge	Lowell St.	MassDOT	10/14/1999	0.0624
910-79-23A	Parcel at ramp onto Route 213E	Pleasant Valley St.	DPW Right of Way Bureau	3/19/1993	2.62
1109-110A-1	Merrimack River riverfront shoreline parcel at Haverhill line	Merrimack St.			2.56
716-115-31	Methuen Rail Trail (South Segment -Oakland Ave to Lawrence Line)	Railroad St.	MBTA	1/1/1903	10.2
612-121-17A	Osgood/Lowell St. ROW parcel including Fire Dept. Monument location/ bridge decking over Rail ROW	Lowell/Osgood St.	MassDOT		
STATE ACREAGE TOTAL					63.5924

Methuen Properties in 61A, APR and 61B Programs

(1 of 2)

MAP_PAR_ID	CH61_PROG	CR_APR	SITE_NAME	LOCATION	SITE_OWNER	ACREAGE
1111-110B-106	A		Bonanno solar array	Wingate Ave. 0	Bonanno, Clement	0.11
1111-110B-107	A		Bonanno solar array	Wingate Ave. 0	Bonanno, Clement	0.2
1111-110B-16A	A		Bonanno's	Wingate Ave. 0	Bonanno, Clement	25.3
1111-110C-41	A		Bonanno's Farm	Merrimack St. 255	Bonanno, Richard	2
1210-110B-10	A		rear of Clementi Lane	Venice Rd. 0	DFF Group Inc.	1.16
1210-110B-16B	A		rear of Clementi Lane	Venice Rd. 0	DFF Group Inc.	2.76
1210-110B-9	A		rear of Clementi Lane	Venice Rd. 0	DFF Group Inc.	0.1922
212-127-22	A		Avedisian Farm	Salem St. 70	Avedisian, Richard	4.75
					GUZEZIAN FRANCIS TR ESTATE OF	9.9
216-129A-10	A		Guzelian property	MYRTLE STREET 77		
310-125-9	A		Joiner property	Hampshire Rd. 150	Joiner, Leonard	15.96
310-126A-52	A		Avedisian Farm	Salem St. 0	Avedisian, Richard	7
312-129B-32	A			West St. 10	Nightingale, William	7.4
315-131-55	A		Rotondo Farm	Forest St. 0	Rotondo, Alfred - c/o Henry	25.38
320-165A-2	A		Forcier property @ Lowell & Wheeler	Lowell St. 0	Forcier, Robert Trust	6.52
320-165A-2B	A		Forcier property @ Lowell & Wheeler	Lowell St. 0	Forcier, Robert Trust	3.13
410-125-21	A		Rotondo Farm	Hampshire Rd. 0	Rotondo, Henry & Marjorie	14.8
410-126A-11A	A		Rotondo Farm	Hampshire Rd. 0	Rotondo, Henry & Marjorie	10.93
414-131-57	A		Rotondo Farm	Don Ave. 0	Rotondo, Alfred - c/o Henry	6.24
416-129B-27	A		Drouin Property	Forest St. 324	Drouin, Leda	6.1
704-72-5	A		Raymond's Turkey Farm	Hampstead St. 163	Rischer, Raymond & Claire	57.36
812-80-29	A		Mann Orchards	Pleasant Valley St. 27	Mann Orchards Inc.	22.47
1012-100-31A	A	APR	Nimmo Farm	Oak St. 0	SPES Development Corp.	6.9
1012-108-291A	A	APR	DeLucia Farm	Merrimack St. 0	Griffin, Michael & Cara	1.27
1014-100-35	A	APR	Nimmo Farm	Cambridge St. 0	SPES Development Corp.	4.1
					59	

Private Properties of Recreation/Conservation Interest (1 of 3)

	FEE_OWNER	LEV_PROT	CH61_PROG	SITE_NAME	LOCATION	SITE_OWNER	MANAGEMENT DEPT.	ACREAGE
1109-110A-1A	Private Utility		undeveloped riverfront parcel	Merrimack River riverfront	Merrimack St. (east of 495 overpass)	New England Power Company (NationalGrid)		1
			power lines- undeveloped waterfront	Merrimack River riverfront	Merrimack St. (west of 495 overpass)	New England Power Company (NationalGrid)		
1109-110A-2	Private Utility		community center- waterfront	Sons of Italy -Lawrence Lodge 902	Merrimack St. 459	Sons of Italy Community Center Trust		3.48
1109-110A-3A	Nonprofit							2.73
1111-108-290	Nonprofit Church		St. Lucy's Church	St. Lucy's Church	Merrimack St. 254	Roman Catholic Archdiocese		5.89
							used as Methuen Youth Soccer fields from 1990s to 2018	
212-127-26Z	Nonprofit			Faith United Methodist	Hampshire Road	Trustees of Faith United		31.85
216-129B-7	Private	Conservation Restriction		Stone Castle open space	TYLER STREET	Stone Castle Condo Association		
310-125-13A	Nonprofit Church			Fellowship Bible Church & School	HAMPSHIRE ROAD	FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURC		26.01
312-126A-60	Nonprofit Church	Marsh Corner Community Church		Marsh Corner Community Church	Pelham St. 317	Marsh Corner Community Church		2.14
312-126A-72	Private	wetland; No conservation restriction		Wetland undeveloped area- Quail Run	Pelham St.	RKACO LLC Company		21.3
316-130-20A	Nonprofit			Eaton's Grove	North Lowell St. 151	Eparch St Marion of Brooklyn		6.7
318-166-6	Nonprofit			Phillips Academy		Phillips Academy Trustees		5.9
318-166-9Q	Nonprofit			Boathouse on Merrimack	Lowell St. 620			1.83
320-165B-25	Nonprofit Church	Assembly of God	Merrimack College boating(former Essex Rowing Club)	Lowell St. 656	Merrimack College (2020)			11.2
			Assembly of God	Lowell Blvd. 15-17	Lawrence Assembly of God			
416-154-10AB	Nonprofit Church	Latter Day Saints	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	Hill St. 39	Latter Day Saints			3.45

Private Properties of Recreation/Conservation Interest (2 of 3)

MAP_PAR_ID	FEE_OWNER	LEV_PROT	CH61_PROG	SITE_NAME	LOCATION	SITE_OWNER	MANAGEMENT DEPT.	ACREAGE
610-123-44	Nonprofit			MSPCA	Broadway 400	MSPCA		
610-123-48C	Nonprofit center		community Hall	Gaythorne Hall Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative	Broadway 462	Knights of Columbus Methuen Council #4027		3.74
610-123-51A	Nonprofit School		School	Methuen Memorial Music Hall	Broadway 476	GLEC		8.33
612-120-8	Nonprofit			First Church Congregational	Broadway 192	MMMH Inc.		2.76
612-56-1	Nonprofit Church			First Church Congregational	Pleasant St. 30	First Church Congregational		
612-57-18	Nonprofit			MSPCA Pet Cemetery	Nevins Road 3	MSPCA		4.09
614-120-32	Nonprofit lodge		VFW lodge	VFW Lodge	River St. 26	Arnold Greenwood Post 8349		1.37
614-137-1	Nonprofit			Walnut Grove Cemetery	Grove St	VFW		14.41
616-150-81	Private	L		ST MARYS CEMETERY	Woodland St. 6	Walnut Grove Cemetery Inc.		67.97
				St. Ann's Home - special education school & residence		ST MARYS CHURCH OF LAV		
618-153A-10	Nonprofit				Haverhill St. 100A	St. Ann's Home Inc.		
714-10-13	Nonprofit Church		Church & School	St. Monicas	Lawrence St. 200	Roman Catholic Archdiocese		3.6
714-120-6	Nonprofit lodge		American Legion			American Legion Post 122		1.43
714-14-2A	Nonprofit Church		lodge	American Legion Lodge formerly St. George's Church; as of 2016 Iglesia	Broadway 190			
				Iglesia Pentecostal Pentecostal	Phillips St. 10	Iglesia Pentecostal		1.0445
				former Searles Estate/Presentation of Mary			PMA School sold 2020 to Notre Dame Cristo Rey Academy; remainder of estate parcel on market; Property subdivided into 3 parcels 2020.	
714-41-1	Non Profit				Lawrence St. 209	Congregation of Presentation of Mary		24.3

Private Properties of Recreation/Conservation Interest (3 of 3)

	FEE_OWNER	LEV_PROT	CH61_PROG	SITE_NAME	LOCATION	SITE_OWNER	MANAGEMENT DEPT.	ACREAGE
714-41-123	Non Profit			St. Basil's Seminary	East St. 30	Basilian Salvatorian Order Inc.		24
714-53-6	Nonprofit Church			Baptist Church	Park St. 24	Baptist Church Society		0.2912
716-114-25A	Nonprofit Church			St. Andrew's Church	Broadway 90	St. Andrews Church		1.23
814-41-22	Nonprofit			Holy Family Hospital	East St. 70	(Episcopal)		72.3
816-96-30	Nonprofit Church			Methuen Jehovah's Witness	Jackson St. 130	MPT of Methuen Steward LLC		1.48
		Conservation Restriction - state & local (pending Jan. 2021)				Jehovah's Witness Methuen Congregation		
906-76-		Preserve at Emerald Pines	Preserve at Emerald Pines	Open Space - Preserve at Emerald Pines	Howe Street	Toll Brothers		65.5

Section 6: Community Goals



The planning team and Mayor's Advisory Committee used the Open Space & Recreation planning process to outline a vision for Methuen's parks and conservation areas. Many of these areas have fallen into disuse because of neglect or inadequate investment and maintenance. One of the goals of this planning effort is to build a community commitment to reshape our public lands so they can become truly recognized and valued, used and promoted as community assets fully contributing to a vibrant and growing Methuen.



Questions for Methuen's Next Decade

Environment/Open Space

- What areas/resources need to be protected?

Climate Resilience/Hazard Mitigation

- How can we protect our environmental resources, limit our carbon footprint & adapt to more extremes of heat & precipitation?



Recreation

- What programs are working well? What needs to be improved?

Environmental Justice

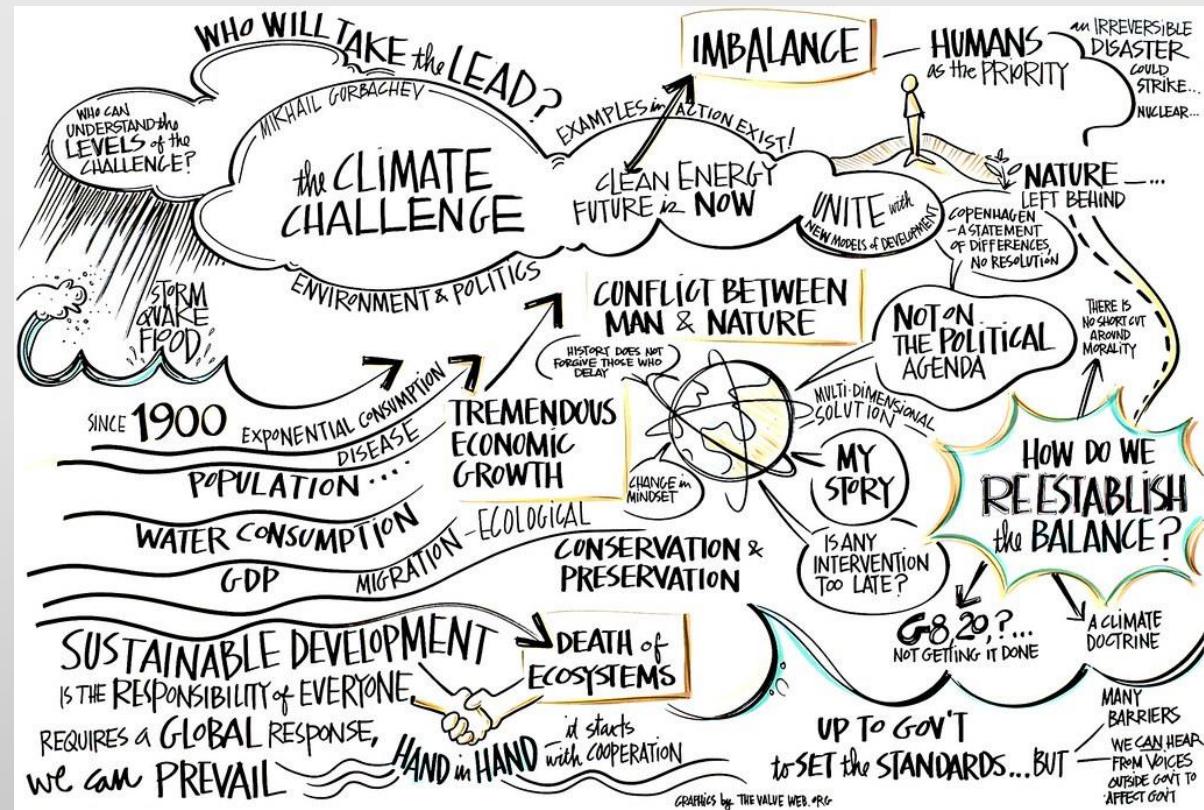
- What should be standards to ensure all neighborhoods have access to quality parks/open space?

Historic/Cultural

- What are the public art and historic preservation opportunities to enhance Methuen spaces?

Issues for the 2020s

- Waterfront Access
- Agricultural Land Protection
- Playgrounds
- Recreation Programs—All Ages
- Accommodating Diverse & Multiple Interests
- Athletic Fields & Programs
- Historic Preservation
- Climate Adaptation/Community Resilience
- Public Health
- Access to Parks/Open Space
- Arts/Cultural Programs
- Environmental Justice/Social Equity
- Balanced Growth
- Reuse/Redevelopment
- Water Quality & Pollution Control
- Habitat Protection
- ADA Compliance
- Active Transportation (Walking/Biking)
- Management Capacity—Operations & Maintenance, Planning, Design & Construction, Finance



Section 7: Analysis of Needs

Management-defined Needs & Priorities

Primary agencies within Methuen City government managing parks and recreation programs are the Department of Public Works Environmental Division, Recreation Department and School Athletics Program. Open Space & conservation areas are managed and maintained by the Methuen Conservation Division within the Department of Economic and Community Development.

Recreation Dept. priorities focus on condition upgrades at existing facilities, including playground modernization and repairs at the MHS baseball field and tennis courts and installation of lighting at the Nicholson Stadium lower turf field.

School Athletics Program identify priorities in MHS tennis court upgrade and addressing lack of sufficient outdoor full-court basketball in the City. The Athletic Director also expresses interest in opportunities available through more use of communication and interactive technologies in more active promotion and program engagement with the community—students and adults.

Conservation Division outlines a focused need for timely action on open space preservation opportunities in connecting wildlife habitat corridors as well as enhancing public access to conservation land through trail and waterfront improvements. The department also aims to promote greater City involvement in “green” projects of recycling, composting, water conservation and organizing a community garden at conservation land off Tyler St.



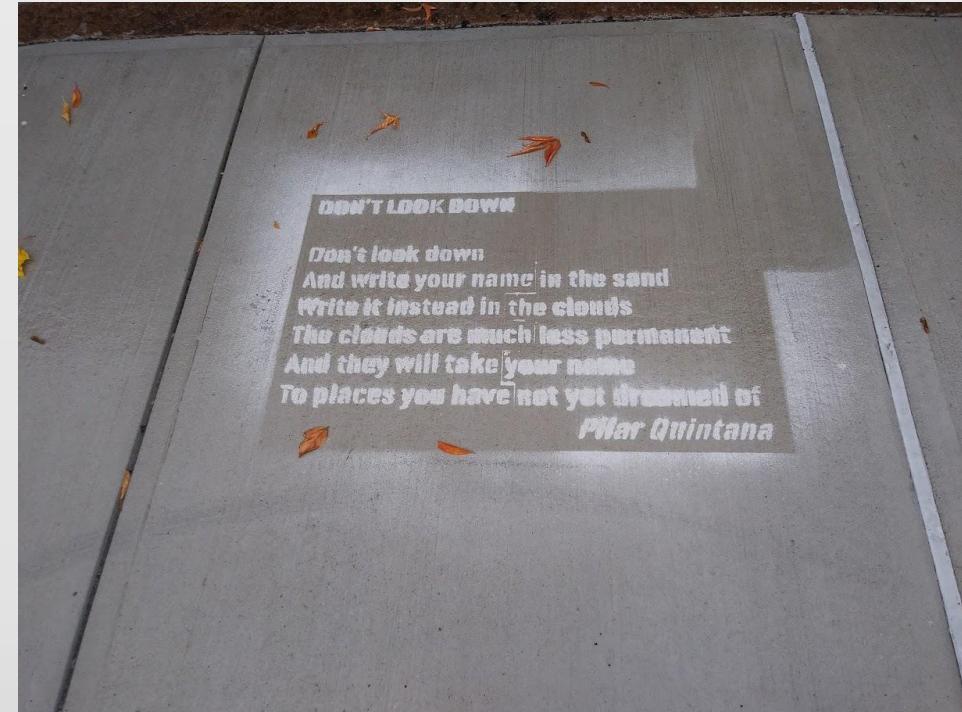
A Pre-Covid Public Meeting in Person: A Full House at Irish Cottage on Vision Concept for the Riverside Corridor in West Methuen - Fall 2019.

Dept. of Public Works through its Environmental Division is the primary entity charged with maintenance and management of the City's 29 active park/recreation areas. Under operating agreement with the state, the City also contracts out landscaping maintenance at Greycourt Park. Priority need of the Department is in building up maintenance capacity with additional crews (beyond the existing two crews of two laborers) and adequate supply of equipment including mowers, trash collection vehicles, trailers and landscape blowers.

Community Needs Survey

In addition to internal management discussions and meetings with the Mayor's OSRP Advisory Committee, the planning team prepared an on-line community needs survey distributed from Fall 2019 to Summer 2020. The survey was prominently featured on the City of Methuen website, promoted through social media postings, MCTV programming and e-mail blasts to residents using organization contacts lists including Nevins Library, Senior Center, Methuen Arlington Neighborhood, and municipal departments. A total of 661 residents responded to the survey indicating high interest, more attention to public outreach and/or the benefits of on-line technology. (As a comparison, total response to the paper survey conducted in the prior 2012 Open Space/Recreation Plan process was 77 residents). In the 2019-20 on-line survey, the team received good response representation from throughout the community - East, West and Central - and the needs and interests indicated provide a representative snapshot of how Methuenites view open space & conservation issues at the start of the 2020s.

The survey responses and comments submitted indicated high concern with maintenance, cleanliness and public safety at Methuen facilities. At the same time, respondents want the City to balance maintenance interests with goals of protecting conservation habitat areas and expanding programs and facilities to keep up with changing and growing demand. While one-third of respondents (216) indicated maintenance improvements should be the focus of open space & recreation planning, a plurality of 36% (236) expressed need for the City to give equal priority focus to all three interests in maintenance upgrades, recreation facility expansion and open space protection.



The Methuen Arts Initiative's *Raining Poetry Display* at Rail Trail - Fall 2020



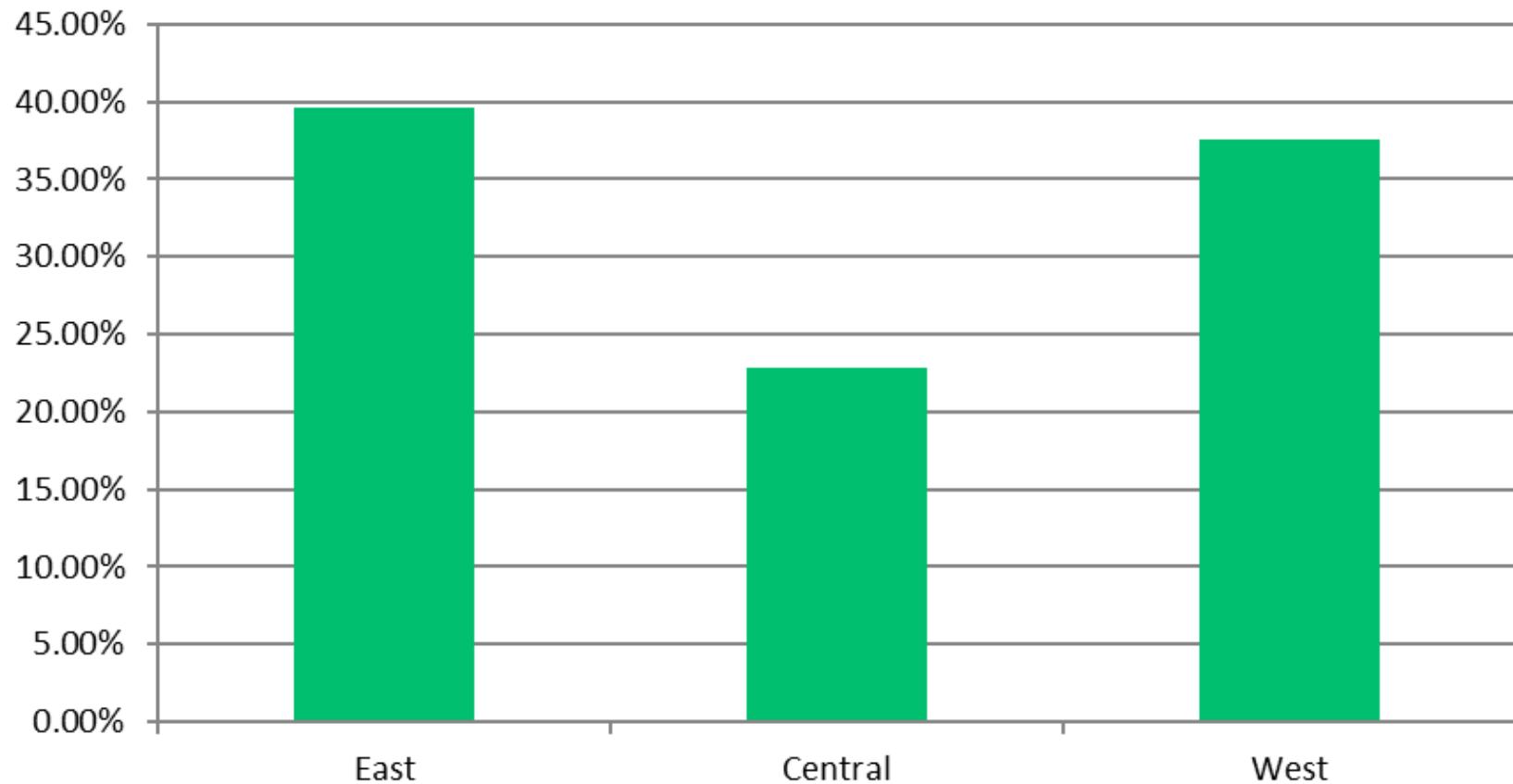
Results of the survey questions are summarized in the pages that follow. The survey instrument is included as an appendix.

METHUEN OPEN/SPACE RECREATION Needs Survey

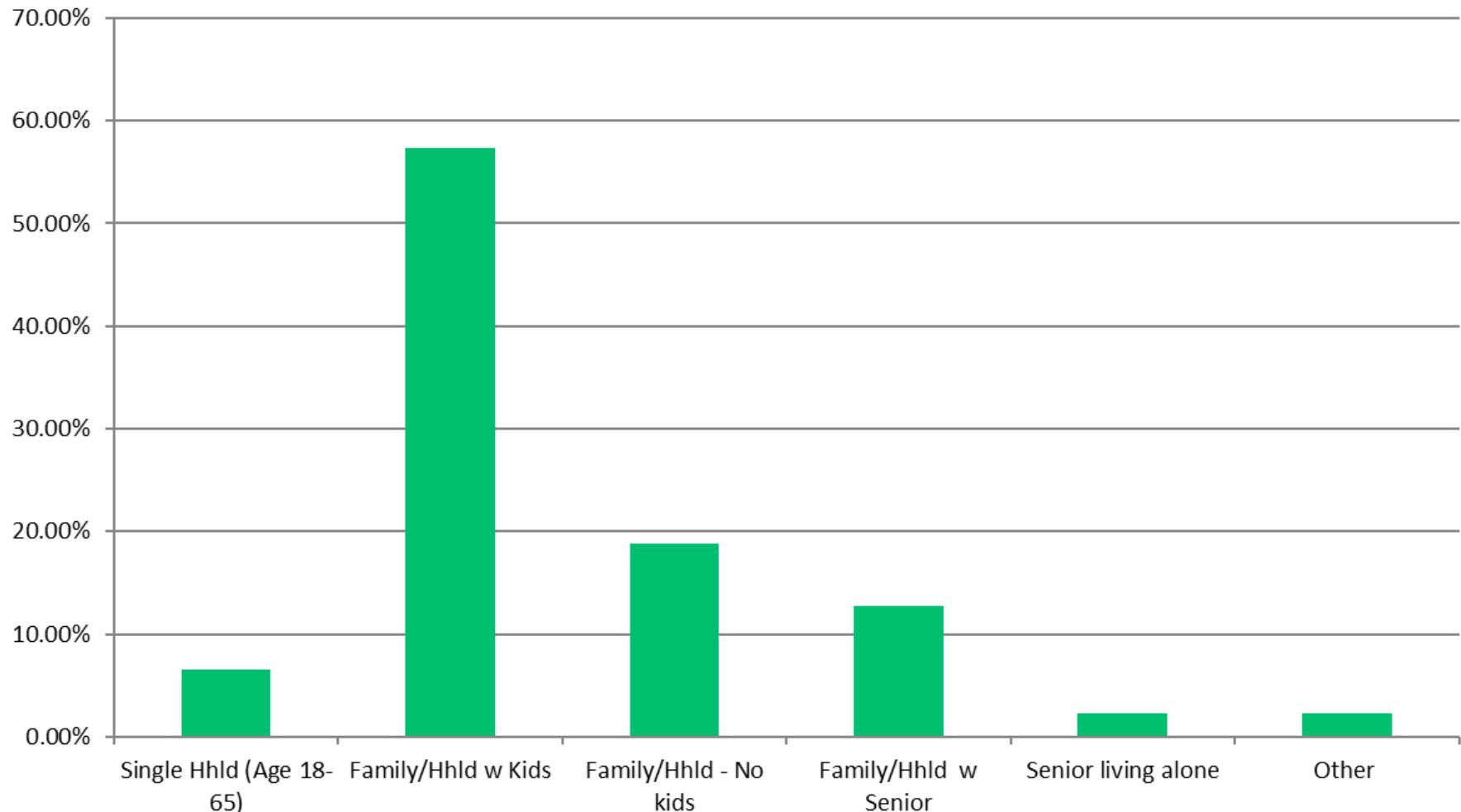
new play Please trees development housing Will maintenance updates Thank time
business go many fixed growing improve high school lot teens baseball fields
home think much places seniors great allow rail trail really use
conservation space live building s better things kids Forest Lake
maintained well town open area stop
playground nice park schools need create
Methuen Veterans Park city preserve see parks playgrounds
fields Stop building also come children leave open space
old make residents keep Maybe dog park around clean Loop
love see sports fields add one community job sidewalks properties Safe
Upgrade activities bring work basketball court programs public look enjoy etc plan
sports equipment take care downtown important put

2020 Methuen Needs Survey

In which section of Methuen do you live?



Which best describes your current living situation?



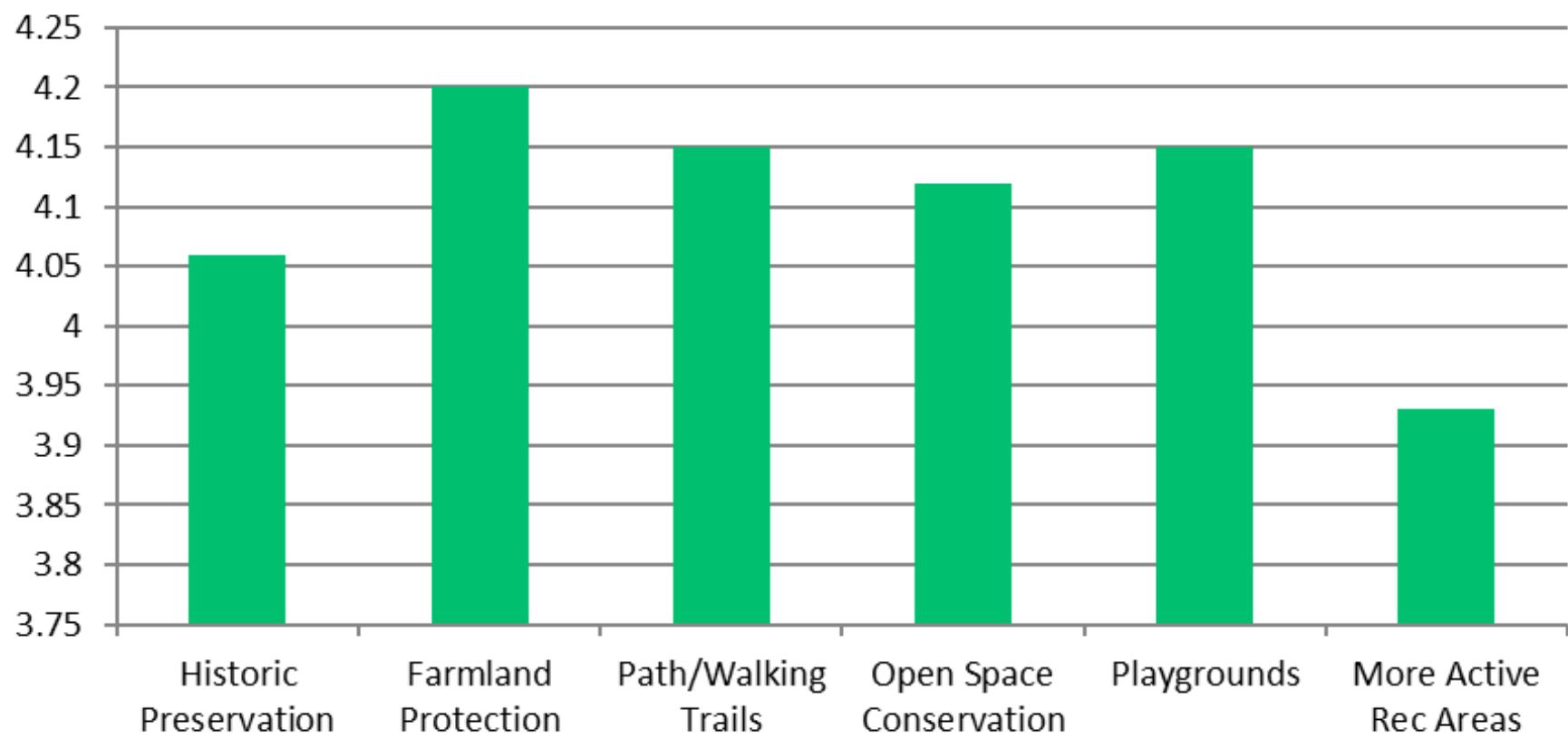
Top Ten Recreation Activities of Respondents

Hiking/Walking	64.69%	425
Community Events (outdoor movie nights, concerts, festivals etc.)	45.97%	302
Nevins Library activities/book clubs	37.75%	248
Dogwalking	36.68%	241
Boating/Canoeing/Kayaking	35.46%	233
Art/Music Programs	34.86%	229
Baseball/Softball	29.22%	192
Gardening	28.16%	185
Farmers Market @ Nevins Library	26.79%	176
Cycling/Mountain Biking	24.96%	164
Basketball	24.20%	159

Top Methuen Facilities Used By Respondents

Methuen Rail Trail	53.31%	346
Veterans Memorial Park (Milk St.)	39.60%	257
Greycourt Park at the Tenney Estate	31.12%	202
Nicholson Stadium	29.12%	189
Forest Lake Town Beach	27.58%	179
Methuen Recreation Dept. Programs & Special Events	24.35%	158
MHS Track	22.96%	149
Burnham Road Sport Fields	21.73%	141
CGS Fields & Playground	20.80%	135
Nevins Bird Sanctuary	18.95%	123
Tenney School Fields & Playground	18.49%	120
Riverside Park @ Merrimack River	18.34%	119
Marsh School Playground	17.72%	115
Methuen Memorial Music Hall	15.41%	100

In your opinion, how important are the following activities?



Survey asked Respondents to Rate the Supply/Condition of Methuen Facilities: (1= extremely poor; 3=fair, 5=excellent)

- Active Recreation Parks & Playgrounds - 2.88
- Conservation Lands & Passive Rec. Areas (trails) - 3.11
- Historic & Cultural Facilities - 3.41

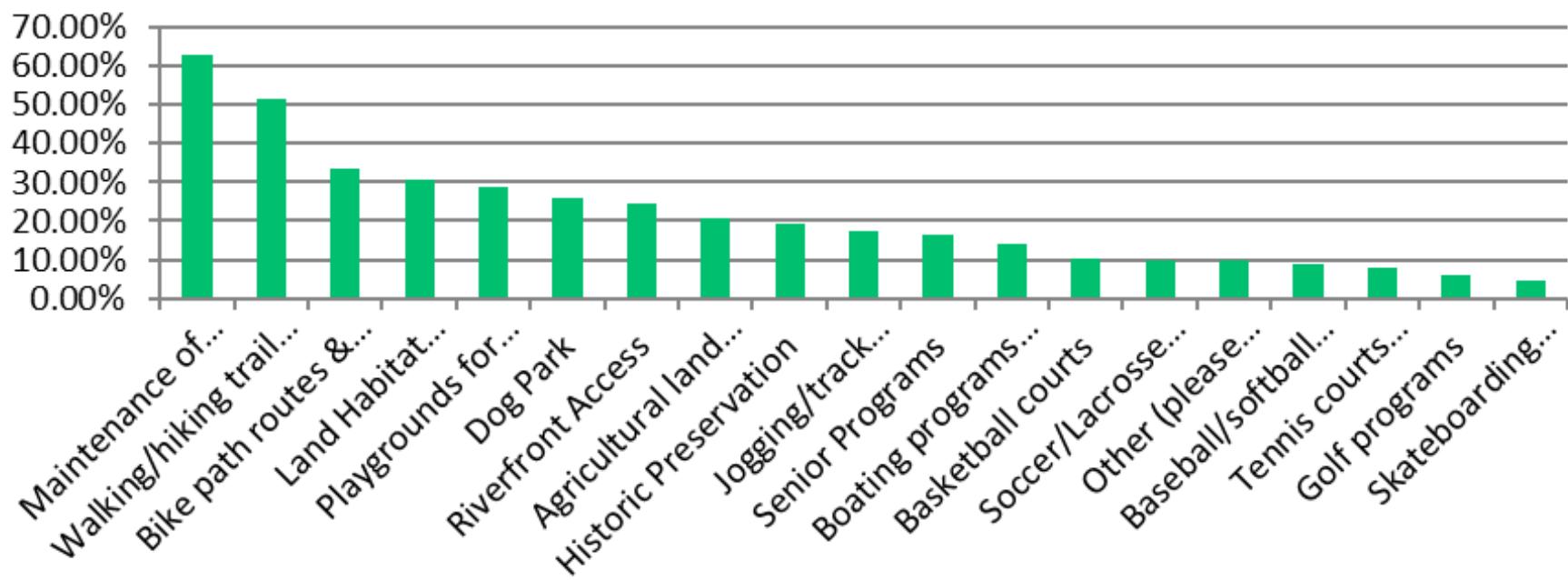
Methuen does a fair/ mixed job in the management and maintenance of its park, recreation & cultural facilities, in the opinion of survey respondents.

Survey asked “How important is it to you for Methuen to acquire and preserve open space for conservation and recreation?”

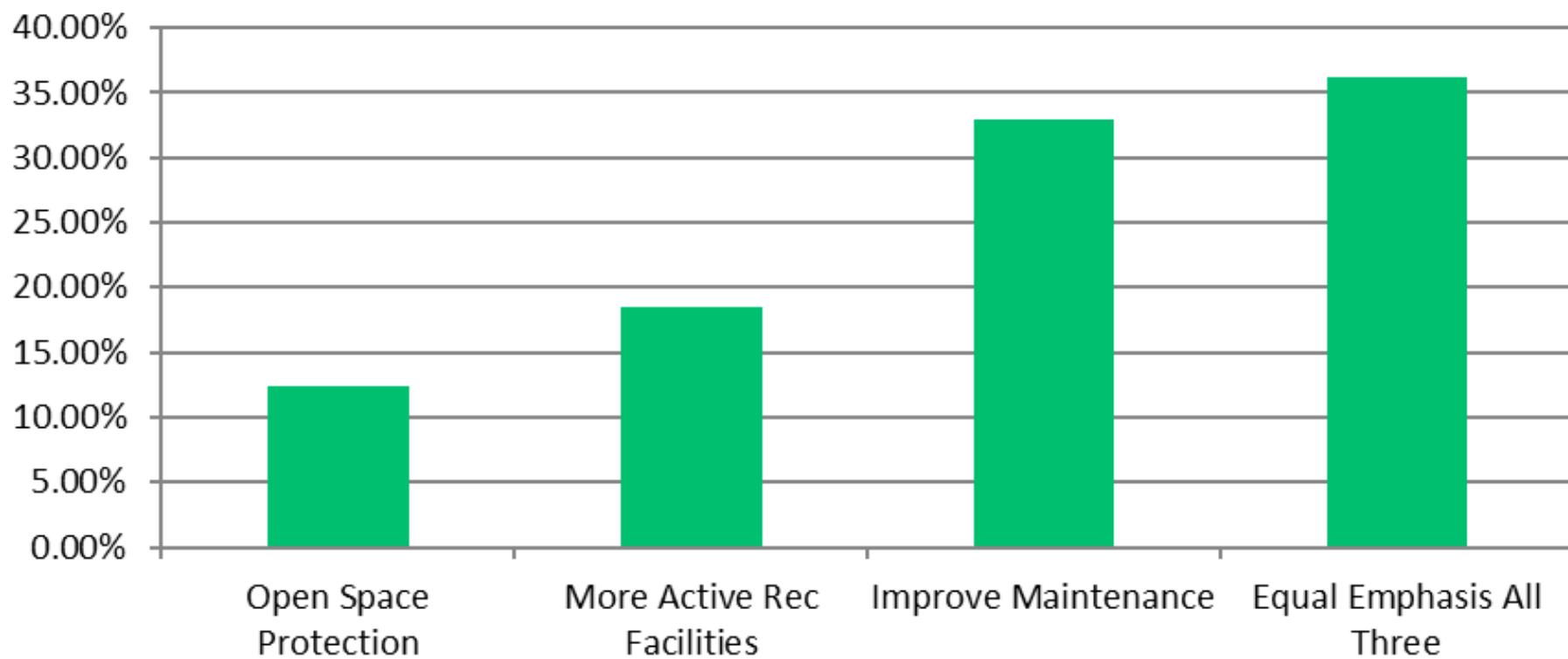
(1= Very unimportant; 3=Neutral, 5=Very important)

- 4.16 weighted average of 657 responses
(indicates fairly high level of priority)

What do you think should be the focus areas for Methuen's open space and recreation program over the next decade
(Select your top 3)



Which should Methuen consider the top priority in its Open Space and Recreation planning?



Section 8: Goals & Objectives



The Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee worked with the staff planning team in organizing the guiding goals and objectives of this plan during a series of meetings in early Fall 2020.

The goals and objectives defined here lay out the framework for the action plan of Methuen's parks and conservation area improvements the City seeks to bring to fruition in the decade ahead.



GOAL #1: Methuen parks and recreation facilities will be safe, well-maintained and accessible.

- **Objective 1:** Promote and implement a broad range of quality recreation programs for all ages, neighborhoods and diverse interests.
- **Objective 2:** As steward of Methuen's parks and open spaces, City government is committed to putting in place management systems to ensure adequate staffing, standards, protocols and resource capacity to maintain and protect facilities so that all parks & recreation areas can be positive contributors to community pride and activity.



GOAL #1: Methuen parks and recreation facilities will be safe, well-maintained and accessible.

- **Objective 3:** Update facilities and replace outdated equipment based on capital investment plan priorities and identified needs.
- **Objective 4:** Formalize & strengthen partnerships with community advocates and champions for Methuen parks and recreation areas.
- **Objective 5:** Establish reliable funding sources for sustaining a quality park & recreation system.



GOAL #2: Methuen will proactively work to protect and expand our environmental resources and conservation areas.

- **Objective 1:** Expand Riverfront Access.
- **Objective 2:** Preserve Environmental Habitat Areas & Wildlife corridors.
- **Objective 3:** Protect Agricultural lands.
- **Objective 4:** Promote Environmental-sensitive design in new developments.
- **Objective 5:** Maintain a convenient and accessible trail network.



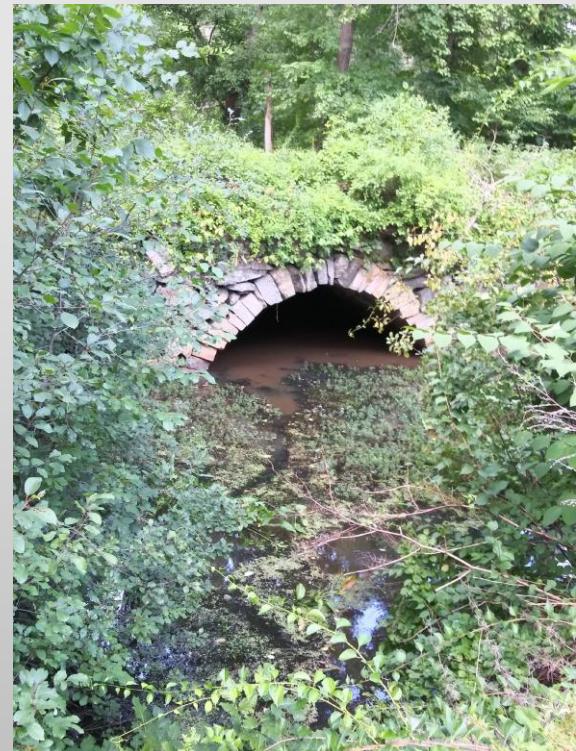
GOAL #3: Methuen's historic architectural and cultural resources including artistic community are central to the City's identity and are to be preserved, promoted and cultivated.

- **Objective 1:** Use Historic Preservation tools- regulatory, financing incentives and design standards- to support property restoration and community revitalization.
- **Objective 2:** Incorporate public art and landscape design into public spaces and park/recreation areas.



GOAL #3: Methuen's historic architectural and cultural resources including artistic community are central to the City's identity and are to be preserved, promoted and cultivated.

- **Objective 3:** Establish a designated cultural district in central Methuen.
- **Objective 4:** Expand Methuen's visibility and participation in regional and statewide arts/cultural/historic networks and collaborations.



GOAL #4: Methuen will upgrade its recreation facilities in response to the needs of a growing and changing community. All Methuen residents- regardless of neighborhood, age, gender, disability, race or ethnicity- should be able to use and feel welcome at a City park or recreation program.



- Objective 1: Develop reuse plans for underutilized facilities and underserved areas.
- Objective 2: Create safe and accessible paths of travel to parks, conservation areas and recreation facilities.

GOAL #4: Methuen will upgrade its recreation facilities in response to the needs of a growing and changing community. All Methuen residents- regardless of neighborhood, age, gender, disability, race or ethnicity- should be able to use and feel welcome at a City park or recreation program.



- **Objective 3:** Build on existing bike routes by creating a safe, convenient bike network throughout Methuen.
- **Objective 4:** Involve neighborhoods in park & playground upgrades and foster local champions of City recreation areas.

GOAL #4: Methuen will upgrade its recreation facilities in response to the needs of a growing and changing community. All Methuen residents- regardless of neighborhood, age, gender, disability, race or ethnicity- should be able to use and feel welcome at a City park or recreation program.



- **Objective 5:** Use latest communications systems and technologies to engage residents in programming and park/recreation activities.
- **Objective 6:** Organize plan with protocols & standards for operations and management of a quality park system.

GOAL #5: Methuen's open space protection and acquisition program will advance City and regional policies in building community climate resilience and mitigating hazard risks including flooding and more frequent, intense storms.

- **Objective 1:** Maintain City eligibility for state and federal hazard mitigation & climate resilience funding.
- **Objective 2:** Use City parks & recreation areas as model sites for green infrastructure & best management practices in stormwater management, flood mitigation and pollution control.



GOAL #5: Methuen's open space protection and acquisition program will advance City and regional policies in building community climate resilience and mitigating hazard risks including flooding and more frequent, intense storms.

- **Objective 3:** Identify & pursue opportunities for land acquisitions/parcel donations that enhance flood storage and wetland protection.



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GOAL #1: Methuen parks and recreation facilities will be safe, well-maintained and accessible.

Objective 1: Promote and implement a broad range of quality recreation programs for all ages, neighborhoods and diverse interests.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Plan, design & build a signature park project for Methuen's Tricentennial (2026).	Mayor, DPW, Community Development	PARC; CPA	Merrimack waterfront or Forest Lake/Town Forest are prime target sites
High	Create additional multi-use field to address shortage of field space serving Spring/Fall season demand	Community Development, Recreation, DPW	PARC; Local	Potential acquisition project - Hampshire Road Faith United Church property used by Methuen Youth Soccer from 1990s to 2018.
Medium	Develop water sport facility (kayak, canoe, paddleboard, sailing) for youth	Recreation Dept., DPW, Conservation, Community Development	PARC CPA	Potential locations – Forest Lake, Riverside
High	Identify site, design and construct Dog Park	Recreation Dept., DPW	Local, Sponsorships	Potential location—Gill Avenue
High	Identify site and install Pickleball court	Recreation Dept., DPW		Potential location -- Veterans Park
High	Expand recreation program to include adult programs	Recreation Dept., Senior Center, Nevins Library		
High	Redevelop former Pleasant Valley School as a community youth center	Mayor, DPW, Council		
Low	Organize swimming program; indoor community pool	Recreation Dept.		

Goal 1; Objective 2: As steward of Methuen's parks and open spaces, City government is committed to putting in place management systems to ensure staffing, standards, protocols and resource capacity to maintain and protect facilities so that all parks & recreation areas can be positive contributors to community pride and activity.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Set up working group to identify appropriate management structure for managing and maintaining Methuen parks	Mayor, Council		Need to clarify rules, responsibilities and set up system of accountability for governance, management & promotion of parks & recreation programs.
High	Develop written management plans for Methuen parks & recreation areas	DPW		
High	Install security cameras/call boxes at facilities with record or perceptions of safety concerns	Mayor, DPW, Police	Public Safety	Parks of concern: Grey Court Park, Gill Avenue, Riverwalk, Burnham Road, MHS Stadium & Track area
High	Ensure adequate supply of trash bins and frequency of collections.	DPW		Trash collection truck needed; Issues of overflowing trash at Veterans, Burnham Rd., Riverside, Forest Lake and need for more trash cans at Methuen Rail Trail.
Medium	Add recycling bins at parks	DPW	Recycling Dividends Program	Needs to be accompanied by campaign on smart recycling
High	Install or upgrade lighting – Burnham Road, Neil Playstead, Lower turf field at MHS & Pelham St. ballfield	DPW		
High	Update signage at parks with safety/security info.	Recreation/DPW	Community Placemaking Grants, Private Sponsorships	Particular issue at Gill Avenue, Veterans & Riverwalk, among others)

Goal 1; Objective 3: Update facilities and replace outdated equipment based on capital investment plan priorities and identified needs.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Prepare a detailed 5-year Parks & Recreation Capital Investment Program including projects in planning, design, construction	Mayor, DPW, Finance, Community Development		CIP Interdepartmental Committee established by Mayor Perry
High	Upgrade Forest Lake to make a premiere facility with updated equipment, signage, accessibility, public art, parking rehab.	Recreation, DPW		
High	Potter Field/Pelham Street - Install lighting; Add net on first & third baselines; Install fence in outfield and scoreboard	DPW		
High	MHS tennis courts - Resurface courts & access walkway, new signage.	DPW, School		
High	MHS baseball field - renovate field with irrigation, accessible seating	DPW, School		
High	Identify location(s) and Install outdoor full-length basketball courts	Recreation, DPW, Community Development		
Medium	Chelmsford St. Playstead – Upgrade and redesign neighborhood park.	DPW		Involve neighborhood & MAN in design of park upgrade last improved in mid 1990s.

Goal 1; Objective 3 (Continued): Update facilities and replace outdated equipment based on capital investment plan priorities and identified needs.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Spicket Falls bridge - Repair deteriorating boards and pavement	DPW		
Medium	Field & Facility at YMCA--Upgrade concession stand and access ramp.; Install fence and restore infield/outfield grass	DPW, Methuen Girls Softball League		
Medium	Resurface Tennis courts at Homestead Acre; new fencing	Recreation, DPW		
High	Ashford Fields and Playground-- Update playground equipment to include accessible features; Irrigate fields	DPW		Field irrigation project implemented with assistance of Youth Soccer League 2020
High	Morse Park -Upgrade softball fields conditions with new fencing, dugout, scoreboard and seating for first class MHS softball fields; new lighting at fields and parking; Resurface & reconfigure parking areas and replace curbing; Install . fencing and new signage	DPW	PARC	Field 3 improvement concept design completed.
High	Gill Avenue Park– Field improvements and design makeover of facility; Spray park--Maintain system in operating condition	DPW	PARC	Fields in poor condition with ruts. Public Safety concerns raised by youth groups. Water play feature has had frequent operation failures and in 2020 was not open for use because of the pandemic.
Medium	DeGaspe Park (Mystic St.) - Replace chain link fence; construct sidewalk to Pelham St.; Design & improve park entranceway; Update playground equipment	DPW		

Goal 1; Objective 4: Formalize & strengthen partnerships with community advocates and champions for Methuen parks and recreation areas.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Medium	Develop and approve MOU with community groups including Methuen Rail Alliance, Youth sports leagues and Methuen Arts Alliance formalizing roles, responsibilities & programming.	Non-Profits, Mayor, Solicitor, Community Development, DPW, Recreation		
High	Organize Design charrettes for park/playground improvements	Community Development, Recreation		
High	Establish partnership/ operations plan to sustain Community Youth Center at former Pleasant Valley School	Non-Profit, Mayor, School		
High	Holy Family Hospital Trail Project – Partner with Hospital, MHS and City in restoring exercise trail within forested area around hospital and creating connection to water use by MHS students at Searles Pond	School Dept Athletic, Community Development, Conservation, Holy Family Hospital		Partnership with MHS, Holy Family Hospital

Goal 1; Objective 5: Establish reliable funding sources for sustaining a quality park & recreation system.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Medium	Reconsider adoption of the Community Preservation Act financing	Mayor, City Council, Solicitor, Community Development		City rejected local adoption of CPA in early 2000s. CPA provides funding to communities for open space, historic preservation and affordable housing activities through a surcharge on local real estate transfers. Adoption would require local referendum and education campaign on program benefits and experience of other communities.
High	Investigate potential sources of sustainable revenue stream for parks and cultural activities including an "Adopt A Park" partnership program involving local businesses sponsorships or advertising	Mayor, DPW		Current revenue sources include the Stadium Stabilization Fund supported through billboard revenue

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GOAL #2: Methuen will proactively work to protect and expand our environmental resources and conservation areas.

Objective 1: Expand Riverfront Access

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Advance planning/engineering & acquisition for Riverfront Action Plan (Merrimack River @ Riverside Drive)	Community Development, DPW, Solicitor	PARC, Water System Protection	Concept/vision plan developed 2019
High	Construct fishing platform at Riverside Park	Conservation, MA Fish & Wildlife	MA Fish & Wildlife	Project design completed
Medium	Build connection to Schruender Park access & trail	Conservation, Community Development		
Medium	Develop plan for riverfront access to Merrimack in East Methuen segment	Conservation, Community Development		

Goal 2; Objective 2: Preserve Environmental Habitat Areas & Wildlife corridors.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Restore Hills Pond off Milk St.	Conservation, DPW	MS4 Stormwater Project	First step – Condition assessment & development of management plan
High	Restore Searles Pond off Jackson St.	Conservation, DPW	MS4 Stormwater Project	First step – Condition assessment & development of management plan, including options review/impact analysis of dam removal vs. repair
Medium	Tree planting program	Community Development, Groundwork Lawrence	EOEEA, Gateway Cities	
High	Restoration and protection of habitat corridors encompassing Harris Brook (West), Spicket River (Central) and Hawkes Brook (East). Restoration measures to include culvert replacement per updated stream crossing standards (including at Old Ferry Road/Drew St.-Hawkes Brook)	DPW, Conservation, Community Development	MA DER-Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Program; EOEEA – Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program	First step – Ecological assessments
High	Invasive Species Management—Development management plans for conservation areas including Forestry Management Plan at Town Forest	DPW Environmental, Conservation	MA Forest Stewardship Program-DCR USDA – National Resources Conservation Service	Citywide

Goal 2; Objective 3: Protect Agricultural lands.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Outreach to Methuen land owners of large tracts inc. working farms for participation in Essex Greenbelt farmland conservation program	Community Development, Greenbelt		Community outreach forums and events with Greenbelt
High	Establish community gardens program	Community Development, Groundwork Lawrence		Tyler Street at Stone Castle conservation land is prime location.
High	Establish agribusiness support programs including expansion of Farmer's Market; training & promotion.	Community Development, Groundwork Lawrence		
High	Permitting and review, including regulatory reform to advance innovative farm preservation proposals and sustainable agriculture programming such as Melita Farms (Nimmo Farm)	Community Development		
High	Monitoring status of 61A properties and conservation restrictions and developing long-term strategy for protection and management	Community Development, Assessors, Conservation		Establish capacity & options for City to better respond to land offers and rights of first refusal

Goal 2; Objective 4: Promote Environmental-sensitive design in new developments.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Medium	Update Ordinance to incentivize further Open Space Residential Development	Community Development	-	Under existing ordinance, OSRD is by special permit of the Community Development Board. Consider as of right provision or requiring OSRD concept with standard subdivision submittal.
High	Plan and implement Stormwater BMPs including adoption of Low Impact Development techniques & floodplain protections	Stormwater Management Working Group	EOEEA MS4 Assistance/MVPC	
High	Implement clean energy measures at municipal facilities that advance goals of net zero carbon emissions	Community Development, DPW	Green Communities; Municipal Energy Technical Assistance	Measures include solar generation, battery storage and EV infrastructure installations
High	Wildlife corridor habitat restoration planning	Conservation, DPW		Spicket River, Harris Brook, Hawkes Brook, Baremeadow Brook areas to target

Goal 2; Objective 5: Maintain a convenient and accessible walking trail network.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Written maintenance plan and MOU between City and Rail Trail Alliance	Community Development/DPW/ Solicitor/Rail Trail Alliance		
Medium	Install Trail signage and conduct trail maintenance at Town Forest	Conservation	Local	
High	Create trail map for public display on City website and distribution	Community Development/Conservation	MA Historic; Essex Heritage	
High	Install amenities at Methuen Rail Trail including: Additional benches; trash receptacles; portable bathrooms; Pocket park at north entrance @ Hampshire Road	DPW/Rail Trail Alliance	Cultural Council; Local	
Medium	Add map/regional trail info to kiosk installed at Great Oaks open space trailhead	Conservation	Local	
Medium	Design and construct trailhead improvements at Sadie Lane (Great Oaks); Liam's Lane (off Howe St.); and Schruender Park.	DPW, Conservation	Local	Medium
High	Land acquisitions and easements to support greenbelt corridor and walking trail network along the Spicket River and Merrimack River (east & west corridors of Methuen)	Community Development, Solicitor, Conservation	PARC; Water Protection Land Acquisition	High
Medium	Trail restoration and improvements at Nevins Bird Sanctuary	Conservation; Rail Trail Alliance		

Methuen Open Space & Recreation Plan - Action Plan for the 2020s

GOAL #3: Methuen's historic architectural and cultural resources including art community are central to the City's identity and are to be preserved, promoted and cultivated.

Objective 1: Use Historic Preservation tools- regulatory, financing incentives and design standards- to support property restoration and community revitalization.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Medium	Monitor condition of historic central Methuen stone walls and undertake restorative maintenance as needed.	DPW, Historic Commission	Methuen Historical Society	
High	Historic cemetery maintenance and marker restoration at Meeting House Hill and Lawrence St. cemetery.	DPW, Historic Commission	Methuen Historical Society	
High	Restore canopy overhang at former Train Depot on Methuen Rail Trail	Community Development	MA Historical Commission; MPO	
Medium	Secure Preservation restrictions/façade easements for restoration work at prominent Methuen buildings/structures	Community Development; Solicitor, Mayor, City Council	MA Historic District Commision	Community Development info and outreach to property owners.
Medium	Restore deteriorating turret at Spicket Broadway dam at American Legion property	Community Development; DPW	MA Historical Commission; Methuen Historical Society	
High	Develop long-term plan for preservation of former Searles Estate/PMA property	Mayor, City Council, Community Development	Local; MA Historic Commisison	Coordinate plan with management of the abutting GreyCourt Park.

Goal 3; Objective 2: Integrate public art and landscape design into public spaces and park/recreation areas.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Medium	Investigate options for sustainable revenue stream supporting art & cultural community	Mayor, City Council; Community Development; Solicitor		One suggestion: Adopt a Percent-for-Art ordinance requiring 1% set-aside of municipal street construction projects to be dedicated to public art/streetscape
High	Create 501c3 non-profit art group with capacity to sponsor & promote public art activities.	Solicitor; Community Development; Arts Alliance		
High	Map Methuen's cultural assets and include in regional plans	MVPC; ECCF; Community Development		
High	Install murals at Riverwalk Park	Community Development; DPW; Arts Alliance		
High	Re-create spaces as neighborhood art parks; candidates included Chelmsford St, Riverwalk Park, Schruender Park, DeGaspe Park, Bicentennial Prk at Library, Greycourt Park, former Searles Estate/PMA property	Community Development; DPW; Arts Alliance		
High	Plan, design & install major community Parks & Art project for City's tricentennial in 2026	Mayor, Community Development; Arts Alliance		
Medium	Adopt a Percent-for-Art ordinance requiring 1% set-aside of municipal street construction projects to be dedicated to public art/streetscape.	Mayor, City Council; Community Development; Solicitor		

Goal 3; Objective 3: Establish a designated cultural district in central Methuen.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Develop cultural partnership to leverage resources & opportunities	Community Development; Arts Alliance		Organize collaborative of artists, property owners and business community.
High	Educate community on benefits of designation program	Community Development; Arts Alliance		
High	Prepare plan and proposal for adoption by City to seek designation as a Cultural District from the Mass. Cultural Council.	Community Development		Purpose of District designation is to encourage an arts economy that can be a contributor to a vibrant central business district.

Goal 3; Objective 4: Expand Methuen's visibility and participation in regional and statewide arts/cultural/historic networks and collaborations.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Active representation by City and Methuen organizations in Essex National Heritage Area Program	Mayor, City Council, Community Development		
High	Promotion and Marketing Plan for Methuen Memorial Music Hall and other community landmarks	Mayor, Community Development		
High	Promote Methuen Cultural Council active role in leading and supporting a vibrant local arts community	Mayor, City Council, Cultural Council		
Medium	Update brochure, educational materials highlighting Methuen historic & cultural resources	Community Development		
Medium	Incorporate technology options for promoting Methuen parks & resources and built interactive engagement with the public	Recreation, School Dept., Library, Senior Center	Community Placemaking Grant, Sponsorships	

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GOAL #4: Methuen will upgrade its recreation facilities in response to the needs of a growing and changing community. All Methuen residents- regardless of neighborhood, age, gender, disability, race or ethnicity- should be able to use and feel welcome at a City park or recreation program.

Objective 1: Develop reuse plans for underutilized facilities and underserved areas.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Plan reuse of dilapidated street hockey rink and outdoor basketball area at Veterans Park	DPW, Recreation, Community Development	PARC; Local	Hoops have been long removed at Veterans basketball court.
Medium	Plan repurposing of playground at former Central School (now School Administration Building)	School, Community Development, Recreation, DPW	Local	
Medium	Sargent Field – Landscape, parking and baseball field restoration.	Recreation Dept., DPW, Community Development	Local	New backstop, benches, and accessibility improvements including replacement of outdate playground equipment
High	Resurfacing walkway and accessibility improvements at Forest Lake beach area	Recreation Dept., DPW	Local	Include as part of Vision for Major facility upgrade
High	Create landscaped open space/recreation areas at public housing developments	Housing Authority, Community Development	CDBG, Local	Veteran's Housing, Mystic Street
Medium	Field & amenity upgrades at Tenney K-8 and CGS	School Dept., DPW	Local	CGS- Resurface parking and access path from Kensington; Field improvements inc. spectator seating & restrooms; Tenney – Field upgrades inc. lighting, restrooms.

Goal 4; Objective 2: Create safe and accessible paths of travel to parks, conservation areas and recreation facilities.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Improve sidewalks and add bike lanes – priorities inc. Howe St., East St., Jackson St., Lowell St., Merrimack St., Railroad Ave.	Community Development, DPW	Complete Streets, Merrimack Valley MPO, CDBG	Complete Street city-wide priorities at heavily traveled arterial corridors
High	Review and Improve Lighting at parks.	DPW, Recreation, School Community Development	Local, National Grid incentives	
High	Implement recommendations of ADA Self Assessment for parks & playground areas.	DPW, School	CIP	
High	Implement recommendations of ADA Self Assessment for parks & playground areas; Fully accommodate and design facility upgrades for accessibility and ADA compliance.	DPW, School	CIP	

Goal 4; Objective 3: Build on existing bike routes by creating a safe, convenient bike network throughout Methuen

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Establish active Safe Route to Schools Programs at all Methuen K-8 schools	Mayor, DPW, Finance, Community Development	MassDOT, Merrimack Valley MPO, DPW	CGS, Timony and Marsh schools have enlisted as partner in MassDOT Program. SRTSP provide organization and design technical assistance as well as construction funding for pedestrian/biking improvements at school routes.
High	Build out gaps in bike lane connections and corridors	Recreation, DPW		Riverside Drive, Howe Street, Jackson St. Pleasant Valley St., Haverhill St. among others.
High.	Add Bike Racks and Electric Vehicle Charging Stations at Parks	DPW, Community Development	EVIP, National Grid Incentives, Merrimack Valley MPO	

Goal 4; Objective 4: Involve neighborhoods in park and playground upgrades and foster local champions of City recreation areas.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Medium	Revive Methuen Trails Committee	Conservation		Committee has been inactive since 1990s
High	Set up model design planning projects at neighborhood parks	Community Development, Recreation		Chelmsford St., Ashford field, Gill Avenue, pocket parks at infill lots, others

Goal 4; Objective 5: Use latest communications systems and technologies to engage residents in programming and park/recreation activities.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Make use of recreation virtual programming to reach more people	Recreation, IT, School Dept., Senior Center, Library		
High	Events programming for all ages and interests	Recreation, IT, School Dept., Senior Center, Library		
High	Creative competitions to engage residents in parks and Methuen public places	Recreation		

Goal 4; Objective 6: Organize plan with protocols and standards for operation and management of a quality park system.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Set up management system for complaint/issue intake & response	DPW, Recreation, Police		
Medium	Public posting of park rules	DPW, Recreation		
Medium	Set and monitor equity standard that all Methuen homes are within walking distance of a park or recreation facility	Community Development		Methodology for analysis to identify underserved areas

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GOAL #5: Methuen's open space protection and acquisition program will advance City and regional policies in building community climate resilience and mitigating hazard risks including flooding and more frequent, intense storms.

Objective 1: Maintain City eligibility for state and federal hazard mitigation & climate resilience funding.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Update Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan for endorsement by MEMA & FEMA (expires May 2021)	Community Development, Emergency Management, MVPC	FEMA/MVPC	
Medium	MVP annual reporting of resilience activities to reduce Methuen risk of climate change impacts	Community Development	In House/Staff	
High	MVP Action Plan implementation of resilience measures including internal and external communication systems	Community Development, Emergency Management	Local/MVP Program	

Goal 5; Objective 2: Use City parks & recreation areas as model sites for green infrastructure & best management practices in stormwater management, mitigation and pollution control.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Medium	Identify park locations for Stormwater Best Management Practices/Biofiltration & design/install	DPW, Conservation, Community Development	Local/Water Resources Asset Mgmt Grant	
Medium	Science programming at parks	Recreation, Conservation	Local	
Medium	Monitor pollution control performance of biofiltration area at Riverside Park	Conservation, DPW	Local	
High	Add bike racks and EV charging stations at parks	DPW, Community Development	EV Incentives/MPO	

Goal 5; Objective 3: Identify & pursue opportunities for land acquisitions/parcel donations that enhance flood storage and wetland protection.

Priority	Project/Action Item	Responsible Agent	Potential Funding Source	Notes
High	Strategic acquisitions on Riverside Corridor - Merrimack River (west)	Mayor, Community Development, Solicitor	LAND	
High	Strategic acquisitions and improvements - Spicket Corridor	Mayor, Community Development, Solicitor	LAND	
Medium	Brownfields assessment & cleanup for open space/recreation	Community Development, MVPC	EPA Brownfields Program, MassDevelopment	Potential reuse of Old Ferry Road site for field use/conservation habitat restoration
High	Include Methuen priorities in Essex County Greenbelt priority maps	Community Development		

Section 10: Sources

Reference Documents

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Angel of Life statue by George Moretti at gravesite of Eliza and David Nevins, Methuen's Nevins Memorial Library