



TOWN OF GEORGETOWN

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

FEBRUARY 2026





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The Georgetown Open Space and Recreation Plan Working Group, in coordination with consultant firm BSC Group, Inc., oversaw the development of the 2025 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The following individuals served as sitting members of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Working Group:

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- Amy Smith, Open Space Committee
- George Comiskey, Planning Board
- Jim DiMento, Parks and Recreation Committee
- Laura Replier, Select Board, Conservation Commission
- Pete Lucido, Georgetown Athletic Association
- Harry LaCortiglia, Community Preservation Committee and Planning Board
- John Lopez, Open Space Committee
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- Adam Duchesneau, Planner
- Katherine Kemen, Director of Climate Resilience Services

1. Executive Summary

Every effort has been made to develop a plan that reflects Georgetown's open space and recreation needs. To accomplish this, the Open Space Working Group, with the assistance of BSC Group, has conducted a series of public outreach efforts, including an open house, a public forum, and an online community survey. An updated Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is necessary to assist land use boards in Georgetown with the task of guiding the community in its desired direction as well as ensure that the Town is eligible to pursue grant funding for future open space and recreation projects.

The goals of the 2025 OSRP are general statements of policy and represent the town's short and long-range aspirations relative to open space and natural resources protection and the provision of recreation lands and services.

This plan update aims to advance the following goals:

Environmental

- Protect water resources for water supply and resource management.
- Protect habitats for biodiversity.
- Improve water quality.
- Enhance climate resiliency.

Recreation

- Link open space parcels and trails.
- Improve the bicycle and pedestrian network.
- Maintain and improve existing recreation facilities and programs.
- Improve access to conservation lands for passive recreation.
- Identify and meet new recreation needs.

Historic and Cultural

- Protect scenic and historic landscapes.
- Preserve historic and cultural resources.
- Acquire land for future cemetery use.

Organization

- Improve management of open spaces.
- Support education and networking opportunities.

Together, these goals were placed within a realistic timeframe in order of their importance and potential for accomplishment. This timeframe is presented in the form of a ten-year action plan in Section 7, which will be updated at regular intervals as goals are achieved, or, as the town's conservation and recreation needs change.

2. Introduction

A. Statement of Purpose

A current, approved plan is required for municipalities to be eligible for various grant programs administered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). These grants support the acquisition, preservation, and development of parks, trails, and conservation lands. The town's updated OSRP provides an inventory of existing open space and recreational assets, integrates climate considerations, and includes a prioritized action plan.

Georgetown is fortunate to have beautiful natural resources such as forests, ponds, meadows, streams, and marshes that are ideal locations for passive recreational activities. Sightseeing, boating, fishing, hunting, picnicking and bird watching are some of the activities that a broad range of residents can enjoy within the town's open spaces. Informal and organized active recreational pursuits are also important to many of the town's residents. From early spring through late fall, the town's recreational fields are filled with youth participating in organized sports. American Legion Park is a focal point for community recreation and celebrations, and school properties provide playgrounds and additional recreational facilities.

Georgetown continues to attract families with young children, with its proximity to major employment clusters in Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire and is well served by the Merrimack Valley region's roadway network, including I-95. The Merrimack Valley Transit Authority (MEVA) offers origin-to-destination shared ride services by advance reservation for Georgetown residents. Georgetown also offers access to great schools and a vibrant civic life. Consequently, there is an anticipated need for additional recreational fields to accommodate the increasing demand. As land development in town increases and interest in outdoor activities rises, it is important to preserve and protect the town's natural resources while ensuring they remain accessible to all residents. Residents wish to prioritize the protection and acquisition of open spaces designated for both conservation and recreation.

Georgetown's previous Open Space and Recreation Plans were completed in 1983, 2001, 2006, and 2016. The 2016 plan outlined practical steps to advance goals of the OSRP. While many of the 2025 goals are like the goals within the prior plan update, the Town added a new goal in this update relative to climate resiliency. This OSRP aims to prioritize the town's needs and identify resources, focusing on addressing the greatest demands and acquiring ecologically valuable and recreationally suitable lands. By developing a strategic plan, the Town can achieve its goals and safeguard the limited open space that remains.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

The Georgetown OSRP Working Group collaborated with a consultant, BSC Group, to develop the 2025 OSRP. The OSRP Working Group consists of eleven members and includes representatives from the Planning Board, Parks and Recreation Committee, Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, Select Board, Georgetown Athletic Association, Community Preservation Committee, and other residents.

The OSRP Working Group held meetings on February 13, 2025, and May 13, 2025, to provide input and support for the OSRP update.

The Town has been fortunate over the years to receive broad backing from a variety of town boards, nonprofit conservation organizations, and regional and state agencies. Among these are the following:

- Georgetown Planning Board
- Georgetown Conservation Commission
- Georgetown Water Commission
- Georgetown Board of Selectmen
- Georgetown Open Space Committee
- Georgetown Board of Health
- Georgetown Park & Recreation Commission
- Georgetown Highway Department
- Georgetown Town Clerk's Office
- Georgetown Board of Assessors
- Georgetown Historical Commission
- Georgetown Recreational Path Committee
- Georgetown Youth Community Center
- Parker River Clean Water Association
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
- Essex County Greenbelt Association
- Massachusetts Department of Conservation Services
- Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
- Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

Public Participation

For the 2025 update of Georgetown's Open Space and Recreation Plan, Georgetown residents, town officials and staff, board and committee members, other stakeholders, including resource protection advocates, and recreation and sports service providers were invited to provide input throughout the planning process through an open house, public forum, and a community-wide survey.

The open house, public forum, and community-wide survey were publicized using flyers and social media posts. These efforts were advertised online and in frequently visited public areas. The community meetings and an online survey were used to gather input on current needs as they relate to the town's open space and recreation areas.

The community meetings and the online survey were promoted and advertised through the following outreach and communication efforts:

- Posted on the town's municipal website.
- Through flyers in frequently visited areas including the town hall, post office, Georgetown Café, and the Georgetown Team Leagues and Outfitters.
- Through social media posts on Facebook, including Georgetown Parks and Recreation.
- Through emails to the school system, external organizations, community groups, and partners.



Online Survey

The online survey was live from March 6, 2025, through March 21, 2025. It was conducted to understand the needs and concerns of Georgetown residents related to open space and recreation. Participants were asked to share their satisfaction with parks and recreation, identify areas for improvement or preservation, and express desired recreational amenities for existing facilities. Additionally, open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide further comments, concerns, or suggestions related to parks and recreation in Georgetown.

Figure 2-1: Social Media Post

The online survey received a total of 119 responses. A summary of key findings is included in Section 6: Analysis of Needs.



Figure 2-2: Open House

Open House

The Town held an open house on March 25, 2025. Participants provided input on display maps and shared their recreational preferences including activities, environmental health and sustainability, and other programming through dot voting. They also shared aspirations for the Town's open spaces by writing on sticky notes and placing them under broad based recreational goals. Additionally, participants were provided with one page of key findings related to open space. A summary of the dot voting exercise and recreational preferences board is included in Section 6: Analysis of Needs.

Public Forum

The Town held a public forum on May 13, 2025. Participants engaged in small group discussions to review broad-based goals and provide feedback on current needs and action items. The updated OSRP's goals, objectives, and actions are summarized in Section 7: Action Plan, and include initiatives related to conservation, protection, maintenance, improved linkages, expansion, public access, and climate resiliency.

The Open Space Working Group played a vital role in the planning process by reviewing each section of the plan. Maps for this Plan were prepared by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission.

3. Community Setting

A. Regional Context

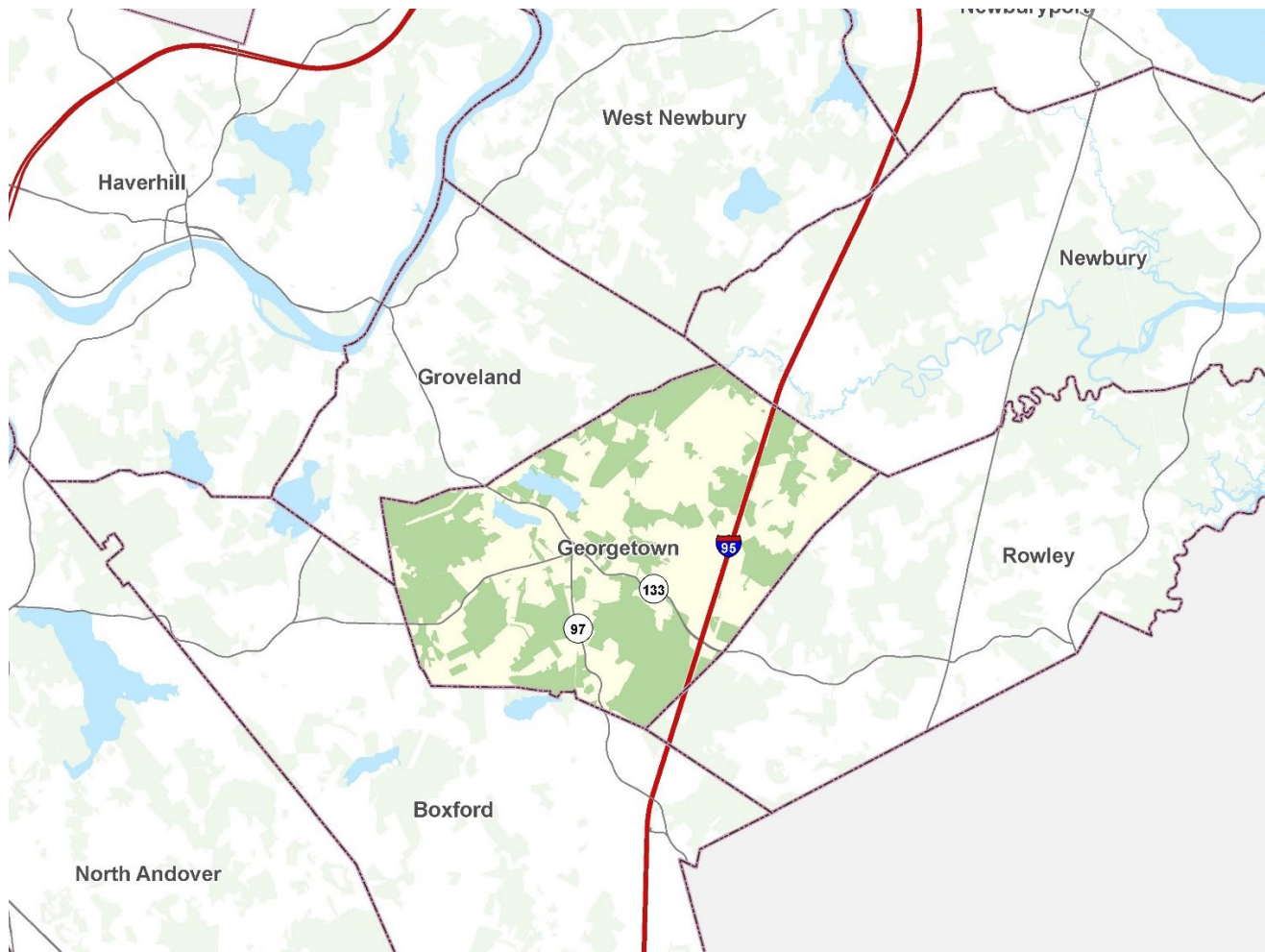


Figure 3-1: Regional Context Map

Source: Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

Georgetown is in central Essex County, between the Merrimack River to the north and Boston, 28 miles to the south (see Figure 3-1: Regional Context Map and Appendix A). It is bordered by Boxford to the west and south, Groveland to the north, Newbury to the northeast, and Rowley to the east. The town has a total land area of 13.2 square miles and is primarily a suburban community. It features industrial development areas adjacent to Route 95 and a small downtown area, which includes many antique shops and an organ manufacturing company.

Georgetown has a small, but vital, business center where residents can shop and buy necessities.

Figure 3.2: Lufkin's Brook Conservation Area



The qualities that make Georgetown a desirable place to live also require ongoing evaluation of the community's open space needs. Over the past 50 years, the town has experienced rapid population growth and a surge in single-family home construction. Unfortunately, much of the remaining land is unsuitable for development due to proximity to wetlands, and further construction could negatively impact the ecological and recreational benefits these areas provide.

Various wildlife species thrive in Georgetown's rural habitat. Bird species range from native songbirds to raptors and wild turkeys, small animals including skunk, squirrels, and raccoons are abundant, fish species are diverse, and beaver and deer populations are expanding. Generous conservation lands and greenways provide travel corridors and are necessary to preserve harmony between the town's human and wildlife populations. The need to preserve these natural treasures is further illuminated by the Georgetown Water Department's wellhead area in the Lufkin's Brook conservation area on the west side of town.

Each of the above factors, and others, have been considered in the development of this plan, to create an integrated approach to preserving the natural resources of Georgetown and providing for the community's recreational needs.

B. Population Characteristics

The data in this section is sourced from the 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates (2018-2022) and the U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census of Population for past years, unless noted otherwise.

To plan for the community’s future open space and recreation needs, it’s important to look at the population size, density, age, and overall makeup. According to the population projections from University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, Georgetown’s population, which grew by about 3.5% from 8,183 in 2010 to 8,470 in 2020, is expected to decline by 2050. The most significant decrease is projected to occur between 2040 and 2050. This decline can be attributed to lower birth rates and migration by age trends, particularly the out migration of family age adults combined with aging in place of residents who moved to Georgetown during the population boom in 1960s and 1970s.

Table 3-1: Georgetown Population Growth and Projections 2010-2050

Year	2010 ^a	2020 ^b	2030	2040	2050
Population	8,183	8,470	8,221	7,809	7,282
% Change	-	3.5%	-2.9%	-5.0%	-7.2%

Source: UMass Donahue Institute 2024

Note:

- a. 2010 Decennial Census
- b. 2020 Decennial Census

Population Density

Population density influences demand for outdoor public parks and recreation spaces. Since 2010, Georgetown’s population density has increased. Dividing the 2022 population of 8,455 by the town’s 12.9 square miles of land area yields an average density of 655 people per square mile. This is a 5.7% increase from 2010, when it was 620 people per square mile. Most of this population is concentrated near the town center and east toward Interstate 95. Among its neighboring towns, Georgetown has the highest population density, surpassed only by Groveland at 758 people per square mile. In contrast, Boxford (346), Rowley (339), and Newbury (287) are much less densely populated. These characteristics highlight the need for the Town to continue efforts to provide open space in densely populated neighborhoods and to improve and develop recreational facilities that are easily accessible by foot. Over 34% of respondents in the 2025 OSRP survey indicated that it takes them over 15 minutes to walk to the nearest park or recreational facility. Relative to park equity, the goal of linking existing and potential trails and recreational resources is key to ensuring residents have nearby spaces to enjoy.

According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, there are currently no Environmental Justice (EJ) populations located within the Town of Georgetown. However, other key population characteristics remain critical to consider in open space and recreation planning.

Age of Residents

The age distribution of Georgetown's population has changed over the past decade. In 2010, approximately 35% of the population were under 24 years of age, while only 9% were 65 or older. Over the next 12 years, this trend continued: by 2022, the share of residents under 24 had declined to around 30%, while the proportion aged 65 and older had doubled to approximately 18%.

The 65 and older age group is experiencing the most significant growth in the community, increasing from about 9% of Georgetown's population in 2010 to nearly 18% by 2022, while most of the other age groups experienced a decline. This trend may be attributed to a large population boom in the 1960's and 1970's that brought many young homeowners to town, many of whom continue to reside in Georgetown today. The Town must balance open space and recreation facilities that serve youth and families, such as tot lots and ballfields, with an increasing need for passive recreation options that support older adults, such as walking and accessible green spaces.

Community preferences for open space and recreation are shaped by population characteristics. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 1,314 residents were reported as having some form of disability, representing 17.1% of the town's population. Persons with disabilities include those with ambulatory difficulty that require the use of a wheelchair, walker, or cane, visual impairments, hearing impairments, and cognitive, self-care, or independent living difficulty. When acquiring or upgrading any open space for recreational use, it is essential to consider the specific needs of this segment of the community.

The ten-year action plan coupled with the recreational potential of existing open spaces outlined in Section 5 recommends strategies to improve accessibility to park amenities, including implementation of the schematic path designs for the Universal Access Nature Trails (UANT). Additionally, expanding passive recreational opportunities can be an effective strategy to improve accessibility and enhance the quality of life for the aging population.

Table 3-2: Georgetown Population Change by Age Cohort, 2000-2022

Age Categories	2000	Percent	2010	Percent	2022 ^a	Percent	Percent Change: 2000 to 2022
< 5 Years	625	8.5%	477	6.0%	531	6.3%	- 15.0%
5 – 9 Years	658	8.9%	571	7.1%	516	6.1%	- 21.6
10 – 14 Years	543	7.4%	878	11.0%	541	6.4%	- 0.4%
15 – 19 Years	473	6.4%	499	6.2%	563	6.7%	19.0%
20 – 24 Years	209	2.8%	413	5.2%	398	4.7%	90.4%
25 – 34 Years	807	10.9%	644	8.1%	868	10.3%	7.6%
35 – 44 Years	1,520	20.6%	1,237	15.5%	1,049	12.4%	- 31.0%
45 – 54 Years	1,235	16.7%	1,632	20.4%	965	11.4%	- 21.9%

Age Categories	2000	Percent	2010	Percent	2022 ^a	Percent	Percent Change: 2000 to 2022
55 – 59 Years	383	5.2%	456	5.7%	953	11.3%	148.8%
60 – 64 Years	239	3.2%	463	5.8%	539	6.4%	125.5%
65 – 74 Years	390	5.3%	434	5.4%	961	11.4%	146.4%
75 – 84 Years	247	3.4%	256	3.2%	395	4.7%	59.9%
85 Years and Over	48	0.7%	35	0.4%	176	2.1%	266.7%
Total Populations	7,377	100%	7,995	100%	8,455	100%	14.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census, Summary File 4 for year 2000 data and 2010-2022 American Community Survey

Note:

- a. 2022 estimates are used instead of 2020 to ensure consistency across the document and because they reflect more current demographic trends.

Household Income

Georgetown's median household income has seen a growth over the decades, rising from \$23,906 in 1980 to \$76,260 in 2000, \$106,765 in 2010, and \$147,156 as of 2022. This income level is 59.2% higher than the Essex County average of \$92,413 and 55.7% higher than the Commonwealth average of \$94,488. When compared to the surrounding communities, Georgetown's median household income falls in the middle. It is higher than that of Groveland (\$131,952) and Rowley (\$135,396), but lower than Newbury (\$167,625) and Boxford (\$209,423).

Table 3-3: Georgetown Household and Family Income, 2022

	Median Household Income	Median Family Income
Georgetown	\$147,156	\$164,471
Boxford	\$209,423	\$216,150
Groveland	\$131,952	\$145,649
Newbury	\$167,625	\$209,643
Rowley	\$135,396	\$148,281
Essex County	\$92,413	\$118,136
Massachusetts	\$94,488	\$120,263

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey

At the same time, approximately 3% of Georgetown's population (255 individuals) live below the poverty level. This rate is much lower than the Essex County (9.8%) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (10.4%). Nearly 46% of Georgetown residents living below the poverty level are over the age of the 60.

C. Growth and Development Trends

Open Space Based Infrastructure



Figure 3.3: Border to Boston Trail

Source: essexheritage.org

The Recreational Path Committee (RPC), via a resolution by the Georgetown Board of Selectmen, has been participating in two regional efforts to establish shared-use paths along former railroad rights-of-way for passive multi-use recreation. The 30-mile Border to Boston (B2B) Trail (also known locally as the Georgetown Recreational Path and officially called an abandoned railroad right of way) is the most extensive effort and includes Salisbury, Newburyport, Newbury, Georgetown, Boxford, Topsfield, Wenham, and Danvers. The 4.5-mile corridor section in Georgetown winds through the heart of the community. Currently, the Danvers, Wenham, Topsfield, Newburyport, and Salisbury sections are in use, and portions of the Georgetown and Boxford trails are also available for use.¹ New, formalized, and upgraded connections to the B2B Trail are being planned to/from American Legion Park and Camp Denison. To make use of the trail while waiting for design and construction, the RPC worked with National Grid to develop a license agreement in 2013, which allows for use of the right-of-way in its existing condition.² Each year more walkers and cyclists learn about the B2B Trail and continue to make good use of it despite the unimproved condition, bridges in need of

1. Fay, Spofford, and Thorndike LLC. 2007. "Georgetown Recreational Path Feasibility and Conceptual Design Study." July.

https://cms5.revize.com/revize/georgetownma/Document%20Center/Government/Boards%20&%20Commissions/Recreational%20Path%20Committee/feasibility_conceptual_design_study.pdf.

2. Town of Georgetown. 2020. "Georgetown Rail Trail Update." December.

https://cms5.revize.com/revize/georgetownma/Document%20Center/Government/Boards%20&%20Commissions/Recreational%20Path%20Committee/background_paper_-_dec._2020.pdf.

repair, and some sections which are impassable.

With the 75% design of the rail trail completed by MA DOT, the Town will need to secure a 99-year lease agreement for the right-of-way from National Grid in order to complete the proposed rail trail.³ The Town will work with its Counsel and National Grid in the near future to secure the lease. To be eligible for state and federal funds to support the construction of the trail, Georgetown will need to take land from abutting parcels by eminent domain and compensate landowners for the takings. The Town is actively working with Town Counsel to determine the owners of the abutting parcels, secure the titles, and calculate the amount of compensation to each abutter. The Town is actively seeking funding opportunities to cover the cost of the compensation to abutters.

The other regional trail effort is the Georgetown Branch Shared-Use Path in collaboration between the City of Haverhill and the Towns of Georgetown and Groveland. If constructed, either or both regional multi-use paths would provide a safe, vehicle-free travel-way to numerous recreational, cultural, and commercial areas, and highly desired links between villages and urban centers, a priority cited by respondents to successive community surveys (1995 Open Space Survey, 2004 Recreational Path Survey, 2013 Open Space Survey). This aligns with feedback from the 2025 Open Space Survey, where respondents expressed linking open space parcels and trails as a top desired improvement for existing parks and recreation facilities.

Long Term Development Patterns

The character of the landscape in Georgetown has changed dramatically over the years, shaped by the decline of agriculture and the influx of suburban development. In general, the town has undergone major periods of change. By 1840, nearly 70% of the town's land was open or used for farming. By 1950, this trend had nearly reversed, with 70% of the town once again covered by forest. This shift marked a second period of change, the decline of agriculture as Georgetown's primary way of living. The third period, though shorter, was the rapid suburbanization of the town from 1951 to the present. During this period, over 1,300 acres of forest, farmland, and wetlands have been developed, primarily for single-family residential housing. This transformation has closely followed a more than four-fold increase in Georgetown's population over the last 80 years. Table 3-4 presents land use changes between 1971-1999. The table highlights a decline in cropland, pasture, forest, and wetlands (shown in pink) and an increase in medium density residential and low density residential (shown in green).

3. 2020. "Recreational Path Committee 2020 Fiscal Year End Report ." November 1. https://cms5.revize.com/revize/georgetownma/Document%20Center/Government/Boards%20&%20Commissions/Recreational%20Path%20Committee/fy_2020_recpath.pdf.

Table 3-4: Georgetown Land Use Changes (1971-1999)

Land Use	1971	1985	1999
Cropland	312.79	324.19	165.42
Pasture	140.13	194.58	63.81
Forest	5,387.37	5,079.37	4,597.13
Wetland	469.03	469.03	464.23
Mining	85.70	79.54	40.49
Open Land	206.24	187.39	172.56
Participation Recreation	16.43	19.13	149.59
Spectator Recreation	4.91	4.91	0
Water Recreation	2.76	2.76	0
Multi-Family Residential	0	10.11	11.26
Medium Density Residential	442.85	502.05	557.69
Low Density Residential	932.32	1,071.92	1,612.67
Commercial	48.07	57.35	83.23
Industrial	12.76	23.14	74.31
Urban Open	59.79	76.40	85.89
Transportation	137.84	157.12	167.25
Waste Disposal	16.45	16.45	17.26
Water	119.32	119.32	117.72
Woody Perennial	15.38	15.38	29.61
Total (Acres)	8,410.14	8,410.14	8,410.14

Source: Georgetown Master Plan, 2007, MassGIS Land Use (1971-1999)

Changes to Georgetown's housing inventory have occurred due to development from 2018-2024 (see Figure 3-4, Georgetown's Building Permits, 2018-2024). Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) MassBuild's database also shows past, present, and future development in Georgetown. Since 2017, Turning Leaf Residential Development consisting of 22 single-family housing units has been recorded in the database.

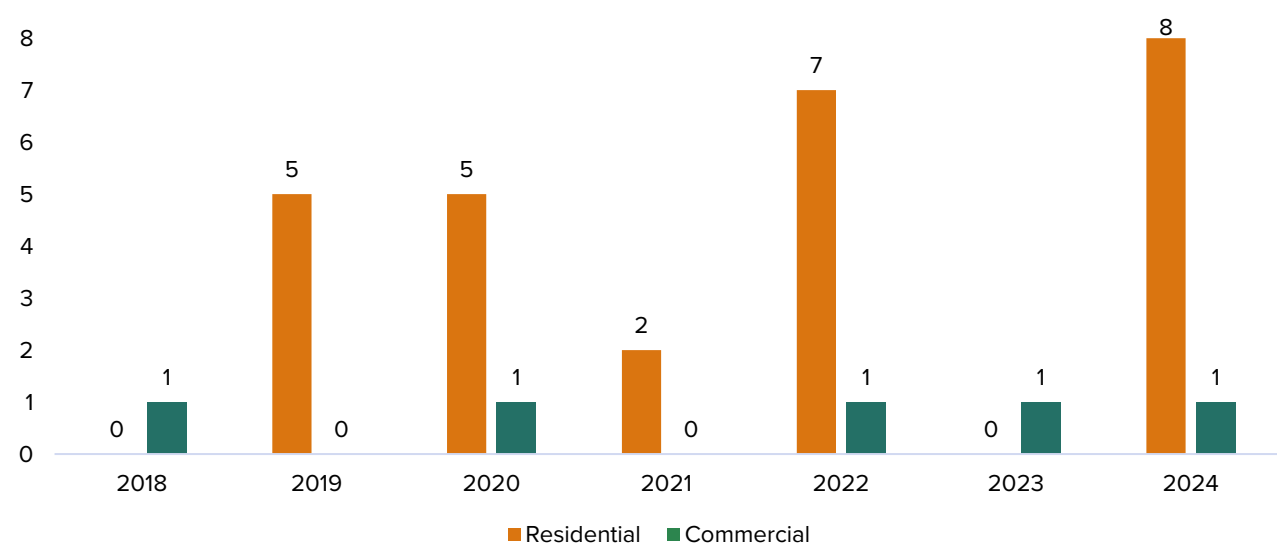


Figure 3-4: Number of Building Permits in Georgetown, 2018-2024

Source: Town of Georgetown

The type and location of housing may influence the demand for access and availability of recreation areas and programs. For example, residents in dwelling units without yards or shared community spaces may rely more heavily on public parks and recreational facilities.

Zoning

Georgetown is divided into eight zoning districts (see Figure 3-5: Zoning Map and Appendix A). These districts define allowable land uses, density of development, and other regulatory parameters:

- RA Central Residential District
- RB Outside Residential B
- RC Outside Residential C
- CA Business and Commercial District A
- CB Business and Commercial District B
- CC Business and Commercial District C
- IA Light Industrial District A
- IB Light Industrial District B

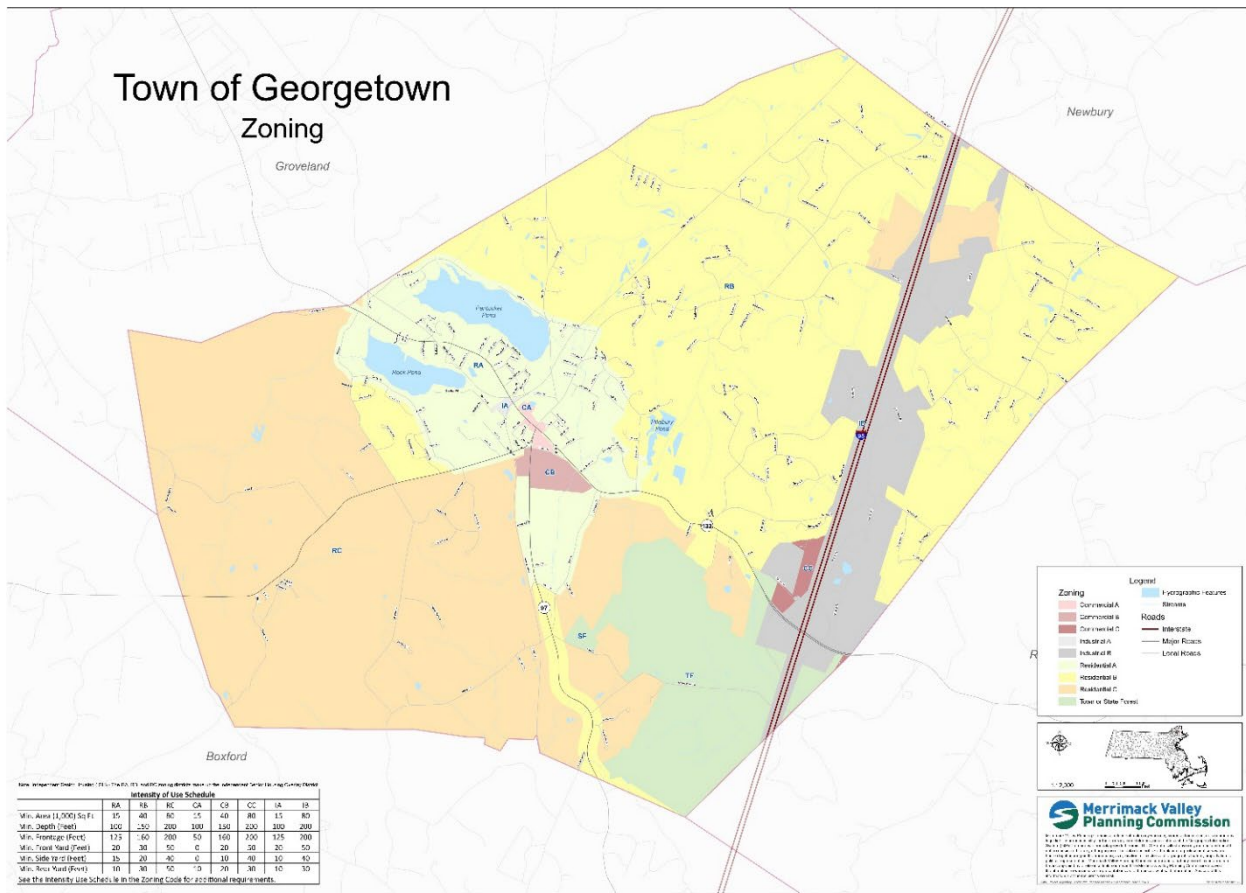


Figure 3-5: Zoning Map

In addition to zoning districts, the Town has established seven overlay districts. Overlay districts are special requirements or modifications to standard zoning without changes to the underlying base zoning, allowing more flexible or stringent requirements in targeted areas.

Overlay districts are used to address unique challenges such as water resource protection. Georgetown consists of the following overlay districts:

- 43D District
- Adult Entertainment District
- Floodplain District
- Groundwater Protection District
- Marijuana Business District
- Mixed-Use District
- Water Resources District

4. Environmental Inventory and Analysis

A. Soils and Topography

The town's major natural resources are the upper Parker River, many of its major tributaries, two Great Ponds (Pentucket and Rock), and extensive wetlands that are known or have the potential to serve as habitat for rare and endangered species.

The landscape of Georgetown is dominated by its wetlands and large tracks of open space. The low, rolling topography means no single feature overwhelms the others. The town has been fortunate in being able to preserve, throughout much of the community, the appearance of a traditional New England village dominated by mixed deciduous and pine woods, and stretches of wetlands, streams, and ponds. There are many historic houses and other buildings in the Town Center, as well as numerous other locations throughout the town.

To the northeast of Georgetown, the Parker River/Essex Bay in Newbury, MA has been designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) by the Commonwealth. At the heart of this ACEC is the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, located on and around Plum Island in Newburyport, MA. The Refuge is nationally recognized for the observation of migratory and resident birds, many of them very rare.⁴

Situated on the Atlantic coastal plain of New England, Georgetown has a low and gently rolling topography. The glaciers of the Pleistocene era carved and shaped the landscape, leaving depressions and drumlins of unsorted till deposits. Glacial meltwaters left layered deposits of sand and gravel forming level outwash plains.

Generally, the southern part of town is dominated by relatively steep drumlins, such as Baldpate Hill and Little's Hill, with elevations ranging between 150 and 300 feet above mean sea level (MSL). Lower elevations of 70 to 110 feet MSL characterize the central and northern sections of the community.

Over thousands of years, the actions of weather, erosion, changes of riverbeds, and the processes of life and decay have further changed the surface of the land, adding or stripping topsoil, silts, and organic material. As a result, the topography of Georgetown includes a complex pattern of fields, swamps, marshes, bogs, pools, small hills, and large and small ponds and streams. Knowledge of these soils and their physical characteristics can be a valuable tool in open space and development planning and management. For example, soils information can be helpful in locating aquifer recharge areas, identifying wetlands, floodplains, and prime agricultural land, and determining areas susceptible to erosion which shall not be disturbed without proper safeguards.

Based on the soils map and soil survey data by the Natural Resources Conservation Service,

4. <https://newburyport.com/>. (n.d.). *Parker River National Wildlife Refuge*. Retrieved 2025, from <https://newburyport.com/parker-river-national-wildlife-refuge/#:~:text=Parker%20River%20is%20a%20nationally,to%20feed%2C%20rest%20and%20nest.>

several observations can be made about the general suitability and limitations of the soils to development (see Figure 4-1: Soils Map and Appendix A).

- **Steep Slopes & Erosion:** Over 19% of the town consists of steep slopes greater than 15%, which present challenges for recreational development, particularly universally accessible facilities and playing fields. Only 0.3% of soils exhibit slow infiltration rates on steep slopes (>25%), limiting development due to risk of erosion.
- **Highly Drained Soils:** Deep, sandy, or gravelly soils that are well to excessively drained cover 67% of the town and can affect both water supply and septic systems. Highly drained soils may require additional irrigation and increased maintenance for recreational fields.
- **Poorly Drained Soils:** About 22% of soils exhibit poor drainage combined with a high-water table, conditions that have implications for septic systems. Poorly drained soils can limit the usability of recreational areas, particularly after rainfall, and may require additional drainage improvements.
- **Agricultural Soils:** Over 10% of Georgetown's soils are classified as prime farmland, and 37% as farmland of statewide importance. However, much of this land has already been developed, limiting future farming opportunities.

It is important to note these soil types overlap, and certain soils may possess multiple limiting characteristics.

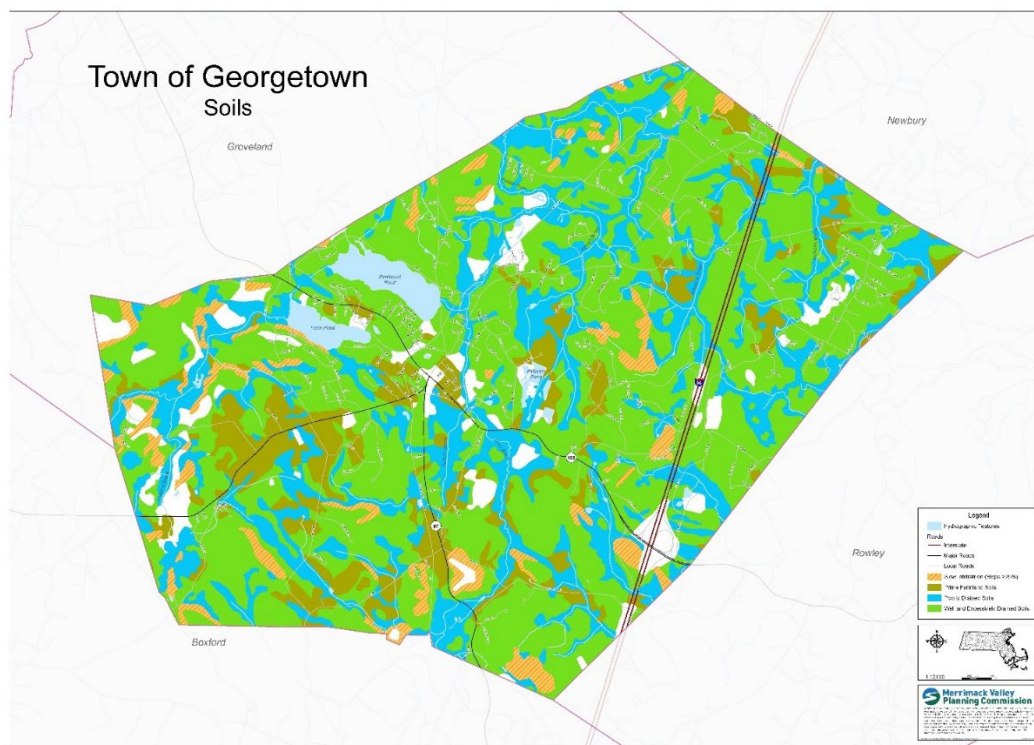


Figure 4-1: Soils Map

B. Water Resources

Watersheds

Georgetown is divided into three major watersheds. A majority of the town is within the Parker River Watershed. The Parker River Watershed is the largest of the three, totaling some 8,000 acres in Georgetown and covering almost 94% of the town. About five percent is within the Merrimack River Watershed (located in the northern area of Georgetown) and less than one percent is within the Ipswich River Watershed.

Source Water Assessment Program

The Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP), established under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, requires every state to:

- Inventory land uses within the recharge areas of all public water supply sources.
- Assess the susceptibility of drinking water sources to contamination from these land uses
- Publish the results to provide support for improved protection.

In 2001, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts completed the SWAP Report for Georgetown. This report is a planning tool to support local and Commonwealth efforts to improve water supply protection. By identifying land uses within water supply protection areas that may be potential sources of contamination, the assessment helps focus protection efforts on appropriate best management practices (BMPs) and drinking water source protection measures.

The wells for the Georgetown Water Department are located within a water supply protection area that has portions extending into Boxford and Groveland. Each well has a Zone I radius of 400 feet, except the Tubular Wellfield, which has a 250-foot Zone I (see Water Resources Map and Appendix A). The wells are in aquifers with a high vulnerability to contamination due to the absence of hydrogeologic barriers (i.e. clay) that can prevent contaminant migration.

Zone II, which is the primary recharge area for the water supply aquifer for Georgetown, is predominantly forested and residential, with a small portion of commercial land uses (see Water Resources Map and Appendix A). The overall ranking of susceptibility to contamination for Georgetown is high, based on the presence of at least one high threat land use within Zone II: Junk Yards and Salvage Yards that can produce spills, leaks, or improper handling of automotive chemicals, wastes, and batteries. Other potential threats include residential fuel oil storage, lawn care and gardening, septic systems/cesspools, composting facilities, oil or hazardous materials sites, stormwater drains/retention basins, transmission line rights-of-way, and transportation corridors.

Surface Water

Streams

- Penn Brook, which originates at Baldpate Pond in Boxford, flows northward through the center of town and joins the Parker River between Pond Street and North Street
- Wheeler Brook, which rises from wooded wetlands southwest of the intersection of Jewett Street and Interstate 95
- Jackman Brook, which is fed by wooded wetlands bounded by Jewett Street, Tenney Street, and Interstate 95, and joins Wheeler Brook north of Jackman Street before entering the Parker River in Newbury
- Lufkin's Brook, which flows northward to the Parker River in the western part of town.

A smaller stream named Plough Brook, issuing from wetlands just east of Georgetown center between North Street and East Main Street, also flows north to the Parker River, joining the Parker River near the abandoned gravel pits south of Thurlow Street.

Muddy Brook, a tributary of the Mill River, originates in wetlands near the southbound entry ramp to Interstate 95 at Route 133. It is joined by the North Branch tributary south of Long Hill and flows into Upper Millpond in Rowley where the Mill River is partially impounded. Great Swamp Brook flows east of Warren Street into Rowley's Mill River.

Lakes and Ponds

Two ponds of notable size are Rock Pond and Pentucket Pond located to the south and north of West Main Street/Route 97. These are linked by the Parker River and are the only Great Ponds of the river. They serve as major recreation attractions for swimming, boating, fishing, and nature observation. The Parker River, Pentucket Pond, and Rock Pond are stocked with trout in the spring by the MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

At 57 acres, Rock Pond is the smaller and more developed of the two. It is almost surrounded by residential areas except for a one-acre parcel where a public boat ramp is located along West Main Street. Pentucket Pond covers 85 acres and has conservation land on its northwest end, a park and beach (American Legion Park) at its south side, and a summer camp (Camp Leslie) on its southwest side.

The mainstream of the Parker River has local conservation land and Water Department land along most of its upstream reaches in Georgetown. Downstream sections border conservation land and state (MassWildlife) property.

Lufkin's Brook has large areas of protected land along its upper portions from where it exits Half Moon Meadow Conservation Area as well as the Lufkin's Brook Conservation Area, north of Andover Street/Route 133 up to West Street where the Georgetown Water Department has extensive holdings from West Street north to the Parker River.

There is also conservation land east of West Street and north of the Parker River. These dedicated open spaces are particularly important because they provide significant protection to the Town's public water supply. They also serve as important habitat areas for plant and animal species of interest, though not Commonwealth protected.

Conservation land, Commonwealth forest land, and Town-owned school land protect the upstream portions of Penn Brook. Wheeler Brook is currently without public protection.

Assessing and Managing Water Quality Standards

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 (FWPCA) and subsequent Amendments in 1977, 1981 and 1987 are collectively known as the Clean Water Act (CWA). The objective of this statute is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. As one step toward meeting this goal each state must administer a program to monitor

and assess the quality of its surface and groundwater and provide periodic status reports to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Congress, and the public.

The Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards (WQS), regulation 314 CMR 4.00, last amended in 2022, assigns all inland and coastal and marine waters to classes according to the intended beneficial uses of those waters. It is important to note these are goals and do not necessarily reflect existing water quality. For example, Class A waters are designated as the source of public water supplies and, where compatible with this use, are also be suitable for supporting aquatic life, recreational uses such as swimming and boating, and fish consumption. Class B waters are not water supplies, but are designated or intended for all the other uses cited above for Class A. Finally, Class C waters are suitable for aquatic life and recreational uses where contact with the water is incidental, such as boating and fishing, but may not be suitable for swimming, diving, or water skiing.

The Parker River Basin in Georgetown, including Parker River and its tributaries as well as Pentucket Pond, are noted as Class B waters and as such are designated to be suitable for supporting aquatic life, recreational uses and fish consumption.

Section 303(d) of the CWA and the implementing regulations at 40 CFR 130.7 require states to identify those waterbodies that are not expected to meet surface water quality standards after the implementation of technology-based controls and to prioritize and schedule them for the development of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs). A TMDL establishes the maximum amount of a pollutant that may be introduced into a waterbody and still ensures attainment and maintenance of water quality standards. Furthermore, a TMDL must also allocate that acceptable pollutant load among all potential sources. The formulation of the 303(d) List includes rigorous public review and comment process before being formally approved by the EPA.

Assessing surface waters (305b) and listing impairments (303d) is inextricably linked to the WQS, as they define the uses that are to be evaluated for any given waterbody. In addition, the accompanying criteria provide the basis for determining whether the designated uses are, in fact, supported.

Assessments result in listings in one of the following categories.

- **Category 1:** Unimpaired and not threatened for all designated uses
- **Category 2:** Unimpaired for some uses and not assessed for others
- **Category 3:** Insufficient information to make assessments for any uses
- **Category 4:** Impaired for one or more uses but not requiring the calculation of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) (impairment due to "pollution" such as low flow, habitat alterations or non-native species infestations).
- **Category 5:** Impaired for one or more uses and requiring a TMDL (impairment due to pollutant(s) such as nutrients, metals, pesticides, solids and pathogens).

Pentucket Pond and Rock Pond are both listed as Category 5 water bodies and require a TMDL.

- **Pentucket Pond** (Segment ID-MA91010) was listed as a Massachusetts Category 5 Water (Waters requiring a TMDL) and was found to have fanwort, a non-native aquatic plant and mercury in fish tissue.
- **Rock Pond** (Segment ID-MA91012) was also listed and found to have mercury in fish tissue.

Two sections of the Parker River are listed as Category 4C due to dewatering and fish passage barriers, which do not require a TMDL.

Due to the mercury level in certain affected fish in these ponds, the MA Department of Public Health has included them on the Freshwater Fish Consumption Advisory List. The Department of Public Health recommends that sensitive populations, those under the age of 12 and people who are nursing, pregnant, or may become pregnant, do not eat any fish from Pentucket Pond or Rock Pond.⁵

Aquifers and Aquifer Recharge Areas

Complementing the town's diverse surface water sources is a major groundwater reservoir, or "aquifer," located in the western part of town. This consists of an expansive deposit of highly permeable sand and gravel which yields significant quantities of groundwater. The town's municipal water supply is obtained entirely from this source.

According to the USGS study of the Water Resources of the Parker and Rowley River-Basins (1967), there are no other groundwater sources in town of comparable yield, so the protection of this resource is of paramount importance. It is for this reason that Georgetown has historically acquired Conservation and Water Department holdings around Lufkin Brook.

A Stressed Basin Analysis completed in 2001 by the Water Resources Commission (WRC) indicated that the Parker River is considered "highly stressed" based on the low-flow metrics established by the WRC. The full report can be found at this link: [Stressed Basins in Massachusetts](#).

The Massachusetts Water Management Act requires that new groundwater sources and/or increases in groundwater withdrawals from existing sources be evaluated for impact to streamflow. Documentation has shown the lack of recharge around the Town wells. MassDEP created the Sustainable Water Management Initiative (SWMI) and interactive map, [SWMI Interactive Map \(arcgis.com\)](#). The maps show Georgetown's well area can exceed negative 55 percent of net depletion during the summer months.

5. Massachusetts Department of Public Health. (2025). Freshwater Fish Consumption Advisory List. Retrieved from <https://www.mass.gov/doc/public-health-freshwater-fish-consumption-advisories-2025-0/download>

The Georgetown Zoning Bylaw includes a Groundwater Protection District (see Figure 3-3: Zoning Map in Appendix A). This overlay district applies to all new construction, reconstruction, or expansion of existing buildings. The purpose of the Groundwater Protection Overlay District is to:

- Promote the health, safety, and general welfare of this community by ensuring an adequate quality and quantity of drinking water for the residents, institutions, and businesses of the Town of Georgetown.
- Preserve and protect existing and potential sources of drinking water supplies.
- Conserve the natural resources of the Town.
- Prevent temporary and permanent contamination of the environment.

Flood Hazard Areas

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) depicts flood risk information on the National Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) database. The FIRM database identifies areas subject to 100-year floods along several open space and conservation areas including Upper Parker River and Conservation Area, West Street Conservation Area, Bailey Lane Conservation Area, Upper Parker River Wildlife Management Area, Crane Pond Wildlife Management Area, Georgetown Rowley State Forest, Martel Way Park, Harmony Cemetery, among others (see Water Resources Map and Appendix A). The Georgetown Zoning Bylaw includes a Floodplain District. The land located within this overlay district is subject to flooding, and any development proposed in this area requires a special permit (see Zoning Map in Appendix A). Special Flood Hazard Area or 100-year flood is defined as an area that has 1% annual chance of occurring in any given year. A 500-year flood is defined as an area that has 0.2% annual chance of occurring in any given year. All the flood hazard areas in Georgetown experienced significant flooding during the 2006 Mother's Day storm, which brought over 15 inches of rain in just two days. According to the 2020 Community Resilience Building Summary of Findings, flooding remains a concern in Georgetown. Flooding has been observed in the 100-year floodplain, including large areas of open space. Georgetown has also seen an increase in roadway flooding on King Street and in areas between Rock, Pentucket, and Crane Ponds. Additional facilities experiencing flooding include critical facilities such as health care facilities, the Perley Elementary School, decommissioned landfill, water treatment facility, Searles Street substation, and private wells.

Wetlands

Georgetown contains over 97.8 acres of local wetlands, which are protected under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (See Figure 4-2: Water Resources Map and Appendix A.) Wetlands are prevalent throughout Georgetown including many within conservation lands such as the Georgetown-Rowley State Forest, Lufkin Brook Conservation Area, Hampshire Woods, and within Water Department lands throughout the northern section of town. These areas provide flood storage, water filtration, and wildlife habitat. Minor wetland changes have been detected in Georgetown since 2001, primarily due to commercial developments, residential developments, as well as new roads.

Wetland communities are well represented in Georgetown and include marsh, wet meadow, shrub swamp, wooded swamp, flood plain, and bog communities. A rich variety of vegetation exists. Small herbaceous plants encountered include Arrow Arum, Pickerelweed, Sweet Flag, Larger Blue Flag, Skunk Cabbage, Marsh Marigold, Blue-eyed Grass, Spring-Cress, Pitcher Plant, Sundews, Spotted Jewelweed, White Turtlehead, Swamp Milkweed and Cardinal-flower. Many species of rushes, sedges, cattails, bulrushes, waterlilies and mosses are also found. Larger, woody species include alders, buttonbush, and willow. Many of these species are important hosts to butterfly larvae or serve as important butterfly nectar sources. Other species are important food sources for breeding Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

Sustaining and protecting the town's water resources is a system of bordering vegetated wetlands and floodplains, which receive and transmit large volumes of precipitation, thus ensuring a steady supply of groundwater. These areas include numerous potentially certifiable vernal pools as well. The wetlands and floodplains provide natural storage for runoff during storm events, thereby reducing downstream flooding and the attendant effects of erosion and sedimentation.

A group of experts, including wetland scientists, a climate scientist, and attorneys, has developed a proposed Universal Declaration of the Rights of Wetlands through the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS). This initiative builds on Indigenous peoples' knowledge that recognizes nature as a living entity and offers an opportunity for improved cross-cultural understanding, respect, and collaboration between Indigenous peoples and other communities.

The Declaration of the Rights of Wetlands declares that all wetlands are entities entitled to inherent and enduring rights, which derive from their existence as members of the Earth community and shall possess legal standing in courts of law. These inherent rights include the following:

- The right to exist.
- The right to their ecologically determined location in the landscape.
- The right to natural, connected and sustainable hydrological regimes.
- The right to ecologically sustainable climatic conditions.
- The right to have naturally occurring biodiversity, free of introduced or invasive species that disrupt their ecological integrity.
- The right to integrity of structure, function, evolutionary processes and the ability to fulfil natural ecological roles in the Earth's processes.
- The right to be free from pollution and degradation.
- The right to regeneration and restoration.

The full text of the Declaration can be found at www.rightsofwetlands.org.

C. Vegetation

General Inventory

Georgetown is a mosaic of vegetation, presenting a changing picture of color and form throughout the year. Upland and wetland forests, swamps, marshes, and open fields all contribute to the town's rural character, and character and provide various habitat for wildlife. Large expanses of woodland, both upland and wetland, can be found in protected properties including Georgetown-Rowley State Forest, the Lufkin Brook Conservation Area, and Hampshire Woods. The state's Commonwealth's selective harvesting program in Georgetown-Rowley State Forest results in some open areas within the forest, while conservation areas owned by the Town are minimally managed and remain in their natural state.

Public Shade Trees

Georgetown's public shade trees include those at municipal facilities including town offices, library, schools, parks, and cemeteries. Trees within the rights-of-way along town roads are also considered public resources. Public shade trees are recognized as valuable to the town's visual character and to residents' physical comfort and the town looks to preserve them whenever feasible. The town's Highway Department includes a Tree Warden and oversees the maintenance and when necessary, removal of public trees.

Georgetown's scenic roads regulation protects trees and stone walls within the road right-of-way along Nelson Street by requiring a public hearing and permission from the Tree Warden before removal.

Rare Species

According to NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species and Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife, Georgetown is home to several rare, threatened, endangered, or species of special concern. Georgetown inventory includes five threatened, one endangered, and six species of special concern. The town's largest Priority Habitats of Rare Species and Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife are located within the Crane Pond Wildlife Management Area, Georgetown Water Supply Lands, and conservation areas along the western edge of town (see Figure 4-3: Unique Features Map in Appendix A).

According to the Natural Heritage Program staff of the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, several rare vascular plant species are present in Georgetown:

- Bog Sedge (*Carex exilis*), status: Threatened
- Fen Cuckoo Flower (*Cardamine dentata*), status: Threatened
- Slender Cottongrass (*Eriophorum gracile*), status: Threatened
- New England Blazing Star (*Liatris novae angliae*), status: Special Concern
- Pale Green Orchis (*Plantathera flava* var. *herbiola*), status: Threatened
- Wild Senna (*Senna hebecarpa*), status: Endangered

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Small Whorled Pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*), which is listed as endangered and protected under the federal Endangered Species Act, is also present in Georgetown.

The fragmentation of woodlands, major disturbances of soil, historic agricultural activities, and past and present landscaping practices have promoted the invasion of exotic plant species throughout much of Georgetown's natural landscape, as is the case in much of southern New England. Such species often occupy ecological niches necessary for rare native plants that may themselves be associated with rare native animal species. While there are many isolated and pristine areas in Georgetown where exotic vegetation is rarely encountered or is at least non-invasive, most of the town's deep wetland edges and shallow wetlands are overgrown with Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrium salicaria*) which seems to promote eutrophication and has choked out native wetland species that are essential food sources for the increasingly rare swamp and marsh birds, such as Rails.

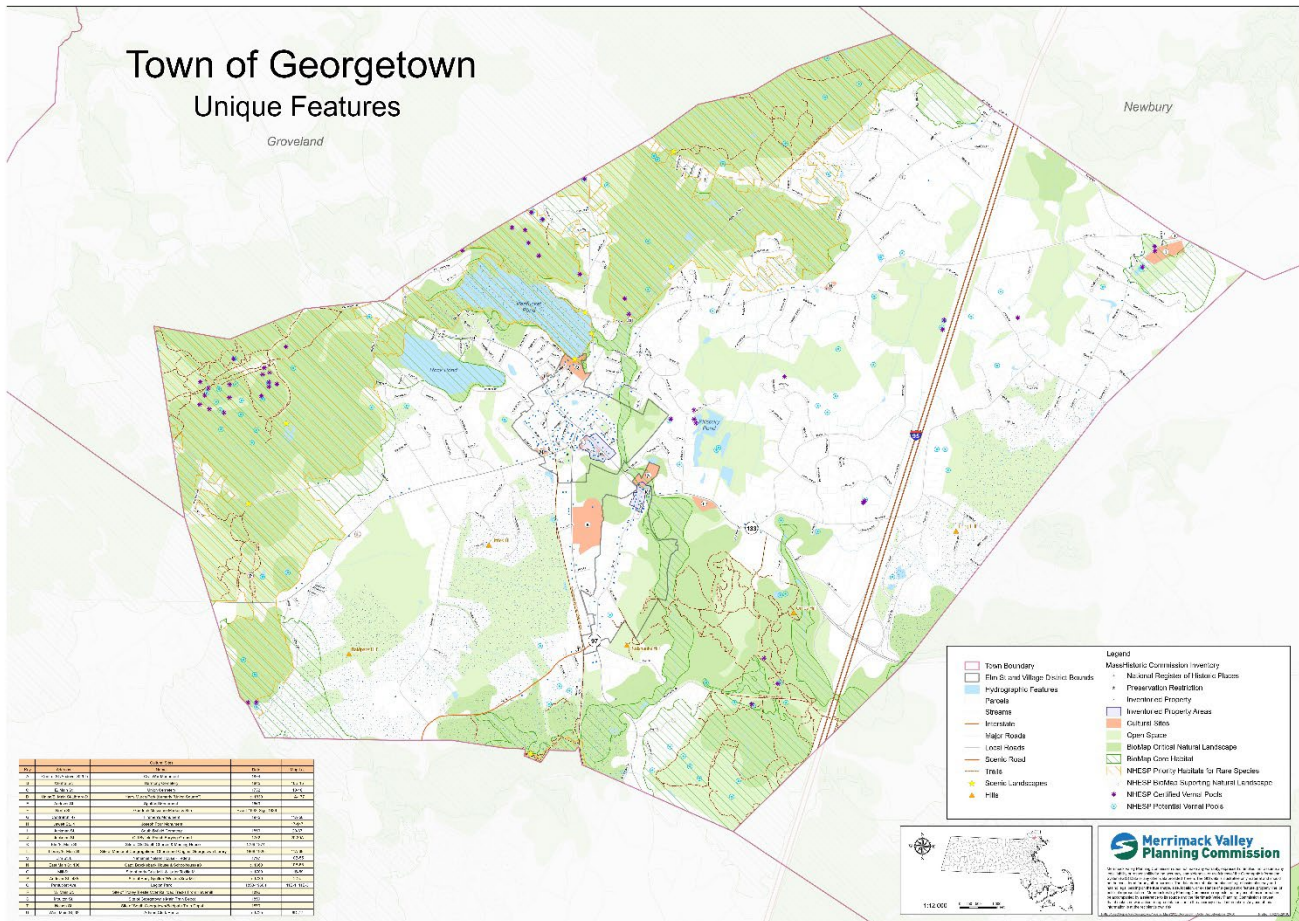


Figure 4-3: Unique Features Map

Vernal Pools

Georgetown has numerous potential vernal pool habitats, 46 of which have been certified by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) (see Figure 3-4: Unique Features Map in Appendix A). Statewide coverage included photos taken of Essex County in 2000. Using stereo pairs under a mirror stereoscope, the approximate centers of pools were determined and located on the map. All potential vernal pool sites are protected under the Georgetown Wetlands Protection Bylaw until proven they do not support vernal pool habitat.

Some vernal pools in Massachusetts are protected under the Wetlands Protection Act Regulations. The Georgetown Conservation Commission is responsible for applying the State and Local Regulations/Bylaws based on the Wetlands Protection Act.

Agricultural Land

There is limited active agricultural land remaining in Georgetown. Most open land is used for grazing and horse pastures. In 2013, the Town, in partnership with the Essex Country Greenbelt Association, protected the 2-acre Wheeler Brook Farm, the only remaining row crop farm in Georgetown with a Conservation Restriction.

In Georgetown, 166.12 acres of agricultural land are temporarily protected under Chapter 61A - Agriculture. In Massachusetts, the program provides a tax break for landowners who commit to maintaining their land in agricultural use for a specific period. Agricultural products include fruits, vegetables, ornamental shrubs, timber, animals, and maple syrup.⁶

Forest Land

Previous open space plans indicate that there was a dramatic change in vegetative cover type as because of abandonment of agricultural land, with subsequent reversion of open fields to woodlands. A high percentage of conservation land remains forested, including the Georgetown-Rowley State Forest which is partially located in Georgetown.

Most of Georgetown's forests are second or third growth post-agricultural forest communities. Stone walls, wolf trees, rock piles, and wild apple and pear trees are found throughout the town's forestland as artifacts of Georgetown's agricultural past. Dominant upland forest types include the pine-oak and oak-hickory associations. Most of this woodland consists of larger, mature trees with 81-100% crown closure. Here, little sunlight reaches the forest floor, and the number and density of understory trees, shrubs, and herbs is limited.

In the younger forests, a more open forest canopy exists. Shrubs such as lowbush blueberry, huckleberry, sheep laurel, viburnums, and azaleas are found in greater abundance. Herbaceous plants are found as well, including Spotted Wintergreen, Pipsissewa, Canada Mayflower, False Solomon's Seal, Wild Geranium, Jack-in-the Pulpit, Pink Lady's-Slipper, Star-Flower, and assorted Ferns and Clubmosses. On occasion, one can find large colonies of the translucent

6. DCR, UMass Extension. (n.d.). *Chapter 61 Programs*. Retrieved 2025, from <https://masswoods.org/sites/masswoods.net/files/Ch61-v2.pdf>

Indian-Pipes (*Monotropa uniflora*), which are parasitic on roots and therefore have no chlorophyll.

Where open areas occur, either as pasture or utility line rights-of-way, the vegetation community consists of a greater variety of herbaceous plants, grasses, and sedges, most notably a wide variety of members of the mustard family, asters, goldenrods and other members of the aster or composite family. These areas are also often dominated by non-native species of herbaceous plants that frequent dry and disturbed soils.

In Georgetown, 198.6 acres of forestland are temporarily protected under Chapter 61 – Forestry. In Massachusetts, the program provides a tax break for landowners who commit to maintaining their land for growing forest products for a specific time period. Forest products include wood, timber, Christmas trees, and other products produced by forest vegetation.⁷

BioMap

Summary of BioMap⁸

Over 33% (2,790.6 acres) of Georgetown is covered by Core Habitat, 18.5% of which is protected (see Unique Features Map in Appendix A). Core Habitats are key areas critical for the long-term persistence of rare species, exemplary natural communities, and resilient ecosystems. Core Habitat components in Georgetown include:

- Rare Species Core: 2,187.2 acres
- Forest Core: 174.5 acres
- Aquatic Core: 699.5 acres
- Wetland Core: 463 acres
- Vernal Pool Core: 848 acres

Over 29.5% (2,483.1 acres) of Georgetown is also covered by Critical Natural Landscapes, 17% of which is protected (see Unique Features Map in Appendix A). Critical Natural Landscapes are large landscapes minimally impacted by development and buffers to Core Habitats and coastal areas, both of which enhance connectivity and resilience. If protected, these areas provide habitat for wide-ranging native species, support intact ecological processes, maintain connectivity among habitats, and enhance ecological resilience to natural and anthropogenic disturbances. Components of Critical Natural Landscapes in Georgetown include:

- Landscape Blocks: 249.1 acres
- Aquatic Core Buffer: 1,320.3 acres
- Wetland Core Buffer: 848.5 acres

7. DCR, UMass Extension. (n.d.). *Chapter 61 Programs*. Retrieved 2025, from <https://masswoods.org/sites/masswoods.net/files/Ch61-v2.pdf>

8. MassWildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program. (n.d.). *BioMap Town Report: Georgetown*. Retrieved 2025, from <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/biomap-town-report-georgetown>

To complement statewide habitats, BioMap also includes habitats assessed and prioritized from the perspective of each city and town, which provide municipalities and local land trusts with additional information to support local decisions. Local components in Georgetown include:

- Local Landscapes: 1,843.7 acres
- Local Wetlands: 97.8 acres
- Local Wetland Buffer: 177.9 acres
- Local Rare Species Core: 941.0 acres
- Local Aquatic Habitats: 110.2 acres
- Local Aquatic Habitat Buffer: 372.2 acres

BioMap also identifies habitats particularly important for regional conservation and the habitat connections critical for conservation success across the Northeast. Regional components in Georgetown include:

- Regional Rare Species Core: 1,840.9 acres

BioMap is a non-regulatory conservation planning tool to plan and prioritize conservation actions. In contrast, NHESP Priority Habitat is a regulatory screening tool to allow the NHESP to review projects or activities for impacts to state-listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA).

D. Fisheries and Wildlife

Fisheries Inventory

Several aquatic habitats are of important recreational value in Georgetown, including cool, deep rivers and brooks with moderate current, warm, shallow streams with light current, and several 'great ponds'. The major aquatic features in Georgetown are the Parker River drainage and two 'great ponds' near the middle of town. The Parker River originates in northwestern Georgetown, and in Boxford and Groveland. It flows past the town's wellfields, into Rock and Pentucket Ponds. A small spillway controls water depth in Pentucket Pond and allows water to flow downstream through the Crane Wildlife Management Area and the Town of Byfield. Two tributaries, Wheeler Brook and Jackman Brook, originate in northeastern Georgetown and feed the Parker River further downstream, in the Town of Newbury. Penn Brook drains the south-central portion of Georgetown and joins the Parker River slightly downstream of Pentucket Pond. Georgetown also shares Baldpate Pond, another 'great pond', with the Town of Boxford.

Access to these resources ranges from nearly impassable (upper Parker River) to easy (Pentucket Pond). Access to the upper Parker River is possible from West Street and Bailey Lane, but thick overgrowth makes passage by canoe nearly impossible. Numerous residences line Rock Pond and Pentucket Pond, the latter being served by American Legion Park, which is open to the public. Pond Street offers another access point to Pentucket Pond and was a favorite location for fishermen, however since the construction of the dam, access is no

longer allowed here. The lower Parker River has moderate access, provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts right-of-way along the abandoned railroad bed and at the crossings on Mill and Thurlow Streets. The Parker River, through the Crane Wildlife Management Area, is often used by canoeists and fishermen because of the area's accessibility and high wildlife value. Wheeler, Jackman, and Penn Brooks are used less often for recreation, partly because of fewer points of access. Baldpate Pond is accessible from Nelson Street via Camp Denison.

Georgetown's recreational fishery is quite active due to natural conditions, spawning by anadromous fish, and a seasonal stocking program. Historically, the Rock and Pentucket Ponds were important spawning areas for anadromous alewife in the Parker River, but have not been seen migrating to the upper reaches in the Parker River for several years. Pentucket, Rock, and Baldpate Ponds also contain some populations of freshwater invertebrates, including clams.

In addition, according to the Natural Heritage Program staff of the Department of Fish and Game, Bridle Shiner (*Notropis bifrenatus*), a species of fish of Special Concern are known to be present in Pentucket Pond, last reported locally in 2007.

The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (MA DFG) manages a trout stocking program in Rock and Pentucket Ponds and in the Parker River. In addition, the MA DFG also stocks Penn Brook with small brown trout during the early spring, while water temperatures are cool. The stocking program in Georgetown has been relatively stable in recent years, although there has been a trend to stocking fewer, but larger, trout to enhance recreational angling.

As mentioned above, Rock and Pentucket Ponds are popular locations for recreational anglers. In addition to the accessibility and stocking programs, Georgetown Fish & Game sponsors annual ice fishing derby on Pentucket Pond, depending on the ice. Fishermen catch mainly cool water species such as largemouth bass, calico bass, brown trout, and pickerel in Rock Pond, Pentucket Pond, and the Parker River. The catch in Baldpate Pond is mainly largemouth bass and some trout. Penn Brook, because it moves more slowly and summer temperatures are higher, mainly produces hornpout catfish and some trout for fishermen.

Wildlife Inventory

Despite its increasing development, Georgetown continues to support a wide variety of wildlife. As in most developed areas of Eastern Massachusetts, the most frequently encountered wildlife are species that have adapted to and benefited from living in close proximity to human structures or open landscaped areas, such as: Eastern Gray Squirrel, Eastern Chipmunk, Striped Skunk, Raccoon, White-tailed Deer, Rabbit, Woodchuck, Virginia Opossum, Canada Goose, American Robin, House Sparrow, Rock Doves (Pigeons), Herring Gull, etc. The large numbers of these species, as well as the fragmentation of the pre-colonial forests may have a negative impact on other wildlife species that are less well adapted to human activity or disturbance.

However, perhaps due to the large blocks of protected open space in Georgetown, there continue to be reports of wildlife that are more frequently associated with wilderness than developed areas. Bobcat, Beaver, Red Fox, Mink and Fishercat continue to be reported. At night, nocturnal Flying Squirrels can be heard squeaking high among the trees. Due to the large insect populations associated with wetlands, Georgetown appears to have a healthy population of bat species.

The birdlife of Georgetown includes many species that add beauty, both visually and with sound, to the landscape. The striking or brilliantly colored Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, and Baltimore Oriole are regular nesters. In many of the town's woodlands, the calls of thrushes can be heard. Many insect eating flycatchers are also common nesters, and the Eastern Phoebe and Eastern Wood Pewee can frequently be heard. Great Blue Herons can be seen frequenting the shallows of Pentucket Pond in search of Alewife and other prey. The much smaller Green-backed Heron can often be encountered in the swamps and marshes of the town. Pied billed Grebe and Hooded Merganser, both rare wetland breeders, have been observed in Georgetown, with no recent records during breeding season even though there is potential breeding habitat in the town.

Many birds of prey can be seen in Georgetown. Perhaps due to the town's proximity to Plum Island, rare Peregrine Falcons and Cooper's Hawks have been observed during migration and visiting winter bird feeders in search of prey. In addition, Northern Harrier (or Marsh Hawk) has been observed apparently making forays from Plum Island into Georgetown to search for prey over the town's fields and marshes. Bald Eagles have also been reported fishing along the upper Parker River and Pentucket Pond when these areas remain open during the winter. During migration, all the Wood Warblers (tiny, colorful neo-tropical jewels) that are regularly reported in eastern Massachusetts have been observed in Georgetown. This includes the rare, protected Golden-winged Warbler which has traditionally nested in a few locations in northern and central Essex County. Power line rights-of-way in Georgetown may also provide potential nesting sites for this species. A common nesting Wood Warbler is the Yellow Warbler. Its song can be frequently heard in and around Georgetown's wetlands, especially where willow species are common. Fish Crow and Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoos have also been reported during breeding seasons.

Due to its many wetlands, amphibians are well represented in Georgetown. During the spring, Wood Frogs, Spring Peepers, American Toads, Gray Tree Frogs, Bullfrogs can be frequently heard in many sections of Georgetown. These species have particular significance because of the sensitivity of amphibians to environmental degradation. Without continuing protection of the town's many wetlands, potential vernal pool habitat, and adjacent wooded areas, Georgetown residents may experience a more silent spring in the future.

Little documentation is currently available on the insect life of Georgetown, though residents and visitors are aware of it, especially during the summer. Common butterfly species noted are the Tiger Swallowtail and Spicebush Swallowtail, both common wetland shrub species in Georgetown. While insects and bugs can be very bothersome, especially mosquitoes, their importance as pollinators or major food sources for many species of fish and birds cannot be

over-emphasized. One of the reasons that Georgetown has such large numbers of varied wildlife is that it has a healthy population of insects that serve as a base of the food chain.

Wildlife Corridors

Georgetown's more resilient wildlife species have few corridors to move along throughout town. Development has recently created isolated areas in which species are forced to cross highways, roads, or driveways to get from one forested or wetland area to another. While this doesn't present much of a problem to avian species, isolated areas are becoming more difficult to reach for land creatures. For this reason, the management of open space and acquisition of undeveloped land are of utmost importance in the coming decades due to the development value that is currently placed on the remaining lots within town. Thus, the town's greatest challenge essentially boils down to a veritable race to expand upon the open space currently held, before it is all but gone.

The expansion of migration corridors and linkages to isolated areas must be in the forefront of any future acquisition plan. Fortunately, this falls much in line with the open space acquisition agenda of past years. In the past, most open space acquisition by the town was done with the intent of protecting the town's water supply by gaining parcels that were above the aquifer or adjacent to rivers, streams, and wetlands. A fortunate benefit of those acquisitions was that the wildlife that now exists could move about the routes that the town's surface waters take. Alternative routes that wildlife can take from one isolated area to another, although unintended for this purpose in their inception, are the abandoned railroad bed right-of-way and any undeveloped land abutting it. In conjunction with power line easements that cross the town, while less than ideal, movement is still possible for some species.

Rare Species

According to the Natural Heritage Program staff of the MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, several rare vertebrate animal species are known or presumed to be present in Georgetown, including:

- Blue spotted Salamander (*Ambystlaterale* pop. 1), status: Special Concern last officially reported locally in 2008
- Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina*), status: Special Concern, last reported in 2022
- Long eared Owl (*Asio otus*), status: Special Concern, last reported locally in 1981
- Wood Turtle (*Clemmys insculpta*), status Special Concern, last reported locally in 2013
- Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*), status: Threatened, last reported locally in 2015
- Bridle Shiner (*Notropis bifrenatus*), status: Special Concern, last reported locally in 2007

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), which is listed as endangered and protected under the federal Endangered Species Act, is present in Georgetown. The Tricolored Bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) is proposed for listing as endangered, and the Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is proposed for listing as threatened; both are rare species identified as being present in Georgetown.

Rare species habitats are continually under development pressure throughout the town and the protection and/or acquisition of these areas must be made a priority.

E. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Scenic Landscapes

There are many trees in Georgetown that are more than 100 years of age, primarily oaks and pine, primarily White Pine. In many New England towns, the fall foliage is noted for the bright oranges, yellows, and reds of Sugar Maples. This is not the case in Georgetown. Instead, many areas throughout the town are ablaze with the brilliant scarlet foliage of Red Maple swamps in the fall. In addition, these trees provide another visual gift in the spring when they are covered first with scarlet flowers before their leaves are fully out, and then by scarlet fruit mixed among the fresh green leaves.

In the woodlands in town, lichen covered rocks and rock walls are found. The glaciers of the past left vast deposits of small rocks and often very large boulders scattered over the area. As fields were plowed, Georgetown farmers would discover new rocks had been brought near the surface by frost heaves each year. The easiest way of dealing with this special New England “crop” was to move the rocks and boulders to the edge of the field or to the property line. Over time, New England’s traditional stone fences lined the area, and many remain today as part of the town’s scenic landscape.

Georgetown’s wetlands contribute to another phenomenon to the landscape: fog and dew. Depending on humidity and the temperature differences between the air and land, many areas of the town are enveloped in blankets of fog in the morning or evening.

Major Characteristics and Unusual Geologic Features

The Great Ponds are a special feature of Georgetown. If one knows their shape, one can easily find Georgetown on any topographic map of Essex County. They create two large holes in the scenery in which suddenly the trees are gone and there appears to be nothing that separates these great waters from the vast firmament above.

On a clear night, walking through the more open sections of Georgetown, one can see the Milky Way stretching across the sky.

At 385 feet, Baldpate Hill in Georgetown is among the higher elevations in Essex County. Just a few miles west of the coast, it may be only one of a few points on land from which one can see the full length of Plum Island and the Parker River ACEC. From the deepest points of its Great Ponds to its highest point, the landscape of Georgetown is tied to the River, its watershed, and its important wildlife habitats.

Archaeological, Historic and Cultural Areas

Archeological Areas

In the past, Native American stone artifacts have been found on Baldpate Hill and near the Parker River giving evidence of Indigenous campsites. There are reports of unusual stone formations in various wooded areas that may possibly be ancient house foundations, but these remain undocumented. The last key to any archeological discoveries may be in the outlying areas of town where stone walls that once marked the boundaries of the original landowners remain.

Historical and Cultural Areas

The most significant historical area in town is located on East Main and Elm Streets. The oldest structure, the Captain Brocklebank House, c. 1660 is still standing at this intersection. It is presently a museum operated by the Georgetown Historical Society. Adjacent to the house is a restored one-room schoolhouse. Schoolhouse #3 was built in 1828 on Andover Hill and moved to the Brocklebank site in 1984. Also on the grounds is a small shoe shop, a remnant of the early 19th century cottage shoe industry. Across the street on the southeast corner of Elm and East Main stands the Nathaniel Nelson House built in 1797. On the opposite corner is the Adams House, an exceptional example of the Greek Revival style. It is the only structure in town having a portico with Greek columns. There are many well preserved 18th and 19th century homes along Elm Street. Throughout the center of town, a few of the old shoe factories are still standing, some have been converted into homes while others contain a variety of businesses. Georgetown is fortunate that many homes and structures built in the early years of settlement and growth can still be found on most of the older roads and streets. Once surrounded by open space, these ancient homes now view neighborhoods of homes.

Also, historically significant is Union Cemetery containing tombstones dating back to the 1730's and Harmony Cemetery dating back to 1830. There are Georgetown families today who can trace their ancestors on these ancient stones. In the pages of the town's history, these past generations played an important part in the growth and prosperity of Georgetown.

Churches were the cultural centers for early settlers in Georgetown. Over time, cultural activity evolved beyond church influence and in the early 1800's, lectures, plays and recitals became an integral part of community life. Recognizing the need for formal education, the first one-room schoolhouse was built in 1739. Over the years, the town's rapid growth required the construction of three schools and closed Central School, which is now Memorial Town Hall.

Unique Environments

Area of Critical Environmental Concern

There are no state defined Areas of Critical Environmental Concern in Georgetown, although the 25,500-acre Great Marsh is in the neighboring towns of Newbury and Rowley.

Local Environmental Concerns

Issues of local environmental concern focus on several of the town's unique or special resources.

- The continued vigilant protection of the town's current and potential public drinking water aquifers must be a top priority.
- The identification, certification, and protection of the town's many certified and potentially certifiable vernal pool habitats is a priority for the Conservation Commission.
- Improving the surface water quality and fish and wildlife habitat value of Pentucket Pond, Rock Pond, Penn Brook, Bulford Brook, Jackman Brook and the Parker River will help preserve the integrity of these important resources.
- Developing a long-term water conservation plan for the town. The Parker River in the upper-watershed frequently runs dry due to lack of recharge and water withdrawals in the western part of town.

F. Climate Change Impacts

According to Nature Conservancy's Resilient Land Mapping Tool (RLMT), several areas in Georgetown are classified as climate resilient. These include the Crane Wildlife Management area in the northern part of the town, the areas surrounding Baldpate Hill Reservation, Baldpate Hill Water Storage, Penn Brook Conservation Area, Camp Denison Conservation Area, the Georgetown Rowley State Forest, and various municipally owned conservation lands east of interstate 95. Climate resilient lands support biodiversity and maintain important ecological functions in Georgetown and must be prioritized for protection to ensure long term environmental resilience.

The Crane Pond Wildlife Management area, particularly the section surrounding the Border to Boston Trail in northern Georgetown (a former rail bed) and adjacent to the North Street Conservation Areas has been identified as "most resilient" in the RLMT. This area, managed by the MA DFG, along with municipally owned conservation lands east of interstate 95, is permanently protected. A parcel adjacent to the Baldpate Hill Reservation at 28 Spofford Street was recently acquired by the Essex County Greenbelt Association and is now protected through a conservation restriction. However, climate resilient lands surrounding Penn Brook Conservation Area, Camp Denison Conservation Area, and the Georgetown Rowley State Forest remain unprotected and must be considered for future acquisition and conservation (see Figure 4-4).

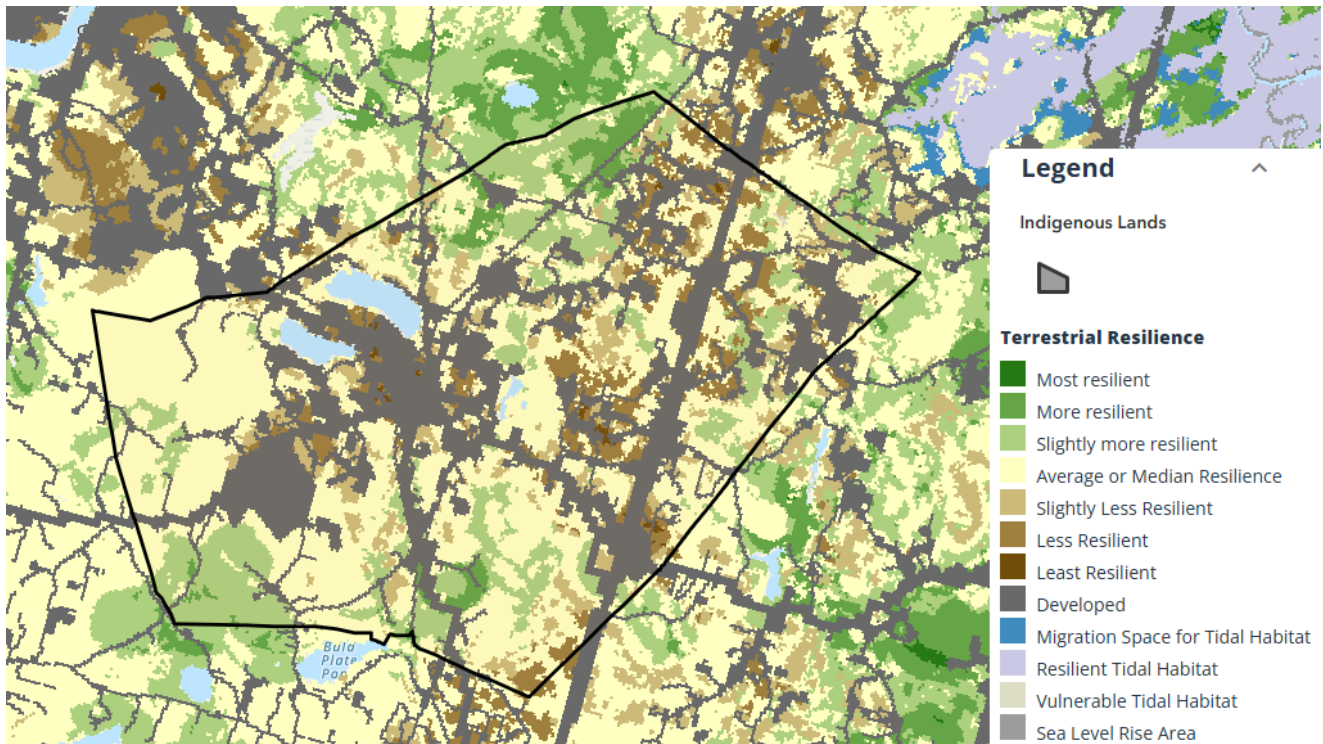


Figure 4-4 Terrestrial Resilience

Source: The Nature Conservancy Resilient Land Mapping Tool

Chronic Flooding

The abundance of streams, ponds, and wetlands throughout Georgetown gives rise to localized flooding problems in dispersed locations during periods of prolonged rainfall and heavy snowmelt. Significant flood prone areas include:

- Parker River at West Main Street (between Rock Pond outlet and Pentucket Pond inlet)
- Parker River at Bailey Lane, upstream from Rock Pond inlet
- Penn Brook at Library Street (from Route 97 to Route 133, plus several hundred feet further east where Penn Brook flows under Route 133 and Central Street)
- Bulford Brook, including Skunk Point sub-drainage area

All the above flood hazard areas experienced severe flooding during the May 2006 Mothers' Day storm when Georgetown received over 15 inches of rain in two days.

According to Georgetown Public Works Department and emergency management officials, there are two recurring flooding problems that are of particular concern and warrant immediate attention to protect public safety, private property and town infrastructure. These problem areas are summarized below.

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grants allowed the Town to address chronic flooding with culvert and roadway upgrades at Thurlow Street/Parker River, West Street/Parker River, Bailey Lane, and Central Street/Penn Brook. The 2020 Community Resilience Building Summary of Findings

and Hazard Mitigation Plan Update also notes an increase in flooding observed in areas between Rock, Pentucket, and Crane Ponds.

Hot Spots

The town does not contain many large areas of impervious cover, and there are very few “hot spots” identified in the Massachusetts EEA Statewide Land Surface Temperature (LST) Index. However, a few hot spots are present at the intersection of West Main Street and Central Street near the Georgetown Peabody Library and the Pearley School (see Figure 4-4 Hot Spots). These areas are good candidates for additional public shade trees and other heat mitigation strategies. The LST index was developed by combining surface temperature estimates from several days in 2018, 2019, and 2020 when the air temperature exceeded 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

Hot Spots (Land Surface Temperature)

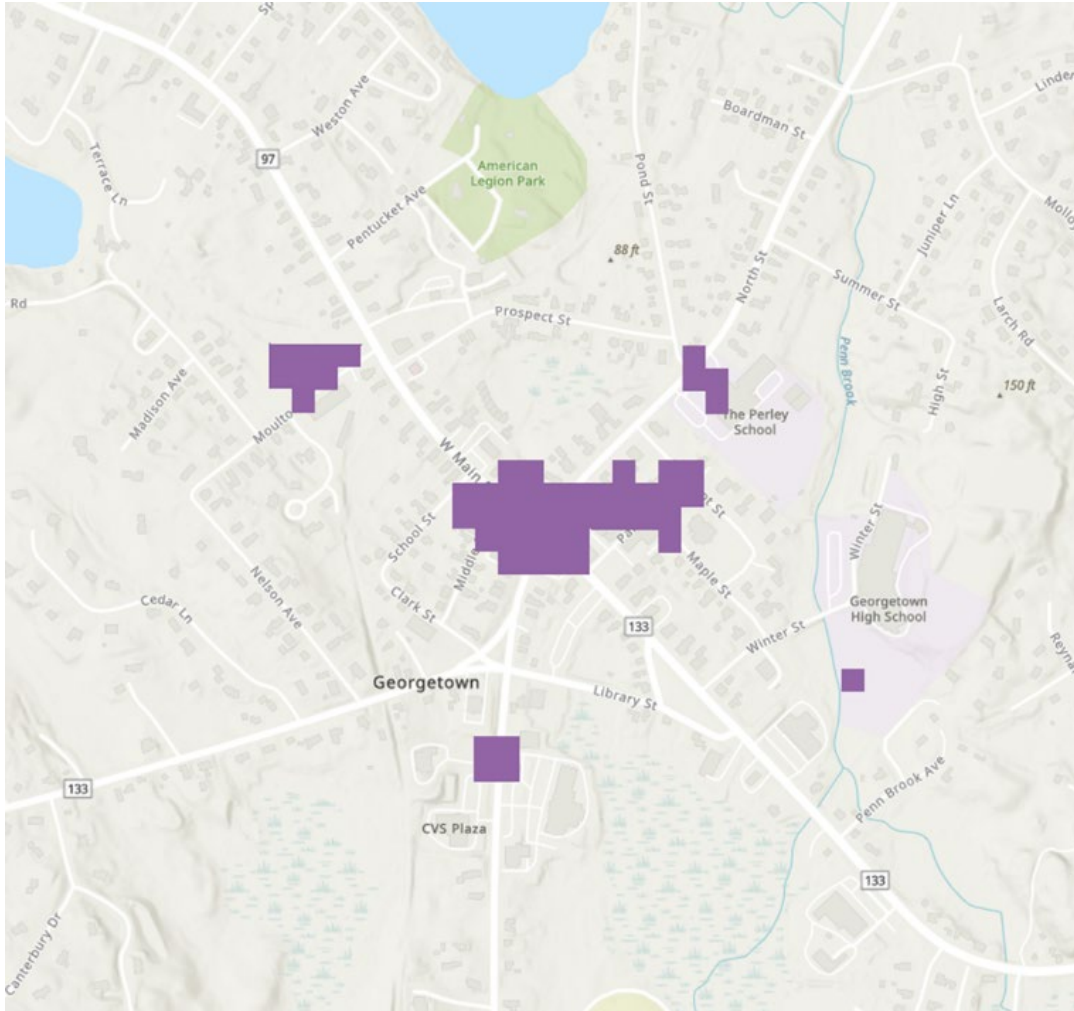


Figure 4-5 Hot Spots in Georgetown

Source: MassEEA Statewide Land Surface Temperature (LST) Index

5. Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

Open space is defined as land that is not developed and land, when developed, that is primarily for preservation or recreation. It includes conservation, forested, recreation, and agricultural lands, corridor and small parks, green buffers, and vacant lots and brownfields that can be turned into passive or active recreation areas. Open space can be used for passive activities such as walking and hiking or active recreational uses such as soccer or baseball. Open space may or may not be protected from development. Protected open space refers to open space that is owned by a municipality, a state or federal agency, a non-profit land trust organization, or privately and is primarily managed for conservation, recreation, or environmental protection.

The levels of protection described in this plan generally adhere to the MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space criteria:

- **Protected:** Land that is legally protected in perpetuity, as recorded in a deed or other official document. This includes land owned by the Town's Conservation Commission or, sometimes, by the Water Department, land with a conservation restriction held in perpetuity, land owned by state conservation agencies (under Article 97 protection), land owned by non-profit land trusts, or where the Town has received federal or state assistance for purchase or improvement. Private land is also considered protected if it has a deed restriction in perpetuity, an Agriculture Preservation Restriction (APR), or a Conservation Restriction (CR) in place.
- **Temporary:** Land that is legally protected for a limited time (e.g., short-term conservation restriction) or temporarily protected due to its functional use. For example, some water district lands are only temporarily protected if they serve a water resource protection function.
- **Limited:** Land that is protected by legal mechanisms other than those above or protected through functional or traditional use. This category also includes land that is likely to remain open space for other reasons, such as cemeteries.
- **None:** Land that is unprotected. This land is usually privately owned and could be sold without restriction at any time for another use (e.g., scout camps, private golf course, and private woodland).

Land dedicated to park and recreation purposes in its deed is also protected open space.

Additionally, land enrolled in special taxation programs under Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B are actively managed for forestry, agriculture, horticulture, or recreation. If these lands are sold, the community has the right of first refusal, allowing the Town the opportunity to acquire and permanently protect the parcel.

The open space and recreation areas in the Town of Georgetown include a variety of landscapes and land types with various owners, managers, and degrees of protection. The purpose of this inventory is to identify areas of conservation and recreation interest in the town to evaluate current and future open space planning needs. Areas of interest include open spaces that are valued for recreation opportunities, protection of natural resources, historic resources, and scenic character.

Why Open Space Protection is Important

Georgetown's natural resources and history have helped to create a distinctive landscape and a richness of culture that makes the town an attractive and interesting place to live and visit. Protection of these natural resources ensures a healthy environment that can provide safe drinking water, clean air, and outdoor recreation opportunities, and sustain healthy wildlife habitats and populations. Land use decisions that consider the community's natural constraints and opportunities will work to protect and preserve surface and groundwater resources, reduce air and noise pollution, limit erosion, moderate temperatures, and protect places of natural beauty and critical environmental concern.

In many cases, open space protection can be a reactive measure, mobilizing community funding to preserve the "last wetland" or "last farm." This method can not only be costly but can also result in disconnected fragments of conservation land. Establishing criteria to prioritize open space parcels for protection allows the Town and regional conservation partners to be strategic about which lands to acquire. Such a strategy can focus on developing a network of large, connected parcels of open space (green infrastructure) which have higher ecological value. Because natural systems do not necessarily adhere to political boundaries, natural resource protection is best achieved through regional collaboration. This approach emphasizes connections between natural habitat areas and corridors, study and collecting inventory information for unique sites of special importance such as vernal pools or endangered or rare habitats and species.

How Open Space is Protected

Public Land

Public conservation and recreation lands can be acquired by means including outright purchase, donation of land, or taking. In Massachusetts, lands acquired for conservation or recreation are generally referred to as Article 97 lands. However, to ensure these lands are protected by Article 97, the deed must include protection language. Georgetown should consider recording confirmatory deeds for any unprotected parcels currently used for conservation or recreation purposes to formally place them under Article 97.

In 1972, Massachusetts voters approved an amendment to the State Constitution, known as Article 97, requiring that any state-owned or municipally owned land taken or acquired for the preservation of natural resources shall not be used for other purposes unless the Massachusetts legislature approves the change by a two-thirds vote. Article 97 was intended to ensure that land acquired for these purposes was not converted to other inconsistent uses.

Some public recreation lands, however, such as school playgrounds and ballfields are not generally protected and can be easily sold or developed with local legislative approval.

However, any property that is either acquired or developed with grant assistance from EEA's Department of Conservation Resources (i.e., Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity, Parkland Acquisitions and Renovation for Communities, or Land and Water Conservation Fund), the converted land must be replaced with land of equal monetary value and recreational or conservation utility. While conversions do occur, the process is purposefully onerous to protect these conservation and recreation lands in perpetuity.

Private Land

Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B of the General Laws of Massachusetts are tax laws that allow for significant reduction of property taxes for landowners willing to maintain their land as managed forest, outdoor recreation, or agriculture. If a landowner chooses to withdraw land from this classification, the owner must pay a penalty tax to the municipality equal to the number of years a reduced tax has been paid on the land. When the land is put up for sale, the municipality has a right of first refusal to consider whether to buy the land outright.

Conservation restrictions, also called conservation easements, are voluntary yet binding legal agreements between a landowner and a municipality or land trust. The landowner is offered incentives (through estate tax and federal income tax deductions and property tax relief) to keep parcels in an undeveloped state either in perpetuity or for a specified number of years. The owner keeps control over the land, while the holder of the restriction promises to enforce the terms of protection. The unique features of conservation restrictions are that they leave land on the tax rolls, preserve land without public ownership, and allow, in many instances, for public access. In Massachusetts, all conservation restrictions must be submitted according to the written procedures of and approved by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs.

Other restrictions governed by Massachusetts General Laws are preservation restrictions, agricultural preservation restrictions, and watershed preservation restrictions. Preservation restrictions are legal agreements to preserve a structure or site for historical significance and must be approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. An agricultural preservation restriction (APR) applies to lands in active farming or forest use and must be approved by the Commissioner of Food and Agriculture. Watershed preservation restrictions are used for the purpose of protecting public water supplies and are approved by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Georgetown's open space and recreation lands comprise properties managed and administered by the Conservation Commission, the Water Department, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the School Department. The Highway Department is responsible for the mowing of parks, the School Department maintains playgrounds and ballfields. The Parks and Recreation Commission organizes many activities and programs for residents of all ages throughout the year, and the Georgetown Athletic Association runs programs including baseball, basketball, football, lacrosse, soccer, and softball and use town facilities and fields for their games and practices

Municipally Owned Conservation and Recreation Properties

Summary of Town Owned Parks & Recreation Facilities and Conservation Areas

Georgetown's Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the management of the following parks and pond areas:

- American Legion Park
- Greenway Recreation Park (East Main Street)
- Harry Murch Park
- Martel Way Park (undeveloped)
- Pillsbury Pond



Images of American Legion Park



Harry Murch Park



Pillsbury Pond



Greenway Recreation Park

The Georgetown Conservation Commission is responsible for the management of over 42 properties comprising nearly 826 acres (see Table 5-1). The Lufkins Brook Conservation Area currently has existing trails that pass through the forested areas, wetlands, and ponds. The Town has explored the possibility of modifying these trails to create a Universal Access Nature Trail (UANT), with minimal disturbance to the surrounding natural landscape. Additional improvements include new ADA-compliant parking spaces.

At the Camp Denison Conservation Area, the Bob Goodwin Memorial Trail has been explored as a potential UANT, with minor adjustment to the trail gradient and connections to public restroom facilities and cabins.⁹ The remaining 40 conservation properties do not consist of recreational amenities, and many consist only of wetlands.



Camp Denison

Essex County Greenbelt Association holds Conservation Restrictions on nine properties totaling around 225 acres, including two recently acquired parcels in 2025 along 28 Spofford Street. They include lands in:

- Bailey Lane Conservation Area
- Nelson Woods Conservation Area (adjacent to Camp Denison)
- Hampshire Woods Conservation Area
- Driftway Woods Conservation Area
- 8 Pearson Street

9. Active Living Research. (2015). Impact of Safe Routes to School Programs on Walking and Biking . Retrieved from https://activelivingresearch.org/sites/activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR_Review_SRTS_May2015_Slides.pdf

- Wheeler Brook Farm
- Barry Way
- Heather Lane
- 28 Stafford Street

The Georgetown Conservation Commission holds a Conservation Restriction (CR) on a 16.3-acre private property located near Stone Row.

In Massachusetts, a conservation restriction (also called a conservation easement) is a way to legally limit the use of private land to protect specified conservation values. All conservation restrictions must be approved by the Secretary of the EEA. Conservation Restrictions vary in purpose:

- A charitable deduction for federal income tax, gift, and estate tax purposes
- A perpetual conservation restriction required by a government agency in the permitting process
- Development rights restrictions which are purchased by a governmental agency or private, non-profit organization
- Other restrictions (such as for a term of years)

A conservation restriction is recorded in the chain of title of a property at the appropriate Registry of Deeds or Land Court, so all present and future owners have notice that a property is subject to a conservation restriction and that they are required to comply with its terms. The landowner continues to own the property and can sell or convey the property subject to the terms and conditions of the conservation restriction. The organization or agency, as “holder” of the restriction, assumes the responsibility of periodically monitoring the property to safeguard the conservation values and enforce compliance with the terms of the conservation restriction, typically called a stewardship program. All lands with conservation restrictions must have a CR Stewardship Plan that includes documentation of baseline conservation values, methodology for annual monitoring of the site, and written policies for enforcement of conservation restrictions.

Table 5-1 provides a complete list of recreation and conservation areas managed by the Town’s Parks and Recreation Department and the Conservation Commission; properties with a conservation restriction are denoted with an asterisk (*).

Table 5-1: Municipally Owned Conservation and Recreation Properties

Property Name	Current Use	Recreational Potential	Condition	Public Access	Grant Received
Acorn Way Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
American Legion Park	Little league baseball field, kickball field area with backstop, picnic area, beach access and docks for swimming, batting cage, basketball court, pavilion, two playgrounds, two tennis courts/four pickleball courts	Implement UANTs to adhere to ADA standards and to provide accessibility to park amenities such as the baseball field, beach front, and tennis courts, as outlined in the UANT feasibility study and schematic path designs. Incorporate bioswales along the trail leading to the rail trail and perform habitat restoration and invasive species management around the park.	Good	Yes	N/A
Bailey Lane Conservation Area*	No recreational amenities, conservation restriction	N/A	N/A	Yes	CPA
Blueberry Swamp Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Boxford Olde Farms Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes
Brocklebank Meadow Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A

Property Name	Current Use	Recreational Potential	Condition	Public Access	Grant Received
Camp Denison Conservation Area	Grill, picnic tables, pavilion, swing set, sandbox, dock, and a trail Lodges, nature center, restroom buildings, cabins, and storage buildings	Potential for universal access to Rail Trail and navigation around ecologically sensitive areas and natural landscapes, as outlined in the Universal Access Nature Trails (UANT) feasibility study and schematic path designs	Needs Improvement	Yes	Self-Help
Cat Island Lot	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Limited	N/A
Cedar Lane Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Conservation Area Adjacent to Pentucket Pond	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	Self-Help
Fairview Estates Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Fox Hollow Estates Conservation Area and Rear	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Georgetown Commons Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A

Property Name	Current Use	Recreational Potential	Condition	Public Access	Grant Received
Greenway Recreation Park (East Main Street)	Playing fields, fenced in dog park, picnic tables, soccer shed, wooded trails.	Improve accessibility to community features such as the dog park and playing fields, as outlined in the UANT feasibility study and schematic path designs. Implement proposed trailhead adjacent to the ADA compliant parking. Create an overlook area with interpretive signage near the pond along the proposed UANT. Develop this area to include pickleball, tennis courts, and other uses.	Good	Yes	CPA
Half Moon Meadow Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Hampshire Woods Conservation Area*	No recreational amenities Conservation restriction	N/A	N/A	Yes	CPA
Harris Way Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Harry Murch Park	War memorial with benches	Potential for an accessible path leading to the War Memorial.	Good	Yes	CPA
Hawk Meadow Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Hawk Way Exit	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Hickory Lane Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Jewett Street Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A

Property Name	Current Use	Recreational Potential	Condition	Public Access	Grant Received
Lisa Lane Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Little's Hill Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Lufkins Brook Conservation Area	Pre-existing trails that pass through dense forested areas, wetlands, and ponds	Modify trails to create a UANT with minimal disturbance to the surrounding natural landscape. Implement new ADA-compliant parking spaces.	Poor	Yes	LWCF
MacLennen Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	Self-Help
Martel Way Park	Currently undeveloped	Potential for sports field. Access point for a passive/active recreational greenway.	Currently undeveloped	Yes	CPA
Nelson Woods Conservation Area*	No recreational amenities Conservation restriction	N/A	N/A	Yes	CPA
North Street Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Penn Brook Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Pentucket Acres Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Pillsbury Pond Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	CPA
Pillsbury Village Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Pond Street Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A

Property Name	Current Use	Recreational Potential	Condition	Public Access	Grant Received
Rainbow Ridge Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Rosemarie Lane Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Silvermine Lane Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Tenny Street Parcel	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
The Swamp Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
ThurLOW Street Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
True Lane Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Turning Leaf Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Upper Parker River Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Web Road Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
West Street Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Westover Farms Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Wiffletree Lane Conservation Area	No recreational amenities	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A

Public Properties Providing Conservation and Recreation Amenities

The following public properties provide conservation and recreational amenities but are not held by municipal conservation or recreation departments; properties with a conservation restriction are denoted with an asterisk (*).

- 28 Spofford Street*
- Baldpate Hill Reservation
- Baldpate Hill Twin Water Storage Tanks
- Baldpate Pond State Park
- Crane Pond WMA
- Chaplin Baldpate Hill Reservation
- Driftway Woods Conservation Area*
- Georgetown Middle/High School
- Georgetown Rowley State Forest
- Georgetown Water Supply
- Off Baldpate Road Old Standpipe
- Pearson Street
- Perley School Playground
- Penn Brook Elementary School Playground
- Proposed Standpipe Long Hill
- Rock Pond Boat Launch
- South Byfield Cemetery
- Swanton Way Conservation Area
- Tolman Reservation
- Union Cemetery
- Upper Park River WMA



Rock Pond Boat Launch

Table 5-2: Public Properties Providing Conservation and Recreation Amenities

Property Name	Owner	Current Use
28 Spofford Street*	Essex County Greenbelt Association	Water Protection Land
Baldpate Hill Reservation	Essex County Greenbelt Association	Baldpate Hill (351 Ft)
Baldpate Hill Twin Water Storage Tanks	Georgetown Water Department	Water Protection Land
Baldpate Pond State Park	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	Boating, Fishing, Trails
Crane Pond WMA	Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game	Wildlife Management Area
Chaplin Bladpate Hill Reservation	Essex County Greenbelt Association	Wetlands and Wildlife Habitat
Driftway Woods Conservation Area*	Town of Georgetown, Conservation Restriction held by Essex County Greenbelt Association	Wetlands and Wildlife Habitat
Georgetown Middle/High School	Georgetown School Department	Multipurpose Field, Baseball/Softball Diamond
Georgetown Rowley State Forest	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	Year-round recreational activities (i.e., horseback riding, hiking, walking, hunting, and cross-country skiing)
Georgetown Water Supply	Georgetown Water Department	Water Protection Land
Off Baldpate Road Old Standpipe	Georgetown Water Department	Water Protection Land
Pearson Street	Essex County Greenbelt Association	Parcel connection between Driftway Woods Conservation Area and Swanton Way Conservation Area Wildlife Habitat
Perley School	Georgetown School Department	Baseball Field, Basketball Courts, Playground
Penn Brook Elementary School	Georgetown School Department	Multipurpose Field, Baseball/Softball Field, ADA Compliant Playground
Proposed Standpipe Long Hill	Georgetown Water Department	Water Protection Land
Rock Pond Boat Launch	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	Boat Launch
South Byfield Cemetery	South Byfield Cemetery Association	Private Cemetery

Property Name	Owner	Current Use
Swanton Way Conservation Area	Essex County Greenbelt Association	Wetlands and Wildlife Habitat
Tolman Reservation	Essex County Greenbelt Association	Wetlands and Wildlife Habitat
Union Cemetery	Town of Georgetown	Private Cemetery
Upper Parker River WMA	Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game	Wildlife Management Area

Permanently Protected Private Parcels

Private protected lands include private forested lands (chapter 61 classified), agricultural lands (chapter 61A classified), recreation lands (chapter 61B classified), and lands under a conservation restriction. Presently, there are no agricultural preservation restrictions in Georgetown.

Table 5-3: Permanently Protected Private Lands

Parcel ID/Property Name	Duration of Easement	Current Use
1-2A/Andover St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
1-2B/Andover St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
1-12A/Andover St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
4-14A/Nelson St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
4-53/Chaplin Hills Rd	term-limited	Chapter 61 Forestry Land
5-3E/Andover St	term-limited	Chapter 61B Recreational Land
9-1/Central St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
12-8/Pond St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
12-25A/Pillsbury St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
12-25B/Pillsbury St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
12-56/North St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
13-10/Pond St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
16-48/Tenny St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
16-48/Tenny St	term-limited	Chapter 61 Forestry Land
17-108/Jewett St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
17-109/Jewett St	term-limited	Chapter 61B Recreational Land
20-6/Jackman St	term-limited	Chapter 61 Forestry Land
20-67/Jackman St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
20-35/Warren St	term-limited	Chapter 61 Forestry Land

Parcel ID/Property Name	Duration of Easement	Current Use
20-38/Warren St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
20-39/Warren St	term-limited	Chapter 61A Agricultural Land
17-110/Wheeler Brook CR	In perpetuity	Conservation Restriction
18-39C/Barry Way CR	In perpetuity	Conservation Restriction
6C-71 /Heather Lane CR	In perpetuity	Conservation Restriction
18-44/Pearson Street CR	In perpetuity	Conservation Restriction
17-86C/Ruh CR	In perpetuity	Conservation Restriction

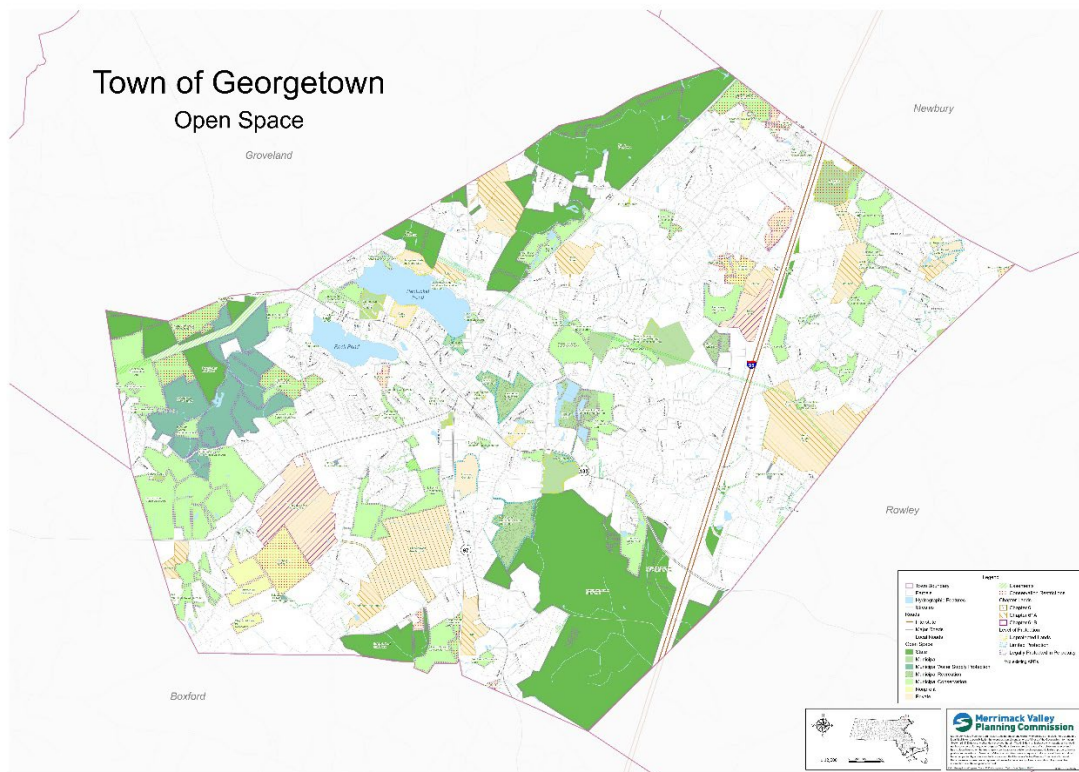


Figure 5-2: Inventory of Open Space Map

Park and Open Space Equity

Georgetown provides just 2.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents (calculated using parks and playgrounds managed by Georgetown’s Parks and Recreation), compared to the national average of 10.2 acres reported by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA)).

The 2025 survey indicated that while Georgetown residents are generally satisfied with the condition and availability of recreational facilities and programming, many also expressed a desire for better connectivity through paths and trails, improved signage, and more accessible recreational spaces.

According to Trust for Public Land’s (TPL) ParkServe data, over 65% of Georgetown residents are modeled as living within a 10-minute walk to a park or recreation area. However, results from the 2025 community survey suggest a different lived experience: more than half (52%) of the respondents reported that it takes them over 10 minutes to walk to the nearest park or recreation facility. This discrepancy may reflect conditions not captured in the modeling such as incomplete sidewalks or other barriers that influence how residents experience access. Areas west and east of the Interstate 95 highway were identified as priority areas for new parks (see Figure 5-3).

ParkServe data is prioritized based on six equally weighted factors: population density, density of low-income households, density of people of color, air pollution respiratory hazard, urban heat islands, and health. However, ParkServe’s data is limited to its definition of accessible parks and walkable service areas. ParkServe’s methodology uses GIS boundaries, satellite imagery, and signage viewable through Google Street view to delineate park boundaries. The ParkServe database uses Esri’s Street Map Premium network dataset to create a half-mile walkable service area, which allows for physical barriers such as highways, train tracks, or rivers without bridges.

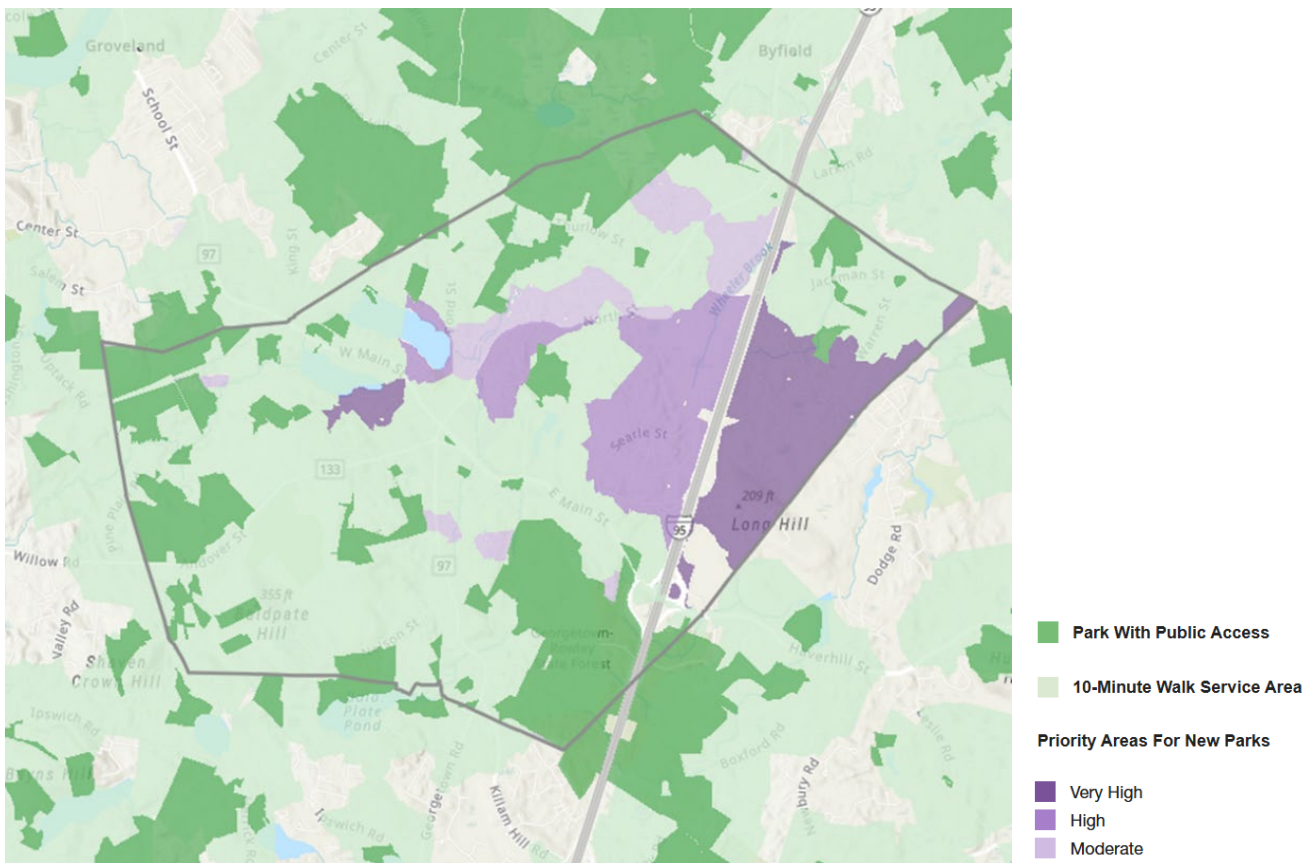


Figure 5-3: Georgetown Parks with Public Access and Priority Areas for New Park

6. Analysis of Needs

A. Summary of Natural Resource Protection Needs

Inland wetlands, undeveloped forested uplands, undeveloped land bordering ponds and major streams, surface waters, scenic roads and vistas, agricultural lands, unprotected lands which provide linkage between existing dedicated open spaces, and potential lands suitable for active recreational uses may be at risk due to current and future demand for land development.

Great strides have clearly been made in protecting Georgetown's open space and natural resources, but a great deal more work remains to be done. It is important in preparing for this latest update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan that trends in the physical character of the town, as well as the expressed desires of the residents be documented.

Water Quality

Based on the 2025 town-wide survey, when asked about open space preservation and protection needs, Georgetown residents expressed that their greatest concern was protecting the town's water quality. Over 84% of respondents rated it as "very important" and over 13% rated it as "important." Town owned parks, playgrounds, and or/recreation areas were also highly valued, with over 78% of respondents rating them as "very important" and 19% rating them as "important." Passive recreation opportunities such as hiking, biking, and walking trails were similarly prioritized, with more than 78% of respondents rating them as "very important" and 18% as "important."

The Conservation Commission and Water Department have acquired large tracts of undeveloped land in the watershed that contains the Town's wells and aquifer recharge areas. Control of these lands is critical for effective water supply protection. In addition, a special water protection district bylaw was adopted by Town Meeting in 1985 and revised in 1992. This prohibits several potentially harmful land use activities, such as toxic chemical storage and metal plating, and carefully regulates others, such as vehicle repair stations, by special permit. Complementing these measures is the Water Department's ambitious leak detection and repair program that helps to minimize waste and conserve water for future needs. It will be important for the town to build on these actions by acquiring additional conservation lands in the vicinity of the municipal wells and by diligently enforcing the zoning and wetlands bylaws, sanitary code, and other groundwater protection measures.

Wetlands

The Conservation Commission is responsible for the local administration of the Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Chapter 131, section 40). The purpose of this act is to preserve the critical natural functions of wetlands, including protection of public or private water supplies and groundwater, flood control, storm drainage prevention, pollution prevention, protection of land containing shellfish, protection of fisheries, and protection of land supporting wildlife

habitat. These are important public benefits that are all too often threatened by unsound land development. The Conservation Commission reviews all Notices of Intent and other development proposals that might alter or impair these important areas. The Commission has the authority to impose strict mitigating measures - “Orders of Conditions” - to ensure that water quality and other wetland interests are not compromised. As an aid to this effort, the Conservation Commission and Planning Board crafted a local Wetlands Protection By-law and regulations to complement the state statute, and adopted at Town Meeting.

Wetlands protection is important because of the continuing threat of encroachment into these important resource areas. In Georgetown, as elsewhere, many acres of wetlands were indiscriminately dredged and filled in the past. It will be important for the Conservation Commission and other town boards to remain vigilant so that these remaining vital resources are adequately protected.

Data from MA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) shows wetland changes detected in Georgetown have primarily been due to commercial developments, residential developments, and new roads. Wetland changes were also observed because of commercial development and construction of new roads. Changes in wetlands were noted at Cat Island, near East Main Street, near Georgetown Rowley State Forest, and at the Black Swan Country Club. According to the LWCF Manual, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORPs) must include a wetlands priority component that is consistent with Section 303 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. The wetlands priority component must show that the authors of the SCORP consulted with the state agency responsible for fish and wildlife resources, include a list of wetland types given priority status when acquiring land, and discuss outdoor recreation opportunities that utilize wetland resources.

Massachusetts is active in protecting, preserving, and restoring our wetlands. Wetlands work to reduce pollution and flooding while supporting ecosystems and providing cleaner water. Mass Audubon has estimated that freshwater and saltwater wetlands in Massachusetts provide \$2.3 billion in annual ecosystem service value, while the Army Corps of Engineers has estimated that wetlands in the Charles River watershed prevent \$18 million in flood damage every year. The filling of wetlands was once a significant issue facing Massachusetts. Thankfully, wetlands losses have slowed over the past decade. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the state’s Conservation Commissions review thousands of applications annually from parties that wish to work in or near wetlands. This work has helped to protect wetlands from alteration.

The Conservation Commission and Water Department working together have acquired several scenic forests, meadows, and wetland areas in town. These are not only protecting important water and wildlife resources but are also helping to maintain the scenic rural landscape that makes Georgetown an attractive place to live and work. In the face of continuing growth pressure, there will be an ongoing need to set aside additional lands to preserve the scenic quality of Georgetown’s roads, hillsides, and waterways.

Flood Areas

To minimize flood hazards and property damage, and to preserve important water resources, there is a need to better define the town's flood zones and to institute more effective development controls. The wise use and protection of Georgetown's natural resources depends on the public's understanding and appreciation of the important functions these resources serve in the community. Whether it is preserving critical wetlands or keeping woodland hiking trails free from unsightly litter, public awareness is a key ingredient in the overall success of the town's conservation effort.

The Conservation Commission, working with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, has assembled several maps and inventories of the town's important natural resource areas. It will be important to maintain up-to-date inventories and maps of the town's open public spaces, resources, agricultural areas, and historic sites, as well as lands of interest. The Open Space Working Group and Committee, with the help of members of the Conservation Commission, Parks and Recreation, Selectmen, and private citizens, working with Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, must review and update the maps and inventories periodically. By clearly identifying and understanding the town's network of open spaces and resources both controlled and desired, and by tracking the needs of the town on an ongoing basis, the town will be better able to react to changing conditions and act on opportunities to protect additional resources as they arise.

B. Summary of Community's Outdoor Recreation Needs

As detailed in Section 2, the 2025 Update incorporates resident feedback collected through an open house, public forum, and an online survey.

Online Survey

The surveys were advertised online on March 6, 2025, and closed on March 21, 2025. The survey was conducted to understand the needs and concerns of Georgetown residents related to open space and recreation needs. Participants were asked to share satisfaction with parks and recreation, identify areas for improvement or preservation, and express their desired recreational amenities for existing facilities. Additionally, open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide further comments, concerns, or suggestions related to parks and recreation in Georgetown.

The online survey received a total of 119 responses. A summary of key findings is included in Section 6: Community Goals, with the full results available in Appendix B: Public Participation and Survey Results.

Key Findings

- The American Legion Park is the most frequently used recreational facility, with 30% visiting at least once a week and Camp Denison is the most frequently visited conservation area, with 17% visiting at least once a week.

- Many respondents indicated that they rarely or never visit conservation areas, Camp Denison being the notable exception.
- More than half of the respondents indicated that they rarely or never visit Rock Pond (61%), Greenway Recreation Park (57%), Harry Murch Park (56%), and Pillsbury Pond (52%).
- Most respondents feel neutral about both the availability of recreational programming and the condition of existing recreational facilities.
- When it comes to accessibility, responses are evenly split between neutral and satisfied (both around 39%), with only 15% expressing dissatisfaction in this category. However, it's important to note that all respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the accessibility of existing recreational facilities also indicated that a person with a physical disability lives in their household.
- Passive recreation such as walking, strolling, and fitness are the most common activities in Georgetown's recreational areas.
- More than half of the respondents indicated (52%) that it takes them over 10 minutes to walk to the park or recreation facility located nearest to them.
- The top five desired recreational needs in Georgetown include: Nature Trails (78%), Biking Trails (50%), Playgrounds (47%), Outdoor Swimming (29%), Picnic Areas (24%).
- The top five desired improvements for existing parks and recreational facilities include:
 - Link open space parcels and trails (57.14%)
 - Expand and improve bicycle and pedestrian network (55.46%)
 - Safer/wider sidewalks (52.94%)
 - Enhance accessibility to conservation lands for passive recreation (36.13%)
 - Create dog-friendly parks (29.41%)
- Over two-thirds of the respondents want the town to prioritize preserving and protecting the following:
 - Water resources for water supply (84.87%)
 - Town-owned parks, playgrounds, and/or recreation areas (78.99%)
 - Hiking, biking, and walking trails (78.15%)
 - Scenic landscapes (68.91%)
 - Shade trees/street trees (67.23%)
 - Conservation lands (67.23%)
- The following location-specific recommendations for enhanced accessibility were suggested through the survey:
 - Ground level benches, an ADA compliant nature trail, improved accessibility for strollers and wheelchairs, and improved parking at American Legion Park
 - Level parking, benches, and trails at Camp Denison Conservation Area
 - Level natural areas for exercise at Lufkin Brook Conservation Area
 - Improved accessibility along the Rail Trail including additional signage, maps, and information
 - Improved access for motorboats
- The following location-specific recommendations for linkages between open space parcels were suggested through the survey:
 - Connect Georgetown Rowley State Forest to trails and Crane Pond
 - Multiple respondents suggested connecting Georgetown Rail Trail with Boxford

- Rail Trail
 - Create a pedestrian network linking Marlboro/Tenney neighborhood with open space areas, Pillsbury neighborhood, downtown, and the high school.
 - Establish a safe trail network and parking area for Lufkins Brook Conservation Area
 - Complete recreation paths and ensure they are fully paved or graveled
 - Create connections to the Newbury trail that avoid West Main traffic.
- The following location-specific recommendations for upgrading recreational facilities were suggested through the survey:
 - Pave the parking lot, add landscaping, and build a new outdoor amphitheater at American Legion Park
 - A running track near American Legion Park
 - Multiple respondents suggested a new playground, including one specific suggestion for a playground in the Marlboro/Tenny neighborhood
 - Construct a skateboard park
 - Construct a softball field

Open House

The town held an open house on March 25, 2025. Participants provided input on display maps and shared their recreational preferences including activities, environmental health and sustainability, and other programming through dot voting. They also shared aspirations for the town’s open space by writing on sticky notes and placing them under broad based recreational goals. Additionally, participants were provided with one page of key findings related to open space. A summary of the dot voting exercise and recreational preferences board is included in Section 6: Community Goals, with the full results available in Appendix B: Public Participation and Survey Results.

Table 6-1: Recreational Preferences Dot Voting Results

Category	Dot Votes
Field Based Recreational Activities	Track Running (14) Pickleball (14) Tennis (10) Multi-Use Fields (Football, Lacrosse, Field Hockey, Soccer) (10) Basketball (2) Little League (2) <i>Write Ins:</i> <i>Multi-use field with track surround – possibly at high school upper fields</i> <i>Improve existing multiuse fields before more</i>

Category	Dot Votes
Nature Based Activities	Trails/Hikes (28) Wildlife Watching/Scenic Viewing (10) Fishing Docks (9) Picnic Areas (8) Boat Launch Areas (7) <i>Write Ins:</i> <i>Accessible trails – ADA compliant</i> <i>Get Boxford to clean up Baldpate Pond</i> <i>Invasives</i>
Recreational Amenities	Benches (9) Adaptive Play Equipment (9) Informative Signage (9) Fitness Stations (8) Shade Structures (7) Water Fountains (3)
Environmental Health and Sustainability	Stormwater Mitigation through Green Infrastructure (17) Environmental Education (12) Invasive Species Management (12) Urban Tree Canopy (11) Environmental Stewardship (9)
Other	Playgrounds (16) Community Garden (11) Improved Parking (11) Dog Parks (7) Sledding (3) Splash Pad (2)

Table 6-2: Aspirations for Broad Board Goals

Broad Based Goals	Aspirations
Sustainably manage water resources by protecting water supply, improving water quality, and preserving habitats to support biodiversity.	Projects to improve wildlife habitat and water quality. Protect and conserve historical and cultural and landscape sites.
Enhance recreational opportunities by linking open space and trails, improving the bicycle and pedestrian network, maintaining existing facilities and programs, increasing access to conservation lands for passive recreation, and addressing new recreational needs.	Maintain existing facilities. Multiple responses in support of trails include: Pave and maintain the Rail Trail please. Create an accessible trail Connect Groveland Trail to B2B.

Broad Based Goals	Aspirations
Protect and preserve historic and cultural resources, scenic and historic landscapes, and acquire land for future cemetery use.	Future cemetery Acquire Woodman's Farm
Improve open space management and support education and networking opportunities.	Continue work with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) and conservation groups.
Other	Redevelop West St. Fields Multiple responses in support of the rail trail

Active Recreation

American Legion Park is the town's principal park and has many amenities and activities including basketball, tennis, swimming, baseball, a playground, bandstand, small watercraft access to Pentucket Pond, and volleyball. It serves as a center for community celebrations and activities. The potential for a rail trail linkage must be explored.

School properties including Penn Brook, Perley Middle, and Georgetown Middle and High Schools provide numerous recreation and sports fields, diamonds, courts, and playgrounds. In 2019, the town collaborated with Gale Associates, Inc. to develop an Athletic Field Master Plan. The plan recommended exploring artificial turf, ensuring ADA compliance, upgrading site amenities, and evaluating opportunities for the development of new athletic fields. The High School gym is open for drop-in activities (basketball) several days a week.

The proposed Martel Way Greenway that could connect several resources could be supported with entrance points at Martel Way and East Main Street. The 9.6 acre at East Main parcel includes playing fields and dog park. There may also be potential for more passive recreational uses and water access at the site. The 10 acres at Martel Way is a longer-term project and offers potential for an additional sports field. Additional easements, leases or licenses for rights-of-way will be needed to complete the vision of the Greenway.

West Street Fields include two soccer/multi-purpose fields and the potential for a third exists. The area also represents future well fields, water treatment zones 1 & 2, and is a breeding area for Blanding Turtles (an endangered species).

Other needs identified include more recreational fields, a pickleball court, a running track, pump track for bike riding, fitness stations along trails, and improved sidewalks outside the Central Business District to increase mobility and access.

Aquatic Recreation

Most if not all the water-based recreation takes place at the two largest ponds in town. Rock Pond is the smaller of the two ponds and is used for private recreation. Public access is limited to a public boat ramp which is located on West Main Street. Pentucket Pond which is adjacent to American Legion Park comprises some 85 acres and is the primary area for water-based

activities.

Playgrounds

There are two playgrounds used in town. The Joseph Soucy Memorial playground is available for use at the Penn Brook School. The larger playground is located at the American Legion Park. According to the 2025 online survey, the American Legion Park is the most frequently used recreational facility, with 30% of respondents reporting they visit at least once a week. Respondents have expressed desire for an ADA compliant nature trail, improved accessibility for strollers and wheelchairs, and improved parking at American Legion Park. Multiple respondents also expressed desire for a new playground, including one specific suggestion for a playground in the Marlboro/Tenny neighborhood.

Passive Recreation

While there is abundance of opportunities for passive or informal recreation Georgetown, many respondents in the town-wide survey indicated that they rarely or never visit town owned conservation areas, Camp Denison being the notable exception. Georgetown's passive recreation opportunities also include Georgetown Rowley State Forest, Crane Pond Wildlife Area and others. The town's two major ponds, Pentucket Pond and Rock Pond, have access and are well used. Water Department lands also allow public access. Georgetown can also access the ocean through nearby towns like Rowley, Newbury, and Ipswich.

The town wide survey and open house noted several opportunities for improvement to Georgetown's passive recreation options. Participants indicated a desire to link open space parcels and trails, expanding and improving bicycle and pedestrian networks, enhancing accessibility to conservation land, and adding new picnic areas.

One of the biggest assets to the town is the variety of open space that can be used for hiking, jogging or exploring the forest and adjacent streams. Conservation properties including Lufkins Brook and Hampshire Woods, the many Water Department lands, state-owned lands including the Georgetown Rowley State Forest and Cranes Pond Area and lands managed by non-profit organizations including Bailey Woods all provide opportunities for passive recreation. Camp Denison is a unique resource that includes 26 acres of forest land, cabins and a lodge located on Baldpate Pond.

The town's existing conservation lands are valuable community assets, though some areas have limited accessibility and underutilized features. Establishing a regular maintenance and improvement schedule would help ensure these lands remain safe, functional, and welcoming for passive recreation by residents of all ages. Collaboration with local stewardship committees and service organizations (such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts) could support these efforts. Activities like cleanup days and trail maintenance events may also be organized with community participation.



Over 78% of survey respondents indicated that preserving land for passive recreation such as hiking, biking, and walking trails is a high priority. Activities like walking, strolling, and fitness are the most common uses of Georgetown's recreational areas. However, many respondents noted that they rarely or never visit town-owned conservation areas, with Camp Denison being the notable exception. When asked about recreational needs, the top two preferences were nature trails (78%) and biking trails (49%). As for

improvements to existing parks and recreational facilities, the top three priorities included linking open space parcels and trails (57%), expanding and improving the bicycle and pedestrian network (55%), and providing safer/wider sidewalks (53%). Respondents also noted the need to improve accessibility along trails with additional signage, maps, and information.

The Georgetown Conservation Land Policy affirms that municipal conservation lands are irreplaceable resource requiring protection and environmentally sensitive management to preserve the town's natural heritage. See Appendix C: Georgetown Conservation Land Policy for the conservation purposes and values adopted by the Georgetown Commission in 1999.

Special Open Space and Recreation Needs

It is important to note that all respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the accessibility of existing recreational facilities in Georgetown also indicated that a person with a physical disability lives in their household. As a result, open space upgrades should prioritize universal design, accessible pathways, and adaptive play equipment to ensure inclusive access.

The following location-specific accessibility improvements were identified through the survey, particularly for American Legion Park: ground-level benches; an ADA-compliant nature trail; enhanced accessibility for strollers and wheelchairs; and improved parking.

The Town must balance open space and recreation facilities that serve youth and families, such as tot lots and structured recreational facilities like ballfields, with an increasing need for passive recreation options that support older adults, such as walking and accessible green spaces.

Participants in the online survey expressed neutral about the availability of recreational programming. The Town offers activities through the Georgetown Youth Community Center, Council on Aging, Georgetown Athletic Association, as well as town-wide events such as the Georgetown Summer Concert Series, public and private camps (Camp Denison and Camp Leslie), and opportunities such as at Workshop in the Woods, Black Swan Country Club, and The Brocklebank Museum.

SCORP

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is developed by individual states to be eligible for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants. Since it was first required in 1960, the SCORP has also become a valuable tool for states to use in planning for future needs and uses of outdoor resources for public recreation and relaxation. The Stateside Program of the LWCF has been used successfully to aid in acquisition of conservation projects such as hunting and fishing sites, heritage corridors, greenways and riverways, as well as funding the development of outdoor recreation facilities.

Georgetown's OSRP update identifies several actions that align with the priorities outlined in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' SCORP 2023. Doing so ensures that local projects contribute to broader statewide objectives. These goals include regularly assessing the need for improved water access points and collaborating with neighboring communities to pursue major trail projects. The four goals of the MA SCORP 2023 include:

- Improve access to beaches and other water-based recreation facilities.
- Support trail projects.
- Create and renovate neighborhood parks, especially to benefit the underserved.
- Create opportunities, especially for the underserved, to enjoy protected natural areas.

C. Management Needs

Staffing and Volunteers

Georgetown currently in 2025 has a full-time Conservation Director. This allows the Conservation Commission to administer not only its duties under the Wetlands Protection Act but also the responsibilities and activities envisioned for conservation purposes. The Open Space Committee, consisting of members of various boards, commissions, and private citizens, works with its town liaison to track progress on open space goals and objectives, maintain and update maps and data, and regularly update the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Communication and coordination amongst departments, boards and committees was identified in surveys as vitally important in acquiring, improving and managing the town's open space and recreation resources.

Policies and Regulations for the Use of Public Lands

The existing public and quasi-public conservation areas in Georgetown are owned and managed by several different entities: the Conservation Commission, the Water Department, the State Fisheries & Wildlife Department, and the Essex County Greenbelt Association. There is a need to better coordinate the individual management policies of these agencies to ensure that the dual purposes of public recreational use and resource protection are achieved. A positive step in this direction would be for town boards to work cooperatively to develop management plans that are tailored to the individual municipally owned lands in town. The Conservation Land Policies developed by the Conservation Commission could be used as a guide.

6. Ten Year Action Plan

An action plan is a compilation of recommended strategies that address the Plan's goals and objectives. The action plan matrix consists of the following information: actions, priority, responsible party, potential funding source, and timeframe. It is prioritized and organized by general goals for easy reference. The four categories of goals are:

- Environmental Goals
- Recreational Goals
- Historical and Cultural Goals
- Organizational Goals

Section 6 of this Plan provides a broader discussion of the findings that form the basis for the recommended actions.

Priorities

A high, medium, or low priority level is assigned to each action in consideration of immediacy of need, resources and funding available, and anticipated impact on resources, facilities, or programs. High priority items indicate a need to begin or complete an action within one to three years, medium priority actions within three to five years, and lower priority actions to be addressed in five to ten years. Potential funding sources are included where applicable.

Priority Key

A: Highest Priority

B: Moderate Priority

C: Lower Priority

Responsible Parties

Specific parties have been identified for each action step. Acronyms for departments or others responsible for implementing actions are listed below.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ▪ BOS Board of Selectmen | ▪ MVPC Merrimack Valley Planning Commission |
| ▪ CC Conservation Commission | ▪ PB Planning Board |
| ▪ ECGA Essex County Greenbelt Association | ▪ PD Planning Department |
| ▪ GAA Georgetown Athletic Association | ▪ PR Parks & Recreation |
| ▪ HC Historical Commission | ▪ OSC Open Space Committee |
| ▪ HD Highway Department | ▪ WD Water Department |
| | ▪ ZBA Zoning Board of Appeals |

Potential Funding Sources

Along with general funding allocations from the Town, additional sources that could be utilized for park and open space improvements include:

- **MA Community Compact Cabinet (CCC)** – Best Practices Compact
- **MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)** – MassTrails Grant Program, Urban and Community Forestry Challenge
- **MA Division of Conservation Services (DCS)** – Conservation Partnership Grant, Local Acquisitions of Natural Diversity Grant, Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, DCS Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities Grant, Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grant Program, Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program
- **MA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)** – 604(b) Water Quality Management Planning, Water Utility Resilience Program, Clean Water State Revolving Fund
- **MA Division of Ecological Restoration (DER)** – Streamflow Restoration Programs, Dam Removal Program, Urban River Revitalization Program, Wetlands Restoration Program, Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program
- **MA Department of Transportation (MassDOT)** – Chapter 90 Program, Transportation Enhancement Program, Complete Streets Program
- **MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)** – Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP), Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Program, Environmental Trust General Grant, EEA Planning Assistance Grant
- **MA Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED)** – Community One Stop for Growth (includes MassWorks)
- **MA Office on Disability (MOD)** – Municipal ADA Improvement Grant
- **MA Office of Outdoor Recreation (MOOR)** – Inclusive and Accessible Events Grants Program
- **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)** – New England Forests and Rivers Fund
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** – Community Development Block Grant Funding (CDBG)
- **U.S. Department of Transportation** – Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- **Community Preservation Act**

Ten-Year Schedule

Table 7-1: Ten-Year Action Plan

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Environmental Goal: Sustainably manage water resources by protecting water supply, improving water quality, and preserving habitats to support biodiversity.													
Objective: Protect water resources for water supply and resource management.													
Collaborate with non-profit organizations and other partners to acquire or otherwise preserve lands critical to water resource protection.	A	CC, OSC, BOS, WD	DCS, CPA		X	X							
Regularly share information on watershed protection goals and initiatives with regulatory departments and review boards to ensure consistency in project review and permitting decisions.	A	CC, PD, PB, ZBA, WD, BOS	EEA, DEP		X	X							
Collaborate with local and regional stakeholders, including MVPC, to update a Watershed Action Plan every 10 years.	B	CC, PD, MVPC, WD, BOS	EEA, DEP, CCC			X	X	X					
Hold an annual Watershed District meeting or workshop to engage citizens and stakeholders, providing a forum to share concerns and ideas.	B	CC, PD, BOS	CCC, EEA			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Promote efficient water use by providing educational materials and endorsing best practices.	B	WD, CC, PD	DEP, EEA MVP		X		X		X		X		X

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Initiate the development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) at Rock Pond and Pentucket Pond to reduce nutrient loading and improve water quality.	A	CC, WD, PD	DEP		X	X							
Maintain vegetated buffers along pond edges to improve water quality.	A	CC, PD, WD, HD	DEP, DER, DCS		X	X	X	X	X				
Monitor cyanobacteria in Georgetown's ponds to detect harmful blooms and protect public health and recreational use.	A	WD, CC, BOH, PD	DEP, EEA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Monitor drought conditions by tracking precipitation levels to reduce impacts on water supply.	A	WD, CC, PD, BOS	DEP, EEA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Implement a municipal sewer system, with priority areas near Georgetown Ponds.	A	BOS, WD, PD, HD, CC	DEP, EOED	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Implement stormwater mitigation strategies such as green infrastructure to reduce flooding and erosion from runoff at existing parks and recreation areas.	B	CC	EEA, DER			X	X	X					
Implement nature-based solution recommendations from the town's Natural Resource Infrastructure Assessment.	A	CC	EEA		X	X			X	X		X	X
Objective: Protect habitats for biodiversity.													

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Retain qualified professionals to develop comprehensive management plans for critical beaver activity sites.	B	CC, PD, BOS, WD	EEA, DCR, NFWF				X	X	X				
Collaborate with the Merrimack Valley Bird Club and Mass Audubon to identify opportunities and implement strategies that protect and enhance grasslands and other bird habitats.	B	CC, OSC, PR, PD	NFWF, DCS, EEA				X	X	X	X			
Encourage homeowners to plant native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers that provide food and shelter for wildlife.	B	CC, OSC	EEA				X	X	X				
Install bird, bat, and wood duck boxes in suitable areas to support biodiversity.	B	CC, OSC	NFWF, DCR			X		X		X			
Develop programs to raise public awareness and appreciation of vernal pools and their ecological importance.	B	CC, OSC	EEA, DCR				X	X		X	X		X
Develop programs to raise awareness and appreciation of critical habitats that support rare and endangered animal and plant species.	B	CC, OSC	EEA, NFWF, DCR				X	X		X	X		X
Link conservation areas to strengthen wildlife corridors and promote ecological connectivity.	A	CC, OSC, MVPC	DCS, EEA, NFWF		X	X	X	X	X				

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Address invasive species concerns, including the presence of Carolina Fanwort in Pentucket Pond.	A	CC, WD, HD	DEP, EEA, NFWF		X	X	X	X					
Limit development near wetlands to protect wildlife habitat.	A	PB, PD, ZBA	EEA, CCC, DEP		X	X	X						
Consider the future acquisition of parcels surrounding Penn Brook Conservation Area, Camp Denison Conservation Area, and the Georgetown Rowley State Forest to support biodiversity and maintain important ecological functions.	A	CC, OSC, PD, BOS	DCS, EEA, CPA		X		X		X		X		
Enhance wildlife crossing areas to reduce animal conflicts with powerlines.	B	CC, OSC, PD	NFWF, EEA, DCR, CPA			X	X		X	X			
Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Recreational Goal: Enhance recreational opportunities by linking open space and trails, improving the bicycle and pedestrian network, maintaining existing facilities and programs, increasing access to conservation lands for passive recreation, and addressing new recreational needs.													
Objective: Link open space parcels and trails.													
Continue to update the MVPC open space map and develop a comprehensive trail map and guide by collecting input from relevant boards, departments, and other committees. Identify and document existing open space and trail network using GPS devices.	A	PD, OSC, MVPC, CC, PR	EEA, DCR, CCC		X			X			X		

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Collaborate with neighboring communities to pursue major regional trail projects.	A	PD, MVPC, OSC, PR, BOS	DCR, EEA, MassDOT, CPA		X	X	X	X	X				
Identify, prioritize, and develop open space and trail linkages to expand the Martel Way Greenway and Rail Trail connections, including potential construction of boardwalks through wetlands and improvements to existing bridges.	A	PR, CC, PD, OSC, MVPC, BOS	DCR, EEA, NFWF, MassDOT		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Conduct a trail linkage analysis to identify opportunities for connecting open space properties, isolated neighborhoods, and any future development areas.	A	PD, OSC, PR, CC, MVPC	EEA, DCR, CCC, CPA		X	X	X						
Research all abandoned roads and paper streets to assess their potential to link open space parcels and neighborhood paths.	B	PD, OSC, PR, CC, BOS	EEA, CCC, CPA				X	X	X	X			
Connect open space parcels from the East Main St. facility to the Martel Recreation Lands to complete the Martel Way Greenway.	A	OSC, PR, PD, CC, BOS	DCR, EEA, NFWF			X	X		X	X		X	X
Connect open space and vacant parcels along the Martel Way Greenway, including land between Harris Way and Turning Leaf Conservation Areas.	A	OSC, CC, PD, PR, BOS	CPA, DCS, DCR, EEA, NFWF		X	X		X	X				

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Acquire parcels along the Georgetown Rail Trail (abandoned railroad right of way), including the access point on Central Street across from Harmony Cemetery.	A	BOS, PD, OSC, PR, CC, MVPC	DCR, CPA		X	X	X	X					
Objective: Improve sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian network.													
Develop a Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan to establish safe and accessible walking and biking routes throughout town.	A	PD, PR, MVPC, HD, BOS	MassDOT, DCR		X	X	X	X					
Include an assessment of the feasibility for developing pedestrian and bike paths along portions of the existing railroad and power line right-of-way.	A	PD, PR, MVPC, CC	DCR, MassDOT		X	X	X	X					
Continue to develop the Recreational Path along Georgetown Rail Trail (abandoned railroad right of way) and throughout the town.	A	PR, PD, CC, MVPC, BOS	DCR, MassDOT		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Establish sidewalk and path connections to the Border to Boston Rail Trail from Bailey Lane, West Main Street, and American Legion Park to improve access and trail connectivity.	A	PR, PD, HD, BOS, MVPC	DCR, MassDOT		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Establish a trail branch from the Recreational Path at West Main and Moulton Streets, extending through Groveland past Trestle Way.	A	PR, PD, CC, MVPC	DCR, CPA, MassDOT			X	X	X	X	X			

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Establish a connection from the Recreational Path to Penn Brook School via Nelson and Elm Streets, utilizing the emergency access way.	A	PR, PD, HD	DCR, CPA, MassDOT		X	X	X						
Coordinate with the Highway Department to develop bikeways along roadways during repaving and roadway improvement projects.	A	HD, PD, PR, BOS	MassDOT, CCC		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Develop a sidewalk improvement plan to enhance pedestrian safety and connectivity along major roadways, including West Main Street, North Street, the state highway, Route 133 and 97.	A	PB, HD, PR, MVPC	MassDOT, CCC		X	X	X	X					
Objective: Maintain and improve existing recreational facilities and programs.													
Implement strategies from Georgetown's Capital Improvement Plan, the Athletic Field Master Plan, and the Universal Access Nature Trails (UANT) Feasibility Study and Schematic Path Designs to improve and enhance existing recreational facilities and playgrounds.	A	PR, PD, BOS, CC, HD	DCS, DCR, MOD		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Collaborate with the Georgetown Athletic Association to formalize a maintenance agreement for the upkeep of the town athletic fields.	A	PR, PD, GAA	CPA		X	X		X	X			X	X

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Promote parks, trails, recreation programs, and opportunities through outreach using the town newsletter, website, social media, and local news outlets to increase public participation.	B	PR, PD	CCC, CPA			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Expand recreational opportunities for children with mobility challenges by increasing access through adaptive play equipment, inclusive design, and wider range of recreational programs and activities.	A	PR, PD, BPS	MOD, DCS, CPA		X	X	X	X					
Implement ADA improvements at open space and recreation properties and as identified in the Universal Access Nature Trails (UANT) feasibility study and schematic path designs.	A	PR, PD, BOS, CC	MOD, DCS, CPA		X	X	X	X	X				
Establish a volunteer stewardship network dedicated to support the maintenance and care of Georgetown's recreational facilities.	B	PR, BOS, CC, PD	CCC, CPA				X	X	X		X	X	
Objective: Improve access to conservation lands for passive recreation.													
Improve public awareness of Georgetown's existing conservation land through signage, updated maps, and outreach.	A	CC, PD, PR, OSC, MVPC	CPA, MOD		X	X		X	X		X	X	

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Conduct a review of all conservation lands to access conditions, identify deficiencies, and prioritize upgrades to existing access points and trails, as well as the creation of new access points where needed.	A	CC, PD, OSC, PR, BOS	EEA, DCR, CCC		X	X	X		X	X	X		
Explore parking arrangements with the Town of Rowley to enable Georgetown residents to access the public launch facilities at Rowley Town Landing for motorized boating activities.	A	PD, BOS			X	X	X						
Objective: Identify and meet new recreation needs.													
Collaborate with community members and recreational service providers to regularly assess the need for new or improved recreation facilities, including fields, pocket parks, playgrounds, trails, and water access points.	A	PR, PD, CC, GAA, OSC, BOS	CPA, DCS		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Evaluate potential sites and current capacity for additional soccer fields, track & field facilities and pursue acquisition or improvements where feasible.	A	PR, GAA, PD, BOS, OSC	CPA, DCS		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Identify and publicize trails within Georgetown that are accessible to horses and mountain bikes and expand multi-use trail access where appropriate.	B	PR, CC, OSC, PD, BOS	DCR, CPA, CCC		X	X		X	X		X	X	

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Access the feasibility for a multi-purpose field, pickleball, tennis court, track, larger dog park, skateboard park, and other potential uses at the East Main Street Recreation Area.	A	PR, PD, GAA, OSC, BOS	CPA, DCS,		X	X		X	X				
Assess the need for neighborhood parks both west and east of the Interstate 95 highway, including the Marlboro/Tenny neighborhood. These areas have been identified as high priority locations for new parks based on the Trust for Public Land’s ParkServe data and community feedback.	A	PR, PD, OSC, BOS	CPA, DCS		X	X		X	X			X	X
Assess the feasibility of a multi-sport facility with amenities such as batting cages, tennis courts, and indoor recreation at the former Transfer Station site.	B	PR, PD, GAA, OSC, BOS	CPA, DCS, EOED		X	X	X	X	X				
Explore opportunities for a sledding hill, with consideration of the location near Baldpate Hill Reservation.	B	PR, PD, BOS, CC, OSC	CPA, DCS		X	X		X	X			X	X
Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Historic and Cultural Resource Goal: Protect and preserve historic and cultural resources, scenic and historic landscapes, and acquire land for future cemetery use.													
Objective: Protect scenic and historic landscapes.													

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Minimize the impact of development on scenic landscapes and farmland, to preserve the community character.	A	PB, PD, CC, BOS, OSC	CPA, DCS		X	X	X	X					
Encourage enrollment of eligible properties in Chapter 61, 61A and 61B tax programs to promote conservation, agriculture, and recreational land use.	A	PD, OSC, CC, Assessor's Office	CCC		X	X	X		X	X	X		
Actively pursue Conservation Restrictions and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions to permanently protect high priority scenic and ecological areas.	A	CC, OSC, PD, ECGA	CPA		X	X	X	X	X				
Pursue designation of scenic roads to help preserve Georgetown's rural character.	B	PB, PD, CC, HC	CPA, CCC				X	X	X				
Pursue scenic road designation for Baldpate Road under Georgetown's Scenic Roads Bylaw to protect the scenic vista at Baldpate Hill.	A	PB, PD, CC, HC	CPA, CCC		X	X	X						
Objective: Preserve historic and cultural resources.													
Collaborate with the Historical Commission and Historical Society to preserve, protect, and promote historic town-owned properties.	A	HC, PD, PR	CPA		X	X	X	X					

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Develop a program to research, document, and enforce existing deed restrictions to ensure compliance with conservation agreements.	A	CC, PD, OSC	CPA, CCC		X	X	X	X					
Continue support and advocacy for the CPA as a key funding source for developing new parks and enhancing recreational facilities.	A	PD, PR, CC, HC, OSC	CPA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Organizational Goal: Improve open space management and support education and networking opportunities.													
Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Objective: Improve open space management.													
Identify and secure additional funding sources to support the long-term management and maintenance of conservation parcels.	A	CC, BOS, PD, OSC	CPA, EEA, CCC		X	X	X	X					
Create and regularly update management plans for each significant open space parcel to guide maintenance.	A	CC, PD, OSC	CPA, EEA, CCC		X		X		X		X		X

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Secure professional assistance to develop a Conservation Restriction Stewardship Program (CRSP) for all properties with a Conservation Restriction. The CRSP shall include: 1) baseline documentation of protected resource values, 2) a schedule and process for regular property monitoring, documentation, and enforcement actions if needed, and 3) strategies for maintaining strong working relationships with landowners.	A	CC, PD, OSC	CPA, CCC		X		X		X		X		X
Collaborate with community members to establish a volunteer stewardship network to support the care and monitoring of major parcels managed by the conservation commission.	B	CC, OSC, PR	CPA, CCC		X		X		X		X		X
Establish partnerships with existing community groups and form new volunteer groups, such as a Bike Trail Group or Trails Committee, to help achieve town wide objectives related to connectivity and open space.	B	PR, PD, CC, OSC	DCR, CCC		X	X		X	X				
Objective: Support on-going education and networking opportunities for departments, boards, commissions, committees and volunteers.													
Offer municipal training opportunities through Citizen Planner Training Collaborative and other technical assistance and educational programs.	A	PD, PB, CC, OSC	CCC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Actions	Priority	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Maintain an up-to-date list of educational and networking opportunities on the town's website.	B	PD, HC, CC, OSC	CCC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Regularly distribute and announce educational and networking opportunities to staff, board and committee members, and volunteers.	B	PD, BOS, CC, HC, OSC	CCC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Acknowledge and promote participation in educational and networking events through outreach channels such as newsletters and social media.	B	PD, HC, CC, PR	CCC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

7. Public Comments

TOWN OF GEORGETOWN

PLANNING DEPT. - TOWN HALL

ONE LIBRARY STREET

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(978)352-5713 EMAIL: FOCONNOR@GEORGETOWNMA.GOV



14 January 2026

Mr. Peter Burns, Chair
Georgetown Open Space and Recreation Plan Working Group
Town Hall
One Library Street
Georgetown, MA 01833

RE: Support for updated Open Space and Recreation Plan

Mr. Burns:

On behalf of Georgetown Planning Board, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for Georgetown's updated Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP).

This plan is the culmination of extensive community engagement. It incorporates valuable feedback from residents via surveys and public forums and provides a crucial roadmap for protecting and enhancing our natural resources and recreational facilities for the foreseeable future.

Specifically, we support the OSRP's commitment to protect natural resources, provide safe spaces for recreation, preserve historic and cultural features, and improve management of these important facilities. These initiatives will directly benefit town residents by promoting health, connecting neighbors, and ensuring Georgetown remains a vibrant, desirable place to live, work, play, and raise a family.

Your efforts to have a state-approved OSRP will unlock critical funding opportunities, ensuring these vital projects can move from vision to reality. We approve this comprehensive plan, which reflects our community's shared vision for a sustainable and enjoyable future.

Sincerely,

Harry LaCortiglia, Chair
Georgetown Planning Board



GEORGETOWN CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Memorial Town Hall ♦ One Library Street ♦ Georgetown, MA 01833

Phone: (978) 352-5712 ♦ Fax: (978) 352-5725

20 January 2026

Ms. Melissa Cryan
Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02112

Re: Georgetown Open Space & Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan:

I would like to convey to you that The Conservation Commission and I support and recommend the approval of the draft Open Space and Recreation Plan. Everyone worked hard on the plan including employees, Boards, Commissions, Committees, and the BSC Group to develop the document that reflects the future goals of the town.

The community, through the plan, continually promotes open space acquisition, maintaining open space, and we do have a community garden that needs help, as we strive to promote sustainability & biodiversity.

We look forward to the Division of Conservation Services' approval of the Georgetown Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Kind regards,

Daryle J. LaMonica
Conservation Commissioner
Georgetown Conservation Commission
Email: mgrenier@georgetownma.gov



*Town of Georgetown
Massachusetts*

February 9, 2026

Dear Members of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Working Group,

On behalf of the Georgetown Park and Recreation Committee, I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the Town of Georgetown's Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The Park and Recreation Committee support the preliminary draft of the Plan prepared by the Town in collaboration with BSC Group and the Open Space and Recreation Plan Working Group. We understand that the Plan has been submitted to the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services (DCS) for initial review and that letters of support from relevant boards and committees are required for final approval. The Committee appreciates the inclusive and collaborative process used to develop the Plan. We recognize the efforts of the Working Group, which included representation from the Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, Planning Board, Select Board, Park and Recreation Committee, Town Administrator, and Georgetown Athletic Association. The Committee also acknowledges the valuable contributions of BSC Group, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, and the residents of Georgetown through public hearings and community outreach, all of which helped shape the Plan's priorities. The Open Space and Recreation Plan provided a thoughtful and comprehensive framework to guide the Town's future planning efforts related to parks, recreation, and open space. Importantly, adoption of the Plan will position Georgetown to pursue state grant funding opportunities that support these priorities and benefit the community. For these reasons, the Georgetown Park and Recreation Committee supports and approves the Open Space and Recreation Plan and recommends its acceptance by the Division of Conservation Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important planning effort. Please feel free to contact us if additional information or clarification is needed.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Donahue

Chairman - Georgetown Park and Recreation

TOWN OF GEORGETOWN

MEMORIAL TOWN HALL

1 LIBRARY STREET

GEORGETOWN, MA 01833

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ORLANDO PACHECO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

EMAIL: OPACHECO@GEORGETOWNMA.GOV



December 10, 2025

Ms. Melissa Cryan
Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02112

Re: Georgetown, MA Open Space & Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan:

After significant time and effort by the Open Space & Recreation Plan Working Group (the Working Group) I would like to enthusiastically support and recommend approval of the draft Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Committee worked diligently over the past year with several local boards/committees, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, and the public to develop a document that reflects the future goals of the Town.

The plan properly promotes open space acquisition, maintaining adequate green spaces and parks, fostering active use of lands and trails, and promoting sustainability & biodiversity.

We look forward to the Division of Conservation Service's approval and implementing the plan.

With regards,

Orlando Pacheco, Town Administrator

12/30/2025

Melissa Cryan
Division of Conversation Services
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, MA 02144

Re: Request for Review and Support – Georgetown Open Space and Rec Plan

Dear Melissa Cryan,

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) commends the Town of Georgetown for its thoughtful development of the 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan. The plan reflects a strong commitment to community engagement and awareness of Georgetown's natural resource needs. It offers a comprehensive update to the Town's goals and action steps for protecting open space, enhancing recreation, and improving public health and safety.

MVPC has been pleased to review this updated plan and is supportive of the implementation goals and strategies which are consistent with those identified through other parallel efforts in Georgetown and in the Merrimack Valley Region. We look forward to working with the Town in the years ahead to support implementation of plan recommendations.

We thank the Town for their work and dedication to this plan update. Please don't hesitate to contact MVPC if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Jerrard Whitten
Executive Director
Merrimack Valley Planning Commission



Georgetown Board of Health

1 Library Street Georgetown, MA 01833- Tel. 978-352-5720
Fax. 978-352-5714

January 12, 2026

Ms. Melissa Cryan
Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services
100 Cambridge Street; Suite 900
Boston, MA 02112

Re: Georgetown, MA Open Space & Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan:

After reviewing the Town of Georgetown's draft Open Space and Recreation Plan, it is evident that the committee (Working Group) has developed a comprehensive document that promotes the protection, acquisition and improvement of open space, green spaces and parks which will enhance the availability of the Town's Open Space and Recreational properties.

The proposed plan will serve to encourage an active population that frequents the Town owned open spaces, parks, recreational lands and trails for exercise and social events. The Board of Health believes that expansion or improvements to existing facilities and the creation of new facilities will ultimately enhance the overall public and environmental health, which will be a significant benefit to the community.

The Board of Health unanimously supports the plan and recommends that the Division of Conservation Service approves the draft Open Space and Recreation Plan as presented.

Respectfully,

William G. Holt, PLS, RS, SE
Health Director
Town of Georgetown

8. References

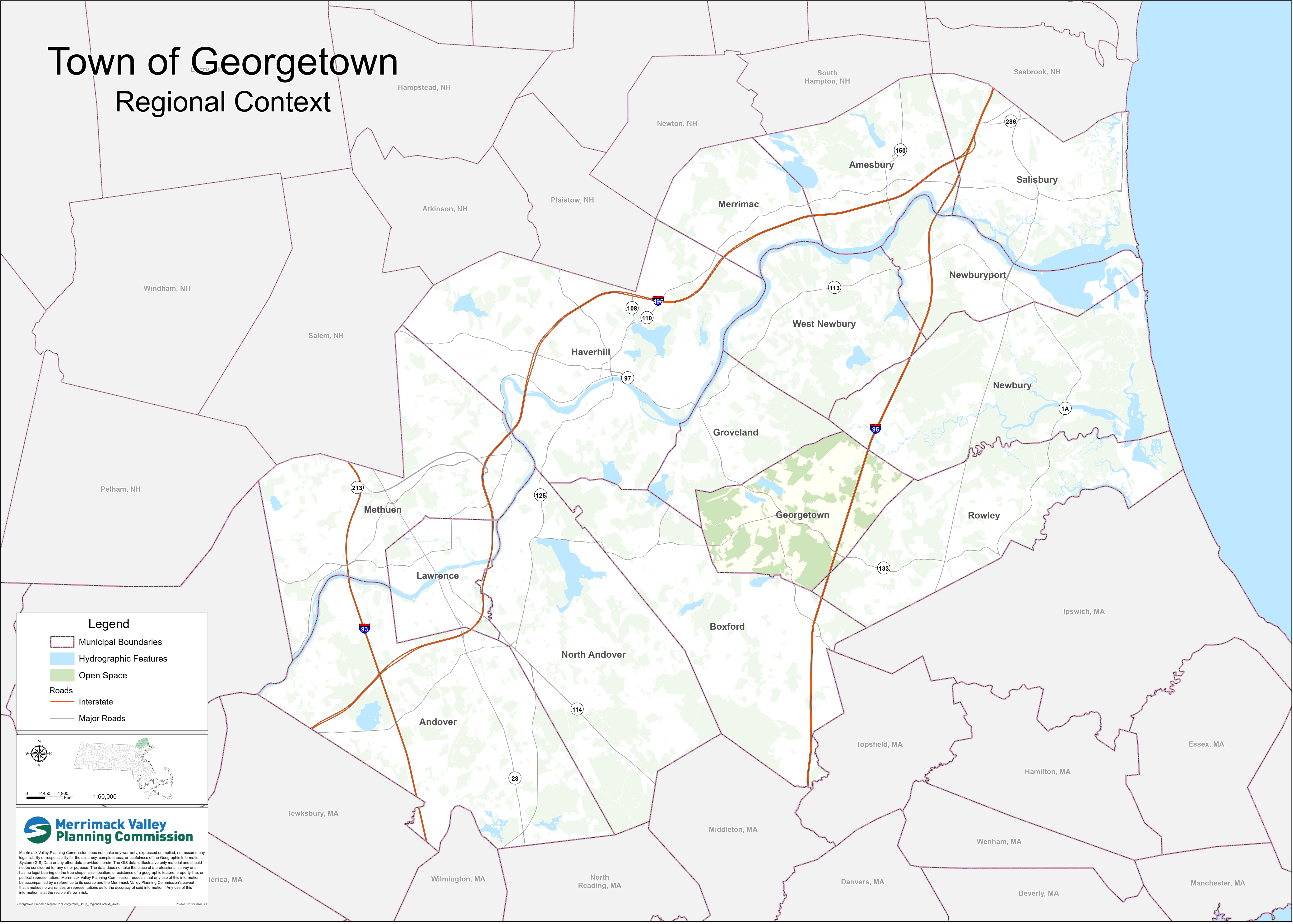
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- U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *ACS 5-Year Estimates, Households and Families*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1101?q=Georgetown%20town,%20Essex%20County,%20Massachusetts&t=Families%20and%20Living%20Arrangements>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *ACS 5-Year Estimates, Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2022 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1901?q=Georgetown%20town,%20Massachusetts&t=Income%20and%20Earnings>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *ACS 5-Year Estimates, Means of Transportation to Work by Selected Characteristics*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S0802?q=Georgetown%20town,%20Essex%20County,%20Massachusetts&t=Commuting>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *ACS 5-Year Estimates, Median Value (Dollars)*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2022.B25077?q=Georgetown%20town,%20Massachusetts&t=Housing%20Value%20and%20Purchase%20Price>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *ACS 5-Year Estimates, Occupancy Characteristics*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S2501?q=Georgetown%20town,%20Essex%20County,%20Massachusetts&t=Housing>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *ACS 5-Year Estimates, Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1701?q=Georgetown%20town,%20Massachusetts&t=Income%20and%20Poverty>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *ACS 5-Year Estimates, Selected Economic Characteristics*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2022.DP03?q=DP03%20Georgetown%20town,%20Essex%20County,%20Massachusetts>

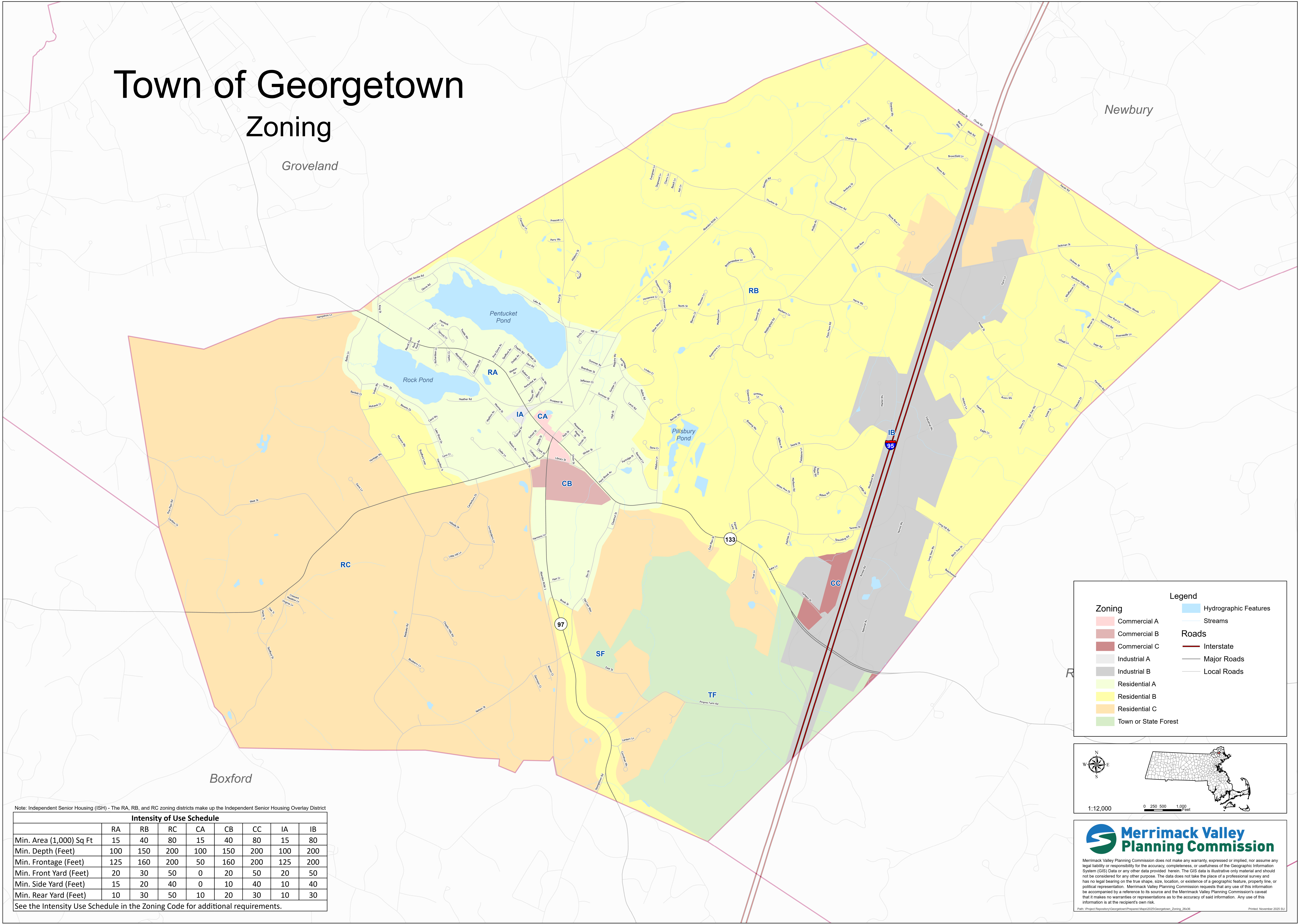
Appendix A: Maps

Town of Georgetown

Regional Context



Town of Georgetown Zoning



Note: Independent Senior Housing (ISH) - The RA, RB, and RC zoning districts make up the Independent Senior Housing Overlay District

Intensity of Use Schedule								
	RA	RB	RC	CA	CB	CC	IA	IB
Min. Area (1,000) Sq Ft	15	40	80	15	40	80	15	80
Min. Depth (Feet)	100	150	200	100	150	200	100	200
Min. Frontage (Feet)	125	160	200	50	160	200	125	200
Min. Front Yard (Feet)	20	30	50	0	20	50	20	50
Min. Side Yard (Feet)	15	20	40	0	10	40	10	40
Min. Rear Yard (Feet)	10	30	50	10	20	30	10	30
See the Intensity Use Schedule in the Zoning Code for additional requirements.								

Zoning

Commercial A

Commercial B

Commercial C

Industrial A

Industrial B

Residential A

Residential B

Residential C

Town or State Forest

Legend

Hydrographic Features

Streams

Roads

Interstate

Major Roads

Local Roads

N

E

S

W

1:12,000

0

250

500

1,000

Feet

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Path: \\Project Repository\Georgetown\Prepared Maps\2025\Georgetown_Zoning_26x36

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Town of Georgetown

Zoning Overlay

Newbury

Groveland

Rowley

Boxford

Overlay Zones

Multi-Family Housing Overlay District

Floodplain District

Water Resource District

Groundwater Protection

Marijuana Business

Adult Entertainment District

43D

Hydrographic Features

Streams

Roads

Interstate

Major Roads

Local Roads

1:12,000

0

250

500

1,000

Feet

Merrimack Valley

Planning Commission

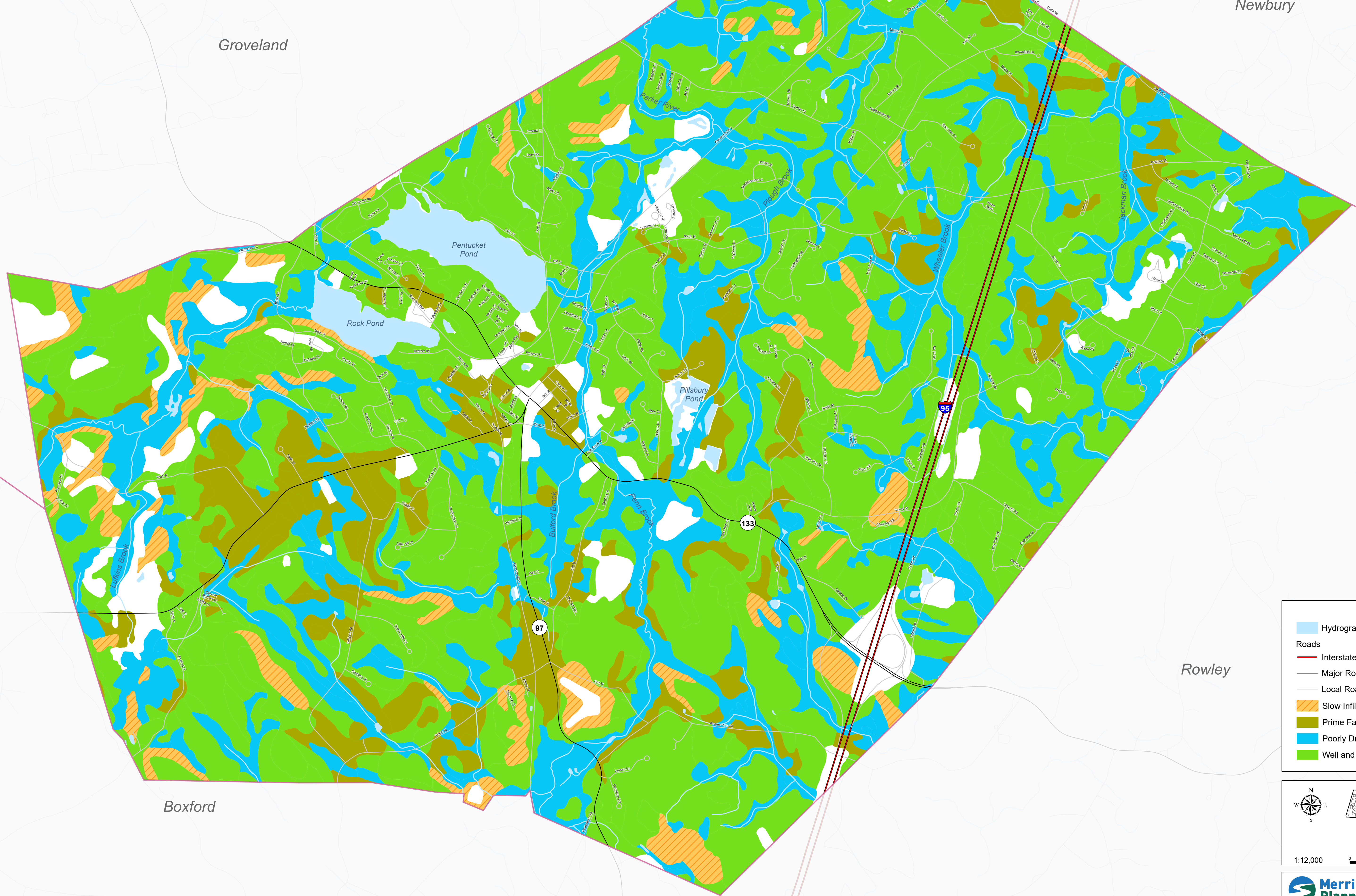
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Path: \\Project Repository\Georgetown\Prepared Maps\2025\Georgetown_ZoningOverlay_26x36

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Town of Georgetown

Soils



Legend

- Hydrographic Features
- Roads**
 - Interstate
 - Major Roads
 - Local Roads
- Slow Infiltration (Slope >25%)
- Prime Farmland Soils
- Poorly Drained Soils
- Well and Excessively Drained Soils

1:12,000

0 250 500 1,000 Feet

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

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Water Resources

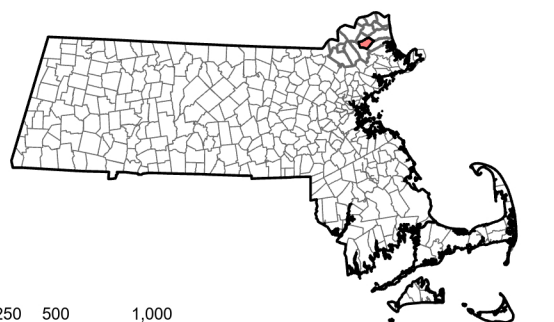
Newbury

Groveland

Boxforc



1:12,000

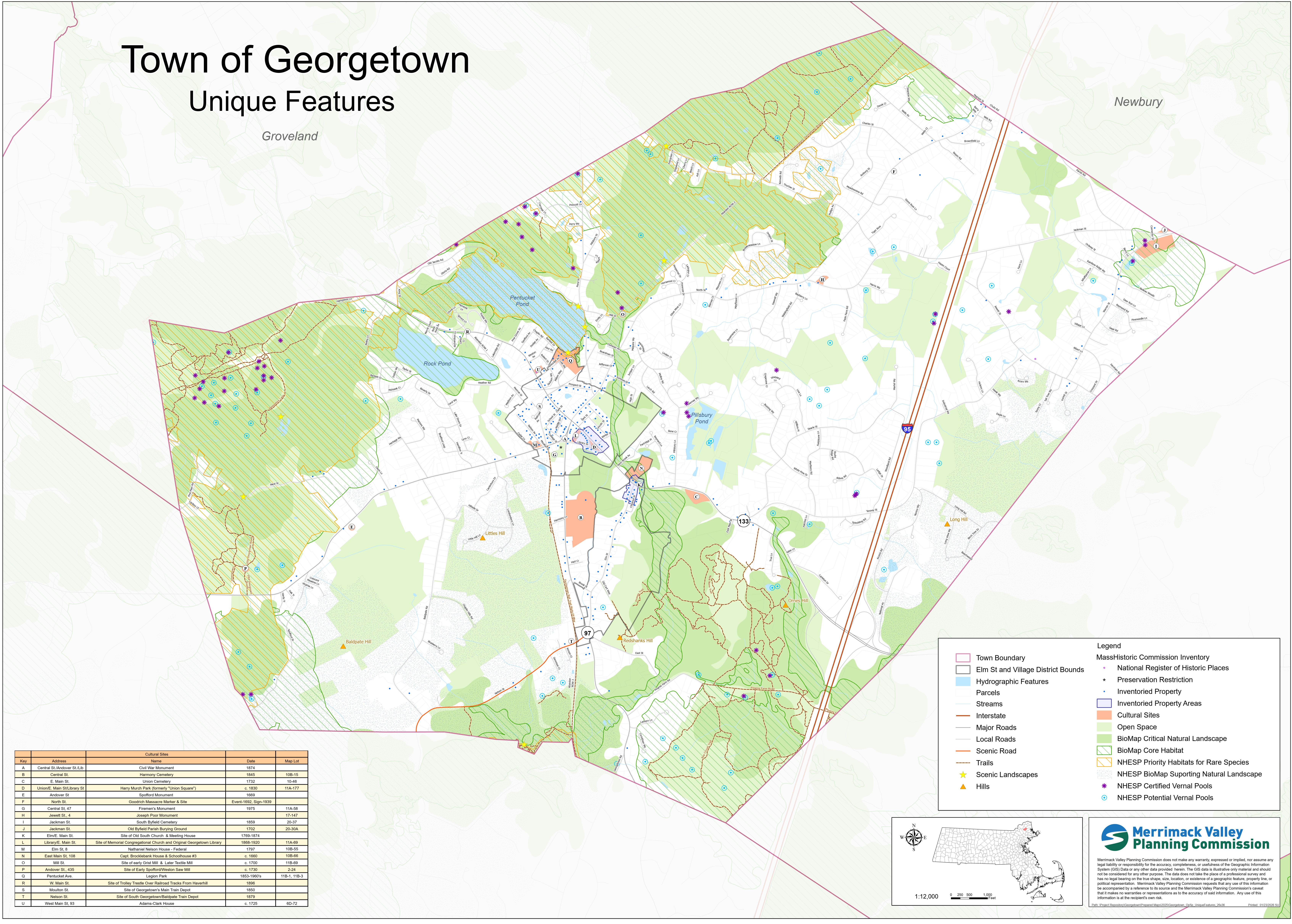


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Town of Georgetown

Unique Features



Key	Address	Cultural Sites	Date	Map Lot
A	Central St./Andover St./Lib.	Civil War Monument	1874	
B	Central St.	Harmony Cemetery	1845	10B-15
C	E. Main St.	Union Cemetery	1732	10-46
D	Union/E. Main St./Library St	Harry Murch Park (formerly "Union Square")	c. 1830	11A-177
E	Andover St.	Spofford Monument	1688	
F	North St.	Goodrich Massacre Marker & Site	Event-1692, Sign-1939	
G	Central St. 47	Fireman's Monument	1975	11A-58
H	Jewett St. 4	Joseph Poor Monument		17-147
I	Jackman St.	South Byfield Cemetery	1859	20-37
J	Jackman St.	Old Byfield Parish Burying Ground	1702	20-30A
K	Elm/E. Main St.	Site of Old South Church & Meeting House	1769-1874	
L	Library/E. Main St.	Site of Memorial Congregational Church and Original Georgetown Library	1868-1920	11A-69
M	Elm St. 8	Nathaniel Nelson House - Federal	1797	10B-55
N	East Main St. 108	Capt. Brocklebank House & Schoolhouse #3	c. 1660	10B-46
O	Mill St.	Site of early Grist Mill & Later Textile Mill	c. 1700	11B-69
P	Andover St. 435	Site of Early Spofford/Weston Saw Mill	c. 1730	2-24
Q	Pentucket Ave.	Legion Park	1853-1960's	11B-1, 11B-3
R	W. Main St.	Site of Trolley Trestle Over Railroad Tracks From Haverhill	1896	
S	Moulton St.	Site of Georgetown's Main Train Depot	1850	
T	Nelson St.	Site of South Georgetown/Baldpate Train Depot	1879	
U	West Main St. 93	Adams-Clark House	c. 1725	6D-72

Town Boundary

Elm St and Village District Bounds

Hydrographic Features

Parcels

Streams

Interstate

Major Roads

Local Roads

Scenic Road

Trails

Scenic Landscapes

Hills

Legend

MassHistoric Commission Inventory

National Register of Historic Places

Preservation Restriction

Inventoried Property

Inventoried Property Areas

Cultural Sites

Open Space

BioMap Critical Natural Landscape

BioMap Core Habitat

NHESP Priority Habitats for Rare Species

NHESP BioMap Supporting Natural Landscape

NHESP Certified Vernal Pools

NHESP Potential Vernal Pools

A north arrow pointing upwards and a scale bar indicating distances in feet (0, 250, 500, 1,000). The scale is 1:12,000.

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Town of Georgetown

Open Space

Groveland

Newbury

Rowley

Boxford

Town Boundary

Parcels

Hydrographic Features

Streams

Roads

Interstate

Major Roads

Local Roads

Open Space

State

Municipal

Municipal Water Supply Protection

Municipal Recreation

Municipal Conservation

Nonprofit

Private

Easements

Conservation Restrictions

Chapter Lands

Chapter 61

Chapter 61A

Chapter 61B

Level of Protection

Unprotected Lands

Limited Protection

Legally Protected in Perpetuity

*No existing APRs

N

E

S

W

0

250

500

1,000

Feet

1:12,000

Merrimack Valley

Planning Commission

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Path: Georgetown\Prepared Maps\2025\Georgetown_City_OpenSpace_26x36

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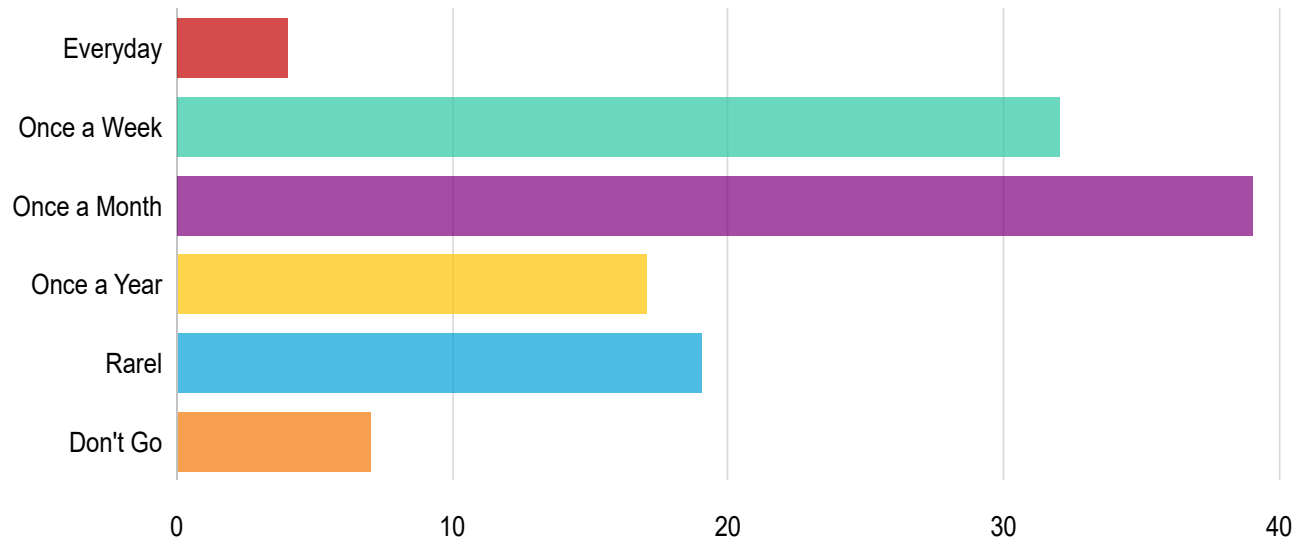
Appendix B: Survey Results

Georgetown Open Space and Recreation Plan

Open Space and Recreation

Open Space and Recreation > 1. How often do you visit the following parks and recreational facilities in Georgetown? Please select the frequency for each location:

○ ○ American Legion Park at Pentucket Pond



Answers

Count

Percentage

Everyday

4

3.36%

Once a Week

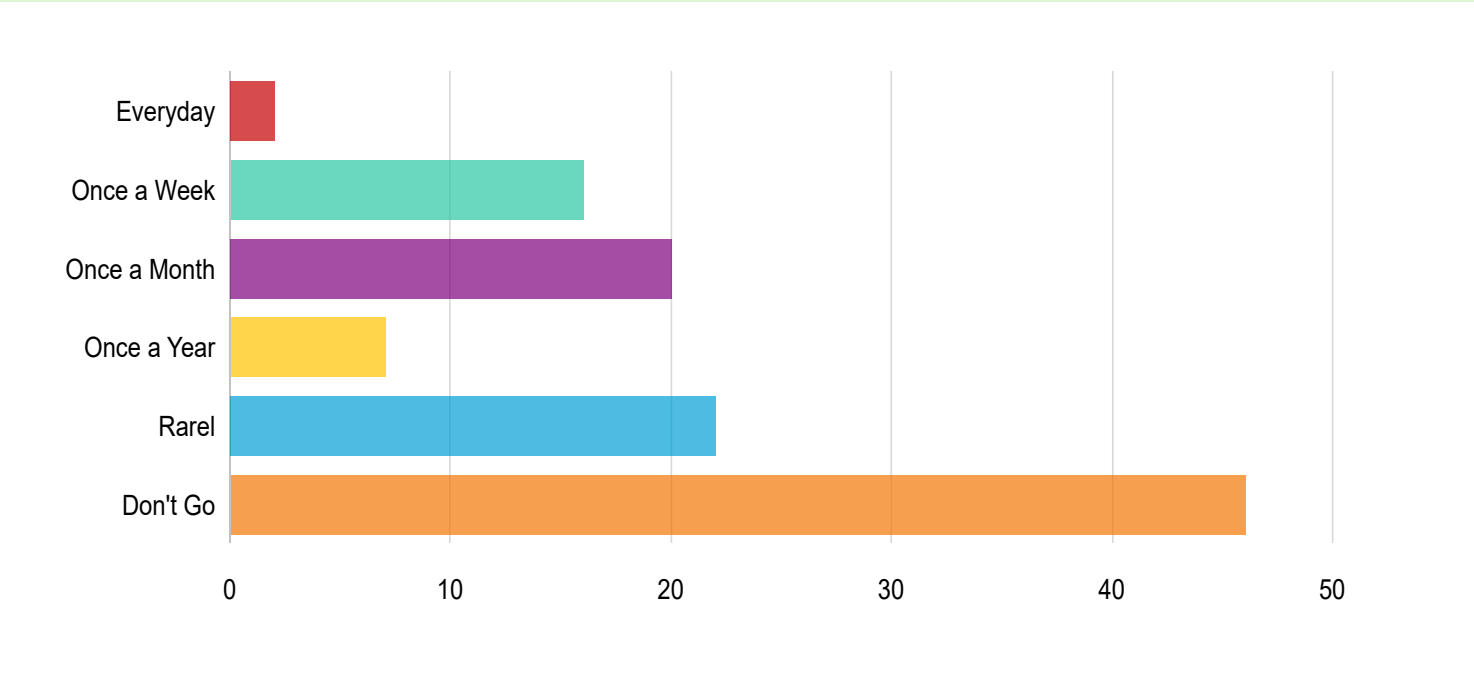
32

26.89%

Once a Month	39	32.77%
Once a Year	17	14.29%
Rarely	19	15.97%
Don't Go	7	5.88%

Answered: 118 Skipped: 1

Greenway Recreation Park

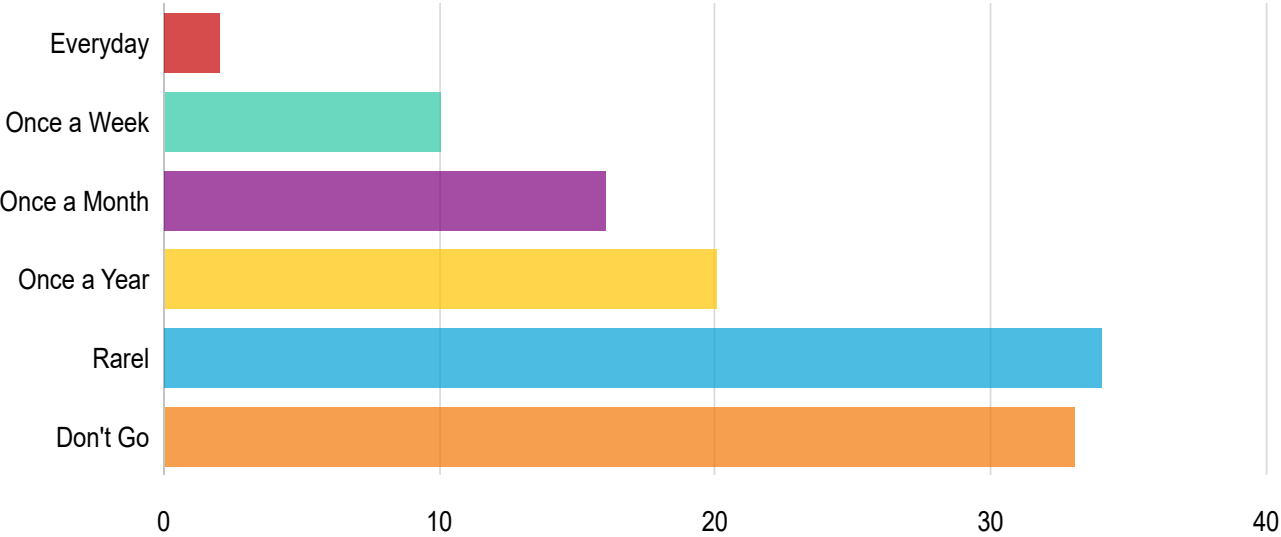


Answers	Count	Percentage
Everyday	2	1.68%
Once a Week	16	13.45%

Once a Month	20	16.81%
Once a Year	7	5.88%
Rarely	22	18.49%
Don't Go	46	38.66%

Answered: 113 Skipped: 6

○ ○ Harry Murch Park



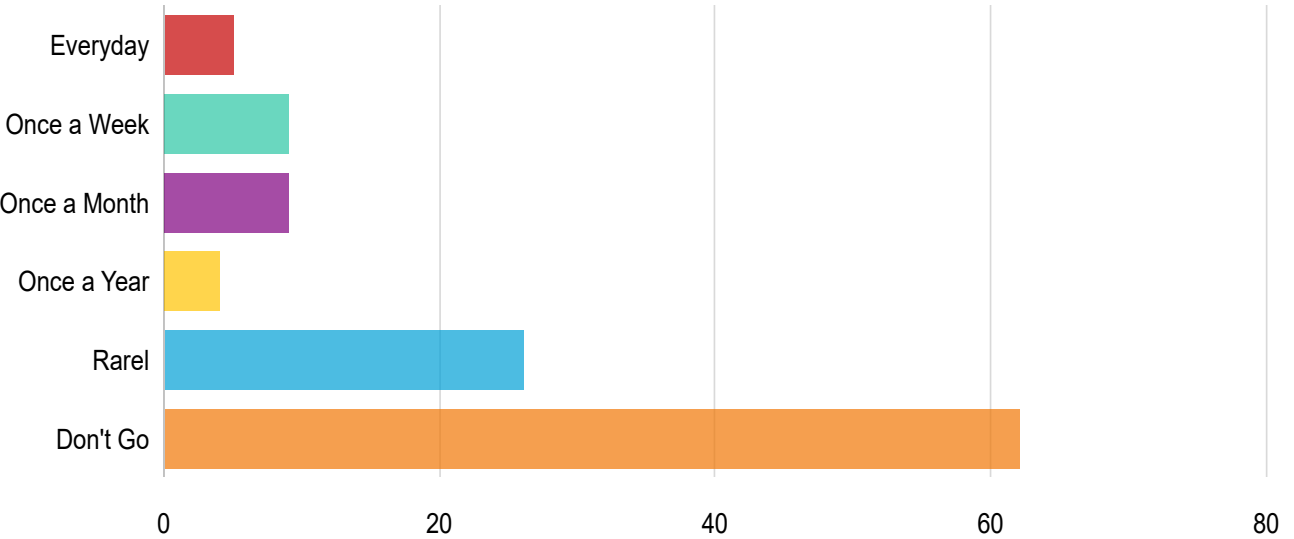
AnswersCountPercentage

Everyday	2	1.68%
Once a Week	10	8.4%

Once a Month	16	13.45%
Once a Year	20	16.81%
Rarely	34	28.57%
Don't Go	33	27.73%

Answered: 115 Skipped: 4

○ ○ Pillsbury Pond



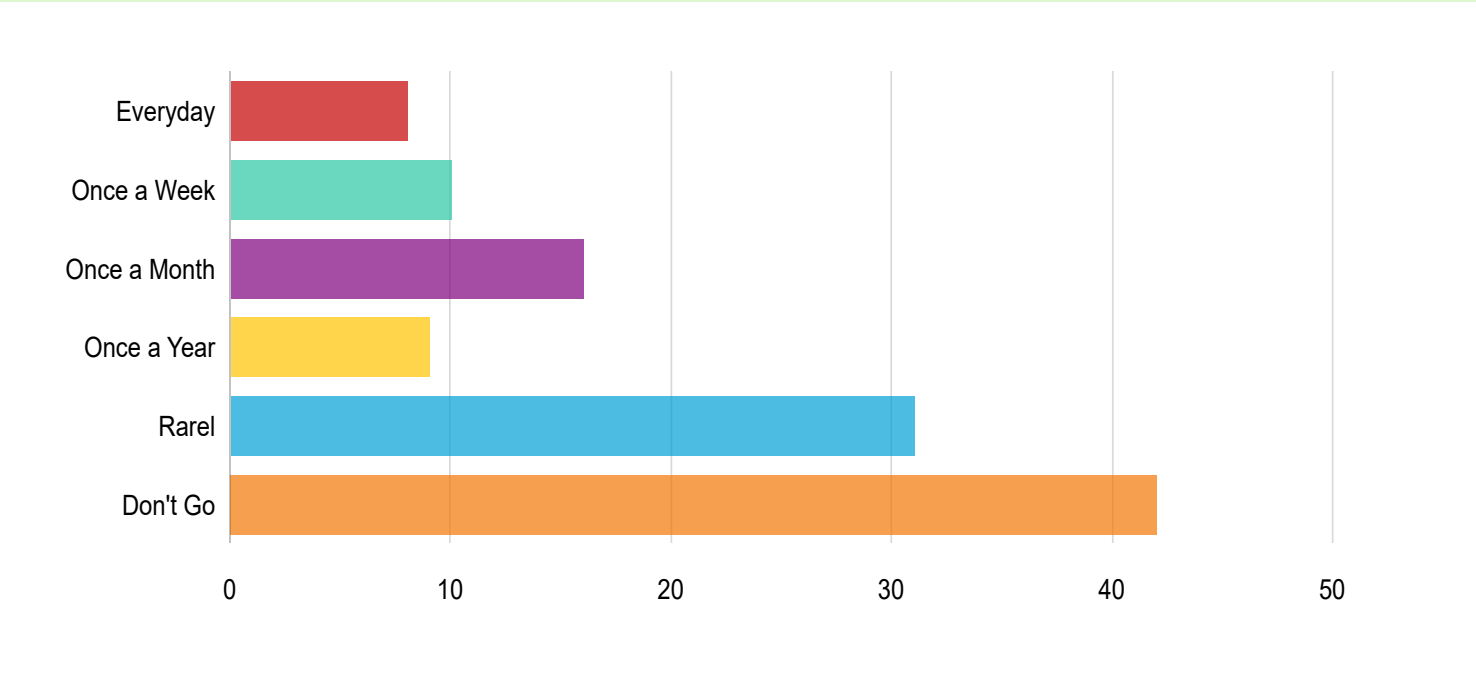
Answers **Count** **Percentage**

Everyday	5	4.2%
Once a Week	9	7.56%

Once a Month	9	7.56%
Once a Year	4	3.36%
Rarely	26	21.85%
Don't Go	62	52.1%

Answered: 115 Skipped: 4

Rock Pond

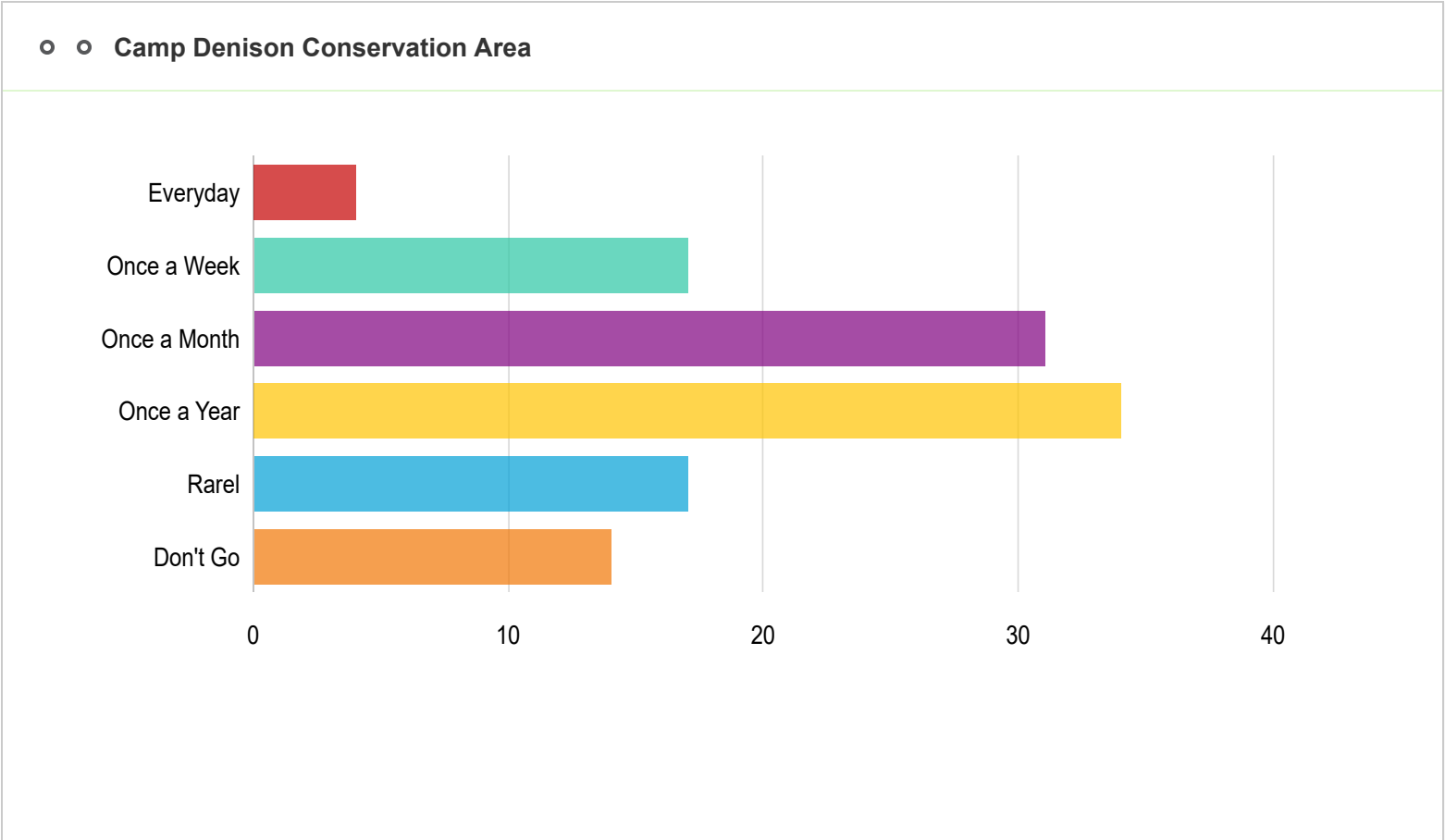


Answers	Count	Percentage
Everyday	8	6.72%
Once a Week	10	8.4%

Once a Month	16	13.45%
Once a Year	9	7.56%
Rarely	31	26.05%
Don't Go	42	35.29%

Answered: 116 Skipped: 3

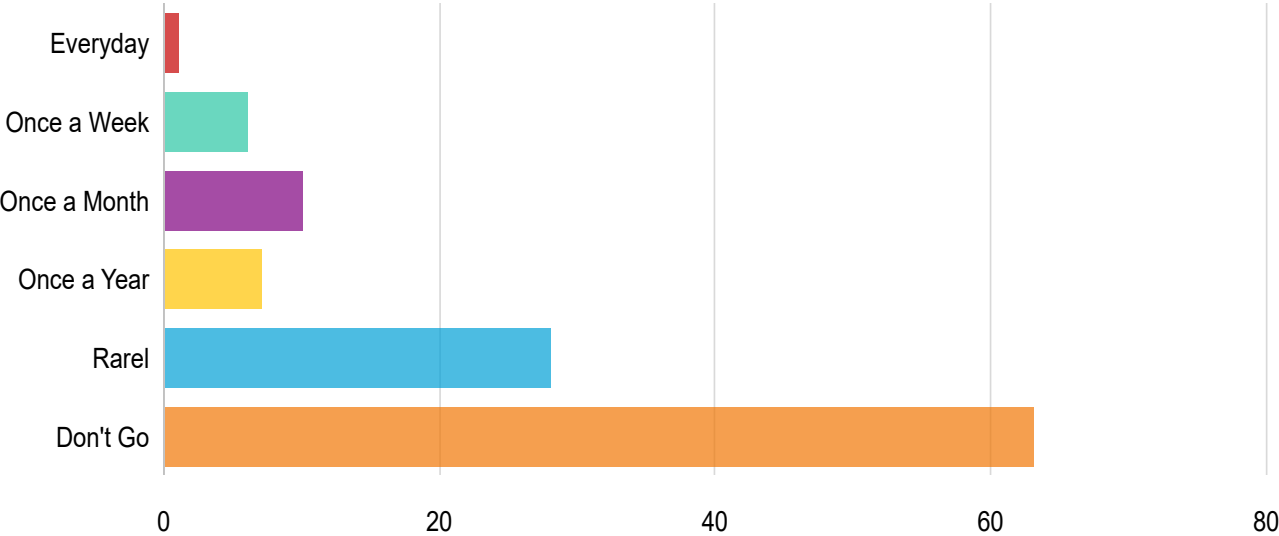
Open Space and Recreation > 2. How often do you visit the following conservation areas in Georgetown? Please select the frequency for each location:



Answers	Count	Percentage
Everyday	4	3.36%
Once a Week	17	14.29%
Once a Month	31	26.05%
Once a Year	34	28.57%
Rarely	17	14.29%
Don't Go	14	11.76%

Answered: 117 Skipped: 2

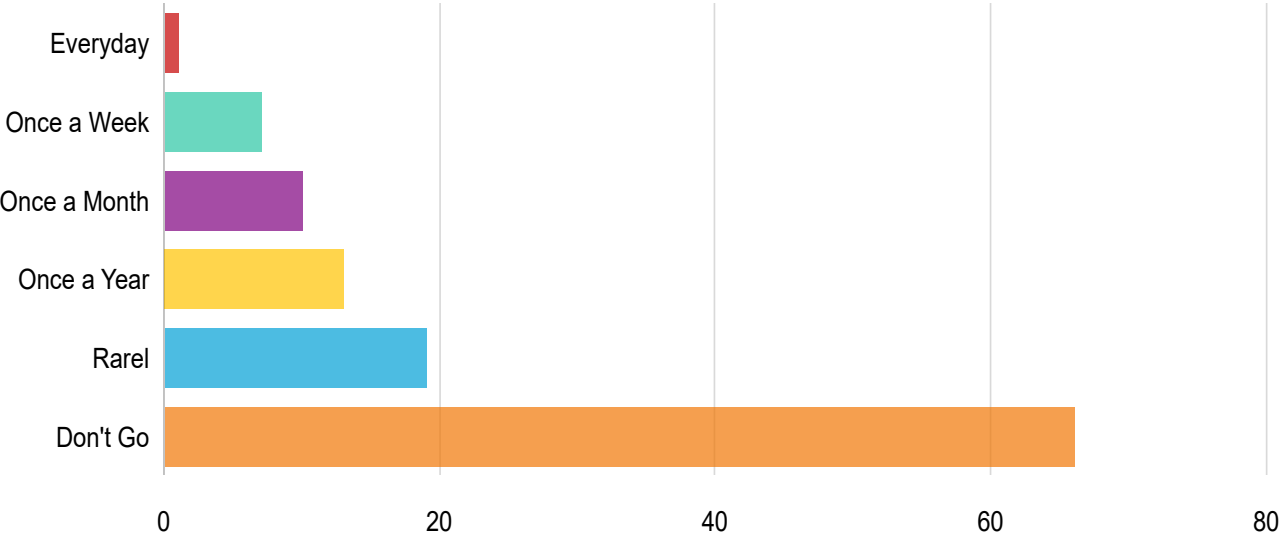
○ Hampshire Woods Conservation Area



Answers	Count	Percentage
Everyday	1	0.84%
Once a Week	6	5.04%
Once a Month	10	8.4%
Once a Year	7	5.88%
Rarely	28	23.53%
Don't Go	63	52.94%

Answered: 115 Skipped: 4

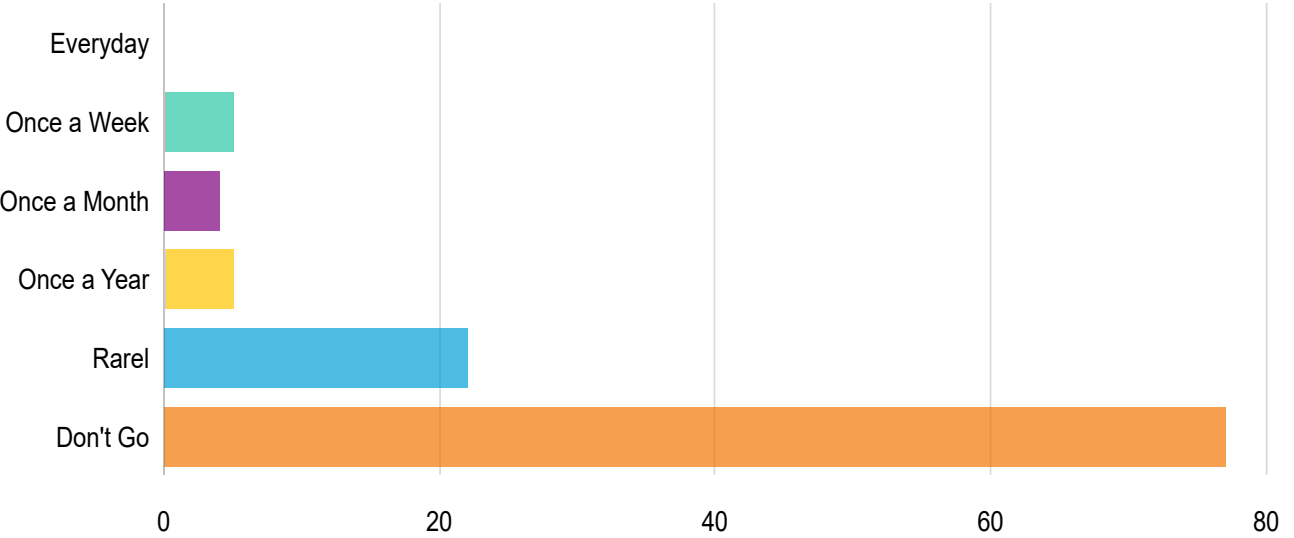
○ ○ Lufkins Brook Conservation Area



Answers	Count	Percentage
Everyday	1	0.84%
Once a Week	7	5.88%
Once a Month	10	8.4%
Once a Year	13	10.92%
Rarely	19	15.97%
Don't Go	66	55.46%

Answered: 116 Skipped: 3

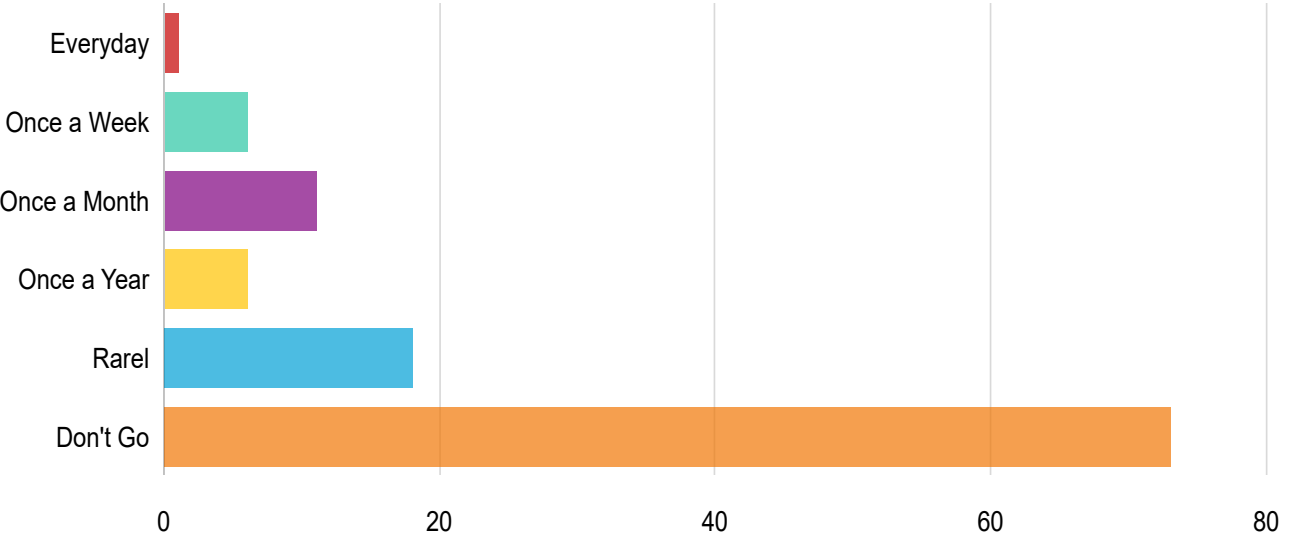
MacLennan Conservation Area



Answers	Count	Percentage
Everyday	0	0%
Once a Week	5	4.2%
Once a Month	4	3.36%
Once a Year	5	4.2%
Rarely	22	18.49%
Don't Go	77	64.71%

Answered: 113 Skipped: 6

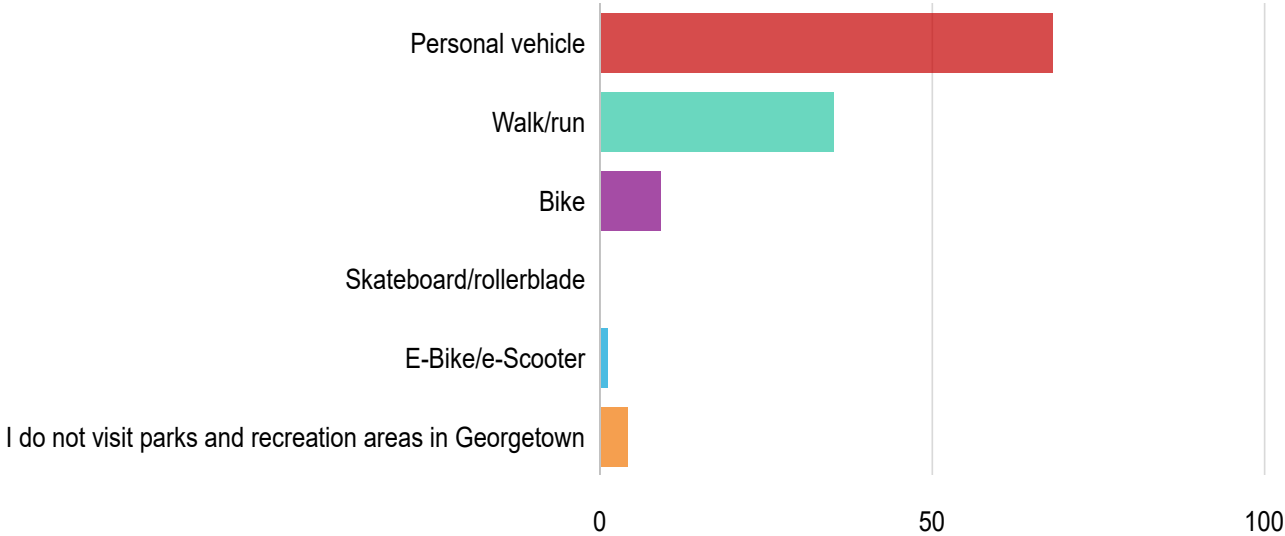
○ ○ Nelson Woods Conservation Area



Answers	Count	Percentage
Everyday	1	0.84%
Once a Week	6	5.04%
Once a Month	11	9.24%
Once a Year	6	5.04%
Rarely	18	15.13%
Don't Go	73	61.34%

Answered: 115 Skipped: 4

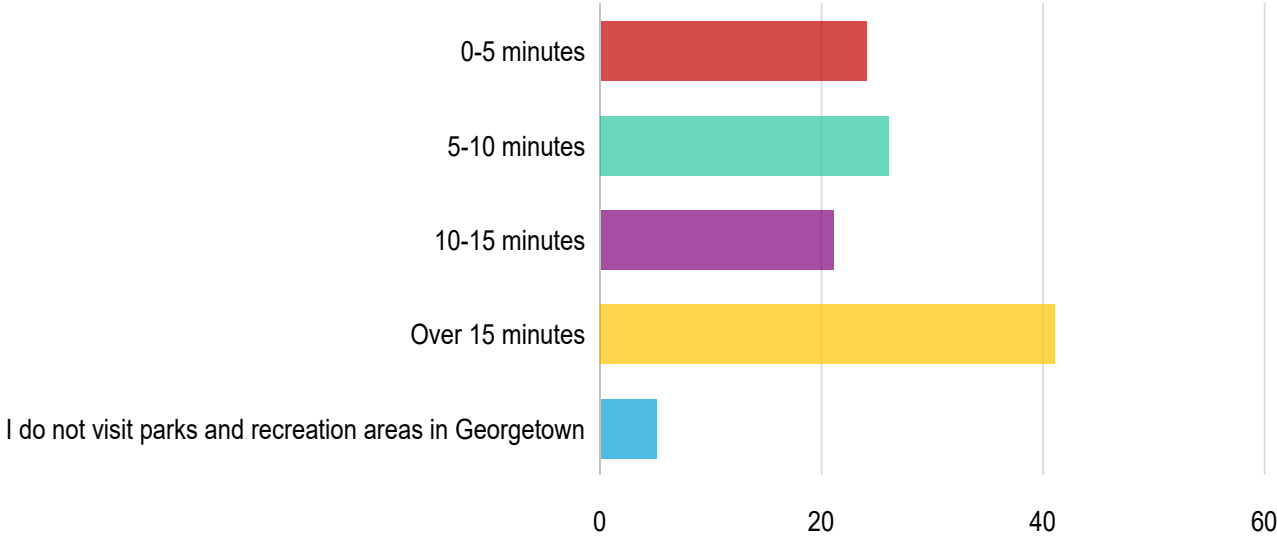
3. How do you typically travel to parks and recreation facilities in Georgetown...



Answers	Count	Percentage
Personal vehicle	68	57.14%
Walk/run	35	29.41%
Bike	9	7.56%
Skateboard/rollerblade	0	0%
E-Bike/e-Scooter	1	0.84%
I do not visit parks and recreation areas in Georgetown	4	3.36%

Answered: 117 Skipped: 2

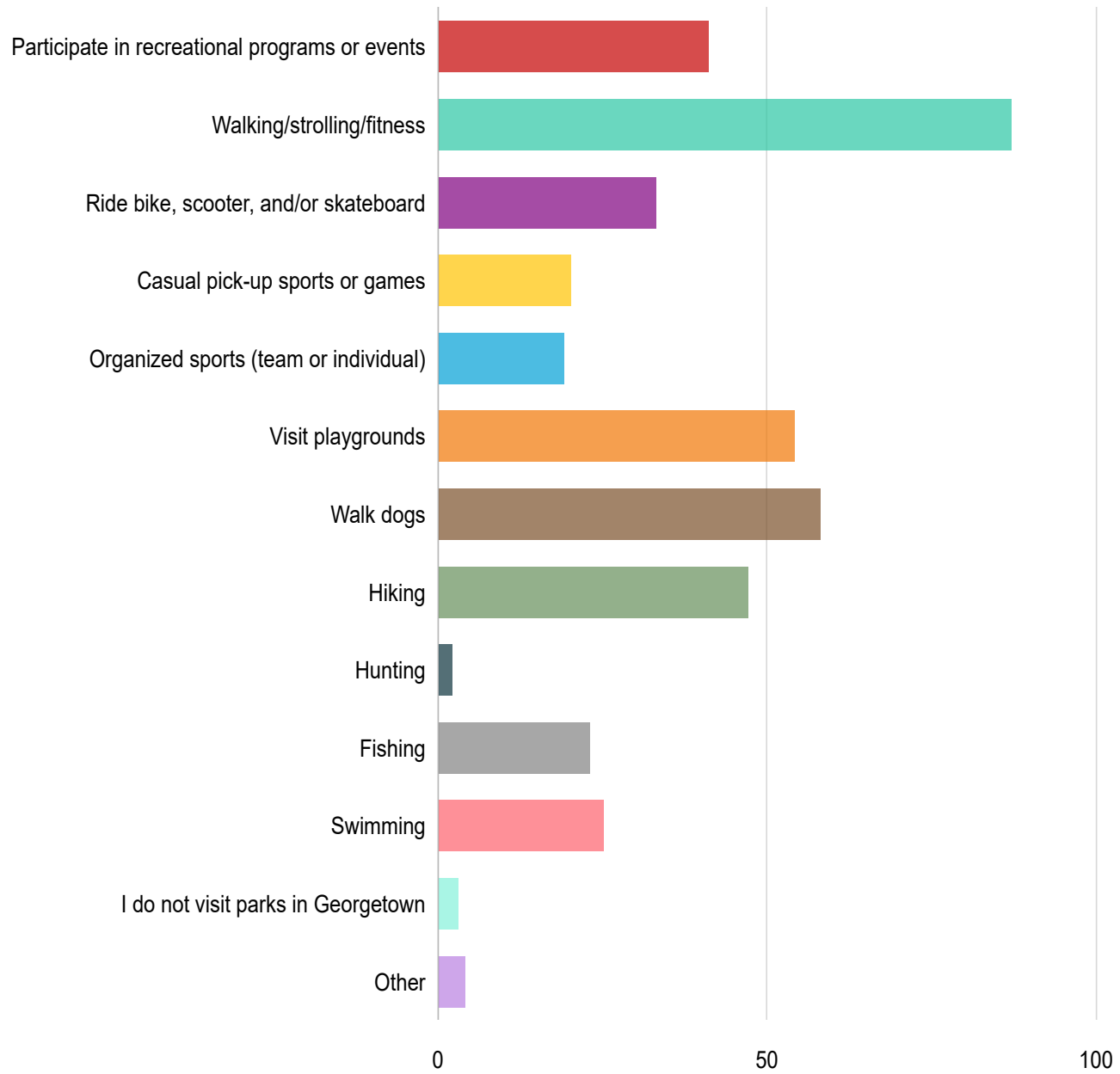
4. On average, how long does it take you to walk to the park or recreation facilit...



Answers	Count	Percentage
0-5 minutes	24	20.17%
5-10 minutes	26	21.85%
10-15 minutes	21	17.65%
Over 15 minutes	41	34.45%
I do not visit parks and recreation areas in Georgetown	5	4.2%

Answered: 117 Skipped: 2

5. What activities do you participate in when visiting parks and recreation facilities in...

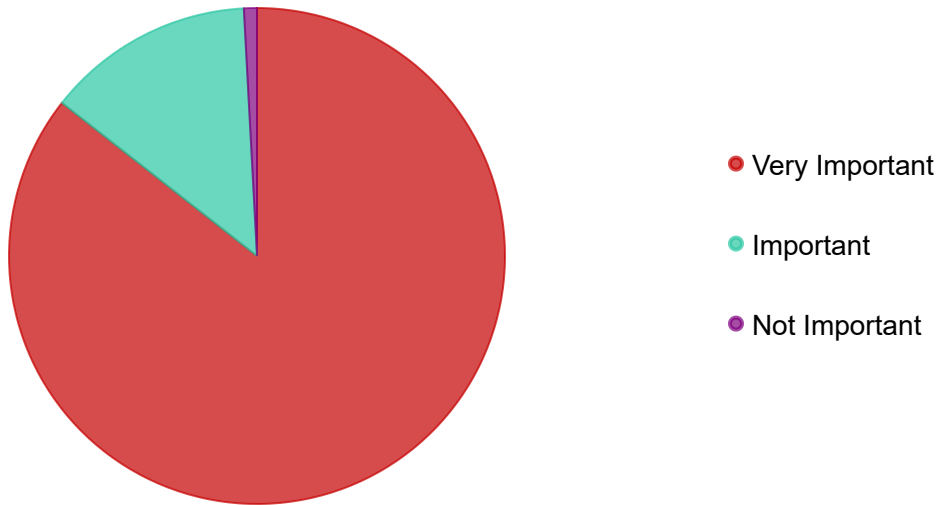


Answers	Count	Percentage
Participate in recreational programs or events	41	34.45%
Walking/strolling/fitness	87	73.11%
Ride bike, scooter, and/or skateboard	33	27.73%
Casual pick-up sports or games	20	16.81%
Organized sports (team or individual)	19	15.97%
Visit playgrounds	54	45.38%
Walk dogs	58	48.74%
Hiking	47	39.5%
Hunting	2	1.68%
Fishing	23	19.33%
Swimming	25	21.01%
I do not visit parks in Georgetown	3	2.52%
Other	4	3.36%

Answered: 117 Skipped: 2

Open Space and Recreation > 6. How important is it to you to preserve and protect the following in Georgetown?
Please rate each item from “Not Important” to “Very Important”:

○ ○ Water resources for water supply



Answers

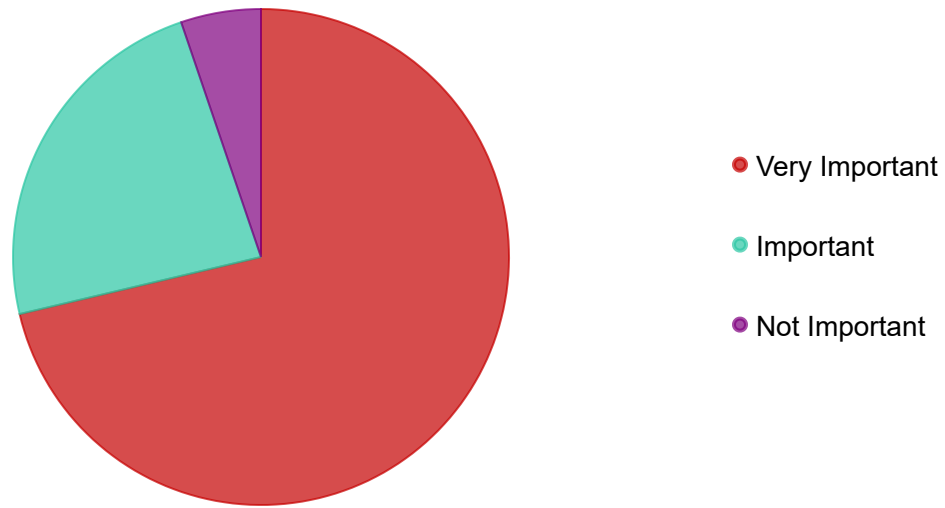
Count

Percentage

Very Important	101	84.87%
Important	16	13.45%
Not Important	1	0.84%

Answered: 118 Skipped: 1

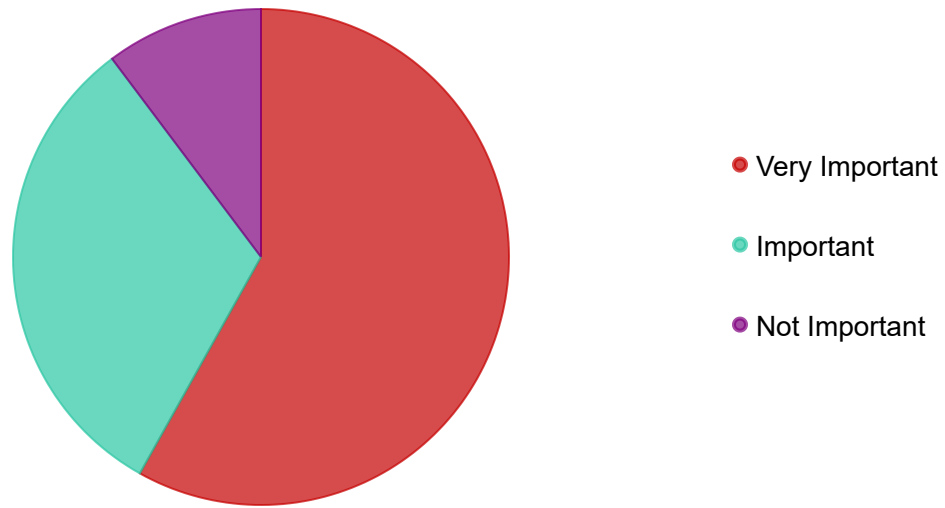
○ ○ Scenic landscapes



Answers	Count	Percentage
Very Important	82	68.91%
Important	27	22.69%
Not Important	6	5.04%

Answered: 115 Skipped: 4

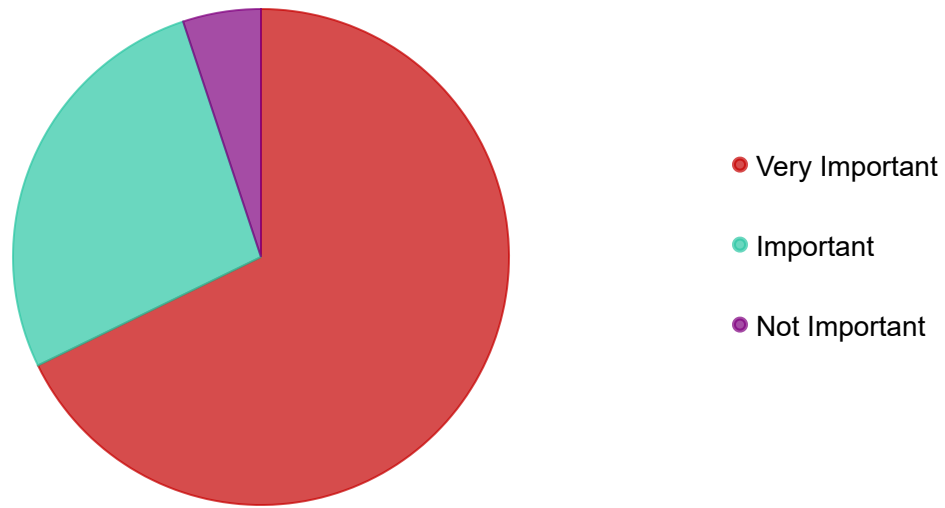
○ ○ Historic and cultural resources



Answers	Count	Percentage
Very Important	68	57.14%
Important	37	31.09%
Not Important	12	10.08%

Answered: 117 Skipped: 2

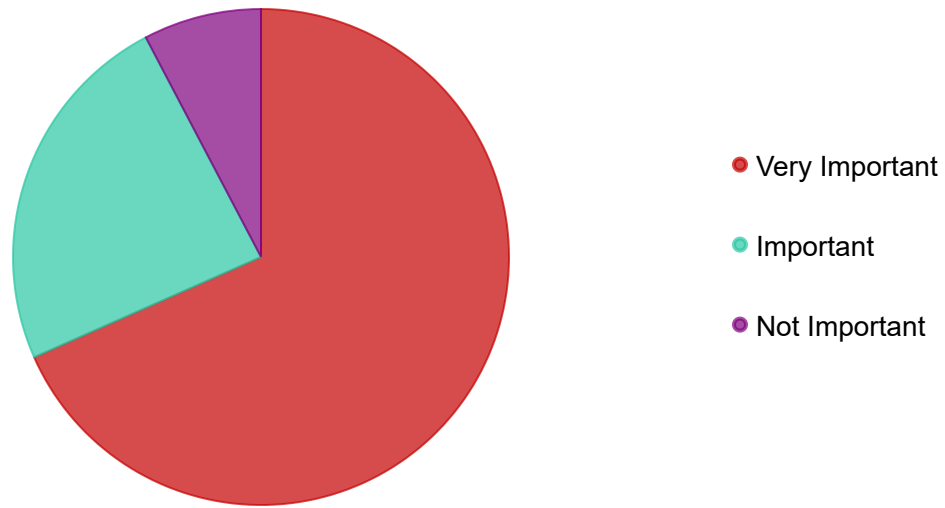
☐ ☐ Shade trees/street trees



Answers	Count	Percentage
Very Important	80	67.23%
Important	32	26.89%
Not Important	6	5.04%

Answered: 118 Skipped: 1

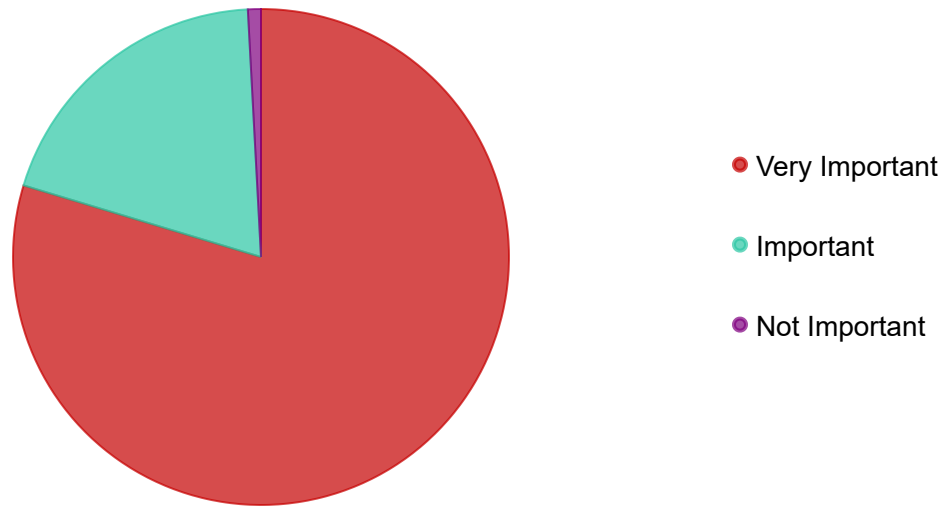
☐ ☐ Conservation lands



Answers	Count	Percentage
Very Important	80	67.23%
Important	28	23.53%
Not Important	9	7.56%

Answered: 117 Skipped: 2

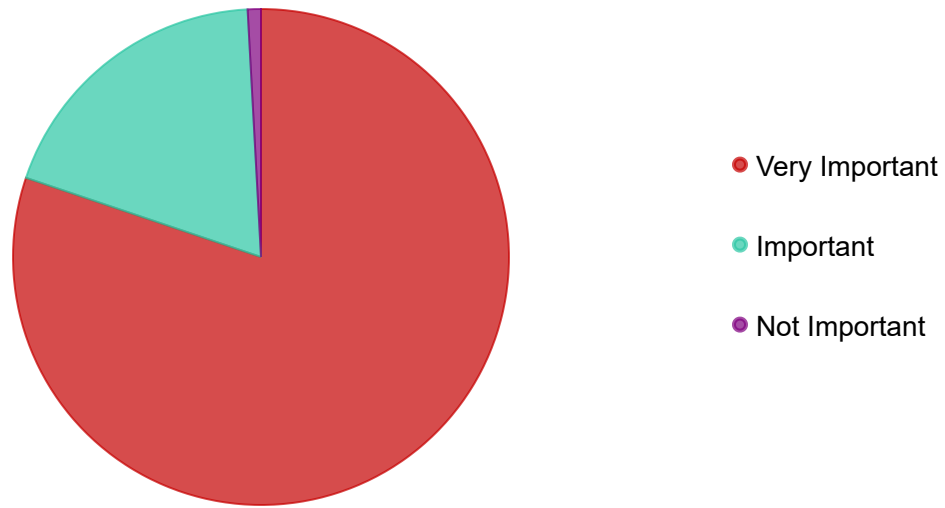
☐ ☐ Town-owned parks, playgrounds, and/or recreation areas



Answers	Count	Percentage
Very Important	94	78.99%
Important	23	19.33%
Not Important	1	0.84%

Answered: 118 Skipped: 1

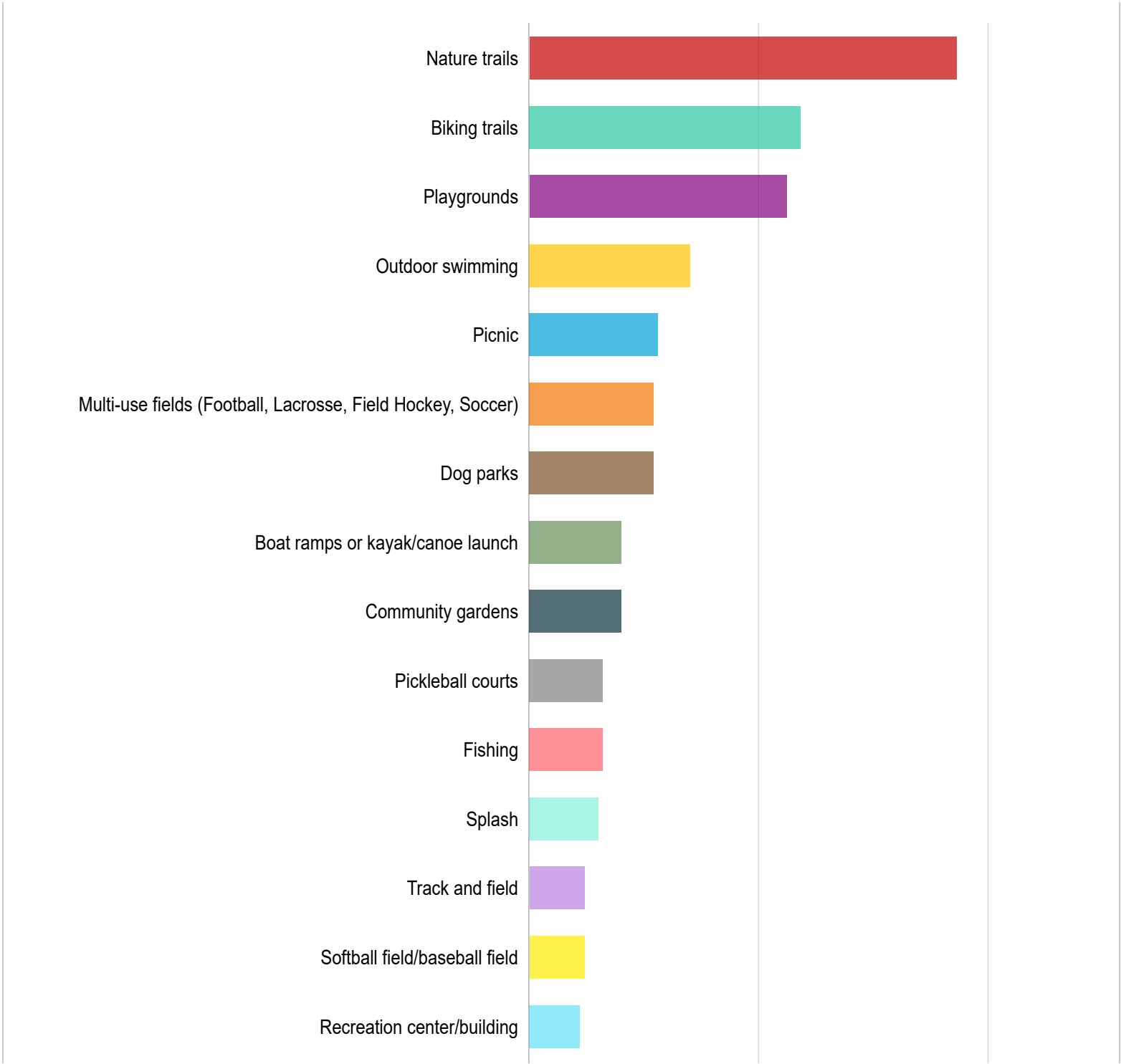
☐ ☐ Hiking, biking, and walking trails

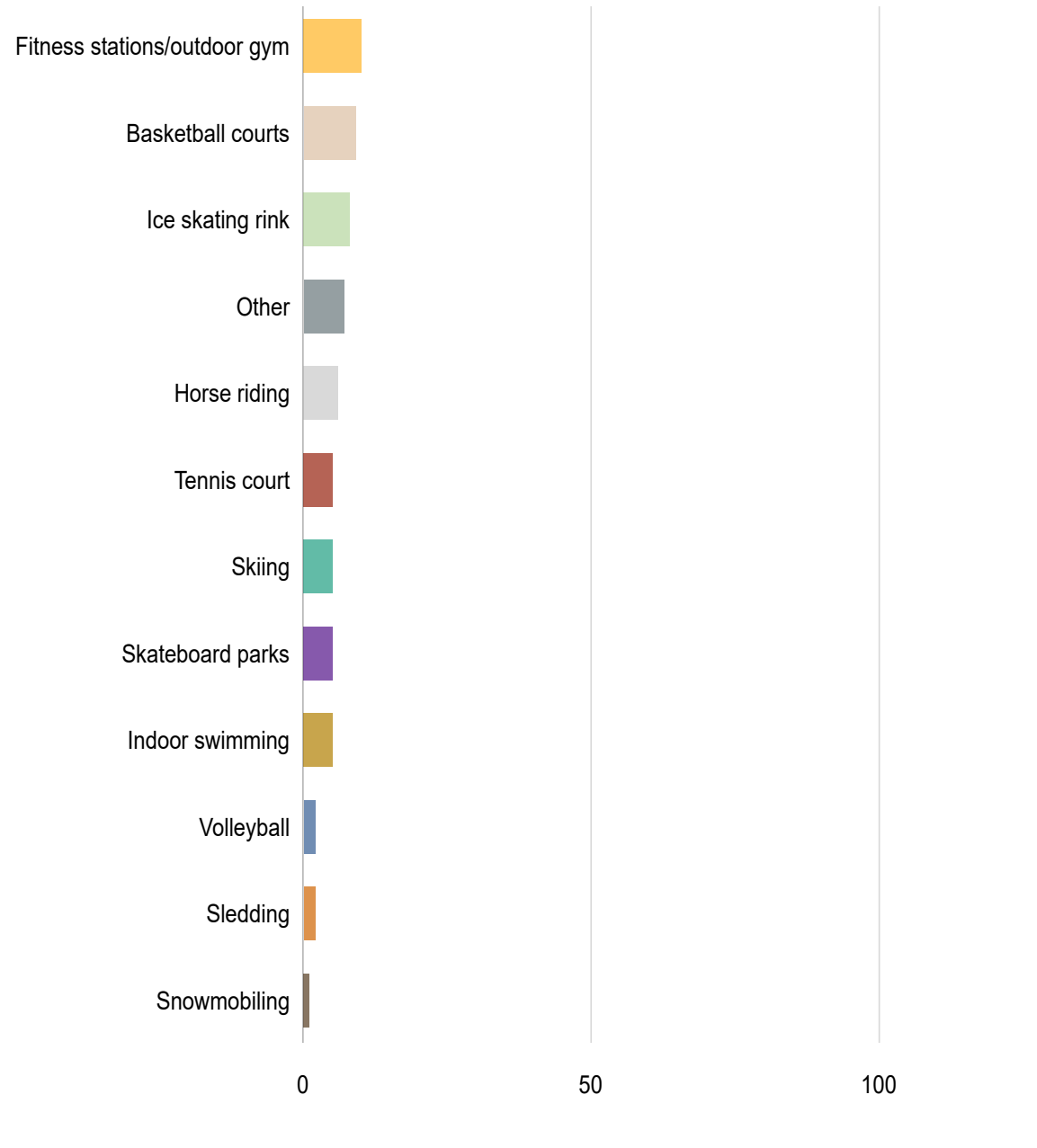


Answers	Count	Percentage
Very Important	93	78.15%
Important	22	18.49%
Not Important	1	0.84%

Answered: 116 Skipped: 3

7. Please select your top five desired recreational needs in Georgetown from the options...





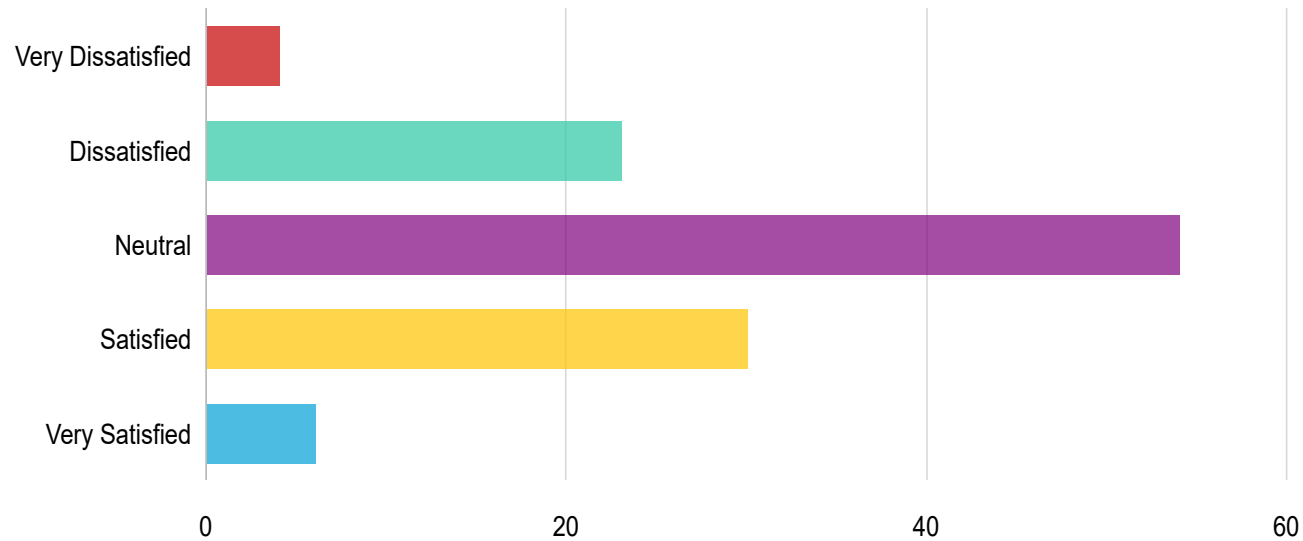
Answers	Count	Percentage
Nature trails	93	78.15%
Biking trails	59	49.58%
Playgrounds	56	47.06%
Outdoor swimming	35	29.41%
Picnic areas	28	23.53%
Multi-use fields (Football, Lacrosse, Field Hockey, Soccer)	27	22.69%
Dog parks	27	22.69%
Boat ramps or kayak/canoe launch	20	16.81%
Community gardens	20	16.81%
Pickleball courts	16	13.45%
Fishing	16	13.45%
Splash Pad	15	12.61%
Track and field	12	10.08%
Softball field/baseball field	12	10.08%
Recreation center/building	11	9.24%
Fitness stations/outdoor gym	10	8.4%

Basketball courts	9	7.56%
Ice skating rink	8	6.72%
Other	7	5.88%
Horse riding	6	5.04%
Tennis court	5	4.2%
Skiing	5	4.2%
Skateboard parks	5	4.2%
Indoor swimming	5	4.2%
Volleyball	2	1.68%
Sledding	2	1.68%
Snowmobiling	1	0.84%

Answered: 115 Skipped: 4

Open Space and Recreation > 8. How satisfied are you with the current state of parks and recreational opportunities in Georgetown. Please rate your satisfaction with the following:

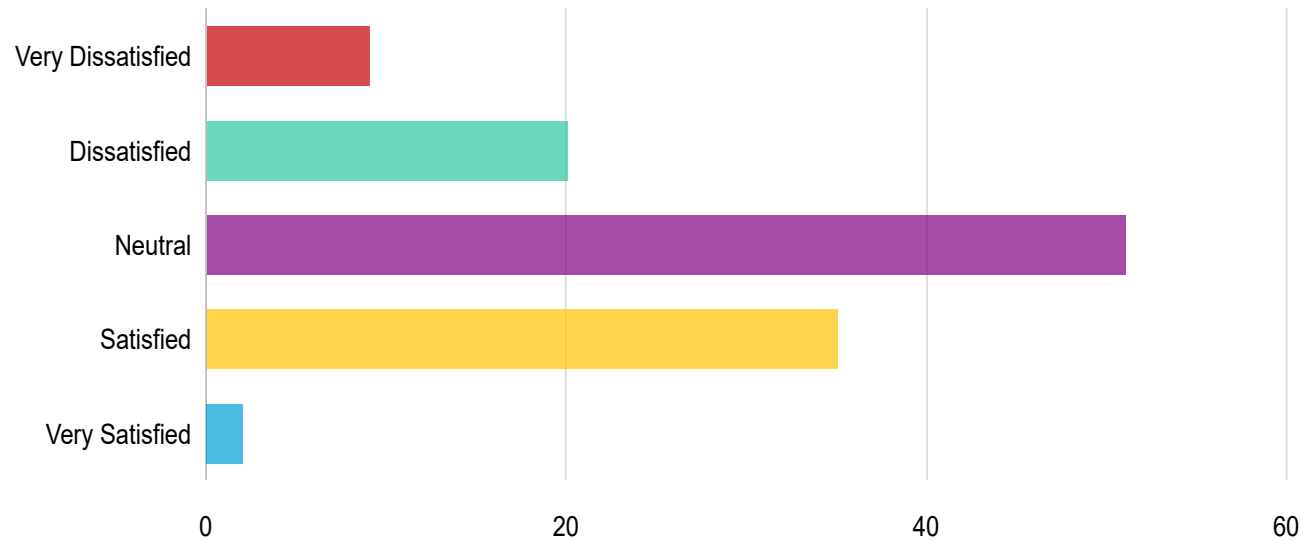
- ○ Availability of recreational programming for all ages



Answers	Count	Percentage
Very Dissatisfied	4	3.36%
Dissatisfied	23	19.33%
Neutral	54	45.38%
Satisfied	30	25.21%
Very Satisfied	6	5.04%

Answered: 117 Skipped: 2

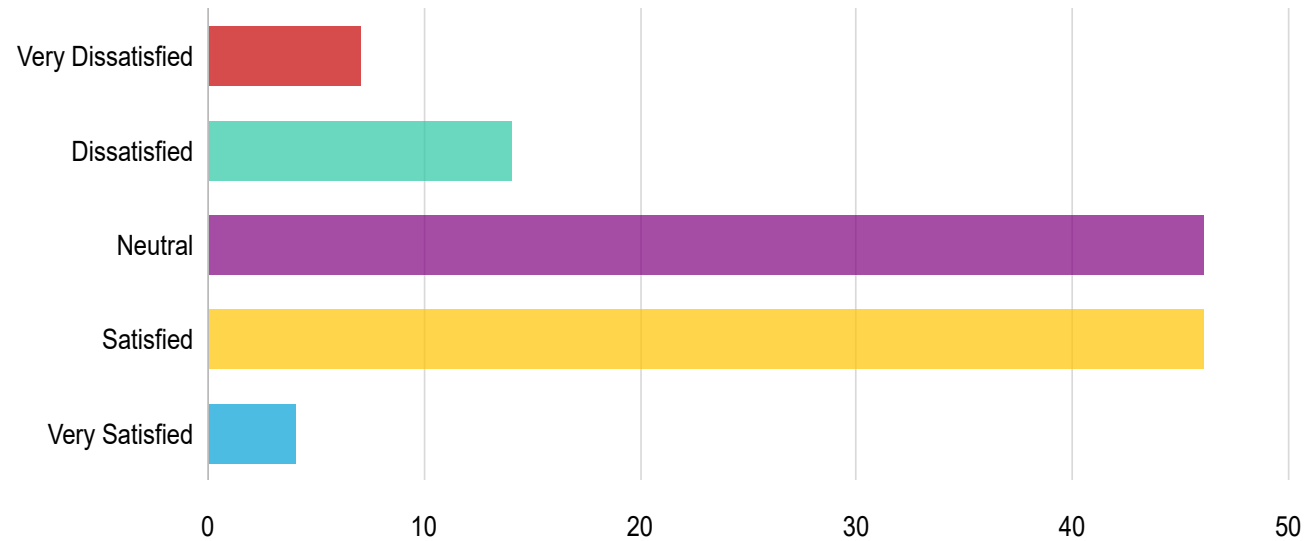
○ ○ Condition of existing recreational facilities



Answers	Count	Percentage
Very Dissatisfied	9	7.56%
Dissatisfied	20	16.81%
Neutral	51	42.86%
Satisfied	35	29.41%
Very Satisfied	2	1.68%

Answered: 117 Skipped: 2

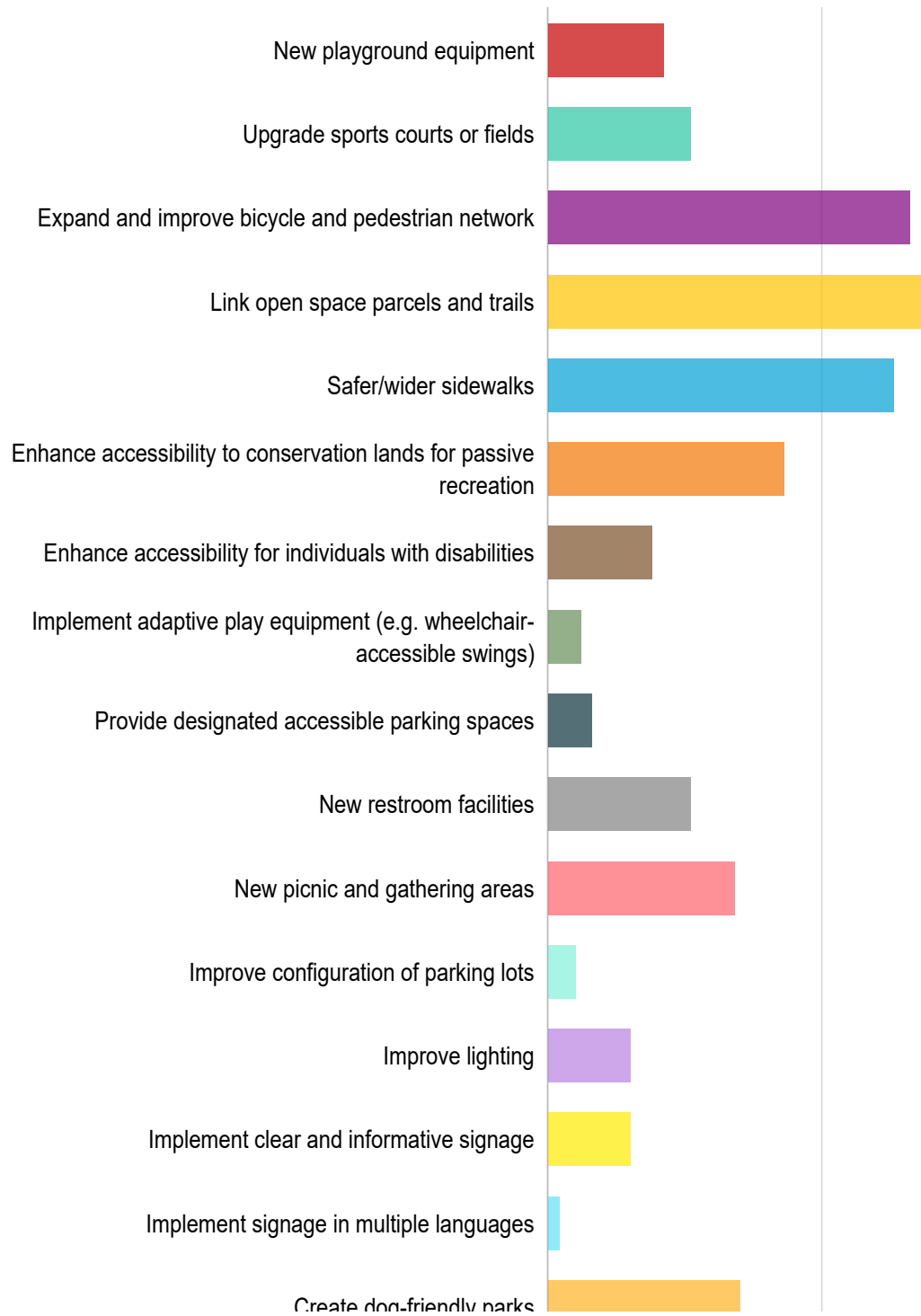
○ ○ Accessibility of existing recreational facilities



Answers	Count	Percentage
Very Dissatisfied	7	5.88%
Dissatisfied	14	11.76%
Neutral	46	38.66%
Satisfied	46	38.66%
Very Satisfied	4	3.36%

Answered: 117 Skipped: 2

○ 9. Please select the top five desired improvements for existing parks and recreation faciliti...





Answers

Count

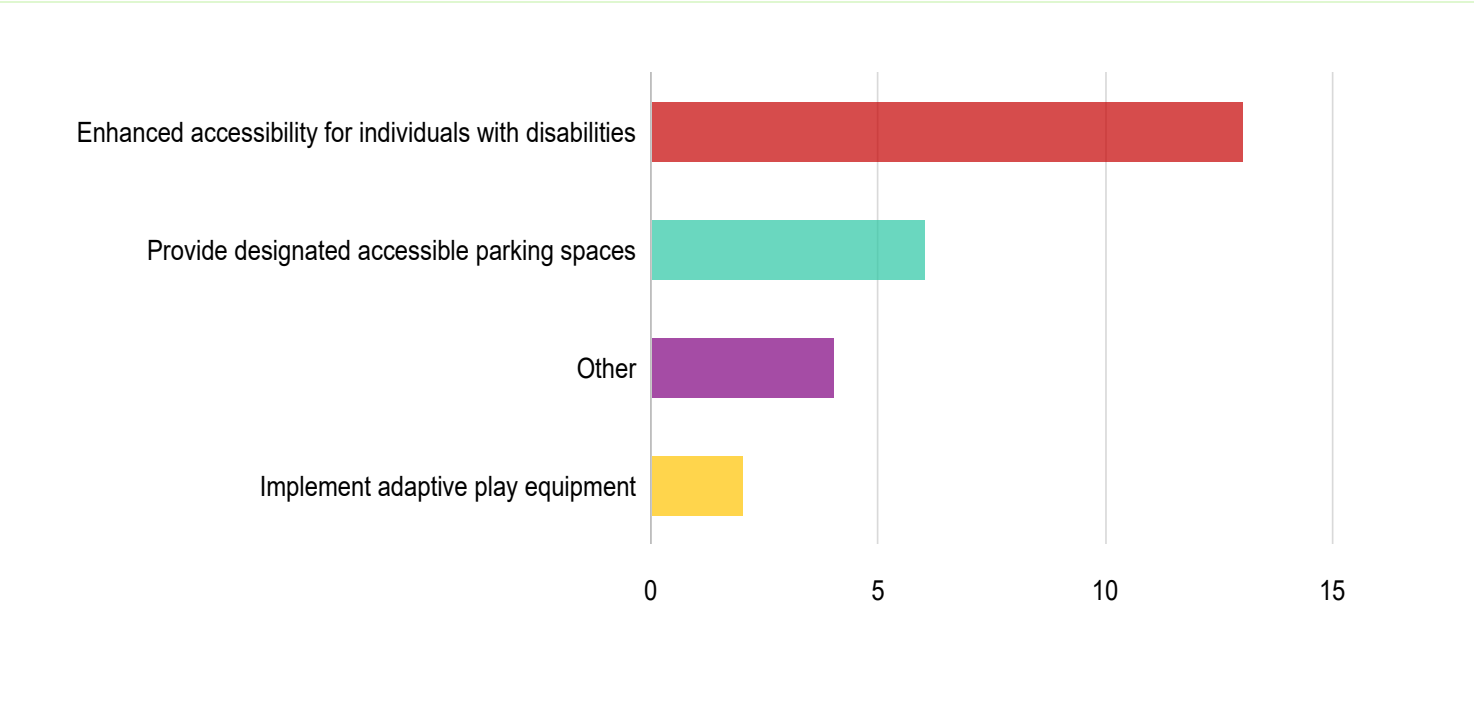
Percentage

New playground equipment	21	17.65%
Upgrade sports courts or fields	26	21.85%
Expand and improve bicycle and pedestrian network	66	55.46%
Link open space parcels and trails	68	57.14%
Safer/wider sidewalks	63	52.94%
Enhance accessibility to conservation lands for passive recreation	43	36.13%
Enhance accessibility for individuals with disabilities	19	15.97%
Implement adaptive play equipment (e.g. wheelchair-accessible swings)	6	5.04%
Provide designated accessible parking spaces	8	6.72%
New restroom facilities	26	21.85%
New picnic and gathering areas	34	28.57%
Improve configuration of parking lots	5	4.2%

Improve lighting	15	12.61%
Implement clear and informative signage	15	12.61%
Implement signage in multiple languages	2	1.68%
Create dog-friendly parks	35	29.41%
Other	6	5.04%

Answered: 115 Skipped: 4

Select the desired improvement mapped above.



Answers	Count	Percentage
Enhanced accessibility for individuals with disabilities	13	10.92%

Provide designated accessible parking spaces	6	5.04%
Other	4	3.36%
Implement adaptive play equipment	2	1.68%

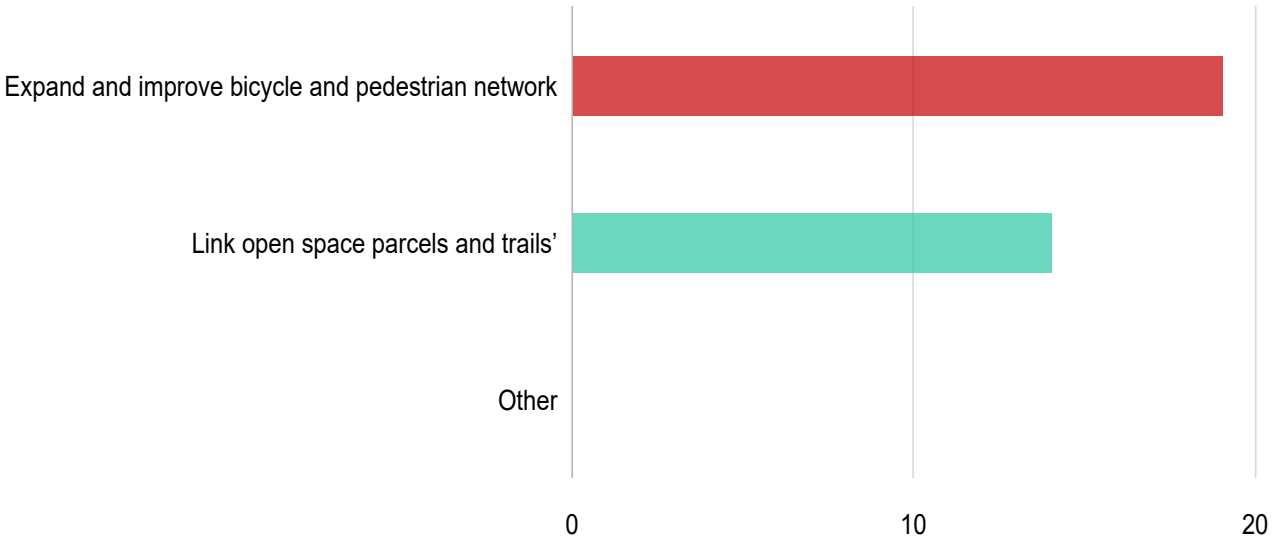
Answered: 25 Skipped: 94

Why did you place the pin here?

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Answered: 14 Skipped: 105

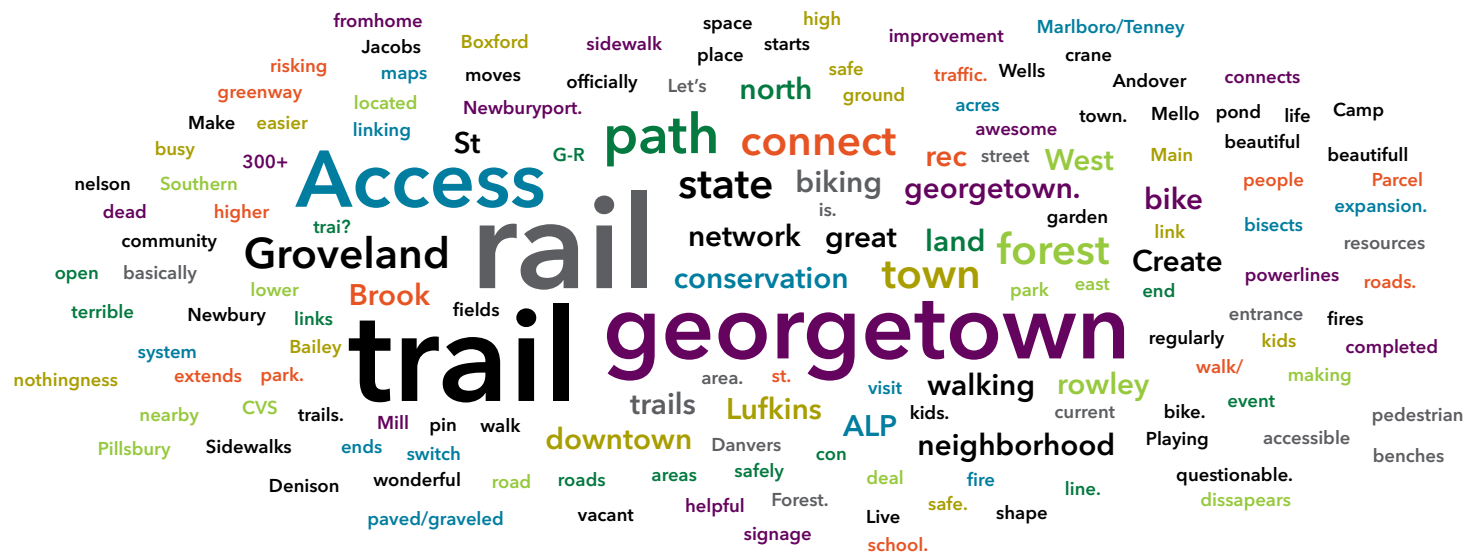
Select the desired improvement mapped above.



Answers	Count	Percentage
Expand and improve bicycle and pedestrian network	19	15.97%
Link open space parcels and trails'	14	11.76%
Other	0	0%

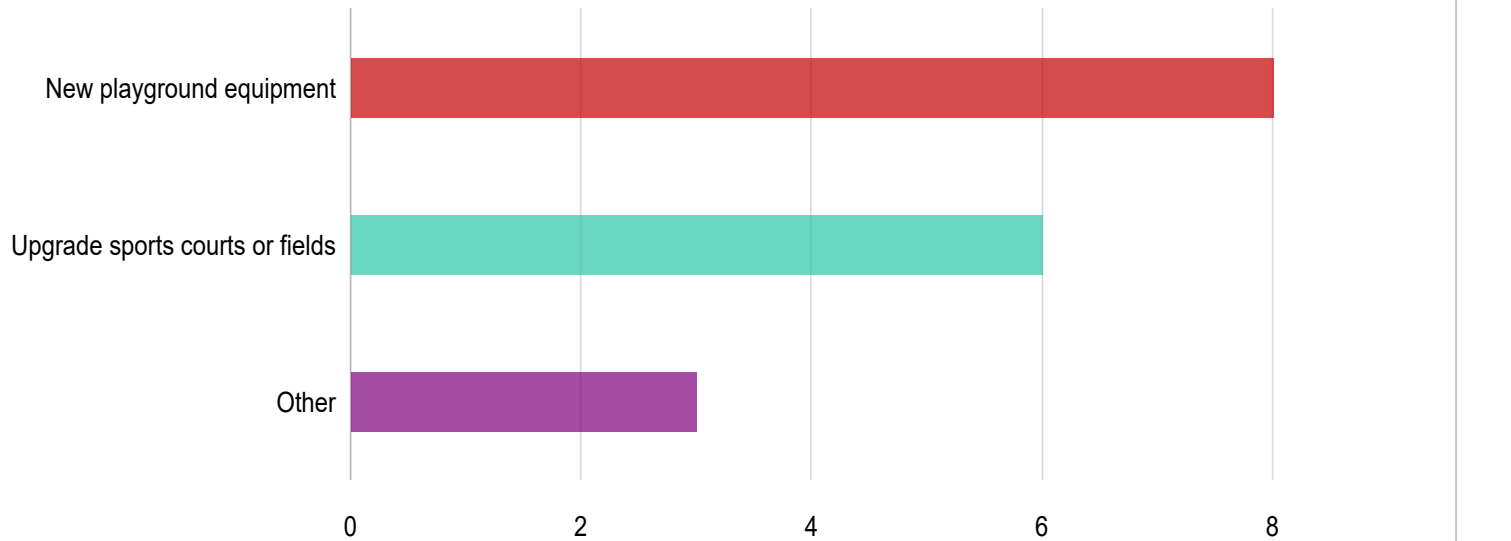
Answered: 33 Skipped: 86

- Why did you place the pin here?



Answered: 20 Skipped: 99

- **Select the desired improvement mapped above.**



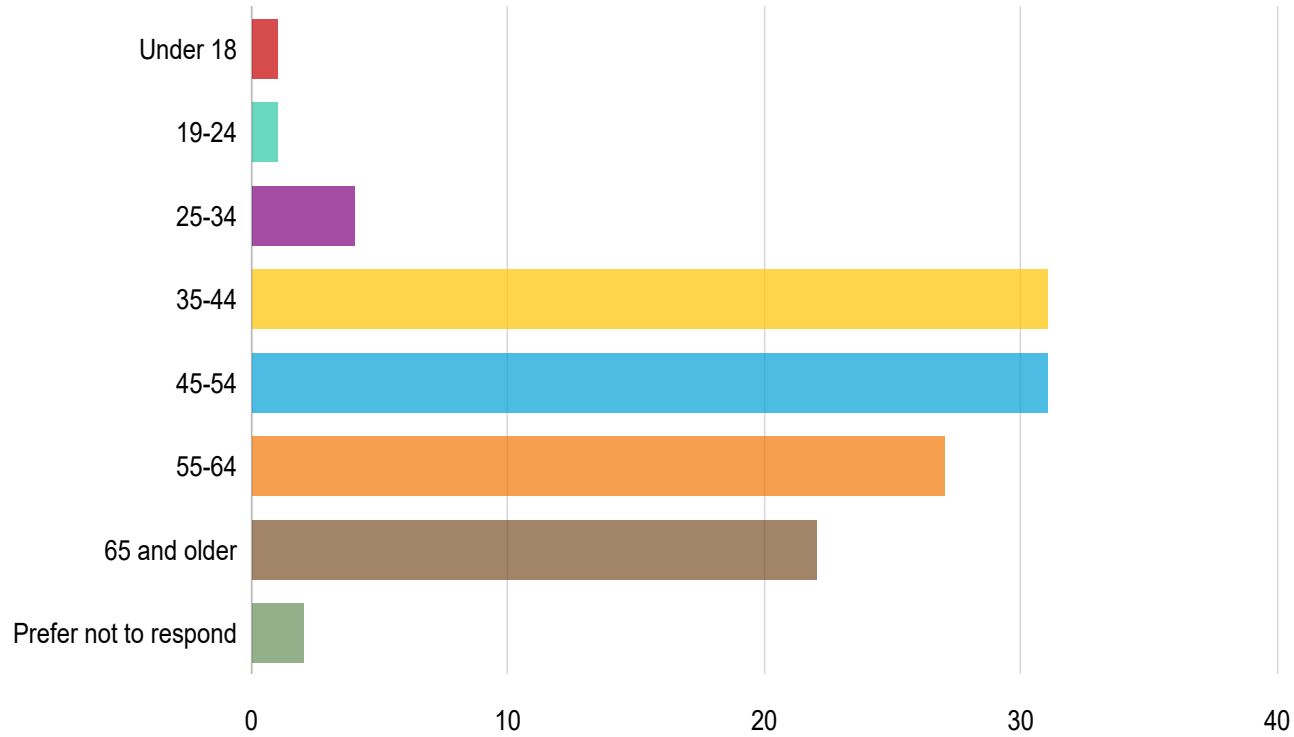
Answers	Count	Percentage
New playground equipment	8	6.72%
Upgrade sports courts or fields	6	5.04%
Other	3	2.52%

Answered: 17 Skipped: 102

Why did you place the pin here?

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Answered: 12 Skipped: 107

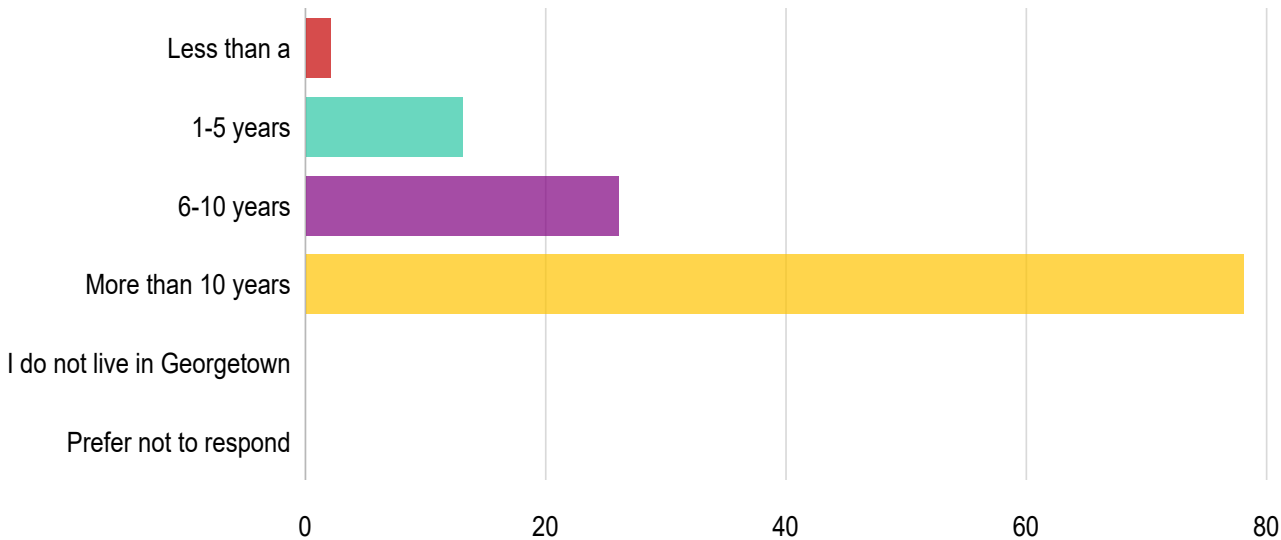


Answers	Count	Percentage
Under 18	1	0.84%
19-24	1	0.84%
25-34	4	3.36%
35-44	31	26.05%
45-54	31	26.05%
55-64	27	22.69%

65 and older	22	18.49%
Prefer not to respond	2	1.68%

Answered: 119 Skipped: 0

2. How long have you lived in Georgetown?

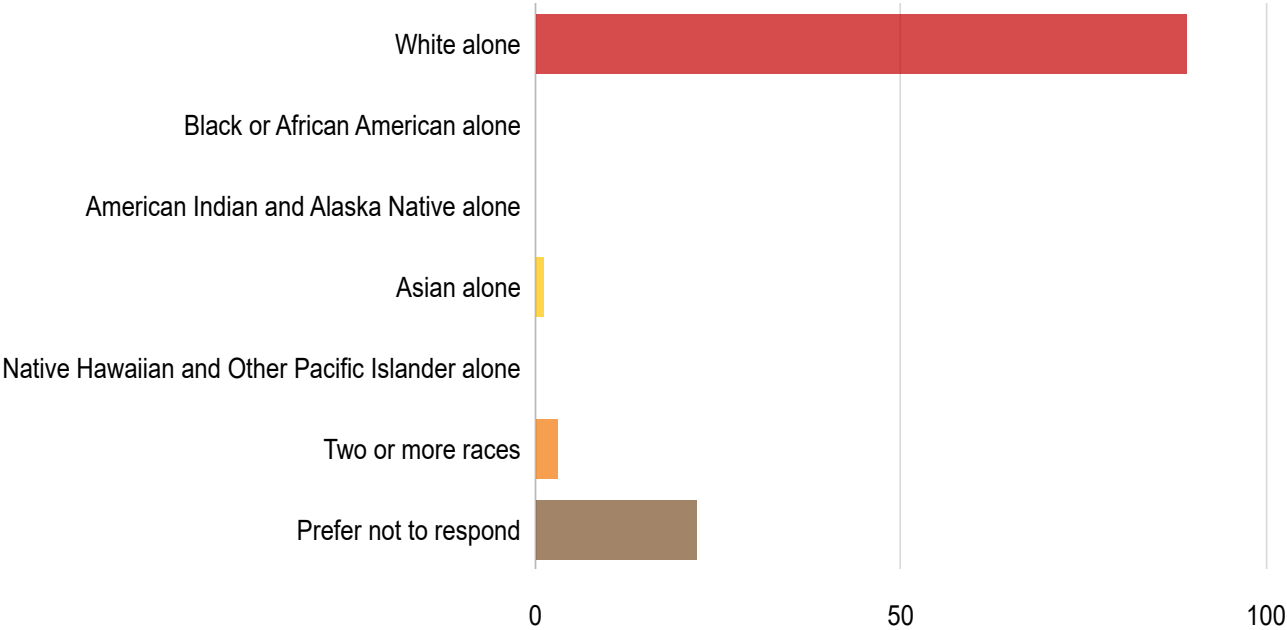


Answers	Count	Percentage
Less than a year	2	1.68%
1-5 years	13	10.92%
6-10 years	26	21.85%
More than 10 years	78	65.55%

I do not live in Georgetown	0	0%
Prefer not to respond	0	0%

Answered: 119 Skipped: 0

3. What is your race? (Options are based on U.S. Census Race and Hispanic...



Answers

Count

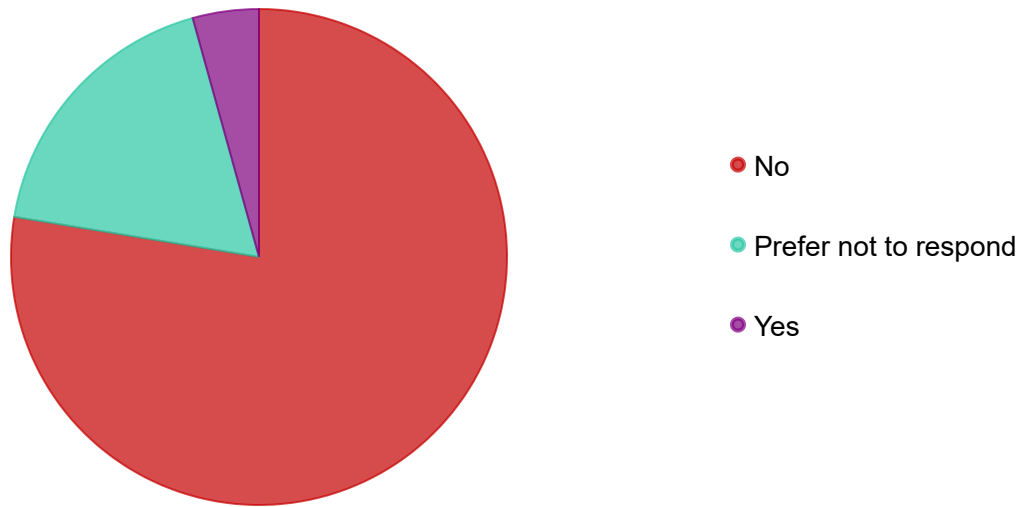
Percentage

White alone	89	74.79%
Black or African American alone	0	0%

American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0	0%
Asian alone	1	0.84%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0%
Two or more races	3	2.52%
Prefer not to respond	22	18.49%

Answered: 115 Skipped: 4

4. Are you Hispanic or Latino?

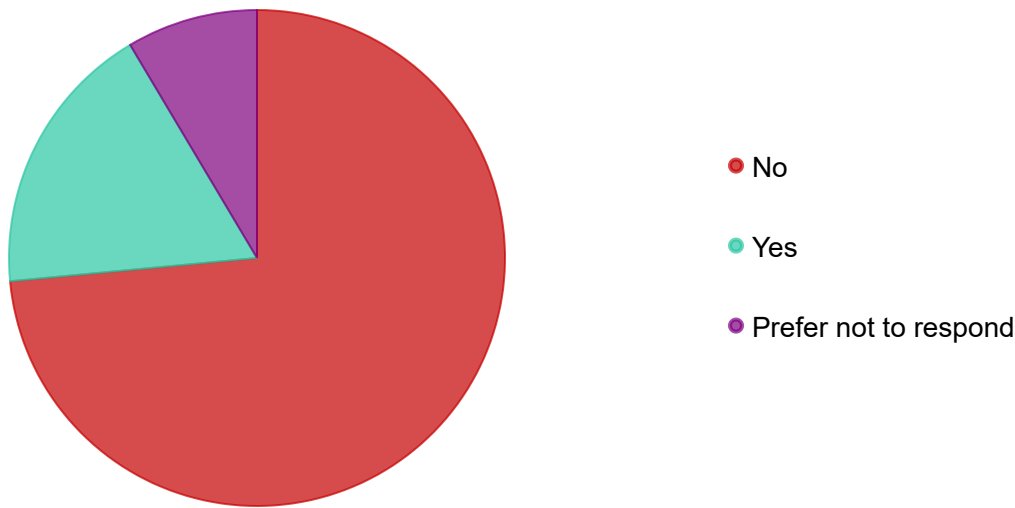


Answers	Count	Percentage
No	90	75.63%

Prefer not to respond	21	17.65%
Yes	5	4.2%

Answered: 116 Skipped: 3

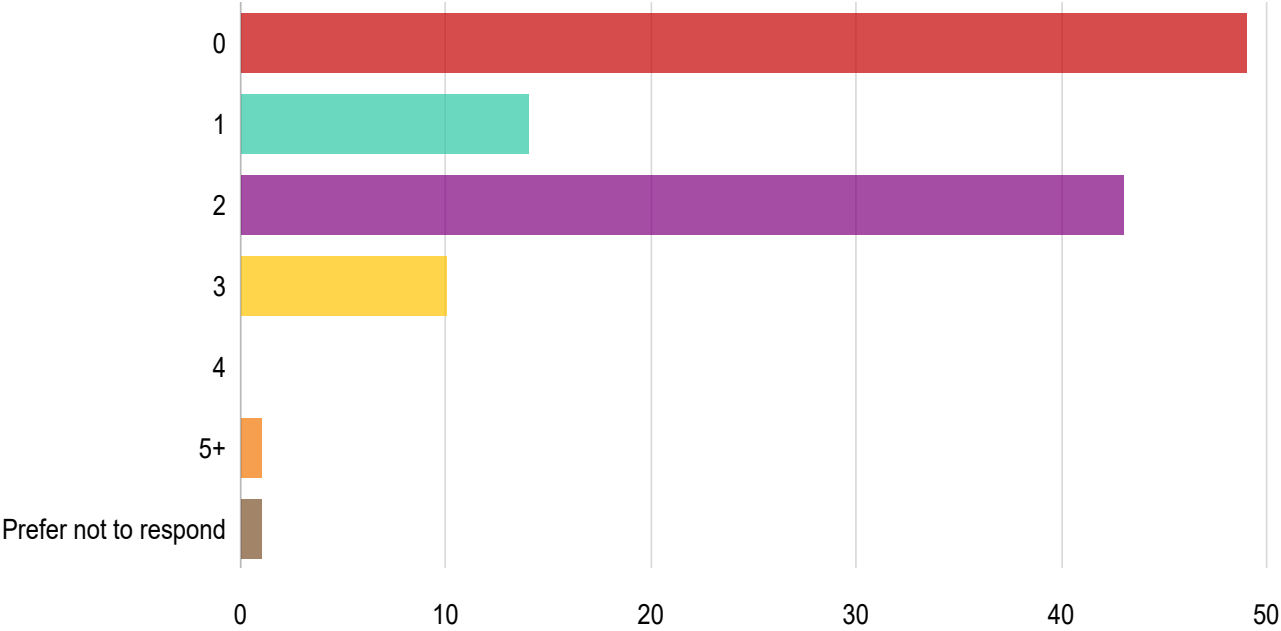
5. Does a person with a physical disability live in your household?



Answers	Count	Percentage
No	86	72.27%
Yes	21	17.65%
Prefer not to respond	10	8.4%

Answered: 117 Skipped: 2

6. How many children under 18 live in your household?



Answers	Count	Percentage
0	49	41.18%
1	14	11.76%
2	43	36.13%
3	10	8.4%
4	0	0%

5+

1

0.84%

Prefer not to respond

1

0.84%

Answered: 118 Skipped: 1

Appendix C: Conservation Land Policy

Appendix 5

Georgetown Conservation Land Policy

Whereas municipal conservation land is an irreplaceable resource that requires protection and environmentally sensitive management; whereas such protection and management shall preserve, restore and enhance the natural heritage of this municipality and other conservation values that such lands provide; whereas stewardship of such lands and values shall be for the benefit of this and all future generations; whereas the acquisition, protection and management of such lands is furthered by broad participation and support from the residents of this municipality; the Georgetown Conservation Commission (the "Commission") hereby promulgates the following policies under the Conservation Commission Act (M.G.L. Ch. 40 §8C) defining the purpose of and values provided by Georgetown Conservation Lands, and setting forth certain principles and procedures by which the Commission shall acquire, manage and dispose of municipal conservation land on behalf of current and all future citizens of Georgetown.

Adopted by the Georgetown Conservation Commission in public hearing at Memorial Town Hall, 1 Library Street, Georgetown, on March 11, 1999.

1. CONSERVATION PURPOSES AND CONSERVATION VALUES

- A) Conservation purposes shall be to protect, maintain, restore and enhance the following conservation values:
 - (1) The ecological diversity and biological integrity of this municipality and our region's ecosystems; with principal emphasis on specimens, species and communities of indigenous wild vegetation and animals that are environmentally beneficial, or are rare or uncommon within this municipality, county or Commonwealth; as well as the habitats used by natural vegetation and wild animals in general;
 - (2) Natural systems that promote the overall environmental health of the air, lands and waters of this municipality and region; with principal emphasis on naturally vegetated buffers protecting significant aquifers, water bodies, water courses and wetlands, as well as natural vegetation in general;
 - (3) Natural landscape features of this municipality;
 - (4) Significant historic sites and historic landscape features of this municipality, wherein their protection, maintenance, restoration or use is compatible with and has no significant adverse impact upon conservation values 1.A),(1)-(3);
 - (5) Opportunities for cultural events, educational programs, recreational activities and scientific research that serve a public interest, wherein such activities are passive, are compatible with conservation values 1.A),(1)-(3), and have no significant adverse impact upon conservation values 1.A),(1)-(4); and
 - (6) Opportunities for agricultural and forestry activities that serve a public interest, wherein such activities are sustainable, compatible with conservation values 1.A),(1)-(3), and have no significant adverse impact upon conservation values 1.A),(1)-(5).
- B) Georgetown Conservation Land shall therefore be acquired, protected and managed by the Commission for conservation purposes only; the Commission shall preserve, restore and enhance the conservation values provided by municipal Conservation Land for this generation and for all future generations; and the Commission shall dispose of municipal Conservation Land only upon adhering to strict procedures intended to ensure that any such disposition serves an over-riding and long-term public interest and serves the greater common good not only of this generation, but all future generations.

2. ACQUISITION OF MUNICIPAL CONSERVATION LAND

- A) Through purchase or donation, with the advice and consent of the Select Board, with the advice of the Planning Board in appropriate cases, and with the approval of Town Meeting as deemed necessary, the Commission shall approve the acquisition of titles in fee, easements, development rights or conservation restrictions to parcels of land that are of "conservation interest" on behalf of this municipality and to be managed by the Commission. To be of conservation interest, a parcel's location, size and existing condition shall be consistent with conservation purposes, or otherwise would enhance such purposes upon restoration or improvement or sale that is deemed to be both desirable and feasible, and shall include:
 - (1) Any parcel of 20 acres or more, regardless of location;
 - (2) Any parcel of 5 to less than 20 acres, that:
 - (a) Abuts existing legally dedicated open space;
 - (b) Abuts or contains any water body, water course or wetland that shows on a USGS topographic map;
 - (c) Contains a vernal pool certified or certifiable by the Commonwealth;

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- (d) Protects habitat for locally rare or uncommon specimens, species or communities of indigenous wild vegetation or animals; or
- (e) Has outstanding scenic, historic or cultural significance or passive recreational potential; and
- (3) Any parcel, regardless of size, that:
 - (a) Would enhance protection of any Zone 1 or Zone 2 of any public water supply designated by the Commonwealth;
 - (b) Is surrounded by existing legally dedicated open space on at least two-thirds of its boundaries;
 - (c) Would enhance protection of any FEMA designated floodway;
 - (d) Provides habitat for any species identified as endangered, threatened or of special concern by the Commonwealth;
 - (e) Could form part of a wildlife migration corridor or passive recreational trail between any contiguous parcels of legally dedicated open space of 100 acres or more within this municipality or region; or
 - (f) Upon restoration or sale, would enhance conservation purposes within this municipality.
- B) The Commission shall avoid approving the acquisition of lands with easements or other stipulations that do not promote conservation purposes.
- C) The Commission shall avoid approving the acquisition of lands that have been substantially developed for non-conservation purposes, unless:
 - (a) the Commission determines that it is in the public interest to restore such land to a condition appropriate for conservation purposes, and that funds are available or it is feasible to raise funds, through property rental or lease or through another means, to accomplish such restoration in the foreseeable future; or
 - (b) the property is donated for the expressed purpose of sale to raise funds that will support municipal Conservation Land acquisition, management or enhancement.
- D) Municipal Conservation Land planning and acquisition shall be undertaken by an Open Space Committee appointed by and reporting to the Commission.
- E) Membership in said Committee shall be open to all residents of Georgetown who demonstrate they have an interest in and can contribute to planning and acquiring Conservation Land for conservation purposes. Appointment or re-appointment to said Committee shall be at the sole discretion of the Commission. After notice to a member of said Committee, public notice, and in public hearing, the Commission shall have the authority to remove an appointed member of said Committee for failure to participate or for other good cause. Terms of said Committee members shall expire on the first day of March in each year.
- F) Meetings of the Open Space Committee shall comply with the Open Meeting Law. All actions undertaken by said committee shall comply with all relevant federal, state and municipal laws. Committee members shall avoid, to the maximum extent feasible, any action that may have an appearance of a conflict of interest. Minutes of said committee's meetings shall be submitted to the Commission in a timely manner. Said Committee's meetings shall be scheduled to avoid conflict with meetings of the Conservation Commission, and, to the extent feasible, shall be scheduled to avoid conflict with meetings of any other Committee appointed by the Commission.
- G) The Open Space Committee shall meet no less than twice per year, and shall submit an annual report to the Commission in January, including accomplishments and recommendations for short-term and long-term objectives and budgetary needs for open space planning and acquisition.
- H) The Open Space Committee shall be responsible for preparing and, as needed, updating an Open Space Plan for Georgetown in accordance with the requirements of the Division of Conservation Services (DCS) of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA). Said Plan and any modifications in said plan shall be approved by the Commission and DCS prior to implementation. To the maximum extent feasible, such plan shall be developed or modified in consultation with and with input from all relevant public agencies and private organizations, and with opportunities for participation or comment from all residents of this municipality; updated annually; and made available to the public in print, audio-video and hypertext markup language (web site) formats that are accessible to disabled persons.
- I) In accordance with the latest approved Open Space Plan and in collaboration with appropriate state and municipal agencies and private conservancy organizations, the Open Space Committee shall be responsible for:
 - (1) Identifying specific parcels that may be of conservation interest, researching their history, evaluating their existing or potential conservation values, analyzing their availability and risk of development, recommending the best available means for their acquisition or other methods of protection, and undertaking preliminary negotiations with owners;
 - (2) Preparing written proposals for the acquisition of or other form of protection for such parcels. Such proposals shall be submitted to the Commission for its approval, and shall include a justification for the proposed method of protection, existing or potential conservation values on the parcels, proposed conservation uses, and any budgetary requirements;
 - (3) Fund raising and grant writing deemed necessary and appropriate for open space planning and

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- acquisition; and
- (4) Appropriate public education regarding open space planning, acquisition and protection; and recommending changes in state and local laws, regulations or policies to enhance open space planning, acquisition, protection and public uses of municipal Conservation Lands that are compatible with conservation purposes.
- J) The Commission shall include at least a summary of the annual report of the Open Space Committee within its annual report to this municipality.
- K) Upon approval of the Commission, the Commission shall include budgetary requests for the Open Space Committee within its annual budget request to this municipality.

3. RULES AND PERMITS FOR USES OF GEORGETOWN CONSERVATION LANDS

- A) The following shall be the general rules for Georgetown Conservation Lands:
 - (1) Open to the public from sunrise to sunset.
 - (2) No littering. No dumping. No polluting.
 - (3) No fires. No camping. No hunting. No trapping. No firearms.
 - (4) No alcohol. No controlled substances (drugs).
 - (5) No motorized or non-motorized vehicles or bicycles, except on designated entrance roads and parking areas.
 - (6) No loud noises. No disturbance of wildlife or habitat.
 - (7) No horses, dogs or other pets, except on designated trails and under close control.
 - (8) No removal, no destruction, no damage to signs or real property.
 - (9) No removal, no destruction, no damage, no cutting of any vegetation, including trees.
 - (10) No liability for injury.
 - (11) Penalty of \$100 fine per violation.
- B) Upon written request, and at its discretion, the Commission may issue a written permit for:
 - (1) Visits between sunrise and sunset.
 - (2) Day and overnight camping and camp fires.
 - (3) Maintenance and improvement activities.
 - (4) Other activities which the Commission determines, with certainty, will have no adverse impacts or will have beneficial impacts on conservation values.
- C) The Commission may waive any general rules or adopt different or additional or special rules and permitting procedures for individual parcels or groups of parcels of municipal Conservation Land, upon its finding that such rules and permitting procedures are appropriate to the conservation purposes provided by said parcels and any requirements of the State Constitution or DCS that may apply.
- D) The Commission may adopt a management plan with rules and permitting procedures for individual parcels or groups of parcels of municipal Conservation Land, upon its finding that such plans, rules and permitting procedures are appropriate to the conservation purposes provided by said parcels and any requirements of the State Constitution or DCS that may apply. Wherein the Commission has adopted or modified such a management plan for one or more parcels, that has been approved by DCS if needed, all activities upon said parcels shall be in accordance with said plan.

3. MANAGEMENT OF GEORGETOWN CONSERVATION LAND

- A) Individual parcels or groups of parcels of Georgetown Conservation Land shall be managed by Stewardship Committees appointed by and reporting to the Commission, and in accordance with specific management plans and any expressed wishes of the seller(s) or donor(s) of said parcel(s), as well as any requirements of DCS. Prior to implementation, the Commission shall approve all significant expenditures; uses requiring permits from the Commission; changes of use; alterations of habitat, vegetation or facilities, not including routine maintenance; any activity which requires a permit from the Commonwealth or any subdivision thereof; any disposition of real property located on the parcel(s); adoption or changes in rules and fees; and any disposition of municipal Conservation Land.
- B) Membership in said committees shall be open to all residents of Georgetown who demonstrate they have an interest in and can contribute to the management of municipal Conservation Land for conservation purposes, and in accordance with the expressed wishes of the seller(s) or donor(s) of the parcel(s) being managed. Wherein one or more parcels being managed by a committee has been acquired with the assistance of funding from the Commonwealth, membership in said committee shall be open to all residents of the Commonwealth who demonstrate they have an interest in and can contribute to the management of municipal Conservation Land for conservation purposes, as long as such members only vote on matters pertaining to said parcel(s) and as long as

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non-Georgetown residents make up no more than one-third of the members.

- C) Appointment or re-appointment to said Committees shall be at the sole discretion of the Commission. After notice to a member of such a Committee, public notice, and in public hearing, the Commission shall have the authority to remove an appointed member of such a Committee for failure to participate or for other good cause. Terms of said Committee members shall expire on the first day of March in each year.
- D) Meetings of said committees shall comply with the Open Meeting Law. All actions undertaken by said committees will comply with all relevant federal, state and municipal laws. Committee members shall avoid, to the maximum extent feasible, any action that may have an appearance of a conflict of interest. Minutes of said committees' meetings shall be submitted to the Commission in a timely manner. Meetings of said Committees shall be scheduled to avoid conflict with meetings of the Conservation Commission, and, to the extent feasible, shall be scheduled to avoid conflict with meetings of any other Committee appointed by the Commission.
- E) Said committees shall meet no less than twice per year, and shall submit an annual report to the Commission in January, including accomplishments and recommendations for short-term and long-term objectives and budgetary needs for municipal Conservation Land management, preservation, restoration, enhancement and public uses that are compatible with conservation purposes.
- F) Said committees shall be responsible for preparing and updating a Management Plan for each parcel or group of parcels of municipal Conservation Land being managed. Said plans shall be updated annually if feasible, or as needed. Said plans and any modification of said plans shall be approved by the Commission prior to implementation. Wherein a Management Plan pertains to one or more parcels acquired with the assistance of funding from the Commonwealth, said plan or any modification of said plan shall also be approved by DCS prior to implementation. Management Plans shall be consistent with the expressed wishes of the seller(s) or donor(s) of the parcel(s) to which they apply, as well as the latest Open Space Plan approved by the Commission and DCS. To the extent deemed desirable or necessary by the Commission, or DCS as appropriate, each Management Plan shall include:
 - (1) An inventory and mapping of the current status of vegetation and wild animal life, habitat, natural landscape features, historic sites, historic landscape features, and authorized and unauthorized uses of the municipal Conservation Land(s);
 - (2) A natural and cultural history, and analysis of the environmental, ecological, scenic, historic, and cultural significance of the parcel(s);
 - (3) Surveys of neighborhood and community views regarding uses of said parcel(s), and recommendations for responding to these views;
 - (4) Responses to any specific concerns or requirements of the Commission, other agencies of this municipality, the Commonwealth, and relevant conservancy organizations or outdoor recreational groups;
 - (5) Recommendations regarding any sites that require maximum protection due to their environmental, ecological, landscape, cultural or historic significance, and methods for accomplishing such protection;
 - (6) Recommendations regarding any sites that should be preserved in or restored to their natural state, and methods for accomplishing this;
 - (7) Recommendations regarding specific culturally or historically significant sites that should be preserved or restored, and methods for accomplishing this;
 - (8) Recommendations regarding any sites that are appropriate for specified trails or boardwalks, accommodations for visitors with disabilities, informational or educational brochures or signs, habitat supplements (nest boxes, etc.), scientific research, educational programs, recreational activities, cultural events, or agricultural or forestry activities, and methods for developing and managing such uses;
 - (9) Recommendations regarding any special rules, permitting procedures or fees to be required of users;
 - (10) Identification of any relevant permitting or regulatory requirements of the Commonwealth, or any subdivision thereof, including the Commission, and recommendations for achieving compliance; and
 - (11) Recommendations regarding short-term and long-term objectives and budgetary needs for management purposes;
- G) The Commission shall include at least summaries of the annual reports of said committees within its annual report to this municipality.
- H) Upon approval of the Commission, the Commission shall include budgetary requests for said committees within its annual budget request to this municipality.

5. DISPOSITION OF GEORGETOWN CONSERVATION LAND

- A) Disposition of Georgetown Conservation Land shall include any use of municipal Conservation Land for any purpose that does not perpetually maintain, protect, restore or enhance conservation values; regardless of whether such disposition is permanent or temporary; regardless of whether such disposition serves another public

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purpose; regardless of whether such disposition is undertaken by the sale or gift of title in fee or easement or any other interest; regardless of whether such disposition is undertaken by the granting of any permit or lease that would have the effect of a change in use from conservation purposes if repeatedly or continuously granted; and regardless of whether such disposition is undertaken by allowing any use or evaluation of an area for the purpose of evaluating the area's potential for long-term or permanent uses that are not consistent with conservation purposes.

- B) Except when a parcel of municipal Conservation Land has been acquired with the expressed intent of later sale for the purpose of raising funds for municipal Conservation Land management or acquisition, all requests for the disposition of municipal Conservation Land shall be made in writing to the Commission by certified mail (return receipt requested), including an original, two complete copies, and one complete copy for each Commissioner. At the same time and in the same manner, a complete copy of such a request shall be sent to:
- (1) The seller(s) or donor(s) of the parcel(s) subject to the request, if feasible;
 - (2) The Georgetown Select Board, Georgetown Open Space Committee, and any Stewardship Committee responsible for managing said parcel(s); and
 - (3) DCS, the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency, and the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement.
- C) At the same time, the applicant shall provide notice by certified mail (return receipt requested) to all abutters and abutters to the abutters within 300 feet of any boundary of any contiguous parcel(s) of municipal Conservation Land to which the request applies, including all direct abutters to any body of water that borders said parcel(s). Said notice shall include an easily readable summary of the request, and prominently identify the newspaper and section in which the date, time and location of the public hearing will be published.
- D) All testimony, deliberations and votes regarding the disposition of municipal Conservation Land shall take place in public hearing that complies with the Open Meeting Law.
- E) The date, time and location of the public hearing and a readable summary of the request shall be prominently advertised by the Commission at the applicant's expense in a newspaper the Commission deems to be of greatest general circulation within this municipality at least 5 days and no more than 14 days prior to the opening of said hearing.
- F) To the maximum extent feasible, the date(s), time(s) and location(s) of such a public hearing and any continuance(s) shall be selected to ensure that all Commissioners and all other interested persons can participate.
- G) A request for disposition shall include:
- (1) The name(s), address(es) and telephone number(s) of the applicant(s) and any professional consultant(s) employed in preparing the request;
 - (2) To the extent feasible, notarized copies of the deed and any Town Meeting Report(s) of this municipality referring to the acquisition of the parcel(s) of municipal Conservation Land subject to the request;
 - (3) Locus maps accurately locating said parcel(s) on the latest Georgetown Board of Assessors map, USGS topographic map, and Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program map;
 - (4) Professionally prepared plans, drawings and written documentation identifying the area(s) of municipal Conservation Land subject to the request, as well as an assessment of the existing or potential conservation values provided by said parcel(s); and
 - (5) Professionally prepared plans, drawings and written documentation providing clear and convincing evidence for the Commission to make the determinations required by this policy, the most recent policy regarding the disposition of Article 97 Land adopted by EOEA, Article 97 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth, and any relevant case law or Attorney General opinions.
- H) At its discretion, and upon independent review of the request and independent evaluation of the parcel(s) to which the request applies by professional consultants approved by the Commission and paid for at the applicant's expense, the Commission may approve the disposition of municipal Conservation Land upon its determinations that:
- (1) The proposed use of the municipal Conservation Land conforms with the expressed wishes of the seller(s) or donor(s) of the parcel(s) subject to the request;
 - (2) There is an imminent or ongoing threat to an established public interest that can only be prevented or alleviated by the use of Georgetown Conservation Land for other than conservation purposes;
 - (3) There is no feasible and substantially equivalent alternative available that could be undertaken on any other private land or public land not protected under Article 97 of the Constitution, or on other municipal Conservation Land that would have less adverse impacts on conservation values, regardless of the cost of such alternative;
 - (4) The area of Conservation Land proposed for disposition is the least amount necessary to accomplish the proposed activity;
 - (5) The proposed use would not result in any significant adverse impact on any significant existing

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- conservation values provided by the parcel(s);
- (6) Sufficient funds will be provided to the Commission to acquire land that is known to be available, or an area of land will be provided to the Commission; and prior to acquisition or donation, such land shall not be substantially subject to protection by the Commission under any easement, restriction, law, ordinance or regulation; and such land shall be of equal or greater appraised value, square footage and conservation value to the land that is the subject of the disposition request;
 - (7) The area of Conservation Land that is the subject of the request is excess and no longer needed for municipal conservation purposes; and
 - (8) Such disposition of Conservation Land shall comply with Article 97 of the Constitution, the latest policy approved by the Commission on the disposition of Conservation Land, and the most recent policy regarding the disposition of "Article 97 Land" adopted by EOEA.
- I) Wherein the Commission seeks to dispose of a parcel of municipal Conservation land that was acquired with the expressed intent of later sale, the Commission shall comply with all requirements of the most recent policy regarding the disposition of Article 97 Land adopted by the EOEA, Article 97 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth, and any relevant case law or Attorney General opinions; and all testimony, deliberations and votes regarding such a disposition shall take place in public hearing that complies with the Open Meeting Law.

6. SEVERABILITY

A determination that any portion or provision of these policies is invalid shall not invalidate any other portion or provision thereof, nor shall it invalidate any action of the Commission previously undertaken thereunder.