

# TOWN OF WEBSTER

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

December 17, 2008  
Resubmitted June 1, 2009



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With assistance from



Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission  
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Worcester, MA 01604  
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## SECTION 1 - PLAN SUMMARY

The Open Space and Recreation Plan was prepared for the Town of Webster under the direction of a Selectmen-appointed Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee. The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) provided



technical assistance to the Committee throughout the process. The Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor Inc (QSHC), of Danielson, Connecticut partially funded this effort with a \$2,500 grant. Comprised of representatives from the Conservation Commission, Recreation Committee, environmental advocacy groups and interested citizens, the Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee has taken care to see that this Plan is consistent with the Town's previous planning efforts and its current policies regarding future

growth and development. The Plan is a continuation and expansion of the goals and objectives outlined in Webster's previous Open Space and Recreation Plan (1997), and is consistent with both the Town's Community Development Plan (2004) and Master Plan (1989).

The purposes of the Plan are to set forth a comprehensive strategy for protecting Webster's natural, scenic and historic resources; guide public land acquisition; identify and plan for new recreation facilities; increase recreation opportunities; and provide natural open spaces for the enjoyment of Webster's citizens, thus improving their quality of life.

Towards these ends, the Plan's action strategies are centered on the following goals:

- Protect large areas of undeveloped space in the Town of Webster.
- Preserve Webster's natural resources, especially its remaining open space, wetland and wildlife communities and scenic views.
- Preserve the quality and character of Webster Lake for all residents, current and future, to enjoy.
- Improve and expand the Town's open space and recreation facilities for the enjoyment of all residents of Webster.
- Link active and passive recreation areas.
- Preserve and enhance the historic character of downtown Webster.

The goals of this Plan will serve as a guide for Webster in its future efforts to protect open space and provide recreation resources for its citizens. These goals are lofty but entirely achievable. However the achievement will require cooperation and organization among Town officials, boards and committees, as well as participation from residents. Even if funding is obtained from other sources to implement elements of the Action

Plan, Town funding may be required to support early stages of the process and to provide partial matches to other sources.

## **SECTION 2 - INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Statement of Purpose**

The 2008 update of the Webster Open Space and Recreation Plan is part of a town-wide effort to manage growth and protect the natural, cultural and historic resources that Webster residents currently enjoy. While the Town has worked aggressively in these areas, it should benefit from an updated plan of direction.

Webster's previous Open Space and Recreation Plan was completed in 1997 and identified many important tracts of land in need of permanent protection. The 1997 Plan also identified goals and objectives relevant to the provision of recreation facilities and programs in Webster. The 1997 Plan concluded with a five-year action plan aimed at achieving these goals and objectives, although not all of the action plan items have been implemented to date. The revised Open Space and Recreation Plan you are reading now is an attempt to build upon the previous 1997 effort, making adjustments to reflect the changes that have occurred in Webster during the past eleven years. The primary purpose of this Plan is to realize the Town's vision where open space preservation is integral to the Town's character, where natural landscapes and historic resources are valued and protected, and to ensure that Webster residents have a wide variety of recreation facilities and programs to meet the needs of all age groups and populations.

### **B. Planning Process and Public Participation**

This Plan represents a strong collaborative effort among the various stakeholders in the community to identify needs, set goals and develop a strategy to meet future open space, conservation, recreation and historic preservation needs. These strategies will allow Webster to ensure the best possible quality of life for all residents of the Town now and in the future.

The Open Space Committee utilized various mechanisms to solicit public participation throughout the planning process. In addition to a series of regularly scheduled Committee meetings conducted during the planning process, a survey was distributed to all households in order to solicit input from the citizens of the community for incorporation of their suggestions and comments into the Plan and the Committee held a community-wide public forum.

A series of Committee meetings were held beginning in September of 2007 and continued into the summer of 2008. All meetings were advertised public meetings and were open to participation by all interested citizens as well as members of other municipal boards or commissions. Members of the Conservation Commission and the Recreation Committee served on this Committee and members of other boards were invited to do so. The Committee also made itself available to respond to citizen, board and commission questions relative to the formulation of the Plan and its recommendations.

In an effort to solicit public input, the Committee designed an Open Space and Recreation Plan survey, which was distributed to all 8,300 households in town along with the annual town census. Additionally, surveys were available to complete on-line. The Committee published notices in the two local newspapers and in the Worcester newspaper concerning the survey. Notices were also published on the cable access channel, and announced at a televised meeting of the Board of Selectmen which is widely viewed. 1,262 surveys were returned. Webster planners also held a public forum on the morning of April 5, 2008 to solicit public input on the Town's open space and recreation needs and many good ideas came from this meeting.

According to Mass GIS, a small segment of Webster meets one of the environmental justice income criteria (Households earn 65% or less of the statewide median household income.) Since Webster's environmental justice population is income based and not language based, an English mailing to all households along with public notices in two local papers seemed sufficient to fairly reach this community.

The survey and the public forum were useful in identifying the needs and concerns of Webster residents regarding open space and recreation priorities. The results of the survey were used to develop goals, strategies and the associated Five-Year Action Plan contained herein. The Action Plan was also informed by input solicited from the Office of Community Development, the Department of Public Works, the town engineer, the assessor, and by review comments obtained from other boards.

The final Plan presented herein represents a culmination of town-wide efforts to bring stakeholders having a vested interest in the Town's future into the planning process. The resulting document provides a framework for the citizens of Webster to guide the destiny of the Town through future open space and recreation acquisition, projects, initiatives and plans.

## SECTION 3 - COMMUNITY SETTING

### A. Regional Context

Webster is located in southwestern Worcester County along the Connecticut state line, approximately 56 miles southwest of Boston and 18 miles south of Worcester. The Town has a total size of 9,332 acres: 8,000 acres of land and 1,332 acres of water, mostly from Webster Lake, the Town's largest waterbody and most distinctive landscape feature. The Town is bordered on the east by the town of Douglas, to the north by the town of Oxford, to the west by the town of Dudley and to the south by Thompson, Connecticut. Webster is part of the 40-town planning area covered by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) and is considered part of CMRPC's Western Subregion, which also includes the towns of Oxford, Auburn, Dudley, Charlton, Southbridge and Sturbridge. Webster's steeply to moderately sloped terrain is consistent with that of the surrounding southern Worcester County area and contributes to the scenic hillsides found along either side of Interstate 395 from Oxford to the Connecticut border.

The historic town center and hub of commercial activity is located along the banks of the French River, slightly west of Lake Chargoggagogmanchaugagoggchaubunagun-gamaugg (Webster Lake), which is located in the middle of Town. Webster's eastern half is much more rural and undeveloped. The Town's circulation system provides easy access to the region's major employment, shopping and service centers. Route 12 extends south into town before continuing in a westerly direction through the town center, essentially functioning as the Town's Main Street. Route 193 extends through the town in a southerly direction, closely paralleling the shoreline of Webster Lake. Route 16 extends in an easterly direction into neighboring Douglas. Taken together, Routes 12 and 16 form a segment of the Maine-to-Virginia Bike Route.



Interstate-395 (part of the interstate highway system) extends through Town in a north-to-south direction. Webster's three exits along I-395 generate two forms of traffic circulation: commute trips in and around Worcester and the lower portion of the County, and vehicles using the highway as a shortcut when local roads are heavily congested. I-395 provides an artificial delineation of Webster's land use pattern, for the area west of the highway is far more densely populated than the portion of the Town located east of the highway. This development pattern means that the Town's open space and recreational needs will vary greatly depending on which geographic half of Webster is being considered.

Webster contains seven historic villages: East Village located northeast of the Lake, South Village, which covers the downtown area, and five villages along the Lake's shoreline: La Vue Du Lac, Wawela Park, Lakeside, Colonial Park and Bates Grove.

As with other New England towns located on major rivers, Webster experienced heavy industrial development during the 1800s. This development was centered along the shoreline of the French River, which was used to supply power to the industries. As the Industrial Revolution slowed towards the end of the 1800s, the Town was left with a number of mill buildings. Since then, many of the mill buildings have been adapted and reused for other industries. The town center has increased its presence as a commercial hub while adding population to become a mini-urban center. During the past century, much of Webster Lake's shoreline has been developed as seasonal cottages and high-end residences. The eastern part of town remains largely undeveloped and rural.

## **B. History of the Community<sup>1</sup>**

Webster, a town of approximately 16,000 residents, is located in south central Massachusetts, on Connecticut's northeast border. The community's most distinctive geographic feature is a beautiful glacial lake created thousands of years ago during the Ice Age. A significant Native American population inhabited the area, primarily the Nipmuc tribe. The lake's long and unusual name, Lake Chargoggagoggmanchaugagoggchaubunagungamaugg, which evolved during colonial times, probably means something like "English knifemen and Nipmuc Indians at the neutral fishing place."<sup>2</sup>

The formation of the town was a direct result of the influence of Samuel Slater. Slater is known as "the Father of American Manufacturers," a title given him by President Andrew Jackson, who understood the significance of Slater's contributions to establishing a modern textile process in America. After leaving England with an understanding of the highly protected English textile manufacturing process, Slater set up mills in the 1790s in Rhode Island, and in 1812, he established a mill in what would become East Webster. Slater was attracted to the area by the water power potential of the lake, and the Maanexit, or French River to power his mills, and the potential workers available on local farms. Slater would later establish mills in what would become known as North and South Villages, expanding to both cotton and woolen products in addition to the cambric products being produced in East Village. The Slater mills occupied part of the towns of Oxford and Dudley, and in 1832, Slater petitioned the legislature to create a new town, Webster. Both Oxford and Dudley opposed the action, but Slater prevailed, and the new town was named for statesman Daniel Webster, whom Slater

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<sup>1</sup> Most of this section is taken directly from Manzi, Carla; Manzi James J.; and Mrazik, John J. Images of America, Webster Arcadia Publishing 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Early History of Webster, Dudley, and Oxford", Paul J Macek and James R Morrison, copyright 2000, 2001.

admired. The Slater organization would go on to dominate the town politically, socially, and economically for close to 100 years.

Webster soon outdistanced Oxford and Dudley by a considerable margin in terms of population and economic activity. In 1840, the Norwich and Worcester Railroad entered Webster, providing the town with an excellent transportation source to carry passengers and to ship goods to Worcester, Boston, and New York via the water connection at Norwich, Connecticut. The establishment of the railroad resulted in a major change in the location of the commercial district of the town. Prior to the coming of the railroad, most of the town's activities centered on the East Main Street area, but a shift to the area of today's Main Street occurred as the railroad's importance increased. Two other railroads entered Webster, the Boston, Hartford, and Erie Railroad in the 1860s, and the Providence, Webster and Springfield Railroad in the 1880s. In 1912, a fourth railroad, the Southern New England Railroad, or Grand Trunk, was 80 percent completed before construction was halted, in part due to the death of the railroad's president, Charles Hays, on the Titanic. Today, the Providence and Worcester railroad runs in a north-south direction through Webster and neighboring Dudley near the French River.

The industrial base of the community continued to expand in the 19th century as other industrialists established operations in the area. Especially noteworthy was the growth of the shoe industry. Immigrants from many nations flocked to Webster looking for opportunities to work in the busy mills. With the growing population, the Main Street business and retail district continued to expand. People from surrounding communities traveled to Webster to avail themselves of its many products and services.

Late in the 19th century, Webster Lake's recreational resources were parlayed into significant economic activity, especially after Edgar S. Hill took control of two lake resorts, Point Breeze and Beacon Park. Webster Lake became one of the top summer destinations in all of Worcester County, and the enterprising Hill built a trolley system to accommodate prospective lake goers.

The 20th century saw continued expansion throughout the community in terms of population, town services, schools, churches, industry, recreation, and housing, but it also signaled the end of the Slater dominance, with the sale of their mill complexes in the 1920s and 1930s. The Depression of the 1930s was a major economic setback, but the rebound with the start of World War II was remarkable. In the country's wars, Webster has been noted for supplying not only the forces needed to wage battle, but also for the goods to conduct the wars successfully.

Significant flooding of the downtown area occurred in 1938 and again in 1955, leading to the construction of flood control dams upstream of town on the French and Little Rivers.

In the middle of the 20th century, a reduction in the bustling Main Street activity and a disappearance of industry began. Industrial activity began to shift to the southern United States and then overseas where costs were lower. Businesses began to locate in East

Webster, where there was room for expansion and parking space that was not available downtown. Another factor leading to the deterioration of the Main Street business district was the advent of the out-of-town mall. Travel out of town was made easier by the construction of Interstate 395 in the late 1970's. While bisecting the town into eastern and western sections, the highway corridor provides a transportation resource attractive to industry. Nevertheless, the net loss of industry and industrial jobs has changed the complexion of the area from a blue-collar mill town to a more demographically diverse population. The largest employer today is Commerce Insurance, headquartered in town.

Prior to the late 1990's there has been relatively little attention given to environmental, conservation, and passive recreation issues in Webster. In the 1990's, the threat of a regional landfill in neighboring Douglas uphill from Webster Lake galvanized the community and the project was subsequently halted. There are now four local and regional organizations working to address the area's environmental issues:

- The Webster Lake Association is working to remove invasive weeds and stop their proliferation; reduce sedimentation from adjacent roadways; and generally improve the Lake's water quality.
- The French River Connection is working to clean up the river and improve access through the creation of a network of trails along the riverbanks.
- The Dudley Conservation Land Trust operates in all of southern Worcester County to preserve open space.
- Quinebaug-Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor (QSRVNH) was created in the early 1990s for the purposes of preserving historic resources, working landscapes, natural environments and expanding tourism within the region. The nine Massachusetts communities within the Quinebaug-Shetucket Watersheds joined in 2000.

### **C. Population Characteristics**

The 2000 Census counted 16,415 residents in Webster, an increase of 219 persons from the 1990 Census count of 16,196 residents. With a total landmass that consists of 12.5 square miles, Webster has a population density of roughly 1,313 people per square mile. Of the 40 communities in the CMRPC planning region, only Shrewsbury and Worcester have higher population densities. Table 1 presents Webster's growth in population over the years, as well as the Town's projected population for the years 2010 and 2020.

**Table 1 - Webster Population Growth**

<b>Year</b>	<b># of People</b>	<b>Numerical Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
1930	12,992	---	---
1940	13,186	194	1.50%
1950	13,194	8	0.01%
1960	13,680	486	3.70%
1970	14,917	1,237	9.00%
1980	14,480	-437	2.90%
1990	16,196	1,716	11.95%
2000	16,415	219	1.35%
2006*	16,826	411	2.5%
2010 Projection**	16,600		
2020 Projection**	16,800		

Sources: US Census. \* 2006 population count is an estimate prepared by the US Census Bureau.  
\*\*Forecasts for 2010 and 2020 provided by CMRPC Transportation Department.

Table 1 shows that Webster has experienced two substantial growth spurts: the 1960s when the Town added 1,237 new residents, and the 1980s when the Town added 1,716 new residents. Please note that the US Census Bureau's 2006 population estimate for Webster is 16,826, which is even higher than the CMRPC population projection for 2020. Thus, CMRPC's population forecasts may need to be adjusted to account for higher than anticipated growth in Webster's population.

**Table 2 - Housing Unit Growth in Webster**

<b>Year</b>	<b># of Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>Numerical Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
1970	5,439	----	
1980	6,034	595	10.9%
1990	7,078	1,314	21.8%
2000	7,343	265	3.7%
2007*	7,439	96	1.3%

Source: US Census. \* = 2007 housing unit count provided by the Webster Assessor's Office.

Table 2 shows how Webster's year-round housing stock has grown over the last 37 years and allows for a comparison against the Town's population growth. Please note that Table 2 refers only to year-round housing units. The US Census also counted 210 seasonal housing units for Webster in 2000, but these units are not included in the Town's year-round housing tally. It should be noted that the US Census counted 313

seasonal homes in Webster in 1980; thus, the number of seasonal dwellings has been declining during the past few decades, with the majority of these units being converted to year-round housing units. Taken together, Tables 1 and 2 indicate that new home construction in Webster has been growing at a faster rate than the growth in population: between 1970 and 2000, Webster’s population grew by 10% whereas its housing stock grew by 35% during the same time period.

That the rate of housing growth is higher than the rate of population growth is not surprising when one considers the national trend towards smaller household sizes. Couples are having fewer children today and there has been a substantial increase in single-parent households. Webster’s US Census data confirms this trend. In 1970, the typical Webster household contained 2.87 people. By 2000, this figure had declined to 2.34 persons per household. Another factor contributing to smaller household sizes is “the graying of America”, that is, our nation’s elderly population is expanding. In 1980, the median age of Webster’s population was 34.4 years of age. By 2000, the median age had increased to 38 years of age.

**Table 3 - Population by Age Group**

Year	Under 5	5 – 19	20 – 44	45 – 64	65 – 74	75 +
1990	1,287	3,053	6,029	2,789	1,615	1,423
2000	1,081	3,037	5,920	3,643	1,160	1,574
Change	-206	-16	-109	854	-455	151
% Change	-16.0%	-0.5%	-1.8%	30.6%	-28.2%	10.6%

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

Table 3 displays the changes in age groups within the Town’s population from 1990 to 2000. Most of Webster’s age groups experienced modest declines between 1990 and 2000, with the largest decline being the 65-74 age group (a loss of 455 residents). While a first glance at the data would indicate that Webster’s senior population is in decline, this is likely to be a temporary phenomenon. The fastest growing segment of Webster’s population is the 45-64 age group, or the soon-to-be-seniors (adding 854 residents). It is likely that this age group will show up as an increase in Webster’s senior population when the next decennial census is taken in 2010.

**Table 4 - Webster Households by Type (2000)**

Household Type	# Households	Percentage
Family Household	4,271	61.9%
Non-Family Household	2,634	38.1%

Source: 2000 US Census

Table 4 indicates that approximately 60% of Webster's households consist of families. This represents a decrease from the 1990 Census when family households accounted for 67.5% of all Webster households. The number of female-headed households held steady at just over 800 between 1990 and 2000, as did the number of senior households, with just over 900 such households in Webster at the time of both census counts.

**Table 5 - Type of Occupancy (Owner/Renter - 2000)**

Type of Occupancy	Number of Units	Percentage
Owner Occupied Housing	3,728	54%
Renter Occupied Housing	3,177	46%

Source: 2000 US Census

According to the US Census, there were a total of 6,905 occupied housing units in 2000, with 54% being owner-occupied and 46% renter-occupied. These percentages are all but unchanged since the 1990 census. Numerically, Webster gained 269 owner-occupied units and 107 renter-occupied units between 1990 and 2000.

**Table 6 - Median Household Income Comparison**

<b>Webster Median Household Income</b>	\$38,169
<b>State Median Household Income</b>	\$50,502
<b>Webster as a Percent of State Average</b>	75.6%
<b>Worcester County Median Household Income</b>	\$47,874
<b>Webster as a Percent of Worcester County Average</b>	79.7%

Source: 2000 US Census

According to Table 6, Webster's median household income is substantially lower than both the State and County median figures. This is indicative of a community with many low-income households and a low-wage workforce. This has implications for the amount of tax dollars that can be raised from residential property taxes, the ability of Webster homeowners to afford them, and the amount of tax dollars that can be used for open space and recreation. The per capita income figures presented in Table 7 below help further illustrate Webster's situation.

**Table 7 - Per Capita Income Comparison**

<b>Webster Median Per Capita Income</b>	\$20,410
<b>State Median Per Capita Income</b>	\$25,952
<b>Webster as a Percent of State Average</b>	78.6%
<b>Worcester County Per Capita Income</b>	\$22,983
<b>Webster as a Percent of Worcester County Average</b>	88.8%

Source: 2000 US Census

**Table 8 - Webster Household Income Distribution**

<b>Income Range</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than \$10,000	222	5.2%
\$10,000 - \$24,999	805	18.8%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	409	9.6%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	756	17.7%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	1,101	25.8%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	520	12.2%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	365	8.5%
\$150,000 and over	94	2.2%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

Table 8 indicates that more than half (51.3%) of Webster's households earned less than the State's median family income figure of \$50,502 in 2000. Furthermore, the 2000 Census identified 348 families and 1,767 individuals living at or below the poverty level, one of the highest rates in Worcester County and CMRPC's 40-town planning region.

According to Mass GIS, a small segment of Webster meets one of the environmental justice (EJ) income criteria – "Households earn 65% or less of the statewide median household income." Webster's environmental justice population is income based and not language based. The Environmental Justice Population in Webster is defined by two contiguous areas. The first is north of East Main Street, bordered by Stoughton St., Upland Street, North Main Street, the rail road tracks, and a stream. The other section is generally south of East Main Street and extends a few blocks south to Negus St. and then a narrow swatch along French River to Hill Street.

According to the 2000 census, 91.3% of Webster reports as White, 1.3 % as Black or African American alone, 4.5 % Hispanic Latino alone, 1.5 % Hispanic Multiracial and the remaining other the remaining 1.4%. The median household income for much of this area is \$27,679, while the median household income of all of Webster is \$32,163.

Additional Demographics:

Jobs in Webster: According to the most recent statistics of the Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance, there were 430 business establishments in Webster as of 2006, employing a monthly average of 7,051 workers. Of the 430 businesses in Webster, 68 were of the retail trade variety, 48 were in the construction sector, 40 were in the accommodations/food services sector, 36 were in the health care/social service sector, 29 were in professional/technical sector, 20 were in the manufacturing sector, and the remaining businesses in Webster were scattered among the other sectors of the economy.

Webster's Labor Force: Statistics from the Division of Unemployment Assistance indicate that as of August 2007, Webster had a labor force of 8,461 (Webster residents with jobs) and 508 Webster workers were unemployed. The Division's most recent unemployment data is also from August 2007 and shows that Webster's unemployment

rate was 6% for that month, a full point higher than the Worcester County rate (4.9%) and a point and a half higher than the State rate (4.5%). As with the income demographics, the Town's unemployment rate is indicative of a community that is struggling economically.

## **D. Growth and Development Patterns**

### **D-1. Patterns and Trends**

The University of Massachusetts-Amherst has been tracking statewide land use data for the better part of the last century. The University uses aerial photographs and interprets them (now using GIS) based on land use categories. Table 9 below outlines Webster's land use totals for the last three UMass-Amherst statewide mapping efforts.

**Table 9 - Webster Land Use Changes Over the Years (in acres)**

<b>(acres)</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1999</b>
<b>Undeveloped Total</b>	5,023	4,641	4,171
<b>Undeveloped Forestland</b>	4,855	4,509	4,116
<b>Undeveloped Farmland</b>	168	132	55
<b>Developed Total</b>	1,932	2,228	2,709
<b>Developed Residential</b>	1,691	1,948	2,347
<b>Developed Commercial</b>	170	187	218
<b>Developed Industrial</b>	71	93	144

Source: UMass-Amherst land use data for 1971, 1985 and 1999.

Table 9 indicates that Webster’s residential sector has added the most acreage (over 656 acres between 1971 & 1999). While of lesser acreage, Webster more than doubled its industrial land between 1971 (71 industrial acres) and 1999 (144 industrial acres). The Town also added a modest 48 acres of new commercial land during this timeframe. The biggest land use losses between 1971 and 1999 were forestland (a loss of 739 acres) and farmland (loss of 113 acres).

## **D-2. Infrastructure**

**2-a. Transportation Systems:** Webster’s transportation network consists of approximately 75-miles of roadways, which provide easy access to the region’s major employment, shopping and service centers. Route 12 extends south into town from Oxford until reaching the East Village where it then extends through Town in a southwesterly direction. Route 12 runs through the town center and serves as Webster’s Main Street. Route 193 starts in the East Village and extends through the town in a southerly direction in close proximity to the shoreline of Webster Lake. Route 16 extends in an easterly direction into neighboring Douglas. Taken together, Routes 12 and 16 form a segment of the Maine-to-Virginia Bike Route.

Interstate-395 extends through town in a north-to-south direction before it enters Thompson Connecticut. Webster’s three exits along I-395 generate two forms of traffic circulation: commute trips in and around Worcester and the lower portion of the County, and vehicles using the highway as a shortcut when local roads are heavily congested. I-395 provides an artificial delineation of Webster’s land use pattern, for the area west of the highway is far more densely populated than the portion of the Town located east of the highway. In terms of public transportation, the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) provides bus service into downtown Webster five times a day during the weekdays.



## 2-b. Water Supply System:

### Water Division of the Public Works Department

*Organization:* The Board of Selectmen serves as the Board of Water Commissioners. The Town Administrator hires the Water Division Superintendent, who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the division.

*Staff:* The Superintendent is a full-time position. In addition, there is a full-time foreman and four full-time laborers that are available to help with the Sewer Division. The division receives 19 hours a week of administrative support and this will likely become a full-time position in the near future.

*Budget:* For the 2008 Fiscal Year, the Water Division had an operating budget of \$1,912,466. As an enterprise system, the entirety of the Division's operating budget is derived entirely from user fees. The Division is on the verge of completing several major upgrades to the water system, and these have been long-term projects paid for through borrowing. Thus, close to 50% of the Division's operating budget is debt service: for FY 2008, the principal loan amount is \$488,181 and the interest is \$372,061. The Division has its own 5-year capital improvement plan and large-scale capital improvements are usually paid for through the Town Meeting warrant article process, whether through an upfront appropriation or borrowing.

*Facilities:* The Department does not have a centralized water treatment facility; rather, the water is treated directly at the Town's three wellfields located on Memorial Beach Drive, Bigelow Road and Thompson Road. There is a one million gallon standpipe located on Park Road and a 1.6 million gallon in-ground concrete storage tank on Rawson Road.

*System Description:* The system consists of three wellfields, over 600 hydrant locations, and approximately 62 miles of pipes (some of which are close to 100 years old). There are approximately 4,600 customers, including residences, businesses, industries and institutional uses (municipal buildings, schools, churches, etc.). All customers are metered and the Division uses a new radio-read system for reading the meters on a monthly basis.

The system makes use of three groundwater wellfields for its water supply sources:

- **Bigelow Road Wellfield:** Consisting of one gravel-packed well, the Bigelow Road Wellfield has a State permitted yield of 2.16 million gallons per day (gpd), although on average it uses approximately 700,000 gpd. There is an emergency generator at this site to ensure an emergency water supply source.

- Thompson Road Wellfield: This wellfield has been offline since 2002 and is in the process of being rehabilitated. The Division received a low-interest loan from the MA Water Pollution Abatement Trust for this rehabilitation project. This was a tubular wellfield (numerous shallow wells) and will be replaced by five gravel-packed wells. The wellfield has a State permitted yield of 1.73 million gpd, but on average uses approximately 600,000 gpd.
- Memorial Beach Drive Wellfield: Consisting of a single gravel-packed well, this wellfield has a State permitted yield of 1.02 million gpd, but on average uses 300,000 gpd. There is an emergency generator at this site to ensure an emergency water supply source.

The wellfields are operated one at a time as opposed to being used simultaneously. Each wellfield has its own treatment plant on-site providing disinfection and aeration. In total, Webster's water system has been permitted to pump as much as 4.91 million gpd, and currently uses an average of 1.3 million gpd, although this figure can increase to as much as two million gpd during the summer months.

The Division prepares an annual pipe replacement program based on a 1999 Water System Master Plan prepared by the engineering firm of Camp, Dresser and McKee. The Division makes use of its own leak detection program although it is about to solicit professional assistance to revise the program. The Division's unaccounted for water figure (water lost to leaks) currently stands at 7.5%, well below the State-mandated unaccounted for water standard of 15%.

## **2-c. Sewage Disposal System:**

### Sewer Division of the Public Works Department

*Organization:* The Board of Selectmen serves as the Board of Sewer Commissioners. The Town Administrator hires the Sewer Division Superintendent, who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the division.

*Staff:* In addition to the Superintendent, there are 13 full-time employees in the Sewer Division including a full-time administrative position. The Division also has a part-time administrative assistant.

*Budget:* For the 2008 Fiscal Year, the Sewer Division had an operating budget of \$3,947,321 and this figure includes a debt service of \$1,434,000 (principal and interest). The debt was incurred in order to make necessary improvements to the sewage treatment plant and associated infrastructure. As an enterprise system, the entirety of the Department's operating budget is derived entirely from user fees. Large-scale capital improvements are usually paid for through the Town Meeting warrant article process, whether through an upfront appropriation or borrowing.

*Treatment Plant and Sewer System Details:* Located on Hill Street along the French River, the treatment plant was initially built in 1950, with substantial upgrades occurring

in 1973, 1984 and 1990. The Division has begun advanced planning for another upgrade to the plant that will address an EPA mandate to remove additional nutrients from the wastewater. The Division received approval at an October 2007 Town Meeting to begin the design work for this upgrade. This design work will result in a detailed cost assessment for the upgrade project. It is anticipated that the upgrade will be completed by 2011.

The plant provides extended aeration in an effort to remove nutrients, phosphorous and nitrogen. Wastewater gets treated at the plant and flows through three settling tanks before being discharged into the French River. The plant is designed to treat as much as six million gallons per day (gpd) of wastewater, but typically treats an average of 3.6 million gpd or 60% of the plant's capacity, although this can increase to as much as 4.5 million gpd during the fall and winter months, or 75% of the plant's capacity.

The system serves approximately 4,200 customers in Webster and also serves a portion of Dudley that includes Nichols College. Dudley accounts for 20% to 30% of the system's daily demand. It should be noted that Webster and Douglas have begun preliminary discussions about extending a waterline into west Douglas in order to provide water service to an industrial park along Route 16. These discussions are in the nascent stage and, before a final agreement can be reached, Douglas needs to prepare a buildout analysis of its industrial park in order to determine the amount of water it will need from Webster.

The sewer system consists of over 100 linear miles of pipes. Some of the pipes are older than 100 years, but the majority of pipes are no older than 70 years of age. The system covers 80% - 90% of the Town's population with the remaining 10% served by on-site septic systems. There are 20 pump stations scattered throughout town. The system has a moderate problem with inflow and infiltration. Inflow is caused by direct connections to the sewer system from roof drains, sump pumps and any other water source directly discharging into a sewer line without the Department's knowledge. Infiltration is essentially groundwater infiltrating into the sewer pipes. Many of the older pipes are broken, have tree roots growing through them, or have some other type of flow restriction. Excessive inflow/infiltration eats up the treatment plant's capacity and endangers the system's ability to service new connections.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the DEP issued an Administrative Consent Order to the treatment plant in early 2007 because it is unable to meet its new National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, which calls for increased nutrient removal beyond the ability of the existing facility. It is anticipated that the planned upgrade for the treatment plant will address this issue and the order will eventually be lifted. The plant's NPDES permit was renewed in early 2007, about the same time as the Consent Order was issued.

### **D-3. Long-Term Development Patterns**

Webster's zoning scheme allows for industrial development in several locations: an area north of town bounded by Oxford, Sutton Road and Cudworth Road; an area just north of Webster Lake between Route 12 and Cudworth Road; three distinct strips along the French River; and a block in the town center bounded by Elm Street, Park Street, Maple Street and Myrtle Avenue. Business zoning districts can be found along either side of Route 12 in the town center; along either side of Cudworth Road in the north of Town; an area between Route 16 and the Lake in the vicinity of the La Vue Du Lac village; and along either side of Route 193 south of Birch Island Road. Multi-family residential zoning occurs in the town center; single-family zoning occurs north and south of the town center and two locations east of the Lake; the shoreline of the Lake is zoned Lake-Residential; and east of the Lake is zoned Agricultural/Single-Family Residential. There are also four conservation districts scattered throughout Town: the islands within Webster Lake; a large tract of land in the northeast corner; the area in the vicinity of Sucker Brook Swamp and an area in the vicinity of Freeman's Brook. Webster's conservation districts limit the permitted land uses to those having low environmental impacts. Lastly, Webster has a Floodplain Protection overlay district covering the land within the 100-year floodplain.

All told, Webster has 59.6% of its land area zoned for residential purposes, 25.2% zoned for conservation (this includes Webster Lake), 8.6% zoned for industry, 6.6% zoned for commercial activity. A graphic depiction of Webster's zoning scheme can be found on the accompanying Zoning Map.

In 1999 the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) initiated an effort to prepare a buildout analysis for each community in the State. A buildout analysis attempts to determine what the town would look like at full buildout, that is, if the town were completely developed under the standards of current zoning. Existing developed lands, protected lands and land with environmental constraints were taken out of the equation, and the remaining developable land was divided by the standards of the local zoning bylaw.

It should be noted that a buildout analysis does not attempt to determine when a community will reach full buildout; rather, it is simply an attempt to determine what a community would look like if its remaining vacant land were developed according to the town's current zoning standards. The town could alter its buildout results by making changes to dimensional requirements for new lots (lot size, frontage) or by permanently protecting more land in town. Thus a buildout analysis represents a snapshot in time.

The regional planning commissions were contracted to perform buildout studies for each community in their respective regions. In Webster's case, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) completed a buildout analysis for the Town in May 2000. A summary of Webster's buildout analysis is presented below. The first section details the amount of new development that Webster could

accommodate if its remaining vacant developable land were fully built out, while the second section adds the buildout potential to Webster’s current land use figures to estimate what Webster would look like upon full buildout.

**Table 10 – Webster Buildout Analysis**

Remaining Acres of Vacant, Developable Land	3,153
Additional New Residential Housing Units	2,691
Additional New Population	5,919
Additional New School-Age Children	1,345
Total Housing Units at Full Buildout	10,408
Total Population at Full Buildout	22,334
Total School-Age Children at Full Buildout	3,838

Source: CMRPC Buildout Analysis for Webster, May 2000.

The buildout analysis indicates that Webster is approximately two thirds of the way towards full buildout based on the current standards of the Town’s Zoning Bylaw. With a total land area of 9,332 acres, of which 6,179 acres are either developed, permanently protected or can’t be built on because of environmental constraints, this leaves 3,153 acres of vacant developable land in Town (or 33.8% of the Town’s land area). Looking towards the future, Webster will most likely retain its present land use pattern of a densely populated town center west of the lake and dispersed rural residential development east of the lake.

It should be noted that in 2007 and 2008, the state purchased 444 acres in the area east of Highway 395, reducing the developable land in the buildout analysis by that amount.

## SECTION 4 - ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

### A. Topography, Geology and Soils

Webster is situated in the southern portion of the French River Valley. The landscape exhibits the geo-morphological results that are typically associated with glaciated landscapes in central New England. The terrain is hilly with generally north to south oriented ridgelines that are interspersed with extensive wetland systems in areas of lower relief. Elevations range from a high of 905 feet above sea level at Woods Hill to a low of 480 feet above sea level at Webster Lake. Other significant hills in Webster include Sugarloaf Hill (767 feet) and Emerson Hill (688 feet). Most of the landscape ranges in elevation from 500 feet to 600 feet above sea level.

Webster is located on the central plateau of Worcester County. The plateau, as a whole, is so thoroughly dissected that large areas of smooth plateau surface do not exist within the county – and certainly not within Webster. The surface of the plateau is interrupted in many places by hills rising higher than the general plateau elevation, which averages 800 to 900 feet in the southern portions of the county. These hills are predominately small in area and consist largely of elongated, rounded hills with the longer axes generally oriented north-to-south.



Some of Webster's hills are piles of unconsolidated clay, gravel and sand, called "drumlins" by geologists. These drumlins are the result of past glacial activity. The most recent glacier is estimated to have retreated some 12,000 to 15,000 years ago. As the glacier melted and retreated, it dumped along the receding face the load of boulders, stones and soils it gathered while moving southward. The material left by the glacier is called glacial "till" and, with drumlins, constitute most of the land surface area of Worcester County. Many of the hills within the central plateau consist of rock hills with a thin layer of unconsolidated material covering them. Large areas of the Town are overlain with thick deposits of glacial till. Materials moved by glaciers and subsequently sorted and deposited by streams flowing from melting ice are called Glaciofluvials. Webster has several examples of these types of stratified drift deposits including eskers, kames and kettle holes.

According to the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service report of 1998, Soil Survey of Worcester County, Massachusetts, Southern Part, Webster can be divided into three major soils categories. A graphic depiction of the Town's soils can be seen on the following page as Map 2 (Soils Map).

- Merrimac-Hinckley-Windsor Soils: Nearly level to steep, very deep, excessively drained and somewhat excessively drained soils on outwash plains. This soil type consists of soils located on broad, flat plains and in rolling to steep areas throughout the southern portion of Central Massachusetts. The soils were formed in water-sorted deposits of glacial outwash. In Webster, this soil category appears along the banks of the French River, Mine Brook and all along the shoreline of Webster Lake. This soil type is suited to trees, cultivated crops, hay and pasture. Slope, droughtiness and low nutrient content are the limiting factors for farming.
- Canton-Montauk-Scituate Soils: Nearly level to steep, very deep, well-drained soils on glaciated uplands. This soil type consists of soils located on upland hills and rolling glacial till flats. It is dissected by broad drainage-ways that flatten out on the lower slopes. Stones cover more than 3% of the surface in most areas. The soils were formed in friable glacial till. In Webster, this soil category covers a portion of land south of Klebart Avenue/Lake Parkway, between the French River and Webster Lake. This soil category also covers the majority of the eastern half of the Town, excluding Webster Lake.
- Chatfield-Hollis Soils: Gently sloping to steep, moderately deep and shallow, well drained and somewhat excessively drained soils on glaciated uplands. This soil type consists of soils on hills and ridges that have bedrock exposures throughout. Stones cover more than 3% of the surface in most areas. The soils were formed in glacial till. In Webster, this soil category appears as a small area along either side of Route 16 in the eastern portion of Town.

## **B. Landscape Character**

Predominantly a small residential community, Webster's urban core developed along the French River during the 19<sup>th</sup> century when textile mills were a landscape fixture along riverbanks throughout New England. Industrial development created a host of environmental problems that the State and the Town (along with many community organizations and private citizens) have been slowly but steadily addressing during the last sixty years. Upgrades to wastewater treatment plants have resulted in significant water quality improvements for the River during the last 25 years. Nevertheless, there are still lingering concerns regarding the River's water quality and thus the River is not being used to its full potential for public recreation.

Webster Lake remains the Town's most significant landscape feature. Various Indian trails that converged on the Lake's western shore, including one that served as the major pathway by which settlers from Boston moved westward to Connecticut and beyond, served to influence current and prior settlement patterns of the community.

The area east of Webster Lake includes most of the Town's forestlands, rolling hills and ledge. The relatively undeveloped landscape includes Wood Hill, which abuts the

Douglas State Forest. There are still portions of this area that are served by on-site wells and septic systems. This portion of Webster contains the majority of the Town's vacant developable land, and currently faces development pressure.

### **C. Water Resources**

A graphic depiction of the Town's water resources can be found on the following page as Map 3 (Water Resources Map).

Watersheds: The vast majority (96%) of Webster's land area falls within the French River Watershed, although 87 acres of the Blackstone River Watershed do extend into Webster at three locations along the Town's eastern boundary line, and a small portion (260 acres) of the Town's southeast corner falls within the Quinebaug River Watershed. The French River Watershed ranges from Leicester, Massachusetts in the north and extends south to Killingly, Connecticut. The Massachusetts portion of the French River Watershed constitutes roughly 60,595 acres and is shared by the Towns of Dudley, Webster, Oxford, Charlton, Spencer and Leicester (the headwaters community). The Town has recently adopted a Lake Watershed Protection District that covers the eastern half of the Town, including the entirety of Webster Lake. The district prohibits several potentially hazardous land uses and requires the use of Best Management Practices for others.

In 1999, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst prepared a study entitled, French-Quinebaug Watershed Plan for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's French-Quinebaug Watershed Basin Team. This document provided an analysis of the drainage patterns found in the two watersheds. The French River Watershed has what is known as a "dendritic" drainage pattern, that is, uniformly resistant crystalline rocks with a gentle regional slope. Generally speaking, the French River has a lower energy system than the river segments with higher elevations located north of Webster. From the River's headwaters, there is a 400-foot drop in elevation



over a 12-mile span. From Clara Barton Pond in Oxford, the River's elevation drops by 150 feet over a 20-mile span until its confluence with the Quinebaug River in Connecticut.

Surface Waters: Webster is home to the 1278-acre Webster Lake located in the center of Town. Besides the Lake, there are only two other named water bodies in Webster: Club Pond, which is hydrologically connected to Webster Lake but is located on the north side of Route

16, and Nipmuck Pond (20 acres in size) located in the northeast corner of Town just south of Sutton Road. There are a handful of small un-named ponds scattered throughout Webster.

The French River is Webster's most significant watercourse and the River forms the Town's western boundary line (approximately 3.5 miles in length). The River is the most prominent natural feature in the downtown area. Other significant watercourses in Town include Mill Brook (starts in the northwest corner and drains into the French River), Sucker Brook (starts in the north and drains into Webster Lake), Mine Brook (starts in the east and drains into Webster Lake), Brown's Brook (starts in the east and drains into Webster Lake), and Freeman's Brook (starts in the southwestern corner of Town and flows south before joining the French River in Connecticut). It should be noted that the Massachusetts River Protection Act establishes a 200-foot buffer zone on either side of all perennial watercourses, with the first 100-feet being a 'no build' zone while the second 100-feet allowing for limited development (10% of the affected land area). In Webster, a total of approximately 506 acres fall under the River Protection Act's jurisdiction (256 acres in the primary 100-foot 'no build' zone and 250 acres in the secondary 100-foot limited development area).

There are no public access points along the French River, which is a serious impediment to using this resource for recreational purposes. This issue was addressed in the French River Blueway Study of 2007, completed by the University of Massachusetts for the Town of Oxford Open Space Committee and the French River Connection, under a grant from the Quinebaug-Shetucket National Heritage Corridor. The study examined ten potential sites for car-top access, with four of these sites being in Webster: Collins Cove, Downtown Webster, the access road for the wastewater treatment plant, and Perryville. One other point on Chase Avenue, owned by the Town, was subsequently identified as a potential point of river access. Town-owned lands are particularly appropriate for this purpose, as the State Board of Fishing & Boating Access will install car-top access points under a land management agreement with the Town at its own expense. Regarding Webster Lake, there are two points of public access. The first is the Town beach and boat launch at the end of Memorial Beach Drive, and the second is a State boat launch at the end of Lakeside Avenue.

Floodplains: Webster's floodplains are located near its major surface water resources, such as Webster Lake, Club Pond, the French River, Freeman's Brook, Mine Brook, Mill Brook and Sucker Brook. All told, Webster has 1,572 acres of land falling within its 100-year flood zones, or 16.8% of the Town's total land area. Webster has adopted a Floodplain Protection Overlay District, which regulates development within the Town's flood hazard areas as identified on the Town's Flood Insurance Rate Maps prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), dated June 16, 1993.

Wetlands: Webster's wetlands include three major swamp areas: Sucker Brook Swamp in the north, Cedar Swamp in the southeast, and Cranberry Meadows Swamp in the southeast. Wetlands form an intricate link to the health of the natural environment and play many roles. They recharge groundwater, act as a spongy pollution filter, control floodwater by absorbing and storing water while gradually releasing it, are invaluable as a habitat for wildlife, support fisheries, and support rare plant and animal species.

Webster's Conservation Commission regulates development within wetlands and acts as the local administrator of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MGL Chapter 131, Section 40) and associated regulations (Chapter 310, CMR 10.00). The Army Corps of Engineers, under provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act, also regulates the filling of wetlands. As mapped by the DEP Wetlands Conservancy Program, Webster contains 544 acres of wetlands, or close to 6% of the Town's total land area.

Aquifers: The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has identified seven stratified drift aquifers within Webster's boundaries: six bordering the shoreline of Webster Lake and one in the northwest corner of Town bordering the French River (see the Water Resource Map for exact locations). At 254 acres in size, the aquifer bordering the French River is the largest aquifer in Town and the Water Department's Bigelow Road wellfield is located above. The Water Department's wellfields on Thompson Road and Memorial Beach Drive are located above a 67-acre stratified drift aquifer. The other aquifers abutting the Lake include an 84-acre aquifer in the vicinity of Sucker Brook, a 122-acre aquifer is located directly underneath Killdeer Island, a 26-acre aquifer in the vicinity of Wawela Park, a 25-acre aquifer in the vicinity of Winter Cove and an 82-acre aquifer located in the very southern end of Town, in the vicinity of Bates Grove and Colonial Park.

It should also be noted that the Town of Dudley currently maintains two municipal water wells above an aquifer located on the west side of the French River. While the hydrological connections between Webster's aquifers and the surface water resources of Webster Lake and the French River have never been studied in great detail, they are generally acknowledged as being connected and influential of each other.

Vernal Pools: Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife's Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program (NHESP) serves the important state role of officially "certifying" vernal pools. Nineteen vernal pools have been certified in Webster as of January 2008; however, local conservationists believe there are many more scattered throughout the community; in fact, there are 51 sites in Town that the State considers "potential" vernal pools. Vernal pools are unique wildlife habitats best known for the amphibians and invertebrate animals that use them to breed. Vernal pools, also known as ephemeral pools, autumn pools and temporary woodland ponds, typically fill with water in the autumn or winter due to rising groundwater and rainfall and remain ponded through the spring and into summer. Vernal pools dry completely by the middle or end of summer each year, or at least every few years. Occasional drying prevents fish from establishing permanent populations. Many rare amphibian and invertebrate species rely on a breeding habitat that is free of fish predators. Vernal pools are protected in Massachusetts under the Wetlands Protection Act regulations as well as several other federal and state regulations. The locations of the State-certified vernal pools and potential vernal pools in Webster can be seen on Map 4 (Unique Features and Scenic Resources Map).

Bio-Map and Living Waters: In addition to the scenic and unique environments identified by the residents as part of the planning process for this document, it should be noted

that Webster contains a large swath of land that has been identified by the NHESP as “Core Habitats” for aquatic, plant and wildlife species. In 2001, with funding from the EOEEA, the NHESP developed a BioMap for the entire Commonwealth in order to identify and delineate the areas most in need of protection to ensure long-term viability of terrestrial and wetland elements of native biodiversity. The BioMap delineates Core Habitat that identifies the most critical sties for biodiversity conservation across the state. The areas mapped were determined by biologists to be those most suitable to support viable plant and wildlife species. In Webster, there is a large swath of Core Habitat area located east of I-395 and Webster Lake, and adjacent areas have been identified as Supporting Natural Landscape providing buffers around Core Habitats, connectivity between Core Habitats, sufficient space for ecosystems to function, and contiguous undeveloped habitat for common species. It should be noted that Webster’s Core Habitat areas contain many of Webster’s wetlands.

The NHESP’s Living Waters Project attempted to identify and map the State’s most critical sites for maintaining freshwater aquatic biodiversity. These Core Habitat sites represent where the State will focus its conservation priorities. In Webster, a section of the French River has been designated as a Living Waters Core Habitat, starting at the South Dam and extending south to the Connecticut state line. The BioMap and Living Waters projects were created to help towns prioritize their land protection efforts. A graphic depiction of the Town’s Core Habitat areas can be seen on Map 4 (Unique Features and Scenic Resources Map).



#### **D. Vegetation**

Webster’s forests are typically composed of southern New England hardwoods, dominated by oaks and hickories in the uplands. Additionally, there are large stands of white pine and red maple that grow in both Webster’s uplands and wetlands. Another species common to the forestlands is birch, reflecting the Town’s location not far from the northern Worcester county transition zone where this species is prevalent. As is typical in southern New England, hemlock and beech trees, two species common farther north, are generally restricted in Webster to the cool, moist, shadier north facing slopes. Webster’s vegetation can be divided into three categories: upland forests, wetlands and grasslands.

Oaks, maples and eastern white pines can be observed in Webster’s upland areas on the Webster Lake side of Wood Hill and the Douglas Road side of Sugarloaf Hill. Maples, birch, beech, white and red pine, and hemlock trees are visible on north-facing slopes and other areas where increased exposure to cold winds creates a more northern climate. This type of forest is common in the Nipmuck Pond and Sutton Road

areas. Hardwood trees dominate Webster's eastern half that abuts the Douglas State Forest.

Webster's wetland vegetation takes the form of both shallow and deep fresh water marshes, cranberry bogs, shrub swamps, wet meadows and wet woods. These plant communities provide valuable habitat, protect the quality of surface and ground waters nearby, contribute to the diversity of wildlife found in Webster and provide flood storage that protects downstream areas. The majority of Webster's wetlands contains water lilies, duckweed, pondweed and forested red maple swamp. Northern white cedars and pitcher plants are also fairly common in Sucker Brook Swamp and lower Cedar Swamp.

Webster's grasslands, located east of Webster Lake, were once cleared by early settlers for agricultural use, but have been absorbed by much of the Town's urban core. As a result, Webster has very few undeveloped grasslands. Several unusual plant species can be found within Webster's grassland habitats, including the Spiked Rush, the Bog Sedge and the Bog Aster.

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program currently lists only one threatened plant species in Webster according to its most recent inventory (11/2007), and that is the *Potamogeton confervoides*, a vascular plant species that appears as an algae-like pondweed.

Webster's public shade trees receive sporadic special care. Some public shade trees can be found at the town hall/ school complex and the local cemeteries among other locations. The Town received a tree planting grant from DCR in 2004. There has been no other tree planting or replacement program since then. At this time there is no monitoring or maintenance of public shade trees funded by the Town. The town is planning an Arbor Day seedling planting project for April 24, 2009 and hope to encourage participation from the French River Connection, the Webster Lake Association and the Webster School Department.

## **E. Fisheries and Wildlife**

Habitats: The interspersed of open fields, woodlands, lakes, ponds, rivers, streams and wetlands found in Webster creates a diversity of habitats for wildlife including insects, spiders, birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. As a result, Webster currently supports virtually every species that is common in Massachusetts as well as several species that are less common. Wildlife corridors exist in the vicinity of Webster Lake and Lower Cedar Swamp, continuing east to the Douglas State Forest; along the French River; and along either side of I-395. These corridors are not protected and could potentially be developed in the future.

Mammals observed in Webster include opossum, short-tailed shrew, little brown bat, Eastern cottontail, white-footed mice, gray squirrel, chipmunk, woodchuck, beaver,

muskrat, coyote, red and gray fox, raccoon, fisher, weasel, river otter, striped skunk, bobcat, white-tailed deer and many more.

Birds observed in Webster include the common loon, double-crested cormorant, great blue heron, green heron, Canada goose, mute swan, wood duck, mallard, black duck, ring-necked duck, bufflehead, common, hooded, and red-breasted merganser, osprey, bald eagle, sharp-shinned hawk, red-tailed hawk, ruffed grouse, turkey, herring gull,



rock pigeon, mourning dove, screech owl, barred owl, great horned owl, saw-whet owl, chimney swifts, ruby-throated hummingbird, belted kingfisher, downy, hairy, pileated, and red-bellied woodpecker, kingbird, blue jay, crow, tree and barn swallow, black-capped chickadee, tufted titmouse, red and white breasted nuthatch, house and winter wren, bluebird, robin, gray catbird, mockingbird, starling, towhee, cardinal, red-winged blackbird, common grackle, oriole, and numerous species of warblers, finches, sparrows, and shorebirds.

Reptiles and amphibians observed in Webster include the garter, ring-necked, milk, brown, and Northern water snake, black racer, box, painted, snapping, wood, spotted, and musk turtle, American toad, wood, bull, and green frog, spring peeper, gray tree-frog, red-spotted newt, spotted, red-backed and marbled salamander, and many more.

Webster Lake is recognized as providing important recreational fishing opportunities for warm water and stocked fish species. The State Department of Fish and Game last stocked Webster Lake with trout in 1997 and northern pike and tiger muskies in 1998. The Webster Fish and Game Club provided assistance with both of these stocking efforts. When available, State Fish & Game stock with brook, brown, and rainbow trout, and brood stock salmon. In addition, Webster Lake is home to other varieties of fish including bass, pickerel and panfish. The French River is home to perch, shiners, bullheads, trout, bass, rock bass, bluegill, white suckers, northern pike, fallfish, and American eel.

The Town has created four Conservation Districts: the islands within Webster Lake; a large tract of land in the northeast corner; the area in the vicinity of Sucker Brook Swamp and an area in the vicinity of Freeman's Brook. It should be noted that designating these areas as Conservation Districts does not mean that the land is permanently protected. Rather, Webster's Zoning Bylaw sets forth a limited number of uses that can be conducted within these areas. Land uses permitted By Right within Webster's four Conservation Districts include: municipal uses, windmills, forestry and wildlife management, private sportsman's clubs, unpaved trails and paths, public and private water supplies, and assorted recreation uses. Uses permitted by Special Permit

in Webster's Conservation Districts include: campgrounds, golf courses, and structures that are associated with outdoor recreation activities. Thus, while Webster does not allow residential, commercial or industrial development within its Conservation Districts, land uses associated with conservation and recreation are allowed.

Rare and Endangered Species: The most recent listing of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program shows the following wildlife species existing in Webster:

**Table 11: Rare and Endangered Species in Webster**

<b>Taxonomic Group</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Most Recent Observation</b>
Amphibian	<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>	Marbled Salamander	T	2004
Mussel	<i>Alasmidonta undulata</i>	Triangle Floater	SC	2002
Mussel	<i>Strophitus undulatus</i>	Creeper	SC	2002
Reptile	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle	SC	1993
Reptile	<i>Terrapene carolina</i>	Eastern Box Turtle	SC	1994

SC = Special Concern at State Level; T = Threatened at State Level.

Source: MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Natural Heritage & Endangered Species program.

## **F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments**

In 1982, the MA Department of Environmental Management prepared the State's first and only Scenic Landscape Inventory, where scenic landscapes were designated as either "Distinctive" or "Noteworthy". While none of the Town's landscapes received such designations, there are many locations in Webster that its citizens consider to be special, unique and scenic. A graphic depiction of the Town's unique features and scenic resources can be found on the following page as Map 4 (Unique Features and Scenic Resources Map).

<b>Map #</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Significance</b>
1	Top of Sugarloaf Hill	Scenic overlook: great views of Webster Lake.
2	Top of Blueberry Hill	Scenic overlook: views of three states at once: MA, CT and RI.
3	Upper Gore Road	Scenic view of Webster Lake.
4	Cranberry Bog - east	Rare freshwater cranberry bog.
5	Land bound by Lake Parkway, I-395, CT border, and brook	Last undeveloped lowland in this vicinity, containing a rare freshwater cranberry bog, heron rookery and wildlife habitat.
6	Memorial Beach Drive	Town beach, recreation area, natural area with pine forest, scenic views of Webster Lake and Sugarloaf Mountain, and site of the Old North Village Bridge.
7	Webster Pump Station	Historic building (1893).
8	Slater Mansion	Historic building.
9	Market Street/Mill Street	Historic mill housing.
10	Pond Court	Historic mill housing and stone building.
11	Little Red School House	Historic building – current home of the Historical Society.
12	Slater Mills	Historic industrial mill buildings and mill housing.
13	South Dam	Scenic river view and significant engineering achievement.
14	Lakeside Cemetery	Historic cemetery.
15	Collins Cove	Old railroad engine turnaround and scenic riverside meadow.
16	Cranston Clock Tower	Only remaining element of historic mill building.
17	Slater Memorial	Historic memorial.
18	Town Hall/Court of Honor	Site of Webster Town Hall, historic watering trough and several war memorials.
19	Train Museum	Trail-related exhibits and artifacts.
20	Perryville Dam	Historic dam and scenic views of the French River.
21	Fenner Street Woods	Wooded area near the downtown.
22	Robinson Burial Plot	Historic gravesite.
23	Praying Indian Historic Marker	Historic marker.
24	Nap's Diner	Historic diner.
25	Railroad Trestle	Scenic overlook along the French River.
26	Main Street Historic District	National Register of Historic Places; Registered District.
27	State-owned boat launch	Boat launch site along the shoreline of Webster Lake.
28	Upper Gore Road, Lower Gore Road, Gore Road, Point Breeze Road, Sutton Road, Rawson Road, Memorial Beach Drive, Mine Brook Road, Pinewood Drive and Kingsbury Road.	Locally designated Scenic Roads.

## G. Environmental Challenges

Surface Water Pollution: It is well known that the French River was the source of power for the textile mills that flourished in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup>. In fact, there are still active mills located along the French. The river was also a major transportation corridor for shipping goods, materials and finished products. The industrial use of the river has resulted in serious water quality problems that will take a long time to rectify. A 1974 report by the Massachusetts Water Resource Commission (MWRC) noted that the French River in the Dudley/Webster area had the “general appearance... of pea soup, although the color may vary from blue to green to rouge.”



Discharges from industrial uses created sludge and sedimentation particularly in the ponds and impoundments behind dams. Nutrient and coliform levels were through the roof. The 1974 report noted that the impoundment behind the Perryville dam (no longer active) was known to have a “sludge deposit [that] had accumulated on the bottom, pieces of which occasionally came loose and floated to the top” and “coliform bacteria counts skyrocketed up to the million level count.” Most of the mills along the French River have shut down and the ones that remain follow strict NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permit requirements.

Municipal wastewater treatment plants have also been a substantial source of pollution for the French River. A 1990 report by the MWRC identified the Oxford-Rochdale treatment plant along the French River as significant contributor of high nutrients and organic loads. The area’s treatment plants have all received significant upgrades during the 1980’s, with the Webster plant being upgraded in 1990 and a new upgrade in the planning stages. These upgrades have resulted in a substantial reduction of pollutants in the rivers. According to the 1999 French-Quinebaug Watershed Plan, the major problem associated with today’s treatment plants is high phosphorus loading.

The municipal treatment plants and the industries discharging into the River are known as “point” pollution sources, that is, a pollution source that can be traced back to a single location. Abandoned landfills and auto salvage yards are also considered “point” pollution sources because of their potential to leach hazardous chemicals into nearby water resources. The past few decades have seen a marked reduction in the amount of pollutants entering the River from point pollution sources. Although the water quality of the French has improved dramatically, much remains to be done.

Today, the primary pollution problems for Webster’s surface waters are “non-point” pollution sources, that is, pollution sources that are diffuse in nature and discharge pollutants over a broad area. Typical non-point pollution sources include: stormwater

runoff, lawn fertilizers, manure leachate, septic systems, pesticides, road salt, erosion, etc. It is these non-point pollution sources that the watershed communities will need to address in order to further improve the water quality of Webster's surface waters.

Water Quality – State Monitoring Efforts: The State has conducted numerous scientific studies of Webster's water resources over the years, primarily under the auspices of the MA Department of Environmental Protection and its predecessor. This section summarizes the results of the more recent studies that have evaluated the quality of Webster's water resources, including:

- French-Quinebaug Watershed Plan, 1999, prepared by the University of Massachusetts-Amherst for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's French-Quinebaug Watershed Basin Team.
- Massachusetts Section 303(d) Integrated Lists of Waters, Years 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2006. Prepared by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) and the MA Department of Environmental Protection.
- French & Quinebaug River Watersheds Water Quality Assessment Report, 2001, prepared by the MA Department of Environmental Protection.
- Nonpoint Pollution Source Action Strategies for the French and Quinebaug Basins, 2003, prepared by the MA Department of Environmental Protection.
- Watershed-Based Plan for the French Basin, 2006, prepared by the MA Department of Environmental Protection.

1999 French-Quinebaug Watershed Plan (summary): This UMass report contains an extensive summary of water quality testing in the French-Quinebaug basins, going back to the State's earliest monitoring efforts. The report also presents a detailed summary of the hydrological systems, their various components (wetlands, floodplains, etc.), as well as the impact of human activities on these resources. The report concludes with a set of recommendations aimed at improving water quality within the two basins and encouraging the appropriate public use of the two rivers. Chief among the recommendations were:

- Extend the Quinebaug-Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor from Connecticut to Massachusetts. Note: this was accomplished in 2000 and now the corridor includes both the Connecticut communities and the nine Massachusetts communities.
- Develop tourism opportunities in an effort to expose the greater public to the area's natural resources and enhance the local economy.
- Develop sections of the Grand Trunk, Southbridge Spur and other rail trails for recreational purposes. Note: The State has purchased the railroad right-of-way for the 11-mile Southbridge Spur and has obligated funds for an engineering study, although these funds have yet to be spent. When completed, the Southbridge Spur will create a trail that starts in the Southbridge downtown area, dips south into Thompson Connecticut before branching north into downtown Webster.

- Develop river awareness and other educational programs. Note: the non-profit French River Connection has taken on this task. The Connection has sponsored several riverbank clean-up efforts, mapped existing trails along the French, planned for new trails and conducts outreach to engage the public in its activities.
- Encourage adaptive reuse. This recommendation is aimed at ensuring that historic mill buildings are rehabilitated and reused for new purposes rather than being torn down. The mills represent a link to the area's industrial past.

Massachusetts Section 303(d) – The Department of Environmental Protection: Integrated Lists of Waters (summary): The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) designates six classes of water quality, based largely on the standards of the Federal Clean Water Act. In Massachusetts, Class A refers to those surface water resources that are used as water supply sources. Class B waters are considered safe for fishing, swimming and boating. The remaining four water quality categories cover those surface water resources with lesser water quality. The DEP has designated Webster's water resources as Class B, although there are several surface water resources that are impaired for designated Class B uses (more on this below).

Under the regulations of the Federal Clean Water Act, states are required to file a report every two years that identifies those surface waters that are not expected to meet the Act's surface water quality standards (Class A, Class B, etc.). This report, known as the Massachusetts Section 303(d) Integrated Lists of Waters, was last prepared in 2006 through a joint effort of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

The 2006 report brought some good news to Webster, in that the water quality of Mill Brook continues to improve and continues to sustain aquatic life. However, the following surface waters in Webster listed in Table 12 **do not** meet the quality standards of the Federal Clean Water Act.

**Table 12 - Surface waters in Webster that do not meet the quality standards of the Federal Clean Water Act**

Surface Water Resource	Watershed	Pollutant/Stressor
Webster Lake	French River	Exotic plant species
French River (from Oxford town line to Webster WWTP – 2.4 miles)	French River	Organic enrichment Low dissolved oxygen Pathogens Taste, odor and color Objectionable deposits Habitat alterations
French River (from Webster WWTP to CT state line – 0.9 miles)	French River	Nutrients Organic enrichment Low dissolved oxygen Habitat alterations Pathogens Taste, odor and color Turbidity Objectionable deposits

The 2006 Massachusetts Section 303(d) Integrated Lists of Waters also listed the French River as requiring Total Maximum Daily Load investigations, or more commonly known as TMDL studies. A TMDL study is essentially a “pollution budget” designed to restore the health of the impaired water body or river. The Federal Clean Water Act requires that states must develop a TMDL plan for each water body/river identified as being impaired. Components of a TMDL plan include identifying the source(s) of the pollutant from direct discharges (point pollution sources) and indirect discharges (non-point pollution sources), determining the maximum amount of the pollutant that can be discharged into a specific water body to meet water quality standards and developing a plan to meet that goal. The Massachusetts DEP will likely undertake a TMDL study for the French River sometime within the next five years.

It should be noted that DEP prepared a 2002 study entitled, Total Maximum Daily Loads of Phosphorus for Selected French Basin Lakes, however Webster Lake was not included in this study because it does not have a documented phosphorus problem.

The 2001 French & Quinebaug River Watersheds Water Quality Assessment Report presents a summary of water quality data that is used to determine whether a stream, river or water body meets the State’s surface water quality standards for particular uses (ability to support aquatic life, water supply, fish consumption, recreational use and aesthetics). The main findings of this report are as follows:

- Four lakes within the French and Quinebaug Watersheds are considered impaired for fish consumption because of elevated levels of mercury. While none of the identified lakes are located in Webster, it should be noted that Webster Lake was not assessed as part of this effort. However, the MA Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Watershed Management and

Environmental Analysis sampled Webster Lake for mercury in 1999 as part of its annual Fish Toxics Monitoring Survey.

- The lower three miles of the French River is considered impaired in its ability to support aquatic life. The impairment is a result of organic enrichment and habitat quality degradation (i.e., sedimentation), although flow alteration is also a suspected cause of impairment. Sources of flow alteration include hydromodification (upstream impoundments), urban runoff and municipal wastewater discharges, although runoff from sand and gravel operations and hydropower operations are also suspected.
- The lower 12.7-miles of the French River are considered impaired for recreational use and aesthetics. The impairment is a result of objectionable deposits, odor, and/or turbidity resulting from urban runoff, illegal dumping and municipal wastewater treatment plants.

The Assessment Report concludes with a set of recommendations aimed at improving water quality within the French and Quinebaug Basins:

- Investigate the hydromodification resulting from the various hydropower facilities within the basins and minimize fluctuations in stream flow.
- Conduct habitat quality evaluations along the rivers to assess stream-flow conditions related to water withdrawals.
- Document erosion and sedimentation problems along the river and implement Best Management Practices to control stormwater runoff.
- Conduct stream cleanups and encourage/strengthen local stewardship efforts.
- Continue to conduct biological and water quality monitoring to evaluate the effects of discharges permitted under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), water withdrawals, power plants, and nonpoint pollution sources.
- Monitor and control the spread and growth of exotic aquatic and wetland vegetation.

2003 Nonpoint Pollution Source Action Strategies for the French and Quinebaug Basins (summary): This report evaluated the water quality of several surface water resources within the French and Quinebaug River Basins along with the results of previous remediation efforts in an effort to develop strategies for addressing nonpoint pollution within the Basins. The report recommends the following actions for Webster's surface water resources:

- French River (from North Oxford Dam to North Village in Webster)
  - Conduct additional monitoring.
  - Review 1999 Habitat Survey and Benthic Macrophyte monitoring data.
  - Minimize the rapid flow flux at the North Village Hydropower facility.
- French River (from North Village to the Webster Wastewater Treatment Plant)
  - Review 1999 Habitat Survey and Benthic Macrophyte monitoring data.
  - Minimize the rapid flow flux at the North Village Hydropower facility.

- Consider remediation at Shield Packaging site.
- Conduct a TMDL study and implement corrective actions.
- Continue monitoring this reach of the French River.
  
- French River (from Webster Wastewater Treatment Plant to Connecticut state line)
  - Compare MA monitoring data with CT monitoring data.
  - Work towards nutrient reductions through intra-state collaboration.
  - Promote inter-state cleanup of river with the CT DEP.
  - Conduct a TMDL study and implement corrective actions.
  
- Mill Brook (from its Webster Lake outlet to the French River)
  - Conduct additional monitoring.
  
- Webster Lake
  - Conduct macrophyte survey to determine extent of noxious aquatic plant infestation and spot treat problem locations.
  - Establish a management program to prevent further infestation.
  - Improve drainage and catchment near I-395 and Union Point.
  - Mitigate sedimentation at Point Breeze and Route 16 near Sucker Brook.
  - Prepare contingency plans for fuel spills.
  
- Nipmuck Pond
  - Conduct macrophyte survey to determine extent of noxious aquatic plant infestation and spot treat problem locations.
  - Establish a management program to prevent further infestation.
  - Conduct a TMDL study and implement corrective actions.

2006 Watershed-Based Plan for the French River Basin (summary): In an effort to address previously identified water quality problems in the French River Basin, this DEP report recommends several corrective actions for particular urban and agricultural land uses. Mass DEP expects to spend the next five years working with communities and private landowners to implement the following list of best management practices.

<b>Urban Land Uses</b>	<b>Urban Land Uses</b>
Non-Structural Best Management Practices	Structural Best Management Practices
Street Sweeping Road Salt Management Catch Basin Management Lawn Care Education Septic System Management	Erosion Control Subsurface Recharge Vegetated Swales Filter Systems Infiltration Recharge Basins Constructed Wetlands Deep Sump Catch Basins Extended Detention Basins Permeable Paving
<b>Agricultural Land Uses</b>	<b>Agricultural Land Uses</b>
Non-Structural Best Management Practices	Structural Best Management Practices
Nutrient/Fertilizer Management Conservation Tillage Cover Crops Contour Farming Pesticide Management	Conservation Buffers Sediment Basins Animal Waste Disposal Systems

Water Quality – Local Monitoring Efforts: It should be noted that the Webster Lake Association has been monitoring the Lake’s water quality since 2003, and the French River Connection has been monitoring the River’s water quality since 2005.

The French River Connection has been monitoring the French River and its tributaries since 2005, the last two under a QAPP (Quality Assurance Project Plan) approved by the Mass DEP. In 2007, fifteen sites (see Water Resource Map for locations) were monitored monthly from May through November. Parameters monitored include dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, conductivity, and turbidity. Levels of phosphate and nitrate-nitrogen are also determined, as are aesthetic qualities such as water appearance, odor, and accumulations of trash. The presence of plants, fish, and other aquatic life is also recorded. In 2007 the French River Connection began a program of temperature data logging in four Webster streams (Sucker, Mine and Browns Brook, and one unnamed stream) for the purpose of identifying possible coldwater resources. The French River Connection has received funds to support its work from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation and uses monitoring equipment on loan from Nichols College. In 2007, the Quinebaug-Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor obtained a Mass DEP grant to purchase equipment for use in all Massachusetts corridor towns.

The Webster Lake Association has been monitoring water quality in Webster Lake in one deep spot in North Pond, one in South Pond and one in Middle Pond since 2003. In 2003 & 2004 the Association hired GeoSyntec Consultants to complete the sampling work. GeoSyntec checked the water quality only once in each year. Volunteers assisted in the monitoring effort in 2004, working with unsophisticated equipment every other week from May through September. In 2005 and 2006 the sampling work was done using accurate scientific instruments and State Certified labs under a QAPP (Quality

Assurance Project Plan) approved by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. In 2007 the Association monitored the same sites, but only once per month from May through October.

The Association collects data at 2-foot intervals of depth down to the lake bottom: dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, conductivity, and turbidity. The presence of plants, fish, and other aquatic life is also recorded. The program has recently been expanded to include monitoring of streams flowing into Webster Lake and testing of several coves.

The Webster Lake Association has funded its activities through the support of its membership. The Webster Lake Association also received a grant from the EPA, allowing the Association to borrow approximately \$2000 worth of monitoring equipment for five years. In 2007, the Quinebaug-Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor obtained a Mass DEP grant to purchase monitoring equipment for use in all Massachusetts corridor towns and the Association now uses this equipment.

#### Local Environmental Initiatives and Remediation Efforts:

- Lake Watershed Protection District: The Town has recently adopted a Lake Watershed Protection District that covers the eastern half of the Town, including the entirety of Webster Lake. The district prohibits several potentially hazardous land uses and requires the use of Best Management Practices for others
- Floodplain Protection Overlay District: Webster has adopted a Floodplain Protection Overlay District, which regulates development within the Town's flood hazard areas as identified on the Town's Flood Insurance Rate Maps prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), dated June 16, 1993.
- Conservation Districts: The Town has created four Conservation Districts: the islands within Webster Lake; a large tract of land in the northeast corner; the area in the vicinity of Sucker Brook Swamp and an area in the vicinity of Freeman's Brook. This designation limits the uses allowed in these areas but does not permanently protect the land.
- Webster Lake Weed Eradication Efforts: In 2006 the Webster Lake Association contracted with GeoSyntec to assess nuisance aquatic vegetation in the Lake, particularly macrophyte communities in 18 specific areas where herbicides had been applied. This work was continued in 2007 and will likely continue into 2008 as well. Aquatic Control Tech Inc. was hired to apply a combination of herbicides and mechanical hydro-raking in an effort to control both milfoil and large-leaf pondweed.

Identified Polluted Sites in Town: The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has a current inventory of 86 chemical spills at 57 locations throughout Webster. The inventory covers a twenty-year period (from 1987 through the present) and most of the spills are associated with oil or hazardous materials. These sites are in various stages of remediation. Under the heading labeled "compliance status", the reader will notice that most of the Webster sites have the acronym RAO attached to them. RAO stands for Response Action Outcome. This term applies to those hazardous

waste spills where immediate actions were taken that were sufficient to contain the spill to the point of posing no significant risk to the public.

**Table 13 – Department of Environmental Protection Site Inventory for Webster**

RTN	Release Address	Site Name/ Location Aid	Reporting Category	Notifi- cation Date	Compli- ance Status	Phase	Chemical Type
2-0010466	10 12 Upland Ave	Salem Tomato Packing	72 Hr	9/6/1994	RAO		Oil
2-0012063	Arkwright Rd	Leo Con-Struction	120 Dy	1/12/1998	TIER 2	PHASE IV	Haz. Mat.
2-0013682	96 Chase Ave	Residence	Two Hr	2/7/2001	RAO		Oil
2-0011782	Davis St	French R	Two Hr	6/26/1997	RAO		Oil
2-0010387	3 East Main St	Tac Properties	Two Hr	7/16/1994	RAO		Oil
2-0011350	33 East Main St	Rte 16	Two Hr	8/13/1996	TIER 1D		Oil
2-0011802	67 East Main St	Hi Lo Gas	Two Hr	7/14/1997	RAO		Oil
2-0014650	74 East Main St	Mobil X-Tra Mart	72 Hr	1/31/2003	TIER 2	PHASE IV	Oil
2-0014784	74 East Main St	East Main St @ Rt 16	120 Dy	6/4/2003	TIER 2	PHASE IV	Oil
2-0015851	74 East Main St	X-tra Mart	72 Hr	8/3/2005	RTN CLOSED		Oil
2-0016173	74 East Main St	X-tra Mart	72 Hr	3/24/2006	RTN CLOSED		Oil
2-0016678	74 East Main St	Extra Mart	72 Hr	5/4/2007	RTN CLOSED		Oil
2-0010818	100 East Main St	Kunkel Buick	72 Hr	6/13/1995	RAO	PHASE II	Oil & Haz. Mat.
2-0014891	100 East Main St	Former Kunkel Buick	120 Dy	8/22/2003	RAO		Oil
2-0014882	106 East Main St	J Roger Reisner	120 Dy	8/20/2003	TIER 2	PHASE II	Haz. Mat.
2-0000732	112 East Main St	Hess Station 21210	None	5/3/1990	RAO	PHASE III	Oil
2-0012801	112 East Main St	Amerada Hess Sta 21210	120 Dy	5/20/1999	DPS		
2-0012956	112 East Main St	Webster Hess Sta	Two Hr	9/29/1999	DPS		Oil
2-0013203	112 East Main St	Webster Hess	72 Hr	3/22/2000	RTN CLOSED		Oil

RTN	Release Address	Site Name/ Location Aid	Reporting Category	Notification Date	Compliance Status	Phase	Chemical Type
2-0016606	123 East Main St	Former Shell Station	Two Hr	3/2/2007	RAO		
2-0016615	123 East Main St	Shell Gasoline Station	72 Hr	3/8/2007	UNCLASSIFIED		Oil
2-0013398	137 East Main St	Tosco Corp	120 Dy	8/1/2000	REMOPS	PHASE V	Oil
2-0014483	10 Golden Hts B12	Mass Electric Co Transformer Bldg 12	120 Dy	9/23/2002	TIER 2	PHASE V	Oil
2-0000739	Gore Rd	Gore Rd Webster Lake	None	3/8/1990	RAO		Oil
2-0013093	Gore Rd	Rte 16 - Mv	Two Hr	12/24/1999	RAO		Oil
2-0014494	91 Gore Rd	Webster Fish And Game	Two Hr	9/27/2002	TIER 1D		Oil
2-0014186	1 Goya Dr	Cappys Transport Roadway Release	Two Hr	2/11/2002	RAO		Oil
2-0015147	5 Goya Dr	Detention Pond	Two Hr	3/4/2004	RAO		Oil
2-0015329	10 Goya Dr	A. Duie Pyle Trucking Company	Two Hr	7/12/2004	RAO		
2-0010520	24 Granite St	East Main Intersection	Two Hr	10/21/1994	RAO		Oil
2-0011002	30 Hill St	Healy Trucking	Two Hr	11/16/1995	TIER 1D		Oil
2-0011863	30 Hill St	Healy Trucking	Two Hr	8/22/1997	TIER 1D		Oil
2-0010860	7 Indian Point Rd	Webster Lake	Two Hr	9/26/1995	RAO		Oil
2-0013895	10 Kingsbury Rd	Oleary Residence	Two Hr	7/9/2001	RAO		Oil
2-0010693	195 Lower Gore Rd	180 Lower Gore Rd	Two Hr	3/9/1995	RAO		Oil
2-0012927	Main St	Ma Electric	72 Hr	9/3/1999	RTN CLOSED		
2-0015275	2-8 Main St	Vermark Realty Corporation	120 Dy	6/3/2004	RAO	PHASE II	Oil & Haz. Mat.

RTN	Release Address	Site Name/ Location Aid	Reporting Category	Notifi- cation Date	Compli- ance Status	Phase	Chemical Type
2-0000382	7 Main St	Webster Fmr Mgp Site	None	7/15/1988	URAM	PHASE IV	Oil
2-0012500	7 Main St	Substation	72 Hr	11/18/1998	RTN CLOSED		Oil
2-0013896	7 Main St	National Grid	72 Hr	6/26/2001	RTN CLOSED		Haz. Mat.
2-0016214	80-90 Main St	Hi-Lo Gas Station	Two Hr	4/27/2006	RAO		Oil
2-0000681	421 Main St	Gibbs Station Fmr	None	1/15/1990	WCSPRM		Oil
2-0013760	562 Main St	Pruett Trucking	Two Hr	4/2/2001	TIER 1D		Oil
2-0013665	Main St And Union St	Meco Substation	72 Hr	1/26/2001	RTN CLOSED		Haz. Mat.
2-0010868	35 Mechanic St	Residence	Two Hr	7/31/1995	TIER 1D		Oil
2-0012331	48 Negunis St	St Louis Church	120 Dy	8/4/1998	RAO		
2-0000949	Negus St	Mass Electric	None	10/23/1992	RTN CLOSED		Oil and Haz. Mat.
2-0015673	22 Negus St	Andrea Grecco	Two Hr	4/2/2005	TIER 2	PHASE II	
2-0016434	60 North Main St	Ed's Oil Co Roadway Rel	Two Hr	10/24/2006	RAO		Oil
2-0012851	4 Old Douglas Rd	Rte 16 Auto Salvage	72 Hr	6/25/1999	RAO	PHASE V	Haz. Mat.
2-0000548	2 Old Worcester Rd	Zmetra Memorials	None	4/15/1989	RAO	PHASE III	
2-0000650	3 Old Worcester Rd	Cams Oil Service	None	7/15/1989	REMOPS	PHASE V	Oil
2-0011435	3 Old Worcester Rd	Cams Oil Service	120 Dy	10/9/1996	RTN CLOSED	PHASE V	Haz. Mat.
2-0015039	3 Old Worcester Rd	Cams Oil Service	Two Hr	12/11/2003	RAO		Haz. Mat.

RTN	Release Address	Site Name/ Location Aid	Reporting Category	Notification Date	Compliance Status	Phase	Chemical Type
2-0000410	8 Park Ave	Petersons Oil Service Inc	None	10/15/1988	TIER 1D		Oil
2-0010622	12 Park St	Jeffco Fibers	Two Hr	1/13/1995	RAO		Oil
2-0013546	Pearl St	Dudley Woolen Mill Fmr	120 Dy	10/30/2000	RAO		Oil and Haz. Mat.
2-0011694	1 Pearle St	Anglo Fabrics	Two Hr	4/22/1997	RAO		Oil
2-0016389	5 Pinewood Dr	Hibbard Residence	Two Hr	9/12/2006	RAO		Oil
2-0016354	114 Point Breeze Rd	Point Breeze Marina	Two Hr	8/14/2006	RAO		Oil
2-0012758	26 Poland St	Dugas Realty	72 Hr	4/21/1999	RAO		Oil
2-0000391	Pt Breeze	Point Breeze Marina	None	10/15/1988	RAO		
2-0015428	6-8 River Ct	Fomer Empire Cleaners	120 Dy	10/13/2004	TIER 1D		Haz. Mat.
2-0012953	20 Robinson St	Residence	Two Hr	9/25/1999	RAO		Oil
2-0011809	Rte 12	Kmart Plaza	Two Hr	7/16/1997	RAO		Oil
2-0012011	Rte 16	Near Rte 16 Auto	Two Hr	12/2/1997	RAO		Oil
2-0012076	School St	Chem Waste Mgmt	Two Hr	1/26/1998	RAO		Oil
2-0016513	130 School St	Cams Oil Service Inc	Two Hr	12/26/2006	UNCLASSIFIED		Oil
2-0016707	745 School St	Webster Manor	120 Dy	5/23/2007	RAO		Oil
2-0015254	1052 School St	Richards Residence	Two Hr	5/17/2004	TIER 1D		Oil
2-0015434	415-431 South Main St	Drake Petroleum Co Inc	Two Hr	10/12/2004	RAO		Oil
2-0015110	626 South Main St	Former J G Motors	120 Dy	2/3/2004	RAO		Oil and Haz. Mat.
2-0015288	626 South Main St	Webster Main, Llc	72 Hr	6/9/2004	RAO		Oil
2-0015351	626 South Main St	Former J. G. Motors	72 Hr	8/3/2004	RAO		Oil

RTN	Release Address	Site Name/ Location Aid	Reporting Category	Notifi- cation Date	Compli- ance Status	Phase	Chemical Type
2-0014013	661 South Main St	South Village Mills	Two Hr	9/28/2001	RAO		Oil
2-0010591	2 Sutton Rd	Warehouse	120 Dy	11/30/1994	RAO	PHASE II	Oil
2-0013282	16 Sutton Rd	Buris Refrigerated Logistics	72 Hr	5/11/2000	RTN CLOSED		Oil
2-0014092	16 Sutton Rd	Commerce Insurance Co	120 Dy	11/19/2001	RTN CLOSED		Haz. Mat.
2-0012566	144 Thompson Rd	Citgo Station	72 Hr	12/22/1998	RAO	PHASE III	Oil
2-0012863	144 Thompson Rd	Rabicot Romanek Inc	120 Dy	6/8/1999	RTN CLOSED		Haz. Mat.
2-0014877	243 Thompson Rd	Webster Lake	Two Hr	8/18/2003	RAO		Oil
2-0013025	1 Union St	Former Cal Gasification Facility	72 Hr	11/12/1999	RTN CLOSED		Haz. Mat.
2-0012464	8a Wakefield St	Tremblay Oil Co Inc	72 Hr	10/22/1998	RAO		Oil
2-0012130	Worcester Rd	East Webster Substation	Two Hr	3/4/1998	RAO		Oil
2-0000144	2 Worcester Rd	Cranston Print Works	None	1/15/1987	RAO		Haz. Mat.
2-0011510	2 Worcester Rd	Cranston Print Works	Two Hr	12/5/1996	RAO		Oil
2-0011829	2 Worcester Rd	Cranston Print Works	Two Hr	8/11/1997	RAO		Haz. Mat.

The Town owns a former landfill at the site of its highway garage on Cudworth Road. Webster's Public Works Department monitors the landfill's effect on water quality through a series of monitoring wells along the property's boundaries. **The Webster landfill has been closed for over 23 years.** No serious water quality problems have been detected at the landfill to date.

**Land acquisitions by the State and adoption of the Lake Watershed Protection Zoning District by the town have attempted to minimize negative environmental impacts by the**

future development. One exception is the large unprotected wetland that is being threatened by mall development. However with the slow down in the economy this proposal has stalled for the time being.

The Town has privatized the operation of its transfer station. The operator of the Town transfer station, Erin Pratt General Manager of Pratt Trucking, recently announced that there will be a \$1.00 fee per 30 gallon bag for recycling starting in April 2009. Both our new Town Administrator, John McAuliffe, and the Superintendent of Public Works believe, based on the information available at this time, that under the current contract for operation of the Transfer Station, Pratt Trucking cannot charge for residential recycling. However, most of the trash and recyclables in Webster are picked up by private haulers. There is currently no Town bylaw to encourage or mandate recycling.

Land clearing under the current forestry permitting process is not protective of the town's woodlands.

Issues of environmental equity have not been highlighted as a result of our planning process. The French River borders a significant portion of the area identified as an environmental justice area (generally the western border of the central section of town.) As a result the environmental justice community has access to the river and its opportunities. Some might consider the town recreation area on Ray Street as within walking distance of the area identified as an environmental justice area. However, a look at the Open Space Inventory Map might suggest that as the Town plans for more Park Space it should consider the western border of town.

Erosion, Chronic Flooding & Sedimentation:

Catch basins have been identified as an environmental problem for Webster. There are currently five catch basins draining into the French River and as many as 50 catch basins draining into Webster Lake. While MassHighway has been proactive in addressing its catch basins along I-395, the Town could do more to address the catch basins under its own local jurisdiction. Sandbars have formed in the river and collected on banks due to road runoff, and snowplowing has pushed sand directly onto the banks and into the river.



Dams can have a long term effect on the retention of sediment and if not properly maintained can be the cause of highly damaging floods. There are a number of dams in Webster and some pose a greater hazard than others. The State defines the hazard of the dam not in terms of the condition but rather in terms of the impact should that dam give way. The State DCR identifies the following dams in Webster:

**Table 14 – Webster Dams**

Dam Name	Owner	Owner's Address	DCR Hazard Code Description
Lake Chaubunagungamaug Dam	Cranston Print Works Co.	2 Worcester Road, Webster, MA 01570	Significant Hazard
Club Pond Dam	Webster Fish & Game Assoc.	91 Gore Road, Webster, MA 01570	Low Hazard
Nipmuck Pond Dam	200 Sportsman Club	Webster Lake, 184 Sutton Road, Webster, MA 01570	Low Hazard
Storage Pond Dam	Cranston Print Works Co.	2 Worcester Road, Webster, MA 01570	Non Jurisdictional
Recreation Pond Dam	200 Sportsman Club	Webster Lake, 184 Sutton Road, Webster, MA 01570	Non Jurisdictional
Mill Brook Canal Dam	Cranston Print Works Co.	2 Worcester Road, Webster, MA 01570	Significant Hazard
Fish and Game Pond	Webster Fish & Game Assoc.	91 Gore Road, Webster, MA 01570	Non Jurisdictional
Webster Lake Dam	Cranston Print Works Co.	2 Worcester Road, Webster, MA 01570	Significant Hazard
Pool Dam	Webster Fish & Game Assoc.	91 Gore Road, Webster, MA 01570	Non Jurisdictional

Source: Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

There are three dams on the French River which are anchored on the east in Webster and on the west in Dudley. From north to south they are the North Village Dam, which currently is used for electric power generation, South (sometimes called Middle) Dam, and Perryville Dam at the Connecticut border. Sediment behind the latter has been studied extensively by USGS, and there are tens of thousands of yards of contaminated sediment. Many chemicals are present at levels that adversely affect benthic organisms. There is contaminated sediment behind the others as well.

Webster's streets and roads, waterways, and vacant lots, collect a lot of garbage, from discarded household trash and fast food items, to illegal dumping of tires, construction materials, furniture and appliances and yard waste. There are apparently insufficient incentives for proper disposal of larger items, and little effective education in the impact of littering.

## SECTION 5 - INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION & RECREATION INTEREST

Open space makes an important contribution to quality of life. Public recreation areas and open space provide a focus for community life and promote a unique and identifiable community character. Open space can also be an oasis for quiet reflection. In dense areas of urbanized areas like parts of Webster, parks and open space greatly enhance the connection to natural world.

Open space also has economic benefits. It protects and enhances the property values of nearby land. Open space also attracts businesses, new residents, and public and private investment. Research on this topic suggests that the proximity to recreation and open space is THE most important factor in choosing the location of a small business, while quality of life ranks as the third most important factor in choosing location of a large business.



Additionally, conservation land serves environmental functions in a city, providing natural rainwater storage and corridors for wildlife. Even small pockets of green space may serve an important function for migratory birds and butterflies. Open space can also reduce runoff and diminish the frequency and severity of flooding. Wooded open space helps to cool the city and improves air quality.

### A. Land Protection Summary

Article 97 of the State Constitution provides permanent protection for certain lands acquired for natural resources purposes, meaning “conservation, development and utilization of the agricultural, mineral, forest, water, air and other natural resources.” Lands of this nature are often owned by the municipal conservation commission, recreation commission, water department, or by a state or federal conservation agency (i.e., the EOEEA or the Division of Fish & Wildlife). Private, public and non-profit conservation and recreation lands are also protected under Article 97. Removing the permanent protection status of such lands is extremely difficult, as is evidenced by the following required steps:

- The municipal Conservation Commission or Recreation Committee must vote that the land in question is surplus to its needs
- The removal of permanent protection status must be approved at a Town Meeting/City Council vote and pass by a 2/3 vote
- The municipality must file an Environmental Notification Form with the EOEEA’s Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

- The removal of permanent protection status must be approved by the State Legislature and pass by a 2/3 vote and
- In the case of land either acquired or developed with grant assistance from the EOEEA's Division of Conservation Services, the converted land must be replaced with land of equal monetary value and recreational or conservation utility.

In other words, it is intentionally difficult to remove a property's permanent protection status so that it may be developed. Private lands can also be protected in perpetuity through deed restrictions or conservation easements. Municipal lands under active use (schools, town halls, highway department facilities, police/fire facilities, etc.) are not considered permanently protected, nor are private lands that are within the State's special taxation programs (Chapter 61). Chapter lands are considered as having limited protection.

In terms of permanently protected land, the Town of Webster owns very little conservation land on its own (two parcels in the vicinity of Minebrook Road adjacent to the State's Wildlife Management Area, a 24 acre conservation area on School Street, and 27 acres in and around Memorial Beach); however, the State of Massachusetts owns 948 acres of conservation land in Town.

The table in this section provides a matrix of all permanently protected open space in Town including such details as parcel ownership, management entity, current use, condition, recreation potential, grant used to purchase the property (if applicable), public access, and zoning category. Open lands under the jurisdiction of the Sewer and Water Departments are also included in the matrix, although this land is not considered permanently protected. A graphic depiction of Webster's protected lands can be found on Map 5 (Open Space Inventory Map).

Many of the privately owned parcels that have "limited protection" status fall under the Chapter 61 taxation program that offers a lower tax rate to property owners who keep their land in its natural forested state. The 200 Sportsman's Club, a private hunting organization, is another significant owner of open land, although their properties are also considered being under limited protection.

Webster has 1,237 acres of land under permanent protection (or 13% of the Town's total land area), and 717 acres of land having limited protection status (or 7.7% of the Town's total land area). All told, Webster has approximately 1,750 acres of land (or roughly 21% of the Town's total land area) having some degree of protection.

**Table 15 - Lands of Conservation/Recreation Interest in Webster, MA (Town-Owned Parcels)**

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/ Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
1-L-1-0-E	350 Main Street	Town of Webster/ School Dept.	Town Hall and School	Town			Yes	3.3	B-4	Limited
2-K-13-0-E	451 School Street	Town of Webster/ Historical Society	Museum	Town			Yes	0.14	MFR	Limited
4-A-1-0-E	38 Hill Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Treatment Plant	Town			No	11.35	IND	Limited
4-B-1-)-E	Westwood Road	Town of Webster/ Recreation	Berthold Field - soccer	Town	Good		Yes	5	SFR	Limited
5-A-1-0-E	School Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Treatment Plant	Town			No	9	IND	Limited
10-A-33-0-E	School Street	Town of Webster/ Conservation	Open Space	Town	Good		Yes	23.68	SFR	Perpetuity
12-B-29-0-E	George Street	Town of Webster/ Recreation	Soccer Field, playground	Town	Fair	Built Out	Yes	4.96	MFR	Limited
12-E-16-0-E	52 Lake Parkway	Town of Webster/ School Dept.	High School w/ playing fields	Town			Yes	60.14	SFR	Limited
12-E-16-10-E	Klebart Avenue	Town of Webster	Pond	Town				0.79	SFR	Perpetuity

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/ Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
16-F-6-0-E	Slater Street	Town of Webster/ Recreation	Softball Fields	Town	Good	Adjacent wooded area has potential	Yes	12.7	SFR	Limited
18-A-1-0-E	29 Bigelow Road	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Pumping Station	Town			No	14	SFR	Limited
27-F-15-0-E	31 Ray Street	Town of Webster	Armory	Gift from National Guard	Building in poor shape	Building rehab is needed	Yes	2.5	SFR	Perpetuity
23-A-6-0-E	Worcester Road	Town of Webster	Mt. Zion Cemetery	Town		None	Yes	20.7	SFR	Perpetuity
27-F-16-0-E	Ray Street	Town of Webster/ Recreation	Part of Memorial athletic fields (Alexander Starzec field)	Town	Fair – Fieldhouse in poor shape	Built out	Yes	0.17	SFR	Limited
86-C-2-0-E	Minebrook Road	Town of Webster/ Conservation Comm.	Conservation District	Town	Good	Passive	Yes	5.32	CD	Perpetuity
86-C-3-0-E	Minebrook Road	Town of Webster/ Conservation Comm.	Conservation Area	Town	Good	Passive	Yes	12.64	ASFR	Perpetuity
29-H-30-0-E	Little League Lane	Webster Little League	Baseball Field	Town		None	Yes	0.18	MFR	Limited

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/ Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
56-B-63-2-E	Union Point Road	Town of Webster/ Water Dept.	Wellfield	Town		None	No	0.06	LR	Limited
56-E-2-0-E	185 Thompson Road	Town of Webster/ Public Works Dept.	Pump House	Town		None	No	0.1	B-5	Limited
57-A-13-0-E	Birch Island Road	Town of Webster/ Public Works Dept.	Pumping Station	Town		None	No	0.13	LR	Limited
57-A-14-0-E	80 Birch Island Road	Town of Webster/ Public Works Dept.	Pumping Station	Town		None	No	0.11	LR	Limited
57-E-5-0-E	Birch Island Road	Town of Webster/ Public Works Dept.	Pumping Station	Town		None	No	0.16	LR	Limited
61-E-3-0-E	Lower Gore Road	Town of Webster	Lakeside Cemetery	Town		None	Yes	0.95	LR	Perpetuity
74-B-5-0-E	Rawson Road	Town of Webster/ Water Dept.	Underground storage reservoir	Town			No	4.85	ASFR	Limited
75-B-5-0-E	Gore Road	Town of Webster/ Water Dept.	Wellfield	Town			No	41.49	LR	Limited

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/ Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
75-B-8-0-E	Gore Road	Town of Webster/ Water Dept.	Wellfield	Town		None	No	0.25	LR	Limited
75-C-9-1-E	Gore Road	Town of Webster/ Water Dept.	Wellfield	Town		None	No	0.18	LR	Limited
75-C-10-0-E	Gore Road	Town of Webster/ Water Dept.	Wellfield	Town			No	3	LR	Limited
75-C-10-2-E	Gore Road	Town of Webster/ Water Dept.	Wellfield	Town			No	1.9	LR	Limited
76-C-1-0-E	6 Memorial Beach Drive	Town of Webster/ Water Dept.	Wellfield	Town			No	39	LR	Limited
76-C-2-0-E	Memorial Beach Drive	Town of Webster/ Public Works Dept.	Memorial Beach	Town			No	14	LR	Perpetuity
78-A-1-0-E	Worcester Road	Town of Webster	St. Anthony Cemetery	Town			Yes	8.35	SFR	Perpetuity
78-B-1-1A-E	Sutton Road	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Pump Station	Town			No	0.69	BI	Limited

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/ Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
22-A-6-1-E	Bigelow Road	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Protected strip for well	Town			No	1.53	SFR	Limited
27-G-15-0-E	60 Park Avenue	Town of Webster/ School Dept.	Park Avenue Intermediate School w/playing fields	Town	Good		Yes	10.2	SFR	Limited
29-H-10-0-E	Little League Lane	Town of Webster/ Webster Little League	Baseball Field	Town	Good		Yes	4.7	MFR	Limited
27-G-16-0-E	Ray Street	Town of Webster/ Recreation	Athletic Fields	Town	Good		Yes	9.76	SFR	Limited
27-F-17-0-E	Ray Street	Town of Webster/ Recreation	Part of Memorial athletic fields	Town	Good	Built out	Yes	0.17	SFR	Limited
27-F-16-0-E	Ray Street	Town of Webster/ Recreation	Alexander Starzec Softball fields and playground	Town	Good		Yes	8.28	SFR	Limited
27-G-16-0-E	Ray Street	Town of Webster/ Recreation	Cody Street 4 Tennis Courts	Town	Good		Yes	9.76	SFR	Limited

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/ Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
13-B-18-0-E	11-15 May Street	Town of Webster/ Recreation	Basketball, skate park, playground, open field	Town	Good		Yes	1.94	MFR	Limited
28-D-3-0-E		Town of Webster/ Public Works	Water standpipe	Town	Good		No	8.32	SFR	Limited
77-A-22-1-E	Main Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Slater Memorial	Town	Good	Built out	Yes	0.75	B-4	Limited
88-C-2-0-E		Town of Webster/ Public Works	Old Town Dump	Town	Good		Yes	10.4	IND	Limited
1-S-6-0-E	116 School Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Senior Center Park	Town			Yes	0.8	MFR	Limited
76-B-1-0-E	Thompson Road	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Drainage Swale	Town			Yes	1.25	LR	Limited
1-F-1-0-E	Davis Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Railroad Museum	Town			Yes	0.27	B-4	Perpetuity
1-F-5-0-E	Davis Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Main Street Common	Town			Yes	0.26	B-4	Perpetuity
1-F-6-0-E	Davis Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Main Street Common	Town			Yes	0.13	B-4	Perpetuity

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/ Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
3-K-1-0-E	Fenner Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Houghton Street Property	Town			Yes	0.17	MFR	Limited
3-K-5-0-E	Fenner Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Houghton Street Property	Town			Yes	0.16	MFR	Limited
7-B-1-0-E	Perryville Road	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Perryville Road Property	Town			Yes	0.2	SFR	Limited
13-K-7-0-E	Snow Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Snow Street Property	Town			Yes	0.29	MFR	Limited
12-A-1-0-E	Snow Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Snow Street Property	Town			Yes	0.19	MFR	Limited
12-A-4-0-E	Snow Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Snow Street Property	Town			Yes	0.13	MFR	Limited
7-B-1-1-E	32 Perryville Road	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Sewer Pumping Station	Town			No	7.4	SFR	Limited
22-A-6-1-E	Bigelow Road	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Well Protective Area	Town			No	1.53	SFR	Limited
1-F-1-0-E	Davis Street	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Parking Area	Town			Yes	0.4	B-4	Limited
1-G-4-0-E	Tracy Court	Town of Webster/ Public Works	Parking Area	Town			Yes	0.4	B-4	Limited

**Table 16 - Lands of Conservation/Recreation Interest in Webster, MA (Nonprofit-Owned Parcels)**

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/ Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
22-A-6-0-E	Old Worcester Road	St. Joseph's Church	Cemetery	Church		None	Yes	35.2	SFR	Perpetuity
22-C-14-0-E	16 Old Worcester Road	Church of the Sacred Heart	Cemetery	Church		None	Yes	13.6	SFR	Perpetuity
15-G-64-0-E	Day Street	St. Anne's Church	School Yard	Church			No	0.98	B-4	Perpetuity
13-C-51-0-E	Negus Street	St. Louis School	School Yard	Church			No	2	MFR	Perpetuity
16-F-8-0-R	18-A Village Way	North Village Housing Dev.	Amenities for housing development	Federal			No	0.5	MFR	Perpetuity

**Table 17 - Lands of Conservation/Recreation Interest in Webster, MA (State-Owned Parcels)**

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
90-A-8-0-E	Gore District	Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife	Wildlife area, hunting & passive recreation	State	Good	Passive	Yes	17	ASFR	Perpetuity
91-A-1-0-E	Sutton Road	Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife	Wildlife area, hunting & passive recreation	State	Good	Passive	Yes	40	CON	Perpetuity
91-A-2-0-E	Rawson Road	Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife	Wildlife area, hunting & passive recreation	State	Good	Passive	Yes	110.35	CON	Perpetuity
72-A-2-0-R	Douglas Road	Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife	Wildlife area, hunting & passive recreation	State	Good	Passive	Yes	240	ASFR	Perpetuity
55-A-18-0-E		Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Used by Nipmuc Ski Club	State	Good	Passive	Yes	1.3	B-5	Perpetuity
40-A-1-0-E	Lakeside Avenue	Commonwealth of MA	Boat Ramp	State			Yes	0.32	LR	Perpetuity
40-B-1-0-E	Lakeside Avenue	Commonwealth of MA	Boat Ramp	State			Yes	1.43	LR	Perpetuity

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
79-B-7-0-E	Rawson Road	Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife	Wildlife area, hunting & passive recreation	State	Good	Passive	Yes	2.18	ASFR	Perpetuity
79-B-14-0-E	Rawson Road	Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife	Wildlife area, hunting & passive recreation	State	Good	Passive	Yes	277	ASFR	Perpetuity
83-A-1-0-E	Rawson Road	Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife	Wildlife area, hunting & passive recreation	State	Good	Passive	Yes	20	CON	Perpetuity
85-A-3-0-E	Kingsbury District	Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife	Wildlife area, hunting & passive recreation	State	Good	Passive	Yes	4.6	ASFR	Perpetuity
90-A-5-0-E	Sutton Road	Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife	Wildlife area, hunting & passive recreation	State	Good	Passive	Yes	18.1	ASFR	Perpetuity
Map 66		Department of Conservation and Recreation	Wildlife area, hunting & passive recreation	State	Good	Passive	Yes	204	ASFR	Perpetuity

**Table 18 - Lands of Conservation/Recreation Interest in Webster, MA (Town-Owned Parcels Leased to Nonprofit Groups)**

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
79-A-2-0-R	91 Gore Road	Town/Webster Fish & Game Club	Hunting and fishing	Town	Good		Yes, for fee	15	CON	Perpetuity
79-A-3-0-R	Minebrook Road	Town/Webster Fish & Game Club	Hunting and fishing	Town	Good		Yes, for fee	5.76	CON	Perpetuity
79-A-1-0-R	Minebrook Road	Town/Webster Fish & Game Club	Hunting and fishing	Town	Good		Yes, for fee	49	CON	Perpetuity

**Table 19 - Lands of Conservation/Recreation Interest in Webster, MA (Privately-Owned Parcels)**

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
74-B-6-0-R	33 Rawson Road	Mark Mason	Forestry (Chapter 61)				No	26.6	ASFR	Limited
62-F-1-0-R	Laurel Wood Drive	Wakefield Land Trust	Forestry (Chapter 61)				No	5.2	LR	Limited
36-A-2-B-1-0-R	Thompson Road	Benjamin Craver	Forestry (Chapter 61)				No	16.3	LR	Limited
38-A-1-1-R	Point Breeze Road	Craver Family	Forestry (Chapter 61)				No	11.1	LR	Limited
47-A-9-0-R	Thompson Road	Craver Family	Forestry (Chapter 61)				No	11.9	LR	Limited
47-A-20-0-R	Thompson Road	Andrew Bates,	Forestry (Chapter 61)				No	4	LR	Limited
47-A-21-1-R	Thompson Road	Andrew Bates,	Forestry (Chapter 61)				No	10.5	LR	Limited
62-G-1-0-R	Laurel Wood Drive	Wakefield Land Trust	Forestry (Chapter 61)				No	13.4	LR	Limited
70-A-7-0-R	106 Douglas Road	KOA Campground	Private Recreation				Fee	18.9	ASFR	None
60-D-17-0-R	200 Gore Road	Indian Ranch	Private Recreation				Fee	16.9	ASFR	None

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
50-A-1-0-R	4 Bates Point Road	Webster Sailing Association	Private Recreation				Fee	2.4	LR	None
67-A-2-0-R	84 Old Douglas Road	Francis Dirico, Trustee	Cell Tower				No	43	ASFR	None
70-A-8-1-R	Gore District	Charter Communications	Cable Tower				No	6.8	ASFR	None

**Table 20 - Lands of Conservation/Recreation Interest in Webster, MA (200 Sportsman’s Club Inc.)**

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
93-A-1-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman’s Club	Private Recreation Club				No	14	CON	Limited
93-A-2-0-R184	Sutton Road	200 Sportsman’s Club	Private Recreation Club				No	34.5	CON	Limited
94-A-2-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman’s Club	Private Recreation Club				No	2.93	CON	Limited
94-A-3-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman’s Club	Private Recreation Club				No	21.3	ASFR	Limited
94-A-4-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman’s Club	Private Recreation Club				No	41.3	CON	Limited
95-B-5-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman’s Club	Private Recreation Club				No	5.1	ASFR	Limited
95-B-5-1-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman’s Club	Private Recreation Club				No	0.3	ASFR	Limited
102-A-1-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman’s Club	Private Recreation Club				No	0.2	ASFR	Limited
102-B-1-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman’s Club	Private Recreation Club				No	3	CON	Limited

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
102-B-2-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman's Club	Private Recreation Club				No	15	ASFR	Limited
102-B-3-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman's Club	Private Recreation Club				No	96.8	CON	Limited
103-B-2-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman's Club	Private Recreation Club				No	15	CON	Limited
103-C-1-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman's Club	Private Recreation Club				No	13.1	CON	Limited
104-A-1-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman's Club	Private Recreation Club				No	35.7	CON	Limited
104-B-1-0-R	184 Sutton Road	200 Sportsman's Club	Private Recreation Club				No	3.6	ASFR	Limited

**Table 21 - Lands of Conservation/Recreation Interest in Webster, MA (Private Lands With Town-Owned Conservation Restrictions)**

Parcel Number	Location	Owner/Manager	Use	Funds Used	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Size (Acres)	Zoning	Protection
19-B-8-0-R	5 Deerfield Street	Ceppetelli Co. New England Commons/ Webster Con. Com.	Open Space for Condo Association	Conservation Easement				16.2	SFR	Perpetuity
40-D-13-0-R	Lakeside Avenue	Sunny Shore Estates/ Webster Con. Com.	Conservation land	Conservation Restriction				22.45	ASFR	Perpetuity
44-A-5-0-R	35 Sunny Shore	Sunny Shore Estates/ Webster Con. Com.	Conservation land	Conservation Restriction				1.75	SFR	Perpetuity
44-A-13-0-R	Lakeside Drive	Sunny Shore Estates/ Webster Con. Com.	Conservation land	Conservation Restriction				5.8	LR	Perpetuity
40-D-13-46-R	Lakeside Drive	Sunny Shore Estates/ Webster Con. Com.	Conservation land	Conservation Restriction				10	LR	Perpetuity

## **B. Town-Sponsored Recreation Programs**

The Town of Webster's Recreation Committee sponsors numerous programs for local residents throughout the year:

- Summer Basketball Program: Run out of the Bartlett High School gym, this program serves grades 6 through 12.
- Memorial Beach Summer Program: This is a six-week program offered during the summer months for children ages 4 through 12. The program offers arts, crafts and playtime at the Beach's playground. This program can accommodate up to 100 children. The Recreation Committee would eventually like to expand this program to include swimming lessons.
- Winter Wonderland: This is a family event held over two nights in December. Held on Memorial Beach, this program offers a bonfire, horse-drawn carriage rides, visits with Santa, and arts and crafts.
- Easter Egg Hunt: This family event is held around the time of Easter Weekend on Memorial Beach.
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks: This is a family event held on Memorial Beach around the weekend of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Historically the Town has funded this event, however in recent years due to budgetary constraints the fund for the fireworks has come from private donations.
- Triathlons: The Town, along with private sponsors, holds two triathlons (one in the spring and one in the summer).

The Town has two recreation projects in the works:

- Rehabilitating the parking lot behind the old Armory building for a multi-use recreation field for soccer and football. The pavement has been removed from the parking lot and the Town is in the process of securing the necessary funds to complete this project.
- Installing multi-use fields on a piece of property in the Minebrook area. This project is currently at a standstill until the Town can secure the necessary funding to proceed.

In addition to the Town-sponsored recreation programs described above, there are numerous private recreation groups active in Webster including: Little League baseball, Pop Warner football, and numerous softball groups with a diversity of age groups participating (men and women of various age groups, co-ed, and seniors).

Issues of environmental equity have not been highlighted as a result of our planning process. The French River borders a significant portion of the area identified as an environmental justice area (generally the western border of the central section of town.) As a result the environmental justice community has access to the river and its opportunities. Some might consider the town recreation area on Ray Street as within walking distance of the area identified as an environmental justice area. However, a

look at the Open Space Inventory Map might suggest that as the Town plans for more Park Space it should consider the western border of town.

## **SECTION 6 - COMMUNITY GOALS**

### **A. Description of the Process**

The community goals described in this section are based on several recent community-wide planning initiatives, as well as the citizen survey and public forum undertaken specifically for this initiative.

In an effort to solicit public input, the Committee designed an Open Space and Recreation Plan survey, which was distributed to all 8,300 households in town along with the annual town census. Additionally, surveys were available to complete on-line. The Committee published notices in the two local newspapers and in the Worcester newspaper concerning the survey. Notices were also published on the cable access channel, and announced at a televised meeting of the Board of Selectmen which is widely viewed. 1262 surveys were returned. Webster planners also held a public forum on the morning of April 5, 2008 to solicit public input on the Town's open space and recreation needs and many good ideas came from this meeting.

The survey and the public forum were useful in identifying the needs and concerns of Webster residents regarding open space and recreation priorities. The results of the survey were used to develop goals, strategies and the associated Five-Year Action Plan contained herein. The Action Plan was also informed by input solicited from the Office of Community Development, the Department of Public Works, the town engineer, the assessor, and by review comments obtained from other boards.

### **B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals**

In 1990, the French River Advisory Committee (a non-profit citizen advocacy group) worked with a consultant to prepare the French River Greenway Plan, a compendium of historical and environmental information on the River. Generally accepted by the Town as a blueprint for the River's management, this report also included the following open space and recreation goals:

- Establish the French River and its shoreline as a resource to be used, enjoyed and treasured by the residents and visitors of the French River Region.
- Increase awareness and appreciation of the French River's natural and cultural heritage.
- Protect and restore the natural integrity of the French River and its adjacent lands.
- Give Webster, Dudley and Oxford a public outdoor place for residents to enjoy recreational activities, cultural and civic events.
- Reinforce public and private commitment to quality of life and promote community pride.
- Establish guidelines toward achieving a successful permanent Greenway along the French River corridor.

In 2004, the Town utilized a team of consultants to prepare a Community Development Plan for the Town of Webster, MA. This project was made possible through State funding under Executive Order-418, which provided funding to those Commonwealth communities that were willing to address housing, economic development, transportation and natural resources in a comprehensive manner. Several public forums and workshops were held as part of this effort, and the following open space and recreation goals are included in the 2004 Plan:

- Protect the character and heritage of Webster by enhancing a town wide system of urban parks and rural open space areas that correspond to the Town's growth and development purposes.
- Preserve the natural resources, the Town's remaining open space, wetland and wildlife communities and scenic views.
- Protect the Town's water resources, giving primacy to the long-term quality, public access to and enjoyment of Webster Lake.
- Increase the amount of permanent open space, particularly in the eastern half of Webster where undeveloped land remains available for conservation and passive recreation uses.
- Protect and preserve Webster's rich legacy of historic buildings, village spaces and areas of historic or cultural interest.
- Upgrade existing recreation facilities, whether on school or municipal property, and improve their accessibility to persons with disabilities.

In 2006, the Town prepared a grant application to participate in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Mini-Entitlement Program administered through the MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). While this grant program is primarily intended to address economic development and housing rehabilitation, Webster' grant application did identify a recreation project that the Town considers to be a Medium priority:

- Planning, design and development of a French River public park and Riverwalk in the downtown area.

In June of 2007, the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in conjunction with the French River Connection and the town of Oxford, Massachusetts worked on preparing a Canoe Trail Blueway Study. This study represented a feasibility analysis for creating a canoe trail along a nine-mile stretch of French River beginning at the base of Hodges Village Dam in Oxford, extending south to the Connecticut state line. As part of this effort, the following goals were developed:

- Create a Greenway Trail that not only provides unmotorized recreational opportunities, but also includes the preservation of abutting natural landscapes for the benefit of native species and the preservation of scenic beauty.
- Create links to other regional trails such as the Midstate Trail.

- Create car-top access to the French River for paddlers and anglers through the development of a companion “Blueway” canoe trail.
- Development of natural and cultural points of interest along the trail to make them safe, accessible and informative.
- Improvement of the urban riverfront as a catalyst to economic revitalization.
- Development of a shared positive identity for French River communities.

As derived from the public planning process for this Open Space and Recreation Plan, the goals are as follows:

**Goal A:** Protect large areas of undeveloped space in the Town of Webster.

**Goal B:** Preserve Webster’s natural resources, especially its remaining open space, wetland and wildlife communities and scenic views.

**Goal C:** Preserve the quality and character of Webster Lake for all residents to enjoy.

**Goal D:** Improve and expand the Town’s open space and recreation facilities for the enjoyment of all residents of Webster.

**Goal E:** Link active and passive recreation areas.

**Goal F:** Preserve and enhance the historic character of downtown Webster.

## SECTION 7 - ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

### A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

Webster's resource protection needs are primarily two-fold: finding a way to protect and preserve the water quality of the French River and Webster Lake and finding a way to protect as much land as possible within the contiguous Supporting Natural Landscapes and Core Habitats in the eastern portion of Town within the Lake watershed. With limited funding available and inflated real estate prices, the Town may find it difficult to protect the entirety of the State-identified Core Habitat areas. This means that future land protection will be challenging for the Town of Webster, but every effort should be made to protect as much land as possible. In regard to the water bodies in Town there are organizations actively working to prevent any further degradation to their water quality. Both the French River Connection and the Webster Lake Association are addressing the future protection of two of Webster's most prominent surface water bodies. These efforts include working to strike an appropriate balance between recreational use and preservation of the surrounding landscape in a natural or recovered form. While these organizations have made notable progress in the past five years this is a continuing issue and assistance from citizens and Town officials is essential to the success of their efforts.

### B. Summary of Community Needs

Webster's Open Space Committee utilized two methods of obtaining public input during the open space and recreation planning process: a citizen survey and a public forum. The survey was bundled with the Town's annual census and mailed to all households in Webster. There were 1,262 responses from 8,300 households for a response rate of 15.2% (Results can be found in Appendix D). The survey was intended to cover a multitude of topics that impact the open space and recreation planning process and included specific questions gauging citizens preferences about recreation activities, preservation, recreation facilities and spending to name a few. This survey and forum revealed three main perceived needs in Webster: increased recreational opportunities, protection of natural resources and maintaining historic character.



Residents responding to the survey expressed concern that opportunities for active and passive recreation in Webster are limited. To promote the well being of its residents and enhance the quality of life, residents indicated that they would like to see an increase in the number of walking (both historic and natural) and biking trails in Town, a recreation or community center, additional conservation areas, picnic areas and more

children's play areas/neighborhood parks. Also highlighted in the survey is a strong preference for improvements to the existing facilities at Webster Lake (i.e. the bath house, playground, etc.) and the preservation of Webster's historic character, especially in the downtown. Residents also indicated in the survey responses a preference for more cultural activities in Webster including more youth programs, community fairs, arts events (including gallery space) and concerts.

The priorities for open space and recreation as outlined by the results of the survey were the improvement/maintenance of existing conservation areas for passive recreation use and the improvement and maintenance of existing recreation facilities. This indicates that residents of Webster who responded to the survey feel that the number of facilities in Town is adequate but the quality and variety of these facilities is lacking. The best example of this would be Memorial Beach. This facility is very well used by residents and non-residents alike but there is a general consensus that the facilities are in dire need of modernization and possibly slight expansion (additional tennis courts and children's play areas).

Additionally, those who responded to the survey felt that there was a need for more conservation areas in Webster. It is unclear if these respondents want to increase the size of existing conservation areas or if the preference is for the creation of new areas that are geographically separate from the existing facilities. Regardless, it is important for the Town to be proactive in the pursuit of funding and identification of appropriate and available parcels for acquisition.

Finally, the survey strongly indicates a preference for the preservation of historic buildings, places and sites in downtown Webster. There are a variety of older buildings downtown including Town Hall, the Town Library and the Sitkowski School that have special meaning to many of Webster's residents. The preservation of these buildings in addition to some form of assistance for the preservation of the facades of the commercial buildings downtown in conjunction with the construction of the French River Greenway can create an area that is active, attractive and economically thriving.

### **C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use**

The Town of Webster has limited financial resources and the current fiscal situation of our State is likely to result in fewer resources for the purposes of open space protection and recreation. Identification of funding and staffing resources will be key elements of the Town's strategy for open space acquisition and upgrading recreation facilities. To this end it is



imperative that Town officials, staff and members of Webster's Boards and Commissions work together to manage the resources that currently exist and any that may exist in the future. If these entities can present a unified position that focuses on the best interests of the residents of Webster, accomplishing the goals of this Plan will be much less of an uphill battle. A major aspect in the creation of this unified front will be the hiring of a Town Planner. The person who fills this position will have the responsibility of leading the implementation of this plan and coordinating the communication and interaction of the Town's boards and commissions in that endeavor.

The division of responsibility for the upkeep and management of town-owned conservation and recreation lands need to be reviewed annually. Such assignments should be done based on the primary management objective of each parcel, taking careful consideration of the consequences and advantages of different designations. Successfully managing the land will require collaboration between Town boards and the involvement of dedicated volunteers.

Management plans with clear objectives for each parcel will reduce conflicts and take advantage of the resources that these lands offer. Maximizing the resources that the Town has will also provide a more accurate assessment of the needs for additional recreation lands. Where specific expertise is needed, contracting professional resource managers will bring invaluable information.

Mass Outdoors 2006 (State-wide Comprehensive Outdoor and Recreation Plan), concluded the following for the Central Region, where Webster is located:

Historic and cultural sites receive the highest satisfaction levels for the Central Region and the highest statewide. Bikeways were also high in satisfaction. Lower levels of satisfaction are reported with wetlands, rivers and streams, lakes and ponds, coastal beaches, agricultural lands and golf courses, neighborhood parks, playgrounds and tot lots. The strongest dissatisfaction ratings are given for trails and greenways, agricultural lands, and wildlife conservation areas.

No dissatisfaction at all was reported for historic and cultural sites, albeit residents reported traveling longer distance than most for such experiences. Apparently, the lower frequency of visitation and distance are in line with the expectations of residents in this region. Clearly, this is much less the case with coastal beaches and shorelines, where the same factors of even longer distances but high frequency result in high levels of dissatisfaction.

The overall pattern of preferences among Central Region residents regarding new funding initiatives follows that of the statewide patterns. However, feeling was strongest in this region for supporting acquisition of new recreation areas (81.1%), and the gap between this alternative and the highest ranked alternative, maintaining existing facilities (93.9%), was the smallest difference statewide. Feeling is also stronger in the Central Region in support of additional park staff

(78.8%), significantly higher than other regions, although this item still ranks relatively low in the priority ranking.

When asked what new facilities would most benefit them, residents of the Central Region showed the highest interest in facilities for walking (16.4%), swimming (17.0%), hiking (14.4%, the strongest interest in the state), road biking (12.1%), and playground activity (10.2%). A second tier of facilities interest is noted among relatively moderate percentage of Central Region respondents for mountain biking (8.5%), golfing (8.3%), picnicking (5.3%), camping (4.8%) and basketball (4.0%). Almost all categories, except off-road vehicle driving, football, sunbathing, photography and painting (all 0.0%), and sailing and pond ice-skating (both 0.3%), volleyball (0.4%), and pond hockey (0.7%) reported at least some respondent interest (more than 1%) in new facilities. The low responses here should not be confused with the demand figures, which show that there is public interest in all these activities rather that residents of this region do not feel that additional facilities (or any public facilities) are needed to support the activity. Perhaps the exception here is surfing.

These facility interests have been translated into Inferred Demand for resource types. The method used results in the highest needs – i.e. the ones which satisfy most activity desires of this region’s residents - being those for rivers and streams, agricultural lands, lakes and ponds, golf courses and parks, and trails and greenways. While these are presented in order of their rank scores, the relative differences among the need for each recreational area are small.

Most of Webster’s facilities are fully ADA compliant. Webster should consider the ADA inventory forms included in the appendices of this OSRP in determining appropriate actions to provided improved access to open space and recreation resources for the handicapped and the elderly populations. A few items that need attention might include improvement of handicapped designated parking areas at the town’s recreation facilities and the addition of paved paths over existing gravel walk ways to soccer field spectator areas.

Webster has a very active Senior Center that offers many activities for its constituents such as the Silver Dippers Exercise and Line Dancing classes and the Progressive Pitch League. Webster’s population over the age of 65 decreased by almost 10% between 1990 and 2000. As with each special population, attention should be paid to this age group’s needs going forward.

## SECTION 8 - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following Open Space and Recreation goals and objectives are logical derivatives of the public participation, related community planning and information collection and analysis done in conjunction with preparing this Plan. They support Webster's needs, and of equal importance, they complement statewide policy as expressed in the State's most recent version of its Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission's Regional Open Space Plan and trail planning initiatives for its Western Subregion.

**Goal A:** Protect large areas of undeveloped space in the Town of Webster.

### Objectives:

- Acquire more land for conservation and passive recreation purposes in Webster.
- Educate the citizens, school children and Town officials in Webster about open space issues and the role they play in the community's redevelopment.
- Increase open space within land that is to be developed.
- Implement the French River Greenway.

**Goal B:** Preserve Webster's natural resources, especially its remaining open space, wetland and wildlife communities and scenic views.

### Objectives:

- Preserve and protect watersheds to ensure water quality and wildlife habitat.
- Protect water supply sites
- Protect important wetland resource areas throughout Town.
- Identify and certify vernal pools
- Develop town-wide Best Management Practices for the collection and treatment of stormwater.

**Goal C:** Preserve the quality and character of Webster Lake for all residents to enjoy.

### Objectives:

- Identify and preserve important viewsheds at Webster Lake.

- Retain the classic, scenic and family friendly atmosphere of Memorial Beach.
- Protect the water quality of the Lake.
- Maintain the quality of the recreational experience for all lake users.

**Goal D:** Improve and expand the Town's open space and recreation facilities for the enjoyment of all residents of Webster.

Objectives:

- Maintain the Town's current recreation areas as needed.
- Create new recreation facilities as needed.
- Improve parks and playgrounds adjacent to or within established neighborhoods.
- Make accessibility modifications as required to parks and recreation facilities.
- Consider using small, odd-shaped lots for recreation purposes.
- Create a new annual cultural or fun event for Webster.
- Create paddling access on the French River.

**Goal E:** Link active and passive recreation areas.

Objectives:

- Identify corridors that link existing recreation and conservation areas.
- Work cooperatively with Dudley, Oxford, and Thompson to realize the vision of the French River Greenway.
- Work cooperatively with other parties on the implementation of the Quinebaug Valley Trail.
- Ensure there are active town representatives on CMRPC and QSRVNHC committees.

**Goal F:** Preserve and enhance the historic character of downtown Webster.

Objectives:

- Work with property owners to preserve buildings that contribute to the historic look and character of the area.
- Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing vacant and underutilized buildings.

## SECTION 9 - FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

**Important Note:** Successful implementation and completion of any of these strategies is contingent upon sufficient availability of funding and staffing levels in the appropriate department, board or commission assumed to be responsible for each individual strategy. Currently, the Town of Webster is without some key staff, commissions and/or boards that could be valuable assets in the implementation of this Plan. These include a Town Planner, an active Historical Commission and a standing Open Space Committee. This is not to say that the Open Space and Recreation Plan cannot be implemented without them, rather it is to say that the creation of these would ease the implementation and magnify the results. Additionally, it is imperative that the Open Space and Recreation Plan be posted on the Town's website and be made available at the library and town hall so that all who are interested can have adequate access to the Plan. Likewise, projected timeframes may need to change depending upon the availability of funding and staffing. Where possible funding sources and/or technical assistance is indicated for the various action items. Since many actions are of a planning or coordinating nature to be carried out by town employees, "town budget" is the listed funding source. Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds is listed as a potential source, though the town has not taken the necessary action to adopt it at town meeting. Some potential funding sources are detailed in Appendix A.

A graphic depiction of the Town's Five - Year Action Plan can be seen on the map that follows the matrix below (Map 6: Action Plan Map).

### Goal A. Protect large areas of undeveloped space in Webster.

Objective	Year	Responsible	Funding Sources and/or TA
<b>1. Acquire more land for conservation and passive recreation in Webster.</b>			
a. Hire a town planner, whose duties would be to coordinate the acquisition of land.	1	Town Administrator, BOS	Town Budget, CPA
b. Create and maintain an open space map that includes all protected open space, all chapter lands, all unbuilt town owned property, all tax-title property, and tracts of undeveloped private property.	1	Open Space Committee, Assessor	Town Budget, CPA, CMRPC, Mass GIS
c. Post the newly created open space map on the town's website.	2	Town Administrator	Town Budget
d. Develop, with public input, a priority list for land acquisition/protection, preserving the ability to expend funds on targets of opportunity.	2	Planner, Open Space Committee	Town Budget

e. Develop a working relationship with a local land trust.	2	Open Space Committee	Town Budget, Dudley Land Trust
f. Develop a presentation/handbook for landowners and officials on ways to protect land.	2-3	Open Space Committee, ConCom	Town Budget, Dudley Land Trust
g. Establish policies and procedures to ensure all tax-title property is considered for public use prior to disposal.	3	Town Administrator	Town Budget
h. Establish policies and procedures for timely decision making on exercising the town's rights regarding chapter lands.	1	Planner, Town Administrator	Town Budget
i. Research available funding tools, including the Community Preservation Act.	Ongoing	Planner, Open Space Committee	Town Budget
j. Establish and begin to implement a schedule of grant writing and fundraising.	3	Planner	Town Budget
<b>2. Educate the citizens, school children, and Town officials in Webster about open space issues and the role they play in the community's redevelopment.</b>			
a. Begin an education campaign about the benefits, focusing on historic preservation and open space, of adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA).	2	Open Space Committee	No funding required, volunteer effort
b. Prepare a town meeting article proposing the adoption of the CPA.	3-4	Town Administrator, Open Space Committee	No funding required, volunteer effort
c. Create an informational packet that explains the powers and limitations of Town boards and commissions. This packet would be distributed to prospective and new members to ease their transition into public service.	1	Town Administrator, BOS	Town Budget
d. Develop a policy and budget funding to allow members of town boards and commissions to participate in training and conferences annually.	Ongoing	Town Administrator, BOS	Town Budget
<b>3. Increase open space within land that is to be developed.</b>			
a. Create open space residential development bylaw which allows smaller lots in exchange for open spaces subject to approval by the ConCom and Planning Board site reviews.	1	Planner, Planning Board	Town Budget, CMRPC

b. Create a manual for developers, surveyors and engineers, as a guide to planning for open space.	4	Planning Board	Town Budget
c. Use the open space map as a guide to create the most desirable tracts of open space across development boundaries.	Ongoing	Open Space Committee	Town Budget
d. Create incentives for developers to create recreation areas, open land, and wildlife corridors.	4-5	Planning Board	Town Budget, Agricultural Preservation and Conservation Restrictions, Chapter 61 tax benefits
<b>4. Implement the French River Greenway.</b>			
a. Promote the release of \$250,000 in planning funds earmarked in the Acts of 2006 and the Environmental Bond Bill of 2008.	1	BOS	Town Budget
b. Work with other trail interests to maximize connections.	Ongoing	French River Connection	Town Budget, FRC, MHD, Fed Land and Water Conservation Fund, Greenways and Trails Demo Grant Prog.
c. Identify preferred routes within Webster.	2-3	French River Connection, Open Space Committee	Town Budget, FRC, Greenways and Trails Demo Grant Prog.
d. Identify segments for acquisition of rights and completion of engineering.	3-4	French River Connection, Open Space Committee	Town Budget, FRC, Greenways and Trails Demo Grant Prog.

e. Educate the public and landowners on the benefits of the greenway; seek input on public preferences regarding its uses.	3	French River Connection	Town Budget, Greenways and Trails Demo Grant Prog.
f. Identify funding needs and sources.	Ongoing	Planner, French River Connection	Town Budget, FRC
g. Submit grant requests as required to complete trail development.	Ongoing	Planner, French River Connection	Town Budget

**Goal B. Preserve Webster’s natural resources, especially its remaining open space, wetland and wildlife communities and scenic views.**

Objective	Year	Responsible	Funding Sources and/or TA
<b>1. Preserve and protect watersheds to ensure water quality and maintain wildlife habitat.</b>			
a. Review the lake watershed protection district by-law and make changes as experience dictates.	4-5	ConCom, Planning Board, Webster Lake Association	Town Budget, CMRPC
b. Consider extending appropriate elements of the lake watershed protection district to the French River.	4-5	ConCom, Planning Board	Town Budget, WLA, FRC, CMRPC
c. Ensure open space priorities appropriately consider core habitat, supporting habitat, and living waters areas.	2-5	ConCom, Open Space Committee	Town Budget, DCR
d. Incorporate waterside parcels in the open space priority list.	2	Open Space Committee, Webster Lake Association, French River Connection	Town Budget
e. Identify funding sources that apply to river/stream/lake/pond protection and restoration and schedule a list of grant request submittals.	Ongoing	Planner, Webster lake Association, French River Connection	Town Budget, FRC, WLA
<b>2. Protect water supply sites</b>			

a. Identify threats to wellfield water quality.	Ongoing	Board of Health, DPW	Town Budget, DEP Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program
b. Upgrade and maintain town-owned wells to ensure their long-term viability as a potable water source.	Ongoing	DPW	Town Budget, DEP Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program
<b>3. Protect important wetland resources areas throughout Town</b>			
a. Determine needed elements of a wetlands protection by-law.	1	ConCom	Town Budget, CMRPC
b. Draft by-law and create an informational presentation for the public.	2-3	ConCom	Town Budget
c. Present a Wetland Protection Bylaw for passage at a town meeting.	3-4	ConCom	Town Budget
<b>4. Identify and certify vernal pools.</b>			
a. Map certified and potential vernal pools, locating them on parcels.	2	Open Space Committee, ConCom	Town Budget, Volunteer Effort, DCR, Mass Department of Fish and Wildlife
b. Work with state agencies to educate the public on vernal pools.	2-3	ConCom, Open Space Committee	Town Budget, Mass Department of Fish and Wildlife

c. Establish a “citizen science” program to submit data to certify vernal pools and identify additional potential vernal pools.	3-5	ConCom, Open Space Committee	Town Budget, volunteer effort, Mass Department of Fish and Wildlife
<b>5. Develop town-wide best management practices for the collection and treatment of stormwater.</b>			
a. Develop a stormwater management bylaw which would dictate structural and non-structural management techniques and would include provisions for maintenance and upkeep.	2-3	DPW, Planning Board	Town Budget, CMRPC, DEP
b. Create a guidebook for developers that explains the requirements of the new stormwater bylaw.	4-5	DPW, Planning Board	Town Budget, DEP
c. Investigate the implementation of Low Impact Development stormwater techniques.	4-5	DPW, Planning Board, ConCom	Town Budget, DEP

**Goal C. Preserve the quality and character of Webster Lake for all residents to enjoy.**

Objective	Year	Responsible	Funding Sources and/or TA
<b>1. Identify and preserve important viewsheds at Webster Lake</b>			
a. Identify and incorporate viewsheds into the Open Space Map.	1	Open Space Committee	Town Budget
b. Ensure the enforcement of the Scenic Roads bylaw.	Ongoing	Zoning Board of Appeals	Town Budget, MHD
c. Put up signs identifying scenic roads.	5	DPW	Town Budget
d. Review development proposals to ensure compliance with the town’s scenic roads bylaw.	Ongoing	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals	Town Budget
<b>2. Retain the classic, scenic, and family friendly atmosphere of Memorial Beach.</b>			
a. Develop a site master plan that will guide refurbishment of existing amenities and identify appropriate additions.	2-3	DPW, Recreation Committee	Town Budget, Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund

b. Develop a capital plan that addresses costs for maintenance and enhancements and balances these with fees collected.	3-4	DPW, Town Administrator	Town Budget
c. Determine additional funding required and submit grant requests and/or conduct capital campaigns as required.	4-5	DPW, Town Administrator	Town Budget
d. Identify areas at Memorial Beach to remain undeveloped and develop a strategy for their permanent protection.	2-3	Planner, Open Space Committee	Town Budget
<b>3. Protect the water quality of the lake.</b>			
a. Support long term, comprehensive measurements of water quality within the watershed, especially early warning indicators.	Ongoing	Webster Lake Association, Board of Health, ConCom, DPW	Town Budget, WLA, DEP Section 604b Grant Program Water Quality Management Planning
b. Take timely action against identified pollution sources.	Ongoing	Board of health, ConCom, DPW	Town Budget, DEP
c. Continue the program for the installation of catch basins.	Ongoing	Town Administrator, DPW	Town Budget, DEP Section 319 Nonpoint Source Competitive Grants Program
d. Establish a station to clean the hulls of boats launched at public sites to avoid introduction of invasive species.	3-5	Town Administrator, DPW	DCR, Mass Department of Fish and Wildlife
<b>4. Maintain the quality of the recreational experience of all lake users</b>			
a. Vigorously enforce all safety, speeding, and alcohol regulations.	Ongoing	Police department	WLA, WPD
b. Develop regulations governing boat noise.	2-3	Town Administrator	WLA

**Goal D. Improve and expand the town’s open space and recreation facilities for the enjoyment of all residents of Webster.**

Objective	Year	Responsible	Funding Sources and/or TA
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<b>1. Maintain the town's current recreation areas as needed</b>			
a. Develop a town maintenance plan for all recreation areas.	1-2	DPW	Town Budget
b. Incorporate maintenance resources in the towns budget or capital plan.	2-3	Town Administrator, DPW	Town Budget
<b>2. Create new recreation facilities as needed</b>			
a. Determine total need for sports fields for all users, including time to rest/rehabilitate.	1-2	DPW, Recreation Committee	Town Budget
b. Compare the requirements for field use against total availability and determine needs for additional fields.	2-3	Recreation Committee	Town Budget
c. Budget for the acquisition/development of new fields as necessary.	3-5	DPW, Town Administrator	Town Budget, CPA,
d. Identify land for, and implement, a dog park.	2-4	Open Space Committee, BOS, Town Administrator, DPW, Animal Control officer	Town Budget, local animal protection groups.
<b>3. Improve parks and playgrounds within or adjacent to established neighborhoods.</b>			
a. Survey neighborhood residents and users to determine improvement needs.	2	Recreation Committee	Town Budget
b. Incorporate identified needs into the capital budget.	3-4	DPW, Recreation Committee	Town Budget
c. Secure grants or other funding.	Ongoing	Planner, recreation Committee	Town Budget
d. Promote volunteer programs within neighborhoods to construct, improve, and maintain their parks.	3-5	Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Recreation Committee, DPW	Town Budget, volunteer effort, FRC, WLA
<b>4. Make accessibility modifications as required to parks and recreation facilities.</b>			
a. Review access requirements and determine compliance.	Ongoing	ADA Coordinator	Town Budget

b. Budget for compliance actions as required.	Ongoing	ADA Coordinator, Town Administrator	Town Budget, CDBG, American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act)
c. Obtain funding to meet compliance requirements.	Ongoing	ADA Coordinator, Town Administrator	Town Budget
<b>5. Consider using small, odd-shaped lots for recreation purposes.</b>			
a. Create a list, from the Open Space map, of all unusable town-owned property.	2-3	Open Space Committee, Assessor, DPW	Town Budget
b. Establish a program whereby citizens can clean up a parcel and establish a park, beauty spot, community garden, etc.	2-4	Town Administrator, BOS	No funding required, volunteer effort
c. Determine what assistance the town will offer.	2-4	BOS	Town Budget
d. Publicize the program and promote a small number of pilot examples.	3-5	Recreation Committee	Town Budget
<b>6. Create a new annual cultural or fun event for Webster.</b>			
a. Work with downtown merchants to organize a street fair, concert series, or other annual event.	3-4	Recreation Committee	Town Budget, Webster Dudley Business Alliance
b. Establish a revolving fund to support it.	3-4	Town Administrator, BOS	Town Budget
<b>7. Create paddling access on the French River.</b>			
a. Identify a series of launch points which will offer varied paddling experiences.	1-2	French River Connection	Town Budget, FRC, DLT, DCR
b. Use town-owned land and/or secure agreements from landowners to establish access points.	2-3	Town Administrator	Town Budget, FRC, DCR

c. Obtain funding and engineering support from the Office of Fishing and Boating Access to build launch points on town owned land.	2-4	Town Administrator, DPW	DCR, Mass Department of Fish and Wildlife
d. Secure the commitment of volunteers to maintain the launches.	Ongoing	Town Administrator	No funding required, volunteer effort

**Goal E. Link active and passive recreation areas.**

Objective	Year	Responsible	Funding Sources and/or TA
<b>1. Identify corridors that link existing recreation and conservation areas.</b>			
a. Create a map that places Webster in the context of neighboring towns to assist in locating the best areas for connecting open space, trail systems, and wildlife corridors.	1	Open Space Committee	Town Budget, DCR, Mass GIS
<b>2. Work cooperatively with Dudley, Oxford, and Thompson to realize the vision of the French River Greenway.</b>			
a. Appoint a town representative to the ad-hoc French River Greenway Steering Committee.	1	BOS	No funding required, volunteer effort
<b>3. Work cooperatively with other parties on implementation of the Quinebaug Valley Trail.</b>			
a. Maintain appointments of active members of the QVT advisory committee.	Ongoing	BOS	No funding required, volunteer effort
<b>4. Ensure there are active town representatives on CMRPC and QSRVNH committees.</b>			
a. Review committee structures and make appointments from appropriate boards or from among interested, qualified citizens.	Ongoing	BOS	No funding required, volunteer effort
b. Ensure that committee minutes are shared with Town officials.	Ongoing	Town Administrator	No funding required, volunteer effort

**Goal F. Preserve and enhance the historic character of downtown Webster.**

Objective	Year	Responsible	Funding Sources and/or TA
<b>1. Work with property owners to preserve buildings that contribute to the historic look and character of the area</b>			
a. Appoint an active historic commission to take the lead on this goal.	1	BOS	No funding required, volunteer effort
b. Identify candidate buildings for preservation, starting with those listed in the state's database	2-3	Historic Commission	Town Budget, Mass Preservation
c. Investigate a downtown signage and façade renovation program which would provide financial assistance and/or incentives for meeting guidelines established by the town	3-5	Historic Commission, OCD	Town Budget, Community Development Block Grant
d. Put up signs on buildings clarifying their historical/ architectural significance	5	Historic Commission	Town Budget, Mass Preservation
e. Develop a program of historical walking tours of downtown.	5	Historic Commission	Town Budget, volunteer effort
f. Establish, with downtown merchants, a "pride" beautification program.	2-3	Town Administrator	Webster Dudley Business Alliance
g. Investigate the creation of a local historic district and historic designations for individual structures outside the district.	4-5	Historic Commission	Town Budget, Mass Preservation
h. Appropriately budget for the maintenance and renovation of public buildings.	Ongoing	Town Administrator	Town Budget, CDBG, American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act)
i. Consider granting tax credits to property owners who restore buildings to their original character and style.	5	Historic Commission, Assessor, BOS	Town Budget, Mass Office of Business Development
<b>2. Encourage the adaptive re-use of existing vacant and underutilized buildings.</b>			

a. Consider creating a zoning overlay district that would express the kinds of uses that would complement those already existing and include design elements such as façade, landscaping, signage, etc.	2-3	Historic Commission, Planning Board	Town Budget, CMRPC
b. Consider a policy of tax incentives for the appropriate re-use of existing buildings.	3-4	BOS, Assessor	Town Budget, Mass Office of Business Development

## **SECTION 10 - LETTERS OF SUPPORT**

1. October 23, 2008      Town of Webster Office of Community Development
2. October 28, 2008      Town of Webster Office of the Board of Selectmen
3. November 3, 2008      Dudley Conservation Land Trust
4. November 4, 2008      French River Connection
5. November 5, 2008      Town of Webster Conservation Commission
6. November 25, 2008      Webster Lake Association
7. December 8, 2008      Town of Webster Planning Board
8. December 16, 2008      Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

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## APPENDIX A - FUNDING MECHANISMS AND PROGRAMS

Purpose	Program/Method	Sponsoring Agency	Approximate Funding Maximum	Program Description	Priority for pursuing	Chances of success
Property Acquisition	Municipal purchase	Town of Webster	Dependent on Town Meeting	This tool is probably the most direct and effective way for a town to achieve the acquisition objectives of its open space plan. Towns may either issue bonds to cover purchases or in some cases include a purchase item in the general budget. Bond issues are quite common and provide communities with the flexibility to negotiate with property owners, knowing that money has already been authorized to complete the acquisition. In practice, towns generally ask for authorization to float a bond to cover open space acquisition, and then once a deal has been negotiated return to town meeting for the actual appropriation.	High	Moderate. Will depend on a vigorous public outreach campaign prior to town meeting and the general referendum
Property Acquisition	Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) Open Space Program	Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction (EOTC)	None, but program receives only \$1M/year to be spread around the State.	This program acquires scenic areas adjacent to roadways. Funds are not available for recreation projects, though MHD has worked cooperatively with other state agencies and municipalities to assist in adjoining recreation projects. Scenic views and environmental protection are the two areas of program focus.	Low	Low, unless a great scenic resource is involved.
Property Acquisition	Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund	Massachusetts EOECA DCS	\$500,000	This Program provides up to 50% reimbursement towards the cost of acquisition or improvement of recreation land, including the development of active recreation facilities.	Moderate	Moderate depending on the funds to be made available upon the Program's new startup.

Purpose	Program/ Method	Sponsoring Agency	Approximate Funding Maximum	Program Description	Priority for pursuing	Chances of success
Studies and Construction/ Maintenance	Lake and Pond Grants	Massachusetts DCR	\$10,000.00	This program is the successor program to DEP's Clean Lakes Program (Chapter 628). Eligible activities include lake management analysis and planning, public education, and watershed and in-lake management techniques. The program requires a 50% cash match. Applications are due in November of each year.	Moderate	Moderate
Studies and Construction/ Maintenance	The National Recreational Trails Act (NRTA)	Massachusetts DCR	\$30,000	Part of the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Act, NRTA provides funds for trail projects. Eligible projects include: trail construction, land/easement acquisition, handicapped accessibility, interpretative areas/facilities, and education. Trails must be recreational, e.g. intra-city, on-road bikeways would probably not be eligible. There is no limit on grant funds, but a 50% local match is required (matching funds can be "non-cash"). Motorized and non-motorized trail use must be included in the grant with at least thirty percent of funds going to each activity. Applications are due in October of each year.	Moderate	High with a good proposal
Studies and Construction/ Maintenance	Greenways and Trails Demonstration Grant Program	Massachusetts DCR	\$5,000	Greenways and trail projects are at the center of this program. Funding categories include: planning, research, mapping, public education and community outreach, ecological assessment, and trail construction, maintenance and expansion. In recent years focus has been placed on projects that either educate the public or work on river greenways. However, all greenway/trail projects are eligible with the exception of those confined to a single parcel of land. Applications are due in January/February every year and no local match is required.	Moderate	High with a good proposal

Purpose	Program/ Method	Sponsoring Agency	Approximate Funding Maximum	Program Description	Priority for pursuing	Chances of success
Studies and Construction/ Maintenance	Inter-Modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Regional Transportation Improvement Program	Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD), Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)	No maximum.	Funds are available for transportation related open space improvements. A bike path that connects dense areas of housing with employment or shopping centers would clearly fit the criteria. However, the state and the MPO have been relatively flexible about definitions and projects that are slightly less directly related to transportation may be eligible e.g., an open space parcel adjacent to a road programmed for repairs; the parcel provides a roadway rest area and access to walking trails.	Moderate with an appropriate project	Low
Studies and Construction/ Maintenance	ISTEA, Enhancement Program	MHD, Central Massachusetts MPO	None, but a \$100,000 minimum is requested by MHD.	Money is provided to a variety of transportation "enhancement" projects. Among those eligible are bikeways, walking paths and rail trails. This is a special dedicated fund that amounts to 10% of statewide spending from ISTEA monies.	Moderate	Low
Non-acquisition programs	Conservation Restrictions (CRs)	Massachusetts EOEEA, DCS	Only technical support available.	Conservation restrictions (CRs) are legal, enforceable agreements, authorized by the state, which are made between a landowner and a charitable organization, or a town. They are used primarily to keep land in a "natural or scenic open condition". Restrictions can be written so that certain uses are permitted and others prohibited, e.g. the current owner may continue to occupy an existing house on the land, but may restrict the construction of any additional houses. Grantors of restrictions may also be able to benefit by reductions in various taxes including property, estate and income.	High.	Depends on property owner
Non-acquisition programs	Assessment Act (M.G.L. Chapters 61, 61A and 61B)	Massachusetts DEM, Department of Food and Agriculture (DFA), and Department of Revenue (respectively).	No public funds available.	These programs work by making available special property tax assessments to owners who agree to restrict their land to a particular use. Chapter 61 applies to lands actively devoted to forestry use, 61A applies to active agricultural lands, and 61B applies to public recreational lands. Generally properties are assessed at their current use value rather than their highest use, which translates into a substantial property tax savings for owners. The program requires a right-of-first-refusal option to the town when property owners look to sell their land.	Moderate.	Depends on property owner.

Purpose	Program/ Method	Sponsoring Agency	Approximate Funding Maximum	Program Description	Priority for pursuing	Chances of success
Non-acquisition programs	Agricultural Preservation Restrictions	Massachusetts DFA	No public funds available.	This program insures that active farms stay in agricultural production. The state purchases a farmer's development rights. The price paid is the difference between the full market value of the property and its appraised agricultural value. A permanent restriction is then put in place prohibiting all non-agricultural uses on the parcel. The farmer is taxed at the agricultural value rather than the highest use value.	High	Depends on property owner
Property Acquisition	Massachusetts Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Program (Formerly Self-Help Program)	Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) Division of Conservation Services (DCS)	The maximum reimbursement is based on your community's equalized valuation per capita decile rank and ranges from 52% to 70% of the total project cost. The maximum grant award for any project has been set at \$500,000	The LAND program was established to assist municipal conservation commissions acquiring land for natural resource and passive outdoor recreation purposes. Lands acquired may include wildlife, habitat, trails, unique natural, historic or cultural resources, water resources, forest, and farm land. Compatible passive outdoor recreational uses such as hiking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, bird observation and the like are encouraged. Access by the general public including people with disabilities is required. This state program pays for the acquisition of land, or a partial interest (such as a conservation restriction), and associated acquisition costs such as appraisal reports and closing costs. A reimbursement program requiring the applicant to raise, borrow or appropriate the total project cost, and then be reimbursed a portion of that cost by the grant.	High	Moderate. Will depend on quality of town's application and level of competition.

Purpose	Program/Method	Sponsoring Agency	Approximate Funding Maximum	Program Description	Priority for pursuing	Chances of success
Property Acquisition, Construction and Restoration	Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program (Formerly Urban Self-Help Program)	Massachusetts EOEAA DCS	The maximum reimbursement is based on your community's equalized valuation per capita decile rank and ranges from 52% to 70% of the total project cost. The maximum grant award for any project has been set at \$500,000	The PARC Program was established to assist cities and towns in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. Communities that do not meet the population criteria listed above may still qualify under the "small town," "regional" or "statewide" project provisions of the program and must have an active authorized park /recreation commission. Only projects that are to be developed for suitable outdoor recreation purposes, whether active or passive in nature, shall be considered for funding. Grants are available for the acquisition of land, and the construction, restoration, or rehabilitation of land for park and outdoor recreation purposes such as swimming pools, zoos, athletic play fields, playgrounds and game courts. Access by the general public is required. Towns with a population less than 35,000 qualify for a grant if proposals are designed to provide statewide or regional recreational facilities or a maximum grant of \$50,000 for smaller recreational projects.		
Various	Typically for specific uses such tracks, fields, recreation programs	Typically private non-profit organizations	Various	A list of grant opportunities can be found the National Recreation and Park Association (a non-profit) website at <a href="http://www.nrpa.org/content/default.aspx?documentId=594">http://www.nrpa.org/content/default.aspx?documentId=594</a>	Various	Various

**APPENDIX B - AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) SECTION-504 SELF-EVALUATION**

## APPENDIX C - CITIZEN SURVEY RESULTS

### Webster Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey

1. Do you favor the preservation of the following in Webster?						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
Historic buildings, places, and sites	<b>51.2% (599)</b>	42.5% (497)	4.9% (57)	1.5% (17)	3.43	1170
Forest lands	<b>65.0% (746)</b>	33.1% (380)	1.4% (16)	0.4% (5)	3.63	1147
Wildlife habitats	<b>65.4% (750)</b>	33.0% (379)	1.1% (13)	0.4% (5)	3.63	1147
Scenic areas	<b>58.5% (670)</b>	38.3% (439)	2.7% (31)	0.4% (5)	3.55	1145
Fishing and hunting areas	<b>49.9% (556)</b>	40.8% (455)	7.1% (79)	2.2% (25)	3.38	1115
Open space for water supply protection	<b>67.2% (779)</b>	31.4% (364)	1.1% (13)	0.3% (3)	3.66	1159
Open space for protection of Webster Lake	<b>70.9% (836)</b>	27.9% (329)	0.8% (10)	0.3% (4)	3.69	1179
Open space for protection of the French River Corridor	<b>52.2% (573)</b>	43.0% (472)	4.4% (48)	0.5% (5)	3.47	1098
Open space for protection of wetlands, streams, ponds, and vernal pools	<b>57.2% (631)</b>	38.7% (427)	3.7% (41)	0.5% (5)	3.53	1104
Open space for hiking and biking trails	<b>54.0% (593)</b>	40.0% (439)	5.0% (55)	1.0% (11)	3.47	1098
Open space for motorized vehicle trails (i.e. ATVs, snowmobiles, etc)	23.7% (247)	<b>33.1% (345)</b>	28.0% (292)	15.2% (159)	2.65	1043
Other (write in)	<b>65.6% (21)</b>	18.8% (6)	3.1% (1)	12.5% (4)	3.38	32
					-	29
					<b>answered question</b>	<b>1245</b>
					<b>skipped question</b>	<b>17</b>

2. To preserve open space in Town would you:						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
Donate money to buy land	8.6% (80)	29.6% (277)	<b>46.0% (430)</b>	15.8% (148)	2.31	935
Vote for zoning changes to protect open space	40.5% (423)	<b>51.0% (533)</b>	7.2% (75)	1.3% (14)	3.31	1045
Vote for town-sponsored land acquisition	30.3% (297)	<b>52.3% (512)</b>	13.5% (132)	3.9% (38)	3.09	979
Vote to pay \$25-\$50 more on your real-estate taxes	13.9% (137)	<b>30.6% (302)</b>	30.2% (298)	25.3% (249)	2.33	986
Vote to eliminate property taxes for seniors who donate land	31.4% (312)	<b>44.6% (443)</b>	17.0% (169)	7.0% (70)	3.00	994
Vote to require all new developments to include open space	36.6% (357)	<b>46.6% (454)</b>	13.2% (129)	3.6% (35)	3.16	975
Serve on a town committee	10.4% (91)	30.2% (264)	<b>47.8% (418)</b>	11.7% (102)	2.39	875
Volunteer to assist in operation and maintenance of recreation resources (such as "adopt-a-park" program, etc)	13.4% (120)	<b>41.9% (374)</b>	36.4% (325)	8.3% (74)	2.60	893
Other (write in)	<b>56.0% (14)</b>	8.0% (2)	28.0% (7)	8.0% (2)	3.12	25
					-	14
					<i>answered question</i>	<b>1135</b>
					<i>skipped question</i>	<b>127</b>

**3. If you own land, would you do the following to preserve open space:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
Donate land to the town or a conservation group	7.5% (55)	23.8% (175)	<b>41.1% (302)</b>	15.8% (116)	11.8% (87)	2.26	735
Restrict your deed to limit future use of your land	13.7% (100)	<b>32.8% (240)</b>	30.0% (219)	12.4% (91)	11.1% (81)	2.54	731
Sell land to the town at a "bargain price"	4.2% (30)	18.9% (136)	<b>48.2% (346)</b>	16.2% (116)	12.5% (90)	2.13	718
Sell land to the town at fair market value	8.5% (62)	<b>46.4% (340)</b>	22.4% (164)	11.6% (85)	11.1% (81)	2.58	732
Sell land to the state or a conservation group	8.1% (59)	<b>40.7% (295)</b>	26.2% (190)	13.0% (94)	12.0% (87)	2.50	725
Other (write in)	9.5% (6)	6.3% (4)	12.7% (8)	7.9% (5)	<b>63.5% (40)</b>	2.48	63
						-	13
<b>answered question</b>							<b>789</b>
<b>skipped question</b>							<b>473</b>

**4. Existing Recreational Opportunities are adequate for:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
Young Children	17.0% (165)	<b>36.9% (358)</b>	33.0% (320)	13.0% (126)	2.58	969
Teenagers	16.5% (160)	25.4% (246)	<b>40.4% (391)</b>	17.8% (172)	2.41	969
Adults	13.8% (130)	<b>40.5% (382)</b>	33.3% (314)	12.4% (117)	2.56	943
Senior Citizens	16.0% (151)	<b>41.6% (394)</b>	31.2% (295)	11.2% (106)	2.62	946
Physically Challenged	15.2% (130)	25.8% (221)	<b>43.1% (369)</b>	15.9% (136)	2.40	856
<b>answered question</b>						<b>1022</b>
<b>skipped question</b>						<b>240</b>

5. What recreational facilities are needed in Town?						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
Biking trails	40.6% (406)	<b>49.1% (491)</b>	8.8% (88)	1.6% (16)	3.29	1001
Hiking and skiing trails	37.1% (357)	<b>46.8% (450)</b>	14.0% (135)	2.1% (20)	3.19	962
Picnic areas	33.4% (330)	<b>52.7% (521)</b>	12.6% (124)	1.3% (13)	3.18	988
Conservation areas	37.3% (359)	<b>53.2% (512)</b>	8.5% (82)	1.0% (10)	3.27	963
Playing (sports)fields	29.8% (276)	<b>46.0% (426)</b>	21.3% (197)	3.0% (28)	3.02	927
Children's play areas	37.7% (364)	<b>49.0% (473)</b>	11.6% (112)	1.8% (17)	3.23	966
Recreation/community center	41.8% (413)	<b>47.0% (464)</b>	9.4% (93)	1.7% (17)	3.29	987
Neighborhood parks	35.5% (334)	<b>46.6% (439)</b>	15.9% (150)	2.0% (19)	3.15	942
Swimming areas	29.0% (257)	<b>41.4% (367)</b>	25.7% (228)	3.8% (34)	2.96	886
Hunting and fishing areas	21.7% (186)	<b>40.9% (351)</b>	31.1% (267)	6.4% (55)	2.78	859
Paddling access	22.0% (190)	<b>50.3% (434)</b>	24.7% (213)	3.0% (26)	2.91	863
Motor and sailboat access	17.9% (152)	<b>45.9% (389)</b>	30.6% (259)	5.5% (47)	2.76	847
Basketball courts	19.2% (168)	<b>52.9% (462)</b>	24.4% (213)	3.5% (31)	2.88	874
Tennis courts	19.5% (167)	<b>51.5% (441)</b>	25.6% (219)	3.4% (29)	2.87	856
Improved sidewalks	40.6% (338)	<b>44.7% (372)</b>	13.3% (111)	1.3% (11)	3.25	832
Ice skating facilities	25.6% (225)	<b>46.0% (405)</b>	24.0% (211)	4.4% (39)	2.93	880
Skateboard parks	17.9% (152)	<b>43.8% (372)</b>	31.6% (268)	6.7% (57)	2.73	849
Campgrounds	18.3% (149)	<b>38.5% (314)</b>	36.1% (294)	7.1% (58)	2.68	815
Dog park	30.3% (257)	<b>39.0% (331)</b>	25.4% (215)	5.3% (45)	2.94	848
Riverwalk	36.7% (293)	<b>46.0% (367)</b>	15.4% (123)	1.9% (15)	3.18	798
Downtown Urban Park	28.7% (219)	<b>45.7% (348)</b>	22.3% (170)	3.3% (25)	3.00	762
Open Space Downtown	24.7% (174)	<b>45.2% (319)</b>	26.0% (183)	4.1% (29)	2.90	705
Other (write in)	<b>76.1% (35)</b>	15.2% (7)	8.7% (4)	0.0% (0)	3.67	46
					-	52
					<b>answered question</b>	<b>1161</b>

6. Where in town would you like to have these facilities?							
	French River Corridor	Downtown	Neighborhoods	Webster Lake	East of Webster Lake	Response Count	
Biking trails	<b>66.8% (545)</b>	7.5% (61)	12.9% (105)	38.6% (315)	28.2% (230)	816	
Hiking and skiing trails	<b>58.1% (443)</b>	3.4% (26)	8.7% (66)	35.1% (268)	36.7% (280)	763	
Picnic areas	43.4% (346)	9.7% (77)	11.3% (90)	<b>60.7% (484)</b>	19.6% (156)	797	
Conservation areas	<b>54.3% (395)</b>	8.8% (64)	19.4% (141)	52.1% (379)	35.0% (255)	728	
Playing (sports)fields	9.4% (59)	16.6% (104)	<b>71.7% (450)</b>	19.4% (122)	12.3% (77)	628	
Children's play areas	8.6% (61)	24.4% (173)	<b>73.9% (525)</b>	21.1% (150)	9.9% (70)	710	
Recreation/community center	7.1% (50)	<b>59.6% (419)</b>	36.8% (259)	15.8% (111)	5.4% (38)	703	
Neighborhood parks	9.1% (62)	15.6% (106)	<b>70.6% (480)</b>	20.9% (142)	7.9% (54)	680	
Swimming areas	11.5% (75)	8.9% (58)	16.2% (106)	<b>72.7% (475)</b>	10.7% (70)	653	
Hunting and fishing areas	30.2% (172)	3.9% (22)	7.6% (43)	<b>59.2% (337)</b>	31.6% (180)	569	
Paddling access	34.0% (210)	4.2% (26)	6.0% (37)	<b>70.6% (436)</b>	11.2% (69)	618	
Motor and sailboat access	10.9% (62)	5.8% (33)	12.7% (72)	<b>76.6% (435)</b>	11.1% (63)	568	
Basketball courts	6.4% (37)	25.8% (150)	<b>60.4% (351)</b>	28.6% (166)	8.3% (48)	581	
Tennis courts	7.7% (43)	23.3% (130)	<b>59.7% (333)</b>	29.9% (167)	8.8% (49)	558	
Ice skating facilities	7.7% (43)	27.0% (151)	23.8% (133)	<b>51.3% (287)</b>	12.5% (70)	560	
Skateboard parks	8.9% (45)	27.1% (137)	<b>45.3% (229)</b>	26.7% (135)	18.2% (92)	505	
Campgrounds	23.6% (110)	7.9% (37)	14.8% (69)	40.0% (187)	<b>44.3% (207)</b>	467	
Dog park	25.5% (136)	21.0% (112)	<b>43.2% (230)</b>	31.9% (170)	29.3% (156)	533	
Other (write in)	17.1% (6)	28.6% (10)	11.4% (4)	<b>45.7% (16)</b>	17.1% (6)	35	
					-	23	
				<i>answered question</i>		<b>992</b>	
				<i>skipped question</i>		<b>270</b>	

7. What programs and cultural events would you like to see in Webster?						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
Community fairs	41.7% (362)	<b>50.8% (441)</b>	6.1% (53)	1.4% (12)	3.33	868
Concerts	40.1% (351)	<b>52.9% (463)</b>	5.7% (50)	1.3% (11)	3.32	875
Drama productions	27.8% (214)	<b>51.8% (398)</b>	17.2% (132)	3.3% (25)	3.04	769
Nature outings	33.5% (266)	<b>57.2% (454)</b>	7.9% (63)	1.4% (11)	3.23	794
Road races	20.1% (148)	<b>45.3% (334)</b>	23.3% (172)	11.4% (84)	2.74	738
Youth programs	<b>50.8% (433)</b>	45.5% (388)	2.6% (22)	1.1% (9)	3.46	852
Other (write in)	<b>78.6% (22)</b>	21.4% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.79	28
					-	29
<i>answered question</i>						<b>982</b>
<i>skipped question</i>						<b>280</b>

8. Priorities for Open Space and Recreation spending should be:						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
Improve/maintain existing active recreation facilities	<b>56.6% (505)</b>	41.6% (371)	1.6% (14)	0.2% (2)	3.55	892
Develop new active recreation facilities (playgrounds, ballfields, etc.)	39.8% (328)	<b>40.8% (336)</b>	15.9% (131)	3.5% (29)	3.17	824
Acquire land for passive recreation use (hiking, paddling, nature watching, etc.)	42.8% (360)	<b>43.0% (362)</b>	11.7% (98)	2.5% (21)	3.26	841
Improve/maintain existing conservation land for passive recreation use	<b>48.0% (420)</b>	47.8% (418)	3.4% (30)	0.8% (7)	3.43	875
Other (write in)	<b>69.2% (18)</b>	30.8% (8)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.69	26
					-	16
<i>answered question</i>						<b>957</b>
<i>skipped question</i>						<b>305</b>