

2023 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN



CITY OF MELROSE
OFFICE OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Table of Contents

Section 1: Plan Summary	1-1
Section 2: Introduction	2-1
A. Statement of Purpose	2-1
B. Planning Process & Public Participation	2-1
C. Accomplishments	2-3
Section 3: Community Setting	3-1
A. Physical Context	3-1
B. Regional Context	3-2
C. History of the Community	3-3
D. Growth & Development Patterns	3-5
Section 4: Environmental Inventory & Analysis	4-1
A. Geology, Soils & Topography	4-1
B. Landscape Character	4-1
C. Water Resources	4-4
D. Vegetation	4-9
E. Fisheries & Wildlife	4-11
F. Scenic Resources & Unique Environments	4-12
G. Environmental Challenges	4-16
Section 5: Inventory of Open Space & Recreation Land	5-1
A. Protected Public & Nonprofit Parcels	5-1
B. Open Space & Recreation Availability in Melrose	5-7
C. Unprotected & Private Parcels	5-11
Section 6: Community Vision	6-1
A. Description of the Process	6-1
B. Statement of Open Space & Recreation Goals	6-1
C. Coordination with Municipal & Regional Goals	6-2
Section 7: Analysis of Needs	7-1
A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs	7-1
B. Summary of Recreation Needs	7-2
C. Management Needs	7-8
Section 8: Goals & Objectives	8-1
Section 9: Seven-Year Action Plan	9-1
Section 10: Public Comments	10-1
Section 11: References	11-1

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Inventory of Conservation and Recreation Land	A-1
Appendix B: ADA Self-Evaluation Report	B-1
Appendix B: Letters of Review	C-1
Appendix D: Open House Flyer	D-1

List of Charts

Chart 1: Population Growth in Melrose, 1900-2020	3-5
Chart 2: Population Growth in Surrounding Communities, 2010-2021	3-5
Chart 3: Age Distribution of Melrose Residents	3-7
Chart 4: Population Change, 1980-2021	3-8

List of Tables

Table 1: Largest Employers in Melrose	3-9
Table 2: Threatened/Endangered Plants	4-10
Table 3: List of Approved Tree Species	4-10
Table 4: Threatened/Endangered Species	4-12
Table 5: EEO Tier Classified Sites in Melrose	4-18
Table 6: EEO Sites with Activity & Use Limitations (AUL)	4-19
Table 7: Land Use in Melrose	5-2
Table 8: Open Space Categorized by Owner & Protection Status	5-2
Table 9: Parks and Playground in Melrose	5-3
Table 10: Conservation Land	5-5
Table 11: Private Unprotected Parcels	5-13
Table 12: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, City of Melrose Parks	5-17
Table 13: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, City of Melrose School Parks and Playgrounds	5-18
Table 14: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land: City of Melrose Cemetery	5-18
Table 15: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, City of Melrose Conservation Commission	5-19
Table 16: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, City of Melrose Conservation Commission Tax Title Lands	5-19
Table 17: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, City of Melrose Other	5-21
Table 18: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, Commonwealth of Massachusetts	5-21
Table 19: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, Private Parks and Cemeteries	5-22
Table 20: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, Other Private Land	5-23

List of Figures

Figures 1 and 2: Melrose OSRP Open House	2-2
Figure 3: Volunteer Park	2-3

Figure 4: Franklin Field Community Garden Beds	2-3
Figure 5: Water bottle station at Fred Green Field	2-4
Figure 6: Solar powered phone charging bench at the Common	2-4
Figure 7: Earth Week Litter Pickup Art	2-5
Figure 8: Adopt-a-Site	2-5
Figure 9: Raingarden on Orient Avenue	2-5
Figure 10: Regional Context Map	3-1
Figure 11: Slayton Tower at Mt. Hood	3-2
Figure 12: Melrose City Hall, 1936	3-3
Figure 13: Ell Pond Bathhouse, 1948	3-4
Figure 14: Melrose EJP Populations	3-6
Figure 15: Zoning Map	3-11
Figure 16: Roundabout at Green St. and Howard St. Intersection	3-14
Figure 17: Cyclists on the North-South Bike Route	3-14
Figure 18: Geologic Features 4-2	4-2
Figure 19: Ell Pond Improvement Council	4-4
Figure 20: Water Chestnut Removal	4-4
Figure 21: Water Resources	4-5
Figure 22: Ell Pond Gazebo	4-6
Figure 23: Cygnets on Ell Pond	4-6
Figure 24: Turtles at Ell Pond	4-6
Figure 25: Heron at Ell Pond	4-6
Figure 26: Towners Pond	4-7
Figure 27: 1 st Pond Mt. Hood	4-7
Figure 28: Unique Features Map	4-13
Figure 29: Boston from Sea View Trail	4-14
Figure 30: Downtown Parklet	4-15
Figure 31: Central Alley Terrace Ribbon	4-15
Figures 32 & 34: Painted Utility Box	4-16
Figure 33: Melrose High School Mural	4-16
Figure 35: City of Melrose Trail Network	5-6
Figure 36: Parks in Melrose	5-8
Figure 37: Mt. Hood Playground	5-10
Figure 38: Melrose Common	5-10
Figure 39: Pine Banks Park	5-11
Figure 40: Morelli Field	5-11
Figure 41: Drawing of a Pollinator Garden	7-2
Figure 42: Conant Park	7-3
Figure 43: Bike Rack Location	7-4
Figure 44: Trailhead Kiosk at Mt. Hood	7-5
Figure 45: Spring Tea and Hat Contest at Milano Senior Center	7-6
Figure 46: Pickleball at Foss Park	7-6
Figure 47: Crystal St. Tennis Courts	7-6
Figure 48: Melrose Rotary Skate Park	7-7

Figure 49: Seven Year Action Plan 9-9
Figure 50-56: Community Feedback 10-5:
10-1

Section 1: Plan Summary

The 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is the City of Melrose's fourth Open Space and Recreation Plan and serves to document the City's continued commitment to preserving, maintaining, and improving the City's open spaces and recreation areas. Although the City spans less than 5 square miles, its public parks, fields, greenspaces, and natural resources satisfy a variety of recreational needs and user groups. This access to the outdoors and availability of gathering spaces adds to the high quality of life enjoyed by the community.

The 2023 OSRP provides insight into the City's history, landscape, and overall vision for community members, stakeholders, and City Officials. The plan is divided into eleven sections beginning with the Plan Summary. Section 2 of the plan reviews the planning and public participation process that took place over the course of one year to help clarify the community's goals, as well as a summary of the City's accomplishments since the last OSRP was completed in 2015. Section 3 describes the community setting, and the City's growth and development patterns. Sections 4 and 5 inventory the City's natural resources, open space and recreation land, and environmental challenges. The community vision and statement of goals are detailed in Section 6, and Section 7 provides a needs analysis for resource protection, and recreation and management needs. The City's Goals and Objectives are listed in Section 8 and a Seven Year Action Plan is outlined in Section 9. Section 10 offers more information about the public comments the City received and Section 11 provides a list of references.

Through interdisciplinary, internal working group meetings with City Staff, as well as community surveys, focus groups, and a public open house event where community feedback was solicited and collected, five overarching themes and priorities emerged:

- ❖ Improve and maintain existing facilities and expand recreational programming;
- ❖ Enhance open spaces through sustainable and innovative design;
- ❖ Protect and preserve sensitive lands and natural resources;
- ❖ Improve access to parks and open spaces; and
- ❖ Provide opportunities for community engagement and participation

The tools and methods to help meet these goals are organized in the Seven Year Action Plan which provides a framework for the planning and plan implementation process. This 2023 Open Space Plan has also been submitted to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC).

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Section 2: Introduction

A. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to identify the open space and recreation goals for the City of Melrose and provide guidance for the expansion, enhancement, and preservation of open space and recreation opportunities. The plan examines the condition of existing park resources and protected open spaces, and offers specific goals and recommendations for preserving our existing natural and recreation assets. A Seven-Year Action Plan was developed, which provides a policy framework and represents the City's planning and implementation efforts. This plan builds upon the City's previous open space planning efforts and has been updated to meet the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' *Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements*.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

The 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan was prepared by the City of Melrose Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD). At the onset of the planning process, OPCD staff began by reviewing the 2015 version of the Plan and Mayor Brodeur assembled a Working Group with representation from residents, the Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Community Development, Park Department, Recreation Department, Department of Health and Human Services, School Department, and City Council.

OPCD staff convened several meetings with the Working Group, which guided the process and contributed to the development of the plan. Together, the group revised the Seven-Year Action Plan based on past accomplishments and future goals. The group also augmented the community needs analysis by incorporating elements of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which clearly outlines recreation needs in the metropolitan Boston area, and adding information and suggestions gathered from Melrose's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance efforts.

Throughout the duration of the planning process, OPCD staff elicited community input through a variety of events. To engage the older adult population, a survey was distributed during a Senior Resource Fair and a Bingo event with questions around increasing intergenerational amenities in the city's open spaces and creating more accessible recreation opportunities. To better understand the needs of youth and adolescent user groups, focus groups were held with students at the Melrose Middle and High School. To capture the comments and suggestions of stakeholders and community members, the public was invited to participate in an Open House at the Milano Center. Those

interested in sharing their thoughts were also encouraged to email comments to OPCD staff.

Figures 1 and 2: Melrose OSRP Open House



Source: OPCD

The Open House was advertised via a number of platforms including through the local newspapers, direct emails to stakeholders, flyers in popular community meeting spaces, a virtual backpack announcement to parents and guardians of children in the Melrose Public Schools, a local podcast produced by residents, and on the City's website, the Mayor's blog and social media accounts. The Division of Conservation Services requires enhanced outreach to Environmental Justice Populations (EJP) which are mostly concentrated in the southwest and central portion of the City.¹ As such, notice was provided to community organizations located in those areas and serving these populations including the Council on Aging, the Milano Center, the YMCA and Pine Banks Park. Additionally, the Open House was held at the Milano Center to provide greater access to the EJP. The format of the Open House was interactive and over 40 people participated and shared their ideas.

Once the public's comments and suggestions were gathered, the community's feedback was incorporated in the draft document. The draft of the 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan was made available for public comment and review for 30 days and provided to the Planning Board, the Mayor, and the Conservation Commission. Following the public process, the draft document was provided to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Division of Conservation Services. Letters of review from both agencies are attached to this document.

¹ Massachusetts Environmental Justice Populations. Prepared by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Available at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-2020-environmental-justice-populations>

C. Accomplishments

Since developing the last Open Space and Recreation Plan, the City of Melrose has accomplished a wide range of open space and recreation-related objectives with a focus on promoting equity and access. Significant investments have been made to retrofit older facilities and enhance their accessibility. Volunteer Park, for example, is the City's first fully accessible playground with structures designed for users with various special needs. Moving forward, all new parks and playgrounds must be inclusive, accessible, and include elements for all age groups to ensure all community members have access to the recreational opportunities provided by the City.

Figure 3: Volunteer Park



Source: OPCD

To serve the residential needs of the City's other underserved populations, such as teenagers and older adults, the Recreation Department has partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of Stoneham & Wakefield to increase recreational opportunities for adolescents and continues to offer yoga and tai chi in parks around Melrose. The City is also in the final phases of planning its Wayfinding Initiative, which, when completed, will include signs and directions to popular parks to help community members and visitors access the City's open spaces.

Other noteworthy projects in Melrose completed in the past seven years to improve city-wide facilities and satisfy the active and passive recreation needs of residents include:

- 40 community garden beds were installed at Franklin Field
- A Seed Library was established
- Several elementary schools installed community gardens
- The Recreation Department partnered with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to offer free park passes to all state parks
- Parklets were created in Downtown Melrose and in the neighborhood business districts

Figure 4: Franklin Field Community Garden Beds



Source: Melrose Rotary Club

There have been many parks and playground improvements including:

- New equipment at the Skateboard Park
 - Installation of rock-climbing wall at the Franklin Playground
 - New basketball courts at Mary A. Livermore Park
 - New swings at Conant Park
 - New benches and solar powered lights at the Knoll Dog Park
 - New dog park at Pine Banks
 - Installation of lighting, storage facility, and water bottle filling station, and net extension behind goal posts at Fred Green Field
 - New pickleball courts and renovation of basketball courts at Foss Park;
 - New bike repair station at Morelli Field
 - Solar-powered phone charging Soofa benches at the Common and Melrose High School
 - Installation of basketball half court at the Melrose High School
 - New hiking trail created from Hillside Park to Dexter Rd.
 - Installation of bicycle racks at select parks and playgrounds
1. New trash and recycling barrels added to several parks and playgrounds around the City

Figure 5: Water bottle station at Fred Green Field



Figure 6: Solar powered phone charging bench at the Common



Source: OPCD

Opportunities for community members and businesses to be involved in open space improvements and beautification efforts included:

- Community open space clean up events
- 43 Adopt-A-Sites sponsored by businesses and organizations around the City
- Trail Steward Program created in 2018
- The Wayfinding & Creative Placemaking Initiative gathered local artists and community members to participate in art installations around the City

Figure 7: Earth Week Litter Pickup Art



Source: OPCD

Figure 8: Adopt-A-Site



Strides were made in the preservation of existing open space and environmentally sensitive land such as:

- The creation of the Ell Pond Feasibility Study and Master Plan
- The acquisition of additional Conservation Land
- Extra trash pick-ups scheduled throughout the Summer on Sundays to manage overflow and mitigate littering

The City has also encouraged sustainability by:

- The installation of rain gardens on Orient Ave
- Adopting a Complete Streets Ordinance and enhancing the City's multi-modal transportation network
- Creating and adopting the Melrose Forward Master Plan to promote sustainable, transit-oriented development, and identify needed infrastructure
- Adopting a NetZero Action Plan

Figure 9: Rain Garden on Orient Ave.



Source: City of Melrose

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Section 3: Community Setting

A. Physical Context

The City of Melrose, located in eastern Massachusetts in the Metropolitan Boston area as shown on Figure 10, is bordered by the Towns of Stoneham, Wakefield, and Saugus, and by the Cities of Malden, Medford, and Revere. Located about eight miles north of Boston, Melrose’s population of approximately 29,000 residents occupies a geographical area of 4.76 square miles, 2% of which is covered by water.² Melrose lacks direct access to any of Greater Boston’s major highways but is well served by public transit, particularly the MBTA commuter rail system, which has three stations within Melrose.

Figure 10: Regional Context Map



Since its settlement in the mid-18th century, Melrose has offered its residents a balance of both urban and suburban living with its historic downtown and a wide range of local and regional open space and recreation options. Vital to this condition is the notion of the Garden City, which highlights a commercial/institutional core surrounded by housing of varying density, interspersed with schools, small parks, and most importantly, a wide “greenbelt” buffering it from surrounding communities and providing ample opportunity for passive recreation. The Garden City has long been the model for development in Melrose, and for the most part, this model remains intact; presently the City is surrounded on three sides by major parks and conservation lands, including the Middlesex Fells Reservation to the west, Mount Hood to the east, and Pine Banks to the south.

The City’s topography generally consists of a valley running north-south through the middle portion of the city with moderate to steep slopes on either side. Elevations in the valley average approximately 50 feet, while the hilly areas

² U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts 2022. Available at: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/melrosecitymassachusetts/PST045222>

to the east and west average 100 to 150 feet above sea level, with high points of rocky ledge reaching over 200 feet. In the central portion of the city is Ell Pond, a large scenic pond surrounded by a park and playing fields. Several smaller ponds, Swains Pond, Towner's Pond, and Long Pond are in the southeast. Centrally located in the Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course are three lesser ponds that act as collectors for irrigation.

These geographic conditions have influenced past growth in two significant ways. First, they have provided a break in development between the central core and the higher elevations to the east and west. Second, they have historically discouraged development in the southeastern section where topographic changes are generally characterized by ledge, large rock outcroppings, and three of the City's major ponds and wetlands. The City's Master Plan in 1930 recommended the southeast be preserved as open space and in response, Mount Hood Park expanded to add a golf course, growing from 25 acres to the 230 acres it encompasses today. Immediately outside of this area, however, development has increased over recent years. Demand for more housing threatens the environmentally sensitive southeast region, though the City's Slope Protection Ordinance, adopted in 2005, helps to protect against major alterations to sloped areas.

B. Regional Context

Regional Open Spaces

At the regional level, Melrose shares several open space and recreation resources with surrounding cities and towns. These include the Middlesex Fells Reservation, which is managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, located in the communities of Medford, Winchester, Stoneham, Malden, and Melrose. Pine Banks Park, a 107.5-acre park with 78 acres in Melrose, features active and passive recreation facilities including athletic fields and a network of walking trails offering views of the Boston skyline and the Blue Hills. While Pine Banks Park is owned and managed by a Board of Trustees, the Cities of Melrose and Malden jointly provide for maintenance of the facilities.

Figure 11: Slayton Tower at Mt. Hood



Source: The Patch

Melrose also has resources of regional significance entirely within the City including Mount Hood Golf Course & Memorial Park, and Morelli Field.

Established in 1936, Mount Hood is an 18-hole public course nestled within 300 acres of wooded parkland which offers an extensive trail system that is used for passive and active recreation throughout the entire year. There is also a function facility and a tot lot onsite.

Regional Planning

Melrose is a member municipality of MAPC's Inner Core Committee (ICC). The ICC is made up of 21 municipalities that share plans and ideas regarding open space planning, among other topics that affect the region's cities and towns. The City also participates in the Metro Mayor's Coalition, which is made up of 14 communities in Greater Boston, that allows members to address vulnerabilities in the region including those related to environmental and transportation liabilities.

The City also consults the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan in its open space planning, which is produced by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), that documents the available recreational resources across the state, the barriers to providing recreation access, and ways to protect resources.

C. History of the Community

In 1633, English colonists Ralph and Richard Sprague chose Melrose, then referred to as Pond Feilde, as a hospitable place to settle. Originally part of Charlestown, and later Malden, Melrose was incorporated as a separate town in 1850. Melrose was not to remain a small, rural, farming community for long. By 1845, the wood strap rails of Boston and Maine cut through the town in its central lowland portion, parallel to and west of Main Street.

Three train stops in Melrose aided its rapid development over the next half century and anchored the distinct commercial districts that exist to this day. Victorian Melrosians made it their aim to create a "well-designed city of homes," as opposed to a mere weekend escape from Boston. Thus, residential neighborhoods spread out from these small commercial areas, allowing residents easy access to their jobs in Boston by way of train. By 1900, Melrose had become incorporated as a city and the population had reached 12,000 inhabitants.

Figure 12: Melrose City Hall, 1936



Source: Melrose Public Library

The small industries established in the 1800's, which produced, among other things, boots, needles, and picture moldings, began to disappear from all but the railroad corridor. Gradually, many of the industrial and commercial activities, such as ice cutting on Ell Pond, were phased out. This shift made way for the "Garden City", with a carefully planned mix of homes, businesses, open space, and approach to growth.

The first park or dedicated open space in Melrose was established in 1856 when the Upham and Lynde farms, two of the City's earliest settled areas, were purchased and divided into house lots. An area was reserved as a park and named Melrose Common. This park would eventually become an important playground resource for the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Yet unlike other communities in the region, Melrose had not established a centrally located Common. In 1910, Ell Pond Park was dedicated to serve the needs of the higher-density downtown area. Many more parks were created in the following years, in part by Works Progress Administration (WPA) crews.

In the 1960s, Melrose was evolving from a desirable place to settle to a fine place for families leaving the City of Boston or other inner core suburbs to live for a few years on their way to a permanent home further out from Boston. However, just a decade later, the arrival of rapid transit in the mid-1970s by way of the Orange Line extension to Oak Grove Station in Malden brought with it the ultimate accessibility of Melrose as a suburb of Boston. New residents were drawn to Melrose not only for the Victorian architecture, but also the accessibility. During the 1970s, the population of Melrose peaked.

Figure 13: Ell Pond Bathhouse, 1948



Source: Melrose Public Library

In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, revitalization of the downtown commercial district had taken hold and investments were made in Victorian streetlights, street and sidewalk improvements, and grants were given to replace signage and improve facades. Smaller neighborhood commercial districts, including those around the commuter rail stations, also received investment from the City.

The City seeks to maintain the high desirability of Melrose as a place to live, work, and recreate by updating public buildings and infrastructure, and providing economic housing, open space and recreation opportunities to ensure that the City can support the needs of the community.

D. Population Characteristics

Melrose is a predominately residential community that has developed in a relatively dense pattern. Although Melrose’s population has grown in recent years, it is still much lower than its 1970 peak. In 1950, Melrose was home to roughly 27,000 people. Its population continued to grow toward a peak of more than 33,000 people in 1970, before declining to 27,000 in 2010. The 2010s saw the first decade of population growth in Melrose in 40 years when the City grew by roughly 1,000 people. According to the 2021 U.S. Census, Melrose has a population of 29,312.³ Melrose’s population growth between 2010 to 2021 (roughly 8.6%) was significant and consistent with similar communities.

Chart 1: Population Growth in Melrose, 1900-2020

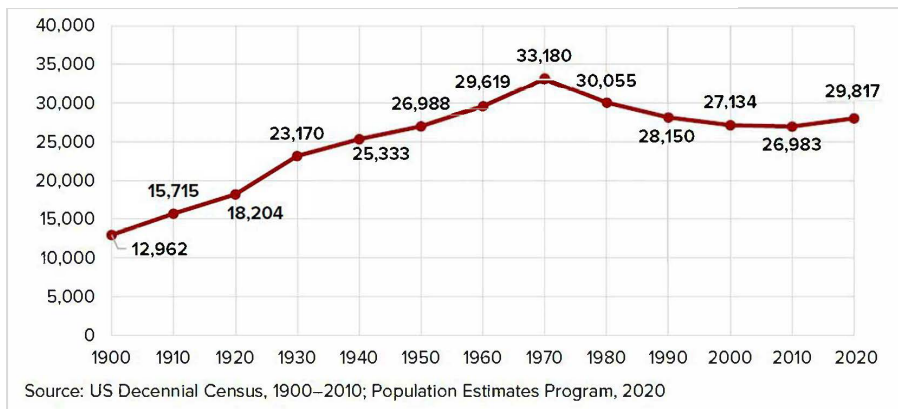
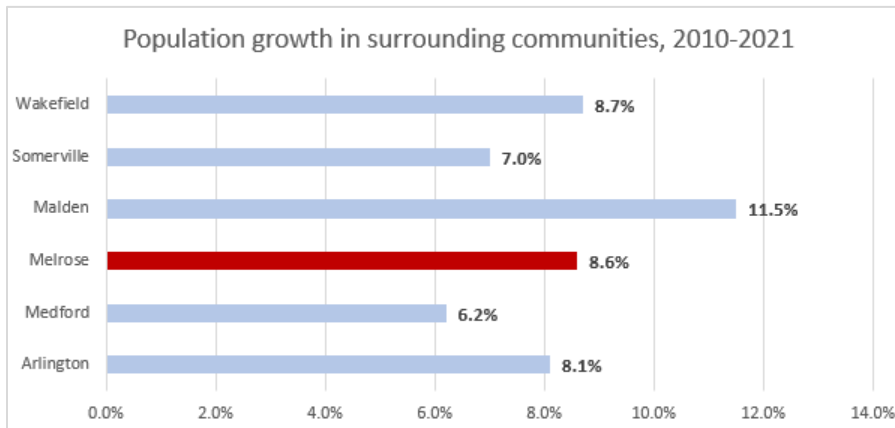


Chart 2: Population Growth in Surrounding Communities, 2010-2021



Source: US Census 2010-2021

³ U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts 2022. Available at: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/melrosecitymassachusetts/PST045222>

Of the 29,312 residents, there are 11,996 households and the population density is 6,367 persons per square mile. White residents constitute the greatest percentage of residents (82.3%) followed by Asian residents (8.3%), which also constitutes the largest and fastest growing minority group. Hispanic and Latinx residents are the next largest group (3.5%) followed by African Americans or Black residents (3.4%). 4.4% of the population is multiracial. A small portion of residents, 12%, are foreign born and 14% speak a language other than English at home.⁴

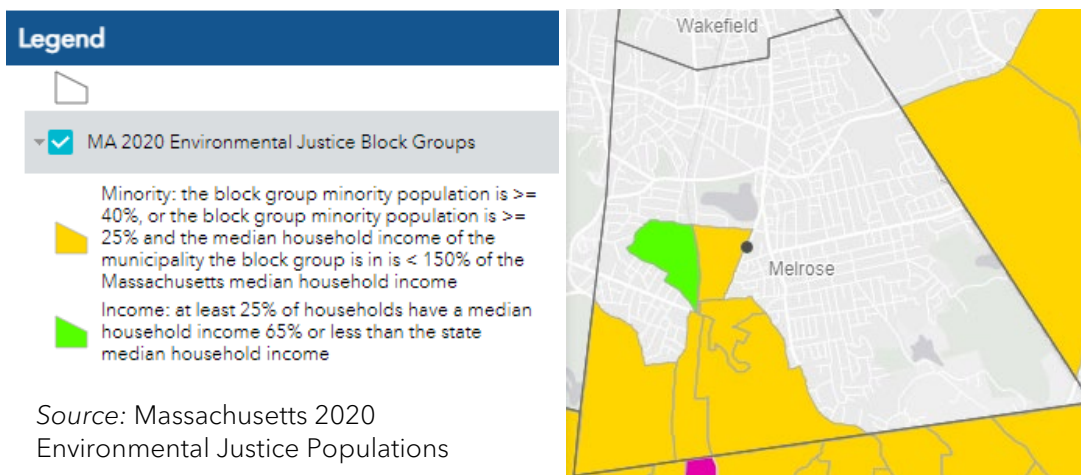
Education

Melrose’s population is well educated; 96.2% of the population has a high school diploma or higher and 61.9% of the population has a bachelor’s degree or higher. These figures are higher than the statewide average of 89.1% and 45%, respectively.⁵

Environmental justice populations

Out of 27 block groups in Melrose, six are considered environmental justice groups (25.9%) which are mainly concentrated in the southwest and central portion of the City as depicted in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Melrose EJP Populations



In 2020, the total population in these block groups was 9,290 or 33% of the population. Of the six block groups, five are identified as minority block groups. The sixth block group is identified as having an income that is 65% below the state median income. Although census data shows that the median household income for Melrose residents is \$125,229 approximately 3.4% of Melrose’s

⁴ *ibid*

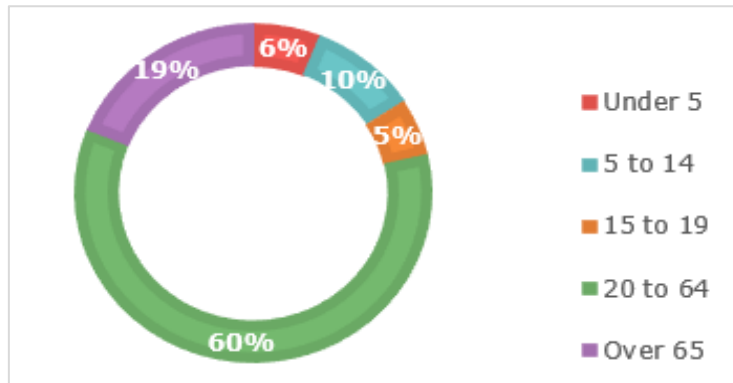
⁵ *ibid*

population is determined as living below the poverty level.⁶ Representing 4.2% of the population, households just west of downtown have significantly lower incomes than the City median with earnings that are approximately 67% less (\$38,150) than Melrose as a whole. The age groups with the highest percentage of the population in poverty include those under 5 (3.9%) and over 60 (12.1%), and this EJP may be explained by the presence of the Congregational Retirement Homes, a three-building complex, located at the corner of West Foster and Cottage Streets.

Age

The largest age group in Melrose are residents between 20-64.⁷ This is most likely due to the City’s relatively high proportion of families with young children, as well as older adults who have spent much of their lives in the City and find the compact neighborhoods and public transportation options amenable to their lifestyles.

Chart 3: Age Distribution of Melrose Residents



Source: US Census 2022

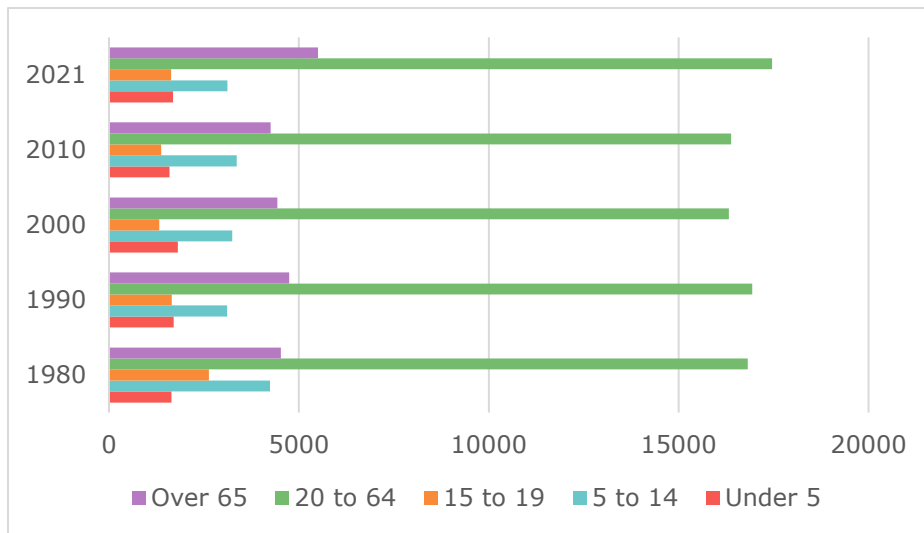
Between 1980-2020, the age of Melrose’s population has stayed relatively consist with residents aged 5-19 experiencing the greatest fluctuations.⁸ The two age groups that have increased since the 1980s are residents under 5 and over 65. The 5 to 14 age group and the 15 to 19 age group have decreased by 35.4% and 41.4%, respectively, resulting in the most significant changes of any group. The 20- to 65-year-old age has experienced the least amount of change, decreasing by .3% since the 1980s, indicating that it is generally less susceptible to change overtime.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts 2022. Available at: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/melrosecitymassachusetts/PST045222>

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ *ibid*

Chart 4: Population Change, 1980-2021



Source: US Decennial Census, 1980-2021

Housing

Consistent with the metro Boston area, housing costs have skyrocketed with the median value of owner-occupied housing units rising to an estimated \$638,800 compared with the statewide average of \$424,700. The City’s homeownership rate of 66.5% is similar to the statewide average of 62.4%. Census data shows that there are an average of 2.44 people living per household in the City.⁹

The City’s ownership and rental housing vacancy rates have been declining meaning that people have fewer options for homes when they need to find one. Although various multifamily developments have recently been constructed throughout the city, there is still a low inventory of housing and the rising living costs are a hardship for many. Data shows that roughly one-third of households are cost burdened.¹⁰

Workforce

Much of the City’s population over the age of 16 is in the civilian labor force (70.6%) and there is a relatively low unemployment rate of 2.6%.¹¹ According to data released by the Executive Office for Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) in 2022, Melrose is home to 734 business establishments that employ on average 5,571 workers per month and pay \$1,029 per week, which is an increase from a weekly wage of \$885 in 2015.¹² The largest employers are

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts 2022. Available at: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/melrosecitymassachusetts/PST045222>

¹⁰ Melrose Housing Production Plan 2022, Housing Cost Burden, page 44

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² Employment and Wages, Department of Economic Research. Available at: <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/LMI/EmploymentAndWages>

Hallmark Health System, the City of Melrose, Shaw’s Supermarket, and Bellevue Golf Club, as illustrated in Table 1.¹³

On occasion, private businesses have joined with the City to raise funds for park and playground enhancements. Many also participate in the Adopt-a-Site Program, which helps beautify the City’s public spaces. Engaging and integrating business leaders in the city’s open space plans is critical for achieving the City’s goals.

Number of employees	Company Name
1,000-4,999	Hallmark Health System
100-249	City of Melrose
	Melrose Healthcare
	Shaw’s supermarket
50-99	Bellevue Golf Club

E. Growth and Development Patterns

Melrose began as a relatively small rural farming community with its center in a valley between two parallel ranges of hills. The advent of the railroad along the western side of the valley brought with it the development of small industry and a commercial Main Street. Residential development spread north, east, and west up the slopes of the adjacent hills. Several large ponds served as the most vital catalysts for the consolidation and protection of considerable areas of open space.

The general pattern of land use in Melrose has not changed significantly since 1960. The City still consists of a linear core extending along the Main Street axis, as well as the railroad corridor, which also runs north to south and is parallel to Main Street. This core contains most of the commercial, industrial, and high-density residential development. Medium and low-density residential development surrounds the core, and is in turn surrounded by a large tract of permanent open space (the greenbelt). This open space provides a distinct boundary between the dense, urban development toward Boston and the sprawling suburban character of the communities west and north of Melrose.

Land use

Most of the city’s land is used for residential purposes as reflected on the Zoning Map. Detached single-family homes constitute the greatest percentage of Melrose’s housing (55%) and single-family parcels are in virtually all parts of Melrose.¹⁴ The next most common housing type (16% of units) is multifamily structures of 20 or more units which are scattered throughout the City, but are mainly concentrated near transportation nodes such as the commuter rail stations and Oak Grove Station.¹⁵ Two-, three-, and four-family residences exist within the residential and neighborhood business districts.

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ Melrose Housing Production Plan, Housing Type, page 32

¹⁵ *ibid*

Over half of housing units in Melrose were built before World War II and another quarter were built from 1940-1969. This is consistent with the development of Melrose as a community that initially grew with the railroad and then experienced a wave of suburban style development. The city's historic housing provides a diverse range of housing sizes and types as well as a shared architectural heritage.

Since the 1990's, a few, small subdivisions were approved in locations throughout Melrose:

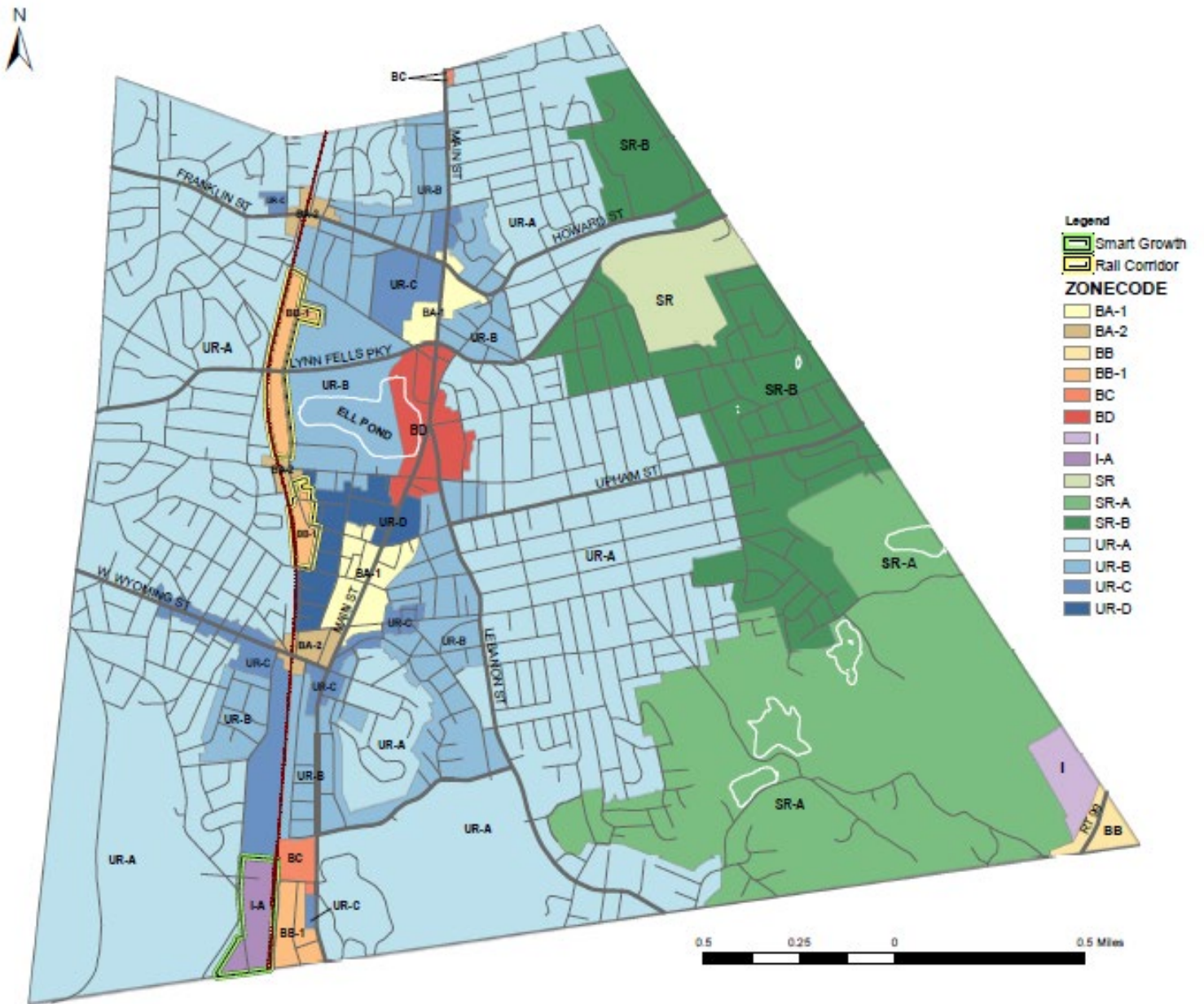
- A nine-lot subdivision on Indian Hill Lane
- A five-lot subdivision on Cedarwood Lane
- A six-lot subdivision on Clover Circle
- A seven-lot subdivision on Nordic Way
- A nine-lot subdivision on Patrick's Place
- A three-lot subdivision on Patriot Way
- A two-lot subdivision off Dexter Road
- A five-lot subdivision on Blueberry Hill Lane
- A five-lot subdivision on Boardman Ave
- An eight-lot subdivision on Regans Way

In recent years, larger and several smaller projects (fewer than 30 units) have been built. The Radio Factory Loft at 99 Washington Street renovated and expanded an old mill and created a three-story, mixed-use building with 141 residential units and retail and community space. The 10-14 Corey St. project converted an office and research development space into 40 apartments in between the Wyoming Business District and downtown Melrose. Several other 20-40 residential unit mixed-use buildings have been permitted but not yet built.

Commercial uses and business districts are located along Main Street, with additional commercial hubs around the commuter rail stations and Melrose-Wakefield Hospital. Older industrial districts in the southeast corner along Routes 1 and 99 accommodate larger commercial uses or those requiring extensive floor space relative to employee and customer density. A quarry and former landfill are located in the southeast corner of the City. Since no highways run directly through the city and there are just three roads classified as major collectors (Main Street, Franklin Street, and Lynn Fells Parkway), Melrose is unattractive to industries that require immediate access to highway transportation.

While the existing zoning is primarily residential in nature for most of the city, the different districts create distinct residential, commercial, mixed-use and industrial areas. However, there is little available undeveloped land for major

Figure 15: Zoning Map



new residential or commercial construction except for the southeastern corner of the City between Mount Hood Memorial Park and Pine Banks Park. Much of this land functions as open space and creates the unique natural feel of the area but it is privately owned and particularly vulnerable to development pressures.

With the exception of the development pressure in the southeast corner of the City, there has generally been little change in the City's development pattern because Melrose is essentially built-out. Consequently, the only major opportunity for change is in redevelopment. To encourage opportunities and promote community-minded projects, the City passed a zoning amendment in 2021 that allows for density incentives in the BA-1 and BA-2 districts. This amendment aims to encourage projects that provide community benefits or amenities beyond what is otherwise required by the Zoning Ordinance. Incentives, such as increased density and ability to provide open space in different ways, are given in exchange for providing community benefits such as sustainable building features and improvement to the public realm.

This amendment follows the Rail Corridor Overlay District, created in 2014, which represents the community's vision for transit-oriented development that consists of a mix of residential and commercial/office developments built on a pedestrian scale. Through another phase of this effort, the commuter rail station areas were rezoned to create vibrant streetscapes and new hubs of commercial activity. These rezoning efforts took cues from the Smart Growth Overlay District located on Lower Washington Street, which has been successfully redeveloped.

To support redevelopment efforts, the City was awarded a Housing Choice Grant from the Commonwealth in 2022 to rewrite the zoning ordinance and realize the City's housing and economic goals as outlined in the Master Plan and Housing Production Plan (HPP). The HPP suggests many zoning amendments to increase and diversify the housing supply.

Infrastructure

As a densely developed community, Melrose has established infrastructure present throughout the City that has been the subject of many capital improvements in the last decade. The quality of the infrastructure has dramatically improved with these investments, resulting in a well-supported City. The City continues to follow a maintenance schedule as well as make coordinated and targeted improvements to correct infrastructure issues. Having well-maintained infrastructure makes the community a desirable place to live.

Water, Sewer, & Energy

The developed land in Melrose is completely served by public water and sewer. Both systems are operated by the city's Public Works Department and are connected to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) systems.

The City also operates a stormwater drainage system with Ell Pond functioning as main receiver of runoff; stormwater runoff from Melrose eventually outflows to the Mystic River. National Grid provides electric service, which, except for Main Street and newer developments, is transmitted through aerial lines. National Grid also provides natural gas to all developed areas.

Transportation

There are approximately 90 miles of roadway within Melrose and DPW is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep on most roads. The major collectors are Main Street, Franklin Street, and Lynn Fells Parkway, which receive the largest amount of traffic in the City. Roadways are inventoried for necessary improvements, and improvements are coordinated with other work, such as water, sewer, or drainage improvements.

Pedestrians and bicyclists are also accommodated through the availability of sidewalks on most streets particularly in the densely developed areas of the City, and the presence of bike lanes and sharrows. In 2016, the City adopted a Complete Streets Policy to advance efforts to provide safety and accessibility for all users of the City's roadways, trails, and transit systems. Since 2017, the City completed four significant Complete Streets projects including:

- The Melrose High School/ Middle School Pedestrian and Bike Assessment: This project sought to identify potential infrastructure opportunities, bicycle and pedestrian friendly policies, and education and outreach programs that will encourage more students and staff to ride bicycles or walk to school
- The North-South Bike Route: The scope of this project was to establish two bike routes through Melrose between the Wakefield line and the Malden line
- Improvements on Howard Street from Nelson Road to Green Street: The City installed a roundabout in place of the unsafe and poorly functioning intersection at Green St. and Howard St., and added cross walks and rapid flashing beacons on Howard St. to enhance pedestrian safety
- Improving connectivity between the Hoover School and surrounding neighborhoods: This includes adding a network of sidewalks with school zone signage and installing a bike rack

Other investments made to improve the transportation network and enhance safety include:

- New sidewalks
- Speed feedback signs
- New crosswalks
- Curbing improvements
- Restriping streets, and
- Tree planting through the City

Figure 16: Roundabout at Green St. and Howard St. Intersection



Source: City of Melrose

Figure 17: Cyclists on the North-South Bike Route



Source: Melrose Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee

The Melrose Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee is active in advocating for increased pedestrian and bicycle accommodations throughout the City, and particularly on the major collector roadways. Additionally, while new subdivisions are rare in Melrose, new streets are required to have a sidewalk installed on at least one side of the street. As part of roadway construction projects, sidewalks are also typically rehabilitated if there are defects or do not have accessible ramps.

Although Melrose does not have immediate access to highway transportation, it is a well-connected City due to the available public transportation networks. Just south of the City limits, in the City Malden, is Oak Grove Station, the northern terminus of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA) Orange Line. Traveling south on the Orange Line, commuters are in downtown Boston in less than 30 minutes. Additionally, Melrose has the benefit of three commuter rail stations on the MBTA's Haverhill Line. North to south, these stations include Melrose Highlands, Cedar Park, and Wyoming Hill Stations. Commuting via the Haverhill Line brings commuters to Boston's North Station in a half-hour or less.

Spanning out from these transportation nodes are four bus routes. Two routes travel north-south on Main Street, connecting Melrose with points south in Malden and north in Wakefield and Reading. A third route completes a local loop on the east side of Melrose. The fourth route connects the west side of Melrose with Stoneham and Oak Grove Station. Being accessible to downtown Boston via public transportation contributes to what makes Melrose a desirable community.

Improving access to public and alternate transportation modes for those coming to and from Melrose for the workday supports sustainable development and the livability of the City. As described, Melrose is known for its diverse means of travel and of the approximately 79.1% of employed

Melrosians working outside of the City, 23.3% of commuters rely on public transportation to get to their place of occupation.

Long Term Projections

The anticipated long-term development patterns are redevelopment of the already developed areas of Melrose. The Housing Production Plan (HPP) identifies underutilized sites that could be redeveloped to support additional housing. Since the release of the HPP, the Planning Board has approved plans for several projects on six of the ten designated opportunities sites including:

- 453-463 Franklin Street (mixed-use building with 21 residential units and one commercial unit)
- 14 Chipman Avenue (mixed-use building with 40 residential units with a retail unit and the VFW canteen)
- 31-39 West Wyoming Avenue (mixed-use building with 26 residential units and 1 commercial unit)
- 681-697 Main Street (mixed-use building with 18 residential units and one-to-two commercial units)

Many new developments in Melrose use high efficiency, low-impact materials and fixtures and this trend is expected to continue, reducing the impacts of the built environment on the City's natural resources, and limiting greenhouse gas emissions. Native plants and innovative stormwater management techniques are also being incorporated into new projects to limit runoff and prevent overwhelming the City's sewer system. Where construction impacts the right of way, Developers have agreed to plant street trees and improve pedestrian access.

There is pressure on the undeveloped areas in the southeastern corner of the City where large open space areas are present. The City should fund the acquisition of sensitive lands and continue preserving this rural area that contributes to the City's greenbelt.

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Section 4: Environmental Inventory and Analysis

A. Geology, Soils and Topography

The highest elevations in Melrose, those 200 feet or more above sea level, constitute the most significant topography in the city. As shown in Figure 18, these elevations are typically located along the southern boundary of the city, especially in the southeastern section from Mount Hood to an area just west of Swains Pond at the top of Beacon Street, and in the southwestern corner at Black and Melrose Rocks. A smaller area of land over 200 feet in elevation is in the northwestern corner of the city at High Rock. The peaks of these hills reach an elevation of over 250 feet.

Most of the land in Melrose is less than 200 feet in elevation and has generally been developed along the historical transportation corridor running north-south through the western half of the city. Ell Pond and much of the land along Main Street and West Wyoming Avenue are located at the lowest elevations under 50 feet.

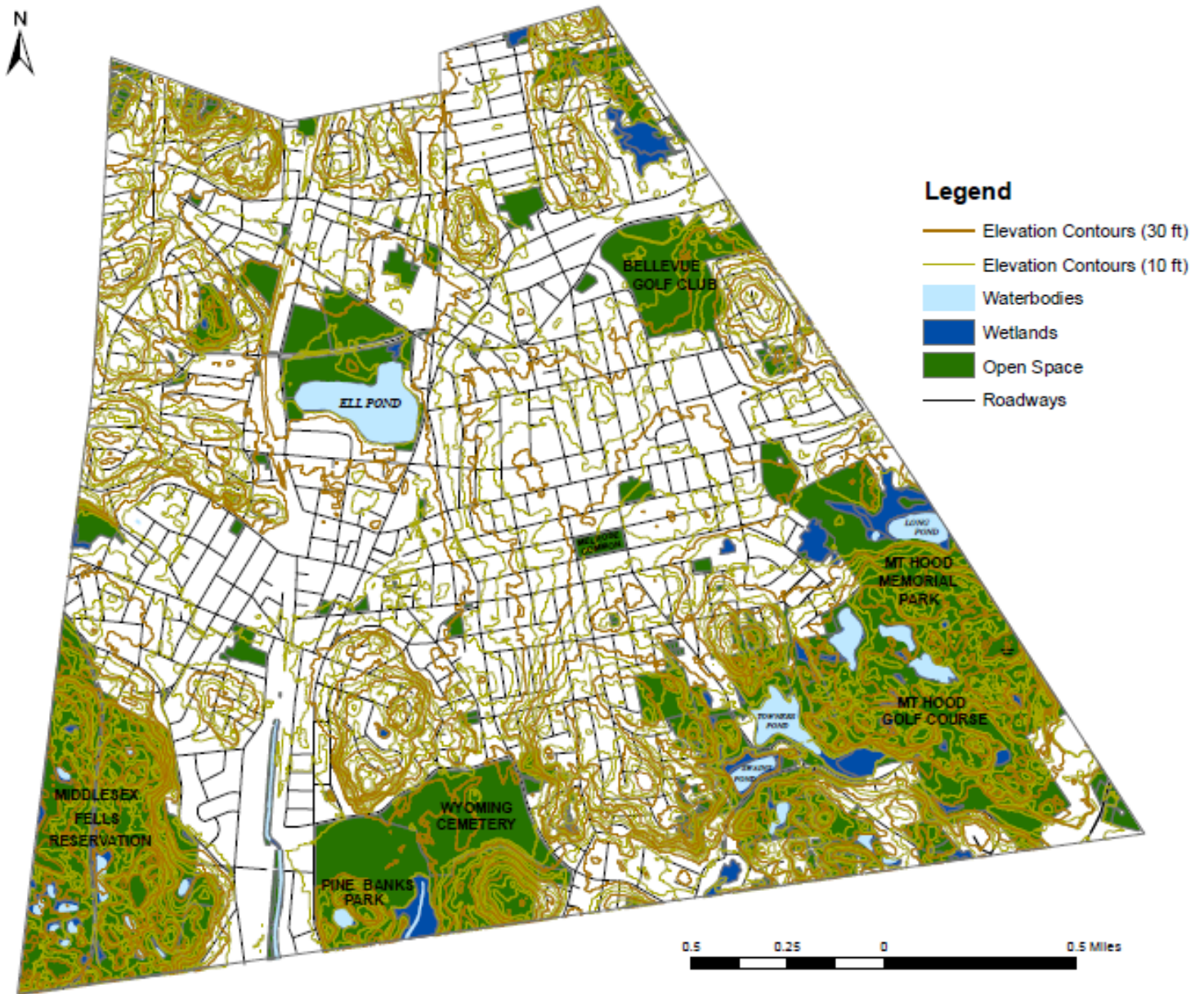
The most significant geological feature is bedrock with prominent outcrops, especially in the higher elevations. The southeastern, southwestern and western boundary areas all consist of igneous bedrock at or near the surface. Construction costs for foundations, roads, and other utilities are comparatively high in such areas. The 1924 Surficial Geology Map identified a large amount of wetland soils, including muck and peat in stream bottoms and in old lake beds and swamps, that have either been culverted or filled. The Spot Pond-Ell Pond drainage system along the commuter rail corridor and beyond was classified as meadow or flood plain just fifty years ago. Only those ponds and wetlands encompassed by public open space have remained intact over the years.

The other geological categories plotted on the 1924 Soil Survey and Map of Middlesex County are glacial landforms such as upland till. These landforms have better drainage characteristics than the thin till associated with the igneous bedrock, as they are composed of stratified beds of sands and gravels. The formations that exhibit excellent drainage characteristics are also present in Melrose. These landforms comprise most of the area of the city and are virtually built out.

B. Landscape Character

The City of Melrose is situated in an attractive landscape. The exceptional natural qualities of the region were noted upon its settlement, and to a large extent, have been preserved in the Middlesex Fells Reservation - a widespread system of rolling hills, ponds and waterways, forest, meadows, wetlands, and rocky outcroppings. From the city's highest points, the view is one of unbroken

Figure 18: Geologic Features



woodlands - the buildings of Main Street and the surrounding area disappear under dense foliage. The combination of hilly woodland and sizable ponds lend a pastoral quality to the city's outlying areas that feel far from the bustle of Main Street and the rapid transit station less than five minutes away. It is this quality, when appreciated for its recreation potential, that makes the city an attractive place to live while simultaneously raising concerns about protection and conservation.

The concept of a greenbelt is to link open spaces as a development buffer, wildlife corridor, and recreation resource. Melrose boasts an attractive greenbelt around much of its perimeter. Since its establishment in 1967, the Conservation Commission has been actively pursuing the completion of this greenbelt between Mount Hood in the east and Pine Banks Park on the southern boundary of the city. In its 55-year history, the Commission has filed a series of proposals with City Council requesting the transfer of tax title land in the southeastern section of the city, which has resulted in a transfer of about 27 acres of land to the care and custody of the Conservation Commission.

Most of the land in Melrose, however, is not in its natural state. Apart from the downtown and other commercial nodes, the city is characterized by a tight network of quiet streets lined with sidewalks, trees, and single-family homes ranging from modest post-war ranch-style houses to stately Victorian mansions. A generous provision of open space makes the very dense pattern of development in Melrose comfortable and appealing. Schools, tot lots, playgrounds, neighborhood parks, and playing fields punctuate this pattern. Recreation and open space resources deserve close attention due to their vital role in enhancing quality of life.

Volunteer Groups

Open space resources may be threatened by neglect and deterioration as well as by development. Several initiatives by both small neighborhood groups and larger public organizations have proven successful in maintaining and enhancing existing open space and recreation facilities in the city. Volunteer groups have formed across the city that all work to enhance and beautify open spaces. For example, Ell Pond Improvement Council (EPIC), continues to be proactive in their efforts to improve the park areas surrounding Ell Pond as well as the quality of the pond itself. Volunteers helped remove water chestnuts from the pond, which continue to negatively impact the pond's ecosystem, along with other invasive species found in the area.

The Melrose Office of Planning and Community Development and EPIC have worked closely with other organizations to secure funding for park improvements that have included everything from shrub and tree planting to field drainage and water quality studies.

Figure 19: Ell Pond Improvement Council



Source: Grass Roots Fund

Figure 20: Water Chestnut Removal



Source: The Patch

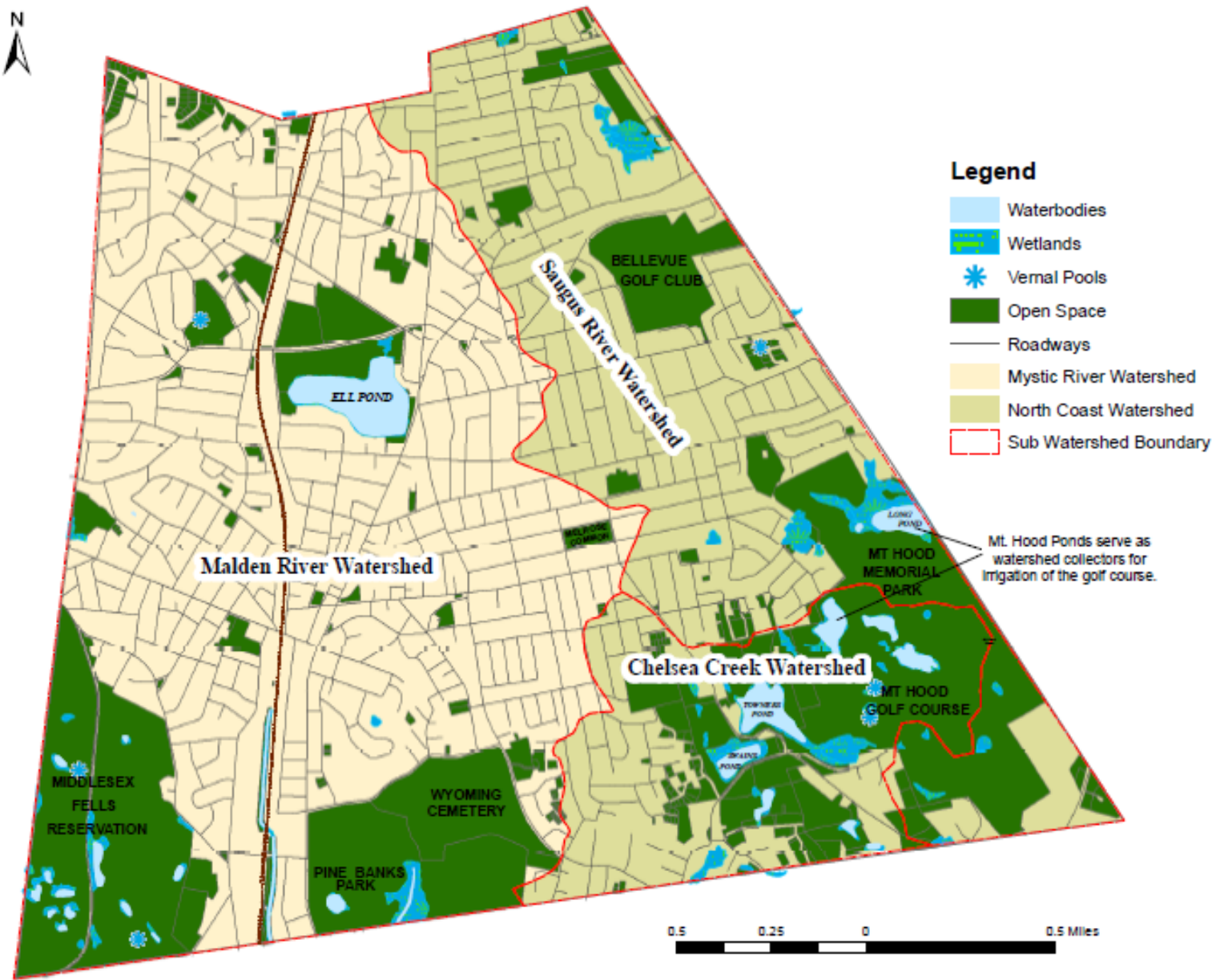
Friends of the Fells is another group that has actively advocated for the preservation of open space, specifically the Middlesex Fells Reservation. They have organized multiple volunteer clean-up days to clear trails of branches and debris. Additionally, Zero Waste Melrose, Keep Melrose Beautiful, and Melrose Garden Community are just some of the other organizations that work to enhance the City's open spaces by hosting events, educating the community, and preserving our natural resources. To assist with the organization and collaboration of all these groups, establishing a Friends of Melrose Parks and Recreation would further support volunteering and fundraising efforts.

C. Water Resources

The City of Melrose sits along the divide between the Malden River Watershed, the Saugus River Watershed, and the Chelsea Creek Watershed. The western two-thirds of the City drain to the Malden River and form part of the headwaters of that river, while the eastern portion of the City drains to the Saugus River and Chelsea Creek through a number of small tributary streams. The Malden River watershed portion of the City is densely developed and contains most of the City's commercial areas as well as a small portion of the Middlesex Fells. The Saugus River and Chelsea Creek side is primarily residential and contains much of the City's open space, including two golf courses and the City's most extensive conservation landholdings around Towners and Swains Ponds.

Due to the fact that stormwater runoff from Melrose outflows to the Mystic River, the City works alongside the Mystic River Watershed Association and the Resilient Mystic Collaborative to support the health of the Mystic River. The City's water resources are illustrated on Figure 21 and described in detail below.

Figure 21: Water Resources



Ponds

The most visible water resources in the City are its ponds, many of which are owned and maintained by the City under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission (Townners and Swains Ponds) and Park Commission (Ell Pond and several ponds at the Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course).

Ell Pond is the largest pond in the City. It is a highly visible landmark that borders Main Street and is adjacent to the High School and Middle School. Ell Pond is part of a park system that features soccer and baseball fields, tennis courts, and walking trails. The pond is a site for fishing and limited boating. Previously, a swimming beach existed at Ell Pond, but it has been closed since the 1950s. The Recreation Department plans to utilize the pond for kayaking and other water-based activities starting in the summer of 2023.

Figure 22: Ell Pond Gazebo



Source: OPCD

The pond is also home to a surprising variety of wildlife, including snapping turtles, largemouth bass, muskrats, and a several types of birds. Its resident swans, named Mel and Rose, are beloved by the City. Nearly the entire watershed of Ell Pond is very densely developed. The historic wetlands adjacent to Ell Pond were long ago converted to playing fields. Flooding in the Ell Pond flood plain is one of the most serious natural hazards in the City, and the City has completed capital improvement projects in the area of Ell Pond and elsewhere to mitigate the flooding hazard. In 2022, the City completed a Feasibility Study and Master Plan for Ell Pond Park which includes recommendations for improved stormwater management, passive and active recreation amenities, and overall enjoyment of the park's many offerings.

Figure 23: Cygnets on Ell Pond



Source: The Patch

Figure 24: Turtles at Ell Pond



Source: Ell Pond Improvement Council

Figure 25: Heron at Ell Pond



Source: The Patch

Towners Pond and Swains Pond serve as passive recreation areas, surrounded by the City's trail network and favorite areas for hiking, shoreline fishing, and picnicking. Public boating is not permitted on Towners Pond under the terms of the City's purchase of the property. Swimming is prohibited in both ponds for health reasons.

Figure 26: Towners Pond



Source: OPCD

Throughout the City, the ponds are affected by nutrient enrichment and nuisance vegetation. Being a dense, urban City, the ponds receive nutrient loading from the adjacent land uses, which has led to rapid eutrophication. Towners Pond and Swains Pond were hydro-raked several years ago and are treated on an annual basis for nuisance vegetation.

Ell Pond is treated yearly for algae blooms, and in recent years, the Conservation Commission has managed an Aquatic Harvester Vegetation Management Program that targets non-native species, specifically the Invasive Water Chestnut, utilizing a mechanical harvester to remove the plants before they are able to release mature seeds. The treatment resulted in the removal of over three acres of plant material from the pond's surface. As mentioned above, volunteers were also organized to hand pull and collect some of the smaller and deeper fragments.

Figure 27: 1st Pond Mt. Hood

The ponds within Mount Hood are also routinely treated for nuisance vegetation. Dredging First Pond would improve the water quality and support the pond's ecosystem. This ongoing issue is regularly addressed by the Conservation Commission and Park Commission with support from the City.



Source: Mt. Hood Park Association

Prioritizing an invasive species management and removal plan can help mitigate some of the deleterious effects of unwanted invasives in ponds throughout the city. Additionally, expanding the water quality testing program would help support the health of the City's ponds.

Rivers and Streams

The Malden River originates in the southern end of Melrose where the river has been straightened and channeled into a concrete bed and the riverbank lined with chain link fences. Tributary streams leading from Ell Pond to the Malden River have been culverted underground, as have all but a small portion of the streams feeding Ell Pond. Spot Pond Brook leads from Spot Pond in neighboring Stoneham through the Middlesex Fells into Melrose, where it remains an open stream for some distance before it is culverted and joins the Malden River.

A striking feature in the Middlesex Fells is the Cascades waterfall, located off Washington Street in Melrose. A major draw for hikers, it is particularly impressive after a heavy rain.

On the Saugus River watershed side of the City, Bennets Pond Brook flows through the Bellevue golf course and along the Lynn Fells Parkway into Saugus. This stream is culverted underground until it reaches the golf course; the open portion is heavily impacted by sediment. This area of the City is also subject to flooding. A small number of open streams flow through the conservation areas, the golf course, and the undeveloped areas in the southeast of the City, but most others have been culverted underground.

Wetlands

The City's historic wetlands have been heavily impacted by development. The last remaining white cedar swamp is located next to Towners Pond in the Towners and Swains Pond Conservation Areas. Other substantial wetland areas include wetlands bordering Spot Pond Brook near Conant Park, bordering Long Pond in the Mount Hood/Slayton Road area, and east of Cranmore Lane and Carlida Road. There are also small wetland areas scattered around the City that appear to be the remnants of the wetlands filled for development. One of the more visible of these is located on the site of Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. This wetland was expanded as mitigation for drainage work in connection with the middle school construction.

Flood Hazard Areas

Flood hazards are a major concern in Melrose and are recognized as the greatest natural hazard facing the City. The two largest floodplains in the City, associated with Ell Pond and with the historic Bennetts Pond Brook area near Howard Street, are heavily developed and impacted by flooding on a regular basis. Smaller floodplains bordering Long Pond and Towners and Swains Ponds are primarily contained on City-owned park and conservation land that experience localized flooding. In order to alleviate localized flooding in densely developed areas, the City completed an ambitious capital improvement program to improve drainage to the extent possible in these areas.

Aquifer Recharge Areas

There are three aquifer recharge areas in Melrose, the largest of which is in the area surrounding Ell Pond. A smaller area is located along the Lynn Fells Parkway around the Bellevue Country Club where Bennets Pond Brook is located. The third aquifer recharge area, which is along a stretch of the daylighted Spot Pond Brook at the Malden municipal boundary, extends from Washington Street across the railroad track to Pine Banks Park. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) identifies these three areas as having a medium yield of 100 to 300 gallons of water per minute. MassDEP also recognizes these areas as non-potential drinking water sources due to the high density and urban land cover of Melrose.

D. Vegetation

The distribution of vegetation closely mirrors topographical and geographical patterns. The three major areas of “non-urban land cover” in order of size are: (1) the southeastern section of the City from Long Pond on the Saugus line west to beyond Towners Pond and Swains Pond, (2) the southwestern corner of the City east to Washington Street (part of the Middlesex Fells Reservation), and (3) the Pine Banks Park area north to Boston Rock. Sewall Woods Park and the northwestern corner of Melrose are also primarily vegetation. In all, there is considerably more area classified as urban land with developed uses than as non-urban land cover.

The City’s vegetation resources consist primarily of Northern hardwoods, with oak as the predominate species. The largest area of softwoods is in Pine Banks, where the white pine and hemlock provide a welcome contrast to the deciduous hardwood forests. The other significant non-urban land cover is marsh and wetland vegetation. Marsh and wetland vegetation is present in areas of Melrose that are still undeveloped.

A large wetland complex surrounding Towners Pond and Swains Pond is present in the southeastern corner of Melrose featuring a cedar swamp. Within Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course, a large, wooded swamp borders Long Pond and is present at scattered sites within the park and golf course. A cattail marsh is located east of Cranmore Lane and Carlida Road in the northeastern section of the City. Smaller areas of marsh vegetation are found near Conant Park.

There are three vascular plants that have been listed in Melrose as either threatened or endangered since the turn of the last century. They are listed in the Table 2 below.¹⁶ The Middlesex Fells is identified as a priority habitat for

¹⁶ List of Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, available at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/list-of-endangered-threatened-and-special-concern-species>

rare species according to MassWildlife’s Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.¹⁷

Scientific Name	Common Name	Taxonomic Group	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
<i>Boechera missouriensis</i>	Green Rock- cress	Vascular Plant	Threatened	1900
<i>Sphenopholis nitida</i>	Shining Wedgegrass	Vascular Plant	Threatened	1879
<i>Ranunculus micranthus</i>	Small- flowered Buttercup	Vascular Plant	Endangered	1887

In the developed areas of Melrose, public trees provide shade and animal habitats. Two of Melrose’s most traveled corridors, Main Street and the Lynn Fells Parkway, are mostly tree-lined, enhancing the character of this urban area. Tree canopies are present in many City parks and particularly within the Wyoming Cemetery and Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course. These mature canopies provide shade as well as habitat for wildlife.

A street tree planting program, run by the Department of Public Works, assesses existing street trees for health and potential locations for new street trees, and the City recently funded a Tree Warden Position. Additionally, Tree-Plenish, a student led effort based out of Melrose High School, host community tree planting events and have planted over 500 trees over the last two years. The current approved tree list for trees planted in the right of way is outlined in Table 3.

October Glory Red Maple	Thundercloud Purpleleaf Plum	Ivory Silk Japanese Tree Lilac
Thornless Honeylocust	Spring Snow Flowering Crab	Littleleaf Linden
Kwanzan and Yoshino Cherry	Callery Pear	Kousa Dogwood
Japanese Pagoda Tree	Eastern Redbud	Round Leaf Serviceberry

¹⁷NHESP, MassGIS. Available at: <https://massgis.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?layers=a953ef7fe0744ef2b2a8fb49118c51c7>

Businesses, volunteers, and organizations have planted native pollinator gardens around the City including at several Adopt-A-Sites, Franklin Field, and Cedar Park. A pollinator garden will also be planted at the newly constructed library. The Conservation Commission has been active in identifying potential no-mow areas, such as at Conant Park. The City only uses native plants in public projects and private developers are encouraged to landscape with native plants, as well.

E. Fisheries and Wildlife

Wildlife in Melrose is typical of Eastern Massachusetts. The Audubon Society recorded sightings of over ninety-one different species in and around the City's parks and conservation areas. In recent years, a bald eagle visited Ell Pond on several occasions and a red-tail hawk also chose Melrose as its hunting ground. Forested areas in Melrose are natural settings for a variety of wildlife including raccoons, pheasants, rabbits, owls, and foxes. The City's ponds support aquatic life such as eels, bass, red perch, sunfish, oriental carp, hornpout, bullfrogs, snakes, and turtles. Canada geese and mallards can also be found near the water. The geese in particular have become troublesome in the Ell Pond area, and the City continues to work to control geese landings at Ell Pond.

Wild turkeys have been spotted in and around Melrose. It has been speculated that a recent rabies epidemic sufficiently lowered the raccoon population, a major predator of the turkey, to allow this previously endangered species to make a comeback. Consequently, wild turkeys have been thriving in this relatively urban region. A contributing factor to their current visibility may also be that development of formerly natural areas has displaced wild turkeys and other animals from their natural habitat. As a result, turkeys have been increasingly feeding outside downtown restaurants.

Within the Middlesex Fells, predators are present. Although illusive, coyotes are present in the Middlesex Fells and have been documented by sightings. Fishers have also been documented in the Middlesex Fells. These predators are venturing into the developed areas of Melrose that border larger open spaces.

There are six certified vernal pools in Melrose and several potential vernal pools. These pools are an important resource as they serve as a breeding ground for amphibians and invertebrate animals. During the summer months, vernal pools can completely dry out, thus no fish population inhabits them. Without their natural predators, amphibians flourish in vernal pools.

The Mass Wildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program lists Flagg Acres and Mount Hood as priority habitats of rare species and has

identified eight different birds, plants, beetles, and moths in Melrose listed in Table 4 below.¹⁸

Scientific Name	Common Name	Taxonomic Group	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
<i>Antrostomus vociferus</i>	Eastern Whip-poorwill	Bird	Special Concern	2019
<i>Cicindela rufiventris hentzii</i>	Hentz's Red-bellied Tiger Beetle	Beetle	Threatened	1914
<i>Catocala Herodias</i>	Herodias Underwing Moth	Butterfly/Moth	Special Concern	2011
<i>Pyrrhia aurantiago</i>	Orange Swallow Moth	Butterfly/Moth	Special Concern	2011
<i>Cicindela purpurea</i>	Purple Tiger Beetle	Beetle	Special Concern	1916

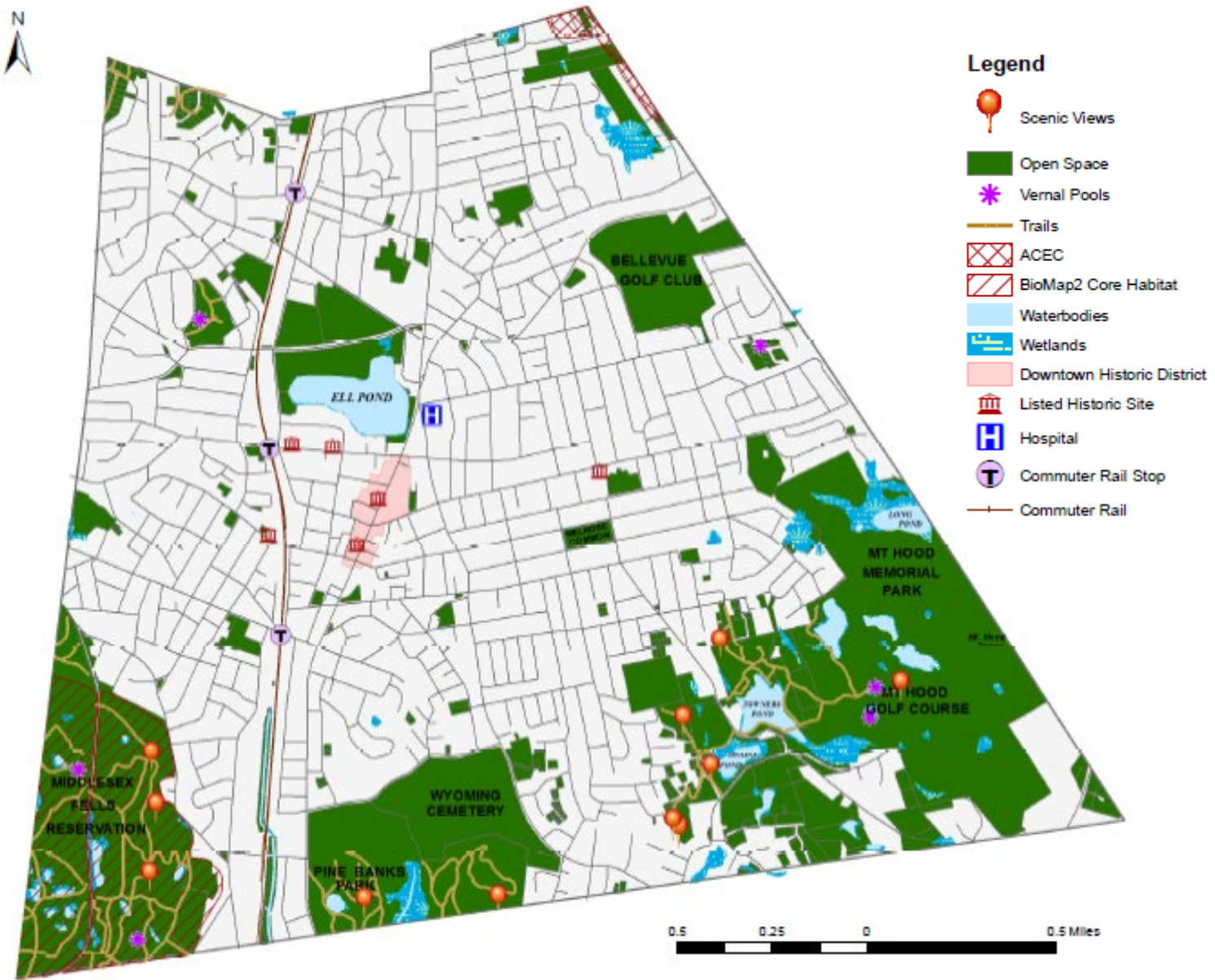
Wildlife corridors are present on the western edge and the eastern edge of Melrose, but there are few corridors that cross east to west within Melrose. In addition, the railroad corridor is a wildlife corridor through Melrose for small urban animals as it is rarely disturbed by humans. Larger animals, such as the predators that have been spotted in Melrose, travel throughout the Middlesex Fells entering Melrose on the western side of the City. On the eastern side of the City, wildlife can travel throughout the Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course, the Swains Pond and Towners Pond Conservation Area, and the numerous undeveloped City-owned and privately-owned open space parcels. However, wildlife corridors that span out from these areas are limited as the surrounding areas are densely developed.

F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

The ponds and wetlands, igneous bedrock with outcrops, the surrounding greenbelt, and uplands form the major scenic resources of the City of Melrose. These critical areas form the backbone of the remaining substantial natural environments in an otherwise man-made landscape. These scenic resources are accessible by Conservation Commission and Park Commission trails, as well as in the Middlesex Fells. Although primarily located within the Towns of Wakefield and Saugus, the Golden Hills Area of Critical Environmental Concern represents a unique environment within the City of Melrose. Scenic resources and unique environments are illustrated on Figure 28.

¹⁸ Rare species viewer, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Available at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer>

Figure 28: Unique Features Map



As for scenic quality, the ponds, wetlands, forestlands, and golf courses provide the most visual variety and relief from an otherwise built-up landscape. Several promontories, such as those at Mount Hood Tower, Rocky View Trail, Sea View Trail, and overlooks within the Middlesex Fells, offer panoramic views of Melrose, surrounding communities, the Boston skyline and the Atlantic Ocean. Perhaps even more interesting, is the Cascade in the Middlesex Fells, one of the few natural waterfalls in the metro-Boston region. Visiting the Cascade is popular year-round, particularly during the winter for its ice climbing opportunities.

Figure 29: Boston from Sea View Trail



Source: OPCD

Golden Hills, an area designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern by the State is mostly located in the Towns of Wakefield and Saugus, but a small area is in the northeastern corner of Melrose, along Windsor Street to Bay State Road between

Ledge Street and the municipal boundary.¹⁹ Golden Hills contains an unusual blend of residential and open space resources in a heavily developed area. In the Melrose portion, the terrain is very hilly, and slopes down to three ponds and wetlands in Saugus and Wakefield. The Area of Critical Environmental Concern designation can be used by communities to protect and manage areas that have natural or cultural significance on regional or statewide level.

Cultural and Historic Resources

Melrose is home to many cultural events and historic landmarks; several of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places including: The Beebe Estate, Larrabee's Brick Block, Melrose Public Library, The Phineas Upham House, The Trinity Episcopal Church, The Middlesex Fells Reservation Parkways, and the Downtown Historic District.²⁰

Downtown Melrose

Melrose's downtown, defined by the Main Street commercial corridor from Wyoming Avenue to Ell Pond, serves as a focus of community life. Extensive use of red brick and cloth awnings, coupled with wrought-iron Victorian lampposts and a predominance of carved wooden shop signs lend a quaint, historical sense to the downtown, which serves as an everyday promenade and as a

¹⁹ Massachusetts Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Mass.gov. Available at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-areas-of-critical-environmental-concern-acecs-statewide-map/download>

²⁰ National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service. Available at: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>

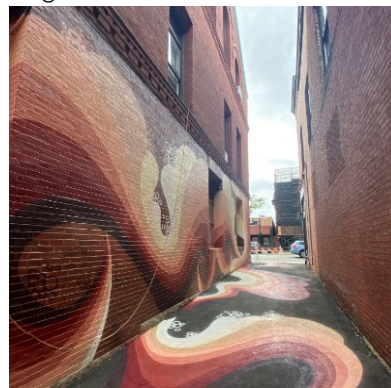
venue for annual events such as the Victorian Fair. The scenic downtown area, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, culminates at Ell Pond Park, which features an expansive view of the pond, benches and paths, as well as a gazebo for outdoor performances.

The downtown district is home to a variety of shops, restaurants, and seating areas for residents to gather, including the newly transformed Central Terrace Alley. The City transformed the space from an auto-centric alley to a lively public gathering space when it repaved the alleyway, closed the curb cut, and installed tables, benches, lights, and a colorful, abstract mural celebrating diversity.

Figure 30: Downtown Parklet



Figure 31: Central Terrace



Source: OPCD

Memorial Hall

Memorial Hall, which serves as a commemorative monument to the patriotism of service men and women from Melrose, is also a cultural center for the community. The Melrose Veterans Group and the Melrose Symphony Orchestra call this building home. Many other community groups use the building as well, for performances, annual events and fundraisers.

The Beebe Estate

The Beebe Estate, originally constructed as a summer retreat in 1828, was acquired by the City of Melrose in 1963 and underwent a significant renovation and restoration process to preserve the historic property. Apart from providing office space for several organizations, including the Council on Aging, the Melrose Alliance Against Violence, and the Friends of the Fells, the Estate is used for art shows, rentals, and other events and activities under the oversight of the Beebe Estate Board of Trustees.

Other Cultural and Historic Resources

The City's Wayfinding & Creative Placemaking Initiative, which began in 2020, supported the transformation of the City's open spaces into public art. In addition to Central Terrace, artists were commissioned to create pieces in well-

traveled locations, which resulted in the installation of the mural at the Melrose High School and painted utility boxes. The final phase of this initiative involves installing traditional wayfinding elements, like signs and kiosks, throughout the City to direct residents and visitors to popular destinations. It is expected that this will be complete by the end of 2023.

Figures 32-34: Melrose Public Art



Source: OPCD

To help preserve the distinct features of the City's Downtown Historic District, the Melrose Historic District Commission, comprised of volunteers appointed by the City Council, work alongside the Office of Planning and Community Development to review any proposed architectural changes in the district prior to permitting. Separately, the volunteers comprising the Melrose Historical Commission are charged with the preservation, protection and promotion of the historical heritage, neighborhoods, landscapes, and architectural assets of the community.

Other volunteer groups that work to enrich creative, cultural, and programmatic experiences for Melrosians are the Melrose Cultural Council and the Melrose Creative Alliance. Additionally, Follow Your Art, a nonprofit organization, provides art classes and community engagement through art for all ages and abilities. The City partners with community groups, organizations, and artists to help host several popular, citywide festivals including Porchfest, the Melrose Arts Festival, and Melrose Open Studios, among many others.

G. Environmental Challenges

Environmental challenges facing Melrose are related to the urban nature of the community. Demand for housing in the region has grown while the supply of available land in the city has decreased; thus, developers seek to build on land that is not inherently suitable for development, such as near wetlands, greatly sloped land, and extremely rocky terrain. Developing these marginal lands causes challenges such as erosion and sedimentation. Other issues facing Melrose include the effects of climate change, flooding from stormwater, pollution, and the illegal dumping of household waste, all of which are typical for urban communities.

Development

Climate Change and Resiliency

Like other communities nationwide, Melrose has experienced the effects of climate change and has been planning ways to become more resilient and adaptable while reducing the use of nonrenewable resources. In partnership with the Metro Mayors Coalition, which seeks to create regional solutions to climate challenges, the City's Sustainability Manager, and the many volunteer advocacy groups, the City has taken steps to prepare for more extreme weather events.

As detailed in the recently released Net Zero Action Plan, the City is committed to becoming a net zero community by 2050 using 31 strategies that focus on electrifying residential heating systems, introducing greener transportation options, and greening the community's electric grid. The City also conducted a feasibility study and master plan for Ell Pond, which included strategies for stormwater management and flood mitigation. In December 2022, the City was awarded \$1 million in federal funding to implement the recommended stormwater management actions.

New Construction

The undeveloped forested ridges, and ponds with associated wetland vegetation, are vital resources that provide protection against erosion and sedimentation of water resources. Soil maintenance and preservation of vegetation is particularly important on the steep slopes associated with the higher rocky elevations. Without plants and soil, the runoff of surface water down the hillsides of bedrock would become erosive and destructive.

The City has regulations to protect these areas when development is proposed. The City's local Wetland Protection Ordinance has strengthened the Conservation Commission's ability to protect wetland resources. The Slope Protection Ordinance, passed in 2005, allows the Planning Board to regulate the manipulation of topography, which often results in an alteration of the natural landscape, a reduction in vegetation, an upheaval of existing drainage patterns, and can result in a change in the community's character. The Site Plan Review process allows the City to thoroughly review drainage systems of commercial, industrial, and residential developments of more than four units and requires a maintenance plan for stormwater management systems. Lastly, Applicants are required to pay a one-time infiltration/inflow fund contribution for any increase in proposed sewer flows compared to existing conditions.

Water Pollution, Flooding, and Stormwater Management

The ponds in the southeastern section of Melrose located near the areas of outcropping bedrock and steep slopes, are susceptible to any pollutants carried down the impermeable sides of these hills. Water pollution has already

caused these ponds to be closed to swimmers but has not advanced to the point of precluding fishing and other water-related recreation. The City has also experienced stormwater pollution due to residents dumping or storing leaves and grass clippings near waterways.

To address flooding concerns, the City prepared a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2019 and the Department of Public Works has completed a number of capital projects that address areas of flooding throughout the City. This includes installing rain gardens with native plants designed for optimal stormwater filtration to remove pollutants from street runoff and reduce flooding. The grant money received for the Ell Pond Feasibility Study will also help improve stormwater management and mitigate flooding.

To prevent any commingling of stormwater runoff and sewage overflow, the Department of Public Works conducts quarterly inspections at the City Yard and Wyoming Cemetery to make sure nonpoint source pollution is addressed. Additionally, the City is implementing a Stormwater Management Program to improve the water quality at the City's ponds, streams, and downstream waterways. Education materials for residents are distributed throughout the year with information about how to keep the City's bodies of water clean from salt, de-icer, and yard waste.

Household Waste

The Conservation Commission has identified the dumping of household waste on open spaces around the City as an issue. This not only creates unsightly conditions, but it also contributes to pollution of waterways and can impact wildlife. Raising public awareness and more vigilant oversight of these lands are possible remedies to the problem of illegal dumping.

Landfills

There are no active landfills that operate in Melrose today. There were locations known to be used as landfills in the past but these locations have since been redeveloped.

Hazardous Waste

According to the Massachusetts Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, there have been 129 reported disposal incidents in Melrose since 1987.²¹ The vast majority posed a relatively minor risk, but two incidents are classified as a Tier II, which warrant clean-up under a Licensed Site Professional. None involved a high enough risk to require an EEO permit.²² Melrose also has nine sites that

²¹Waste Site & Reportable Releases Results, Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs. Available at:

²² The Waste Site Cleanup Program, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. Available at: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/the-waste-site-cleanup-program>

are subject to Activity and Use Limitations (AUL).²³ These are sites where cleanup was not achieved to the most protective use (residential standard) and a Notice of AUL must be attached to the deed of the contaminated properties. Two sites are classified as contaminated groundwater and soil where a permanent solution was achieved although some contaminants may still be present. The Tier 2 sites can be viewed in Table 5 and the other seven sites in Table 6, below.

Site Name	Address	Contamination Type	Chapter 21E Status
Melrose Public Work	72 Tremont Street	Oil and Hazardous Waste	Tier 2
186 Tremont Street	186 Tremont Street	Oil and Hazardous Waste	Tier 2

Site Name	Address	Status	RAO Class	AUL Date
Jackson Dry Cleaners	29-33 Essex Street	TMPS*	TN†	12/01/2017
Hickory St./Harold St.	Off Swains Pond Ave.	RAO**	A3‡	03/13/2012
N/A	50 Tremont Street	RAO	A3§	06/04/2009
Lucey's service Station	889 Main Street	RAO	A3	07/15/2005
NHD Hardware Store	106 Main Street	RAO	A3	09/09/1998
N/A	22 Corey Road	RAO	B2	07/13/1995
N/A	35 Grove Street	RAO	A3	09/30/1994

Notes:

*TMPS (Temporary Solution): submitted statement asserting that sufficient actions were taken to eliminate all substantial hazards but more permanent solutions are necessary,

**RAO (Response Action Outcome): report filed with EEO that actions taken have eliminated substantial hazards and no significant risk exists on the site

†Class TN (Temporary solution): site must be periodically reviewed until permanent solution achieved

‡Class A3: Permanent solution achieved but some contamination remains and AULs have been implemented

²³Waste Site & Reportable Releases Results, Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs. Available at: <https://eeonline.eea.state.ma.us/Portal/#!/search/wastesite/results?SearchType=All%20Sites&TownName=MELROSE>

§Class B2: no remedial action required if AULs are implemented

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Section 5: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land

A. Protected Public and Nonprofit Parcels

The term *open space* as used in this plan denotes any medium or large parcel of undeveloped land, and all land (developed or not) that is managed primarily for preservation or recreation purposes. *Protected open space* refers to open space owned by a municipality, a state or federal agency, a non-profit land protection agency, or private entities, and managed primarily for conservation, recreation, or environmental protection. Protected open space is sheltered from development, although there is sometimes the chance that the use of these areas will be changed. Ordinary open space is often *unprotected*; for instance, land owned by the City, and privately owned parcels are often relatively easy to develop, even if they have been maintained as open space for several years.

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 or a location to increase physical activity and health. In relatively high-density cities like Melrose, parks and open space greatly enhance the quality of residential life.

Open space also has important economic benefits.²⁴ It protects and enhances the property values of nearby land. Open space also attracts business and investment. Research on this topic suggests that the proximity to recreation and open space amenities as being the most important factors in choosing the location of a small business, while quality of life ranks as an important factor in choosing the location of a large business.²⁵

Additionally, conservation land serves important 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.²⁶ Open space can also reduce runoff and diminish the frequency and severity of flooding.²⁷ Wooded open space helps to cool the city and improves air quality.²⁸

²⁴ Harnik, Peter and Welle, Ben. "Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System." The Trust for Public Lands. 2009.

²⁵ Crompton, John L. "Competitiveness: Parks and Open Space as Factors Shaping a Location's Success in Attracting Companies, Labor Supplies, and Retirees. In *The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation*. Constance T.F. de Brun, Ed. Trust for Public Lands. 2007.

²⁶ Kane, Richard P. "The Ecological and Biological Benefits of Open Space." *The Benefits of Open Space*. Leonard Hamilton, Ed. New Vernon, NJ: Great Swamp Watershed Assoc. 1997.

²⁷ *ibid*

²⁸ *ibid*

Proximity to downtown Boston, convenient rail service to the central city, beautiful old homes, a historic district, and excellent schools all make Melrose an attractive residential area and popular commuter suburb. These features also put land at a premium. Melrose is fortunate to have some open space in the city preserved through the Conservation Commission, Park Department, and various state agencies. This open space, in addition to both the formal and informal activities it supports, contributes to the high quality of life enjoyed by the community. Although Melrose is almost fully developed, 33 percent of the land in Melrose is parks and open space as illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7: Land Use in Melrose

Land Use	Percent
Residential	59.18%
Commercial & Industrial	4.65%
Parks & Open Space	33.28%
Municipal & Institutional	2.86%
Vacant Land	.02%
Total	100%

The City currently owns approximately 545 acres of protected open space. This figure includes land controlled and managed by the Park Department, the School Department, the Public Works Department, and the Conservation Commission. The Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Bellevue Golf Club also have significant open space holdings in Melrose. Table 8 provides a breakdown of open space by ownership and type.

Table 8: Open Space Categorized by Owner and Protection Status

Protected Parcels	Total Acreage
City of Melrose	569.6
• Parks and Playground	420.6
• Cemetery	49.0
• Conservation Commission	100.0
Commonwealth/DCR	159.6
Private (cemetery)	6.2
Total Protected	735.4
Unprotected Parcels	
City of Melrose (Squares, Schools, Undeveloped Land)	25.7
Private Recreation (Bellevue Golf Club & Incarnation Church)	53.4
Other Private	52.6
Total Unprotected	131.7

As noted above, “protected” open space and recreation facilities shall refer to all nonprofit, state, or municipally owned lands that are legally precluded from development. The City of Melrose has a variety of protected open space and

recreation facilities under its management. These facilities are distributed throughout the city and vary in size from 251 acres to less than 1/4 of an acre. The Park Department and the Conservation Commission generally serve as the managing bodies for municipally owned open space and recreation resources.

The Park Department oversees the maintenance of neighborhood playgrounds, school playgrounds, and parks highlighted in Table 9. These two departments work together to ensure that facilities are properly kept by regularly reviewing maintenance schedules and evaluating work performance for all recreation space.

Table 9 also includes parks and playgrounds, which are not necessarily protected, but are open to public use during non-school hours. Use of the athletic fields at the High School and Middle School Complex and at the Ell Pond Memorial Park by private Adult and Youth Sport Leagues do require a permit for use at a cost that is routinely evaluated, as does field use at Pine Banks Park which is managed under a different entity.

Park	Location	Description of Facilities
Athletic Fields (Fred Green Field, Morelli Field, Cabbage Patch)	High School and Middle School Complex - Lynn Fells Parkway	Multi-purpose Field, Baseball Field, Practice Field
Beebe School Play Yard	West Foster Street	School Play Yard
Bingham Community Playground	W. Wyoming St. & Cottage St.	Tot Lot
Bowden Park	W. Emerson St. & Vinton St.	Passive Park
Burnett Park	Burnett St.	Wooded Undeveloped Land
Colby Park	Lynn Fells Parkway and Larchmont Rd.	Passive Park
Conant Park	Baxter St. & Conant Rd.	Baseball Field, Tot Lot
Drinkwater Tot Lot	East End of Porter St	Small Tot Lot
Dunton Park	Franklin St. & Pratt St.	Small Park with Tot Lot
Ell Pond Memorial Park (Knoll Fields, Lewis Monk Field, Crystal Street Tennis Courts, Lyons Memorial Tennis Courts, Dog Park, Skate Park)	Lynn Fells Parkway	2 Soccer Fields, Junior Soccer Field, Little League Field, 8 Tennis Courts, Dog Park, Skate Park, Passive Recreation Areas
Ell Pond Park	700 Main St.	Passive Park with Gazebo

Foss Park	Lynde St. & Malvern St.	Softball Field, Tot Lot, Basketball Court, Pickleball Court
Franklin Field	Greenleaf Place	Two Soccer Fields, Tot Lot
Franklin Early Childhood Center Tot Lot	Main St. & Franklin St.	School Tot Lot
Gooch Park	Maple St. and Florence St.	Park with Basketball Court, Tot Lot
Hesseltine Field	Ruggles St. adjacent to Horace Mann School	Baseball Field, Basketball Court, Multipurpose Field, Tot Lot
Hoover School Playground	Glendower St.	School Tot Lot
Lebanon Street Playground	Lebanon St. across from Wyoming Cemetery	Softball Field, Tot Lot, Basketball Court
Lincoln Playground	Pleasant Street behind Lincoln School	Baseball Field, Tot Lot, Basketball Court
Mary A. Livermore Memorial Park	Upham Street & Felton Place	Tot Lot and Basketball Court
Mary Foley Park	Grove St. & Myrtle St.	Small Passive Park with Benches
Melrose Common	East Foster, Sixth, Laurel, & Larrabee St.	2 Softball Fields, Tot Lot, Basketball Court, Riding Track
Messengers Field	Brunswick Park at Roosevelt School	Softball Field, Tot Lot, Basketball Court
Milano Park	Main St. & Grove St.	Small Passive Park with Benches
Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course	Slayton Rd.	Golf Course, Tot Lot, Trails
Ripley School Play Yard	Lebanon St. & Forest St.	School Tot Lot
Sewall Woods Park	Lynn Fells Parkway & Sewall Woods Rd.	Passive Park with Trails
Volunteer Park	Warren St. & Melrose St.	Park with Tot Lot
Winthrop School Playground	First St. at Winthrop School	School Tot Lot

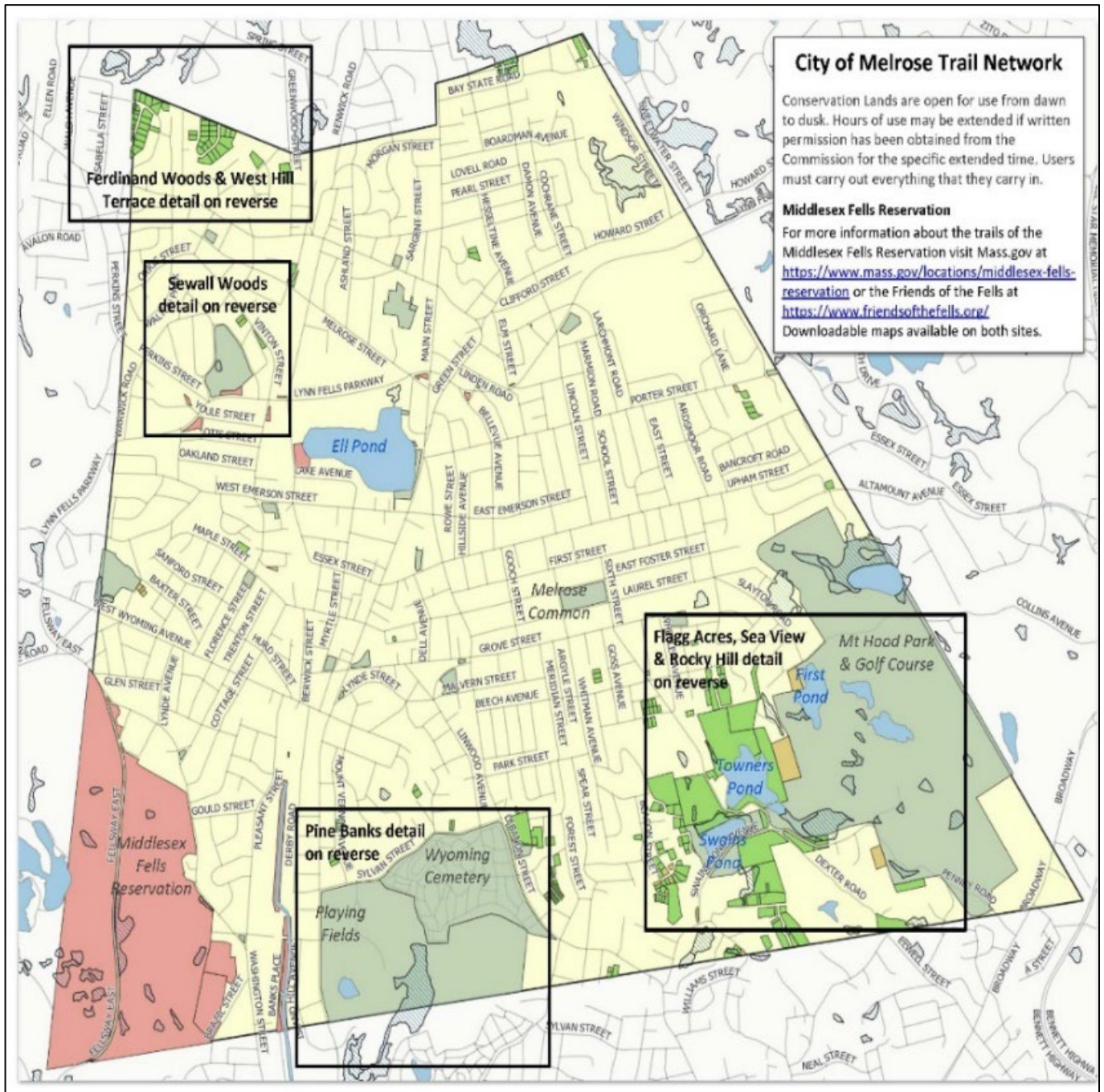
The parks and playgrounds listed above are typically less than three acres in size. The largest City-owned park is the 251-acre Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course. The Park Department is responsible for maintenance of this facility, which is carried out using the Park Commission’s Enterprise Funds. The Athletic Complex and the Ell Pond Memorial Park, located along Lynn Fells Parkway is the next largest, totaling approximately 33 acres, which serves the community’s need for athletic fields.

The Conservation Commission manages approximately 99 acres of undeveloped land primarily located in the southeast and northeast corners of the City, described in Table 10.

Conservation Area	Location	Description
Towners Pond and Swains Pond Conservation Area including:	Swains Pond Avenue	Wooded conservation land surrounding the two ponds
Flagg Acres Trail	Swains Pond Avenue	Main trail network around Towners Pond with connections to Mount Hood Park Trails
Knox Memorial Trail	Swains Pond Avenue	Trail around perimeter of Swains Pond with connections to Rocky Hill Trail
Rocky View Trail	Glendower Road	Trail through wooded areas with rocky ledges leading from the Hoover School to Swains Pond including an outdoor classroom; a recently acquired new parcel in this area has led to the restoration of the Rocky view Trail near Swains Pond which is where the bulk of current trails are located.
Seaview Trail	Beech Street	Trail connects neighborhood on Beech/Water Streets to conservation area
Ferdinand Woods	Ferdinand Street	Woodland with informal trails and connections to Stoneham and Wakefield
High Rock Trail	West Hill Terrace	Sparsely wooded hilltop with ledge outcrops and views to Boston

The Conservation Commission also owns numerous smaller parcels distributed around the city. Many of these were abandoned to the City in tax title proceedings in the 1930s and 1940s as land of little value due to steep slopes and presence of wetlands, and were subsequently transferred to Conservation jurisdiction. These areas serve to protect the natural landscape of Melrose at a time when development pressures have led to proposals to develop ledges and wetlands previously considered unbuildable. These conservation lands provide precious naturally wooded areas in densely developed neighborhoods.

Figure 35: City of Melrose Trail Network



Source: City of Melrose

Pine Banks Park, 78 acres of which is in Melrose, is a recreational facility that has been jointly maintained by the cities of Melrose and Malden since 1905. Pine Banks was established as a result of a gift of 107.5 acres in Melrose and Malden by Colonel Harry E. Converse, on behalf of himself and sisters as heirs of Elizabeth S. Converse. The gift was made on the condition that the Cities of Malden and Melrose would bear the expense of upkeep. Fields are now used by soccer, rugby, football, and field hockey teams and have alleviated the field-shortages being felt in both communities. The project was realized through the combined efforts of Malden and Melrose, the nonprofit Board of Trustees, various local organizations, and funding from several Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities PARC Grants (formerly known as Urban Self-Help Grants).

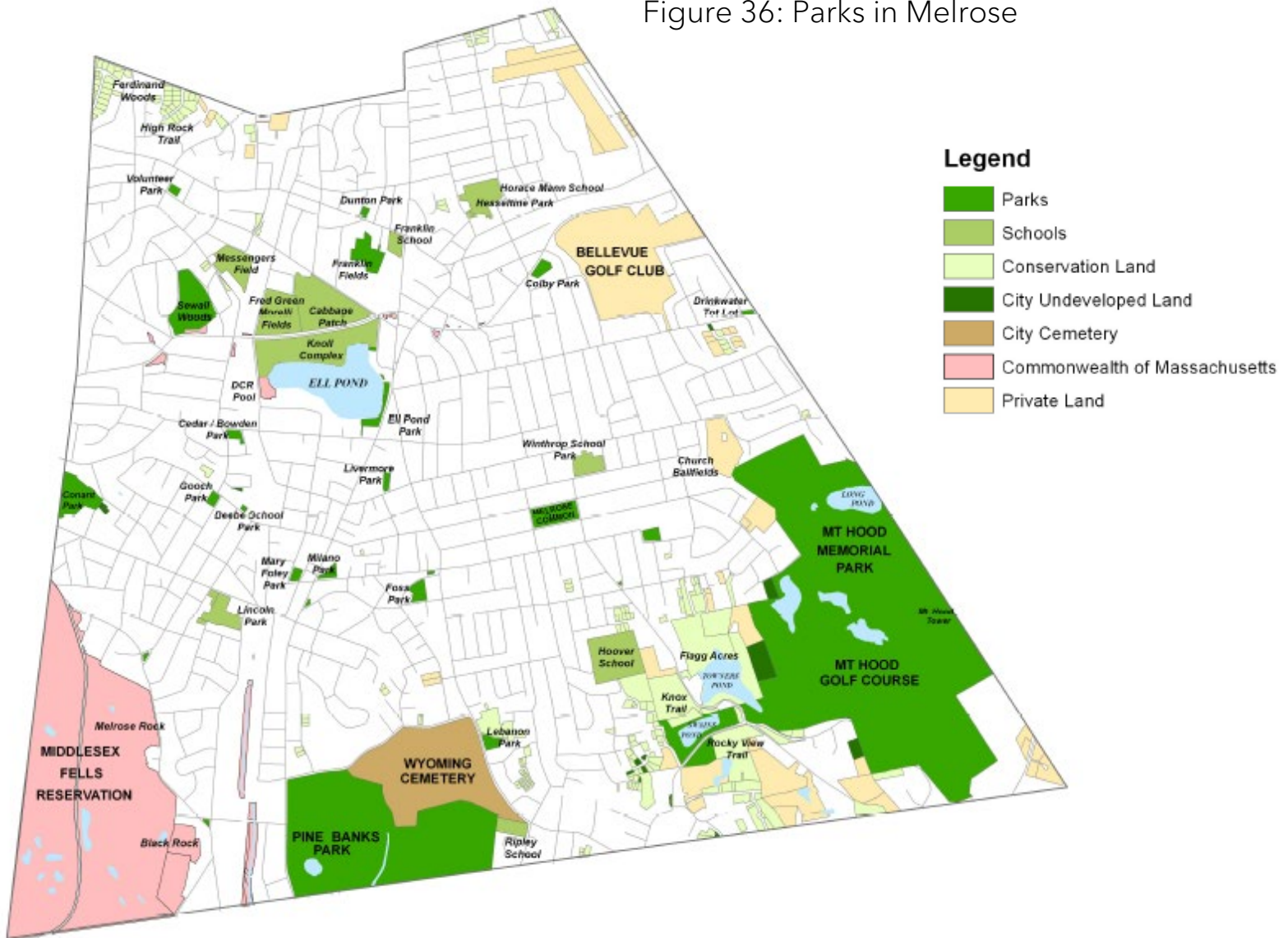
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns approximately 160 acres of open space in the City through the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). By far the most significant state holding is the 150-acre portion of the Middlesex Fells Reservation that lies within city limits. Additionally, the DCR operates the Lawrence W. Lloyd Memorial Swimming Pool, located on Tremont Street. Much of the remaining land is held as part of the Lynn Fells Parkway, which passes through the City.

The Middlesex Fells Reservation, in addition to the land surrounding Towners and Swains Pond, are the City's largest tracts of land protected in perpetuity, though several smaller sites are scattered throughout Melrose.

B. Open Space and Recreation Availability in Melrose

Melrose currently has a total of approximately 900 acres of protected and unprotected land for roughly 29,000 citizens, or 30 acres per 1,000 population, which surpasses the National Recreation and Park Association's standard of between 6.25 and 10.5 acres of open space per 1,000 population. These open space and recreation facilities can be divided into a few general categories depending on the size, accessibility, and facilities, including wooded areas, wetlands, city and regional parks, playing fields, neighborhood parks and playgrounds, tot lots, and elementary school play yards. However, this basic calculation should not be regarded as the authority on the adequacy of the City's park system; rather, the City's unique geographic, socioeconomic, and demographic characteristics should determine the community's open space and recreation needs.

Figure 36: Parks in Melrose



According to The Trust for Public Land, a national nonprofit organization, 95% of residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park.²⁹ However, there are a lack of neighborhood playgrounds in portions of the eastern section of the city. In the southeast, much of the land is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission and used for passive recreation. The northeastern portion of the City is also farther than most areas of the City from a neighborhood playground with Hesseltine Field and Horace Mann Playground being the closest, both of which are located at the elementary school.

As such, any future land use change from private land to parkland, or vice versa, should closely weigh the location and benefits to the community and the environment rather than the population to acreage basis. The focus on open space and recreation availability in Melrose is on improving existing spaces and the recreational opportunities at them. The City can also continue investing in bicycle infrastructure to increase access to parks and open spaces in neighborhoods where a park is farther away than a 10-minute walk.

Programming

The City of Melrose provides programming in a variety of ways at open spaces. Existing unique programming include summer jazz concerts and outdoor movies in the restored Beebe Estate Gardens, and an annual Fourth of July outdoor concert and other community events at Mount Hood. The Recreation Department offers a diverse range of activities, including summer recreation activities, field sports clinics, yoga, chess lessons, board games, storytelling and arts and crafts classes. The City is committed to ensuring that members of the public who require special accommodations are well served and encourages all residents to participate in its recreational programming.

Following the goals of the 2017 SCORP to increase the availability of water-based recreation, the Recreation Department plans to utilize Ell Pond for kayaking and other water-based activities starting in the summer of 2023. As funds become available, the City will implement the Ell Pond Master Plan which includes additional provisions for passive recreation for users to enjoy.

The Milano Center offers regular programming including weekday lunches, yoga classes, arts and crafts, dancing lessons, and has served as a gathering place for the City's older adults since 1995. The Parks and Recreation Departments also provide activities and programs for older adults including tai chi, and meditation, and a Pickleball Court was recently installed at Foss Park.

²⁹ Melrose, MA, Trust for Public Land. Available at: <https://www.tpl.org/city/melrose-massachusetts>

Playgrounds

The Parks Department has made significant investment in playgrounds, parks and tot lot facilities throughout the City. Neighborhood playgrounds provide passive and active recreation options. They are generally accessible by foot or bicycle without substantial barriers. There are eighteen tot lots in Melrose located throughout the City, some of which are located at the City's elementary schools. Tot lot and elementary school play yards typically serve the active needs of neighborhood and school children, from age eighteen months to eight years of age.

Figure 37: Mt. Hood Playground



Source: OPCD

Parks

Apart from the smaller, neighborhood parks, that serve more localized populations, there are also city and regional parks in Melrose that serve a larger geographical area and offer more active types of recreational uses like hiking and organized sports. Three such parks include:

- Mount Hood Memorial Park
- and Golf Course provides a 18-hole golf course, tot lot, walking trails and sledding in the winter.
- Pine Banks Park features walking and bicycling trails, a dog park, and extensive playing fields.
- The Melrose Common is a city park with opportunities for passive and active recreation. The programmed and unprogrammed activities that occur throughout the year at this park draw residents from throughout the City and region.

Figure 38: Melrose Common



Source: OPCD

Athletic Fields

The High School Athletic Complex, Ell Pond Memorial Park, Melrose Common, Messengers Field, Hesseltine Field, and Conant Field are examples of playing fields that are utilized by the schools and local youth and adult sport leagues. Melrose also offers two regional athletic facilities including:

- Pine Banks Park, which has five fields utilized by organized teams from both Melrose and Malden; and
- Morelli Field, which is a 267-person capacity baseball field adjacent to the Fred Green Field at the Melrose High School and Middle School complex.

Figure 39: Pine Banks



Source: Pine Banks Park

Figure 40: Morelli Field



Source: The Patch

Ponds

Ell Pond is popular for different recreational activities including fishing. The Recreation Department began a kayaking program in the summer of 2023. Towners Pond and Swains Pond serve as passive recreation areas, surrounded by the City's trail network and favorite areas for hiking, shoreline fishing, and picnicking. Public boating is not permitted on Towners Pond under the terms of the City's purchase of the property. Swimming is prohibited in ponds for health reasons. These ponds also provide regional amenities for wildlife enthusiasts and naturalists.

Trails

There are five major trail networks throughout the City that are maintained by the Conservation Commission. Additionally, the Middlesex Fells Reservation provides a variety of hiking and bicycling trails that are beloved by in Melrose and across the region.

The Lloyd Memorial Swimming Pool, located nearby Ell Pond, is also a popular regional amenity that is free and open to the public during the summer months.

C. Unprotected and Private Parcels

The largest area of privately held open space is the 49-acre Bellevue Country Club. The Club offers a 9-hole golf course, tennis courts, and swimming facilities to its members. Though it is not legally protected, this area is highly unlikely to be developed in the future. However, there are several scattered private open space parcels throughout Melrose that are more susceptible to

development. Many of these parcels are adjacent to existing conservation areas and, as such, should be considered a focus of efforts for future protection.

The parcels are mostly located in the southeast region of the City and were included as Priority Preservation Areas in the MetroNorth Land Use Priority Plan released by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development in 2014. These Priority Preservation Areas deserve protection as there are sensitive environmental resources due to the presence of wetlands and are also contiguous to existing open space where opportunities to maintain wildlife corridors and create trails could be achieved. A brief description of each is provided in Table 11 below.

Tables 12 through 20 provide a breakdown of the inventory of open space and recreation land in the City of Melrose, including protected and unprotected land. Appendix A contains a more detailed inventory.

Table 11: Private Unprotected Parcels

Conservation Area	Description
Slayton Road Property	The 3.9-acres area is a large swampy low land containing a culverted stream. The property is within a flood plain and abuts Mount Hood Park and Golf Course. Protecting this property will limit the Bow Street bowl area from further impact due to flooding.
Dexter Road Properties	These properties consist of several parcels over approximately 21.3- acres which likely provide wildlife habitat and corridors. The Conservation Commission is trying to acquire one parcel and the other may be donated in the near future. The other parcels contain wetlands and rocky hillsides. The wetland closest to the Malden line appears to be heavily impacted by phragmite growth and Malden DPW has reported flooding issues on adjacent properties. There is conservation land abutting and nearby these properties.
Abutting Hoover School (Swains Pond Ave)	This 2.68-acre area consists of a forested hillside with a large wetland area. Most of the site is undeveloped aside from a single-family house. This area likely provides a wildlife corridor.
Abutting Flagg Acres (Mill Road)	This 3.5-acre property previously had one single family house that was abandoned and destroyed by a fire. There are wetlands on the site with a stream flowing from the first pond abutting Mount Hood to Towners Pond. City conservation land abuts two sides of this property with the Mount Hood Golf Course abutting the other. The area likely provides a wildlife habitat and corridor along the stream path.
Penney Hill Road Properties	There are three parcels that make up this area spanning about 2.25 acres, combined. The wetland on the parcel closest to the Malden line appears to be heavily impacted by phragmite growth and Malden DPW has reported flooding issues on adjacent properties in Malden. The parcels serve as an upland wildlife habitat and likely function as a wildlife corridor.
Porter Street Properties	These smaller properties consist of a tennis court and fence, which can be accessed via a house on Elmcrest Circle. The parcels are surrounded by conservation land and serve as part of the greenbelt. Development of a paper street is a threat to the wildlife and vernal pools situated in proximity.
Grove Street Properties	These three contiguous parcels include a swampy field and wetlands; however, a full wetland delineation has never been conducted to show the extent of the area. Vegetation includes cattails and other native species. An open stream channel runs through the parcels from a drain culvert on Burnett St. into another culvert on Sycamore Rd. A city drain easement is located here and there may be some wetland enhancement for flood control in the future.

Table 12: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, City of Melrose Parks

Name	Location	Owner	Managing Agency	Size (acres)	Zoning ¹	Type	Condition	Public Access ²	Recreation Potential	Protection Status	Grants Received
Bowden Park	Vinton Street	City	Park Dept.	0.62	UR-A	Neighborhood Park	Good	Yes	Medium	Perpetuity	None
Burnett Park	Burnett Street	City	Park Dept.	1.02	SR-B	Undeveloped Land	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Colby Park	Lynn Fells Parkway	City	Park Dept.	0.89	SR-B	Neighborhood Park	Good	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Conant Park	Baxter Street	City	Park Dept.	5.64	UR-A	City-wide Park, Playfields, Neighborhood Park	Good	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Drinkwater Tot Lot	Porter Street	City	Park Dept.	0.24	SR-B	Tot Lot	Poor	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Dunton Park	Franklin Street	City	Park Dept.	0.34	UR-B	Neighborhood Park, Tot Lot	Good	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Ell Pond	Main Street	City	Park Dept.	24	UR-B	Water	Pond	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	
Ell Pond Park	Main Street	City	Park Dept.	1.51	BD	City-wide Park	Good	Yes	Medium	Perpetuity	None
Foss Park	Lynde Street & Malvern Street	City	Park Dept.	1.37	UR-B	Neighborhood Playground, Tot Lot	Good	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Franklin Field	Greenleaf Place	City	Park Dept.	4.9	UR-C	Playfields, Tot Lot	Good	Yes	High	None	None
Gooch Park	Florence Street	City	Park Dept.	0.64	UR-A	Neighborhood Playground, Tot Lot	Excellent	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Lebanon Street Playground	Lebanon Street	City	Park Dept.	0.97	UR-A	Neighborhood Playground, Tot Lot	Excellent	Yes	Medium	Perpetuity	None
Mary A. Livermore Memorial Park	Upham Street	City	Park Dept.	0.53	UR-B	Neighborhood Playground, Tot Lot	Excellent	Yes	Medium	Perpetuity	None
Mary Foley Park	Grove Street	City	Park Dept.	0.61	BA-1	Neighborhood Park	Very Good	Yes	Medium	Perpetuity	None
Melrose Common	East Foster Street	City	Park Dept.	4.03	UR-A	Neighborhood Playground, Tot Lot	Excellent	Yes	High	Perpetuity	Our Common Backyards (2014)
Milano Park	Main Street	City	Park Dept.	0.03	BA-1	Neighborhood Park	Excellent	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course	Stillman Road	City	Park Dept.	251	SR-A	Regional Park	Good	Yes	High	Perpetuity	Urban Self Help (1997; 1999)
Pine Banks Park	Main Street	Melrose & Malden	Pine Banks	78	UR-A	Regional Park	Excellent	Yes	High	Perpetuity	Urban Self Help (2003; 2007); Gateway City Parks Initiative (2012)
Sewall Woods Park	Lynn Fells Parkway	City	Park Dept.	9	UR-A	Neighborhood Park	Good	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Swains Pond	Swains Pond Avenue	City	Park Dept.	11.2	SR-A	City-wide Park	Pond	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Volunteer Park	Warren Street	City	Park Dept.	0.43	UR-A	Neighborhood Park, Tot Lot	Excellent	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None

SUBTOTAL (PROTECTED)
SUBTOTAL (UNPROTECTED) 4.9
TOTAL (PARKS)

Source: City of Melrose

Notes:

1 Zoning information taken from the Zoning Map of the City of Melrose, Massachusetts, Revised May 15, Order 2023-81.

2 A “Yes” in this column indicates that the property is legally accessible to the public. Physical access may be limited by topography or other environmental constraints or lack of parking or signage. This table does not include an assessment of accessibility issues as per the Americans with Disabilities Act. These issues are covered in Appendix B.

Table 13: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, City of Melrose School Parks and Playgrounds

Name	Location	Owner	Managing Agency	Size (acres)	Zoning ¹	Type	Condition	Public Access ²	Recreation Potential	Protection Status	Grants Received
Athletic Fields	Lynn Fells Parkway	City	Park Dept.	7.8	UR-B	Playfield	Excellent	Yes	High	Perpetuity	LWCF (1986)
Beebe School Play Yard	West Foster Street	City	Park Dept.	0.18	UR-A	School Play Yard	Good	Yes	Medium	None	None
Bingham Community Playground	West Wyoming Avenue	City	Park Dept.	0.40	UR-C	Tot Lot	Excellent	Yes	High	None	None
Cabbage Patch	Lynn Fells Parkway	City	School/ Park	1.19	UR-B	Playfields	Excellent	Yes	Medium	None	None
Ell Pond Memorial Park	Lynn Fells Parkway	City	School/ Park	16.52	UR-B	City-wide Park	Very Good	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Franklin Early Childhood Center Tot Lot	Main Street	City	School/ Park	0.19	UR-C	School Play Yard	Good	Yes	Low	None	None
Hesseltine Field and Horace Mann Playground	Damon Avenue and Hesseltine Avenue	City	School/ Park	3.42	UR-A	Playfields, School Play Yard, Tot Lot	Excellent	Yes	High	None	None
Hoover School Play Yard	Glendower Road	City	School/ Park	10.75	SR-A	School Play Yard, Tot Lot	Fair	Yes	High	None	None
Lincoln School Playground	Pleasant Street and West Wyoming Avenue	City	Park Dept.	1.71	UR-C	Playfields, School Play Yard, Tot Lot	Excellent	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Messengers Field – Roosevelt School Playground	Brunswick Park	City	Park Dept.	2.53	UR-A	Playfields, School Play Yard, Tot Lot	Excellent	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Ripley School Play Yard	Lebanon Street	City	School/ Park	.17	UR-A	School Play Yard, Tot Lot	Fair	Yes	Low	None	None
Winthrop School Playground	First Street	City	School/ Park	.83	UR-A	School Play Yard, Tot Lot	Good	Yes	High	None	None

SUBTOTAL (PROTECTED)
SUBTOTAL (UNPROTECTED)
TOTAL (SCHOOLS)

Source: City of Melrose

Notes:

- 1 Zoning information taken from the Zoning Map of the City of Melrose, Massachusetts, Revised May 15, Order 2023-81.
- 2 A “Yes” in this column indicates that the property is legally accessible to the public. Physical access may be limited by topography or other environmental constraints or lack of parking or signage. This table does not include an assessment of accessibility issues as per the Americans with Disabilities Act. These issues are covered in Appendix B.

Table 14: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, City of Melrose Cemetery

Name	Location	Owner	Managing Agency	Size (acres)	Zoning ¹	Type	Condition	Public Access	Recreation Potential	Degree of Protection	Grants Received
Wyoming Cemetery	Sylvan Street	City	Cemetery Dept.	49	UR-A	Cemetery	Excellent	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None

TOTAL (CEMETERY - PROTECTED) 49

Source: City of Melrose

Notes:

- 1 Zoning information taken from the Zoning Map of the City of Melrose, Massachusetts, Revised May 15, Order 2023-81.

Table 15: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, City of Melrose Conservation Commission

Name	Location	Owner	Managing Agency	Size (acres)	Zoning ¹	Type	Condition	Public Access ²	Recreation Potential	Degree of Protection	Grants Received
Ferdinand Woods Trail	Ferdinand Street and Columbus Avenue	City	Con Com	4.81	UR-A	Trail, Undeveloped	Good	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
High Rock Trail	West Hill Terrace and Chaska Avenue	City	Con Com	5.03	UR-A	Trail, Undeveloped	Fair	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Mill Road	Mill Road	City	Con Com	0.48	SR-B	Road, Undeveloped	Fair	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Swains Pond and Towners Pond Conservation Area	Swains Pond Avenue	City	Con Com	41.97	SR-A	Trail, Undeveloped	Good	Yes	High	Perpetuity	LWCF (1976) ; Self Help (unknown)
Unnamed	Bowdoin Road	City	Con Com	0.69	SR-B	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Limited	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Cliff Road	City	Con Com	0.30	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	East Rock Park	City	Con Com	0.72	SR-B	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Limited	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Fern Street	City	Con Com	0.92	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Greenwood Street	City	Con Com	0.26	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Hawthorne Street	City	Con Com	0.45	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Limited	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Lake Road	City	Con Com	0.49	SR-A	Trail, Undeveloped	Fair	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Summit Street	City	Con Com	1.02	SR-A	Trail, Undeveloped	Fair	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Swains Pond Avenue	City	Con Com	2.14	SR-A	Trail, Undeveloped	Fair	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Walnut Avenue	City	Con Com	0.42	SR-A	Trail, Undeveloped	Fair	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
TOTAL (COSERVATION COMMISSION - PROTECTED)				58.77							

Source: City of Melrose

Notes:

- 1 Zoning information taken from the Zoning Map of the City of Melrose, Massachusetts, Revised May 15, Order 2023-81.
- 2 A “Yes” in this column indicates that the property is legally accessible to the public. Physical access may be limited by topography or other environmental constraints or lack of parking or signage. This table does not include an assessment of accessibility issues as per the Americans with Disabilities Act. These issues are covered in Appendix B.

Table 16: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, City of Melrose Conservation Commission Tax Title Lands

Name	Location	Owner	Managing Agency	Size (acres)	Zoning ¹	Type	Condition	Public Access ²	Recreation Potential	Degree of Protection	Grants Received
Swains Pond and Towners Pond Conservation Area	Swains Pond Avenue	City	Con Com	6.29	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	LWCF (1976) ; Self Help (unknown)
Unnamed	Altamont Avenue	City	Con Com	0.25	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Bay State Road	City	Con Com	0.08	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Beacon Street	City	Con Com	0.17	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Beacon Street, Prescott Street, & Summit Street	City	Con Com	1.24	SR-A	Trail, Undeveloped	Fair	Yes	High	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Beaumont Street	City	Con Com	0.35	UR-B	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Belmont Place	City	Con Com	0.58	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Bennett Street, Evelyn Street, and Oxford Street	City	Con Com	1.32	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None

Name	Location	Owner	Managing Agency	Size (acres)	Zoning ¹	Type	Condition	Public Access ²	Recreation Potential	Degree of Protection	Grants Received
Unnamed	Cliff Road & Fern Street	City	Con Com	0.37	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Corner Street & Mount Zion Road	City	Con Com	0.78	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Dana Street, Fairfield Avenue, and Lebanon Street	City	Con Com	4.36	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Dexter Road	City	Con Com	1.65	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	No	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Florence Avenue	City	Con Com	0.45	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Granite Street	City	Con Com	0.22	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Greenwood Street	City	Con Com	0.41	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Harold Street & Hickory Street	City	Con Com	1.61	SR-A & UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Hawley Road	City	Con Com	1.01	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Hillside Park & Miller Street	City	Con Com	10.49	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Limited	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Hunnewell Street	City	Con Com	0.15	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Leonard Street	City	Con Com	0.07	UR-B	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Maple Street	City	Con Com	0.39	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	No	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Maple Terrace	City	Con Com	0.62	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Mount Vernon Avenue	City	Con Com	0.32	UR-B	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Mount Vernon Avenue	City	Con Com	0.33	UR-B	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Naples Road	City	Con Com	0.28	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Olive Avenue	City	Con Com	0.36	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	No	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Penney Road	City	Con Com	2.94	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Pleasant Street	City	Con Com	0.04	UR-C	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	No	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Reading Hill Avenue	City	Con Com	0.47	UR-B	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Steffins Terrace	City	Con Com	0.47	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	No	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Stowcroft Road	City	Con Com	0.01	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Sylvan Street	City	Con Com	0.18	UR-B	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Upland Road	City	Con Com	0.19	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Vinton Street	City	Con Com	0.35	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None
Unnamed	Woodland Avenue	City	Con Com	0.51	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	Perpetuity	None

TOTAL (TAX TITLE – PROTECTED) 40.31

Source: City of Melrose

Notes:

- 1 Zoning information taken from the Zoning Map of the City of Melrose, Massachusetts, Revised May 15, Order 2023-81.
- 2 A “Yes” in this column indicates that the property is legally accessible to the public. Physical access may be limited by topography or other environmental constraints or lack of parking or signage. This table does not include an assessment of accessibility issues as per the Americans with Disabilities Act. These issues are covered in Appendix B.

Table 17: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, City of Melrose Other

Name	Location	Owner	Managing Agency	Size (acres)	Zoning ¹	Type	Condition	Public Access	Recreation Potential	Degree of Protection	Grants Received
Bishop Square	Washington Street	City	DPW	0.14	UR-A	Square	Excellent	Yes	Low	None	None
Dimontier Square	Lynde Street & Grove Street	City	DPW	0.12	UR-B	Square	Excellent	Yes	Low	None	None
Lloyd Square	Swains Pond Avenue	City	DPW	0.05	UR-A	Square	Excellent	Yes	Low	None	None
Stone Place Island	Pleasant Street	City	DPW	0.11	UR-A	Square	Excellent	Yes	Low	None	None
Thompson Square	Lynde Street & Main Street	City	DPW	0.11	UR-C	Square	Excellent	Yes	Low	None	None
Unnamed	Beacon Street	City	Park Dept.	0.10	SR-A	Undeveloped, Trail	Fair	Yes	High	None	None
Unnamed	Fern Street	City	Park Dept.	0.19	SR-A	Undeveloped, Trail	Fair	Yes	High	None	None
Unnamed	Maple Terrace	City	Park Dept.	0.09	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	None	None
Unnamed	Mill Road	City	Park Dept.	3.30	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Limited	Medium	None	None
Unnamed	Penney Road	City	Park Dept.	0.03	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	None	None
Unnamed	Penney Road	City	Park Dept.	1.00	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Limited	Low	None	None
Unnamed	Porter Street	City	Park Dept.	0.12	SR-B	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	None	None
Unnamed	Prescott Street	City	Park Dept.	0.07	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Limited	Medium	None	None
Unnamed	Sibley Street	City	Park Dept.	0.34	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Limited	Medium	None	None
Unnamed	South High Street	City	Park Dept.	0.09	UR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	None	None
Unnamed	Stillman Road	City	Park Dept.	1.00	SR-B	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	High	None	None
Unnamed	Summit Street	City	Park Dept.	0.14	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Medium	None	None
Unnamed	Swains Pond Road	City	Park Dept.	0.17	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Low	None	None
Unnamed	Walnut Avenue	City	Park Dept.	0.09	SR-A	Undeveloped	Undeveloped	Yes	Medium	None	None
TOTAL (OTHER – UNPROTECTED)				7.26							

Source: City of Melrose

Notes:

¹ Zoning information taken from the Zoning Map of the City of Melrose, Massachusetts, Revised May 15, Order 2023-81.

Table 18: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Name	Location	Owner	Managing Agency	Size (acres)	Zoning ¹	Type	Condition	Public Access	Degree of Protection
Flood Control	Washington Street	Massachusetts	None	2.76	BB-1	Undeveloped land for flood control	Unknown	No	High
Lawrence W. Lloyd Memorial Swimming Pool	Tremont Street	Massachusetts	DCR	1.25	UR-B	City-wide Park	Excellent	Yes	Perpetuity
Middlesex Fells Reservation	Brazil Street, Fellsway East, & Washington Street	Massachusetts	DCR	149.09	UR-A	Regional Park	Excellent	Yes	Perpetuity
Spot Pond Brook	Washington Street	Massachusetts	DCR	4.37	BC & UR-C	Open and culverted water	Unknown	No	High
Unnamed	Banks Place & MBTA	Massachusetts	MBTA	0.30	BB-1	Roadway	Fair	Yes	None
Unnamed	Lynn Fells Parkway & Youle Street	Massachusetts	DCR	0.54	UR-A	Roadway	Fair	Yes	None

Name	Location	Owner	Managing Agency	Size (acres)	Zoning ¹	Type	Condition	Public Access	Degree of Protection
Unnamed	Youle Street	Massachusetts	DCR	0.21	UR-A	Roadway	Fair	Yes	None
Unnamed	Lynn Fells Parkway & Vinton Street	Massachusetts	DCR	0.27	BB-1	Roadway	Fair	Yes	None
Unnamed	Lynn Fells Parkway & Sewall Woods Road	Massachusetts	DCR	0.44	UR-A	Roadway	Fair	Yes	None
Unnamed	Lynn Fells Parkway & Bellvue Avenue	Massachusetts	DCR	0.04	UR-B	Roadway	Fair	Yes	None
Unnamed	Lynn Fells Parkway & Bellvue Avenue	Massachusetts	DCR	0.15	UR-A	Roadway	Fair	Yes	None
Unnamed	Lynn Fells Parkway	Massachusetts	DCR	0.003	UR-B	Roadway	Fair	Yes	None
Unnamed	Lynn Fells Parkway, Melrose Street, & Main Street	Massachusetts	DCR	0.19	BD	Roadway	Fair	Yes	None
Unnamed	Lynn Fells Parkway & Elm Street	Massachusetts	DCR	0.03	UR-A	Roadway	Fair	Yes	None
SUBTOTAL (COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS – PROTECTED)				157.47					
SUBTOTAL (COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS – UNPROTECTED)				2.17					
TOTAL (COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS)				159.64					

Source: City of Melrose

Notes:

¹ Zoning information taken from the Zoning Map of the City of Melrose, Massachusetts, Revised May 15, Order 2023-81.

Table 19: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, Private Parks and Cemeteries

Name	Location	Owner	Managing Agency	Size (acres)	Zoning ¹	Type	Condition	Public Access	Degree of Protection
Agudas Achim Cemetery	Newburyport Turnpike	Agudas Achim, CWM Corp.	JCAM	1.00	BB	Cemetery	Excellent	Limited	High
Bellevue Golf Club	320 Porter Street	Bellevue Golf	Private	49.00	SR	Golf Course	Excellent	Yes	None
Congregation Hadrath Cemetery	Newburyport Turnpike	Congregation Hadrath	JCAM	1.46	BB	Cemetery	Excellent	Limited	High
Vilkomir Cemetery	Newburyport Turnpike	Ind Vilkomir Cemetery Corp.	JCAM	1.00	BB	Cemetery	Excellent	Limited	High
Incarnation Church Fields	Upham Street	Archdiocese of Boston	Private	4.38	SR-B	Church	Excellent	Yes	None
Netherlands Cemetery	Linwood Avenue	Netherlands Cemetery	JCAM	1.04	UR-B	Cemetery	Excellent	Limited	High
United Brothers Onikchty Cemetery	Newburyport Turnpike	United Brothers Onichy Cemetery	JCAM	0.99	BB	Cemetery	Excellent	Limited	High
Workmen’s Circle Cemetery	Newburyport Turnpike	Workmen’s Circle Cemetery Assn.	JCAM	0.67	BB	Cemetery	Excellent	Limited	High
SUBTOTAL (PRIVATE – PROTECTED)				6.16					
SUBTOTAL (PRIVATE – UNPROTECTED)				53.38					
TOTAL (PRIVATE)				59.54					

Source: City of Melrose and Jewish Cemetery Association of Massachusetts (www.jcam.org)

Notes:

¹ Zoning information taken from the Zoning Map of the City of Melrose, Massachusetts, Revised May 15, Order 2023-81.

Table 20: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, Other Private Land

Name	Location	Owner	Managing Agency	Size (acres)	Zoning ¹	Type	Condition	Public Access	Degree of Protection
Private Utility	Heywood Avenue, Howard Street, & Windsor Street	Utility Company	Utility Company	20.47	SR-B & UR-A	Transmission Lines	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	Beech Avenue & Highland Street	A. Sousa; S. Longmuir	Private	0.35	SR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	
Unnamed	Dexter Road	Stanley Family Trust	Private	5.30	SR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	Dexter Road	J. Fish	Private	0.81	SR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	Dexter Road	G. Connell	Private	1.83	SR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	Dexter Road & Penney Road	J. McDermott	Private	1.31	SR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	
Unnamed	Dexter Road & Swains Pond Road	Kennedy Dev Group, Inc.	Private	.76	SR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	Dexter Road	A. Contreas	Private	6.05	SR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	East Rock Park & Bowdoin Road	Kennworthy & Kendall	Private	1.00	SR-B	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	
Unnamed	Elmcrest Circle	P. Hook	Private	0.51	SR-B	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	
Unnamed	Greenwood Street	R. Pelham	Private	0.54	UR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	
Unnamed	Highland Street	S. Longmuir	Private	0.73	SR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	Mill Road	A. Perry	Private	3.51	SR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	Messenger Court	P. O'Connor	Private	1.80	UR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	Porter Street	G. Lynch	Private	0.85	SR-B	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	Slayton Road	J. Confalone	Private	0.36	SR-B	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	Slayton Road	E. Nicholson	Private	3.53	SR-B	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	Swains Pond Avenue	L. Muise	Private	2.68	SR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None
Unnamed	Summit Avenue	G. Warren	Private	0.89	UR-A	Undeveloped	Unknown	None	None

TOTAL (OTHER – UNPROTECTED) 69.24

Source: City of Melrose

Notes:

1 Zoning information taken from the Zoning Map of the City of Melrose, Massachusetts, Revised May 15, Order 2023-81.

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Section 6: Community Vision

A. Description of the Process

To develop the 2023 City of Melrose Open Space and recreation Plan, the Office of Planning and Community Development worked with a Working Group assembled by Mayor Brodeur with representation from the Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works, Parks Department, Recreation Department, Department of Health and Human Services, School Department, City Council representatives and residents. The Working Group reviewed all previous goals and actions, prepared an extensive list of accomplishments, crafted the City's goals and objectives and created an updated Seven Year Action Plan with the input of the community.

Feedback from residents was gathered throughout the duration of the drafting process through different targeted events such as a survey, focus groups and a public open house. More information on outreach can be found in Section 1: Introduction and Section 10: Public Comments.

Based on the comments and feedback received, the goals and actions were updated. Additionally, OPCD staff GIS Analyst assisted with updating the Inventory of Conservation and Recreation Land from the 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Once a draft of the plan was complete, the public was able to review once more and provide feedback, which was included in the final plan. The plan was then submitted to the Commonwealth and to MAPC who reviewed and offered suggestions.

B. Importance of Open Space and Recreation Goals

Open space is an important resource, particularly in urban areas. Open space, sports, and recreation facilities serve to enhance biodiversity and air quality, offer opportunities for social interaction and community cohesion, and promote healthy lifestyles. Overall, these networks lead to more sustainable development by integrating the natural and built environments. The City of Melrose demonstrates and promotes the importance of natural and recreational resources by creating this plan and carrying out its objectives.

The high quality of life enjoyed by Melrose residents is due in part to its abundance of recreational opportunities, open spaces, and conservation lands, which account for roughly a quarter of the City's total land area. Overall, our community's goal is to ensure that there is a deliberate mix of land devoted to natural conservation, passive recreation use, and active recreation use, which is distributed around and throughout the City for a variety of users. A corollary to these goals is to ensure that these resources are adequately developed and well maintained.

Additionally, the city hopes to improve not just the physical attributes of its open space and recreational facilities, but also to expand the programming that is offered to the community. The Recreation Department and Council on Aging provide activities based on our recreational, natural and financial resources. More programming through collaborations with the Conservation Commission, Beebe Estate, Memorial Hall, the Milano Center, and Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course, and the City's numerous volunteer organizations should also be proactively encouraged.

The City also looks to improve the stewardship of these properties by providing education and signage, establishing a volunteer corps, and fostering private-public relationships through programs such as Adopt-a-Site. Melrose seeks to plan for and preserve sufficient land resources to meet the needs of both current and future residents. A network of high-quality open space and recreation areas is fundamental to protecting and enhancing the character of Melrose. Seeking out new and innovative ways to fund and develop open space and recreation areas is necessary for future planning and acquisitions. Promoting alliances at the regional level and continuing to make our green space accessible by many different modes of transportation and physical abilities are also components of the community's vision for an equitable, accessible, and enjoyable environment.

C. Coordination with Municipal and Regional Goals

The goals outlined in this Open Space and Recreation Plan are consistent with and expand upon the goals outlined in the City of Melrose's 2017 Master Plan. The Master Plan focuses on the redevelopment and improvement of existing facilities rather than developing new facilities in order to increase the function of these facilities and the ability to provide multiple activities for a variety of users at once. The Master Plan also focuses on redevelopment for new growth as opposed to expanding into the existing open space that forms a greenbelt around the City and gives Melrose its unique character.

This plan is consistent with the goals in other local plans adopted in recent years including the Ell Pond Master Plan, the ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan, and the Net Zero Action Plan. The Ell Pond Master Plan includes actions to reduce runoff into Ell Pond and the saturation of surrounding fields by improving resource and stormwater management in sustainable and environmentally sensitive ways. The recommendations and best practices provided by the recently conducted ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan for inclusive designs in outdoor facilities will also be considered in park and playground upgrades to ensure that the City's facilities are accessible for a variety of community members and user groups.

Published in 2022, the City's Net Zero Action Plan sets a roadmap to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The plan advocates for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through a variety of measures including protecting and planting trees, increasing opportunities for active and sustainable modes of travel, and producing locally sourced renewable energy. Implementation strategies include robust community outreach and engagement efforts, with an emphasis on engaging residents from vulnerable populations.

In coordination with these plans, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) MetroCommon 2050 Plan, the Open Space and Recreation Plan encourages utilizing innovative planning techniques and engaging in local partnerships for a regionally minded metropolitan Boston.

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Section 7: Analysis of Needs

A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

Melrose has a long history of participating in regional efforts to protect our natural resources and provide opportunities for residents to enjoy them. In the late 1800's, the towns of Melrose, Malden, Medford, Winchester, and Stoneham joined together to create the Middlesex Fells Reservation, the first protected reservation to provide unprecedented passive and active recreational opportunities in the greater Boston region.

Regional planning for the protection of natural resources and recreational amenities continues to the present day as evidenced by the investment made by the cities of Malden and Melrose in Pine Banks Park over the last decade. Relationships with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Friends of the Fells, and the Middlesex Fells Program Coordinator should continue to be strengthened to work together on conservation efforts as well as publicizing the availability of the Middlesex Fells and events that occur within the Reservation. In addition, to protect Melrose's greenbelt, working with the neighboring communities is important to develop and preserve sensitive land that cross municipal boundaries.

Water Resource Protection Needs

The Melrose Conservation Commission acknowledges several conservation needs in the city and identified both the southeast region of the City and the City's ponds as areas especially in need of protection because of their benefits to both the environment and the community. Members stress the importance of continuing to protect wetlands and other marginal land from development by linking green areas and buffering city ponds. Additionally, they note that focusing on stormwater quality and improvements, and installing natural groundwater recharge features should be a priority to limit runoff, much of which drains to Ell Pond. Other critical actions to support the health of the ponds is to create an invasive species management plan and educate residents about responsible chemical usage on lawns and land around bodies of water. As noted previously, the abundance of the water chestnuts in Ell Pond out-compete native species, which is a detriment to the aquatic habitat.

Urban Forestry Needs

Members of the public and the Conservation Commission also emphasized the importance of protecting the City's tree canopy especially with increasingly hot summer temperatures. Calls for an evaluation of heat island effect throughout the city and reviewing Melrose's approved tree planting list to ensure that the species' are able to survive New England's changing climate, are ways to protect both the fauna and the community. Furthermore, feedback included

that native species and pollinator gardens should be planted wherever possible, and no mow areas should be created in our parks and open spaces.

To protect, improve, and expand the urban tree canopy a line item should be created in the City's budget for tree planting. The City can work to establish a Tree Advisory Committee to assist with creating a street tree inventory and conducting a tree study to assess the tree canopy and establish priorities and management schedule. A tree preservation ordinance can also be adopted.

Figure 41: Drawing of a Pollinator Garden



Source: Daisy Troop 64389

Supporting Resource Needs

To protect the City's natural resources, the Conservation Commission should pursue grant and funding opportunities and continue to work with City Departments and the City Council, as well as non-profit groups such as the Ell Pond Improvement Council. The Ell Pond Improvement Council is particularly important to sustaining the health of Ell Pond. All of these groups should continue to reinforce each other's efforts to improve the water quality and the recreation potential of this resource. Recently, the City has been successful in receiving local and federal funding for construction of improved stormwater management at Ell Pond Park.

The City's zoning ordinance requires all parcels to maintain various percentages of open space, which is defined as a space not covered by buildings, structures or impervious surfaces and is unobstructed to the sky. City's Planning Staff should continue to ensure that new developments offer usable, quality outdoor areas for residents to enjoy. Additionally, new developments in certain districts are required to contribute to the City's Streetscape Improvement Fund in exchange for increased density. This fund allows for investments in streetscape amenities, such as street trees and benches, that make the City more welcoming. The City should utilize the Streetscape Improvement Fund in conjunction with the Seven Year Action Plan.

B. Summary of Recreation Needs

Melrose residents are fortunate to have access to a variety of open spaces, and recreation programs and facilities. However, based on community feedback, the City can focus on improving field availability and quality, providing safe bicycle and pedestrian routes to parks and playgrounds, and maintaining city

trails, including route signage. There is also a need to increase programming for teenagers and older youth, and ensure that open spaces are welcoming for older adults by providing benches and water stations. These needs align with the statewide and regional recreational facility needs, as outlined in the 2017 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). To counter statewide deficiencies, the SCORP puts forth four goals for communities across Massachusetts including:

1. Increase access for underserved populations including people with disabilities, teenagers, and older adults
2. Support Statewide Trails Initiative
3. Increase availability of water-based recreation
4. Support the creation and renovation of neighborhood parks

The following describes how the goals relate to Melrose’s reactional needs.

Access

The City should continue to consider where new investment is needed to provide better access for underserved populations. Direct feedback from the surveys and focus groups included improving access and increasing field availability. The lack of lighting at fields and courts reduces the number of playable hours; however, light pollution near residential neighborhoods and the overuse of grass fields makes adding lighting not desirable in many locations as a way of increasing access and reducing scheduling conflicts. To continue managing the parks for various users, the City can ensure that field time is equitably distributed between different groups. Additionally, the City can fund a feasibility study for the backfield at Conant Park, which is heavily vegetated and waterlogged, to gain more field space.

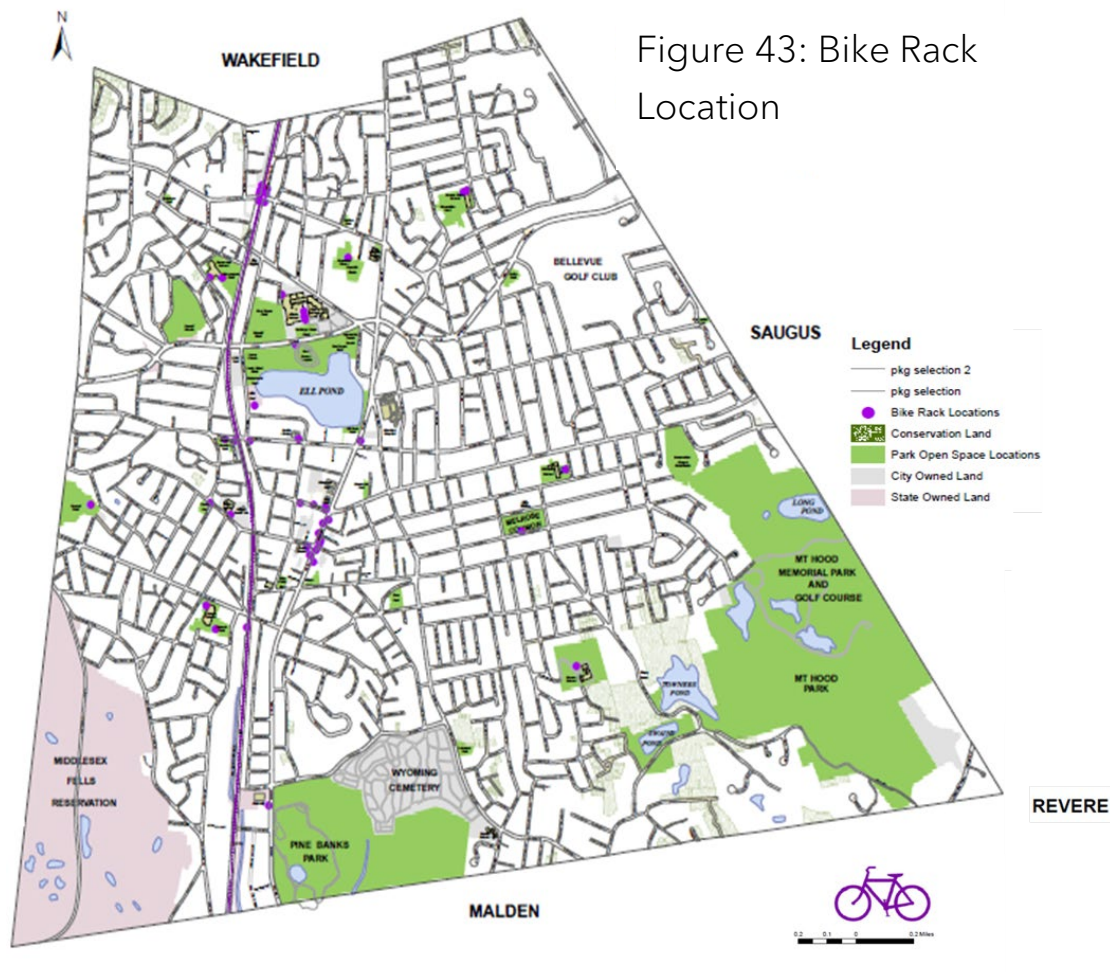
Figure 42: Conant Park



Source: OPCD

The City can also continue investigating the feasibility, desirability, and sustainability of converting certain grass fields to turf fields to improve the conditions of these fields, reduce maintenance costs, and provide more opportunities for field usage. Assessing the potential environmental impacts associated with synthetic fields along with the challenges of improving the functionality of the existing play fields should be considered.

Based on a survey conducted among older adults, 37% of respondents indicated that the City can make open spaces easier to get to and more comfortable by adding benches and water stations. Also, 37% indicated that public recreation can be made more accessible by hosting classes and events in more parks around the City. Additionally, through focus groups at Melrose Middle School and High School, students commented that the City can improve bicycle lanes, create more sidewalks, and increase summer recreation opportunities such as adding volleyball nets in the parks. Although Melrose is a small city and much of the park system is within walking distance, not every roadway provides the same degree of access. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations need to continue to be evaluated and improvements implemented. Safe routes to popular locations in the park system should be established allowing people of all abilities to safely access City parks.



Trails

The City offers an extensive trail network for recreation in several locations including Conservation Land, around Mount Hood, and in the Middlesex Fells. Public feedback included a need to improve trail conditions and the user experience at the trails. Trailheads are needed to clearly mark the path and kiosks should be installed at trailheads with maps,

Figure 44: Trailhead Kiosk at Mount Hood



Source: OPCD

information on trails' level of difficulty and educational materials. Additionally, a program for routine evaluation and maintenance should be developed to be completed by the City in conjunction with a volunteer corps.

Regional efforts have also been made to connect bicycle paths and networks, which will open up transportation opportunities beyond our borders. The City is engaged with the Mystical Highlands Greenway Project sponsored by MAPC and state Senator Jason Lewis, which envisions a corridor with priority for bicycling and walking on low traffic residential streets, and protected bicycle lanes and sidewalks on busier streets through Malden, Melrose, Wakefield, Stoneham and Reading. Continuing to work with regional partners will help promote the goals of MAPC's MetroCommon 2050 and support safe and accessible recreational opportunities.

Recreation

Older Adults' Needs

Melrose's older adults comprise 19% of the city's population and this age group is expected to grow. Melrose will need to continue planning for the open space needs of older adults and provide access to facilities in all seasons. This includes ensuring that popular walking routes and street crossings are plowed during the winter, and designing quiet seating areas, and installing intergenerational equipment in parks and playgrounds.

The City should offer active games like bocce ball and horseshoes in neighborhood parks. Additionally, planning for more passive recreation, such as installing more community gardens and educational signage at parks, and offering different volunteering opportunities, may help older adults take advantage of the City's open spaces and natural resources.

Figure 45: Spring Tea and Hat Contest at the Milano Center



Source: The Patch

Figure 46: Pickleball at Foss Park



Source: City of Melrose

Adults' Needs

Figure 47: Crystal St. Tennis Courts



Source: The Patch

For residents between 20 and 65, both passive and active recreation in regional and neighborhood parks are popular. Activities such as tennis, bicycling, hiking and golf attract the adult population, as does volunteering, participating in community beautification and attending City sponsored classes and courses that are free and open to the public. Additionally, many in this age group also have children that use playgrounds and parks and act as advocates for the provision of adequate city facilities for

their children. To continue serving this population, the City can expand its bicycle infrastructure, perform regular maintenance on popular courts and trails, make trails more navigable and enhance access points, and provide opportunities for community participation in park and recreation planning efforts.

Toddlers', Children's, And Teens' Needs

Residents aged 0- 19 make up 21% of the population. Melrose has many parks, playgrounds, and fields distributed across the City, however, the conditions and usability of the facilities vary. The drainage problems at several fields and the high volume of residents participating in youth sports create scheduling

conflicts. Additionally, the lack of fields and courts with lighting limits the number of playable hours and the demand for fields for soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, baseball, and softball has increased. The City should evaluate the best use for underutilized open space and consider lighting open spaces when possible and innovative playground design during park renovations.

To continue managing the parks and playgrounds in an equitable way, the City should evaluate field access and amenities for different sports and for girls and boys teams within the same sport. In particular, the city should try to establish a home field for the Melrose High School Softball Team, which currently shares a field at Pine Banks Park. Ideally, the team would play closer to the High School and have similar accommodations as the Baseball Team. The amenities at and accessibility of fields between sports and within the same sport for boys' and girls' teams should be considered in programming and field improvements.

Figure 48: Melrose Rotary Skatepark



Source: Wicked Local

The Recreation Department can also offer more opportunities for older teenagers and routine maintenance should continue to be performed at popular parks. To engage residents in this age group, the City can establish youth stewardship programs and events for children and increase volunteering opportunities for high schoolers interested in becoming involved with the conservation and preservation of Melrose's open spaces, like the Recycling and Composting Club and the Environmental Club at Melrose High School.

Persons With Disability

According to the US Census Bureau, 4.8% of people under the age of 65 years, have a disability in Melrose. To study accessibility, the City was awarded an ADA Improvement Grant from the Massachusetts Office on Disability. Using grant funds, the City collaborated with the Melrose Commission on Disability (COD) and the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD) to perform an ADA self-evaluation and create a Transition Plan. The Transition Plan includes an evaluation of City facilities, school buildings, and outdoor facilities, and provides recommendations for best practices and inclusive designs. The plan was completed in early 2023.

The City endeavors to consider all users when constructing or renovating parks and open space facilities. The city has installed accessible playground

equipment in many of its tot lots and playgrounds and uses surfaces accessible to wheelchair users whenever feasible. The City completed its first fully accessible playground in 2022 and will use the success and the Transition Plan to guide future park and playground upgrades.

Neighborhood Parks

As noted in Section 5: Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Land, Melrose has sufficient open space per capita based on resident proximity to open space. There is a need to improve existing parks and playgrounds rather than acquire more land.

Several parks and playgrounds throughout the City have received investment in recent years through grants and public-private partnerships with the school communities. The City should assess the existing parks and playgrounds that have not been improved, especially those that do not have an established community to support them. One small park in need of attention is the Drinkwater Tot Lot which used to be a neighborhood amenity but is now in poor condition and outdated.

Because yard space is often limited in this densely settled city, the Melrose Community Garden Group, which was established in 2015, worked with the City to establish 15 community garden plots at Franklin Field. Due to the popularity of the plots, 23 new garden beds were added in 2022.

C. Management Needs

The City's publicly owned parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces are maintained by three entities: the Park Department, the Department of Public Works (DPW), and the Conservation Commission. In addition, the Recreation Department, which consists of a full-time Director and two staff positions, provides diverse recreational opportunities in the community. These organizations have partnered on a number of occasions to enhance the open space and recreation opportunities within the City. There is a need to continue this tradition and expand the involvement of both private businesses and residents, to ensure that the quality of life we enjoy today will continue for future generations.

Several opportunities for potential management changes were identified during the planning process. The Conservation Commission properties have historically had little upkeep. The Trail Steward Program was started in 2018 with a goal of monitoring City-owned Conservation Land and helping the Conservation Commission identify potential threats including invasive species, illegal dumping, and encroachment from abutters. Volunteers also assist in trail upkeep by alerting the City when trails must be cleared from obstruction. A

formal management strategy specific to the protected conservation areas, should be created.

Similarly, a volunteer corps or friends group, such as the Friends of Melrose Open Space could be instrumental in park development and maintenance. By establishing a volunteer corps, the City may be able to instill a sense of ownership of the park system by the community and foster stewardship. Additionally, incorporating education on environmental stewardship through the public schools and hosting events geared towards youth can help instill ownership of and responsibility for open space and recreation facilities in the youngest generations.

Another means of increasing community involvement in the City's open spaces and raising funds for park maintenance and open space acquisition, is through the adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Cities and towns that participate in the CPA can adopt a property tax surcharge up to 3 percent in an effort to fund open space, historic preservation and affordable housing initiatives. The CPA is a means of coordinating what are often seen as opposing forces: conservationists, affordable housing advocates, and historic preservationists. Together, their objectives strengthen those resources that make Melrose a desirable place to live. The CPA's goal of preserving the special parts of a community's natural and built environment complements the identified goals of this Open Space and Recreation Plan and all of the City's recent planning efforts.

In the area of sustainability, the City of Melrose should continue to provide leadership by choosing low impact development techniques and native plants that require less irrigation. The City's recently released Net Zero Action Plan will serve as the local climate mitigation plan and outlines steps for achieving carbon-free status by 2050. Following the guidelines in this plan and expanding the use of sustainability measures will improve the quality of the park system and enhance the environment.

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Section 8: Goals and Objectives

Based on the Community Vision and Needs Analysis, the following are Melrose's open space and recreation goals to improve the quality of life for residents at the neighborhood, city, and regional level. The objectives are listed below each goal.

Goal 1: Upgrade and maintain the conditions of existing facilities and expand recreational programming.

- Provide a variety of recreational activities throughout the City considering diversity, equity, and inclusion, to meet the needs of all citizens
- Improve trail conditions and user experience
- Strengthen the on-going maintenance program for parks and playgrounds
- Evaluate and implement improvements at existing fields to enhance functionality
- Evaluate and implement improvements at existing parks and playgrounds to increase usability

Goal 2: Activate and enhance open spaces through innovative design and sustainable development.

- Consider design improvements in open space upgrades that incorporate strategies to mitigate climate change and its effects
- Promote landscaping that conserves resources and supports biodiversity
- Activate and create comfortable public spaces, and promote healthy play and activity for all ages

Goal 3: Enhance our natural resources

- Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive land and biodiversity
- Protect water quality in ponds throughout the City and conserve resources
- Protect, improve, and expand the urban tree canopy

Goal 4: Improve access to parks and open spaces.

- Support active and sustainable modes of travel to and through the City's parks and open spaces
- Eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities and mobility challenges to access open spaces
- Improve access to open space and cultivate spaces for gathering

Goal 5: Strengthen regional and local partnerships to promote environmental stewardship.

- Establish partnerships and contribute to projects that address and support local and regional needs
- Increase public awareness and educate residents about open space and recreational resources
- Involve the community in the development and planning of park improvements.

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Section 9: Seven-Year Action Plan

The City of Melrose Open Space and Recreation Plan links its goals to future implementation by identifying a range of strategies and recommended actions. The strategies of this plan strive to address the physical planning of open space and recreation facilities as well as the programming that allows residents to partake in these facilities' offerings. The Action Plan outlined in this section provides a schedule by which the City hopes to attain each of these objectives. Strategies are defined as either short-term (S) for 0 to 3 years, medium-term (M) for 3 to 5 years, or long-term (L) for 5 to 7 years, Those departments or entities responsible for an objective's implementation are also listed. Figure 49 at the end of this section provides an illustration of location specific items in the Seven-Year Action Plan.

Goals & Objectives	Action Recommended	Time Table	Responsibility
Goal 1: Upgrade and maintain the condition of existing facilities and expand programming			
A. Provide a variety of recreational activities throughout the City considering diversity, equity, and inclusion, to meet the needs of all citizens	Ensure recreational programming is well distributed in parks and open spaces around the city.	S	Park Department, Recreation Department, Conservation Commission, and Office of Planning and Community Development
	Increase outdoor music and public art programming and explore additional locations to host events.	S	Park Department, Recreation Department, Office of the Mayor, and Melrose Creative Alliance
	Create recreational programming and special events at City ponds.	S	Recreation Department and Park Department
	Increase sports opportunities for older teenagers.	M	Recreation Department and Park Department
	Ensure that fields are equally available to boys and girls sports teams	S	Recreation Department, School Athletics, Park Department, and Melrose Youth Sports
	Establish relationships with organizations that provide services, programs, and events that create inclusive opportunities for residents.	S	Recreation Department and Health and Human Services
B. Improve trail conditions and user experience	Clearly mark trails and include level of difficulty	S	Conservation Commission and Park Department

	Enhance access and entry points to trails City-wide and use kiosks at trailheads, open spaces, and recreation facilities to post information on events and volunteer opportunities, as well as educational materials and trail maps.	M	Park Department, Recreation Department, Conservation Commission, and Public Works
	Develop a program for routine evaluation and maintenance of existing trails, and creation of new trails, for improvements to be completed by the City and/or a volunteer corps.	S	Conservation Commission, Park Department, and Public Works
	Make trails more navigable by centralizing and combining mapping and information for all City parks, recreation facilities, and trails on the City's website.	S	Park Department, Conservation Commission, Recreation Department, and Office of Planning and Community Development
	Develop trails for multi-season, multi-use at Mount Hood.	M	Park Department
C. Strengthen the on-going maintenance program for parks and playgrounds	Assess the availability, usage, and signage of trash and recycling receptacles at the City's open space and recreation facilities, and monitor and address any inadequacies.	S	Park Department, Zero Waste Melrose, and Public Works
	Maintain the Dog Park including the benches and water fountain, and periodically rake mulch.	S	Melrose Dog Society, Park Department, and Public Works
D. Evaluate and implement improvements at existing fields to enhance functionality	Restore the double wide visitor's gate at Fred Green Field.	S	Park Department, School Department, and Public Works
	Replace the padding on Fred Green Field endzone fences.	S	Park Department, School Department, and Public Works
	Replace the Fred Green Athletic Field Turf.	S	Park Department, School Department, and Public Works
	Replace the padding on the irrigation cabinet at the Cabbage Patch Field.	S	Park Department, School Department, and Public Works

	Implement Ell Pond Master Plan field recommendations at The Knoll and Cabbage Patch Fields to address drainage issues.	S	Park Department, School Department, and Public Works
	Evaluate installation of lights at parks, fields, and courts such as Lewis Monk Field and the Knoll.	M	Public Works, Park Department, Office of the Mayor, EPIC, and Conservation Commission
	Improve the fields and storage equipment at the Common and add benches.	M	Park Department and Public Works
	Install a safety net at Conant Park to protect sports equipment from leaving the playing field.	M	Park Department and Public Works
	Evaluate use of Lewis Monk Field for high school softball use.	S	Public Works and Park Department
	Evaluate utilizing natural fields where possible.	S	Park Department and Public Works
E. Evaluate and implement improvements at existing parks and playgrounds to increase usability	Enhance the existing Skateboard Park with new equipment.	S	Park Department and Public Works
	Resurface Crystal St. tennis courts.	M	Public Works and Park Department
	Install new equipment at Dunton Park.	S	Park Department and Public Works
Goal 2: Activate and enhance open spaces through innovative design and sustainable development			
A. Consider design improvements in open space upgrades that incorporate strategies to mitigate climate change and its effects	Establish design guidelines for sustainability/climate resilience in the design of parks projects.	S	Park Department, Office of Planning and Community Development, Public Works, and Conservation Commission
	Evaluate parking lots and other areas of concern throughout the city for heat island effect.	M	Public Works
	Conduct feasibility study to evaluate the back field at Conant Park currently unplayable due to water issues.	M	Public Works and Park Department
	Use sustainable irrigation techniques in public projects.	M	Public Works and Park Department

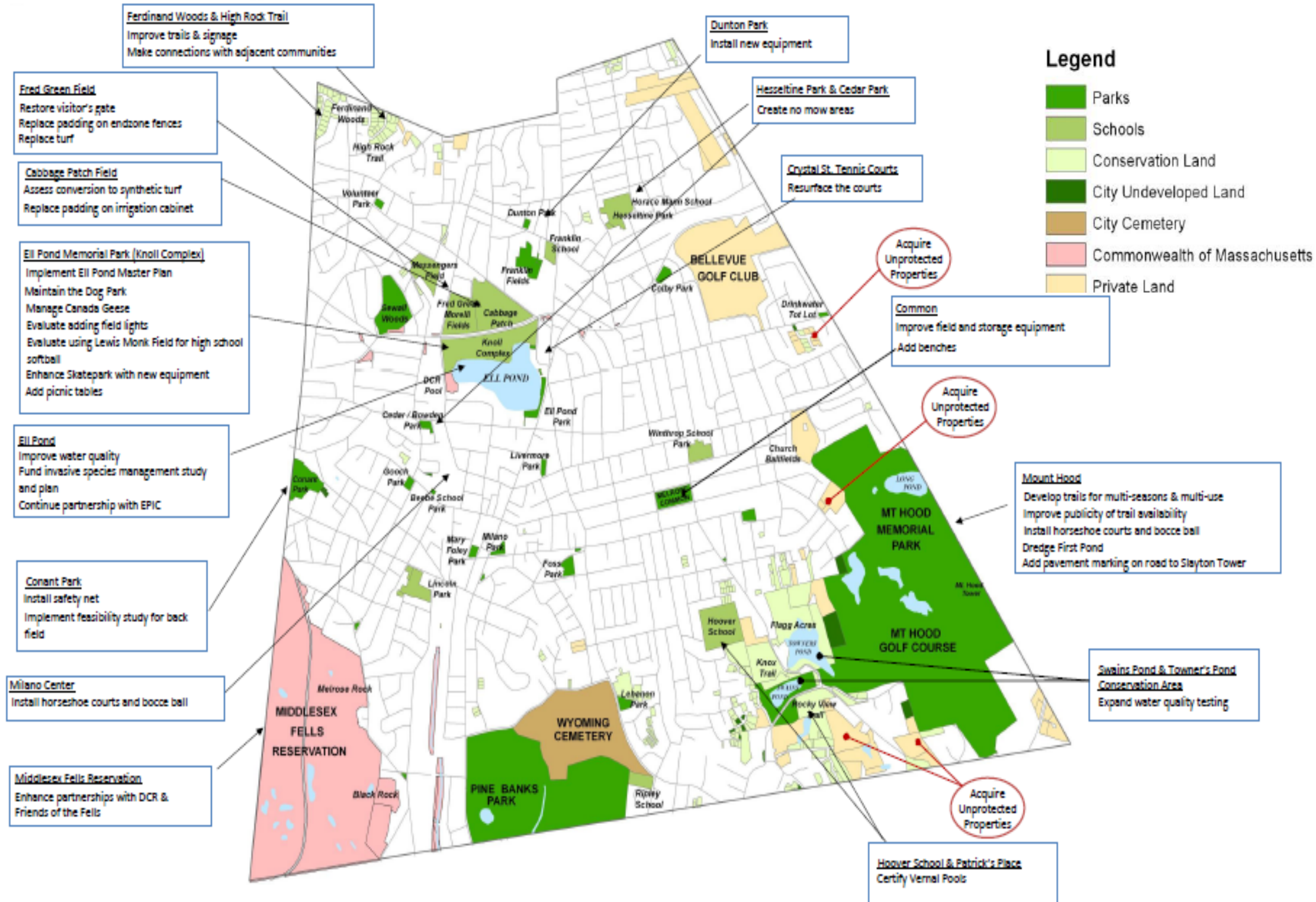
B. Promote landscaping that conserves resources and supports biodiversity	Create "no mow" areas in our parks and open spaces such as Hesseltine Park and Cedar Park.	S	Conservation Commission, Public Works, and Park Department
	Plant pollinator gardens and native plants where possible.	S	Conservation Commission, Park Department, and Public Works
C. Activate and create comfortable public spaces, and promote healthy play and activity for all ages	Incorporate art into public street furniture and playground equipment.	M	Park Department, Office of Planning and Community Development and Public Works
	Consider innovative playground design with multigenerational and multi-purpose structures in park renovations.	S	Park Department, Office of Planning and Community Development, Public Works, Recreation Department, and Council on Aging
	Evaluate the addition of spray equipment at a City park.	S	Park Department and Public Works
	Evaluate the addition of Pickelball infrastructure on courts around the City.	S	Public Works and Park Department
	Install bocce ball and horseshoe courts at appropriate locations, such as at the Milano Center or Mount Hood.	S	Park Department, Health and Human Services, Council on Aging, Mount Hood Park Association, and Public Works
	Install picnic tables at Ell Pond.	S	Public Works and Park Department
	Identify locations to create new community gardens.	S	Park Department and Public Works
	Install water fountains and water bottle filling stations in parks around the City.	M	Public Works and Park Department
	Install benches at Colby Park, Mary Livermore Park, and along Main Street.	M	Public Works, Park Department, Council on Aging, Office of Planning and Community Development
Goal 3: Enhance our natural resources			
A. Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive land and biodiversity	Monitor and enforce restrictions on dumping on conservation lands and educate property owners abutting conservation properties about negative impacts of dumping.	M	Conservation Commission, Public Works, and Office of the Mayor
	Certify vernal pools adjacent to Patrick's Place and Hoover Elementary School.	S	Conservation Commission

	Manage Canada Geese at Ell Pond and Mount Hood.	S	Public Works, Park Department, and Health and Human Services
	Fund an invasive species management study and plan, and continue to pursue maintenance funding options.	S	Conservation Commission, Parks Department, Public Works, and Office of the Mayor
B. Protect water quality in ponds throughout the City and conserve resources	Expand the water quality testing program at City ponds.	S	Conservation Commission and Public Works
	Dredge First Pond at Mt. Hood.	S	Public Works and Park Department
	Implement stormwater recommendations as outlined in the Ell Pond Master Plan.	L	Public Works, Park Department, Office of the Mayor, EPIC, and Conservation Commission
	Increase public education around programs and opportunities for residential stormwater management.	S	Public Works, Conservation Commission, and Office of the Mayor
	Educate residents about responsible chemical usage on lawns and land around bodies of water.	S	Public Works, Park Department, and Office of the Mayor
C. Protect, improve, and expand the urban tree canopy	Adopt a tree preservation ordinance.	S	Public Works, City Council, Office of the Mayor and Office of Planning and Community Development
	Create a line item in the City's budget for tree planting.	S	Office of the Mayor and City Council
	Reevaluate tree species to ensure adaptation to changing New England climate.	S	Public Works
	Hire a Tree Warden.	S	Office of the Mayor and Public Works
	Establish a Tree Advisory Committee to assist with conducting a tree study to assess the tree canopy, establishing priorities and a management schedule, and creating a street tree inventory with data on net gains/losses of trees throughout the City.	S	Office of the Mayor, Conservation Commission, and Public Works

Goal 4: Improve access to parks and open spaces			
A. Support active and sustainable modes of travel to and through the City's parks and open spaces	Purchase and install bicycle racks throughout the City in parks, schools, playgrounds, and commercial districts.	M	Public Works, Park Department, Office of Planning and Community Development, and Office of the Mayor
	Expand traffic calming program near parks, schools, and high foot traffic areas.	S	Public Works
	Install more protected and separated bike paths especially connecting to trails and recreation areas.	L	Public Works, Park Department, Office of Planning and Community Development, and Office of the Mayor
	Add pavement markings to the road to Slayton Tower at Mount Hood to better delineate the roadway for vehicles and pedestrians.	S	Park Department and Public Works
	Reevaluate existing sidewalk plowing list to identify high priority locations for snow clearing.	S	Public Works, School Department, and Council on Aging
	Create safe routes to popular destinations for pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages that include well-defined street crossings, sidewalks in good condition, shade, and locations for rest.	S	Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee, Council on Aging, and Office of Planning and Community Development
B. Eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities and the elderly to access open spaces	Implement ADA study recommendations and add inclusive infrastructure in parks.	L	Public Works, Office of the Mayor, and Park Department
C. Improve access to open space and cultivate spaces for gathering	Explore City owned, underutilized parcels for public benefit including Colby Park, grass behind basketball court at Hesseltine Park, and land along Hesseltine St.	M	Public Works, Office of the Mayor, and Park Department
	Establish location of additional parklets and public gathering spaces	S	Park Department, Office of Planning and Community Development, Office of the Mayor, and Public Works

Goal 5: Strengthen regional and local partnerships to promote environmental stewardship			
A. Establish partnerships and methods that address and support local and regional needs	Work with adjacent communities to create trail connections across municipal boundaries.	M	Conservation Commission, Park Department, and Office of Planning and Community Development
	Adopt the Community Preservation Act to protect undeveloped, environmentally sensitive parcels	S	Office of the Mayor and City Council
	Hold annual Working Group Meeting to review implementation of the action items in the Open Space and Recreation Plan	S	Office of Planning and Community Development
B. Increase public awareness and educate residents about open space and recreational resources	Promote community events focused on open space and recreation on City website and social media	S	Park Department, Recreation Department, Conservation Commission, and Office of the Mayor
	Extend DPW Day to the community at large	S	Public Works, Park Department, and Office of the Mayor
	Provide historical and educational signage at parks and open spaces	M	Park Department, Public Works, Historical Commission, Office of Planning and Community Development, and Conservation Commission
C. Involve the community in the development and planning of park improvements.	Provide equitable opportunities for residents to participate in park and recreation planning efforts and volunteer opportunities	S	Recreation Department, Park Department, Office of the Mayor, and Office of Planning and Community Development
	Establish a volunteer hub to coordinate and promote volunteer events	S	Park Department and Conservation Commission
	Establish youth programs and events for children to learn about environmental stewardship	S	Recreation Department, School Department, Conservation Commission, and Office of the Mayor
	Establish a Friends of Melrose Parks and Recreation to assist in park and open space improvements and funding	S	Office of the Mayor, Park Department, and Recreation Department
	Establish quarterly events involving community members and volunteer corps to clean and clear trails, parks and playgrounds	S	Park Department, Conservation Commission, and Office of the Mayor

Figure 49: Seven Year Action Plan



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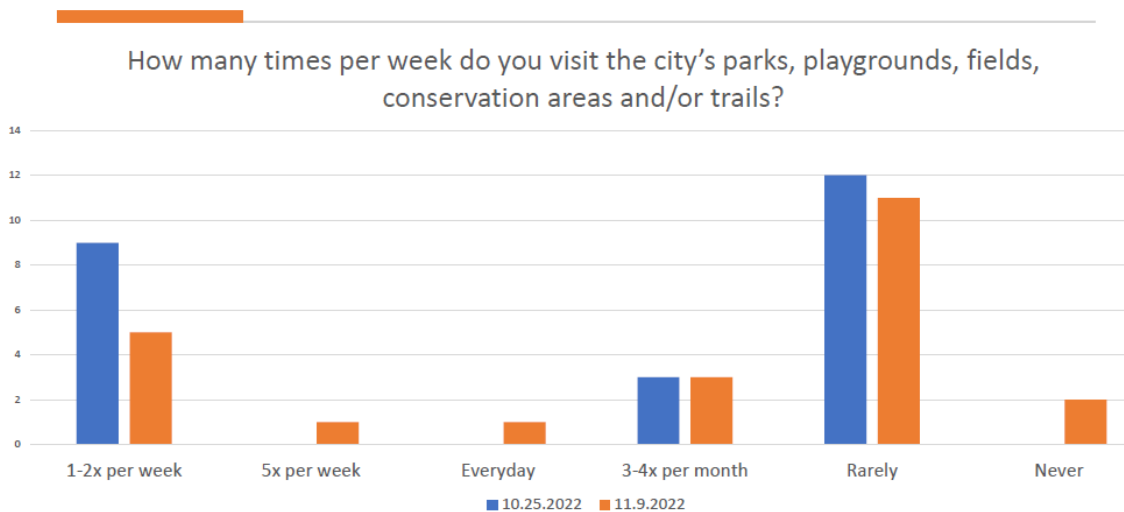
Section 10: Public Comments

Throughout the duration of the planning process for the City of Melrose Open Space and Recreation Plan, OPCD staff elicited community input through a variety of targeted events. To engage the older adult population, a survey with four questions was distributed during a Senior Resource Fair and a Bingo event. Questions included:

- 1 How many times per week do you visit the city's parks, playgrounds, fields, conservation areas, and/or trails?
- 2 How can the city make open spaces easier to get to, comfortable, and open to all?
- 3 How can the city make public recreation opportunities more accessible?
- 4 How do you prefer to receive information from the city?

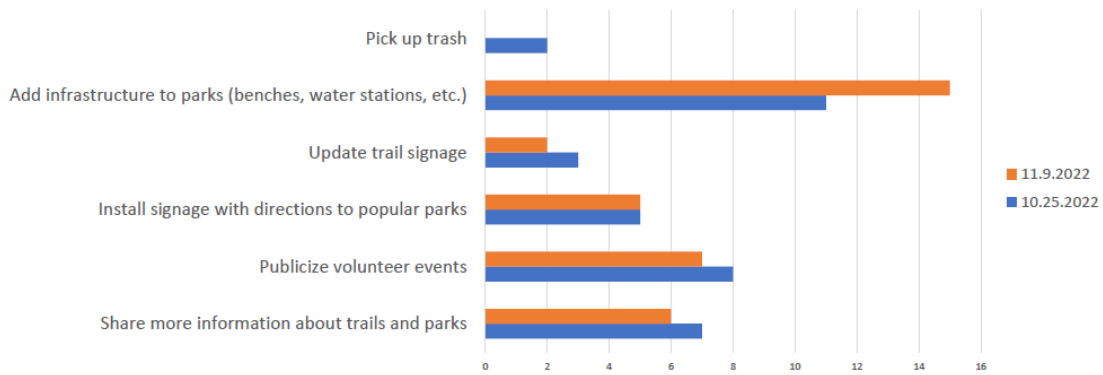
Of the 49 survey respondents, most rarely visit open spaces, although fourteen visit 1-2 times per week. Many indicated that adding infrastructure such as benches and water stations would make parks and playgrounds more comfortable and welcoming. Others felt that publicizing volunteer events and sharing more information about trails and parks would help make open spaces more accessible. Participants indicated that publicizing recreation opportunities and having classes in more parks around the city would attract higher numbers. Respondents noted that sharing information through the Melrose Weekly is the best way to reach older adults. The results from the survey are shown below.

Question 1



Question 2

How can the city make open spaces more easy to get to, comfortable, and open to all? (Select all that apply)



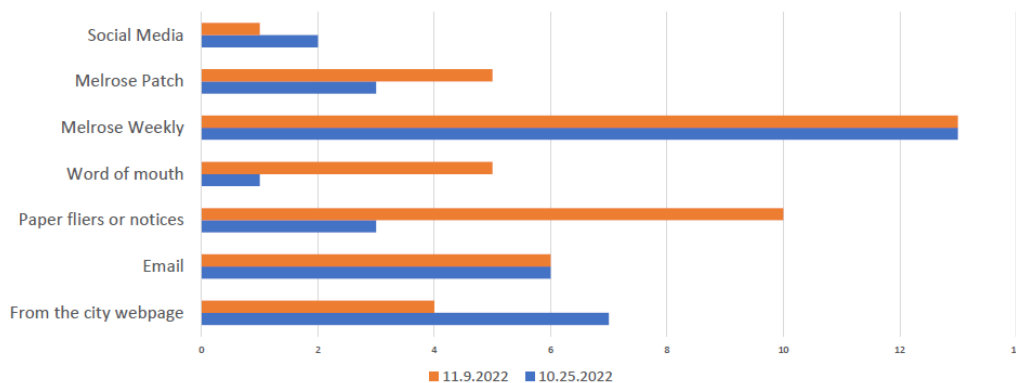
Question 3

How can the city make public recreation opportunities more accessible? (Select all that apply)



Question 4

How do you prefer to receive information from the city?



To better understand the needs of youth and adolescent user groups, three focus groups were held with students at the Melrose Middle and High School. Students discussed seven questions related to how the city can improve its open spaces for this demographic. Questions included:

- 1 What is your favorite open space in the city?
- 2 How do you use the city's open spaces?
- 3 How do you get to/from the parks?
- 4 Are there enough bike racks where you need them? Should there be more and placed in a different location?
- 5 What are some things the city can do to improve its parks, sports fields, and other open spaces?
- 6 What are some things the city can do to improve its recreation opportunities?
- 7 What goals or action items should the city consider including in the updated plan?

Participants primarily access open spaces by biking or walking and utilize them for a variety of activities including biking, dog walking, and sports practice. There were many ideas for how the city can improve its open spaces such as ensuring ADA accessibility, planting more trees, monitoring the water quality at the city's ponds, increasing provisions for cyclists and pedestrians, upgrading the Knoll and the Common by adding field lights, and mitigating field drainage issues. Participants also requested that the city provide more volunteer opportunities and host arts and festivals in the parks. Other general feedback included that there is not enough field space for different teams and community events and opportunities hosted by the city can be improved.

Comments and suggestions from other stakeholders and community members were gathered during an open house at the Milano Center. The open house was advertised via a number of platforms including through the local newspapers, direct emails to stakeholders, flyers in popular community meeting spaces, a virtual backpack announcement to parents and guardians of children in the Melrose Public Schools, a local podcast produced by residents, and on the City's website, the Mayor's blog and social media accounts. The flyer can be found in Appendix D.

The open house was well attended with over 40 participants including representatives from the Melrose Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory, Melrose Creative Alliance, Zero Waste Melrose, Melrose Farmers Market, Keep Melrose Beautiful, Melrose Youth Sports, Melrose Historical Commission, Melrose Community Garden, and Friends of the Fells. Participants were asked to reflect on the goals from 2015 and provide ideas for the 2023 goals and action plan. Based on the feedback, comments were grouped into 13 categories with

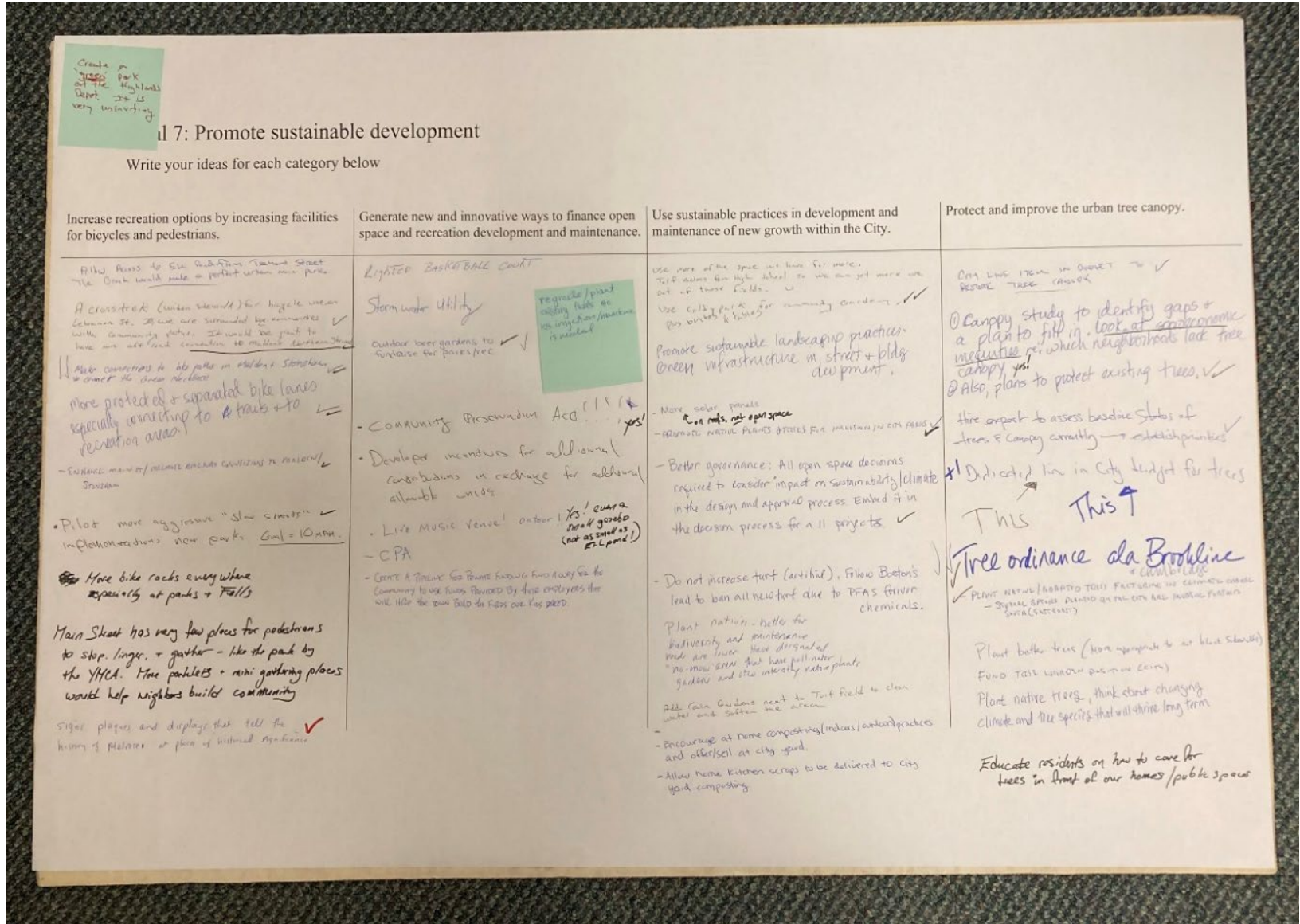
themes ranging from supporting best practices to upgrading parks and playgrounds. Many echoed the suggestions from survey respondents and focus group participants while also calling for the adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA), funding the removal of invasive species from ponds, installing wayfinding signs to popular open spaces, evaluating turf vs turf alternatives for fields, and planting native plants, among others. There were also comments related to improving specific parks and playgrounds. Figures 49 through 54 show feedback from attendees.

Those interested in sharing their thoughts were also encouraged to email OPCD staff. Eight members of the public submitted emails, including a presentation from the Melrose Girl Scout Daisy Troop 64386 where troop first graders shared ideas and advocated for inclusive and accessible spaces, and more pollinator and community gardens.

The 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan incorporated the community's feedback in the draft document and was made available for public comment and review for 30 days. The comment period was advertised through the local newspapers, direct emails to stakeholders, a virtual backpack announcement to parents and guardians of children in the Melrose Public Schools, and on the City's website, the Mayor's blog and social media accounts. It was also provided to the Planning Board, the Mayor, and the Conservation Commission.

Letters of review were solicited from the following: the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the Melrose Conservation Commission, the Melrose Planning Board, and the Mayor of Melrose, Paul Brodeur. These letters of review can be found in Appendix C of this document.

Figure 56: Community Feedback



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Section 11: References

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Councilor Ryan Williams, City Council
Eric Devlin, Conservation Commission
Chris Minton, Office of the Mayor
Joe Hobbs, Department of Public Works
Frank Olivieri, Recreation Department
Stephen Fogarty, School Department
Kara Showers, Health and Human Services
Martha Grover, Office of Planning and Community Development

Resources for figures used in this plan:

Cover Photograph: OPCD (2023). *Ell Pond*. [Photograph]. Melrose, MA

Figures 1 and 2: OPCD (2022). *Melrose OSRP Open House* [Photograph]. Milano Senior Center, Melrose, MA.

Figure 3: OPCD (2022). *Volunteer Park* [Photograph]. Volunteer Park, Melrose, MA.

Figure 4: *Melrose Community Garden* [Photograph]. Melrose Rotary Club.
<http://www.melroserotary.org/melrose-community-garden>

Figure 5: OPCD (2022). *Water bottle station at Fred Green Field* [Photograph]. Fred Green Field, Melrose, MA.

Figure 6: OPCD (2022). *Solar powered phone charging bench at the Common* [Photograph]. The Common, Melrose, MA.

Figure 7: OPCD (2022). *Earth Week Litter Pickup Art* [Photograph]. ,Melrose, MA.

Figure 8: OPCD (2022). *Adopt-a-Site* [Photograph]. ,Melrose, MA.

Figure 9: *Orient Avenue Raingardens* [Photograph] City of Melrose Stormwater Projects. <https://www.cityofmelrose.org/engineering/pages/stormwater-projects>

Figure 11: (2013). *Mount Hood Memorial Park & Golf Course- Melrose's Green Jewel* [Photograph] The Patch.

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/melrose/mount-hood-memorial-park--golf-course--melroses-green-jewel>

Figure 12: N.A. (pre-1936). *Melrose City Hall* [Photograph] Melrose Public Library, Melrose, Mass.

<https://digitalheritage.noblenet.org/s/melrose/item/24160>

Figure 13: N.A. (1948). *Ell Pond Bathhouse* [Photograph]. Melrose Public Library, Melrose, Mass.

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Figure 14: N.A. (2022) Updated Massachusetts 2020 Environmental Justice Populations <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-2020-environmental-justice-populations>

Figure 16: *The Howard/Green Street roundabout* [Photograph]. City of Melrose Roadway Marking and Traffic Changes- Some Reminders

<https://www.cityofmelrose.org/home/news/roadway-markings-and-traffic-changes-some-reminders>

Figure 17: Orange Line Shutdown- Group Bike Rides! [Photograph] Melrose Pedestrian & Bicyclist Committee. <https://pedbikemelrose.org/orange-line-shutdown-group-bike-rides/>

Figure 19: Ell Pond Improvement Council, Inc. [Photograph]. Grass Roots Fund.

<https://grassrootsfund.org/groups/ell-pond-improvement-council-inc>

Figure 20: McSweeney, Finn (2022) Melrose Ward 7 City Councilor Ryan Williams volunteers to help remove invasive water chestnuts at Ell Pond [Photograph] The Patch. <https://patch.com/massachusetts/melrose/melrose-residents-plan-water-chestnut-ell-pond-cleanup>

Figure 22: OPCD (N.D.). *Ell Pond Gazebo* [Photograph]. Melrose, MA.

Figure 23: The Patch (2019). [Photograph]. Melrose, MA.

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/melrose/diary-ell-ponds-swans-cygnets-2018>

Figure 24: Ell Pond Improvement Council (2023). [Photograph]. Ell Pond Improvement Council.

Figure 25: The Patch (2023). [Photograph]. Melrose, MA.

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/melrose/ell-ponds-inhabitants-back-again>

Figure 26: OPCD (2023). Towners Pond. [Photograph]. Melrose, MA

Figure 27: 1st Pond. [Photograph]. Mount Hood Park Association.

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Figure 29: OPCD (N.D.). *Boston from Sea View Trail* [Photograph]. Melrose, MA.

Figure 30: OPCD (N.D.). *Downtown Parklet* [Photograph]. Melrose, MA.

Figure 31: OPCD (2022). *Central Alley Terrace Ribbon* [Photograph]. Melrose, MA.

Figures 32 & 34: OPCD (2021). *Painted Utility Box* [Photograph]. Melrose, MA.

Figure 33: OPCD (2021). *Melrose High School Mural* [Photograph]. Melrose, MA.

Figure 35: City of Melrose Trail Network. City of Melrose Conservation Commission. <https://www.cityofmelrose.org/conservation-commission/pages/trails-and-open-areas>

Figure 37: OPCD (2022). *Melrose Common* [Photograph]. Melrose, MA.

Figure 38: [Photograph]. Pine Banks Park. <https://www.pinebanks.org/about/>

Figure 39: (2012) *New Morelli Field To Open On May 19* [Photograph]. The Patch. <https://patch.com/massachusetts/melrose/new-morelli-field-to-open-on-may-19>

Figure 40: OPCD (2022). *Mt. Hood Playground*. [Photograph]. Melrose, MA.

Figure 41: Daisy Troop 64386 (2022). *Community Pollinator Garden* [Drawing].

Figure 42: OPCD (2022). *Conant Park*. [Photograph]. Melrose, MA

Figure 44: OPCD (2022). *Trailhead Kiosk at Mt. Hood*. [Photograph]. Melrose, MA.

Figure 45: (2012). *Spring Tea and Hat Contest at Milano Senior Center*. [Photograph]. The Patch. <https://patch.com/massachusetts/melrose/an--spring-tea-and-hat-contest-at-milano-senior-center>

Figure 46: Pickleball at Foss Park [Photograph]. Melrose Recreation Department Programs & Events. https://www.cityofmelrose.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf3451/f/uploads/fall_programs_brochure_21_.pdf

Figure 47: (2011). *Melrose Boys Tennis Toppled by Redding* [Photograph]. The Patch. <https://patch.com/massachusetts/melrose/melrose-boys-tennis-toppled-by-redding>

Figure 48: Wicked Local (2008) *Melrose Rotary Skate Park Grand Opening* [Photograph]. The Patch. <https://www.wickedlocal.com/story/melrose-free-press/2008/10/02/concrete-surf-s-up-melrose/37803608007/>

Appendix A: Inventory of Conservation and Recreation Lands

The following is a general history of the parks and recreation lands in Melrose, followed by an inventory sheet describing the size, history, facilities, existing conditions, and suggested improvements for each of the parks, school playgrounds, and major conservation commission properties in the City.

History of Parks and Recreation in the City of Melrose

Melrose, unlike other neighboring early New England towns, did not establish a traditional town common that was centrally located and accessible to all. Initial recreational development took place outside and away from the downtown area; i.e. Melrose Common, 1856, and Sewall Woods Park, 1892. Up until the establishment of these formal recreation spaces, the children of Melrose utilized vacant lots that were rapidly disappearing by the late 1800's.

Since 1900, Ell Pond has traditionally served as the focal point for community recreational activity. A popular swimming facility up until its closing by the Board of Health in 1951, the pond has continually provided summer and winter recreation for thousands each year.

Situated between the north banks of Ell Pond and Lynn Fells Parkway is Ell Pond Park, which was dedicated in 1910. Submerged under water for a fifty-year period ending in 1862, the land comprising the park was a "compound of peat, underlying mud, and quicksand." Constant filling and draining of this swampy land provided today's city with this recreational facility.

On December 20, 1904, at a meeting of the Malden Aldermen, Colonel Harry E. Converse, on behalf of himself and sisters as heirs of Elizabeth S. Converse, offered the 107.5 acres of Pine Banks Park to the Cities of Malden and Melrose if they would bear the expense of upkeep. On January 31, 1905, a joint committee from the two cities accepted the offer.

Since its inception in 1855, the Park Commission has stressed the need for various recreational facilities throughout the City. Future locations for neighborhood parks and playgrounds have followed these guidelines. In 1915, the land situated on the corner of Grove and Myrtle Streets was turned over to the Park Commission for the express purpose of creating a passive, park-like recreation space. As a result, Horace Mann Park, now Mary Foley Park, was dedicated the following year and still remains as a popular place for citizens to sit and relax. The Honorable Charles Cox donated Land for the Messengers Meadow Playground at the Roosevelt School and the Lincoln Playground to the City in 1917. Both sites are still actively used and make significant contributions to the City's active recreational needs. Bowden Park, initiated in 1925 and constructed from plans drawn up by Olmstead Brothers Associates, was

developed and utilized as a passive recreation space. Another passive, ornamental, neighborhood-type park was initiated in 1929 on the plot of land at the corner of Lynde, Grove, and Lebanon Streets.

Prior to 1924, there were no enclosed baseball or football fields in Melrose on which organized high school teams could play. As a result, local citizen groups, headed by the Melrose Rotary Club, formed an association and raised monies to build an athletic facility on a tract of land located on the corner of the Lynn Fells Parkway and Tremont Street. This land, which previously had been an unsightly dumping ground, was converted into today's recreational site. In 1939, this facility was turned over to the Park Department for maintenance and upkeep.

The Park Commission cooperated with the School Committee to develop playgrounds adjacent to existing, or to be constructed, school buildings. This joint cooperation has led to the establishment of the following school playgrounds: Ripley School Playground, 1926; Hesseltine Playground, 1932; Gooch and Beebe School Playground, 1942; Hoover School Playground, 1954. The dual purpose of these recreational spaces is to provide recreation not only for school children but neighborhood residents as well.

From 1931 to 1940, numerous projects were accomplished under the Federal Government's Work Progress Administration (WPA) program. Under the direction of the Park Department, the eighteen-hole golf course and memorial park at Mount Hood was initiated in 1931 and completed in 1938. Mount Hood is a facility that is enjoyed all year round. Summer activities include golf, hiking, fishing, and picnicking, as well as passive recreational enjoyment. Winter activities include tobogganing, skiing, sledding, and ice skating at the three ponds at Mount Hood. Winter carnivals and yearly golf tournaments centered around the beautiful clubhouse have provided area residents with year-round recreation throughout the years.

WPA crews, under the direction of the Park Department, began the clearing of land in 1941 for the Lebanon Street Playground. Work was finally completed four years later. The playground provides space for year-round active recreation. Also constructed by WPA crews was Colby Park, which is located off the Lynn Fells Parkway between Lincoln Street and Larchmont Road. This park was constructed in 1941 and is another fine example of the ornamental, passive parks that were so prevalent during that time period.

Due in part to wartime conditions, the Park Department followed a policy of general up-keep and maintenance rather than a policy of expansion and growth during the 1940's. Some general improvements were made on existing park property, but expanded growth did not occur again until the early 1950's. Construction started in 1950 for the development of the Conant Road Playground. Although the site required fill and lacked proper drainage, it is now

another example of an active recreational facility that is enjoyed by area residents. After the old Gooch School was demolished in 1957, a tot lot and small recreation space was developed on the vacant lot. Neighborhood children use the Gooch Park extensively. The landscaping of the former Whittier School site in 1967 led to the formulation of a neighborhood tot lot at that site. Now called Dunton Park, this space provides active tot-age recreation.

During 1951, the Melrose Board of Health banned swimming in Ell Pond. Annual attendance figures throughout the years had averaged between 35,000 and 50,000 people. The closing left a void in the swimming recreational needs of Melrose citizens. To help alleviate this need, the busing of Melrose children to neighboring MDC pools was carried out. In 1970, the MDC pool was constructed on the old Tremont Street ice skating rink to provide swimming facilities within the City's borders. Due to state government guidelines, the land north of Ell Pond was transferred to the School Department in 1972. The Park Department manages these facilities year-round.

In more recent decades, the City Departments and Boards have worked collectively to operate, maintain, and develop new open space and recreation facilities. Major projects include redevelopment of the High School Athletic Complex, Ell Pond Memorial Park, Mount Hood Golf Course and Park, and Pine Banks Park. The Conservation Commission has developed and marked trails through the large land holdings. Smaller neighborhood parks have received attention in the last few decades, where ADA improvements have been made through public-private partnerships. The focus is on redeveloping parks and playgrounds that are deficient to improve the longevity and reduce maintenance costs.

Inventory of Individual Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Areas

The following pages provide a summary of the history, facilities, existing conditions, and suggested improvements at the following City's park and conservation areas:

Conservation Commission Lands:

- Ferdinand Woods Trail
- High Rock Trail
- Swains Pond and Towners Pond Conservation Area (Flagg Acres Trail, Knox Memorial Trail, Rocky View Trail, and Seaview Trails)

Department of Conservation and Recreation:

- Melrose and Black Rock Trails
- Lawrence W. Lloyd Memorial Swimming Pool

Parks and School Playgrounds:

- Athletic Fields (Fred Green Field, Morelli Field and Clarence De Mar Track)
- Beebe School Play Yard
- Bingham Community Playground
- Bowden Park
- Burnett Street Park
- Colby Park
- Conant Park
- Drinkwater Tot Lot
- Dunton Park
- Ell Pond Memorial Park
- Ell Pond Park
- Foss Park
- Franklin Field and Tot Lot
- Franklin Early Childhood Center Play Yard
- Gooch Park
- Hesseltine Park
- Hoover School Playground
- Lebanon Street Playground
- Lincoln Playground
- Mary Foley Park
- Mary A. Livermore Memorial Park (Coolidge School Neighborhood Playground)
- Melrose Common
- Messengers Field - Roosevelt School Playground
- Milano Park
- Mt. Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course
- Pine Banks Park
- Ripley School Play Yard
- Sewall Woods Park
- Volunteer Park
- Winthrop School Playground

CONSERVATION LAND

Ferdinand Woods Trail

Manager: Melrose Conservation Commission
Size: 209,638 square feet (4.81 acres)
Identification: Map: A13, Parcels: 97-99; Map: A14, Parcels: 1-14, 23, 32, 35-39
Location: Ferdinand Street

History

Established in 1918-19 by the acquisition of tax title land, this woodland area was augmented in 1968 by land deeded from Trinity Church. Trails have existed on the site since the early 1900's.

Facilities

- Trail.
- Limited on-street parking available.

Existing Conditions

This land is in good condition. The area is predominantly woodland that is generally free of debris. The paths appear to be well used. The wide main trail runs from Melrose into Stoneham and Wakefield, and a number of thinner trails travel north and south off of the main trail.

Suggested Improvements

- The site should remain as a passive recreational nature area and wildlife habitat.
- A new Conservation Commission sign is needed at the Melrose trail head.

High Rock Trail

Manager: Melrose Conservation Commission
Size: 219,670 square feet (5.03 acres)
Identification: Map: A13, Parcels: 56-57; Map: B13, Parcels: 7-14; Map A14, Parcels: 49-50; Map B14, Parcels 3-13
Location: West Hill Terrace and Chaska Avenue

History

Land was taken as tax title land in 1970 and devoted to conservation and open space preservation. Trails were established and marked in spring 1993.

Facilities

- Trail
- Limited on-street parking

Existing Conditions

This land is in fair condition. The trail is distinguishable but not very wide. The area is a sparsely wooded hilltop that offers opportunities for passive recreation. It has numerous exposed bedrock outcroppings and offers views toward the Boston skyline.

Suggested Improvements

- The site should remain as a passive recreation and nature area and wildlife habitat.

- A new Conservation Commission sign is needed at the Melrose trail head.
- Signage directing visitors to Wakefield and the scenic overlook are needed.

Swains Pond and Towners Pond Conservation Area

Manager: Melrose Conservation Commission
Size: 2,482,740 square feet (56.93 acres)
Identification: Map: F4, Parcels 108-111; Map: F5, Parcel: 56; Map: G4, Parcels: 4, 6+8, 7, 11, and 13-15; Map: G5, Parcels: 2, 11C, and 12; Map: G6, Parcels: 8, 9, 17-28, 29, 30, 33-36, and 37
Location: Swains Pond Avenue

History

The Swains Pond and Towners Pond Conservation Area is comprised of multiple parcels surrounding Swains Pond and Towners Pond and hosts a large trail network in Melrose: the Flagg Acres Trail, Knox Memorial Trail, the Rocky View Trail, and the Seaview Trail.

Swains Pond, a natural formation, was identified and mapped as early as 1795 before Melrose was incorporated as a City. Like many of the ponds in Melrose, Swains Pond was used early on for ice production. Easy accessibility to Malden and points south suggests that residents in the area, and the related commercial ice operation, were originally dependent on the colonial economy of Malden. In contrast to the long history of Swains Pond, Towners Pond is a relatively recent addition to Melrose. Mapping by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in 1903 shows a small stream where, today, Towners Pond is located northeast of Swains Pond. USGS mapping in 1946 shows Towners Pond in existence at its present location. At some point in the early 1900s, Towners Pond was created and used in for the purposes of ice harvesting, and is also believed to have been a quarry at one time resulting in its unknown water depth.

In the early 1930s, the land north and west of Swains Pond operated as the City's dump. In 1977, the Conservation Commission acquired the large parcels that are now known as Flagg Acres, Rocky View Trail, and Knox Memorial Trail. Other smaller parcels were acquired via tax title and transferred to the Conservation Commission during the late 1970s and 1980s.

Facilities

The Swains Pond and Towners Pond Conservation Area hosts a large trail network including the Flagg Acres Trail, Knox Memorial Trail, Rocky View Trail, and Seaview Trail.

Flagg Acres Trail

The Flagg Acres Trail is a wooded, passive recreation area for amateur hikers, environmental study, and scenic observation. The highest elevation at 220 feet offers panoramic views of lowland Melrose, the Mt. Hood Tower, Lynn Harbor, and the Boston skyline. The facilities are as follows:

- Three trails include the Red Trail which connects to the Seaview Trail System, the Blue Trail, which leads to Mount Hood, and the Green Trail which follows the shoreline of Towners Pond.
- Fishing and skating on Towners Pond.
- A gravel parking area is located at the entrance to the trail system on Swains Pond Avenue.

Knox Memorial Trail

The Knox Memorial Trail was originally known as Pond View Glen. It was renamed in 1979 for Charles Knox, a former long-time member of the Conservation Commission. Canadian geese and mallards can be seen on the pond, among the cattails that border the pond. A muskrat has built its home of mud and vegetation at the northern edge of the pond bordering the marsh grass; it diets on water plants as well as fish. This park is a home to a variety of wildlife from raccoons, pheasants, and rabbits to owls and an occasional fox. The entrance to the park is north of Towners Pond on Swains Pond Avenue. Trails run westerly along the outer perimeter of the pond then in a southerly direction. Some of the features include:

- A connection to Rocky View Trail.
- Easy to follow trails in a variety of widths.
- A large rock outcropping on the western edge of the pond offering a terrific scenic view of the pond and the surrounding natural setting.
- Autumn foliage offering a kaleidoscope of color.
- Natural springs in the pond.
- Habitat of eels, bass, red perch, sunfish, oriental carp, and horn pout, as well as bullfrogs, snakes and turtles.

Rocky View Trail

The Rocky View Trail begins about 150 feet south of the Hoover School. The blue-marked trail follows a southerly course down to Swains Pond with a connection to the Knox Memorial Trail. The landscape surrounding the trail largely consists of hills and low shrubs. The climax offers panoramic views of the Boston skyline. In 2014, the Conservation Commission installed an outdoor classroom near the trail head of the Rocky View Trail for use by the Hoover School teachers and students. In

the future, a curriculum will be developed for use by the teachers. Parking is available at the Hoover School.

Seaview Trail

The trail begins at the end of Water Street off Beech Street. The area is a sparsely wooded hilltop and is used for a passive recreation and as a nature area. The trail is marked with red markers and has connections to Flagg Acres.

Existing Conditions

All of the trails within the Swains Pond and Towners Pond Conservation Area are in good condition.

Suggested Improvements

The Swains Pond and Towners Pond Conservation Area will remain as a passive recreational nature area and wildlife habitat. All of the trails should be maintained more frequently to clear overgrowth and litter, particularly along the roads adjacent to the ponds. Specific improvements include:

- Post brochures or plaques providing seasonal nature information at Flagg Acres Trail and Rocky View Trail.
- Gravel parking lot at Flagg Acres Trail needs to be repaved.
- Trail markings need to be improved, particularly at trail crossings.
- A child-friendly trail should be added between the Hoover School and Swains Pond.
- Curbing on Swains Pond Avenue and Penny Road needs to be stabilized to prevent further erosion of the pond bank.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

Melrose and Black Rock Trails

Manager: Department of Conservation and Recreation

Location: East Fellsway Parkway

History

The trail begins at Gate 49 on the East Fellsway Parkway. This extensive trail system is part of the Middlesex Fells Reservation. The trails provide lookout areas for viewing Melrose, Malden, and the Boston skyline.

Facilities

- None.

Existing Conditions

Trails tend to be fairly level.

Suggested Improvements

- None.

Lawrence W. Lloyd Memorial Swimming Pool

Manager: Department of Conservation and Recreation
Size: 54,400 square feet (1.25 acres)
Identification: Map: B9, Parcel: 112
Location: 49 Tremont Street

History

The Tremont Street Pool was built in the early 1970s by the former Metropolitan District Commission (MDC; a predecessor to the Department of Conservation and Recreation) utilizing Land and Water Conservation Fund monies. Given the high cost of operation and maintenance, the MDC gave the pool to the City of Melrose in 1986. After running the pool for one summer in 1987 it became clear that the leakage of the pool was so significant it would make operating costs prohibitive without substantial renovation to correct the leakage issues. The Mayor's Youth Activities undertook a study of the pool in early 1992. This study concluded that it was not financially feasible to renovate and operate the pool. The study further concluded that even if money could be found to renovate the pool, the cost of operation could not be justified given the short 10-week season the pool would be operated.

In 1993, the City of Melrose returned the pool complex to the MDC. The MDC proceeded to renovate the complex and reopened it for public use in 1994. In 2014, the Department of Conservation and Recreation converted the timber framed deck structure to a concrete deck structure and replaced the decking around the pool. It continues to be a popular destination during summer months.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Bathhouse with showers, rest rooms, and two small offices
- Pool
- Bike Rack

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition.

Suggested Improvements

- None.

PARK DEPARTMENT

Athletic Fields (Fred Green Field, Morelli Field, and Cabbage Patch)

Manager: Park Department
Size: 391,768 square feet (8.9 acres)
Identification: Map: C10 Parcel: 2 & 3
Location: Lynn Fells Parkway and Tremont Street

History

The Athletic Fields were originally built in 1924, and has had significant investment over the last nine decades. In 2011, the Athletic Fields were entirely rebuilt.

- 1924 - Monies raised to build athletic facility.
- 1939 - Athletic Field turned over to Park Department.
- 1946 - Rebuilding of Athletic Field including 2 football fields, 1 baseball field, and 1 cinder track. All adjacent areas graded, loamed and seeded.
- 1947 - Electric scoreboard erected.
- 1952 - New storage building erected.
- 1962 - Complete renovation of football field.
- 1964 - Underground watering system installed.
- 1985-93- The Morelli Field Project was undertaken, including a baseball field, bleachers, scoreboard, press box, field house, and night lighting. Over these years, the football field was upgraded, including new lighting, a sprinkler system, the installation of the Clarence De Mar Track surrounding the football field, and new fencing.
- 1997 - Press box installed on bleachers. Concession was repainted and brought up to code.
- 1998 - Public address system installed.
- 2000 - ADA compliant bathrooms installed in the field house.
- 2009 - Minor upgrades were completed including replacing 23 of the 54 lights at Morelli Field, a new scoreboard was donated by the Melrose Babe Ruth League, and the restrooms were upgraded with a new water heater and backflow device. The Cabbage Patch was also upgraded.
- 2011 - The Athletic Fields were entirely rebuilt. This project included the installation of a new multi-purpose synthetic athletic field and a new

natural grass baseball stadium. As a result, the track was removed. At both fields, new ADA-accessible grandstand seating was installed to accommodate over 2,000 spectators. Both fields also received ADA-accessible press boxes. Further, the following project elements were also completed: a permanent restroom facility was constructed; a MUSCO lighting system was installed; two wireless multi-sport score boards were installed; new PA systems were installed for both press boxes; a concession building with team room was constructed; storage was provided under the bleachers; a new walking track around the perimeter of the facility was construction; a new brick entrance was installed at the corner of Tremont Street and the Lynn Fells Parkway; and a new underdrain was installed.

- 2018 - A bike repair station was added at Morelli Field.
- 2022 - A new scoreboard was installed at Morelli Field that can be controlled by a phone application.
- 2023 - A basketball half-court was installed at Fred Green Field.

Facilities

- Fred Green Field, including a multi-use field with bleachers, press box, restrooms, concession building, lights, PA system, half-court basketball and scoreboard.
- Morelli Baseball Field, including trash barrels, stadium seating, press box, PA system, dugouts, scoreboard, and storage systems.
- Cabbage Patch, grass practice field.

Existing Conditions

This park is in excellent condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Installation of a security system.
- Replace Fred Green turf and padding on endzones.
- Restore double wide visitor's gate.
- Replace padding on irrigation cabinet on Cabbage Patch field.

Beebe School Play Yard

Manager: School Department
Size: 8,000 square feet (0.18 acres)
Identification: Map: B7, Parcel: 116A
Location: West Foster Street

History

The SEEM Collaborative has operated at the school since 2011. To the east of the school building in an open grassed area, a fenced in, ADA compliant swing set was added in 2013.

Facilities

- Swings
- Trash barrels

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Maintenance needed
- Mulching

Bingham Community Playground (formerly Lincoln School Playground)

Manager: School Department
Size: 17,210 square feet (0.4 acres)
Identification: Map: B6, Parcel: 87
Location: 92 West Wyoming Avenue

History

The playground, located off West Wyoming Avenue, between Pleasant and Cottage Streets, is utilized by neighborhood residents of all ages, as well as by the kindergarten through sixth grade students attending the adjacent Lincoln Elementary School. The playground was updated to be handicap accessible in the mid-2000s. In 2013, all of the playground equipment was replaced as a result of fundraising efforts and renamed the Bingham Community Playground.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Tot lot equipment
- 4 benches
- Four recycled plastic multipurpose play structures including a jeep, a playhouse, 4 swings, 2 toddler swings, 2 ADA swings, and an enclosed slide
- Trash barrels

Existing Conditions

This park is in excellent condition.

Suggested Improvements

- None.

Bowden Park

Manager: Park Department
Size: 26,954 square feet (0.62 acres)
Identification: Map: B8, Parcel: 49
Location: Vinton Street

History

Located across from commuter rail station on the corner of West Emerson and Cedar Park, this ornamental park is situated on land donated to the City by Mr. Frederick P. Bowden in 1924, and is used mostly for passive recreation. The park was laid out in 1925 from plans drawn by Olmstead Brothers, Landscape Architects. It requires extensive maintenance during the early spring months. In 1956, two new walks were installed and more recently, three decorative benches were installed.

In 2012, the irrigation system was upgraded, as was the electrical system to support the Victorian-period lighting, and new sidewalks were installed. In 2014, a wind sculpture donated by the Melrose Arts Society was installed as well as bench dedicated to Melrose artist Tom Sutherland. In 2023, a 50 AMP box was installed to support the electrical needs of the Sally Frank's Farmers' Market, which has been held at Bowden Park every Thursday from June through October since 2012.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- 1 trash receptacle
- 3 benches
- Bike racks
- 50 AMP box

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition. The park should be maintained as a passive, ornamental park.

Suggested Improvements

- New plantings, particularly in open areas to discourage active play.
- Landscaping of overgrown areas.
- Needs irrigation backflow system.

Colby Park

Manager: Park Department
Size: 38,962 square feet (0.89 acres)
Identification: Map: E11, Parcel: 101
Location: Lynn Fells Parkway

History

Located off the Lynn Fells Parkway between Lincoln Street and Larchmont Road, this park was constructed in 1941 by Works Progress Administration (WPA) crews under the direction of the Park Department. It is a good example of the ornamental, passive recreation parks of that era.

Facilities

- None.

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition.

Suggested Improvements

- New plantings.
- Night lighting.
- Improve visibility from the street.
- Construct curb cuts where appropriate.
- Add picnic tables

Conant Park

Manager: Park Department
Size: 245,759 square feet (5.64 acres)
Identification: Map: A8, Parcel: 65A
Location: Baxter Street

History

The playground was constructed from 1950 to 1952 and the basketball court was added in 1968. The ADA accessible tot lot and softball field were installed in 1997. A batting cage and new basketball rims were installed in 2005. All age groups utilize this neighborhood playground and organized Citywide baseball teams use the existing ball fields.

In 2011, the softball field was upgraded to improve the infield and outfield. The clay infield was tilled to remove vegetation and new clay was added to eliminate all low spots allowing the field to drain properly. Clay bricks were installed under home plate and the pitching mound to prevent degradation of these high-stress areas. The transition from the infield to the outfield was regraded and new sod was installed. Permanent foul lines (non-skid surface) were installed.

In 2012, a water line was installed from the street to the concession trailer. In 2014 the deteriorated basketball court was removed, which resulted in the need to address the on-going drainage issues. In 2018, new swings were installed.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- 1 baseball field with benches and small bleachers
- Equipment storage lockers
- ADA accessible tot lot
- Updated irrigation system
- Concession trailer
- Batting cages
- Open field in southwest section
- Swings

Existing Conditions

This park is generally in good condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Updated backflow prevention system.
- Implement study for backfield usage.
- Install safety net behind field to prevent objects from going into waterlogged area.

Drinkwater Tot Lot

Manager: Park Department
Size: 10,629 square feet (0.24 acres)
Identification: Map: G10, Parcel: 48-49
Location: Porter Street

History

This neighborhood tot lot, built in 1985-1986 in memory of Fred Drinkwater, is situated at the end of Porter Street. The land was acquired by the City of Melrose through eminent domain. In 2000, accessible playground equipment was installed, pea stone excavated, and wood carpet put in.

Facilities

- 1 climbing apparatus.
- 1 Spring rider

Existing Conditions

This park is in poor condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Update the playground equipment.

Dunton Park

Manager: Park Department

Size: 15,000 square feet (0.34 acres)
Identification: Map: D12, Parcel: 1
Location: 143 Franklin Street

History

Constructed in 1969, Lt. J.G. Dunton Park is a small, enclosed park situated in a residential neighborhood on the corner of Franklin and Pratt Streets. With the addition of tot lot equipment in 1975, the park mainly serves preschoolers and the K-6 neighborhood youth, however, during the summer months, the elderly also use the park for passive recreation. This playground has become known as the Swiss Cheese Park due to a piece of equipment that resembles Swiss cheese. In 2021, a Daisy Swing was added.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Enclosed by 4-foot chain link fence
- 1 jungle gym
- 2 trash receptacles
- 4 wooden benches
- Daisy swing

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Accessible play equipment needed
- Night security lights
- New fences
- Improved seating areas/benches/chess tables

Ell Pond Memorial Park (Knoll/Lewis Monk Fields, Crystal St. Tennis Courts, Lyons Memorial Tennis Courts, Dog Park, and Skate Park)

Manager: School Department
Size: 1,094,605 square feet (25.1 acres)
Identification: Map: C10, Parcel: 1; Map: D10, Parcel 5
Location: Lynn Fells Parkway and Tremont Street

History

Ell Pond Park was dedicated in 1921. Since 1900, Ell Pond has served as the focal point for the City's recreational needs. Once a popular swimming facility until its closing by the Board of Health in 1951, the pond has continued to provide summer and winter recreation for thousands. In 1937, 36,500 swimmers utilized Ell Pond.

- 1897 - Aldermen vote to purchase 23 acres to the north and west of Ell Pond.
- 1902 - John Slayton and James McGuire purchase Littlefield Ice House and present it to the City, providing the land for the present small park on Main Street.
- 1910 - Bathhouse constructed.
- 1912 - Road around Knoll built.
- 1920 - Bathhouse condemned by Board of Health. A hockey rink was built.
- 1921 - Area to the north of Ell Pond dedicated as a memorial park.
- 1922 - A second outdoor hockey rink built.
- 1923 - New bathhouse opened.
- 1927 - Rebuilding of the southeasterly end of Ell Pond.
- 1928 - Ice hockey rink located on the Lynn Fells Parkway and close to the pond was increased in size.
- 1929 - Large area bordering the Lynn Fells Parkway and along western side of bathhouse filled in.
- 1931 - Large area between Knoll and Tremont Street graded and seeded.
- 1940 - Four tennis courts constructed near Lynn Fells Parkway.
- 1954 - Hockey rink on Tremont Street partially filled in and a new rink excavated on a site near the Knoll.
- 1957 - Existing swampland bordering the parkway and Tremont Street reclaimed.
- 1958 - Tremont Street ball field laid out.
- 1962 - Complete renovation of Little League field on Tremont Street.
- 1964 - Extensive renovation of existing tennis courts at parkway and construction of two new ones. The Bandstand at the Knoll was removed.
- 1966 - Grading and reclaiming of swampland east of Knoll.
- 1972 - The School Department obtained jurisdiction over 5.6 acres of Ell Pond recreation land from September 1 to June 15 every year for use as High School athletic/recreation complex. The City transferred a 3,300-square foot parcel to the Metropolitan District Commission for new municipal swimming pool.

- 1983 - A Diagnostic/Feasibility Study funded by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Quality Engineering was completed.
- 1984-93- Between the years 1984 and 1993, few improvements were made including refurbishing the Crystal Street Tennis Courts, installing new exercise equipment, and improving the Little League Field.
- 1995 - The Ell Pond Master Plan was prepared by Levy, Eldrege, & Wagner Associates, Inc. The Tremont Street basketball court was reconstructed.
- 1997 - The West Knoll Field was stripped, filled, regraded, and resodded. The irrigation system was updated.
- 2000 - The Crystal Street Tennis Courts were pulverized and completely replaced.
- 2003 - Lewis Monk Field was reconstructed with new dugouts and fencing. An irrigation system and backflow device was also installed.
- 2005 - The West Knoll Field was reconstructed.
- 2006 - The Middle School drain was replaced. The Lyons Memorial Tennis Courts were resurfaced.
- 2008 - The Skate Park was constructed adjacent to Lewis Monk Field on Tremont Street.
- 2010 - Benches were added to the Lyons Memorial Tennis Courts and the Crystal Street Tennis Courts for tournament viewing.
- 2011 - Implemented a Canadian Geese control program with support from the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture.
- 2012 - The Melrose Dog Park was constructed on the eastern side of the Knoll.
- 2013 - Three catch basins were added to the East Knoll Field to draw water off of the field. A new irrigation system was installed as well to support the newly sodded East Knoll Field. At the West Knoll Field, soccer lights with a MUSCO system were installed. The World War I Memorial at the Knoll was rededicated.
- 2014 - The infield of the Lewis Monk Field was renovated.
- 2015 - Lyons Memorial Tennis Courts are planned for renovation.
- 2022 - A feasibility study was conducted to identify necessary improvements to existing park facilities and features. The study included a master plan for the park, which the City hopes to incrementally implement as funds allow.

2023 - New equipment was added to the Skatepark

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows

- Eight tennis courts
- East and West soccer fields, one lighted for night play
- Junior soccer field, lighted for night play
- Little League field
- Dog Park
- Skate Park
- Six wooden benches
- Four War Memorials

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition and with the implementation of the Ell Pond Feasibility Study and Master Plan, the drainage on the West and East Knoll fields can continue being addressed. The Canadian geese control program implemented in 2011 has resulted in a dramatic decrease of the number of birds landing at Ell Pond, however, more should be done to prevent the destruction of the fields.

Suggested Improvements

- Night lighting for tennis courts and basketball court, including electrical outlets.
- Develop seating arrangements near Ell Pond shore.
- Improve handicapped accessibility to the trails and game areas.
- Asphalt drive around knoll needs to be pulverized and paved.
- Perimeter fencing needs to be replaced along all the Knoll Fields.
- Continue to manage Canadian Geese at Ell Pond.
- Maintain the dog park.
- Resurface Crystal St. Tennis Courts
- Implement feasibility study and address drainage issues.
- Add water fountain station and bike racks.
- Evaluate Lewis Monk Field for high school softball use and add night lighting.
- Plant pollinator gardens/designate no mow areas

Ell Pond Park

Manager: Park Department
Size: 65,799 square feet (1.51 acres)
Identification: Map: D9, Parcels: 1A and 3
Location: Main Street

History

This park is located on the southeasterly shore of Ell Pond, between the pond and Main Street. It is an ornamental, passive recreation area utilized by downtown shoppers, residents, patrons of the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital, and area employees. The park was dedicated in 1921 and a Victorian gazebo was installed in 1984. The park area was completely renovated with Community Development Revolving funds in 1988. Benches were rebuilt and the Park Department repaired the irrigation system in 1998. In 2009, the park was refurbished and in 2023, funds were distributed to repair the Gazebo.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- 6 wooden benches
- 2 trash receptacles
- Victorian gazebo
- 2 electrical outlets

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition. A deteriorating retaining wall on the southeast corner of the pond was repaired in 1988. Drainage improvements occurring in 2013 in the vicinity of the park included further repair to the retaining wall and installation of a gate to control the water level of Ell Pond.

Suggested Improvements

- New plantings.
- Night security lighting.
- Growth around pond unchecked, needs tree removal and riprap wall reconstruction.
- Add picnic tables.

Foss Park (formerly Washington Playground)

Manager: Park Department
Size: 59,535 square feet (1.37 acres)
Identification: Map: D6, Parcel: 29
Location: Lynde Street and Malvern Street

History

This neighborhood playground was constructed in 1925. The Planning Office, in conjunction with citizen advisory committees, playground users, and neighbors, carried out an extensive redesign in the early 1980s. A new ADA accessible tot lot was installed in 1997 by the Park Department and an irrigation system was installed in 1999.

In November 2005, the park was dedicated to Ken L. Foss, who served on the Board of Alderman from 1980 to 1990 and on the Park Commission from 2002 to 2005.

Improvements were made in 2006 & 2007 with the replacement of the rumble slide and the resurfacing of the basketball court. Further improvements were made in 2009 and in 2012, a flagpole was added to the Little League Field. In 2022, a Pickleball Court and basketball half court was created. New playground equipment is planned for the fall of 2023.

Facilities

- Baseball backstop
- Basketball court
- One 250 watt vapor night-light
- Tot lot
- 4 benches

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Replace backstop.
- Install drinking fountain and lighting.
- Baseball diamond should be rebuilt: graded, loamed, sodded/seeded.
- Perimeter fencing should be replaced.
- Asphalt parking area should be pulverized, graded, and paved.
- Benches in tot lot should be replaced.
- Improve ADA accessibility.

Franklin Field

Manager: Park Department
Size: 213,277 square feet (4.89 acres)
Identification: Map: D11, Parcels: 2 and 6
Location: Greenleaf Place

History

Franklin Field was built in 1976 as a part of the new High School recreation complex. This play area features two soccer fields and a sprinkler system. Electricity has been available at the fields since 2014.

A tot lot was built in 1985 relocating a previous school playground displaced by the construction of a new elderly housing complex next to the Franklin School in 1975-1977. The tot lot was refurbished in 2000 and again in 2009. Since 2021, 40 community garden beds have been constructed at the park.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Two soccer fields
- Electric outlet at fields
- Tot lot equipment
- 4 benches at tot lot
- Four foot fence around tot lot
- 40 community garden beds

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Add bike racks.

Franklin Early Childhood Center Play Yard

Manager: School Department
Size: 8,400 square feet (0.19 acres)
Identification: Map: D11, Parcel: 0
Location: Main Street

History

The Franklin Early Childhood Center play yard is adjacent to the school at the corner of Franklin Street and Main Street. The play yard is fenced-in with a few pieces of tot lot equipment. There is a large tree and some landscaping located inside the fence at the intersection.

The Parent-Teacher Organization fundraised in order to replace the play yard equipment and in 2015, a rock climbing wall was installed.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Tot lot equipment
- Fence
- Benches
- Rock climbing wall
- Trash barrels

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Replace back tot lot equipment.

Gooch Park

Manager: Park Department
Size: 27,815 square feet (0.64 acres)
Identification: Map: B7, Parcel: 55
Location: Florence Street and West Foster Street

History

This small playground serves the surrounding neighborhood as well as Beebe Elementary School. It was constructed in 1957 on the site of the old Gooch School; a basketball court was added later. Eight lights were added in 1975. An ADA-accessible tot lot was installed in 1999, along with sod and irrigation upgrades.

In 2012, Gooch Playground was refurbished. The basketball court was resurfaced and repainted, and the tot lot was upgraded with ADA-accessible equipment.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Basketball court with 8 GE 250-watt mercury vapor floodlights mounted on four 35-foot wooden poles
- Play structure with slide and overhead climber designed for 5-12 year olds
- Bubble climber
- Swings consisting of one toddler swing, 1 intermediate swing, and 1 tire swing
- 3 trash receptacles
- field with irrigation system
- 2 benches
- Flag pole

Existing Conditions

This park is in excellent condition.

Suggested Improvements

- The lighting needs to be upgraded and reconfigured.
- Fencing should be replaced.
- Add bike racks.

Hesseltine Field

Manager: School Department - Park Department
Size: 148,890 square feet (3.42 acres)
Identification: Map: E12, Parcels: 3 and 107
Location: Ruggles Street, Damon and Hesseltine Avenue

History

Hesseltine Field is open space adjacent to the Horace Mann School, including the Horace Mann Playground. Since 2007, the City has invested in improving the field for a variety of activities. In 2007, a new baseball field and multipurpose turf field were installed and the basketball court was resurfaced. The remainder of the field was dedicated to passive recreation. In 2009, the playground received a facelift. In 2014, as a result of fundraising efforts by the Horace Mann School community as well as the community-at-large, the playground was entirely replaced and rubber surfacing was installed.

In 2012, a school community garden was established, fenced, and irrigation access was provided. The irrigation access for the community garden was also improved in 2014.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Baseball diamond
- Multipurpose turf field
- Playground
- Irrigation system
- Basketball court
- Community garden
- Passive recreation area
- Trash barrels

Existing Conditions

This park is in excellent condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Designate a no mow area.

Hoover School Playground

Manager: School Department
Size: 468,270 square feet (10.75 acres)
Identification: Map: F5, Parcel: 55
Location: Glendower Road

History

Located on Glendower Road adjacent to Hoover Elementary School, this playground is utilized by kindergarten through sixth grade students, as well as by neighborhood residents of all ages. The playground, like the school, was built in 1966. A basketball court was added in 1967. New playground

equipment was added in 1986, a new tot lot was constructed in 2001, and an ADA swing was added in 2010.

In 2011, a number of improvements to the playground were completed. The asphalt area around the playground was resurfaced and the grass areas were resodded. The rail road ties delineating the play areas were replaced, and the retaining wall was rebuilt. The irrigation system was upgraded as well. The basketball court posts, backboards, and rims were replaced, as was the Toss & Score.

The Hoover School has a school community garden, which was established in 2009. A water spigot was added in 2013 for the community garden.

In 2014, the Conversation Commission established an outdoor classroom on land adjacent to the Hoover School.

In 2020, the climbing structures and swings were replaced and a figure 8 climber was installed.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Basketball Court
- Playground
- Open play area
- Community garden
- Benches
- Trash barrels

Existing Conditions

This park is in fair condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Continue to explore additional recreation opportunities on abutting City property.

Lebanon Street Playground

Manager: Park Department
Size: 42,253 square feet (0.97 acres)
Identification: Map: E4, Parcel: 5
Location: Lebanon Street

History

All age groups in the neighborhood utilize this playground, which is located off Lebanon Street and across from the Wyoming Cemetery. It was constructed by

WPA crews in 1944. A basketball court was added in 1961, and an ADA tot lot was installed by Park Department in 1997. In 1999, the Park Department added an irrigation system.

In 2008, the softball field and basketball court were improved. For the softball field, new loam, topsoil, clay, and sod were installed as well as a new backstop. The half-basketball court was entirely replaced. Additionally, new sidewalks, fencing, and timbers around the perimeter of the tot lot were installed.

In 2023, the entire park was refurbished except for the tot lot equipment.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Half basketball court
- Softball diamond
- Tot lot
- Equipment locker
- Trash receptacles
- Benches
- Flag pole
- Backflow prevention system, irrigation system

Existing Conditions

The field is in excellent condition, but the steep topography of the site limits the play area and results in conflicts over use of the space. Additionally, a sewer easement bisects the playground. The playground itself is handicapped accessible by way of a driveway.

Suggested Improvements

- Parking should be better accommodated.
- Night security lights.
- Construct curb cuts where appropriate.
- Tot lot could be relocated to the back of the facility to allow for construction of off-street parking and conversion to a T-ball park.

Lincoln Playground

Manager: Park Department
Size: 74,303 square feet (1.71 acres)
Identification: Map: B6, Parcels: 86 and 126
Location: Crescent Avenue and West Wyoming Avenue

History

The Lincoln School was constructed in 1917 on land donated by the Honorable Charles Cox. Tennis courts, a basketball court, and a ball field were added at a later date. The tot lot was renovated by the Office of Planning and Community

Development in the early 1980s, and again in 1992 by the Lincoln School Community Playground Projects neighborhood group. The baseball infield was rebuilt by the Park Department in 1997.

The new Lincoln School opened in September 2000. During construction of the new school, the tennis courts were demolished to accommodate a new teacher and staff parking lot. (These tennis courts were replaced by the Crystal Street Courts at Ell Pond Memorial Park.) A basketball court/hard surface play area is located near the south face of the new addition to Lincoln School.

Minor upgrades were made since the opening of the new school. In 2004, new basketball court rims were installed and an ADA accessible swing was added to the tot lot. In 2010, a 50-foot backstop was installed at the baseball field and new fencing was installed along the outfield, backstop, and dug outs.

A community garden was added in 2014.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Basketball court
- Baseball field
- 2 wood benches
- 6 trash receptacles
- Tot lot
- Community garden

Existing Conditions

This park is in excellent condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Baseball field needs grading and reseeding and general infield improvements.
- Benches are needed adjacent to the tot lot.

Mary A. Livermore Memorial Park

Manager: Park Department
Size: 23,248 square feet (0.53 acres)
Identification: Map: D8, Parcel: 128
Location: 46 Upham Street

History

This neighborhood playground sits between Upham Street and Main Street and was completely renovated in 1980. The Park Department installed an ADA accessible tot lot in early 1998, along with more benches, a sandbox, and night lighting. In 2019, new equipment was added. It serves all age groups, but is favored by children ages one through 12.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Basketball Court
- ADA accessible tot lot
- Benches

Existing Conditions

This park is in excellent condition, but the basketball court is in fair condition.

The playground itself is ADA accessible.

Suggested Improvements

- Clean up of graffiti.
- Backflow prevention irrigation system.
- Water fountain.
- Basketball court needs to be pulverized, graded, paved, and painted.
- Add water fountain.
- Install bike racks.

Mary Foley Memorial Park

Manager: Park Department
Size: 26,361 square feet (0.61 acres)
Identification: Map: C6, Parcel: 41
Location: Grove Street

History

Located on the corner of Myrtle and Grove Streets, this passive ornamental park, which is primarily utilized during hot summer months, was constructed in 1915 on the old Horace Mann School site. The park was refurbished in 1927 and regraded in 1945. In 1986, it was again refurbished, this time by private donation. Benches were recently scraped and repainted, four new trees were planted, and the irrigation system was updated.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- 6 benches
- 2 trash receptacles
- Mary Foley Memorial Monument
- Internal walkways
- Flag pole

Existing Conditions

This park is in very good condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Irrigation was recently updated, but the park still needs a backflow prevention system.
- Redo benches.

Melrose Common

Manager: Park Department
Size: 175,547 square feet (4.03 acres)
Identification: Map: E7, Parcel: 125
Location: East Foster Street

History

This park was initiated as a public garden in 1856 from land that was part of Lynde and Upham farms. Subsequently, the following improvements have been made:

- 1917 -A baseball diamond created
- 1924 -A tot lot installed
- 1929 -Tennis courts installed
- 1932 -Baseball diamond rebuilt
- 1940 -WPA installed more tennis courts
- 1959 -Courts resurfaced
- 1965 -A basketball court was installed
- 1975 -Night lighting for tennis and basketball was added
- 1977 -A new tot lot was installed
- 1985 -A plaque for Vietnam Veteran Scott Andresen was installed
- 1997 -Complete renovation of park with the addition of new tot lots, two new softball fields, new basketball court, fences, equipment boxes, irrigation with backflow prevention, sidewalks, and ten new trees.
- 2009 -Tennis courts that were removed were reused as a riding track. The area was resurfaced with an acrylic surface system and a figure-eight riding track, hopscotch and four-square games were created. Two large "M" for Melrose were added to the middle.
- 2010 -The softball complex was renovated including reestablishing base lines, and realigning home plate and the pitcher's mound. Base paths and the infield to outfield transition were restored to proper grades. New sod was installed at the transition lines and stone dust was replaced around the dug outs.

2014 -The playground at the corner of East Foster Street and Larrabee Street was entirely replaced. New equipment and safety surface were installed and the entry plaza was reconstructed with the aid of an Our Common Backyard Grant from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. New plantings will be completed in the Spring of 2015.

2021 -The softball storage equipment was replaced in 2021.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- 2 softball fields
- 1 basketball court
- Enclosed asphalt area (old tennis courts)
- 5 benches
- 6 trash receptacles
- ADA accessible tot lots

Existing Conditions

This park is in excellent condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Drainage issue near the tot lot should be corrected.
- Upgrades to the sidewalks around perimeter of the park are needed.
- Improve the field conditions.
- Add a water fountain.

Messengers Field – Roosevelt School Playground

Manager: Park Department
Size: 110,000 square feet (2.5 acres)
Identification: Map: B11, Parcels: 54, 54A
Location: Brunswick Park

History

Located between Vinton Street and Brunswick Park, this playground is used jointly by the neighborhood and the Roosevelt Elementary School. The playground was constructed in 1917 on land donated by the Honorable Charles Cox. Two tennis courts were removed in 1965 to make room for an addition to the Roosevelt School. A new baseball infield (Messengers Field), additional irrigation, and new wood carpeting in the tot lot were installed in 1998 by the Park Department.

The Roosevelt School Playground was completely replaced in 2002 with construction of the new school. The playground was replaced again in 2013

due to the collective efforts of the City, the Roosevelt School Parent-Teacher Organization, and community fundraising.

A community garden was added in 2014.

Facilities

- Basketball court
- Softball field with 2 new player benches
- ADA accessible tot lot
- Community garden
- Trash barrels

Existing Conditions

This park is in excellent condition; however, the softball field functions as a detention basin as per the design of the new school which limits the availability of the field following storm events. Due to the design limitations, the field should be converted to an all-purpose field.

Suggested Improvements

- None.

Milano Park

Manager: Park Department
Size: 1,500 square feet (0.03 acres)
Identification: Map: C6, Parcel: 53-83
Location: Main Street

History

Located at the corner of Main and Grove Streets, this urban park was developed in 1981 as a passive recreation facility under a Community Development program. A flag and flag pole was donated by Papa Gino's, an establishment adjacent to the site. Since the passing of Mayor Milano in 2011, this park has become an Adopt-a-Site.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- 3 benches
- 1 trash receptacle
- 2 Victorian street lamps
- 1 flagpole with large American flag

Existing Conditions

This park is in excellent condition.

Suggested Improvements

- None.

Mount Hood Memorial Park & Golf Course

Manager: Park Department
Size: 10,933,560 square feet (251 acres)
Identification: Map: H6, Parcel: 0
Location: Stillman Road

History

Mt. Hood, once known as Bear Hill, is situated in the southeastern part of the City near the Saugus line. The park and golf course are utilized all year round as a multi-purposed recreation facility. Summer activities include golf, hiking, fishing, picnicking, and passive recreation. Winter activities include skating, sledding and cross country skiing. The fieldstone clubhouse plays host to a wide variety of social functions year round.

The site was originally a signal station of the Wampanoag Indians, whose "fires could be seen as far away as Mount Wachusett."

John C. F. Slayton purchased 25 acres of land from Wendall P. Hood in 1907. He immediately built a road to the summit and constructed an observation tower, which later burned down. Mr. Slayton then donated this tract of land to the City. The City purchased an additional 210 acres and began making plans in 1931 to develop a park and golf course on the site.

- 1934 - A nature trail was established. The 40-foot stone tower was constructed with an overall high of 322 feet above mean sea level. The Board of Aldermen authorized the City to "lay out, construct and maintain, and operate a municipal golf course." The City utilized WPA labor for this project.
- 1935 - The first nine holes of golf course completed; second nine begun. Additionally, the fieldstone clubhouse began construction, the fieldstone garage was completed, and the toboggan chute erected.
- 1936 - The second nine holes were completed and the ski jump was opened.
- 1937 - The fieldstone clubhouse was dedicated. At this time, the toboggan chute became a maintenance problem.
- 1950 - New ski rope tow put into operation.
- 1951 - A feasibility study for a new ten meter ski jump was initiated.
- 1973 - Due to increased vandalism, a security patrol initiated.
- 1974 - The rope tow was vandalized.
- 1975 - The Park Commission approves a two year lease of land for antenna facilities to be installed by the Federal Aviation Administration (To

date, the lease continues to be renewed.) A special public meeting was held regarding a recreational facility at Mt. Hood. The proposed facility would include a hockey rink, baseball diamond, and tennis courts. After the meeting, the Park Commission voted to abandon the project.

- 1976 - Fireplaces repaired by the Regional Vocational School.
- 1984 - The golf course is leased to Massachusetts Golf Association on 10 year lease.
- 1986 - The Park Commission undertakes preliminary site preparation for field development. Repairs are made to the tower including to the stone work, grates, and door.
- 1987 - A land swap of 4,800 sq. ft. for 6,639 sq. ft. contiguous to Mt. Hood plus \$40,000 is completed.
- 1984-93 - The golf course irrigation system continues to be upgraded and tees maintained, under terms of the lease. A request for proposals is released for a selection of a Management Entity to operate the facility when current lease ended in 1994.
- 1995 - A Master Plan written by Camp, Dresser, & McKee is prepared: "The intent of this project was to explore design, technical, environmental and cost feasibility of new improvements that will enhance the quality and use potential of the overall site. This goal was a first tier priority in the five year Action Plan of the 1993 Open Space and Recreation Plan for the City of Melrose and this document serves as a basis for proposed capital improvements to the site. The attached information in this Master Plan will also be used to solicit Federal and State Grant Assistance."
- 1996-98 - A new ADA compliant tot lot was installed. The parking lot was rebuilt and expanded to ADA requirements, with accessible parking spots and curb cuts. New parking area also featured traffic islands and tree plantings. Continued improvements to course drainage and fairway occurred. A new road was built through course, with drainage systems. Cross-country skiing is encouraged, since hilly terrain is ideal.
- 2000 - A trail system was developed to connect the Park with adjacent Flagg Acres Conservation Land.
- 2001 - A new field built behind the 11th green and the 12th hole was reconstructed.
- 2002 - The clubhouse bathrooms renovated. Beginning in 2002, the cart paths were repaved and expanded.

- 2004 - Handicapped accessible entrances were added to the Pro Shop and function hall in the Clubhouse. GMC was authorized by the Park Commission to run skating parties on the pond during the winter months. The maintenance building demolished. The Clubhouse's Carr Room was renovated.
- 2005 - Clubhouse roof was replaced and a new heating system was installed.
- 2006 - A new storage building was constructed. A bar was added to the Carr Room.
- 2007 - The Slayton garage was repointed. A stone parapet was reconstructed. The Clubhouse chimney was rebuilt.
- 2009 - The 19th Hole Snack Bar roof was replaced. Granite-engraved distance markers were added to all eighteen holes. A new irrigation system was installed on the back nine holes.
- 2010 - Air conditioning was added to the Clubhouse, Pro Shop, and Park Office. First Pond was hydroraked and a lighted fountain was installed. A "Welcome to Mt. Hood" carved sign on granite posts was added to the property.
- 2011 - The Weston Memorial was added to the 8th hole near the Mt. Hood Tower. Trail markers were added on all trails.
- 2012 - The renovation of the 19th Hole Snack Bar was completed including new kitchen equipment, accessible entrances, new doors and windows, and a walk-in cooler. The First Pond trail loops were completed.
- 2013 - The Clubhouse serving and bar areas were renovated to be more efficient. The stone parapet over the 19th Hole Snack Bar was rebuilt. Accessible ramps were added to the entrances at the Snack Bar. A granite bench donation program was implemented, and four benches were installed throughout the park.
- 2014 - Interior and exterior renovations at the Clubhouse were completed. Extensive tree work was completed throughout the park.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- 18 hole golf course
- Club house
- 2 Garages
- Pump House
- Tower
- Picnic area

- When sufficient snow is on the ground, 300-400 sledders are accommodated daily, primarily on the first fairway. A police officer is provided at such times to monitor parking safety.
- ADA compliant tot lot
- Cart storage area
- Practice Field

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Develop regulations for sledding safety and post rules during winter months.
- Picnic area and tower should be refurbished.
- Ongoing well exploration; recently a spring was discovered with flow of 75 gallons/minute.
- Dredge first pond.
- Install bocce ball/horseshoe.
- Manage Canada Geese.
- Add pavement markers to the road to Slayton Tower.
- Develop trails for multi-season/multi-use.
- Clearly mark and maintain trails.

Pine Banks Park

Manager: Pine Banks Board of Trustees
Size: 3,397,860 square feet (78 acres) in Melrose
Identification: Map: C3, Parcel: 0
Location: Main Street and Sylvan Street

History

Pine Banks Park consists of a total of 107.5 acres, which were donated to the Melrose and neighboring Malden by former Mayor Elisha S. Converse in 1905. Today, Pine Banks is a multi-purposed recreational facility that includes playing fields, a regulation sized track, a tot playground, trails, and picnic grounds. A Board of Trustees makes policy and planning decisions regarding the park. Meanwhile, administrative and maintenance tasks are implemented by the park superintendent and his staff through shared funding from the Cities of Melrose and Malden.

Organized summer activities of Pine Banks include softball, soccer, baseball, football, rugby, and track and field. Up to 200 teams play in the park each year. Installation of a multi-purpose, synthetic field was completed in the fall of 2003 with the aid of an Urban Self-Help Grant (now known as Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant). This field requires little

maintenance and has stood up well to heavy use. In 2007, a baseball field was added also through the assistance of a PARC Grant. Finally, in 2012, a regulation-sized track, interior multi-purpose field, and softball field were constructed. The Audubon Society visits the park yearly and has recorded sightings of over 91 different species.

Winter activities include skating and sledding. The park's pond is kept clear of snow for ice skaters.

- 1905 - Joint committee from Malden and Melrose accept gift of 107.5 acres from Colonel Harry E. Converse, made of behalf of himself and his sisters as heirs of Elizabeth S. Converse.
- 1906 - One softball field and one baseball field constructed.
- 1908 - Tot play equipment incorporated.
- 1909 - Bleachers erected near ball field. Approximately, 7,000 sq. ft. of lowland south of Pine Banks Road filled and seeded. Park zoo established.
- 1915 - High school football and baseball teams play at park. Four acres utilized for victory gardens.
- 1925 - Tourist camp established.
- 1937 - New baseball field constructed.
- 1938 - Tourist camp destroyed by hurricane.
- 1940 - Approximately 75,000 people visited park.
- 1947 - Trustees voted to replace existing victory gardens with softball and baseball fields in their place. These fields were ready for use in the spring of 1949. Fireplace and log cabin built at park.
- 1949 - Second wood burning fireplace built.
- 1950 - New field house built on ball fields. Sylvan Street corner filled.
- 1954 - Two new charcoal burning fireplaces built.
- 1955 - New Little League fields graded and seeded at corner of Main Street and Sylvan Street.
- 1956 - Approximately 100,000 people visited park.
- 1957 - 58 lights of 1,500 watts each added to north softball field.
- 1959 - Little League baseball fields and softball fields rebuilt with new loam.
- 1960 - Replaced two of original six fireplaces and added four additional ones. Approximately 250,000 people visited park.

- 1962 - Chain link fence installed along ball fields.
- 1964 - New storage house built at ball field.
- 1965 - Log cabin torn down.
- 1969 - Three permanent animal pens built.
- 1970 - Ball fields utilized by local skimobilers during winter.
- 1972 - New tot lot equipment added.
- 1973 - Proposed master plan developed by landscape architect Frank McHugh.
- 1976 - Melrose Rotary Club repaired and painted bleachers.
- 1980s - Community group developed small car derby track.
- 1990 - Earth Day celebration.
- 1997 - A 150 gal/min well drilled for irrigation system.
- 1999 - Major league baseball field reconstructed with lights. Restrooms made handicapped accessible, handicapped accessible parking constructed. ADA accessible tot lot installed. Irrigation systems updated.
- 2003 - Installation of a multi-purpose, synthetic field was completed in the fall with the aid of an Urban Self-Help Grant, now known as PARC Grant.
- 2007 - Installation of new baseball/multi-purpose synthetic field with the aid of an Urban Self-Help Grant, now known as PARC Grant.
- 2012 - Completion of a regulation-sized track, a multi-purpose field interior to the track, a softball field, field lighting, and additional parking with funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as part of the Gateway City Parks Initiative.
- 2019 - A dog park was created and the rugby carpet was redone.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Picnic grounds
- Multi-purpose, synthetic field
- Baseball Field with multi-purpose, synthetic field
- Regulated-size track with interior multi-purpose field
- Softball Fields
- Trails
- ADA accessible tot lot

- ADA accessible restrooms
- ADA accessible parking spaces

Existing Conditions

This park is in excellent condition.

Suggested Improvements

- An irrigation system with backflow prevention.
- Install bike racks.
- Install water bottle filling station.

Ripley School Play Yard

Manager: School Department
Size: 60,000 square feet (1.38 acres)
Identification: Map: E3, Parcel: 1
Location: Lebanon Street and Forest Street

History

This playground was built with the school in 1925. Additions to the school in 1930 and 1965 combined with restrictive topographic conditions have resulted in limited play space. A small tot lot was added in 1989. An additional larger tot lot was constructed in 2001. The original tot lot has been abandoned for safety concerns. The SEEM Collaborative has operated at the school since 2008, and has replaced pieces of equipment in the play yard. In 2018, a climbing net was installed.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Tot lot equipment
- 1 basketball stanchions
- Benches
- Trash receptacle
- 1 climbing net

Existing Conditions

This park is in fair condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Resurface playground.

Sewall Woods Park

Manager: Park Department
Size: 392,040 square feet (9.0 acres)
Identification: Map: B20, Parcel: 17

Location: Lynn Fells Parkway

History

Located in the northwest corner of the City, this passive recreation park was created from the former Sewall Estate in 1892. Improvements were limited by the deed of gift. In 1930, 1,000 pine trees were planted, other trees were trimmed, and the site was cleaned. Perimeter vegetation was cut back in 1998.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Trails.

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Although deed restrictions limit any general improvements, some carefully situated seating should be introduced.
- Additional tree planting.
- Improved handicapped accessibility.
- New signage is needed to identify the trail heads.

Volunteer Park (Formerly Warren Street Park)

Manager: Park Department
Size: 18,572 square feet (0.43 acres)
Identification: Map: B12, Parcel: 32
Location: Warren Street

History

This park, which includes a neighborhood tot lot, is situated on the old Warren School site. The tot lot was installed in 1971 and within two months was vandalized and destroyed by neighborhood children that had previously used the site as a ball field. In 1985, new tot lot equipment was added, based on community design. The site is too small to accommodate a baseball diamond. New ADA accessible tot lot was installed in 1997. New sod and irrigation system, and water fountain was also installed in 1997 by the Park Department.

In 2011, the park was renovated and rededicated at Volunteer Park and in 2023, the park became the City's first inclusive and completely ADA accessible playground.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- ADA accessible playground
- 2 benches
- 3.5-foot chain link fence

- Irrigation with backflow prevention
- Communication board

Existing Conditions

This park is in excellent condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Tree planting

Winthrop School Playground

Manager: School Department
Size: 75,000 square feet (1.72 acres)
Identification: Map: F8, Parcel: 10
Location: First Street

History

This site is located next to the Winthrop School in a residential neighborhood at the corner of the First Street and Ashcroft Road. It consists of a small grassy area in front of the school and a large paved area in the rear. The school was built in 1926 with an addition in 1956. Tot lot equipment was added in 1975 by the PTO. In 1977, the Planning Office in conjunction with the area users and Winthrop School officials planned a new tot lot that was implemented in 1977. In 1991, more tot lot equipment was added. A new tot lot was constructed in 2003 to replace equipment damaged by fire. In 2019, new swings were added and climbing net was installed in 2021.

Facilities

Facilities in the park are as follows:

- Tot lot equipment
- Basketball court
- Community garden
- Swings
- Climbing net
- Trash receptacle

Existing Conditions

This park is in good condition.

Suggested Improvements

- Resurface playground.
- Refurbish existing cast iron fence.

Appendix B: ADA Self-Evaluation Report

As part of the open space and recreation planning process, the City of Melrose is required to complete an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) self-evaluation to determine how accessible the City's conservation and recreation programs and properties are to people with disabilities. There are three required elements of a self-evaluation: Administrative Requirements; Program Accessibility; and Employment Practices. The results of the self-evaluation as described below.

PART I: ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

This section reviews the City's general efforts to address the needs of people with disabilities which include the following: appointing an ADA Coordinator, advertising City efforts to provide reasonable accommodations, involving people with disabilities in the planning process, and responding to concerns regarding the provision of services to people with disabilities. As part of the City's efforts to assess the current level of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act in City programs, services, activities, and facilities, the City of Melrose has collaborated with COD and the Institute of Human Centered Design (IHCD) to perform an ADA Self-Evaluation, which includes a comprehensive assessment of its policies, practices and procedures. IHCD's recommendations can be found at the end of this section.

1. Designation of an ADA Coordinator

Mr. Albert Talarico, Building Commissioner, has been designated as the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Title II (Local Government) Coordinator and Ms. Polina Latta, Director of Human Resources, has been designated as ADA Title I (Employment) Coordinator, for the City of Melrose.

2. Grievance Procedures

The City offers several avenues for the public to pursue a discrimination complaint. Members of the public are encouraged to voice their concerns in the way that they feel comfortable.

Formal Complaints

Any member of the public who wishes to file a formal complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability is asked to submit a written complaint to the City's ADA Coordinator. The complaint should include relevant information about the alleged discrimination such as the name, address, and phone number of the complainant as well as the location, date, and description of the problem. Reasonable accommodations, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities

who are unable to submit a written complaint. The complaint may be submitted either by the grievant or by his/her designee. It should be submitted no later than 60 days after the alleged violation.

Within 20 calendar days of receipt of the complaint, the ADA Coordinator will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 20 days of this meeting, the ADA Coordinator will respond in writing, in a format accessible to the complainant, such as an audiotape. The response will explain the position of the City of Melrose and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint. The ADA Coordinator will notify City Council or their designee of complaints received within 5 calendar days.

If the response of the ADA Coordinator does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his/her designee may appeal the decision of the ADA Coordinator to City Council or their designee within 20 calendar days after receipt of the response to City Council or their designee.

Within 20 days after receipt of the appeal, City Council, or their designee, will then meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 20 calendar days after the meeting, City Council, or their designee, will respond in writing and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, such as audiotape, with a final resolution of the complaint.

All complaints received by the ADA Coordinator, appeals to City Council or their designee, and response from the ADA Coordinator and City Council or their designee, will be kept by the City of Melrose for at least three years.

Employee Grievances

Union Employees

City employees who belong to a union (firefighters, patrolmen, police superior officers, library employees, clerical employees, public works employees, and traffic supervisors) are governed by the grievance procedures negotiated under their contract. Note that the timeframes vary depending on the specific contract. In general, the procedure is:

STEP 1: Employee, or a representative of the Association, submits a written grievance to his/her Department Head, within seven days working days of the incident or the date the employee first knew of its occurrence. The Department Head has seven working days to respond.

STEP 2: If the Department Head does not respond satisfactorily, it shall be taken up with the Mayor within seven working days after the Department Head's response is due or received, whichever is earlier. The Mayor, or the Mayor's representative, shall meet with the Association within ten days from the time the grievance is presented and the Mayor, or the representative, shall respond in writing within ten days of the meeting.

STEP 3: If the grievance is unresolved, either party may, within fifteen days after the reply of the Mayor is due or received, whichever is earlier, by written notice to the other, submit the grievance to arbitration. Arbitration proceedings are conducted in accord with the Voluntary Labor Arbitration Rules of the American Arbitration Association.

Non-Union Employees

Non-union employees are governed by the procedures contained in the City of Melrose Employee Handbook. Grievance proceedings for non-union employees are similar to the general procedures outlined for Union Employees, except that no arbitration is stipulated. Instead, City Council adjudicates complaints, as they do for the general public.

3. Public Notification Requirements

Current Policies

The City strives to provide accommodations that will make its services accessible to people of all abilities. A statement of non-discrimination is posted in the City's Human Resources Office, along with a list of resources available to people with disabilities. City Hall is accessible to people with disabilities.

Every job description issued by the City of Melrose includes a list of physical requirements and the statement that reasonable accommodations to the requirements will be made for qualifying individuals. The Human Resources Department as well as all City Departments, are also directed to provide printed materials such as job descriptions in alternative formats for those who request them, and to provide written copies of verbal information for those who request them. The City's employment advertisements (as in the local paper) currently include a statement of the City's policy on non-discrimination.

The City's Human Resources Department manages policies with respect to diversity in the workplace. Equal Opportunity and Reasonable Accommodations Policies include specific assurances regarding:

- Integration of people with and without disabilities in City programs and services;
- Reasonable modifications;
- Adequate training of City employees regarding accommodations and adaptive devices
- Absence of surcharges for accommodations;
- Absence of discrimination in programs supported by the City;
- Availability of accessible City transportation;
- Accessibility of commonly-used community referral agencies;
- Availability of TTY/TDD devices;
- Availability of alternative formats and interpreters; and

- Provision of assistive listening devices.

These policies also provide standard procedures regarding how and when to request program accommodations and alternative formats.

4. Participation of Individuals with Disabilities or Organizations Representing that Community

The City of Melrose routinely works with individuals with disabilities and organizations representing those with disabilities to plan for and make improvements to City facilities to increase accessibility. In 2020, the City established a Commission on Disability (COD), which has undertaken a series of activities to advance inclusion of people with disabilities in the City.

5. IHCD’s Findings

IHCD suggests that the City make a more accessible website to assist visitors who use assistive technology and include information about accessible routes to reaching the City’s programs and activities. The City should also take steps to clarify and post its Grievance Procedure for members of the public and City employees, and widely share its Notice of Nondiscrimination. Information on how members of the public and employees can request auxiliary aids and services should also be clarified and publicized.

PART II: PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY

Within IHCD’s ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan, twelve municipal building, ten public schools and their playgrounds and 25 parks/outdoor areas were surveyed for their accessibility. The survey encompassed elements such as accessible routes, walking surfaces, slopes, picnic tables, play areas, and recreational areas. Separate reports for each facility were created and improvements were prioritized based on the critical need. The parks/outdoor facilities surveyed are listed below.

Melrose Common	Lewis Monk Field	Dunton Park
Conant Park	Morelli Field	Drinkwater Tot Lot
Fred Green Field	The Knoll	Ell Pond Park
Franklin Field	Foss Park	Livermore Park
Hesseltine Park	Bowden Park	Mary Foley Park
Lebanon Park	Colby Park	Lyons Tennis Courts
Lincoln Park	Crystal St. Tennis Courts	Milano Park
Messengers Field	Volunteer Park	DesForges Park
Poplar Island		

IHCD’s general recommendations include ensure that there are accessible routes to all elements, ensure that there is a stable and firm floor space adjacent to team benches and spectator areas, and ensure that at least 5% but no less

than one amenity is accessible and located on an accessible route. It should be noted that all new renovations include equipment and surfaces that meet a high standard of accessibility and Volunteer Park, which was completed in 2022, is the City's first fully accessible park.

The Park Department and Recreation Department also utilizes school facilities for some of their programs. Although some of these properties are not protected open space, the Park Department typically maintains these facilities. The ten public schools and playgrounds that were evaluated include:

- Franklin School
- Beebe School
- Melrose High School
- Melrose Middle School
- Hoover School
- Horace Mann School
- Lincoln Elementary School
- Ripley School
- Roosevelt School
- Winthrop School

In addition to IHCD's evaluation, the School Department also has a separate transition plan and is working to make all its facilities accessible.

Other open spaces that the survey did not cover include the three main sites that the Conservation Commission manages, which are Ferdinand Woods, High Rock Trail, and the Towners Pond and Swains Pond Conservation Area. None of these sites are accessible by ADA standards. They are not improved beyond primitive (unpaved and sometimes steep and narrow) trails, and parking is offered only at Flagg Acres and the Rocky View Trail. There are no plans to significantly alter these trails to conform to ADA standards because this would require the construction of switch-backed ramps, handrails, and boardwalks in otherwise unimproved areas. These changes are not only cost-prohibitive but would significantly alter the character of the sites.

Although none of the Conservation Commission sites are physically accessible according to ADA standards, the Conservation Commission publishes a brochure describing natural areas in the City of Melrose. Many of the areas have curb cuts and benches that invite quiet contemplation by people of all abilities. and the trails marked green (easy) on the map are accessible to some people with physical disabilities.

The Recreation Department also ensures that many of the activities offered are accessible or adaptable to a person who may have a disability. The program registration forms allow parents to note any special needs or considerations for their child (i.e., cognitive/developmental issues, dietary restrictions, physical

limitations, and health issues such as asthma, epilepsy, and diabetes). It is the City's policy to make reasonable accommodations to these programs, as it is for all City services. The Recreation Department has a strong partnership with Communitas, which offers local recreation programs and events for youth with special needs. These programs and events are completely accessible and include field trips and organized recreational opportunities.

SECTION III: EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

The City's Employee Manual clearly states, "The City of Melrose is committed to the fundamental principles of equal employment opportunity for all current and prospective employees. The City's policies, procedures, and practices are intended to prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, physical handicap, marital status, national origin, Vietnam veteran status, or sexual orientation" With regard to the Americans with Disabilities Act, it also notes that:

The City of Melrose does not discriminate on the basis of disability. Program applicants, participants, members of the general public, employees, job applicants, and other area entitled to participate in and benefit from all agency programs, activities, and services without regard to disability.

It is the policy of the City of Melrose that no other qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from employment at the City of Melrose. Employment review and hiring will be based on the employee/prospective employee's ability to perform what the City of Melrose determines to be the essential functions a job. Further, it is the policy of the City of Melrose that reasonable accommodations will be made for an otherwise qualified applicant or employee with a disability, unless the City of Melrose can demonstrate that the accommodation imposes an undue financial or administrative hardship on the operation of its programs.

Recruitment

A. Job announcements

Job descriptions and announcements are available in the City Human Resources Office, City Hall, an accessible location, and available on the City's website. They are also available in auditory form; Human Resources personnel will read them aloud, or by request, make them available on tape. Both job descriptions and job advertisements contain the City's non-discrimination statement. A copy of a sample job description and a memo regarding the inclusion of non-discrimination statement in job advertisements is included at the end of this document.

B. Interviews

Interviews only address job qualifications, and Department Heads are aware of their obligation not to inquire about any disability (visible or not) or other unlawful inquiries.

2. Personnel Actions

The hiring and promotion policies of the City of Melrose are described in union contracts and in the Employee Handbook. The City adheres to these policies regardless of the disability status of the employee.

The City does not compile statistics regarding employees with disabilities, nor does the City require or request that employees divulge their disability status. Anecdotal evidence (from employees who voluntarily reveal their disability status) indicates that people with disabilities work in a variety of City jobs.

3. Leave Administration

Policies for granting leave are the same for all employees regardless of disability, and do not function so as to discriminate against people with disabilities.

4. Training

Training programs allow equal participation by people of all abilities.

6. Tests

The City of Melrose does not use tests to make employment or promotion decisions.

7. Medical Examinations / Questionnaires

The City of Melrose uses medical examinations only after conditional offers of employment and only to determine fitness for essential job responsibilities (i.e., fire fighting).

8. Social / Recreation Programs

The City of Melrose does not sponsor any social / recreation programs for its employees.

9. Fringe Benefits

Fringe benefits are the same for all employees, regardless of their disability status.

10. Collective Bargaining Agreements

The City's collective bargaining agreements do not contain any provisions that could be construed as limiting the participation of employees with disabilities.

11. Wage and Salary Administration

Each City job is assigned a level of pay consistent with the responsibilities, qualifications, and experience required for that job. This level of pay is consistent regardless of the employee who holds the job.

List of Attachments to ADA Self-Evaluation Report

- Letter from Mayor to Certify ADA Coordinator
- Public Notice: Americans with Disabilities Act
- City of Melrose ADA Grievance Procedure

Mayor's Letter



**PUBLIC NOTICE
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

The City of Melrose does not discriminate on the basis of disability. Program applicants, participants, members of the general public, employees, job applicants, and others are entitled to participate in and benefit from all agency programs, activities, and services without regard to disability.

Copies of this notice are available upon request, in alternate print formats (large print, audiotape, Braille, computer disc, etc.) Our grievance procedure, self-evaluation, as well as ADA policies, practices and procedures are available upon request. This notice is posted prominently at all our sites, and on all our program brochures and manuals.

The City of Melrose has designated the following persons to coordinate its efforts to comply with the ADA. Inquiries, requests, and complaints should be directed to:

ADA Title II (Local Gov't) Coordinator:

Albert Talarico
Building Commissioner
562 Main Street
Melrose, MA 02176
(781) 979-4137 (Voice/TTY)
(781) 662-3450 (Fax)
atarlarico@cityofmelrose.org

ADA Title I (Employment) Coordinator :

Polina Latta
Director of Human Resources
562 Main Street
Melrose, MA 02176
(781) 979-4137 (Voice/TTY)
(781) 979-4246 (Fax)
platta@cityofmelrose.org

ADA GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The following Grievance procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in employment practices and policies or the provision of service, activities, programs and benefits by the city of Melrose.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Reasonable accommodations, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities who are unable to submit a written complaint.



CITY OF MELROSE

Human Resources

The complaint should be submitted by the grievance and/or their designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

ADA Title II (Local Gov't) Coordinator:

Albert Talarico
Building Commissioner
562 Main Street
Melrose, MA 02176
(781) 979-4137 (Voice/TTY)
(781) 662-3450 (Fax)
atararico@cityofmelrose.org

ADA Title I (Employment) Coordinator:

Polina Latta
Director of Human Resources
562 Main Street
Melrose, MA 02176
(781) 979-4137 (Voice/TTY)
(781) 979-4246 (Fax)
platta@cityofmelrose.org

Within 20 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the ADA Coordinator will meet the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolution. Within 20 calendar days after the meeting, the ADA Coordinator will respond in writing, in a format accessible to the complainant, such as audiotape. The response will explain the position of the City of Melrose and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint. (ADA Coordinator will notify the City Council or their designee of complaints received within 5 calendar days.)

If the response by the ADA Coordinator does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his/her designee may appeal the decision of the ADA Coordinator within 20 calendar days after receipt of the response to the City Council or their designee.

Within 20 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the City Council, or their designee, will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 20 calendar days after the meeting, the City Council, or their designee, will respond in writing and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, such as audiotape, with a final resolution of the complaint.

All complaints received by the ADA Coordinator, appeals to the City Council or their designee, and response from the ADA Coordinator and the City Council or their designee, will be kept by the City of Melrose for at least three years.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT
REASONABLE ACCOMODATION POLICY**



It is the policy of the City of Melrose that no other qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of their disability, be excluded from employment at the City of Melrose. Employment review and hiring will be based on the employee/prospective employee's ability to perform what the City of Melrose determines to be the essential functions of a job.

Further, it is the policy of the City of Melrose that reasonable accommodations will be made for an otherwise qualified applicant or employee with a disability, unless the City of Melrose can demonstrate that the accommodation imposes an undue financial or administrative hardship on the operation of its programs.

Notice of the availability of reasonable accommodations for the job applicants will be included in postings and advertisements and will be made available upon request to applicants with disabilities during the pre-employment process if necessary to provide equal opportunity to secure employment at the City of Melrose.

All prospective employees will be informed at the initial interview that the City of Melrose does not discriminate on the basis of disability and that requests for reasonable accommodations needed for the performance of essential job functions or for the enjoyment of other benefits of employment should be made by the prospective employees following receipt of a conditional offer of employment, preferably at the post employment offer meeting.

People with disabilities employed by the City of Melrose may request reasonable accommodations from their immediate supervisor or from the ADA Coordinator. Requests for reasonable accommodations should be made verbally and/or in writing describing the nature and purpose of the requested accommodation.

Assistance will be made available upon request to any individual who needs assistance in identifying or documenting the reasonable accommodation needed. A decision regarding a reasonable accommodation request will be made within five business days of the request and any supporting documentation required by the City of Melrose. The effectiveness of the accommodation and need for modifications or additional accommodations will be assessed during the first month of use of the accommodation.

Current employees seeking reasonable accommodations should make requests to their immediate supervisor, who will inform the ADA Coordinator and the Director of Human Resources. Requests for accommodations can be made at any time when they become necessary to the performance of essential job functions or the enjoyment of benefits of employment.



A decision regarding the requested accommodation will be made within ten working days of the submission of the request and any supporting documentation required. If the accommodation cannot be provided within ten working days of the request, the supervisor will issue a memo to the employee or applicant explaining why. If the substitute accommodation is being offered to the employee, this will also be explained verbally and in writing.

These policies will be modified when necessary by the ADA Coordinator. The final decision concerning any requested accommodation that may represent an undue financial or administrative hardship will be made by the Mayor. Applicants or employees have the right to appeal the denial of any accommodation request using the ADA Grievance procedure. In the case of a denial based on undue hardship by the Mayor, the employee or applicant may appeal in writing to the City Council.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT EMPLOYMENT TRAINING ASSURANCE

It is the policy of the City of Melrose that staff training and development activities provided by city personnel and volunteers include information about rights and obligations under TITLE I of the ADA. Our employee training and orientation manual includes a full explanation of our ADA policies, procedures, and practices regarding employment.

All materials include information on reasonable accommodations, grievance procedures, essential vs., nonessential job functions, permissible and impermissible inquires. Training will be conducted annually, and all new employees are trained, as per our employee orientation procedures, on all of the above requirements. The ADA Coordinator is the employee responsible for seeing that this is done.

Details of disability are kept separate from other employment information. Employee's right to confidentiality (whenever confidential information regarding disability, etc. is divulged) will be assured.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT NON – DISCRIMINATORY OPERATION



A. Equal Opportunity Policy

No qualified person with a disability shall be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of the City of Melrose's programs or activities.

In providing its services, programs, and activities, the City of Melrose will not:

- 1.) Deny a qualified individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in, or benefit from, a benefit, service, or activity.
- 2.) Deny qualified individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in, or benefit from, any aid benefit, or service that is not equal to that afforded to others.
- 3.) Deny a qualified individual with a disability the opportunity to participate as a member of planning or advisory boards, commissions, or any other entity of the City of Melrose.
- 4.) Otherwise limit a qualified individual with a disability the enjoyment of any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity enjoyed by other qualified individuals receiving the aid, benefit, or service.
- 5.) As earlier stated, it is the policy of City of Melrose to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided maximum opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs, services, and activities. Moreover, it is our goal that such participation be in the same manner as those of nondisabled persons and in fully integrated settings.

B. Reasonable Modification Policy

The City of Melrose will make reasonable modifications to policies and procedures necessary to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability when ever an otherwise qualified person with a disability requests such modification, unless it can be demonstrated that such an accommodation would impose an undue burden or fundamental alteration to the program.

The City of Melrose is committed to making reasonable modifications when they are needed to afford persons with disabilities access toe services and programs. The final decision concerning whether a request for a modification is reasonable (or is a fundamental alteration of the program) is made by the Mayor and Director of Human Resources in discussion with the ADA Coordinator, and, if necessary, the City Council.



Aggrieved employees or applicants have the right to appeal as per our grievance procedure.

The City of Melrose will comply with all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations relative to the use of assistive equipment and trained assistive animals. In addition, no arbitrary restrictions or limitations will be placed on the type of assistive equipment or trained assistance animals that consumers bring with them to City of Melrose facilities.

Persons requesting a particular modification may be asked to furnish documentation to support the need for the modification. Aggrieved individuals have the right to appeal as per our written appeals process. This policy will be modified when necessary to make our program accessible to people with disabilities.

C. Eligibility Requirements Assurance

Any prohibitions or limits on the eligibility of qualified individuals with disabilities to receive services or practice any occupation or profession are not allowed under this policy. Eligibility requirements have been reviewed by the ADA Coordinator and updated as necessary to comply with the requirements of the ADA. Whenever programs formulate new eligibility policies or new programs are developed, policies will be reviewed with the ADA Coordinator to ensure compliance.

All safety requirements are similarly reviewed and it has been determined that there are no discriminatory requirements. The determination of the existence of a direct threat must be based on objective factual evidence and not stereotypes or misconceptions about a person's disability. If any new criteria are developed, their impact on persons with disabilities will be reviewed by the Director of Human Resources and the ADA Coordinator, and all employees will be informed on any changes in eligibility requirements that may arise.

D. Assurance Regarding Surcharges

It is the policy of the City of Melrose that surcharges will not be charged to persons with disabilities, their family members or organizations representing them for the provision of reasonable accommodations, reasonable modifications to policies and procedures, auxiliary aids and services, or other costs related to the participation of a person with a disability.



E. Integrated Services Assurance

It is the policy of the City of Melrose that all of our services, programs, and activities are provided in the most integrated setting possible. People with disabilities will not be required to participate in separate programs even if separate programs specifically designed to meet the need of persons with disabilities are offered.

Services will not be provided to any person with a disability in a manner or at a location different from that available to other service recipients unless the potential for removal of architectural barriers, or the use of assistive devices and equipment, have been found to be inadequate or inappropriate to the needs of the individual. In all cases, the affected individuals, (family members and other representative when appropriate) will be fully involved in the consideration and decision-making process.

F. Significant Assistance

It is the policy of the City of Melrose that programs to whom we provide significant support (or contract with) may not discriminate against people with disabilities. All contracts and program sites are regularly assessed to ensure nondiscrimination against people with disabilities. The City of Melrose will not knowingly contract with any entity that discriminates.

G. Accessible Transportation Policy

It is the policy of the City of Melrose that Melrose Public school transportation services are accessible to students in our programs regardless of disability. Transportation vehicles are leased and vans equipped with wheelchair lifts are used for students requiring them.

Individuals in need of accessible transportation should make their requests in writing to the Melrose Public Schools' Transportation Coordinator, Frederick D'Angelo at (781) 979-2140. Requests must be made at least three days (3) in advance. As with all our transportation services, all requests are subject to the availability of space. When a request cannot be met, notice will be given as soon as possible and at least one (1) day before the requested date of the trip.

H. Community Referral Policy



Whenever the City of Melrose participates in other programs and services as a condition of participation or makes reference to other programs, it is our policy that such programs and services must be accessible. The City of Melrose will make every attempt to obtain information regarding which of the programs (to which it may refer people) are accessible, and which are not. Please note that there is at least one accessible provider in each of the categories of services in which we make referrals.

I. Training Assurance Policy Regarding Non-discriminatory Operations

It is the policy of the City of Melrose that staff training and other staff development activities provided by city and school personnel and volunteers include information about ADA requirements. Our programs operate in such a manner that does not discriminate against people with disabilities. As stated in our staff training and orientation handbook, such training includes a full explanation of our ADA policies, procedures, and practices. Training will be done on an annual basis, and the ADA coordinator has the overall responsibility for ensuring that all staff are informed, including new employees.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

A. Effective Communications Policy

It is the policy of the City of Melrose that auxiliary aids and services will be provided when necessary to ensure effective communication with persons whose disabilities effect communication. Persons with communications disabilities will be given the opportunity to request the aid or service that they prefer and the requested aid or service will be given primary consideration by the City of Melrose and will be provided unless doing so would impose an undue hardship or burden or an effective alternative is available.

It is the policy of the City of Melrose that all documents and publications are available, upon request, in accessible formats. These include large print, audiotape, Braille, and computer disc.

The procedure for anyone who requests accessible formats (or any type of effective communication) is:

- 1.) To specify their accessible format either in person, over the phone, or in writing to the ADA Coordinator at least 30 days in advance of the event.



CITY OF MELROSE

Human Resources

- 2.) Within four (4) business days, the City of Melrose will provide the format to the requester at no charge.

The Human Resources Director is the person who makes undue burden determinations as per our procedures. When we decide what type of aid or service to provide, primary consideration is given to the type of aid or service preferred by the person with the disability.

All flyers, posters, etc advertising school and city events will include the following phrase:

ADA Title II (Local Gov't) Coordinator:

Albert Talarico
Building Commissioner
562 Main Street
Melrose, MA 02176
(781) 979-4137 (Voice/TTY)
(781) 662-3450 (Fax)
atararico@cityofmelrose.org

ADA Title I (Employment) Coordinator:

Polina Latta
Director of Human Resources
562 Main Street
Melrose, MA 02176
(781) 979-4137 (Voice/TTY)
(781) 979-4246 (Fax)
platta@cityofmelrose.org

~~B. TTY/TDD Assurance~~

~~TTY machines are available at the Melrose Public schools (781) 662-2000 administrative offices and at the Nurse Leaders office in the Horace Mann School (781) 665-6865 and the 911 Emergency Response. TTY training will be provided for appropriate employees and updated on an annual basis. The TTY is printed on all documents and mailings that contain the city and schools' voice telephone number.~~

C. Alternative Format Policy and Procedures

It is the policy of the City of Melrose to make all documents, publications, and materials used in the city and school programs available to persons with disabilities who need them in alternate formats. Procedures have been established for the provision of alternative formats include large print, audiotape, Braille, and computer diskettes. Braille materials are purchased through Massachusetts Association for the Blind telephone # (617) 738-5110.

Large print, short audiotapes and computer diskettes in ASCII formats will be prepared by or under the direction of the ADA Coordinator. Preparation of long audiotapes will be purchased through Massachusetts Association for the Blind telephone # (617) 738-5110.



The procedure for requesting alternate formats is:

1. The person making the request should identify the materials desired and specify his/her preferred alternate format to the ADA Coordinator either in person, by telephone, or in writing at least ten (10) days in advance of the event or activity for which the material is needed.
2. The materials will be provided in the requested format at no charge. (Every attempt will be made to meet requests made less than 10 days before an event or activity.)
3. If, after primary consideration has been given to the preferred format, the request cannot be met, an alternative effective format will be offered. If a request cannot be met, the person making the request will be informed as soon as possible but at least 2 days in advance of the event or activity.

We use the Massachusetts Association for the Blind, Braille Department, 200 Ivy Street, Brookline, Ma. 02146, telephone # (800) 682-9200. On current MAB site: 888-613-2777. Email: mabvi@mabcommunity.org

The Director of Human Resources is the person who makes the undue burden determination as per our procedures. When we decide what type of aid or service to provide, primary consideration will be given to the type of aid or service preferred by the person with the disability.

D. Interpreter Services Policy

It is the policy of the City of Melrose that sign language interpreters will be provided, upon request, to any person needing interpreter services in order to participate in any meeting, program, or activity of the agency. Requests should be made 10 days in advance of the scheduled event or meeting. (Every reasonable effort will be made to meet requests made with less than 10 days.) Requests should be made either in person, over the phone, or in writing to the ADA Coordinator, or Program director.

Within 24 hours of receipt of the request, the ADA Coordinator, or other responsible employee, will contact the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at (617) 695-7500 (current site: Voice (617) 740-1600 and Video Phone: (617) 326-7546. to schedule the interpreter service. In addition, the MCDHH, the International Institute of



Greater Lawrence, Inc., which maintains a list of names and phone numbers to at least 3 qualified freelance language interpreters working in the Greater Lawrence area, will be contacted for interpreter services.

If an interpreter service cannot be obtained, the ADA coordinator or other member of the staff will offer the option of an alternative effective form of communication or the opportunity to postpone the meeting until such time as an interpreter can be scheduled.

E. Assistive Listening Device Assurance

It is the policy of the City of Melrose that assistive listening devices will be provided, upon request, to persons needing such devices to participate in programs, services, and activities of the city. The City of Melrose owns assistive listening devices for use by staff or at public meetings. If necessary, arrangements would be made for them through ADCare Educational Institute (ADC) (1-800-345-3552) or Hanley Audio Systems (1-617-661-1520).

The procedure for requesting an assistive listening device is for the person needing the device (or their representative) to identify his or her need for a device in person, by telephone, or in writing to the ADA Coordinator or other program director at least 4 business days prior to the scheduled event or activity will take place.

The ADA Coordinator or Program Director, or other responsible staff member will contact ADC within 24 hours of receipt of the request and arrange for rental and timely delivery of the device by express mail. Every reasonable effort will be made to meet requests made with less than 4 days notice.

F. Video Assurance

It is the policy of the City of Melrose to provide captioned versions of videotapes when such captioning is available in order to ensure that presentations are accessible to all individuals with disabilities.

G. Effective Communication Training Assurance

Training on all aspects of effective communication is conducted at least annually, and all new staff are trained, as per our staff orientation procedures, on all of the above requirements. All staff are familiar with, and have a copy of the City of Melrose's entire



CITY OF MELROSE

Human Resources

ADA Policies, Procedures, and Practices and this information is provided to all school employees also.

Appendix C: Letters of Review

A draft version of the City of Melrose Open Space and Recreation Plan was submitted to the Mayor of Melrose, the Melrose Planning Board, the Melrose Conservation Commission, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council for review and comment. Those letters are attached.

Appendix D: Open House Flier



CITY OF MELROSE

**2022 OPEN SPACE AND
RECREATION PLAN: COMMUNITY
OPEN HOUSE**

The City is updating its Open Space and Recreation Plan and wants to hear from you! Join us to share thoughts and ideas on parks, recreation and conservation areas.

WHERE: Tierney Hall, Milano Senior Center
201 W. Foster St.

WHEN: Thursday, November 17th, 2022
6:30-7:30 PM

For more information contact
Maya Noviski 781-979-4196 or
mnoviski@cityofmelrose.org