



Boroughs Trail Feasibility Study

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District Local Technical Assistance program

Prepared for
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Executive Summary

The Boroughs Trail Feasibility Study was initiated by the Marlborough Economic Development Commission (MEDC). The project is a collaborative effort among MAPC, CMRPC, the City of Marlborough and the Towns of Southborough, Northborough and Westborough (collectively the “Boroughs”), and stakeholders from trail committees and land preservation organizations. Marlborough EDC proposed this project to strengthen the trails and greenways of the region as a means to make the Boroughs a more attractive and desirable location for employers, their employees and residents.

The project relied heavily on the coordination and input from the municipalities and the stakeholders. Those involved represent a wealth of knowledge and experience, especially in regards to trail development and maintenance, and serve as a foundation for regional collaboration.

Through research and project meetings, the project has created a set of desired goals and possible strategies that will strengthen the Boroughs Trail networks through regional coordination and cooperation. This document details the efforts and discussions that took place to bring the stakeholders to a shared understanding of possible strategies or efforts. Next steps for the organizations involved and other future partners are:

1. Develop a Trails Map for the Boroughs
2. Set a Regular Meeting Schedule
3. Perform Follow Up Activities that will Sustain the Collaboration:
 - Prepare marketing and communication materials
 - Create electronic media for internal and external communication
 - Create a common trail logo/brand
 - Identify current budget for trails activities and existing group resources



Main Street in Marlborough,
Source: Wikipedia



Hikers on Trail in Westborough,
Source: Westborough Land Trust

Introduction

The City of Marlborough and the Towns of Southborough, Northborough and Westborough recognize the value of the extensive trails network and greenways. This project sought to strengthen the efforts of those who develop, manage and promote the region's trails such that the asset can be utilized by residents, businesses, institutions, workers and visitors. Each municipality has undertaken significant efforts to acquire and maintain open space with the great promise to provide a higher quality of life in the region.

There have been efforts in the past to coordinate access, maintenance, acquisition and management of the trails and green space. However these efforts have occurred mainly within individual municipalities and there have been limited efforts to coordinate the differing trail and open space plans into a singular unified project within the Boroughs where the major parcels of open space land are linked together.

Starting from a different perspective, the City of Marlborough recently completed a ten year economic development master plan and a reoccurring theme to this strategy is the need to increase and further enhance the quality of life for those individuals who live and work within the region. The plan identified that if Marlborough and the other three towns are going to attract good businesses and employees, there needs to be existing resources that support a high quality of life.

A major component of a good quality of life is having recreational opportunities and green space, especially in a largely suburban setting that is looking to plan for how and where development occurs. This project is supportive of this planning by setting the foundation for regional coordination to protect, link and promote the trails and greenways that define the Boroughs. The vision would be to have a unified trail network in the Boroughs to (a) attract businesses and (b) that promotes a regional identity.



Aerial view of the Wachusett Aqueduct from the west

Overview of Boroughs Trail Project Area

REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY

The project area for the Boroughs Trail Feasibility study is located in the vicinity of I-495 between Interstate 90 (I-90/MassPike) and Interstate 290 (I-290), which is approximately 30 miles west of the City of Boston and 16 miles east of Worcester (Figure 1).

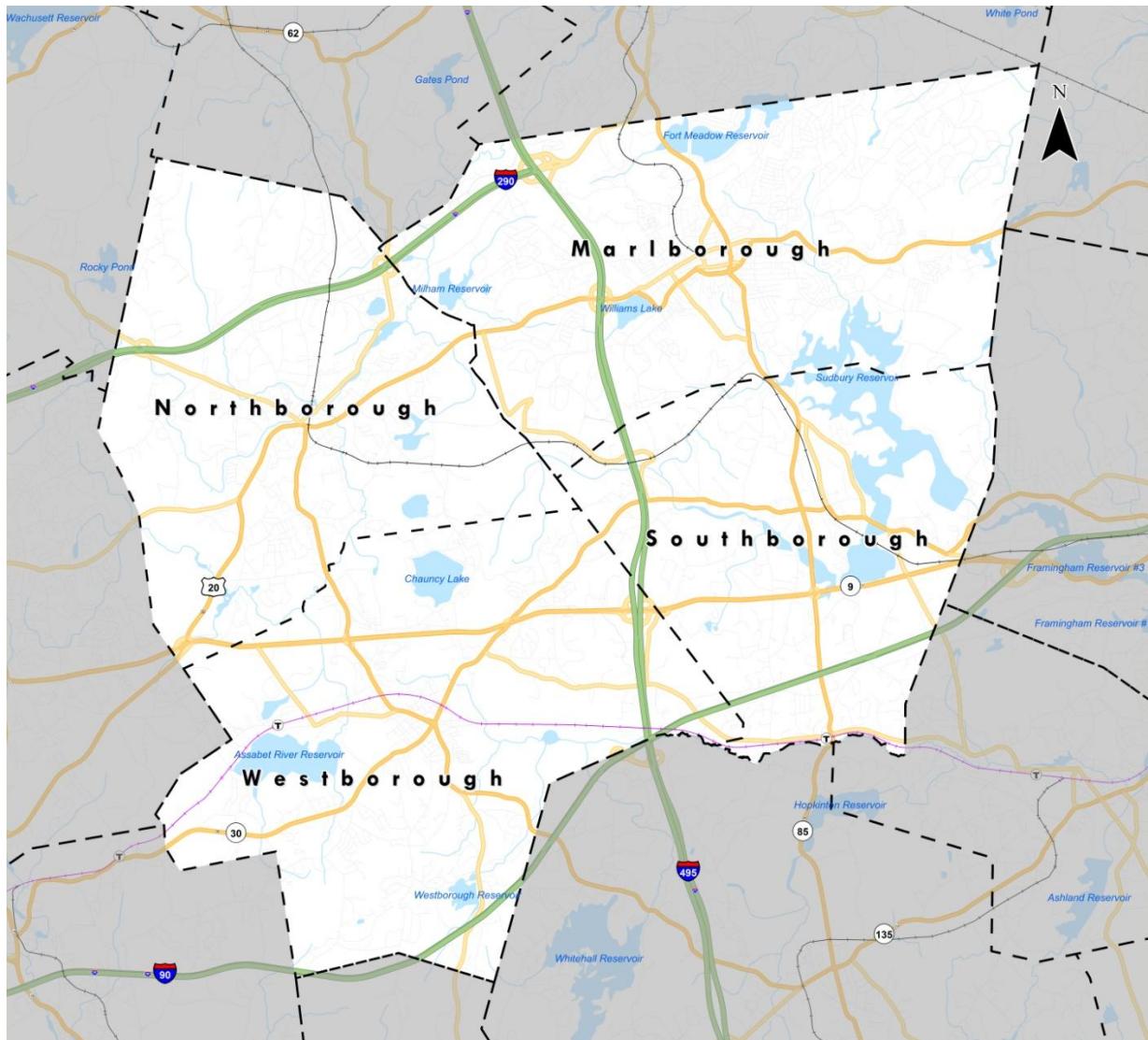


Figure 1. Map of the Boroughs Trail Project Area

OPEN SPACE

There is currently over 6,900 acres of land permanently protected in the Boroughs project area as well as an additional nearly 700 acres of open space that has limited protection. The

protected land is under a variety of owners from local government to state agencies and from local land trusts to regional and statewide land trusts (Figure 2).

Owners of protected open space in the Boroughs project area include:

State and Public Agencies

1. [Department of Conservation and Recreation](#)¹ (DCR), which owns and manages land through two Divisions:
 - a. *Division of State Parks and Recreation*, which maintains nearly 300,000 acres of the state's forests, beaches, mountains, ponds, riverbanks, trails, and parks. The division maintains properties in the project area including Callahan State Park, which has land in Marlborough and Southborough, and Upton State Forest, which has land in Westborough.
 - b. *Division of Water Supply Protection*, which manages and protects the drinking water supply watersheds for Greater Boston. The division manages lands dispersed in and around the project area, which includes property around Cold Harbor Brook in Northborough and land around the Sudbury Reservoir in Southborough and Marlborough.
2. [Massachusetts Water Resources Authority](#) (MWRA), which is a public authority providing drinking water and sewage services primarily in the Metro Boston region. MWRA owns land in the Boroughs, including the land that is used for aqueducts like the Weston and the Wachusett aqueducts.
3. [Division of Fish and Game](#) (DFG), which is responsible for the preservation and conservation of the Commonwealth's natural resources, including marine and freshwater fish, wildlife species and plants. DFG is responsible for land in the project area that includes property around Little Chauncy Pond in Northborough and Lake Chauncy in Westborough.
4. [Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance](#) (DCAMM), which serves as the agency responsible for major public building construction and real estate services for the Commonwealth. DCAMM owns property that was formerly the Westborough State Hospital and one of the state's mental health facilities. Due to the closure of mental health facilities across the state, the former hospital is currently for sale through the state's property disposition process.

Municipalities

Marlborough, Northborough, Southborough and Westborough have land holdings in their respective municipalities. In each instance, the municipality owns hundreds of acres in permanent protection. Additionally hundreds of acres are privately owned and are enrolled in [Chapter 61](#) programs (61, 61A and 61B), which are a more limited form of protection.

¹ The report contains hyperlinks throughout to provide direct connections for finding additional information about organizations, projects, etc. Underlined text indicates a hyperlink.

The protected lands are managed in various ways, but often include involvement by the Conservation Commissions, Recreation Departments and Department of Public Works. Open Space Committees exist in each town to guide future acquisition efforts. The Open Space and Recreation Plans for the municipalities provide details of the land holdings and unprotected lands of conservation interest (links to plans below):

- [City of Marlborough Open Space and Recreation Plan 2010](#)
- [Town of Northborough Open Space and Recreation Plan 2010](#)
- [Town of Southborough Open Space and Recreation Plan 2009](#)
- [Town of Westborough Open Space and Recreation Plan 2012](#)

The action plan maps from each Open Space and Recreation Plan are included in Appendix A.

Non-Profits

1. [Westborough Community Land Trust](#) (WCLT), which was created by town residents in 1997 to address development pressure on undeveloped lands and increase the town's ability to protect natural resources, preserve natural resources and meet recreational needs. WCLT land holdings include over 100 acres of land in the Westborough.
2. [Southborough Open Land Foundation](#) (SOLF), which works to preserve, protect, conserve, and enhance the natural resources in the Town of Southborough. SOLF owns more than 180 acres in Southborough. SOLF played a major role in the public outreach and private fundraising efforts that resulted in the Town purchase of a Conservation Restriction on the 131- acre Chestnut Hill Farm. SOLF maintains an extensive trail system on the Beals Preserve, which connects to the Reservoir Trail.
3. [Sudbury Valley Trustees](#) (SVT), which is a regional land trust, was founded in 1953 and has care of over 140 properties totaling more than 3,600 acres. SVT has reservations and co-operative projects in each of the four municipalities, and has land under conservation restrictions in Marlborough, Northborough and Southborough.
4. [The New England Forestry Foundation Inc.](#) (NEFF), which was founded in 1944, works to advance sustainable forest management and assist landowners in protecting and maintaining properties. NEFF holds conservation easements through New England, including one for 31.57 acres of land in the western section of Northborough (West Main Street).
5. [The Trustees of Reservations](#) (TTOR), which has its roots as an organization in the late nineteenth century, is focused on the preservation of properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value for public use and enjoyment throughout the Commonwealth. TTOR holds the Chestnut Hill Farm property in the northwest corner of Southborough and the property is 131 acres.

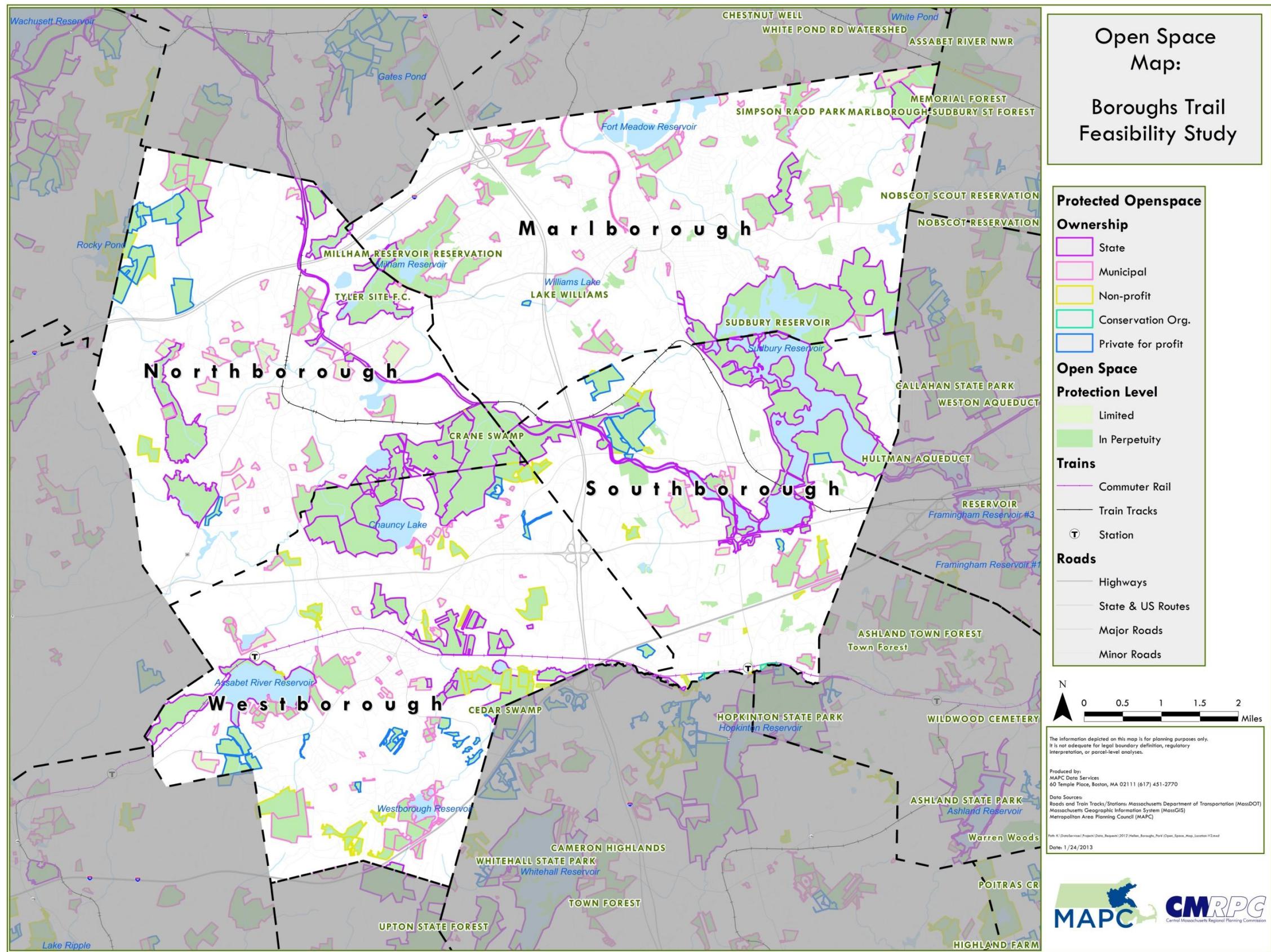


Figure 2. Open Space and Ownership in the Boroughs Trail Project Area

TRAILS

There already exist a variety of existing trail systems as well as trails in planning and development in the Boroughs project area (Appendix A). Existing trail systems include:

Municipal Trail Systems

- Westborough – The trails in Westborough, known as [Charm Bracelet Trail system](#), are a planned network of trails throughout the town, and are being developed through the efforts of WLCT and the town's Open Space Preservation Committee. The Charm Bracelet is planned to consist of three major pieces:
 - A roughly 28-mile loop trail around the town to connect most of the major open space areas within the town
 - A network of side trails to interconnect every open space, recreation area, school, and neighborhood
 - A set of trails to link Westborough to all the surrounding municipalities

Completed trails that are part of the Charm Bracelet include the Mill Pond trail, the Headwaters Conservation Area trail and two sets of trails on SVT lands (the Walkup Robinson Reservation and the Cedar Hill and Sawink Reservations).

- Northborough – Trails in Northborough are advanced through the town's [Trail Committee](#), which is a subcommittee of the Northborough Open Space Committee. Currently, the town has eight recreational areas with approximately 20 miles of trails. The committee actively seeks places to create and build new trails, and maintains the current trail system through its network of volunteers.
- Southborough – Trails can be found in many of the preserved open spaces in Southborough. The Southborough Stewardship Committee manages the extensive trail system on [Breakneck Hill Conservation Land](#) and the Town Forest. The [Recreation Department](#) and DPW have been providing maintenance and volunteers for the Reservoir Trail. The newly established Southborough Trails Committee will work to provide continuity of municipal trail maintenance throughout town. Two significant trails in the town are the Southborough Reservoir Trail (Wachusett Open Channel) and a portion of the Bay Circuit Trail (more below).
- Marlborough – The [trails](#) in Marlborough include networks developed on Conservation land, park land and other municipal land, including Cider Knoll, the Desert Natural Area/Memorial Forest Reservation and Holt's Grove, Lake Williams trail, and a portion of the [Assabet River Rail Trail](#), to name a few. At present there is no formal trails committee, and the Conservation Commission works with boy scouts to help with trail construction and a volunteer trail stewardship group helps with trail maintenance.

Non-Profits

Most of the non-profit land owners have developed trails on their properties. Examples of these are:

- [Chestnut Hill Farm](#), a TTOR property
- [Walkup and Robinson Memorial Reservation](#), a SVT property
- [Beals Preserve](#), a SOLF property
- [South Cedar Swamp](#), a WCLT property

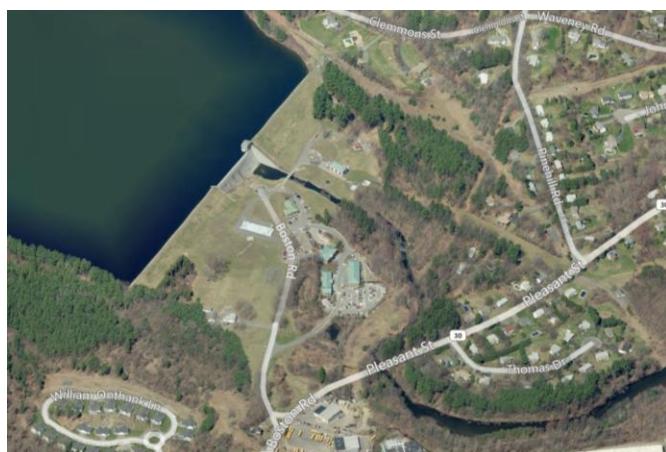
In most cases the trails on the non-profit properties are internal networks, but some do connect (or have potential connections) to external trails systems on public and other private lands.

RELATED REGIONAL PLANNING EFFORTS

In addition to these trail systems, there are four related initiatives that address open space preservation and trail planning in the Boroughs Trail project area.

Bay Circuit Trail

The [Bay Circuit trail](#) is a planned trail and greenway corridor that will extend through 34 municipalities in eastern Massachusetts, arcing from Plum Island and Ipswich to the Duxbury/Kingston shore. The trail effort is lead by the [Bay Circuit Alliance](#) and to date, 180 miles of trails have now been developed as part of the trail. The [trail](#) passes north to south through Southborough and Marlborough by its eastern border with the Town of Framingham.



Sudbury Reservoir Dam where the Bay Circuit Trail Crosses through in Southborough (Aerial)

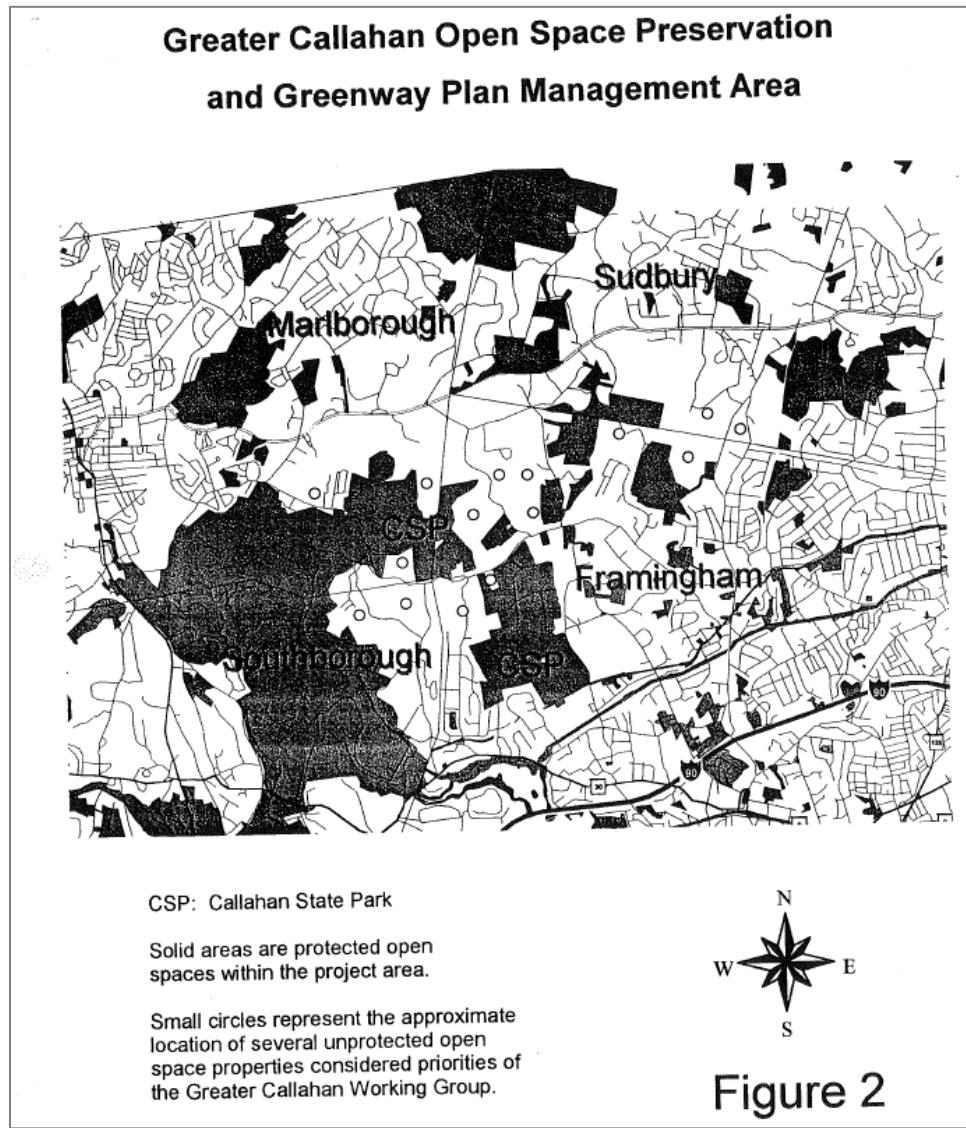


Sudbury Reservoir Dam where the Bay Circuit Trail Crosses through in Southborough (Trail Map)

Greater Callahan Open Space Preservation and Greenway Plan

The Greater Callahan Open Space Preservation and Greenway Plan was developed in 2000, and began as a collaborative effort between the City of Marlborough and the towns of Framingham, Southborough, and Sudbury, as well as representatives from the [Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection](#), SVT and the [Trust for Public Land](#), to look at regional land acquisitions. This plan identifies the properties that are important for preservation, including greenway corridors that cross municipal boundaries and key parcels for linking large parcels of open space and protecting a large intact area of forested land. The group has continued to meet once a year to provide updates about regional efforts and lend support to adjacent communities.

Several properties have been protected in Sudbury and Framingham which has enlarged this regional open space area including the protection of Nobscot Hill in Sudbury and Framingham.



Map of Greater Callahan Open Space and Greenway Plan
(from 2003 Town of Framingham Open Space and Recreation Plan)

MetroWest Open Space Connectivity Plan

The [Connectivity Plan](#) was a collaborative effort among the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC), MAPC and representatives of the nine (9) member municipalities of the MWRC: Ashland, Holliston, Framingham, Natick, Marlborough, Southborough, Wayland, Wellesley and Weston. Beginning with existing trails and open space resources, the plan identified potential linkages for an interconnected regional network that would cross municipal boundaries and identified unprotected land of potential conservation interest that would enhance connectivity and open space resources. In particular, the plan includes proposed trails and open space acquisitions in the Town of Southborough and the City of Marlborough. Through the Boroughs Trails project, concerns

were raised about this plan and additional information may need to be reviewed with project stakeholders to confirm data and recommendations.

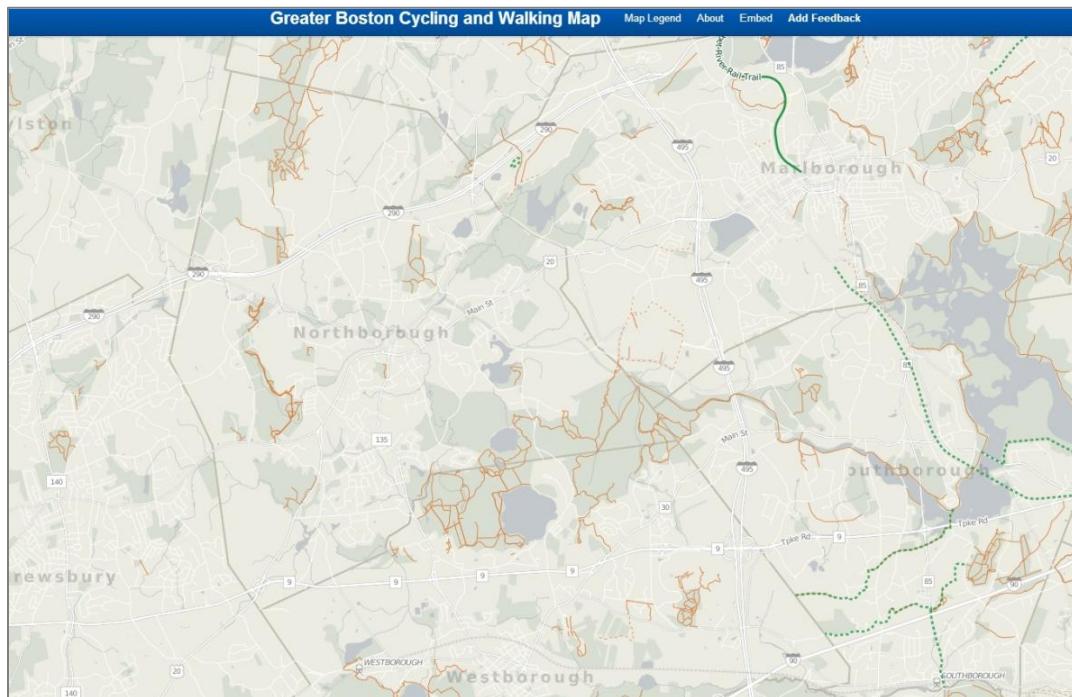
495/MetroWest Development Compact Plan

The [495/MetroWest Development Compact](#) was a regional-level planning process that established community-based priorities and strategies along the I-495 corridor and then integrated those priorities into regional and state development and preservation strategies. Each municipality in the Boroughs Trail project area was part of the Compact process, and three of the municipalities (Marlborough, Northborough and Southborough) have regionally significant priority preservation areas (PPAs) and one (Westborough) has a regionally significant priority development/preservation areas (PDA/PPAs).

Issues were raised by stakeholders for the regional and state preservation priorities identified in this plan. Additional information should be reviewed with project stakeholders to confirm local acceptance of data and assess recommendations for consistency with other ongoing regional open space efforts.

Greater Boston Cycling and Walking Map

The [cycling and walking map](#) is a comprehensive compilation of the Metro Boston region's walking and bicycling facilities. It was developed to provide a single source of information for people to plan and then traverse the region by foot and on bicycle. The map includes walking facilities, bicycle facilities, shared use paths and regional networks such as linear corridors that have been signed or otherwise designated. This map was created with contributions from cities, towns, state agencies, land trusts, other organizations, and individuals; it reflects many of the trails and greenways (existing and proposed) in the Boroughs project area.



Screenshot from Greater Boston Cycling and Walking Map

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration

As mentioned in the previous section, the municipalities and a number of private, non-profit organizations own open space in the Boroughs Trail project area. Similarly, there are a number of organizations who are working on trail planning, development and maintenance in the project area. In this context, regional collaboration for a Boroughs Trail (and related system) will involve a variety of stakeholders. These stakeholders will include local governments, state agencies, non-profit organizations, volunteer organizations.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

A series of meetings were held with local and regional stakeholders to determine how a regional approach to promotion and maintenance support could move forward (Appendix B). On August 27, 2012, the first stakeholder meeting was held in Southborough, MA, and participants included planners from each of the four municipalities as well as representatives from SVT, TTOR and WCLT. Background was provided on the project and its development, and through the following discussion at the meeting some additional background tasks were identified. In particular, it was identified that a better understanding was needed of the organizations that would have a stake in the project area and the trail initiative. Additional outreach was performed and information was collected to assist in building this understanding.

The second stakeholder meeting was held on November 20, 2012, in Northborough. In addition to many stakeholders from the previous meeting, participants included representatives from the Northborough Trails Committee, Northborough Open Space Committee, SOLF, Southborough Open Space Preservation Commission, Southborough Recreation Department and the Bay Circuit Trail. At this meeting, there was a facilitated discussion regarding who was known to have stake in this project area (Figure 3) based on a data collection effort and input following the first August meeting.



Meeting participants at Stakeholder Meeting 2

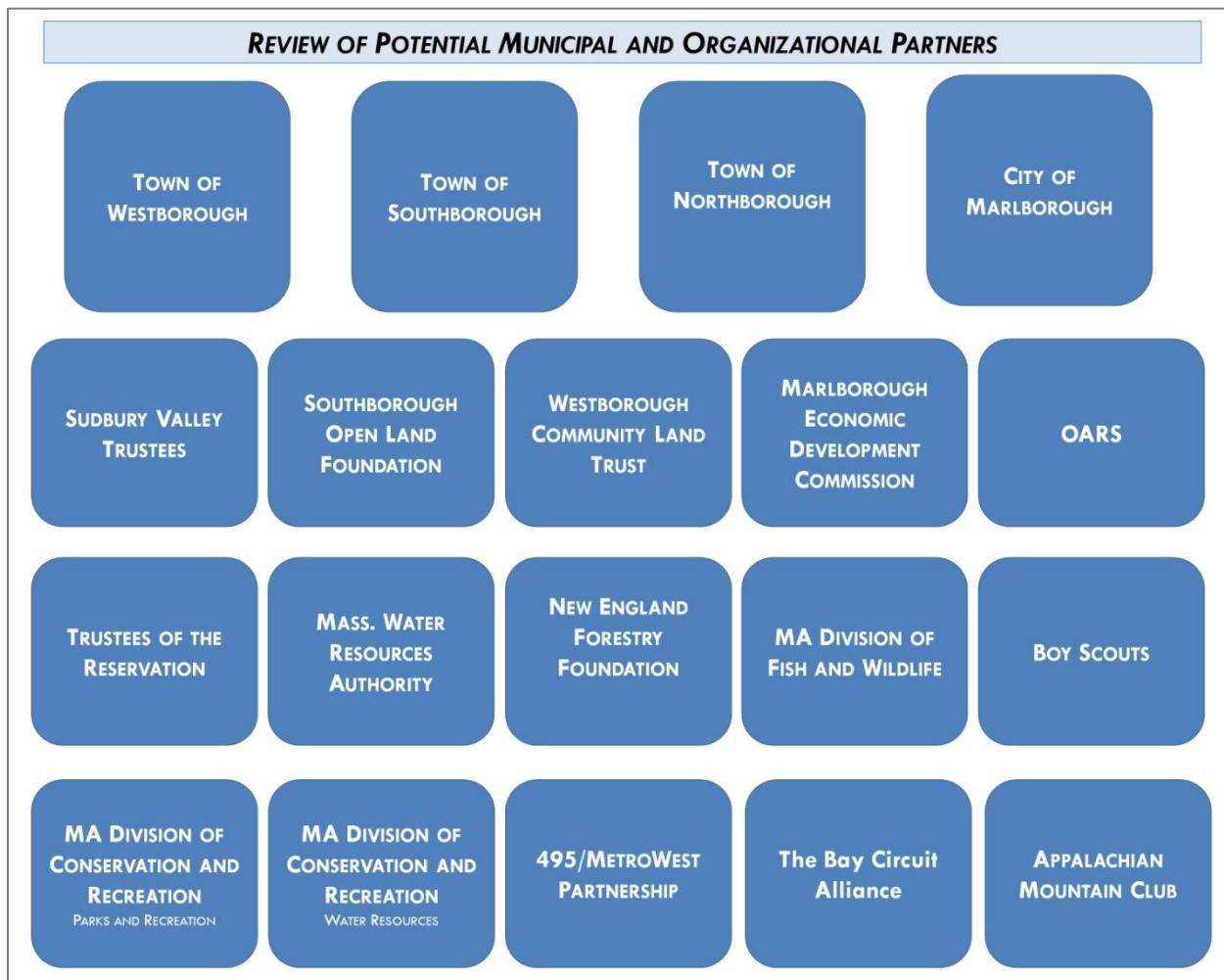


Figure 3

Through the discussion, it was identified that some groups may not need to be included (e.g., OARS) and that there are ongoing collaborations among a number of the groups identified (e.g., an agreement between the two DCR agencies, collaboration between the Town of Westborough and the Westborough Community Land Trust, and a partnership between the Bay Circuit Alliance, the [Appalachian Mountain Club](#) and the TTOR).

A similar dialogue was held around the different trail efforts and initiatives identified in the study area (Figure 4).

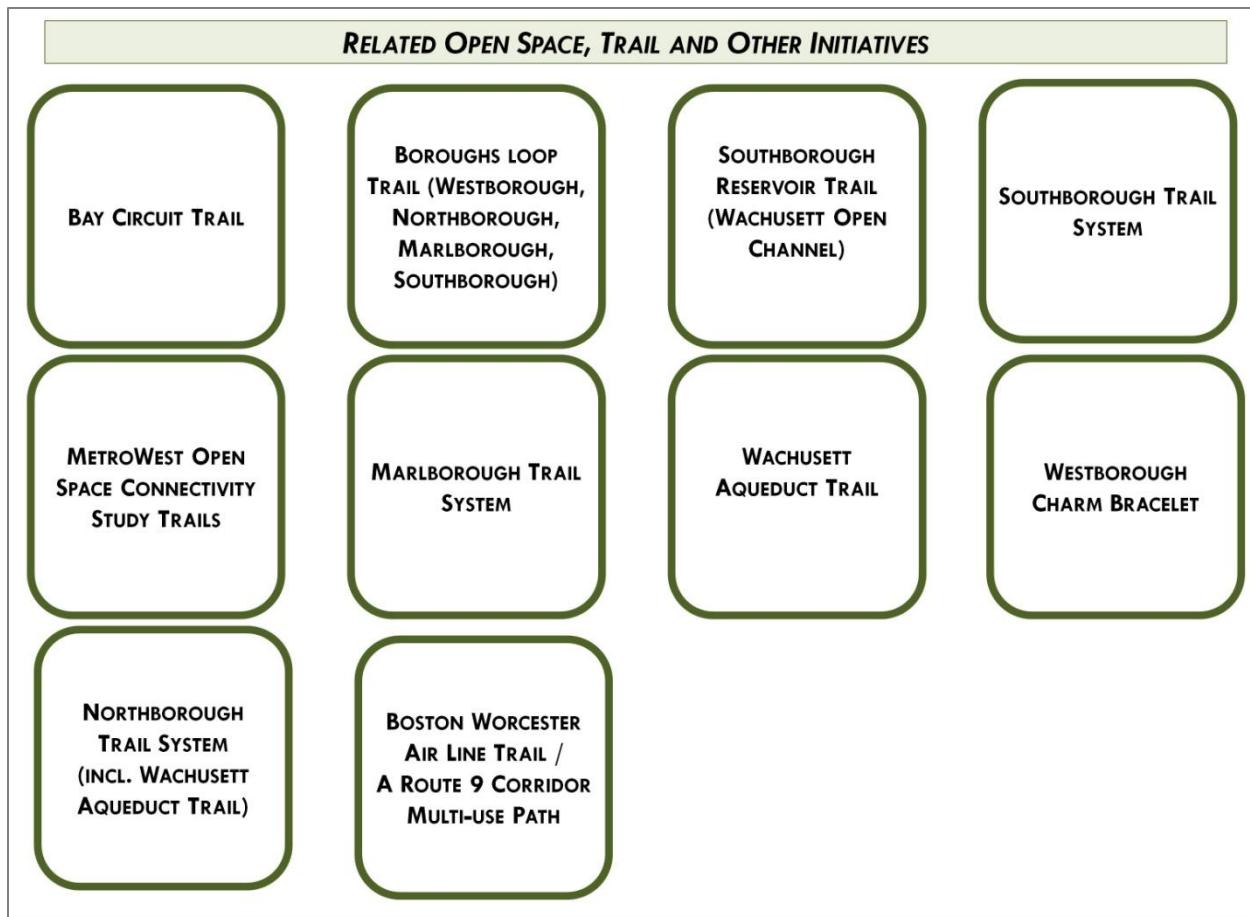


Figure 4

The discussion that accompanied the presentation led to a refinement of the collected information. The following changes were noted (which are reflected above):

- Boroughs Trail was removed since the Boroughs Loop Trail included this effort
- The Southborough Reservoir Trail (Weston Aqueduct Trail) was revised to be the Southborough Reservoir Trail (Wachusett Open Channel).
- The Westborough Trail System was revised to be the Westborough Charm Bracelet
- The Weston Aqueduct was removed
- The Wachusett Aqueduct Trail was moved under the Northborough Trail System as it is included directly as part of the planning for the Northborough trails.

Lastly, a brainstorming session was held to identify the key characteristics that stakeholders would like for a regional collaboration around trails maintenance and promotion/marketing. Participants provided their ideas and shared them through sticky notes in a brainstorming session (Figure 5)

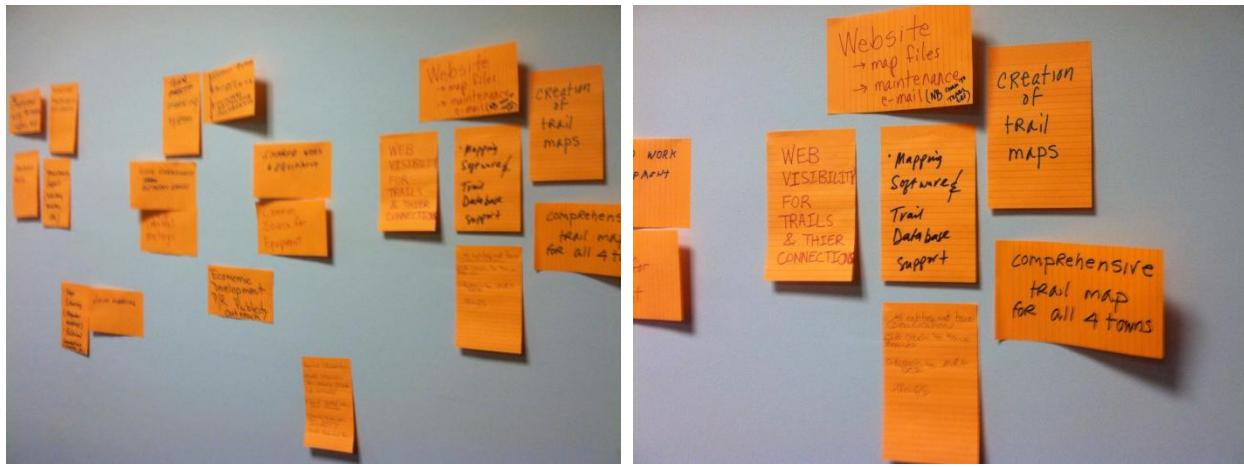


Figure 5. Stakeholder Input on Key Characteristics for a Regional Collaboration

Based on the brainstorming and associated discussion, the following key characteristics were identified:

- Maintenance Support (e.g., funding, resources, volunteers, mowers/common source of equipment, mapping resources, database management)
- Good Communication Among Groups/Information Sharing (e.g., regular meetings, political connections, joint lobbying, outreach to MWRA)
- Common Brand but local control for local trails (e.g., town marking system, appeal for private funding, publicity and outreach, comprehensive trail map)
- Web Visibility (e.g., central website to connect to local trail websites, central location for links to trail maps, location to share files)
- Connection to Local Businesses (e.g., through collaboration build connections to local business communities both for support of trail and for business attraction and retention)

Stakeholder input and guidance was used in the formulation of the next steps for the effort, which were identified at a third meeting and are discussed in last section of this report.

Examples of Regional Collaboration

A review of how other organizations have structured regional collaboration around open space, trail and natural resource was performed. The purpose of this review is to inform stakeholders about the benefits of collaboration, models of collaboration and challenges from formalized collaborations. These include

- Benefits of Collaboration
 - *Coordinated management*
 - *Improved efficiency*
 - *Reduced costs of maintenance*
 - *Fundraising / marketing / resource development*
- Models for Collaboration
 - *Volunteer*
 - *Mutual Aid*
 - *Partnership Agreement*
 - *Independent Organization*
- Challenges from formalized collaboration
 - *Time and resources to coordinate*
 - *Perceived loss of self control/identity by stakeholders/constituents*

The [Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund](#) funded the development of the [Partnerships for Parks](#) report, which looked at partnerships between public agencies and nonprofit groups, as part of an evaluation conducted by the Urban Institute of parks in 11 cities across the country.

The report evaluates public-private partnerships and discusses emerging lessons. Specifically, the report describes common challenges to successful parks partnerships, as well as outlines five critical topics:

- Structure: generally, parks partners identified were parks agencies and nonprofit organizations that support parks. Other (limited) partners include constituencies that use or support parks— such as recreation associations, environmental groups, youth organizations, and community development agencies.
- Control: decision making responsibility is typically shared more broadly; limited partners often are given a voice in decision making in return for their support.

- Assets and Liabilities: assets and liabilities are viewed in terms of the partners' financial resources, organizational capacity, public image, and constituency characteristics.
- Risks: parks partnerships normally develop a set of strategies for mitigating risks.

The report examines reasons why partnerships between public and private entities, specifically nonprofit organizations, are successful. First, nonprofit and government partnerships have become central to service delivery (e.g., the influence nonprofit organizations have recently had on housing, economic development and community planning). Second, nonprofits can involve the community of park users directly in park design, construction, programming, and management, particularly through their membership resources. A local example of this is the City of Boston Parks Department and the Boston Natural Areas Fund partnership for the creation of the East Boston Greenway and the Neponset Greenway creation and improvements.

The following ten (10) models offer lessons to the Boroughs Trail Feasibility Project. Note, the review was limited to only US based examples, but there are examples around the world that could also offer valuable perspectives and experiences.

1. U.S. Forest Service – State of California Parks
2. National Parks of New York Harbor, NY
3. San Bernardino County Regional Parks, CA
4. Willow Springs Park, Long Beach, CA
5. Pittsburg Regional Parks, PA
6. Millennium Park, Chicago, IL
7. High Line, New York City, NY
8. Bryant Park Corporation, New York, NY
9. Partnerships for Parks, Baltimore, MD
10. Boston Harbor Island Partnership, Boston, MA

1. U.S. Forest Service – California Parks

A public-private partnership model has been used by the US Forest Service (USFS) for approximately 30 years in hundreds of California parks and campgrounds. In this model, California retains ownership of the land and control of the use and character of the park while a private company handles operational tasks in a more cost-effective manner. The objective of this model was to form a partnership that combines public oversight and a unique knowledge of the state park with the efficiency and customer service of a private company. The task assignment between partners is broken-down in the following way:

- The Public Agency retains ownership of the land. Typical concession agreements include extremely detailed operational requirements and restrictions.

- The Parks Agency retains responsibility for strategic planning, habitat development and restoration, facilities planning, environmental sciences, rule-making, oversight, and fee approval.
- The Private Company takes on operational tasks (from maintenance to bathroom cleaning). Private company's expenses are paid out of park visitor fees without any additional payments from the state. [Recreation Resource Management](#), the largest private park management operation in the U.S., provides private operations management for numerous CA public parks.

2. National Parks of New York Harbor, NY

In 2001, the National Park Service created an umbrella management scheme over all 22 of its parklands in the metropolitan area (including the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island) the National Parks of New York Harbor (NPNH). In 2005 a new non-profit entity was established; the [National Parks of New York Harbor Conservancy](#) as a 501 [c] 3. The Harbor Conservancy is the primary private partner of the NPNH, sanctioned under a U.S. Department of the Interior General Agreement:

Pursuant to the authority provided under the [NPS Organic Act 16 U.S.C. §§ 1-3](#), the [National Historic Preservation Act](#) 16 U.S.C. § 461 et. Seq, and NPS donation acceptance authority provided under [16 U.S.C. § 6](#).

In 2009, NPNH authorized the Harbor Conservancy to secure revenue streams for the park under a U.S. Department of Interior Cooperating Association Agreement. Under that agreement, retail stores were allowed on Ellis Island, Liberty Island and at the African Burial Ground.



Figure 6. New York Harbor Parks Home Page

3. San Bernardino County Regional Parks, CA

A more traditional, yet regional, approach to park management can be found in the San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department. The Regional Parks Department manages and maintains nine Regional Parks throughout San Bernardino County totaling approximately 9,200 acres. The [San Bernardino County Regional Parks Advisory Commission](#) was established in May of 1969 by a County Board of Supervisors resolution. The seven member commission provides a

citizen body that recommends policies regarding the development and operation of the Regional Parks.

4. Willow Springs Park, Long Beach, CA

Willow Springs Park is a newly created park in Long Beach, CA (the largest development of new park space in Long Beach since 1952). The park is a product of a public-private partnership between the City of Long Beach, Los Angeles County, and [Signal Hill Petroleum](#) (abutter). This is one of example that includes a private, for profit organization as a primary partner.

5. Pittsburg Regional Parks, PA

The City of Pittsburgh, within Allegheny County, has a multi-strand park system (171 park facilities, 2,800 acres), similar to our Emerald Necklace. The park system includes four historic, regional parks: Schenley, Frick, Highland, and Riverview Parks, which make up 60% of the overall City park system.

The [Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy](#), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, signed an official public-private partnership agreement with the City of Pittsburgh in 1998 to work together to restore these four parks. The organization has no debt and does not undertake capital projects until funding has been secured. The County has nine additional large parks, comprising 12,000 acres to form a ring just outside the city limits. The [Regional Parks Master Plan](#) was developed by a working group of public and private partners such as the City of Pittsburgh Planning Department, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, numerous national foundations, and consultants.

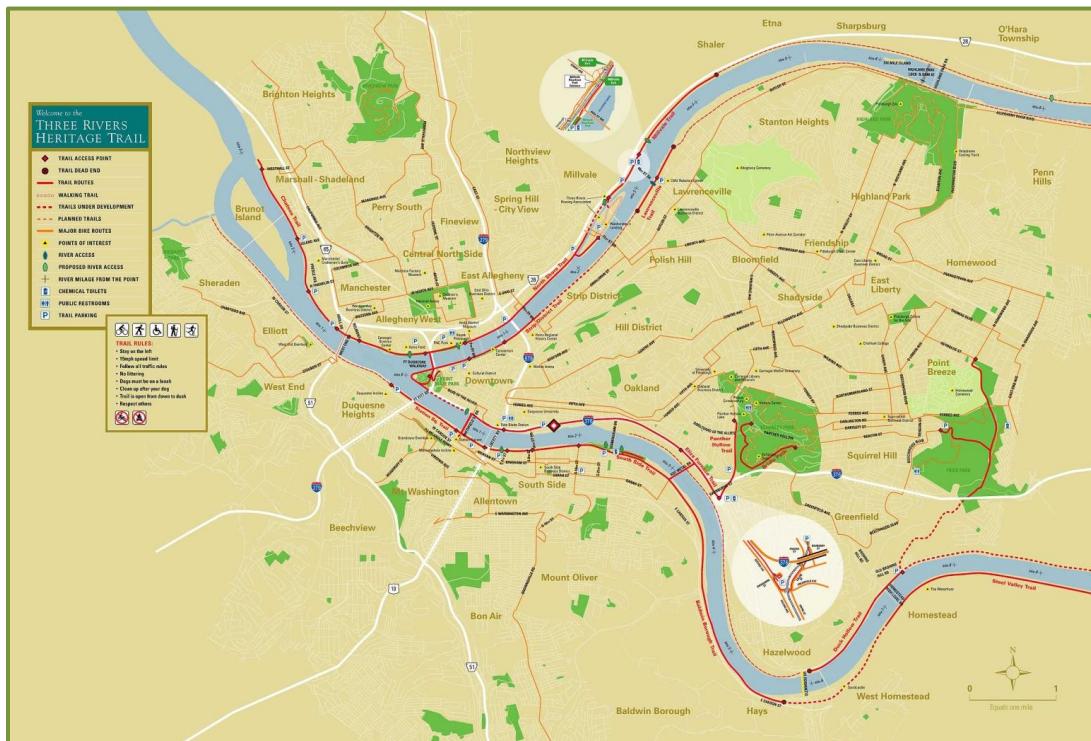


Figure 7. Map of Pittsburg Parks and Three Rivers Heritage Trail

6. Millennium Park, Chicago, IL

The City of Chicago Mayor's Office initially acquired the land for [Millennium Park](#). In order to engage the private sector, a public-private partnership was formed between the City and John H. Bryan (a well connected philanthropist), who formed the not-for-profit Millennium Park, Inc. The partnership successfully raised \$490 million to complete the park, which would not have been possible without access to both public and private funding sources. Partnership organizations included:

- Chicago Department of Transportation
- Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs
- Grant Park Conservancy
- Friends of the Park
- Art Institute of Chicago
- Private Donors
- Various Artists, Architects, and Landscape Architects

7. High Line, New York City, NY

The High Line is a public park built on an historic freight rail line elevated above the streets on Manhattan's West Side. It is owned by the City of New York, and maintained and operated by Friends of the High Line. Founded in 1999 by community residents, Friends of the High Line is a non-profit conservancy working with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation. A presentation and discussion was held in December 2010: "[The New York High Line: Is it a Model for the City or Not?](#)" to discuss whether the development of the High Line should be considered an exemplary or replicable model for the intersection of public and private interests in the development of a public amenity. The panel assembled included a Malcolm Gladwell, New Yorker; Robert Hammond, Friends of the High Line's co-founder; Jerilyn Perine, affordable housing and community development expert for the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council; and John Mollenkopf, CUNY. Although an engaging and informative discussion was had, no consensus was reached.



Figure 8. Photos from the High Line

8. Bryant Park Corporation, New York, NY

[Bryant Park Corporation](#) (BPC) is a nonprofit private management company, and a cooperating business improvement district, established by Daniel A. Biederman and Andrew Heiskell with support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. BPC was formed to restore historic [Bryant Park](#), which had suffered a severe decline in the 1970s. A 15-year agreement was signed in 1988, entrusting management and improvements to the BPC. It is the largest effort in the nation to apply private management backed by private funding to a public park, and it has been a success with public, press, and nearby institutions. The BPC operates Bryant Park with private sector techniques and management methods. Working as agent for the City of New York, the BPC provides sanitation and security services, and creates seasonal gardens and horticultural installations for the park.

9. Partnerships for Parks, Baltimore, MD

Partnership for Parks is a program sponsored by the [Parks & People Foundation](#). The goal of [Partnerships for Parks](#) is to build community capacity to become active stakeholders of public lands and recreational spaces. The program is designed to strengthen the involvement of community organizations by establishing partnerships between these entities and the City of Baltimore Department of Recreation and Parks, and to inspire other groups to become actively involved in their public parks and recreational facilities. Organizations that establish formal partnership agreements with the Department may also be eligible for partnership investment funds. These public and private partnerships provide an expanded parks workforce, leverage financial and human resources, and connect education to outdoor learning opportunities.



Figure 9. Parks and People web page for Support and Giving

10. The Boston Harbor Island Partnership

The [Boston Harbor Island Partnership](#) is an organization of federal, state, city, and nonprofit agencies that coordinates activities for the islands and implements the management plan for the islands and the [Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area](#). The partnership is a non-profit organizations and has the power to seek and accept donations to help carry out its duties and has been empowered to carry out the plan for the islands recreation area. Several of the partners are non-profit organizations, one of which owns and operates an island ([Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center](#)) and another that helps raise funds to the improve the national park ([Boston Harbor Island Alliance](#)).



Figure 10. Boston Harbor Island Webpage

Conclusion and Next Steps

The final meeting of this Boroughs Trail Feasibility Project was held on January 7th, 2013 in the Selectmen's Meeting Room in Northborough Town Hall. The goal of the meeting was to identify and prioritize next steps to assist the collaboration in moving forward.

At that meeting, participants provided a range of ideas for actions that the group could take within the next year, primarily through an informal agreement to work together and continue the collaboration that started through this project.

Based on similarities among the provided ideas, a set of priorities for next steps was determined. The top two priorities were:

- **Develop a Trails Map for the Boroughs**

As a first step, the group wants to coordinate existing trails map to create a master map. The group would then use this map to identify potential connections and gaps; this would include the opportunity to identify a potential trail loop that would pass through each borough as well as other connections in the existing and proposed trail networks in the municipalities and other land holdings.

- **Set a Regular Meeting Schedule**

The group would like to set up bi-monthly meetings for the upcoming year (January – December 2013). This time would be used to review the map and identify opportunities for connections and to coordinate related ongoing activities (trail maintenance, best practices and lessons learned, etc.)

The other identified actions had a similar priority level for the group and these were determined to be the supporting action steps that would follow the two actions above.

- **Prepare marketing and communication materials**

Once the map and other supporting materials have been developed, the group would like to reach to the media to share information about the trail effort and the regional collaboration. This could include a fact sheet, press release(s) and a central website with links to local trail websites.

- **Create channels for internal communication**

The group would like to develop an internal communication tool to share information. This could take the form of a group email, a group page (e.g., Yahoo or Google group) or another electronic format that allows sharing of updates, getting advice and other opportunities to benefit from the shared experience and expertise of those involved.

- **Create a common trail logo/brand**

The group is interested in developing a trail logo or brand. This shared symbol could be used on the trail system to complement existing blazes and information at trailheads. It

would let hikers know that they are on a local trail that is part of the larger regional system. The logo or brand would also be used as part of the communication materials.

- **Identify current budget for trails activities and existing group resources**

To assist in determining what additional resources could help the group, there is a desire to understand the existing costs for maintaining and promoting the trails. The group could use this information to identify funding needs (e.g., funds for the upkeep of equipment, for blazes, etc.) that could be filled through a collective effort (fundraiser, outreach to local businesses).

By the end of the meeting, a next meeting date was being scheduled for early March 2013 and work was beginning to gather and map the trails for the Boroughs.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

As part of the stakeholder meetings, Don Burn of WCLT shared information about a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) by and between the Department of Conservation and Recreation and WCLT. The purpose of this agreement was to establish the responsibilities of DCR and the permittee, WCLT, relative to trail development and maintenance on designated trails located on or after traversing over DCR property in Westborough. Don shared this with the group for their work with DRC. In addition, Don shared information about a blanket NOI process used with the Conservation Commission for trails in Westborough Trails.

Don and others agreed to continue to share examples of their agreements and successes so that the other stakeholders could potentially model efforts their own agreements and work on them.



Figure 11. Next Steps Identified by Stakeholders