

Join us to

**FORM
FRANKLIN'S
FUTURE**

**Franklin Master Plan
Inventory and Assessment**

Revised March 7, 2024

Consultants:

**BETA Group, Inc.
Barrett Planning Group LLC**

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Part I. Overview

1. Introduction

(Reserved)

2. Community Engagement

(Reserved)

3. Community Vision and Goals

(Reserved)

Part II. Inventory and Assessment



4. Economic Development

Introduction

Franklin's past is rich in industrial history. Once a thriving manufacturing community during the industrial revolution, Franklin's landscape was covered with mill buildings and prospered as a manufacturer of textiles and straw hats, the oldest industrial operation in Franklin. While the mill buildings of Franklin's history are landmarks of an era past, today, Franklin's two large industrial parks, Franklin Industrial Park and Forge Park, house millions of square feet of manufacturing, industrial, warehousing and office space combined with several smaller office and industrial parks along the Grove Street Corridor and elsewhere.¹

Franklin is a growth community with a pro-business environment, a low stable single tax rate, streamlined permitting processes, ample industrial land, modernized infrastructure, excellent

¹ Town of Franklin, *Master Plan*, 2013, ED-1.

municipal services, well-educated workforce, diverse housing opportunities and a great quality of life. Predominately a manufacturing town, Franklin is home to dozens of research and development and manufacturing companies and has attracted innovative technology companies in a wide range of industries: nanotechnology, data storage, specialty materials, life sciences - biotechnology, and medical devices.

Existing Conditions and Trends

POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE

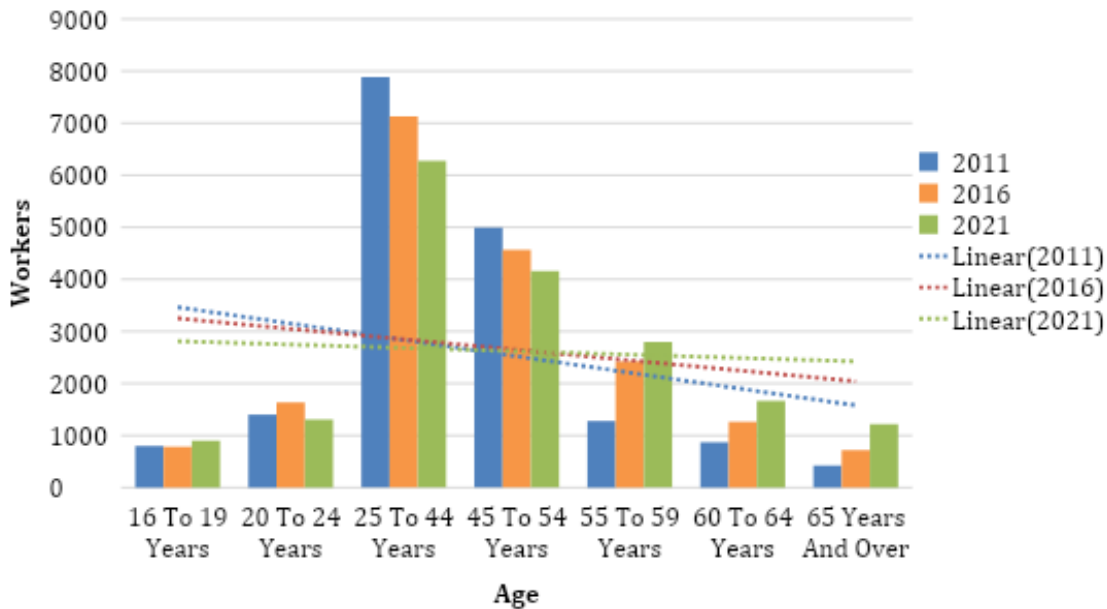
Over the last four decades, Franklin has nearly doubled its population, growing from a community of 17,304 individuals in 1981 to its current 33,057 (91 percent increase). According to the American Community Survey (ACS), in 2021, the population of Franklin was 33,057, with 12,511 households. The average household size in Franklin is 2.6 people, on par with the state and county average of 2.5 people per household. Population growth was especially significant during the 1980s and 1990s: the town's population increased 31.0 percent between 1981 and 1990, and an additional 31.2 percent between 1990 and 2000. These two decades of growth increased Franklin's population by 71.9 percent, averaging approximately 3.6 percent per year.² More recently, population growth has slowed, increasing by only 4.5 percent between 2010 and 2021.

During the last two decades there have also been substantial changes in the number and percent of Franklin's residents within specific age categories. With a median age of 41, Franklin's population is marginally older than that of Massachusetts (median age 39.6) or Norfolk County overall (median age 40.7). In general, compared to ten years ago, there are fewer children, somewhat fewer adults under the age of 55, and substantially more residents over the age of 55 living in Franklin today. As a result, Franklin's labor force is aging (see Figure 4.1); between 2016 and 2021, the proportion of workers aged 55 to 64 increased by 22 percent, while the proportion over 65 increased by 71 percent.

² Town of Franklin, Housing Production Plan, April 2022, 10.

Fig. 4.1. Age Distribution of the Workforce in Franklin

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2017-2021 via Social Explorer



LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The **labor force** of any city or town includes all civilian residents over the age of 16 who are either currently employed or are actively seeking employment. Although Franklin experienced only a 4.5 percent increase in population since the 2013 Master Plan, the Town has experienced a significantly higher increase (32.4 percent) in labor force participation. In 2021, Franklin had a labor force of 19,326 people and a labor force participation rate higher than that of both Norfolk County and Massachusetts (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. 2021 Labor Force and Employment Profile, Franklin and Peer-Group Communities					
Geography	Civilian Population in Labor Force 16 Years and Over	Civilian Labor Force Participation Rate	Employed	Unemployed	Annual Unemployment Rate
Attleboro	25,789	69.95%	24,447	1,342	5.20%
Bellingham	9,758	73.21%	9,300	458	4.69%
Foxborough	9,890	66.38%	9,328	562	5.68%
Franklin	19,326	71.49%	18,330	996	5.15%
Mansfield	13,965	73.60%	13,386	579	4.15%
Marlborough	25,185	74.01%	23,814	1,371	5.44%
Medway	7,635	74.74%	7,439	196	2.57%
Milford	17,839	72.52%	16,981	858	4.81%
Natick	21,175	71.83%	20,474	701	3.31%

Table 4.1. 2021 Labor Force and Employment Profile, Franklin and Peer-Group Communities

Geography	Civilian Population in Labor Force 16 Years and Over	Civilian Labor Force Participation Rate	Employed	Unemployed	Annual Unemployment Rate
Norfolk	4,945	54.69%	4,767	178	3.60%
Shrewsbury	20,149	66.52%	19,408	741	3.68%
Westborough	11,583	70.78%	11,242	341	2.94%
Wrentham	6,973	68.90%	6,557	416	5.97%
Norfolk County	407,520	69.24%	386,932	20,588	5.05%
Massachusetts	3,876,978	67.15%	3,667,019	209,959	5.42%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2017-2021 via Social Explorer

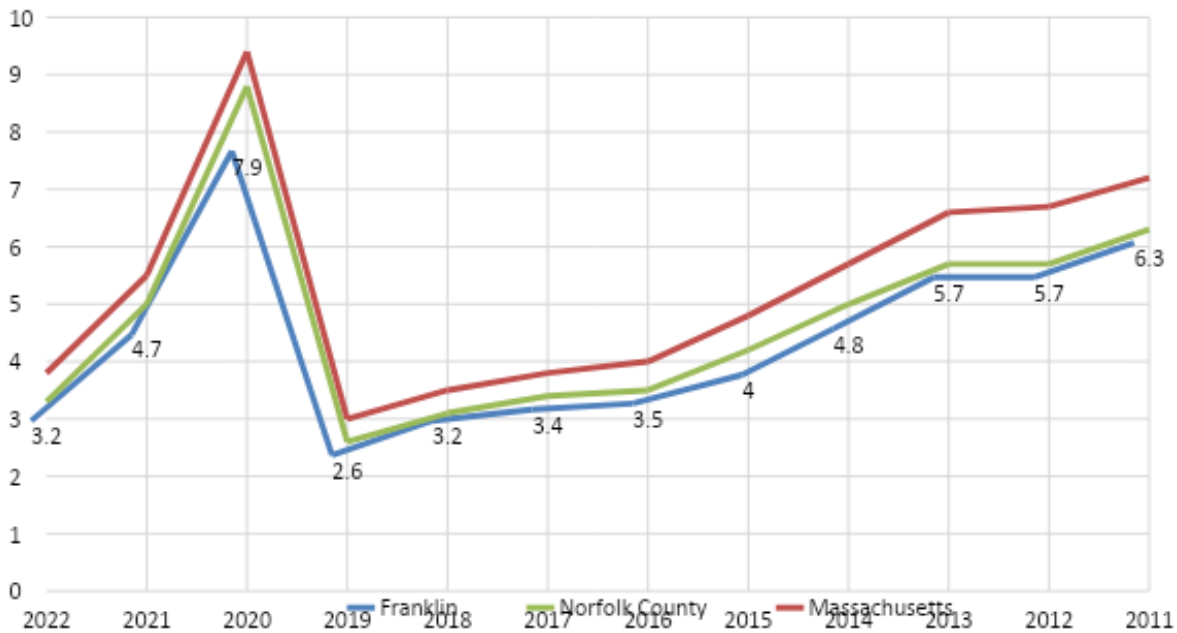
UNEMPLOYMENT

Between 2009 and 2019, Franklin’s unemployment rate was steadily decreasing (Figure 4.2). Low unemployment tends to go hand-in-hand with high educational attainment and high household wealth. On a month-by-month basis, unemployment in Franklin fell as low as two percent in November of 2019. By April 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic’s first surge, unemployment had jumped to 13.7 percent.

However, like many other towns throughout Massachusetts and the country, Franklin experienced a rapid increase in unemployment in 2020 due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (unemployment rate increasing from 2.9 in March 2020 to 13.7 by April 2020). Since this peak, the unemployment rate has been declining, though not yet reaching pre-pandemic levels. In 2021, Franklin’s unemployment rate of 5.2 percent was generally on par with County averages and below the Commonwealth’s rate. Amongst neighboring communities, Franklin’s unemployment rate was similar or higher.

Fig. 4.2. Annual Unemployment Rate

Source: Massachusetts Department of Economic Research, Labor Force and Unemployment Data, 2023.



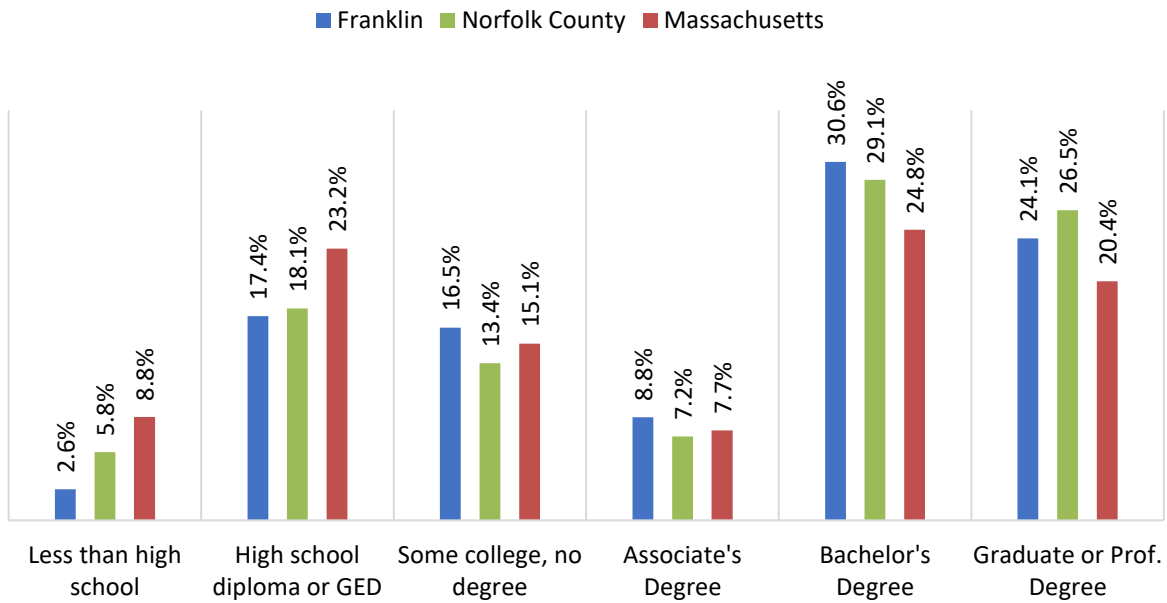
In 2021, 18,330 Franklin residents (94.8 percent of the labor force population) were employed. Of those, 70.7 percent worked in the private sector, with only 7.4 percent of all workers self-employed. This is compared to 65.4 percent of Massachusetts in the private sector, and 8.8 percent of workers self-employed at the state level. While the proportion of private sector workers in Franklin is slightly higher or on par with neighboring towns, Franklin is amongst the lowest in terms of the percentage of self-employed workers (with only Mansfield and Westborough below).

EDUCATION

Franklin's labor force is well-educated; 54.7 percent of residents over 25, have completed at least a bachelor's degree. This is higher than the state and on par with Norfolk County. Moreover, Franklin has a significant proportion of residents that have completed higher degrees (Figure 4.3). Nearly a quarter of residents over 25 have completed professional or graduate degrees, significantly higher than Massachusetts as a whole.

Fig. 4.3. Highest Level of Education Completed

Source: American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates 2017-2021, Table B15003 via Social Explorer.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Franklin's location between Providence, Boston, and Worcester positions it within 30 miles of over 100 higher education and vocational training institutions, including State universities, colleges and community colleges, Ivy League schools and many other well-known private colleges and universities, including some of the best research and engineering universities in the country. Within Franklin's borders, Dean College offers associate and bachelor's degrees in a variety of majors, and Tri-County Regional Vocational High School provides vocational technical education to students from Franklin and beyond.

RESIDENT OCCUPATIONS AND EARNINGS

Almost a quarter of working Franklin residents are employed by the education and health care industry (Table 4.2). Many of Franklin's residents are employed in high-skill jobs, reflecting their high levels of educational attainment and higher incomes. The industries next most likely to employ Franklin residents are: professional and management services (13.3% of working Franklin residents), retail (12%), finance, insurance, and real estate (9.4%), and manufacturing (9.0%).

Manufacturing, finance, insurance, and real estate, and professional and management services are also among the highest paid industries, with Franklin residents employed by these sectors earning over \$100,000 a year. At \$68,623, median earnings for all industries in 2021 were higher in Franklin than in both the county and state. Those commuting via public transportation (likely to Boston) and those working from home earning the most.³

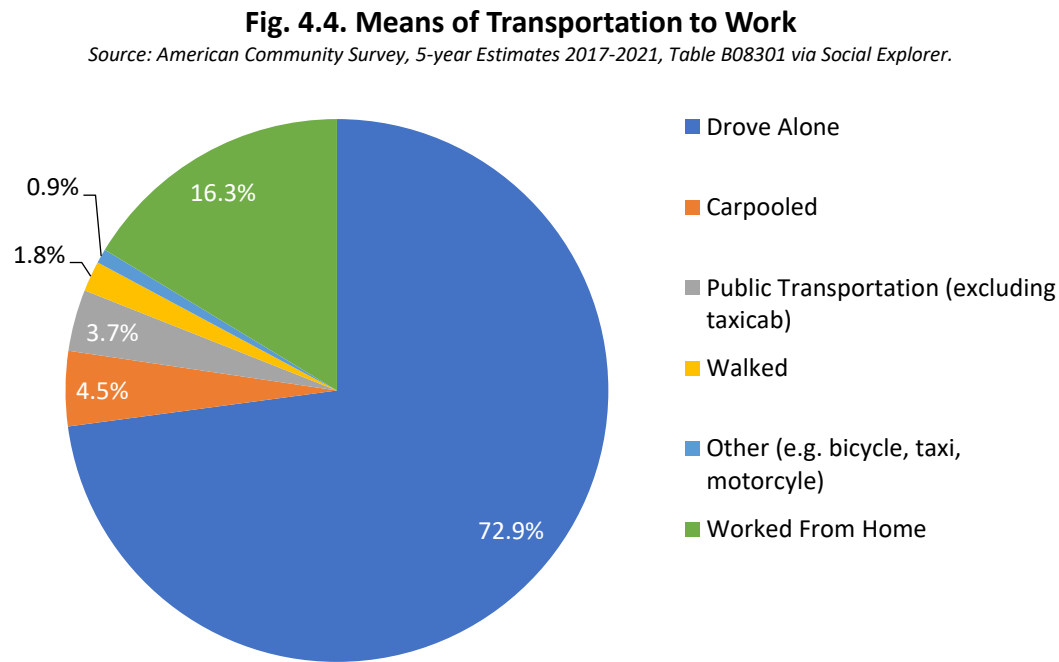
Industry	Franklin Residents Employed	Percentage of Franklin's Labor Force	Median Earnings
<i>Total, All Industries</i>	<i>18,330</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>\$68,416</i>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining	100	0.60%	\$85,764
Construction	1,045	5.70%	\$79,637
Manufacturing	1,652	9.00%	\$112,136
Wholesale Trade	661	3.60%	\$83,839
Retail Trade	2,194	12.00%	\$32,647
Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities	672	3.70%	\$73,510
Information	484	2.60%	\$70,227
Finance and Insurance, and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,729	9.40%	\$106,067
Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services	2,442	13.30%	\$104,073
Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance	4,455	24.30%	\$56,033
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services	1,627	8.90%	\$30,578
Other Services, Except Public Administration	607	3.30%	\$32,415
Public Administration	662	3.60%	\$89,777
<i>Source: American Community Survey, 2021 5-Year Estimates, A17004. Industry by Occupation for Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over; B24041. Industry By Median Earnings In The Past 12 Months (In 2021 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) For The Full-Time, Year-Round Civilian Employed Population 16 Years And Over, via Social Explorer.</i>			

COMMUTING

The majority of Franklin's employed residents work outside the town. Direct access to I-495 (at two locations) and access to several smaller routes as well as access to two MBTA stations make Franklin an ideal Town to commute to and from for work. The vast majority of Franklin residents

³ American Community Survey 2017-2021 5-Year Estimates, Table B08121

commute via car, whether driving alone (73 percent) or carpooling (4.5 percent). Nearly 17 percent of Franklin residents worked from home in 2021, higher than both Norfolk County and the state. About 3.7% took public transportation, 1.8% walked to work, and statistically 0.0% biked or rode a motorcycle to work. Although two commuter rails stations are located in Franklin, residents have stated previously that the commuter rail was infrequent and expensive for commuting to and from Franklin. Additionally, about a quarter of Franklin residents spend more than 45 minutes a day traveling to work and are considered extreme commuters.

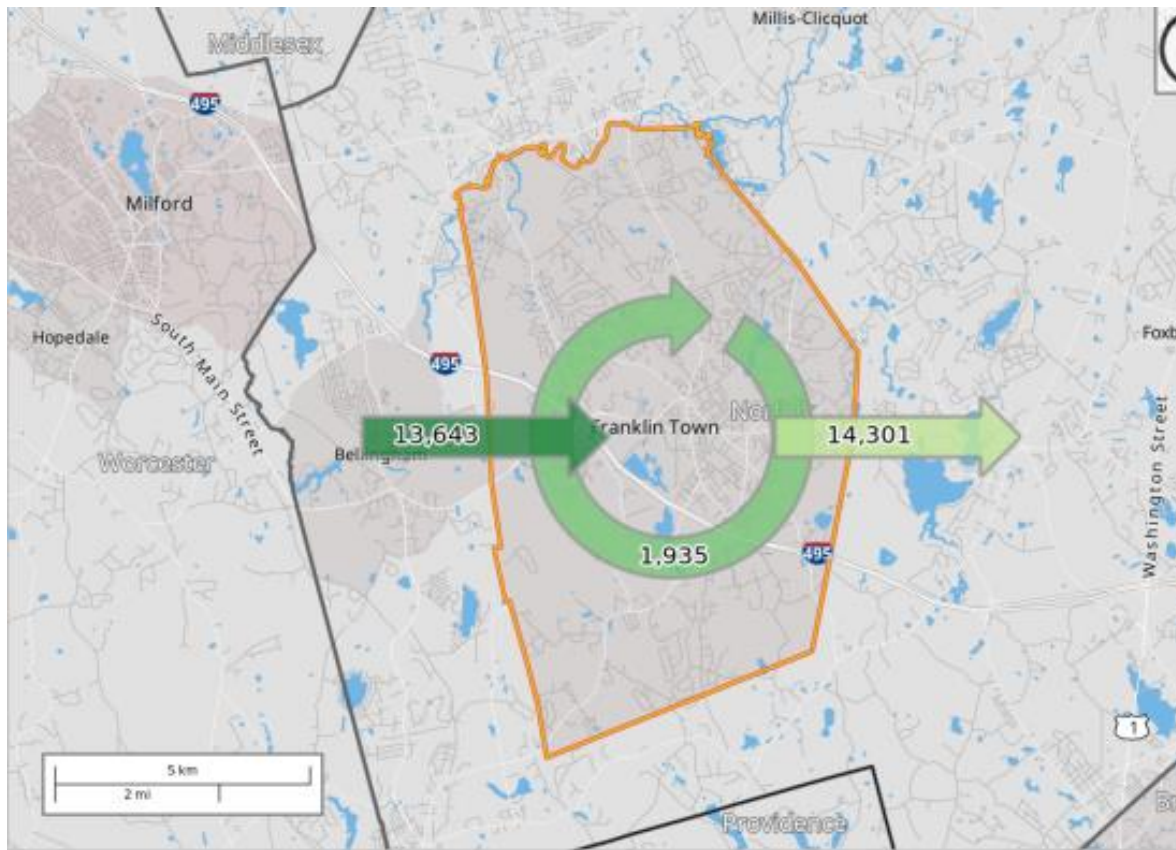


According to 2020 commuting data, from OnTheMap by the U.S. Census Bureau, Franklin has an inflow of 13,643 workers entering town for jobs, but an outflow of 14,301 residents leaving for jobs outside of Franklin.

Using data from 2020, OnTheMap tracks the number of workers on a daily basis coming into, leaving and staying within Franklin for their places of work. Though this data may be skewed because of its collection during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the most recent set available, and is shown below in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5: Inflow/Outflow Counts of All Jobs for Franklin, MA in 2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau's OnTheMap <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov> on 07/05/2023



Map Legend

Selection Areas

Selection Area

Inflow/Outflow

- ◆ Employed and Live in Selection Area
- ◆ Employed in Selection Area, Live Outside
- ◆ Live in Selection Area, Employed Outside
- Note: Overlay arrows do not indicate directionality of worker flow between home and employment locations.



Table 4.3 shows that most Franklin residents travel outside of town to get to work, with only 11.9 percent of 16,236 Franklin residents working in town in 2020. Meanwhile, the vast majority of those commuting outside of Franklin (11.7 percent) travel to Boston, though down from 13 percent when the last master plan was completed in 2013. The rest of the Town's residents commute to a variety of nearby places and regional centers where similar industries tend to

cluster, with the remaining top 10 workplace destinations all employing under 5 percent of Franklin residents. Outside the top ten, each remaining municipality received less than two percent of residents, although combined they formed where the majority of Franklin residents traveled to work. The overall picture of employment destinations has changed very little over time.

Table 4.3. Where Franklin Residents Work in 2020 (All Jobs)	
Jurisdiction	Share of Franklin Residents Work in:
Franklin (Norfolk, MA)	11.90%
Boston (Suffolk, MA)	11.70%
Framingham (Middlesex, MA)	3.20%
Milford (Worcester, MA)	3.00%
Norwood (Norfolk, MA)	2.20%
Marlborough (Middlesex, MA)	2.10%
Hopkinton (Middlesex, MA)	1.80%
Cambridge (Middlesex, MA)	1.70%
Medway (Norfolk, MA)	1.70%
Worcester (Worcester, MA)	1.70%
All Other Locations	58.90%
Source: 2020 U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap, Work Destination Analysis - All Jobs	

EMPLOYMENT BASE

Meanwhile, 12.4 percent of the 15,578 workers employed in Franklin also live in Franklin (Table 4.4). The top ten municipalities that Franklin workers came from were generally from nearby municipalities, most commuters into Franklin traveled less than 25 miles to get to work. Boston is a notable exception, contributing 2.2 percent of Franklin's workforce. Rhode Island is a significant source of Franklin's workers, with four of the top ten worker home locations being Rhode Island communities, including Woonsocket (4.6%), Pawtucket (2.2%), Cumberland (1.8%) and Providence (1.8%). Woonsocket, Rhode Island is just 10 miles or about a 20-minute commute from Franklin. Almost two-thirds of Franklin workers, however, did not come from these ten municipalities, but from many other municipalities.

*Employment Base:
employers that provide
jobs and wages in the
community.*

Table 4.4. Where Franklin Workers Live in 2020 (All Jobs)

Jurisdiction	Share of Franklin Workers Reside in:
Franklin (Norfolk, MA)	12.40%
Woonsocket (Providence, RI)	4.60%
Bellingham (Norfolk, MA)	3.70%
Boston (Suffolk, MA)	2.60%
Attleborough (Bristol, MA)	2.60%
Milford (Worcester, MA)	2.40%
North Attleborough (Bristol, MA)	2.40%
Pawtucket (Providence, RI)	2.2%
Cumberland (Providence, RI)	1.80%
Providence (Providence, RI)	1.80%
All Other Locations	63.60%
<i>Source: 2020 U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap, Work Destination Analysis - All Jobs</i>	

EMPLOYMENT

Table 4.5 reports the location quotients for Franklin’s employment base, or the establishments and individuals that operate and work within Franklin. Location quotients (LQ) are a helpful tool for evaluating strengths or weaknesses in employment and wages for a given jurisdiction compared to others. The LQs for Franklin show certain sectors make up a larger share of employment and the economy in Franklin compared to the county and state. This includes industries like manufacturing, whose share of employment is 3.09 times larger in Franklin compared to the state. In an average month, this sector employs 3,245 people, or 21 percent of the workforce in Franklin. Education was the second largest industry in terms of average monthly employment, with Dean College and other educational services employing about 10 percent of the total workforce.

Table 4.5. Industries in Franklin by Number of Employees and Firms.

Description	No. of Establishments	Percentage of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment	Percentage of Workers	LQ vs Norfolk County	LQ vs MA
Manufacturing	52	4.85%	3,245	20.81%	3.66	3.09
Educational Services	29	2.71%	1,618	10.38%	1.17	1.03
Wholesale Trade	78	7.28%	1,493	9.58%	2.16	2.79
Retail Trade	101	9.42%	1,452	9.31%	0.81	0.97
Health Care and Social Assistance	163	15.21%	1,089	6.98%	0.43	0.38

Table 4.5. Industries in Franklin by Number of Employees and Firms.

Description	No. of Establishments	Percentage of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment	Percentage of Workers	LQ vs Norfolk County	LQ vs MA
Accommodation and Food Services	61	5.69%	1,045	6.70%	0.93	0.93
Transportation and Warehousing	30	2.80%	934	5.99%	2.14	1.88
Professional and Technical Services	144	13.43%	827	5.30%	0.73	0.5
Construction	124	11.57%	708	4.54%	0.67	0.8
Administrative and Waste Services	67	6.25%	703	4.51%	0.76	0.86
Other Services, Except Public Administration	88	8.21%	693	4.44%	1.26	1.44
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	18	1.68%	323	2.07%	0.94	1.35
Information	20	1.87%	299	1.92%	0.61	0.67
Management of Companies and Enterprises	11	1.03%	226	1.45%	0.58	0.73
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	39	3.64%	204	1.31%	0.75	0.99
Finance and Insurance	34	3.17%	176	1.13%	0.17	0.23
Total, All Industries	1,072	100.00%	15,592	100.00%	1	1

Source: MA Department of Labor and Workforce Development, ES-202

The wholesale trade LQ for Franklin is 2.79 while for transportation and warehousing, it is 1.88, demonstrating the strength of these industries in Franklin. The Town's strength in these sectors reflects Franklin's manufacturing history; ample industrial land; and major employers in the manufacturing industry, notably EMC/Dell. Notably, the arts and entertainment sector LQ is also quite high (1.35), likely due to the Town's recent work promoting arts and the Franklin Cultural District. Franklin stands out for its very low labor force ratios (<0.60) in three industry sectors: finance and insurance, professional and technical services, and healthcare and social assistance.

Between 2016 and 2021 Franklin experienced a nearly 6 percent decrease in average monthly employment overall, with many of Franklin's strongest industries having faced the greatest

declines. As more industry leaves Massachusetts in search of cheaper labor and manufacturing productivity decreases, the number of manufacturing positions in the Town of Franklin has decreased. In 2016, there were approximately 4,089 manufacturing positions; in 2021, positions within Franklin's manufacturing sector were at 3,245 (a 21 percent decrease). This may correspond to the almost 17 percent loss in manufacturing establishments during that time. The biggest employment downturn has been in the Wholesale Trade sector (-30.8%).

Only a few industries experienced a growth in employment during this time period. The largest increases in employment have been in the Transportation and Warehousing (69.8 percent) and Administrative and Waste Services (67.4 percent) sectors. Additionally, the Health Care and Social Assistance sector added 57 new establishments and 144 jobs to Franklin between 2016 and 2021.

While many leading employment industries experienced losses in establishments and employment, almost none saw a loss in average weekly wage rates. The largest increase was in the information industry, which went from a weekly average of \$3,952 in 2016 to \$5,959 in 2021; a 51 percent increase. The "Other Services" sector provided the second and third highest increases in wages, 48 percent, and the Administrative and Waste Services industry was the third highest at a 47 percent increase in wages. The Wholesale Trade industry increased wages by 44 percent and the Health Care and Social Assistance industry increased wages by 33 percent. The only sector that saw a decline in wages during this period was Transportation and Warehousing, with a 0.8 percent decrease in average weekly wages. Franklin continues to seek out new employers that generate a high number of manufacturing, research and development, and office jobs to ensure a continuing increase in household income.

LARGEST EMPLOYERS

Today, Franklin has 23 employers with over 100 employees per establishment. In 2017, there were only twelve (listed in Table 4.6). Like most suburbs, the Town itself is among the largest employers in Franklin, with approximately 1,972 municipal and school employees.

Table 4.6. Franklin Largest Employers

Rank	Employer	Nature of Business	Number of Employees
1	Town of Franklin	Government	1,972
2	Dell/EMC Corporation	Computer Storage/Manufacturing	1,562
3	Garelick Farms	Dairy	600
5	Thermo Fisher Scientific	Scientific Instruments & Equipment	400
4	Tegra Medical	Precision Grinding Medical	387
6	Dean College	College	356
7	Alpha Grainger	Manufacturing	172
8	Shaw's Supermarket	Supermarket	162
9	Owens & Minor, Inc.	Scientific Instruments and Equipment	160
10	Stop & Shop Supermarket	Supermarket	150
11	Big Y Supermarket	Supermarket	135
12	BJ's Wholesale	Retailer	135
Total			6,191
<i>Source: MA Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Town of Franklin</i>			

As Table 4.6 demonstrates, the largest employers consist of the Town of Franklin along with manufacturing and dairy processing. Franklin's twelve largest employers represent a number of different industries including wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, retail trade, and manufacturing, along with the Dean College. Amongst these largest employers, there is no real concentration within one industry.

WAGES

Location quotients for wages allow an easy comparison against the state's and reveal that wages in Franklin are generally on par with state and county averages. Table 4.7 shows the overall 2021 weekly wage LQ for Franklin workers was 92 percent of the state's average weekly wage and 105 percent of the county's.

In some sectors, Franklin wages were significantly lower than the state average. For instance, in Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, the average weekly wage for a Massachusetts worker was \$926. Yet in Franklin, it was only 40 percent of that amount at \$375. In only four industries (Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Information, and Administrative and Waste Services) did the Franklin weekly wage exceed the state average weekly wages. The largest wage LQ is for Information at 2.06, though this is likely an outlier. Although the information industry makes

up less than 2 percent of the jobs in Franklin, the wages are two to three times higher than that of the labor market area, county, and state.

The strongest industries are not always those with the highest paying jobs. In fact, many of the weaker industries in Franklin are the most well-paying. Table 4.7 shows that in Franklin, the highest-wage industry is information, followed by the manufacturing and professional, scientific, and management sectors. While manufacturing is both high-wage and regionally competitive, the professional, scientific, technical, and management sectors are generally below the larger labor market area both in terms of wages and industry strength.

NAICS	Description	Franklin	Massachusetts	Wage LQ vs MA	Norfolk County	Wage LQ vs County
10	Total, All Industries	\$1,556	\$1,686	0.92	\$1,475	1.05
23	Construction	\$1,408	\$1,669	0.84	\$1,800	0.78
31-33	Manufacturing	\$2,050	\$1,913	1.07	\$1,789	1.15
DUR	Durable Goods Manufacturing	\$2,292	\$2,105	1.09	\$1,960	1.17
NONDUR	Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	\$1,579	\$1,557	1.01	\$1,526	1.03
42	Wholesale Trade	\$2,980	\$2,367	1.26	\$2,299	1.3
44-45	Retail Trade	\$743	\$846	0.88	\$856	0.87
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	\$1,057	\$1,215	0.87	\$1,184	0.89
51	Information	\$5,959	\$2,896	2.06	\$1,967	3.03
52	Finance and Insurance	\$1,839	\$3,530	0.52	\$2,304	0.8
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$1,341	\$1,883	0.71	\$1,504	0.89
54	Professional and Technical Services	\$1,895	\$3,220	0.59	\$2,625	0.72
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	\$1,426	\$2,871	0.5	\$2,315	0.62
56	Administrative and Waste Services	\$1,333	\$1,160	1.15	\$1,248	1.07
61	Educational Services	\$1,179	\$1,372	0.86	\$1,281	0.92
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	\$978	\$1,246	0.78	\$1,119	0.87
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$375	\$926	0.4	\$1,182	0.32

Table 4.7. Average Weekly Wage by Industry and Location Quotient

NAICS	Description	Franklin	Massachusetts	Wage LQ vs MA	Norfolk County	Wage LQ vs County
72	Accommodation and Food Services	\$538	\$586	0.92	\$556	0.97
81	Other Services, Except Public Administration	\$806	\$924	0.87	\$1,045	0.77

Source: Massachusetts Department of Economic Research, ES-202

TAX BASE

Franklin residents pay the fifth lowest average single-family tax bill of the communities around it, i.e., less than Natick and Foxborough and more than Attleboro, Marlborough, and Milford (Table 4.9). According to 2023 data from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) show in Table 4.8 below, residential property taxes represent 81.2% of the town's total property tax levy, commercial provides 6.5%, industrial 9.08%, and personal property 3.18%.

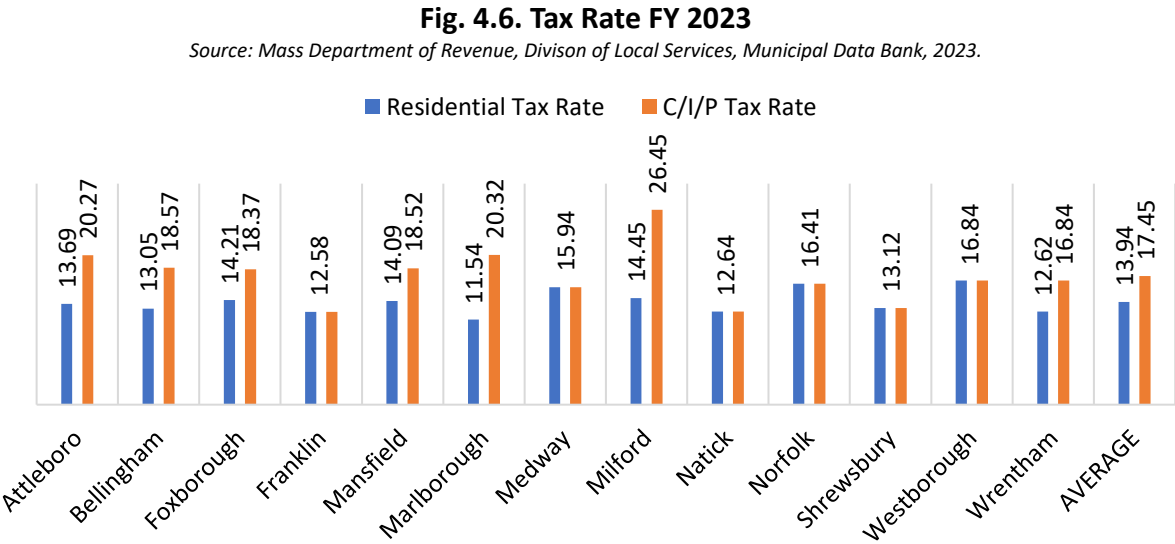
Table 4.8. Tax Levy by Class, Franklin, MA.

Fiscal Year	Residential	Open Space	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property	Total
2019	\$62,627,945	\$0	\$5,275,257	\$6,816,149	\$2,594,275	\$77,313,626
2020	\$65,394,573	\$0	\$5,576,514	\$7,293,198	\$2,732,516	\$80,996,801
2021	\$68,627,622	\$0	\$5,648,530	\$7,547,152	\$2,767,015	\$84,590,319
2022	\$70,779,353	\$0	\$5,841,384	\$7,993,946	\$3,038,317	\$87,652,999
2023	\$73,928,517	\$0	\$5,931,525	\$8,265,718	\$2,897,858	\$91,023,619
2019	81.01%	0.00%	6.82%	8.82%	3.36%	100.00%
2020	80.74%	0.00%	6.88%	9.00%	3.37%	100.00%
2021	81.13%	0.00%	6.68%	8.92%	3.27%	100.00%
2022	80.75%	0.00%	6.66%	9.12%	3.47%	100.00%
2023	81.22%	0.00%	6.52%	9.08%	3.18%	100.00%

Source: DOR Municipal Databank.

In 2023, the total tax levy from residential, commercial, and industrial properties was \$91 million. Franklin has a uniform tax rate, currently set at \$12.58 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Tax rates are often the first comparator used in fiscal analyses. As shown in Figure 4.6, Franklin is one of the few towns without a split tax rate in the area and ranks the lowest in both residential rates and commercial/industrial/personal property rates than the surrounding towns.

Communities that adopt a split tax rate divide their total tax levy according to property tax classifications, so the owners of some types of property carry a larger share of the tax burden than others. In most cases, the decision to adopt a split tax rate is based on an intent to transfer more of the tax levy to commercial and industrial taxpayers in order to keep residential taxes as low as possible and is generally seen in communities with existing robust commercial and industrial development.



Franklin’s commercial tax rate is almost 29 percent lower than the average of the thirteen towns and 10 percent lower than the average residential tax rate (Figure 4.6). These differences might increase Franklin’s competitiveness with surrounding towns in attracting business and residential development.

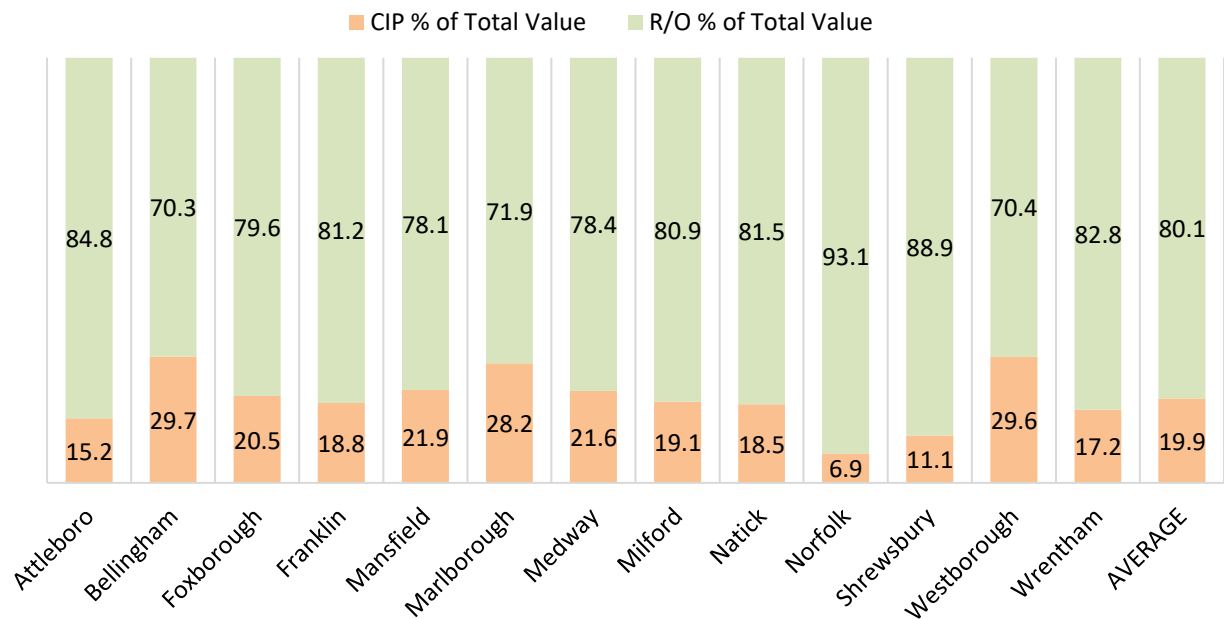
As shown in Figure 4.7, 18.78 percent of the assessed value of all real property in Franklin is commercial, industrial, or personal property. This is slightly less than the average proportion but one of the higher proportions amongst other single-rate towns.

The second largest contributor to Franklin’s tax revenue is from the Town’s industrially assessed properties. These properties make up 9% of Franklin’s tax revenue. There are more than 2,200-acres of industrially zoned land in Franklin, which support \$657,052,300 of assessed valuation and contribute more than \$8.26 million in annual property taxes. Franklin encourages the development of industrial based businesses in properly zoned areas and will offer, when

appropriate, tax increment financing to business (see Economic Incentives) to help a company locate in Franklin or expand its business and remain in Franklin.

Fig. 4.7. Residential & Commercial Property % of Total Assessed Valuation 2022

Source: Mass Department of Revenue, Divison of Local Services, Municipal Data Bank, 2023.



All towns are heavily dependent on residential properties or revenues, as shown in Table 4.9 below. The tax levies track the valuations of real property shown in the previous chart. The proportions Franklin derives are nearly identical to the average of all the towns (80.1 percent from residential and 19.9 percent from commercial, industrial, and personal property tax sources).

Table 4.9. Tax Rate by Class (FY 2023)								
Municipality	FY 2023 SF Tax Bill	Tax Rate					% of Total Revenue	
		Residential	Open Space	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property	R/O	CIP
Attleboro	\$5,506	13.69	0	20.27	20.27	20.27	79.06%	20.94%
Bellingham	\$5,227	13.05	0	18.57	18.57	18.48	62.56%	37.44%
Foxborough	\$7,853	14.21	0	18.37	18.37	18.37	75.06%	24.94%
Franklin	\$7,470	12.58	0	12.58	12.58	12.58	81.22%	18.78%
Mansfield	\$7,979	14.09	0	18.52	18.52	18.52	73.09%	26.91%
Marlborough	\$5,856	11.54	0	20.32	20.32	20.32	59.17%	40.83%

Table 4.9. Tax Rate by Class (FY 2023)

Municipality	FY 2023 SF Tax Bill	Tax Rate					% of Total Revenue	
		Residential	Open Space	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property	R/O	CIP
Medway	\$8,628	15.94	0	15.94	15.94	15.94	78.38%	21.62%
Milford	\$6,097	14.45	0	26.45	26.45	26.45	69.85%	30.15%
Natick	\$9,597	12.64	0	12.64	12.64	12.64	81.52%	18.48%
Norfolk	\$10,275	16.41	16.41	16.41	16.41	16.41	93.11%	6.89%
Shrewsbury	\$7,797	13.12	0	13.12	13.12	13.12	88.90%	11.10%
Westborough	\$11,059	16.84	0	16.84	16.84	16.84	70.36%	29.64%
Wrentham	\$7,579	12.62	0	16.84	16.84	16.81	78.29%	21.71%

Source: Department Of Revenue Municipal Databank.

Local Policies and Practices

ECONOMIC INCENTIVES

Economic development related efforts are crucial to attracting new businesses and industrial manufacturing companies as well as retaining these types of businesses in Franklin. Franklin's form of government makes for a streamlined permitting process that many other communities are not able to offer, allowing for quick project review and relatively easy permitting for commercial and industrial development.

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT SITES

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 43D was signed into law in August 2006; the law offers communities a tool for targeted economic development - Priority Development Sites, and a related Expedited Permitting Program. Chapter 43D provides an opportunity for a community to proactively target commercial or industrial sites or "PDSs" and to recruit developers by offering a predictable and streamlined permitting process. Potential benefits to owners of parcels within Franklin's designated priority development sites, as well as the Town in general, are substantial and include the following:

Expedited Permitting. Chapter 43D's Expedited Permitting Program enables a community to provide guaranteed 180-day local permitting decisions on commercial and industrial development projects that are located on parcels that have been designated as

a priority development site. The Town of Franklin's transparent and efficient municipal permitting process for our PDSs is accessed by contacting the Town's PDS Municipal Point of Contact.

Marketing of Priority Development Site Parcels. The priority development site designation increases visibility of the Town of Franklin's pro-business environment, our priority development sites, and our available industrially zoned manufacturing, warehouse and office space. The State works with communities and the owners of parcels within PDSs to aggressively market the PDS and related properties.

Priority Consideration for State Assistance. Designation of PDSs enables communities and related development projects to take advantage of various State programs, including priority consideration for infrastructure related grant programs, brownfields remediation assistance, and priority consideration for development financing and training programs.

Expedited Permitting as described in Chapter 43D was approved by Franklin's Town Council on November 19, 2008. Soon after the State's Interagency Permitting Board approved three large priority development sites totaling over 546 acres within the Town of Franklin.

The Town of Franklin's three PDSs are shown on Map 4.1. Economic Opportunity Areas and Priority Development Sites, and summarized below:

1. Franklin Industrial Park Priority Development Site, consisting of 20 privately owned, industrially zoned parcels totaling 252.3+/- acres located on four roadways (Constitution Boulevard, Discovery Way, Freedom Way and Liberty Way);
2. Forge Park Priority Development Site, 30 privately owned, industrially zoned parcels totaling 259.8+/- acres on three roadways (Forge Parkway, National Drive, West Central Street [Route 140]);
3. Pond Street Priority Development site, consisting of two town-owned, office zoned parcels totaling 33.95 acres on Pond Street. Note, the Pond Street PDS has been redeveloped with multifamily housing and is no longer considered a feasible PDS.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC TARGET AREA

In 2003 the I-495/95 South Regional Technology Economic Target Area (ETA) was designated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The ETA consists of Franklin and nine other area communities. Designation as an ETA is an economic development tool that allows municipalities to enhance and preserve the economic vitality of the region by offering tax incentives to companies either looking to locate or expand in the community. Goals of the I-495/95 South Regional Technology ETA include:

- Stimulating economic development through encouraging businesses to expand, and attracting new businesses to the region.
- Creating livable wage jobs.
- Attracting technology and technology-supporting businesses to the region to enhance the I-495 Technology Corridor.
- Redeveloping underutilized, abandoned, and contaminated sites into more productive uses.

In order for an ETA community to offer tax incentives to a company, an Economic Opportunity Area needs to be created.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

An Economic Opportunity Area (EOA) is a specific site, or numerous properties that abut each other, needing redevelopment and investment, which is located within a community that is within the larger regional ETA. EOAs are designated through an application to the State's Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC) who will then determine if the proposed EOA meets specific criteria established by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 23A for designation of an EOA. The majority of the States EOAs have been determined to be a "blighted open area", a "decadent area", or a "substandard area".

The Town of Franklin has utilized its status as an ETA community to create several EOAs. Soon after creation of the I-495/95 South Regional Technology ETA, the Town established 2 Master Drive EOA to support expansion of Eikos, Inc., a carbon-based nanotube technology company. A few years later the Town established the 9 Forge Park EOA, as it worked with Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) to relocate New England Precision Grinding (NEPG) Holdings, LLC to Franklin. NEPG relocated its two Massachusetts facilities, including its

corporate headquarters to 9 Forge Park in Franklin, and soon after renamed its company Tegra Medical.

In 2009 the Town implemented its Economic Opportunity Area Initiative in order to support Franklin's manufacturing businesses and attract new companies to the community's empty or underutilized industrial buildings. At the time the Town had over one million square feet of vacant industrially zoned facilities. During 2009 and 2010 the Town established six large multi-parcel EOAs consisting of 100 parcels on over 941 acres. One of these EOAs is the 33.95 acre Pond Street EOA, which was redeveloped with multifamily housing and is no longer considered a feasible EOA.

The Town currently has five multi-parcel economic opportunity areas, which are shown on Map 4.1 and summarized below:

1. Forge Park Economic Opportunity Area, consisting of 33 parcels on 277.51± acres of industrially zoned land. The majority of the Forge Park EOA is also within the Forge Park PDS.
2. Franklin Industrial Park Economic Opportunity Area, consisting of 22 parcels on 261.43± acres of industrially zoned land. The majority of the Franklin Industrial Park EOA is also within the Franklin Industrial Park PDS.
3. North Grove Street Economic Opportunity Area, consisting of 9 parcels on 24± acres of business zoned land. One of the parcels is the Town-owned "Nu-Style" brownfield property.
4. South Grove Street Economic Opportunity Area, consisting of 32 parcels on 221.52± acres of industrially zoned land.
5. Financial Way Economic Opportunity Area, consisting of 2 industrially zoned parcels on 122.6± acres. The majority of the Financial Way EOA has been developed or has permits in place for redevelopment, however additional commercial or industrial development is possible.

In addition to the EOAs listed above, the Town can create EOAs in other sections of Town for important economic development projects.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Businesses looking to start up or expand in one of Franklin's EOAs can request a Tax Increment Finance Agreement (TIF), one of the most attractive incentives a Massachusetts community can offer a business. Franklin supports the use of this local tax credit for a wide range of development projects, including projects that create a significant number of livable wage jobs for Franklin residents, support innovative technology, and result in redevelopment of empty or underutilized industrially zoned properties, or development of new facilities.

To obtain Tax Increment Financing a business works in partnership with the Town and MOBD to complete and submit to the EACC an Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP) application for project certification. EDIP applications can be for both a State investment tax credit and local TIF agreement, or just a TIF agreement, known as a Certified "Local Incentive Only" Application.

In 2009 Franklin Town Council passed Resolution 09-25, which is a binding offer to provide tax increment financing to each "certified project" located within one of the Town's EOA. TIF agreements negotiated with the Town of Franklin normally have a duration of roughly 10 fiscal years, with 90 to 95 % of the increment exempted in the first year, dropping annually each year to roughly 50% by the end of the TIF agreement.

The Town has negotiated several TIF agreements for economic development projects over the last 20 years, the most noteworthy include the following:

New England Precision Grinding Holdings, LLC (Tegra Medical), 9 Forge Park EOA,
Project certified on September 24, 2008.

Exemption period of 10 years (FY2010 - FY2019)

Tegra Medical, a leader in manufacturing of metal medical devices, consolidated its Massachusetts manufacturing facilities and corporate headquarters into 9 Forge Parkway. In 2022 Tegra moved its operations to a larger facility across the street at 16 Forge Parkway.

Hamilton Storage Technologies, Inc., Forge Park EOA

Local Incentive Only, certified on December 21, 2011

Exemption period of 10 years (FY2013 - FY2022)

Hamilton Storage Technologies, Inc. purchased 3 Forge Parkway and constructed a new facility at 3 Forge Park for its corporate headquarters, and engineering, manufacturing and customer support operations. This project is an excellent example of the benefits to a community by offering short term tax exemptions. The property has an FY2024 value of \$7,621,900, which provides Franklin with approximately \$89,860 in tax revenue. If a building was not constructed at that location the FY2024 property value would be approximately \$1,725,300, with real estate taxes at \$20,340 in FY2024. Since FY2013 the Town has received roughly \$500,000 in increased tax revenue from the property, as well as increased hotel and meals taxes.

Cold Chain Technologies, Inc., Franklin Industrial Park EOA

135 Constitution Boulevard

Project certified on December 16, 2015

Exemption period of 10 years (FY2018 - FY2027)

Cold Chain consolidated its three Massachusetts facilities into 135 Constitution Boulevard.

Plansee USA LLC, Franklin Industrial Park EOA

115 Constitution Boulevard

Project certified on September 22, 2022

Exemption period of 10 years (FY2024 - FY2033)

Plansee, a leader in production of high-performance materials products, made major improvements at their 115 Constitution Boulevard facility including construction of a two-story office addition for Plansee's North America headquarters.

The duration of Franklin's EOAs is twenty years, commencing on the certification date of the EOA's first certified project. Therefore, Forge Park EOA will terminate in December 2031, Franklin Industrial Park EOA will terminate in December 2035, and North Grove Street, South Grove Street, and Financial Way EOAs still have 20-year life spans.

BIOTECHNOLOGY USES

In 2010, changes were made to the Town of Franklin's Biotechnology Uses Zoning Overlay district to include eleven (11) additional parcels and to remove one parcel, which was sold to the State Forest. In addition, changes were made to the entirety of the Town's Biotechnology bylaw,

allowing biotechnology uses within the Town of Franklin's Biotechnology Use Zoning District by right, subject to limitations and conditions, rather than by a Special Permit from the Town Council as previously required under the Town's Biotechnology Bylaw. The Bylaw requires a Franklin Board of Health Biotechnology Operating Protocol Permit prior to commencing biotechnology use or constructing any structure for such use. By rewriting the Bylaw, the Town made it easier for biotechnology companies to come to Franklin by removing the formerly lengthy process that discouraged these industries from siting a facility in Town. Portions of Forge Park and Franklin Industrial Park are within Franklin's Biotechnology Uses Zoning Overlay District. During 2011, additional parcels within the Grove Street Business Corridor, and the Town's Pond Street property were added to the Overlay District. In 2013, the Massachusetts Biotechnology council awarded Franklin a *Platinum BioReady Community* rating, recognizing the Town's commitment to the biotech industry and its work to add good jobs and attract investment.

RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING EFFORTS

Economic development has been a major initiative for Franklin in the past several years. Together with MAPC and community partners, Franklin completed a **Market Study** in 2021 of three focus areas: Downtown Franklin, the Mixed Business Innovation District, and the Crossing, as well as the Franklin Cultural District. This resulted in a list of eleven a set of recommended goals, strategies and actions focused on marketing Franklin's existing and potential future amenities to attract more business activity.

One of the first recommendations was to create a **Business Guide** which the town has since released. Designed to aid in the process of opening a business in Franklin, the guide provides important contacts, links, and guidance to prospective businesses.

Currently, the Town is working on completing the recommendations of the **Franklin For All** project, which is focused on rezoning Franklin Center for economic growth and diverse housing opportunities.

Local Capacity

FRANKLIN DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

The mission of the Franklin Downtown Partnership is to stimulate economic development in downtown to create a positive impact throughout the area and to be a pro-active organization that brings residents, business owners and community leaders together, encourages cooperation, and builds leadership for the purpose of revitalizing downtown Franklin.

The Partnership sees Franklin's downtown as the heart of the community: a center of civic and cultural activities, government services, commercial businesses, and diversified housing. All the Partnership's activities are designed to foster greater vitality in the downtown commercial district and to serve as a vehicle for public policy discourse. The Partnership implements an annual work plan aimed at stimulating economic activity, supporting local businesses, increasing public events, and the continuous revitalization of the downtown area.

FRANKLIN CULTURAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE

In June 2017 Franklin Town Council passed Resolution 17-45 endorsing state-sponsored cultural district goals, and the establishment of the Franklin Cultural District Committee. During 2018 the newly created Committee developed and refined Franklin Cultural District's goals, which are a blend of the State's Cultural District Initiative (CDI) goals, previous planning initiatives (2002 Franklin Center Plan & Franklin's 2013 Master Plan) and additional input from Partners and the public.

The Franklin Cultural District Committee is a town-appointed seven-member committee tasked with attracting artists and cultural enterprises, encouraging business and job development, establishing the district as a tourist destination, preserving, and reusing historic buildings, enhancing property values, and fostering local cultural development. In addition to managing the Cultural District, the FCDC has also established formal partnerships with many of the anchor arts and culture assets in town. Also, in addition to regular committee meetings, the FCDC coordinates quarterly Cultural District Partners meetings within the FCD.

Regional and State Initiatives

The Town of Franklin is part of the 495/MetroWest Partnership, an organization that acts as an advocate for the public and private sector by forming partnerships between the sectors to provide assistance related to economic development, traffic and water supply issues. The Town of Franklin is also part of the Tri-County Regional Chamber of Commerce, which has been supporting businesses in Franklin since 1922.



5. Housing

Introduction

Housing serves as an important foundation for a community, not only defining where individuals spend much of their time but also impacting their perspectives on the surrounding area. The Town's housing regulations, affordability, and quality are all important factors when it comes to making Franklin an appealing place to live.

Affordability and diversity of housing stock in a Town such as Franklin is vital for continuous growth and improvement. Massachusetts encourages municipalities to create a Housing Production Plan (HPP) to guide local policies for creating affordable housing. The HPP serves as a strategic report to help communities meet the 10 percent minimum under Chapter 40B, the state's affordable housing law.

Existing Conditions and Trends

Franklin is one of the most populated towns in Norfolk County with over thirty thousand residents. Most homes in Franklin were built between 1980 and 1999 when the Baby Boomer

generation sought homes in the suburbs to raise their families and migrated from cities such as Boston and Providence. This movement was facilitated in part by the extension of I-495. The housing boom during this period led to the construction of over 5,100 homes, including large-scale subdivisions featuring spacious single-family houses.⁴ During the latter half of the 1990s, Massachusetts experienced a notable surge in housing production as part of the recovery from the housing collapse that occurred between 1989 and 1991.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2017-2021 American Community Survey, Franklin's population has continued to grow since the influx of population in the 1980s, supporting 33,057 people today.⁵ This population growth, coupled with the town's considerable development capacity, has led to a broader range of housing options. Compared with neighboring towns, Franklin stands out for its ability to offer a more varied selection of housing developments.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Race and Ethnicity

Franklin's population consists of 28,921 (88 percent) white, non-Hispanic residents, similar to other towns in Norfolk County.⁶ The second largest ethnic cohort is of Asian descent, with 1,855 residents (5.6 percent) identifying as such.⁷

Based on the 2021 American Community Survey, Franklin has 14,255 residents who are hometown natives, having resided in the town for the majority, if not the entirety, of their lives.⁸ Roughly two-thirds of the populace were born in Massachusetts; the remaining third is comprised of individuals who relocated from other states or were born outside of the United

⁴ Town of Franklin, *Housing Production Plan*, April 2022, 21.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, "Table S0101: Age and Sex" 2021. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables*. <https://data.census.gov/>

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B08121: Race" 2021. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables*. <https://data.census.gov/>

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B02001: Race." 2021. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables*. <https://data.census.gov/>

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, "Table DP02: Selected Social Characteristics." 2021. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables*. <https://data.census.gov/>

States.⁹ Of the foreign-born population, an estimated 45 percent (about 1,300 residents) emigrated from Asia.¹⁰

Population Age

As in most communities in Massachusetts, Franklin has an aging population. Unique to Franklin is its large population of older children, who constitute the second largest age group after middle-aged residents. There are 5,855 (17 percent) residents 10-19 years old, while the largest population cohort aged 50-65 comprises 8,125 (25 percent) of the total population.¹¹ Even with a substantial population of children, school enrollment is in decline, though the overall population has stayed relatively consistent in recent years.

HOUSEHOLDS

Census data from 2021 shows there are 9,693 owner-occupied housing units and 2,425 renter-occupied housing units to accommodate Franklin's population.¹² In recent years the population of Franklin has been aging, to the extent that almost 25 percent of the population will be 65 years of age or older by the year 2030, leading to a need to create a more welcoming housing market that includes an increase of affordable housing.¹³ According to the Town's recently completed Housing Production Plan:

- Franklin has experienced a 48 percent increase in population over the past 25 years.
- By 2030, residents over 65 years of age are expected to make up approximately 23.2 percent of Franklin's population, compared to 8.2 percent in 2000.
- Franklin is home to 12,511 households, up from 10,995 in 2010 (9 percent increase)
- Franklin's average household size is 2.7, and its average family size is 3.22.
- Franklin's median household income has increased 13.2 percent since 2015, and 37.25 percent since the 2010 Census.¹⁴

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, "Table DP02: Selected Social Characteristics." 2021. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables*. <https://data.census.gov/>

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, "Table DP02: Selected Social Characteristics." 2021. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables*. <https://data.census.gov/>

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, "Table S0101: Age and Sex" 2021. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables*. <https://data.census.gov/>

¹² Town of Franklin, *Housing Production Plan*, April 2022, 24.

¹³ Town of Franklin, MA. 2022. *Town of Franklin Housing Production Plan*, 1.

¹⁴ Town of Franklin, *Housing Production Plan*, April 2022, 6.

Households by Type

Within every household, diverse demographics are interconnected, forming a network of interactions and dependencies. Households can be categorized based on different criteria such as family structure, size, composition, or lifestyle. Understanding household types contributes to the overall dynamics of a community by displaying the network of relationships residents within Franklin have. It is also an important indicator of housing needs for Franklin's future to discern what type of housing developments would likely be more inviting for population diversity and housing availability moving forward.

Table 5.1 displays Franklin's households by type of Householder. Most households in Franklin are married-couple families while less than a quarter of all households are single people living alone.

Table 5.1. Occupancy Characteristics, Franklin, MA.		
Household Type	Number of Households	Percentage
Married-couple family	7,461	61.6%
Male Householder, no spouse present	200	1.7%
Female Householder, no spouse present	1,253	10.3%
Total Family Households	8,914	73.6%
Householder Living Alone	2,521	20.8%
Householder Not Living Alone	683	5.6%
Total Nonfamily Households	3,204	26.4%
Total Households	12,118	100.0%
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Table S2501: Occupancy Characteristics" 2021. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. https://data.census.gov/</i>		

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

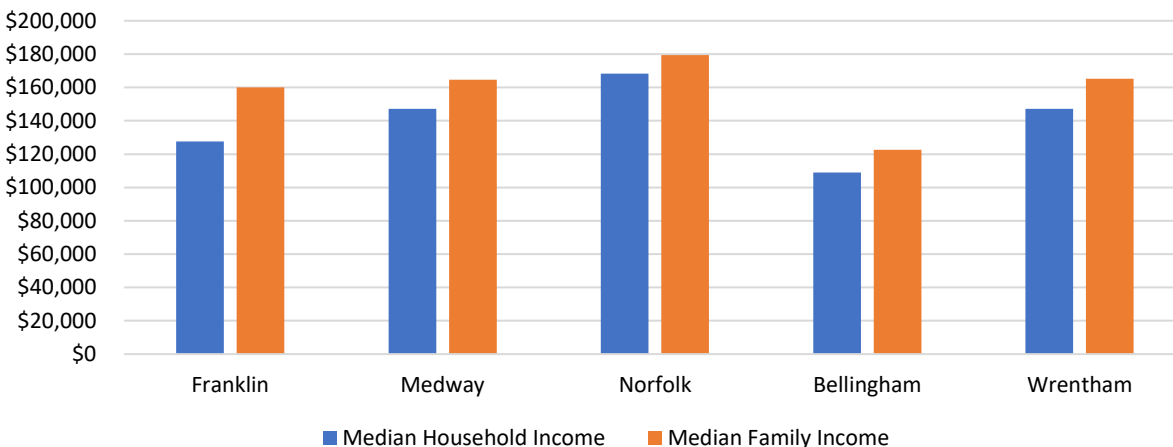
In 2021, Franklin had a median household income of \$127,608, which is 52 percent higher than the statewide average.¹⁵ Figure 5.1 below compares the median household and family incomes of several Norfolk County towns. The median income is relatively consistent among the towns, with all totals above \$100,000 and below or equal to \$180,000. The U.S. Census Bureau defines "household" as one or more people occupying a single housing unit, regardless of whether the

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, "Table S1902: Median Income" 2021. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. <https://data.census.gov/>

occupants are related to each other; “family” refers to households of two or more people related by blood, marriage, or adoption. Median *household* income is the midpoint income of all households in the community, and median *family* income is the midpoint income of all families. The proportion of households with income over \$200,000 has more than tripled since 2010 to 23.3 percent of Franklin's households, compared to 13.2 percent of all Massachusetts households.¹⁶ Nearly 39.3 percent of households in Franklin have incomes of \$150,000 or more, compared to 23.4 percent statewide.¹⁷

Fig. 5.1 Norfolk County Median Household and Family Income

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Table S1902: Median Income" 2021. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables*. <https://data.census.gov/>



HOUSING PROFILE

Most of Franklin’s housing stock (80.7 percent) is owner-occupied and a vast majority of that is single-family housing. According to Zillow in August 2023 the median price of a single-family home in Franklin was \$622,702, compared to \$590,793 state-wide.¹⁸ Figure 5.2 reports the typical home value comparison between Massachusetts and Franklin from 2019 to 2023.

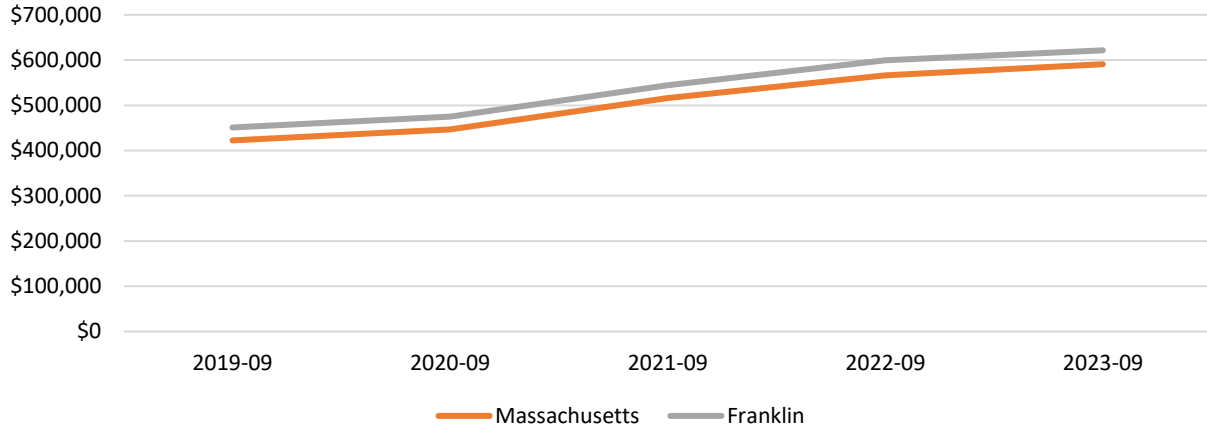
¹⁶ Town of Franklin, MA. 2022. Town of Franklin Housing Production Plan, 6.

¹⁷ Town of Franklin, *Housing Production Plan*, April 2022, 6.

¹⁸ Zillow, “United States Home Prices & Home Values | Zillow”, 2023.

Fig. 5.2 Typical Home Values Massachusetts and Franklin 2019-2023.

Source: Zillow, Massachusetts Home Prices & Home Values, 2023.



Another indicator of housing affordability is HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) which is defined as middle family income for four-person households in a given area. In the case of Franklin, HAMFI is based upon the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy Fair Market Rent Area (FMRA). Figure 5.3 shows that 4,735 households in Franklin have incomes below 100 percent HAMFI.

Fig. 5.3 HUD Area Median Family Income

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Table S1903: Median Income in the Past 12 Months" 2021. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. <https://data.census.gov/>

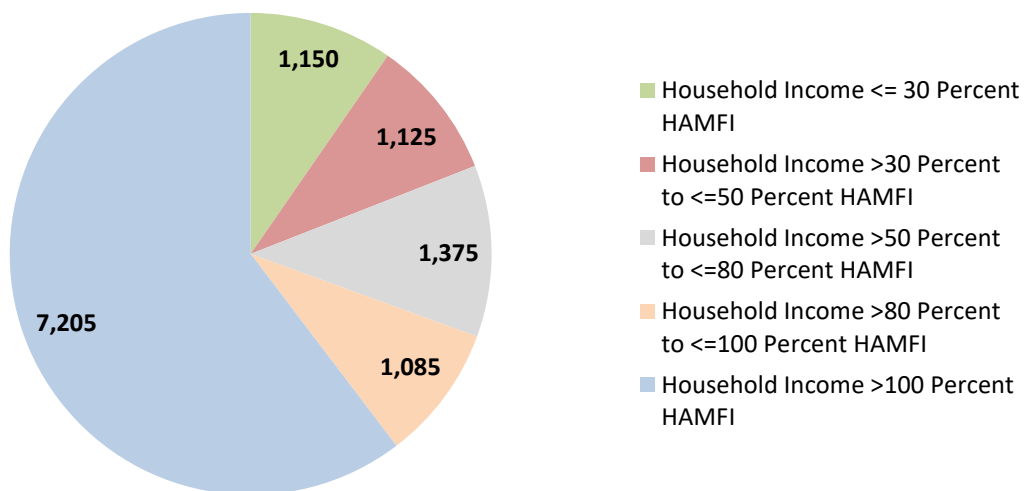


Figure 5.4 illustrates the cost burden for renter households in Franklin in 2021. Franklin’s cost burdens for renter households compares closely with county and state percentages, with just over 54% not burdened (rent is less than 30% of income) and just over 45% of renter households are cost burdened (rent is 30% or more of income).

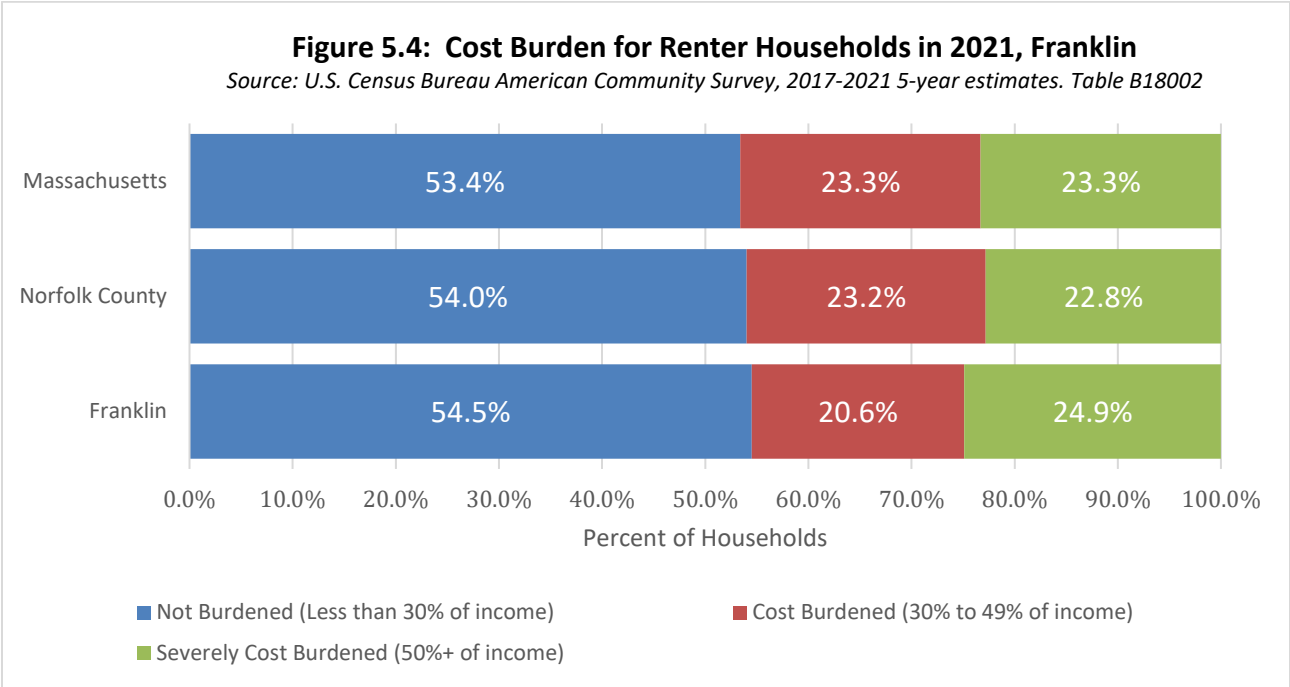
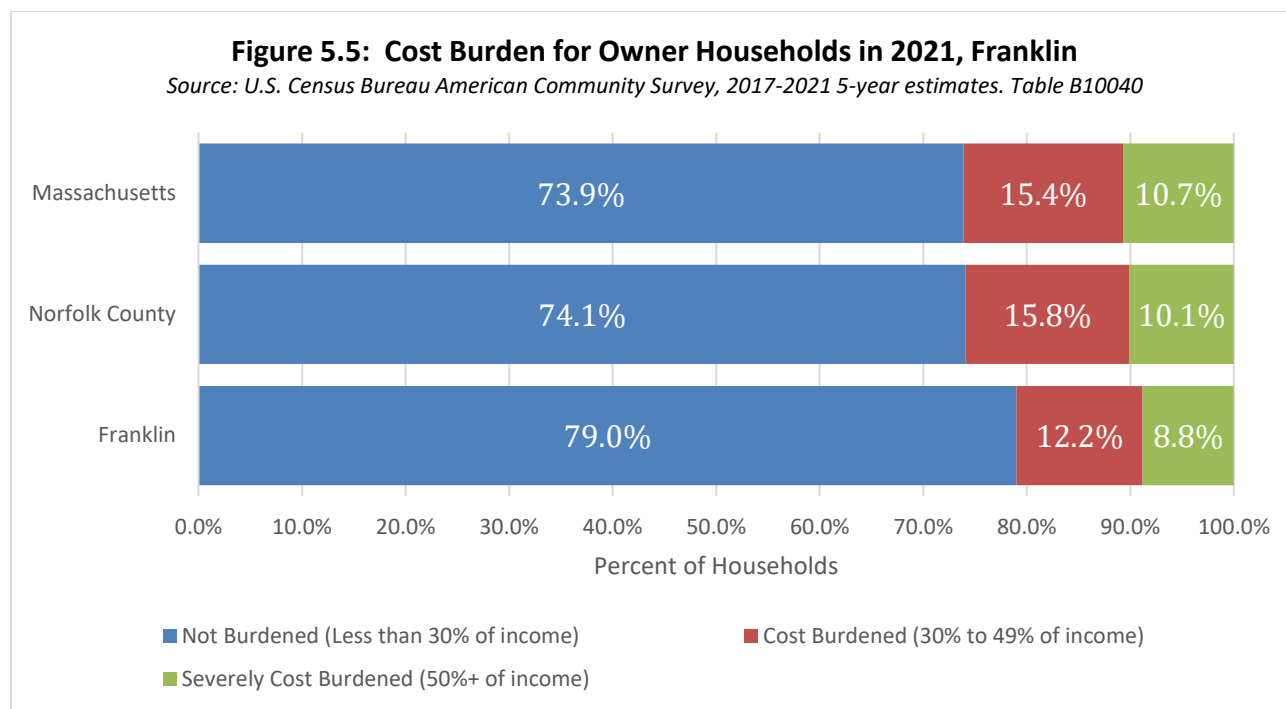


Figure 5.5 illustrates the cost burden for homeowners in Franklin in 2021. Approximately 21% of Franklin’s owner households are cost burdened (percent of monthly household income spent on housing costs is 30% or more), which is slightly less than the percent of county and statewide households that are cost burdened (approximately 26%).



Age of Housing

Franklin was settled during the 1600s as colonial families spread out from Boston to establish new villages. Noteworthy historic districts, such as Franklin Town Common Historic District and the Dean College Historic District, surround the Town Common. Homes within these districts, constructed in the early 1800s, have played a pivotal role in shaping Franklin’s distinctive character. The town’s evolution is reflected in its diverse neighborhoods, beginning with the Downtown Commercial Center and extending to various residential areas featuring both single-family and multi-family homes from the turn of the twentieth century.

This residential landscape is complemented by structures such as dormitories, serving the housing needs of Dean College students. Expanding beyond Franklin’s downtown, the housing surge of the 1980s and 1990s contributed significantly to the current housing stock, constituting approximately 42 percent of existing residences. Predominantly single-family homes characterize this later wave of development. A mix of older homes, new subdivisions, and protected open space are located throughout the Town.¹⁹ Table 5.2 displays the estimated number of residential structures built in the past century that have become a part of Franklin’s historical character and

¹⁹ Town of Franklin, MA. 2022. Town of Franklin Housing Production Plan, 21.

architecture. A residential structure is defined as any dwelling, dwelling unit, or structure where any part of the structure is used or intended to be used as a living space.

Table 5.2: Year Structure Built Franklin, MA.		
Year Built	Estimate of Number of Structures Built	Percentage of Total Structures Built
Built 2000-2019	2,123	17.6%
Built 1980-1999	5,030	41.6%
Built 1960-1979	2,361	19.5%
Built 1940-1959	1,136	9.4%
Built 1939 or earlier	1,440	11.9%
Total	12,090	100%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B25034: Year Structure Built" 2021. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. https://data.census.gov/		

Housing Types

The vast majority of housing units in Franklin (74.2 percent) are single-family units (63.6 percent attached and 10.6 percent detached).²⁰ Units in Duplexes make up 3.7 percent of housing units, small multi-family buildings (buildings with three to nine units) 9.8 percent, medium-sized multi-family buildings (buildings with ten to forty-nine units) 6.4 percent, and large multi-family buildings (fifty or more units) comprise another 5.8 percent. The 10 mobile homes reported in the 2021 ACS comprise the final 0.1 percent of all housing units in town. As Table 5.3 shows, Franklin's housing stock is more diverse than many of its neighbors. Compared to other neighboring municipalities, Franklin's housing stock has fewer single-family dwellings, and more multi-family dwellings compared to its neighbors. 22 percent of all housing units in Franklin are within a multi-family building, and this figure is relatively spread out among small, medium, and large multi-family developments. Franklin has more units in medium (eleven to forty-nine units), and large (fifty plus units) than any other comparison community.

Franklin's diversity of housing types is a significant strength of the community, offering more options for those with a range of needs, lifestyles, and incomes to live in Franklin.

²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B2504: Units in Structure" 2021. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 5.3: Housing Types in Franklin and Select Norfolk County Communities 2021					
Units in Building	Franklin	Bellingham	Medway	Norfolk	Wrentham
One Unit	74%	82%	86%	96%	67%
Detached	63.6%	74.9%	81.3%	90.8%	55.9%
Attached	10.6%	7.0%	4.5%	5.3%	11.4%
Two	3.7%	2.7%	2.9%	1.5%	10.8%
3 to 9	9.8%	6.4%	5.3%	2.4%	11.3%
10 to 49	6.4%	4.4%	2.3%	0.0%	9.4%
50+	5.8%	3.8%	3.8%	0.0%	1.2%
Mobile Home	0.1%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Boat, RV, Van Etc.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B5202: Units in Structure" 2021. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates. <https://data.census.gov>

Housing Tenure

Franklin's housing stock has increased at a faster rate than that of surrounding towns. Figure 5.6 shows the 2010 and 2020 housing unit statistics of the nearby towns in Norfolk County. Compared to surrounding towns, Franklin has the highest increase in housing units in the past decade with more than 1,000 new units. Table 5.4 displays housing tenure in Franklin from 1990 to 2021, showing an overall increase in housing units while there is an overall decrease in average household size.

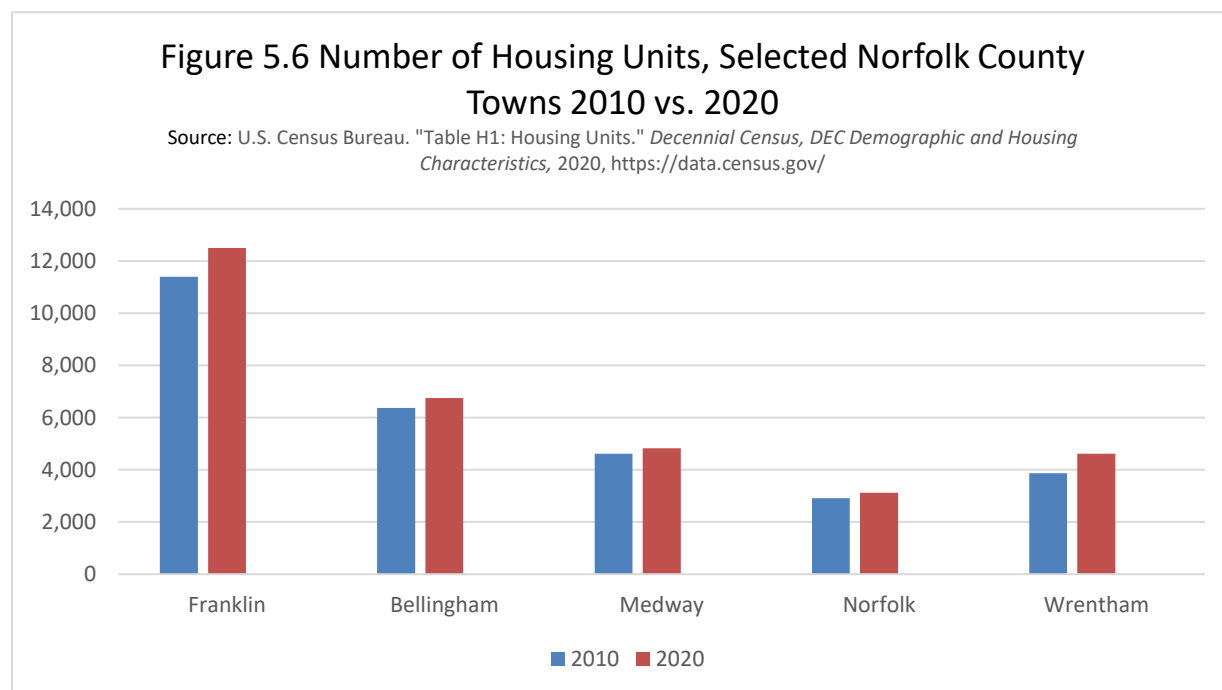


Table 5.4: Housing Tenure in Franklin 1990 to 2021.

Housing Tenure	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	2020 Census
Total Housing Units	7,692	10,327	11,394	12,511
Occupied Housing Units	7,406	10,152	10,995	12,018
Owner-occupied units	5,609	8,261	8,761	9,253
Renter-occupied units	1,797	1,891	2,234	2,765
Vacant Housing Units	286	175	399	533
Average Household Size				
Owner-occupied units	3.06	3.06	2.95	N/A
Renter-occupied units	2.22	1.95	2.07	N/A
Source: Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2020, DP-1. Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics, https://data.census.gov/ ; Decennial Census 1990, 2000, and 2010, accessed from Social Explorer.				

The majority of Franklin’s housing stock is owner-occupied, comprising 80 percent of all occupied housing units. As shown at Figure 5.7, Franklin has a higher-than-average rate of home ownership, 17.6 percentage points higher than the share across Massachusetts, and 11.7 points above the share in Norfolk County. However, compared to its neighbors, Franklin has more renter households than average, with the second lowest rate of homeownership among its comparison communities. This indicates that while Franklin’s housing stock is less diverse in ownership than larger state and county trends, Franklin’s housing tenure is more diverse than many of its neighbors, by a significant margin in some instances.

Figure 5.7: Housing Tenure in Franklin and Select Norfolk County Communities 2021

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Table B25003 "Tenure" American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2021 <https://data.census.gov/>

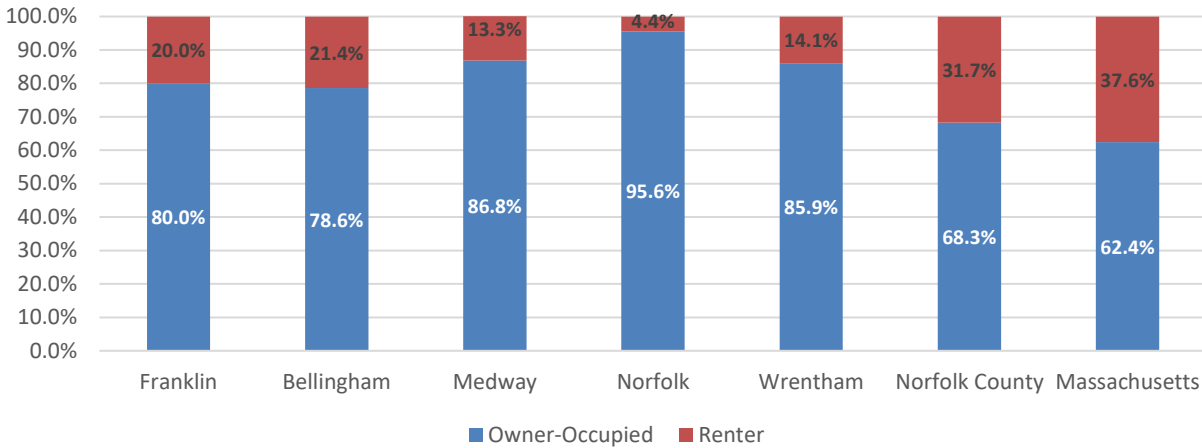


Table 5.5 compares the median monthly rent in Franklin with Norfolk County and statewide, showing that the gross median monthly rent in Franklin is \$1,519 which is approximately \$100 higher than the statewide median and approximately \$200 lower than the county median.

Table 5.5: Median Housing Costs, 2021

Tenure	Franklin	Norfolk County	Massachusetts
Gross Median Monthly Rent (Rental Households)	\$1,519	\$1,781	\$1,429
Monthly Housing Costs (Owner Households)	\$2,228	\$2,242	\$1,873
Source: American Community Survey 2021 (ACS21_5yr), ACS 2021 (5-Year Estimates), U.S. Census Bureau			

HOUSING TYPES

Affordable Housing

A critical part of housing for any community includes affordability. Franklin's affordable housing stock consists of ownership housing along with several hundred rental units. Westerly at Forge Park Luxury Apartments includes 25 percent of the units as affordable housing with 280 units total, while Station 117 Apartments has a total of 259 units with no affordable housing units.²¹ The Town of Franklin website currently reports the available units of affordable apartments.²²

²¹ "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Franklin Town City, Massachusetts." 2022. www.census.gov.

²² "Affordable Apartment Developments." Town of Franklin, 2023. Accessed Sep 2, 2023.

Communities with a variety of housing options enable people to remain in their communities as they age or their financial situation changes, by staying in their home or moving to housing in line with their changing needs.²³ Table 5.6 reports the overall number of apartment units designated as affordable housing across the town, amounting to 940 units.

Table 5.6: Available Apartment Affordable Housing Units, Franklin, MA.		
Name of Development	Address	Number of Units
Eaton Place – Elderly Housing	20 Veterans Memorial Drive	50
Franklin Commons	8 Gatehouse Lane	96
Glen Meadow Apartments	43 Glen Meadow Road	288
Franklin Housing Authority – Low-Income Family/Elderly/Disabled	1000 Central Park Terrace	136
Residences @ Union Place	10 Independence Way	300
The Westerly @ Forge Park	50 Woodview Way	70
Source: Town of Franklin Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, <i>Available Apartment Affordable Housing Units</i> , 2023. https://www.franklinma.gov/municipal-affordable-housing-trust		



The Westerly at Forge Park

²³ Town of Franklin, MA *Affordable Apartment Developments*. 2023. <https://www.franklinma.gov/municipal-affordable-housing-trust/pages/affordable-apartment-developments>

Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) maintains the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as the official record of low- or moderate-income housing under G.L. Chapter 40B. As of June 2023, 10.9 percent of Franklin's total housing supply is affordable housing as defined in Chapter 40B. The Town's success at providing affordable housing stems from years of work by the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), the Town Council Economic Development Committee, the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT), the Franklin Housing Authority, town residents, and housing developers.²⁴ In addition, the Town has donated 21.9 acres of land on Veteran's Memorial Drive to the MAHT to create 119 units of mixed-income multifamily housing.

Town staff has worked to identify town-owned property that may be appropriate for affordable housing development by the Franklin Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, and other organizations, and have worked closely with landowners and developers to encourage inclusion of affordable housing units in the development plans. One multi-family building has been built that provides 100 percent affordable rental units to people over 62 years of age and a second multi-family building is currently going through the permitting process and is proposed to include 60 affordable units for those over 62 years of age.

The Department of Planning and Community Development has created two main goals for addressing housing needs in Franklin, not necessarily in order of priority:

Goal 1: Provide the appropriate mix of housing alternatives that meet the needs of Franklin-based employment. For the Town to attract businesses, especially to industrial parks, housing needs to be available so that it is affordable to middle-income workers.²⁵

Goal 2: Support the development of affordable housing opportunities for low, moderate, and middle-income households.²⁶

²⁴ Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of June 29, 2023.

²⁵ Town of Franklin, *Housing Production Plan*, April 2022, 60.

²⁶ Town of Franklin, *Housing Production Plan*, April 2022, 60.

Table 5.7 below reports the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. Some of the developments listed in the SHI contain only affordable homes and others contain mixed income housing. In either case, all the affordable homes are income-restricted units, typically for households with incomes below 80 percent of the HUD Area Median Family Income. By state policy, when a rental development provides at least 25 percent affordable apartments, all the apartments in the development “count” on the SHI, including the market-rate units. Some developments on Franklin’s SHI fall into that category. Map 5.1, at the end of this chapter, illustrates the locations of most of the affordable housing in Franklin excluding group homes.

Table 5.7: Department of Housing and Community Development CH40B Subsidized Housing Inventory, Franklin, MA.				
Project Name	Address	Type	Total SHI Units	Subsidizing Agency
N/A	Central Park Terrace	Rental	40	EOHLC
N/A	Central Park Terrace	Rental	40	EOHLC
N/A	Central Park Terrace	Rental	56	EOHLC
N/A	Winter Street	Rental	4	EOHLC
N/A	Winter Street	Rental	25	EOHLC
N/A	192 Brook Street	Rental	8	EOHLC
N/A	Walnut Street	Rental	6	EOHLC
Beaver Court	Beaver Court	Ownership	9	EOHLC
Benjamin’s Landing	Benjamin’s Landing Lane	Ownership	15	EOHLC
Dover Farms	Palomino Drive	Ownership	19	EOHLC
Glen Meadow	139 Glen Meadow Road/Chestnut Street	Rental	288	EOHLC
Franklin Commons	575 East Central Street	Rental	96	EOHLC, MHP
Residences at Union Place	Independence Way	Rental	300	MassHousing
The Woodlands	Stonehedge Road	Ownership	4	EOHLC
DDS Group Homes	Confidential	Rental	28	DDS
N/A	Grove Street	Rental	0	EOHLC
Union Square	301 Union Street	Rental	0	EOHLC
Metacomet Land Trust	Lewis Street	Ownership	1	EOHLC
Metacomet Land Trust	School Street	Ownership	1	EOHLC
Metacomet Land Trust	Lincoln Street	Ownership	1	EOHLC

Table 5.7: Department of Housing and Community Development CH40B Subsidized Housing Inventory, Franklin, MA.

Project Name	Address	Type	Total SHI Units	Subsidizing Agency
Metacomet Land Trust	Maple Street	Ownership	1	EOHLC
Metacomet Land Trust	Rolling Ridge	Ownership	1	EOHLC
Metacomet Land Trust	Summer Street	Ownership	1	EOHLC
Metacomet Land Trust	Summer Street	Ownership	1	EOHLC
Brandywine Village	Brandywine Road	Ownership	16	EOHLC
Franklin Heights Estates	Between Lincoln & Daniels Street	Ownership	18	FHLBB
The Villages at Oak Hill	61 Innsbruck Way	Ownership	6	DCHD
Eaton Place	Off Panther Way	Rental	50	HUD
Hidden Acres Village	Longobardi Drive	Ownership	2	EOHLC
Meadowbrook Heights	Grey Wolfe Drive	Ownership	9	EOHLC
Weston Woods	1330-1342 West Central Street	Rental	280	MassHousing
Affordable Housing Trust Home Preservation Program	Landry Street	Ownership	1	EOHLC
Affordable Housing Trust Home Preservation Program	Chestnut Street	Ownership	1	EOHLC
Affordable Housing Trust Home Preservation Program	Arlington Street	Ownership	1	EOHLC
Affordable Housing Trust Home Preservation Program	Beaver Court	Ownership	1	EOHLC
King Street	King Street	Ownership	1	EOHLC
Total SHI Units in Town as 2023:			1,359	
<i>Source: Town of Franklin, Housing Production Plan, April 2022, 62.</i>				

ZONING

Residential zoning accounts for more than 75 percent of all the Town's land use.²⁷ Areas for residential development in Franklin include seven residential districts: Rural Residential I and II, Single-Family III and IV, General Residential V, and Residential VI and VII. Currently, affordable housing is more common in the densely developed areas with apartments, townhouses, duplexes, and multi-level buildings. Single family homes make up most of the housing in Franklin, with a fraction of it used for households with lower incomes.

Of the estimated 2,289 acres of residentially zoned land remaining available for residential development, the average undeveloped lot size is 2.5 acres, and approximately 45 percent of lots are less than 1/2 acre in size. According to a study by DPCD, there were 117 residential parcels of land (1,808+/- acres) that are five or more acres in size that remain developable. The Cistercian Nuns of Mount Saint Mary's Abbey own 510.5 acres of the unprotected residentially zoned property, and Dean College owns 90.4 acres. Figure 5.8 displays the residential zones by land area and usage in Franklin.

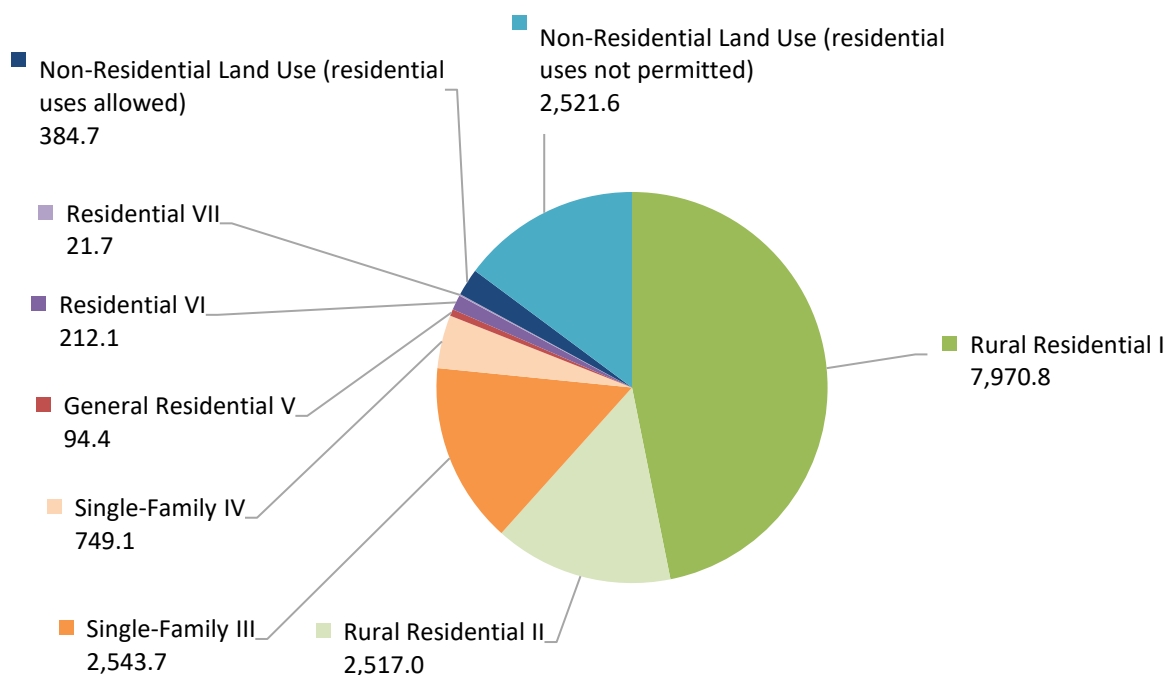
The 2,289 acres of unprotected residentially zoned land does not include Chapter 61A or 61B properties. Chapter 61 programs offer a property tax reduction for landowners willing to keep some or all of their land undeveloped for a specified period of time. The different chapters of the program refer to different land designations. Chapter 61 pertains to forestry, Chapter 61A refers to agricultural land, and Chapter 61B refers to open space and recreation land.²⁸ The Town has first refusal to acquire lands that have been enrolled in these real estate tax abatement programs, all of which encourage open space by taxing the owners based on the current use of their land, not the land's market value. There are 1,007.3 acres of Chapter 61 property in Franklin, 930.7 acres of which are in either Rural Residential I or Rural Residential II zoning districts, and the balance (76.6 acres) is zoned industrial.

²⁷ Town of Franklin, MA. "Town of Franklin, MA: Districts Enumerated." Town of Franklin, MA Code, 2023. <https://ecode360.com/10435114#10435114>.

²⁸ UMass Amherst and Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, *Chapter 61 Programs: Understanding Massachusetts Ch. 61 Current Tax Programs* (Revised 2018).

Fig. 5.8 Non-Residential and Residential Zoning Land Use Acreage

Source: Town of Franklin, MA. 2022. Town of Franklin Housing Production Plan, 19.



The amount of developable land for residential property is not restricted to the land specifically zoned for residential use. Commercial and industrially zoned properties have been developed for housing, because of Chapter 40B developments on industrially zoned land. There are also a substantial number of residential units within the Town's commercial zoning districts, especially in the Downtown area. Many lots, depending on their location, the type of zoning and density allowances, have the potential for new and infill developments. Any residential development on these non-residentially zoned lots would depend on site-specific characteristics including access, adjacent uses, environmental constraints, availability of utilities, property owners, and zoning. Despite existing and increasing challenges, Franklin is continually evaluating and reviewing both publicly and privately owned parcels, for potential purchase with aims towards both open space

protection and affordable housing production.²⁹ Please see Chapter 6, Land Use, for a description of residential zoning districts in Franklin.

Local Policies and Practices

Creating effective local policies and practices to shape the growth, execution, and oversight of residential areas in Franklin lays the foundation for addressing citizens' current needs and anticipating future adjustments. These local strategies not only form the regulatory framework but also define the Town's housing approach, ensuring sustainable evolution that adapts to the changing housing requirements of its present and future residents.

HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN (2022)

A Housing Production Plan (HPP) is a strategic document designed to address a community's current and future housing needs, promoting affordability, diversity, and sustainability. This plan outlines specific goals, policies, and actions to encourage the development of housing units within a community. Consistent with state guidelines, Franklin's 2022 Housing Production Plan includes a numerical goal for annual housing production that will increase the number of SHI-eligible housing units by at least 0.5 percent of its total units during every calendar year included in the HPP, until the overall percentage exceeds the 10 percent statutory minimum.³⁰ In compliance with Chapter 40B requirements, the HPP recommends performing a thorough assessment of Franklin's Town Zoning Bylaw, as detailed in Chapter 185 of the Franklin Town Code. Specific attention will be shown to housing density, creating zoning related development incentives, assessing parking requirements, and other zoning set practices.³¹ In Franklin's case, 0.5 percent of housing stock totals approximately 62 units, currently in compliance with state guidelines.

The 2022 Housing Production Plan outlines nine goals:

Goal 1: Maintain Franklin's Subsidized Housing Inventory above ten percent through 2030 and beyond.

Goal 2: Increase the number of housing units affordable to Franklin's very low-income, low-income, and moderate-income residents.

²⁹ Town of Franklin, MA. 2022. Town of Franklin Housing Production Plan, 19.

³⁰ Town of Franklin, *Housing Production Plan*, April 2022, 1.

³¹ Town of Franklin, *Housing Production Plan*, April 2022, 7.

Goal 3: Increase the number of affordable housing units available to persons with special needs, and the elderly.

Goal 4: Support affordable housing appropriate for expected future demographics.

Goal 5: Provide housing alternatives that meet the needs of Franklin-based employers and employees.

Goal 6: Adopt strategies that incentivize the production of affordable housing.

Goal 7: Adopt zoning strategies that will advance affordable housing production.

Goal 8: Continue the funding and expansion of the Franklin Municipal Affordable Housing Trust for additional in-perpetuity affordable housing units.

Goal 9: Identify new funding sources and other resources for affordable housing production.³²

Implementing these goals and strategies outlined in this HPP will assure that the Town of Franklin maintains at least 10 percent affordable units on its SHI, but it will also help to make progress in facilitating the development of a diverse housing supply for Franklin's low and moderate-income residents.³³

FRANKLIN FOR ALL

A recent rezoning proposal of the Downtown Commercial District called *Franklin for All* includes an increase in residential zoning, and in turn the number of affordable housing units located in the area as well. The Town Planning Board and MAPC have been working together to rezone these particular aspects:

- Chapter 40R Smart Growth Overlay District for the downtown core that balances density with high-quality design and the need for Affordable Housing and meets the Section 3A requirements, which encourages the production of multi-family housing by requiring MBTA communities to adopt zoning districts where multi-family housing is allowed as of right.³⁴
- Supplementary Town-wide Affordable Housing requirements.

³² Town of Franklin, MA. 2022. Town of Franklin Housing Production Plan, 1.

³³ Town of Franklin, MA. 2013. *Town of Franklin Master Plan 2013*, 20.

³⁴ MassGov. *Section 3A Guidelines, 2023*. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/section-3a-guidelines#compliance-guidelines-for-multi-family-zoning-districts-under-section-3a-of-the-zoning-act->.

- Land use permitting changes to base zoning districts to better incentivize desired commercial uses and housing types.
- Programming to manage parking and support small business and property owners.
- Additional incentives for outstanding projects.³⁵

These proposals have yet to be adopted, but they may be finalized, changed, or rejected by the local town government.

AGE-FRIENDLY HOUSING

The Town of Franklin, recognizing the challenges posed by its aging population, actively supports age-friends initiatives through its Council on Aging. Their focus is on fostering housing options that enable residents to remain in their community, even when changes in health or physical fitness call for assistance for safe and independent living.³⁶ At the heart of these efforts is the Senior Center, serving as the central hub for events and information related to the town's aging population.

Simultaneously, the Department of Planning and Community Development is working to address the housing needs of seniors, given the current waitlist of over 350 Franklin residents seeking accommodations through the Franklin Housing Authority. Managing 165 unites of State-Aided Elderly/Disabled Housing, the Franklin Housing Authority's public housing inventory details the state-aided public housing units developed within Franklin. Specifically, Table 5.8 highlights the elderly housing category within the inventory of state-aided public housing developments with a total of 165 units.

Table 5.8: Elderly State-Aided Public Housing Developments, Franklin, MA.				
Development No.	Development Name	Number of Buildings	Year Built	Dwelling Units
667-01	Central Park Terrace 667-01	8	1960	40
667-02	Central Park Terrace 667-02	11	1965	40
667-03	Central Park Terrace 667-03	8	1975	56
667-04	Theron Metcalf School 667-04	1	1989	29
Source: Franklin Housing Authority, 2023. Annual Plan for Fiscal Year 2024 for State-Aided Public Housing, 2.				

³⁵ Harmon, Elise. "Franklin for All." MAPC, October 13, 2022. <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/franklin-for-all/#about>

³⁶ AARP, 2018. "Roadmap to Livability: Housing Workbook." AARP, 6.

Since the Town's 2011 Affordable Housing Strategy and Development Action Plan, the SHI has increased from 10.4 percent to 10.9 percent, approximately a 200-unit absolute increase due to the continuous addition of more housing units from 2011 to 2021. Franklin works with the Housing Choice Initiative to provide motivation, incentives, technical support, and specific legislative adjustments to inspire and empower municipalities in planning and for the ongoing prosperity of the Commonwealth.³⁷

The Housing Choice Initiative for municipalities in Massachusetts are designated by:

- At least 5 percent increase or 500 units increase over the previous 5 years, or
- At least 3 percent increase of 300 units increase over the previous 5 years and demonstrate 7 of 14 practices that the initiative follows³⁸

By following these guidelines, a municipality can become eligible for grant funding for housing projects and future development. The Town regularly applies for State Grants to support future housing projects. The Town was awarded a \$201,000 in Fiscal Year 2021 Housing Choice Community grant to construct the water distribution system improvements needed for the Franklin Ridge project. Funding from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) also helps to fund affordable housing projects. The Town has donated funds and land for specific Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT) projects.

³⁷ MassGov. *Housing Choice Grant Program*, 2023. <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/housing-choice-grant-program>.

³⁸ "Housing Choice Grant Program." Mass.gov, 2023. <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/housing-choice-grant-program>.



6. Land Use

Introduction

Franklin's landscape and land use patterns - marked by expansive open space and natural resources, along with an abundance of historic properties and a picturesque historic Town Center – reflect the community's agricultural history and quintessential New England character. Over the years, increased development has impacted the characteristics of what was once a rural farming community. While many of the picturesque farmlands have been developed into sprawling residential subdivisions, the Town has been able to maintain its small-town charm while growing as a prominent business, commercial and industrial area along the I-495/MetroWest Corridor.

The downtown commercial district and outlying business and industrial districts create pocket urban areas that connect to rural feeling residential neighborhoods, agricultural lands, and

forests. The mixed-use commercial area and business districts include retail, single and multi-family residential mixes, schools, parks and Recreation Areas, a college campus and two train stations. The industrial areas in Franklin include industrial, manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, research and development facilities and office space. Many of Franklin's new houses are located within large subdivisions, but there are still many older homes located on rural scenic roadways that have views of pastures and agricultural lands still in production.³⁹

The Land Use section of a master plan is intended to delineate the opportunities and challenges that will shape all future development goals. As such, this section will examine both Franklin's past and potential future: the past, by examining historic development patterns and the current layout that these patterns have created; and the future, by analyzing the Town's zoning regulations, which govern the type of development that can currently take place.

Existing Conditions and Trends

LAND USE PATTERNS AND TRENDS

Development and land use in Franklin have changed drastically throughout the Town's 363-year history but have followed clear patterns still visible in its landscape today. The axes along which development has occurred in town are the traditional Town Center, dating back to Franklin's founding, and the system of highways that crisscross the landscape, opened in the twentieth century.

Originally settled in 1660, Franklin was officially incorporated in 1778 and was primarily an agrarian community. The access to waterpower initially, and to railroads later, led to the development of mills and other industry in town. As industrial development grew in the 18th and 19th century, so did the Town's population, mostly in the Downtown and Unionville areas and along long-established roadways. Residential growth initially occurred adjacent to the industrial and commercial growth, but now occurs in all parts of Town (see Map 6.1 Age of Housing Stock).

³⁹ Town of Franklin, *Open Space & Recreation Plan*, 2023 Update, 27.

Between 1900 and 1950, the Town's growth was relatively slow but steady, with no ten-year period having a population increase of over 1,000 residents. During this period, manufacturing continued and began to diversify. After World War II, the development patterns began to change; a greater percentage of residents owned cars, and single-family homes were being constructed farther from the Downtown core. Between 1950 and 1960, the Town's population increased by 31 percent to 10,530 residents.

With construction of Interstate 495 and its two Franklin exits, development patterns continued to change. Residential growth began to boom in the 1960s and substantial areas of undeveloped land were turned into residential subdivisions. The construction of the subdivisions encroached on many of the scenic areas of Franklin, leaving residents to be fearful of over development. As a result, in 1987, the Town enacted an Open Space Development Bylaw to promote preservation of Open Space in subdivision development.

Interstate 495 positioned Franklin as a major regional distribution center for goods and as a regional employment center. In the 1980's, the Town rezoned former farmlands lying immediately outside Interstate 495 for industrial uses. Since that time, the Town has rezoned additional residential property to industrial several times. In the late 1980's, the Town established itself as a regional transportation hub by lobbying successfully for an extension of commuter rail to an Interstate 495 terminus in Franklin, and for major improvements to State Route 140 connecting the Town's extensive commercial areas. Franklin has had a steady increase in commercial and industrial development since 1980.

The 1997 Master Plan also responded to this rapid growth by establishing three goals relating to industrial and commercial zoning, reducing residential build out, and maintaining Franklin's New England character. Towards these ends, the plan set a target growth rate of no more than 100 building permits per year.

Additionally, Franklin adopted a Growth Management Bylaw in October 1997 which was designed to guide development to minimize excessive demands on the Town's infrastructure and services including fire protection, water, sewer, schools, transportation, recreation, and police protection; however, this Bylaw expired in June of 2009. During the past few decades, Franklin has seen a substantial reduction in the number of large subdivisions being constructed due in part to a poor economic climate and fewer large parcels of undeveloped land.

The 2013 Master Plan introduced six goals to attain fuller, more efficient development while protecting natural resources and the New England, small town character of Franklin. There have been several amendments to the Zoning Ordinance since 2013 that can be traced to these goals outlined in this plan, but many of the recommendations are as valid in 2023 as they were a decade ago.

Recent work by the Town has focused on promoting mixed use development and encouraging expansion, retention, and attraction of business. A Market Study completed by MAPC in 2020 offered recommendations to attract business activity and concentrate development in the existing economic corridors of Franklin Center, The Crossing, and the Mixed Business Innovation District (*see the Economic Development section for further discussion*). Franklin created a Business Guide based on MAPC's recommendations.

The Town is currently working on *Franklin For All*, a project to rezone Franklin Center for economic growth and diverse housing opportunities. Some of the proposed actions include establishing a 40R Smart Growth Overlay District that includes properties in the Downtown Commercial, Commercial I, and General Residential V Districts, adopting a town-wide inclusionary zoning policy, and other zoning amendments to incentivize higher density downtown.⁴⁰ Franklin has already made significant progress in implementing many of the recommendations: adopting an inclusionary zoning policy (Recommendation 2), changing multifamily development from a required special permit to by-right up to one unit for each 2,250 sf of lot area (Recommendation X), separating out 3-family multi-family housing in the use regulations and allow it by-right in CI, DC, CII, and GRV, and by special permit in SFRIV (Recommendation 5), allowed Accessory Dwelling units and increased impervious in GRV (Recommendation 7).⁴¹

Residential subdivisions have proved to be the greatest agent of change to the character of the landscape of Franklin. Today, residential uses continue to dominate Franklin's landscape, with single-family residences taking up the largest portion of the Town's land area by a large margin.

⁴⁰ MAPC, *Franklin For All DRAFT Vision & Zoning Recommendations*, June 2022.

⁴¹ Brian Taberner (Director of Planning and Community Development, Town of Franklin, MA), email message to Jill Slankas, October 24, 2023.

Industrial and commercial uses, in contrast, occupy only a combined ten percent of its land. Map 6.2 shows the current land use pattern in Franklin, while Table 6.1 outlines land use by acre.

Table 6.1: Land Use by Area (2023 Tax Parcel Data)		
Land Use Category	Acres	% of Land
Single-Family Residential	6,487.50	40.70%
Public Land (Federal, State and Municipal Structures/Buildings/Public Schools)	1,815.80	11.40%
Public Recreation	1,129.20	7.00%
Industrial	1,125.80	7.10%
Chapter 61, 61A, 61B	1,121.50	7.00%
Nonprofit (Religious / Private Schools / Other Nonprofit)	917.8	5.80%
Town Owned Conservation	843.5	5.30%
Residential - 2 or more units	784.4	4.90%
Vacant Land (Developable)	517.4	3.20%
Vacant Land (Currently Undevelopable)	512.3	3.20%
Commercial	390.8	2.50%
Other Residential	118.7	0.70%
Mixed Use	103.1	0.70%
Multiple Houses on Lot	74.2	0.50%
Total*	15,942.00	100.00%
Source: MassGIS & Franklin Assessors Database (2023).		
* Tax parcel data does not include areas like roads and major water bodies, so this number is smaller than Franklin's total land area.		

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

A vast majority of Franklin's land area is dedicated to residential development (approximately 47 percent), most of which consists of single-family homes. Even so, a variety of housing types can be seen throughout Town. The Town's most recent Housing Production Plan describes the characteristics of housing stock in Franklin clearly and succinctly:

The Town of Franklin is situated like many typical New England communities; a town common surrounded by residences built in the mid to late-1800's, with churches, a post office and library all within walking distance of the commercial center and numerous stores and restaurants. Some of the brick-faced businesses on the first floor of the commercial center have condominium or apartment units located on upper floors bringing people into the town center to shop and gather.

Radiating out from the Downtown Commercial center are various neighborhoods, with single-family and multi-family turn of the century homes. Surrounding the Town Common is the Franklin Town Common Historic District and the Dean College Historic District. Both historic districts contain homes built in the early 1800's and have played a significant role in defining Franklin's character. In addition to rental units, condominium, single-family and multi-family homes found in and around the Downtown, there are also various residential structures and dormitories associated with housing for Dean College students.

Further away from Franklin's Downtown, the housing boom of the 1980s and 1990's becomes easily apparent, when over 5,100 residential structures were built. During this period, large scale subdivisions were constructed with significantly sized, single-family houses, most with 3 or more bedrooms. A mix of older homes, new subdivisions, and protected open space are located throughout the Town.⁴²

For more information on housing in Franklin, see Chapter 5 Housing.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

As stated above, Franklin's downtown center developed as the main commercial and economic hub in the 18th and 19th centuries. However, by the 1980s, Downtown Franklin was no longer the focus of the community's economic activity and had become run down and undesirable to the business community. Starting around 2001, the Town of Franklin made revitalization of Downtown a major priority.⁴³ In the last two decades, the Town has devoted significant time and resources to foster a more attractive, pedestrian friendly, and vibrant Downtown Commercial District. Today, Downtown Franklin is home to an MBTA Commuter rail station, historic landmarks, a museum, a performing arts theater, entertainment establishments, Dean College, and a mix of retail and restaurants.

Franklin has experienced a steady increase in commercial and industrial development since 1980, and the location of more recent industrial and commercial development in Franklin has been influenced primarily by highways, specifically I-495 and Route 140. In addition to the Downtown commercial area, the entirety of the Route 140 corridor serves as a commercial center in town.

⁴² Town of Franklin, *Housing Production Plan*, April 2022, 21.

⁴³ Town of Franklin, *Open Space & Recreation Plan*, 2023 Update, 16.

Franklin Crossing and the Mixed Business Innovation District are two additional key commercial areas, identified by the Town as sites for further development and resource allocation. Mixed use development featuring both commercial and residential uses on the same property is not common in Franklin (0.65 percent of land area), though the Town is exploring zoning amendments that would allow for and encourage additional mixed-use development in certain commercial and residential districts.⁴⁴

There are major industrial parks at each of the two interchanges with Interstate 495. Grove Street, which parallels I-495, is the other major center of industrial growth within Franklin.⁴⁵ The Town's industrial and office parks house a substantial number and variety of businesses, including research and development and manufacturing companies.⁴⁶ *For additional information on economic activity and development in Franklin, see Chapter 4 Economic Development.* Commercial development is in the form of strip malls and shopping complexes, while industrial areas contain large manufacturing and industrial buildings. This type of development has infringed upon much of the rural landscape and character; however, there are still areas of undeveloped farmlands and forests throughout the Town.⁴⁷

CHAPTER 61, CHAPTER 61A & CHAPTER 61B LANDS

Chapter 61 programs offer a property tax break for landowners willing to commit to keeping some or all of their land undeveloped for a specified period of time. Three programs exist and focus on different land uses: forestry (Ch. 61), agriculture (Ch. 61A), and open space and recreation (Ch. 61B).⁴⁸

Parcels taxed under these programs are in private ownership and are not protected Open Space areas. The tax classification enables the lands to be taxed at their use value rather than the full fair market value. The Town has the right of first refusal if the parcels are sold prior to the expiration of the tax abated status. Owners of land classified under Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B must notify the Town before selling or converting the land to another use. The Town has 120 days to decide

⁴⁴ MAPC, Franklin For All DRAFT Vision & Zoning Recommendations, June 2022.

⁴⁵ Town of Franklin, Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2023 Update, 19-20.

⁴⁶ Town of Franklin, Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2023 Update, 16.

⁴⁷ Town of Franklin, Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2023 Update, 27.

⁴⁸ UMass Amherst and Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Chapter 61 Programs: Understanding Massachusetts Ch. 61 Current Tax Programs (Revised 2018).

whether to exercise the option to purchase the land. This allows the Town to protect individual Open Space parcels as they enter the market or become threatened by development. As of May 2023, approximately 1,122 acres (or 7 percent) of land in Franklin is under this tax classification. There has been an approximate 285 acre decrease in Chapter 61/A/B acreage since 2008.⁴⁹

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Franklin's land use history has been uniquely shaped by federal, state, municipal, and private institutions. Dean College's over 155 years in Franklin has heavily influenced the development and character of the town, especially Franklin Center. Established in 1865 as Dean Academy, the school transformed significantly when a Junior College was added during World War II. During the 1950s and 1960s, the college underwent a large expansion, adding four new dormitories, a gymnasium, library, science center, and campus center. In the 1990s, the institution evolved again becoming Dean College, and soon began offering bachelor's as well as associate degrees. Recent expansion included a new dormitory on West Central Street, new dining and performance facilities, and purchase of a mixed-use building on East Central Street where students are housed in the upper floors.⁵⁰

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has approximately 838 acres of protected land in Franklin, between Franklin State Forest and SNETT. Metacomet Land Trust, a non-profit conservation organization that is dedicated to the protection of Open Space and natural resources, owns approximately 65 acres of public open space. Additionally, the United States Army Corps of Engineers has about 465 acres of open space primarily used for water conservation and floodplain control.⁵¹ The Town owns approximately 1,075 acres of protected conservation land which are maintained through DPCD and the Conservation Commission. Along with privately owned parcels, these areas contribute to the nearly 5,000 acres of conservation and open space in Franklin that preserve large swaths of land and lend the Town its rural character. For a complete description of these areas see Chapter 8 Open Space and Recreation.

⁴⁹ Town of Franklin, *Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2023 Update*, 36-7.

⁵⁰ Town of Franklin, *Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2023 Update*, 15.

⁵¹ Town of Franklin, *Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2023 Update*, 37-8.

VACANT LAND

Roughly 6.5 percent of Franklin’s privately owned land area remains vacant, with an even split between areas considered developable by the Assessor’s Office and those considered undevelopable. The Assessor’s Office categorizes land as “developable” based on whether it meets zoning standards for buildable lots (i.e., frontage, square feet, etc.); if a parcel meets these criteria, it is considered developable unless proven otherwise. Thus, it is still possible for some “undevelopable” land to someday be developed by right, which requires no special permissions from the Zoning Board of Appeals or Planning Board. For example, if the minimum lot size requirements became smaller, some “undevelopable” parcels may become categorized as “developable”. However, the majority of remaining vacant parcels in Franklin have at least some development constraints in the form of wetlands, flood zones, ledges, or similar physical constraints. These parcels are scattered throughout Town.

Local Policies and Practices

ZONING DISTRICTS

All parcels in Franklin are currently assigned to one of seventeen⁵² base zoning districts that serve residential, commercial, and industrial uses of varying densities. Each has its own regulations about what types of land use is allowed and dimensional standards that lots and structures must adhere to. A use may be allowed by special permit, which requires a public hearing by the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals, or by right, which requires no special permissions. In all districts, any use that is otherwise allowed must obtain a special permit from the Board of Appeals if the proposed project results in an increase in estimated water consumption of more than 15,000 gallons per day. Map 6.3 shows the location of Franklin’s zoning districts and Table 6.2 lists each district by total size in acres.

Table 6.2 Franklin Zoning Districts by Area.		
District	Acres	% of Land
Rural Residential I	7,970.80	46.90%
Rural Residential II	2,517.00	14.80%

⁵² Although Zoning Districts have been established within Chapter 185 Section 4 for Limited Industrial and Neighborhood Commercial, no parcels have formally been designated to those zoning districts, and thus are not shown on the Town’s Zoning Map.

Table 6.2 Franklin Zoning Districts by Area.

District	Acres	% of Land
Single-Family III	2,543.70	15.00%
Single-Family IV	749.1	4.40%
General Residential V	94.4	0.60%
Residential VI	212.1	1.30%
Residential VII	21.7	0.10%
Commercial I	39.7	0.20%
Commercial II	258.9	1.50%
Business	254.6	1.50%
Office	41.1	0.20%
Industrial	2,227.90	13.10%
Limited Industrial	Not mapped	--
Neighborhood Commercial	Not mapped	--
Downtown Commercial	40.2	0.20%
Rural Business	4.8	0.03%
Mixed Business Innovation	39.1	0.20%
Total*	17,015.20	100.00%

Source: Town of Franklin, GIS Department.

*Does not include I-495; Total land area for Tables 6.1 and 6.2 differs due to methodology. Area calculations for zoning districts include roads, some water bodies, etc., where those for parcel-level data do not

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Like most Massachusetts towns, the vast majority (over 80 percent) of Franklin’s land is zoned for residential use, most often taking the form of lots with one single-family dwelling. The five residential zoning districts differ mainly in their accessory uses permitted or authorized under special permit and their allowed density. A substantial amount of the Town’s residentially zoned acres is permanently protected, mostly open space, schools, parks, or DPW managed sites owned by the federal government, state, or Town itself.⁵³

Single-family homes are allowed by right in every residential district and four commercial districts: Rural Business, Neighborhood Commercial, Commercial I, and Commercial II (see Table 6.3). Multi-family development is permitted in the Downtown Commercial District and requires a special permit from the Planning Board in the Residential VI, General Residential V, and

⁵³ Town of Franklin, *Housing Production Plan*, April 2022, 18.

Commercial I districts with specific requirements, including various requirements for minimum lot size. As a result, there are a substantial number of residential units within the Town's Commercial zoning districts, especially in the Downtown area.⁵⁴ Industrially zoned properties have also been developed for housing, in particular for Chapter 40B developments.⁵⁵

Table 6.3. Residential Uses Allowed, Franklin, MA.

Principal Uses	District										
	RRI, RRII	RVI	RVII	SFRIII	SFRIV	GRV	RB	CI	CII	DC	O
Multifamily or apartment with 4+ units ³	N	PB	PB	N	N	Y ^{1,2}	N	Y ^{1,2}	N	Y ^{4,5}	PB ^{6,7}
Multifamily or apartment with 3 units	N	N	N	N	PB ¹	Y ¹	N	Y ¹	Y	Y	N
Single family	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Two family - New	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
Two family - Conversion	ZBA	ZBA	ZBA	ZBA	ZBA	Y	N	ZBA	Y	ZBA	N

Source: Town of Franklin, Zoning Code, Use Regulations Schedule Part VI
Note: Only includes mapped zoning districts where some residential use is allowed.
¹Lot area must be at least 25% greater than that required for a single-family dwelling.
²No more than one dwelling unit per 2,250 square feet of lot area may be permitted; additional dwelling units may be allowed by Special Permit from the Planning Board.
³All multifamily developments with 10 or more housing units are required to address the Affordable Housing requirements in § 185-51.
⁴All dwelling units shall be located on floors above the street level floor.
⁵No more than one dwelling unit per 2,000 square feet of lot area will be permitted; additional dwelling units may be allowed by Special Permit from the Planning Board.
⁶All multi-family residential developments require a minimum of 5-acres.
⁷No more than one dwelling unit per 3,000 square feet of lot area will be permitted.
*ZBA – Zoning Board of Appeals; PB – Planning Board

The Rural Residential Districts (RRI and RRII) represent the majority of residential land and are the most rural parts of town. Intended primarily for single-family homes, many agricultural and related uses, such as produce stands, are generally permitted while commercial and industrial uses are not permitted. Unsurprisingly, most of the Chapter 61/61A/61B land and much of the town's open space are found in these districts. The main difference between the two rural

⁵⁴ Town of Franklin, *Housing Production Plan*, April 2022, 19.

⁵⁵ Town of Franklin, *Housing Production Plan*, April 2022, 19.

residential districts is the dimensional requirements; RRII has slightly less intensive requirements than RRI, including a smaller minimum lot size (see Table 6.4). Generally, as you move closer to Franklin Center, the residential districts have less stringent dimensional requirements and allow for greater density. This serves to create density that “radiates” outward from the highly developed Downtown Commercial District to the more rural RRI and RRII areas.

Table 6.4 Franklin Residential Districts - Selected Dimensional Regulations.

District	Min. lot area (sf)	Min. lot depth (sf)	Min. lot frontage (ft)	Min. front setback (ft)	Min. side setback (ft)	Min. rear setback (ft)	Max. building height (ft)
Rural Residential 1	40,000	200	200	40	40	40	35
Residential VI	40,000	200	200	40	40	40	35
Residential VII	40,000	200	200	40	40	40	35
Rural Residential II	30,000	150	200	40	35	35	35
Single-Family Residential III	20,000	125	160	40	25	30	35
Single-Family Residential IV	15,000	100	100	30	20	20	35
General Residential V	10,000	100	100	20	15	20	40

Source: Town of Franklin Zoning Code, 185 Attachment 9 Schedule of Lot, Area, Frontage, Yard and Height Requirements.

The Residential VI District (RVI) allows for multifamily dwellings and more than one single-family or two-family dwelling on a single lot may be authorized on special permit from the Planning Board. As a result, many of the Town’s larger condominium communities are found in this district. Limited commercial uses may also be allowed by special permit. Although it is intended primarily for multi-family development, RVI is one of the residential districts with the most intensive dimensional requirements, speaking to the Town’s priority to minimize departure from the single-family residential scale.

The Residential VII District (RVII) was created to allow for planned residential development. Single family dwellings are allowed by right, while multiple, single-family dwelling units may be allowed under Special Permit from the Planning Board. Preservation of open space is encouraged, and most nonresidential uses are not allowed. This district covers the Village at Cooks Farm (a 55+ condominium community) and part of Franklin Country Club.

Unsurprisingly, the Single-Family Residential Districts (SFRIII, SFRIV) are intended primarily for single-family residential uses, although two-family residential uses may be permitted in some areas. Generally, commercial and industrial uses are not permitted; however, limited commercial uses may be allowed in some areas. With smaller minimum lot sizes, SFRIII is one of the more densely developed residential areas; The district makes up about 18 percent of Franklin's residentially zoned land but contains nearly a third of its residential lots. In comparison, RRI contains about the same number of residential lots, yet makes up over 55 percent of the Town's residentially zoned land.

The General Residential V (GRV) and SFRIV districts surround the Downtown Commercial District and permit for the highest density residential development. SFRIV and GRV have a much smaller minimum lot size (10,000-15,000 sf vs. 40,000 sf), lower frontage requirement, smaller minimum lot depth, and the ability to develop a greater portion of the lot. They are friendlier to two-family development, allowing it by right, and multifamily and apartment uses may also be authorized under special permit by the Planning Board. While certain commercial uses may be permitted, most nonresidential uses are not allowed in GRV.

COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

The Downtown Commercial (DC) and Commercial I (CI) Districts together with several residential zones comprise Downtown Franklin. Intended as a mixed-use, transit-oriented commercial district, DC combines first-floor commercial uses with upper-floor office or multi-unit residential uses. An emphasis is placed on commercial uses like restaurants and retail that support an economically rich downtown environment.

Found at the Union Street Cottage Street intersection and radiating out from the Downtown Commercial District along East Central Street, CI is intended primarily for office, retail, service, trade, restaurant, and other commercial uses. Limited industrial uses may be authorized under special permit. Single-family and new two-family dwellings are allowed by right while multi-unit residential development and hotels are allowed by special permit from the Planning Board. Both the DC and CI Districts have the smallest minimum lot sizes of any district, at 5,000 square feet, and some of the least intensive setback requirements.

In the Commercial II District (CII), all of CI's by right uses are also allowed, plus small and medium ground mounted solar energy systems and larger wholesalers. More intensive uses that

are prohibited in CI, such as auto yards and mechanic shops, are also allowed by special permit, usually from the Planning Board. Single-family and two-family residential uses are permitted.

The Rural Business District (RB) is intended primarily for low-intensity commercial uses located in or within proximity to primarily residential neighborhoods, providing retail and agricultural services to the surrounding community. This district was created in 2016 in response to the 2013 Master Plan's goal to promote the development of small, village-style businesses.⁵⁶ As a result, the RB district is further classified by rural neighborhood design concepts consistent with the character of the community, complementary in scale and appearance with the surrounding neighborhood, with low luminescent lighting fixtures, densely planted property borders, and pedestrian-scaled signage with external illumination. Single-family dwellings are allowed by right. Only 4.8 acres in Franklin, at the intersection of Spring Street and Washington Street, have been zoned to the RB District. This district is home to the Hillside Florist & Nurseries.

Found primarily along I-495, the Business District (B) allows for office, retail, service, trade, restaurant, and other commercial uses with limited industrial uses. B is nearly identical to CII; they mainly differ in that B has smaller minimum lot dimensions, allows for some additional industrial uses, and does not permit any residential uses. The development here is a typical strip-style highway-side commercial space.

The Mixed Business Innovation District (MBI) rezoned and repurposed an older industrial neighborhood in 2019 as a part of the previous Master Plan's implementation plan goal to "Encourage expansion and retention of current businesses and attraction of new businesses in appropriate locations."⁵⁷ A strong emphasis is placed on encouraging reuse and redevelopment of older manufacturing and warehouse buildings, providing for a wide range of light industrial, commercial, cultural, institutional, or entertainment uses that create and support a diverse economically and culturally rich environment. Residential uses and heavy manufacturing uses are not allowed.

⁵⁶ Franklin Department of Planning & Community Development, *Status of 2013 Master Plan Implementation*, 2020 update, https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/masterplan_update_materials.pdf.

⁵⁷ Franklin Department of Planning & Community Development, *Status of 2013 Master Plan Implementation*, 2020 update, https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/masterplan_update_materials.pdf.

No parcels have been zoned to Neighborhood Commercial (NC), which was created to allow for low-intensity commercial uses located in or within proximity to primarily residential neighborhoods providing retail and personal services which serve the surrounding neighborhood. While no land is currently zoned NC, the district has potential applicability to existing areas and could be a tool for future neighborhood development.

INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE DISTRICTS

The Town's two industrial districts have the same dimensional requirements: 40,000 square foot minimum lot size, 175-foot minimum frontage, 40-foot front yard setback, 30-foot side and rear setbacks, and roughly 80 percent maximum lot coverage. As stated previously, industrially zoned areas in Franklin are primarily located off I-495. These districts differ mainly in intensity of uses.

The Industrial District (I) allows for light and medium industrial uses, warehouse and distribution uses, and business uses. Some commercial uses and accessory office and retail uses may be permitted. Additionally, the I District is the only district in Franklin in which adult entertainment and marijuana facilities may be allowed by special permit (within the Adult Use Overlay and Marijuana Use Districts). The Industrial District is Franklin's preferred zone for Solar Energy Systems, with any-scale projects allowed by right. Small-scale solar use is allowed by right in most other districts, while medium-scale projects generally require a Special Permit (if allowed at all). Residential uses are not allowed in either industrial district. The Limited Industrial District (LI) is intended primarily for light industrial service, trade and limited business uses. No parcels in Town have been zoned as Limited Industrial since its creation in 2002 and as of writing this chapter.

Similarly, residential development (except multifamily and apartments by special permit) is not permitted in the Office District (O). Located off I-495 Exit 43, O is intended primarily for office parks, business uses, limited commercial and light industrial uses. Industrial uses such as warehouse and manufacturing are only permitted as an accessory use. At the time of writing, O contains the Franklin Office Park and Brookview at Franklin, a condominium complex.

The town has designated many parcels within the I and O districts as Priority Development Sites and/or Economic Opportunity Areas to streamline the permitting process for development and encourage existing businesses to expand and attract new businesses. *For more information about these areas and economic development in Franklin, see Chapter 4 Economic Development.*

OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Overlay districts are areas with supplementary regulations that apply in addition to the underlying zoning districts described above. Franklin has eight zoning overlays (see Table 6.5) the locations of which are shown on Map 6.4.

Table 6.5: Franklin Zoning Overlays	
District Name	Purpose/Details
Floodplain District (§ 185-24)	This overlay includes all special flood hazard areas within the Town of Franklin designated as Zone A or AE on the Norfolk County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the administration of the National Flood Insurance Program.
Water Resource District (§ 185-40)	The purpose of the Water Resource District is to protect, preserve and maintain the existing and potential ground- and surface water resources providing water supply for the Town of Franklin through measures such as limiting the percentage of the lot that can be rendered impervious, prohibiting the underground storage of hazardous materials, strictly regulating above ground storage, limiting the use of septic tanks, and more. This overlay includes areas designated DEP Approved Zone 1; DEP Approved Zone 2; submitted for approval DEP Zone 2: and DEP approved Interim Wellhead Protection Areas.
Wireless Communications Services District (§ 185-44)	This overlay establishes a district in which wireless communications services may be provided by special permit with minimal harm to the public health, safety and general welfare. Specifically, the Wireless Communications Services District has been created to: protect the general public from hazards associated with wireless communications towers; and minimize visual impacts from wireless communications towers in residential districts within Franklin.
Biotechnology Uses Overlay District (§ 185-42)	The goal of this overlay district is to protect the public from risks and potential risks posed by biotechnology uses in the Town of Franklin, including but not limited to experimentation with or use of recombinant DNA (rDNA) technology. Biotechnology uses are permitted within this district.
Adult Use Overlay District (§ 185-47)	This overlay was created with the purpose and intent of regulating and limiting the location of adult entertainment establishments (as defined in § 185-47) so as to prevent the secondary effects associated with these establishments (increased levels of crime, decreased tax base, blight, and increased late-night noise and traffic) and to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the Town of Franklin.

Table 6.5: Franklin Zoning Overlays

District Name	Purpose/Details
Senior Village Overlay District (§ 185-48)	This overlay encourages development of master-planned residential communities for persons 55 years of age and older, by allowing for a greater variety of uses and building types at a higher density than would normally be allowed and allowing greater flexibility in site planning so as to promote affordable housing and the preservation of open space and historic resources within the development. It is intended that a senior village development provides a range of housing types and facilities that are responsive to the socio-cultural, health care, and recreational needs of senior residents.
Sign District Map (§ 185-20)	This overlay establishes four separate sign districts (Downtown Commercial District, Commercial Business Corridor District, Industrial - Office Park District, and Residential District) with different regulations within each district.
Marijuana Use Overlay District (§ 185-49)	This overlay establishes zoning to allow the use of medical marijuana treatment centers, medical marijuana testing facilities, and non-medical marijuana facilities in the Town of Franklin.
<i>Source: Town of Franklin Zoning Bylaw</i>	

OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT BYLAW

In 1987, Franklin enacted the “Open Space development” amendment (Chapter 185 Section 43) of the Zoning Bylaw (Chapter 185). While this amendment encourages development of single-family residential housing patterns, it is ultimately designed to accommodate and preserve the physical characteristics of a site and provide open space for active and/or passive recreation. This bylaw retains the same density as existing zoning would permit but allows the lots to be reduced in size and located on only a portion of a developable parcel in order that the remainder of the parcel can be dedicated as conservation land. To date, there have been 18 Open Space subdivisions constructed and preserving, although not necessarily permanently, hundreds of acres of significant wetlands, wooded areas and green areas in Town. The land acquired by the OSD Bylaw tends to go to ownership by the Town Council. If ownership to the Conservation Commission was granted, then the land would be permanently preserved.

OTHER REGULATIONS

Priority Development Sites and Economic Opportunity Areas. Economic Opportunity Areas (EOA) and Priority Development Sites (PDS) are two additional tools the Town utilizes to encourage site specific economic development within the community.

In 2008 and 2009, Franklin created three Priority Development Sites that allow for expedited permitting, increased visibility of development opportunities, and priority consideration for state assistance. This expedited permitting process is meant to attract development by streamlining administrative procedures and ensuring a maximum 180-day turnaround for permits. Franklin has over 50 parcels assigned to one of the three Priority Development Sites (Forge Park PDS, Pond Street PDS and Franklin Industrial Park PDS). Most of these parcels are zoned for light and medium industrial uses and could support substantial expansion and additional development. The Town of Franklin is working to attract renewable energy, biotechnology, medical instrumentation, and other innovative technology companies to its industrially zoned areas. For that reason, all parcels in Priority Development Sites are also within Economic Opportunity Areas.

Franklin established five Economic Opportunity Areas between 2009 and 2012 to stimulate economic development by creating conditions favorable for business expansion and assisting property owners to help fill the Town's currently empty or underutilized industrially zoned manufacturing, warehouse and office space. Businesses within EOAs can qualify for tax increment finance agreements, multi-year property tax exemptions based on the increased value of the property due to new construction or significant improvements. Chapter 4 Economic Development Element provides additional information about these designations.

Local Capacity

In Franklin, there are several departments, boards, committees, and personnel that are responsible for making land use decisions. Two departments that are most closely involved with land use decisions are the Building Department and the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and their staff; *see Chapter 9 Public Services and Facilities for a further description of these Departments*. In addition to Departmental oversight of land use issues, there is also the involvement of the following Boards and Committees.

PLANNING BOARD

The Planning Board is responsible for reviewing site plans, some use special permits, and subdivision plans. The Board has five members and one associate who are elected from the Town at-large for four-year overlapping terms. Site plans are reviewed under Chapter 185 of the Town

of Franklin Zoning Bylaw while subdivisions are reviewed under Chapter 300 of the Town of Franklin Subdivision Regulations.⁵⁸

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is responsible for approving variance requests, some special permits, and Chapter 40B applications. The Board also makes determinations on land use and zoning issues. The ZBA consists of three appointed members, and three appointed associate members.⁵⁹

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Conservation Commission is the official agency charged with the protection of Franklin's natural resources, including wetland resource areas, Conservation Areas, and Open Space. The Commission also advises other municipal officials and boards on conservation issues that relate to their areas of responsibility.⁶⁰

DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

The Design Review Commission (DRC) is a committee of Citizen Volunteers that has approval authority on signage and recommendation input to the Planning Board on Site Plans as to landscaping and lighting and Building Plans as to exterior design, colors, and materials. The purpose of design review is to promote development while maintaining the New England character and appearance of Franklin.⁶¹

TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Members of the Technical Review Committee include the Building Commissioner, Town Planner, Director, Department of Planning and Community Development, Town Engineer, Board of Health Director, Conservation Agent, Fire Chief, Town Administrator, and Town Attorney. These inter-departmental meetings serve as a way for relevant Town Departments to meet with

⁵⁸ "Planning Board" Franklin, MA, accessed August 2023, <https://www.franklinma.gov/planning-board>

⁵⁹ "Zoning Board of Appeals" Franklin, MA, accessed August 2023. <https://www.franklinma.gov/zoning-board-appeals>.

⁶⁰ "Conservation" Franklin, MA, accessed August 2023. <https://www.franklinma.gov/conservation>.

⁶¹ "Design Review Commission" Franklin, MA, accessed August 2023. <https://www.franklinma.gov/design-review-commission>.

developers to work out technical issues and provide advice and assistance to help developers through the permitting process in preparation for Board meetings.⁶²



⁶² “Technical Review Committee” Franklin, MA, accessed August 2023. <https://www.franklinma.gov/technical-review-committee>.

7. Natural, Cultural & Historic Resources

Introduction

Franklin is a town that proudly intertwines its natural, historic, and cultural treasures to create a tapestry of unparalleled charm. Steeped in a rich historical background, many of Franklin's significant buildings and areas have stood the test of time, narrating tales of the past. Franklin offers a rich diversity of landscapes including urban, suburban, small town and rural/agricultural areas. The Town has hills, farmlands, pastures, scenic roadways lined with large trees, stone walls, lakes, rivers, streams, marshes, and swamps - all the unique features for a picturesque landscape that serves a variety of lifestyles and creates a pleasant environment for residents to live and work. As stewards of this New England gem, the community is committed to smart growth, protecting its natural resources, maintaining its historic appeal, and identifying and safeguarding lands and historic characteristics that make Franklin a treasured place to live, work, and play.

Existing Conditions and Trends

GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY, AND SOILS

Franklin is characterized by low, rounded hills and open valleys formed by repeated advances of glacial ice. Elevations in the town range from 470 feet above sea level in the southern portion of the town, to less than 150 feet near Populatic Pond in the north. Some portions of northern Franklin also reach elevations over 400 feet above sea level.⁶³ With a majority of the town sitting at 250-350 feet above sea level, Franklin is one of the highest elevated towns in Norfolk County.⁶⁴

Franklin's bedrock is mainly composed of two types of granite: Dedham and Quincy granite. Dedham Granite runs through the lower half of Franklin, while Quincy Granite runs through the

⁶³ Town of Franklin, *2013 Master Plan*, 2013.

⁶⁴ Town of Franklin, *Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020 Update)*, prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, January 6, 2021, https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/franklin_ma_hazard_mitigation_plan_2020_update_-_adopted_01-06-21.pdf.

northern half.⁶⁵ The Town has a small band of diorite (a dark, granite-textured rock) and diabase (dark, fine igneous rock, often used for crushed stone) dikes and sills along its eastern border with Norfolk and a strip of Wamsutta Formation (red to pink conglomerates of sandstone shale and rholite) along its southern border with Wrentham. The Bellingham-Franklin line is straddled with a strip of the Blackstone Group (quartzite, schist, phyllite, marble and metavolcanic rocks) on its northern half and a strip of Mattapan Volcanic Complex to the south of the Blackstone Group.⁶⁶

As the glacier retreated to the north, glacial till (unsorted glacial sediment) was deposited on hills, while meltwaters covered lower elevations with stratified glacial deposits of sand and gravel. In Map 7.1, tills appear as green, outwash areas of sand and gravel deposits are indicated by orange, bedrock outcrops are denoted by red, and brown indicates areas of artificial fill. Alluvium (mainly organic matter, fine sand, and silt) which underlies the flood plains of most streams and rivers, is represented by yellow areas.⁶⁷ There are large swamp deposits in the western half of the town, as well as in some wetland pockets in other parts of Franklin. Comparing the surficial geology to flood hazard areas (shown in Map 7.2), clearly shows how the soils left behind by the glaciers are impacting the water flow at the surface today. Areas that would experience flooding during a 100-year flood overlap areas of floodplain alluvium and swamp deposits that are poorly draining and hold significant amounts of water and peat.⁶⁸

Franklin's surficial geology consists primarily of deep, moderate to excessively drained fine, sandy loams. Knowledge of the soil types located within Franklin is a valuable tool for land use

⁶⁵ Town of Franklin, *2013 Master Plan*, 2013.

⁶⁶ Town Of Franklin, *2016 Open Space & Recreation Plan*, prepared by the Franklin Conservation Commission with the assistance of the Franklin Department of Planning & Community Development, 2016, https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/updated_osrp.pdf, 38.

⁶⁷ Stone, J.R., Stone, B.D., DiGiacomo-Cohen, M.L., and Mabee, S.B., comps., 2018, Surficial materials of Massachusetts—A 1:24,000-scale geologic map database: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Map 3402, 189 sheets, scale 1:24,000; index map, scale 1:250,000; 58-p. pamphlet; and geodatabase files, <https://doi.org/10.3133/sim3402>.

⁶⁸ Stone, J.R., Stone, B.D., DiGiacomo-Cohen, M.L., and Mabee, S.B., comps., 2018, Surficial materials of Massachusetts—A 1:24,000-scale geologic map database: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Map 3402, 189 sheets, scale 1:24,000; index map, scale 1:250,000; 58-p. pamphlet; and geodatabase files, <https://doi.org/10.3133/sim3402>.

planning. Soil conditions can inform appropriate locations for farming, development and construction uses, flood management and other uses.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

Due to the high quality of its soil, Franklin has a rich agricultural history. Of Franklin's 17,296 acres, 5,375 acres are classified as prime farmland or farmland of statewide significance.⁶⁹

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), prime farmland "has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for economically producing sustained high yields of food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods".⁷⁰ Farmland of statewide significance "is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oil seed crops, as determined by the appropriate state agency or agencies. Generally, these include lands that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods."⁷¹

While there were over 200 farms across Franklin in the late 1800s, that number has decreased dramatically today. As of 2023, the town reported only 14 operating farms (see Table 7.1 below).⁷² Recently, the Town Council established the Franklin Agricultural Commission to promote the long-term economic and environmental viability of Franklin agriculture, provide agricultural resources, and preserve farmland in the town.⁷³

⁶⁹ MassGIS, "Soils SSURGO-Certified NRCS," June 2020, Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-soils-ssurgo-certified-nrcs>.

⁷⁰ MassGIS, "Soils SSURGO-Certified NRCS," June 2020, Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-soils-ssurgo-certified-nrcs>.

⁷¹ MassGIS, "Soils SSURGO-Certified NRCS," June 2020, Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-soils-ssurgo-certified-nrcs>.

⁷² Town of Franklin, *Our Family Farms*, 2023, provided by Melanie Hamblen, Franklin Town Council, Agriculture Liaison.

⁷³ "Agricultural Commission," Franklin, MA, accessed August 2023. <https://www.franklinma.gov/agricultural-commission>.

The Franklin Farmers' Market is held on the Franklin Town Common on Fridays from June through October and a Winter Farmers' Market is held at Fairmount Fruit Farm on selected Saturdays from November through April.

There is a Franklin StoryMap on the farms in Franklin ([Farms in Franklin Map Tour \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)).

Table 7.1. Farms in Franklin.		
Farm	Address	Description
Broken Fork Farm	70 Daniels St.	Formerly Hoffman Farm. Locally raised, small batch chicken. All-natural feed. Veggies and eggs.
Charles River Farm	107 Elm St.	Offers wholesale salad greens and vegetable plants, which are sold at the local Franklin Agway
Clarion Farm	444 Lincoln St.	Hunter/jumper stable; breeder of Duch Warm blood sport horses
Cook's Valley Farm	Main farm is in Wrentham, but farms some in Franklin	Cook's Family has been farming in Franklin since 1757, before Franklin was incorporated. Offers a large variety of fruits and vegetables, local eggs, jams and jellies, and apple cider
Fairmount Fruit Farm	887 Lincoln St.	Fairmount Fruit Farm is a Century Farm and has been family owned since 1920. Offers a variety of fresh produce (apples, peaches, pears), free range eggs, dairy products, baked goods and products made by other local vendors
Franklin Honey Company	1 Green St.	Provide raw and unprocessed honey and beeswax related products including soap, lip balm and hand creams
Gianetti's U- Pick Blueberries	557 Union St.	Pick your own blueberries
Linda's Tomatoes at Terrapin Farm	555 Lincoln St.	Specializes in hydroponically grown heirloom tomatoes
Lyon Landscape Nursery	250 Bent St.	Cut your own Christmas trees
Northeast Bees	64 Maple St.	Apiary raising queens and bees for beekeepers
Night Owl Farm	49 Prospect St.	Formerly Grateful Farm. Originally started as an herb farm in 1983. From the beginning, all herbs and produce have been grown pesticide and chemical free to meet organic growing practices. Contact for CSA.
Old Exit 17 Farm	360 Central Street	Farm grown seasonal flower bouquets, potted perennials, annuals, herbs and veggies plants
Wadsworth Farm	15 Spring St.	Specializes in blueberries, raspberries, and flowers
WoodCrest Farm	398 Prospect St.	Feed and construction hay
Source: Town of Franklin, Our Family Farms, 2023		

FORESTED LAND

Nearly 8,000 acres in Franklin is forest. This makes forested land the largest land use category in Franklin at 46.1 percent of the town, and adding the 4.8 percent of forested wetlands brings the total forest coverage to over half of the town.⁷⁴ Forests in Franklin include a mixture of coniferous and hardwood trees, mainly varieties of oak, red maple, and white pine.⁷⁵ Woodland areas provide habitat for a variety of birds and mammals such as ruffed grouse (pheasant), thrushes, woodpeckers, gray and red squirrels, chipmunks, gray fox, deer, and other wildlife typical to this part of New England.⁷⁶

SIGNIFICANT HABITAT

Map 7.3, BioMap Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape,⁷⁷ displays high priority habitats targeted for preservation to conserve biodiversity in Massachusetts. MassWildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program and the Nature Conservancy collaborate to designate these areas.⁷⁸ Many of these components have Local and Regional additions to help enhance conservation of habitats and plan at the municipal and regional scale.

Franklin has four National Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) delineated priority habitats of rare species⁷⁹ and NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife.⁸⁰

1. The area around Beaver Pond and Mine Brook: from the railroad tracks just south of Route 140, across Interstate 495 to, and including, Spring Pond on Washington Street.

⁷⁴ Town of Franklin, *Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020 Update)*, prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, January 6, 2021, https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/franklin_ma_hazard_mitigation_plan_2020_update_-_adopted_01-06-21.pdf, 55.

⁷⁵ Town of Franklin, *2013 Master Plan*, 2013.

⁷⁶ Town of Franklin, *Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020 Update)*, prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, January 6, 2021, https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/franklin_ma_hazard_mitigation_plan_2020_update_-_adopted_01-06-21.pdf, 55.

⁷⁷ NHESP/TNC BioMap must be in legend

⁷⁸ MassGIS, "BioMap: The Future of Conservation," prepared by the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program and the Nature Conservancy, November 22, 2022, www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-biomap-the-future-of-conservation#elements-of-biomap.

⁷⁹ MassGIS, "NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species," prepared by the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, August 2021, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-nhesp-priority-habitats-of-rare-species>.

⁸⁰ NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife are the same as/ perfectly overlap priority habitats in Franklin.

2. Located primarily within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Charles River Natural Valley Storage area.
3. The area encompassing Wampanoag Drive up to Concetta Way located in the eastern part of Franklin on the border of Norfolk and Wrentham.
4. The area surrounding Miscoe Brook on the southwestern portion of Town within proximity of Washington and South Street.

Endangered and Vulnerable Species

According to the National Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Franklin provides habitat for several endangered, threatened, and species of special concern. Table 7.2 details the plant and animal species in Franklin protected under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act.

Table 7.2. Endangered and Vulnerable Species, Town of Franklin, MA.				
Taxonomic Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	MESA Status	Most Recent Obs.
Vascular Plant	Small-flowered Buttercup	Ranunculus micranthus	Endangered	1910
	Stiff Yellow Flax	Linum medium var. texanum	Threatened	1886
Bird	Least Bittern	Ixobrychus exilis	Endangered	1992
Reptile	Eastern Box Turtle	Terrapene carolina	Special Concern	2015
	Wood Turtle	Glyptemys insculpta	Special Concern	2016
Source: MassWildlife's NHESP, "Rare species viewer," January 10, 2020, https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer .				

WATER RESOURCES

Drinking water

According to the town's 2022 *Drinking Water Report*, drinking water is obtained from 14 groundwater supply wells. Seven of these wells undergo filtration through one of the two town operated water treatment plants (Grove Street WTP and Fisher Street WTP). The town also operates eight booster pumping stations, six water storage tanks, 2,000 hydrants, 170 miles of

water main, and more than 9,700 water services.⁸¹ Well No. 7 has been offline since February 2022 and will not be turned back on until a treatment plant to reduce PFAS below the regulated limits is complete. In the areas outside of municipal services, individual private wells are used to supply homes and other uses.⁸² *(For additional information on Franklin's water supply, see the Public Services and Facilities chapter).*

None of Franklin's major surface water bodies serve as a source for drinking water. Instead, Franklin relies on local groundwater sources (aquifers associated with these water bodies) for all of its public water supply. There are two major types of aquifers in the area, gravel and sand aquifers and bedrock aquifers. Only the sand and gravel aquifers, which are not very deep and are located near surface water bodies, are capable of producing the hundreds of gallons of water per minute that are expected from municipal wells.⁸³

DEP Wellhead Protection Areas

As a groundwater community, the DEP wellhead protection areas are crucial to protecting the recharge areas around public water supplies in Franklin. There are three types of WPAs:

Zone I: The protective radius required around a public water supply well or wellfield.

Zone II: Zone II applies to the larger recharge area around Zone I. As stated in 310 CMR 22.02, Zone II is "The area of an aquifer which contributes water to a well under the most severe pumping and recharge conditions that can be realistically anticipated (180 days of pumping at safe yield, with no recharge from precipitation)."

Interim Wellhead Protection Area (IWPA): In the absence of an approved Zone II, DEP delineates IWPA as the primary, protected recharge area for public water supply groundwater sources.

Map 7.4 displays these wellhead protection zones, aquifers, and groundwater supply wells.

Water quantity and quality are important concerns for maintaining the water supply and for the health of the many streams and wetlands within Franklin. The town created a Water Resource

⁸¹ Franklin Department of Public Works Water Division, *2022 Drinking Water Report*, 2022, https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf10036/f/uploads/franklinccr2022_updated.pdf.

⁸² Town of Franklin, *Open Space & Recreation Plan*, 2023 Update, 23.

⁸³ Town of Franklin, *Open Space & Recreation Plan*, 2023 Update, 28.

District (Franklin Zoning Bylaw, Chapter 185-40) to protect, preserve and maintain the existing and potential ground and surface water resources providing water supply for the Town of Franklin.⁸⁴ It includes areas designated DEP Approved Zone 1, designated DEP Approved Zone 2, submitted for approval DEP Zone 2, and DEP approved Interim Wellhead Protection Areas. Aquifers are afforded protection by the Water Resource District bylaw enacted in Franklin and wellheads are provided with at least a 400-foot radius wellhead protection zone.⁸⁵ This overlay district helps protect the water supply through measures such as limiting the percentage of the lot that can be rendered impervious, prohibiting the underground storage of hazardous materials, and strictly regulating above ground storage, limiting the use of septic tanks, etc.

Watersheds and Surface Water

The majority of Franklin is in the Charles River watershed, as the Charles River forms the northern boundary of the town. A small portion of Franklin (the southern corners) is part of the Blackstone River watershed. Several smaller rivers and streams meander across the town including Shepards Brook, Mine Brook, Miller Brook, Uncas Brook, Dix Brook, and Miscoe Brook. The 2023 OSRP lists seven significant ponds scattered around Franklin: Beaver Pond, Uncas Pond, Western Shore of Populatic Pond, Spruce Pond, Ray's Pond, Joachim Pond, and Green Pond.⁸⁶

Other significant surface water bodies in Franklin include the DelCorte Recreation Area,⁸⁷ Franklin Reservoir (which is not used for public water supply), and Woodward Swamp.⁸⁸ As stated above, none of Franklin's major surface water bodies serve as a source for drinking water, though most of Franklin's aquifers are associated with and are in close proximity to surface water bodies. Instead, these surface water bodies are ecological, recreational, and historic assets to the community.

⁸⁴ Town of Franklin, Zoning Bylaw, Chapter 185-40, Water Resources District.

⁸⁵ Town of Franklin, *Open Space & Recreation Plan*, 2023 Update, 28.

⁸⁶ Town of Franklin, *Open Space & Recreation Plan*, 2023 Update, 28.

⁸⁷ Town of Franklin, *2013 Master Plan*, 2013.

⁸⁸ Town of Franklin, *Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020 Update)*, prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, January 6, 2021, 29.

https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/franklin_ma_hazard_mitigation_plan_2020_update_-_adopted_01-06-21.pdf.

VERNAL POOLS

Vernal pools are small, shallow freshwater ponds characterized by periods of dryness. Vernal pools are important areas to protect as they provide habitat for many species of wildlife, some of which rely exclusively on vernal pools for their survival. These pools provide a safe place for frogs, salamanders, and other species to lay eggs that are free from fish.

Map 7.2 displays Franklin's seven NHESP certified Vernal pools. Three are located in the northeast side of town near Chestnut Street and Jordan Road, three located in the southern portion of town in the vicinity of Jefferson Road and Forest Street, and one in and near Franklin State Forest on the western side of town. The map also includes approximately 110 potential vernal pools identified by the NHESP.⁸⁹

Certification of new vernal pools relies on volunteers to submit documentation of certain biological and physical characteristics of the potential vernal pool to the NHESP. Franklin also encourages residents to report potential vernal pools to the town's Conservation Agent/Natural Resource Protection Manager.⁹⁰ Efforts to locate these potential vernal pools and submit for NHESP certification could help protect these important habitats.

WETLANDS

The Town of Franklin recognizes Wetlands, Rivers, Bordering/Isolated Land Subject to Flooding (i.e. floodplain/zone), Vernal Pools, Estimated/Priority Habitats, Perennial and Intermittent Streams, and their respective Buffer Zones as jurisdictional Wetland Resource Areas (WRAs).⁹¹ The Franklin Conservation Commission oversees the protection of these sites through enforcement of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Local Wetlands Bylaw and Regulations.⁹²

Wetlands perform important functions in Franklin; they provide recharge for both public and private wells, store floodwaters, assist in filtering and cleaning water, and provide habitat for

⁸⁹ MassGIS, "NHESP Certified Vernal Pools", Updated Continually, Accessed November 2023.

⁹⁰ "Vernal Pools and How to Report," Franklin, MA, accessed August 2023, <https://www.franklinma.gov/conservation/webforms/vernal-pools-and-how-report>.

⁹¹ "Homeowners 101," Franklin, MA, accessed August 2023, <https://www.franklinma.gov/conservation/pages/homeowners-101>.

⁹² Town of Franklin, Bylaws, Chapter 181 Wetlands Protection.

wildlife. Map 7.2 illustrates the approximately 2,320 acres in Franklin that are delineated wetlands.⁹³ Wetland areas are scattered throughout Franklin, with many located along the sides of streams, brooks, or ponds.

FLOOD AREAS

The 2020 update of Franklin's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan cites flooding as "the most prevalent natural hazard identified by local officials".⁹⁴ Flooding in Franklin is primarily associated with overflowing streams and rivers, stormwater flooding, and beaver dams. As a result, most flood hazard areas mapped by FEMA (see Map 7.2) follow the floodplains of streams and overlap with wetlands and ponds.

A majority of the floodplain in Franklin is located within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charles River Natural Valley Storage Area (CRNV) or is adjacent to Mine Brook, Shepards Brook, and Uncas Brook.⁹⁵ The wetlands and marshes of the CRNV provide a passive means of water conservation and floodplain control within Franklin and the Towns located downstream along the Charles River watershed. This area also provides benefits beyond flood protection: maintaining open space and recreation lands, scenic views, wildlife habitats, and more. Like many other towns, Franklin has established a Floodplain District zoning overlay to regulate development within all special flood hazard areas designated as Zone A or AE on the Norfolk County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).⁹⁶

The Charles River Flood Model (CRFM) is an available resource to help identify additional flood-prone lands.⁹⁷

⁹³ MassGIS, "National Wetlands Inventory", November 2020.

⁹⁴ Town of Franklin, *Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020 Update)*, prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, January 6, 2021, 30.
https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/franklin_ma_hazard_mitigation_plan_2020_update_-_adopted_01-06-21.pdf.

⁹⁵ Town Of Franklin, *2016 Open Space & Recreation Plan*, prepared by Franklin Conservation Commission with the assistance of the Franklin Department of Planning & Community Development, 2016 update,
https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/updated_osrp.pdf.

⁹⁶ Franklin Zoning Bylaw, Chapter 185-24

⁹⁷ Charles River Watershed Association, "A Clean Resilient Charles River for All, Strategic Plan 2021-2025," 7.

IMPAIRED WATERS

Several of Franklin’s significant surface water bodies have water quality impairments (and accompanying Total Daily Maximum Loads (TMDLs). Table 7.3 lists these water bodies along with their impairment(s). Primary impairments include pollution from stormwater and other sources and invasive species.

TMDLs are critical tools for restoring and protecting the water quality of degraded water bodies. A TMDL specifies the maximum allowable amount of a pollutant that can enter a water body so that the water body will meet water quality standards for that pollutant. The TMDL also sets a pollutant reduction target and allocates the pollutant load across different sources. This allocation can then be used to identify control actions that will help achieve the applicable water quality standards.⁹⁸

Table 7.3. Integrated List of Waters in Franklin			
Waterbody	Area (acres) or Length (miles)	Water Quality Category	Impairment
Charles River	11.5 miles	5 Impaired waters requiring a TDML	Flow Regime Modification*
			Ambient Bioassays - Chronic Aquatic Toxicity
			Chlordane in Fish Tissue
			DDT in Fish Tissue
			Escherichia Coli (E. Coli)
			Fish Bioassessments
			Mercury in Fish Tissue
			Nutrient/Eutrophication Biological Indicators
			Total Phosphorus
			Temperature
Populatic Pond	42 acres	5 Impaired waters requiring a TDML	Algae
			Chlordane in Fish Tissue
			DDT in Fish Tissue
			Dissolved Oxygen
			Dissolved Oxygen Supersaturation
			Mercury in Fish Tissue
			Nutrient/Eutrophication Biological Indicators

⁹⁸ “Overview of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs),” US EPA, last modified November 30, 2022.

Table 7.3. Integrated List of Waters in Franklin

Waterbody	Area (acres) or Length (miles)	Water Quality Category	Impairment
Beaver Pond	32 acres	4c Impairment not caused by a pollutant – TMDL not required	Fanwort*
			Non-Native Aquatic Plants*
Franklin Reservoir Northeast	21 acres	4a "TMDL is completed"	Water Chestnut*
			Aquatic Plants (Macrophytes)
			Turbidity
Franklin Reservoir Southwest	13 acres	4a "TMDL is completed"	Aquatic Plants (Macrophytes) Turbidity
Mine Brook	8.9 miles	5 Impaired waters requiring a TDML	(Habitat Assessment*)
			Escherichia Coli (E. Coli)
			Temperature
Shepards Brook	2.3 miles	2 Waters suitable for some uses; other uses not assessed	
Uncas Pond	17 acres	4a "TMDL is completed"	Non-Native Aquatic Plants* Dissolved Oxygen
<i>Sources: Mass DEP, Final Massachusetts Integrated List of Waters for the Clean Water Act 2018/2020 Reporting Cycle, November 2021, https://www.mass.gov/doc/appendices-1-5-to-massachusetts-integrated-list-of-waters-for-the-clean-water-act-201820-reporting-cycle/download.</i> *TMDL not required (Non-pollutant)			

UNIQUE FEATURES AND SCENIC RESOURCES

The 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan highlights several scenic and unique features within Franklin. Scenic vistas can be found throughout town, allowing residents to enjoy the beauty of natural landscapes within their community:

- on major water bodies such as the Charles River and Chilson Beach and Beaver Pond (both of which have swimming access);
- quaint, winding, stonewall and old growth lined scenic roads; and
- active farmlands, including farms on Daniels Street, Lincoln Street, and Koshivas Drive.

Residents of Franklin also enjoy access to forest lands and several recreation areas. These include the Franklin State Forest, Franklin Town Forest, nearly 55 acres of conservation land owned by the Metacomet Land Trust, and the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT). Recreation areas include Fletcher Field, King Street Memorial Park, the DelCarte Recreation Area, and Dacey Field all of which have playing fields, parking areas and playground equipment that meet ADA

accessibility guidelines. Historic areas, including the Town's two historic districts, provide a place for people to learn about Franklin's unique past.⁹⁹

SCENIC ROADS

The town has designated nine "Scenic Roads" (illustrated in Map 7.5), under the Scenic Road Bylaw (Town Code 170-50-56), because of their historic significance, mature trees, stone walls, and contribution to scenic and aesthetic quality of area. Designations take place through a local review process with the Franklin Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Historical Commission (though this process is currently on hold).¹⁰⁰ Developers are required to maintain the character of the roads by replacing any disturbed stone walls and planting new trees to replace any that were removed. Existing scenic roads include: Daniels St., Forest St., Jordan Rd., Mount St., Partridge St., Prospect St. (from Town line to Washington St.), South Street, Spring St., and Upper Union St. (from King St. to Wrentham Town line).¹⁰¹

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Franklin prides itself on the wide spectrum of architectural styles preserved in the community, including handsome Greek revival and Italianate buildings, as well as High Victorian Gothic, Second Empire and Queen Ann, among others. Many of these historic structures are home to the offices and dormitories of Dean College, and within the community's two National Historic Districts.¹⁰²

First Public Library

In 1778, when the town was incorporated, the designated name Exeter was changed to Franklin in honor of Dr. Benjamin Franklin, who responded with a gift of 116 books for use by the Town's residents. On November 20th, 1790, those attending Franklin's town meeting voted to lend the books to all Franklin inhabitants free of charge. This vote established the Franklin collection as the first free public lending library in the United States. Horace Mann, born and raised in Franklin, who went on to transform public education in America, credits the library with

⁹⁹ Town of Franklin, Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2023 Update, 31.

¹⁰⁰ Franklin Department of Planning & Community Development, *Status of 2013 Master Plan Implementation*, 2020 update, https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/masterplan_update_materials.pdf.

¹⁰¹ Town of Franklin, *2013 Master Plan*, 2013.

¹⁰² "Community Profile," Franklin, MA, accessed August 2023, <https://www.franklinma.gov/economic-development/pages/community-profile>.

providing the majority of his early education. The remaining volumes of the original Franklin collection are on display in the historic Ray Memorial Library building.

Historic Properties

Franklin has 400¹⁰³ historic resources documented on MACRIS, the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Cultural Resource Information System.¹⁰⁴ While most properties are only documented as historic resources at the state level, 96 (90 extant) properties are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Furthermore, the majority of listed historic resources are residential buildings, 22 of which were constructed in the 18th century. The oldest of these include the Aldis Homestead at 146 Brook Street, and the Blake House at 365 Grove Street, both built in 1710.

Most documented historic structures (239) in Franklin date back to the 19th century. Red Brick Schoolhouse, constructed in 1833, was at one time considered to be the Country's oldest continually running one room schoolhouse. Until 2019, this Greek-Revival was still being used for educational purposes by the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School. Currently, the town has historic preservation plans to restore the building. Another town-owned building, Ray Memorial Library, originally built in 1904, is still in use as the Franklin Public Library. Commissioned by Franklin sisters Lydia Ray Peirce and Annie Ray Thayer as a memorial to their father, successful industrialist Joseph Gordon Ray, and designed by prominent Boston landscape artist Henry Hammond Gallison, it is a shining example of neoclassical architecture. In addition to the fine architecture there are also fine works of art by H.H. Gallison, American artist Frank Hector Tompkins and Italian artist Tommaso Juglaris. The Ray Memorial Library is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Additionally, MACRIS lists objects and structures of historical significance, including war memorials, other monuments, and bridges. Examples include the Franklin Civil War Soldiers Monument (c. 1903), Franklin Common Bandstand (c. 1917), G. A. R. Memorial Boulder (1913), and the Horace Mann Birthplace Monument (c.1929) on East Central Street. The town has two historic cemeteries from the early 1700's: Union Street Cemetery and Green Street Cemetery.

¹⁰³ Twenty of these 400 historic structures have been demolished subsequent to the record being created and filed with MHC.

¹⁰⁴ MassGIS, "MHC Historic Inventory," updated May 23, 2023, Prepared by Massachusetts Historical Commission, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-mhc-historic-inventory>.

Many of the gravestones in Union Street Cemetery, which serves as the resting place for many revolutionary soldiers, remain intact. Map 7.6 displays the historic properties and features listed on MACRIS by type.

Historic Districts

The majority of Franklin's historic resources are clustered around the town's two historic districts, which are National Register Historic Districts. Franklin does not currently have any local historic districts. Dean Junior College National Register Historic District was established in 1975. Currently, MACRIS lists 21 extant buildings within the district, primarily housing and academic buildings related to the college.

Established in 2005, the Franklin Common National Register Historic District includes properties on portions of Main Street, High Street, Union Street, Pleasant Street, and Church Square. This district contains 70 historic resources: 56 buildings, 12 objects, and 2 structures.

MACRIS documents several other historic areas of Franklin, including: Franklin Center, Franklin Manufacturing District, Unionville, North Franklin, South Franklin, West Central Streetscape, Garfield Streetscape, Emmons Streetscape, Dale Streetscape, Charlotte Court Streetscape, North Park Streetscape, Ray Hill Streetscape, and Franklin State Forest - CCC Camp.

Industrial History

Franklin also has a rich industrial history. Many of Franklin's historic mill buildings date back to the early industrial revolution. Production of straw hats started in the 1790s, and several other industries popped up throughout the 19th century. Franklin's manufacturing facilities produced a wide range of products, including J.W. Clark's foundry and factory for making textile equipment, and many textile mills were constructed. By the late 1880s members of the Ray family alone owned and managed fourteen mills. Many of these mill buildings are still visible in Franklin today, having been rehabilitated into commercial buildings, condominiums, or apartment buildings, and some are still utilized for industrial uses. Examples of mill buildings and other prominent buildings built in the late 19th and very early 20th centuries include the following:

- Clark, Cutler and McDermott Factory at 5 Fisher Street (1910);
- Bassett Snow and Company Straw Works at 115 Dean Street (1880);
- Ray Woolen Mill at 305 Union Street (1876);

- Rathburn and McKenzie Ray Felting Mill on Union Street (1972);
- Franklin Cotton Manufacturing Company at 860 West Central Street (1883);
- Franklin Railroad Station; E.A. Staples Straw Factory at 23 Winter Street (1906);
- Ray Mills - Franklin Mills Worker Housing at 349 Union Street (1890);
- A.J. Cataldo Building at 7-13 East Central Street (1923);
- Palmer and Woodworth House at 85 Hillside Road (1910);
- Aaron Hartwell House (Dean College) at 131 Main Street (1890);
- Hayward Mansion at 195 Main Street (1921);
- Hayward Mansion Gardeners Bungalow at 36 Pleasant Street (1915);
- First Congregational Church of Franklin (1895), and related Parsonage (1868) both at 183 Main Street; and
- Asa Austin Fletcher House at 164 Main Street (1877).

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Since the previous Master Plan, much has been accomplished related to cultural resources. The creation of Franklin Cultural District was an important objective reached. But even without a Cultural District, Franklin's arts and cultural resources, especially in the areas of performing arts and education, are regionally significant.

Franklin Cultural District

Since the creation of the 2013 Master Plan, much has been accomplished related to cultural resources. After a multi-year effort by the Town and a dedicated committee of citizen arts advocates and cultural organization partners, the establishment of the Franklin Cultural District in 2019 helped achieve the goal of providing quality arts and cultural resources. Franklin's Cultural District designation is currently one of fifty-five in Massachusetts. Even without a Cultural District, Franklin's arts and cultural resources, especially in the areas of performing arts and education, are regionally significant.

Arts and culture make communities a more vibrant, supportive place to live, while boosting the economy and the community's value. The District has a vibrant, walkable nature and is filled with culture, activities, events, and partner organizations.

The purpose of the District is to attract artists and cultural enterprises, encourage business development and job growth, expand tourism, preserve and reuse historic buildings, enhance

property values, and foster local cultural development. Having an established Cultural District not only attracts additional arts and cultural organizations to the town but drives economic development in and around the area. The District designation also benefits partner organizations by making them eligible for a variety of state grant programs, economic development opportunities, strategic planning tools, historic preservation assistance, and marketing assistance. The Franklin Cultural District Committee manages the District, by marketing and organizing partnerships and events.

Cultural Organizations

Franklin is home to numerous organizations that contribute to the culture and heritage of the town. Resident organizations and clubs include the Franklin Cultural Council, Franklin Garden Club, Rotary Club of Franklin, and Franklin Historical Commission. Visual and Performing Arts organizations include the Franklin Art Association, LiveARTS, and Circle of Friends Coffeehouse. Charitable organizations within town include Order Sons and Daughters of Italy, the Franklin Odd Fellows, Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks, and the Franklin Lions Club. Cultural and religious-based organizations include the Knights of Columbus, Franklin Interfaith Council, and the various religious facilities and places of worship.

Local Policies and Practices

BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND COMMISSIONS

The Town of Franklin has numerous active volunteer boards, committees, and commissions whose efforts relate to the Town's natural, cultural, and historic resources.

Agriculture Commission

The Agricultural Commission's mission is to preserve, revitalize, and sustain the Franklin Agricultural Industry and its lands: encouraging the pursuit of agriculture, promoting agricultural-based economic opportunities, and protecting farmland. The commission performs public relations outreach and education, builds relationships, and helps resolve conflicts between farms and neighbors or town boards, and serves as a resource on agricultural matters for all town boards and citizens.

Franklin Cultural Council (FCC)

The FCC grants funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Town of Franklin to support non-profit organizations, programs, and events.

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission is the official agency specifically charged with the protection of Franklin's wetland resource areas, Conservation Areas, and Open Space. The Commission also advises other municipal officials and boards on conservation issues that relate to their areas of responsibility.

Historical Commission

The Historical Commission provides for the preservation, protection, and development of the historic and archaeological assets of Franklin. The activities of the commission encompass many areas including: research on places of historical or architectural value, working with the State Archaeologist in conducting surveys and reporting on sites, supporting educational activities, establishing historic districts, providing information for genealogical searches, and operating and maintaining the Franklin Historical Museum. The Historical Commission partners with the Building Commissioner to manage the Demolition Delay Bylaw in Town as well as with the Director of Planning and Community Development to monitor the Town's entries on the National Registers of Historic Districts and Buildings.

Cultural District Committee

The Town Council established the Franklin Cultural District Committee on June 28, 2017, to attract artists and cultural enterprises, encourage business and job development, establish the district as a tourist destination, preserve and reuse historic buildings, enhance property values, and foster local cultural development. This committee markets the District and helps to organize cross-partner efforts and events.

LOCAL REGULATIONS

In addition to those discussed throughout this chapter, Franklin has numerous regulatory measures in place to protect, preserve, and restore valuable natural, historic, and cultural resources within the town.

Preservation and Conservation Restrictions

Three buildings cataloged on MACRIS are listed as having preservation restrictions that run with their deeds in perpetuity: the Aldis Homestead (146 Brook St, built in 1710), the Dean Junior College Administration Building (119 Main St, built in 1870), and the Joseph P. Ray – Arthur W. Peirce House (884 Washington St, built in 1875).

The Franklin Historical Commission partners with the Building Commissioner to manage the Demolition Delay Bylaw (Town Code 71-1-7). This bylaw requires a public hearing with the Historical Commission to determine if a structure listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, or built prior to 1930, is eligible for a one-year delay period prior to issuance of a permit.

No lands within the town are permanently protected by a conservation restriction, but some, such as those that were created as part of an open space subdivision, are deed restricted. Franklin has over 1,000 acres of Town owned, protected conservation lands.¹⁰⁵

Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) was passed in 2000 to help communities empower themselves to raise a dedicated revenue source for the purposes of open space preservation, historic preservation, affordable housing, and recreation.

Franklin approved the Community Preservation Act at the ballot in November 2020 and adopted a Community Preservation Committee Bylaw (Town Code 16-1-4) in December 2020. The Community Preservation Committee carries out activities related to the CPA. The CPA has already proved to be a useful tool for the Town. In November 2021, the Town purchased the 70-acre Maple Hill open space property and was able to purchase this property very quickly by making use of the provision in the Community Preservation Act that allows communities to borrow against future spending on CPA.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Town of Franklin, Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2023 Update, 205.

¹⁰⁶ Community Preservation Committee, *CPA Plan & Materials*, June 7, 2022, https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/2022_cpa_plan_v.2_4.pdf.

Additional CPA funded historic projects that were recently funded in Franklin are the Town Clerk Vault Records Preservation, Historical Museum Cupola, and Brick School House Exterior Preservation. Table 7.4 includes the project descriptions as well as amount of CPA funding.

Table 7.4: Community Preservation Act (CPA) Projects, Historic, Franklin, MA (2021-2023)				
Project Name	Description	Approval Date	CPA Amount	Total Amount
Town Clerk Vault Records Preservation	The Town will Hire King Information Systems to organize and improve the handling of our records as well as increase the efficiency of what is left for our storage space in the vault used to hold all vital records, ballots, etc. in the Town Clerk's office.	6/22/2022	\$15,000	\$15,000
Historical Museum Cupola	This project will restore the Cupola on top of the Franklin Historical Museum Building, the cupola will be lifted off of the building, restored, painted and reattached.	6/22/2022	\$70,000	\$70,000
Red Brick School House Exterior Preservation	The Red Brick School house is a town owned building on the National Registry of Historic Places. This project involved lead paint remediation on the exterior of the building, brick restoration and preservation, in addition to some structural and cosmetic improvements to the exterior of the building (doors, flagpole, windows) and surrounding landscaping, signage, landscaping and general improvements are also included.	6/22/2022	\$200,000	\$200,000
Source: Community Preservation Coalition CPA Projects Database, CPA Projects Database Community Preservation Coalition, accessed August 2023; MassGIS Data Community Preservation Act Projects, June 2022.				

Chapter 61 Lands

Parcels taxed under the Chapter 61 tax classifications have a semi-protected status. The Town has the right of first refusal if the parcels are sold prior to the expiration of the tax abated status. Owners of land classified under Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B must notify the Town before selling or converting the land to another use. The Town then has 120 days to decide whether to exercise the option to purchase the land, thus allowing individual Open Space parcels to be purchased and protected as they enter the market or become threatened by development. Approximately 1,122 acres of land in Franklin are currently under this tax classification.

- Chapter 61: Landowners receive a property tax reduction in exchange for a commitment to keep their land undeveloped and to manage it for forest products.

- Chapter 61A: Landowners receive a property tax reduction in exchange for a commitment to keep their land undeveloped and managed for agricultural or horticultural products.
- Chapter 61B: Landowners receive a property tax reduction in exchange for a commitment to keeping their land undeveloped and managed for open space and recreation.

PAST AND CURRENT NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION EFFORTS

Master Plan (2013)

The update of the 1997 plan, Franklin's 2013 Master Plan introduced six goals with accompanying objectives to guide the Town's protection of natural, cultural, and historic resources. These goals focused on preserving natural resources; supporting local arts and culture; preserving scenic vistas, protecting historic architecture; and incentivizing low impact and sustainable development. While the implementation of many of these objectives is ongoing, the town has made significant progress in addressing some of them (such as adopting the Community Preservation Act and the creation of the Cultural District, for example). However, several objectives and subgoals have also been put on hold:

- Objective NCH3.5: Develop Local Historic Preservation Districts where appropriate.
- NCH3.8a. Request streets are added to the Town's Scenic Road Bylaw.
- NCH3.3a. Integrate the database with the town's Geographic Information System (GIS).

Open Space and Recreation Plan (2023)

The town recently released the draft of its Open Space and Recreation Plan 2023. Once approved by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, this plan will, in part, guide Franklin in its protection of natural resources through 2031. Town staff reviewed the previous plan (2016) and other related planning efforts, interviewed various town departments and committees, and distributed a survey to residents. The plan included five goals, including two specifically related to natural, cultural, and/or historic resources:

Goal 4: Protect natural, historical, and cultural resources and maintain Franklin's New England character; and

Goal 5: Preserve and Protect the Town's Water Resources.

To achieve these goal, the OSRP promotes several objectives and action items, many of which were ongoing during this Master Plan process: preserve natural resources for the protection of priority habitats so as to enhance biodiversity improve the quality and health of natural infrastructure; seek further adoption of Community Preservation Act; implement growth management techniques that will help to preserve the Town's natural, historic and cultural resources; and prioritize water bodies in Town for ecological studies.



8. Open Space and Recreation

Introduction

The Town of Franklin embraces a distinctive blend of developed land, open spaces, and recreational opportunities. The town places a high value on outdoor activities and conservation efforts to maintain this delicate balance between development and open space preservation. While suburban sprawl remains an ongoing challenge, Franklin has recently implemented measures to conserve and safeguard its natural landscape. Open Space and Recreation will continue to be a town priority.

Existing Conditions and Trends

Over the past few decades, various initiatives have worked towards preserving Franklin's open space. The effort began in 1985 when the Franklin Conservation Commission created the first individual open space and recreation plan. Since then, efforts have been progressively concentrated on conserving and safeguarding the town's natural environment, with the inclusion

of additional open space and recreational parcels. Currently, the town has over 5,000 acres of both public and private open space and recreation areas, including:

- 1,000+ acres of Town-owned permanently protected conservation land.
- 1,000+ acres of permanently protected recreational land.
- 400+ acres of permanently protected public open space.
- 600+ acres of private recreational land.

LEVEL OF PROTECTION

The Town of Franklin currently has 3,136 acres of land classified as protected open space and recreation.¹⁰⁷ Eighty-four percent of that land is protected in perpetuity. The remaining 16 percent of open space parcels have limited, unknown, or no protection. The 134.7 acres (9 parcels) that have limited protection include St. Mary's Cemetery, Brick School House, Fletcher Field, Davis Thayer School, Old Town Pool Site, Tri-County Vocational High School fields, Horace Mann Middle School fields, Theron Metcalf Field, JFK Elementary School, Parmenter School, and King Street Memorial Park. The two parcels (9.2 acres) that have unknown protection comprise the Harborwood Playground, owned by the Harborwood Association. The nine parcels (357.6 acres) that have no protection include Camp Haiastan, the Franklin Rod and Gun Club, Franklin Country Club, and Maplegate Country Club. Parcels that fall into this category are privately owned lands that are 10 acres or more and contain no structures.¹⁰⁸ Table 8.1 lists the protected open space and recreation by level of protection and Map 8.1 illustrates the level of protection throughout the town.

Table 8.1: Open Space by Level of Protection, Town of Franklin.

Level of Protection	# of Parcels	Total Area (acres)	% of Total
No Protection	9	357.6	11.40%
Unknown	2	9.2	0.30%
Limited	16	134.7	4.30%
In Perpetuity	157	2,634.50	84.00%
Total	184	3,136.00	100%

Source: MassGIS Protected Open Space and Recreation, July 2023.

¹⁰⁷ MassGIS Protected Open Space and Recreation, July 2023.

¹⁰⁸ Town of Franklin, *Open Space & Recreation Plan*, 2023 Update, 37.

OWNERSHIP

As previously stated, there are several different owners of protected open space and recreation within Franklin. There is a total of 3,136 acres of protected space, and the respective owners with the total number of acres owned are displayed in Table 8.2. Map 8.2 illustrates protected open space and recreation by ownership.

Table 8.2: Protected Open Space and Recreation by Ownership, Town of Franklin, MA.			
Owner Type	# of Parcels	Owners	Total Area (acres)
State	38	DCR - State Parks & Recreation	850.8
Federal	18	Army Corps of Engineers	457.8
Land Trust	7	Metacomet Land Trust	64.6
Municipal	91	City of Franklin	1,161.70
Non-Profit	4	St. Mary's Cemetery; Harborwood Playground	31.8
Private	26		569.3
Total	184		3,136.00
Source: MassGIS Protected Open Space and Recreation, July 2023.			

PRIMARY PURPOSE

The majority of open space and recreation land in Franklin has the primary purpose of conservation and recreation, totaling 2,243 acres or 71.5 percent of total open space.¹⁰⁹ Table 8.3 contains a list of protected open space and recreation parcels by primary purpose. Five parcels (125.1 acres) are for agriculture, 18 (122.5 acres) are for flood control, two parcels (22.6 acres) are historical/cultural, and 18 parcels (178.0 acres) are for water supply. An additional 11 parcels (444.8 acres) are categorized as “other” for the primary purpose.

Table 8.3: Protected Open Space and Recreation by Primary Purpose, Franklin, MA.			
Primary Purpose	# of Parcels	Total Area (acres)	% of Total
Recreation and Conservation	37	834.5	26.6%

¹⁰⁹ MassGIS, “Protected Open Space and Recreation”, July 2023.

Conservation	62	804	25.6%
Recreation	31	604.5	19.3%
Other	11	444.8	14.2%
Water Supply	18	178	5.7%
Agriculture	5	125.1	4.0%
Flood Control	18	122.5	3.9%
Historical/Cultural	2	22.6	0.7%
Total	184	3136	100%
<i>Source: MassGIS Protected Open Space and Recreation, July 2023.</i>			

OPEN SPACE PATTERNS

Franklin also has "Cluster" or "Open Space" Development Bylaws. These Bylaws retain the same density as existing zoning would permit but allow the lots to be reduced in size and located on only a portion of a developable parcel in order that the remainder of the parcel can be dedicated as conservation land. This policy has resulted in the preservation of hundreds of acres of conservation lands in Franklin.¹¹⁰

TRAILS

Several designated trail areas open to the public experience frequent use for hiking and walking. The trail that sees the highest level of use, the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT), opened in 2016 and spans 22 miles. The SNETT begins in Franklin's State Forest and extends to Douglas State Forest. The Franklin section of the SNETT is well maintained and serves as a popular destination for bicyclists, skiers, equestrians, and hikers. It ranks among the area's most commonly utilized trails, with ongoing improvements.

CONNECTIVITY

The Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) includes goals, objectives, and actions that would increase connectivity to and between Franklin's Recreation Areas, conservation areas, and Open Space including safe walking and bicycle linkages through the creation of a cohesive "Emerald Necklace" linking and promoting access to the Town's Open Spaces and conservation areas.

¹¹⁰ Town of Franklin 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan, p. 24-25.

Connectivity and access improvements should place a particular emphasis on improved access for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and families with young children.¹¹¹

RECREATION FACILITIES

Table 8.4 lists the 21 current public recreational areas that are town owned, totaling 556.8 acres. It includes the recreation facilities that are town owned and located on Franklin public school system properties. These properties are maintained by the town's Facilities Department, which manages all the operations and maintenance of the public-school buildings, playgrounds and properties.

Table 8.4: List of Public Recreation Areas (Town Owned), Franklin, MA.			
Property Name	Street Address	Parcel Size (acres)	Existing Uses/Facilities
King Street Memorial Park	740 King Street	25.9	Playground, recreational fields, recreational courts, bike racks, picnic tables, bathroom and concessions, community garden
Fletcher Field	45 Peck Street	13.2	Playground, recreational fields, recreational courts, batting cages, concessions, bike racks, picnic area, bathroom
Dacey Community Field	661 Lincoln Street	95.7	Playground, recreational fields, batting cage, trails, bike racks, picnic tables, disc golf, dog park
Henry "Ski" Faenza Memorial Playground	22 Nason Street	0.5	Playground, picnic tables
Sculpture Park	353 Panther Way	3.5	Paths, picnic tables, beaches
Town Common	200 Main Street	4.0	Community stage/bandstand, memorials, paths, benches
Chilson Beach	420 Beaver Street	26.9	Playground, recreational field, obstacle fitness course, Lacrosse rebound wall, beach, boat launch, swim dock, picnic tables, bathroom, concessions
Beaver Pond Recreation Area	420 Beaver Street	2.0	Recreational field, bleacher
Pisani Field	38 Peck Street	3.7	Recreational fields, bathrooms, concession, batting cages
Pirelli Veterans Arena	910 Panther Way	6.7	Ice rink, bathrooms, locker rooms
DelCarte Conservation Area	459 Pleasant Street	106.4	Playground, trails, canoe/kayak launch, boardwalk, fishing dock

¹¹¹ Town of Franklin 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan, Objective 3.4, p. 61.

Table 8.4: List of Public Recreation Areas (Town Owned), Franklin, MA.

Property Name	Street Address	Parcel Size (acres)	Existing Uses/Facilities
Meadowlark Lane Complex	39 Meadowlark Lane	2.5	Playground, recreational fields, concessions
Riverbend Conservation Area	900 Lincoln Street	14.5	Hiking trails
JFK Elementary	551 Pond Street	15.3	Playground, recreation field, court, gymnasium
Parmenter Elementary	235 Wachusett Street	20.5	Playground, recreational field, court, trails, gymnasium
Keller Elementary	500 Lincoln Street	14.6	Playground, recreational fields, gymnasium
Annie Sullivan Middle			Recreational fields, gymnasium
Jefferson Elementary	628 Washington Street	47.0	Playground, recreational fields, gymnasium
Remington Middle			Playground, court, gymnasium
Oak Street Elementary	224 Oak Street	71.9	Recreational fields, recreational court, gymnasium
F.X O'Reagan Early Childhood Development Center			Playground, recreational field, gymnasium
Franklin High School	218 Oak Street		Stadium with bleachers, track, recreational fields, recreational courts, gymnasium
Tri County Regional Vocational Technical High School	147 Pond Street	60.0	Recreational fields, track, gymnasium
Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School	500 Financial Park	22.0	Playground, recreational fields, gymnasium

Source: Town of Franklin, MA. 2023. Town of Franklin 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 41.

Table 8.5 contains a list of parcels considered private property areas for recreation that include enrollment or membership and may not be free for the general public's use. These areas can range from summer camps to college campuses.

Table 8.5: List of Private Recreation Areas

Property	Street Address	Parcel Size (acres)	Existing Uses/Facilities
Harborwood Association Playground	21 Parliament Drive	2.0	Playground, Recreation Courts, Baseball/Softball Fields
Franklin Country Club	372 East Central Street	119.0	Golf, Pool, Clubhouse

Camp Haiastan	722 Summer Street	98.1	Camping, Cabins, Recreation Courts, Boat Launch, Swimming Area, Summer Camp
YMCA	45 Forge Hill Road	7.8	Playground, Pool, Recreational Courts, Weight Room, Indoor Track, Skateboard Facility, Summer Camp, Childcare, Event Programming
Franklin Rod & Gun Club	51 Florence Street	2.4	Beach, Picnic Area, Fishing Area
Planet Fitness	166 Grove Street	6.5	Recreational Courts, Weight Room, Aerobic Room, CrossFit Studio, Cardio Center
NRG labs	100 Franklin Village	0.4	Weight room, Aerobics Room, CrossFit Studio, Cardio Center
Adirondack Club	800 Chestnut Street	11.3	Playground, Indoor/Outdoor Pools, Weight Room, Lounge, Recreational Courts, Daycare
Dean College Fields	169 Maple Street	76.9	Recreational Fields, Concessions
<i>Source: Town of Franklin, MA. 2023. Town of Franklin 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 52.</i>			

Approximately 2,000 acres in Franklin are reserved for various purposes, including hiking, biking, passive recreation, as well as water resource protection and flood control. Out of this land, approximately 1,100 acres are designated as protected Conservation and Open Space areas. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns approximately 838 acres of protected land, with just over 758 acres comprising the State Forest. Additionally, the Metacomet Land Trust, a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to preserving open space and natural resources, owns approximately 63 acres of public open space. Table 8.6 provides details on some of the more significant parcels of land that have permanent or partial protection.

Table 8.6: Protected/Partially Protected Open Space, Town of Franklin, MA.				
Property Name	Street Address	Property Owner	Parcel Size (acres)	Current Uses
Town Forest	Summer Street	Town of Franklin	181.9	Hiking, Trails
DelCarte Conservation Area	459 Pleasant Street	Town of Franklin	106.5	Hiking, Biking, Cross Country Skiing, Trails, Fishing
State Forest	Beaver and Grove Street	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	843.0	Hiking, Biking, Cross Country Skiing, Trails, Horseback Riding, Hunting
Southern New England Trunkline Trail	Grove Street	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	22.0	Hiking, Biking, Trails
Reid Memorial Conservation Area	Daniels Road	Metacomet Land Trust	14.5	Hiking, Trails
Ladybug Trail	Coronation Drive	Metacomet Land Trust	1.8	Hiking, Trails, Outdoor Nature Classroom

Dawn Marie Circle	Dawn Marie Circle	Metacomet Land Trust	10.5	Hiking, Trails
Franklin Woods	Lincoln Street	Metacomet Land Trust	41.8	Hiking, Trails
Maple Hill	Bridle Path	Town of Franklin	69.7	Hiking, Biking, Trails
Schmidt's Farm	215 Prospect Street	Town of Franklin	155.0	TBA
Indian Rock	King Philip Road	Town of Franklin	75.9	Hiking, Trails
Unnamed	Addison Ave, Mulberry Lane, Silver Fox Road	Town of Franklin	67.1	Hiking, Trails
<i>Source: Town of Franklin, MA. 2023. Town of Franklin 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 42.</i>				

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since the Open Space and Recreation report update of 2016, the Town has achieved a significant number of accomplishments aimed at safeguarding and expanding its natural resources:

1. The Town acquired the Riverbend Conservation Area in 2015, which is a 40-acre parcel for recreational use and incorporated additional parcels for conservation. The Riverbend Hiking Trails, which traverse near the Franklin/Medway line, are accessible from an entry point just off Lincoln Street, heading north towards Medway. This location offers parking and an information kiosk. Despite its status as a hidden gem for recreation in Franklin, it remains largely underutilized.
2. In 2020, Franklin adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) to safeguard the Maple Hill Conservation area and Schmidt's farm from future development, preserving their natural beauty.
3. A DCR partnership has been established to extend SNETT for additional pathways. Currently, only 1.4 miles of trail exist within the boundary of Franklin, but an ongoing project aims to extend the trail through the Franklin Industrial Park.
4. The DelCarte Conservation Area has been a popular destination for recreation and community engagement among Franklin residents since opening in 2014. Visitors can enjoy a leisurely afternoon of fishing or explore the Story Walk, which allows families to read a designated storybook while making their way through the trails.

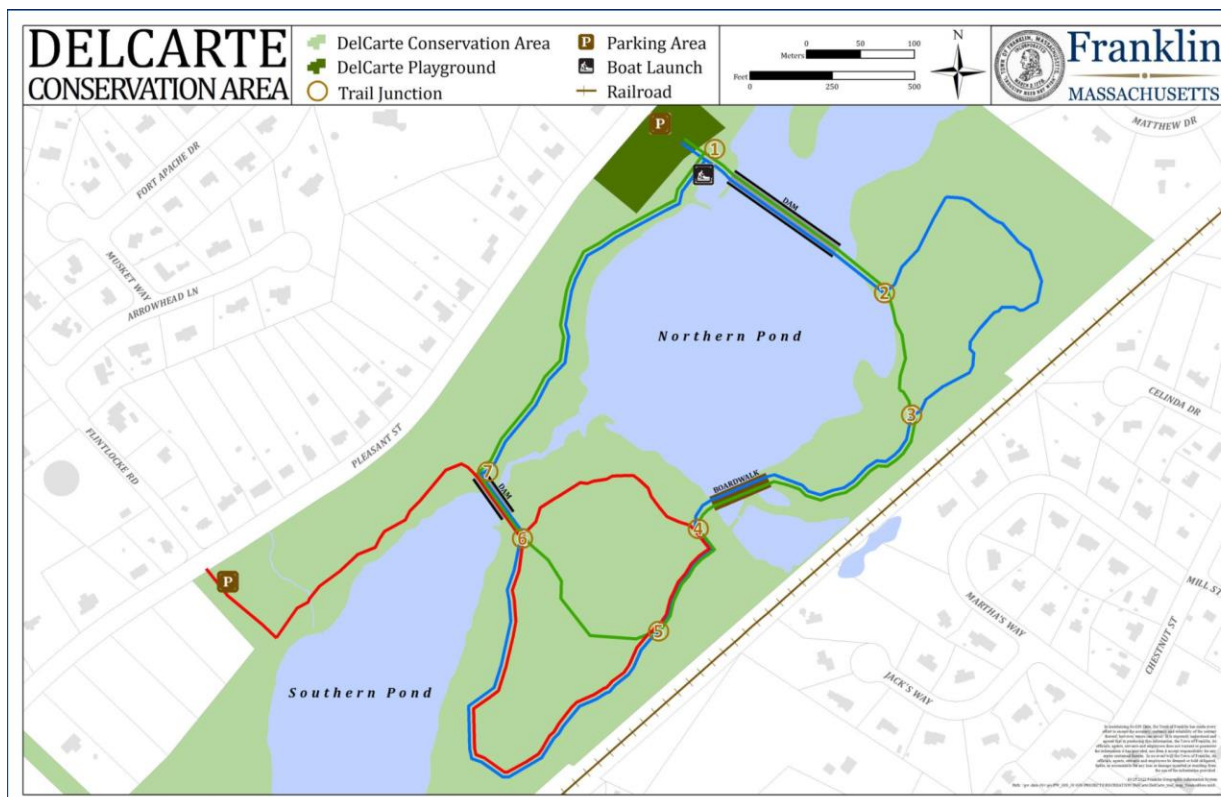
5. Over the past few years, the Town has implemented updated signage and introduced recycling receptacles for all open space areas, simplifying trail navigation and information accessibility.
6. A parking analysis was conducted to investigate the current parking needs during peak recreation periods, taking into account sporting events and high traffic outing times. The findings have raised concerns, particularly in specific conservation and recreation areas, such as DelCorte Conservation Area during sporting events.
7. Franklin has installed sidewalks to enhance the convenience and connectivity of accessing open space and recreation areas on foot.¹¹²



Riverbend Conservation Area

Since the completion of the 2016 OSRP Plan, the Town has focused on executing projects that involve adding sidewalks near Open Space and Recreation parcels and maintaining the Riverbend Conservation Area and the newly acquired DelCorte Conservation Area. Both areas experience daily use from both locals and Town visitors.

¹¹² Town of Franklin, *Open Space & Recreation Plan*, 2023 Update, 5-6.



DelCartere Trail Map¹¹³

Several local groups that include town officials, and groups formed by local residents, conducted outreach and data collection for open space and recreation engagement. The Conservation Department and Commission engaged more than 100 community organizations and stakeholder groups, through a series of communications, a citizen participation questionnaire, and approximately two dozen public meetings, over the course of six months (December 2022 through June 2023). Seven hundred residents provided detailed feedback to a questionnaire containing a variety of questions ranging from the amount of engagement of OSR facilities to the overall mindset the public has when it comes to the importance of both outdoor recreation, and environmental conservation and preservation. According to a survey done by the Open Space and Recreation Committee, 32 percent visit conservation areas a few times a year, 23 percent visit 1-2 times a month, and 6 percent never visit. To display the importance of open space and recreation 64 percent of residents believe accessibility to open space areas is very important.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Town of Franklin. "Discover DelCartere." ArcGIS StoryMaps, March 9, 2023.

¹¹⁴ Town of Franklin, MA. 2023. Town of Franklin 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 52.

This shows how nature and recreation play a vital role in how residents view and utilize the resources Franklin has to offer.

Currently, a project is underway in the DelCorte Conservation Area aimed at restoring 8,600 square feet of wilderness to enhance biodiversity and support native wildlife in the area. The project involves planting native trees, installing birdhouses to accommodate native bird species, and establishing a turtle habitat area with a protective buffer to minimize disturbance by the public. The Town of Franklin is leading this project to raise public awareness about the significance of pollinators and turtles, their roles, and how to best preserve their functions for the future. The plantings and habitat will be situated between the DelCorte Playground and the trail entrance, providing convenient viewing opportunities and multiple chances for engagement. Signage and public events will provide information and educational resources to park visitors and the broader community.¹¹⁵

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND UTILIZATION

Goal 1 in the OSRP is to increase public awareness of Open Space and Recreation opportunities in Franklin. The strategies to accomplish this include the installation of maps and directional signage at Open Space and Recreation areas, creating educational programs for children and adults about the environment and natural habitats of Franklin, assisting schools and other organizations with environmental science related education, and encouraging volunteer efforts to steward natural resources throughout town.¹¹⁶

Local Policies and Practices

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Franklin currently has a Conservation Commission that specializes in the protection of Franklin's wetland resource areas, Conservation Areas, and Open Space. The Commission also advises other municipal officials and boards on conservation issues that relate to their areas of responsibility. The first powers given to the Commission focused on "promotion and development of natural resources and protection of watershed resources". Additionally, the Conservation Commission is

¹¹⁵ "Biodiversity and Buffer Zone Restoration Project." 2022. ArcGIS StoryMaps. November 4, 2022.
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fbc95d3dacc547ba9b20ab9f169f30c1>

¹¹⁶ Town of Franklin 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan, Goal 1, p. 59.

charged with administering the Town's Wetland Protection Bylaw (Codebook, Chapter 181). Approximately 40 percent of the communities in the Commonwealth have enacted some form of local wetland protection bylaw.¹¹⁷

OPEN SPACE DESIGNATIONS

Certain areas of Open Space are designated under Chapter 61 in Massachusetts State Law. It enables landowners to realize the value of the current use of the land in exchange for a ten-year commitment to grow forest products while also keeping their land undeveloped. As detailed in the Natural Resources chapter earlier in this report, the Town has mapped three distinct Chapter 61 designations, each corresponding to different types. According to the current land inventory in Franklin, privately-owned lands reserved for Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B total 1,007.3 acres. Additionally, the Town currently owns 275.4 acres, which it considers potential future conservation or open space.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The Community Preservation Act was passed in 2000 to help communities empower themselves to raise a dedicated revenue source for the purposes of open space preservation, historic preservation, affordable housing, and recreation. In December 2020 the Town of Franklin established a Community Preservation Committee (CPC) consisting of nine appointed members. Initial CPA projects included acquiring the 70-acre Maple Hill open space property as well as 113-acre Schmidt Farm. The CPA has become an integral component of the Town's Open Space and Recreation efforts, with funds allocated for affordable housing projects, Town acquisition of conservation land, and preservation of historic buildings and structures.

Franklin is a town that places a high priority on inclusion and equality, ensuring that all citizens are treated with respect and understanding. The Town is actively planning to achieve full accessibility for all Open Space areas to comply with ADA regulations, thereby enabling visitors of all abilities to fully enjoy Franklin's natural environment.

¹¹⁷ *Town of Franklin, MA. "Conservation."* Town of Franklin. <https://www.franklinma.gov/conservation>.



9. Public Services and Facilities

Introduction

The Community Facilities and Services Chapter describes the existing services and facilities in town, including public schools, public safety and emergency services, library services, wastewater management, public water supply, stormwater, senior center, and town-owned buildings. The Chapter also discusses trends, opportunities, and challenges identified by community members and town staff. The following municipal services and facilities are reviewed in this chapter:

- Drinking Water
- Wastewater
- Stormwater
- Solid Waste & Recycling

- Police and Public Safety
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Public Education
- Public Library
- Senior Center
- Other Town Buildings and Facilities (Occupied and Vacant)

Access to adequate services and facilities is necessary for the health, well-being, and safety of the Franklin community. Residents rely every day on the town’s solid waste, drinking water, and wastewater systems. Adequate public safety and emergency services are essential to community well-being and quality of life. The public education system is critical to attract families to Franklin and raise an informed, civically engaged next generation, and town-owned buildings provide an entry point for civic engagement and house day-to-day municipal operations. The enhancement and maintenance of these services and facilities is critically important to support residents and businesses in their everyday needs.

Existing Conditions and Trends

TOWN BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

The town maintains a range of public facilities such as schools, the public library, parks, recreational centers, and administrative buildings to serve the needs of its residents. The buildings owned and managed by the town (not including public schools) are listed in Table 9.1. The condition and functionality of these facilities vary based on factors like maintenance efforts, funding allocations, and community initiatives.

Table 9.1: Town Buildings and Facilities		
Building	Address	Condition
Town Hall	335 East Central Street	Excellent; Interior buildout 2004; undergoing interior renovation currently
Department of Public Works	257 Fisher Street	Excellent; built 2007
Fire Department Headquarters	40 West Central Street	Excellent; built 2008; undergoing kitchen update currently

Fire Station #2	600 King Street	Satisfactory; built 2000; new roof 2016; undergoing kitchen replacement currently
Franklin Police Station	911 Panther Way	Needs Improvement; needs a new station
Franklin Public Library	118 Main Street	Excellent; underwent total renovation and addition completed in 2018
Franklin Senior Center	10 Daniel McCahill Street	Excellent; built 2007; second floor buildout and elevator completed 2017
Franklin Recreation Department	275 Beaver Street	Excellent; purchased buildings and finished interior buildouts in 2016 and 2017; may need additional space in the future
Franklin Recycling Center	445 Beaver Street	Satisfactory; a new transfer station is being planned
Franklin Animal Control	15 Public Works Way	Average; needs work
Franklin DPW Garage	25 Public Works Way	Excellent; completed construction of additions with new service bay 2007
Franklin Historical Museum	80 West Central Street	Satisfactory; completed total interior and exterior renovation in 2010; cupola restoration underway
Facilities Building	269 Fisher St	Satisfactory
Franklin Historic Brick Building	2 Lincoln Street	Satisfactory; completed exterior renovation in 2024
Franklin Town Common Gazebo	200 Main Street	Satisfactory; new Spanish tile roof 2010
<i>Source: Michael D'Angelo, Director of Public Facilities Town of Franklin / Franklin Public Schools, email correspondence to Amy Love, Town Planner, February 7, 2024.</i>		

TOWN HALL

Franklin's main municipal building, the Town Hall, houses the departments of Town administrator, Board of Assessors, Building & Inspections, Comptroller, Conservation, Facilities, Health, Human Resources, Planning & Community Development, Purchasing, Information Technology (IT), Town Clerk, and the Treasurer/Collector. As of 2023, the Town Hall is undergoing a mechanical renovation to improve the building's sustainability after replacing the building's windows with ultraviolet protection previously. The Town Hall is planning to go through an entire internal modernization within the next several years.

The concern for the Town Hall currently is a spatial concern. Departments like IT have seen an increase in staffing and space needs and may require additional space beyond what is possible in the current Town Hall structure.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Franklin Department of Public Works (DPW) serves as a cornerstone of infrastructure maintenance, community development, and environmental stewardship in Franklin. DPW oversees nine departments, Administration, Engineering, Highway, Grounds, Water, Sewer, Stormwater and Solid Waste & Recycling, which are committed to enhancing the quality of life for residents. All divisions are responsible for a wide range of essential services that keep the town running smoothly.

Road maintenance and repair are at the forefront of the DPW's responsibilities under the Highway Division. The department oversees road resurfacing, pothole repair, signage installation, and other road-related projects to ensure safe and efficient transportation for residents and visitors.

Solid waste management and recycling programs are another vital aspect of the DPW's operations. The department coordinates the collection and disposal of waste and recyclables, promoting responsible waste disposal practices and environmental sustainability within the community.

Additionally, the DPW manages water and sewer infrastructure. This includes maintaining water supply systems, ensuring water quality, and addressing sewer system maintenance and repair needs. These efforts contribute to the overall health and well-being of Franklin's residents. Stormwater management is another critical area of focus for the DPW. The department implements strategies to control stormwater runoff, prevent flooding, and protect local water bodies from pollution, ultimately contributing to a healthier environment.

Beyond these core functions, the DPW is involved in park maintenance, tree management, and landscape beautification projects that enhance the town's aesthetics and recreational spaces. The department's contributions to these areas significantly impact the community's overall quality of life.

Drinking Water

Franklin obtains its drinking water from fourteen groundwater supply wells because the town has no surface public drinking water supply sources or surface water supply watersheds within its boundary. In addition to the fourteen water supply wells, the Town operates eight booster

pump stations, six water storage tanks, more than two thousand hydrants, and 157 miles of water main.

The Town's Average Daily Permitted Withdrawal is 3.27 million gallons per day (MGD) through the Town's Water Management Act's (WMA) Permit. In 2022, the average daily withdrawal was 2.47 MGD and the maximum day withdrawal was 3.883 MGD. The town's total Maximum Daily Withdrawal Volume is 3,998 Gallons per Minute or 5.75 MGD.¹¹⁸ As of 2022, there are 9,588 service connections of which one hundred percent of service connections are metered.

Article VI of the Town bylaws details the process and requirements for a Water Use Restriction and Ban. Under this bylaw, the Town Administrator declares a State of Water Supply Conservation Restriction no later than the first Monday in June through, at the earliest, the second Monday in September each year.¹¹⁹ The Town's Water Enterprise Fund has retained earnings of \$2,730,677 as of July 2022.

For Fiscal Year 2025, DPW anticipates a budget of \$2.46 Million for water Operations and Maintenance Expenses. Proposed projects include Per- and Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS) onsite treatment, Fisher Street Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Improvements, Hillside Tank Replacement, Pleasant Street Tank Service Area Energy Efficiency Project, Bald Hill Tank and Forge Hill Tank Improvements, 5 Year Water Main Replacement Project, and EPA Future PFAS Regulation.

Stormwater

Franklin places a significant emphasis on managing stormwater to ensure the health of its environment and the well-being of its residents. Stormwater management involves the control and treatment of rainwater runoff to prevent flooding, erosion, and the pollution of local water bodies. The town employs a combination of strategies such as stormwater detention basins,

¹¹⁸ Town of Franklin Water & Sewer Superintendent. Email sent January 5, 2024.

¹¹⁹ Town of Franklin, MA General Legislation, *Article VI: Water Use Restriction and Ban*, Adopted April 12, 2017, by Bylaw Amendment 17-787.

permeable pavement, green infrastructure, and erosion control measures to mitigate the impact of heavy rainfall events. The Town has an estimated 1,923 acres of impermeable surface.¹²⁰

Stormwater management policies in the state of Massachusetts have been evolving to address the challenges posed by urbanization, climate change, and water quality preservation. The state works to manage stormwater runoff to prevent flooding, protect water bodies from pollution, and promote sustainable land use practices. Massachusetts stormwater policies incorporate compliance with the federal Clean Water Act's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. Municipalities in the state are required to obtain permits under this program, known as the Massachusetts Small MS4 General Permit (MS4), which regulates stormwater discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems. These permits often mandate the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control pollutants and manage runoff. Franklin has had MS4 General Permit coverage since 2003 and obtained permit coverage under the reissued MS4 Permit that became effective July 1, 2018 (Permit No. MAR041117). As part of the permitting requirements, Franklin is required to develop a written Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP).

To meet the MS4 requirements set forth by the EPA, there are several components. Ultimately, the EPA has obligated the town to abide by a twenty-year timeline to achieve the goals and targets set forth for Phosphorus Removal from the Stormwater System, as well as the SWMP. The NPDES Permit is issued every five years, and the twenty-year program began in 2018.

There is a baseline of work that must be completed each year, for each permit cycle. This includes:

- Structural and source control measures to be implemented during the life of the permit to reduce pollutants from runoff from commercial and residential areas that are discharged from the MS4.
- Illicit Discharge detection and elimination.
- Outfall Inspections.
- Implement and maintain a program for structural and non-structural best management practices to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff from construction sites to the MS4.
- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Participation/Involvement on stormwater controls.

¹²⁰ Town of Franklin Environmental Affairs Coordinator. Email sent January 8, 2024.

- Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for municipal operations.

Additionally, the SWMP is implemented in three phases, each subsequent phase with more stringent requirements than the previous. The Town of Franklin is required to reduce 2,495.3 lbs. of Phosphorus from the system within the twenty-year timeline.

- Years 1-8 (completed by July 2026): 20% removal. A total removal of 499.1 lbs./year
- By year 10 (July 2028): 25% removal. A total removal of 623.8 lbs./year
- By year 20 (July 2038): 100% removal: A total removal of 2,495.3 lbs./year

In 2023, the Town was required to formulate and submit a five-year plan, which would detail the course of action to achieve the "Year 10 Reduction Goals," (July 2028). The report details the Town of Franklin would be required to spend \$30,385,000 between 2023 and 2028 in order to accomplish these goals.

The projected revenue of the Stormwater Utility for FY 24 (its first year) is \$1,456,590. There is a significant gap between the requirements set forth from the unfunded federal mandate, and the amount the Stormwater Utility collects. The current Stormwater Utility rate would need to increase 330% in order to bridge the gap.¹²¹

Wastewater

In Franklin, wastewater management plays a crucial role in maintaining the cleanliness and health of the local environment. The town employs a comprehensive wastewater treatment system designed to collect, treat, and dispose of sewage and wastewater in an environmentally responsible manner. This involves the use of advanced treatment technologies to remove pollutants, contaminants, and pathogens from the wastewater before it is released back into the environment. The treated wastewater meets strict quality standards to ensure that it does not negatively impact local water bodies or the surrounding ecosystem. Franklin's wastewater infrastructure includes a network of pipes, lift stations, a treatment plant, and monitoring systems that work together to efficiently manage and process wastewater from residential, commercial, and industrial sources. The town adheres to state and federal regulations to ensure that its wastewater management practices are in compliance with environmental standards. The Town's Sewer Enterprise Fund has retained earnings of \$2,172,601 as of July 2022.

¹²¹ Town of Franklin Environmental Affairs Coordinator. Email sent January 8, 2024

Franklin belongs to the Charles River Pollution Control District (CRPCD). CRPCD includes a regional wastewater treatment plant located in Medway, Massachusetts and was formed in 1970. The facility provides tertiary treatment of wastewater and septage from domestic, commercial, and industrial sources from the Towns of Medway, Franklin, Bellingham, and Millis. The treated effluent discharges into the Upper Charles River and is regulated by a NPDES permit which is jointly enforced by the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The facility is designed to treat 5.7 MGD and can accept up to seventy-two thousand GPD of septage. The plant treats the communities' wastewater by performing an eight-stage process that incorporates physical, chemical, and biological treatments before discharging the water into the Charles River. The wastewater is treated to meet the EPA's discharge permit limitations.¹²²

The Town of Franklin sanitary sewer system is comprised of 137 miles of sewer pipe, 3,400+ manholes and twenty-three lift stations, while the CRPCD system has over 238 miles of sewer pipes and thirty-seven pump stations, including approximately thirteen miles of District-owned interceptors and one District-owned pump station.¹²³ According to 2021 data, the CRPCD treated approximately 1,797 million gallons of raw wastewater and 10.11 million gallons of septage. As mentioned, the oldest town pipes were built in 1914 and the newest town owned pipes were rehabilitated in 2023. Below is a list of sewer main length by diameter. The Franklin Sewer System is shown in Map 9.1.

As of 2023, the Town will begin the construction for the rehabilitation and replacement of the Beaver Street Interceptor (BSI). Originally built in 1914 and in service for 108 years, the BSI is the town's largest piece of sewer infrastructure. The BSI conveys over 70 percent of the Town's sewage with an average daily flow (ADF) of approximately 1.5 MGD of sewage. The interceptor includes fifty-nine manholes and approximately 2.3 miles of sixteen inches to twenty-four-inch cast iron (CI) pipe, reinforced concrete (RC) pipe, and vitrified clay (VC) pipe. The BSI extends from the intersection of Cottage Street and Union Street to the easement behind Pond Street, near the Interstate 495/Route 140 interchange, where it discharges to the Mine Brook Interceptor. Due

¹²² Charles River Pollution Control District, "History," <https://www.charlesriverpcd.org/about-us/slideshows/history>.

¹²³ Charles River Pollution Control District, "Collection System," <https://www.charlesriverpcd.org/about-us/pages/collection-system>.

to its age, the risk and consequence of failure, and the percentage of the Town's sewer flows conveyed by the interceptor, the BSI is considered Franklin's most critical sewer asset, therefore, the Town proposes rehabilitation, replacement, and general improvements to the interceptor as well as a new pump station on the property at 275 Beaver Street.¹²⁴

For Fiscal Year 2025, DPW anticipates a budget of \$570,000 for sewer Operations and Maintenance Expenses. DPW submits yearly treatment, maintenance, improvement, and energy efficiency plans in the Town's Capital Improvement Planning process. Several of the upcoming projects include replacing old control systems at pump stations, replacement of Sewer Ejector Pots, rehabilitation of older asbestos cement and vitrified clay sanitary pipes and upgrading Programmable Logic Controller and radio equipment at pump stations.¹²⁵

Solid Waste and Recycling

The management of solid waste and recycling is a crucial aspect of Franklin's commitment to environmental sustainability and responsible waste disposal. The Town implements comprehensive solid waste and recycling programs that aim to reduce waste sent to landfills, conserve resources, and promote recycling within the community. The Town maintains a contract with Waste Management (WM) to handle trash, recycling, and yard waste.

Franklin and WM provide residents with guidelines and resources for proper waste separation and disposal. This includes information on curbside collection schedules for different types of waste, such as recyclables, yard waste, and regular trash. The Town encourages the use of recycling bins and composting practices to divert organic materials from landfills. The Town offers free composting kits to residents. Recycling initiatives in Franklin cover a wide range of materials, including paper, cardboard, plastics, glass, and metals. The town offers single-stream recycling, where residents can place various recyclables in a single container for collection, simplifying the recycling process.

The Town runs The Recycle Center on Beaver Street, which accepts rigid plastic items, plastic shelving, milk/soda crates, oil-based paints and latex paints, and more. The Center does not

¹²⁴ Town of Franklin, MA Water/Sewer Division, "Beaver Street Interceptor," <https://www.franklinma.gov/water-sewer-division/pages/beaver-street-interceptor>.

¹²⁵ Town of Franklin Sewer Capital Improvement Plan, DPW 5 Year Plan.

accept hazardous materials, and the Town gives alternative options for waste pick-up on the Town website. As of 2023 the Recycling Center is close to capacity and may require an expansion to continue to serve residents in the future.¹²⁶ The Town also works with Simple Recycling program for free pickup of clothing, shoes, accessories, kitchenware, linens, and other items of less than fifty pounds.¹²⁷

The Town maintains a Solid Waste Enterprise Fund, which contained retained earnings of \$980,427 as of July 2022.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire and Emergency Services

Franklin is dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of its residents through a comprehensive network of emergency services. These services encompass a range of professional responders who are trained to handle various emergencies and critical situations, providing swift and effective assistance when needed.

The Franklin Fire Department plays a critical role in responding to fires, medical emergencies, and other hazardous situations. Highly trained firefighters are equipped to handle fire suppression, rescue operations, hazardous materials incidents, and medical aid. The department's emphasis on prevention, education, and community outreach also contributes to reducing risks and ensuring preparedness. The Franklin Fire Department is the 459th fire department out of forty-five thousand in the United States to reach an ISO-1 rating.

The Department staffs two stations. The main station is located on West Central Street near downtown, and the second station is on King Street. The Department uses the Metacomet Emergency Communications Center (MECC) as a regional dispatch center along with the Franklin Police Department. The center serves Franklin, Mendon, Millville, Norfolk, Plainville, and Wrentham. Per the Fiscal Year 23 Annual Report the Franklin Fire Department provided seventy-four ambulance mutual aid calls to surrounding communities and received 212 mutual

¹²⁶ Derek Adams (Environmental Affairs Coordinator, Town of Franklin, MA), interview by Emily Farmer, August 9, 2023.

¹²⁷ Simplerecycling.com, "Municipalities," <https://simplerecycling.com/curbside-clothing-recycling/>.

aid ambulance calls for assistance with other two ambulances out of service.¹²⁸ The distribution of calls received by the Fire Department in 2023 are shown in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Distribution of Calls, Franklin Fire Department 2023		
Category	Number of Calls	Percentage of Calls
Fire, other	88	1.67%
Overpressure, overheat, explosion	3	0.06%
Good Intent	356	6.75%
Rescue/EMS	3,468	65.73%
False Alarm & False Call	738	13.99%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	148	2.81%
Severe Weather/ Natural Disaster	10	0.19%
Service Call	464	8.79%
Special type	1	0.02%

As of August 2023, the Franklin Fire Department employs fifty-eight firefighters. In the 2023 fiscal year staff responded to over five-thousand calls, the vast majority of which were Emergency Medical Services (EMS) related calls. The department is in the process of adding a peak-time third ambulance to its rotation in order to cover the other two ambulances and provide action in mutual aid calls. The longest call response and transport times exist on the Franklin and Medway border due to the location's distance from the town's fire stations.¹²⁹

Fire Department staff the town's two engines, tower ladder truck, four ambulances, two Deputy Fire chief vehicles and four additional cars, and two brush trucks. The Department is well-equipped with vehicles to cover their current call load. Of the four ambulances, the three most recent vehicles were put in service in 2021, 2022 and subsequently February 2023. The Department also has approval for the purchase of a new tower ladder truck that will be delivered

¹²⁸ James McLaughlin, Franklin Fire Chief. Email sent January 3, 2024.

¹²⁹ James McLaughlin (Fire Chief, Town of Franklin, MA), interview by Emily Farmer, August 25, 2023.

in the spring summer of 2025 which will allow the ability to keep the current 2008 ladder truck as a reserve vehicle.

An estimated 90 percent of the town is covered with hydrants that function as the water supply system for the Department. DPW maintains the hydrants. The 2022 ISO audit considers water supply as 40 percent of scoring, making the Town's Water Department a critical portion of the high ISO rating achieved.

Franklin firefighters complete two live fire burn trainings per year as available, but do not have access to a training facility within thirty miles of Franklin. Franklin firefighters also attend national and international fire-related conferences to stay up to date with strategies and dangers. The Department also conducts fire education awareness programming in Franklin schools.

To stay prepared for natural disasters and other emergencies, Franklin has an Emergency Action Plan that identifies and implements plans for disaster response, evacuation, and recovery. This plan incorporates other local, state, and federal organizations to ensure a coordinated and effective response in times of crisis.

Police Services

The Franklin Police Department is a key component of the town's emergency services, responsible for maintaining law and order, responding to emergencies, investigating crimes, and engaging in community policing efforts. The department collaborates closely with other local and regional law enforcement agencies to ensure public safety. In 2022, the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC) voted to award Accreditation to the Franklin Police Department. Accreditation is a self-initiated process by which police agencies voluntarily strive to meet and maintain standards that have been established for the profession by the professionals.

The Department employs sixty-two people, including fifty-eight officers, two civilian administration, and two mental health clinicians. This does not include special officers and traffic control officers. Employees work on a "four on four off" schedule, working four consecutive day or night shifts followed by four consecutive days off. With fifty-eight employees, the Police Department is fully staffed to ensure quick response times and provide better service to the

community. The department has three divisions: the Patrol Unit, Criminal Investigation Unit, and the Community Service Unit (CSU).¹³⁰

The Department regularly interacts with the public outside of routine calls. One supervisor, a sergeant and three CSU officers are present across Franklin schools. Officers also host a Youth Leadership Camp in the summer months. The department issues weekly reports to the public, detailing recent responses to calls, and regularly gathers feedback from the community through several online forms and surveys.

The Police Department completes an extensive training schedule incorporated into officers' yearly hours. The department covers firearms training, use of force training, de-escalation training, in service training, CPR/first aid, sexual harassment in the workplace training, and more to keep officers up to date with certifications and conduct.

The Franklin Town Council established the Police Station Building Committee to oversee a potential expansion and/or renovation of the current Station located at 911 Panther Way. The Committee began meeting in 2023. The current station is too small for the current fully staffed department. The CSU is especially limited in space due to the addition of mental health clinicians who may oversee private sessions covered under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). The Criminal Investigation Unit also needs space to continue to address sensitive matters without interfering with the stations' overall operations.¹³¹

The department uses Ford Police Interceptors for the main patrol vehicles, both unmarked and marked. Officers also have access to bicycles and motorcycles. As of the 2023 Capital Plan, the department had thirty vehicles (twenty-two Ford Interceptors Utility, seven Ford Interceptor Sedans, and one Chevrolet Cruise Sedan), and two motorcycles. Replacement for vehicles run on a cruiser agents plan; the department uses a vehicle until around eighty-thousand miles. Once it hits that mileage it goes into the replacement protocol and is either sent to other Town departments or auctioned off. The department requests those cruisers to be replaced every year in capital requests.

¹³⁰ James West (Deputy Chief of Police, Town of Franklin, MA), interview by Emily Farmer, September 13, 2023.

¹³¹ James West (Deputy Chief of Police, Town of Franklin, MA), interview by Emily Farmer, September 13, 2023.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

The public school system stands as a cornerstone of education and community development, providing a comprehensive and dynamic learning environment for students of all ages. The town's commitment to academic excellence and holistic student growth is reflected in its diverse range of educational programs and supportive resources. From preschool to high school, Franklin's public schools offer a rigorous curriculum that aligns with state standards while also fostering critical thinking, creativity, and social development.

Technology integration is another focus of Franklin's public schools. The integration of digital tools and resources enhances learning experiences and prepares students for the challenges of a technologically driven world. Technology Services serves both Franklin Public School's faculty and students and serves municipal employees. The Technology Services staff maintains webs support and phone support for on-site and remote services. Technology Services assists with the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law passed in May 2022, ACP was created to provide eligible households up to \$30/month toward their internet bills, as well as a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet.

Furthermore, the Franklin public school system is committed to promoting a safe and inclusive environment for all students, prioritizing their social and emotional well-being.

Franklin High School was rebuilt in 2014, making it the newest building in the Franklin Public School stock. Davis Thayer Elementary, the oldest structure, is no longer in use. A school facilities report was completed in 2020, which covered a comprehensive analysis of each of the school facilities. The current state of Franklin Public School facilities is shown in Table 9.3.

Table 9.3: Public Schools					
School	Address	Grades Served	Year Built	Condition	Enrollment (June 2023)
Franklin High School	218 Oak Street	9 – 12	2014	Satisfactory	1,628
Franklin Early Childhood Development Center	224 Oak Street	Preschool: 3 – 5 years old	2004	Satisfactory	175
John F. Kennedy Elementary School	551 Pond Street	K – 5	1964 (reno. 1999)	Satisfactory, dated	338

Table 9.3: Public Schools

School	Address	Grades Served	Year Built	Condition	Enrollment (June 2023)
Hellen Keller Elementary School	500 Lincoln Street	K – 5	2002	Satisfactory	543
Oak Street Elementary School	224 Oak Street	K – 5	1962	Satisfactory	366
Gerald M. Parmenter Elementary School	235 Wachusett Street	K – 5	1951 (add. In 1968 & 1987)	Satisfactory	293
Jefferson Elementary School	628 Washington Street	K – 5	1996	Satisfactory	350
Annie Sullivan Middle School	500 Lincoln Street	6 – 8	2002	Satisfactory	323
Horace Mann Middle School	224 Oak Street	6 – 8	1962 (reno. 2004)	Satisfactory	376
Remington Middle School	628 Washington Street	6 – 8	1996	Satisfactory	374
Davis Thayer Elementary School (Not in use)	137 West Central Street	K – 5	1924	Not ADA accessible	N/A
Source: Town of Franklin GIS Department; Franklin Public School District: Facilities Assessment Report (Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc., September 30, 2020, Updated December 1, 2020), https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf10036/ff/uploads/townwide_comprehensive_facilities_assessment_report_-_2020.pdf .					

Over the past several years, Franklin School District has seen a decrease in student enrollment, prompting the closure of the Davis Thayer Elementary School in 2021, and redistricting to occur in 2023.¹³² A redistricting analysis was completed in the 2022-2023 school year by the consultant, Applied Geographics Inc. (AppGeo). The analysis offered several options for the future redistricting of Franklin Public Schools. In May 2023, the school superintendent reported that the Franklin Public School Committee voted to approve Option One, which proposed that “current district attendance boundaries remain the same while a School Facilities Master Plan is conducted. ASMS/Keller spaces will continue to be used flexibly. Both administrative teams at the complex will continue to work together to utilize the available space to accommodate the needs of all students.”¹³³

In 2023, the district contracted McKibben Demographic Research, LLC to complete the *Franklin Public Schools: Population and Enrollment Forecasts, 2024-25 through 2033-34*. The report showed that elementary enrollment in the district was expected to fall until the 2024-2025 school year, at which

¹³² Franklin Town Council: Agenda & Meeting Packet (October 6, 2021).

¹³³ Lucas Giguere (Superintendent Franklin Public Schools) Letter to Franklin Public School Community, Dated: May, 2023.

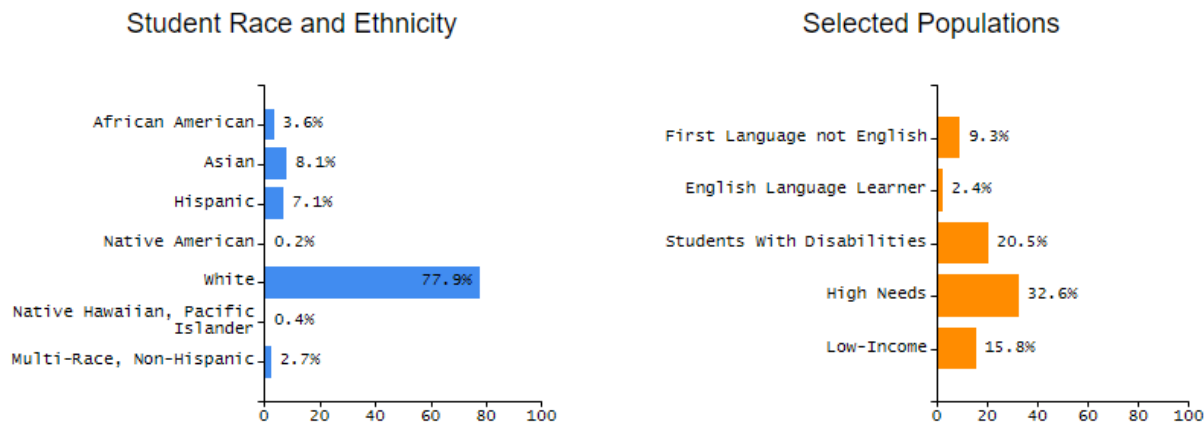
point it will begin to rise again. As of the 2023-2024 school year, 4,686 students are enrolled in Franklin Public Schools. Table 9.4 shows the predicted enrollment numbers from the 2023 study. The 2023-2024 school year is highlighted to mark it as the last official number in the table, all school year enrollment numbers beyond are predicted based on 2023 numbers.

Table 9.4: Franklin Public Schools Total Enrollment Forecast, 2023							
Totals	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
PreK – 5	1956	2029	2024	2053	2022	2052	2055
6 – 8	1147	1073	1067	1061	1106	1040	1024
9 – 12	1738	1672	1632	1572	1480	1463	1422
PreK-12	4841	4774	4723	4686	4608	4555	4501
PreK-12 Change	N/A	-67	-51	-37	-78	-53	-54
PreK-12 % Change	N/A	-1.4%	-1.1%	-0.8%	-1.7%	-1.2%	-1.2%
Totals	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34
PreK – 5	2064	2078	2101	2115	2125	2144	2156
6 – 8	963	960	972	996	1038	1053	1059
9 – 12	1439	1440	1387	1372	1311	1339	1367
PreK-12	4466	4478	4460	4483	4474	4536	4582
PreK-12 Change	-35	12	-18	23	-9	62	46
PreK-12 % Change	-0.8%	0.3%	-0.4%	0.5%	-0.2%	1.4%	1.0%
Source: Jerome McKibben, Ph.D., Franklin Public Schools: Population and Enrollment Forecasts, 2024-25 through 2033-34 (Rock Hill, SC, November 2023), 25.							

Figure 9.1 shows the current enrollment demographics of Franklin Public Schools as of the 2022-2023 school year. A majority (80.5 percent) of students are White, and the district supports all kinds of students, including 30.6 percent of the student body categorized as High Needs. “A student is high needs if they are designated as either low income (prior to 2015, and from 2022 to

present), economically disadvantaged (from 2015 to 2021), English Learner (EL)/former EL, or a student with disabilities.”¹³⁴

Figure 9.1: Franklin School District Student Profile, 2023-2024 ¹³⁵



PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Franklin Public Library, considered to be the first public library in America, serves as a vibrant hub of knowledge, community engagement, and cultural enrichment. With a diverse collection of books, multimedia resources, and digital materials, the library offers a wide array of educational and recreational content for all age groups. The library provides access to computers, Wi-Fi, and digital resources, enabling patrons to stay connected and access information in various formats.

The formal Franklin Public Library vision is to “...[be] the trusted source of information, inspiration, enrichment and opportunity.”¹³⁶ As of 2022, the Public Library provides monthly programming with about 80 offerings, with a high level of satisfaction from the public recorded for use in the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The library also provides rooms to reserve, interlibrary loans through the Minuteman Library Network, art exhibitions, museum passes, copiers, a

¹³⁴ School and District Profiles: Franklin (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education), <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/general/general.aspx?topNavID=1&leftNavId=100&orgcode=01010000&orgtypecode=5>.

¹³⁵ School and District Profiles: Franklin (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education), <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/general/general.aspx?topNavID=1&leftNavId=100&orgcode=01010000&orgtypecode=5>.

¹³⁶ *Franklin Public Library Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025* (Franklin, MA), January 24, 2022, Page 4.

telescope, and internet access. Librarians maintain a vast system of acquisitions that includes books, large print, e-books, audio CDs, etc.

The current library building was built in 1904, with recent additions and renovations in 2017. As of 2019, the library employed twelve full time and part time workers, as well as staffing volunteers to help with Library services and upkeep. The Library averages 2,500 visitors per week. Staff offered 1,274 programs in Fiscal Year 2023, with a total of 39,576 in program attendees.

SENIOR CENTER & COUNCIL ON AGING

The Franklin Senior Center serves as a vital community resource, catering to the needs and interests of the town's adult population. The center offers a wide range of programs, activities, and services designed to promote social engagement, lifelong learning, and overall well-being among its adult residents. The Senior Center operates to serve residents fifty-five and over in the community and neighboring towns, and offers a variety of programming and services including but not limited to exercise classes, educational lectures, social events, an adult day program, health and wellness opportunities, social services, veterans' services, a Common Grounds Café, etc.

Enrollment statistics indicated that the Senior Center has been adding an average of twenty-five new members each month in 2023. Because of the continued growth and use of the space, the Council on Aging has invested in new furniture for the Senior Center and often pursues grants for additional assistance.

Since 2007 when this Senior Center opened, 3,789 people have registered as members. In 2023, around 1,800 people signed in for programs or services at the Senior Center. This does not include the people that call for resources, information, referrals, homebound residents, social services needs, home visits, etc. In 2022, there were 540 new members, and 2023 saw 382 new members (almost one-thousand new members in the past two years). Attendees of the Center include 77 percent from within Franklin and 23 percent of non-Franklin residents.¹³⁷

Transportation to programs is available through the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA). The Council on Aging was awarded a MassDOT grant in 2023 to purchase

¹³⁷ Danielle Hopkins, Senior Center Director, in email dated January 12, 2024.

a fourteen-person bus. The Senior Center also received a technology grant to be used for senior-oriented education.¹³⁸

Though supported by state and local funds, the Senior Center also benefits from the financial assistance of the Friends of Franklin Elders, Inc. (FOFE), which is a non-profit organization that helps to provide funds for programs, services, and equipment. Franklin also offers a Senior Tax Workoff program where eligible seniors (sixty or over) can hold temporary jobs with the town or school government and obtain money off their property taxes.¹³⁹

VETERANS' SERVICES

The Town has a separate department for Veterans' Services, which works with the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services to assist Franklin veterans. Veterans' Services are headquartered in the Franklin Senior Center. Approximately three to four percent of Franklin residents are Veterans.¹⁴⁰ The Department helps to provide medical, housing, education, and financial assistance, as well as transportation to medical appointments and veterans' facilities. Along with other community resources, assistance with job searches, workshops, seminars, and employment training the Department also conducts in-home visits to veterans who are disabled and need assistance completing required paperwork to complete applications. The Department can help veterans in retrieving military records and obtaining burial flags, headstones, and grave markers as well as help to provide or find reimbursement of expenses for interment in national veterans' cemeteries.

Local Policies and Practices

CHAPTER 73 DEPARTMENTAL REVOLVING FUNDS

Chapter 73 of the Town Charter: Departmental Revolving Funds, outlines the establishment and authorization of revolving funds for various town departments, boards, committees, agencies, or officers. These funds are used to support programs or activities that generate fees, charges, or other receipts to cover some or all expenses. The bylaw operates under the authority of

¹³⁸ Jan Jewett, Franklin Council on Aging June Meeting Minutes (Franklin, MA), June 13, 2023.

¹³⁹ Senior Tax Workoff Program, (Franklin Senior Center/Council on Aging), <https://www.franklinma.gov/franklin-senior-center/pages/senior-tax-workoff-program>.

¹⁴⁰ Shannon Nisbett, Town of Franklin Veterans Services Officer. Email dated January 9, 2024.

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44, Section 53E 1/2. Key points of the bylaw include defining expenditure limitations, interest accrual, and the production of regular procedures and reports.

The bylaw lists several specific revolving funds, including:

- Council on Aging Senior Center Respite Program Revolving Fund
- Council on Aging Senior Center Activities Program Revolving Fund
- Council on Aging Senior Center Supportive Day Program Revolving Fund
- Use of Facilities Revolving Fund (for Public Facilities Department)
- Fire Department Fire Rescue Training Program Revolving Fund
- Community Policing Programs Revolving Fund (for the Police Department)

These funds are used for specific purposes and are credited with fees generated from various programs or activities. Each fund has its own fiscal year of operation starting on or after July 1, 2017.

CHAPTER 139 SEWERS

Sewer regulations establish uniform requirements for both direct and indirect contributors to the wastewater collection and treatment system in Franklin, which ultimately discharges into the CRPCD Wastewater Treatment Facility. In accordance with the Clean Water Act of 1977, the general pretreatment regulations outlined in 40 CFR 403, and permits issued by the United States EPA and through the MassDEP the CRPCD is granted the authority to implement and enforce these regulations, especially concerning industrial users within Franklin discharging into the facility. However, the Franklin Town Council retains authority over the implementation and enforcement of these regulations for all domestic and nondomestic users of the facility. These regulations, specifically the regulation of wastewater discharges, were most recently updated in 2005.

CHAPTER 151 SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

Article I regarding curbside services outlines comprehensive regulations governing the removal, processing, and disposal of refuse, recyclable materials, and garbage within Franklin. It establishes the responsibilities of both the Department of Public Works and residents, emphasizing the use of Town-provided receptacles, proper placement for collection, and compliance with curbside pickup schedules. Additionally, provisions exist for the disposal of

bulky waste items, solid waste exemption options, and maintenance responsibilities for provided carts.

Article II details the Recycling Center details the control and regulations governing the operation and use of the recycling center. Use of the recycling center is limited to Town residents and businesses within the Town's jurisdiction, and access is subject to permission and compliance with rules from the DPW Director. Violations of regulations incur fines, with enforcement authorized by the DPW Director or their designee. Requirements for using the Recycling Center, including the need for current stickers and proper disposal practices, are also outlined to ensure orderly and responsible use of the facility.

Article III discusses Improper Trash and Waste Disposal prohibits individuals from disposing of trash or waste in any manner other than what is specified in Article I of the chapter. It explicitly forbids the disposal of commercial or household trash in receptacles on municipal or private property without written permission. Dumping or disposing of various items, including appliances, furniture, and hazardous materials, on public or private property is also strictly prohibited. Violations carry a fine of \$300 for each offense, with each improperly disposed item considered a separate offense. Enforcement of these provisions is authorized by the DPW Director, the Police Department, the Building Commissioner, the Board of Health Agent, and the Conservation Agent.

CHAPTER 153 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The purpose of the Stormwater Management Bylaw is to establish minimum requirements and controls aimed at protecting the environment, natural resources, public health, safety, and the welfare of residents. It specifically focuses on mitigating the adverse effects of soil erosion, sedimentation, and stormwater runoff. The bylaw outlines several objectives, including reducing erosion and sedimentation, minimizing stormwater runoff from development, mitigating nonpoint source pollution from stormwater, promoting groundwater recharge where appropriate, and ensuring the proper operation and maintenance of control measures.

This bylaw applies to land disturbance activities of one acre or more or those that are part of a larger development plan, with exemptions for agricultural and aquacultural land use. Responsibility for administering, implementing, and enforcing the bylaw falls upon the DPW Director. Project changes must be reported to the DPW Director, and if significant, may require

amendments to the approved plans. Fees are associated with applications, reviews, and inspections. Enforcement measures include suspension of construction or site activities, civil relief through court injunctions, issuance of orders for monitoring and remediation, criminal penalties, and noncriminal dispositions with varying fines. Appeals are subject to a court's jurisdiction, and the remedies provided by the bylaw are not exclusive, allowing for additional legal actions as necessary.

The Stormwater Utility is Article V of the Stormwater Management bylaw. It establishes the framework for the administration and funding of the Town's stormwater management program. The primary purpose of the program is to collect revenue through a stormwater utility fee to support the construction, operation, maintenance, and regulation of stormwater management systems and facilities. The stormwater utility fee is assessed annually to all developed parcels in the Town, regardless of occupancy, and is based on recommendations from staff and determined by the Town Council. The stormwater utility fee, consistent with state law, is allocated for various purposes, including acquiring necessary real and personal property, program administration, debt servicing, engineering, and design, operation and maintenance of stormwater systems, capital investments, monitoring, surveillance, enforcement, etc. Exemptions to the stormwater utility fee are limited, while credits may be granted based on specific criteria outlined in the Stormwater Utility Credit Manual.

CHAPTER 179 WATER

Chapter 179 of the Town Bylaws deals with the regulation of Town water. The completion of a water rate study has led to the necessity of implementing changes for ensuring adequate funding for water provision to residents outlined in Article 1 of the bylaw. The following articles determine the rules around water connections for new developments and extensions. The Bylaw also regulates the use and protection of water meters and hydrants. Franklin has enacted a comprehensive bylaw to regulate water use, aiming to protect public health, safety, and welfare. It establishes measures for State of Water Supply Conservation and Water Ban, applying primarily to public water supply users. The bylaw outlines the specific restrictions during water shortages and follows with a regulation and prohibition of backflow and foreign materials in the public water system.



10. Traffic & Circulation

Introduction

A well-functioning transportation system provides safe and efficient mobility for people to get to local and regional destinations no matter how they choose to travel, whether by walking, biking, public transit, or personal vehicle. While Franklin's land use and transportation system has historically been auto centric, the town has made great strides in recent years to expand and improve the safety of their bicycle and sidewalk network. Public transportation also plays a role in the structure of Franklin, with two Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) commuter rail stops, and Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) microtransit bus service. Transportation system design, in tandem with land use decisions, affects

energy consumption, equity, traffic congestion, pollution, and public health. The choices made over the next ten to twenty years in Franklin with regards to maintenance and enhancement of the transportation system will impact how residents and visitors get around and interact with neighboring communities in the future.

Existing Conditions and Trends

ROADWAYS

Franklin has around 220 miles of roadways. Roads in town can be classified using the federal road classification system into interstate, arterials, collectors, and local roads. Table 10.1 shows the total length of each classification of roadway in Franklin by centerline miles, the roadway length without accounting for the number of lanes. Map 10.1 shows the roads in Franklin symbolized by their functional class.

Table 10.1: Franklin Roadway Functional Classification		
Roadway Class	Length in Miles	Percentage of Total Miles
Interstate	9.81	4.46%
Arterial	8.35	3.80%
Collector	30.71	13.97%
Local	170.95	77.77%
Total	219.82	100%
<i>Source: Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) "Road Inventory 2022 Year-End Report," March 2023, prepared by MassDOT.</i>		

Interstate Roads

Interstate 495 (I-495) runs from the border of New Hampshire to near Cape Cod, that forms a semicircle around Boston. I-495 cuts through the middle of Franklin.

Arterial Roads

Arterial roads typically move people across town or between towns while providing access to popular destinations. Approximately four percent of the roadways in Franklin are arterials. Route 140 (also known as E. Central Street and W. Central Street) is the major and numbered state highway in Franklin and is managed by MassDOT. Outside of the downtown area from approximately Beaver St to Lewis St, which is managed by the Town.

Collector Roads

Collectors typically move traffic from local roads to arterial roads, while providing access to places along the road. About 14 percent of Franklin roadways are collectors. Major collector roadways include:

- Pond Street
- Lincoln Street
- Washington Street
- King Street
- Summer Street
- Oak Street
- Grove Street
- Chestnut Street

Local Roads

Local roadways provide the highest access to adjacent properties. Approximately 78 percent of all roadways in Franklin fall under this classification. Local roadways in Franklin are characterized by predominantly residential development and lower vehicle volumes and speeds.

Roadway Jurisdiction

Around 9.81 centerline miles of roads in Franklin are under MassDOT jurisdiction as of 2022. The Town has jurisdiction over 140.25 centerline miles of road, and 22.07 miles are unaccepted by any jurisdiction.¹⁴¹

VEHICLE VOLUMES

Traffic congestion is a primary concern for many residents in suburban Massachusetts communities and can have a negative impact on quality of life. Route 140, Washington Street, and King Street are heavily utilized throughout the day, especially during morning and evening peak commuting hours. Table 10.2 shows the Annual Average Daily Traffic volumes for a selection of roadways in Franklin from 2017 when available to 2022. In 2022, I-495 has the highest volume at over 81,000 AADT. Many of the roadways experienced a dip in volume during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and some have yet to reach pre-2020 levels of traffic. Other roadways, like

¹⁴¹ Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) "Road Inventory 2022 Year-End Report," March 2023, prepared by MassDOT.

West Central Street and the southbound King Street I-495 ramp have shown relatively consistent growth over time.

Table 10.2: Available Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Volumes 2017 to 2022							
Roadway	Location	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Interstate 495	Ramp to I-495 northbound to Rt. 140	87,001	83,551	89,222	68,108	79,108	81,244
Pleasant Street	Norfolk Town Line	10,281	11,724	11,677	9,634	8,517	8,508
West Central Street (Rt. 140)	West of Beaver Street	21,200	21,264	N/A	25,766	29,013	29,448
East Central Street (Rt. 140)	East Central Street west of Glen Meadow Road	N/A	N/A	N/A	16,800	N/A	N/A
Union Street	Hutchinson Street and Arlington Street	8,395	8,420	8,386	10,532	11,769	11,784
	Union Street near King Street	N/A	3,507	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
King Street	King Street near Union Street	N/A	22,788	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grove Street	Grove Street north of Old Grove	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,240	N/A	N/A
Ramp I-495 northbound to King Street	Exit 17 King Street Franklin	6,668	7,107	9,746	7,863	8,807	8,798
Ramp King Street to I-495 northbound	King Street On-ramp	N/A	5,334	5,094	4,295	4,810	4,805
Ramp I-495 northbound to Rt. 140	Exit 17 Rt. 140 Franklin	N/A	8,286	8,920	6,032	6,840	6,963
Ramp Rt. 140 to I-495 northbound	Rt. 140 On-ramp	N/A	10,489	9,160	9,379	10,636	10,827
Ramp I-495 southbound to Rt. 140	Exit 17 Rt. 140 Franklin	N/A	10,415	11,108	7,376	8,364	8,515
Ramp Rt. 140 to I-495 southbound	Rt. 140 On-ramp	N/A	8,026	7,314	7,578	8,593	8,748
Ramp I-495 southbound to King Street	Exit 16 King Street Franklin	NA	5,502	5,942	5,824	6,523	6,516
Ramp King Street to I-495 southbound	King Street On-ramp	N/A	6,917	8,843	5,922	6,633	6,626

Source: MassDOT Transportation Data Management System, Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts, 2017-2022.

Map 10.2 shows the roadways in Franklin labeled by functional class and identifies the most recent traffic counts from the MassDOT Transportation Data Management System.

ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

Road maintenance is a critical component of Franklin's infrastructure management, ensuring safe and efficient transportation for residents and visitors. The town implements a comprehensive road maintenance program that encompasses various activities aimed at preserving and improving the condition of its roadways. Regular maintenance activities include road resurfacing, pothole repair, crack sealing, and pavement markings. These efforts help extend the lifespan of roads, prevent further deterioration, and provide a smoother and safer driving experience.

Snow and ice removal is a significant focus during the winter months. The town's road maintenance teams are well-equipped to handle snowstorms and icy conditions, ensuring that roads remain passable and safe for travel. This involves plowing, salting, and sanding roads to minimize hazards and maintain accessibility. The DPW will plow sidewalks along central routes that are heavily traveled by children on their way to and from school. Areas near schools are the top priority and have been agreed upon by the School Department, Police Department and DPW.

Additionally, the town has a systematic approach to road inspections and assessments. Regular evaluations of road conditions help prioritize maintenance projects and allocate resources effectively. Data-driven decision-making allows the town to identify areas that require attention and plan road improvement projects accordingly. Communication with the community is essential in road maintenance. The town keeps residents informed about ongoing projects, road closures, and potential traffic disruptions through official channels, such as the town website, social media, and public announcements.

The DPW generally begins street sweeping, weather permitting, in April. Sweeping begins downtown and is followed by primary roadways. Secondary roadways and subdivisions are swept based upon the order of the current street sweeping zones. Town wide street sweeping typically takes up to three months and is weather dependent.¹⁴²

¹⁴² Town of Franklin GIS Department, Franklin Street Sweeping Map, (March 25, 2021), https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/street_sweeping_2021_0.pdf.

PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Town of Franklin implements a pavement management program to monitor the conditions of roadways and prioritize their repair. The GIS-based program collects and evaluates data about the condition of roadways to determine a Roadway Surface Rating (RSR) and schedule of maintenance. The RSR is a numerical index between zero and one hundred which is used to indicate the general condition of pavement for a community's roadways. The higher the RSR score, the better overall pavement condition. The latest RSR data collection for the Town in May and June of 2023, with an average score by segment of 71.73 which represents a satisfactory overall pavement condition. This is lower than the 73.56 Average RSR score from the 2019 Pavement Management Report.¹⁴³

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

A comprehensive sidewalk network exists in downtown Franklin and the immediate surrounding residential streets with sidewalks typically located on two sides of the street. Additionally, some streets have a sidewalk only on one side of the street, while the remainder do not have sidewalks on either side of the street. Route 140 has well utilized sidewalks on both sides of the street from the east side of town to Franklin Village Drive on the west side. Most of the Town's sidewalks are concrete with granite curbs, 48 miles of concrete and 72 miles of asphalt sidewalks. Map 10.3 shows the sidewalk network throughout Franklin.

Franklin has a handful of off-road trails accessible to bicyclists and hikers that are primarily within the Town Forest and State Forest areas. The trails within the State Forest area are accessible via the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT) a twenty-two-mile trail that begins in Franklin and extends through four communities to the Douglas State Forest. There are a handful of gaps in the SNETT trail but the portion in Franklin is well utilized.

Franklin currently has few formal separated or on-street bicycle accommodations. The Town recently constructed the first phase of a shared-use path on the west side of Grove Street between Washington Street and Rosewood Lane (600 feet). The next phase will extend to the SNETT with a new Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon and to Kenwood Circle (approximately 1.2 miles total

¹⁴³ Franklin Department of Public Works Current Project Updates, Pavement Management Program & Sidewalk Plan, and Water Tank Master Plan. Current Project Updates Pavement Management Program & Sidewalk Plan Water Tank Master Plan. August 16, 2023

distance). There was no available funding to continue to Kenwood under the current project, but it is anticipated that the path will eventually be extended to the State Forest parking lot across from Beaver Street at some point in the future. There is a short stretch of bike lane stencil markings along Panther Way near Franklin High School. Additionally, Emmons Street, Main Street, and Route 140 in Franklin feature shared lane markings which remind motorists to be alert to the presence of bicycles but do not foster a very comfortable bicycling environment for all ages and abilities. Maps 10.4 and 10.5 show the potential for walkable and bikeable trips in town, as taken from MassDOT

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

The Massachusetts Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program aims to increase the safety of walking and bicycling infrastructure along travel paths to schools. As of 2023, Gerald M. Parmenter Elementary School, Hellen Keller Elementary School, Jefferson Elementary School, John F. Kennedy Elementary School, Oak Street Elementary School, Horace Mann Middle School, and Remington Middle School are partners in the program.

In 2016, Oak Street Elementary School participates in a Bike Safety Assembly funded by the SRTS program. Every year each school also participates in SRTS's "iWalk" program in October, which encourages families to walk, bike, or roll to school to promote active transportation.¹⁴⁴

COMPLETE STREETS

The Town adopted a Complete Streets Policy in April of 2021 that commits the Town to "implementing projects which take into account the various users in the overall transportation network." Franklin has registered for the MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program and completed a Tier II Prioritization Plan in November 2021.¹⁴⁵ In July 2021, the Town also received a MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces Grant award of \$20,814.28 to provide space for food trucks

¹⁴⁴ MassDOT, Safe Routes to School Dashboard, 2023, https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/c800f41387264f40b49ac22a21fb58fe/page/Results/?data_id=dataSource_4-0%3A34%2CdataSource_1-SRTS_FME_8639%3A633748%2CdataSource_3-0%3A153.

¹⁴⁵ Town of Franklin, Massachusetts, Complete Streets Policy, April 7, 2021, https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/pages/franklin_complete_streets_policy_-_2021-04-07_adopted.pdf.

and enclose an area of Main Street with tables and chairs for dining, concerts, and other Town-sponsored events.¹⁴⁶

The Town's Complete Streets Funding Program Project Prioritization Plan draft identifies twenty-two projects that fall in line with Complete Streets recommendations. The town was awarded approximately \$90,000 on August 19, 2022, to complete the following three Complete Streets projects:

- Grove Street Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at the SNETT crossing (\$39,900)
- RRFB at Lincoln Street and Sherman Avenue (\$39,900)
- Bicycle racks at four locations (\$9,900)

The town is eligible for approximately \$410,000 for Complete Streets projects in Fiscal Year 2024.

PARKING

On-street parking as well as MBTA-owned and Town of Franklin-owned surface parking lots are provided in downtown Franklin. The parallel on-street parking spaces along School Street, Dean Avenue, Route 140, Union Street south of Route 140, and other locations are restricted to two hours between 8:00 am and 2:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The parallel on-street parking spaces along portions of Martin Avenue, Garfield Street, Emmons Street, High Street, Ray Street, Union Street north of Route 140, and other locations is restricted to two-hour parking between 6:00 am and 10:00 am, Monday through Friday. In addition to the two-hour regulated areas, there is a section of Emmons Street that is designated as merchant or permit only parking. There are ninety-two parking meters in the Town. Meters are located at the two public lots in downtown Franklin and along East Central Street, Main Street, Dean Street, Emmons Street, and Depot Street.¹⁴⁷ The town does not have any parking meters; they were replaced with pay to park spaces using a more modern payment app/service.

Five public parking areas are available in the downtown area:

¹⁴⁶ MassDOT, Shared Streets & Spaces: 2021 Round 3 project narratives, July 2021, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/shared-streets-spaces-2021-round-3-project-narratives>

¹⁴⁷ BETA Group, Inc. *Franklin, MA Transportation Master Plan*, 2017.

- The library lot has thirty-four spaces
- The Main Street parallel on-street parking area has twenty-nine spaces
- The Depot/Downtown lot has seventy-five parking spaces
- The Ferrara lot has twenty-one spaces
- The East Central Street parallel-striped on-street parking area has twenty-seven spaces

Each of the above locations also has handicapped parking spaces available. A Downtown Parking District was adopted by Town Council on August 10th, 2016. In 2008 Downtown Parking Assessment, DPCD staff conducted numerous traffic counts at varying days and times of day; they came to the conclusion “there is not currently a shortage of parking spaces under normal conditions in Downtown Franklin. In fact, most days of the week and times of day there are a substantial number of extra spots. In a 2010 study of Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements in Six Urban Centers, the Metropolitan Planning Council made numerous recommendations for targeted removal of car parking and construction of bicycle infrastructure in Downtown Franklin. In a 2020 Town of Franklin Market Study, MAPC recommended that the Town “promote shared parking so that parking facilities serves multiple destinations” and “keep any new parking off the main commercial streets.” They also recommended that Franklin “pursue funding for parking garage on commuter rail parking lot.” In their 2021 Housing Production Plan, Franklin set a goal to “amend Zoning regulations regarding parking space requirements to decrease development costs and allow additional housing units to be developed.” In their 2021 Housing Production Plan, Franklin set a goal to “amend Zoning regulations regarding parking space requirements to decrease development costs and allow additional housing units to be developed.”

BRIDGES

According to the most recently available data from MassDOT, Franklin has a total of twenty-eight bridges and six culverts. Thirteen of these structures are municipally owned, while the rest are owned and maintained by MassDOT. Two bridges are categorized as structurally deficient: both MassDOT bridges that cross Interstate 495 north and southbound.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ MassDOT Bridge Inspection Management System (BIMS), June 1, 2023. <https://geo-massdot.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/MassDOT::bridges/about>.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Franklin has two Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) commuter rail stops: the Forge Park station near the western edge of the town and Franklin Station in the center of town. Approximately 3.7 percent of residents use public transit to commute to and from work. Boston is the most popular MBTA commute trip generator and represents the work commute destination for 10.2 percent of Franklin residents. The Forge Park Station is the terminus of the Franklin Line and draws commuters from surrounding communities with its large parking lots. The Franklin Line has some of the highest ridership of the MBTA Commuter Rail system. The most recent commuter rail counts for the MBTA were completed in the spring and fall of 2018. The Forge Park Station had approximately 680 boardings in total on May 3, 2018, and the Franklin Station had approximately 630 boardings on the same date.¹⁴⁹

An active Conrail freight rail line also runs along the MBTA tracks through Franklin and extends west of the Forge Park Station area into Bellingham.

Franklin is also served by the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA). All twenty-nine member communities of GATRA have access to demand response (Dial-A-Ride) services for people with disabilities and seniors. Franklin also participates in the GATRA GO United (GATRA GO). GATRA GO is an on-demand microtransit service that runs in the communities of Foxborough, Franklin, Mansfield, Norfolk, Norton, and Wrentham. GATRA GO riders can be picked up or dropped off anywhere within the participating communities and service is also available to specific destinations by phone or mobile application.

GATRA GO fares are \$1 across Franklin and free to-and-from the Senior Center and Food Pantry. The Town covers the remaining ticket costs. Franklin had a fixed-route bus service until the COVID-19 pandemic (2020). There are currently no bus shelters in town. 2020 Market Study recommended working with GATRA to improve the Franklin Area Bus line to have a more frequent schedule and develop a more circular pattern around the town center in order to expand the Town's multi-modal transportation system.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), 2018 Commuter Rail Counts, May 3, 2018, <https://www.mass.gov/lists/2018-commuter-rail-counts>

¹⁵⁰ Town of Franklin Market Study, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, 2020.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations are available at the Town Hall, DPW Administration, DPW garage, Public Library, and several other private properties. Charging stations are provided and paid to Eversource based on surge pricing.

AIRPORTS

The closest public airport to Franklin is the Mansfield Municipal Airport, while the closest international airport is Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport, located around thirty-six miles away in Warwick, Rhode Island. While T.F. Green may be slightly closer than Logan Airport, Logan is certainly the most significant airport serving Franklin.

SAFETY

Vehicle crash data from MassDOT was reviewed for the six-year period between 2017 and 2022, as shown in Figure 10.1. The figure shows that total crashes in 2022 are higher than 2020 and 2021, that are likely lower due to lower traffic volumes as a result of COVID -19; but lower than 2017-2019. Franklin Police records, on the other hand, record the total number of motor vehicle crashes as 609 for 2022.¹⁵¹ A total of five fatal crashes happened within 2017-2022, with the majority of crashes causing only property damage and no injuries.

The five fatal crashes occurred at:

- Route I-495 N, Mile marker 41, May 6, 2017
- Four thousand one hundred feet south from intersection at Interstate 495 Route I-495 N / Ramp-Route 495 northbound to Route 140, February 1, 2019
- Six hundred feet east from intersection at East Central Street Route SR140 N / Route 140 / Glen Meadow Road, June 30, 2021
- Fifty feet west from intersection at Route 140 / West Central Street Route SR140 S / Union Street, November 1, 2022

West Central Street (Rt. 140) is a particular area of both safety and congestion concern for Franklin residents. The large traffic volumes and numerous intersections make the roadway a prominent

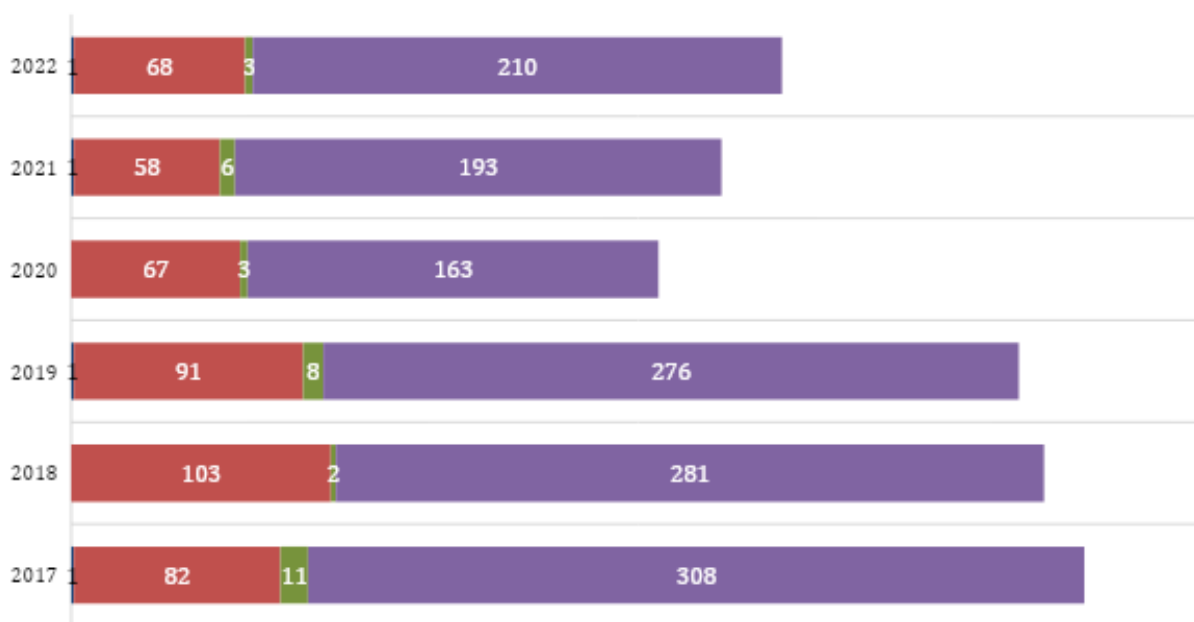
¹⁵¹ Town of Franklin 2022 Annual Report, Page 165, 2022,
https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/2022_annual_report_0.pdf

place for crashes to occur. Franklin residents and workers reported several areas and intersections where safety was a concern during stakeholder interviews, including:

- Cottage Street at Union Street intersection
- East Central Street (Rt. 140) intersection at King Street and Chestnut Street
- West Central Street intersection at Union Street
- Washington Street intersection at Grove Street
- Main Street intersection and three-way stop by Dean College¹⁵²

Fig. 10.1 Crash Severity in Franklin by Year 2017-2022

Source: Massachusetts Department of Transportation.



The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is a federal-aid program that funds projects with the goal of decreasing the number of traffic injuries and fatalities on public roads. An HSIP eligible project contains a hot spot crash location (a cluster where the total of “equivalent property damage only” crashes in the cluster is within the top 5 percent of all clusters in a specific region).¹⁵³ Franklin has an HSIP location on West Central Street at Panther Way identified in the 2018-2020

¹⁵², Stakeholders (Town of Franklin, MA), interviews by Emily Farmer, August 7, 9, 11, and 25, and September 14, 2023.

¹⁵³ U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, Massachusetts Highway Safety Improvement Program 2020 Report, 2020.

Figure 10.2: MassDOT HSIP Clusters 2018-2020¹⁵⁵

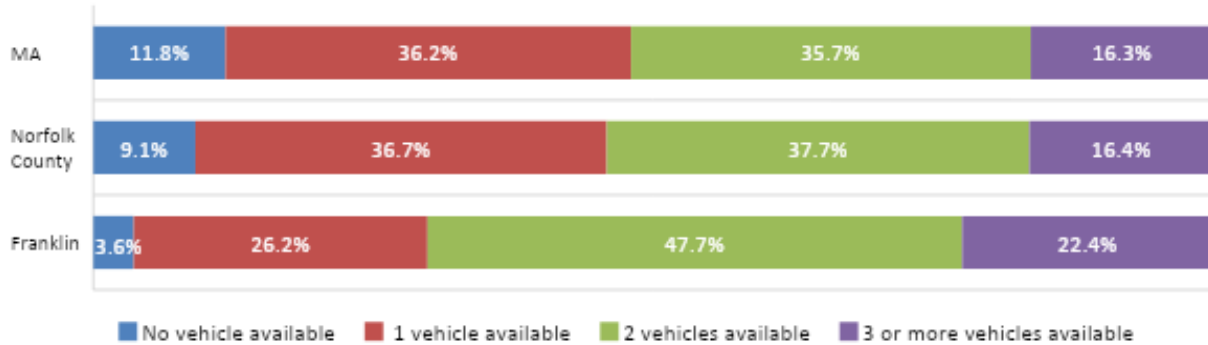


According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2021 Estimates, most households in Franklin (70.1 percent) have access to two or more vehicles, which is higher than both the state (52 percent) and the rest of Norfolk County (54 percent). Figure 10.3 shows the estimated number of vehicles available per household for the Town of Franklin, Norfolk County, and Massachusetts.

¹⁵⁵ MassDOT, Top Crash Locations, <https://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/topcrashlocations/>.

Fig. 10.3: Households by Vehicles Available, 2021

Source: ACS 5-year Estimates 2017-2021, Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing -Units.

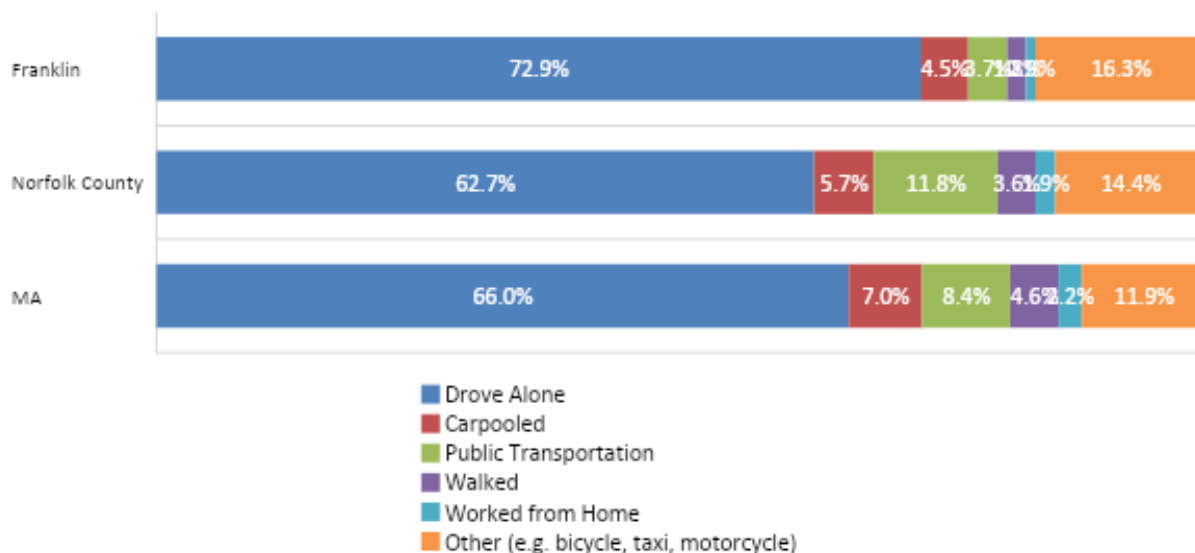


Commuting Patterns

Figure 10.4 shows the modes of transportation to work for Franklin residents. As shown, nearly 73 percent of residents drive alone, 4.5 percent carpool, 3.7 percent use public transportation, and 1.8 percent walk. The “Other” category includes commuters who used bicycles, taxis, or motorcycles to get to work. Only around 0.9 percent of Franklin’s population commutes to work using “other” means. As of the 2021 ACS 5-Year estimates, 16.3 percent of Franklin residents work from home. The percentage of Franklin residents driving alone to work and those working from home are higher than both the county and the state averages. Additionally, the percentage of Franklin residents taking public transportation to work is lower than both the county and state average.

Fig. 10.4: Commute to Work by Mode

Source: ACS 5-year Estimates 2017-2021, Comparative Economic Statistics.



The mean travel time to work for:

- Franklin residents is approximately 35.3 minutes
- Norfolk County residents is 33.6 minutes
- Massachusetts residents is 29.6 minutes

This data indicates that Franklin residents are willing to commute for slightly longer periods of time to live in a desirable community like Franklin.

RECENTLY COMPLETED, CURRENT, AND UPCOMING PROJECTS

Recently Completed

Grove Street Roadway Improvements Phase 1 was completed in 2022. During the 2022 construction season, the intersection of Grove Street and Washington Street was reconstructed and approximately 600 feet of a shared-use path was added along Grove Street from Washington Street to Rosewood Lane.

Grove Street at Washington Street Traffic Signal: The traffic signal has been completed as part of the Grove Street project.

Plain Street (from the Bellingham Townline to Palomino Drive) underwent a full depth reconstruction as of 2023. The full depth reclamation process provides an opportunity to correct

road profile issues and build the pavement back up from below its current depth, while using existing materials to create a stronger uniform base layer.

The Arlington Street neighborhood (Arlington Street, North Park Street, Howard Street and Howard Place) underwent drainage improvements and full depth roadway reclamation. The waterline was replaced during the 2022 construction season.

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) and Bicycle Parking Installation were installed at the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT) crossing on Grove Street and for the crossing of Lincoln Street at Sherman Avenue. Bicycle Parking Racks will be installed at Chilson Park, the MBTA Franklin Rail Station, the Cottage Street and Union Street intersection, and at the Town Common. The funding is part of a grant through the Complete Streets Program from MassDOT. The installation is complete with the exception of the RRFB at the SNETT/Grove St crossing which was delayed due to equipment backorder.

Underway

Grove Street Roadway Improvements Phase II are underway as of 2023. The shared-use path will be extended along Grove Street from Rosewood Lane to Kenwood Circle. This is the second phase of a two-phase project that aims to improve the use of Washington Street and Grove Street by motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Planned

Upcoming road repairs and treatments will be completed on several roads in town. Cape Seal is a form of pavement management that uses a combination of a chip seal base with a microsurfacing wearing course on top to create a protective surface to existing pavement. Crack seal will be used to prevent water and moisture from penetrating roadways and is typically used when roadways are showing signs of cracking. The mill and overlay treatment will consist of removing the top layer of existing paving and replacing it with new material.

The SNETT Trail Expansion will connect the 22-mile rail trail to downtown Franklin. A feasibility study to assess the track conditions and best path forward is underway as of 2023

including the examination of the current and potential future ownership of the stretch. The Town secured \$700,000 of state funding in 2023 for the trail extension.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Franklin and Bellingham Rail Trail Committee, FBRTC Launches Petition to Extend Trail to Downtown Franklin, August 10, 2022, <https://www.franklinbellinghamrailtrail.org/2022/08/10/extend-trail-to-downtown-franklin/>.



11. Sustainability

Introduction

Municipal sustainability practices refer to the efforts and strategies implemented by local governments to create environmentally, socially, and economically resilient communities. These practices are designed to address the challenges posed by urbanization, resource depletion, climate change, economic challenges, and other pressing issues. Municipalities play a critical role in driving sustainable development, as they have the power to enact policies, provide services, and influence the behavior of their residents and businesses. The Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050 sets the goal for the Commonwealth to achieve Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions in 2050. Some key aspects of municipal sustainability practices include:

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency: Renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydroelectric power reduce the carbon footprint and dependency on fossil fuels. A town may invest in solar panels for public buildings, implement wind energy projects, or support local renewable energy startups. Improving the energy efficiency of buildings and infrastructure includes adopting green building codes, encouraging energy-efficient retrofits, and promoting the use of LED lighting and smart technologies to optimize energy consumption. Towns may also promote the use of energy efficient or electric vehicles by converting Town fleets and offering energy credits.

Waste Management: Sustainable waste management practices involve reducing, reusing, and recycling materials to minimize landfill waste and impact. Recycling programs, composting services, and public awareness campaigns encourage waste reduction. (See Services and Facilities chapter).

Public Transportation: Developing efficient and accessible public transportation systems is a cornerstone of sustainable planning; this includes creating safe infrastructure for alternative modes of transportation like cycling and walking. (See Transportation and Circulation).

Green Spaces and Biodiversity: Municipalities can establish and maintain parks, community gardens, and protected areas to promote a healthier environment, provide recreational opportunities for residents, and reduce stormwater runoff.

Water Management: In order to minimize water waste, improve water quality, and manage stormwater runoff, a municipality may promote water-efficient landscaping, installing rainwater harvesting systems, and addressing water pollution through proper infrastructure. (See Services and Facilities).

Climate Adaptation: Municipalities are increasingly focused on adapting to the impacts of climate change, such as rising temperatures, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events. This involves developing strategies to protect communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems from the effects of climate change.

Community Engagement: Successful sustainability practices require the active participation of residents, businesses, and community organizations.

Green Procurement: Adopting green procurement practices involves sourcing products and services that have a reduced environmental impact, such as choosing eco-friendly office supplies and supporting local, sustainable businesses.

Data and Technology: Utilizing data and technology, such as smart city solutions, can help municipalities monitor energy usage, traffic patterns, and air quality to make informed decisions that enhance sustainability.

Climate change and sustainability are considered within every chapter of this plan as it looks toward Franklin's next twenty years. The Town does currently have assets, policies, and practices that directly relate to sustainability.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a shift in long-term temperature, precipitation, and wind patterns driven by a build-up of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in the Earth's atmosphere. For Franklin and communities around the world, it is a challenge that demands solutions at every level. Land use and development patterns can strongly affect a community's contribution to global climate change, first through the production of GHG and second, through its resilience to the impacts of increasingly severe storms and temperature extremes. Key components of a municipality's contribution to harmful GHG emissions include the physical arrangement of streets and public transportation infrastructure, building types, and land uses that influence both vehicle use and energy consumption. By contrast, a climate-resilient community has local infrastructure that provides facilities for alternative transportation, reduces the amount impervious areas, reduces heat-islands, can adapt to future weather conditions, robust community resources and strong social services, and a healthy natural environment with a variety of thriving ecosystems.

Climate change mitigation aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, slow global warming, and avoid the worst potential impacts of climate change. This is the major goal of the Green Communities Program.¹⁵⁷ The objective of climate change adaptation is to prepare for and adjust to both the current and projected impacts of climate change.

¹⁵⁷ MA Department of Energy Resources, Green Communities Division, <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/green-communities-division>

Ecosystem Services are the diverse benefits to humans provided by the natural environment and healthy ecosystems. Forests, grasslands, rivers, and other ecosystems work together to offer such things as natural pollination of crops, clean air, extreme weather mitigation, and human mental and physical well-being.

Climate projections model an increase of 387.5 percent (baseline of eight to 39) days above 90 degrees Fahrenheit by 2050 in Franklin.¹⁵⁸ Extreme heat days, or days 90 degrees Fahrenheit and hotter, are of special concern for older adults due to the increase in heat-related hospitalizations and mortality. Annual precipitation in the majority of Franklin is expected to rise by 8.7 percent by 2050.¹⁵⁹

Natural Hazard Mitigation is any sustained action taken to reduce or remove the long-term risk to life, property, and the environment from natural hazards. The impacts of natural hazards, however, can be amplified or made more extreme by climate change. Franklin completed a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) plan with the neighboring Town of Bellingham in 2019, and Franklin updated its Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) in 2020, and identified four areas of repeated flooding:

- Populatic Pond (pond exceeds banks)
- Pleasant Street and Miller Street (series of old dams)
- Spring Street (beaver activity)
- Spruce Pond (beaver activity)

In a future impacted by climate change, areas like Populatic Pond and Pleasant Street at Miller Street will need to be closely monitored and maintained to ensure that flooding does not severely impact Town function. Spring Street and Spruce Pond have beaver activity that causes flooding and will be less impacted by the increase and severity of rainstorm events due to climate change.

Climate change amplifies threats that already exist in the social, environmental, and built environments, and historically underserved communities already experience the greatest impacts. This plan strives to identify inequities and acknowledge disparities in the capacity for

¹⁵⁸ Resilient MA Climate Hub. 2023. "Resilient MA Climate Change Projections Dashboard." Accessed October 10, 2023, <https://mass-eoea.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/2e8534bc2a7849b0aa6f64d0f79a8937>

¹⁵⁹ Resilient MA Climate Hub. 2023. "Resilient MA Climate Change Projections Dashboard." Accessed October 10, 2023, <https://mass-eoea.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/2e8534bc2a7849b0aa6f64d0f79a8937>

resilience in order to direct policy and actions to the most vulnerable members of the Franklin community.

Existing Conditions and Trends

GREEN COMMUNITY DESIGNATION

Franklin is served by the Green Communities Division (GCD) within the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER), who provides grants, technical assistance, and local support from to help municipalities reduce energy use and costs by implementing clean energy projects in municipal buildings, facilities, and schools. The Town was designated Green Community status in 2017.

Over ninety percent of all electricity used by the town facilities and schools is from the solar farm on Upper Union Street. The solar farm was constructed in 2013 and produces over 11 Mega Watts of power, more than its initial production goals. Additionally, all the mechanical aspects (e.g., boilers, motion sensors, electrical controls, etc.) in Town buildings and Schools have been upgraded to maximize emergency efficiency.

Franklin High School was awarded a silver certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) in February 2016. To achieve LEED certification, a project earns points by adhering to prerequisites and credits that address “carbon, energy, water, waste, transportation, materials, health and indoor environmental quality.”¹⁶⁰ Projects go through a verification and review process by Green Business Certification Inc. and are awarded points that correspond to a level of LEED certification: Franklin High School received Silver at fifty-one points.¹⁶¹ The new high school building is also rated as solar ready, meaning it was also built with the future installation of a solar energy system in mind.

The Town has taken advantage of energy efficiency incentives from National Grid to replace all the T8 and compact fluorescent lighting in the schools, Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, Police Headquarters, Fire Headquarters and Station 2, and DPW Administration and garage with LED

¹⁶⁰ U.S. Green Building Council, LEED Rating System, 2023
[https://www.usgbc.org/leed#:~:text=LEED%20\(Leadership%20in%20Energy%20and,environmental%2C%20social%20and%20governance%20benefits.](https://www.usgbc.org/leed#:~:text=LEED%20(Leadership%20in%20Energy%20and,environmental%2C%20social%20and%20governance%20benefits.)

¹⁶¹ LEED BD+C Schools (v2009), Franklin High School, Silver, 1000025275, Franklin, MA, Awarded February 2016.

lighting and Smart Fixtures where appropriate. The Town also received a Gap II Grant from DOER in the amount of \$80,000 to upgrade sewer stations pumps to energy efficient ones in 2018. Gap grants are designed to fill the last “gap” in project financing for energy efficiency.

As of 2018 the Town of Franklin owns over 1,650 streetlights. Energy incentives from the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) helped the Town to replace all these lights with LED lights. This change has made the Town’s streetlights more efficient and has significantly lowered the costs of operation and maintenance for the Town.

As of March 2021, the Town was awarded a total of \$30,000 in the 2020 Green Communities grant funding from DOER, \$15,000 of which went towards the purchase and installation of two electric vehicle charging stations and the remaining \$15,000 was applied towards the purchase of two fully electric 2018 Nissan Leaf vehicles. The Town successfully installed four dual port electric vehicle charging stations. Three of the four stations were installed at the Town Hall building and one station was installed at the Franklin Public Library parking lot.

In 2022, DOER Green Communities Division approved an award of \$150,902 for projects proposed in the Town’s Green Communities Competitive Grant application. The money was applied towards the procurement of two additional electric vehicles, converting the fluorescent lights at the current Horace Mann School Building to more efficient Smart LED lights, and replacing transformers to a more efficient model in the Keller Sullivan, Remington Jefferson, and Horace Mann school complexes.

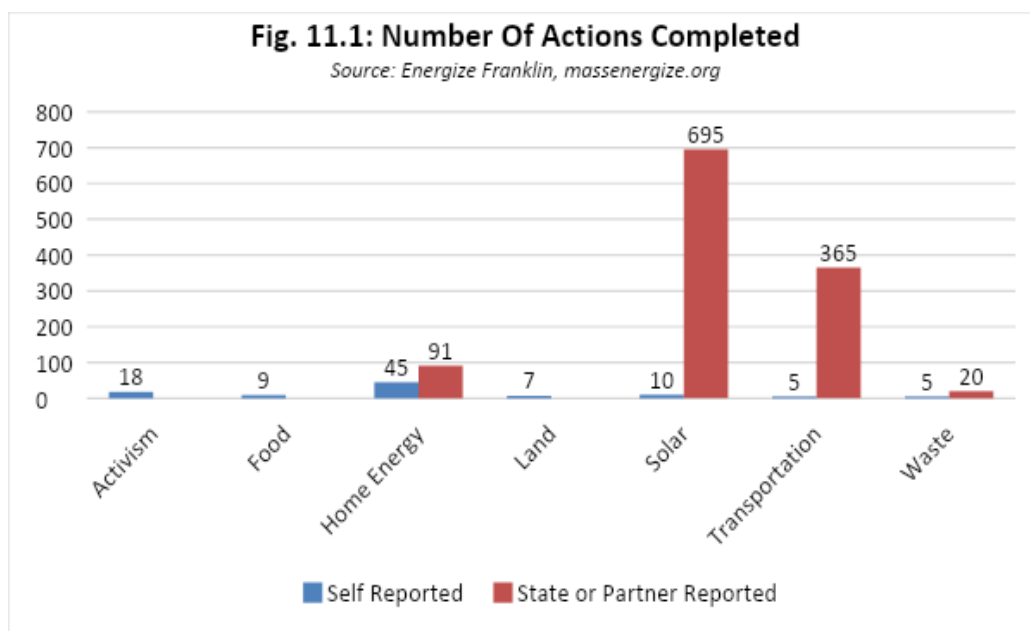
ENERGY REDUCTION PLAN

In order to qualify for Green Community grant funding, the Town partnered with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to develop an Energy Reduction Plan for the entire town in 2017. The plan commits Franklin to reduce energy use in municipal facilities by at least 20 percent compared to Fiscal Year 2016 over five years. As of 2016, the weather-normalized energy usage for Town facilities was 112,027 million British Thermal Units (MMBtu). As of 2020, the Town’s usage decreased to 97,983 MMBtu, a 12.5 percent decrease from Fiscal Year 2016.

ENERGIZE FRANKLIN

EnergizeFranklin is a project of the 350Mass Greater Franklin node and a nonprofit organization running on the Mass Energize platform. MassEnergize collaborates with community organizers

and local leaders to scale climate actions at the household and community levels. The organization equips local leaders with tools, templates, and a support network, tracking community impacts to refine campaigns and drive policy decisions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting environmental justice. Figure 11.1 shows the number of actions completed through the EnergizeFranklin program reported by community members, from State or partner databases, or through previous community programs.¹⁶²



SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste Management is discussed in Chapter 9. Public Services and Facilities. The Town encourages the use of recycling bins and composting practices to divert organic materials from landfills. The Town offers free composting kits to residents. Recycling initiatives in Franklin cover a wide range of materials, including paper, cardboard, plastics, glass, and metals. The town offers single-stream recycling, where residents can place various recyclables in a single container for collection, simplifying the recycling process. The Town's Recycling Center accepts clothing and keeps a list of accepted materials for Town residents.

¹⁶² Energize Franklin Actions, <https://community.massenergize.org/FranklinMA/impact>.

MUNICIPAL AGGREGATION

The Town of Franklin is working to lower individual residential and small business electricity bills. The Town uses its authority granted by state law to bulk purchase an electricity rate to help lower electricity costs for taxpayers by using the purchasing capacity that allows the Town to leverage a potentially lower electricity rate than an individual user. The Franklin Community Choice Power Supply Program has successfully saved electricity ratepayers an estimated 11.5 million dollars throughout the previous three-year contract.¹⁶³



Mount St. Mary's Solar Farm on Upper Union Street in Franklin. Source: Google Maps, October 2019.

SOLAR ENERGY

Private power supplied by solar panels provides energy for several organizations and businesses in town, including at the Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School (ground-mounted solar array) and Alpha Grainger (ground- and roof-mounted solar arrays) complexes. Other private arrays are developed through and tracked by the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) Solar Tariff Generation program using Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards (RPS) and Alternative Portfolio Standards (APS). These programs track units installed since 1997 and beyond, with programs reimagined every several years to determine new standards for solar eligibility.¹⁶⁴

Parmenter Elementary School has roof-mounted solar panels with a 15-kilowatt (kW) capacity that have been in operation since 2011 and provide power to the school building. The panels were

¹⁶³ Franklin, MA Municipal Aggregation, <https://www.franklinma.gov/administrator/pages/municipal-aggregation>

¹⁶⁴ Lists of Qualified Generation Units, MA DOER, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/lists-of-qualified-generation-units>

installed using Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funds from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources.¹⁶⁵

Some municipal energy is also provided from the ground-mounted solar panels located on the property of Saint Mary's Abbey in southeast Franklin. Two separate ground-mounted arrays provide 3.6 megawatts hours (MW) and 4.8 MW of power. Net Metering Credits from the project are sold through a long-term contract creating a public-private partnership agreement to the Town of Franklin, Mount Saint Mary's Abbey, and the project.¹⁶⁶ The project generates \$250,000 in tax revenue for the town and conserve electricity.¹⁶⁷

A solar farm located on Spring Street went live in 2021 and added more than 6.3 MW of renewable energy to the local electricity grid. This community solar farm falls under Massachusetts' Community Solar Program, which allows residents to subscribe to a share of a local solar farm and go solar without rooftop panels. Residents are eligible to benefit from future prices through the local shared community solar at a discount from the developer.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Gerald M. Parmenter Elementary School, *Parmenter's Solar Data*, <https://www.franklinps.net/g-m-parmenter-elementary-school/about-us/pages/parmenters-solar-data>.

¹⁶⁶ Kearsage Energy, *Mount Saint Mary's Solar I (Franklin, MA)*, <http://www.kearsargeenergy.com/mt-st-marys-solar-farm-1/>.

¹⁶⁷ The Sun Chronicle, "St. Mary's Abbey's solar panels unveiled, hailed," December 8, 2013, https://www.thesunchronicle.com/news/local_news/st-mary-s-abbey-s-solar-panels-unveiled-hailed/article_5203a97b-804b-5482-8a7e-f3880f9d23a0.html.

¹⁶⁸ Nexamp (Zaid Ashai), Letter to Franklin residents dated 2020, https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10036/f/uploads/nexamp_signed_letter_1.pdf.



Wind Turbine at St. Mary's Abbey, Franklin. Source: Google Maps October 2019

WIND ENERGY

According to the United States Wind Turbine database, Franklin currently has one wind turbine located at Mount St. Mary's Abbey put online in 2009. The turbine has a capacity of generating 0.1 MW. The turbine supplies power to the Church at the abbey alongside a geothermal power system and is the first location in Massachusetts to have three renewable energy systems on one property.¹⁶⁹

RENEWABLE THERMAL TECHNOLOGY

Renewable heat technologies include renewable biofuels, solar heating, geothermal heating, heat pumps and heat exchangers.

¹⁶⁹ The Sun Chronicle, "St. Mary's Abbey's solar panels unveiled, hailed," December 8, 2013.

EMISSIONS PER HOUSEHOLD

Figure 11.2 shows the average household carbon footprint for Franklin and for Norfolk County as taken from UC Berkeley EcoDataLab and CoolClimate Networks. This data comes from 2017, prior to the COVID 19 pandemic and was developed as a consumption-based emissions inventory (CBEI). CBEI is not a direct measurement of individual households' consumption or behavior and instead uses a model to estimate consumption of goods and services, and associated emissions.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ Consumption-Based Emissions Inventory Methodology, <https://www.ecodatalab.com/cbei/methodology>.

Fig. 11.2 Average Household Carbon Footprint for Franklin and Norfolk County, MA¹⁷¹

Location	Electricity (kWh)*	Natural Gas (cubic ft.)	Fuel Oil (gallons)	Transport (tCO ₂ e/yr.)*	Housing (tCO ₂ e/yr.)	Food (tCO ₂ e/yr.)	Goods (tCO ₂ e/yr.)	Services (tCO ₂ e/yr.)	Total Household Carbon Footprint (tCO ₂ e/yr.)	Households	Total City Carbon Footprint (tCO ₂ e/yr.)
Franklin	9,699	54,099	264	21	14	9	7	8	59	10,327	604,344
Norfolk County	8,230	45,599	371	18.0	13.9	7.7	6.8	8.0	54.5	254,676	13,879,081

* Kilowatt hours

** Tons (t) of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent (e)

¹⁷¹ Source: UC Berkeley CoolClimate Network, Average Annual Household Carbon Footprint, 2017.

Local Policies and Practices

The town has not adopted any legislation on autonomous vehicles, and drone usage.

NEW FUEL-EFFICIENT VEHICLE POLICY

Along with the Town's Green Communities designation, in 2017 the Town adopted a fuel-efficient vehicles policy, which requires the town purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use. The Town hopes to continue prioritizing fuel-efficient and electric vehicles where possible in the replacement of the Town fleets over time, especially as electric vehicle technology improves. The fuel-efficient vehicle policy counts towards green procurement goals for the town.

LOCAL ADOPTION OF STRETCH ENERGY CODE

As of December 2017, the Town formally adopted a Stretch Energy Code from the State Building Code 780 CMR Appendix 115AA, into its local building codes. The Stretch Energy Code is an appendix to the MA State Building Code (8th edition) and focuses on a higher tier of building energy conservation provisions that are more progressive than the baseline energy conservation requirements of the State Building Code. Buildings constructed using the Stretch Energy Code are roughly twenty percent more energy efficient than those using the baseline requirements.

The Code impacts the design and construction of new residential buildings of three stories or less, portions of existing residential buildings undergoing renovation or addition, and certain new commercial buildings. The goal of the code is to lower building energy consumption requirements, modernize internal systems, and promote cost savings through energy offsets and efficiency.¹⁷² Franklin currently adheres to this code; however, it is not the opt in code and that there are more efficient codes out there.

ENERGY PRODUCTION ZONING REGULATIONS

Zoning Amendments 18-810, 18-811 & 18-812 created regulation for ground mounted solar energy systems. Zoning Amendment 20-849 modified the Zoning Districts that large ground-mounted solar is allowed, which is currently only in Industrial zoned areas.¹⁷³

¹⁷² Eighth Edition of the MA State Building Code 780 CMR Chapter 115 AA: Stretch Energy Code, May 18, 2018.

¹⁷³ Franklin, MA, Zoning, 185 Attachment A Use Regulations Schedule Part III, January 2021.

A 2016 bylaw amendment states that owners “of any commercial or industrial building or any multi-unit residential building of three units or more which has a flat roof and has photovoltaic (solar) panels” installed needs to provide notification to the Fire and Police Departments for safety purposes.¹⁷⁴

The Town does not currently have bylaws that pertain to the construction of wind energy facilities or structures.

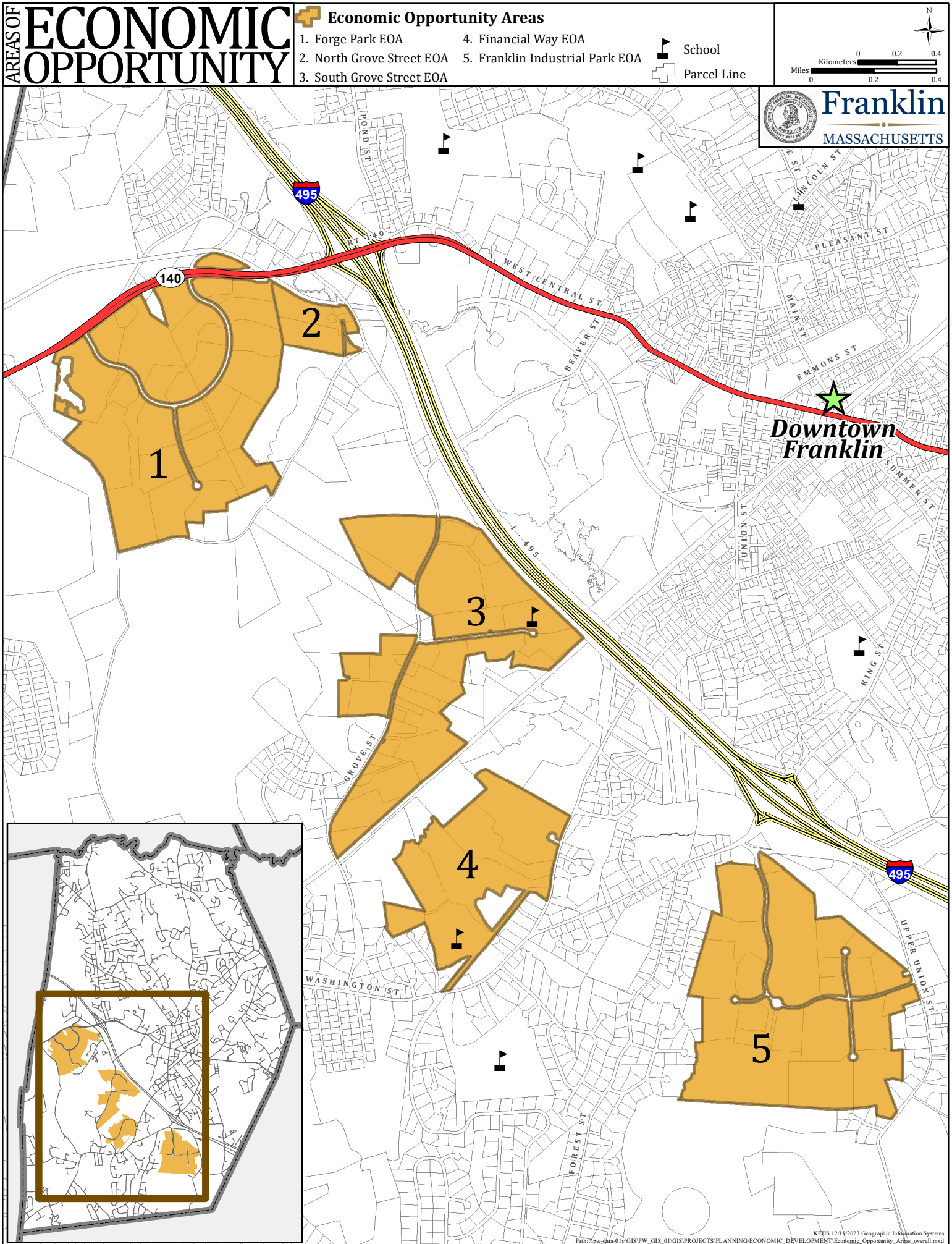
SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW

The use of low-impact development (LID) and green infrastructure (GI) practices are encouraged and incorporated into site plans in accordance with the most recent Town of Franklin MS4 permit. LID is environmentally friendly land use development that values design techniques used to maintain the natural landscape and drainage features of a site. Long-term, using LID can help to make Franklin structures more resilient in the face of climate change.




¹⁷⁴ Town of Franklin, MA, General Legislation, *Chapter 130: Property Owner Public Safety Notification*, April 27, 2016.

MAPS

Map 4.1 Economic Opportunity Areas



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

-  Affordable Housing Locations
-  Parcel Line
-  Municipal Boundary


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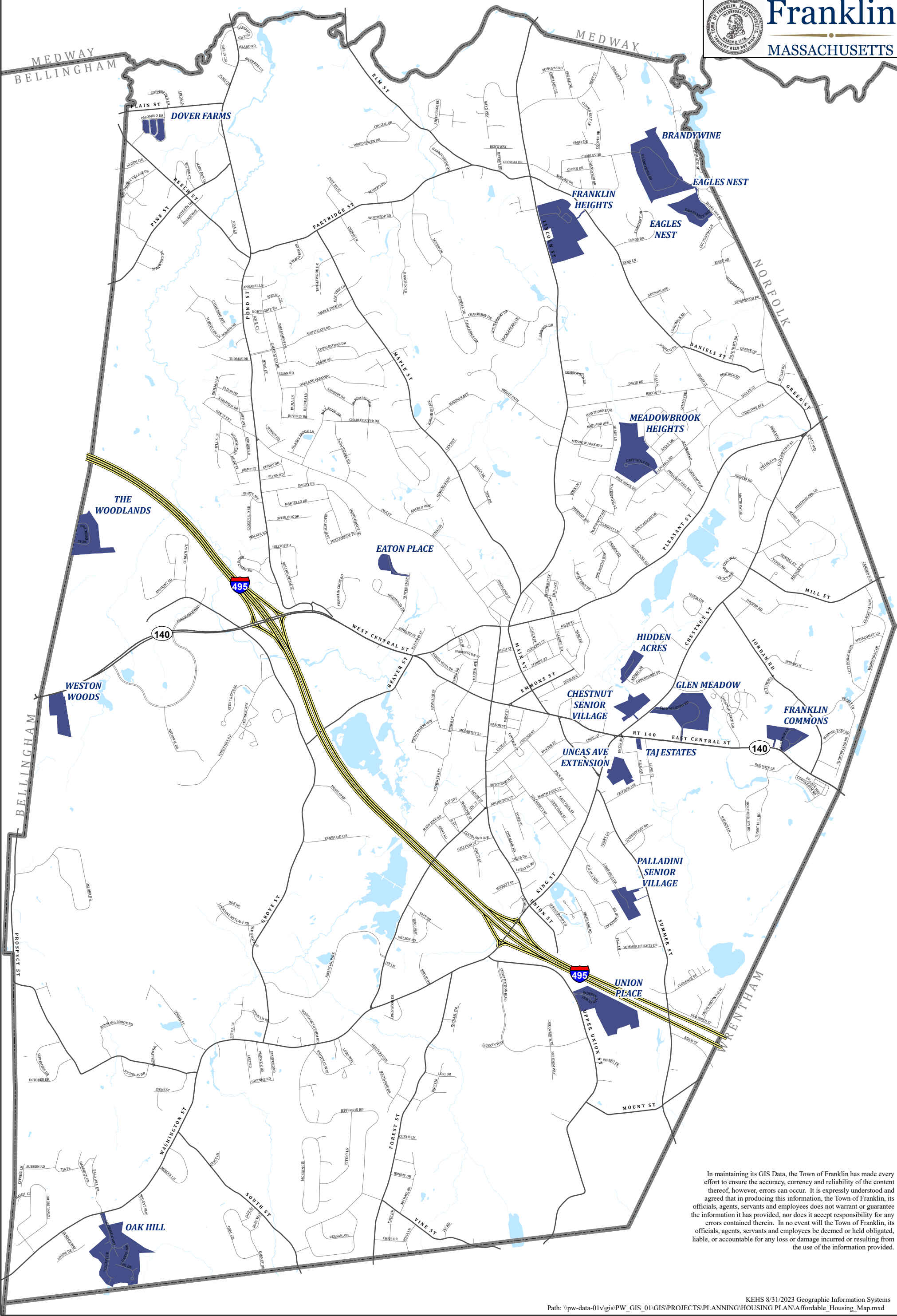
Kilometers

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Miles

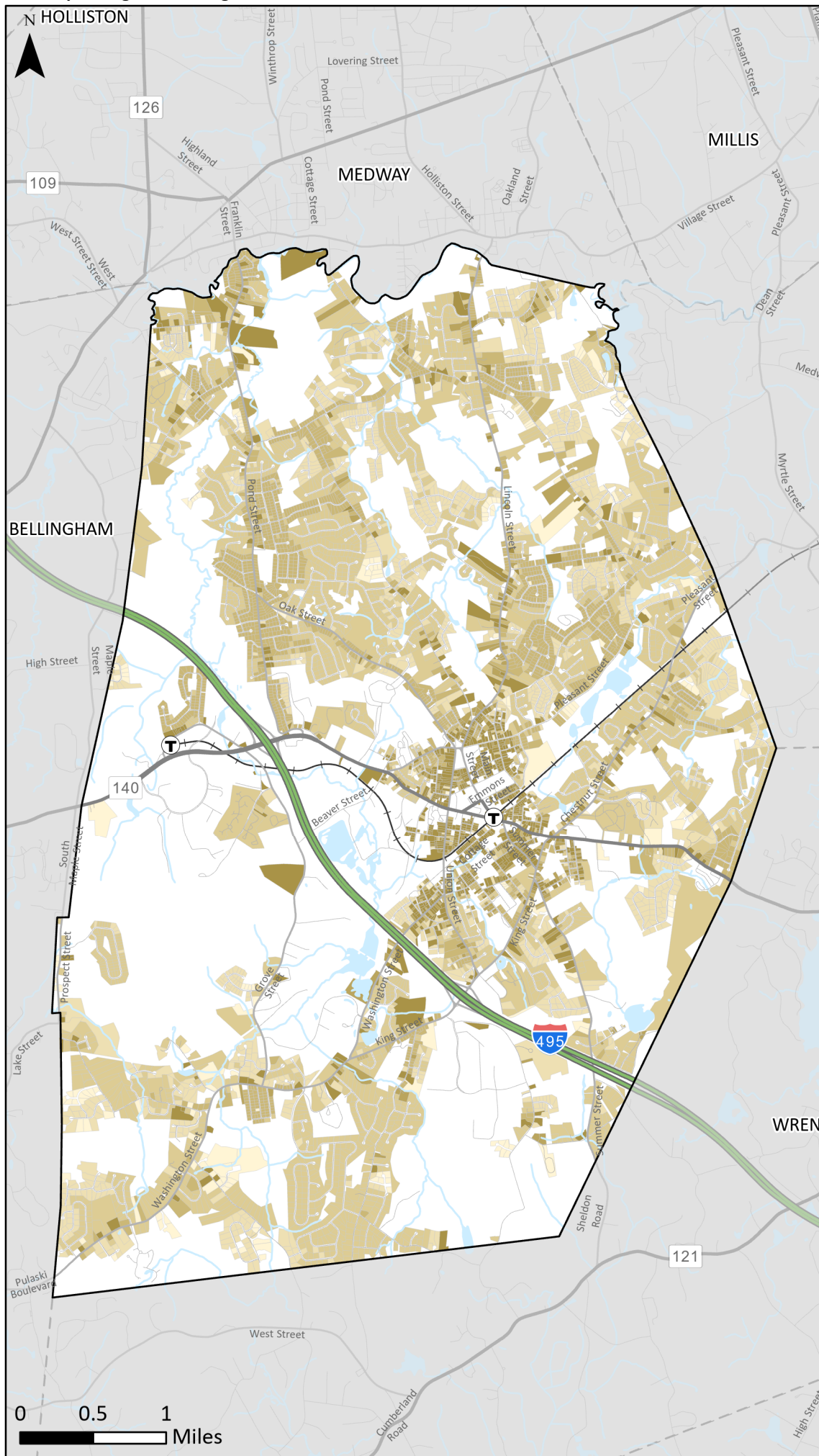
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In maintaining its GIS Data, the Town of Franklin has made every effort to ensure the accuracy, currency and reliability of the content thereof, however, errors can occur. It is expressly understood and agreed that in producing this information, the Town of Franklin, its officials, agents, servants and employees does not warrant or guarantee the information it has provided, nor does it accept responsibility for any errors contained therein. In no event will the Town of Franklin, its officials, agents, servants and employees be deemed or held obligated, liable, or accountable for any loss or damage incurred or resulting from the use of the information provided.

Map 6.1 Age of Housing Stock



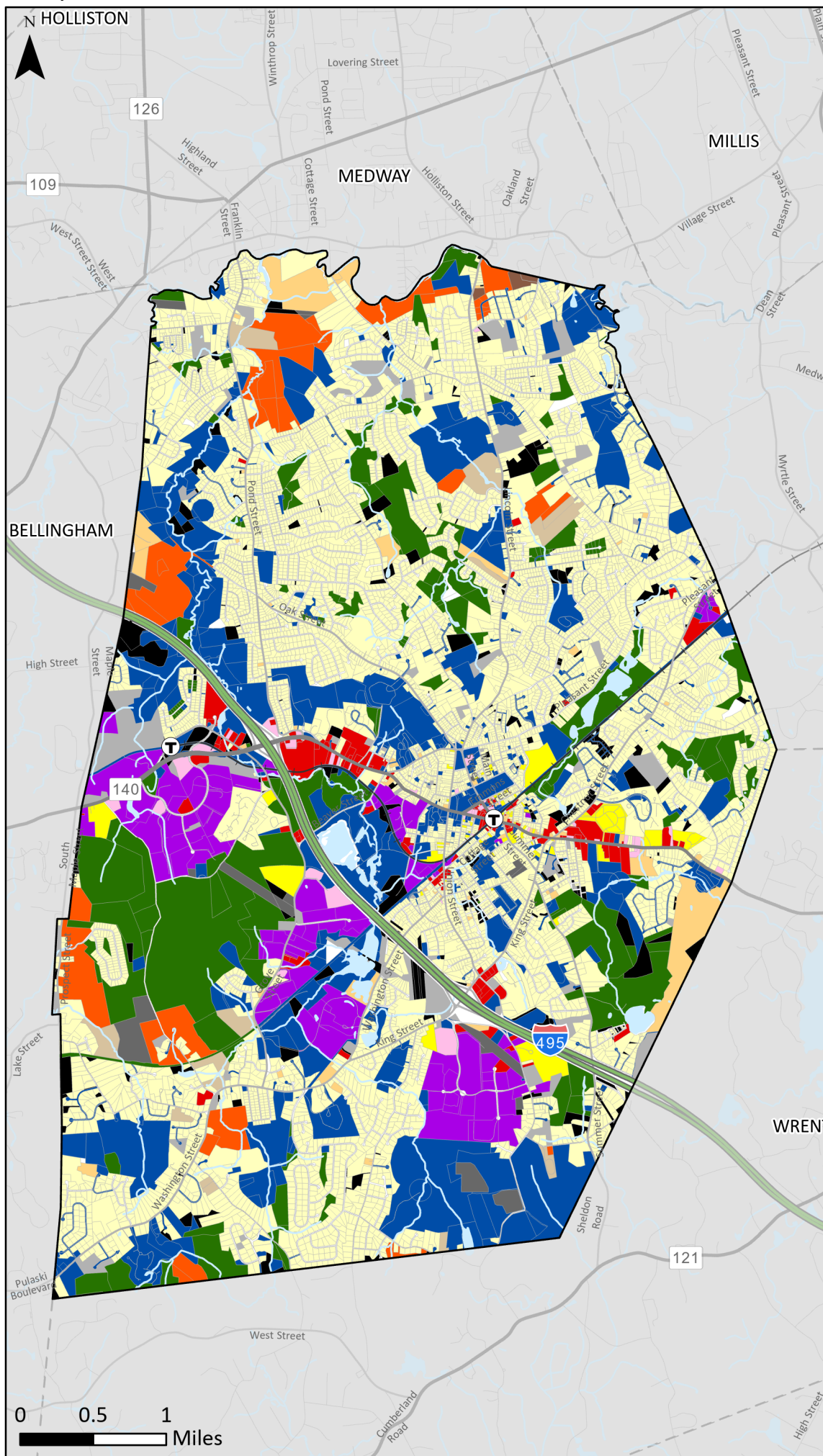
Town of Franklin Age of Housing Stock

- Pre- 1920
- 1921 - 1945
- 1946 - 1970
- 1971 - 1995
- 1996 - 2010
- 2011 - Present

Date: November 2023
Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 6.2 Land Use



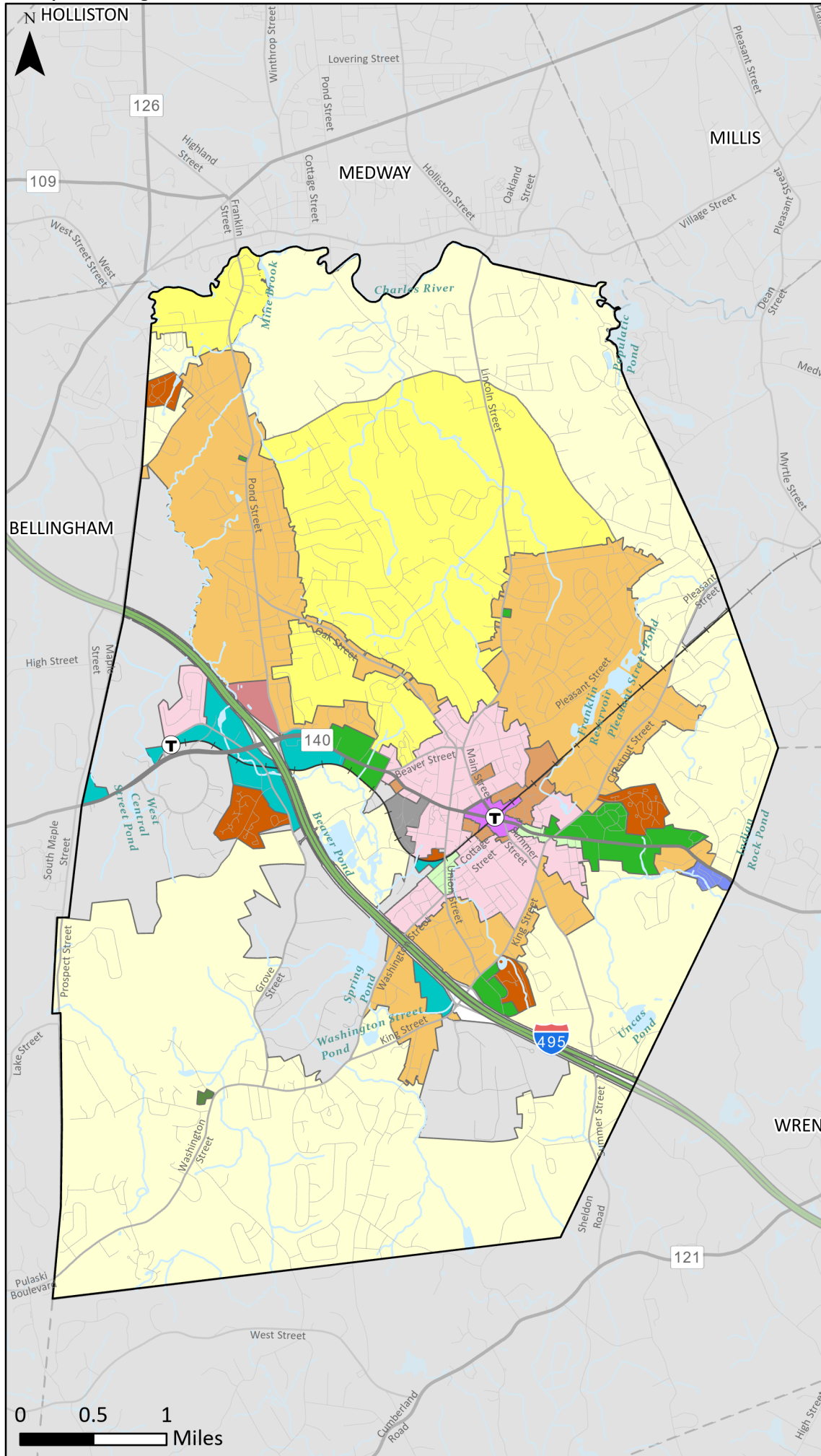
Town of Franklin Land Use

- Residential <3 Units
- Apartments > 4 Units
- Mixed-Use
- Office
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Res/Ag and Res/OS
- Agriculture
- Chapter Land
- Exempt Conservation Land/Open Space
- Exempt Institutional
- Undevelopable
- Utility and Transportation
- Vacant
- No Data

Date: November 2023
Source: Town of Franklin, MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 6.3 Zoning Districts



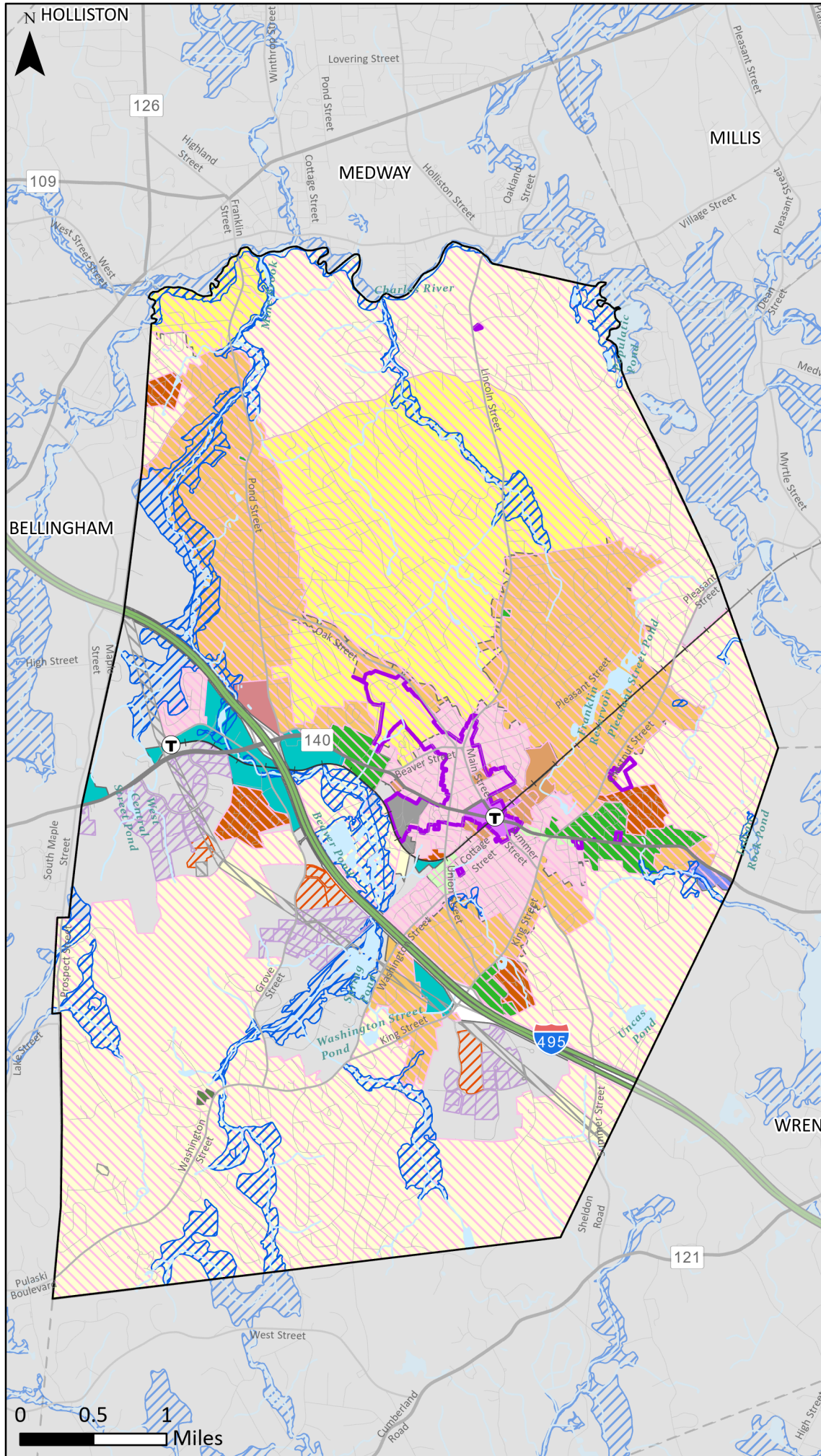
Town of Franklin Zoning

- BUSINESS
- COMMERCIAL I
- COMMERCIAL II
- DOWNTOWN
- COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
- GENERAL RESIDENTIAL V
- INDUSTRIAL
- MIXED BUSINESS INNOVATION
- OFFICE
- RESIDENTIAL VI
- RESIDENTIAL VII
- RURAL BUSINESS
- RURAL RESIDENTIAL I
- RURAL RESIDENTIAL II
- SINGLE-FAMILY III
- SINGLE-FAMILY IV



















Date: October 2023
Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 6.4 Zoning and Overlay Districts



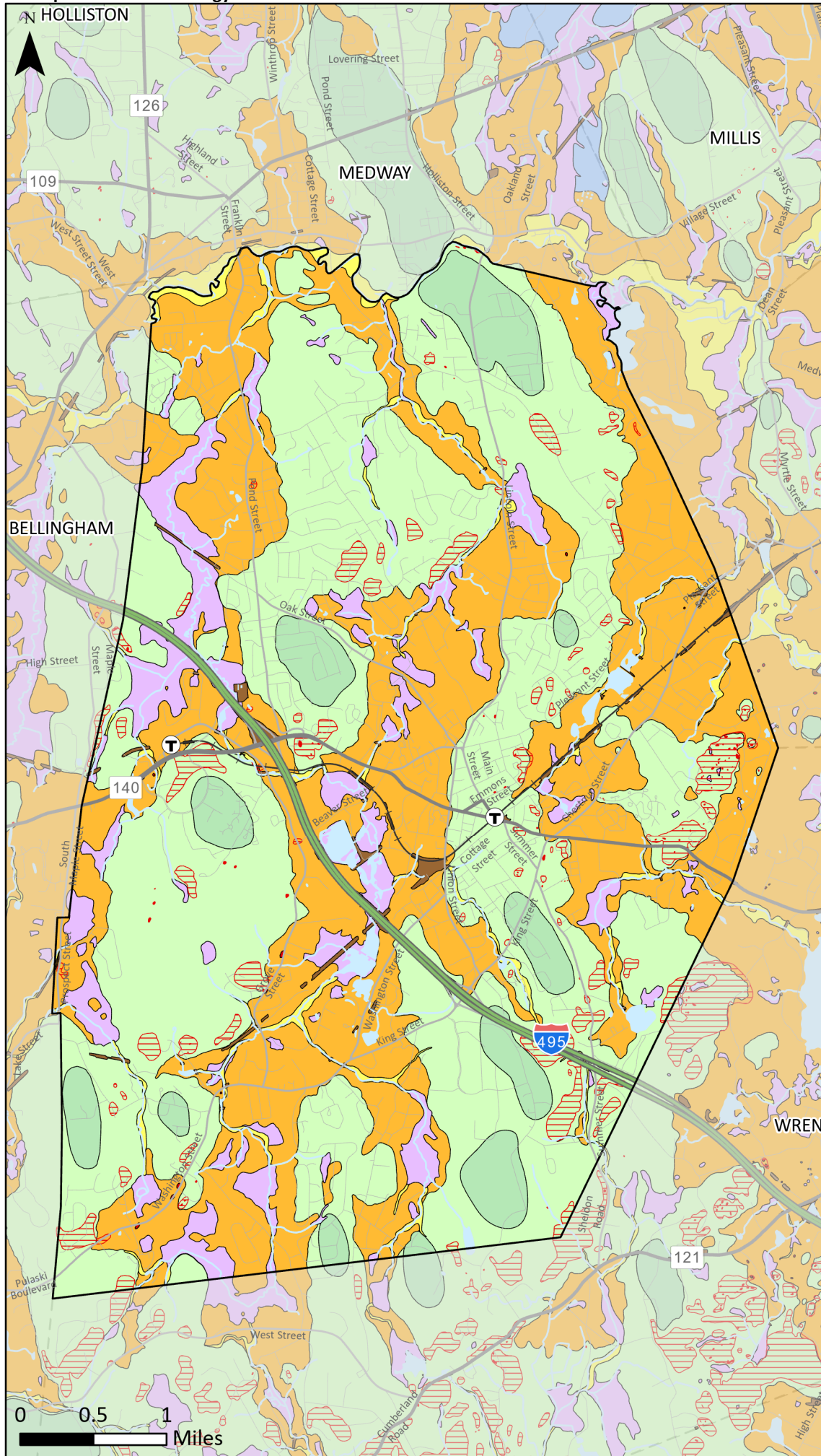
Town of Franklin Zoning and Overlay Districts

-  Flood Hazard Overlay District
-  Marijuana Use Overlay District
-  Adult Use Overlay District
-  Senior Village Overlay District
-  Wireles
-  Communication Overlay District
-  Cultural District
-  BUSINESS
-  COMMERCIAL I
-  COMMERCIAL II
-  DOWNTOWN
-  COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
-  GENERAL RESIDENTIAL V
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  MIXED BUSINESS INNOVATION
-  OFFICE
-  RESIDENTIAL VI
-  RESIDENTIAL VII
- RURAL BUSINESS
- RURAL RESIDENTIAL I
- RURAL RESIDENTIAL II
- SINGLE-FAMILY III
- SINGLE-FAMILY IV

Date: October 2023
Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 7.1 Surficial Geology



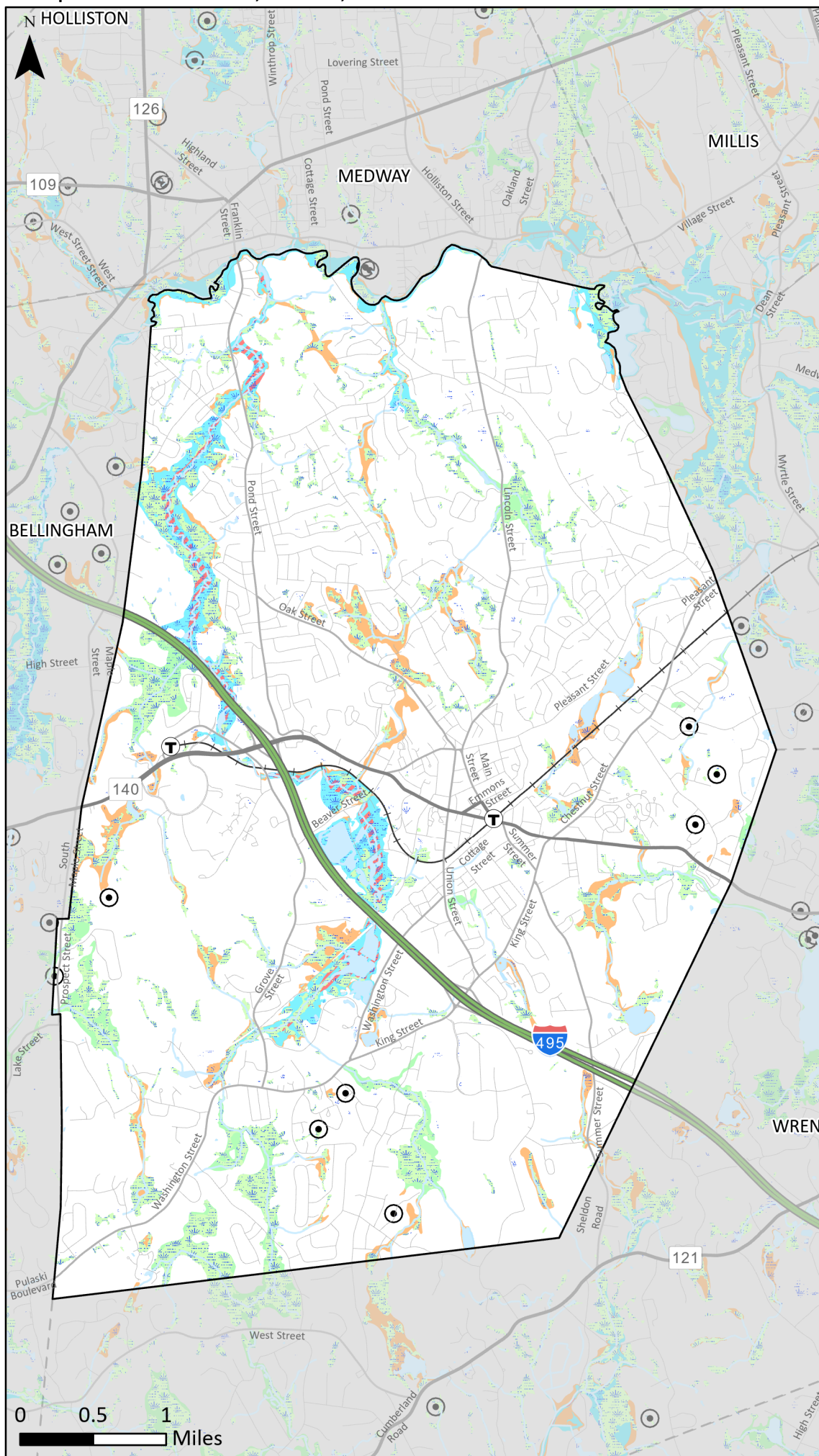
Town of Franklin Surficial Geology

- Abundant Outcrop and Shallow Bedrock
- Artificial Fill
- Postglacial Deposits**
 - Swamp and Marsh Deposits
 - Alluvium
- Glacial Stratified Deposits**
 - Coarse
 - Glaciolacustrine Fine
- Thick Till and Moraine**
 - Thick Till
- Bedrock Outcrops and Thin Till**
 - Bedrock Outcrop
 - Thin Till
- MassDOT Major Roads**
 - Interstate
 - U.S. Highway
 - State Route
 - Non-numbered Road
 - Local Roads
- MBTA Commuter Rail Lines**
 - Regular Service
- MBTA Commuter Rail Stations**
 - Regular Service
- Town of Franklin
- Surrounding Towns
- Water

Date: October 2023
Source: Town of Franklin, MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 7.2 Flood Hazard Areas, Wetlands, and Vernal Pools



Town of Franklin

Wetlands and Vernal Pools

● Certified Vernal Pools

Wetlands

Marsh/Bog

Wooded marsh

Cranberry Bog

Open Water

FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer

A: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, no BFE

AE: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE

AE: Regulatory Floodway

X: 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding

MassDOT Major Roads

Interstate

U.S. Highway

State Route

Non-numbered Road

Local Roads

MBTA Commuter Rail Lines

Regular Service

MBTA Commuter Rail Stations

Regular Service

Town of Franklin

Surrounding Towns

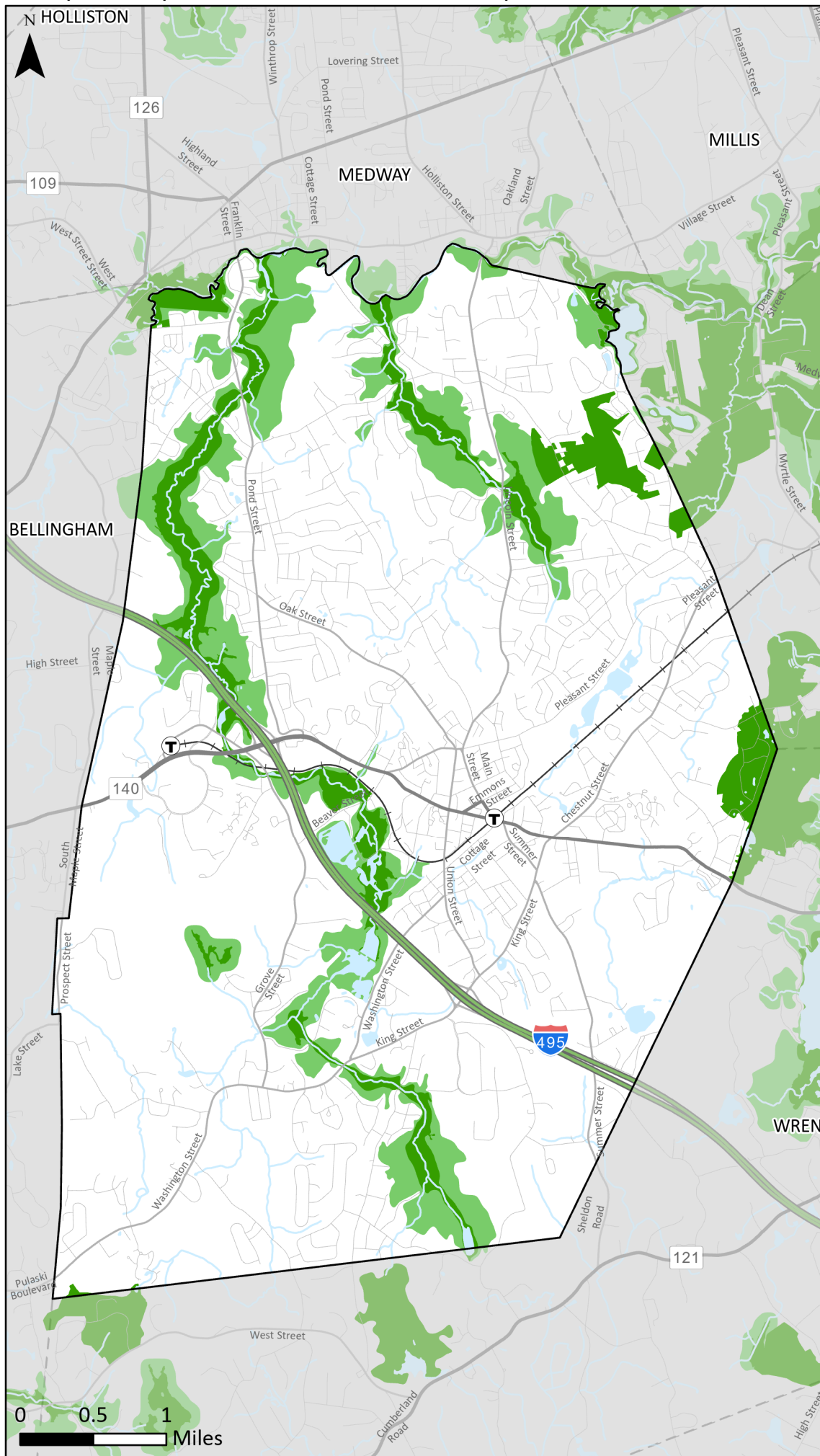
Water

Date: October 2023

Source: Town of Franklin, MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 7.3 BioMap Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape



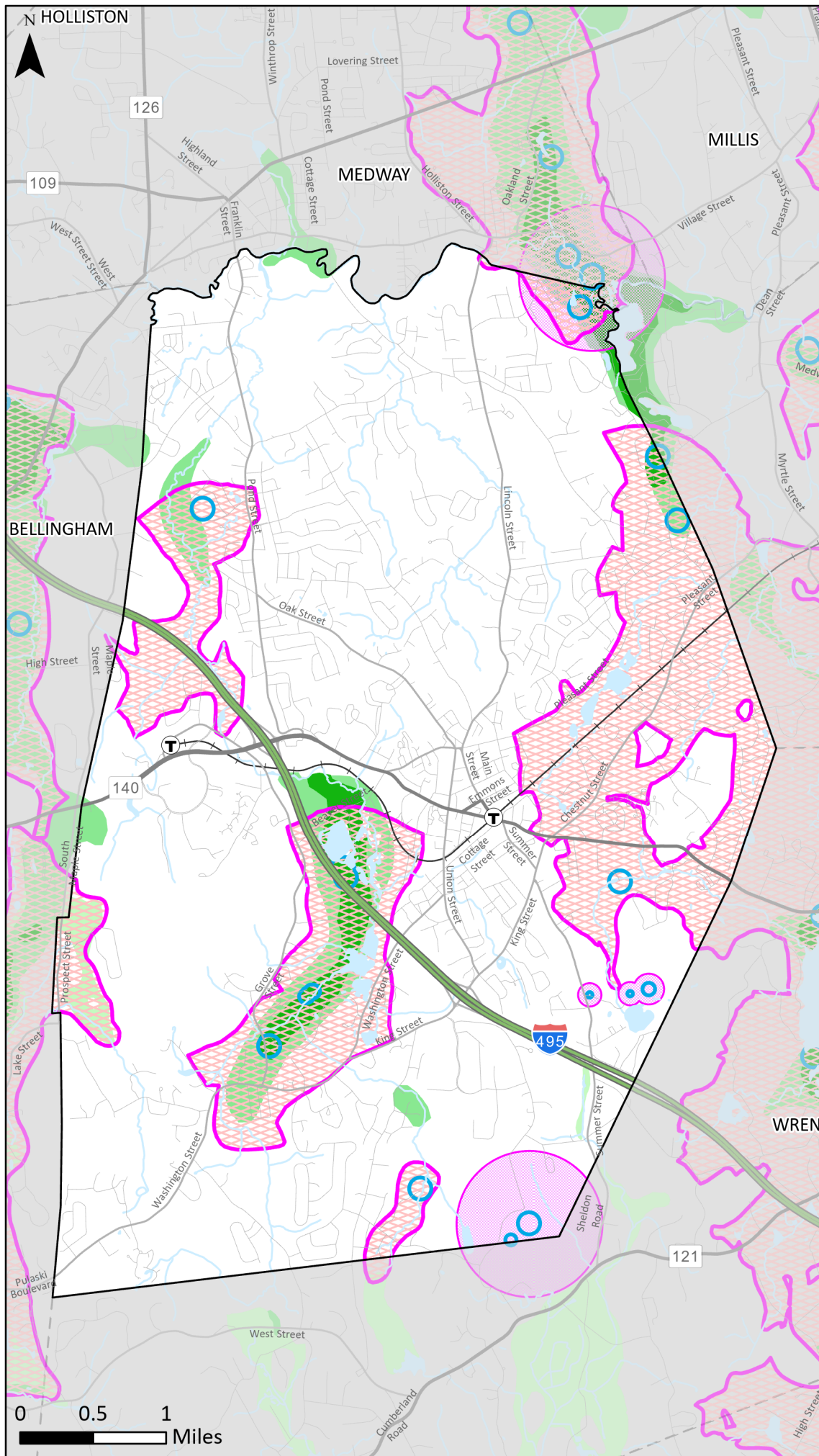
Town of Franklin BioMap

- Core Habitat
- Critical Natural Landscape
- MassDOT Major Roads
 - Interstate
 - U.S. Highway
 - State Route
 - Non-numbered Road
 - Local Roads
- MBTA Commuter Rail Lines
 - Regular Service
- MBTA Commuter Rail Stations
 - T Regular Service
- Town of Franklin
- Surrounding Towns
- Water

Date: October 2023
Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 7.4 Wellhead Protection Areas, Aquifers, and Groundwater Supply Wells



Town of Franklin

Wellhead Protection Areas

Aquifers

High Yield

Medium Yield

Low Yield

DEP Approved Zone I

DEP Approved Zone II

Interim Wellhead
Protection Area

MassDOT Major Roads

Interstate

U.S. Highway

State Route

Non-numbered Road

Local Roads

MBTA Commuter Rail Lines

Regular Service

MBTA Commuter Rail Stations

Regular Service

Town of Franklin

Surrounding Towns

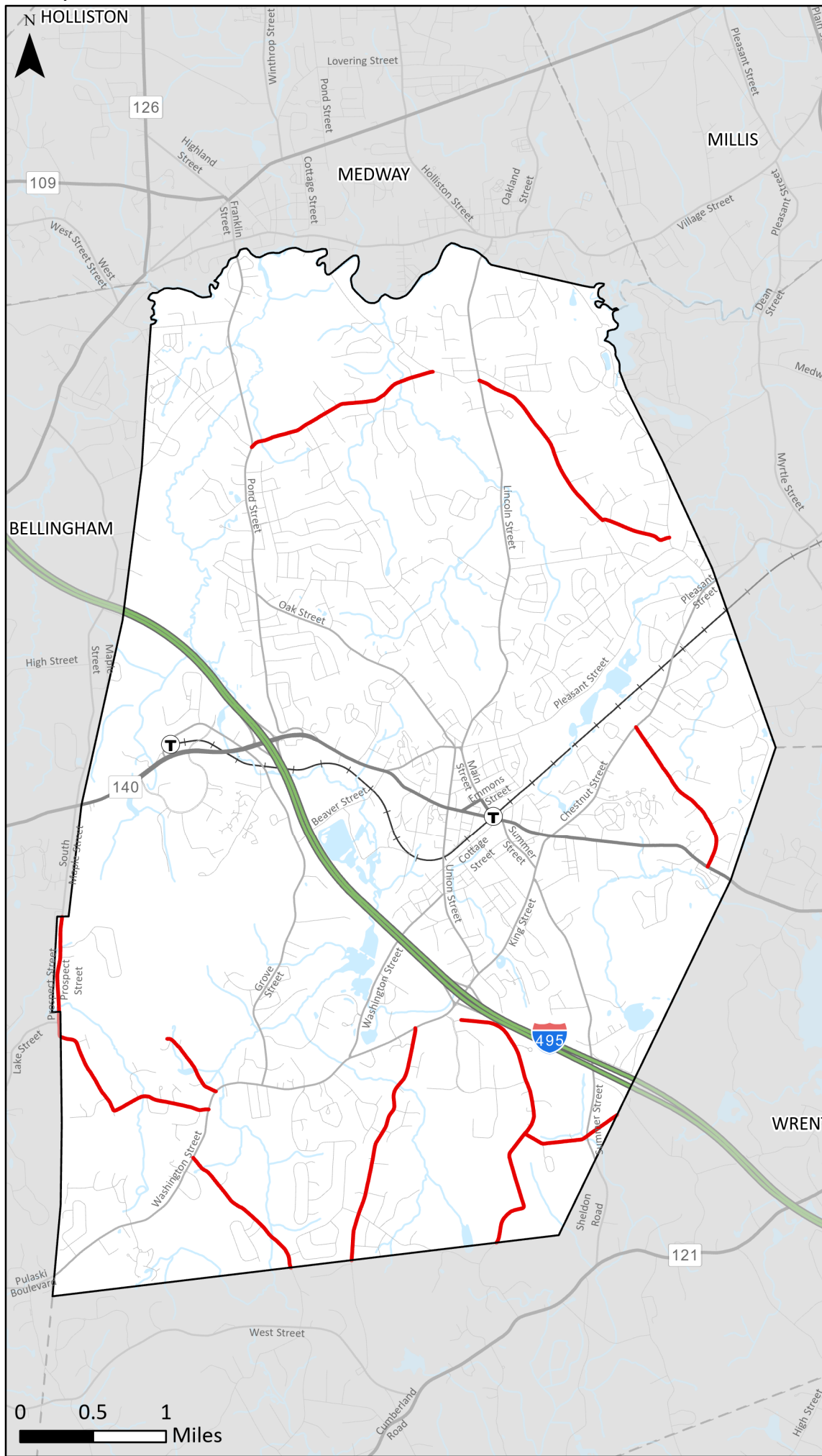
Water

Date: October 2023

Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 7.5 Scenic Roads



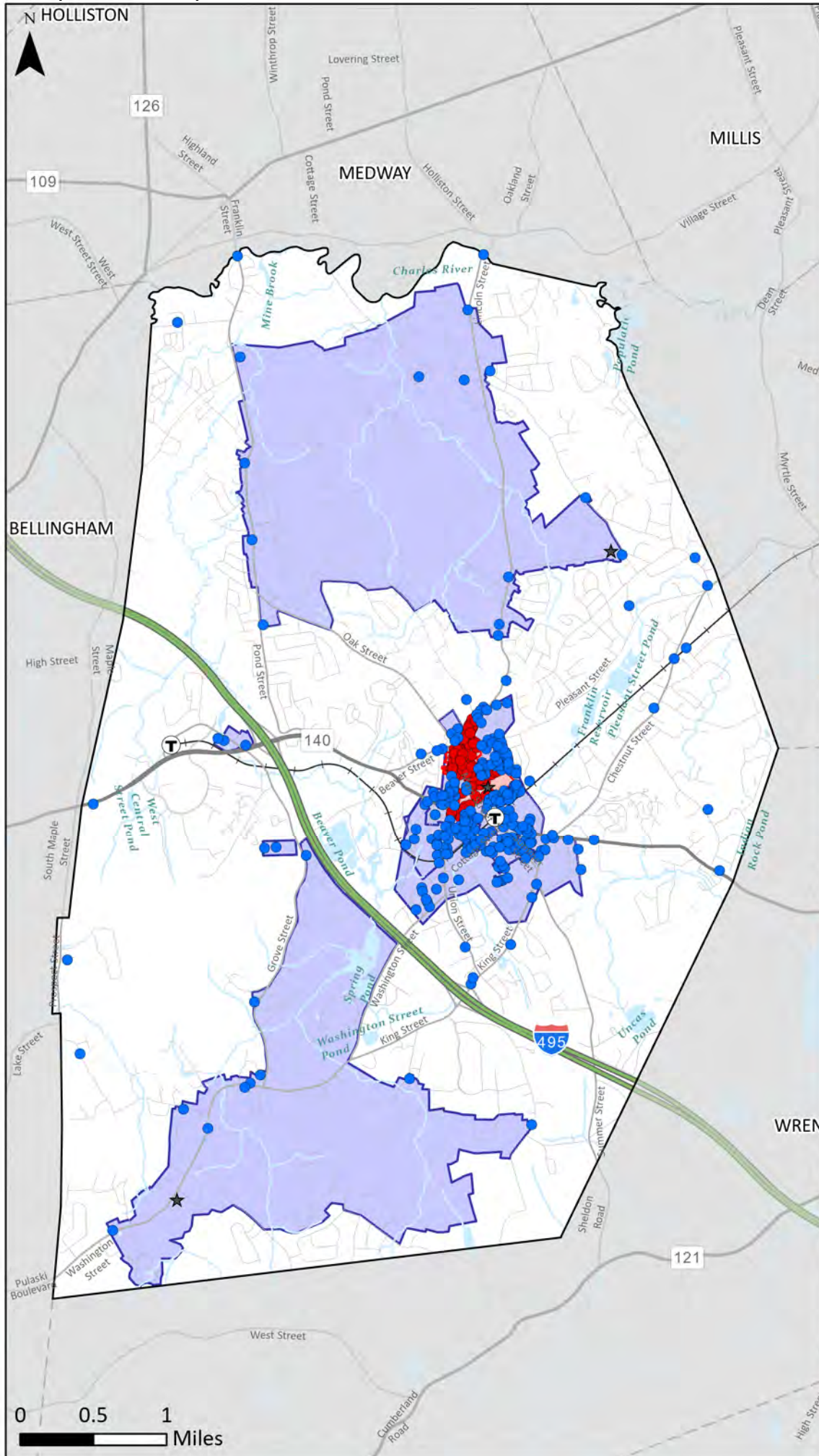
Town of Franklin Scenic Roads

- Scenic Roads
- MassDOT Major Roads
 - Interstate
 - U.S. Highway
 - State Route
 - Non-numbered Road
 - Local Roads
- MBTA Commuter Rail Lines
 - Regular Service
- MBTA Commuter Rail Stations
 - Regular Service
- Town of Franklin
- Surrounding Towns
- Water

Date: October 2023
Source: Town of Franklin, MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 7.6 Historic Properties and Features



Town of Franklin Historic Properties

MassHistoric Commission Inventory (Points)

- National Register of Historic Places
- ★ Preservation Restriction
- Inventoried Property

MassHistoric Commission Inventory (Areas)

- National Register of Historic Places
- Inventoried Property

MassDOT Major Roads

- Interstate
- U.S. Highway
- State Route
- Non-numbered Road
- Local Roads

MBTA Commuter Rail Lines

- Regular Service

MBTA Commuter Rail Stations

- Ⓣ Regular Service

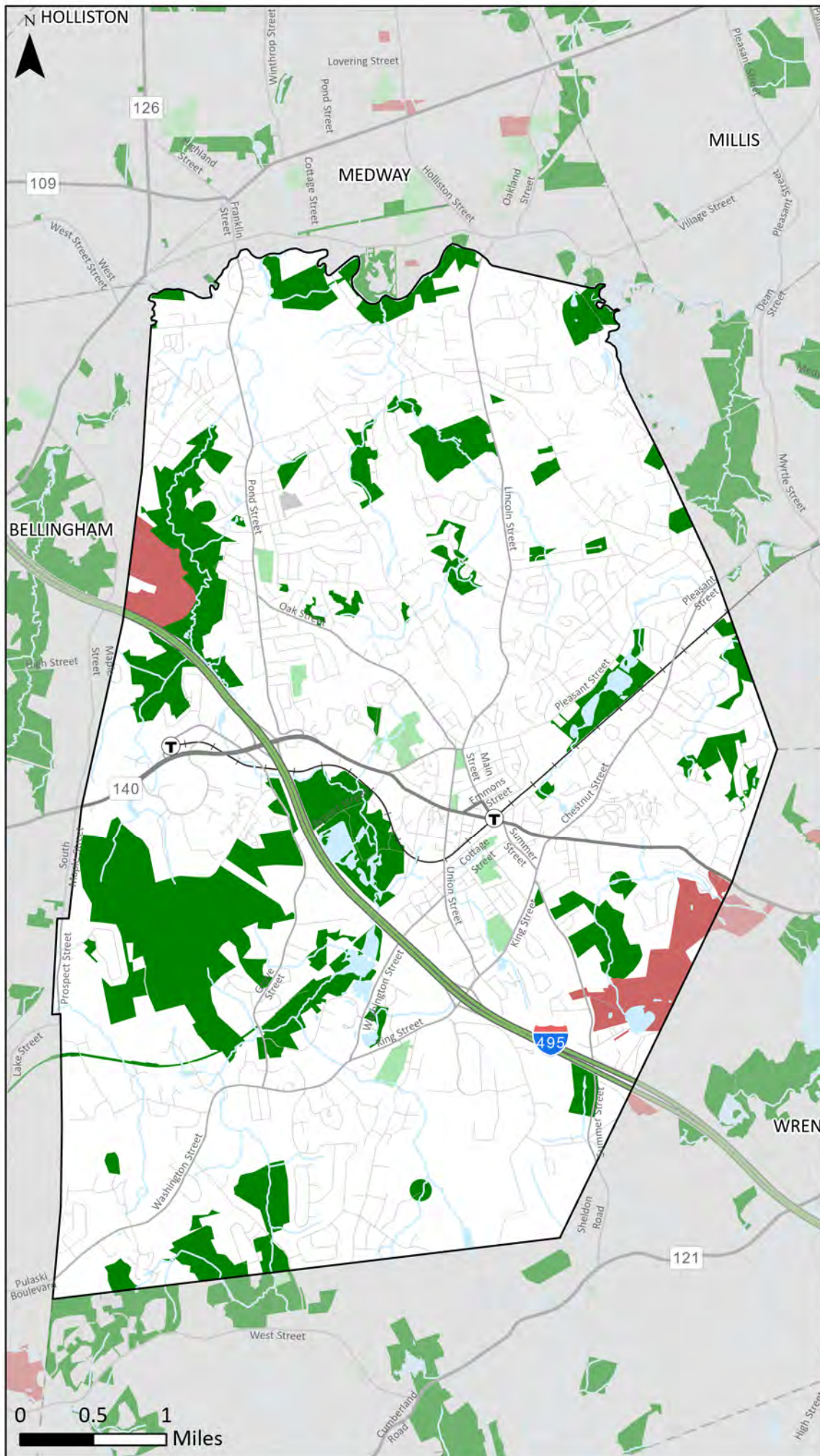
- Town of Franklin
- Surrounding Towns
- Water

Date: October 2023
Source: Town of Franklin, MassGIS, and MassDOT



0 0.5 1 Miles

Map 8.1 Open Space by Level of Protection



Town of Franklin Open Space by Level of Protection

OpenSpace: Level of Protection

- In Perpetuity
- Limited
- None
- Unknown

MassDOT Major Roads

- Interstate
- U.S. Highway
- State Route
- Non-numbered Road
- Local Roads

MBTA Commuter Rail Lines

- Regular Service

MBTA Commuter Rail Stations

- Regular Service

- Town of Franklin

- Surrounding Towns

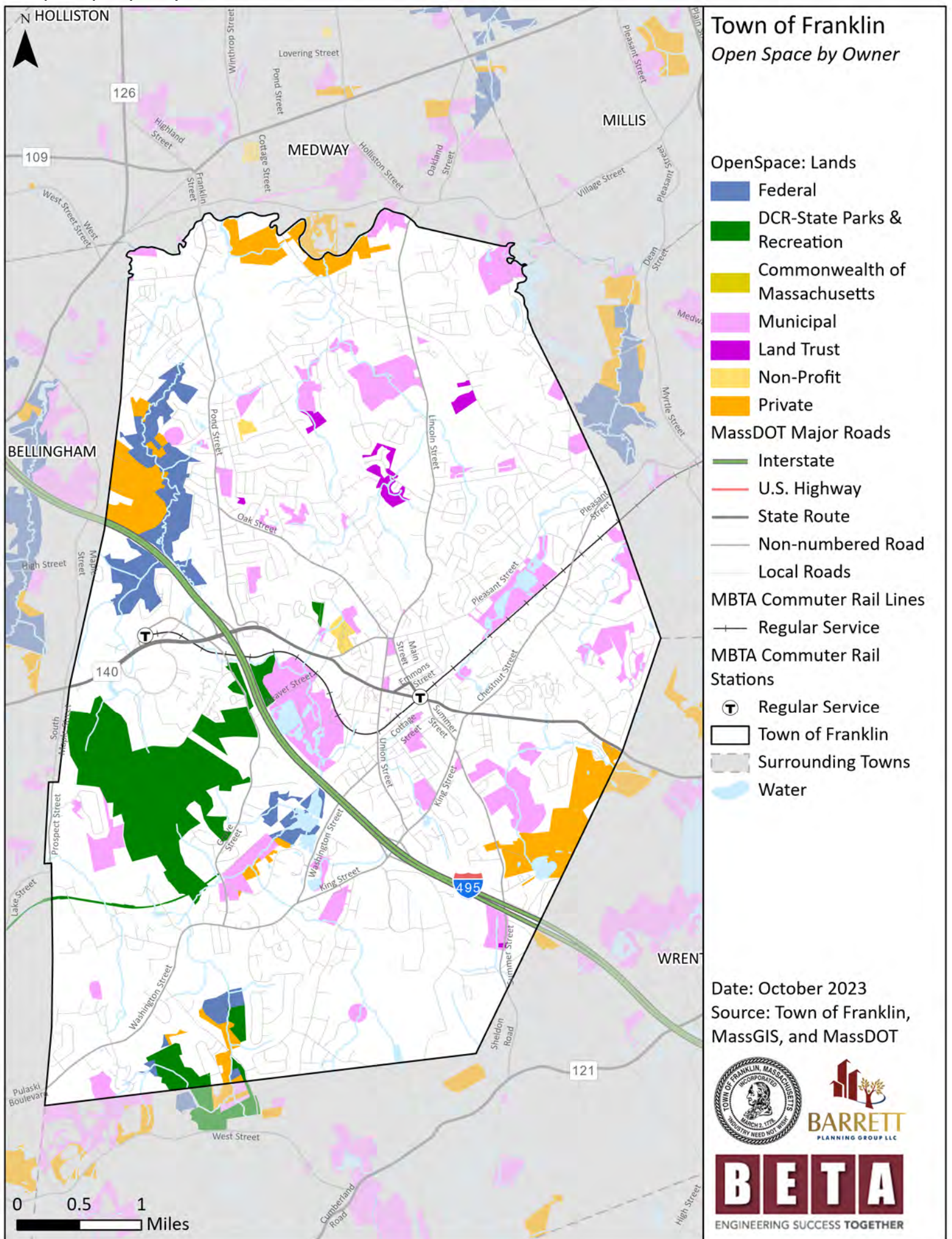
- Water

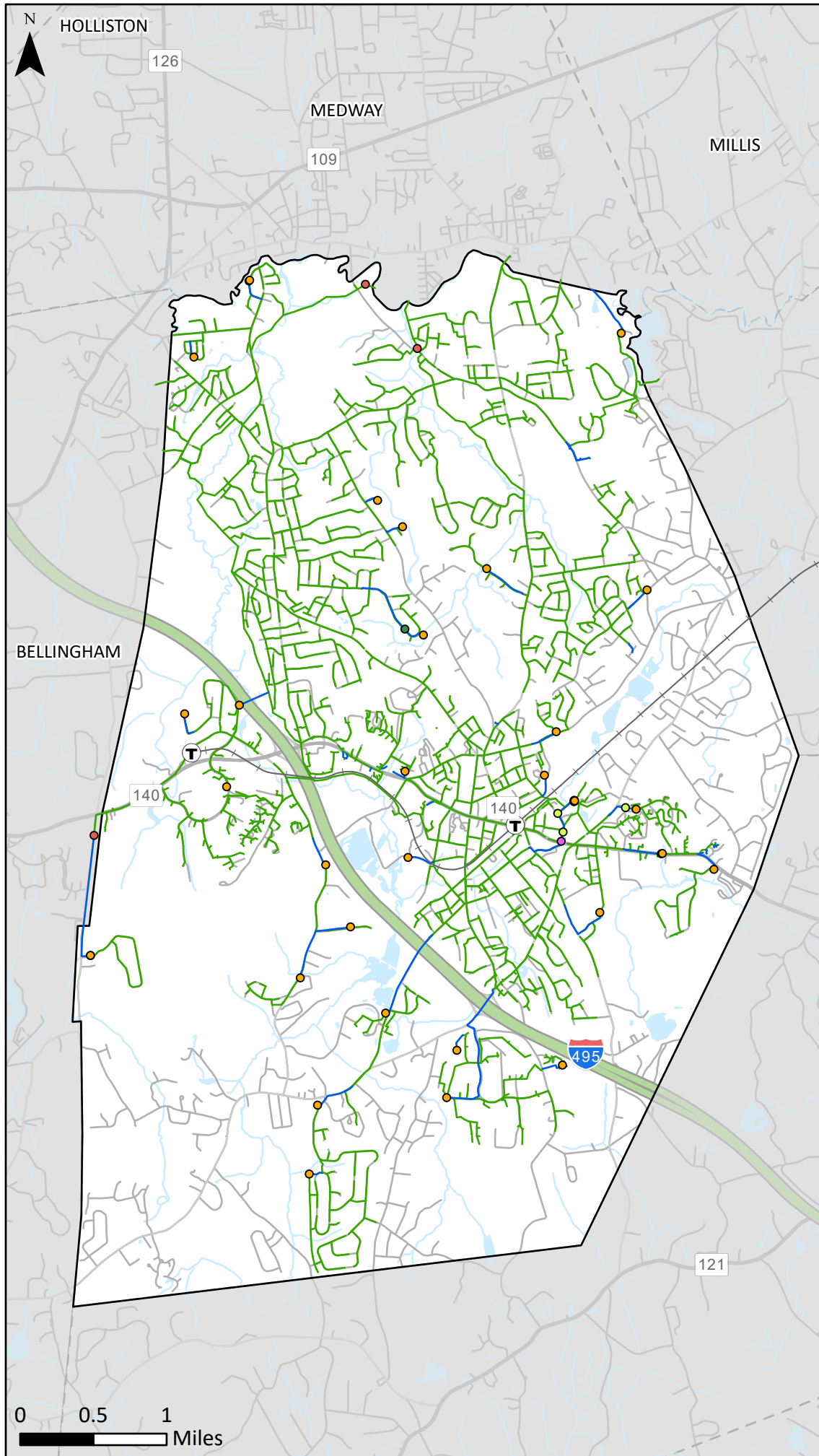
Date: October 2023

Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 8.2 Open Space by Owner





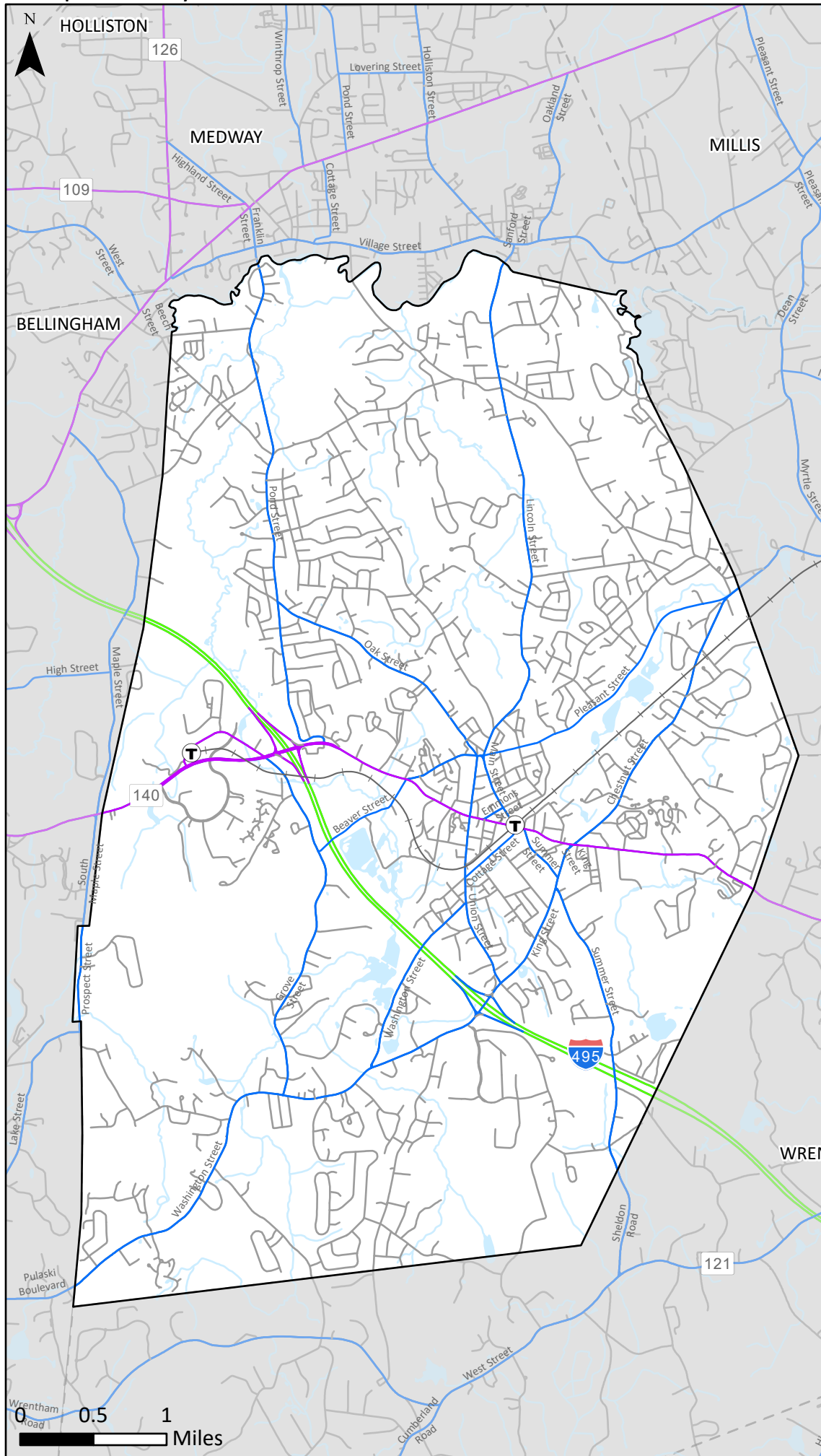
Town of Franklin Sewer System

- Gravity Sewer Pipes
 - Pressure Sewer Types
- Sewer Network Features
- FM Cleanout MH
 - Force Main Valve
 - Metering Station
 - Pressurized Sewer Gate Valve
 - Sewer Network Feature
 - Sewer Pump Stations

Date: November 2023
Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 10.1 Roads by Functional Class



Town of Franklin

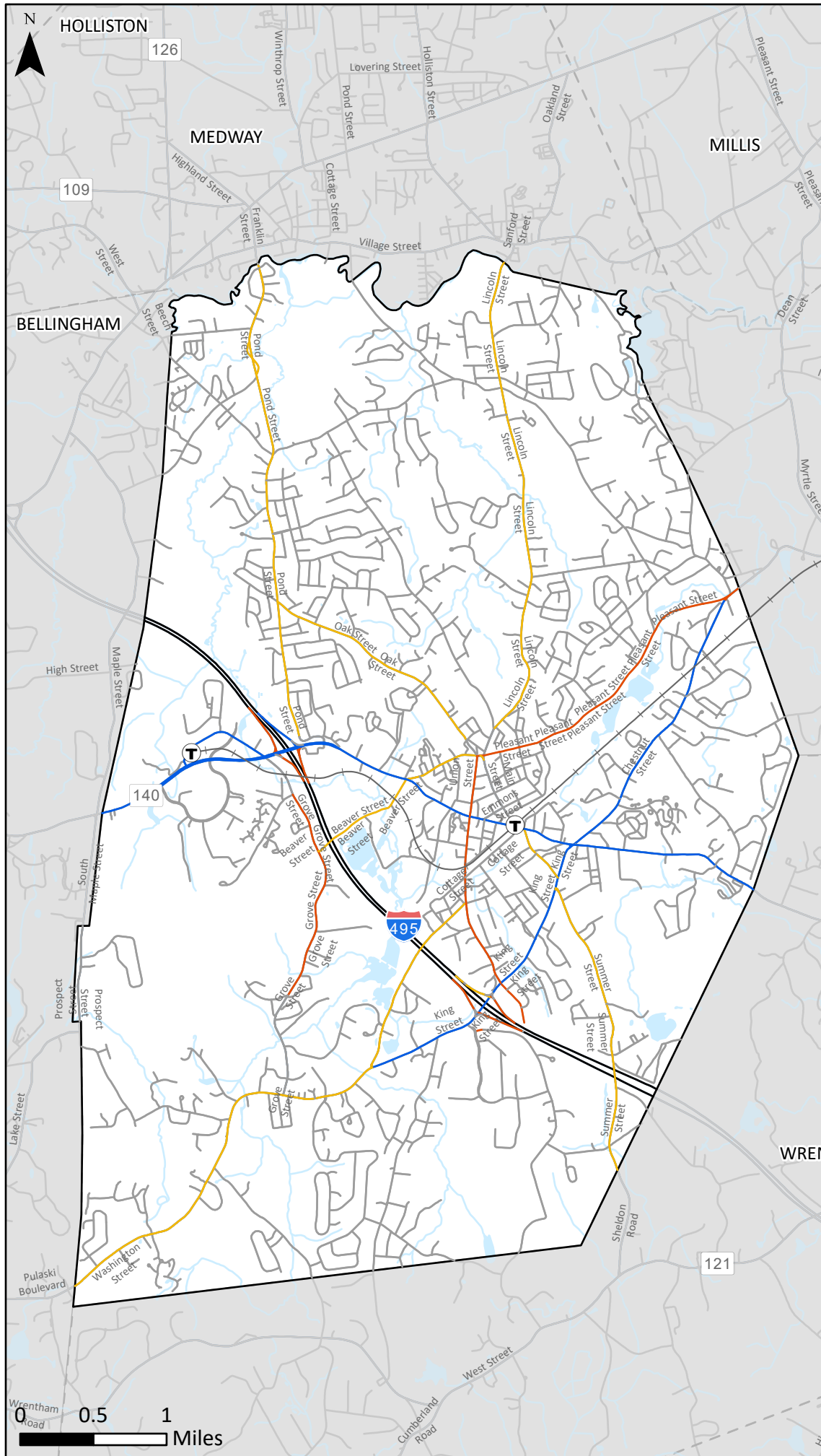
Roads by Functional Class

Functional Class

- Interstate
- Arterial
- Collector
- Local

Date: October 2023
Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT





Town of Franklin MassDOT Traffic Data Counts

Traffic Volumes

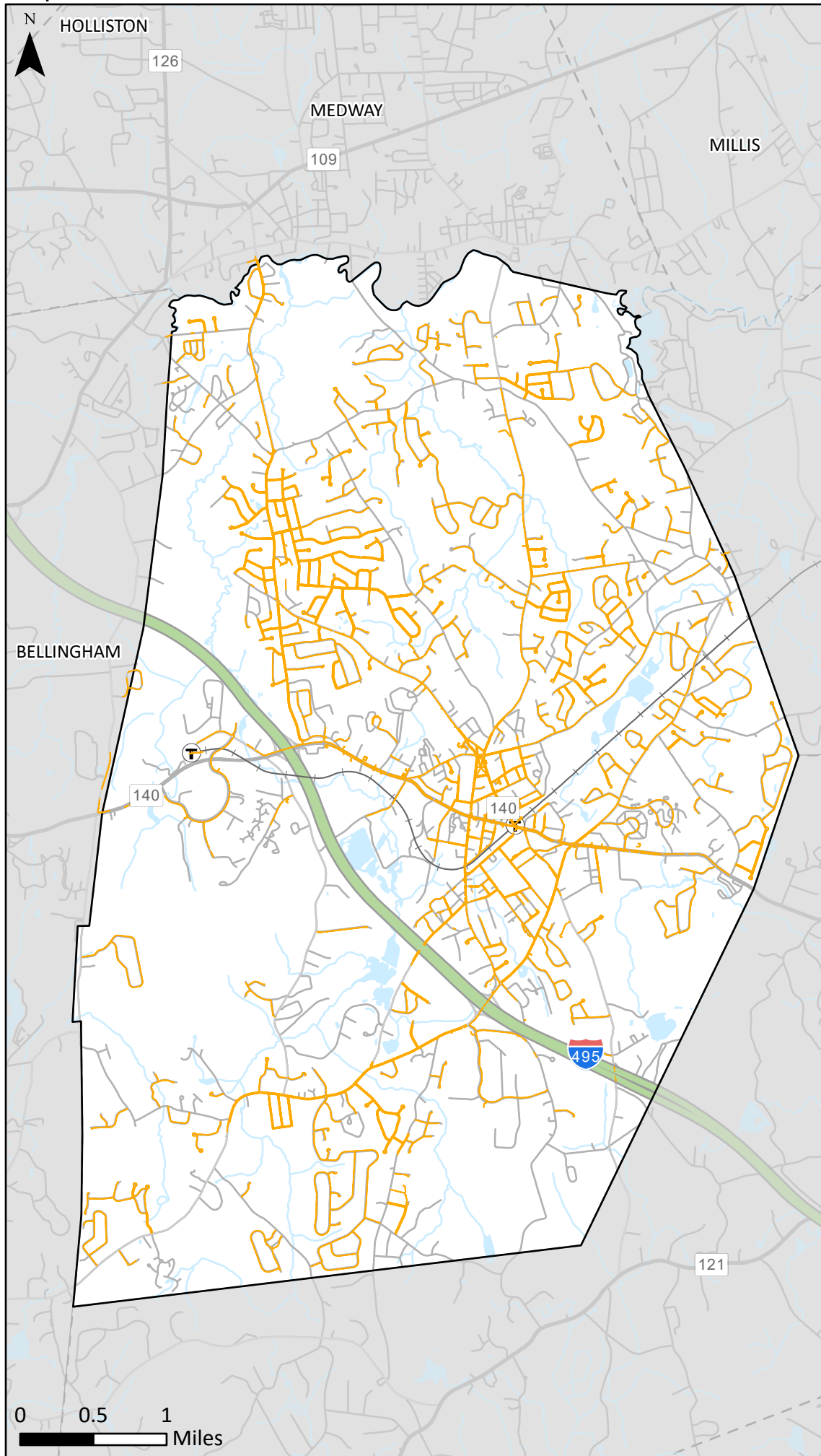
Annual Average Daily Traffic

- No Data
- ≤ 5,000
- 5,001 - 10,000
- 10,000 - 25,000
- ≥ 25,000


Date: November 2023
Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 10.3 Franklin Sidewalks



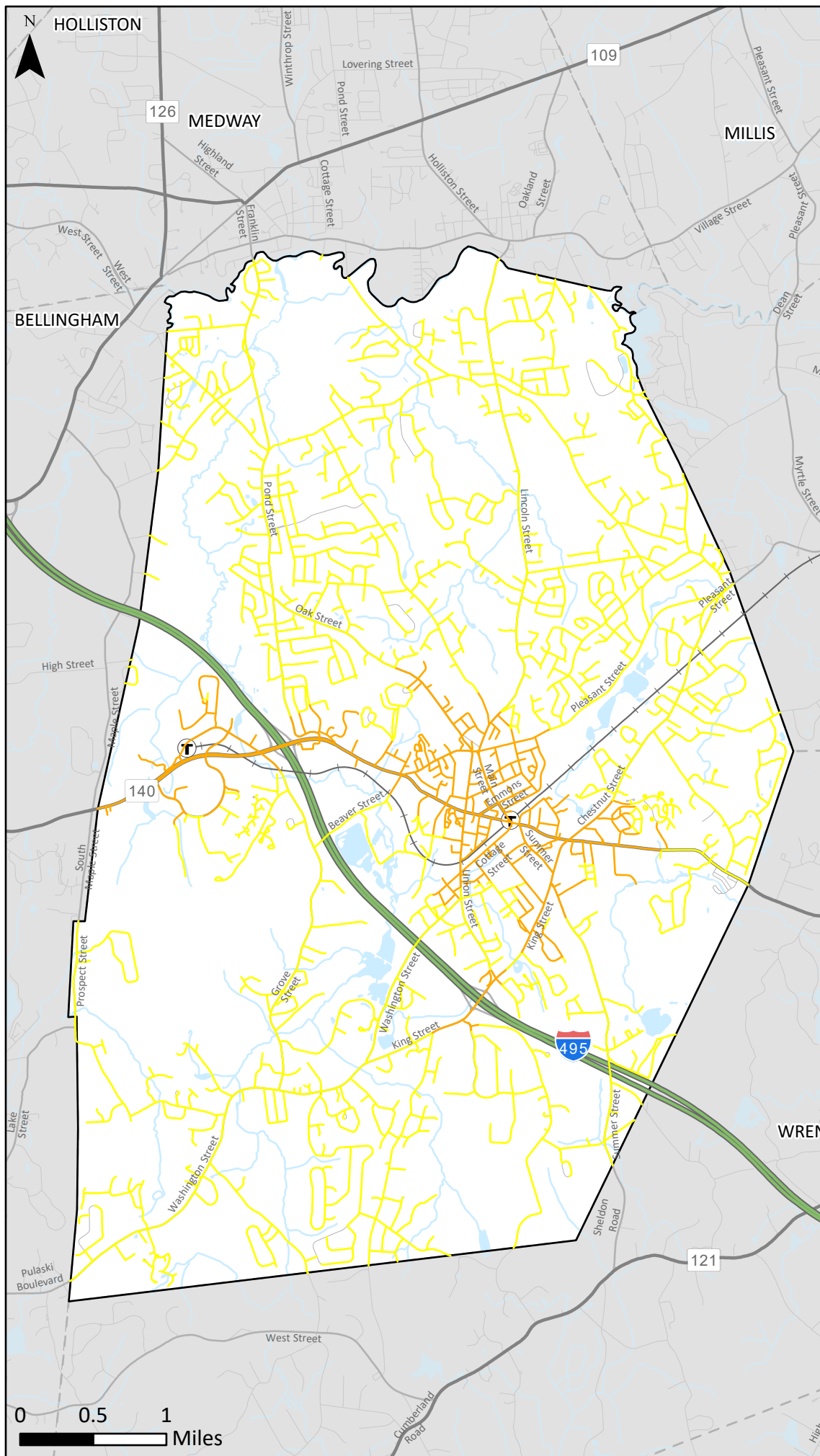
Town of Franklin Sidewalks

 Sidewalks

Date: October 2023
Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 10.4 Potential Walkable Trips



Town of Franklin

Potential Walkable Trips

Potential

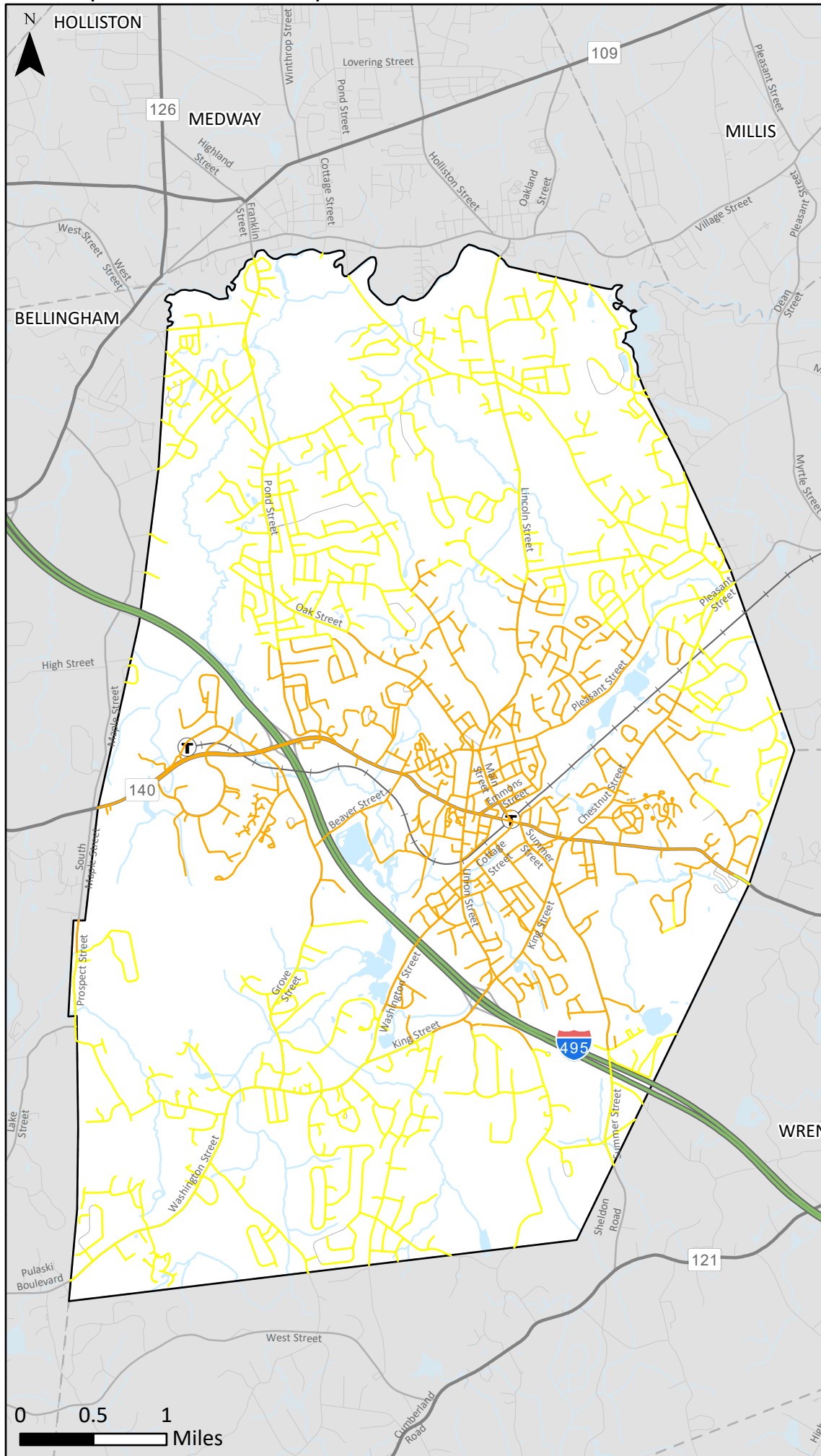
Low

Medium

Date: January 2024
Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 10.5 Potential Bikeable Trips



Town of Franklin

Potential Bikeable Trips

Potential

Low

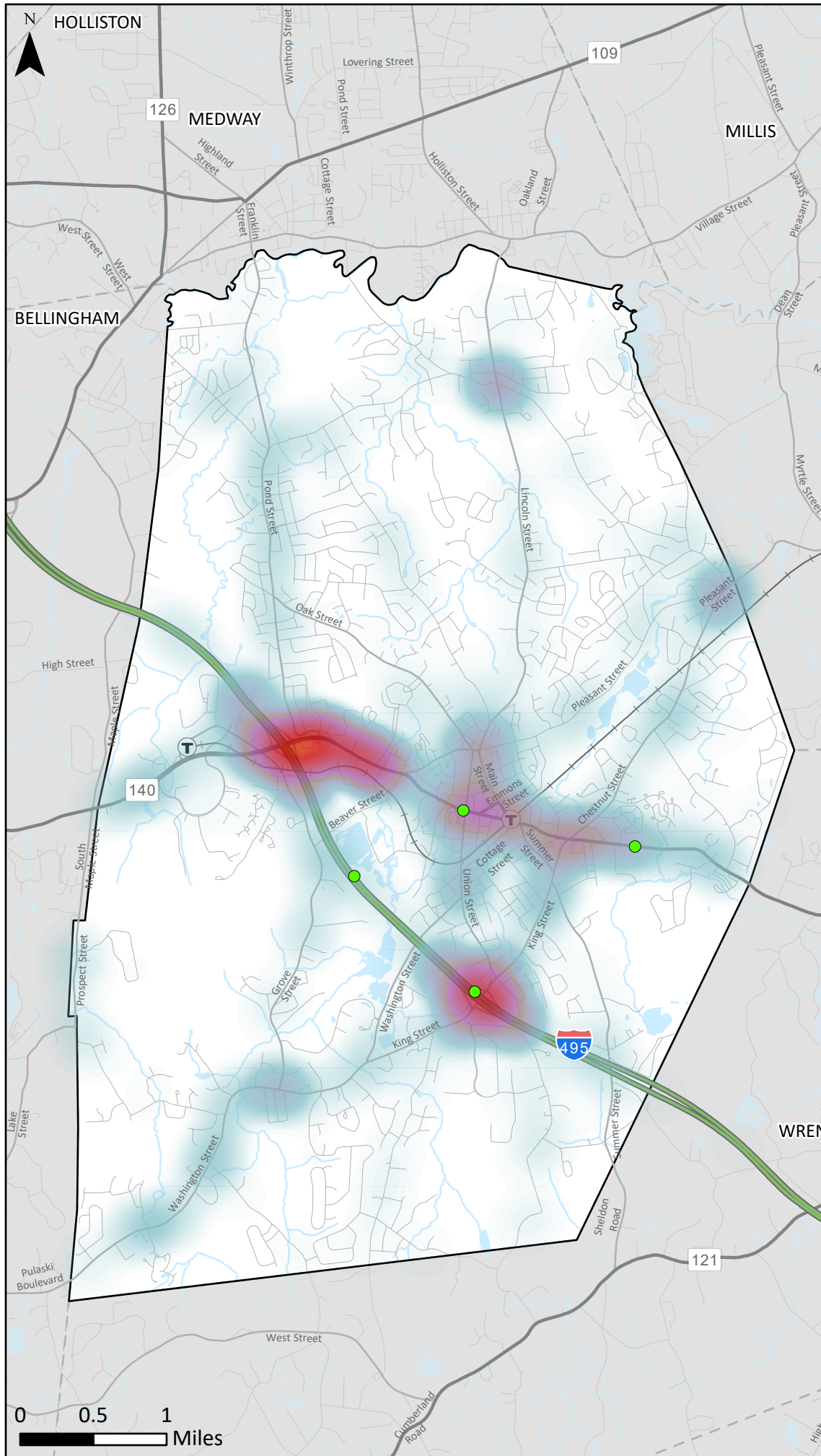
Medium

Date: January 2024

Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 10.6 Crashes and Fatalities 2017-2022



Town of Franklin Crashes and Fatalities Franklin 2017-2022

● Crash Fatalities 2017-2022

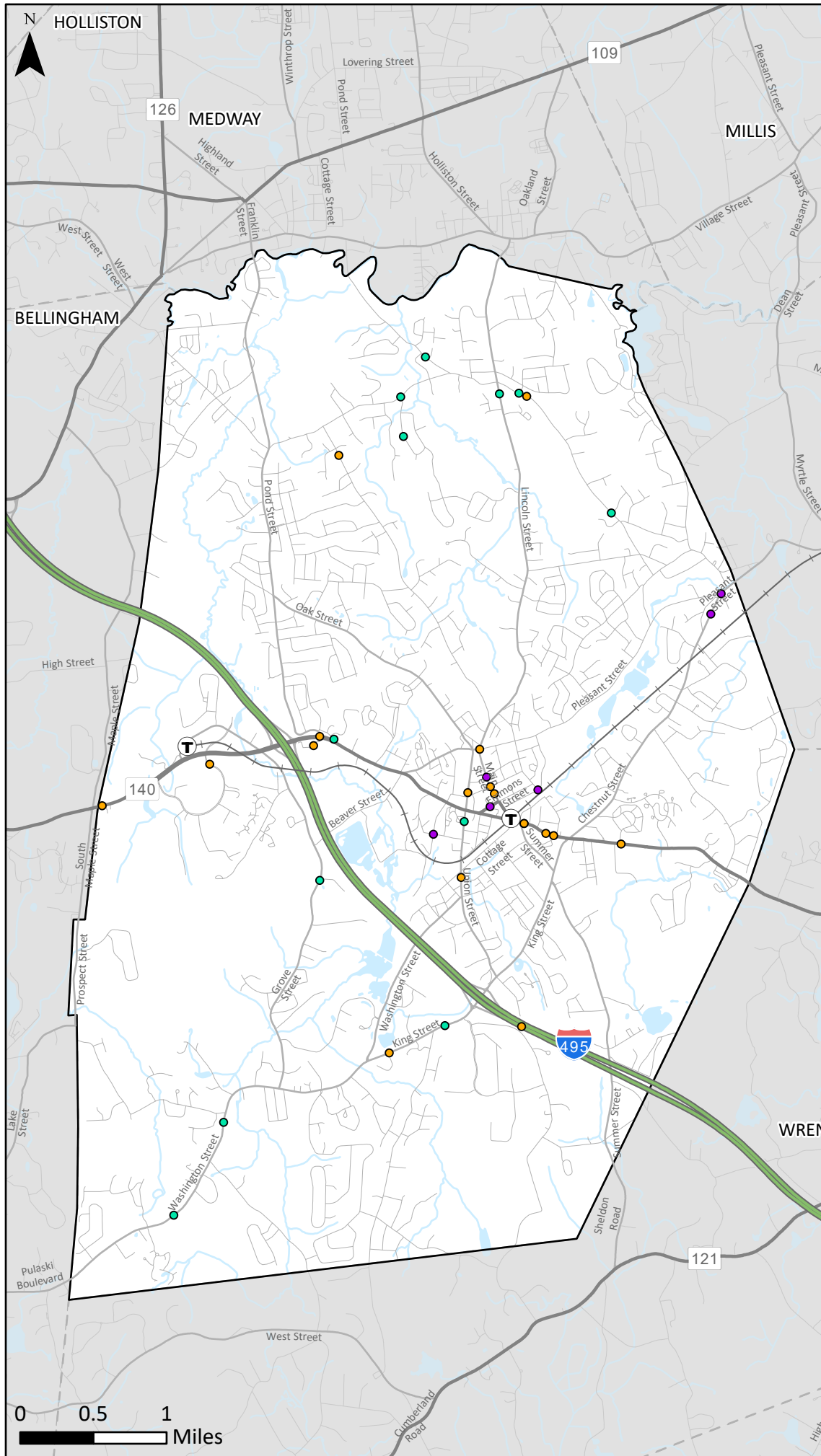
Crash Data 2017-2022



Date: October 2023
Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT



Map 10.7 Non-Motorist Injuries from Crashes



Town of Franklin

Clusters of Non-Motorist Injuries from Crashes

Non-Motorist Classification

- Bicyclist
- Other or Unknown
- Pedestrian

Date: January 2024
Source: Town of Franklin,
MassGIS, and MassDOT

