

Meeting 2

Open Space, Recreation, and Sustainability

Needham Street Area Vision Plan



Community Engagement Group
January 22, 2018

Summary of Meeting 1

- Charter agreement
- Ground rules for working together
- Feedback provided on potential meeting topics

Meeting Topics

This is what we heard:

- Environmental Issues
- Utilities
- Sustainability
- Zoning
- Budgeting and Financing to Achieve Goals
- Impact of People and their Needs
- Construction Process
- Neighborhood Connection and Schools
- Open Space and Sustainability
- Land Use and Zoning
- Housing
- Connectivity
- Street Character
- Other Models and Examples from around the Country
- Recreation

These are our future meeting topics:

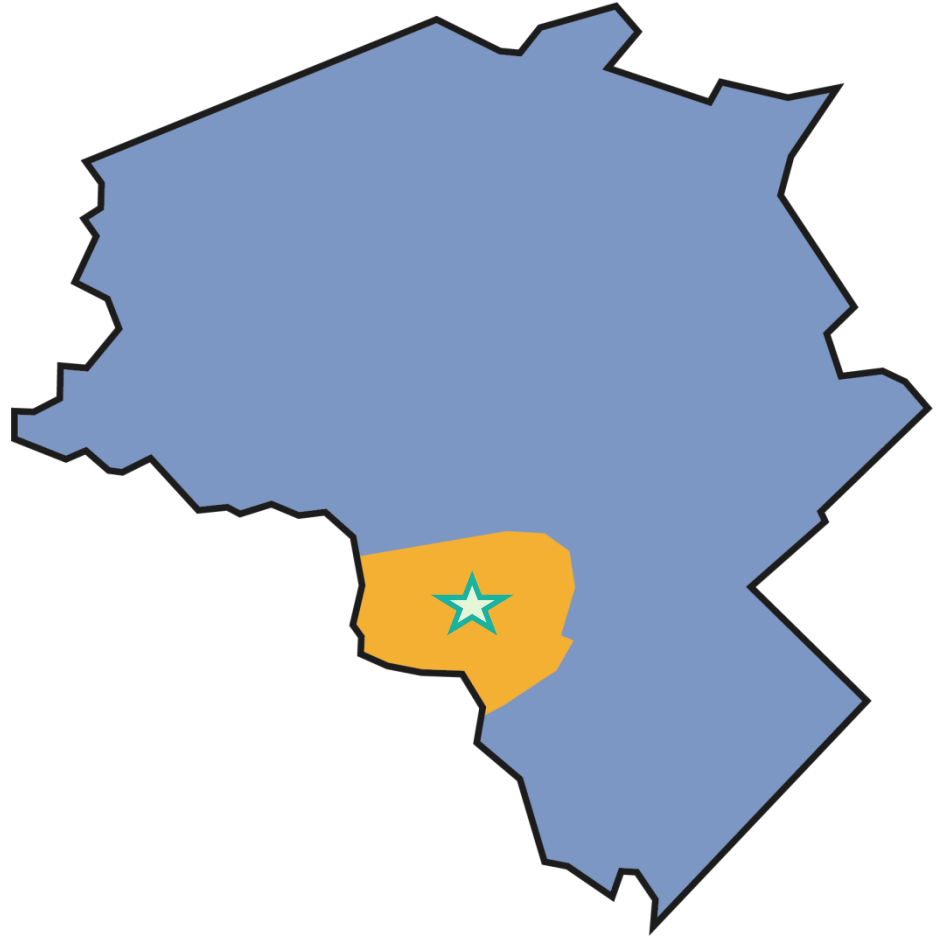
- Open Space, Recreation, Sustainability
- Transportation
- Land Use Mix & Economic Development
- Urban Design & Place-making

Weaving Throughout

- Sustainability
- Connections
- Fiscal Considerations
- Zoning

A Vision Plan is...

a guide for public policy action
regarding a particular
geographic area



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a guide for public policy action regarding a particular geographic area

based in..

- broader citywide strategies
- past studies & data analysis
- community engagement



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- objectives for the future
- guidelines for development
 - infrastructure & systems (transportation, open space, utilities, etc.)
 - private development (scales, land uses, urban design, etc.)



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**ultimately about place-making:
enhancing the unique features
that distinguish a given
location from any other**



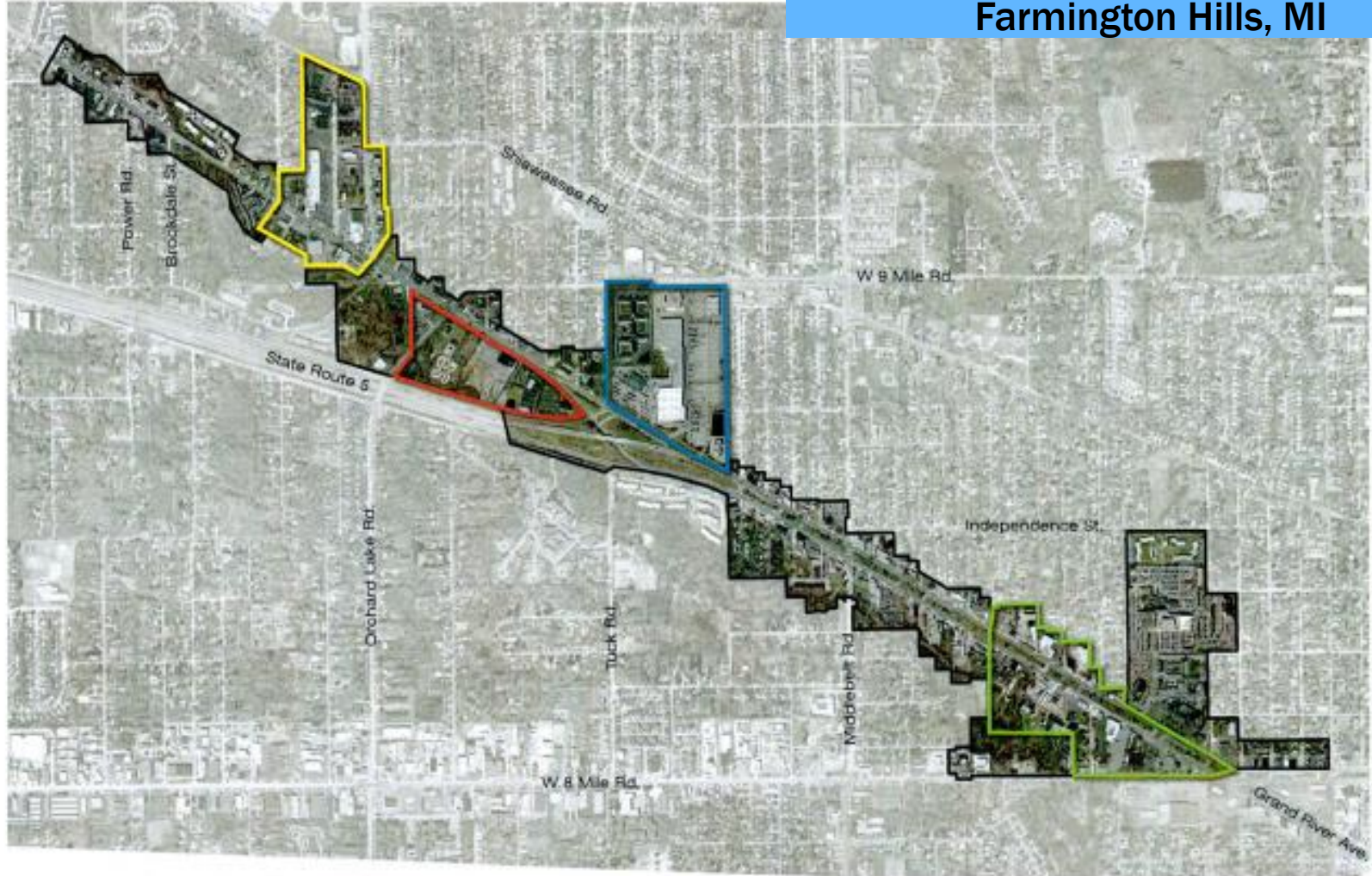
Medford Square







Grand River Corridor

Farmington Hills, MI

Figure 5.1 - Focus Area Map



 Botsford Focus Area
 Orchard Lake Focus Area

 Grand River North Focus Area
 Grand River South Focus Area



Main Street Corridor Springfield, OR

SEGMENT 1 – COUPLET AREA: 10TH STREET TO 23RD STREET

This corridor segment is organized around two streets which form an OR Hwy 126B couplet — Main Street and South A Street. It is immediately adjacent to the downtown core. The eastern boundary coincides with the boundary of the Downtown Urban Renewal District (URD). Both streets are associated with historically important neighborhoods, businesses, and industries. Main Street is dominated by retail uses, with relatively few residential choices. South A Street serves commercial and heavy industrial uses that are a key employment area for the City. Many of the current uses are historically railroad-oriented. The distinction suggests a different vision for each street.

20-Year Vision Statement for Main Street

Main Street will transition to a more active mixed-use district, complementary to downtown as envisioned in the adopted *Downtown Urban District Design Plan*. It will provide a transition between downtown and an auto-oriented business corridor stretching nearly three miles to the east. Existing businesses will thrive while redevelopment adds small-scale commercial and office space, along with new options for eating and shopping. There will be new opportunities for living near Main Street in multi-story mixed-use buildings designed to complement the neighborhood and downtown. Pedestrian-oriented design and increased mobility through walking, cycling, and transit will be emphasized. Investments in infrastructure will create an attractive streetscape featuring street furnishings,



small plazas, Green Street stormwater facilities, and public art. Green Street facilities and landscape plantings on Main Street will create a "garden street" for the City.

Goals for Main Street

Transportation Goals

Design changes to the roadway (curb-to-curb) and sidewalk corridor (curb-to-property line) should be aligned with the vision statement. Consider design solutions that will reduce travel speeds, encourage increased trips by bike, walking and transit, and support pedestrian shopping activity.

- **Goal 1:** Safety and comfort of walking and cycling to jobs, shopping, and entertainment on Main Street.
- **Goal 2:** Reduced vehicle speeds.



Pedestrian-Oriented Environments



SEGMENT 1 – COUPLET AREA

20-Year Vision Statement for South A Street

South A Street will continue to be a place that works. It will support industrial and larger-scale commercial uses that are reliant on customers arriving by vehicles and the movement of freight. The railroad and industries will remind Springfield of its history. Some new businesses will need shop space and outdoor storage areas. New jobs will be created by manufacturing and industrial uses, and by craft industries. Some of the craft industries will include a retail or "storefront" component in their buildings. Roadway safety will be improved, especially for cyclists and pedestrians, and railroad access will be maintained. The streetscape should be attractive and functional.



Goals for South A Street

Transportation Goals

Maintain good vehicle and freight access to existing and future businesses served by South A Street. Projects to improve the safety and mobility of pedestrians and bicyclists should carefully consider access needs.

- **Goal 1:** Safe and efficient vehicle travel including access to properties fronting the street.
- **Goal 2:** Multi-modal transportation balance appropriate to the land use environment.

Public Realm Enhancement Goals

Streetscape improvements should balance the benefits of an attractive street with considerations of visibility of buildings and parking areas for businesses.

- **Goal 1:** Functionally attractive streetscape which includes additional street trees and pedestrian-oriented lighting.
- **Goal 2:** Improve the traveler's and visitor's understanding of downtown destinations.

Business Activity Goals

Business goals should build on strengths and opportunities created by the economic histories of South A Street. The mix of commerce and industry should support City goals for job opportunities and be complementary to the retail and pedestrian-oriented environment on Main Street.

- **Goal 1:** Retain long-standing and viable businesses and industries.
- **Goal 2:** New jobs through commercial and service businesses and light industry.
- **Goal 3:** New craft industrial uses that need workshop space and/or retail space.

Housing Goals

Housing is not the key element in the vision for South A Street. The south side of the street is primarily zoned for industrial uses and is valuable land for those continued uses. The north side of the street might see limited market demand for live/work residences. However, residential uses will be challenged by incompatibility with auto- and freight-oriented commercial and industrial uses that will continue to be the dominant land uses along the street.



2017

Community Engagement Process

Engagement Group & Public Forum

Drafting the Vision Plan

Present draft to Zoning and Planning Committee,
Planning & Development Board

2018

Final Needham Street Area Vision Plan
adopted by City Council as an amendment to
the Comprehensive Plan

Use to guide decision making for upcoming projects

Zoning Redesign

Guide private
development

Inform public
investments

Anticipated results from the Needham Street Area Vision Plan

- Comprehensive Plan Amendment
- New Zoning for Needham Street
- Guidance for Future Development
- Potential City Investments & Grant Sources
- Listing and Prioritization of Improvements to Needham Street Area
- Other?

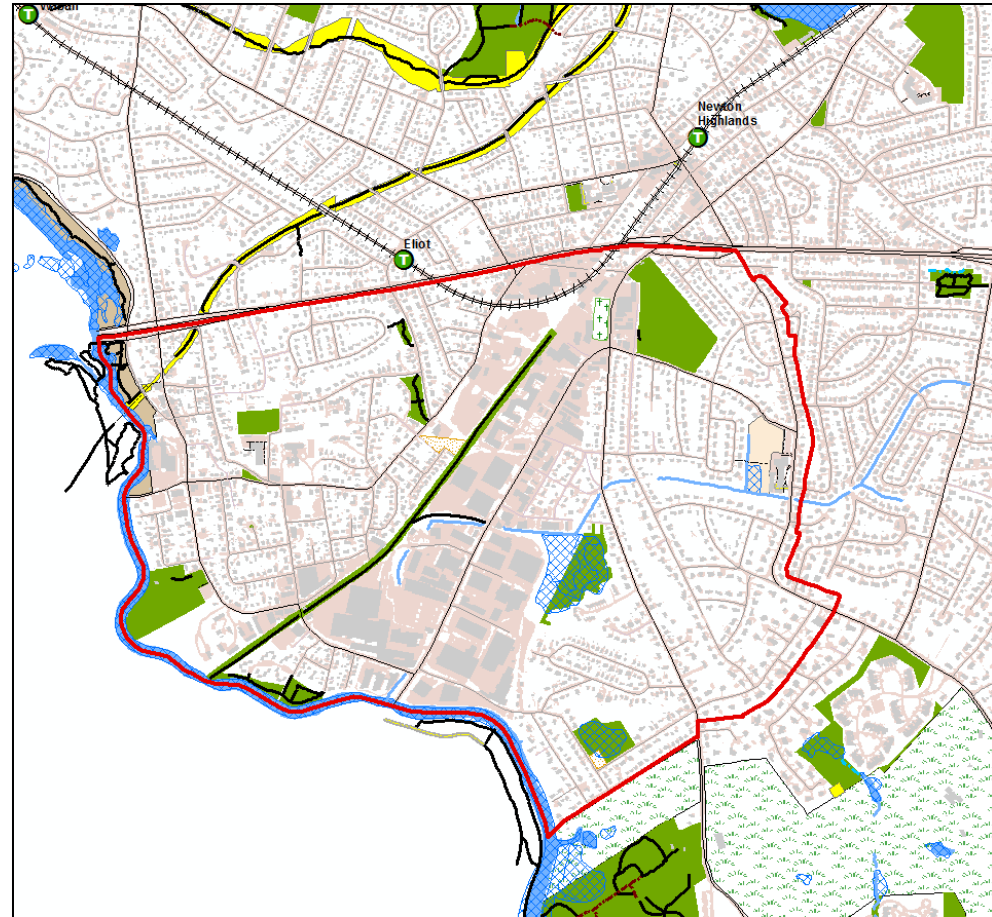
Defining Terms

Open Space, Recreation Areas, Sustainability, and Ecological Health

- **Open Space:** Predominantly natural areas
 - May (or may not) be protected
 - May (or may not) be healthy
 - May (or may not) be accessible and used by people
- **Recreation Areas:** Maintained parks & playgrounds (and cemetery)
- **Ecological Health:** The degree to which the integrity of the soil and ecological processes of ecosystems are sustained.
- **Sustainability relative to these topics:** Supporting long-term ecological diversity, productivity, and balance. (Being not harmful to the environment and not depleting natural resources.)

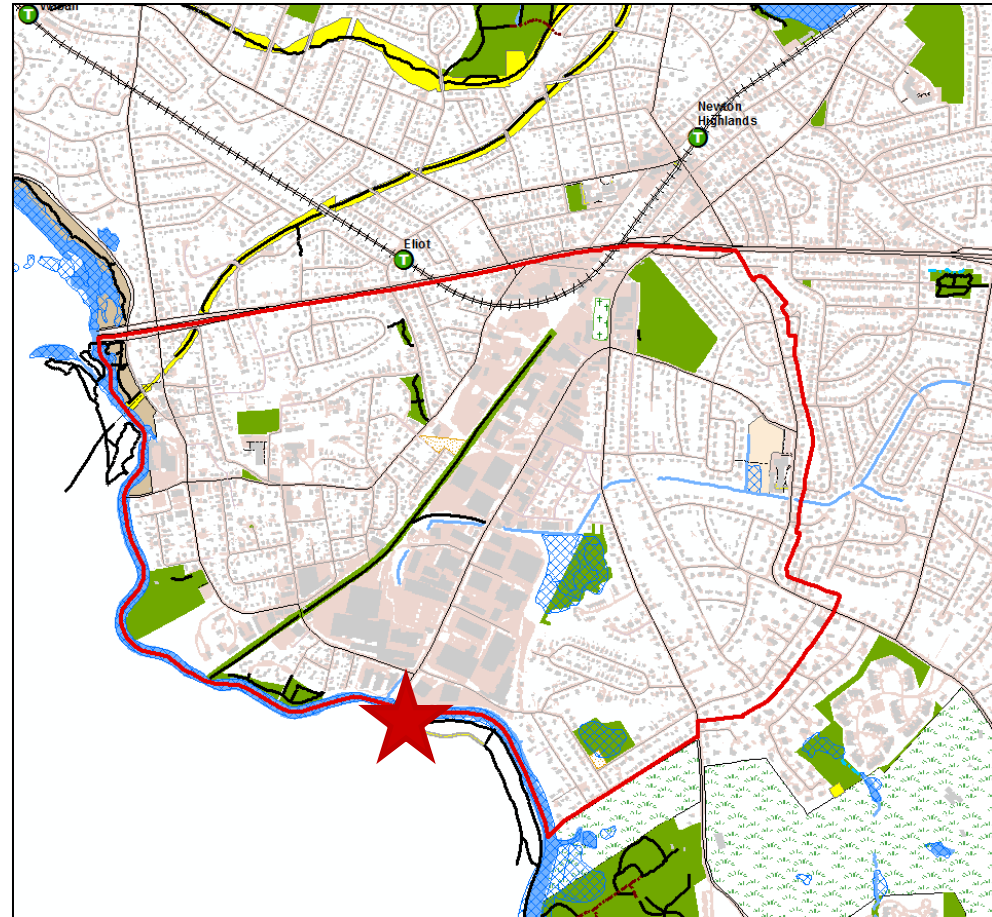
Open Space, Recreation Areas, & Trails in the Needham Street Study Area

- Natural resources are equally distributed
- Just a smattering
- Highly dis-connected



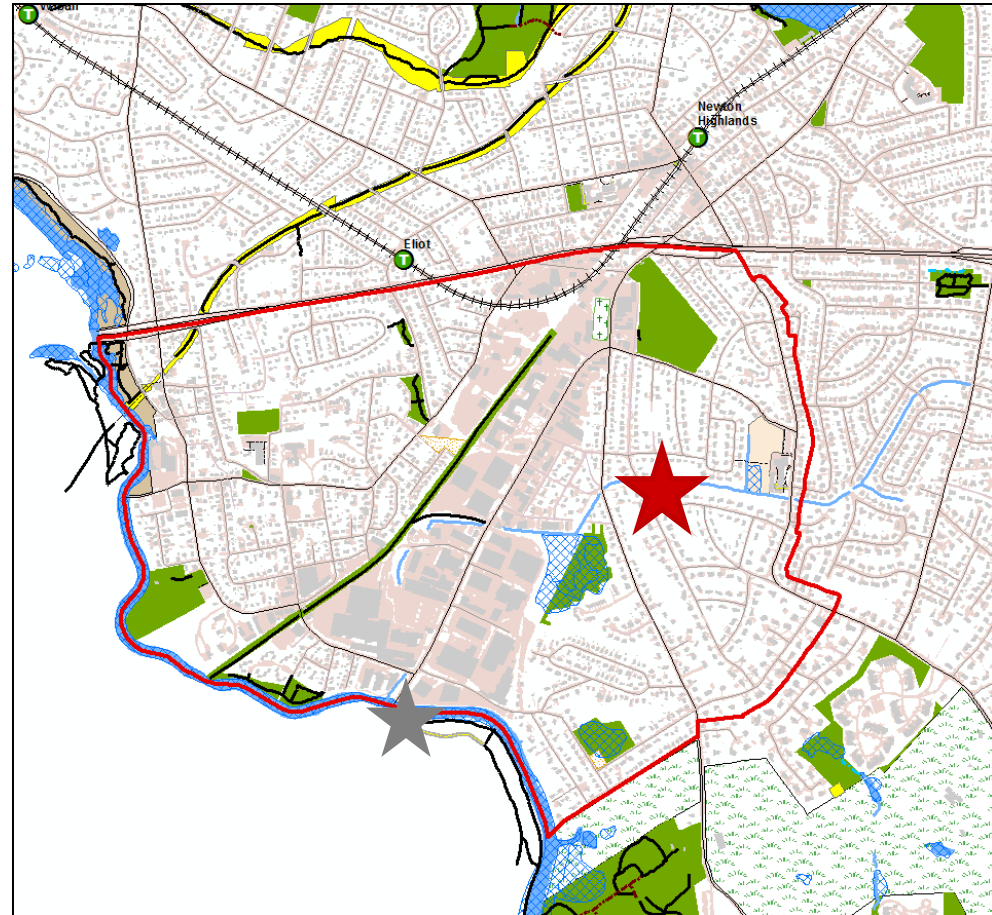
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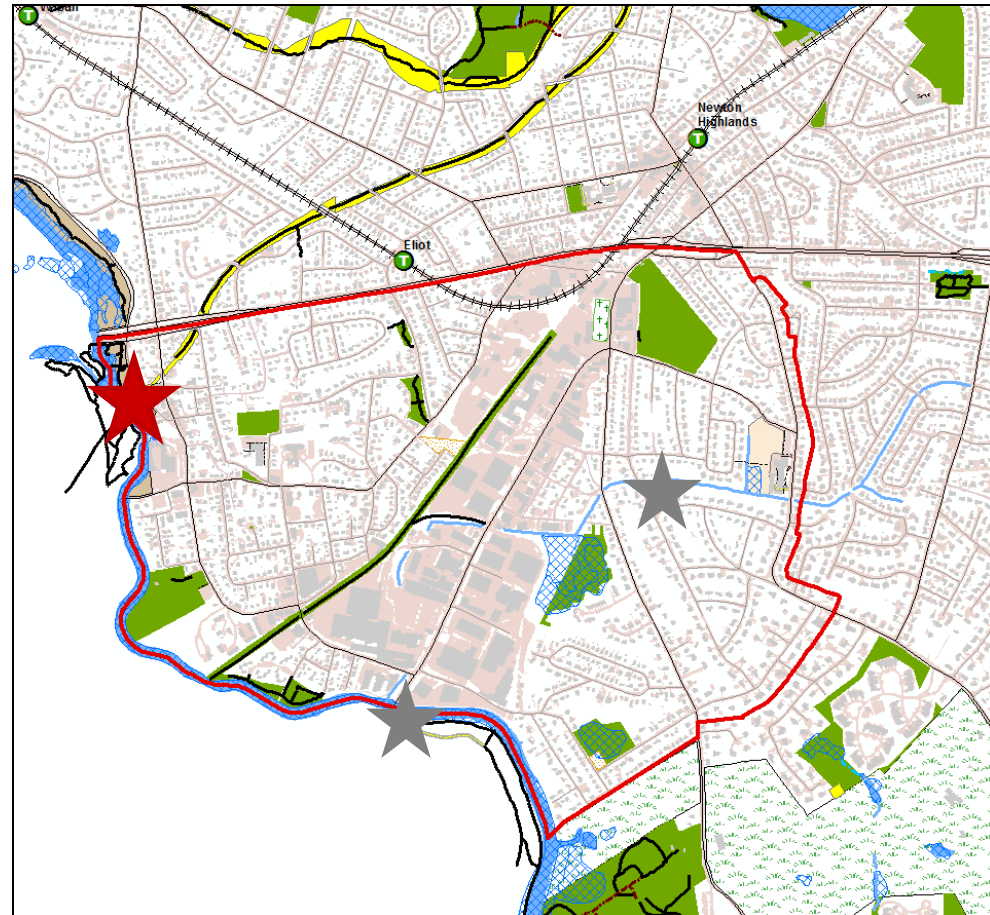
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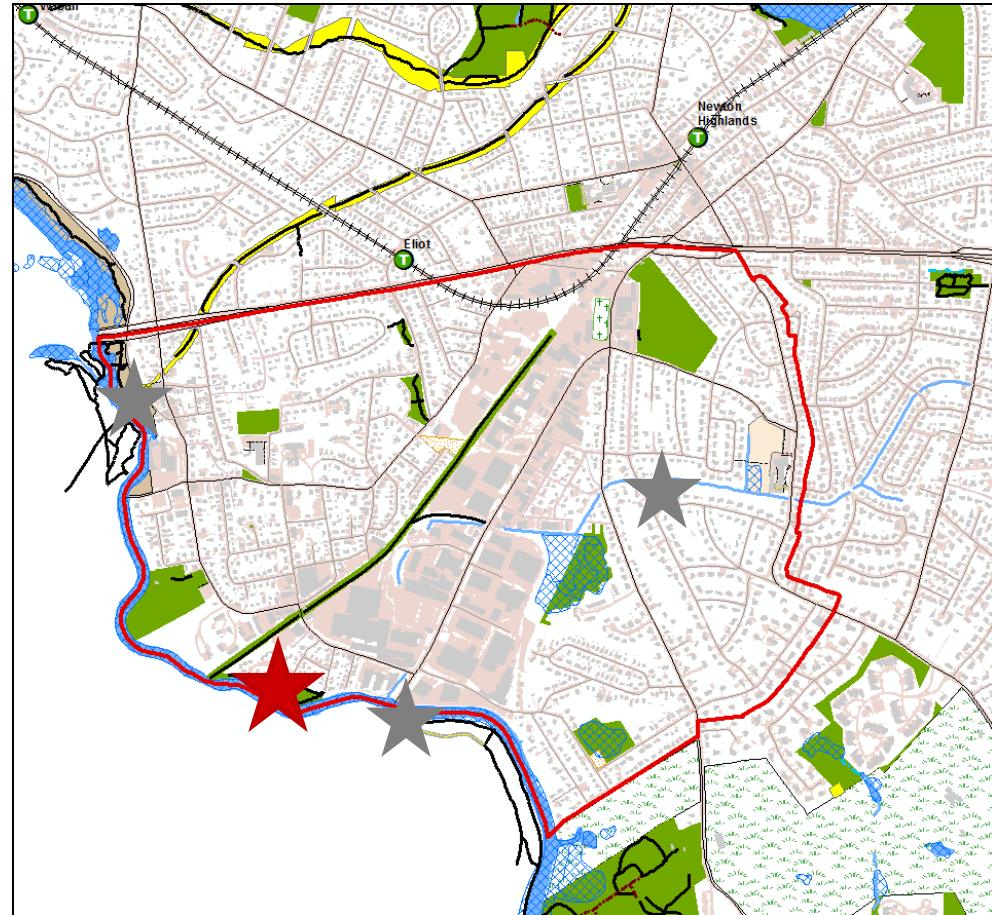
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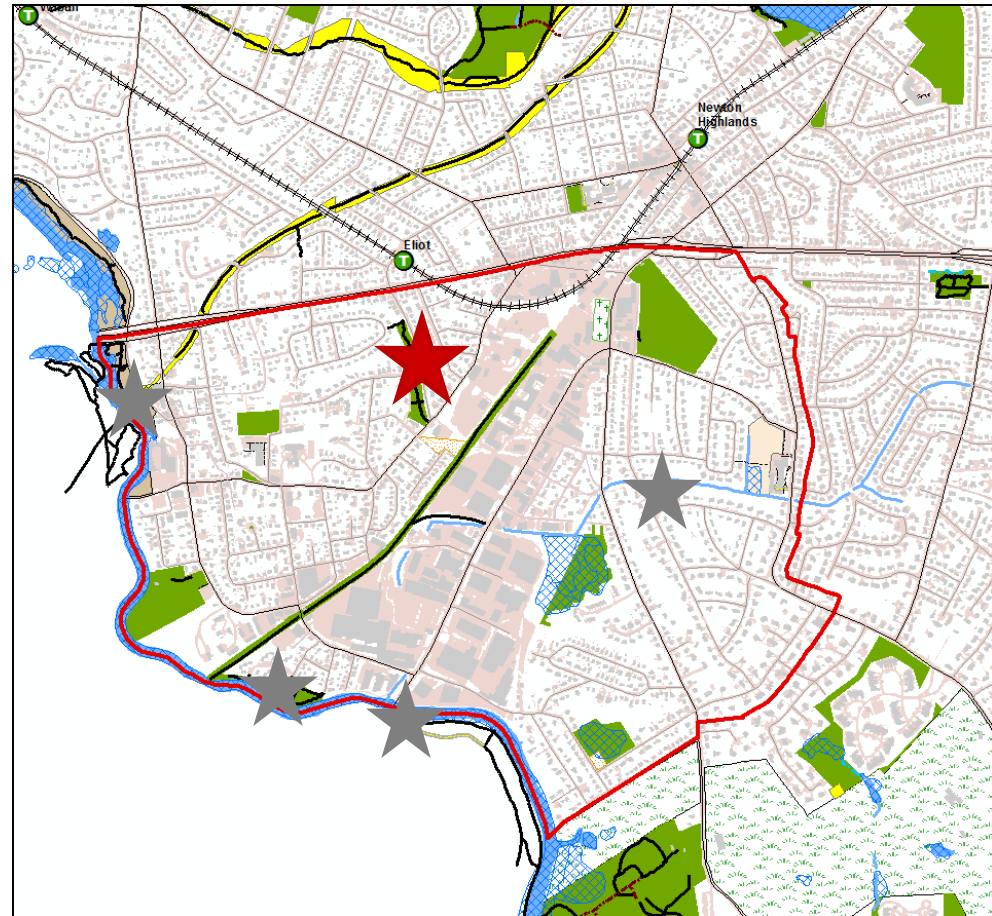
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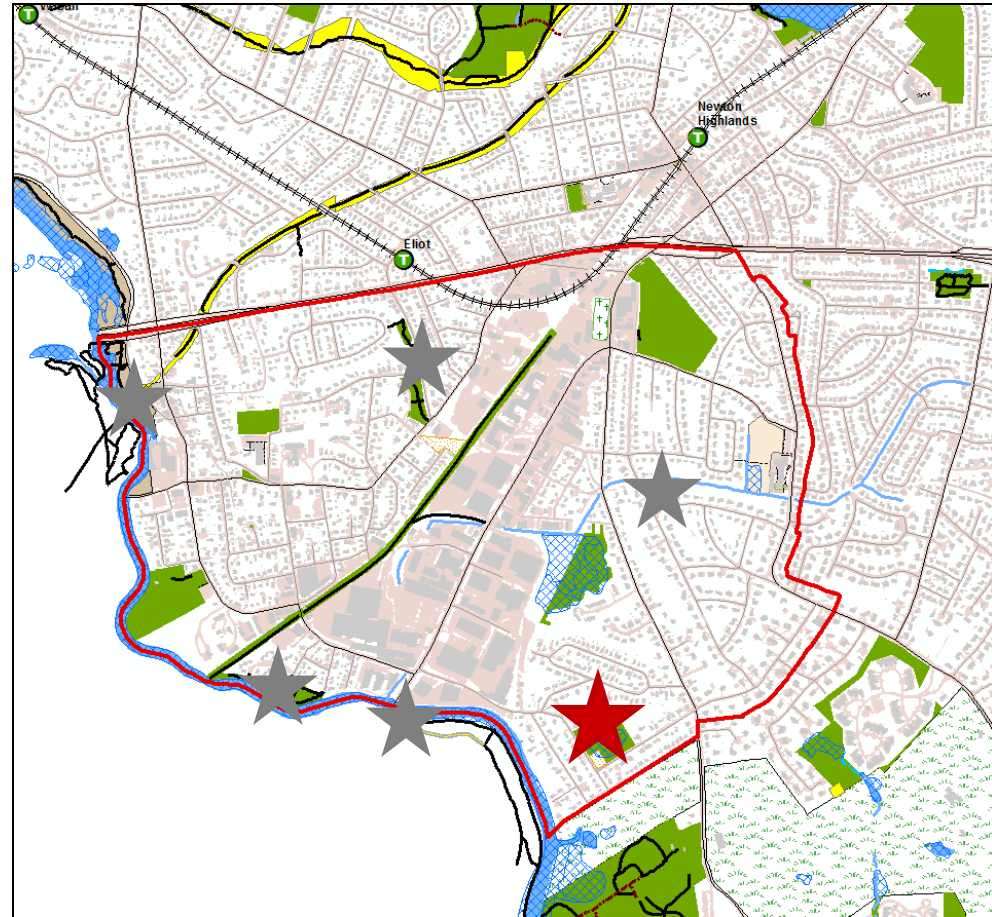
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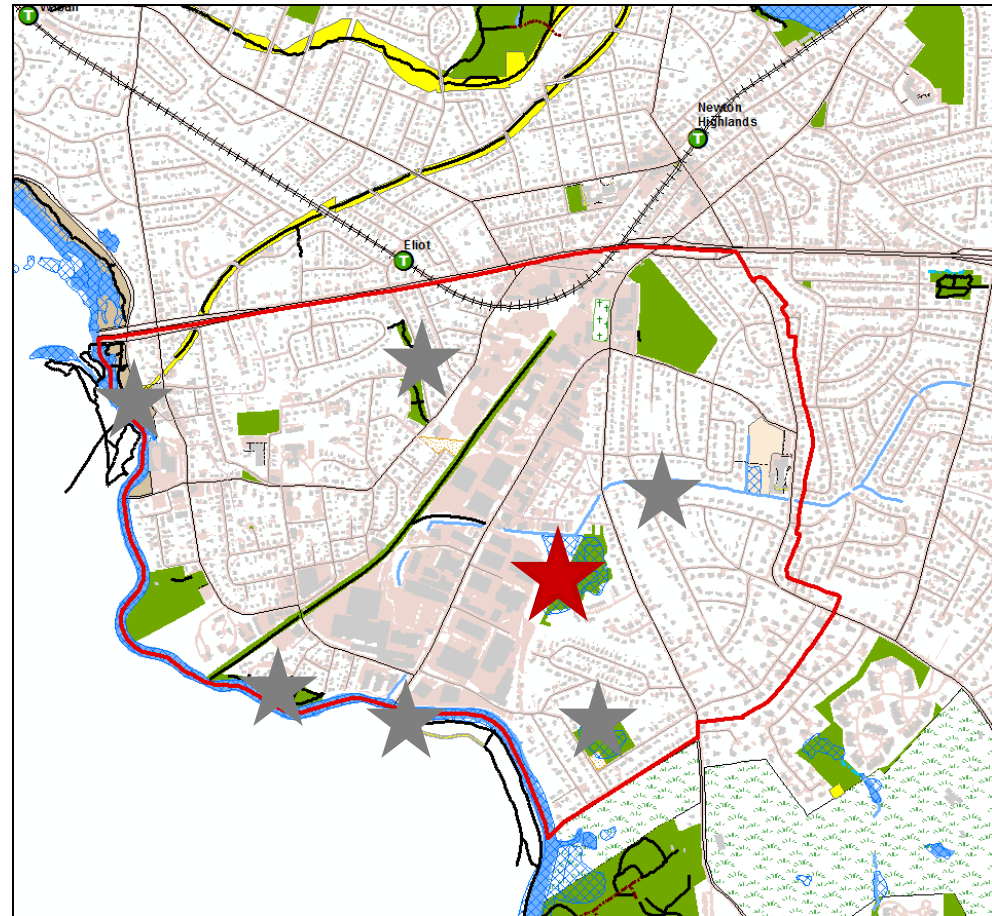
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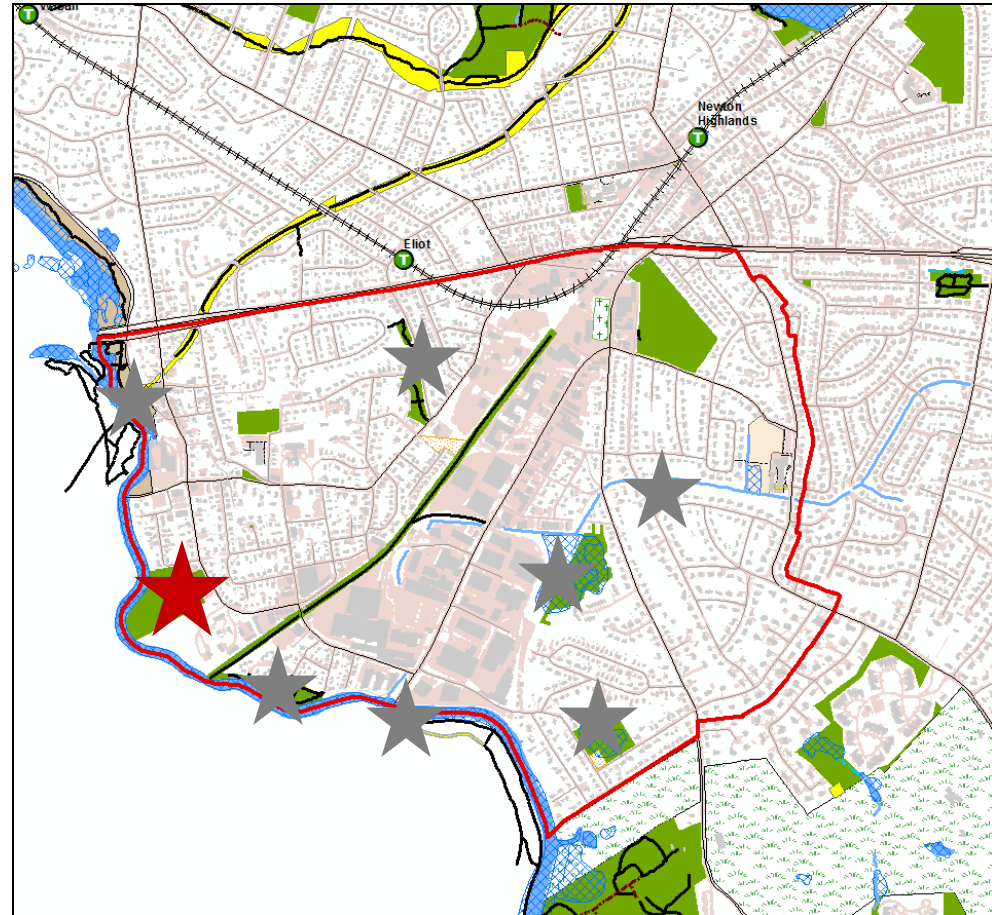
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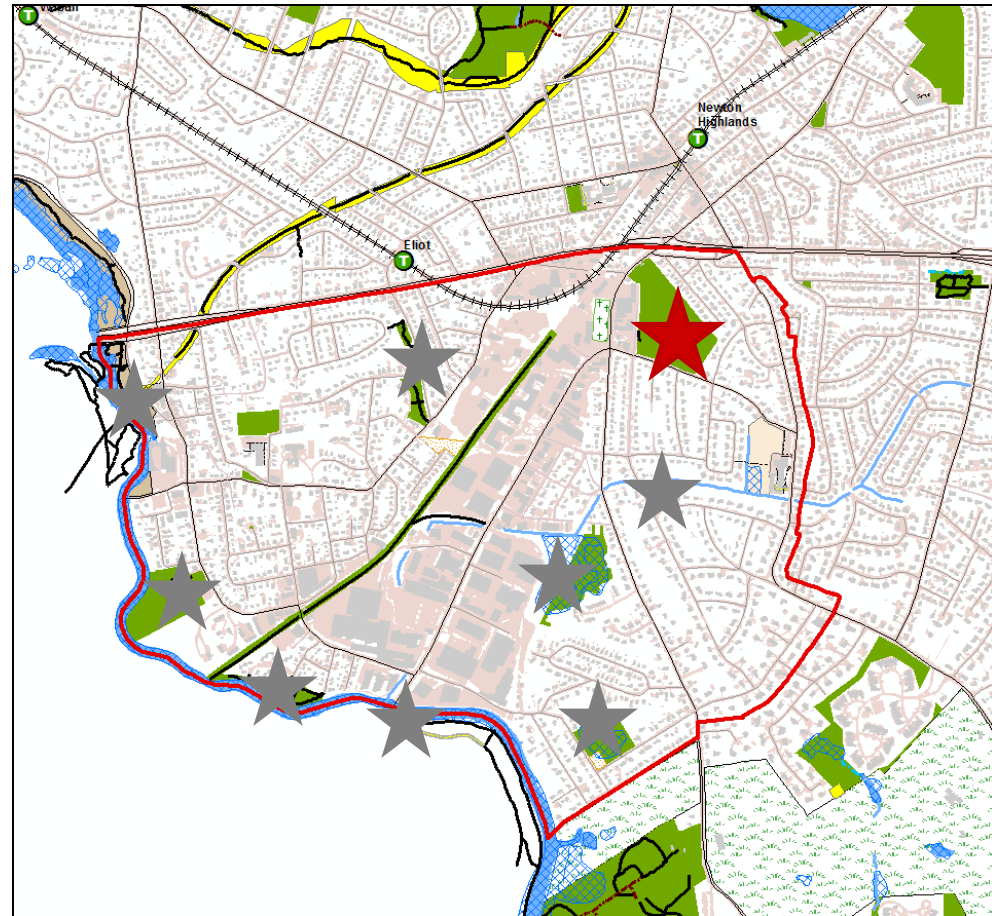
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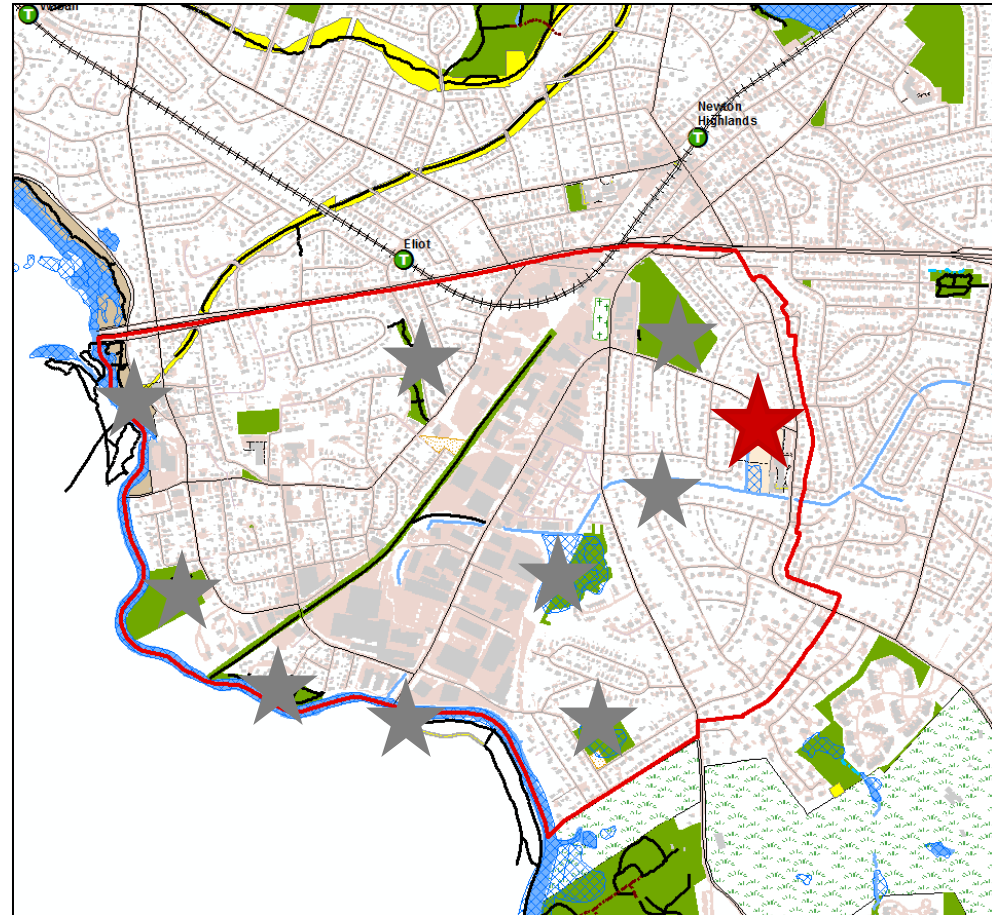
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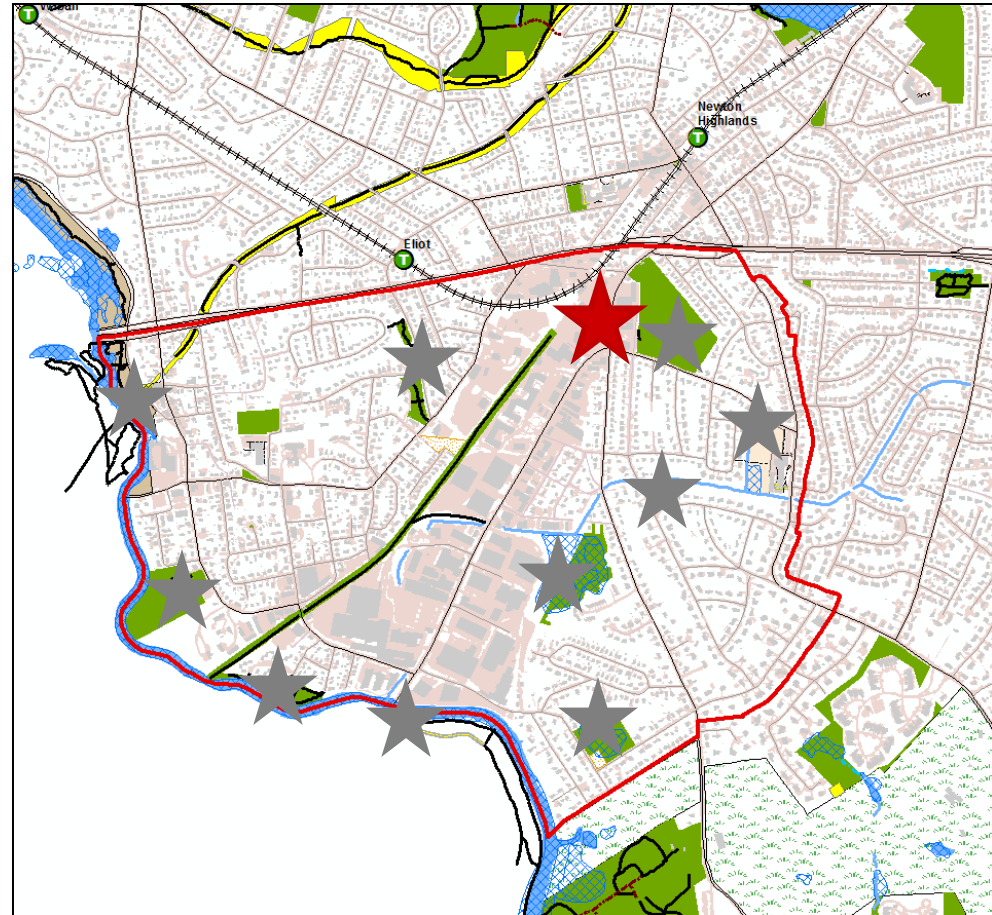
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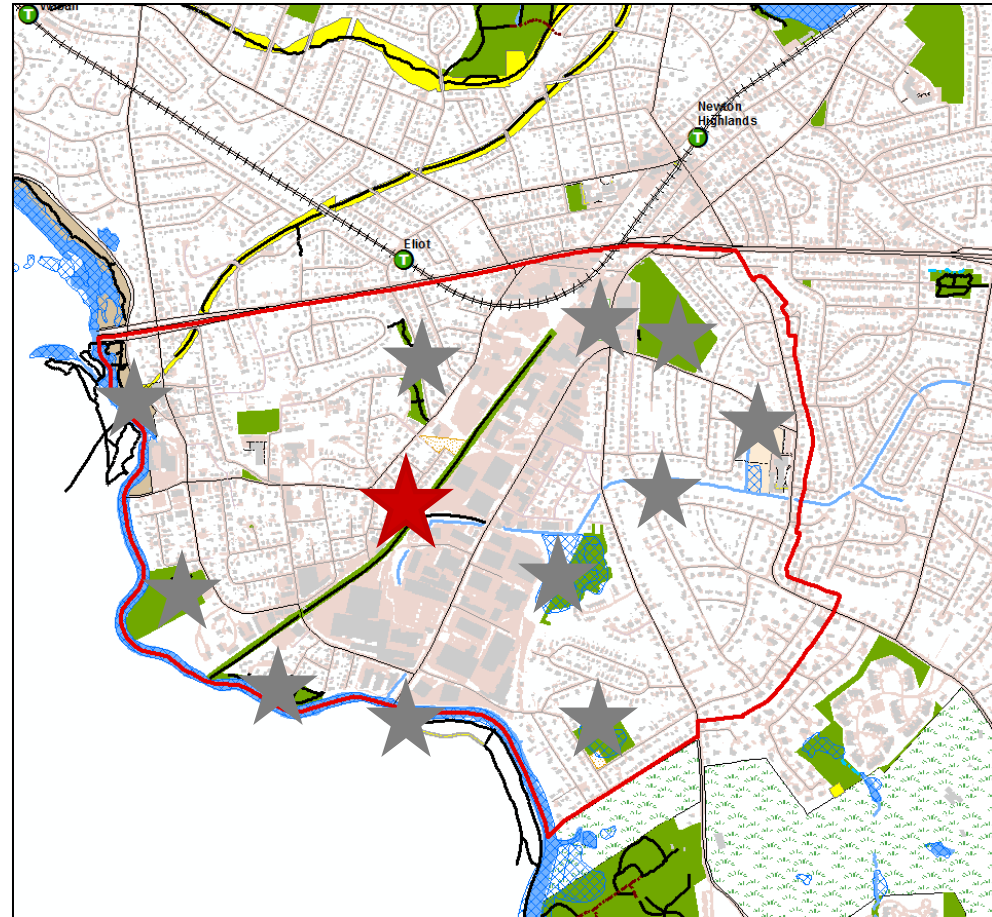
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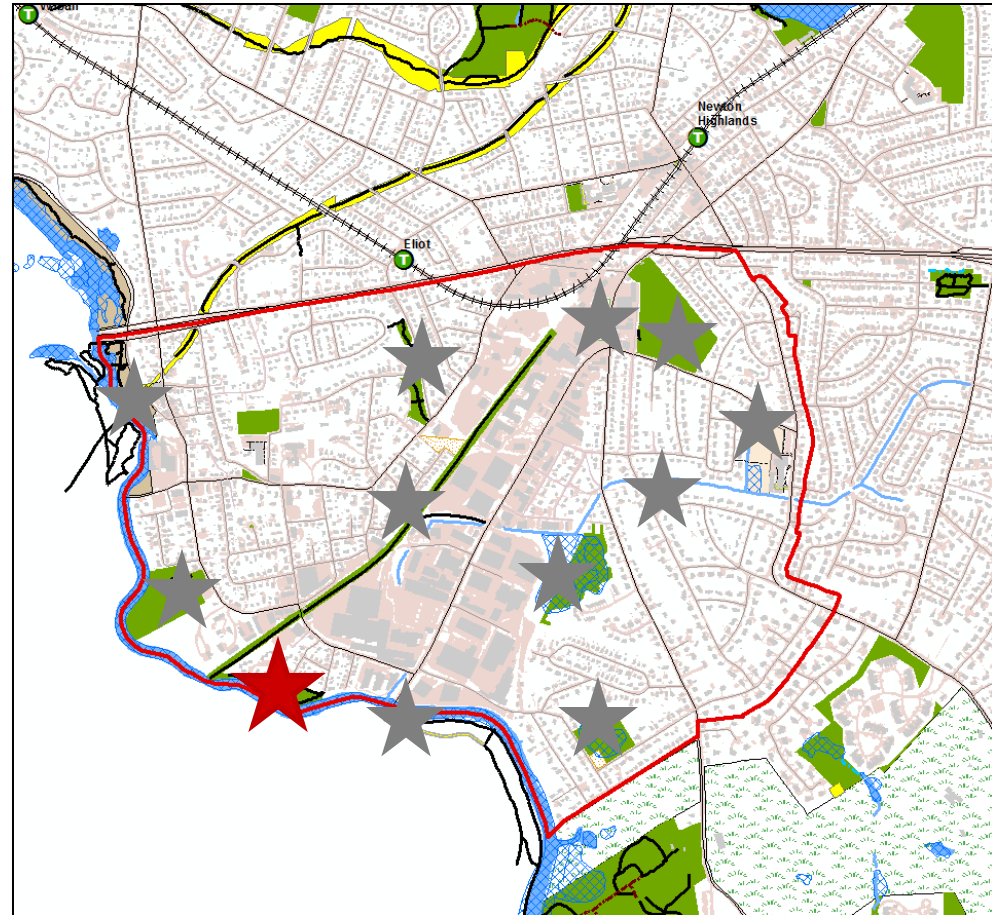
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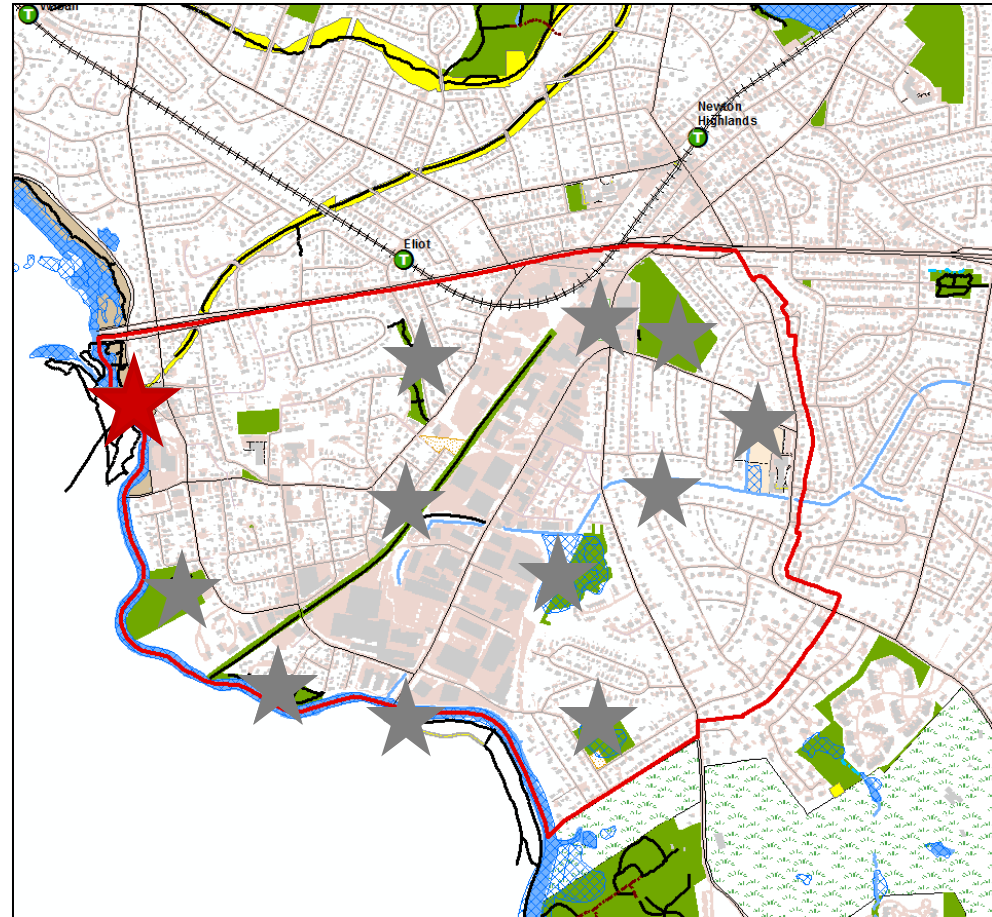
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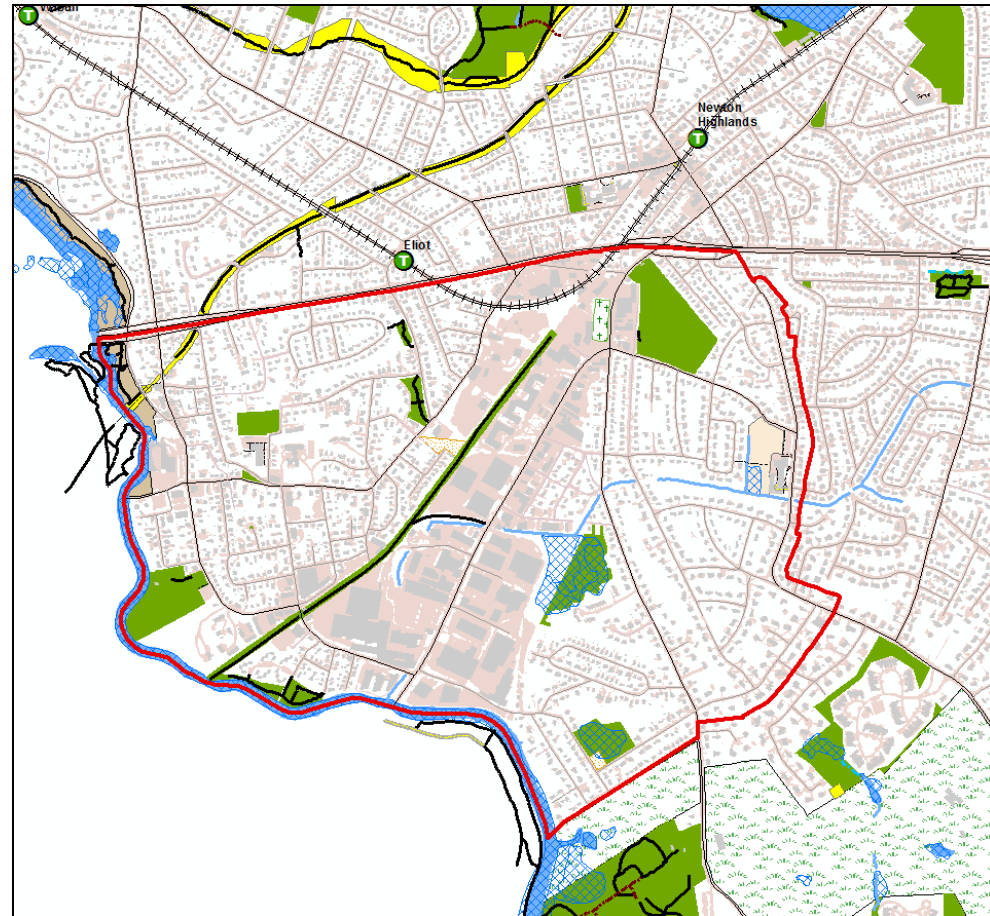
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Sustainability and Ecological Health Challenges in the Needham St. Area

- **Loss of habitat and native species**
 - Loss of forest, swamp, etc.
 - Loss of “green corridors” & connections
- **Disruption of water cycle**
 - Pavement/catch-basins/pipes vs. infiltration and slow recharge
 - Flashy/dry streams (flooding/parched ground)
 - More polluted stormwater → river
- **Pollution (from cars, businesses, etc.)**
 - WQ - Charles R. & South Meadow Brook TMDLs
 - Exotic species
 - Flow alteration
 - Noxious aquatic plants
 - Nutrients
 - Pathogens
 - PCBs, pesticides
 - Objectionable deposits
 - Organic enrichment/low DO
 - Other habitat alterations
 - Litter
 - Air quality concerns
- **Heat (from roofs and pavement)**
 - Air and water are heated

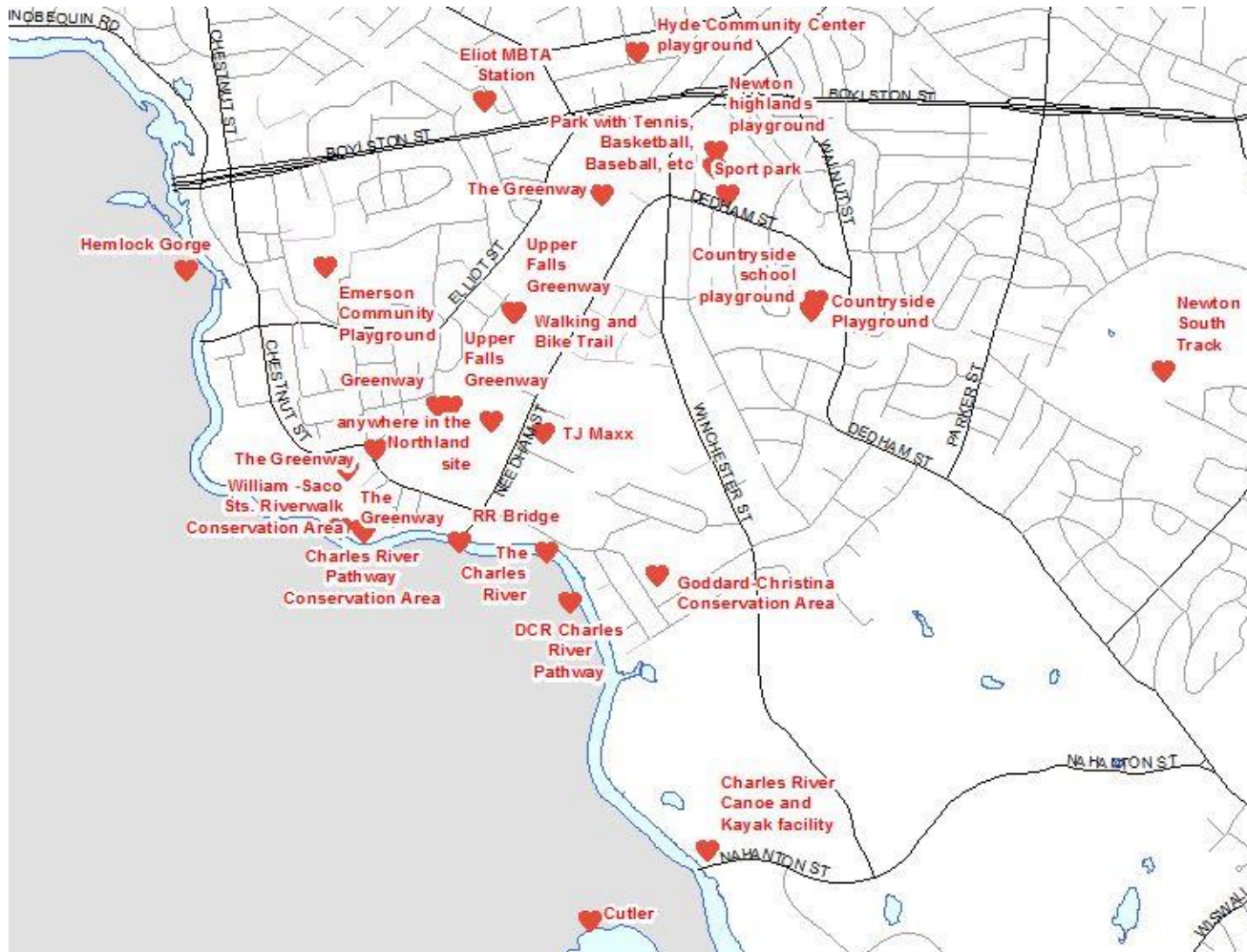


Current Open Space and Sustainability Initiatives

- **Newton Upper Falls Greenway!**
 - New link through Nexus!
 - Efforts to extend Greenway north to Curtis St.
- **Other local trail connectivity efforts**
 - Connect Greenway to Bobby Braceland Park and Charles River Pathway (grant application in process)
 - Connect Charlemont Rd. to Needham trails via tressle bridge (grant application in process)
- **Newton Highlands Playground redevelopment**
- **MassDOT Needham Street Corridor Redesign**
 - Stormwater improvements
 - Waling/biking connectivity improvements

Idea Generation

Community Engagement Group's Places We Love



Idea Generation

Community Engagement Group's Places We Love

- The Greenway
- Charles River
- Newton Highlands Playground
- Countryside Playground
- Railroad Bridge
- TJMAXX
- Hemlock Gorge
- DCR Charles River Pathway
- Eliot T Stop
- Northland Site as an Opportunity
- Goddard/Christina Conservation Area
- Riverwalk Conservation Area
- Hyde Playground
- Emerson Community Playground
- Walking and Bike Trails
- Cutler Park
- Newton South Track
- Cold Spring Park
- Echo Bridge
- Newton Centre Green

Idea Generation

Community Engagement Group's Places We Love



Railroad Bridge – Great for nature watching and photography



South Meadow Brook as seen from the Upper Falls Greenway

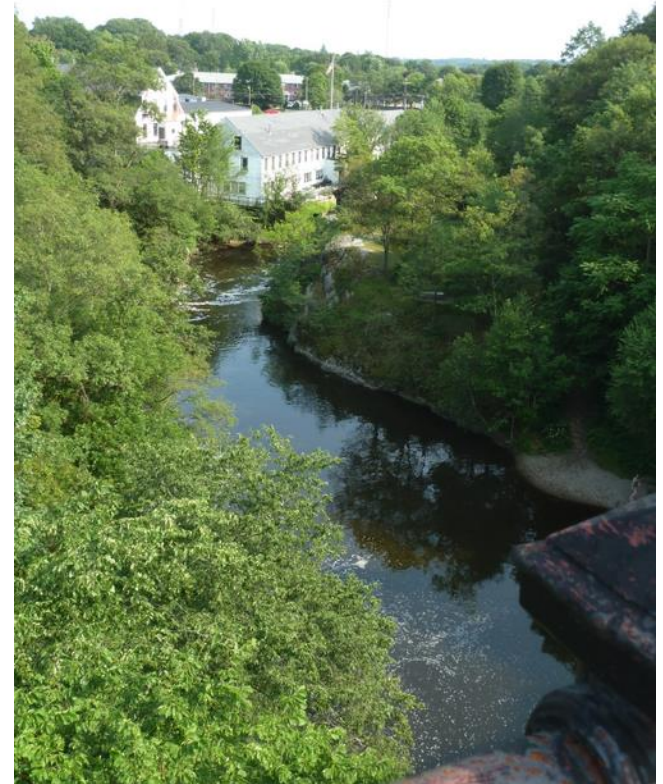


Charles River Pathway Conservation Area – Great for walks, fishing, dog walking



Views from Canoe from the Nahanton Canoe/Kayak rental

Views from Echo Bridge – Hemlocks, History, Canoe/Kayak Races



Idea Generation

Community Engagement Group's Places We Love



Emerson Community Playground: Great for hard court activities – ball games & dance performances like at Village Day, easy parking, improve with shade and water features



Canoeing – great for wildlife viewing, always something new to see



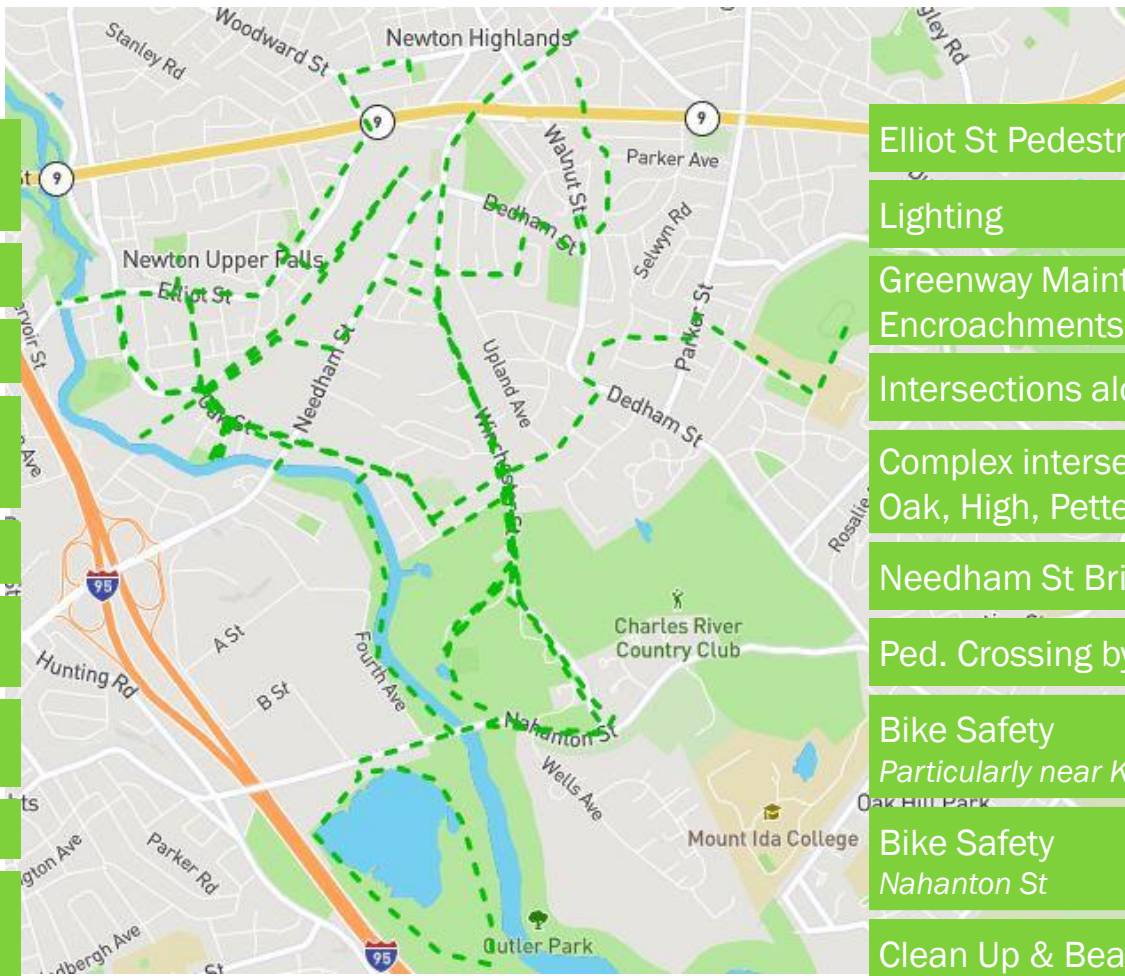
Playhouse complete with kitchen – great for preschools and easy walk to coffee shops nearby

Idea Generation

Recreation Routes

Most Enjoyable

Could Improve

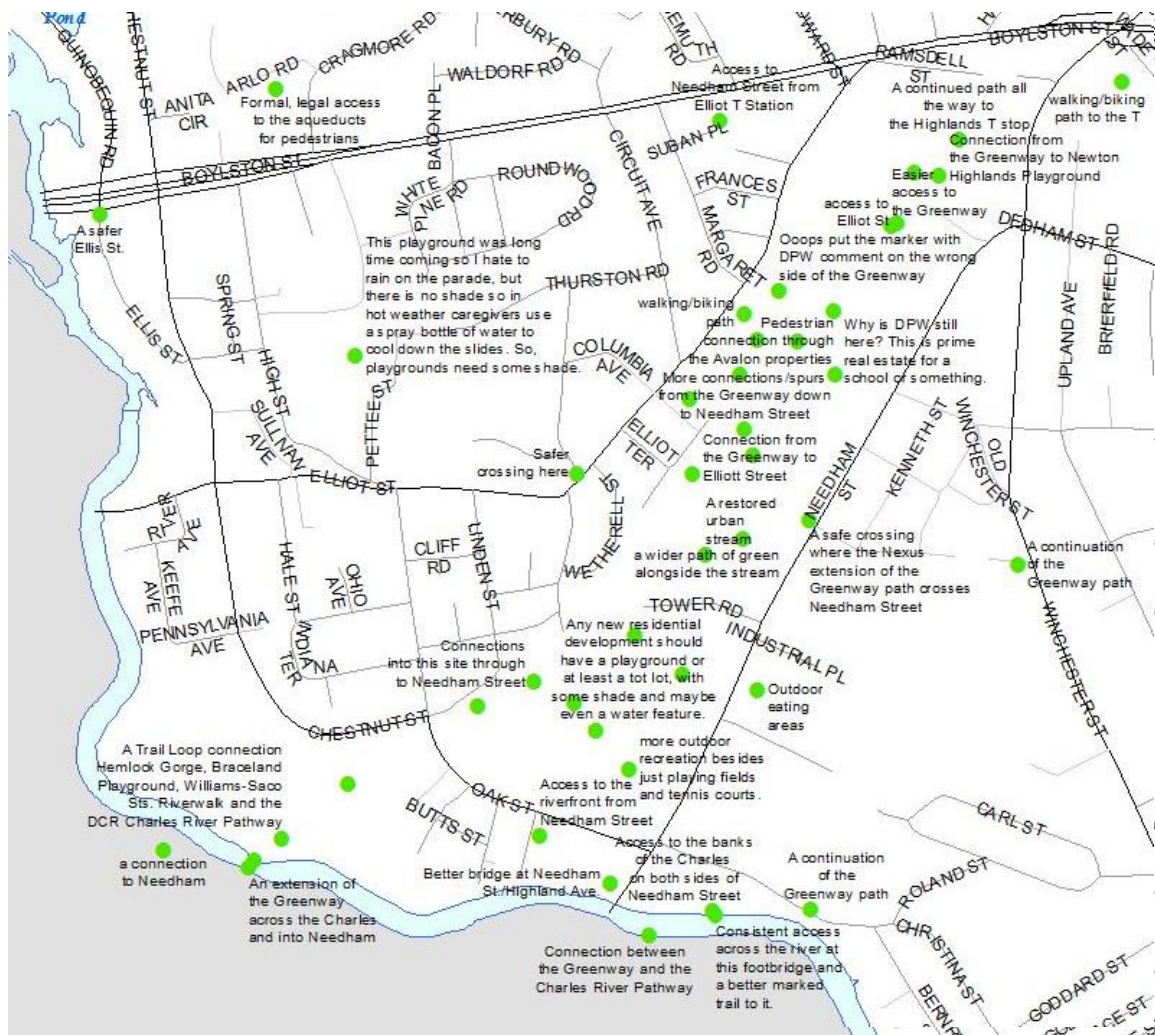


- Hyde Community Playground & Playhouse
- Newton Community Farm
- Greenway
- DCR's Charles River Pathway to Cutler Park
- Charles River Canoe & Kayak
- Elliot St Bridge
But it needs benches
- Passing Stone Barn on Oak St
Route to Emerson Playground
- Walk/Bike in Cutler Park
- Variety of scenery – green space and urban bustle

- Elliot St Pedestrian Safety
- Lighting
- Greenway Maintenance & Encroachments
- Intersections along Elliot St
- Complex intersection at Elliot, Oak, High, Pettee Streets
- Needham St Bridge
- Ped. Crossing by Farm
- Bike Safety
Particularly near Kendrick St Exit
- Bike Safety
Nahanton St
- Clean Up & Beautification

Idea Generation

Community Engagement Group's "What's Missing?"



Idea Generation

Community Engagement Group's "What's Missing?"

- Extensions from the Greenway
- Easier access to/from the Greenway
- More attractive and up kept landscaping and seating areas on the Greenway
- A theme for the corridor
- Formal entrance into the corridor at Highland Ave/Needham St such as a hanging design
- Trail loop to connect all open and green spaces
- Better access to/from bike and walking trails
- Parking locations by the Charles River
- Bike access to the Charles River
- Playgrounds with more shade and water features
- Playgrounds/parks will more tennis and basketball courts
- Enforcement of "dogs on leash" rule at Countryside Playground
- Pedestrian bridge by Christina St
- Formal access to aqueducts
- Overlook at Sunset Bridge
- Environmental education facility
- Parking lots that have nicer landscaping and designed better to deal with storm water and sustainability issues
- Access to riverfront from Needham St.
- Viewing platform on river and easier access to banks on both sides
- Urban Stream
- Open stream to Charles River
- Wider paths along the stream
- Safer access to/from the bridges
- Seating under the Echo Bridge with better railings and stairs
- Outdoor recreation space
- Outdoor eating area
- Skating rink
- Path to the Highlands T stop
- Easier access and connections to Eliot T stop; shuttles
- Better access to Eliot St.
- Better and safer access to parks and playgrounds
- Pocket parks
- Labyrinth Parks
- Spray Park
- For proposed development - Taller, fewer proposed buildings if it means more accessible green/open space

Idea Generation

Community Engagement Group's "What's Missing?"



Spray Park
Example: Hippo Park, NYC



Solar Parking Lots
Example: REI Framingham



Nature Education Center
Example: Wellfleet Audubon Center



Daylight and Restore South Meadow Brook – even a symbolic connection to the Charles River is important.
Example: Seoul South Korea

I would personally support a scheme that didn't carpet the site with mid-rise buildings but instead featured fewer, but taller, structures, IF this resulted in better quality open space - green spaces that actually amounted to something, like a sizeable South Brook Valley park or conservation area which might actually function as a habitat, at least for birds and pollinators. The attached image isn't really the typology I have in mind, but it's the closest I could find.



Idea Generation

Community Engagement Group's "What's Missing?"



Greenway Terminus



Traffic Calming

The Town of Framingham and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Celebrate Start of Aqueduct Trails Program

Under a new policy announced in May 2012, MWRA is allowing public access on inactive aqueducts in the Metro West area, through partnerships with local communities. This policy makes available over 40 miles of trails for public use along the Sudbury, Weston, Wachusett and Cochituate Aqueducts.

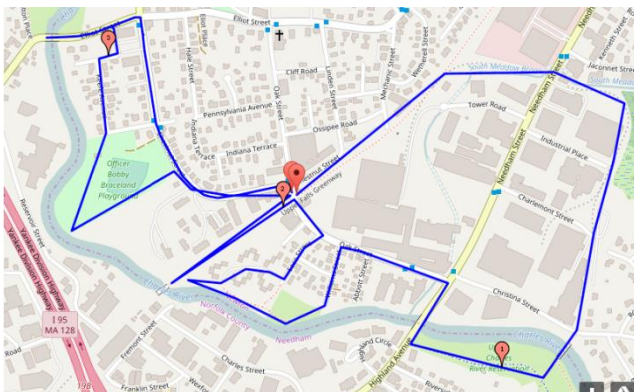
The first of these permits, between MWRA and the Town of Framingham, has now been finalized and the first section of trail opened today along the Weston Aqueduct.

"This policy is a great example of promoting open space access and connecting people to the outdoors," said Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rick Sullivan. "We thank Framingham for partnering with us to help kick off the start of the trail network and look forward to working with other local communities in the future."



Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rick Sullivan speaks at the opening day ceremony for the Aqueduct Trails.

Aqueduct Trail connections
Example: Framingham



Trail Connectivity



Holiday Lighting



Gathering Space

Idea Generation

Meeting Activity

What's missing from the list?

Timeline of Meetings

DEC 11	JAN 22	JAN 29	FEB 12	MAR 12	MAR 26	APR 9	APR 23
Kick-off	Open Space & Recreation	Transportation					Public Forum

Community Engagement Process
Engagement Group & Public Forum

PUBLIC COMMENT