

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

INTRODUCTION

Open space and recreational resources are important features of a community. In addition to providing places for residents to enjoy both passive and active recreation and stay connected to nature, open space provides habitat for wildlife and vegetation, and can serve as *green infrastructure* by storing and/or absorbing and filtering stormwater runoff.

This section discusses the open space and recreation resources in Blackstone. This component is closely related to the Natural and Cultural Resources section. It includes an overview of the currently existing open space and recreation facilities. It discusses the survey results that pertain to open space and recreation. Finally, this element identifies opportunities and recommendations for future policies.



Lake Hiawatha

OVERVIEW OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Table 31 presents the current protected open space parcels in Blackstone. Figure 11 illustrates those lands. Importantly, more than 900 acres of public and private lands are protected. The Town of Blackstone owns nearly half, 421.75 acres of the protected land. Of that amount, 49 acres protect the municipal wells and Town’s water supply. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns 298.9 acres of which most are located at Quissett Hill. Metacomet Land Trust and Daniels Farm Homestead Foundation own 131.1 acres and 66.9 acres, respectively. These open space properties constitute a total of 918.6 protected acres in Blackstone.

Table 32 presents the Chapter 61, 61A and 61B lands in Blackstone. Chapter 61 lands keep land undeveloped and each category focuses on a different type of land use. Chapter 61 lands include land growing forestry products, Chapter 61A represents agricultural land, as well as horticulture land, and Chapter 61B lands are for open space and recreation, which can be anything from a golf course or tennis club to undeveloped land for hiking or observing nature. These *Chapter lands* are not permanently protected. However, they are part of a state program designed to encourage land preservation by offering a local property tax reduction in return for maintaining those uses. However, if those specified uses are changed, then the property owner must pay back

TABLE 31

PROTECTED OPEN SPACE PARCELS IN BLACKSTONE

LOCATION/ DESCRIPTION	ASSESSOR'S MAP/LOT#	AREA (Acres)	ZONING	EXISTING USES	Comments/ Questions
Back Meadows	7-6	5.0	I	Conservation	
Blackstone River Island	11-86	2.2	R3	Conservation 938	
Lincoln Street/Fox Brook	14-52	12.6	R1	Conservation, abuts brook	
Farm Street	16-61	6.0	R1	Future Trail/Bike path	Part of SNETT
11 Summer Street	17-39	3.4	R2	Wells #1 & 2	
Elm Street/Harris Pond	17-64-A, 17-66, 18-1 18-2, 18-6, 18- 7A	15.5	R2	Wells #1 & 2	
Glenside Road	17-239	18.19	R2	Wells	932
Off Elm Street	18-9, 18-10	24.54	R2	Veterans Park	Soldier On
Off Elm Street	18-21	1.5	R2	Conservation	
Off Elm Street	18-31	1.31	R2	Conservation	
Quickstream Street	18-55	5.0	R2	Conservation	
Rolling Brook Lane	18-89	12.89	R2	Conservation	Rolling Brook HOA
Sycamore Lane	18-106	17.18	R2	Conservation	Sycamore Estates
Quickstream Street	19-112	5.0	R3/R2	Conservation	
				Conservation	
45 Bellingham Road	19-140	17.36	R3	Conservation	
Elm Street/Walsh's Pond	20-05, 20-06	9.8		Well Site	
Bellingham Road	20-33	12.28	R3	Conservation	
Chestnut Street	24-9	30.1	R3/R2		Landfill
Mendon Street	26-20, 26.23, 27- 3, 27-20, 28-8	68.7	R3	Parcels abut Daniels Farm, not necessarily contiguous	
Blackstone Street	29-18	3.1	R2	Conservation	
Off Mendon	29-33	11.8	R3	Former RR ROW	
Blackstone Street	29-25-A	2.1	R2	Water Department	
Bellingham Rd- Spruce St	30-69,31-20	136.2	R3	Conservation	
SUB-TOTAL		421.75			

Source: Blackstone Assessors Database 2017

TABLE 31
PROTECTED OPEN SPACE PARCELS IN BLACKSTONE
(Continued)

LOCATION/ DESCRIPTION	ASSESSOR'S MAP/LOT#	AREA (Acres)	ZONING	EXISTING USES	Comments/ Questions
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS					
SNETT Trail	7-5, 8-53, 8-72, 8-75, 8-53A, 8-123, 8-129, 8- 132, 10-133, 10- 147, 11-28, 11- 62, 11-68, 17-69,	34.42	R1/I	Trail	
Harkness Farm/	11-80, 11-82	29.4	R3	Conservation	
High Rocks Gorge	10-5+57	8.2	R1	Conservation	
Quissett Hill	28-1, 28-2, 28-3, 29-3, 29-10, 29- 36, 29-38	226.9	R3	Conservation	
SUB-TOTAL		298.92		Conservation	
PRIVATE NONPROFIT					
METACOMET LAND TRUST	25-18, 26-16, 28- 10	131.09		Conservation/ Preservation	
DANIELS FARMSTEAD FOUNDATION	25-33, 26-11, 26- 12, 28-16	66.85	R3	Conservation/ Preservation	
SUB-TOTAL		197.94			
TOTAL		918.6			

Source: Blackstone Assessors Database 2017

TABLE 31
PROTECTED OPEN SPACE PARCELS IN BLACKSTONE
(Continued)

SUMMARY AND TOTAL		
OWNER	USE	ACREAGE
TOWN OF BLACKSTONE	Conservation	372.8
	Water Supply	49.0
	Sub-Total	421.8
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS	Trail	34.4
	Conservation	264.5
	Sub-Total	298.9
METACOMET LAND TRUST	Conservation/ Preservation	131.1
DANIELS FARMSTEAD FOUNDATION		66.85
	Sub-Total	197.9
TOTAL		918.6

Source: Blackstone Assessors Database, 2017

FIGURE 11

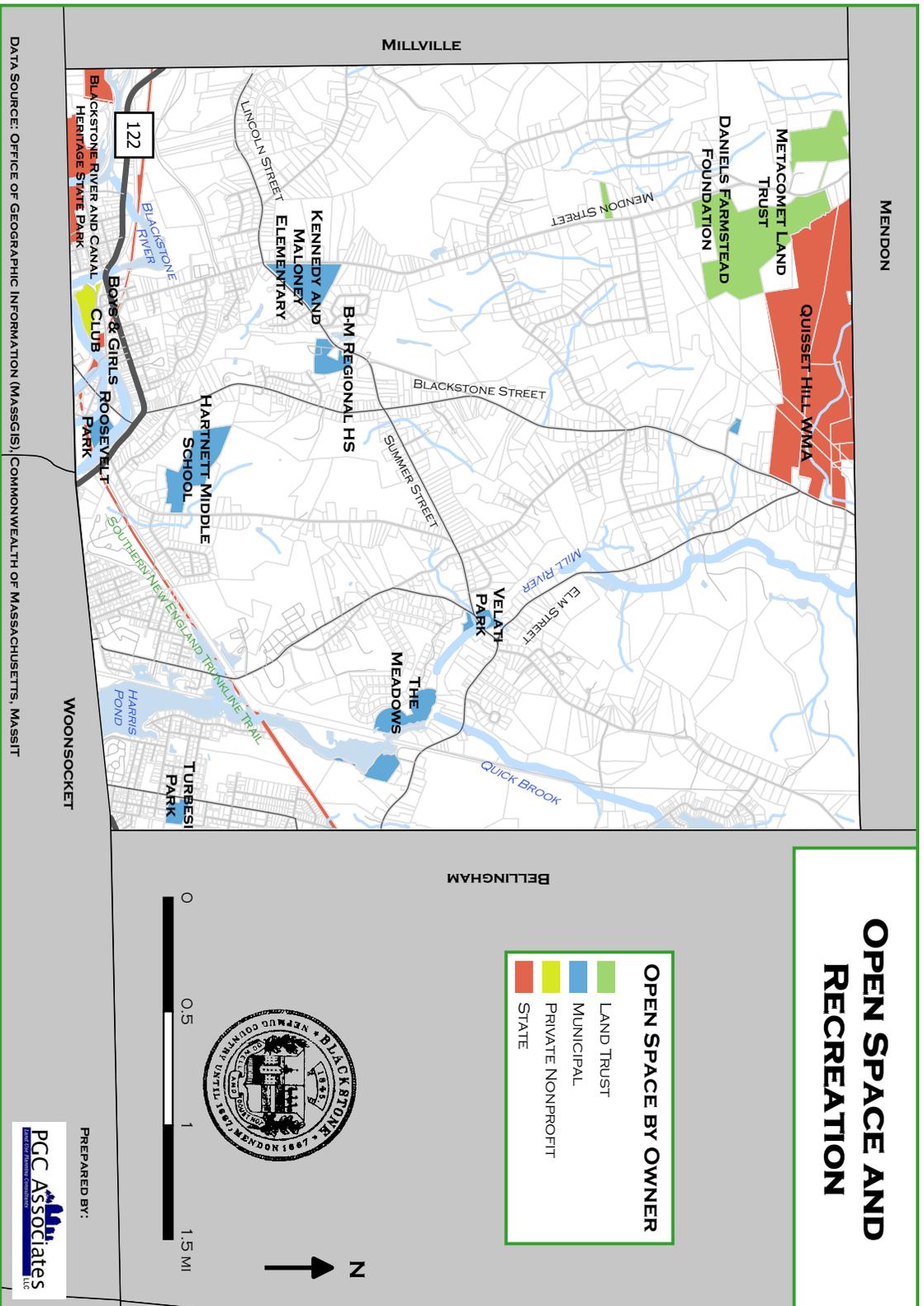


TABLE 32
CHAPTER 61, 61A AND 61B LANDS IN BLACKSTONE

LOCATION	OWNER	ASSESSOR'S MAP/LOT NO.	AREA (acres)	ZONING
Chapter 61				
Lincoln Street	Makowski	11-17A	16.3	I
79 Mendon Street	Makowski	11-24A	25.43	I/R1
Federal and Summer Streets	Alexandrowicz	15-61&61A	57.22	R1
Farm Street	Bik	16-24A	5.35	R1
Farm Street	Bik	16-28A	5.75	R1
Bellingham Road	Cournoyer	19-10	16.93	R3
Union Street	Saravara	24-17&18	13.14	R3
Total Chapter 61			140.12	
Chapter 61A				
Federal Street	Zerva/Green	15-13	8.56	R1
83 Federal Street	Zerva/Green	15-66A	70.00	R1
25 Park Street	Notorantonio	16-3A	8.19	R2
Federal Street	Zerva/Green	16-45	42.37	R1
Elm Street/Handy Rd	Fox	21-27,27A&33	16.89	R2
216 Blackstone	Webber	22-62A	16.7	R2
60 Milk Street	Deguire	23-19A	51.74	R2
Chestnut Street	Wojcik	25-15	17.27	R3
Mendon Street	Wojcik	25-17	26.02	R3
Union Street	Poirier	26-37A	5.64	R3
222 Mendon Street	Wojcik	27-8A	11.36	R3
33 Milk Street	Markle	27-21A	9.05	R2
277R Blackstone St.	Robbins	27-38	39.70	R2
63 Milk Street	Wojcik	27-42	1.16	R2
Milk Street	Wojcik	27-49	19.39	R2
Mendon Street	Wojcik	27-134A	7.95	R3
Milk/Mendon Streets	Wojcik	27-10A, 11,43,44&131	6.01	R2/R3
Total Chapter 61A			358.00	
Chapter 61B		None	0.0	
Total Chapter 61B			0.0	
TOTAL CHAPTER 61, 61A & 61B LANDS			498.12	

Source: Blackstone Assessors Database 2017

taxes for a certain number of years, as well as offer the town the right of first refusal to match any bona fide offer for purchase of the property.

As Table 32 indicates, most of the Chapter land, 358 acres, is in the agriculture/horticulture category, Chapter 61A. Another 140 acres are involved in forestry. There are no Chapter 61B lands in Blackstone. The nearly 500 acres of farm and forestry land play a significant role in helping to maintain Blackstone's agricultural and rural heritage.

Access to parks is also important to the health of Blackstone residents since they provide opportunities for physical activities. The AARP Livability Index rates neighborhoods on their access to parks within a half-mile. A rating of 0.0 indicates that a community has an average number of parks within a half mile. Blackstone's score is 0.7, indicating more parks within a half-mile than the U.S. average.



Attilio Valati Nature Park

Table 33 presents the public and private recreation sites in Blackstone. The school sites provide recreation facilities that supplement Roosevelt Park (below, left), located behind the Municipal Center and Turbesi Park (below, right), located in Millerville.



Veterans Park on Elm Street had been developed with soccer fields but is currently unused. However, while much of the site will be devoted to veterans housing in the future, that development provides for the construction of soccer fields for Town use, as well as use by residents.

The only significant private recreation facility in Blackstone is

Tupper Park. In the late 1950's Earl

Tupper purchased the site of an old mill, dating back to the early 1800's, to manufacture the product he invented: Tupperware. He built a recreation park on 12 of the acres of land to be enjoyed by his employees and their families. This property was used until the late 1980's, when Tupper sold the park. In 1995, the Blackstone Valley Boys & Girls Club (BVBGC) leased the park and revived Tupper Park for a summer program for 400 local youths. In 1996, David King, from the Champlin Foundation, donated funds to purchase the land to create a year-round home for the Boys & Girls Club.



TABLE 33

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RECREATION SITES IN BLACKSTONE

NAME	LOCATION	AREA	EXISTING USES/FACILITIES
PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS			
A. Roosevelt Park	St. Paul Street	9.00	Baseball fields, basketball courts, pavilion, playground equipment, track
B. Turbesi Park	Rathbun Street	5.90	Baseball/softball fields, basketball court, tot play area
C. JFK/Maloney Elementary Schools/Goulet Field	200 Lincoln Street	23.36*	Baseball fields, basketball courts, playground equipment, gymnasium
D. Blackstone-Millville Regional Senior High School	Lincoln Street	34.7*	Baseball/softball fields, soccer/field hockey fields, indoor and outdoor basketball courts, tennis courts, track, gymnasium
E. Blackstone-Millville Regional Middle School (Hartnett)	Federal Street	33.12*	Soccer field
F. Elm Street Mini-Park	Elm Street	2.00	Basketball/tennis courts
G. Valati Mini-Park	Summer Street	3.75	Benches, picnic tables
H. Veterans Memorial Park	Elm Street		Currently unused, Soccer fields planned as part of Soldier On project
Total Public Recreation Acreage (including schools)		111.83	
PRIVATE RECREATION AREAS			
I. Tupper Park (Boys and Girls Club)	115 Canal Street	11.8	Swimming and wading pools, tennis and basketball courts, shuffleboard, baseball/softball fields, arts and crafts center, picnic areas, playground equipment
Total Private Recreation Acreage		11.8	
TOTAL RECREATION ACREAGE		123.63	

Source: Blackstone Assessor's Database

*Acreage includes entire school sites.

SURVEY RESULTS

The open space and recreation survey results identify it as a category in need of some attention. All the open space and recreation items, except horse trails, were rated positively, as “Very Important” or “Important” by survey participants. Ranking the highest in importance by 68% of participants was *Condition of Recreational Facilities*. This was followed by *Appropriate Use of Open Space* (63%). *Walking Trails*, *Amount of Open Space Protected*, and *Number of Recreational Facilities* were all highly rated by 62% of participants. *Type* (mix of Recreational Facilities) was favored by 61%; and *Maintenance of Conservation Land* by 58% of survey participants. Only 16% of participants ranked *Horse Trails* as important.

In contrast to its importance, 57% of survey participants rated their satisfaction level for *Walking Trails* as only “Fair” or “Poor.” Ranked levels of “Fair” or “Poor” were also attributed to *Appropriate Use of Open Space* by 53% of survey participants, *Type* (mix) of *Recreational Facilities* (52%) and *Horse Trails* (50%). Fewer than 50% of survey participants awarded “Fair” or “Poor” ratings to *Amount of Open Space Protected* (47%), *Number of Recreational Facilities* (47%) and *Maintenance of Conservation Land* (46%).

For the related issue of natural resources, 63% of survey participants responded that stormwater management was “Very Important” or “Important”, while 68% rated wetlands protection that highly. However, once again, satisfaction lagged behind importance. Among survey participants, 48% indicated satisfaction with current conditions as “Excellent” or “Good” for stormwater management, and 49% considered wetland protection as “Excellent” or “Good”.

The survey also posed questions about future policies. When asked to consider allowing more units in a subdivision that would cluster houses in order to preserve open space, 26% of survey participants favored it, 18% were opposed, and 27% wanted more information. When asked about allowing community gardens on Town-owned land, 63% of survey participants would support this concept with 3% opposed. Preserving scenic roads was supported with 61% of survey participants in favor and 4% opposed. Preserving and assisting agricultural activities had the support of 54% of the participants with 3% indicating opposition. Purchasing open space was supported by 35% of survey participants, 7% of participants were opposed, and 27% needed more information.

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Opportunities for acquiring or protecting open space are presented in four categories. First, as residential development in recent years has demonstrated, the Flexible Residential Development bylaw has resulted in significant acquisition of open space. The Meadows at Harris Pond, Rolling Brook Estates, and Sycamore Estates have accounted for nearly 50 acres of protected open space at no cost to the Town. This method of developing residential land should continue to be encouraged.

Second, Chapter 61, 61A and 61B properties also present another opportunity. While the purpose of the state's Chapter 61, 61A and 61B program is to encourage the land to remain in forest, agriculture and open space/recreation, the lands generally don't remain in that status indefinitely. The fact that the Town has a right of first refusal on any sale provides an opportunity to acquire those properties when they go on the market. The Town then has a 120-day period to determine whether appropriating the money is in the Town's best interest at that time. Another option is to transfer that right to a non-profit conservation organization.

The next opportunity category is more of a priority than opportunity. The Zone II/aquifer areas, as well as Priority Habitat areas, represent an opportunity to further protect the Town's water supplies and habitat areas for rare and endangered species.

Finally, there is an opportunity to acquire open space through donations and grants. There is precedent in Blackstone for a land donation: Daniels Farm. State grants are also available for land purchases. Completion of an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) provides eligibility for state grants both for acquiring land and improving or constructing recreation facilities. Those grants are called LAND and PARC grants. They are from the Division of Conservation Services and require local matches. Recreation Trail Grants are also available from the State for developing trails.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Master Plan goals and objectives that pertain to Open Space and Recreation are the following:

GOAL OPEN SPACE/RECREATION: Improve Open Space and Recreation Resources

- a. Acquire additional open space
- b. Link/expand existing open space and recreation areas, including links to Bikeway
- c. Encourage use of Flexible Residential Development
- d. Improve access and visibility of open space and recreation resources (signage, website, maps, trail heads, etc.)
- e. Expand active recreation resources

Based on the Open Space and Recreation Resources goal and objectives, the recommendations for future steps are discussed in the next section.

OPEN SPACE/RECREATION RECOMMENDATION 1:

ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL OPEN SPACE

Blackstone has increased its protected open space by about a third since 2001. Most of this increase was due to the acquisition of 136 acres, as a result of the power plant development on Bellingham Road. Acquisition of additional lands remains a high priority, as documented in the survey of residents. Some of the areas that should be considered for acquisition are as follows:

Quisset Hill/Daniels Farm Area – This open space land now forms a large contiguous area of protected open space totaling more than 500 acres in Blackstone and Mendon. Linking these parcels with each other and to the land acquired from the power plant would further expand the protected area and provide opportunities for an extensive trails system as well as wildlife habitat.

Fox Brook Site (between Mendon and Blackstone Streets) – This site was designated as a priority for acquisition in the 1995 and 2001 OSRPs. The property straddles Fox Brook, and includes about 57 acres.

Chapter 61, 61A and 61B Lands – Blackstone has about 358 acres of Chapter 61 and 61A land, down from 588 acres in 1995. These lands contribute to the Town's rural character. Since the Town has right of first refusal before these parcels can be sold, they should be targeted for acquisition when they become available, and/or targeted for conservation under the flexible residential zoning bylaw.

Sensitive Environmental Areas – Other areas that should be targeted for acquisition are sensitive environmental areas. This includes flood plains, aquifers and Zone II areas, state designated Priority Habitat areas (especially along the Mill River and Quick Stream corridors), and key habitats as presented in the BioMap 2 provided by the state. Figure 2 illustrates these areas.

OPEN SPACE/RECREATION RECOMMENDATION 2:

INCREASE CONNECTIONS TO BLACKSTONE RIVER GREENWAY AND SNETT

The segment of the Blackstone River Greenway that passes through Blackstone uses a portion of the SNETT from the center of Blackstone westward. High priority should be given to acquiring parcels that connect to either of these that could provide additional access points. This could be in the form of fee interest purchase, access easements, or landowner agreements as such parcels are developed, or other means. This includes parcels within the Industrial district on the western part of town, as well as along the SNETT in the eastern part.

Furthermore, efforts are underway to improve the portion of SNETT in Bellingham and Franklin. These efforts include both physically improving the trail that currently exists and extending it further east into Franklin center to the commuter rail station. Since Blackstone is the junction between SNETT and the Blackstone River Greenway, improvements to either of them increase the utility and importance of them for Blackstone residents. Therefore, efforts to improve both should be supported.

OPEN SPACE/RECREATION RECOMMENDATION 3:

CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE USE OF FLEXIBLE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Recent subdivision development in Blackstone has taken advantage of the Flexible Residential Development bylaw in order to provide more compact lot sizes in return for publicly accessible open space. Recent developments include Rolling Brook, The Meadows at Harris Pond and Sycamore Estates. An important change has already been made to require that the land acquired through this process be dedicated to open space. The bylaw should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it continues to serve the best interests of the Town.

OPEN SPACE/RECREATION RECOMMENDATION 4:

IMPROVE ACCESS AND AWARENESS OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION RESOURCES

The survey indicated that there is a need for increased awareness about existing open space and recreation resources. A number of steps can be taken to inform residents of the available resources. These include the following:

Provide an inventory of Town lands available for passive and active recreation uses – The list in Section 5 is a good start on this inventory. The list could be reviewed to identify those parcels where public use is encouraged and those that are best left as habitat area only. Then use of those identified sites can be encouraged through signage, information on the Town website, maps, etc.

Add signage at locations where use is encouraged – Signage can be useful in increasing public awareness of open space and conservation land. Signs identifying the SNETT and Blackstone River Greenway could be placed at major road crossings, at lands along the Blackstone River, and at many of the other conservation lands that are less well known but could accommodate passive recreation. Additional informative signage has the potential to increase use and activities on those lands, as well as build support for maintaining and expanding those resources.

Increase outreach efforts – A public information campaign should be produced to inform the Blackstone residents about available resources. The Town website could include an inventory of open space and recreation lands, maps and scenes of existing and proposed open space areas and recreation facilities, facts about growth and facility usage, and information about the benefits of the existing and proposed open space/recreation systems. The website could be supplemented by a slide show or video that could be presented to meetings of civic/social/fraternal/business groups, at public hearings/meetings, and on public access cable TV, with references to the website for additional information. At a minimum, a brochure/map would help increase awareness of open space and recreation opportunities.

OPEN SPACE/RECREATION RECOMMENDATION 5:

EXPAND ACTIVE RECREATION RESOURCES

As the survey results demonstrate, active recreation is important to Blackstone residents. While 62% and 61% responded that the number and type of recreation facilities were “Important” or “Very important”, only 52% of survey participants were satisfied with the types of recreational facilities available and 47% of participants rated the number of facilities as “Fair” or “Poor”. This indicates a need for improvement.

The fact that the soccer fields at Veterans Park are not being used likely contributes to these results. The redevelopment of Veterans Park as a home for veterans that includes new soccer fields should help the situation.

CIRCULATION

INTRODUCTION

Circulation, or transportation, is a critical piece of infrastructure for any town and region. While roadways are the backbone of most transportation systems, other important components include sidewalks, public transportation services, bike lanes and trails. In addition to serving as a means to move from place to place, these components also facilitate providing exercise and encouraging healthy residents, as well as promoting social interaction in public spaces. The Central Massachusetts Indicators Project (CMIP), conducted by Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) in 2016, in which Blackstone was a participant, found that “lack of transportation options were indicated as having the greatest impact on the Town’s overall health.”

This section discusses the circulation resources in Blackstone. It includes an overview of the street system, Blackstone River Greenway, Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT), sidewalks and trails, and access to public transportation services. Finally, this section identifies opportunities and recommendations for future circulation policies.

OVERVIEW OF CIRCULATION

Figure 12 illustrates the current transportation resources in Blackstone. As noted above, the road system is the most important component of the transportation system. Most people depend on cars for transportation needs. According to the Department of Public Works, Blackstone has approximately 75 miles of roadway. Maintaining the roadway network involves plowing, sanding and salting, street sweeping, fixing potholes, reconstructing streets or portions thereof, and general street maintenance. Managing stormwater has always been an important part of road maintenance and it has become increasingly so as federal and state regulations have become more concerned with the quality of stormwater. Additionally, climate change has increased the possibility of more severe storm events.

Route 122 is the only state highway that traverses Blackstone. However, Elm Street provides a connection to Route 126 in Bellingham. Interstate 495 is about 7 miles away in Franklin (from East Blackstone), and Route 146 is less than 3 miles from Route 122 via St. Paul Street or just over 3 miles from the western part of Town.

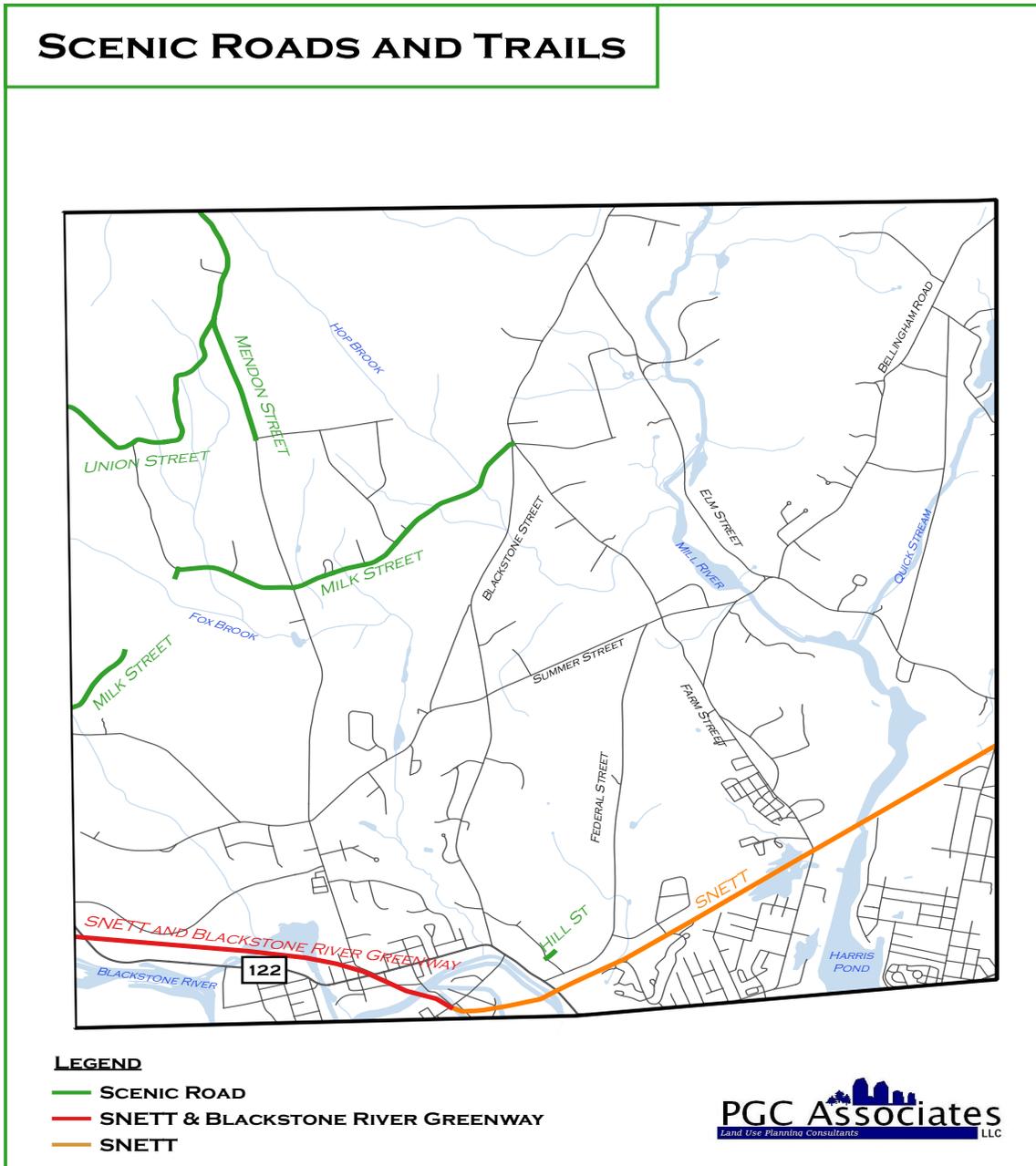
Sidewalks are another important element of transportation. Most of the 75 miles of Blackstone’s roadways lack sidewalks. As with the majority of towns in the region, sidewalks are most likely on the roads that serve the older, denser parts of town, as well as in new subdivisions. The CMRPC CMIP project also cited the AARP Livability Index which estimated .61 walk trips per household per day in Blackstone. That was below the median for U.S. neighborhoods of .73 per day. Lack of sidewalks discourages walking even among people who are inclined to do so,

primarily due to safety concerns about walking in the street, especially on narrow roads with high traffic and travel speeds.

A relatively new transportation component in Blackstone is the Blackstone River Greenway. This paved, multiuse path provides opportunities for safe biking, walking, jogging, rollerblading, etc. The Greenway provides Blackstone residents and visitors with an opportunity for transportation and exercise. Traversing the center of Town, this facility also provides an economic development opportunity through offering users access to services, such as food and drink, bike sales and maintenance, shopping, etc.



FIGURE 12



Related to the Greenway is the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT). The Greenway route through Blackstone is coterminous with the SNETT. However, the SNETT extends east through East Blackstone and Bellingham into Franklin, and west to Douglas.

There is no public transit available in Blackstone. The nearest service is the Forge Park Station of the Franklin commuter rail line, which is 9 to 10 miles away. However, it should be noted that the Boston Surface Railroad Company has proposed initiating service between Worcester and Providence. The latest iteration of that proposed service would add Nashua, NH to the route. The Worcester-Providence leg would have a stop in Woonsocket, RI, which would put a station within about 2 miles of the center of Blackstone.

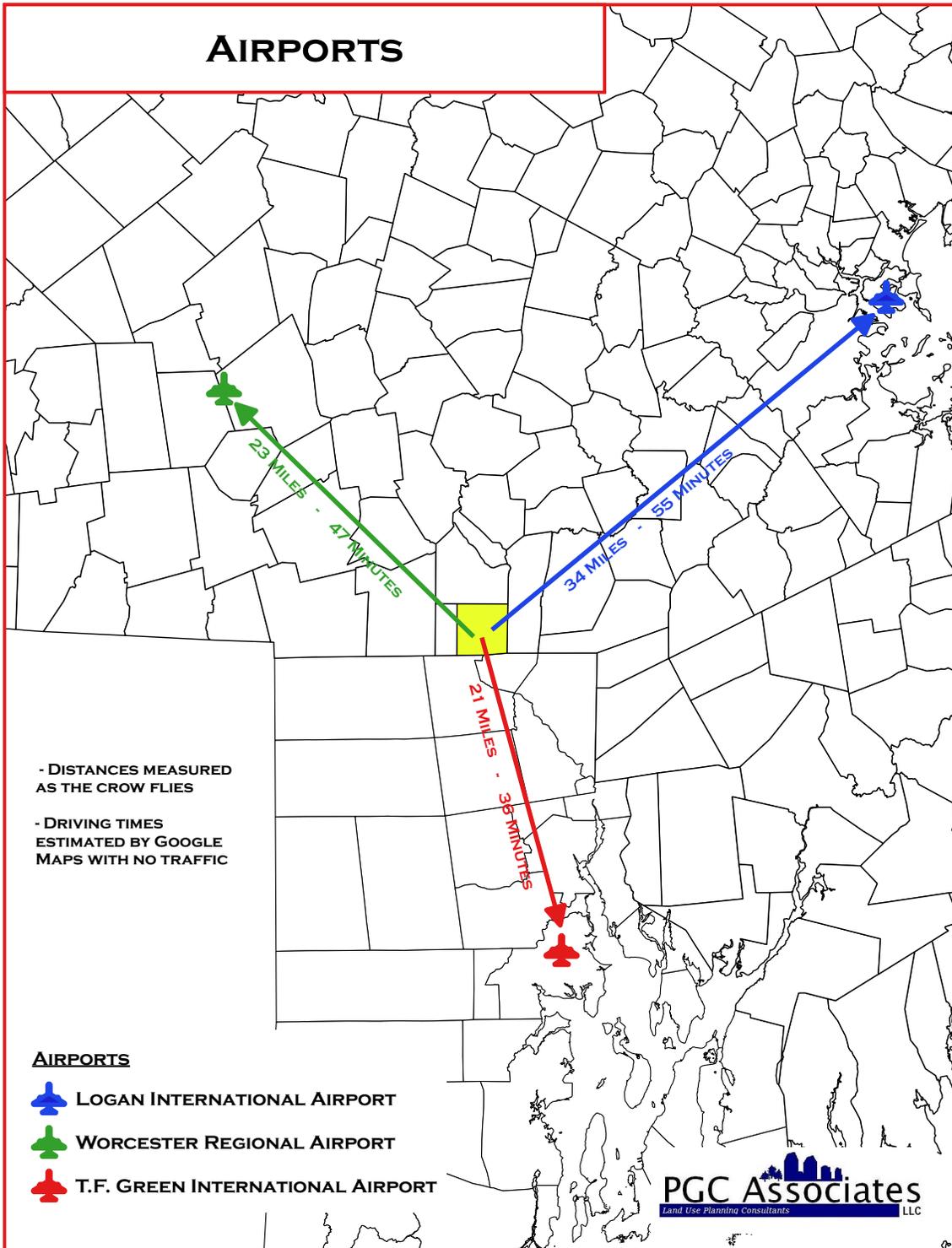
Blackstone, in collaboration with the Council on Aging, has provided some transit services. Van transportation is available to residents 60 years of age and over on weekdays from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM, through this collaboration.

The closest passenger service airport to Blackstone is Green International Airport in Warwick, RI, about 26 miles away. Logan International Airport in Boston is about 53 miles, and Worcester Regional Airport is 30 miles away. Airports with private plane service include Hopedale Industrial Park Airport (about 8 miles away), Mansfield Municipal Airport (about 22 miles away) and Norwood Memorial Airport (about 32 miles away). Transit service is available to Logan from either the Franklin or Attleboro commuter rail stations, and to Green from the Attleboro station. Figure 13 illustrates the airports in relation to Blackstone.



FIGURE 13

AIRPORTS IN RELATION TO BLACKSTONE



SURVEY RESULTS

The survey results pertaining to transportation are very clear. There is dissatisfaction with current conditions of and strong support for future efforts to improve sidewalks and off-road paths. *Sidewalks and Crosswalks* were ranked as “Important” or “Very Important” by 80% of respondents. *Pedestrian Amenities* and *Bike Paths* were ranked that way by 54% of respondents.

In contrast to its importance, 69% of survey respondents rated their satisfaction level for *Pedestrian Amenities* as only “Fair” or “Poor,” while 68% rated *Sidewalks and Crosswalks* that way. *Bike Paths* were rated “Fair” or “Poor” by 53%.

Respondents were also concerned with trails and pedestrian amenities as they specifically relate to the Town Center. *Trails and Bike Paths connecting to the Town Center* were rated “Important” or “Very Important” by 58% but only 27% rated the current level as “Excellent” or “Good.” *Walkability* was rated as “Important” or “Very Important” by 58% of respondents, while 56% of respondents thought the current level of walkability is “Excellent” or “Good”.

Public Transportation was deemed “Important” or “Very Important” by 34% of respondents. However, *Public Transportation satisfaction* was rated as “Fair” or “Poor” by 69% of respondents, which was not surprising given the lack of public transportation in Town.

There was general satisfaction with roads, parking, plowing and maintenance. Majorities rated *Town Roads* (51%), *On-Street Parking* (51%) and *Off-Street Parking* (59%) as “Excellent” or “Good” (51%). *Road Plowing and Maintenance* was rated “Excellent” or “Good” by 56%.

The survey also posed questions about future policies. The strongest support for future town services and facilities was to increase sidewalks and off-road paths. It received a large majority with 64% in favor and only 2% opposed. Sidewalk improvement were also highly desired in response to questions about the Town Center. *Improving sidewalk design to encourage more use* was favored by 37% (3% opposed) and *expanding sidewalks and bicycle paths to better connect residential areas with the Town Center* was favored by 31% (6% opposed).

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

There are several opportunities for improving transportation in Blackstone. First, while there is general satisfaction with the roads, there is strong interest in improving sidewalks, crosswalks, trails, and pedestrian amenities, in general. This should be a priority.

Second, the Blackstone River Greenway has become a popular amenity for Blackstone. It will become more useful as it is completed in its entire route from Providence to Worcester. The route in Blackstone and through Millville and into Uxbridge follows the route of the Southern New England Trunkline Trail, which is also not completed. When both trails are completed Blackstone will become the crossroads for two significant trails and will gain trail access to Worcester and Providence, as well as to Franklin and Douglas, and points in between.

Public transportation is lacking in Blackstone. The proposed commuter service from Providence to Worcester (and further north to Nashua, NH) would have a stop in Woonsocket which would be easily accessible to Blackstone residents. Furthermore, Woonsocket and North Smithfield are served by the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, and Bellingham is served by the Greater Attleboro and Taunton Regional Transit Authority. Metrowest Regional Transit Authority serves Milford. A service connecting those three systems (perhaps by the Worcester Transit Authority, which currently does not offer nearby service) through Blackstone would benefit Blackstone, as well as the other towns in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Master Plan goals and objectives that pertain to Circulation are the following:

GOAL CIRCULATION/TRANSPORTATION: Expand Transportation Options

- a. Explore transit service from WRTA and/or RIPTA
- b. Expand sidewalk and trail network
- c. Improve pedestrian and bicycle amenities
- d. Explore/improve connections to Blackstone River Bikeway
- e. Support further development of SNETT
- f. Support commuter rail from Providence to Worcester with a stop in Woonsocket

Building on this goal and its objectives, Circulation Recommendations are described below.

CIRCULATION/TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATION 1: ADOPT COMPLETE STREETS PROGRAM

Expanding sidewalks and trails and improving pedestrian and bicycle amenities received the strongest support in the survey for future policies. A major step in that direction would be to join the State's Complete Streets program. This program encourages improvements that expand the functionality of streets to serve multiple purposes beyond moving cars.

The program, under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) consists of three tiers. Tier 1 requires the adoption of a Complete Streets Policy. The policy is a commitment to the complete streets philosophy of accommodating pedestrians, bicyclists, handicapped, and all age groups as streets are redeveloped. It does not require that it be applied to every street nor does it require any immediate action.

Once a policy is adopted and accepted by MassDOT, the Town may apply for Tier 2. Tier 2 provides funding for an engineering consultant to review existing streets and identify a list of projects that would move toward Complete Streets goals and prioritize them. The projects can include sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, intersection improvements, street trees or other amenities, etc. Completion of Tier 2 allows the Town to apply for Tier 3, which is funding up to \$400,000 to implement projects identified in Tier 2.

CIRCULATION/TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATION 2: INCREASE CONNECTIONS TO BLACKSTONE RIVER GREENWAY AND SNETT

Another aspect of improving pedestrian and bicycle amenities, especially the off-road type, is to improve access to the Blackstone River Greenway, as well as to support further construction of the Greenway along the remaining segments. Similarly, improvements to SNETT along its entire length should be supported.

Efforts are currently underway to improve the segments of SNETT in Bellingham and Franklin. These efforts include both physically improving the trail that currently exists and extending it further east into downtown Franklin to the commuter rail station. Since Blackstone is the junction between SNETT and the Blackstone River Greenway, improvements to either of them increases the utility and importance of them for Blackstone residents. Therefore, efforts to improve both should be supported.

CIRCULATION/TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATION 3: ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE BETWEEN WORCESTER AND PROVIDENCE

As currently proposed, the commuter rail service from Worcester to Providence would have a stop in Woonsocket. This would provide easy access to such service for Blackstone residents. Furthermore, the proposal now includes a further extension to the north to Nashua, NH. The additional extension helps the financial feasibility of the service while increasing its utility by adding more destinations.

CIRCULATION/TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATION 4: OTHER PUBLIC TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES

As noted above, two different transit authorities serve the abutting communities of Bellingham, North Smithfield and Woonsocket. A third serves the nearby town of Milford. Blackstone stands out as a gap in public transportation service. The survey of Blackstone residents indicated strong dissatisfaction with the lack of service. More detailed studies should be conducted to determine whether there is demand for a service that would provide transit to Blackstone while also connecting these three systems, thus enhancing mobility and expanding available destinations for all three systems.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Public facilities are the necessary infrastructure to deliver needed services to the residents of a community. They include all town buildings, as well as water and sewer services. Parks, playing fields and roads and sidewalks are addressed in other sections. For purposes of this section, some private services, including cable TV and cell phone service, that are not provided by the Town but which the Town can influence through regulation, are also addressed.

OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC FACILITIES

Figure 14 presents the major public facilities in Blackstone. The primary public facility is the Municipal Center located on St. Paul Street. The Municipal Center consolidates the general Town government offices, Police and Fire headquarters and Senior Center in a single building. A recreation facility is also located to the rear of the building.



The Library is located on Main Street, which helps enhance the Town Center. It is a new, modern building that should serve the needs of the Town well into the future. The Historical Museum is also on Main Street.

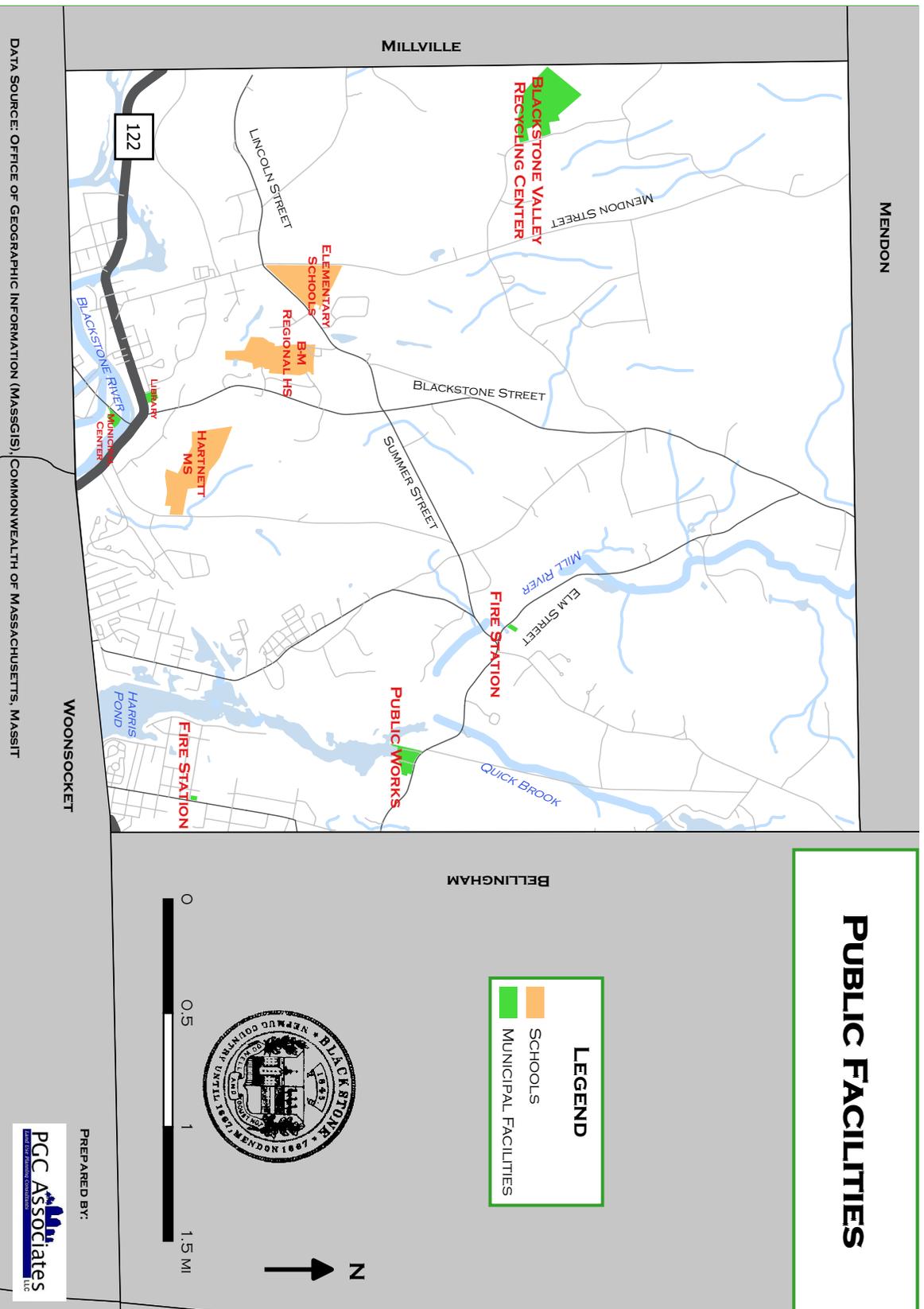
In addition to the headquarters in the Municipal Center, the Fire Department has two satellite stations: one on Rathbun Street and another on Elm Street. These satellite stations are unmanned.



The Blackstone Valley Regional Recycling Center is located on Chestnut Street. It is a regional facility that serves 11 towns.

Blackstone is a member of the Blackstone-Millville Regional School District. All the schools except the Millville Elementary School are located in Blackstone. The two elementary schools, John F. Kennedy and Augustine F. Maloney share a site on Lincoln Street. The Frederick W. Hartnett Middle School is on Federal Street and the Blackstone-Millville Regional High School is on Lincoln Street.

FIGURE 14



Most of the Town, other than the northwest section, is served by Town water. The Department of Public Works (DPW), including the Water Division and Sewer Division, is located on Elm Street.

The DPW operates and maintains about 40 miles of water mains. The system also includes eight wells and six pumping stations. There are also four standpipes to store water and maintain pressure.

The sewer system serves primarily the denser, southern part of Blackstone, though there is a line along Elm Street up to a power plant. There is also a recent extension serving a new subdivision off Park and Farm Streets. The system includes about 15 miles of sewer mains and 15 pump stations. The Town contracts with the City of Woonsocket, RI to treat the sewer as there is no treatment plant in Town. These systems serve about 2800 water customers and 1100 sewer customers.

Stormwater management is also an increasingly important element of the Town's services. Not all streets have drainage systems and increasing state and federal regulations now require more attention to this function.

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey of residents asked respondents to rate Town services two ways: first to rate their satisfaction level with those services and then to rate the importance of each. In terms of satisfaction, the highest rated service was the library, which was rated “Excellent” by 59% and “Good” by another 32% for a total of 91% positive. Police and fire protection also received high marks at 88% each either “Excellent” or “Good.” Town Office Services received 71% positive rating and the public school system received 64% positive ratings. Others receiving strong positive ratings (60% or above) include Town water (67%), Public Works (63%), and the Transfer Station (60%).

The fairness of local taxes was the lowest rated item with 25% rating it “Poor” and 43% “Fair” for a total of 68% negative. The Town website also fared poorly with a 56% negative rating (survey was conducted prior to a recent upgrade).

While they are not services provided by the Town, cable TV received a net negative rating of 52%, while cell phone service received significant negative ratings of 39% and 37% for service “at home” and “Town wide.”

When compared with the respondents’ views about the importance of these services, the results correlate fairly well. Police and fire protection ranked highest on importance with 90% each in “Very important” and “Important,” which matches their satisfaction level of 88%. Town Office services received an 81% positive importance rating which is higher than the satisfaction level of 71% but both are strongly positive. The library was rated 78% positive in importance, slightly lagging behind its satisfaction level of 91%.



Town water and public works each received 82% positive rating in importance, exceeding their satisfaction levels of 67% and 63% respectively. Town sewer was rated positively in satisfaction by 52%, while its positive importance rating was 64%. Public schools were rated at 76% in importance, compared to its satisfaction level of 64%.

The fairness of local taxes was rated as “Very important” or “Important” by 83%. Satisfaction with the fairness of local taxes was 68% negative.

Among the non-Town services, cell service was rated high in importance with 77% rating it “Very important” or “Important” compared to negative satisfaction levels of 37% (town-wide) and 39% (at home). Cable TV had a positive importance rating of 58% compared to a negative satisfaction level of 52%.

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

The biggest and most immediate opportunity for improving public services and facilities is evident in the suggested improvements delineated in the recent feasibility study for a new public safety building. While there are some advantages in multiple departments sharing headquarters in a single building, the current Municipal Center building is not suited to modern operations of the Blackstone Police and Fire departments. The Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc. study identified lack of sufficient space for equipment, and a lack of security for both departments, among other deficiencies. Therefore, a new public safety building was recommended on a different site.

The Kaestle Boos study recommends a new building with 32,140 square feet for the Police and Fire departments. This compares to a total of 9400 square feet (5900 for Fire and 3500 for Police) in the Municipal Center.

An added advantage of a new public safety building would be the opportunity to also address deficiencies in the remaining operations at the Municipal Center. In particular, the Senior Center lacks space needed to serve a rapidly-growing senior population. The space vacated by the Police and Fire departments would allow the town offices on the lower level to be moved upstairs facilitating communication and more efficient operations while also allowing the Senior Center to expand to the entire lower level. Badly needed storage space for all departments would also be created.

The Senior Center currently occupies a total of 2800 square feet on the lower level in two areas. The Kaestle Boos proposal estimates a need for a net 7556 square feet for its various functions, and a total of 11,000 including storage, van garage space, etc.

The survey of residents revealed a significant gap between the importance of cell service and the satisfaction of its existing status. A smaller gap is evident between the importance of cable TV and the satisfaction level of current service. While attracting a second provider of cable TV service (including telephone and Internet) is difficult, newer “Small Wireless Facility” technology for cell service may help improve that service in the near future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Master Plan goals and objectives that pertain to Public Services and Facilities are the following:

GOAL PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES: Reduce Tax burden on Residents

- a. Pursue non-tax revenue sources (fees, leases, etc.)
- b. Strongly encourage and promote economic development
- c. Identify and apply for grants
- d. Identify efficiency measures including regional collaboration

GOAL PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES: Town Services and Facilities

- h. Maintain or enhance current level of Town services
- i. Improve Town website
- j. Expand water and sewer networks
- k. Prioritize and implement bridge and road repairs
- l. Expand efforts to utilize green energy
- m. Encourage improved cable TV service and options
- n. Support improved cell service

The following are Public Services and Facilities recommendations to help implement the goals and objectives:

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES RECOMMENDATION 1: CONTINUE TO SEEK OUT AND APPLY FOR GRANTS

Grants are one way to help reduce the cost burden on taxpayers by either offsetting the cost of necessary improvements or funding projects that otherwise would not be funded with Town resources. A recent example is the Green Communities program which funds energy efficiency measures that then reduce operating costs going forward. The Town is also participating in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program which results in eligibility for grants to address the impacts of climate change and mitigate hazards that would otherwise be costly in the future.

The Complete Streets program, discussed in the Circulation section, also works in a manner similar to Green Communities and MVP in that if the Town takes certain steps it becomes eligible for grant funding for that specific purpose. There are a number of state and federal grant programs available that that should be considered by the Town. A sample of them are as follows:

- Parkland Acquisition and Renovations for Communities (PARC), which funds acquisition or renovations of recreation facilities. A current Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is a prerequisite for this program.
- Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND), which funds the acquisition of open space and conservation land. This program also requires a current OSRP.
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which can fund improvements to housing for low and moderate income residents (including private residences), as well as for certain public facilities, such as senior centers, that serve low and moderate income residents, and removal of architectural barriers.
- MassWorks, which funds infrastructure projects that serve multi-family housing in walkable, mixed-use areas, as well as economic development projects in distressed areas.
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program provides grants for projects designed to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Blackstone is already in the MVP program and is eligible for its grants.
- Complete Streets, as discussed in the Circulation section, provides grants to expand transportation options with a focus on pedestrian and bicycle improvements and universal accessibility.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES RECOMMENDATION 2:

CONSTRUCT NEW PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

The proposed public safety building represents a significant upgrade from the current situation. It will provide modern, efficient headquarters for both the Police and Fire Departments. At the same time, it will allow an expansion of the senior center into the Municipal Center space currently occupied by those departments. It will also allow the Town Hall functions that are currently in the basement level to move to the first floor resulting in a more efficient operation.

Furthermore, while the only grants currently available for a new public safety building are for energy efficiency, including the heating and cooling system, the location of the facility could be used to leverage other benefits. If the facility is located in an area with additional land that could also be the subject of economic development activity, grants for infrastructure would become a possibility. At a minimum, even without grants, the public safety facility could serve as a stimulus to “jump start” economic development in an appropriate area. Therefore, the ability to stimulate additional economic activity should be a major criterion in the selection of a location.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES RECOMMENDATION 3:

CONSTRUCT A BIKEWAY/EMERGENCY ACCESS ON SNETT

SNETT is owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), so it is not under Town control. However, the Town could work with DCR to pursue improvements that could serve the dual purpose of creating a viable bicycle and pedestrian connection between Millerville and the rest of the Town in a manner that could also improve emergency services by reducing response times. Connections to streets along the SNETT would also need to be established. The Complete Streets program is a potential source of funds for this project.

In addition, as discussed in the Circulation section, efforts are currently underway to improve the segments of SNETT in Bellingham and Franklin. These efforts include both physically improving the trail that currently exists and extending it further east into downtown Franklin to the commuter rail station. Since Blackstone is the junction between SNETT and the Blackstone River Greenway, improvements to either of them increases the utility and importance of them for Blackstone residents in terms of transportation, recreation and economic development.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES RECOMMENDATION 4:

IMPROVE TOWN WEBSITE

The Town's website was recently revamped. It now has a modern appearance and is easier to navigate. Many individual department or board pages, such as Assessors, Treasurer-Collector, and Board of Selectmen, include useful information about their functions and how residents can access information. They also contain links to other pages with helpful information including the up-to-date Town Bylaws on the General Code eCode website.

However, in other cases the data on the website is sometimes outdated, lacking or even contradictory. For example, The Planning Board and Inspectional Services pages each have links to different versions the Zoning Bylaw, neither of which is the current version. Many board pages have old agendas and minutes. Old agendas, minutes and reports can be useful and should continue to be accessible on the site. However, up-to-date agendas and minutes should also be available.

A review of the entire website should be conducted to identify and, where necessary, remove outdated information and archive old but useful information so that it remains available. Efforts should also be made to post current information such as agendas, minutes, reports or projects on board and department pages. Moreover, those board and department pages that do not currently have information, such as a description of their functions, forms, fee schedules, rules and regulations, staff contacts, etc. should be upgraded to add that information. In addition to providing useful information to the

public, it could also help reduce the number of phone calls or in-person questions handled by staff thus freeing up time that can be devoted to other essential tasks.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES RECOMMENDATION 5:

IMPROVE/EXPAND PUBLIC UTILITIES

Town water and sewer each received high ratings in terms of importance and level of satisfaction. Expanding Town sewer received the second highest level of support in the survey question regarding future policies. Expanding Town water also received support. There are no current plans for expanding these systems and financing expansions is costly. However, opportunities for expansion in a manner that also benefits existing residents should be sought when private developments are proposed that require sewer extensions. Also, grants may be available to extend public utilities when the purpose is to support economic development or housing.

Stormwater management is an increasingly important service that is being impacted by federal and state mandates. The Town is already working to meet the requirements. However, as the costs of meeting ever-increasing requirements continue to rise, innovative solutions need to be adopted. Currently, new developments are required to assume the maintenance of stormwater facilities necessary to serve those developments. However, other solutions will need to be considered to address the issue on existing roads and developed areas.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES RECOMMENDATION 6:

SMALL CELL ANTENNAS

According to the survey of residents, 77% of respondents believe that cell service at home is very important or important and 73% felt that way about cell service in town. However, 39% consider existing service fair or poor at home and 37% consider it fair or poor in town. There is only one cell tower in Blackstone. It is located in the northwest corner of town off Mendon Street. Other towers are in Woonsocket, Millville and Bellingham.

Cell phone carriers are now introducing “small cell antennas” that are mounted on utility poles and are designed to look like electrical transformers on utility poles, so they are virtually invisible. They are not capable of replacing the larger monopoles but are useful in filling in gaps of coverage.

The Town does not provide cell service and the carriers who do operate largely under federal rules and regulations. However, the Town could help encourage the installation of such small cell antennas by amending its wireless communications bylaw to allow them by right and subject only to a “grant of location” process through the Board of Selectmen.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES RECOMMENDATION 7:

REGIONALIZATION OF SERVICES

Blackstone currently shares its middle and high schools with Millville. Its recycling center serves eleven towns. Police and Fire Departments have mutual aid agreements with nearby towns. The Library is a member of Central/Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing (C/WMARS) library network. Regionalizing services is a good way to take advantage of economies of scale and reduce costs.

On the other hand, home rule is very strong in New England and each town takes pride in its own manner of providing services. Nevertheless, Blackstone should explore other possible shared services that offer potential cost savings and/or improved services.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following pages present the recommendations of each section of the Master Plan in a table format. The table lists each recommendation and suggests Lead Agency, Other Agencies, Implementation Mechanisms, Schedule, and Possible Funding.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
1. Engage Property Owners Within Industrial District					
Reach out to landowners in Industrial District to determine interest in developing property.	Economic Development Committee	Town Administrator Planning Board	Community Info Session	2018-2019	NA
2. Explore means of extending needed infrastructure to the District					
Examine potential use of Grand Trunk railroad right of way to provide access to Industrial District.	Economic Development Committee	Planning Board	Collaborate with Millville exploring same	2018-2021	CMRPC
Research and identify best financing method for infrastructure improvements.	Economic Development Committee	Board of Selectmen Finance Committee	EDC to research and present findings to Board of Selectmen	2019-2025	MassWorks Complete Streets
3. Secure Access to the Town-owned Site from Main Street					
Research and pursue best approach to providing access to Town-owned site.	Economic Development Committee	Planning Board Town Administrator	Research surrounding land parcels Map potential access routes Identify funding sources	2018-2020	NA
4. Consider revising Zoning District Boundaries					
Study location of residences within Industrial District. Research potential needed zoning changes.	Planning Board	Economic Development Committee	Zoning Amendment Informational discussions	2018-2020	NA
5. Update/Upgrade Infrastructure					
Investigate implementation costs and work involved in upgrading street and sidewalks along Main Street.	Board of Selectmen	Planning Board DPW Highway Division	DPW/Highway to research costs/work and report to Board of Selectmen	2018-2022	TIP MassWorks Complete Streets

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
6. Promote the Blackstone River Bikeway					
Advance need for connections between Bikeway and Main Street.	Economic Development Committee	Planning Board Board of Selectmen	Complete Streets Program Coordinate with biking/walking advocates and business/property owners	2018-2020	Complete Streets
Include needed signage to direct travelers/residents to businesses.	Planning Board	Board of Selectmen Business/property owners	Business/property owners	2018-2020	NA
Support further development of SNETT.	Board of Selectmen	Planning Board Parks & Recreation	Coordinate with biking/walking advocates in Blackstone and other towns, and business/property owners	2018-2025	Complete Streets DCR
7. Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections					
Enhance bike pathways and sidewalks.	DPW	Planning Board Board of Selectmen Parks & Recreation	Complete Streets program Coordinate with biking/walking advocates and business/property owners	2018-2022	Complete Streets
8. Update and Revise Sign Bylaw					
Review sign bylaw. Make changes that result in higher quality signs that support the business center along Main Street.	Planning Board	Board of Selectmen Business owners	Zoning bylaw amendment	2019-2021	NA

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
9. Consider Establishment of a Main Street Organization					
Study the feasibility of a Main Street organization supporting business and property owners. Incorporate valued historic and cultural attributes of Main Street.	Economic Development Committee	Board of Selectmen Business owners Historical Comm.	National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Program Neighboring communities with downtown organizations	2018-2020	MA Downtown Initiative Grants
10. Consider Expanding the Industrial Districts					
Study zoning within and around Industrial Districts.	Planning Board	Economic Development Committee	Zoning bylaw amendment	2019-2022	CMRPPC
Consider the inclusion of a Light Industrial Zoning district.	Planning Board	Economic Development Committee	Zoning bylaw amendment	2019-2022	CMRPPC
11. Consider the Area East of Quick Stream					
Study land use in the area east of Quick Stream.	Planning Board	Economic Development Committee	Zoning bylaw amendment Specify special permit uses	2018-20	CMRPPC

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: HOUSING

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
1. Support Measures to Encourage Housing in Main Street/Route 122 Area					
Seek out and/or develop measures that make housing in this area a more attractive area in which to live.	Board of Selectmen Town Administrator Planning Board	Business community Area property owners	Bicycle/pedestrian improvements, aesthetic improvements/design guidelines; promote Blackstone River Greenway, etc.	2020-2025	Complete Streets CMRPC
2. Explore Means to Expand and Improve Housing for Seniors					
Assist seniors with strategies and options/supports to “age in place”	Council on Aging	Planning Board Board of Selectmen	Review strategies used by others Community listening sessions Outreach to health care community	2019-2030	To be determined
Encourage additional housing for seniors.	Council on Aging	Planning Board Board of Selectmen	Zoning Bylaw amendment	2019-2030	To be determined
3. Promote Additional Affordable Housing					
Encourage “friendly 40B” in appropriate locations.	Board of Selectmen	ZBA Planning Board	Identify locations	2019-2025	NA
Encourage renovation of existing buildings with affordable housing as an outcome.	Planning Board	Board of Selectmen	Affordable Housing Bylaw	2020-2025	Community Development Fund

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: HOUSING

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
4. Promote Additional Affordable Housing					
Research potential changes to the Village Overlay District that would help to encourage mixed uses and preserve and enhance the district's character.	Planning Board	Board of Selectmen Historical Comm.	Zoning Bylaw amendment	2019-2021	CMRPC
5. Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections					
Study possible enhancements to bicycle paths and sidewalks that connect to Main Street from SNETT and Blackstone River Bikeway.	Planning Board	Parks & Recreation DPW	Establish committee to study pathways and make recommendations	2019-2025	Complete Streets Recreation Trails

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
1. Consider Appointment of Conservation Agent					
Research need for and funding of conservation agent position.	Town Administrator	Board of Selectmen, Conservation Comm. DPW	Develop job description and salary structure Identify funding sources	2019-2020	Application fees, General Fund
2. Protect Natural Resources Through Acquisition of Open Space					
Continue to acquire open space with an emphasis on protection of natural resources.	Conservation Comm.	Board of Selectmen Planning Board Metacomet Land Trust	Flexible Development Seek out grant and/or matching funds for purchase	2018-2030	LAND grants Debt exclusion
3. Encourage development of Solar and Other Renewable Energy Sources and Conservation Measures					
Research, identify and implement measures to encourage use of solar energy by homeowners.	Board of Selectmen	Planning Board	Establish Energy Committee Host solar information presentation Post solar info on web site	2018-2025	NA
Continue to participate in initiatives that support conservation measures in Town buildings and vehicles.	Board of Selectmen	DPW Highway Division	Green Communities program Utility-sponsored energy assessments	2018-2025	Green Communities Program
4. Protect and promote Blackstone's historic character					
Consider adoption of design guidelines for Village Overlay District.	Planning Board	Historical Commission	Zoning Bylaw amendment Adoption of regulations	2019-2022	CMRPC
Consider use of a special permit provision that would help protect historic structures.	Planning Board	Historical Commission	Zoning Bylaw amendment	2019-2021	NA

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
5. Increase Visibility and Awareness of Historic and Cultural Resources					
Add maps of historical and cultural resource locations to Town web site.	Board of Selectmen	Cultural Council Historical Comm. Parks and Recreation	GIS contractor	2019	General Fund
Appoint a committee to research social media plan.	Board of Selectmen	Cultural Council Historical Comm. Parks & Recreation	Committee researches and develops social media plan and presents plan to Board of Selectmen and others	2018-2019	NA
Create town community event calendar.	Board of Selectmen	Cultural Council Historical Comm. Library Council on Aging Parks & Recreation Town Clerk	Establish ad hoc committee of town boards and residents to create community event calendar	2018-2020	Cultural Council
Collaborate with area cultural organizations to promote Blackstone's facilities and activities.	Board of Selectmen	Cultural Council Historical Comm. Library Council on Aging Parks & Recreation Town Clerk	Appoint ad hoc committee of cultural organizations and town departments/boards/commissions Inventory promotional activities and facilities Identify opportunities to increase promotional activities	2018-2025	NA

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
1. Acquire Additional Open Space					
Link Quissett Hill/Daniels Farm Area and power plant land	Conservation Comm.	Board of Selectmen Planning Board Metacomet Land Trust	Flexible Development	2019-2025	LAND
Fox Brook Site	Board of Selectmen	Conservation Comm.	Flexible Development	2019-2025	LAND
Chapter 61, 61 A, 61B Lands	Board of Selectmen	Conservation Comm. Planning Board	Flexible Development	2019-2025	LAND
Sensitive Environmental Areas	Board of Selectmen	Conservation Comm. DPW/ Water Division, Planning Board	Flexible Development	2019-2025	LAND
2. Increase Connections to Blackstone River Greenway and SNETT					
Acquire land or easements that provide access points	Board of Selectmen	Conservation Comm. Planning Board Parks & Recreation	Research, identify and mark access point land or easements	2019-2024	LAND Recreation Trails Grant

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
3. Continue to Encourage Use of Flexible Residential Development					
Review bylaw periodically to make certain it serves the best interest of the Town	Planning Board	Board of Selectmen	Zoning Bylaw amendment	2019-2025	NA
4. Improve Access and Awareness of Open Space and Recreation Resources					
Provide an inventory of Town lands available for passive and active recreation uses	Planning Board	Conservation Comm. Parks & Recreation	Post map on Town web Highlight through social media	2018-2019	General Fund
Add signage at locations where use is encouraged	Parks & Recreation Conservation Comm.	Planning Board Board of Selectmen	Community meetings to identify locations	2019-2021	General Fund
Increase outreach efforts	Board of Selectmen	Parks & Recreation Schools DPW Sports Leagues	Web site Cable Access Community listening sessions	2019-2025	General Fund
5. Expand Active Recreation Resources					
Improved Understanding of needed types of recreation resources	Parks & Recreation	Board of Selectmen Council on Aging Sports Leagues	Needs survey Community listening sessions Input from Town departments/boards	2019-2020	NA
Establish new fields and facilities as needed	Parks & Recreation	Board of Selectmen Sports Leagues		2020-2026	PARC
Renovate existing fields	Parks & Recreation	Board of Selectmen Sports Leagues		2020-2026	PARC

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: CIRCULATION

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
1. Adopt Complete Streets Program					
Develop and adopt Complete Streets Policy.	Board of Selectmen	DPW	Adopt policy based on models from other towns	2018-2019	NA
When Streets Policy accepted, apply for engineering consultant funding.	Board of Selectmen	DPW	Complete Streets Tier 2	2018-2019	Complete Streets
Apply for implementation funding.	Board of Selectmen	DPW	Complete Streets Tier 3	2019-2022	Complete Streets
2. Increase connections to Blackstone River Greenway and SNETT					
Support area efforts to improve connections to Greenway and SNETT.	Board of Selectmen	Planning Board Parks & Recreation	Attend area meetings Support Rail/trail initiatives	2018-2022	Complete Streets
3. Encourage and Support Commuter Rail Service Between Worcester and Providence					
Support area efforts to provide this commuter rail service.	Board of Selectmen	Economic Development Committee	Advocate for commuter rail service	2018-2019	NA
4. Other Public Transit Opportunities					
Study need for, as well as support for, transit system that serves Blackstone.	Economic Development Committee	Board of Selectmen Council on Aging Planning Board	Research need for transit Conduct survey Interviews	2018-2022	NA

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
1. Continue to Seek out and Apply for Grants					
Research and monitor state and federal grant programs that could benefit Blackstone.	Town Administrator	Planning Board	Submit applications	2018-2030	NA
2. Construct New Public Safety Building					
Take all necessary steps to fund and construct a new public safety building to house the Police and Fire Departments.	Town Administrator	Board of Selectmen Police Department Fire Department	Town vote	2018-2020	Debt exclusion
As part of the relocation of public safety to a new structure, undertake the steps needed to support the organization of Town Hall functions within the existing building and the expansion of the senior center.	Town Administrator	Board of Selectmen Council on Aging Town Departments	Town vote	2018-2020	Debt exclusion
3. Construct a Bikeway/Emergency Access on SNETT					
Continue to support the creation of viable bicycle and pedestrian connections to SNETT	Board of Selectmen	Parks & Recreation Planning Board	Cooperation with abutters	2018-2025	Complete Streets
Promote the development of SNETT along its entire length	Board of Selectmen	Parks & Recreation	Work with other towns and state legislators	2018-2030	Recreation Trails, DCR

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
4. Improve Town web Site					
Continue to review and update Town website, making certain current and correct information is posted.	Town Administrator	Town departments contributing to web	Appoint web coordinator	2018-2019	General fund
Create pages for Town departments and boards not currently included within the website.	Town Administrator	Town departments contributing to web	Appoint web coordinator	2018-2019	General fund
5. Improve/Expand Public Utilities					
Monitor and be prepared for opportunities to improve/expand water and sewer systems, as needed.	DPW	Board of Selectmen Planning Board	Development projects	2018-2025	NA
Research and evaluate new stormwater management systems that would improve service to existing and developed areas.	DPW	Board of Selectmen Planning Board Conservation Comm.	MS4 Program	2018-2024	General Fund
6. Small Cell Antennas					
Encourage the installation of small cell antennas through amendments to wireless communications bylaw.	Planning Board	Board of Selectmen	Research and amend bylaw	2019	NA
7. Regionalization of Services					
Continue to explore and build on existing regional collaborations to provide a high quality of service to Blackstone residents.	Town Administrator	Board of Selectmen Town Departments	Regional organizations	2018-2024	NA