

# North Reading Community Development Plan

June 2004



**EO418 Report Prepared for:  
Town of North Reading, MA**



**Prepared by:**



# **North Reading Community Development Plan An EO418 Project Report**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

<b>1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Visioning Process.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Community Planning Commission.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Development Team.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Public “Visioning” Sessions.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<b>Assets and Liabilities.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Housing.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Open Space and Resource Protection.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Economic Development.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Transportation.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Other.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<b>Community Visioning Questions and Answers .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Housing.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Open Space and Resource Protection.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Economic Development.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Transportation.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<b>Community Vision Statement.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Housing.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Open Space and Resource Protection.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Economic Development.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Transportation.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<b>3 HOUSING.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Demographics.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>Number of housing units.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Population trends.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Density of population.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Median [household] income.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Home value.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Age and condition of housing.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Vacancy rates (houses) .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Percentage of 40B units.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>Growth Trends .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Build-out Analysis.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Build-out Plan Summary.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Supply and Demand Comparison – Gap Analysis.....</b>	<b>17</b>



	<b>Housing Goals and Objectives.....</b>	<b>19</b>
	<b>Housing Actions.....</b>	<b>21</b>
	<b>Housing Opportunity Map</b>	
	<b>Land Use Map</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>OPEN SPACE AND RESOURCE PROTECTION.....</b>	<b>24</b>
	<b>Existing Conditions.....</b>	<b>24</b>
	<b>Environmentally Critical Unprotected Open Space.....</b>	<b>26</b>
	<b>Land Critical to Sustaining Surface and Groundwater Quality and Quantity.....</b>	<b>26</b>
	<b>Protection of Priority Wildlife Habitat, Vistas, Key Landscapes and Recreational Facilities.....</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>Land suitable for Development and What Type.....</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>Water Budget Analysis.....</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>Water Quality and Quantity Analysis.....</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>Water Supply Protection.....</b>	<b>29</b>
	<b>Wastewater/Storm Water Management.....</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>Description of Recommendations From Existing Open Space Report and Summary.....</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>Goals and Objectives Statement.....</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>Open Space and Resource Protection Actions.....</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>Town-Owned and Other Govt. Land Map</b>	
	<b>Open Space Protection Map</b>	
	<b>Open Space Potential Map Including: Recreation &amp; Wildlife Corridors, Bike Trails &amp; Special Districts</b>	
	<b>Wetlands &amp; Habitat Map</b>	
	<b>FEMA Flood Zones Map</b>	
	<b>Zoning Map</b>	
	<b>Public Water Supply Map</b>	
	<b>Storm Water Features Map</b>	
	<b>Ipswich River Greenway Map</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.....</b>	<b>32</b>
	<b>Demographics.....</b>	<b>32</b>
	<i>Major employers and number of jobs provided.....</i>	<i>32</i>
	<i>Unemployment rate.....</i>	<i>33</i>
	<i>Demographic and income data.....</i>	<i>34</i>
	<i>Labor force statistics.....</i>	<i>34</i>
	<b>Growth Trends/Current and Future Profile.....</b>	<b>36</b>





<b>Future Economic Development Potential/Economic Development Opportunities.....</b>	36
<b>Economic Development Goals and Objectives Statement.....</b>	37
<b>Economic Development Strategy Map</b>	
<b>Land Use Map</b>	
<b>6 TRANSPORTATION.....</b>	40
<b>North Suburban Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan.....</b>	40
<b>North Suburban Transit Opportunities Study.....</b>	40
<b>Additional Transportation Related Items.....</b>	41
<b>Goals and Objectives Statement.....</b>	42
<b>Transportation Network Map</b>	
<b>7 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.....</b>	44
<b>Narrative Report.....</b>	44
<b>Housing Recommendations.....</b>	44
<i>Actions.....</i>	45
<b>Open Space and Resource Protection Recommendations.....</b>	46
<i>Actions.....</i>	47
<b>Economic Development Recommendations.....</b>	48
<i>Actions.....</i>	48
<b>Transportation Recommendations.....</b>	49
<i>Actions.....</i>	49
<b>Implementation Plan Timeline and Responsibilities.....</b>	50
<i>Housing.....</i>	50
<i>Open Space and Resource Protection.....</i>	52
<i>Economic Development.....</i>	52
<i>Transportation.....</i>	53
<b>Putting it All Together Maps</b>	
<b>Environmental Constraints</b>	
<b>Proposed Land Use Summary</b>	

## REFERENCED MATERIALS

## ATTACHMENTS

- I Handout to CPS and Development team for input
- II Community Development Plan Public Workshops Flier
- III Community meeting agenda
- IV Community meeting PowerPoint presentation – April 22 & 29, 2004
- V Community meeting questions
- VI Sign-in sheets



## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview

This Community Development Plan was prepared for the Town of North Reading through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts EO418 Program. The purpose of the EO418 program is to encourage communities to evaluate certain issues related to growth in order to better plan for where and how growth is to occur. The issues addressed in this report include:

- Assets and Liabilities – what the community thinks of itself,
- Housing – what should be built where, as well as affordable housing issues,
- Open Space and Resource Protection – protection of valuable natural resources
- Economic Development – what is needed and where should it be built,
- Transportation - what is needed to provide an integrated transportation system,
- Community Vision Statement – where the community wants to be in the future.

The following report evaluates these elements in detail, recommends specific actions, provides a timetable for implementation and assigns responsibilities for all actions.

### Context

North Reading is a 13.53 square mile suburban community located 16 miles north west of Boston. Census figures from 1990 and 2000 show that, during that 10-year time period, North Reading's population grew by 15 percent from 12,002 to 13,837. This is a significant growth and one of the highest percentage growth rates in the region. This growth appears to have continued into the 2000's with new homes being built every year. Commercial growth has followed this residential growth with new, large retail stores being built along Route 28. As a result, North Reading is experience growing pains, as are many communities in the region. Citizens are concerned about the impact this growth is having in their Town, and this plan helps identify actions that will direct and control development to help preserve the community's character and quality of life.

### Assets and Liabilities

One of the first steps in this planning process was to ask residents to identify the community's assets and liabilities. Overall, residents spoke favorably of their Town, though they did identify issues that need to be addressed. Major assets included schools, open space resources, housing stock, sense of community, access to highways, central commerce areas and many related items. Major liabilities included lack of public transportation, lack of public sewer, housing costs and lack of affordable housing, the need to protect more open space and diversification of the local economy and jobs.

### Community Vision Statement

After hearing what residents feel about their community now and what they envision for the future, it became evident that North Reading's vision for itself is to be a "sustainable community" in the future. Residents want to maintain a balance both *within* each of the plan's core elements and as well as *between* all core elements. For housing, they want to



provide a variety of housing opportunities from starter homes to senior housing. For economic development, they see to need for larger chains but also want opportunities for locally owned businesses. Furthermore, they understand that a healthy community needs a balance of elements, meaning that economic development can occur as long as important environmental resources are protected. The community, as it currently exists, has a healthy balance, and actions recommended within this report are intended to strengthen this balance and to achieve this “sustainable community” vision.

### **Housing**

Issues regarding housing, and the increasingly difficulty of finding affordable housing in the community, was the major topic of discussion in many of the community meetings. Since North Reading is a desirable place to live, with easy access to highways for commuters, a large amount of residential development has occurred dominated by larger, expensive homes. In addition, smaller homes are being expanded, making them less affordable when they come on the market. This plan recommends many items related to addressing the affordable housing issues for the community. Most of the actions are intended to make North Reading proactive when dealing with affordable housing issues. The Community should formulate a working relationship with the Housing Authority and Housing Partnership to identify lots and build affordable housing units, as was recently done at the 2004 Town Meeting. In addition, a public/private partnership should be forged to develop multi-family housing that is affordable. In addition, regulatory and policy issues need to both control housing and enhance open space resources.

### **Open Space Resource Protection**

The community has a number of regulations in place to protect its abundant natural resources. Furthermore, the community has a number of state and local recreational areas for use by residents. Actions are recommended to acquire and protect additional resources and create greenways to link many of these resources as well as provide additional recreational opportunities and wildlife corridors. Development is not recommended in or adjacent to previously developed areas, though current regulations will control development in environmentally sensitive areas.

### **Economic Development**

Economic development actions are intended to strengthen the local economy and expand it in areas that will improve its diversity and balance. Strengthening the larger retail corridor along Route 28 is just as important as strengthening the local business zone along Park Street. Economic expansion in the Berry Center should include businesses that will help diversify the local economy.

### **Transportation**

North Reading’s proximity to regional highways was listed as one of its assets. However, a more diversified local transportation network is desired, including mass transit service and more pedestrian and bike facilities.



## 2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

### **Visioning Process**

The preparation of the North Reading Community Development Plan involved public input at various levels and thorough various forums. First, this plan was initiated by the North Reading Community Planning Commission (CPC) and, as such, they provided input on issues presently affecting the Town and anticipated to affect the Town in the future. In addition, TerraSphere attended a meeting with the North Reading Development Team, which is comprised of representatives from various Town Departments dealing with development issues. Furthermore, two public “Visioning Sessions” were held to solicit public input on all plan core elements. Finally, upon completion of a draft report, the CPC held a public meeting at which TerraSphere presented the recommendations for discussion and comment. As a result, this plan reflects concerns faced by residents, municipal staff and commission volunteers who all deal with the “core elements” associated with growth and housing issues.

### Community Planning Commission

This plan was prepared by TerraSphere under the direction of the CPC and the Community Planning Department’s Planning Administrator. Throughout the process, the CPC provided input regarding issues of concern to the community that needed to be addressed in the plan. At one special CPC meeting, members and staff provided input on all the core elements of this Plan- assets and liabilities, housing, open space, economic development and transportation. Although the CPC did provide input on all plan elements, the major concern was housing issues and achieving an affordable housing goal of 10%. In addition, the community visioning process was developed with, and tested on, the CPC as a means of determining its effectiveness in collecting community input on a variety of issues. CPC members attended both community visioning meetings and held a final public meeting where the Draft Report was discussed.

### Development Team

TerraSphere and planning staff attended a meeting with the Development Team to solicit input on development issues and pending projects in the community. The format for collecting input at this meeting followed the same format developed for the community visioning meetings, as described in the questionnaire included as Attachment V. A representative from each of the following departments: Public Works, Town Administrator, Planning, Police, Fire, Engineering, Building, Health, and Water were in attendance at the Development Team meeting. Their input was very important and has been incorporated in the Assets and Liabilities chart and in the individual topic sections.





### Public “Visioning” Sessions

Two public visioning sessions were held to solicit public input regarding plan issues and community assets and liabilities. The public workshops flier, meeting agenda, PowerPoint presentation and questionnaire are included in the report attachments (see Attachments II, III, IV and V). To provide meeting options and, thus, encourage higher attendance, the meetings were held at different locations on different nights. In total, 30 people attended the two meetings, although some attendees did not sign-in (see Attachment VI). Lively discussions occurred at both sessions regarding all of the topics to be addressed in the Community Development Plan. By design, input was revealed in several forms. Most were verbal comments recorded by TerraSphere, some came from answers to the questionnaire distributed at the meetings and some were generated from the breakout group discussions that followed the PowerPoint presentations. TerraSphere has summarized the input received in the following Assets and Liabilities table, with a summary of answers to specific questions, and a resulting Community Vision statement. Lastly, a final public meeting was held at which TerraSphere provided a PowerPoint presentation of the Draft Report.

### Town of North Reading Context



## Assets and Liabilities

The following chart summarizes input gathered from residents and municipal officials involved in the public input process regarding North Reading's Assets and Liabilities.

Core Element	Assets	Liabilities
<i>Housing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of home styles are available</li> <li>• Range of house sizes still available</li> <li>• The community contains many nice single-family homes</li> <li>• Some over 55 housing is available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability to meet affordability</li> <li>• Loss of starter homes through building additions</li> <li>• Loss of historic homes through demolition</li> <li>• Viability of remaining lots to support housing</li> <li>• Property values are driving elderly, and people living on fixed incomes, out of town</li> </ul>
<i>Open Space and Resource Protection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active recreation facilities</li> <li>• Natural resources (ponds and river)</li> <li>• Town center green space</li> <li>• Hillview Commission</li> <li>• Ipswich River Park</li> <li>• Eisenhaures Park proposal</li> <li>• Railroad bed walk</li> <li>• Thompson Club</li> <li>• Wheeler property</li> <li>• Swan Pond</li> <li>• Harold Parker State Forest</li> <li>• Ipswich River - recreation potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current zoning, planning, conservation vis-à-vis maintenance of open space</li> <li>• No financial impetus for developers to cluster housing or other environmentally friendly development</li> <li>• Have to protect Ipswich River and water resources</li> <li>• Limited water rights at Swan Pond</li> </ul>
<i>Economic Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central areas for commerce - Route 28, Concord Street, Berry Center</li> <li>• Good for businesses who want good proximity to Route 93</li> <li>• High-tech, light industrial development</li> <li>• Dense industry area, not spread out</li> <li>• Lots of service-based industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of public sewerage</li> <li>• No "destination" businesses in Town center – need aesthetics to match</li> <li>• Post office annex occupies a lot of valuable land</li> <li>• No hotels</li> <li>• No comprehensive development plan</li> </ul>



<b>Core Element</b>	<b>Assets</b>	<b>Liabilities</b>
<i>Transportation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to Boston</li> <li>• Easy access to major highways</li> <li>• Elderly shuttle bus system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of sidewalks</li> <li>• Lack of bike paths</li> <li>• No public transportation</li> <li>• Limited handicapped sidewalk access to Route 28 businesses</li> <li>• No bus, no taxi service</li> </ul>
<i>Other</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good school system</li> <li>• Good sense of community</li> <li>• Full-time municipal services i.e. fire, police, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No identifiable town “center”</li> <li>• Need new cemetery</li> <li>• Location and appearance of Town Hall</li> </ul>

## Community Visioning Questions and Answers

In order to develop the Community Vision Statement and address each plan core element, TerraSphere developed a list of questions to be answered by the residents who attended the visioning sessions and the municipal officials contacted during this process. The full questionnaire is included as Attachment V. Following is a summary of the questions and answers received.

### Housing

What type(s) of housing do you think would work best for the community?

- Provide a mix of housing
- Need to provide more affordable housing for first-time homebuyers, empty nesters who want to stay in the community and middle-income families.
- Owner occupied preferred but some rental units are OK
- Affordable or low/moderate for seniors
- Provide more modest single-family homes
- Assisted living
- Duplexes
- Cluster housing
- “Mix of single-family, affordable single family but less condo complexes. I would rather have duplexes than “apartments”. Not rental property – absentee landlords tend to not care for properties as well as a homeowner/tenant.”
- “The only issue is density. As density increases, demographics change, services are required, and infrastructure suffers. The type of housing is immaterial. The population the Town can support is the limiting characteristic.”
- “One problem with rental housing is that those that live there use services, such as schools, without contributing property taxes, and North Reading seems to always be short of money. Maybe rental units would be good in commercial areas – the type that are mixed-use so that people live above/next to stores, etc.”



- “Condos are nice for making housing slightly more affordable.”
- Higher density

What are your thoughts about locations for new housing that will still preserve community character?

- New housing should be in keeping with the character of existing neighborhoods in which they will be built
- “Don’t think size of development is an issue as long as it fits specific area. Developers should have to meet specific guidelines regarding neighborhood character and open space.”
- Add development around edges of existing developments instead of creating new developments
- Build new housing on appropriate Town-owned land
- Dispersed locations preferred over large developments
- “Cluster developments to maximize surrounding natural areas. This type of development can also foster stronger neighborhood ties.”
- Affordable housing should be compatible with neighborhood housing style

Should Town-owned lots be designated for affordable housing?

- Should be looked at first for affordable housing before another use is identified.
- Yes, under a Town-managed plan
- Not complexes – single family or duplexes
- “I don’t think that we can accommodate much more housing without losing the open space needed to keep the town character intact.”
- Lack of sewer limits affordable housing development
- Should land bank town land for housing, sewer, open space, municipal buildings, schools, etc.
- Look to Town-owned land for affordable housing funding mechanism, could sell or barter land for affordable housing development elsewhere.

### Open space and Resource Protection

Is there a need for additional recreational facilities in town?

- Additional recreational fields are needed
- Community center needed, focusing on teens, seniors, etc.
- In combination with large tracts of Town-owned land and affordable housing
- Need bike paths/walking paths and sidewalks
- “Depends on what you mean by recreational facilities. There should be enough open space protected to offer everyone access to both active and passive recreation.”





Is there a need for additional protected open space in town?

- Town already owns large percent
- Large tracts along Ipswich watershed need to be protected (Ipswich is [3<sup>rd</sup> most endangered river in the United States.)
- Protect wetlands, floodplains, old growth forests, woodlands and valuable habitats
- Provide pocket locations within neighborhoods
- “We have lots of open space, but not enough is protected.”
- Create greenways and wildlife corridors
- “We should just ensure that development is not spread out over everything... limit suburban sprawl.”
- Cemetery land needed

Should developers of large housing projects be required to set aside land for open space and/or recreation?

- Yes, if conducive to neighborhood setting
- A percentage should be conservation land, such as 20%
- To be determined by the site
- Should provide an open common area
- Should provide recreation space

### Economic Development

Does the Town need job growth?

- Yes, in light industry & technology
- Doubtful – drive to work culture
- Not specifically, but a nice byproduct of development
- Jobs with growth potential
- Jobs for unskilled labor with training opportunities

Does the Town need new commercial development?

- Light industrial
- Small local stores
- Office use
- Smaller chain stores
- Bookstore
- Biotech and/or technology center
- No more national chains

Where should new commercial development occur?

- Old State Hospital (some would rather not see development there)
- Along Route 28



- Downtown
- RiverPark Industrial Park area
- In the presently zoned areas
- “Truck farms” – Concord St – need to be replaced with companies which will add revenue and jobs to the Town

### Transportation

Are there traffic circulation problems in town?

- No
- Town center at times
- Route 28 at times
- Batchelder School and high school during commuting hours
- Intersection of Route 28 and Park St during commuting hours and on weekends
- Getting onto Route 62 is sometimes difficult

Do you feel you have adequate access to mass transit facilities in neighboring communities?

- Town needs bus/service of some sort to mass transit (buses to trains) and neighboring towns, with parking area
- Want MBTA bus to train, taxi, the Ride
- Need bus stops along Route 28
- “There is no access to public transportation, will be necessary with low income development”
- Shuttle service to neighboring towns
- Links to Route 93
- Barry property development may require mass transit

Does the Town have facilities that accommodate pedestrian and bicycle circulation?

- Some loops needed
- Sidewalks – constructing and connecting needed
- Bike trails and/or bike lanes for commuters
- Dedicate revenue stream toward sidewalk construction
- More sidewalks around school zones

Are there any other issues that you would like to bring to our attention?

- “I think there should be a commercial development effort through combined efforts of CPC, real estate professionals, marketing professionals, etc.”
- Sewage for commercial
- Need to develop a “Comprehensive Business Development Plan”



## Community Vision Statement

Overall, the residents of North Reading expressed their satisfaction with the community as it is, but acknowledged the need to make improvements in key areas. As TerraSphere heard comments from all segments of the community during the planning process, it became apparent that the resident's vision for North Reading includes maintaining a balance in all segments of the community in order to establish a "sustainable community." In the case of North Reading, a sustainable community needs to strike a balance among the plan core elements – housing, economic development, open space and transportation. Consequently, the actions in one area support improvement in one or more other areas. Also, within each plan core element, a balance of these characteristics that comprise each core element needs to be established as follows.

### Housing



*Existing newer large home*

The Town needs to set parameters to facilitate development of a variety of housing types to serve all segments of the population. Primarily, this means placing emphasis on more affordable housing. Historically, North Reading had a higher percentage of modest housing units, with a large number of these homes built post WWII. However, recent trends in North Reading have favored much larger and expensive single-family homes and the expansion of older modest homes.

Residents would like a good mix of housing including small single-family and duplexes, condominiums and senior housing balanced with larger single-family homes. Historic homes should be preserved for housing, and

"in-law" apartment opportunities in these older homes may make preservation a more affordable option. In every category, affordable units should be provided to achieve an affordable housing goal of 10% town-wide.

A better mix of housing will result in a more sustainable community. To be sustainable, housing improvements need to be linked to diverse local employment opportunities, to alternative modes of transportation and to open space for recreation.





#### *Open space resource*

Open Space vision, the Town will need to protect some of its most sensitive wetland areas and add both passive and active recreational facilities to satisfy local demand now and in the future.

To remain sustainable, the Town should direct development away from sensitive open space resources. Improvements or additions to open space resources should be recommended in larger housing projects and encouraged in commercial development projects. Development of the Ipswich River Greenway, which is both an open space resource and transportation link, helps reinforce a sustainable community.



#### *Economic development opportunity*

should be built-out and occupied to their full potential. There is a need for additional “clean” industry jobs, such as high tech and office, within the community to help balance the local job force with a relatively clean industry.

To be a sustainable community, economic development should not impact sensitive open space resources. Development should be located along or close to the transportation links necessary to support these businesses. The local economy should provide a mix of jobs at all levels and support local housing initiatives to enable employees of these businesses to live within the community.

### Open Space and Resource Protection

The Town has an extensive amount of open space and Town-owned land, which comprises over 20% of land area. Some of this land is state owned, some municipally owned, some is private recreation land, and some are privately owned wetlands that cannot be developed. Residents are comfortable with this mix in their vision of North Reading. In order to maintain this

### Economic Development

Residents seem satisfied with the commercial mix within the community and stressed the need for a more diversified local industry base and the support of locally owned retail. Their vision for the economic future of North Reading includes a mix of local small chain and privately owned retail establishments to support local needs, not regional needs. The industrial/technology businesses should remain, and such areas







## Transportation

The Transportation Vision for North Reading dictates that the community becomes more multi-modal. There are no specific transportation issues that need to be addressed. However, additions are needed to provide more transportation options. Sustainability requires better accommodations for both bicyclists and pedestrians. In addition, the community

### *Transportation corridor*

needs better access to public transportation facilities, such as a bus line through town or a shuttle bus connection to MBTA facilities in neighboring communities.



### 3. HOUSING

Housing generated the most discussion during the planning process for this North Reading Community Development Plan. Of all the plan elements discussed, there was a consensus that housing issues needed the most attention due to the recent influx of larger, expensive homes and conversion of smaller, modest homes into larger homes with higher assessed values. Just as many communities statewide are dealing with affordable housing issues, so is North Reading.

To help identify current conditions and affordability, the following sections synthesize existing demographic and housing information dealing with and related to housing issues. To help address affordable housing concerns, the community's thoughts and recommendations are also presented, along with accounts of some recent actions. Finally, recommendations are made, building upon recent actions and linking housing initiatives to other actions within this report.

#### Demographics

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is a regional planning agency that was set up to address state and local issues of regional importance. There are 101 cities and towns represented in the metropolitan Boston area. These towns have been separated into eight subregional organizations. In 1989, North Reading joined seven other towns and one city to voluntarily form the North Suburban Subregion (NSPC).



The MAPC Region and Subregions  
Source: MAPC Report: A Decade of Change



The following chart shows demographic changes in North Reading between 1990 and 2000, and also shows these changes in relation to the NSPC Subregion as a whole.

	1990 Census	2000 Census	Percent Change
<i>Number of housing units</i> <sup>1</sup>			
Town of North Reading	4,176 4,157 year round	4,870 4,839 year round	16.6% 16.4%
NSPC Subregion	70,133	76,094 75,752 year round	8.5%
<i>Population trends</i> <sup>1</sup>			
Town of North Reading	12,002	13,837	15.3%
NSPC Subregion	190,006	198,417	4.4%
<i>Land Area</i> <sup>2</sup>			
Town of North Reading	13.3 Mi <sup>2</sup>		
NSPC Subregion	94.5 Mi <sup>2</sup>		
<i>Density of Population (Pop/Mi<sup>2</sup>)</i>			
Town of North Reading	902.4	1,040.4	15%
NSPC Subregion	2,010.1	2,100.0	4.4%
<i>Density of Units</i> <sup>2</sup> (Units/Mi <sup>2</sup> )			
Town of North Reading	314.0	366.2	16.6%
NSPC Subregion	742.1	805.2	8.5%
<i>Median [household] income</i> <sup>1</sup>			
Town of North Reading	\$52,707	\$76,962	46%
NSPC Subregion	N/A	N/A	
<i>Home value</i> <sup>1</sup>			
Town of North Reading	\$190,600	\$270,300	41.8%
NSPC Subregion	N/A	N/A	
<i>Age and condition of housing</i> <sup>1</sup>			
Town of North Reading	Median year built 1961	28.4% age 60+ years	
<i>Vacancy rates (houses)</i> <sup>1</sup>			
Town of North Reading	111	75	32.4%
NSPC Subregion	2,109	1,600	24.1%
<i>Percentage of 40B units</i> <sup>3</sup> (year round, 2000 base)			
Town of North Reading	1.1%	# Units 55, 1.14%	0
NSPC Subregion		# Units 3,601, 4.75%	

<sup>1</sup>MAPC

<sup>2</sup>MISER

<sup>3</sup>DCS/DUA



## Growth Trends

Housing growth has been significant over the last 10 to 15 years, as is supported by data shown in this chart and by comments received at the community meetings that. It is understandable that a community, which many people find a great place to live, has been attracting new residents. Many of the residents use the town's proximity to highways and mass transit to commute to jobs in and around the Boston area.



*Newer affordable housing*

This analysis and comparison shows significant increases in many categories over the last ten years. A 16.6% increase in the number of housing units in town is almost twice that of the surrounding region. Residents commented on this increase during the planning process and worried about the impact new housing developments have had and will continue to have on open space resources. However, even though the number of units increased dramatically over

the last ten years, the density of housing units in North Reading, 366.2 units/square mile, is still much less than the surrounding region at 805.2 units/square mile.

As one would assume from the increase in number of housing units, the population also increased dramatically over the last ten years, going from 12,002 in 1990 to 13,837 in 2000, a 15.3% increase. This increase is three to four times greater than the increase found in the surrounding subregion. However, even with this dramatic population increase, the density of population is only half of that in the abutting areas, with only 1,040 persons/square mile compared to 2,100 persons/square mile in surrounding communities.

Therefore, even though housing and population have seen significant increases over the last ten years, statistics indicate there is still more opportunity for growth, as further explained in the following "Build-out Analysis" section. However, this growth signifies the need for North Reading to establish appropriate regulations to properly protect its open space resources. As described in the Open Space and Resource Protection section, North Reading already has a number of regulations to help protect its wetlands, aquifers and open space areas. However, these regulations require supporting policies in the other core elements to become significant guidelines for growth and management.

## Build-out Analysis

Two recent Geographic Information System (GIS) based studies have been conducted to analyze the residential build-out potential for the Town of North Reading. The first study, produced by the MAPC in the fall of 2000, identified 913 potentially





developable lots in town. The second study, conducted by the Town's Community Planning Department (CPD) and completed in October 2001, identified 1,329 potentially developable lots. Rationale for the difference in results has to do with the methodologies each group applied to the study. MAPC is a regional planning agency working with a methodology that is larger in scale while the CPD is working on a much smaller, parcel-based scale. Other differences as noted in the 'Population Projections and Build-out Analysis' by the Community Planning Department are summarized below:

- CPD's study analyzed residential growth only, MAPC's study estimated commercial and industrial development in addition to residential growth.
- CPD used parcel level GIS based land use to estimate build-out, MAPC used GIS based gross land use.
- CPD did not exclude large portions of wetlands, flood zone and river zone development whereas MAPC did.
- CPD included additional development within developed areas of town (oversized lots that could be available for subdivision), MAPC only considered undeveloped land because the information provided in the gross land use methodology would not detect these types of lots.
- CPD build-out factors for subdivisions were based upon historical North Reading subdivision build-out data whereas MAPC's were not.

For the purposes of this plan, the Community Planning Department's build-out analysis will be utilized here, as it is based upon a smaller scale parcel use, which relates better to the scale of this plan.



*Existing apartment complex*

### **Build-out Plan Summary**

The build-out analysis in 'Population Projections and Build-out Analysis' by the Community Planning Department, estimated that there are 1,329 potential future developable lots for housing in the town based upon current regulations. The information used for this study included the Town's current zoning and subdivision requirements, environmental constraints, data from the Assessing Department and the Town's GIS information. GIS layers

included zoning, parcels, streets, wetlands, water bodies, Town-owned land, subdivisions, building footprints, and aerial photos. Residential zones RA, RB, RD, and RR were used for the build-out analysis. Since these zones are designated as single-family districts, the Community Planning Department study calculated single-family build-out.



Of the 1,329 potential new homes, over half (52%) are split from oversized, developed lots. The remaining lots (48%) are on land that is currently vacant. Due to minimum lot size requirements, 123 lots cannot be built upon.

Many factors may influence the number of actual built units, to be more or less than the 1,329 identified in the study, and they are as follows:

- Not all property owners will want to subdivide their land.
- Access constraints, limited frontage, and wetland crossings have not been taken into account in all cases, only in the most explicit cases.
- Not all undersized lots will be granted the right to build under grandfathering.
- Undersized lots, back land with access constraints and lands currently owned by separate parties may be combined to yield additional lots.
- Non-jurisdictional lands could be offered for private sale and development, such as it happened with the J.T. Berry property.
- Comprehensive permit development, which would allow for increased density in exchange for affordable housing, could allow more houses to be built.
- Comprehensive permit developments and apartment and condo developments can be built in non-residential zones.
- Over 150 of the developable lots are Town-owned parcels and may not be sold for development.
- Zoning changes could be enacted which might allow for stricter lot shape requirements.

Interpretations of existing regulations by town boards and commissions and the strictness with which they enforce the regulations will affect the number of future homes built in North Reading.



*Existing housing complex for elderly*

### **Supply and Demand Comparison - Gap Analysis**

According to the 2000 census, there were a total of 4,870 housing units in North Reading. Many of the statistics and percentages listed in previously presented charts utilize this number. However, the FY 2003 Housing Certificate form submitted by the Town to DHCD listed a total of 4,967 housing units. To achieve an affordable housing goal of 10% within the Town, North Reading would require a total of

approximately 490 units. The last certified count of affordable housing units totaled 55, but a recent count raised that number to 81, although it has not yet been certified. In any case, the gap between what exists (55 to 81 units) and what is desired (close to 500) is a large gap. Therefore, community input and recommendations contained



within this report recommend various strategies for closing this gap.

As documented in the Town's most recent housing certification requests, almost all new housing that has entered the market in the last few years has sold for over \$300,000. This price far exceeds the state definition of affordable housing, that being housing that is affordable to households at 80% of median income in the community. Based on recent calculations, a housing unit selling for approximately \$180,000 would be considered affordable in North Reading. Such units are hard to come by, with the average assessed value of homes in North Reading at \$270,300 in 2000.

In addition, the Housing Authority has a waiting list of families looking for affordable and/or subsidized housing units. Two years ago, the Housing Authority had an open listing for one day and 400 people signed up to be on the list for affordable/subsidized housing. Recently, the Housing Authority has been receiving an average of two to three phone calls daily from people looking for affordable units. Therefore, there is still quite a demand for such units.

Recent initiatives with the Housing Authority and Housing Partnership to build affordable units on Town-owned land are moving the community in the right direction. Such an arrangement needs to be formalized and pursued aggressively.



*Existing mobile home*

In addition, proposed legislation at the state level would help North Reading achieve its 10% affordable housing goal. For example, this proposed legislation would double count rental units, and incorporate 50% of mobile homes and 75% of certain assisted living units. Such legislation, once passed, will help North Reading strategize on how to best meet its affordable housing goals. One strategy the Town may want to pursue, if

rental units will count as double, is to establish a public/private partnership to build an apartment complex of 25 units that would count towards 50 units under the Affordable Housing Certification program.

In any case, North Reading has quite a gap to fill and should utilize the variety of recommendations included in this report, including policy, regulatory and development recommendations, to begin aggressively reducing this deficit. They should try to add 1%, or approximately 50 new units per year for the next few years, and then re-assess the demand and gap after two to three years in light of any approved legislative changes.





## Housing Goals and Objectives

During the planning process, it was evident that residents wish to address the need for more affordable housing. The community wants to be proactive in establishing agreements with organizations and developers regarding where and how affordable housing will be built. The Town does not want to be in the position of having to react to a proposed affordable housing development that may not be located or developed in the Town's best interest. At the 2004 Town Meeting, residents approved transferring two Town-owned lots to be developed for affordable housing. The Town is in the process of determining who would take ownership of the land, the Housing Partnership or the Housing Authority, for development of the affordable housing. The major difference between these two groups is that the Housing Authority can only rent units, whereas the Housing Partnership can sell or rent units. Due to the cost of land in North Reading, this model of donating Town-owned land works well because it eliminates land acquisition costs, making development for affordable units more feasible. This model should be built upon to help the Town meet affordable housing goals.



*Existing smaller lot*



*Existing newer large home*



*Existing older home*

A recent trend is the expansion and/or demolition and rebuilding of smaller lots. Since North Reading is a desirable place to live and new lots are at a premium, some existing modest homes are being purchased and expanded resulting in a loss of moderately priced housing units. The Town believes that this trend may evolve into modest homes being purchased and demolished to make way for larger



new homes on these older lots. Furthermore, such a trend is a threat to the preservation of historic structures. There must be a stricter enforcement of zoning regulations to minimize the potential of large, oversized homes being built on older, smaller lots. Additionally, a zoning provision to allow in-law apartments in owner-occupied homes may make the preservation of historic structures more financially feasible.

It is clear that residents are concerned about the cost and size of new housing being built in town in recent years with the resulting lack of affordability and impacts on open space areas. Given that house values have increased due to upgrades of surrounding homes and construction of large expensive homes near older smaller houses, many residents are also concerned about potential tax increases. A balanced housing program and housing development that is sympathetic to the surrounding neighborhood will help keep property values in check.



*Newer affordable housing*

The North Reading Housing Authority has been very creative in presenting the Town with affordable housing opportunities. Recently, they were successful in identifying two Town-owned parcels that could be used for affordable housing. These parcels were recently approved by town meeting vote. HUD also has funding available on a “use it or lose it” basis of approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000 per year for use in affordable housing initiatives. Through this funding source, the North Reading Housing

Authority was able to obtain \$64,000, which was used to add two affordable condominium units. The Housing Authority and Housing Partnership will be working together to continue to address North Reading’s affordable housing needs

In addition to the HUD funding sources and the identification of unbuilt Town-owned parcels suitable for affordable housing, the Housing Authority will be contacting the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, Federal Home Loan banks, North Shore HOME Consortium and local banks, as well as identifying grant sources for other funding opportunities.

Initiating a Community Preservation Act and creating an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw are two other possible funding/building sources for affordable housing. The Community Preservation Act raises funds through a property tax surcharge and the Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw would require developers of large land parcels to incorporate affordable housing.







*Public safety services*

However, any initiative for larger affordable housing development must include an evaluation of the municipal services needed to support additional residential development, such as schools, police, fire and public works. Revenues must be identified to support increases in the services, such as the 40B housing legislation recently proposed by the Romney Administration in early 2004.

It is also necessary to evaluate and provide upgrades to address maintenance problems in existing older affordable housing stock, such as the elderly units at Peabody Court.

### **Housing Actions**

- Formalize an agreement between the Town, the Housing Authority and the Housing Partnership to develop affordable housing on appropriate Town-owned parcels.
- Identify Town-owned lots that are appropriate for residential development. With land costs at a premium, the Town can help lower development costs by making Town-owned land available, provided that it be developed within certain guidelines, consequently making the development of affordable units more realistic for a developer.
- Identify guidelines for how these lots will be developed – i.e. in keeping with the existing character of the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Smaller Town-owned lots could be developed in conjunction with the Housing Partnership or the Housing Authority. Many of these smaller lots are located closer to the older town center and should be designed to be similar in character to the surrounding neighborhoods. Furthermore, the development of the Ipswich River Greenway in this area of town would provide an additional open space resource for this new housing and provide an alternative transportation link to the commercial area along Route 28.
- Larger Town-owned lots could be developed through a public/private partnership. Appropriate lots for multi-family housing should be identified along Route 28 where there is a sufficient transportation network to support the increased traffic. Also, links to mass transit facilities could be established along Route 28, providing accessibility to these units.
- Zoning regulations should recommend that open space and/or recreation land be set-aside in larger residential development projects.
- More senior housing and affordable housing for 55 and older adults should be provided. Many of the community's senior citizens, who might want or need to move into smaller units, cannot do so because of lack of availability. This,



in turn, will open up larger homes for families.

- One way to satisfy the need for housing for seniors and young adults alike is to allow small “in-law” apartments in certain zones. This is probably more appropriate to the older residential zones.
- Public sewer would also help lower multi-family residential development costs and would allow development on smaller parcels, which are currently available but too small by present regulations to develop for housing. Sewer should be proposed and made a priority for commercial areas, such as Route 28, where it would also support larger residential development projects.
- The Town should consider adopting a property tax through the Community Preservation Act to raise funds for affordable housing.
- The Town should consider developing an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw which would require developers with large parcels of land to incorporate affordable housing by setting aside some units or by contributing to a fund set up by the Town for affordable housing.
- The Town needs to increase its level of support to the Housing Partnership to initiate more affordable housing actions.
- Encourage the Housing Authority and Housing Partnership to identify sources of additional funding such as Federal Home Loan banks, Massachusetts Housing Partnership, North Shore HOME Consortium, local banks and grant sources.
- Continue to apply for and receive HUD funding (presently \$20,000 to \$25,000 per year) to use for affordable housing costs.
- The Town should consider changes in the Zoning Bylaw and land use policy to allow a density bonus for affordable housing on smaller lots.
- A multi-family zoning area should be considered for addressing affordable housing needs.
- Some of the affordable housing funding should be set aside for maintaining, preserving and improving the existing affordable housing stock.
- There should be tighter enforcement of zoning regulations to inhibit the expansion of older homes located on smaller lots.

### **Housing Opportunity Map**

In general, the existing zoning map for the Town of North Reading allows residential development in the most appropriate areas of town. However, within this residential zoning framework, affordable housing should be encouraged in certain areas.

The following Housing Opportunity Map indicates two types of areas for local housing initiatives in support of affordable housing development.

- Potential Affordable Housing Areas – Two areas are recommended – one in the older center of town and one in the Martins Pond Area. These two areas possess many characteristics that make them appropriate for small-scale, scattered development of affordable housing units. First, these areas are in older sections



of town where lot sizes are smaller and thus, land costs less. In addition, there are many lots owned by the Town in these areas that are appropriate for housing development. This “in-fill” housing development should be consistent with neighborhood character. Development should be limited to single-family homes or duplexes. The Town should evaluate allowing “in-law” apartments in these areas to increase the local stock of smaller rental units for young adults and seniors. Historic preservation should be encouraged.



*Historic home in older center of town*



*Commercial Zone along Route 28*

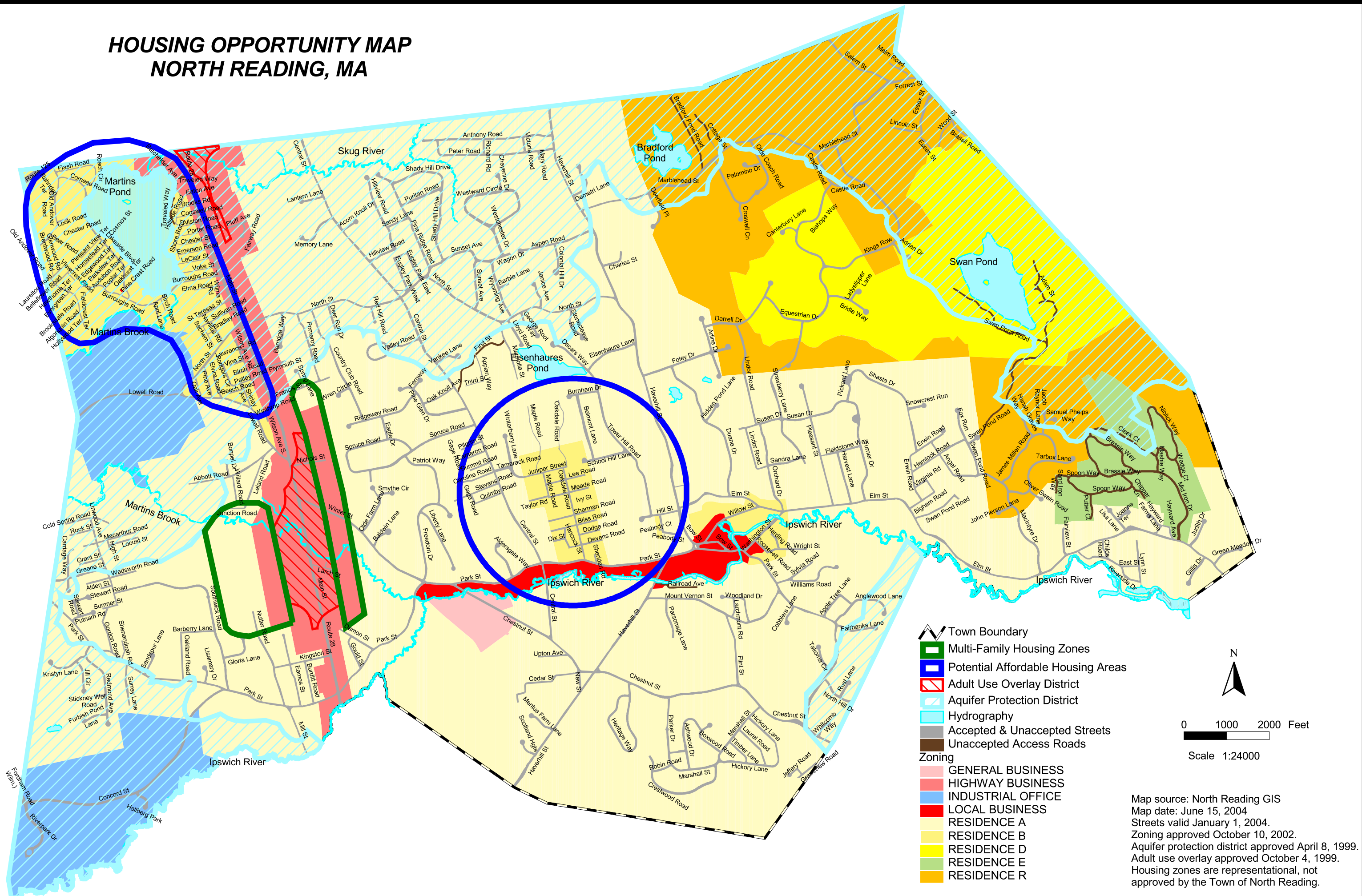
- Multi-Family Housing Areas – These two areas, located to the rear of the commercial zone along Route 28 possess many attributes conducive for the development of multi-family affordable housing. These attributes include proximity to transportation network, the capacity of the existing roadway network to support increased traffic, proximity to retail services and the potential linkage to mass transit facilities in abutting communities. Furthermore, this is one of the few areas in town where larger lots exist or could be assembled. These areas would serve as transition zones between the commercial zone along Route 28 and the abutting residential zones.





# HOUSING OPPORTUNITY MAP

## NORTH READING, MA



#### 4. OPEN SPACE AND RESOURCE PROTECTION

In general, the community of North Reading has a very good open space system and residents are pleased with the resources they have access to and land that is protected.



*Open space resource*

However, in order for a community development plan to be effective, it must balance future development with the continued protection of sensitive resources and the addition of new recreational resources, both active and passive. The following section describes the existing open space and recreational resources within North Reading; the community's thoughts and recommendations regarding the protection and expansion of these resources, and recommended future actions.



*Recreation resource*

#### Existing Conditions

As was mentioned earlier, North Reading has a great wealth of open space and recreational resources. The following information is taken primarily from the Town's 1995 Conservation and Recreation Plan, which is currently being updated by the Town. That plan summarized public/private land related to recreation and open space protection at the time that time was written. Some changes have occurred since 1995, but the general make-up remains the same and is shown on the "Town-Owned and Other Govt. Land" map included at the end of this section and on the "Open Space Protection " map.





	Acres	% of Town Land Area
<b>Town-Owned Land</b>		
Water Department	36.33	0.4%
School Department	131.94	1.5%
Conservation Commission	431.78	5%
Recreation Committee	24.99	0.3%
Other Town-Owned Land	611.79	7.1%
<b>TOTAL Town Land</b>	<b>1,236.79</b>	<b>14.3%</b>
<b>Other Permanent Open Space</b>		
Harold Parker State Forest	232.4	2.7%
Wetlands and Floodplains unknown		
<b>TOTAL Other</b>	<b>232.4</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Quasi-Public/Private Ownership</b>		
State Property	138.7	1.6%
Country Club	172.2	2.0%
<b>TOTAL Public/Private</b>	<b>310.9</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1,780.1</b>	<b>20.6%</b>

In summary, there is a large percentage of land under public control. Some of this land is protected and will serve the residents of North Reading for years to come. Other land, particularly the “Other Town-Owned Land,” should be evaluated to determine if it requires protection as open space, or if could provide strategic land for other needs, such as affordable housing, municipal facilities (i.e. fire station, cemetery) or recreation land. For example, to create Eisenhaure’s Pond Park, a large contiguous land area is being created by consolidating Town-owned parcels surrounding Eisenhaure’s Pond with privately owned parcels to be acquired by the Town. This initiative received final approval at the 2003 Fall Town meeting and the Town is currently in the process of acquiring those parcels. Although some of the funds utilized to purchase these parcels will come from the sale of land under the control of the Conservation Commission, there will be an overall net gain to the community and the establishment of a significant new town park in the center of the community.

This model could be used for other important town projects requiring the assembly of privately owned parcels. In fact, some residents voiced concerns that no Town-owned land should be sold out-right. If some land is expendable, it should be land-banked and possibly bartered or swapped for land needed in another part of town. For example, the conservation land that was sold to generate funds to create Eisenhaure’s Pond Park was of little conservation value, but the revenue it produced helped acquire land of high environmental and recreational value.

This plan makes recommendations for the use of some Town-owned property, but the subsequent update of the Conservation and Recreation Plan will help further define how this available land should be utilized.





### **Environmentally Critical Unprotected Open Space**

In addition to environmentally sensitive land owned by the Town, other environmentally critical land is in private ownership. Some residents argue that, for future protection, the Town should acquire environmentally valuable parcels. Others argue that much of this privately owned land cannot be developed because it is protected under

#### ***Environmentally critical open space resource***

current wetland regulations and, therefore, public funds are not needed to acquire these parcels. This plan recommends public acquisition of key parcels for protection if those parcels can also serve a dual purpose, such as becoming part of a greenway system along the Ipswich River, expanding critical parcels already in public ownership, or protecting unique and key parcels that may otherwise have some development potential. As stated above, the attached “Open Space Potential Map” identifies corridors and scenic areas where unprotected private lands with open space potential should be acquired.



***Recreation resource showing water resource in the background***

### **Land Critical to Sustaining Surface and Groundwater Quality and Quantity**

The Town and the State have established regulations to help protect land critical to sustaining surface and groundwater quality and quantity. Local regulations include the Floodplain Protection District overlay zone, the local Wetlands Bylaw and the Aquifer Protection District. State regulations most applicable to helping safeguard most of North Reading’s surface and groundwater

resources include the Wetland Protection Act and the Riverfront Protection Act. Maps previously prepared by the Town, and included at the end of this section, show the extent of protection provided by these regulations in North Reading. The “Wetlands and Habitat” map shows the extent of potential wetland areas in town, which is rather extensive, and therefore subject to Conservation Commission review before any development can occur. The “FEMA Flood Zones” map shows the extent of the 100-year flood zones in town, which are also subject to development regulations. The “Zoning” map shows the extent of the aquifer protection district in town. Combined, these regulations, along with their corresponding maps, appear to protect the necessary quality and quantity of surface and groundwater resources required for the Town.

Over and above these regulatory protections, the Town should identify key parcels for acquisition to better control land use at important areas. Such parcels are identified in the Conservation and Recreation Plan currently being updated.



## Protection of Priority Wildlife Habitat, Vistas, Key Landscapes and Recreational Facilities

Some of the lands that should be considered for acquisition are of value through one or more of the following factors:

- water resources and wildlife habitat – the “Wetlands and Habitat” map generated by North Reading identifies estimated habitat areas, both certified and potential vernal pools, wetlands, streams, rivers, lakes and ponds. The Town should discourage development in these areas.
- priority vistas – priority vistas are described in the 1995 Conservation and Recreation Plan and are located as follows:
  - from the hill at the west end of Cedar Street overlooking the Ipswich River – *recommended for acquisition in the updated Open Space Plan,*
  - from a hill at the south end of Red Hill Road looking north and east – *acquisition potential should be assessed,*
  - very large and unusual boulders on the Town-owned Strawberry acres off Duane Drive – *already Town-owned.*
- priority key landscapes – key landscapes described in the 1995 Conservation and Recreation Plan are as follows:
  - a quaking bog in the vicinity of Furbish Pond – *already protected,*
  - a rare Atlantic White Cedar swamp on the town line with Reading – *acquisition potential should be assessed,*
  - the abandoned railroad bed running east-west through the southern end of town – *this is a key acquisition due to its recreational, greenway, bicycle, pedestrian and environmental values, and is shown on the “Open Space Potential” and “Ipswich River Greenway” maps,*
  - an excellent stand of white pine and red oak on Town-owned land straddling Swan Pond and Swan Pond Road – *already Town-owned.*
- priority outdoor recreational facilities – the 1995 Conservation and Recreation Plan listed may properties of key interest for recreational purposes. However, some recommendations were implemented, others no longer apply and still others are being incorporated into the plan update currently being written. Recommendations being considered for inclusion in the updated plan are consistent with the recommendations found in this report.

A new open space map is being prepared for the Conservation and Recreation Plan update. This Plan and map identifies many of these parcels as potential open space acquisition parcels, giving much more detail than this report. However, for the most part, the recommendations as shown on the “Open Space Potential” map are consistent with both the recommendations of this Community Development Plan and proposed new open space map.



## **Land Suitable for Development and What Type**

Although North Reading possesses a significant amount of land that is protected for open space and recreational use, and even more acquisitions are recommended, there remains sufficient parcels and land areas necessary to meet the housing and economic goals within this report. The following recommendations are being made to direct recommended development to the most appropriate locations:

- In general, housing is being recommended in areas where housing already exists, building upon the unique characteristics of individual neighborhoods or areas of town.
- Smaller vacant lots close to the original center of town and in the Martin's Pond area are suitable for in-fill housing.
- Larger vacant lots along Route 28 are suitable for commercial development and multi-family housing.
- Undeveloped lots in approved sub-divisions provide opportunities for new market-rate housing.
- The land along Concord Street in the RiverPark area should be built-out for industrial uses as originally planned and the J. T. Berry property should be redeveloped for office or high-tech uses, as has been negotiated with a developer.

These recommendations are described in more detail in both the Housing and Economic Development sections of this report.

In summary, by recommending that certain lands be protected and not developed, other land not so identified are suitable for development.

## **Water Budget Analysis**

North Reading uses a combination of water pumped from Town-owned wells and water purchased from the Town of Andover (whose sources are the Merrimack River and a lake). Water usage for 1998, as noted in the 'Final Report: Planning for Growth in the Upper Ipswich River Watershed,' indicates that 412,230,000 gallons were consumed. Of those, 209,390,000 gallons came from town wells and 202,840,000 gallons were purchased from Andover.

## **Water Quality and Quantity Analysis**

The 'Final Report: Planning for Growth in the Upper Ipswich River Watershed' noted that the Metropolitan Planning Council (MAPC) had conducted the 1992 Water Supply Protection Plan for the North Suburban Subregion. The purpose of this plan was to inventory water resources and delineate watershed and aquifer recharge areas; document existing land uses and potential sources of contamination; analyze local zoning and non-zoning water resources protection measures; and provide recommendations for additional or strengthened water supply protection measures. In 2001, MAPC revisited the plan to determine what protection measures had been implemented and/or adopted, and to



identify the remaining items needing action. North Reading was found to have no significant contamination occurrence since 1992 although trace amounts of MTBE, a gasoline component, were detected in one area.

Due to its arrangement with the Town of Andover to supply additional water to supplement water pumped from town wells, North Reading does not anticipate any future water quantity issues.

## **Water Supply Protection**

The protection of groundwater and surface water resources is vital to the welfare of the Town and its citizens. Therefore, it is critical to control growth and regulate development that could be potentially hazardous to the quality of life, including wildlife, in the entire region.

North Reading's groundwater sources lie within the Ipswich River basin area. There are a number of ways that the Town is protecting its groundwater supply. There is an Aquifer Protection District overlay that contains the town's well fields, surrounding drainage basins and boundary delineations for Zones I, II and III as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (see the following "Zoning" and "Public Water Supply" maps). Several uses or functions are not permitted within these protection zones. A few of these uses include: landfills; automobile junkyards; snow disposal from roadways which use certain chemical additives; non-sanitary wastewater treatment or disposal, hazardous waste facilities; and liquid petroleum storage.

Some uses require a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. These uses include: commercial fertilizer storage; animal manure storage; storage of hazardous liquid materials which dictate container requirements; removal of "mineral substances within four feet of the historical high groundwater table elevation" and land uses with fifteen percent (15%) or 2,500 sq. ft. of impervious surface. Also, with the exception of single-family use, a lot retaining less than twenty percent (20%) of its natural vegetation requires a special permit with written narrative by a registered professional engineer attesting that vegetation removal will not increase sedimentation of surface waters or decrease groundwater aquifer recharge.

The Floodplain Protection District is another zoning overlay district which covers all areas designated A, AO, AH and A1-130 on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (see the following "FEMA" map). In addition to state and federal wetland and river protection act requirements, the Town's Conservation Commission is in charge of administering a local Wetlands Bylaw passed in 1992, which incorporates additional restrictions within the 100' buffer zone.

As a regional water supply source, it is imperative that the Town of North Reading take the necessary steps to enhance, preserve and protect the waterways that feed into the Ipswich River.





## Wastewater/Storm Water Management

The Town's 'Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan,' dated February 2002 addresses storm water management issues related to flooding in town, particularly from the Ipswich River. As part of the plan, a Flood Hazard Mitigation Planning Team was formed of town agency representatives. The final plan identified and mapped all known flood hazard areas; determined potential damage and critical facilities within the 100 and 500 year flood plains; identified existing mitigation measures and 'gaps' in protection; identified and analyzed possible mitigation measures; prioritized projects based upon cost effectiveness/greatest need; and developed an Implementation Strategy for the mitigation projects. Furthermore, the Town has recently mapped its storm water infrastructure, including catch basins, manholes, outfalls and conduits. This "Storm Water Features" map follows this section.

## Description of Recommendations From Existing Open Space Report and Summary

Identifying critical land areas in need of protection has already been initiated through the process of updating the Town's Conservation and Recreation Plan. Relevant recommendations from the 1995 plan will be incorporated into the new plan. Initial recommendations from the new plan are consistent with the Community Development Plan.



*Recreation resource*

### Goals and Objectives Statement

The residents of North Reading believe their open space and recreational resources are one of the community's best assets.

Therefore, they want to take steps to assure that these assets remain protected in the face of recent and future development pressures. Regulations currently in place give the community many tools for open space protection. This Community Development Plan recommends development in areas that

will not harm the community's unprotected resources. Furthermore, the Conservation and Recreation Plan, as it is currently being updated, will contain many recommendations for the acquisition and protection of open space areas and for the development of additional recreational resources.

## Open Space and Resource Protection Actions

The following recommendations are included as part of the Community Development Plan because they are necessary to ensure a sustainable community and are related to the other three core elements of the plan – housing, economic development and transportation. The recommendations that relate to physical improvements and acquisition are shown on the "Open Space Potential" map.

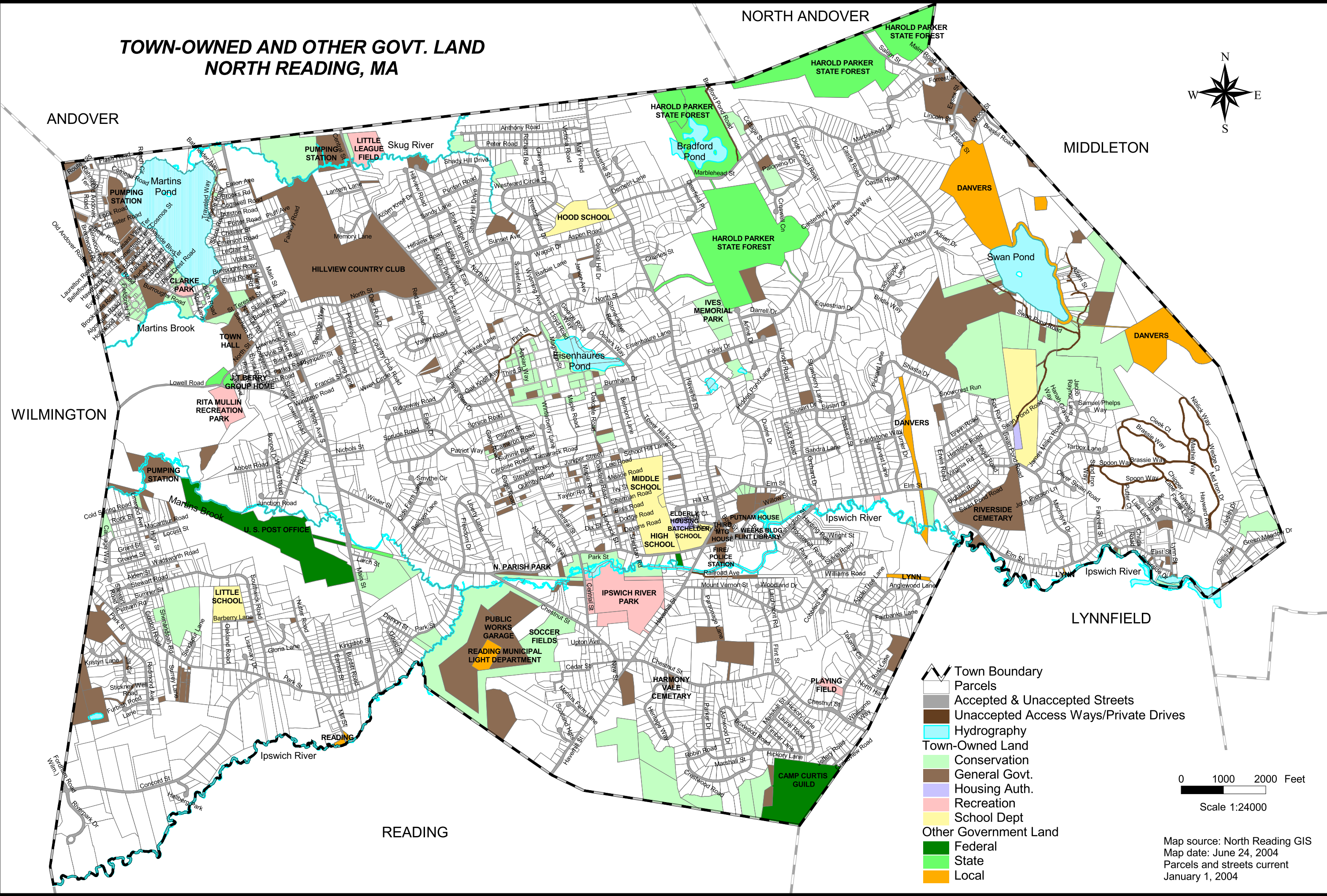


- The Town should take steps to acquire the old railroad land and other key parcels along the Ipswich River to create the Ipswich River Greenway. This greenway will be an open space asset for all residents of North Reading, but will be most accessible to existing and new residents in the older, central area of town. This greenway will also provide an important wildlife corridor that will connect with adjacent communities. In addition, the trails to be built within the greenway will provide residents with an alternative mode of transportation for getting to other sections of town and will provide opportunities for recreational walking, biking, bird watching, etc. A preliminary “Ipswich River Greenway” map for this corridor is shown following this section.
- The Town should take steps to acquire and/or protect land along its northern and eastern borders to create the “Northeast” open space corridor. This passageway would link many of the open space resources in this area and would make use of existing, undeveloped utility corridors.
- The Town of North Reading should coordinate acquisition of key parcels with the Town of Reading in order to establish the Bane Meadow Corridor.
- Establish the north-south and the east-west bike trails in town as recommended in the North Suburban Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan. These trails will provide a recreational resource and link together open space areas, as well as provide an alternative mode of transportation.
- Take steps to acquire or protect key parcels in order to preserve scenic areas such as around Swan Pond.
- Any proposed large-scale residential and commercial development should be required to include an open space component. Larger sub-divisions should be required to set aside a percentage of their land for open space or recreational use should the Recreation Department determine that such a facility is needed in the section of town where the proposed development is located. Any large-scale commercial development, such as the redevelopment of the Berry property, should include an open space component for the users of that facility, as well as connections to alternative means of transportation to that facility, such as a trail or bikeway system or mass transit.
- The Hillview Commission Golf Course is an excellent example of how a recreational facility can be self-supporting and also generate income to support other recreational initiatives in the community. Opportunities to apply this approach to other recreational facilities should be considered when presented.
- A community center, with an emphasis on teens and seniors, should be developed in the older center of town. Such a facility would provide needed services for these segments of the population. A location in the older center of town will be more accessible to the Housing Authority complex for seniors, will be convenient to the High School and will help strengthen the older historic town center. Establishing a community center in this vicinity would encourage more use and activity, which would possibly attract small retail development. To be sustainable and totally accessible, public transportation access should be tied into the center’s location.





**TOWN-OWNED AND OTHER GOVT. LAND  
NORTH READING, MA**



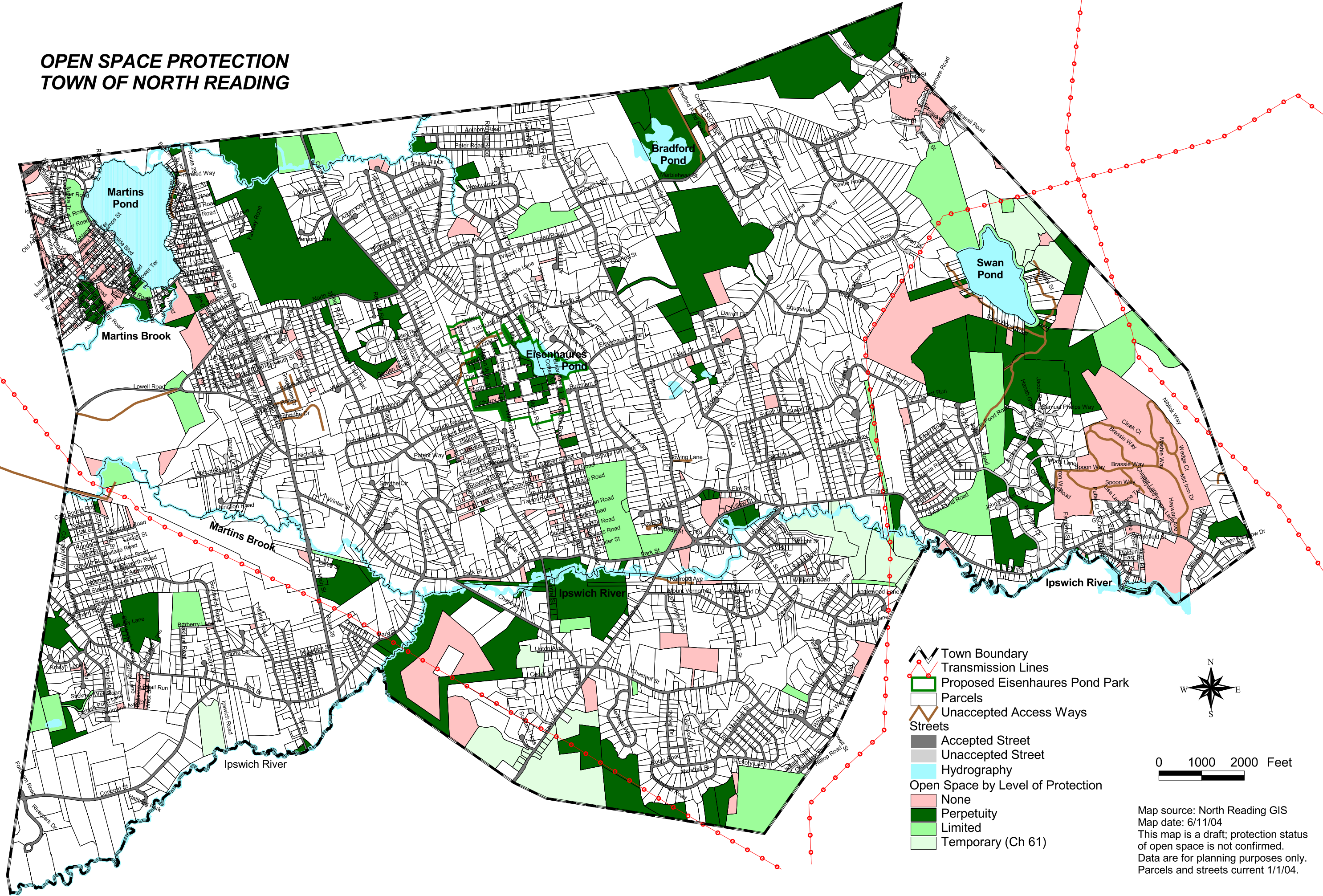
- Town Boundary
- Parcels
- Accepted & Unaccepted Streets
- Unaccepted Access Ways/Private Drives
- Hydrography
- Town-Owned Land
  - Conservation
  - General Govt.
  - Housing Auth.
  - Recreation
  - School Dept
- Other Government Land
  - Federal
  - State
  - Local

0 1000 2000 Feet  
Scale 1:24000

Map source: North Reading GIS  
Map date: June 24, 2004  
Parcels and streets current  
January 1, 2004

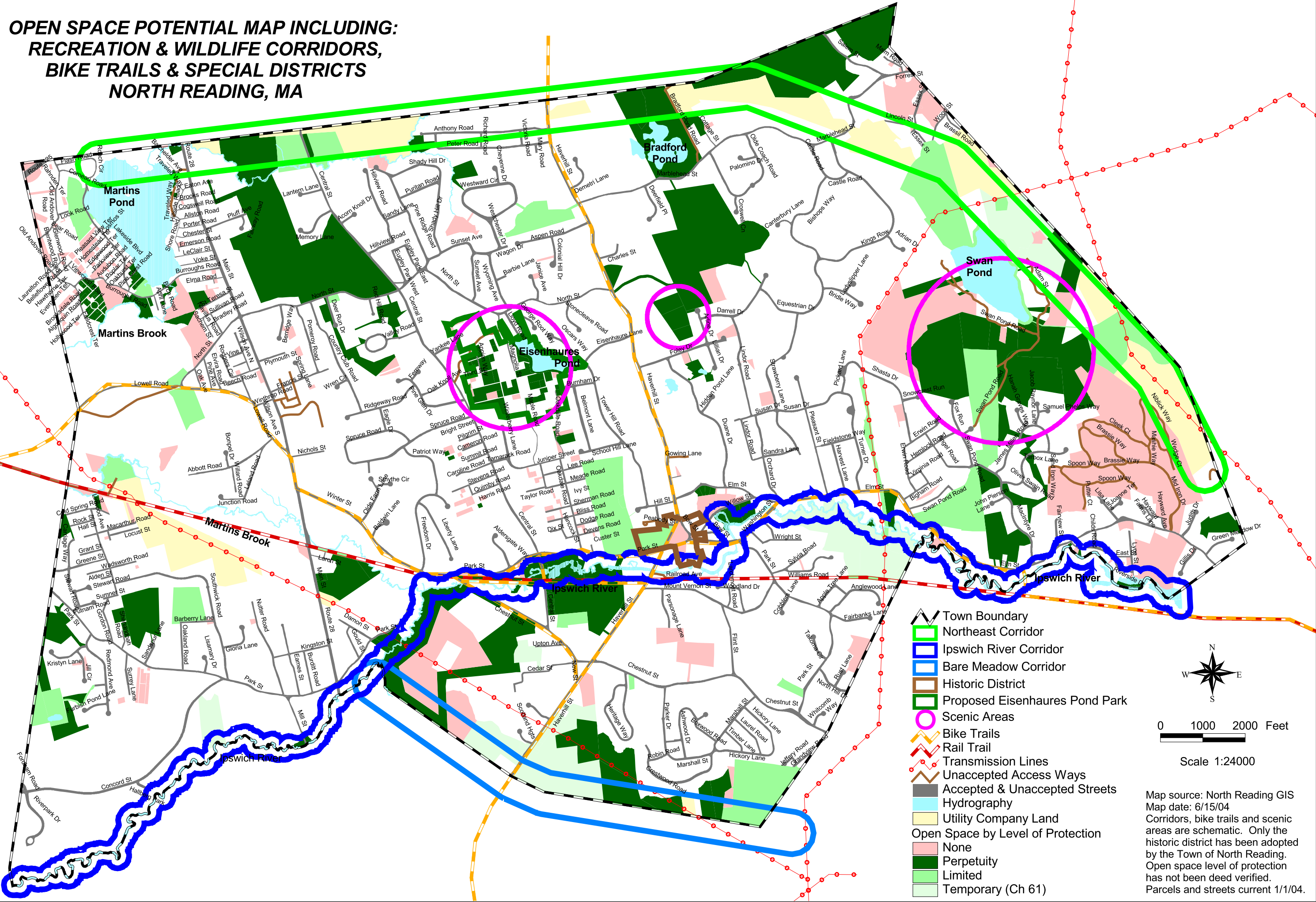


# OPEN SPACE PROTECTION TOWN OF NORTH READING



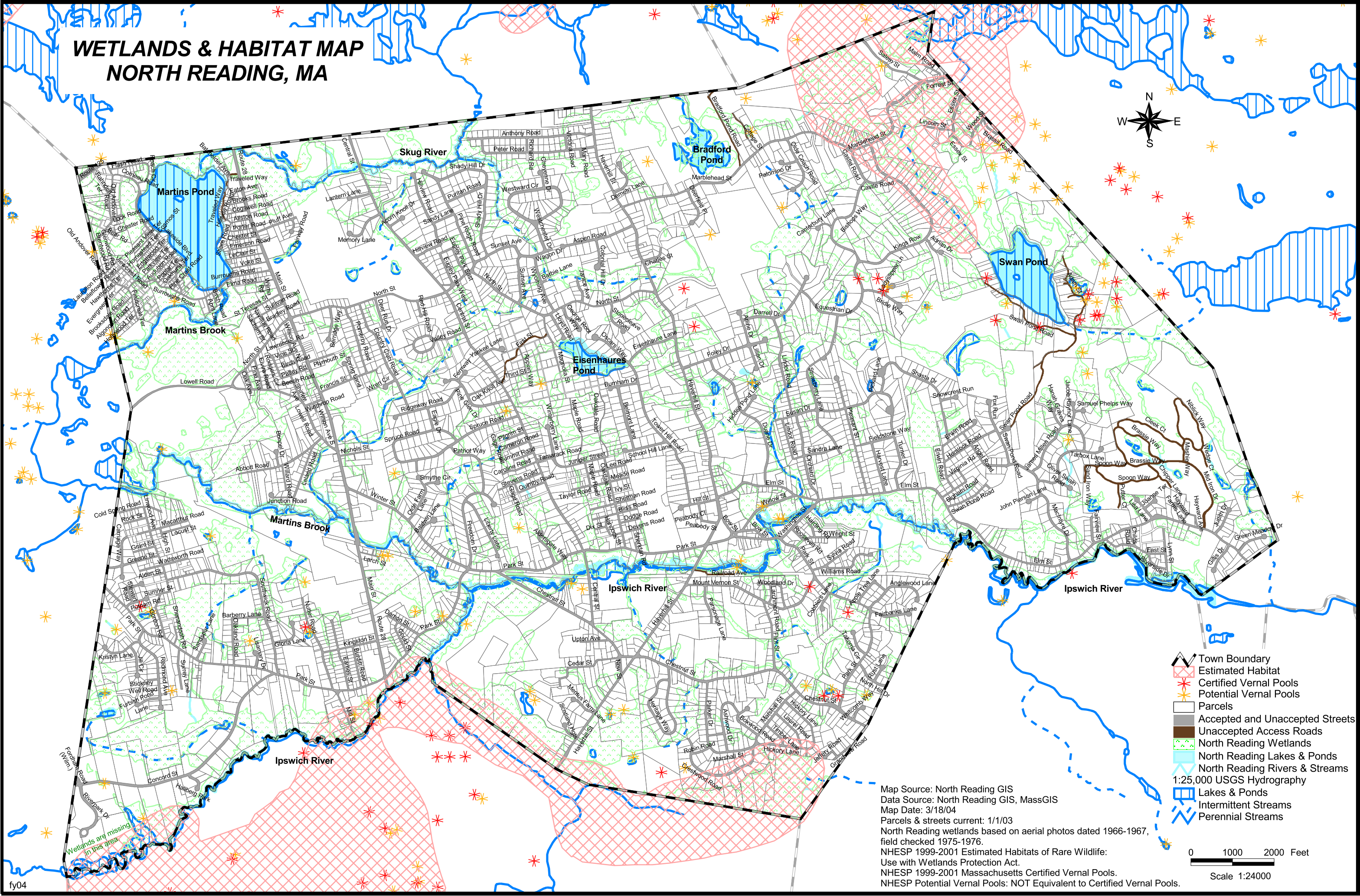


OPEN SPACE POTENTIAL MAP INCLUDING:  
RECREATION & WILDLIFE CORRIDORS,  
BIKE TRAILS & SPECIAL DISTRICTS  
NORTH READING, MA





# WETLANDS & HABITAT MAP NORTH READING, MA





**FEMA FLOOD ZONES  
NORTH READING, MA**

Community Panel Number  
250209-0001-C  
Apr. 3, 1989

Community Panel Number  
250209-0002-B  
Jan. 6, 1983

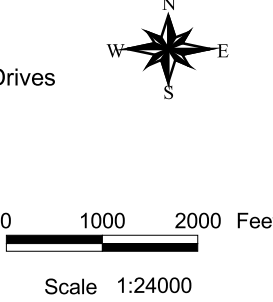
Community Panel Number  
250209-0003-B  
Jan. 6, 1983

Community Panel Number  
250209-0005-B  
Jan. 6, 1983

Community Panel Number  
250209-0004-C  
Mar. 5, 1996

- Town Boundary
- FEMA Community Panel
- Aquifer Protection District
- Parcels
- Streets
- Unaccepted Access Ways/Private Drives
- Hydrography
- FEMA 100 Yr Flood Zone

Map Source: North Reading GIS  
Data Source: North Reading GIS, FEMA  
Map Date: 4/29/04  
Parcels current 1/1/03  
FEMA data do not replace paper FIRMs  
which remain the official document.  
FEMA panel boundaries are approximate.  
Note: FEMA FIRM maps revised 6/16/04.





ANDOVER

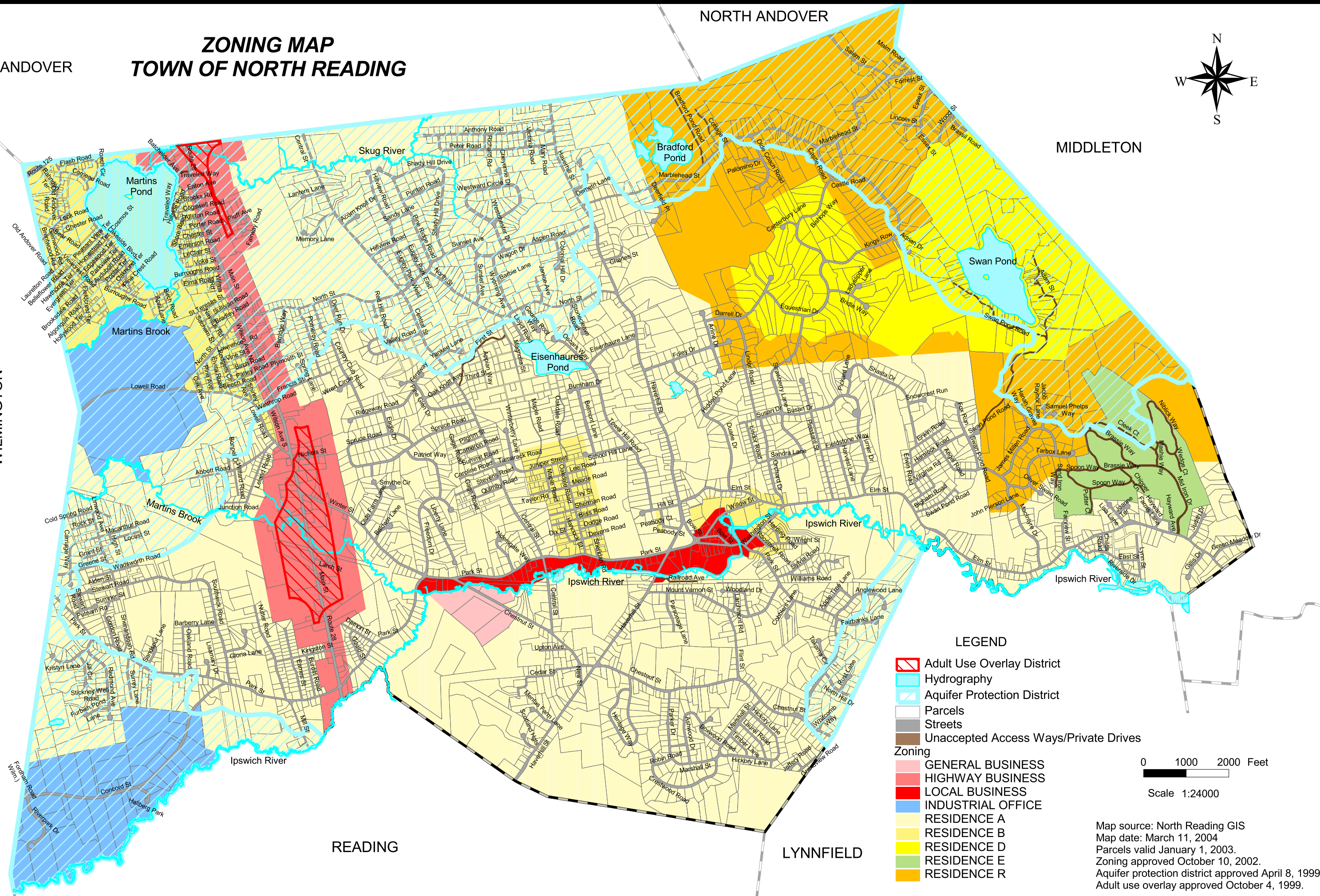
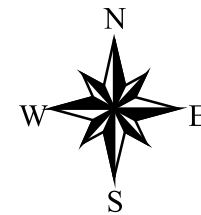
# ZONING MAP TOWN OF NORTH READING

MIDDLETON

WILMINGTON

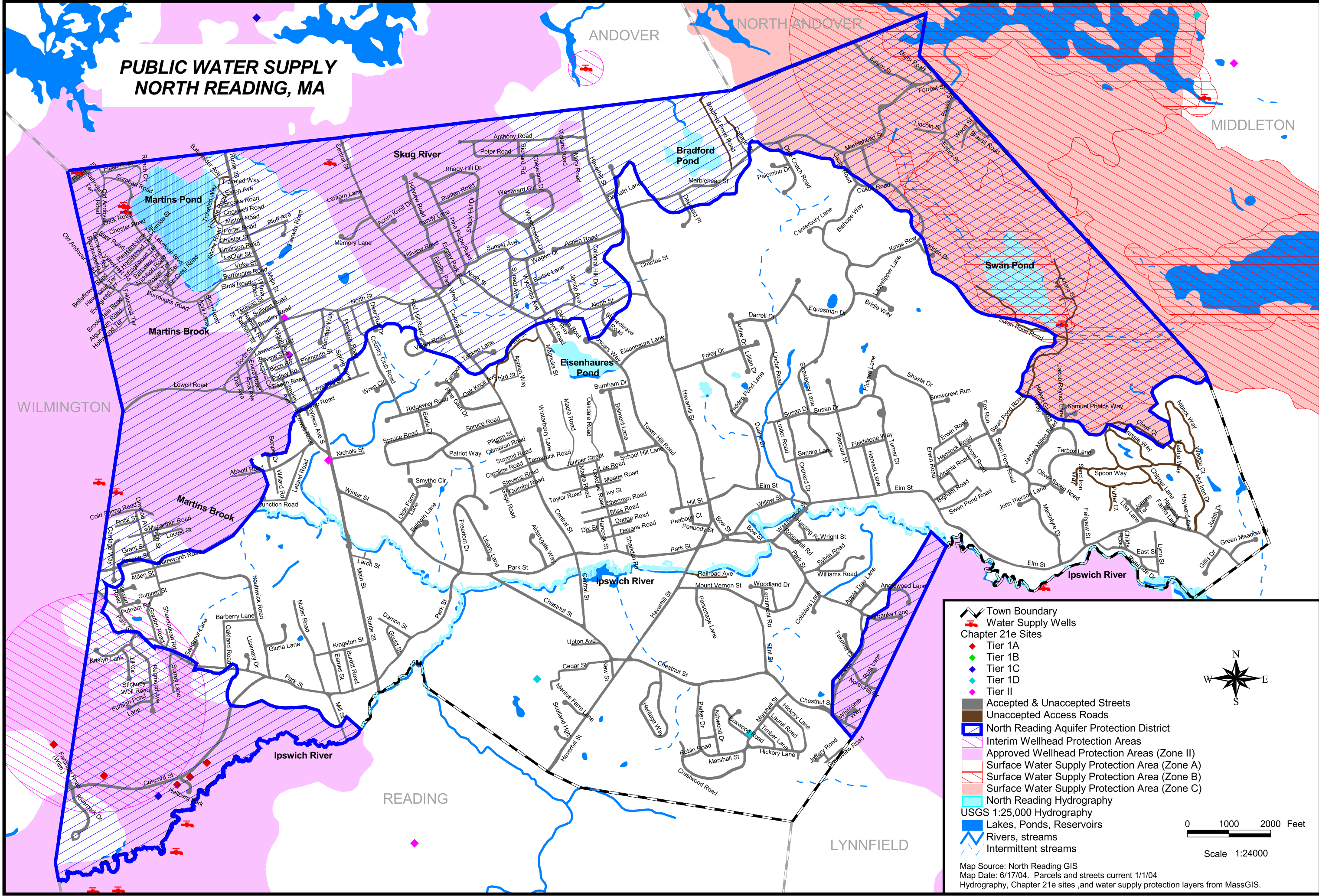
READING

LYNNFIELD





**PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY  
NORTH READING, MA**



**Legend**

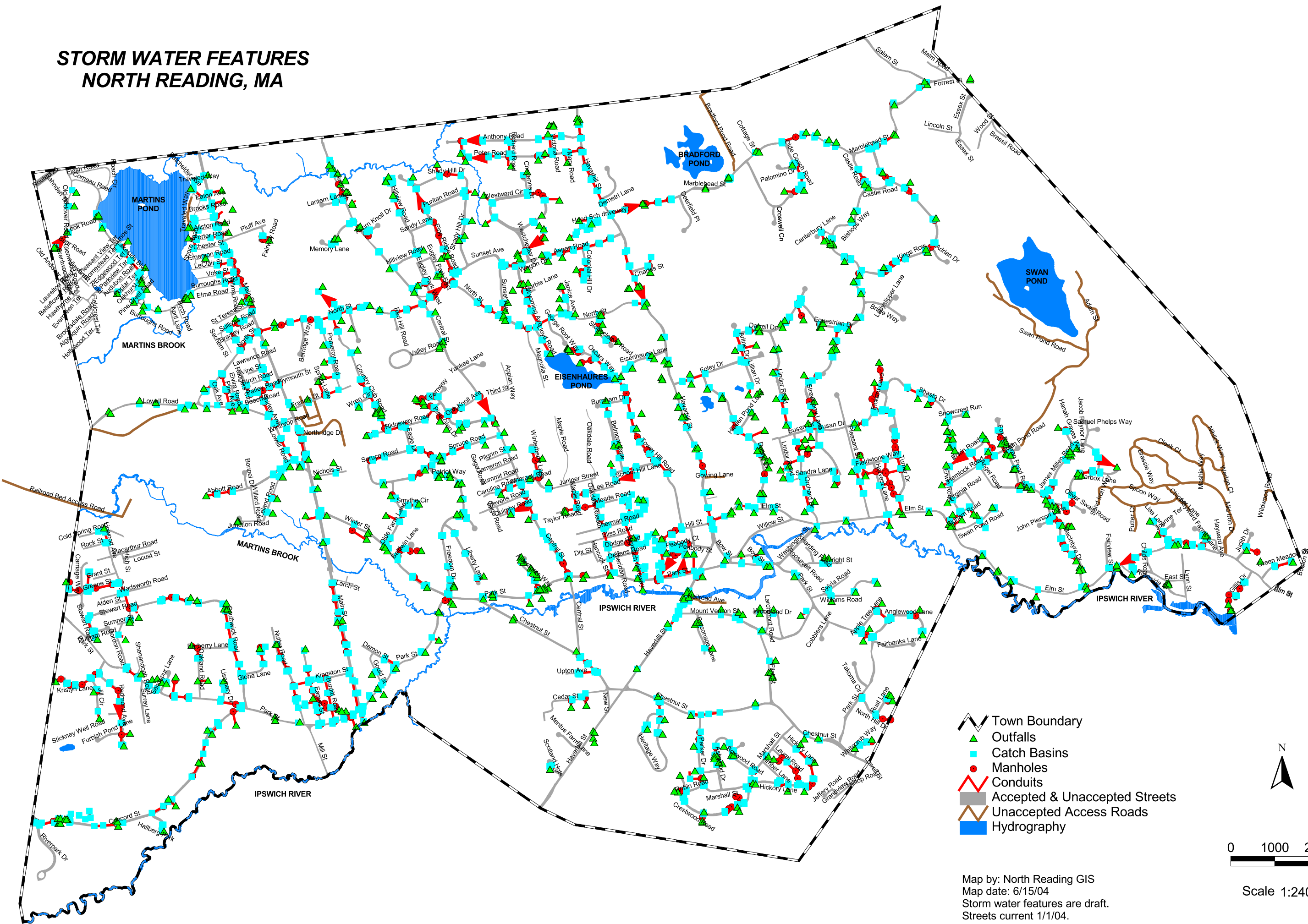
- Town Boundary
- Water Supply Wells
- Chapter 21e Sites
  - Tier 1A
  - Tier 1B
  - Tier 1C
  - Tier 1D
  - Tier II
- Accepted & Unaccepted Streets
- Unaccepted Access Roads
- North Reading Aquifer Protection District
- Interim Wellhead Protection Areas
- Approved Wellhead Protection Areas (Zone II)
- Surface Water Supply Protection Area (Zone A)
- Surface Water Supply Protection Area (Zone B)
- Surface Water Supply Protection Area (Zone C)
- North Reading Hydrography
- USGS 1:25,000 Hydrography
  - Lakes, Ponds, Reservoirs
  - Rivers, streams
  - Intermittent streams

0 1000 2000 Feet  
Scale 1:24000

Map Source: North Reading GIS  
Map Date: 6/17/04. Parcels and streets current 1/1/04  
Hydrography, Chapter 21e sites, and water supply protection layers from MassGIS.



# STORM WATER FEATURES NORTH READING, MA



- Town Boundary
- Outfalls
- Catch Basins
- Manholes
- Conduits
- Accepted & Unaccepted Streets
- Unaccepted Access Roads
- Hydrography



0 1000 2000 Feet

Map by: North Reading GIS  
Map date: 6/15/04  
Storm water features are draft.  
Streets current 1/1/04.

Scale 1:24000



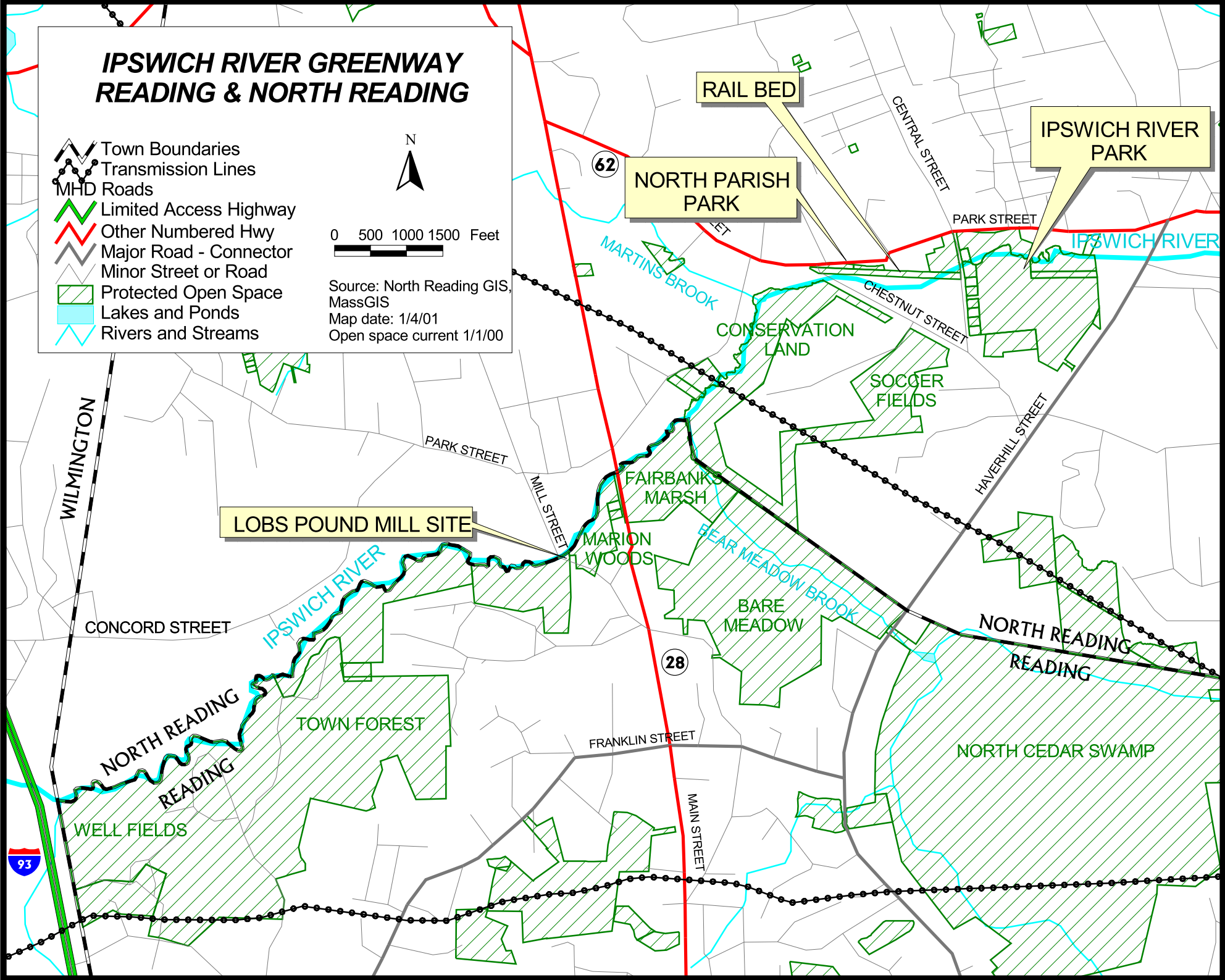
# IPSWICH RIVER GREENWAY READING & NORTH READING

- Town Boundaries
- Transmission Lines
- MHD Roads
- Limited Access Highway
- Other Numbered Hwy
- Major Road - Connector
- Minor Street or Road
- Protected Open Space
- Lakes and Ponds
- Rivers and Streams



0 500 1000 1500 Feet

Source: North Reading GIS,  
MassGIS  
Map date: 1/4/01  
Open space current 1/1/00



## 5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Overall, the economic and employment characteristics of North Reading have improved over the last ten years, as is supported by statistics and community comments. Unemployment is down, wages are up and the number of jobs has increased. These changes are consistent with other communities in the region resulting in a strong economic profile with some significant changes since the 1990 census.

The employment profile for the residents of North Reading has shifted toward more professional and office jobs. This is the result of changes in the regional job market and the influx of new residents who are attracted by larger new homes in North Reading and commute to high paying jobs outside of the community. As a result, the average wages of the North Reading population have increased due to increases in the overall economy, shifts in the labor force and influx of new residents.

The accompanying sections and charts describe these changes in more detail.



*Light “clean” industry building*



*Example of professional office building*

### Demographics

#### Major employers and numbers of jobs provided

According to statistics compiled by MAPC, the following North Reading businesses provided the following number of jobs in 2001. These jobs are shown as a percentage of the total jobs within the community. Furthermore, this chart shows the same statistics for the NSPC Sub-region to indicate how North Reading compares to the job market in the region.



Type of Business	North Reading <sup>1</sup>				NSPC <sup>1</sup>			
	Number Employed		% of Total		Number Employed		% of Total	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Government	396	693	11.5	10	9,844	11,057	8	7
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	58	60	2	1	1,023	1,294	1	1
Mining	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	345	777	10	11	5,354	8,281	4	5.5
Manufacturing	667	853	19	13	27,459	21,897	22	14
TCPU (Transportation, Communication and Public Utilities)	212	546	6	8	4,324	6,692	3	4.5
Trade	1,174	2,014	34	29	38,077	36,820	30	24
FIRE (Finance, Insurance and Real Estate)	86	135	2.5	2	6,053	6,216	5	4
Services	516	1,718	15	26	34,849	60,030	27	40
Total	3,454	6,796	100	100	127,073	152,287	100	100

<sup>1</sup>MAPC

As this chart shows, North Reading's numbers are relatively consistent with the NSPC regional numbers and do not show an imbalance in any particular area. Furthermore, when compared to communities in the larger MAPC area, numbers are also consistent, but show that North Reading is relatively low in the FIRE industries (2% vs. 9%) and the services industries (26% vs. 40%), and high in the construction business (13% vs. 4 %). There is little reason to be overly concerned about these differences, but given that North Reading is interested in attracting more clean businesses and office buildings at the J. T. Berry site, the community should try to attract more businesses in the FIRE areas in an attempt to balance their local economy.

#### Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate in North Reading decreased significantly from 1990 to 2000 and continues to remain low. These relative numbers are consistent with, and slightly better than, state and national trends. North Reading should try to diversify its employment base to help ride-out future cyclical changes in the economy.



North Reading Unemployment rate <sup>1</sup>	1990	2000	% Change
Total unemployed	382	66	-82.7%
Percent of civilian labor force	5.5%	.9%	-83.9%

### Demographic and income data

From 1990 to 2000, the US Census reveals an increase in the median household income from \$52,707 to \$76,962. Such an increase is to be expected due to the growth in overall wages during this period plus a shift to more residents working in management and professional office jobs. From 1990 to 2000 there was a 47.9% increase in this category, as shown in the “Types of occupations” table.

### Labor force statistics

According to US Census data, the size of the workforce in North Reading in 2000 versus 1990 is as follows:

North Reading Size of workforce [persons age 16+] <sup>1</sup>	1990	2000	% Change
Total population	12,002	13,837	15.3%
Total workforce [persons age 16+]	9,433	10,443	10.7%
Total civilian labor force	7,017	7,535	7.4%
As a percent of workforce	74.4%	72.2%	
Total employed	6,619	7,469	12.8%
As a percent of labor force	94.3%	99.1%	

These numbers are good when compared to NSPC numbers where the population increased by 2.1 % but the labor force decreased by 2.6 %<sup>1</sup>.

The following chart shows the types of occupations of North Reading residents who are in the workforce. As expected, the largest increase is seen in management and professional positions. This number increased 47.9%. This increase can be attributed to a change in the regional economy and jobs associated with North Reading’s recent population growth, associated with new residents who are attracted to the new, larger and more expensive homes in North Reading.



North Reading Types of occupations <sup>1</sup>	1990	2000	% Change
Management, professional and related occupations	2,451	3,624	47.9%
Service occupations	689	718	4.2%
Sales and office occupations	2,239	1,832	-18.2%
Farming, fishing and forestry	59	17	-71.2%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	636	638	0.3%
Production, transportation and material moving occupations	545	640	17.4%
Total	6,619	7,469	12.8%

The following chart shows the industries where North Reading residents worked in 2000 versus 1990. This chart summarizes statistics from the 1990 and 2000 census and shows a significant shift in the industries. A large number of jobs were lost in the manufacturing and wholesale trade industries. Such a loss is consistent with regional trends as the area transformed from manufacturing and distribution to more office and high-tech jobs. This shift seems to have come at the loss of jobs in retail trades. The largest percentage loss is seen in agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining and is not surprising. This employment area is a small segment of the local workforce and, therefore, saw a loss of only 54 jobs. Although numbers were not reported in the 1990 census for FIRE industries (finance, industry, real estate); professional services; and educational, health and social services, these numbers reflect an expected increase for these jobs.

Local employment of North Reading residents <sup>1</sup>	1990	2000	% Change
Agriculture, forestry, fishing hunting, and mining	88	34	-61.4%
Construction	379	370	-2.4%
Manufacturing	1,206	889	-26.3%
Wholesale trade	378	265	-29.9%
Retail trade	1,207	700	-42.0%
Transportation and warehousing, utilities	N/A	468	N/A
Information	N/A	265	N/A
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	N/A	711	N/A
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	N/A	939	N/A





Educational, health and social svcs.	N/A	1,582	N/A
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	N/A	436	N/A
Other services (except public administration)	N/A	380	N/A
Public administration	330	430	30.3%
Total	3,588	7,469	

### **Growth Trends/Current and Future Economic Profile**

MAPC Community Employment Forecasts for 2005 – 2025 predict a continued growth in local employment. They are predicting growth in all industries, with the exception of the manufacturing and agriculture, forestry and fishing segments. Decreases in these areas are consistent with the region, as these types of industries are typically moving outside the state.

Consistent growth is predicted by MAPC in all other industries. Statistical data on commercial vacancy rates was not readily available, but local observations indicate there is a limited amount of vacant commercial space available for this growth. One source, the Finard Report for Eastern Massachusetts, showed a retail vacancy rate of 3% in North Reading, which is one of the lowest in the region. Local observations indicate a larger vacancy rate in industrial property, particularly in the River Park area. The reuse of existing vacant property should be encouraged, particularly since most of the space in the RiverPark is relatively new. Furthermore, filling existing buildings is preferred since there is limited land available for commercial growth and the community wants to protect sensitive environmental areas. When it comes to new development, the future economic profile may lean more towards expanding or establishing “clean” industries in town, such as office and technology jobs. Growth in these areas would also help diversify the local job market, as the FIRE segment of the local economy is low compared to the region. Growth in this area would also provide more local employment opportunities, which is transitioning more towards professional and management office positions.

### **Future Economic Development Potential/Economic Development Opportunities**

North Reading’s future economic development is linked to the town’s access, available land, market demands and is regulated by zoning. The current Zoning map designates where commercial growth can occur, which is consistent with other sections of this study and the community’s vision.



Industrial and office uses are directed to the Concord Street area and the J. T. Berry property, and are anticipated in the future at the adjacent gravel operation facility along Lowell Road. This is consistent with existing land uses, access to transportation links and the availability and potential of public sewer. The Concord Street area has some vacant space within existing buildings as well as limited land for new development. The J. T. Berry property offers the best development potential for the community. Uses being proposed, and uses that should be encouraged by the community, include office, high tech and light industries. Such uses should also be encouraged for the long-term redevelopment of the gravel facility off of Lowell Road. The redevelopment of these two areas should encourage more of a campus type development, with sufficient open space areas around new buildings and parking. A shuttle bus providing links to mass transit in abutting communities and retail areas of town should also be encouraged.

The Route 28 corridor, zoned as Highway Business, provides an area for the growth of retail and commercial uses serving the community as well as abutting communities. Route 28 has the capacity to support the traffic to and from such uses. There are areas for potential growth along this corridor with some vacant land; single family residential uses that should be relocated to residential zones, which would free up parcels for commercial development and older businesses that will transition to meet future market demands.

The Local Business zone, located along Park Street, the Ipswich River and the older center of town, is the appropriate location for local retail and service businesses. There are limited vacancies and opportunities for growth here. However, when growth or expansion does occur, design guidelines should be established to reinforce the historic feeling of this area and give this zone an identifiable aesthetic treatment unique to North Reading.



*Local business located near historic downtown*

### **Economic Development Goals and Objectives Statement**

To support the sustainable development approach for North Reading, the community needs to diversify its local job market. Increases are needed in retail, commercial, office and technical positions to provide more employment opportunities for local residents within various wage categories. This would reduce commuting needs and keep a higher percentage of these wages in the local economy. Development also needs to be sensitive to environmental concerns.



The following economic development goals are proposed to help strengthen the local economy and job market.

*Expansion of public sewer system*

Currently, the Town's only public sewer is in the RiverPark industrial park area, which is served by the Town of Wilmington sewer system. Additional sewerage is needed to support economic development in key areas, such as the Route 28 corridor, the J. T. Berry property, the future gravel facility redevelopment and the previously mentioned RiverPark area. Options for new sewer include the Town's development of its own sewer treatment facility to service these areas. This is an expensive proposition and receiving permits will be time consuming. However, there would be a net benefit to the community through economic development and environmental protection. Although sewer use fees could help offset the debt service for such an investment, state and/or federal funding assistance would most likely be necessary. Another proposed option is to have the developers of the J.T. Berry property construct an on-site sewer treatment facility for the redevelopment of that site, which could also service surrounding uses. This could be a "turn-key" arrangement with the town and developer negotiating the town's operation of the facility after construction in return for certain concessions and payment to the developer.

*Attract office and tech jobs to the community*

As has been mentioned many times, the town needs to attract "clean" businesses to town in those areas where commercial growth is allowed and being encouraged. Office and high tech jobs provide such an opportunity. Such uses are consistent with the community's desire to protect its environmental resources and provide local jobs that are more in line with the talents of the local workforce. Over the last twenty years, the Boston area economy has attracted such uses, though there have been ups and downs when there has been limited development in these market segments. The market is currently in a lull, and there is not much of a demand for new development to support these uses, which has resulted in a lag in the redevelopment of the J. T. Berry site. As the economy picks-up, demands for new development for office and high tech are expected to return, although this is not guaranteed. Therefore, the town may want to consider incentives for such uses and develop a marketing strategy to attract such uses.





*Building in historic downtown illustrating historic character to maintain*

### Develop Design Guidelines for Business zones

To help retain the historic and unique character of North Reading, which attracts many new residents to the community, design guidelines should be developed for the Local Business zone. Design guidelines for the Local Business zone would encourage historic preservation in this area. Uniform signage should be required; buildings should maintain an architectural style consistent with the historic elements found on valuable older buildings in this area; and site development should screen parking and supporting uses.

### **Economic Development Strategy Map**

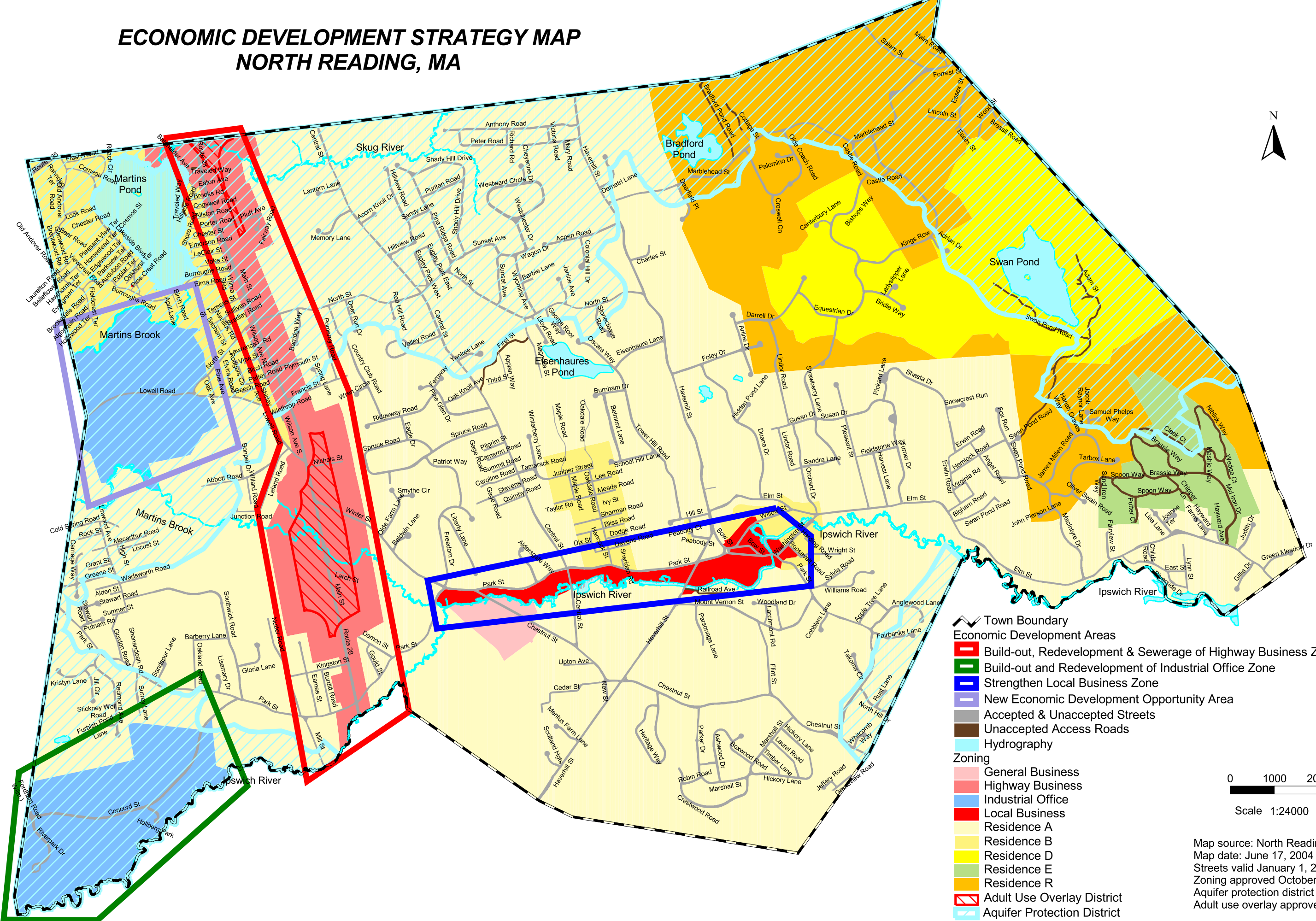
The following map depicts areas where economic development initiatives should be directed. These areas are consistent with the objectives stated above.

- Build-out, redevelopment and sewerage of Highway Business zone – As outlined in red, the build-out of the Highway Business zone along Route 28 should be encouraged. Sewerage should be brought into this corridor to support economic development. Commercial uses should front onto Route 28. Multi-family housing should be considered on large parcels set back from Route 28.
- Build-out and redevelopment of Industrial Office zone – As outlined in green, this area along Concord Street has been designated for industrial and office use. Full use of existing space and future build-out within this zone should be encouraged. This area currently has sewers tied into the Wilmington system.
- Strengthen Local Business zone – Smaller, local businesses should be encouraged in the Local Business zone area outlined in dark blue. Professional offices, services and unique retail, combined with design guidelines intended to preserve the historic older character of the community, could make this business area unique and memorable.
- New economic development opportunity area – As outlined in light blue, this area includes the J.T. Berry property and the existing gravel processing facility. The state has designated a developer for the property, whose plan includes office, industrial and sewerage. This option deserves continued support from the community. Eventually, the gravel extraction facility will cease to operate once resources are exhausted. Therefore, the Town should begin discussions with the current owner to plan for the redevelopment of this site.





**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY MAP  
NORTH READING, MA**



Town Boundary

**Economic Development Areas**

- Build-out, Redevelopment & Sewerage of Highway Business Zone
- Build-out and Redevelopment of Industrial Office Zone
- Strengthen Local Business Zone
- New Economic Development Opportunity Area

**Accepted & Unaccepted Streets**

- Accepted & Unaccepted Streets
- Unaccepted Access Roads

**Hydrography**

- Hydrography

**Zoning**

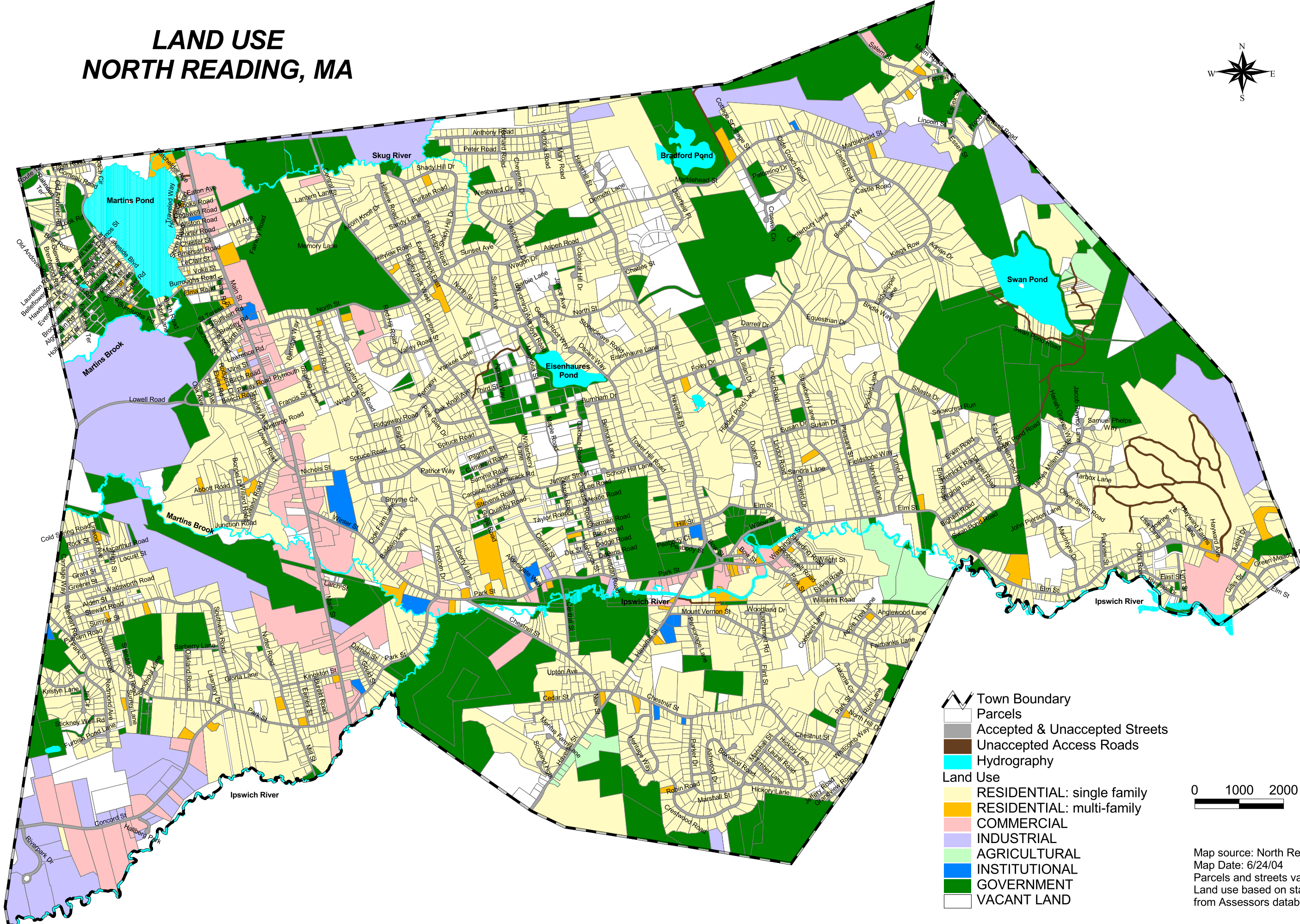
- General Business
- Highway Business
- Industrial Office
- Local Business
- Residence A
- Residence B
- Residence D
- Residence E
- Residence R
- Adult Use Overlay District
- Aquifer Protection District

0 1000 2000 Feet  
Scale 1:24000

Map source: North Reading GIS  
Map date: June 17, 2004  
Streets valid January 1, 2004.  
Zoning approved October 10, 2002.  
Aquifer protection district approved April 1999.  
Adult use overlay approved October 4, 1999.



# LAND USE NORTH READING, MA



- Town Boundary
- Parcels
- Accepted & Unaccepted Streets
- Unaccepted Access Roads
- Hydrography
- Land Use**
  - RESIDENTIAL: single family
  - RESIDENTIAL: multi-family
  - COMMERCIAL
  - INDUSTRIAL
  - AGRICULTURAL
  - INSTITUTIONAL
  - GOVERNMENT
  - VACANT LAND

0 1000 2000 Feet

Map source: North Reading GIS  
Map Date: 6/24/04  
Parcels and streets valid 1/1/04  
Land use based on state use codes  
from Assessors database.

## 6. TRANSPORTATION

The transportation requirement for this plan has been satisfied through Equivalent Plan Approval by the IAWG for North Reading's participation in two transportation related projects, the North Suburban Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan and the North Suburban Transit Opportunities Study. A brief summary of each project follows:

### **North Suburban Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan**

This plan consists of a regional bikeway system that will also serve the Towns of Lynnfield, Reading, Wakefield and Wilmington. A planning grant for the study was obtained through the Transportation Enhancement Program of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA).

The purpose of the study is to provide links between communities, to other bikeways, and to public transportation. The goals, as outlined in the grant application, are as follows:

- Provide enhanced commuter options for access to MBTA commuter rail stations in Reading, Wilmington, and Andover.
- Provide direct bike access to the Borders to Boston Trail, Minuteman Trail, Bay Circuit Trail and Pennacook Trail bike paths and the planned Merrimack Valley Bike Corridor.
- Provide bike access for short trips such as shopping, recreation, school activities, and socializing.
- Design bike routes that comply with federal recommendations for safety and accessibility.

Two major paths are proposed which run north/south and east/west through the town. The north/south path is located along Haverhill Street from the proposed Merrimack Valley Bike Corridor to the north, to the Reading Depot/Wakefield MBTA train stations to the south. The east/west path runs along Route 62 from the Town's boundary at Lynnfield to the Town's boundary in Wilmington (towards the North Wilmington Commuter Rail Station) with a short section of the path crossing over into Lynnfield and running along the Ipswich River corridor before it reenters North Reading. These routes are shown on the "Open Space Potential Map" in the Open Space section of this report.

### **North Suburban Transit Opportunities Study**

Conducted by the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization, this study evaluates existing transit routes, travel patterns and employment characteristics and provides an assessment of demand for new transit services and potential service improvements in the regional area based upon 1990 and 2000 census data.





The overview provided in the study for North Reading travel patterns indicates that the number of people commuting to Boston and Cambridge from North Reading was below average compared to other towns of equal distance from these cities. A 1993 commuter rail passenger survey indicated that Reading Station was used the most by residents.

The study did not specifically address potential service improvements that would directly affect North Reading commuters.

Through the visioning meeting process, it was discovered that residents are now using the Reading, North Wilmington and Woburn/Anderson stations for train access.

### **Additional Transportation Related Items**

During the community visioning process and through meetings and discussions with Town agencies, representatives and individuals, transportation related items were brought up both as assets and liabilities. Although not required for the purposes of this study, they are being noted here for reference.

#### Assets

Location to major highways and regional rail stations is one of the strongest reasons why people live here or want to move to North Reading. Proximity to Interstates 93 and 95 as well as Routes 62, 28, 125, 114, 129 and 38 provides residents with easy access to the regional area and the Northeast Corridor. Four airports are within reasonable distance in Boston, Manchester, Bedford and Hanscom. A local saying is, “You can get anywhere from here.” The following “Transportation Network” map shows North Reading’s proximity to this highway system as well as MBTA transit facilities.

Although there is no major public transportation node/line within North Reading, many residents do travel to nearby train stations to commute to work and do not appear to have difficulty accessing and finding parking at the local MBTA stations except for Oak Grove Station in Malden.

Public access to transportation in North Reading includes a town sponsored bus for elderly residents to get around town and a private bus service which runs along Route 28 and takes people from the Lutheran Church parking lot to the train station in Andover.

Recently, a private bus service company spoke with the Community Planning Commission regarding the possibility of establishing a route from Interstate 95 through Middleton to North Reading and then on to Boston. This service would cater primarily to students, elderly, handicapped individuals and denser population areas.



## Liabilities

There are minor traffic issues within the town mostly due to intense volume during a short period of time such as when schools are opening and closing and during peak commuter periods. Locations that were mentioned included the Town Center, Route 28, the Batchelder School and high school, the intersection of Route 28 and Park Street during commuting hours and weekend travel on Route 62.

In addition to having no mass transit service in town, there is also no taxi service. As a result, residents have no option but with to drive their own vehicles to destinations or to neighboring train stations, because there is no major bus service, and a lack of sidewalks and adequate bicycle ways. Ironically, the town pays for MBTA Bus service that actually runs through town but does not make any stops in North Reading. Access to the MBTA's "The Ride" also appears to be difficult or non-existent.



**Intersection along Route 28**

## **Goals and Objectives Statement**

In order to accommodate existing resident's needs and to assist with affordable housing initiatives, the Town needs to consider developing a bus service which would link North Reading's residences with local businesses, adjacent communities and regional train nodes. The development of the J.T. Berry property might be the catalyst for this effort and an opportunity to develop this type of service with assistance from private developers.

Establishing communication with the MBTA to discuss incorporating stops in North Reading would significantly improve transportation opportunities. This would be especially beneficial along Route 28 where parking could be made available; and provide access to The Ride. Bus service would benefit existing residents and future affordable housing residents who may need to rely on this type of transportation.





Incorporation of the results of the North Suburban Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan and adding sidewalk infrastructure with connections to businesses, trains, schools, greenways and regional bike paths should be a priority. Emphasis should be focused on providing 'loops' or spurs along the linear routes, which would make it more user friendly and provide easy, safer access. The "Open Space Potential Map" shows the proposed bike trail routes. Funding for these types of improvements could come through private donations; grants; development of a 'Community Preservation Act'; incorporating improvements into planned future roadway and infrastructure improvement projects; and obtaining grant monies through state and federal transportation enhancement funds.

Developers should also be encouraged to incorporate sidewalks and multiuse paths into their plans for future developments or contribute to a pedestrian/bicycle transportation fund set up by the Town to provide those improvements elsewhere in the Town.

Future studies should be conducted to address existing minor traffic circulation problems, which will only intensify as the populations in and around North Reading grows and car and truck travel increases. As a lack of public access to transportation may be an obstacle to residents seeking affordable housing, locations targeted for future affordable housing stock should align with planned future transportation improvements.



# TRANSPORTATION NETWORK NORTH READING, MA

- Town Boundaries
- North Reading Streets
- Major Highways
- Limited Access Highway
- Multi-lane Hwy, not limited access
- Other Numbered Hwy
- Major Road - Connector
- Commuter Rail Stations
- MBTA Stations
- Rail Lines
- MBTA Orange Line
- North Reading Hydrography



0 0.5 1 Miles

Map source: North Reading GIS  
Map date: 4/12/04  
Major highways, rail and transit  
lines and stations from MassGIS.  
Bus routes not available.

NORTH  
ANDOVER

BOXFORD

ANDOVER

MIDDLETON

TOPSFIELD

28 NORTH READING

DANVERS

WILMINGTON

READING

LYNNFIELD

PEABODY

BURLINGTON

WAKEFIELD

LYNN

WOBURN

STONEHAM

SAUGUS

WINCHESTER

MELROSE

MALDEN

## 7. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### Narrative Report

The rationale, results and recommendations of this Community Development Plan have been written to support a vision for North Reading that reflects community values and desires. As stated previously, in order to establish a sustainable community, this vision makes improvements in key areas so as to balance all segments of the community.

The *rationale* used throughout this report attempts to strike a balance within each core element and between all core elements. For example, when making recommendations within the housing section, the community does not want only certain types of housing, they want a balance of all housing stock to serve all segments of the population. This balanced housing stock must be supported by recommendations in other sections of this study. For example, the economic development section recommends that the local job market supply a mix of job types at various levels. Therefore, people with different work skills and income potential will have both job opportunities and housing options within this community.

The *results* of this study indicate where improvements are needed in various components of the community to maintain and sustain a balanced community. These results are based upon community input, collection and evaluation of empirical data and current planning principles. The results indicate a stable community with few deficiencies. However, some improvements are needed in all areas, but with an emphasis on housing needs and issues.

The *recommendations*, as summarized below, are proposed to help North Reading remain a sustainable community in light of development pressures and changing needs within the community.

### Housing Recommendations

During the planning process, it became evident that residents wish to address the need for more affordable housing. The community wants to be proactive in establishing agreements with organizations regarding where and how affordable housing will be built. The Town does not want to be in the position of having to react to a proposed affordable housing development that may not be located or developed in the Town's best interest.

Furthermore, the Town wants to develop a good mix of housing that serves all segments of the population. This means placing emphasis on more affordable housing. Future housing should consist of small single-family homes and duplexes, condominiums, and senior housing along with larger single-family homes. In every category, affordable units should be provided to achieve the 10% goal town-wide.



The following “Putting It All Together” maps show the recommended locations for affordable housing. Smaller vacant lots close to the original center of town and around Martins Pond are suitable for in-fill housing; larger lots along Route 28 are suitable for multi-family housing. In general, housing should be incorporated in areas where housing already exists, building upon the unique characteristics of individual neighborhoods or areas of town.

The “Putting It All Together – Environmental Constraints Map” shows that there are few constraints to locating housing closer to the older section of town. The area around Martins Pond has wetland, aquifer and FEMA constraints, which allow development within certain guidelines. Therefore, limited housing development can occur there. The “Putting It All Together – Proposed Land Use Summary Map” shows that housing in these areas is consistent with the existing residential uses.

The multi-family areas to the rear of Route 28 overlap with the economic development area, which is acceptable. Housing can be incorporated into this zone, which provides important services and transportation links, given the frontage of lots along Route 28 remain for commercial uses. The multi-family area will provide a transition from commercial to the abutting residential areas as shown on the “Putting It All Together – Proposed Land Use Summary Map.”

### Housing Actions

The following actions are recommended to address various housing issues. They are described here related to either policy, regulatory or physical development actions.

#### *Policy*

- Develop an agreement between the Town and North Reading Housing Authority/North Reading Housing Partnership to develop affordable housing on Town-owned lots.
- The Housing Authority and Housing Partnership should continue to work together to address North Reading’s affordable housing needs.
- The Town should continue to apply for and receive HUD funding (presently \$20,000 to \$25,000 per year) to use for affordable housing costs and identify other possible HUD funding sources.
- Encourage the Housing Authority and Housing Partnership to identify additional sources of funding such as Federal Home Loan banks, Massachusetts Housing Partnership, North Shore HOME Consortium, local banks and grant sources.

#### *Regulatory*

- Explore the potential for a Community Preservation Act and/or an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw in providing funding and regulations to encourage affordable housing initiatives.





- Consider changes in the Zoning Bylaw and land use policy regarding lot size and frontage requirements to allow for presently undeveloped Town-owned land to be available for affordable housing.
- Zoning regulations should be reviewed, amended and enforced as necessary, to minimize the potential of large, oversized homes being built on older, smaller lots.
- Create a multi-family zoning area to address affordable housing needs.
- Explore the possibility of small “in-law” apartments in certain zones such as in the older residential zones.

#### *Physical Development*

- The Town, Housing Authority and Housing Partnership should identify Town-owned parcels suitable for affordable housing and create guidelines for how these lots will be developed.
- Create a fund for maintaining, preserving and improving the existing affordable housing stock.
- Provide evaluation and upgrades to address maintenance problems in the existing older affordable housing stock, such as the elderly units at Peabody Court.
- Provide more senior housing and affordable housing for 55 and older adults.
- Larger housing developments should include an appropriate amount of recreational space and/or open space.
- Larger lots should be developed through a public/private partnership. Appropriate lots for multi-family housing should be identified just behind the retail fronting Route 28 where there is a sufficient transportation network to support the increased traffic.

#### **Open Space And Resource Protection Recommendations**

The residents of North Reading believe their open space and recreational resources are one of the community’s best assets. Therefore, they want to take steps to assure this asset remains protected in the face of recent and future development pressures. Regulations currently in place give the community many tools for open space protection. This Community Development Plan recommends development in areas that will not harm the community’s unprotected resources. Furthermore, the Conservation and Recreation Plan, as it is currently being updated, will contain many recommendations for the acquisition and protection of open space areas and the development of additional recreational resources.

The following “Putting It All Together – Environmental Constraints Map” shows certain open space and resource protection actions that support the housing, economic development and transportation elements of this plan and should be incorporated into the updated Conservation and Recreation Plan. This plan shows minimal conflicts between open space and recreation recommendations and other recommendations. The recreation and wildlife corridors stand alone or have minimal conflict with the



economic development zones. The conflicts with the economic development zones are at the edges of those zones, and, therefore, have minimal impact, with the exception of the “Local Business zone”. However, the Local Business zone is intended to accentuate the unique historical character and local businesses within this area. The preservation and enhancement of the Ipswich River corridor through this district also reinforces the unique qualities of this area.

The recommended bike trail connects many of the housing and economic development areas.

The environmental constraints that overlap the economic development and housing areas on the “Putting It All Together – Environmental Constraints Map” do not prohibit development in these areas. They do allow development with certain constraints and within certain regulations. Furthermore, housing and economic development within these areas is consistent with existing land use patterns as shown on the “Putting It All Together – Proposed Land Use Summary Map.”

#### Actions

The following actions are recommended to address various open space issues. They are described here as either being related to policy, regulatory or physical development actions.

#### *Policy*

- Complete the update of the Conservation and Recommendation Plan. Incorporate recommendations to establish open space and wildlife corridors.
- Identify opportunities to create facilities that can be self-supporting and also generate income to support other recreational initiatives in the community, such as the Hillview Commission Golf Course.

#### *Regulatory*

- Develop a Bylaw requiring an open space component in all proposed large-scale residential and commercial development.

#### *Physical Development*

- The Town should take steps to acquire the old railroad land along the Ipswich River to help protect the river and create the Ipswich River Greenway.
- A community center should be considered for the older center of town. This location will be more accessible to elderly residents in the Housing Authority complex and to high school students and will help strengthen the older historic town center.



## **Economic Development Recommendations**

Residents appeared happy with the commercial mix within the community and stressed the need for a more diversified local industry base and the support of locally owned retail. Their vision for the economic future of North Reading includes a mix of local small chain and privately owned retail establishments to primarily support local needs, not regional needs. The industrial/warehouse businesses should remain and such areas be built-out and occupied to their full potential. There is a need to add more “clean” industry jobs, such as high tech and office within the community to help balance the local job force with a relatively clean industry.

The following “Putting It All Together – Proposed Land Use Summary Map” shows proposed economic development areas. As revealed by the map, economic development in these areas is consistent with existing land use. Furthermore, these economic development areas are linked to accessible roadways, available land and zoning.

As was stated earlier, any environmental conflicts within these areas do not prohibit development, for the most part. They allow development with certain constraints or within certain regulations. In addition, prior to development, wetland areas will be flagged and, therefore, better defined than is shown on this generalized wetland map.

### Actions

The following actions are recommended to address various economic development issues. They are described here as either being related to policy, regulatory or physical development actions.

### Policy

- Identify vacant properties, single-family residential uses and older businesses along Route 28 for growth potential to meet future market demands. The Town should work with the Chamber of Commerce to identify businesses that should be approached to encourage them to locate to North Reading.
- Encourage businesses that will create office and technical positions to provide more employment opportunities for local residents, which will in turn, reduce commuting needs and keep a higher percentage of wages in the local economy.
- Consider possible incentives by the Town to encourage office and high tech businesses to locate in North Reading and develop a marketing strategy to attract such uses. Consider establishing an economic development incentive commission to initiate economic development activities.
- Economic development should be located along or close to the transportation links necessary to support these businesses and in locations that do not impact sensitive open space resources.



### *Regulatory*

- Develop design guidelines for the Local Business zone to reinforce the historic feeling and encourage the historic preservation of this area and give this zone an identifiable aesthetic treatment unique to North Reading.

### *Physical Development*

- Provide expansion of the public sewer system to the Route 28 corridor, the J.T. Berry property and the gravel facility off of Lowell Road.
- Explore options for development of new sewer facilities. Development could either be by the Town or a “turn-key” arrangement with the Town and a developer.
- Encourage the redevelopment of the J.T. Berry property. Plan for the future redevelopment of the gravel facility off of Lowell Road.

## **Transportation Recommendations**

The Transportation Vision for North Reading is for the community to become much more multi-modal. The community does not have a specific transportation issue that needs to be addressed. However, additions are needed to provide more transportation options. Sustainability requires better accommodations for both bicyclists and pedestrians. In addition, the community needs better access to public transportation facilities, such as a bus line through town or a shuttle bus connection to MBTA facilities in neighboring communities.

The following “Putting It All Together – Environmental Constraints Map” shows the proposed bike trail routes. These bike trails would provide many benefits to the community, such as recreation, enhancement of greenway corridors, alternative modes of transportation between economic development areas and housing areas, and the addition of yet another unique quality to the Local Business zone.

### Actions

The following actions are recommended to address some transportation issues. They are described here as either being related to policy, regulatory or physical development actions

### *Policy*

- Explore the development of a bus service, which would link North Reading’s residences with local businesses, adjacent communities and regional train nodes.
- Establish communication with the MBTA to incorporate bus stops in North Reading, especially along Route 28, where parking could be made available.
- Establish access to The Ride for existing residents and future affordable housing residents who may need to rely on this type of transportation.





- Identify funding sources for alternative transportation modes such as sidewalks and bike paths through private donations, recreation or transportation grants, or development of a ‘Community Preservation Act.’
- Future studies should be conducted to address existing minor traffic circulation problems, which will only intensify as the populations in and around North Reading grows and car and truck travel increases.

#### *Regulatory*

- Encourage developers to incorporate sidewalks and multiuse paths into their plans for future developments or contribute to a pedestrian/bicycle transportation fund set up by the Town to provide those improvements elsewhere in the Town.

#### *Physical Development*

- Implement the bike trail recommendations of the North Suburban Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan.
- Add sidewalk infrastructure in key areas of Town with connections to businesses, schools, greenways and regional bike paths, providing ‘loops’ or spurs along the linear routes.

### **Implementation Plan Timeline and Responsibilities**

The following charts summarize the recommendations for each of the plan elements presented in this report and provide a recommended timeline for implementation as well as assigning responsibility for the various tasks.

#### Housing

<i>Timeline Year</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
1	Agree on a strategy between the Town, Housing Authority and Housing Partnership to develop affordable housing on Town-owned parcels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOS</li> <li>• CPC</li> <li>• NR Housing Authority</li> <li>• NR Housing Partnership</li> </ul>
1	Identify Town-owned parcels to develop affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC</li> <li>• NR Housing Authority</li> <li>• NR Housing Partnership</li> </ul>
1	Create guidelines for how Town-owned parcels should be developed for affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC</li> <li>• BOS</li> </ul>



*Housing continued*

<i>Timeline Year</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
1	Consider Zoning Bylaw and land use policy changes to allow density bonus for affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC</li> </ul>
2	Provide more senior and affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NR Housing Authority</li> <li>• NR Housing Partnership</li> </ul>
2	Create zoning areas for both multi-family and smaller affordable housing development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC</li> </ul>
2	Evaluate local support for Community Preservation Act and/ or Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOS</li> <li>• CPC</li> </ul>
2	Write Bylaw to require recreation and/or open space in larger housing developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC</li> </ul>
2	Write Bylaw to allow “in-law” apartments in older residential zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC</li> </ul>
3	Develop larger lots for affordable housing through public/private partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOS</li> <li>• NR Housing Authority</li> <li>• NR Housing Partnership</li> </ul>
3	Create fund for affordable housing maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NR Housing Authority</li> <li>• NR Housing Partnership</li> </ul>
3	Maintenance evaluation and upgrades of older housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NR Housing Authority</li> <li>• NR Housing Partnership</li> </ul>
2	Identify other funding sources for affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NR Housing Authority</li> <li>• NR Housing Partnership</li> </ul>
On-going	Encourage stricter enforcement of Zoning Bylaws to minimize land consumption by oversize homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOS</li> <li>• Zoning Board of Appeals</li> </ul>
On-going	Apply for and receive HUD funding to use for affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NR Housing Authority</li> <li>• NR Housing Partnership</li> </ul>



### Open Space and Resource Protection

<i>Timeline Year</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
1	Complete Conservation and Recommendation Plan update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Space Committee</li> </ul>
2	Create bylaw requiring open space component in large-scale development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC</li> <li>• Parks Department</li> </ul>
2-5	Take steps to establish greenway along Ipswich River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks Department</li> <li>• Conservation Commission</li> <li>• BOS</li> <li>• CPC</li> </ul>
2-5	Begin assembling and/or protecting land to establish open space and recreation corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOS</li> <li>• CPC</li> <li>• Parks Department</li> </ul>
2-5	Begin development of bike trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DPW</li> <li>• Parks Department</li> </ul>
3	Identify location for community center in older center of town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC</li> <li>• Parks Department</li> </ul>
On-going	Identify opportunities to create self-supporting and income-generating recreational facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOS</li> <li>• Parks Department</li> </ul>

### Economic Development

<i>Timeline Year</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
1	Identify parcels for growth potential along Route 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC</li> </ul>
2	Identify potential businesses to entice to locate in town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
2	Develop design guidelines unique to North Reading for Local Business zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC</li> </ul>
3	Consider incentives to encourage office and high-tech businesses to locate in North Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOS</li> <li>• CPC</li> </ul>
4	Plan for gravel facility redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC</li> </ul>
On-going	Encourage redevelopment of J.T. Berry property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOS</li> <li>• CPC</li> </ul>



*Economic Development continued*

<i>Timeline Year</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
On-going	Encourage businesses to provide transportation links to MBTA facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BOS</li><li>• CPC</li></ul>
On-going	Develop strategy to expand public sewer to certain commercial zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DPW</li><li>• BOS</li></ul>

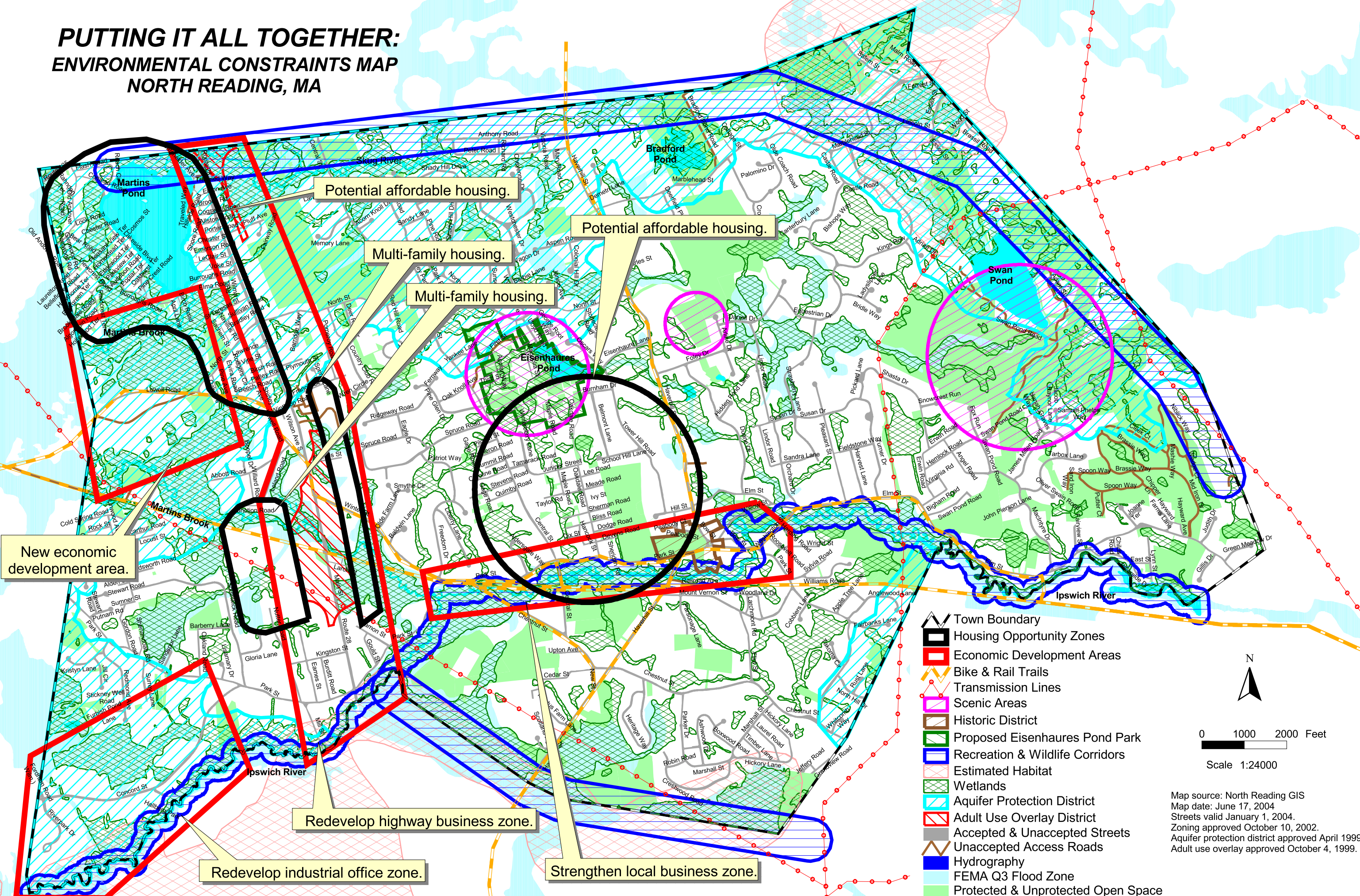
*Transportation*

<i>Timeline Year</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
2	Begin working with MBTA and developers to establish links to BTA services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BOS</li><li>• CPC</li><li>• MBTA</li></ul>
2	Identify funding sources for alternative transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CPC</li></ul>
2	Begin implementing North Suburban Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DPW</li><li>• Parks Department</li></ul>
2	Establish sidewalk /multi-use paths requirements for developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CPC</li><li>• DPW</li></ul>
3	Analyze traffic circulation conditions in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CPC</li><li>• DPW</li></ul>
On-going	Add sidewalk infrastructure and connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CPC</li></ul>





**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS MAP  
NORTH READING, MA**



- Town Boundary
- Housing Opportunity Zones
- Economic Development Areas
- Bike & Rail Trails
- Transmission Lines
- Scenic Areas
- Historic District
- Proposed Eisenhaures Pond Park
- Recreation & Wildlife Corridors
- Estimated Habitat
- Wetlands
- Aquifer Protection District
- Adult Use Overlay District
- Accepted & Unaccepted Streets
- Unaccepted Access Roads
- Hydrography
- FEMA Q3 Flood Zone
- Protected & Unprotected Open Space

N

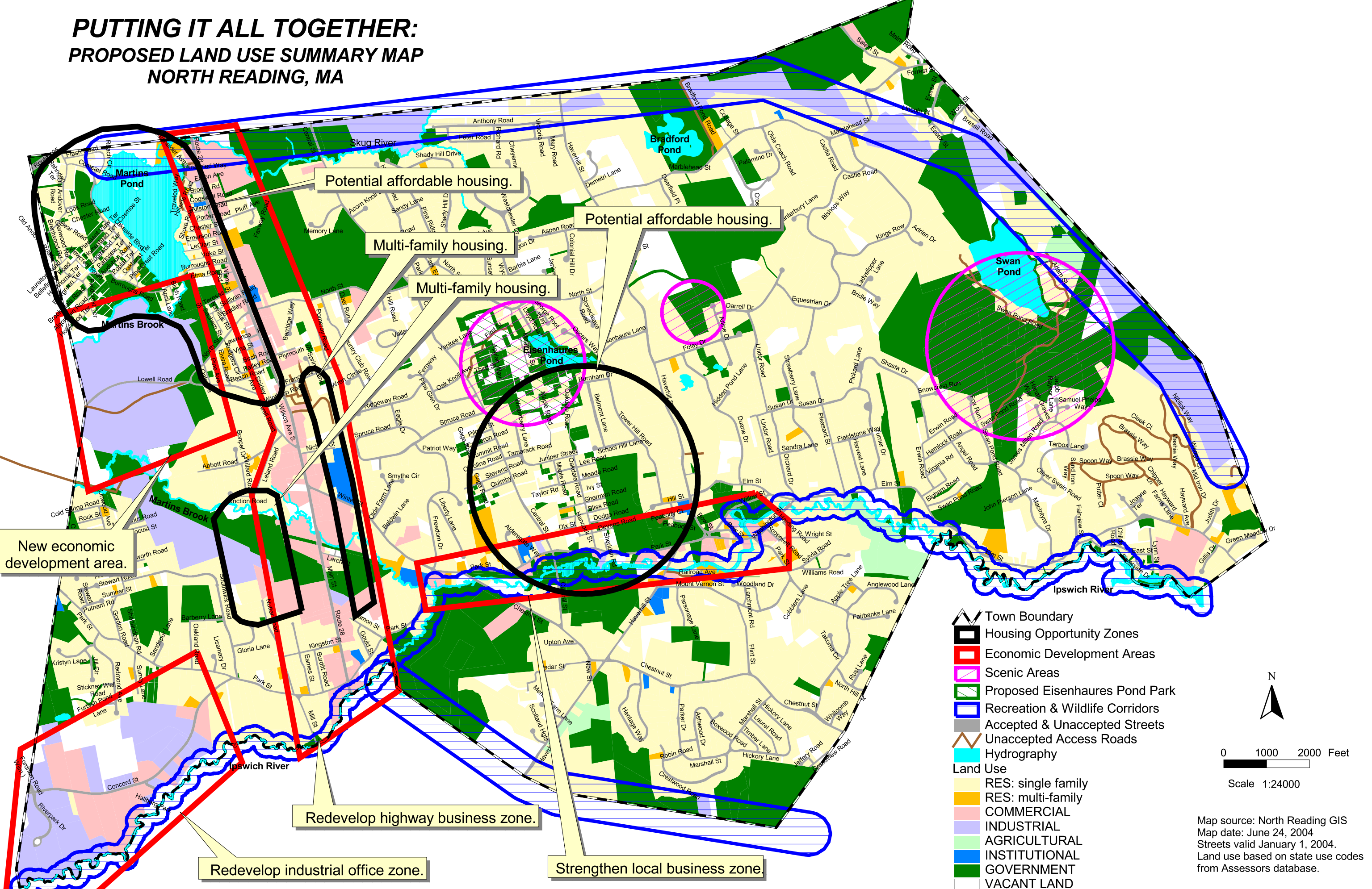
0 1000 2000 Feet

Scale 1:24000

Map source: North Reading GIS  
Map date: June 17, 2004  
Streets valid January 1, 2004.  
Zoning approved October 10, 2002.  
Aquifer protection district approved April 1999.  
Adult use overlay approved October 4, 1999.



**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:  
PROPOSED LAND USE SUMMARY MAP  
NORTH READING, MA**



Potential affordable housing.

Potential affordable housing.

Multi-family housing.

Multi-family housing.

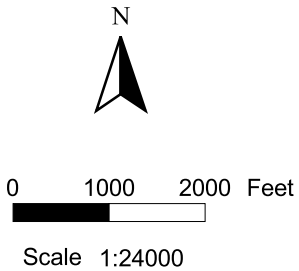
New economic  
development area.

Redevelop highway business zone.

Redevelop industrial office zone.

Strengthen local business zone.

- Town Boundary
- Housing Opportunity Zones
- Economic Development Areas
- Scenic Areas
- Proposed Eisenhaures Pond Park
- Recreation & Wildlife Corridors
- Accepted & Unaccepted Streets
- Unaccepted Access Roads
- Hydrography
- Land Use
  - RES: single family
  - RES: multi-family
  - COMMERCIAL
  - INDUSTRIAL
  - AGRICULTURAL
  - INSTITUTIONAL
  - GOVERNMENT
  - VACANT LAND



Map source: North Reading GIS  
Map date: June 24, 2004  
Streets valid January 1, 2004.  
Land use based on state use codes  
from Assessors database.

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## ATTACHMENTS

- I Handout to CPS and Development team for input
- II Community Development Plan Public Workshops Flier
- III Community meeting agenda
- IV Community meeting PowerPoint presentation
- V Community meeting questions
- VI Sign-in sheets



## North Reading Development Team

March 10, 2004

### **EO 418 PROGRAM AGENDA**

#### Overview of the EO 418 Program and Process

##### **1) *What is the EO 418 Program?***

- Initiated by the Governor's Office and involves the creation of a Community Development Plan to address:
  - Housing
  - Open Space and Resource Protection
  - Economic Development
  - Transportation
- Involves the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction, and the Department of Economic Development.
- Administered by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC).

##### **2) *What needs to be included in the Community Development Plan?***

- Priorities for how future development should occur in the town
- Needs to address the following four sections:
  - Housing – location, type and quantity with an emphasis on Affordable Housing
  - Open Space and Resource Protection – location, type and quantity of land needed to protect critical open space, surface and ground water, and sensitive resources.
  - Economic Development – location, type and quantity of commercial and industrial.
  - Transportation – location and description of improvements needed for safety, access, congestion and transit.
- TerraSphere will conduct the public meetings and write the text for the Plan.
- North Reading Planning Department will produce all GIS maps.

##### **3) *What will be addressed at the public meeting sessions?***

- Two public meetings must be held to gather input.
- Items to be addressed include creating a list of the community's "Assets and Liabilities" and establishment of a "Vision Statement".
- After the plan is drafted, it must be presented at a final public meeting for community review.

##### **4) *What is the timeframe for this process?***

- The plan must be completed by June 30, 2004.
- We would like to hold the public meetings in March 2004.
- TerraSphere proposes to complete a draft plan by May 15, 2004.
- Draft plan will be presented to the public in early June 2004.
- Submit plan to MAPC for review, mid-June 2004.

***Questions for the Development Team***

- a) What do you consider the Town's "Assets and Liabilities"?  
i.e.: schools, access, town character, services, etc.
- b) Are there any new residential or commercial development projects being planned that we should know about?
- c) Are there any municipal improvements being planned that we should know about?  
i.e.: Eisenhaures Park, school expansion, sewer line extension, roadway improvements, etc.
- d) What are your thoughts about locations for new housing that will still preserve community character.  
i.e.: dispersed locations versus larger developments, what areas of town can support more housing, etc.
- e) What type(s) of housing do you think would work best for the community?  
i.e.: rental versus ownership, condo vs. duplex or single family, what market segments need housing,
- e) Are there any other issues that may influence this plan?



# **Community Development Plan Public Workshops**

**The North Reading Community Planning Commission (CPC) will be holding two community workshops for the purpose of soliciting public input for the preparation of a Community Development Plan. The format of these two workshops will be exactly the same. They are being held on different nights and at different locations to give the public two options to attend. The workshops will be held as follows:**

- Thursday, April 22, 2004, 7:30 PM @  
Room 14 of Town Hall**
- Thursday, April 29, 2004, 7:30 PM @ the  
Middle School Library Meeting Room**

**Housing  
Open Space  
Economic Development  
Transportation**

**North Reading's assets and liabilities will be identified and discussed and a vision for the future of North Reading will be developed. Come participate in and provide input into this Community Development Plan, which will help guide the future development in North Reading.**

**Any questions about these workshops should be directed to the North Reading Planning Department, 978-664-6050.**

North Reading Community Development Plan  
EO 418 Program

**COMMUNITY MEETING AGENDA**  
**April 22 & 29, 2004**

- 1) **Welcome and Introductions**                      **Warren Pearce, Chair**  
(7:30 – 7:40)                      **North Reading Community Planning Commission**
  
- 2) **Overview of the EO 418 Program**    **Jef Fasser, Director of Planning, TerraSphere**  
(7:40 – 7:45)
  - *What is the EO 418 Program?*
  - *What needs to be included in the Community Development Plan?*
  - *What will be addressed at this public meeting?*
  - *What will the final product include?*
  - *What is the timeframe for this process?*
  
- 3) **Community Development Plan Elements**  
(7:45 – 8:00)
  - *Assets and Liabilities*
  - *Housing*
  - *Open Space*
  - *Economic Development*
  - *Transportation*
  - *Vision for the Future*
  
- 4) **Community Meeting “Visioning” Process**                      **Marybeth Murphy, TerraSphere**  
(8:00 – 8:45)
  - *Break-out into groups*
  - *Take a few minutes to review questions on your own*
  - *Materials include maps, markers, paper, etc.*
  - *Each group to identify community “Assets and Liabilities”*
  - *Each group to answer questions regarding plan elements*
  - *Groups should record their ideas on paper and maps*
  - *Each group to identify person to report back*
  
- 5) **Groups Report Back to Larger Group**  
(5 minutes per group)
  
- 6) **Summary and Next Steps**



## Town of North Reading

### Community Development Plan EO 418 Program

Community Visioning Workshop  
April 22 & 29, 2004

## North Reading Community Development Plan



- Assets and Liabilities
- Housing
- Open Space
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- "Vision" for the Future



## North Reading Community Development Plan

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### ■ *What is the EO 418 Program?*

- Initiated by the Governor's Office and involves the creation of a Community Development Plan to address:
  - Housing
  - Open Space and Resource Protection
  - Economic Development
  - Transportation
- Involves the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction, and the Department of Economic Development.
- Administered by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC).

## North Reading Community Development Plan

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### ■ *What needs to be included in the Community Development Plan?*

- Priorities for how future development should occur in the town
- Needs to address the following four sections:
  - **Housing** – location, type and quantity with an emphasis on Affordable Housing
  - **Open Space and Resource Protection** – location, type and quantity of land needed to protect critical open space, surface and ground water, and sensitive resources.
  - **Economic Development** – location, type and quantity of commercial and industrial.
  - **Transportation** – location and description of improvements needed for safety, access, congestion and transit.
- TerraSphere will conduct the public meetings and write text for the Plan.
- North Reading Planning Department will produce all GIS maps.

## North Reading Community Development Plan

### ■ *What will be addressed at the public meeting sessions?*

- Two public meetings being held to gather input.
- Items to be addressed include creating a list of the community's "Assets and Liabilities" and establishment of a "Vision Statement".
- After the plan is drafted, it will be presented at a final public meeting for community review.

## North Reading Community Development Plan

### ■ *What will the final product include?*

- Community Vision Statement
- Written report describing existing conditions and recommendations for:
  - Housing
  - Open Space
  - Economic Development
  - Transportation
- Supporting Maps

## North Reading Community Development Plan

### ■ *What is the timeframe for this process?*

- June 30, 2004 – THE PLAN MUST BE COMPLETED.
  - April 2004 – Initial public meetings.
  - Mid-May 2004 - TerraSphere proposes to have completed a draft plan.
  - Early-June 2004 - Draft plan will be presented to the public.
  - Mid-June 2004 - Submit plan to MAPC for review.

## Community Development Plan Elements

### Assets and Liabilities

#### ■ *What do you consider the Town's "Assets and Liabilities"?*

#### ■ *Why do you like North Reading?*

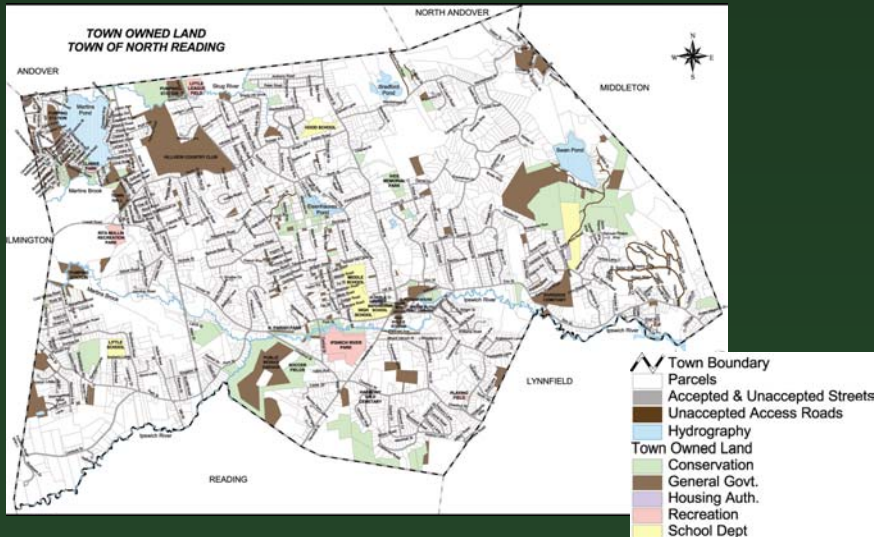
- i.e.: schools, access, town character, services, etc.





## Community Development Plan Elements

### Town-Owned Land



## Community Development Plan Elements

### Housing

- ***What type(s) of housing do you think would work best for the community?***
  - i.e.: rental versus ownership, condo vs. duplex or single family, what market segments need housing such as affordable, assisted living, low/moderate income?
- ***What are your thoughts about locations for new housing that will still preserve community character?***
  - i.e.: dispersed locations versus larger developments, what areas of town can support more housing, etc.
- ***Should Town-owned lots be designated for affordable housing?***

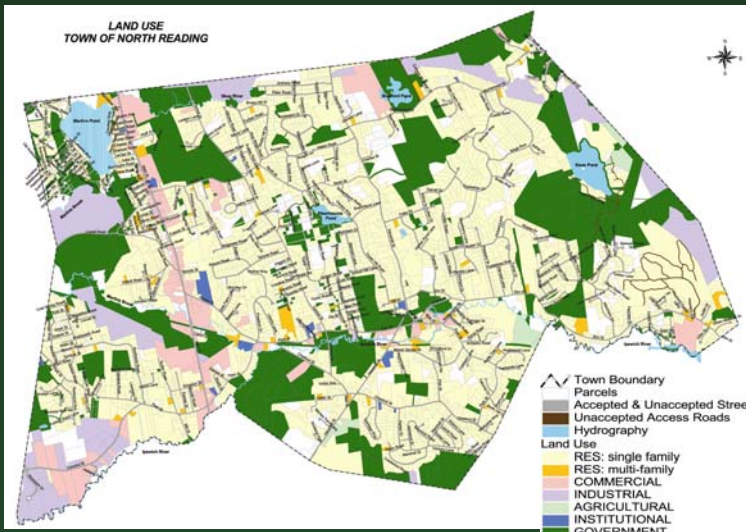
# Community Development Plan Elements

## Housing



# Community Development Plan Elements

## Land Use Plan



## Community Development Plan Elements

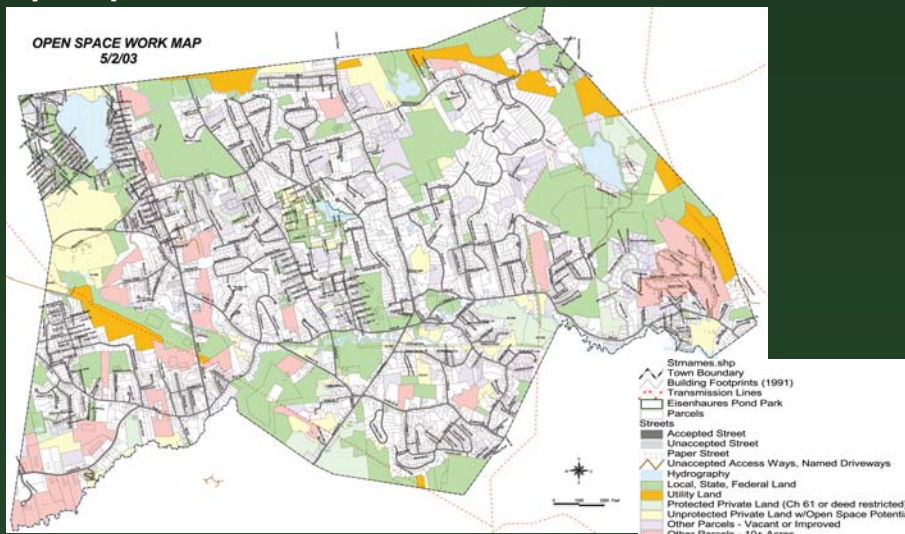
### Open Space

- ***Is there a need for additional recreational facilities in Town?***  
***If so, what is needed and where should they be located?***
- ***Is there a need for additional protected open space in Town?***  
***If so, what should be protected?***
- ***Should developers of large housing projects be required to set aside land for open space and/or recreation?***  
***If so, how much and how should the land be used?***



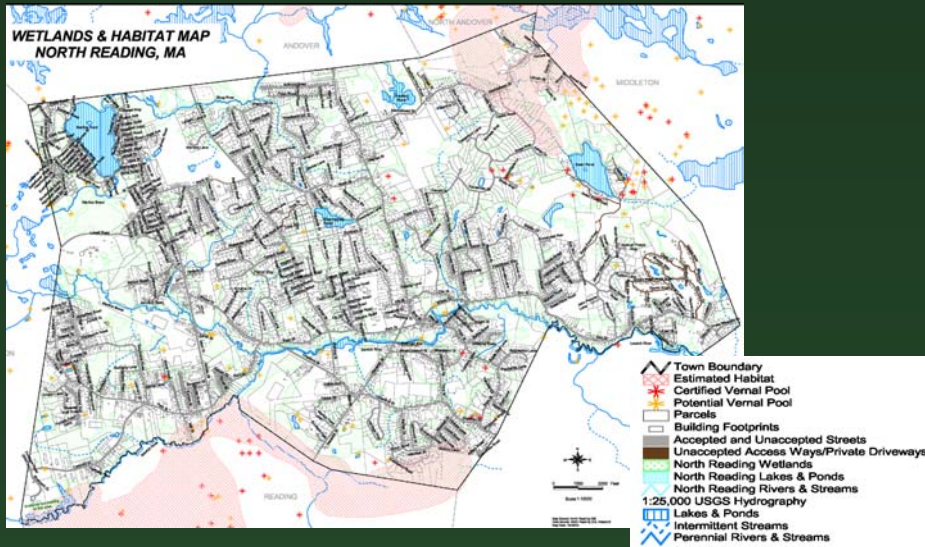
## Community Development Plan Elements

### Open Space



## Community Development Plan Elements

### Wetland



## Community Development Plan Elements

### Economic Development

#### ■ Does the Town need job growth?

*If so, in what sectors?*

#### ■ Does the Town need new commercial development?

*If so, what type of additional commercial development would you like to see in Town?*

- i.e., office use, light industrial, more retail, large national stores vs. small local stores, or nothing.

#### ■ Where should new commercial development occur?

- i.e., Downtown, River Park Industrial Park, old State Hospital site, along Route 28?



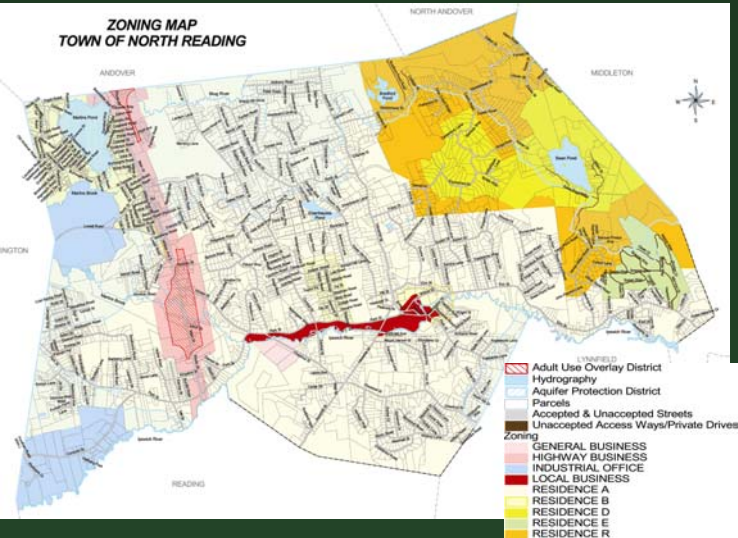
# Community Development Plan Elements

## Economic Development



# Community Development Plan Elements

## Zoning



## Community Development Plan Elements

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### Transportation

- ***Are there traffic circulation problems in Town?***

*If so, where? ■*

- ***Do you feel you have adequate access to mass transit facilities in neighboring communities?***

*If not, what is needed?*

- ***Does the Town have facilities that accommodate pedestrian and bicycle circulation?***

*If not, what is needed?*



## Community Development Plan Elements

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- ***Community Meeting "Visioning" Process (45 minutes)***

- *Break into groups*
- *Take a few minutes to review handout question on your own*
  -
- *Each group will identify one person to report back to the larger group*
- *Materials provided include maps, markers, paper, etc.*
- *Each group will answer questions regarding plan elements*
- *Each group will identify community "Assets and Liabilities"*
- *Groups should record their ideas on paper and maps*

**North Reading Community Development Plan**  
**EO 418 Program**

**COMMUNITY MEETING QUESTIONS**

**Assets and Liabilities**

***What do you consider the Town's "Assets and Liabilities"? Why do you like North Reading?***

i.e.: schools, access, town character, services, etc.

***Assets?***

***Liabilities?***

**Housing**

***What type(s) of housing do you think would work best for the community?***

i.e.: rental versus ownership, condo vs. duplex or single family, what market segments need housing such as affordable, assisted living, low/moderate income?

***What are your thoughts about locations for new housing that will still preserve community character?***

i.e.: dispersed locations versus larger developments, what areas of town can support more housing, etc.

***Should Town-owned lots be designated for affordable housing?***

**Open Space**

***Is there a need for additional recreational facilities in Town?***      **Yes**      **No**

*If so, what is needed and where should they be located?*

***Is there a need for additional protected open space in Town?***      **Yes**      **No**

*If so, what should be protected?*

***Should developers of large housing projects be required to set aside land for open space and/or recreation?***      **Yes**      **No**

*If so, how much and how should the land be used?*

**Economic Development**

***Does the Town need job growth?***

**Yes**

**No**

*If so, in what sectors?*

***Does the Town need new commercial development?***

**Yes**

**No**

*If so, what type of additional commercial*

*development would you like to see in Town?*

i.e., office use, light industrial, more retail, large national stores vs. small local stores, or nothing.

***Where should new commercial development occur?***

i.e., Downtown, RiverPark Industrial Park, old State Hospital site, along Route 28?

**Transportation**

***Are there traffic circulation problems in Town?***

**Yes**

**No**

*If so, where?*

***Do you feel you have adequate access to mass transit facilities in neighboring communities?***

**Yes**

**No**

*If not, what is needed?*

***Does the Town have facilities that accommodate pedestrian and bicycle circulation?***

**Yes**

**No**

*If not, what is needed?*

**Are there any other issues that you would like to bring to our attention?**

*Use the back of this page if necessary.*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT**



North Reading Community Development Plan  
EO 418 Program

COMMUNITY MEETING SIGN-UP SHEET  
April 22, 2004

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE # / EMAIL
<u>JEFF FASSAR</u>	<u>TERRASPHORE</u>	
<u>MARYBETH MURPHY</u>	<u>TERRASPHORE</u>	
<u>Bob Rodgers</u>	<u>CPC</u>	
<u>PAT ROMEO</u>	<u>CPC</u>	
<u>Dave Hanlon</u>	<u>DPW</u>	
<u>Bill Zellalmo</u>	<u>KRHA</u>	<u>(978) 664-3352</u>
<u>Frank Delaney</u>	<u>HPC + HF</u>	
<u>Jeff Ry</u>	<u>CPC</u>	
<u>Maureen Doherty</u>	<u>North Reading Transcript</u>	
<u>STEPHEN DALY</u>	<u>16 NORTH ST, N. READING</u>	

North Reading Community Development Plan  
EO 418 Program

**COMMUNITY MEETING SIGN-UP SHEET**  
**April 29, 2004**

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE # / EMAIL
Jim Delola	6 Beach Circle	664-4645
JOHN DAVIS	11 KINGSTON ST	664-4445
BRAO H. JONES, JR.	251 PARK ST	664-3746
MICHAEL J LINNANE	40 KINGS ROW	664-2599
JEFF FASSOL	TERRASPIERRE	
MARYBETH MURPHY	"	
BILL REED	17 GRANDVIEW RD	664-4068
LINDA BREISCH	6 PARKER DR	664-0401
Happy DiFranco	25 Bow St.	664-2034
Mr. Shugl	41 Lakeside Blvd	664-4304
Bob Kelly	33 Island Rd	664-9928
CAROLE DINGMAN	7 CANTERBURY LANE	664-1157
Anne Brang	5 Canterbury Ln.	664-6604

**COMMUNITY MEETING SIGN-UP SHEET**  
**April 29, 2004**

**PHONE # / EMAIL**

664-9251/baileynrma@comcast.net  
276-0412

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661-4451 / bmauceri@ekau.com

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