# Attachment E

***Regional and Local Trail Initiatives***

The Conservation Commission requested an additional scope of work from GWL to broaden the 2009 Open Space Plan to explore and research means of connecting to regional trail initiatives and expanding habitat and resource protection specifically along the city's rivers and other habitat corridors. Discussion of the benefits of trails, habitat protection needs and case studies are described in the body of the Open Space Plan. This memo outlines local non-motorized connectivity as well as regional trail initiatives in our neighboring communities and the Merrimack Valley.

Interviews, conversations, or trail tours were conducted with the following individuals:

- Betsy Goodrich, Transit Planner, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission;
- Paul Materazzo, Director of Planning, Town of Andover;
- Fred Snell, President, Andover Village Improvement Society;
- Robert Decelle, Special Projects Manager, Town of Andover Conservation Commission;
- Alan French, Chairman, Bay Circuit Alliance;
- Joyce Godsey, President Pro Tem, Methuen Rail Trail; and
- Matthew Kraunelis, Mayor's Chief of Staff, City of Methuen.

The following planning and research documents were also utilized:

- MVPC Priority Growth Strategy;
- Merrimack River Shoreline Survey Report 2008;
- NHESP Core Habitats of North Andover;
- NHESP Core Habitats of Andover;
- NHESP Core Habitats of Methuen;
- City of Lawrence Canal District Master Plan;
- Arlington Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy
- Essex County Landscape Inventory - Lawrence Reconnaissance Report;
- Essex County Landscape Inventory - Methuen Reconnaissance Report;

## City of Lawrence Existing and Potential Trail Network

### *Lawrence Spicket River Greenway*

The Spicket River Greenway in Lawrence is envisioned as a three-mile long "emerald bracelet" of green spaces and walking paths connecting parks and open space through multiple neighborhoods. The Greenway will link parks in north Lawrence including Manchester Street Park, William Kennedy Community Park, Hayden Schofield Playstead, Immigrant Park, Dr. Nina Scarito Park, Misserville Park, and the proposed Oxford Paper Site and Ferrous Site Parks. The Greenway starts in the Lower Tower Hill Neighborhood at the Methuen line through the Arlington Neighborhood, the North Common Neighborhood and ending in the Downtown Canal District. The Greenway also connects Lawrence schools: Central Catholic High School, the Leahy School, and the Leonard School. Portions of the Greenway exist formally in the parks, but also informally in the streets and sidewalks along the river. Significant improvements and requirements for these improved connections are outlined below:

- Manchester Street Park to Broadway
    - At present, pedestrians can travel on a sidewalk along Manchester Street from the front of La Frutería to Broadway where they can cross at the traffic signal towards William Kennedy Community Park.

- The City has received funding from the DCR Recreational Trails program to fund partial construction of a connecting path from Manchester Street Park to the dam across Stevens Pond. Design and construction documents were completed with previous DCR Recreational Trails grant funds, easement and ownership issues are currently being address.
- The College Street Management redevelopment of Malden Mills has included the Greenway in their design plans. From the dam to Broadway, a sidewalk with buffering plants will be constructed between the river and their parking area. This sidewalk will link users to a crosswalk and light at Broadway.

- Broadway to Hampshire Street
  - From Broadway, the sidewalk is the best access to William Kennedy Community Park's portion of the Greenway. At Kennedy Park, users can walk along the river on an off-road pathway. At the Central Catholic Parking lot, however, the pathway stops and continues as an informal worn grass path to Hampshire Street. The gap from Kennedy Park to Hampshire Street is 0.1 miles or 530.'
- Hampshire Street to Hayden Schofield Playstead at Lawrence Street
  - Across Hampshire Street, on the south side of the Spicket, is a street that dead ends into the City DPW Yard. The DPW yard is fully enclosed and there is no room at present for a trail between the yard and the river. If improvements are made at the Yard a trail along the river would come out at Bennington Street and the Mary Immaculate Nursing Home. The Nursing Home property abuts the river and has a small sitting area along the river, but trail development would require significant coordination at their site. The benefit to a trail here would be at Lawrence Street where the trail is at the same grade as the road. The city would conceivably not need a conservation or public use easement from the property owners as their property does not extend to the river. The City owns the actual river bank on both sides in this location. The distance from Hampshire Street to Lawrence Street through the Mary Immaculate Property is 0.15miles
  - Across Hampshire Street, Erving Avenue runs along the north side of the Spicket. There is no sidewalk along Erving Avenue, but as discussed in the Arlington Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy, it has a wide right-of-way and relatively low vehicle volumes.[1] Erving Avenue's vehicle travel widths could be narrowed and a landscaped walkway constructed along the river. The distance from Hampshire Street to the Hayden Schofield Playstead along Erving Avenue is 0.2 miles, with a street crossing required at Bennington Street. Near the Portuguese Club, between Bennington Street and the start of the pathway at the Playstead, is an area currently used as a taxi stand. A formal curb and sidewalk would better define the space for pedestrians and vehicles.
  - For a distance of 0.1 miles, the Hayden Schofield portion of the Greenway sits above the playing fields along an abutment and chain link fence. The path is mostly an informal footpath, but is highly used. To reach Lawrence Street, however, a trail user must ascend stairs.
- Lawrence Street to Jackson Street at Immigrant Park
  - Erving Avenue runs along the north side of the Spicket to Jackson Street, crossing Short Street at about the halfway point. As previously mentioned Erving

[1] August 2009; Community Opportunities Group, Inc. with Land Strategies Group LLC, Connery Associates, and Public Planning, Research and Implementation, Inc. Arlington Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy.

Avenue is wider than necessary and could be narrowed for a landscaped walkway on the river side. The distance to Hampshire Street is 0.3 miles. At Short Street however, trail users could cross the Spicket to access Immigrant Park.

- The south side of the river at Lawrence Street is the dead end of Marion Avenue at the Farrah Funeral Home. Marion Avenue dead ends into a fence at a large vacant property behind a housing complex. The property is owned by the City and shows evidence of informal pedestrian use along the river. A preliminary design for a trail here includes fence removal, path construction and accommodation at Marion Avenue for the light traffic that is necessary for the funeral home. The distance from the end of Marion Avenue to Short Street through the vacant property is 0.1 miles. After Short Street a trail user could use the existing path at Immigrant Park as mentioned above. Immigrant Park has a riverside trail briefly that cuts across the park to the sidewalk at Chestnut Street.

- Jackson Street to East Haverhill Street
  - For less than 0.1 mile the river in this portion is channelized and has little access to the banks; however two streets dead-end at the river (Lincoln Court and Albion Street). Businesses that abut the river here include two auto bodies, a church, and a restaurant. Pedestrian access directly along the river would require access down to the bank as it is lower than the street level, and then access under or over the bridge at East Haverhill Street. Also, the bridge over the Spicket at East Haverhill Street is currently undergoing reconstruction and will be minimally reconfigured.
  - An alternative route of the Greenway would be to proceed south along Jackson Street to Elm Street, and then east to East Haverhill Street to Brook Street. The vacant lot on the corner of Brook Street and East Haverhill could have a formal access point to the river at Brook Street.
- E. Haverhill Street at Brook Street to Dr. Nina Scarito Park
  - Between the East Haverhill Street Bridge and Dr. Nina Scarito Park on the South bank of the river are a vacant lot, an auto body shop and a private residence. The vacant lot, owned by the City, is eyed as community garden space that could also provide access to the river bank. A trail along the river is feasible, but coordination and cooperation from those adjacent owners would be necessary as their properties appear to extend to the river's edge. This is a location that a conservation or other public easement would be necessary for behind the auto body shop as city park property extends behind the private residence. The distance from E. Haverhill Street to Dr. Nina Scarito Park is less than 0.1 miles.
  - The trail at Dr. Nina Scarito Park is a little more than 0.1 mile along the river.
- Downstream from Dr. Nina Scarito Park – Misserville Park and the Oxford Paper Site
  - The river from Scarito Park picks up speed and depth and the banks are steeper than in other locations in the city. Properties along the river here have steep walls as their river banks and with walls and fences blocking their access to the river. Misserville Park at the Leonard School has a pathway along and access to the river, but at the General Street Bridge and downstream to the Oxford Paper site, views of the river are through fencing and from high walls. Behind Lawrence General Hospital's parking lot, there seems to be space for a trail, but access would need to be configured down from General Street. There is a footbridge 0.1 mile from General Street that connects the parking lot with 1 Canal Street and the Oxford Paper Site. Conservation or public access easements would be required behind LGH parking but the end of the footbridge is on City property.

- There is a park design for the Oxford Paper Site as part of the Gateway Project. The Gateway Project also includes improvements to Canal Street and the bridge over the Spicket from Marston Street. The park design includes passive recreation and a trail along the river. The park construction is currently only partially funded.

### *Lawrence Riverwalk Trail*

The Riverwalk Trail was originally envisioned as a north side and south side recreational loop with possible spurs to adjoining communities in the future; the initial phase of the project has been scoped as a 10-12 foot wide walkway stretching along the 1.2 mile southern side of the Merrimack from I-495 to the Great Stone Dam. There is strong community support for the project and extensive stakeholder meetings have been held since 2005. Design and engineering is at 75%. The Riverwalk project stands to greatly improve opportunities for bike and pedestrian-oriented riverfront recreation, will spur further economic development and reinvestment in Lawrence's downtown, and enhance local and regional connections in concert with other communities' capital improvements throughout the Merrimack Valley. The Riverwalk project is envisioned as a public/private partnership project, the first of its kind in the City of Lawrence. Additional support and schematic design is in place along the east end of the island to the Duck Bridge. The Union Crossing mixed-use development is a primary driver for trail development along the former Southwick mill. The very end of the east island is known as the "Ferrous Site" and is privately owned, but undeveloped. Trail development at the Ferrous site would tie in directly with the proposed Spicket River Greenway at the mouth of the Spicket River. Buildings on the central island extend all the way to the river's banks, so a continuous trail to the dam would require creative design and easements. At the west end of the island, Pemberton Park already has riverfront access with a trail that goes almost to the base of the dam. The distance of a continuous trail from the Ferrous site to the dam is 1 mile

A Riverwalk trail on the south side of the Merrimack could also connect Riverfront State Park and the Abe Bashara Boathouse along the south side of the Merrimack all the way to 495 and to a potential trailhead of the Shawsheen River Trail. This distance would be almost 2.5 miles of off-road trail. A Riverwalk Loop, crossing the river at the dam and the Duck Bridge would connect the two ends of the island and be 2.5 miles of trail along the Merrimack River. The demand for these trails will grow with continued private development on the island with Washington Mills, Monarch on the Merrimack, Forest City Project and Union Crossing bringing more residents looking for active recreation near their homes.

Upstream of the dam on the north side of the river are residential, wooded, or institutional parcels. Closest to the dam are small warehouses with trucking needs and then the Boys and Girls' Club. Almost a mile upstream from the Boys and Girls' Club is a large parcel owned by the City of Lawrence Water Department. This parcel is mostly open land with the water department facility. It is also tends to flood with high storm events. Some residents in the adjacent Tower Hill Neighborhood have expressed interest in Open Space Plan discussions to develop this parcel into public open space and river access. Further upstream from the Water Department Property are properties that are predominantly wooded at the river's edge. The river bank is steep from Riverside Drive to the water and while undeveloped, is also not very accessible by any public access from the roadway. Trail development would require private easements and construction of safe public access. As the river passes through Methuen, the riverfront begins to be dominated again by manicured lawns and private residences.

### *Canal Walk*

Both the North and South Canals begin at the Great Stone Dam and empty into the Merrimack River. The North Canal is just over a mile long and empties out near the outfall of the Spicket River while the South Canal is about half as long and goes underground near the New Balance Factory on Merrimack Street. The North Canal has a maintained sidewalk, trees and benches that are maintained by the Lawrence Heritage State Park while the South Canal is sparse in amenities. For pedestrians walking a loop of the canals, some small improvements at the South Canal would be necessary to cross the driveway access at the New Balance Factory. At the intersection of South Union and Merrimack Street, the sidewalk on the north side of Merrimack Street stops as it crosses the truck and vehicle access. The sidewalk picks up again after less than 0.1 miles. Currently, many New Balance employees park west down Merrimack Street at a parking lot and groups walk down Merrimack Street safely, but for a safer walking environment or destination historic trail, accommodation to distinguish pedestrian space from truck traffic would be necessary. Changing the driveway configuration or rerouting the pedestrians are obviously options, but creative traffic calming design could also work to designate a shared space for pedestrians and cars.

The loop around the Duck Bridge to the Great Stone Dam is almost 2 miles. When the Gateway Project is complete including the new bridge from Island Street to Canal Street, the combination of way-finding and historical signage will create a destination for residents and visitors to Lawrence looking to explore the industrial legacy, immigrant history and open space amenities.

Recommendations for opening up access to the Merrimack River and enhancing the Canal and adjacent streetscapes have been described in several planning documents including the *Lawrence Canal District Revitalization Strategy* by MassDevelopment and the City of Lawrence, the *Lawrence Reconnaissance Report of the Essex County Landscape Inventory* by the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program, *Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy* by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission and the *2004 Open Space Plan* by the City of Lawrence. These documents can be consulted for further information.

### *Neighborhood Connections – Connecting homes, business, parks, and schools*

Lawrence residents are walkers and bikers for both exercise and local transportation. Bikers travel on sidewalks and on streets but do not have designated bicycle lanes. Like most urban areas, Lawrence streets are not simply means of getting from one end of town to another, but locations of commerce and socialization. Lawrence has sidewalks on many of its streets; however they are in various conditions, and as discussed elsewhere in this memo, do have gaps in coverage. For the Arlington Neighborhood, the Arlington Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy discusses the condition of the roads and sidewalks and the impact on community character and safety. Lawrence streets are vibrant locations in the city with tremendous potential for activity on foot and wheel. The dense street network with underutilized alleyway connections provides exciting possibilities for pedestrian-centric and creative use. A focus on improving connections between and within neighborhoods could lead to a study of Lawrence's arterial streets. Arterials are the streets which provide direct long distance connection between towns and cities while local roadways and collectors access local land use, service local trips and connect to the higher level arterials. [2]

[2] MA Department of Transportation, Office of Transportation Planning; "*Functional Classification Definition*", http://www.eot.state.ma.us/default.asp?pgid=content/planDefinition&sid=about (accessed 3 November 2009)

The major arterials in Lawrence that connect to our neighboring communities include Broadway (Rt. 28), Andover Street, Riverside Drive, South Union Street, Winthrop Avenue (Rt. 114), Merrimack Street, Lawrence Street, and East Haverhill Street past Marston Street (Rt. 110). These avenues serve as "gateways" to Lawrence including our roads adjacent to the major highways like Canal Street, Marston Street and Haverhill Street (Rt. 110). In addition to bringing neighboring communities in and through Lawrence, these roads are the main thoroughfares of cross-town travel for Lawrence residents and school children. Safe and attractive streetscape improvements include maintained sidewalks, street trees and furniture, crosswalks, and defined curb cuts as well as bicycle accommodations.

Neighborhood Connector Streets provide means of travel within neighborhoods – connecting the parks and schools and places of business within a smaller region of the City. These streets sometimes have lower traffic speeds, more parking and serve the residents' needs more than the regional community. Two examples of organized street inventory and design guides include the City of St. Louis and Los Angeles. While significantly larger in total than Lawrence, these two projects focused their efforts in their downtown cores and can serve as models for similar analysis in Lawrence. The Downtown St. Louis Project explores and views road improvements as more than just physical improvement of the roadway, but a way to increase economic development and social capital in a neighborhood. Their Great Streets Program looks to create vibrant places to live and work that include street and streetscape design as the catalyst for that development. [3]

The City of Los Angeles created design guidelines for the bulk of their downtown area that includes street standards and a focus on human scale building interactions. The street standards include reconstruction widths for all roadways in the downtown based on use (bus route, pedestrian need, land use) with an emphasis on "alternatives to the automobile and wider sidewalks." [4]

These two comprehensive street design guidelines could serve as a model for Lawrence and its neighborhoods to engage residents in creation and enhancement of pedestrian spaces. Because Lawrence is a dense urban community and mostly built out, more of the residents' time is spent interacting with the street dominated urban landscape than with open space respite in parks. Parks serve the need of the community for passive and active recreation, but people's day to day lives are played out through the streets and sidewalks, thus street and sidewalk improvements can affect community character and neighborhood identity as much as large park amenities.

As Lawrence is a city of neighborhoods, a combination neighborhood scale organization of roads and land use with city-wide organization of arterials and gateways can create a comprehensive transportation plan (including bus, car, bikes and pedestrians). Example recommendations for streetscape improvements could include bicycle lanes and signage, road striping to define travel lanes, normal and enhanced crosswalks at intersections, and sidewalk and street tree maintenance. Some locations adjacent to schools, parks, or community centers may be better served by traffic calming devices to alert drivers that there are more pedestrians in an area. Determination of what is appropriate in a certain instance is best decided by the experts-the residents and youth who use the streets and sidewalks daily.

---

[3] St. Louis Great Streets Initiative, http://www.greatstreetsstlouis.net/ (accessed 10 November 2009)

[4] The City of Los Angeles; "*Downtown Design Guide*" and "*Downtown Street Standards"*, http://www.urbandesignla.com/downtown_guidelines.htm (accessed 10 November 2009)

*Parker Street* is a link from North Lawrence to South Lawrence across the Central Bridge and also ties into Rt. 114 at Winthrop Avenue. Immediately adjacent to Parker Street is the South Branch of the Lawrence Public Library, St. Patrick's School, and McDermott Park. Bringing together this South Lawrence neighborhood could define what pedestrian paths are currently used and why as well as create a plan that includes traffic control and pedestrian protection near the schools and library.

*Winthrop Avenue* (Rt. 114) extends into the Town of Andover and is a gateway street to Lawrence. Adjacent to Winthrop Avenue is Stockton Park, Sullivan Park, Veterans Memorial Stadium, and Den Rock Park. In addition, the newly constructed Lawrence High School is on Rt. 114. Many students walk to the high school and the sidewalk does not extend fully to Den Rock Park. Winthrop Avenue near the high school has had a history of pedestrian accidents and is obviously highly traveled. Improvements discussed have included a pedestrian "bridge" over the roadway. Bridges generally signal that a community has given their roads to the auto. Better pedestrian-focused design near the school and analysis of the pedestrian traffic can be used to create a safe space for pedestrians, bikers, and drivers.

*South Union Street* extends from the Town of Andover across the Merrimack River into North Lawrence across the Duck Bridge. Union Street is adjacent to the South Common, the MVRTA Train Station, the North Canal, and the Leonard School. This heavily trafficked corridor includes buses, pedestrians, bikers, cars and many individuals heading to the train station, high school, Leonard School, Lawrence General Hospital and downtown Lawrence. The intersection with the MVRTA Station could be improved to identify it as an entrance to Downtown Lawrence and direct pedestrians to other places in the City through way-finding signage.

Other Gateway Streets that connect the City to the region could undergo similar improvements as the examples above and they include:

- Merrimack Street
- Andover Street to River Road
- Lawrence Street
- Marston Street
- E. Haverhill Street
- Lowell Street
- Haverhill Street
- Riverside Drive
- Jackson Street
- May Street
- Broadway

Neighborhood Connector Streets serve residents' needs for connection and interaction within a smaller scale than the regional connections. Residents live on these streets and travel to work or to the broader Gateway streets to get to school or work. These streets are where residents come home and should reflect the character of the neighborhood.

Important Neighborhood Connector Streets include

- Park St
- Arlington Street
- Mt. Vernon Street
- Salem Street

- Manchester Street
- Cross Street
- Beacon Street
- Osgood Street
- Erving Avenue
- Berkeley Street

Other streets of neighborhood importance could be identified through focused neighborhood charrettes, traffic counts, and pedestrian analysis.

## Merrimack Valley Region Existing and Potential Trail Network

### *Methuen*

*Spicket River Greenway and Rail Trail north to New Hampshire*

There is an active Rail to Trail Group in Methuen working to convert the 2.5 miles of rail bed that runs north from the Lawrence border to their border with Salem. The group sees the rail trail as two sections – from downtown Methuen to Lawrence and from downtown Methuen north to Salem. Through the City's Energy Block Grant funding, the group will be able to conduct an Engineering Feasibility Study which can lead to design. The existing rail bed is owned by the MBTA who can lease it to the city for $1/year for 99 years. The Methuen Rail Trail Group has initiated the agreement with the MBTA who would then provide maps of the area. The abutters to the potential Rail Trail include the MSPCA at Nevins Farm, private commercial property and a significant amount of conservation land including the Mass Audubon Bird Sanctuary. The Rail Trail connection in Lawrence would be at Manchester Street Park. The rail line is on an abutment that sits above the park between it and Currant Hill Road and there is enough property and grade sufficient to construct a ramped path down to the park and tie in with the Spicket River Greenway. The park area used to have several rail spurs that were removed through years of changes at the site and then the final spurs were removed during park construction. At the Methuen line an existing rail line sits on a bridge crossing the Spicket into Malden Mills. The bridge is owned by the City of Lawrence and could connect the park-side Greenway to a loop around the pond and further connection to the Spicket River Greenway in Methuen.

The City of Methuen is also pursuing park and trail projects along the Spicket River. In 2009, the City received EOEEA P.A.R.C. funding to complete a passive riverside park and downtown parking area at the former Appleyard Trucking Site. The site is less than one acre and would build on the downtown Spicket Riverwalk at Riverwalk Park on Osgood Street in Methuen. Riverwalk Park, rebuilt in 2009, connects the retirement community on Gleason Street to other downtown locations. Between the Appleyard Trucking Site and Manchester Street Park on the Spicket River is another park adjacent to an area that has seen flooding in the recent large storms. Abutters to the Spicket that have existing informal trails include an assisted living facility, commercial properties, and the Methuen Memorial Music Hall. Just before entering Stevens Pond and Lawrence, the river snakes through the Malden Mills property and there is a small bridge that crosses the river as part of the factory complex. Creation of a river trail here would require coordination and agreement with Malden Mills for access. As mentioned above, a loop of Stevens Pond is possible across the railroad bridge into the Malden Mills property as is continuing the trail north into Methuen along the Spicket. From the Appleyard Trucking Site at the intersection of Lowell and Hampshire Streets it is 1.5 miles to the Lawrence line along the river. A Stevens Pond loop

would add almost ½ mile of trail and the distance from Manchester Street Park along the Rail Trail to Appleyard Trucking at Lowell Street would be approximately 1 mile.

*Merrimack River*

Methuen also has a few parks along the northern bank of the Merrimack River downstream from Lawrence and a few upstream as well. There is no large scale effort to connect these parks with a trail system, but currently the areas are mostly residential and developed. The MVPC shows property along the Merrimack for Priority Open Space Acquisition. The Shoreline Survey by the Merrimack River Watershed Council notes there is significant development but very little access to the riverfront.

## *North Andover*

*Sutton Street East to Haverhill*

Part of North Andover's Osgood Landing Development Site is approved as a Priority Development Site and another portion has been designated as a 40R Smart Growth Overlay. Adherence to the site's Master Plan will create a smart growth centered development with pedestrian and non-vehicular accommodations necessary along Rt. 125. From Lawrence, the main route to Osgood Landing is along Sutton Street east from Merrimack Street. With development centered along Merrimack Street and Sutton Street designated as priority transportation projects, non-vehicular and pedestrian accommodations should be part of the plan and design for this area. Currently employees at Osgood Landing can take the train to Lawrence and find bus service to Osgood Landing. Safe pedestrian and bicycle ways would greatly improve the corridor as a whole. The south bank of the Merrimack River from the Lawrence line through North Andover has little access or development because the MBTA tracks and power lines parallel the river into Haverhill. Limiting access to the MBTA lines would make trail provisions here difficult.

*Rail Trail south*

An inactive rail line runs from near the intersection of Sutton Street at 495 south through North Andover skirting the Machine Shop Village District, residential areas, and open space into Middleton. Accessing this potential rail-trail in Lawrence would tie the community to a large recreation amenity.

*Shawsheen River Trail*

The Shawsheen River has a short stint in North Andover, but that location is directly adjacent to Den Rock Park and a portion of the river that NHESP has recognized as an uncommon natural community (See Open Space Plan Section 4-E and Appendix F). The Shawsheen River, after entering the southern portion of Den Rock Park in Andover, exits the park and crosses Rt. 114 where the river runs between the Market Basket Plaza and a hotel then continues through South Lawrence toward the Merrimack. A continuous trail from Andover through Den Rock and to the mouth of the Shawsheen will require creative pedestrian accommodation at Rte. 114 and the Market Basket Plaza. This portion of Rte. 114 is also identified as a high priority transportation project by the MVPC and they are studying the full corridor but specific improvement near Den Rock Park is not included in the study. A traffic light exists at the Market Basket Plaza but improved signage, trail demarcation, and user safety should be incorporated in development and improvement at this busy traffic area.

*Lawrence hub of trail networks*

The area near the mouth of the Shawsheen at the Merrimack River, Rte. 495 access, and Merrimack and Sutton Streets is currently undergoing intense redevelopment by Sal Lupoli with his Riverwalk Complex. This area could also become a hub of a regional trail network-connecting the Shawsheen Trail, Sutton

Street east to Osgood Landing and Haverhill, and the rail trail south through North Andover. It could also serve as a main launch point for boating trips south on the Shawsheen. This hub in Lawrence would likely draw recreational users from around the region due to its close proximity to 495 and varied recreational activity and could include trail-head amenities such as food, gear, showers, and regional open space information.

### *Andover*

*Merrimack River Trail*

Along the south side of the Merrimack River in Andover, the Andover Improvement Society (AVIS) and the Andover Conservation Commission manage the Merrimack River Trail situated on conservation easements between businesses and the river. A large portion of the riverbank is held in easement or independently by AVIS or the town of Andover Conservation Commission. The easements are 100 feet wide in most cases, but 50 feet in others. Private landholders that granted easements include The Andovers (insurance company), the New England Business Park, New England Power, private homes, a seminary and a school. Establishment of these easements and the trail management are undertaken by passionate volunteers. The Merrimack River trail is not ADA accessible but provides a link to natural areas in Andover and the Bay Circuit Trail at Deer Jump Reservation. The trails also run either on top of or alongside the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District trunk line. The trail ends at the Andover metering station at the Lawrence line behind the Andover Place Apartments on Bullfinch Drive. Trail clearing beyond the metering station into Lawrence would require bush-whacking and trail clearing. Only 0.6 miles from the metering station is the Abe Bashara Boathouse operated by the Greater Lawrence Community Boating Program. The abutter along that location is the Lawrence Riverfront Industrial Park off of River Road and a trail would require coordination as well as creative layout. Behind the Industrial Park and across the Andover line are two large inlets from the Merrimack and from the Boathouse. Directly upstream is another inlet that varies greatly in size with water flow in the river. A trail could be created that circumscribes the inlets and then utilizes existing public and private roadways to cross them or a series of bridges could be constructed to keep trail users separate from the businesses.

From the Boathouse, trails exist further east to Riverfront State Park. At Riverfront State Park the trail ends in the residential neighborhood at Shattuck Street where there is a gap in the sidewalk to Broadway for .1 miles. A riverside path would provide a view of the Great Stone Dam and power plant facilities and 530’ of new sidewalk would essentially create almost a mile of pedestrian access in the city.

## Proposed Goals and Action Items

- Create a Lawrence Trails Committee to spearhead efforts and coordinate with regional trail groups. The Trails Committee can be ad-hoc or officially sponsored by the City but should have access to mapping resources;
- With the Boathouse and Andover Trails Group, engage residential neighbors and commercial neighbors to create a layout for a trail from the Boathouse to Andover;
- Complete sidewalk connecting the Riverfront State Park to the end of the sidewalk at the William X. Wall Experiment Station;
- Engage Greater Lawrence Sanitary District to determine the feasibility of utilizing their network of sewer easements for trail use and create a framework agreement for that use;
- Seek funding with other trail groups for topographic survey of the area between the Abe Bashara Boathouse and the Andover sewer metering station;
- Continue to work with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission’s regional trail meetings and actively seek funding to develop regional trails through MVPC and state transportation dollars.

## Funding resources

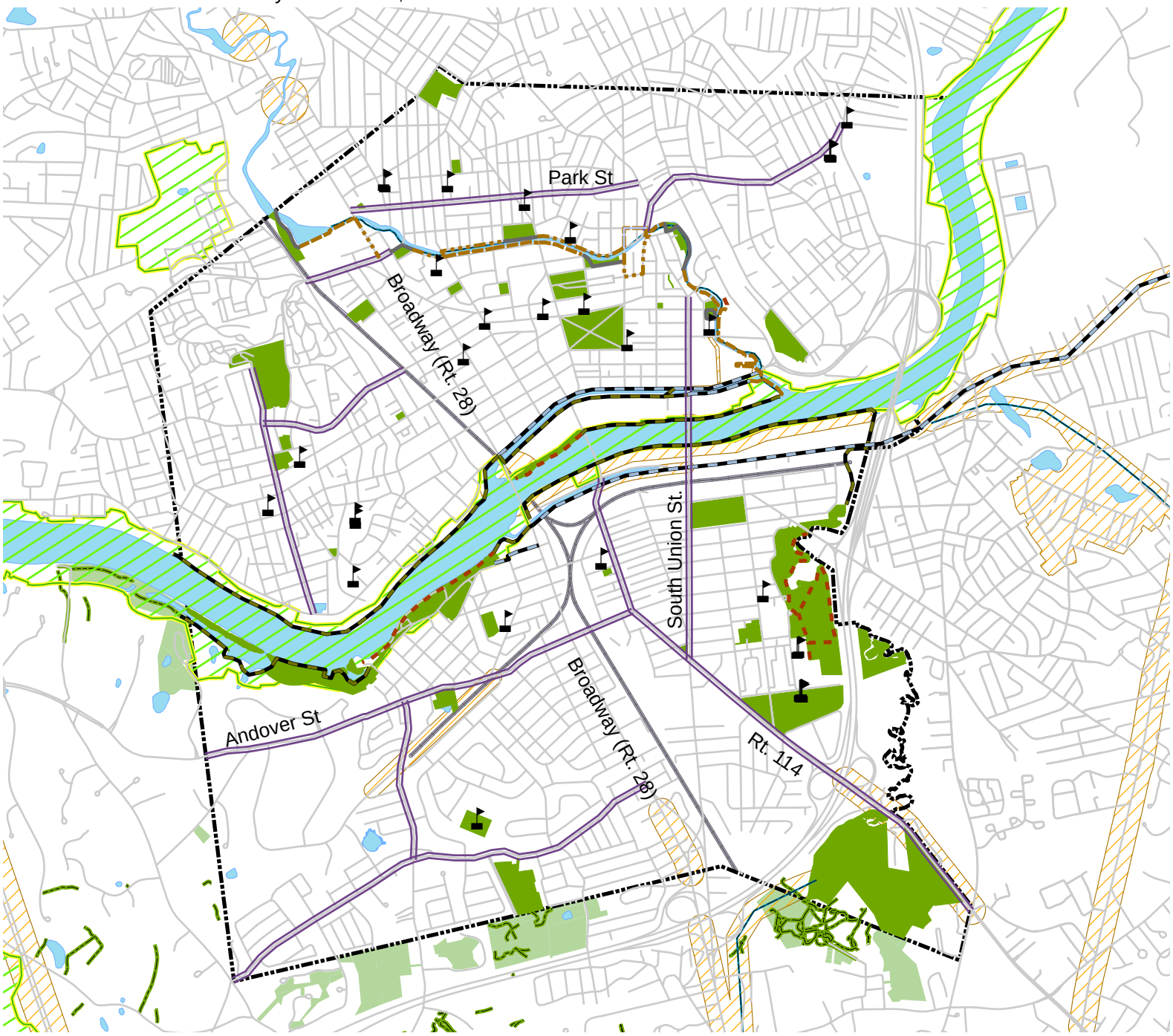
- DCR's Recreational Trails Grant – provides up to $50,000 for a variety of trail protection, construction, and stewardship projects throughout Massachusetts. DCR Recreational Trails grants are 80-20 challenge grants. In other words, 80% of the project costs are reimbursed to grantees, but at least 20% of the total project budget must come from other sources.
    - The City of Lawrence has been successful in utilizing Recreational Trails dollars for survey, design and construction of portions of the Spicket River Greenway.
    - The Town of Andover applied for Recreational Trails funding to construct .45 miles of the Shawsheen River trail but was not successful.
    - The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission has applied for funding to survey the entire Shawsheen Corridor, funding is pending.

  A successful application may be possible by focusing on coordinated efforts of more than one community - enhancing or creating a space that benefits the region as a whole. For example, the intersection of the Shawsheen at Den Rock Park and Rt. 114 would benefit three communities, or the Merrimack River Trail upstream from the boathouse would be a benefit to Lawrence and Andover residents and businesses and draw other communities to the Boathouse and Lawrence.
- Executive Office of Transportation - Transportation Enhancement Program - Eligible projects include development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, educational programs, landscaping, acquisition of scenic easements, historic preservation, restoration of buildings and structures, removal of outdoor advertising, archaeological research, environmental mitigation of stormwater pollution, and establishment of transportation museums. The project must be regional and the regional planning agency must determine whether the project is eligible according to Mass Highway Guidelines.
- Private property owners: Some communities charge a fee or tax to property owners or businesses along a public amenity such as a boulevard, trail or walkway. The fee system can be based on linear frontage and pays for upkeep and maintenance of the open space. Institution of this fee is based on the assumption that adjacent businesses receive a commercial benefit by being adjacent to the public amenity.
- EOEEA – P.A.R.C. Program assists cities and towns in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. Grants are reimbursable up to $500,000 for new park and open space development and require a match.
    - The City of Lawrence has been successful in receiving P.A.R.C. funding for construction of Dr. Nina Scarito Park, Kennedy Community Playstead, Manchester Street Park and the renovation of Misserville Park.
    - Applications to the P.A.R.C. program can also be regional.
- Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET) funds are focused on water quality initiatives and require a match in most instances. MET likes funding projects that draw in several partners including other State funding, private funding and local sources. MET funds up to $50,000 that can be a part of a larger project, impacts water quality, and is replicable for other communities.
- Massachusetts Department of Ecological Restoration (a new State Division of the Department of Fish and Game that includes the Riverways Division) is dedicated to restoring the integrity of waters and streams through partnerships with local stake-holders, state agencies, watershed organizations, federal agencies and other organizations. There is currently a grant pending to designate the Spicket River as a priority site.

- Other regional and national grant programs focused on parks, trails, transportation and public health.

# Local Non-motorized Connections

City of Lawrence, MA




## City of Lawrence
## 2009 Open Space Plan

0 0.10.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 Miles

N

**Legend**

- School

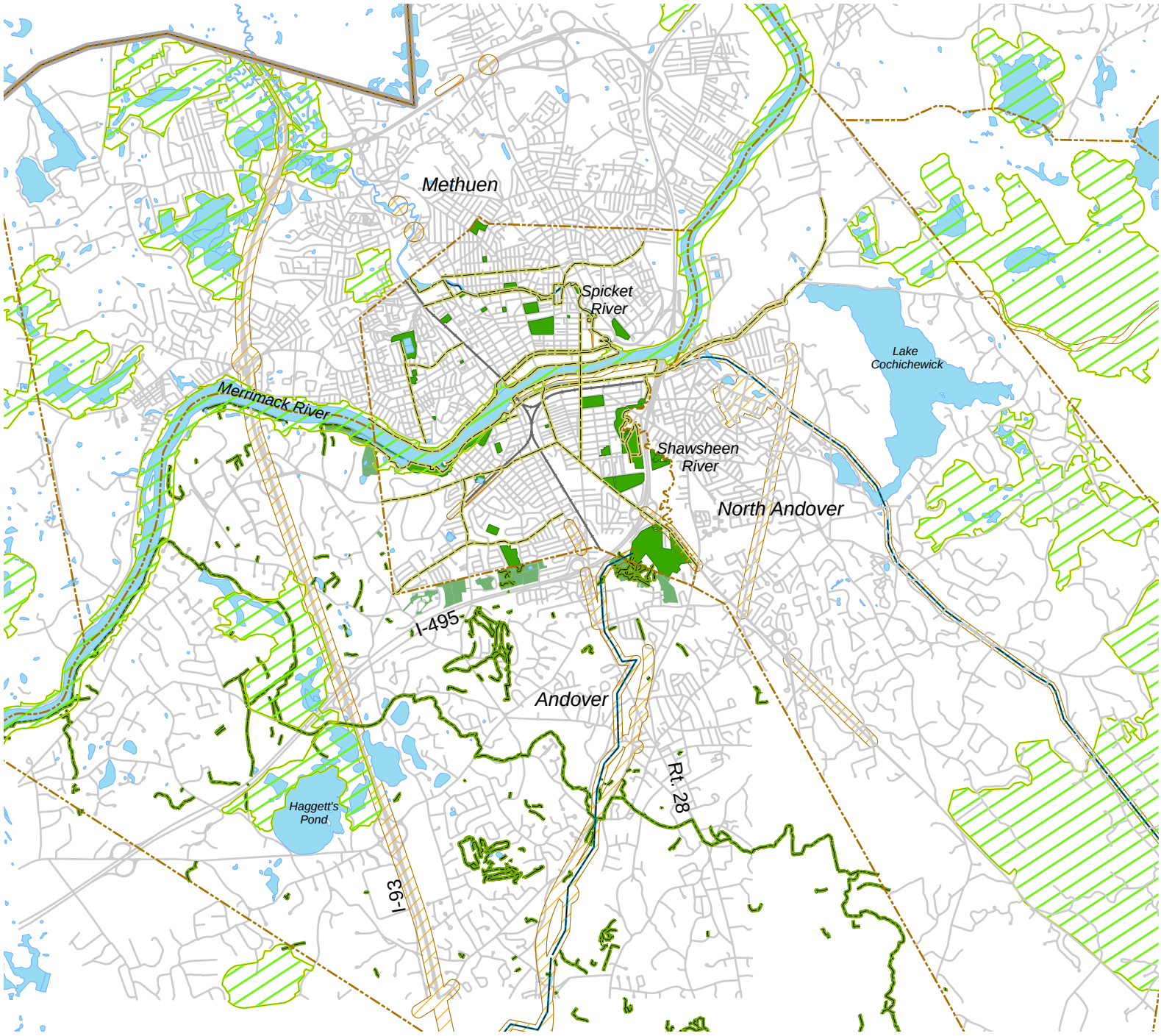
**Lawrence Potential and Existing Paths**

- 0
- Existing Trail
- Off Road Trail - Potential
- Sidewalk or Roadway Improvement
- SRG - Off Road Trail - Potential
- SRG - Sidewalk or Roadside Trail
- SRG - Existing
- Gateway or Neighborhood Connector
- MVPC Proposed Trails
- Lawrence Parks
- NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife
- Andover-Existing Trails
- MVPC High Priority Transp. Projects

*November 2009, Created by Groundwork Lawrence*

# Regional Trail and Transportation Projects

City of Lawrence, MA




## City of Lawrence
## 2009 Open Space Plan

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

N

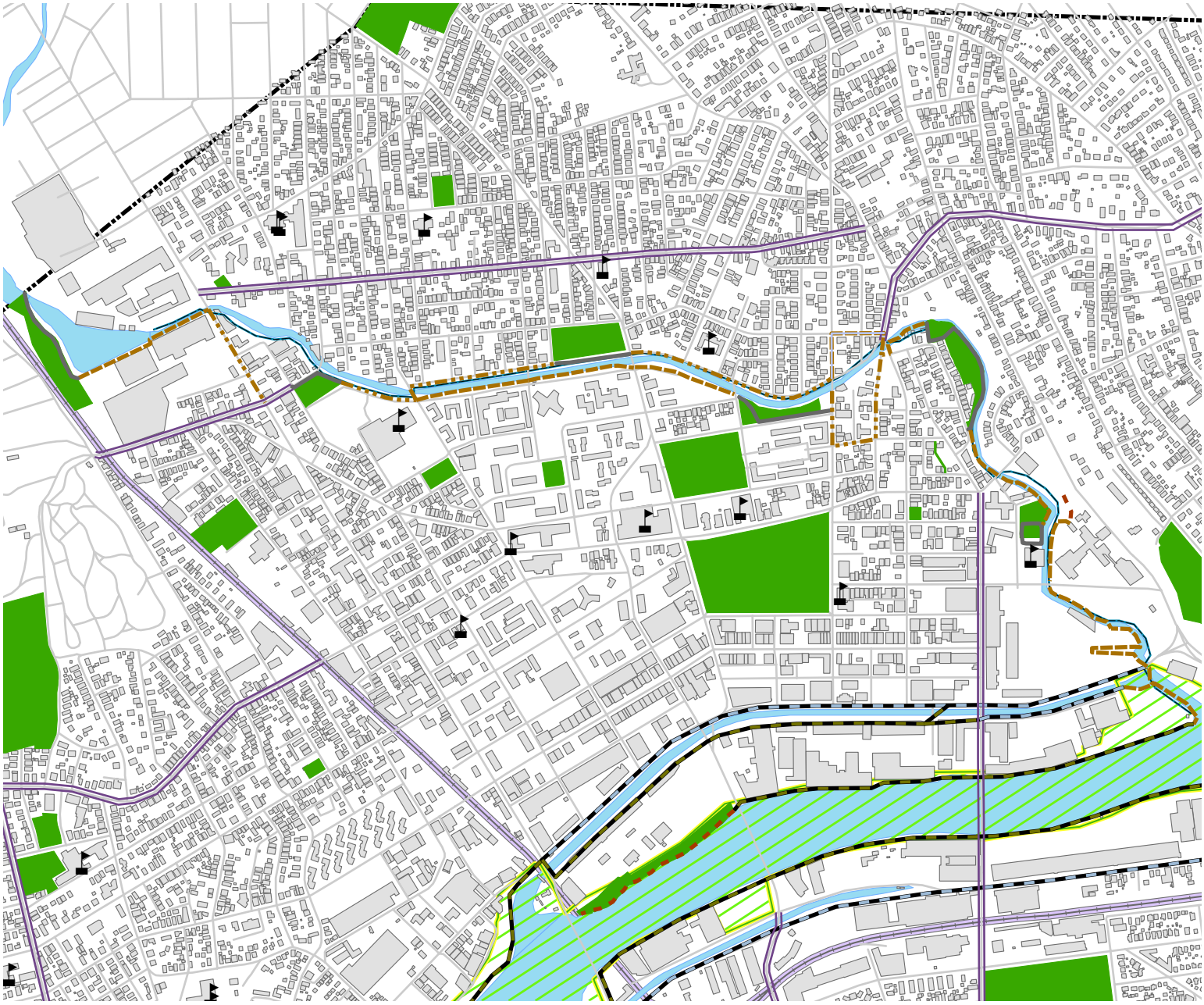
## Legend

- Lawrence Potential and Existing Paths
- MVPC Proposed Trails
- Andover-Existing Trails
- NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife
- MVPC High Priority Transp. Projects
- Community Boundaries

*November 2009, Created by Groundwork Lawrence*

# Spicket River Greenway

City of Lawrence, MA



## City of Lawrence
## 2009 Open Space Plan

0 0.050.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 Miles

N

**Legend**

- School

**Lawrence Potential and Existing Paths**

- 0
- Existing Trail
- Off Road Trail - Potential
- Sidewalk or Roadway Improvement
- SRG - Off Road Trail - Potential
- SRG - Sidewalk or Roadside Trail
- SRG - Existing
- Gateway or Neighborhood Connector
- Lawrence Parks
- MVPC Proposed Trails
- Building_Polys_2008_Lawrence
- NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife
- Andover-Existing Trails

*November 2009, Created by Groundwork Lawrence*