

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN 2026-2036



**2026-2036** - Approved through the end of July 2036

# Open Space and Recreation Plan

**PREPARED FOR**



Town of Montague,  
Massachusetts

**PREPARED BY**



260 Arsenal Place #2, Watertown,  
Massachusetts 02472-4026

**August 2026**

## Acknowledgements

This Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) was developed with the guidance and oversight of the OSRP Steering Committee, whose leadership and commitment helped shape the direction and priorities of this document. The planning process benefited from the insight and expertise of local, regional, and statewide stakeholders, as well as the thoughtful participation of Montague community members who shared their perspectives, experiences, and ideas. Their collective contributions were critical in identifying the community's needs and opportunities and will continue to inform the Town's efforts to protect and enhance its open spaces and recreation resources.

### OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

- ▶ Maureen Pollock, Director of Planning & Conservation
- ▶ Jon Dobosz, CPRP, Director of Parks & Recreation

### COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

- ▶ Jill Banach, APR Stewardship Planner, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
- ▶ Andy Brydges, Community Relations Director, First Light Power
- ▶ Shannon Callahan, UMass student
- ▶ Bryan Camden, Turners Falls Municipal Airport Manager
- ▶ David Celino, DCR Chief Fire Warden
- ▶ Liam Cregan, Land Conservation Specialist, Franklin Land Trust
- ▶ Matt DiBona, Director of Land Stewardship, Mount Grace Land Trust
- ▶ Mackenzie Greer, Legislative and Partnership Coordinator, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation West & Central Regions
- ▶ Jeff Hildreth, Superintendent, Turners Falls Water Department
- ▶ Paul Jahnige, Director, Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation
- ▶ Seth Kelley, Community Conservation Program Manager, Mount Grace Land Trust
- ▶ Walker Korby, Turners Falls Fire District and Montague Tree Advisory Committee
- ▶ Chelsey Little, Clean Water Facility Superintendent, Town of Montague
- ▶ Suzanne LoManto, RiverCulture Program Director, Town of Montague
- ▶ Tyson Neukrich, Farm Conservation Program Manager, Mount Grace Land Trust
- ▶ Ryan Paxton, Public Health Director, Town of Montague
- ▶ Joe Roger, Connecticut Valley District Supervisor, MassWildlife Division of Fish & Game
- ▶ Dave Small, Conservation Director, Mount Grace Land Trust

- ▶ Rachel Stoler, Montague Board of Health member/Montague resident
- ▶ Thomas Taaffe, Executive Director, Brick House Resource Center
- ▶ Sam Urkiel, Department of Public Works Superintendent, Town of Montague
- ▶ Jenna Weld, Montague resident

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

- ▶ Mark Fairbrother, Chair
- ▶ Justin Fermann, Vice Chair
- ▶ Al Averill
- ▶ Tobias Carter
- ▶ Donna Francis
- ▶ Margaux Reckard
- ▶ Tony Reiber
- ▶ Sean Werle

## PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

- ▶ Barbara Kuklewicz, Chair
- ▶ Ken Danford, Vice Chair
- ▶ Jeffrey Singleton, Secretary

## Table of Contents

|                                                                                                       |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>1. Executive Summary .....</b>                                                                     | <b>8</b>   |
| <b>2. Introduction .....</b>                                                                          | <b>9</b>   |
| Statement of Purpose .....                                                                            | 10         |
| Planning Process & Public Participation .....                                                         | 10         |
| <b>3. Community Setting .....</b>                                                                     | <b>13</b>  |
| Regional Context.....                                                                                 | 13         |
| Population Characteristics .....                                                                      | 16         |
| Growth & Development Patterns .....                                                                   | 22         |
| <b>4. Environmental Inventory &amp; Analysis .....</b>                                                | <b>33</b>  |
| Geology & Topography.....                                                                             | 33         |
| Soils .....                                                                                           | 34         |
| Recreational Resources.....                                                                           | 36         |
| Water Resources .....                                                                                 | 41         |
| Vegetation .....                                                                                      | 48         |
| Fisheries & Wildlife.....                                                                             | 51         |
| Climate Change.....                                                                                   | 58         |
| Environmental Challenges .....                                                                        | 61         |
| Scenic Resources & Unique Environments .....                                                          | 69         |
| Significant Geologic & Special Landscape Features.....                                                | 73         |
| <b>5. Inventory of Lands of Conservation &amp; Recreation Interest .....</b>                          | <b>75</b>  |
| Open Space & Recreation Land Protections .....                                                        | 76         |
| <b>6. Needs Analysis .....</b>                                                                        | <b>97</b>  |
| Natural Resource Protection Needs .....                                                               | 97         |
| Community Outdoor Recreation Needs.....                                                               | 100        |
| Management Needs .....                                                                                | 103        |
| Alignment with the 2023 Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor<br>Recreation Plan (SCORP)..... | 104        |
| <b>7. Goals &amp; Objectives .....</b>                                                                | <b>106</b> |
| <b>8. Ten-Year Action Plan .....</b>                                                                  | <b>107</b> |
| Planning for Implementation .....                                                                     | 105        |
| <b>9. References .....</b>                                                                            | <b>119</b> |
| <b>10. Appendices .....</b>                                                                           | <b>122</b> |



## List of Tables

|                                                                                                                                |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table 1: Montague Population and Household Data (2000-2020) .....                                                              | 16  |
| Table 2: Montague Median Household Income 2023.....                                                                            | 17  |
| Table 3: Montague Environmental Justice Block Groups .....                                                                     | 19  |
| Table 4: Montague Land Use Distribution (2005) .....                                                                           | 26  |
| Table 5: State-Listed Rare Species Documented in Montague.....                                                                 | 56  |
| Table 6: Town of Montague Properties Managed by the Conservation Commission .....                                              | 80  |
| Table 7: Montague Municipal Recreation Lands .....                                                                             | 80  |
| Table 8: Municipal Permanently Protected Lands: Turners Falls Fire District and Montague Center Water District (Summary) ..... | 82  |
| Table 9: Municipal Cemeteries.....                                                                                             | 82  |
| Table 10: Municipal Public Facilities: Limited Level of Protection .....                                                       | 83  |
| Table 11: Municipal and Regional Public School Land: Limited Level of Protection .....                                         | 85  |
| Table 12: State and Federally Owned Protected Land (Summary) .....                                                             | 86  |
| Table 13: Temporarily Protected Private Lands in Chapter 61 Forestry.....                                                      | 88  |
| Table 14: Temporarily Protected Private Lands in Chapter 61A (Agriculture).....                                                | 90  |
| Table 15: Temporarily Protected Private Lands in Chapter 61B (Open Space & Recreation).....                                    | 92  |
| Table 16: Land Protected by Conservation Restrictions.....                                                                     | 93  |
| Table 17: Land Permanently Protected by APR In-Perpetuity .....                                                                | 94  |
| Table 18: Other Parcels: Easements .....                                                                                       | 96  |
| Table 19: Unprotected or Limited Protection Utility Company Land (Summary) .....                                               | 96  |
| Table 20: Other Privately-Owned Open Space.....                                                                                | 96  |
| Table 21: Funding Sources .....                                                                                                | 109 |
| Table 22: Municipal Permanently Protected Lands: Turners Falls Fire District and Montague Center Water District.....           | 123 |
| Table 23: State and Federally Owned Protected Land.....                                                                        | 127 |
| Table 24: Municipal Land With Limited Protection.....                                                                          | 130 |
| Table 25: Unprotected Utility Company Land on the Montague Plains.....                                                         | 131 |
| Table 26: Additional Unprotected Utility Company Land in Montague .....                                                        | 131 |
| Table 27: Utility Company Land with Limited Protection in Montague.....                                                        | 134 |

# List of Figures

Figure 1: Regional Context.....15

Figure 2: Age distribution in Montague.....17

Figure 3: Environmental Justice .....21

Figure 4: Historic Resources.....23

Figure 5: Zoning .....25

Figure 6: Land Use (2005) .....27

Figure 7: Existing Infrastructure .....32

Figure 8: Soils & Geologic Features.....35

Figure 9: Trails .....39

Figure 10: Water Resources .....42

Figure 11: Plant & Wildlife Habitat .....52

Figure 12: Climate Change .....60

Figure 13: Environmental Challenges.....62

Figure 14: Unique Features .....72

Figure 15: Open Space Inventory .....77

Figure 16: Action Plan ..... 108

## List of Acronyms

**ACEP:** Agricultural Conservation Easement Program  
**ACS:** American Community Survey  
**APR:** Agricultural Preservation Restriction  
**CDBG:** Community Development Block Grant  
**CMR:** Code of Massachusetts Regulations  
**CPA:** Community Preservation Act  
**CR:** Conservation Restriction  
**CWF:** Clean Water Facility  
**DCR:** Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation  
**DPW:** Department of Public Works  
**EJ:** Environmental Justice  
**EOEEA:** Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
**EPA:** United States Environmental Protection Agency  
**FEMA:** Federal Emergency Management Agency  
**FERC:** Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
**FIRMs:** Flood Insurance Rate Maps  
**FRCOG:** Franklin Regional Council of Governments  
**FRTA:** Franklin Regional Transit Authority  
**GIS:** Geographic Information Systems  
**LAND:** Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity  
**MCC:** Mass Cultural Council  
**MCP:** Massachusetts Contingency Plan  
**MDAR:** Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources  
**MESA:** Massachusetts Endangered Species Act  
**MassDEP:** Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection  
**MassDOT:** Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
**MassGIS:** Massachusetts Geographic Information System  
**MFSP:** Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program  
**M.G.L.:** Massachusetts General Laws  
**MOTT DDC:** Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism Destination Development Capital Grants  
**MVP:** Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness  
**NFIP:** National Flood Insurance Program  
**NHESP:** Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program  
**ORV:** Off-Road Vehicle  
**OSRP:** Open Space and Recreation Plan  
**PARC:** Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities  
**RTP:** Recreational Trails Program  
**SCORP:** Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan  
**SRF:** State Revolving Fund  
**UCF:** Urban and Community Forestry  
**USDA:** United States Department of Agriculture  
**USFS:** United States Forest Service  
**USGS:** United States Geological Survey  
**WMA:** Wildlife Management Area

# Executive Summary

The Town of Montague's 2026–2036 Open Space and Recreation Plan provides a comprehensive framework for protecting natural resources and expanding equitable access to recreation. The Plan builds on recent local planning efforts and reflects extensive public engagement, including focus groups, public forums, and a community survey.

Montague's rural character is shaped by its five distinct villages, including: Lake Pleasant, Millers Falls, Montague Center, Montague City, and Turners Falls, each surrounded by an extensive natural landscape defined by forests, farms, rivers, and wetlands. Much of the Town's open space is permanently or semi-protected from development, managed through a patchwork of municipal and state agencies, nonprofit land trusts, and private landowners. Despite Montague's strong legacy of conservation, the Town faces mounting pressures from climate change, invasive species, water quality concerns, and aging infrastructure, all of which threaten the long-term health and accessibility of its natural resources.

Demographic trends, including an older population and income inequality across different neighborhoods, highlight disparities in access to parks, safe walking routes, and transportation. Many residents—particularly those without vehicles—report limited ability to reach open space and recreational facilities. Public input indicates strong demand for improved trail connections, expanded river access, more shade and climate-resilient amenities, safer bike infrastructure, and accessible, family-friendly parks.

Based on these community needs, the Plan identifies eight core goals to guide Montague's future open space and recreation investments, programming, and policies, along with detailed strategies to meet each goal. The goals include: expanding equitable access, creating inclusive and climate-ready recreation spaces, improving communication and wayfinding, sustaining working lands, conserving habitats and forests, balancing conservation with recreation, protecting water resources and floodplains, and strengthening municipal capacity through partnerships and sustainable funding.

# Introduction

---

# 1

The Town of Montague is home to significant and varied open spaces, including forests, farms, parks, rivers, and lakes. These open spaces provide residents and visitors with the opportunity to engage in a range of recreational activities, from hiking and birdwatching to biking and organized sports. Montague's forests and wetlands also provide numerous ecological benefits and support biodiversity.

Open space includes conservation land, forested land, recreation land, agricultural land, corridor parks and amenities such as small parks, green buffers along roadways or any open area that is owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation.<sup>1</sup> Open spaces exist in many forms, including public (e.g., parks) or private (e.g., farms), natural (e.g., forests and wetlands) and landscaped (e.g., gardens and athletic fields) features.

This Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) builds on previous planning efforts, in particular the 2017 OSRP and 2024 Comprehensive Plan, while incorporating new research, public input, and an updated understanding of current challenges and opportunities. It sets a vision and goals for Montague's open space and recreation planning over the next 10 years, while providing specific actions and implementation steps to allow Montague to meet that vision. The planning process spanned approximately six months and was jointly led by the Town's Planning & Conservation and

---

<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2025.). *Open space and recreation plan workbook*. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-space-and-recreation-planners-workbook-with-appendices-updated-in-2025/download>

Parks & Recreation Departments, with numerous opportunities for residents to provide input and shape the Plan's goals.

## Statement of Purpose

This 2026 Open Space & Recreation Plan establishes goals and actions to guide Montague's conservation and recreation efforts over the next ten years. As a rural community with significant land area dedicated to open space, Montague aims to preserve and enhance existing natural resources while expanding equitable access to outdoor recreation. The following strategic goals outlined in this Plan will guide Montague's next decade of actions related to open space planning and conservation:

1. Expand equitable access to parks and open space
2. Create inclusive, climate-ready recreation amenities
3. Improve communication about recreational opportunities
4. Build capacity through coordination and sustainable funding
5. Conserve connected habitats and core forests
6. Protect and restore water resources and floodplain systems
7. Sustain working lands and healthy landscapes
8. Balance conservation and recreation needs in trail management and river access

Montague intends to use these goals and associated actions to implement open space and recreation improvement projects and guide investments and planning processes.

## Planning Process & Public Participation

The open space and recreation planning process was conducted over a period of approximately six months. The process is summarized as follows:

### ► Kickoff Meeting and Community Tour

To begin the OSRP planning process, the contracted consultant and town staff from the Planning & Conservation Department and the Parks & Recreation Department met to review the project scope, timeline, and key objectives. This meeting provided a foundation for identifying priority issues and opportunities related to Montague's open space and recreation resources. Following the discussion, staff led the consultants on a guided tour of key sites throughout town, providing firsthand insights into significant open spaces, recreational facilities, and areas of concern across Montague's five villages.



► **Baseline Conditions Assessment**

The Baseline Conditions Assessment involved a review of past and recent planning documentation, including the 2024 Montague Comprehensive Plan and the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program 2.0 community engagement results. The project team also reviewed data from the U.S. Census Bureau, MassGIS, and input received from stakeholders and the community. This Plan builds heavily upon the findings of the Town's 2017 OSRP. This assessment and public input informed the identification of Montague's current open space and recreation issues and opportunities.

► **Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

The public engagement process for the OSRP solicited community input through multiple channels, including targeted focus group discussions, public meetings, and an online survey. The project team organized three focus group interviews to gather input from those who use and manage open space in town. The focus groups covered the following topics:

- **Focus Group 1:** Conservation and recreation landowners and stewards. Participants included staff from state and local agencies and conservation land trusts with properties in Montague.
- **Focus Group 2:** Access and equity. Participants included residents and community leaders, including several residents who had participated in the recent MVP 2.0 planning process.<sup>2</sup>
- **Focus Group 3:** Local officials. Participants included staff from the Planning & Conservation, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, and Public Health Departments, as well as the RiverCulture Program, Clean Water Facility, and Turners Falls Municipal Airport.

Montague held two virtual public forums as part of the OSRP planning process. The first meeting reviewed current conditions related to open space and recreation and solicited community input on needs and priorities. The meeting included polling questions and open-ended discussion to understand how residents currently use open space, challenges they face, and their ideas for the future.

Montague held the second public forum after a draft plan had been completed and shared with the public. The purpose of this meeting was to review and get community input on the draft goals and actions. Following the second public forum, the project team revised the goals and actions to incorporate community feedback.

The project team also presented the draft plan at a joint meeting of the Conservation Commission and Parks & Recreation Commission in April 2026. Discussion at this meeting focused on the plan's goals and actions, and input from members of the Commissions was incorporated into the final plan.

To gather broad public input, the Town also published an online community survey in the fall of 2025. 107 residents responded to the survey. The Town publicized the survey and public forums on the Town's website, in email newsletters, and by posting

---

<sup>2</sup> Town of Montague (n.d.). *Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) 2.0 Core Team*. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/1554/>

fliers in strategic locations throughout town. The survey was also translated into Spanish, and six respondents completed the survey in Spanish.

► **Needs Analysis**

Informed by existing planning studies, stakeholder discussions, and an evaluation of the Town's existing open space and recreational resources, the team identified resource protection needs by assessing natural resources and environmental challenges and determining current facility usage and future recreational demands. The team reviewed regional and statewide planning efforts, including the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), to align local priorities with broader initiatives. The Needs Analysis examined management needs to assess the Town's capacity to maintain and enhance its open space and recreational assets for residents of all ages.

► **Planning for Implementation**

The Ten-Year Action Plan provides a roadmap for implementing each recommended action in the plan. The implementation matrix included in this section outlines these actions, specifying the champion, estimated costs, timeframes, and potential funding sources, providing guidance for successful execution.

## **Enhanced Outreach & Public Participation**

The Town of Montague has four census block groups that meet the state's environmental justice (EJ) criteria for income, located in the villages of Turners Falls and Montague City. As part of the OSRP process, Montague held a focus group on Equity and Access, which included individuals familiar with the concerns faced by residents of Turners Falls. This focus group covered topics such as transportation options for no-vehicle households to open space, impacts of extreme heat, and opportunities for partnerships with schools and other community organizations. Input from this focus group was crucial in understanding community needs and developing the goals and actions reflected in this plan.

All residents of Montague, including residents of these EJ census block groups, had the opportunity to participate in the two public forums and complete the community survey. The public forums were held online to facilitate participation of those without easy access to a vehicle. The Town promoted the survey through email outreach, the Town website, social media channels, and coverage in the local newspaper, the Montague Reporter. Paper copies were made available at Town Hall, Montague Public Libraries, and Montague-based social service organizations, including the Brick House Community Resource Center and the Heartwing Healing Center. 48 survey respondents, or 38 percent, indicated that they live in Turners Falls, the highest of any village.

To gather input from residents with limited English proficiency, the community survey was translated into Spanish and shared both online and in a printed format with Spanish-speaking residents. Six of the 107 survey responses were completed in Spanish.

# Community Setting

---



## Regional Context

The Town of Montague is nestled in the Connecticut River Valley at the confluence of the Connecticut River and Millers River. It is situated within Franklin County in northwestern Massachusetts, stretching across 30.1 square miles. Montague is bounded from the north-northeast by the towns of Gill and Erving, from the east by the town of Wendell, from the south by Leverett and Sunderland, and by Deerfield and Greenfield from the west (see **Figure 1**). The Town is characterized by the five distinct historic villages where development is concentrated: Lake Pleasant, Millers Falls, Montague Center, Montague City, and Turners Falls (see **Figure 6**). Montague is accessible through state routes 2, 47, and 63, and Interstate 91.

Montague is defined by its variety of scenic landscapes, varying from plains, agricultural fields, forests, rivers, and wetlands. The western segment of Montague is distinguished by rich floodplains lands along the Connecticut River Valley while the rest of the Town is characterized by hilly landscapes. Many of Montague's environmental assets belong within a regional network of natural resources, from forested land to water bodies. The Connecticut, Millers, and Sawmill River corridors stretch across several towns.

Much of the rich biodiversity and wildlife that span Montague and the surrounding area are protected from development, either by private landowners or by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. These lands are either managed for forestry, wildlife, or open space. Montague is part of a significant landscape corridor that spans an area from the Connecticut River to the Quabbin Reservoir. The Montague Plains, one of the largest inland pine-scrub oak communities in the state, is protected across an area that spans Montague, Sunderland, Greenfield, and Leverett. Additional forested lands stretch from eastern Montague to Wendell, and to Mount Toby State Forest in Sunderland.

In addition to its abundant natural landscapes, Montague is also known for its rich historical and cultural context. Inhabited by indigenous tribes for more than ten thousand years, the area where Montague is located was known as “the Great Falls”, where people would gather by the falls during the annual fish migration season.<sup>3</sup>

Numerous state, regional, and local organizations play a role in conserving, protecting, managing, and maintaining the health of the natural resources within Montague. Key state agencies and regional organizations include the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, the Millers River Watershed Council, Connecticut River Conservancy, and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Non-profit and community organizations include Mount Grace Land Trust, Franklin Land Trust, Brick House Community Center, and the Heartwing Center.



Image 1: Connecticut River – Source: Town of Montague

Montague’s rivers have historically been, and continue to be, an important source of energy. Companies operate hydroelectric facilities along the Connecticut River in Turners Falls and Millers Falls. FirstLight, the main hydroelectric operator, provides public amenities and recreational facilities as negotiated in licensing processes through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

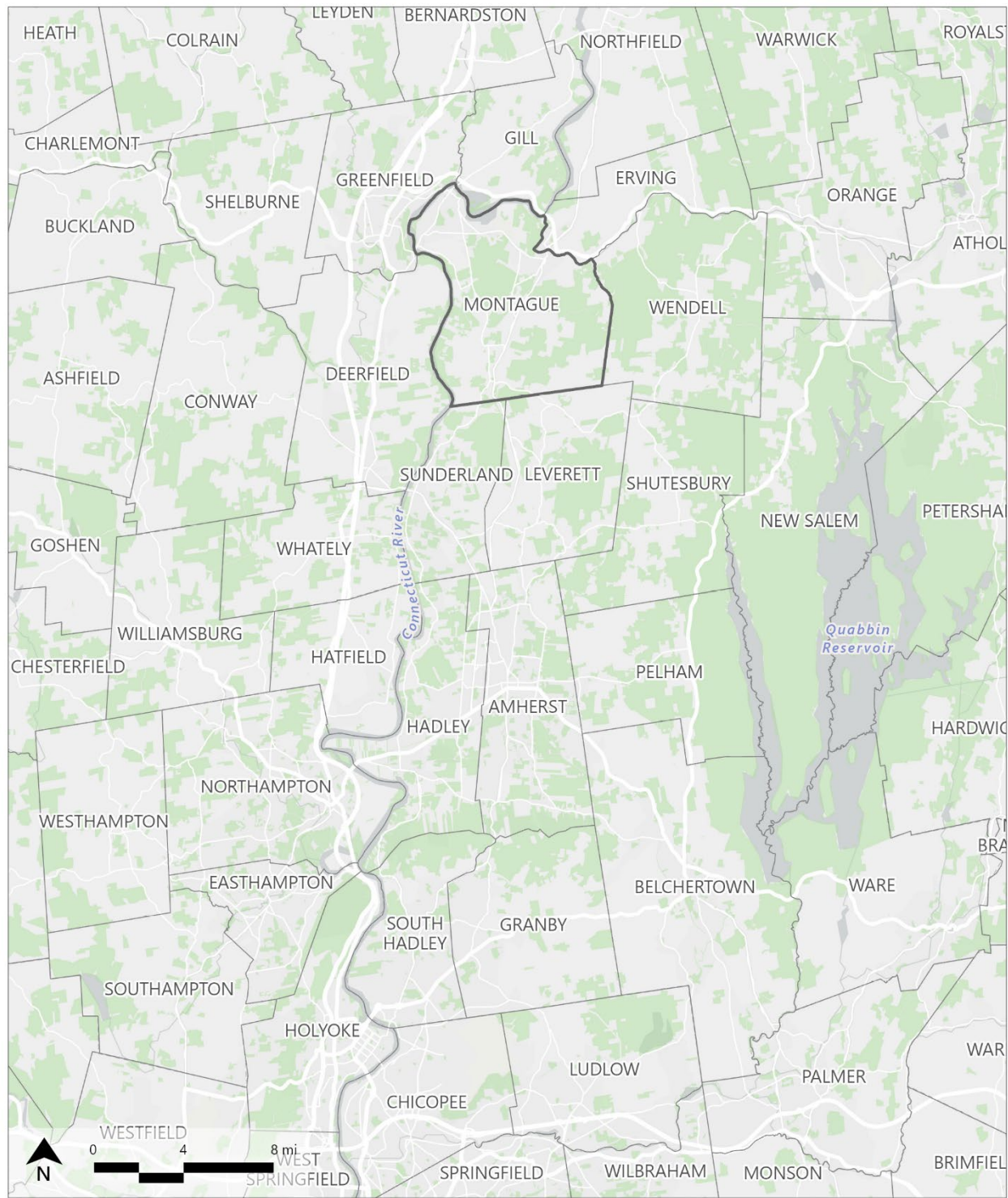
Montague’s natural resources offer opportunities for recreational activities such as fishing, hiking, birdwatching and boating. The Town provides numerous recreational and open space opportunities to serve residents and visitors, including bike paths, a skate park, playgrounds, parks, and sports fields. Montague continues to invest in recreational opportunities, including playground and park renovations.

---

<sup>3</sup> Town of Montague. (n.d.). *History of the villages*. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/20/History-of-the-Villages>



Figure 1: Regional Context



Source: MassGIS

## Population Characteristics

### Population Trends, Density & Household Data

As of the 2020 U.S. Census, 8,580 residents within 3,892 households lived in Montague, making it one the largest towns in Franklin County.<sup>4</sup> The population declined from 8,451 to 8,011 between 1970 and 1980, a change that corresponds with the decline of the local manufacturing industry. Since then, the population has steadily increased over recent decades, as noted in Table 1.

**Table 1: Montague Population and Household Data (2000-2020)**

| Census Year | Total Population | Households | % Children Under 18 | % Seniors (65+) | Population Density (per sq. mile) | % Hispanic |
|-------------|------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 2000        | 8,489            | 3,616      | 23%                 | 16.5%           | 281                               | 2.5%       |
| 2010        | 8,437            | 3,694      | 18.5%               | 16%             | 279.8                             | 5.1%       |
| 2020        | 8,580            | 3,892      | 14.4%               | 20.9%           | 284.6                             | 6.2%       |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000, 2010, 2020)

According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 2023 five-year estimates, 94 percent of Montague's 3,930 housing units are occupied, with 61 percent being owner occupied.<sup>5</sup> This indicates a low vacancy rate and a balanced housing market between renters and homeowners. Montague's population density reflects the Town's rural character with abundant open space that is relatively sparsely populated.

### Income and Employment

Montague has a median household income of \$72,344, which is comparable to the median income of Franklin County, and two-thirds of the state's median household income (\$72,584 and \$101,341 respectively) (see Table 2).<sup>6</sup> Between the 2018 and 2023 five-year estimates, the median household income in Montague increased by 35 percent, while it increased 22 percent overall in Franklin County, and 31 percent overall in Massachusetts.<sup>7</sup> The unemployment rate in Montague as of 2023 was 6.1 percent, similar to Franklin County and higher than the overall Massachusetts unemployment rate of 5.1 percent. Approximately 10 percent of Montague's population lives in poverty.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics. *Decennial Census, DEC Demographic Profile, Table DP1*.  
<https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALDP2020.DP1?q=population+and+household+data+montague+massachusetts&q=060XX00US2501142285&y=2020>.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). Tenure. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25003*, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.B25003?q=B25003&q=060XX00US2501142285>.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). Median Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2023 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars). *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1903*, from [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1903?t=Income+\(Households,+Families,+Individuals\):Income+and+Poverty&q=040XX00US25050XX00US25011060XX00US2501142285&moe=false](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1903?t=Income+(Households,+Families,+Individuals):Income+and+Poverty&q=040XX00US25050XX00US25011060XX00US2501142285&moe=false).

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). Median Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2018 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars). *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1903*, from [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2018.S1903?t=Income+\(Households,+Families,+Individuals\):Income+and+Poverty&q=040XX00US25050XX00US25011060XX00US2501142285&moe=false](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2018.S1903?t=Income+(Households,+Families,+Individuals):Income+and+Poverty&q=040XX00US25050XX00US25011060XX00US2501142285&moe=false).

**Table 2: Montague Median Household Income 2023**

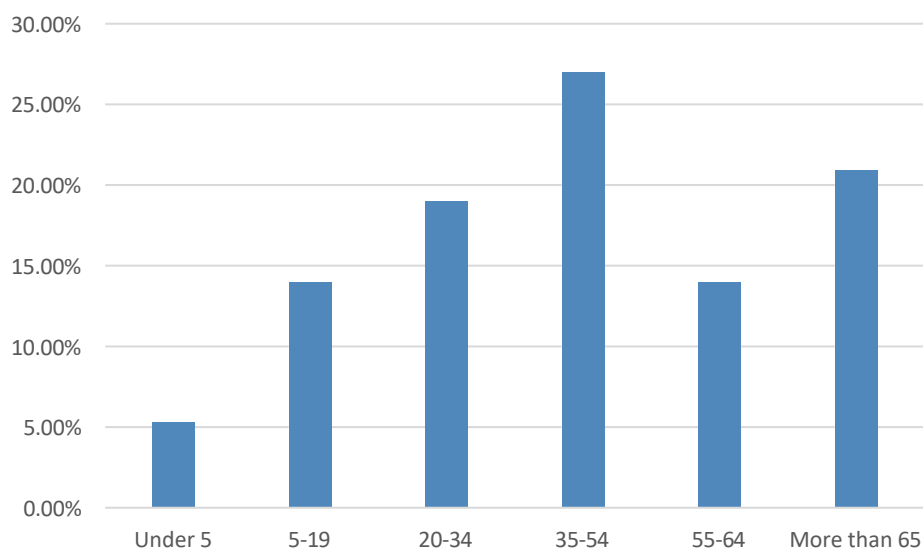
|                        | % of Households Under \$50K | % of Households \$50K - \$100K | % of Households \$100K - \$200K | % of Households Over \$200K | Unemployment Rate % | % Below the Poverty level |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Montague</b>        | 35.2%                       | 32%                            | 29.1%                           | 3.7%                        | 6.1%                | 10.3%                     |
| <b>Franklin County</b> | 34.3%                       | 30.7%                          | 27.2%                           | 7.7%                        | 6.2%                | 12.2%                     |
| <b>Massachusetts</b>   | 26.3%                       | 23.1%                          | 29.5%                           | 21.1%                       | 5.1%                | 10%                       |

Source: ACS Five-Year Estimates (2023-2019): Tables S1701, S1901, S2301

## Age

**Figure 2** identifies the 2023 age distribution of Montague’s population. Almost a third of Montague residents are seniors, indicating a need for accessible recreation spaces for those above the age of 65. The median age is 44.3, slightly less than the Franklin County median age of 47.3. In recent years Montague’s younger and middle-aged groups have increased more than the senior age group.<sup>8</sup> Data indicates that the number of younger families in town is growing, leading to a strong younger adult presence.

**Figure 2: Age distribution in Montague**



Source: ACS Five-Year Estimates (2023-2019): Table DP1

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics. *Decennial Census, DEC Demographic Profile, Table DP1*.  
<https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALDP2020.DP1?q=population+and+household+data+montague+massachusetts&q=060XX00US2501142285&y=2020>.

## Recreational Needs by Age Group

Recreational needs vary by age, requiring diverse programming and accessible spaces.

- ▶ **Children Under Five:** Recreation for young children typically occurs under parental supervision and close to home due to travel constraints. This age group benefits from structured preschool programs that foster essential skill development. Parents of young children also seek safe walking areas and family-oriented recreation opportunities such as playgrounds. **Children under five make up 5.3 percent of Montague's population.**<sup>9</sup>
- ▶ **Adolescents:** This age group often finds engaging in traditional, structured programs with adult supervision difficult. Instead, they prefer activities where they have input in decision-making. Effective programs include adventure-based activities such as rock climbing, skateboarding, hiking, concerts, cookouts, dances, and sports. **Adolescents make up 8.2 percent of Montague's population.**
- ▶ **Adults:** The recreation needs of adults vary considerably based on interests, ability, and income levels. Some adults enjoy recreation activities such as hiking or biking, while others participate in gardening, birdwatching, or sports like tennis and golf. People in this age group who are parents may accompany their children to playgrounds and organized sports activities. **Adults age 20 to 54 make up 46 percent of Montague's population.**
- ▶ **Seniors:** Recreational needs differ across age groups within the senior population. Recreation preferences may include walking, golf, tennis, swimming, and therapeutic recreational services. **Seniors make up 20.9 percent of Montague's population.**
- ▶ **Residents with Disabilities:** Participation in recreational activities varies based on individual abilities. Some individuals can join general programs with little or no modification, while others require specialized accommodation. Accessibility must be evaluated and improved according to the Americans with Disabilities Act Section 504. Improvements may include removing physical barriers and providing staff training to support inclusive recreation. **Residents with disabilities make up 19.5 percent of Montague's population.**<sup>10</sup>

Parks and other recreational facilities can also support intergenerational activities, where families and groups of mixed ages can enjoy outdoor recreation together. For example, Unity Park in Turners Falls has amenities for residents of all ages and is frequently enjoyed by families spending time together.

## Environmental Justice & Equity

Environmental Justice (EJ) populations are defined by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) based on one or more of the following criteria at the Census block group level:

---

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). Age and Sex. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101*. <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S0101?q=S0101:+Age+and+Sex&q=060XX00US2501142285>.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). Disability Characteristics. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1810*. <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1810?q=S1810:+Disability+Characteristics&q=060XX00US2501142285>.



- **Income:** The annual median household income is 65 percent or less than the statewide annual median household income.
- **Minority:** 40 percent or more of the population is composed of minorities.
- **Linguistic Isolation:** 25 percent or more of households identify as speaking English less than very well.
- **Population composition + Median Income:** 25 percent or more of the population is composed of minorities and the annual median household of the municipality does not exceed 150 percent of the statewide annual median household income.<sup>11</sup>

The Commonwealth's EJ Policy seeks to ensure meaningful engagement and equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens in communities meeting these criteria.

Within Montague, four Census block groups along the Connecticut River in Turners Falls and Montague City meet the EJ income criteria (see **Table 3**). According to the ACS 2019-2023 5-year estimates, 3,904 individuals reside in this area, including 702 residents under 18 years of age and 834 residents over age 65 (18 percent and 21.4 percent respectively).

**Table 3: Montague Environmental Justice Block Groups**

| Block Group, Census Tract          | Total Population | Households | Median Household Income (\$) | Median Household Income (%) | Minority (%) | Limited English Household (%) | Area (acres) |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Block Group 1, Census Tract 407.02 | 998              | 325        | \$40,491                     | 48%                         | 18.4%        | 0%                            | 609          |
| Block Group 2, Census Tract 407.01 | 1,282            | 548        | \$25,339                     | 30%                         | 23.1%        | 1.5%                          | 118          |
| Block Group 3, Census Tract 407.01 | 871              | 453        | \$54,696                     | 64.8%                       | 15.7%        | 0%                            | 392          |
| Block Group 4, Census Tract 407.01 | 885              | 432        | \$40,000                     | 47.4%                       | 6.9%         | 1.9%                          | 218          |
| <b>Montague</b>                    |                  |            | <b>\$59,364</b>              | <b>70.3%</b>                |              |                               |              |

Source: EOEEA GIS: MA 2020 Environmental Justice Block Groups<sup>12</sup>

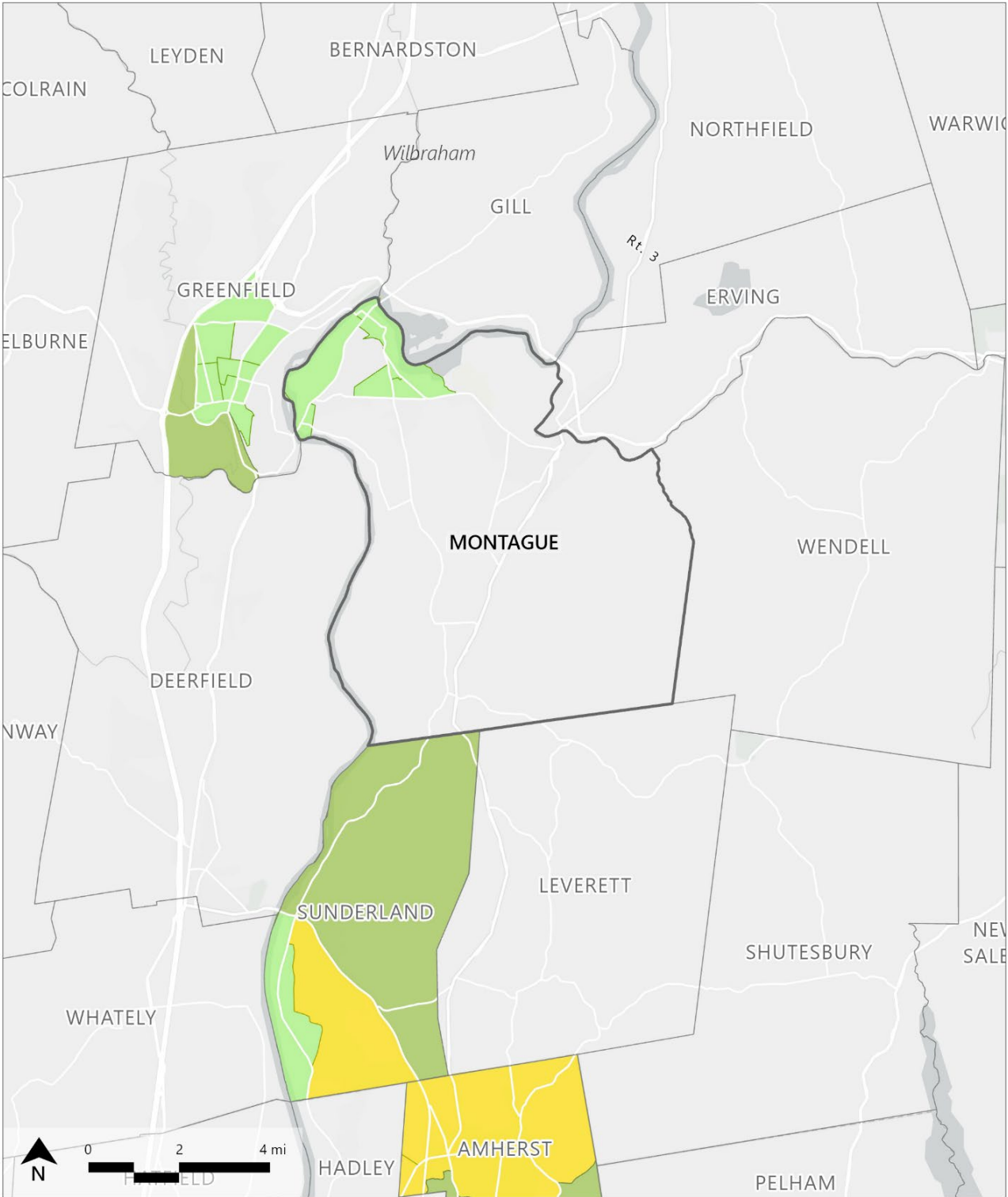
Montague's demographic characteristics influence how residents use parks, trails, and recreational facilities. In the OSRP focus groups, residents noted the limited available and accessible open space in Turners Falls and indicated the need to focus on this part of Montague for future development of open space opportunities. Lower income residents are less likely to have access to a car to travel to outdoor recreation opportunities, making recreational opportunities within Montague's village centers especially important.

<sup>11</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (n.d.). Environmental justice populations in Massachusetts. Mass.gov. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/environmental-justice-populations-in-massachusetts#what-is-an-environmental-justice-population>

<sup>12</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (n.d.). MassGIS data: 2020 environmental justice populations. Mass.gov. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-2020-environmental-justice-populations>

Montague has implemented several climate-focused projects to enhance the quality of life for its residents from an environmental perspective. Montague has been awarded several Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program Grants from the state in recent years, equivalent to more than \$1 million. Some of the major milestone projects include the Road Flooding Protection Project (design and permitting) with a focus on Turners Falls, incorporating climate resiliency in the Town's comprehensive plan, and more recently "The Hill" Neighborhood Green Infrastructure Master Planning, which addresses climate hazards (erosion and flooding) in Turners Falls. These projects indicate the Town's commitment to addressing environmental justice needs, particularly in underprivileged parts of Montague such as Turners Falls.

Figure 3: Environmental Justice



Source: MassGIS

- Income
- Minority
- Minority & Income

## Growth & Development Patterns

In the past, Montague's growth and development patterns varied based on the resources near each village center. Montague Center had established farming lands to the south, west, and north of the village given the fertile soil composition. The Connecticut River allowed for industrial development in Turners Falls. The mills that were established in Turners Falls later expanded to Montague City and Millers Falls with canals, a series of locks, and factories powered by the Millers River. Lake Pleasant remains known for its scenic natural resources, and as a meeting place for spiritual groups starting in the late 19th century to the present day.

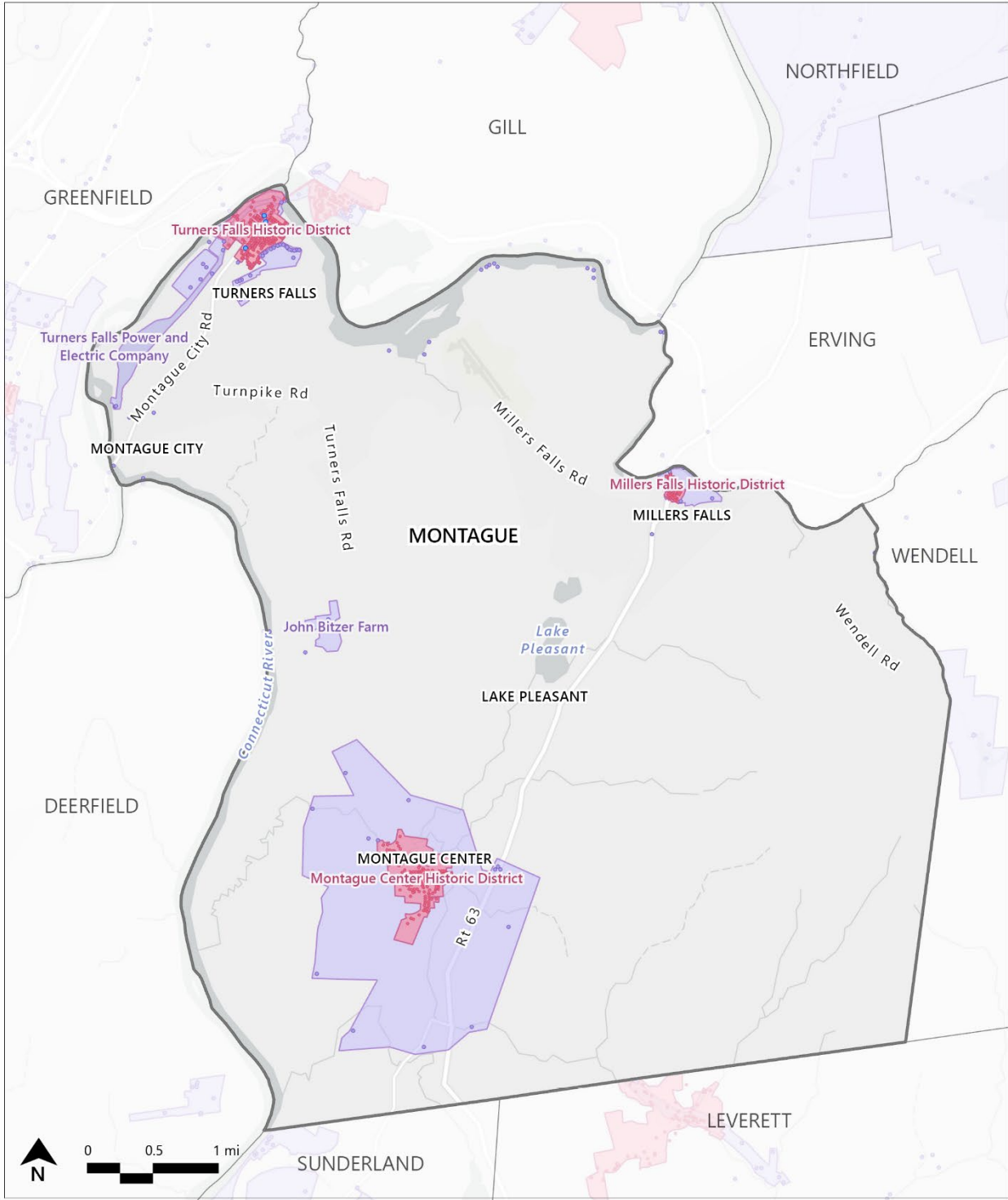
Montague preserved three National Register Historic Districts, in Turners Falls, Millers Falls, and Montague Center (see **Figure 4**), which highlight the early colonial and 19<sup>th</sup> century planned industrial communities that shaped the Town.<sup>13</sup>

Montague has an abundance of natural resources, many of which are protected from development through permanent conservation and zoning restrictions. These protective measures limit growth across these lands, although more recently residential growth has been recorded in the hilly forested areas around Montague Center. Montague residents have a strong interest in preserving and enhancing access to open space. The Town is actively working on various planning projects with a focus on integrating environmental resiliency and social equity measures in future development.

---

<sup>13</sup> Town of Montague. (n.d.). *History of the villages*. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/20/History-of-the-Villages>

Figure 4: Historic Resources



## Zoning Districts

Montague's zoning supports natural resource protection by concentrating development in certain areas while preserving much of the Town as forested or agricultural land. Montague has 12 zoning districts within the categories of residential, business, agriculture-forestry, historic, industrial, and recreation-education zones (see **Figure 5**). All of Montague's zoning districts allow agriculture and forestry on parcels of land exceeding five acres, as well as public parks and off-road recreational paths.

The Agriculture-Forestry zones make up most of the Town's land area, including the Montague Wildlife Management Area, Montague State Forest, Montague Plains, and Watershed Protection Area. These districts protect natural resources and water bodies from most development by allowing only farming, forestry, and single family dwellings by right, and other limited uses by special permit.

Recreation-Education (RE) districts allow for public parks and other recreational uses, as well as educational uses. Residential and most commercial uses are not allowed in this district. Montague City is the only village that does not have a parcel under the RE zone, indicating an opportunity for improving access to open space in the village.

The Residential zones (RS-1 and RS-2) aim to provide possibilities for walkable neighborhoods, either in smaller lots serviced by municipal sewer (RS-1) or parcels that are not serviced (RS-2). Most of the residential zone parcels fall under the RS-1 category, with the RS-2 residential zones located across the edges of the village centers and towards the forested areas.

The Central Business and General Business districts are primarily located in Turners Falls, with portions in Montague City and Millers Falls. A large Rural Business zone extends from Montague Center to Lake Pleasant along Route 63, which could be an opportunity to activate that area between the village residential centers and agriculture forestry areas.

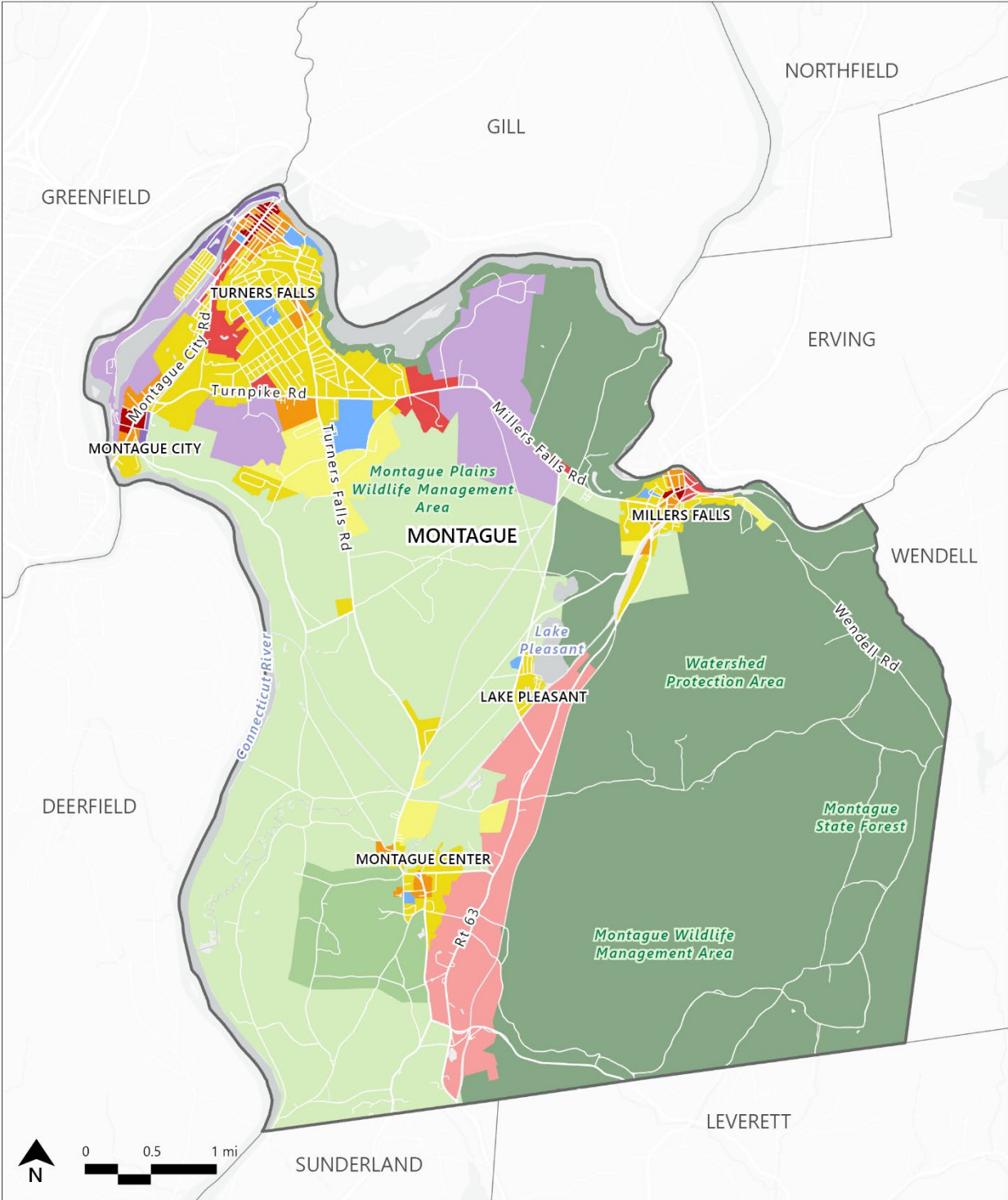
The Historic Industrial (HI) zone allows for the adaptive reuse of industrial buildings, and runs north of Turners Falls along the Connecticut River. Industrial zones include areas along the river and parcels on Millers Falls Road and Turnpike Road.

Montague also has three overlay districts:

- ▶ The Floodplain Overlay District aims to protect development from flooding.
- ▶ The Water Supply Protection District prevents contamination of the surface water and ground water resources that provide public water supply.
- ▶ The Agricultural Business Overlay District promotes commercial agriculture in areas identified as critical agricultural areas.



Figure 5: Zoning



Source: MassGIS

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Residential 2         | Agricultural - Forest 4  |
| Residential 1         | Agricultural - Forest 2  |
| Neighborhood Business | Agricultural - Forest    |
| Central Business      | Historic Industrial      |
| General Business      | Industrial               |
| Rural Business        | Recreational-Educational |

## Land Use Patterns

Montague’s 2024 Comprehensive Plan: Five Villages, One Plan mentions that more than 60 percent of the land in town is protected from development.<sup>14</sup> The plan recommends guiding development to village centers while preserving other areas for open space or agriculture.

A large portion of land in Montague consists of forests such as the Montague Plains and Montague State Forest, with residential hubs clustered in the center of each village (see **Figure 6**). Water bodies and streams also shape land use in Montague, with major rivers present along the northwest border, where several open space and industrial parcels are located. Much of the land along the river is owned by the FirstLight Power Company, and additional development is limited due to conditions FERC places on FirstLight’s ownership and management of this land.

**Table 4** identifies that the top three land uses in Montague are forest (70.5 percent), agriculture (7.6 percent), and water (4.3 percent), indicating that over 80 percent of the Town is not developed. Total residential use is 8 percent, split almost evenly between high and low density.

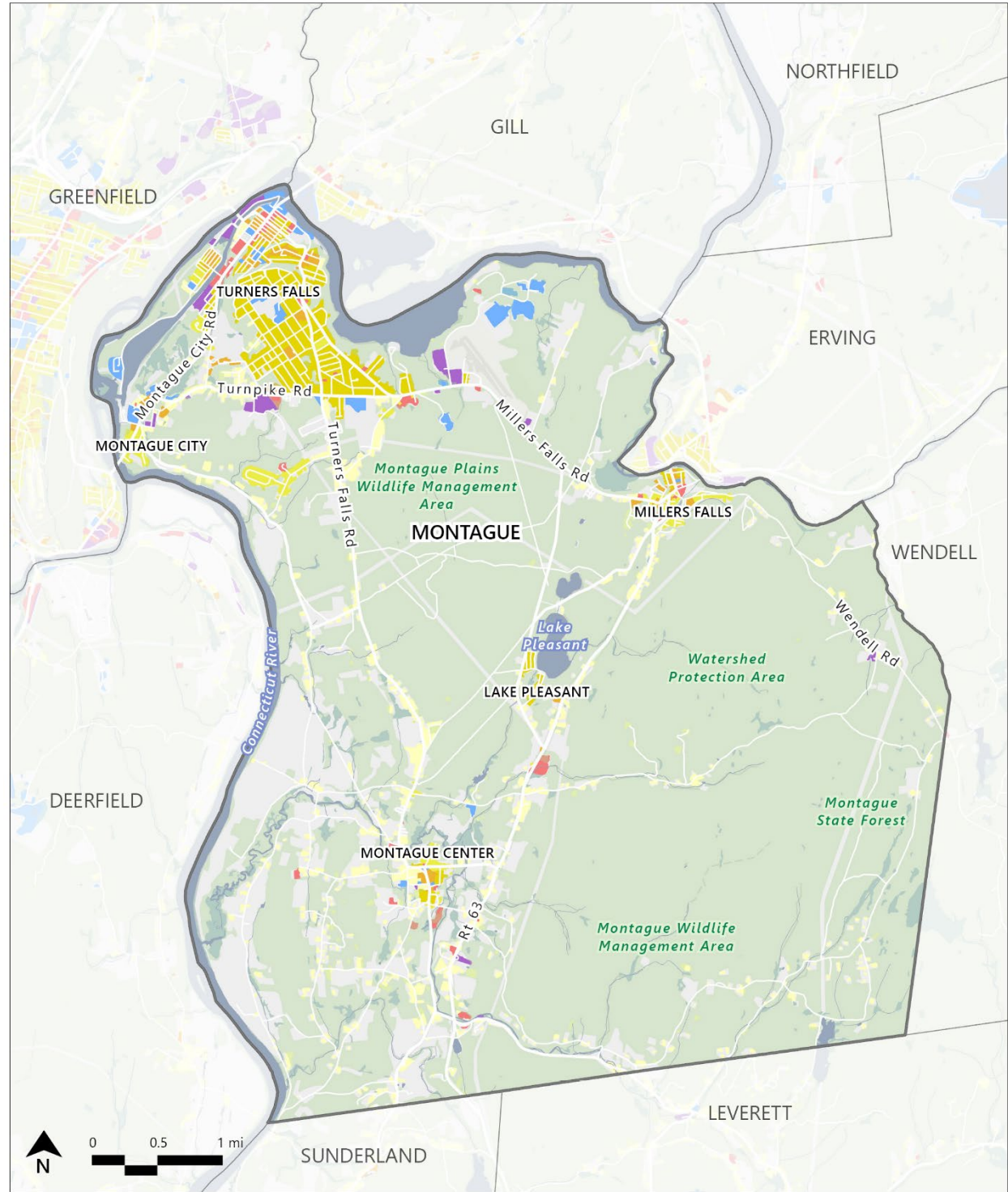
**Table 4: Montague Land Use Distribution (2005)**

| Land Use (2005)                             | Acres         | Percentage     |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Forest                                      | 14,175        | 70.50%         |
| Agriculture                                 | 1,537         | 7.60%          |
| Water                                       | 871           | 4.30%          |
| Residential (< .5 acre lots & multi-family) | 777           | 3.90%          |
| Residential (> .5 acre lots)                | 752           | 3.70%          |
| Wetlands                                    | 472           | 2.30%          |
| Open Land                                   | 450           | 2.20%          |
| Powerline/Utility                           | 316           | 1.60%          |
| Urban Public/Institutional                  | 142           | 0.70%          |
| Recreation                                  | 126           | 0.60%          |
| Commercial                                  | 98            | 0.50%          |
| Industrial                                  | 75            | 0.40%          |
| Other                                       | 319           | 1.60%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>20,108</b> | <b>100.00%</b> |

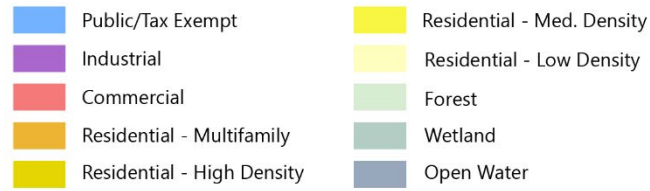
Source: MassGIS Land Use 2005

<sup>14</sup> Town of Montague, Massachusetts. (2024). *Montague comprehensive plan: Five villages, one future*. <https://montague-ma.gov/files/2024-Montague-Comprehensive-Plan-Final-PB-Approved-9-24-24.pdf>

Figure 6: Land Use (2005)



Source: MassGIS





## Transportation Infrastructure

Montague's transportation network includes Town roads, three state highways, a freight rail line, and a small-scale airport. Montague is serviced by a regional bus route, operated by the Franklin Regional Transit Authority. Town roads are the main way residents access parks, playgrounds, and open spaces.<sup>15</sup> Montague has planned and implemented road reconstruction projects to make streets safer through traffic calming and pedestrian and bicycle crossings. Projects have also involved making streets more resilient to climate change through stormwater drainage street tree planting projects.

Montague implemented a Complete Streets Policy in 2017 and a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan in 2018, highlighting the Town's commitment to safe and accessible streets. Since then, the Town has been awarded several grants and prioritized 41 streets for improvements. Most recently, MassDOT awarded Montague approximately \$499,000 in 2025 for improvements across three major areas in Montague Center, including: North Street/Town Common, Main Street Bike Accommodations, and the FRTA Bus Stop on Main Street.<sup>16</sup>

Ten percent of households in Montague do not have access to a vehicle,<sup>17</sup> affecting access to local resources such as open spaces, parks, and playgrounds. This number is higher in Turners Falls, where 15.5 percent of households lack access to a vehicle.<sup>18</sup> Residents highlighted the lack of safe pedestrian infrastructure in Montague to access public spaces, and a desire for more sidewalks and bike lanes.

Existing active transportation infrastructure includes bike paths along the Connecticut River and sidewalk infrastructure concentrated in the village centers of Turners Falls, Montague Center, and Millers Falls (see **Figure 7**). Formal and informal trails are distributed throughout the Montague Plains and the Montague State Forest. Montague is



Image 2: Canalside Rail Trail – Source: VHB

a popular town for cyclists given the scenic routes and views that one can enjoy when biking, with several known loop rides through town.<sup>19</sup> In 2026, the Town began a planning study to envision a townwide shared use path network, including on Town-owned roads through the Montague Plains.

The Canalside Rail Trail is a popular location for residents, offering scenic views of the water and connecting to Unity Park and the town of Deerfield. Many of the popular bike routes in

<sup>15</sup> Franklin Regional County of Governments. (2024) *Franklin County Regional Transportation Plan*.  
<https://frcog.org/publications/franklin-county-regional-transportation-plan-2020/>

<sup>16</sup> Town of Montague. (n.d.). *Complete Streets program*. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/414/Complete-Streets-Program>

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). Household Size by Vehicles Available. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B08201*.  
<https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B08201?q=B08201+montague+ma>

<sup>18</sup> Esri. (n.d.). *GEAR maps*. ArcGIS Experience.  
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/60e419d78cb5493a91641ffa3c160dd6/page/GEAR-Maps>

<sup>19</sup> Franklin Regional County of Governments. (n.d.). *Franklin County Bikeway*. <https://frcog.org/project/franklin-county-bikeway/>

Montague are along roadways shared with cars. Recently, e-bikes have become more popular in town, and some residents expressed safety concerns about the use of e-bikes on bike paths. Montague does not have any municipal policies regulating the use of e-bikes.

The sidewalks in each village also create access to the neighboring towns of Gill, Greenfield, and Erving. Turners Falls has the most developed center with the longest stretches of sidewalk infrastructure along Montague City Road, Avenue A, and Turnpike Road (see **Figure 7**). These sidewalks create safe pedestrian connections to public amenities including the library, town hall, and schools. However, the sidewalk infrastructure does not connect any of the village centers to each other, limiting the ability of residents to safely walk between villages. The town is currently undertaking several projects that focus on roadway and sidewalk improvements, including Avenue A Streetscape improvements and the Montague Center Complete Streets Project.<sup>20</sup>



*Image 3: Streetscape Improvement Projects: Wheat Paste Mural in Turners Falls and the Shea Mural in Montague Center*  
Source: Town of Montague

The Turners Falls Municipal Airport is an important open space asset located near the Montague Plains. This facility is an established resource in Franklin County as a multi-model transit node, connected to other forms of transit, and is supported by an Airport Commission that promotes its use for aviation and non-aviation users. The airport offers



*Image 4: Turners Falls Airport - Source: Town of Montague*

<sup>20</sup> Town of Montague. (n.d.). Current Planning Department projects. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/1529/Current-Planning-Department-Projects>

a space for recreational flying, educational training, and corporate aviation.<sup>21</sup> Montague conducted a Wildfire Hazard Assessment for the airport in 2022, which indicates the critical environmental location it sits within, close to more than eight wildlife attractants within five miles, including the Connecticut River, Barton Cove, and Lake Pleasant.<sup>22</sup>

## Water Infrastructure

Montague's municipal public water supply sources are primarily located between Montague Center and Lake Pleasant. Wells in Turners Falls and Montague Center are connected hydrologically to provide an interchangeable water supply when needed. In 1994, the Lake Pleasant and Green Pond Reservoirs were downgraded to emergency water supplies by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). These water sources remain inaccessible for any type of recreational use by law, due to their hydrological connection to other water sources.

Several projects and studies have been performed to assess Montague's water supply resources. A 1999 study identified the Montague Plains as the site of a potential new municipal water supply due to its underlying aquifer, and a subsequent 2002 study recognized the Sawmill River Valley as a potentially sensitive groundwater source.<sup>23</sup>

Seven dams have been constructed along Montague's rivers, primarily to support electricity generation (see Figure 7).

In terms of sewer infrastructure, the Town sewer serves the more densely developed areas, and the rural areas lack sewer service. Montague is served by the Montague Clean Water Facility (CWF) wastewater treatment facility located on Greenfield Road as well as Erving's facility, which serves



Image 5: Turners Falls Dam – Source: Town of Montague

Miller Falls. The CWF seeks to promote the conservation of wildlife along the Connecticut River by effectively treating wastewater to National Pollution Discharge Elimination Standards.<sup>24</sup> The Water Pollution Control Facility is a secondary treatment facility designed to treat sewage. The treated effluent is discharged to the Connecticut River through several discharge points. Some sewer lines are almost at capacity and cannot be extended. This situation creates a barrier for future development and growth in these isolated areas.

<sup>21</sup> Town of Montague. (n.d.). *Turners Falls Airport*. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/31/Turners-Falls-Airport>

<sup>22</sup> Stantec. (2022). *Wildlife hazard assessment*. [https://montague-ma.gov/files/Wildlife\\_Hazard\\_Assesment.pdf](https://montague-ma.gov/files/Wildlife_Hazard_Assesment.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Town of Montague. (2018). *Open Space and Recreation Plan*.

<sup>24</sup> Town of Montague. (n.d.). *Clean Water Facility – Wastewater Treatment*. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/33/Clean-Water-Facility-Wastewater-Treatment>

## Water Infrastructure for Recreation

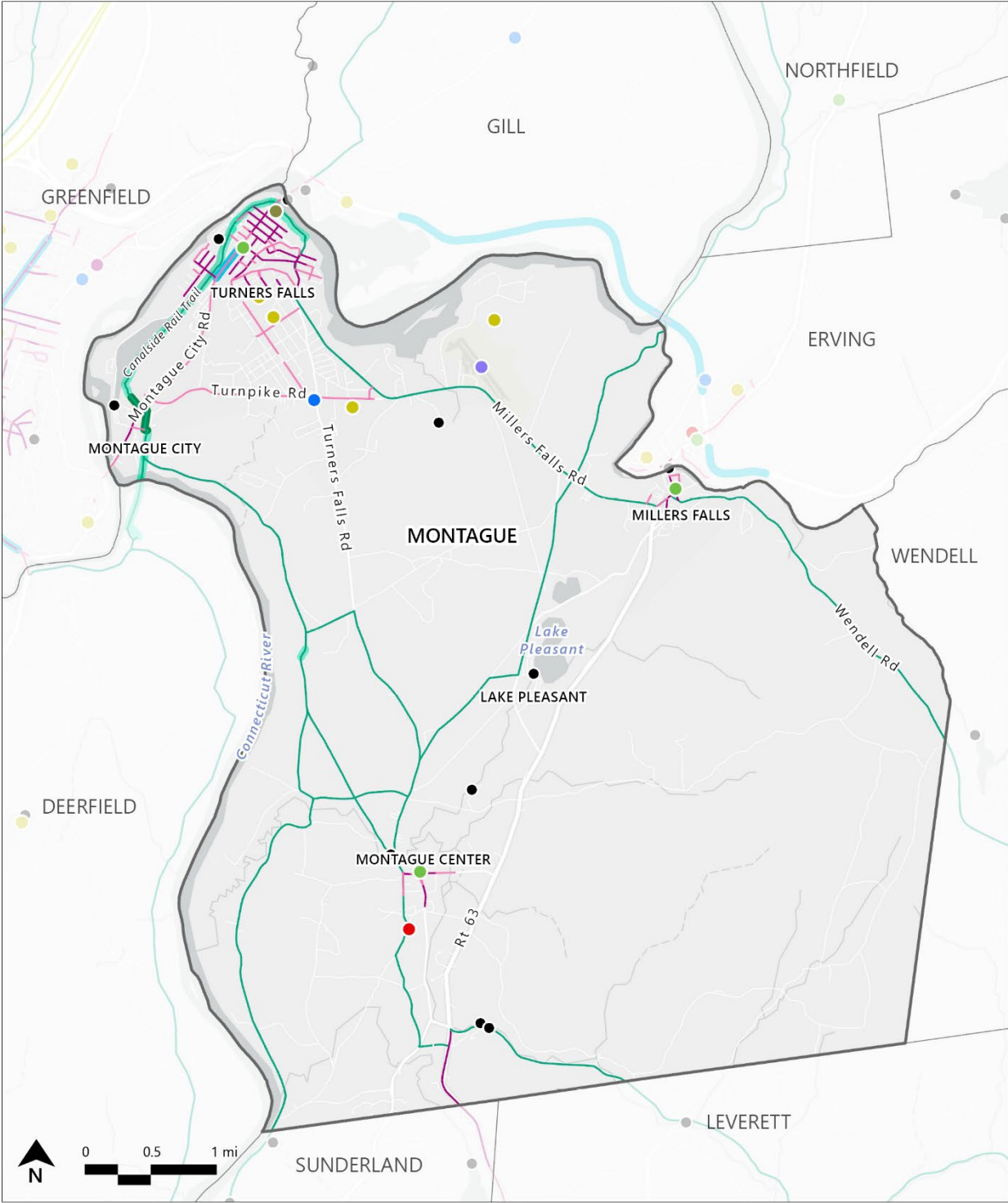
The Town maintains two kayak and canoe access points on the Millers River, located off Newton Street and at the end of East Mineral Road, both of which need site improvements. A single access point on the Connecticut River, located at One Migratory Way, is an emergency boat launch used by local and state public officials for rescue and recovery operations. While this facility is critical to public safety, it requires upgrades to support its continued, reliable, and effective use.

Looking ahead, Montague intends to capitalize on new river access opportunities associated with planned controlled dam releases under the new FirstLight license. Over the next five years, the Town's goal is to develop a coordinated network of access points along the Connecticut River that accommodates kayaking, canoeing, and guided whitewater rafting, while maintaining a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and public safety. The proposed access points are as follows:

- Access Point 1: North of Unity Park for kayaking and canoeing.
- Access Point 2: Below the Turners Falls Dam for kayaking and canoeing, and white river rafting to be run by private companies.
- Access Point 3: At Poplar Street which includes an ADA accessible dock and stairs for kayaking, canoeing, and for end of white river rafting to be run by private companies.
- Access Point 4: Mount Grace Land Trust property for kayaking and canoeing access along Meadow Road.



Figure 7: Existing Infrastructure



Source: MassGIS, MassDOT, FRCOG

- |                  |                        |                               |
|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ● Police Station | ● Dam                  | — Bicycle: Shared Use Path    |
| ● Fire Station   | ● Library              | — Bicycle: Priority Roadway   |
| ● Airport        | — Sidewalk: One Side   | — Bicycle: Lane               |
| ● School         | — Sidewalk: Both Sides | — Franklin County Bike Routes |
| ● Town Hall      |                        |                               |

# Environmental Inventory & Analysis

---

# 3

## Geology & Topography

The Town of Montague is situated within the Connecticut River Valley, a landscape shaped primarily by glacial activity and post-glacial river processes. The town's geology reflects a combination of glacial till, stratified drift, and extensive sand and gravel deposits associated with historic meltwater flows from retreating glaciers. These geologic features have influenced Montague's soils, hydrology, and patterns of settlement, as well as the distribution of agricultural lands, forests, and open spaces.<sup>25</sup>

Topographically, Montague is characterized by a mix of relatively flat low-lying areas along the Connecticut River and its tributaries, gently rolling uplands, and distinct outwash plains, including the Montague Plains. Elevations generally increase away from the river corridor, with higher ground and ridgelines framing the village centers and agricultural areas. These variations in elevation and landform create a diverse landscape that supports a wide range of recreational opportunities, including river-based activities, trail systems, agricultural uses, and forest-based recreation.

Montague's geologic and topographic conditions also present important constraints and considerations for land use and recreation planning. Low-lying areas near rivers and streams are prone to flooding and are often limited in their suitability for intensive development but provide valuable opportunities for conservation, floodwater storage, wildlife habitat, and passive recreation. In contrast, well-drained upland areas and outwash plains have historically supported agriculture and development but require careful management to protect groundwater resources and prevent erosion. Understanding these underlying geologic and topographic conditions is essential for guiding future open space protection efforts and for siting recreational amenities in locations that are both environmentally appropriate and resilient over time.

---

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Massachusetts Geological Survey, surficial geology and sand and gravel deposits mapping for the Connecticut River Valley region (Massachusetts), accessed 2026.

## Soils

The soils of Montague reflect the Town's glacial history and varied topography, consisting primarily of glacial till, stratified drift, and sandy outwash deposits (see **Figure 8**). Along the Connecticut River and its tributaries, soils are generally deep and well-drained, having formed in river deposits and glacial outwash plains. In upland areas, soils are more viable and often shallower, with higher proportions of glacial till and increased limitations related to slope, drainage, and erosion potential. These soil characteristics influence land use patterns, agricultural productivity, and the suitability of land for recreation and development.<sup>26</sup>

Montague contains large areas of prime farmland soils and soils of statewide importance, particularly within the Connecticut River Valley and the Montague Plains. These soils support active agricultural uses and contribute to Montague's character, local food production, and scenic landscapes. The presence of high-quality agricultural soils underscores the importance of balancing development with farmland protection and long-term soil conservation.<sup>27</sup>

Soil conditions also affect recreational opportunities and environmental protection efforts throughout Montague. Well-drained soils such as glacial stratified deposits (coarse and fine) and stream-terrace deposits, which are prevalent across portions of the Montague Plains, are generally more suitable for trails, athletic fields, and other recreational facilities. In contrast, areas characterized by floodplain alluvium, swamp deposits, and mapped wetlands, particularly along the Connecticut River corridor and associated tributaries, are poorly drained and limit intensive recreational use but provide important ecological functions, including flood storage, water quality protection, and wildlife habitat. Areas with steep slopes, thin till, or shallow bedrock, including portions of the uplands east of Millers Falls, require careful siting and design of trails and facilities to minimize erosion and protect underlying resources. Understanding these soil constraints is essential for guiding open space protection priorities, locating recreation facilities appropriately, and minimizing long-term environmental impacts.

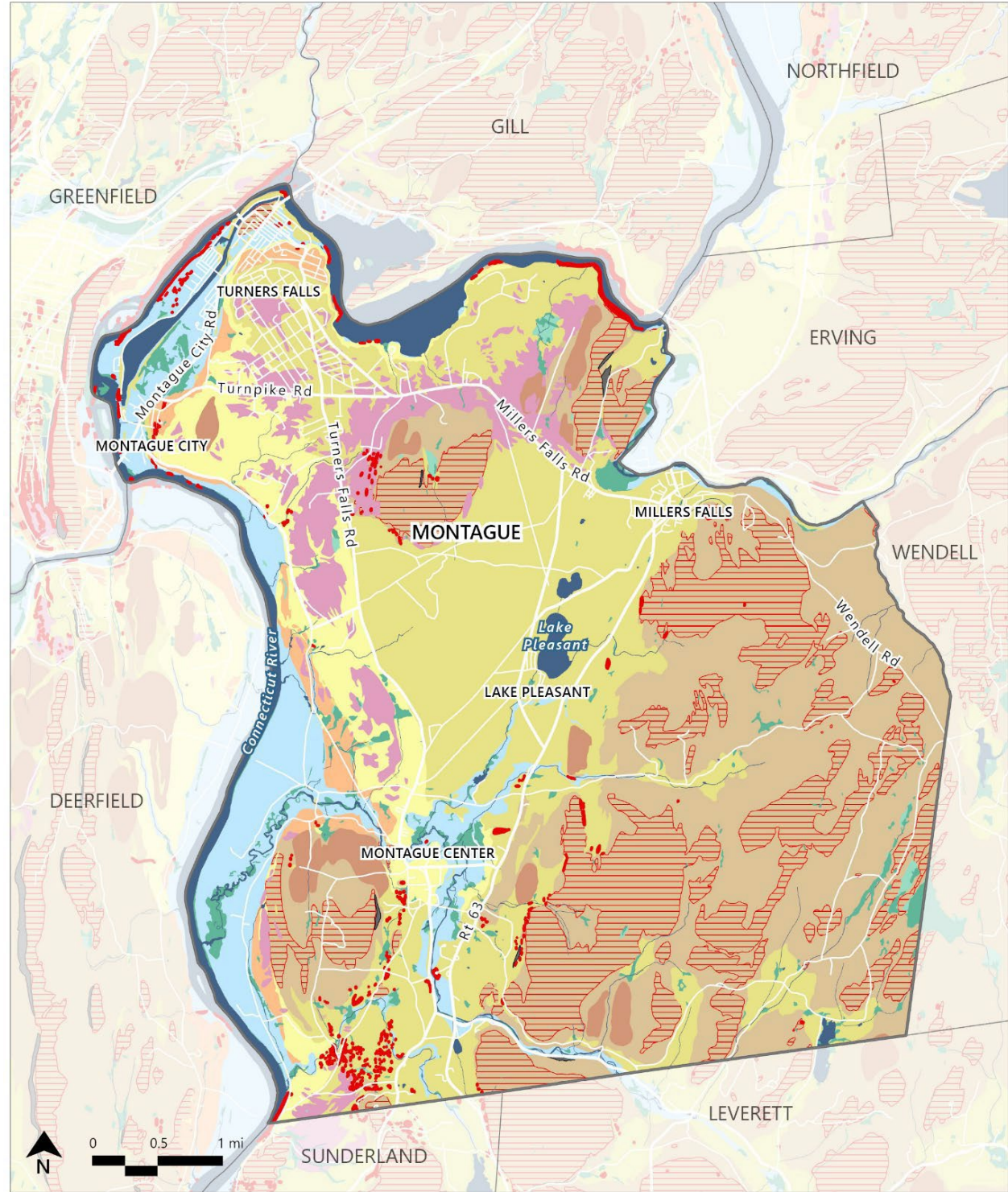
---

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS). *Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) Database*, accessed via MassGIS.

<sup>27</sup> Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS). *Prime Farmland Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance* data layer.



Figure 8: Soils & Geologic Features



Source: MassGIS





## Recreational Resources

Montague contains a diverse network of recreational and open space resources that contribute significantly to the Town's quality of life, community health, and village identity. Parks, trails, riverfront areas, and small neighborhood parks, commons, playgrounds, and community gathering spaces within village centers provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation, serving residents across a wide range of ages and interests. These resources are distributed across Montague's villages and are closely tied to the Town's natural landscape, particularly the Connecticut River and its associated floodplain, canal system, and adjacent open lands.



*Image 6: Event at Peskeompskut Park  
Source: Town of Montague*

Together, Montague's recreational assets form an interconnected system that supports outdoor activity, social interaction, and access to nature, while also reinforcing the Town's historic development patterns and scenic character.

## Local Programming

Recreational programming in Montague is coordinated primarily through the Town's Parks & Recreation Department, in collaboration with other municipal departments, including the Council on Aging, Department of Public Works, RiverCulture, and local volunteer groups. Programming and maintenance responsibilities are centralized under Parks & Recreation, reflecting a long-standing organizational structure within the Town.

Montague offers a range of seasonal and year-round recreational opportunities that support physical activity, community engagement, and informal social use. Recreational programs and activities include youth and adult sports, community events, riverfront recreation, and educational programming tied to the Town's natural and cultural resources. Key facilities such as playgrounds, athletic fields, trails, river access points, and



*Image 7: Great Falls Discovery Center: Event & Exhibition – Source: Town of Montague*

the Great Falls Discovery Center, serve as important hubs for both structured programming and informal use.

## Adult & Senior Recreation

Recreational opportunities for adults and seniors in Montague include fitness, wellness, and social activities offered through the Council on Aging and community partners. Walking, passive recreation, and informal use of parks and trails are common among older residents, particularly in areas with flat terrain and proximity to village centers.

Several parks and open spaces serve as important daily-use locations for adults and seniors, offering shaded seating, walking routes, and access to scenic riverfront or village settings. Accessibility remains an important consideration, as not all facilities are fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and some trails and park features require upgrades to better accommodate residents with limited mobility, strollers, or assistive devices.

## Trails

Montague includes a growing network of multi-use paths, walking trails, and informal trail connections that support recreation, transportation, and access to natural areas (see **Figure 9**). These include river-adjacent paths, village connectors, and hiking trails within conservation lands and state-owned properties.

Key trail systems, including the Canalside Rail Trail, serve both local and regional users and provide important non-vehicular connections between neighborhoods, parks, and open spaces. **More than 70 percent of survey respondents report using the Canalside Rail Trail on a regular basis, emphasizing its importance as a recreational resource.**<sup>28</sup>

In contrast, trails within the Montague Plains are primarily designed for hiking and passive recreation and traverse more sensitive ecological areas. Some trail corridors cross wetlands, floodplains, and other environmentally sensitive landscapes, requiring coordination with state agencies and careful management to balance recreation with habitat protection. Emerging challenges include potential conflicts between different user types, maintenance capacity, and the need for improved wayfinding and public awareness of trail locations and appropriate use. These issues were noted through stakeholder discussions and reflect the Town's growing trail use and expanding network.

The Robert Frost Trail is a long-distance regional hiking trail, stretching from Northampton in the South to the Montague-Wendell border in the North. The trail passes through the Eastern part of Montague, following the Spaulding Brook and traversing the Dry Hill area before ending at Wendell State Forest.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to land-based trail resources, the Connecticut River and Millers River corridors provide important opportunities for paddling and boating. While Montague does not currently maintain a formally designated blue trail or water trail system, regional planning

---

<sup>28</sup> Montague Open Space and Recreation Plan Community Survey.

<sup>29</sup> <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b1780aa426a44e08be034098a130893e>

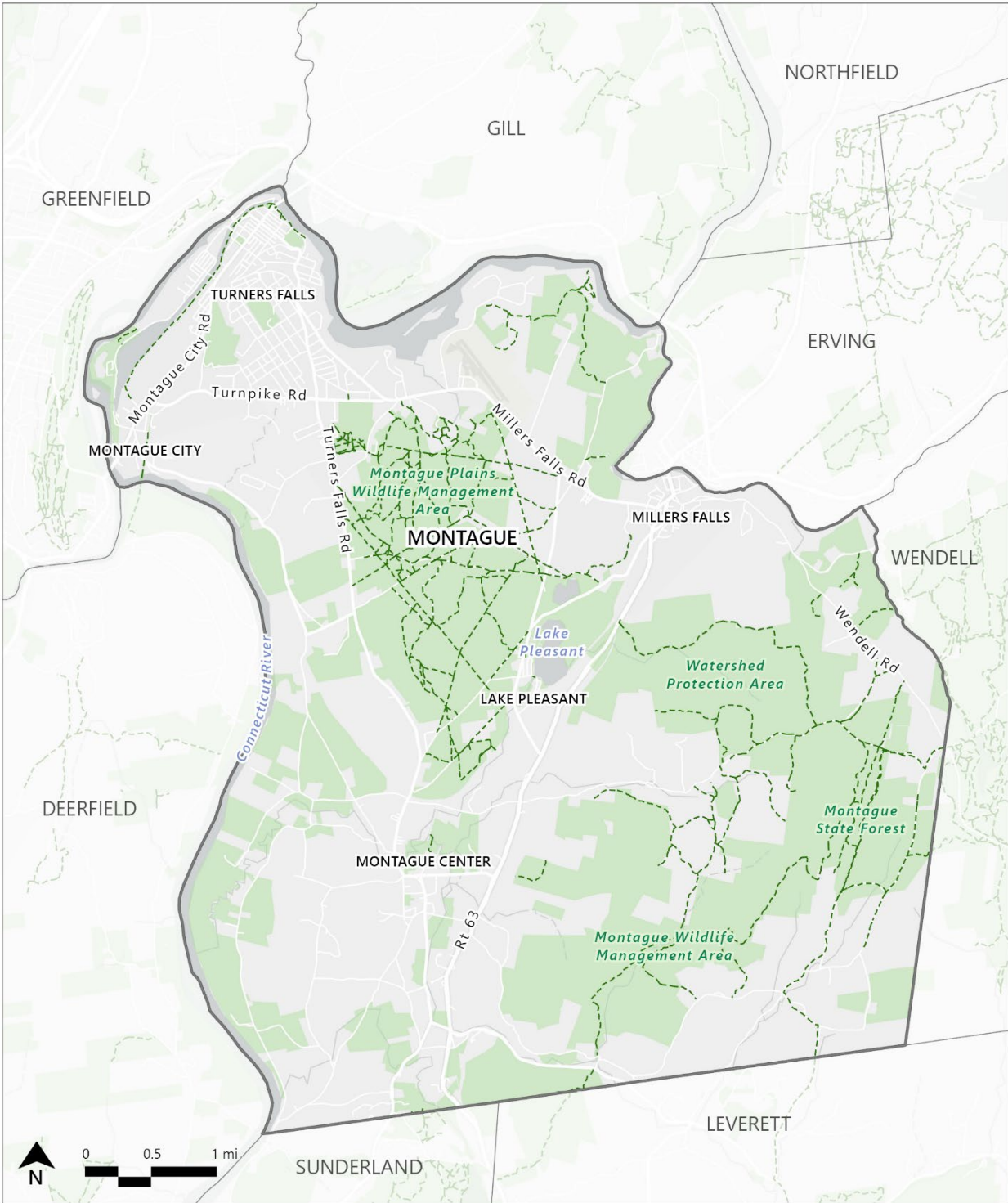


efforts and local discussions have identified the river corridors as potential areas for enhanced water-based recreation and access wayfinding.



Image 8: Robert Frost Trail - Source: Town of Montague

Figure 9: Trails



Source: MassGIS

- Trails
- Open Space

## Parks

Montague's parks play a central role in providing recreational opportunities and public gathering spaces within the Town's villages. These parks support a wide range of uses, including playgrounds, athletic fields, skateboarding facilities, community gardens, passive recreation, and riverfront access.

Unity Park in Turners Falls is one of the Town's most heavily used recreational areas, used by 54 percent of survey respondents on a regular basis. Unity Park serves families during daytime hours and youth and teens in the afternoons and evenings, and offers unique amenities such as a skate park, splash pad, and community garden. Its proximity to the Connecticut River influences site conditions, including a high-water table that has shaped park design and infrastructure decisions. Highland Park in Millers Falls is primarily used for organized sports, particularly soccer. Rutter's Park in Lake Pleasant provides additional village-scale recreational spaces that support informal recreation, community events, and resident-led stewardship, reflecting strong local engagement in park use and maintenance.



Image 9: Unity Park: Skatepark - Source: Town of Montague

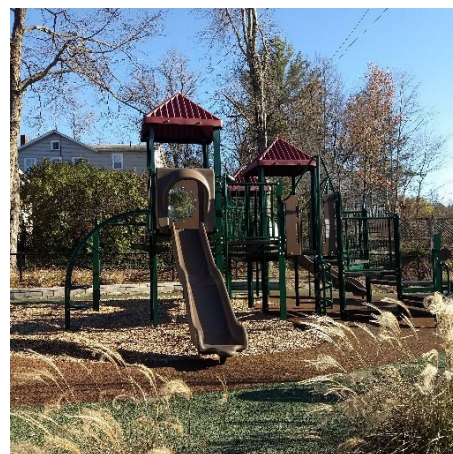


Image 10: Rutters Park - Source: Town of Montague

Maintenance of parks and public spaces remains an ongoing challenge due to staffing constraints and aging infrastructure. Some facilities require periodic upgrades to surfaces, amenities, and accessibility features to remain safe and functional. Public awareness of available recreational assets varies across the Town, and improved wayfinding and signage have been identified as opportunities to enhance access and equitable use of existing resources.

## Cemeteries

Montague is home to 15 cemeteries, eight of which are publicly owned, including: Burnham Cemetery, Chestnut Hill Cemetery, Dry Hill Cemetery, East Mineral Cemetery, Fairway Cemetery, Highland Cemetery, Old South Cemetery, and Town Cemetery. Highland Cemetery is the town's only active cemetery as well as the only cemetery that allows natural (green) burial. The public cemeteries are maintained by the Cemetery



Commission, which also organizes volunteer groups for cemetery upkeep.<sup>30</sup> These sites are part of the Town's open space and can be used for recreational purposes like walking and birdwatching. Montague can continue to provide information about cemetery access, history, and natural resources to encourage the use of cemeteries as a community open space asset.



Image 11: Highland Meadow Cemetery: Green Burials  
Source: Town of Montague



Image 12: Elm Grove Cemetery – Source: VHB

## Water Resources

Water resources are a defining feature of Montague's landscape and play a central role in the town's ecology, recreation opportunities, and development patterns. The town lies primarily within the Connecticut River Watershed, one of the largest and most significant watersheds in New England. The Connecticut River and its tributaries shape Montague's settlement patterns, support diverse habitats, and provide important recreational opportunities such as fishing, boating, wildlife observation, and riverside trails.<sup>31</sup>

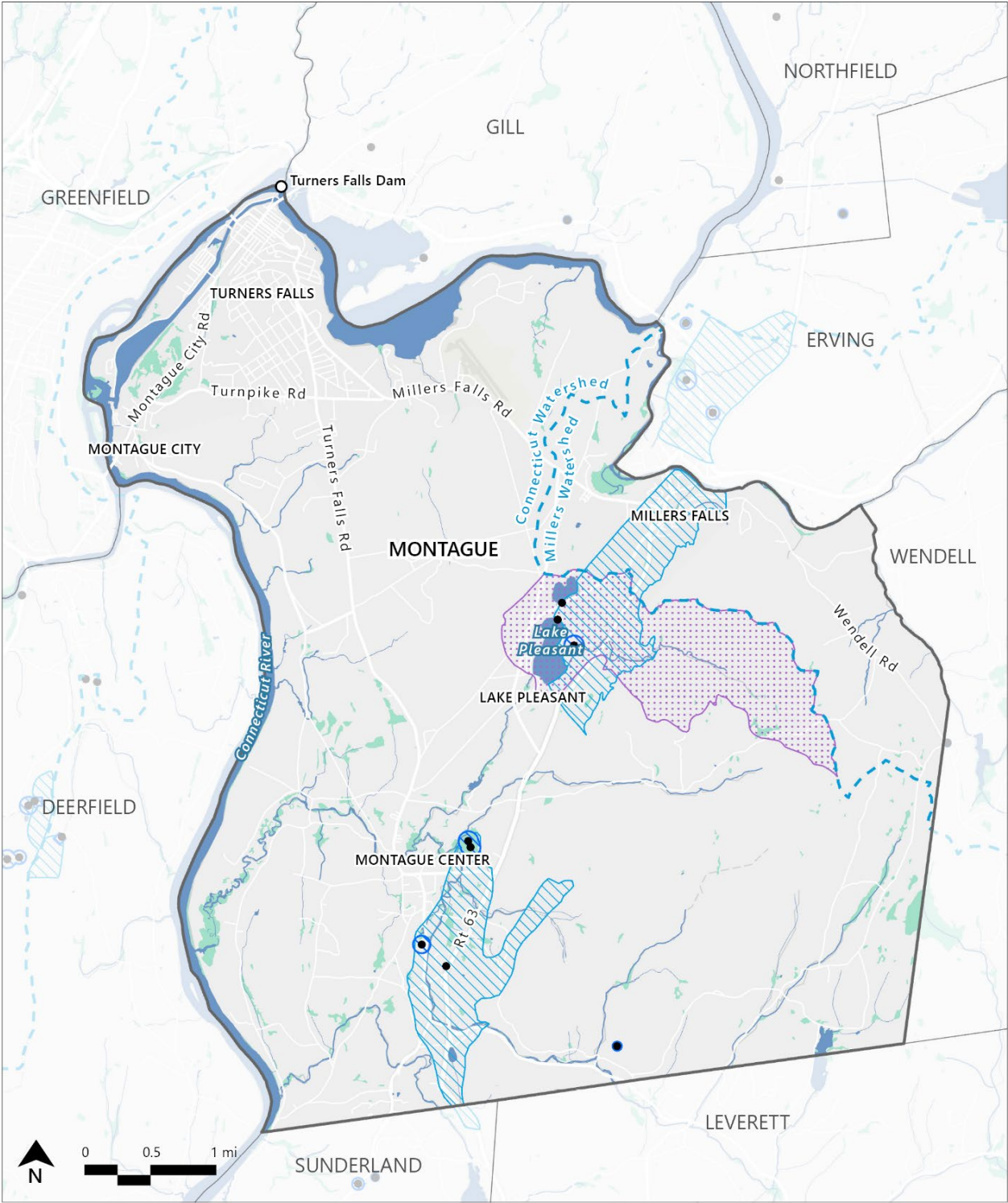
Understanding the distribution and function of these water resources is essential for guiding open space protection, locating recreational amenities appropriately, and addressing long-term challenges related to flooding, water quality, and climate change.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Town of Montague. (n.d.). Cemetery Commission. <https://montague-ma.gov/g/71/Cemetery-Commission>

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), *Watershed Boundary Dataset (WBD)* (Hydrologic Unit Codes) for the Connecticut River watershed and sub-watersheds in Massachusetts, accessed 2026.

<sup>32</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) / flood hazard mapping for Montague, Massachusetts, accessed 2026.

Figure 10: Water Resources



Source: MassGIS

- |                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  DEP Wetlands               |  Surface Water Protection Watersheds |
|  Open Water                 |  Wellhead Protection Area: Zone II   |
|  FEMA Flood Zones           |  Wellhead Protection Area: Zone I    |
|  Public Water Supply Source |                                                                                                                         |



## Water Resource Management

Water resources play a critical role in the Montague's ecological health, recreational opportunities, and resilience to climate-related hazards. Rivers, streams, wetlands, floodplains, and groundwater systems are interconnected, and changes to one component of this system can affect water quality, wildlife habitat, flood risk, and public access to natural areas. Effective water resource management is therefore essential to maintaining the environmental functions and community benefits provided by Montague's open spaces.<sup>33</sup>

Montague's water resource management framework emphasizes the protection of natural hydrologic processes, including flood storage, groundwater recharge, and surface water filtration, while accommodating recreation and existing development patterns. Open spaces, wetlands, riparian corridors, and undeveloped flood-prone lands play an important role in managing stormwater, reducing flood impacts, and supporting climate resilience.

## Stormwater Management

Stormwater runoff plays a significant role in shaping water quality, erosion patterns, and flood risk in Montague. As development and impervious surfaces increase, rainwater is less able to infiltrate into the ground and instead flows more rapidly into rivers, streams, wetlands, and flood-prone areas. This runoff can transport pollutants, accelerate erosion, and contribute to sedimentation, particularly during intense precipitation events that are becoming more frequent due to climate change. Although Montague is not regulated under the Massachusetts MS4 Phase II Stormwater Program, stormwater management activities in the Town remain subject to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, state Stormwater Management Standards, and local wetlands and land use controls.

Montague's approach to stormwater management emphasizes the protection of natural landscapes that absorb, slow, and filter runoff, including wetlands, floodplains, riparian corridors, forests, and undeveloped open spaces. These areas provide critical ecosystem services by reducing peak flows, improving water quality, and mitigating downstream flooding while also supporting wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. The town has identified the use of nature-based and green infrastructure strategies, particularly on Town-owned land and within open space and recreation areas, as an important tool for improving stormwater management, enhancing climate resilience, and advancing environmental equity.<sup>34</sup>

## Flood Hazard: National Flood Insurance Program

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides flood hazard information through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), primarily through Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), which identify areas subject to flooding and inform land-use planning and flood mitigation efforts. In Franklin County, including the Town of Montague, FEMA

---

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), *Watershed Management and Protection*, including guidance on integrated management of rivers, wetlands, floodplains, and groundwater systems, accessed 2026.

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), *Green Infrastructure and Stormwater Management* guidance; Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), *Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience*, accessed 2026

flood mapping is currently undergoing an update, and newly developed Preliminary FIRMs have been released for municipal review.<sup>35</sup>

At present, the effective FEMA flood maps for Montague are based on older studies completed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, while updated flood hazard mapping is still in draft form and has not yet been formally adopted. As a result, flood hazard information for the town reflects a combination of legacy mapping and preliminary data that is not yet enforceable.

The Preliminary FIRMs indicate flood hazard areas primarily along the Connecticut River and certain tributaries, reinforcing the importance of these river corridors as natural flood storage areas. While these maps are still under review, they provide useful context for long-range planning and highlight the value of preserving flood-prone lands, wetlands, and riparian buffers as open space. Protecting these areas supports flood mitigation, water quality, habitat conservation, and passive recreation. In Montague, floodplain areas associated with rivers and streams are also regulated under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Town's local wetlands bylaw, with review and permitting administered by the Conservation Commission.

## Surface Waters

Surface waters are a defining natural feature of the Town of Montague and play a central role in its open space system, ecological health, and recreational identity. The town is characterized by an extensive network of rivers, streams, ponds, and wetlands that provide opportunities for passive and active recreation while supporting wildlife habitat, flood storage, and scenic landscapes.

The Connecticut River, the largest river in New England, forms Montague's western boundary and is a major regional recreational resource. The river supports boating, paddling, fishing, wildlife observation, and scenic enjoyment, with public access currently provided at locations such as the Poplar Street Boat Launch in Montague City and riverfront areas associated with Unity Park and Barton's Cove. Much of the land adjacent to the river remains undeveloped, providing important ecological functions and opportunities for conservation.<sup>36</sup> While the river is widely used for boating and fishing, swimming is generally discouraged due to safety concerns related to currents, fluctuating water levels, and water quality. Continued coordination with state agencies and utility operators is important to balance recreation, ecological protection, and public safety along the corridor.

The Connecticut River in Montague is influenced by hydroelectric facilities operated by FirstLight Power, including the Turners Fall Dam and associated canal system, which regulate river flows and water levels. These operations affect ecological conditions, recreational access, and public safety along the river corridor. The ongoing relicensing process includes environmental review and opportunities for improved river access and

---

<sup>35</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), *National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)* and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Franklin County and the Town of Montague, Massachusetts, including Preliminary FIRMs under review, accessed 2026.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Connecticut River Conservancy, *Connecticut River Watershed Overview* and river corridor conservation resources, accessed 2026.

recreational amenities, including potential additional boating access points along the Millers and Connecticut Rivers and enhanced riverfront amenities such as overlooks and benches.<sup>37</sup>

The Millers River flows through the northern portion of Montague and converges with the Connecticut River near Turners Falls. The Millers River corridor includes a mix of forested lands, wetlands, and developed areas, and offers recreational opportunities such as fishing, paddling, and riverside walking. Portions of the river are influenced by historic industrial activity and dams, which shape both access and recreational use patterns.

The Sawmill River and its tributaries traverse the central part of town and are closely tied to Montague Center and surrounding neighborhoods. These waterways contribute to local character and provide ecological value, though recreational use is generally limited due to channel size, access constraints, and periodic flooding.

Montague also contains several ponds and smaller water bodies, including Lake Pleasant and Clapp's Pond, which serve as scenic and ecological resources within the Town. Lake Pleasant functions as a backup water supply resource, and as a result, swimming and direct water-based recreation are not permitted. The Town has expressed interest in working with the state to evaluate whether the lake continues to be needed for water supply purposes and to explore potential future recreational opportunities if appropriate. Clapp's Pond and other smaller water bodies are valued for their visual character, wildlife habitat, and informal recreation such as walking and nature observation. Recreational use of ponds may be influenced by seasonal water levels, safety considerations, and water quality conditions.

Water quality and quantity vary across Montague's surface waters and can affect recreational use. Factors such as seasonal flooding, sedimentation, historic land uses, and upstream influences contribute to changing conditions in rivers and ponds. In some locations, safety concerns, access limitations, or water quality issues may restrict swimming or other direct contact recreation, reinforcing the importance of managing and protecting riparian buffers and adjacent open space.<sup>38</sup> Surface waters and their associated resource areas in Montague are regulated under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Town's local wetlands bylaw, with permitting and oversight provided by the Conservation Commission.

## Aquifer Recharge Areas & Water Supply

Aquifer recharge areas are critical components of Montague's natural environment and open space system, as they support groundwater resources that contribute to existing and potential drinking water supplies. In Montague, these areas are primarily associated with the Connecticut River Valley, the Millers River corridor, and the Montague Plains, where well-drained sands and gravel promote high rates of groundwater infiltration.

---

<sup>37</sup> Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project (No. 1889) and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project (No. 2485) Recreation Management Plan.

<sup>38</sup> Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), *Integrated List of Waters (Clean Water Act Sections 303(d) and 305(b))* for the Connecticut and Millers River watersheds, accessed 2026.

These areas allow precipitation to infiltrate the ground, replenishing underground aquifers that help maintain water availability, water quality, and ecosystem health.

In addition to these broader recharge areas, Montague contains mapped public water supply protection areas regulated under the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations (310 CMR 22.00). These include Interim Wellhead Protection Areas and, where delineated, Zone II Wellhead Protection Areas associated with public water supply wells. Portions of the Town may also fall within surface water supply protection watersheds regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. Activities within these areas are subject to state requirements and local review intended to prevent contamination of present and future drinking water sources.

Montague's groundwater resources are influenced by its geology and soil conditions, particularly in areas with well-drained sands and gravels that promote infiltration. These conditions are most prevalent within mapped glacial stratified drift deposits and floodplain soils. Protecting land within aquifer recharge areas is important to reduce the risk of contamination from development, runoff, and other land uses that could impair groundwater quality.

Open space protection plays a key role in safeguarding aquifer recharge areas by limiting impervious surfaces, preserving natural vegetation, and maintaining soil permeability. Forested lands, wetlands, and undeveloped open spaces help filter pollutants, moderate runoff, and support the long-term sustainability of groundwater resources.

While drinking water supply infrastructure and regulatory oversight are managed through state and local programs, land conservation remains an effective planning tool for protecting both existing and potential water supply areas. Identifying aquifer recharge areas helps inform future land protection priorities and supports the Town's broader goals related to environmental stewardship, public health, and climate resilience.<sup>39</sup>

## Wetlands & Streams

Montague's wetlands and stream systems are foundational to the town's ecological health, recreational character, and long-term climate resilience. These resources support water quality, wildlife habitat, flood attenuation, and passive recreation, while also shaping the town's scenic landscapes and rural identity. Forested and non-forested wetlands and stream corridors are mapped using MassGIS and other statewide datasets and are shown in **Figure 10**.<sup>40</sup>

### Wetlands

Montague contains extensive forested and non-forested wetlands distributed throughout the town, particularly along river corridors, stream valleys, and low-lying areas. These wetlands include floodplain forests, marshes, wet meadows, and shrub swamps that provide critical habitat for wildlife and support a wide range of plant and animal species.

<sup>39</sup> Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), *Drinking Water Program and Aquifer Protection Guidance*; MassGIS, *Aquifer Recharge Areas*, accessed 2026.

<sup>40</sup> MassGIS, *Wetlands (MassDEP Wetlands and National Wetlands Inventory)* and Hydrography datasets, accessed 2026.

Wetlands perform important ecological functions, including filtering pollutants, moderating stormwater runoff, recharging groundwater, and reducing flood impacts. From an open space and recreation perspective, wetlands enhance scenic value, support wildlife observation and education, and help preserve the natural character of conserved lands. Many wetland areas are adjacent to trails, river corridors, and protected open spaces, contributing to passive recreational experiences such as walking, birdwatching, and nature study.

Due to their sensitivity and ecological importance, wetlands generally have limited suitability for active recreation or development. Protecting wetlands through open space conservation helps maintain water quality, ecological integrity, and resilience to climate-related flooding and storm events.

Vernal pools are also present within Montague's wetland network and provide important seasonal breeding habitat for amphibians and other wildlife. According to Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) mapping, Montague contains approximately 15 certified vernal pools and 59 potential vernal pools.<sup>41,42</sup> Certified vernal pools receive protection under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and are reviewed locally by the Conservation Commission. Protection of forested uplands surrounding vernal pools is also important to maintain habitat function and long-term ecological integrity.

Wetland resource areas in Montague are regulated under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. c.131 40) and its implementing regulations (310 CMR 10.00), which are administered locally by the Montague Conservation Commission. In addition, the Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act establishes a 200-foot Riverfront Area along perennial streams and rivers, providing additional jurisdiction over activities that may affect riverine resources. Montague also enforces its local wetlands bylaw and regulations, which in some cases provide protections that are more stringent than state requirements. Through the permitting and review process, the Conservation Commission plays a central role in protecting wetlands, stream corridors, and associated buffer zones while guiding appropriate land use and recreation activities near these sensitive resources.

## Streams

Numerous streams and brooks traverse Montague, forming an interconnected network that drains into larger water bodies such as the Connecticut and Millers Rivers. These streams, including smaller tributaries and headwater systems, are important ecological corridors that connect wetlands, forests, and riparian habitats across the landscape.

While most streams in Montague are not used for direct recreation due to their size, flow conditions, or access limitations, they contribute indirectly to recreational value by supporting healthy ecosystems, scenic landscapes, and water quality in downstream rivers and ponds. Stream corridors often align with open space areas and provide opportunities

---

<sup>41</sup> MassGIS. (2024). *NHESP Certified Vernal Pools*. Retrieved from: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-nhesp-certified-vernal-pools>

<sup>42</sup> MassGIS. (2024). *NHESP Potential Vernal Pools*. Retrieved from: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-nhesp-potential-vernal-pools>



for informal recreation such as walking, wildlife observation, and environmental education.

Protecting streams and their adjacent buffers helps reduce erosion, limit sedimentation, and maintain aquatic habitat. These corridors also serve as natural pathways for wildlife movement and play a role in flood mitigation by conveying and storing stormwater during high-flow events.

## Vegetation

Vegetation in the Town of Montague plays a critical role in supporting outdoor recreation, scenic character, and ecological integrity. Forests, wetlands, agricultural lands, and managed landscapes provide opportunities for activities such as hiking, hunting, wildlife observation, and passive recreation, while also delivering important ecosystem services including habitat protection, water quality enhancement, and climate resilience. The town's vegetation patterns reflect its varied topography, extensive river systems, and land-use history, contributing to both local biodiversity and regional ecological connectivity.

### Forests

Montague lies within the Transition Hardwoods-White Pine Forest Region, a forest type common to upland central Massachusetts and the Connecticut River Valley. Forests are the dominant vegetation cover in town, particularly east of Route 63 and outside village centers, and include several large, contiguous blocks identified as Prime Forest Land or forest land of statewide or local importance based on MassGIS data, including the Montague Wildlife Management Area and Montague State Forest.<sup>43</sup>

#### Hardwood-White Pine Forests

The most widespread forest type in Montague is mixed hardwood-white pine forest, characterized by red and sugar maple, birch, American beech, red oak, and white pine. Hemlock occurs in cooler, moist ravines and north-facing slopes. These forests support a range of recreational uses, including hiking, wildlife observation, and scenic enjoyment.

#### Pitch Pine-Scrub Oak Forests (Montague Plains)

The Montague Plains contain the largest inland pitch pine-scrub oak community in southern New England and represent a regionally significant and rare ecosystem. This fire-adapted forest occurs on deep, sandy glacial outwash soils and is protected in large part within the Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area. These lands provide important habitat for rare species while also supporting recreation such as hiking and nature study.

---

<sup>43</sup> MassGIS, *Land Cover, Forest Core, and Prime Forest Land datasets*; Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), accessed 2026.



*Image 13: Montague Plains Forest – Source: VHB*

### Floodplain Forests

Floodplain forests occur along the Connecticut River, Millers River, Sawmill River, and associated tributaries. Dominated by silver maple and associated flood-tolerant species, these forests provide critical flood storage, water quality benefits, wildlife habitat, and scenic river corridors used for passive recreation.

### Conservation Considerations

Montague's forests play a vital role in supporting biodiversity, protecting water resources, and providing recreational opportunities. Maintaining large, connected forested landscapes – particularly Prime Forest Land, floodplain forests, and the Montague Plains – will remain an important consideration for land conservation and open space planning.

### Wetlands

Wetlands and associated open spaces are widespread throughout Montague and support a diverse range of plant communities adapted to seasonally or permanently saturated soils. These areas occur along major river corridors, tributaries, ponds, floodplains, and low-lying depressions, and are especially prevalent near the Connecticut River, Millers River, Lake Pleasant, and throughout the Montague Plains.

Vegetation within Montague's wetlands includes a mix of emergent, shrub, and forested wetland communities. Common plant species include cattails, sedges, rushes, buttonbush, sensitive fern, and flood-tolerant trees such as silver maple and red maple. These wetland plant communities provide critical wildlife habitat, support water quality functions, and contribute to the town's overall ecological diversity.

## Invasive Species

Like many communities in Massachusetts, Montague faces challenges from invasive plant species and forest pests that threaten native vegetation, wildlife habitat, and the ecological health of open spaces. Invasive species can outcompete native plants, alter forest structures, and reduce the recreational and scenic value of natural areas.

Several invasive pests have been documented in Montague, including the emerald ash borer, beech leaf disease, and mile-a-minute vine, according to the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources invasive pest dashboard. Emerald ash borer poses a threat to ash trees in forested and riparian areas, while beech leaf disease affects American beech, an important component of Montague's hardwood forests. Mile-a-minute vine is a fast-growing invasive plant that can smother native vegetation and degrade forest edges and wetland margins.<sup>44</sup>

Invasive species are present in a variety of settings throughout the town, including forests, wetlands, river corridors, and disturbed areas along roads and trails. Their spread can reduce habitat quality, limit biodiversity, and complicate land stewardship and recreational use. Addressing invasive species through monitoring, education, and coordinated management will be important for protecting Montague's native plant communities and maintaining the ecological and recreational value of its open spaces.

## Public Shade Trees

Public shade trees are an important component of Montague's built and natural environment, contributing to community character, environmental quality, and recreational spaces throughout Town. Public trees are found along streets, within village centers, in parks, school grounds, cemeteries, and other municipally owned lands.

In Turners Falls, street trees form a key element of the downtown streetscape. Cherry and apple trees planted along Avenue A as part of earlier streetscape improvements enhance the visual character of the commercial district and provide seasonal interest and summer shade. Similar plantings were incorporated into streetscape improvements in Millers Falls by 2023. These trees, along with shade trees in Town parks such as Unity Park, Highland Park, Montague Center Park, Rutter's Park, and Peskeompskut Park, support recreational use and improve the pedestrian experience.

A public tree inventory completed in downtown Turners Falls in 2015 documented 441 public shade trees and found them to be generally well-maintained and in good condition. The inventory identified both benefits and vulnerabilities, including limited species diversity and a predominance of small- to medium-canopy trees. The presence of commonly planted species such as Norway maple (considered invasive in Massachusetts), further showcases the importance of diversifying future plantings. Increasing canopy

---

<sup>44</sup> Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, *Invasive Pest Dashboard* and invasive species profiles for emerald ash borer, beech leaf disease, and mile-a-minute vine, accessed 2026.

diversity and the proportion of large-canopy trees was identified as an opportunity to improve long-term resilience, shade, stormwater interception, and air quality benefits.

The importance of expanding and maintaining tree canopy to address extreme heat impacts was also identified through Montague's MVP 2.0 planning process, which emphasized shade as a key strategy for protecting public health and improving climate resilience in village centers and recreational areas.

Montague manages public shade trees under the authority of the appointed Tree Warden, in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 87 and the Town's Public Tree Protection Bylaw. The bylaw establishes standards for planting, pruning, removal, and protection of public trees and emphasizes replacement planting and long-term canopy health. Public shade trees are recognized as a shared community asset that supports environmental quality, neighborhood character, and the usability of public spaces.

To increase its eligibility and competitiveness for state and federal urban forestry grants, Montague could seek Tree City USA status through the Arbor Day Foundation. Montague already meets most of the criteria for this designation, including having a public tree ordinance, a Tree Advisory Committee, and a designated entity responsible for public trees.

## Fisheries & Wildlife

Montague supports a wide variety of wildlife and aquatic species, sustained by its diverse ecosystems, including extensive forests, wetlands, river corridors, sandplain habitats, and agricultural lands. These environments provide habitats for mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates, many of which are adapted to large, relatively intact natural landscapes (see **Figure 11**). The Town's significant open space holdings and proximity to regional conservation lands contribute to the persistence of these species and support a range of compatible recreational activities, including wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting where permitted, paddling, and nature study.

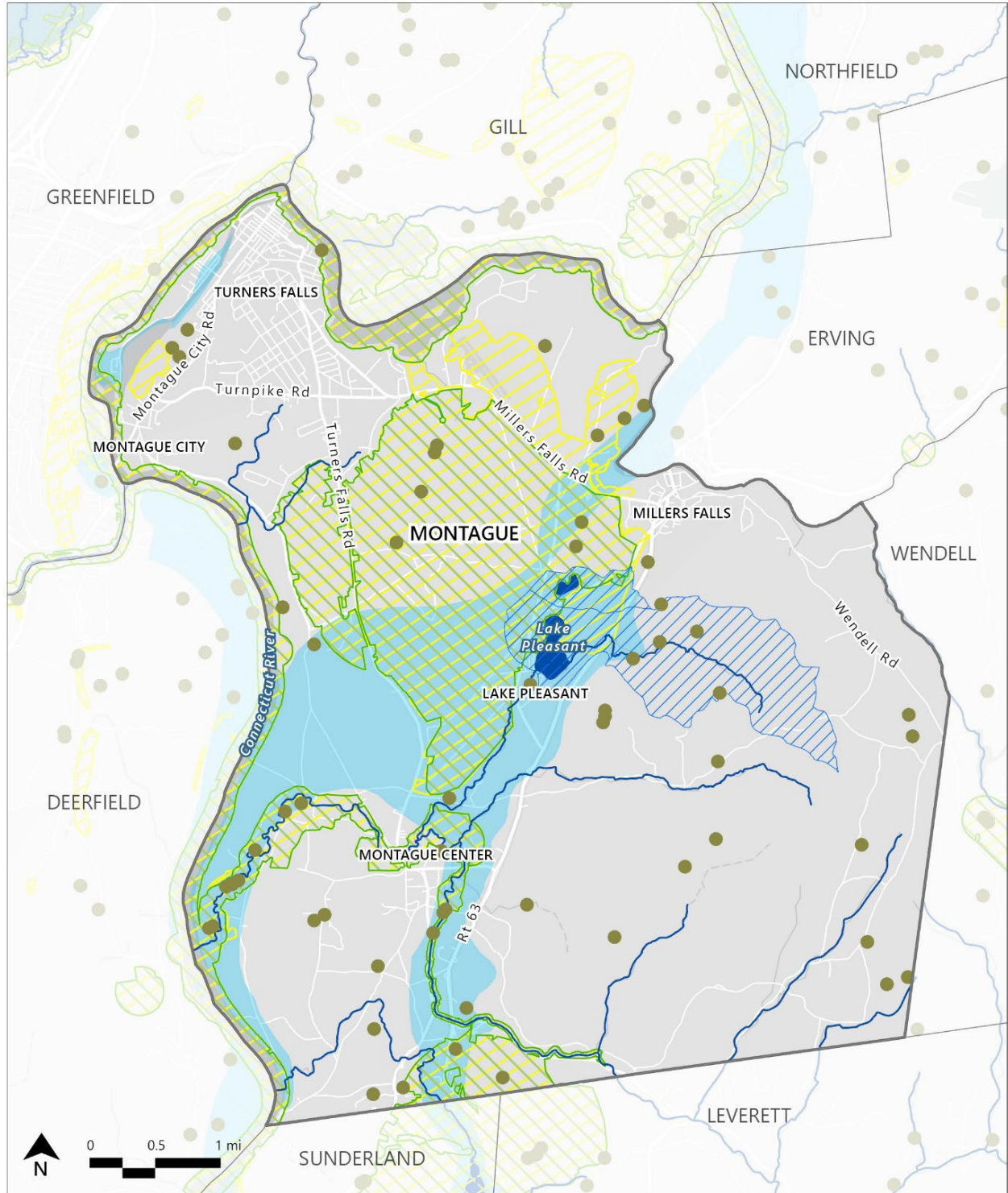
Montague's fisheries and wildlife resources are closely tied to major natural features such as the Connecticut River and its tributaries, the Montague Plains, and large forested areas east of Route 63. These landscapes function not only as habitat but also as movement corridors that connect local ecosystems to broader regional conservation networks.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP); MassGIS, *BioMap* and wildlife habitat datasets, accessed 2026.



Figure 11: Plant & Wildlife Habitat



Source: MassGIS





## Mammals, Birds, & Other Wildlife

Montague supports a diverse assemblage of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates, reflecting the Town's large forest blocks, extensive wetlands, river corridors, sandplain habitats, and agricultural landscapes. Common mammals include white-tailed deer, black bear, beaver, raccoon, red and gray fox, fisher, muskrat, and mink. Larger, more remote forested areas, particularly east of Route 63, provide interior forest habitat for species that require large home ranges and minimal human disturbance such as bobcat, barred owl, and pileated woodpecker, while wetland and riparian areas support moose and other wetland-associated wildlife.

Birdlife in Montague is especially diverse, supported by floodplain forests, upland woodlands, wetlands, and open fields. Songbirds, wild turkey, waterfowl, wading birds, and raptors are widely distributed across the Town. The Connecticut River corridor, in particular, provides important breeding, feeding, and migratory habitat, including for bald eagles, which are now regularly observed nesting and foraging along the river. This diversity of bird species also supports birdwatching as a popular recreational activity and draws visitors from across the regions. Wetland and floodplain habitats also support amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates that form the foundation of local food webs and contribute to overall biodiversity.

As in many communities, deer are both valued and challenging. While deer viewing is enjoyed by many residents, high deer populations can affect forest regeneration and native plant communities and contribute to tick-borne disease concerns. Hunting, where permitted and consistent with state regulations, remains one tool for managing deer populations and balancing ecological and human considerations.<sup>46</sup>

## Aquatic Species & Habitat

Montague's rivers, streams, wetlands, and floodplain habitats support a diverse range of aquatic species, reflecting the Town's position along the Connecticut River and its tributaries, including the Millers and Sawmill Rivers. These water bodies provide habitat for fish, freshwater mussels, aquatic insects, and other organisms that are essential to ecosystem health and that support recreational fishing, wildlife viewing, and environmental education.

The Connecticut River is the most significant aquatic resource in Montague and serves as a major regional habitat corridor. Historically, the river supported abundant migratory fish populations, including Atlantic salmon, American shad, river herring, and American eel. While dams constructed for transportation and hydropower significantly reduced fish passage, ongoing restoration efforts, including fish ladders and dam management, have improved conditions for several migratory species. Today, the river continues to support a mix of resident and migratory fish species, as well as federally and state-listed species such as the shortnose sturgeon.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife; Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), wildlife habitat and species distribution data, accessed 2026.

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife; Connecticut River migratory fish restoration and species accounts, accessed 2026.

Tributary streams, including the Millers and Sawmill Rivers and smaller brooks throughout Town, provide spawning, feeding, and refuge habitat for fish and aquatic invertebrates. These waterways also support amphibians and reptiles that rely on clean, connected aquatic systems during portions of their life cycles. Floodplain forests and adjacent wetlands play a critical role in maintaining water quality by moderating flows, filtering pollutants, and providing organic inputs that sustain aquatic food webs.

Aquatic habitats in Montague are closely linked to recreational opportunities, including fishing, paddling, wildlife observation, and nature study. Maintaining water quality, stream connectivity, and riparian buffers is therefore essential not only for ecological health but also for sustaining the recreational and scenic values of the Town's water resources.

## Wildlife Corridors

Montague contains several large blocks of high-quality wildlife habitat connected by natural corridors formed by rivers, streams, wetlands, and contiguous forested uplands. The Connecticut River, Millers River, Sawmill River, and their associated riparian areas function as primary wildlife corridors, linking floodplain forests, wetlands, and upland habitats across the Town.

These corridors are essential for wildlife movement, allowing species such as white-tailed deer, black bear, bobcat, beaver, river otter, amphibians, reptiles, and migratory birds to travel between feeding, breeding, and seasonal habitats. Forested lands east of Route 63 and within the Montague Plains further support regional connectivity by providing large, relatively unfragmented habitat areas.

Roadways and development can interrupt these natural movement patterns, particularly where corridors intersect with transportation infrastructure. Continued protection of riparian buffers, wetlands, and large forest blocks will be important to maintaining wildlife connectivity and supporting biodiversity in Montague.

## BioMap Initiative

BioMap, developed by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, is a strategic conservation planning tool designed to guide land protection and stewardship efforts across the Commonwealth. By identifying areas critical for preserving rare species, exemplary natural communities, and resilient ecosystems, BioMap helps ensure the long-term health of Massachusetts' biodiversity and highlights lands essential to wildlife habitat and water quality.

BioMap is organized into the following categories:

- **Core Habitat**, which identifies areas essential for sustaining rare species, intact natural communities, and key ecological processes;

- ▶ **Critical Natural Landscape**, which prioritizes large, relatively unfragmented landscapes that support ecological connectivity, climate resilience, and long-term ecosystem function;
- ▶ **Local Components**, which refine Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape priorities based on municipal-scale ecological significance; and
- ▶ **Regional Components**, which identify habitats important for conservation success across the broader Northeastern United States.

Together, these overlapping designations provide a comprehensive framework for conservation planning.<sup>48</sup>

Montague contains an exceptionally high concentration of BioMap-designated lands. Of the Town's approximately 20,123 acres, more than 50 percent (10,173 acres) are mapped as BioMap Core Habitat, and over 54 percent (10,931 acres) are included within BioMap Critical Natural Landscape. Approximately 40 percent of Montague's total land area is permanently protected open space, with a substantial portion overlapping BioMap Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape designations.<sup>49</sup>

BioMap areas in Montague are concentrated along the Connecticut, Millers, and Sawmill River corridors, across extensive upland forest blocks east of Route 63, and within the Montague Plains sandplain ecosystem. These landscapes support high ecological integrity, maintain regional wildlife connectivity, protect water quality, and provide critical habitat for rare and sensitive species.

Wetland Core, Aquatic Core, and Vernal Pool Core habitats within Montague represent some of the least disturbed and most ecologically functional wetlands and freshwater systems in the region. Upland and aquatic buffers associated with these cores further enhance resilience by reducing development impacts and maintaining natural hydrologic and ecological processes. Protection and stewardship of these BioMap-designated lands are central to sustaining Montague's biodiversity and guiding future open space, recreation, and land-use planning.

### Exemplary Natural Communities & Species of Conservation Concern

BioMap identifies Montague as supporting a wide range of exemplary natural communities and Species of Conservation Concern, reflecting the Town's ecological importance at the local, regional, and statewide levels. Core Habitat within Montague includes substantial areas of Rare Species Core (6,392 acres), Forest Core (3,379 acres), Aquatic Core (1,723 acres), Wetland Core (218 acres), Vernal Pool Core (431 acres), and Priority Natural Communities (1,138 acres).

These habitats encompass high-quality river corridors, floodplain forests, wetlands, vernal pool complexes, large interior forest blocks, and the globally rare pitch pine-scrub oak sandplain ecosystem of the Montague Plains. Together, these systems support rare fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, insects, and freshwater mussels, many of which are

---

<sup>48</sup> Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program; The Nature Conservancy, *BioMap* overview and methodology, accessed 2026.

<sup>49</sup> MassGIS; Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), *BioMap* spatial data for Montague, accessed 2026.

listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act.

BioMap Critical Natural Landscape areas in Montague include extensive landscape blocks (7,715 acres) and associated aquatic and wetland buffers that enhance connectivity between core habitats and support wide-ranging species and climate resilience. In addition, BioMap Local Components identify wetlands, aquatic habitats, vernal pools, and rare species habitats of particular importance at the municipal scale, further refining conservation priorities within the Town.

Regional Components mapped within Montague highlight its role in maintaining regional habitat connectivity and supporting species that are imperiled beyond Massachusetts. Protecting and stewarding these exemplary natural communities and Species of Conservation Concern will be essential to maintaining Montague’s ecological health, preserving biodiversity, and ensuring that future land use and recreation planning are aligned with long-term conservation goals.

### Rare Species

The NHESP reports that the Town of Montague supports a diverse assemblage of state-listed rare species, reflecting the town’s extensive riverine, wetland, forested, and pine barrens habitats. Species documented in Montague include those listed as Endangered, Threatened, and of Special Concern under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA).

Rare species occurrences in Montague are closely associated with Priority Habitats of Rare Species identified by NHESP, particularly along the Connecticut River and its tributaries, within floodplain forests, wetlands, vernal pools, and the Montague Plains pine barrens. These habitats provide critical conditions for a wide range of species, including fish reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals, insects, and freshwater mussels.

NHESP records indicate that Montague supports numerous state-listed species, including aquatic species such as shortnose sturgeon and bridge shiner; reptiles such as wood turtle and eastern box turtle; birds such as grasshopper sparrow and eastern whip-poor-will; and a notable diversity of rare dragonflies, damselflies, moths, and butterflies associated with riverine and sandplain ecosystems. **Table 5** summarizes state-listed rare species documented in Montague based on NHESP records.<sup>50</sup>

**Table 5: State-Listed Rare Species Documented in Montague**

| Common Name          | Scientific Name                 | Taxonomic Group | MESA Status     |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| American Bittersweet | <i>Celastrus scanden</i>        | Vascular Plant  | Threatened      |
| American Bumble Bee  | <i>Bombus pensylvanicus</i>     | Insect (Bee)    | Endangered      |
| Autumn Coral-root    | <i>Corallorhiza odontorhiza</i> | Vascular Plant  | Special Concern |
| Bailey’s Sedge       | <i>Carex baileyi</i>            | Vascular Plant  | Threatened      |

<sup>50</sup> Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), rare species occurrence records for Montague, accessed 2026.

| Common Name                    | Scientific Name                   | Taxonomic Group     | MESA Status     |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Bald eagle                     | <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>   | Bird                | Threatened      |
| Barrens metarranthis           | <i>Metarranthis apiciaria</i>     | Butterfly/Moth      | Endangered      |
| Brook snaketail                | <i>Ophiogomphus aspersus</i>      | Dragonfly/Damselfly | Special Concern |
| Buck moth                      | <i>Hemileuca maia</i>             | Butterfly/Moth      | Special Concern |
| Burbot                         | <i>Lota lota</i>                  | Fish                | Special Concern |
| Cobblestone tiger beetle       | <i>Cicindela marginipennis</i>    | Beetle              | Endangered      |
| Creeper (mussel)               | <i>Strophitus undulatus</i>       | Mussel              | Special Concern |
| Eastern box turtle             | <i>Terrapene carolina</i>         | Reptile             | Special Concern |
| Eastern hog-nosed snake        | <i>Heterodon platirhinos</i>      | Reptile             | Special Concern |
| Eastern whip-poor-will         | <i>Antrostomus vociferus</i>      | Bird                | Special Concern |
| Frosted elfin                  | <i>Callophrys irus</i>            | Butterfly/Moth      | Special Concern |
| Grasshopper sparrow            | <i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>      | Bird                | Threatened      |
| Jefferson salamander (complex) | <i>Ambystoma jeffersonianum</i>   | Amphibian           | Special Concern |
| Little brown bat               | <i>Myotis lucifugus</i>           | Mammal              | Endangered      |
| Longnose sucker                | <i>Catostomus catostomus</i>      | Fish                | Special Concern |
| Midland clubtail               | <i>Gomphurus fraternus</i>        | Dragonfly/Damselfly | Endangered      |
| New Jersey tea inchworm        | <i>Apodrepanulatrix liberaria</i> | Butterfly/Moth      | Endangered      |
| Ocellated darner               | <i>Boyeria grafiana</i>           | Dragonfly/Damselfly | Special Concern |
| Pine barrens buckmoth          | <i>Hemileuca maia</i>             | Butterfly/Moth      | Special Concern |
| Pine barrens zale              | <i>Zale lunifera</i>              | Butterfly/Moth      | Special Concern |
| Pink sallow moth               | <i>Psectraglaea carnosus</i>      | Butterfly/Moth      | Special Concern |
| Rapids clubtail                | <i>Phanogomphus quadricolor</i>   | Dragonfly/Damselfly | Endangered      |
| Riverine clubtail              | <i>Stylurus amnicola</i>          | Dragonfly/Damselfly | Endangered      |
| Shortnose sturgeon             | <i>Acipenser brevirostrum</i>     | Fish                | Endangered      |
| Skillet clubtail               | <i>Gomphurus ventricosus</i>      | Dragonfly/Damselfly | Threatened      |
| Slender clearwing sphinx       | <i>Hemaris gracilis</i>           | Butterfly/Moth      | Special Concern |
| Spine-crowned clubtail         | <i>Hylogomphus abbreviatus</i>    | Dragonfly/Damselfly | Special Concern |
| Vesper sparrow                 | <i>Pooecetes gramineus</i>        | Bird                | Threatened      |
| Water shrew                    | <i>Sorex palustris</i>            | Mammal              | Special Concern |
| Wood turtle                    | <i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>        | Reptile             | Special Concern |
| Yellow lampmussel              | <i>Lampsilis cariosa</i>          | Mussel              | Endangered      |

Source: Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program



## Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are temporary freshwater wetlands that provide essential breeding habitat for a variety of wildlife species. These pools typically form in the spring from snowmelt and seasonal rains and usually dry out by mid- to late summer, although some may persist longer depending on annual precipitation. Vernal pools are often small and shallow, but they support highly productive and biodiverse ecosystems.

A defining characteristic of vernal pools is the absence of fish, which allows certain species to reproduce without predation. Species such as wood frogs, spotted salamanders, and fairy shrimp are considered obligate vernal pool species, meaning they depend entirely on these habitats to complete their life cycles. Many insects and other invertebrates also rely on vernal pools for breeding and early development.

Montague contains a substantial number of vernal pools distributed throughout forested uplands, floodplain forests, and low-lying areas. According to the NHESP, the town has fourteen certified vernal pools, along with more than sixty additional potential vernal pools identified through aerial photo interpretation. Areas with higher concentrations of vernal pools include forested lands east of Route 63 and floodplain forests along the Sawmill River.

Certified vernal pools receive regulatory protection under several state and federal programs, including the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (310 CMR 10.00), Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards (314 CMR 4.00), Title 5 of the State Environmental Code, and the Forest Cutting Practices Act. In Montague, the Conservation Commission also administers the Town's local wetlands bylaw which provides additional local review authority and may allow the Commission to consider potential vernal pool habitat and associated buffer areas during project review. Certification helps ensure long-term protection of these sensitive habitats and their surrounding buffer zones.

Vernal pools are ecologically significant and culturally valuable resources. In addition to supporting rare and declining species, they provide opportunities for environmental education and nature observation. Continued identification, certification, and protection of vernal pools will be important to maintaining Montague's biodiversity and supporting healthy wildlife populations.

## Climate Change Impacts

Climate projections for New England indicate that the region will experience significant environmental changes in the coming decades, including hotter summers, milder winters, more frequent and intense precipitation events, and greater climate variability overall. While Montague is not exposed to coastal hazards such as sea-level rise, climate change presents substantial inland risks that affect the Town's rivers, wetlands, forests, infrastructure, and water resources.

Climate change is also expected to alter the condition, accessibility, and management of Montague's open spaces and recreational resources. More frequent extreme precipitation events may increase riverine flooding, resulting in trail erosion, damage to recreation facilities, and temporary closures of parks and river access areas. Longer

periods of drought and higher temperatures can stress forests, wetlands, and wildlife habitats, while also increasing the risk of invasive species, pest outbreaks, and wildfire, particularly in ecologically sensitive areas such as the Montague Plains. Additionally, increased heat and more frequent extreme weather events may affect how and when residents use parks, trails, and open spaces, creating a need for climate-resilient recreational amenities such as shade, cooling areas, and improved stormwater management.

Addressing climate change will be critical to maintaining a healthy, safe, and resilient community. This includes reducing pollution, protecting natural systems that provide climate resilience, and adapting infrastructure and land-use practices to changing conditions.

Montague has engaged in climate resilience planning efforts, developing its Montague Vulnerability Preparedness Plan in 2018 and Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2019. The Municipal Preparedness Vulnerability (MVP) 2.0 program allowed Montague to identify strategies to address climate-related risks, with a particular focus on social vulnerability and equity. Key climate-related vulnerabilities identified for Montague include the following:

### **More Intense Storms**

Climate change is projected to increase the frequency and intensity of heavy precipitation events in New England. In Montague, more intense storms can lead to higher river and stream flows, increased erosion, and greater sediment and pollutant transport into surface waters, particularly the Connecticut River and its tributaries. These conditions heighten the risk of localized flooding, strain stormwater infrastructure, and can degrade water quality and aquatic habitat.

### **Rising Temperatures**

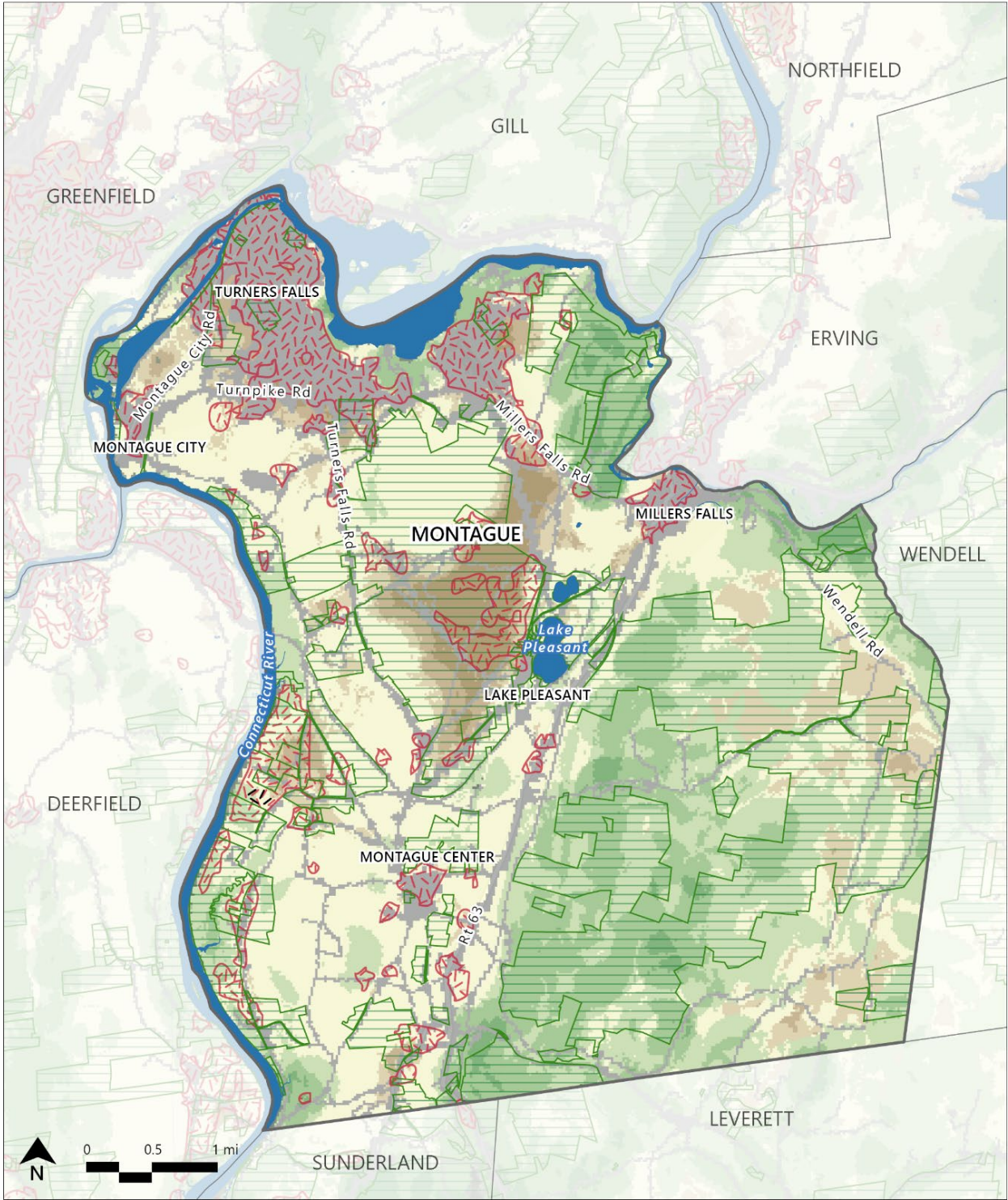
Rising average temperatures are altering seasonal patterns, with earlier springs, longer growing seasons, hotter summers, and shorter winters. These changes affect Montague's natural ecosystems, as many plant and animal species rely on specific temperature cues for migration, breeding, and dormancy. Increased heat can also stress forests, contribute to the spread of pests and invasive species, and increase heat-related health risks for residents.

### **Drought**

Periods of drought are expected to become more frequent and severe under future climate scenarios. Drought conditions can reduce groundwater recharge, lower stream and river levels, and place pressure on drinking water supplies, agricultural operations, and natural ecosystems. In Montague, prolonged dry periods may affect both public and private water supplies, as well as wetlands and cold-water aquatic habitats that are sensitive to reduced flows and higher temperatures.

As climate projections indicate that these challenges are likely to intensify over time, Montague will need to continue developing and implementing strategies that both mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate impacts. Nature-based solutions, such as protecting floodplains, wetlands, and forested areas, can provide multiple benefits by enhancing stormwater management, supporting biodiversity, and improving resilience to extreme weather events.

Figure 12: Climate Change



Source: MassGIS, Nature Conservancy Resilient Lands Mapping Tool

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Terrestrial Resilience * | Hot Spots **         |
| Most Resilient           | Protected Open Space |
| Average Resilience       | Open Water           |
| Least Resilient          | Developed Land       |

\* Calculated based on a site's capacity to maintain species diversity and ecological function as the climate changes (Source: Nature Conservancy Resilient Lands Mapping Tool)

\*\* Areas with the 5% highest Land Surface Temperature Index values in the region.

## Environmental Challenges

Like many communities in the region, the Montague faces a range of environmental challenges that affect its natural resources, public health, and long-term sustainability. These challenges arise from a combination of local land use patterns, legacy development, and broader regional and global trends, including climate change. Montague's extensive river systems, wetlands, forests, agricultural lands, and village centers create both ecological strengths and vulnerabilities that must be carefully managed.

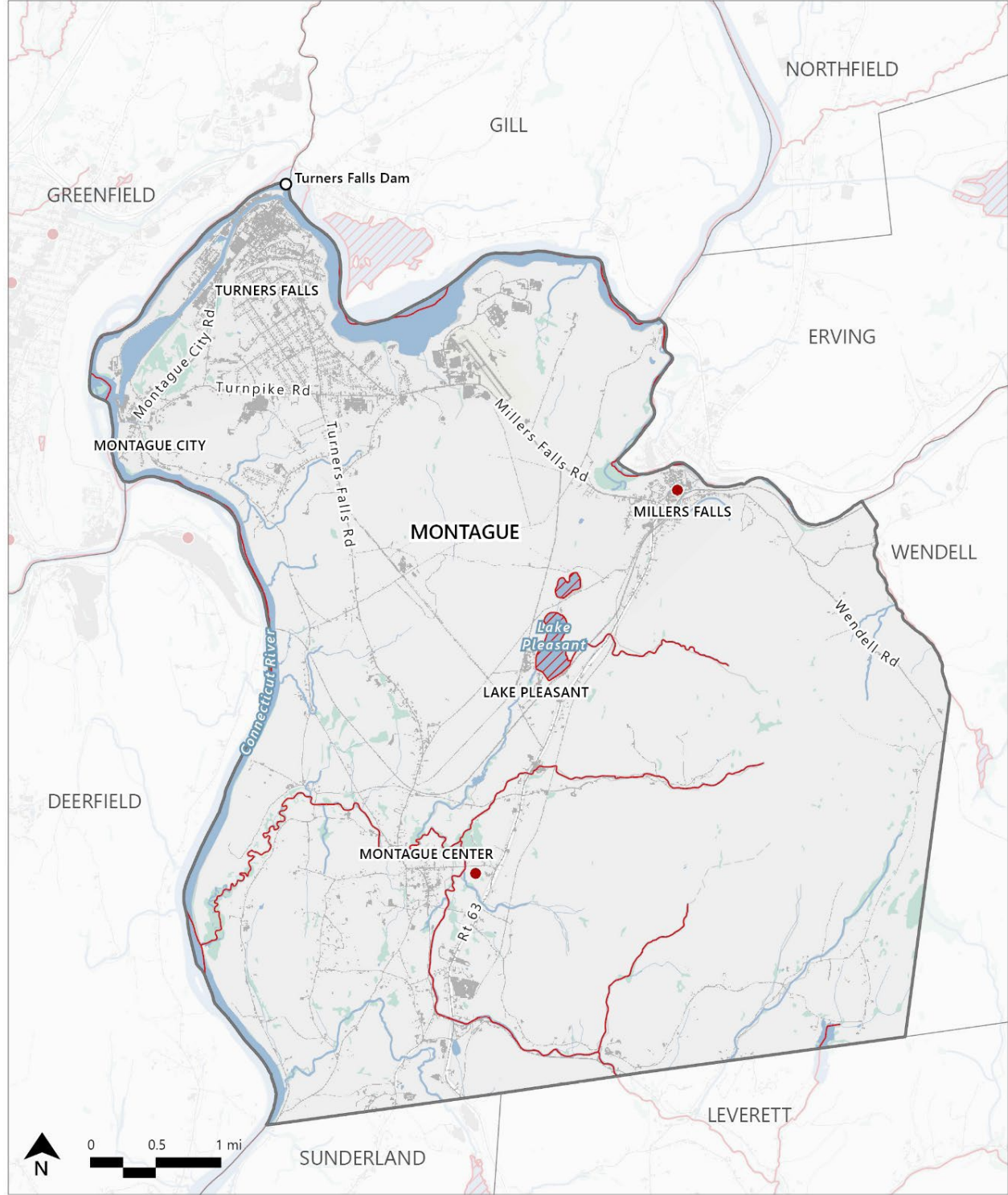
Key challenges include increasing pressures on water resources, habitat fragmentation, flooding and infrastructure constraints, and the management of invasive species and contaminated or underutilized lands. Addressing these issues is essential to protecting Montague's environmental assets, supporting resilient ecosystems, and maintaining a high quality of life for residents.

This subsection outlines the primary environmental obstacles the town faces, including the following.

- ▶ Agriculture
- ▶ Sedimentation
- ▶ Flooding & Infrastructure
- ▶ Deforestation
- ▶ Invasive Species
- ▶ Ground & Surface Water Pollution
- ▶ Off-Road Vehicle Use
- ▶ Wetlands & Watershed Awareness
- ▶ Hazardous Waste Sites & Blighted Areas
- ▶ Environmental Equity



Figure 13: Environmental Challenges



Source: MassGIS

- |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  DEP Wetlands       |  Impaired Streams                          |
|  Open Water         |  Impaired Lakes and Ponds                  |
|  Chronic Flooding   |  Oil/Hazardous Material Sites (MGL c. 21E) |
|  Impervious Surface |                                                                                                                               |



## Agriculture

Agriculture remains an important component of Montague's landscape, contributing to local food production, scenic character, and the town's rural identity. Active and former agricultural lands are found throughout Montague, particularly in areas with suitable soils and access to water resources. These lands also provide secondary environmental benefits, including wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge, and open space continuity.

At the same time, agricultural activities can present environmental challenges if not carefully managed. Soil disturbance, fertilizer and pesticide use, and livestock operations have the potential to contribute nutrients, sediment, and pathogens to nearby surface waters and groundwater. Improperly managed runoff from agricultural fields can increase erosion and transport pollutants into streams, wetlands, and rivers, affecting water quality and aquatic ecosystems.

Montague's agricultural areas often occur in proximity to sensitive natural resources, including wetlands, floodplains, and river corridors. In these locations, land management practices that minimize erosion, protect riparian buffers, and reduce nutrient runoff are particularly important. Climate-related stressors, such as more intense rainfall events and periodic drought, may further challenge agricultural operations by increasing erosion risk and placing additional pressure on water supplies.



*Image 14: Agricultural Land- Source: VHB*

Balancing agricultural productivity with environmental protection is an ongoing challenge. Maintaining working farmland while encouraging practices that protect soil health, water quality, and adjacent natural resources will remain an important consideration for Montague's long-term environmental sustainability.

## Sedimentation

Sedimentation occurs when soil particles are mobilized by wind or water and deposited into rivers, streams, wetlands, and other water bodies. In Montague, sedimentation is closely linked to erosion from developed areas, transportation corridors, steep slopes, and disturbed soils, particularly during heavy rainfall events. Increased sediment loads can reduce water clarity, alter stream morphology, and degrade aquatic habitats.

Sediment often carries nutrients such as phosphorus, which can contribute to excessive plant and algal growth in downstream waters. Elevated sedimentation can also smother fish spawning areas, reduce benthic habitat quality, and impair the ecological function of

wetlands and streams. These impacts are of particular concern along the Connecticut River and its tributaries, as well as smaller brooks and drainageways throughout town.

Stormwater runoff is a primary driver of sedimentation in Montague, especially where impervious surfaces concentrate flows and overwhelm drainage infrastructure. Erosion from roadways, culverts, and outfalls has been documented in areas subject to repeated flooding or high runoff volumes. Agricultural lands and cleared areas may also contribute sediment when protective vegetation or buffers are absent.

Projected increases in the frequency and intensity of storm events due to climate change are likely to exacerbate sedimentation challenges. Addressing erosion sources, maintaining vegetated buffers, and managing stormwater more effectively are essential to reducing sediment transport and protecting water quality. Sedimentation will remain an ongoing environmental challenge with implications for aquatic ecosystems, infrastructure stability, and downstream communities.<sup>51</sup>

## Flooding & Infrastructure

Montague experiences recurring flooding and erosion challenges that pose risks to transportation corridors, public infrastructure, and nearby natural resources. These issues are most pronounced in low-lying areas and along river and stream corridors, where intense precipitation events overwhelm drainage systems and increase surface runoff.

Flooding has periodically affected roads, culverts, and stormwater infrastructure, particularly in areas with steep slopes, sandy soils, or aging drainage systems. Stormwater runoff from developed areas can contribute to localized flooding, erosion, and sediment transport, impacting downstream water quality and aquatic habitats. In some locations, particularly along low-lying roadways near the Connecticut River, Millers River, and Sawmill River corridors in Turners Falls and Montague City, repeated storm damage has resulted in road closures and costly repairs, highlighting vulnerabilities in existing infrastructure.

Natural landscapes play an important role in moderating flood impacts by absorbing and infiltrating stormwater. Forested areas, wetlands, floodplains, and undeveloped open spaces help slow runoff, reduce peak flows, and protect downstream communities. Continued development or expansion of impervious surfaces can reduce these natural buffering functions and increase the severity of flooding events if not carefully managed.

Protecting and enhancing natural flood storage areas, maintaining and upgrading drainage infrastructure, and incorporating nature-based solutions into stormwater management are critical to reducing flood risk. Addressing flooding and infrastructure resilience will remain an important environmental challenge for Montague as climate conditions continue to change.

---

<sup>51</sup> Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. . Final Massachusetts integrated list of waters for the Clean Water Act 2022 reporting cycle. Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## Deforestation

Deforestation remains an ongoing environmental challenge in Montague, driven primarily by land development, infrastructure expansion, and incremental land conversion. Forested land constitutes a substantial portion of the town's landscape and plays a critical role in supporting biodiversity, protecting water resources, moderating local climate conditions, and maintaining the town's rural character.

Residential development, road construction, and associated infrastructure can result in the permanent loss or fragmentation of forested areas. Even when development occurs at a relatively small scale, cumulative forest clearing can disrupt wildlife habitat, reduce interior forest conditions, and increase edge effects that favor invasive species and reduce overall ecological integrity. Forest fragmentation also diminishes the effectiveness of forests in providing ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, stormwater infiltration, and temperature regulation.

Montague's forests are also vulnerable to secondary stressors that can accelerate forest loss or degradation. Invasive insects, plant species, and forest pathogens threaten tree health and species diversity, while increased storm intensity associated with climate change raises the risk of windthrow, erosion, and damage to forest soils. In some locations, clearing associated with utility corridors or potential energy infrastructure may further contribute to localized forest loss if not carefully sited and managed.

Protecting large, contiguous forest blocks and minimizing unnecessary clearing are important for maintaining Montague's ecological resilience. Forest conservation supports wildlife movement, protects water quality, and enhances the town's ability to adapt to climate-related stressors. Addressing deforestation will remain a key consideration as Montague balances growth, infrastructure needs, and long-term environmental stewardship.

## Invasive Species

Invasive, non-native plant, insect, and forest pest species present an ongoing environmental challenge in Montague, threatening the health, diversity, and resilience of the town's natural ecosystems. These species often outcompete native vegetation, alter habitat structure, reduce food sources for wildlife, and degrade ecological functions in forests, wetlands, and aquatic systems. Once established, invasive species can be difficult and costly to control, requiring long-term management and monitoring.

Montague's forests and wooded landscapes are increasingly affected by invasive insects and diseases that weaken or kill native tree species. Forest pests such as emerald ash borer and beech leaf disease have been documented in the region and pose a significant risk to forest structure, canopy cover, and associated wildlife habitat. The loss of mature trees from these infestations can accelerate forest fragmentation, increase vulnerability to erosion, and reduce the ecological services forests provide, including carbon storage and temperature moderation.

Aquatic and riparian environments are also vulnerable to invasive species that degrade water quality and impair habitat. Invasive plants in wetlands, rivers, and ponds can

displace native aquatic vegetation, reduce oxygen levels, interfere with fish spawning habitat, and limit recreational access. Riparian invasives can destabilize streambanks and reduce shading, contributing to higher water temperatures and altered stream ecology.

Addressing invasive species in Montague requires a coordinated, site-specific approach focused on early detection, targeted removal, and long-term stewardship. Prioritizing high-value ecological areas, such as wetlands, riparian corridors, forest cores, and protected open spaces, will be essential to limiting the spread of invasive species and maintaining the town's biodiversity and ecosystem health.<sup>52</sup>

## Ground & Surface Water Pollution

Several rivers and streams within and adjacent to Montague are included on the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's Integrated List of Waters for the Clean Water Act, indicating that they are impaired or threatened for one or more designated uses. Waters within the Connecticut River and Millers River watersheds have been identified as experiencing water quality challenges related to nutrients, sediment, bacteria, and other pollutants, reflecting both local conditions and cumulative impacts from upstream land uses. In 2002, a study of the sewage treatment system assessed Combined Sewer Overflows and showed that during the wet season uncontrolled overflow events occur leading to surface water contamination. This contamination prevents any recreational activities from occurring.<sup>53</sup>

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act requires states to identify impaired waters and, where necessary, establish Total Maximum Daily Loads to address pollutant sources and restore water quality. In Montague, potential contributors to ground and surface water pollution include stormwater runoff from roads and developed areas, agricultural activities, wastewater discharges, legacy industrial land uses, and failing septic systems. Because watershed boundaries extend beyond municipal borders, water quality in Montague is influenced by regional land use patterns and infrastructure as well as conditions within town.

Degraded water quality can adversely affect aquatic habitat, drinking water sources, and recreational opportunities. Elevated nutrient and sediment loads may contribute to reduced dissolved oxygen, algal growth, and habitat degradation, while bacterial contamination can limit contact recreation. Protecting riparian buffers, wetlands, and open space, improving stormwater management, and coordinating with regional and state partners are essential strategies for reducing pollution and maintaining water quality in Montague's rivers, streams, and groundwater resources.

---

<sup>52</sup> Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), *Invasive Insect and Plant Pest Dashboard*

<sup>53</sup> Camp, Dresser, and McKee. *Town of Montague, Massachusetts, CSO Study and Facility Plan System Characterization*, Report September 2002.

## Off-Road Vehicle Use

Unregulated off-road vehicle (ORV) use presents ongoing challenges in Montague, particularly on forested conservation lands and wildlife management areas. Unauthorized use of all-terrain vehicles and dirt bikes can result in soil compaction, vegetation loss, erosion, and damage to sensitive habitats, especially in areas with sandy soils and steep slopes. These impacts can degrade wildlife habitat, impair water quality through sedimentation, and reduce the ecological and recreational value of open space.

ORV activity can also create conflicts with other recreational users, generate noise disturbances, and accelerate the deterioration of informal trail networks, particularly in areas such as the Montague Plains where large remote forest blocks attract motorized use. While motorized recreational use is restricted on many conservation lands, enforcement can be challenging due to the size and remoteness of forested areas and the regional draw of Montague's open space resources.

Addressing unauthorized ORV use requires continued coordination among landowners, municipal boards, state agencies, and conservation partners. Education, signage, trail management, and targeted enforcement can help reduce environmental damage while protecting Montague's natural resources and ensuring safe, appropriate recreational use of open space.

## Wetlands & Watershed Awareness

Many residents are unaware of the essential role wetlands and watersheds play in supporting environmental quality and community well-being. Wetlands provide critical functions, including groundwater recharge, flood attenuation, water quality protection, wildlife habitat, and sediment and nutrient filtration. When these resources are altered or misunderstood, development and land-use decisions can inadvertently increase flooding, erosion, and water pollution.

Montague contains extensive wetland systems associated with the Connecticut River, Millers River, and numerous streams, ponds, and forested wetlands throughout town. These wetlands help moderate flood impacts, protect downstream water quality, and support diverse ecological communities.

## Hazardous Waste Sites & Blighted Areas

Effective management of hazardous waste sites and blighted areas is essential for protecting Montague's public health and environmental resources. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) oversees the identification, classification, and remediation of hazardous waste sites under the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP). The MCP classifies oil and hazardous material release sites under Chapter 21E into Tier categories based on the severity of contamination and the urgency of required response actions.

- **Tier I sites** represent the most urgent cases and generally involve groundwater contamination, imminent hazards, or conditions requiring immediate remedial action to protect public health or the environment.



- ▶ **Tier II sites** do not meet the criteria for Tier I classification but still require assessment, monitoring, or remediation to address potential risks.
- ▶ **Tier 1D sites** are default classifications assigned to sites that fail to submit required documentation, such as a Permanent Solution Statement or Tier Classification Submittal, within established deadlines or are otherwise not in compliance with MCP requirements.

Based on current MassDEP records, multiple sites within Montague have been identified, investigated, or remediated under the MCP. These include properties associated with historic commercial, industrial, transportation, or municipal uses. Several sites remain subject to ongoing regulatory oversight, while others have achieved Permanent Solution status or regulatory closure, in some cases with Activity and Use Limitations to ensure long-term protection of human health and the environment.

Examples of sites identified in Montague include locations along Center Street, Millers Falls Road, Industrial Boulevard, Avenue A, and First Street, as well as areas within and adjacent to former industrial corridors and developed portions of Turners Falls. The status of these sites ranges from Tier I, Tier II, and Tier 1D classifications to sites that have completed response actions under the MCP.

In addition to regulated hazardous waste sites, blighted or underutilized properties, particularly those with historic industrial or commercial activity, can present environmental and community challenges. Continued assessment, remediation, and appropriate reuse of these properties are important for reducing environmental risk, protecting water and soil resources, and supporting community revitalization efforts.<sup>54</sup>

## Environmental Equity

Environmental equity in Montague focuses on ensuring that all residents have reasonable access to open space, recreational resources, and environmental benefits regardless of neighborhood, income, age, or mobility. Montague contains a diverse mix of villages and neighborhoods, each with distinct development patterns, infrastructure conditions, and access to natural resources. While the town benefits from extensive protected open space and riverfront resources, access to these assets is not evenly distributed across all areas.

Some neighborhoods are more densely developed and have limited nearby open space or recreational facilities, particularly in Montague City, which does not contain a municipal park, and in portions of Turners Falls where development is more concentrated. In village centers where historic development patterns prioritized housing and industry over public green space, residents may rely more heavily on a small number of parks, school grounds, or informal open spaces. In Turners Falls, where a higher proportion of residents do not drive and the community has been identified as an EJ area, walkable access to parks and open space is especially important.

Environmental equity considerations also intersect with climate resilience and infrastructure challenges. Areas that experience flooding, erosion, or aging stormwater

---

<sup>54</sup> Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), *Oil and Hazardous Material Release Site (OHMRS) Database*, accessed 2026.

and transportation infrastructure can face compounded environmental burdens, particularly during extreme weather events. Community input gathered through recent planning and resilience efforts has emphasized the importance of improving access to safe outdoor spaces, enhancing neighborhood-scale green infrastructure, and ensuring that environmental improvements benefit all residents.<sup>55</sup>

Addressing environmental equity in Montague will require continued attention to the geographic distribution of open space, the condition and accessibility of recreational resources, and the integration of environmental considerations into future planning and capital investment decisions. Ensuring equitable access to environmental assets supports public health, community well-being, and long-term sustainability for residents across the town.

## Scenic Resources & Unique Environments

Montague's scenic resources and unique environments reflect the town's varied natural landscapes, historic settlement patterns, and strong relationship to the Connecticut River and surrounding uplands (see **Figure 14**). Forested ridgelines, river corridors, wetlands, open plains, and village-centered parks contribute to Montague's rural character while supporting ecological integrity and recreational opportunities. These features are integral to the town's visual identity and environmental health.

Several locations within Montague stand out for their scenic, environmental, cultural, or recreational significance. These areas include riverfront landscapes, large tracts of protected open space, state-managed wildlife lands, and village parks that serve as focal points for community life. Many of these resources provide multiple benefits, including wildlife habitat, flood mitigation, outdoor recreation, and opportunities for environmental education. Preserving and enhancing these unique environments supports conservation goals while maintaining Montague's distinctive sense of place.

### Connecticut River Corridor

The Connecticut River is Montague's most prominent scenic and environmental feature, shaping both the town's physical landscape and its historical development. Flowing along the western edge of town and through Turners Falls, the river provides expansive scenic views, important wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities such as fishing, boating, and riverside walking and biking. The river corridor supports migratory fish species, riparian ecosystems, and regionally significant biodiversity.

Riverfront areas also play a critical role in flood storage and sediment transport, particularly during high-flow events. While the Connecticut River is a defining asset, it presents ongoing management challenges related to flooding, erosion, and water quality. Protecting riverfront open space and maintaining vegetated buffers are essential to preserving scenic views, ecological functions, and public access to this vital resource. The Connecticut River Scenic Byway provides people with access to the various cultural

---

<sup>55</sup> Town of Montague MVP 2.0 Climate Resilience Planning and Public Engagement

resources along the river valley. People can experience the history, farming, and heritage along the river valley as the scenic byway traverses across the Connecticut River through two counties. The byway moves North-South from Franklin to Hampshire County through several towns including Montague, where it runs through the Montague Center Village Historic District and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Montague Mill.<sup>56</sup>

## Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area

The Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is one of the most distinctive and ecologically significant landscapes in town. Managed by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, this large, protected area encompasses extensive forest and sand plain habitats that are uncommon in the region. The Plains support a variety of plant and animal species adapted to dry, sandy soils and early successional conditions.

Historically shaped by fire and other natural disturbances, the Montague Plains are actively managed to maintain habitat diversity and ecological resilience. The area provides scenic open landscapes, wildlife viewing opportunities, and passive recreation such as walking and nature observation. As a state-owned conservation property, the Montague Plains contribute substantially to regional open space networks and biodiversity conservation while offering residents access to a unique natural environment, with opportunities for hiking, birdwatching, and hunting. The WMA is pheasant stocked area and provides seasonal opportunities to hunt for white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbit, fox, wild turkey, ruffed grouse, raccoon, and eastern coyote.<sup>57</sup>



*Image 15: Montague Plains prescribed fire - Source: Town of Montague*

<sup>56</sup> National Scenic Byways Foundation. (n.d.). *Connecticut River Byway (MA)*. [Connecticut River Scenic Byway – MA – National Scenic Byway Foundation](https://www.nscenicbyways.org/Connecticut-River-Scenic-Byway-MA)

<sup>57</sup> Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. (n.d.). *Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area*. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/montague-plains-wma>

## Village Parks and Riverfront Open Spaces

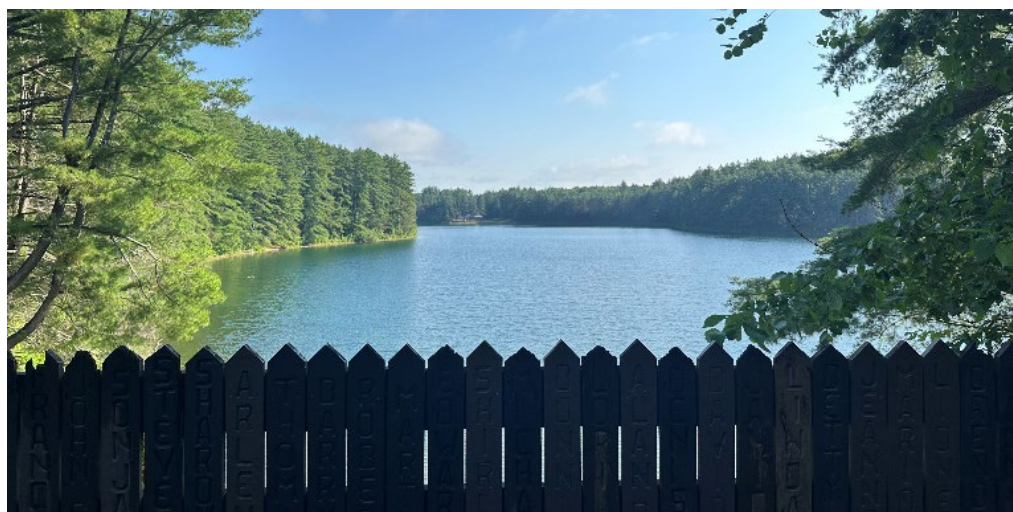
Montague's village parks and riverfront open spaces serve as important scenic and recreational assets within the town's more developed areas. Parks such as Unity Park, Highland Park, Montague Center Park, and Rutter's Park provide accessible green space for residents while contributing to village character and visual relief from surrounding development.

Unity Park, located along the Connecticut River in Turners Falls, is a prominent riverfront park offering views of the river and adjacent landscapes. Other village parks support active recreation, community gatherings, and passive enjoyment of outdoor space. These parks also serve important environmental functions, including stormwater absorption and urban tree canopy support. Together, Montague's village parks strengthen connections between residents and the town's natural surroundings while enhancing livability in village centers.

## Unique Historic & Cultural Landscapes

Montague's scenic resources are closely tied to its cultural and historical landscapes. The town's villages, Turners Falls, Montague Center, Millers Falls, Montague City, and Lake Pleasant, reflect historic development patterns shaped by industry, transportation, and religious and social movements. Features such as historic bridges, riverfront mill areas, cemeteries, and long-established roadways contribute to the town's visual character and sense of continuity.

Several open spaces and scenic areas also hold cultural significance, having served as gathering places, recreational destinations, or transportation corridors for generations. Preserving these landscapes helps maintain Montague's historic identity while ensuring that scenic and cultural resources remain accessible and meaningful to residents and visitors.



*Image 16: Bridge of Names and view to Lake Pleasant – Source: Town of Montague*



Figure 14: Unique Features



Source: MassGIS





## Significant Geologic & Special Landscape Features

Montague's landscape reflects a long geological history shaped by glaciation, river processes, and underlying bedrock formations. These features contribute to the town's scenic character, ecological diversity, and settlement patterns, and continue to influence land use, hydrology, and habitat conditions today. Aquatic and geologic features throughout Montague play an important role in defining the town's natural environment and supporting both ecological functions and recreational opportunities.

### Aquatic Features

The Connecticut River is Montague's most prominent aquatic feature and one of the most significant river systems in New England. Flowing through Turners Falls and along the town's western boundary, the river has historically supported transportation, industry,

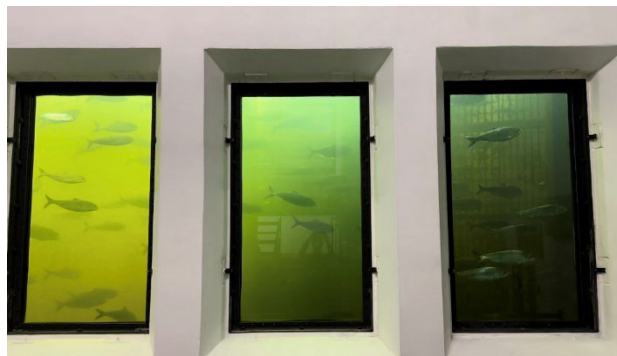


Image 17: Turners Falls Fishway - Source: Town of Montague

fisheries, and settlement. Today, it remains a defining scenic element and an important ecological corridor, supporting migratory fish species, riparian habitats, and regionally significant biodiversity.

In addition to the mainstem river, Montague contains numerous brooks, streams, wetlands, and impoundments that contribute to local hydrology and aquatic

habitat. These smaller water bodies play a critical role in groundwater recharge, stormwater attenuation, and nutrient cycling. Several streams support cold-water or cool-water conditions in headwater areas, providing habitat for aquatic organisms adapted to lower temperatures and higher dissolved oxygen levels.

Wetlands and floodplain areas associated with these aquatic features help moderate flood flows, filter pollutants, and support amphibians, birds, and invertebrates. Together, Montague's interconnected aquatic systems form an essential foundation for water quality protection, wildlife habitat, and scenic value.

### Geologic Features

Montague's geologic landscape was shaped primarily by glacial activity during the last Ice Age, which deposited extensive sand, gravel, and till across the region. These glacial deposits strongly influence soil characteristics, drainage patterns, and vegetation communities found throughout town. In particular, the sandy soils of the Montague Plains reflect glacial outwash processes and support unique ecological conditions distinct from surrounding uplands.

Bedrock in Montague is part of the Connecticut River Valley geological framework, with much of it buried beneath glacial sediments. However, bedrock outcrops and steep

riverbanks are visible in places along the Connecticut River and its tributaries, where erosion has exposed underlying formations. These features contribute to the town's varied topography and scenic interest.

Glacial erratics, large boulders transported and deposited by retreating ice, are present throughout Montague and serve as visible reminders of the town's geologic past. River terraces, steep slopes, and sand plains further illustrate the dynamic natural forces that shaped the landscape. Together, these geologic features influence land stability, erosion potential, habitat diversity, and the visual character of Montague's natural environment.

# Inventory of Lands of Conservation & Recreation Interest

---



Montague is home to numerous and various open spaces, from municipal parks to large, forested areas to trails for hiking and bicycling. These assets are central to Montague's character, provide rich recreational opportunities, and are critical to maintaining healthy ecosystems and clean waterways. As Montague faces development pressures and climate-related challenges, protecting open space for conservation and recreation can help to safeguard the environmental, economic, and community values that make Montague unique. Permanent protection of open space will ensure that future generations can enjoy access to nature, outdoor recreation, clean water, and a healthy environment while supporting the Town's long-term conservation and resilience goals.

This Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest provides a comprehensive listing of open space parcels under permanent protection, as well as those that hold conservation or recreation value but are not permanently protected. These include publicly-owned parcels, owned and managed by the Town or the state. They also include properties owned or managed by conservation land trusts, private institutions, and individuals and businesses. While Montague is fortunate to have so much land already under conservation, the Town can seek permanent conservation over parcels with environmental significance.

For the purpose of this plan, the following terms are defined as:

- ▶ **Open Space:** Public or private land without buildings or highways that holds significant value for conservation or recreation.
- ▶ **Protected Land:** Land permanently designated for conservation or parkland purposes.
- ▶ **Unprotected Land:** Land that holds conservation or recreational value but lacks permanent protection and could be developed.
- ▶ **Conservation Land:** Permanently protected land managed for wildlife habitat, groundwater protection, and ecosystem health.
- ▶ **Municipal Land:** Town-owned land used for public purposes, which may change over time, including areas held for potential future needs.

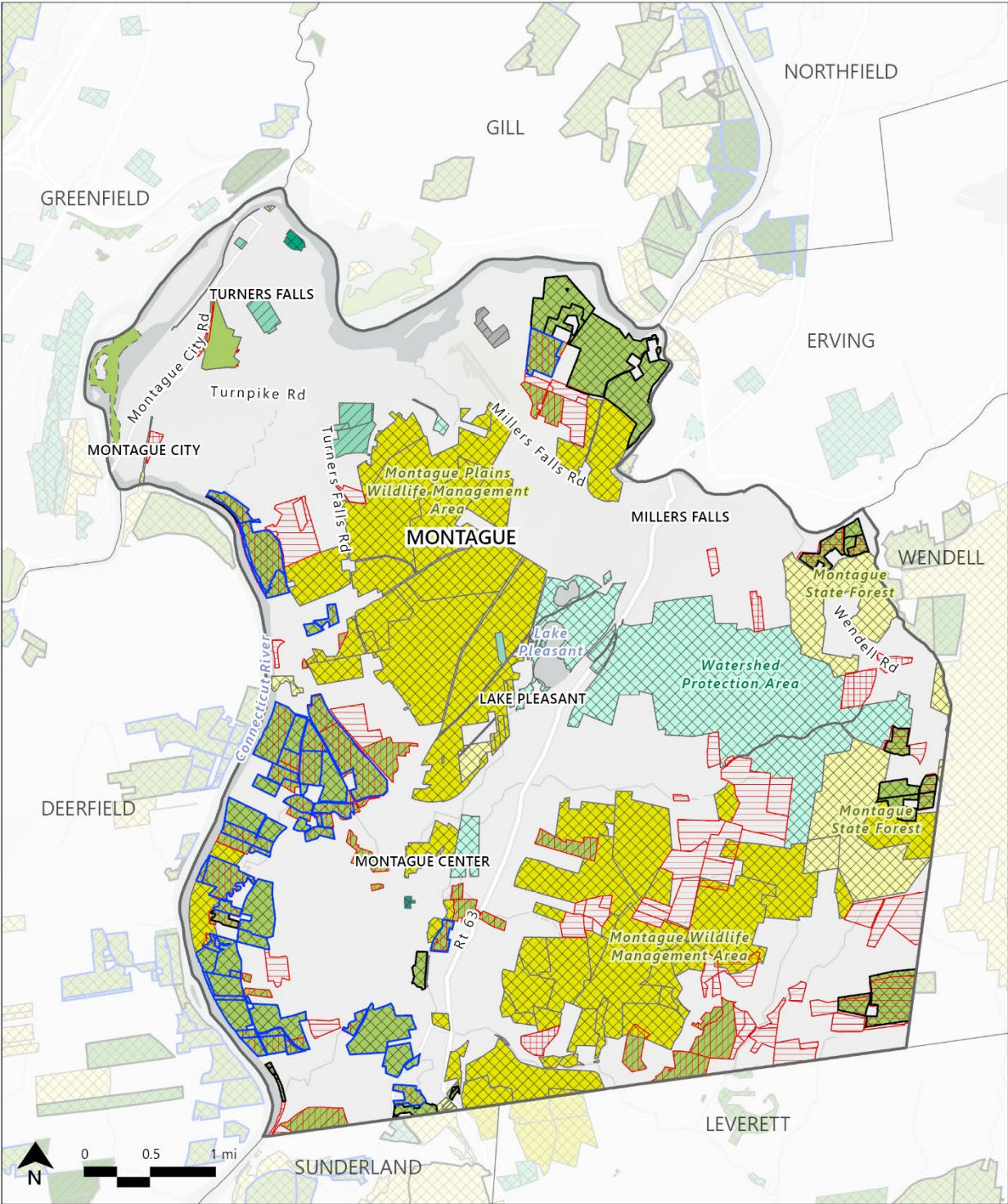
## Open Space & Recreation Land Protections

Montague's open spaces provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors and promote conservation of critical resources, from farmland to forested habitats to water quality. **Figure 15** shows Montague's inventory of open space resources.

Many conservation lands have long-term protection through fee simple ownership combined with Article 97 status and/or recorded conservation restrictions (CRs). Farmland can receive further protection through Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs), ensuring continued agricultural use. Temporary protection is available through Chapter 61 programs (61, 61A, 61B), which provide tax incentives for forestry, agriculture, or recreation, respectively.

At the municipal level, Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution protects land acquired by the Conservation Commission, Water Department, or other municipal entities that is dedicated and used for conservation, park, or recreation purposes. Changing the use of these lands requires a local approval through Town Meeting and a two-thirds vote of the state legislature. Additionally, under the state's "no net loss" policy, if a municipality converts protected land under Article 97 to another use, it must protect land of equal or greater natural resource value in its place. However, this policy is subject to certain conditions and oversight. Article 97 does not apply to lands acquired by federal conservation agencies.

Figure 15: Open Space Inventory



Source: MassGIS, DSPR, DFG

Ownership:

- Municipal: Turners Falls Fire & Water District
- Municipal: Town of Montague - Other
- Municipal: Town of Montague Parks & Rec. Dept.
- State: Dept. of Conservation & Recreation
- State: Dept. of Fish & Game

- Private
- Other

Level of Protection:

- None
- Unknown Trust
- Limited
- Perpetuity

Chapter 61 Land:

- Ch. 61: Forestry
- Ch. 61A: Agriculture
- Ch. 61B: Open Space

Restrictions:

- Conservation Restriction
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction



## Protected Lands

- ▶ Town-owned land held in fee simple and dedicated to natural resource protection (Article 97).
- ▶ Land dedicated to park purposes through deed (Article 97).
- ▶ Town-owned historical land with permanent historical restrictions.
- ▶ State-owned conservation land (Article 97).
- ▶ Private Land Trust-owned land held outright or with permanent deed restrictions or Conservation Restrictions held in perpetuity.
- ▶ Private lands that have enrolled in the state's APR Program.

## Unprotected Lands

- ▶ Privately owned land that lacks a permanent deed or conservation restriction filed at the County Registry of Deeds. These parcels remain vulnerable to future development without a formal designation ensuring perpetual open space conservation.
- ▶ Town-owned land not protected under Article 97, such as parcels held by the Board of Selectmen and some school athletic fields, though valuable open spaces, may be repurposed for future development. Note that use of certain state funding sources like Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities Grant Program (PARC) grants, or Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity Grant Program (LAND) grants result in article 97 protection, so some school athletic fields and other town property may be permanently protected.
- ▶ Private lands are enrolled in the **Chapter 61 Program**, which grants temporary tax benefits for forestry (61), agriculture (61A), or recreation (61B). Parcels must meet minimum acreage requirements and, if sold, offer the Town the right of first refusal. However, these lands remain vulnerable, as owners can remove them from the program by paying back taxes. The Town should prioritize such parcels for protection.

**Chapter 61: Forestry** applies to private land for growing forest products, such as timber, Christmas trees, and other forest vegetation. Landowners receive a property tax reduction in exchange for keeping their land undeveloped and actively managed for forestry. To qualify, at least 10 acres must be in active forest management under a 10-year plan approved by a state service forester. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation recommends hiring a licensed private forester to develop this plan. Tax benefits exclude residences and associated land.

**Chapter 61A: Agriculture** applies to private land used for agriculture or horticulture, including crops, livestock, and maple syrup production. A property must have at least 5 acres in agricultural use for at least two years before application for Chapter 61A protection to qualify. Landowners must demonstrate annual sales of at least \$500 for the first five acres plus \$5 per additional agricultural acre or \$0.50 per additional forested acre. Rollback or conveyance taxes may apply if the land converts to non-agricultural use within 10 years.

**Chapter 61B: Open Space and Recreation** applies to private land designated for open space or recreation with a minimum of five acres. Public access is not required for open space designation but is necessary for recreation uses.

- **Open Space** land under Chapter 61B is maintained in a natural, wild, landscaped, or pasture condition or under an approved 10-year forest management plan.
- **Recreation** land under Chapter 61B supports low-impact activities such as hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, skiing, horseback riding, archery, and nature observation. Stadium-based sports or horse or dog racing are restricted. Recreation land must be open to the public or nonprofit organization members, and landowners may charge a fee.

All Chapter 61 programs provide the Town an option to purchase (often described as a right of first refusal) when enrolled land is proposed to be sold or conveyed for a non-qualifying use while in the program or within one year of withdrawal. The Conservation Commission is responsible for developing procedures for exercising this right, ensuring coordination among municipal staff, boards, and residents when landowners intend to sell or convert Chapter 61 land.

## Additional Regulatory & Legal Tools for Open Space Protection

- ▶ **Zoning Act & Planning Regulations** are used for long-term land-use planning. Zoning does not provide permanent land protection, as it can be changed at any time.
- ▶ **The Wetlands Protection Act** requires a permit for development to occur in wetland areas, protecting critical habitats, including Montague's extensive wetlands.
- ▶ **The Rivers Protection Act** establishes a 200-foot corridor where development requires a permit along perennial rivers and streams. These regulations can lead to the preservation of riverfront land as open space.

## Municipal Parcels

Municipal open space parcels in Montague include permanently protected lands managed by the Conservation Commission, parks and playgrounds managed by the Parks and Recreation Department, public cemeteries and school parcels, and parcels owned by other municipal entities such as the Turners Falls Fire District, Montague Airport Commission, and Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation.

Four of the five villages in Montague have parks managed by the Montague Parks and Recreation Department that offer playgrounds, sports fields, and picnic areas, among other amenities. Unity Park in Turners Falls has some amenities that are unique in town, including a splash pad, skatepark, and community garden. In recent years the Parks and Recreation Department has renovated playgrounds in Montague Center Park and Rutter's Park, and added lighting to the skatepark at Unity Park. Montague City is the only village without a public park.

The Turners Falls Fire District owns large tracts of forested land surrounding Lake Pleasant, Green Pond, and the Hannegan Brook Watershed, and the Montague Center Water District also owns several forested parcels. There is a small network of public hiking trails within Turners Falls Fire District Land, with the Dry Hill Trail System offering seven miles of marked hiking trails.

Open space with limited protection includes properties managed by the Gill Montague Regional School District, including ballfields, school playgrounds, and some wooded land. The Turners Falls Municipal Airport also manages open space parcels within the airport property.

## Inventory of Public Lands

Table 6: Town of Montague Properties Managed by the Conservation Commission

| Parcel ID | Property Name                       | Acres      | Current Use | Rec Potential             | Condition | Public Access | Grant                 | Notes                   |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 37-0-129  | Fifth Ave                           | 0.4        | Forested    | Maintain as forested land | Good      | None          | None                  | Conservation Commission |
| 44-0-69   | Sawmill River Access Area, Swamp Rd | 6.0        | Forested    | Maintain as forested land | Good      | North Street  | Resident fund-raising | Conservation Commission |
|           | <b>Total Acres</b>                  | <b>6.4</b> |             |                           |           |               |                       |                         |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data, 2017 OSRP

Table 7: Montague Municipal Recreation Lands

| Property Name        | Location        | Acres | Current Use                        | Rec Potential                                                                                                                                             | Condition | Public Access | Grant                                                                                       | Notes                                            |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Highland Park        | Millers Falls   | 6.2   | Ballfield, Playground, Picnic Area | Shed/storage, ADA parking, accessible access to playground, community gardens, modernized playground equipment, restrooms, shade trees or shade structure | Good      | Yes           | Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), PARC Grant, Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) | Town of Montague Parks and Recreation Department |
| Montague Center Park | Montague Center | 4.4   | Ballfield, Playground, Gardens     | Picnic shelter, ballfield rehabilitation, adult fitness equipment, expanded parking, walking path, community gardens                                      | Good      | Yes           | PARC Grant, LWCF                                                                            | Town of Montague Parks and Recreation Department |
| Norma's Park         | Lake Pleasant   | 3.7   | Playground, Picnic Area            | Playground equipment                                                                                                                                      | Fair      | Yes           | CDBG, PARC Grant, LWCF                                                                      | Town of Montague Parks and Recreation Department |

| Property Name                 | Location      | Acres | Current Use                                                                           | Rec Potential                                                                                                                                          | Condition | Public Access | Grant                                        | Notes                                            |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Rutter's Park</b>          | Lake Pleasant | 1.1   | Playground, Picnic Shelter, Open Space                                                | Basketball court, planting of fruit trees, raised community gardens, cultural programming for existing pavilion                                        | Good      | Yes           | CDBG, PARC Grant, LWCF                       | Town of Montague Parks and Recreation Department |
| <b>Unity Park</b>             | Turners Falls | 8.5   | Ballfield, Playground, Skatepark, Community Garden, Splash Pad, Picnic Area, Sledding | Playground equipment, fitness equipment, shade structure for sitting area at skatepark, installation of a larger splash pad for all ages and abilities | Good      | Yes           | LWCF, CDBG, Tony Hawk Foundation, PARC Grant | Town of Montague Parks and Recreation Department |
| <b>Peskeompskut Park</b>      | Avenue A      | 1.9   | Park, playground, outdoor performances                                                | Additional events, concerts, movies, wifi, add sign                                                                                                    | Good      | Yes           | Donation, CDBG                               | Town of Montague                                 |
| <b>Roosevelt Park</b>         | Roosevelt St. | 0.8   | Neighborhood open space                                                               | Add sign, bench                                                                                                                                        | Fair      | Yes           | None                                         | Town of Montague                                 |
| <b>Montague Center Common</b> | Main St       | 0.4   | Open space                                                                            | Maintain, fix existing water fountain                                                                                                                  | Fair      | Yes           | None                                         | Town Of Montague                                 |
| <b>Soldiers Memorial</b>      | Avenue A      | 1.1   | Open space, walkway                                                                   | Formalize pathways                                                                                                                                     | Good      | Yes           | None                                         | Town Of Montague                                 |

|                        |                        |             |                   |                              |      |         |      |                                                                                                           |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------------|------|---------|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Athletic Fields</b> | Montague St            | 6.2         | Ballfields        | Shade;<br>access to<br>water | Good | Limited | None | Owned by<br>Town of<br>Montague<br>and leased to<br>Newt-<br>Guilbault<br>Community<br>Baseball<br>League |
| <b>Hillside Path</b>   | Turners<br>Falls       | 8.6         | Multi-use<br>path | Maintain                     | Good | Yes     | None | Town of<br>Montague                                                                                       |
|                        | <b>Total<br/>Acres</b> | <b>42.9</b> |                   |                              |      |         |      |                                                                                                           |

Source: Town of Montague, Parks Department

**Table 8: Municipal Permanently Protected Lands: Turners Falls Fire District and Montague Center Water District (Summary)**

A full listing of parcels owned by the Turners Falls Fire District and Montague Center Water District is provided in **Appendix C**.

| Owner                          | Acres         |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Turners Falls Fire District    | 1514.1        |
| Montague Center Water District | 27.9          |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>1542.0</b> |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data, MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space data

**Table 9: Municipal Cemeteries**

| Parcel ID | Property Name            | Location            | Acres      | Current Use |
|-----------|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|-------------|
| 13-0-034  | Burnham Cemetery         | South High St       | 0.5        | Cemetery    |
| 13-0-088  | Fairway Av Cemetery      | Fairway Ave         | 0.3        | Cemetery    |
| 25-0-15   | E Mineral Rd Cemetery    | East Mineral Rd     | 0.5        | Cemetery    |
| 34-0-058  | Town Farm Cemetery       | Federal St          | 0.3        | Cemetery    |
| 46-0-027  | Dry Hill Rd Cemetery     | Dry Hill Rd         | 0.7        | Cemetery    |
| 48-0-0025 | Old South Cemetery       | East Taylor Hill Rd | 1.5        | Cemetery    |
| 53-0-029  | W Chestnut Hill Cemetery | W Chestnut Hill Rd  | 0.4        | Cemetery    |
|           |                          | <b>Total Acres</b>  | <b>4.5</b> |             |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data



**Table 10: Municipal Public Facilities: Limited Level of Protection**

| Parcel ID | Property Name                   | Location              | Acres | Owner                                                | Current Use                  |
|-----------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 04-0-0044 | Great Falls Discovery Center    | Avenue A              | 0.7   | Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation | Great Falls Discovery Center |
| 04-0-0040 | Great Falls Discovery Center    | Avenue A              | 0.3   | Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation | Great Falls Discovery Center |
| 17-0-025  | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | 10 Aviation Way       | 34.6  | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 17-0-023  | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | 10 Aviation Way       | 23.3  | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 24-0-02   | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | Rear Millers Falls Rd | 19.4  | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 17-0-024  | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | Industrial Blvd       | 14.9  | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 17-0-15A  | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | Industrial Blvd       | 11.8  | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 24-0-11   | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | Millers Falls Rd      | 10.4  | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 17-0-026  | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | 10 Aviation Way       | 10.3  | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 25-0-13   | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | West Mineral Rd       | 10.0  | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 17-0-015  | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | 78 Industrial Blvd    | 10.0  | Town of Montague                                     | Airport/Pump Station         |
| 24-0-03   | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | Rear Millers Falls Rd | 9.3   | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 17-0-038  | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | Industrial Blvd       | 8.0   | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 24-0-01   | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | Rear Millers Falls Rd | 7.2   | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 24-0-04   | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | Rear Millers Falls Rd | 6.6   | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 17-0-022  | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | 10 Aviation Way       | 5.9   | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 24-0-12   | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | West Mineral Rd       | 5.3   | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |
| 17-0-045  | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | 36 Industrial Blvd    | 5.3   | Town of Montague                                     | Airport                      |

| Parcel ID  | Property Name                   | Location              | Acres        | Owner                                                | Current Use |
|------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 24-0-13    | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | 321 Millers Falls Rd  | 5.0          | Montague Airport Commission                          |             |
| 17-0-046   | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | 24 Industrial Blvd    | 3.0          | Montague Airport Commission                          |             |
| 17-0-021   | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | Rear Industrial Blvd  | 2.4          | Town of Montague                                     | Airport     |
| 17-0-033   | Turners Falls Municipal Airport | 40 44 Industrial Blvd | 2.1          | Montague Airport Commission                          |             |
| 21-0-152   |                                 | 0 Turners Falls Rd    | 15.6         | Inhabitants of Montague                              |             |
| 28-0-13    |                                 | Millers Falls Rd      | 7.4          | Town of Montague                                     |             |
| 12-0-044   |                                 | Montague City Rd      | 7.3          | Town of Montague                                     |             |
| 12-0-051   |                                 | Montague City Rd      | 0.9          | Town of Montague                                     |             |
| 12-0-44A   |                                 | 356 Montague City Rd  | 0.8          | Town of Montague                                     |             |
| 04-0-0280  |                                 | Second St             | 0.7          | Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation |             |
| 48-2A-0136 |                                 | 493A Federal St       | 0.5          | Town of Montague                                     |             |
| 04-0-0041  |                                 | 38 Avenue A           | 0.4          | Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation |             |
| 51-0-26    |                                 | Gunn Rd               | 0.1          | Inhabitants of Montague                              |             |
| 03-0-82    |                                 | Rear Canal St         | 1.8          | Town of Montague                                     |             |
| 03-0-83    |                                 | Rear Canal St         | 0            | Town of Montague                                     |             |
| 05-0-153   |                                 | Rear Avenue A         | 2.1          | Town of Montague                                     |             |
| 06-0-358   |                                 | Rear Avenue A         | 0.8          | Town of Montague                                     |             |
|            |                                 | <b>Total Acres</b>    | <b>244.2</b> |                                                      |             |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data, 2017 OSRP

**Table 11: Municipal and Regional Public School Land: Limited Level of Protection**

| Parcel ID | Property Name                                         | Location              | Acres        | Owner                     | Current Use                 |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 06-0-323  | Montague Elementary School                            | 35 Crocker Avenue     | 3.5          | Town Of Montague          | Administrative Building     |
| 06-0-135  | Abandoned School Lot                                  | Chestnut Ln           | 0.2          | Town Of Montague          | Vacant Lot                  |
| 06-0-137  | Central Street School                                 | 34 Central St         | 0.4          | Town Of Montague          | School                      |
| 06-0-324  | Sheffield Elementary                                  | 39 Crocker Ave        | 5.2          | Town Of Montague          | School                      |
| 10-0-049  | Hillcrest Elementary School                           | 30 Griswold St        | 10.4         | Town Of Montague          | School                      |
| 17-0-011  | Franklin County Technical School                      | Industrial Blvd       | 10.7         | Franklin County Technical | School District             |
| 17-0-036  | Franklin County Technical School                      | 82 Industrial Blvd    | 48.0         | Franklin County Technical | School District             |
| 21-0-011  | Great Falls Middle School / Turners Falls High School | Turners Falls Rd      | 20.0         | Gill Montague Regional    | School District             |
| 22-0-15   | Great Falls Middle School / Turners Falls High School | Turnpike Rd           | 6.1          | Gill Montague Regional    | School District             |
| 22-0-16   | Great Falls Middle School / Turners Falls High School | 222 - 224 Turnpike Rd | 20.7         | Gill Montague Regional    | School District/High School |
| 22-0-43   | Great Falls Middle School / Turners Falls High School | Hillside Rd           | 20.2         | Gill Montague Regional    | School District             |
| 22-0-44   | Great Falls Middle School / Turners Falls High School | Rear Turners Falls Rd | 3.7          | Gill Montague Regional    | School District             |
|           |                                                       | <b>Total Acres</b>    | <b>149.1</b> |                           |                             |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data, 2017 OSR

## State, County, & Non-Profit Parcels

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is the largest landowner in Montague, with over 5,000 acres of land representing approximately 25 percent of the Town's total land area. Key conservation areas owned and managed by the state include:

- ▶ Montague State Forest, 648 acres managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
- ▶ Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area, 3,741 acres managed by the Department of Fish & Game
- ▶ Connecticut River Greenway State Park, 27 acres managed by DCR
- ▶ Mount Toby State Forest, 7 acres in Montague managed by DCR
- ▶ Wendell State Forest, 28 acres in Montague managed by DCR

Together, these state-owned, permanently protected areas provide large swaths of forested habitat, as well as recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. The tables below summarize the state-owned open space parcels in Montague. There are no non-profit or county owned open space lands in Montague.

### Inventory of State, County, and Non-Profit Lands

**Table 12: State and Federally Owned Protected Land (Summary)**

A full listing of state and federally owned open space parcels is provided in **Appendix C**.

| Property Name                            | Acres   | Owner                                   | Current Use                                                       |
|------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | 3,741.3 | Department of Fish & Game               | Walking/hiking, biking, XC skiing, hunting, birdwatching          |
| Mount Toby State Forest                  | 7.3     | Department of Conservation & Recreation |                                                                   |
| Wendell State Forest                     | 28.1    | Department of Conservation & Recreation | Walking/hiking, biking, XC skiing, hunting, fishing, boating      |
| Montague State Forest                    | 648.5   | Department of Conservation & Recreation | Walking/hiking, biking, XC skiing, hunting, fishing, birdwatching |

|                                                     |                |                                                                                                                |                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Connecticut River Greenway State Park</b>        | 27.4           | Department of Conservation and Recreation, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Environmental Management | Walking/hiking, boating, camping   |
| <b>Connecticut River Access - Montague</b>          | 70.9           | Department of Fish & Game                                                                                      |                                    |
| <b>Sawmill River Access</b>                         | 51.9           | Department of Fish & Game                                                                                      | Walking/hiking, XC skiing, hunting |
| <b>Bitzer Fish Hatchery</b>                         | 150.4          | Department of Fish & Game                                                                                      | Hunting (limited public access)    |
| <b>Silvio Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center</b> | 20.0           | US Geological Survey                                                                                           | Walking/hiking, biking             |
| <b>Great Falls Discovery Center</b>                 | 1.3            | Department of Conservation & Recreation                                                                        | Walking/hiking, biking             |
| <b>Other</b>                                        | 420.7          | Department of Fish & Game                                                                                      |                                    |
| <b>Total Acres</b>                                  | <b>5,167.8</b> |                                                                                                                |                                    |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data, 2017 OSRP, MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space Data

## Private Parcels

Privately owned open space in Montague includes land enrolled in the Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B tax programs, properties with some level of protection through CRs or other conservation mechanisms, and unprotected open space owned by utility companies or other private entities.

Dozens of private parcels in Montague are temporarily protected under Chapter 61, including 50 parcels (1,084 acres) under Chapter 61 (Forestry), 66 parcels (1,120 acres) under Chapter 61A (Agriculture), and 12 parcels (139 acres) under Chapter 61B (Open Space & Recreation). The amount of land under Chapter 61 protection has declined in recent years. Compared with 2017, in 2025 there were 523 fewer acres under Chapter 61 Forestry and 184 fewer acres protected under Chapter 61A (Agriculture), while the amount of land enrolled in 61B slightly increased by 7 acres. This underscores the temporary nature of Chapter 61 protection and the importance of shifting to permanent protection where possible.

Monson also has 17 private properties (759 acres) under Conservation Restrictions (CRs), with the large majority of these protected in perpetuity. Organizations responsible for managing these conservation areas include the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Franklin Land Trust, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, and Town of Montague Conservation Commission. Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs) are an important tool for permanently protecting farmland. Currently 30 agricultural parcels representing 1,102 acres are protected under APRs.

Utility companies own a significant amount open space land in Montague. Rocky River Realty Co., the landholding company for Eversource, owns 511 acres of unprotected land on the Montague Plains. According to the 2017 OSRP, this land is planned for eventual industrial development. Rocky River Realty Co. and Eversource also own over unprotected 500 acres elsewhere in Town, which may be vulnerable to development pressures in the future.



FirstLight Power owns 552 acres of land with limited protection, primarily along the Connecticut River and on islands in the river. Some of this land is used for recreational purposes, including the popular Canalside Bike Path. FERC places conditions on FirstLight's ownership and management of this land as part of its license for its hydroelectric facilities. These conditions include providing recreational benefits, such as a canoe launch at the end of Poplar Street in Montague City, a park and picnic area along the river in Turners Falls, and fishing access at Cabot Woods and Cabot Camp. FirstLight leases land to the Department of Conservation and Recreation for the Canalside Bike Path. As FirstLight is currently undergoing a re-licensing process, the recreational amenities it is required to provide may change in the future. As of 2025, proposed recreational improvements included two additional boat access points, improved access and wayfinding around Rock Dam, and a new fish ladder/elevator at the dam.

Other private open space parcels include five private cemeteries and the Thomas Memorial Golf & Country Club.

The tables below provide a listing of the privately owned open space parcels in Montague, with information on ownership and level of protection.

## Inventory of Private Conservation Lands: Chapter 61

**Table 13: Temporarily Protected Private Lands in Chapter 61 Forestry**

| Parcel ID | Location               | Acres | Owner                                                          | Current Use   |
|-----------|------------------------|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 21-0-031  | Hillside Rd            | 10.6  | Mcclelland, Alan D & Mcclelland, Patricia M                    | Forested Land |
| 25-0-01   | West Mineral Rd        | 7.3   | Elliott, James D & Elliott, Connie L                           | Forested Land |
| 25-0-05   | West Mineral Rd        | 13.8  | Elliott, James D & Elliott, Connie L                           | Forested Land |
| 25-0-07   | West Mineral Rd        | 32.4  | Elliott, James D & Elliott, Connie L                           | Forested Land |
| 26-0-02   | Greenfield Rd          | 69.4  | Rewa, Andrew P Jr & Rewa Karen E & Dowd, Sandra R              | Forested Land |
| 32-0-04   | Rear Old Greenfield Rd | 6.1   | Kline, Brian J & Roell, Angela H                               | Forested Land |
| 35-0-03   | Rear South Prospect St | 8.3   | Lagoy, Gail S & Lagoy, Michael F                               | Forested Land |
| 39-0-005  | Rear Old Greenfield Rd | 40.1  | Garbiel, Karl W                                                | Forested Land |
| 45-0-10   | Dry Hill Rd            | 13.1  | Davey, John N Jr + Brooks M L, & Davey Christopher R + Matthew | Forested Land |
| 45-0-37   | Rear Dry Hill Rd       | 37.9  | Lpc Holdings Llc                                               | Forested Land |
| 45-0-46   | Rear Dry Hill Rd       | 39.5  | Lpc Holdings Llc                                               | Forested Land |
| 45-0-47   | Rear Dry Hill Rd       | 35.8  | Lpc Holdings Llc                                               | Forested Land |
| 45-0-51   | Dry Hill Rd            | 3.1   | Pezzati, Patrick S & Hancock, Chandra L                        | Forested Land |
| 46-0-042  | E Chestnut Hill Rd     | 9.6   | Hunting, William L                                             | Forested Land |
| 46-0-045  | Dry Hill Cross Rd      | 18.7  | Hunting, William L                                             | Forested Land |
| 46-0-055  | Rear Dry Hill Rd       | 30.9  | Lpc Holdings Llc                                               | Forested Land |
| 46-0-057  | Dry Hill Rd            | 140.3 | Lpc Holdings Llc                                               | Forested Land |

| Parcel ID | Location                | Acres          | Owner                                      | Current Use   |
|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 46-0-064  | E Chestnut Hill Rd      | 9.4            | Hunting, William L                         | Forested Land |
| 46-0-079  | Dry Hill Cross Rd       | 7.8            | Hunting, William L                         | Forested Land |
| 47-0-20   | Rear Meadow Rd          | 23.5           | Garbiel, Karl W                            | Forested Land |
| 48-0-0068 | Taylor Hill Rd          | 15.4           | Kennaugh, Sharon L                         | Forested Land |
| 50-0-04   | Meadow Rd               | 2.5            | Falls Farm Llc                             | Forested Land |
| 50-0-05   | Old Sunderland Rd       | 4.5            | Falls Farm Llc                             | Forested Land |
| 52-0-007  | Rear Highland Ave       | 19.9           | Lyme Quabbin LLC                           | Forested Land |
| 52-0-008  | Rear Highland Ave       | 4.9            | Lyme Quabbin LLC                           | Forested Land |
| 52-0-009  | Rear Highland Ave       | 4.5            | Lyme Quabbin LLC                           | Forested Land |
| 52-0-011  | Rear Highland Ave       | 17.3           | Lyme Quabbin LLC                           | Forested Land |
| 52-0-012  | Rear Highland Ave       | 4.9            | Lyme Quabbin LLC                           | Forested Land |
| 52-0-016  | Rear W Chestnut Hill Rd | 10.3           | Lpc Holdings Llc                           | Forested Land |
| 52-0-017  | Rear W Chestnut Hill Rd | 10.9           | Lpc Holdings Llc                           | Forested Land |
| 52-0-018  | Rear W Chestnut Hill Rd | 7.3            | Lpc Holdings Llc                           | Forested Land |
| 52-0-021  | Rear W Chestnut Hill Rd | 37.5           | Lpc Holdings Llc                           | Forested Land |
| 52-0-022  | Rear W Chestnut Hill Rd | 22.7           | Lpc Holdings Llc                           | Forested Land |
| 52-0-074  | E Chestnut Hill Rd      | 8.4            | Doherty, Michael F & Ricks, Margaret H     | Forested Land |
| 52-0-075  | E Chestnut Hill Rd      | 12.8           | Doherty, Michael F & Ricks, Margaret H     | Forested Land |
| 52-0-132  | W Chestnut Hill Rd      | 14.0           | Pinardi, Christopher C & Pinardi, Stacey J | Forested Land |
| 52-0-154  | W Chestnut Hill Rd      | 37.42          | Pinardi, Denise W                          | Forested Land |
| 53-0-015  | Rear E Chestnut Hill Rd | 47.1           | Lyme, Quabbin Llc                          | Forested Land |
| 53-0-017  | E Chestnut Hill Rd      | 25.2           | Lyme, Quabbin Llc                          | Forested Land |
| 53-0-018  | E Chestnut Hill Rd      | 25.6           | Lyme, Quabbin Llc                          | Forested Land |
| 53-0-033  | E Chestnut Hill Rd      | 9.4            | Bauman, Amy Trte & Hinson, Glenn Trte      | Forested Land |
| 53-0-036  | Rear Chestnut Hill Lp   | 11.1           | Bauman, Amy Trte & Hinson, Glenn Trte      | Forested Land |
| 53-0-037  | Rear Chestnut Hill Lp   | 19.4           | Voorhees, Mark & Pulliam, Susan            | Forested Land |
| 53-0-041  | Chestnut Hill Lp        | 69.5           | Voorhees, Mark & Pulliam, Susan            | Forested Land |
| 53-0-042  | Chestnut Hill Lp        | 5.0            | Chestnut Loop Realty Llc                   | Forested Land |
| 53-0-045  | Richardson Rd           | 31.7           | Bauman, Amy & Hinson Glenn D               | Forested Land |
| 53-0-047  | E Chestnut Hill Rd      | 14.6           | Doherty, Michael F& Ricks Margaret H       | Forested Land |
| 53-0-053  | Chestnut Hill Lp        | 20.9           | Bastl, Christine P                         | Forested Land |
| 53-0-058  | E Chestnut Hill Rd      | 7.9            | Williamson, Patrick & Williamson, Anne K   | Forested Land |
| 53-0-080  | Richardson Rd           | 4.0            | Bauman, Amy & Hinson, Glenn D              | Forested Land |
|           | <b>Total Acres</b>      | <b>1,084.4</b> |                                            |               |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data

**Table 14: Temporarily Protected Private Lands in Chapter 61A (Agriculture)**

| Parcel ID | Location          | Acres | Owner                                                        | Current Use |
|-----------|-------------------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 18-0-06   | West Mineral Rd   | 48.0  | Gendron, Amanda J & Gendron, David R                         | Agriculture |
| 20-0-23   | Greenfield Rd     | 27.0  | Voiland, Paul & Voiland, Jean                                | Agriculture |
| 25-0-02   | West Mineral Rd   | 15.3  | Kozik, Karla J                                               | Agriculture |
| 25-0-03   | West Mineral Rd   | 18.9  | Kozik, Karla J                                               | Agriculture |
| 26-0-44   | Greenfield Rd     | 81.8  | Patterson, Donald F Jr                                       | Agriculture |
| 32-0-07   | Old Greenfield Rd | 1.3   | Kline, Brian J & Roell Angela H                              | Agriculture |
| 32-0-44   | Old Greenfield Rd | 25.0  | Garbiel, Karl W                                              | Agriculture |
| 32-0-71   | Old Greenfield Rd | 49.6  | Nourse Realty Llc                                            | Agriculture |
| 32-0-84   | Hatchery Rd       | 9.3   | Big Foot Food Forests Llc                                    | Agriculture |
| 32-0-85   | Rear Hatchery Rd  | 3.0   | Shreve, Miriam Shannon                                       | Agriculture |
| 38-0-4    | Meadow Rd         | 34.6  | Nourse Realty Llc                                            | Agriculture |
| 38-0-6    | Meadow Rd         | 2.3   | Nourse Realty Llc                                            | Agriculture |
| 38-0-8    | Meadow Rd         | 14.9  | Mieczkowski, Edward A & Mieczkowski, Wanda A                 | Agriculture |
| 38-0-9    | Meadow Rd         | 31.5  | Mieczkowski, Edward A & Mieczkowski, Wanda A                 | Agriculture |
| 39-0-002  | South Ferry Rd    | 10.0  | Nourse Realty Llc                                            | Agriculture |
| 39-0-003  | South Ferry Rd    | 27.5  | Mieczkowski, Edward A & Mieczkowski, Wanda A                 | Agriculture |
| 39-0-004  | South Ferry Rd    | 16.3  | Garbiel, Karl W                                              | Agriculture |
| 39-0-034  | Turners Falls Rd  | 38.1  | Spatcher Clifford C, Spatcher Natalie A                      | Agriculture |
| 39-0-035  | Old Greenfield Rd | 85.5  | Garbiel, Karl W                                              | Agriculture |
| 39-0-044  | South Ferry Rd    | 14.3  | Mieczkowski, Edward A & Mieczkowski, Wanda A                 | Agriculture |
| 39-0-045  | Meadow Rd         | 12.8  | Mieczkowski, Edward A & Mieczkowski, Wanda A                 | Agriculture |
| 39-0-046  | Ferry Rd          | 5.8   | Fronckus, Edwin W + Frances A. & Revocable Inter Vivos Trust | Agriculture |
| 39-0-047  | Ferry Rd          | 17.8  | Garbiel, Karl W                                              | Agriculture |
| 39-0-048  | Old Greenfield Rd | 2.5   | Fronckus, Edwin W + Frances A. & Revocable Inter Vivos Trust | Agriculture |
| 39-0-049  | Ferry Rd          | 1.5   | Fronckus, Edwin W + Frances A. & Revocable Inter Vivos Trust | Agriculture |
| 39-0-052  | Ferry Rd          | 2.2   | Fronckus, Edwin W + Frances A. & Revocable Inter Vivos Trust | Agriculture |
| 39-0-086  | Wills Ferry Rd    | 5.3   | Mieczkowski, Edward A & Mieczkowski, Wanda A                 | Agriculture |
| 39-0-089  | South Ferry Rd    | 4.4   | Nourse Realty Llc                                            | Agriculture |

| Parcel ID | Location          | Acres | Owner                                          | Current Use |
|-----------|-------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 41-0-01   | Meadow Rd         | 21.6  | Mieczkowski, Edward A & Mieczkowski, Wanda A   | Agriculture |
| 41-0-02   | Rear Meadow Rd    | 14.7  | Hanold, Pamela F                               | Agriculture |
| 41-0-05   | Rear Meadow Rd    | 47.1  | Mount Grace Farm Llc                           | Agriculture |
| 41-0-11   | Meadow Rd         | 3.7   | Mieczkowski, Edward A & Mieczkowski, Wanda A   | Agriculture |
| 41-0-24   | Rear Meadow Rd    | 6.7   | Garbiel, Karl W                                | Agriculture |
| 41-0-25   | Rear Meadow Rd    | 1.2   | Garbiel, Karl W                                | Agriculture |
| 41-0-26   | Rear Meadow Rd    | 0.3   | Garbiel, Karl W                                | Agriculture |
| 41-0-28   | Meadow Rd         | 11.7  | Hanold, Pamela F                               | Agriculture |
| 41-0-38   | Meadow Rd         | 9.8   | Gaier, Melanie & Reiber Anthony A              | Agriculture |
| 42-0-03   | Meadow Rd         | 10.0  | Mountain Research Llc                          | Agriculture |
| 42-0-08   | Meadow Rd         | 5.4   | Garbiel, Karl W                                | Agriculture |
| 42-0-13   | Meadow Rd         | 10.4  | Garbiel, Karl W                                | Agriculture |
| 42-0-75   | Rear Meadow Rd    | 11.3  | Garbiel, Karl W                                | Agriculture |
| 43-0-069  | Court Sq          | 2.0   | Stone, Edward G                                | Agriculture |
| 44-0-56   | Rear Center St    | 6.4   | Jiang, Xin Miao & Kuo, Shao Zhi                | Agriculture |
| 45-0-41   | Rear Dry Hill Rd  | 35.4  | Lang, Charles F Jr                             | Agriculture |
| 47-0-02   | Meadow Rd         | 2.4   | Garbiel, Karl W                                | Agriculture |
| 47-0-04   | Meadow Rd         | 4.5   | Smiarowski, Daniel A & Smiarowski, Elizabeth A | Agriculture |
| 47-0-06   | Meadow Rd         | 5.3   | Smiarowski, Daniel A & Smiarowski, Elizabeth A | Agriculture |
| 47-0-09   | Meadow Rd         | 0.7   | Smiarowski Daniel A, Smiarowski Elizabeth A    | Agriculture |
| 47-0-12   | Meadow Rd         | 8.2   | Garbiel, Karl W                                | Agriculture |
| 47-0-14   | Meadow Rd         | 2.5   | Garbiel, Karl W                                | Agriculture |
| 47-0-27   | Meadow Rd         | 5.2   | Smiarowski, Daniel A & Smiarowski, Elizabeth A | Agriculture |
| 48-0-0144 | Rear Federal St   | 15.6  | Ewell, Scott T & Ewell, Emily J                | Agriculture |
| 49-0-01   | South St          | 16.6  | Kretzenger, Suzanne                            | Agriculture |
| 49-0-03   | Federal St        | 1.8   | Kretzenger, Suzanne                            | Agriculture |
| 49-0-06   | Federal St        | 9.2   | Kretzenger, Suzanne                            | Agriculture |
| 50-0-01   | Meadow Rd         | 10.4  | Smiarowski, Daniel A                           | Agriculture |
| 50-0-10   | Meadow Rd         | 14.5  | Smiarowski, Daniel A                           | Agriculture |
| 50-0-11   | Smiarowski Rd     | 5.7   | Smiarowski, Daniel A                           | Agriculture |
| 50-0-12   | Smiarowski Rd     | 4.7   | Smiarowski, Daniel A                           | Agriculture |
| 50-0-18   | Old Sunderland Rd | 45.2  | Arcoleo, James A & Arcoleo, Justyne M          | Agriculture |
| 51-0-73   | Sunderland Rd     | 16.4  | Kachavos, Elaine J & Kachavos, Janice K        | Agriculture |
| 51-0-74   | Old Sunderland Rd | 9.2   | Webber, Suzanne                                | Agriculture |
| 52-0-066  | Rear Ripley Rd    | 35.0  | Billings, Gary Gray                            | Agriculture |

| Parcel ID          | Location                | Acres          | Owner                                         | Current Use |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 52-0-068           | Rear W Chestnut Hill Rd | 11.0           | Billings, Gary Gray & Doyle, Janis R          | Agriculture |
| 52-0-080           | W Chestnut Hill Rd      | 59.7           | Starkweather, Andrew J & Wescott, Catherine E | Agriculture |
| 52-0-151           | W Chestnut Hill Rd      | 40.0           | Starkweather, Andrew J & Wescott, Catherine E | Agriculture |
| <b>Total Acres</b> |                         | <b>1,128.5</b> |                                               |             |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data

**Table 15: Temporarily Protected Private Lands in Chapter 61B (Open Space & Recreation)**

| Parcel ID          | Location               | Acres        | Owner                                                       | Current Use             |
|--------------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 09-0-078           | Montague City Rd       | 0.7          | Tm Realty ii, Llc                                           | Open Space & Recreation |
| 09-0-080           | Montague City Rd       | 4.7          | Tm Realty ii, Llc                                           | Open Space & Recreation |
| 10-0-148           | Rear Country Club Ln   | 0.2          | Tm Realty ii, Llc                                           | Open Space & Recreation |
| 14-0-004           | Fairway Ave            | 0.1          | Tm Realty ii, Llc                                           | Open Space & Recreation |
| 20-0-47            | Greenfield Rd          | 9.4          | Doherty, Charles & Mckay Mary Sherilyn                      | Open Space & Recreation |
| 35-0-36            | Rear South Prospect St | 14.6         | Rugg, Richard Trustee & Rugg, Kathleen L Trustee            | Open Space & Recreation |
| 35-0-46            | Mormon Hollow Rd       | 9.3          | Smith, Denton J Iii + Marsha J & Marsha J, Smith Investment | Open Space & Recreation |
| 35-0-47            | Mormon Hollow Rd       | 29.0         | Smith, Denton J Iii + Marsha J & Marsha J, Smith Investment | Open Space & Recreation |
| 46-0-014           | Wendell Rd             | 36.1         | Senn, James & Senn, Lawrence & Senn, George                 | Open Space & Recreation |
| 46-0-024           | Wendell Rd             | 9.4          | Senn, Claire C Le & C/O Senn, James                         | Open Space & Recreation |
| 46-0-026           | Wendell Rd             | 1.6          | Senn, Claire C Le & C/O Senn, James                         | Open Space & Recreation |
| 52-0-058           | Ripley Rd              | 23.6         | Lovejoy, Samuel H & Schermerhorn Kathy A                    | Open Space & Recreation |
| <b>Total Acres</b> |                        | <b>138.7</b> |                                                             |                         |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data



## Inventory of Private Land Protected through Conservation Restrictions

Table 16: Land Protected by Conservation Restrictions

| Property Name                 | Property Owner                       | Acres Protected | Duration of easement | Level of Protection | Notes                                        | Current Use                 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Waidlich CR</b>            | Waidlich Henry G                     | 234.4           | 1/1/1988             | In perpetuity       | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation | Conservation                |
| <b>Walker CR</b>              | Muriel and Robert Walker             | 100.0           | 12/31/2001           | In perpetuity       | Franklin Land Trust                          | Conservation/Working Forest |
| <b>Carson CR</b>              | Carson Andrew and Virginia           | 90.1            |                      | In perpetuity       | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation | Recreation and Conservation |
| <b>Rewa and Dowd CR</b>       | Rewa Andrew P And Dowd Sandra R      | 81.5            | 11/6/2008            | In perpetuity       | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation | Recreation and Conservation |
| <b>Hunting CR</b>             | Hunting William L                    | 80.5            | 2/8/2017             | In perpetuity       | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation | Conservation                |
| <b>Smith CR</b>               | Smith III Denton J and Martha J      | 53.9            | 6/14/2017            | In perpetuity       | Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust          | Conservation                |
| <b>Keller CR</b>              | Keller Daniel W                      | 48.2            | 5/31/2017            | In perpetuity       | Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust          | Conservation                |
| <b>Old Sunderland Rd CR</b>   | Elinor S Wright                      | 31.4            | 12/19/2025           | In perpetuity       | Franklin Land Trust                          | Conservation                |
| <b>LaClaire CR</b>            | Town of Montague                     | 18.3            | 1/1/1995             | In perpetuity       | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation | Recreation and Conservation |
| <b>Kachavos CR</b>            | Kachavos Elaine J and Janice K       | 16.5            | 9/28/2018            | In perpetuity       | Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust          | Conservation                |
| <b>Wightman CR</b>            | Wightman Mark A and LaClaire Larry M | 3.6             | 12/23/2000           | In perpetuity       | Town of Montague Conservation Commission     | Recreation and Conservation |
| <b>Brand CR</b>               | Brand David J And Julia A.           | 2.6             | 5/12/2005            | In perpetuity       | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation | Recreation and Conservation |
| <b>Ross CR</b>                | Ross Allen                           | 2.3             | 1/1/2001             | In perpetuity       | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation | Recreation and Conservation |
| <b>Dancs &amp; Sweeney CR</b> | Anita Dancs and William Sweeney      | 0.5             | 5/12/2005            | In perpetuity       | Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust          | Recreation and Conservation |
| <b>Garbiel CR</b>             | Garbiel Karl W                       | 0               | 8/11/2004            | Limited             | Town of Montague Conservation Commission     | Conservation                |

| Property Name    | Property Owner                  | Acres Protected | Duration of easement | Level of Protection | Notes                                        | Current Use                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Stewart II CR    | Stewart James K and Barbara I   | 0               | 7/20/1995            | In perpetuity       | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation | Conservation                |
| Rewa and Dowd CR | Rewa Andrew P And Dowd Sandra R | 0               | 11/6/2008            | In perpetuity       | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation | Recreation and Conservation |
|                  | <b>Total Acres</b>              | <b>663.6</b>    |                      |                     |                                              |                             |

Source: MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space Data

**Table 17: Land Permanently Protected by APR In-Perpetuity**

| Property Name              | Property Owner                    | Acres Protected | Duration of easement | Notes                                | Current Use |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Garbiel Karl W APR         | Garbiel Karl W and Lena           | 128.0           | 7/27/2009            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Tuvek CR/APR               | Tuvek Helen A                     | 118.9           | 5/31/1989            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Mieczkowski FLT APR        | Mieczkowski Mieczyslaw S          | 110.67          | 3/11/2008            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Tuvek CR/APR               | Tuvek Helen A                     | 105             | 5/31/1989            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Beauchesne Thomas A 2 APR  | Webber Suzanne                    | 89.2            | 9/5/2003             | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Garbiel Family CR/APR      | Garbiel Family Trust              | 75              | 8/7/1992             | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Garbiel Family CR/APR 2    | Garbiel Family Trust              | 64              | 8/7/1992             | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Smiarowski Stanley A APR   | Smiarowski Stanley A and Edward A | 56.1            | 12/8/1998            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Field TPL APR              | Field Franklin                    | 50              | 11/17/1986           | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Gendron David R APR        | Gendron David R and Amanda J      | 45              | 5/31/2012            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Garbiel Karl W APR 2       | Garbiel Karl W                    | 35.4            | 6/28/2021            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Smiarowski i CR/APR        | Smiarowski Stanley A and Edward A | 33.9            | 12/30/1997           | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Lapinski Alexander J APR   | Lapinski Paul J et al             | 25.5            | 8/10/1992            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Garbiel Family Trust APR 3 | Garbiel Family Trust              | 19              | 9/14/1993            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |

| Property Name                         | Property Owner                         | Acres Protected | Duration of easement | Notes                                | Current Use |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Garbiel Family Tr APR 4               | Garbiel Family Trust                   | 17.3            | 2/29/1996            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Mountain Research APR                 | Mountain Research LLC                  | 17              | 5/26/2005            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Bissell Farm APR                      | Plavin Amy F                           | 16.4            | 9/5/2003             | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Ewell Scott TI APR                    | Ewell Scott T and Emily J              | 16              | 8/17/2012            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Bitzer MGLCT APR                      | Bitzer John R                          | 15              | 12/28/2000           | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Belunas Mary APR                      | Belunas Mary                           | 14.5            | 3/16/1992            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| WMECo APR                             | Western Massachusetts Electric Company | 14              | 6/26/2006            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Laczynski VLF APR                     | Laczynski Theodore H and Charles L     | 12              | 3/18/1991            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Belunas Mary APR                      | Belunas Mary                           | 10.4            | 3/16/1992            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Gaier_Reiber APR                      | Gaier Melanie and Reiber Anthony A     | 10              | 12/10/2004           | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Lapinski Alexander J APR              | Lapinski Paul J et al                  | 3.7             | 8/10/1992            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Connecticut River Greenway State Park | Smiarowski Stanley A and Edward A      | 0               | 12/8/1998            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Smiarowski CR/APR                     | Smiarowski Stanley A and Edward A      | 0               | 12/30/1997           | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Garbiel Family CR/APR 2               | Garbiel Family Trust                   | 0               | 8/7/1992             | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Stewart James K APR                   | Stewart James K and Barbara I          | 0               | 7/20/1995            | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
| Bitzer MGLCT APR                      | Bitzer John R                          | 0               | 12/28/2000           | Department of Agricultural Resources | Agriculture |
|                                       | <b>Total Acres</b>                     | <b>1102.0</b>   |                      |                                      |             |

Source: MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space Data layer

**Table 18: Other Parcels: Easements**

| Property Name           | Property Owner        | Acres Protected | Duration of easement | Notes                                        | Current Use                                          |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Mount Toby State Forest | Cybulski              | 43.7            | 1996-01-01           | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation | Recreation and Conservation - Public Access Easement |
| Turners Falls Hsp       | Esleeck Manufacturing | 0.1             | 1989-01-01           |                                              | Gift; 10ft. wide proposed bike easement              |
|                         | <b>Total Acres</b>    | <b>43.8</b>     |                      |                                              |                                                      |

Source: MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space Data layer

## Other Private Open Space Parcels

**Table 19: Unprotected or Limited Protection Utility Company Land (Summary)**

A full listing of utility company open space parcels is provided in **Appendix C**.

| Owner                      | Description                                             | Acres          |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Rocky River Realty Co.     | Unprotected Utility Company Land on the Montague Plains | 262.2          |
| Eversource                 | Unprotected Utility Company Land                        | 207.6          |
| Rocky River Realty Company | Additional Unprotected Utility Company Land             | 125.8          |
| Turners Falls Hydro Llc    | Unprotected Utility Company Land                        | 0.1            |
| FirstLight Power           | Utility Company Land with Limited Protection            | 552.3          |
|                            | <b>Total Acres</b>                                      | <b>1,148.0</b> |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data, 2017 OSRP, MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space Data

**Table 20: Other Privately-Owned Open Space**

| Parcel ID | Location                            | Acres        | Owner                                                             | Notes            |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 21-0-004  | Turnpike Rd                         | 12.2         | Cemetery Springdale, Turners Falls Cemetery Assoc C/O Paul Porter |                  |
| 21-0-008  | Turners Falls Rd                    | 11.6         | Roman Catholic Bishop of Springfield                              | St Mary Cemetery |
| 21-0-009  | Turners Falls Rd                    | 10.7         | Roman Catholic Bishop of Springfield                              | St Mary Cemetery |
| 21-0-010  | Turners Falls Rd                    | 10.9         | Cemetery, Aaron Clark Memorial                                    |                  |
| 42-0-26   | Turners Falls Rd                    | 1.1          | Cemetery, Elm Grove                                               |                  |
| 42-0-27   | Turners Falls Rd                    | 1.1          | Cemetery, Elm Grove                                               |                  |
| 42-0-32   | Turners Falls Rd                    | 5.1          | Cemetery, Locust Hill                                             |                  |
| 09-0-087  | Thomas Memorial Golf & Country Club | 61.9         | Thomas Memorial Golf & Country Club                               | Not protected    |
|           | <b>Total Acres</b>                  | <b>114.2</b> |                                                                   |                  |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data

# Needs Analysis

---

# 5

## Natural Resource Protection Needs

Montague's natural resources form the foundation of the Town's ecological health, climate resilience, recreational opportunities, and rural character. Extensive river corridors, large forest blocks, sandplain habitats, agricultural lands, and wetlands provide critical ecosystem services while supporting wildlife and community well-being. As development pressures, climate impacts, and recreational use increase, strategic resource protection is necessary to maintain ecological integrity, protect water quality, and balance conservation with public access.

Key resource protection needs in Montague focus on safeguarding water resources and floodplains, conserving large, connected habitat areas, managing forests and invasive species, protecting productive agricultural soils, and guiding trail use to minimize environmental impacts.

### Protection of Water Resources, Floodplains, and Riverfront Areas

Montague's surface waters, particularly the Connecticut River, Millers River, and associated wetlands and floodplains, are among the Town's most important natural assets. These systems provide flood storage, groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities while shaping village development patterns.

Continued protection of riparian corridors, wetlands, and floodplain lands is essential to maintaining water quality, reducing erosion, and increasing resilience to more frequent and intense storm events. Preserving undeveloped lands along rivers and streams helps buffer pollutants, moderate runoff, and limit development in high-risk flood zones.

Future resource protection efforts should prioritize:



- ▶ Conserving riverfront and floodplain lands to support flood mitigation and water quality;
- ▶ Protecting aquifer recharge areas from contamination and excessive impervious cover; and,
- ▶ Supporting climate-resilient landscapes that can absorb stormwater and reduce downstream impacts.

Montague can also seek opportunities to enhance river access while protecting ecological functions. The Town can coordinate with the ongoing FirstLight hydroelectric relicensing and with state agencies and utility operators that manage riverfront land to balance river access with conservation needs.

## Conservation of Natural Habitats and Ecologically Significant Lands

Montague contains large contiguous forest blocks, wetlands, sandplain habitats, and river corridors that support high biodiversity and regional wildlife movement. Key areas, including the Montague Plains, Montague Wildlife Management Area, Montague State Forest, and extensive riparian corridors, function as core habitat and ecological linkages within the broader Connecticut River Valley landscape.

Preventing habitat fragmentation is a central resource protection need. Continued residential and infrastructure development can disrupt wildlife corridors, reduce forest interior habitat, and isolate ecological systems. Protecting remaining undeveloped lands that connect large conservation areas will help maintain species movement, biodiversity, and ecosystem resilience. Habitat conservation is also a high priority for residents, with **83 percent of public survey respondents indicating that protection of wildlife corridors is a high priority and 80 percent indicating that that protection of wetland habitats is a high priority.**

Resource protection strategies should focus on conserving large core habitat areas and natural corridors, filling gaps between existing protected lands, and limiting fragmentation from new development through land protection, zoning tools, and conservation planning.

## Forest Management and Landscape Resilience

Forests are the dominant land cover in Montague and provide essential benefits, including carbon storage, wildlife habitat, stormwater regulation, and recreational opportunities. Large forest blocks are particularly important for ecological integrity and climate resilience.

Active forest stewardship can help maintain healthy, diverse forest systems that are better able to withstand pests, storms, drought, and climate stressors. Resource protection efforts should support sustainable forest management practices that enhance habitat diversity, reduce invasive species spread, and promote long-term forest health.

Balancing conservation with appropriate management will be critical to ensuring that Montague's forests continue to provide ecological and community benefits.

## Invasive Species Management

Invasive plant species pose a growing threat to Montague's natural ecosystems, particularly in wetlands, river corridors, disturbed lands, and along trail networks. Invasive vegetation can displace native species, reduce habitat quality, alter hydrology, and increase maintenance needs in conservation and recreational areas.

Continued monitoring, early detection, and targeted removal efforts are needed to limit the spread of invasive species and protect native plant communities. Integrating invasive species management into land stewardship practices and coordinating with state agencies and volunteer groups can strengthen long-term control efforts.

## Protection of Agricultural Lands and Soils

Montague's prime farmland soils and active agricultural areas, particularly within the Connecticut River Valley and Montague Plains, contribute to the Town's rural character, local food production, and scenic landscape. These lands also support climate resilience by maintaining permeable surfaces and ecological diversity. **74 percent of public survey respondents indicated that protection of farmland is a high priority.**

Protecting productive soils from conversion to development is a key resource protection need. Climate change impacts, including shifting precipitation patterns, flooding, and drought, may also affect agricultural viability, increasing the importance of soil conservation and floodplain management.

Future protection strategies should emphasize preserving farmland and high-quality agricultural soils, supporting sustainable agricultural practices, and protecting floodplain farms while minimizing flood risk to infrastructure.

## Trail Management and Balancing Conservation with Recreation

Montague's growing network of trails and multi-use paths provides important recreational and transportation benefits but also presents resource protection challenges, particularly in sensitive landscapes such as the Montague Plains. Increased trail use, emerging recreation trends such as mountain biking and e-bikes, and informal trail creation can contribute to erosion, habitat disturbance, and user conflicts.

Careful planning is needed to balance public access with conservation goals. This includes identifying appropriate areas for different types of recreation, improving trail design and maintenance, limiting unauthorized trail expansion, and protecting ecologically sensitive habitats.

Key needs include developing clear trail management strategies for conservation lands, evaluating where multi-use trails are appropriate and where hiking-only use should be

maintained, and enhancing signage, education, and stewardship to reduce environmental impacts.

## Community Outdoor Recreation Needs

### Access to Open Space

While a significant portion of Montague's land area is dedicated to open space, residents do not have equal access to it. Some villages, like Turners Falls and Montague Center, have public parks and playgrounds, while Montague City lacks a public park.

Residents' ability to drive also affects their ability to access open space, as many recreational areas are not easily accessible by walking and biking. **21 percent of survey respondents selected lack of transportation as a concern related to open space, and 61 percent of respondents state that they would use recreational facilities more if they had improved transportation access.**

For example, the Montague Plains, located in the center of town, is far from most village centers, and there are not safe walking and biking routes to access it. Even within the villages, lack of sidewalks and bike paths creates safety concerns for residents walking and biking to parks. Many residents expressed a desire to improve safety and access for those walking and biking. The Town's ongoing planning study for a townwide shared use path network, including on town-owned roads through the Montague Plains, should help improve access to parks throughout town. Following up on the study, Montague can continue to seek funding to implement new bike paths.

Montague could also seek funding for a small-scale bike share program that would connect villages and open spaces. ValleyBike, an electric bikeshare program in the southern part of the Pioneer Valley, could be expanded to Montague and neighboring towns, allowing residents and visitors to use bikes to access parks and recreation areas in towns, including the popular Canalside Rail Trail.

Several Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) bus routes operate in Montague on limited schedules. These bus routes primarily connect Montague with neighboring towns rather than connect the villages within Montague. Some residents expressed interest in improved transit service within Montague, which would improve access to parks and other recreational areas. However, due to funding and operational constraints, increased FRTA service in Montague is not likely in the near future. Some also suggested that the town could provide occasional bus service for recreational programs that bring children to open spaces such as the Montague Plains. Such a program could be a potential partnership between the Recreation Department, School District, and non-profit organizations such as Brick House.

### Recreational Opportunities for All Ages and Abilities

21 percent of Montague residents are over age 65 and 19.5 percent have a disability. Paved trails, passive recreation opportunities, and amenities like benches and shade

structures can help older residents and people with disabilities access Montague's open spaces. Other improvements may include removing physical barriers and providing staff training to support inclusive recreation. **16 percent of survey respondents stated that they would use recreational facilities more if they had improved accessibility, with several comments mentioning the need for accessible trails.**

See the [Population Trends, Density & Household Data](#) section of this plan for a discussion of recreational needs by age group. Children under the age of five are a small but growing segment of Montague's population. Montague's Recreation Department has been investing in renovating and upgrading existing parks and playgrounds, and continuing to do so will ensure that play spaces are available for children in all of Montague's villages. Upgrading Highland Park in Millers Falls and creating a half basketball court in Montague Center are upcoming projects that the Recreation Department plans to invest in. There are also opportunities to offer additional recreational programming for teenagers, including adventure-based activities such as rock climbing, skateboarding, or hiking.

## Climate Change

As climate change leads to more extreme heat, residents expressed a desire to have more places to cool off. Preserving mature trees and installing shade structures at parks can provide cooler spaces for residents to gather. The splash pad at Unity Park is popular with children, and some residents desire additional splash pads or a swimming pool in town.

Plantings should also be adapted to future climate conditions. The town could develop guidelines for climate-adapted plantings, ensuring that plantings at parks and other public spaces are able to withstand expected conditions.

## Wayfinding and Public Education

Montague has numerous public open spaces managed by a variety of stakeholders, including the Town, state, land trusts, and private entities. Residents are not always aware of the breadth of these recreational opportunities or which open spaces are open to the public. **Only 20 percent of survey respondents stated that they can easily find information about open space in Montague, and 35 percent selected inadequate signage as a concern.**

Wayfinding signage could help indicate publicly available open spaces, along with how to access them. Montague could also collaborate with other open space land stewards to develop and promote a list of open spaces open to the public. This could also help attract visitors to Montague's open spaces, who may be drawn to opportunities for birding, river access, biking, and more.



Image 18: Existing signage across Montague – Source: VHB

## Recreational Facilities

In addition to Montague’s parks and playgrounds, residents have expressed interest in other types of recreational facilities. There are three community gardens located in Turners Falls, which are all full and have waitlists. One of the community gardens is owned and managed by the Town, while the other two are located on private properties and are managed by residents. Residents are interested in finding space for community gardens in additional villages, as well as exploring the possibility of a community farm. The Town is interested in permanently protecting the two private community garden properties.



Image 19: Community garden at Unity Park  
Source: VHB



Residents are also interested in a safe place for outdoor swimming. Swimming is not allowed in Lake Pleasant because it is part of the state's backup water supply, and swimming in the Connecticut River poses safety concerns due to the dams and high water speeds. **Nearly half of survey respondents stated that they would like to see a swimming pool in Montague.** However, at present the town does not have space designated for a pool and is also concerned about high construction and maintenance costs. An additional splash pad or small wading pool, similar to the one at Unity Park, could help residents cool off during heatwaves, and would be particularly popular with children.

**Nearly half of survey respondents expressed interest in more hiking trails in Montague.** Given the large number of existing hiking trails, this may indicate a desire for more varied types of trails (e.g., accessible trails or hiking-only trails), or it could indicate the need to better promote existing trails.

Residents also highlighted the importance of lighting in recreational facilities. Most of Montague's public spaces lack any light features, limiting the time of use of these spaces. In 2024 lighting was installed in the Unity Park skatepark, which allows skaters to use the space during evening hours.

## Management Needs

### Coordination

Open space in Montague is managed by a range of entities, including the town, several state agencies (including DCR and Mass Wildlife), land trusts, and private entities such as FirstLight. Many of these open spaces are nearby or adjacent to each other, and wildlife and habitat cross jurisdictional boundaries. Greater coordination between the various public and private landowners can help stakeholders align on conservation priorities and make shared decisions about open space management. Montague can consider establishing a formal coordination mechanism between these various entities, such as quarterly meetings to discuss priorities, upcoming projects, and coordination needs.

### Staffing & Volunteers

Park maintenance is the responsibility of Department of Public Works (DPW) staff, who are under-resourced and have many competing responsibilities. Adding an additional DPW staff person with time dedicated to maintaining parks and other open spaces could help the town address maintenance needs at parks in a timely manner, and have more capacity to invest in park upgrade projects.

With limited town staff available, volunteers can play a role in the upkeep of Montague's open spaces. **Approximately half of survey respondents indicated interest in volunteer opportunities to help preserve or maintain open spaces and recreational facilities in Montague.** Residents have expressed interest in volunteering for park cleanups, invasive species removal efforts, and maintaining community gardens. Given this strong interest in support outdoor recreation, the town could consider increasing outreach to recruit volunteers, and organizing several volunteer clean up days each year.

## Funding

Montague has been successful in accessing state grants to support open space-related projects, including grants through the MVP Program, MassDOT, PARC grants, and Community Development Block Grants. The Town should continue to monitor state funding opportunities and seek funding for open space planning and construction projects.

Montague has not passed the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which would allow the Town to charge a property tax surcharge to create a local fund for open space and recreation, historic preservation, or affordable housing projects. Communities that have adopted CPA are also eligible for state matching funds. Adopting the CPA would give Montague a new source of funding that could be used for open space and recreation projects, among other community priorities.

## Alignment with the 2023 Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Montague's open space and recreation needs closely align with the priorities outlined in the 2023 Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), particularly in areas related to equitable access, trail connectivity, neighborhood-scale recreation investment, and opportunities to engage residents with protected natural areas. The following sections describe how Montague's identified needs support and advance the SCORP's statewide goals.

### Goal 1. Improve Access to Beaches and Other Water-based Recreational Facilities.

Montague's priorities around safe, equitable access to water-based recreation closely mirror the SCORP's focus on expanding opportunities to enjoy rivers and other water resources while addressing climate resilience and public health. Residents have expressed a desire for safe places to swim and cool off, but Lake Pleasant is off-limits due to its function as a backup water supply, and swimming in the Connecticut River is generally unsafe. In response to rising temperatures and limited safe outdoor swimming options, Montague is exploring creating additional splash pads for children and families.

Montague's rivers and associated wetlands are both recreational amenities and critical natural systems, and the Town is seeking to improve access while maintaining water quality, habitat, and flood resilience. Coordination with state agencies, utilities, and the FirstLight hydroelectric facility will be a key strategy for balancing new access points with protection of riparian corridors and floodplains. This aligns with the SCORP's goal of ensuring that expanded public enjoyment of water resources does not compromise long-term ecological health.

### Goal 2. Support Trail Projects.

Montague's trail-related needs strongly support the SCORP's priorities for connected,

well-managed trail systems that serve multiple user groups. The Town has identified a townwide shared-use path network and improved bicycle connections between villages and key destinations as significant outdoor recreation needs, aligning with the SCORP's emphasis on regional connectivity, multimodal access, and the use of trails for both recreation and transportation.

Trail management is also an important priority in Montague, aligning with the SCORP's focus on community-based stewardship of trail networks. Despite the large number of hiking trails in town, residents are interested in more varied trail types (including accessible and hiking-only trails) and better information about existing routes. Montague plans to coordinate with other land stewards to identify appropriate trail locations for multi-use, mountain biking, and e-bike access, and where to maintain hiking-only trails. The Town is also exploring developing wayfinding and outreach materials to better communicate about existing trails.

### **Goal 3. Create and Renovate Neighborhood Parks, Especially to Benefit the Underserved.**

Montague's emphasis on addressing uneven access to parks and playgrounds, especially in villages with limited park facilities, directly supports the SCORP's goal of investing in parks to benefit underserved residents. Montague plans to prioritize upgrades and new amenities in locations with limited existing resources, like Montague City, while improving pedestrian and bicycle connections so that residents can safely reach nearby parks without relying on a car. In addition, residents have identified a number of amenities that they would like to see in Town parks, such as accessible paths, water fountains and bathrooms, and community gardens. Montague is also working to adapt its parks to climate change through increased shade, cooling features, and climate-adapted plantings, advancing the SCORP's broader objective of adapting neighborhood parks to hotter, more variable conditions while strengthening everyday access to outdoor recreation.

### **Goal 4. Create Opportunities, Especially for the Underserved, to Enjoy Protected Natural Areas.**

Montague has identified the importance of connecting residents with its extensive conservation lands, aligning closely with the SCORP's goal of ensuring that underserved communities can reach and enjoy protected natural areas. The town is working to reduce transportation barriers through studying a shared-use path network and exploring targeted programmatic transportation to destinations like the Montague Plains. Montague also recognizes informational barriers that can limit access to natural areas. Strategies like wayfinding and communication about publicly accessible lands can raise awareness about where recreation is welcome across a patchwork of public and private ownership.

At the same time, the town's resource protection agenda—prioritizing habitat connectivity, invasive species management, and climate-resilient land stewardship—ensures that expanded use of natural areas remains compatible with long-term ecological health, reinforcing the SCORP's integrated vision of equity, access, and conservation.

# Goals & Objectives

---

# 6

Based on the outdoor recreation, resource protection, and management needs identified through this OSRP planning process and described in Section 5, Montague has developed the following long-term goals. These goals will guide future policy decisions, capital investments, and partnerships to support equitable access, ecological health, and community well-being.

1. Expand equitable access to parks and open space
2. Create inclusive, climate-ready recreation amenities
3. Improve communication about recreational opportunities
4. Build capacity through coordination and sustainable funding
5. Conserve connected habitats and core forests
6. Protect and restore water resources and floodplain systems
7. Sustain working lands and healthy landscapes
8. Balance conservation and recreation needs in trail management and river access

# Ten-Year Action Plan

---



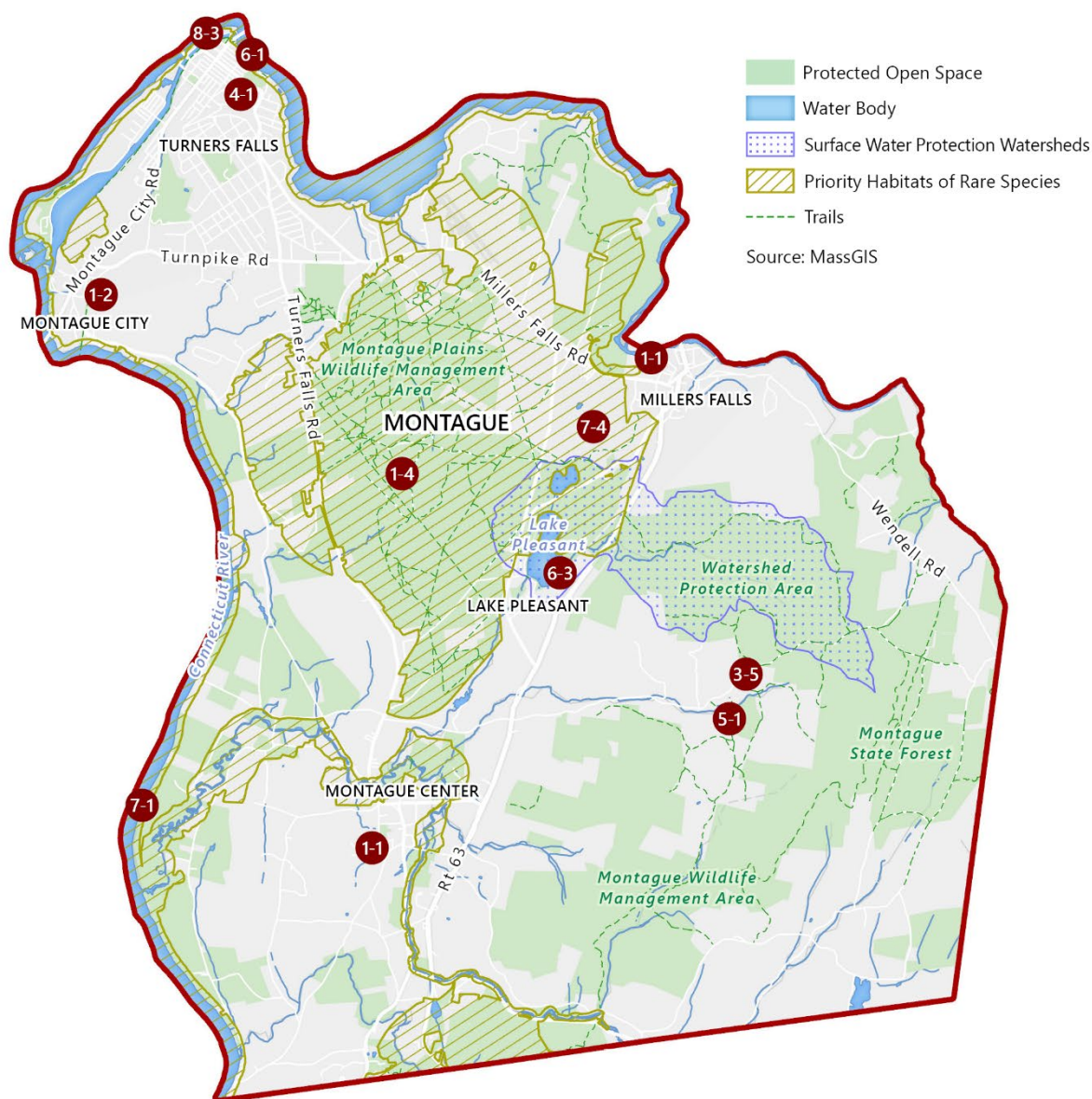
## Planning for Implementation

The following Ten-Year Action Plan outlines a framework for advancing the OSRP's goals and objectives. The matrix that follows serves as a roadmap for translating the Plan's goals into actionable steps and identifies key implementation details, including responsible parties, timeframes, and relative cost considerations. Goals in the Action Plan and the specific actions within each goal are organized in order of priority order based on community and Town staff input.

Actions included in the matrix reflect a range of approaches. Some are spatially tied to specific areas of the Town, as depicted in **Figure 16** while others focus on policy, planning, programming, and stewardship actions that support system-wide improvements. These actions are intended to guide coordinated, flexible implementation over time as priorities evolve and opportunities arise.



Figure 16: Action Plan



**GOAL 1: Expand Equitable Access to Parks and Open Space**

- 1-1 Renovate neighborhood parks
- 1-2 Expand Parks to all five villages
- 1-4 Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity

**GOAL 3: Improve Communication About Recreational Opportunities**

- 3-5 Grow awareness of existing trails across Montague

**GOAL 4: Build Capacity Through Coordination & Sustainable Funding**

- 4-1 Secure sustainable park maintenance funding

**GOAL 5: Conserve Connected Habitats & Core Forests**

- 5-1 Protect land connecting conservation areas

**GOAL 6: Protect & Restore Water Resources & Floodplain Systems**

- 6-1 Protect riverfront and floodplain lands
- 6-3 Clarify Lake Pleasant water supply status

**GOAL 7: Sustain Working Lands & Healthy Landscapes**

- 7-4 Coordinate forest stewardship

**GOAL 8: Balance Conservation & Recreation Needs in Trail Management & River Access**

- 8-1 Expand Connecticut River access
- 8-3 Implement Connecticut River Restoration Project at Strathmore Mills

As included in the following matrix, the **Ten-Year Action Plan** addresses the following:

- ▶ **Champion:** The Champion column identifies the municipal entity that holds primary responsibility for implementing a recommended action.
- ▶ **Cost:** The Cost column provides an approximation of the financial cost to the Town of the recommended action, generally defined as either "\$" (less than 50,000), "\$\$" (between 50,000 and 100,000), and "\$\$\$" (greater than 100,000).
- ▶ **Timeframe:** The Timeframe column indicates the recommended schedule for implementation based on the relative priority and urgency of each action. Actions are categorized as "short-term" (2026–2028) for the highest priority needs, "medium-term" (2029–2032) for moderate priority efforts, and "long-term" (2033–2036) for lower priority or more complex initiatives requiring extended planning.
- ▶ **Funding Source:** The Funding Sources column identifies potential funding options and grants from local, regional, or statewide sources, abbreviated as outlined in Table 21.

**Table 21: Funding Sources**

| Source                                     | Program                                               | Abbreviation     | Link                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MA Department of Agricultural Resources    | Agricultural Grants and Financial Assistance Programs | MDAR             | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/guides/agricultural-grants-and-financial-assistance-programs">https://www.mass.gov/guides/agricultural-grants-and-financial-assistance-programs</a>           |
| MA Department of Conservation & Recreation | Forest Stewardship Program                            | MFSP             | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/forest-stewardship-program">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/forest-stewardship-program</a>                                                     |
| MA Department of Conservation & Recreation | MassTrails Grants                                     | MassTrails       | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants">https://www.mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants</a>                                                                                   |
| MA Department of Conservation & Recreation | Recreational Trails Program                           | RTP              | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/guides/recreational-trails-program">https://www.mass.gov/guides/recreational-trails-program</a>                                                               |
| MA Department of Conservation & Recreation | Urban & Community Forestry Challenge Grants           | UCF Challenge    | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/guides/urban-and-community-forestry-challenge-grants#overview-">https://www.mass.gov/guides/urban-and-community-forestry-challenge-grants#overview-</a>       |
| MA Department of Environmental Protection  | State Revolving Fund                                  | SRF              | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/state-revolving-fund-srf-financial-assistance-program">https://www.mass.gov/state-revolving-fund-srf-financial-assistance-program</a>                         |
| MA Department of Environmental Protection  | Watersheds & Water Quality Grants                     | MassDEP Water    | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality</a> |
| MA Department of Revenue                   | Community Preservation Act (see note)                 | CPA              | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/lists/community-preservation-act">https://www.mass.gov/lists/community-preservation-act</a>                                                                   |
| MA Department of Transportation            | Complete Streets Funding Program                      | Complete Streets | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/complete-streets-funding-program">https://www.mass.gov/complete-streets-funding-program</a>                                                                   |

| Source                                                  | Program                                                             | Abbreviation     | Link                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MA Division of Conservation Services                    | Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity Grant Program              | LAND Grant       | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/local-acquisitions-for-natural-diversity-land-grant-program">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/local-acquisitions-for-natural-diversity-land-grant-program</a>                           |
| MA Division of Conservation Services                    | Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities Grant Program | PARC             | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/parkland-acquisitions-and-renovations-for-communities-parc-grant-program">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/parkland-acquisitions-and-renovations-for-communities-parc-grant-program</a> |
| MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife                     | Habitat Management Grant Program                                    | MassWildlife HMG | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/guides/masswildlife-habitat-management-grant-program">https://www.mass.gov/guides/masswildlife-habitat-management-grant-program</a>                                                                   |
| MA Executive Office of Housing & Livable Communities    | Community Development Block Grant                                   | CDBG             | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-development-block-grant-cdbg">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-development-block-grant-cdbg</a>                                                                     |
| MA Executive Office of Economic Development             | Rural Development Fund                                              | Rural Dev. Fund  | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rural-development-fund">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rural-development-fund</a>                                                                                                     |
| MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs | Planning Assistance Grants                                          | EOEEA Planning   | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/planning-assistance-grants">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/planning-assistance-grants</a>                                                                                             |
| MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs | Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program                        | MVP              | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program">https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program</a>                                                                           |
| MA Office of Travel & Tourism                           | Destination Development Capitol Grants                              | MOTT DDC         | <a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-office-of-travel-and-tourism-grants">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-office-of-travel-and-tourism-grants</a>                                               |
| Mass Cultural Council                                   | Festivals & Projects Grants                                         | MCC Festivals    | <a href="https://massculturalcouncil.org/organizations/festivals-projects/">https://massculturalcouncil.org/organizations/festivals-projects/</a>                                                                                   |
| Mass Cultural Council                                   | Local Cultural Council Program                                      | MCC              | <a href="https://massculturalcouncil.org/communities/local-cultural-council-program/">https://massculturalcouncil.org/communities/local-cultural-council-program/</a>                                                               |
| U.S. Department of Agriculture                          | Agricultural Conservation Easement Program                          | ACEP             | <a href="https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/acep-agricultural-conservation-easement-program">https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/acep-agricultural-conservation-easement-program</a>                         |
| U.S. Forest Service/U.S. Department of Agriculture      | Urban & Community Forestry Program                                  | USFS UCF         | <a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests/ucf">https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests/ucf</a>                                                                                                       |

Note: Montague has not passed the Community Preservation Act, so CPA is not a funding source that is currently available. CPA is listed with an asterisk in the implementation plan tables below to indicate potential uses of CPA funds if Montague were to pass the CPA in the future.

# 1

## Goal 1: Expand Equitable Access to Parks and Open Space

|     | Action                                              | Description                                                                                                                                                                                         | Champion                               | Cost   | Funding Opportunities             | Timing      |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| 1-1 | <b>Renovate neighborhood parks</b>                  | Continue investments in current parks and playgrounds by renovating Highland Park in Millers Falls and creating a half basketball court in Montague Center Park.                                    | Parks & Recreation                     | \$\$   | PARC, CPA*                        | Short-term  |
| 1-2 | <b>Expand parks to all five villages</b>            | Conduct a site feasibility analysis and secure funding for development of a municipal park in Montague City.                                                                                        | Parks & Recreation                     | \$\$\$ | EOEEA Planning, PARC              | Long-term   |
| 1-3 | <b>Create neighborhood pocket parks</b>             | Identify locations and funding sources for small pocket parks in neighborhoods (e.g., alleyways in Turners Falls, town owned lot in the Patch neighborhood).                                        | Planning & Conservation                | \$\$   | EOEEA Planning, PARC, CPA*        | Medium-term |
| 1-4 | <b>Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity</b>  | Complete feasibility study for pedestrian/bicycle connectivity through the Montague Plains and identify funding sources and timeline for implementation.                                            | Planning & Conservation                | \$\$   | MassTrails, RTP                   | Short-term  |
| 1-5 | <b>Improve sidewalk access to parks and schools</b> | Install or expand sidewalks as part of roadway resurfacing projects to provide safe pedestrian access to parks and schools.                                                                         | Public Works                           | \$\$   | Complete Streets, CDBG            | Ongoing     |
| 1-6 | <b>Promote Indigenous history and culture</b>       | Partner with the Nolumbeka Project and other Indigenous groups to incorporate Indigenous history and culture into open space planning, programming, and education.                                  | Planning & Conservation                | \$     | MCC                               | Short-term  |
| 1-7 | <b>Expand bikeshare access</b>                      | Partner with regional stakeholders such as Franklin Regional Council of Governments to study feasibility of expansion of ValleyBike electric bikeshare program into Montague and surrounding towns. | Planning & Conservation                | \$\$   | EOEEA Planning                    | Medium-term |
| 1-8 | <b>Facilitate transportation to natural areas</b>   | Provide transportation for organized activities in the Montague Plains and other forested areas (e.g., for school groups).                                                                          | Gill Montague Regional School District | \$\$   | Local nonprofits, Rural Dev. Fund | Short-term  |

## 2

### Goal 2: Create Inclusive, Climate-Ready Recreation Amenities

| Action                                                         | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                | Champion                   | Cost   | Funding Opportunities                    | Timing      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 2-1<br><b>Increase shade in village parks</b>                  | Add trees and shade structures to village parks to increase comfort and usability during extreme heat.                                                                                                     | Parks & Recreation         | \$\$   | PARC, USFS UCF, UCF Challenge, MVP, CPA* | Medium-term |
| 2-2<br><b>Expand water-based recreation facilities</b>         | Evaluate potential locations and funding sources for a town-owned community pool and for adding splash pads at additional Town parks.                                                                      | Parks & Recreation         | \$\$\$ | PARC, EOEEA Planning, CPA*               | Medium-term |
| 2-3<br><b>Create universally accessible trails</b>             | Identify locations, partnerships, and funding sources for trails accessible to people with disabilities.                                                                                                   | Planning & Conservation    | \$\$\$ | MassTrails, RTP, CPA*                    | Long-term   |
| 2-4<br><b>Establish climate-resilient planting standards</b>   | Develop guidelines for climate-resilient plantings, including a list of recommended plant species and maintenance best practices, for town parks and facilities, including tree planters in Turners Falls. | DPW                        | \$     | EOEEA Planning, MVP                      | Short-term  |
| 2-5<br><b>Limit light pollution in parks and public spaces</b> | Establish a policy that Town-owned outdoor lighting at parks and public buildings must be Dark Sky friendly and limit light pollution.                                                                     | Department of Public Works | \$     | Staff time                               | Medium-term |
| 2-6<br><b>Improve park amenities</b>                           | Install new park amenities like bike racks, water fountains, and restroom facilities where feasible.                                                                                                       | Parks & Recreation         | \$\$\$ | PARC, CPA*                               | Long-term   |



3

### Goal 3: Improve Communication About Recreational Opportunities

|     | Action                                                                  | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Champion                | Cost | Funding Opportunities | Timing     |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------|-----------------------|------------|
| 3-1 | <b>Create an open space wayfinding system</b>                           | Develop a wayfinding/branding plan to clearly identify public open spaces, as well as interpretive materials to better share and connect people to Montague's history.                                                                                                | Planning & Conservation | \$   | MOTT DDC              | Short-term |
| 3-2 | <b>Develop a comprehensive trail inventory and map</b>                  | Develop and promote a list and online map of hiking/biking trails managed by different state, local, and nonprofit entities. Incorporate this trail map into the Town's online GIS system.                                                                            | Planning & Conservation | \$   | Staff time            | Short-term |
| 3-3 | <b>Expand partnerships to provide information on outdoor recreation</b> | Continue partnering with the DCR Discovery Center, FirstLight Power, the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, and the Regional Tourism Council, among other organizations, to provide information on outdoor recreation opportunities to visitors.                    | Planning & Conservation | \$   | MOTT DDC              | Short-term |
| 3-4 | <b>Promote outdoor recreation tourism</b>                               | Market Montague as an outdoor recreation tourism destination for birding, river access, hiking, and more. Provide information on outdoor recreation opportunities to residents and visitors through kiosks, educational signs, walking tours, and online information. | Planning & Conservation | \$   | MOTT DDC              | Ongoing    |
| 3-5 | <b>Grow awareness of existing trails across Montague</b>                | Increase awareness of the trail resources east of Route 63, particularly in the Dry Hill area and connections to Wendell State Forest.                                                                                                                                | Planning & Conservation | \$   | Staff time            | Ongoing    |
| 3-6 | <b>Increase awareness of cemeteries as an open space asset</b>          | Provide information about cemetery access, history, and natural resources to encourage the use of cemeteries as a community open space asset.                                                                                                                         | Planning & Conservation | \$   | Staff time            | Ongoing    |
| 3-7 | <b>Promote environmental education</b>                                  | Develop educational materials, programming, and opportunities for residents to learn about conservation, habitats, environmental issues, and Montague's history and cultural landscapes.                                                                              | Planning & Conservation | \$\$ | Staff time            | Long-term  |
| 3-8 | <b>Expand recreational programming</b>                                  | Partner with RiverCulture, local festivals, and other arts and culture organizations to expand programming in open space in Montague.                                                                                                                                 | RiverCulture            | \$   | MCC Festivals         | Ongoing    |

# 4

## Goal 4: Build Capacity Through Coordination and Sustainable Funding

| Action                                                                          | Description                                                                                                                                                                     | Champion                         | Cost   | Funding Opportunities      | Timing      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|----------------------------|-------------|
| <b>4-1</b><br><b>Secure sustainable park maintenance funding</b>                | Identify sustainable funding sources for DPW maintenance and Parks & Recreation staff to ensure sufficient capacity for maintaining parks and open spaces.                      | Public Works, Parks & Recreation | \$\$\$ | Municipal budget           | Medium-term |
| <b>4-2</b><br><b>Establish volunteer stewardship program</b>                    | Establish volunteer park clean up or trail maintenance days and a process for recruiting and coordinating with volunteers.                                                      | Planning & Conservation          | \$     | Staff time, volunteer time | Short-term  |
| <b>4-3</b><br><b>Coordinate land management across state and local agencies</b> | Convene state and local owners of conservation areas within Montague and neighboring towns to coordinate on open space management needs.                                        | Planning & Conservation          | \$     | Staff time                 | Ongoing     |
| <b>4-4</b><br><b>Track open space inventory</b>                                 | Consolidate and track open space land inventory to identify future opportunities for permanently protecting open space. Develop a GIS inventory of public trees and cemeteries. | Planning & Conservation          | \$     | Staff time                 | Ongoing     |
| <b>4-5</b><br><b>Prevent illegal dumping</b>                                    | Collaborate with local and state agencies to develop a strategy for preventing illegal dumping in the Montague Plains and other conservation areas.                             | Select Board                     | \$     | Staff time                 | Ongoing     |
| <b>4-6</b><br><b>Explore Community Preservation Act funding</b>                 | Consider the Community Preservation Act as a source of funding for open space and recreation projects. Educate the community about potential benefits of CPA funding.           | Select Board                     | \$     | Staff time, CPA*           | Short-term  |

# 5

## Goal 5: Conserve Connected Habitats and Core Forests

| Action                                                   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Champion                  | Cost   | Funding Opportunities                        | Timing      |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 5-1<br><b>Protect land connecting conservation areas</b> | Pursue permanent conservation of undeveloped parcels that provide key linkages between large, protected areas, with priority focus on lands connecting the Montague Plains, river corridors, and existing conservation blocks.                                                                                                                                                                            | Conservation Commission   | \$\$\$ | LAND Grant, ACEP, CPA*                       | Medium-term |
| 5-2<br><b>Integrate habitat protection into planning</b> | Integrate rare species and priority habitat protection into local planning and land management decisions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Planning & Conservation   | \$\$   | MassWildlife HMG                             | Medium-term |
| 5-3<br><b>Reduce habitat fragmentation</b>               | Limit habitat fragmentation from new development by integrating habitat protection priorities into local zoning, subdivision review, and conservation planning, particularly in Priority Habitat and BioMap Core areas. Explore local regulations around tree clearing in forest areas not covered by the Massachusetts Forest Cutting Practices Act and beyond the scope of the Wetlands Protection Act. | Planning & Conservation   | \$\$   | EOEEA Planning, LAND Grant, MassWildlife HMG | Medium-term |
| 5-4<br><b>Support pollinator habitat</b>                 | Coordinate with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to update the 2021 Montague Pollinator Action Plan. <sup>58</sup> Develop sustainable maintenance strategies for existing and new pollinator habitat.                                                                                                                                                                                | Planning and Conservation | \$\$   | EOEEA Planning                               | Medium-term |

<sup>58</sup> Franklin Regional Council of Governments. (2021). *Montague Pollinator Action Plan*. [https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Montague-Pollinator-Action-Plan\\_FINAL\\_2021.pdf](https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Montague-Pollinator-Action-Plan_FINAL_2021.pdf)

# 6

## Goal 6: Protect and Restore Water Resources and Floodplain Systems

| Action                                                                                  | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Champion                | Cost   | Funding Opportunities          | Timing      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>6-1</b><br><b>Protect riverfront and floodplain lands</b>                            | Prioritize permanent protection of undeveloped riverfront and floodplain lands to reduce flood risk, improve water quality, and maintain habitat connectivity.                                                                                        | Conservation Commission | \$\$\$ | LAND Grant, MassDEP Water, MVP | Long-term   |
| <b>6-2</b><br><b>Preserve wetland and riparian systems</b>                              | Advance wetland restoration, riparian buffer enhancement, and stormwater management strategies that strengthen natural flood storage and reduce pollutant loading to surface waters.                                                                  | Planning & Conservation | \$\$\$ | MassDEP Water, SRF, MVP        | Long-term   |
| <b>6-3</b><br><b>Clarify Lake Pleasant water supply status</b>                          | Coordinate with the state to clarify the long-term policy status of Lake Pleasant as a backup water supply and evaluate implications for recreation, water quality, and public communication.                                                         | Planning & Conservation | \$     | Staff time                     | Short-term  |
| <b>6-4</b><br><b>Promote water conservation and stormwater management in Town parks</b> | Establish guidelines for water conservation and water recycling for water elements (e.g., splash pads, water fountains) in Town parks and public spaces, and for green infrastructure and sustainable stormwater management at Town-owned properties. | Parks & Recreation      | \$     | Staff time                     | Medium-term |

## 7

## Goal 7: Sustain Working Lands and Healthy Landscapes

|     | Action                                                                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Champion                    | Cost   | Funding Opportunities            | Timing      |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 7-1 | <b>Expand community garden locations</b>                                           | Identify municipally owned sites for community gardens in additional villages such as Millers Falls, Lake Pleasant, and Montague City, as well as additional community garden sites in Turners Falls.                                                                              | Parks & Recreation          | \$     | EOEEA Planning, PARC             | Short-term  |
| 7-2 | <b>Seek permanent protection of community gardens and urban agricultural lands</b> | Secure, protect, and expand land for community gardens, agri-forestry, and urban agriculture, with a focus on permanent protection of existing privately owned garden sites.                                                                                                       | Planning & Conservation     | \$\$\$ | MDAR, USFS UCF, LAND Grant, CPA* | Long-term   |
| 7-3 | <b>Increase farmland protection</b>                                                | Protect working farms and landscapes by increasing the number of conservation restrictions and agricultural preservation restrictions.                                                                                                                                             | Planning & Conservation     | \$\$   | LAND Grant, ACEP, CPA*           | Medium-term |
| 7-4 | <b>Coordinate forest stewardship</b>                                               | Establish and implement a coordinated forest stewardship framework for conservation lands and priority forest blocks managed by the Turners Falls Fire District. Encourage Eversource and Rocky River Realty Company to develop forest stewardship strategies on their properties. | Turners Falls Fire District | \$     | MFSP                             | Medium-term |
| 7-5 | <b>Enhance agricultural climate resilience</b>                                     | Strengthen the climate resilience and long-term viability of agricultural lands through farmland protection, soil health practices and limiting soil disturbance, and coordination with local farmers and state agricultural programs.                                             | Planning & Conservation     | \$\$\$ | MDAR                             | Medium-term |
| 7-6 | <b>Coordinate on invasive species management</b>                                   | Coordinate with state agencies and volunteer groups on invasive species management and removal.                                                                                                                                                                                    | Planning & Conservation     | \$     | MassWildlife HMG                 | Ongoing     |
| 7-7 | <b>Pursue Tree City USA designation</b>                                            | Pursue Tree City USA designation through the Arbor Day Foundation to increase competitiveness for state and federal urban forestry grants.                                                                                                                                         | Tree Warden                 | \$     | Staff time                       | Short-term  |
| 7-8 | <b>Support aging farmers and owners of conservation properties</b>                 | Educate farmers and owners of conservation properties about long-term conservation strategies when they retire or are ready to sell their properties.                                                                                                                              | Planning & Conservation     | \$     | Staff time                       | Ongoing     |



## 8

### Goal 8: Balance Conservation and Recreation Needs in Trail Management and River Access

|     | Action                                                                    | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Champion                | Cost   | Funding Opportunities                      | Timing      |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 8-1 | <b>Expand Connecticut River access</b>                                    | Increase safe access to the Connecticut River by partnering with FirstLight, DCR, and other landowners to provide boat launches, trails, and river viewing opportunities.                                                                                                                                     | Planning & Conservation | \$     | MassTrails, PARC, CPA*                     | Medium-term |
| 8-2 | <b>Enhance access to regional trails</b>                                  | Promote the Robert Frost Trail as a regional trail connection and recreational opportunity by identifying and providing information on designated parking and trail access points in Montague.                                                                                                                | Planning & Conservation | \$\$   | Staff time                                 | Short-term  |
| 8-3 | <b>Implement Connecticut River Restoration Project at Strathmore Mill</b> | After the planned demolition of the old Strathmore Mill Complex is complete, restore the site to open space and provide a dedication space to the local Indigenous People.                                                                                                                                    | Planning & Conservation | \$\$\$ | PARC, CPA*                                 | Long-term   |
| 8-4 | <b>Provide bicycle and trail etiquette education</b>                      | Develop and provide bicycle education and trail etiquette materials and signage, including best practices for safely using e-bikes on trails.                                                                                                                                                                 | Planning & Conservation | \$     | Staff time, local nonprofits or businesses | Short-term  |
| 8-5 | <b>Coordinate trail management strategies</b>                             | Coordinate with state agencies and local land trusts on trail management strategies for conservation lands, evaluating where multi-use trails are appropriate and where hiking-only use should be maintained. Coordinate with utility companies on the potential for using easements for recreational trails. | Planning & Conservation | \$     | MassTrails                                 | Medium-term |

# References

---



Connecticut River Conservancy. (n.d.). *Connecticut River watershed overview and river corridor conservation resources*. <https://www.ctriver.org/>

Esri. (n.d.). *GEAR maps* (ArcGIS Experience). <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/60e419d78cb5493a91641ffa3c160dd6/page/GEAR-Maps>

Federal Emergency Management Agency. (n.d.). *National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Franklin County and the Town of Montague, Massachusetts*.

Franklin Regional Council of Governments. (2024). *Franklin County Regional Transportation Plan*. <https://frcog.org/publications/franklin-county-regional-transportation-plan-2020/>

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. (n.d.). *Invasive Insect and Plant Pest Dashboard*.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. (n.d.). *Drinking Water Program and aquifer protection guidance*.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. (n.d.). *Oil and Hazardous Material Release Site (OHMRS) Database*.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. (2022). *Final Massachusetts integrated list of waters for the Clean Water Act 2022 reporting cycle*. Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. (n.d.). *Wildlife habitat and species distribution data*.

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, & U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. (n.d.). *Connecticut River migratory fish restoration and species accounts*.

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2025). *Open space and recreation plan workbook*. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-space-and-recreation-planners-workbook-with-appendices-updated-in-2025/download>

## References

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (n.d.). *Environmental justice populations in Massachusetts*. Mass.gov. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/environmental-justice-populations-in-massachusetts#what-is-an-environmental-justice-population>

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (n.d.). *MassGIS data: 2020 environmental justice populations*. Mass.gov. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-2020-environmental-justice-populations>

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. (n.d.). *Nature-based solutions for climate resilience*. [https://resilient.mass.gov/mvp/content.html?toolkit=nature based](https://resilient.mass.gov/mvp/content.html?toolkit=nature%20based)

Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS). (n.d.). *Aquifer Recharge Areas*.

Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS). (n.d.). *BioMap and wildlife habitat datasets*..

Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS). (n.d.). *Hydrography and Wetlands (MassDEP Wetlands and National Wetlands Inventory) datasets*.

Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS). (n.d.). *Land Cover, Forest Core, and Prime Forest Land datasets*.

Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS). (n.d.). *Prime Farmland Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance*.

Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program. (n.d.). *BioMap overview and methodology*.

Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program. (n.d.). *Rare species occurrence records for Montague*.

Stantec. (2022). *Wildlife hazard assessment*. [https://montague-ma.gov/files/Wildlife\\_Hazard\\_Assesment.pdf](https://montague-ma.gov/files/Wildlife_Hazard_Assesment.pdf)

Town of Montague. (2018). *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. <https://montague-ma.gov/f/0/57/Planning-2018-Open-Space--Recreation-Plan>

Town of Montague. (2022, May 7). *Zoning bylaw*. [https://montague-ma.gov/files/Zoning\\_Bylaw\\_Effective\\_Date\\_May\\_7\\_2022.pdf](https://montague-ma.gov/files/Zoning_Bylaw_Effective_Date_May_7_2022.pdf)

Town of Montague. (2024). *Montague comprehensive plan: Five villages, one future*. [https://montague-ma.gov/files/2024-Montague-Comprehensive-Plan-Final-PB\\_Approved\\_9-24-24.pdf](https://montague-ma.gov/files/2024-Montague-Comprehensive-Plan-Final-PB_Approved_9-24-24.pdf)

Town of Montague. (n.d.). *Clean Water Facility – Wastewater Treatment*. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/33/Clean-Water-Facility-Wastewater-Treatment>

Town of Montague. (n.d.). *Complete Streets program*. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/414/Complete-Streets-Program>

Town of Montague. (n.d.). *Current Planning Department projects*. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/1529/Current-Planning-Department-Projects>

## References

- Town of Montague. (n.d.). *History of the villages*. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/20/History-of-the-Villages>
- Town of Montague. (n.d.). *Montague MVP 2.0 climate resilience planning and public engagement*.
- Town of Montague. (n.d.). *Sawmill River Corridor presentation*. [https://montague-ma.gov/files/Sawmill River Corridor Presentation 2023-05-24.pdf](https://montague-ma.gov/files/Sawmill_River_Corridor_Presentation_2023-05-24.pdf)
- Town of Montague. (n.d.). *Shea Mural Project*. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/1539/?cache=0>
- Town of Montague. (n.d.). *Turners Falls Airport*. <https://montague-ma.gov/p/31/Turners-Falls-Airport>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Median income in the past 12 months (in 2018 inflation-adjusted dollars)* (ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1903). [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2018.S1903?t=Income+\(Households,+Families,+Individuals\):Income+and+Poverty&g=040XX00US25\\_050XX00US25011\\_060XX00US2501142285&moe=false](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2018.S1903?t=Income+(Households,+Families,+Individuals):Income+and+Poverty&g=040XX00US25_050XX00US25011_060XX00US2501142285&moe=false)
- U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). *Age and sex* (American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101). <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S0101?q=S0101:+Age+and+Sex&g=060XX00US2501142285>
- U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). *Disability characteristics* (American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1810). <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1810?q=S1810:+Disability+Characteristics&g=060XX00US2501142285>
- U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). *Household size by vehicles available* (American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B08201). <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B08201?q=B08201+montague+ma>
- U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). *Median income in the past 12 months (in 2023 inflation-adjusted dollars)* (American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1903). [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1903?t=Income+\(Households,+Families,+Individuals\):Income+and+Poverty&g=040XX00US25\\_050XX00US25011\\_060XX00US2501142285&moe=false](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1903?t=Income+(Households,+Families,+Individuals):Income+and+Poverty&g=040XX00US25_050XX00US25011_060XX00US2501142285&moe=false)
- U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). *Poverty status in the past 12 months* (American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701). [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1701?q=economic+demographics&t=Income+and+Poverty&g=040XX00US25\\_050XX00US25011\\_060XX00US2501142285&moe=false](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1701?q=economic+demographics&t=Income+and+Poverty&g=040XX00US25_050XX00US25011_060XX00US2501142285&moe=false)
- U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). *Profile of general population and housing characteristics* (Decennial Census, DEC Demographic Profile, Table DP1). <https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALDP2020.DP1?q=population+and+household+data+montague+massachusetts&g=060XX00US2501142285&y=2020>
- U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). *Tenure* (American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25003). <https://data.census.gov>

# Appendices

---

# 1

**Appendix A:** Inventory of Land – Additional Details

**Appendix B:** Public Survey Results

**Appendix C:** Letters of Support



# Appendix A:

## Inventory of Land - Additional Details

**Table 22: Municipal Permanently Protected Lands: Turners Falls Fire District and Montague Center Water District**

| Parcel ID | Location             | Acres | Owner                          | Current Use                    |
|-----------|----------------------|-------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 48-0-0021 | 104 Main St          | 7.9   | Montague Center Water District |                                |
| 48-0-0019 | 86 Main St           | 0.1   | Montague Center Water District |                                |
| 48-0-0030 | Main St              | 5.6   | Turners Falls Fire District    | Montague Center Water District |
| 48-0-0022 | Main St              | 5.0   | Turners Falls Fire District    | Montague Center Water District |
| 48-0-0029 | Main St              | 5.0   | Turners Falls Fire District    | Montague Center Water District |
| 48-0-0150 | 28 Old Sunderland Rd | 2.2   | Montague Center Fire District  | Fire Department                |
| 48-0-0151 | Old Sunderland Rd    | 2.1   | Montague Center Fire District  | Fire Department                |
| 37-0-142  | Lake Pleasant Rd     | 8.6   | Turners Falls Fire District    | Bridge Of Names                |
| 36-0-071  | Denton St            | 4.5   | Turners Falls Fire District    | Bridge Of Names                |
| 36-0-049  | Denton St            | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District    | (Lot 18)                       |
| 36-0-121  | 1 Denton St          | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District    | (Lots 1-2-3) / Pump Station    |
| 46-0-004  | Dry Hill Rd          | 87.5  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 45-0-09   | Rear Dry Hill Rd     | 82.2  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 46-0-028  | Dry Hill Rd          | 81.6  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 46-0-006  | Dry Hill Rd          | 68.3  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 46-0-056  | Dry Hill Rd          | 58.7  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 46-0-053  | Dry Hill Rd          | 56.0  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 46-0-001  | Rear Dry Hill Rd     | 55.6  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 45-0-07   | Rear Dry Hill Rd     | 52.4  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 45-0-06   | Rear Dry Hill Rd     | 50.2  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 46-0-008  | Rear Dry Hill Rd     | 49.0  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 45-0-08   | Rear Dry Hill Rd     | 44.0  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 45-0-02   | Rear Dry Hill Rd     | 43.4  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 46-0-007  | Rear Dry Hill Rd     | 43.3  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 34-0-042  | Rear Federal St      | 42.1  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 46-0-011  | Dry Hill Rd          | 38.1  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 46-0-003  | Rear Dry Hill Rd     | 35.9  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 46-0-051  | Dry Hill Rd          | 30.4  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 46-0-002  | Rear Dry Hill Rd     | 29.5  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |
| 45-0-01   | Rear Dry Hill Rd     | 29.2  | Turners Falls Fire District    |                                |

## Appendices

| Parcel ID | Location               | Acres | Owner                       | Current Use |
|-----------|------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 46-0-059  | Rear Dry Hill Rd       | 27.2  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 35-0-32   | Rear South Prospect St | 26.0  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 24-0-16   | Rear Millers Falls Rd  | 23.0  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-043  | Rear Federal St        | 22.2  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 46-0-013  | Rear Dry Hill Rd       | 21.2  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 46-0-009  | Rear Dry Hill Rd       | 19.9  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 46-0-012  | Dry Hill Rd            | 19.0  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-004  | Green Pond Rd          | 18.2  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 33-0-18   | 160 Lake Pleasant Rd   | 17.4  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-005  | Rear Green Pond Rd     | 17.0  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-044  | Rear Federal St        | 14.9  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 46-0-054  | Rear Dry Hill Rd       | 14.8  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 23-0-49   | Millers Falls Rd       | 14.5  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 44-0-50   | 67 Center St           | 12.9  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-047  | Federal St             | 12.1  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-041  | Rear Federal St        | 12.0  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 46-0-010  | Dry Hill Rd            | 11.8  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-052  | Federal St             | 11.7  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 33-0-19   | Green Pond Rd          | 10.8  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 35-0-30   | Rear South Prospect St | 10.3  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-040  | Rear Federal St        | 10.1  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 35-0-29   | Rear South Prospect St | 10.0  | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-054  | Rear Green Pond Rd     | 9.8   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 23-0-51   | Millers Falls Rd       | 8.9   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 46-0-53A  | Rear Dry Hill Rd       | 8.8   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 44-0-08   | 54 Swamp Rd            | 8.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 46-0-005  | Dry Hill Rd            | 8.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-056  | Rear Federal St        | 7.5   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-001  | Rear Green Pond Rd     | 7.4   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-006  | Green Pond Rd          | 6.8   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-051  | Federal St             | 6.6   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 44-0-06   | Rear Center St         | 6.3   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-002  | Green Pond Rd          | 6.0   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 23-0-50   | 226 Millers Falls Rd   | 5.4   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-057  | Rear Federal St        | 5.0   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 24-0-07   | Millers Falls Rd       | 4.9   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 33-0-21   | Green Pond Rd          | 4.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 33-0-20   | 92 Green Pond Rd       | 4.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-055  | Rear Federal St        | 3.9   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-053  | Rear Federal St        | 3.6   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-003  | Green Pond Rd          | 3.3   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 44-0-16   | Rear Center St         | 3.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |

## Appendices

| Parcel ID | Location              | Acres | Owner                       | Current Use |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 34-0-010  | Green Pond Rd         | 2.8   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-136  | 11 Adams St           | 2.6   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 44-0-46   | Rear Center St        | 2.5   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 28-0-28   | Green Pond Rd         | 2.5   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-184  | Walnut St             | 2.4   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-046  | Rear Federal St       | 2.3   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 51-0-50   | North Leverett Rd     | 1.8   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 44-0-15   | Rear Center St        | 1.6   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-050  | Federal St            | 1.5   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 23-0-68   | Millers Falls Rd      | 1.5   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 23-0-69   | Millers Falls Rd      | 1.5   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 34-0-049  | Federal St            | 1.3   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-015  | Massasoit St          | 1.3   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 23-0-50A  | Rear Millers Falls Rd | 1.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 46-0-052  | Dry Hill Rd           | 1.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 46-0-08A  | Rear Dry Hill Rd      | 1.0   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 33-0-16   | Lake Pleasant Rd      | 1.0   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-010  | Massasoit St          | 0.9   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 44-0-44   | Rear Center St        | 0.8   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-021  | Massasoit St          | 0.6   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 37-0-012  | Broad Way             | 0.6   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-024  | Massasoit St          | 0.5   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-022  | Massasoit St          | 0.5   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 24-0-09   | Rear Millers Falls Rd | 0.5   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 44-0-45   | Rear Center St        | 0.5   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-012  | Turner St             | 0.4   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-001  | Lake Pleasant Rd      | 0.4   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-013  | Massasoit St          | 0.4   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-044  | Turner St             | 0.4   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-023  | Massasoit St          | 0.4   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-006  | Turner St             | 0.4   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 37-0-016  | First Ave             | 0.3   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-028  | Turner St             | 0.3   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-052  | Massasoit St          | 0.3   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-029  | Turner St             | 0.3   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-047  | Massasoit St          | 0.3   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-002  | Lake Pleasant Rd      | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-045  | Turner St             | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-046  | Massasoit St          | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-026  | Massasoit St          | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-030  | Turner St             | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-048  | Denton St             | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |

## Appendices

| Parcel ID | Location              | Acres | Owner                       | Current Use |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 36-0-007  | Turner St             | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-035  | Carey St              | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-033  | Carey St              | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-038  | Carey St              | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-043  | Turner St             | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-069  | Denton St             | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-027  | Massasoit St          | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 23-0-60   | Millers Falls Rd      | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 33-0-17   | Rear Lake Pleasant Rd | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-014  | Massasoit St          | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-011  | Turner St             | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-036  | Carey St              | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-183  | Walcott St            | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-50A  | Walcott St            | 0.2   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-018  | Denton St             | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-008  | Walnut St             | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-016  | Denton St             | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-025  | Massasoit St          | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-040  | Turner St             | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 37-0-015  | Broad Way             | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-017  | Massasoit St          | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-019  | Massasoit St          | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-031  | Carey St              | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-041  | Turner St             | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-055  | Massasoit St          | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 23-0-34   | Millers Falls Rd      | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-003  | Carey St              | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-005  | Carey St              | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-004  | Carey St              | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-032  | Carey St              | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-039  | Lake Pleasant Rd      | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-034  | Carey St              | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-051  | Massasoit St          | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-154  | Montague Ave          | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-155  | Lake Shore Ave        | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-158  | Owasso Ave            | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-009  | Massasoit St          | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-020  | Massasoit St          | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-042  | Turner St             | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-156  | Lake Shore Ave        | 0.1   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-157  | Lake Shore Ave        | 0.0   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 37-0-017  | First Ave             | 0.0   | Turners Falls Fire District |             |

| Parcel ID    | Location         | Acres          | Owner                       | Current Use |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 37-0-140     | Union Ave        | 0.0            | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 44-0-07      | Rear Swamp Rd    | 0.0            | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-037     | Carey St         | 0.0            | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-153     | Lake Shore Ave   | 0.0            | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 37-0-013     | Broad Way        | 0.0            | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 37-0-014     | Barber St        | 0.0            | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-137     | Lake Shore Ave   | 0.0            | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 37-0-145     | Lake Pleasant Rd | 0.0            | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-159     | Owasso Ave       | 0.0            | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 36-0-160     | Owasso Ave       | 0.0            | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| 33-0-70      | Lake Pleasant Rd | 0.0            | Turners Falls Fire District |             |
| <b>Total</b> |                  | <b>1,542.0</b> |                             |             |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data

**Table 23: State and Federally Owned Protected Land**

| Parcel ID   | Property Name                                | Location          | Acres | Owner                         | Notes                                   |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 03-0-021    |                                              | 186 Avenue A      | 0.3   | United States Government      |                                         |
| 08-0-3      | Silvio Conte Anadramous Fish Research Center | 1 Migratory Way   | 20.0  | US Geological Survey          | USGS Migratory Way                      |
| 25-0-21     |                                              | East Mineral Rd   | 0.2   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | C/O C Peterson - Ct Valley Ag           |
| 192-1247    | Montague State Forest                        |                   | 0.6   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Conservation + Recreation |
| 192-1248    | Montague State Forest                        |                   | 0.5   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Conservation + Recreation |
| 192-0-114.1 | Montague State Forest                        | Federal St        | 7.4   |                               | Department of Environmental Management  |
| 192-0-114.2 | Montague State Forest                        | Wendell Rd        | 640.0 | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Environmental Management  |
| 192-0-113.4 | Connecticut River Greenway State Park        | Old Greenfield Rd | 10.1  | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Environmental Management  |
| 192-27      | Connecticut River Greenway State Park        |                   | 4.7   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Conservation + Recreation |
| 192-868     | Connecticut River Greenway State Park        |                   | 11.3  | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Conservation + Recreation |
| 192-190     | Connecticut River Greenway State Park        |                   | 0.6   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Conservation + Recreation |
| 192-191     | Connecticut River Greenway State Park        |                   | 0.7   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Conservation + Recreation |
| 192-341     | Connecticut River Access - Montague          |                   | 17.5  | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game               |
| 192-353     | Connecticut River Access - Montague          |                   | 53.4  | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game               |
| 192-528     | Sawmill River Access                         |                   | 51.9  | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game               |



| Parcel ID   | Property Name                            | Location                | Acres  | Owner                         | Notes                                        |
|-------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 192-0-102.0 | Bitzer State Fish Hatchery               | Turners Falls Rd        | 150.4  | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Division of Fish + Game                      |
| 192-1163    | Mount Toby State Forest                  |                         | 1.7    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation |
| 192-1165    | Mount Toby State Forest                  |                         | 1.4    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation |
| 192-1166    | Mount Toby State Forest                  |                         | 3.1    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation |
| 192-1164    | Mount Toby State Forest                  |                         | 1.1    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation |
| 192-207     | Wendell State Forest                     |                         | 24.4   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation |
| 192-1001    | Wendell State Forest                     |                         | 3.7    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation |
| 25-0-10     |                                          | East Mineral Rd         | 113.6  | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Division of Fisheries + Wildlife             |
| 25-0-11     |                                          | East Mineral Rd         | 47.4   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Division of Fisheries + Wildlife             |
| 40-0-31     |                                          | Rear Old Northfield Rd  | 0.5    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Division Of Fish + Game                      |
| 45-0-43     |                                          | Rear Dry Hill Rd        | 163.0  | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Division of Fish + Game                      |
| 27-0-010    |                                          | Plains Rd               | 64.8   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Division of Fish + Game                      |
| 27-0-008    |                                          | Plains Rd               | 5.2    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game                    |
| 40-0-17     |                                          | Rear Lake Pleasant Rd   | 6.8    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game                    |
| 52-0-145    |                                          | Rear Ripley Rd          | 18.9   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game                    |
| 53-0-010    | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Rear E Chestnut Hill Rd | 20.4   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game                    |
| 04-0-0001   | Great Falls Discovery Center             | 2 4 Avenue A            | 0.7    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Conservation + Recreation      |
| 04-0-0002   | Great Falls Discovery Center             | Avenue A                | 0.6    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Conservation + Recreation      |
| 192-0-115.1 | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Plains Rd               | 25.7   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Conservation + Recreation      |
| 192-0-117.1 | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | W Chestnut Hill Rd      | 180.2  | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Division of Fisheries + Wildlife             |
| 45-0-38     | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Rear Dry Hill Rd        | 174.1  | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game                    |
| 192-0-103.0 | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Meadow Rd               | 1527.4 | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Division of Fisheries + Wildlife             |

| Parcel ID   | Property Name                            | Location                | Acres  | Owner                         | Notes                              |
|-------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 192-0-115.0 | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Hillside Rd             | 1486.3 | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fisheries & Wildlife |
| 21-0-039    | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Hillside Rd             | 18.5   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 21-0-062    | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Hillside Rd             | 22.6   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 23-0-44     | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Hillside Rd             | 1.7    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 23-0-47     | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Hillside Rd             | 25.7   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 23-0-52     | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Hillside Rd             | 0.6    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 23-0-56     | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Hillside Rd             | 0.4    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 24-0-38     | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Rear Millers Falls Rd   | 11.8   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 26-0-20     | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Turners Falls Rd        | 38.5   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 26-0-23     | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Greenfield Rd           | 54.8   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 32-0-26     | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Rear Turners Falls Rd   | 17.1   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Division of Fisheries + Wildlife   |
| 45-0-54     | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Dry Hill Rd             | 70.2   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Division of Fisheries + Wildlife   |
| 48-0-0038   | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | South St                | 7.8    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 48-0-0050   | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Main St                 | 1.0    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 49-0-39     | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | South St                | 6.4    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 51-0-29     | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Federal St              | 17.9   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |
| 52-0-034    | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Rear W Chestnut Hill Rd | 11.0   | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Division of Fish + Game            |
| 52-0-055    | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Ripley Rd               | 9.4    | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game          |

| Parcel ID | Property Name                            | Location           | Acres          | Owner                         | Notes                     |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 52-0-057  | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Rear Ripley Rd     | 11.8           | Commonwealth of Massachusetts | Department of Fish & Game |
|           |                                          | <b>Total Acres</b> | <b>5,167.5</b> |                               |                           |

Source: 2017 OSRP, MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space Data

**Table 24: Municipal Land With Limited Protection**

| Parcel ID | Property Name                            | Location               | Acres        | Owner            |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| 52-0-052  | Sawmill River Access                     | North Leverett RD      | 2.1          | Town of Montague |
| 53-0-044  | Sawmill River Access                     | Richardson Rd          | 15.8         | Town of Montague |
| 33-0-31   | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Northfield Rd          | 8.4          | Town of Montague |
| 40-0-08   | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Rear Northfield Rd     | 5.3          | Town of Montague |
| 40-0-20   | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Rear Northfield Rd     | 19.1         | Town of Montague |
| 40-0-26   | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Rear Northfield Rd     | 0.6          | Town of Montague |
| 40-0-27   | Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area | Rear Northfield Rd     | 0.5          | Town of Montague |
| 35-0-27   | Hannegan Brook Conservation Area         | Rear South Prospect St | 74.7         | Town of Montague |
| 35-0-31   | Hannegan Brook Conservation Area         | Rear South Prospect St | 10.6         | Town of Montague |
| 35-0-33   | Hannegan Brook Conservation Area         | Rear South Prospect St | 11.9         | Town of Montague |
| 35-0-34   | Hannegan Brook Conservation Area         | Rear South Prospect St | 11.4         | Town of Montague |
|           |                                          | <b>Total Acres</b>     | <b>160.4</b> |                  |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data, 2017 OSRP

**Table 25: Unprotected Utility Company Land on the Montague Plains**

| Parcel ID | Acres | Owner                  |
|-----------|-------|------------------------|
| 24-0-21   | 2.8   | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 27-0-009  | 39.4  | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 27-0-011  | 2.8   | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 27-0-015  | 8.5   | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 27-0-016  | 8.2   | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 27-0-017  | 3.9   | Rocky River Realty Co. |

| Parcel ID          | Acres        | Owner                  |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| 27-0-018           | 9.3          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 27-0-019           | 11.0         | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 27-0-020           | 5.7          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 27-0-030           | 4.1          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 27-0-14A           | 0.9          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-22            | 0.4          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-05            | 2.2          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-06            | 3.2          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-07            | 0.8          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-14            | 3.2          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-16            | 3.5          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-17            | 4.6          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-21            | 40.9         | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-22            | 13.6         | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-23            | 13.5         | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-24            | 0.5          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-06            | 34.8         | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-26            | 4.4          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-27            | 28.7         | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-31            | 2.5          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 28-0-36            | 6.1          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 39-0-058           | 1.2          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| 40-0-14            | 1.5          | Rocky River Realty Co. |
| <b>Total Acres</b> | <b>262.2</b> |                        |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data, 2017 OSRP

**Table 26: Additional Unprotected Utility Company Land in Montague**

| Parcel ID | Acres | Location      | Owner                      |
|-----------|-------|---------------|----------------------------|
| 04-0-0175 | 0.2   | Third St      | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 04-0-0279 | 0.7   | Prospect St   | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 05-0-090  | 0.2   | Twelfth St    | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 05-0-093  | 0.2   | Thirteenth St | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 05-0-094  | 0.3   | Thirteenth St | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 05-0-095  | 0.2   | Fourteenth St | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 05-0-123  | 0.2   | N St          | Rocky River Realty Company |

## Appendices

|          |      |                    |                            |
|----------|------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 05-0-136 | 0.8  | Fifteenth St       | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 05-0-144 | 0.2  | Fifteenth St       | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 05-0-145 | 1.1  | Sixteenth St       | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 05-0-150 | 0.6  | Sixteenth St       | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 07-0-023 | 0.1  | First St           | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 09-0-004 | 3.7  | Paradise Parkway   | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 09-0-069 | 30.3 | Montague City Rd   | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 14-0-163 | 0.8  | Oak St             | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 16-0-01  | 11.2 | Millers Falls Rd   | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 26-0-06  | 2.3  | Greenfield Rd      | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 26-0-27  | 23.5 | Greenfield Rd      | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 26-0-29  | 1.5  | Greenfield Rd      | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 26-0-40  | 30.0 | Turners Falls Rd   | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 32-0-03  | 7.6  | 230 Greenfield Rd  | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 32-0-60  | 4.1  | Rear Greenfield Rd | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 32-0-61  | 2.3  | Rear Greenfield Rd | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 33-0-71  | 3.7  | Lake Pleasant Rd   | Rocky River Realty Company |
| 02-0-1C  | 0.1  | 16 Canal Rd        | Turners Falls Hydro Llc    |
| 06-0-103 | 0.1  | Spring St          | Eversource                 |
| 07-0-102 | 0.4  | Riverside Dr       | Eversource                 |
| 09-0-075 | 1.2  | Walnut St          | Eversource                 |
| 09-0-084 | 6.1  | Walnut St          | Eversource                 |
| 09-0-086 | 0.0  | Montague City Rd   | Eversource                 |
| 12-0-027 | 0.4  | Depot St           | Eversource                 |
| 12-0-028 | 0.5  | Depot St           | Eversource                 |
| 12-0-029 | 0.5  | Depot St           | Eversource                 |
| 12-0-031 | 1.5  | Rear Depot St      | Eversource                 |
| 12-0-032 | 0.2  | Depot St           | Eversource                 |
| 12-0-033 | 0.5  | Depot St           | Eversource                 |



## Appendices

|          |      |                         |            |
|----------|------|-------------------------|------------|
| 12-0-034 | 0.1  | Depot St                | Eversource |
| 12-0-043 | 2.1  | 20 Farren Av            | Eversource |
| 12-0-067 | 2.6  | Rear Cabot St           | Eversource |
| 14-0-003 | 0.6  | Dell St                 | Eversource |
| 14-0-038 | 0.4  | Dell St                 | Eversource |
| 14-0-090 | 0.9  | 9 Oak St                | Eversource |
| 21-0-040 | 2.4  | Rear Turners Falls Rd   | Eversource |
| 29-0-106 | 0.2  | West Main St            | Eversource |
| 31-0-47  | 1.1  | South Prospect St       | Eversource |
| 32-0-05  | 3.3  | Rear Old Greenfield Rd  | Eversource |
| 32-0-50  | 1.3  | Rear Old Greenfield Rd  | Eversource |
| 34-0-023 | 1.9  | Federal St              | Eversource |
| 34-0-024 | 5.2  | Federal St              | Eversource |
| 34-0-045 | 14.7 | Federal St              | Eversource |
| 34-0-060 | 0.0  | Green Pond Rd           | Eversource |
| 35-0-06  | 18.1 | South Prospect St       | Eversource |
| 35-0-40  | 2.4  | South Prospect St       | Eversource |
| 35-0-6A  | 2.1  | South Prospect St       | Eversource |
| 40-0-41  | 4.9  | Rear Lake Pleasant Rd   | Eversource |
| 40-0-62  | 1.0  | Lake Pleasant Rd        | Eversource |
| 45-0-40  | 0.7  | Dry Hill Rd             | Eversource |
| 45-0-56  | 17.5 | Dry Hill Rd             | Eversource |
| 46-0-034 | 67.6 | Wendell Rd              | Eversource |
| 46-0-068 | 4.1  | Wendell Rd              | Eversource |
| 46-0-071 | 0.8  | Rear Wendell Rd         | Eversource |
| 46-0-075 | 0.6  | Dry Hill Cross Rd       | Eversource |
| 53-0-009 | 22.5 | Rear E Chestnut Hill Rd | Eversource |
| 53-0-020 | 3.4  | E Chestnut Hill Rd      | Eversource |
| 53-0-023 | 7.3  | Chestnut Hill Lp        | Eversource |

|                    |       |                    |            |
|--------------------|-------|--------------------|------------|
| 53-0-026           | 0.4   | Chestnut Hill Lp   | Eversource |
| 53-0-050           | 1.2   | E Chestnut Hill Rd | Eversource |
| 53-0-051           | 3.4   | Chestnut Hill Lp   | Eversource |
| 53-0-052           | 1.4   | E Chestnut Hill Rd | Eversource |
| <b>Total Acres</b> | 333.4 |                    |            |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data, 2017 OSRP

**Table 27: Utility Company Land with Limited Protection in Montague**

| Parcel ID | Acres | Use                   | Protection | Owner            |
|-----------|-------|-----------------------|------------|------------------|
| 02-0-02   | 18.9  | Power Canal           | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 02-0-03   | 1.1   | Riverfront            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 02-0-04   | 3     | Riverfront            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 03-0-028  | 3.6   | Riverfront            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 03-0-029  | 0.02  | Riverfront            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 03-0-046  | 3.1   | Power Canal           | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 03-0-047  | 2.8   | Power Canal           | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 04-0-0003 | 0.1   | Gatehouse / bike path | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 04-0-0005 | 0.3   | Gatehouse / bike path | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 04-0-0006 | 0.8   | Recreational          | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 04-0-0007 | 4.7   | Recreational          | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 04-0-0008 | 1.9   | Riverfront            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 04-0-0009 | 0.6   | Recreational          | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 04-0-0015 | 0.3   | Recreational          | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 05-0-040  | 0.1   | Power Canal / path    | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 05-0-128  | 8.1   | Power Canal           | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 05-0-149  | 1.3   | Power Canal           | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 05-0-151  | 40.5  | Right of Way          | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 07-0-027  | 3.1   | Riverfront            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 07-0-037  | 1.2   | Riverfront            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 07-0-093  | 0.3   | Riverfront            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 07-0-103  | 0.1   | Riverfront            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 07-0-144  | 0.2   | Riverfront            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |

## Appendices

| Parcel ID  | Acres | Use                     | Protection | Owner            |
|------------|-------|-------------------------|------------|------------------|
| 08-0-1     | 61.1  | Riverfront/Power Canal  | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 08-0-2     | 3.5   | Power Canal             | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 09-0-001   | 15.8  | Power Canal             | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 09-0-002   | 23.4  | Power Canal             | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 09-0-003   | 3.9   | Right of Way            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 011-0-048  | 27    | Riverfront              | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 11-0-116   | 4.7   | Land Under Water        | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 11-0-117   | 4.6   | Land Under Water        | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 11-0-118   | 3.9   | Land Under Water        | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 012-0-001  | 25.8  | Power Canal             | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 12-0-002   | 4.9   | Right of Way            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 12-0-003   | 13.2  | Right of way, Wetlands  | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 12-0-025   | 0.4   | Transmission lines      | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 012-0-026  | 0.7   | Right of way, Wetlands  | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 12-0-030   | 4.4   | Canal access, bike path | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 12-0-056   | 2.6   | Open/Wetlands           | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 12-0-058   | 0.9   | Open/Wetlands           | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 013-0-008  | 0.7   | Right of way            | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 13-0-016   | 15.3  | Open/Wetlands           | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 015-0-0020 | 0.5   | Open                    | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 015-0-0021 | 9.9   | Riverfront              | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 015-0-0213 | 11    | Riverfront              | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-001  | 3.8   | Land Under Water        | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-002  | 2.5   | Land Under Water        | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-003  | 21.8  | Land Under Water        | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-004  | 10.3  | Land Under Water        | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-005  | 4.8   | Land Under Water        | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-006  | 8.5   | Land Under Water        | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-007  | 10.5  | Land Under Water        | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-008  | 3.7   | Land Under Water        | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-009  | 4.9   | Riverfront              | FERC       | FirstLight Power |

| Parcel ID          | Acres        | Use          | Protection | Owner            |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------------|
| 017-0-010          | 3.7          | Riverfront   | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-012          | 13           | Riverfront   | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-017          | 8.4          | Recreational | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-018          | 27           | Recreational | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 017-0-034          | 72           | Recreational | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 018-0-01           | 3.5          | Riverfront   | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 018-0-03           | 5            | Riverfront   | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 018-0-12           | 4            | Riverfront   | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 018-0-13           | 1.8          | Riverfront   | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 018-0-15           | 2.3          | Recreational | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 018-0-16           | 1.1          | Parking lot  | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 019-0-01           | 1.2          | Driveway     | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 019-0-74           | 0.7          | Recreational | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| 25-0-17            | 3.5          | Riverfront   | FERC       | FirstLight Power |
| <b>Total Acres</b> | <b>552.3</b> |              |            |                  |

Source: 2025 Assessor Data, 2017 OSRP

# Appendix B:

# Public Survey Results

# **Town of Montague**

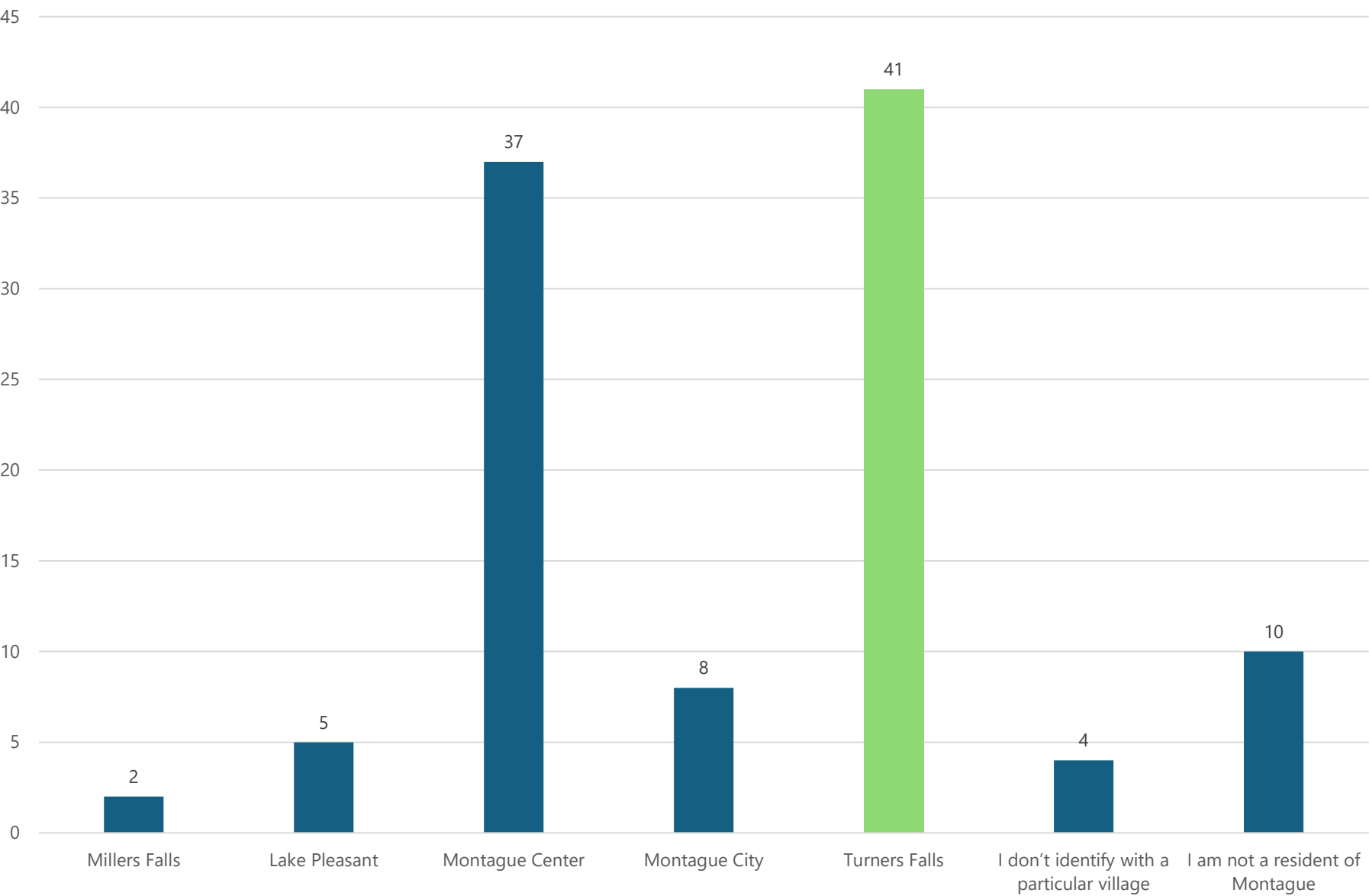
## **Open Space and Recreation Plan**

**Community Survey**

**107 total responses**  
(6 paper responses in Spanish)

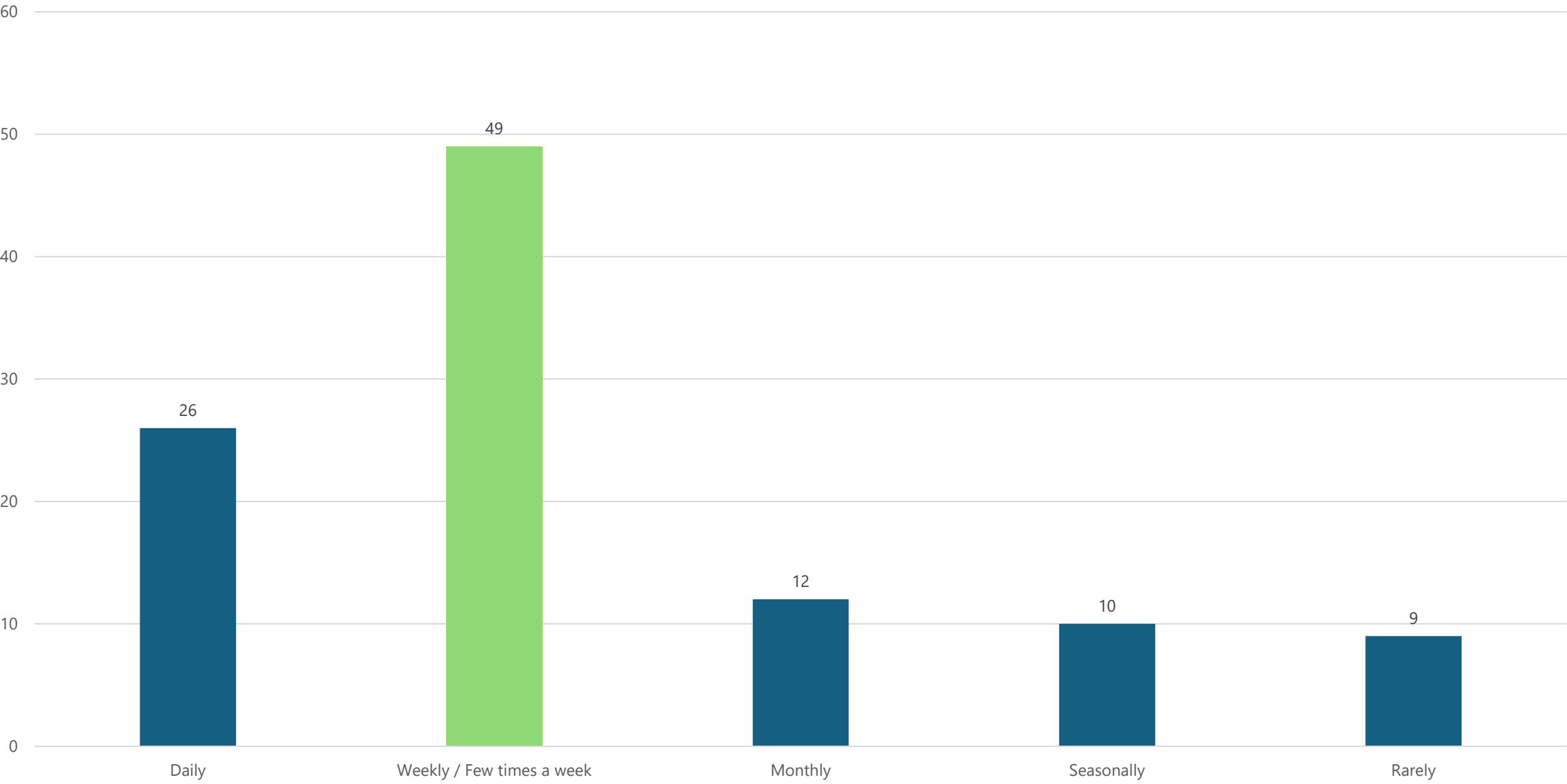


“Which village in Montague do you live in?”

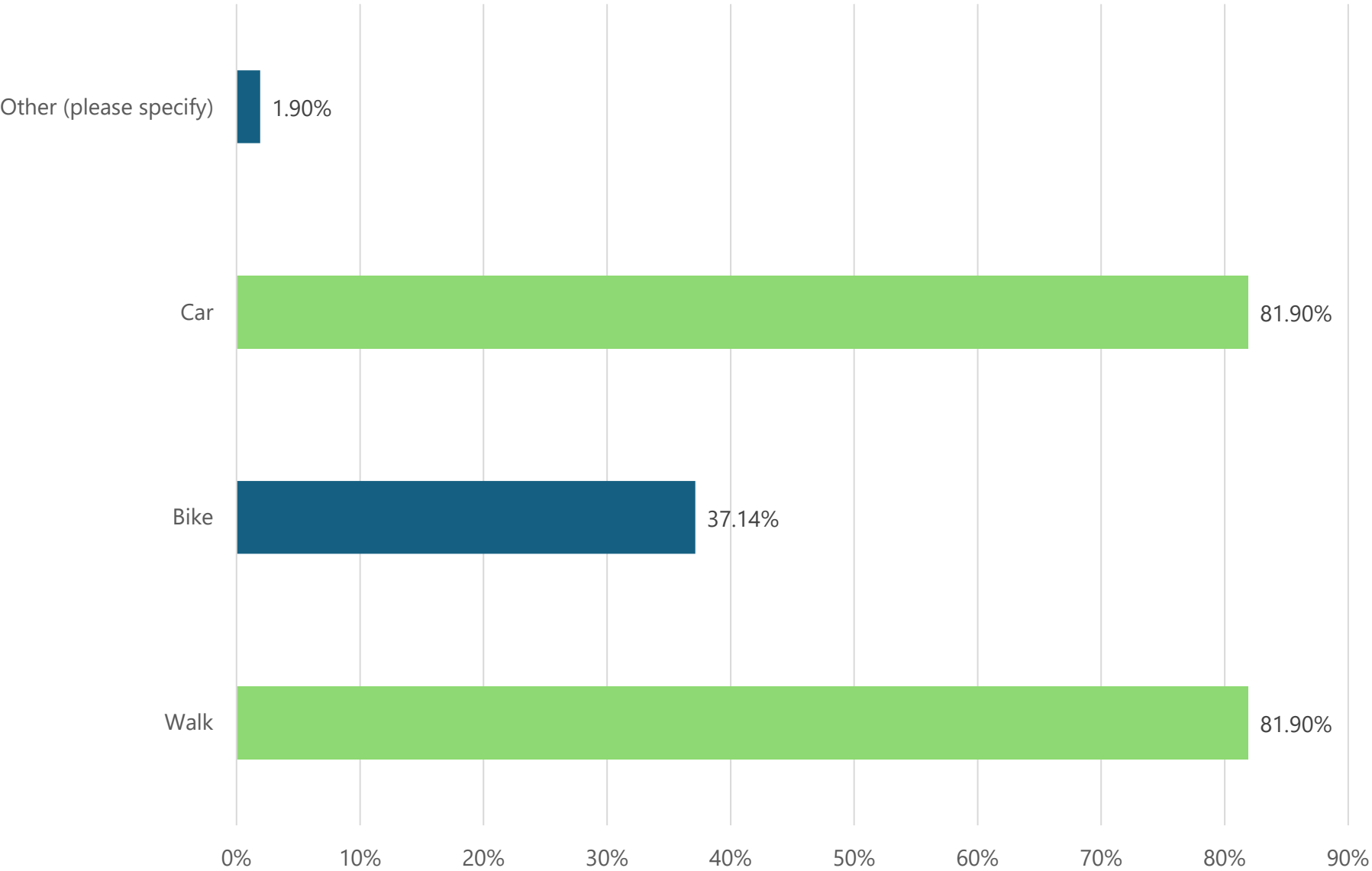


Gill was mentioned in one of the responses

“How often do you visit open space and recreational facilities in Montague?”



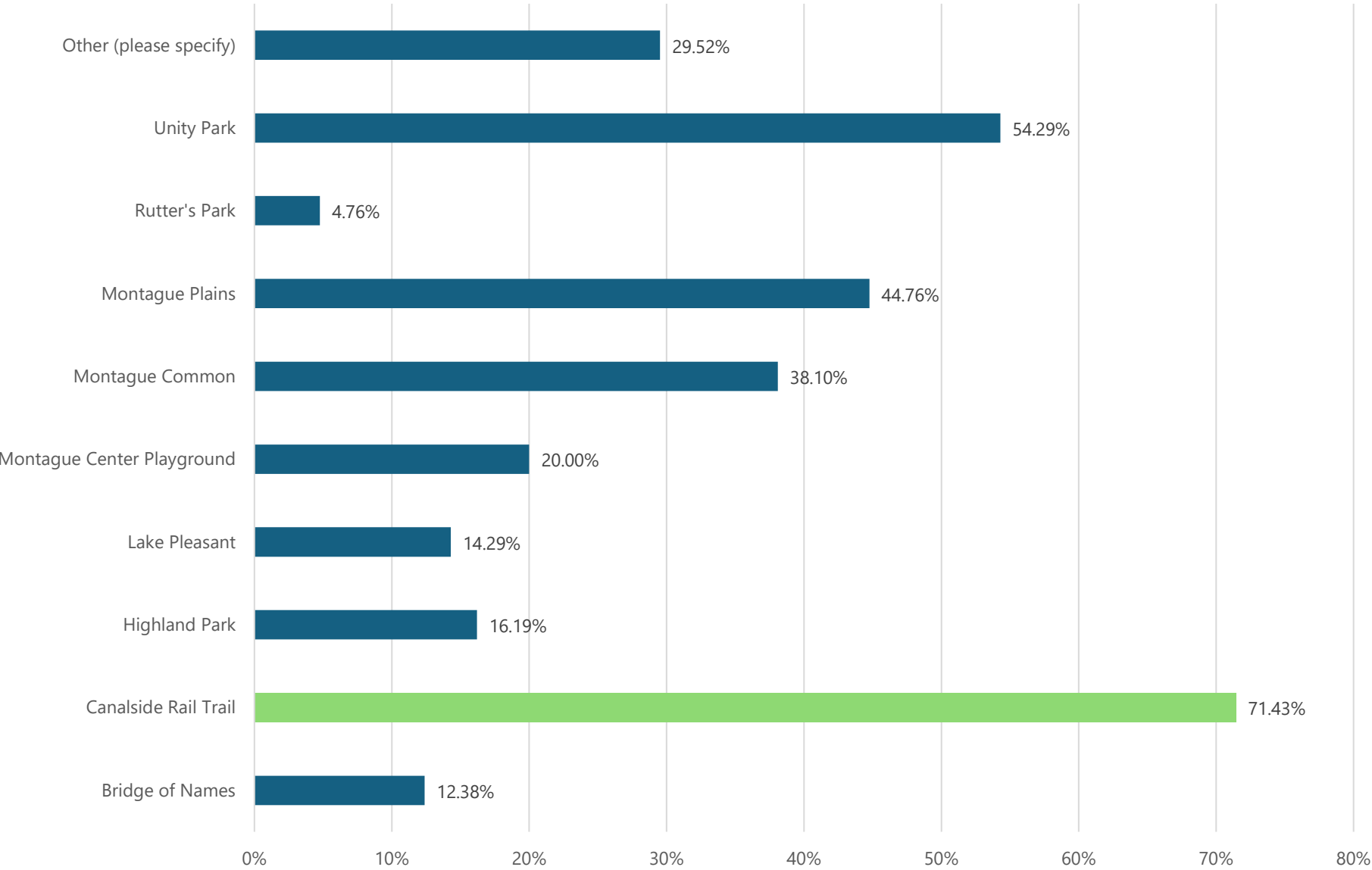
“How do you travel to open space and recreational facilities in Montague?”



The following themes emerged among the responses for respondents to selected "Other":

- *Running*
- *car but I would choose another method if more feasible*

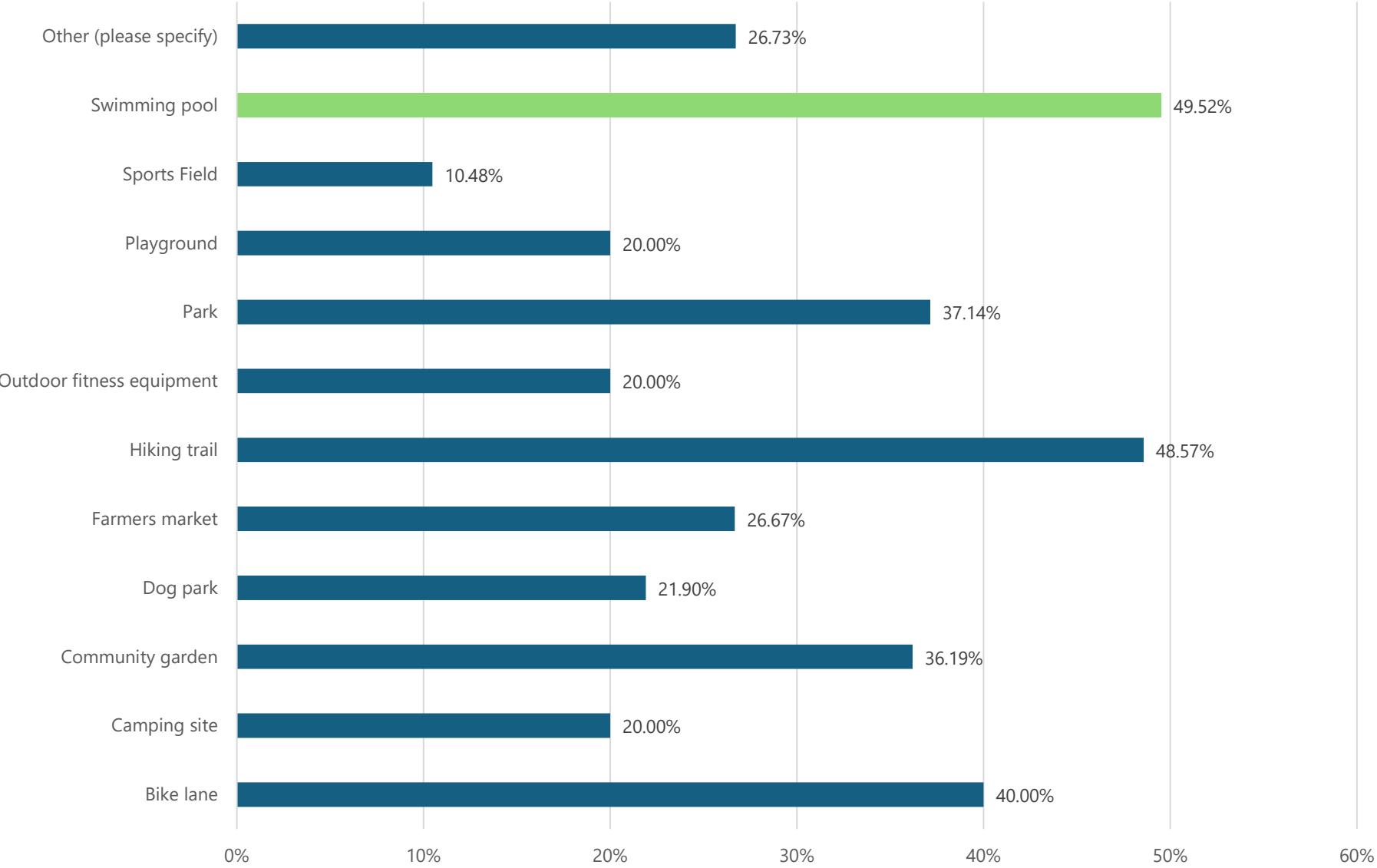
“Which open space, recreation lands, or trails do you and your family use on a regular basis?”



The following themes emerged among the responses for respondents to selected “Other”:

- *Peskeompskut park, spinner park.*
- *Cabot Camp parking area (end of E Mineral Falls Road), Rock Dam*
- *Community Gardens, Ave A pocket parks*
- *North Street WMA, Barton Cove campground area, Migratory Way*
- *Dog park*
- *Community garden*
- *Conservation area at end of North Street / Four Corners*
- *Conservation / Magoo Wildlife Management Area (off Ripley Rd. )*
- *Highland Cemetery woods*
- *Mt Toby, but I guess that's Sunderland!*
- *Sawmill River WMA*
- *Sidewalks / Boardwalks on the hill between downtown and High st.*

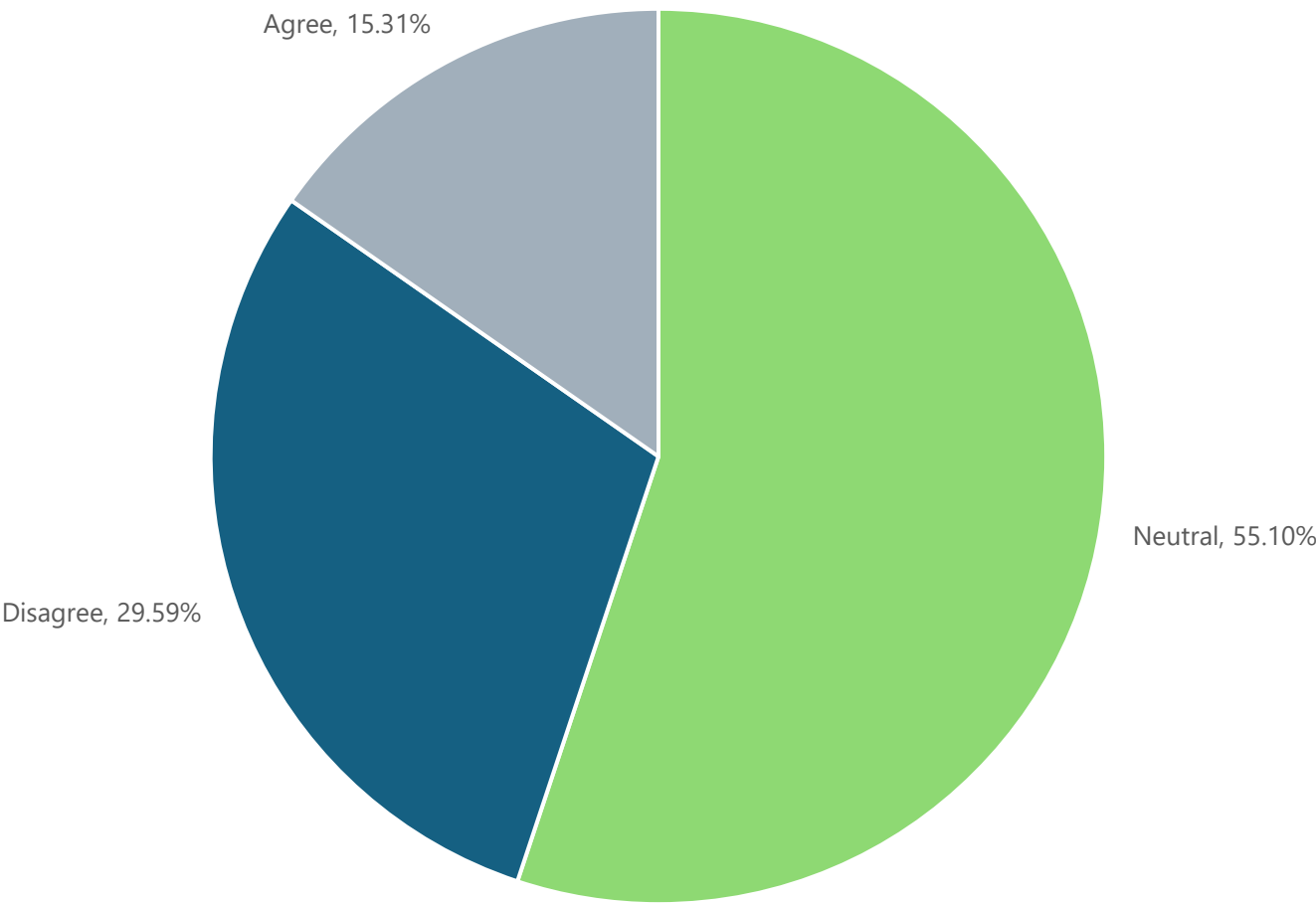
“Which types of recreational facilities would you like to see more of in Montague?”



The following themes emerged among the responses for respondents to selected “Other”:

- *We have farmers market weekly 6 months a year w/ plans to expand to monthly winter market, we have a good amount of playgrounds, parks, sports field. don't want to not check things like farmers market or park and then what we have currently is decreased.*
- *Swimming access in lake pleasant*
- *Skating rink, labeled hiking trails, boat rental on our side of river*
- *Pickleball Courts*
- *Outdoor bonfires*
- *Natural Surface Unmaintained Forest Road for 4x4 Vehicle Access*
- *Community collaborative art space.*
- *Basketball court at Montague Center Recreational Park*
- *baseball park @ Montague Center park !*
- *Access to Connecticut River for kayaking/canoeing / disc golf, birdwatching*
- *Free Fruit trees / Orchard*

**“Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: Montague’s open spaces have adequate amenities to serve residents’ needs.**



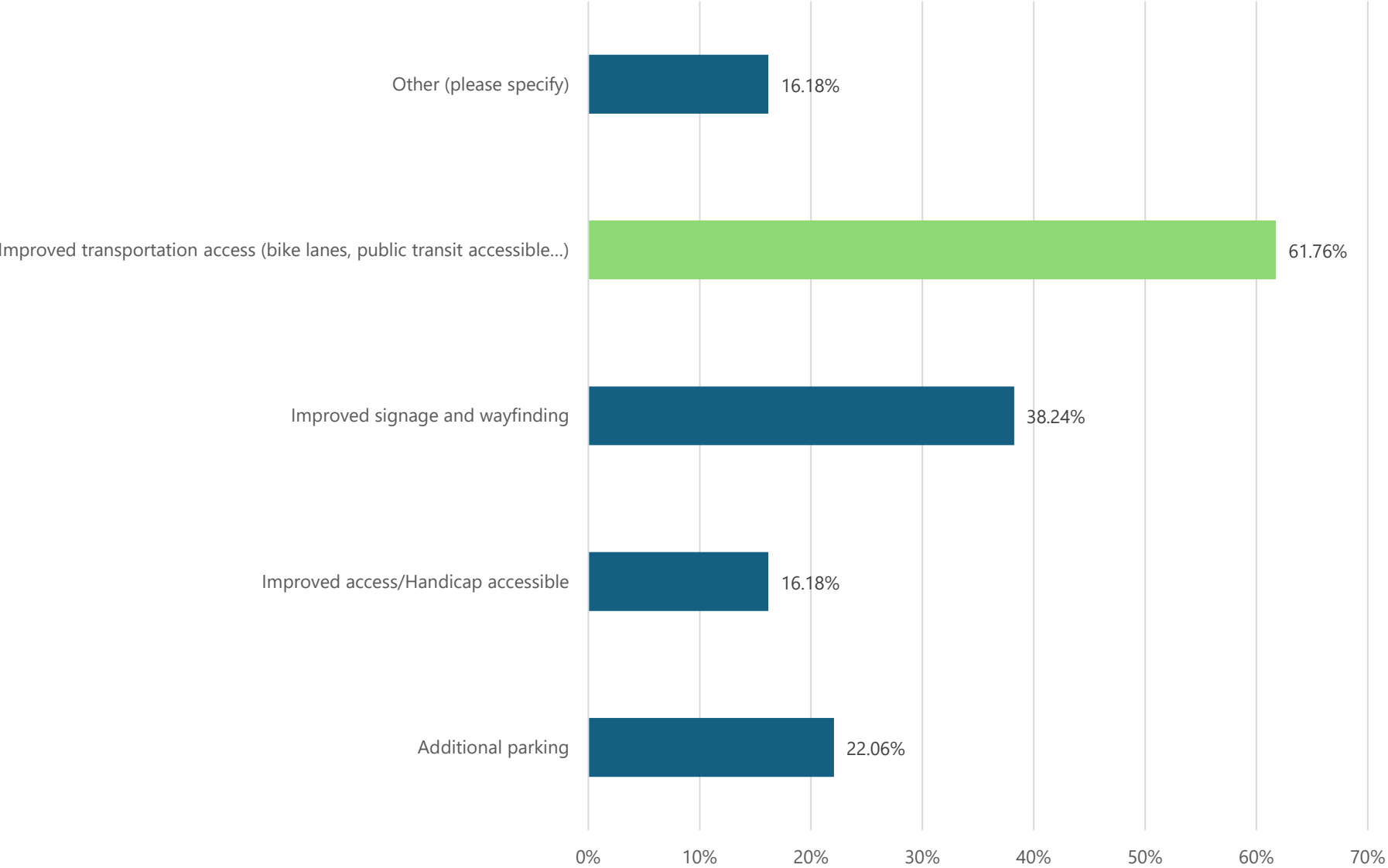


## **“If you disagree, what additional amenities are needed?”**

Some of the responses included the following:

- *Public access to drinking water. water fountain/ water bottle fill station*
- *Public park in Montague City. Clearing snow from Canalside bike path.*
- *Portapotties, a good trash can in Montague Center, river access and parking, signs on the bike path telling walkers/bikers/dogs which side to be on. I want to follow the rules but I don't know what they are.*
- *Pool / Swimming pool (and year round access to the indoor pool and not late at night - during the weekend days like Amherst, Northampton) / It should be a priority to have a public swimming area and swimming lessons. For our aging population, we should prioritize accessibility, and for our economy, we should do more to engage visitors w the town*
- *Trails are not accessible for people with mobility issues. Also not everyone in Montague has outdoor recreational facilities near them. / road side parking can be unreliable and trails are not always accessible*
- *Turners Falls has park & some amenities. A public pool would be good. A public gym would be great. I can't speak with authority about the other villages*
- *rest rooms, more benches, more trees/shade*
- *Most parks don't have a bathroom when people are using the park. In most cases you need to drive or walk far.*
- *I'd like to see unity park with a closed gate park for the littles (I surveyed parents and this was their top need), i still dream of a free fruit tree set up, in addition to us having a bike rental such as blue bikes in Boston and Amherst*
- *better enforcement of snow and leaves cleared from sidewalks. Healthy place to go after dark... indoor basketball court with swimming pool and an indoor walking track would be idea. Our sports teams do not have enough gyms to use in the winter.*
- *There are no trash cans on the canal side rail trail. People occasionally toss litter, and frequently toss their poop, filled dog bags all over the trail, and at the trailhead.*

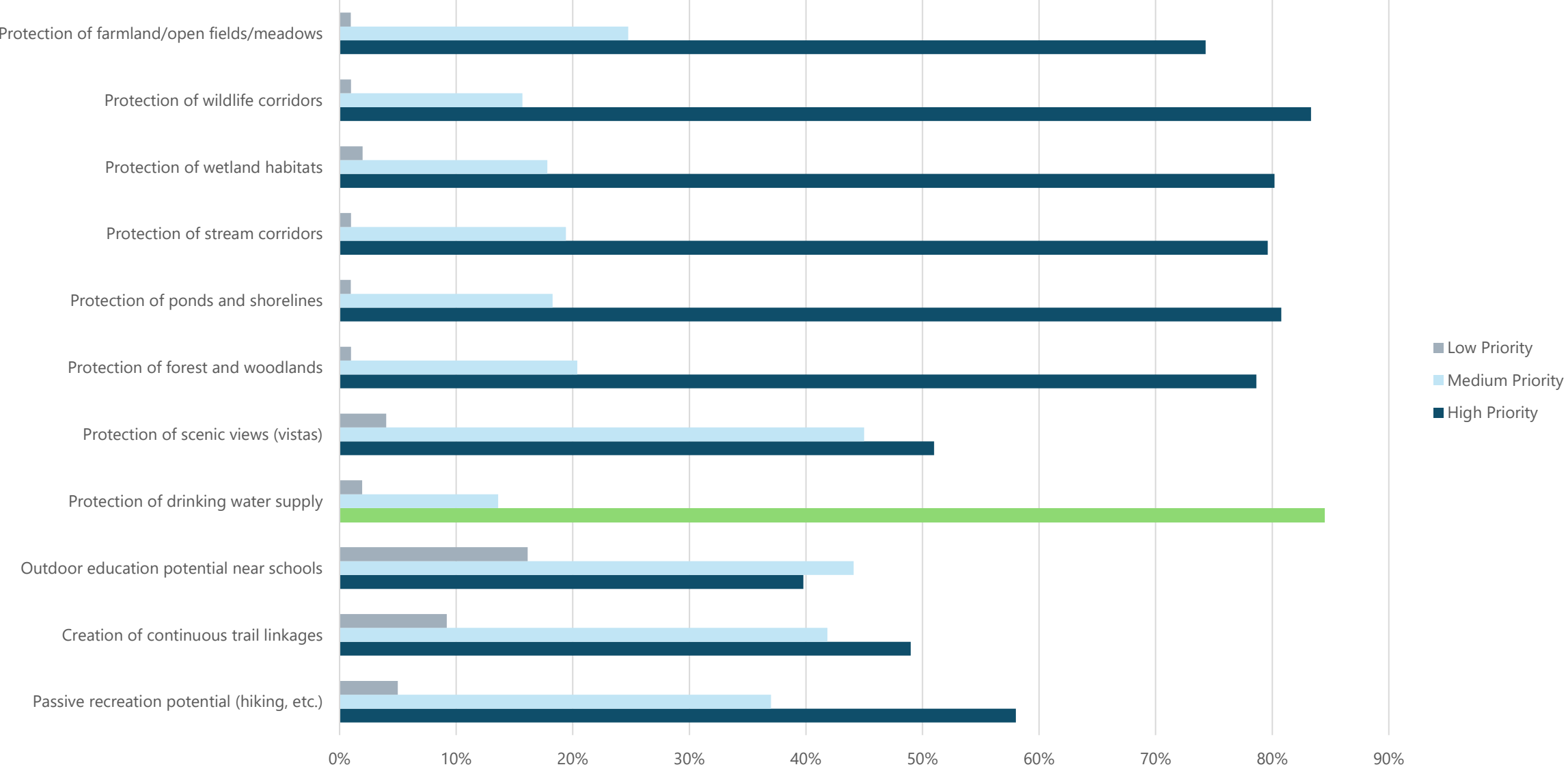
“Would you use recreational facilities more if they had the following?”



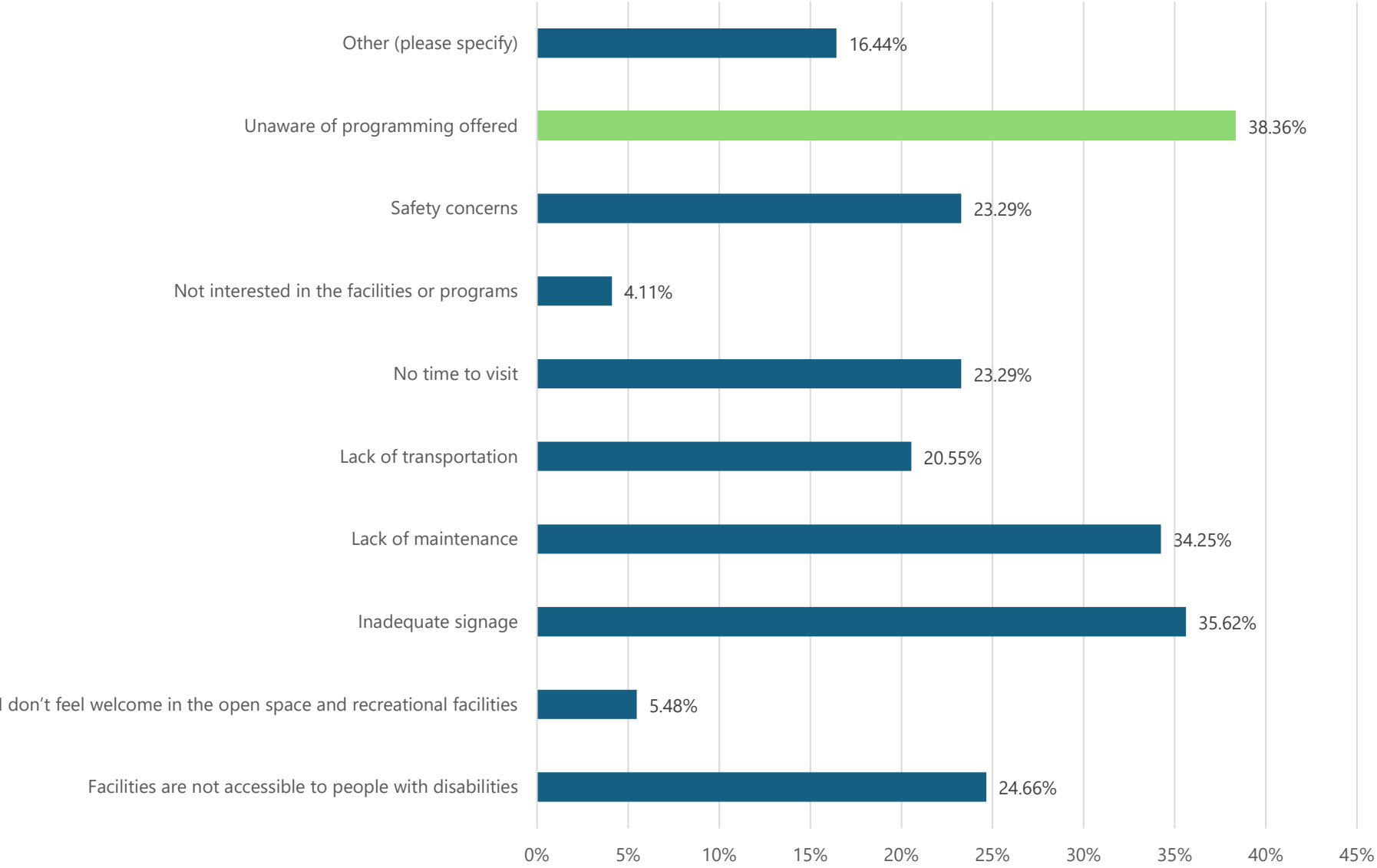
The following themes emerged among the responses for respondents to selected “Other”:

- Safer pedestrian access
- Public art, information booth; restrooms. Also, informational signs about history, ecology, architecture, etc
- I like hiking and birdwatching, but it's not easy to figure out what trail systems exist near me. Could there be master map?
- Accessible times (see indoor pool comments above)
- Bike share/rental
- If the Unity park had lights around the walking path and snow was cleared, but right now we are not allowed after dark.
- More seating / variety of seating-covered benches, table + chairs, etc.
- Bathrooms

“What resources are the most important to protect?”



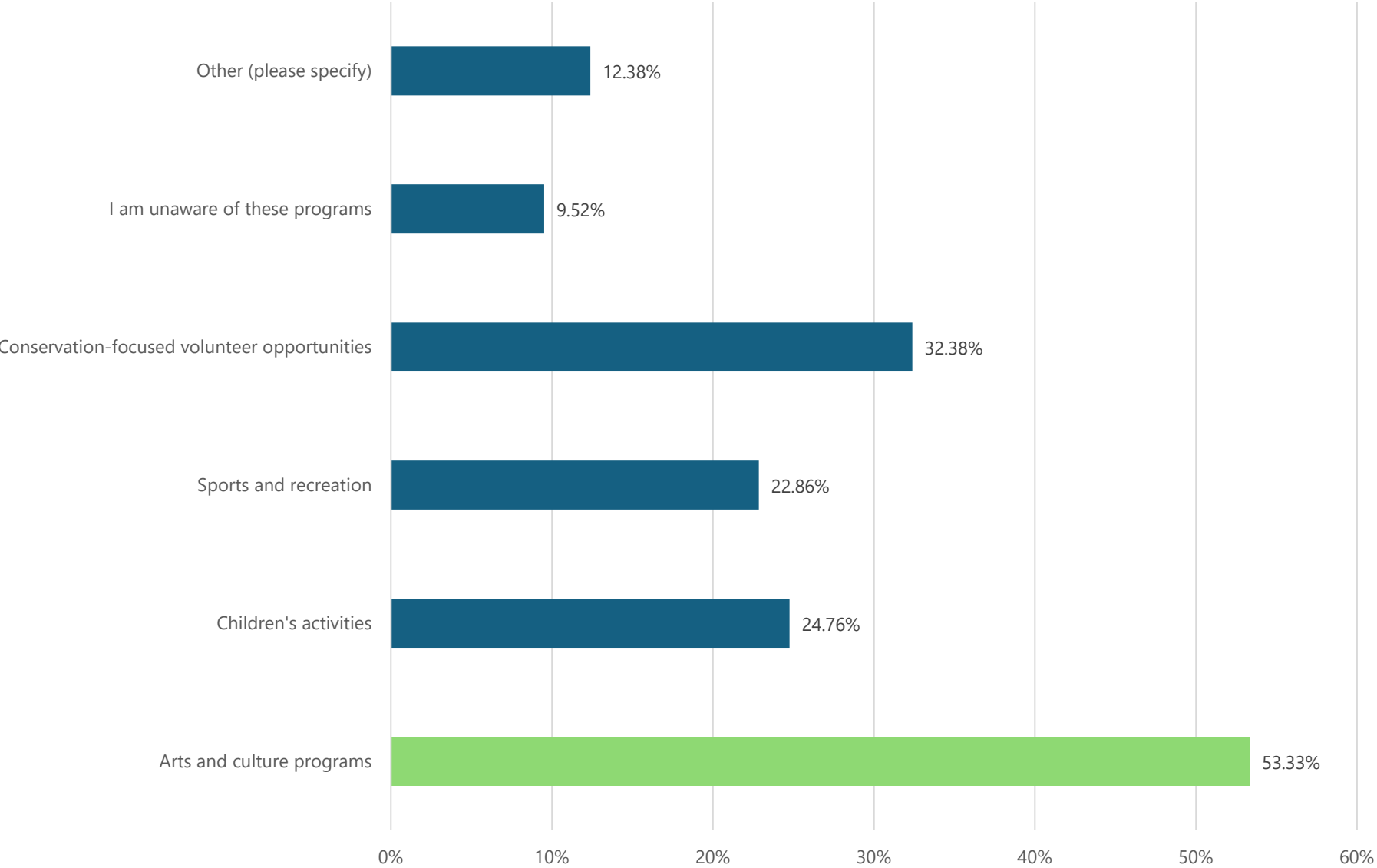
“What concerns do you have related to open space in Montague?”



The following themes emerged among the responses for respondents to selected “Other”:

- *The signage to high school door & pool insufficient. Driving to/from the indoor pool at 8/9 pm winter in the dark, the roads can be icy, no one is around & Unity St's hill is not accessible to this elder.*
- *Protect the Access for high clearance 4x4 passenger vehicles on Dry Hill Rd.*
- *Montague plains does not feel safe. Too many dangerous encounters with gun owners over the years - we have stopped going.*
- *Dark sky friendly lighting*
- *hiking or bike trails being used by motor bikes, wild flower/pollinator fields being mowed*
- *Land owned/maintained by FirstLight, is not a priority for them. Flooding & accessibility near picnic tables*
- *I'm concerned about the cost of maintaining open space used by the public and expanding programs and services. I'd be happy to see more of the town's resources go towards this, but I don't think others would be willing to make cuts to achieve this goal.*

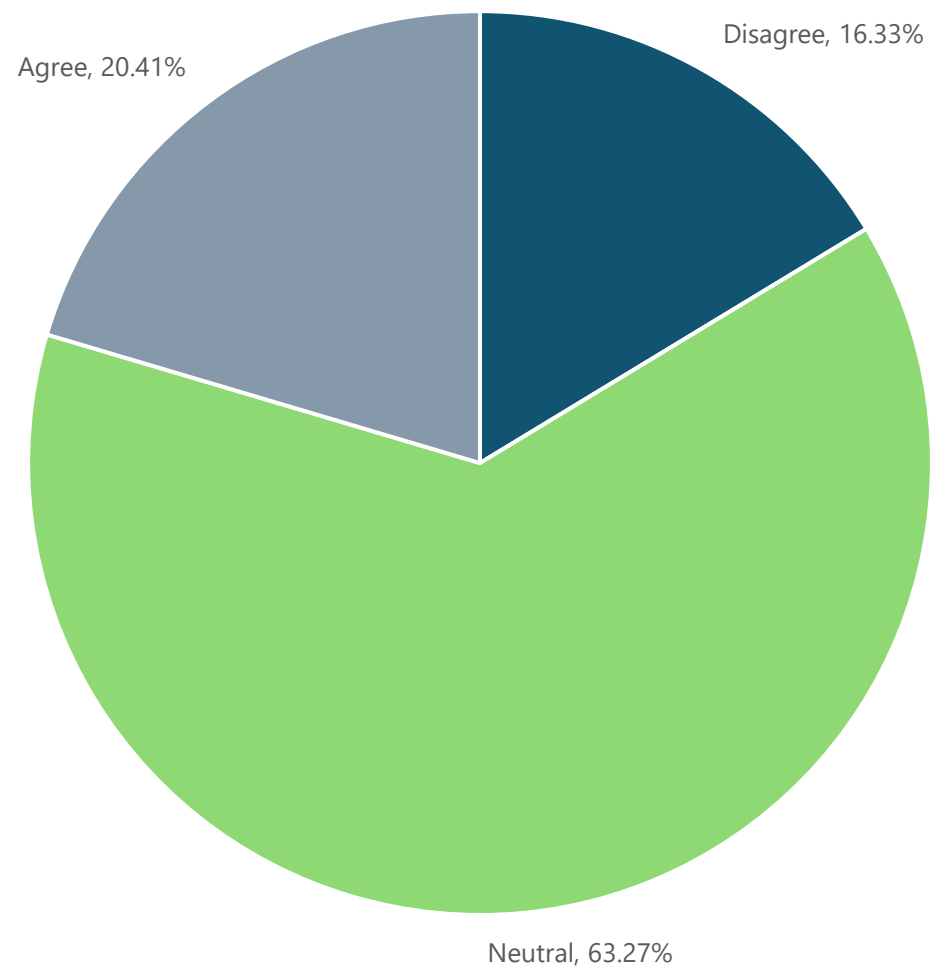
“Which programs, events, or activities are you involved with in Montague?”



The following themes emerged among the responses for respondents to selected “Other”:

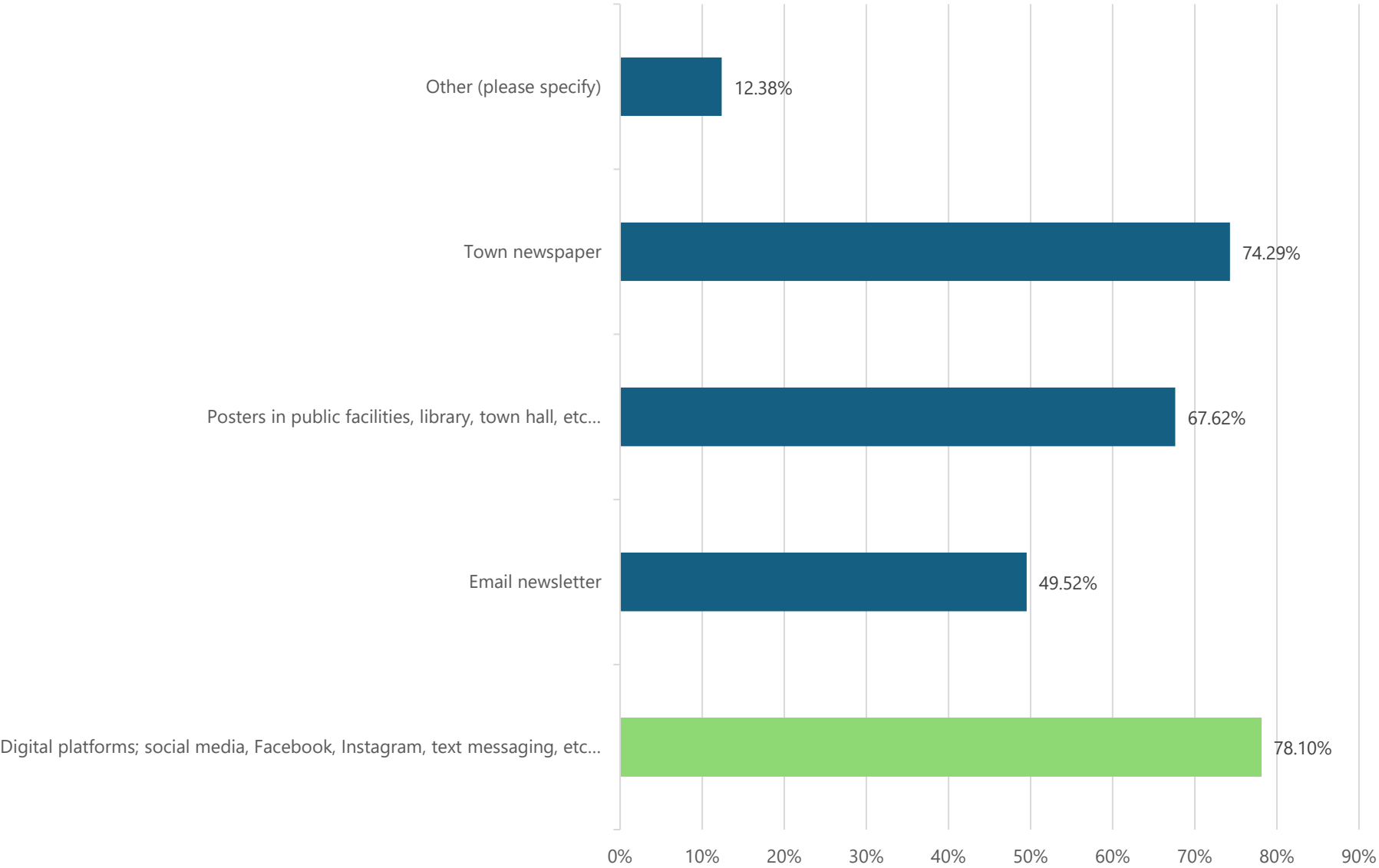
- food security activities! / and sustainability
- Community garden
- Farming for food security with Draw Down Montague
- Montague Food Security Coalition; TF especially needs more space where residents can grow their own food
- transprotation initiatives and group rides out of Sadie's Bikes
- Town Meeting, local paper, neighborhood events.
- Pollinator garden at Sheffield School / occasional children's nature education program

**“Indicate how you feel about the following statement: I’m able to easily find information about open space in Montague.”**





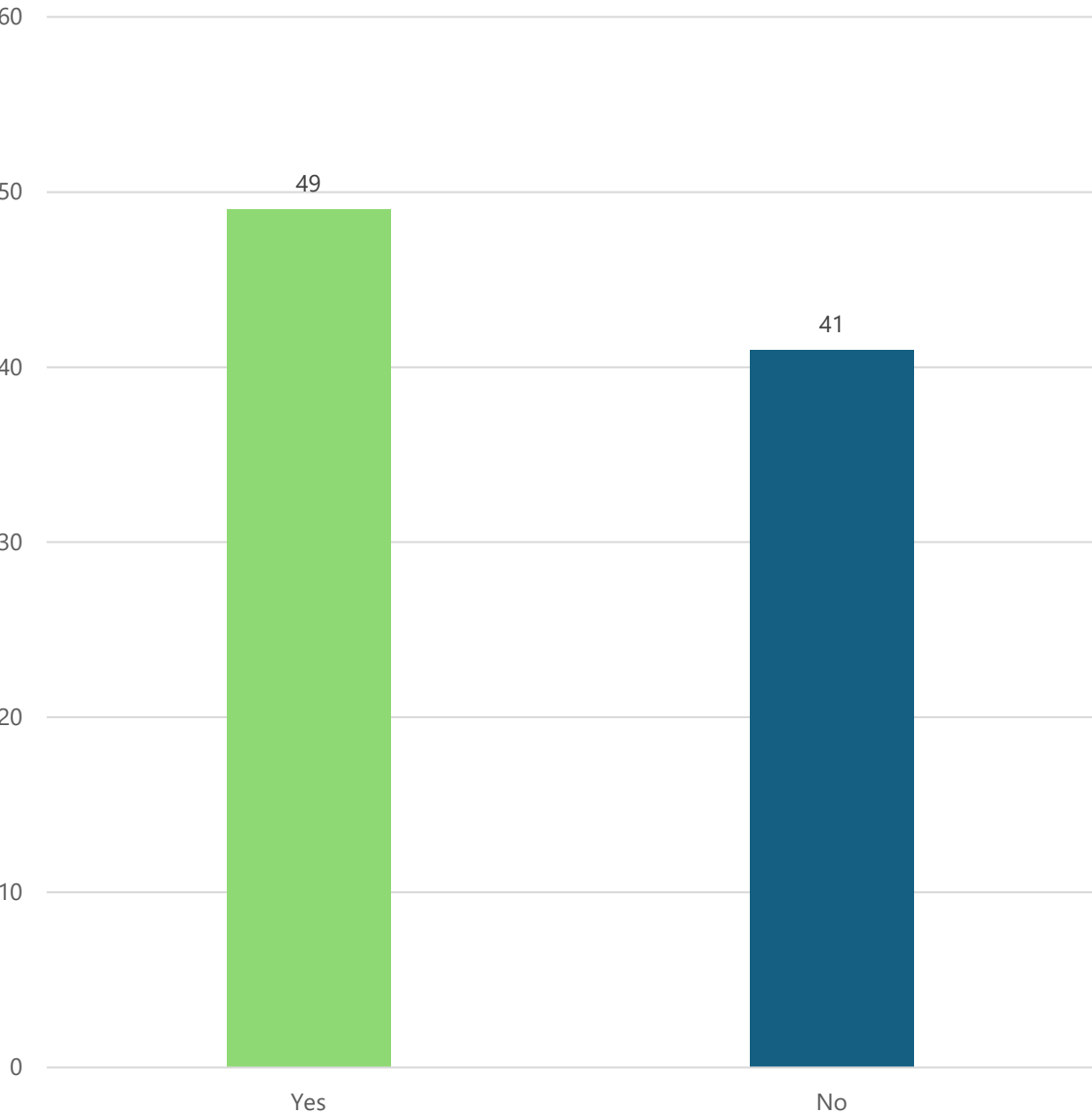
“How should the town communicate upcoming projects and opportunities for involvement?”



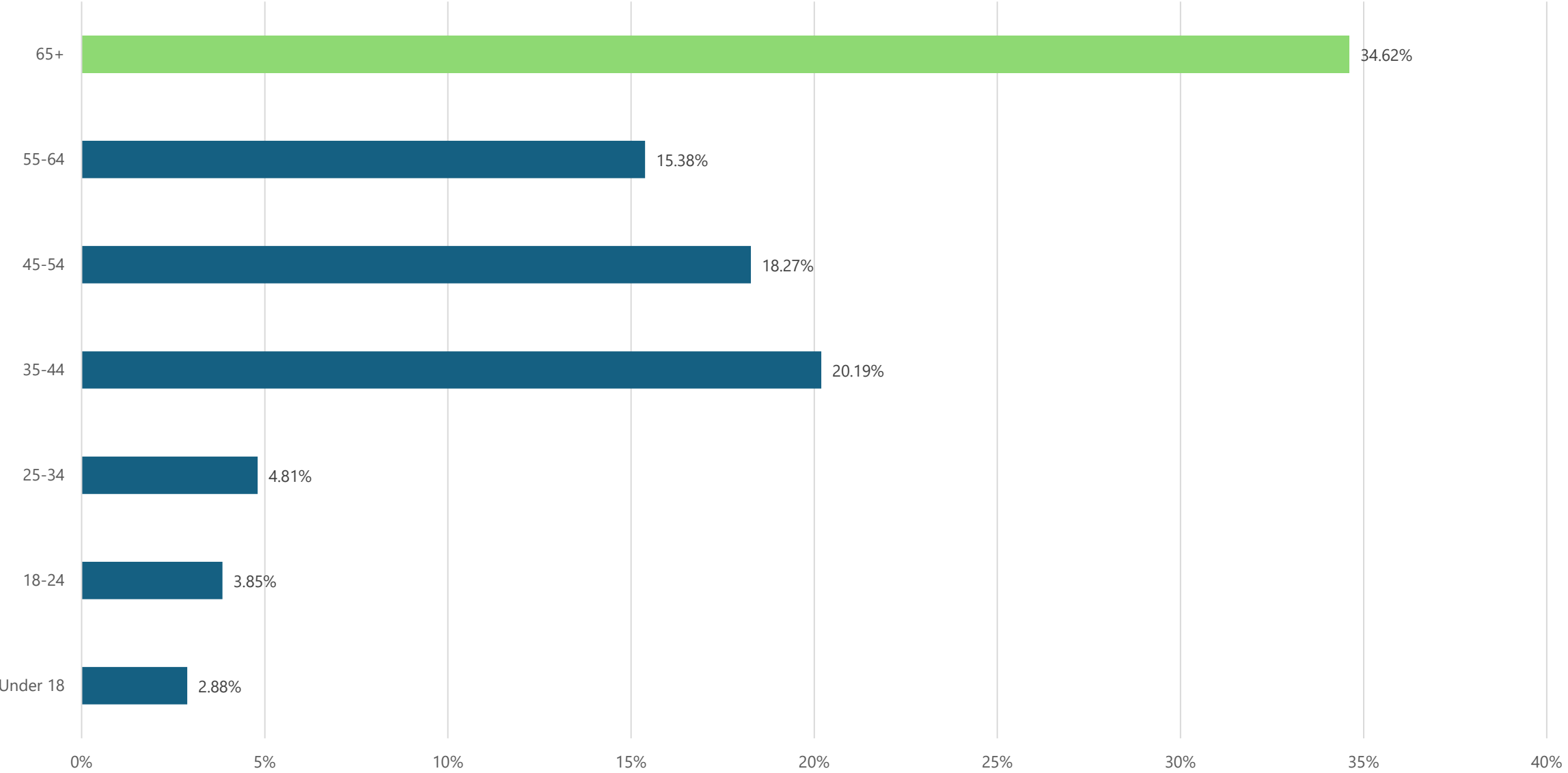
The following themes emerged among the responses for respondents to selected “Other”:

- Website: Town and RiverCulture
- Potential social media page
- Flyers or mailers to all villages / to schools
- Poster at post office
- news mailing lists from community member-leaders (like Will Quale)
- Radio

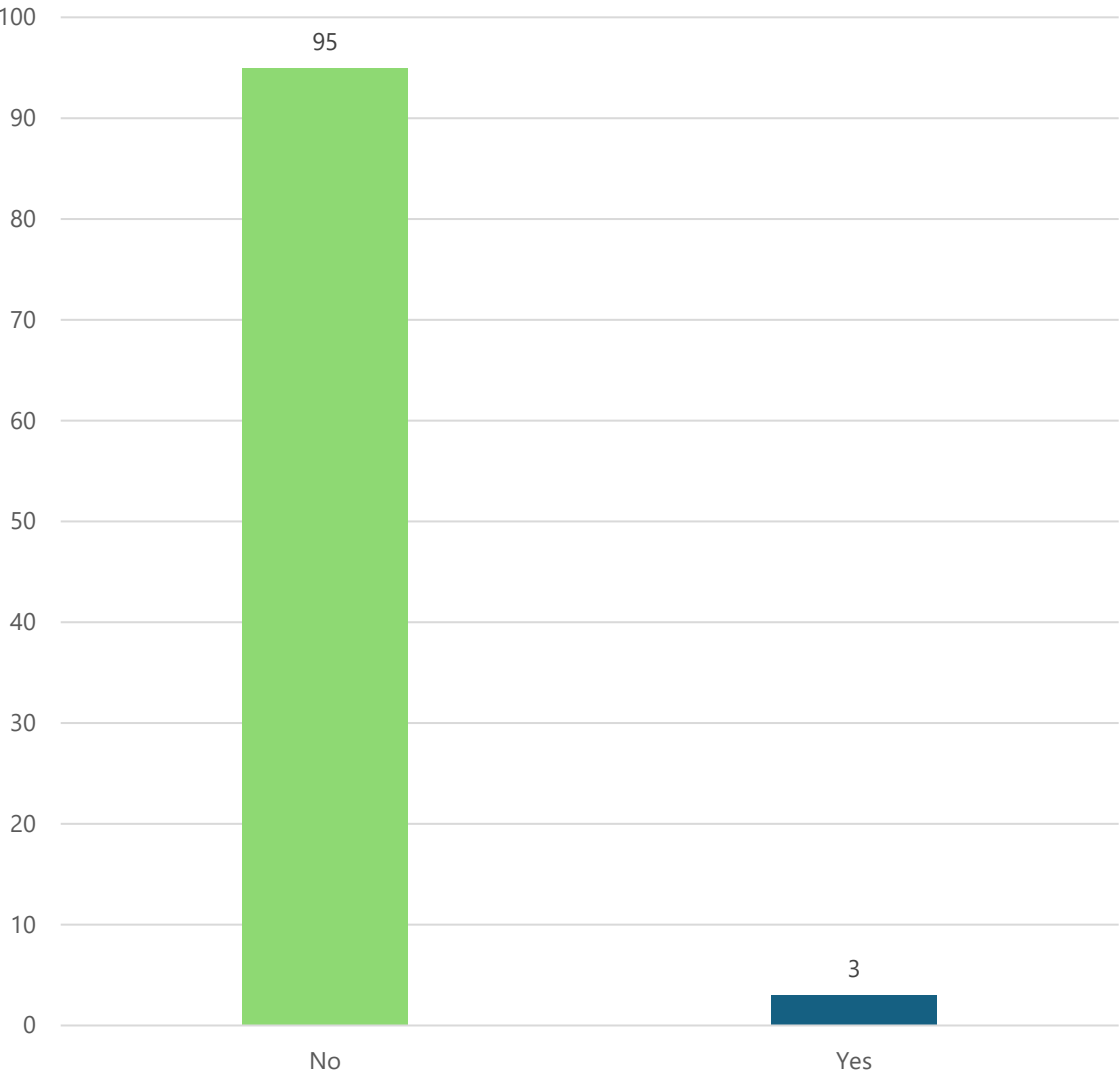
**“Are you interested in volunteer opportunities to help preserve or maintain open spaces and recreational facilities in Montague?”**



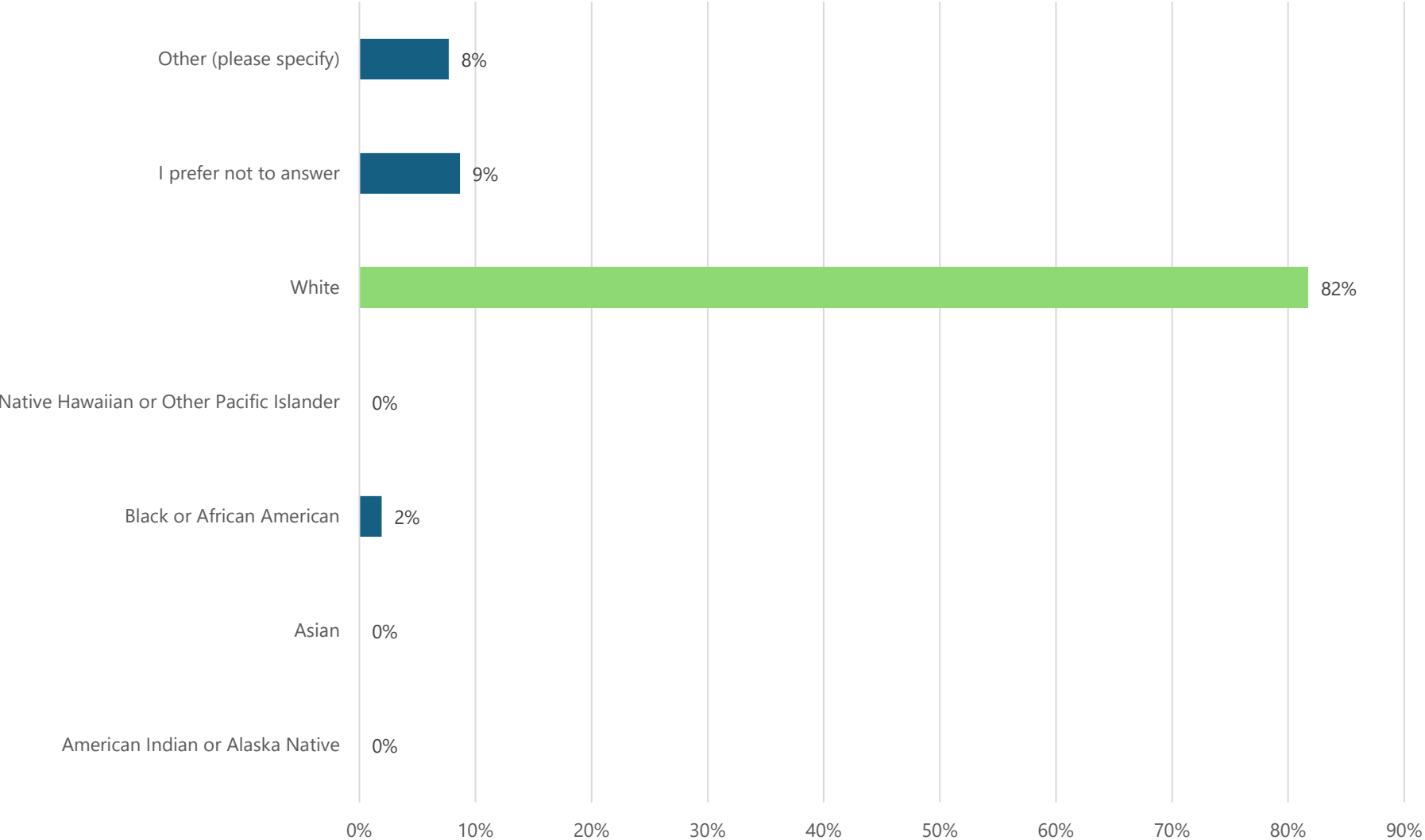
“What age group do you belong to?”



“Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?”



“Which of the following best describes your race?”



The following themes emerged among the responses for respondents to selected “Other”:

- *Jewish Eastern European*
- *My race should not matter!*
- *Mixed*
- *Irish*
- *Homosapien*

## **“Please feel free to add any additional comments or ideas you have here!”**

Some of the responses included the following:

- *Thank you! I love Montague, and I feel like we have some great outdoor spaces that are publicly available, and our pickup soccer group has really appreciated working with the Rec Department to have a place to play. A public swimming spot would be awesome. Can we do it across from Unity Park, above the dam, near the dog park?*
- *Safe bike lanes, particularly Montague Center > Turners Falls and over the Turners Falls bridge to Greenfield, and to/from hiking/swimming areas. Also more accessible marked swimming areas in natural water bodies would be a plus.*
- *How can we use our open space and recreational resources to better integrate food security, grow more food with/for our food insecure neighbors, and increase community cohesion, especially across race and class (those with and without economic privilege)? What can the Town do, in collaboration over time, to advance this?*
- *Particularly given the aging population of Franklin County, I think it is critical that Montague prioritize the creation of universally accessible trails, also known as all-person's trails, in our town. Unpaved (ie, stone dust) trails are particularly important. To my knowledge, there are only two in the county (by Riverside Park in Sunderland and Alderbrook Meadows in Northfield), which is not enough. We need trails that will allow people with a range of disabilities—be it that they use mobility devices, have low vision or blindness, or have balance issues—to be able to experience our natural spaces to the fullest degree possible. I highly recommend visiting <https://www.unpavedtrailsforall.org/> for more on this issue.*
- *Open up Lake Pleasant to resident swimming. They purify the water anyway when it gets to Boston. Build us a pool and don't dawdle about it please. Olympic size.*
- *Better public transportation would make open and recreational areas more available to people. More community gardens would be great for all the villages. A community gym would be good for people's health. Right now, folks have to go to the Greenfield Y. Something in town that's low cost would make staying healthy easier for low income people.*



# Appendix C:

# Letters of Support



TOWN OF  
**MONTAGUE**  
MASSACHUSETTS

TOWN HALL  
One Avenue A  
Turners Falls, MA 01376

PLANNING BOARD  
(413) 863-3200 ext. 112  
Planner@montague-ma.gov

---

May 26, 2026

Division of Conservation Services  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Letter of Support for the Montague Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Montague Planning Board, I am writing to express our support for the Town of Montague's Open Space and Recreation Plan update, dated May 2026.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan is vital in promoting environmental stewardship, while supporting climate resilience and encouraging equitable access to recreational and natural resources. The plan assists in aligning local and regional priorities for sustainable land and economic development.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan is a critical component of the Town of Montague's vision for protecting open space, land conservation, improving access to recreational opportunities, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

The Montague Planning Board supports the goals and strategies developed as part of this plan. The Board is confident that its implementation will position the Town to pursue funding opportunities, strengthen community and regional partnerships, and make meaningful progress toward long-term conservation and recreation objectives.

The Board appreciates the Division of Conservation Services' support of this effort and respectfully request your approval of the Montague's Open Space and Recreation Plan update.

Sincerely,

Ronald Sicard, Chair  
On behalf of the Montague Planning Board



**TOWN OF  
MONTAGUE  
MASSACHUSETTS**

TOWN HALL  
One Avenue A  
Turners Falls, MA 01376

CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
(413) 863-3200 ext. 112  
Planner@montague-ma.gov

May 18, 2026

Division of Conservation Services  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Letter of Support for the Montague Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Montague Conservation Commission, I am writing to express our support for the Town of Montague's Open Space Plan update, dated May 2026.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan is a critical document that reflects a shared vision for protecting open space, improving access to recreational opportunities, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. The plan promotes environmental stewardship, supports climate resilience, encourages equitable access to natural and recreational resources, and helps align local and regional priorities for sustainable development.

The Montague Conservation Commission supports the goals and strategies in this plan. We are confident its implementation will position the Town to pursue funding opportunities, strengthen community partnerships, and making meaningful progress toward long-term conservation and recreation objectives.

We appreciate the Division of Conservation Services' support of this effort and respectfully request your approval of the Town of Montague's Open Space and Recreation Plan update.

Sincerely,

Mark Fairbrother, Chair  
On behalf of the Montague Conservation

MARK FAIRBROTHER, CHAIR MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION



**MONTAGUE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

56 First Street, Unity Park Fieldhouse

Turners Falls, MA 01376

Phone: (413) 863-3216/Fax: (413) 863-3229

[www.montagueparksrec.com](http://www.montagueparksrec.com)

Jonathan J. Dobosz, CPRP, CPO  
Director of Parks & Recreation  
[recdir@montague-ma.gov](mailto:recdir@montague-ma.gov)

Jennifer L. Peterson  
Clerk/Bookkeeper  
[recclerk@montague-ma.gov](mailto:recclerk@montague-ma.gov)

May 14, 2026

Melissa Cryan  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge St., 9th Floor  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Ms. Cryan,

It is with great enthusiasm that the Montague Parks & Recreation Commission endorse the 2026 Montague Open Space & Recreation Plan. The *OSRP* will work as a vital catalyst for our annual Strategic Plan for the next ten years, and we are confident this valuable resource will allow us to meet those needs of the citizens of Montague. We appreciate the efforts of the Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee and the residents of Montague for identifying the critical benchmarks the plan has set forth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Kuklewicz".

Barb Kuklewicz, Chairperson  
Montague Parks & Recreation Commission

JJD/jjd





**TOWN OF**  
**MONTAGUE**  
**MASSACHUSETTS**

Selectboard Office  
One Avenue A  
Turners Falls, MA 01376

413-863-3200  
Ext. 108 & 107

May 11, 2026

Division Conservation Services  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Letter of Support for the Montague Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express our support for the Town of Montague 's Open Space and Recreation Plan update, dated May 2025.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan is a critical document that reflects a shared vision for protecting open space, improving access to recreational opportunities, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. The plan promotes environmental stewardship, supports climate resilience, encourages equitable access to natural and recreational resources, and helps align local and regional priorities for sustainable development.

Our Selectboard supports the goals and strategies in this plan. We are confident it's implementation will position the Town to pursue funding opportunities, strengthen community partnerships, and make meaningful progress toward long term conservation and recreation objectives.

We appreciate the Division of Conservation Services' support of this effort and respectfully request your approval of the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan update.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Lord", is written over a light blue circular stamp. The stamp contains the text "TOWN OF MONTAGUE" and "MASSACHUSETTS" around a central emblem.

Matthew Lord  
Selectboard Chair



**Franklin Regional  
Council of Governments**

April 30, 2026

Ms. Melissa Cryan  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Ms. Cryan,

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) is pleased to endorse the work of the OSRP Steering Committee, municipal officials and vhb consultant team on their 2026-2036 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) for the Town of Montague. We support their submission of this OSRP to the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services for final review and approval

The OSRP update represents a considerable amount of work conducted to gather public input, inventory assets, analyze needs, and develop meaningful goals and objectives. Along with the town's recently updated comprehensive plan and MVP 2.0 Plan, the OSRP update reflects the vision and values that Montague residents have for their future. The OSRP update will provide municipals officials and volunteers guidance and resources to help inform decisions regarding land use, recreation, cultural, and open space issues.

The OSRP update, once approved by the Commonwealth, will make Montague eligible for funding to implement open space and recreation projects. In addition, the Town will be better able to collaborate with neighboring towns, local land trusts, FRCOG, and others to work towards their goals and objectives of protecting and enhancing Montague's significant natural, cultural, and recreational resources. We congratulate Montague and the OSRP Steering Committee on completing this project!

Sincerely,

Jessica Atwood  
Director of Planning