

Town of Dunstable



OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN UPDATE



What is an Open Space and Recreation Plan?

Roadmap for prioritizing open space and recreation projects and expenditures

Requirement for Massachusetts Division of Conservation Service Grants

Created through a public process

Plan components:

- Plan Summary
- Introduction
- Community Setting
- Environmental Inventory
- Inventory of Lands
- Community Goals
- Analysis of Needs
- Goals and Objectives
- 5-Year Action Plan
- Public Comments

Why an Open Space and Recreation Plan?



1

An OSRP provides information about the community and what residents want to achieve in the next 5 to 7 years

2

An OSRP helps encourage community protection and stewardship of these vital resources

3

Completion of an OSRP makes a municipality eligible to apply for State grants to acquire for conservation and improve land utilized for recreation

4

Dunstable's current OSRP expires in March of 2025.

Who is writing the OSRP Update?

Town Administrator Working Group

- Select Board
- Recreation Commission
- Conservation Commission

Other Town Stakeholders

- Parks Commission
- Planning Board
- Cemetery Commission
- COA Board

Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

YOU!



What are Open Space and Recreation Areas?



Open space and recreation areas can mean a lot of things and can mean different things to different people.

Examples of Open Space and Recreation Areas

**Conservation
Land**

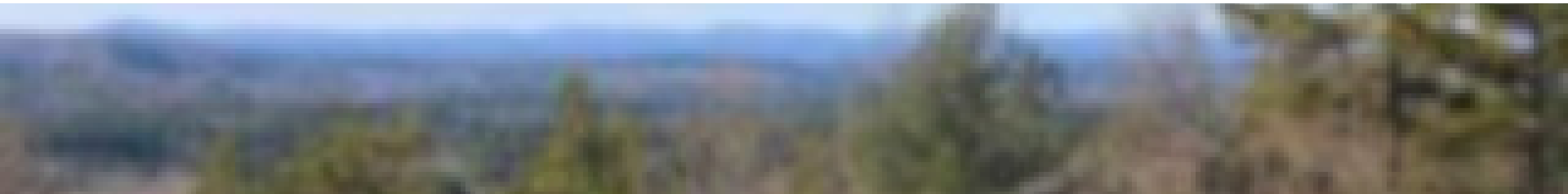
**Forested
Land**

**Agricultural
Land**

**Athletic
Fields**

**Playgrounds
and Parks**

**Undeveloped
Land**



Massachusetts Division of Conservation Service

Grant Programs

Drinking Water Supply Protection

Municipal/state agency
grant for both
conservation and
recreation projects

LAND Grant (Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity)

Municipal grant for the
acquisition of
conservation land

Conservation Partnership Grant Program

Land trust grant for
the acquisition of
conservation land

Landscape Partnership Grant Program

Large-scale
conservation projects
submitted by 2+
partners

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant Program

Municipal/state agency grant for
both conservation and recreation
projects

Conservation Assistance for Small Communities Grant Program

Municipal grant (towns with less
6,000 people or less) for preparation
of property appraisals, OSRPs, and
other planning assistance in support
of land conservation

PARC Grant Program (Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities)

Municipal grant for the acquisition
of recreation land/or development
of new or renovation of existing
parks

Local OSRP Update Process

Creation of OSRP Working Group

Town Administrator, representatives from Select Board, Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission

Second Public Meeting

Review updated draft OSRP, review and comment

Post draft updated OSRP on website for review and comment

Issue OSRP Resident Survey

Issued in month of January with over 100 responses

Update OSRP

Based on data collected, new information, accomplishments, changes since last plan, new priorities, community feedback

Outreach to Stakeholders

Town Departments, Boards, Committees, and other stakeholders

Host First Public Meeting

Community Outreach

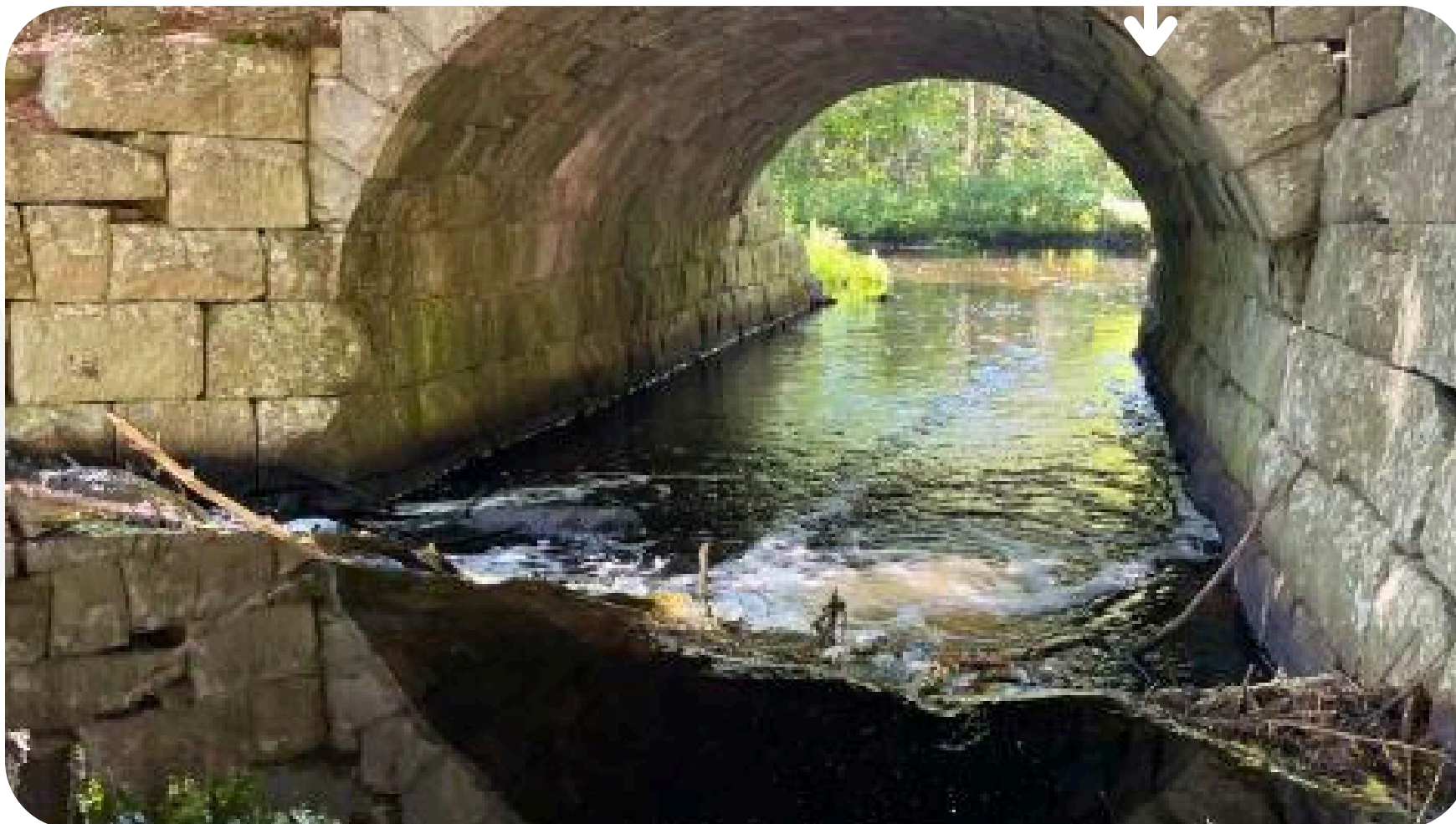
Parents, seniors, renters, stakeholders, Environmental Justice communities

Support Letters

Planning Board, Select Board, Regional Planning Agency (NMCOG)



State OSRP Approval Process



1

Submit Updated OSRP to the Division of Conservation Services

2

Conditional approval letter provided by DCS, with comments that need to be addressed

3

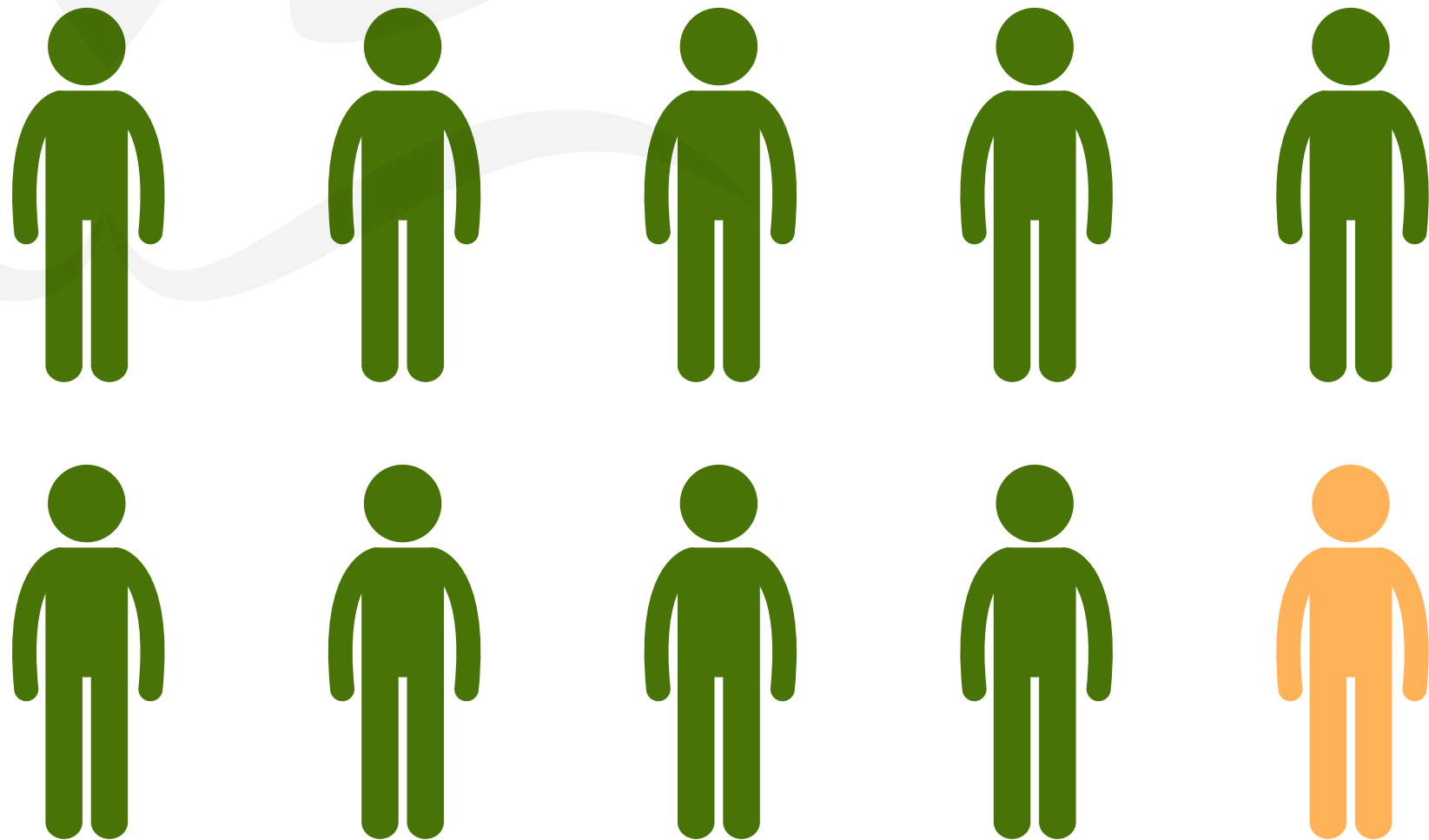
Hard copy of OSRP addressing all comments must be mailed to DCS for final approval

4

Post final approved plan on Town website; two hard copies in Town buildings, and distribute to local boards and agencies

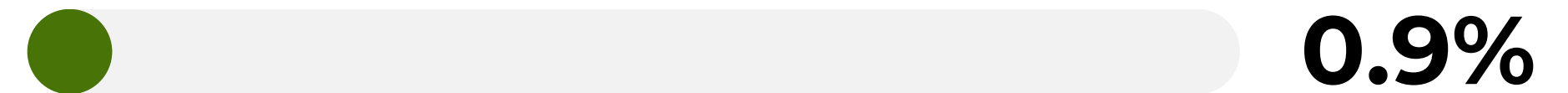
Who lives in Dunstable?

87.3%
White Alone

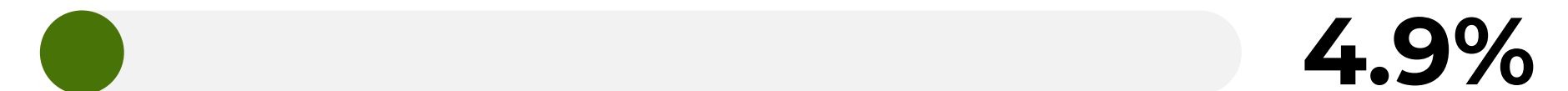


Among Minority Population:

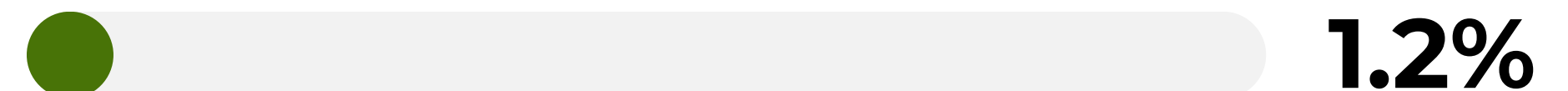
Black or African American Alone



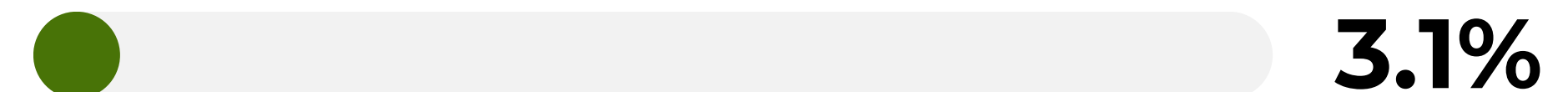
Asian Alone



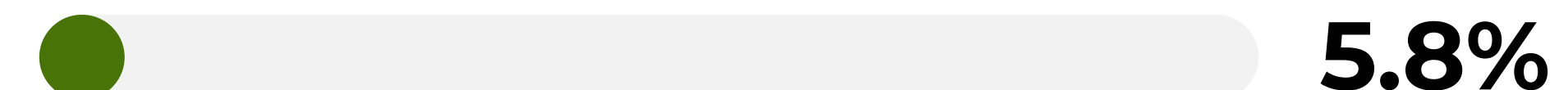
Some Other Race Alone



Hispanic or Latino (All Races)

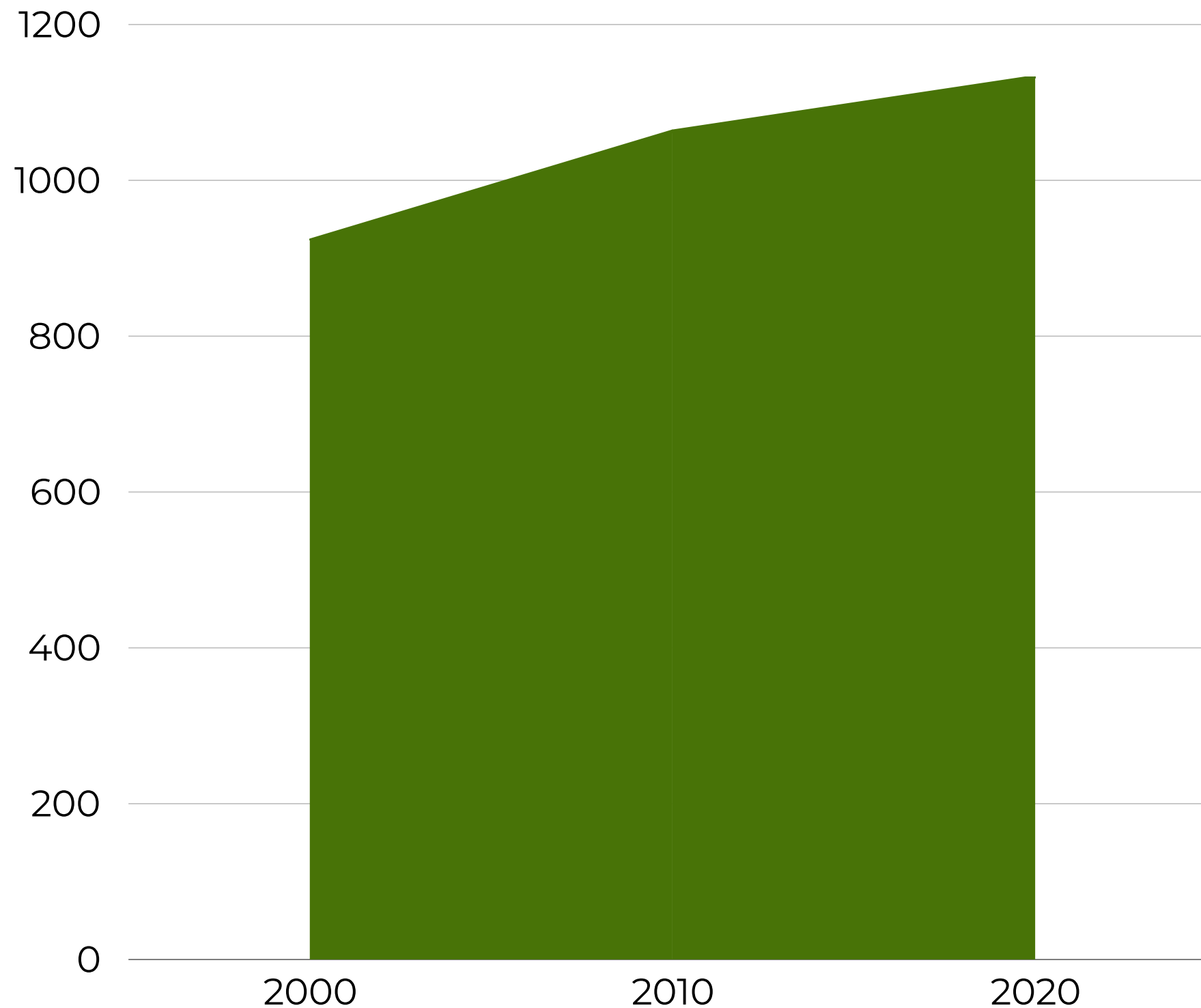


Two or More Races



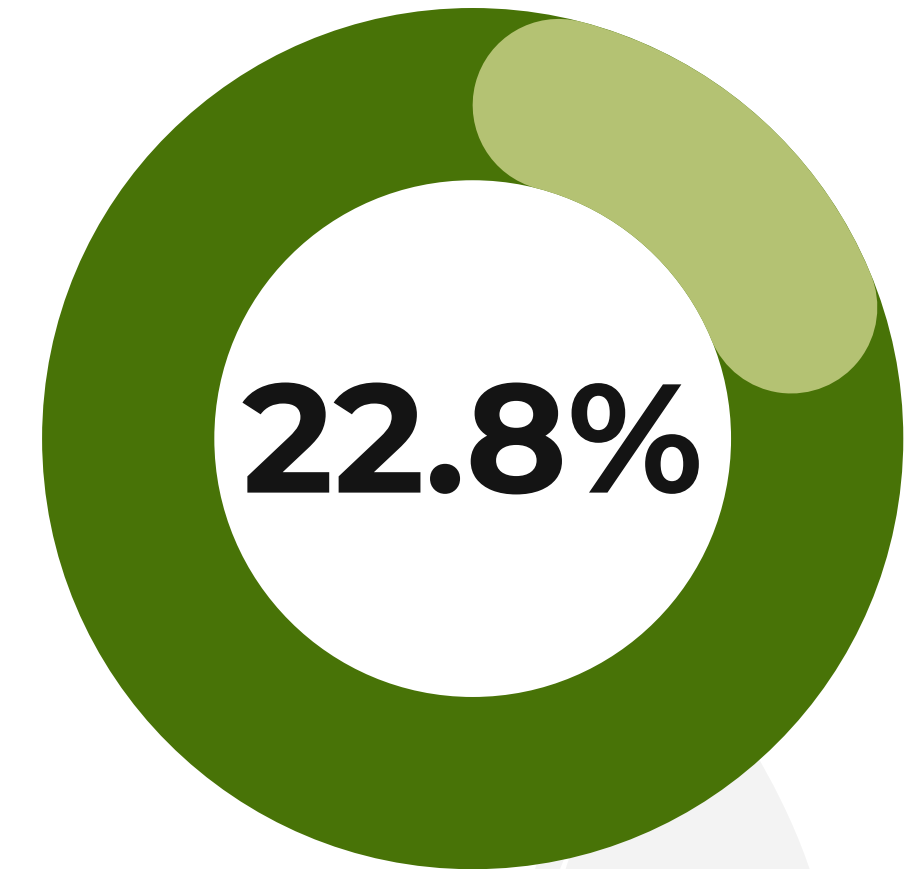
Total Households

1,136



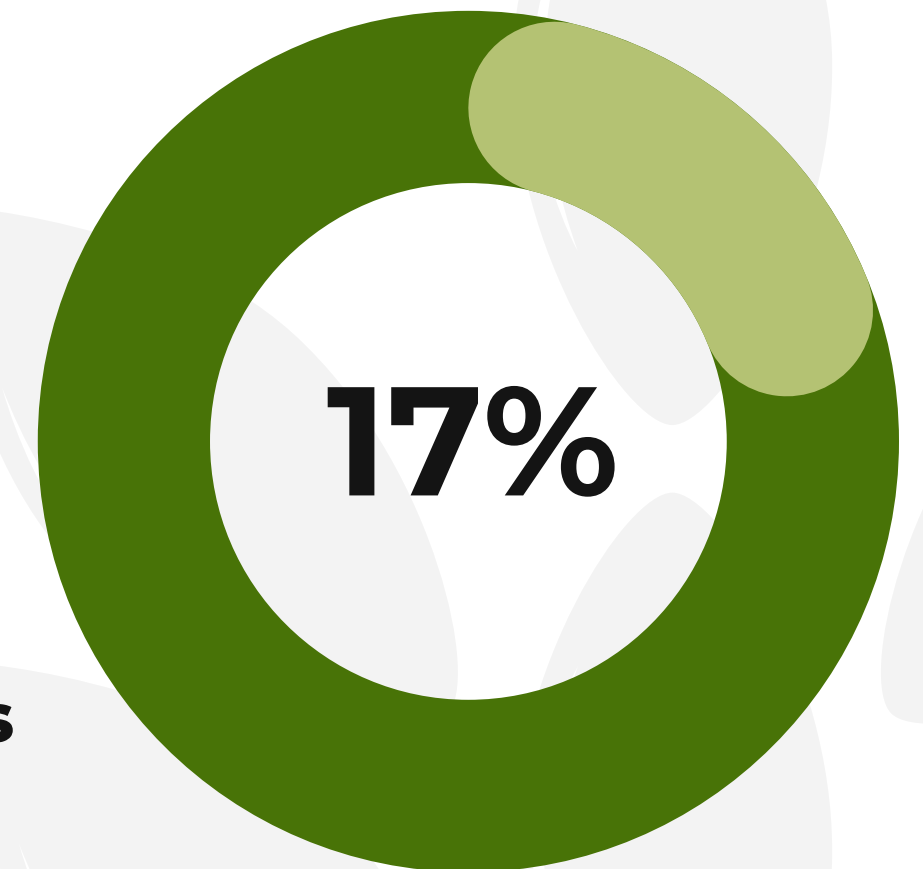
**Dunstable
Household
Growth Rate
2000-2020**

210 households

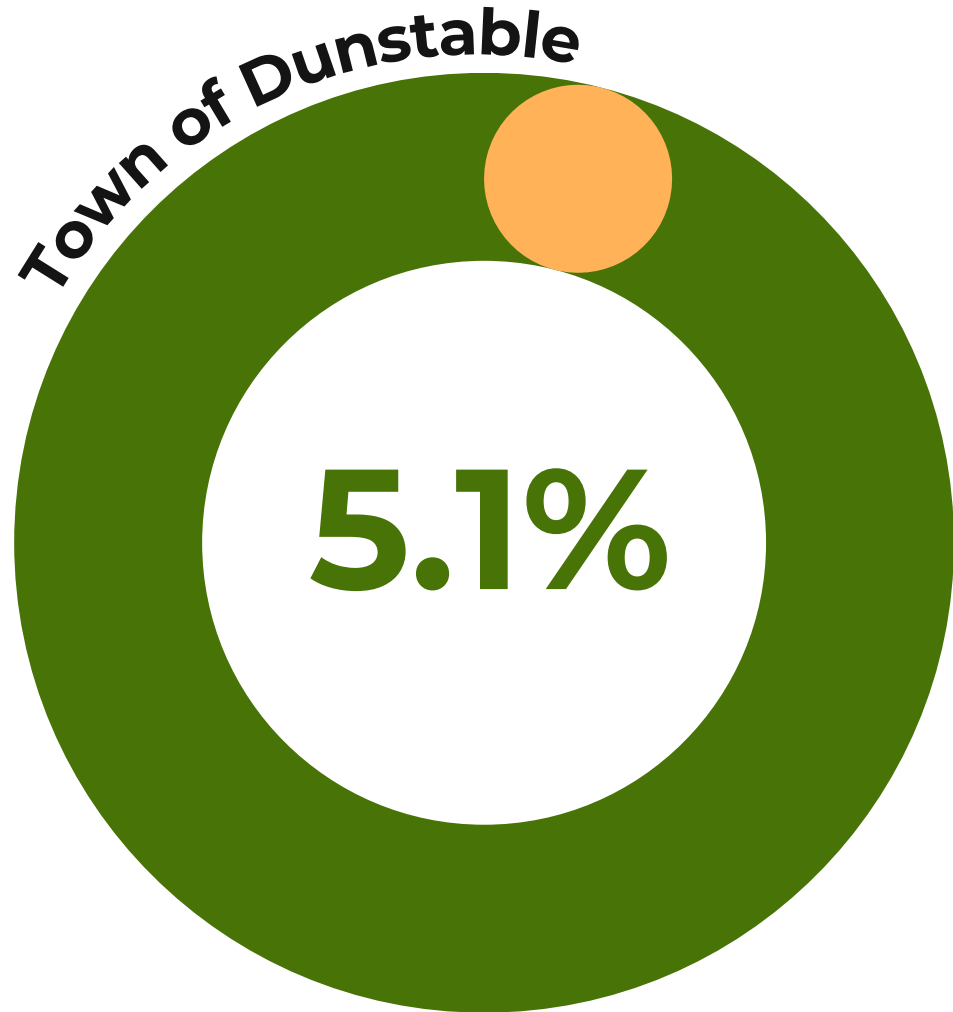


**Greater Lowell
Region
Household
Growth Rate
2000-2020**

16,929 households



Population impacted by a disability



With hearing difficulty



53 people

With vision difficulty



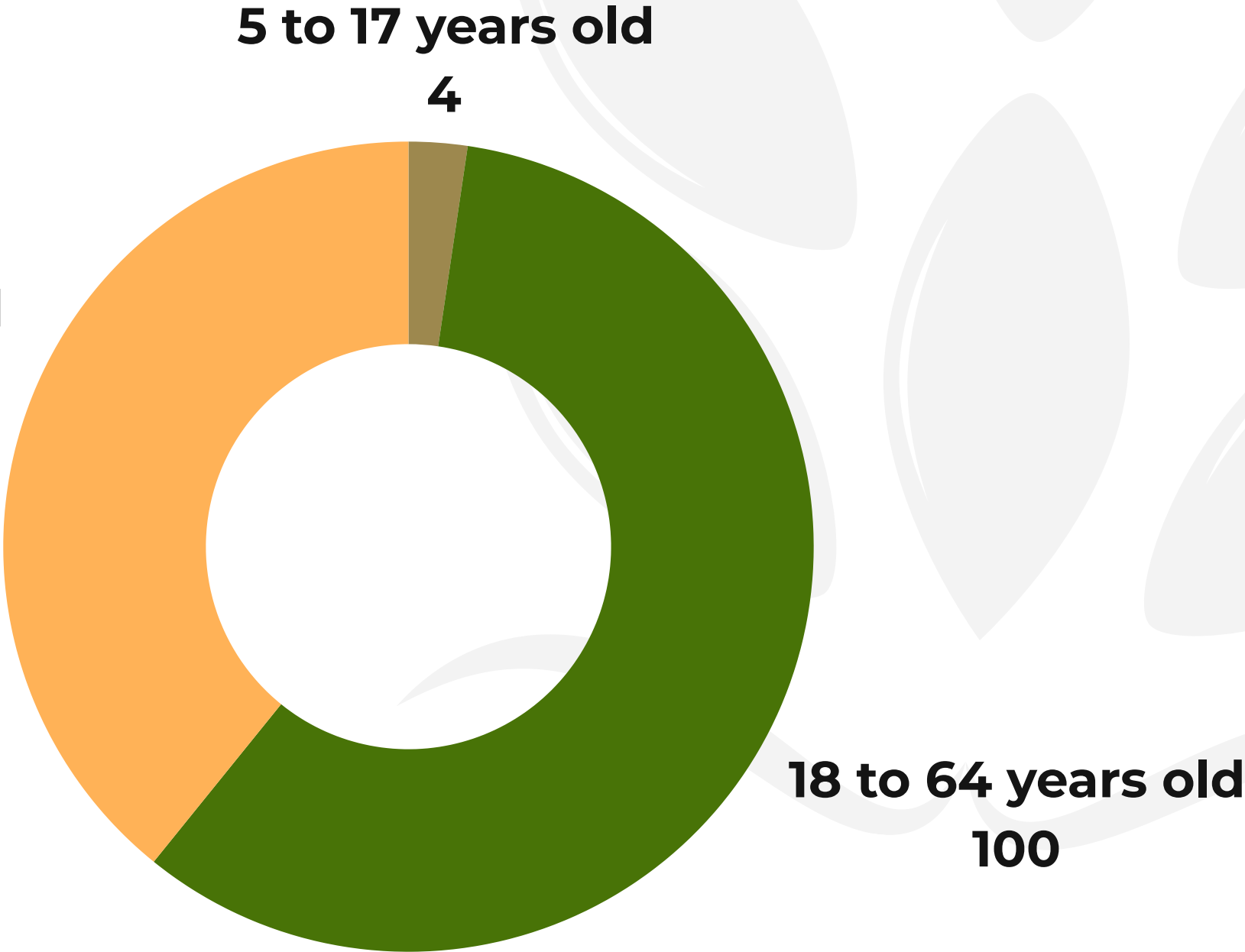
9 people

With cognitive difficulty



90 people

65+ years old
67



With ambulatory difficulty



31 people

With self-care difficulty



19 people

With independent living difficulty



72 people

Head of Household Age



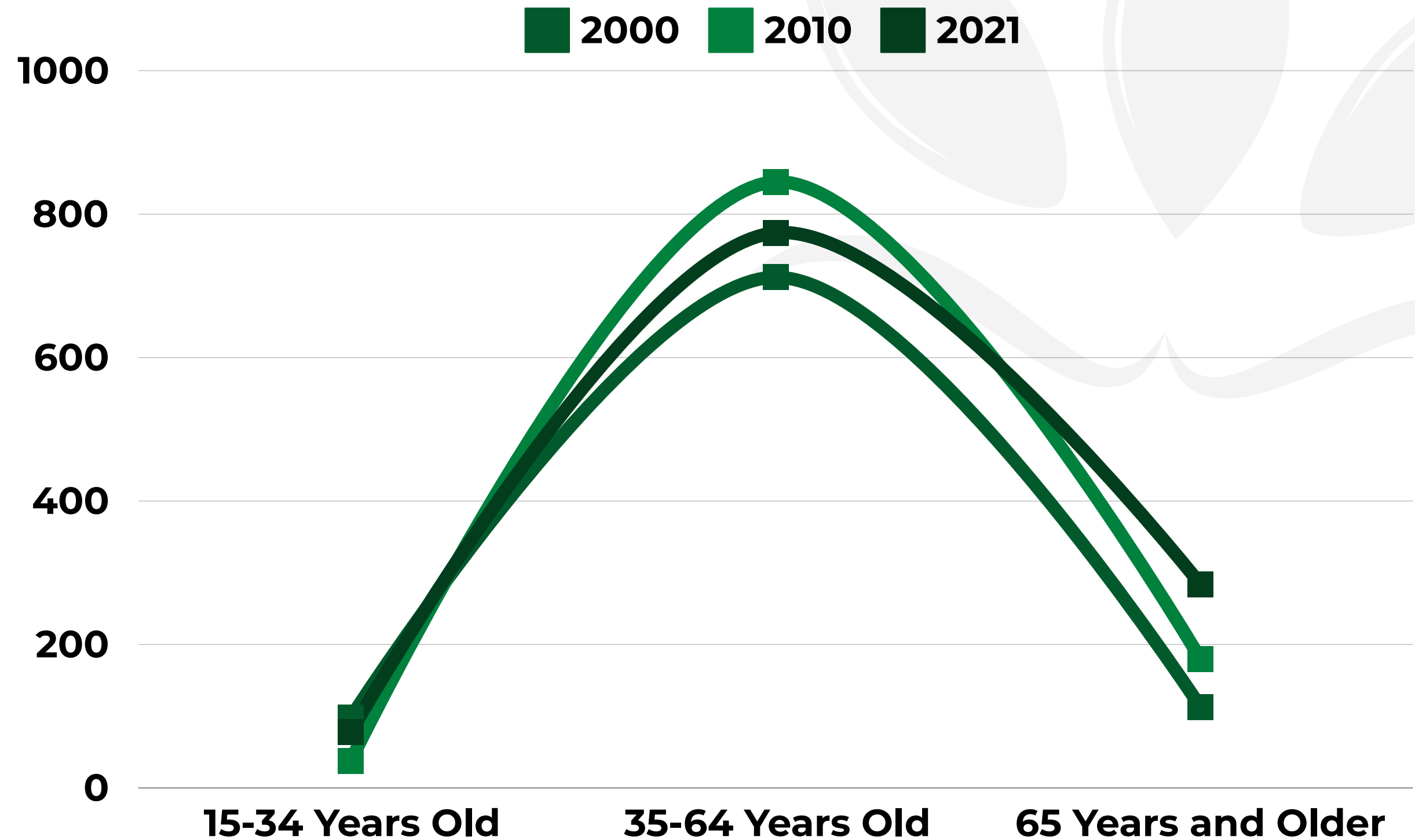
2000

98 Heads of Household
between 15-34 Years Old and
113 Heads of Household 65
Years and Older

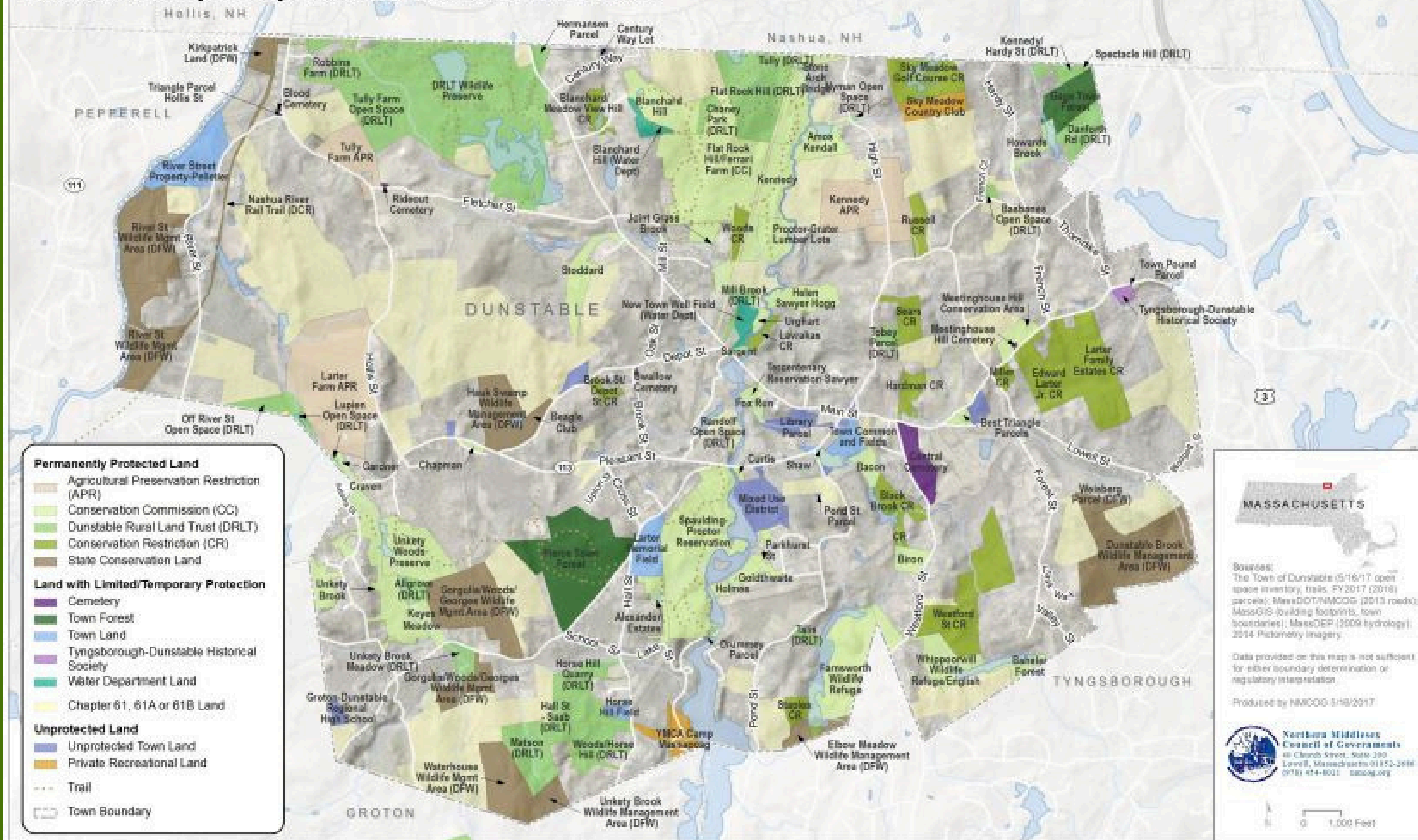


2021

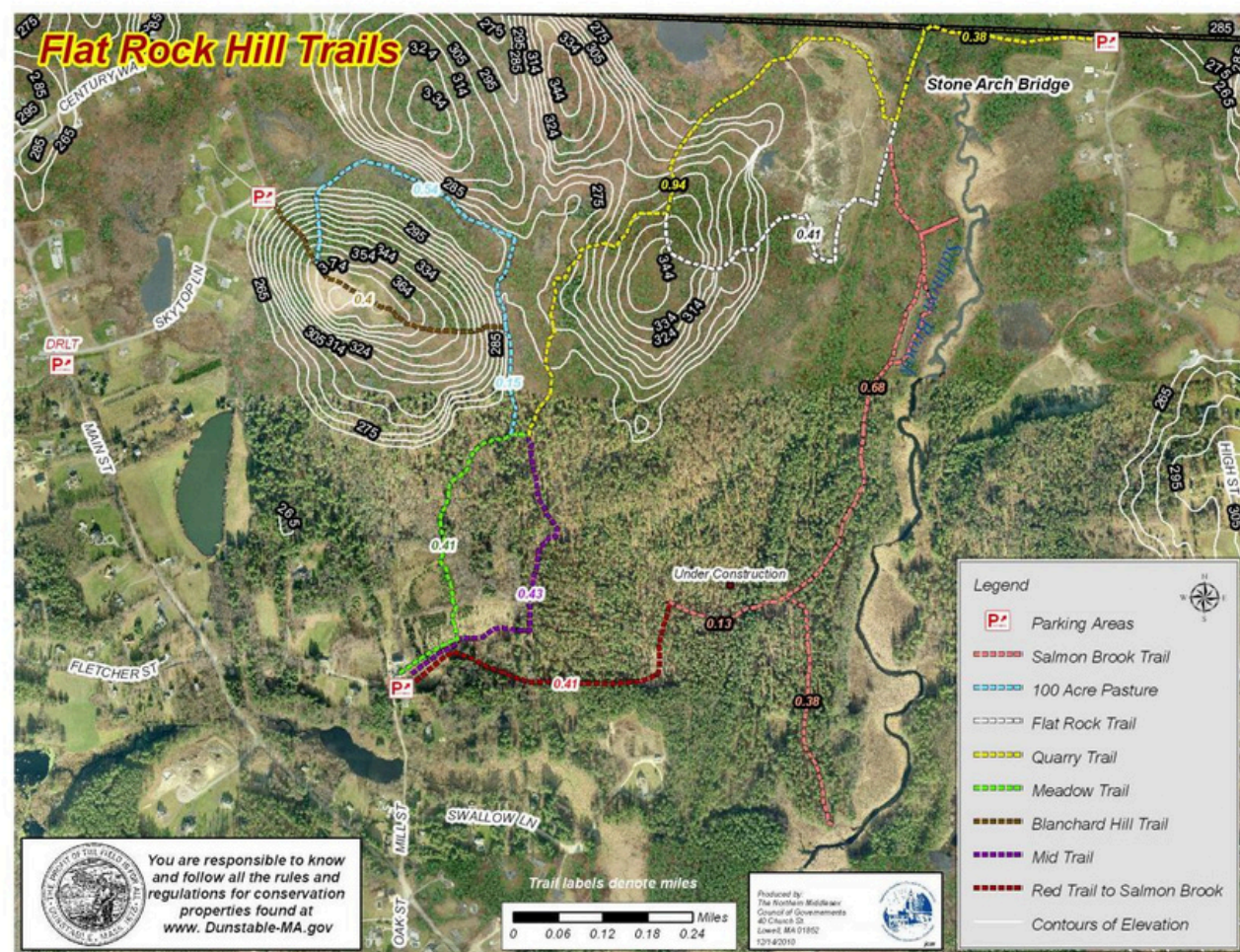
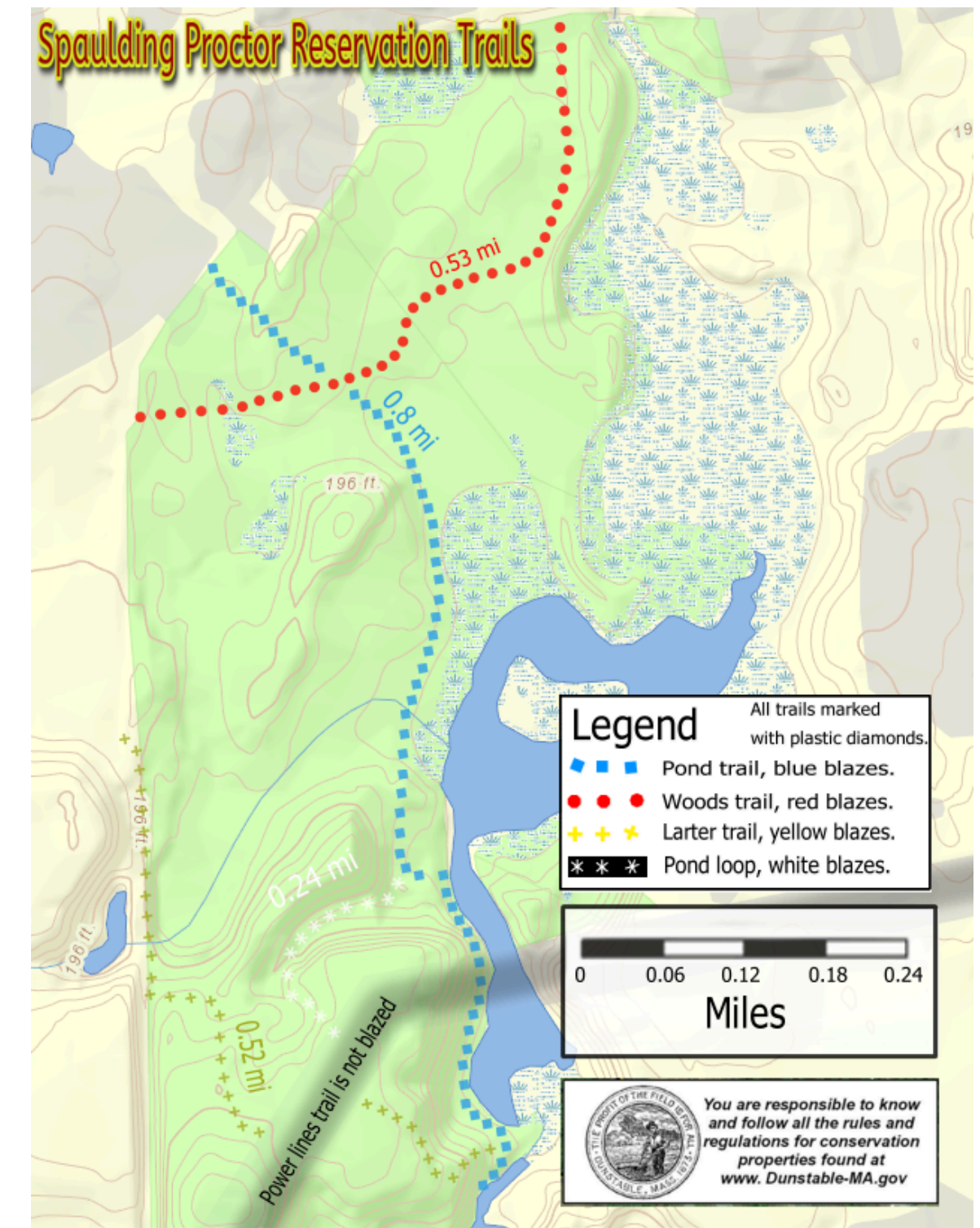
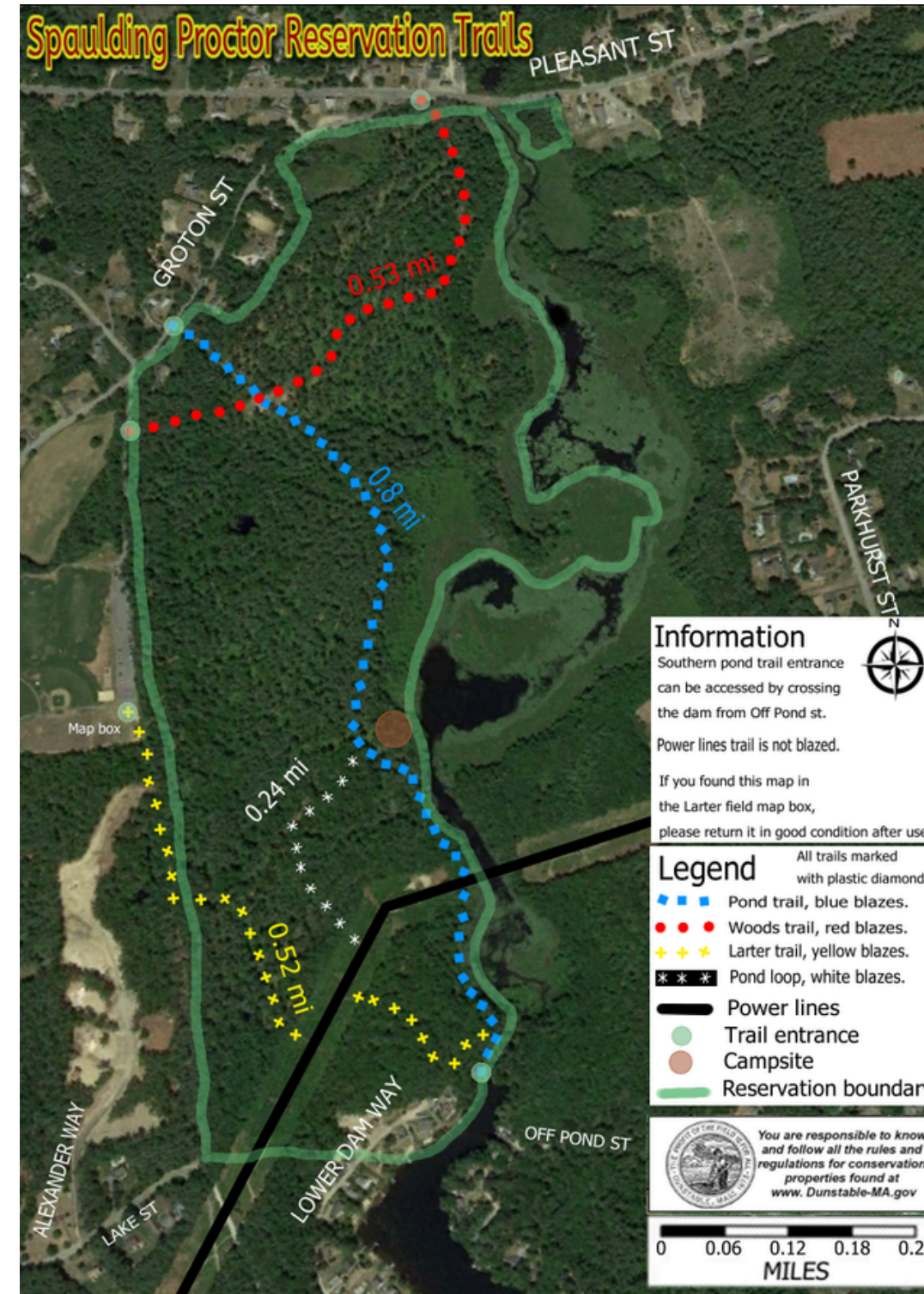
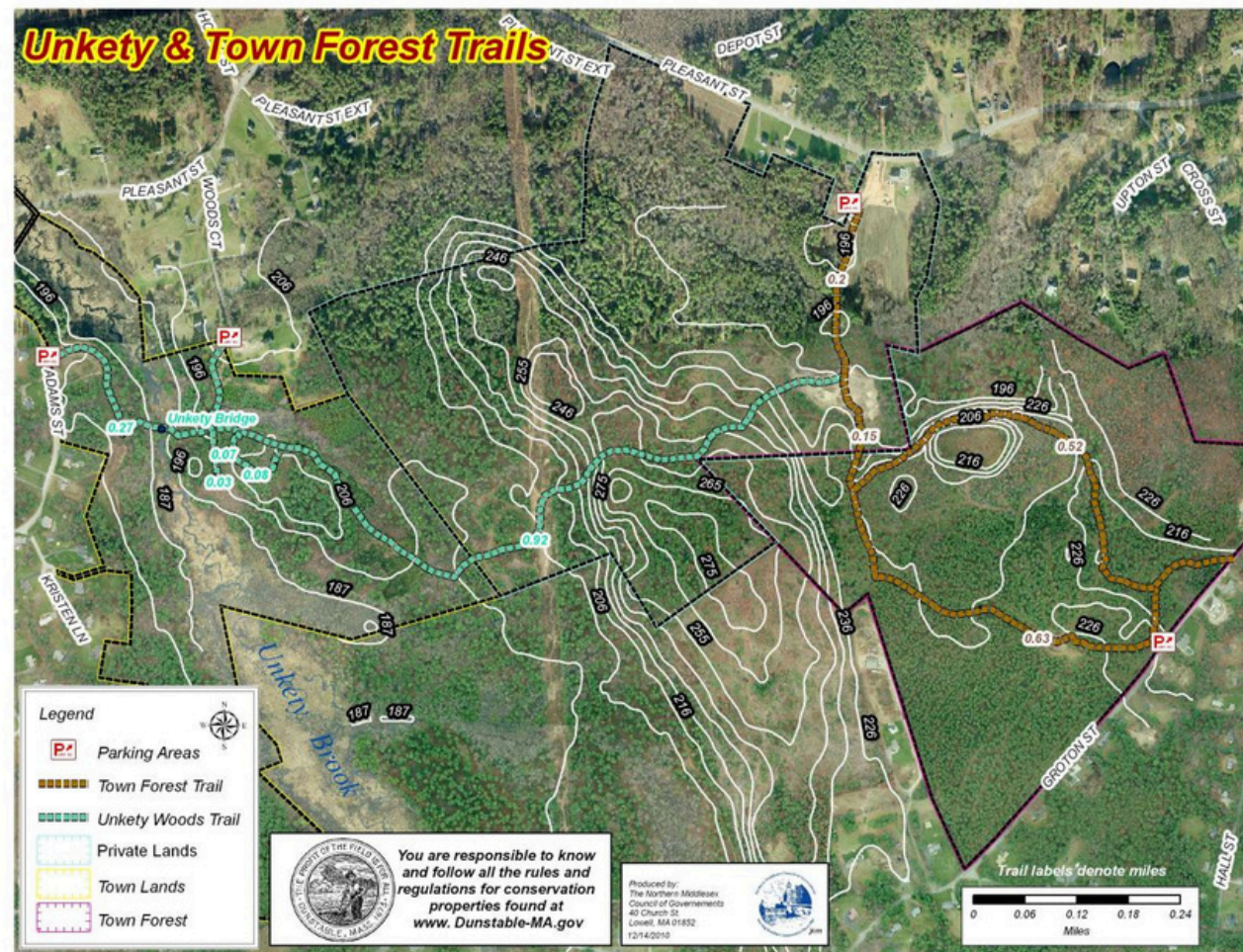
78 Heads of Household
between 15-34 Years Old and
284 Heads of Household 65
Years and Older



Dunstable Open Space and Recreation Lands



Dunstable Trail Maps

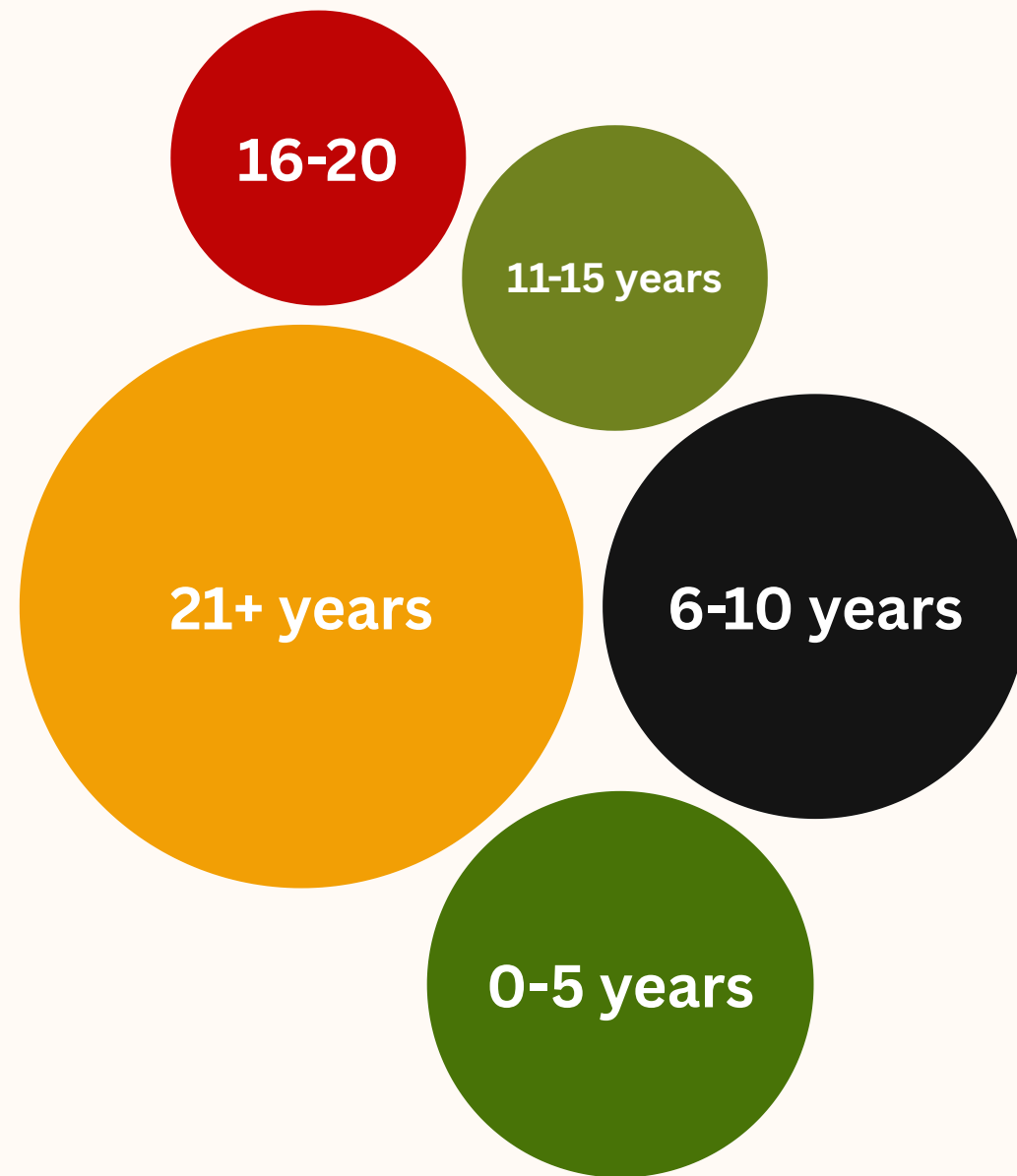


OSRP Survey

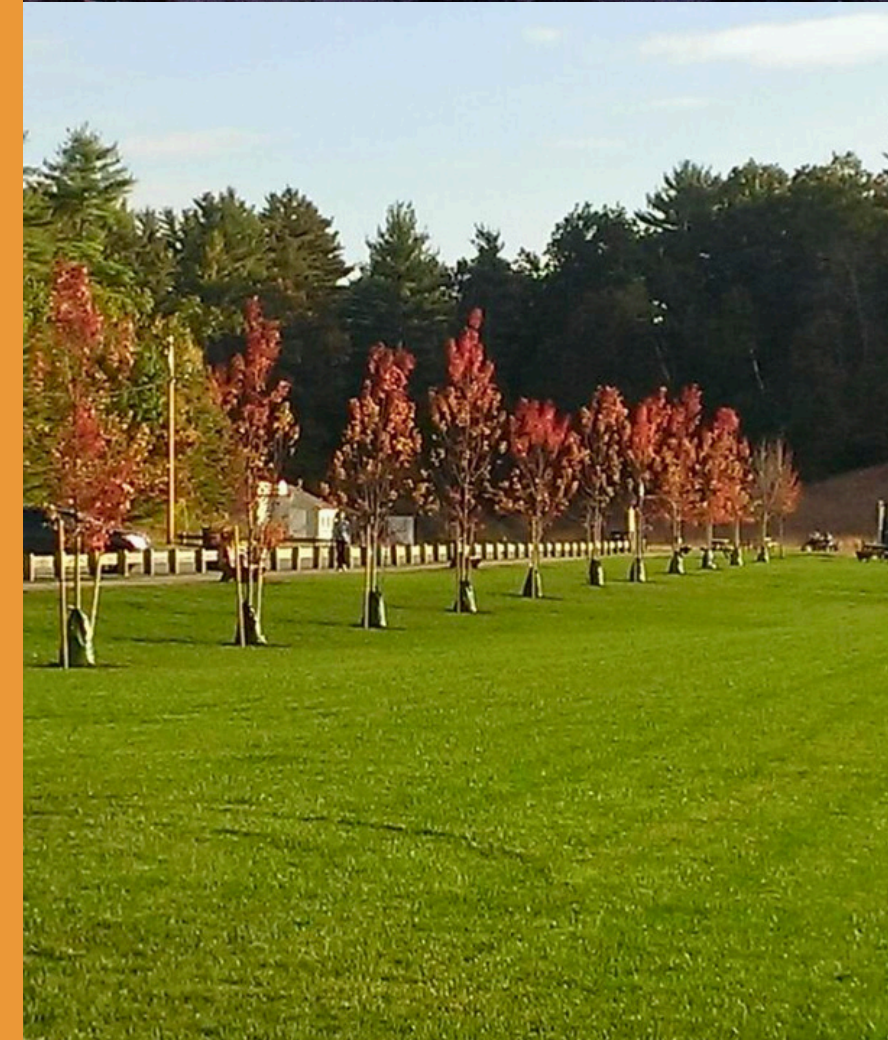
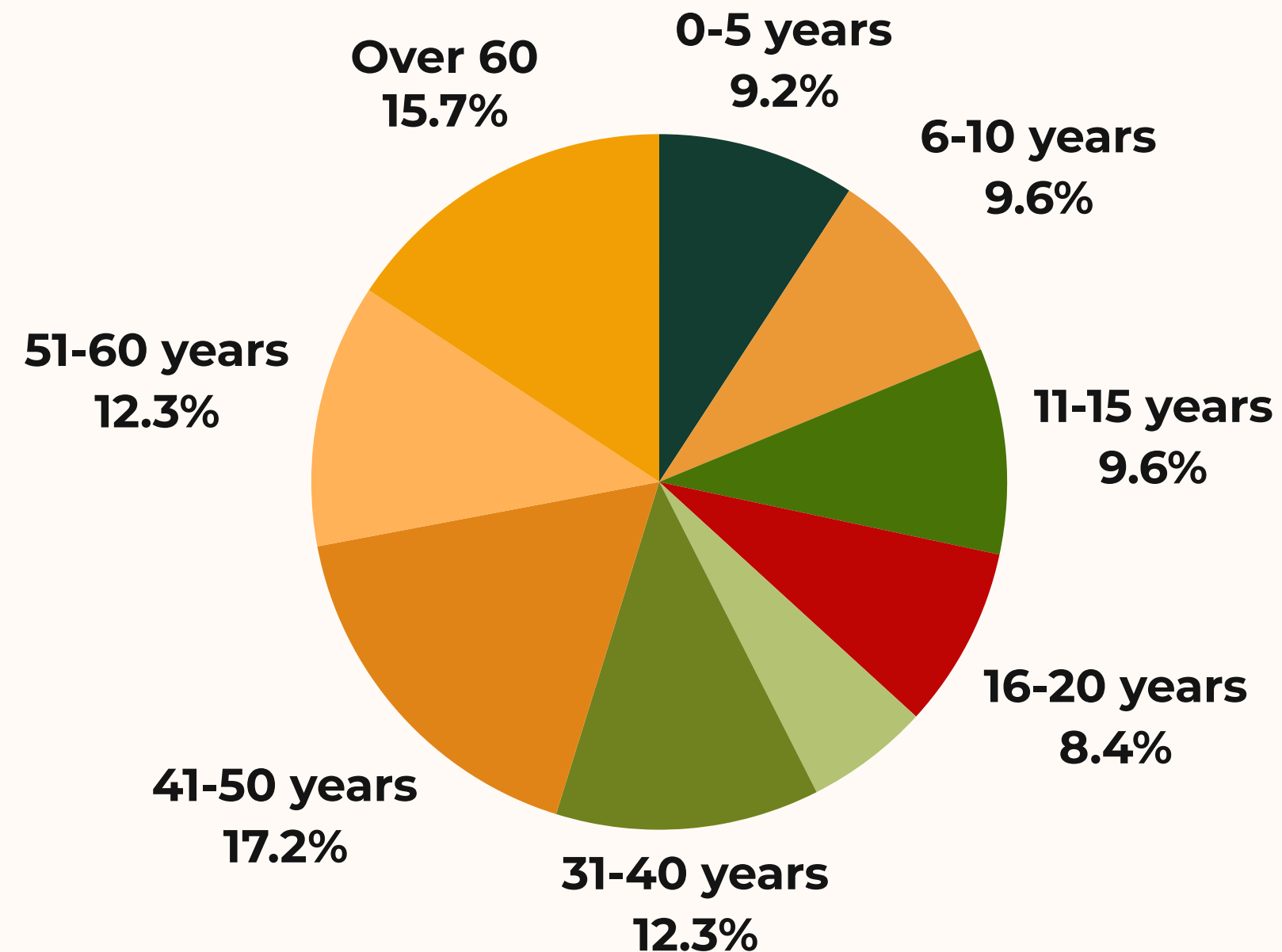
133 Responses

Survey was available from January 8 to January 31

How long have you lived in Dunstable?

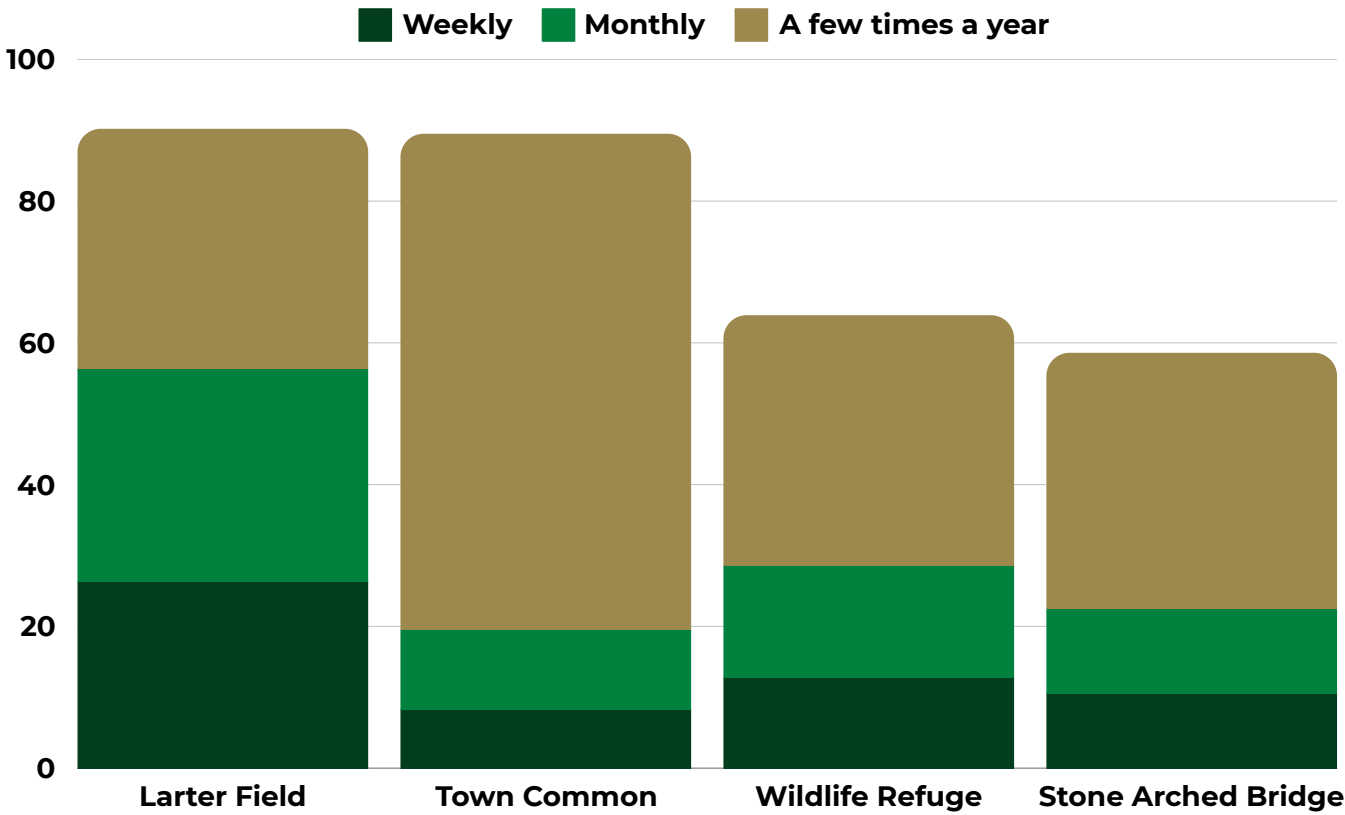


What age groups are represented in your household?



Survey Results

Key Takeaways



For 14 out of the 20 areas surveyed over 30% of the respondents were not aware of the area



For 6 out of the 20 areas surveyed over 50% of the respondents were not aware of the area

Ranked in order of importance

- 1 Preserving rivers, ponds, streams, wetlands
- 2 Preserving and enhancing lands surrounding water supplies, well and aquifers
- 3 Preserving and enhancing wildlife habitats

Most important Needs

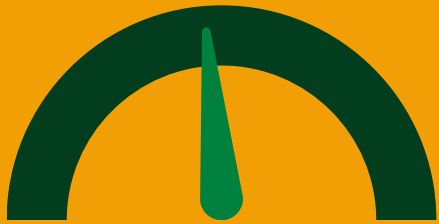
- 1 Hiking and Walking Trails
- 2 Playgrounds
- 3 Wildlife Areas

Most important Improvements

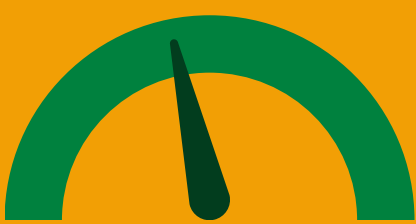
- 1 Better Signage/Marked Trails
- 2 Connections of Trails/Properties
- 3 Maps of Conservation Properties

Should the Town Acquire Land for Conservation?

for Conservation for Recreation



47.4%



43.6%

Goals, Objectives, and Accomplishments

2018 - 2025

Protect Water Resources

Protect streambanks and adjoining floodplains.

Protect wetlands and their buffers for their ability to reduce flooding and pollution by functioning as natural storage basins and pollutant modifiers.

Protect ground water aquifers and critical recharge areas, particularly for Salmon Brook and Unkety Brook aquifers



Purchased property along Salmon Brook (Emory Property and Kennedy CR, Drew Landing)



Conservation Commission voted a policy to protect 25' buffer to wetland.



CPA funds approved to treat invasive plants in Lake Massapoag



Adopted revised Wetland Bylaw to protect isolated wetlands greater than 500 square feet and vernal pools

Goals, Objectives, and Accomplishments

2018 - 2025

Improve the use of existing conservation areas

Develop a list of projects for trails and town conservation/recreation land management, make list available to school groups, scouts, other town groups to encourage their participation in carrying out improvements



Maintenance work including removal of fallen trees from trails, footbridge repairs, brush removal for fishing access performed at Spauding Proctor, Flat Rock, and Shaw Pond.



Signs installed at Frye Field Conservation Restriction and Flat Rock for parking and property uses.



Mowing of fields at Unkety Woods Preserve, Stone Arch Bridge, and Blanchard Hill.



Parking area created for Swallow Mill Pond.

Goals, Objectives, and Accomplishments

2018 - 2025

Land Conservation Priorities

Enlarge and create connections between all existing conservation lands



Acquired Hall St property that adds 1 acres to the Alexander Estates Open Space area.



CPA approved funding for Town Center Trail Loop Feasibility Study in 2024 and received a grant from AARP to conduct a study to create a trail network through conservation properties.



Created Economic Development Committee and Land Use Committee to review properties and consider ideas to work with farmers and use open space parcels to boost economic development.



Purchased Frye Field Conservation Restriction (pasture for cows, goats)

Protect Farmlands

Conduct public outreach.

Goals, Objectives, and Accomplishments

2018 - 2025

Preserve Historic Places

Support the nomination of historic districts to the national register of historic places

Continue to research all significant historic sites.



Adopted Town Center Historic Overlay District Bylaw in 2021



Approval of CPA funds to restore the exterior of the Union Building.



Dunstable Center National Register District approved by the State Review Board, Mass Historical Commission in 2018



Adopted revised Wetland Bylaw to protect isolated wetlands greater than 500 square feet and vernal pools

Protect environmental resources through strengthened development controls

Improve local wetlands, floodplain, and other bylaws dealing with environmental issues.

Goals, Objectives, and Accomplishments

2018 - 2025

Preserve Scenic Areas

Protect scenic roads including rural roadside views of fields, stone walls, and shade trees particularly along Rte 113 from Tyngsboro line to town center: the "Gateway" to Dunstable

Protect hilltops to preserve rural landscape views and prevent environmental issues arising from excessive runoff and erosion.

Preserve open fields.

Preserve scenic quality in new residential developments



Adopted Town Center Historic Overlay District Bylaw in 2021



Purchase of Swallow Mill Pond, historic scenic area open for fishing



Purchased Frye Field Conservation Restriction in 2018



Several trail maps have been created for Flat Rock, DRLT Wildlife Refuge, and others.

Creation of book of Open Space Properties

Provide maps and information about our Conservation land so the public to better understands our propeties and what they have to offer.

Goals, Objectives, and Accomplishments

2018 - 2025

Encourage more participation in conservation

Provide more information about existing and potential sites as residents need to know about the town's resources (& their conservation benefit)

Educate about how saving land saves the town money in the long run.



Conservation Commission website has active information about issues and town properties.



Monday morning walks conducted every May led by Conservation Commission member.



DRLT is very active in promoting conservation values, sends out yearly townwide newsletter.



Town wide messaging via email, social media, and What's Going On newsletter on MS4 requirements.

Goals, Objectives, and Accomplishments

2018 - 2025

Protect Lands with High Recreational Potential

Protect shoreline Greenways that include trails, fishing, boating, and swimming access.

Support Rail Trails conversions

Develop trail network.



Purchased Drew Landing in 2021, Emory Woods Conservation Restriction in 2021, and Kendal Cranberry Bog in 2018



CPA approved funding for Town Center Trail Loop Feasibility Study in 2024 and received a grant from AARP to conduct a study to create a trail network through conservation properties.



Renovation of irrigation wells and irrigation system at Larter Field



CPA funds approved to treat invasive plants in Lake Massapoag

Goals, Objectives, and Accomplishments

Protect Wildlife Habitat

Accomplishments

- Actively report observations of state listed species to National Heritage and Endangered Species Program.
- Acquired Hall St property that adds 1 acres to the Alexander Estates Open Space area.
- Adopted revised Wetland Bylaw to protect isolated wetlands greater than 500 square feet and vernal pools.
- Bat boxes installed by Eagle Scout at Spaulding Proctor, DRLT Wildlife Refuge and McLoon Barn.
- Used CPA funds to purchase Conservation Restriction on High Street and Emory Woods.
- Planning Board adopted regulations to require native plantings on subdivision projects.
- Articles written in town wide publications such as the Dunstable Rural Land Trust newsletter.
- Sold several parcels to Division of Fish and Wildlife to provide better maintenance of the land and create habitat for desired species.
- Worked with Zoo New England and Division of Fish and Wildlife to create turtle habitat in Pierce Town Forest for state-listed Box Turtle and plant, Blazing Star, a state-listed flower.

Develop Facilities and/or partnerships to meet recreational needs



Accomplishments

- Established partnership with YMCA at Camp Massapoag to allow public use of swimming area and facilities
- Relocated tennis and pickleball courts to Larter Field for improved accessibility to all people.
- Created Land Use Committee to explore parcels and determine potential uses.
- Completion of Swallow Union Playground Area with addition of the tire swing, stair railing, pavers at slide entrance and safety fence at slide entrance.
- New landscaping contract successfully created to include all the Town's properties with a hope to reduce costs.
- Larter Family Memorial Field tree restoration completed on trees that line the field on the parking lot side.
- Swallow Union upper baseball field restoration completed.
- Collaboration with Swallow Union school to add GaGa Ball pit at the school fields.
- Softball field at Larter Family Memorial Field partially renovated.
- New events and programming created like Food Truck Fridays, Movie Nights, Oktoberfest, Chair Yoga

Group Discussion

1

What is your favorite open space and/or recreation area in Dunstable and why?

2

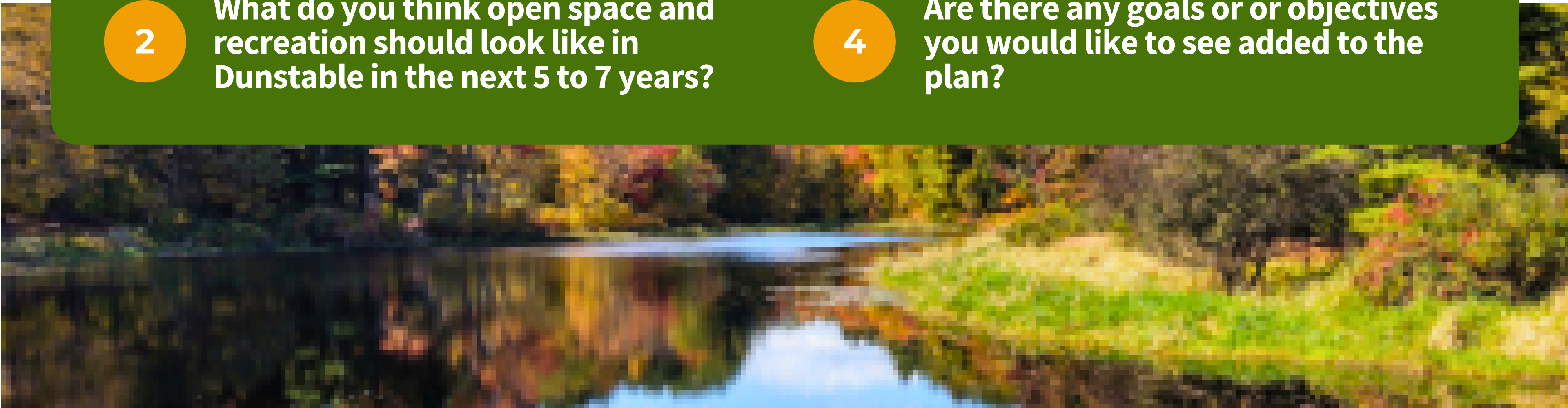
What do you think open space and recreation should look like in Dunstable in the next 5 to 7 years?

3

Review the goals from the current plan. Are there any that should change or be removed?

4

Are there any goals or or objectives you would like to see added to the plan?



Next Steps

1

Town will work to update plan and post update to the website.

2

Attend out next meeting to review! Stay tuned!

3

**Ask Questions!
Send emails to jsilva@dunstable-ma.gov.**





THANKS

