



Saugus Mill Mixed Use Overlay

Funding provided by the
District Local Technical Assistance program

Prepared for

Town of Saugus
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TOWN OF SAUGUS

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Executive Summary

The Town of Saugus requested assistance with a planning process to identify options for protecting historic mill structures, and the associated mill-worker housing and neighborhood, on Central Street, in the vicinity of the Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site. The Town's goals included adaptive re-use, including mixed use development and preservation of the mill structures. Working with residents and property owners, MAPC drafted a Mill Mixed Use Overlay that provided incentives to maintain the mills while promoting redevelopment opportunities and incorporating appropriate permitting review by the Town.

Major Provisions of the Overlay

- **Optional zoning overlay**

If a property owner does not wish to use the provisions of the proposed by-law, the existing underlying zoning continues to regulate all uses, dimensions, parking, etc. The underlying zoning includes Industrial, Business and one Residential parcel.

For three historic mill properties, mixed use or all-residential development is allowed **by right**, provided the facades and majority of the historic mill structure is rehabilitated, re-used and maintained as part of the redevelopment proposal. The by-right redevelopment of the mills would be subject to Site Plan Review.

For all other properties developed under the Overlay provisions, mixed use or all-residential is authorized by grant of a special permit by the Planning Board.

- **The Planning Board is the Special Permit Granting Authority**

Under the existing zoning, the Planning Board conducts Site Plan Review. To streamline the permitting process, the Planning Board is designated as the Special Permit Granting Authority for all developments submitted under the Overlay regulations. All major projects, whether electing to use the Overlay or not, will be subject to Site Plan Review under the current Zoning By-law.

- **Uses**

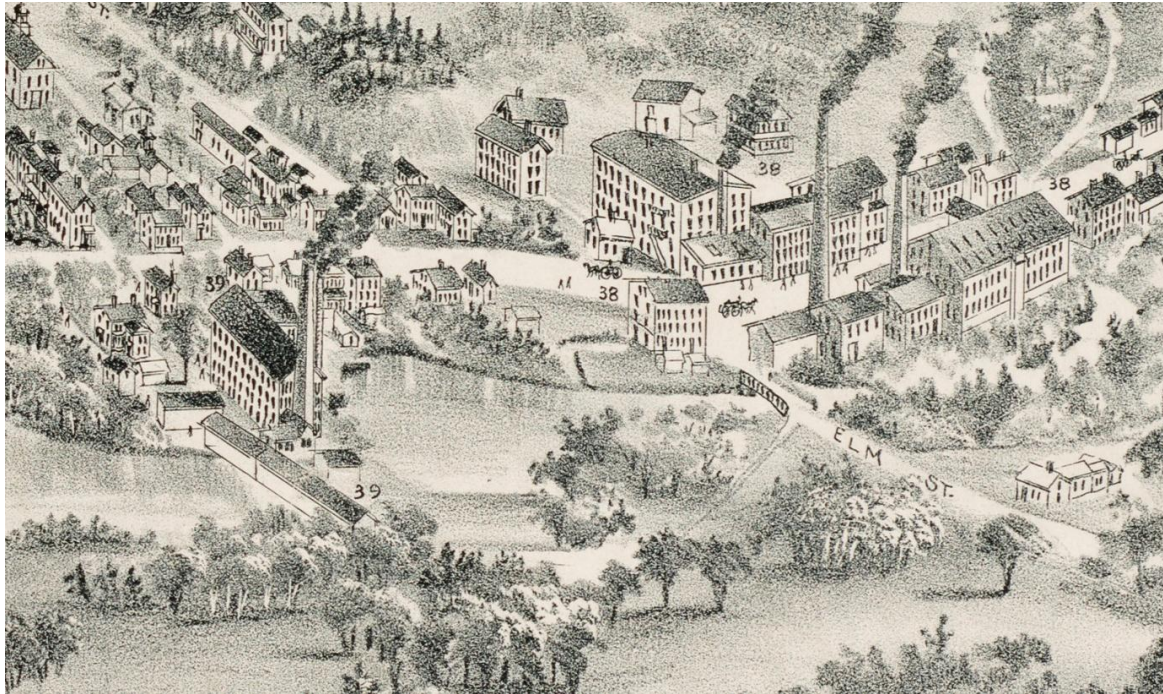
The mix of uses, including residential, or an all-residential option, is the major incentive to elect to use the Overlay zoning provisions. Some uses currently Allowed as of Right, as well as some uses available by Special Permit, would not be permitted in an Overlay project. This is to promote a range of compatible uses. Examples of the types of uses recommended to be excluded from any Overlay project include: private stables; place of business for blacksmith, carpenter, undertaker; laundry facility; gasoline and oil stations, garages for storage and repair; junk yards.

- **Parking requirements**

Provisions for minimum and maximum amounts, as well as making the size of spaces more consistent with zoning bylaw requirements throughout the region, provide additional incentives.

- **Design criteria**

Design criteria to be used for Site Plan Review are included, with the goals of promoting quality development that is compatible with the character of the historic mill area, is in context with the setbacks of the nearby structures, is pedestrian-scaled, and, where appropriate, provides public access to the Saugus River. The complete text of the draft Saugus Mill Mixed Use Overlay is in **Chapter 2** on Page 7. A map of the proposed Overlay District is on Page 14.



*The sketch from 1896 shows the Pranker Mills (# 38) and the Scott Mill (# 39)
Credit: Boston Public Library Map Collection*

Chapter One: Introduction and Background

One of the items identified in Saugus' Community Development Plan, completed in 2004, was to preserve the historic architectural character of the Central Street Mills. The Plan called for developing a vision for re-using the mills, and writing zoning to implement the vision. The Town applied for DLTA funds to accomplish those tasks. After the project was approved and a scope signed in spring 2012, MAPC conducted research and prepared base maps for the study area. An initial meeting with the Town Manager and representatives of the Historic Commission and Affordable Housing Trust was held on April 25, 2012. A Working Group for this project was appointed by the Town and met on November 26, 2012. The following project goals were identified at the first meeting of the Working Group:

- Protect existing residential uses
- Protect existing industrial uses
- Incentivize historic preservation of/adaptive reuse of mills
- Permit multi-family housing, including affordable housing/senior housing.

The Working Group and MAPC concurred that a critical next step was to meet with the property owners in the proposed district. On December 13, 2012, a meeting of property owners in the mill area was held. A long-term vision for the area was developed that includes a mix of uses, multi-family residential use, and retention of the small scale industrial uses (many of which have impacts similar to office uses). The consensus of the meeting was to develop an overlay zone that allows residential uses as of right, provided the mill structures are kept and rehabilitated. For the non-mill property owners, multi-family residential use, and mixed uses structures, would be authorized by grant of a Special Permit.

Subsequent to the property owners' meeting, MAPC staff prepared a draft of the Mill Mixed Use Overlay for consideration by the Working Group. It is anticipated that the Town will apply for 2013 DLTA funding to continue the public discussions related to the Overlay, with the possible goal of bringing the proposed new zoning to Town Meeting in 2013.

Chapter Two: Draft Saugus Mill Mixed Use Overlay

§ _____ Purpose and Intent

The Mill Mixed Use Overlay zoning by-law is established to promote:

- Existing industrial uses, as well as site redevelopment to allow for current types of industrial uses
- Mill building adaptive reuse that is economically viable
- Preservation of historic resources
- Innovative and sustainable building and site design
- A variety and balance of commercial, retail and residential uses
- Opportunities for affordable housing
- Public access to the Saugus River and connections to recreational resources
- Redevelopment and development that is sensitive to the historic context of the Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site.

§ _____ Applicability

The Mill Mixed Use Overlay includes the entire Industrial (I) and Industrial 2 (I-2), the Residential-Multi-Density, Apartment (R-4), and the Business-Neighborhood (B-1) zoning districts north of the Saugus Iron Works, and adjacent to Central Street and Elm Street. These zoning districts are shown on the map entitled “Saugus Mill Mixed Use Overlay” dated _____ and prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, on file with the Town Clerk and hereby made a part of this by-law.

§ _____ Zoning Regulations in Effect: Conflict Provisions

- 1) The Mill Mixed Use Overlay by-law shall not restrict the rights of any owner who elects to utilize the existing underlying zoning district regulations to develop or redevelop land. If an owner elects to utilize the Mill Mixed Use Overlay to develop or redevelop land, the project shall conform to all applicable requirements of this by-law, including any regulations or guidelines that may be adopted to support this by-law.
- 2) The underlying zoning in the Saugus Zoning By-law and the Mill Mixed Use Overlay by-law shall together constitute the zoning regulations for the area.
- 3) If the provisions of this by-law are in conflict with any other section of the Saugus Zoning By-law, the regulations of the Mill Mixed Use Overlay shall govern.

§ _____ Administration

- a) For purposes of this by-law, the Planning Board is designated as the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA). All Special Permit applications made pursuant to this by-law shall conform to the requirements of this by-law and Article XII - Special Permits and Conditions, Sections 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3 of the Saugus Zoning By-law.

- b) The decision of the Planning Board for a Mill Mixed Use Overlay Special Permit may be approval, approval with conditions, or denial of the requested special permit(s).
- c) The Planning Board may adopt regulations for the implementation of this by-law, including but not limited to design guidelines that support the Mill Mixed Use Design Criteria, Section _____, below.
- d) Consistent with SZB Section 12.6 Site Plan Review, the Planning Board will perform Site Plan Review under the Mill Mixed Use Overlay. The Planning Board shall conduct Site Plan Review concurrently with Special Permit review, as applicable.

§ _____ Special Permit Criteria

The Planning Board shall consider the following criteria before issuing a Special Permit for development or redevelopment under the provisions of the Mill Mixed Use Overlay:

1. Adequacy of the site for the size of the proposed project
2. Suitability of the site for the proposed uses(s)
3. Degree to which the proposed project complies with the purposes of the Mill Mixed Use Overlay
4. The extent to which the project contributes to the historic context of the Mill Mixed Use Overlay
5. The extent to which affordable housing is a component of the project
6. Public access and/or trail connectivity to the Saugus River, if applicable
7. Impact on traffic and pedestrian flow and safety and access for emergency vehicles

§ _____ Pre-Application Meeting

Prior to submitting an application to the Building Commissioner for projects under the Mill Mixed Use Overlay, applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Town Manager and request a Pre-Application Meeting with relevant Town officials and Board members. The purpose of the meeting is to present the project concept and discuss zoning, public safety, conservation, historic resources, housing concerns, etc. as applicable, in order to facilitate project development and coordinate the permitting processes. Project proponents are encouraged to bring sufficient information to the meeting to enable attendees to become familiar with the site and the project. This information includes photographs, a map of existing conditions, and a preliminary concept plan for the proposed project.

§ _____ Uses

Within the Mill Mixed Use Overlay, the following three (3) properties that include historic mill structures built prior to 1900 shall be allowed as of right to include a mix of uses, as defined below, in a redevelopment project provided 75 % of the mill deemed historically significant for preservation by the Saugus Historical Commission, including a majority of the Central Street facing façade, remains and is rehabilitated. The properties are: “Pranker’s Mills”, 180 Central Street (Assessor’s Map F-2-12); and 179 Central Street (Assessor’s Map F-11-1-3) and “Scott Mill”, 222 Central Street (Assessor’s Map F-10-2-22).

Alternatively, the three mill properties may as of right, be redeveloped for residential uses only, with the same preservation requirement noted above.

For all other properties developed or redeveloped under the provisions of the Overlay, a mix of uses (or exclusive residential use), shall be authorized by grant of a Special Permit by the Planning Board.

Mix of Uses shall mean: Within the same structure, two or more of the following Principal Uses: **Residential, Community Facilities, Agriculture, Retail Service-Commercial, Wholesale Transportation and Industrial**, as specified below. (*Italicized terms* are from the Saugus Zoning By-Law Table of Uses Not all specified uses within the category are listed in this draft; the “**etc.**” indicates the full listing as shown in the Zoning By-Law Table of Uses.)

Residential Uses

- Multi-Family Dwelling-Apartment House, Town House*
- Planned Multi-Density Residential-Apt. House*
- Artist’s lofts*
- Live/work space (Home Occupation)*
- Bed and breakfast*

Community Facilities

- Church, School, Libraries, Public Museums, etc.*
- Parks, Playgrounds, etc*
- Private Club*
- Nursing Homes, Rest Homes, Continuing care facilities*
- Private Day Nursery or Kindergarten*
- Facilities for Essential Services*

Agriculture

- Farms, including Facilities*

Retail Service-Commercial

- Retail Stores and Shops for Custom Work, etc.*
- Retail Establishments Selling Principally Convenience Goods and Services, etc.*
- Health Clubs, Personal Fitness Establishments, etc.*
- Places of business for Massage Therapy, etc. as defined and regulated by the Saugus Board of Health*
- Professional Office for Engineers, Surveyors, etc.*
- Restaurants, Hotels, etc.*
- Theater, etc.*

Wholesale Transportation and Industrial

- Light Manufacturing, using unobjectionable machinery or process*
- Plant for Manufacture of Electrical or electronic Devices, etc. or other Precision Instruments;*
- Laboratory Engaged in Experimental or Testing Research.*

Miscellaneous

- Conservation of Water Plants and Wildlife*
- Outdoor Recreation*

For development or redevelopment under the provisions of the Overlay, retail uses shall be limited to 30% of the structure’s total built floor area, unless a greater percentage is approved by the Planning Board by grant of a Special Permit.

§ _____ Use Exceptions

The following Uses shall not be allowed in any project submitted as a Mixed Use project:

Residential Uses

All other residential uses listed in the Table of Uses

Community Facilities

Commercial Golf Course
Passenger Stations
Private Stables
Telephone Exchanges
Town Equipment Garage
Municipal Parking Lot
Private Utility Sub-Station

Agriculture

Greenhouses, Nurseries, etc.

Retail Service-Commercial

Place of business of Blacksmith, etc.
Gasoline and Oil Stations, etc.
Commercial Stables
Commercial Trailers, etc.
One Story Mini-Storage Facility

Wholesale Transportation and Industrial

Building Material, Fuel, Feed, Junk Yards, Automobile Repair and Sales
Plant for disposal/processing for waste material, etc.
Storage Warehouses for Building Supplies, etc.
Removal of Earth materials, etc.
Railroad Yards, Motor Freight Terminals

Miscellaneous

Pony rides, etc.
Temporary Refreshment Stand
Temporary Trailer

§ _____ Dimensional Requirements

Minimum Lot Area for housing units will be consistent with the existing zoning by-law requirement of 2,500 sq. ft. of lot area per dwelling unit in excess of four. (See Table of Dimensional and Density Regulations, Footnote # 1.)

By grant of a Special Permit, the Planning Board may reduce front, side and rear yard setbacks subject to the following conditions:

1. The setback is consistent with other setbacks on Central Street
2. The setback does not hinder pedestrian access
3. Historically inappropriate alterations to structures are either removed or redesigned to be more architecturally compatible with the structure

The height limit in the Mill Mixed Use Overlay is 40 feet. By grant of a Special Permit, the Planning Board may adjust this limit.

A minimum of 5% of the lot shall be reserved and maintained for open space.

§ _____ Parking

For projects submitted under the provisions of the Mill Mixed Use Overlay, parking spaces shall be 9 feet wide by 18 feet long, except for required Handicapped Spaces, and designated “small or compact car spaces” shall be 8 feet wide by 16 feet long. No more than 10% of spaces shall be designated for “small cars”.

To promote a pedestrian environment, parking in front of buildings is discouraged.

Bicycle parking shall be provided as close as possible to the building entrances.

The following table provides Minimum and Maximum parking requirements.

Use	Minimum Parking Spaces:	Maximum Parking Spaces	Comments
Studio/1 Bedroom All other residential units	1 per unit 1.5 per unit	1 per unit 2 per unit	Reduction for smaller units
Eating and drinking establishments	1 space for each 4 seats or 2 spaces for each 150 s.f. of gross floor area, excluding basement storage area	One space for each 2 seats or one space for each 50 square feet of gross floor area, excluding basement storage area	Use seats for primarily sit down facilities, floor area for primarily take- out facilities.
Motels, hotels	0.75 space for each guest room or dwelling unit, plus 1 space for each 500 s.f. of meeting, banquet or restaurant area	1 space for each guest room or dwelling unit, plus 1 space for each 400 s.f. of meeting, banquet or restaurant area	
Professional Offices, Health Clubs, Massage Therapy	1.3 spaces for each 200 s.f. of gross floor area, excluding basement storage area	1.5 spaces for each 200 s.f. of gross floor area, excluding basement storage area	
Offices	1 space for each 300 s.f. of gross floor area, excluding basement storage area	1 space for each 200 s.f. of gross floor area, excluding basement storage area	
Retail business and service establishments	1 space for each 250 s.f. of gross floor area on the first floor of a building, and one space for each 500 square feet of gross floor area thereafter for all floors use businesses, excluding basement storage area	1 space for each 200 s.f. of gross floor area on the first floor of a building, and one space for each 400 square feet of gross floor area thereafter for all floors used for office, retail or service businesses, excluding basement storage area	
Theaters	1 space for each five seats or for each 100 s.f. of auditorium area, if there are not fixed seats	1 space for each four seats or for each 50 s.f. of auditorium area, if there are not fixed seats	
Mixed uses in a single building	Potential reduction for shared spaces: See provisions below.	Spaces required will be the sum of the requirements of the various individual uses	If deeded condo parking, may not apply.

By grant of a Special Permit by the Planning Board, the Minimum number of off-street parking spaces required by this by-law may be decreased provided that the following criteria have been met:

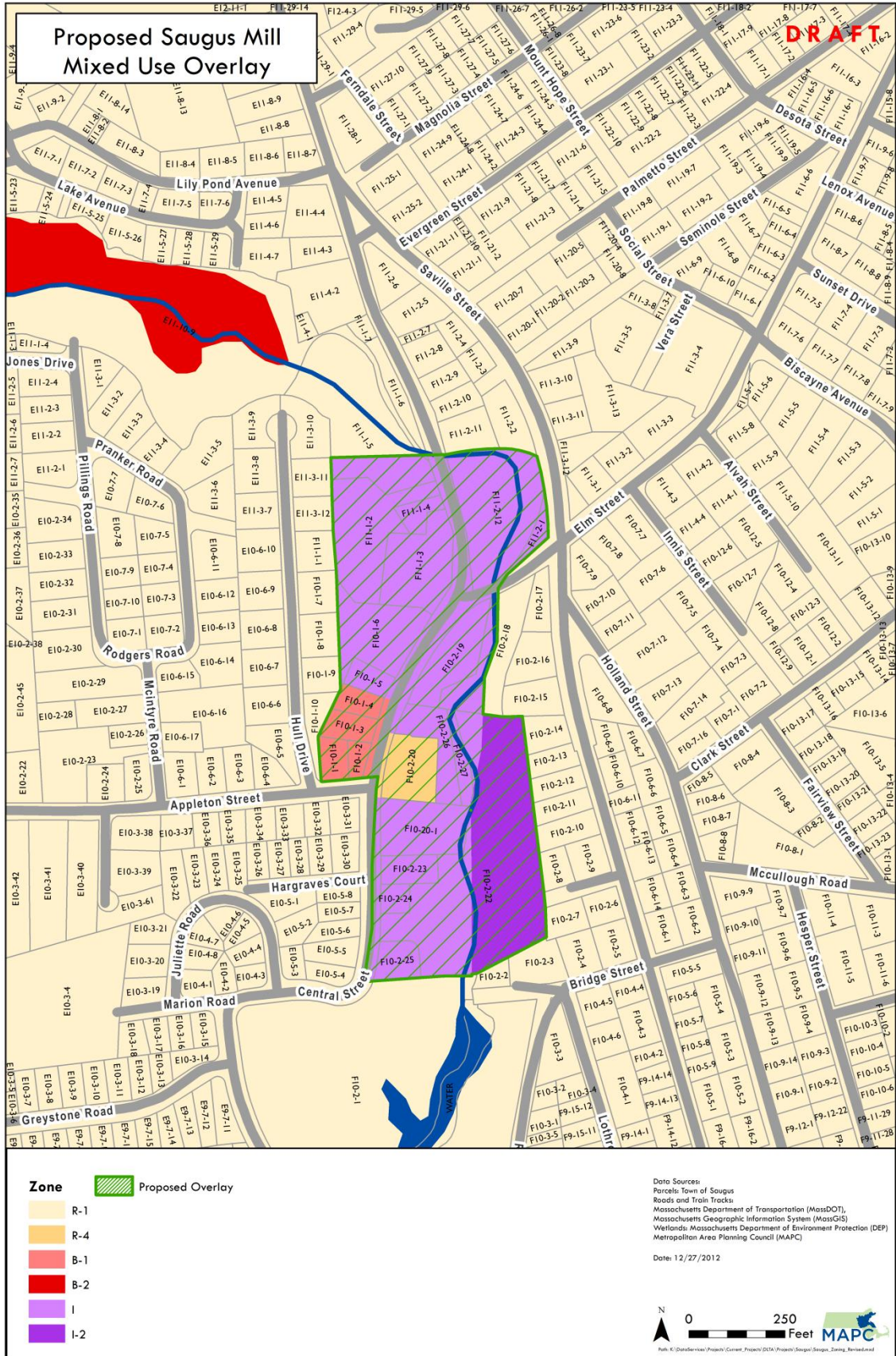
1. The purpose and intent of the by-law is achieved
2. The amount of off-street parking to be provided will be sufficient to serve the use(s) for which it is intended
3. The decrease in required off-street parking is based on a parking study prepared by a registered professional engineer. The parking study will include, at a minimum, the following:
 - a. Size and type of existing uses or activities on site
 - b. Size and type of proposed uses or activities on site
 - c. Rate of parking turnover
 - d. Peak traffic and parking loads to be encountered
 - e. Availability of public transportation, bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks
 - f. Other factors identified by the Planning Board
4. The Planning Board may or consult with the Town Building Commissioner, public safety officials and/or engineer prior to granting any decrease in parking.
5. If the Planning Board allows a decrease in the amount of required off-street parking, the Board may require that a portion of the site be reserved to meet the off-street parking spaces required by this bylaw. This reserved area shall not be developed and shall be either landscaped or maintained in a natural state. The reserved area shall not count towards the open space requirements.

§__ Design Criteria

The following Design Criteria shall be used to evaluate all projects that require a Special Permit and/or Site Plan Review submitted under the provisions of the Mill Mixed Use Overlay. The Design Criteria are intended to promote quality development that is compatible with the character of the historic mill area, and the desire for contextual, pedestrian-scaled projects.

1. New structures and additions shall relate to the pedestrian scale by including appropriate architectural details along the ground floor of all facades that face streets and pedestrian spaces.
2. External building treatments shall relate to and be in harmony with surrounding historic structures.
3. Continuous lengths of flat, blank walls adjacent to streets and pathways are to be minimized.
4. For visibility and accessibility, primary building entrances shall be located on a Central Street frontage, to the extent possible.
5. For parking located to the rear or side of the building, entrances to the building are to be visible and accessible from the parking lot.
6. Any alternation to an existing historic structure designated by the Saugus Historical Commission shall use materials, colors and textures, massing, size, scale and architectural features that are compatible with the original structure(s). Distinctive features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved. Any awnings and canopies shall be compatible with the architectural style of the building.
7. Mechanical equipment located on roofs shall be screened, organized and designed so as not to appear to be a “leftover” or “add-on” element.

8. Projects shall enhance the pedestrian environment by minimizing the number and size of curb cuts and by providing sidewalks along Central Street to the extent possible.
9. Projects abutting the Saugus River shall provide public access provided an access plan has been developed by the Town of Saugus.
10. As feasible, building rehabilitation will incorporate green building techniques, such as those developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.



Chapter Three: Additional Recommendations

During the meetings related to the proposed Mill Mixed Use Overlay, MAPC and the Town discussed several additional actions that the Town may undertake to further their goals for the study area. These include:

Consider designating the Central Street Mill Area a Neighborhood Conservation Area

This is a form of overlay district designed to protect the historical character and features of a neighborhood or a unique area, generally with less strict regulations than a Local Historic District. The focus is on preserving distinctive characteristics and architectural features with a targeted review of certain proposed changes. The bylaw spells out exactly what changes are reviewed, and the bylaw is written after a detailed study documents the characteristics that are to be preserved.

Reviews within a Neighborhood Conservation District can be administered by a Planning Board, Historic District Commission, or a designated Neighborhood Conservation District Commission. This technique provides a flexible approach to preservation without creating an undue burden on property owners.

Consider National Register of Historic Places listing

A study committee, including affected property owners, could determine if it is more advantageous to list individual properties, or try and have the Central Street area designated as a district. National Register designation could provide opportunities for tax incentives for re-use of the mills. This designation also provides limited protections when state or federal permits or funds are involved in a project affecting a National Register property. According to the 2004 Community Development Plan, a designation was previously attempted. A first step would be to determine why this earlier designation proposal was not successful.

Appendices

Following are maps created for the Saugus Mill Mixed Use Overlay project, including Land Use, Zoning and Environmental Constraints. An aerial photo of the study area, and photos of the mills are also included below.



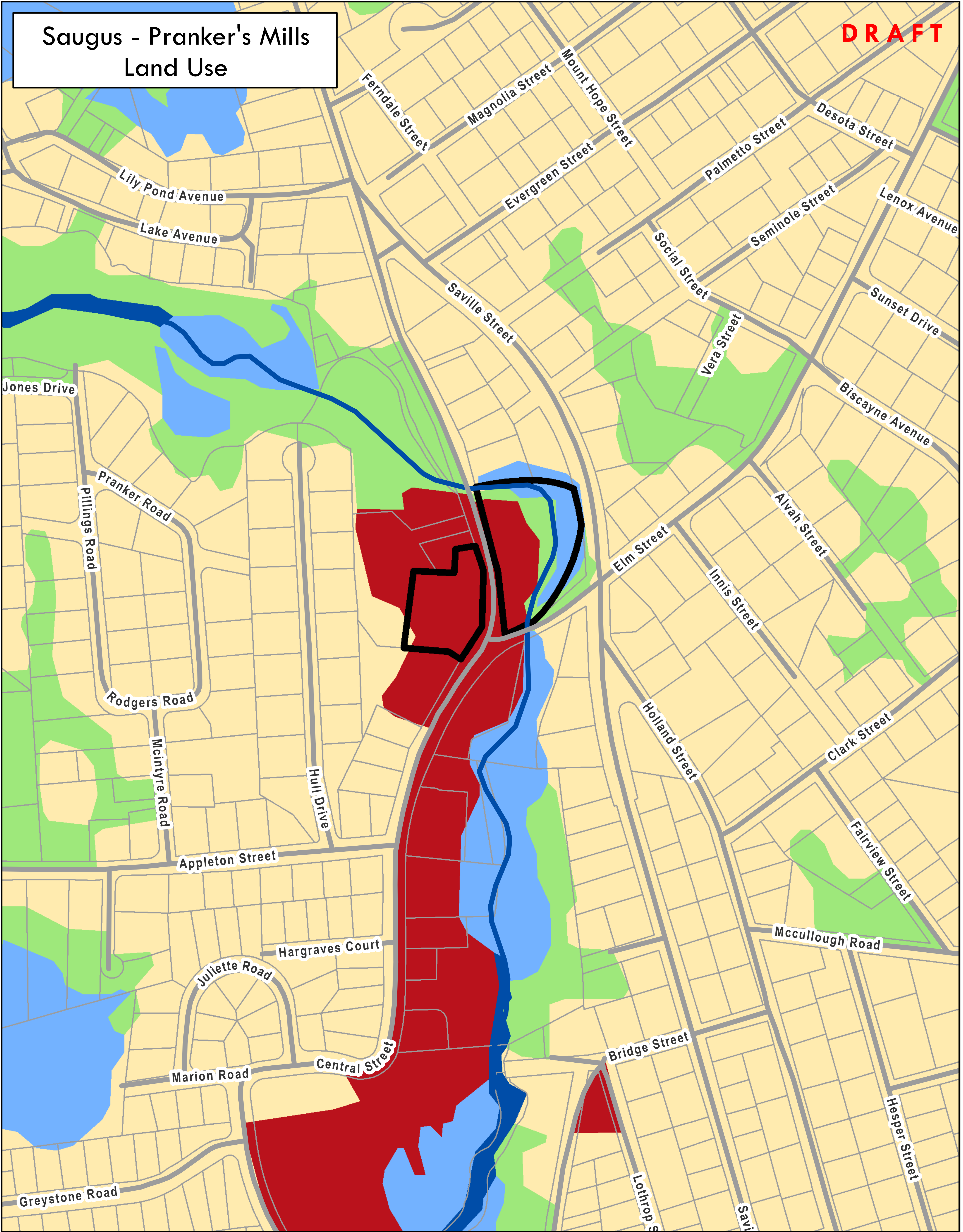
This is an aerial photo of the former Pranker's Mills.
Source: Pictometry image, 2004



This is an aerial photo of the former Scott Mill
Source: Pictometry image, 2004

Saugus - Pranker's Mills Land Use

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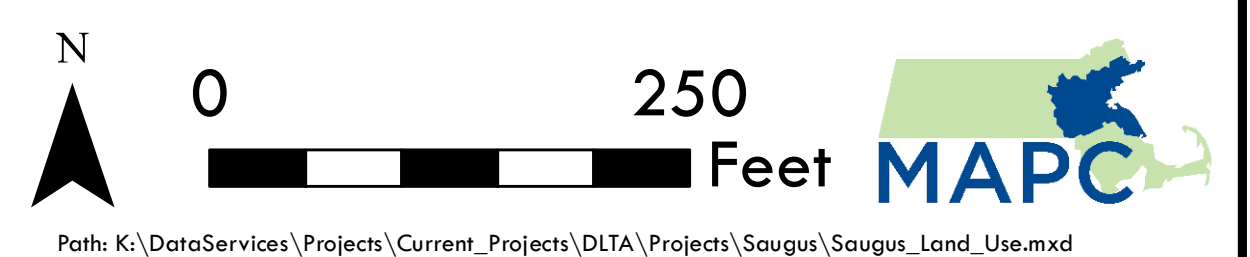
Land Use

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Open Space
- Wetlands
- Water

Pranker's Mills

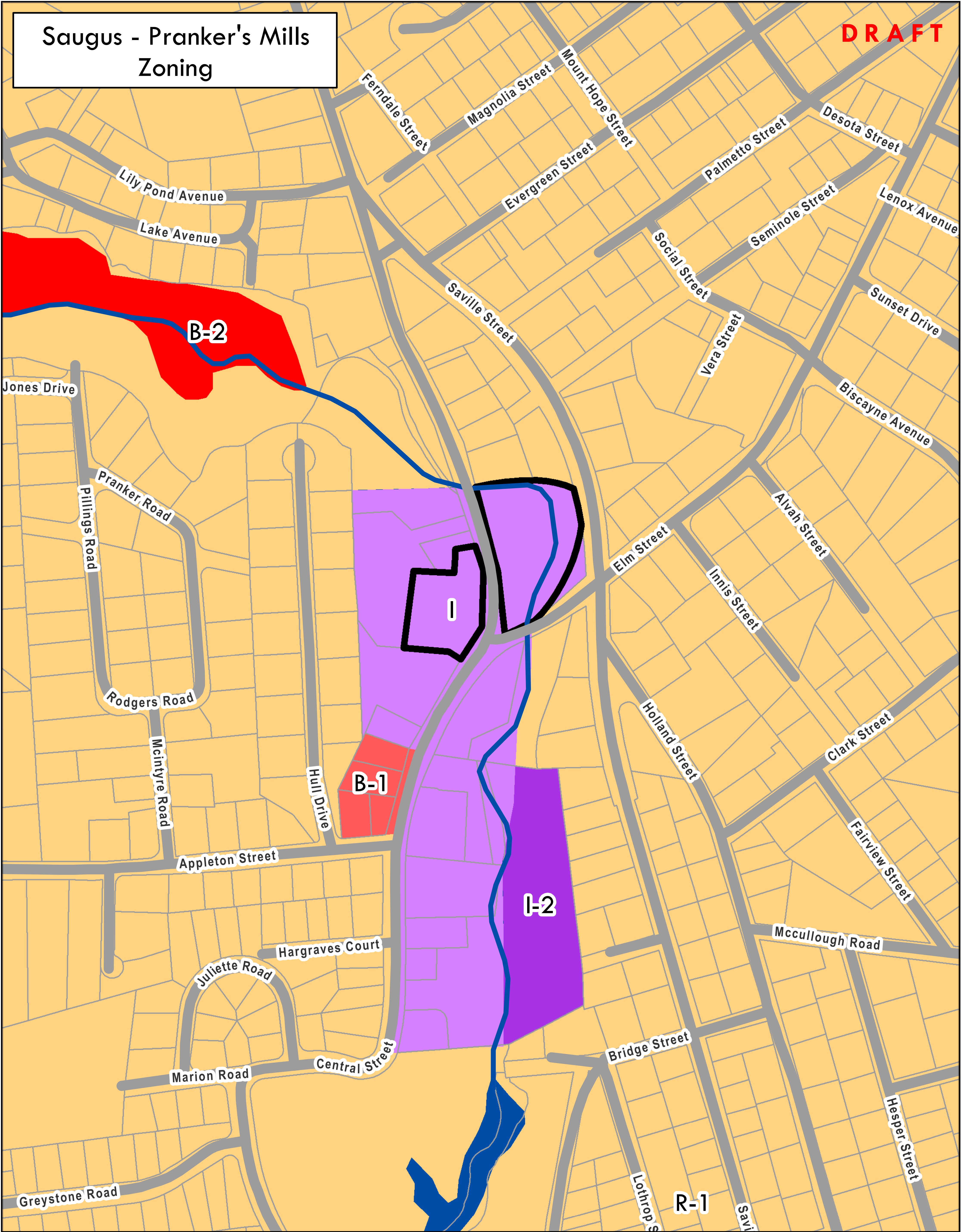
Data Sources:
 Parcels: Town of Saugus
 Roads and Train Tracks:
 Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT),
 Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)
 Wetlands: Massachusetts Department of Environment Protection (DEP)
 Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

Date: 11/7/2012








Saugus - Pranker's Mills Zoning

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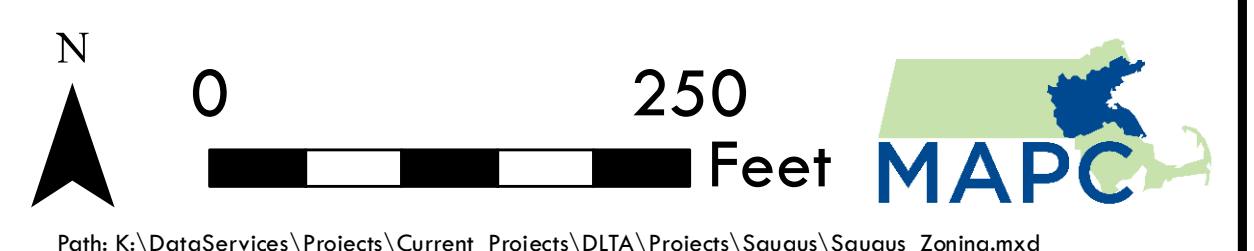
 Pranker's Mills

Zone

-  R-1
-  B-1
-  B-2
-  I
-  I-2

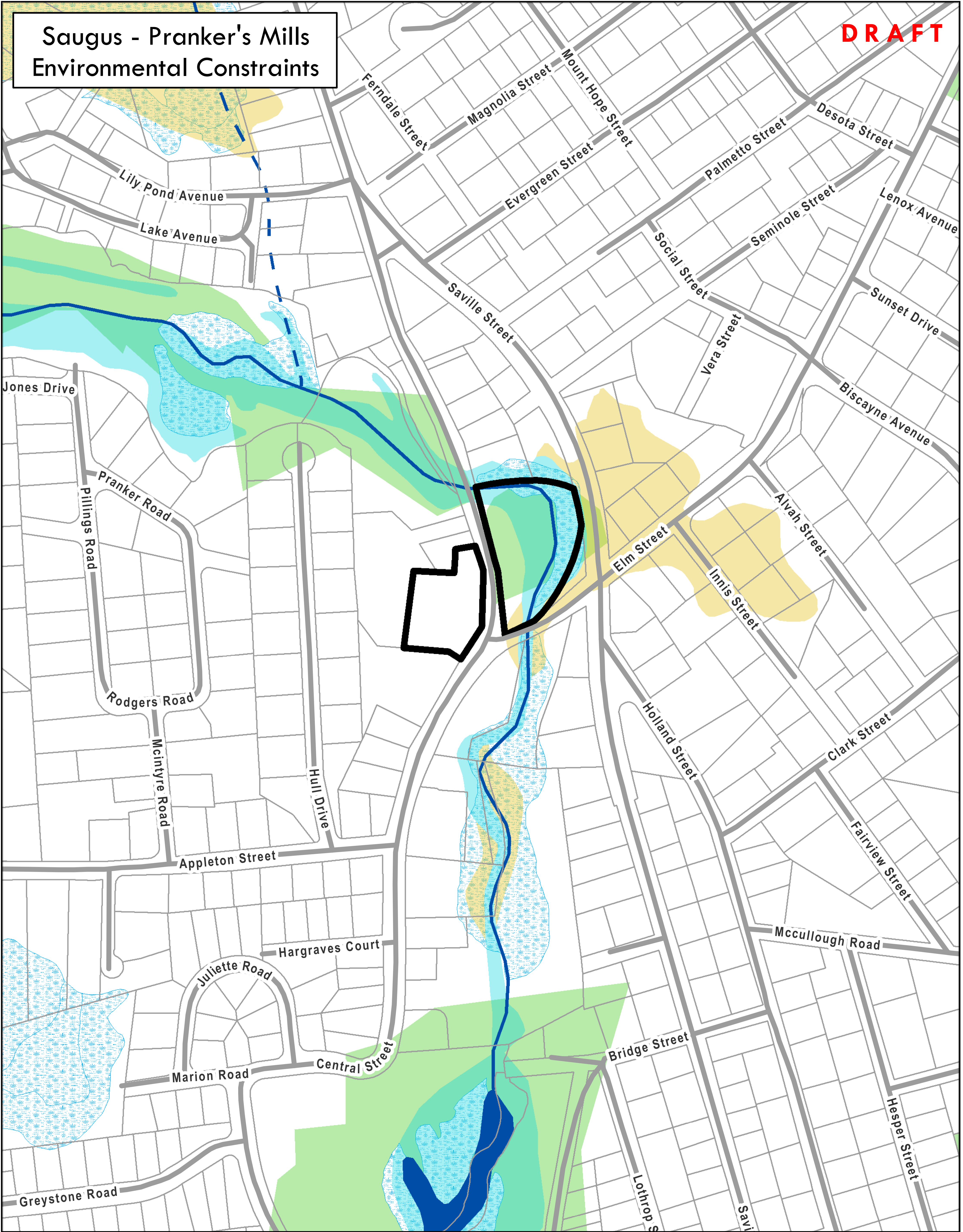
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 Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)
 Wetlands: Massachusetts Department of Environment Protection (DEP)
 Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

Date: 11/30/2012



Saugus - Pranker's Mills Environmental Constraints

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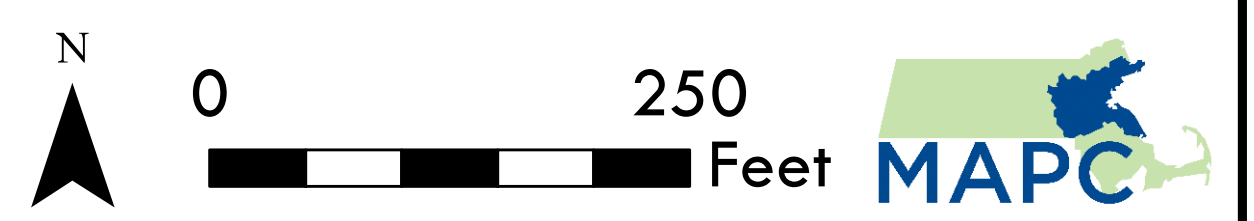
Flood Zones

- AE: 1% Annual Chance
- 0.2% Annual Chance
- Water Bodies
- Wetlands
- Protected Open Space
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream

Pranker's Mills

Data Sources:
 Parcels: Town of Saugus
 Roads and Train Tracks:
 Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT),
 Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)
 Wetlands: Massachusetts Department of Environment Protection (DEP)
 Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

Date: 11/7/2012



Saugus - Pranker's Mills Air Photo (2011)

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 Pranker's Mills

Data Sources:
Parcels: Town of Saugus
Roads:
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT),
Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

Date: 11/30/2012

