



LANDLINE

Connecting people and
places with an active trail
network in Metro Boston

Spring 2018



The Metropolitan Area Planning Council is proposing a 1,400-mile connected network of trails and greenways within the Boston region.

The Boston region is fortunate to have abundant natural landscapes, vibrant cities, towns, and villages, multi-layered history, and a thriving economy.

Yet transportation challenges in the region threaten to stifle economic growth, increase pollution, and create a less healthy environment.

Active transportation trips—made by walking and cycling—are growing in our region, as people seek a healthier lifestyle, save time commuting by ditching their car and traffic, and find they can get around the region faster (and less expensively!) than when driving.

To achieve the full potential of active transportation and all of its benefits, MAPC presents this visionary plan to connect our homes, jobs, parks, schools and natural resources.

Thankfully, Metro Boston already has a collection of popular trails which lay a great foundation for a true regional network. The 11-mile **Minuteman Bikeway** is one of the busiest rail trails in the country, unlocking access to the Alewife MBTA Station with millions of trips by bike and on foot every year. The **Charles River Esplanade** collection boasts paths on both sides of the river, from Boston to Waltham. And the **Northern Strand Trail** runs from Everett to Lynn, with the Border to Boston Trail extending farther north into New Hampshire.



NEPONSET RIVER GREENWAY IN MATTAPAN



ALEWIFE LINEAR PARK

Vision



Proposed

UPPER FALLS GREENWAY IN NEEDHAM



In Progress

BRUCE FREEMAIN IN CONCORD

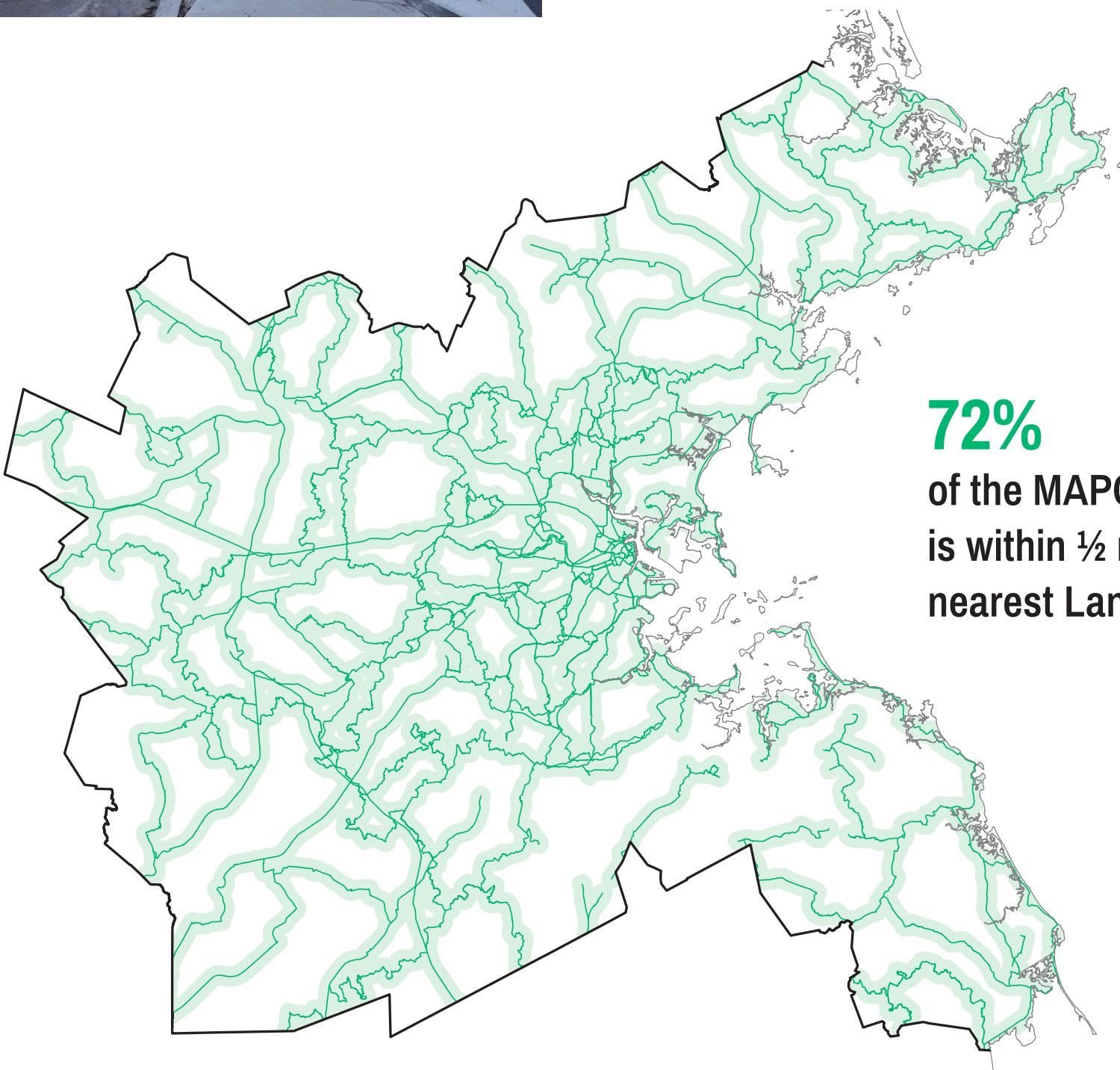


Complete

ARSENAL STREET IN WATERTOWN

Unfortunately our most popular trails do not currently connect to each other. With this Vision, we outline a plan to not only make these connections but create a network of trails and greenways throughout the region. **Currently 45% of the greenway network and 60% of the foot trail network is complete**, providing a good foundation to move forward.

We are proposing 913 miles of greenways and 515 miles of foot trails across the MAPC region. At buildout, the network we're proposing would bring trail access within a half mile of where three-quarters of the region's residents live—and 92% would be within one mile of the nearest trail or path. Through engaging with our existing and new partners, the LandLine network will continue to expand and evolve to be in close proximity to even more people.



72%
of the MAPC population
is within ½ mile of the
nearest LandLine corridor

The LandLine Network is composed of two types of corridors: Greenways and Foot Trails.

Greenways

Greenways are the backbone of the network, providing a corridor of travel for the widest variety of users including pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair and stroller users. The surface is firm and stable, wide enough to pass each other. The corridor is ideally on its own reservation (such as a rail trail), though when not possible, on low traffic streets, or protected bike lanes and sidewalks.



SOMERVILLE COMMUNITY PATH



WESTERN GREENWAY TRAIL IN WALTHAM

Foot Trails

Foot trails are natural surface linear corridors, through natural surroundings where possible, particularly parks and conservation lands. Most are to be marked with wayfinding signs or blazes along the route. Foot trail designations will also be focused on helping preserve unprotected, undeveloped parcels.

LandLine Greenway Status

ENTIRE MAPC REGION

913 MILES TOTAL



EXISTING
IN CONSTRUCTION
PROPOSED



Additional Terminology

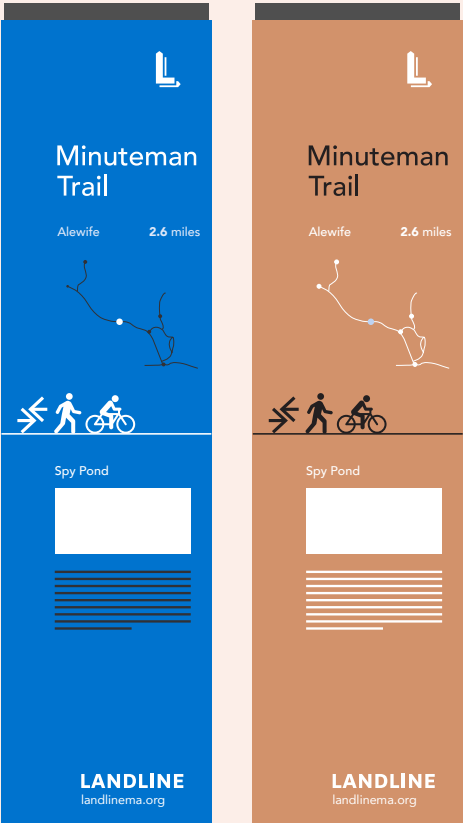
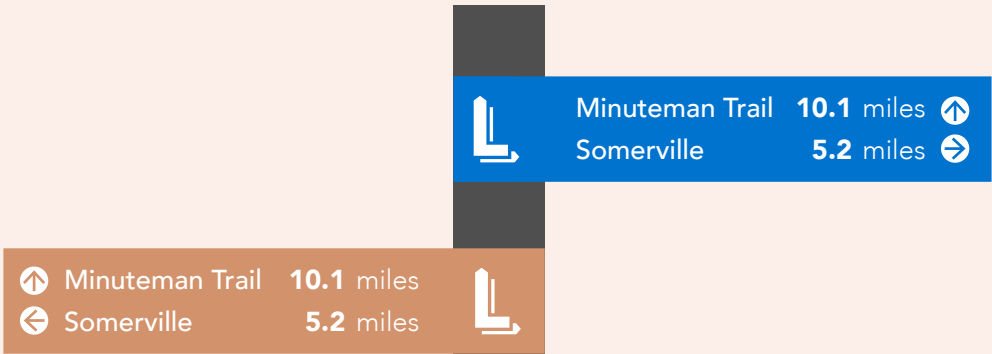
Trail or Path	broadly generic term used to describe a corridor that is separated from traffic on its own right of way and largely through a natural landscape. A trail may be restricted to certain types of users, or time of day, or may have no restrictions.
Rail Trail	a trail that runs along a former rail bed corridor. It may be fully engineered with a paved surface of asphalt or stone dust, or unimproved with a dirt or ballast path.
Bikeway	a term used at one point in time to qualify for funding construction of trails for transportation (such as the Minuteman Bikeway). However, bicyclists are just one of many users on these trails.

Develop a Consistent Standard for Signage and Wayfinding

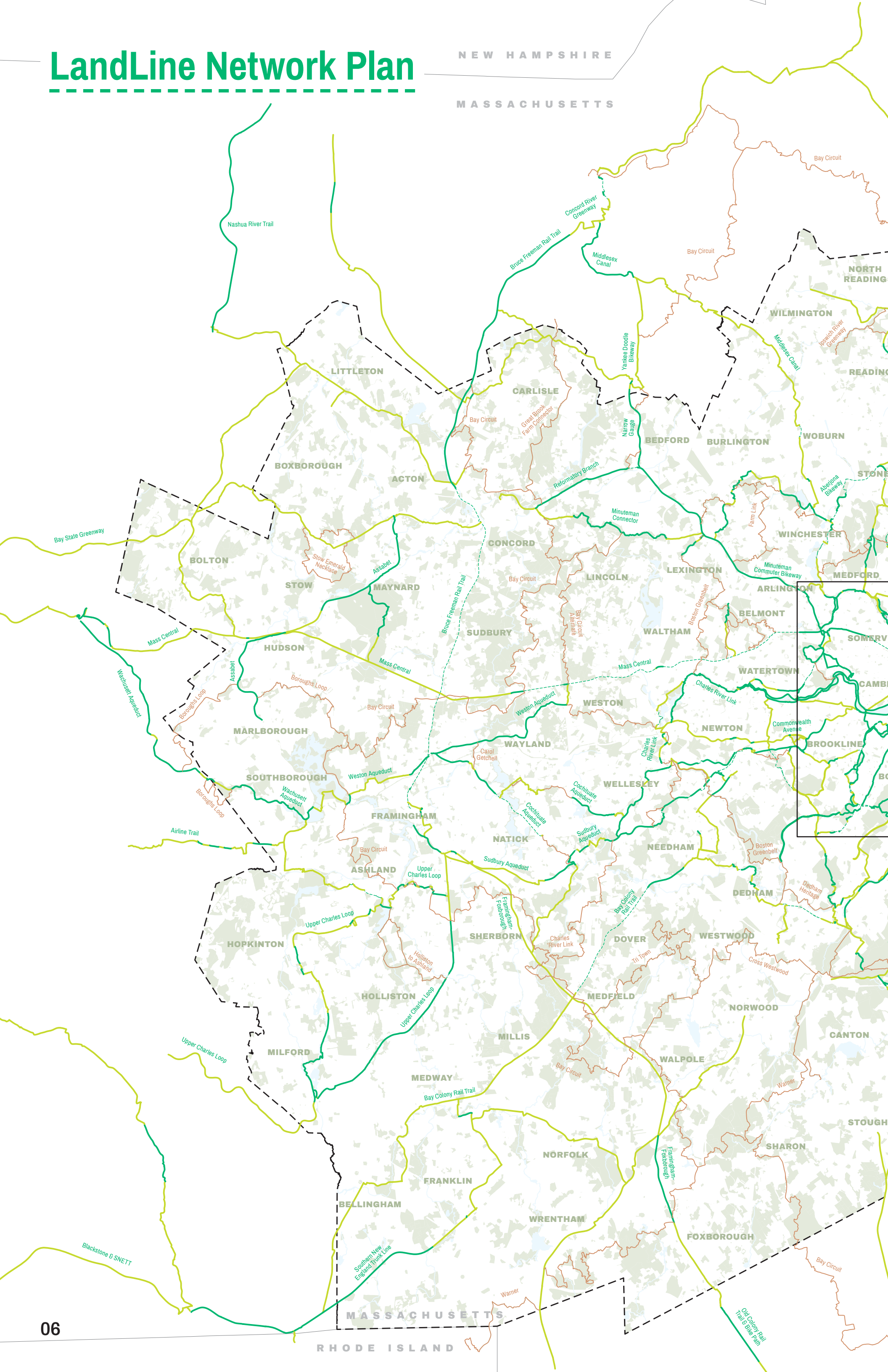
The proposed greenway and trail corridors navigate a variety of routes including separated multi-use trails, local roads, on busy roads with bicycle lanes, and dirt trails. Route identification and wayfinding will be key to allow the user to easily travel along the corridors.

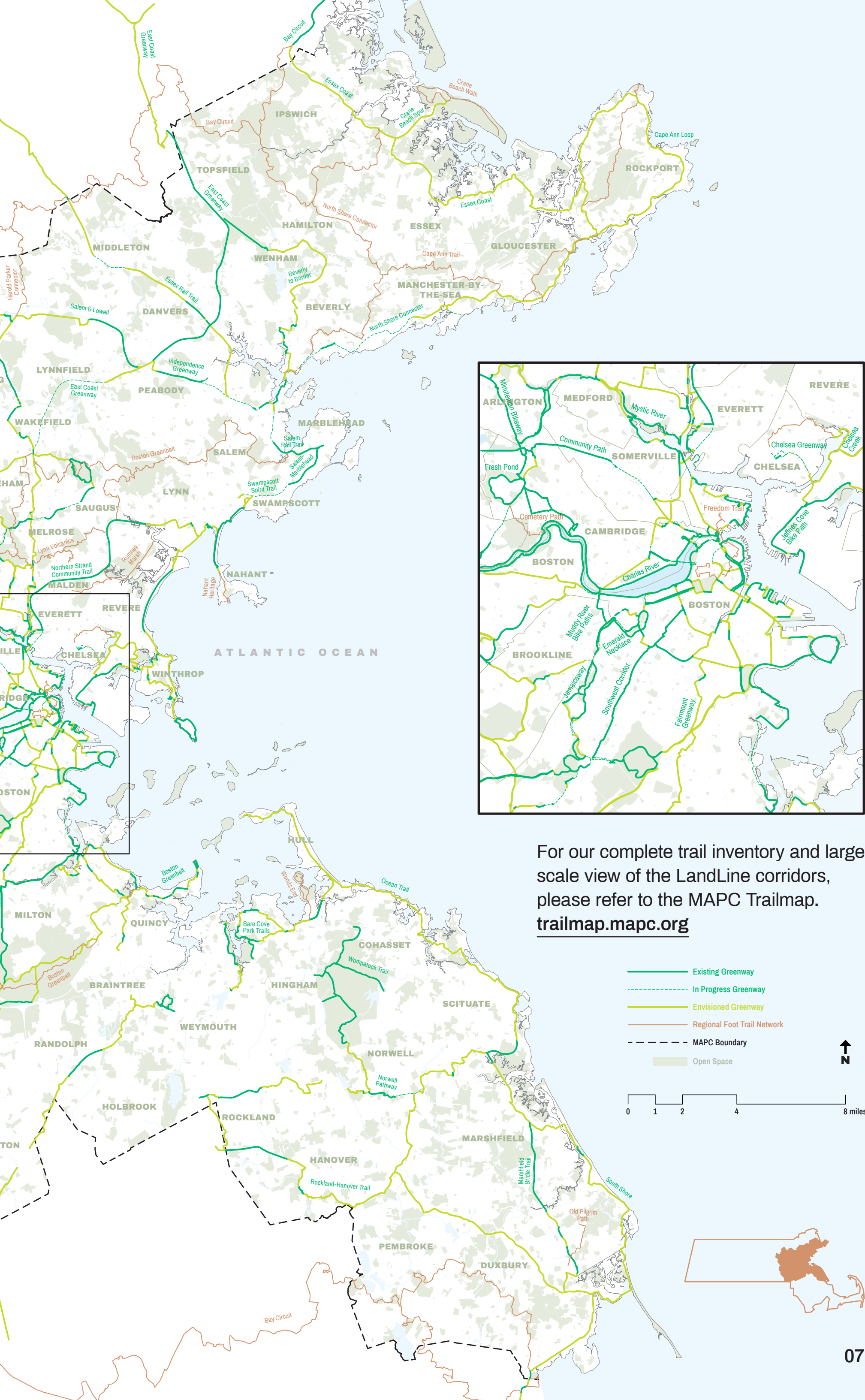
We are recommending a signage and wayfinding plan be created at the state level that creates consistent signage themes for our greenways statewide, while allowing individual trail identities to be preserved.

- Key components of greenway wayfinding and signs shall include—
- A consistent color and design scheme for all greenway signs that is unique and easily identifiable
 - Confirmation of the trail and/or location that the user is traveling on
 - Directions to follow along the given route where turns are required particularly as the route follows a mix of streets and trails
 - Distance and direction to key locations on or off the route (towns, train stations, villages)



LandLine Network Plan





For our complete trail inventory and large scale view of the LandLine corridors, please refer to the MAPC Trailmap. trailmap.mapc.org

Emerald Network

The Emerald Network is a LivableStreets Alliance initiative that envisions 200 miles of seamless greenways around Boston, from the Neponset River in the south to the Mystic River north of the city. The Emerald Network is contiguous with the LandLine network, with regular coordination between MAPC and LivableStreets.

When completed, this system will connect every neighborhood to open space, transit, and jobs and thereby increase mobility, promote active recreation, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance our city's competitiveness in the global economy.

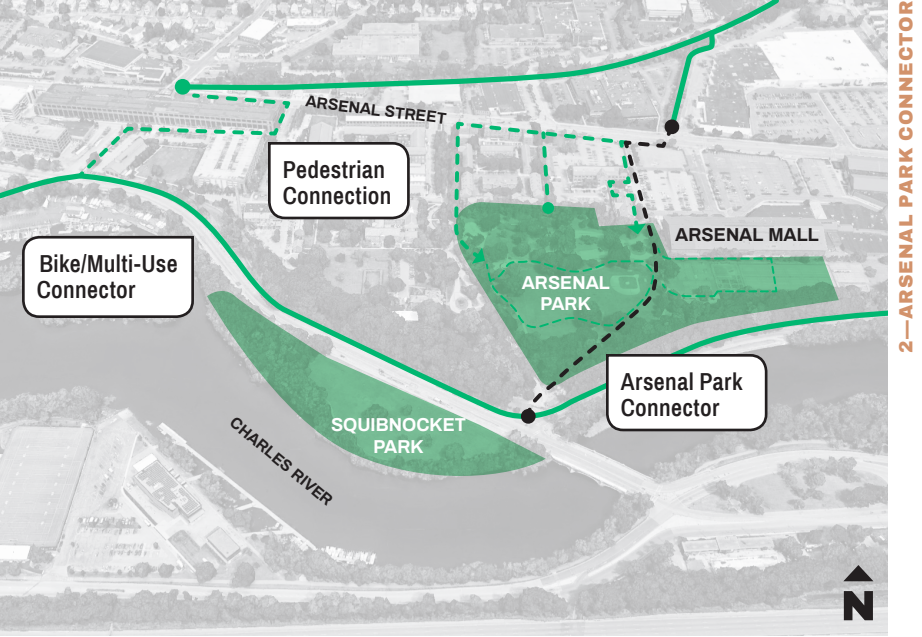
LivableStreets is making progress toward the Emerald Network vision by increasing public awareness of the potential system and its benefits, targeting outreach to decision-makers and thought leaders, and working to advance specific greenway projects.

1 Arboretum Gateway Path Boston

The Arboretum Gateway Path will connect a large section of the community to the Arnold Arboretum and Forest Hills MBTA Station, via the Blackwell Path. Additionally, the path will create low cost mobility options for people between the Roslindale Commuter Rail Station and Forest Hills Station. Currently, the MBTA Orange Line and Commuter Rail tracks deter access to Arnold Arboretum for several neighborhoods on the eastern side of the park. Improved access to the Arboretum, Roslindale Village and Forest Hills Station will help to create a more inclusive and equitable neighborhood. This project has secured a project lead through the Boston Transportation Department as well as a 25% design, key steps in moving this project forward.

2 Arsenal Park Connector Watertown

The Arsenal Park Connector will close the gap between the end of the Watertown Spur and the Paul Dudley White Path along the Charles River through Arsenal Park. The Arsenal Park Connector will eventually be a link between the Charles River and the Watertown Community Path, the Somerville Community Path, and the Mystic River. Partnering with the Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, the Emerald Network assisted in the design and community outreach aspects of constructing this small but vital link. LivableStreets supported the partners in conducting community outreach at various events including—Watertown Moves, Fair in the Square, and Public Workshop for Arsenal Park by designing engagement materials and staffing support.

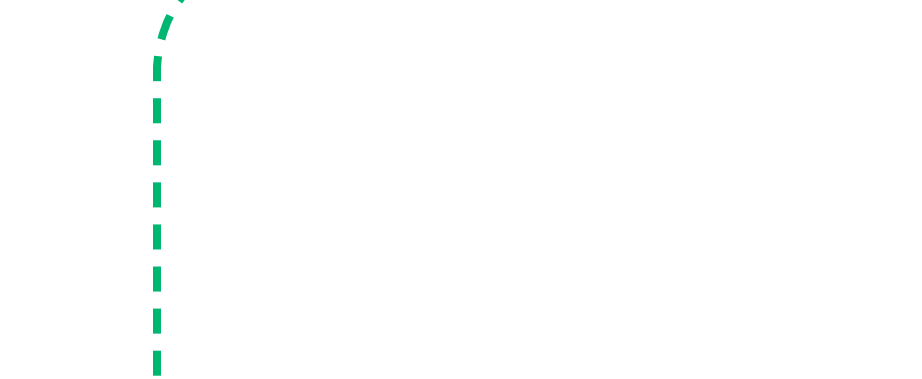
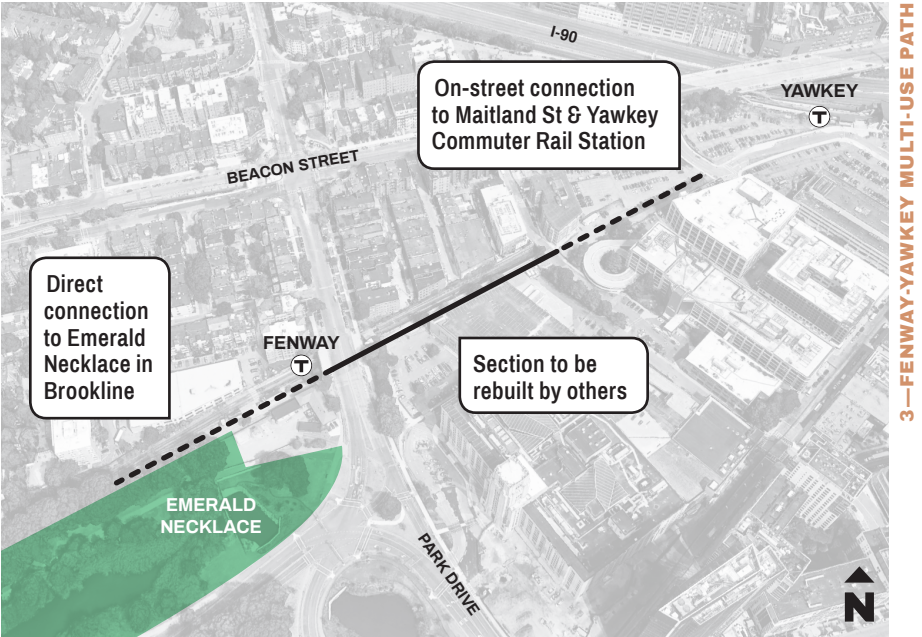


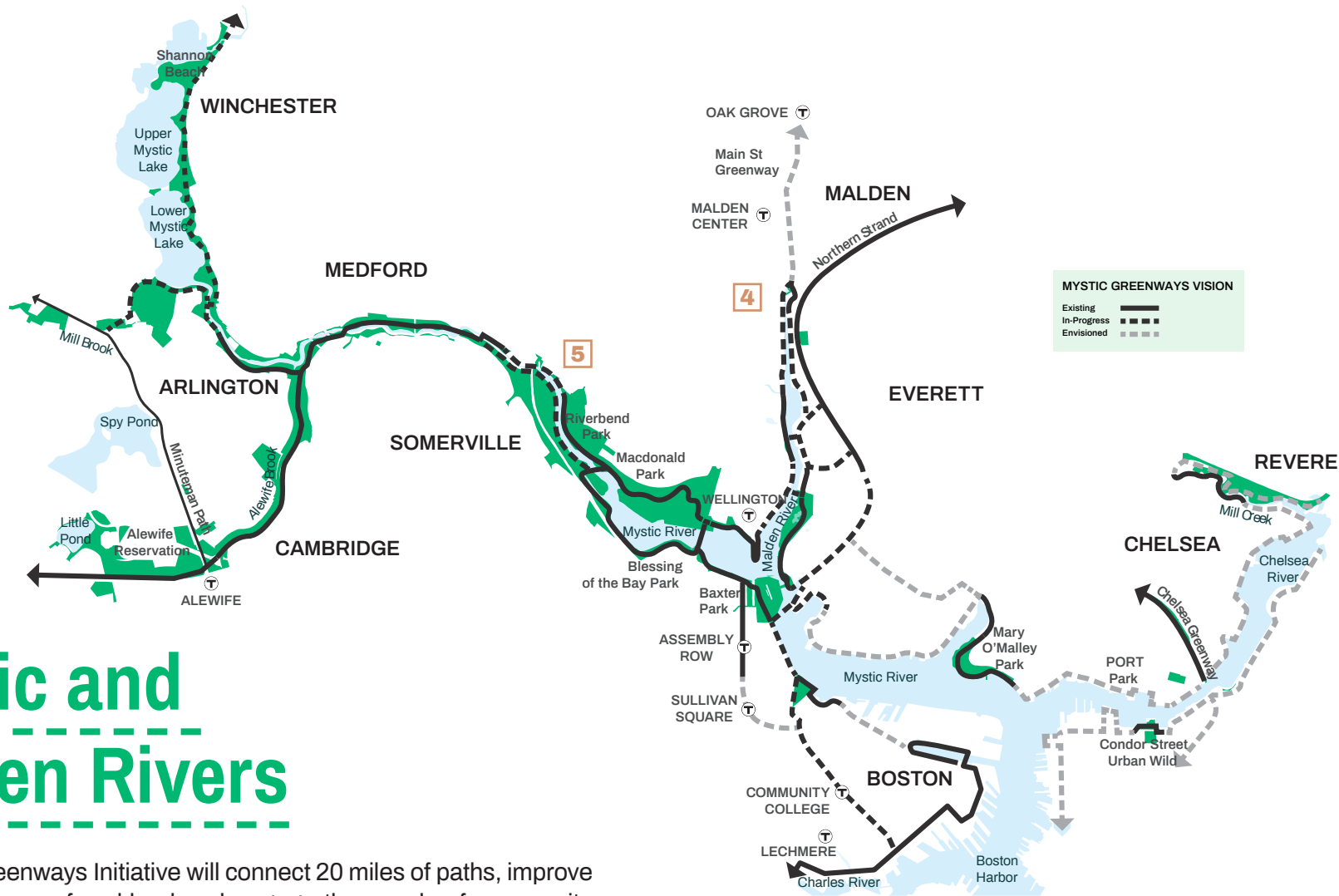
Highlights



3 Fenway-Yawkey Multi-Use Path Boston

The Fenway-Yawkey Multi Use Path is a Green Link that would extend from the Emerald Necklace Muddy River Path to Maitland Street adjacent to the Green Line D Branch right-of-way. The path will provide a direct connection between the Emerald Necklace and Yawkey Station as well as Fenway Park. Construction is currently scheduled to begin in 2020.





Mystic and Malden Rivers

The Mystic Greenways Initiative will connect 20 miles of paths, improve hundreds of acres of parkland and engage thousands of community members from the Mystic Lakes to Boston Harbor. The Mystic River Watershed Association is leading this vision and creating a roadmap to transforming the paths and parklands along the Mystic River. This ambitious effort is made possible by partnerships with all types of stakeholders across the watershed. We are working collaboratively with the Massachusetts Department of Recreation and Conservation, other federal and state agencies, dozens of municipalities and many local community groups and citizens. There are 16 miles of trail completed, 3.5 miles designed and funded, and 3 more planned.

4 Main Street Greenway

The Malden River runs underground in a culvert just south of Malden Center until it daylights upstream around Oak Grove Station. Fortunately the land on top of the culvert for the most part is undeveloped, and a good portion in the public domain. This allows for the potential of both daylighting the river in sections as well as the opportunity for a continuous greenway connecting the Malden River to Melrose and into Wakefield. The greenway will parallel Main Street and access two Orange Line stations as well as several commuter rail stations. The concept is relatively new but gaining support within the communities.

5 Clippership Connector

The Clippership Connector, a proposed half-mile waterfront path, will connect more than 10 miles of contiguous greenways along the Mystic River and provide a safe and scenic route between Medford Square, Andrew/McGlynn Schools and Riverbend Park. The path will allow people to walk, run, bike, and push strollers along a section of the river that, to date, has been blocked from public access. Thanks to a Partnership Grant from the DCR, the project is being designed and will be shovel-ready by late 2018. The Clippership Connector will be built approximately 18-24 months after capital funding is identified.



4—MAIN STREET GREENWAY



5—CLIPPERSHIP CONNECTOR

LandLine encompasses the entire region and MAPC is working with our partners to connect the gaps. These highlighted projects describe just a sample of the many efforts that MAPC is engaged with our supportive partners. These areas encapsulate how the LandLine Vision is becoming a reality.

East Coast Greenway

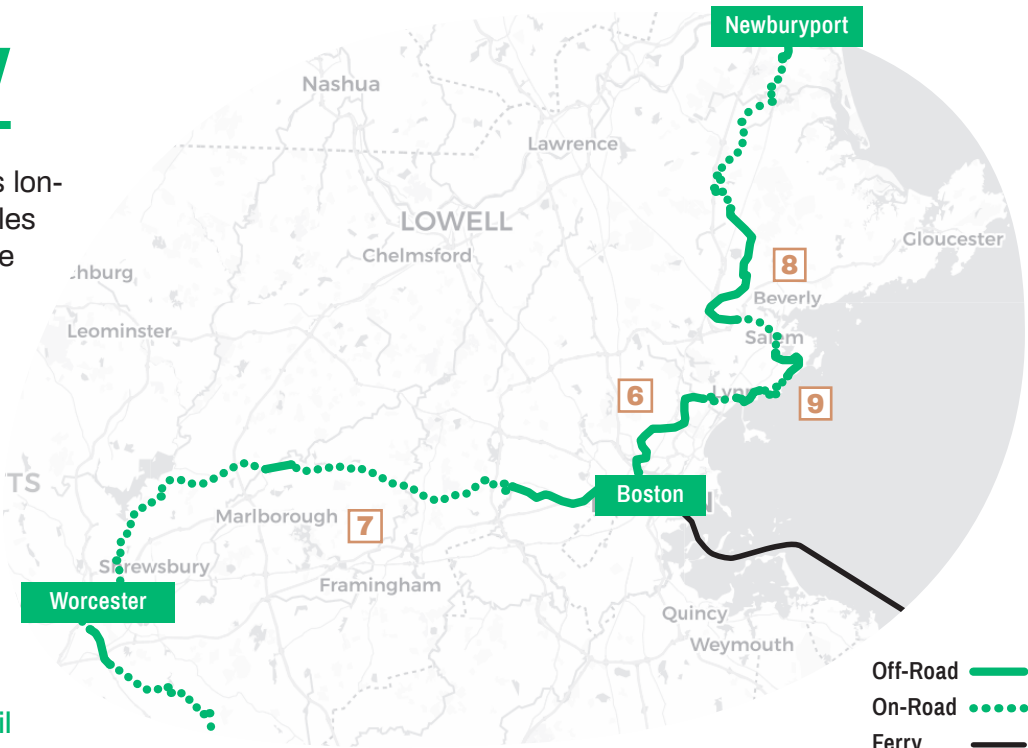
The East Coast Greenway will eventually become the nation’s longest connected off-road cycling and walking route, 3000 miles from Maine to Florida. Within the MAPC/LandLine region the Greenway follows the Border to Boston Trail, future Peabody Riverwalk, Salem Rail Trail, Northern Strand Trail, Paul Dudley White Bikeway, and the Mass Central Rail Trail.

6 Northern Strand Community Trail

The Northern Strand (also called “Bike to the Sea”) trail will stretch close to 12 miles and connect the municipalities of Lynn, Saugus, Revere, Malden and Everett to trails along the Nahant Causeway to the North with trails along the Mystic River with connections to Boston to the South. The trail follows the former Saugus Branch railroad right-of-way for a majority of its route. It travels through urban areas and green spaces of great natural beauty, including the Rumney Marsh in Revere and along the Saugus River. Together there are roughly 5 miles of paved trail, 2.5 miles of gravel and 4.5 miles of undeveloped trail. Design is underway with grant funding from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

7 Mass Central Rail Trail

The Mass Central Rail Trail, locally called the Wayside Rail Trail, will be the longest shared use path in the state when complete. It will run from Boston’s North Station to Northampton, for a total of approximately 104 miles. The trail will extend through communities in Metrowest that are some distance from the nearest commuter rail lines and therefore serve as a connector for improved access into Boston. Through a partnership between the utility Eversource and the state’s Department of Conservation and Recreation, a four-mile section of trail in Weston and Wayland is under construction with completion slated for late 2018.



8 Peabody Independence Greenway

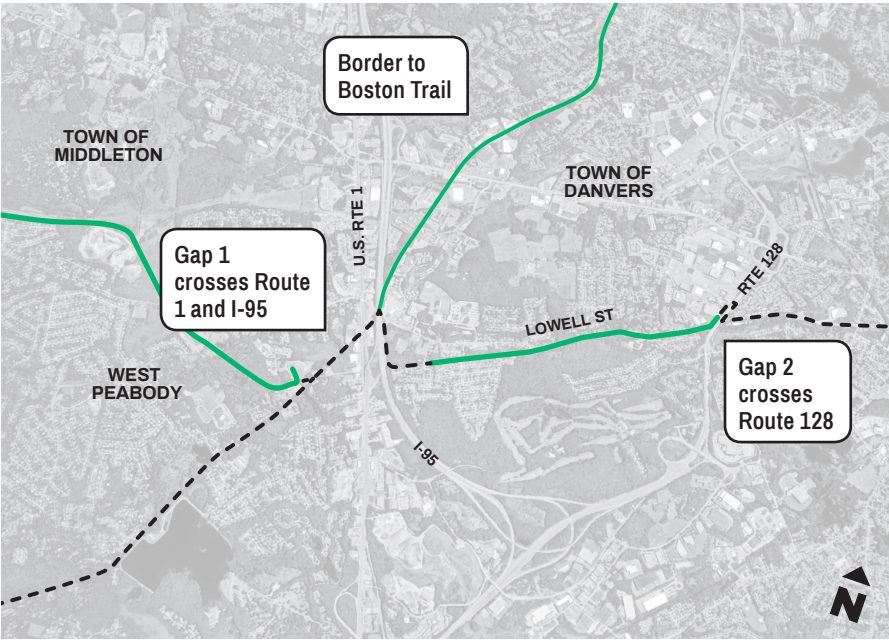
Peabody is planning to complete the missing gaps in the Independence Greenway to downtown and connect to the proposed Peabody Riverwalk. To date, the city has constructed six miles of the Independence Greenway and one mile of the Independence Greenway spur trail connecting to the Danvers Rail Trail. Design is underway on the missing gaps. The Riverwalk will increase economic development in Peabody Square by following the North River into Salem.

9 Swampscott Rail Trail

The Swampscott Rail Trail will be a two-mile linear park throughout the town along the National Grid utility corridor (formerly the Boston and Maine railroad) and connecting to the Marblehead Rail Trail. Swampscott Town Meeting and a subsequent townwide election approved moving forward with the Rail Trail and voted to fund the design and engineering of the trail as well as the costs for the acquisition of the easement rights. Preliminary design is underway.



6—NORTHERN STRAND COMMUNITY TRAIL



8—PEABODY INDEPENDENCE GREENWAY



7—MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL



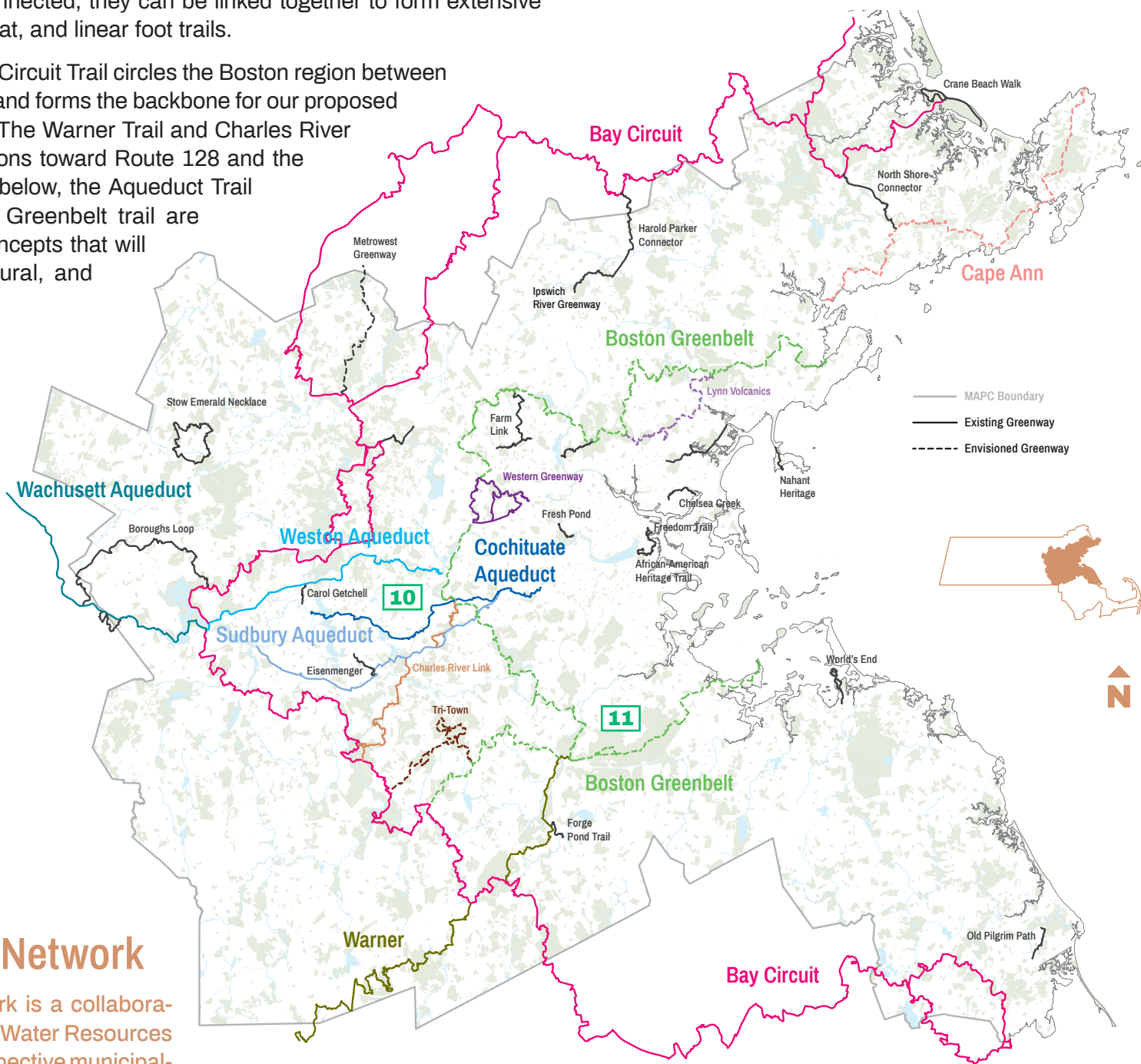
9—SWAMPSCOTT RAIL TRAIL

Foot Trails

Along with the rail trails and paved river paths that form the backbone of our greenway system, the MAPC region has a wealth of natural and historical features, and an incredible diversity of preserved open space. Though the open space is often scattered and disconnected, they can be linked together to form extensive greenbelts of wildlife habitat, and linear foot trails.

The existing 230 mile Bay Circuit Trail circles the Boston region between Plum Island and Duxbury and forms the backbone for our proposed regional foot trail system. The Warner Trail and Charles River Link trails provide extensions toward Route 128 and the Charles River. Described below, the Aqueduct Trail network and the Boston Greenbelt trail are relatively new foot trail concepts that will connect our historic, cultural, and natural resources.

MAPC Regional Foot Trails



10 Aqueduct Trail Network

The aqueduct trail network is a collaboration of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), the respective municipalities, MetroWest Regional Collaborative and MAPC. The Cochituate, Weston, Sudbury, and Wachusett Aqueducts were built in the mid to late 1800's to carry water from western MA to the Boston region. The total aqueduct trail network, when complete will span almost 70 miles in three roughly east/west corridors. Public access along the MWRA controlled portions of the aqueducts was long forbidden, until a few years ago when this collaboration yielded permission between the towns and the MWRA. MAPC developed a plan for the entire aqueduct trail system identifying road and trail connections between gaps in the surface aqueduct sections. Through the MetroWest Regional Collaborative, MAPC is further developing plans with the municipalities to extend the Cochituate Aqueduct to the Cochituate Rail Trail in Framingham and Natick.

11 Boston Greenbelt Trail

The Boston Greenbelt Trail is envisioned as an 80+ mile foot trail that circles the urban core inside Route 128. The trail will connect our key regional parks including the Blue Hills, Cutler Reservation, Cummings Park, Horn Pond, Middlesex Fells, Breakheart Reservation, and many other conservation areas. It's a prime opportunity to create a regional trail that is in close access to the inner core, with convenient intersections to a number of MBTA stations. Despite the developed urban context, almost 75% of the trail is able to follow paths away from roads. The Greenbelt Trail is envisioned to serve as a catalyst to preserve the remaining unprotected lands that it passes through or near as well as to provide an almost continuous wildlife corridor.



10—AQUEDUCT TRAIL NETWORK



11—BOSTON GREENBELT TRAIL

Next Steps

As individual municipalities advance segments of the LandLine in their community, MAPC stands ready to help with corridor level planning and identification of funding resources. MAPC is planning for the corridors to evolve and expand with further engagement at the local level. Under leadership from the Baker Administration, the state has increased funding for the design and construction of trails, and has begun a process to coordinate the trail planning conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and the Department Conservation and Recreation, into a new MassTrails initiative. This new state level program will help streamline the planning, design and funding process for municipalities seeking to build trails.

The LandLine Vision is one of the first completed elements of MAPC’s next region plan.

This vision for a connected greenway network can only happen with many involved partners. Our coalition of partners is constantly growing as we engage with more groups and individuals.

The LandLine Coalition’s monthly meetings serve as a way to engage our partners on a regular basis, along with regular MAPC projects. The following is a list of our key partners to date. Refer to mapc.org/landline for the most updated list.

To access our complete trail mapping database including locations of all trails, bicycle facilities (protected and roadway bike lanes), and the LandLine corridors, visit trailmap.mapc.org



This report was prepared by



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With input and enthusiasm from our many partners—

Partners

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Governor’s Office Massachusetts Trails Team
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA)
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA)
Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)/ Boston MPO

MAPC Region Cities and Towns
Arlington – Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee
Boston – Boston GreenLinks
Brookline – Bicycle Advisory Committee
Cambridge – Cambridge Bicycle Advisory Committee
Dedham – Sustainability Advisory Committee
Lexington – ACROSS Lexington
Medford – Medford Bicycle Commission
Melrose – Melrose Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee
Newton – Bicycle Committee & Transportation Advisory Group
Salem – Bicycling Advisory Committee
Somerville – Somerville Bicycle Committee
Watertown – Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

Organizations
Appalachian Mountain Club
Arborway Coalition
Bike to the Sea, Inc
Boston Cyclists Union
Charles River Conservancy
East Coast Greenway Alliance
Emerald Necklace Conservancy
Fairmount Greenway
Friends of the Blue Hills
Friends of the Community Path (Somerville)
The Friends of Mary Cummings Park
Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation
LivableStreets Alliance (Emerald Network)
Mass Central Rail Trail Coalition
Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition (Massbike)
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MAPC subregion)
Mystic River Watershed Association (Greenways Program)
Neponset River Greenway Council
The Solomon Foundation
WalkBoston
Waltham Land Trust

Partners & Acknowledgments