

RECREATION ASSET MANAGEMENT & ASSESSMENT

Great Barrington, Massachusetts December 1, 2020

Tighe&Bond

net kerigi net kerigi n

Tighe & Bond has conducted an inventory of recreational assets in the Town of Great Barrington. The goal of this effort is to quantify available recreational opportunities and to perform a qualitative assessment of existing facilities, as well as identify opportunities for improvement of both service to the community and the quality of facilities available to residents and visitors. The following maps and narrative will provide a summary of the findings of the inventory.

1.0 Facilities Overview

There are a great number of properties in Great Barrington that are available for recreation. Some, like the park properties are available for active recreation, and some, such as the properties owned by Great Barrington Land Conservancy and the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, provide opportunities for more passive activities like hiking and scenic enjoyment. There are also properties owned by state, federal and private entities that while out of the direct control of the Town, provide additional opportunities for recreation. The focus of this study will be on the park properties owned and managed by the town.

Parks serve a variety of recreational needs. Some parks are entirely passive in nature; some are oriented toward neighborhoods; and some are used by the entire community. Ideally, there would be a neighborhood park located within a ¼ mile walk of every residential neighborhood, while community parks serve as a town-wide asset and should provide access to the entire community, but not necessarily access by foot.

Figures 1 and 2 show the location of various community and neighborhood park facilities with the ¼ mile walking radius shown for park properties that presently serve or could be improved to serve a neighborhood park role. In addition, there are several properties that due to their size, access or location do not play a role in active recreation.

Review of the service areas covered by the existing neighborhood park facilities reveals that there are a few gaps in coverage where the Town may want to consider acquisition and development of additional properties. These gap areas are in the neighborhood northwest of the town center between Alford Road and Lake Mansfield, and in the residential neighborhood east of Stockbridge Road and north of State Road. There are other areas of town not within easy walking distance of neighborhood parks, but they are primarily more rural in nature, and it is likely that other open spaces and large lots provide more informal recreational opportunities to these parts of the town.

Community facilities provided by the town are provided at generally acceptable levels, although there are a few notable exceptions. While the inventory revealed several baseball and softball fields, there were very few "square" fields for soccer, football or lacrosse. Some of this need is being filled by facilities at Monument Valley Regional Middle School and at Monument Mountain Regional High School. The town may wish to consider if the residents' needs for this sort of programmed recreation is being adequately met under the current arrangement. Public tennis courts and indoor recreational facilities are also not immediately apparent in the town.

2.0 Facility Inventory

<u>Old Maid's Park</u>

31 Wyantenuck Street Map 26, Lot 81A 3.89 Acres

Old Maid's Park consists of nearly 4 acres of forested land bisected by the Williams River. There is an unpaved access drive and parking area. Currently, there is no access across the river, and the property is largely undeveloped. The property is also adjacent to a 43-acre property owned by the Great Barrington Fish & Game Association.

Park facilities include:

- Picnic Table
- Open Play Area
- Fishing/River Access

Housatonic Park & Playground

207 Pleasant Street Map 1, Lot 165 1.1 Acres

This well used park is adjacent to a former school property and consists of approximately 0.65 acres of level property used for a playground, a small ball field, and a basketball court. The property slopes up toward the adjacent building where there are benches, picnic tables and a barbecue.

Facility conditions are generally good, with relatively modern play equipment with resilient surfacing and modern picnic tables, benches and trash receptacles. The property is fenced with galvanized chain link fence that appears to be in good condition.

Park facilities include:

- Picnic Tables
- Barbecue
- Benches
- Playground
- Swings
- Tee Ball Field
- Basketball Court
- Open Play Area

Housatonic Community Center

1064 Main Street Map 1 Lot 163 0.57 Acres

The Housatonic Community Center, or "Housy Dome" is a community gymnasium facility located adjacent to Housatonic Playground. Used to host indoor team sports programs, it was the recent recipient of a Massachusetts Department of Energy grant directed to upgrades to insulation and LED lighting.

Lake Mansfield Beach

45 Lake Mansfield Road Map 32, Lot 78-1 1.0 Acres

The beach and park area at Lake Mansfield is approximately 1.0 Acres on the westerly side of Lake Mansfield Road. There is parking for 35 to 40 cars available of the east side of Lake Mansfield Road adjacent to the Lake Mansfield Forest access. There is a beach facility on Lake Mansfield, a shaded picnic area with tables and barbecues, limited playground equipment with swings and a metal "jungle gym" structure, trash receptacles and an enclosure with 2 portable restrooms. The park area is separated from Lake Mansfield Road by a two-rail split rail fence.

Facility conditions appear to be generally good, although the play equipment lacks appropriate resilient surfacing, and the metal "jungle gym" structure does not meet any of the current CPSC safety standards.

Park facilities include:

- Parking for 35 40 cars
- Beach Area
- Picnic Tables
- Barbecue
- Benches
- Playground
- Swings
- Restrooms
- Information Kiosk

Lake Mansfield Forest

40 Lake Mansfield Road Map 10, Lot 4 29.08 Acres

The Lake Mansfield Forest is a largely undeveloped property with significant wildlife habitat value. The 29-acre property has natural trails developed both as a loop trail with access from

the Lake Mansfield parking area, and a through trail to Christian Hill Road that is part of the 3.5-mile Great Barrington Walking Loop.

Charles Castranova Park

Main Street Map 11, Lot 70 0.96 Acres

This park property is a largely decorative park located at the gateway intersection on State Road and Main Street with a flagpole, decorative landscaping, an open lawn area and a swing set. There is very poor access from the street and the adjacent sidewalk, with a steep grass slope between the frontage and the flatter portions of the property above. There is on-street parking adjacent to the property, but no on-site vehicular access or parking. There is no barrier to keep children from going toward this busy road.

The condition of the swing set is poor, as they do not have resilient surfacing and do not meet CPSC Safety guidelines.

Park facilities include:

- Swings
- Decorative Landscaping
- Flagpole
- Open play area

Parrish Park

65 Main Street Map 14, Lot 60 0.24 Acres

Located across the street from Castranova Park, Parrish park is a small property along Main Street and the Housatonic River. This largely decorative passive park has a grassed area and a bench.

Tracy Park

Stockbridge Road Map 12, Lot 83 5.8 Acres

Tracy park is a 5.8-acre property located with frontage on Stockbridge Road consisting of a large wetland area and a relatively narrow grassed area with a flagpole and a memorial plaque. Access to the property is extremely limited. These is no on-street parking and no sidewalk.

Use of the property could be expanded to include a wildlife observation/overlook area, but access to the park would need to be improved to make this investment worthwhile.

Belcher Square

Stockbridge Road ROW 0.11 Acres

This small park at the intersection of State Road and Stockbridge Road is a part of the roar right of way. There is a historic marker discussing troop movements during the Revolutionary War, and a gazebo that is in poor condition. It appears that the gazebo may have been a fountain or watering trough and likely has historic value.

Stanley Park

Main Street Map 14, Lot 38 0.84 Acres

Stanley Park is a narrow strip of open space between Main Street and the Housatonic River just north of the downtown area. There is a plaque dedicated to the memory of William Stanley, a pioneer in the electrification of the country. There are also a few benches, but the park is otherwise undeveloped.

Further extension of the Riverwalk or river access could be developed in this location. Onstreet parking is available, and the site will be easily accessible via Cottage Street once the bridge is repaired/reconstructed.

Park Street Park

Park Street Map 14, Lot 304 5.04 Acres

This 5-acre open space is a sloping grassed area between Park Street and Quarry Street, and adjacent to the much larger East Mountain Forest property. There are swings at the top of the hill, but no other formal facilities. The swings do not have suitable resilient surfacing, and do not meet CPSC guidelines for fall zone protection. The open lawn areas are certainly valuable for informal sports and open play, but are too steep for use for formal programmed sports. The sloping portion of the property would potentially be suitable for sledding in the winter, although the presence of several large trees may dictate caution in encouraging sledding.

There is on-street parking available although Park Street is essentially a dead-end street with no convenient turning space at the end, so access from this side is somewhat problematic. Pedestrian access is somewhat limited, as there are no sidewalks on Quarry Street and limited sidewalks on East Street and Park Street.

East Mountain Forest

Quarry Street Map 20, Lot 131 45.0 Acres

This large property is mostly undeveloped, with an informal trailhead located on Quarry Street. There is an opportunity to expand the town's natural trails in the area, and potentially develop mountain biking opportunities. There appear to be areas with significant invasive species growth, primarily consisting of *Norway Maple*, shrubby growth such as *Tartarian Honeysuckle* and vine growth such as *Oriental Bittersweet*.

<u>Town Hall Park</u>

334 Main Street Map 19, Lot 91 1.89 Acres

This park is the centerpiece of the downtown area and has been in park use since at least 1875. There is a relatively new play area with climbing structures, swings and other play equipment. The play area is enclosed by a 4-foot chain link fence. There are benches and waste receptacles within the enclosure, and the entire area appears to have adequate resilient surfacing to meet current safety standards. There are areas where maintenance of the resilient surface is needed.

There is a bandstand/gazebo that has been recently upgraded, and there are several picnic tables and portable restrooms that are available to park users. There is also a game table available at the site.

Pedestrian access to the site is excellent, and there is parking available. The site appears to be generally accessible and compliant with most ADA requirements.

Memorial Field Park

60 Bridge Street Map 19, Lot 145 3.8 Acres

Memorial Field is adjacent to the Main Street corridor and has frontage on the Housatonic River. There is a baseball field that is in generally good condition, although one of the dugout areas is somewhat in disrepair.

On the easterly side of the property is a basketball court and the Skate Park which are in also in good condition. The new Riverwalk Greenway trail traverses this property along the river and connects to Olympian Meadows toward the south. Pedestrian access is excellent and there is limited on-street parking and parking at the Railroad Street Youth Project facility.

South Street Park

South Street Map 19, Lot 51 1.33 Acres

South Street Park is a neighborhood park with roughly an acre of open play, and fitness equipment. There is also a portable enclosure to provide a safe place for small children to play while adults are engaged with the fitness circuit.

The equipment is in very good condition and appears to meet applicable safety guidelines. There is excellent pedestrian access to the park, and on-street parking is available. There is an active rail line immediately to the east of the park property, and the town may want to consider constructing a fence or other barrier between this hazard and the park.

Grove Street Park

30 Grove Street Map 20, Lot 93 2.68 Acres

Grove Street Park is a neighborhood park with a paved basketball area. picnic tables, tot play equipment, swings, and a climbing apparatus. There is also a game table. The tables and benches are in fair condition. The tot play structure is fairly modern, but the fall zone does not appear to be adequate. The swings have some resilient fall zone material, but this does not appear to meet CPSC guidelines, and the climbing apparatus does not appear to meet modern requirements.

Pedestrian access is excellent, with access from Grove Street and Warren Avenue, but the pedestrian access does not meet ADA requirements for accessibility. There is on-street parking available.

Olympian Meadows

551 Main Street Map 22, Lot 64 22.2 Acres

Olympian Meadows is a community park facility that includes two baseball fields, a softball field, one "square" field for football/ soccer, and a smaller, less formal baseball field. There is play equipment, a restroom/concession area and equipment storage building. The play equipment is generally in good condition, but there are limited areas of resilient surfacing.

Pedestrian and vehicle access to the property is excellent, and there is parking on site for 50 – 60 cars. The Riverwalk Greenway trail connects this property to Memorial Field via a very pleasant walk along the Housatonic River.

As a community park facility that serves as the principal athletic field facility in the Great Barrington, the park serves its function well. There are opportunities to provide enhanced access to the Housatonic River on this property, as the river front area is largely undeveloped. The town may wish to consider whether it would be desirable to expand/modernize the playground so this park can serve a neighborhood park function for the southerly neighborhoods of the town as well.

McAllister Park

9 Haley Road Map 31, Lot 34 88.68 Acres

This large property is managed by the Conservation Commission and serves as a natural area accessible for walking and horseback riding. The condition of the property is fair with the forested portions of the property overgrown with invasive species. There is a gated access to the property, and only on-street parking on Healy Road available. As this property is in a more rural portion of town, there are no sidewalks for pedestrian access.

The town should discuss the future of this property with the Conservation Commission and determine if limited off street parking and additional passive recreation opportunities such as picnicking or open play may be appropriate.

Newsboy Monument

ROW

This small decorative park is part of the town's right of way for Maple Avenue southerly of Silver Street. This small park was dedicated as a roadside resting place, with a fountain providing water for horses, dogs and people. The park does not have a purpose in active recreation but is available for bicyclists and walkers to rest.

Gilmore Avenue/Courthouse Park

9 Gilmore Avenue Map 14, Lot 60 1.0 Acres

The Gilmore Avenue property is the land surrounding the District Court. The property is owned by the Town but leased to the District Court for their use. The property has a swing set that is in poor condition, with no fall-zone protection.

The site is in an area of the Town that is otherwise unserved by neighborhood park facilities and has ample parking that could be shared with the District Court, particularly when the court is not in session. There are sidewalks leading to the site along Gilmore Avenue and Anderson Street.

The town may wish to consider adding play amenities to this property so that it can better serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, there is a relatively flat area on the property that could be improved to be an additional small "square" field for use by the town.

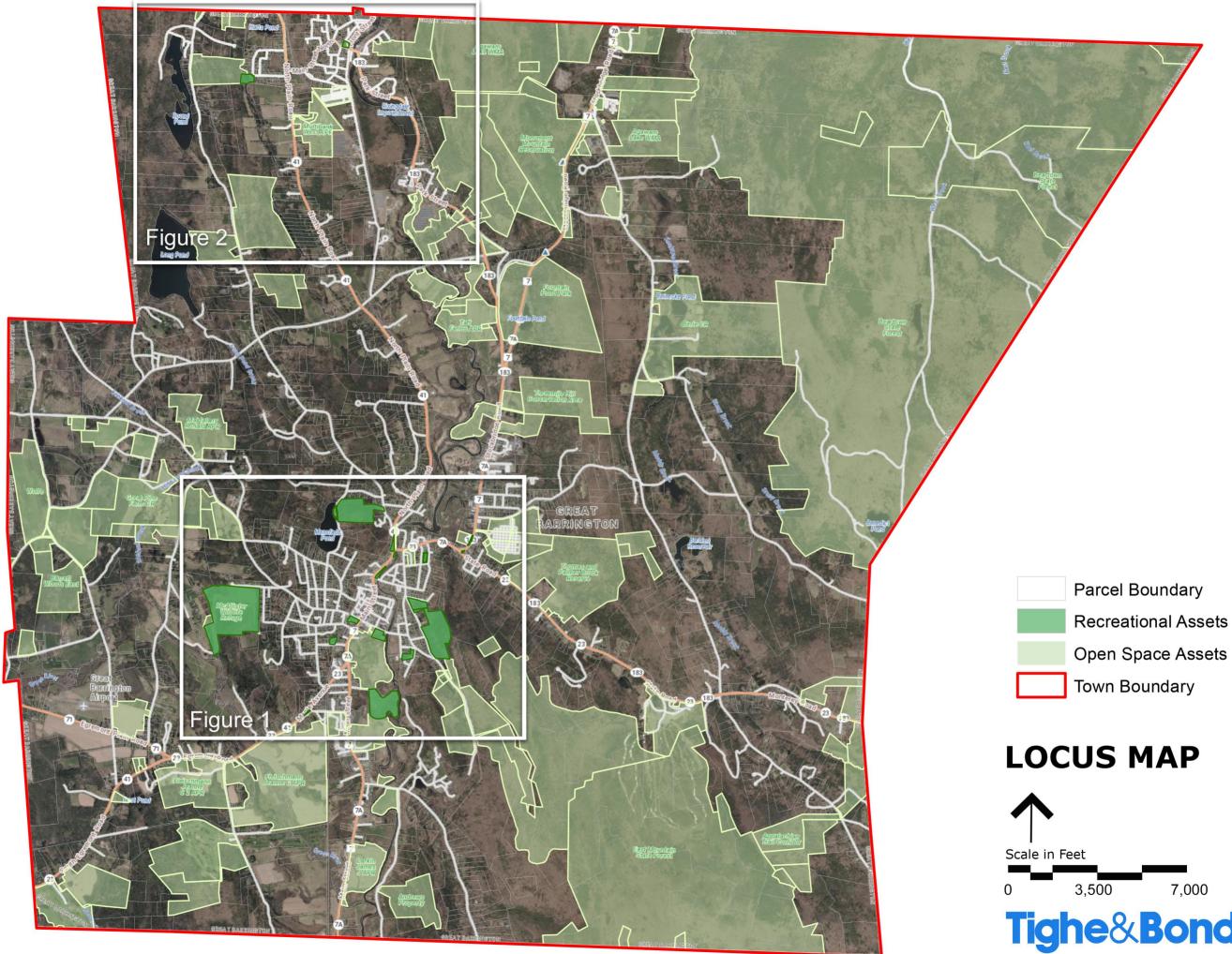
<u>Cemeteries</u>

There are several large cemeteries in town, including Elmwood Cemetery, St. Peters Cemetery and Ahavath Shalom Cemetery, all located off Stockbridge Road and Blue Hill Road; Mahaiwe Cemetery, off South Main Street and Silver Street; the Water Street Cemetery located between State Road and Anderson Street; and Greenlawn Cemetery and Ste. Bridget's Cemetery located off Van Deusenville Road. These properties, while not recreational properties in the strict meaning of the term, do provide a place for passive activities and an escape from the busy pace of everyday life.

2.0 Summary

Generally, the Town has ample opportunity to provide adequate recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. The play equipment that exists, with some exceptions, is in need of upgrade to modern standards. This includes providing accessible facilities, and equipment that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines for equipment spacing and fallzone protection. Consistent signage identifying the parks and simple information kiosks providing program and other useful information would help create a positive image with the town's residents.

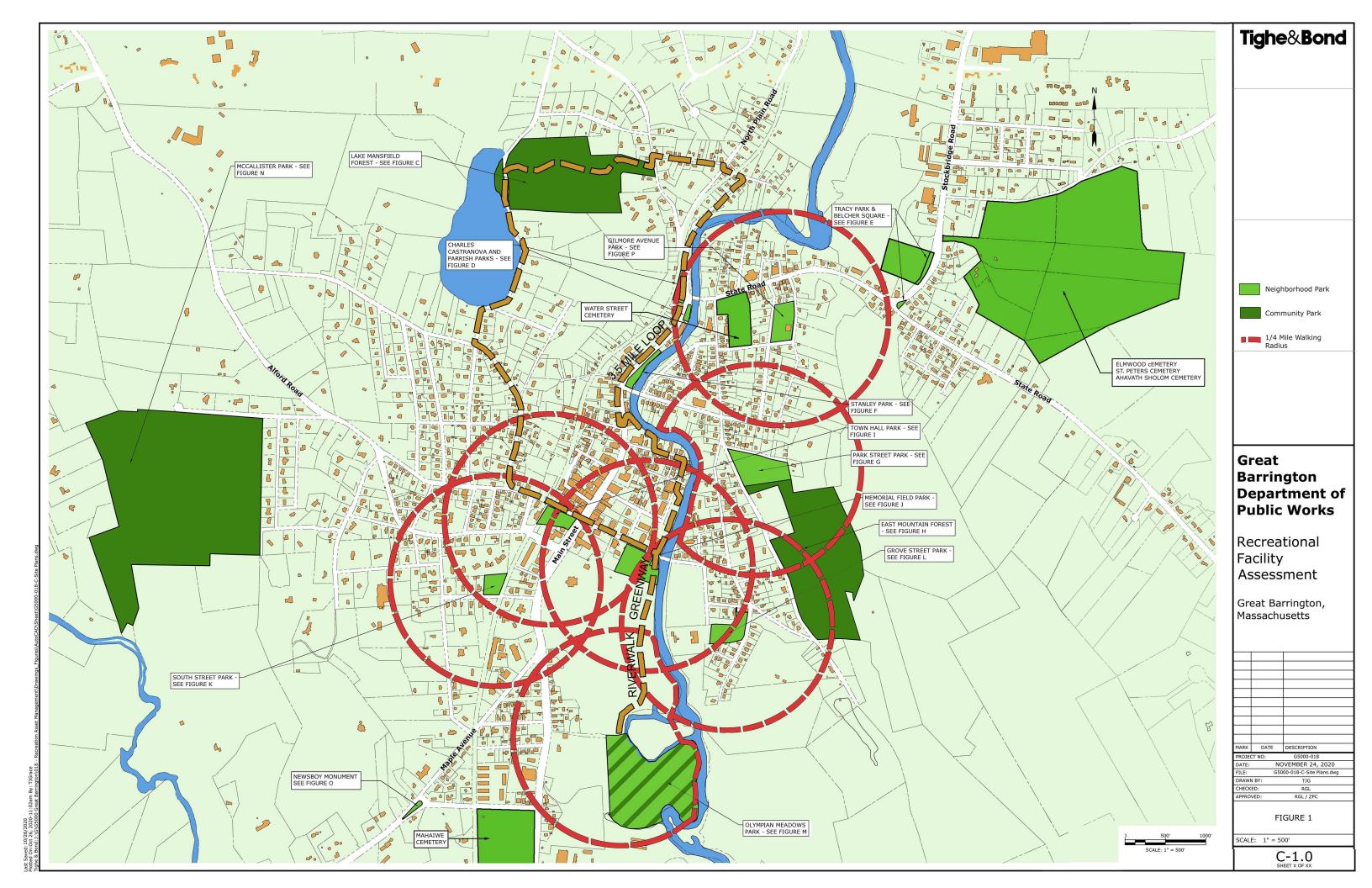
In order to provide better neighborhood park services to residents, the town may wish to consider adding play equipment to several under-developed park properties. In some portions of town, it may be desirable to determine if the Town owns any additional properties that may be used as neighborhood parks. In addition, the town may wish to work with the Parks and Recreation Commission to determine their long term needs for additional park programs, facilities and properties in order to guide capital investment in recreational assets.

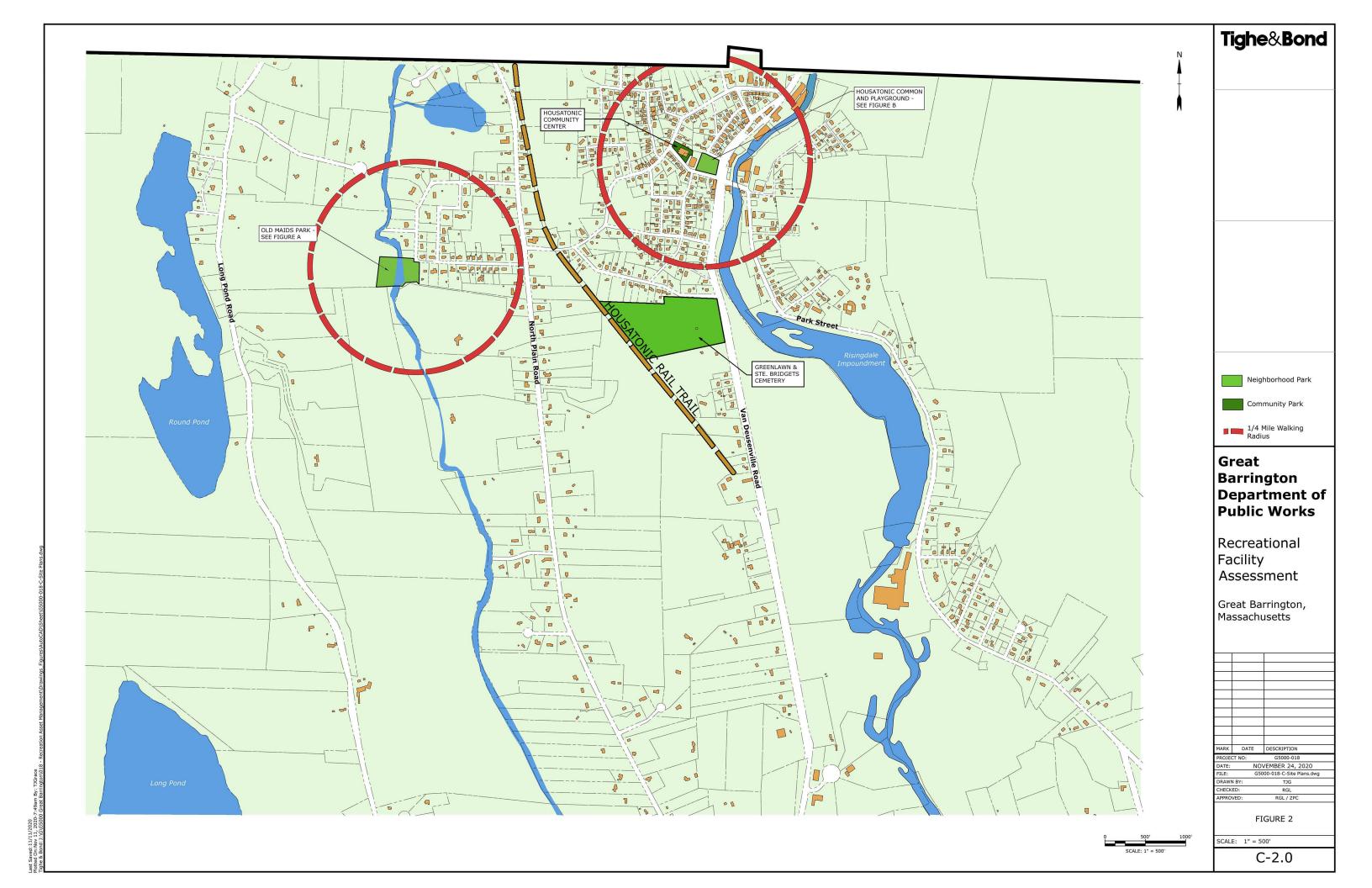














PARKING



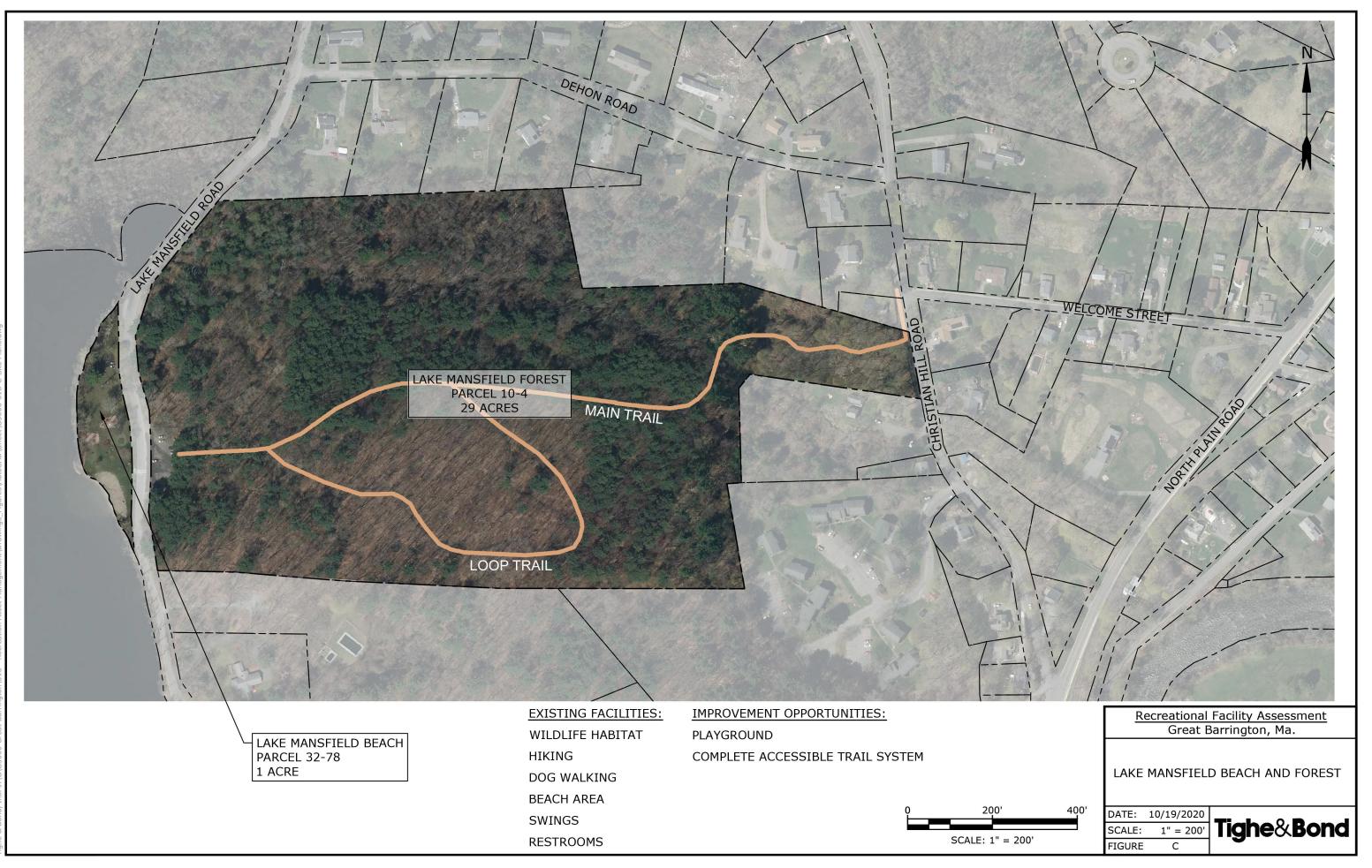
SCALE: 1" = 60'

OLD MAID'S PARK

120'

DATE: 10/19/2020 SCALE: FIGURE А





PARCEL 11-7 0.96 ACRES EXISTING FA FLAG POLE & SWINGS	<u>CILITIES:</u> LANDSCAPING IT OPPORTUNITIES:		MAIN STREET	STATE ROAD
POTENTIAL R	0			

SCALE: 1" = 80'





EXISTING FACILITIES: FLAG POLE & LANDSCAPING

IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES: PARK SIGNAGE BIRD WATCHING PLATFORM IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

STOCKBRIDGEROAD

BELCHER SQUARE PARCEL 18 0.11 ACRES

EXISTING FACILITIES:

MONUMENT

IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES: PARK SIGNAGE STATE ROAD



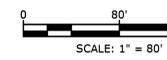
Ν

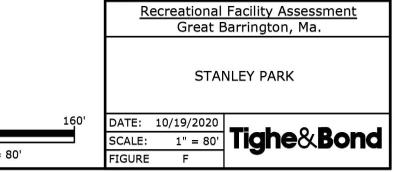




EXISTING FACILITIES: BENCHES MONUMENTS

IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES: FUTURE RIVER WALK TRAILHEAD PARK SIGNAGE IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS









EAST MOUNTAIN FOREST PARCEL 20-131 45 ACRES

EXISTING FACILITIES: HIKING WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES: TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS INFORMATION KIOSK PARKING INVASIVES MANAGEMENT



SCALE: 1" = 150

			- An
and the second sec			
7			1
	Recreational	Facility Assessm	ient
		Barrington, Ma.	
300'	DATE: 10/19/2020 SCALE: 1" = 80'	Tighe & B	ond
	FIGURE H	•	

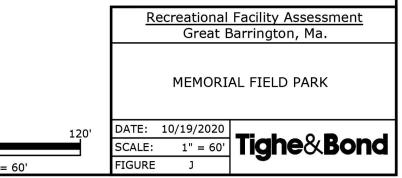




SCALE: 1" = 60'

MEMORIAL FIELD PARK PARCEL 19-145 3.8 ACRES

EXISTING FACILITIES: BASEBALL FIELD BASKETBALL COURT SKATE PARK BENCHES RIVERWALK GREENWAY TRAILHEAD IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES: PARK SIGNAGE





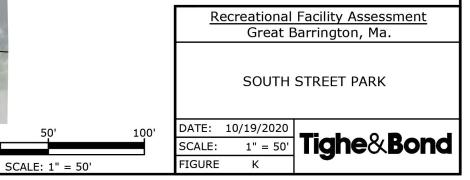
SOUTH STREET PARK PARCEL 19-51 1.33 ACRES

EXISTING FACILITIES: FITNESS EQUIPMENT

IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

DOG WALKING

PARK SIGNAGE





1000	GROVE STREET PARK PARCEL 20-93 2.68 ACRES
1	
	EXISTING FACILITIES:
	PLAYGROUND BASKETBALL COURT
	PICNIC TABLES
	BENCHES
	BENCHES
1-1-57	IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES:
- A B	PARK SIGNAGE
-	ADA ACCESS
5	
P-1723	Recreational Facility Assessment
1 . 1	Great Barrington, Ma.
	GROVE STREET PARK
0' 100'	DATE: 10/19/2020
1" = 50'	SCALE: 1" = 50' FIGURE L
1 = 50	



SCALE: 1" = 150'

OLYMPIAN MEADOWS PARCEL 22-64 22.2 ACRES

EXISTING FACILITIES: ATHLETIC FIELDS CONCESSIONS PLAYGROUND RESTROOMS RIVER WALK CONNECTOR

IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES: PARK SIGNAGE

IMPROVED PLAYGROUND

Recreational Facility Assessment Great Barrington, Ma.

OLYMPIAN MEADOWS PARK

DATE: 10/19/2020 SCALE: 1" = 150' FIGURE M

300'







SCALE: 1" = 50'

NEWSBOY MONUMENT PARK 0.25 ACRES

EXISTING FACILITIES: BENCHES HISTORIC MARKERS

> Recreational Facility Assessment Great Barrington, Ma.

NEWSBOY MONUMENT PARK

DATE: 10/19/2020 SCALE: 1" = 50' FIGURE O



100'



SCALE: 1" = 100'

Recreational Facility Assessment Great Barrington, Ma.

GILMORE AVENUE / COURTHOUSE PARK

DATE: 10/19/2020 SCALE: 1" = 100' Ρ

GILMORE AVENUE/

PARCEL 14-60 1.0 ACRES

SWING SET

PARK SIGNAGE

COURTHOUSE PARK

EXISTING FACILITIES:

IMPROVED PLAYGROUND

IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

200'





www.tighebond.com

