

# WALKABILITY & PARKING STUDY

LUNENBURG, MA



September 2019

Prepared in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The views and opinions of the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation or the U.S. Department of Transportation.

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# Walkability & Parking Study For Lunenburg, MA



*Main Street, Lunenburg*

Prepared for the town of Lunenburg

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MRPC  
464 Abbott Ave.  
Leominster, MA 01453  
(978) 345-7376  
[geaton@mrpc.org](mailto:geaton@mrpc.org)

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## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to assist the town of Lunenburg with a Walkability and Parking Study for their town center and Whalom area. Walkability is a measure of how friendly an area is for walking. There are many factors that influence walkability such as the presence of sidewalks or footpaths, roadway and traffic conditions and safety, accessibility for all users, etc. A walkable community not only benefits people by providing increased accessibility for walkers, it also has been known to provide health benefits for its residents, increased social interaction, reduction in crime, an increased sense of pride and volunteerism.

The study areas were developed, which incorporated critical infrastructure locations provided by the town, within the downtown area and included a 1000' buffer around those locations. Data that was collected within the study areas included traffic volumes, sidewalks, a related sign inventory, public parking locations, and from public input.

The residents and business owners were invited to participate in a walking audit where they had the opportunity to walk as a group within the study area and provide their personal experiences and thoughts regarding how walkable they felt the town is. Topic areas included sidewalks, roadways, crosswalks, trails, parks and public gathering spots, shade trees and benches, parking and local attractions. All comments and feedback are provided throughout the document.

Based on the data collected, a recommendations section was included. These recommendations consist of sidewalk upgrades and connections, crosswalk locations and visibility, intersection improvements, additional and improved parking, and roadway reconfiguring.

## II. INTRODUCTION

A walkable community is one that allows residents access to major community elements that are generally within a 10-minute walking distance. Those community elements may include shopping centers, town hall, library, post office, and the senior center. The term “Walkability” refers to how friendly an area is to walking. Factors that make a community walkable include street connectivity and design, pedestrian features, access for all roadway users (vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians), desirable streetscapes, and pedestrian and bicycle safety features. Being a walkable community doesn’t necessarily refer to only transportation features; aspects like socialization and walking for exercise can also play a part.

This report will outline the process of how the town of Lunenburg was evaluated for walkability as well as providing some recommendations to help boost pedestrian friendliness within the study area. Public parking was also examined to determine if more parking opportunities should be created to accommodate the abundance of points of interest that the town has to offer.

## III. STUDY PROCESS

### A. Study Area

The study areas for this report were determined by the Steering Committee that consisted of the Lunenburg Town Manager, Land Use Director, Police and Fire Departments, DPW, Senior Center, School Administration and the Library. These areas are located within the Lunenburg town center and the Whalom Lake area and include key community elements such as town hall, schools, parks, religious facilities, library, post office, senior center, shopping centers, banks, restaurants, town beach, etc. A 1,000-foot buffer was placed around these locations (see Map Figures 1A & 1B). These selected areas were broad enough to incorporate all the key locations and have it be realistic for walkers.

### B. Walking Audit

Once the study areas were established, the MRPC and the town of Lunenburg led a walking audit of the town center study area on June 1, 2019 (see flyer and handout in Appendix A). The walking audit was conducted to provide an assessment of walkability within the study area. Participants met in the town hall, broke up into two groups and walked Main Street to Highland Street, Memorial Drive, Massachusetts Avenue and the surrounding areas when time permitted.



After the first audit was held, the public requested that two additional audits be done to accommodate more comments. Because of this feedback, the MRPC conducted a second audit at the Whalom Lake/Town Beach area on July 25, 2019 and the Town of Lunenburg conducted a third audit at the town center on July 30, 2019.

During the walkability audit participants were asked to observe the following:

- Sidewalks – Are there sidewalks within the study area? Is the width/condition acceptable (at least 4 feet wide)? Do they have handicap access ramps at each crossing and crosswalk? Are there large cracks, bumps, dips, etc. present?
- Roadways – Are the current roadways in good condition? Is speeding a problem? Are large trucks an issue? Are drivers able to see pedestrians in crosswalks – is there adequate sight distance?
- Crosswalks – Are the current crosswalks adequate? Do you feel safe while crossing at the crosswalks? Are vehicles parked closer than 10 feet to the crosswalks? Are there “no parking” zones near crosswalks? Is the striping on the crosswalk visible?
- Trails – Are the trails in the area accessible to the study area? Are there guide signs to help people navigate to those trails and trail parking areas?
- Parks/Public Gathering Spots – Are these located nearby? Are they accessible? Is the number of parks/gathering spots adequate for the area?
- Shade Trees/Benches – Are there sufficient areas to take a rest? Will you be walking in the sun most of the time or are their shaded areas to cool off in the summer?
- Parking – Is there ample parking available within the study area? Are parked cars a problem within the study area? Are there guide signs to show where the parking areas are?
- Attractions – What are the local attractions or key destinations that you walked pasted (ex. library, parks, shops)? Is there a local attraction guide or signs for visitors?

Other questions to consider were:

1. What are the positive aspects of your walking route?
2. Would this walk be adequate for a young child, elderly person, or a disabled person?
3. What would make this area more walkable for all users?
4. What would encourage more walking in the area? What is missing?
5. What are the concerns regarding walking within the study area?
6. Are the neighborhoods in the area considered mixed income? Is there a variety of housing types in the area?
7. Did you see other people out walking within the study area?

After the walking audits were conducted, participants were asked to provide feedback, both positive and negative, based on their walking experiences.

### Summary of Findings Based Upon Public Input

The following summarizes a sample of the responses that participants developed regarding the positives and negatives of walkability and parking for the Lunenburg study areas based on the observation topics mentioned above.

Sidewalks – *Town Center* - Overall, most of the major roadways downtown have sidewalks. However, there are some gaps in the sidewalks and there could be improvements made to the areas along Memorial Drive, the Highland/Oak St intersection, and around Town Hall and the Ritter Building. Inconsistent curbing along existing sidewalks was also mentioned as a negative.

*Whalom Area* – Sidewalks are needed along Route 13, Whalom Road (from Rt. 13 to Prospect), Prospect Street (to the town beach), and Wallis Park Road.



*Memorial Drive*



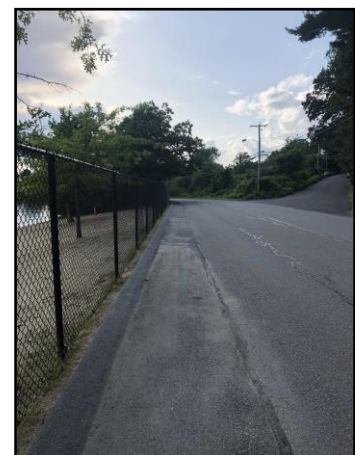
*Town Center*



*Massachusetts Ave.*



*Prospect Street*



*Town Beach*



Roadways – *Town Center* -Speeding is a concern along Massachusetts Ave and Memorial Drive. When on street parking occurs along Main Street, the roadway is narrowed and becomes dangerous. Sight distance is also a concern during this time. The intersection of Oak Street/Highland Street/Main Street is a major concern with sight distance, speed and overall safety.

*Whalom Area* – Speeding along Route 13 and safety concerns at the Route 13/Whalom Road intersection and at the town beach area.

Crosswalks – *Town Center* - The crosswalks within the study area were in good condition although a few were faded or not consistent throughout town. There were also crosswalks that did not connect to sidewalks and/or were not ADA accessible. The crossing lights at the intersection of Main Street at Massachusetts Ave were not long enough to safely cross. Due to overflow parking occurring on street, cars that parked too close to the crosswalks create a sight distance problem for both drivers and pedestrians. Bump outs were recommended to make pedestrians more visible and to slow vehicles down.

*Whalom Area* – Along Route 13 it is clear that people cross the street from the Emerald Place Apartment Complex or from where they parked on the roadway to get to the local businesses and restaurants on the opposite side. There is a crossing sign in the roadway at this location but no crosswalk. There is also a walkway from Emerald Place that leads to Route 13 but does not connect to a sidewalk or crosswalk. There is also room for crosswalk improvements at the Route 13/Whalom Road intersection, and most crosswalks did not comply with ADA standards when they connected up to sidewalks.



*Crosswalk at Elementary School*



*Crosswalk at Main/Oak/Highland St*



*Walkway from Emerald Place to Rt. 13*



*Crossing sign on Route 13*

Trails – *Town Center* – It was mentioned that a possible trail connection could be made from Marshall Park east to Highland Street. This would connect the park to Oak Street which leads to the schools.

*Whalom Area* – there were no trails mentioned in this area.

Parks/Public Gathering Spots- *Town Center* – There was discussion regarding the Kid's Kingdom playground on Memorial Drive where moving a portion of the play space to the northeast would allow for more parking along east side the senior center. The Veterans Memorial Park is also centrally located in between Massachusetts Ave and Memorial Drive. The gazebo/common area is located between Lancaster Ave and Leominster Road and is where many community events and entertainment occur.

*Whalom Area* – The town beach was the major topic of discussion where there is minimal designated parking and visitors are forced to park on street which creates dangerous conditions for both drivers and pedestrians. There is an abundance of parking opportunities along Lake Front Ave where you can sit and look out at the lake, take a walk or do some fishing. There is also a playground on Wallis Park Road that would benefit from sidewalk access from Whalom Road.



*Kid's Kingdom Playground*



*Gazebo*



*Town Beach*



*Wallis Park*



Shade Trees/Benches – *Town Center* - There are shade trees throughout the town center and benches at the major gathering spots.

*Whalom Area* – there is a lack of shade trees and benches in the area of Route 13 but the parks and gathering spots do have some places to sit down and get out of the sun.



*Main Street Common*



*Ritter Building*



*Waterfront walkway & parking area*



*Wallis Park Benches*

Parking – *Town Center* – Adequate public parking for municipal offices was a major concern. On Street parking occurs during specific times of day (Senior Center activities, Town Hall evening meetings, Church service, etc.) which causes disruptions in traffic and walkability.

*Whalom Area* – The town beach was a major focus for lack of adequate parking with narrow roadways and shoulders as well as speeding vehicles.



*Parking along Memorial Drive*



*Town Beach*



*Lake Front Ave parking*

Attractions – *Town Center* - Most people felt that there were an abundance of attractions and shops in both study areas. Many local businesses, restaurants, cafes and parks exist. The study area is also located in the historic district.

*Whalom Area* – The abundance of housing at Emerald Place at Lake Whalom is a major draw to the area, as are the small restaurants and shops. Whalom Lake itself and the town beach are very popular destinations for swimming and fishing and Wallis Park is also well known.



*The Village business building*



*Restaurant/Bar*



*Emerald Place housing complex*

## C. Data Collection

### 1. Traffic Volume Data

The following traffic volumes were conducted as part of the MRPC's yearly count program or from statewide data provided by MassDOT. This data is calculated for 2018 through the use of average growth factors that can be found on the MassDOT MS2 website - <https://mhd.ms2soft.com/tcds/tsearch.asp?loc=Mhd&mod=> . Please see Map Figure 2A & 2B for more detailed location information.

**Town Center Traffic Volumes**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Average Traffic Volume based on Growth Factors (Vehicles per Day)</b>
Lancaster Ave south of Massachusetts Ave.	5,000
Leominster Road south of Whiting St	4,000
Massachusetts Ave east of Main Street	7,600
Massachusetts Ave west of Main Street	8,300
Main Street north of Massachusetts Ave.	3,500
Memorial Drive north of Massachusetts Ave.	150
Northfield Road north of Massachusetts Ave.	1,400
Oak Ave. west of Northfield Road	1,100
Whiting Street northeast of Lancaster Ave.	1,200

Traffic volumes are highest along the major intersection in the town center. Massachusetts Ave. (Rt. 2A) averages around 8,000 vehicles per day, Main Street has around 3,500 and Lancaster Ave has 5,000 vehicles per day. The side streets have a much lower volume that range from 150-4,000 vehicles per day.



### Whalom Area Traffic Volumes

Location	Average Traffic Volume based on Growth Factors (Vehicles per Day)
Electric Ave north of Whalom Road	12,100
Electric Ave. south of Whalom Road	13,900
Lakefront Ave at the Leominster Line	1,900
Pond Street east of Prospect Street	790
Prospect Street east of Electric Ave	3,300
Prospect Street east of Pond Street	1,100
Whalom Road west of Electric Ave	3,200

Traffic volumes in this area are highest along Electric Avenue (Route 13) at around 12,000-13,000 vehicles per day on average. Prospect Street and Whalom Road have relatively similar volumes at around 3,200-3,300 vehicles per day and the remaining side streets have a much less traffic overall.

## 2. Crash History

The MRPC collected accident data from the Lunenburg Police Department for the years of 2016-2019. All recorded crashes in the study area were mapped in Map Figure 3A & 3B. For the town of Lunenburg there were 51 total crashes recorded within the town center area and 23 within the Whalom Area. Of those reported crashes, zero were reported as fatal injury crashes for either study area. The town center had 9 non-fatal injury crashes and 42 were considered property damage only. The Whalom area had 6 non-fatal injury crashes and 17 property damage only crashes. Out of the 51 total crashes, none involved a cyclist or pedestrian.

As shown on the maps, The Whalom area doesn't appear to have many crashes in one particular area. The town center shows that most crashes occur at the Main Street/Massachusetts Ave intersection and the Lancaster Ave/Whiting Street intersection. The map also shows a number of non-fatal injury crashes along the stretch of Massachusetts Ave from Lancaster Ave to Chestnut Street.

## 3. Inventory of Road Facilities

This inventory incorporated all roadways (local streets, collectors, arterials, and highways) and any pedestrian-related infrastructure that may exist. Data that was collected included sidewalks, crosswalks, and signage. (See Map Figure 4)

Sidewalks are probably one of the most important aspects of a walkable community. In most downtown areas, simply walking along the side of the road with traffic is far too dangerous for most pedestrians. Since the average daily traffic through downtown Lunenburg is 8,000 and

12,000-13,000 in the Whalom area it is imperative that sidewalks exist and are in good condition to accommodate pedestrians of all ages and abilities.

There are many miles of sidewalk within the study areas and a majority of those are in good condition. Sidewalks are needed along side streets that would connect up to Main Street/Massachusetts Ave and Electric Ave.

#### **4. Parking**

Parking is a major concern within both study areas. The town center area is lacking parking at the municipal offices (Town Hall and the Ritter Building) as well as the Senior Center and the surrounding areas. The municipally owned parcels were analyzed for public parking opportunities. The parking areas at the Boys & Girls Club, Eagle House Senior Center, Library, Brooks House and Ritter Building were all calculated in the following table:

**Lunenburg Center Parking**

<b>Parking Lot Location</b>	<b>Number of Total Spaces</b>	<b>Number of Handicap Spaces</b>
Boys & Girls Club	19	0
Boys & Girls Club (side lot)	24	4
Senior Center	9	2
Playground	6	0
Library	47	3
Brooks House	19	1
Ritter Building	14	1

The Whalom area has an abundance of parking along Whalom Lake on Lakefront Avenue but the popular town beach on Prospect Street does not have adequate/safe parking or access. This lack of parking creates challenges to residents and visitors who are trying to access these facilities. Adequate parking may be available within walking distance but safe pedestrian accommodations are also lacking in these areas which causes safety concerns. The parking areas along Lakefront Ave, Wallis Park, Brian McNally Park and the Town Beach were calculated in the following table:

**Whalom Area Parking**

<b>Parking Lot Location</b>	<b>Number of Total Spaces</b>	<b>Number of Handicap Spaces</b>
Lakefront Ave. (waterfront)	62	4
Wallis Park (main lot)	13	0
Wallis Park (basketball court)	8	0
Brian McNally Park	No designated parking spots	
Town Beach	No designated parking spots	



## D. Recommendations

When streets and town centers are designed only for cars, they become barriers for pedestrians of all abilities, who cannot get from point A to point B safely. As a result, many people end up in their cars, missing out on opportunities for much needed fresh air, socialization and physical activity.

Based upon the data collected and the analysis conducted, the following Recommendations were developed: (Numbered recommendations are in no particular order and can be referenced as examples on map Figure 6A & 6B)

### 1. Infrastructure Improvements

#### Sidewalks

- Repair all damaged, cracked, chipped and uneven portions of the existing sidewalks.
- Continue the sidewalk up Memorial Drive to the Library (#1).
- Sidewalk access at the Oak Ave/Highland St/Main St intersection (#2).
- Add sidewalks along Prospect Street from Lakefront Ave to Town Beach if possible. Work with the DPW to determine if there is the proper amount of roadway width to continue all the way to the Town Beach (#3).
- Add/continue sidewalk along Route 13 from the Leominster line northwards (#4).
- Add Sidewalk along Whalom Road from Route 13 to Prospect Street (#5).
- Add sidewalk on Wallis Park Road from Whalom Road to the Playground (#6).
- Mandate sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes in all developments where appropriate.
- Provide and maintain pedestrian lighting.

#### Crosswalks

- If sidewalks are added down Memorial Drive, a crosswalk will be needed to connect southwards to the Library.
- Add additional crosswalk on Lakefront Ave. where the southern portion of Great Pond Road connects. (#7)
- Consider traffic calming techniques such as road narrowing or adding bump outs at major crosswalk locations along Main Street, Route 2A and Route 13.
- Place “No Parking” signs for areas within 10 feet of a crosswalk or driveway.
- Keep crosswalk striping bright, consistent and visible year-round.
- Place crosswalks that connect to sidewalks and have ADA accessible ramps.
- Add advanced warning signs or flashing signs at high traffic areas.

#### Roadways

- Intersection improvements at Main St/Highland St/Oak St. could include eliminating one of the legs to create a T intersection (#8).
- Consider one-way designation for Memorial Drive heading eastbound. This would create more sidewalk and on street parking opportunities while maintaining a more accessible

roadway for public safety vehicles by having parking limited to one side of the roadway (#9).

- Work with the DPW to determine if it would be possible to shift Prospect Street to the north to allow for a sidewalk and/or parking opportunity at the Town Beach (#10).
- Further study the public recommendation of having Prospect Street become one-way during open Town Beach hours to allow for parking and reduce traffic in this area (#10). This location currently has around 1,728 vehicles that pass through during the hours of 10:00am – 7:00pm.
- Consider bike lanes whenever possible.
- Increase pedestrian access at Route 13/Whalom Road intersection by improving crosswalks, ramps and pedestrian signals and signage.
- Warning signs should continue to be placed and maintained in the school area to warn all drivers of pedestrians, cyclists and children. Placement of all regulatory and guidance signs should conform to guidelines established by Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) – Highway Division and the “Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices” (MUTCD).

#### Parking

- Consider a municipal parking lot between School Street and the Ritter Building (#11).
- Designated on street parking could be added if Memorial Drive was transformed into a one-way street (#9). This would also provide parking and access to the TC Passios building next to the playground where there have been discussions about making this building the new Town Hall.
- Senior Center parking could be added to the east of the building if the Kids Kingdom playground was moved further to the east (#12).
- On-street parking could be added to Prospect Street at the Town Beach if the roadway could be shifted north (#10).
- Increase the number of handicap parking spaces in the municipal lots

#### Other

- Continue to work towards Complete Streets efforts by following the Lunenburg Complete Streets Policy that was developed in 2017. This policy helped create the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan in 2018 and is a great resource in applying for Complete Streets funding or municipal project development using other funding sources.
- Encourage the Community to grow their Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programing efforts. This program works to increase safe biking and walking among elementary and middle school students by using a collaborative, community-focused approach that bridges the gap between health and transportation. SRTS utilizes the six E’s to implement its program- Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation, Engineering, and Equity.
- Continue to work towards the completion of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan. This plan is a formal document available to the public outlining a city’s compliance with ADA. A typical transition plan table of contents includes:

1. **Introduction/Executive Summary:** Background on need and purpose, relationship to other laws and a general outcome of self-evaluation.
2. **ADA Program Coordination:** Listing one or more designated persons responsible for coordinating ADA compliance. This person or persons is responsible to serve staff and the public with knowledge and background to address questions and issues regarding ADA.
3. **ADA Public Notice:** Statement on the city's understanding of their responsibility for employment, communications, policy, and modifications to policies and procedures.
4. **Grievance Procedure:** A written and published procedure with contact information on how a resident can make a complaint or grievance of discrimination on the basis of a disability.
5. **Public Involvement:** The procedure on how the city reaches out to the disabled public on accessibility challenges and priorities.
6. **Self-Evaluation:** Detail of existing barriers to city communications, programs and services, streets and intersections, and buildings and outdoor areas.
7. **Implementation Program:** The city's methods and schedule on barrier removals. This section can include costs for the work.

## IV. NEXT STEPS

### A. Project Development

Project Development is the process that takes a transportation improvement from concept through construction.

Every year the Montachusett region receives federal and state funds for projects to improve the transportation network in local communities. These funds and projects are prioritized through the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO), a regional advisory group that annually develops the Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

For a community to receive funds, the project must follow a multi-step review and approval process required by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Highway Division. This process is summarized in the flowchart located on the following page.

Project proponents are required to follow this process whenever MassDOT Highway Division is involved in the decision-making process. The project development procedures are, therefore, applicable to any of the following situations:

- When MassDOT is the proponent; or
- When MassDOT is responsible for project funding (state or federal-aid projects); or
- When MassDOT controls the infrastructure (projects on state highways).

Projects with local jurisdiction and local funding sources are not required to go through this review process unless the project is located on the National Highway or Federal-Aid Systems.

The project development process is designed to progressively narrow the projects focus in order to develop a project that addresses identified needs at that location. There should be opportunities for public participation throughout.

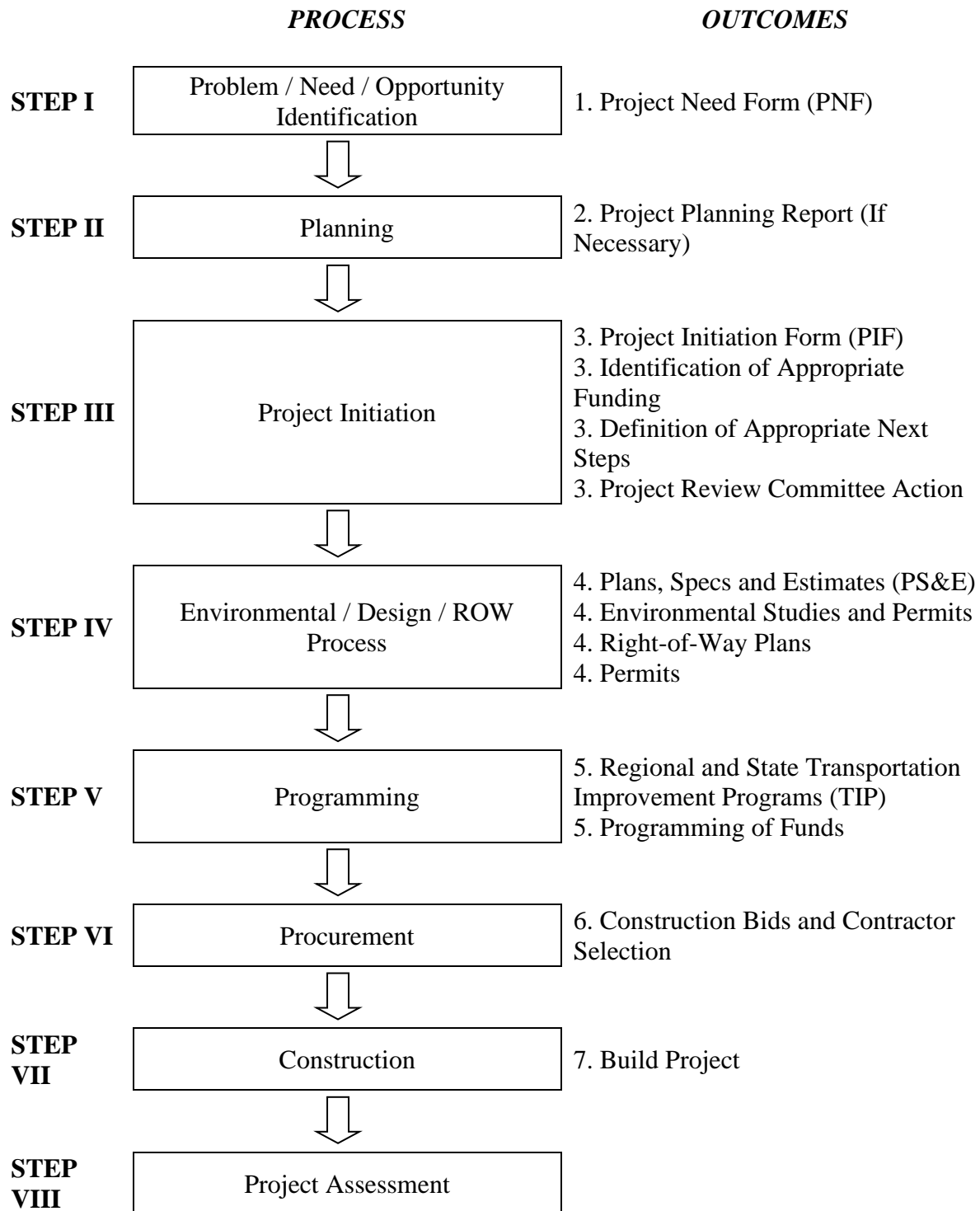
The eight steps in the above figure are described in detail in Chapter 2, Project Development Guide of the MassDOT Highway Division Design Guidebook (<http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/default.asp?pgid=content/designGuide&sid=about>).

In summary, to get a project constructed, a community should:

1. Using MassDOT's online project initiation tool, MaPIT, the town identifies project needs.
2. Using MaPIT, project proponent works with a MassDOT District Office or other MassDOT Section to define project scope, costs, timeline, impacts and responsibilities.
3. District Office or other MassDOT Section submits project to the Project Review Committee for approval.
4. MassDOT and its Project Review Committee (PRC) act upon the PIF. If the project is approved by the PRC, the community is notified and, if applicable, initiates the design process for the project.
5. The municipality hires a design consultant and also begins work on the right of way plans as well as any permits, local approvals, etc.
6. During this phase the project is incorporated into the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by the MPO. Placement and prioritization of the project is based upon available funds, evaluation criteria scoring, design status and public support and comments.
7. Design public hearing is held at the 25% design phase.
8. Design progresses to 100% and all plans, specifications and estimates (PS&E) are completed. Project is then ready for advertisement by MassDOT.

Copies of the PNF and PIF can be found in the Appendix of this report. The MassDOT MaPIT Tool can be accessed online with credentials given to the communities by MassDOT.

## **Project Development Process**



Source: MassDOT Highway Division

## B. Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO)

All urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000 are required by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal regulations to designate an MPO for the area. The establishment of an MPO is necessary for the State to receive Federal transportation funds. In the Montachusett Region, the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) serves as staff for the MPO. The MRPC staff annually produces a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). In addition, a Regional Transportation Plan is updated periodically to reflect the changing transportation needs of the area. A 2020 Regional Transportation Plan was prepared and endorsed by the MPO on July 17, 2019.

The MPO in the Montachusett Region (after reorganization in October 2001) is currently comprised of the following signatories:

- Secretary and CEO of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT);
- Administrator of MassDOT Highway Division;
- Chairman of the MRPC;
- Chairman of Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART)\*;
- Mayor of the City of Fitchburg
- Mayor of the City of Gardner
- Mayor of the City of Leominster
- Four Representatives from the four identified Subregions of towns in the MRPC region

\*This member will be represented by one of the Mayors from Fitchburg, Gardner or Leominster.

The MMPO Subregions are composed as such:

Subregion 1 - Athol, Hubbardston, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, Templeton, Winchendon;  
Subregion 2 - Ashburnham, Ashby, Groton, Townsend, Westminster;  
Subregion 3 - Ayer, Harvard, Lunenburg and Shirley;  
Subregion 4 - Clinton, Lancaster, Sterling.

These 10 members serve as the MPO Policy Board for the regional "3C" (comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing) transportation planning process.

## C. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Development and Process

The TIP is a prioritized listing of transportation projects proposed for implementation during the future four federal fiscal years and is updated every year by the MMPO. TIP projects are

identified by funding category so that where necessary priorities may be established for projects within each funding program. Unless otherwise noted, the agency responsible for implementing highway projects is the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division and, for transit projects, the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority.

MRPC staff annually develops the TIP project listing from sources that include the MassDOT's Project Information System, MassDOT Highway Division Districts 2 and 3, local officials, the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC), the Long and Short Range Elements of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Prioritization of projects is based upon input from MassDOT regarding project design and implementation status, local prioritization from chief elected officials, scoring of the project based upon the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC), fiscal constraints for the Montachusett Region, consensus vote by the MJTC and formal adoption by the MPO. Throughout this procedure, input from local citizens are reviewed and considered where appropriate in the prioritization process.

An initial project listing is obtained from MassDOT and the local communities. These projects are then reviewed one by one to ascertain their current status as to design and potential advertising dates. Projects are then scored and evaluated utilizing the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) developed by the MassDOT. The TEC is a series of criteria to "be applied by the appropriate implementing agency during the project development stage to ensure that our limited budgetary and staff resources are committed to the best proposals; to assist the MPO process of programming federal funding through the regional Transportation Improvement Programs; and to examine existing projects in the pipeline to determine which should ultimately proceed to design and construction." Final scores based upon the TEC then become part of the decision and prioritization process.

From this information, a project listing by fiscal year is developed. This fiscal listing is then compared to the Federal funding target allocation for the region. The listing is then reviewed by state and local officials, as well as the MJTC and the MMPO, to determine fiscal constraint by funding year. Any problems are then identified. Through the MMPO, projects are adjusted and prioritized in order to resolve the identified problems.

In conformance established procedures with the MMPO Public Participation Program (PPP), developed to ensure a "proactive public involvement process ... in developing plans and TIPs, the draft TIP is distributed for a federally mandated 30-day public review and comment period. Following completion of the 30-day review period, any comments or issues received are addressed and reflected in the final TIP. This document is then reviewed by the MJTC, MRPC and MMPO and is recommended for endorsement by the MMPO at a subsequent MMPO meeting.

The fully endorsed TIP is then distributed to Federal, State and local agencies and groups, including FTA, FHWA, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) again in conformance with the PPP.



At any time during the Federal Fiscal Year, an amendment to the TIP can be developed and endorsed by the MMPO following similar procedures established for the TIP, i.e. a draft amendment is prepared and released for a 30 day public review and comment period, reviewed by the MJTC, MRPC and the MMPO and endorsed if deemed appropriate.

## D. Funding Programs

Several funding sources exist on the federal and state level that may be applicable to the preferred projects identified by the communities within this report. As the municipality begins the project development process, the following funding sources/options may come into play during the design, implementation and construction phases. The community should note that a funding program need not be identified as part of the PNF or PIF process but can be determined as the project limits and scope become defined.

The following is a brief listing of Federal, State and Local funding programs that may be potential sources for road, bridge, trail and sidewalk projects. Information is based upon the recent federal surface transportation funding legislation known as Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. This legislation has created a more streamlined, performance-based and multimodal program to address the challenges facing the country's transportation system. For further information on some of these programs please contact the MRPC or MassDOT Highway Division. Additional information on the FAST Act can be found at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) website, [www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/)

### **The FAST Act**

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. No. 114-94) into law—the first federal law in over a decade to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment. The FAST Act authorizes \$305 billion over fiscal years 2016 through 2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. The FAST Act maintains our focus on safety, keeps intact the established structure of the various highway-related programs we manage, continues efforts to streamline project delivery and, for the first time, provides a dedicated source of federal dollars for freight projects. With the enactment of the FAST Act, states and local governments are now moving forward with critical transportation projects with the confidence that they will have a federal partner over the long term. The following FAST Act programs may be applicable to securing funding for improvements.

### Federal Programs:

- *National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)* - The enhanced National Highway System (NHS) is composed of approximately 220,000 miles of rural and urban roads serving major population centers, international border crossings, intermodal transportation facilities, and major travel destinations. It includes the Interstate System,

all principal arterials (including some not previously designated as part of the NHS) and border crossings on those routes, highways that provide motor vehicle access between the NHS and major intermodal transportation facilities, and the network of highways important to U.S. strategic defense (STRAHNET) and its connectors to major military installations.

- *Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)* - The FAST Act converts the long-standing Surface Transportation Program into the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, acknowledging that this program has the most flexible eligibilities among all Federal-aid highway programs and aligning the program's name with how FHWA has historically administered it. The FAST Act provides an estimated annual average of \$11.7 billion for STBG, which States and localities may use for projects to preserve or improve conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway, bridge projects on any public road, facilities for nonmotorized transportation, transit capital projects, and public bus terminals and facilities.
- *Railway-Highway Crossings Program* - The FAST Act continues the Railway-Highway Crossings Program, providing funds for safety improvements to reduce the number of fatalities, injuries, and crashes at public railway-highway grade crossings.
- *Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)* - The CMAQ program provides a flexible funding source to State and local governments for transportation projects and programs to help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. Funding is available to reduce congestion and improve air quality for areas that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter (nonattainment areas) as well as former nonattainment areas that are now in compliance (maintenance areas). States with no nonattainment or maintenance areas may use their CMAQ funds for any CMAQ- or STP-eligible project.
- *Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)* - The HSIP emphasizes a data-driven, strategic approach to improving highway safety on all public roads that focuses on performance. The foundation for this approach is a safety data system, which each State is required to have to identify key safety problems, establish their relative severity, and then adopt strategic and performance-based goals to maximize safety. Every State is required to develop a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) that lays out strategies to address these key safety problems.
- *Transportation Alternatives (TA)* - The FAST Act eliminates the MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and replaces it with a set-aside of STBG funding for transportation alternatives. These set-aside funds include all projects and activities that were previously eligible under TAP, encompassing a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe

routes to school projects, community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity. Eligible activities include:

- Transportation alternatives (new definition incorporates many transportation enhancement activities and several new activities)
- Recreational trails program (program remains unchanged)
- Safe routes to schools program
- Planning, designing, or constructing roadways within the right-of way of former Interstate routes or other divided highways.

#### State Programs:

- *MassWorks Infrastructure Grants* - The MassWorks Infrastructure Program is a competitive grant program that provides the largest and most flexible source of capital funds to municipalities and other eligible public entities for public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs throughout the Commonwealth.
- *Municipal Bridge Program* - MassDOT manages and funds rehabilitation and replacement of municipally-owned bridges, and as of 2016 has allocated \$50 million in general obligation bonds for municipal structures over the next five years.
- *Complete Streets Program* - MassDOT provides funding to cities and towns for the completion of “Complete Streets” plans, which could include provisions for freight loading areas in business districts.

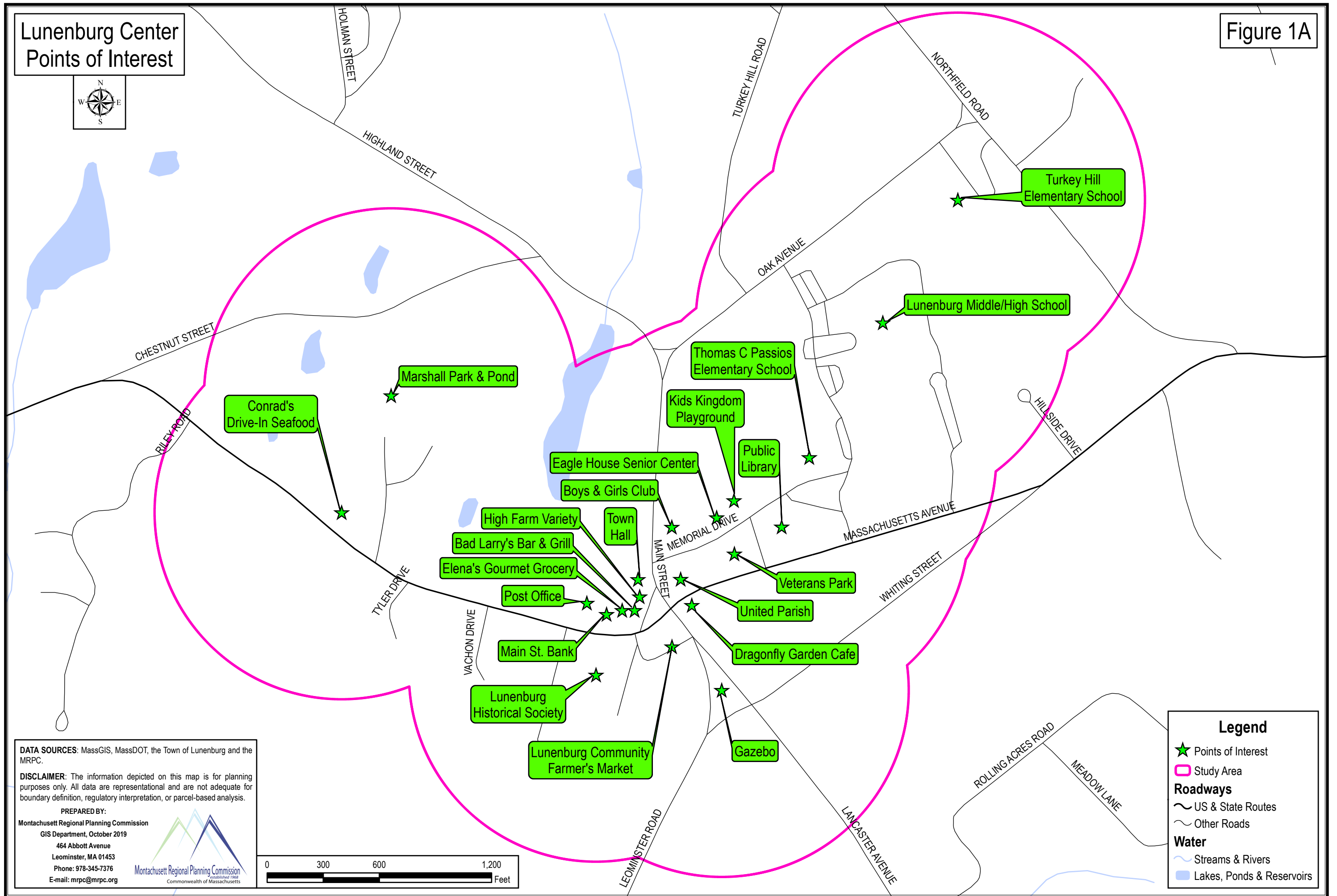
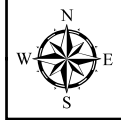
#### Local Sources:

- *Chapter 90 Transportation Funds* -The Chapter 90 Program entitles municipalities to reimbursement of documented expenditures for Capital Improvement Projects for Highway Construction, Preservation and Improvement Projects that create or extend the life of Capital Facilities under the provisions of General Laws Chapter 90, Section 34, Clause 2(a) on approved Projects. Eligible Highway Construction projects include resurfacing, microsurfacing, pug mill mix (cold mix), drainage, intersections, sidewalks, footbridges, berms and curbs, traffic controls and related facilities, right-of-way acquisition, street lighting (excluding operating costs and decorative enhancements), bridges, and tree planting/landscaping in association with a project.

## **MAP FIGURES**

# Lunenburg Center Points of Interest

Figure 1A



**DATA SOURCES:** MassGIS, MassDOT, the Town of Lunenburg and the MRPC.

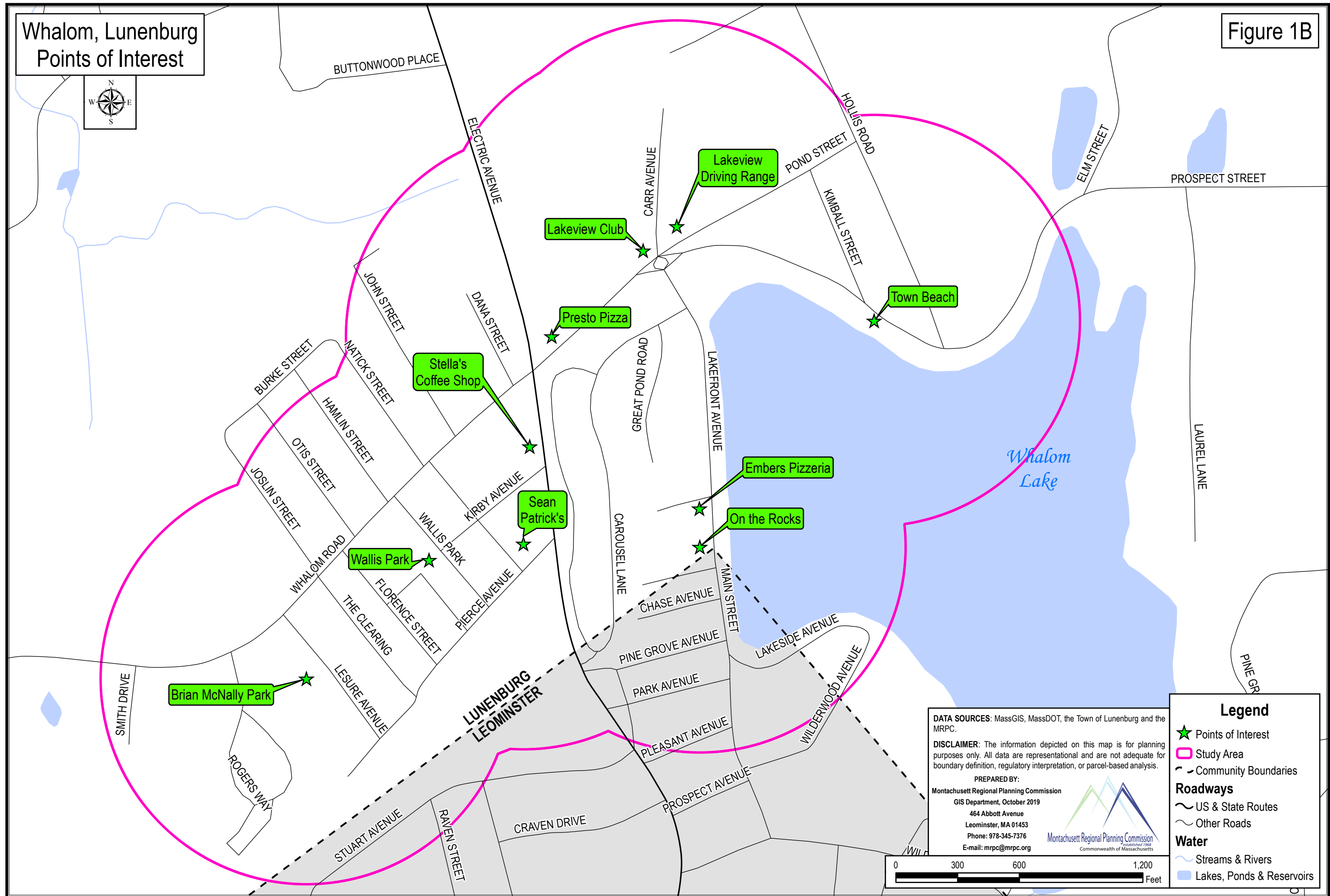
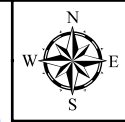
**DISCLAIMER:** The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. All data are representational and are not adequate for boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-based analysis.

**PREPARED BY:**  
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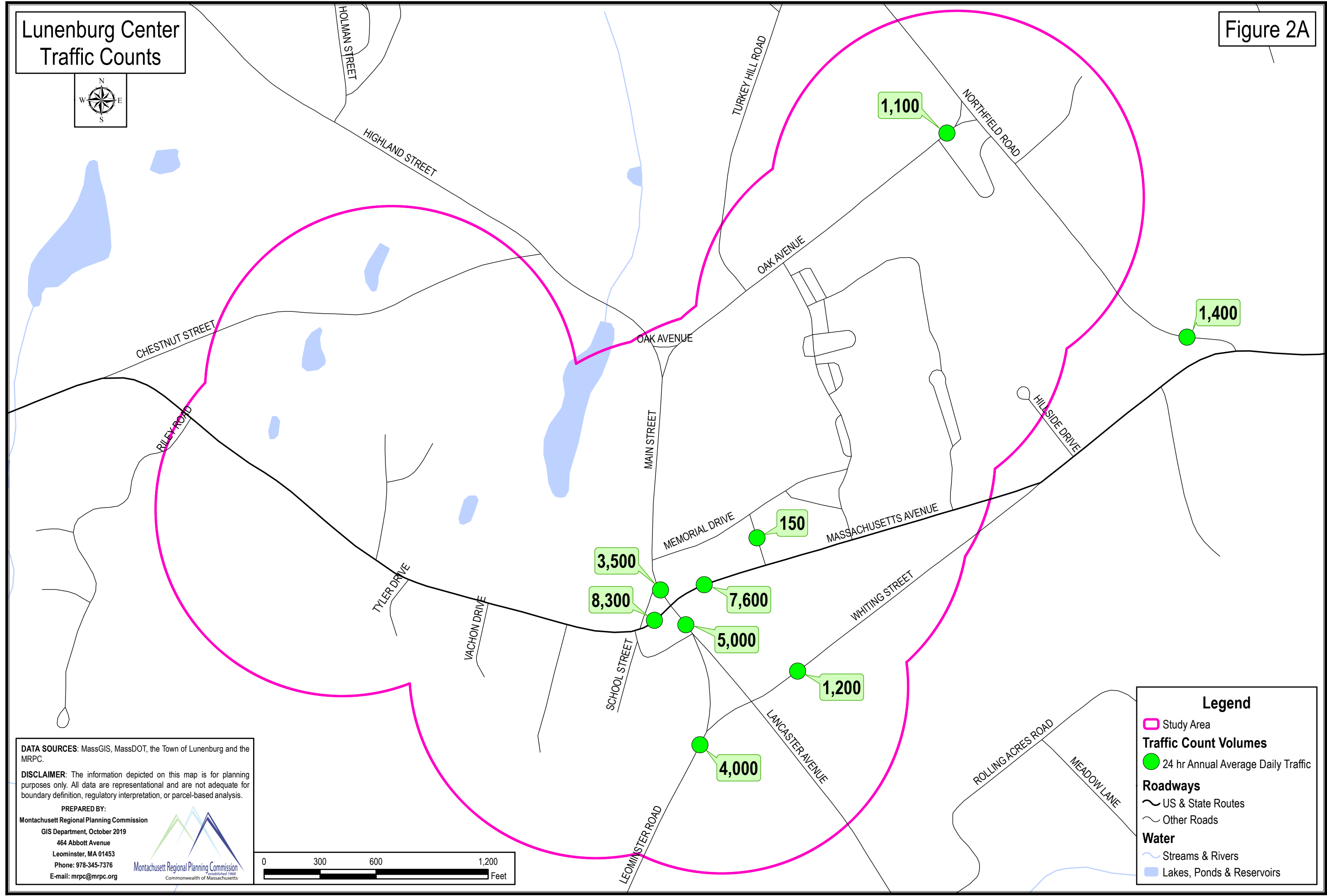
# Whalom, Lunenburg Points of Interest

Figure 1B



# Lunenburg Center Traffic Counts

Figure 2A

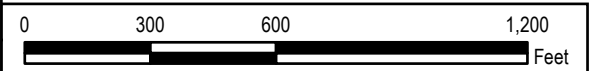


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**Montachusett Regional Planning Commission**  
 Established 1968  
 Commonwealth of Massachusetts



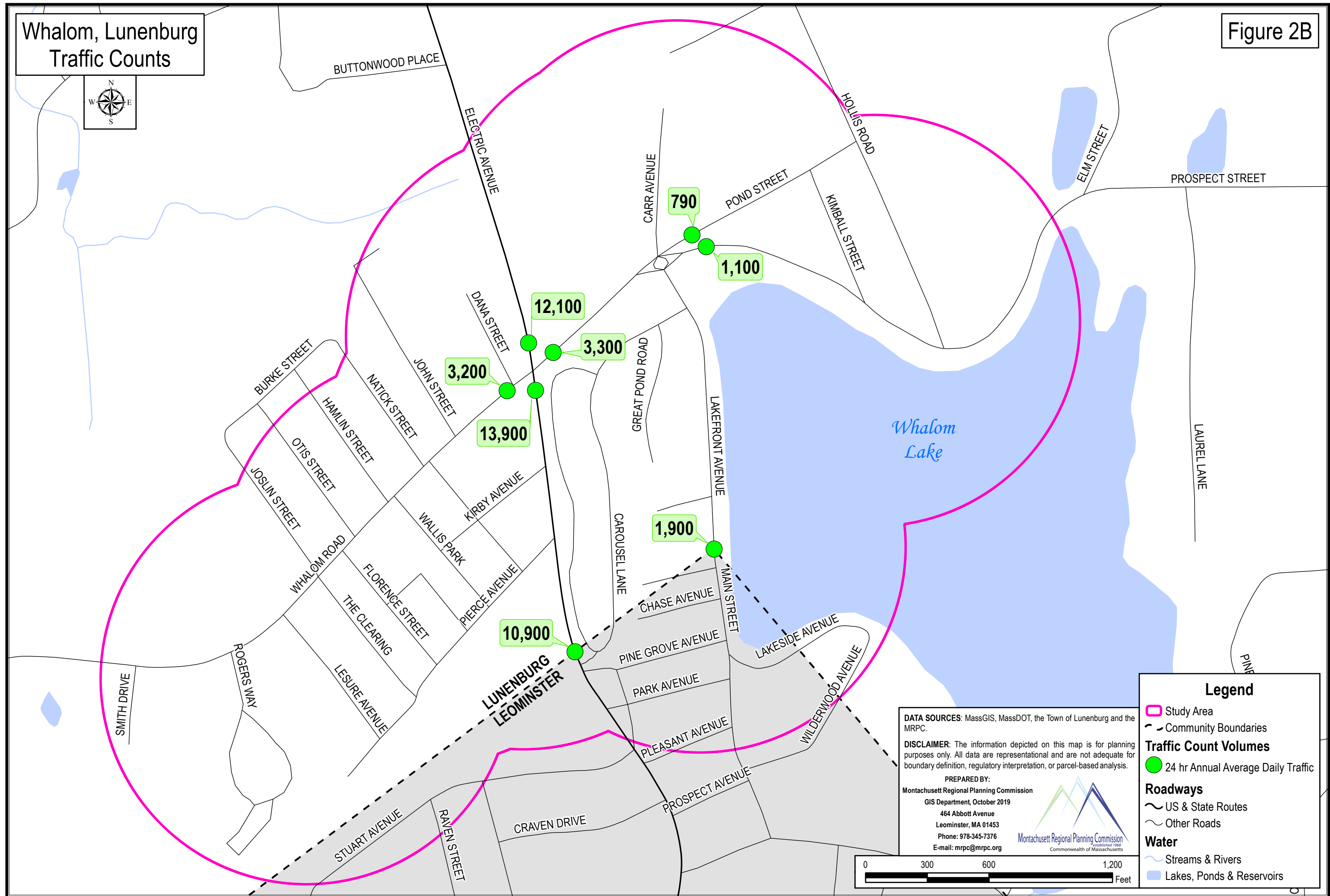
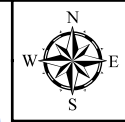
**Legend**

- Study Area
- Traffic Count Volumes**
  - 24 hr Annual Average Daily Traffic
- Roadways**
  - ~ US & State Routes
  - ~ Other Roads
- Water**
  - ~ Streams & Rivers
  - Lakes, Ponds & Reservoirs



# Whalom, Lunenburg Traffic Counts

Figure 2B



**DATA SOURCES:** MassGIS, MassDOT, the Town of Lunenburg and the MRPC.

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## Legend

- Study Area
- Community Boundaries
- Traffic Count Volumes**
  - 24 hr Annual Average Daily Traffic
- Roadways**
  - US & State Routes
  - Other Roads
- Water**
  - Streams & Rivers
  - Lakes, Ponds & Reservoirs



# Lunenburg Center Crash Data\* May 2016 to May 2019

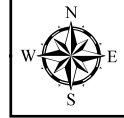
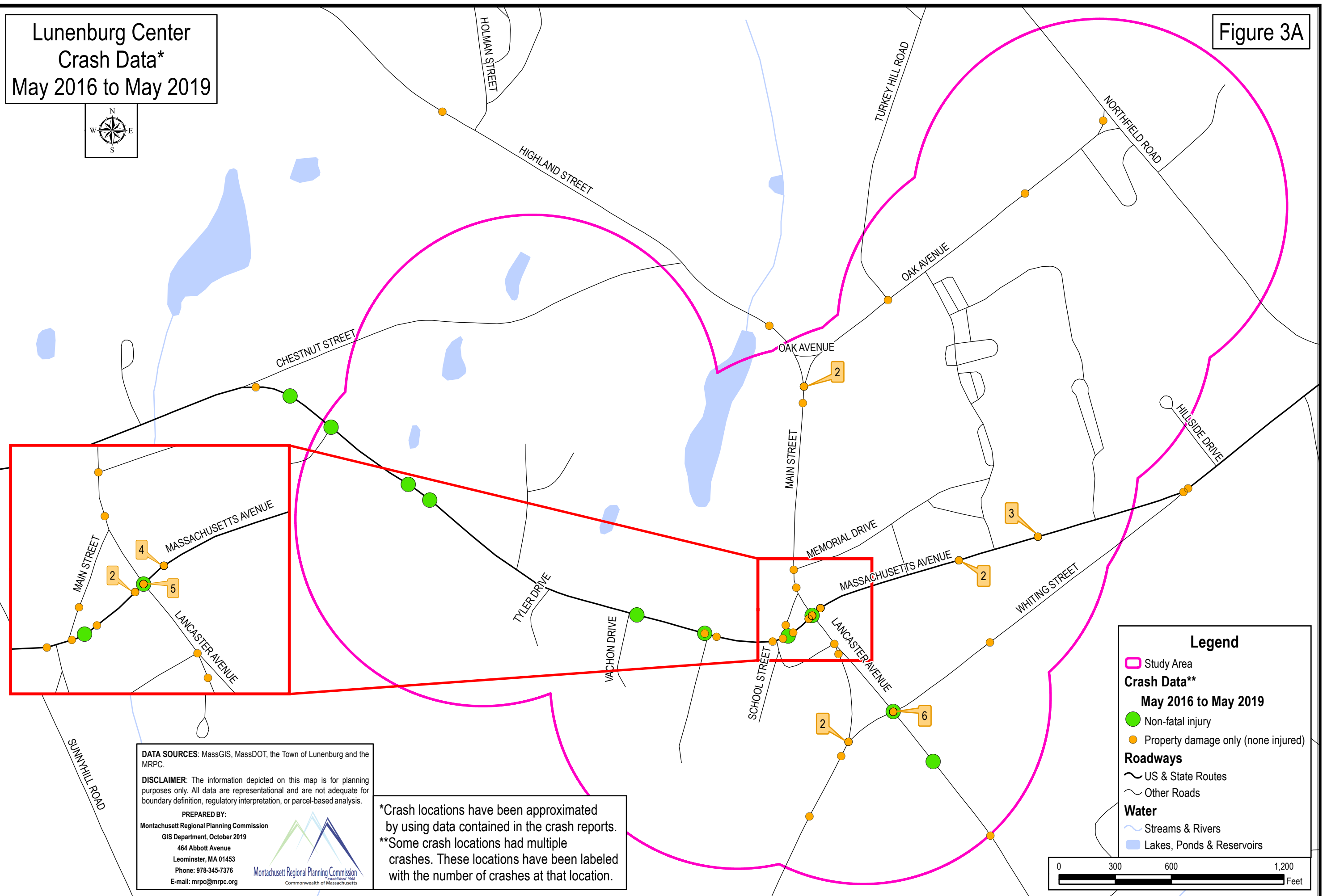
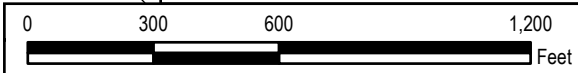


Figure 3A



**Legend**

- Study Area
- Crash Data\*\***  
May 2016 to May 2019
  - Non-fatal injury
  - Property damage only (none injured)
- Roadways**
  - US & State Routes
  - Other Roads
- Water**
  - Streams & Rivers
  - Lakes, Ponds & Reservoirs



**DATA SOURCES:** MassGIS, MassDOT, the Town of Lunenburg and the MRPC.

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\*Crash locations have been approximated by using data contained in the crash reports.  
 \*\*Some crash locations had multiple crashes. These locations have been labeled with the number of crashes at that location.

Whalom, Lunenburg  
Crash Data\*  
May 2016 to May 2019

Figure 3B

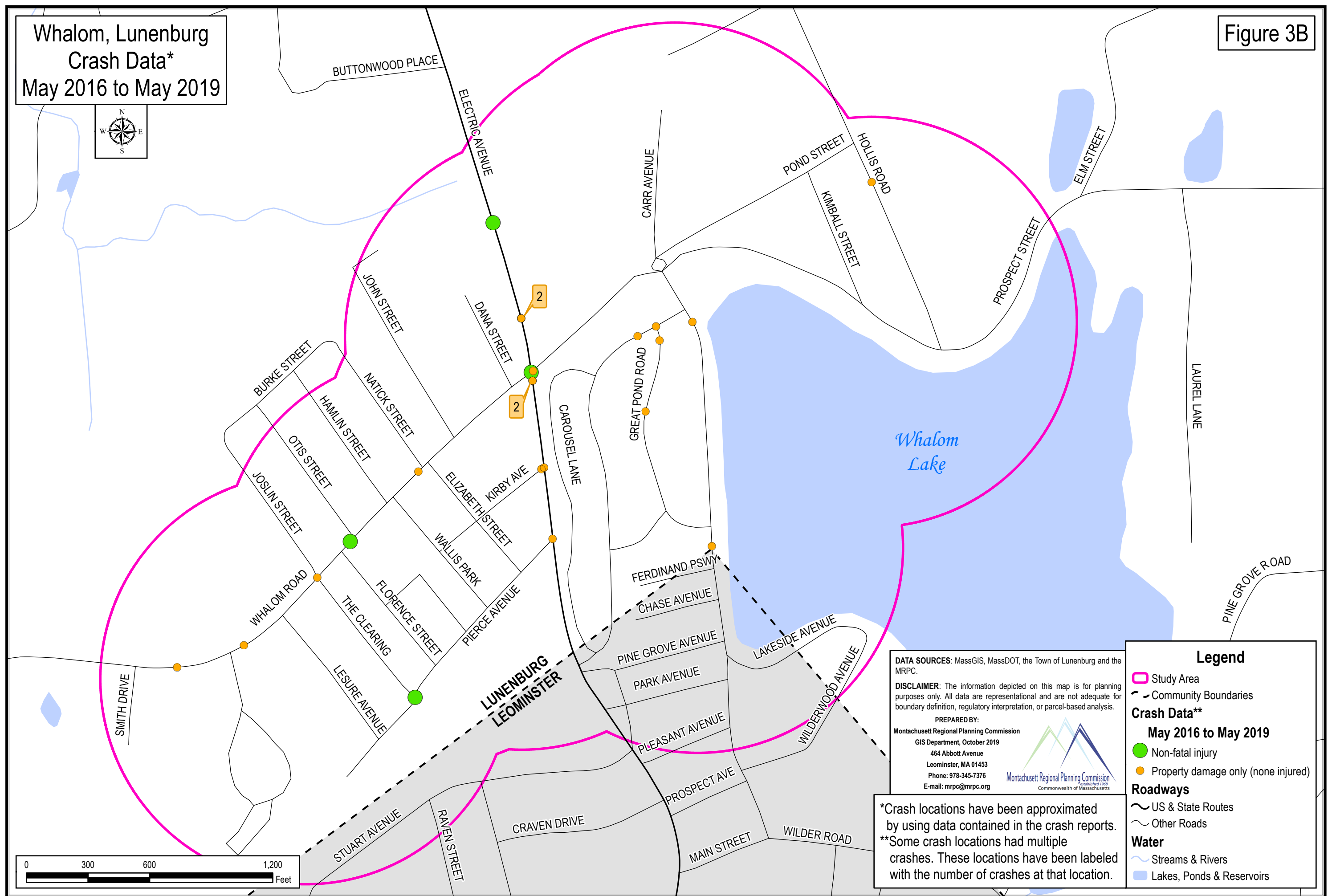
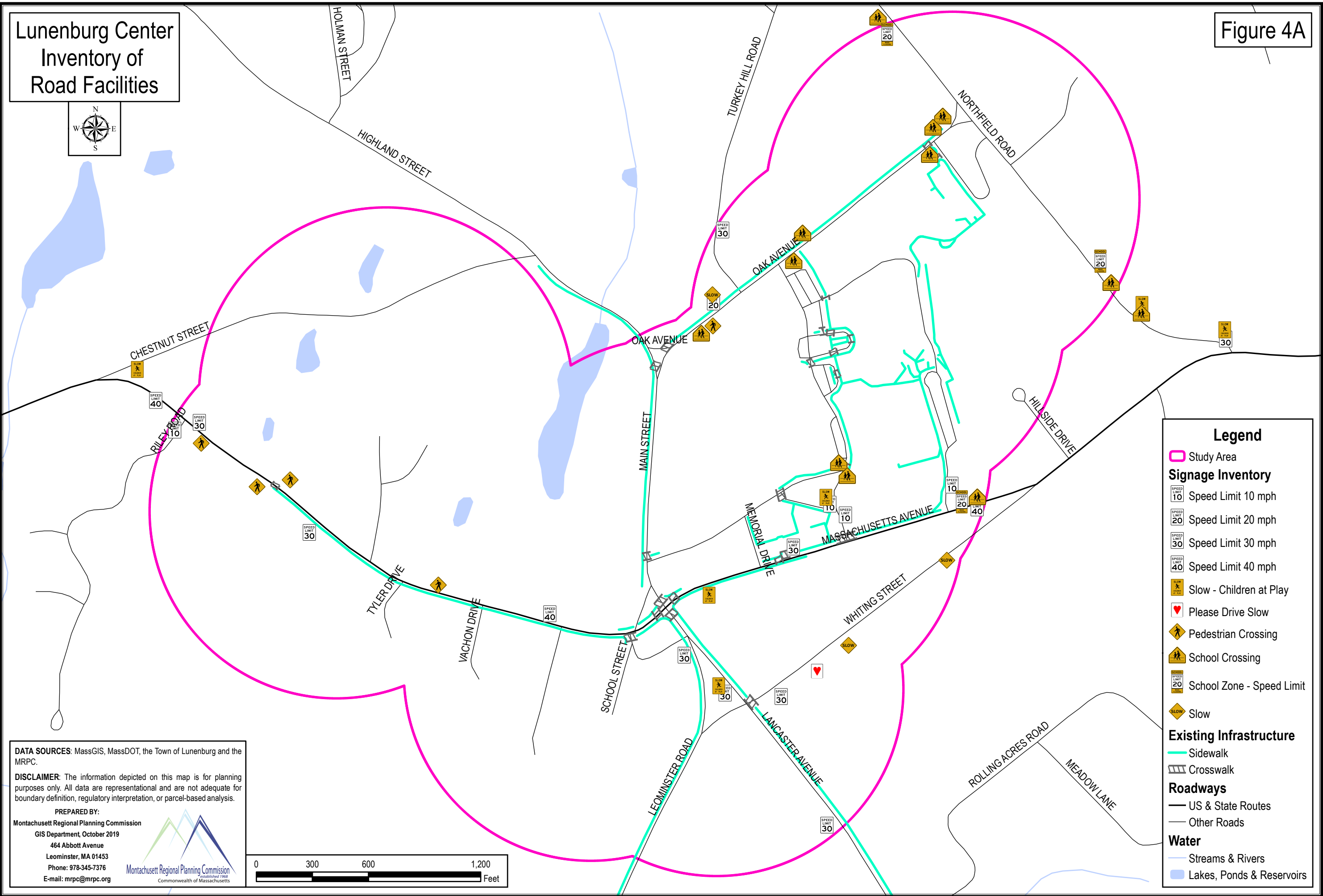
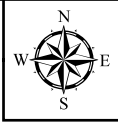


Figure 4A

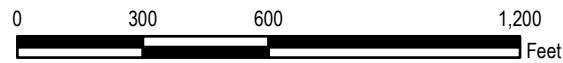
# Lunenburg Center Inventory of Road Facilities



**DATA SOURCES:** MassGIS, MassDOT, the Town of Lunenburg and the MRPC.

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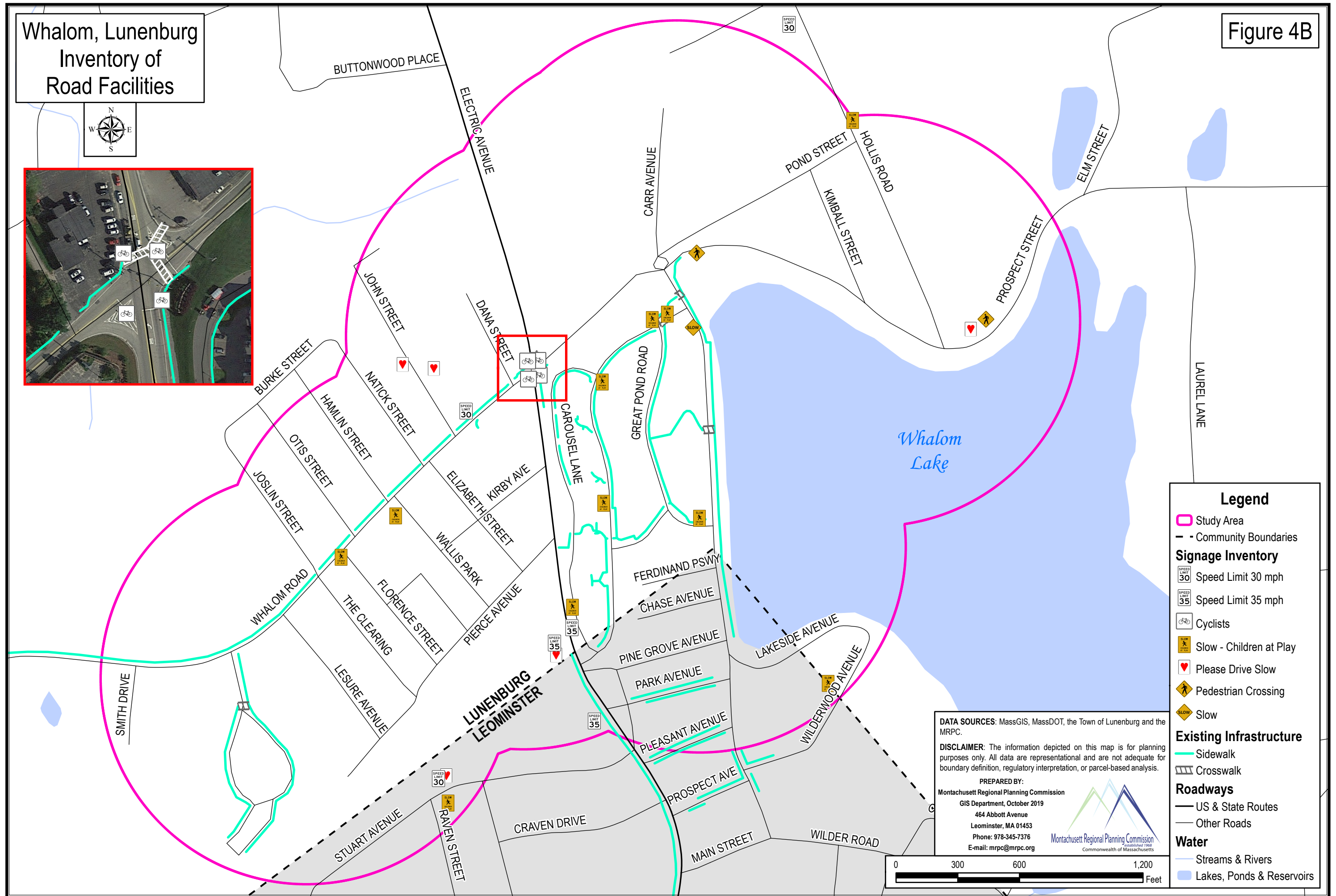
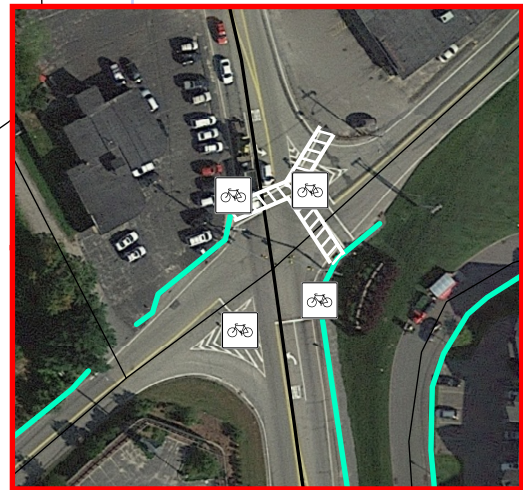
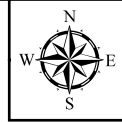
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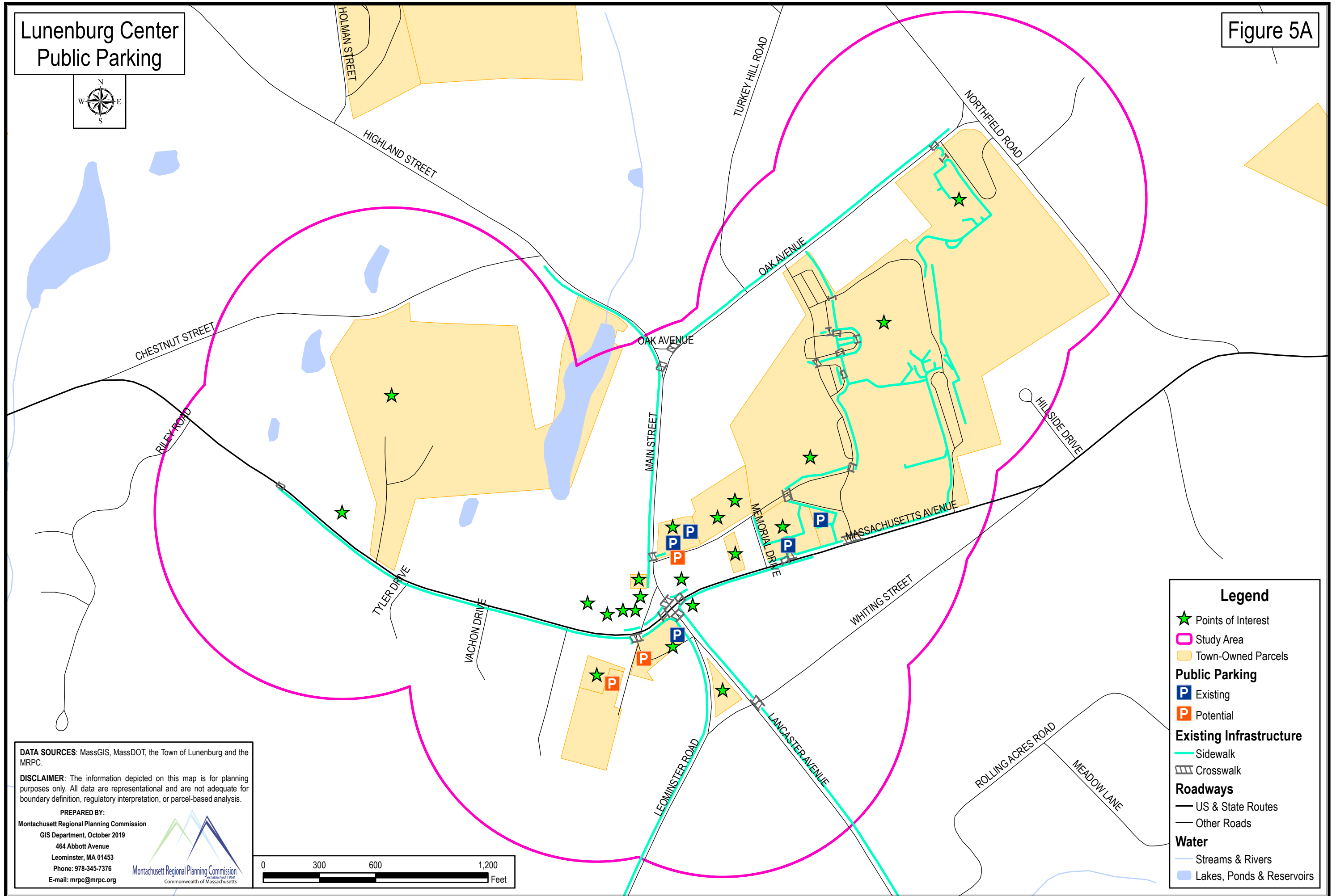
# Whalom, Lunenburg Inventory of Road Facilities

Figure 4B



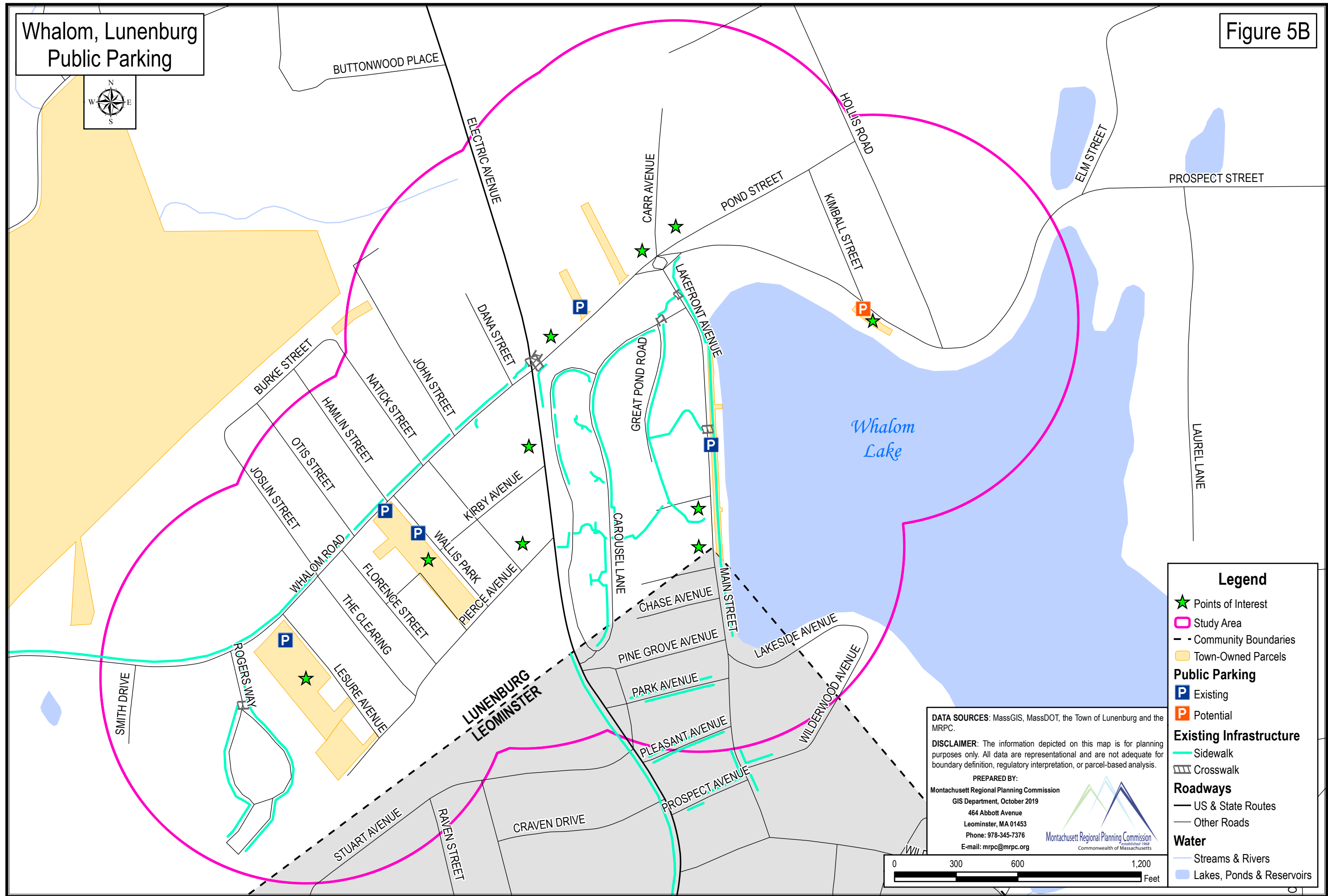
# Lunenburg Center Public Parking

Figure 5A



# Whalom, Lunenburg Public Parking

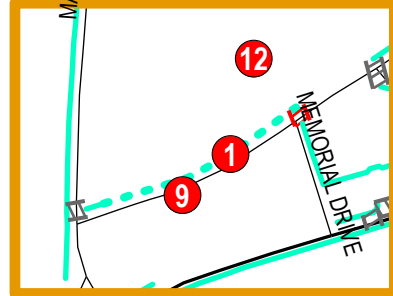
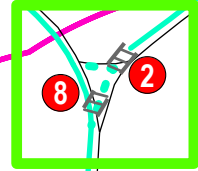
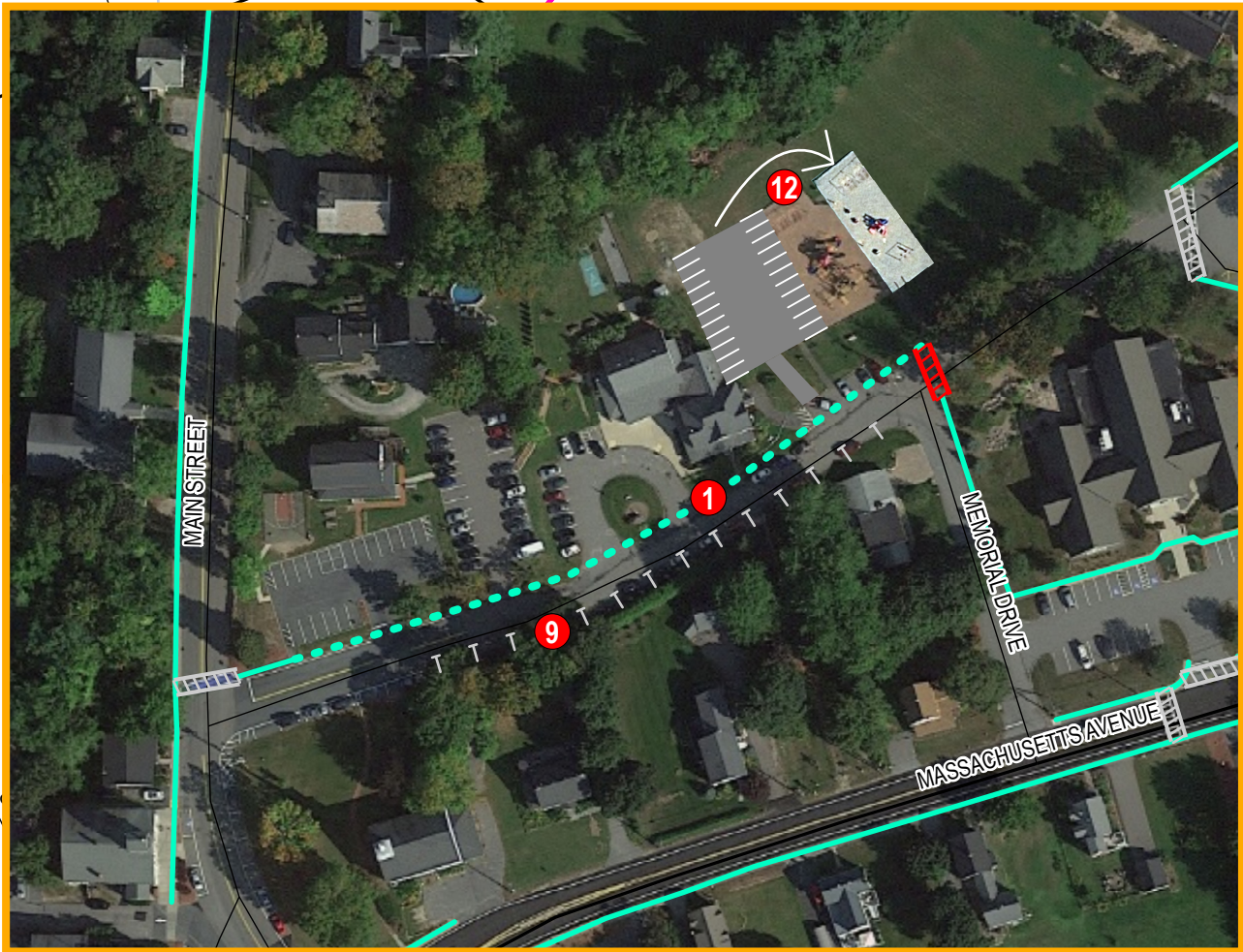
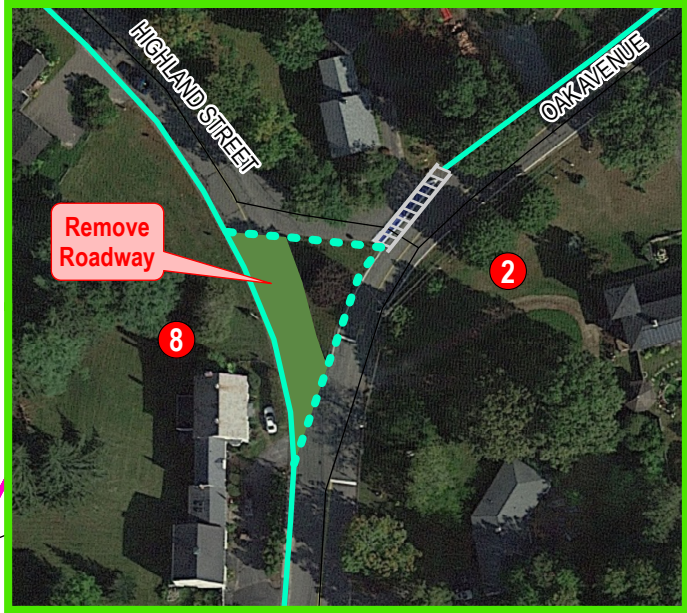
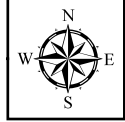
Figure 5B





Lunenburg Center Recommendations


Figure 6A



**DATA SOURCES:** MassGIS, MassDOT, the Town of Lunenburg and the MRPC.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts

0 300 600 1,200 Feet

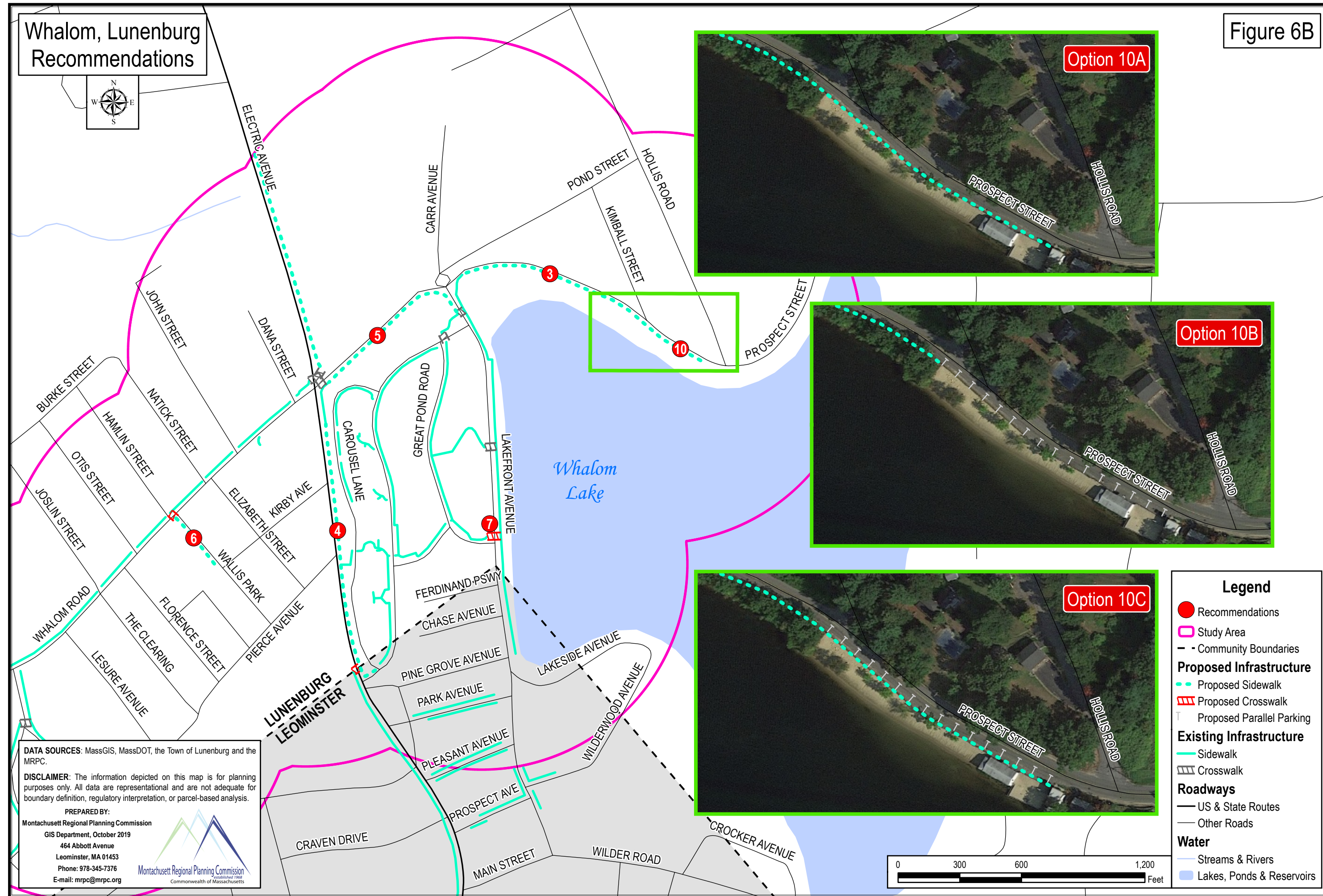
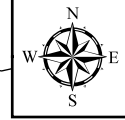
**Legend**

- Recommendations
- ◻ Study Area
- Proposed Infrastructure**
  - Proposed Sidewalk
  - ▤ Proposed Crosswalk
  - ▤ Proposed Parallel Parking
- Existing Infrastructure**
  - Sidewalk
  - ▤ Crosswalk
- Roadways**
  - US & State Routes
  - Other Roads
- Water**
  - Streams & Rivers
  - Lakes, Ponds & Reservoirs



# Whalom, Lunenburg Recommendations

Figure 6B



**Legend**

- Recommendations
- Study Area
- - Community Boundaries

**Proposed Infrastructure**

- Proposed Sidewalk
- Proposed Crosswalk
- Proposed Parallel Parking

**Existing Infrastructure**

- Sidewalk
- Crosswalk

**Roadways**

- US & State Routes
- Other Roads

**Water**

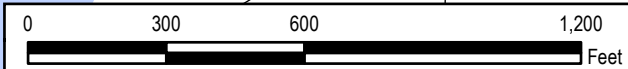
- Streams & Rivers
- Lakes, Ponds & Reservoirs

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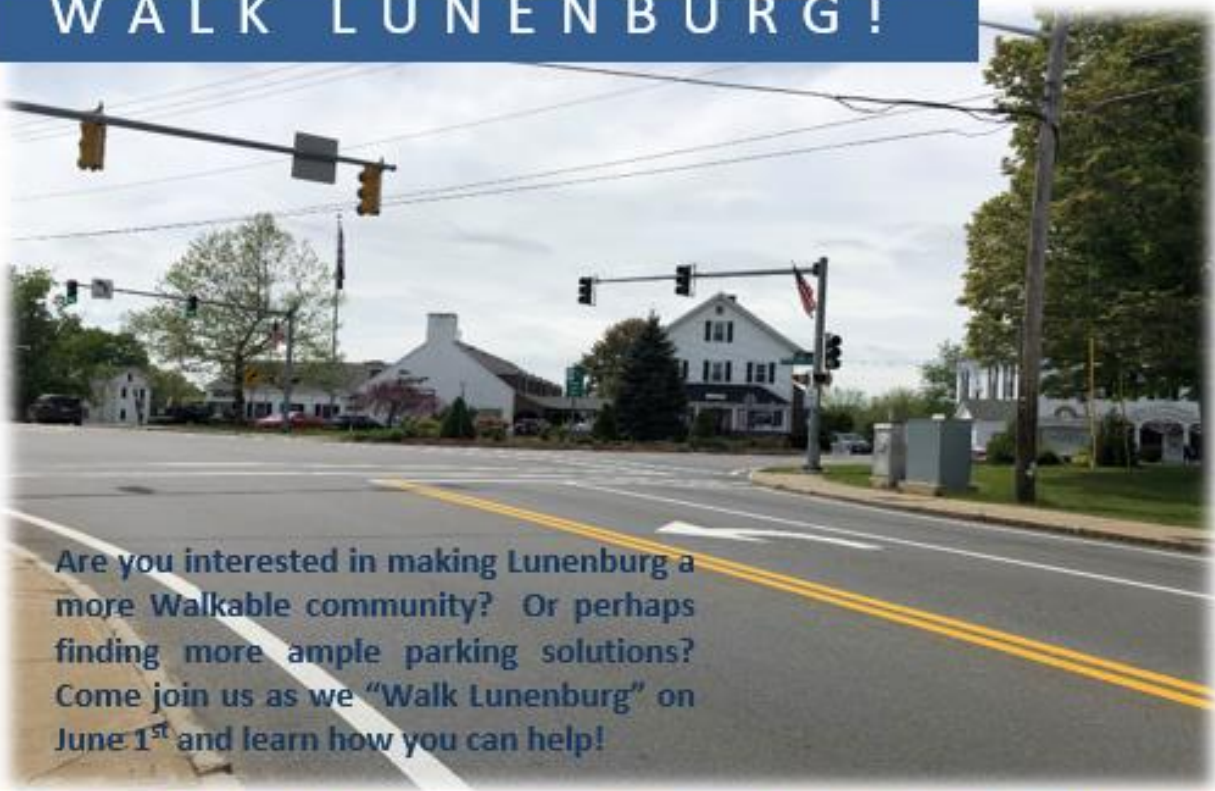
**Montachusett Regional Planning Commission**  
 Established 1988  
 Commonwealth of Massachusetts



## **APPENDIX A – Walking Audit Flyer and Handout**



# WALK LUNENBURG!



Are you interested in making Lunenburg a more Walkable community? Or perhaps finding more ample parking solutions? Come join us as we “Walk Lunenburg” on June 1<sup>st</sup> and learn how you can help!

**When: June 1, 1:00 PM** (Rain Date 6/3 at 5:00pm) **Where: LUNENBURG TOWN HALL**

*By walking the streets of Lunenburg Center, we can identify positive and negative aspects affecting pedestrian travel and prioritizing specific solutions that will increase safety and accessibility for pedestrians. Potential solutions could include addressing missing sidewalk links, intersections, crosswalks, parking, signage and traffic calming. Come let us know how Lunenburg can be more pedestrian friendly!*

## Agenda

1:00-1:15 – Introduction & project overview

1:15-2:15 – Walking & parking audit

2:15-3:00 – Review findings, come up with possible solutions, wrap up

---

**All Lunenburg residents, business owners, public officials,  
& people of all ages are welcome!**



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Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

## What to look for while conducting a Walkability Audit:

**Sidewalks** – Are there sidewalks within the study area? Is the width/condition acceptable (at least 4 feet wide)? Do they have handicap access ramps at each crossing & crosswalk? Are there large cracks, bumps, dips, etc. present?

**Roadways** – Are the current roadways in good condition? Is speeding a problem? Are large trucks an issue? Are drivers able to see pedestrians in crosswalks – is there adequate sight distance?

**Crosswalks** – Are the current crosswalks adequate? Do you feel safe while crossing at the crosswalks? Are vehicles parked closer than 10 feet to the crosswalks? Are there no parking zones near crosswalks? Is the striping on the crosswalk visible?

**Trails** – Are the trails in the area accessible to the study area? Are there guide signs to help people navigate to those trails & trail parking areas?

**Parks/Public Gathering spots** – Are these located nearby? Are they accessible? Is the number of parks/gathering spots adequate for the area?

**Shade Trees/Benches** – Are there sufficient areas to take a rest? Will you be walking in the sun most of the time or are there shaded areas to cool off in the summer?

**Parking** – Is there ample parking available within the study area? Are parked cars a problem within the study area? Are there guide signs to show where the parking areas are?

**Attractions** – What are the local attractions or key destinations that you walked by? (ex. library, parks, shops) Is there a local attraction guide or signs for visitors?

Other questions to consider-

1. What are the positive aspects of your walking route?
2. Would this walk be adequate for a young child, elderly person, or a disabled person?
3. What would make this area more walkable for all users?
4. What would encourage more walking in the area? What's missing?
5. What are the concerns regarding walking within the study area?
6. Are the neighborhoods in the area considered mixed income? Is there a variety of housing types in the area?
7. Did you see other people out walking within the study area?