

# Creating Parks and Protecting Land for People

DCR STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

November 12, 2020

# Agenda

- About The Trust for Public Land
- Impact
- Massachusetts focus
- Highlight: Edgewater Neponset Riverfront in Mattapan

# About The Trust for Public Land

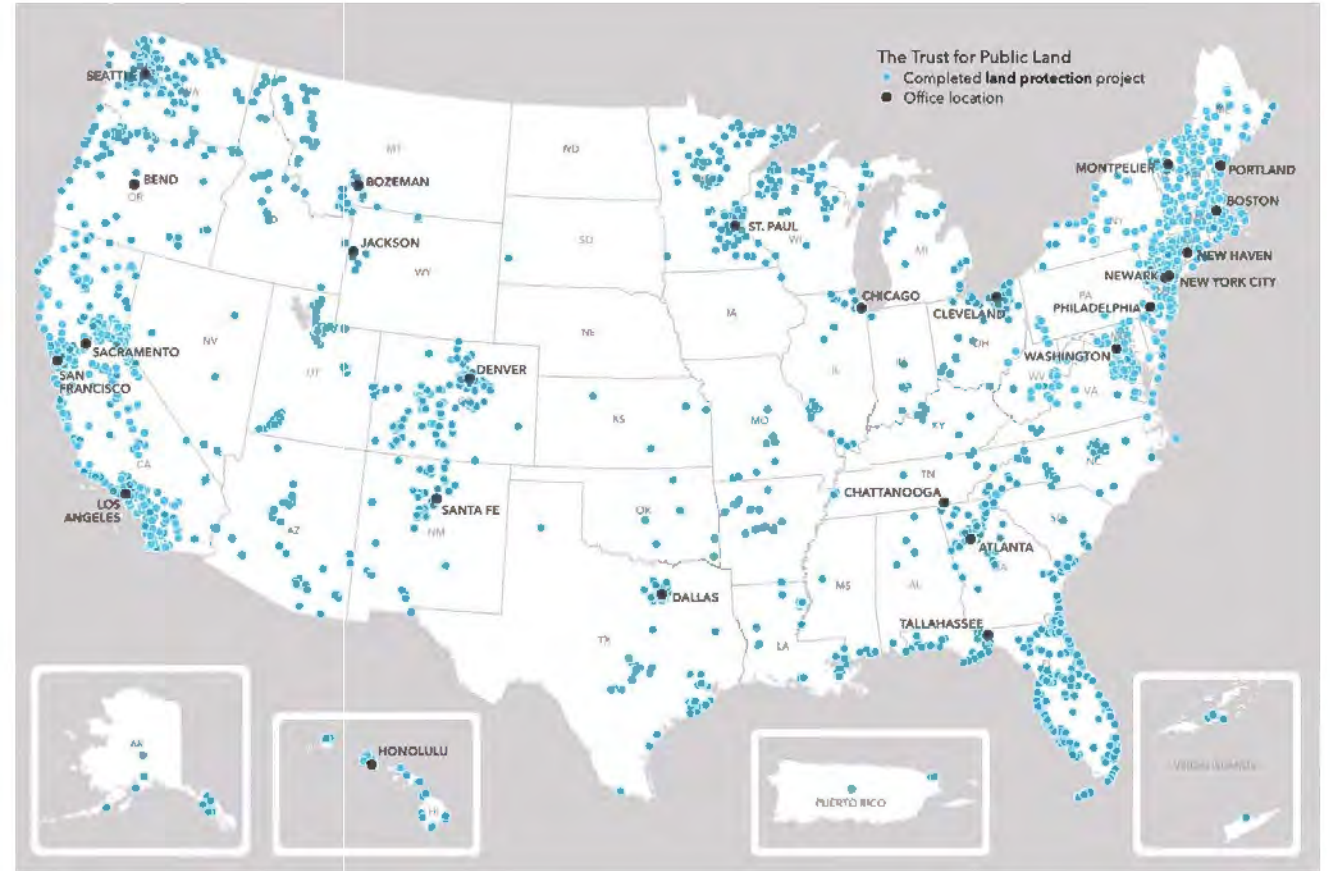
- Founded in 1972
- Mission: To **create parks and protect land for people**, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.
- 25 offices throughout the U.S.



# Impact

## UNITED STATES

- 5,000 parks and open spaces created and protected
- 3.8 million acres conserved
- \$80 billion in new voter-approved funding for parks, open space, and stewardship

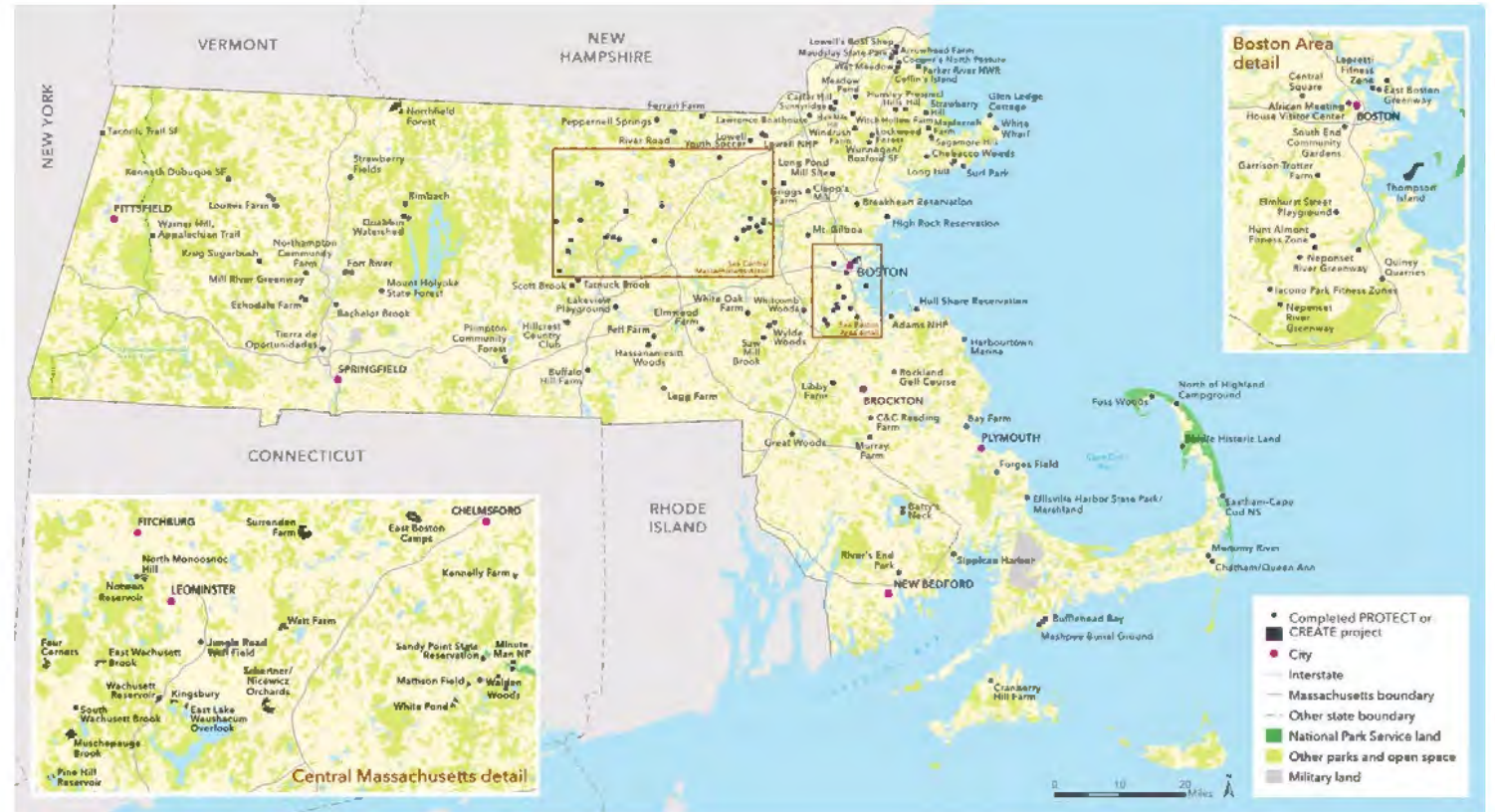




# Impact

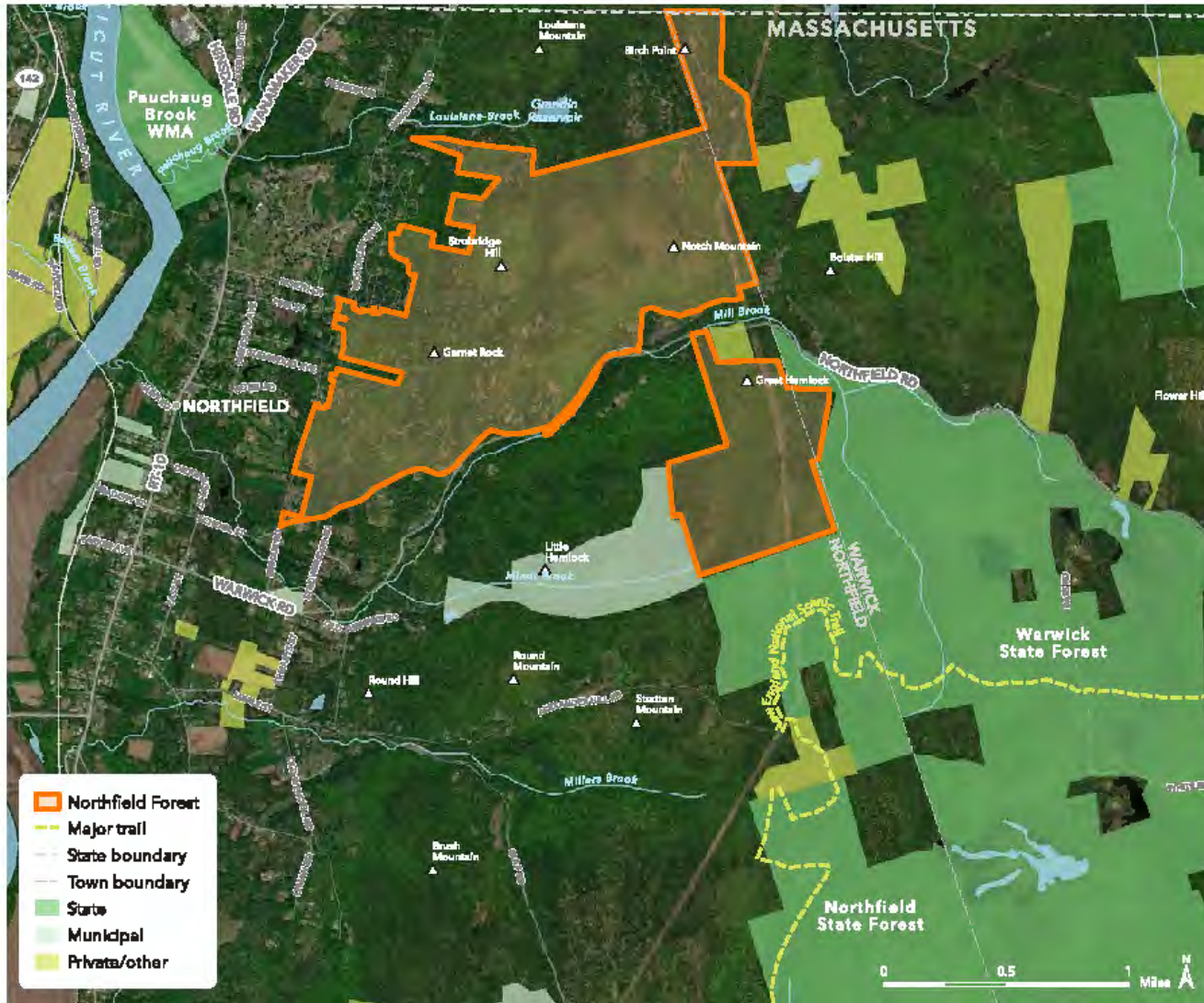
## MASSACHUSETTS

- 14,116 acres protected (\$247,000,000 fair market value)
- Helped 184 cities and towns adopt and administer local Community Preservation Act programs—including 9 this past election day!
- Completed iconic projects across the Commonwealth



# Impact

## NORTHFIELD FOREST





# Impact

WALDEN WOODS



# Impact

## APPALACHIAN TRAIL EXPANSION, BERKSHIRES





# Impact

## CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE EXPANSION



# Impact

THOMPSON ISLAND





# Impact

## SOUTH END COMMUNITY GARDENS





# Impact

## EAST BOSTON GREENWAY





# Impact

BOSTON URBAN FARMS





# Impact

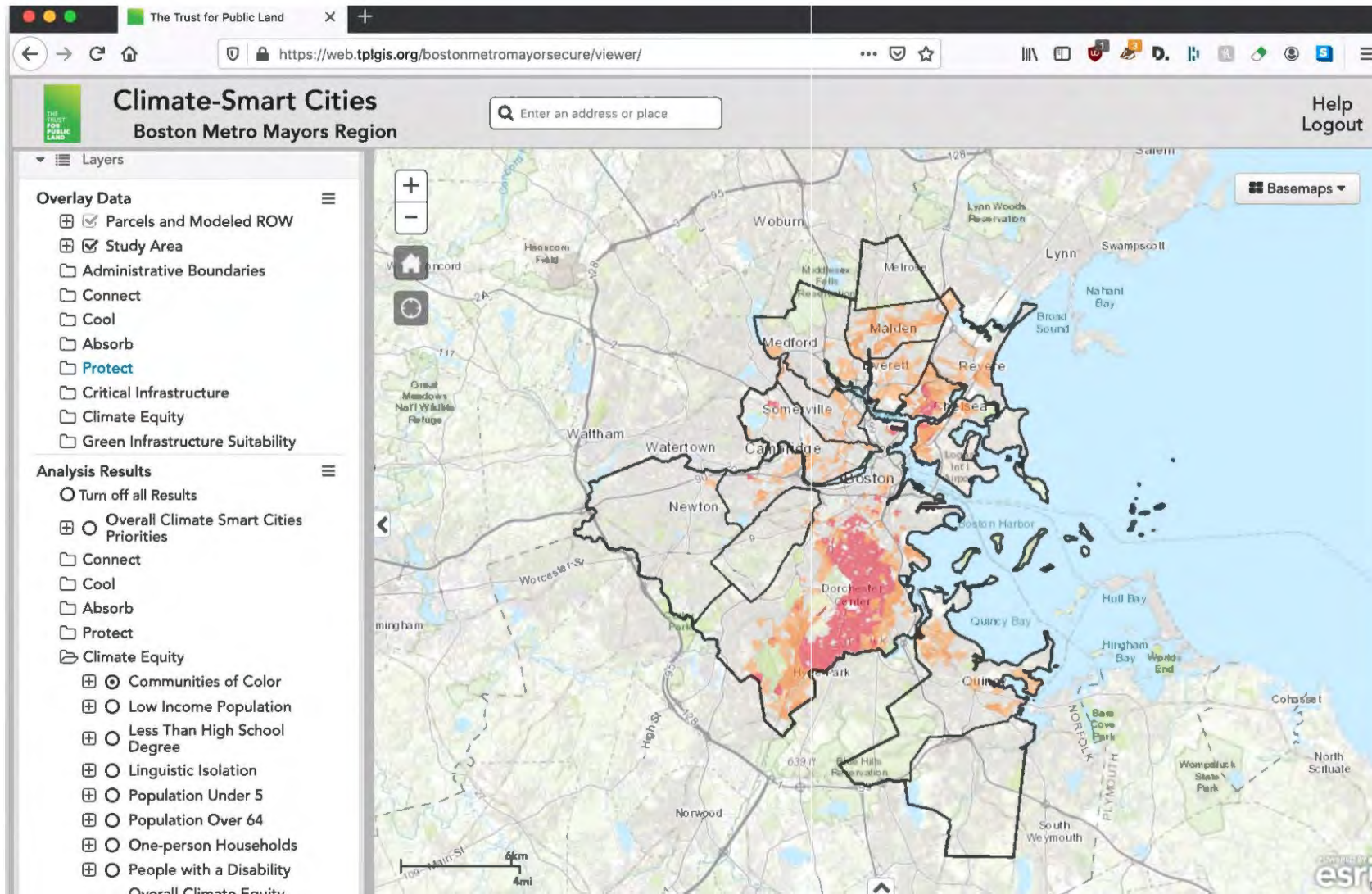
10-MINUTE WALK PARK-ACCESS FOR EVERYONE IN BOSTON





# Impact

## BOSTON METRO MAYORS DECISION SUPPORT TOOL



# Massachusetts Focus

## GUIDED BY OUR NEW NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

### WHAT we do OUR INITIATIVES

By 2025, we will directly engage more than 300 communities and improve quality of life for more than 85 million people.



#### LANDS

We will generate more than \$10 billion in funding for land protection and establish 500 protected places for public benefit, deploying innovative tools to advance community conservation goals.



#### PARKS

We will put a quality park within a 10-minute walk of five million people who currently lack access by creating new parks or transforming underutilized parks in the communities of greatest need and by activating local and national partnerships.



#### SCHOOLYARDS

We will grow our schoolyards program to expand park access for nearly 6 million people across the country and open green schoolyards in 20 underserved school districts.



#### TRAILS

We will connect more than 3 million people to 1,000 miles of local and national trails and greenways.

### WHY we do it OUR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITIES



#### HEALTH

Everyone deserves healthy communities. We create opportunities for all people to experience the physical and mental health benefits nature provides, from close-to-home parks to awe-inspiring outdoor experiences.

#### CLIMATE

Everyone deserves climate-smart communities. The parks we create and the lands we protect safeguard people from extreme heat, poor air and water quality, flooding, and sea level rise, making communities more resilient and prepared for change.

#### EQUITY

Everyone deserves access to the benefits of nature. Working hand in hand with communities, we support the efforts of historically marginalized groups to create access to the outdoors by delivering park and green space solutions that energize their efforts and address wide-ranging challenges.

### HOW we do it OUR TOOL KIT



#### PUBLIC LAND FOR PUBLIC GOOD

We help communities protect lands and waterways to benefit everyone.



#### PARK CREATION AND TRANSFORMATION

We help communities create and transform parks to reflect local interests, cultures, heritage, and aspirations.



#### DATA AND INSIGHT

We help communities prioritize investments in public land, using data-driven mapping technology and insights to pinpoint where nature is most needed.



#### ADVOCACY

We mobilize support for critical bills and policies to advance the use of public land for societal good.



#### FUNDING AND LEVERAGE

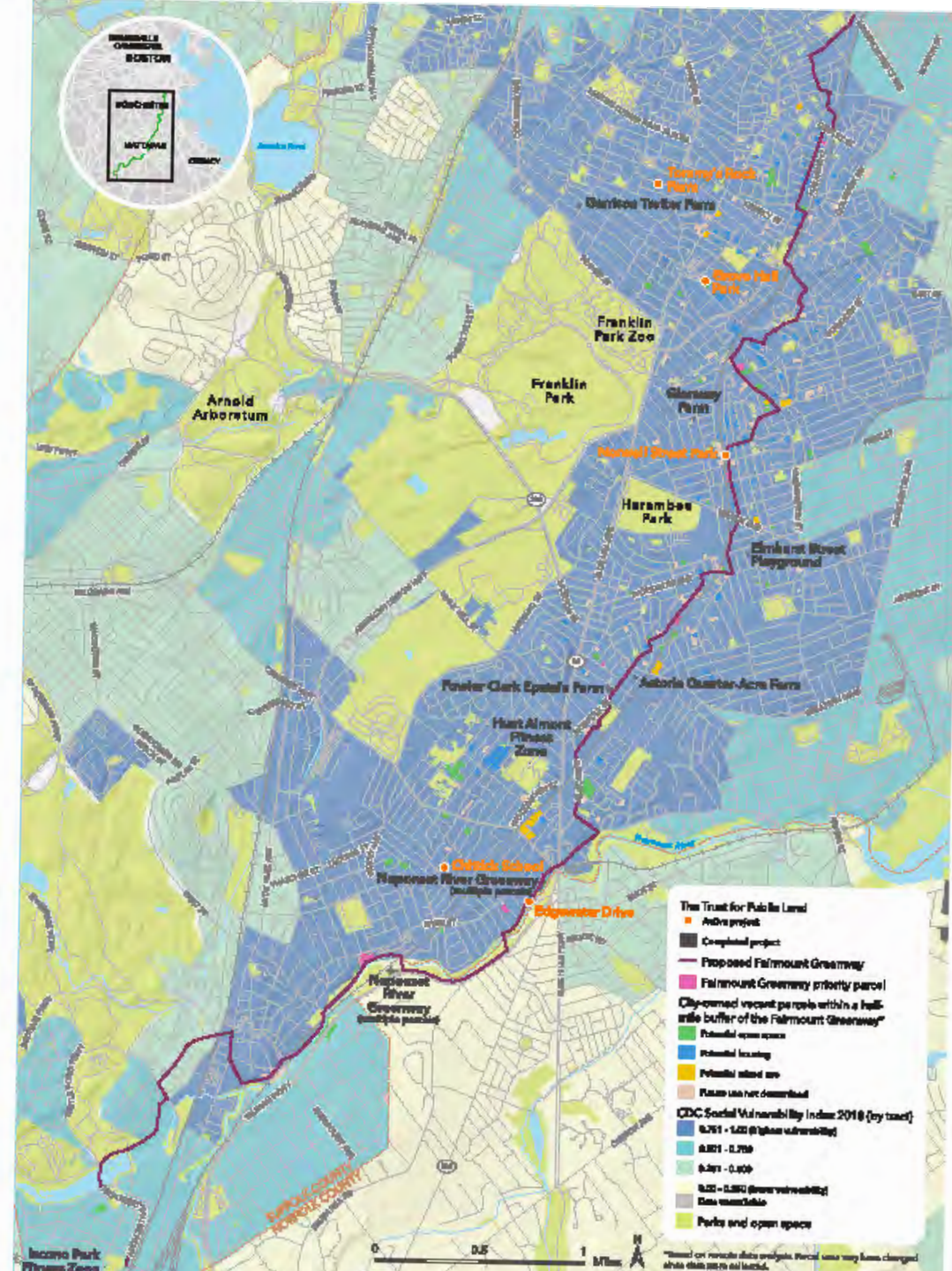
We help communities generate public funding for parks and open space, leveraging donations to achieve a return of \$2,000 in public funds for every \$1 donated.



# Massachusetts Focus

## FAIRMOUNT GREENWAY CORRIDOR

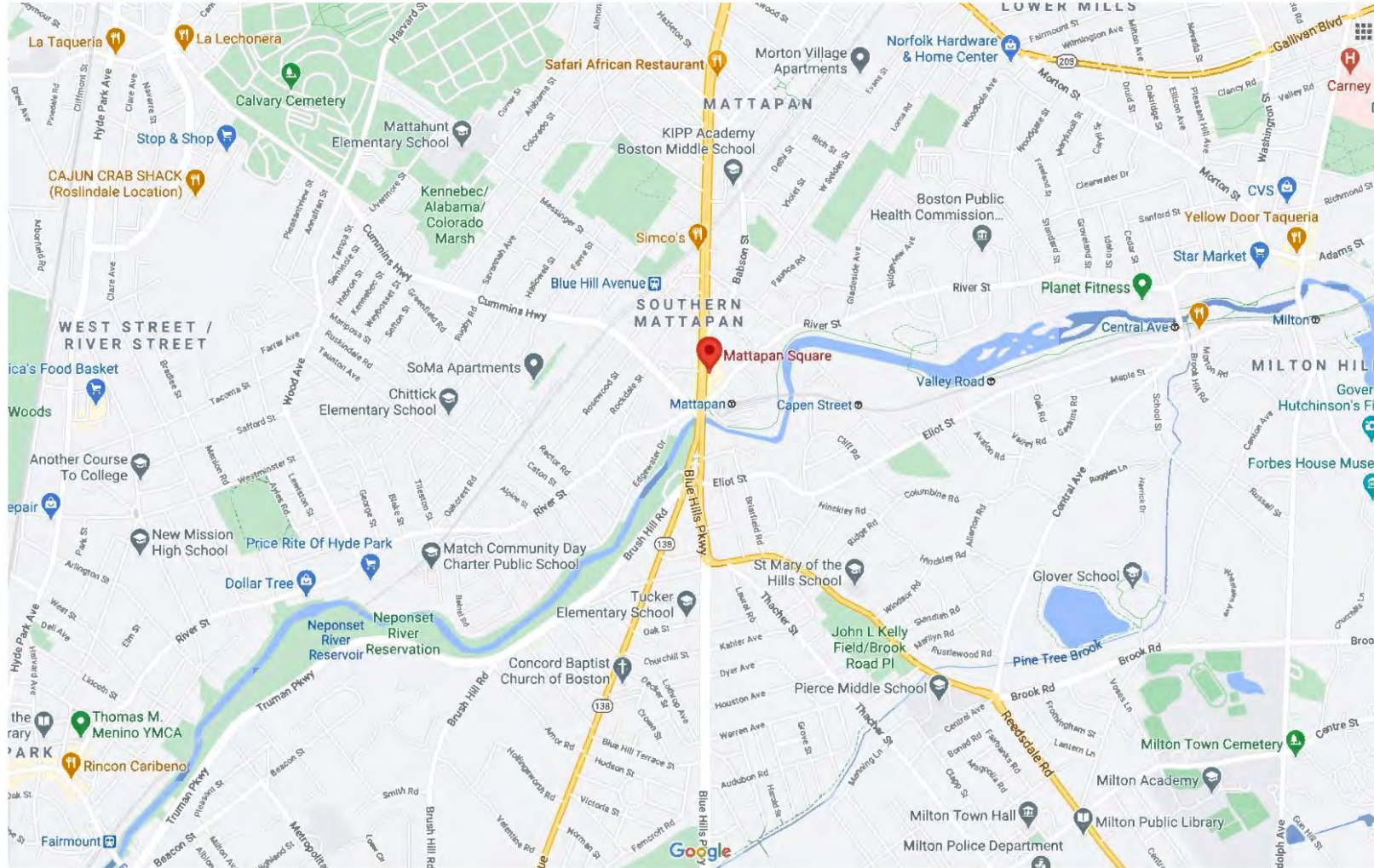
- Grove Hall Park
- Norwell Street Park
- Chittick Schoolyard Park
- Edgewater





# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

## LOCATION





# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

NEXT TO BUSY MATTAPAN SQUARE...





# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

...A VERDANT RIVERFRONT





# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

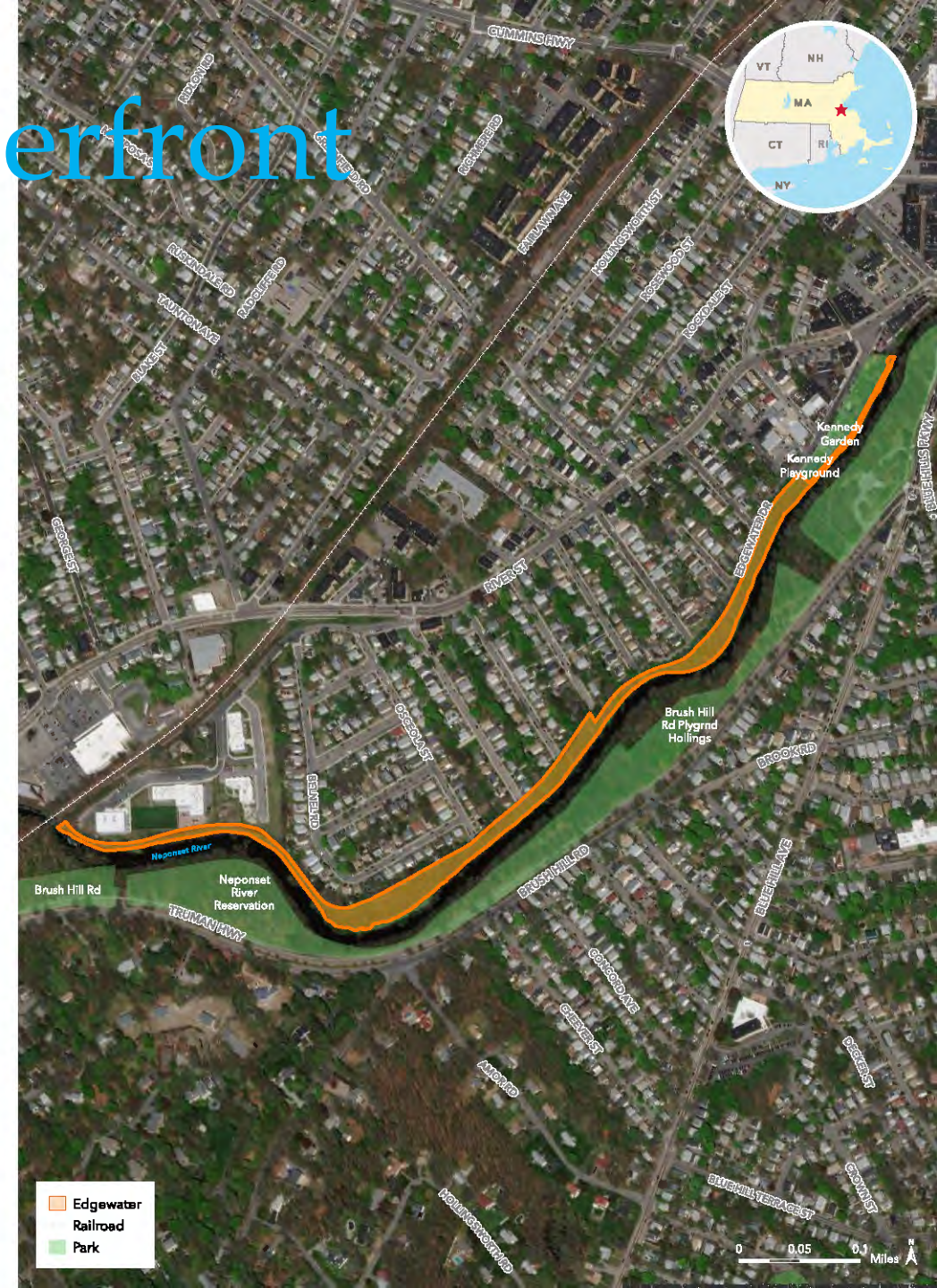
- Scenic, peaceful ribbon of riverfront forest
  - Largest natural area near Mattapan Square
  - Scenic, tranquil oasis from traffic, pavement, and noise
  - Cooling refuge from urban heat island effects
  - Walking, paddling, other passive recreation opportunities
  - Natural infrastructure for community's physical and mental health, wellbeing





# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

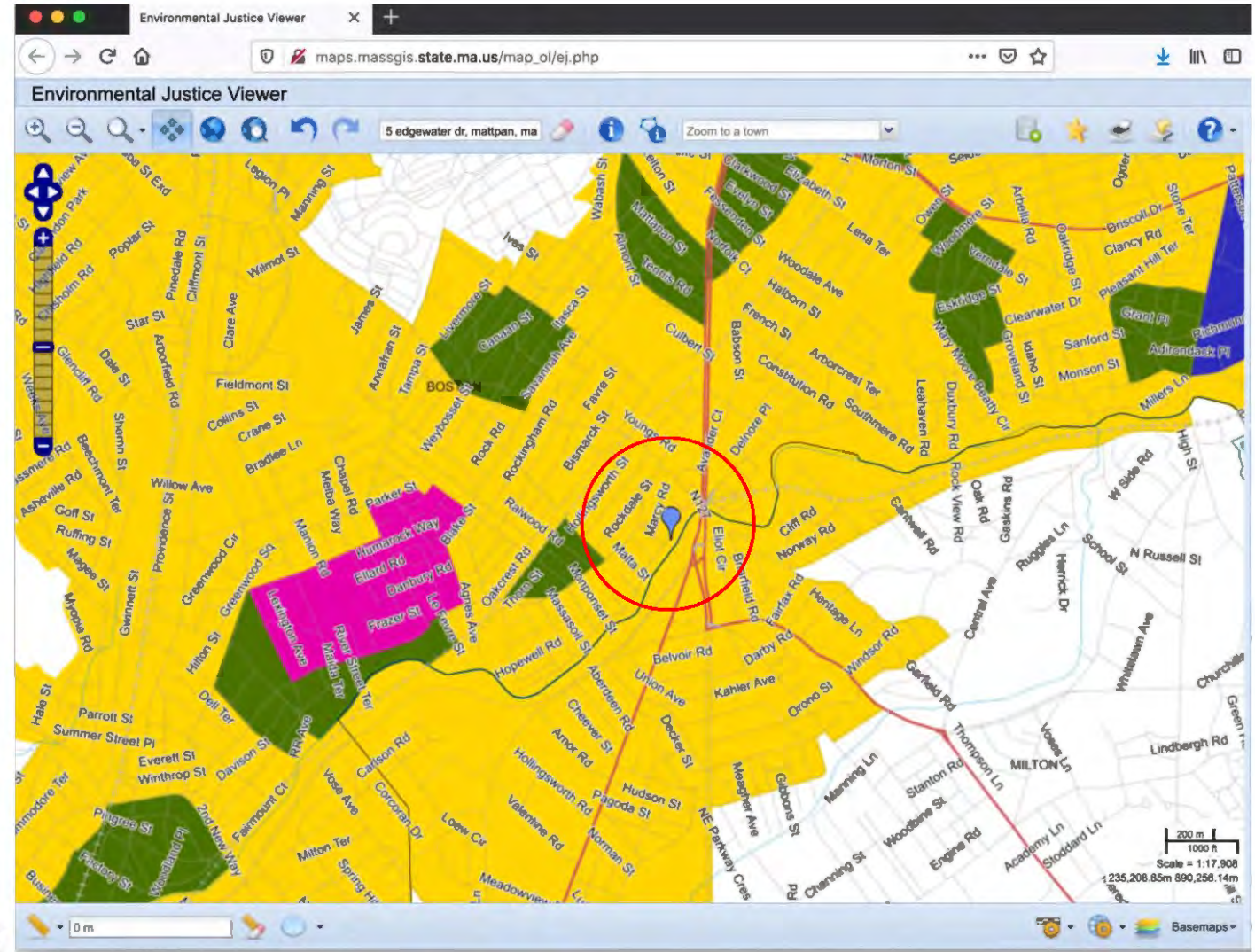
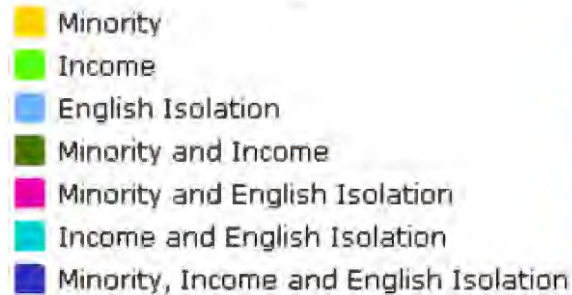
- 4,716 people live within 10-minute walk
  - 86% Black
  - 42% low income
- Mattapan disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, resulting economic recession
  - 11.3% cumulative Covid-positivity rate
  - 17.3% unemployment





# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

- Located in State-identified Environmental Justice community



# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

## STATE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICY

“Working with these EJ populations, EEA will take direct action as part of the implementation of this policy to restore degraded natural resources, to increase access to open space and parks, to address environmental and health risks associated with existing and potential new sources of pollution, to appropriately address climate change, and to improve overall quality of life...”

- —*Environmental Justice Policy of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, 2017*



# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

## CURRENT REALITY

- Neighborhood is walled off from its riverfront
- No public access improvements along most of corridor
- Chronic illegal dumping
- Community deprived of benefits of its riverfront





# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

- Wall has only one entrance to riverfront
  - Prevents physical and visual access to riverfront
  - Makes people feel unsafe
  - Discourages pedestrian access
  - Impedes security afforded by community “eyes and ears”
  - Encourages illegal dumping, other illicit activity
  - Deprives community of access to outstanding natural resource and benefits of access





# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

## EDGEWATER

- DCR has prepared draft environmental study of Edgewater, but:
  - No apparent consideration of Environmental Justice issues
  - No meaningful community engagement conducted
  - Counterintuitively asserts that increasing community access would increase illicit activity
  - Emphasis of wall's historic preservation value inconsistent with recent DCR modifications to wall
  - Status of study, next steps unknown to community

# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

## ACROSS THE RIVER

- Meanwhile, on the Milton side of the Neponset
  - Ample riverfront access
  - Quality public access improvements
  - No evident dumping sites
  - Robust public use
  - Riverfront benefits the community





# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

- DCR needs more funding and staff to address stewardship needs across the Commonwealth, but:
  - Edgewater equity issues are stark and long-running
  - Covid-19 and economic recession have exacerbated health, economic, and other disparities
  - More important than ever to prioritize, engage, and serve Environmental Justice communities
  - Modest Edgewater stewardship enhancements will change lives

# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

- Partners can help DCR enhance its capacity to address Edgewater stewardship
  - Community engagement
  - Assembling capital
  - Near-term, modest public access improvements
    - Additional breaks in wall
    - Selectively remove invasive plant species
    - Clear brush along existing trail along top of riverbank, add woodchips
- Long-term visioning and participatory design



# Edgewater Neponset Riverfront

- Ideal next steps
  - DCR meets with community and conservation partners to address issues, concerns, and opportunities
  - DCR works with conservation partners to implement modest public access improvements
  - Community given opportunity to access, get to know property before long-term management strategies are pursued
  - Finalize Edgewater environmental study transparently—after meaningful community dialogue and due consideration of Environmental Justice issues

Questions?



# Thank you!

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