



# Community Forum on Open Space and Recreation Needs

Rockland Open Space and Recreation Plan



October 19, 2017

**Rockland Senior Center** 

# Tonight's Agenda

- Introduction to the Rockland Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Overview of Rockland's demographics, land use, and open space and recreation features
- Discussion of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats at the Town's open space and recreation facilities
- Discuss and prioritize goals for the plan
- Next steps

# What is "Open Space?"

 Conservation land, forested land, recreation land, agricultural land, corridor parks and amenities such as small parks, green buffers along roadways or any open area that is owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation.

-Open Space and Recreation Planners Workbook

 But the term can mean many different things to different people!

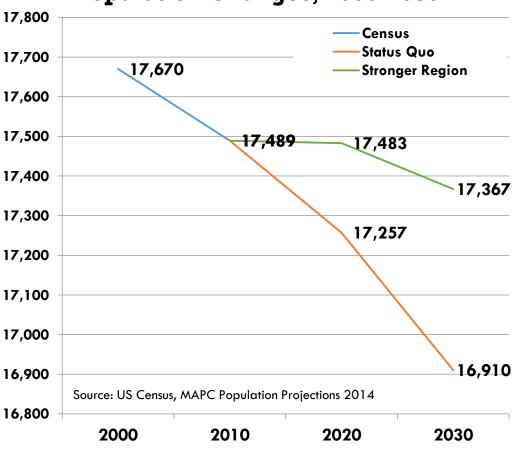
# Why an OSRP?

- An Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) provides information about the community and what residents want to achieve in the next 7 years
- OSRP helps encourage community protection and stewardship of these vital resources
- Completion of OSRP makes municipality eligible to apply for State grants to acquire for conservation and improve land utilized for recreation
- Rockland's previous plan was prepared in 2005

# In 2030, Rockland will likely have a slightly smaller population...

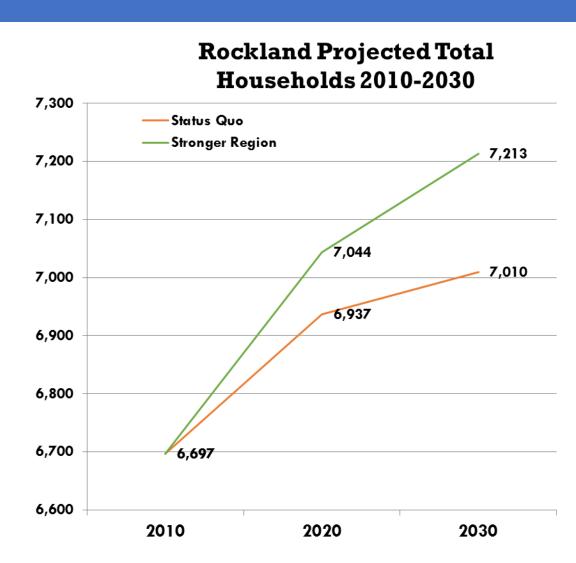
- Local population declined about 1% from 2000-2010.
- An additional decrease in population between 2010-2030 is projected at about 1-3%.
- In the past 20 years, school enrollment has declined.





# ...But is projected to have a larger number of households.

- Although population is expected to decrease, the number of households is expected to grow 5-8%.
- Average household size was 2.58 persons/ household in 2010 and is projected to decrease to 2.45 in 2020 and 2.37 in 2030.



### Housing and household characteristics

Proportion of Single Family Homes

65%

Proportion of Owner-Occupied Homes

86%

Proportion of Family Households

70%

Proportion of Housing Stock built between 1940-1999

80%

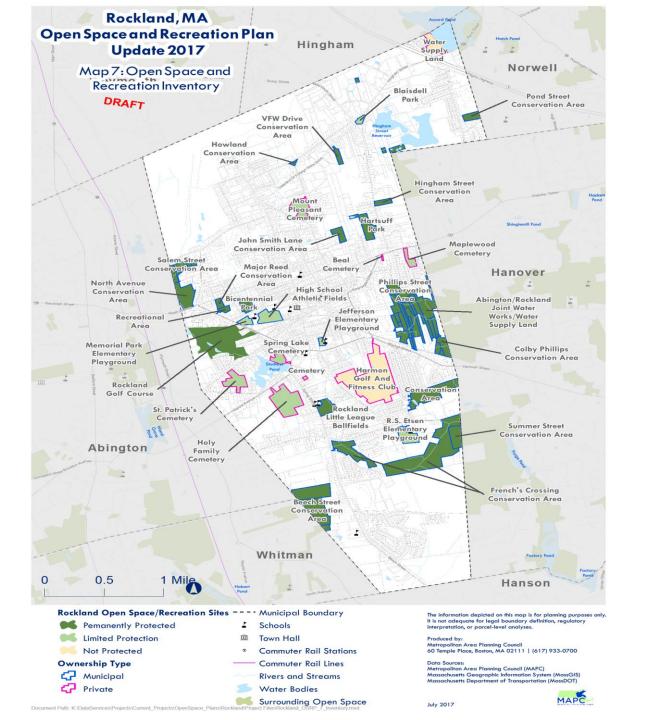
Population increase 1950-1960

46%

Reflected in development patterns

# Park and Open Spaces in Rockland

- Total land area of Rockland 6,360 acres (6,476 including water bodies)
- 1,404 acres of wetlands (22.7%)
- 356 acres of permanently protected land (5.5%)
- 1,190 acres in the 100-year floodplain (18.4%)
- 22 conservation parcels 336 acres
- 7 parks/fields 79 acres
- Additional playgrounds and fields at school sites



- Hartsuff Park
  - 16.5 acres
  - Multi-use including playground, trails, swimming, hiking





- Studley's Pond
  - Water access
  - Fishing & boating

- Rockland Golf Course
  - Private fee-based golf course





- Rockland Town Forest
  - 26.3 acres
  - Hiking



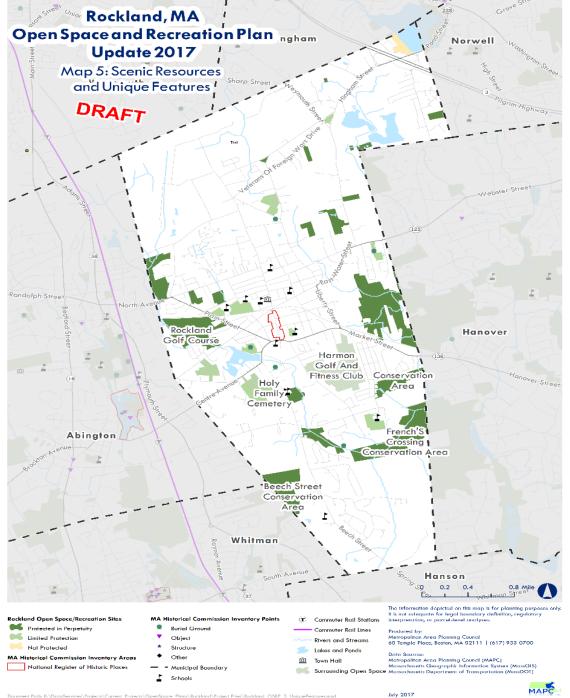
- Thompson Pond and Twin Ponds Trail System
  - Located to the rear of the Rockland Town
     Forest
  - Greenway links to Abington





- Memorial Park
  - School Department property
  - Football and baseball stadium (major improvement project to start next year)
  - Playground and ballfield





#### Goal #1: Acquire open space and conservation land.

- Provide better access to ponds, rivers, and streams.
- Create open space corridors that link Town and regional natural and historic resources in order to protect critical resources and habitats, to create a sense of place, to provide recreational opportunities, and to shape Rockland's growth.

# Goal #2: Protect and preserve Rockland's natural resources.

- Identify watershed areas.
- Protect existing and potential drinking water supplies by acquiring adjacent land.
- Stop wetland encroachment and degradation.
- Preserve scenic areas by maintaining existing populations and species diversity and by preventing the loss or degradation of critical wildlife and plant habitat
- Minimize the impact of new development on wildlife and plant habitat.
- Create by-laws for resource protection.

Goal #3: Provide open space resources and recreational facilities which meet the active and passive recreational needs of Rockland's youth and adults.

- Add new town recreational facilities.
- Develop facilities for all age groups.
- Eliminate handicap barriers at all recreational facilities.

Goal #4: Maintain and manage existing recreation facilities, parks and conservation lands

- Increase the use of the town's conservation and open space lands.
- Improve the condition of existing, and develop additional passive and active recreational facilities.

Goal #5: Increase public awareness on open space and conservation issues

- Educate the public on the location of properties.
- Foster stewardship of open space and conservation lands.
- Place signage on selected conservation parcels.

# Group Discussions

- What do you like, and what are your concerns, about specific parks:
  - Tell us which open spaces you like and which areas can use improvements, and why
- Areas of Scenic Importance or Unique Features:
  - Identify scenic resources/unique environments/features in Rockland
  - Add to, or subtract from, the initial mapped locations

# Group Discussions

- What do you consider to be the STRENGTHS of the open space and recreation system in Rockland?
  - What would you brag about to someone who you wanted to move into town?
- What are the WEAKNESSES of the open space and recreation system?
  - What is lacking, or less than perfect?
- What OPPORTUNITIES do you see for improvements?
  - What can change, and what are the means to change it?

# Group Discussions

- Review the Goals and Objectives from the 2005
  Plan
  - Are any of these completed? (Can they be removed?)
  - Do any need to be amended due to changes since 2005?
- Suggest additional Goals and Objectives for the 2017 Plan

# Next Steps

- MAPC will take the feedback from tonight, and work with the Committee to prepare a draft plan, including priorities for Goals, Objectives and Actions.
- The draft plan will be presented at a second public forum early next year for additional feedback.
- A final draft will be reviewed by the Planning Board and Selectmen, and then submitted to the Division of Conservation Services for approval.
- Once the Plan is approved by DCS, the Town can work on implementation, and will be eligible for state grants.

#### Thank You!

#### THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

Be sure to sign in to receive notices of future meetings!

For more information, contact Ralph Willmer at <a href="mailto:rwillmer@mapc.org">rwillmer@mapc.org</a> or Marcy Birmingham at <a href="mailto:mbirmingham@rockland-ma.gov">mbirmingham@rockland-ma.gov</a>