

Section 7.2.16:

WEST ROXBURY

For an explanation of the organization, content and maps in this section, please see the Introduction to Section 7.2: Community Open Space and Recreation (page 160).

Background

Originally part of the town of Roxbury, West Roxbury broke off to form its own town government in 1851. In the same year, rail service was extended to rural West Roxbury, allowing people to live in the new town but work in Boston. With the annexation to Boston in 1874, a second wave of housing construction began in the late 19th century. Despite this early settlement, over ¾ of West Roxbury's current housing units were built after 1920.

The original West Roxbury village formed along Centre Street near Spring Street. The Roxbury Latin School, the oldest private school in America (1645), was built near the location of the old village and still operates there. A 19th century utopian experimental community that attracted many noted American intellectuals, Brook Farm, was located in the western reaches of West Roxbury near Saw Mill Brook and the Charles River.

Open Space Access & Equity/ Future Development

West Roxbury is the most suburban of Boston's neighborhoods. Density decreases here, with an abundance of single-family homes and backyards (West Roxbury Map 1). The neighborhood is rich with open space, boasting a ratio of 20.68 acres per 1,000 residents, nearly three times the city average of 7.59 acres. West Roxbury's population grew by almost 6% between 2000 and 2010, though the prospect of continued growth at that pace seems unlikely given the limited development sites in the neighborhood. West Roxbury has a high percentage of residents over age 65 (18%), which is significantly higher than the surrounding neighborhoods' average in this demographic of around 12–13%.

Private open space is significant in West Roxbury, composed largely of cemeteries (six private cemeteries within the neighborhood limits) and private school campuses and athletic fields. Part of the Stony Brook Reservation is within West Roxbury as is Millennium Park, the capped Gardner Street landfill site, which meets the Charles River at Boston's western boundary. The two parkways that weave through the neighborhood (VFW and West Roxbury Parkway) provide visual amenities to all who use them, but currently offer little recreation value (West Roxbury Map 4).

West Roxbury's active recreational facilities are distributed among four parks (Hynes Field, Billings Field, Draper Playground and Millennium Park) which are well spread out within the neighborhood. The largest neighborhood recreational complexes (sometimes shared with Boston Public Schools facilities) Ohrenberger, West Roxbury High School and Millennium Park are all too remote from the residential areas in the neighborhood to be accessed by walking—these are destination facilities that neighborhood residents and others must drive to for access.

Billings Field is the most centrally located park, next to the commercial core along Centre Street and adjacent to the YMCA both of which are great park activity generators (West Roxbury Maps 7 and 8).

Because the parks in West Roxbury tend to be larger in size, each accommodates multiple facilities and features. Nonetheless, certain facilities, like tennis courts, are limited. The park service area maps illustrate this story; large portions of the neighborhood do not have a park within a 10 minute walking distance (West Roxbury Map 10). In a neighborhood with such low population densities, no areas are identified as in high need of park access. Many residents have access to private back yards that can provide the small scale amenities that many other city residents are reliant on public parks to provide, like children's play structures and shade trees.

The West Roxbury Quarry is a large highly scarred and disturbed landscape area in the middle of this neighborhood which could have significant impacts on the landscape character and density of the community if it was ever closed and redeveloped. Options and desirability for retaining this area as long-term open space should be explored.

Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile

WEST ROXBURY

Population	
2010 Census	74,997
2000 Census	69,648
Population Growth/Decline, 2000–2010	7.7%

Population Density		Persons per Acre
2010 Census		8.7
2000 Census		8.2
Density Change, 2000–2010		0.5

Age	Persons	Percent of Population
0 to 9	3,845	13%
10 to 19	2,944	10%
20 to 34	5,346	18%
35 to 54	8,900	29%
55 to 64	3,935	13%
65 and over	5,476	18%

Teens, City to Community Comparison	Total Population	Total Children 12-17	% of Boston's Children 12-17	Children 12-17 as % of Neighborhood Population
Boston	617,594	33,920	100.0%	5.5%
West Roxbury	30,446	1,848	5.4%	6.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census, BRA Research Division Analysis

Race/Ethnicity/ Latino Status	Persons	Percent of Population
White alone	22,303	73%
Hispanic or Latino	2,573	8%
Black or African American alone	2,959	10%
Asian alone	1,969	6%
Other	642	2%

Median Household Income
\$71,286

Source: US Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

Percent of Households by Number of Vehicles Available	
No vehicles	10%
1 vehicle	44%
2 vehicles	38%
3 or more vehicles	9%

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2010; BRA Research Division Analysis

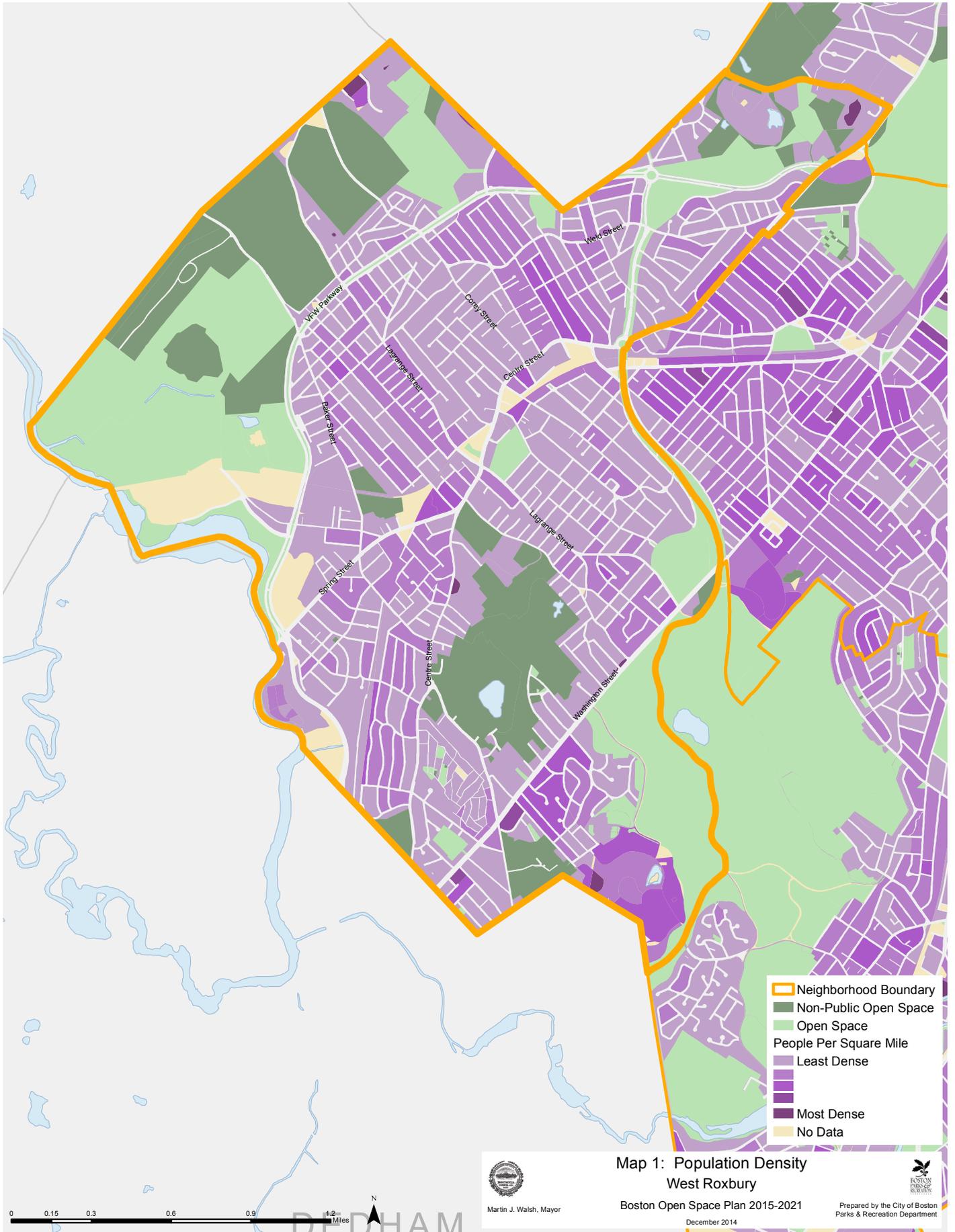
Population* with Disability	Persons	Percent of Population
Boston	72,390	11.6%
West Roxbury	3,199	10.6%

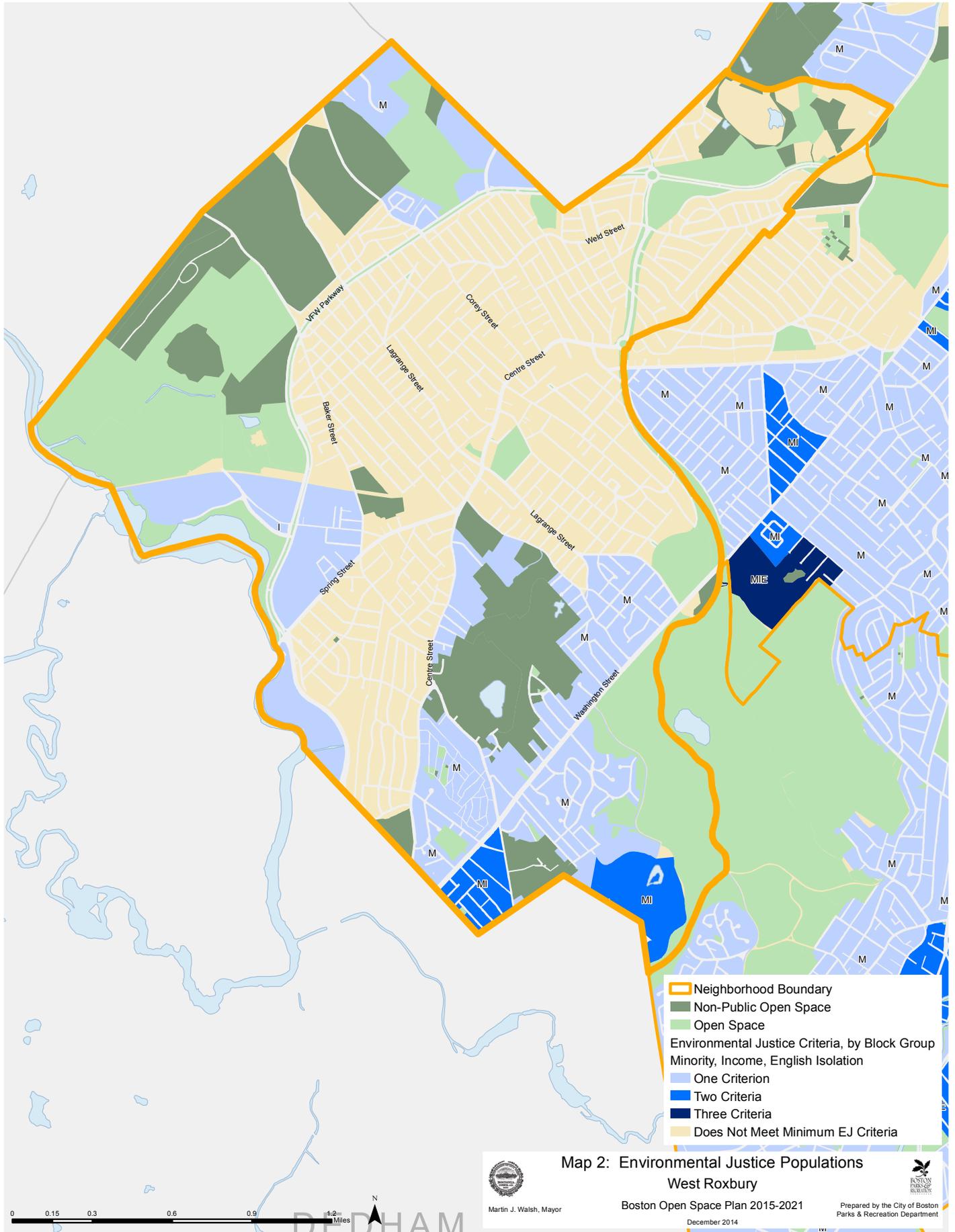
*Civilian Noninstitutionalized

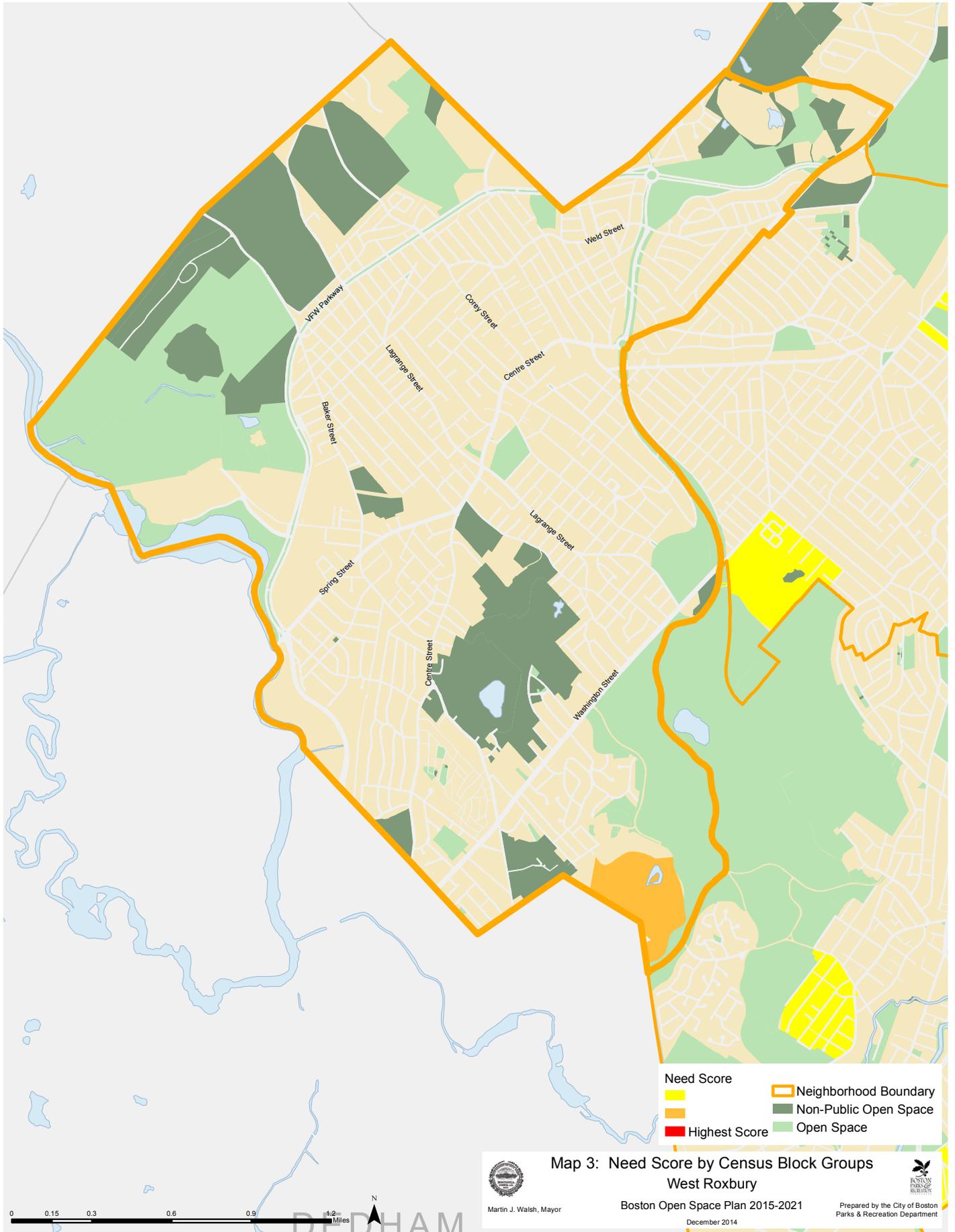
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, BRA Research Division Analysis

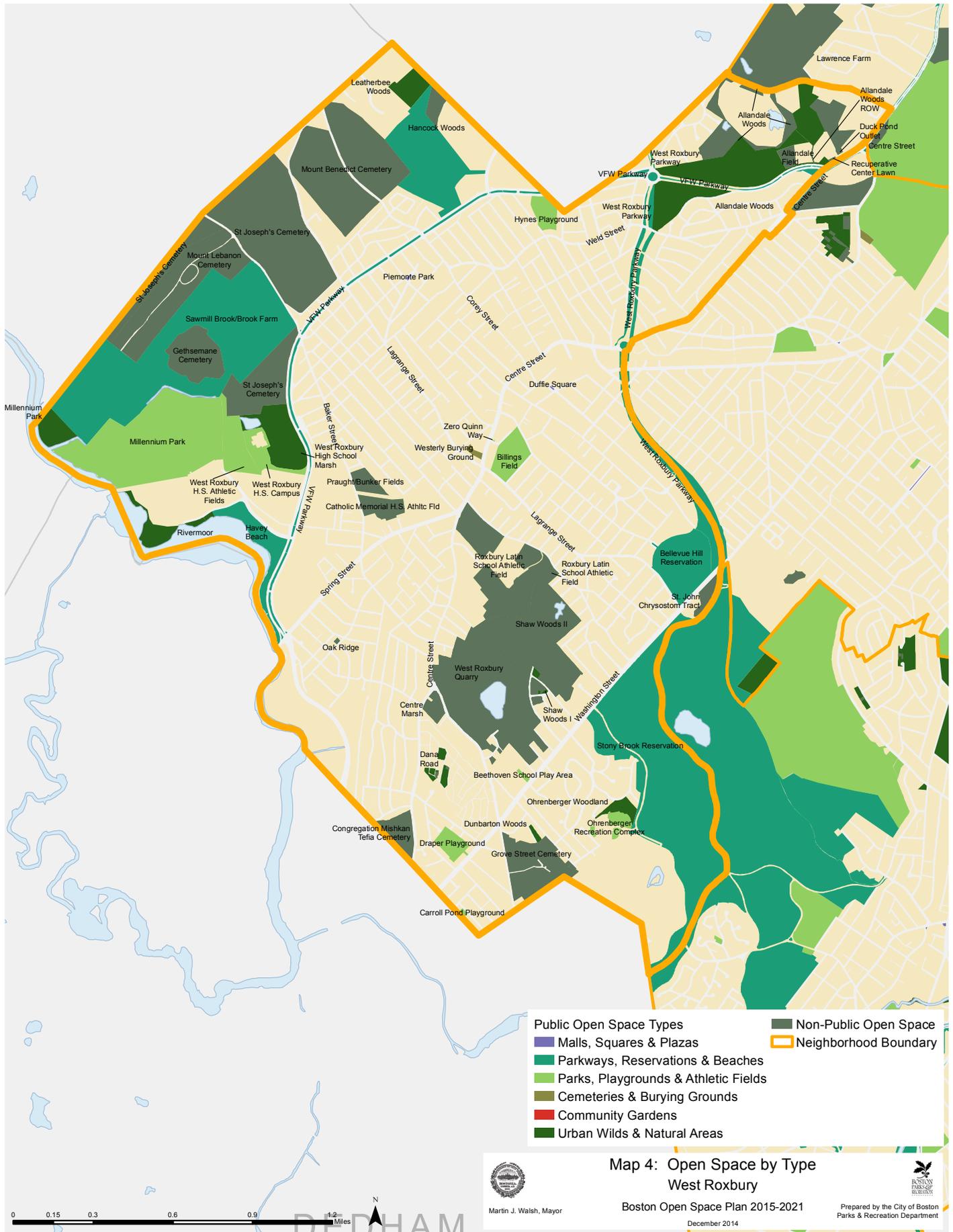
N.B.: "0%" means "less than 1%"

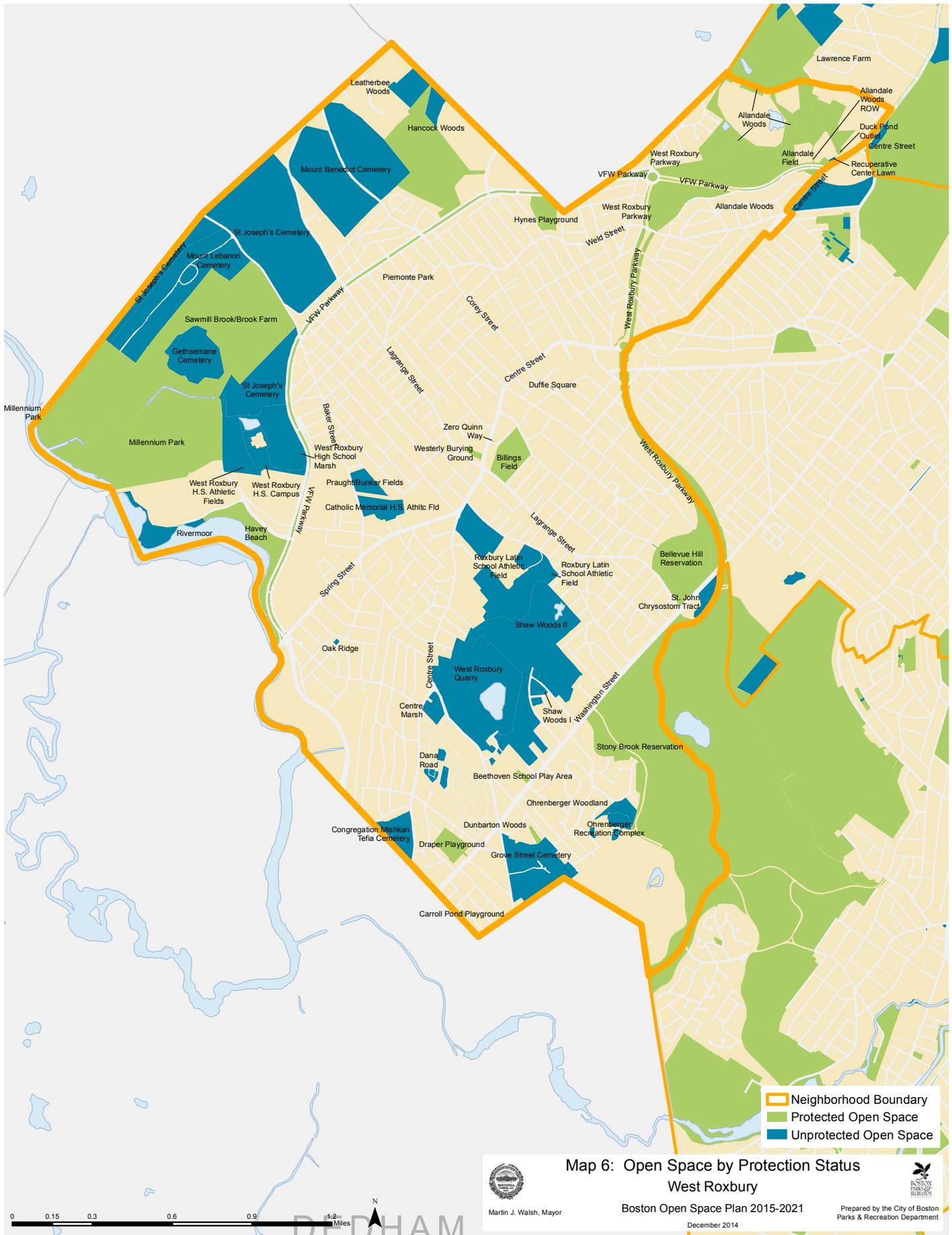
All Tables 2010 U.S. Decennial Census, unless otherwise noted

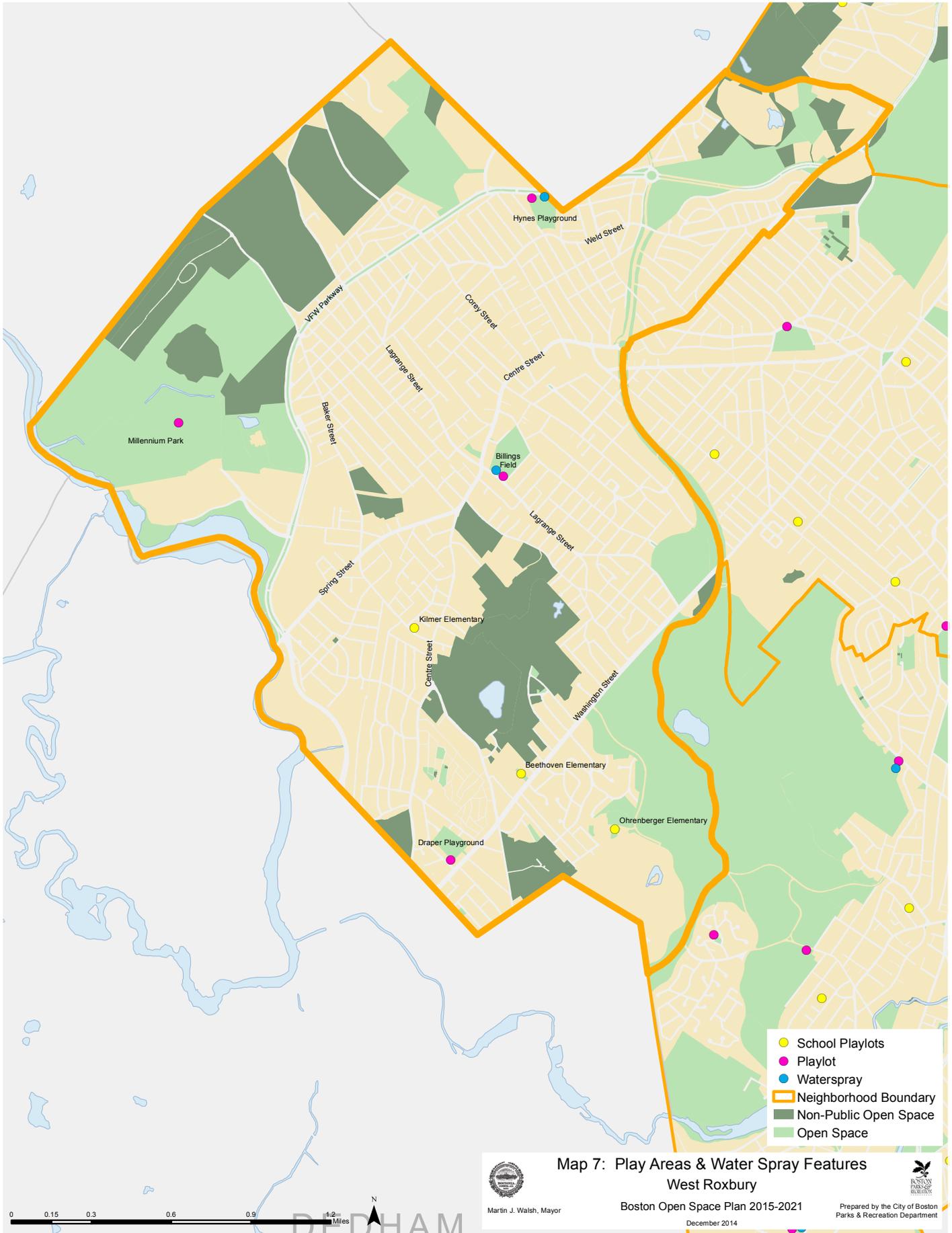


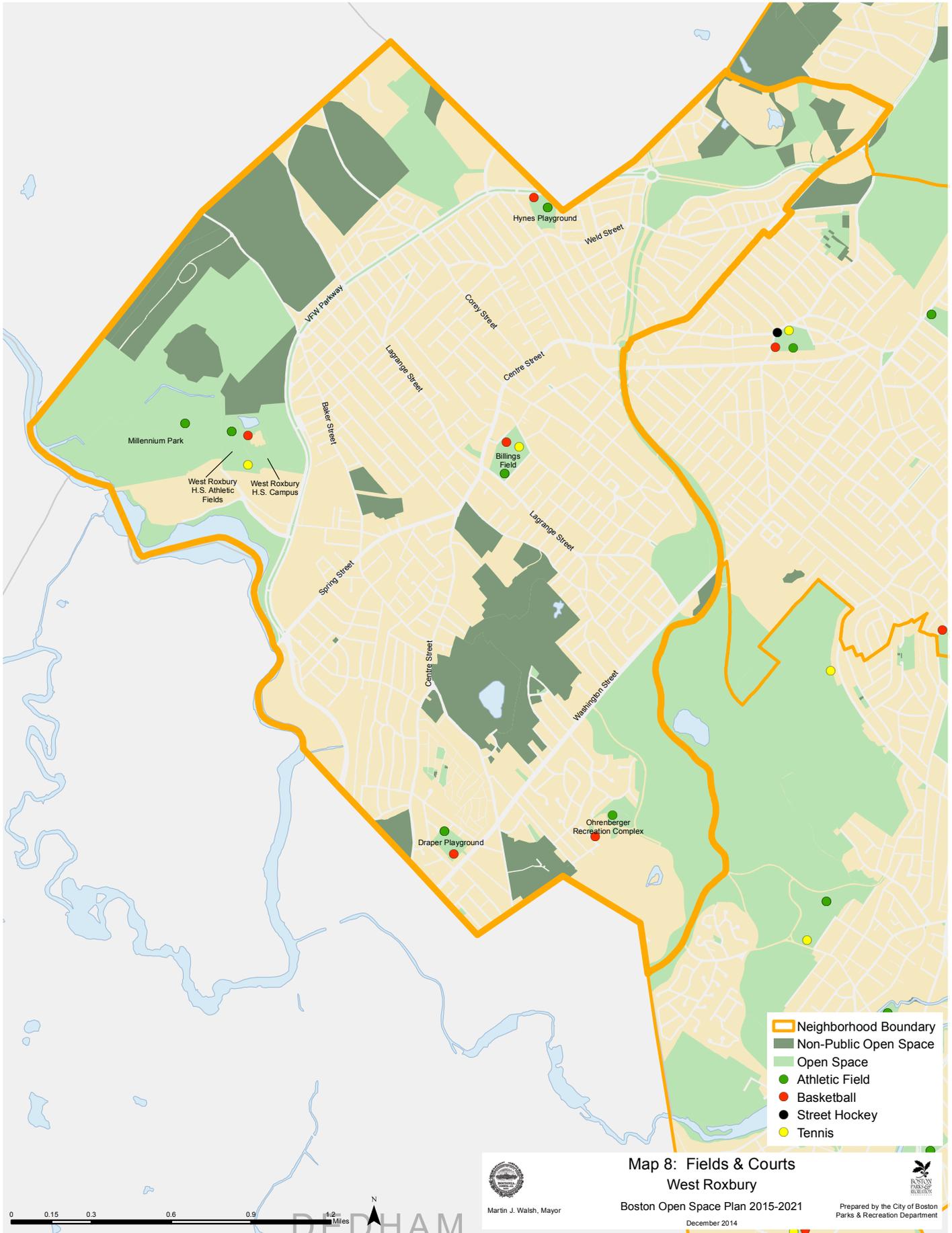


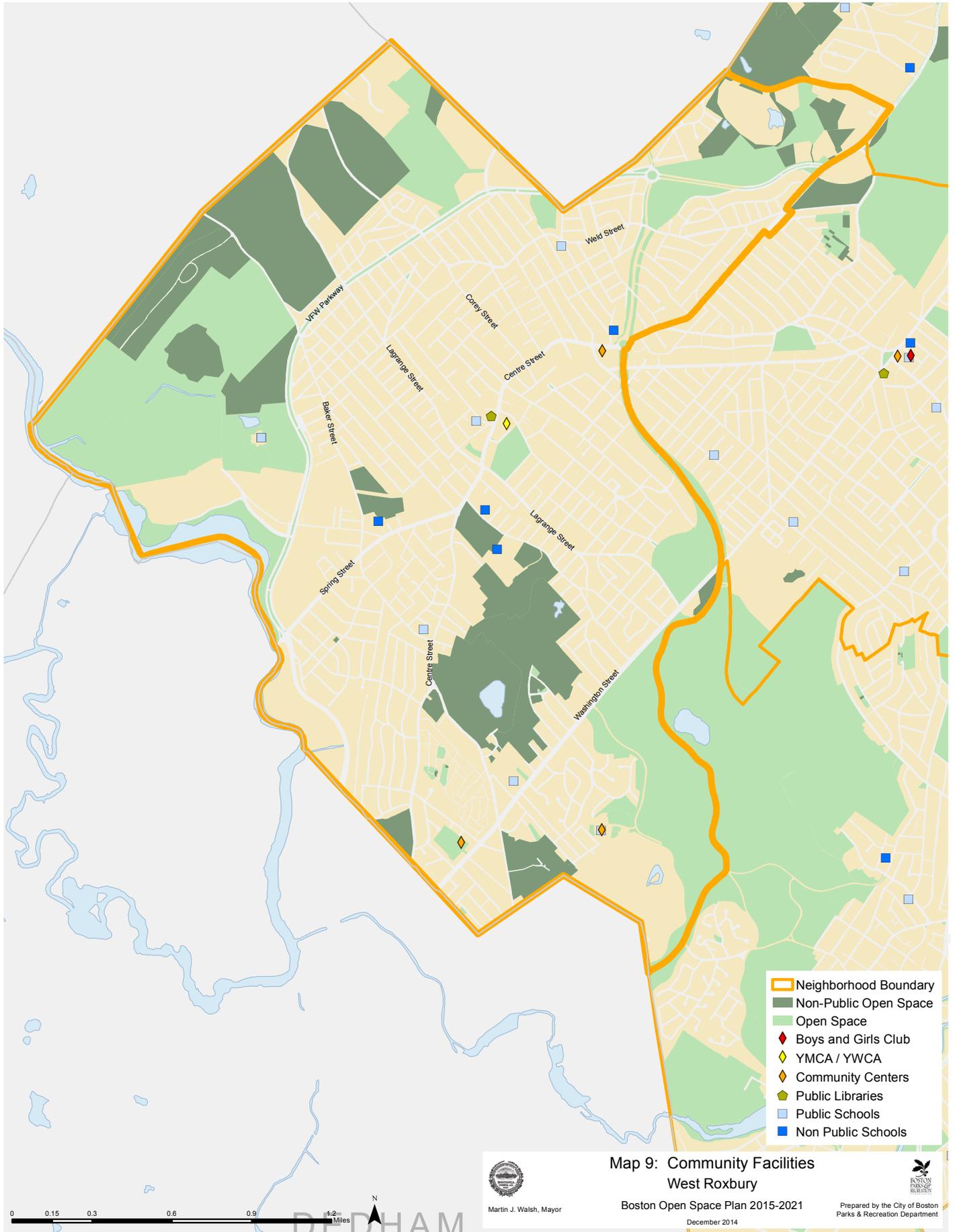


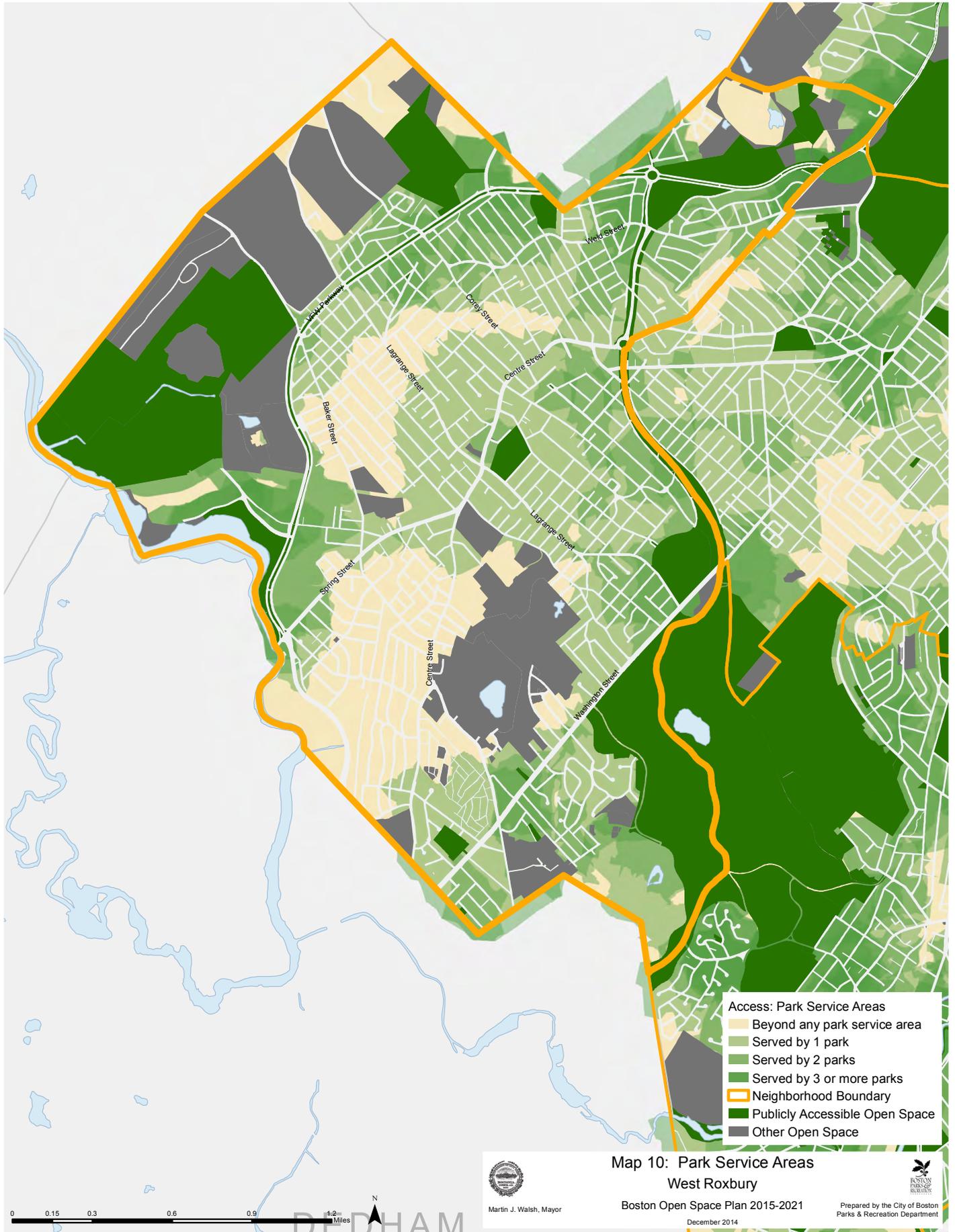


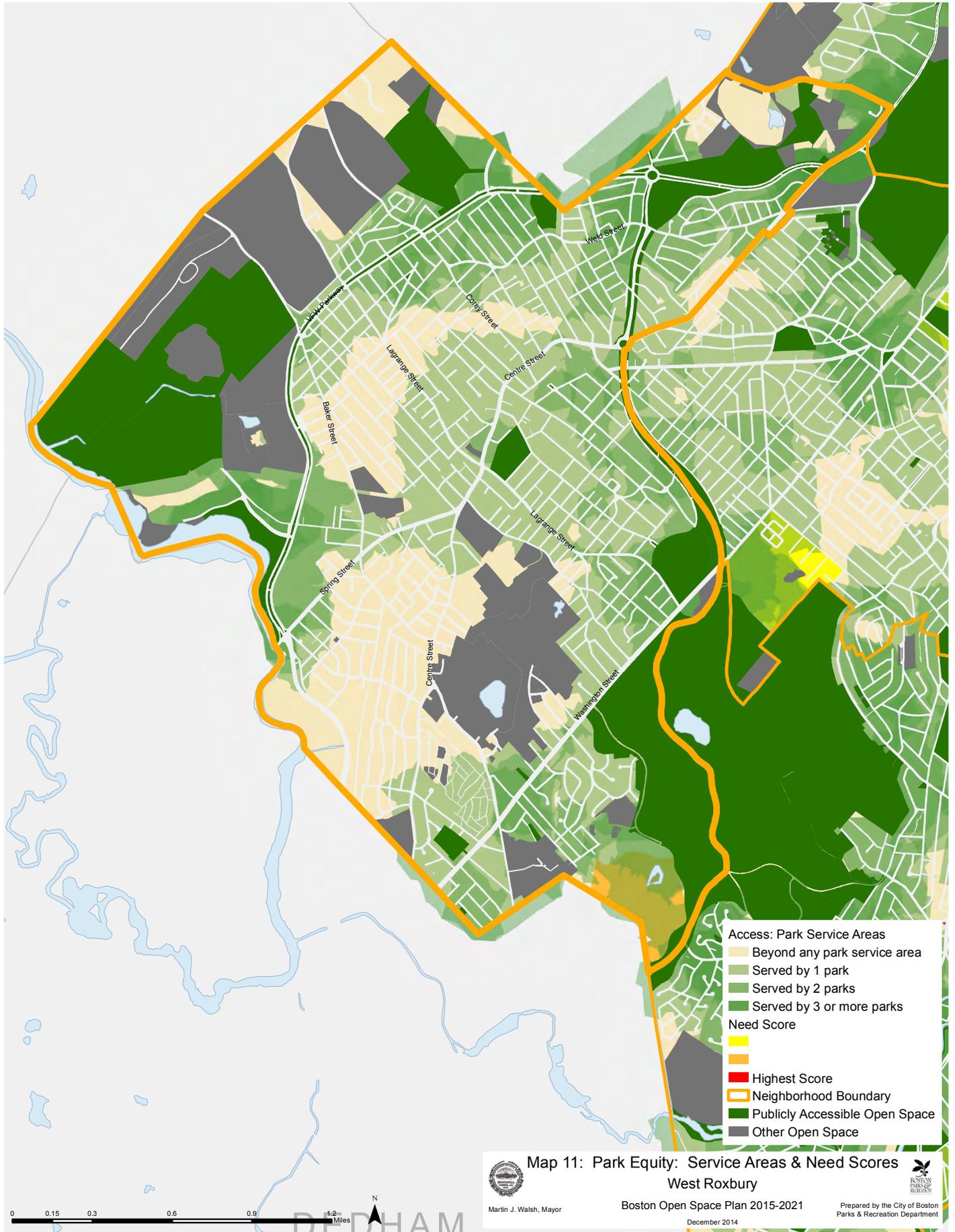












Map 11: Park Equity: Service Areas & Need Scores
West Roxbury



Martin J. Walsh, Mayor

Boston Open Space Plan 2015-2021

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