
Open Space Plan 2015-2021

Section 7

Analysis of Needs

**Section 7.2.16 Community Open Space &
Recreation
WEST ROXBURY**

DRAFT

Section 7.2.16:

Community Open Space & Recreation

WEST ROXBURY

The Community Open Space & Recreation Needs Analysis breaks down the open space analysis by neighborhood, in contrast to the city-wide assessment which was explored in Sections 3, 4 and 5. At the neighborhood scale we are better able to inventory and analyze the specific fabric and make-up of a community, and explore how the open space resources in that community respond to its needs. Functionally, neighborhood boundaries have no meaning in the use and operation of the city's open space system but these established perimeters help organize the discussion for the purposes of the Open Space Plan. This is why we chose to call these areas "communities" rather than neighborhoods.

The six basic components of the Open Space Plan neighborhood needs assessment are:

- What is the neighborhood setting and history?
- Who is the parks and open space system serving in each neighborhood?
- Where in the neighborhood are the populations with the greatest need for access to open space and how well served are these areas?
- Where are the parks and open spaces in the neighborhood and what kinds of facilities are located in these places?
- Can residents easily walk to a public park?
- What planning and development is happening in the neighborhood? What are the potential open space impacts and opportunities associated with those projects?

For further detail on the components of this analysis, see pages 7.2-1, et seq.

Needs Analysis

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. Over 3/4 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.

Analysis

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 1000 residents, nearly three times the city average of 7.64 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 (6 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

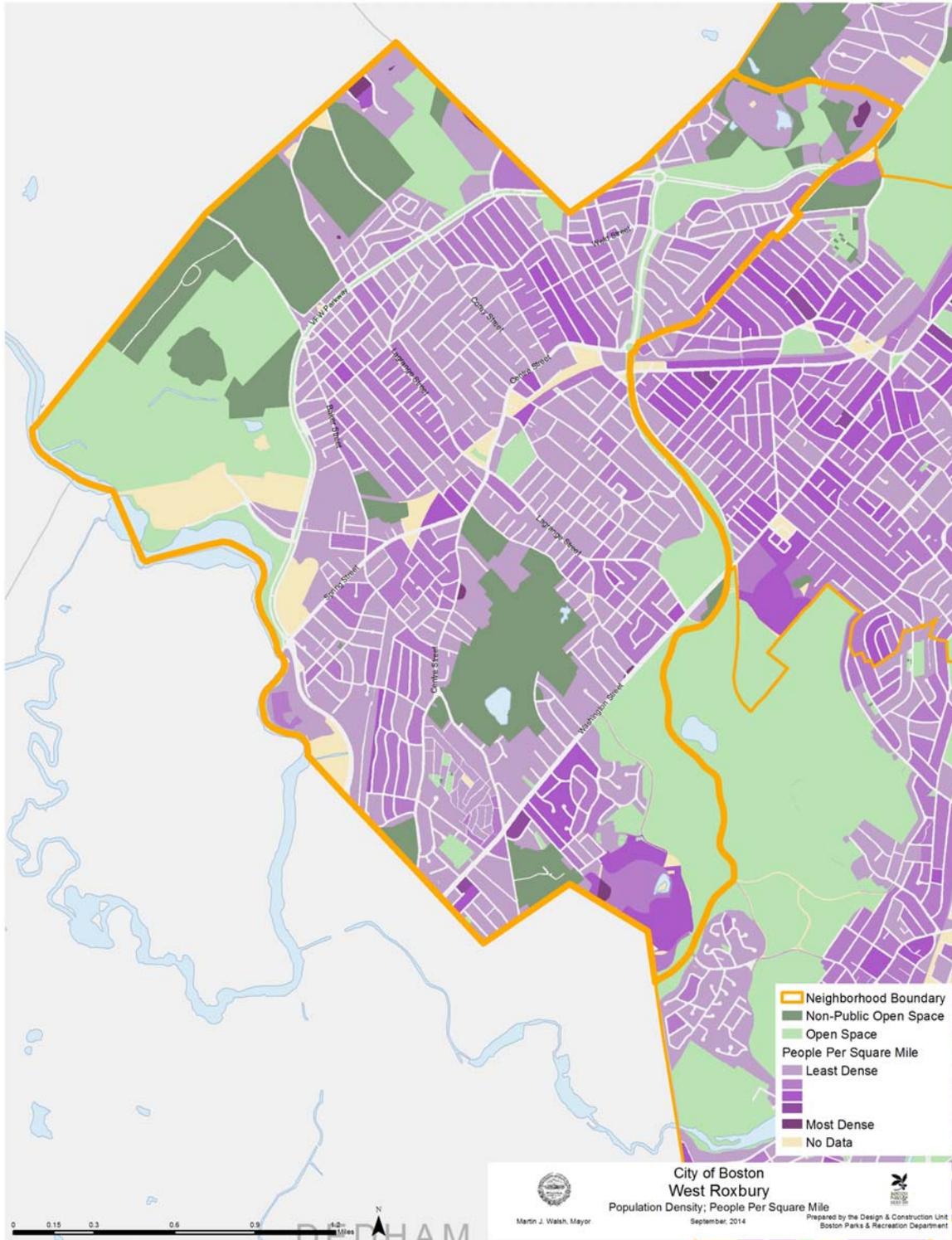
Needs Analysis

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 & 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, with large portions of the neighborhood without a park within a 10 minute walking distance (West Roxbury Map 10). In a neighborhood of this scale, with its low density population, 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.

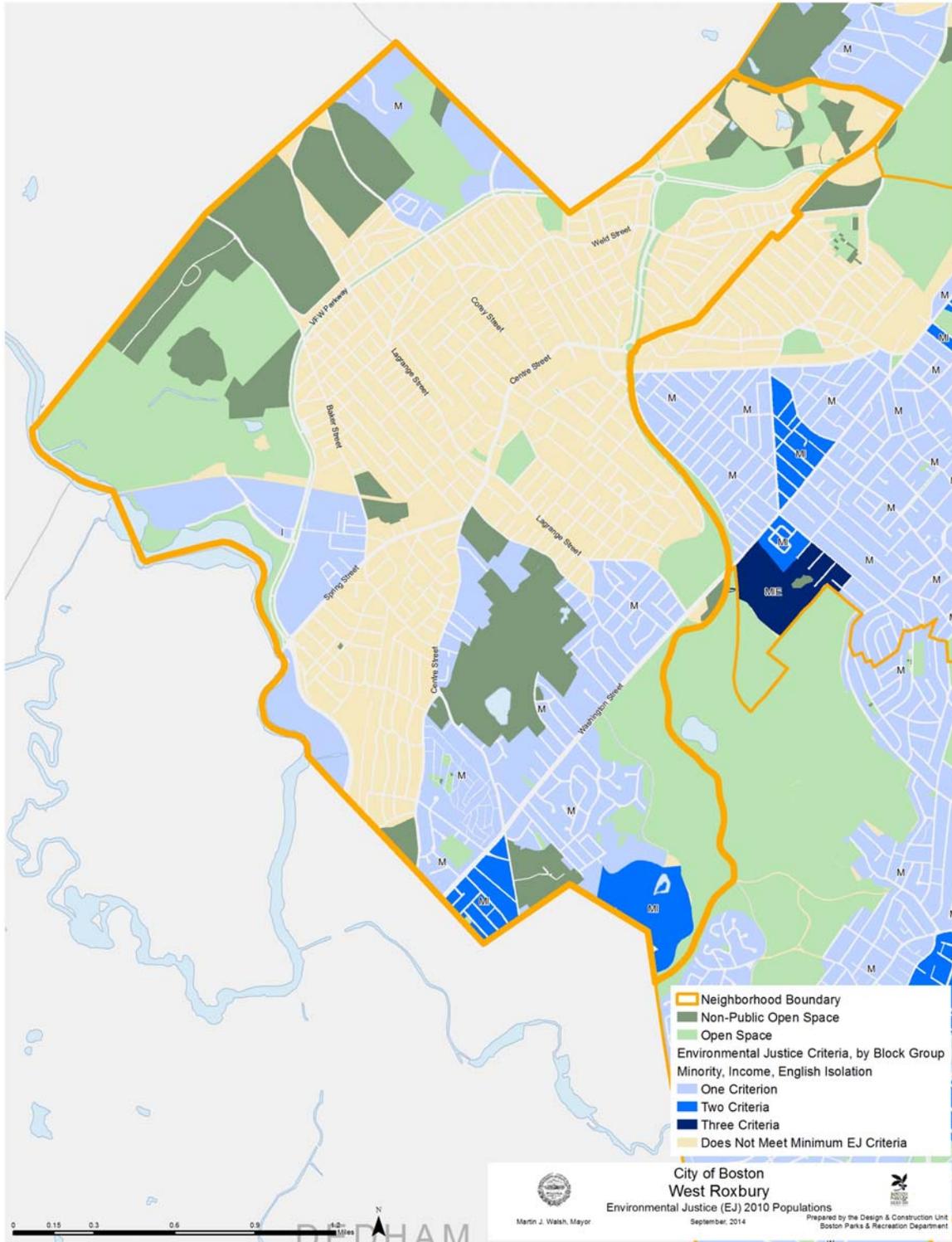
The West Roxbury Quarry is a large highly scarred and disturbed landscape area in the middle of this neighborhood which could have significant impacts on the landscape character and density of the community if it was ever closed and redeveloped. Options and desirability for retaining this area as open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

Needs Analysis



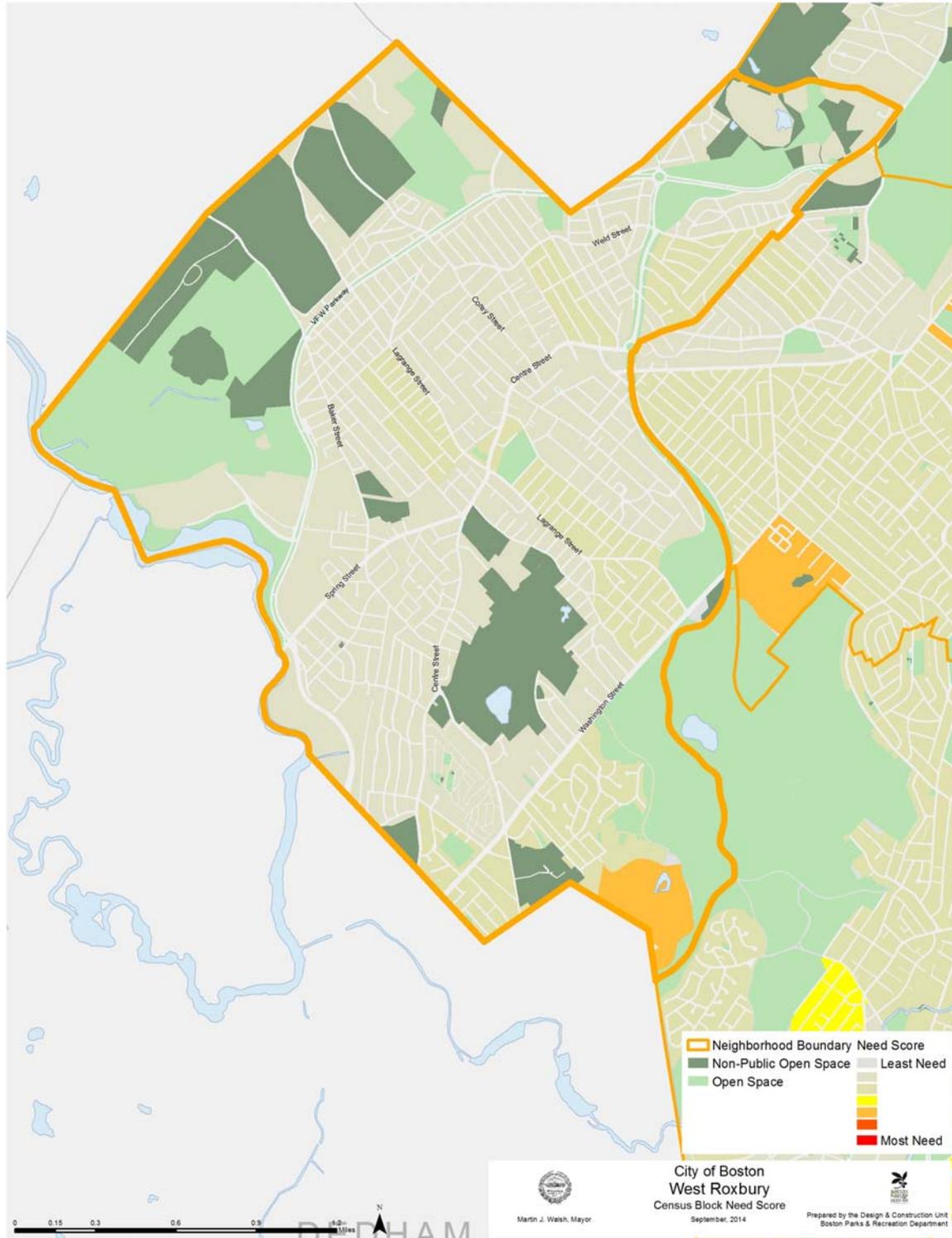
Map 1: Population Density, West Roxbury

Needs Analysis



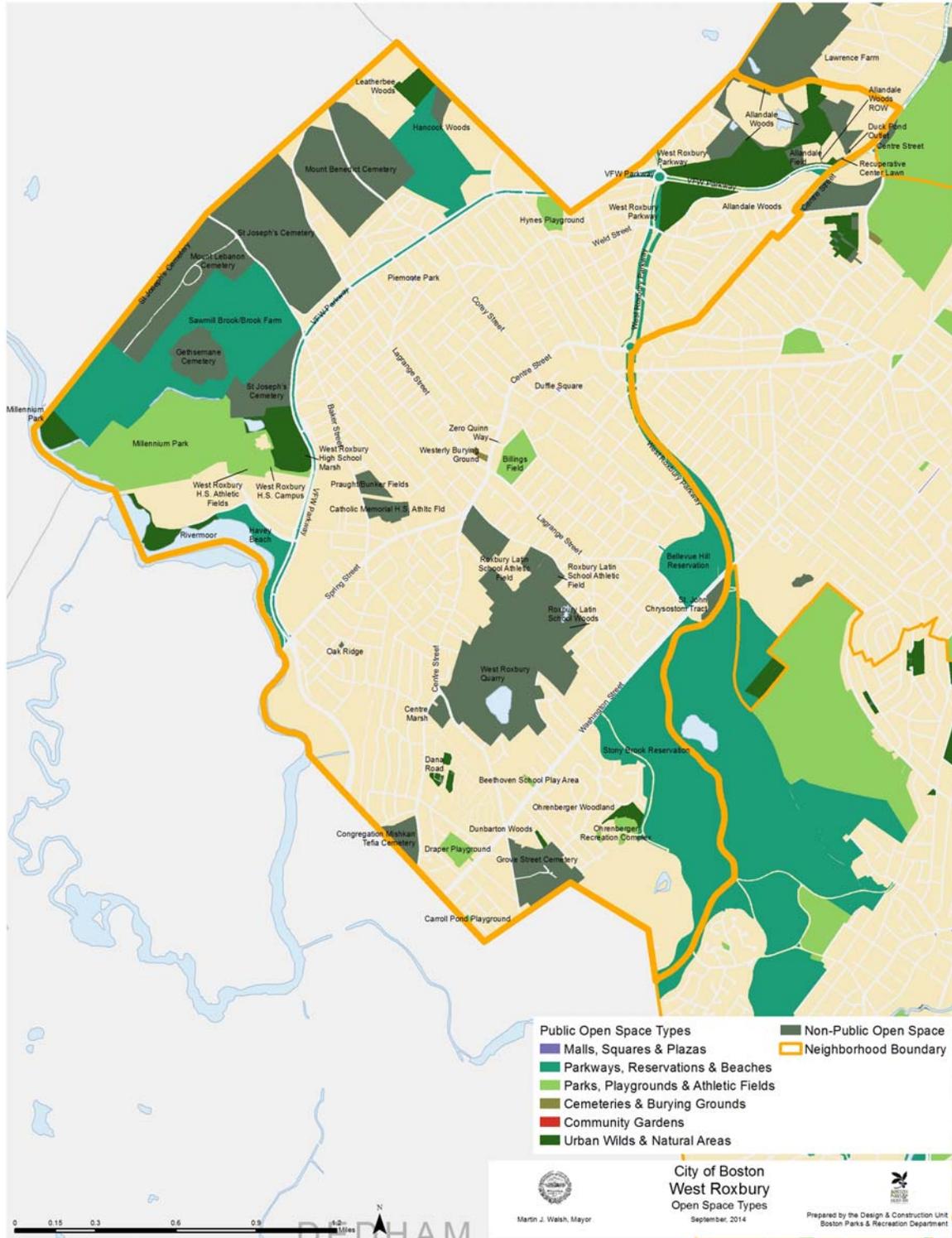
Map 2: Environmental Justice Populations, West Roxbury

Needs Analysis



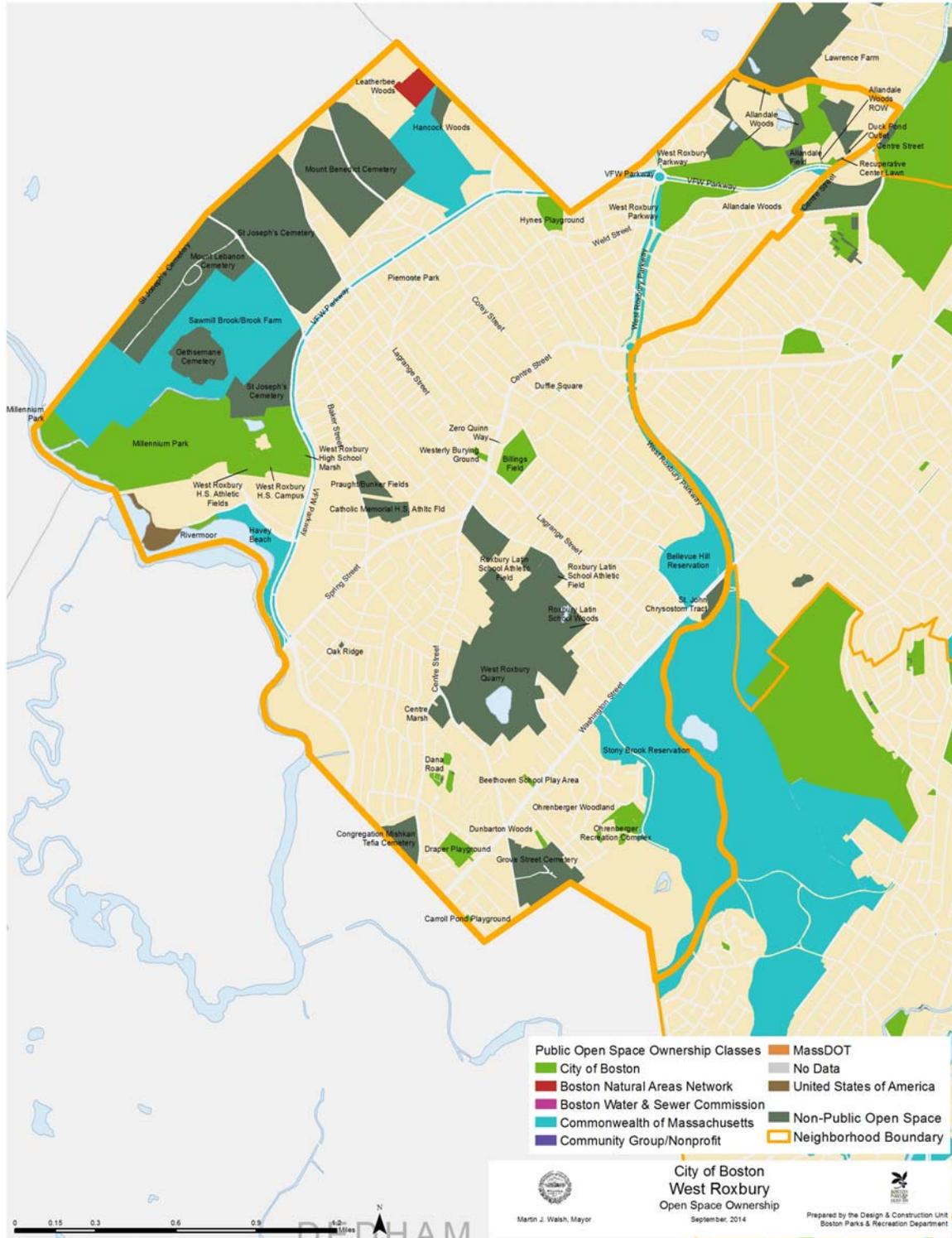
Map 3: Need Score by Census Block Groups, West Roxbury

Needs Analysis



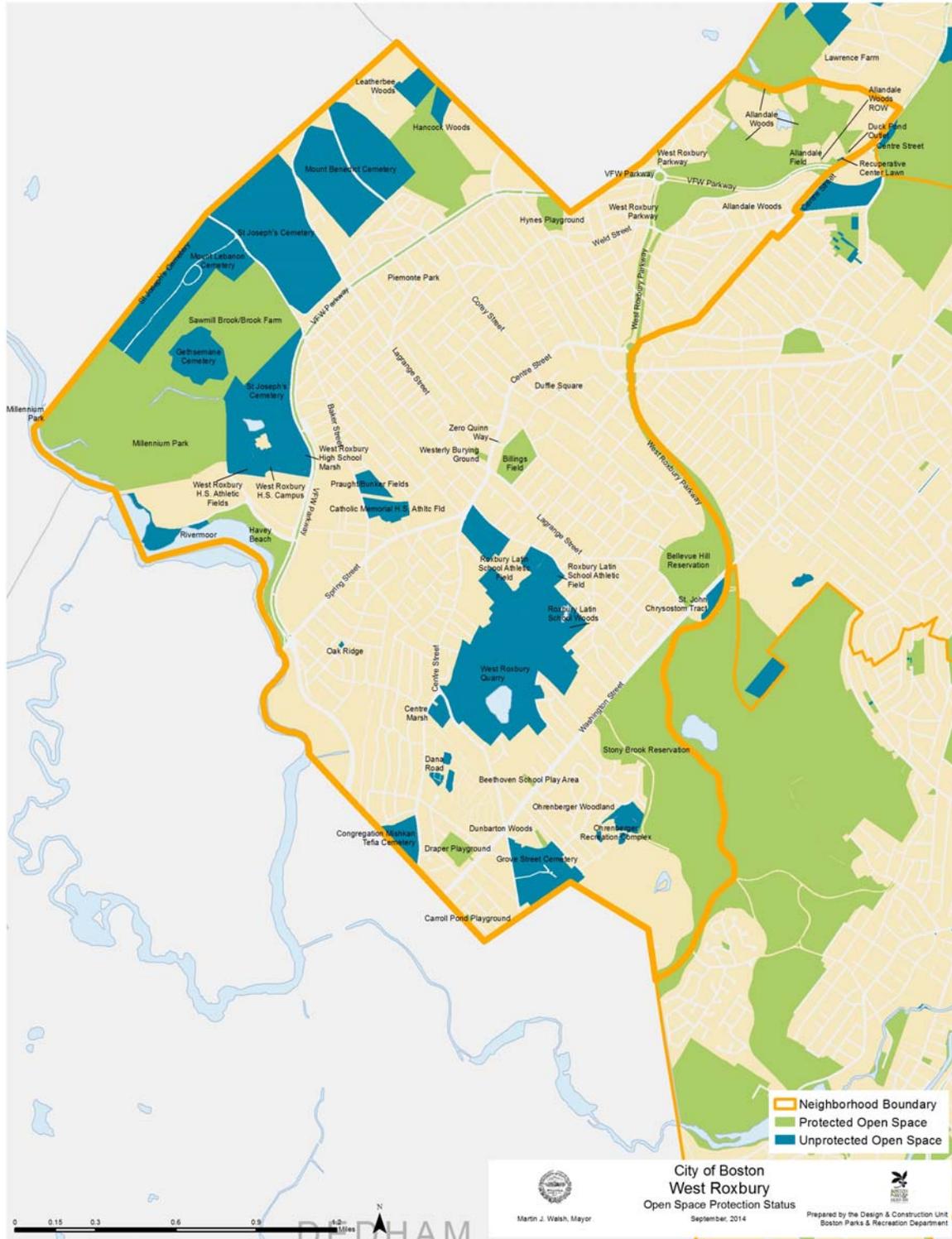
Map 4: Open Space by Type, West Roxbury

Needs Analysis



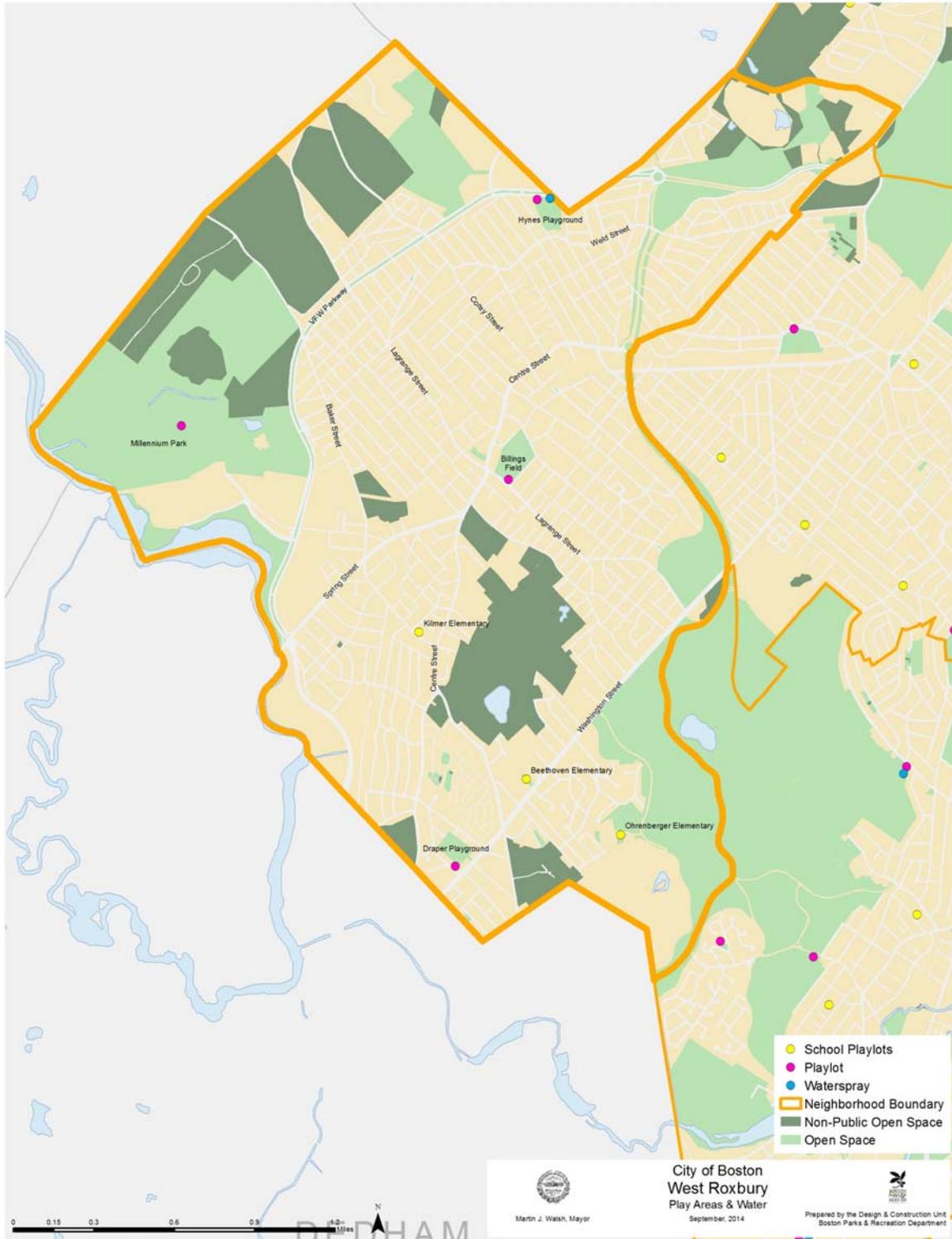
Map 5: Open Space by Ownership, West Roxbury

Needs Analysis



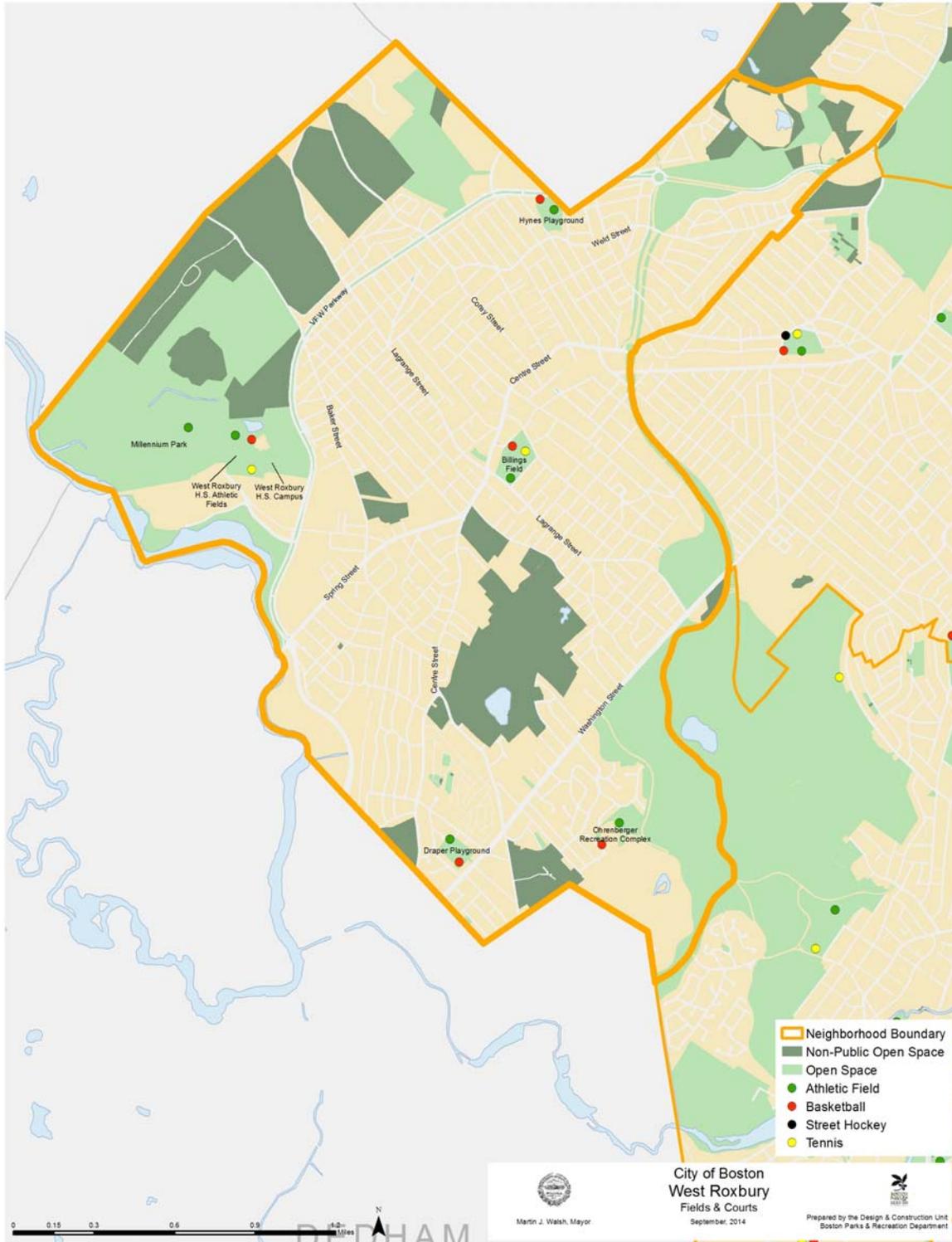
Map 6: Open Space by Protection Status, West Roxbury

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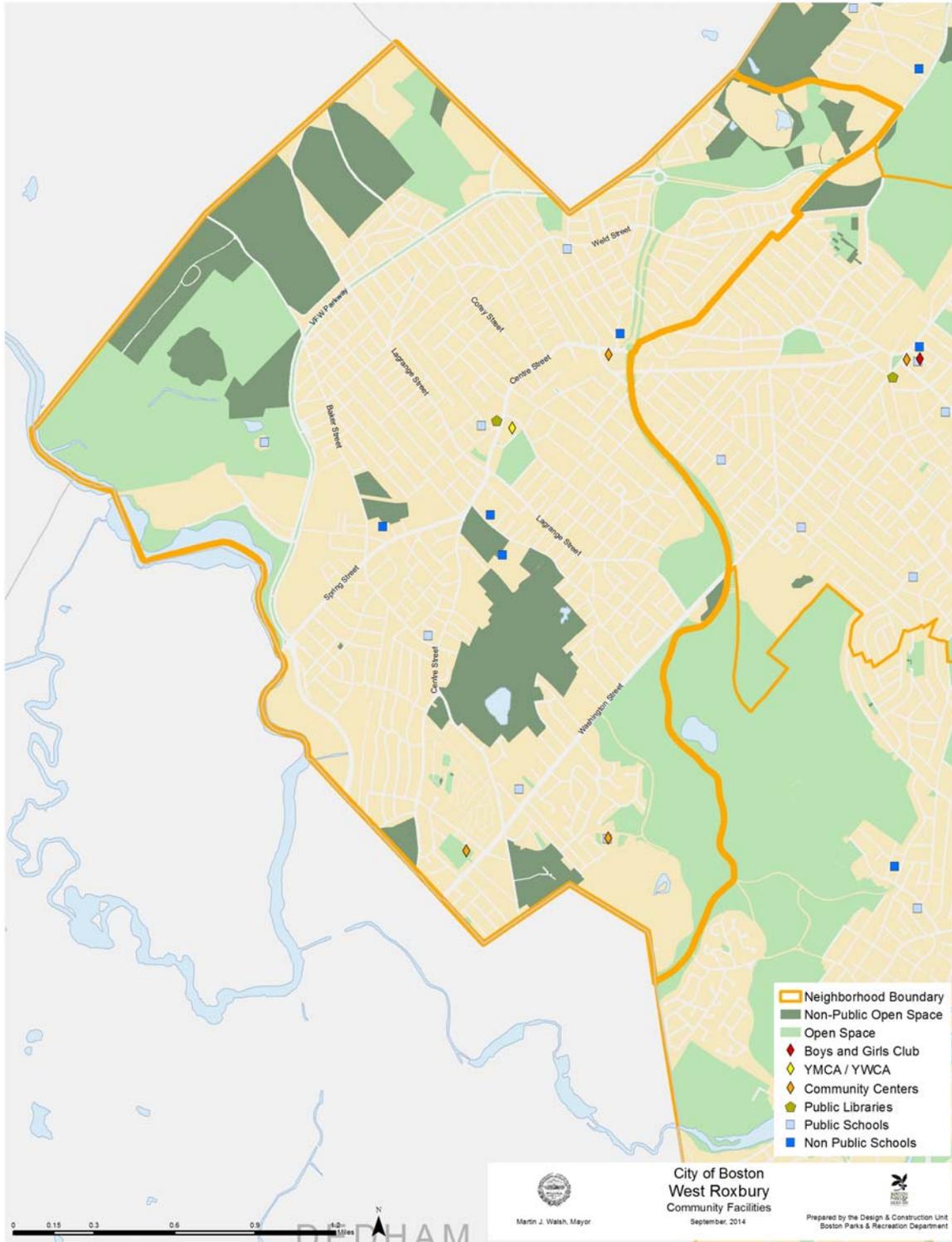


Map 7: Play Areas and Water Spray Features, West Roxbury

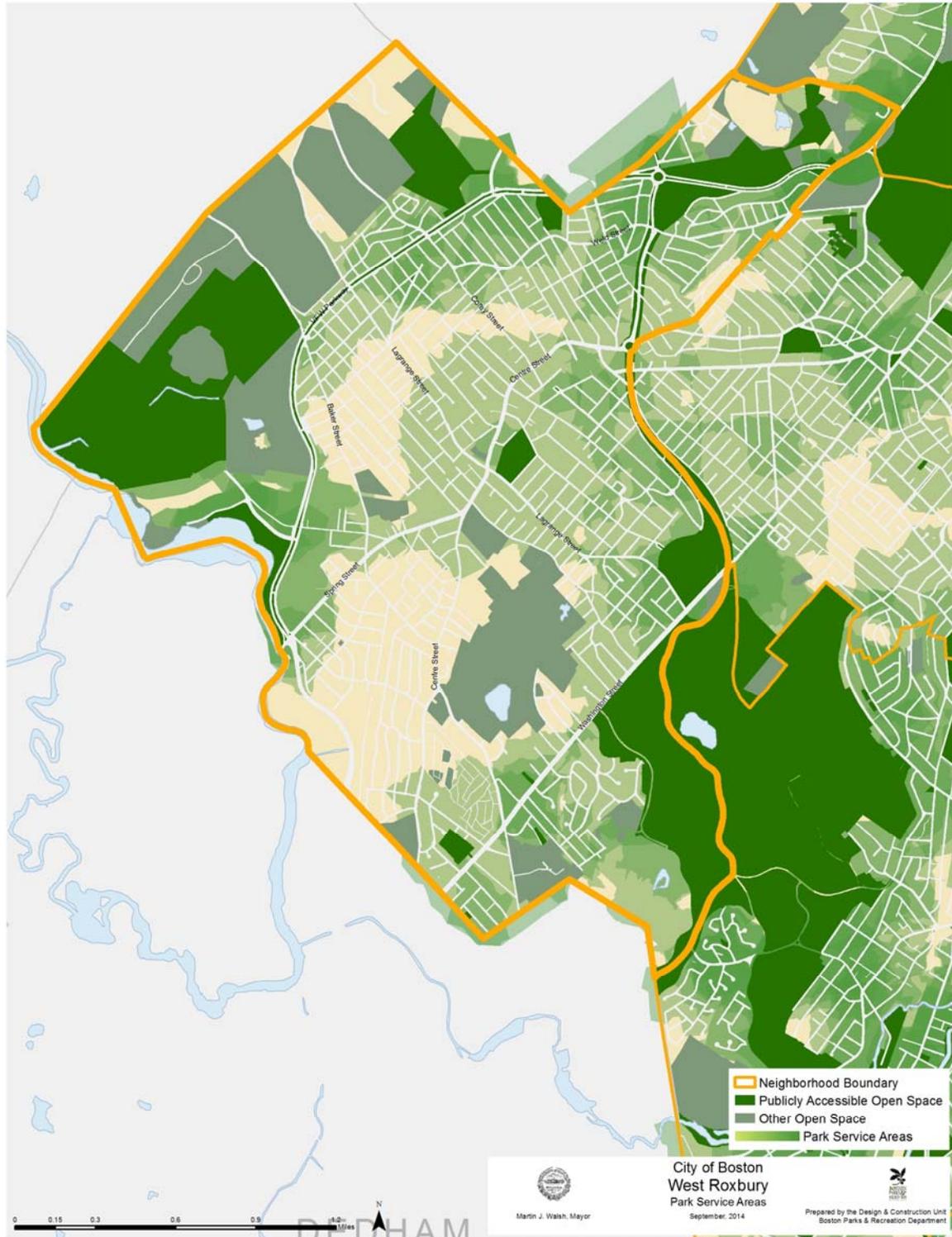
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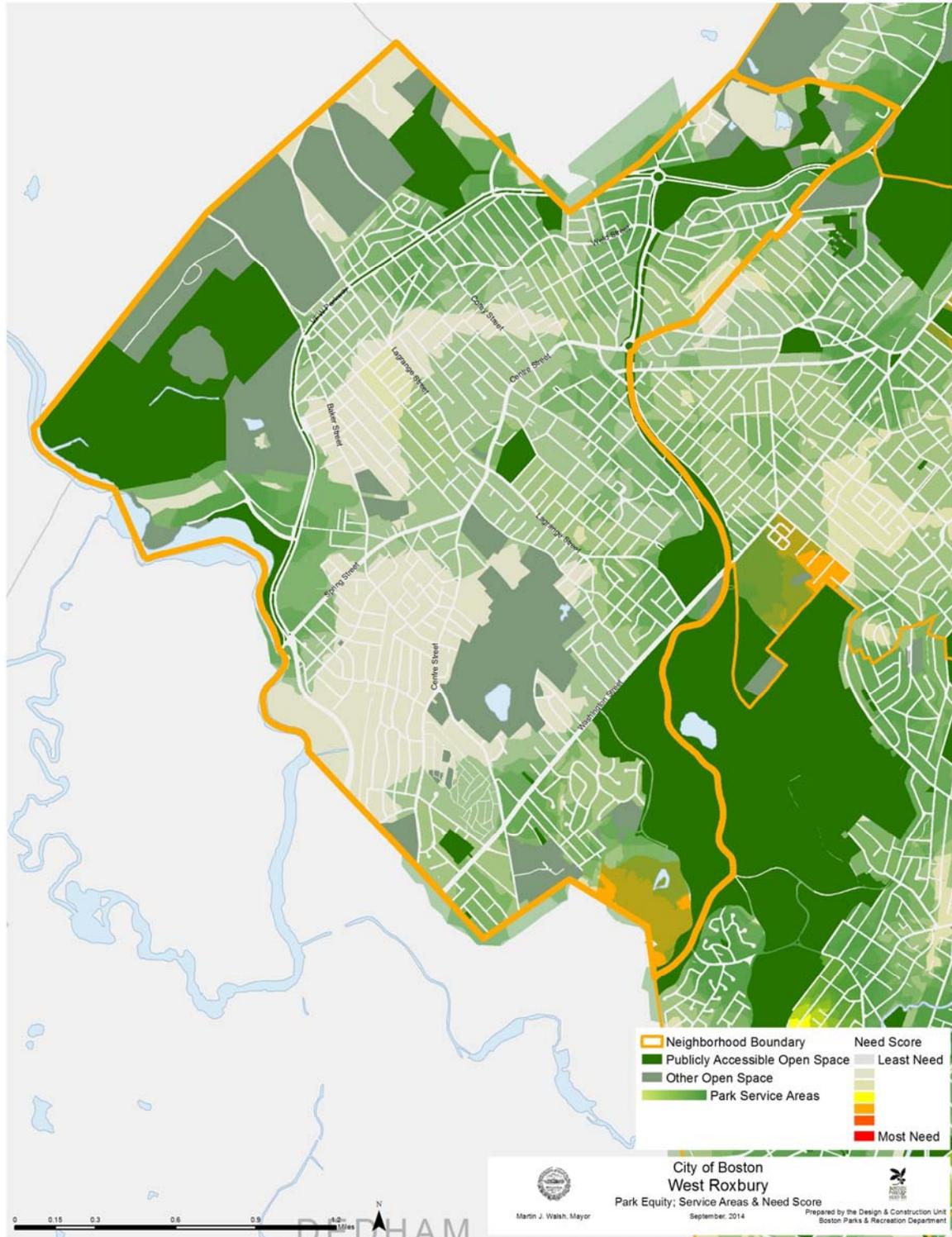
Map 8: Fields and Courts, West Roxbury



Map 9: Community Facilities, West Roxbury



Map 10: Park Service Areas, West Roxbury



Map 11: Park Equity: Service Areas and Need Scores, West Roxbury

Needs Analysis

Population	
2010 Census	30,446
2000 Census	28,755
Population growth/decline, 2000-2010	5.9%

Age		
Under 9	3,845	12.6%
10-19	2,944	9.7%
20-34	5,346	17.6%
35-54	8,900	29.2%
55-64	3,935	12.9%
65 and over	5,476	18.0%

Race	
	% of Total Population
White Alone	73.3%
Black or African American alone	9.7%
Asian Alone	6.5%
Other	2.1%

Latino Status	
	% of Total Population
Hispanic or Latino	8.5%

Population Density	
	Persons Per Acre
2010 Census	8.7

Median Household Income	
	\$79,010

Household by Number of Vehicles Available	
No Vehicle	9.6%
1 vehicle	43.9%
2 vehicles	37.7%
3 or more vehicles	8.7%