

# Welcome to the Open Space Planning Kickoff Meeting!

## Icebreaker:

While we're waiting for people to sign in, feel free to share into the chat:

- Your name
- Your neighborhood
- Park you've visited most recently (doesn't have to be a Cambridge park!)



# Our Parks, Our Plan:

## Parks and Open Space Planning

City of Cambridge  
Community Development Department

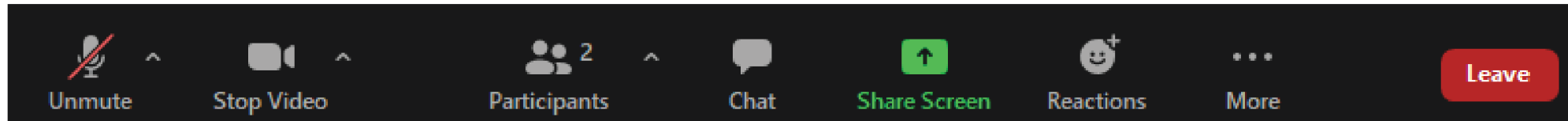




# Meeting Agenda

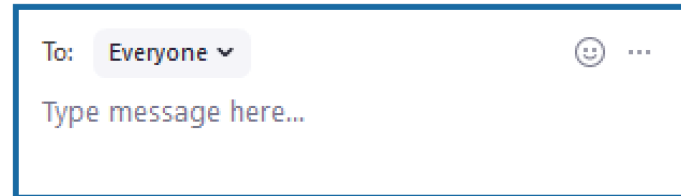
- Welcome
- Purpose and Scope of Planning Process
- Parks System Overview and Defining Park Needs
- What to Expect During Process
- Q&A and Feedback

# Getting to Know Zoom

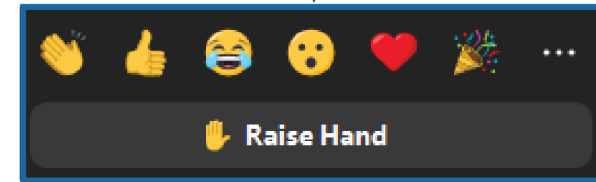


↑ ↑  
Please leave your **audio muted** and video on (if comfortable)

↑  
Click to open the **Chat** box. This will allow you to chat with the Hosts and Participants.



↑  
Click to open the **Reactions** box. This will allow you to give nonverbal feedback.



For Zoom-related questions reach out to Lev McCarthy via chat or email [lmccarthy@cambridgema.gov](mailto:lmccarthy@cambridgema.gov)



If you're having connectivity issues, call in at 929/436-2866  
Meeting ID: 842 7433 7036



We're recording!

Parks and open spaces are a key part of the City's infrastructure for maintaining and increasing quality of life





# Purpose of Open Space Planning

- How can our parks and open space system reflect our community priorities and values?
- How should our open space system evolve over time?
- How do we use the public space that we have well?

# Challenges

- Population growth increases demand on open space
- Densely built city means less available land
- Competitive real estate market
- Matching park facilities to need of community
- Other public priorities, e.g. affordable housing, community needs



# Opportunities

- Improve and reprogram existing open space
- Improve connections to existing open space
- Work with private development partners to create new open space





# Plans and Studies

- State Open Space & Recreation Plan
- Green Ribbon Open Space Study
- Healthy Parks & Playgrounds
- Play in the Public Realm
- Let the Public Play
- Adventure Playground Report
- Parks & Playgrounds Guide



# Related Initiatives

**Envision Cambridge** looked at open space through lenses of urban form, climate and environment, and community. This work will pick up from Envision Cambridge recommendations with a more in-depth look at our parks system.

For more information:

[envision.cambridgema.gov](https://envision.cambridgema.gov)

# Envision Cambridge

A plan for the  
future of the city

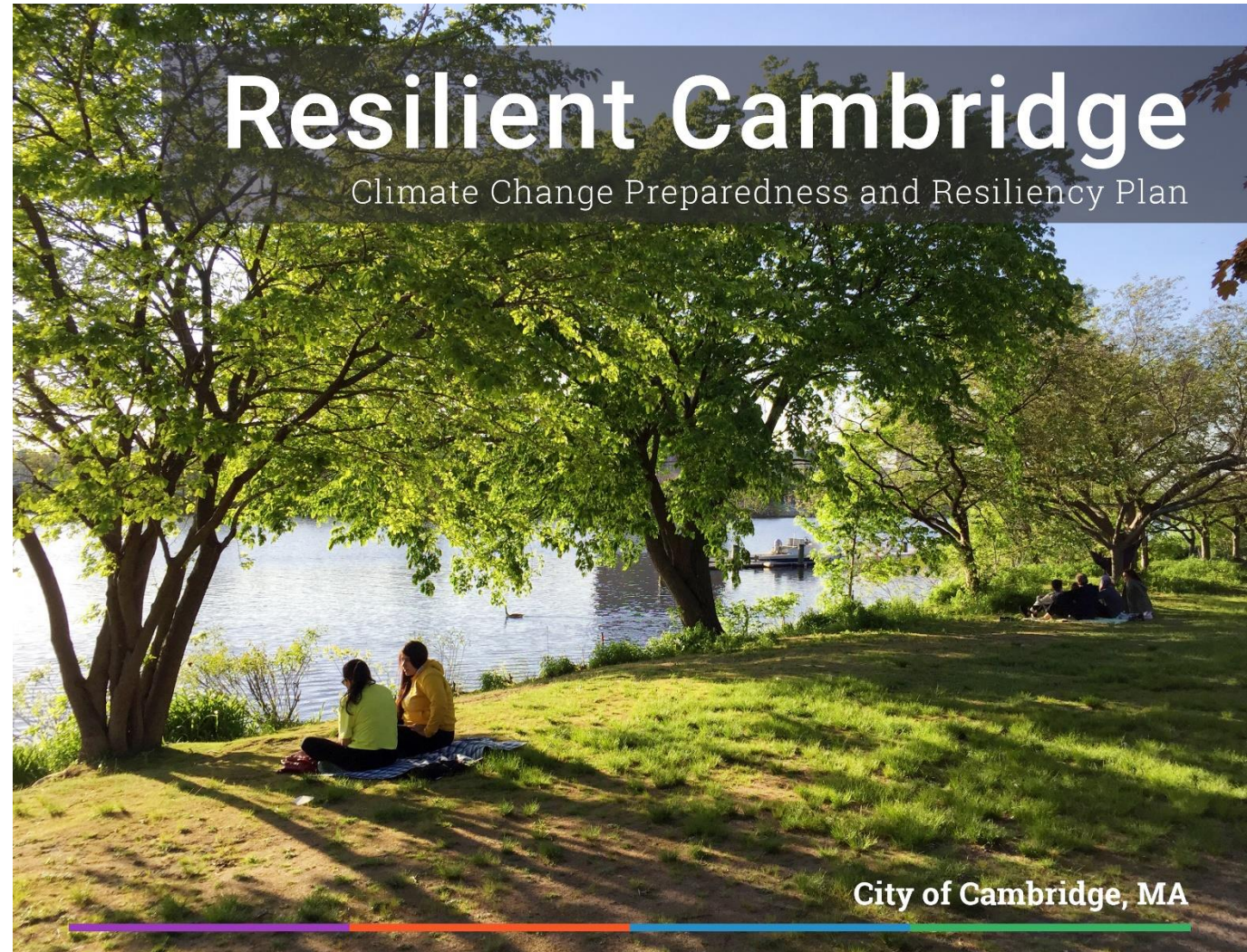


# Related Initiatives

The **Resilient Cambridge Plan** addresses the climate change driven risks from increasing temperatures, increasing precipitation, and rising sea levels looking out to 2030 and 2070.

For more information:

[cambridgema.gov/resilientcambridge](https://cambridgema.gov/resilientcambridge)



# Related Initiatives

**Healthy Forest, Healthy City Initiative** and **Urban Forest Master Plan** to help reshape Cambridge's relationship with its urban forest and to provide opportunities for the Cambridge community to play a role in keeping the urban forest healthy and strong—and enjoy its many benefits.

For more information:

[cambridgema.gov/ufmp](http://cambridgema.gov/ufmp)

**Healthy  
Forest**



**Healthy  
City**

# Related Initiatives

**Public Space Lab** is a testing ground for intentional community building. It seeks to cultivate inclusive and participatory public spaces using a spirit of partnership, experimentation, and collective learning.

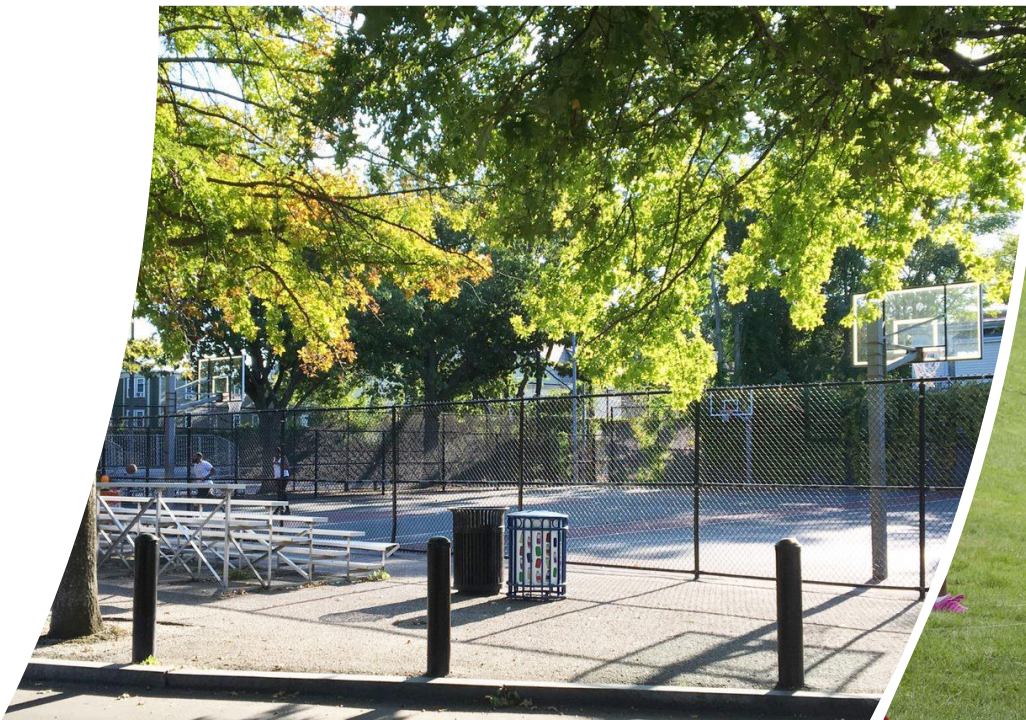
For more information:

[cambridgema.gov/publicspacelab](https://cambridgema.gov/publicspacelab)



# Cambridge's Open Spaces

**109 open spaces**  
covering  
**490 acres**



# Cambridge's Open Spaces

321 acres

City-owned parks and open space

169 acres

POPS and non-City  
public open space

11.9%

of Cambridge's land area  
is public open space

# How does Cambridge compare?

Somerville  
~6% of  
land area

~2 acres per  
1000 residents  
(2019)

Cambridge  
11.9% of  
land area

4.1 acres per 1000  
residents (2020)

Boston  
~15% of  
land area

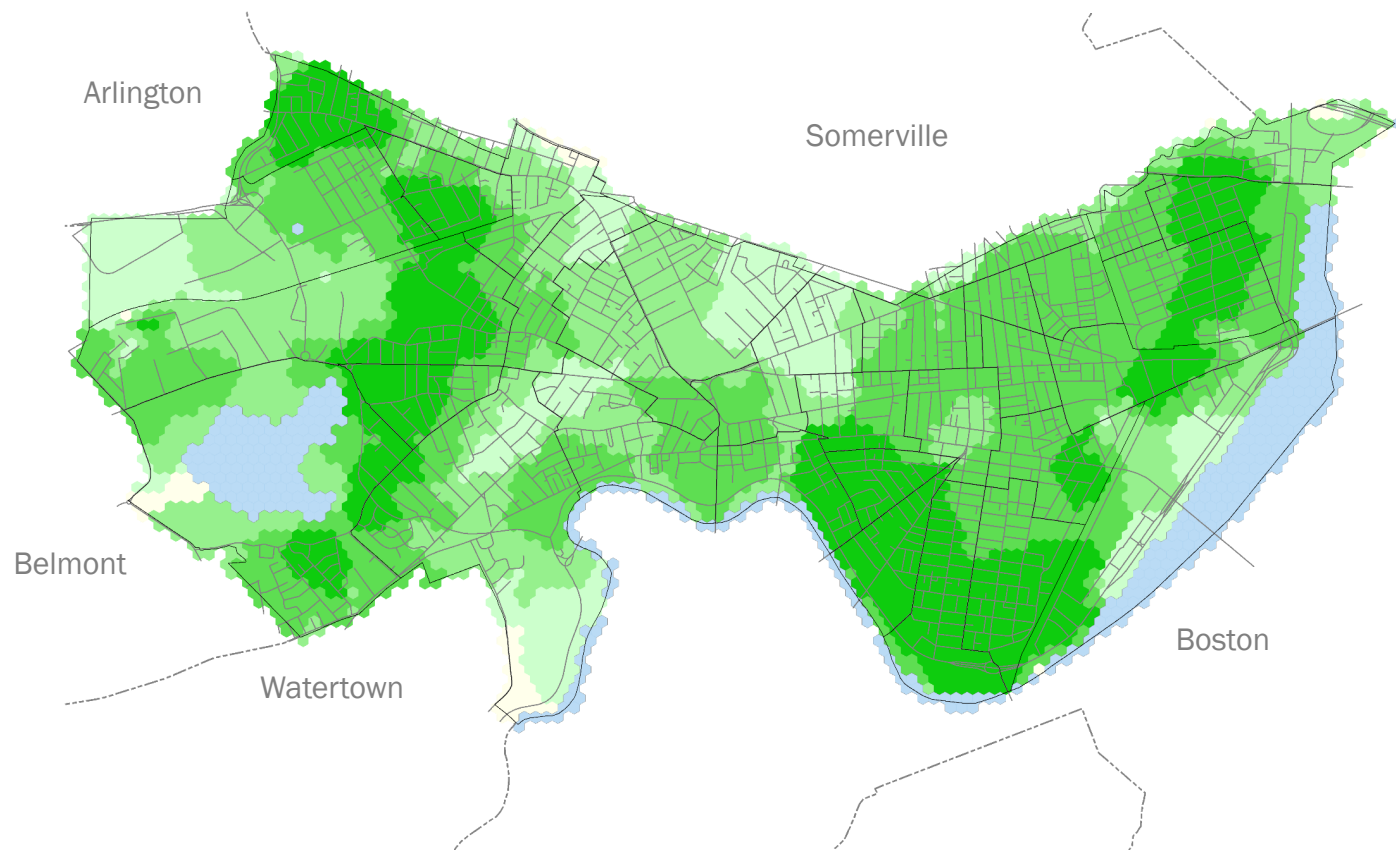
~7.6 acres per 1000  
residents (2015)



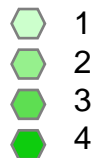
# Access to Open Space

**Over 99%**

of Cambridge residents live within  
a 10-minute walk of a  
public open space in Cambridge



**Number of Park Types  
within Walking Distance**



*\*Mini Parks = 1/4mi walking distance*

*Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks Citywide Parks = 1/2mi walking distance*



# Park Program

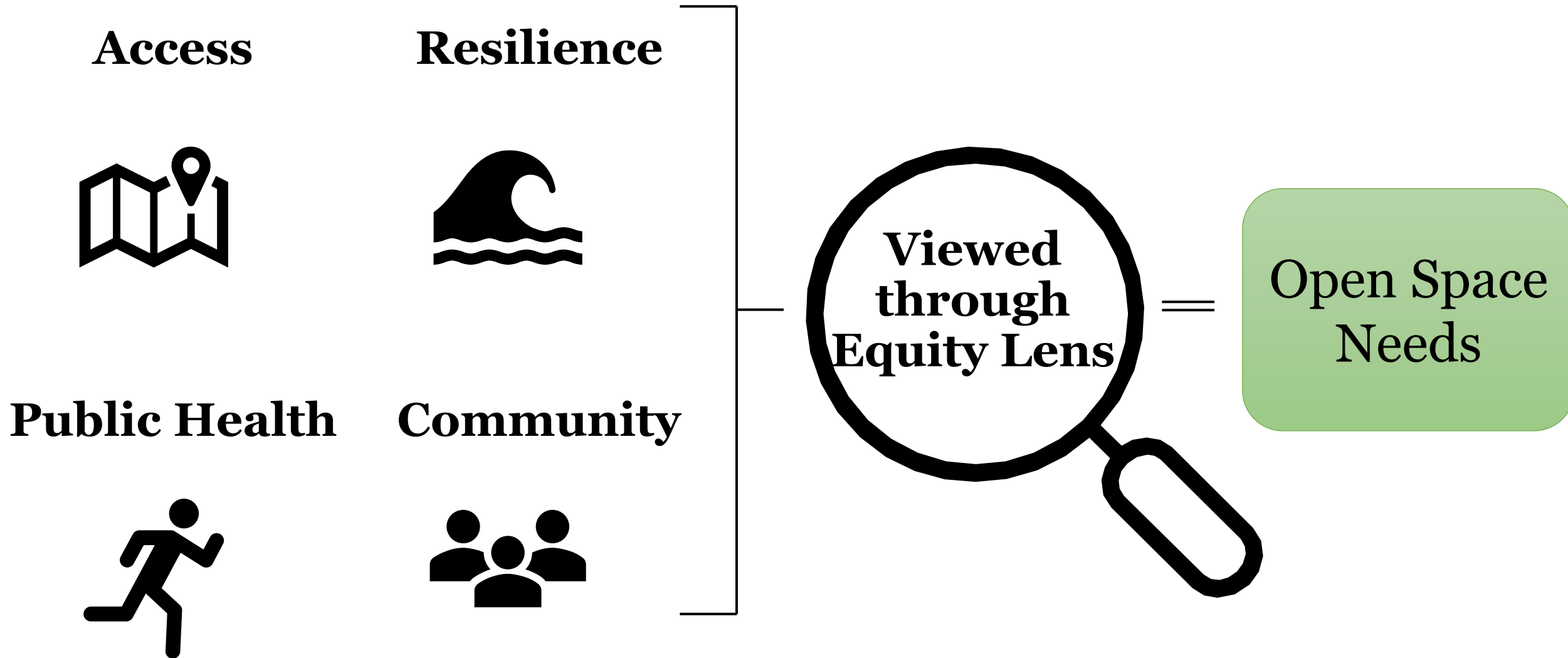
## Typical program elements

- Athletic uses
- Passive spaces
- Natural areas and paths
- Special uses
- Sports fields
- Courts
- Playgrounds
- Community gardens
- Dog parks
- Water play

# How do we define open space needs?



# How do we define open space needs?



# Access

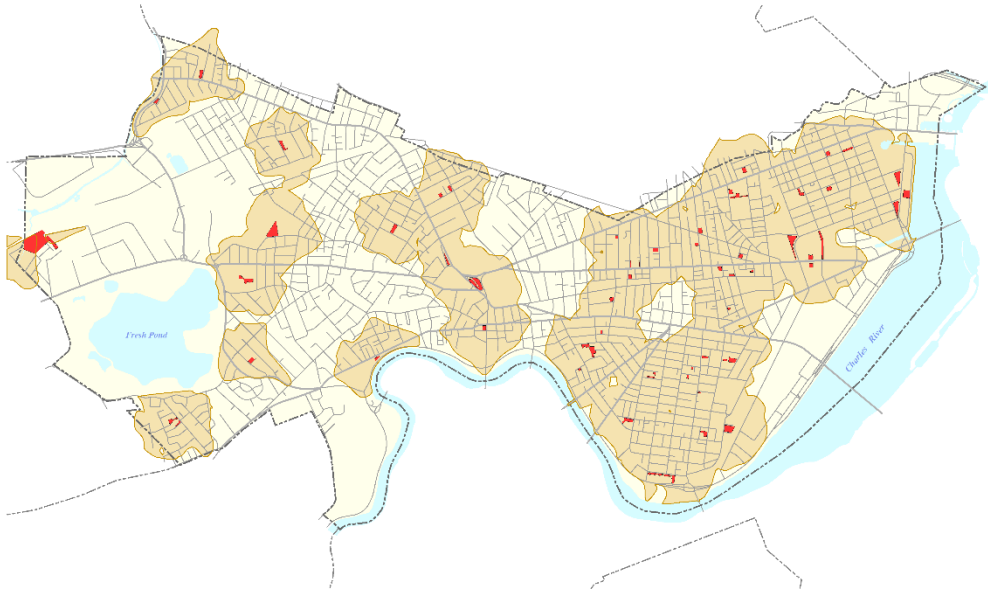
- Type of open space
- Quality of open space
- Barriers to access (physical, societal)



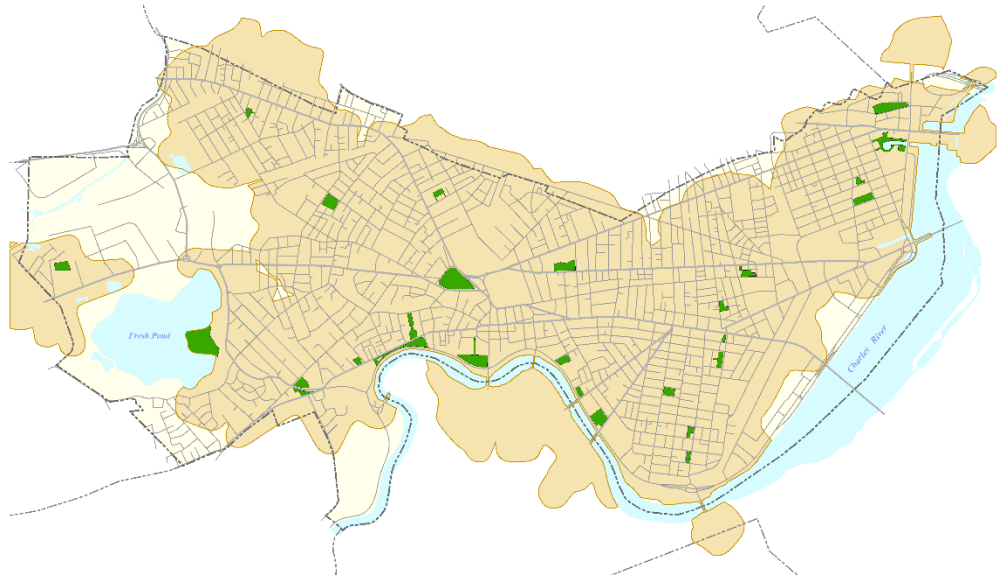
# Open Space Categorized by Park Type



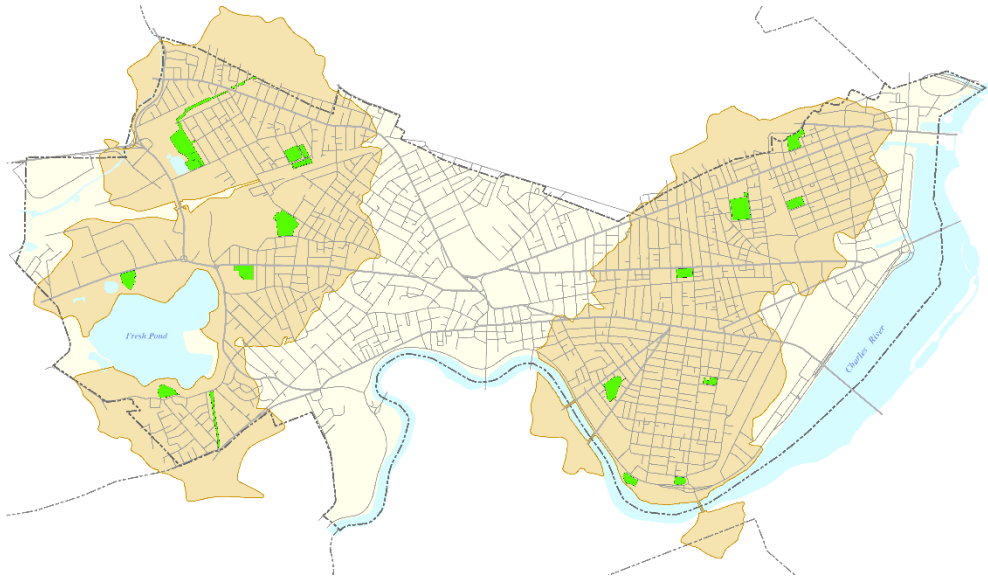
**Mini Parks**



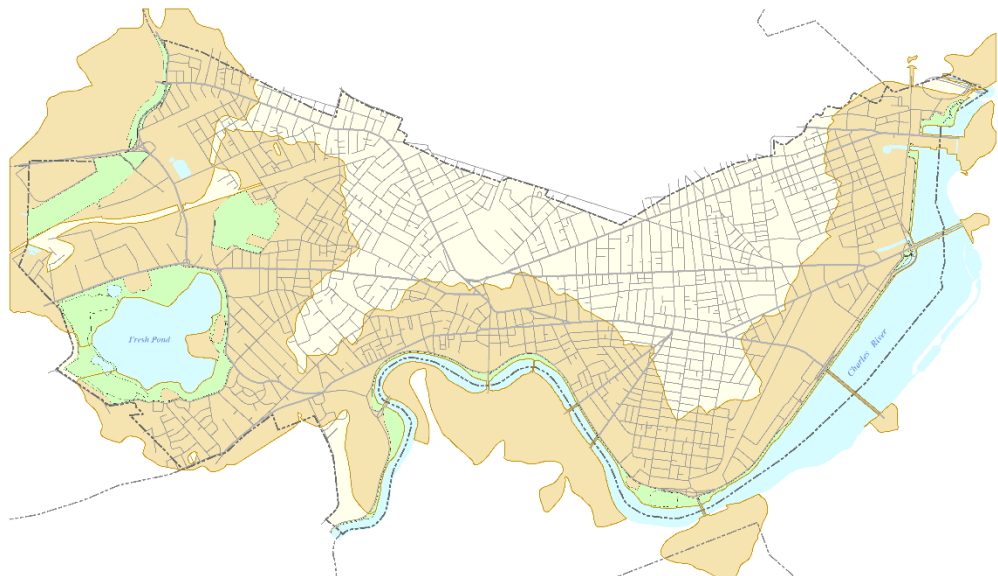
**Neighborhood Parks**



**Community Recreation Parks**



**Citywide Parks**

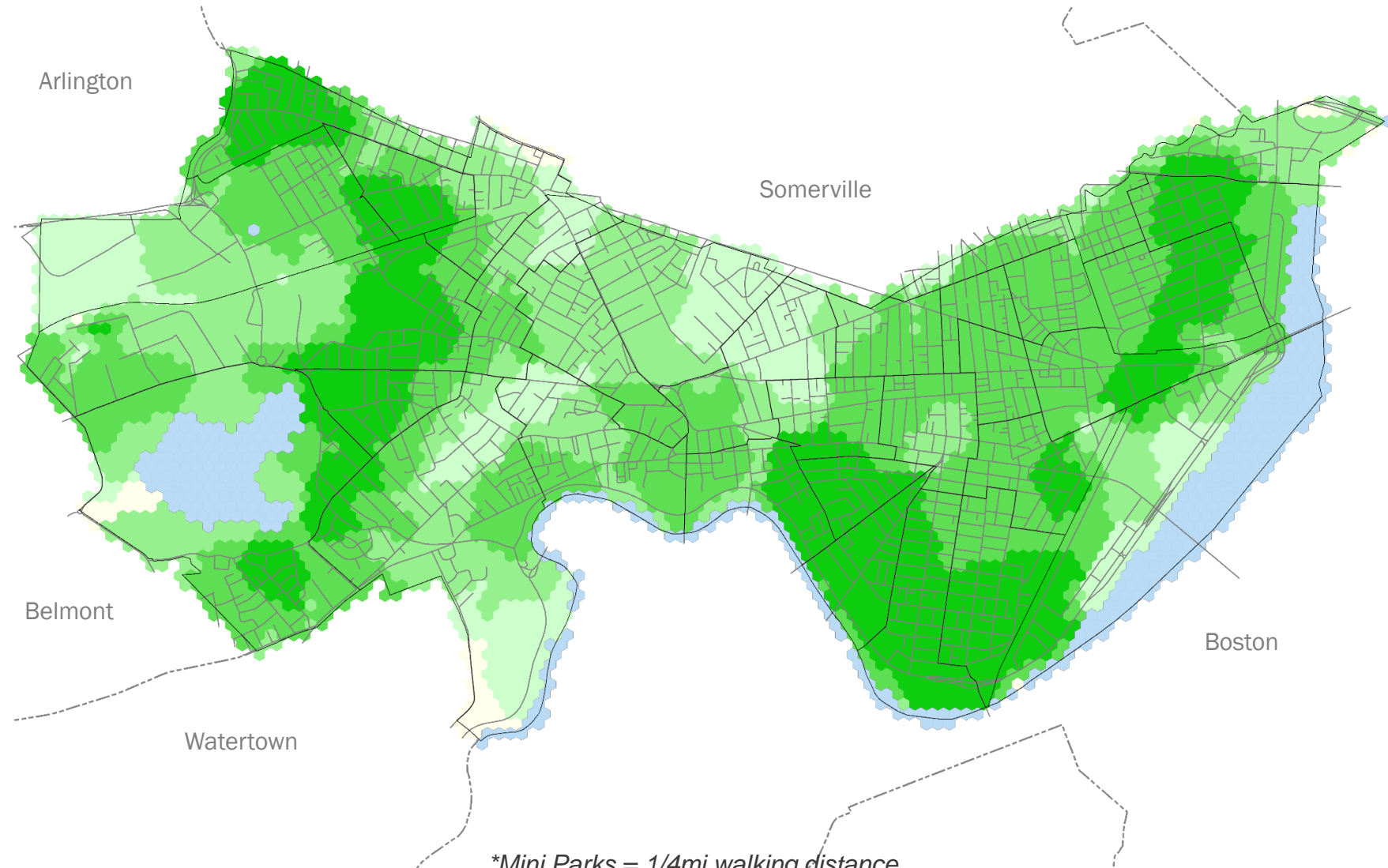
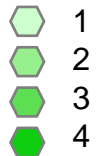


# Access and Proximity to Park Types

The number of park types to which different areas of the city have access within walking distance.

This includes  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile walksheds based on the park type\*

Number of Park Types  
within Walking Distance

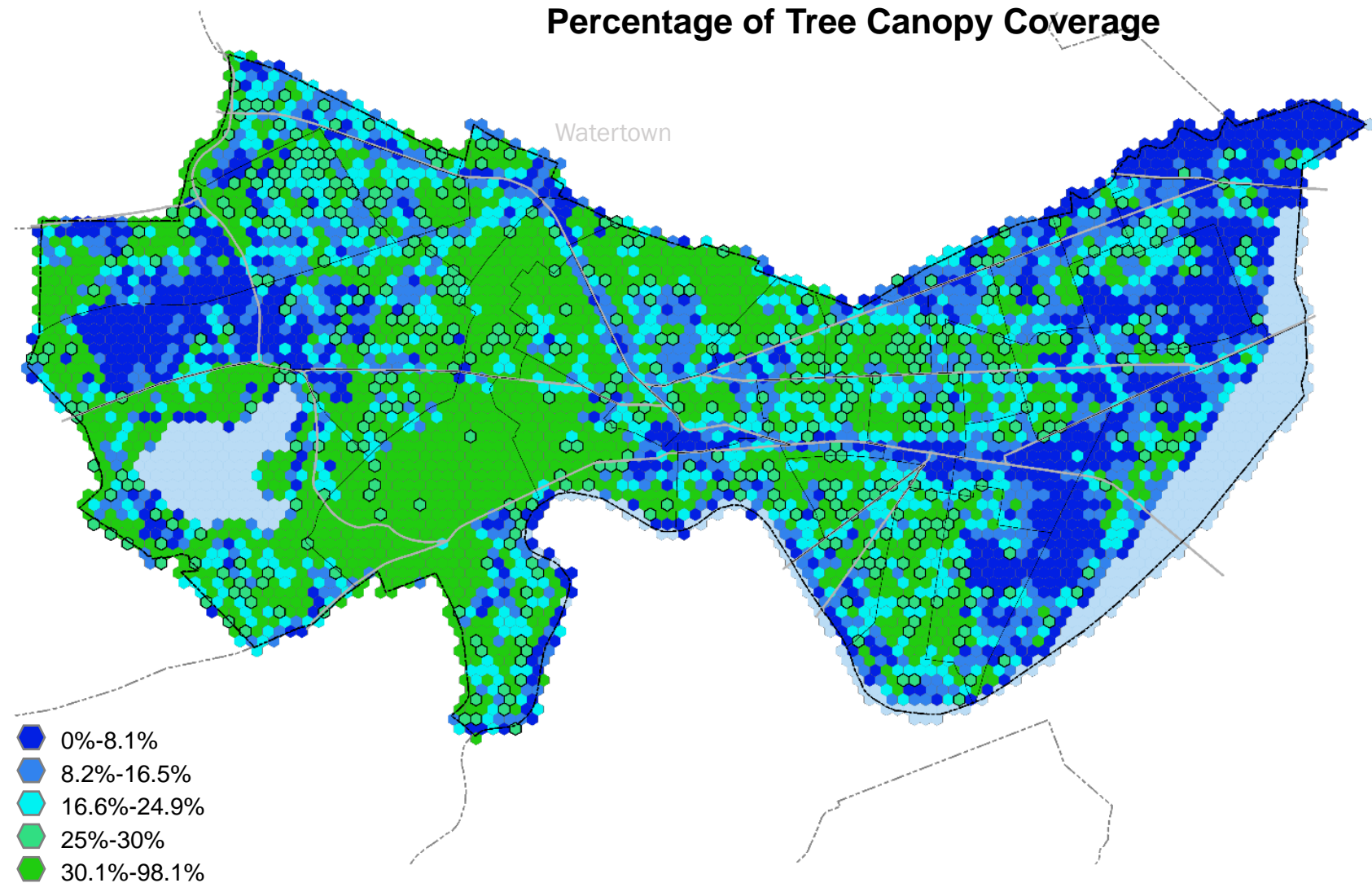


\*Mini Parks = 1/4mi walking distance  
Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks Citywide Parks = 1/2mi walking distance



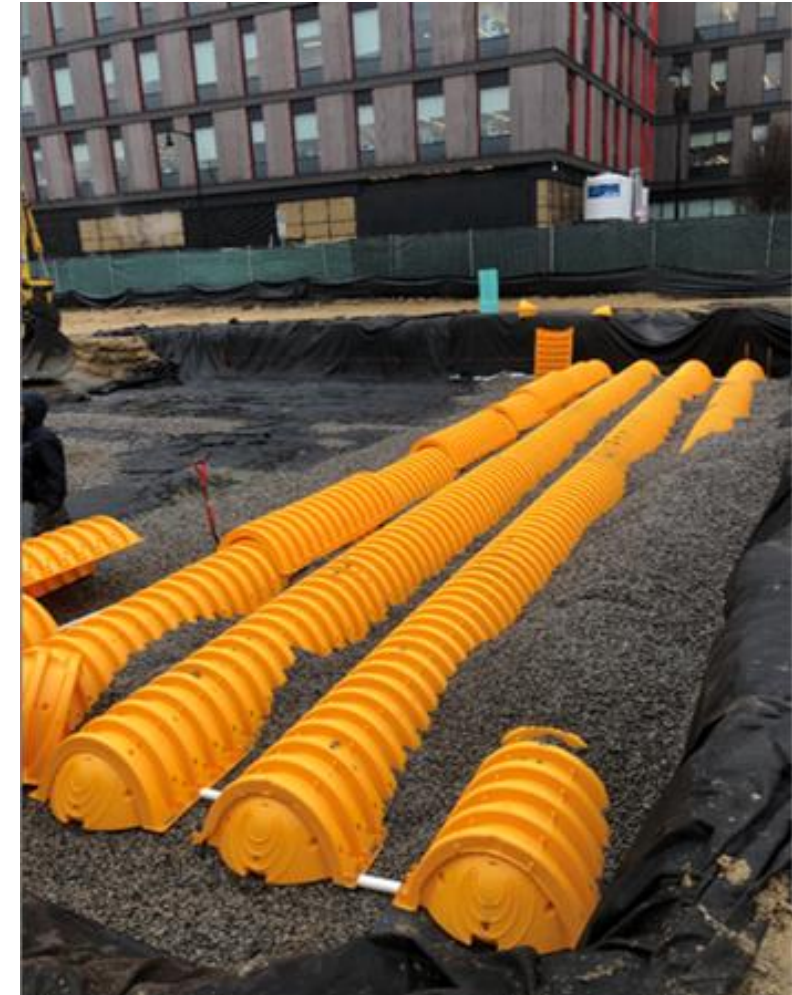
# Resilience

- Tree canopy density
- Urban heat island
- Current and projected flooding



# Resilience

- Opportunities for tree plantings and greening
- Infrastructure to mitigate impacts of climate change
- Spaces to cultivate social resilience



# Public Health

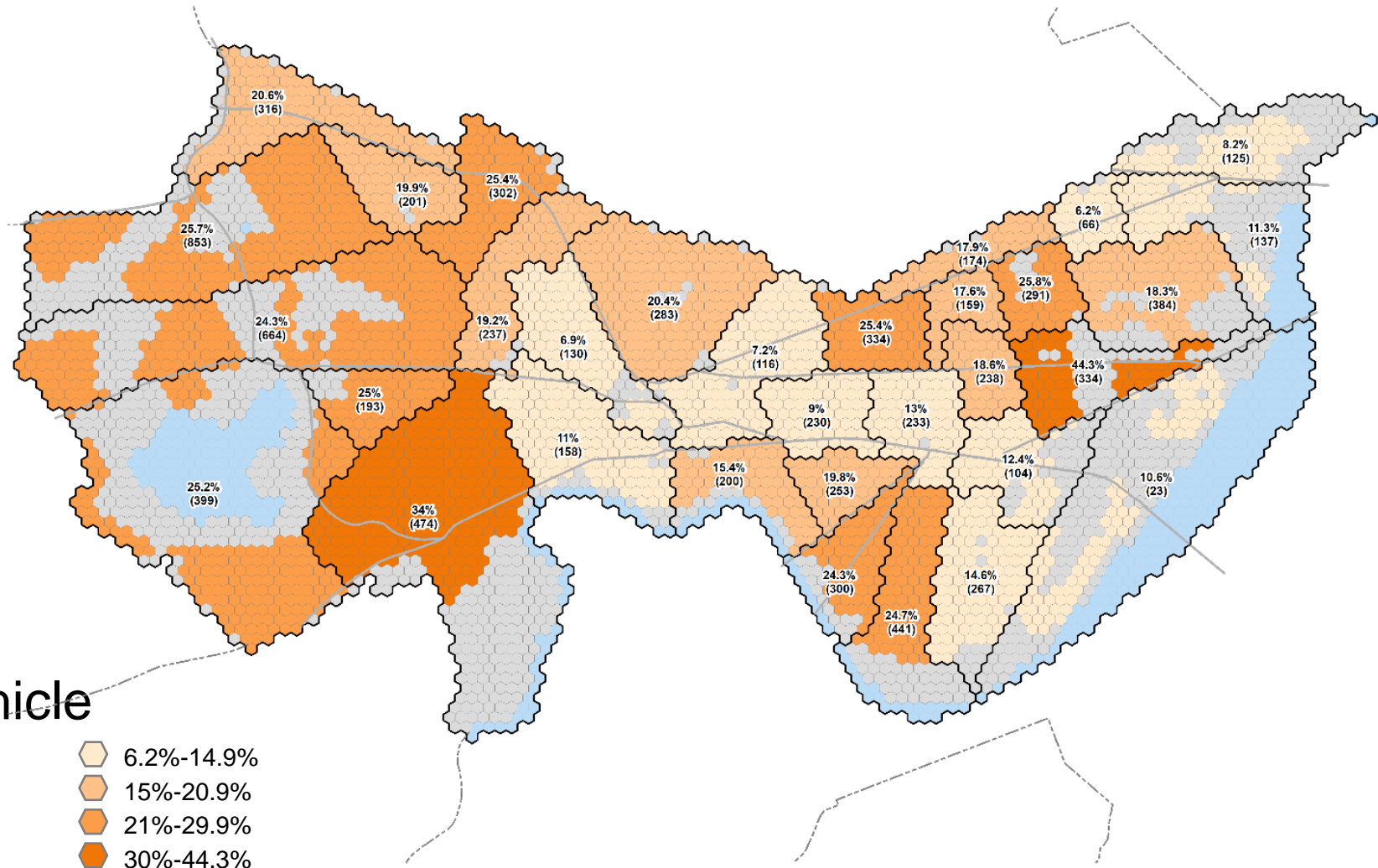
- Physical activity and active lifestyles
- Physical and mental health
- Social wellbeing and connection



# Community

## Families with Children Under 18

- Family populations
- Senior population and subsidized elderly housing
- Environmental justice communities
- Daycares
- Population without vehicle access



# Open Space Planning Process



# Community Engagement

**Community input will be critical to this work:**

- Core values and priorities
- Program and design needs and interests

**Ways to get involved:**

- Parks questionnaire and upcoming surveys
- Focus groups/small group discussions
- Invite us to your meetings and events!



# What We've Heard So Far

87%

of respondents say Cambridge parks and open spaces are "**Extremely Important**" to the city's **quality of life**

67%

of respondents say they are **visiting parks and open spaces more** since the start of the pandemic

## Favorite Park/Open Space Activities:

40%	<b>Walking</b>
15%	<b>Playing</b>
15%	<b>Sitting</b>
13%	<b>Eating or Dining</b>
10%	<b>Dog activities</b>
4%	<b>Relaxing</b>
4%	<b>People watching</b>

# What We've Heard So Far

## Why are Cambridge's parks and open spaces important to you?

- “ Builds community, offers healthy outdoor time/recreation, cleans and cools air.”
- “ Promotes good feelings about the neighborhood, provides opportunities for kids to play outside, opportunity to meet neighbors.”
- “ As a senior, I especially value the opportunity to be active and outdoors.”



# Citywide Open Space Analysis

Are park conditions, access to parks, and environmental and health benefits, equitably distributed citywide?

# Capital Improvements Planning



How should we  
prioritize  
improvements to  
our parks and  
open spaces?

# Park Uses and Experiences

How should we design and program of our parks and open spaces to respond to our community's diverse needs and interests?



# What's Next

- **Next (virtual) meeting – December 15:**  
Community Core Values and Priorities
- **Keep an eye out for:**
  - Survey 2: *Our Parks Values and Priorities*
  - Focus group/small group discussion recruitment
- **For more information:**
  - Visit [cambridgema.gov/openspaceplan](https://cambridgema.gov/openspaceplan)
  - Contact Gary Chan at [gchan@cambridgema.gov](mailto:gchan@cambridgema.gov)



Community Planning

**Get Involved with Open Space Planning!**

The Community Development Department is excited to kick off our open space planning process to guide future work related to parks and open space.



Open Space Planning

Our parks and open spaces play an important role in the quality of community life in Cambridge. As our open space system evolves over time, we want to ensure that changes over time reflect our community's values and priorities.

Join us for our kickoff meeting around our open space planning process:

**Open Space Planning Kickoff Meeting (VIRTUAL)**  
Wednesday, November 10  
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

[Click here to register for the meeting](https://cambridgema.zoom.us/join/911791234567) (or use the URL below):  
<https://cambridgema.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAvO2rrTwqGdIK2lY7zaS-r0PJUzhKWnGS>

Through this planning process, we will examine our open space system through an equity lens to assess priorities based on multiple criteria, including distribution and access, park conditions, and environmental and public health benefits. It will incorporate analysis and recommendations from the [City's Urban Forest Master Plan](#) and the [Resilient Cambridge Plan](#).

Can't make this meeting? Meeting materials will posted on the project website ([cambridgema.gov/openspaceplan](https://cambridgema.gov/openspaceplan)) after the meeting, along with additional ways to get involved with the process as we move ahead.

Contact Gary Chan at [gchan@cambridgema.gov](mailto:gchan@cambridgema.gov) or 617-349-4603 with any questions or comments.

[Click Here for More Information](#)

**Let's Hear From You!**

In our [Tell Us How You Use Parks](#) questionnaire, we asked people to tell us about their favorite and most frequented parks, how often they visit parks, and more. Here's some of what we've learned from those who have filled this out so far:

# Feedback Question and Q&A

## **Feedback Question:**

**What are your hopes for this process?**

- For example: Topics of Interest? Measures of success?

## **Ways to Respond:**

- Raise your (Zoom) hand
- Via Chat (to Everyone or just to Hosts)
- Link for responses after the meeting or anonymously: <https://www.menti.com/muwwroeycg>