

Fresh Pond Shared Use Public Engagement Process Recommendations



June, 2011

Submitted by the Consensus Building Institute
to the
City of Cambridge, Massachusetts



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

MASSACHUSETTS

WATER DEPARTMENT
250 FRESH POND PARKWAY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS. 02138

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September 16, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I am pleased to share with you this final report from the Fresh Pond Shared Use Public Engagement Process. This report synthesizes the work done by hundreds of citizens over the past year to develop recommendations and ideas for improving user experiences at Fresh Pond Reservation. On behalf of the Cambridge Water Department, I'd like to express my profound appreciation for all the hard work done by over 275 members of the public, City Manager's Office, Mayor's Office as well as by city staff and those managing the process.

It is always important to remember and understand that Fresh Pond Reservation's primary function is to perpetually sustain the highest possible potable drinking water quality for the residents and businesses in Cambridge. As a secondary benefit, the Reservation is the single largest open space in Cambridge and thus provides an important recreational space within our city limits. This report and the public process focused on the subset of management decisions made at the Reservation related to recreational use, not on those related to broader water quality or quantity issues.

My staff and I look forward to implementing the recommendations developed during the process. Please stop by the ranger station, check back at our website www.cambridgema.gov/cwd or call our main number (617) 349-4770 to stay updated on our progress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen S. Corda".

Stephen S. Corda (Sam)

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1. Introduction and Background

Introduction

Fresh Pond Reservation is an important open space for Cambridge residents and visitors. It is the terminal reservoir in the water system that provides drinking water to the City. The Reservation also provides cherished recreational opportunities of all kinds, including the chance for people to walk, bicycle, run, bird watch, picnic, walk dogs on- and off-leash, and be in a natural setting in the midst of the city. Volunteer groups work to improve the flora of the Reservation, the Cambridge Water Department and the Friends of Fresh Pond provide nature programs, and the Maynard Ecology Center provides science programming for Cambridge schoolchildren.

Due to limited space on paths, trails, and open areas, its location within a densely populated City, its increasing popularity due to restoration, and diverse uses, there has been occasional conflict among users at Fresh Pond. Furthermore, given sometimes conflicting rules and regulations from multiple jurisdictions, enforcement challenges, and changes over time, visitors are not clear on what is expected of them at the Reservation. Between Summer 2010 and Spring 2011, the City sought to engage the public in order to develop a shared vision for future use and a clear and implementable plan with the goal of identifying creative ideas for maintaining and improving the experience at Fresh Pond, maintaining diverse uses, and protecting the water supply.

Purpose and Goals of 2010-2011 Shared Use Public Engagement Process

The City's intent in initiating this process was to engage a diverse group of stakeholders in working collaboratively to develop recommendations for new and improved policies, regulations, and/or education. The resulting recommendations will be considered by the Cambridge Water Board, City Manager and City Council in developing a formal Shared Use Plan for the Reservation. The Plan will seek to provide a common, widely understood and broadly accepted approach for City staff and Reservation visitors alike to manage uses on the Reservation and provide greater certainty and clarity for all.

The City intended for this public process to create a Shared Use Plan to accomplish the following objectives, listed in no particular order:

- Protect the flora, fauna and overall ecosystem and water supply
- Promote a welcoming and safe place
- Provide for a multitude of recreational activities
- Promote mutual respect and civility among users
- Improve communication among users and with those managing the Reservation
- Provide for additional education and opportunities to participate in stewardship

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- Enhance user safety and enforcement through rules that are easy to understand, posted and enforceable
- Provide for enjoyment by current and future generations

Description of Process

The City chose to begin the plan development by reaching out to the people who frequent the Reservation and creating an open dialogue with the public to help develop a Shared Use Plan. The City engaged an impartial facilitation team from the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) to facilitate the process. To initiate the process, CBI conducted twenty-eight interviews in Spring 2010. The interviews were summarized in a report that contained findings and a proposed engagement process, which can be found in its entirety with all other documents from this process at cbuilding.org/freshpond. The assessment helped identify key issues, concerns, and user groups, and enabled members of the public to provide their recommendations on how to move forward.

With guidance from the assessment and the facilitation team, the City designed a series of public meetings inviting anyone from the public to participate. Six public meetings were held between September 2010 and May 2011. Attendance at these meetings ranged from 50-140 people (September: 140, October: 100, November: 75, February: 50, March: 55, May: 85). A final meeting will be held on June 20 to present the final report. The public will be offered the opportunity to submit individual written comments for up to sixty days after this June 20 meeting. All public comments received by August 20 will be submitted to the City along with this report.

Meetings were held on weeknights between 6:30 and 9:00 PM to try to accommodate the general public. These meetings were publicized via signs at the Reservation, flyers throughout Cambridge, an email list developed through public sign-up, and the project website mentioned above. This website was regularly updated, and summaries and documents from public meetings were posted within ten days of each meeting. The meeting format varied, and included presentations, question and answer sessions, small table discussions and report outs, and poster and map sessions.

The topics for these public meetings were as follows:

- September 14: Introduction to the Process
- October 19: Work Plan Development, Shared Use Plan Vision and Objectives
- November 30: Information and Communication
- February 16: Developing Norms & Expectations
- March 16: Developing Recommendations on Key Questions
- May 10: Input on Approach to Shared Use by Area
- June 20: Review of Recommendations to the City

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Based on the assessment and early meetings, participants identified the following user groups, recognizing that individuals enjoy Fresh Pond for a variety of reasons:

- City of Cambridge Staff
- Cyclists
- Education
- Elderly
- Nature
- Non-Cambridge Residents
- Other
- Parents with Young Children
- Persons with Disabilities
- Runners
- Walkers
- Walkers with Dogs

Core Members and User Groups

In addition to the public meetings, a core group of diverse stakeholders committed to represent different perspectives throughout this process. The core group was created because: 1) the City wanted to have the process be as open to different views and as participatory as possible; 2) users were not necessarily formally organized into distinct and separate groups; and, 3) the process needed consistent and collaborative participation to succeed. Core group representation was not meant to be a demographically or statistically accurate reflection of users at Fresh Pond or of Cambridge residents, but rather, to provide input and a voice in the process for the numerous user groups identified. Core group members were those willing and able to dedicate significant volunteer time to meet between public meetings, to present at public meetings, and to work with others with different views to seek to craft an overall approach for shared use.

Once the user groups were identified, participants were invited to indicate which user groups they were affiliated with. People were then given the opportunity to volunteer as a core member for a particular user group. Since many individuals use Fresh Pond in several different ways (for example sometimes walking, sometimes running, etc.), they were asked by the facilitation team to sign up as core members for the user group with which they most strongly identified. The facilitation team did not seek to independently verify this self-identification. Please note that core group members may have a range of affiliations and interests other than those listed below.

For those user groups in which one to three people volunteered as core members, those individuals became the core members. There were two user groups in which more than three people indicated interest in becoming core members. For the Walkers (without dogs) group, those three who continued to express their interest were identified as the core members with

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help from the facilitation team. Users from the Walkers with Dogs group who had indicated a desire to serve as a core member were invited to submit a brief statement and photo. These were compiled and distributed via email to all who had identified themselves as part of that user group. Based on an electronic vote, four individuals were selected to serve as core members for this group, because one also contributed the perspective of non-Cambridge residents.

In addition to participating in the public meetings, the core group met seven times between January and June 2011 to advance ideas and issues and to help plan the public meetings. The core members also: worked extensively between meetings (read and responded to emails, drafted and reviewed documents, reviewed meeting summaries), talked with facilitators, met in small groups, reached out to their constituencies, engaged in problem solving that addressed their and others' interests, sought to set an example of collaborative behavior, and worked to build agreement.

Core members decided early in their work that they would strive to be practical and positive, promote community building, prioritize education of users before enforcement, and seek solutions that empower users. Three City staff members participated actively as core group members throughout the process.

This report is the result of extensive deliberations and compromise by the core group. The core group endeavored to identify a workable, fair, shared use approach for the Reservation. The approach seeks to meet the needs of diverse users, to incorporate the public discussions to the extent possible, to address the range of ideas and interests expressed by core members, and to provide the City a clear framework for implementation.

A majority of core members can live with this overall approach. However, the strength of support from individual core members varies, each core member may not fully endorse each and every element, and there are some members who dissent from this overall approach. (See table on following page).

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The user groups and core members are listed below.

User Groups	Core Members
City of Cambridge Staff	Sam Corda, Chip Norton, Jennifer Wright
Cyclists	Elizabeth Feigenbaum*, Manju Gokhale**
Education	Susan Agger
Elderly	Barbara Norfleet, Elizabeth Seelman*
Nature	Claudia Thompson**, Dara Woods-Calkins**
Non-Cambridge Residents	Peter Wilkins*
Other	Nicolai Cauchy**, Eric Hermanson**
Parents with Young Children	Monica Strauss**, Josefine Wendel**
Persons with Disabilities	
Runners	David Liquori
Walkers	Susan Jenness, Susie Robillard, Janet Shur**
Walkers with Dogs	Jane Beal**, Helen Fairman, Rosalind Gorin, Peter Wilkins*

* Indicates core group members who can live with the approach but felt it important to note individual additional comments or reservations, see Appendix A.

** Indicates core group members who cannot live with the overall approach and most of whom provided individual comments, see Appendix A.

One individual indicated interest in participating as a core member for the Persons with Disabilities and Non-Cambridge Residents user groups but withdrew early in the process. Rachel Henke, core member of the Parents with Young Children user group, was not able to participate in core group deliberations.

Brief History of Fresh Pond Reservation

Occupying an area of 365 acres, Fresh Pond Reservation encloses and protects the Fresh Pond Reservoir, an ancient glacial kettle pond that formed during the last ice age about 15,000 years ago. The pond and the surrounding woodland and marshes were used as a rich source of food by Native Americans and later by European settlers. In the 1600's, Europeans began haying the meadows, and in the early 1800's the area became a retreat for wealthy Bostonians. Fresh Pond was also a source of ice; every winter the ice was cut and shipped for sale as far away as England, Singapore and India. In 1852, the private Cambridge Water Works Co. was established and began supplying water a few years later; the City of Cambridge purchased the company and its distribution system in 1866 and the Reservoir has served as the source of drinking water for the City of Cambridge since.

In an effort to protect water quality, the ice-harvesting infrastructure was removed and a master plan for the Reservation was created. The City of Cambridge contracted the office of Frederick Law Olmsted to create the first formal plan for the use and protection of the

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Reservation between 1894 and 1909. The plan conceptualized the Reservation as a refuge from the city and proposed significant changes to the landscape, including a circular path around the pond and a natural landscape. Much of the Olmsted plan was never realized due to disagreements between the firm, the public and the City. For a more complete account of Fresh Pond history, please refer to published histories and the Fresh Pond Reservation website.

Recent Management History and Regulations

Beginning in 1997, a committee of City staff and Cambridge residents collaborated to create a Master Plan for the Reservation, which was adopted by the City Council in May 2000. The vision of the Master Plan is to protect the water supply, enhance the open space and naturalistic character, and contribute to the quality of life for the community. Since 2000, the aspects of the Master Plan that have been completed include: a new water treatment facility, over eight million dollars in landscape restoration and enhancement, and an increase in education and outreach. Fresh Pond Reservation is managed by the Cambridge Water Department under the general oversight of the City Manager with advice and direction from the Water Board, consistent with the regulatory authority of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Cambridge Conservation Commission. Over 100,000 Cambridge residents are provided with potable water from City of Cambridge reservoirs.

In recent years, Fresh Pond Reservation projects have focused on landscape restoration; specifically, re-establishing native species and encouraging biodiversity. The projects and priorities were established in the Fresh Pond Master Plan and are guided by the Fresh Pond Advisory Board.

2. Norms of Behavior

Through the public engagement process, Fresh Pond users articulated norms of behavior to clarify for both new and frequent users what is expected of them while at the Reservation. These norms were first developed by participants at a public meeting and then refined by the core group. The norms are intended to be practical and positive, promote community building, prioritize education of users before enforcement, and empower users by informing them of these norms.

The fundamental interests identified in creating shared space are:

- to promote a welcoming and mutually friendly atmosphere for all users
- to protect the water supply and sustain healthy habitats for plants and wildlife
- to continue the Fresh Pond tradition as dog-friendly with off-leash areas
- to ensure that dogs on- or off-leash are under strict control
- to create areas of quiet contemplation and wildlife observation
- to continue to provide for recreational activities such as biking, running and walking
- to provide for children, the elderly and those with disabilities

The following language is intended to be a concise summary of norms that would be posted as signage at the Reservation. For more details on signage, see Chapter 3.

Welcome to Fresh Pond Reservation.

Join us in creating a healthy setting for our water supply, wildlife, people and dogs.

- Be aware of and considerate to others
- Stay on trails, roadways and designated grassy areas
- Keep right and pass left
- When stopped on path, move to the side
- When part of a group, make room for others

Bikers:

- Bike slowly, at jogging speed or less
- Let others know when you are passing

Dog owners:

- Clean up after your dog
- Off-leash dogs must stay within your sight and quickly obey commands
- Keep dogs on leash in designated areas

Runners:

- Give a wide berth to others

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All:

- Be aware that there are bicyclists, runners, and dogs on- and off-leash at the Reservation

For more information, see bulletin boards, brochures or the Fresh Pond Reservation website.

3. Communication, Education, and Outreach

Effective communication is a critical part of effective shared use of Fresh Pond Reservation. Communication channels are especially key given the thousands of Fresh Pond visitors; some who visit daily while others come only occasionally or may even be one-time visitors. Without clear communication in multiple forms, people who visit the Reservation may not be aware of appropriate user behavior or activities happening onsite that could affect their visit. Clear explanations of and the reasoning behind what is happening at the Reservation can decrease user conflicts, enhance user experience, and increase user knowledge and voluntary compliance.

The Water Department should prioritize clear, effective, user-friendly and standardized communication of the following key information:

- The norms and expectations for users' behavior;
- Public and private group activities and events scheduled at the Reservation;
- Channels of communication with the Water Department and City regarding user issues of concern;
- The rules and regulations that apply to all users of the Reservation.

Modes of communication for the Water Department to use should include:

- Signs - simple, easy to interpret, engaging, appealing, using images as well as words, temporary and permanent, located strategically, standardized for ease of comprehension, and visible from a distance as needed
- Calendar of upcoming events visible to visitors – posted at the Ranger's Station, Bulletin Boards, A-Frames
- Staffed Ranger Station when the Reservation is open
- Frequent emails to a listserve of upcoming events, news, and information (such as publicizing group events ahead of time) with an easy sign-up both onsite and on the Fresh Pond Reservation website
- Fresh Pond Reservation and Water Department Websites
- Short videos such as various users conveying the norms in short clips and available on the website
- Suggestion box – physical and online
- City mailings – water bill, dog license, etc.
- Consider newer forms of social media communication such as Twitter or Facebook
- Talks and presentations to various community groups

Ensuring Two-Way Communication:

- It is important that users of Fresh Pond know how to communicate ideas or concerns and who to contact. There should be a protocol for two-way communication between visitors and City staff to ensure that (a) people who try to communicate with City staff get a response in a timely fashion, (b) City staff and departments are all aware of that

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communication, concern, idea or incident, and (c) responses are posted to be easily available to other Fresh Pond users.

The Water Department should communicate both in short form on signs and/or other means and in longer form via brochures, websites, display boards, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Norms / shared use / user empowerment
- Rules and regulations (for all users and for distinct user groups)
- Different uses/areas and rationales for such approaches
- Maps and place names at the Reservation
- Events and group activities – date, time, number of people expected, construction schedule, how to get involved
- Ecology – information, goals, issues
- Communication options – contact info (website, email addresses, phone numbers including cell for Rangers), who to contact about what, reporting process, response to reports or comments
- Governance of Fresh Pond – who manages, how to get involved
- Data gathered on the Reservation such as on waterfowl, erosion, etc.
- Information on use such as number and type of users, summary of comments received and actions taken on comments, summary of incidents, etc.

The remainder of this section provides some proposed suggestions for information to be communicated via brochures, websites and display boards:

Shared use

- Describe different segments of population and uses
- Describe traditions and norms at the Reservation

How to promote positive community interactions

- Give feedback in the spirit of sharing information. Describe the action that disregards norms and the consequence of the action. May be useful to increase awareness that an individual action may not cause harm but if everyone did the same, there would be problems.
- Assume responsibility and apologize for your/your pet's/your child's transgressions

Ecology of Fresh Pond and water supply

- Maps depicting Fresh Pond ecology
- Natural history of the Reservation
- Habitat stressors: pollution, dogs and humans
- Why open space needs to be undisturbed by dogs and people
- How to recognize, prevent and treat poison ivy

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Getting to know dogs

- If you want to pat a dog, ask the dog owner if that's ok. (Some dogs don't like to be patted by strangers). Put your hand out flat or with a closed fist facing down and let the dog come up and sniff your hand. If the dog seems relaxed, then you can pat him.
- What to do if a dog barks at you: Calmly request assistance from the dog owner. Turn away and break eye contact with the dog as dogs may interpret direct eye contact as aggressive behavior.
- What to do if you encounter an aggressive dog (reporting, etc)

Being a responsible dog owner

- Clean up after your dog, better yet, remove any waste you find
- Keep off-leash dogs within your sight and ensure that they quickly obey commands
- Keep your dog on a leash where required
- Keep your dog out of areas designated as sensitive
- Please keep your dog away from those who are frightened of or bothered by dogs

Being a responsible cyclist

- Bike slowly at jogging speed or less on shared paths (approx. 5 mph). The bike path along the exterior of the Reservation allows for faster speeds.
- Look out for others
- Pass left and be aware of oncoming users
- Notify others verbally or via bike bell when approaching if passage is narrow or crowded

Being a responsible runner

- Look out for others
- Pass left and be aware of oncoming users
- Notify others verbally when approaching if passage is narrow or crowded

Sound at Fresh Pond

- When you wear headphones, your awareness of other users decreases
- Some people come to Fresh Pond to enjoy the natural sounds of wind, birds, and other creatures. If you are loud, the quiet noises can't be appreciated.

Winter at Fresh Pond

- The golf course is open to all users when covered with snow. Cross-country skiers make trails on the golf course. When walkers use these, it ruins them for skiers. Walkers and snow-shoers, please make other trails!
- Paths are sometimes icy. Reservation staff plow the Perimeter Path but not all other paths. Please use with caution.

Groups at Fresh Pond

- See Chapter 4

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Contact/reporting/suggestion information

- List who has authority for situations and contact information

4. Group Permit Guiding Principles

The ultimate goals of the group permitting process and underlying principles are for visitors to have information about group activities happening at the Reservation and for Water Department staff to be able to effectively manage groups onsite. This process should be as simple, quick, and easy as possible, and Water Department staff should have the flexibility to make smart, practical decisions about group permits without being overly constrained by these recommendations. The final process should be transparent such that if a group meets the criteria, space is available, and it does not increase the average number of permitted group activities per year, then they will be granted a permit.

Definition of group

- Organized groups must apply to the Water Department for a use permit.

Application process

- Applications will (a) specify what, where, and when the group is requesting to hold its activity, (b) identify a point of contact, (c) indicate requested areas of use on a map, noting areas of high use, such as the first half mile of a race or areas where people will be congregating, and (d) provide lower and upper estimates of the number of participants.
- The City shall determine an efficient and timely standard approval process. This will include an application deadline of a certain number of weeks that enables City staff to both respond to applicants and to notify visitors in advance of the event.
- A flat, reasonable fee per event will be required. The purpose of this fee is cost recovery for administrative and supervisory activities related to the event, not profit generation. This fee will be waived for City of Cambridge Agencies, such as the public schools. Regular events, such as the Saturday and Thursday races, should pay a flat annual fee.
- All permitted events will be accompanied by a letter of conditions as defined by the Water Department in conjunction with the applicant. The letter of conditions will refer specifically to the norms of behavior expected and may also require additional items such as port-a-potties at the event sponsor's expense or a description of how other group impacts, like parking and noise, will be addressed.
- Applications will be granted for single, multiple, or regular recurring use.
- Regular recurring events will be subject to review at least twice a year to ensure that permit conditions are being met.

Requirements of permitted groups

- Group organizers will be required to make their members aware of the Reservation rules and norms through a general announcement before the event or in writing. Specifically, members will be told that Fresh Pond Reservation is a shared space, event participants do not have unrestricted or priority use of the Reservation, it is an actively used drinking water supply, and misuse of the Reservation could lead to them or their group being banned from the Reservation.

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- Groups with high use in specific areas may be required to alert other users via temporary additional signage in those areas at the Water Department's discretion.

Priority of use

- In granting permits, the Water Department will prioritize Cambridge-based organizations and businesses.
- Permits will be granted on a first come, first serve basis.
- In selecting among permit applications, the Water Department should prioritize public and non-profit organizations, such as for school and educational events, over private businesses.

Amount of use, coordination, and permitted activity impacts

- The City will not increase the average number of permitted group activities per year.
- The City will ensure that only a limited number of permits are issued for the same time period (i.e., days and hours) to prevent overcrowding at the Reservation.
- The Water Department and the Recreation Department will coordinate so they are each aware of large group activities at the Reservation.
- The City will consider impacts of permitted group activities to adjacent neighborhoods when issuing group permits. These impacts may include, but are not limited to, parking, trash collection, noise, and traffic.
- The City will provide clear guidance for group activities in sensitive areas.

Public notification

- Water Department staff will put signs at entrances to the Reservation alerting the public to group use in advance of events.
- All events will be listed on the Fresh Pond Reservation website.

Annual community review of the group permit process

- In order to adapt to the changing use of Fresh Pond, the Water Board or Water Department will devote one meeting annually to reviewing the previous year's use of the Reservation by groups. This meeting should include discussion of use levels by groups.
- The Water Department will also collect community feedback on the permitting process and consider any changes needed.

5. An Approach to Areas and Uses at Fresh Pond

Overall Approach for Areas and Uses on the Reservation

The intent of the following approach is to provide shared use at the Reservation, to provide a diversity of experiences for users and to protect natural resources. The overall approach includes the following, with additional details by Reservation section or area provided later in this chapter. See Appendix B for maps depicting this approach.

- The Perimeter Path is open to all users to share under the norms set forth in this report.
- Kingsley Park is managed for all users through sharing different parts of the Park at different times of year. This provides opportunities for walkers, picnickers, children, dogs on- and off-leash, sledders, and others.
- The Northeast Sector of the Reservation, roughly from Lusitania Meadow to Black's Nook, not including the Perimeter Path, is an area for more limited activity to provide areas of contemplation, paths for walkers and on-leash dogs, and to support wildlife nesting and continued restoration. The Black's Nook path now under construction (separate from the access path from Concord Avenue) would be for walkers only.
- Off-leash areas are provided at additional points along the Perimeter Path, including the woods between the aggregate path at the shoreline and the paved path along the southern end of Lusitania Meadow, Little Fresh Pond, the access paths and other trails along the southern side of the Reservation bordering on Huron Avenue, along the southern side of Weir Meadow, and in specified areas of Kingsley Park.

Separation of Use and Activity Areas

In order to implement this kind of approach, the Water Department needs to establish effective separation between certain areas and uses that would be both easily understood and enforceable.

- In general, all users are expected to abide by the norms of behavior established in this process. This applies uniformly across all areas of the Reservation.
- A variety of means including low to medium fences, hedges, signage, or other visual/physical barriers will be utilized to distinguish areas of varying levels of activity. The Water Department is encouraged to experiment with different choices to determine what is most effective and least obtrusive and to approach this challenge in the spirit of adaptive management; trying out options, collecting statistically valid data, and learning and adjusting as needed over time.
- Signage needs to be clear, consistent, and easily understandable by new and infrequent users as noted in Chapter 3 of this report.
- All users are expected to stay on trails, roadways and designated grassy areas.

Area/Section Recommendations for Uses on the Reservation

1: Perimeter Path

One of the great values of the Reservation is shared, multiple use and the circular flow of this path for people involved in many types of activities. The Perimeter Path will be open to all users under the norms established through this process, including bikers, walkers, joggers, dogs on- and off-leash, permitted groups, and others. For this discussion, the Perimeter Path provides a complete path or loop around the Pond, including both the aggregate path and paved paths along the water south of Lusitania Meadow, the lower, unpaved path along the water below Kingsley Park, and the paved path that runs from the Water Department facility across the southern edge of Kingsley Park.

2: Lusitania Meadow

The Lusitania Meadow loop path will be an area for such activities as walking, individual jogging, and on-leash dogs. Bicyclists will be directed to use the paved access path in from Concord Avenue and the Perimeter Path. Permitted running groups will not be allowed. To allow for full protection of the wetland, Lusitania Meadow itself, within the loop path will not be accessible to users and a fence will be installed on the meadow side of the Perimeter Path. Dogs will be allowed off-leash on the aggregate path by the shoreline, in the open understory area between the two paths, and on the paved Perimeter Path.

3: The paths in and around Neville Manor (also known as Butterfly Meadow)

The access paths in from Concord Avenue, along with the paths in and around Neville Manor will be for such activities as walking, individual jogging, and on-leash dogs. There will be no permitted running groups, off-leash dogs, or bicyclists allowed. In order to determine whether high school cross-country training/races should be allowed on trails in this area, the Water Department should evaluate the current status of this use. Paths near Neville Manor through the woods have been improved and are ADA-compliant.

4: Black's Nook

The Black's Nook path (now under development), that connects to the access path from the Concord Avenue Burger King crosswalk and includes a boardwalk, will be reserved as an area for quiet contemplation. This path will be the sole path on the Reservation where only walkers are allowed. Bikes, on- and off-leash dogs, jogging, and group permitted events (other than permitted school groups) will not be allowed.

5: Little Fresh Pond

The area of Little Fresh Pond on the western side of the Reservation near the Perimeter Path will be an area for walkers and dogs on- and off-leash.

6: Southern Paths (roughly from the Golf Course clubhouse to Weir Meadow along Huron Avenue)

These paths will be open to walkers, joggers, and on- and off-leash dogs. The Water Department will continue to manage the area for erosion and restoration, especially on steep slopes, and may restrict all users in some places for periods of time for these purposes. In particular, Glacken Slope is undergoing active restoration.

7. Weir Meadow

The raised grassy area and adjacent woods on the southern side of the Perimeter Path (closer to Huron Avenue) will be open to walkers, joggers, and on- and off-leash dogs. Bikers and permitted group activities will not be allowed in this area. The area on the northern side of the Perimeter Path (adjacent to the water) will be set aside from all uses to provide for a protected natural meadow along the shoreline.

8: Kingsley Park

Because of the accessibility of Kingsley Park, the desire for multiple uses in this space, the history of use in this area, and the fact that restoration work has been completed in some areas, Kingsley Park will allow for shared use managed by area and season. The approach is as described below, and please note that the exact dates are approximate since they may vary modestly each season depending on weather and ground conditions. The City should improve and actively maintain the lower loop path by the Pond in order to make this path more accessible and usable. For restoration purposes, two areas of Kingsley Park will be set aside from use except on paths: (a) the slopes between the upper loop path and the lower loop path, and (b) the sloped part of the grassy area between the two places where the upper path joins the Perimeter Path. (See map in Appendix B.)

From approximately 1 May to 30 November

- The lower bowl area will be for shared use by walkers, on- and off-leash dogs, and others (with the exception of bikers and group permitted running activities).
- The upper area and woods, including the paved upper loop path and grassy areas, will be an area for activities such as walking, individual jogging, on-leash dogs, picnicking, and children playing. Permitted running groups will be allowed only on an occasional basis due to historic race starts in this area.

From approximately 1 December to 30 April

- The lower bowl area will be for walkers and sledders only.
- The upper area and woods, including the paved upper loop path and grassy areas, will be an area for such activities as walking, individual jogging, on- and off-leash dogs, and children playing.
- Some areas of Kingsley Park, particularly grassy and sloped areas, may be briefly closed to all users temporarily during wet seasons (particularly in the spring) to allow the soils to dry out.

9: Parking Lots

To ensure safety for all, visitors are encouraged to be cautious and dogs must be on-leash in Reservation parking lots, including the two lots by the Water Treatment Facility and the lot by the Golf Course clubhouse. Group permitted activities will not be allowed.

10: Grassy Area from Water Department Building to Community Gardens

The grassy area next to the Perimeter Path is narrow, has drainage issues, and is owned by the railroad and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) in addition to the City. Thus, the Water Department controls only a limited area beside the Perimeter Path. For safety reasons, some kind of fence to protect children and dogs between this area and the railroad tracks/bike path is encouraged.

Alternative Views Raised by Core Group Members

A majority of core members can live with this overall approach, but some cannot. The key differences of opinion stated by those who cannot agree with this overall approach include views of whether the use and area approach is too restrictive or not restrictive enough, particularly regarding off-leash dogs. These two differing views are summarized below. In addition, each core group member was given the opportunity, if she/he wished, to provide additional individual comments in Appendix A. Please see the appendix for further details.

The two differing views, in broad terms, are as follows.

- *There are too few restrictions on off-leash dogs.* These core group members believe that insufficient areas have been provided for those wanting opportunities to experience the Reservation for such activities as walking, bird watching, picnicking, and quiet contemplation with dogs either on-leash or not present. These core group members noted that there are many people who use the Reservation but who remain uncomfortable around off-leash dogs, and others who avoid the Reservation for this reason. They believe that more restrictions relating to off-leash dogs will encourage use by a broader range of City residents.
- Alternative approaches for those who believe the recommended approach has *too few off-leash restrictions* include:
 - Requiring dogs to be on-leash on the northern section of the Perimeter Path, from Lusitania Meadow to Little Fresh Pond.
 - Making Kingsley Park on-leash year round.
 - Setting aside other areas at the Reservation where dogs would be on-leash or not allowed.
 - Creating a schedule alternating between allowing on- or off-leash dogs overall or in particular areas at the Reservation.
 - Making all access paths from the exterior of the Reservation to the Perimeter Path on-leash.

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- *There are too many restrictions on off-leash dogs.* These core group members note that this is the only place in Cambridge where dog owners can walk for a long distance with their dogs off-leash and one of the few places in the greater Boston area where this is possible. They note the Reservation has historically allowed dogs off-leash, and some believe that new users should expect this when they choose to visit. Members said that in the last few decades people walking their dogs at the Reservation helped increase use and therefore made the Reservation safer for all users.
- Alternative approaches for those who believe the recommended approach has *too many off-leash restrictions* include:
 - Black’s Nook should allow for on-leash dogs at heel.
 - Portions of the northern part of the Reservation (Neville Manor area paths) away from Black’s Nook and Lusitania Meadow could allow for dogs off-leash.
 - Kingsley Park could be managed to allow more rather than less off-leash dog activity in order to decrease congestion on the Perimeter Path while also supporting users who are uncomfortable around dogs and want protected space for uses, such as quiet meditation and picnicking.

In addition, core members provided additional comments, reservations, objections or alternatives on the following subjects in the appendix. Please note that this chart is intended to capture broad topics from the comments. For full comments, see Appendix A.

Topic	Last Names of Core Members
Kingsley Park	Beal, Gokhale, Hermanson, Strauss, Thompson, Wendel
Black’s Nook	Beal, Feigenbaum, Hermanson
Non-Cambridge Residents	Wendel, Wilkins
Overall Approach for Areas and Uses	Beal, Cauchy, Feigenbaum, Gokhale, Hermanson, Seelman, Shur, Thompson, Wendel
Process and Core Group Selection	Beal, Cauchy, Hermanson, Seelman, Shur, Strauss, Thompson, Wendel
Education, Signage, Enforcement	Feigenbaum, Gokhale, Shur

6. Other Issues and Items

The core group also identified additional issues and items to forward to the Water Department in the final report. These are listed below.

Non-Cambridge Dogs: The core group supports individual access for non-Cambridge residents to have the same experience and opportunities as Cambridge residents, including on and off-leash dog walking. The core group considered a range of options for implementing such access for dog walkers, and determined that it should be up to the Water Department to identify the most effective way to make this work. A majority of the core group supported one or both of the following possible implementation options, with the first option listed obtaining slightly more support than the second: (1) Non-Cambridge licensed dogs are allowed off-leash under the same identified conditions and areas as Cambridge dogs, or (2) Non-Cambridge licensed dogs are allowed off-leash under the same identified conditions and areas as licensed Cambridge dogs if they obtain a Fresh Pond identification tag. The identification could be obtained annually, at nominal cost, from the Water Department or other appropriate City Department. This would provide an opportunity to educate non-Cambridge users about the norms and expectations at the Reservation and to help these users feel like part of the Fresh Pond community.

Poison Ivy: Some members note that poison ivy is of concern to many people and especially children. For instance, to access the Glacken Slope playground from the Perimeter Path, children must pass extensive poison ivy. In addition, its presence reduces the actual useful width of the Perimeter Path around much of Fresh Pond, and of the secondary paths in the woods. Therefore, some core group members request that removal of poison ivy be the highest priority for contracting with landscape and environmental restoration firms, current and forthcoming at Fresh Pond.

Maher Park Youth Soccer Field: Some members would like the City to open the field for the community-at-large when it is not otherwise reserved by organized groups. This could include signage on what's allowed, a schedule and whom to contact for information.

Enforcement and Rules and Regulations: Members expect the City to provide sufficient enforcement to implement these recommendations. Furthermore, members expect that the City and Water Department will review all existing rules and regulations and make the necessary changes to reflect these recommendations. Members hope that there can be public, annual review of this implementation effort.

Other Paths: In the upcoming work on pathways by the Water Department, some members would like the City to explore future paths in the following areas:

- In the triangular portion of forest just north of little Fresh Pond, in order to create an off-leash path. Other core group members believe that this might be best as on-leash

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only or as a restoration area with more limited use.

- Around the outer periphery of the golf course, in order to provide additional access for walking, jogging, and other activities to alleviate the density of use on the current paths.

Data: Some members note that more data are needed. This includes:

- Gathering expert opinion on the relative importance of various potential causes of erosion in the Reservation, soil compaction, and wetland and woodland plant loss.
- Fecal coliform, phosphorus, and rainfall data should be analyzed in order to determine the significance of waterfowl feces and non-point source runoff as pollutants to Fresh Pond. Impartial expert information is already available and needs to be applied to existing Fresh Pond water data.
- Using statistically valid sampling methods, gathering usage data of the number and type of users who frequent the Reservation, and use patterns through the day, week and year.
- Conducting regular user surveys to obtain widely representative and continuing feedback on current user experience at the Reservation.

Neighborhood Impacts: Some members requested that the City evaluate ongoing neighborhood impacts in relation to the increased number of users at Fresh Pond Reservation. These impacts include but are not limited to parking, trash collection, noise, and traffic.

Future Input: Some members would like the Water Department to reach out to Cambridge residents who do not currently use the Reservation to find out why they don't go to Fresh Pond and to gather input on its management practices.

Appendix A: Core Member Additional Comments

Core members were given the opportunity to submit additional comments on subjects they felt were not fully captured in the body of this report. They were given a word limit of 250 words.

Beal, Jane - Walkers with Dogs

Jane Beal is dissenting from the report because:

In 40 hours of meetings over 8 months, the case was not made for there being “conflict among users” to any meaningful extent.

The core group concept was presented as a way to ensure consistent attendance by a cross-section of users. Assurances were made that the core group would not have access to other information or have greater influence than the general public. This report demonstrates this was not the case. The core group was given the responsibility to negotiate conflicting interests. With the exception of dog walkers who elected their representatives, the members were self-appointed. A determined minority seeking to reverse decades of dog-friendly practice ensured that the conversation was solely focused on dogs and barely addressed concerns regarding other user groups.

The Kingsley Park proposal is confusing, unenforceable and runs counter to the stated aim of shared use. The major gateway to the Reservation, this area should be as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

The proposal to ban dogs from Black’s Nook is a bad precedent. The interests of protecting this fragile area would be served by making this an on-leash area.

Recent policy confined dogs to the perimeter roads, forcing all users into the same narrow confines. I remain convinced that restrictions breed conflict. Opening up areas spreads the users, lessens stress to the environment such as soil compaction and creates the inviting atmosphere that is the stated intention of the City.

Cauchy, Nicolai – Other

The fundamental issues are increasing density, a huge area occupied by the golf course, and private interests. A substantial number of people abandoned the process after the 3rd General Meeting because they felt it demonstrated that the agenda had been pre-set by a few City officials. Historical arguments aside, dogs had been free to run off leash everywhere within Fresh Pond for well over two decades; any change to that meant reducing liberties.

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But the underlying issue is that of overcrowding, with over 1 Million entries to Fresh Pond annually. Yet an aerial survey shows that the area accessible to the general public represents one fifth of the area occupied by the golf course, which is on Cambridge public land and reportedly serves about 1200 people (with a subsidized membership fee). The obvious solution to the overcrowding should be sharing the existing paths within the golf course and along its periphery. Core-group members associated/employed with/by the City argued that the golf course is a moneymaker for the City, but no accounting supports that.

Indeed, the overall "shared user plan" was flawed from the moment it excluded options that might have transgressed certain politicians' and high powered individuals' personal interests. Fresh Pond will be a truly PUBLIC park, without compromising "natural" havens, nor the quality of the water (the golf course selects unnatural species of grass, keeps away natural wildlife, uses water in times of drought...) when a city-wide referendum is held on the best use of this precious public land.

Feigenbaum, Elizabeth – Cyclists

Although I agreed to the shared use plan (I thought it was the best we could do given the negotiations) I have concerns...

For a shared use plan to be adopted, it must have support from a majority of active users. The reality at Fresh Pond is that the majority of the daily users are dog owners.

Preserving habitat and creating safety for all users is critical. These goals can be met through establishing fences, norms, and community education and giving them time to take root and create change. The sweeping restrictions in the plan, especially the ban of dogs at Black's Nook, sets a dangerous precedent and devalues the long-standing dog-friendly culture of Fresh Pond.

I believe these restrictions will cause us to lose the support of many sensible off-leash dog owners who care about providing safety for the elderly and young, and preserving habitat, as well as those who are currently less responsible but likely amenable to education about the value of healthy flora and training dogs. We could mitigate this probable lack of support by: 1) Allowing dogs on-leash at heel at Black's Nook. 2) Establishing a medallion program in the Northern sector paths allowing dogs to be close by and off-leash. 3) Creating an off-leash path in the woods between Little Fresh Pond and Black's Nook. These last two amendments to the plan will allow dogs to roam on a non-paved path away from roads and decrease congestion on the perimeter pathway.

Gokhale, Manju - Cyclists

Regretfully, I will need to dissent from this report. I feel that consistent enforcement of current rules and regulations at Fresh Pond is currently lacking and would significantly enhance user experience. Additionally, I agree with the sentiments (both pro and con) outlined by Janet Shur,

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in particular, the need for on-leash areas. Right now, that area is Kingsley Park, where children swing and picnic and sled – I would like it to remain that way.

Hermanson, Eric – Other

I dissent for two reasons: first, because of the fundamentally flawed nature of the process behind this document, and, second, because this document adopts a perspective on "shared" use -- including significant new restrictions on unleashed dogs at Kingsley, Lusitania, Black's Nook, etc. -- that I cannot support.

Taking the second point first: Fresh Pond has historically been a place where dogs could roam free in nature with few restrictions. It has enormous regional importance as one of the few remaining places where that is true. I welcome new users. But I believe those individuals should accept, rather than seeking to change, the park's traditional, established uses. There are dozens of nearby places where one can walk, picnic, bird watch, or engage in "quiet contemplation" without encountering unleashed dogs. If individuals choose to pass on those places, and come here instead, they need to accommodate themselves to what makes this place special and different: including, above all, the leash-free norms. I've seen no hard evidence that unleashed dogs have led to any significant problem with erosion, water quality, or landscaping -- either historically or now.

As to the first point: this document purports to be an exercise in consensus and "self-government," but in forming the Core Group, and in the deliberations that followed, the City's consultants have consistently rigged the system so dog owners' voices would be minimized relative to their numbers. I stand with those who believe this exclusion has compromised both the integrity and the outcome of this process.

Seelman, Liz – Elderly

Many Cambridge residents do not feel safe at Fresh Pond because of off leash dogs. These are often the elderly and people of color. Comments during the process by the dog walkers were insensitive. Suggestions to "walk at Mt. Auburn", "play on Huron Ave" were as helpful as "take your dogs to Danehy" would have been. Fresh Pond should be open and accessible to all. I love dogs and have walked 2 of my own for many years at Fresh Pond but there seems to be no real possibility of engaging other groups and users because of this hostility. Also, the ability to have kids play somewhere free of dog poop residue seems a modest request.

Shur, Janet – Walkers

While I feel progress was made and I concur with several recommendations (norms, education, communication, ongoing data collection, protection of Black's Nook and Concord Avenue access paths), I believe this process and the Core Group itself failed to represent the wide range of Fresh Pond users. Dog owners were disproportionately represented in discussions as members were permitted to self-select a user group affiliation (and certain groups were

represented by people who were also dog owners) and members were not in practice required to focus their comments on their particular constituency. The resulting report is not a consensus amongst equal and diverse user groups. Substantively, in designating the entire perimeter path as off leash, the report substantially fails to address concerns of users whose experience is negatively affected by off leash dogs. Perimeter path “on leash” areas or times (e.g. Lusitania to Little Fresh Pond, or certain days/hours) would offer more protection for sensitive restored areas, as well as a far more comfortable place for many walkers, for elderly and/or handicapped individuals, for certain dogs being walked on leash, for people fearful of dogs, for bird/nature observers, for runners/bicyclists, for families with young children, etc. Enforcement would be straightforward since it is obvious whether a dog is on a leash (as opposed to under “voice command”). Further, to protect Fresh Pond from becoming a regional “off leash” destination, the City should retain and enforce the existing ordinance requiring non-Cambridge dogs to be on leash at all times.

Strauss, Monica – Parents with Young Children

Kingsley Park can be physically partitioned for year-round off-leash dog activity and quiet space protected from dogs:

- A quiet area, Kingsley West Side Park includes the west side of the Kingsley path, both of the Pond viewing areas and approximately one-third of the woods and grassy areas on Kingsley Park Top. Quiet users only access West Side Park by the south path, ensuring seclusion.
- The East Side Park includes the eastern and northeastern remainder of the Kingsley Top grassy area and the grassy slope adjacent to the Kingsley Bowl. Walkers with dogs would access this East Side Park by the current northeastern path.

Shared use process bias: The Water Board (WB) hired CBI and provided suggested interviewees, mostly affiliated with WB or CDog, whose agenda differs from many residents with dogs. CBI selected many members of the core group from this list. The WB thus indirectly dominated the highly influential Core Group, probably excluding self-selected residents. Core Group members’ affiliations are excluded from the document.

Core Group bias: Half the members were WB related; CDog had all the dog slots, including one also representing out-of-town. Another represented out-of-town and disabled users and left by the first meeting; thereafter the disabled were unrepresented. Proposals congenial to WB-related members were usually accepted without major concession.

Numerous non-CDog residents with dogs were excluded from the Core Group. CDog was invited to elect several Core members; non CDog residents with dogs couldn’t vote.

Thompson, Claudia – Nature

The “Shared Use Process” has made progress by starting to define areas of use as a basis for enhancing the experience for different Reservation users and to frame policy development. The creation of one new and very short path into Black’s Nook for quiet contemplation and nature observation is especially important to many users as well as to habitat preservation for ground nesting birds, waterfowl, amphibians, reptiles—including several species of conservation concern that inhabit or visit the Reservation.

Yet, the proposed plan does not go far enough since the majority of all paths within the Reservation are designated as open to off-leash dogs. For the purpose of protecting wildlife and habitat, all access paths from the surrounding roadways into the Perimeter Path should require dogs to be on-leash. This would create a simpler and more enforceable regulation—not treating the Concord Avenue side of the Pond differently than the Huron Avenue side. Additional leash requirements along portions of the Perimeter Path and in Kingsley Park are needed to protect the millions of dollars of restoration work already expended, and to genuinely support multiple uses.

Unfortunately, Core Group membership was not representative of current users or City residents as a whole, and the needs of families and those without dogs got marginalized in the process. Overall, this plan continues to encourage our vitally important water supply to be a destination dog park for Metro Boston residents, and those two purposes are fundamentally incompatible, with potential risks for human health.

Wendel, Josefine – Parents with Young Children

While I respect the time and effort that core group members contributed to the consensus process, and I concur with some of the recommendations (specifically norms, education and protection nature - Black’s Nook), I cannot support the outcome as described in the final report because insufficient efforts were made to ensure equitable and unbiased representation of Cambridge residents and user groups. The result of this was that dog owners were overrepresented in all user groups.

Given this representation, it is not surprising that the needs of families with children, walkers, the elderly and others who feel less safe at Fresh Pond in the presence of (off-leash) dogs, were not considered. The proposal in the final report takes away the one area in Kingsley Park where currently dogs are officially not allowed, and doesn’t include any compromise regarding the use of the perimeter path, for example there could be certain sections of certain times of day that dogs would have to be on-leash. Of even more concern to me is the idea in this report to remove limits on dogs from non-Cambridge residents, which would turn Fresh Pond into even more of an off-leash destination, effectively crowding out other users even more than currently.

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According to 2010 data there are only 2,650 licensed dogs in Cambridge, and the 2010 census counted 105,000 residents, 12,028 of whom children. Dog owners' needs should be considered in relation to the need of all residents to have safe and equitable access to Fresh Pond Reservation.

Wilkins, Peter – Walkers with Dogs and Non-Cambridge Residents

I agree in general principal with the paper as presented.

I dissent as follows:

- There should be no discrimination against non-Cambridge residents (N-CR).
- Fresh Pond (FP) users are a cohesive community in themselves, comprising members whose catchment area is probably a maximum of 2 miles radius from FP.
- FP has been improved using MA taxpayers (N-CR) money as part of CPA funding.
- At least one N-CR has donated and erected a public seat at FP.
- Many N-CRs already help at FP by picking up trash left by picnickers, teen drinkers, runners, and other users as they walk around FP.
- Many senior N-CRs could not afford to pay an extra fee to Cambridge after already paying a license fee to their own towns.
- Statistics show that if you reduce the number of people in an area like FP, then both crime and vandalism increase.
- N-CRs are not looking for parking spaces, but merely to have the same off-leash privileges for their dogs as residents.
- If a resident is caring for the dog of an N-CR friend is that resident also discriminated against?
- Enforcement of this issue detracts from enforcement of other more serious issues at FP.

Appendix B: Maps of the Shared Use Approach

The following maps were created to depict the general approach described in this report. They are intended to show broadly what could be done where on the Reservation. During implementation, the City would build from these maps in much greater detail.



Fresh Pond Shared Use Plan Areas and Paths

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Areas

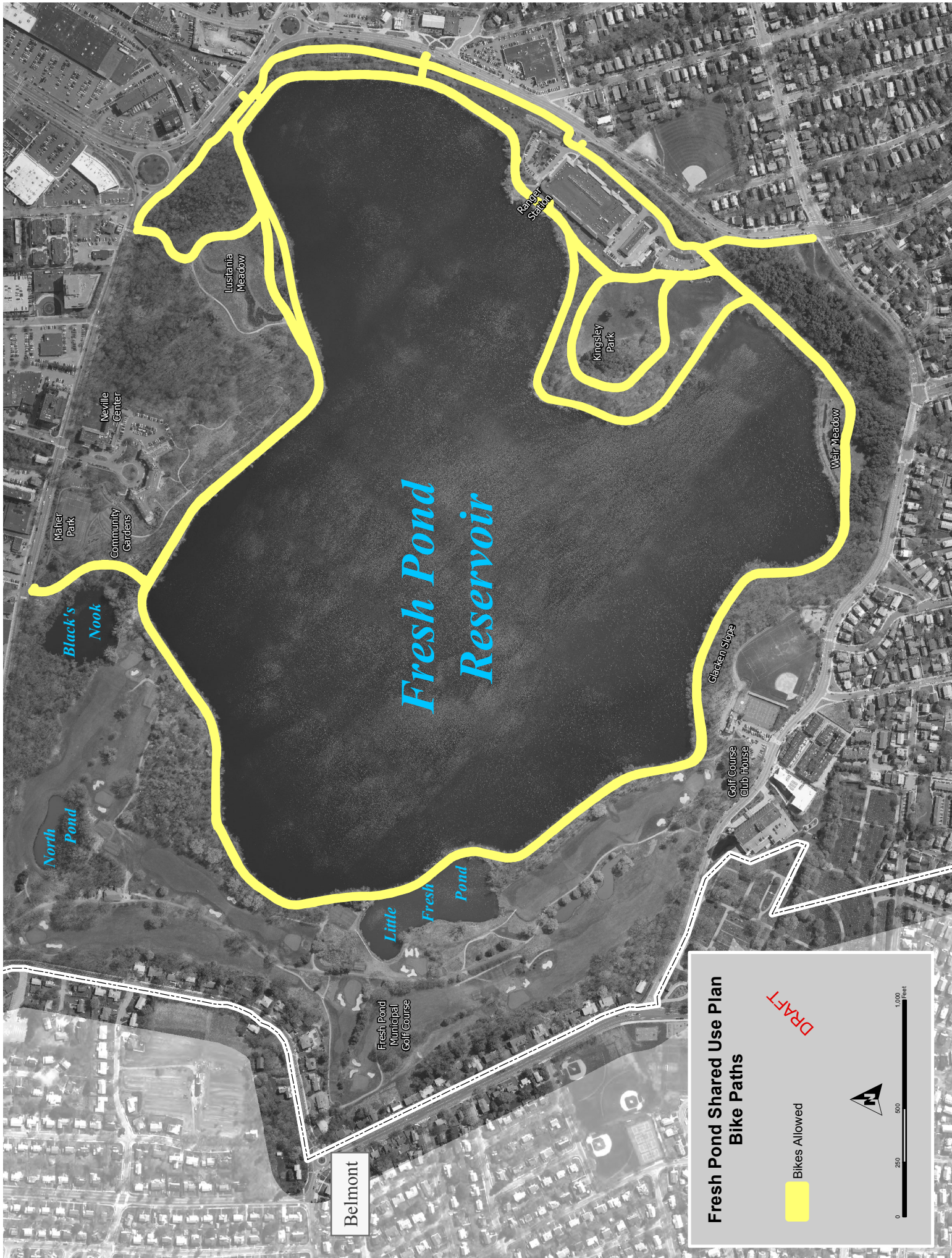
- All users
- Seasonal off-leash
- Walkers, on-leash dogs, joggers
- No access
- Slope restoration areas

Paths

- All users
- Seasonal off-leash
- Walkers, on-leash dogs, joggers
- Walkers only, no dogs or joggers

All users are expected to stay on trails, roadways, and designated grassy areas
Bikes are expected to stay on Perimeter Road and paved access paths





Fresh Pond Reservoir

Fresh Pond Shared Use Plan Bike Paths

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Bikes Allowed

