

CPC Application: “Bear Swamp and Jablonski Parcels”

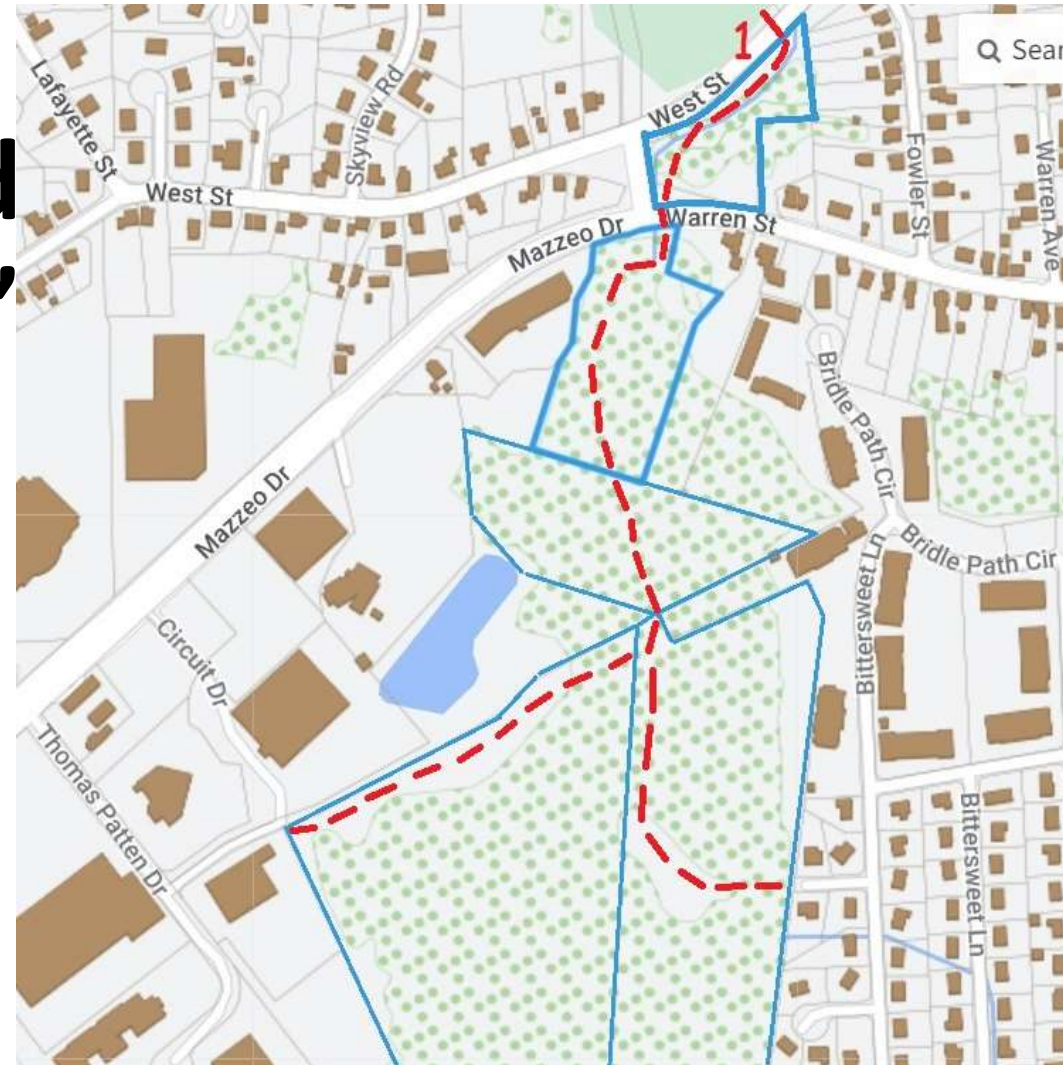
South Randolph Greenway

by Town Councilor Jesse Gordon

jgordon@randolph-ma.gov

617-320-6989

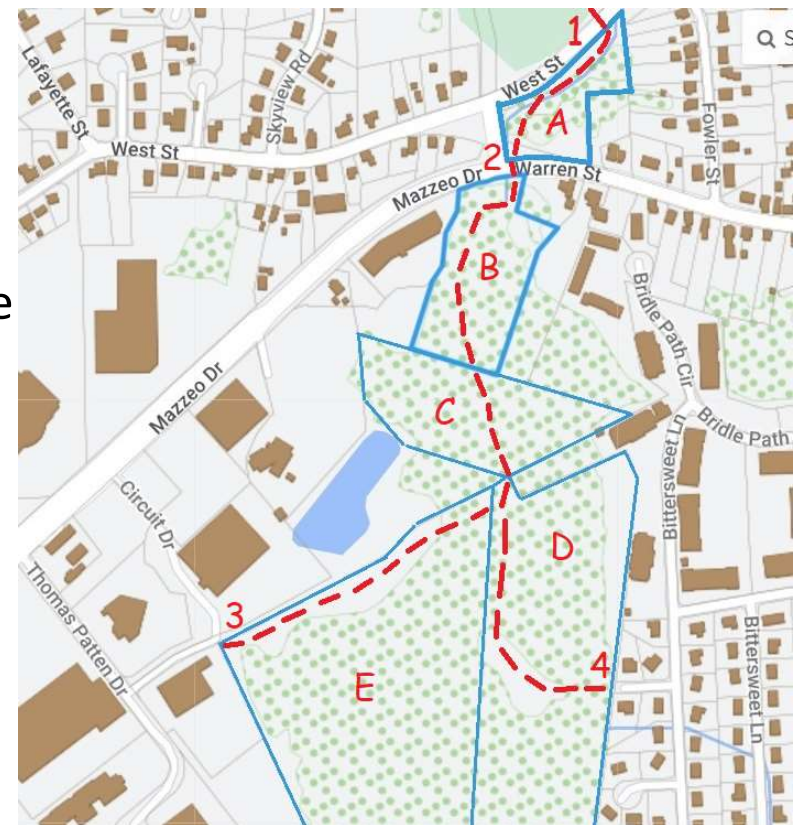
April 28, 2023



Background on Jablonski Parcels

The Town of Randolph recently was gifted two parcels totaling 6.3 acres from the Jablonski family. The gift came with the purpose of connecting the Dog Park open space with the Bear Swamp open space. This project proposes implementing that connection.

- A crossing on West Street from the Dog Park entrance; with a painted crosswalk and a “Welcome” sign
- A crossing on Warren Street into Bear Swamp, with another painted crosswalk and “Welcome” sign
- Clearing brush for the gifted parcels A & B above, plus the three already Town-owned parcels C, D, & E.
- Boardwalk construction where the ground is too swampy for a footpath (total about 400 feet)
- Footpath exits at Thomas Patten Drive (Post Office) and at Edward Scahill Drive (rail trail connection)
- Plans for further connection next year along the Rail Trail through Avon to DW Field



Gift memo

- Memo from Town Manager to Town Council dated Nov. 3, 2022, detailing the Jablonski properties on page 4.
- Council Order 2022-052 passed the Town Council on Nov. 7, 2022
- Memo notes, “with these parcels... it would be possible to create a trail so it would run from Powers Farm all the way to Bear Swamp Conservation Area (2.5 miles)”
- This project proposes to do so.

JABLONSKI PARCELS:

Jablonski - 3 parcels

Owner: Jablonski and Jablonski-related Trusts

Total Acreage for the 3 Parcels: approx. 6.7 acres

Location:

Warren Street - 56-A-001.8

Warren Street - 56-B-001

Joyce Circle - 71-A-027.2. I

Total Assessment for the 3 Parcels 2021: approx. \$222,450

2 Warren Street Parcels

The Jablonski - Warren Street donations would have the greatest impact. Acquisition of these parcels would provide a connection to existing Town of Randolph parcels, which would create continued access from across from the dog park entrance on West across through to Warren Street to behind “Not Your Average Joe’s” restaurant building through to bear swamp!

With these parcels, and as resources allow, it would be possible in the future to create a trail so it would run from Powers Farm all the way to Bear Swamp Conservation Area (2.5 miles).

Warren Street Parcels

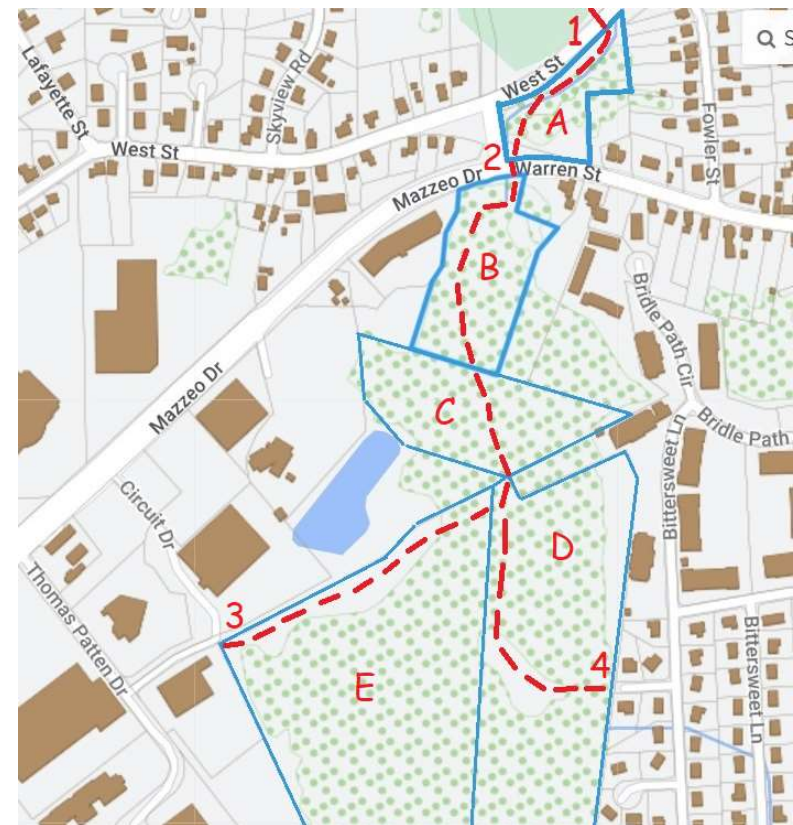


Parcel identification

First, the properties involved are labeled A through E on the map, and include two new Jablonski parcels, plus three additional parcels already owned by the Town of Randolph.

All of this needs “surveying” to identify property boundaries and a reasonable boardwalk route, plus involvement from the ConComm.

- A: Property ID 56-A-1 is the 2-acre Jablonski property between West Street and Warren Street.
- B: Property ID 56-B-1.8 is the 4.3 acre Jablonski property south of Warren Street/Mazzeo Drive
- C: Property ID 57-D-5 is a 5.25 acre parcel called Mazzeo Drive, owned by the Town of Randolph
- D: Property ID 58-A-4 is a 14 acre parcel called Mazzeo Drive Rear, owned by the Town of Randolph
- E: Property ID 58-A-1 is a multi-acre parcel called Bear Swamp, owned by the Town of Randolph



Point 1: Dog Park exit

1. The Dog Park exit to West Street is directly across the street from an entrance to the northern Jablonski property. A crosswalk should be painted on West Street at this crossing – painted green to indicate the “Randolph Greenway”. And perhaps a blinking stop sign to match the current blinking stop sign at the Warren Street merge a few hundred feet west -- but that's not part of the CPC proposal – that’s for the Town to do!

A "Welcome" sign on the south side of West Street should be constructed -- in the same style as the "Welcome" signs constructed this year at the Reservoir Walk and other sites. The "Welcome" sign will indicate that parking is available at the Dog Park walkway entrance, and at the Post Office (near point "3").



Parcel A: Jablonski West Street parcel

A. There's a stream flowing through this parcel, and a lot of sticker bushes. A footpath along the north bank of the stream will need brush clearing for several hundred feet. The footpath needs to cross the stream at some point -- perhaps a 10-foot wooden bridge or boardwalk. The stream has to be crossed twice to avoid a wide water area, so that's two 10-foot bridges.

Work in this parcel:

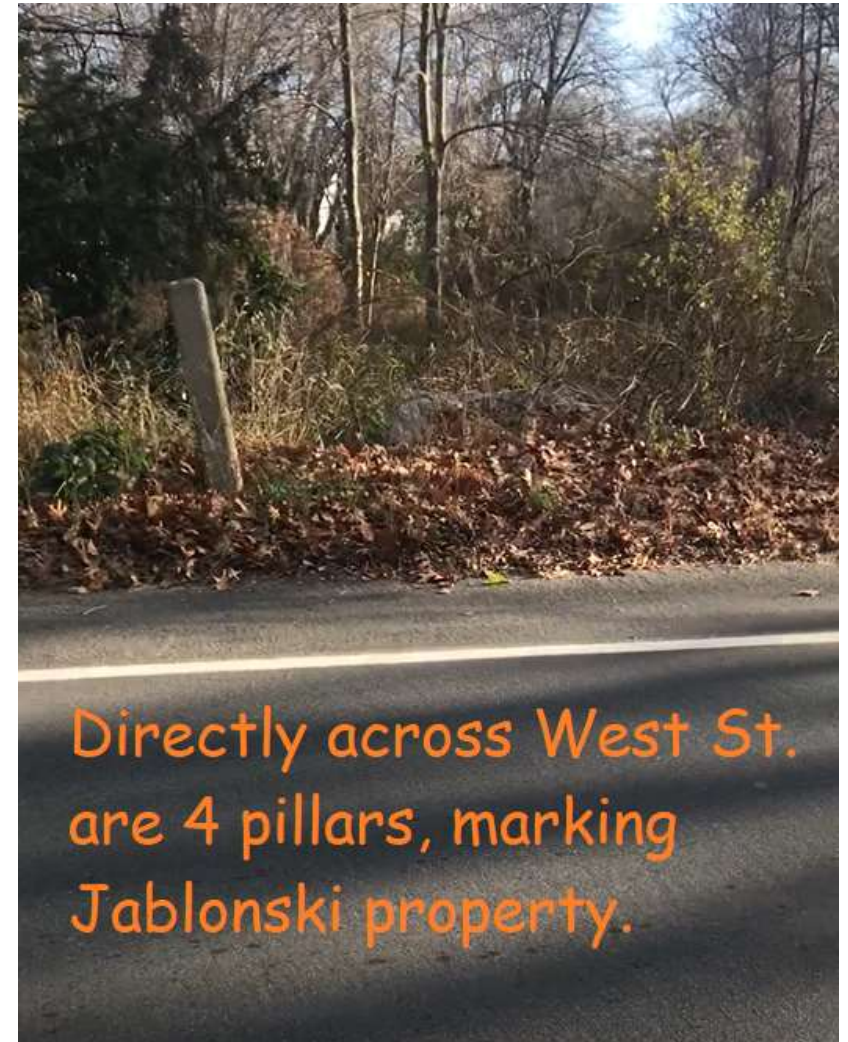
- 500 feet of brush clearing
- 10 foot boardwalk (bridge)
- “Welcome” sign #1
- Painted crosswalk on West St.
- Later Town work: Traffic light, perhaps a blinking stop sign as suggested by Fowler Street neighbors; perhaps replace the Fowler crosswalk with this one.



Parcel A: Jablonski West Street parcel



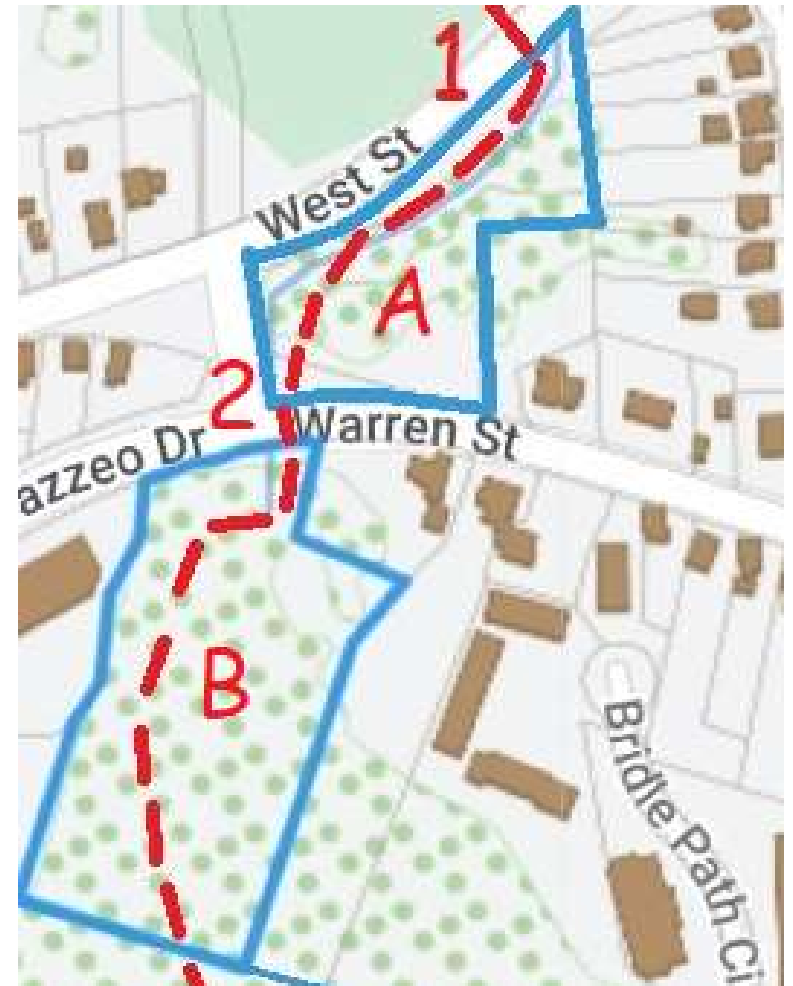
Dog Park entrance (with parking and footpath) happens to be directly across West Street from an "entrance" to the Jablonski property – marked by four stone pillars (one is shown). This project proposes painting a green crosswalk, but leaving the rest of the crossing work (like a light) to the Town.



Point 2: Warren Street crossing

2. Crossing Warren Street should have the same crosswalk painted as on West Street, and perhaps a blinking stop sign here too, also not part of this project proposal. Warren Street is a very busy street and pedestrians will need assistance crossing.

At the south side of Warren Street we propose another "Welcome" sign, because many passersby will see it and will then explore the new Conservation Area.



Point 2: Warren Street crossing



There are some “dry” areas (appropriate for footpaths) and some “wet” areas (muddy ground but not a stream)

This project proposes clearing brush and litter from the “dry” areas, and constructing a boardwalk on the “wet” areas, as needed.

The boardwalk would be modeled on the Powers Farm boardwalks – a foot off the ground to allow wildlife below, and wide enough for wheelchair access.

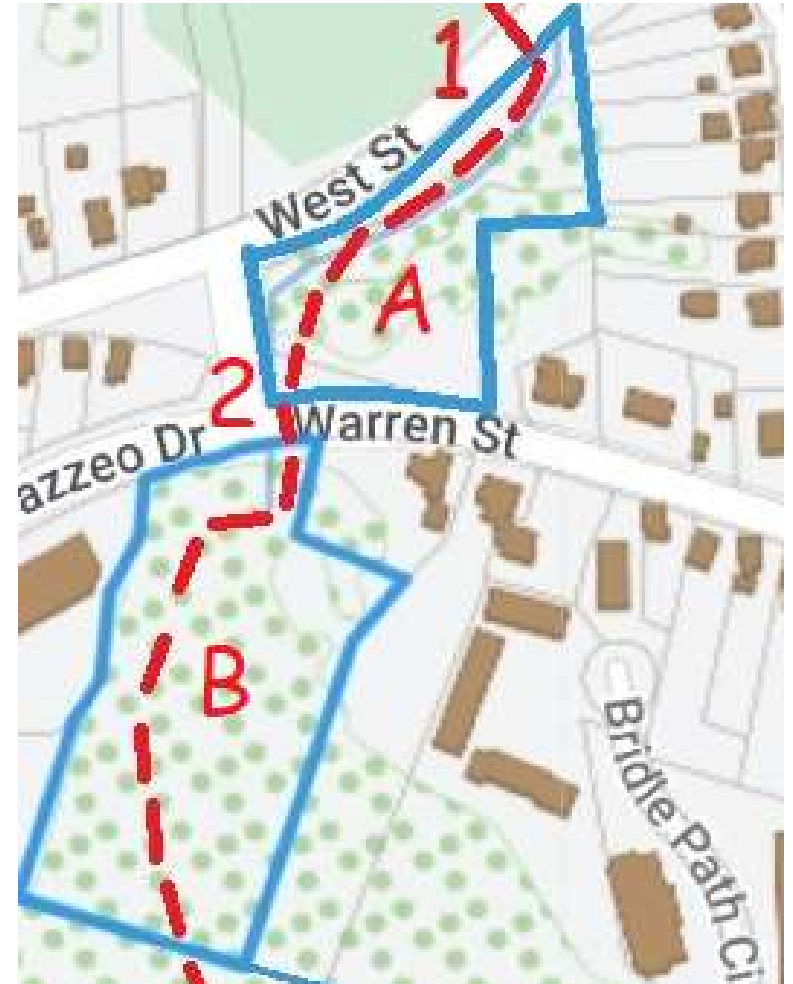
The reeds past the bramble indicate a wet muddy area. It’s dry and walkable in front, if the bramble were cleared.

Parcel B: Jablonski Warren St. parcel

B. The southern Jablonski property will need some brush clearing but also some boardwalk -- it is much swampier than the northern Jablonski property. There are some dry areas but we can expect several hundred feet of boardwalk.

Work in this parcel:

- 1,000 feet of brush clearing
- 20 feet of boardwalk/bridge
- “Welcome” sign #2
- Gren-painted crosswalk on Warren St.
- Later Town work: Another traffic light, perhaps a blinking stop sign too.



Parcel B: Jablonski Warren St. parcel



Here is the stream flowing into the Mazzeo corner from Bear Swamp – it's actively flowing (there are swampy muddy areas around it). You can see a concrete culvert which flows under Warren Street and lets onto the northern parcel.

Some streams like this would need bridge (like a ten-foot stretch over the stream, instead of the typical boardwalk). Survey work would determine where footpaths, boardwalks, and bridges should go. Along with input from the ConComm, since all are adjacent to wetlands.

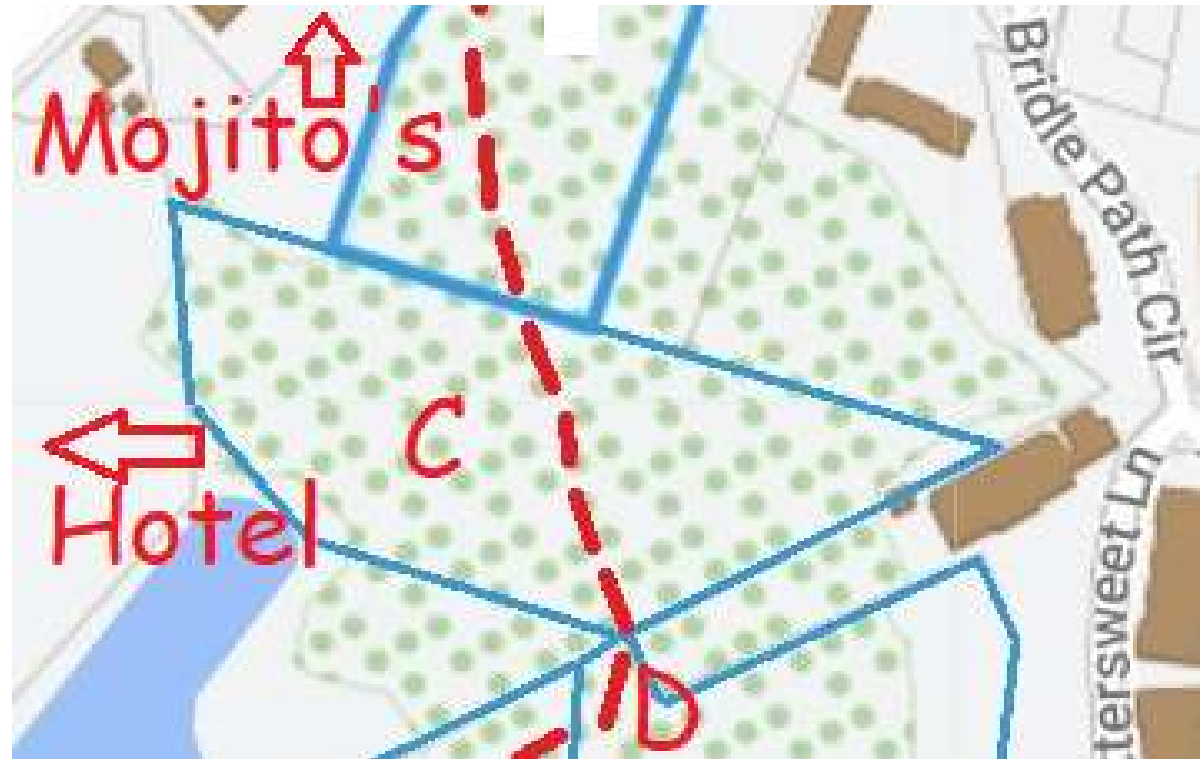
Parcel C: Mazzeo Drive parcel

C. The parcel marked "C" can be seen from Mazzeo Drive as the wooded area behind the Mojito's club parking lot. It will need a couple hundred feet of boardwalk too.

Parcel "C" meets parcel "D" at a corner, where the opposite corners are privately owned -- which means the boardwalk should go right through that corner, to avoid crossing private property.

Work in this parcel:

- 500 feet of brush clearing
- 20 feet of boardwalk/bridge in swampy areas

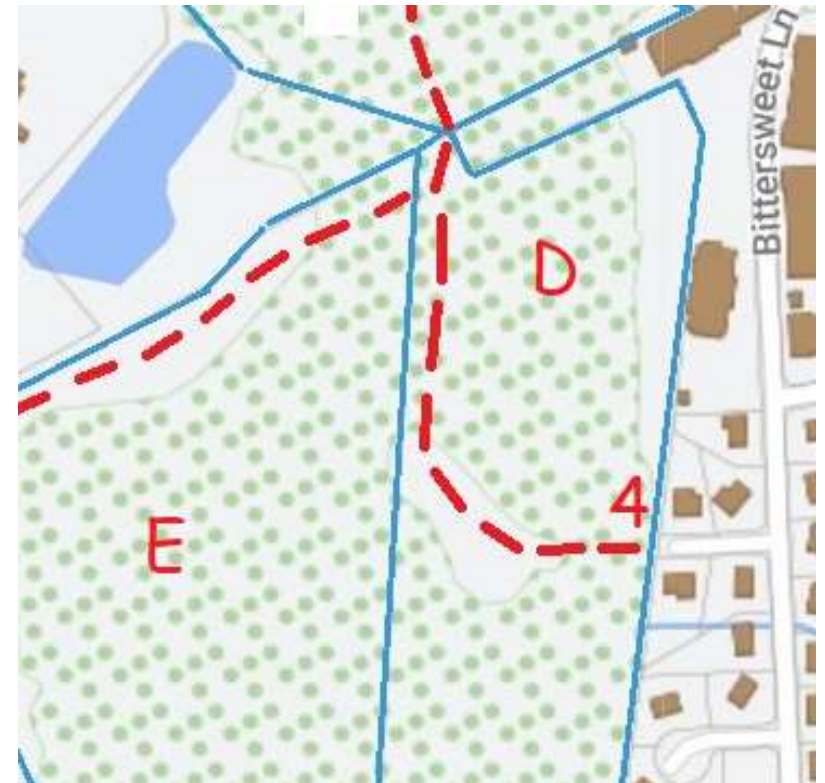


Parcel D: Rear Mazzeo Drive parcel

D. The parcel marked "D" can be seen from Bittersweet Lane as the wooded area behind several apartment buildings. There's a dry patch in the middle (the grey area without green swamp markings) but a couple hundred feet of boardwalk will be needed here too. That dry patch is directly west of Edward Scahill Drive.

Work in this parcel:

- 1,000 feet of brush clearing
- Survey to identify footpath that doesn't require boardwalk (look for least swampy areas – you can see dry areas in white instead of green on map)
- No “welcome” sign here



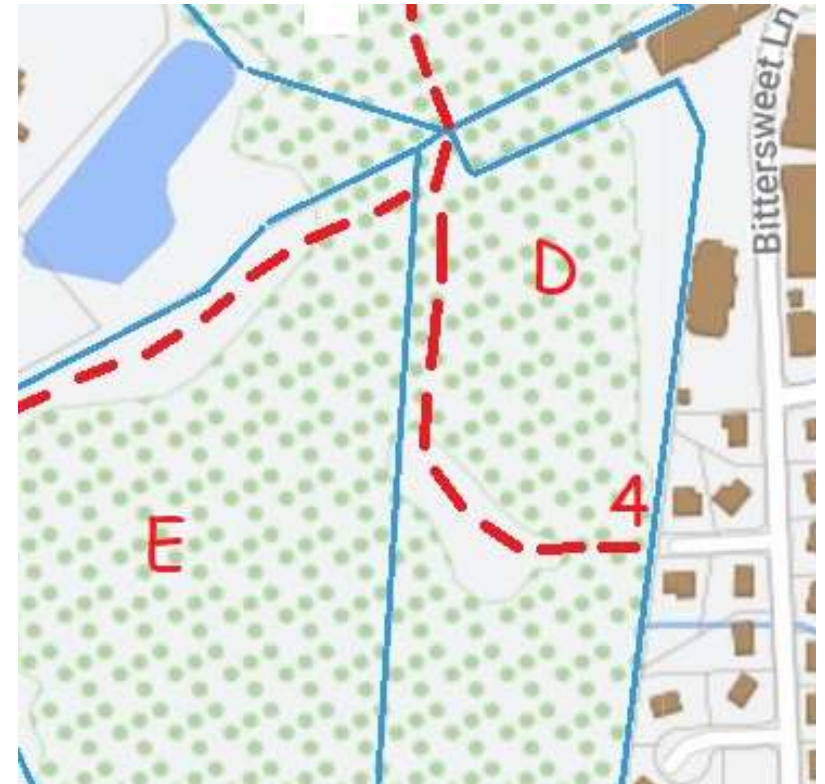
Point 4: Edward Scahill Drive

4. The boardwalk/footpath ends at the dead end of Edward Scahill Drive, a cul-de-sac off Bittersweet Lane south of Highland Glen Drive. This is a residential street so we don't propose a "Welcome" sign there, but the other signs will indicate that pedestrians can exit there (without parking there).

If the allocated funds are insufficient for the amount of surveying & boardwalk needed, the path in this parcel would be postponed until next year.

Future plans from this point (details below):

- Three blocks northeast on Bittersweet Lane is the Old Colony Rail Trail
- Continuing south in parcel D from point 4 is the Rail Trail for 2,000 feet to the Stoughton border
- Four blocks south might be exit to Cole Street (to be proposed next year) which connects to Lokitis Conservation Area



Parcel E: Bear Swamp parcel

E. The parcel marked "E" can be seen from Circuit Drive (the street connecting Thomas Patten Drive south of the Post Office, then between other commercial properties and back to Mazzeo Drive). A footpath will be marked at the north edge of this parcel, because it's a dry patch. About a hundred feet of boardwalk will be needed where parcel "D" connects to parcel "E".

Work in this parcel:

- 1,500 feet of brush clearing
- Survey to identify footpath that doesn't require boardwalk (look for least swampy areas – the northern edge of the property is dry)
- “Welcome” sign at point 3



Point 3: Circuit Drive exit

3. This exit point feels like you're next to the Post Office. A "Welcome" sign will be posted on Town land in the corner nearest the Post Office, suggesting parking in the Post Office parking lot. There are actually plenty of other parking lots near that point too, but they're privately owned.

So there are a total of three "Welcome" signs, which will all contain the same map, with a different "You are here" marking and a different URL on a QR code printed on the map, offering specific routes from the 3 points of entry.



Why would anyone want to hike through a swamp?

- Swamps are havens for birds, plants, and animals (appropriate for field trips for students)
- Best places to go birdwatching (like swan's nest in the swamp below Norroway Pond)
- Swamps have a bad name, so maybe call them “wetlands” or “fens” (as in “The Fenway”, the big swamp and great footpath in Boston)
- People like 'em! “The 10 Best American Swamp Tours To Go On In 2019” <https://www.thetravel.com/best-american-swamp-tours-2019/>
- Randolph residents like 'em! “Open Space and Recreation” was most popular of Master Plan categories, and is in Community Wellness Plan
- That's it for the proposal for this year. A few slides more to show the context in a “Randolph Greenway” with more to follow next year....

South Randolph Greenway (future plans)

We envision this project as the southern section of the “Randolph Greenway.” Northward from the Goldstein Open Space (Dog Park footpath) pedestrians can cross Grove Street directly onto the boardwalk southern entrance to Powers Farm. Southward from this newly-proposed park is the following (for a future open space development proposal):

- Edward Scahill Drive exits to Bittersweet Lane and Highland Glen Drive, which then connects to the Old Colony Rail Trail between several apartment buildings. That rail trail connects northeastward to the existing rail trail at Depot Street, if developed and maintained (it is currently walkable between apartment buildings, but not maintained). The rail-trail right-of-way has been taken over by residential construction on these three streets, but picks up again in the woods to the west of Bittersweet Lane south of Thomas Salamone Circle. A boardwalk could reconnect the broken rail-trail connection.



South Randolph Greenway

- Extending the boardwalk south through parcel "D" connects to more Town-owned swampy/wooded areas. An additional entry point would be the dead end of Cole Terrace, which lets directly onto Town-owned land (without parking because Cole Terrace is residential). The dead end of Cole Terrace is appropriate for another "Welcome" sign.
- That Cole Terrace entry point lets onto the rail-trail corridor. Next year we'll propose connecting the boardwalk from the Edward Scahill Drive exit to the rail-trail corridor at Cole Terrace. A boardwalk isn't needed along the rail-trail corridor itself -- it's dry -- but only to connect through the swampy area.
- The rail trail continues south into Stoughton. Councilor Gordon will propose to the Town of Stoughton to participate in extending the rail trail from the Randolph border. It goes through the Stoughton section of the Bear Swamp and could let out onto Technology Drive (at the Kohl's/Olive Garden/BJ's/Sonesta Hotel parking lot).



South Randolph Greenway

- Bear Swamp also continues southward into Avon. Councilor Gordon will propose to the Town of Avon to also participate in extending the rail trail, which runs along the Stoughton/Avon border and connects to Page Street/Bodwell Street. That would provide a connection to the Lokitis Conservation Area which is opened with a "Welcome" sign in a current project. Bodwell Street runs through the Avon Industrial Park and provides a connection to the Avon portion of DW Field Park.
- The entire "Randolph Greenway" would connect, mostly off-road, from the Blue Hills in Milton to DW Field Park in Brockton. That's a total distance of about 12 miles, of which about 4 miles is in Randolph. The "Randolph Greenway" would also connect westward to Canton through the Blue Hills, and eastward to Braintree and Holbrook via the Old Colony Rail Trail project. That's the vision that this project is part of.



CPC Application by
Town Councilor Jesse Gordon

jgordon@randolph-ma.gov

617-320-6989

April 28, 2023

**Conclusion: Let's open up the
new Bear Swamp parcels**

**Let's use that to connect
from Powers Farm as the
South Randolph Greenway!**

