



INTRODUCTION

Hallowell's recreational opportunities are based on outdoor activities and cultural events. Fortunately, the City is both blessed with significant open spaces and a strong cultural core that is supported by city government. In addition, some recreational opportunities for seniors are available at private facilities.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

The City operates recreational programs for school-aged children are operated in the summer, in conjunction with the Town of Farmingdale. The school system also operates after school programs when school is in session.

Private facilities, such as Cohen Community Center on Town Farm Road, operate private, fee-based activities such as exercise classes and social activities for seniors. The Camden Ice Vault on Whitten Road hosts skating events such as skating lessons and hockey leagues for a range of ages. There is also a small manmade pond behind the Water District office that is cleared by the City in the winter for informal skating use.

Finally, as noted below, there are a number of cultural institutions in the City for residents and visitors, including theaters, art galleries, and the Hubbard Free Library. The City provides some funding, space rental, and operational assistance for these cultural assets.

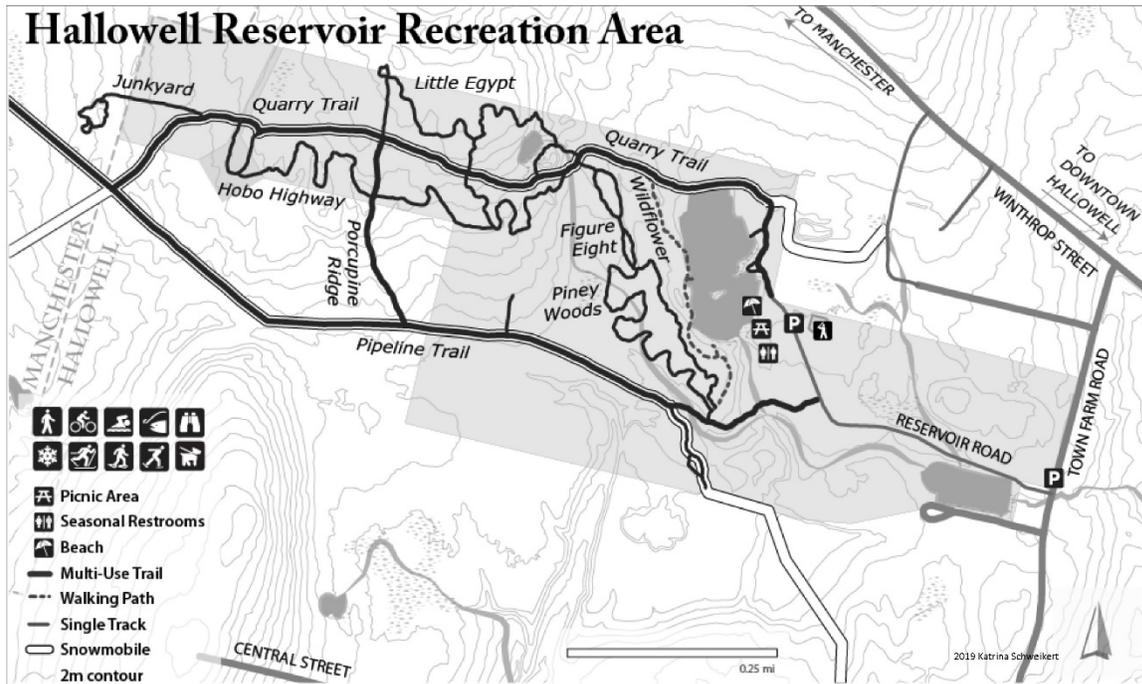
RECREATION AREAS

Hallowell has several outdoor areas that offer passive and active recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. As shown on the map below, these spaces are owned by the city, the state (including the school district) and private parties. These areas are described below, with blue boxes indicating spaces that are primarily City owned, green boxes indicating spaces that are primarily owned by the state or other public entities, and orange boxes indicating spaces that are privately owned. Conservation status is also listed with each area.

**“THE RES”
188 ACRES**

The largest open space in the City, the City Recreation Area is owned by the City and the Hallowell Water District. The Res provides Hallowell residents with a facility offering advantages found in no other place in the city—a mix of outdoor recreation facilities and a network of trails for the enjoyment of nature and history. It is a recognized wading bird habitat, and has a beach, picnic shelters, seasonal restrooms, and parking. There is also a smaller stone-lined pond, softball diamond and basketball courts, and a modest parking area on Town Farm Road for winter uses. A closed City landfill is located on the north side of the property. While there was once more formal recreational programming on the site, the current uses are mostly self-guided.

CONSERVATION STATUS: OWNED BY THE CITY, ZONED FOR OPEN SPACE



LITTLE LEAGUE BALL FIELD
17 ACRES

At the corner of Litchfield and Smith Roads, this site is used for youth sports, but was originally held as land for a future cemetery.

CONSERVATION STATUS: OWNED BY THE CITY

GRANITE CITY PARK
2.29 ACRES

At the north end of downtown, this waterfront park is owned jointly by the State of Maine and the City of Hallowell. It includes a bandstand, picnic tables, and granite blocks for seating. There is also parking available for users of the park and downtown visitors. Programming at the park includes the summer farmers' market and summer concerts. The City has looked in the past at expanding the park through acquisition of nearby property.

CONSERVATION STATUS: OWNED BY THE CITY

VAUGHAN FIELD
9 ACRES

This field, donated to the City as a park and playground in 1923, this field is located at the site of the former elementary school, this site includes a playground, ball field, and a basketball court. This is also the site of the city's dog park.

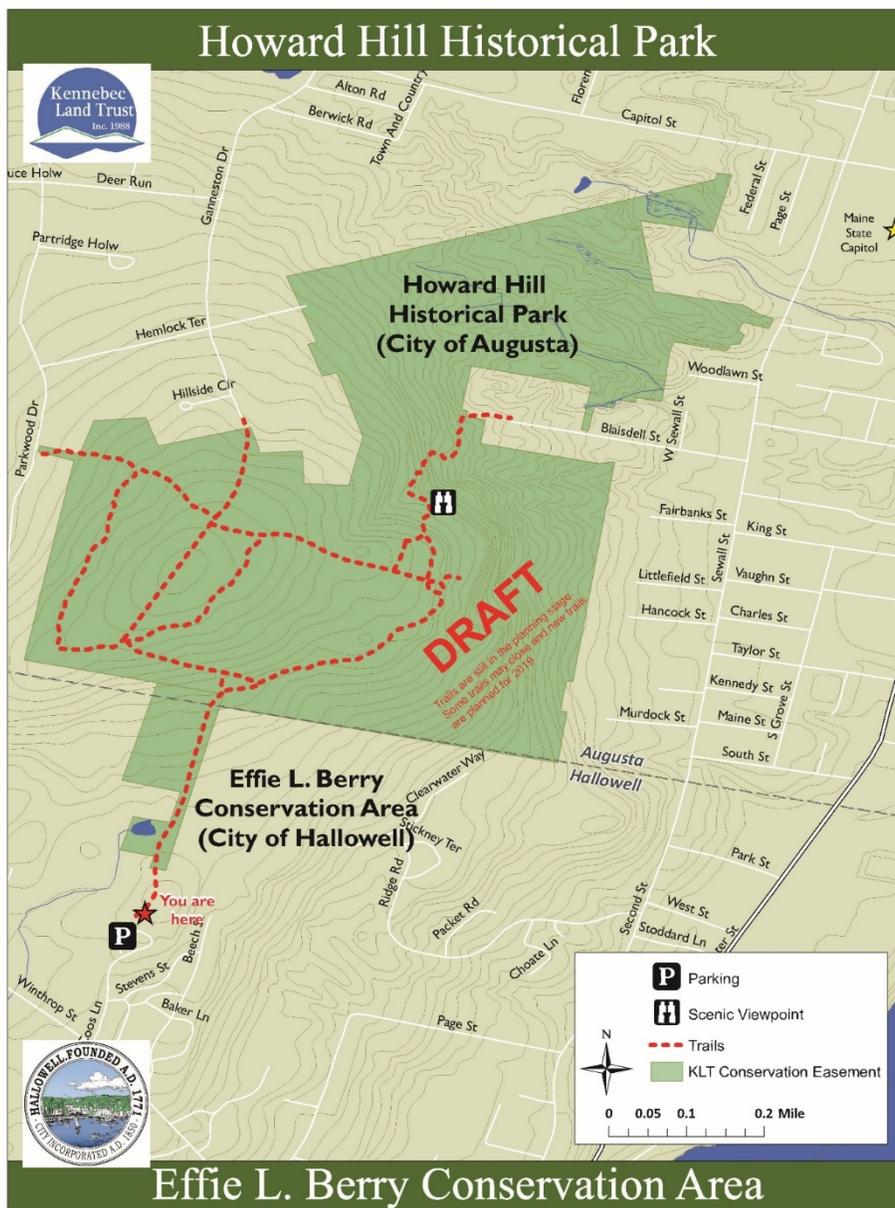
CONSERVATION STATUS: OWNED BY THE CITY, RESTRICTED BY GIFT CONDITIONS

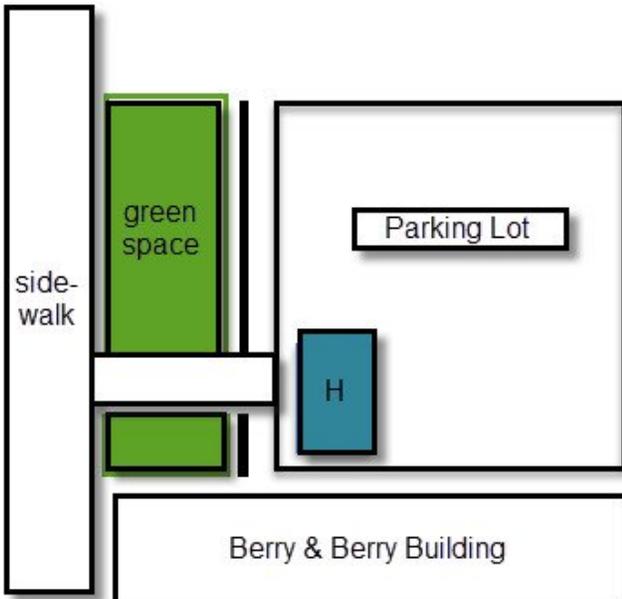
BERRY CONSERVATION AREA

8 ACRES

Part of the former Industrial School for Girls campus, this site was donated to the City as part of the redevelopment of Stevens Commons. The site's trail connects to a larger area in Augusta, and allows hiking, snow shoeing, skiing.

CONSERVATION STATUS: CONSERVATION EASEMENT BY KENNEBEC LAND TRSUT



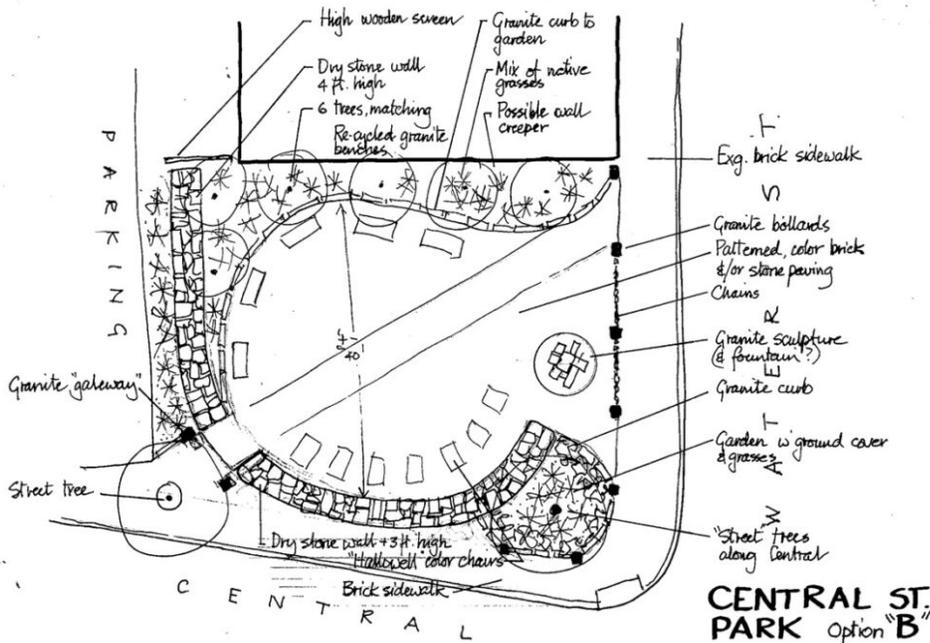


Earlier (below) and revised (above) concepts for pocket park at Central and Water Streets. Revised concept is smaller but retains parking

POCKET PARKS

There are various small open spaces throughout the City that provide opportunities for gathering and rest. For example, there is a small pocket part at the corner of Second Street and Union Street. There is also a proposal under development for a pocket park at the corner of Central Street and Water Street. Vision Hallowell has been given permission to pilot a pocket park while the Council determines a long-term use for that space.

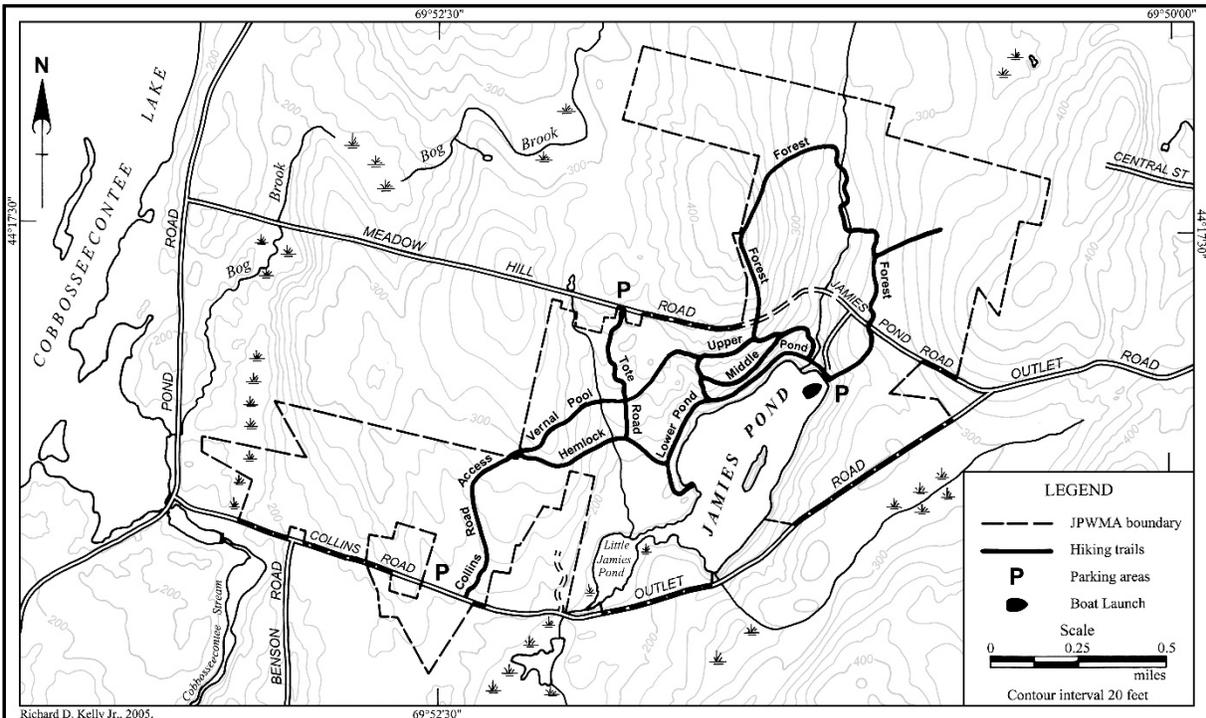
**CONSERVATION STATUS:
OWNED BY THE CITY**



JAMIES POND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA 160 ACRES (IN HALLOWELL)

Part of a much larger wildlife management area, this area is primarily accessible by vehicle from the Hallowell side. This area includes trails, and allows boating, hunting, fishing and trapping. The City of Hallowell's Conservation Commission with the state's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, as well as the Manchester Conservation Commission, to maintain the trail system.

CONSERVATION STATUS: WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA



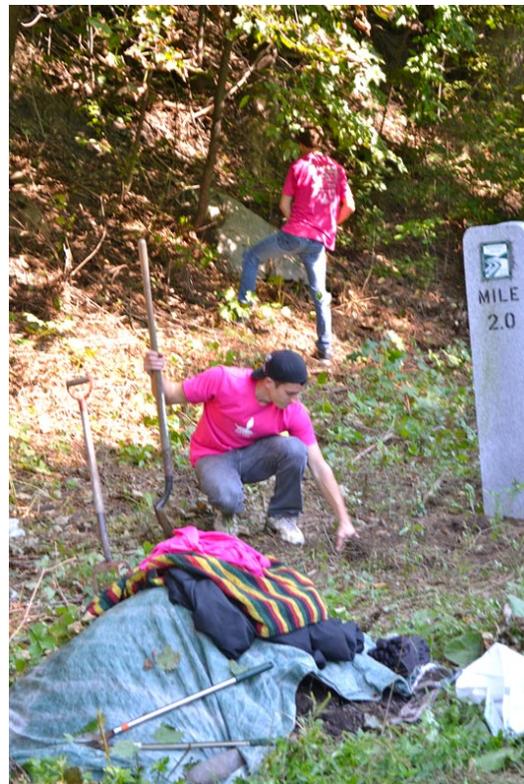
Richard D. Kelly Jr., 2005.

***KENNEBEC RIVER RAIL TRAIL
6.5 MILES IN TOTAL***

Connecting Gardiner, Hallowell, Farmingdale and Augusta, the Rail Trail is part of the East Coast Greenway, a network of trails under development from Key West, Florida to Calais, Maine. The trail was funded by a mix of federal, state and local sources as well as private donations. The Rail Trail has two trailheads in Hallowell, one at the Waterfront Park heading north, and the other at the south end of Water Street, heading south. The not-for-profit Friends of the Kennebec River Trail assist in funding the upkeep of and improvements to the trail.

The trail hosts many events in a typical year, including a half marathon, a 5K race, an annual cleanup, and other events that are coordinated by the Friends of the Kennebec River Rail Trail.

CONSERVATION STATUS: OWNED BY THE STATE



***KENNEBEC RIVER BOAT LAUNCH
1 ACRE***

The boat launch is on Water Street, and includes a seasonal float and an 80' long ramp. The state Department of Conservation, Recreation & Forestry maintains the site. There is parking for 8 rigs as well as picnic sites. As noted elsewhere, there is some interest on the local level in ensuring that this site meets local needs in addition to providing water access. A planned redesign of the boat launch in 2019 was delayed due to bids coming in over budget. With the COVID-19 pandemic, it is currently unclear when a rebid will occur.

CONSERVATION STATUS: OWNED BY THE STATE

***HALL-DALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL & COMMUNITY GARDENS
30 ACRES***

This site includes formal recreational spaces, such as a playground and ball fields, as well as about 25 acres of less developed land. The site includes community gardens and some trails that connect within the site.

CONSERVATION STATUS: OWNED BY RSU2

***HALL-DALE MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS
30 ACRES (FARMINGDALE)***

These sites, while located outside of Hallowell, are open for Hallowell residents' use. They include formal recreational spaces such as tennis course and ball fields.

CONSERVATION STATUS: OWNED BY RSU2

VAUGHAN WOODS
157 ACRES (ESTIMATE)

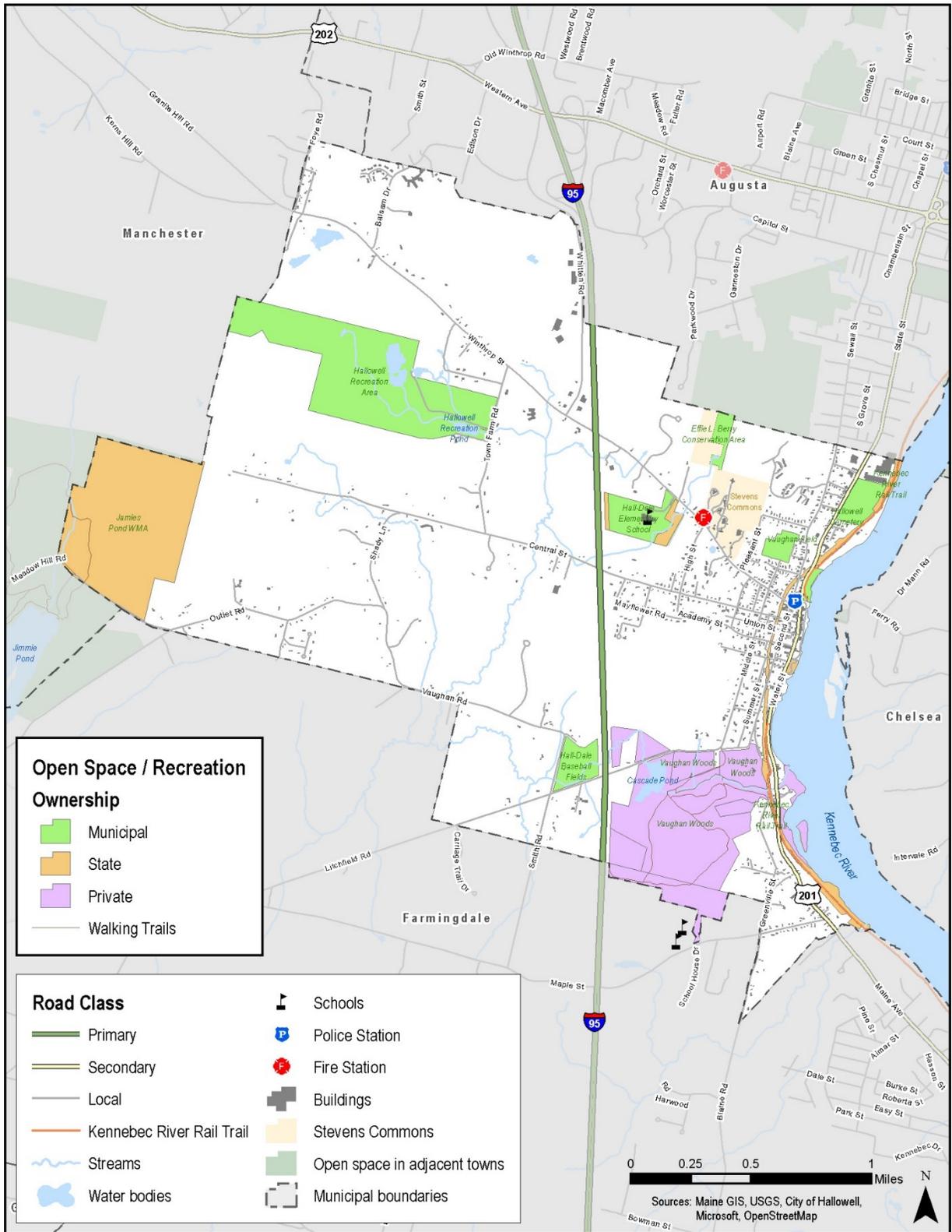
Vaughan Woods is a private conservation area owned by the Vaughan Homestead Foundation and protected by a conservation easement held by the Kennebec Land Trust. The Homestead Foundation and the Trust maintain a series of trails and a small parking area for public use.

CONSERVATION STATUS: CONSERVATION EASEMENT BY KENNEBEC LAND TRUST

SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

Trails for snowmobile use run throughout Hallowell, and connect to trails in nearby communities and beyond. Two snowmobile clubs are based in Hallowell and help maintain the network. Use is generally based on agreements between the private land owners and the clubs.

CONSERVATION STATUS: PRIMARILY PRIVATE OWNERSHIP



WATER ACCESS

The primary access to the Kennebec River is through the state-owned boat launch described above. Based on issues with the current layout, a planned redesign went out to bid in 2019. That redesign included changes to the paved areas as well as other modifications that would allow larger boats to use the facility. The Hallowell City Council also asked for pedestrian access improvements to the area to be completed as part of the redesign. The 2019 bids were all over budget, and a planned rebid of the project appears to be on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

TRAIL SYSTEMS

There are a number of public and private trails in the City, including hiking trails, biking trails, and snowmobile routes. These trails are maintained by a variety of groups. While the number of trails appears to be adequate for a city the size of Hallowell, there are issues related to trail connectivity and accessibility.

CULTURAL PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

Hallowell is known as a regional center for cultural programs such as theater, arts and antiques. Summer visitors to Maine, as well as year-round residents, come to the city to take advantage of the rich offerings provided by local organizations and businesses.

In addition to the ongoing activities, downtown Hallowell hosts a number of annual festivals and cultural activities, such as Old Hallowell Day, Marti Gras, and Christmas in Old Hallowell. These events – unfortunately currently curtailed due to COVID-19 – bring people to the city both to enjoy its rich offerings and to support local businesses. Old Hallowell Day, perhaps the largest of these events, has been going on for over 50 years and is organized by volunteers with support from the city.

More recently, Stevens Commons has begun to host activities as well, such as a regular farmers' market.

Cultural Organizations

There are many cultural organizations that call Hallowell home. Some of the largest are:

- **Gaslight Theater:** In existence since 1938, this non-profit community theater is one of the oldest in the country. It has been based in the second floor of City Hall for 40 years. Recent upgrades to City Hall have helped improve that space for their operations;
- **The Harlow Gallery:** The home of the Kennebec Valley Art Association, the Harlow Gallery has been in existence since 1963. The Gallery offers regular public events, art exhibitions, art courses, and other cultural attractions. The City of Hallowell has supported the Harlow Gallery through its annual budget for many years. Most recently, the annual support has been \$4,000.



Downtown Hallowell is also home to many galleries and antique stores that are attractions for residents and visitors.

EXISTING & FUTURE NEEDS

Much of the existing need for recreational activities is met by current opportunities. There is a great deal of passive recreational space, as well as programmed activity and ongoing cultural events. There are some gaps in the overall system, as outlined below, but in general, Hallowell is well served from a recreational standpoint.

There is a small population increase projected in the next 10 years, largely due to redevelopment at Stevens Commons. That increase will result in some additional need for recreational activities. However, at present, the site redevelopment is also incorporating recreational opportunities into its programming, including additional passive recreational space and active events. As a result, while there are some challenges facing recreational needs in Hallowell in the future, they are not expected to be significantly different than those facing the City today.

ANALYSIS & ISSUES FOR FURTHER STUDY

- ✓ How should the City leadership balance the interest in additional pocket park space with the perception that more parking is needed?
- ✓ How will changing demographics impact recreational needs?
- ✓ How can the City ensure that the trail system is adequately connected and maintained?
- ✓ Are improvements needed to the Rail Trail through downtown?
- ✓ How can the boat launch better connect to downtown and serve local residents?
- ✓ Does the City support its arts and cultural events and facilities equitably and adequately?