

# **GLOUCESTER RECONNAISSANCE REPORT**

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## **ESSEX COUNTY LANDSCAPE INVENTORY**

### **MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM**



**Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation**

**Essex National Heritage Commission**

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## INTRODUCTION

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Essex County is known for its unusually rich and varied landscapes, which are represented in each of its 34 municipalities. Heritage landscapes are places that are created by human interaction with the natural environment. They are dynamic and evolving; they reflect the history of the community and provide a sense of place; they show the natural ecology that influenced land use patterns; and they often have scenic qualities. This wealth of landscapes is central to each community's character; yet heritage landscapes are vulnerable and ever changing. For this reason it is important to take the first steps towards their preservation by identifying those landscapes that are particularly valued by the community – a favorite local farm, a distinctive neighborhood or mill village, a unique natural feature, an inland river corridor or the rocky coast. To this end, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Essex National Heritage Commission (ENHC) have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program (HLI) to communities in Essex County. The primary goal of the program is to help communities identify a wide range of landscape resources, particularly those that are significant and unprotected. The focus is on landscapes that have not been identified in previous survey efforts in a given community. Another important goal of the program is to provide communities with strategies for preserving heritage landscapes.

The methodology for the Heritage Landscape Inventory program was developed in a Pilot Project conducted in southeast Massachusetts. It is outlined in the DCR publication *Reading the Land* which has provided guidance for the program in Essex County. In short, each participating community appoints a Local Project Coordinator (LPC) to assist the DCR-ENHC consulting team. The LPC organizes a heritage landscape identification meeting at which interested residents and town officials offer community input by identifying potential heritage landscapes. This meeting is followed by a fieldwork session including the consulting team and the LPC, usually accompanied by other community members. This group visits the priority landscapes identified in the meeting and gathers information about the community. The final product is the Reconnaissance Report, prepared for each participating community. It outlines the history of the community; identifies the resources and documentation that provide background information; provides a short description of the priority heritage landscapes visited; discusses planning issues identified by the community; and concludes with a brief discussion of survey and planning recommendations. A list of all of the heritage landscapes identified by the community is included in the Appendix.

## GLOUCESTER HISTORY

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Gloucester's coastal location and its dramatic landscape features — harbor, rivers, uplands and shoreline — were instrumental in shaping the history of the community from the earliest Native American use of the land to the present day.

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Prior to English settlement, Gloucester was inhabited by members of the Pawtucket group, who traveled along the rivers and coastline, and also established inland trails. Although few pre-historic archaeological sites are known for the Gloucester area, the presence of Native Americans is well documented by early explorers and settlers.

Cape Ann was used for seasonal fishing until 1623 when the Dorchester Company established a year-round fishing settlement on what was later known as Fisherman's Field, now Stage Fort Park. Settlement remained sparse until 1642 when the population was sufficient to merit incorporation. Around that time the center of town moved from Fisherman's Field to near the First Parish Burial Ground and later to the area of present day Grant Circle along Route 128. By the 1740's the harbor was assuming more importance. Annisquam, Sandy Bay (now part of Rockport) and the Riverdale Mills area were also important early villages. Gloucester's early settlers were mostly farmer/fisherman/carpenter combinations, with a large transient population. Around 1800, trade with European and Asian ports became an important industry. Fishing did not become the primary industry until after the war of 1812.

Major fires in 1830 and 1860 destroyed much of the downtown area. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial fishing continued to prosper, there was an active granite industry and tourism emerged as an important part of the local economy. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries there was an influx of people from the Canadian Maritimes, the Azores, Finland and Sicily. Gloucester was incorporated as a city in 1873.

The year-round population remained relatively stable between 1915 and 1990, at just over 28,000. The most densely populated areas occur in the central business and downtown, particularly around Gloucester Harbor, as well as in the villages of Magnolia, Lanesville, Annisquam and East Gloucester. Gloucester is also a seasonal tourist community, whose summer population increases by about 40%.

## **RESOURCES AND DOCUMENTATION**

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This section of the Reconnaissance Report identifies planning documents and tools that provide information relevant to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program.

### **Inventory of Historic Assets**

The Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets is a statewide list that identifies significant historic resources throughout the Commonwealth. In order to be included in the inventory, a property must be documented on an MHC inventory form, which is then entered into the MHC database. This searchable database, known as MACRIS, is now available online at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc>.

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According to the MHC, Gloucester's inventory documents 1,332 properties that date from 1633 to 1989. It represents nearly four decades of documentation with approximately 1,000 properties completed by 1985 by professional planning consultants. In addition there are many area forms documenting neighborhoods and villages. Several large areas were documented in the 1990s in preparation for the Multiple Property Submission.

### **State and National Registers of Historic Places**

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that have been determined significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. The city also has two large National Register districts: the Central Gloucester Historic District established in 1982 with 191 resources and the East Gloucester Square Historic District established in 1996 with 305 resources, as well as several smaller districts. There are 21 properties individually listed in the National Register. There are also properties associated with two thematic National Register nominations; First Period Buildings of Eastern Massachusetts and Lighthouses of Massachusetts. Gloucester has two National Historic Landmarks, Beauport and the Schooner Adventure, and one Massachusetts Landmark, the Fitz Hugh Lane House. Gloucester also has submitted several context statements to fulfill the Multiple Property Submission format of National Register listing. All National Register properties are also listed in the State Register.

There are 22 Gloucester buildings under preservation restrictions, drawn up in accordance with MGL Chapter 183, Sections 31-33. This is an unusually large number for a community. A preservation restriction runs with the deed and is one of the strongest preservation strategies available. All properties which have preservation restrictions filed under the state statute are automatically listed in the State Register.

### **Local Historic District**

Local historic districts, which are administered at the municipal level, are special places within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected by a local historic district commission. Gloucester has one local historic district, the Central Gloucester Historic District established in 1977 with 80 resources, which are centered along Middle Street from Washington Street to Pleasant Street. This local district also falls within a larger National Register district of the same name. All properties in local historic districts are automatically included in the State Register.

### **Planning Documents**

Gloucester's Open Space and Recreation Plan was last updated in 2003. It indicates that nearly 60% of the city is classified as open space including forest and areas of natural vegetation, recreation areas, and undeveloped urban and natural lands. While this is an unusually large percentage of open space per capita, much of it is protected watershed land with limited public access. There are also large amounts of coastal and inland wetlands, 878 and 212 acres

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respectively. While Gloucester enjoys many of the same recreational activities as other communities, it also has a special relationship to the sea, which it relies on for aesthetic, economic, recreational and cultural reasons. Boating, fishing and other water-related activities are a way of life in Gloucester.

Gloucester completed its Community Development Plan in 2001, which includes recommendations that address a broad range of citywide issues. It identifies three community focal points: harbor/waterfront, downtown, and villages/neighborhoods. It also contains a list of Special Places in Gloucester, which is included at the end of this Reconnaissance Report. Gloucester completed its Harbor Plan in 1999, which has a three pronged strategy: rebuild harbor infrastructure, strengthen the traditional port, and celebrate historical and cultural assets.

The original sources of historical information reside primarily in the City of Gloucester Archives and at the Cape Ann Historical Museum. The Gloucester Archives have a wealth of documentation including: town records (meetings, land distributions, highway constructions, deeds, etc.) from 1642 to 1873 (Thereafter the city records take over); selectmen's records (dealing with the general running of the town, people, schools, etc.) from 1698 to 1873; commoners' records (recording land grants, highway layouts, proprietors' meetings) from 1701-1820; assessor's valuations (that help identify and date old buildings, and indicate use and ownership of properties) from 1771 to current date.

### **Other Planning Tools and Ordinances**

The Historical Commission is currently working with other city agencies to develop a demolition delay ordinance.

## **PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES**

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Gloucester's Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by approximately 23 residents, some representing city boards and local non-profit organizations, was held on July 21, 2004. During the meeting residents compiled a lengthy list of the town's heritage landscapes, which is included in the Appendix. Once the comprehensive list was created, attendees were asked to articulate the value of each landscape and to identify issues relating to its preservation. Based on the information gathered, community members selected a group of priority heritage landscapes to be visited by the consulting team during the fieldwork. Each of the priority landscapes is highly valued, contributes to community character and is not permanently protected or preserved.

This section describes the priority landscapes that are the focus of the reconnaissance work in Gloucester. In most instances intensive survey work will be needed to fully document the physical characteristics and the historical development of the landscape. These heritage landscapes, which are listed alphabetically, represent a range of scales and types of resources from small burial grounds to Dogtown Common.

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### **Ancient (First Parish) Burial Ground**

The Ancient Burial Ground, also known as First Parish Burial Ground and Old Bridge Street Burial Ground, is a 2.51-acre site located off Centennial Avenue near the railroad tracks. It is the oldest burial place in Gloucester, established in 1633, and one of the few surviving remnants of the earliest years of the community. Although it is located in a dense residential neighborhood, it has little street frontage and is largely hidden from public view. Many of headstones have been badly damaged or destroyed. The site is in such poor condition that it cannot be easily maintained, so it continues to deteriorate through neglect and vandalism. The Ancient Burial Ground has been the subject of discussion in Gloucester for many years. A stone-by-stone inventory was undertaken in the late 1980s; an MHC inventory form was prepared in 1991; and recommendations for it were included in a 1992 report on preservation of city-owned properties. Despite these past initiatives, the Ancient Burial Ground remains the city's most deteriorated and threatened cemetery.



### **Dogtown Common**

Large natural areas such as Dogtown Common have traditionally been perceived as open space but are not permanently protected and are vulnerable to development, particularly around the edges. Dogtown was settled in 1719 when distribution of the town's open land made lots available to settlers. By 1741 there were 25 families living there. The population gradually declined after the Revolution and the area was largely abandoned by 1830. Today Dogtown consists of approximately 3,000 acres of rugged undeveloped land in interior sections of Gloucester and Rockport. It includes forests, wetlands, glacially created rock formations, old fields, pastures, quarries and trails. Two of Cape Ann's reservoirs, Babson and Goose Cove, are also located in Dogtown and much of the area has been designated as watershed protection land. Dogtown has long been a priority for Gloucester and was cited as a primary resource protection need in the 2003 Open Space and Recreation Plan. A Dogtown Management Plan was recently developed by the Mayor's Dogtown Steering Committee. The plan listed two basic objectives: preservation of the important natural and cultural features that make Dogtown unique, and protection of a clean, quiet place for

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traditional forms of passive recreation. The plan stressed the consensus to preserve distinctive features and not to make Dogtown into a park "or other such manicured tract." It also recommended that structures be kept to a minimum.

### **Good Harbor Creek Area**

The Good Harbor Creek area was historically a harbor for small boats but over time the barrier beach shifted and closed off the mouth of the harbor. Today the area consists of a city-owned barrier beach with an extensive salt marsh behind it. It is one of the most scenic coastal areas in Gloucester and serves as a regional recreational resource. The beach and marsh are publicly owned but new development proposed at the edge of the marsh could impact both the fragile coastal ecology and the visual character of the area. The Brier Neck neighborhood to the east of the beach currently consists of compact late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses on small lots. Any future development would most likely be at a much larger scale and higher density.

### **Little River Area**

The Little River area (also known as the Daylor Study Area), located in West Gloucester, is a tidal river flowing northwest into the Annisquam River just south of the A. Piatt Andrew Bridge. It has always been a scenic place where there has been informal public access – for fishing, clamming, putting in small boats or just enjoying the scenery. The Little River area was initially developed as seasonal camps, with small houses on small lots. Over time it has become a place where long-term residents can find affordable housing in a city where the cost of real estate has soared. The city is installing sewer lines in this area, which will almost certainly accelerate development on previously unbuildable parcels, particularly in high visibility locations. Residents are worried about visual changes, particularly construction along the water's edge; loss of public access; and potential impacts on water quality that would affect clam beds and a fish run that is already stressed. There are public right-of-ways along the Little River but they are not well mapped and may be inadvertently blocked by new development. Local residents also expressed concern about the lack of land use regulations to address these issues, particularly size, density and height of new development.

### **Niles Pond Area**

Niles Pond is a designated Great Pond located on Eastern Point, accessible by Eastern Point Boulevard which is a private road. It is a freshwater pond that is valuable to migratory birds but the causeway that protects it along its eastern edge adjacent to Brace Cove is in danger of being washed out. From this causeway, is a view of Brace Rock, which was painted by Fitz Hugh Lane. Other issues include access, and management of views and invasive vegetation.



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### **Paint Factory**

The Tarr and Wonson Paint Factory, located at the end of Horton Street on a point overlooking the inner harbor, was established in the 1840s to manufacture paint used on the bottom of boats. The current building, which dates to 1874, has become a local landmark admired by residents and visitors alike. It functions as a gateway between the Inner and Outer Harbors. The paint factory is now closed and the building faces an uncertain future. It is an industrial structure located on a site with difficult access and many other constraints, including environmental issues. It is currently abandoned and vulnerable to vandalism.

### **Riggs Corridor Area**

The Riggs corridor area consists of the Riggs Pasture, which is roughly 33 acres, and two First Period houses, the Thomas Riggs, Sr. house (circa 1640s) and the Thomas Riggs, Jr. house (circa 1690s). The 26-acre portion of Riggs Pasture east of Washington Street, also known as Goose Cove Reservation, is permanently preserved by the Essex County Greenbelt Association. The seven-acre portion of the pasture west of Washington Street adjacent to the Thomas Riggs, Sr. house is the site of a proposed residential development.

### **Rocky Neck Art Colony**

The Rocky Neck Art Colony is one of the oldest working art colonies in the country, active for over 150 years. It is dramatically located on a spit of land extending out into Gloucester Harbor. The site itself is spectacular, with panoramic views north towards downtown and south towards the outer harbor and the ocean beyond. The streets are narrow fingers leading out to the water's edge, buildings are small, typically wooden vernacular structures on small lots. There is a mix of residential, commercial and maritime uses with a large number of working artists still living in the area. Artists are interested in promoting their artwork but the small area with limited parking cannot accommodate heavy commercial use.



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## **Route 128 Corridor**

Route 128, also known as Yankee Division Highway, is Gloucester's major link to the rest of Essex County and the primary gateway to the community. The four-lane roadway enters Gloucester from the west through a long wooded section, then passes through settled portions of West Gloucester to the A. Piatt Andrew Bridge, which rises dramatically over the Annisquam River with panoramic views up and downstream. West of the bridge is Grant Circle, a rotary located on the site of Gloucester's First Parish, which provides the main access to downtown and to villages along Gloucester's northern shore. Route 128 then travels through a rocky, wooded area along the southern part of Dogtown Common, passing Blackburn Circle and ending at Main Street near Gloucester Harbor. The two aspects of Route 128 that are most valued by Gloucester residents are the wooded landscape through which portions of it travel and the dramatic views of the Annisquam River and adjacent salt marsh from the A. Piatt Andrew Bridge, now partially obscured by new security fencing. The view from the bridge is known as the "Window on the Marsh." The marshland was preserved through the efforts of private citizens and the Essex County Greenbelt Association.

## **Second Parish Burial Ground**

The Second Parish Burial Ground, also known as the Thompson Street Burial Ground, is located off Concord Street in West Gloucester. It is the second oldest burial place in the community. Land was granted to the Second Parish in 1716. The oldest remaining headstone is from 1760; other extant stones date from the late 18th century and early 19th centuries, with the most recent being 1814. The half-acre burial ground is located in a wooded area that is well on its way to obliterating all evidence of its historic use. The perimeter is roughly defined by a low fieldstone wall and there are less than a dozen burial stones remaining. There are no signs of active vandalism although some stones have reportedly been removed in the past. Decay and neglect are the greatest threats. The remote location, with limited access, makes regular maintenance difficult.

## **Ways to the Water**

Access to the water has been critical since the founding of Gloucester. The many narrow alleys, paths and roads leading to the water were laid out for practical use by fishermen, seamen and residents alike. These public ways lead from main roads to the water in the center of town and in outlying villages. Many are little known and not well documented. Over time some these ways have become forgotten or have been appropriated by abutters, particularly in outlying parts of the city. Gloucester has already done a good job of documenting its public landings and has recently begun to focus the same level of attention on its ways to the water.

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## **PLANNING**

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### **Preservation Strategies**

Gloucester residents place high value on the community's strong sense of place, which is created by its varied natural features and traditional land use patterns. Gloucester's dramatic coastal landscape played a critical role in the settlement and historical development of the community and remains among the city's most important assets. Gloucester is also fortunate to have a large and diverse collection of historic resources. The city has already taken steps to preserve its most significant buildings and natural areas. It is now looking beyond these resources to the landscapes, streetscapes, rural roads, neighborhoods and other natural and cultural assets that define the overall fabric of the community. Like most Essex County municipalities, Gloucester is facing multiple pressures for change that threaten land-based uses and natural resources, especially in waterfront areas. Special places within the community that were once taken for granted are now more vulnerable than ever to change.

### **Planning Issues**

In addition to the priority landscapes listed in the previous section, residents identified general issues related to heritage landscapes and community character. Each of the critical planning issues affects at least one of the priority landscapes. These issues are listed in alphabetical order. Community members also expressed interest in learning about preservation tools and strategies that have been effective in other Massachusetts communities and in identifying sources for preservation funding.

### ***Burial Grounds and Cemeteries***

Gloucester residents identified two burial grounds as priority landscapes but also expressed concern about other city-owned burial grounds and cemeteries. All burial grounds exhibit some preservation needs, particularly those that are no longer actively used for burial. Issues include inadequate maintenance, vandalism, deteriorated monuments, hazardous trees, impacts from abutters, poor or absent signage, and lack of interpretation. In 2003 Gloucester took an important step towards preserving its historic burial places with the establishment of a Historic Burial Ground Committee.

### ***Neighborhoods***

Preserving neighborhood character was a major theme of the heritage landscape meeting. Gloucester's diverse residential neighborhoods are rich in historic resources and essential to community vitality. They include neighborhoods such as Portuguese Hill and Rocky Neck, and villages such as Annisquam, Lanesville and Magnolia. Churches, schools and other institutions were mentioned as important anchors in the community. Closing of such institutions is often a blow to the neighborhood, especially when they are replaced with new uses that are no longer integral to the community. While almost all neighborhoods are facing

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changes that threaten community character, historic villages and waterfront neighborhoods were perceived as the most threatened. Specific concerns were that villages are losing their distinctive character and ethnic associations, and that small houses are being replaced by larger houses that long-term Gloucester residents cannot afford, particularly in valuable waterfront areas.

### ***Scenic Roads***

Gloucester's roads were mentioned as scenic and historic assets that contribute much to the character of the community. While the city's historic roads are inefficient at times, residents value the narrow idiosyncratic road patterns and the dramatic views of the coast.

Legislation has been filed to designate Route 127 as a "state scenic byway." The proposed route begins with Route 1A in Salem, proceeding north over the Beverly-Salem Bridge linking with Route 127 in Beverly, then proceeding through Beverly, Manchester and Gloucester and around all of Cape Ann (on Route 127A). The designation provides no oversight or controls but allows byway communities to apply for federal funds through the National Scenic Byway Program.

### ***Waterfront and Harbor***

Fishing and other maritime activities are essential to Gloucester's economic wellbeing and community identity. Increasingly as waterfront land becomes more valuable, traditional uses are being forced out. Some of the new uses, such as luxury housing, are larger in scale, higher in density and less welcoming to the public. The recent Community Development Plan and Harbor Plan both recognized the importance of preserving traditional waterfront uses while also creating new economic opportunities and established a framework for doing so. Recognizing the harbor as a cultural landscape provides another framework for valuing its functional, cultural and aesthetic importance to the community.

## **PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Preservation planning is a three-step process: identification, evaluation and protection. Four useful documents to consult before beginning to implement preservation strategies are the Massachusetts Historical Commission's *Survey Manual* and *Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances*; the Department of Conservation and Recreation's *Reading the Land*; and the Essex National Heritage Commission's *Essex National Heritage Area Plan*. Each publication provides necessary information for the identification, evaluation and protection of the rich cultural heritage of Massachusetts communities. The recommendations that follow are in two parts. General recommendations are listed first, followed by more specific recommendations.

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Each community will have to determine the best way to implement the recommendations discussed below. One approach that might help Gloucester begin the process is to form a Heritage Landscape Committee, as described in *Reading the Land*.

### **General Recommendations**

Recommendations that apply to a broad range of resources are discussed below. The general recommendations are listed in the order in which they are most logically addressed when applying the three-step preservation planning process as described above. Thus the goal will be to (1) identify, (2) evaluate and (3) protect.

### ***Inventory of Heritage Landscapes and Other Historic Assets***

The vital first step in developing preservation strategies for heritage landscapes is to record information about the resources on MHC inventory forms. One cannot advocate for something unless one knows precisely what it is – the physical characteristics and historical development. Although Gloucester has done extensive survey of its historic resources, much of it was done 20-30 years ago. Most of the city's historic landscapes have not been documented at all. All resources that have been recorded in the past should be reviewed, particularly those documented in the 1970s because survey methodology has changed since that time. New procedures are more comprehensive and link properties in a more coherent way than in the past. Thus, using the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology, record Gloucester's heritage:

- Document heritage landscapes and other resources identified by the community that are not already represented in the MHC inventory, with emphasis on priority landscapes and areas vulnerable to change such as Dogtown Common, the Little River area and Rocky Neck.
- Organize the survey by property type and include a wide range of property types. Document unprotected resources first and prioritize by need/threat.

### ***National Register Program***

As additional survey work is completed, evaluate properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Develop a National Register listing plan taking into consideration a property's significance, integrity and vulnerability. Properties that are in need of recognition in order to advance preservation strategies should be given priority.

### ***Burial Grounds and Cemeteries***

Gloucester has many city-owned cemeteries. The documentation and preservation needs vary for each site. The DCR publication *Preservation Guidelines for Municipally Owned Historic Burial Grounds and Cemeteries* provides guidance on developing preservation plans for burial grounds, including

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identification and evaluation of the resources as well as preservation strategies. Using this guide Gloucester should:

- Prepare MHC inventory forms for all burial grounds and cemeteries that have been in use for more than 50 years. Update existing MHC inventory forms as needed.
- List eligible burial grounds and cemeteries in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Develop a preservation and management plan for each city-owned burial ground taking into consideration repair of stone markers, stone walls and stone fencing related to cemeteries, repair of iron work, removal of invasive growth and on-going maintenance of plant material.
- Work with private/institutional owners of older burial grounds to inform them of preservation and management planning and to assure that basic preservation needs are met.



### *Neighborhood Character*

Nearly all preservation strategies seek to maintain neighborhood character in some manner. As described above, thorough documentation on MHC inventory forms is an important first step in the preservation planning process, followed by National Register listing where appropriate. The Historical Commission is already working to adopt a demolition delay ordinance, which is another important neighborhood preservation tool. Two additional tools that are particularly applicable to Gloucester's historic neighborhoods are local historic districts (MGL Chapter 40C) and neighborhood conservation districts. Both types of districts recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected. Each type of district is a local initiative, adopted by a 2/3 vote of the City Council, and administered by a district commission appointed by the Mayor.

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Local historic districts, as Gloucester already knows from experience, offer the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic resources, while neighborhood conservation districts are less restrictive but still embrace neighborhood character.

- Pass demolition delay ordinance that includes abutter notification of pending demolitions.
- Determine where local historic districts would be appropriate and where neighborhood conservation districts would be appropriate. Areas with a high level of historic significance and integrity should be considered as potential local historic districts, while neighborhood conservation districts would be more appropriate for residential neighborhoods that may have less integrity and where more flexibility is needed.
- Designate historically significant neighborhoods as local historic districts to preserve individual property as well as neighborhood character. In a local historic district, any proposed changes to exterior architectural features visible from a public right-of-way are reviewed by a locally appointed historic district commission. Consider some of Gloucester's neighborhoods and villages as potential local historic districts.
- Alternatively, pass a neighborhood conservation district (NCD) ordinance. Neighborhood conservation districts are special areas that are preserved by regulating scale, massing and materials of additions and new construction. Such districts may be the most appropriate way to preserve the land use pattern of an area where there have already been changes in materials but the overall size, scale and orientation of structures within the heritage landscape are retained. Consider Rocky Neck as a possible neighborhood conservation district.

### ***Scenic Roads***

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Gloucester residents and visitors alike. Yet roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel requirements as the only consideration. The Scenic Roads Act (MGL Chapter 40-15C) adopted by many communities only addresses removal of trees and stone walls that are within the right-of-way. Yet, in addition to roadway issues, much of what we value about scenic roads — the stone walls, views of the water — is not within the public right-of-way, which is owned by the city. This is an important distinction and requires more than one approach.

- Develop a list with descriptions and photo documentation of each rural road in Gloucester. Use this as the basis for designation of scenic roads, particularly those in rural areas and adjacent to the water.

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- Adopt a scenic roads ordinance consistent with MGL Chapter 40-15C and designate certain roads as scenic roads. Include design criteria to be considered when approving removal of trees and stone walls. Add other design criteria such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads. Coordinate procedures between Highway Department and Planning Board.
  - Establish an overlay to reinforce preservation of important views by establishing a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopting flexible zoning standards to protect certain views. Such ordinances could be written to apply to the numbered routes also, which are not protected under the scenic roads ordinance.
  - Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstruction, which address the scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety. This is an important public process in which the public may have to accept responsibility for some costs to implement certain standards that are not acceptable to projects funded by Mass. Highway Department. Such standards should have a section addressing the way in which the local Highway Department maintains roads, for example requiring a public hearing if any additional pavement is to be added to a town road during reconstruction or repair. Policies can be adopted by local boards having jurisdiction over roads, or can be adopted through an ordinance. In developing policies consider factors such as road width, clearing of shoulders, walking paths and posted speeds. A delicate balance is required.

### ***Funding of Preservation Projects***

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing preservation strategies. In recent years, the ENHC has maintained a small grants program for Essex County communities. In addition, both the MHC and the DCR have had funding programs to assist communities in preservation related issues including:

- Survey and Planning Grants administered by the MHC support survey, National Register and preservation planning work.
- The Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) administered by the MHC, funds restoration and rehabilitation projects.
- The Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program (HLPGP) administered by DCR funds planning, rehabilitation, education and stewardship projects focused on historic landscapes, including cemeteries.



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Funding for state programs varies from year to year. When planning Gloucester's Heritage Landscape Inventory program, contact relevant agencies to determine whether funding is available.

Cities and towns that have adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) find it to be an excellent funding source for many heritage landscape projects; however Gloucester first would have to adopt the Act. While tricky to pass in lean economic times, the number and types of projects that are benefiting across the Commonwealth are worthy of consideration. The CPA (MGL Chapter 44B) establishes a mechanism by which municipalities can develop a fund dedicated to historic preservation, open space and affordable housing. Funds are collected through a .5% to 3% surcharge on each annual real estate tax bill. The Commonwealth has established a dedicated fund which is used to match the municipality's collections under the CPA.

Adoption of the Community Preservation Act, by a majority vote on a ballot question, fosters partnerships among historic preservationists, conservationists, and affordable housing advocates. At least 10% of the funds must be used to preserve historic resources. At least 10% must be used to protect open space. And at least 10% must be used to advance affordable housing. The remaining 70% must be used for one of these three uses as well as recreational needs and can be distributed in varying proportions depending upon the projects that the town believes are appropriate and beneficial to the municipality. Information about the CPA can be found at [www.communitypreservation.org](http://www.communitypreservation.org).

Cities like Gloucester which have a local historic district ordinance, may apply for Certified Local Government (CLG) status which is granted by the National Park Service through the MHC. After the city completes an application and is accepted as a CLG, it files a report yearly on the status of applications, meetings and decisions. In return the city is eligible for federal funding that is distributed by the MHC. The matching funds are competitive; however a proportion of the federal allocation must be distributed to CLGs for Survey and Planning projects. CPA funds can be used for matching funds.

### **Specific Recommendations**

#### ***Ancient (First Parish) Burial Ground***

The goals for this site should be to preserve the historical record contained in the inscriptions and to bring the cemetery to a safe and maintainable condition.

- Eliminate obvious hazards such as open pits, dead trees or limbs; carefully re-establish level surface so the ground can be more easily mowed and maintained.
- Mow or grub out invasive vegetation before it becomes well established. Establish maintenance program to prevent further deterioration and keep site as open as possible.
- Continue documentation of inscriptions and repair of selected stones.

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- Involve community in long-range preservation and establish priorities based on available funding.

### ***Rocky Neck***

Rocky Neck is a unique but fragile enclave that epitomizes many values associated with Gloucester. It has a dramatic and powerful relationship to the sea, it reflects the long-term tradition of artists inspired by the landscape and it also contributes to the economic vitality of the community.

- Complete MHC inventory forms for the historic resources in Rocky Neck. Consider National Register nomination if determined eligible.
- Consider designation of Rocky Neck as a neighborhood conservation district (see previous general recommendations). Also consider special overlay zoning district to develop design review procedure and dimensional requirements consistent with size and scale of existing neighborhood.

### ***Second Parish Burial Ground***

The primary goals for this cemetery should be to systematically collect what documentary evidence exists before the remaining stone deteriorate further and to upgrade the ground plane of the burial ground to a point where it can be maintained.

- Organize volunteer efforts to clear away underbrush which is immediately threatening stones.
- Conduct stone-by-stone inventory of grave markers, including inscription, before they deteriorate further and the information is permanently lost.



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## CONCLUSION

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The Gloucester Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Gloucester and in beginning to think about preservation strategies. However, it is only the first step in the planning process. Landscapes identified in this report, especially the priority landscapes, will typically need further documentation on MHC inventory forms. The documentation in turn can be used to build consensus and gather public support for their preservation. Implementation of recommendations will require a concerted effort of and partnerships with municipal boards and agencies, local non-profits, and state agencies and commissions.

Distribution of this Reconnaissance Report to the municipal land use boards and commissions will assist in making this one of the planning documents that guides Gloucester in preserving important features of the community's character. The tasks that are recommended will require cooperation and coordination among boards and commissions, particularly Gloucester's Historical Commission, Historic District Commission, Community Development Department and Open Space Committee. It also is advisable to present this information to the City Council and the Mayor, applicants to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program on behalf of the city. Finally, distribution of the report to conservation organizations, neighborhood associations and other preservation minded groups will broaden the audience and assist in gathering interest and support for Gloucester's heritage landscapes.

## APPENDIX: HERITAGE LANDSCAPES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY

This list was prepared as a summary of the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting held in Gloucester on July 21 and follow-up fieldwork on October 22, 2005. This is a working list and can be updated by the community. **There may be other heritage landscapes that were not identified at the HLI meeting noted above.** The chart has two columns, the name and location of the resource are in the first, notes about the resource are in the second. Landscapes are grouped by land use category. Abbreviations used are listed below.

CR = Conservation Restriction  
LHD = Local Historic District  
NHL = National Historic Landmark  
NR = National Register

PR = Preservation Restriction  
TTOR = The Trustees of Reservations  
\* = Priority Landscape

<b>Burial Ground</b>	
<b><i>Ancient Burial Ground *</i></b> Centennial Avenue	Established 1633, also known as First Parish Burial Ground and Old Bridge Street Burial Ground. Surviving remnant of early history of community, other features associated with First Parish are now largely under Grant's Circle.
<b><i>Bay View Cemetery</i></b> Washington Street	Established 1728, also known as Third Parish Burial Ground. Adjacent to town-owned land proposed for sale, which may impact cemetery.
<b><i>Oak Grove Cemetery</i></b> Washington Street	NR. Established 1854, large 19 <sup>th</sup> century rural cemetery. Privately owned.
<b><i>Second Parish Burial Ground *</i></b> Thompson Street	In remote wooded area of West Gloucester, few monuments remaining, nearly obscured by vegetation.
<b><i>Universalist Church and Cemetery</i></b>	Small private cemetery.
<b>Industrial</b>	
<b><i>Tarr &amp; Wonson Paint Factory *</i></b> Horton Street	Paint Factory is a historic building and a scenic landmark at the mouth of the harbor. Currently unoccupied with an uncertain future.
<b>Maritime</b>	
<b><i>Back Shore</i></b> Eastern Point	Ocean side of Eastern Point. Valued for its moorlands, coastline, summer cottages and Eastern Point Lighthouse. Fitz Hugh Lane painted here.
<b><i>Brace Cove</i></b>	Ocean side of Eastern Point, seaward of Niles Pond. Cove and Brace Rock painted by Fitz Hugh Lane. Pristine pocket beach and rocky shoreline free from extensive development.

<b><i>Gloucester Harbor</i></b>	Especially Harbor Cove, Inner Harbor and Paint Factory. Heart of working harbor, great views. Goals clearly outlined in harbor plan.
<b><i>Lanes Cove</i></b> Lanesville	Village associated with quarry industry, public landing.
<b><i>Long Wharf</i></b> Atlantic Street	Public access/boat landing to Jones River/Annisquam River estuary and Boynton's Island. Superb views of extensive salt marsh/estuary, including clam flats.
<b><i>Public Landings</i></b>	There are approximately 57, most of which have been documented. Several mentioned were Annisquam, Concord Street, Cripple Cove, Dunfudgin, Kent's, Lane's, Rocky Neck and West Gloucester. Neighborhood ones and those in West Gloucester were considered most threatened. Landings are under the jurisdiction of the Harbormaster.
<b><i>Right-of-ways to the Water *</i></b>	These are less well documented than public landings and many are being encroached upon. Some have railings to define the edges. Pathway to Collins School off Columbia Street mentioned as a priority.
<b>Natural Features</b>	
<b><i>Good Harbor Creek Area *</i></b> Thatcher Road	Includes Good Harbor Creek, as well as adjacent beach and the marshland behind it. Briers Neck neighborhood lies to the east of the beach.
<b><i>Little River Area *</i></b> West Gloucester	Little River and associated open space along Essex Avenue (also known as Daylor Study Area). Includes entire watershed, Lily Pond, public landing at head of river, and important fish run.
<b><i>Mill River Area</i></b> Riverdale	Area is site of original mills, includes river, beach, mill pond, lupine field, 35 bird species, also Babson Farm, Babson Field and public landing. Babson Field is Fitz Hugh Lane painting site. Open space is vulnerable to development; 12 houses proposed for lupine field.
<b><i>Niles Pond *</i></b>	Seawall threatened, does have public access. Designated a Great Pond.
<b><i>Poles Hill</i></b>	Protected, under Conservation Commission jurisdiction.
<b><i>Red Rocks Area</i></b>	Includes land northeast of Lawrence Road.
<b>Open Space / Recreation</b>	
<b><i>Dogtown Common *</i></b>	Approximately 3,000 acres in northeastern part of town, with unprotected inholdings. Areas of concern include edges of Dogtown, public landings and Emerald Forest (underground stream and wetland from Babson Reservoir to the harbor).
<b><i>Rafe's Chasm &amp; Magnolia Woods</i></b> Magnolia	Town-owned natural area extends almost 200 acres; it is separated from Ravenswood Park by Route 127, making this the area the largest tract of open woodland leading to the ocean in Gloucester. The coastline of red rocks has been extensively documented since 1623. Rafe's Chasm itself is now within private hands and is inaccessible to the public. Extensive recreational and fishing use of rocky area for half mile SW to Magnolia.

<b><i>Ravenswood Park</i></b> West Gloucester	Large natural area owned by TTOR.
<b><i>Riggs Corridor *</i></b> Goose Cove	Named for early town clerk. 3/4 of area is Goose Cove Reservation owned by Essex County Greenbelt, rest threatened by development. Includes public way across mudflats and two endangered species. Two historic houses associated with the Riggs family remain.
<b><i>Stage Fort Park</i></b> Western Avenue	Large waterfront park on area associated with early settlement and military history of Gloucester (ramparts, cannons). Includes Half Moon and Cressy Beaches.
<b>Residential / Neighborhood</b>	
<b><i>Annisquam</i></b> Leonard Street	Village retains its historic character. Annisquam River is important natural and recreational resource. Concerns include the demolition or alteration of existing structures and addition of larger homes.
<b><i>Downtown</i></b> Main Street	Portion of downtown is NR District and LHD. Downtown area is mixed use, some conflicts in compact area. Parking lot detracts from Fitz Hugh Lane house.
<b><i>East Gloucester</i></b> Atlantic Road	Moorlands, rocky coast, Bass Rocks Golf Club and Brace Cove mentioned as areas of concern in East Gloucester. Older summer cottages being taken down to build much larger houses.
<b><i>Lanesville</i></b>	Early settlement by Lane family at Flatstone Cove, early (late 1600s) land distribution from Cove to Pigeon Cove; well preserved village character with still undeveloped and original character. Includes quarrying; Finnish neighborhood; home to many important artistic residents (Grafly, Walter Hancock, George Demetrios, Leon Kroll, Ellen Day Hale, Paul Manship) and writers (including Nancy Hale, Virginia Lee Burton). Concerns include over development of existing structures and traffic problems on the small roads.
<b><i>Magnolia</i></b> Norman Avenue	Village settled by summer visitors in 19 <sup>th</sup> century, now mostly residential.
<b><i>Portuguese Hill</i></b> Downtown area	Including "Our Lady of Good Voyage" and Fishermen's Park, with dramatic views of the harbor; both are anchors of the neighborhood. Neighborhood was associated with Portuguese in 19 <sup>th</sup> century, is now losing its ethnic character. Large development proposed on the edge.
<b><i>Riverdale</i></b>	Neighborhood near Goose Creek, developed in 1950s.
<b><i>Rocky Neck</i></b> Wonson Avenue	One of the earliest art colonies in the country, mix of residential, studios and galleries. Compact area with limited parking makes access difficult.
<b>Transportation</b>	
<b><i>Blynman Canal</i></b> Annisquam River	Also described as the Cut, was built in 1643. Includes Blynman Bridge, a gateway to Gloucester.
<b><i>Route 127</i></b>	Lanesville through Folly Cove. Reflects the visual diversity of Gloucester including industrial areas, rural and coastal landscapes, and villages.

<b><i>Route 128 Corridor *</i></b>	Rural character along road corridor is regionally important. Includes A.Piatt Andrew Bridge with new fence that blocks view as road passes over Annisquam River. Also "Candy House," Mount Ann Park and state-owned land between Route 133 and Concord Street. This corridor was also identified by Beverly.
<b><i>Street Patterns and Rotaries</i></b>	Irregular street pattern with rotaries is idiosyncratic and uniquely characteristic of Gloucester.
<b><i>Thompson Trail</i></b> Off Concord Street	Also known as Old Thompson cart track, near Second Parish Church site and burial ground, also Mount Ann/Red Rocks. Used by four-wheel drive vehicles.

## APPENDIX: SPECIAL PLACES IN GLOUCESTER

*Note: This list was compiled in 2000 as part of Gloucester's 2001 Community Development Plan. It contains many of the same landscapes that were identified in the heritage landscape meeting.*

Annisquam Lighthouse	E. Gloucester Square and Highland Street historic area
Annisquam River	Eastern Avenue intersection
Annisquam River riverbank	Eastern Point
Antonio Gentile Bandstand	Eastern Point breakwater
Approach to A. Platt Andrew Bridge	Eastern Point Lighthouse
Babson Farm	Elizabeth Gordon Smith Park
Babson Reservoir	Ellery House
Back Shore	Emerald Forest
Back Shore pedestrian access to water	Fernwood Lake
Bass Avenue	Fishermen's Park
Bass Rock's Golf Club	Fitz Hugh Lane House
Bass Rocks	Flat Cove Landing #4 Wonson Cove, Eastern Point Rd.
Bay View Cemetery	Flat Rocks, Seaside Cemetery
Bay View Resource Center	Folly Cove
Beechbrook Cemetery	Folly Cove Designers
Benjamin Smith Playground	Football field, edge by canal
Bickford Marine	Fort
Blueberry Hill	Fort Point
Blueberry Lane	Fort Square Park
Bond Hill	Freshwater Cove
Boulevard	Friend Street Park
Brace Cove	Fuller School area wetlands
Breakwater	Gloucester Harbor
Bronze plaque to James Babson at Witham Street and Eastern Ave	Gloucester Marine Railways
Burnham's Field	Gonzaga Retreat House
Buswell Estate	Good Harbor Beach
Buswell's Pond	Good Harbor Beach bridge and creek
Cambridge Beach	Goose Cove
Camp Annisquam	Goose Cove area
Century Elm (Washington Street)	Goose Cove Reservoir
City Hall	Gordon Thomas Park
Coles Island	Governor's Park
Corliss Field	Gray Beach, Magnolia
Corliss Landing	Green Street Park
Cressy's Beach	Gus Foote Path
Cripple Cove	Half Moon Beach
Day's Pond	Hammond Castle
Dennison Street	Area from Harbor Loop to Cape Ann Historical
Doc Viera's drugstore	Haskell's Pond
Dog Hill	Haven Terrace
Dogtown Common	Hill in back of Dornell Road
Dogtown watershed	Holy Cow
Don Howie's quarry	I4C2
Downtown Gloucester	Jones Creek
Downtown Lanesville	Land around Vine Street
Drive in lot	Lane's Cove
Dunfudgin	



Lane's Cove Cemetery  
 Lanesville Community Ctr.  
 Lanesville village area  
 Ledgesmont Park  
 Legion Hill  
 Lexington village area  
 Lighthouse beach, Annisquam  
 Lily Pond  
 Little Good Harbor  
 Little River  
 Lobster Cove Bridge  
 Long Beach  
 Long Wharf  
 Lookout Park  
 Lucy Davis Walkway  
 Magnolia  
 Magnolia Cemetery  
 Magnolia Center  
 Magnolia Pier  
 Main Street  
 Marshes off Wingaersheek Beach  
 Mill Field (Lupine Field)  
 Mill Pond  
 Mill River  
 Mill River beach  
 Mt. Ann  
 Niles Beach  
 Niles Pond  
 North Gloucester  
 North Shore Arts Association  
 Oak Grove Cemetery  
 Old cemeteries  
 Old Rockport Road  
 Old Salem Road  
 Olde Thompson Road  
 Open space by riverfront walk, Boulevard to  
     Pole's Hill  
 Paint Factory  
 Pavilion Beach  
 Playground at the Fort  
 Plum Cove  
 Plum Cove beach – no pier  
 Point Hill  
 Pole's Hill  
 Public landing at head of Little River  
 Public Landings  
 Quarry behind Plum Cove  
 Rafe's Chasm  
 Ravenswood Park  
 Red Rocks  
 Riggs Pasture  
 Riverdale-Beeman Hillside and Old Back Road  
 Robinson's Landing

Rocky Neck  
 Rocky Neck Art Colony  
 Salt Island  
 Seaside Cemetery (back)  
 Shore Road  
 Short Pier, across from Cape Ann Campground  
 Sign at corner of Rocky Neck and East Main  
 Small downtown wooded lots  
 Smith Cove  
 St. Peter's Park and landing  
 Stage Fort Park  
 Staircase at Terrace Lane to  
     Rocky Neck Avenue  
 Stairway at Herrick Court  
     & Winchester Court  
 State Fish Pier edge  
 Steven's Lane right-of-way on Rocky Neck to  
     Oak's Cove  
 Stone Pier  
 Stoney Brook  
 Stoney Cove  
 Swinson's Field  
 Ten Pound Island  
 Ten Pound Island and Lighthouse  
 The Pines  
 The Quarries  
 Tiderock  
 Tip of Dog Bar Breakwater  
 Traffic Island near Beechbrook Cem.  
 Virgilios  
 Walker Creek  
 Wallace's Pond  
 West Pond  
 Wetlands on corner of Ledge Rd. and Marble Rd.  
 Wingaersheek Beach  
 Winneahdin  
 Woodbury Street area

# GLOUCESTER OPENSOURCE & HISTORIC RESOURCES

