

LITTLETON RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

FREEDOM'S WAY LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM



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Freedom's Way Heritage Association

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Cover Photographs: Yapp Farm, Newtown Road;
39 Foster Street; Planter in front of Historical Society

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INTRODUCTION

The Freedom's Way Heritage Association includes 37 Massachusetts communities that are linked by historic events that helped to shape America's democratic form of governance and the intellectual traditions that underpin American freedom, democracy, conservation and social justice. Freedom's Way communities extend from Arlington on the east to Winchendon on the west. They represent a wide range of cities and towns, each shaped by the relationship between nature and culture.

Heritage landscapes are special places created by human interaction with the natural environment that help define the character of a community and reflect its past. They are dynamic and evolving; they reflect the history of a community and provide a sense of place; they show the natural ecology that influenced land use patterns; and they often have scenic qualities. The 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 or an important river corridor. To this end, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Freedom's Way Heritage Association (FWHA) have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program (HLI) to communities in the Freedom's Way area. 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 and refined in Essex County. It is outlined in the DCR publication *Reading the Land* which has provided guidance for the program since its inception. In summary, each participating community appoints a Local Project Coordinator (LPC) to assist the DCR-FWHA consulting team. The LPC organizes a heritage landscape identification meeting at which interested residents and town officials offer community input by identifying heritage landscapes. This meeting is followed by a fieldwork session including the consulting team and the LPC, often 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 this Reconnaissance Report, prepared for each participating community. It outlines the history of the community; describes the priority heritage landscapes; discusses planning issues identified by the town; identifies planning tools available in the community; and concludes with preservation recommendations. A list of all of the heritage landscapes identified by the community is included in the Appendix.

LITTLETON HISTORY

The Native American history of Littleton dates to the Late Archaic Period (6,000-3,000 B.P.) with confirmed sites from this period and the Contact Period (1500-1620). The Nipmuc tribe was most likely active in the Littleton area before European settlement. The concentration of ponds with access to seasonal fish runs indicates a high likelihood of Nipmuc related sites around the ponds. The Native American praying village of Nashoba was established near Nagog Pond in 1654. The eastern part of Littleton was part of the Concord “New Grant” of 1655. Disruption caused by King Philip’s War delayed European settlement of the area until the early 1700s.

The town of Littleton was established in 1714, extinguishing native claims. The eastern section was added from Chelmsford in 1725 with additional boundary adjustments between neighboring towns through the 18th century. The town center was formed along the main post road west of the Littleton common. Orchards and cattle raising were the primary agricultural activities during the 1700s. There were also several small saw and grist mills. The hilly topography, with areas of exposed bedrock and rocky glacial outwash, made farming challenging. The 1776 census listed 918 residents.

By the early 1800s the village center extended along King Street from Littleton Center to Littleton Common. The railroad arrived around 1845, creating more commercial activity at Littleton Depot. This was the time that Littleton received its first foreign born residents, mostly Irish, who probably participated in the railroad construction. Around this time there was also limited small-scale manufacturing; however Littleton’s apple orchards flourished and Littleton’s farmers shifted their production to raising vegetables for market gardening. Forge and Spectacle Ponds were used for ice cutting in the 19th century.

By 1900 the town was still small and relatively rural. A Village Improvement Society was established in 1904, possibly influenced in part by summer residents. Despite the gravelly soil, Littleton remained primarily a farming community. Apple-related industries continued, including New England Apple Products Inc., which later became Veryfine. In the early 20th century agriculture became more specialized and included dairying, poultry raising, orchards and market gardens. A 20th century brick making establishment expanded into a sand and gravel operation that is now a crushed stone operation. Elastic web making at Conant-Houghton, established in the 19th century, expanded in the 20th century and lasted until 1970.

Around 1950 Route 2 was upgraded, making Littleton more desirable as a residential community. In the 1960s construction of Route 495 made Littleton even more accessible. Today it is mostly a bedroom community with many residents traveling to the high technology businesses along Route 495. The commercial center of the town is at Littleton Common. Littleton Center and Littleton Depot are secondary centers. The current population is about 8,500.

PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Littleton's Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by approximately 23 residents, some representing town boards and local non-profit organizations was held on May 31, 2006. 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 the issues relating to its preservation. Based on the information gathered, community members identified a group of priority 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.

These landscapes, which are listed alphabetically, represent a range of scales and types of resources from individual properties to entire neighborhoods. Several of the priority landscapes describe areas that have multiple layers. For example a neighborhood that is considered a heritage landscape may also include specific features within it that are also individually recognized as heritage landscapes. Such layering shows the complexity and interdependence that are characteristic of most heritage landscapes. The descriptions and recommendations included here are an initial step in identifying resources valued by the community and suggesting action strategies.



Beaver Brook and Marsh

Beaver Brook is a small stream that begins near the Boxborough/Littleton border. It meanders north through the western part of Littleton emptying into Mill Pond and ultimately into Forge Pond on the Littleton/Westford line. For much of its length, there are extensive wetlands associated with Beaver Brook. There is also an old stone bridge and causeway across the brook on the Hartwell Family Memorial Preserve and another old stone bridge at Porter Road.

Beaver Brook is typical of many heritage landscapes in that it has both natural and cultural values. It is primarily valued as a water aquifer that supplies 90% of the town's water and as a scenic feature of the town. It was most likely used by Native Americans and later was dammed to create Mill Pond and to provide a source of power for a grist mill and later a saw mill. The Parlee Mill, another priority landscape, still operates on the site along Beaver Brook where a mill was established in 1750. Issues associated with Beaver Brook are typical of those that many similar streams in the Freedom's Way area face: water quality, impacts of development, invasive vegetation and public access. Solutions must also be multi-faceted.

Recommendations

Acquisition of land along the brook for conservation purposes is obviously an important, although expensive, strategy that must be used in combination with regulatory tools such as enforcement of wetlands and zoning regulations, and careful land stewardship. Also key to the future of the brook is cooperation among the many stakeholders: various town departments, non-profit organizations such as the Conservation Trust, abutters of the brook and others who use it.

- Information about historic resources (parts of the heritage landscape) is an important part of river stewardship. The Historical Commission should survey historic resources along the banks of the river.
- Continue working actively with all concerned parties on water quality and other issues of mutual concern.

Farms on Great Road (Route 2A/119)

Loss of active farming and development of agricultural property was the single most important landscape issue in the minds of Littleton residents. Many farms that were active until a few years ago are no longer farmed and there are *For Sale* signs and surveyors marks on many agricultural properties. The greatest concentration of active farms is along Great Road (Route 2A/119). Farms west of Route 495 include: Proctor Hill Horse Farm, Springdell Farm (since 1931, owned by Theodoros family, with market gardening of strawberries and vegetables and a farmstand where they sell only their own products); Spring Brook Farm (established 1713, owned by Matheson family, has greenhouses); Gary Wilkins Farm (flowers and vegetables); and Dell Dale Farm (former dairy farm now a horse farm and building development). Farms east of Route 495 include: Nashobaside Farm (no longer active); Dan Pickard Farm (stone walls, wood products, hay); Jim Pickard Farm (dairy) and Powers Horse Farm.



Recommendations

As preservation of agricultural land is such a major concern in Littleton, it is important for the town to address the issue comprehensively and to establish priorities. These will depend on the physical attributes of each farm; its economic viability; the wishes of the owner; and the importance of the farm to the community. For specific recommendations regarding **agricultural landscapes** see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report. Some recommendations lead to the preservation of farming; others focus on ways in which to reduce the impact of development if there is no alternative to abandoning farming activities and selling the land.

Kaleva Camp

The Kaleva Camp is a Finnish cottage community on Fort Pond. The land is owned by the Knights and Ladies of Kaleva, a Finnish civic organization from Maynard that was founded in 1915 and is part of a larger national network of Finnish groups. The camp consists of a long entry drive through the woods to a cluster of cottages and a community building on the shore of Fort Pond. The cottages, most of which are tiny one-story cabins, are individually owned. Some have been modified over the years while others retain their simple rectangular form. The camp landscape is rustic and informal with a few small decorative plantings. Kaleva Camp holds periodic Sunday morning pancake breakfasts that are open to the general public.

Recommendations

Kaleva Camp is typical of many small cottage communities and appears to be stable and well run. Potential concerns are that residents may wish to expand their cottages, which would change the distinctive character of the area and would likely raise issues regarding septic systems, as the cottages are right on the water. The Historical Commission may wish to contact the Kaleva organization to learn more about the history of the camp.

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- If the property owners are willing, document Kaleva Camp on an MHC area form. Consider sponsoring a joint program with the Historical Society to highlight the unique aspects of this neighborhood.
 - The Conservation Commission should work with owners on broader issues such as water quality and wastewater disposal.



Littleton Center Area

Littleton Center, also referred to as the Foster Street area, was the western end of Littleton's early settlement. The historic village area extends along Foster Street from King Street to Tahattawan Road. It is primarily residential today but also has some civic and institutional buildings. Fay Park, established in 1917, a common-like space with rolling lawn, gazebo and wooded backdrop, is a focal point of the area. Also prominent is the Houghton Building (former library, now historical society) at 4 Rogers Street, one of three properties in Littleton that is individually listed in the National Register. The Unitarian Church at 19 Foster Street is an imposing Greek Revival building that dates to 1841. There is also a former town hall that is now a fire station at 20 Foster Street that dates to 1949. (The original Town Hall burnt down in 1943.) Many handsome, well-preserved houses, some with barns, can be found along Foster Street. Most date from the 19th and early 20th century.

Recommendations

The Littleton Center area has been well documented on an MHC area form, as well as individual building forms for significant properties. Much of the area is eligible for listing in the National Register. This area would also be appropriate as a local historic district or neighborhood architectural conservation district, which is less restrictive than a local historic district. For additional information about **strategies for preserving villages and rural neighborhoods** see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

Littleton Common Area

The Littleton Common area is roughly centered on the intersection of King Street and Great Road and also extends west along King Street. The triangular common, which is bisected by Great Road, is the focal point of this village center, which is Littleton's primary downtown commercial area. Important structures in the immediate vicinity of the common include the Conant Houghton mill complex and the Reed-Wood house (which is listed in the National Register). Extending west along King Street there are many well-preserved 19th century houses, including some with attached barns, as well as the Old Burying Ground (NR). Interspersed with the historic buildings are late 20th century commercial buildings. Heavy traffic, widened roads, loss of some historic homes and late 20th century commercial infill has impacted the character of this area.

Recommendations

There are several issues associated with this commercial area. One is preserving the historic fabric of the area – the houses, outbuildings, mill, older commercial buildings, common and burying ground. Another concern is the impact of heavy traffic through the area. The third concern is ensuring the economic vitality of the downtown area.

- Request NR determination of eligibility of Littleton Common area as a district; or for key properties such as the Conant Houghton mill complex.
- Consider establishing a neighborhood architectural conservation district, which is less restrictive than a local historic district. For additional information about **neighborhood architectural conservation districts** and other strategies for preserving historic neighborhoods see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.
- Develop design review criteria recommendations (if not regulatory) to help guide development in the area.

Littleton Depot Area

The depot area, a small commercial center, is located at the intersection of King Street, Harwood Road and Taylor Road. This area emerged as a new center of activity after 1845 when the Fitchburg Railroad established a stop here and flourished in the late 19th and early 20th century. The current depot at 2 Taylor Street (1879) is privately owned and is used as a stove store. It has recently been restored by its owner. There is a post office and several small commercial buildings in the vicinity as well as older residential buildings and Veryfine/Kraft, a large late 20th century manufacturing complex that processes apple products. Also noteworthy in this area is the Sanderson Farm on Oak Hill Road, with 18th century farmhouse, numerous outbuildings and well preserved landscape consisting of stone walls, hay fields and forest. It is considered one of the best preserved agrarian landscapes in Littleton. Part of Sanderson Farm is now the Oak Hill Conservation Area, a 220-acre area owned by the town of Littleton that includes Oak Hill, the highest point in Littleton, as well as Tophet Chasm.



Recommendations

The mix of residential, small-scale commercial and large-scale industrial make this an unusual neighborhood. The buildings around the depot have been documented on MHC inventory forms, as has the Sanderson farm. Goals appropriate for this area include preserving the historic buildings as well as the compact scale and village-like density of the area. For additional information about strategies for preserving **village and rural neighborhood character** see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

Long Store

The Long Store at 499 Great Road is reportedly the oldest commercial building in Littleton, dating to the late 18th century. A sign erected by the Littleton Historical Commission reads:

THE LONG STORE

THIS BUILDING DEEDED TO 6 MEN IN 1700
HOUSED THE FIRST STORE IN LITTLETON.
IT SERVED AS A COOPERAGE, A GROCERY
AND A DRY GOODS STORE AND A TAVERN.
AT ONE END AN OPEN SHED SHELTERED
THE OX TEAMS WHILE THEIR OWNERS MADE
THEIR PURCHASES.

The building has been modified many times during its history. Today it is a long narrow one-story gable end building that has been adapted for residential use. The building appears to be unused and in poor condition. There is also a barn located on the property. The Long Store is located on an 18-acre parcel that in the recent past has been known as the Chase Farm. The property is currently for sale.

Recommendations

Residents value this property as a remnant of Littleton's agricultural past and an important anchor to the rural/agricultural district along Great Road west of 495. The building has been documented on an MHC inventory form. While Littleton does have a demolition delay bylaw, it might be difficult to make a case for preservation of this building. If preservation is not possible, Planning Board might be able to work creatively with a new owner to establish a green buffer between the road and any future development to preserve the rural agricultural character of the area.

Parlee Sawmill

The present Parlee Sawmill is located on Mill Road adjacent to the Mill Pond. It is on the site of the former Warren's Mill, which is marked by a Historical Commission marker that reads:

WARREN'S MILL

SITE OF A GRIST MILL BUILT BY THE WARREN
FAMILY CIRCA 1750. PART OF THE MILL WAS
CONVERTED TO A SAW MILL IN 1815,
THE YEAR OF THE "GREAT BLOW"
AND HAS OPERATED AS SUCH EVER SINCE.

The current sawmill buildings appear to be entirely mid- to late-20th century structures and remain in active use as a sawmill. The Mill Hill Conservation Land is adjacent to the sawmill. The Historical Commission marker, one of several found while visiting priority landscapes, is an important reminder of the past history of this site that would otherwise go unnoticed. The plaque is partially obscured by vegetation and is difficult to find and read from the road.

Recommendations

The Historical Commission should:

- Replace current low contrast plaque with text that is easier to read, such as the one at the Long Store. Periodically prune vegetation away from the sign.

Yapp Farm

The Yapp Farm at 455 Newtown Road includes a handsome well-sited Federal period house on the north side of the road. There is an adjacent barn and several smaller sheds. Stone walls line both sides of the road. The farm is no longer intensively farmed but the rolling topography and expansive hay fields contribute to the overall character of this scenic rural area. A tall AT&T communications tower is situated on the hill behind the house and barn on a parcel sold by the Kimball family to a telecommunications company. This farm has already been documented on an MHC inventory form.

Recommendations

As preservation of agricultural land is such a major concern in Littleton, it is important for the town to address the issue comprehensively and to establish priorities. These will depend on the physical attributes of each farm, its economic viability, the wishes of the owner and the importance of the farm to the community. For additional information about **agricultural landscapes** see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

CRITICAL CONCERNS

In addition to the priority landscapes listed in the previous section, residents also identified critical concerns related to heritage landscapes and community character. Critical concerns are townwide issues that are linked to a range or category of heritage landscapes, not to a particular place. 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.



Scenic Roads and Stone Walls

One of the many ways that Littleton residents perceive their town is via the public roads, many of which retain their historic alignment, narrow road width and scenic views over open fields. Stone walls line many of Littleton's more rural roads and delineate the boundaries of former farm fields. Some residents value the informal natural hedgerows (scruffy edges along the roadway, such as 2A) that reflect the rural character of the town. Littleton has a scenic road bylaw but may wish to consider designating additional roads. For additional information about **scenic roads** see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

EXISTING RESOURCE DOCUMENTATION AND PLANNING TOOLS

Littleton already has important planning tools in place to document current conditions within the town; identify issues of concern to town residents; and develop strategies for action. This section of the Reconnaissance Report identifies some of the existing planning documents and tools that provide information relevant to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program.

Inventory of Historic and Archaeological 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>.

According to the MHC, Littleton's inventory documents over 200 historic resources ranging from 1673 to 1992. These include primarily individual building and structure forms but there are also seven area forms: Whitcomb Farm, Pingrey/Sanderson Farm, Littleton Center, Littleton Common, Conant-Houghton and Company Worker Housing, and the Old Burying Ground.

Littleton has six documented ancient Native American sites dating back to the Late Archaic Period (6,000-3,000 B.P.) and three documented historic archaeological sites. Based on documentation in the region it is clear that Littleton's Native American activity is under-reported and it is likely that there is significantly more archaeology potential in the town.

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. Littleton has three properties that are listed in the National Register: Houghton Memorial Building at 4 Rogers Street; Old Burying Ground on King Street; and the Reed-Wood Place at 20 Meetinghouse Road. All National Register listings are automatically listed in the State Register.

Planning Documents and Tools

In 2002 Littleton completed its Master Plan which addresses a range of planning issues including: land use, open space and resource protection, housing, economic development, transportation and community facilities. Littleton's latest Open Space and Recreation Plan was completed in 2003. The plan addresses many of the landscapes identified in the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting.

Littleton's zoning bylaw includes site plan review, cluster zoning and overlay districts. The town has adopted a six-month demolition delay bylaw that pertains to National Register buildings, those within 200 feet of a district and those included in the inventory or determined by the Historical Commission to be part of the inventory of historic assets. The town also has a scenic roads bylaw.

GENERAL PRESERVATION PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations pertaining to priority heritage landscapes can be found beginning on page 3. This section of the Reconnaissance Report offers more general recommendations relevant to preserving the character of the community that would be applicable to a wide range of community resources.

Littleton's residents place high value on the community's strong sense of place, which is created by its varied natural features and land use patterns that made use of the fertile land. The town has already taken measures to document and evaluate its most significant buildings and natural areas. It is now looking beyond the traditional resources to the landscapes, streetscapes, rural roads, neighborhoods and other natural and cultural assets that define the overall fabric of the community. Like most municipalities, Littleton is facing multiple pressures for change that threaten land-based uses and natural resources, especially its remaining farming areas. Special places within the community that were once taken for granted are now more vulnerable than ever to change.

Preservation planning is a three-step process: **identification, evaluation and protection**. Four useful documents to consult before beginning to implement preservation strategies are:

- Department of Conservation and Recreation, *Reading the Land*
- Freedom's Way Heritage Association, *Feasibility Study*
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Survey Manual*
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances*

Recommendations that apply to a broad range of resources are discussed below. These 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, (3) protect.

Inventory of Heritage Landscapes

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 the historical development. The resources discussed in this Reconnaissance Report that have not been documented should be included in the

next inventory project. Thus, using the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology:

- Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not sufficiently documented, beginning with heritage landscapes.
- Document unprotected resources first, beginning with the most threatened resources.
- Make sure to document secondary features on rural and residential properties, such as outbuildings, stone walls and landscape elements.
- Record a wide range of historic resources including landscape features and industrial resources.
- Conduct a community-wide archaeological reconnaissance survey to identify patterns of ancient Native American and historic occupation and to identify known and probable locations of archaeological resources associated with these patterns. Known and potential ancient Native American and historic archaeological sites should be documented in the field for evidence of their cultural association and/or integrity. All survey work should be completed by a professional archaeologist who meets the professional qualifications (950 CMR 70.01) outlined in the State Archaeologist Permit Regulations (950 CMR 70.00). The Inventory of Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth contains sensitive information about archaeological sites. The inventory is confidential; it is not a public record (G.L. c. 9, ss. 26A (1)). Care should be taken to keep archaeological site information in a secure location with restricted access. Refer to the MHC article "Community-Wide Archaeological Surveys" which appeared in the Preservation Advocate, Fall 2005 which can be found at the following MHC link:<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/pafall05.pdf>.

National Register Program

Survey work will require an evaluation as to whether resources meet the qualifications for National Register listing. Using the information generated in the survey work and the accompanying National Register evaluations, Littleton should expand its National Register program to augment the three single property nominations that already exist.

- Develop a National Register listing plan, taking into consideration a property's integrity and vulnerability. Properties that are in need of recognition in order to advance preservation strategies should be given priority.
- Consider potential National Register district nominations for the Littleton Center/Foster Street area and for other areas determined eligible in the town survey of historic resources.



Village and Rural Neighborhood Character

Nearly all preservation strategies address village and 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. There are three traditional preservation strategies that have been effective in communities similar to Littleton: a demolition delay bylaw; a local historic district bylaw (in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C) and designation; and a neighborhood architectural conservation district bylaw and designation.

- **Demolition delay bylaws** provides a time period in which towns can explore alternatives to demolition. Littleton has already enacted a six-month demolition delay bylaw. However many communities are finding that a one-year delay is more effective.
- **Local historic districts**, adopted through a local initiative, recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected by the designation. These districts are the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic resources. They are adopted by a 2/3 vote of Town Meeting and are administered by a district commission appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Littleton Common/Foster Street area might benefit from a local historic district.
- **Neighborhood architectural conservation districts** also are local initiatives that recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected. They are less restrictive than local historic districts but still embrace neighborhood character. Neighborhood architectural conservation district designation is appropriate for residential neighborhoods that may have less integrity and where more flexibility is needed. The Littleton Historical Commission

should work with MHC staff to determine how a neighborhood conservation district could help to preserve Littleton Center and residential neighborhoods.

Agricultural Landscapes

Preservation of agricultural landscapes means preservation of the farming activities, particularly in Littleton where there are working farms but some are declining and their character is integral to the community's past. It is important to know what the features of these agricultural landscapes are and which features the community treasures in order to make a case for preservation of these farms. Some recommendations lead to the preservation of farming; others focus on ways in which to reduce the impact of development if there is no alternative to abandoning farming activities and selling the land.

- Document additional farms that may not presently be included in Littleton's inventory of historic resource, using MHC survey forms.
- Establish an agricultural commission to advocate for farming.
- Adopt a right-to-farm bylaw which allows farmers to carry on farming activities that may be considered a nuisance to neighbors.
- Develop partnerships to raise funds to purchase development rights on farms or to assist a farmer in the restoration of historic farm buildings for which the owner would be required to donate a preservation restriction (PR).
- Pass a bylaw to require a buffer between development and farmland.

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Littleton residents and visitors alike. Roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel requirements as the only consideration. Littleton already has a Scenic Roads Bylaw (MGL Chapter 40-15C). For roads designated under this bylaw, there is review and approval for the 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 across open fields – is not within the public right-of-way. The preservation and protection of scenic roads therefore requires more than one approach.

- Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the roads in Littleton including the character defining features that should be retained.
- Adopt design criteria to be considered when approving removal of trees and stone walls, such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads. Once adopted coordinate procedures between Highway Department and Planning Board.

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- Consider a scenic overlay district which may provide a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopt flexible zoning standards to protect certain views. Such bylaws also could be written to apply to the numbered routes, which are not protected under a scenic roads bylaw.
 - Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstructions, which address the scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety. This is an important public process in which the community may have to accept responsibility for certain costs to implement standards that are not acceptable to projects funded by the Massachusetts 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 at Town Meeting through a bylaw. In developing policies consider factors such as road width, clearing of shoulders, walking paths, posted speeds. A delicate balance is required.

Funding of Preservation Projects

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing preservation strategies. Both the MHC and 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.

Funding for state programs varies from year to year. When planning Littleton'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 Littleton first would have to adopt the Act. While it is tricky to pass in lean economic times, the number and types of projects that are currently benefiting across the Commonwealth make the CPA worthy of consideration. Littleton projects that would be eligible for CPA funding would include MHC inventory, National Register nominations, cemetery preservation, open space acquisition and preservation and restoration of public buildings. The CPA (M.G.L. Chapter 44B) establishes a mechanism by which cities and towns can develop a fund dedicated to historic preservation, open space and affordable housing. Local funds are collected through a .5% to 3% surcharge on each

annual real estate tax bill. At the state level, the Commonwealth has established a dedicated fund which is used to match the municipality's collections under the CPA. The amount of the surcharge is determined as a ballot question proposed at a city election.

Adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA), 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 city believes are appropriate and beneficial to the municipality. Additional information about the CPA can be found at www.communitypreservation.org.

CONCLUSION

The Littleton Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Littleton and in beginning to think about preservation strategies. Littleton will have to determine the best way to implement the recommendations discussed above. One approach that might help Littleton begin the process is to form a Heritage Landscape Committee, as described in *Reading the Land*.

Landscapes identified in this report, especially the priority landscapes, will typically need further documentation on MHC inventory forms. That documentation in turn can be used in publicity efforts to build consensus and gather public support for their preservation. Implementation of recommendations will require a concerted effort of and partnerships among municipal boards and agencies, local non-profit organizations, 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 Littleton in preserving important features of the community's character. The recommended tasks will require cooperation and coordination among boards and commissions, particularly Littleton's Historical Commission, Planning Board, Conservation Commission and the Littleton Conservation Trust. It also is advisable to present this information to the Board of Selectmen, who are the applicants to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program on behalf of the town. Finally distribution of the report to neighborhood associations and any other preservation minded organizations will broaden the audience and assist in gathering interest and support for Littleton's heritage landscapes.

APPENDIX: HERITAGE LANDSCAPES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY

This list was generated by local participants at the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting held in Littleton on April 20, 2006 and the follow-up fieldwork on May 31, 2006. **There are undoubtedly other heritage landscapes that were not identified at the HLI meeting noted above.** The chart has two columns, the names and locations of resources are in the first; notes about resources are in the second. Landscapes are grouped by land use category. Abbreviations used are listed below.

APR = Agricultural Preservation Restriction PR = Preservation Restriction
 CR = Conservation Restriction * = Priority Landscape
 LHD = Local Historic District + = Part of a Priority Landscape
 NR = National Register

Agriculture	
<i>Cobb Chicks</i> Great Road	Inactive farm on Route 119. Subdivided by Conservation Trust. House lots, easements, trails, pond. Conservation dept. now owns 30 acres and has easement on 60 acres.
<i>Flagg Farm</i> Great Road	Route 119 east of Common. Formerly very active, now less so.
<i>Farms on Great Road</i> *	Loss of agricultural property was the single most important landscape issue in the minds of Littleton residents. Many farms that were active until a few years ago are no longer farmed and there are <i>For Sale</i> signs and surveyors marks on many agricultural properties. The greatest concentration of active farms is along Great Road (2A/119).
<i>Idylvale Farm</i> 91 Bruce Street	Dairy farm in western part of town near Pingryville, still has some cows.
<i>Morrison Orchard</i> Nagog Hill Road	Nagog Hill Road and Nashoba Road. Large town-owned orchard near Nagog Pond. Leased to farmer who maintains it and continues active orchard use including farmstand and pick your own apples.
<i>Proctor Hill Horse Farm</i> Great Road	Horse farm on south side of road west of 495.
<i>Sanderson Farm</i> Sanderson Road	Scenic gentleman's farm in Oak Hill area near depot, in Sanderson family for 300 years, still largely intact. Sanderson family already donated extensive acreage for conservation including parts of Oak Hill and Tophet Chasm. Farm includes about 100 acres of land (much of which is hayed), as well as well-preserved 19 th century house and attached barn. Also esker, quarry, groves of trees and watershed land.
<i>Springdale Farm</i> Newtown Street	Also known as Whitcomb Farm. One of several farm properties along Newtown Road.
<i>Springdell Farm</i> Great Road	A working truck farm with an operating farm stand.

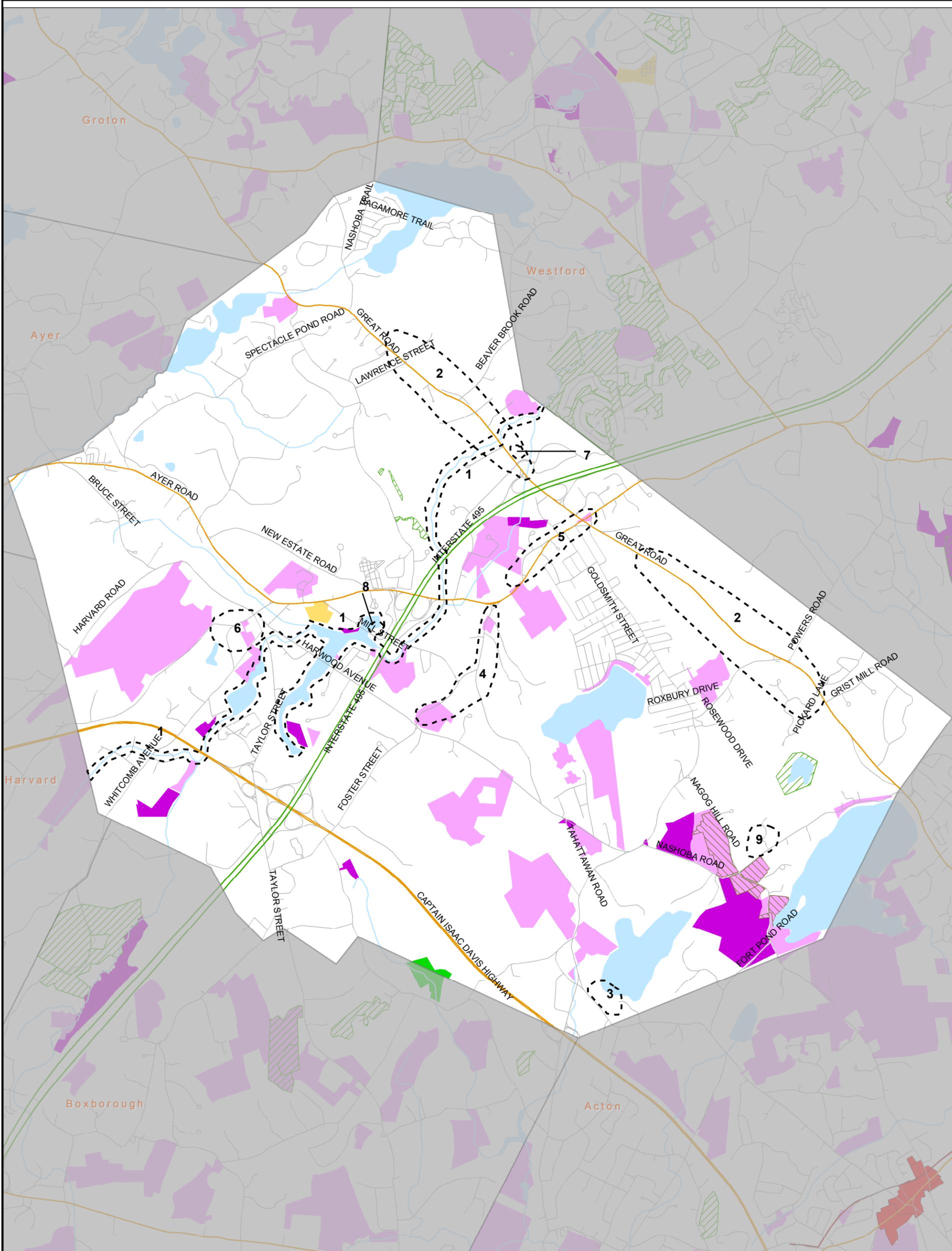
<i>Yapp Farm *</i> 441 Newtown Street	Handsome, well-sited 19 th century house and barn along Newtown Street. Hay fields and stone walls on both sides of road. Communication tower on hill behind house. No longer actively farmed. One of inactive several farm properties along Newtown Street. Future is uncertain.
Archaeology	
<i>Mary Shepherd House Site</i> Great Road	Mary Shepherd was reportedly captured by King Phillip in the 1670s. Near bonsai store and tubing center east of town center.
Burial Grounds and Cemeteries	
<i>Old Burying Ground</i> King Street	NRIND. Established 1721.
<i>Westlawn Cemetery</i> King Street	Town cemetery established 1809 but developed primarily in 20 th century. Still active.
Civic/Center	
<i>Liberty Square +</i> King Street	Also known as Little Common. Was training field for Colonial militia. Musket balls found here. Part of Littleton Common priority landscape.
<i>Littleton Center Area *</i>	Also known as Foster Street area. From King Street to Tahattawan Road. Historic village center that includes Fay Park, Houghton Building (former library, now historical society), church, former Fox Tavern, Masonic Lodge, historic homes.
<i>Littleton Common Area *</i>	Major commercial portion of Littleton.
<i>Littleton Depot Area *</i> Taylor/King Sts.	Depot is center of active village area that also includes other commercial buildings including Veryfine/Kraft and well as 19 th century residential buildings and Sanderson Farm.
<i>Pingreyville</i> Littleton Road	Cluster of houses, remnants of small village area between Ayer and Littleton.
<i>Town Common +</i> Great Road	Historic town common at the intersection of King Street and Great Road. Part of Littleton Common priority landscape.

Industrial	
<i>Conant Houghton and Company +</i> 410 Great Road	Also known as Houghton Mill and United Elastic Corporation. Ca. 1880 mill complex initially a cider mill, later used for production of elastic webbing. Includes three story brick and wooden mill complex. Building is in good condition and now houses a variety of small businesses. Has been documented on MHC inventory form.
<i>Long Store *</i> Great Road	Eighteen-acre property on Great Road just west of Littleton Common. Includes one story former general store building and barn, both underutilized and starting to deteriorate. Property was an important anchor to the rural/agricultural district along Great Road west of 495 and is currently for sale.
<i>Nashoba Garage</i> King Street	Ca 1917-31. Was early garage for assembling Lincoln cars and an early car dealer. Now an automotive repair shop.
<i>Parlee Sawmill *</i> Mill Road	Modern lumberyard on site of historic mill (ca. 1815) located along Beaver Brook. Has operated continuously as sawmill for nearly 100 years. Historical Commission plaque describes history. Mill Hill Conservation Land is adjacent.
<i>Veryfine/Kraft</i> 20 Harvard Road	Veryfine Products is successor to cider mill established in Littleton in 1865. It was purchased by the Rowse family in 1900. In 2003, Kraft acquired Veryfine's extensive manufacturing facility in Littleton, which continues in operation.
Institutional	
<i>Camp Nashoba</i> 140 Nashoba Road	Day camp on northwest shore of Fort Pond, established in 1957. One hundred acres of woodlands, fields and beach frontage. Camp literature reports that camp is on the site of Nashoba Indian camping and burial grounds. Issues are similar to those of Kaleva Camp.
<i>Congregational Church</i> 330 King Street	Located between Littleton Common and Littleton Center.
<i>First Baptist Church</i> 461 King Street	Prominently sited on Littleton Common.
<i>Kaleva Camp *</i> Kaleva Road	Finnish cottage community on Fort Pond. Land owned by Finnish civic organization from Maynard (which is part of a larger national network of Finnish groups). Cottages, most of which are tiny cabins, are individually owned.
<i>Houghton Memorial Building +</i> 4 Rogers Street	NRIND. Former Littleton Library, built 1895. Now historical society building. Part of Littleton Center priority landscape.
<i>Indian Hill Music Center</i> King Street	Music school that also has a symphony orchestra.

Masonic Lodge + King Street	Brick building opposite old library. Part of Littleton Center priority landscape. Was formerly St. Anne Roman Catholic Church.
Omega Way House Omega Way	Social service agency near Fort Pond.
Saint Anne Catholic Church 75 King Street	New church near Westlawn Cemetery.
Shattuck Street Building Shattuck Street	Former Shattuck Street School, now used as town offices and library.
Unitarian Church + 19 Foster Street	Part of Littleton Center priority landscape.
Wayward House for Girls King Street	Corner of King Street and Ayer Road.
Miscellaneous	
Bowlmar 550 Newtown Road	Presently a storage center, formerly the old Bowlmar where the automatic pin setter equipment for bowling was invented.
Historic Markers	The Historical Commission has installed bronze and wooden signs on historic properties.
Scratch Flat	One square mile area near Long Store on Great Road commemorated in Littleton author John Hanson Mitchell's book <i>Ceremonial Time</i> .
Watering Troughs	Five 19 th century cast iron watering troughs, most now used as planters, can be found throughout town.
Whitcomb Monument Off Nancy Way	Monument to Jonathan Whitcomb who shot a bear here in 1740. Text inscribed on a rock. Hard to find. Located near Sweeney Development between two houses.
Open Space/Parks	
Bumblebee Park Foster Street	Small park near Foster and Harwood Streets. Hilly, quaint.
Fay Park Foster Street	Grassy park with bandstand and woods behind. Low area is used as a skating pond in the winter.
Hartwell Forest	Conservation land. Town has recently purchased 87 acres of this property.

<i>Hathaway Park</i> Shattuck Street	Small triangle of land with World War I monument at corner of Shattuck and King Streets.
<i>Long Lake Beach, Park & Refuge</i> Town Road	Important public open space and pond access that is heavily used in the summer. Great views. Includes eight miles of stone walls that have been mapped.
<i>Mill Hill Conservation Land</i> Mill Street	Adjacent to Parlee Sawmill. Largely wooded 24-acre site that was once a cottage community. Beaver Brook runs along one edge and there are old chimney remnants and stone walls.
<i>Prouty Woods</i>	New England Forestry Foundation lands. Can see Watatic and Monadnock mountains from here. Town recently purchased a conservation restriction on 85 acres of this property.
<i>Newtown Hill</i> Newtown Road	Conservation land. Includes large beech tree.
<i>Oak Hill/Tophet Chasm</i> Oak Hill Road	Oak Hill is the highest hill in town. 300 acres of conservation land donated by Sanderson family. Spectacular view from the top, can see all the way to Boston. Includes Tophet Swamp and Lookout Rock.
<i>Sarah Doublett Forest</i> Nashoba Road	Located in north part of town. Largest parcel owned by Littleton Conservation Trust, 98 acres. Part of former Praying Indian Plantation.
<i>Smith Property</i> Whitcomb Avenue	Conservation easement pending. Includes Black Pond, deep chasm on Harvard line, hemlock groves, trails connecting to Harvard trails, quarry. watershed.
Residential	
<i>Conant House</i> King Street	Also includes pear orchard.
<i>Mill Houses</i> Adams Street	Off Adams Street near Common.
<i>Tory House</i> King Street	White house near Beaver Brook.
<i>Tuttle House</i> Newtown Road	One of three handsome farmhouses on Newtown Road. No longer farmed.
Transportation	
<i>Causeway and Granite Bridge</i>	Located on Hartwell Property. Remnant of colonial road over Beaver Brook.
<i>Littleton Depot +</i> King Street	Historic depot building that has been restored and is currently used as a stove restoration business. In Depot Area priority landscape.

<i>Porter Road Bridge</i> Porter Road	Bridge over Beaver Brook.
Waterbodies	
<i>Beaver Brook and Marsh *</i>	River and marsh in western part of town emptying into Mill Pond and ultimately into Forge Pond on the Littleton/Westford line. Old stone bridge at Porter Road.
<i>Doufl Pond</i>	Off Newtown Road on Newtown Hill Conservation Land.
<i>Fort Pond</i>	Located in southern part of town.
<i>Long Lake</i>	Located in east/central portion of town. Includes town beach. Cottages on north and east sides.
<i>Mill Pond</i>	On Beaver Brook. Site of sawmill since 1815.
<i>Spectacle Pond</i>	Located in northwest part of town.
<i>Tenney Corner Spring</i>	Spring at corner of Foster Street and Tahattawan. Site of former Tenney house.



LITTLETON OPENSOURCE & HISTORIC RESOURCES

Note: Default Legend, all categories may not appear on the map.

DCR	Municipal	Agricultural Preservation Restriction	State
DCRS/DFG	Federal	CR/APR Combination	Local Road
DFG	Land Trust	Other Legal Interest	Rivers and Streams
Other State	Non-Profit	State Historic Resources	Lakes and Ponds
County	Conservation Restriction	Interstate	

Littleton Priority Landscapes

1. Beaver Brook and Marsh
2. Farms on Great Road (Route 2A/119)
3. Kaleva Camp
4. Littleton Center Area
5. Littleton Common Area
6. Littleton Depot Area
7. Long Store
8. Parlee Sawmill
9. Yapp Farm

