



WEST BROOKFIELD RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

UPPER QUABOAG WATERSHED AND NORTH QUABBIN REGION LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM



**Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership**

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Spring 2008

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS • EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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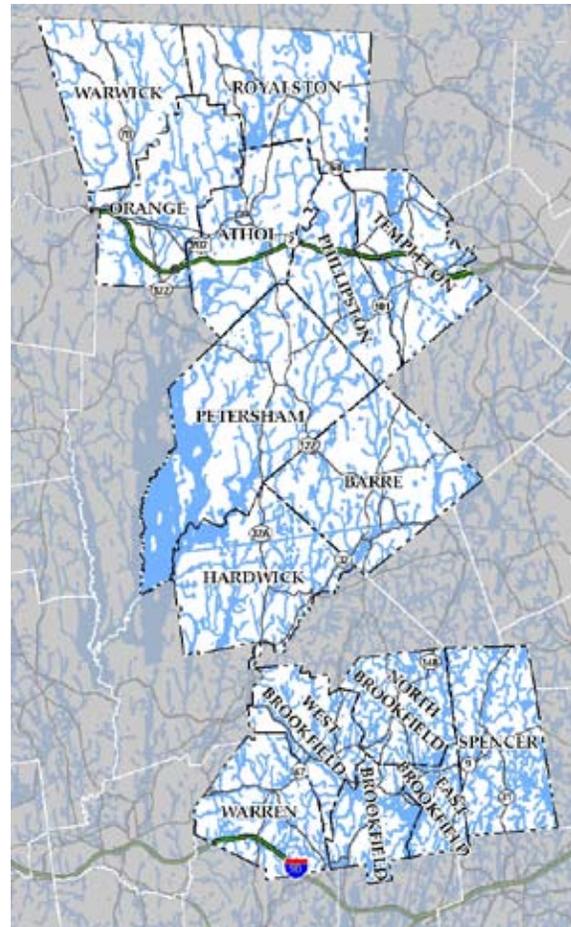
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INTRODUCTION

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, reflect the history of a community and provide a sense of place. They show the natural ecology that influenced land use patterns and 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 step toward 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 its regional partners, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (NQRLP), have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program to fifteen communities in central Massachusetts. The goals of the program are to help communities identify a wide range of landscape resources, particularly those that are significant and unprotected, and to provide communities with strategies for preserving heritage landscapes.

The communities within the Upper Quaboag Watershed and North Quabbin region of central Massachusetts share a common dispersed settlement pattern as well as an early agricultural economy and later shift into manufacturing. Developed along a series of major waterways and their tributaries, including the Millers, Quaboag and Ware Rivers, this region contains vast cultural and historic resources and uncommon natural beauty. The heritage landscapes in the participating communities reflect the agrarian and industrial past while providing recreational and educational opportunities for today. From scenic town commons and natural areas to civic buildings and burial grounds, the heritage landscapes within the region collectively tell the story of their varied and often turbulent, history.



*Upper Quaboag Watershed and North Quabbin Region
Heritage Landscape Inventory project area*

Methodology

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 since its inception. In summary, each community organized a heritage landscape identification meeting during which residents and town officials identify and prioritize the landscapes that embody the community's character and its history. This meeting is followed by a fieldwork session including the consulting team, accompanied by interested community members. The final product for each community is an individualized Heritage Landscape Reconnaissance Report. This report outlines the community's landscape history, discusses broader land planning issues identified by the community, describes the priority heritage landscapes and issues associated with them and concludes with preservation recommendations.

LOCAL HISTORY

West Brookfield is situated among the hills, valleys and streams in what is now Worcester County. The Mill Brook Valley wall rises to more than 1000 feet above sea level to the west. Native Americans occupied lands that are now part of West Brookfield at the south end of Wickaboag Pond as well as along much of the Quaboag River. Ipswich petitioners were granted land on as



Stone wall along Foster Hill Road, site of the original settlement of Brookfield (now part of West Brookfield)

part of a six-mile land grant in 1660 and established the township of Brookfield in 1673. The area that is now West Brookfield, centered on Foster's Hill, was the primary area of dense settlement in Brookfield and included a cluster of 20-acre lots and one enclosed 95-acre field. The settlement also included fortified houses, a meetinghouse and taverns.

Brookfield struggled economically at first due to hostilities with the Native Americans including the burning of the first settlement on Foster's Hill during King Phillip's War in 1675. Once the settlers established a permanent presence

and hostilities ended in the early-18th century, Brookfield quickly became one of the leading agricultural centers of the region maintaining a civic center on Foster's Hill. In 1716 the settlers established a second meetinghouse to replace the one lost in King Phillip's War.

In 1718 the original land grant was extended two square miles into an 8-mile grant and included all or parts of the following towns: "the Brookfields," Western (now Warren), New Braintree, and Ware. Residents in the outlying areas to the north began a campaign to separate from Brookfield and were successful in getting the meetinghouse moved further north in 1749. Brookfield's economy gradually became a prosperous agricultural area focused primarily on sheep and cattle operations.

Between 1775 and 1830 the commercial and residential center began to develop along the Boston Post Road on the plain southeast of Wickaboag Pond. In 1795 the fourth meetinghouse was built, and a residential area developed around the common at the intersection of the Boston Post Road and North Brookfield Road. In 1798 the first printing office opened in the village center, and by

1830 there were three sawmills and a grist mill in the area. Small shops for blacksmiths, leather goods, cloth fulling and dressing, shoemaking, and woodworking were also established.

Significant economic change occurred in the late 1830s when the Western Railroad established a depot at the end of Pleasant Street southwest of the village center. The 1795 meetinghouse was remodeled to include columns and it was moved to align it with the common in 1838. In 1848 West Brookfield separated from Brookfield as its own incorporated entity. The Town Hall was built in 1859 at the head of Central Street on Main Street, and at the same time the Methodist and Episcopal churches were moved to the center of town. Shoemaking was the leading light industry in town, and in the 1860s a corset factory and two cheese factories were established. One of the cheese factories was converted to produce condensed milk during the Civil War and later switched back to producing cheese (and then back again to condensed milk production in the late-19th century). Emphasis on dairy production led to an increase in mowed lands for pasture and a general decline in other agricultural pursuits.

Manufacturing began to decline through the end of the 19th century. The shoe industry shifted away from “sale” shoes for shipment to southern plantations for slaves and towards heavy boot production for trade with the western United States. The corset factory continued operating into the early-20th century. The Merriam-Gilbert Library opened in 1880 across from the Town Hall, and the town built the fifth meetinghouse in 1882. The 1890s saw the buildings of two commercial blocks (Dillard-Edson and Conway); and the establishment of an electric streetcar from Warren along Main Street, through the center of West Brookfield, and into Spencer.

Unlike many other towns in the region, West Brookfield remained a vibrant industrial center into the 1920s. Expansion occurred when the wire manufacturing industry came to town, and other businesses moved into old shoe factories. A furniture manufacturer occupied one old factory, and the Varnum Yeast Company moved into a facility on Long Hill Road, vacated by the Gavitt Manufacturing Company’s move to the Grange Hall on S. Main Street. Dairying remained the dominant agricultural activity and marginal farmlands returned to forest with the general decline in farming. Today, the western end of town surrounding the Salem Cross Inn and Cutler Road as well as Foster Hill remain the largest contiguous areas of active agriculture.

This remaining agrarian landscape, the historic center and the industrial remnants of the late 19th century, provide valuable heritage landscape resources for the community. The preservation of these and other significant cultural landscape elements enables future generations of West Brookfield residents to convey the unique landscape history of the region. Appropriate interpretation and stewardship of these resources is an essential component to their protection.

PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

West Brookfield is experiencing significant growth pressure and will need to determine how it will affect the rural character of the community and the heritage landscapes that the community finds valuable. In the public identification meeting, participants identified priority landscapes in town that define the heritage of the community. These heritage landscapes provide a cross section of the types of landscapes that contributed to the historical development of the town and together tell the story of West Brookfield's past. The following text describes the unique value that each of these landscapes provides to the community and a set of recommendations for its preservation and protection.

West Brookfield Center Historic District

The center of West Brookfield has long been the focal point of economic and civic activities for the community as well as a substantial residential area. A majority of the buildings date to the 19th century and are primarily built in the Greek Revival and Federal styles. There are, however, individual examples of all architectural styles. The historically significant buildings range from civic uses such as the Town Hall and Merriam Library to institutions including the Congregational Church, the former Brookfield Classical Female Seminary on North Main Street and the last remaining factory in town, the former Quaboag Corset Factory on Pleasant Street.

The West Brookfield Center Historic District also includes the triangular town common, which is the center's major open space and has been since it was deeded to the town in 1791. Also known as Quaboag Park, this 6-acre space contains beautiful, mature trees and sweeping lawns as well as several public monuments and fountains. The Rice Memorial Fountain and the Rice Drinking Fountain were gifts to the town from George Rice in 1885. The common is still a popular gathering place, used for community activities and ball games and an integral part of the center historic landscape.

There are several historic residential neighborhoods including the homes surrounding the common on North and South Main Streets and the Cottage and High Street areas that contribute to the character of the



Residences on North Main Street along the West Brookfield Common

district. The 19th century Federal and Greek Revival homes along North and South Main Streets retain their historical integrity and are well-maintained. These include the former Brookfield Seminary built in 1825 which is an excellent example of early Greek Revival architecture. The Seminary, now a residence, went out of use in the early 20th century and has had several uses since that time. The Cottage Street neighborhood contains several Victorian-era homes with some ornate detailing, that make this a unique enclave of late 19th century architecture.



The Brookfield Classical Female Seminary, built in 1825

The Merriam-Gilbert Public Library on Main Street is the only example of Gothic architecture in the center district. Built in 1880, this brick and stone building retains its historic character and many original interior details. Charles Merriam, a prominent local businessman funded the construction of the building and it was modernized in 1950 with additional donated funds. It was at that time that the name Gilbert was added. The building has housed the town's public library since its construction and remains a beloved community structure.



Merriam-Gilbert Library, built in 1880

Also in institutional use and of historic interest are the several churches located within the district including the Sacred Heart Church on West Main Street, the Whitefield United Methodist Church on West Main Street and the Congregational Church on North Main Street. Of these, the Congregational Church is considered non-contributing by the National Register but is significant to the community for its historical associations. The existing structure, built in 1942, replaced the 1882 church damaged by the 1938 hurricane. Portions of the original building, including the western roof and gables were reused and remain intact in the existing church.



Merriam Printing Office building, built in 1810

“Ye Old Tavern” was built in 1760, as a stop along the Old Bay Path (now Route 9), an improved native route which ran from Brookfield to Springfield. The tavern continues to provide food,

spirits, and host social functions to patrons today. Many famous figures in history stopped at the tavern, including George Washington and John Adams. Other early examples of commercial enterprises in the center of town include the Merriam Printing Office building on West Main Street. Built around 1810, this brick building was in use as printing office by the Merriam and Cooke families until the late 19th century and has since changed ownership and use several times. The Merriam and Cooke families built several homes behind the office on Central Street in the mid 19th century.



Commercial block in the center of West Brookfield

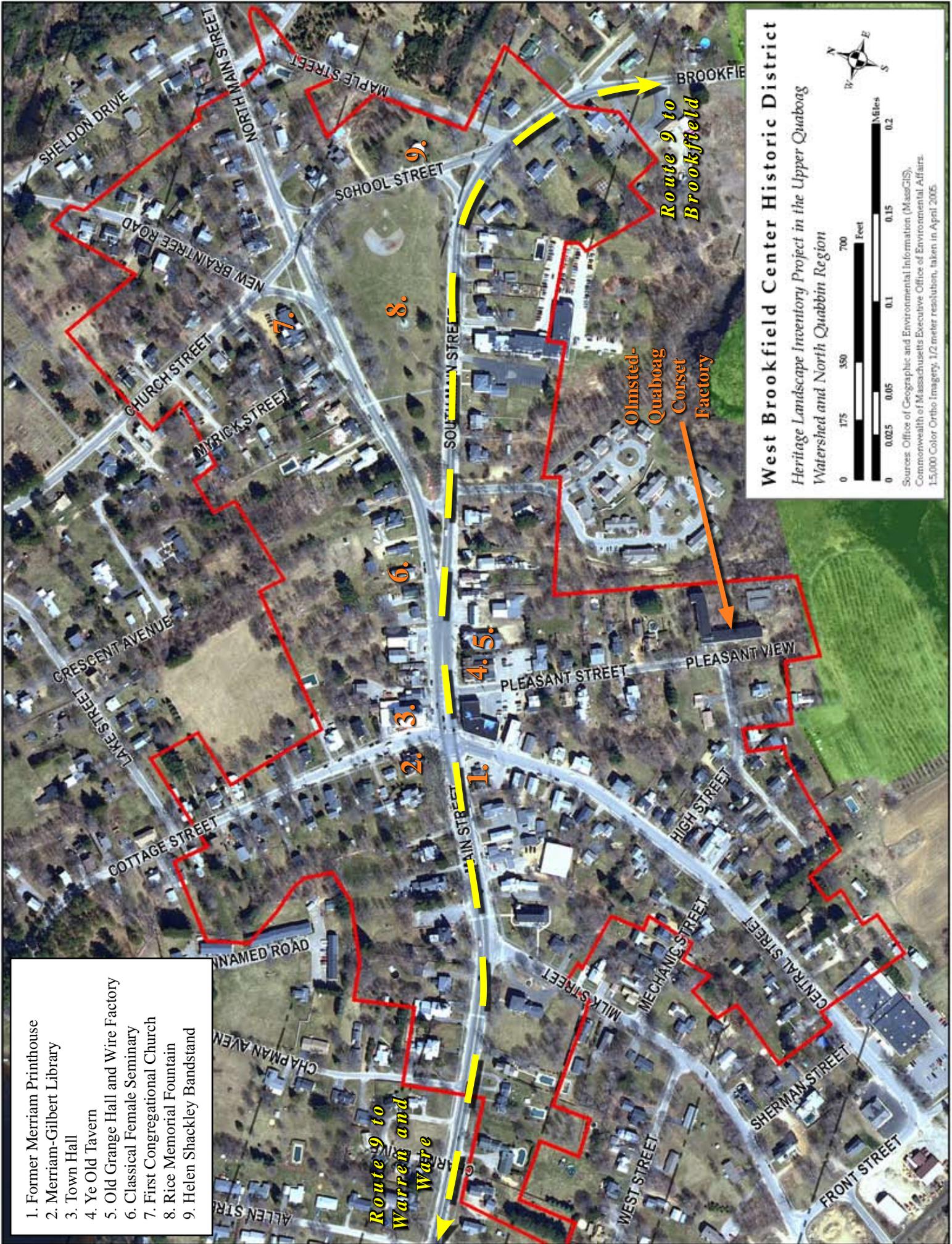
With its collection of historic homes, civic and institutional buildings and the impressive Common, the West Brookfield Center Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. At that time the district boundaries were defined roughly as Central, Cottage and North, South and West Main Streets. This National Register District was expanded in 2006 to include what was called the “Railroad District”. This included portions of Mechanic, Sherman, Milk and Front Streets, Long Hill Road, Railroad Avenue and Freight House Road.

Archaeological Significance:

West Brookfield Center’s archaeological potential may contribute to its significance as a National Register district. At least six recorded historic period archaeological sites are located within or immediately adjacent to the district boundaries, and seven additional sites are located nearby. All of these sites were identified in 2004 through a review of historic building forms on file at MHC; to date no archaeological excavation has occurred at any of the sites nor have associated artifacts or features been reported.

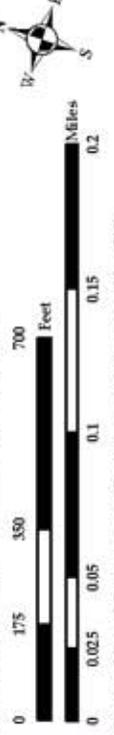
Three sites located within the West Brookfield Town Center were situated on West Main Street; and three additional sites are located off West Main Street but within or immediately adjacent to the physical boundaries of the National Register district. These sites represent the wide range in both date and function for potential archaeological resources within the West Brookfield Town Center district.

The National Register registration form also identifies several other archaeological sites that have not yet been recorded in the MHC site files. In 1990 Archaeologists from Old Sturbridge Village located the original site of the circa 1790-1819 John Clark House and the shop that was utilized by cabinetmaker Clark circa 1790-1830 and then by John Tomblen circa 1870-1885. The buildings,



1. Former Merriam Printhouse
2. Merriam-Gilbert Library
3. Town Hall
4. Ye Old Tavern
5. Old Grange Hall and Wire Factory
6. Classical Female Seminary
7. First Congregational Church
8. Rice Memorial Fountain
9. Helen Shackley Bandstand

West Brookfield Center Historic District
Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quabog Watershed and North Quabbin Region



Source: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. 1:5,000 Color Ortho Imagery, 1/2 meter resolution, taken in April, 2005.

which were originally sited near the intersection of North Main and Church streets and New Braintree Road (North Brookfield Road), were moved by Tomblen further east on New Braintree Road in the 1870s-1880s.

Opportunities:

- The West Brookfield Center Historic District retains its historic character and many contributing buildings and landscapes
- The historic circulation patterns have been retained and provide a walkable and attractive streetscape
- West Brookfield adopted a Town Common Overlay District in January 1987 to “protect the historic center of the Town of West Brookfield” and “retain the residential character of the Town Common area and to enhance the quality of life for residents therein.”

Issues:

- Several buildings have experienced additions and renovations that are not historically compatible
- Modern infill along the Main Street commercial area has not always been compatible with the historic character of the district

Recommendations:

1. Establish a Local Historic District (LHD) Study Committee to create a West Brookfield Center LHD using the 2006 National Register District boundaries as an initial guide (see page 36 for more about LHDs).
2. Adopt a Demolition Delay Bylaw that will allow time for the consideration of alternative to demolition (see page 36 for more about this bylaw).
3. Re-evaluate Village Center Zoning to work in conjunction with an LHD to help control the types of development that can occur in the Center District (see page 37 for more about this type of zoning).
4. Undertake an Archaeological Survey for the Center District to expand on the limited data that has been recorded in the Massachusetts Historical Commission files.

Corset Factory



Olmstead-Quaboag Corset Factory on Pleasant Street, built in 1894

In the last half of the 19th century, the boot and shoe industry that had sustained the West Brookfield economy began to decline. In response to this, the manufacturing of corsets came to town at the turn of the century. Originating as the Bay State Corset Company, 2 and 3 story-wood frame factory buildings were constructed in 1894 on Pleasant Street. In 1902, the Olmstead-Quaboag Corset Factory opened for business in these buildings and continued operation until 1922. The factory at one time employed over one hundred and fifty women. Portions of the building were

dismantled in the 1930s and the remaining sections have been vacant since the mid 20th century and are now only used for storage. This building is the only major factory remaining in the center of West Brookfield and was included in the original 1990 National Register Historic District Boundary.

Opportunities:

- This large, former manufacturing building has a prime location in the center of town and is an ideal location for residential redevelopment.
- The site is adjacent to the permanently protected Quaboag Wildlife Management Area and Coys Brook corridor.

Issues:

- This property is privately owned
- The town is concerned about the condition of the buildings and its current state of underutilization.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a public/private partnership with the owner to study the potential rehabilitation of the property. Explore options such as Tax Increment Financing and a Smart Growth Overlay Zone that would allow for redevelopment of the site as a residential development (see page 37 for more about this type of zone).
2. As a building within the National Register District, make sure the current owner is aware of the federal and state investment tax credits available for qualified rehabilitation.



PLEASANT STREET

Olmstead-Quaboag
Corset Factory

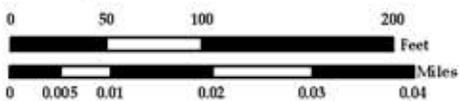
PLEASANT VIEW

Orchard with Agricultural
Preservation Restriction

Coys Brook

Corset Factory

*Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper
Quaboag Watershed and North Quabbin Region*



Sources: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS),
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs,
1:5,000 Color Ortho Imagery, 1/2 meter resolution, taken in April 2005.

Western Railroad Depot Area

The Western Railroad came through the West Brookfield Town Center alongside the Quaboag River in 1839. At this time, the community began a period of growth and development in this portion of town. The first railroad passenger station was built in 1839 on Front Street but was replaced



1884 Richardsonian train station built on Front Street to replace the 1847 station

in 1847 by a larger one with Gothic leaded glass windows and detailed woodwork. Also in 1847, a large, brick freight building was constructed across the tracks on Freight House Road.

In 1884, when the Boston & Albany railroad took over the line, the 1847 train station was moved to Ware Street and a new Richardsonian passenger station was built at the Front Street location. This building is currently owned by the Town and houses the Quaboag Historical Society and Museum. The 1847 station of Ware Street is in private ownership and is currently used for offices and storage. The north façade of this building has been recently rehabilitated with historically sympathetic paint and fixtures but the south façade remains unaltered. The original leaded glass windows and woodwork also remain intact.



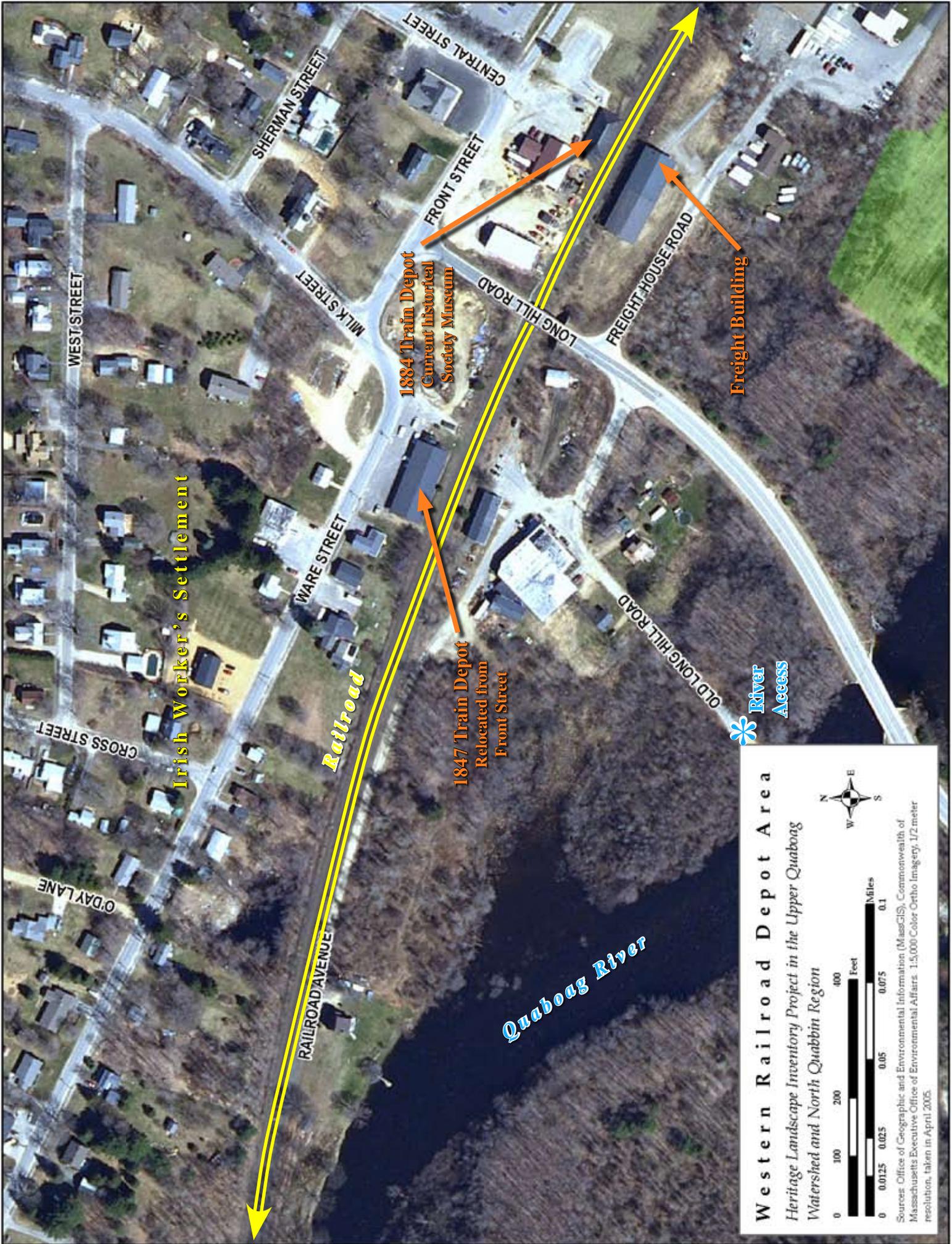
Freight Building on Freight House Road, built in 1847

Archaeological Significance:

The general area that includes the railroad depot is included within a large avocational collection area where Native American artifacts have been recovered. Although no specific artifacts are known from this site area, the natural environmental setting at the confluence of several wetland networks would have been an attractive location for pre-contact period habitation.

While no historic period archaeological sites have been recorded in this section of Brookfield, it is likely that subsurface deposits and possibly structural remains associated with the original and relocated railroad building sites could be present.

This collection of three, distinct 19th century railroad buildings as well as the adjoining neighborhoods and associated natural landscape, provide an excellent representation of the industrial era in West Brookfield and the region. The development of the railroad led directly to the industrial growth that provided the 19th century economic base for the community.



Irish Worker's Settlement

Railroad

**1884 Train Depot
Current Historical
Society Museum**

**1847 Train Depot
Relocated from
Front Street**

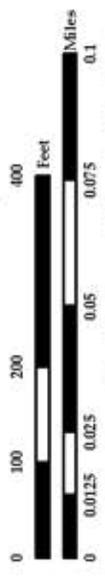
Freight Building

**River
Access**

Quabong River

Western Railroad Depot Area

Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quabong Watershed and North Quabbin Region



Source: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. 1:5,000 Color Ortho Imagery, 1/2 meter resolution, taken in April 2005.

Opportunities:

- This area is a unique representation of 19th century industrial growth related to the development of the railroad. The boundaries of the West Brookfield Center Historic District was expanded to include the Western Railroad Depot Area in 2006.
- All three railroad buildings are in relatively good condition
- The Richardsonian building is owned by the West Brookfield Historical Society
- The area may be archaeologically sensitive

Issues:

- The 1847 Station and the Freight House are in private ownership and not currently under any form of protection
- Modern development and site design have visually impacted the historic character of the area

Recommendations:

1. Make sure the owners of the station and freight house are aware of their eligibility to apply for State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits. The town owned building is eligible to apply for Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) grants.
2. Include this area in the bounds of the Local Historic District recommended for the West Brookfield Center area.
3. Pursue the acquisition of Preservation Restrictions on the train stations and the freight house (see page 39 for more about PRs). Community Preservation Act funds could be used if adopted in town (see page 35 for more about the CPA)
4. Through the Historical Society, develop interpretive materials that discuss the unique collection of railroad buildings and their influence on the 19th century development of the community.



1847 train station on Ware Street, currently used for offices and storage

Foster Hill

Foster Hill is the site of the first settlement of the region in 1665. Originally known as Quaboag Plantation and later Brookfield, this was the central settlement for what are now the separate communities of East and West Brookfield, Brookfield, North Brookfield and Warren. Foster Hill remained the primary settlement until burned in 1675 by Native Americans during King Phillip's War. The second settlement was located on what is now known as Elm Hill in Brookfield.

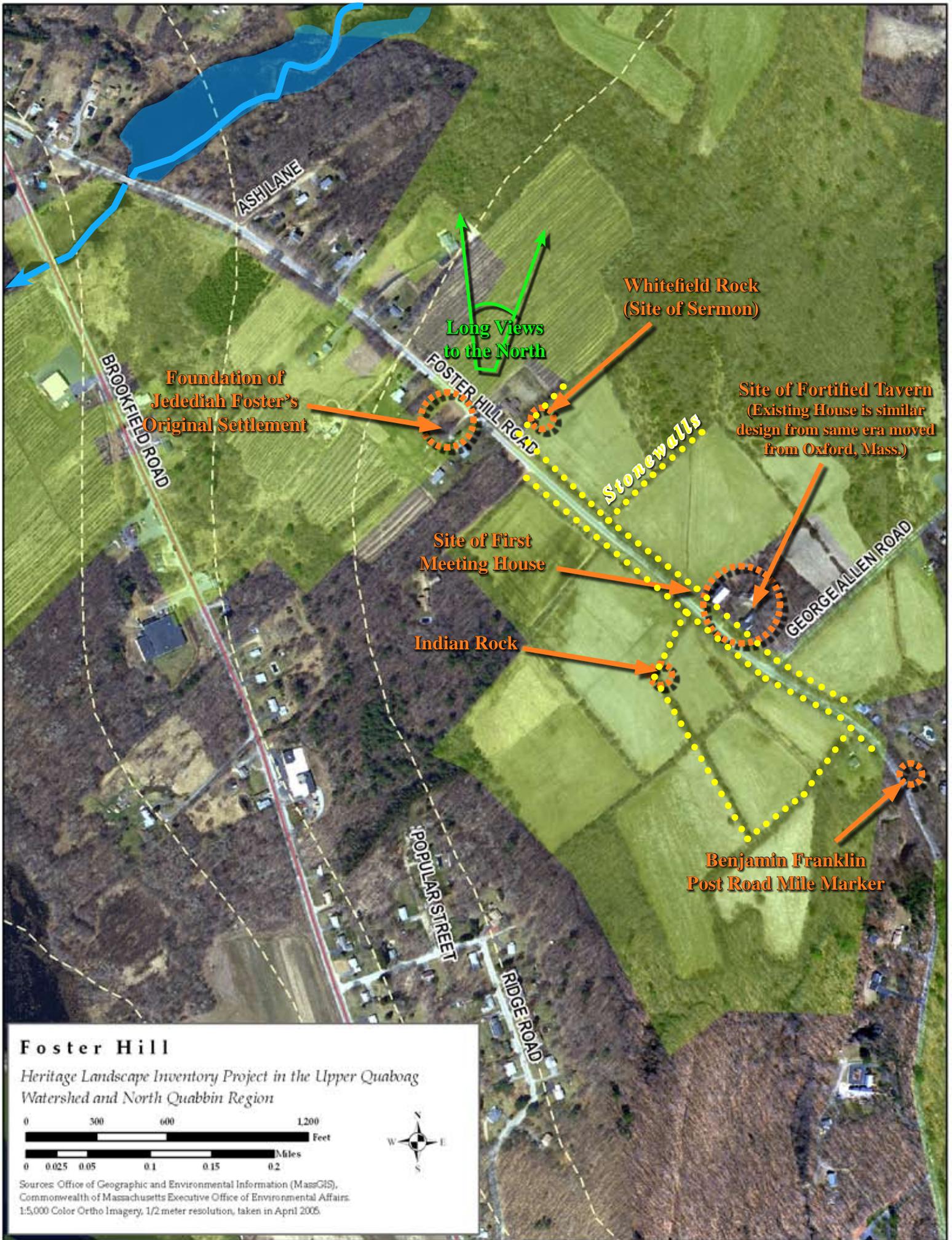


Sugar Maples and stone walls line Foster Hill Road

Foster Hill rises above the center of town to the east and offers panoramic views to the north, west and south to permanently protected land operated as a Wildlife Management Area by the Commonwealth. Foster Hill Road is also the former Old Boston Post Road and contains an original Franklin Mile Marker near the border with Brookfield. Cumberland Farms Companies own and manage the orchards seen along Foster Hill Road. These approximately 148 acres are protected by an Agricultural Preservation Restriction.

Today the area remains dispersed residential and agricultural. The crest of the hill near George Allen Road is active farmland and retains much of its historic character and setting from the earliest settlement period.

The Jedediah Foster Homesite on Foster Hill is owned and maintained by the Quaboag Historical Society although it is not under any form of permanent protection. The site is open to the public and contains an interpretive kiosk for visitors. Additional structures or events are marked by plaques and/or boulders along Foster Hill Road. Views extend for miles to the North and East with church steeples and cupolas in the center of Brookfield visible above the trees. Stone walls and maple trees surround extensive agricultural land, and although few original structures remain, those that do provide a glimpse into past. Some important features remaining today that add to the character Foster Hill include Indian Rock, Whitefield Rock, the First Meetinghouse site, and the Fortified Tavern site.



**Foundation of
Jedediah Foster's
Original Settlement**

**Long Views
to the North**

**Whitefield Rock
(Site of Sermon)**

**Site of Fortified Tavern
(Existing House is similar
design from same era moved
from Oxford, Mass.)**

Stonewalls

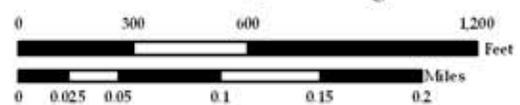
**Site of First
Meeting House**

Indian Rock

**Benjamin Franklin
Post Road Mile Marker**

Foster Hill

*Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quabog
Watershed and North Quabbin Region*



Sources: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS),
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.
1:5,000 Color Ortho Imagery, 1/2 meter resolution, taken in April 2006.

Archaeological Significance:

The Foster Hill area contains several recorded archaeological sites, including one that has been subjected to systematic archaeological testing. The circa 1735 Jedediah Foster Homesite consists of the visible remains of a cellar hole, well, chimney base, partial stone walkway, and several trees that are recorded in historic period photographs and documentary records. The house and grounds were continuously occupied from circa 1735 until 1901, when the original house was destroyed by fire. Archaeologist and West Brookfield Historical Commission member Amy Dugas conducted limited subsurface testing at the site in 2005 and collected eighteenth and nineteenth century structural and domestic debris from the yard areas surrounding the partially filled cellar hole. This site represents a potentially significant resource that is likely eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for its archaeological significance.

The overall archaeological sensitivity of the Foster Hill corridor is considered to be extremely high. The site of the original Quaboag Plantation has been recorded as an archaeological site although to date no archaeological investigations have been undertaken. The significance of this area dates to the settlement's creation in 1665, its burning during King Philip's War in 1675, the construction and use of the Jennings Garrison in 1704, and the circa 1771-1800 Waite's Tavern. Associated sites may also include the old military road to the north of Foster Hill Road, several historic period family cemeteries, and other, as yet undocumented archaeological sites associated with the use of this area as a farmstead over several centuries.

Opportunities:

- The area of the first settlement of Brookfield retains its historic agricultural character and has not yet been impacted by residential development.
- The unique history associated with this area is of regional and state significance with its associations with the Quaboag Plantation and King Philip's War
- Much of the land within the viewshed has been protected by the Commonwealth and the farmland is protected through the APR program
- Foster Hill Road contains 14 individual listings with the Massachusetts Historical Commission

Issues:

- Although there are several stone markers the sites associated with the first settlement are not formally interpreted

Recommendations:

1. Procure a Preservation Restriction on the site of the First Settlement (Quaboag Plantation) in order to permanently protect it from loss to development (see page 37 for more about PRs). Community Preservation Act funds could be used if adopted in town (see page 35 for more about the CPA)
2. Conduct an Archaeological Study of the First Settlement area and evaluate the area for its National Register eligibility.
3. Pursue collaboration between West Brookfield and Brookfield to interpret the First and Second Settlements and the history of the Quaboag Plantation.

Eastern Portion of the Quaboag River

The Quaboag River runs through West Brookfield from east to west, with the eastern portion of the Quaboag River remaining primarily open and natural, containing extensive marshlands and riparian habitats. There are several former agricultural fields that run from Route 9 down to the edge of the river. Although no longer in active use, these fields remain open and the views across them are stunning. The fields across from the western end of Ridge Road are currently for sale as residential or commercial building lots. The owner of the red building (farm stand that looks like it is under construction) also owns the land for sale.

Also visible from this area is the site of the Haymaker's Massacre in which several local residents were killed by Native Americans in the 18th century while making hay. Some of this land is also a former cranberry bog. This stretch of the Quaboag River is part of an excellent stretch of flat-water for canoeing and kayaking that extends from White's Landing in Brookfield all the way into Warren. To the west is the confluence with Coys Brook, which is an area that is part of the Quaboag Wildlife Management Area and is permanently protected by the Commonwealth.

Archaeological Significance:

Native American archaeological sites have been previously identified along much of the Quaboag River corridor in West Brookfield. Three overlapping artifact collection areas extend from the western town boundary east along the river to Coys Brook. These sites were all identified on the basis of surface finds which were often exposed by historic and modern period land use (e.g. construction, gravel removal).

The G.F. Lincoln Homestead Site is the only recorded Native American site that is located along the Quaboag River east of Coys Brook. This site area was recorded in Temple's History of North Brookfield. Temple noted artifacts that the Lincoln family had recovered from the farmstead and indicated that a Native American family may have lived on the property in to the mid-eighteenth century.



View south to the Quaboag River from the Ridge Road off of Route 9

The river margins may have a high sensitivity to contain as-yet unrecorded archaeological sites. Based on the range of identified sites along other sections of the Quaboag River, it is likely that archaeological sites spanning more than 8,000 years could be present in West Brookfield.



Land for sale across from Ridge Road intersection with Route 9 - currently an open view to the Quaboag River

Opportunities:

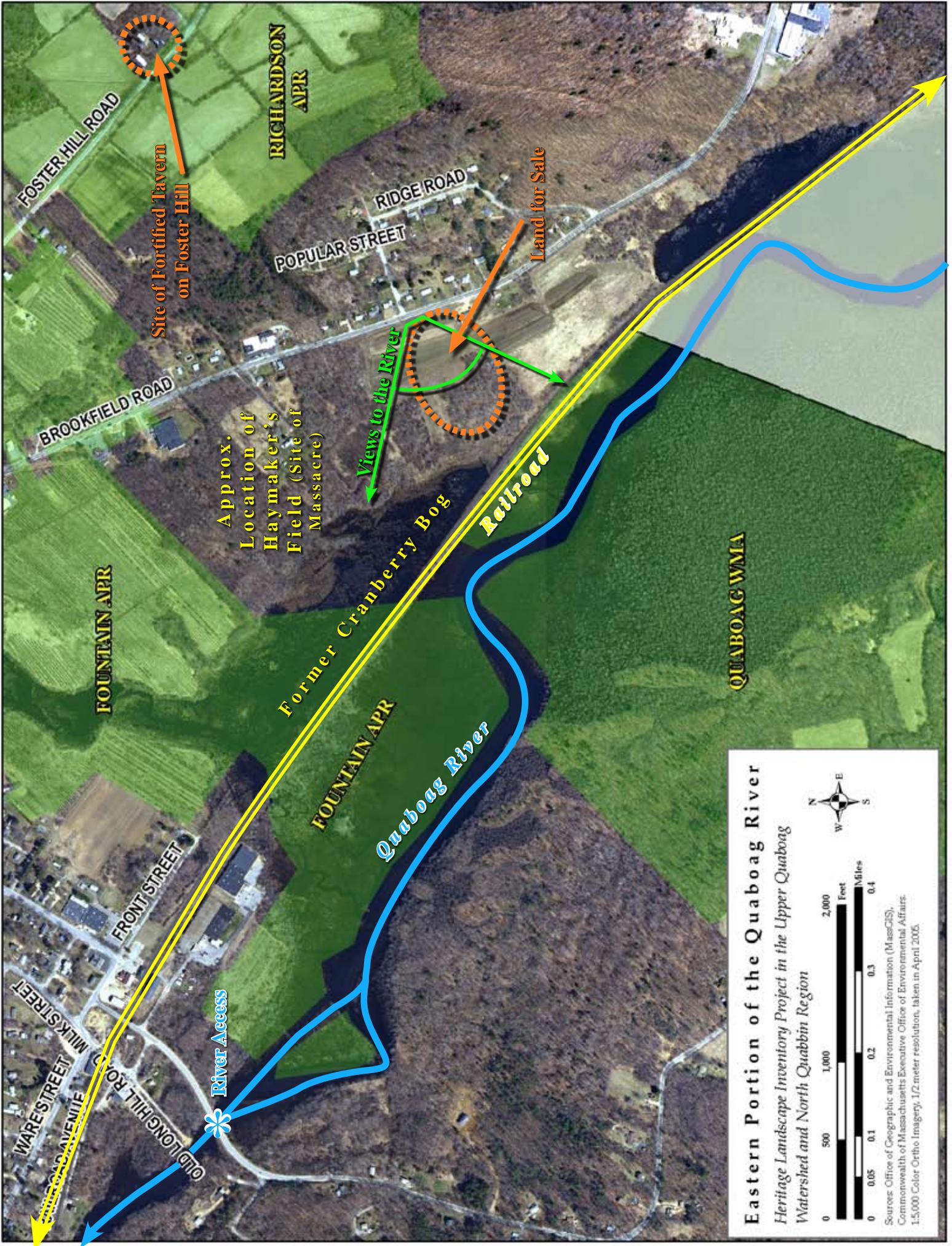
- There is a large amount of land already protected in this area, (APR land and the Quaboag WMA) that provides access to the river and wildlife habitats and corridors
- The distinctive views across the river valley to the south provide a valuable scenic vista from Foster Hill and Brookfield Road (Route 9)

Issues:

- A major portion of the land running from Route 9 to the river is in private ownership and currently for sale
- The farmland that has remained open and therefore protected the view is no longer actively farmed and in danger of growing into forest
- Old Longhill Road could provide river access, but is privately owned.

Recommendations:

1. Pursue the acquisition of scenic easements on the land directly across Ridge Road along the edge of the Quaboag River. This would allow these views to remain open in perpetuity but would also allow for compatible development. Alternatively, the town could adopt Scenic Overlay District Zoning in this area (see page 37 for more about scenic vista protection).
2. Investigate adopting an Archaeological Protection Overlay District to preserve the substantial amount Native American sites and artifacts in this area (see page 35 for more about protecting archaeological sites).
3. The town should form a Recreation Committee and explore public access to the River for non-motorized boating and walking trails possible at the end of Old Long Hill Road or from the Wildlife Management Areas. Community Preservation Act funds could be used for recreation improvements if adopted in town (see page 35 for more about the CPA)



Eastern Portion of the Quaboag River
 Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quaboag
 Watershed and North Quabbin Region

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet
 0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 Miles

North
 South
 West
 East

Sources: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. 1:5,000 Color Ortho Imagery, 1/2 meter resolution, taken in April 2006.

Salem Cross Inn and Adjacent Farmland

Formerly known as the White Homestead, the Salem Cross Inn has been in the Salem family for several generations and is currently operated as a restaurant, hosting historical events and special functions. The Inn sits on approximately 60 acres of gardens and agricultural land, surrounded by additional active farmland, rolling hills, woodlands and the Lamberton Brook.



Agricultural land on the Salem Cross Inn property

The site is historically significant in its associations with the White family who were part of the Second Brookfield Settlement. An original 1707 structure built by John White, one of the haymakers killed in the field along the Quaboag River in 1710, remains on the property as a carriage shed behind the main house. White's descendents expanded the farm and built a new main house and several barns and outbuildings.

The Salem family continues to operate the Inn as well as actively farm much of the surrounding land, including several acres across Ware Road running up to Cutler Road. The Salem's land, running from Lamberton Brook to Cutler and Snow Roads, is the largest contiguous agricultural land remaining in West Brookfield. This landscape reflects the agrarian heritage of the community and has remained remarkably intact over the centuries. The Salem Cross Inn is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

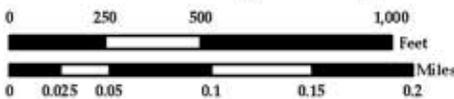
Archaeological Significance:

It is extremely likely that archaeological deposits associated with the construction and use of the Salem Cross Inn house, outbuildings, and grounds are present. Portions of the foundation or sill and yard areas associated with the original John White house may still remain on the property. Given the detailed documentary and architectural history of the house, any archaeological deposits that are present could contribute additional information to this significant site.



Salem Cross Inn and Adjacent Farmland

Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quabog Watershed and North Quabbin Region



Sources: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. 1:5,000 Color Ortho Imagery, 1/2 meter resolution, taken in April 2006.

The site of the Hayward Grist Mill is also included within the Salem Cross National Register district boundaries. The mill site was located on the Lamberton Brook at its intersection with the Old Hadley Path. According to the MHC site form the grist mill was built in 1707 or 1708 by John Hayward, Junior. Temple's *History of North Brookfield* (1887) indicates that a mill dam was still visible around the turn of the twentieth century, and the 1975 Salem Cross Inn National Register nomination form includes a photograph of the mill ruins.

Opportunities:

- This is a valuable landscape for interpreting the early settlement patterns and rural economy that shaped the region
- The Salem Cross Inn and adjoining farmland run along the Lamberton Brook and provide a valuable natural ecosystem and wildlife habitat
- The historical integrity and significance of the White Homestead has been maintained by the Salem family for generations.
- The Salem Cross Inn is listed with the National Register of Historic Places.

Issues:

- Although much of this land is in temporary protection under Chapter 61A designation, none is permanently protected from development
- All of the agricultural land in this area is privately owned by multiple owners

Recommendations:

1. Adopt an Agricultural Overlay Zone for this area of town that will protect the scenic and cultural value of the land but allow for compatible development (see page 34 for more about this type of zoning).
2. Pursue a Preservation Restriction on the buildings and structures associated with the Salem Cross Inn in order to preserve their historical and cultural significance (see page 37 for more about PRs). Community Preservation Act funds could be used if adopted in town (see page 35 for more about the CPA)
3. Work with the owners of the active agricultural land to pursue placing Agricultural Preservation Restriction on the surrounding farmland (see page 34 for more about APR).
4. In case any of the family's Chapter 61A property should come out of the program, the Town should develop a strategy now to invoke its right-of-first-refusal to acquire it outright or purchase a Conservation Restriction (see page 35 for information about adopting a Chapter 61 Policy in town).

Pynchon Grist Mill Site

North of the West Brookfield Center Historic District, a dirt road meanders along Sucker Brook and through marshland to the site of a 17th century mill that is believed to be the first grist mill in central Massachusetts. According to Louis Roy's Brookfield History, the Pynchon Grist Mill operated in this location from approximately 1669 until 1705. It was burned to the ground during King Phillip's War in 1675 but rebuilt soon after. Although no buildings are still standing, the mill pond remains as well as portions of the dam.

Along the road leading to the Pynchon Grist Mill site are what appear to be additional dam remains associated with a second mill along the Sucker Brook. Over time the road has been slightly improved and early utility poles were run along it up to the Pynchon Grist Mill site. This land is privately owned and access is allowed with prior permission only. It is also surrounded on the north and west by permanently protected State Forest land owned by the Commonwealth.

Archaeological Significance:

The John Pynchon Grist Mill was recorded as an archaeological site based on information provided in Louis Roy's Brookfield history. Original town records document the construction of the mill



Remnant mill dam along Sucker Brook and the Bay Path Trail

and note the origin of each element (e.g. millstones, hardware, timber) as well as the amount paid for materials and labor. Dr. Roy and West Brookfield resident Roger Persons conducted excavations at the mill site sometime prior to 1965 and documented a burned layer interpreted as the 1675 destruction of the mill during King Philip's War and a higher layer associated with the reconstructed mill that operated from 1675 until at least 1705. While the mill site and associated pond have undoubtedly undergone significant modifications since the early 18th century, the remnants still convey the industrial past of this area.

A second mill site is located south of the Pynchon Grist Mill at the intersection of Sucker Brook and Mill Brook just east of Wickaboag Valley Road. The Sucker Brook Saw Mill Site was reportedly built in 1710 and, like the Pynchon Grist Mill, was one of the first to be built in Brookfield. This mill site was recorded by Archie Jay of the West Brookfield Historical Commission based on information recorded in Temple's *History of North Brookfield*.

The Old Bay Path route passes across the Sucker Brook just north of Wickaboag Pond. This trail was used by the area's Native American residents prior to the arrival of the first Europeans. After 1648, the trail became an overland travel route to and from colonial settlements in the Worcester region until the New Bay Path was established in 1673. The location of the mill near this heavily traveled path certainly assisted its economic viability.

Opportunities:

- This is a valuable early industrial site that has remained remarkably intact, and appears to be in or near the Wickaboag Valley National Register Historic District.
- The site is relatively accessible and is adjacent to state owned land
- The site is a significant historical and natural resource
- The site is a potentially significant archaeological resources



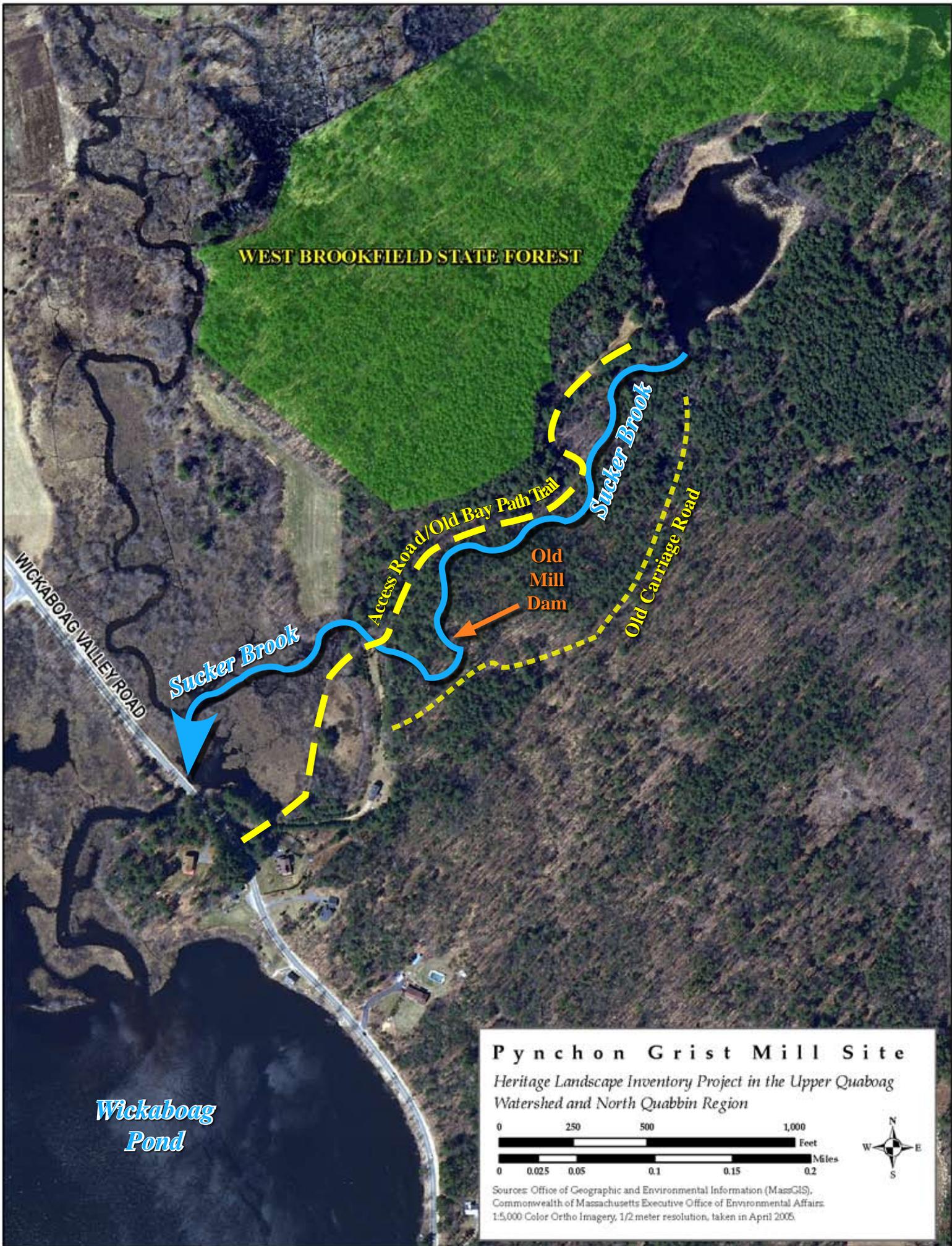
Dam at south end of old mill pond at Pynchon Mill site

Issues:

- The site and access road are privately owned and although access is currently permitted on a case by case basis, there is no permanent easement through the property
- There has never been an intensive archaeological survey of the site
- There is danger that the site may be lost to time and the elements
- All terrain vehicles (ATV's) are using the road and causing erosion problems and could damage the site



ATV trails on the adjacent State Forest land - just off of the trail to Pynchon Mill site



WEST BROOKFIELD STATE FOREST

Sucker Brook

Access Road/Old Bay Path Trail

Old Mill Dam

Sucker Brook

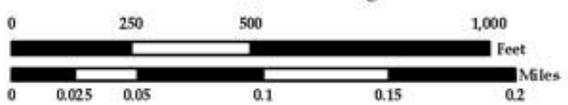
Old Carriage Road

WICKABOAG VALLEY ROAD

Wickaboag Pond

Pynchon Grist Mill Site

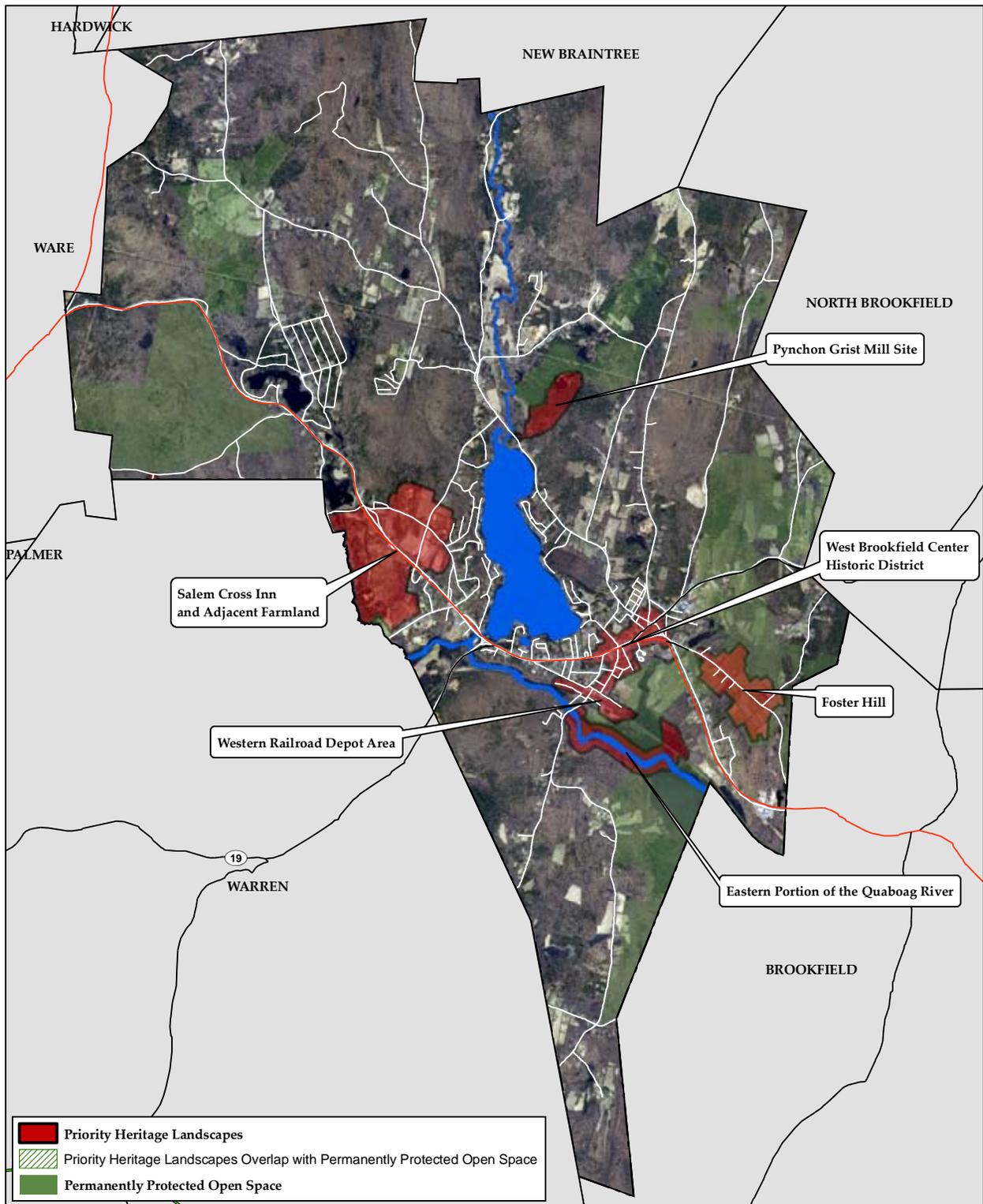
Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quabog Watershed and North Quabbin Region



Sources: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. 1:5,000 Color Ortho Imagery, 1/2 meter resolution, taken in April 2005.

Recommendations:

1. Undertake an Archaeological Survey of the site to document the historical significance.
2. The town should develop a good relationship with the property owner and encourage them to discuss any sale plans of the property with the town and state before putting them on the market.
3. The town should work with the property owner to pursue permanent protection of the site through the acquisition by the town of a Preservation Restriction on the mill site or a Conservation Restriction on the property (see pages 35 & 37 for more about CR & PR). Community Preservation Act funds could be used if adopted in town (see page 35 for more about the CPA)
4. Pursue (with CMRPC and other local organizations) the designation of the Bay Path Trail as a regional recreational resource that crosses municipal boundaries and provides access to historic sites.
5. The Historical Commission should verify if the mill site lies within the Wickaboag Valley NRDS (documented as bordered by Wickaboag Pond, Mill Stone and Madden Roads, and the New Braintree Border). If it is not, the boundaries should be redrawn to include Sucker Brook and the mill site.



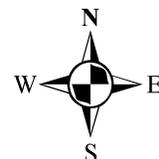
Priority Heritage Landscapes

West Brookfield, Massachusetts

Prepared for: Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quaboag Watershed and North Quabbin Region

Prepared by: Dodson Associates, Ltd., Landscape Architects and Planners
Ashfield, Massachusetts

25 June 2008



"Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs"
MassGIS 2005 Orthophotos

For Planning Purposes Only

PART II: PLANNING FOR HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

As our communities undergo rapid land use changes, heritage landscapes are particularly threatened because they are often taken for granted. There is a broad variety of resources that communities can call upon to protect these irreplaceable landscapes. What follows is a review of the tools that West Brookfield already has in place, as well as a number of recommended actions for the future. The measures already in place for West Brookfield provide a strong foundation for heritage landscape preservation, but additional measures have been identified in the following text that will aid the development of a holistic preservation planning strategy. Appendix B includes extended descriptions of preservation measures. These tools should be considered in combination with those recommendations made in Part I for West Brookfield's priority landscapes.

INVENTORY AND DOCUMENTATION

1. Massachusetts Historical Commission Records

We cannot advocate for something until we clearly identify it – in this case, the physical characteristics and historical development of the town's historic and archeological resources. The necessary first step is to record information about the resources at the Massachusetts Historical Commission. 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 the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), is now available online at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc>.

Current Listings: According to the MHC, West Brookfield's inventory documents approximately 340 properties from the mid 18th century through the 20th century ranging from individual homes, businesses and civic buildings to war monuments and agricultural land. Each of the heritage landscape areas identified by the community as priority resources contain properties listed with MACRIS: There are fourteen listings on Foster Hill Road alone, and there are many separate listings within the central village area. The Corset Factory and the Western Railroad Depot Area are also part of this listing.

The MHC also lists sixty-one recorded archaeological sites within the town. Nine of these are prehistoric and fifty-two are historic.

Recommendations: MHC survey forms should be completed for all of the heritage landscapes identified at the West Brookfield meeting that are not already listed.

2. National and State Register Listing

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. Listing brings a number of benefits including recognition, consideration when federally-or state-funded projects may impact the resource, eligibility for tax credits, and qualification for certain grant programs. Resources on the National Register are automatically added to the State Register of Historic Places.

Current Listings: West Brookfield's National Register (NR) program began with the listing of three 1767 Benjamin Franklin milestones along the Old Boston Post Road in 1971. The Salem Cross Inn (circa 1705) received an individual listing in 1975, and in 1990 the West Brookfield Center Historic District was listed as a National Register district. In 2000, the Wickaboag Valley Historic District was listed, and in 2006, the Old Indian Cemetery at 50 Cottage Street was listed and the West Brookfield Center district was expanded down Central Street to include the Railroad Station and Freight House along with other properties in the vicinity.

Recommended Listings: The area of Foster Hill contains several individual MHC inventory forms for its resources - the area should be evaluated for its eligibility for listing as a National Register of Historic Places District.

3. Heritage Landscape Inventory List from Local Identification Meeting

Each town involved in the Upper Quaboag Watershed and North Quabbin Region Heritage Landscape Inventory held a local identification meeting to solicit input from a range of community members to identify potential heritage landscapes throughout the town. The lists were prioritized by the community, with help from the consultants, to create a list of five to ten priority areas, which were described in Part I of this report. The complete list of the town's heritage landscapes is included as Appendix A of this report and provides a sound resource list for future documentation activities and potential funding opportunities. West Brookfield's meeting was held on March 12th, 2008, with fifteen community members present.

PLANNING AND ZONING TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

1. Comprehensive, Open Space and other Planning Documents

It is important that Open Space Plans, Comprehensive or Master Plans, and other planning documents address heritage landscapes as vital features of the community, contributing not only to unique sense of place but also to environmental, recreational and economic health.

Current Plans: West Brookfield completed an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) in 2002 and a Community Development Plan in 2004. The OSRP provides a valuable source of information for landscape character, significant natural and scenic resources, and a conservation and recreation lands inventory. This inventory includes a table of protected land, identifying the owners and levels of protection including lands in Chapter 61. Objectives of the OSRP include protecting important water bodies and land, increasing educational outreach to the town's residents, creating more linkages between already protected lands, and maintaining the rural town character.

The Community Development Plan completed in 2004 includes goals to encourage diverse housing opportunities while preserving the town's rural character; improve transportation systems (including the addition of a rail trail along the Old Bay Path); preserve open space and environmental quality; and foster economic development. One of the highest priority recommendations to accomplish these goals was to implement the 5-year action plan from the 2002 OSRP.

Recommended Plans: Comprehensive or Master Plans provide an important frame of reference for land use decisions, and incorporate all of a community's issues including economic development, housing and transportation into an integrated plan. Heritage landscapes need to be seen through the lenses of community character, historic preservation, environmental health, and economic viability and growth. Their future and the values they contribute should be addressed within these multiple perspectives, not solely as historical assets of the community. The West Brookfield Master Plan Committee should adopt a Master Plan that includes an updated OSRP and the 2004 Community Development Plan. Together these three documents would provide clear guidance to the town for how to achieve its goals.

2. Zoning Bylaws and Ordinances

Effective and innovative preservation tools exist in the legal and regulatory realm. These range from a wide array of zoning, bylaw and ordinance mechanisms, to incentive programs and owner-generated restrictions on land use.

Current Zoning Bylaws and Ordinances:

West Brookfield adopted revised zoning bylaws in 2007 that encourage Open Space Residential Development and require site plan review for all development requiring special permits. West Brookfield also has bylaws in place that provide protection to their designated Scenic Roads and that preserve the Right to Farm of agricultural lands in town, as well as a Town Common overlay district.

Additional Planning and Zoning Tools and Techniques for West Brookfield's landscapes:

Adaptive Reuse Overlay District

An Adaptive Reuse Overlay District is superimposed on one or more established zoning districts in order to permit incentive-based reuses of existing built properties. These districts can be created to allow for the adaptive reuse of properties of a certain kind, or within a specified area within a community. As an overlay zone, all regulations pertaining to the underlying zone apply, except to the extent that the overlay zone modifies or provides for alternatives to the underlying requirements.

Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR)

The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program is a voluntary program managed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. It is intended to provide a “non-development” alternative to farmers and other owners of “prime” and “state important” agricultural land. When faced with the inability to actively farm and rising tax assessments, this offers the farmer the opportunity to retain the property rather than sell it for development. The State purchased a permanent deed restriction on the property for the difference between fair market value and agricultural value. The deed restriction would preclude any use of the property that will negatively impact its agricultural viability. Agricultural lands on the Salem Cross Inn property and adjacent farms should be considered for the APR program.

Agricultural Preservation Zoning

An agricultural preservation overlay zone can be created that will promote and protect the practice of farming. This can help to preserve lands on which farming is most viable, lands that maintain an adequate agricultural base in town and areas that preserve the culture and landscape of farming. This can be accomplished in several ways including requiring all new large-scale residential development to be clustered on areas least suitable for agriculture and away from farms and views. An agricultural preservation bylaw can also use the site plan review process to require dedicated open space to remain as farmland and include that new development be located on least suitable soils for agriculture and be integrated into the existing landscape. An agricultural preservation overlay district could help to preserve the Salem Cross Inn property and adjacent farms.

Archaeological Resource Protection

Archaeological sites are non-renewable cultural resources that can be permanently altered or destroyed through unauthorized digging, artifact collection, and development. Protection of archaeological sites can occur through a number of different strategies and mechanisms. An important first step is the development of a town-wide archaeological resource protection plan. Based on a professional reconnaissance survey of resources in the community, this plan would recommend steps for their preservation. Options for protection include acquisition, preservation restrictions, site plan review, an archaeological review bylaw and public education. Reasonable thresholds for local review of archaeological resources should be developed in consultation with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and interested groups such as the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs. Due to the significant archaeological resources in West Brookfield, the town should develop an archaeological resource protection plan that should include the Pynchon Grist Mill Site, the corset factory, and Foster Hill. An Archaeological Protection Overlay District should be adopted to preserve the Native American sites along the Quaboag River.

Community Preservation Act

By enabling legislation created in 2000, the Community Preservation Act (CPA) helps communities provide funds for the preservation of open space and historic resources and the creation of affordable housing and recreational facilities. The funds are raised through a property tax surcharge ranging from 0.5% to 3% and are administered by a local Community Preservation Committee. A minimum of 10% of the annual revenues must be used for each of the three core areas: acquisition and preservation of open space, acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes and creation and support of affordable housing. The remaining 70% can be used for any combination of the above uses and for recreational uses.

Conservation Restrictions (CR)

A permanent deed restriction between a landowner and a holder - usually a public agency or a private land trust; whereby the grantor agrees to limit the use of his/her property for the purpose of protecting certain conservation values in exchange for tax benefits. EOEEA's Division of Conservation Services provides assistance to landowners, municipalities, and land trusts regarding conservation restrictions and has produced The Massachusetts Conservation Restriction Handbook as a guide to drafting conservation restrictions. West Brookfield should pursue placing a CR on the land directly surrounding the Salem Cross Inn, running down to Lamberton Brook, as well as the Pynchon Grist Mill Site.

Chapter 61 Policy

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 61 was created in the 1970s when many farmers and forestland owners were forced to sell their land due to rising property values and taxes. The legislation became known as the Forestland Act but was quickly followed by Chapter 61A, the

Farmland Assessment Act and 61B, the Open Space Act. This new legislation required towns to reduce assessments on farm, forest and open space lands as long as the owners made a commitment to keep their land in that use.

A major provision of this law allows the town the right of first refusal on these lands if the lands are to be sold for residential, commercial or industrial purposes. This provision provides the town with the opportunity to match a fair market value offer for the property. West Brookfield should review the Chapter 61 land in town and develop a policy for determining priorities for acquisition if land becomes available. Adoption of a Chapter 61 Policy would outline a response process for the town to follow when these lands come out of the program. This may include a requirement for the select board to collaborate with other town boards, conservation groups and other interested parties, and hold a public meeting. The Town should also maintain a good working relationship with the Opacum Land Trust as they may be able to offer some guidance with these preparations. For more information about the Chapter 61 Program and to see a sample Chapter 61 Policy, please see the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust website (<http://mountgrace.org/>), to download their *Chapter 61 Handbook*.

Demolition Delay Bylaw

Demolition delay bylaws provide a time period in which towns can consider alternatives to demolition of historic buildings and structures. The local historical commission should work with MHC staff to develop a bylaw that would best suit the town and should work with other town groups to publicize the advantages of a demolition delay bylaw to the community. Most demolition delay bylaws apply to structures that were built more than 50 years ago. The most common delay of demolition is six months; however many communities are finding that a one-year delay is more effective. A demolition delay bylaw requires a majority vote of Town Meeting. This tool could help protect historic structures in the West Brookfield Center Historic District from demolition.

Local Historic Districts (LHD)

Local Historic Districts are designated through the adoption of a local ordinance that recognizes 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. West Brookfield should designate the West Brookfield Center Historic District listed on the National Register (including the Railroad Depot extension) as a local historical district.

Preservation Restrictions

Preservation Restrictions protect historic and archaeological properties from changes that may be inappropriate. A Preservation Restriction (easement) on a property restricts present and future owners from altering a specified portion of that building, structure, or site. A restriction can run for a few years or in perpetuity and may be included as part of the property deed. West Brookfield should investigate applying PRs for the 1847 train depot and freight building, Foster Hill and the Pynchon Mill Site. Preservation restrictions can be donated or purchased by a government body or private preservation organization and are enforced by the holder of the restriction. Charitable donations of easements on historical buildings or archaeological sites may qualify for federal income tax deductions.

Scenic Vista Protection Bylaw

This is a preservation planning tool that seeks to protect the scenic qualities of mountains, hills and rolling terrain by requiring additional design criteria for new construction in these visually sensitive areas. A scenic vista protection bylaw can be created in the form of a scenic overlay district or address specific portions of a viewshed such as above a designated elevation and visible from public areas. A scenic protection bylaw is generally administered through site plan review and the development application process. This is another tool that could help to preserve the scenic quality of the area between Route 9 and the Quaboag River and agricultural areas of significant scenic value near the Salem Cross Inn and at Foster Hill.

Smart Growth Zoning – Chapter 40R & 40S

Smart Growth Zoning (Chapter 40R) provides financial rewards to communities that adopt special overlay zoning districts allowing as-of-right high density residential development in areas near transit stations, areas of concentrated development, or areas that are suitable for residential or mixed use development. Such zoning can help direct compact growth to areas that are already developed – such as historic village centers – thereby discouraging growth in less suitable areas. Chapter 40S provides State funding for any net-added school costs that come from children living in newly developed housing within a Smart Growth District. This tool could encourage appropriate mixed-use development to increase the vibrancy of the area around the Olmstead-Quaboag Corset Factory.

Village Center Zoning

The goal of Village Center Zoning is to meet the needs of a small-scale, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly area by encouraging compact development. New construction is required to be built at a scale that is compatible with the neighborhood and to have a reduced (or no) setback from the street. Parking may be directed to discourage large lots in front of buildings. Village Center Zoning shares many similarities with Traditional Neighborhood Development, and the terms are

sometimes used interchangeably. This tool could work in conjunction with a local historic district overlay to help control the types of development that can occur in West Brookfield's center.

Wetlands Protection Act and Bylaws

The Wetlands Protection Act (MGL Chapter 131, Section 40) protects wetlands by requiring a careful review by local conservation commissions of proposed work that may alter wetlands. The law also protects floodplains, riverfront areas, land under water bodies, waterways, salt ponds, fish runs and the ocean. Communities may also adopt their own Wetlands Protection Bylaw, providing stricter regulations than those mandated in Chapter 131. This legislation could also help to preserve the open lands between Route 9 and the Quaboag River across from Ridge Road.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Outreach, Education and Interpretation

In order to create a community of advocates, we need to raise public awareness and broaden the base of support. This includes developing opportunities to learn about and celebrate the places and history of the town, as well as to care for them. West Brookfield's Historical Commission's website contains a "walking tour" of the Center Historic District. Adding priority areas described in this report, including the Western Railroad Depot Area, to this easily accessible resource may further benefit the town's heritage landscapes. They may also consider posting this report to their website in order to have it reach a more broad audience.

Collaboration

Protecting community character, respecting history, and promoting smart growth are interrelated concerns that impact heritage landscapes and require collaboration across a broad spectrum of the community. This includes communication among town boards and departments, as well as public-private partnerships.

Technical Assistance

Regulations and creative solutions for heritage landscapes are constantly changing and emerging. Public and private agencies offer technical assistance with the many issues to be addressed, including DCR, MHC, and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.

Funding Opportunities

Funding rarely comes from a single source, more often depending on collaborative underwriting by private, municipal, and regional sources. Each town also has a variety of funding sources that are locally-based and sometimes site-specific.

A list outlining options for the above strategies can be found in Appendix B.

CONCLUSION

The Heritage Landscape Reconnaissance Report for West Brookfield provides an initial preservation-planning document that identifies priority heritage landscapes and discusses strategies for their long-term protection. West Brookfield contains a rich diversity of heritage landscape types ranging from the preserved colonial agricultural lands on Foster Hill to the 19th century village center, town common and industrial core. These landscapes reflect the strong history and character of the community and are tangible pieces of the West Brookfield story.

This report provides a starting point for preservation strategies but the heritage landscapes identified, especially the priority landscapes, will need additional research and documentation including the preparation of additional MHC inventory forms and survey work. The information provided and further research will allow for better consensus building and the support of the broader community in order to successfully implement the recommendations for these landscapes. Ultimately, preservation and protection implementation requires a collaboration of local boards and commissions, regional and state agencies and non-profit entities.

Many in West Brookfield are already moving forward with a variety of initiatives and projects that advance the celebration and preservation of its heritage landscapes. The Master Plan Committee has outlined an ambitious action plan to maintain the town's rural character and protect its natural resources, and the Historical Commission maintains a wonderfully complete and accessible web-site detailing the significance of West Brookfield's historic resources. There have also been successful partnerships with regional, private, and state agencies including the CMRPC, the Trust for Public Lands, and The Trustees of Reservations (who manage two permanently preserved landscapes in town).

Distribution of this Reconnaissance Report to various municipal boards and commissions involved in making land use decisions will assist West Brookfield with an overall strategy for the preservation of its community's character. The breadth of action steps outlined in this document will require a cooperative effort and a variety of local groups to take the lead on implementation. Recommendations include the potential for adopting Smart Growth Zoning for the Corset Factory, the establishment of a Local Historic District in the center and pursuing Conservation Restrictions for the Pynchon Mill site. There are also significant areas of farmland in the western portion of town that would benefit from participation in the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program. Ultimately, the town should consider the adoption of a Demolition Delay Bylaw to explore preservation options before historic buildings are demolished.

Public outreach that educates the local population regarding the community's heritage landscape resources is also an important tool for increasing awareness and support for their protection. This report provides an important first step for West Brookfield's preservation planning program and can provide the foundation for future historic preservation, conservation and recreation planning

activities. The commitment of the citizens of West Brookfield to their heritage is apparent in the historic landscape character and fabric that makes the town the beautiful and peaceful place it is.

The project team suggests that the following recommendations be the top three priorities for the Town of West Brookfield as it works to protect the heritage landscape character of the community:

1. Adopt the Community Preservation Act
2. Adopt a Demolition Delay Bylaw
3. Establish a Local Historic District for the West Brookfield Center Historic District, and include the Western Railroad Depot Area.

APPENDIX A: WEST BROOKFIELD HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Landscape Name	Landscape Notes
Agricultural	
<i>Talvey's Farm</i>	138 North Main Street
<i>Cranberry Bog</i>	On Route 9, near Howard's Drive-In
<i>Just-a-Mere Farm</i>	110 Snow Road
<i>Saw Mill Farm</i>	54 Cutler Road
<i>Salem Cross Inn & Surrounding Land</i>	253 West Main Street; Salem Cross Inn also identified as a residential landscape - Originally the Peregrine White House. Peregrine White was the first white child born in the Plymouth Settlement to parents who arrived on the Mayflower. He moved his family to West Brookfield from Ipswich.
<i>Foster Hill</i>	Foster Hill Road - Honey Bee Orchard at 39 Foster Hill Road and E. Main Street, area also identified as military landscape
<i>Ragged Hill Orchard</i>	94 John Gilbert Road
Archaeological	
<i>Pynchon Grist Mill</i>	Sucker Brook, North of Wickaboag Valley Road
<i>Jedediah Foster Site</i>	47 Foster Hill Road; Part of the Foster Hill area
<i>Hayward's Mill</i>	North of West Main Street, East of Douglas Road
Burial	
<i>Methodist Cemetery</i>	61 Lyon Road
<i>Old Indian Cemetery</i>	50 Cottage Street
<i>Pine Grove Cemetery</i>	41 Church Street
<i>First Burial Site</i>	On APR land; Part of the Foster Hill area
Civic	
<i>Town Common</i>	Formerly known as Quaboag Park; Part of the West Brookfield Center National Register District (NRDIS)
<i>Town Hall</i>	Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS)
<i>Ye Olde Tavern</i>	Formerly known as Hitchcock Tavern - 7 East Main Street; Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS)

Note: Highlighted landscapes have been designated "Priority Landscapes" by the town or directly correspond to a Priority Landscape

<i>Center Historic District</i>	National Register Historic District - includes common, buildings around the common, and train depot
<i>Merriam Building</i>	8 West Main Street, Printing House; Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS)
<i>Merriam -Gilbert Library</i>	3 West Main Street; Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS)
Industrial	
<i>Corset Factory</i>	34 Pleasant Street, Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS)
<i>Condensed Milk Factory</i>	Was on Milk Street near railroad
<i>Capitol Yeast Company</i>	was at 11 Old Long Hill Road
<i>Ten Footers</i>	Local participants noted home shoe manufacturing workshops still exist throughout town
<i>Old Gold Mine Site</i>	On Route 9 (East Main Street)
Institutional	
<i>School House</i>	215 Ragged Hill Road
<i>School House</i>	44 Ware Street
<i>First Congregational Church</i>	36 North Main Street, Adjacent to the Common; Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS)
<i>Methodist Church</i>	33 West Main Street
<i>Sacred Heart</i>	22 West Main Street
<i>Classical Female Seminary</i>	4 North Main Street, Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS)
Military	
<i>War Monuments</i>	24 East Main Street, on the common; Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS)
<i>Fort Gilbert</i>	Site markers at 7 North Main Street
<i>Hay Makers Massacre Site</i>	Open area between Rt. 9 and the Quaboag River near the cranberry bog.
<i>Devil's Elbow</i>	Military Road off George Allen Road; Part of the Foster Hill area
<i>Knox Trail</i>	Old Boston Post Road

Note: Highlighted landscapes have been designated "Priority Landscapes" by the town or directly correspond to a Priority Landscape

Natural	
<i>Route 9 View to Quaboag River</i>	Especially at the site of 6-parcels currently for sale
<i>Quaboag River</i>	South of Main Street; especially the eastern section
<i>Lake Wickaboag</i>	West Main Street, northern shoreline contains native site (also an archaeological landscape)
<i>Sucker Brook</i>	Shea Road to Wickaboag Valley Road
<i>Tanny Brook</i>	Foster Hill Road, Named for the Tannery that was on its banks
<i>West Brookfield State Forest</i>	Shea Road and Birch Hill Road, State Owned Land
<i>View from Ragged Hill Road</i>	Looking West over the Ware River Valley
Open Space/Recreation	
<i>Town Beach on Wickaboag Lake</i>	Cottage Street, includes a ballfield across the street
Residential	
<i>Indian Rock Farm</i>	64 Foster Hill Road, on APR Land; Part of the Foster Hill area
<i>Chamberlin House</i>	12 Birch Hill Road
<i>Irish Settlement</i>	Ware and Frontage Streets
<i>Church Street Homes</i>	15 Church Street & 2 New Braintree Road
<i>Doctor's Office at the Corner of Church and Main Streets</i>	46 North Main Street & 27 West Main Street; These homes were built by sisters who were competing to see who could have the nicer home. Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS)
<i>Wickaboag House on West Main Street</i>	Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS)
<i>All of the houses in the Historic District</i>	National Register of Historic Places District (no local zone)

Note: Highlighted landscapes have been designated "Priority Landscapes" by the town or directly correspond to a Priority Landscape

Transportation	
<i>Western Rail Road Depot</i>	Oldest Depot of its type; Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS); Ware Street
<i>Boston-Albany Rail Road Depot</i>	Dates to the 1880s; Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS); Front Street
<i>Benjamin Franklin Mile Markers</i>	There are four in town - originally laid out by Ben Franklin along the Boston Post Road
<i>Bay Path Trail</i>	Old Native Trail
<i>Freight Building</i>	14 Freight House Road near Depots; Part of the West Brookfield Center (NRDIS)
<i>Hitching Posts</i>	Old hitching posts throughout town

Note: Highlighted landscapes have been designated "Priority Landscapes" by the town or directly correspond to a Priority Landscape

APPENDIX B: GUIDE TO PRESERVATION & PLANNING TOOLS FOR HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Preservation planning is a four-step process: identification, evaluation, education and protection. Within the realm of protection, there is a vast array of tools that communities can call upon and that are most effective when used in combination with one another. Stewardship of these resources involves education and community support, planning with a clear set of goals, and regulatory mechanisms.

Three useful documents to consult when planning preservation strategies are:

- ◆ Department of Conservation and Recreation, Reading the Land
- ◆ Massachusetts Historical Commission, Survey Manual
- ◆ Massachusetts Historical Commission, Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances

The following three sections detail the resources and strategies available for heritage landscape preservation - from documentation and evaluation, to public education, to regulating activities and finding the revenue necessary to fund the effort. These lists are meant to cover a variety of regional areas and opportunities, all may not apply to any given community.

INVENTORY AND DOCUMENTATION

Massachusetts Historical Commission Records

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.

Survey methodology has advanced since the early work of the 1980s. If a community had survey work done during that time period, it is time for an inventory update, looking at resources in a more comprehensive and connected way than may have been done at that time. Even if survey work is more recent, there may be a need to document more resources throughout the community.

Using the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology:

- ◆ Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not thoroughly researched, 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 prehistoric and historic occupation and to identify known and probable locations of archaeological resources associated with these patterns. Known and potential precontact and historic archaeological sites should be professionally field-checked to evaluate cultural associations and integrity. A professional archaeologist is one who meets the professional qualifications (950 CMR 70.01) outlined in the State Archaeologist Permit Regulations (950 CMR 70.00).

National and State Register Listing

Survey work for the National Register of Historic Places, a program of the National Park Service includes evaluation of whether resources meet the qualifications for its listing. This will provide new information about the eligibility of properties. Using the information generated in the survey work and the accompanying National Register evaluations, expand your town's National Register program.

- ◆ Develop a National Register listing plan, taking into consideration a property's or area's integrity and vulnerability. Properties in need of recognition in order to advance preservation strategies should be given priority. All sites listed on the National Register are automatically added to the State Register.

PLANNING AND ZONING TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Comprehensive, Open Space and other Planning Documents

Communities use a variety of planning exercises and documents to define their goals and vision of the future, address community-wide issues, and recommend measures to respond to them. There are state mandates for towns to prepare Comprehensive or Master Plans and Open Space and Recreation Plans.

- ◆ Comprehensive or Master Plans provide an important frame of reference for land use decisions, and incorporate all of a community's issues including economic development, housing and transportation into an integrated plan. Heritage landscapes need to be seen through the lenses of community character, historic preservation, environmental health,

and economic viability and growth. Their future and the values they contribute should be addressed within these multiple perspectives, not solely as historical assets of the community.

- ◆ Like Comprehensive Plans, Open Space Plans look holistically at the community—its history, demographics and growth patterns, and current conditions—to make recommendations that protect open space and natural resources for ecological health and public benefits. The Heritage Landscape Inventory Program provides a framework for looking at these important resources, and this new understanding should be incorporated into Open Space Plans.
- ◆ Many communities have other plans that have been prepared as well.

Zoning Bylaws and Ordinances

A wide range of laws, bylaws and regulations is available to protect heritage landscapes. Following are brief descriptions of some of the most widely used and/or most effective of these tools, arranged alphabetically.

Adaptive Reuse Overlay District

An Adaptive Reuse Overlay District is superimposed on one or more established zoning districts in order to permit incentive-based reuses of existing built properties. These districts can be created to allow for the adaptive reuse of properties of a certain kind, or within a specified area within a community. As an overlay zone, all regulations pertaining to the underlying zone apply, except to the extent that the overlay zone modifies or provides for alternatives to the underlying requirements.

Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR)

The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program is a voluntary program managed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. It is intended to provide a “non-development” alternative to farmers and other owners of “prime” and “state important” agricultural land. When faced with the inability to actively farm and rising tax assessments, this offers the farmer the opportunity to retain the property rather than sell it for development. The State purchased a permanent deed restriction on the property for the difference between fair market value and agricultural value. The deed restriction would preclude any use of the property that will negatively impact its agricultural viability.

Agricultural Preservation Zoning

An agricultural preservation overlay zone can be created that will promote and protect the practice of farming. This can help to preserve lands on which farming is most viable, lands

that maintain an adequate agricultural base in town and areas that preserve the culture and landscape of farming. This can be accomplished in several ways including requiring all new large-scale residential development to be clustered on areas least suitable for agriculture and away from farms and views. An agricultural preservation bylaw can also use the site plan review process to require dedicated open space to remain as farmland and include that new development be located on least suitable soils for agriculture and be integrated into the existing landscape.

Archaeological Resource Protection

Archaeological sites are non-renewable cultural resources that can be permanently altered or destroyed through unauthorized digging, artifact collection, and development. Protection of archaeological sites can occur through a number of different strategies and mechanisms. An important first step is the development of a town-wide archaeological resource protection plan. Based on a professional reconnaissance survey of resources in the community, this plan would recommend steps for their preservation. Options for protection include acquisition, preservation restrictions, site plan review, an archaeological review bylaw and public education. Reasonable thresholds for local review of archaeological resources should be developed in consultation with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and interested groups such as Native Americans. Reasonable thresholds for local review of archaeological resources should be developed in consultation with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and interested groups such as the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs.

Community Preservation Act

By enabling legislation created in 2000, the Community Preservation Act (CPA) helps communities provide funds for the preservation of open space and historic resources and the creation of affordable housing and recreational facilities. The funds are raised through a property tax surcharge ranging from 0.5% to 3% and are administered by a local Community Preservation Committee. A minimum of 10% of the annual revenues must be used for each of the three core areas: acquisition and preservation of open space, acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes and creation and support of affordable housing. The remaining 70% can be used for any combination of the above uses and for recreational uses.

Conservation Restrictions (CR)

A permanent deed restriction between a landowner and a holder - usually a public agency or a private land trust; whereby the grantor agrees to limit the use of his/her property for the purpose of protecting certain conservation values in exchange for tax benefits. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) Division of Conservation Services provides assistance to landowners, municipalities, and land trusts regarding conservation restrictions

and has produced The Massachusetts Conservation Restriction Handbook as a guide to drafting conservation restrictions.

Corridor Protection Overlay District

A Corridor Protection Overlay District is intended to promote appropriate development within a given corridor, serving to protect natural (and sometimes cultural) resources. As an overlay zone, all regulations pertaining to the underlying zone apply, except to the extent that the overlay zone modifies or provides for alternatives to the underlying requirements. The Corridor Protection Overlay District can be used cooperatively by adjoining communities to help maintain continuous protection across town lines.

Chapter 61 Policy

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 61 was created in the 1970s when many farmers and forestland owners were forced to sell their land due to rising property values and taxes. The legislation became known as the Forestland Act but was quickly followed by Chapter 61A, the Farmland Assessment Act and 61B, the Open Space Act. This new legislation required towns to reduce assessments on farm, forest and open space lands as long as the owners made a commitment to keep their land in that use.

A major provision of this law allows the town the right of first refusal on these lands if the lands are to be sold for residential, commercial or industrial purposes. This provision provides the town with the opportunity to match a fair market value offer for the property. Adoption of a Chapter 61 Policy would outline a response process for the town to follow when these lands come out of the program. This may include a requirement for the select board to collaborate with other town boards, conservation groups and other interested parties, and hold a public meeting. For more information about the Chapter 61 Program and to see a sample Chapter 61 Policy, please see the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust website (<http://mountgrace.org/>), to download their *Chapter 61 Handbook*.

Demolition Delay Bylaw

Demolition delay bylaws provide a time period in which towns can consider alternatives to demolition of historic buildings and structures. The local historical commission should work with MHC staff to develop a bylaw that would best suit the town and should work with other town groups to publicize the advantages of a demolition delay bylaw to the community. Most demolition delay bylaws apply to structures that were built more than 50 years ago. The most common delay of demolition is six months; however many communities are finding that a one-year delay is more effective. A demolition delay bylaw requires a majority vote of Town Meeting.

Design Review

Design Review is a non-regulatory process that is undertaken by a town appointed Design Review Board. The board reviews the design of new construction and additions – typically those taking place in already built-up areas. Recommendations are made to the planning board to help preserve appropriate building patterns and architectural styles, with the goal of maintaining the overall character of a given area. Design Review Boards often limit their review to exterior architectural features, site design and signage.

Downtown Revitalization Zoning

Downtown Revitalization Zoning seeks to encourage businesses to locate in downtowns. Zoning of this nature is typically written to be attractive to businesses of a certain kind that would work well within the given infrastructure and transportation needs, but can also incorporate some of the same elements as Village Center Zoning (see below), such as encouraging mixed use development at a pedestrian-friendly scale, with minimal setbacks and off site parking.

Expedited Local Permitting - Chapter 43D

Expedited Local Permitting (Chapter 43D) provides an efficient process for municipal permitting and grants for up to \$150,000 for such things as professional staffing assistance, local government reorganization, and consulting services. Participating towns benefit from marketing of their site and online promotion of their pro-business regulatory climate. In order to pursue Expedited Local Permitting, a town must have commercial and/or industrial zoning in place for the site, and there must be space for a building of at least 50,000 square feet of floor area.

Flexible Development Zoning

Flexible Development Zoning allows for greater flexibility and creativity when subdividing land, to conform and work with the natural and cultural resources of a site and minimize alteration or damage to these resources, rather than follow standard requirements of subdivision regulations. While this does not prevent land from being subdivided, it does allow for the protection of some features, serves to preserve some undeveloped land, and promotes better overall site planning.

Local Historic Districts (LHD)

Local Historic Districts are designated through the adoption of a local ordinance that recognizes 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.

For more information review the Massachusetts Historic Commission's (MHC) guidebook, [*Establishing Local Historic Districts*](#), available on the MHC website.

Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts (NCD)

Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts (sometimes known as Neighborhood Conservation Districts) are local initiatives that recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of the neighborhood are important. They are less restrictive than Local Historic Districts in that they focus on a few key architectural elements and massing, scale, and setback in an effort to embrace overall neighborhood character. As in Local Historic Districts, changes are reviewed by a Neighborhood Architectural Conservation District Commission.

Open Space Zoning

Open Space Zoning – also known as Cluster Development Bylaw, Open Space Communities Zoning, Open Space Development Overlay District, Open Space Preservation Subdivision, or Open Space Residential Development – allows greater density than would otherwise be permitted on a parcel, in an effort to preserve open space. Typically, construction is limited to half of the parcel, while the remaining land is permanently protected under a conservation restriction.

Preservation Restrictions

Preservation Restrictions protect historic and archaeological properties from changes that may be inappropriate. A Preservation Restriction (easement) on a property restricts present and future owners from altering a specified portion of that building, structure, or site. A restriction can run for a few years or in perpetuity and may be included as part of the property deed. Preservation restrictions can be donated or purchased by a government body or private preservation organization and are enforced by the holder of the restriction. Charitable donations of easements on historical buildings or archaeological sites may qualify for federal income tax deductions.

Rate of Development Bylaw

A town may slow the rate of its growth within reasonable time limits to allow the community to engage in planning and preparation for growth. This measure must be used for the purpose of conducting studies and planning for rational development, and not for restraining the rate of growth for a period of unlimited duration.

Right to Farm Bylaw

A Right to Farm Bylaw asserts the rights of farmers to pursue agricultural activities, provides community support for farming activities and requires dispute resolution so that abutters cannot make nuisance claims. Agricultural landscapes are widely considered to be significant heritage landscapes for which there is constant concern of potential development. This bylaw serves to help active farmers remain just that - active.

Scenic Overlay District Zoning

Scenic Overlay District Zoning protects scenic vistas by providing for a no-disturb buffer on private lands, thereby helping to maintain specific viewpoints. This type of zoning is more far-reaching than a Scenic Roads Bylaw (see below) and may be applied to numbered routes.

Scenic Roads Bylaw

Local roads, owned and maintained by the Town, can be designated as Scenic Roads in order to preserve their rural and/or historic character. A scenic roads bylaw is an effective tool for the preservation of these significant heritage landscapes. Adopted as part of the local zoning bylaws, the scenic roads ordinance requires a public hearing by the planning board before any work is undertaken in a public right-of-way that would involve the cutting of trees or the destruction of stone walls. This bylaw only applies to trees and stone walls within the town-owned right-of-way and to local roads and not state routes.

Scenic Vista Protection Bylaw

This is a preservation planning tool that seeks to protect the scenic qualities of mountains, hills and rolling terrain by requiring additional design criteria for new construction in these visually sensitive areas. A scenic vista protection bylaw can be created as a scenic overlay district to protect a larger area or can address specific views such as those only visible from a certain area or above a certain elevation. A scenic protection bylaw is generally administered through site plan review and the development application process.

Shade Tree Act

The Shade Tree Act is a part of MGL Chapter 87, which defines all trees within the public way as public shade trees. The municipal Tree Warden is responsible for the care, maintenance and protection of all public shade trees (except those along state highways). Trimming or removal of any public shade trees greater than 1.5” in diameter requires a public hearing. Chapter 87 applies to all communities; however, some communities have adopted their own Shade Tree Act Bylaws that provide stricter regulations than those mandated in Chapter 87.

Site Plan Review

Site Plan Review provides the planning board (and other boards and committees, depending how the bylaw is written) with an opportunity to consider a variety of community concerns – such as impacts to vehicular circulation, scenic vistas, topography and natural resources – during the permit process. Boards may comment on site plans and request changes to the design. Site Plan Review is typically limited to large scale projects and tied to the special permit process.

Smart Growth Zoning – Chapter 40R & 40S

Smart Growth Zoning (Chapter 40R) provides financial rewards to communities that adopt special overlay zoning districts allowing as-of-right high density residential development in areas near transit stations, areas of concentrated development, or areas that are suitable for residential or mixed use development. Such zoning can help direct compact growth to areas that are already developed – such as historic village centers – thereby discouraging growth in less suitable areas. Chapter 40S provides State funding for any net-added school costs that come from children living in newly developed housing within a Smart Growth District.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

TDR is a regulatory technique that allows a landowner to separate building or development rights from the property and sell them, receiving compensation for preserving land and allowing for the development to occur in areas selected for higher density projects. In essence, development rights are “transferred” from one district (the “sending district”) to another (the “receiving district”). As a result, development densities are shifted within the community to achieve both open space preservation and economic goals without changing overall development potential.

Village Center Zoning

The goal of Village Center Zoning is to meet the needs of a small-scale, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly area by encouraging compact development. New construction is required to be built at a scale that is compatible with the neighborhood and to have a reduced (or no) setback from the street. Parking may be directed to discourage large lots in front of buildings. Village Center Zoning shares many similarities with Traditional Neighborhood Development, and the terms are sometimes used interchangeably.

Wetlands Protection Act and Bylaws

The Wetlands Protection Act (MGL Chapter 131, Section 40) protects wetlands by requiring a careful review by local conservation commissions of proposed work that may alter wetlands. The law also protects floodplains, riverfront areas, land under water bodies, waterways, salt ponds, fish runs and the ocean. Communities may also adopt their own Wetlands Protection Bylaw, providing stricter regulations than those mandated in Chapter 131.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Outreach, Education and Interpretation

The best stewards and advocates for heritage landscape protection are members of the community. There are many ways to communicate the importance of these special places to the public, and to connect their preservation with the shared values and goals that community members have already expressed in various planning documents and forums.

Think creatively about how to educate the community about the values and threats to heritage landscapes, and how each town resident benefits from these special places. Use a combination of strategies to get the word out about heritage landscapes and preservation of community character, including:

- ◆ **Festivals and Tours** – Tours are a great way to draw attention to the history around us, and to engage more people in caring for it. Consider hosting a Heritage Celebration Day including tours and family-friendly activities, or plan a celebration around a particular place or area on a meaningful date. Make sure events are well publicized.
- ◆ **Signage and Banners** – Signs are a very effective way to announce special historic sites and districts. Banners can also bring attention to the significance of an area and make a celebratory statement about its contribution to the town.
- ◆ **Written Materials** – Clear, concise and engaging written material with engaging illustrations is a reliable way to relay information about community character and heritage landscapes. Make use of fact sheets and flyers to get the word out on particular issues such as a town ordinance that protects heritage landscapes, a threat that needs to be addressed, or an upcoming event.
- ◆ **School Curricula** – Start teaching at a young age. Children are very receptive to engaging stories, and there are no better stories to excite childrens’ imaginations and build pride of place than stories of their town’s past and present. Teachers have an opportunity to connect history with environmental issues through classroom study, hands-on history projects, and field exploration of a town’s heritage landscapes. Subsequently, students have an opportunity to teach their parents that preservation is everybody’s business.
- ◆ **Lectures and Workshops** – Use these forums to raise awareness, educate at a deeper level about the community’s history and its resources, and broaden the base of interest.
- ◆ **Website** – Keep Historical Commission and local historical organizations’ entries on the town’s website current, and include information about issues, proposals for preservation strategies, and upcoming events.
- ◆ **Press Releases** – Use all avenues including press releases to keep the public informed

when a meeting or event is about to occur. Work with local reporters to develop special interest articles that highlight landscape resources.

Remember that bringing an issue or a heritage landscape to people's attention once will have only short-term effect. Outreach, education and interpretation must be ongoing concerns that involve preservation and conservation interests, teachers and community organizations in repeated projects to attract and engage the general public.

Collaboration Opportunities

Because heritage landscapes encompass such a broad range of resources and issues—from preservation of town centers, scenic roads and river corridors to promotion of smart growth and economic development – stewardship of these resources involves many interests in a community. It is essential that there be good communication between the many departments and committees that address issues related to heritage landscapes. Collaboration between public and private partners is also an essential element in a successful preservation strategy.

- ◆ Broaden the base. Preservation, particularly preservation of landscapes, is not just for the Historical Commission. It is important that the cause not be marginalized by those who view preservation as opposed to progress, or to personal interests. A look at DCR's Reading the Land shows the range of organizations and viewpoints that value heritage landscapes.
- ◆ Nurture public-private partnerships. Friends groups, neighborhood associations, and local land trusts all have important roles to play to spread the word, and to expand the capacity of the public sector to care for heritage landscapes.
- ◆ Take advantage of forums created to share issues and ideas. For instance, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources offers a "cluster" format for monthly discussion and information exchange meetings among area farmers.
- ◆ Share resources across communities. Towns that lack funding for a town planner position, for instance, have found that "sharing" a planner with another community can be quite effective.

Technical Assistance

Beyond DCR, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership, technical assistance is available from many governmental and non-profit sources, most often free of charge to municipalities and non-profit organizations.

- ◆ American Farmland Trust: Clearinghouse of information supporting farmland protection and stewardship.
- ◆ Regional planning agencies are charged with assisting communities with local planning efforts:
 - Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission serves the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program towns of Barre, Brookfield, East Brookfield, Hardwick, North Brookfield, Spencer, Warren and West Brookfield.
 - Franklin Regional Council of Government serves the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program towns of Orange and Warwick.
 - The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission serves the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program towns of Athol, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, and Templeton.
- ◆ The North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership provides assistance and small grants to help protect ecologically, historically, economically, and culturally significant open space within the North Quabbin Region.
- ◆ The Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust is a regional non-profit organization that assists with conservation efforts of productive farm and forest land in parts of central and western Massachusetts.
- ◆ Citizen Planner Training Collaborative: Provides local planning and zoning officials with training opportunities and online information; they also hold an annual conference to support land use planning.
- ◆ Massachusetts Historical Commission: Provides technical assistance as well as grants to municipalities and non-profits for preservation planning and restoration projects.
- ◆ New England Small Farm Institute: A non-profit dedicated to providing technical assistance, information and training to farmers.
- ◆ The Trustees of Reservations: Offers conservation and landscape protection workshops, publications and connections through the Putnam Conservation Institute. The Trustees also manages a unique Conservation Buyer Program that links interested sellers with conservation-minded buyers and assists with establishing permanent property protection mechanisms.
- ◆ Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources is the state agency dedicated to supporting the agricultural activities in the state through special initiatives, programs and technical assistance.
- ◆ The Trust for Public Land is a national non-profit that assists municipalities with land conservation efforts.
- ◆ DCR's Lakes and Ponds Program works with local groups and municipalities to protect, manage and restore these valuable aquatic resources. They provide technical assistance to communities and citizen groups, help to monitor water quality at various public beaches

to ensure public safety, and provide educational materials to the public about a range of lake issues.

- ◆ Massachusetts Agricultural Commissions has recently launched a new website that includes helpful information both for communities with Agricultural Commissions and for those learning more about forming one.
- ◆ UMASS extension (NREC) – Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation) can provide assistance on issues related to land and water resource protection, smart growth/sustainability measures and forestry and farming management.
- ◆ The East Quabbin Land Trust provides assistance to protect ecological and historic landscapes through the conservation and stewardship of the farmlands, woodlands and waters of 8 Central Massachusetts towns
- ◆ Opacum Land Trust provides assistance to protect ecologically and culturally significant open space within 13 south-central Massachusetts towns.

Funding Opportunities

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing strategies to protect heritage landscapes. There are local, state, regional, national and non-profit funding programs and resources that can assist communities in preservation and land conservation-related issues. The availability of such assistance varies from year to year and private property is not always eligible for funding. Examples include:

Local Funding Assistance

- ◆ Towns that have adopted the **Community Preservation Act (CPA)** find it to be an excellent funding source for many heritage landscape projects. While tricky to pass in lean economic times, the number and types of projects that are benefiting across the Commonwealth makes the CPA worthy of consideration. Such projects 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 0.5% 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 by ballot vote at a local election.

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 city or town believes are appropriate and beneficial to the municipality. Additional information about the CPA can be found at www.communitypreservation.org.

- ◆ Municipalities can establish land acquisition funds, increasing their revenue from sources such as an annual fixed line item in the municipal budget; income from forestry, farming and leasing of town-owned land; gifts and bequests; grants and foundation funding; and passage of the CPA, detailed above.

State Funding Assistance

Funding for a variety of preservation projects, primarily for municipalities and non-profit, is available through the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), the EOEEA Division of Conservation Services (DCS), the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and other state agencies. Further information on these programs is available on the agency websites.

- ◆ **MHC Survey and Planning Grants** support survey, National Register and a wide variety of preservation planning projects.
- ◆ The **Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF)**, administered through the MHC, funds restoration and rehabilitation projects.
- ◆ Towns that have a local historic district bylaw may apply for **Certified Local Government (CLG)** status which is granted by the National Park Service (NPS) through the MHC. At least 10% of the MHC's yearly federal funding allocation is distributed to CLG communities through Survey and Planning matching grants. To become a CLG, the town completes an application; after being accepted as a CLG, it files a report yearly on the status of applications, meetings, and decisions; in return the town may apply for the matching grant funding that the MHC awards competitively to CLGs annually. Presently 18 cities and towns in Massachusetts are CLGs. **NOTE:** CLG status is dependent in part on a municipality having at least one Local Historical District as evidence of the community's commitment to historic preservation.

Open Space Plans, with a requirement of updating the plan every five years, make a community eligible for **Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) grants** and technical assistance programs through the Department of Conservation Services.

- ◆ The Massachusetts LAND Program of DCS assists local conservation commissions in acquiring land for the purposes of natural and cultural resource protection and passive outdoor recreation.
- ◆ The Massachusetts PARC Program, another DCS initiative, is geared toward assisting towns and cities in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes.
- ◆ DCS Conservation Partnership Grants assist non-profits in acquiring interests in land for conservation or recreation, and have also been used in the past to help protect active agricultural lands.
- ◆ The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, distributed through the DCS, can support heritage landscape protection by providing up to 50% of the total project cost for the acquisition or renovation of park, recreation or conservation areas. Municipalities, special districts and state agencies are eligible to apply.

The **Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)** administers a variety of grant programs that can help with heritage landscape preservation:

- ◆ Urban and Community Forestry grants fund projects which will result in sustained improvements in local capacity for excellent urban and community forestry management.
- ◆ The Recreational Trails Grant Program provides funding on a reimbursement basis for a variety of recreational trail protection, construction, and stewardship projects.

The **Department of Agricultural Resources** Farm Viability Enhancement Program works with farmers to develop sound business plans and funding assistance to implement them.

Regional and Non-Profit Funding Assistance

- ◆ The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national, nonprofit, land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, community gardens, historic sites, rural lands and other natural places. TPL helps communities identify and prioritize lands to be protected; secure financing for conservation; and structure, negotiate and complete land transactions. TPL's New England Office recently launched the Worcester

County Conservation Initiative, to accelerate the pace of land conservation in central Massachusetts by helping communities plan and finance conservation projects.

- ◆ The National Trust for Historic Preservation offers a variety of financial assistance programs. Based on the availability of funding, the National Trust awards more than \$2 million in grants and loans each year for preservation projects nationwide.
- ◆ Regional planning organizations do not administer grants, but can work with communities to write grants or help them find funding:
 - Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission serves the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program towns of Barre, Brookfield, East Brookfield, Hardwick, North Brookfield, Spencer, Warren and West Brookfield.
 - Franklin Regional Council of Government serves the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program towns of Orange and Warwick.
 - The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission serves the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program towns of Athol, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, and Templeton.
- ◆ The North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership offers a Small Grants Program to eligible organizations. More information can be found at: <http://www.nqpartnership.org/sgp.htm>. The Partnership also provides technical assistance.

Federal Funding Assistance

- ◆ The Farmland and Ranchland Protection Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has protected 85 farms to date in Massachusetts on 6,335 acres with matching funds. Eligible organizations are federally recognized Indian tribes, states, local government, and nongovernmental organizations. They are required to provide 50-50 matching funds for purchase of conservation easements in land with prime, productive soils that are subject to a pending offer, for the purpose of limiting conversion to non-agricultural uses of the land.
- ◆ The National Park Service's Rivers & Trails Program provides technical assistance to community groups and government agencies so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. The program does not offer grants, but can provide staff to help identify needs, assist partners in navigating the planning process, and help with organizational development and capacity building. The program can serve as a catalyst for successful trail development and conservation efforts.

APPENDIX C: WORKS CITED

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