

NEWTON'S HERITAGE LANDSCAPES: A COMMUNITY-BASED RECONNAISSANCE REPORT



**Newton Planning & Development Department
Newton Community Preservation Committee**

City of Newton



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

PROJECT TEAM

Newton Planning & Development Department

Amy Yuhasz, Community Development Program Manager
Alice Ingerson, Community Preservation Program Manager
Brian Lever, Senior Preservation Planner

Newton History Museum (Jackson Homestead)

Susan G. Abele, Curator of Manuscripts & Photographs

Newton Parks & Recreation Department

Carol Schein, Open Space Coordinator

Project Consultants

Shary Page Berg, Landscape Preservation Consultant
Gretchen G. Schuler, Preservation Planner

City of Newton

Planning & Development Department

City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Ave.
Newton, MA 02459

April 2009, final revisions March 2010



Cover Photographs: *Charles River at Echo Bridge,
Coletti-Magni Park and Washington Park*

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Methodology	2
Newton History	3
Heritage Landscape Themes and Priority Landscapes	7
Waterways and Their Associated Landscapes	
Charles River	
Cheesecake Brook	
Crystal Lake	
Village Centers and Their Defining Features	
Villages	
Railroad Stations	
Branch Libraries	
Community Spaces Outside Village Centers	
Neighborhoods	
Small Parks and Triangles	
Community-wide Issues	
Existing Resource Documentation and Planning Tools	33
Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets	
State and National Registers of Historic Places	
Planning Documents and Tools	
General Preservation Planning Recommendations	37
Inventory of Heritage Landscapes	
National Register Program	
Village and Neighborhood Character	
Scenic Roads	
Funding of Preservation Projects	
Conclusions	42
Appendix: Heritage Landscapes Identified by Community ,	43

The appendix is posted separately on the Newton CPC website and was last updated in **April 2015**.

INTRODUCTION

The Newton Planning and Development Department and the Community Preservation Committee have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program to the City of Newton. The primary goals of the program are to identify a wide range of landscape resources and to provide strategies for preserving these landscapes, especially those that are most valued by the community.

The Heritage Landscape program is a community-based process through which local participants come together to compile a list of special places in the community. Traditional preservation techniques such as historic resource surveys, preservation plans, National Register listing and local historic district designation are powerful tools for dealing with buildings, but are often less effective in dealing with other resource types, including the context and setting of buildings and the more subtle values that contribute to the quality of life in a community. The Heritage Landscape program encompasses cultural, natural and associative values, using a multi-disciplinary approach in understanding the community and developing preservation strategies. It also brings together a wide range of community perspectives in a process that is integrative, inclusive and participatory.

The program uses a broad definition of heritage landscapes as “special places, created by human interaction with the natural environment, that help define the character of the community and reflect its past.” Heritage landscapes are dynamic and evolving; they reflect the history of the community and provide a sense of place; they show the environmental features that influenced land use patterns; and they often (but not always) have scenic qualities.

These diverse landscapes are central to Newton’s character, yet they are vulnerable and ever-changing. For this reason it is important to take steps towards their preservation by identifying those that are particularly valued by the community – a favorite local park, a distinctive neighborhood or village center, a unique natural feature or an important river corridor. For the purposes of this report and the Heritage Landscape program in Newton, heritage landscapes encompass landscapes at a variety of scales from tiny traffic triangles to the Charles River corridor, as well as features within the City that serve as visual and social landmarks. Many are scenic, others are not, and not all meet traditional criteria for historical significance.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the Heritage Landscape Inventory program was developed in a pilot project conducted in southeast Massachusetts and refined in Essex County and the Freedom’s Way Heritage Area. It has continued in the Blackstone Valley, Pioneer Valley and in western Massachusetts, all under the leadership of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The DCR publication *Reading the Land* has provided guidance for the program since its inception.

Over the past eight years this methodology has been employed on a regional basis in over 100 communities across the Commonwealth, ranging from tiny villages to large cities such as Fall River and Lawrence. Newton was the first community to adopt the Heritage Landscape Inventory program on its own (rather than on a regional basis) and the methodology has been adapted to the needs of a diverse, sophisticated urban community.

Four landscape identification meetings were held in different parts of the City (rather than the one held in other communities). The consultant team also worked closely with Planning and Development Department staff, who were able to draw on the considerable resource documentation and planning work already accomplished in Newton as context for the issues raised by community members.

The community meetings were held on September 9, 11, 17 and October 1, 2008 at various locations throughout the City. Each meeting began with a brief presentation describing the idea of heritage landscapes as special places valued by the community. Next, residents and city officials identified a wide range of landscapes that were important to them. Once the list of landscapes was compiled, participants were asked to describe each landscape in more detail. At the end of each meeting residents were asked to select a small number of priority landscapes that are highly valued and vulnerable to change. In Newton, unlike in most communities, the landscapes most valued by the community fell into three broad thematic categories: waterways and their associated landscapes; village centers and their defining features; and community spaces outside village centers. The clarity with which these themes emerged is an important finding of this report. Residents also identified several city-wide issues that were incorporated into the process as well.

The community meetings were followed by a fieldwork session to visit the priority landscapes that were most frequently identified in the meetings, as well as to look at examples of city-wide issues. The final product is this Reconnaissance Report, which outlines the history of the community; describes the heritage landscape themes and priority landscapes; identifies planning tools available; and concludes with preservation recommendations. A list of all of the heritage landscapes identified by the residents of Newton is included in the Appendix.

NEWTON HISTORY

Native Americans and European Settlement

The Native American history of Newton dates back to the Middle Archaic Period (8,000-6,000 B.P.) with confirmed sites from this period through the Contact Period (1500-1620). Seasonal fishing of the Charles River and its tributaries, and shell fishing in the estuarine conditions up to Watertown, made the Newton area significant to local Native populations.

The small Native population on Nonantum Hill, overlooking what is now the Commonwealth Golf Course, became part of the Reverend John Eliot's first "Praying Indian" village in the 1640s and moved to South Natick in 1650.

European settlers established "New Town" in 1630, which was renamed Cambridge in 1636. It included the lands south of the Charles River that, in 1688, became the town of Newton. European settlement in Newton began with thirteen founding families, commemorated on the First Settlers Monument in the East Parish Burying Ground. By the late seventeenth century, about 50 to 60 European families lived here, with a total 300 people. This population grew slowly to 60 families and just over 1,300 people by 1765. The rate of growth remained slow until about 1830, when Newton residents numbered around 1,850.

Newton's Villages and Dispersed Settlement Patterns

In 1660, Deacon John Jackson (ca. 1602-1675), one of the first permanent residents in the area, gave one acre of land for a Burying Ground, which was laid out at the corner of Centre and Cotton streets. The First Meeting House was built inside the new Burying Ground. A powder house, pound and schoolhouse were built nearby, and together with the Burying Ground and Meeting House defined the area that came to be known as Newton Centre.

As settlement became dispersed throughout the eighteen square-mile area of the town, villages coalesced at Upper and Lower Falls on the Charles River, and at Ainger's Corner (now Newton Corner). A second meeting house constructed in 1764, and the town's division into an east and west parish in 1778, fixed the location of the West Newton village center.

Despite occasional efforts to divide the town along parish or village lines, Newton has to this day remained a single municipal entity, with the villages retaining individual characteristics while remaining part of the whole.

Rivers, Roads and Rails

On the Charles River, fish weirs were maintained at Upper Falls and near Watertown Square. The first known gristmill was on Smelt Brook (also known as Cold Spring Brook) at Bullough's Pond in 1644. By 1688 the first saw and gristmills at Upper Falls had been established and an ironworks was located at Lower Falls in 1722. Additional mills such as the Bemis Mills, an early paper mill, sprang up on the Charles River near Bridge Street ca. 1760.

Early transportation routes in and through Newton followed Native American trails and evolved into roads named after their destinations: the Dedham Road, the Sherborn Road, and the Natick Road. These routes crisscrossed the town, providing access to widely separated farms and emerging villages, as well as to the towns beyond.

The Dedham Road was primary a north-south route that led along what is now Centre Street from Watertown, past Wiswall's Pond (Crystal Lake), to the current Dedham Street. From the intersection of Dedham and Centre streets, a path also led to the Upper Falls. The circuitous Sherborn Road wound from east to west along Heath, Florence, Jackson and Clark streets towards Centre Street, and then along Woodward and Beacon streets to Lower Falls. Another route known as the Natick Road lead from east to west from the Watertown Bridge along Washington Street to Lower Falls.

Beginning in the 1830s the railroads ushered in a new era. The Boston and Worcester Railroad (later the Boston and Albany) was the first to initiate service to areas outside of Boston, making Newton one of the first areas in New England to experience suburban development. North-side villages along the rail line included Newton Corner, Newtonville, West Newton, and Auburndale. Due to improved transportation on the north side, in 1848, the administrative center of government shifted from Newton Centre to West Newton. The railroad linked some pre-existing village centers, and created others wherever a stop or station was built. In 1859, the town's first separate High School was built in the village of Newtonville, which was first known as Hull's Crossing.

Industrial railroad service to Upper Falls began in 1852 with the opening of the Charles River Railroad. In the 1860s that line was used to transport gravel from Needham to fill Boston's Back Bay. Upon completion of the Back Bay project, the tracks were re-built and the line was extended to Riverside. This created what became known as the Circuit Railroad, connecting both the north and south sides of Newton to Boston in one large loop. This line brought service to Chestnut Hill and Newton Centre and fostered the development of new villages at Newton Highlands and Waban.

Other nineteenth-century transportation improvements included the introduction and expansion of streetcar lines throughout the City, the widening of Washington Street, the extension of Commonwealth Avenue from the Brighton line to Auburndale in 1895-96, and the lowering of the tracks on both the north and south-side rail lines.

Economic Development in the 19th and 20th Centuries

In the nineteenth century a variety of industries proliferated in Newton: rolling mills, snuff mills, cotton and thread mills as well as machine shops (for textile machinery), nail manufacturing, and even silk making. In the second half of the nineteenth century the greatest production was of paper, iron and cotton. In addition, a couple of small manufactories were devoted to furniture. By the end of the nineteenth century, the most prominent manufacturers were on the north side of Newton, in the area that came to be known as Nonantum, and at Upper Falls. The Newton Machine Company, which became Nonantum Worsted

(giving the area its name), and the Silver Lake Cordage factory dominated the Nonantum area.

At Upper Falls, the Pettee Machine Company, later called the Saco-Lowell Machine Shop, thrived well into the twentieth century. The Gamewell Alarm Company in Upper Falls also operated into the twentieth century.

Growth and Change in the 19th Century

Railroad access, along with industrial development at Upper Falls and Nonantum, was pivotal in the growth of the community from 2,500 residents when the railroad was instituted to 20,000 by 1885. With a growing population, the town began to grapple with the need to provide public services. In 1873, Newton became a City, and the West Newton meeting house was rebuilt to become the City Hall. The City embarked on projects to develop its infrastructure, first constructing its own water system and later joining the Metropolitan sewer system, as well as building new roads, schools, fire stations and other public facilities.

Immigrants helped to swell the town's population and contribute to the growth of the community. From mid-century on, public works and transportation projects, as well as the local paper and textile industries, provided jobs for Irish and French, and later Italians. A strong black community gathered around the Myrtle Baptist Church in West Newton and Jews built the first Synagogue on Adams Street in Nonantum in the early twentieth century.

Building a 19th-century "Garden City"

Surrounded on three sides by the Charles River, with easy access to Boston and the metropolitan area, Newton's picturesque landscape drew men and women eager to live and raise their families in Newton. They built homes, they created educational, social, and cultural organizations, and they nurtured the development of a progressive community that became known in the late nineteenth century as the "Garden City."

Tree planting in village centers, creation of a garden cemetery, and picturesque landscaping of large estates set the City's tone. Creation of Farlow Park and the Newton Centre Playground established a pattern of commitment to beautification. Along the riverfront, where recreation would eventually replace industry, the Metropolitan Park Commission created the Hemlock Gorge reservation with Echo Bridge as its focal point. Norumbega Park, established by the Commonwealth Avenue Street Railway Company, became a destination because of its beautiful riverfront location.

New railroad stations, designed by the eminent architect H. H. Richardson and landscaped by Fredrick Law Olmsted, became examples of the Railroad Beautiful movement.

Celebrating the city's image, the local newspaper published a book entitled *Newton, Garden City of the Commonwealth, 1874-1902*, and a later edition entitled *Beautiful Newton*. The importance of the built environment from this era was recognized in a reconnaissance survey done by the Massachusetts Historical

Commission in the 1970s, which suggested that Newton had the best collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth architecture in the greater Boston area.

Growth and Change in the 20th Century

The twentieth century witnessed a continued rise in population, with expansion of residential neighborhoods, commercial areas and civic services, but a decline in industrial development. A City Forestry Department was created to plant and care for trees throughout the City, and a Playground Commission was appointed to oversee programs and playgrounds in the villages.

A desire to manage all this growth led to the publication of Newton's first zoning report in 1921. The rising popularity of the automobile was an important component in this report and began to be reflected even in state transportation planning. In 1932, the Worcester Turnpike, built in 1809, became a divided highway known as Route 9. At the same time most streetcar lines went out of business and were replaced by buses. Automobiles and buses particularly improved transportation to the south side of Newton, where the absence of rail and trolley lines, and their associated rising land values, allowed farms to survive well into the mid-twentieth century.

During the Great Depression and World War II, Newton's population fell and building nearly ceased for a time. Following the war, however, population rose again abruptly. The resulting housing crisis in turn led the City to initiate development of veterans' housing in Oak Hill Park, as private developers created innumerable modest subdivisions throughout the city.

In the 1950s, the south side railroad went out of business and the line was again rebuilt, opening in 1956 as the D-branch of the Boston transit system's Green Line. The primacy of the automobile was becoming more and more evident, however. During this period the circumferential highway, Route 128, which originally passed through Newton via Walnut Street, was rerouted to the western end of the city. In the early 1960s the Massachusetts Turnpike, which traversed the state from the western border to the Charles River, was extended through Newton to Boston. The taking of land and buildings for the turnpike extension routed over part of the original Boston and Worcester rail bed created significant disruption, particularly in the villages of Newton Corner and Auburndale. A significant portion of the neighborhood around Myrtle Baptist Church was lost to the Turnpike.

Public Landscapes in the 20th Century

In the early twentieth century, local improvement associations worked to improve what they saw as unsightly triangles of land in Newton Centre and in Newtonville. In 1904, for example, the newly formed Newtonville Improvement Association acquired the land at the intersection of Lowell Avenue and Watertown Street, demolished a row of dilapidated two-family houses and gave the site to the city for a small park.

In the early 1930s, a street railway station, flanked by a row of three-decker houses facing Walnut Street and a car dealership on Commonwealth Avenue, anchored the triangle at the intersection of Commonwealth, Walnut and Fuller.

This triangle became the site of for the new City Hall and War Memorial, dedicated November 11, 1932. Designed to resemble Philadelphia's Independence Hall, the City Hall and the War Memorial, with its monumental façade, made good use of the awkward site in its landscaped, park-like setting designed by the Olmsted firm. The new City Hall created a focal point for the city. At the dedication Mayor Sinclair Weeks stressed the building's central location, its accessibility, and the fact that it belonged not to one village or another, but to the entire city. In 1991, a new Main Library opened on an adjacent site, adding to the civic amenities at this site.

Heritage Landscapes for a Livable 21st Century

Newton's population peaked in 1970 at over 93,000 residents. By 2009 it dropped to nearly 84,000, while the number of residential units increased slightly from 29,000 to just over 31,000. In the second half of the twentieth century, new and more complex planning issues arose. An Urban Renewal project in Newton Lower Falls stimulated community interest in Newton's mill villages and led to designation of Newton Upper Falls as the city's first local historic district. More recently, the last operating private farm was acquired with community preservation funds and as a thriving "community-supported agriculture" operation, became a visible, permanent reminder of Newton's lost rural economy and landscapes.

Historic preservation, open space, and affordable housing are complicated issues, as are commercial development, traffic congestion, energy conservation and climate change. Newton has inherited a collection of buildings and landscapes that represent the city's full, rich history of work, play, and beauty. Its citizens, government, boards, and commissions must share the challenge of preserving the essential building blocks of the community and creating a sustainable future for the City.

HERITAGE LANDSCAPE THEMES AND PRIORITY LANDSCAPES

Newton's four landscape identification meetings were attended by local residents, some representing city boards and commissions as well as local non-profit organizations. During each meeting residents compiled a list of special places that they considered important to the character of the City. Once the list was completed, participants at each meeting identified a group of priority landscapes. At the conclusion of the series of meetings, the four landscape lists were compiled into a single master list organized by land use category. That list is included in the Appendix.

The priority landscapes identified at the individual meetings were also compiled into a single list. Those with the broadest support city-wide fall into three major landscape themes, which have become a major organizing feature of this report.

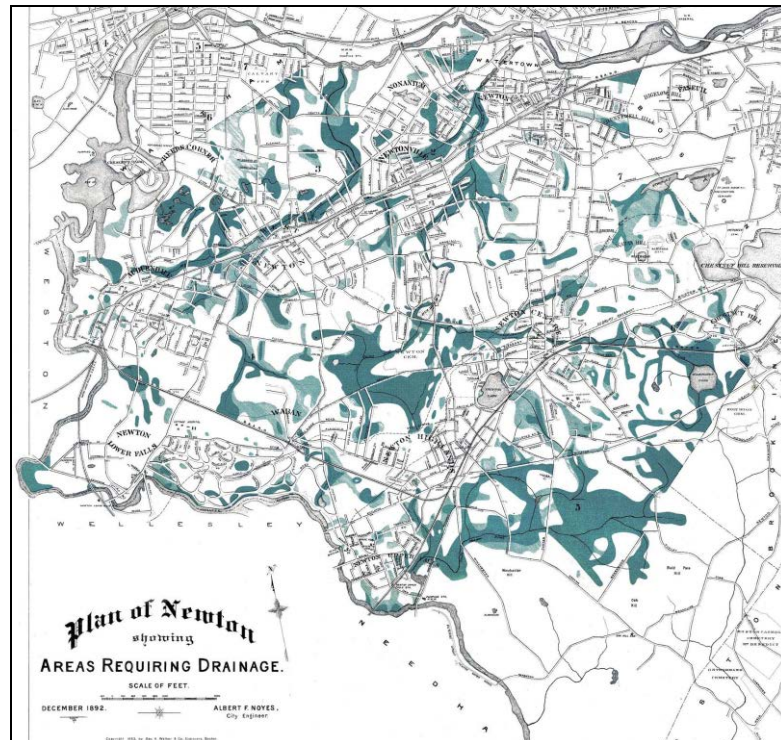
- Waterways and their associated landscapes;
 - Village centers and their defining features;
 - Community spaces outside village centers;
-

In addition, several issues about types of resources were repeated themes of discussion at the community meetings. These are discussed briefly at the end of this section of the report as city-wide issues. Community members and city staff alike identified these categories as overall priorities. The particular examples highlighted in each category, however, inevitably reflect the different levels of organization or activism in the particular neighborhoods where community meetings were held, the knowledge and concerns of the people who came to the meetings, and the timing of the meetings. For example, a controversial budget decision to close Newton's branch libraries preceded by only a few weeks the meetings held to identify landscapes for this report. Yet nearly every meeting also looked beyond immediate neighborhood concerns. The task of listing special places led to discussions about what made these places special, which in turn led to enthusiastic conversations and questions about the history and future of the city as a whole.

These interrelated categories and issues, and the resources within each category and issue, make up the tapestry of Newton. Waterways and associated landscapes informed the early land use patterns, which were then affected by transportation corridors linking the waterways, the village centers and the spaces in between such as neighborhoods and parks and roadways. These priority landscapes represent a range of scales and types of resources from railroad stations to the Charles River corridor, which forms nearly half of the City's borders. Several of the priority landscapes combine multiple sites or landscapes, of which many may be listed independently in the Appendix. Such layering shows the complexity and interdependence typical of heritage landscapes. The descriptions and recommendations included here are an initial step in identifying resources valued by the community and in suggesting strategies for action.

WATERWAYS AND THEIR ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPES

As historical and present day maps suggest, Newton's heritage waterscapes and landscapes are closely intertwined. Early land use patterns were shaped by the interrelationship between waterways and land quality. Thus, it is no accident that many of the city's largest parks and conservation areas are clustered around ponds or along waterways. Historically, the areas that were still undeveloped in the last quarter of the 19th century, when movements to create public parks and playgrounds gained momentum, were most often those that had been considered too low-lying and wet for profitable farming, or for urban development.



Waterways Map of 1892

Charles River Corridor

Description/Issues

Water has been a common theme in shaping the land use patterns of Newton, and its importance to the community is reflected in three of the priority landscapes. The Charles River surrounds and defines the western half of Newton. The Charles was used for transportation, while also acting as an impediment to travel. Construction of dams, bridges, alterations to the channel and even water diversions are critical to telling the story of Newton and establishing a background for the selection of priority heritage landscapes. It is no coincidence that many of the parks and conservation areas in Newton are associated with waterways or waterbodies, as are some of the remaining large tracts of privately-owned “open space.”

The Charles River originates in Hopkinton’s Echo Lake and flows easterly and northeasterly through 22 suburban Boston cities and towns including Newton. Its total length from point of origin to its mouth is 80 miles; however its watershed including innumerable brooks, streams, lakes and ponds is much broader, affecting 35 municipalities. The Charles River forms much of the southwestern, western and northern border of Newton, separating it from Needham, Wellesley, Weston, Waltham and Watertown. At the northwest edge of Newton the Charles meanders farther north through Waltham until returning to the Newton border near Nonantum. East of Newton the Charles River flows between Cambridge on its north shore and Boston, which is south of the river, to Boston Harbor.

In Newton, there are about 12 miles of river frontage, publicly and privately owned. Access to the riverfront occurs sporadically along its route. Beginning at the most southern or upstream end of the Charles bordering Newton, the river passes along the following roads and public spaces:

- Nahanton Park – a 57-acre city-owned reservation that connects to the Charles River Path and is accessed from Nahanton Street and includes a short section of wheelchair accessible trail known as Florrie’s Path;



Charles River at Nahanton Park

- Upper Falls Playground – on Chestnut Street sloping down to the river;
 - The Falls, Echo Bridge and Hemlock Gorge – The Falls, which is above Echo Bridge, provided power for the mills; Echo Bridge (1876) was built to carry the Sudbury Aqueduct over the river. Today the bridge has a pedestrian trail on top linking Newton and Needham. This area is known as Charles River Reservation, including Hemlock Gorge, which was set aside in 1895 by the Metropolitan Park Commission (predecessor to MDC, now the Department of Conservation and Recreation or DCR);
 - Quinobequin Road – after passing under Route 9 the river flows the length of this DCR-owned parkway. The frontage between the river and Quinobequin Road is owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation;
 - Lower Falls – after flowing under I-95 the river winds around Lower Falls passing through Lower Falls Reservation and the DCR-owned Leo J. Martin Golf Course which is in Newton and Weston;
 - Riverside Park – on the north side of Commonwealth Avenue and where the Charles River Boathouse is located;
-

- Norumbega Park Conservation Area – a 13-acre remnant of the old amusement park, much of which was later converted to the present Marriott Hotel;
- Auburndale Park and Forest Grove at Ware’s Cove – the 37-acre Auburndale Park, acquired by the City in 1893 and developed in the 1930s into a park with stone walls, sand pits, and play equipment, has a number of recreational activities. It is accessed from West Pine Street. The 2.6 acre Forest Grove peninsula connects to the park;
- Flowed Meadow Conservation Area – a 28-acre area of wetlands, a kettle hole, and wildlife habitat, adjacent to the river and connecting to Auburndale Park;
- Cheesecake Brook Area – an important tributary that enters the Charles River near the new DCR trail and pedestrian bridge (Note: Cheesecake Brook was also identified as a priority landscape in its own right.);
- Bemis Dam Site – at the site of the 18th century Bemis mills where there was an historic dam, of which remnants are extant including traces of the 1778 raceways;
- Charles River Walkway – DCR-owned pedestrian trail along the northern section of the Charles River in Nonantum.

The Charles River has a number of stewards (state, regional, and local) who help to preserve the quality of this vital heritage landscape. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owns several sections of Charles River frontage in Newton including the Quinobequin and Echo Bridge area, as well as other narrower sections. DCR recently prepared a master plan to provide access along the river. The Charles River Watershed Association is a regional organization whose mission is to protect, preserve and enhance the river and its watershed. The City and the Commonwealth own much of the river front within the city limits. The Conservation Commission is the primary city agency responsible for monitoring and protecting the frontage. The nonprofit The Newton Conservators also plays an active role in monitoring and advocacy. Similar groups exist in other Charles River communities.

General issues affecting the Charles River are water quality, access, and stewardship. Each is an issue that challenges all communities along the Charles. The water quality is affected by run-off including storm water, industrial waste and fertilizers. The Charles River Watershed Association, which monitors water quality in the Charles, estimated in a 2008 report that 60% of the nitrogen loading comes from lawn run-off. Accidental spills from broken sewers and some illegal dumping decrease the quality of water. The influx of nutrients is taken up by plants such as algae and water chestnuts, which clog the river in summer and use up oxygen needed by aquatic animals.

Access has been identified as an issue that both the state and city plan to address. The DCR Master Plan includes an action plan for improving access on state-owned parcels. The City provides access to the river from many of its parcels;

however public access is limited due to lack of parking and canoe/kayak launching areas. Stewardship is a challenge due to the many agencies and groups that focus on discrete issues relating to the health and use of the river. While groups and agencies have varying missions, it is essential to maintain some sort of uniformity and cooperation when planning for river improvements.

Recommendations

As noted above, the Charles River is a regional resource whose banks are in multiple ownerships; therefore its preservation requires cooperation among all the entities in the bordering towns, as well as state agencies with jurisdiction over the river.

- ***Water Quality:*** While there are many upstream communities that affect the quality of the river, Newton can contribute to improved water quality by keeping in close contact with property owners bordering the river in order to plan for purchase when key parcels become available, and in order to monitor activities on the parcels while in private ownership. Newton should maintain a database of bordering parcels and owners; map sources of drainage into the river; and should regulate fertilizing and cutting of plant material and establish certain standards of lawn care to minimize impact of run-off into the river.
 - ***Access:*** Community preservation funds can be earmarked for purchase of recreational land or access easements on river-front parcels. A plan would identify priority acquisitions creating better access to the river as well as point sources of pollution.
 - ***Stewardship:*** An integrated approach to river stewardship that recognizes the multiple values of the Charles River - natural, cultural, and recreational - will enhance success. Getting public and private constituencies from multiple communities to work together on issues of shared concern requires organization at many levels. An example is the SuAsCo Biodiversity and Stewardship Plan, which draws together many communities and constituencies to preserve certain habitats.
-

Cheesecake Brook

Description/Issues

Although Cheesecake Brook is not as highly visible within the City as the Charles River, it received strong support from meeting participants. Headwaters for Cheesecake Brook are on the Brae Burn Country Club property. In the past there has been concern about run-off of fertilizers used by the country club. However in the last couple of years, in response to Conservation Commission filing, Brae Burn has provided for a vegetated buffer zone around the spring that is the headwater for Cheesecake Brook. Additionally, in conjunction with some other site work, Brae Burn has addressed runoff from the parking lots nearest the head of the stream and will add additional treatments to protect the pond adjacent to Commonwealth Avenue. Brae Burn still withdraws water from the Charles to irrigate its fairways.

Much of the brook is underground within a culvert from Brae Burn to north of the Turnpike. From there, the brook flows northerly under the Myrtle Baptist Church-Curve Street neighborhood. At Border Street, it emerges from the culvert and into the open as it flows along the north side of Border Street and along the median strip on Albemarle Road, passing the Horace Mann Elementary School and the recreational fields, Gath Memorial Pool and Russell J. O'Halloran Sports Complex in the adjacent Albemarle Park. Cheesecake Brook then flows under Crafts Street and northerly parallel to Brookside and Village Streets where it empties into the Charles River.

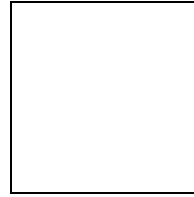
In the late 19th century the history of Cheesecake Brook became one of relocation and lack of stewardship. In the 1870s, prior to construction of nearby neighborhoods and the suburban road system, the brook often flooded surrounding farmland. Then came the changes in land use from farmland to suburban neighborhoods, which required management of the flooding; one solution was to dig a deeper trench to hold more water. In that period a developer moved part of Cheesecake Brook to the south side of Watertown Street (east of Eddy Street) in order to create better drained house lots. The developer then donated the brook to the City.

The part of Cheesecake Brook that is above ground often dries up or floods. The brook runs through a narrow channel and the banks on either side have been built up with silt that continues to be deposited as the brook floods and recedes. Changes in land use, from farming to the suburban setting with substantially increased impervious surface, alter the affects of the flow of the brook. Recent Community Development Block Grant-funded improvements of the banks from Eddy Street to Harrison Street have enhanced the park-like atmosphere with iron fencing at the banks of the brook, leaving some greensward in which to walk, while mitigating runoff from the street and sidewalk.

The issues and challenges for stewards of Cheesecake Brook include:

- Pollution, caused by runoff from roads and adjacent properties;

- Lack of visibility and access in the upper reaches, and fluctuating water level from flooding to a dried-up trickle, most likely caused by the vast increase in impervious surface, which increases runoff rate to the stream when it rains and prevents infiltration to provide base flow in dryer months.



Above ground section of Cheesecake Brook

Recommendations

- Document uses along Cheesecake Brook and create a data base of property use and ownership as part of a corridor management plan that addresses history of the brook; existing conditions including hydrologic issues, vegetation, runoff etc; and recommendations of priority actions and implementation strategies that include city agencies and public-partnerships.
- Consider a wide range of purchase options including preservation and conservation restrictions and partial community preservation funding of eligible purchases.
- Consider role of Newton Conservators in fundraising.

Cheesecake Brook attracts special attention because it still makes its final run to the Charles River above ground, through a ribbon of green open space in an otherwise densely developed part of the City. However, many longtime residents fondly recall their own childhood explorations along other once open brooks that are now channeled into storm drains and underground culverts. Further community outreach might also identify some of these other brooks as “places of the heart,” for which the community as a whole would support preservation or restoration.

Crystal Lake

Description/Issues

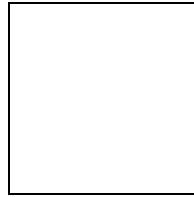
This 33-acre lake is a popular resource that has a long history of use – for fishing, ice production, boating, skating and swimming. It is a great pond, therefore it is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, but is managed by Newton's Parks and Recreation Department. The irregularly shaped lake is situated between Newton Centre and Newton Highlands. Most of the properties bordering on Crystal Lake are privately owned residences with lawns and wooded lots that slope to the lakeshore.

Primary public access to the lake is via Lake Avenue and Rogers Street. The City owns 30 Rogers Street, the parcel on which the Gil Champagne Bathhouse is located; and the recently acquired adjacent parcel, known as 20 Rogers Street, which has been incorporated into the recreation facility. In addition the City recently acquired the eastern subsection of the property and a lakefront public access easement at 230 Lake Avenue with community preservation funds. The acquisition of this parcel provides continuous public access from Levingston Cove to the bathhouse.

The 1930 bathhouse was designed for the City by local architect Herbert A. Colby and constructed in stucco with an arcaded porch facing the water and an entry with curved parapet facing the street. The bathhouse was constructed to provide restrooms, locker rooms, showers and a recreational room to be used by swimmers in the summer and skaters in the winter. Most of the bathhouse, with the exception of restroom facilities, is no longer used by the public except occasionally during the two-month swim season in the summer when it rains and swimmers take cover there or youth from summer camps who do not want to swim. Overall the bathhouse is in very poor condition. The MBTA Green Line runs immediately adjacent to the bathhouse.

Crystal Lake is an outstanding water resource that has been used for public recreation since the late 19th century. However, competing recreational interests and resource management issues place increasing and sometimes contradictory pressures on the lake and its shores. These fall into several categories. The first is impacts from adjacent properties such as run-off into the lake from the nearby bathhouse parking lot (parked cars) that steeply slopes toward the lake, and private properties (lawn fertilizers) that slope down to the shores and into the lake. The growth of algae in the water makes it murky and uses up oxygen, sometimes leading to fish kills.

The second set of issues revolves around the Rogers Street properties. The recent acquisition of 20 Rogers Street by the City provides new options for improving recreational opportunities and also correcting problems with drainage and accessibility. However, the area has limited carrying capacity for recreational use and the sandy beaches have an adverse impact on water quality. A public beach is located at the edge of the two Rogers Street properties mentioned above where there are 290 feet of frontage. This frontage has a sandy beach that is not natural beachfront; rather the sand is imported to maintain a beach for recreational use.



View of Crystal Lake and Bathhouse

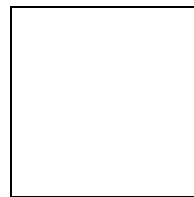
Recommendations

The Mayor has appointed a task force to study and recommend a master plan for use of the combined bathhouse site at 30 Rogers Street and the newly acquired properties at 20 Rogers Street and 230 Lake Avenue that link the existing beach area to Levingston Cove. The presence of Crystal Lake as a priority landscape in this Heritage Landscape Inventory emphasizes the high level of interest and concern among residents and provides an opportunity to highlight preservation issues along with conservation and recreational needs. The community may have conflicting goals for Crystal Lake; therefore compromise may be necessary.

- In anticipation of future changes to the bathhouse and a better understanding of the history of the lake, update the bathhouse inventory form and prepare an Area Form for the lake and its abutting properties using the MHC methodology as well as the methodology outlined in *Reading the Landscape* for documenting heritage landscapes.
- Include runoff mitigation measures for the city-owned properties in the proposed master plan, including measures that keep beach sand from migrating into the lake.
- Develop guidelines for shorefront property and work with property owners to decrease runoff and sources of nutrients, pollutants, and bacteria that threaten swimming programs.

VILLAGE CENTERS AND THEIR DEFINING FEATURES

Newton's village centers are the urban areas that developed along transportation corridors in the 19th and early 20th century and that remain connected to residential neighborhoods primarily via roadway corridors. A theme discussed at all of the community meetings was the importance of Newton's villages as focal points within the community, each with its own commercial, social and recreational amenities. When asked to identify specific features associated with village centers, many residents identified public buildings as community focal points: railroad stations, libraries and schools were all highly valued as places of community interaction. For the purposes of this report village centers, with their mix of commercial and institutional land uses, are distinct from neighborhoods, which are strictly residential.



Village Centers Overlaid on 1855 Map

Villages

Description/Issues

During the Heritage Landscape Inventory meetings, there was strong sentiment that the villages remain at the core of Newton's character and that all villages should be considered heritage landscapes. Each is valued for its small human scale, although each has a mix of residential and commercial properties. It is the village center – the commercial core – that is the focus of this discussion. Residential neighborhoods, many of which surround or are associated with specific village centers are addressed below.

In most village centers, individual properties or a district listed on the National Register honor the unique qualities of the centers and recognize the historical development that led to the formation of the villages. Most of the villages are also featured in the "Discover Historic Newton" neighborhood brochure series, many of which were updated and reproduced by the City in 2002.

Of the thirteen villages, all but two (Newton Upper Falls and Oak Hill) are north of Route 9 and the development of each was connected to their proximity to the Charles River or another stream for water power, or to transportation – such as the two railroads that came to Newton in the early and later 19th century. One notable exception is Oak Hill Park, which is a post-World War II neighborhood accessed by the automobile.

Nonantum was selected for this report as an example of a village center that, like others, is vulnerable to change and to loss of its unique character. Nonantum began as an industrial village with large mills surrounded by modest housing built for factory workers. It is a village that has been shaped by immigrants

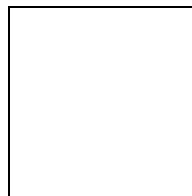
representing diverse cultural groups – first the Irish, followed by the French Canadians and some Jews, and more recently the Italians.

Nonantum is in the northeast corner of Newton and is bordered by the Charles River on the north, by Watertown on the east, by Washington Street on the south and by Crafts Street on the western edge. The area is referred to as “the Lake” referring to Silver Lake, which was filled in during the early 20th century. Mills still visible include Bemis Mill (more recently known as Aetna Mills) on the Charles River; Silver Lake Cordage on Nevada Street, where Silver Lake was located; and Nonantum Worsted Company, on Chapel Street. The commercial area grew up along both sides of Watertown Street where many of the late 19th and early 20th century buildings stand among newer civic buildings and spaces such as the Nonantum Library (1957) and Annino F. Coletti and Robert Magni Memorial Park.

Much of Nonantum is defined by the presence of residents of Italian descent. Many of the stores have Italian proprietors; some of the streets have the red, white and green median striping representing the Italian flag; prominent Newton residents names such as Magni, Coletti and Pellegrini remain on properties. The French Canadian population also remains prevalent and until recently had their own parish, St. Jeans, where, in its early days, Mass was conducted in French.

Issues facing Nonantum are similar to those facing other villages in Newton and include:

- Zoning that favors separation of uses and uniform densities and may therefore undermine historic mixtures of land uses, building sizes and styles;
- Reuse of old buildings that removes or diminishes historic fabric;
- Inconsistent maintenance and unsympathetic signage of commercial property;
- Traffic congestion where pedestrians are vulnerable.



Nonantum, view along Adams Street

Recommendations

Many villages are distinctive as gateways that help to define the sense of place. Newton has generally done a good job of planning for its villages and in many cases has identified key issues and made recommendations to support the unique sense of place that is characteristic of each one. The *Nonantum Preservation Plan*, prepared by the Newton Historical Commission in 1999, provides a framework for preserving the character of Nonantum. Recommendations that are still viable include:

- Edit and re-publish the commercial/storefront guidelines *Nonantum: Guidelines for Storefront Improvements* and make them available online. Nonantum is a target area for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and these funds could potentially be used to help with these improvements. A continued emphasis on maintaining historic fabric and developing compatible signage through such grant programs will enhance the commercial district.
- Continue to work with the Housing Division of the City's Planning and Development Department to maintain historic preservation programs for residential properties. These include historic paint programs that offer deferred payment loans for repairing historic properties with like materials.
- See General Preservation Planning Recommendations – Funding section of this report for potential funding mechanisms using community preservation monies for certain qualified homeowners to complete historically accurate rehabilitation or maintenance projects on residences. State Register listing or eligibility is necessary for community preservation funding.
- Study area for National Register eligibility – parts of Nonantum are listed in the National Register, but it is less common here than in other villages.
- Develop residential rehabilitation guidelines that are specific to Nonantum for repair and maintenance of the variety of architecture found here.
- Consider zoning changes that allow residential uses in large manufacturing buildings, particularly where the industrial buildings are integrated into the village and surrounding housing.
- Consider an Architectural Preservation District, which is less restrictive than a Local Historic District. The Newton Historical Commission is the appropriate agency to assist in preparing a study report to determine whether this type of protective mechanism will be of interest to residents of the area. (Note: for further information about Architectural Preservation districts, see General Preservation Planning Recommendations.)
- Promote the use of the walking tour brochure, *Discover Historic Nonantum*, which is part of the Newton Neighborhood Brochure Program and was updated and republished in 2005, by making it easier to find on the City's website.

Railroad Stations

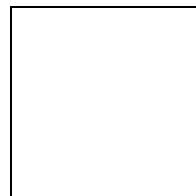
Description/Issues

Railroad stations may seem surprising in a list of landscapes, but they meet the definition employed in this program – special places, created by human interaction with the natural environment. In 1976 Newton recognized the importance of four railroad buildings remaining in the City and listed them in the National Register of Historic Places as the Newton Railroad Stations Historic District. They include the Newton Highlands Railroad Station, two buildings at

Newton Centre (the Railroad Station and the Baggage and Express Building) and the Woodland Station. Three of the four buildings retain enough integrity to be a reminder of the late 19th century commuter railroad that was pivotal in Newton's real estate development, and two (Newton Centre and Newton Highlands) continue to function as shelters at the successor MBTA stations.

The buildings display the Richardsonian Romanesque style of architecture. Renowned architect Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886) is known for his railroad station designs, nine of which he completed for the Boston & Albany Railroad. He was the architect for the Woodland Station and developed the schematic designs for Newton's other railroad buildings, which were carried out by his successor firm, Shepley, Ruten and Coolidge. The Highlands Station was built in 1885, the Baggage and Express Building at Newton Centre in 1886, and the Newton Centre Station in 1890.

Three of the former railroad buildings are underutilized: Woodland Station is used for storage by the Woodland Golf Course; Newton Centre Station is vacant and long term lessee is seeking new tenants; and the baggage building is used as a taxi cab station. The Newton Highlands Station, however, is an example of successful adaptive reuse, now sold as private property and in use as a dentist's office. While the stone construction is sturdy, the required maintenance is costly; yet it is essential for the preservation of the structures. The Newton Centre Station has been leased by the MBTA for the last 10 to 15 years; and the rent has offset building maintenance cost.



Newton Centre MBTA Station

Recommendations

The four buildings, constructed for the Boston & Albany Railroad in the late 19th century are listed in the National Register of Historic Places; however documentation has not been updated in the last 30 years.

- Maintain contact with the MBTA regarding care and maintenance of at least three of the four railroad related buildings. Encourage MBTA to apply for funding (Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund through the MHC leveraged with community preservation monies) when available to prepare historic structures reports that include a preservation plan for each building.
 - Organize a charette to consider viable uses that can be respectful of the design of the buildings. This may be an appropriate project for a preservation or architectural program at a local college or university.
 - Update MHC survey forms to conform to present documentation methodology. Submit as an update to the National Register nomination – they are listed as part of the Multiple Resource Area (MRA) nomination,
-

which only included survey forms. If character defining features are lost, historic properties may be removed from the National Register.

Branch Libraries

Description/Issues

With its strong village-oriented focus, Newton places particular value on the civic spaces and institutions that form an important center of community interaction. The closing of Newton's branch libraries was an issue identified by a large number of participants at all four meetings. Branch libraries are among some of the city-owned properties that are no longer used as originally intended. Of 68 city-owned buildings, eight have served as branch libraries with all but two originally built expressly for that use. The exceptions are the Newton Highland Library (Brigham House) and the Newton Corner Library (Rosedale-Chaffin House), which were constructed as dwellings prior to becoming city libraries. Four of the branch libraries were closed in the 1990s and reused for many different municipal uses; four were closed recently. The branch libraries include:

Village	Address	Date	Present Use
Auburndale	375 Auburn St	1927	Friends of the Library
Newton Centre	1294 Centre St	1927	Health Department
Newton Corner	124 Vernon St	1848	Closed
Newton Highlands	20 Hartford St	1886	Youth Center
Newtonville	345 Walnut St	1938	Senior Center
Nonantum	114 Bridge St	1957	Ciociaro Social Club
Waban	1608 Beacon St	1929	Newton Food Pantry uses part of the structure
West Newton	25 Chestnut St	1926	Police Annex

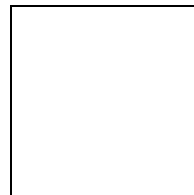
Seven of the eight branch libraries are listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of district nominations for the villages in which they are located. The exception is the Nonantum Library, built in 1957. Each of the branch libraries is a focal point within its village and traditionally has been a multi-generational gathering place near the commercial center of the village. Residents of the villages experience a loss with the closing of a branch library.

Termination of original use of city-owned property is not limited to the branch libraries. Several schools have been closed and reused for housing. Others are likely to need new, updated or expanded facilities in the foreseeable future. The richness of form and function of these city resources is significant. Each municipal building is a reflection of its village; and its lack of use as well as its potential loss of physical character has a negative impact on the context of each village. Construction and maintenance of these buildings has been a significant investment for residents of Newton. This investment should be preserved until alternative uses are identified or until the buildings can return to their original uses.

Recommendations

New uses have been found for seven of the libraries and they remain under the jurisdiction of city departments. The *Preservation Plan of City-Owned Properties* (1997) recommends a city ordinance requiring historic preservation of all historically significant city-owned property. All eight libraries fall into the Highly Significant, Significant or Notable categories of building evaluation that was established for the plan. Recommendations for the library buildings and other city-owned property are unchanged:

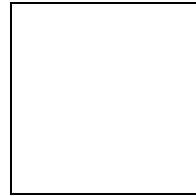
- Require city departments to develop preservation plans for historically significant city-owned properties. All eight branch libraries should be considered historically significant.
- Adopt design review guidelines for evaluating proposed changes to city-owned properties.
- Update MHC survey forms to conform to present documentation methodology standards. Expand forms to identify in detail massing, form and materials of buildings, structures and landscapes owned by the City.
- Apply preservation restrictions to properties that are sold to or re-used (under a long-term lease) by a third party. The PR should be written so that preservation of character-defining features is mandatory in perpetuity. If the City holds a PR, there must be a monitoring plan including funds for the monitoring process.
- Include a right of first refusal or a reversion to the City clause in any sale or long-term lease agreement for city-owned property. Approval by the City of new uses or change in ownership or lessee should be required.



Newton Corner Library

COMMUNITY SPACES OUTSIDE VILLAGE CENTERS

Many of Newton’s heritage landscapes are “in between” waterways, major transportation corridors, and village centers. Some are directly linked with village centers, such as the residential neighborhoods that may retain the name of the village; others are separated by or are part of the links or corridors between village centers. Many are associated at least historically with waterways and associated landscapes.



Open Space Map 2009

Neighborhoods

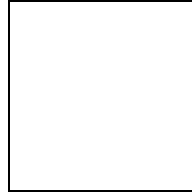
Numerous residential neighborhoods are associated with village centers throughout the City. Many are a result of subdivisions laid out to access the railroads dating from the 1830s or 1870s, late 19th to early 20th-century streetcar lines, and the automobile from the 1920s. Most neighborhoods, particularly those that predate automobile-driven development, are an amalgamation of architectural styles reflecting all periods of their history. This “evolving” character is an important feature to Newton residents who state that they are concerned about substantial changes that obliterate neighborhood character. For the purposes of this report two neighborhoods are considered as examples of areas that may be vulnerable to change. They are the Myrtle Baptist Church–Curve Street neighborhood and Oak Hill Park. These two are slightly different than most Newton neighborhoods in that they are less associated with a particular village center.

Myrtle Baptist Church Neighborhood began and remains an African-American neighborhood located at the base of West Newton Hill. The neighborhood, which the residents called “The Village,” grew up around the Myrtle Baptist Church, which was constructed in 1875 by African Americans who left the nearby First Baptist Church to found this parish. The church, located on Curve Street, became the focal point for this neighborhood, which arose after the Civil War when African Americans came for the church, the liberal culture in West Newton, and jobs available on the nearby railroad.

The present church was rebuilt in 1897 following a fire that was caused by a spark from the nearby railroad. Most of the nearby dwellings, ranging from single family to double houses and one three-decker, were constructed in the late 19th century for African-American families. Most are modest dwellings with little elaboration. Nearly half of this neighborhood was obliterated by the construction of the Massachusetts Turnpike Extension in 1963.

Recognition of this neighborhood as integral to Newton’s heritage is underway. The Myrtle Baptist Church neighborhood has recently been listed in the National

Register of Historic Places, which also means it now is listed in the State Register of Historic Places. The primary reason for listing is the social pattern of development that has been documented, rather than the architecture; this is an important distinction and is a new approach compared to other Newton listings in the National Register of Historic Places.



Curve Street is the center of the Myrtle Baptist Church neighborhood

Recommendations

The Myrtle Baptist Church Neighborhood has not been well known in Newton's history. Information contained in the National Register nomination can be used to publicize the neighborhood's place in local history. Now the task will be to preserve the overall size and scale of the neighborhood.

- Develop a walking tour of the neighborhood using the format of "Discover Historic Newton" through which walking tour brochures have been written for many of the village centers.
- Explore with neighbors and other interested city residents a potential Architectural Preservation District, which is less restrictive than a local historic district. The Newton Historical Commission is the appropriate agency to assist in preparing a study report to determine whether this type of protective mechanism will be of interest to residents of the area. (Note: for further information about Architectural Preservation Districts, see General Preservation Planning Recommendations.)
- Develop rehabilitation guidelines specific to this neighborhood to assist property owners in maintaining historic properties.
- See General Preservation Planning Recommendations – Funding section of this report for potential funding mechanisms using community preservation monies for certain qualified homeowners to carry out historically accurate rehabilitation or maintenance projects on residences. State Register listing makes properties eligible for community preservation funding. Property owner eligibility would have to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Oak Hill Park is a residential neighborhood in the far southern part of the City. It was built just after World War II in response to the housing crisis and need for veterans housing following the war. The City worked with the Veterans Housing Administration to build this neighborhood of 412 houses, a school and a small shopping area. A unique design feature of the area was an integral system of paths. The dwellings were built with the front doors oriented to a network of walking paths to minimize the intrusion of automobiles. The compact houses were sold to returning veterans who had lived in Newton before the war at a cost

of \$7,800. All were built as single-story dwellings with no basements and had the same five-room plan. The new neighborhood was built on an old gravel pit.

Today the path and roadway system remains intact. However, the orientation of many dwellings has been moved away from the paths to the road. About half of the dwellings have become two-story houses and some are nearly twice the footprint as well. Many of the dwellings are no longer “starter-houses” but have become large-scale, four-bedroom, two and one-half-story residences. This auto-dependant neighborhood evolved into a residential neighborhood of like dwellings, but with very little sustained mixed use as was originally intended, due in part to the automobile, which was a necessity due to lack of nearby public transportation.

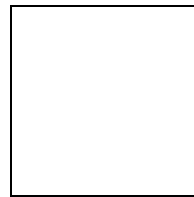
Oak Hill Park has been documented in an Area Form using MHC methodology; through a 1999 Planning and Development Department report, *Oak Hill Park: A Discussion Paper*; and in a Newton Neighborhood Brochure, *Discover Historic Oak Hill Park*, published in 2002 describing the history of this community.

Recommendations

In 1999 the Planning and Development Department issued a report on Oak Hill Park with recommendations of how to preserve the neighborhood character. At that time, fewer changes had been made to the area than there are today and the recommendation of a Neighborhood Conservation District (now referred to as an Architectural Preservation District) was appropriate. It may now be too late for this type of measure as most streets have many dwellings that already have been altered beyond recognition and no longer reflect the scale and character of the original neighborhood. However, future changes may be guided to retain a consistency of size, scale and materials relative to the existing streetscape, particularly along some streets that have seen less change than others.

The layout of Oak Hill Park is unique and should be preserved. The path system is a defining feature with an important intent – building community in this newly developed neighborhood in the late 1940s. This circulation system still contributes to the quality of life in this neighborhood. Character-defining features of the neighborhood as a whole include its circulation system, which encompasses a road system that limits access to a few points; path system intended as a primary means of neighborhood access; open space, including the common/mall space; lot layout; shopping area; and surrounding natural landscape areas.

- Explore National Register eligibility of the path system and neighborhood lot layout.
- Develop design and rehabilitation guidelines that highlight the original design intent and orientation of dwellings in the community. However, it will be difficult to require maintenance of small size and scale due to significant number of changes that have occurred to date.



Open space at Oak Hill Park

Small Parks and Triangles

Description/Issues

Many small, informal open spaces and traffic islands are owned by the City, some within the public-right-of-way, and others on separate parcels. They range in size from tiny traffic islands designed to guide traffic to those big enough to be used as parks for passive recreation like Newtonville's Washington Park, West Newton's Wolcott Park or Auburndale's Islington Oval. While these planted spaces are primarily valued for their aesthetics, they also play a role in storm water management by slowing and capturing rainfall that might otherwise travel down the storm drain.

Most of these traffic islands and small parks are valued by present-day community residents. Some have memorials, fountains and/or benches; others have been designed and maintained by volunteers to enhance their immediate neighborhoods. A few have horticultural displays that are more typical of a private garden than a public space.

The Parks and Recreation Department administers an Adopt-a-Space Program through which businesses, organizations and individuals may offer financial support as well as maintenance tasks such as watering, clean-up, mulching, pruning and plant replacement. The volunteers enter into an agreement with the City, which specifies the commitment including length of time that volunteer will carry out the tasks outlined.

The list included in the Appendix includes spaces mentioned at the various heritage landscape meetings; however it is not a complete listing of these small open spaces in Newton, as there are hundreds. Two examples are given below. Each of these is a space that is well maintained and cared for.

Lambert Fountain is at the intersections of Chestnut, Highland and Valentine Streets, which is a four-way stop in West Newton. The fountain, also known as "Child with Calla Lily Leaves", is the feature object of this triangular traffic island. The sculpture was designed in 1903 by Anne Whitney and produced by the Paul King Foundry and is a contributing resource to the West Newton Hill National Register district. The fountain is surrounded by decorative, low-maintenance plantings that are maintained by a volunteer landscaper through the City's Adopt-a-Space program. This site, which is one of the older, is highly visible and valued by the community.

Washington Park is a one-acre median bordered by one-way park-like roads, which are lined on the outside edge by late 19th century dwellings. The park, roadway and house lots were laid out in 1868 as a subdivision by real estate developer, Dustin Lancey. The thirty-one house lots were developed over the next 40 years reflecting the late 19th century picturesque styles popular at that time. Most dwellings are wood frame and many – particularly the Second Empire and Italianate houses – have slate roofs.

The park site is a long and narrow granite-curbed greensward with newly installed “historic” gaslights, funded by community preservation funds. The park has a strong and active Friends group that for years has worked cooperatively with the Parks and Recreation Department toward making appropriate improvements. The group has raised funds for an irrigation system, benches, park signs and shrub plantings; they also perform seasonal clean-ups. Established in 1868, Washington Park, including the greensward and the neighborhood dwellings bordering on the roads around the park, was listed in the National Register in March 2008.

General issues for traffic islands and small parks are:

- City budget needed to maintain these spaces, which number in the hundreds.
- Access which can be dangerous or at the very least, difficult as the park-like spaces are usually surrounded by roadways;
- Difficult growing conditions due to lack of water source, poor and shallow soil, salt/debris laden snow piles, vandalism, and inconsistent regular maintenance;
- Inconsistent maintenance due to the nature of volunteers who move, go away, age or lose interest;
- Lack of clarity about ownership and status; most are owned by the Department of Public Works and maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Recommendations

While these two spaces listed as examples are in National Register districts and are well-maintained in part due to local residents, there are many other small spaces that languish due to the issues cited above. Therefore:

- Update and merge database information on location, ownership and descriptions of small spaces throughout the city. Historical information if available should also be added. This could be a Garden Club project or a student project for local landscape students.
 - Continue Adopt-a-Space Program administered by the Parks and Recreation Department. Use the City’s website to highlight case studies of successful projects carried out through this program to encourage others to participate.
-

COMMUNITY-WIDE ISSUES

Other broad issues that were discussed at the Heritage Landscape meetings are not necessarily included in the HLI chart in the Appendix because they are thematic and not linked to specific places. However, each is worth mentioning as all affect community character and are important policy issues for the City. These concerns relate to land use categories as described below. They are discussed in a thematic fashion rather than alphabetically so that landscape features such as parks and trees are discussed in tandem. In conclusion, archaeology is discussed as it includes all facets of the City's development.

Institutional Properties

The City has numerous institutional properties, accounting for nearly 20% of Newton's land area. These properties range in size; many are housed in former estates that were established in the 19th century, such as Centre Street, which is lined with at least five of these properties that are contiguous and make up a significant part of Newton's open space and historic resources. Features such as long sweeps of stone walls with lawns, specimen trees, long vistas and stately architecture are essential components of the city landscape. Most are vulnerable to change due to the size of the large parcels of land and the needs of institutions. Most are not subject to zoning restrictions imposed on other property owners. In addition those used primarily for educational or religious purposes do not pay real estate taxes, although many make an "in lieu" payment to the City. Boston College is the largest institutional property owner in the City. Institutional properties are typically found in Village Centers and Community Spaces (Neighborhoods).

Places of Worship

Churches, synagogues and other places of worship help to define Newton's villages and neighborhoods. Many are prominently located landmarks with attractive surroundings, have distinctive architectural styles and serve as community gathering places. Some also provide important public functions by housing various social services. Residents emphasized the importance of preserving these buildings, particularly when they are no longer used for worship. One example is the former Newton Methodist Episcopal Church, also known as Ashoka House at 515 Centre Street, which was turned into condominiums and has a preservation restriction protecting the features that were preserved. Another is St. Bernard's Church at 1515 Washington Street, which was designated a local landmark, after concerns arose about the future of the church. The rectory was converted to condominiums. Similar to Institutional Properties, Places of Worship are found both in Village Centers and in Community Spaces (Neighborhoods).

Schools

Newton residents have strong feelings about the neighborhood schools. The elementary schools are the core community experience of young families and continue to hold life-long memories for many residents. One resident expressed concern about potential closing of some elementary schools. Another noted that

the murals at the Newton North High School are part of the history of the community and should be preserved digitally as the building is slated for demolition in 2010. Others were concerned about expanded and increasingly formalized athletic facilities, which change the character and ecology of an area. A number of schools have been successfully reused for housing including the Warren School on Washington Street and Weeks Junior High School in Newton Centre. Institutional properties are in both Village centers and Community Spaces (Neighborhoods).

Maintenance of Parks and Open Space

Most municipalities across the Commonwealth face difficulty maintaining parks and other landscapes. Trees often are not maintained and many public garden spaces rely on volunteers, whose efforts may be sporadic. Newton's Adopt-a-Space program has been helpful in maintaining certain spaces; however the number of parks and open spaces is substantially larger than the numbers of groups or individuals willing to participate. In January 2009, Newton's Citizen Advisory Group issued a *Capital Infrastructure Report* in which the magnitude of the problem and the lack of monetary resources are acknowledged. Parks and Open Spaces are found throughout the city and are associated with Waterways, Village Centers and Community Spaces.

Trees

Newton has been named a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation and is known as the Garden City, but many large trees have been lost over the years and not replanted, especially along major roads such as Commonwealth Avenue. There are some large trees that are prominent enough to be known beyond the local neighborhood. One is listed in the historic resource survey as the oldest extant resource in the City dating to ca. 1650. (See partial list in chart under Miscellaneous.)

The importance of trees to residents and city officials is well articulated in the newly formed Newton Tree Conservancy, a non-profit organization formed in 2008 with the express purpose of preserving and planting trees in Newton by fund raising, educational programs and training of volunteers. A training program sponsored by the City to enlist help in caring for city trees is the Newton Citizen Pruners. The program enlists the assistance of the City's Tree Warden to train residents in proper tree pruning methods. Finally the City has a Scenic Roads Ordinance that provides some protection of trees within the right-of-way from removal until after there has been a public hearing.

Agriculture

There is only one remaining farm in Newton, the Angino Farm that recently was purchased by the City. In addition there are two farmers' markets that are held at Cold Spring Park and VFW Post 440 during the warm months. The one remaining farm has been preserved and the farmers' markets are successful and are likely to continue.

Golf Courses

Newton has one municipal golf course (Newton Commonwealth Golf Course) and three private club courses. These are vulnerable resources because in an economically stable time these large tracts of land may be more profitable as areas of high-impact development than as golf courses. Thus it is important to be prepared with a general plan for potential purchase for open space perhaps with a condition that parts of a large tract could be sold for limited development that can in turn finance the preservation of the open space. Community preservation funds could be one source of funding for such a purchase.

Archaeological Sites

Archaeological sites are the physical remains of human activity. They include artifacts, structures, burnt seeds, soil stains, trash deposits associated with historic homes, arrowheads, and other clues to the past. These below-ground cultural resources help to tell the “hidden stories” of prehistoric peoples, early European settlers, our parents and grandparents – how they lived and how they worked. In essence they are associated with a community’s cultural heritage.

Archaeological sites may be found in all three categories of priority landscapes: Waterways, Village Centers and Community Spaces.

While many historic structures have been identified in Newton, few archaeological resources have been identified. This is not because archaeological sites do not exist, but because the few efforts made to record archaeological sites have been by private individuals through volunteer effort. Professional work has been done to identify archaeological sites on less than 1% of the total acreage in Newton. It has been estimated that at the current rate of development in Massachusetts thousands of archaeological sites are destroyed every year.

There may be potential for archaeological sites in many of the Heritage Landscapes identified in this survey. For example the landscapes associated with the Charles River have the potential for both prehistoric and historic sites. Resources associated with the river and inland water resources and the number of Native trails that connected these resources suggests the potential to support a sizeable, settled population. The variety of site types thus far identified include a possible village, a fishing station, a possible burial area, a rock shelter, a quarry area, and several campsites. Sites associated with the City’s industrial history may also be located along the Charles River. Other identified Heritage Landscapes with potential for archaeological sites include: undisturbed areas in neighborhoods/ villages, areas of open space, by historic homes, small parks and triangles, and even burial grounds.

EXISTING RESOURCE DOCUMENTATION AND PLANNING TOOLS

Newton is a sophisticated community that already has many important planning tools in place. These document current conditions within the City; identify issues of concern to residents; and develop strategies for action. This section of the report identifies some of the existing planning documents and tools that provide information relevant to *Newton's Heritage Landscapes*. While the Heritage Landscape program originated largely as a historic preservation initiative, a key premise of the program is its emphasis on interdisciplinary cooperation and building constituencies. Thus a river corridor has natural, historical and recreational attributes, while municipal buildings have architectural, landscape and community aspects. This comprehensive way of looking at a wide range of resources is a powerful tool, particularly in this era of tight resources. The CPA is based on the same premise.

Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets

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

According to the MHC, Newton's inventory documents approximately 7,000 historic resources ranging from 1650 (the date attributed to an ancient white oak tree on Collins Road) to 2003, which is the construction date of several buildings located within one of the local historic districts.

Newton has 13 documented ancient Native American sites dating back to the Middle Archaic Period (8,000-6,000 B.P.) and 15 documented historic archaeological sites scattered throughout the City. Based on the location of Newton with its many potentially rich areas, this level of documentation is limited and clearly there is significantly more archaeological potential along the Charles River and other water sources, early roadways, and generally within areas that have undergone minimal development through time.

Generally Newton has taken a comprehensive approach to identifying and documenting its resources; however since the survey program extends back to the 1980s, many of the forms are out of date and do not meet today's standards. This is why many of the recommendations in this report include preparation of updated forms.

State and National Registers of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that have been determined significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. Newton's National Register program began in 1976 with a number of individual listings. In 1986 Newton submitted a Multiple Resource Area (MRA) nomination, which

included 99 individual listings, 15 districts, one district expansion, five Determinations of Eligibility (DOEs), and listings that crossed into Needham including two bridges and part of a district. In 1990 the MRA was expanded adding 12 districts, four district expansions and 29 individual listings.

Also listed in the National Register are three districts that are part of the Water Supply System of Metro Boston Thematic Resource Area Nomination (TRA) and two districts that are part of the Metropolitan Park System Multiple Property Submission (MPS). These nominations are part of larger regional approaches to recognizing significant properties. Additional nominations have been prepared over the last 15+ years so that there now are over 1,600 properties listed in the National Register – 158 individual property listings, 37 districts (some of which have been expanded), seven DOEs, of which two are now included in National Register districts, and one National Historic Landmark (NHL), the Reginald A. Fessenden House. The National Register program is ongoing, with a neighborhood district nomination for Washington Park listed in March 2008 and a district nomination for the Myrtle Baptist Church listed in 2009.

There are four local historic districts (Auburndale, Chestnut Hill, Newtonville and Newton Upper Falls), which are listed in the State Register. Three overlap with National Register districts; however not all local historic district properties are listed in National Register districts. While the City has designated approximately 17 Local Landmarks, only five have been recorded in the State Register of Historic Places.

Preservation restrictions, drawn up in accordance with MGL Chapter 184, Sections 31-33, have been applied to 21 properties according to the MHC database, MACRIS. A preservation restriction (PR) runs with the deed and is one of the strongest preservation strategies available. All properties that have preservation restrictions filed under the state statute are automatically listed in the State Register.

Planning Documents and Tools

Newton has a wealth of planning documents and tools already available to assist in the preservation of its heritage landscapes. Recommendations of this report are likely to be found in one or more of these existing planning documents; thus this report, which is reiterative, provides a slightly different perspective with an eye towards linking interest groups through similar goals and initiatives. Newton has developed multi-disciplinary groups in other instances, the most obvious of which is the Community Preservation Committee. Another example is the Crystal Lake Task Force.

Newton's planning documents include the *Newton Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in November 2007, the *Newton Recreation and Open Space Plan 2003-2007* and the *2002 Preliminary Historic Preservation Plan*. These reports are consistent in identifying land use issues as well as key parcels that are worthy of preservation. The *Comprehensive Plan* in particular establishes a planning context that is relevant for this report. It acknowledges that good stewardship of the City's historic resources may involve actions other than preservation and although "building consensus" and seeking "broad support" are important, permanent

unanimity is neither always possible nor a prerequisite for every action. As the *Comprehensive Plan's* chapter on "Planning For and With History" so well articulates:

"In a diverse, evolving city consensus will never be easy to achieve, and it will seldom be permanent. History can, however, help us understand why the same physical places in Newton mean different things to different groups; and why what one person sees as improving and upgrading a place may feel to someone else like devaluing and discarding the same place. A deeper, more historical understanding of these differences can help us work together more constructively, even without consensus."

Other city-wide reports that relate to heritage landscapes include *Preservation Plan for City-Owned Properties*, completed in 1997 and *Demolition Review & Post World War II Housing Study* completed in 2001.

Preservation strategies adopted by Newton include a local historic district ordinance, a demolition delay ordinance, a local landmarks ordinance and a scenic roads ordinance. The Newton Local Historic District Ordinance regulates changes made to the exterior architectural features of structures located in the four historic districts identified above. It was first adopted in 1975 when the Upper Falls Historic District was established and has been amended several times since as new districts have been added.

The Demolition Delay Ordinance gives the Historical Commission the authority to review and delay proposed demolition for up to one year for properties that are at least fifty years old; listed or eligible for listing in the National or State Register, or deemed to be historically significant by the Newton Historical Commission. The delay period was extended from six months to one year about ten years ago. Most recently the City amended the ordinance to clarify the meaning of "partial demolition" as well as to provide for staff review.

The Local Landmarks Ordinance was adopted in 1993. Landmark reports are prepared and presented to the Newton Historical Commission, which must accept the report and designate the landmark with a 3/4 vote after a public hearing. Although only five landmarks have been recorded in the State Register of Historic Places, the Newton Historical Commission has designated 17 properties as Landmark Preservation Sites. The list and the landmark reports are available at http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/cdbg/Historic/landmarks/newton_landmarks.htm.

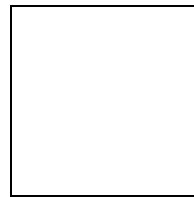
The Scenic Roads Ordinance regulating the removal of trees and stone walls within the right-of-way applies to 17 Newton roads. They are: Brookside, Lake and Waban Avenues; Dudley, Hobart, Woodcliff and Woodland Roads; Chestnut, Concord, Fuller, Grove, Hammond, Hancock, Highland, Mill, Sumner and Valentine Streets.

In 2001 Newton adopted the Community Preservation Act at a 1% surcharge on real estate taxes to begin in 2002; at least 10% of the yearly proceeds must be used or reserved for historic preservation, 10% for open space and 10% for

affordable housing. Many projects have been funded and completed with community preservation monies. Some examples consistent with preservation of heritage landscapes are preservation and restoration projects at City Hall, Durant-Kenrick Homestead, Farlow and Chaffin Parks, Houghton Gardens and the historic burying grounds.

Newton's Zoning Ordinance has several sections that guide development in a way that is consistent with preservation of heritage landscapes. Many communities depend upon cluster development and flexible development ordinances; however Newton is densely developed with approximately 31,000 dwelling units. These types of regulations do not apply to city development in the same way as they do in less developed areas.

The Accessory Apartment section of the Zoning Ordinance can lead to preservation of secondary structures such as carriage houses when rehabilitated as an accessory apartment. Other parts of the zoning ordinance relate to size and scale of construction that can help to maintain community character. For instance, the definitions for Height, Half Story, Grade Plane and Floor Area Ratio (for residential structures) were amended along with the actual height limit of 30 feet, ceiling height of seven feet and floor area ratios leading to design that is consistent with historic buildings.



Commonwealth Avenue Streetscape

GENERAL PRESERVATION PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations pertaining to priority heritage landscapes can be found at the end of each priority landscape description. This section of the Reconnaissance Report offers more general recommendations relevant to preserving the character of the community that would be applicable to a wide range of community resources.

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

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

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

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

Inventory of Heritage Landscapes

Newton has documented parts of many of the heritage landscapes included in the appendix. Although Newton has a more extensive historic resource inventory than most communities, the importance of inventory cannot be overstated. A vital step in developing preservation strategies for heritage landscapes is to record information about the resources on MHC inventory forms. One cannot advocate for something unless one knows precisely what it is – the physical characteristics and the historical development. The resources discussed in this Reconnaissance Report that have not been documented are small in number but should be included in the next inventory project as well as updating of some older forms to accommodate present day methodology. Thus, using the MHC survey methodology:

- Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not sufficiently documented, beginning with heritage landscapes.
-

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

National Register Program

Survey work requires an evaluation as to whether resources meet the qualifications for National Register listing. As noted above, Newton's National Register program is ongoing and the number of properties already listed in the National Register far exceeds most communities. Newton's listings recognize themes and patterns of development locally and regionally. Using the information generated in the survey work and the accompanying National Register evaluation, Newton's National Register program should be expanded.

- Review the National Register listing plan, taking into consideration a property's integrity and vulnerability. Properties that are in need of recognition in order to advance preservation strategies should be given priority.
- Review National Register nominations and amend to include landscape features such as: road layout – stone walls, curbs, widths; designed landscapes features – stone piers, stone walls, water features, gardens etc.

Village and Neighborhood Character

Nearly all preservation strategies address village and neighborhood character in some manner. As described above, thorough documentation on MHC inventory forms is an important first step in the preservation planning process, followed by National Register listing where appropriate. Traditional preservation strategies have been adopted by Newton: a demolition delay ordinance, a local historic district ordinance and a local landmark preservation ordinance. Another strategy

is an architectural preservation district ordinance and designation, which may be appropriate in the future for mid 20th century subdivisions.

- **Demolition delay ordinances** provide a time period in which cities and towns can explore alternatives to demolition. Newton has such an ordinance, which was modified nearly ten years ago, extending the period of delay from six months to one year. The City amended the ordinance to accommodate some of the recommendations in a 2001 report “Demolition Review and Post World War II Housing Study,” including abutter notification, clarification of “partial demolition” and procedures for staff review of certain demolition requests. The study report also addressed the potential adverse affect of “waivers” to the delay of demolition. This has only been partially addressed in amendments. Potential for a tighter process that is more concerned with the possible demolition than with what will replace the demolition may strengthen the demolition delay ordinance.
- **Local historic districts**, adopted through a local initiative, recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected by the designation. As Newton knows, local historic district designation and regulation is the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic resources. The four existing districts and ordinance were adopted by a 2/3 vote of the Board of Aldermen and each is administered by a district commission appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Board of Aldermen.
- **Architectural preservation districts**, also known as neighborhood conservation districts, are local initiatives that recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected. They are less restrictive than local historic districts but still embrace neighborhood character. Architectural preservation district designation is appropriate for residential neighborhoods that may have less integrity and where more flexibility is needed, such as some of Newton’s Post World War II neighborhoods. The MHC has developed a model bylaw or ordinance and encourages communities to follow a process similar to that of adopting a local historic district; however only a majority vote of the Board of Alderman would be necessary in order to adopt an architectural preservation district.

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Newton residents and visitors alike and were mentioned at the landscape identification meetings. Roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel requirements as the only consideration. Newton already has adopted the Scenic Roads Act (MGL Chapter 40-15C) and designated 17 roads for which there must be review and approval for the removal of trees and stone walls that are within the right-of-way. Yet, in addition to roadway issues, much of what we value about scenic roads – the stone walls, views of neighborhoods or wooded land – is not within the public right-of-way. The preservation and protection of scenic roads therefore requires more than one approach.

- Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the designated scenic roads in Newton including the character defining features that should be retained. Also complete an inventory for other roads that may be deemed scenic that were not previously designated.
- Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstructions, which address the scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety. This is an important public process in which the community may have to accept responsibility for certain costs to implement standards that are not acceptable to projects funded by Massachusetts Highway Department. Such standards should have a section addressing the way in which the local Department of Public Works maintains and reconstructs roads. Policies can be adopted by local boards having jurisdiction over roads, or can be adopted by the Board of Aldermen through an ordinance. In developing policies consider factors such as road width, clearing of shoulders, walking paths, posted speeds. A delicate balance is required.

Funding of Preservation Projects

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing preservation strategies. The MHC has had funding programs to assist communities in preservation-related issues including:

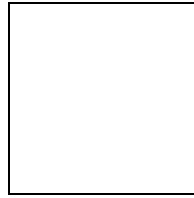
- **Survey and Planning Grants**, administered by the MHC, support survey, National Register and preservation planning work.
- The **Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF)**, administered by the MHC, funds restoration and rehabilitation projects.

Funding for state programs varies from year to year. Sponsors of future heritage landscape projects in Newton should contact relevant agencies early in the planning process, to determine whether funding is available.

Newton adopted the **Community Preservation Act** in 2001 with a 1% surcharge on each real estate tax bill. This has proved to be an excellent source of funding for many heritage landscape projects. Newton is aware of the way in which the CPA fosters partnerships among historic preservationists, conservationists and affordable housing advocates. Many of the recommendations in this report could be funded with community preservation money, including survey and National Register projects, preservation and conservation easements, and land acquisition. Using community preservation funding, Newton could establish a Preservation Fund, which could be used in conjunction with other grant, and loan programs to assist income qualified homeowners to complete projects that are historically and architecturally appropriate. Newton's Housing Division of the Planning and Development Department has had a similar program. Community preservation funding could augment this program as long as there are safeguards in place to protect the public investment such as required repayment should a property be sold in a certain time period after work has occurred. (Cambridge has a Preservation Grant Program which was started using CDBG funds and is

augmented by community preservation funds. Additional information can be found about Newton's CP program at www.ci.newton.ma.us/cpa and about the Massachusetts CP program at www.communitypreservation.org.

Newton, which has a local historic district ordinance, has **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. As a CLG, Newton must file a report yearly on the status of applications, meetings, and decisions; in return the City may apply for the matching grant funding that the MHC awards competitively to CLGs annually. Presently 18 cities and towns are CLGs in Massachusetts.



City Hall Landscape Looking Toward Library

CONCLUSIONS

Newton's Heritage Landscapes is a critical tool for identifying the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Newton and developing preservation strategies. Newton will have to determine the best way to implement the recommendations discussed. One approach that may help Newton begin the process is to form a Heritage Landscape Committee, as described in *Reading the Land*. This could be collaboration between the CPC, the Newton Conservators and the Historical Commission or Historical Society; or it could be one of the purposes of a potential new committee – a Community Assets Taskforce to be based on the former Public Buildings Taskforce. To take on the recommendations of *Newton's Heritage Landscapes*, the committee also should have representation of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Conservation Commission and the Historical Commission.

Landscapes identified in this report, especially those that are most highly valued by the community, will typically need further documentation on MHC inventory forms to provide more detailed historical information and description. The documentation in turn can be used in efforts to build consensus and gather public support for preservation of these landscapes. Implementation of the recommendations will require a cooperative effort by municipal boards and agencies, local non-profit organizations, and state agencies and commissions.

Newton has taken a number of measures towards recognizing and preserving the distinct landscape characteristics of the City. In these challenging times, the City may make best use of limited resources by understanding community priorities and building consensus among multiple groups to implement goals that have broad community support.

Distribution of *Newton's Heritage Landscapes* to municipal land use boards and commissions will assist in making this one of the planning documents that guides Newton in preserving important features of the community's character. The recommended tasks will require cooperation and coordination among boards and commissions, particularly Newton's Historical Commission, Local Historic District Commissions, Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Community Preservation Committee. It is also advisable to present this information to the Board of Aldermen. Finally distribution of the report to the Historical Society, Newton Conservators, the Charles River Watershed Association, village associations and neighborhood groups and other preservation-minded organizations will broaden the audience and assist in gathering interest and support for Newton's heritage landscapes.
