

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

TOWN OF FALMOUTH

Falmouth, Massachusetts

**Town of Falmouth
Planning Department**



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**Prepared for the
Town of Falmouth
Planning Department**

**Prepared by
Heritage Strategies, LLC
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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Falmouth, Massachusetts, on the western end of Cape Cod, has been occupied by humans for thousands of years. First various cultures of Native Americans and later European settlers have shaped its landscape in dramatic ways. Falmouth was initially settled by Englishmen from Barnstable, to the north, about 1660. The Town was officially incorporated in 1686. Over the past 354 years, Falmouth has developed as an agricultural and maritime community and more recently as a summer destination. All the while, the character of the landscape has changed in response to human activity.

Today, historic resources remain from all of Falmouth’s periods of historical development, from the archeological remains of Native Americans, to the traces of agricultural fields, to historic villages, to neighborhoods of summer cottages. Residents of Falmouth have spent years documenting and studying the town’s history and working to preserve its historic resources.

This Historic Preservation Plan is one more step in that process. The Historic Preservation Plan was funded through a grant from Falmouth’s Community Preservation Committee, which implements projects using Community Preservation Act funding on behalf of the Town. The project was lead by the two Chairmen of Falmouth’s Historical Commission and Historic Districts Commission with support of the Town’s Planning Department and a representative of the Cape Cod Commission. A wide variety of individuals representing various Town interests participated in the planning process and contributed to its recommendations.

The purpose of this Historic Preservation Plan is to provide guidance to the Town, especially the Historical Commission and Historic Districts Commission, on actions that should be taken to support historic preservation in Falmouth over the next three to ten years. A lot has been accomplished in historic preservation in Falmouth over the years. Yet challenges remain and will continue to emerge. Building on what has been accomplished, this plan seeks to provide an expansive vision for the value of historic resources in Falmouth as a component of community character. It suggests how that vision can be implemented across a range of endeavors to the benefit of Falmouth’s residents and future generations.



Homes facing Nantucket Sound along Falmouth's south shore

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Work on the Historic Preservation Plan was begun in the fall of 2013 and completed in the summer of 2014. An initial meeting of the Steering Committee and the planning consultants was held in mid-September 2013, and initial field work was begun.

In early November, the planning consultants conducted several days of interviews with individuals representing many of the organizations in Falmouth with an interest in historic preservation. These individuals provided background on planning and development in Falmouth and a range of interesting and informative perspectives on historic preservation issues and town dynamics. A public workshop was conducted as well. Additional field work was undertaken every time the planning consultants came to town. Every corner of Falmouth was explored, as well as the range and condition of historic resources

Over the next two months, the planning team absorbed background materials and organized the planning process. In early February, a series of focus group workshops were held around the topics of Historic Districts, Conservation, Public Outreach and Communication, and Town Policies and Procedures. Many of the focus group participants had also participated in the November interviews. The planning team outlined issues and opportunities related to each topic, and informative discussions were conducted. A number of additional meetings were held with various interests as well.

In mid-March, the planning team returned with an Outline of Recommendations that essentially outlined the recommendations included in this plan. The recommendations were organized into the chapters listed further below. The



Quisset Harbor off of Buzzard's Bay on west coast of Falmouth

four focus group workshops were re-convened to review and discuss the recommendations. Additional meetings were held as well.

In April, work on the draft plan began, and the initial Chapter 2 on Preservation Approach was submitted, which provided perspective on the plan as a whole. At the request of the Planning Department, changes were made to the organization and approach of the plan, and a revised Outline of Recommendations was prepared in late May reflecting those changes.

Work on the Draft Historic Preservation Plan was completed in June and July and submitted for review and comment. The final Historic Preservation Plan was then completed.

THE CHALLENGE

Since 1950, Falmouth has experienced intensive development that has been focused primarily along the coastlines but has also filled the interior. The town is approaching build-out conditions. Comparative mapping prepared by the Woods Hole Research Center for 1951 and 1999 shows the extent of the change and the resulting loss of open space in the landscape.

In response, Falmouth has implemented a range of growth management processes and techniques as authorized under state law. Yet development pressure will continue. Increasingly, new development will occur as infill in already developed areas and as redevelopment, including in the town's historic villages. As this occurs, historic resources will be increasingly threatened, as has been demonstrated in recent development projects.

Falmouth has a wide range of historic building and landscape resources. The vast majority of historic buildings are privately owned residences, which are well maintained and are generally not under threat. With infill and redevelopment pressure, however, historic residences that once seemed safe may now become threatened, and the character and integrity of historic villages and neighborhoods may be significantly affected.

Falmouth has adopted most of the available planning tools for growth management provided through state authorizing legislation and programs. Some of its tools, however, such as historic resource inventories, are in need of updating and better use. In historic villages, outdated local historic district boundaries and internal zoning conflicts are having a significant adverse effect upon the character and integrity of the villages.

Aside from the available tools, Falmouth is losing historic resources because planning review processes are not working as well as they could and are yielding disappointing outcomes. Historic preservation policies outlined in the Local Comprehensive Plan are not being implemented. Boards and commissions are not embracing historic resources as a vital component of community character. The Historical Commission is not actively providing information and guidance to boards and commissions to assist in decision-making.

Falmouth is well-positioned to address these challenges. The recommendations included in this preservation plan will assist in that effort.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The Historic Preservation Plan includes a large number of recommendations which may be implemented over time. After each recommendation listed, a concluding section suggests the entity that should be responsible for its implementation and whether implementation should be ongoing, short-term, mid-term, or long-term. Because much of the work of the municipality is undertaken by volunteers serving on boards, commissions, committees, and in a variety of other organizations, actions must be prioritized and progress should be taken at a measured pace.

The highest priorities for action occur in four areas:

- strengthening the planning process,
- planning for historic villages,
- coordination with conservation organizations, and
- public outreach.

With respect to the planning process, strengthening the role of the Historical Commission and its involvement in providing information and guidance to the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and other town boards and commissions is a high priority. In doing so, it needs to update some of its available tools, and it needs the support of a professional historic preservation consultant. These recommendations are outlined in Chapter 3 and in particular Recommendations 3.2, 3.3, 3.7, and 3.15.



Prominent home in Megansett

With respect to planning for historic villages, the highest priority is undertaking the master plans for each village outlined in Chapter 4, Recommendation 4.2. Master plans will help communities understand where new development should and should not be placed and help resolve problems caused by antiquated historic district boundaries and zoning conflicts. The master plans are intended to build local community consensus around the future of each village.

Conservation initiatives are a strength in Falmouth, and the creation of a Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust as discussed in Chapter 5, Recommendation 5.3 is a high priority. The idea for a Trust has been discussed by a number of interested individuals and organizations. There are good models for its implementation both locally, with respect to existing conservation organizations, and nationally, with respect to historic preservation organizations experienced in the purchase and protection of threatened buildings.

Finally, public outreach is important in building long-term public support for historic preservation. Chapter 3, Recommendation 3.18 suggests how the Historical Commission can reach out to village and neighborhood associations to provide technical assistance to residents. Chapter 6, Recommendation 6.4 discusses implementation of a town-wide interpretive presentation for visitors and residents to help build appreciation for historic building and landscape resources.



Cottage with addition in a residential neighborhood

ORGANIZATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

The Historic Preservation Plan for the Town of Falmouth is organized into six chapters as suggested by topics identified through discussions with stakeholders. They include:

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Overview: As noted above, Chapter 1 provides an introduction, overview, and executive summary of the plan for immediate reference.

Chapter 2 – Preservation Approach: Presents a broad philosophical approach to historic preservation and the treatment of historic resources in Falmouth. Chapter 2 provides context for recognition of the town’s historic character and suggests how historic values should be incorporated into policies and actions town-wide.

Chapter 2 includes an overview of Falmouth’s historic resources and their historical and landscape context. Goals for historic preservation in Falmouth are outlined. A preservation approach is presented which includes discussion of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, the best practices guidelines for the plan.

Chapter 3 – Falmouth’s Historical Commission: Chapter 3 focuses upon the role of the Historical Commission as steward of historic resources throughout Falmouth. That role includes inventorying and monitoring the condition of historic resources, calling attention to issues of concern.

Chapter 3 discusses the town’s Local Comprehensive Plan and emphasizes that its policies with respect to historic preservation should become a basis for



Cottage along the south shore

decision-making. Providing information and guidance to the town's boards and commissions, particularly with respect to land development, is a key role of the Historical Commission. The chapter suggests ways in which existing planning processes can be refined to improve outcomes with respect to historic resources as a component of community character.

Chapter 4 – Falmouth's Historic Villages and Neighborhoods: Many of Falmouth's significant historic resources are clustered together in villages and neighborhoods and create distinctive community environments. Chapter 4 reviews how villages and neighborhoods are currently perceived and treated and how village and neighborhood character can be recognized, respected, and enhanced under differing circumstances.

Chapter 4 suggests continuing to update inventories of historic villages and neighborhoods to provide better information for recognition and planning. It recommends preparation of master plans for each village to help address and resolve issues related to new development that is affecting community character. Master plans undertaken with broad community participation can identify where new development is appropriate and where it is inappropriate. Master plans may help resolve problems arising out of outdated historic district boundaries and zoning conflicts. They can provide guidelines for new development.

Chapter 5 – Cultural Landscapes and Land Conservation: Falmouth has an outstanding program of land conservation in which both the public and private sectors play important roles. The Town of Falmouth is a cultural landscape comprised of interrelated natural and historic attributes that have changed over

time. Chapter 5 focuses upon how historic and cultural values can be recognized and considered in land conservation in both public and private sector activities.

The chapter suggests close cooperation between land conservation and historic preservation interests. It recommends creation of a Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust as a historic preservation partner for land conservation organizations and a new non-profit leader to help preserve historic building and landscape resources.

Chapter 6 – Telling Falmouth’s Stories: Interpretation of Falmouth’s history supports the town’s economy through heritage tourism by enhancing visitor experience and providing visitors with things to do and places to go. It is also a way to engage residents and convey the importance of historic resources to Falmouth’s character and quality of life. Chapter 6 supports creation of a Falmouth Village Cultural District. Further, it outlines how partners may present Falmouth’s stories through a town-wide interpretive presentation.



Beachfront homes



CHAPTER 2 – PRESERVATION APPROACH

Located on the southwestern tip of Cape Cod, the Town of Falmouth is widely known as a popular summer destination. Facing Nantucket Sound on the south and Buzzards Bay on the west, Falmouth’s varied coastline features sandy beaches, protected harbors, salt ponds, marshes, and distinctive communities.

Falmouth has developed as a destination for leisure and recreation over the past 140 years. The town’s population of about 32,000 year-long residents doubles during the summer months. Many of the town’s residences are second homes for families with permanent residences elsewhere. Others are rental properties used exclusively by visitors. In addition to being a summer destination, Falmouth is internationally renowned for its scientific community, mostly based in Woods Hole, which has led the study of the world’s oceans since the 1870s.

Falmouth’s popularity and accessibility have led to extensive development pressure, especially since the mid-twentieth century, which has impacted coastal environmental resources as well as community character. Over the decades, residents have responded to this pressure with thoughtful and far-reaching planning and conservation initiatives. This Historic Preservation Plan is prepared in continuation of that tradition and embraces the vision of Falmouth as a welcoming community of high quality natural and built landscapes.

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Falmouth’s historic resources are discussed below. The range of the town’s historic resources derive out of three broad historical eras:

- the prehistoric Native American era;
- settlement by Europeans and establishment as an agricultural and maritime community; and
- development as a summer community.

In reality, the study of Falmouth’s rich history reveals that these three broad eras are divided into smaller periods that each have their own significance and their own characteristics in terms of the types of historic resources they

produced. Interpretation of Falmouth's history should highlight this deeper and more detailed appreciation of the town's historical development.

An overview of Falmouth's history drawn from other sources is included in Appendix A of this preservation plan. Portions of that overview are used here to characterize the types of historic resources found in Falmouth that should be recognized for preservation.

Falmouth's natural landscape is an integral part of its history. The discussion of historic resources in Falmouth begins with the landscape on which the town's history played out and the changes that have been made to that landscape by the people who lived here over time. The town's landforms, geology, soils, plant communities, streams, ponds, marshes, and other natural features are important to understanding and appreciating Falmouth's history and significance.

Within that landscape remnant historic resources can be identified, whether they are the archeological evidence left by prehistoric peoples; the buildings, road traces, stone walls, or remnant fields and bogs from the agricultural era; or the homes, neighborhoods, and domestic landscapes of today's summer communities.

The Natural Landscape – Context for Historic Resources

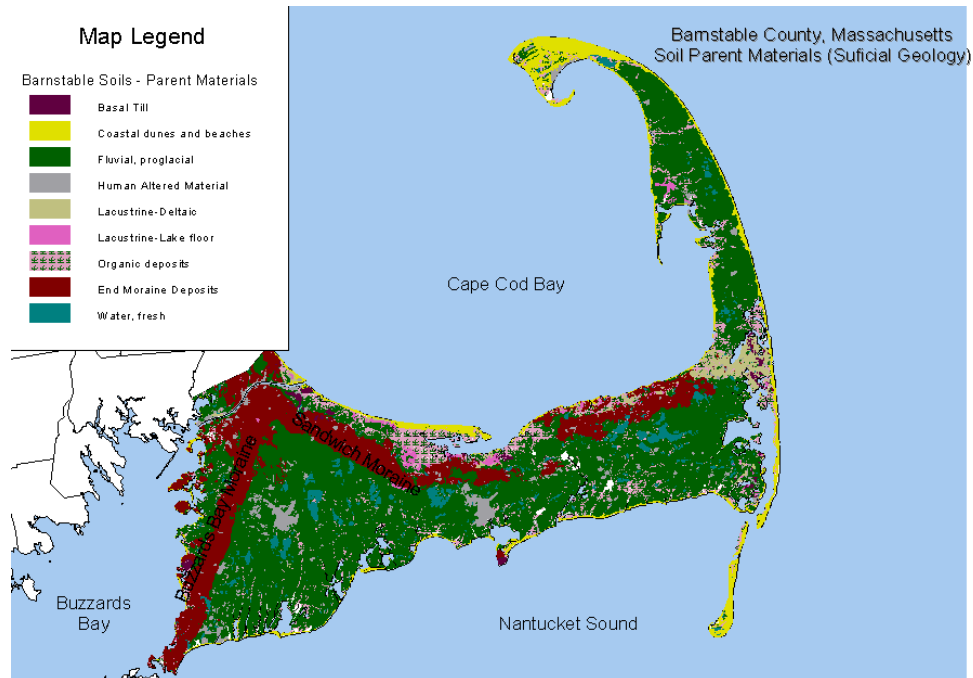
The Cape Cod landscape was created and shaped by the last of the Ice Age glaciers that advanced over New England about 23,000 years ago. The leading edge of the glacier halted just south of the present day shoreline, and the rock and gravel it deposited formed a terminal moraine that includes the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

The glacier began to recede about 19,000 years ago, but a re-advance of the ice about 12,000 years ago again reached Cape Cod and created another terminal moraine that became the backbone of the Cape as we know it today. The Cape Cod moraine is comprised of two parts formed by separate lobes of the same glacier. The Buzzards Bay moraine, formed by a lobe located in Buzzards Bay, extends roughly north-south creating a ridgeline and series of hills from Bourne south through Falmouth and Woods Hole to include the Elizabeth Islands. The Sandwich moraine, formed by a lobe located in Cape Cod Bay, extends west-east from Bourne through Barnstable (Oldale 1981 & USGS 2001).

Southeast of the Buzzards Bay and Sandwich moraines is an extensive area of glacial outwash that slopes gently to the shoreline and comprises most of the Cape Cod landscape. This outwash plain is made up of sand and gravel deposited by meltwater streams that flowed across the plain in a braided pattern, resulting in a broad flat depositional surface that sloped gently away from the ice front.

In Falmouth, the Buzzards Bay moraine creates a long north-south ridgeline from North Falmouth to Woods Hole. The moraine is characterized by an irregular topography of hills and swales and is comprised of an unsorted mixture of rock, sand, and soil, ranging from giant boulders to fine silt and clay. To the west, the land slopes steeply down to Buzzards Bay and creates a series of coves, necks, marshes, and beaches.

PRESERVATION APPROACH



Glacial soils on Cape Cod. Dark red represents the upland moraines. Green shows the outwash plains. Falmouth is located at the southwest tip, facing both Buzzards Bay and Nantucket Sound. (Fletcher 1993)

Most of Falmouth lays to the east of the moraine on the broad outwash plain. This land has a gentle gradient and is comprised mostly of sand and gravel. Dotting both the moraine and the outwash plain are kettle holes that are variable in size.

The gently sloping outwash plain east of Falmouth Village is cut by many narrow, straight valleys that were created by springs coming to the surface along the shore and cutting their way up the ground-water gradient soon after the glacier melted. These valleys intersect ground water so that fresh water drains into them all along their length, creating small streams like the Coonamesset River and watering cranberry bogs in the valley bottoms. The upper ends of most of these valleys are dry today. The southern ends of some of these valleys were flooded when the sea level rose, forming the narrow estuaries of Falmouth Harbor, Little Pond, Great Pond, Green Pond, Bournes Pond, and Eel Pond along Falmouth's south shore.

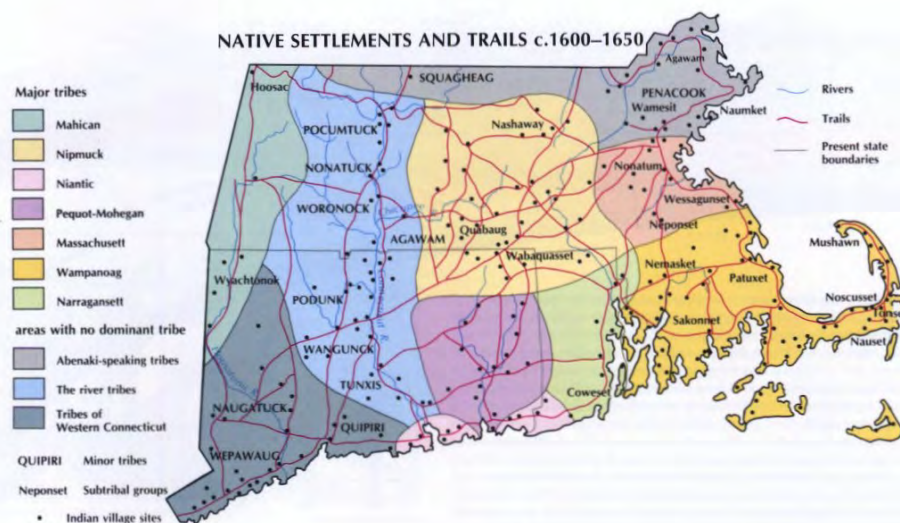
As the sea level rose to its current level over the past few thousand years, the sea's wave action increasingly shaped the land along the shoreline. Waves eroded the sand and gravel of the outwash plain along Falmouth's southern shore as well as the more resistant Buzzards Bay moraine along the western shore. The sand removed from the glacial hills and plains was carried along the shoreline by the waves and shaped into beaches and sand spits. These sandy deposits smoothed the shoreline and protected the areas shoreward of them, where salt marshes developed. Falmouth's dynamic shoreline continues to be shaped today (USGS 2001).

Native American Context and Resources

The landscape created by the glaciers has been occupied by humans and shaped by human activity for most of the time since the ice retreated and the seas rose.

An overview of Falmouth's prehistory is presented in the *Archeological Reconnaissance Survey of Falmouth, Massachusetts* prepared in 1996 by archeologists from the University of Massachusetts (Donta 1996). A brief summary of their overview is included in Appendix A and helps demonstrate that the Falmouth landscape has been home to peoples and evolving cultures for thousands of years before our time. Information obtained at historic sites occupied by these peoples are the only way we can learn about their cultures.

When the Europeans arrived in early 17th century, most of southeastern Massachusetts, including the Cape, was occupied by the Wampanog, a sub-group of the Massachusett. The Wampanog were in turn comprised of a series of smaller sub-groups who formed a loose confederation and occupied separate territories that were probably defined by natural geographical boundaries. The sub-group occupying Cape Cod has been referred to as the Nauset.



The Wampanog occupied southeastern Massachusetts and the Cape (Wilkie 1991)

At least four to five sizable Nauset settlements are thought to have been present in Falmouth before and during the Contact period with an estimated population of 1,200 to 1,500 individuals. Settlements are believed to have been located in the vicinities of North Falmouth, the center of town, the Ashumet Pond/Johns Pond area, and on Waquoit Bay. Other possible settlement sites may have also been present based upon names taken from various historic records, particularly references in early deeds (Donta 1996).

Native American trails followed the general trend of the coasts, were later used by Europeans, and are present today in portions of the town's current road network. The Native American's Buzzard's Bay north-south trail followed Shore Road and Palmer Avenue with a southern extension along today's Woods Hole Road. The east-west Vineyard Sound trail followed Main Street and Teaticket Highway west past Waquoit Bay. Interior trails branched north toward the

PRESERVATION APPROACH

Shawme Lake area on Sandwich Road and northeast toward the Mattachase area on Old Barnstable Road (MHC 1985).

A number of prehistoric sites have been identified in Falmouth over the years, mostly by local historians and avocational archeologists. Falmouth is under-represented in the number of sites that have been identified compared to other Cape Cod communities due to the limited number of professional archeological investigations that have been undertaken within the town. Only 36 prehistoric sites are listed for Falmouth in the files of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (Donta 1996).

The *Archeological Reconnaissance Survey of Falmouth, Massachusetts*, prepared in 1996 and on file in the Falmouth Planning Office, provides an overview of the town's prehistoric and historic archeological sites and the potential for identification of undiscovered sites. The survey is not publicly available due to the sensitivity of the archeological sites it discusses. The precise locations of prehistoric sites are not generally made public due to the potential for vandalism.

Many prehistoric sites in Falmouth have probably been lost due to development over the years. The desirable sites used by Native Americans were also desirable to European settlers and remain desirable for modern development today. Despite the lack of professional study, it is highly likely that the Falmouth landscape was actively occupied by Native Americans prior to European settlement and that archeological sites not yet destroyed by development remain to be found. The 1996 Survey can be used to help identify, investigate, and preserve remaining Native American sites (Donta 1996, MHC 1985).



Many of our natural resource and agricultural sites are also significant as Native American sites. Some early roads follow the routes of Native American trails.

Falmouth's Agricultural Era – Context and Resources

The history of Falmouth is richly told in *The Book of Falmouth*, published in 1986 to celebrate the town's tercentenary (Smith 1986). An overview of the town's history is also provided in the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Reconnaissance Survey Town Report for Falmouth (MHC 1985). Falmouth's story was shaped by its landscape. The town's settlement patterns and agricultural uses developed over three centuries from the self-sustaining local community agriculture of the 17th and 18th centuries through the market agriculture of the 19th century. The historic resources associated with Falmouth's agricultural era are discussed here.

Initial settlement of Falmouth began about 1660 with the granting of lands to settlers primarily from Barnstable. The settlers occupied the strip of land between Salt Pond to the west and Herring Brook and Siders Pond to the east and are said to have arrived by boat (rather than overland). Access to the ocean was critical for the early settlement's transportation and trade needs. The salt marsh bay was important as a source of native marsh grasses that provided natural fodder for livestock. The bay was also an important for its shellfish and fishing. No above ground evidence of this early settlement site remains, but it is a significant archeological site (MHC 1985).

Over a few decades, settlement expanded from the salt bay and vicinity of Falmouth Village to West Falmouth (1666-68), Woods Hole (1677), North Falmouth (1682), and Hatchville and East Falmouth (1685). The Town of Falmouth was officially incorporated in 1686. By about 1720, the town's lands were reported to have been fully occupied or "generally run out" (MHC 1985: 7).

Settlement was concentrated in villages along the main north-south and east-west roadways in the western and southern areas of the town. In the south, additional clusters developed along Shore Street and Davisville Road. In the west, settlement extended along North Shore Road, with a focus at the Friends meetinghouse in West Falmouth and a cluster of houses at North Falmouth. This village settlement pattern would remain the primary organizing feature of the Falmouth landscape for two centuries and is still significant today.

Falmouth was primarily an agricultural landscape, but maritime uses were also important. Buildings included farmhouses, barns, sheds, and other support structures. Most farmers probably also worked at crafts (blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, shops) and had workshops associated with their farmsteads. Agricultural fields and pastures were located on the appropriate soils in the vicinity of each village but might also be located at a distance. Historic landscape features included field lots, farm lanes, stone walls, and fences.

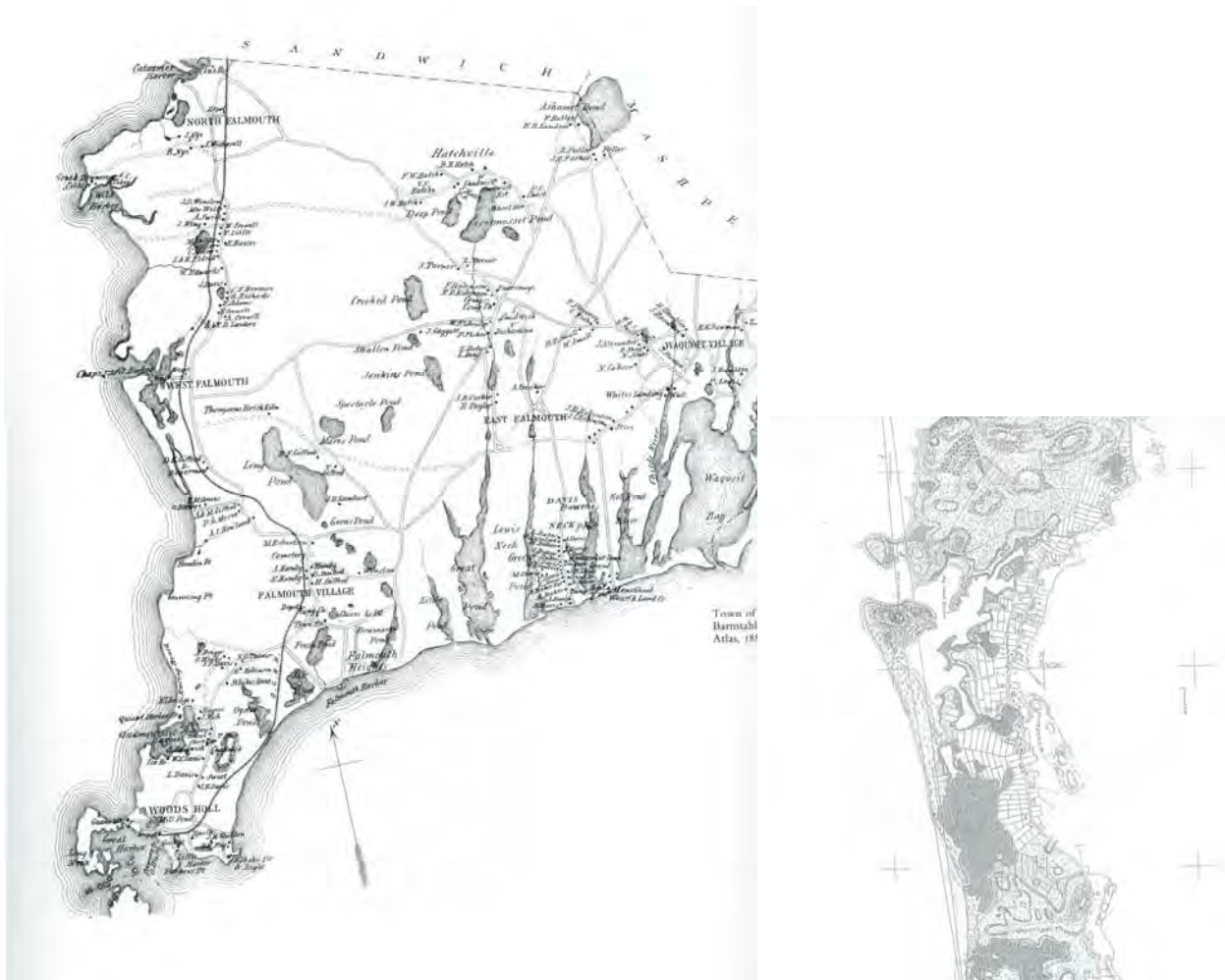
Community buildings such as churches, meeting houses, and, eventually, schools occupied a central place in each village. Mills for grain and wood were located at places where waterpower could be developed. Specialized structures for ship building, maritime, lumbering, salt works, and other industrial occupations were sited at convenient locations each use.

PRESERVATION APPROACH

Falmouth's population grew slowly but steadily from initial settlement through the mid-1800s, peaking in 1850 at 2621 people before beginning a slow decline. The village at Woods Hole expanded as a maritime center after about 1800 with increased use of the harbor. Woods Hole continued to grow as a deep water harbor and was further enhanced by the development of the Pacific Guano Company works at Penzance Point about 1859. Expansion of Falmouth Village continued into the 1850s as the town's primary local commercial focus.

Little interior development took place in Falmouth during the mid-19th century, with the only concentration around Coonamessett Pond. A small cluster developed north of the pond, and the East End meetinghouse became the focus of a small crossroads settlement at Sandwich Road/Hatchville Road.

A series of coastal survey maps issued in 1845 and 1846 show the coastal landscape of Falmouth in remarkable detail (Boyce 1845 & 1846). The rendered landscaping clearly show how land was being used at the time, including open water, marshland, open land, shrub land woodland, orchards, pasture, and improved agricultural fields.



Town of Falmouth from the Barnstable Atlas of 1880 documenting the landscape prior to development as a summer community (Smith 1986). Right, detail of a rendered map of the West Falmouth coastline about 1845 showing land use (Boyce 1845)

Most of the coastal land appears to have been cleared of woodland, but only distinct parcels in the vicinity of villages and along roadways appear as improved agricultural fields. Villages are clearly defined and buildings marked. A number of ponds that are open water today appear as marshland. Back roads and back lots that no longer exist are shown and indicate how land was being used. Overlaying the surveys with current GIS topographic and soil maps would provide interesting information on historic land use in Falmouth in combination with written documentation of the time.

Falmouth's nineteenth century agricultural villages remain the most identifiable and widely recognized historic features in the town today and were the focus of Falmouth's early historic preservation initiatives. Village landscape contexts remain intact today with contributing features that include the natural topography, circulation patterns of roads and lanes, historic buildings, built and natural landscape features surrounding historic buildings, and overall spatial relationships.

In contrast, the surrounding agricultural landscape associated with Falmouth's historic villages has been largely lost to woodlands and suburban development. Discrete features of the agricultural landscape remain, such as remnant field patterns, stone walls, early roads, and farm lanes, and may be discerned in some places. A notable example is a remnant of the earliest north-south road in West Falmouth, relocated in 1753, a portion of which is now Friends Way (MHC 1998: 7/3).



Falmouth's first two centuries of agricultural and maritime development produced a range of building types, most clustered along primary roads within the town's historic villages. The villages retain a high degree of historical integrity, while the surrounding agricultural landscape has been lost to woodland and suburban development.

PRESERVATION APPROACH

Residences are the predominant building type remaining in Falmouth's historic villages. Many of the earliest surviving residences are traditional 1½ story gable roof cottages that characterize the Cape Cod region and date to the 18th century. Falmouth has a greater number of 2½ story versions of these dwelling than most other Cape Cod towns as well. Many later dwellings were expanded from earlier, smaller structures and may include the earlier structures within them or as summer kitchen additions. Many early structures were replaced in later years as successive generations expanded, subdivided, and changed landholdings.

The largest number of surviving historic residences from Falmouth's agricultural era were constructed in the early to mid-1800s, which was a time of prosperity and growth within the agricultural community. As seen in the population figures, mentioned above, this prosperity peaked in the 1850s and then declined, a trend for agriculture throughout Massachusetts.

Most residences from the early 1800s continue the architectural traditions of the 17th century of 1½ and 2½ story gable end, wood framed, shingle sided buildings with center chimneys. A few, however, introduced new forms popular elsewhere with end gable chimneys, center halls, increased ceiling heights, and occasionally, hipped roofs. The architectural styles of Falmouth's dwellings progressed in accordance with national trends into the mid to late nineteenth century (MHC 1998: 7/15 & 18).

A variety of religious and commercial buildings remain from the agricultural era as well, some of which are prominent within their communities. Most notable are churches, such as the Quaker meeting houses in West Falmouth and East End and the Congregational Churches in Falmouth Village and Waquoit. Outbuildings remain on some residential lots. Many former commercial structures, such as grist mills, salt works, brick works, and others have been lost and exist now as significant archeological sites.

Summer Community – Context and Resources

The year 1872 is recognized as a watershed moment in Falmouth's history separating over two hundred years of landscape development based primarily upon agriculture and maritime economy from the town's emergence and development as a resort community. In 1872, the Cape Cod Railroad extended a branch line down the coast from Buzzards Bay Village to Woods Hole harbor to serve the Pacific Guano Company. Construction of the railroad connected Falmouth to the Boston metropolitan area and provided a means by which summer visitors could easily reach the coast to enjoy its beaches, water, and fine summer weather.

The establishment of Falmouth as a summer community transformed the town, its economy, and its landscape. New and different people came. Development patterns changed dramatically away from the focus on the town's historic villages toward the beaches and the coastline.

Falmouth had been considered a prime summering place for Boston's wealthy families since the 1840s. Construction of the railroad, however, facilitated the arrival of large numbers of summer residents and vacationers. The town's

development can be divided into two broad periods based upon economic and transportation transformations nationwide. Before World War II, the railroad and later the emergence of the automobile provided access primarily to wealthy and upper middle class visitors. After World War II road improvements, interstate highways, and the more widespread use of automobiles precipitated a sharp increase in the town's summer population that continues to the present.

Historians identify three distinct types of summer development in Falmouth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first, beginning in the 1870s, was the development of small summer cottages and cottage communities primarily along the beachfront of Nantucket Sound, most as planned developments around a hotel as their social center. Falmouth Heights (1871) and Menauhant (1878) are examples of this type of development.



Falmouth Heights planned development from the Barnstable County Atlas, 1880 (Smith 1986: 208)

Second was the subdivision of shorefront properties along the Buzzards Bay coastline, accessible to the railroad and historic villages, with large Shingle Style houses. Chapoquoit (1890), Penzance Point (1892), and Megansett (1890) are examples.

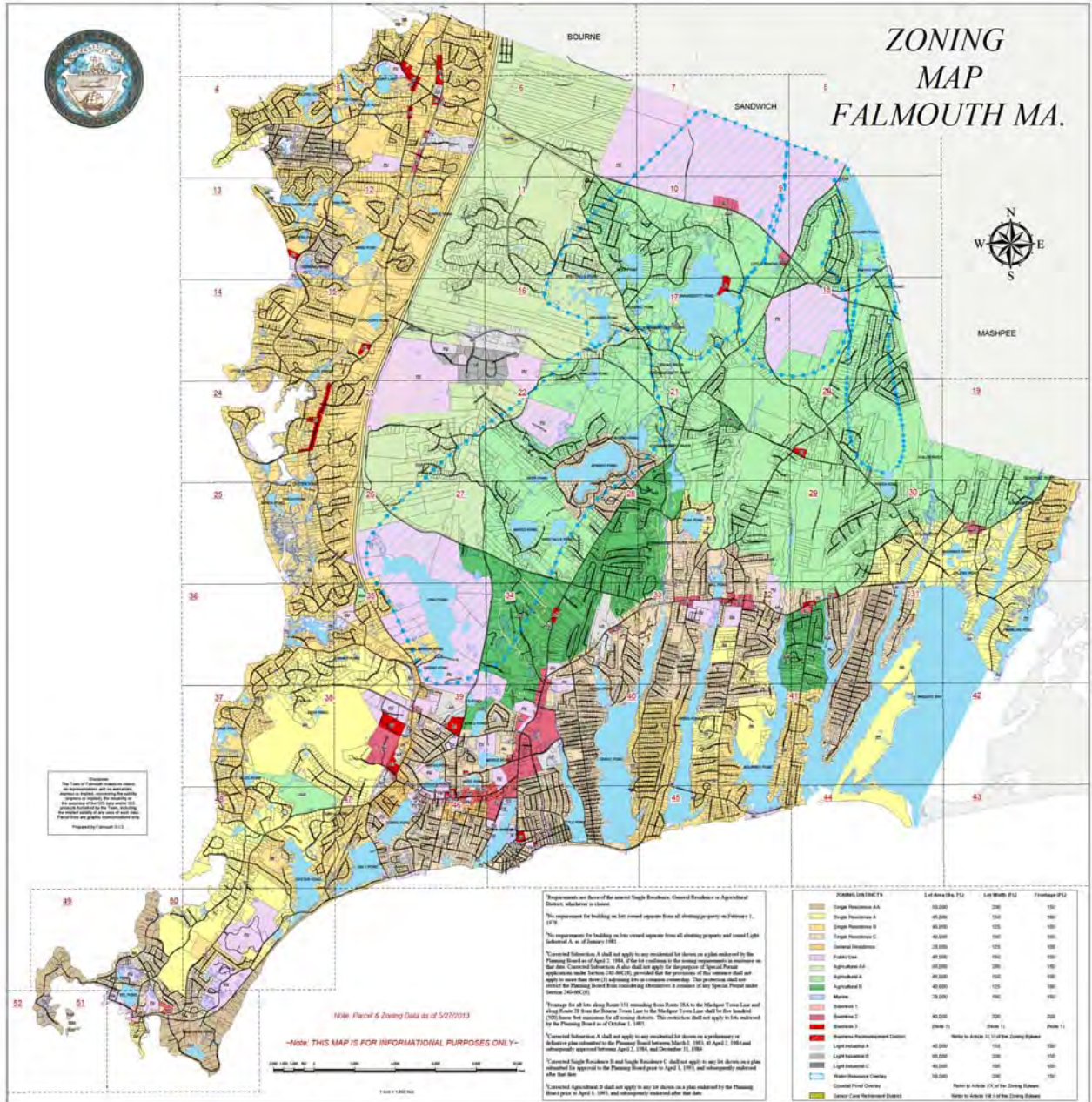
Third was the development of estates by individuals on land that was often purchased as farms. The estates featured large Shingle Style or Classical Revival houses with elaborate landscaping on the ridges overlooking the bay. The most prominent of these estates were constructed about the turn of the century and located in West Falmouth, Quissett, and Woods Hole. Estates were also constructed in Falmouth Village and along Waquoit Bay (Donta 1996: 42).

Since World War II, with the rapid growth of the Boston metropolitan area and the significantly increased use of automobiles, Falmouth has grown steadily and dramatically as a summer community of second homes. Most development has been in the form of suburban style subdivisions, first along the coastlines and then farther inland. Along Nantucket Sound, the long, thin peninsulas between the coastal ponds have filled in from Salt Pond to Waquoit Bay with closely

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packed streets of small suburban style homes. Route 28 from Falmouth Village to Teaticket and East Falmouth has experienced commercial strip development.

Along Buzzards Bay, the rolling hills and former agricultural lands have been developed with larger suburban lots and curving roads. A landscape that was treeless in the late nineteenth century has grown into a maturing woodland masking the extent of new development. Large custom homes continue to be built on lots along the bay. In interior Falmouth, on the outwash plain that is now also largely wooded, new suburban subdivisions have been built in the vicinity of Coonamessett, Deep, Crooked, and Jenkins Ponds.



Falmouth’s zoning map provides an indication of development and growth patterns over the past hundred years

Falmouth's year-round population has grown from 6,868 in 1940 to 15,299 in 1970, 27,597 in 1990, and 32,666 in 2000. The town's population swells to about 60,000 people during the peak summer months. Many of the town's shoreline homes are rental properties used only during the summer season.

The extent of Falmouth's growth and development can be seen in its zoning map, which shows largely single family residences in the coastal areas west and south of Route 28 (shades of yellow and tan); commercial within and east of Falmouth Village (shades of red); and open space, agricultural areas, and large lot subdivisions on the interior (shades of green). Falmouth's rapid growth over the past sixty years has transformed its landscape into that of a mature suburban community. Many newcomers are retirees who value the town's appealing character including its historic landscape.

Most of Falmouth's summer homes are part of neighborhoods that were developed together and share a landscape of common character. Whether developed in 1870, 1920, 1950, or 1990, neighborhood character is important and is the key to recognizing and preserving historic summer building and landscape resources.

Falmouth's dramatic growth has provided challenges in the recognition and retention of the community character that people appreciate and have come to the town to enjoy. With the intense development that has occurred, historic resources have been lost and the character of the historic landscape has dramatically changed. The ongoing recognition of historic building and landscape resources and how they contribute to the community is an important part of planning for Falmouth's future.



Summer homes in Falmouth come in all shapes and sizes, both designed and vernacular, but most adhere to the region's historic natural cedar shingle vocabulary.

Recognition of Falmouth's Historic Resources

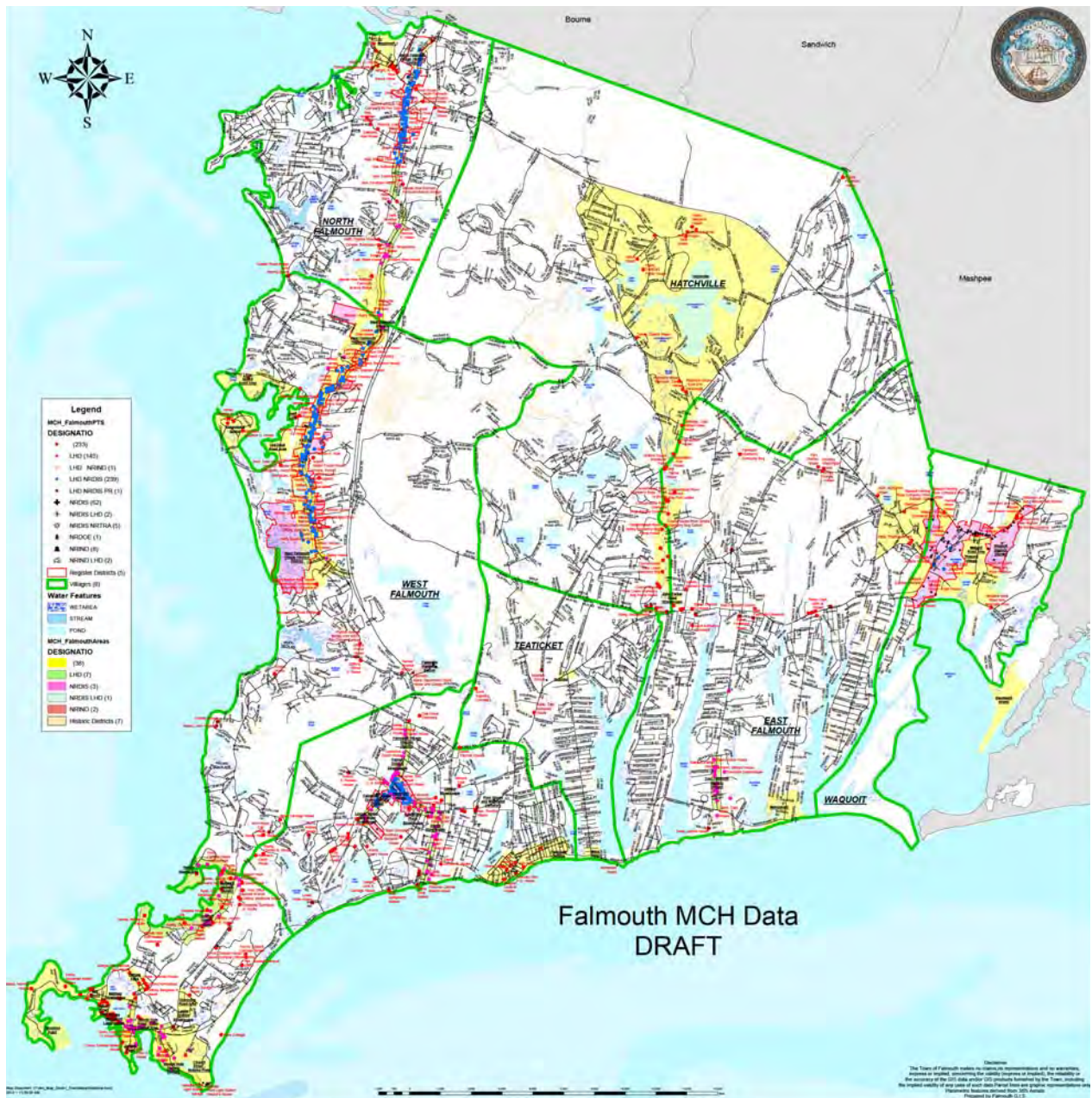
Falmouth's historic resources have been recognized as important to the character of the town since community planning was initiated in Falmouth in the 1920s. The range of resources that are in need of recognition and protection has expanded over time and includes resources from all three of the prehistoric, agricultural, and summer residence eras outlined above. Falmouth's changing cultural landscape is the setting significant to it all.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, few sites have been identified from Falmouth's prehistoric history, largely because of the lack of professional archeological investigation. The *Archeological Reconnaissance Survey of Falmouth, Massachusetts*, prepared in 1996 and on file in the Falmouth Planning Office, provides an overview of the town's prehistoric and historic archeological sites and the potential for identification of undiscovered sites. The survey is an important and under-utilized resource. Identification of potential archeological sites is important so they can be avoided and preserved if possible.

In the 1970s, local advocates and citizens undertook the establishment of local historic districts within Falmouth's seven historic villages. This initiative included the identification and survey of historic buildings along the principal roads within the villages. Over the three decades of the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, dedicated volunteers of the Falmouth Historical Commission surveyed a large number of historic buildings in the town using forms and methodologies of the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Over 500 buildings were surveyed focused primarily upon buildings associated with Falmouth's agricultural era history, including the historic villages. A number of turn-of-the-20th-century streetscapes and residential neighborhoods were surveyed as well.

In 1998, the Falmouth Historical Commission undertook the nomination of three villages to the National Register of Historic Places. A fourth was added in 2004. In 2008, consultants were retained to survey several of Falmouth's historic resort neighborhoods, responding to recommendations of the town's 2005 comprehensive plan. Several other special resources were surveyed as well. The neighborhood surveys undertaken more than doubled the number of surveyed properties in Falmouth.

Falmouth's surveyed historic properties are listed in the Massachusetts Historical Commission's MACRIS database (Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System) accessible online. The MACRIS database provides a link to their related survey forms, whether individual or part of an area or district. The database includes 58 districts or areas (mostly villages, neighborhoods, or individual streets) and 1,538 individual property listings compiled from both the districts and areas and individual property surveys. The complete set of survey forms are also kept in the files of the Falmouth Historical Commission.



Map of surveyed historic resources in Falmouth from data provided by the Massachusetts Historical Commission

In the spring of 2013, students from the Boston University Preservation Studies Program prepared a Heritage Landscape Reconnaissance Report for Falmouth under the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Heritage Landscapes Program and in coordination with the Falmouth Historical Commission and Cape Cod Commission. In a public workshop, residents identified 142 historic landscapes of interest from which 20 were chosen for study by the students. The Heritage Landscapes Inventory Program and 2013 study are important means through which landscape resources are recognized as resources significant to Falmouth’s history and character.

GOALS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic resources play a prominent role in Falmouth's community character and quality of life. As a vacation and leisure-time destination, strengthening and enhancing Falmouth's character and quality of life is especially important to the town's economy. Falmouth has undergone dramatic growth and change over the past fifty years and will continue to experience development pressure in the future.

Increasingly, future growth will be experienced as infill development and redevelopment of existing villages and neighborhoods, presenting challenges in the preservation of historic building and landscape resources. To help protect the long-term interests of residents, it is important that future change be accommodated in a way that strengthens, rather than diminishes, Falmouth's character.

Seven broad goals have been identified that together express the ways in which historic preservation can be incorporated into planning for Falmouth's future. These goals have been incorporated into the strategies and recommendations presented in Chapters 3 through 6 of this preservation plan.

Goal 1: Make historic preservation central to Falmouth's quality of life.

Goal 1 is a broad statement that reflects the central mission of this preservation plan as expressed in the introduction to this section. Historic building and landscape resources play a prominent role in Falmouth's character and quality of life, which in turn are why people come here.

Historic preservation values should be incorporated into everything the town, its organizations, its businesses, and its residents do. Preservation values should be widely recognized as important to Falmouth's future. While change will occur, change should be accommodated in a way that takes historic preservation values under consideration and enhances the qualities that make Falmouth special.

Goal 1 is a part of each of the chapters of this preservation plan. It is reflected in the broad set of topics under which the plan is organized and through which its strategies and recommendations are expressed.

Goal 2: Fully identify and document historic built, landscape, and archeological resources throughout the town.

Falmouth has a long and impressive history of identifying and preserving its historic resources. Volunteers have been surveying historic buildings for over four decades. Falmouth's local historic districts are among the earliest established. Because the town's surveys are so early, however, they do not necessarily reflect advances in professional methodologies and best practices that have developed since. These advances include both an increase in the range and types of resources that should be recognized and the ways in which surveys are documented.

Goal 2 acknowledges that Falmouth must continue to stay abreast of advances in preservation practice and make sure that historic resource surveys are up to date. This means making sure that the full range of historic building and



Cottage typical of Falmouth's charming character

landscape resources are identified so that they can be included in planning considerations. Older surveys may need updating. Research into Falmouth's history and historic contexts should be ongoing and continue to deepen understanding of the town and its resources.

Goal 2 is incorporated into Chapters 3, 4, and 5. Chapter 3, *Falmouth's Historical Commission*, focuses upon the role of the Historical Commission, which has responsibility for the identification and survey of historic resources on behalf of the town. Chapter 4, *Falmouth's Villages and Neighborhoods*, addresses not only the identification and preservation of the full range of contributing resources in the historic villages but also continuing recognition that many of Falmouth's neighborhoods and summer communities have historic value and significance.

Chapter 5, *Cultural Landscapes and Land Conservation*, encourages incorporation of historic values into Falmouth's impressive land conservation programs and initiatives, recognizing that the entire town is an evolving cultural landscape with many layers shaped by its inhabitants over time. Identifying historic landscape features and attributes is a current task facing the preservation community.

Goal 3: Heighten public appreciation of Falmouth's heritage and historic resources.

In order for historic preservation initiatives to be successful, it is essential to have community support. It is necessary, therefore, to make sure that residents are aware that history and historic resources are central to the quality of life they enjoy. Heightening public appreciation of Falmouth's heritage and

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increasing public recognition of the physical attributes and features that contribute to that heritage are important long term objectives.

Goal 3 is a primary focus of Chapter 6, *Telling Falmouth's Stories*. Through interpretation and educational programming, residents and visitors are provided with activities that deepen appreciation of Falmouth's rich heritage. Reminders of the town's heritage can be incorporated into daily experiences in many ways, both subtle and overt.

Goal 4: Have private initiatives and actions a primary means through which historic resources are recognized, preserved, and enhanced.

To the extent possible, it is most desirable to achieve historic preservation goals through private initiative. Most historic buildings in Falmouth are privately owned, and most are residences. Falmouth is an affluent community where property values are high. Vacancy, blight, and neglect are not major issues. People value their properties and generally take good care of them.

Preservation of many historically significant residences can be achieved by helping owners appreciate their historic character and providing them with information and technical assistance regarding appropriate treatment. Developers can be encouraged to incorporate historic preservation into their projects through good planning and advocacy.

Goal 4 will be achieved through actions described in Chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 3, *Falmouth's Historical Commission*, outlines how the Historical Commission's role in planning practices and procedures can encourage better outcomes in proposed development projects. Chapter 4 promotes engagement with neighborhood groups to provide information and technical assistance for appropriate treatment of historic buildings and landscapes.



Falmouth is known for its historic villages.

Goal 5: Assure that public sector initiatives and actions are models for best practices in the preservation and treatment of historic resources.

The Town of Falmouth governmental entities should be model stewards of the town's historic resources. The Town owns and/or maintains a number of historic buildings and landscapes and has potential impacts upon many others. Appropriate stewardship and treatment is not difficult to do and need not be more expensive. It is primarily a matter of understanding.

The Town should ensure that public sector initiatives and actions are models of good stewardship and demonstrate good stewardship to others. We can't ask the private sector to do the right thing if we are not doing it ourselves. Residents should expect nothing less. Goal 5 is referred to in each of the implementation chapters.

Goal 6: Assure that heritage is a core component of Falmouth's visitor experience.

As a Spring, Summer, and Fall destination, Falmouth is a desirable community that is host to a large number of new and repeat visitors each year. Falmouth's historic resources are attractions that enrich the visitor experience and give added interest to every activity. Heritage tourism is appealing to the types of visitors that Falmouth serves. It offers a complete experience, where recreational, leisure, dining, shopping, and lodging activities all have the same high quality and unique community character.

Goal 6 focuses attention on the need to make sure that heritage and historic resources are an important part of Falmouth's presentation to visitors. If visitors appreciate Falmouth for its historic character, so will residents. Goal 6 is featured in Chapter 6, *Telling Falmouth's Stories*, which addresses interpretation and visitor experience as a heritage and cultural tourism initiative.

Goal 7: Integrate heritage and historic preservation into public and private conservation initiatives.

Falmouth's dynamic growth has placed stress upon the town's landscape and natural resources. Coastal resource, water supply resource, and wetland protection have received a great deal of support from governmental entities and the public at large. Private non-profit land conservation initiatives are among the town's proudest achievements. Falmouth's scientific community has been a tremendous asset in both leading conservation initiatives and assuring that they are of the highest technical quality.

As discussed throughout this plan, the Town of Falmouth is a cultural landscape that has been impacted by the hand of man over many centuries, never more thoroughly than over the past two hundred years. Every landscape in Falmouth has been impacted by human activity. Recognizing that the town's natural landscapes are also historic landscapes enriches their meaning and helps us refine stewardship approaches.

Chapter 5, *Cultural Landscapes and Land Conservation*, seeks to incorporate historic values into Falmouth's land conservation initiatives. Conservation and historic preservation are two sides of the same coin and can benefit each other to the ultimate benefit of the Falmouth community.



Cultural landscapes are an important part of Falmouth's heritage.

PRESERVATION APPROACH AND GUIDELINES

This preservation plan is intended to be a guiding document for all of the organizations and entities in Falmouth with an interest in historic preservation. The town's Historical Commission has a central role in implementing the plan and should take responsibility for coordinating, monitoring, and providing support and assistance to other partners. Each year, the Historical Commission and Historic Districts Commission should meet to assess progress on the plan's implementation, and an annual report on historic preservation in Falmouth should be submitted to the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting (see Chapter 3 recommendations).

The following points summarize the approach taken in preparation of the preservation plan. They should also guide its implementation. Consider these points when assessing progress, developing priorities, and making decisions on implementation and adjustments to the plan.

Take a cultural landscape approach to history and historic preservation in Falmouth.

As mentioned throughout this plan, consider the Town of Falmouth a cultural landscape that has evolved over time through a combination of both natural dynamics and human actions. The Falmouth landscape of the mid-nineteenth century looked a lot different than the Falmouth we know today, as did the landscape occupied and influenced by Native Americans before European settlement in the 17th century. Patterns of settlement and land use have changed and evolved over time. Buildings, roads, farmsteads, villages, fields, woodlots, and other features are elements of the cultural landscape. So are

natural systems and plant communities, often intensely managed and otherwise influenced by the town's residents at any particular time.

The cultural landscape we have today has developed over the past hundred years or so of evolution as a summer community. Remnants and features remain from previous eras of the town's history. Our job is to understand, appreciate, and communicate the nature and characteristics of Falmouth's layered cultural landscape and to provide responsible stewardship of its resources where we can as evolution continues.

The point is to look at the landscape holistically, understand its significance and its dynamics, and get the big picture right.

Build on the outstanding work of the previous generation in documenting Falmouth's history and historic resources.

Falmouth has been at the forefront of community planning in Massachusetts for a long time. This includes the work of community volunteers in historic preservation. In part, this leadership has been a consequence of the intense development pressure the town has experienced, but it is also because of the intelligence, foresight, and dedication of the town's residents.

Falmouth's survey files of historic resources, developed in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, are extraordinary. Its local historic districts in the town's seven historic villages are among the earliest in the state. We need to continue this tradition of being at the forefront of community planning, always exploring new techniques and possibilities focused on achieving desired results.

The initiatives of the 1970s, groundbreaking at the time, are now dated. Best practices have evolved as new techniques have been developed to address ongoing challenges. We need to evolve with these changes, being alert to new challenges as they emerge and developing and adapting documentation and planning techniques that yield results. The idea of thinking of historic preservation in terms of the historic landscape is one of these adaptations, leading to a slightly different way of achieving preservation goals.

Build public support through outreach on many fronts.

Community support is essential in achieving preservation and planning goals. Community support should be sought through as many means as possible by as many partners as possible. Education and communication are key. Residents will not support preservation actions if they do not appreciate historic resources and agree that the resources contribute substantially to the community, its character, and the interests of residents.

Achieving consensus takes time. Support must be patiently cultivated through supportive programming and good actions. Grassroots interests and activity must be encouraged within neighborhoods and local communities so that preservation happens organically from within wherever possible, through local actions not superimposed regulation. Information, education, and technical assistance needs to be provided to support grassroots interest and activity.

Build historic preservation values into all private and public activities.

Historic preservation values should be built into everything the community does. It should happen as a matter of course in the normal process of doing business rather than an added extra layer. Forethought, communication, and good planning will help avoid having preservation issues arise through crises and conflict.

Many people mistakenly think that historic preservation is difficult, complicated, and burdensome. This is not so and its perception needs to be dispelled through example and experiences with good outcomes. Preservation should be easy and natural. It should be perceived as simply the right thing to do. Preservation concepts, summarized in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards (discussed below), should be included in all planning activities simply as a matter of course. Preservation processes should be as simple and straightforward as possible.

Implement a continuing process of upgrading to best practices.

As mentioned above with respect to building upon past achievements, develop a process that continually upgrades to best practices in planning, conservation, preservation, and community enhancement. Celebrate achievements. Build creative partnerships based upon mutual interests. Try new things. Falmouth has always been at the forefront of planning, and this tradition should be acknowledged, supported, and continued.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

The strategies, recommendations, and actions included in preservation planning should be informed and guided by the principles of historic preservation that have been developed and honed by practitioners in the field over the years.

Preservation is a practical discipline that can accommodate growth and change while continuing to preserve the characteristics that make a place special. The principles that have been developed in the field of historic preservation emphasize the importance of preserving authentic historic fabric to the maximum extent possible. Building and landscape uses come and go, but once lost, original historic fabric can never be reclaimed. The maintenance and preservation of original historic fabric, features, materials, and design elements, therefore, is central to a sound preservation approach. An underlying objective of this preservation plan is to encourage and promote the preservation and maintenance of historic building and landscape fabric in as many ways as possible.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards are a compilation of "best practices" for historic preservation. They are a touchstone for activities affecting historic buildings and landscapes and help ensure that important issues about the care of historic buildings and landscapes are not forgotten in the process of making decisions about other issues.

The durability of the *Standards* is testimony not only to their soundness, but also to the flexibility of their language. They provide a philosophy and approach to problem solving for those involved in managing the treatment of historic buildings and landscapes. They are not a set of solutions to specific design issues. Following a balanced, reasonable, and disciplined process is often more



Classic period residence in Davisville

important than the exact nature of the treatment option that is chosen. The *Standards* help ensure that the critical issues are considered.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are particularly useful in consideration of the appropriate maintenance of historic buildings; the alteration of older buildings as necessary for reuse, safety, and accessibility; and the construction of new buildings in an historic context. The ten standards that comprise the *Standards for Rehabilitation* are quoted below followed by a brief discussion of the implications of each. Additional discussion of the *Standards for Rehabilitation* may be found online (National Park Service, Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings 2013).

STANDARD 1 – *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*

Standard 1 recommends compatible use in the context of adaptive reuse and changes to historic buildings and landscapes. This standard encourages property owners to find uses that retain and enhance historic character, not detract from it. The work involved in reuse projects should be carefully planned to minimize impacts on historic features, materials, and spaces. The destruction of character-defining features should be avoided.

STANDARD 2 – *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

PRESERVATION APPROACH

Standard 2 recommends the retention and preservation of character-defining features. It emphasizes the importance of preserving integrity and as much existing historic fabric as possible. Alterations that repair or modify existing historic fabric are preferable to those that require total removal.

STANDARD 3 – *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*

Standard 3 focuses on authenticity and discourages the conjectural restoration of an entire property, feature, or design. It also discourages combining and/or grafting historic features and elements from different properties, and constructing new buildings that appear to be historic. Literal restoration to an historic appearance should only be undertaken when detailed documentation is available and when the significance of the resource warrants restoration. Reconstruction of lost features should not be attempted without adequate documentation.

STANDARD 4 – *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*

Standard 4 recognizes that buildings change, and that many of these changes contribute to a building's historical significance. Understanding a building's history and development is just as important as understanding its original design, appearance, and function. This point should be kept in mind when considering treatments for buildings that have undergone many changes.



The complex commercial landscape of Woods Hole

Most historic buildings contain a visual record of their own evolution. This evolution can be identified, and changes that are significant to the history of the building should be retained. The opportunity to compare multiple periods of time in the same building lends interest to the structure and helps communicate changes that have occurred within the larger landscape and community context.

STANDARD 5 – *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

Standard 5 recommends preserving the distinctive historic components of a building or landscape that represent its historic character. Workmanship, materials, methods of construction, floor plans, and both ornate and typical details should be identified prior to undertaking work.

STANDARD 6 – *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*

Standard 6 encourages property owners to repair historic character-defining features instead of replacing them when historic features are deteriorated or missing. In cases where deterioration makes replacement necessary, new features should closely match historic conditions in all respects. Before any features are altered or removed, property owners are urged to document existing conditions with photography and notes. These records assist future choices that are appropriate to the property's historic character.

STANDARD 7 – *Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*

Standard 7 warns against using chemical and physical treatments that can permanently damage historic features. Many commercially available treatments are irreversibly damaging. Sandblasting and harsh chemical cleaning, in particular, are extremely harmful to wood and masonry surfaces because they destroy the material's basic physical properties and speed deterioration.

STANDARD 8 – *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*

Standard 8 addresses the importance of below-ground prehistoric and historic features. This issue is of most importance when a construction project involves excavation. An assessment of a site's archeological potential prior to work is recommended. If archeological resources are present, some type of mitigation should be considered. Solutions should be developed that minimize the need for excavation of previously unexcavated sites.

STANDARD 9 – *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and*

PRESERVATION APPROACH

proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

STANDARD 10 – *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

Standards 9 and 10 are linked by issues of the compatibility and reversibility of additions, alterations, and new construction. Both standards are intended to 1) minimize the damage to historic fabric caused by building additions, and 2) ensure that new work will be different from, but compatible with, existing historic conditions. Following these standards will help to protect a building's historic integrity.

In conclusion, the basis for the *Standards* is the premise that historic resources are more than objects of aesthetic merit; they are repositories of historical information. It is important to reiterate that the *Standards* provides a framework for evaluating preservation activities and emphasizes preservation of historic fabric, honesty of historical expression, and reversibility. All decisions should be made on a case-by- case basis. The level of craftsmanship, detailing, and quality of materials should be appropriate to the significance of the resource.

SUMMARY

Falmouth's Historic Preservation Plan takes a broad view of the role of historic resources in creating community character and making the town a vibrant, prosperous, and desirable place to live and to visit. It seeks to engage residents and the private sector in recognizing preservation's benefits and embracing preservation initiatives. Guided by the seven goals outlined above and informed by the preservation concepts embodied in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*, the following chapters of the preservation plan create a comprehensive framework of strategies and actions through which the town and its partners can work together to make historic preservation a central component of the Falmouth's future development.



Adaptively reused stable at the Falmouth Historical Society



CHAPTER 3 – FALMOUTH’S HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Town of Falmouth was an early proponent of community planning, having begun reviewing subdivisions in the early 1920s and adopted its first subdivision regulations in 1950. The town has implemented other sophisticated growth management tools and techniques over the decades since, including establishment of local historic districts and a Historical Commission. In great measure, this response has been a result of the significant challenges posed by the town’s rapid development as a summer destination.

Chapter 3 focuses upon the role of the Historical Commission in Falmouth as advocate and steward on behalf of the town’s historic resources. Simply stated, it is the job of the Historical Commission to monitor conditions, issues, and threats regarding historic resources town-wide; to raise awareness about issues; and to have a positive impact where it can. The Historical Commission serves as an advisory body to the Board of Selectmen and other municipal entities. Its ultimate responsibility, though, is to the residents and to the resources it was created to protect. The Historical Commission needs to be comprehensive, proactive, and engaged.

The topics and recommendations below address Goals 2, 4, and 5. Goal 2, *Fully indentify and document historic built, landscape, and archeological resources throughout the town*, is a primary responsibility of the Historical Commission in making sure that historic resources are fully identified, recognized, and understood.

Goal 4, *Have private initiatives and actions a primary means through which historic resources are recognized, preserved, and enhanced*, includes a role for the Historical Commission in raising awareness among residents, encouraging appropriate private sector activities and initiatives, and providing information and technical support. The Historical Commission’s role also involves identifying impacts on historic resources as a consequence of private sector actions, especially when those actions involve public review processes.

Goal 5, *Assure that public sector initiatives and actions are models for best practices in the preservation and treatment of historic resources*, relates to the Historical Commission’s role in advising the Selectmen and other town entities

on issues and appropriate treatments with respect to historic resources affected by town activities, processes, and procedures.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the Local Comprehensive Plan as a policy document guiding planning, preservation, and other town actions specifically with respect to historic preservation. It then reviews the roles and responsibilities of the Historical Commission and provides recommendations for its key areas of activity.

Priorities for Action

As noted in Chapter 1, the Historic Preservation Plan, and particularly Chapter 3, includes a large number of recommendations which may be implemented over time. The Historical Commission is a small volunteer entity, and members cannot be expected to undertake all of the recommended here even with the assistance of Planning staff. Consequently, actions must be prioritized and taken at a measured pace. The full complement of potential actions are included, however, to inform Historical Commission members and to provide them with the opportunity to consider which actions might be most helpful in fulfilling their responsibilities.

The highest priority for the Historical Commission is engaging in the planning process and providing information and advice to the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. In this regard, the following recommendations should be considered of high priority.

Recommendation 3.2, Responsibilities of Historical Commission members, especially:

- 3.2.C – Continue to conduct regular monthly meetings; and
- 3.2.E – Organize assignments for members for ongoing work.

Recommendation 3.3, Engage Town boards and commission:

- 3.3.A – Attend meetings of other boards and commission;
- 3.3.B – Continue to have the assistance of Planning staff in preparing for meetings;
- 3.3.C – Retain a professional historic preservation consultant for advice in reviewing projects.

Recommendation 3.7 – Documenting historic resources:

- 3.7.C & E – expand and update the survey of historic resources;
- 3.7.D – Include surveyed properties as a layer on the town’s GIS database
- 3.7.H – Prepare National Register Nomination for the remaining historic villages.

Recommendation 3.15 –Advise the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals on new development projects:

- 3.15.B – Regularly attend Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings;

- 3.15.C – Review subdivision, land development, and zoning applications involving historic properties;
- 3.15.G – Provide information and prepare written recommendations for applications involving historic properties.

LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Local Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning document that establishes town policy and provides guidance for town processes, procedures, and actions. The comprehensive plan outlines a vision for growth and change. Its policies establish how town government should address present and future challenges. Town ordinances and regulations should be crafted to be in accordance with comprehensive plan policies and should be instruments for their realization.

The Town of Falmouth adopted an update of its Local Comprehensive Plan in 2005 that includes Element 7.1 entitled *Historical Preservation and Community Character*. The policies outlined in this element are well-conceived and provide specific guidance for the overall treatment of historic resources in Falmouth.

As a policy document, the comprehensive plan does not have regulatory effect or any mechanisms for enforcing its vision, policy, or action items. It does not stipulate specifically how its policies might be implemented. It is up to Falmouth's leadership, including its boards and commissions, to determine how to implement the comprehensive plan policies and actions within their area's of responsibility and authority. The measure of a board or commission's performance should be assessed through the outcomes that result through their activities and the degree to which those outcomes reflect the goals, policies, and actions in the comprehensive plan.

The goals and policies for historic preservation adopted as part of the 2005 Falmouth Local Comprehensive Plan have not been fully incorporated into town processes. Boards and commissions do not appear to coordinate their activities with respect to established historic preservation policies. Going forward, it is recommended that the historic preservation policies of the Local Comprehensive Plan be used to more explicitly guide actions.

RECOMMENDATION 3.1: Fully embrace and implement historic preservation goals and policies adopted in the 2005 Falmouth Local Comprehensive Plan in undertaking planning activities.

Element 7.1 of the 2005 Falmouth Local Comprehensive Plan (Town of Falmouth 2005) reviews the range of historic resources that have been identified in Falmouth, issues and threats to historic resources, and approaches to better planning. The issues it raises remain relevant today. Some recommendations included in the Local Comprehensive Plan have been implemented. The document remains a benchmark against which progress in historic preservation



Historic adaptively reused residence along Route 28 in Waquoit

and the recognition and enhancement of community character can be measured.

The policies established under Element 7.1 are organized under two goals related to the protection and preservation of historic resources and the encouragement of adaptive reuse. Significantly, the plan takes a broad view in recognition of the types of historic resources that should be protected, including not only buildings but archeological resources, landscape context, scenic roads, scenic views, and culturally significant landscapes. Brief examples of the language of its policies include:

- Historic buildings threatened with demolition should be **preserved on site** and included in the overall design of new land development projects.
- A historic structure's key character-defining features, including relationship to its **site and setting**, shall be preserved.
- **Cultural landscapes and archeologically sensitive areas** should be protected.
- Distinguishing original features of an **historic or cultural landscape** shall be preserved.
- New development within historic or cultural landscapes shall be located to **retain distinctive qualities** of such landscapes.
- Distinguishing **original features of a site** such as...existing plantings and topography should be preserved wherever possible.

- New development proposed adjacent to **scenic roads** shall be designed to preserve distinctive features of the scenic road including vistas.

This is language that this preservation plan embraces. Most importantly, it includes a landscape approach to historic preservation and community character. The comprehensive plan concentrates upon planning topics and issues. It cites a number of specific policy recommendations relevant to considerations undertaken during land development planning reviews by the town's planning entities.

The question, then, is how successful has the town been in implementing the policy guidelines and recommendations of this element of the comprehensive plan? The comprehensive plan notes that outside of village historic districts, historic buildings and landscapes have little protection from demolition and detrimental alterations. It states that persistent and continued development is the overarching threat to Falmouth's historic settlement patterns, scenic resources and community character (Town of Falmouth 2005: 7.1 4,5).

The analysis, goals, and policies outlined in the comprehensive plan are thoughtful and far reaching. However the Priority Action Items at the end of Element 7.1 are limited to general statements about improving the operations of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and Design Review Committee without providing much in the way of specifics. No other guidance is provided as to how the plan's policies might be implemented. Without more specific guidance, the policies remain largely unimplemented in practice.



East End Meetinghouse, constructed in 1797, today preserved and adaptively reused as a synagogue by the Falmouth Jewish Congregation

This Historic Preservation Plan is focused on providing as much detail as possible on how improvements can be made. The level of success in achieving the policies outlined in the Local Comprehensive Plan should be a measure by which current planning activities are assessed. To the extent that they are not successful, adjustments need to be made and new ways need to be developed to achieve preservation goals.

The 2005 Local Comprehensive plan should be actively used as guiding document as planning processes are undertaken in Falmouth. The specific policies of the comprehensive plan should be applied in the review of new development projects with the intent of incorporating their recommendations into the new projects. As the Town of Falmouth undertakes an update to its comprehensive plan, it should continue to embrace and implement the historic preservation policies outlined in the 2005 plan.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission, Planning Office, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The authority for municipal governments in Massachusetts to create local historical commissions was established in the 1960s with enactment of Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 40, Section 8d (MGL 2014).

Local historical commissions are the official agents of municipal government responsible for community-wide historic preservation planning. Historical commissions work in cooperation with other municipal agencies, such as the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic Districts Commission, and Conservation Commission, to insure that the goals of historic preservation are considered in the planning and future development of the community (MHC 2010: 4).

MGL Chapter 40 Section 8d identifies five responsibilities for local historical commissions:

1. Research places of historic or archaeological value;
2. Cooperate with the State Archaeologist in conducting surveys and reporting sites;
3. Coordinate with other preservation organizations;
4. Keep accurate records of the historical commission's actions and file an annual report; and
5. Maintain a membership of not less than three nor more than seven members.

Beyond these five responsibilities, historical commissions are free to undertake many other activities for the purpose of preserving and protecting the historic and archaeological assets of the community (MHC 2010: 2).

Falmouth's Historical Commission is established under the Town Charter, Article VII, Appointed Town Boards, Section C7-9 which simply states, "A Historical Commission of five (5) members shall be appointed (Town of Falmouth 2014)."

FALMOUTH'S HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen and may serve for three consecutive three year terms.

Requirements for the overall operation of the Historical Commission and other appointed boards are outlined in Section C7-2 of Article VII. They include provisions that:

- It is the responsibility of each chairperson to file a current description of the duties and responsibilities of the governmental body and its members with the Town Clerk;
- Governmental bodies may nominate prospective employee(s) of their choice, who shall then be considered for appointment by the Town Manager. All such employees shall be under the day-to-day supervision of the Town Manager; and
- All governmental bodies shall submit a written report to or meet with the Board of Selectmen at least once in each year (Town of Falmouth 2014).

Falmouth's Historical Commission must participate actively in local government and is integral to local government activities, policies, and politics. As an advisory body, the Historical Commission must make sure that other municipal entities have the information and guidance they need to make informed decisions about actions that may have an impact upon historic areas, buildings, structures, and sites.



Historic cemetery of the East End Meetinghouse

The Historical Commission should work closely with the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic Districts Commission, Conservation Commission, and any other board or department that is likely to have an influence on the physical character of the community. It should make recommendations to these bodies on issues related to historic preservation and advocate for the appropriate treatment of historic resources (MHC 2010: 29-30).

The Historical Commission has four key areas of responsibility, each of which is discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter:

- Inventory and documentation;
- Monitoring historic resources;
- Information and guidance to boards and commissions; and
- Public outreach.

Recommendations for the operation of the Historical Commission in recognizing and addressing its roles and responsibilities are outlined here.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2: Clearly delineate the responsibilities of Historical Commission members. Work with the Board of Selectmen to assure that members with the interest, time, and commitment are appointed to the Historical Commission.

Falmouth's Historical Commission has a long history of action and engagement which includes such outstanding achievements as the establishment of local historic districts, inventory of historic resources, and publication of *The Book of Falmouth*. The Historical Commission needs to be an active participant and voice in town affairs. In order to fulfill its roles and responsibilities, the Historical Commission must have active members with the interest, time, expertise, and commitment to undertake the activities required of it. The following actions are related to membership on the Historical Commission.

3.2.A Prepare a **summary of the responsibilities** of members of the Historical Commission and expectations for their leadership and involvement in serving. Provide the summary to prospective members being considered for appointment by the Board of Selectmen. Upon appointment, require that members sign the document acknowledging understanding of their responsibilities and agreeing to meet those responsibilities to the best of their ability.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission with support of the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager

3.2.B Prepare a set of **rules and regulations** for operation of the Historical Commission in accordance with the recommendations of this preservation plan, Article VII of the Town Charter, and recommendations included in *Preservation Planning Manual* of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC 2010: 35-36). Outline the role and responsibilities of the Historical Commission along with

operating procedures. Include the summary of responsibilities of members noted above as an appendix.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.2.C Conduct **regular monthly meetings** of the Historical Commission to review ongoing issues and to determine courses of action when needed. Prepare an agenda that lists issues of concern organized by town entity through which the issue is being addressed. Include an expected time allotment for each agenda item. Conduct meetings in accordance with the requirements of Article VII of the Town Charter and the recommendations for Commission Organization and Public Procedures included in *Preservation Planning Manual* of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC 2010: 32-39). At the end of each meeting summarize the work to be completed by members, staff, and consultants before the next meeting.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.2.D Maintain a spreadsheet with a **running list of projects** and issues under consideration by town boards and commissions affecting historic resources. Include projects under review by the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. Note the status of each project and dates by which action is required. Review the spreadsheet at each Historical Commission meeting to determine what actions and consultations are necessary by the Commission before the next meeting.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Planning Office and Historical Commission.

- 3.2.E Organize **assignments for members** for ongoing work of the Commission. Assign members to be liaisons to other Town boards and commissions. Assign a team of two members as liaisons to key entities such as the Planning Board, Historic Districts Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.2.F Create **subcommittees** for special issues and ongoing projects that require sustained work over a period of time. Recruit volunteers to fill out the membership of subcommittees. Consider establishing subcommittees for inventory and documentation, monitoring of historic resource conditions, and public outreach.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.2.G Conduct **special meetings** on topics requiring particular time and focus that cannot be allotted during regular Historical Commission meetings. Expect members to undertake **Commission work** *between* regular or



Davisville Road

special meetings, rather than at meetings, and to come to meetings prepared to report on work completed.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.2.H Expect Historical Commission members to **become informed** about the history of Falmouth and the Town’s historic resources. Expect members to **become educated** about historic preservation best practices and to attend periodic training sessions. Expect members to **participate** in the monitoring of historic resource issues and conditions, to **be engaged** in Town affairs, and to **be effective ambassadors and advocates** for preservation and appropriate treatment of the Town’s historic resources.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

RECOMMENDATION 3.3: Organize the Historical Commission to engage Town boards and commissions and be informed of Town affairs.

The Historical Commission’s challenge is to stay abreast of the activities being undertaken by a number of Town boards, commissions, and staff. The Commission needs to be informed, be able to anticipate and address issues that may arise with respect to impacts on historic resources, and be able to act in advance of deadlines and timelines established by others. The Historical Commission must be able to act before issues become crises. Processes that will help the Historical Commission with its work include the following.



Historic residence along Davisville Road

- 3.3.A Maintain a list of **Town boards and commissions**, their meeting times, current membership, and contact information. Confirm Historical Commission assignments as liaisons (discussed above). **Attend meetings** and **cultivate relationships** with the members of other boards and commissions.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.3.B Retain **Planning Office staff** to assist the Historical Commission Chairman in organizing and preparing for Historical Commission meetings as is currently in practice. Have the Planning staff maintain the spreadsheet with the running list of projects noted under Recommendation 3.2 above. Have Planning staff inform and update members on issues being addressed by other boards and commissions and gather background information on those issues for use by Commission members. Distribute an agenda and meeting materials to members for review several days before scheduled meetings.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning Office staff.

- 3.3.C Retain a **professional consultant** experienced in historic preservation to be on-call to advise the Historical Commission on issues as they arise as well as with respect to special projects. The staff of the Cape Cod Commission could provide this service. Work with the Planning staff, Town Manager, and Board of Selectmen in developing an annual budget for consulting services.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission, Planning staff, and Town Manager.

- 3.3.D Have the Planning staff obtain the **agendas and minutes** of other boards and commissions, maintain them in files, and provide them to Historical Commission members on an ongoing basis.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning Office staff.

- 3.3.E Have Planning staff distribute **Historical Commission agendas and meeting minutes** to other Town boards and commissions to keep them informed of Historical Commission activities and to maintain a presence before them.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning Office staff.

- 3.3.G Establish a close working relationship with the **Cape Cod Commission**. The Commission has cutting edge planning and preservation expertise, review authority with respect to National Register properties and other planning tools. The Cape Cod Commission can provide key advice and support to the Historical Commission in its work.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.3.F Maintain relationships and memberships with planning and historic **preservation organizations** at the state, and national levels, including:
- Massachusetts Historical Commission (see below);
 - Preservation Massachusetts;
 - National Alliance of Preservation Commissions;
 - National Trust for Historic Preservation; and
 - Preservation Action.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

RECOMMENDATION 3.4: Maintain an ongoing relationship with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) as a Certified Local Government. Take advantage of MHC programs and support implementation of the State Historic Preservation Plan.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) is an important resource for the Historical Commission. The MHC manages an array of federal and state historic preservation programs that support historic preservation at the local level. Cultivate relationships with MHC staff members and be knowledgeable about the programs they manage. Programs include:

- State historic resource inventory process;
- Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) online database;
- National Register of Historic Places;

- State Register of Historic Places;
- Certified Local Government Program;
- Support for historical commissions and local historic districts;
- Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit;
- Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit;
- Environmental review for state and federal projects;
- Survey and planning grants;
- Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund;
- Review of proposed preservation restrictions (easements); and
- Technical assistance program.

Falmouth collaborates with the MHC as a participating Certified Local Government (CLG). The CLG program is federally authorized and funded and managed by the MHC. The program provides access to grants and technical assistance for municipalities that meet criteria related to historic preservation programming.

The state enabling legislation for historical commissions requires that they cooperate with the State Archaeologist, on the staff of the MHC, in conducting surveys and reporting sites. This should be kept in mind with respect to the identification and protection of archeological sites, discussed under Inventory and Documentation, below.

Among the actions related to the MHC are the following.

- 3.4.A Continue to meet requirements of the **Certified Local Government Program**. Consult with MHC staff responsible for the CLG program at least once a year to review conditions and programs in Falmouth. Take advantage of the technical assistance, advice, and support they provide. With the assistance of Planning staff, file the necessary documentation for participation on a yearly basis.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning Office staff.

- 3.4.B Review the **Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Plan 2011-2015** (MHC 2011). Be cognizant of state programs and issues. Identify areas in which Falmouth can participate and help meet statewide goals.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning Office staff.

- 3.4.C Consult with MHC staff on **survey and mapping** of historic resources in Falmouth. Obtain staff input on the quality of surveys that have been undertaken and the updating of older surveys. Review and obtain recommendations and support for new surveys to be undertaken. Collaborate with MHC staff in completing mapping of surveyed resources for the MassGIS and Town GIS databases. (See Inventory and Documentation section below.)

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning Office staff.

- 3.4.D Consult with the **State Archeologist** on updating the archeology reconnaissance report prepared for Falmouth in 1996 (Donta 1996) and protection of archeological resources. (See Inventory and Documentation section below.)

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.4.E Participate as an interested party in **Section 106** and other state and federal environmental review processes managed by MHC. Support review processes by providing information and advise. Use environmental studies to increase the available information about historic resources in Falmouth.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning Office staff.

- 3.4.F Apply for **survey and planning grants** and CLG grants to support survey, documentation, planning, and other historic preservation projects in Falmouth.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning Office staff.

RECOMMENDATION 3.5: Undertake special projects to be completed over the long term as recommended in this preservation plan or as otherwise determined.

In addition to being involved in the ongoing activities of the Town, the Historical Commission needs to be able to undertake projects related to its mission. A number of potential projects are included as recommendations in this preservation plan, such as the inventorying of historic resources. Others will be identified as needs arise.

Projects may be undertaken by Historical Commission members, volunteers, Planning staff, and/or professional consultants. Due to limited time and resources, projects must be well planned and organized to be diligently completed over time. Actions related to special projects include the following.

- 3.5.A Create a yearly **work plan** for projects to be undertaken or overseen by the Historical Commission. Prioritize projects with the assistance of Planning staff and a professional consultant taking need, time limitations, and budget into consideration. Monitor progress on projects over the course of the year.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning Office staff.



Historic farmstead

- 3.5.B Consult with the **Town Manager and Board of Selectmen** on projects to be undertaken and the resources needed to complete them. Clearly state the purpose and need of each project, the resulting work product or deliverable, and the benefit to the Town. Obtain their approval of projects to be undertaken.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.5.C Recruit a **corps of volunteers** interested in historic preservation to assist the Historical Commission in undertaking projects as appropriate. Undertaking a reconnaissance survey and monitoring of historic resources town-wide is an example of a project that could be undertaken by qualified volunteers. Another would be the identification and condition assessment of historic landscape resources on publicly owned and private conserved lands. Use the subcommittee process to identify volunteers with respect to particular projects and endeavors.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

RECOMMENDATION 3.6: Prepare an annual report for the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting reviewing the condition of historic resources in Falmouth.

Preparation of an annual report on historic preservation in Falmouth for the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting is among the most important responsibilities of the Historical Commission. Required by the Commission's enabling legislation in the Town Charter, the annual report provides the

Historical Commission with the opportunity to fully present the issues, opportunities, and challenges related to historic preservation to the community.

Review the issues that have been faced by historic resources over the course of the year. Outline gains and losses and provide assessment from the perspective of historic preservation and community character. Discuss the Historical Commission's work for the year and present the work plan for the coming year. Make recommendations for changes to Town regulations, policies, and procedures for consideration by the Selectmen and Town Meeting.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Yearly action of the Historical Commission.

INVENTORY AND DOCUMENTATION

Falmouth's Historical Commission has undertaken an impressive long-term program of inventorying and documenting historic resources in the town. Since the establishment of local historic districts in Falmouth in 1975, a wide range of historic resources have been documented using survey forms and methodologies of the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Element 7.1 of the 2005 Falmouth Local Comprehensive Plan provides an overview of the inventory of historic resources in Falmouth at that time, including National Register districts and individual listings, local historic districts, individual buildings, and landscape resources (Town of Falmouth 2005). Its appendices include the following:

- Appendix A – Historic areas and sites determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places
- Appendix B – Scenic Roads
- Appendix C – Scenic Areas and Vistas
- Appendix D – Culturally Significant Landscapes

In its analysis, the comprehensive plan notes that historic resource inventories or surveys have focused primarily upon 18th and 19th century buildings and are less inclusive of significant 20th century buildings. This observation led to the documentation of additional resources by professional consultants in 2008, including the summer communities of Megansett, Belvidere Plains, Menauhant, and Gansett Woods. A number of additional individual resources were surveyed as well.

Other developments since 2005 include expansion of the List of Significant Buildings subject to the town's demolition delay bylaw from 350 in 2005 to 594 today and the identification of historically significant landscapes in the Falmouth Reconnaissance Report Heritage Landscape Inventory Program report recently prepared by students from Boston University (Cirbus 2013).

Original copies of the town's historic resource survey forms are kept in the Historic Commission files and are available for review. Most of the survey forms are also accessible online in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Inventory System (MACRIS) maintained by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is in the process of uploading its survey files into the MassGIS database system, which will enable mapping of surveyed historic resources, but this process is not yet complete. The map for resources surveyed in Falmouth to date based upon data obtained from the Massachusetts Historical Commission is shown here and in Chapter 2. MHC staff are currently in the process of reviewing and ground-truthing the data. When their work is complete, the MHC survey database for Falmouth should be reviewed, uploaded to the town's GIS database, and assessed for remaining gaps. In the meantime, the existing unfinished GIS database may be used for planning purposes. Spreadsheets of the current MHC data lists surveyed properties by street address.

Another issue is the age of the surveys that have been completed in Falmouth. While it is laudable that the Historical Commission undertook survey work at a relatively early date, professional standards for surveys have become more comprehensive, and many of Falmouth's early surveys do not meet those standards. Surveys undertaken as part of National Register Historic District nominations in the late 1990s and 2000s are more complete.

Finally, a key issue for historic preservation in Falmouth is that the surveys are not being used to inform planning processes, especially review of subdivision and land development projects. In large part, this is simply because it has not been the town's practice to do so. Recommendations to make use of the town's survey files are included below. It will help when the Massachusetts Historical Commission mapping is complete and survey files are linked to parcels in the town's GIS database.

To summarize, Falmouth has undertaken an impressive amount of survey work of both building and other resources. Those surveys have not necessarily been put to full use, however, in support of planning goals. The surveys should be updated, organized, assessed, and made useful, as suggested below.

RECOMMENDATION 3.7: Continue to document and improve information on the town's historic resources. Make that information accessible for planning review.

Actions to be taken to implement this recommendation include:

- 3.7.A Support organizations such as the Woods Hole Historical Museum and Falmouth Historical Society in **undertaking research** on Falmouth's history. A great deal has been studied in past years, as evidenced by *The Book of Falmouth* and the bi-annual journal *Spritsail*. Consider developing research contexts on broad topics of interest within which more detailed studies could be undertaken. Organize, coordinate, and digitize research papers. Support publication.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission in collaboration with and support of the Woods Hole Historical Museum and Falmouth Historical Society.

- 3.7.B Use the digital maps being prepared by the Massachusetts Historical Commission to begin to assess the coverage of existing historic resource

surveys in Falmouth. Use the mapping to undertake a **town-wide reconnaissance survey** by volunteers working under the guidance of the Historical Commission.

Check off surveyed resources. Note whether surveyed resources have associated outbuilding and/or landscape features significant to their historic context. Note the locations of buildings and other resources that have not been surveyed but may be of historical significance. Photograph each previously surveyed resource (except in densely developed neighborhoods) from public streets to document current condition. Note additional neighborhoods, areas, and other resources that should be surveyed. Consult with local historians to identify potential gaps in the surveys.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term action to be undertaken by the Historical Commission.

- 3.7.C Continue to undertake and expand the **survey of historic resources**, communities, and neighborhoods town-wide using Massachusetts Historical Commission survey forms and methodologies. Use professional consultants where surveys are complex. Prioritize threatened areas, such as the Route 28 corridor in Teaticket and East Falmouth.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing long-term action of the Historical Commission.



Small residence with porch on a back road

- 3.7.D Use the Massachusetts Historical Commission digital mapping to establish existing historic resource surveys as a layer in the town's **GIS database**. Work directly with the MHC to verify and complete its mapping. (MHC has limited staff and will respond to more interested and active communities.)

Prepare a map showing which properties have been surveyed. Consult with the town's GIS staff to determine the most useful groupings and symbology. Be able to identify and search each surveyed property by its parcel number. Eventually, link each property to a scanned copy of its survey form.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term action of the Historical Commission and GIS staff.

- 3.7.E Begin a long-term process of reviewing and **updating older surveys** using current professional criteria and best practices. Consult with the Massachusetts Historical Commission on priorities and methodologies. Priorities for update can be guided by an assessment of the extent to which the property descriptions and photo(s) fully reflect current conditions, and the level of existing documentation of property history.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Long-term action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.7.F Prepare a **cultural landscape context study** to provide an overview of the natural and historical development of Falmouth's landscape town-wide. The context study will provide needed background for the assessment of conservation landscapes, documentation of additional heritage landscapes, and the preservation of historic landscape features during subdivision and land development. Combine information on landforms, soils, watersheds, and historic land use to create a holistic picture of Falmouth's cultural landscape. Identify landscape character areas and the types of resources and features associated with each.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.7.G Continue to identify and survey Falmouth's **heritage landscapes** in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation methodology and criteria as an ongoing, long-term activity. Review the list of heritage landscapes identified in the appendix of the 2013 study (Cirbus 2013). Revise the list and identify the next set of priority landscapes to be documented. Seek student assistance from Boston University or other schools with preservation programs.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term and long-term action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.7.H Continue to identify properties and districts that should be listed on the **National Register of Historic Places** as an ongoing, long-term project. Based upon existing survey information and in consultation with Massachusetts Historical Society staff, develop a priority list of potential



Residences along the shoreline in Megansett

National Register properties. The preparation of National Register nominations is valuable in providing information and professional level evaluations of significance whether or not the listing process is completed.

It is recommended that National Register Historic District nominations be completed for Falmouth's historic villages and local historic districts as a priority. Nominations have already been prepared for Falmouth Village Green (1996), North Falmouth (1998), West Falmouth (1998), and Waquoit (2004). Nominations remain to be prepared for:

- Woods Hole;
- Quisset;
- Hatchville;
- Shore Road; and
- Davisville.

As an additional priority, prepare National Register nominations for Falmouth's historic neighborhoods, including:

- Falmouth Heights;
- Magansett;
- Gansett Woods;
- Belvidere Plain;
- Menauhaut; and
- Chapaquoit.

Consult with property owners through local neighborhood associations to determine interest or possible opposition to listing on the National Register. Where there is interest, submit nominations for listing. Where

there is opposition, obtain a *determinations of eligibility* but do not complete the listing process.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing long-term action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.7.1 In consultation with Massachusetts Historical Commission staff, retain a professional consulting firm to review and update the **archeological reconnaissance survey** prepared for Falmouth in 1996. Prepare an archeological sensitivity map as a layer within the town's GIS database.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission.

MONITORING HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Historical Commission needs to undertake an ongoing, long-term program of monitoring the condition of historic resources throughout Falmouth and identifying threats to their integrity. Monitoring involves both being aware of activities that are being undertaken throughout the town on an ongoing basis and undertaking a systematic process of review and documentation. In addition, the Historical Commission has regulatory responsibilities related to the demolition of historic resources.

RECOMMENDATION 3.8: Establish a notification process that alerts the Historical Commission when building permit application has been filed for a surveyed historic resource.

- 3.8.A Using the Town GIS database, create an automatic process that lists **building permit applications** that have been filed for surveyed historic resources. Make the list available to the Historical Commission on a monthly basis for their information.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Building Department.

RECOMMENDATION 3.9: Review demolition applications in accordance with Falmouth's Delay of Demolition Bylaw. Work to find alternatives to the demolition of historic structures.

Falmouth has adopted a Delay of Demolition Byway (Chapter 107 of the Town Code) as authorized under the Massachusetts General Law. A *List of Significant Buildings*, recommended by the Historical Commission and approved by Town Meeting, is kept by the Town Clerk. The list currently includes about 594 buildings. Many of the buildings were listed in 1993 when the ordinance was initially adopted. The ordinance was revised in 2006 at which time a number buildings were added to the list. The most recent additions were made in 2009, 2010, and 2013.

When a demolition application for a structure on the *List of Significant Buildings* is received by the Building Commissioner, the Town Clerk records the date and a



Streetscape near Falmouth Heights

period of six month demolition delay period begins. The Historical Commission must act promptly to review the proposed application and work with the applicant on alternatives to demolition if that is possible. Problems occur when the Historical Commission is notified or does not act promptly. Developers have learned to include the six-month delay into their project schedule to avoid being impacted by the requirement.

- 3.9.A Work out a **process** through which the Historical Commission is immediately notified when a demolition application is filed for a building on the *List of Significant Buildings*. Periodically review the process to be sure it is working.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short term action of the Historical Commission, Planning staff, Building Commissioner, and Town Clerk.

- 3.9.B Establish **guidelines for action** by the Historical Commission when notice of a demolition application is received. Include a delineation of responsibilities and timelines. Include:

- Consultation among Historical Commission members and Planning staff;
- Initial contact with the applicant;
- Notification of and consultation with members of the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board;
- Site visit;
- Public notice and consultation with interested parties;
- Outline of issues and alternatives;
- Exploration of alternatives and negotiation with applicant; and

- Decision or additional action by the Historical Commission and others.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term action of the Historical Commission and Planning staff.

3.9.C When a building on the list is to be demolished, require ‘suitable **documentation** of the building’ as stipulated in the ordinance. Prepare a list that can be issued to applicants outlining required documentation. Include:

- Site plan showing the building, site features, and landscaping;
- Conceptual level floor plans at minimum 1/8-inch scale;
- Color photographs of the interior and exterior of the building and site context in printed and digital formats.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term action of the Historical Commission and Planning staff.

3.9.D Modify the Delay of Demolition Bylaw to expand the period of delay from six months to **twelve months** as permitted under state law to make it more effective in encouraging applicants to retain and adaptively reuse historic resources in their development projects.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term or mid-term action of the Historical Commission, Planning staff, Board of Selectmen, and Town Meeting.

RECOMMENDATION 3.10: Maintain an ongoing awareness of actions that are being undertaken throughout Falmouth that might negatively impact the preservation and integrity of historic resources.

Maintaining an ongoing awareness of activities that may impact historic resources is a matter of observation and engagement by Historical Commission members and volunteers. Members need to stay well-informed about local affairs, reach out within the community, and be open to communication with residents. Potential actions include the following.

3.10.A Maintain contact and communication with **Town boards and commissions** as outlined in Recommendations 3.2 and 3.3 above. Be aware of issues and timeframes within which actions will be taken. Try to anticipate issues that may arise with respect to historic resources before events proceed too far along.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

3.10.B Stay **informed of local affairs** by reading the local newspaper, joining local organizations, and receiving newsletters and publications.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.10.C Attend meetings of **village and neighborhood associations** on at least a yearly basis. Maintain a list of contacts for village and neighborhood associations and cultivate relationships with their representatives.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.10.D Be open to **contact with local advocates and residents** with concerns about historic resources. Be on-call to speak with and meet residents who raise concerns.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.10.E Have **Planning Office staff** regularly inform the Historical Commission about activities and actions being undertaken within the Town. Planning staff should serve as eyes and ears for the Commission.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of Planning staff.

RECOMMENDATION 3.11: Undertake a systematic, long-term program of monitoring the condition of historic resources throughout Falmouth.

The Historical Commission should proactively monitor the condition of historic resources in order to identify threats that might not become apparent through other means. The monitoring process should include the following.

- 3.11.A Maintain a list of **historic resources that are threatened** due to vacancy, inappropriate use, lack of maintenance, or demolition by neglect. Monitor their condition on a regular basis.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.11.B Identify **areas of increased potential threat** to historic resources such as the Route 28 commercial corridor between Falmouth Village and Waquoit. Digitally photograph surveyed historic resources in these areas from the public way at least every three years and maintain photographs in the survey files of the Historical Commission. Undertake a **reconnaissance survey** of these areas every year to monitor overall conditions.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.11.C Undertake a **long-term program of monitoring** the condition of historic resources throughout Falmouth. Divide the town into areas of villages, neighborhoods, road corridors, and landscapes. Monitor conditions of historic resources within each area on a rotating basis covering all areas within a ten-year period. Include areas to be monitored in a given year in the Historical Commission's yearly work plan. Use volunteers to assist the Historical Commission in the monitoring process.

In the monitoring process, undertake a reconnaissance survey of an area from public streets. Take digital photographs of resources (or

groups of resources in the case of neighborhoods) from the public way to be kept in the Historical Commission's survey files. Update photographs when changes occur.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission.

INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

As discussed above with respect to roles and responsibilities, the Historical Commission should participate actively in local government and be integral to local government activities, policies, and politics. The Historical Commission is an advisory body to the Board of Selectmen and other town boards and commissions on issues affecting historic resources and community character. The Commission must make sure that other municipal entities have the information and guidance they need to make informed decisions about actions that may have an impact upon historic areas, buildings, structures, and sites.

The Historical Commission should work closely with any town board, commission, committee, or department that is likely to have an influence on the physical character of the community. It should make recommendations to these bodies on issues related to historic preservation and advocate for the appropriate treatment of historic resources (MHC 2010: 29-30).

Most critical are the Historical Commission's advisory role and relationships with the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic Districts Commission, Conservation Commission, and Community Preservation Committee. Relations with the Historic Districts Commission are discussed in Chapter 4 and with the Conservation Commission are discussed in Chapter 5 of this plan. Recommendations with respect to the Community Preservation Committee, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and other boards and commissions are outlined below.

RECOMMENDATION 3.12: Provide information, guidance, and advise to boards, commission, committees, and departments in the Town of Falmouth on issues related to historic preservation and community character.

This recommendation reiterates several of the recommendations and actions outlined under Roles and Responsibilities of the Historical Commission above and is stated here to emphasize the importance of the Historical Commission's advisory role on issues related to historic preservation within the Town. The Historical Commission must organize itself proactively to establish communications with Town boards and commissions, monitor activities, identify issues, and provide information and advice.

Town entities that are likely to have an influence on the physical character of the community include:

- Board of Selectmen
- Planning Board
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Historic Districts Commission

FALMOUTH'S HISTORICAL COMMISSION

- Conservation Commission
- Community Preservation Committee
- Agricultural Commission
- Bikeways Committee
- Building Commissioner
- Building Committee
- Design Review Committee
- Planning Office
- Department of Public Works
- Others as appropriate

The Historical Commission must organize itself with the assistance of Planning staff to monitor the activities of Town entities, maintain communications, and identify issues that warrant Historical Commission involvement. Refer to recommendations and actions listed above under Roles and Responsibilities of the Historical Commission.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning staff.

3.12.A Support the **Agricultural Commission** and Town Agricultural regulations and initiatives supporting farming as a historic land use and the preservation of farmland as significant historic and cultural landscapes.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning staff.



The Nimrod historic house will be incorporated into a new commercial development due to public advocacy and the decision of the local developer.

- 3.12.B Support the **Bikeways Committee** in their work establishing bikeways throughout the Town and incorporate the bikeways as **interpreted recreational resources** in the Town’s interpretive presentation and marketing (See Chapter 6).

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning staff.

- 3.12.C Consider principles and guidelines outlined in the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards in the recommendations for new construction made by the Town’s **Design Review Committee**, especially in historic landscape contexts.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning staff.

RECOMMENDATION 3.13: Take a cultural landscape approach to historic preservation interests Town-wide. Focus not just on buildings but on the historic landscape as it has evolved over decades and centuries and the historic features remaining in the landscape.

A primary goal of this preservation plan is to encourage implementation of a cultural landscape approach to historic preservation in Falmouth. Too often, historic preservation is thought of as only buildings. However as outlined in Chapter 2, Falmouth’s history of human occupation spans over 9,000 years and includes waves of changing and evolving Native American cultures as well as four centuries of European contact and settlement.

Every landscape in Falmouth is a cultural landscape comprised of a rich mix of natural and man-made influences. Every landscape has historically significant features and attributes and contributes to the character of the community. Change will continue to occur in Falmouth over time. Information on cultural attributes of the landscape should be taken into consideration as change is undertaken.

- 3.13.A Be informed about the identification and management of **cultural landscapes** as outlined in the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes (NPS 2013).

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning staff.

- 3.13.B Consider **landscape context** whenever documenting, reviewing, or providing guidance on historic resources in Falmouth.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning staff.

- 3.13.C Further develop the Town’s **scenic roads policies** to protect road character and scenic views in land development review processes.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission and Planning staff.



Residence and landscape context of lawn, shrubs, trees, and stone wall

RECOMMENDATION 3.14: Be actively engaged in the Community Preservation Act program in Falmouth with respect to historic preservation and the preservation and enhancement of community character.

In 2005, Falmouth residents voted to adopt a bylaw consistent with the requirements of the state Community Preservation Act (MGL Chapter 44B). The Community Preservation Act (CPA) provides state matching funds to communities for preservation initiatives related to open space and recreation, historic preservation, and community housing.

The Community Preservation Committee manages Falmouth's program in accordance with the bylaw's requirements. The program's primary goal is to be a catalyst for community organizations, residents, and others addressing community preservation goals. The Community Preservation Committee operates in accordance with *Town of Falmouth Community Preservation Plan* (Town of Falmouth 2013).

The Committee is comprised of nine members, one of which is appointed from the Historical Commission. At least 10 percent of the CPA funds received in each fiscal year are spent on each of the CPA's three main purposes. The remaining 70 percent of funds are spent upon projects prioritized from among the three purposes.

The Community Preservation Committee makes recommendations for the acquisition, creation and preservation of open space; for the acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources; for the acquisition, creation and preservation of land for recreational use and

community housing. All funding recommended by the Community Preservation Committee must be approved at Town Meeting.

Historic preservation is a major beneficiary of the CPA program. Applications for funding may be submitted by Town departments, committees, agencies, civic and non-profit organizations, property owners/residents, and others in accordance with Community Preservation Plan guidelines. As a CPC participant and with historic preservation a major beneficiary, the Historical Commission should be actively engaged in the CPA process.

- 3.14.A Develop a **close working relationship** with the Community Preservation Committee. Assist in identifying, funding, and implementing historic preservation projects in accordance with CPC guidelines. The Historical Commission's representative on the CPC should report regularly to other members of the Commission on CPC activities.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning staff.

- 3.14.B Consult with other **organizations and interests** in Falmouth on potential historic preservation projects to be proposed for funding. Review applications and provide support for proposals as appropriate. Provide written **recommendations** to the CPC on historic preservation and related grant applications.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning staff.

- 3.14.C Propose **projects** for possible funding through the CPC in accordance with grant requirements. Maintain a list of priority projects to be proposed in current and future years. Consider the following recommendations included in this preservation plan:

- Endowment funding for a private non-profit Historic Preservation Trust as outlined in Chapter 5;
- Implementation of a town-wide interpretive presentation over multiple years as recommended in Chapter 6;
- Yearly educational and technical assistance programs for village associations, neighborhood associations, and owners of historic buildings;
- Preparation of a town-wide cultural landscape context study as outlined in this chapter under Inventory and Documentation; and
- Updating of the 1996 archeological reconnaissance survey including GIS mapping as outlined in this chapter under Inventory and Documentation.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission and Planning staff.

RECOMMENDATION 3.15: Work closely with the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals to preserve historic resources in new development projects in accordance with the policies established by the Local Comprehensive Plan and the authority granted under Town ordinances.

The most persistent challenge facing historic resources in Falmouth is continued development pressure in which historic resources may be destroyed and historic contexts compromised. The work of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals is critical in helping to accommodate future change without sacrificing historic resources or community character. The Historical Commission must play an active role in providing information, guidance, and advice to the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals as one of its most important ongoing responsibilities.

Falmouth has been a leader in community planning in Massachusetts since the early and mid-twentieth century. In addition to basic planning and local historic districts, Falmouth has implemented creative initiatives related to conservation, agricultural lands, scenic roads, bikeways, community enhancements, and others that are important with respect to planning. Falmouth makes use of as many planning and growth management tools made available through state statutes as any other community of its size.

The significant challenge to be addressed is the impact on historic resources posed by new commercial and residential development projects throughout the town. Many of these projects are located along Falmouth's primary commercial corridors, especially in historic villages and along Route 28. However, the projects can be anywhere and of any size. Falmouth will continue to experience significant development and redevelopment pressure in future years along commercial corridors and in villages, summer resort neighborhoods, and upland suburban areas.

In some cases, threatened resources associated with new development projects may not have been adequately surveyed. Some are in poor condition because of years of neglect and inappropriate use due to their vulnerable location. In some cases, resources are in fine condition and are threatened because of flaws in policy, process, or underlying ordinances. Some people wonder how a building or other resource that is in poor condition can possibly be of historical interest or value. This is why research, communication, good surveys and anticipation of future threats are important.

Planning and land development in Falmouth should be a means through which historic resources can be recognized and preserved. Historic building and landscape resources are defining features of the town's fabric and character. Developers should understand that it is town policy, clearly stated in the Local Comprehensive Plan, that historic resources should be identified, preserved, and incorporated appropriately into new projects.

Planning and zoning review processes must include thoughtful consideration of impacts on historic resources by private development projects. A purpose of the subdivision and land development review process is to make sure that a balance is found between broad community interests and the interests of private



Threatened building on land to be developed along Route 28

developers. New development is a means through which community goals and enhancement can, in part, be achieved.

The tools available, however, are limited and imperfect and do not always lead to desirable outcomes. In Falmouth, town zoning and land development review requirements and procedures do not always achieve the goals and policies related to historic preservation outlined in the Local Comprehensive Plan.

At least five projects under consideration during the preparation this preservation plan highlighted issues related to historic preservation and provided insights into where improvement might be made. The grassroots advocacy of local residents has been an important factor in bringing issues to the forefront and publicizing preservation threats.

In short, the planning review process has not done all it can in encouraging the preservation of historic resources and in preventing inappropriate projects in locations where they should not occur. Coordination and communication between the various review boards has been uneven at best. The full range of tools available has not been used.

3.15.A Recognize that the Historical Commission serves as an **advisory body** to the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals and should be regularly involved in subdivision, land development, and zoning review processes.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Office, and Historical Commission.

3.15.B A Historical Commission member should be in **regular attendance** at Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings to monitor review processes and provide information and input when appropriate.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Historical Commission.

- 3.15.C Every subdivision, land development, and zoning project involving a historic property or resource should be **reviewed by the Historical Commission**; the Historical Commission should be a regular and routine part of the permit review process. When an application for subdivision and land development is submitted, the Town's GIS database should be consulted to determine whether the property being developed has been included in the Town's historic resource survey. If so, the Historical Commission should be notified of the application and a copy of the proposed plan should be made available to the Historical Commission for their review.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Planning Office.

- 3.15.D Maintain a spreadsheet with a **running list of projects** and issues under consideration by the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals affecting historic resources as recommended in 3.2.D above. Note the status of each project and dates by which action is required. Review the spreadsheet at each Historical Commission meeting to determine what actions and consultations are necessary by the Commission before the next meeting.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Planning Office and Historical Commission.

- 3.15.E Include the identification of historic building and landscape resources in the requested contents for **Preliminary Plans and Definitive Plans** being prepared by applicants for subdivision and land development projects. The Town Code states that Preliminary Plan contents should include "Site features such as buildings, ponds, streams, coastal banks, wetlands and areas subject to seasonal flooding Town Code 305-9." The requirements for Definitive Plans are similar (Town Code 305-12).

"Site features" should be interpreted to include historically significant buildings, structures, and site features within property boundaries. Guidelines for applicants about submissions to the Planning Board should stipulate this requirement.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term action of the Planning Board upon request of the Historical Commission.

- 3.15.F Historical Commission members **should review submitted plans, review survey information** in their files for the property, and **undertake a site visit** to review existing conditions for all subdivision, land development, and zoning projects. Historic building and landscape **features should be identified** during the site visit. Note the locations of historic features on the plans and record the features with digital photographs. Every application should be reviewed to determine whether historic resources are present whether a survey has been previously undertaken or not.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Historical Commission.

- 3.15.G Where a property involves historic resources, the Historical Commission should provide information and prepare **written recommendations** on historic preservation aspects of the project to the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals for their consideration. Historical Commission members should make a verbal presentation of their information and recommendations at Planning Board and Zoning Board review meetings.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Historical Commission.

- 3.15.H Planning Board members may review historic resource aspects of projects under the **Design Standards** portion of the Subdivision Regulations, which states, “*Due regard shall be shown for all natural features, such as large trees, watercourses, scenic points, historic or archaeological sites and similar community assets, which if preserved, will add attractiveness and value to the property* (Town Code 305-27A Protection of natural resources).”

This language should be construed as the basis for preservation and protection of historic and archeological sites and similar community assets in subdivision and land development projects in accordance with the goals and policies outlined in Falmouth’s Local Comprehensive Plan. The results of every project will be different, as the applicants have the right to develop their properties in accordance with state and local regulations. But there should be no doubt that Falmouth expects the preservation of historically significant buildings and landscapes in new land development projects.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Planning Board, Historical Commission, and Planning Office.

- 3.15.I For each subdivision and land development project involving a historically significant property, request that the applicant identify an **Area of Significance** that includes the landscape area surrounding a historic resource comprising its historic landscape context or historic setting. The Historical Commission should review the Area of Significance defined by the applicant, or it has not been defined, define it themselves.

The Area of Significance for the historic building or resource is the historic setting that ideally should be preserved and/or appropriately adaptively reused in the project. The applicants should explain how they plan to treat the historic features and associated landscape as part of their review before the Planning Board. The Planning Board and Historical Commission should seek treatment in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (see Chapter 2).

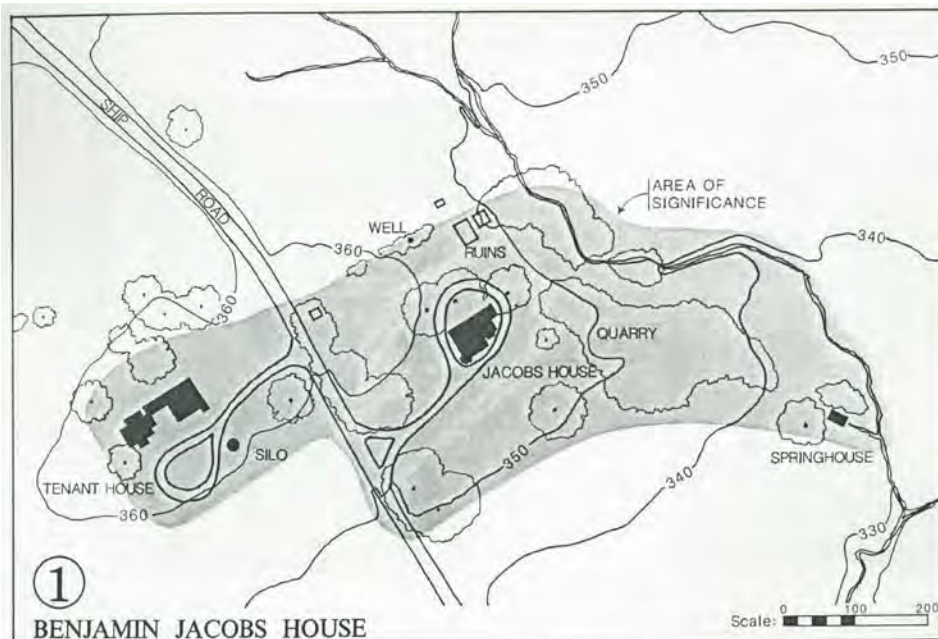
Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Planning Board and Historical Commission.

3.15.J In the site planning and design process, the applicant may identify an **Area of Preservation** that differs from the Area of Significance due to the particular needs of the project. The Planning Board with advice from the Historical Commission should negotiate the boundaries of the proposed area and the proposed treatments related to it. The Area of Preservation should include the landscape context or historic setting around the resource that will be preserved and sensitively treated as well as mitigation measures for impacts on historic resources and their settings.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Planning Board and Historical Commission.

3.15.K Use the survey of **archeologically sensitive areas** to guide planning review. Require predevelopment investigation and assessment of potentially sensitive areas early in the planning process where appropriate as outlined in the 2005 Local Comprehensive Plan with the goal of avoiding potential archeological sites in new development projects.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Planning Board, Historical Commission, and Planning Office.



Area of Significance for a historic farmstead under land development. The Area was defined to include the historic residence, outbuildings, location of a former barn, fencelines, and natural features (stream) and vegetation that make up the immediate landscape context.

- 3.15.L For projects involving significant historic resources or difficult preservation issues, retain a professional **historic preservation consultant** to advise and assist the Historical Commission and Planning Board in assembling information and making recommendations. The staff of the Cape Cod Commission could provide this service.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Planning Board, Historical Commission, and Planning Office.

- 3.15.M Use area **master plans** to explore how areas with concentrations of historic resources outside of historic districts can be developed in accordance with current standards of best practice. Undertake a public process to prepare a master plan for areas with concentrations of historic resources that are likely under development pressure.

Use the master planning process to establish consensus on a **vision for the future** of these areas and to provide guidance for prospective developers. The master plan should be prepared by a professional planning consultant experienced in development and historic preservation planning. The planning process should include a public involvement component. (See master plan recommendations described for historic villages in Chapter 4.)

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term task of the Planning Board, Historical Commission, and Planning Office.

- 3.15.N Consider how **transfer of development rights** can be used as a tool to support preservation of historic properties, especially within local historic districts. Address this question in master planning for local historic districts (see Chapter 4).

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Planning Board, Historical Commission, and Planning Office

RECOMMENDATION 3.16: Encourage the participation of private advocacy groups and individuals speaking up on behalf of historic preservation in the public dialogue.

The state enabling legislation for historical commissions states that historical commission “shall seek to coordinate the activities of unofficial bodies organized for similar purposes.” In this regard, the Historical Commission should maintain relationships and communications with individuals and groups throughout Falmouth with interests in historic preservation. The Commission should encourage and include private advocacy on behalf of historic preservation interests.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Historical Commission.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Building public interest and support for historic preservation in Falmouth is critical to the mission of the Historical Commission. The state enabling legislation for historical commissions states that commissions “may advertise, prepare, print, and distribute books, maps, charts, plans and pamphlets which it deems necessary for its work.” The Falmouth Historical Commission may be best known locally for its publication of *The Book of Falmouth* in 1986 which is an impressive history of the town interesting to anyone who wants to know more about the town and its villages.

The Historical Commission needs to continue in this tradition. Engaging the public and helping residents learn about the places where they live is the best way to gain support for historic preservation, landscape conservation, and enhancing community character.

Chapter 6 of this plan, *Telling Falmouth's Stories* outlines recommendations for implementing a town-wide interpretive presentation for residents and visitors. The Historical Commission should be a lead partner in this endeavor. In addition, the Historical Commission should consider the following recommendations for public outreach focusing on building awareness and providing technical assistance to residents and local groups interested in historic preservation.

RECOMMENDATION 3.17: Support local organizations undertaking research, producing publications, and offering programming related to Falmouth's history.

A number of organizations in Falmouth provide high quality programming and produce publications related to the town's history, including the Falmouth Historical Society, Woods Hole Historical Museum, Highfield Hall & Gardens, The 300 Committee, and others. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the Historical Commission should **support historical research** on Falmouth and its historic landscape and help **publicize information and publications**. The Historical Commission should maintain close ties to historical organizations and should help coordinate their activities and events as a town-wide set of initiatives.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing task of the Historical Commission.

RECOMMENDATION 3.18: Provide information and technical assistance to residents on the maintenance and appropriate treatment of historic buildings and landscape.

3.18.A Consult with the Board of Selectmen in establishing a **budget for educational programming** and technical assistance for residents seeking information on the maintenance and treatment of historic buildings and landscapes.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.18.B Develop a page on the Town **website** that provides information on the history of Falmouth, Falmouth's historic resources, and the maintenance and treatment of historic buildings and landscapes. Feature the web page as a resource for residents who own historic buildings.

Provide an illustrated history of Falmouth's landscape derived from the cultural landscape study recommended under the Inventory and Documents section of this chapter. Include National Register nominations that describe the history and significance of Falmouth's villages and their resources. Provide copies and links to other historical studies and documents.

Provide links to resources such as Preservation Briefs published by the National Park Service through its online Technical Preservation Services with practical information on the appropriate maintenance and treatment of historic building fabric. Publish and promote the availability of the website.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.18.C Establish relationships with **village associations and neighborhood associations** (see Recommendation 3.10 above). Be available to provide consultation, support, and technical assistance on matters related to the treatment of historic buildings and landscapes.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.18.D Partner with the Chamber of Commerce, qualified local contractors, and preservation advocates in offering **workshops, programming, and consultation** on the maintenance and treatment of historic building fabric.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission.

- 3.19.E Present **annual awards** in historic preservation for work on historic buildings and landscapes and in community involvement with respect to historic preservation.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission.



CHAPTER 4 – FALMOUTH’S HISTORIC VILLAGES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

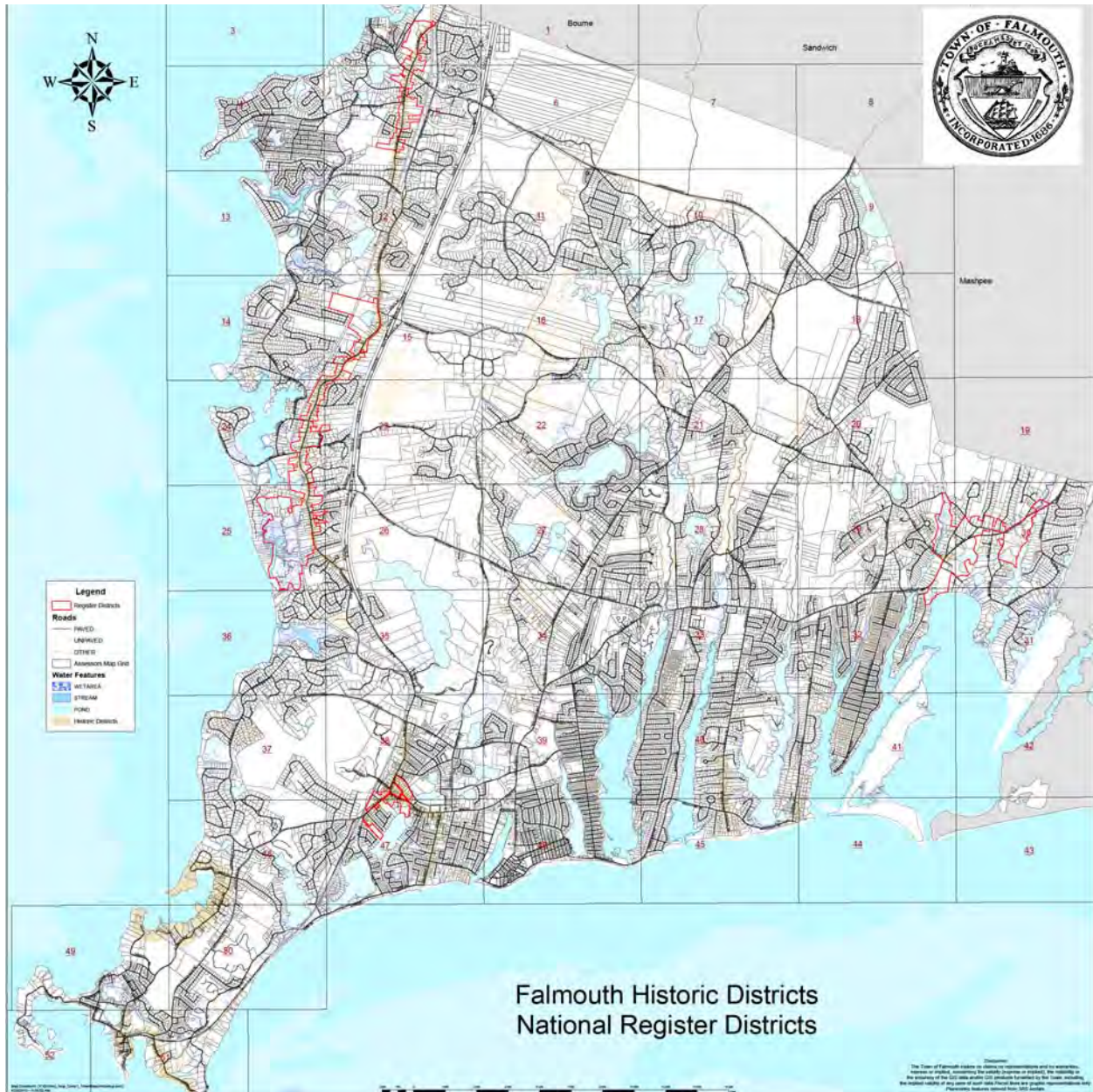
Many of Falmouth’s significant historic resources are clustered together along roadways, in villages, and in planned neighborhoods. As outlined in Chapter 2, Falmouth developed for over two centuries (1680s through 1880s) as an agricultural and maritime community during which time most farmsteads, residences, and businesses were located in villages along primary roads. In the early and mid-twentieth century, Falmouth’s summer development featured neighborhoods of small cottages which were identifiable as distinct communities. Each village and neighborhood has its own appealing character, which is highly appreciated today.

Some of Falmouth’s villages and neighborhoods have been designated as National Register historic districts and/or as local historic districts. Local historic districts are subject to design review processes authorized under a Special Act enacted by Falmouth in 1975 and intended to help preserve and enhance their unique character. Other areas with clusters of significant historic resources have no official recognition or processes to support their preservation.

Chapter 4 focuses upon these villages and neighborhoods, where much of today’s development pressure is being felt. In planning, it is generally agreed that more intense development should be located within and around existing urban centers, rather than spread across the countryside sacrificing potential open space. However, without careful consideration, new development may end up destroying historic resources and undercutting the community character that makes Falmouth’s villages and neighborhoods so appealing.

Similar to Chapter 3, this chapter addresses Goals 2, 4, and 5. Whereas Chapter 3 examined the role of the Historical Commission town-wide, this chapter looks more closely at the particular issues faced by villages and neighborhoods and looks at how the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals might coordinate their responsibilities.

Goal 2 states *Fully identify and document historic built, landscape, and archeological resources throughout the town.* Through recognition, resources will be better appreciated.



Local historic districts (in shaded in light tan) and National Register historic districts (outlined in red) in Falmouth



Quaker meetinghouse in West Falmouth

Goal 4 states, *Have private initiatives and actions a primary means through which historic resources are recognized, preserved, and enhanced.* This includes helping owners appreciate what they have and providing them with the information they need for appropriate treatment. It also means asking private developers to undertake their projects with historic preservation and community character in mind.

Goal 5 states, *Assure that public sector initiatives and actions are models for best practices in the preservation and treatment of historic resources.* This includes not only town-owned properties but town planning processes and procedures.

Chapter 4 begins by addressing the need to undertake planning for historic villages in order to build public consensus and support on a direction for the future. It expresses the importance of coordinated review of proposed projects using criteria customized to the conditions in each village. The chapter ends with steps to reinforce local participation in neighborhood issues.

PLANNING FOR VILLAGES

The Town of Falmouth has seven designated local historic districts that provide protection for historic resources within its historic villages. Local historic districts have been created in the villages of:

- North Falmouth;
- West Falmouth;
- Quissett;
- Woods Hole;
- Falmouth Village;
- Davisville; and
- Waquoit.



The Green in Falmouth Village

Six local historic districts were designated in 1975 under a Special Act, Chapter A320 Article II of the Town Code. (Quissett was added to the original six in 1993.). The Special Act creates a Historic District Commission, creates Falmouth’s seven local historic districts, establishes boundaries for the historic districts, and states that no building, demolition, or sign permit shall be issued without review by the Historic Districts Commission and issuance of a certificate of appropriateness.

The Special Act states that it is *“the function and duty of the commission to consider and pass upon the appropriateness of the exterior architectural features of buildings and structures hereafter designed, arranged, constructed or enlarged, extended, or structurally altered within an historical district, in so far as such architectural features are subject to public view from a public street or way, and to pass on the permissibility of the razing or demolishing of any building or structure within an historical district”*.

Falmouth’s historic villages have been the subjects of some of the most intense development pressure within the town, a condition which is only expected to increase in the future. The impact of development on historic resources and the character of the historic villages has created controversy with strong opinions on each side. The complexity of the process, the lack of coordination between review bodies, the lack of clear guidance for decision-making, and questionable outcomes show a need to address planning within Falmouth’s historic villages.

In part, the problem stems from the age of the Special Act authorizing the historic districts. While adoption of the Special Act was ground-breaking in 1975, today it has been superseded by best practices that have evolved since that time.



Commercial property in North Falmouth

A key issue is the definition of boundaries established for the historic districts, which are set as distances from the road edge (100, 150, 200, and 250 feet depending upon the district) and do not correspond to property lines, topography, viewsheds, or other physical or planning criteria. As a result, in repeated circumstances historic resource site features significant to the history and character of the property and the village but beyond the arbitrary distances set in the Special Act are lost, directly undermining the intent of the ordinance.

In addition, conflicts exist between the purpose of the historic district and underlying zoning classifications. There has been a lack of clear guidance on what constitutes an inappropriate impact or adverse effect upon the historic district and its resources. Changes to the Special Act require action by the state legislature, which is an arduous and complicated procedure not conducive to local interests.

It is proposed, therefore, that additional planning be undertaken for Falmouth's historic villages to create a clear vision for the future based upon an analysis of the resources and the consensus of local property owners and residents. The proposed planning is organized around three areas of activity:

- Updating of historic resource inventories;
- Master planning for each village;
- Updating historic district boundaries;
- Resolving zoning conflicts; and
- Replacing the historic resource ordinance.



Residence in Woods Hole

RECOMMENDATION 4.1: Update the inventories of historic villages using current professional criteria and best practices.

Falmouth’s historic villages were inventoried by local volunteers from the Falmouth Historical Society in the late 1960s and the Falmouth Historical Commission in the 1970s through the 1990s. A significant amount of inventory work was undertaken which led to the establishment of local historic districts and an understanding of the extent of the town’s historic resources.

As important as these inventories or surveys were, they are limited in the amount of information provided and do not meet contemporary professional standards for historic preservation. In a number of instances, upon review by staff of the Massachusetts Historical Society, it was found that boundaries were not justified, integrity and the extent of intrusions were not clearly delineated, and a site visit would be necessary in order to make a determination of eligibility for the National Register.

In 1998, National Register nominations were prepared for three of Falmouth’s historic villages, Falmouth Village Green, North Falmouth, and West Falmouth. Waquoit was added in 2004. The preparation of these nominations and their subsequent listing in the National Register of Historic Places significantly upgraded older survey work and established boundaries in accordance with professional standards of practice.

There is a need to upgrade the inventories of Falmouth’s other historic villages in this manner to provide better and more complete information of the significance and integrity of their historic resources and associated landscapes. The inventory and documentation of historic resources is discussed in Chapter 3



Property on Quisset Harbor

as a responsibility of the Historical Commission. That discussion is extended here as a need of Falmouth's historic villages.

- 4.1.A **Update historic resource inventories** for Falmouth's historic villages to provide more complete information on historic resources and associated landscapes within the villages. Use formats, standards, and methodologies established by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Include documentation on boundaries, condition, and integrity.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and village associations

- 4.1.B Prepare **National Register nominations** for the historic villages for which nominations have not yet been prepared. Use the nominations prepared in 1998 and 2004 as models. Nominations remain to be prepared for:

- Wood's Hole;
- Quisset;
- Hatchville;
- Shore Road; and
- Davisville.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and village associations

- 4.1.C Obtain **determinations of eligibility** for updated inventories and/or National Register nominations for historic villages from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Determinations are important to confirm the information compiled for planning purposes.



Congregational Church in Waquoit

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and village associations

- 4.1.D Prepare **cultural landscape reports** for Falmouth's historic villages in accordance with guidelines established by the National Park Service and outlined in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (NPS 2014). Cultural landscape reports will describe the historical development of the village landscapes, identify historic landscape features, and outline treatment recommendations to assist future planning endeavors.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Long-term action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and village associations

RECOMMENDATION 4.2: Prepare master plans for each historic village to build community consensus and support about guiding future development and change.

The preparation of master plans is the most important recommendation of this preservation plan with respect to Falmouth's historic villages. Master plans that have been prepared with community involvement and support will provide a guide for decision-making about future change within each village.

Undertake a public process to prepare a master plan for each local historic district in Falmouth. Begin with West Falmouth Village, which has been under the most intense development pressure. Use the master planning process to establish consensus on a vision for the future of each village.

FALMOUTH'S HISTORIC VILLAGES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The master plan should be prepared by a professional planning consultant experienced in historic village planning, consensus building, and public involvement processes. Conduct design charrettes involving residents and property owners. Coordinate the involvement of the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Historical Commission, and Historic Districts Commission in the planning process.

The consultant should prepare an existing condition assessment of the historic village landscape including topography, natural resources, circulation systems, historic buildings, and historic landscapes and site features. Incorporate National Register historic district boundaries where they have been identified and establish similar boundaries for the historic landscape where they have not.

Identify what kind of development is appropriate, where new development can most appropriately be accommodated, and where development should not occur. Confirm that historic landscape context is important to preserve as well as buildings and structures.

Based upon existing conditions, develop recommendations for 'zones of sensitivity' identifying areas where different levels of new development might be able to be accommodated without adverse impacts upon historically significant properties or the overall historic character of the village. Zones would range from areas that should not have new development because it would destroy historic building or landscape resources, to zones that could accommodate some development under certain conditions, to zones where new development may be accommodated.

Prepare design guidelines for each level of 'zone of sensitivity' outlining compatible densities and how designs might be introduced appropriately into the landscape.

When completed, the master plan will provide a guide for decision-making with respect to proposed new development and change. Developers will have clear direction for where new development should and should not be placed and what design criteria are needed for each area. The Planning Board, Zoning Board, Historical Commission, and Historic Districts Commission will have clear guidance on what proposals are consistent with the interests of the village and what proposals would have an adverse effect. Village residents and property owners will have a clear understanding of what to expect for the future of their community.

Request that Town Meeting adopt each village master plan when it is completed. Include recommendations for regulatory changes to support each plan where appropriate.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short and mid-term actions of the village associations, Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, Planning Board, and Planning Office



Streetscape in West Falmouth

RECOMMENDATION 4.3: Modify the boundaries of existing local historic districts to include whole properties adjacent to the public street.

As noted above, a key issue in the effectiveness of Falmouth’s historic districts ability to protect historic resources and village character is the method used to establish historic district boundaries. The Special Act establishes boundaries for each district based upon distances from the road edge (100, 150, 200, and 250 feet depending upon the district).

This limited and arbitrary designation directly undermines the intent of the act by allowing the loss of historic resources significant to the property and the character of the village beyond those limited distances. In several recent projects, this defect in the act has resulted in significant adverse effects upon the villages in which the projects were located.

The boundary problem is exacerbated by the underlying B-3 zoning designation along portions of the primary road corridor in the center of North Falmouth’s and West Falmouth’s historic districts and other business zoning classifications within Falmouth Village. Beyond the limited distances authorized for the historic districts, inappropriate business and residential uses are allowed that destroy historic resources, degrade the historic setting, and are incongruous with the intent of the historic district. This is discussed further in Recommendation 4.5 below.

Modifying the boundaries is of primary importance to the long-term viability of the village historic districts. Use the master planning process described under Recommendation 4.2 above to establish community consensus around a plan for the future of each historic village and its related historic district. Include



Condominium project in West Falmouth on the site of a former motel, an appropriate use in the heart of the historic village

recommended boundary changes for the historic district in each plan. At a minimum, include whole properties adjoining the public street within the historic district rather than continuing to use arbitrary distances for the road edge. Bring the boundary changes before Town Meeting for approval as part of the overall master plan for each village.

If master plans are not undertaken, undertake a boundary study for each historic district and bring proposed boundary changes to Town Meeting for approval. Legislative approval will also be required under the Special Act unless MGL Chapter 40C is adopted as suggested in Recommendation 4.4 below.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short and mid-term actions of the village associations, Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, Planning Board, and Planning Office

RECOMMENDATION 4.4: Modify the Town Code to eliminate zoning conflicts in historic villages that have led to the destruction of historic resources and undermining of local village character.

Business district zoning classifications underlying local historic districts have had adverse effects upon the historic villages undermining the purpose of the local historic districts. Along primary road corridors in the center of North Falmouth and West Falmouth, the existing B-3 zoning has led to approval of business or residential uses that have destroyed historic resources on properties that should be preserved and degraded the historic setting that the districts are intended to protect. The narrow width of the historic districts, ranging from 100 to 250 feet from the road edge, results in some significant resources or portions of

resources being located beyond the district boundary and therefore unprotected. Planning and zoning review decisions have failed to resolve or mitigate this situation.

The master planning process outlined in Recommendation 4.2 above should be used to examine zoning conflicts and incorporate changes to the zoning ordinance as part of the village master plan. Modifying the historic district boundaries is one way to help resolve the conflict. Business and multi-family residential uses can be appropriate within a historic district, but the preservation and/or adaptive reuse of historic resources and their landscape contexts should be required. Planning and zoning decisions should place the village's interest in the preservation and appropriate treatment of historic resources and landscapes above the accommodation of new development proposals.

If master plans for historic villages are not prepared, zoning changes should be sought as a separate endeavor, perhaps in combination with boundary adjustments. A strong public information and participation effort should be undertaken to build support, especially within the affected villages, and to help gain passage at Town Meeting. Resolving this problem is a high priority for the long-term viability of Falmouth's historic villages.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short and mid-term actions of the village associations, Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, Planning Board, and Planning Office

RECOMMENDATION 4.5: Replace Falmouth's existing Special Act historic districts with historic districts established under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40C.

Local historic districts have been created in Massachusetts since the mid 1950s by Special Acts of the state legislature. In 1960, the Historic Districts Act, MGL Chapter 40C, was enacted to empower municipalities to establish local historic districts without the special approval of the legislature. The act was created to protect and preserve the historic resources of the Commonwealth through a local review system and has three major purposes as stated in Chapter 40C:

1. To preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the Commonwealth and its cities and towns;
2. To maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places; and
3. To encourage new designs compatible with existing buildings in the district (MHC 2013: 3).

Falmouth's historic districts were established under a Special Act in 1975. MGL Chapter 40C allows municipalities with historic districts established under a Special Act to convert to authority under MGL Chapter 40C with the recommendation of the Historic Districts Commission and a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting.

The primary advantage of authorization under 40C is to permit future changes to the districts with the approval of Town Meeting rather than also requiring an act of the state legislature.

A second important benefit of Chapter 40C is that it authorizes the Town to customize the provisions under review to the issues and needs of a particular designated historic district and local residents. This will allow changes to existing historic districts where appropriate and make the creation of new historic districts with customized review criteria and flexibility possible.

Note that single property 40C historic districts may be created to protect significant individual properties when the owner is interested in preservation.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short and mid-term actions of the village associations, Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, Planning Board, and Planning Office

GUIDELINES AND REVIEW FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

Falmouth's historic villages have been under significant development pressure, a situation that is only expected to continue into the future. Recent projects that have raised controversy have most often involved the construction of new condominiums by private developers within the historic villages. In general, villages may be an appropriate location for such increased densities, and several of the recent projects have been both appropriate to their location and of high quality.



Condominium project sensitively set into a woodland in West Falmouth and screened from the adjacent public road

However, where proposed projects involve the destruction or inappropriate alteration of historic buildings, outbuildings, site features, or landscape character in historic villages, they should not be allowed. New projects in Falmouth's historic villages should be expected to blend appropriately into existing historic contexts.

Contrary to the statements of some developers, this is not only possible but routine and potentially highly profitable in historic districts. Developers who say otherwise are simply not experienced in working within historic contexts. Unfortunately, some recent projects approved in Falmouth's historic villages have had a significant adverse effect upon the villages in violation of the purpose of the Town's zoning, land development, and historic district ordinances.

The Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic Districts Commission, and Historical Commission need to focus on the common goal of preserving historic building and landscape resources and enhancing historic village character. Overlapping areas of responsibility need to be coordinated and planning tools and authorizations need to be refined and interpreted to meet desired goals. The following recommendations are intended to provide guidance toward those ends.

RECOMMENDATION 4.6: Use the master plans recommended under Recommendation 4.2 above as the basis for coordinated review and decisions by the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Historic Districts Commission.

As discussed in Recommendation 4.2 above, master plans created for each historic village and its historic district will enable the identification of areas where new development may appropriately be placed. Design guidelines can be included in the plans to illustrate how new development can be set within historic contexts.

The Planning Board, Zoning Board, and Historic Districts Commission can use the master plans as a common basis for their reviews and decisions with respect to proposed projects.

The modification of historic district boundaries and resolution of zoning conflicts that have resulted in undesirable outcomes should be included in the master plans. If master plans are not prepared, the boundary changes and zoning conflicts need to be addressed separately, as discussed above.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short and mid-term actions of the village associations, Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, Planning Board, and Planning Office

RECOMMENDATION 4.7: Confirm the role of the Historic Districts Commission in preserving historic resources and community character in local historic districts.

The role of the Historic Districts Commission is well developed in Falmouth and is described in the *Special Acts, Historic District Commission* (Chapter A320,

Article II of the Town Code); *Local Historic District Rules and Regulations*; and *Instructions for Submitting an Application for Certificate of Appropriateness*, documents available from the Planning Office.

The *Historic Districts Commission* act states that the Historic District Commission is responsible for reviewing and issuing certificates of appropriateness for:

- the alteration of existing buildings and structures,
- new construction of buildings and structures,
- demolition of buildings and structures, and
- signage within a historic district.

Its responsibility is *to consider and pass upon the appropriateness of the exterior architectural features of buildings and structures hereafter designed, arranged, constructed or enlarged, extended, or structurally altered within an historical district...and to pass on the permissibility of the razing or demolishing of any building or structure within an historical district.*

“Structures” are defined in the *Rules and Regulations* as:

Anything constructed or erected, the use of which requires fixed location on the ground or attachment to something located on the ground, including tennis courts, swimming pools, gas or storage tanks if principally aboveground, stonewalls, retaining walls, fences of any height, gates, memorials and paved driveways or other paved areas.

Design guidelines have been prepared to assist the Historic Districts Commission in their reviews and to inform property owners, developers, architects, designers, and builders about approaches to change within historic districts.

Only buildings and structures visible from a public street or way are subject to review. The Historic Districts Commission may deny the proposed demolition of a building or structure. It does not have authorization to review landscaping or vegetation. Contested decisions of the Commission may be appealed to superior court in Barnstable County. Historic Districts Commission members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

4.7.A Make the preservation of **authentic historic building fabric** a primary goal in the review of historic buildings and structures and the issuance of certificates of appropriateness in Falmouth’s historic districts. The fundamental responsibility of the Historic Districts Commission is historic preservation, not merely appearance.

The guidelines outlined in the *Falmouth Historic Districts Design Review Guidelines* are based upon the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (see Chapter 2). Central to their purpose is the preservation of authentic historic building fabric in historic buildings and structures and its appropriate treatment. Historic Commission Members should be familiar with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and be guided by their principles in every project. This recommendation is of primary importance.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: *Ongoing action of the Historic Districts Commission*



Recent condominium project under construction. The historic property was destroyed, including a nineteenth century barn. The house was stripped and inappropriately treated. The project had a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the historic district and the village.

- 4.7.B Work to preserve the **setting** or historic landscape context of individual properties and the historic villages as a whole. Falmouth’s *Historic Districts Act* states that:

*The purpose of this act is to promote the general welfare of the inhabitants of the town of Falmouth through the preservation and protection of historical buildings, places and districts of historical interest; **through the development and preservation of appropriate settings for such buildings, places and districts**; and through the benefits resulting to the economy of said town by preserving and enhancing the amenities and historical aspects of various of the villages and areas of the town which make the town a desirable place to live and for tourists to visit.*

While the act specifically cites the responsibility of preserving setting, or the landscape context, the Historic Districts Commission is limited to review of buildings and structures, not vegetation. The term “structures” however, as defined in the act includes not only site features such as walls and fences but also driveways and paving.

The Commission therefore has some tools with which to preserve a property’s historic setting by encouraging or requiring the preservation and appropriate treatment of historic site features, especially paved

areas associated with the historic property. This authority extends to the placement and design of proposed new paving as well.

The Historic Districts Commission should undertake the **review of site plans** for proposed new developments in historic districts that include existing and proposed new paving and site structures. The Historic Districts Commission must work closely with the Planning Board with respect to site structures and the preservation of the settings of historic properties and villages.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historic Districts Commission

- 4.7.C In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Historic Districts Commission should **provide information, guidance, and recommendations** to the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals for projects within historic districts or that may directly affect historic districts. Given the boundary issues and zoning conflicts discussed earlier in this chapter, this point is all the more important.

Historic Districts Commission members should evaluate the potential impacts of new development projects on historic districts, outline what those impacts will be, suggest design principles that might mitigate impacts, and provide recommendations where appropriate. Written recommendations should be provided, and Commission members should attend meetings to provide testimony. The Historic Districts Commission should work closely with the Historical Commission in plan review, as discussed further below.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historic Districts Commission

- 4.7.D The Historic Districts Commission should reach out to **village associations and the residents** of historic districts to forge strong positive relationships. Commission members should attend village association meetings and be in close communication with association leadership. They should be aware of issues of importance to village associations and residents.

Where possible, in collaboration with the Historical Commission, the Historic Districts Commission may be able to provide technical assistance to residents in the appropriate treatment of historic buildings and landscapes.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historic Districts Commission



Stone wall and gate in Woods Hole

RECOMMENDATION 4.8: Coordinate the work of the Historic Districts Commission and Historical Commission.

The Historic Districts Commission and Historical Commission have separate but related responsibilities and authorities. Both entities work for the preservation of historic buildings and landscapes in the interest of Falmouth's residents. The two organizations need to work closely together. Coordination between Historic District Commission and the Historical Commission is a requirement of Falmouth's designation as Certified Local Government.

- 4.8.A Create a close working relationship between the Historic Districts Commission and Historical Commission. Create **overlapping membership** by having at least one member of each body as a member of the other.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term and ongoing action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and Planning Office

- 4.8.B Have a routine **exchange of meeting agendas and minutes** between the two commissions. Prepare a joint statement of **principles and guidelines** for historic preservation in Falmouth.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term and ongoing action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and Planning Office

- 4.8.C Conduct two **joint meetings** each year to review ongoing issues and projects under review and to coordinate activities. Jointly prepare the

annual report noted in Chapter 3 on the status of historic preservation in Falmouth each year for submission to the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Town Meeting, and residents.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term and ongoing action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and Planning Office

- 4.8.D Prepare a **yearly work plan** on projects and initiatives to be undertaken by the two commissions to further historic preservation interests and for engagement of the public.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and Planning Office

- 4.8.E Retain a professional **historic preservation consultant** to advise the two commissions with respect to the annual report, annual work plan, and the review of significant projects.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and Planning Office

- 4.8.F Have the **Historical Commission assist** the Historic Districts Commission in the review of historic landscape context and in advising the Planning Board on landscape and site planning issues within and adjacent to local historic districts.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and Planning Office



Residence in Waquoit

RECOMMENDATION 4.9: Coordinate with and advise the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals on projects within and adjacent to local historic districts.

As mentioned above and elaborated upon below, the Historical Commission and Historic Districts Commission need to work closely together in providing information and advising the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals on matters that affect their interests and responsibilities. They need to speak clearly, effectively, and with one voice. Coordination of the work of the Historic Districts Commission with that of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals should be a top priority.

A key problem that has occurred in the review of new development projects in historic districts is the lack of coordination between the various boards and commissions. Each entity has its own area of responsibility and authority, and the decisions of one can adversely affect the responsibilities of another. Falmouth's boards and commissions need to work more closely together toward common ends. Those common ends are best expressed in Falmouth's Local Comprehensive Plan (see Chapter 3), which outlines established Town policies upon which boards and commissions should be focused in the interest of all residents.

- Falmouth's Zoning Board of Appeals has jurisdiction over land use, density, and related zoning matters. In historic districts, a Special Permit is often required for business and residential uses that are not by-right.
- Falmouth's Planning Board is responsible for site design, engineering, infrastructure, landscaping, and other plan components for new land development projects in accordance with Town Code regulations. The Planning Board is the only review entity that can work toward the preservation of historic landscape features and vegetation.
- The Historic Districts Commission, as discussed above, has the responsibility to review and approve the treatment of existing buildings and structures, design of new buildings and structures, demolition of buildings and structures, and signage design within historic district boundaries and visible from a public street or way. Structures include walls, fences, driveways, and paving.
- The Historical Commission has the responsibility to provide information and advice to the other three boards and commissions of the preservation and appropriate treatment of historic buildings, structures, and landscapes.

Each of these entities is bound by the legal restrictions of their respective enabling ordinances, but there is ample room for coordination and collaboration around common goals and purpose. The use of approved master plans for historic villages and districts as discussed in Recommendations 4.2 and 4.6 above would facilitate the coordination of the work of these three entities providing a common touchstone to guide their decision-making.

- 4.9.A Provide information and advice to the **Zoning Board of Appeals** in decisions involving new development in historic villages and historic districts. Work with the Zoning Board to satisfactorily address **zoning conflicts** such that historic resources and historic village character are preserved.

Provide information and testimony as to what constitutes an adverse effect in a historic context. **Special Permits** should only be issued when there is no adverse effect upon a historic property, village, or district. Obtain the assistance and testimony of a preservation consultant when necessary.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and Planning Board

- 4.9.B **Coordinate subdivision and land development reviews** of the Planning Board and Historic Districts Commission in existing local districts through joint work sessions and exchange of information and recommendations. Each entity has its own area of responsibility and authority which, however, overlap and complement each other.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historic Districts Commission and Planning Board

- 4.9.C In any development of a historic property within a historic village or historic district, historic buildings, structures, and landscapes should be preserved and treated in accordance with the principles and guidelines outlined in the **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties** (see Chapter 2). This is among the most important recommendations of this preservation plan.

The Standards represent best practices for historic preservation and are the basis for recommendations in the Historic Districts Commission's *Design Review Guidelines*. The Standards emphasize retaining and appropriately treating authentic historic fabric, not merely appearance.

The Standards include guidelines that allow for the appropriate development or adaptive reuse of historic buildings and landscapes. This might include the introduction of new features such as parking and new buildings within the historic context.

No development project should be permitted in a historic village district that does not adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The Historic District Act and Design Standards provision of the land development ordinance provide the legal basis for this requirement.

The Planning Board, Historic Districts Commission, and Historical Commission should have professional assistance in determining appropriate treatments in accordance with the Standards for any proposed development project and monitor implementation during construction (see Recommendation 4.9.F below).

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Planning Board, Historic Districts Commission, Historical Commission, and Planning Office

- 4.9.D Preservation of **setting, or landscape context**, significant to the character and integrity of historic buildings, is primarily under the authority of the Planning Board. The Historic Districts Commission and Historical Commission should provide recommendations to the Planning Board on the preservation and appropriate treatment of historic setting. Plan review decisions should be based upon the master plans prepared for each village discussed above.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Planning Board upon advice of the Historical Commission and Historic Districts Commission

- 4.9.E In the identification, review, and preservation of **historic landscape context**, use the concepts of Area of Significance and Area of Preservation outlined in Chapter 3, Recommendation 3.15. Require mitigation measures when new development proposals will have a negative impact upon Areas of Significance.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Planning Board upon advice of the Historical Commission and Historic Districts Commission



The Green in Falmouth Heights

- 4.9.F For projects involving significant historic resources or difficult preservation issues, retain a professional **historic preservation consultant** to advise and assist the Historic Districts Commission and Planning Board in assembling information and making recommendations on the preservation and appropriate treatment of historic buildings and landscapes.

STRENGTHENING NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Much of the attention with respect to historic preservation in Falmouth has been placed on the town's historic villages, as rightly so. The historic villages date from the town's earliest periods of development, and with changes in the local economy and the use of historic buildings, attention and care have been warranted.

Over the last decade, however, residents have turned their attention to the documentation of Falmouth's summer communities. As outlined in Chapter 2 and richly told in *The Book of Falmouth*, the town's summer neighborhoods and communities have been developing since the 1880s. Neighborhoods like Falmouth Heights, Megansett, Belvidere Plain, and Menauhant have long, rich histories. Families have owned summer cottages there for generations.

Falmouth has increasingly focused interest upon these and other neighborhoods, recognizing that they are special places, each with its distinct character. Over time, recognition has grown that their distinct character should be acknowledged and that measures should be taken to preserve and strengthen their character.

Threats to the historic character of summer neighborhoods come from inappropriate treatment and from mansion-ization. One consistent thread in most of Falmouth's neighborhoods is the predominance of wood framed construction and the use of naturally weathered cedar shingle siding. Another is the small size of many of Falmouth's early summer cottages. Over the years, owners have constructed additions to cottages and made other changes that result in an interesting array of variations on the basic cottage theme in some older neighborhoods.

In recent years, however, small cottages have been demolished and replaced with large, elaborate houses or have been modified beyond all recognition. Many of these new mansions are garish in comparison to their humble neighbors. Mansion-ization has the potential to dramatically alter historic summer neighborhoods over time.

In addition, some owners have altered historic cottages in ways that are inappropriate to the general character of the neighborhood. An obvious example is the painting of cedar shingles in bright colors, but there are other more subtle examples as well. These owners clearly do not appreciate or respect the character of their historic neighborhoods.



Renovated cottages near Surf Drive

Steps should be taken to raise local awareness and interest in the character of historic neighborhoods. Information should be provided to help and encourage owners to treat their homes appropriately. Over time, some neighborhoods may wish to take more formal steps in the protection of neighborhood character, such as the establishment of conservation districts or customized local historic districts. But the interest and motivation for such steps must come from the residents themselves. Town entities should provide information, encouragement, and support.

RECOMMENDATION 4.10: Strengthen relationships with village associations and neighborhood associations through communication and public outreach.

4.10.A Cultivate local **neighborhood associations** and village associations by understanding local interests, providing information and support, and assisting with local projects. Help strengthen neighborhood associations and village associations as centers of leadership, community planning, and consensus building.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and Planning Office

4.10.B Continue to **inventory and document** historic summer neighborhoods. As discussed in Chapter 3, summer neighborhoods should continue to be the subjects of formal inventory work undertaken in accordance with Massachusetts Historic Commission standards. National Register nominations should also be prepared and determinations of eligibility for the National Register made (see Chapter 3).



New summer residence near Surf Drive

In addition, undertake the **photo-documentation** of historic summer neighborhoods. Collaborate with neighborhood associations. Enlist local volunteers from within the neighborhoods to digitally photograph streetscapes and individual houses. Record and map the locations of photos using the Town's GIS mapping. Maintain digital and printed copies of photographs in the files of the Historical Commission and neighborhood associations. The photographs will provide a baseline record of existing conditions for future reference and the historical record.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and neighborhood associations

4.10.C Provide **information, guidance, and technical assistance** for the appropriate treatment of historic buildings and building fabric to residents of historic neighborhoods through outreach, websites, published resources, hands-on workshops, and technical assistance. Encourage good planning, design, and implementation. See recommendations for public outreach in Chapter 3.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and neighborhood associations

4.10.D Use **interpretation and programming** to raise public awareness about Falmouth's history and historic resources as outlined in Chapter 6 of this plan, *Telling Falmouth's Stories*. Focus in part on neighborhood history drawing connections between the town's history and resident's homes.

As part of a town-wide interpretive presentation, prepare **histories of individual neighborhoods** published on websites and in brochures and booklets that are publicly available. Use town-wide graphic formats. Make the histories available to residents in published and electronic formats.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, neighborhood associations, museums, and Falmouth Historical Society

RECOMMENDATION 4.11: Encourage the creation of new local historic districts through public outreach.

Over time, encourage the residents of interested neighborhoods to create new local historic districts. Promote the benefits of historic district designation in terms of strong, consistent character and property values.

4.11.A Local historic districts authorized under MGL Chapter 40C allow customization of the features subject to historic district review. When appropriate, single property 40C historic districts may be created to protect significant individual properties when the owner is interested in preservation.

Flexible design guidelines can be created that are tailored to the character and conditions of the neighborhood and interests of the residents. Residents can be included on the design review board with Historic District Commission and professional support.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Long-term action of the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and neighborhood associations

4.11.B Encourage establishment of **conservation districts** to assist residents in identifying character defining elements important to their neighborhoods and requiring proposed projects to go under staff review to assure that they are consistent with those characteristics.

Conservation districts are developed by and tailored to the interests and concerns of residents and are a potential tool to help protect the essential character of historic neighborhoods. They were recommended in the 2005 Local Comprehensive Plan and their consideration is still applicable.



Cottage in a residential neighborhood



CHAPTER 5 – CULTURAL LANDSCAPES AND LAND CONSERVATION

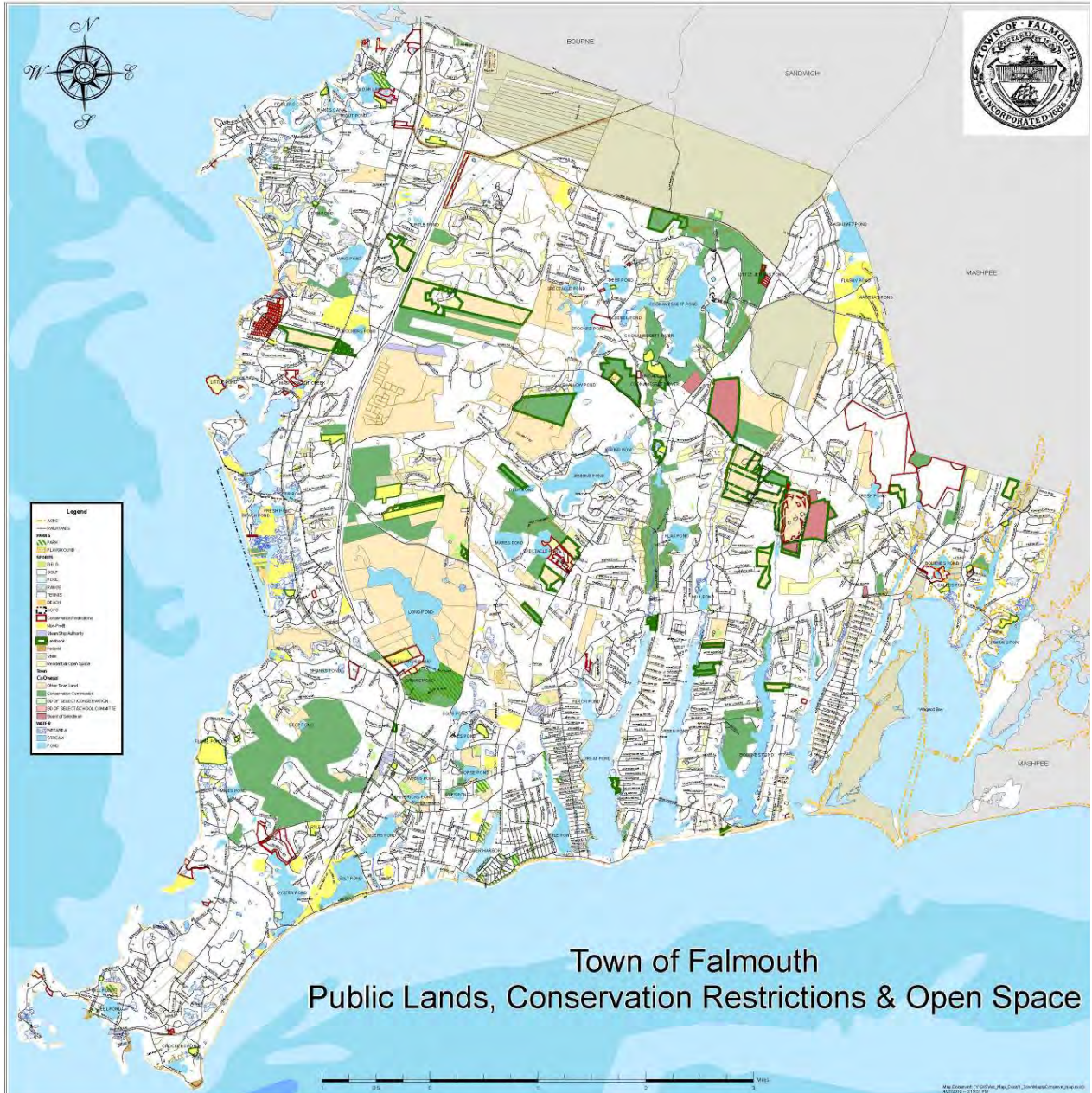
Land conservation has played an important role in the development of Falmouth over the past fifty years. Land conservation initiatives have helped to preserve historic resources and cultural landscapes within the town as well.

Increased building and land development as a summer destination since the early twentieth century has led to the loss of a significant amount of open land in Falmouth that was once taken for granted. Aside from aesthetics and the appeal of natural areas to residents and summer visitors, intense development pressure in the mid-to-late twentieth century threatened natural systems and water supply. Falmouth’s vulnerability to environmental degradation led to increased interest in and support for measures for land protection, both through regulatory and non-regulatory means.

Two areas of environmental concern have received particular attention. First, development along the coastline over the decades has impaired the ability of the coastal formations and ecosystems to evolve in response to natural processes, including both ongoing effects of ocean and tide as well as catastrophic effects of hurricanes and sea level rise. Second, Falmouth’s residents are dependent upon ground water that flows through the sandy soils from the north toward the coastal ponds and beaches along the south shore.

Recognizing its vulnerability, Falmouth has adopted an outstanding set of policies and initiatives for landscape protection and conservation focusing on coastal landscapes; beaches; and inland waterways, wetlands, watersheds, and water supply. Both public and private sector roles and responsibilities have been identified and have become well developed.

State authorized regulatory programs for wetland protection, coastal pond protection, and coastal management have been adopted by the Town of Falmouth and are managed through its Conservation Commission, Coastal Pond Management Committee, and Town staff. Falmouth’s renowned scientific community has been instrumental in raising awareness and providing the momentum and expertise in acknowledging, analyzing, and addressing long-term environmental challenges.



Conserved public and private lands in Falmouth

Town officials have received broad public support for open space preservation and conservation initiatives. In addition to regulatory mechanisms, Falmouth has acquired or otherwise conserved large areas of land primarily for the protection of ground water, perhaps most notably Long Pond, Falmouth Town Forest, and other properties along the north-south moraine through which the town’s ground water flows.

Private sector initiatives and support have been instrumental in the protection of land in Falmouth. Private owners have donated significant parcels of land to the Town, such as the land around Long Pond and Beebe Woods. Since 1960,

the Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. has been acquiring and protecting critical land parcels in Falmouth, particularly marshlands. Since 1985, The 300 Committee, a strong local land trust, has taken a lead role in helping the Town permanently protect over 2,300 acres of open space, in large part through private support. Lands have been protected through acquisition, donation, conservation restriction, and other ways. Additional environmentally significant lands are under state and federal management.

The state authorized and supported Community Preservation Act initiative managed by the Town's Community Preservation Committee has been an important public program providing funding for priority open space, recreation, and land conservation projects.

Chapter 5 recognizes the importance of land conservation and protection initiatives in Falmouth. Land conservation supports historic preservation as well. Every landscape in Falmouth is a cultural landscape influenced by human occupation and use over decades and centuries. Even today's conservation initiatives are of historical significance.

This chapter addresses Goal 7 of the preservation plan, *Integrate heritage and historic preservation into public and private conservation initiatives*. Overdevelopment and environmental change continue to present significant challenges to Falmouth's coastal landscape and ecology. Land conservation is key to Falmouth's future.

Historic preservation is integral to Falmouth's landscape and should support and engage in land conservation initiatives. This can be accomplished by recognizing the significance of Falmouth's cultural landscape, working closely with conservation interests, and initiating new related landscape preservation initiatives. Key recommendations include:

- Developing a cultural landscape perspective and infusing it into conservation initiatives; and
- Establishing a private Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust to parallel the work of local conservation organizations.

FALMOUTH'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Falmouth's landscape has been shaped by human activity for centuries. As outlined in Chapter 2, Native Americans, early European settlers, farmers, mill owners, and summer enthusiasts have used and altered Falmouth's landscape in ways to suit their interest, resulting in dramatic changes over time. A series of coastal survey maps produced in about 1845 rendered Falmouth's landscape in detail showing how land was being used, primarily for agriculture, and how radically it had been altered since early settlement (see Chapter 2). Comparing those maps to the landscape we see today underscores how radically we have altered the landscape today.

Falmouth can be viewed as a broad cultural landscape under continuous evolution by the combination of natural and human influences. Historic resources remain from all periods of the landscape's evolution and are valuable



The area adjacent to Salt Pond Marsh was the location of Falmouth's first European settlement.

both for the information they provide and as physical manifestations of our past. This preservation plan proposes taking a landscape approach to historic preservation, recognizing and preserving aspects of Falmouth's cultural landscape.

A cultural landscape is a geographic area including both natural and cultural resources associated with a historic event or activity, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values. There are four general types of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes (NPS 2014, Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes).

Over the past thirty or forty years, historic preservation has taken an increasingly broader perspective in moving away from a concentration upon historic buildings as isolated objects toward a more holistic approach appreciation of buildings and related historic resources in their landscape context. Falmouth's recognition of its historic villages as local historic districts and National Register historic districts is part of that broader perspective.

The National Park Service has led the recognition and study of cultural landscapes in the United States and has developed methodologies and guidelines for their identification, assessment, and treatment. These methodologies and guidelines can be useful in helping us to understand Falmouth's cultural landscape as it has changed over time. They provide a set of best practices that can help us recognize and preserve aspects and elements of the landscape significant to Falmouth's character.

RECOMMENDATION 5.1: Develop a cultural landscape perspective by investigating and documenting Falmouth’s landscape as it has changed over time.

Falmouth needs to be studied more thoroughly as a cultural landscape so that its significant features and characteristics can be more widely recognized and preserved. Local historians have looked at how the landscape has changed over time, but their knowledge has not been put to use with respect to historic preservation initiatives. The Woods Hole Research Center has taken a lead in analyzing Falmouth’s changing landscape from a combined natural and cultural perspective. This work can be further advanced in the interest of education and preservation.

Falmouth’s Historical Commission should take a leading role in coordinating a cultural landscape approach to Falmouth’s history and landscape. The work recently undertaken to identify threatened cultural landscapes as part of the Heritage Landscapes program was an important first step in this effort.

- 5.1.A Recognize that Falmouth is a historic **cultural landscape** that has evolved over time and that cultural landscape features and characteristics should be identified and preserved when undertaking land development and land conservation initiatives. Coordinate with recommendations in Chapters 3 and 4 with respect to planning for historic villages and developing areas.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of all Falmouth planning and land conservation entities

- 5.1.B Prepare a **cultural landscape context study** of Falmouth’s landscape as it has evolved over the town’s various periods of historical development (see Recommendation 3.7.F). Include discussion of underlying natural conditions and systems, Native American occupation, early settlement, agricultural and maritime development, and development of Falmouth as a summer community.

Describe the historic landscape in each period and identify historic resources as they existed and as they remain today. Describe the changing ecology and plant communities and how they have been influenced by man’s activities over time.

Discuss how today’s landscape continues to evolve. Use insights and approaches suggested by the staff of the Harvard Forest (Foster 2004) and advanced by researchers at the Woods Hole Research Center in their studies of Cape Cod and Falmouth.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term action of the Historical Commission in concert with other landscape oriented organizations

- 5.1.C Use the **methodology** for identifying and documenting cultural landscapes developed by the National Park Service and available in *A Guide To Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (NPS 1998) and *National Park Service, Cultural Landscapes Inventory. Professional Procedures Guide* (NPS 2009).

In general, identification and analysis of landscape characteristics and features should under the following categories include the landscape's:

- Spatial organization and land patterns,
- Views and vistas,
- Topography,
- Natural systems and features,
- Water features,
- Vegetation,
- Circulation,
- Buildings and structures,
- Small-scale features, and
- Special considerations.

Individual features in the landscape should never be viewed in isolation, but in relationship to the landscape as a whole. Each situation may vary, and some features may often be more important than others. Overall, it is the arrangement and the interrelationship of these character-defining features that is most critical to consider. Landscape features should always be assessed as they relate to the property as a whole.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of planning and landscape conservation organizations in Falmouth under the leadership of the Historical Commission and Historic Preservation Trust

- 5.1.D Use the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* as the model for **treatment of cultural landscapes** and historic landscape contexts in Falmouth (NPS 2014). See the discussion of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards in Chapter 2.

In general, treatment recommendations related to *Rehabilitation* are appropriate for most of Falmouth's changing landscapes. Rehabilitation is defined as "the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural value."

Characteristics and features that contribute to the landscape's character and significance (listed in 5.1.E above) should be identified, protected, and preserved whenever possible. New design features should be designed in a manner that is compatible with existing features. Non-significant features that detract from or have altered the historic landscape should be removed.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of planning and landscape conservation organizations in Falmouth under the leadership of the Historical Commission and Historic Preservation Trust

- 5.1.E Continue to identify and survey Falmouth's **heritage landscapes** in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) methodology and criteria (see Recommendation 3.7.G). Students from Boston University under guidance of the Cape Cod



Former cranberry bog along the Coonemessett River Corridor

Commission prepared an initial study of heritage landscapes in the town titled *Falmouth Reconnaissance Report, Heritage Landscape Inventory Program* (Cirbus 2013). The study identified a series of significant landscapes in Falmouth and provided recommendations for their recognition, preservation, and treatment.

The Heritage Landscapes program is important and should continue to be developed in Falmouth through the implementation of recommendations and the study of other heritage landscapes that have been identified. The program does not, however, provide a context for cultural landscapes in Falmouth as a whole, however, which is recommended in 5.1.B and 5.1.C above. It is important to prepare the overall context for Falmouth's historic and cultural landscapes in which the specific heritage landscapes exist.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term and long-term action of the Historical Commission

LAND CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Non-profit land trusts including The 300 Committee and Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. have taken a leading role in land conservation initiatives in Falmouth. The Town's Conservation Commission has been deeply involved in land conservation strategies and in regulatory oversight as well.

Based upon their interests and missions, emphasizing natural resources and open space, these organizations are not always well-positioned in the identification, assessment, and potential treatment of historic resources on the

properties with which they are working. Recognizing this issue, these conservation leaders welcome the involvement of other local organizations that might assist them in appropriately treating historic landscape features. Such assistance might range from providing advice and expertise to actually taking responsibility for the management and implementation of historic preservation related issues and initiatives on conservation properties.

The following recommendations are focused on coordinating natural resource, conservation, cultural, and historic preservation considerations in land conservation in Falmouth.

RECOMMENDATION 5.2: Infuse a cultural landscape perspective into public and private land conservation activities and initiatives.

All planning and land conservation organizations should be asked to take a cultural landscape approach to their endeavors and to include consideration of historic and cultural values and issues in their work. The Historical Commission, discussed in Chapter 3, should take a leading role in coordinating with the various organizations and in guiding this approach. The proposed Historic Preservation Trust, discussed below, should also take a leading role. The guidance, assistance, and support of these two entities will be important to the successful realization of this recommendation.

5.2.A Encourage the **Conservation Commission** to take historic cultural landscape attributes into consideration when assessing impacts on properties under their review. Require applicants to identify historic and cultural resources on their properties under review. In undertaking field work, Commission members, staff, and consultants should also identify historic and cultural features and issues.

Consider the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, discussed above and in Chapter 2, to help guide decision-making with respect to historic and cultural features when appropriate. Ask for advice, assistance, and recommendations from the Historical Commission, staff, and historic preservation consultants.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Conservation Commission with assistance and support from the Historical Commission and Historic Preservation Trust

5.2.B Encourage **The 300 Committee** and other conservation organizations to include historic cultural values in their evaluation of lands for conservation. Include historic building, landscape, and archeological resources.

Properties such as the Bourne Farm, Peterson Farm, and Coonanmessett River corridor have been preserved by local land trusts that clearly valued their historical attributes. Evaluation and protection of the Coonamessett River corridor is ongoing. Historical significance is less evident. The 300 Committee recently preserved a parcel along the Connamessett River that included a farmstead and former cranberry bogs, now successional woodland. Neighbors spoke up for preservation



A flooded bog further north along the Coonemessett River

of the historic farmstead and worked together to raise funds for the preservation of a remaining terra cotta tile silo. Historic values can contribute to the significance of a property and to support for its preservation.

Conservation organizations often use an evaluation form with a point system to evaluate land under consideration for conservation initiatives. For instance, the Parcel Evaluation form used by The 300 Committee includes values for topics including:

- Water Resource Protection,
- Drinking Water Supply,
- Wetlands,
- Wildlife Habitat,
- Flood Plain,
- Linkage,
- Urban Green Space,
- Agriculture,
- Active Recreation,
- Passive Recreation,
- Beachfront/Coastal,
- Views & Vistas,
- Development Potential,
- Local Preference,
- Unique Town Wide Value.

Each topic is given a point rating varying from low (0 to 5 points depending upon the topic), to medium (up to 10 to 20 points depending



Preserved silo at River Bend Conservation Area

upon the topic), to high (up to 20 to 30 points depending upon the topic). The overall score helps the organization prioritize properties for conservation action.

It is suggested that a combined value be included in this system for an added topic *Historical and Cultural* that would be rated for both (a) the presence of historical and cultural building, landscape, and archeological resources on the property and (b) the historical significance of the property and its resources. The Historical Commission and Historic Preservation Trust can assist in the evaluation and rating of a property for Historical and Cultural values.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of The 300 Committee and other conservation organizations with assistance and support from the Historical Commission and Historic Preservation Trust

- 5.2.C Encourage and assist the Conservation Commission, The 300 Committee, and other conservation organizations in the **appropriate treatment** of historic resources and cultural landscape features under their ownership or supervision in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* (NPS 2014) and the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (NPS 2014).

Discussed earlier in the this chapter and in Chapter 2, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards are a relatively simple set of principles for best practices that have been developed by preservationists to guide decision-making in the appropriate treatment of historic resources. The

principles are applied to landscape features and resources in the Guidelines noted above.

The Historical Commission and Historic Preservation Trust should assist the Conservation Commission, The 300 Committee, and other conservation organizations in the evaluation of historic resources and recommendations for appropriate treatment.

In some cases, a preservation consultant should be retained. Depending upon the resource, a historical architect, conservator, or historical landscape architect should be consulted. The Massachusetts Historical Commission, Preservation Massachusetts, and Cape Cod Commission can assist in finding a qualified consultant.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Conservation Commission, The 300 Committee, or other conservation organization with assistance from the Historical Commission and Historic Preservation Trust

- 5.2.D Work with the **Community Preservation Committee** in identifying and funding projects that support the documentation, preservation, and appropriate treatment of cultural landscapes. Undertaking the cultural landscape context study of Falmouth (Recommendations 3.7.F and 5.1.C), village master plans (Recommendation 4.2), and updating the archeological reconnaissance survey (Recommendation 3.7.I) would be a good start in the area of documentation.



Grape vines under cultivation

Aside from documentation and planning, the Community Preservation Committee can provide funding support for the acquisition of culturally significant properties as open space, purchase of conservation restrictions when appropriate, and treatment of building and landscape resources on conservation properties. Funding for treatment of building and landscape resources should be granted on condition that the work be undertaken in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Historical Commission, Conservation Commission, The 300 Committee, Historic Preservation Trust, or other conservation organizations

FALMOUTH HISTORIC PRESERVATION TRUST

During the preparation of this Historic Preservation Plan, a number of stakeholders have expressed the need for creation of an organization similar to The 300 Committee that could focus on historic buildings and landscapes. Several have expressed interest in participating in its formation. The 300 Committee is a model of a successful non-profit organization that has worked in concert with a variety of other organizations, including the Town of Falmouth, to preserve landscapes and open space throughout the town. The 300 Committee has demonstrated the ability to envision needed initiatives, build consensus on action, and raise funds to achieve conservation projects.

Historic preservation, however, is not part of The 300 Committee's mission. While the organization is sympathetic toward and in support of historic preservation, its resources and staffing are best focused upon its core area of expertise.

The proposed Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust would be similar to The 300 Committee in the activities it undertakes and the manner in which it operates, except that it would be focused upon historic building and landscape resources. It would use The 300 Committee as a model both for its organization and structure and for the public reputation and trust it wishes to build.

The Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust would have four areas of activity:

1. Establish a **vision** for historic preservation in Falmouth and what historic preservation initiatives can achieve for the quality of life of residents.
2. **Partner** with The 300 Committee and other conservation organizations on land conservation initiatives that involve historic or cultural resources or are of historical or cultural significance.
3. Undertake historic preservation **initiatives** for the preservation of historic buildings and properties.
4. Serve as an **advocate** for historic preservation in Falmouth, providing information, guidance, and support, and speaking up on behalf of historic preservation values.



Historic Highfield Hall is an outstanding example of a building preserved largely through private initiative

RECOMMENDATION 5.3: Create a local preservation trust to parallel the work of local land conservation organizations.

The Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust should be created to provide the town with a non-profit partner that can address historic preservation issues through private sector initiatives.

5.3.A Create a **Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust** modeled on The 300 Committee to undertake pro-active preservation activities within the Town. Consult with organizations throughout the town in developing a vision, role, and guiding principles for the Trust. Cultivate a leadership group that can provide guidance and the basis for financial support. Identify a Board of Directors with a strong interest in historic preservation and good relationships with the network of town interests that will be important to success.

Draft mission and vision statements, bylaws, and a set of guiding principles. Consult with potential partnering organizations for guidance and support. Conduct public meetings to gather input on the Trust and its potential activities. Cultivate relationships with realtors and developers active within Falmouth.

File for incorporation as a 501c3 non-profit organization. Use The 300 Committee as an organizational model. To start, assume a staffing level of one full-time Executive Director and one full or part-time Administrative Assistant. Develop an annual operating budget.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term action of the Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust

- 5.3.B The Trust should be a bipartisan, private sector entity working to build **community consensus** around historic preservation and land conservation issues. It should carefully maintain a reputation as an honest broker upon which other organizations and the public can depend. The Trust should maintain good working relationships with Town entities.

Ongoing action of the Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust

- 5.3.C The Trust's mission should focus on collaboration with the Town, The 300 Committee, and other conservation interests in preserving significant historic building and landscape resources. The Trust should have the capability of **purchasing threatened historic buildings** and landscapes with the intention of reselling them back into private sector use with preservation restrictions. The Trust should have the ability to retain possession of historic buildings and landscapes if necessary, but that should not be its preferred course of action.

Retain staff with expertise in historic preservation and real estate. Consult with historic preservation organizations with experience in real estate transactions. The Dartmouth Preservation Trust is a regional Massachusetts non-profit that could serve as a model for the Falmouth Trust. Preservation North Carolina is a national leader in preserving threatened resources through purchase and resale and should also be



Elm Arch Inn in Falmouth Village, under current threat of demolition

consulted for advice on best practices. Consider having staff undertake training in real estate finance and deal structuring from the National Development Council's *Economic Development Finance Professional Certification Program* or similar program.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust

- 5.3.D Establish an initial **endowment** for the Trust through private sector donations matched with a grant from the Community Preservation Committee. The endowment should seek to cover basic operating costs, which should be kept to a minimum. Funding for **preservation initiatives** should generally be undertaken on a project by project basis. Consider establishing an **emergency intervention fund** to enable the Trust to act quickly in times of need.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short to mid-term action of the Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust, private donors, and the Community Preservation Committee

- 5.3.E The Trust should assist The 300 Committee and other conservation organizations in the **identification and assessment of historic resources** and qualities associated with the properties they are planning to preserve. The Trust should have the assistance of a professional consultant experienced in historic building and landscape preservation on an as-needed basis. Provide support and guidance to other conservation organizations on the appropriate treatment of building and landscape resources on the properties they are conserving.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust

- 5.3.F The Trust should assist The 300 Committee by having the capability to **preserve and manage historic buildings** and other resources on properties being conserved.

The 300 Committee is sympathetic to historic preservation but historic preservation is not part of its mission. The Committee does not have the expertise to undertake preservation projects for historic resources on properties that they own or for their ongoing management and maintenance. The River Bend Conservation Area in the Coonemessett River Corridor is an example of a property where historic resources presented a challenge in the preservation of a historic silo and farmstead. Local residents formed a group to raise funds and undertake preservation of the silo.

The Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust could smooth the process by having the capability of performing preservation and maintenance actions and by working with local interest groups in partnership with and on behalf of The 300 Committee. The Trust could provide ongoing management and maintenance of resources and raise funding for

historic preservation activities, relieving The 300 Committee of responsibilities they were not formed to undertake.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust

- 5.3.G The Trust should collaborate with the Historical Commission in **education and outreach** to residents and neighborhood associations on the appropriate treatment of historic building and landscape resources. Workshops, technical assistance, and information should be made available to residents undertaking work on their historic buildings. See the public outreach section of Chapter 3.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust

- 5.3.H The Trust should provide **advice, guidance, and assistance** to the Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, Planning Board, Zoning Board, and Board of Selectmen on historic preservation issues when appropriate.

The Trust should be an advocate for historic preservation in Falmouth and should lead initiatives to preserve historic buildings and sites. The Trust should have the expertise to provide recommendations on the identification, evaluation, and treatment of historic resources on properties under development review.

The Trust's reputation for professionalism, balance, and consensus building will be a key asset in assuring respect for its guidance and involvement in projects throughout Falmouth.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Ongoing action of the Falmouth Historic Preservation Trust



Hiking trail in successional woodland in a former agricultural area



CHAPTER 6 – TELLING FALMOUTH’S STORIES

Falmouth has a rich and interesting history and several high quality museums and historic sites where its history is told. Organizations such as the Falmouth Historical Society, Highfield Hall and Gardens, Woods Hole Museum, and Falmouth Artists Guild manage experienced venues and are centers for vibrant community programming and events related to history and culture. Historical and cultural events are an important part of the visitor experience in Falmouth.

Storytelling is way to reach out to visitors and residents about Falmouth’s special places. Interpretation can tell the stories of Falmouth’s landscape – its villages, neighborhoods, harbors, beaches, coastal marshes, farms, and woodlands – to bring the landscape alive. Falmouth’s natural resources are an important part of its history and experience. Through interpretation, public awareness of the Town’s historic building and landscape resources can be enhanced and support for historic preservation can be increased.

Historic preservation advocates recognize the need to build public recognition and support for historic preservation as a component of community character. Interpretation is a means through which to achieve that end. Heritage and cultural programming are therefore a key long-term component of Falmouth’s historic preservation plan in achieving public outreach.

Heritage and cultural tourism contribute to Falmouth’s economic vitality. Visitors who appreciate historic and cultural attractions also appreciate communities that value their historic character. Heritage visitors want to experience authentic places. They want to learn about the town’s history and combine their visits to interpretive sites with interesting dining and shopping opportunities in historic commercial areas such as Falmouth Village and Woods Hole. Heritage visitors want a complete experience, expect high quality, and are willing to spend more than other types of visitors. They like to linger in the restaurants and other places where residents tend to gather.

Chapter 6 supports Goal 3 of the preservation plan, which states, *Heighten public appreciation of Falmouth’s heritage and historic resources*. This goal is achieved by supporting Falmouth’s historic and cultural attractions and by expanding initiating a comprehensive town-wide interpretative presentation that reaches people wherever they are and whatever they are doing.

FALMOUTH VILLAGE CULTURAL DISTRICT

Several of the town's leading historical and arts organizations are partnering with the Town in a state-supported cultural district initiative that will enhance visitor experience in Falmouth. The state Cultural District Initiative is a program of the Massachusetts Cultural Council in which local areas meeting certain criteria may be designated, promoted, and receive matching state funds for programming, enhancement, and support.

Falmouth's designated cultural district will be located in Falmouth Village and encompass Highfield Hall, North Main Street, Palmer Avenue and the Village Green Area, and both sides of Main Street to Gifford Street, terminating at the Falmouth Art Center. Cultural districts are walkable, compact areas that are easily identifiable to visitors and residents and serve as a center of cultural, artistic, and economic activity.

The Falmouth Village Cultural District will establish Falmouth as an arts destination, encourage year-round economic vitality for local businesses, and attract new business. Access to funding may provide avenues for improvements and enhancements such as a master signage strategy, heritage trail, capital improvement projects, and pedestrian improvements. Creating a thriving cultural district adds to the cache of living and working in Falmouth and will encourage private investment in the town. This preservation plan proposes that the Falmouth Village Cultural District be the centerpiece of a town-wide interpretive presentation, discussed below.

A partnership called the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance is being formed to serve as the administrative body for the cultural district. The Alliance includes representatives of eight organizations centered in Falmouth Village:

- Town Manager's Office
- Falmouth Chamber of Commerce
- Historic Highfield and Gardens
- Falmouth Village Association
- Falmouth Historical Society
- Falmouth Art Center
- ArtsFalmouth
- Falmouth Cultural Council

The Falmouth Village Cultural District will promote year round arts and culture activities in Falmouth in support of local businesses and a robust economic environment.

RECOMMENDATION 6.1: Establish a state-designated cultural district in Falmouth Village as authorized under the Cultural District Initiative of the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Establish a state designated cultural district as currently being planned by public and private partners in Falmouth Village. Use the cultural district to promote historic and cultural organizations and activities in the village and serve as a center of cultural, artistic, and economic activity for the Town. The cultural



Falmouth Museums on the Green

district initiative will help promote historic resources and heritage tourism to visitors and residents as central components of Falmouth's quality of life.

- 6.1.A Through the Falmouth Village Cultural District and its partnership entity, the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance, develop coordinated cultural events, interpretive presentations, exhibits, performances, and supporting materials with the goal of creating a **distinctive visitor experience** that links partners and their sites and strengthens Falmouth Village as a visitor destination. Tailor the initiatives of the cultural district to the missions, interests, and capabilities of its partners.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short and mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance

- 6.1.B **Link** the Falmouth Village Cultural District **to other villages, locations, and experiences** throughout the Town.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance and town-wide partners with support from the Historical Commission

- 6.1.C Apply for **funding for cultural district initiatives** from various state programs, such as the Massachusetts Cultural Commission, Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Department of Housing and Community Development, Department of Transportation and Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Provide ongoing **funding support** for cultural district administration, programming, and partners through an allocation from the Town's

lodging tax. Provide matching funds for the implementation of enhancement projects from the Community Preservation Act.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance, Town of Falmouth, Falmouth Chamber of Commerce, and Community Preservation Committee

6.1.D **Market** the Falmouth Village Cultural District as a visitor attraction and destination.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance and Falmouth Chamber of Commerce

TOWN-WIDE INTERPRETIVE PRESENTATION

Interpretation is a means through which visitors and residents can be exposed to Falmouth's heritage. It creates awareness about the themes and stories that convey the Town's history and relates those themes and stories to authentic places. Through interpretation, visitors and residents learn about Falmouth's villages and landscapes and develop awareness and respect for the Town's historic and natural resources. Interpretation is a significant way to reach out to Falmouth's residents to build long-term support for the Town's historic preservation program. Interpretation and heritage tourism will help build community pride.

Falmouth has a fascinating history closely tied to its landscape and the historic building and landscape resources discussed in Chapter 2. Falmouth also has a strong set of interpretive attractions, villages, historic sites, conserved lands,



Historic Highfield Hall and Gardens

natural areas, and public places that can be woven together to create a distinctive interpretive presentation and visitor experience.

A comprehensive town-wide interpretive presentation can be created through the coordination and cooperation of a variety of partners. The centerpiece of the presentation should be the Falmouth Village Cultural District. Other villages, especially Woods Hole, may wish to participate as well. Outdoor recreational opportunities in Falmouth offer a unique opportunity for engaging visitors and residents in the landscapes where stories can be told.

In a town-wide interpretive presentation, existing interpretive attractions serve as anchors and destinations to which visitors can be directed. To be recognized as an anchor site, an attraction should have certain capabilities and amenities to serve the visiting public. Each anchor attraction should:

- Be open to the public and have regular hours of operation that can be coordinated with other attractions.
- Have onsite exhibits and programming that is directly related to the themes and storylines developed in a town-wide interpretive plan. Some level of interior interpretive presentation should be available.
- Have basic visitor amenities such as parking, rest rooms, visitor information, and provisions or alternatives for universal access.
- Have onsite staffing, preferably professional interpreters or at minimum trained volunteers.

Falmouth's interpretive attractions include the Falmouth Museums on the Green (Falmouth Historical Society), Historic Highfield Hall and Gardens, Woods Hole Historical Museum, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, and Woods Hole Science Aquarium. The Robert W. Pierce Visitors Center of the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole also welcomes visitors.

Participating sites with interpretive programming should work together to create a coordinated presentation of Falmouth's history and heritage with each site presenting the aspects of that history to which it relates and coordinating with the stories told at other partnering sites

In addition to its existing interpretive attractions, Falmouth's strength is its wide range of publicly accessible historic sites, natural areas, scenic roads, and conserved lands which draw visitors and residents. In Falmouth, natural and historic resources combine to tell the town's stories and provide rich engaging experiences. Recreational activities are an important way to reach visitors and residents. A landscape approach to interpretation is the key to a town-wide interpretive presentation in Falmouth.

Falmouth's potential for an extensive network of coordinated, self-guided landscape interpretive installations will create a unique experience. Self-guided interpretive installations can be installed in a wide range of publicly accessible locations, including historic sites, natural areas, beaches, parks, conserved lands, sidewalk areas in villages, around public buildings, and in landscapes associated with private sites that have agreed to participate in the interpretive



Ocean Science Exhibit Center, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute

program. Driving and biking routes should be used to link villages, sites, and destinations.

The Shining Sea Bikeway, a regional destination, is Falmouth's best known outdoor recreational resource. Other on-road bike routes such as Surf Drive are also unique, exciting, and important interpretive opportunities. Falmouth is well-known for its many acres of conserved lands with hiking trails where interpretation may be presented. Historic neighborhoods could also participate if they desire.

Falmouth's outdoor exhibits should use a common town-wide graphic format to strengthen their image and cohesion. Public art with interpretive content is a highly desirable form of exhibit in any location. Interpretation should be coordinated using themes and stories outlined in a town-wide interpretive plan. No privately owned site should be included in the interpretive presentation without the explicit written permission of the owners.

The following recommendations provide guidance for creating a town-wide interpretive presentation to enhance visitor experience, promote heritage tourism, and raise public awareness about the central role of the town's historic buildings and landscapes in Falmouth's quality of life.

RECOMMENDATION 6.2: Prepare an interpretive plan for the Town of Falmouth that links sites and engages villages, attractions, organizations, and sites throughout the town.

Develop a town-wide interpretive plan that engages a broad array of partners and interests. Identify interpretive themes and subjects that characterize the town's history. Work with local partners to determine how stories related to



Model of 19th Century Woods Hole in the Woods Hole Historical Museum

each potential interpretive site convey town-wide interpretive themes. Identify the role that each potential site is willing and able to play in a coordinated town-wide interpretive presentation. Create visitor itineraries, routes, and tours that link villages, interpretive sites, natural areas, and other attractions. Outline how the interpretive presentation could be implemented in the short-term and further developed and enriched in phases over time.

The town-wide interpretive plan will determine how best to present an overview of the town's history to which visitors and residents can relate, identifying key themes and storylines. It will provide a context for how each individual interpretive site fits into the town's history, and it will identify how individual interpretive sites will work together to coordinate their stories, programs, and messaging.

Development of the town-wide interpretive plan should be led by educators, interpreters, historians, naturalists, and public program specialists from the town's natural, historical, and cultural sites. Professional consultants should be engaged to help guide the planning and shape the type of experiences that will be meaningful and appropriate to Falmouth's audiences. The interpretive plan should include the following elements:

1. Introduction: Outline the background and purpose of the plan.
2. Themes and Storylines: Identify Falmouth's key natural, historic, and cultural themes and storylines for interpretation as developed by the town's interpretive partners. Every participating interpretive site should be able to find its place within the thematic structure.

3. Overview of Existing Interpretation: Prepare an overview summarizing current interpretive programming offered by partners. Identify (a) each existing participating interpretive site/attraction, (b) organization and contact information, (c) days and hours open to the public, (d) staffing summary, (e) available facilities, (f) theme(s) to which each site relates, and (g) summary of programs and presentations currently offered. Many of Falmouth's interpretive experiences are self-guided and are not staffed.

Organize the overview to outline the interests and capabilities of the various participating sites. Begin with the larger sites that have professional staff and are fully open to the public and work toward the smaller sites that may be self-guided or operated solely by volunteers.

4. Orientation to the Town-wide Interpretive Presentation: Outline how the town-wide presentation will be introduced to visitors and residents and how visitors not familiar with Falmouth will be oriented. Identify places where visitors are most likely to first experience the presentation, such as the Falmouth Village Cultural District, Woods Hole, the Shining Sea Bikeway, and beaches.

Orientation should include an overview of themes and storylines, sites where they are presented, and suggested routes and itineraries linking sites. Consider using websites, interpretive maps and brochures, and introductory exhibits such as kiosks at key public locations.

Consult with partners and determine how best to phase-in coordinated interpretation that presents the town-wide context and sets the stage for detailed interpretation at individual sites and attractions. Exhibits should provide orientation information and direct visitors to participating local interpretive sites. Use a common graphic identity and formatting for exhibits and publications (discussed below).

5. Interpretation at Sites and Attractions: Outline how individual interpretive sites and attractions will participate in the town-wide presentation. Identify the key storylines that each participating site will present and how sites will work together to tailor their interpretation as part of the broader storylines.

Identify which storylines are visitor-ready and which have gaps and need further development. Determine how support can be provided to assist sites in their presentations. Determine how participating sites can be provided with introductory exhibits providing town-wide context and relating sites to larger storylines.

6. Interpretation at Self-guided Sites: Identify potential publicly accessible sites and private partners that might be interested in and appropriate for self-guided interpretive exhibits as part of the town-wide presentation. Consider conservation lands, beaches, harbors, public parks, public buildings, trails, bikeways, and streetscapes. Use self-guided interpretation to create linkages between sites.



Nobska Point Lighthouse

Develop an exhibit format that can be used for installation of self-guided exhibits using a common graphic identity and coordinated with town-wide themes and storylines (see below). Develop a maintenance protocol for self-guided exhibits at partnering locations.

7. **Implementation:** Prioritize the ideas and actions outlined above. Begin with those that are fundable and most likely to achieve results. Identify resources to support coordinated implementation over time.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short to mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance and other town-wide partners with participation of the Historical Commission and Conservation Commission

RECOMMENDATION 6.3: Prepare a common graphic identity that can be used for the town-wide interpretive presentation for exhibits and supporting graphic and digital publications.

Create a common graphic identity for the town-wide interpretive presentation. Develop a family of interpretive carriers such as kiosks, waysides, and markers of varying sizes. Develop graphic standards for sign panels that express the town's character and identity. Adoption of standard National Park Service carriers would be appropriate and would be an economical and easily implementable option. National Park Service standards are recognizable by the public and acknowledged for their high quality and durability.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short to mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance and other town-wide partners



Falmouth Village Green

RECOMMENDATION 6.4: Implement a coordinated Town-wide interpretive presentation.

Organize partners in the implementation of a town-wide interpretive presentation in Falmouth featuring natural, historical, and cultural sites and resources. Use the interpretive plan prepared under Recommendation 6.2 above to guide a phased implementation process.

- 6.4.A Have the **Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance** serve as the coordinating entity leading organization and implementation of the town-wide interpretive presentation. Create an **Advisory Committee** of additional affiliated partners and organizations located outside of Falmouth Village who wish to participate. Create an **implementation process** through which partners can implement interpretive projects on their own sites consistent with graphic and quality control standards adopted for the town-wide presentation.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Short-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance and other town-wide partners with participation of the Historical Commission and Conservation Commission

- 6.4.B Use the town's **villages, interpretive attractions, and key natural and historic sites** as anchors and destinations within the town-wide interpretive plan. Use the Falmouth Village Cultural District as a central focus for the presentation.

Engage the professional educational and interpretive staff of anchor sites and other partnering organizations as leaders in the development of the interpretive plan, discussed above. Actively support development



Shining Sea Bikeway

and enhancement of anchor sites and key destinations and the visitor experiences they offer. Install orientation exhibits at anchor sites, key natural and historic sites, and key public spaces. Establish how sites will coordinate with interpretation at other partnering sites.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance and other town-wide partners

- 6.4.C Create a network of **self-guided outdoor interpretive exhibits** and experiences at partnering sites, conservation lands, beaches, public parks and greens, along streetscapes, and in other publicly accessible places. Use online information and apps as well as QR codes to provide interpretive content where exhibits might not be appropriate or desired and to supplement exhibits with additional detail.

Create an implementation program through which interested partners can develop and install interpretive waysides and kiosks on their publicly accessible properties as part of the town-wide interpretive presentation. Establish a design and implementation process under the oversight of the Cultural District Alliance for implementation by partners using guidelines and quality control standards developed for the town-wide interpretive presentation as a whole.

Funding should be sought to implement the interpretive presentation. Partnering sites should agree to provide matching funds for design and installation and to maintain their sites and interpretive exhibits. Coordinate the interpretation of each site within the overall town-wide presentation. Phase implementation of the program as appropriate,

building upon what is currently offered through existing exhibits, maps, and guides.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance and other town-wide partners with participation of the Historical Commission and Conservation Commission

- 6.4.D Use **public art** as an interpretive medium in villages, public parks, and at other appropriate sites. Work with ArtsFalmouth to establish guidelines, criteria, and processes for the use of public art in interpretation.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of ArtsFalmouth, the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance, and other town-wide partners

- 6.4.E Use **scenic roads and bikeways as linkages** between destinations. Identify driving and biking routes for visitors to use linking villages, destinations, and attractions. Make these routes a central component of the town-wide interpretive plan. Create interpretive exhibits and experiences at locations along those routes for visitors to stop and see.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance and other town-wide partners including the Bikeways Committee

- 6.4.F Use **bikeways and trails** as interpreted recreational experiences and destinations. Feature routes linking the Shining Sea Bikeway and potential interpretive sites such as Beebee Woods, Peterson Farm, Bourne Farm, Salt Pond Reservation, Moraine Trail, Coonamessett River



Scenic drive, Nobska Point to Woods Hole

Greenway, Town Forest, beaches, and other publicly accessible sites. Identify themes and stories that can be told along each of the town's trails and bikeways. Include interpretive enhancements in their development.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance and other town-wide partners including the Bikeways Committee

- 6..4.G Encourage **village associations and neighborhood associations** to participate in the town-wide interpretive presentation, telling the stories of their communities. Use a variety of media as appropriate to the community and desired and approved by residents, such as brochures, maps, exhibits, and public art. Feature only sites with public access. No privately owned buildings or sites should be interpreted without the approval of property owners.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Historical Commission, village and neighborhood associations, Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance, and other town-wide partners

6.4.H Use the rich schedule of **events** offered by the various interpretive partners as an integral part of the town-wide interpretive presentation.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance, Falmouth Chamber of Commerce, and other town-wide partners

RECOMMENDATION 6.5: Support interpretive partners and the development of interpretive programming.

- 6.5.A Use the Community Preservation Act to **fund the development of interpretive exhibits**, installations, public art, site enhancements, graphic materials for the town-wide interpretive presentation.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Community Preservation Committee, Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance, and other town-wide partners

- 6.5.B Use the Community Preservation Act to fund site enhancements through a **matching grant program** for partnering sites and attractions for interpretive exhibits, programming, site enhancements, and supporting materials in concert with the town-wide interpretive plan and the implementation process under the oversight of the Falmouth Village Cultural Alliance.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Community Preservation Committee, Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance, and other town-wide partners

- 6.5.C Use an allocation from the lodging tax to support **non-profit interpretive organizations and attractions** through a matching grant program.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Town of Falmouth and Falmouth Chamber of Commerce

RECOMMENDATION 6.6: Develop graphic, digital, and web-based interpretive materials that provide orientation, historical context for site-specific exhibits, maps, and illustrations.

- 6.6.A Support the town-wide interpretive presentation with a **family of brochures, maps, and interpretive guides** using the common graphic identity noted in Recommendation 6.3 above. Include a high-quality **fold-out map** of the entire town with interpretive context to help visitors identify and appreciate all of the sites, trails, and opportunities available. Make the map and brochures available online.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance and other town-wide partners with participation of the Historical Commission and Conservation Commission

- 6.6.B Create a vibrant **interpretive website** linked to the Town of Falmouth, Falmouth Chamber of Commerce’s visitor website, and partner websites. Include an overview of Falmouth’s history; introduction of the town’s interpretive themes; and access to brochures, maps, apps, and digital interpretive content that can be downloaded and used to explore the town and its sites.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance and other town-wide partners with participation of the Historical Commission and Conservation Commission

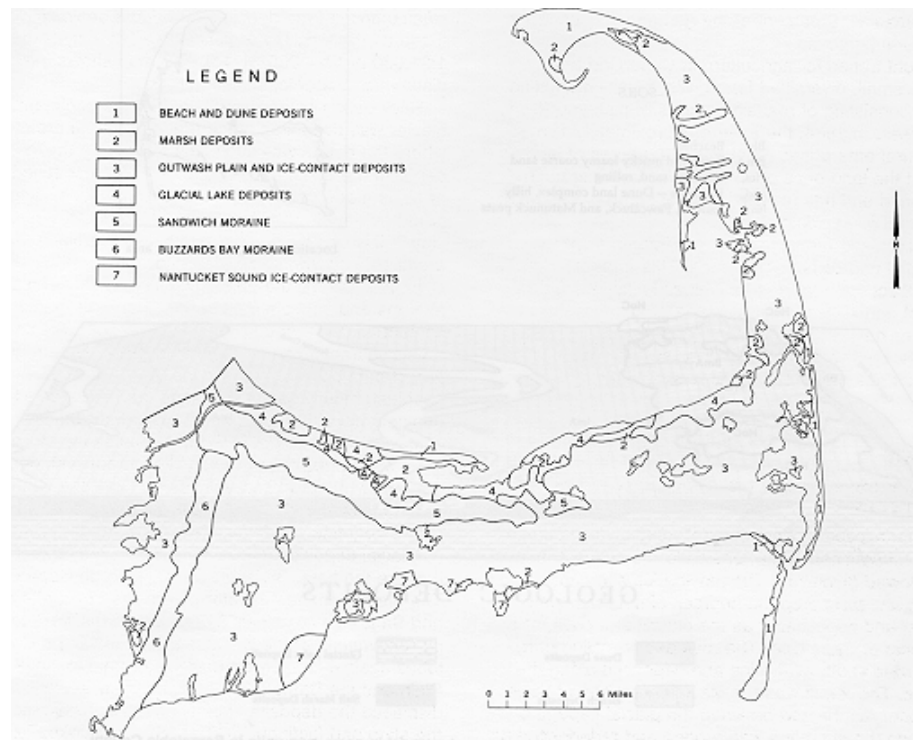
- 6.6.C Develop **digital interpretive presentations** for iPad and other tablet formats to be accessed over the internet from historic sites throughout the town. Digital interpretation can be used to enhance outdoor exhibits and/or provide interpretation where outdoor exhibits cannot be installed or are not desirable. The media content should be rich and exciting. Development of digital interpretive media could be a longer term goal of the interpretive plan.

Responsible Party and Timeframe: Mid-term action of the Falmouth Village Cultural District Alliance and other town-wide partners with participation of the Historical Commission and Conservation Commission

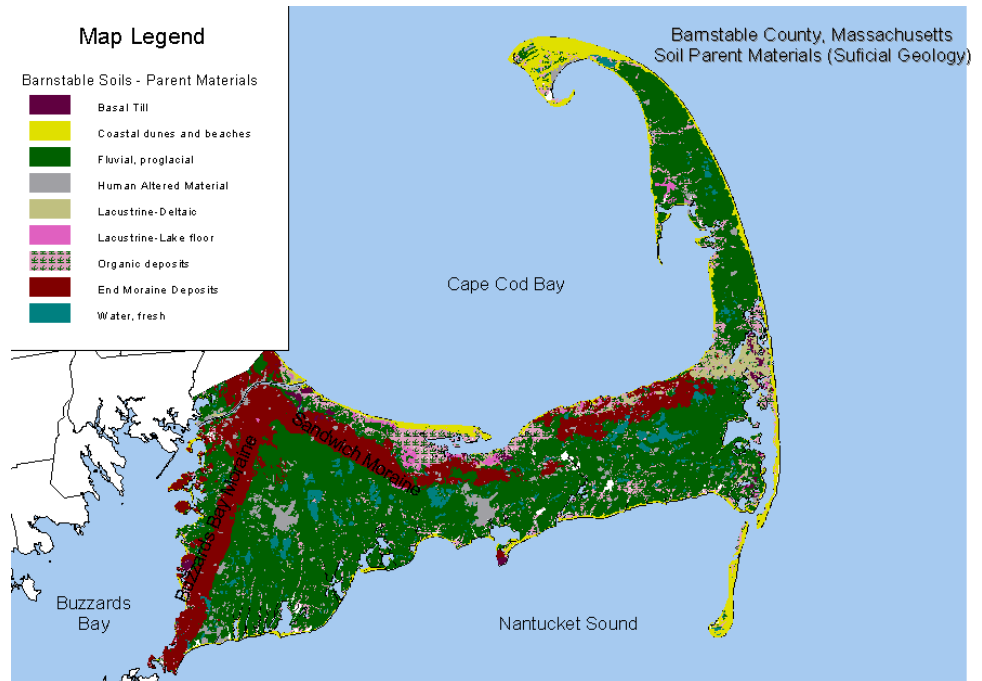
APPENDIX A – LANDSCAPE HISTORY

The Cape Cod landscape was created and shaped by the last of the Ice Age glaciers that advanced over New England about 23,000 years ago. The Wisconsin Stage of the Pleistocene Epoch began approximately 50,000 to 70,000 years ago. The last of the Wisconsin glaciers to advance and retreat across New England was named the Laurentide ice sheet. The leading edge of the glacier halted just south of the present day shoreline, and the rock and gravel it deposited formed a terminal moraine that includes the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

The glacier began to recede about 19,000 years ago, but a re-advance of the ice about 12,000 years ago again reached Cape Cod and created another terminal moraine that became the backbone of the Cape as we know it today. The Cape Cod moraine is comprised of two parts formed by separate lobes of the same glacier. The Buzzards Bay moraine, formed by a lobe located in Buzzards Bay, extends roughly north-south creating a ridgeline and series of hills from Bourne south through Falmouth and Woods Hole to include the Elizabeth Islands. The Sandwich moraine, formed by a lobe located in Cape Cod Bay, extends west-east from Bourne through Barnstable.



Glacial landforms on Cape Cod (Fletcher 1993)



Soil formations from glacial material (Fletcher 1993)

Both moraines were formed by the advancing ice sheet, oscillating during its overall retreat, that overrode previously laid sediments, pushing them up into terminal moraines. The glacial deposits on Cape Cod range between 200 and 600 feet deep over the bedrock beneath. In historic times, the early road that has become today’s Route 28 from Bourne to Falmouth Village was laid out following the high ground of the Buzzards Bay moraine. Historic Old Kings Highway, today’s Route 6, was laid out from Bourne to Barnstable on the Sandwich moraine (Oldale 1981 & USGS 2001).

Southeast of the Buzzards Bay and Sandwich moraines is an extensive area of glacial outwash that slopes gently to the shoreline and comprises most of the Cape Cod landscape. This outwash plain is made up of sand and gravel deposited by meltwater streams that flowed across the plain in a braided pattern, resulting in a broad flat depositional surface that sloped gently away from the ice front.

In Falmouth, the Buzzards Bay moraine creates a long north-south ridgeline from North Falmouth to Woods Hole. The moraine is characterized by an irregular topography of hills and swales and is comprised of an unsorted mixture of rock, sand, and soil, ranging from giant boulders to fine silt and clay. To the west, the land slopes steeply down to Buzzards Bay and creates a series of coves, necks, marshes, and beaches.

Most of Falmouth lays to the east of the moraine on the broad outwash plain. This land has a gentle gradient and is comprised mostly of sand and gravel. There are few rocks larger than a softball in the outwash and only small amounts of silt.

Dotting both the moraine and the outwash plain are kettle holes that are variable in size. Some of the larger kettle holes are deep and intersect the water

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table, creating ponds. Long Pond, a significant town park and water source, has a maximum depth of 65 feet, over 50 feet below sea level. Great Harbor at Woods Hole is 70 feet at its deepest point, which is deeper than Buzzards Bay to the north. Woods Hole channel is a string of deep kettle holes that cuts through the moraine hills.

The gently sloping outwash plain east of Falmouth Village is cut by many narrow, straight valleys that were created by springs coming to the surface along the shore and cutting their way up the ground-water gradient soon after the glacier melted. These valleys intersect ground water so that fresh water drains into them all along their length, creating small streams like the Coonamesset River and watering cranberry bogs in the valley bottoms. The upper ends of most of these valleys are dry today. The southern ends of some of these valleys were flooded when the sea level rose, forming the narrow estuaries of Falmouth Harbor, Little Pond, Great Pond, Green Pond, Bournes Pond, and Eel Pond along Falmouth's south shore.

As the sea level rose to its current level over the past few thousand years, the sea's wave action increasingly shaped the land along the shoreline. Waves eroded the sand and gravel of the outwash plain along Falmouth's southern shore as well as the more resistant Buzzards Bay moraine, with its mixed rocks, sand, and silt along the western shore. The sand removed from the glacial hills and plains was carried along the shoreline by the waves and shaped into beaches and sand spits. These sandy deposits smoothed the shoreline and protected the areas shoreward of them, where salt marshes developed. Falmouth's dynamic shoreline continues to be shaped today (USGS 2001).



Assemblage of USGS topographic maps of Falmouth; the red line is the watershed divide between Buzzards Bay and Nantucket Sound (BBNEP 2014)

The Historic Landscape – Native American Context

This landscape created by the glaciers has been occupied by humans and shaped by human activity for most of the time since the ice retreated and the seas rose. Prehistoric history in the northeast United States, including Cape Cod, is divided into three broad periods, the Paleoindian Period (11,500-9,500 B.P.), Archaic Period (9,500-3,500 B.P.), and Woodland Period (3,000-450 B.P.) according to the lifeways and characteristics that can be inferred from archeological evidence.

An overview of Falmouth's early history is presented in the *Archeological Reconnaissance Survey of Falmouth, Massachusetts* prepared in 1996 by archeologists from the University of Massachusetts (Donta 1996). The survey is not publicly available due to the sensitivity of the archeological sites it discusses, but the brief summary below helps demonstrate that the Falmouth landscape has been home to peoples and evolving cultures for thousands of years before

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our time. Falmouth's and the Cape's archeological story is under-studied and under-appreciated.

Evidence of Paleoindian occupation throughout the northeast is extremely rare. The only evidence from this time period on Cape Cod comes from isolated diagnostic artifacts collected by amateur archeologists. During this period, Cape Cod was an inland environment evolving from tundra to a spruce-parkland plant community. Paleoindians living in this environment are characterized as seasonally nomadic hunter gatherers following the movement of game with the changing weather conditions of the year. Population densities were very low, and only four possible Paleoindian sites had been identified in Cape Cod and the Islands by the time of the 1996 archeological study based upon the finding of stone projectile points and other stone tools characteristic of the period. None of the sites were in Falmouth. Nonetheless, it is clear that Paleoindians were present in southeastern Massachusetts and the Cape.

The Archaic Period is divided into three sub-categories, the Early Archaic Period (9,500-8,000 B.P.), Middle Archaic Period (8,000-6,000 B.P.), and Late Archaic Period (6,000-3,500). By the Middle Archaic period, environmental conditions on the Cape began to approach those of today, with deciduous forests and a diverse array of plant and animal foods. A seasonal settlement system appears to have been established with permanent or semi-permanent base camps.

By the Late Archaic, modern environmental conditions were present with natural resources similar to those observed by early European settlers and explorers. More locally focused subsistence economies are thought to have developed perhaps due to increased populations requiring groups to remain in more confined territories. At least 37 Middle Archaic sites have been identified on the Cape and the Islands, one of which is in Falmouth. Late Archaic sites are much more numerous, with over 279 identified sites, a small number of which are in Falmouth.

The Woodland Period is also divided into three sub-categories, the early Woodland Period (3,000-2,000 B.P.), Middle Woodland Period (2,000-1,000 B.P.), and Late Woodland Period (1,000-450 B.P.). The trend toward a more localized, semi-sedentary settlement system continued with more permanent base camps along coastal and inland watercourses. The development of new technologies during this period, including ceramics, have been thought to relate to the appearance of horticultural practices.

By the Late Woodland, horticulture including cultivation of corn and beans was widespread with increased evidence of more permanent settlements organized around the locations of soils good for planting. Over 326 Woodland sites have been identified on the Cape and the Islands, only a few of which are in Falmouth. Despite the lack of information, Falmouth's landscape probably saw as much cultural development as other portions of the Cape and sites are remaining to be found.

A good deal more information is available about Native Americans during the Contact Period from reports and documentation of explorers and early settlers, including descriptions in early deeds. Direct evidence of Native American

settlements in Falmouth can be supplemented by a substantial amount of information on Native American lifeways in other portions of New England.

At the time of European arrival, most of southeastern Massachusetts, including the Cape, was occupied by the Wampanog, a subgroup of the Massachusetts. The Wampanog were comprised of a series of sub-groups who belonged to a loose confederation and occupied separate territories that were probably defined by natural geographical boundaries. The sub-group occupying Cape Cod has been referred to as the Nauset. It is estimated that the total Wampanog population numbered between 21,000 and 24,000 prior to about 1616. A series of devastating epidemics introduced by the Europeans beginning in 1616-1619 reduced that population by as much as 90 percent by the mid-1600s.



The Wampanog occupied southeastern Massachusetts and the Cape (Wilkie 1991)

The Wampanog were semi-sedentary horticulturalists growing corn, beans, and squash as well as relying upon wild plants and game and sea resources. Reports of Europeans indicate that the people spent part of each year, probably late spring through autumn, in dispersed settlements along the coast, growing and processing food that could be stored for the colder months. During winter, people aggregated at more protected inland locations where fishing and hunting could be profitable. Some permanent coastal settlements may have existed. Trade throughout the region was well established.

At least four to five sizable settlements are thought to have been present in Falmouth before and during the Contact period with an estimated population of 1,200 to 1,500 individuals. Settlements are believed to have been located in the vicinities of North Falmouth, center of town, Ashumet Pond/Johns Pond area, and on Waquoit Bay. Other possible settlement sites may have also been present based upon names taken from various historic records, particularly references in early deeds.

Native routes followed the general trend of the coasts. The Buzzard's Bay north-south trail followed Shore Road-Palmer Avenue, with a southern extension on Woods Hole Road. The east-west Vineyard Sound trail followed Main Street past

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Waquoit Bay. Interior trails branched north toward the Shawme Lake area on Sandwich Road, and northeast toward the Mattachase area on Old Barnstable Road (MHC 1985).

Large areas of Falmouth east of the Buzzards Bay moraine were ideally suited for occupation due to the quality of the soils of the glacial outwash plain, which were among the best on the Cape for settlement and agriculture. Extended family groups were likely to locate in semi-permanent villages close to areas of fertile soils, probably along stream corridors. When fertility declined, settlements could be relocated to new areas and former agricultural areas allowed to restore. Surrounding woodlands could be managed for foraging and game, possibly using fire, to encourage regeneration of fruit-bearing shrubs and other useful plants. Moraines were probably used for trails and hunting but little occupied due to less access to water and food sources. Coastal areas, particularly protected inlets and bays, were heavily utilized due to the aquatic resources they provided as well as use as transportation corridors.

Falmouth is under-represented in the number of Native American sites that have been identified due to the limited number of professional archeological investigations that have been undertaken. Despite this lack of study, it is highly likely that the Falmouth landscape was actively occupied prior to European settlement and that archeological sites not yet destroyed by development remain to be found (Donta 1996, MHC 1985).

Descendants of the Wampanog remain on the Cape today. The Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Tribal Council, Inc., established in 1972 and officially recognized by the federal government in 2007, is one of two federally recognized tribes of Wampanog people in Massachusetts. Its tribal offices are located in Mashpee, east of Falmouth.

The Historic Landscape – Settlement and Agricultural Development

The history of Falmouth is richly told in *The Book of Falmouth*, published in 1986 to celebrate the town's tercentenary. The historical summary outlined below is drawn in part from that source (Smith 1986) and from the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Town Reconnaissance Report for Falmouth (MHC 1985). The summary is intended to highlight how Falmouth's story was shaped by its landscape, a subject which is worthy of additional comprehensive study.

Initial settlement of Falmouth began about 1660 with the granting of lands to settlers primarily from Barnstable and was named the 'Sehonessett' or 'Succanesset' plantation after the Wampanog village that is referred to in deeds and believed to have been in the vicinity. The initial settlers occupied the strip of land between Salt Pond to the west and Herring Brook and Siders Pond to the east.



Detail, rendered map of the West Falmouth coastline about 1845 (Boyce 1845)

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Little evidence exists describing the settlers' economic activities during this period and how they used the land. However, the evidence suggests that agriculture and husbandry were introduced from the beginning following the practices of the settlements from which the settlers came, including cattle, sheep, and corn agriculture. The salt marsh bay was probably a key source of food for animals as well as being important for shellfish and fishing. Access to the sea was critical for the settlement's transportation and trade needs (the initial settlers are said to have arrived by boat from Barnstable rather than overland). The Europeans probably hunted and fished throughout the area during this early settlement period.

Over a few decades, settlement expanded from the vicinity of Falmouth Village to West Falmouth (1666-68), Woods Hole (1677), North Falmouth (1682), and Hatchville and East Falmouth with the purchase of lands east of the Coonamessett River from the Native Americans (1685). The Town of Falmouth was officially incorporated in 1686. By about 1720, the town's lands were reported to have been "generally run out" (MHC 1985: 7)

Falmouth's population grew slowly but steadily from initial settlement through the mid-1800s. Population by 1764 is thought to have been over 1,000 individuals. In 1776, the population was 1,355. It grew to 1,637 in 1790 and 1,882 in 1800.

During the 18th century agriculture continued to grow with corn, rye, and oats as the principal crops with some wheat and barley. Sheep, cattle, and swine contributed to the agricultural system and hay and salt marsh hay were important for their support. Grist mills were developed on the Coonamessett River in 1719 and Green River about 1767.

Shellfishing and fishing, while important in terms of subsistence during early settlement, began to gain economic importance during the 18th century. Various types of shell fish were exploited by offshore fishermen. Oysters were harvested to the point that due to depleted stocks once extensive oyster beds in Oyster Pond had to be regulated by 1773. Herring continued to be harvested in coastal streams, and mackerel in coastal waters.

Between 1776 and 1830, Falmouth's population nearly doubled, rising from 1355 to 2548. Population peaked in 1850 at 2621 before beginning a slow decline. Settlement continued to be concentrated in villages along the main north-south and east-west roadways in the western and southern areas of the town. At Woods Hole in the southwest, a hamlet developed after about 1800 with increased use of the harbor. In the west, residential development extended along North Shore Road, with a focus at the Friends meetinghouse in West Falmouth and a cluster of houses at North Falmouth.

By 1802, Falmouth had eight mills, most of which were windmills. Corn, rye, oats, and small quantities of wheat and barley were consumed locally, and sold to neighboring towns and the islands. Falmouth agricultural production was one of the highest in Barnstable County, with production figures ranging two to three times the county average. More English hay was cut in Falmouth than in



Detail, rendered map of the coastline Woods Hole to Falmouth Village about 1845 (Boyce 1845)

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any other township in the county. Salt marshes continued to be an important additional source of hay.

Sheep-raising was an important part of local agriculture from early settlement and by 1831, Falmouth was the leading sheep-raising town in Barnstable County with 2,974 animals, a trend that continued into the 1860s. Much of the sheep-raising activity was located in West Falmouth, which had the greatest amount of natural pastureland. Two woolen mills were developed in Falmouth which, by 1845, were the largest manufacturing industries at the time.

In addition to general agriculture and husbandry, Falmouth was the largest regional producer of cordwood in the mid-19th century. Over 5,000 cords were harvested in 1855, nearly 40% of the entire county production. The wood was shipped to Nantucket and other towns less wooded as well as to other locations.

Shipbuilding is reported to have been among the earliest occupations of the early settlers. Small coasting vessels were used for fishing and for trade often carrying lumber to the southern states and Bahamas. But by 1802, 60 vessels were owned by residents of Falmouth, 6 of which were fishing vessels and 54 of which were coasters used for shipping. Of these, 30 were used to ship lumber and cordwood to the southern states and Bahamas in the spring, returning by fall with cargos of cotton, molasses, rice, and sugar.

Whaling became important in the early-mid 19th century, sailing out of Woods Hole. Salt-works lined both Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound. By 1832, Falmouth's 52 works had the third highest production in Barnstable County. As whaling, shipbuilding, and saltmaking developed as important economic activities, the local coastal villages and hamlets grew both on Buzzard's Bay and Nantucket Sound, including North and West Falmouth, Quisset Harbor, a small whaling village at Davis Neck, East Falmouth, and Waquoit. Falmouth's maritime economy peaked in 1837.

Expansion of Falmouth Village continued into the 1850s, as the center remained the primary local commercial focus. Woods Hole continued to grow as a deep water harbor and was further enhanced by the development of the Pacific Guano Company works at Penzance Point about 1859.

Little interior development took place during the mid-19th century, with the only concentration around Coonamesett Pond. A small cluster developed north of the pond, and the East End meetinghouse became the focus of a small crossroads settlement at Sandwich Road/Hatchville Road.

A series of coastal survey maps issued in 1845 and 1846 show the coastal landscape of Falmouth in remarkable detail (Boyce 1845 & 1846). The rendered landscaping clearly show how land was being used at the time, including open water, marshland, open land, shrub land woodland, orchards, pasture, and improved agricultural fields.

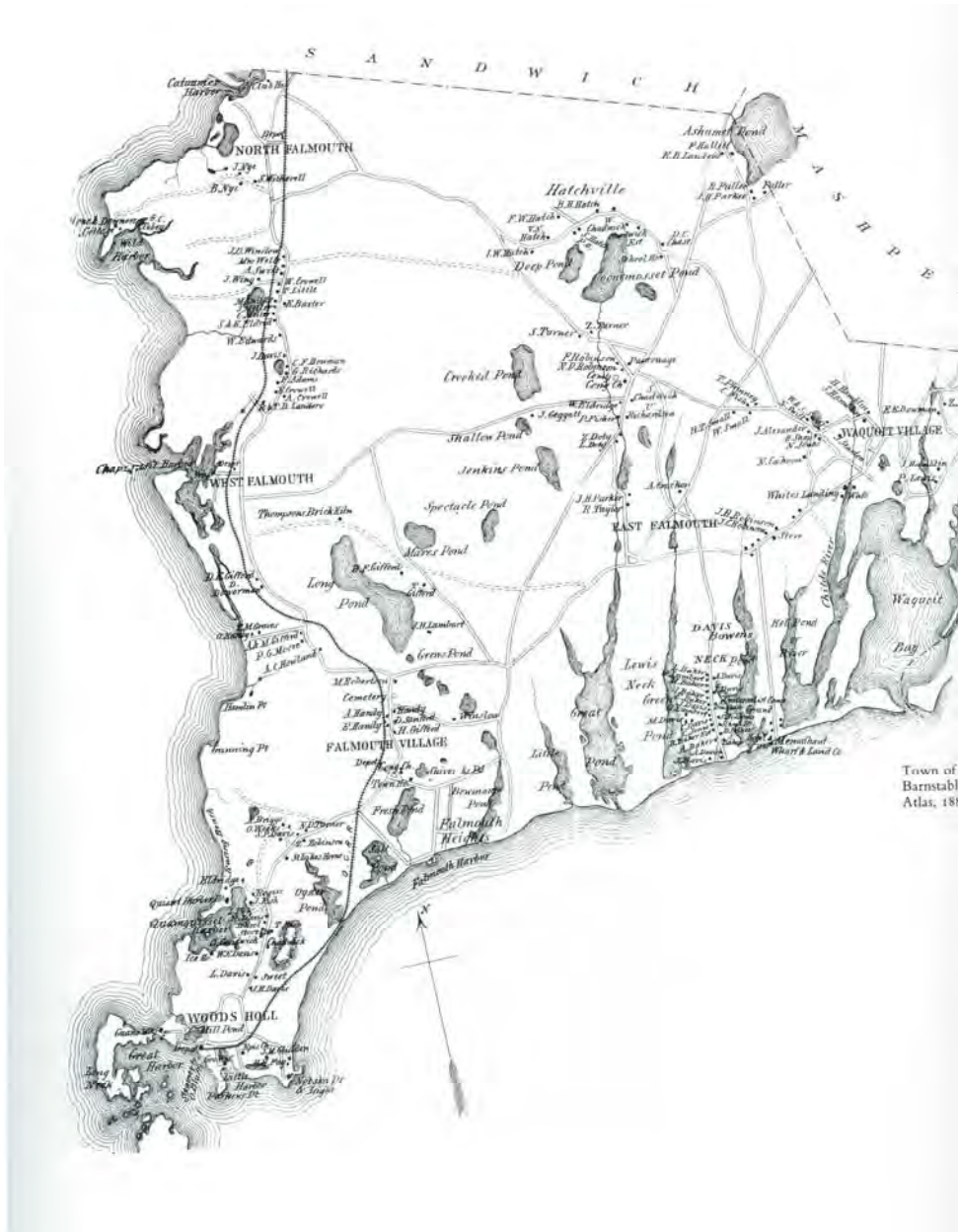
Most of the coastal land appears to have been cleared of woodland, but only distinct parcels in the vicinity of villages and along roadways appear as improved agricultural fields. Villages are clearly defined and buildings marked. A number



Details, rendered map of the coastline Falmouth Village to Waquoit about 1846 (Boyce 1846)

LANDSCAPE HISTORY

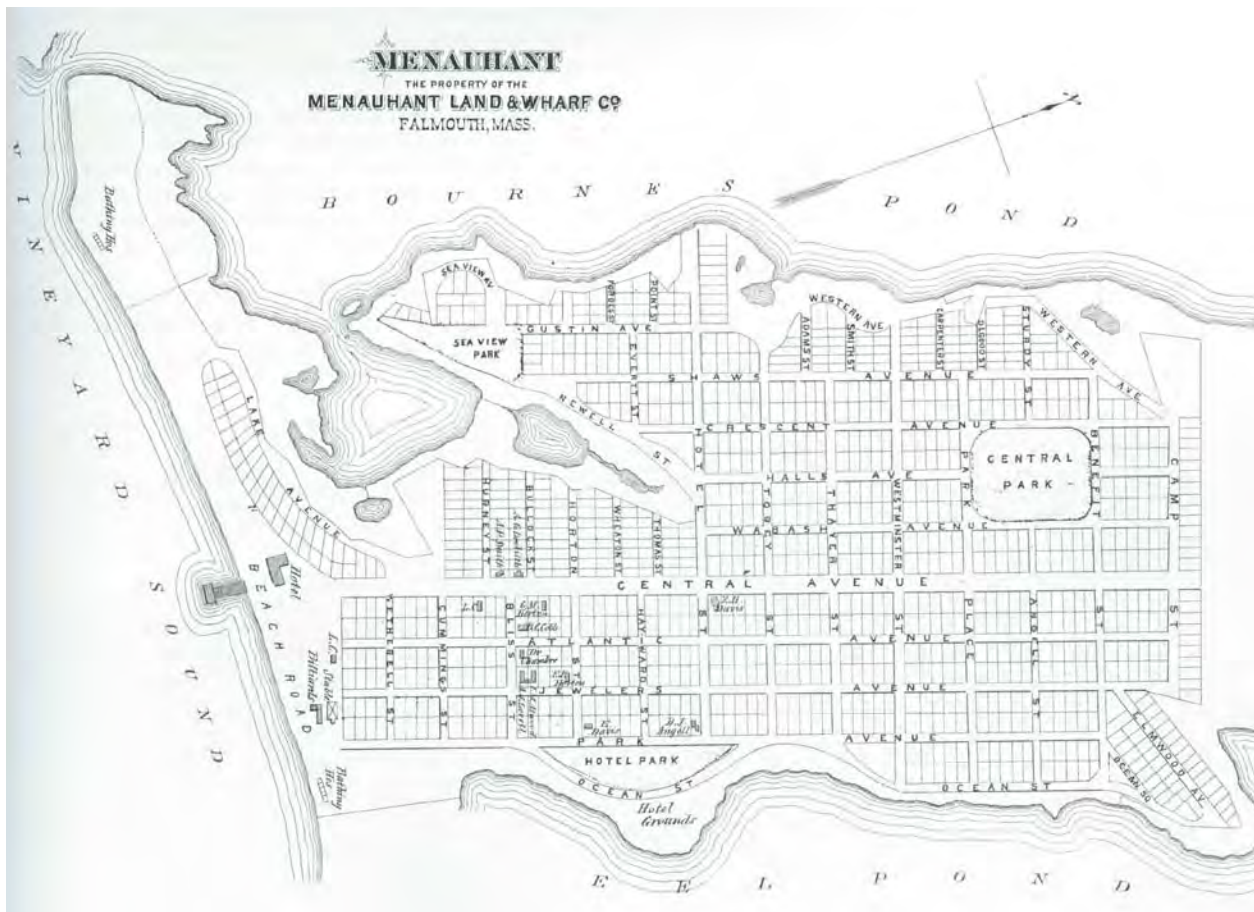
of ponds that are open water today appear as marshland. Back roads and back lots that no longer exist are shown and indicate how land was being used. Overlaying the surveys with current GIS topographic and soil maps would provide interesting information on land use in Falmouth in combination with written documentation of the time.



Town of Falmouth from the Barnstable Atlas of 1880 documenting the landscape prior to development as a summer community (Smith 1986)



Falmouth Heights planned development from the Barnstable County Atlas, 1880 (Smith 1986: 208)



Menauhant planned development from the Barnstable County Atlas, 1880 (Smith 1986: 275)

The Historic Landscape – Growth as a Summer Community

The year 1872 is recognized as a watershed moment in Falmouth's history separating over two hundred years of landscape development based primarily upon agriculture and maritime pursuits from the town's emergence and development as a resort community. In 1872, the Cape Cod Railroad extended a branch line down the coastline from Buzzards Bay Village to Woods Hole harbor to serve the Pacific Guano Company. Construction of the railroad connected Falmouth to the Boston metropolitan area and provided a means by which summer visitors could easily reach the coast to enjoy its beaches, water, and fine summer weather.

The establishment of Falmouth as a summer community transformed the town, its economy, and its landscape. New and different people came. Development patterns changed dramatically away from the focus on the town's historic villages toward the beaches and the coastline.

Falmouth had been considered a prime summering place for Boston's wealthy families since the 1840s. Construction of the railroad, however, facilitated the arrival of large numbers of wealthy and middle class summer residents and vacationers. The town's development can be divided into two broad periods based upon economic and transportation transformation nationwide. Before World War II, the railroad and later the emergence of the automobile provided access primarily to wealthy and upper middle class visitors. After World War II road improvements, interstate highways, and the widespread use of automobiles precipitated a sharp increase in the town's summer population that continues to the present.

Historians identify three distinct types of summer development. The first, beginning in the 1870s, was the development of small summer cottages and cottage communities primarily along the beachfront of Nantucket Sound, most as planned developments around a hotel as their social center. Falmouth Heights (1871) and Menauhant (1878) are examples of this type of development.

Second was the development of large shorefront properties along the Buzzards Bay coastline, accessible to the railroad and historic villages, with large Shingle Style houses. Chapoquoit (1890), Penzance Point (1892), and Megansett (1890) are examples of this.

Third was the development of large estates by individuals on their own land, often purchased as farms, with large Shingle Style or Classical Revival houses on elaborate landscaped properties on the ridges overlooking the bay. The most prominent of these estates were constructed about the turn of the century and located in West Falmouth, Quissett, and Woods Hole, though estates were also constructed in Falmouth Village and along Waquoit Bay.

Established industries were lost during this period as the region's economy was transformed. The old saltworks disappeared, and the guano works were closed in 1888. Most notable, however, was the emergence of Woods Hole as an important scientific community with the establishment of the United States

Fisheries Commission Headquarters in 1884 and the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory in 1888.

Falmouth's population grew substantially in the early twentieth century with the influx of new residents, most as summer homes. The population grew from 2,237 in 1870 to 3,251 in 1905, to 3,500 in 1920, and 6,868 by 1940. The town became the second most populated town in the region, and swelled to an estimated 15,000 people in the peak summer months of July and August. Many of the town's summer colonies had specific regional or professional associations. Worcester residents summered at Falmouth Heights, Brockton residents favored Silver Beach, and Watertown residents came to Megansett. Woods Hole attracted a summer scientific community.

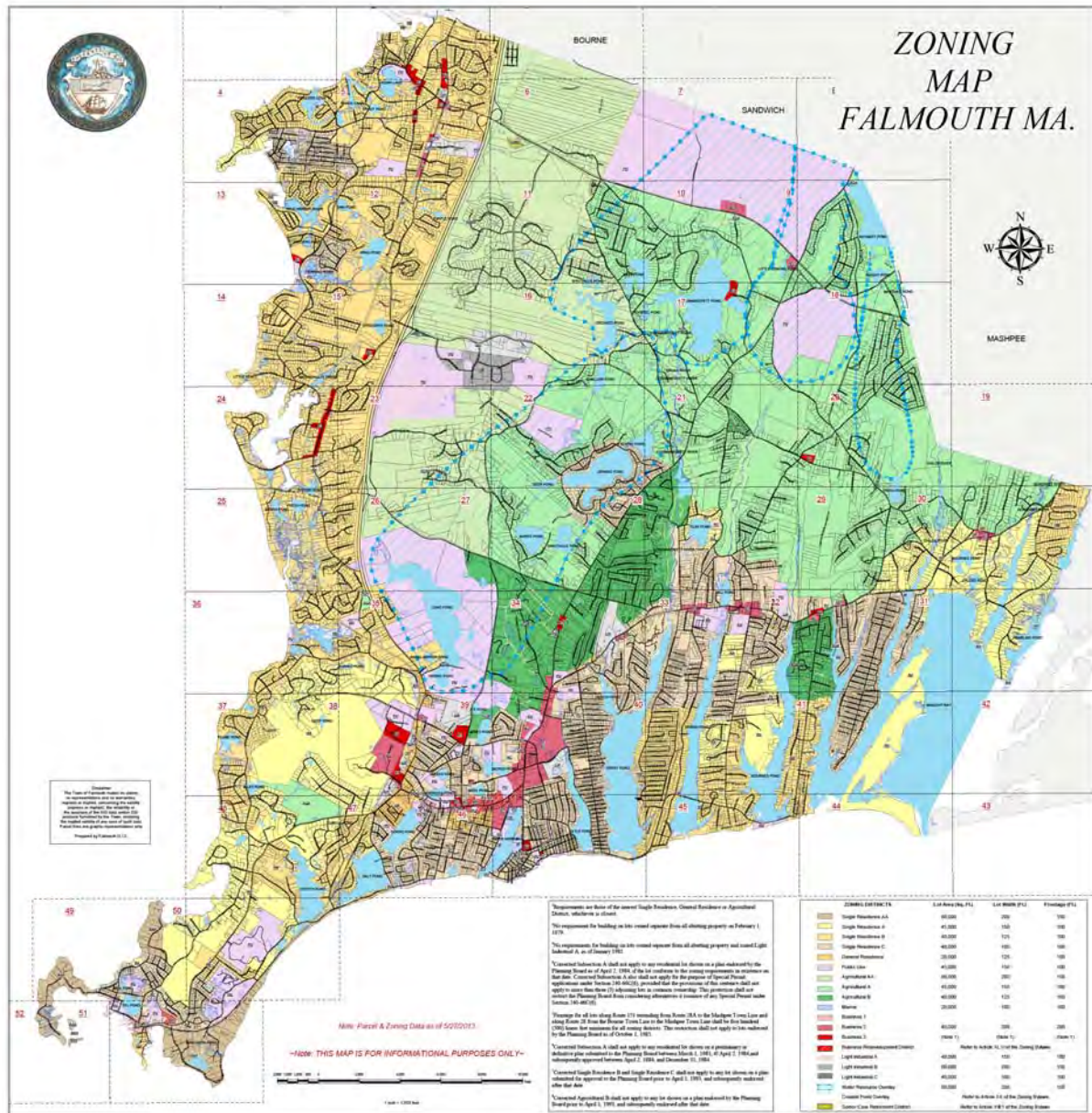
In the early twentieth century, a large component of Falmouth's new permanent residents were Portuguese immigrants who were responsible for the significant expansion of cranberry and strawberry production here. In 1895, Falmouth was the third highest cranberry producer in the county and by 1905, Falmouth was producing 75% of the county's strawberry production and ranked fourth in the state. By 1921, Falmouth was the largest shipping point for strawberries in the state, and by 1930, there were more than 200 individual strawberry growers in the town. The extensive strawberry and cranberry beds transformed the agricultural fields and stream corridors in East and North Falmouth, Hatchville, and Teaticket.

Since World War II, with the rapid growth of the Boston metropolitan area and the significantly increased use of automobiles, Falmouth has grown steadily and dramatically as a summer community of second homes. Most development has been in the form of suburban style subdivisions, first along the coastlines and then farther inland. Along Nantucket Sound, the long, thin peninsulas between the coastal ponds have filled in from Salt Pond to Waquoit Bay with closely packed streets of small suburban homes. Route 28 from Falmouth Village, to Teaticket, to East Falmouth has experienced commercial strip development.

Along Buzzards Bay, the rolling hills have been developed with larger suburban lots with curving roads. The formerly largely treeless landscape has grown into maturing woodlands masking the extent of new development. Large custom homes continue to be built on lots along the bay. Interior Falmouth, on the outwash plain that is now also largely wooded, new subdivisions have been built in the vicinity of Coonamessett, Deep, Crooked, and Jenkins Ponds.

Falmouth's year-round population has grown from 6,868 in 1940 to 15,299 in 1970, 27,597 in 1990, and 32,666 in 2000. Population growth leveled off and declined about 3% between 2000 and 2010, perhaps due to the 2008 recession. The town's population swells to about 60,000 people during the peak summer months. Many of the town's shoreline homes are rental properties used exclusively during the summer season.

The extent of Falmouth's growth and development can be seen in its zoning map, which shows largely single family residences in the coastal areas west and south of Route 28 (various shades of yellow), commercial within and east of Falmouth Village (shades of red), and agricultural areas including large lot



Falmouth’s zoning map provides an indication of development and growth patterns over the past hundred years

subdivisions on the interior (shades of green). Falmouth’s rapid growth over the past sixty years has transformed its landscape into that of a mature suburban community. Many newcomers are affluent retirees who value the town’s appealing character including its historic landscape.

Falmouth’s dramatic growth has provided challenges in the recognition and retention of the community character that people appreciate and have come to the town to enjoy. With the intense development that has occurred, many historic resources have been lost and the character of the historic landscape has dramatically changed. The ongoing recognition of historic building and landscape resources has been an important part of community planning.

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