

# 6.0 HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

## INTRODUCTION

Holden's natural and built environments provide a connection to its past and preserve the historic, architectural, and aesthetic heritage of the Town. The Town's cultural identity is enhanced by its arts community, commitment to preserving local history, and active community groups. Holden still features historic elements dating from every period of its past. Driving through Town, visitors can see pre-colonial landscapes, colonial farm houses, industrial-era mill buildings, farm land dating back to the founding of Holden, and throughout it all, people living and enjoying their daily lives. Such resources play a significant role building a healthy community.

In a Town as rich in historic and cultural resources as Holden, it is imperative to inventory and document these assets in order to provide a framework for preservation. Consequently, this chapter traces the history of the Town, inventories Holden's historic and cultural resources, analyzes past conservation efforts and current conditions, identifies key issues and opportunities for protecting Holden's heritage, and provides recommendations to fulfill the following community goals:

- Preserve and maintain Town-owned and privately-owned historic assets.
- Preserve the community's rich heritage using protective regulatory tools in key areas of Town.
- Ensure there are adequate cultural opportunities for Holden residents of all ages and abilities.

## PRIOR PLANNING AND ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

Residents of Holden have been actively engaged in planning for the conservation and preservation of essential historic and cultural resources for many years. Prior Town planning efforts include the following:

## Master Plan (2008)

The Historic and Cultural Resources Chapter of the 2008 Master Plan provides a condensed chronological history of Holden, an outline of major historic and cultural resource issues, a historic properties inventory, an overview of preservation efforts, and recommendations for protecting the Town's historic and cultural treasures. The recommendations identified in the 2008 Master Plan regarding historical and cultural resources were divided into first and second priority status (Community Preservation Associates, et al., 2008). The completion status of the recommendations and actions from the 2008 Master Plan can be found in the Benchmark Review in the Appendix E.

### First Priority Goals:

- Develop a plan to preserve historic assets and encourage knowledge of Holden's history.

### Second Priority Goals:

- Investigate the creation of historic districts at Jefferson, Quinapoxet, and Chaffinville to supplement the two existing historic districts.

- Review and possibly expand cultural opportunities for youth.
- Protect cultural landscapes around the Red Barn, Alden Laboratories, and historic farms.
- Expand and enhance the Holden Common (Town Hall area).

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### History and Overview

#### Pre-Colonial Period (Before 1675)

The tribes of the Nipmuc Indians were the original inhabitants of Holden and the surrounding southern New England lands between present-day Boston and Springfield. In 1674, a negotiation took place between Daniel Gookin, representing the General Court, and members of the Pakachoge and Tatessit tribes to purchase the land that is now Holden. Establishment of the Town and farms was delayed due to King Phillip's War (1673-1675) until 1683, when Gookin, Captain Daniel Henschman, and a

*Jefferson Mill (Built 1850) on Main Street (CMRPC, 2019)*



group of others set out to begin work on the land. However, continued attacks from local tribes drove away these early pioneers from the area until the early 18th century. (Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1984)

### **Colonial Period (1675-1775)**

By the 1720s, the first permanent settlers came to the eight-square mile area known as “North Worcester.” Limestone was discovered by Jonas Rice of Marlborough, who subsequently set up kilns. Soon afterward, surveys were utilized to divide the land into lots, and four roads were built. A meetinghouse was built near the corner of Main and Highland Streets in 1737. Named after the Honorable Samuel Holden, a London merchant and benefactor of the New England colonies, Holden became a Town in 1741. (Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1984)

There are several landscapes and structures that survive from the Colonial period. According to the Town’s inventory of historic resources, the oldest remaining building is the Rogers House (1733) on Boyden Road. Other Colonial period buildings are included in Table 6 - 1. (Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1984)

### **Federal and Early Industrial Periods (1775-1870)**

A decline in farming followed the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the opening of the west to large-scale agriculture. The early 19th century saw emergence of textile mills, including cotton and woolen mills, on Holden’s many waterways, creating a series of small mill villages within the larger Town. In 1809, the first cotton mill was established on the Quinapoxet River (near the junction of Wachusett and Bullard Streets) by Eleazer Rider & Sons (of West Boylston). The Riders also built several tenement houses and established Holden’s first mill village – Unionville. A second textile mill specializing in dyeing wool and coloring yarn was built by Royal Chaffin in the south part of Holden in 1817. Soon after, other mills developed at Lovellville (1820), North Woods (or Ruralville, 1827), Eagleville (1826), Quinapoxet (1831), Dawsonville (1862), and other locations along Holden’s waterways. (Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1984)

Many of Holden’s historically significant buildings and landscapes date to the Federal and Early Industrial periods. One of Holden’s prominent Federal period (1775-1830) landscapes is the Park Avenue Burying Ground (1826). Other examples of Federal period buildings are included in Table 6 - 1 as well as the full historic inventory in Appendix D.

Mill complexes accompanied by housing and other amenities were constructed in the Early Industrial period (1830-1870) in Holden. The only remaining mill complex, the Jefferson Manufacturing Company on Main Street (1850), stands at Jefferson. There remain many examples of mid-19th century architecture in both vernacular and high styles, which are listed in Table 6 - 1. (Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1984)

### **Late Industrial Period (1870-1915)**

In 1871, the railroad was constructed in Holden and eventually offered stops at Chaffins, Dawson, and North Woods, as well as the Center, Jefferson, and Quinapoxet. The growing immigrant population in Holden (primarily from Ireland, Canada, and Sweden) dominated the manufacturing labor force; in 1885, 40% of the workforce was foreign-born. There are many residential buildings from the late industrial period that remain in Holden. Several prominent late industrial buildings are listed in Table 6 - 1.

### **Early Modern & Modern Periods (1915-present)**

By the end of the 19th century and into the early 20th century, Holden served as a desirable rural retreat with a number of summer hotels, as it was located near an urban area and conveniently on a

*Rogers House (Built 1733) on Boyden Road (CMRPC, 2019)*



Table 6 - 1: Major Historic Properties in Holden by Time Period (MACRIS, 2018)

Historic Period	Structure/Landscape	Location	Year
Colonial Period (1675-1775)	Rogers House	Boyden Road	1733
	Old Burying Ground	Main Street	1742
	Hancock Common	Main Street	1750
	Jonathan Lovell Farm Barn	Malden Street	1752
	Abbott Tavern	Reservoir Street	1763
	Thomas Davis House	Mason Road	1770
	Elisha Hubbard Farm	Wachusett Street	1775
Federal Period (1775-1830)	Davis-Flagg House	Main Street	1779
	First Congregational Church	Main Street	1789
	Nathan Chaffin House	Salisbury Street	1793
	Blake Farm	South Road	1800
	Bassett-Brewer House	Union Street	1813
	Old First Baptist Church	Highland Street	1819
	Park Avenue Burying Ground	Park Avenue	1826
Early Industrial Period (1830-1870)	Jefferson Manufacturing Company	Main Street	1850
	Miles Funeral Home	Main Street	1854
	Grove Cemetery	Main Street	1854
	Eagle Lake Woolen Company Worker Housing	Jefferson	1860s
	St. Mary's Cemetery	Main Street	1867
Late Industrial Period (1870-1915)	Charles L. Hendricks House	Walnut Street	1884
	Damon Memorial Building	Highland Street	1888
	Charles Pomeroy House	Walnut Street	1903
	William Howe Warren House	Maple Street	1910
	Marjery A. Rice School	Phillips Road	1911
	Benjamin H. Robbins House	Highland Street	1913
Early Modern & Modern Periods (1915-present)	Dr. Gardner Cobb House	Stone House Hill Road	1920
	William H. George House	Walnut Terrace	1937
	River Street Bridges	River Street	1937
	Princeton Street Bridge	Princeton Street	1937
	Alden Laboratories Rotating Test Boom Control House	Shrewsbury Street	1937

railroad line. Beginning in 1892, the Metropolitan District Commission began acquiring lands in Holden to protect the Wachusett Reservoir for drinking water supply. While several mills stood on these lands, the buildings were slowly demolished and the lands preserved as open space. In 2019, only the Jefferson Mill Village remains. The area consists of several historic sites, including the original mill building, manufacturing buildings, mill

housing, Catholic Church and cemetery, and mill owner houses. There are still remnants of the mill buildings and dams at 10 other mill sites in Town. Several notable examples of 1920s-1940s architecture remain, as well as several bridges that were constructed over the Quinapoxet River by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s.

In the 20th century, Holden began to evolve into a commuter town and bedroom community for Worcester and Boston as the community's agricultural activity declined along with the mill industry. Contributing to this trend was the construction of US Interstate 190, located east of Holden. In late 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Holden became a suburb and saw the demolition of many residential properties along Route 122A to make way for newer, commercial structures. Demolition has slowed since the 1970s. The Chaffins School was replaced by the electric department building, and a medical arts building replaced an 18th century home on Boyden Road. (Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1984)

### Historic Resources Inventory

A complete inventory of the Town's historic structures is stored in the Jane Wilson Local History Room of the Gale Free Library, and can be found in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), maintained electronically by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. A complete copy of Holden's inventory of historic resources

*Holden Center Historic District Welcome Sign (CMRPC, 2019)*

from MACRIS is included in Appendix D. Notable historic resources within Holden are included in Table 6 - 2, with some represented in Map 6 - 1.

### Local Historic Districts

Holden has established two local historic districts (LHDs) in accordance with the Historic District Act and Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 40C. (MHC, 2003) Local historic districts have three major purposes as stated in MGL Chapter 40C: to preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the Commonwealth and its cities and towns; to maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places; and to encourage new designs compatible with existing buildings in the district. The two districts include Holden Center Historic District and Boyden Road Historic District. (MHC, 2003)

### Holden Center Historic District

The Holden Center Local Historic District is located along Main Street at the intersection of Routes 122A and 31, starting at Miles Funeral Home and



Table 6 - 2 Major Historic Resources in Holden (MACRIS, 2018)

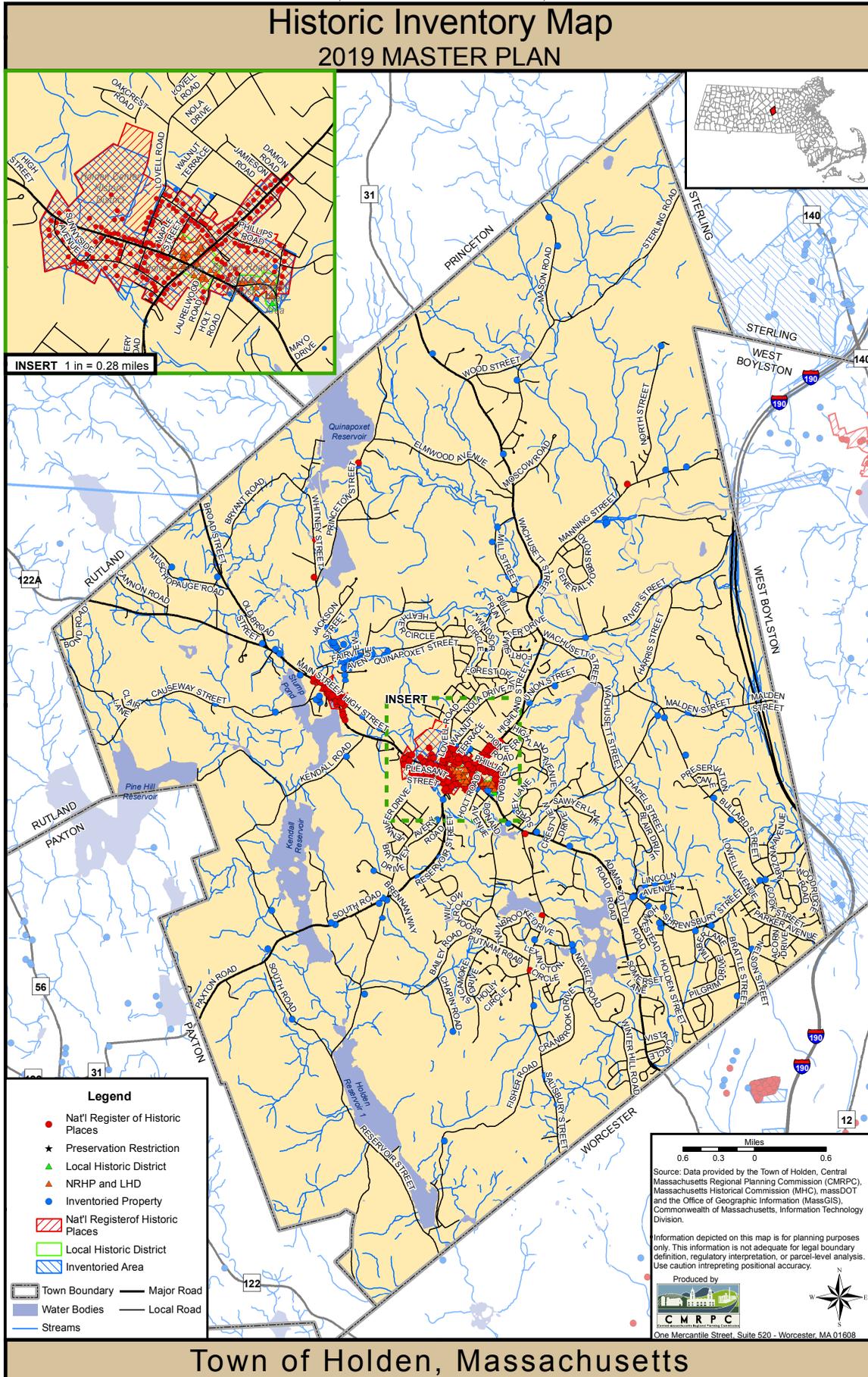
<b>Historic Structures</b>	Old Meeting House Site Holden Park Bandstand	Hancock Common Jefferson Manufacturing Company	Quabbin Aqueduct Reservoir Street Bridge
<b>Historic Areas</b>	Holden Center Jefferson Mill Village	Holden Center Local Historic District Boyden Road Local Historic District	Eagleville Historic District
<b>Historic Buildings (located on the following streets)</b>	Avery Road Bascom Parkway Boyden Road Brattle Street Bullard Street Candlewood Drive Causeway Street Chapel Street Chapin Road Davis Way Deane Ave Doyle Road Fairview Ave Fruit Street High Street Highland Street Hilltop Ave Holden St	Kendall Road Laurelwood Street Lincoln Ave Lovell Road Main Street Malden Street Manning Street Maple Street Mason Road Mayo Drive Mill Street Mixer Road Muschopauge Road Newell Road North Street Park Ave Parker Ave Parsons Road Phillips Road	Pleasant Street Preservation Lane Princeton Street Quinapoxet Street Reservoir Street River Street Salisbury Street Shrewsbury Street South Road Spring Street Stone House Hill Road Sunnyside Ave Union Street Wachusett Street Walnut Street Walnut Terrace Whitney Street Woodland Road
<b>Monuments</b>	Knights Templar Monument Alonzo Knopp Learned Tablet Hancock Common Marker	Drinking Fountain at Grove Street Cemetery Quinapoxet Dam Marker Roll of Honor Memorial	WWI and WWII Monument
<b>Historic Archaeological Sites</b>	Canada Mills Dawson Mill Fairbanks/Chaffins Mill	Lovellville Mill Quinapoxet Mill Shoddy Mill	Unionville Mill
<b>Burial Grounds</b>	Old Burying Ground Park Avenue Burying Ground	Grove Cemetery Saint Mary's Cemetery	

the Hendricks House and extending to the “Old Burial Ground” and the First Baptist Church. This district also runs along Highland Street from the Damon Memorial Library and the Butler House to the Old Burial Ground and the Mobil Station. Established

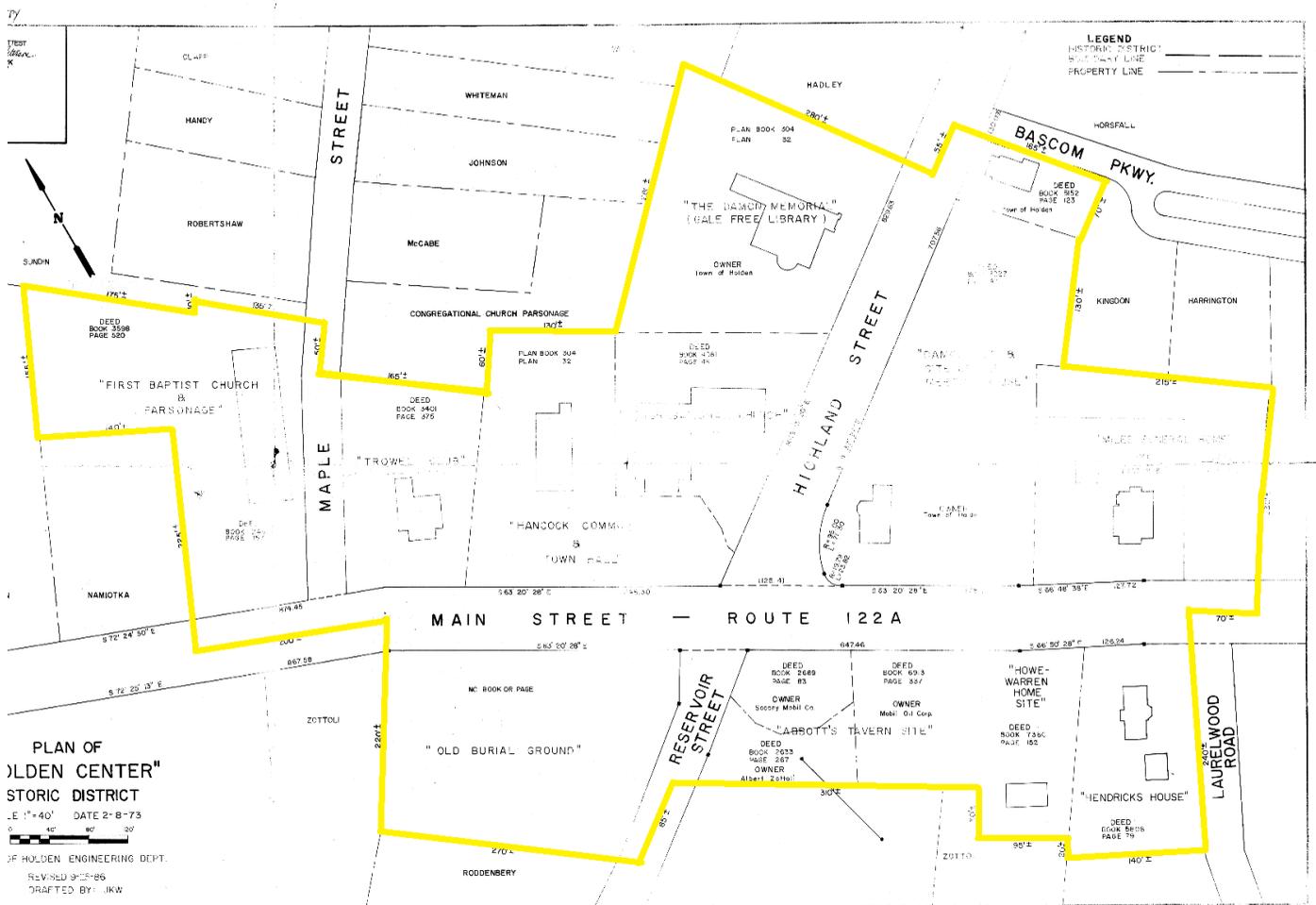
as a local historic district in 1973, the original district included nine buildings. In 1977 the district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and in 1995 it was expanded to incorporate residential portions of the village significant to

Map 6 - 1: Historic Inventory

# Historic Inventory Map 2019 MASTER PLAN



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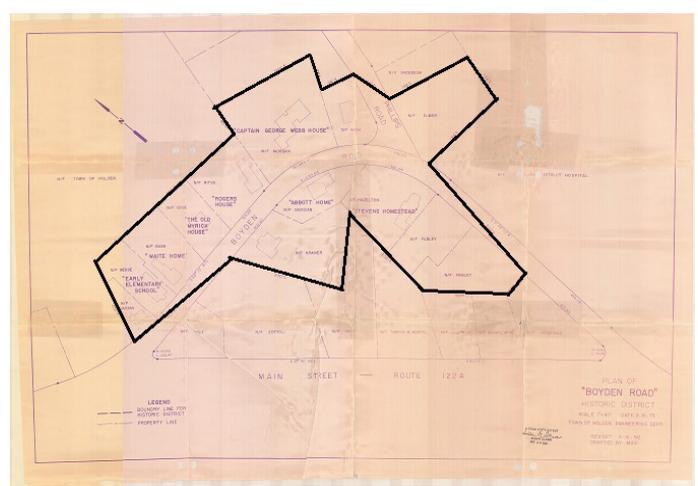
Holden’s history. The district currently consists of 17 historic properties. Notable properties include the 1836 Town Hall, the 1789 First Congregational Church, the 1835 First Baptist Church, the 1880 Old Post Office, and the 1759 Old Burial Ground.

**Boyden Road Historic District**

The Boyden Road Local Historic District encompasses all of Boyden Road. This area was established as a local historic district in 1990. A notable property includes the Rogers House (28 Boyden Road). Rogers House is thought to be the oldest building in Holden (est. sometime before 1733) and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Other properties include the Early Elementary School (8 Boyden Road), the Waite Home (12 Boyden Road), the Old Myrick House (20 Boyden Road), Captain George Webb House (36 Boyden Road), Boyden House (61 Boyden Road), Stevens Homestead (51 Boyden Road), Abbott Home (35 Boyden Road), as well as residences at 25 and 42 Boyden Road.

**Local Historic District Guidelines**

As outlined by the State, local historic districts are intended to “preserve the outward appearance and harmonious exterior relationships of groups of buildings, structures, and site.” The Holden Historic District Commission promotes the preservation and protection of the historic appearance and characteristics of buildings and grounds within



its two districts. Its purview includes alteration, rebuilding, reconstruction, restoration, removal, or demolition. Original materials and features are to be kept and not changed. If a replacement is necessary it should match the original in material and design. Guidelines include the following:

- No artificial siding is to be allowed including, but not limited to vinyl, aluminum, asphalt and artificial brick.
- No vinyl or aluminum clad windows are to replace wood windows.
- New openings on visible facades are discouraged except to restore original or pre-existing conditions.
- Restoration of missing design features should be documented by photographic, physical or historical evidence.
- Deteriorated architectural features are to be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible.
- Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures are to be done in such a manner that the essential form and integrity of the structure would not be unimpaired.
- The use of new materials not originally found on the property is discouraged.
- The removal of artificial siding is strongly encouraged.

Further instructions for property owners contemplating exterior changes to a property within either historic district can be accessed by consulting the Guide to Holden's Historic Districts (Holden Historic District Commission) or by contacting the Town of Holden Director of Office of Planning and Development to discuss proposed changes.

### **National Register Historic Districts**

It is essential to know that there are two kinds of historic districts in Massachusetts, Local Historic Districts and National Register Districts. Although the same area may be designated as both a local historic district and a National Register District,

there are substantial differences between the designations. The National Register of Historic Places is a listing of buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts significant in our nation's history, culture, architecture or archaeology and that are worthy of preservation. It is a Federal designation, administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Massachusetts Historical Commission as the State Historic Preservation Office. Listing in the National Register provides formal recognition of the property's significance, potential tax incentives for owners of income-producing property, and limited protection from state or federally funded, licensed, or assisted projects. National Register listing in no way limits the owner's use of the property, and places absolutely no restrictions or conditions on changes made by a private property owner unless there is state or federal involvement in a project, or unless some other regional and/or local regulation is in effect. Nominations to the National Register are usually initiated by a property owner or by the local historical commission, and do not require any local government approval. A local historic district, on the other hand, is established locally through town meeting or city council vote. It provides a regulatory review process for all changes to exterior architectural features visible from a public way. (MHC, 2003)

The Town of Holden established two National Register Historic Districts and listed several individual properties on the National Register of Historic Places, in addition to the properties included in the two Local Historic Districts. In 1995, a 290-property National Register District was created along Highland, Main, Reservoir, Pleasant, and Walnut Streets, and Woodland, Phillips, and Lovell Roads. The two local historic districts, Holden Center and Boyden Road, lie within the boundary of this National Register District. In 2010, the Eagleville Historic District, which encompasses a historic mill village, was also listed on the National Register. The individual properties in Holden listed on the National Register include four farms: the Brown-Davis-Frost Farm (Whitney Street, 1995), Paddock Farm (Salisbury Street, 1996), Stony Farm (Salisbury Street, 1995), and the Willard-

Fisk Farm (Whitney Street, 1996). The two other properties are houses: the Hubbard-Dawson House (Main Street, 1995), and the Manning-Ball House (Manning Street, 1995).

## Cultural Destinations

### Holden Common

Originally laid out in 1750 as a linear common, as opposed to a typical square-shaped Town green, Holden or “Hancock” Common remains an integral part of the Town as the central location for community activities and leisure (Map 6-2). Over the years, the widening of Main Street through several highway improvement projects eroded the size of the Common; however, its original configuration of civic and religious buildings and lines of trees remain. Numerous activities and events are hosted on the Common throughout the year including the annual Holden Days celebration in August.

### Gale Free Library and Jane Wilson Local History Room

Gifted to the Town in 1888 by Samuel C. and Susan Damon Gale as both a library and high school, the Library remains not only historically significant but also a popular community space for residents. Prior to the Library’s construction, Holden residents had to join the local library association for a fee and borrow books from a small collection housed at Town Hall. Located at 23 Highland Street, the Romanesque style building, was designed by Stephen C. Earle, architect of the Worcester Art Museum. It was constructed by local craftspeople using Holden granite from a quarry on Kendall Road and brown sandstone from Longmeadow, Massachusetts for the sills, lintels, and arches. In 1926 the High school moved into its own facility.

The Local History Room, organized by (former) library director Jane A. Wilson contains vital records and books documenting Holden’s history, including Holden’s historic resource inventory, as well as burial information for three of the Town’s four cemeteries. The Friends of Gale Free Library (FGFL) was founded in 1989 to support the Library through a variety of fundraising projects, including memberships, special activities, and book sales designed to supplement Town appropriations .



*Gale Free Public Library (1888) on Highland Street (CMRPC, 2019)*

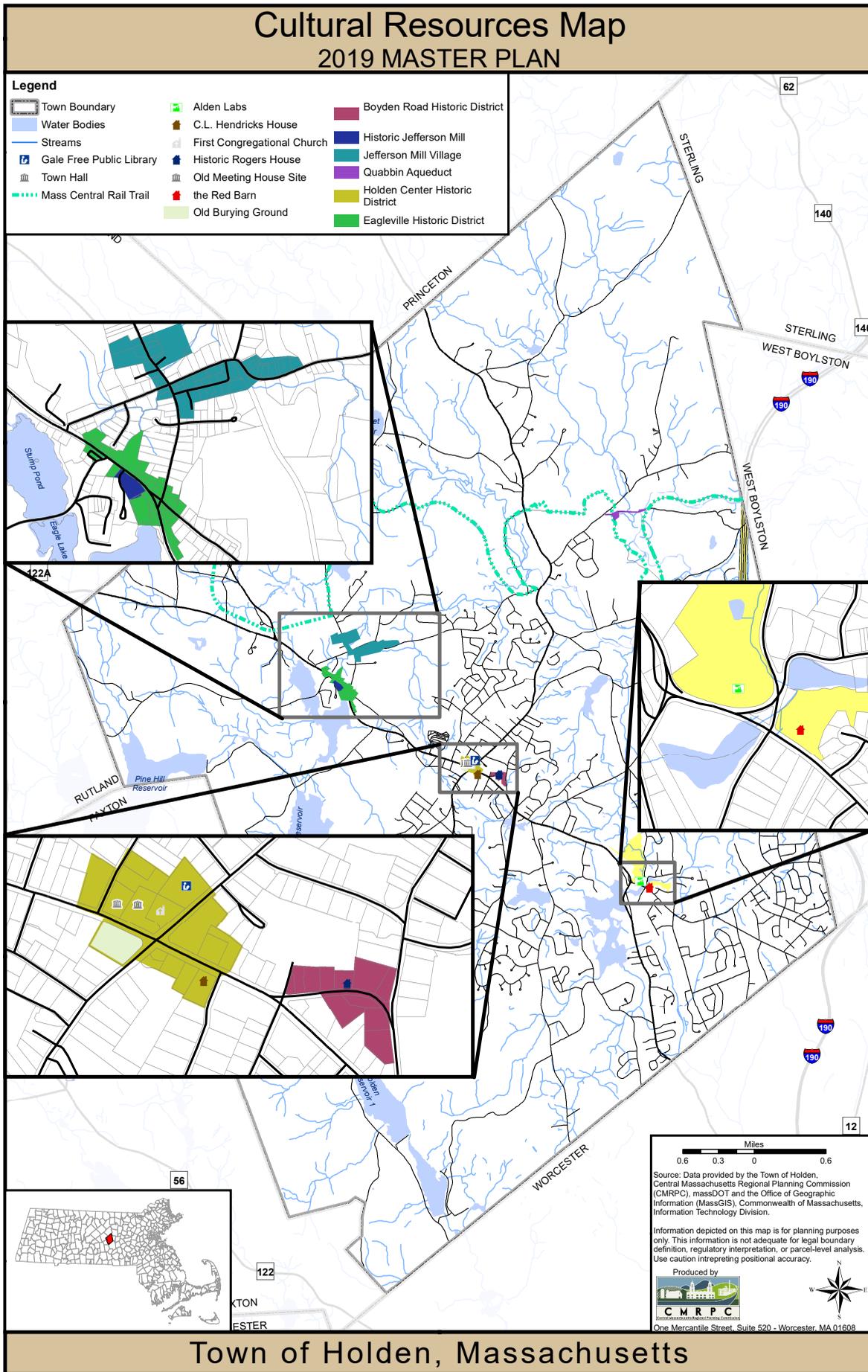
### C.L. Hendrick House

The historic Hendricks House at 1157 Main Street currently serves as the headquarters for the Holden Historical Society. It is the primary repository of Holden-related artifacts and memorabilia. The house was originally built for Charles L. Hendricks and his family in 1884 and remained in the Hendricks family until the property was purchased by the Town in 1975. At the 1975 Annual Town Meeting in Holden, voters appropriated funds to purchase the property of Miss Jennie L. Hendricks for use as a historic site.

The house is located at the center of Town and just outside the boundaries of the Holden Center Historic District. The exterior of the house and barn remain fundamentally unaltered since their construction in 1884-1885. The Holden Historical Commission has been entrusted to manage the property and determine best practices for restoration. With guidance from the Commission, *C.L. Hendrick House (1884) on Main Street (CMRPC, 2019)*



Map 6 - 2: Cultural Resources



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members of the Holden Historical Society, other organizations, and individuals have helped restore the property, holding exhibits, and conducting tours. The Hendricks House is intended to be a visible and important reminder of Holden's past.

### The Red Barn

The Fairbanks Barn, commonly known as the "Red Barn," is maintained by the Friends of the Red Barn, Inc., which sponsors activities and events promoting an understanding of New England's agricultural history. Located on Shrewsbury Street at the intersection of Wachusett Street, the barn was built in the mid-19th century for Winslow Fairbanks on Fairbanks Farm where he lived with his family. The farm remained in the family for two generations and was considered among the best and most productive farms in Holden.

The farm was acquired by Worcester Polytechnic Institute in the 1920s and the barn was used for storage by Alden Laboratories. Meanwhile, the nearby farmhouse served as housing for Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) Civil Engineering students attending their summer programs until the building was demolished in approximately 1938. In 1994, WPI sold 14.6 acres of the farm to Cleland Blair, Sr., a developer in Rutland who subsequently

subdivided part of the land for houses. In 2000, Blair gave the barn and 7.7 acres to the Friends of the Red Barn, Inc. Today, the Red Barn and its grounds are host to fun and educational events sponsored by the Friends of the Red Barn, such as Farm Days, which are free and open to the public .

### Springdale Mill Historic Site

This site is located on the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) just west of the I-190 bridge in Holden. The historic mill site offers a self-guided tour with a brochure and markings along the trail to follow. This site was once a thriving woolen mill located at the end of Springdale Road and it includes the remains of a mill-workers' village. A Springdale Mill Celebration is held annually each September at the site after a short parade led by the Wachusett Greenways MCRT train engine. This family-friendly event features live music, crafts, activities, and food. Visitors to the historic mill site are asked to stay on the trail and off the stones, attend to younger children, park or walk bikes, and not to leave anything at the site or remove anything from the site.



Fairbanks Barn (the "Red Barn") (CMRPC, 2019)

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Preservation and maintenance of Holden's historic properties and cultural destinations is an ongoing challenge for residents, but an imperative battle to fight. Particularly in terms of funding, many small communities struggle to allocate resources to protect local historic and cultural treasures. There are many tools that municipalities can take advantage of to provide supplemental assistance in ensuring historic and cultural resources are preserved for future generations. The Town of Holden has an active and engaged community that should consider various opportunities for the Town to address historical and cultural preservation issues.

The Master Plan Update process offered multiple opportunities for the Holden community to contribute input on how they value their Town's historic and cultural resources. Several themes emerged from outreach efforts:

The need to highlight the breadth of cultural resources available.

Continued protection of Town favorites such as Eagle Lake, Gale Free Library, the Mass Central Rail Trail, and the Red Barn.

Regular maintenance and improvements.



Springdale Mill Celebration Bicycle Race 2014, (Courtesy of Wachusett Greenways)

### Community Planning Tools Community Preservation Act

Codified as Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 44B, the Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a valuable tool for communities invested in protecting their open space and historic sites, creating affordable housing, and developing outdoor recreational facilities. CPA funds are generated through two sources: a voter-approved surcharge of up to 3% on annual real estate taxes, and an annual disbursement from the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund administered by the Department of Revenue, which distributes funds each November to communities that have adopted CPA. At least 10% of the annual revenues must be used for each of the three core areas: open space, historic resource, and affordable housing. The remaining 70% can be used for any combination of the previously described uses and for recreational uses. Municipalities must adopt CPA by ballot referendum. Upon adoption of the Act, the community creates a local Community Preservation Coalition (CPC) to make recommendations on CPA projects to the Town's legislative body (for Holden this would be Town Meeting).

The Town of Holden attempted to pass the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in 2004 but it was voted down at Town Meeting. CPA remains a strategic means of generating funding to protect important natural, cultural, and historic resources. It is recommended that the Town consider attempting to pass CPA again, as Towns that have adopted CPA find it to be a valuable funding source for many heritage landscape projects. The large number and variety of CPA projects across the state makes this tool worthy of re-consideration. As of 2018, seven communities in the CMRPC region have adopted Community Preservation Act, including Sturbridge, West Boylston, Northborough, Northbridge, Upton, Grafton, and Mendon. Hundreds of projects in the aforementioned Towns have been funded since 2001 using funds allocated from CPA. Examples of projects include the restoration of a roof on Old Town Hall in Grafton, refurbishing old tennis courts in Mendon, restoring and preserving permanent Town records that date back to 1733 in Sturbridge, and historic cemetery preservation in West

Boylston. A full list of completed projects utilizing CPA funds in Massachusetts can be viewed using the Community Preservation Projects Database on the Community Preservation Coalition website. (Community Preservation Coalition, 2019)

### Demolition Delay Bylaw

Demolition delay ordinances or bylaws are tools for communities to protect historic buildings and structures. Enacted by a majority vote at Town Meeting, a demolition delay ordinance or bylaw provides a review procedure requiring a delay in the demolition of historically significant buildings. This process provides a time period in which Towns can consider alternatives to demolition of historic buildings and structures. During this process of establishing a demolition delay bylaw, the Local Historical Commission collaborates with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) to develop a bylaw that would appropriately fit the Town's needs. The Local Historical Commission should also work with other local groups to coordinate public education outreach and widely publicize the advantages of a demolition delay bylaw to the community. Typically, demolition delay bylaws apply to structures that were built over 50 years ago. The most common delay of demolition is six months, although many communities have discovered that a 1-year delay is more effective.

The Demolition Delay Bylaw is a tool that can help protect historic

structures within the Boyden Road Historic District, the Holden Center Historic District, and other historically significant buildings throughout the Town. In order to ensure adequate protection of the community's historic assets, the Town should explore the adoption of a Demolition Delay Bylaw that will extend time for the consideration of alternatives to demolition.

### Historic Districts

National Register Districts and Local Historic Districts are both effective tools for helping with historic preservation in communities, but there are distinct differences between the two types of districts. A National Register District is a part of the National Register of Historic Places, which is a list of the individual buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts deemed important in American history,

culture, architecture, or archaeology. A National Register District is a federal designation and provides national recognition that the area is significant to the history of the community, state, or nation. A property listed in the National Register of Historic Places does not limit the way the owner handles their property, as long as there is no state or federal involvement in a project and no pertinent local or regional regulations. National Register Districts in Holden as of 2019 include Holden Center Historic District and Eagleville Historic District. The Town is encouraged to identify additional potential National Register listings.

### CPA Example Using Holden Tax Rate

A home is assessed at \$380,000.

After subtracting the first \$100,000 in residential property value (assuming the community has adopted this optional and very popular SPC exemption), the homeowner's net value to be surcharged equals \$280,000.

After applying the FY2019 tax rate of \$17.45 per \$1,000, the amount subject to the CPA surcharge would be about \$4,900.

With a 1.5% CPA surcharge applied, the CPA surcharge for this homeowner would be approximately \$73 per year. This \$73 would be transferred to the municipality's Community Preservation fund by the Town Accountant.

Local Historic Districts also recognize the historical importance of a property to a community; however, these districts are much more effective at preventing changes than National Register Districts. If a property owner wishes to make changes to exterior architectural features visible to public view, then a locally appointed Historic District Commission must review the proposed changes. A public hearing is held by the Historic District Commission in order to determine whether the changes are appropriate. To assist property owners in Local Historic Districts, many Historic District Commissions choose to prepare Historic District Design Guidelines. The two existing local

historic districts in Holden have a Historic District Commission and Design Guidelines (Holden Historic District Commission) to promote thoughtful consideration of exterior changes for property owners. The Town should explore other areas of the Town for potential creation of additional local historic districts to supplement the two existing districts.

There is currently no comprehensive funding plan for maintenance of historically significant properties within the Boyden Road Historic District and the Holden Center Historic District. In order to ensure adequate funds are allocated to help preserve these historic and cultural resources, it is recommended that a plan be created and implemented to address impending maintenance and repair issues. While maintenance is generally approached on an “as needed” basis, preventative planning that anticipates repair can result in thoughtful decision-making and substantial savings.



Starbard building historical plaque. (CMRPC, 2019)

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION ITEMS

The Master Plan recommends the following action items based on the goals and objectives crafted with careful consideration of the public outreach results, analysis of current conditions, and progress achieved since 2008. The action items accompanying the objectives will also be reflected in the Implementation Chapter (Chapter 11).

## CAPITAL ITEMS

Implement future maintenance funding plan for historically significant properties within the two historic districts

Goal 6.1: Preserve and maintain Town-owned and privately-owned historic assets.

Objective 6.1.1: Evaluate, prioritize, and fund maintenance and preservation of historic structures using timely and proactive measures.

- **Action Item 6.1.1.1:** Develop and implement a plan outlining routine maintenance activities and funding sources for Town-owned historic properties.
- **Action Item 6.1.1.2:** Seek public and private funding to enhance maintenance and preservation of historic resources.
- **Action Item 6.1.1.3:** Implement annual Town budget item to address maintenance of Town buildings within the Holden Center Historic District.
- **Action Item 6.1.1.4:** Budget annual maintenance funding for the center of Holden to keep it historically appropriate and economically viable.
- **Action Item 6.1.1.5:** Expand green spaces in the Town Common area.

Objective 6.1.2: Utilize zoning, regulatory, and legislative resources to enhance preservation efforts.

- **Action Item 6.1.2.1:** Prepare zoning bylaw amendments and design guidelines to ensure zoning districts protect historic structures in terms of uses, scale, placement, and design.
- **Action Item 6.1.2.2:** Educate Town leaders on the significance of historic preservation and ways to address preservation issues.

Objective 6.1.3: Encourage greater collaboration between local preservation groups.

- **Action Item 6.1.3.1:** Develop formal communication channels with and between local preservation groups to ensure awareness of current issues and activities in Holden, including routine distribution of meeting agendas and minutes, scheduling of occasional group meetings to share resources and ideas, and development of joint activities.
- **Action Item 6.1.3.2:** Work with regional, state, and national preservation groups such as Preservation Massachusetts, Inc. and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to seek out technical and financial assistance on preservation issues.
- **Action Item 6.1.3.3:** Pursue partnerships with local college and university programs that could provide preservation assistance to the Town.

Goal 6.2: Preserve the community's rich heritage using protective regulatory tools in key areas of Town.

Objective 6.2.1: Ensure protection of historically significant structures located outside of the protective boundaries of the Town's historic districts.

- **Action Item 6.2.1.1:** Explore adoption of a Demolition Delay Ordinance or Bylaw to protect architecturally and historically significant buildings from demolition.

- **Action Item 6.2.1.2:** Explore the adoption of Community Preservation Act (CPA) as a sustainable funding source.

Objective 6.2.2: Capitalize on Holden’s existing local historic districts and investigate the creation of new historic districts.

- **Action Item 6.2.2.1:** Initiate a public process to establish Local Historic Districts at Jefferson, Quinapoxet, and Chaffinville to supplement the Town’s two existing historic districts.
- **Action Item 6.2.2.2:** Build awareness of Local Historic District (LHD) benefits.
- **Action Item 6.2.2.3:** Encourage property owners in the two historic districts to consult with the Holden Historic District Commission prior to making facade changes.

Objective 6.2.3: Preserve the scenic, historic, and aesthetic characteristics of the Town’s public right-of-way.

- **Action Item 6.2.3.1:** Explore the adoption of a Scenic Roads Bylaw that will help the Town maintain and enhance its small-Town character.

Goal 6.3: Ensure there are adequate cultural opportunities for Holden residents of all ages and abilities.

Objective 6.3.1: Review and expand cultural opportunities for youth.

- **Action Item 6.3.1.1:** Establish a Town committee with youth representation to review cultural opportunities such as arts education, special events and programs, public art, or talks on local history.

Objective 6.3.2: Ensure cultural landscapes in Holden are thoroughly protected.

- **Action Item 6.3.2.1:** Explore bylaws to preserve cultural landscapes such as the Red Barn, Alden

Laboratories, and historic farms (e.g., Scenic Vista Protection Bylaw, Scenic Overlay District Zoning, Corridor Protection Overlay District Zoning, Shade Tree Act Bylaw).

Objective 6.3.3: Expand community outreach initiatives related to the Town’s cultural and historic resources.

- **Action Item 6.3.3.1:** Partner with the school department to involve Holden Public Schools in education programs on historic preservation.
- **Action Item 6.3.3.2:** Consider developing heritage education initiatives, such as guided community tours, history days, and historic house tours to attract visitors and build appreciation for local history and culture.
- **Action Item 6.3.3.3:** Continue to promote local history and culture at special Town events.

Objective 6.3.4: Provide efficient public access to historic resources information.

- **Action Item 6.3.4.1:** Provide a link on the Town of Holden website to the Town’s existing historic resource inventory.
- **Action Item 6.3.4.2:** Make information on Holden’s cultural and historic character, districts, cemeteries, and other heritage assets widely available to residents and visitors in formats that are attractive and easy to understand.
- **Action Item 6.3.4.3:** Identify and prioritize additional historic sites to be included in the National Registry of Historic Places.
- **Action Item 6.3.4.4:** Develop a comprehensive database of historic resources that includes local historic districts, National Register properties, and other inventoried properties, and integrate the database with Holden’s Geographic Information System (GIS) to be made accessible for other public uses.
- **Action Item 6.3.4.5:** Develop branded wayfinding and signage to promote the Town’s historic and cultural assets.

