

## 5. Goals and Objectives

The issues and needs expressed by Bolton citizens in the previous section now must be translated into goals and objectives and into a plan of action. The goals stated here express the *long-term* vision for historic preservation in Bolton, while the objectives are more specific, measurable steps to reach those goals. Chapter 7 of this plan includes a more detailed action plan for implementing these goals and objectives during the next five years.

*The overall goal of historic preservation efforts in Bolton is to preserve the town's historic and rural character as the town continues to change.*

This is the overreaching vision for the town and for this study, and all other goals are subordinate to it. Towns such as Bolton that are in the path of urban sprawl have enormous odds to overcome in preventing their complete suburbanization. However, it can be done, and adequate planning is the first step in making it happen.

During the course of this study, town residents expressed a wide range of concerns and preferences, some very specific and many very general. In this section and in the Action Plan, these various suggestions have been organized into a coherent plan of action that can be implemented by the Town and by private organizations.

The goals are organized into the same five categories as in the previous section, to provide a logical and parallel construction to the report.

### 5.1 Survey and Planning Goals

In order to protect Bolton's heritage, it is first necessary to know where historic sites exist and their significance. The goals for survey and planning activities in town are to complete the inventory of the European settlement period and to initiate inventories of the Native American settlement period and the period of the Ice Age.

The recommended actions for survey and planning activity are principally taken from the recommendations contained in the final report of the Bolton Survey of Historic, Architectural and Cultural Resources, prepared by preservation consultant Anne Forbes and conducted during the same period as the preparation of the Bolton Preservation Plan. Ms. Forbes' recommendations for future action focused on (1) completing survey forms for those historic resources that have not yet been inventoried and (2) upgrading those forms that were completed in earlier surveys to current documentation standards. Ms. Forbes also advised the Historical Commission to develop a system to continually update completed forms.

The Town's inventory of historic resources provides the foundation for all future efforts related to historic preservation and educational activities related to Bolton's history. It is an enormously valuable file of information that deserves to be completed and upgraded.

## **Goal 1: Complete the inventory of the European settlement period.**

Objective A: Document all local engineering sites, including stone culverts and bridges, dams, races and mill-related ruins.

Objective B: Inventory old cart paths and trails in town.

Objective C: Develop a standard operating procedure for adding new information to existing survey forms.

Objective D: Upgrade pre-1998 survey forms to current MHC documentation standards, including preparing new inventory forms for 20th Century resources.

Objective E: Conduct a structural analysis of historic dams in town.

Objective F: Prepare nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, where contacts with property owners have indicated an interest in the status.

## **Goal 2: Inventory all Native American settlement sites in town.**

Objective A: Conduct a professional survey of all settlement sites, including mapping.

Objective B: Develop a strategy to protect sites not yet disturbed.

## **Goal 3: Inventory all significant Ice Age land forms.**

Objective A: Conduct an inventory of all sites.

Objective B: Develop a strategy to protect the most significant of these sites.

## **5.2 Regulatory Goals**

The preservation of Bolton's historic resources can be advanced through the use of the Town's powers to regulate the use of land for the common good. These powers include zoning regulations and other bylaws.

The Town's Zoning Bylaw includes not only prohibitions but also incentives to encourage desired outcomes. Considerable comment was received from residents that expressed the desire to emphasize incentives---rather than prohibitions---in encouraging owners to preserve their properties. It is clear that there is strong property rights sentiment in town that discourages the implementation of additional regulations. However, this position must be balanced with the larger community's interest in preserving the town's historic architectural heritage.

Regulatory recommendations by residents focused on four areas: (1) regulations focused on minimizing the visual impact of new housing development; (2) regulations for new commercial uses; (3) regulations related to preserving farms; and (4) the impact of town bylaws on historic preservation.

**Goal 1: Minimize the impact of new housing development on historic resources and town character.**

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Objective A: Develop a standard operating procedure where the Planning Board will notify the Historical Commission of sites for development during the preliminary plan stage, to the Commission to comment on possible historical resources on the site.

Objective B: Study how town regulations can be revised to minimize the visual impact of new housing development by keeping it out of sight of scenic roads.

Objective C: Study the need to revise the Zoning Bylaw to allow the transfer of development rights from one parcel to another, as a means of preserving historic landscapes.

Objective D: Develop a design manual for use by developers and home owners that will encourage new residential construction that respects traditional motifs.

Objective F: Adopt the new state enabling law that allows assessors to phase-in increased property valuations when an historic property is restored.

**Goal 2: Minimize the impact of new commercial development.**

Objective A: Adopt a design review bylaw for commercial districts to assure compatibility of new construction with the town's character.

Objective B: Research models of commercial developments that would complement Bolton's historic character and develop regulations that will tend to encourage this development.

Objective C: Require common access drives to commercial properties, where feasible, to minimize curb cuts on scenic roads.

**Goal 3: Encourage the adoption and use of regulations that result in the preservation of farms.**

Objective A: Review how effective Chapter 61A has been in maximizing farmland protection, including how extensively it is being used, the adequacy of notification procedures when 61A lands go out of agricultural use, and the effectiveness of the Town's response to notification. Develop a standard operating procedure to maximize the effectiveness of the town's future responses.

Objective B: Analyze the newly-enacted Agricultural/Business provision of the Zoning Bylaw to determine how it might be more widely used, particularly where that would assist in preserving the economic viability of a farm.

Objective C: Review regulations that might increase the economic viability of barns and other farm accessory structures by flexible use regulations.

#### **Goal 4: Review and amend town regulations that impact on town character.**

Objective A: Work with the Long-Range Planning Committee in reviewing Town bylaws that may not sufficiently support the Town's historic preservation goals and recommend amendments to Town Meeting.

Objective B: Review the adequacy of Town controls on communications towers to minimize their visual impact on historic resources.

Objective C: Review the Town's Zoning Bylaw to determine if it needs to be amended to strengthen controls on signs and accessory uses.

### **5.3 Acquisition goals**

Regulatory action of its very nature is limited in scope and cannot address all of the needs in historic preservation. In many instances, acquisition of all or part of the rights to a property will be necessary in order to preserve the integrity of an historic or scenic site.

Residents have expressed a preference for retaining private ownership of sites whenever possible as a means of preserving the "realness" of the town and of not impinging on individual property rights. Acquisition and continued ownership of property need not be incompatible; for example, the acquisition of an easement or restriction on a property allows it to both remain in private ownership and to be protected.

In Bolton, the protection of historic properties is closely related to the protection of open space. The preservation of a property's historic character in Bolton usually requires the preservation of its context, which usually means the open land that

surrounds the buildings. The goals and objectives of this preservation plan complement the goals and objectives stated in the newly-released Bolton Open Space and Recreation Master Plan. Fortunately, the two plans are being prepared at the same time, allowing the opportunity to coordinate preservation and open space planning efforts. In addition to planning, however, there will be ample opportunity for preservationists and conservationists to work together to implement the recommendations in both plans.

The acquisition of either conservation restrictions or fee simple title to open land will require the involvement of the Bolton Conservation Trust and the Bolton Conservation Commission. These agencies have considerable experience in working with Bolton land owners in protecting their properties and will be invaluable in assisting with open space acquisitions that advance historic preservation goals.

One of the recommendations in this section is the creation of a “Bolton Historic Initiative,” which would considerably advance the goals of preservation in the town.

### **Goal 1: Implement the Historic Landscapes Preservation Strategy.**

Objective A: Refine the boundaries of historic landscapes identified in the Preservation Plan based on viewsheds, historic sites that should be included in each landscape, major vistas, archeological areas, etc.

Objective B: Identify all parcels in the historic landscapes and analyze them for opportunities for protection.

Objective C: Develop the first phase of protection scenarios for each area, including priorities.

### **Goal 2: Preserve significant Native American settlement sites.**

Objective A: Begin implementing the protection plan within the context of the Historic Landscapes Preservation Strategy.

Objective B: Assure adequate long-term management of sites.

### **Goal 3: Preserve significant geologic formations.**

Objective A: Begin implementing the protection plan within the context of the Historic Landscapes Preservation Strategy.

Objective B: Assure long-term management of sites.

#### **Goal 4: Preserve working farms in Bolton.**

- Objective A: Develop and implement a farm protection strategy in coordination with other Town agencies.
- Objective B: Provide assistance to Town agencies that are helping farmers who wish to protect their land through the Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program.
- Objective C: Implement actions to protect barns and farm out-buildings from deterioration.

#### **Goal 5: Preserve other sites associated with European settlement.**

- Objective A: Develop a protection strategy for the most significant historical sites in Bolton, foremost among these those properties identified by Anne Forbes as being eligible for National Register nomination.
- Objective B: Identify long-term strategies for restoring particularly-significant structures that are symbolic of important historical events and movements in Bolton and that are in public and non-profit ownership, for example the former Baptist Meeting House owned by the Town.

#### **Goal 6: Preserve open sites that have historical and scenic interest.**

- Objective A: Acquire easements on land where it is important to preserve the viewshed and context of an important historical site.
- Objective B: Acquire the environments around the locations of the town's early manufacturing enterprises, including dam sites.
- Objective C: Protect the most important vistas in town through the acquisition of easements.
- Objective D: Acquire those open properties that will result in the interconnection of existing protected land.

#### **Goal 7: Coordinate preservation efforts with abutting towns.**

- Objective A: Develop a joint protection strategy with the Town of Berlin to preserve the environment settled by the Quakers that Bolton and Berlin share. Also coordinate with Berlin on protecting the land in Berlin south of the Scharfner and Nicewicz historic farms on Sawyer Road.
- Objective B: Develop a joint preservation strategy with the Towns of Lancaster, Harvard and Clinton and the Fort Devens

governing body to protect Ice Age and Native American sites geographically common to these entities.

**Goal 8: Encourage a range of acquisition options in protecting sites.**

- Objective A: Encourage the Bolton Conservation Trust to expand the scope of their mission by working with owners of historic properties to have them not only place conservation restrictions on their land but also to place preservation restrictions on the historic buildings.
- Objective B: Investigate the feasibility of creating a Preservation Fund (there is currently a Conservation Fund) for the purposes of protecting sites of significance, and appropriate a specific amount in the Town budget each year for this objective.
- Objective C: Develop a strategy to encourage owners of significant historic structures to place preservation restrictions on their properties.
- Objective D: Encourage other methods of protecting historic properties through approaches that do not use town funds, for example, through limited development strategies and the clustering of development.
- Objective E: Work with the Bolton Conservation Trust and the Board of Selectmen in encouraging owners to gift sites of historical significance to the Trust or the Town.
- Objective F: Consider the creation of a “Bolton Historic Trust,” whose purpose would be to buy significant historic properties, place preservation restrictions on the structures and conservation restrictions on the land, and then resell the restricted property to new buyers who are sympathetic to historic preservation.
- Objective G: Investigate the creation of a “Bolton Historic Initiative,” which would include a bold plan to implement the Bolton Preservation Plan through the creation of a revolving loan fund to conduct buy/restrict/resell deals and the creation of an endowment that would act as a catalyst to advance historic preservation in Bolton.

**5.4 Town Projects Goals**

Town goals for historic preservation focus on two areas where the Town has a significant impact on preserving the character of Bolton. The first of these is in its treatment of scenic roads and the second is in its role as property owner.

The town's scenic roads in a sense "frame" historic properties on private land. As the owner of all of the town's old and scenic roads, the Town will have a significant impact on the character of these ways as they are improved over time. The current policy of the Bolton Department of Public Works is to improve old town roads with a "minimalist" cross-section design, that is, with as little disturbance or change to the road edge as possible. This is a laudable policy that will help to preserve the historical character of the town's scenic roads.

The Town of Bolton is also a major property owner of historic properties and, as such, is a steward of its architectural holdings and will be either a positive or negative example to the private sector.

### **Goal 1: Maintain the scenic character of town roads.**

Objective A: Resolve the issue of appropriate guard rails on scenic roads in a manner that meets both public safety standards and aesthetic concerns.

Objective B: Review the issue of the treatment of historic structures within public rights-of-way, including stone bridges, culverts and stone walls.

Objective C: Develop a strategy for saving large historic trees on scenic roads and in implementing a street tree replacement program.

### **Goal 2: Maintain a sensitivity to historic preservation issues on town-owned property.**

Objective A: Assure that the design of the new addition to the town library respects the design of the original building.

Objective B: Study and act on recommendations related to repairs needed to the Emerson School.

Objective C: Develop a long-term plan for the restoration of the former Baptist Meeting House (next to the fire station) to its original Greek Revival design and identify an appropriate use for it.

Objective D: Study appropriate landscape treatments for Town-owned properties.

Objective E: Explore options for creating a town common for Bolton.

Objective F: Restore older names to roads, ponds and places (e.g., change Main Street to The Great Road).

## 5.5 Public Awareness and Advocacy Goals.

All of the above recommendations require public support for their implementation. That support, however, must emerge from an awareness and appreciation of Bolton's history and the role of historic sites in preserving the presence of that history. Without doubt, residents appreciate Bolton's historic character; indeed, it is the attractiveness of the town that is threatening the continued existence of this character through new growth.

There is a leap, however, between appreciating the town and actively supporting efforts to preserve it. It takes a high degree of public commitment to historic preservation and to preserving a community's character to overcome the enormous pressures from development. However, *the commitment to preserve a community rarely occurs without a high degree of public awareness of the value of historic preservation.* Citizens must be aware of the value of historic preservation if they are to support it.

### **Goal 1: Acquaint new owners of historic homes with the history of their properties.**

Objective A: Acquaint realtors with the value of historic properties by distributing a copy of the complete historic inventory to them.

Objective B: Distribute a package of material to new owners of historic properties, including the inventory forms for their property, the Narrative History of Bolton, walking tour brochures, etc.

Objective C: Reach out to these owners as a natural core constituency for historic preservation in town.

### **Goal 2: Continue existing and initiate new activities that increase public awareness of the value of historic preservation.**

Objective A: Continue existing activities of the Historical Society, such as house tours, that increase public awareness of historic preservation.

Objective B: On completion of the updating and revisions to the inventory of historic properties, send current owners of these properties a copy of the inventory form for their site.

Objective C: Initiate walking tours of historic neighborhoods.

Objective D: Provide historical information to the Bolton Conservation Trust to incorporate into their walking tours, school and summer camp programs.

Objective E: Develop a town-wide interpretative program that explores how the varied land forms in Bolton developed during the historical period of the Ice Age. Include how these

landscape formations influenced the use of the land by the Nashaways and the Europeans.

Objective F: Sponsor an annual bus tour of the town.

Objective G: Prepare a slide show and speakers bureau to show to various organizations, whose purpose would be to relate Bolton's history and the value of historic preservation.

**Goal 3: Identify historic properties to the public.**

Objective A: Expand the historic plaque program.

Objective B: Identify and interpret historic sites with a series of durable interpretive monuments.

**Goal 4: Create and distribute materials that adequately convey the history of the town and the value of historic preservation.**

Objective A: Publish the Narrative History of Bolton written by Anne McCarthy Forbes as part of the 1998 Bolton Survey of Historic, Architectural and Cultural Resources. Distribute to new residents as part of an introductory packet to the town and make it available to school students.

Objective B: Prepare a series of walking tour brochures for various historical neighborhoods in town; integrate with the environmental walks developed by the Bolton Conservation Trust.

Objective C: Place the slide show and narrative prepared for this preservation plan on a video cassette that will allow it to be viewed at any time.

**Goal 5: Strengthen the organizational ability to implement historic preservation goals.**

Objective A: Institute an annual coordination day in October to plan for actions necessary to implement the Preservation Plan, including initiatives to be recommended to Town Meeting and coordinated actions with other boards and the Conservation Trust.

Objective B: Review the effectiveness of preservation advocacy in Bolton and how it can be improved. Do the missions of existing organizations in town allow the latitude for advocacy or does another organization need to be created?

## **Goal 6: Improve integration of historic preservation into school programs.**

Objective A: Integrate appropriate segments of the Bolton Preservation Plan into the existing curriculum unit on Bolton history and the environment.

Objective B: Develop a format to allow students to develop their own walking tour brochures as part of a classroom project.

Objective C: Discuss with the School Department how local historical sites might be used to illustrate elements of local, state and national history as part of the mandates of the new Social Studies Frameworks, part of the Education Reform Act.

## **6. Tools and Techniques Available to Implement Bolton's Preservation Goals**

Realizing the preservation of Bolton's historic resources will require more than one approach or technique. In some instances, a regulatory solution will work, whereas in another instance the only realistic path will be acquisition. In most instances, a combination of approaches will be needed. Protecting Bolton's historic resources will require a knowledge of what preservation tools exist and when they should be applied.

The techniques described here are only a brief summary of the variety of tools and techniques available to municipalities in advancing the goals of historic preservation. Where applicable, mention is made of the use of the tool in Bolton, how it has been applied, and how it might be improved for use in the town. The description of tools is followed by a table that summarizes the tools and their application in Bolton.

For a more comprehensive review of preservation tools and techniques, please refer to "Preservation Through Bylaws and Ordinances: Tools and Techniques for Preservation in Massachusetts," prepared by Christopher C. Skelly, Director of Local Government Programs for the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

### **6.1 Regulatory Tools**

Because new development is a major threat to historic structures and landscapes, land use regulations are an important part of any preservation strategy. Zoning is the most important of these regulatory tools. Regulatory powers available are wide-ranging and can be extremely effective in moderating the effects of development on historic resources.