

Challenges Impacting Sudbury's Future

Escalating Loss of Sudbury's Historic Fabric

Many residents cite Sudbury's rich historic setting as a draw when choosing where to live. The past few years have seen an acceleration of partial or full-demolitions of historically significant buildings and structures outside of Local Historic Districts. Due to rising land values, developers and property owners are choosing to tear down or significantly modify these historic homes, permanently eroding Sudbury's inventory of historic resources. Areas seeing increased development pressure include the Route 20 corridor, the Willis Pond neighborhood, Landham Road, among others. Sudbury has invested much time and money over the last 30 years to research and document the history of some of these properties. Historic properties outside of Local Historic Districts, however, have little protection beyond the six month Demolition Delay Bylaw that applies to historically significant buildings constructed before 1940. While some residents would like to maintain the historic appearance of the community, others believe building new structures is more economical. Restoring historic buildings, however, is often not more expensive than tearing down/building new and will preserve natural resources. Sudbury is also home to several historically significant post-1940 homes that have no protection from future demolition.

Historic and Cultural Identity

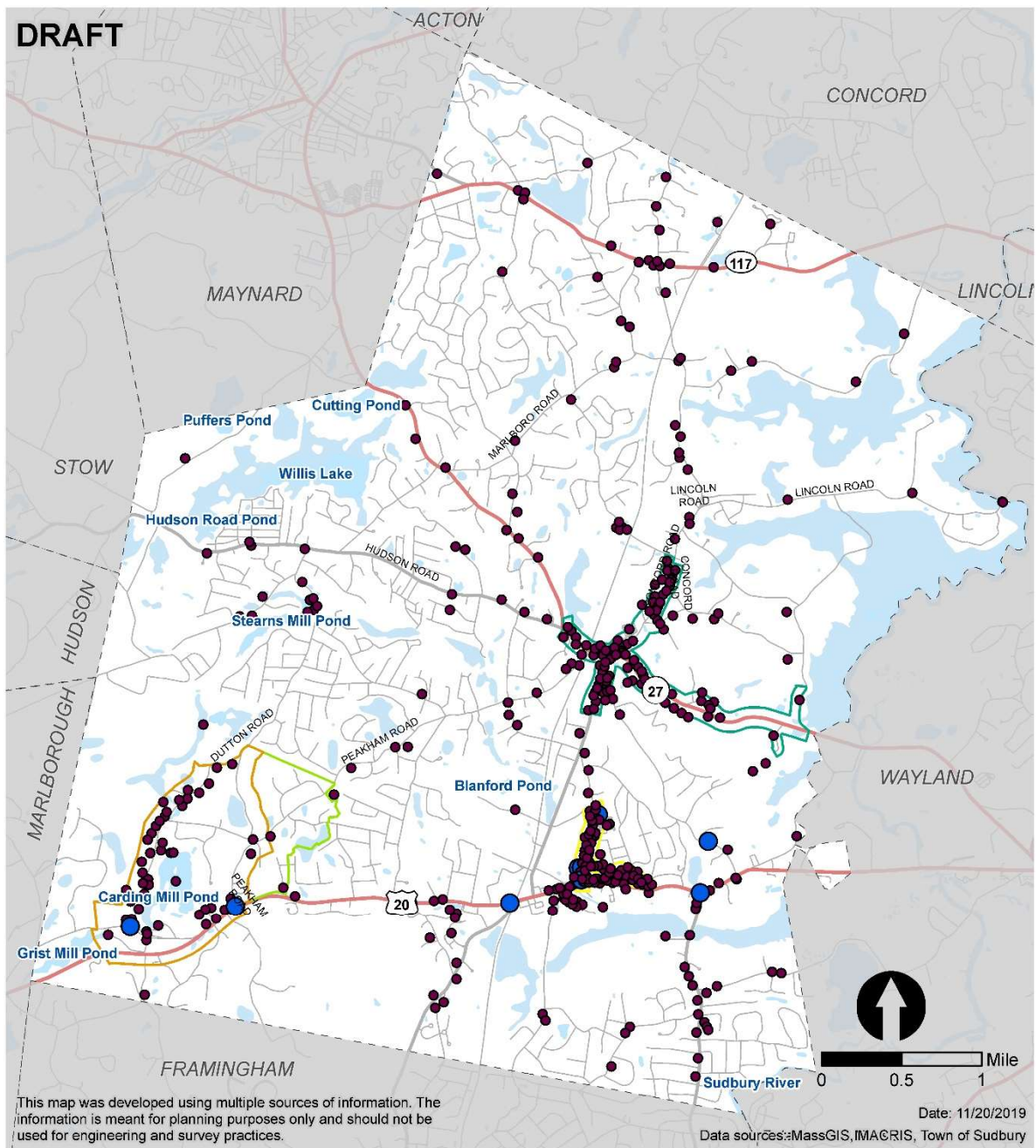
Goal – Preserve, protect, and develop the historical and cultural assets of Sudbury to foster appreciation of the Town’s heritage for enjoyment today and by future generations.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Needs

The Importance of Sudbury’s Living History

In this Master Plan, each chapter examines the different assets that help define Sudbury’s community character and contribute to the everyday quality of life residents’ experience throughout town. There is perhaps no asset so prominent and visually pervasive as Sudbury’s historic and cultural resources. From the historic Town Center, to the Wayside Inn, Goodnow Library, Hosmer House, and literally hundreds of historic properties throughout town—the collection of historic resources is diverse and brilliant. Cultural landscapes in the community include an array of historic sites and farms that tell stories of the birth of the United States and maintain living connections to Sudbury’s rural past. Many of these sites are connected by scenic roads lined with old stone walls, mature trees, and fields for agriculture. There was a time when the presence and viability of these homes, buildings, farms, and fields were simply part of everyday life in Sudbury. Today, the preservation of these historic resources is an ongoing effort between private owners and the Town. Managing them requires the thoughtful use of preservation policy tools and an increased awareness and education of the important role preservation plays in our community.

NOTE from the HC: The HC is concerned this map gives the impression that there are no historic resources in Sudbury outside of the maroon markers — when, in reality, there are many structures and buildings that are considered historic and would be subject to the Demolition Delay Bylaw (buildings of historic importance that are pre-1940) that are not appearing on this map. Do these maroon dots represent locations listed in the MACRIS database? Please elaborate in the key where this data comes from and add a note at the base of the map to the effect that this map is only inclusive of currently surveyed historic properties but many undocumented historic properties are also located throughout Sudbury.



LEGEND

Numbered Highway	Designation (July 2019)	Local Historic Districts
Major Road, Collector	National Register Historic Places	George Pitts Tavern Historic District
Minor Road, Arterial, Local	Local Historic Places	King Philip Historic District
Local Roads		Old Sudbury Historic District
Surface Water		Wayside Inn Historic District I
		Wayside Inn Historic District II



Local Historic Districts and Places

Local Policy Tools to Protect and Promote Historic and Cultural Identity

Sudbury's broad inventory of historic structures, landscapes, and roadways remains intact today, in large part, because of local regulation. Sudbury uses a suite of regulatory and non-regulatory tools to help mitigate potential impacts to resources, or to help educate property owners about their options for restoration or home improvement that honors the architecture and materials of historic structures. While state and federal protection programs are important to use where possible, the local tools used in Sudbury provide a much greater scope of protection. A detailed summary of these tools is provided in the Master Plan's Baseline Report, with a summary list provided below:

Local Tools for Historic Preservation	Description
Local Historic Districts	Sudbury has established four local historic districts with one of these districts being divided into two parts. The districts include the George Pitts Tavern Historic District, King Philip Historic District, Old Sudbury Historic District, and Wayside Inn Historic District (parts 1 and 2). Proposed improvements, development, and demolition activities are reviewed by the Town.
Scenic Roads Bylaw	The purpose of the Scenic Roads Bylaw is to protect the scenic quality and character of specific roadways in Sudbury. The Town uses the bylaw to review proposals that will involve the cutting or removal of trees, or the tearing down or alteration of stone walls.
Demolition Delay Bylaw	The purpose of this bylaw is to protect the historic and aesthetic qualities of Sudbury through preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration, whenever possible, of buildings, structures, or archeological sites that constitute or reflect distinctive features of the Town's architectural or historic resources. The bylaw provides the opportunity to develop preservation solutions for properties under threat by imposing a demolition delay of six months. Applies to historic properties built before 1940 and/or are listed on the MACRIS database.
Wayside Inn Historic Preservation Zone	This district is distinct from the Wayside Inn Historic Districts and adds development standards that are more typically regulated under the Zoning Bylaw (e.g., minimum lot size).

These tools have helped Sudbury protect its historic resources, but discussions during the Master Plan process suggest there would be a benefit to re-examining the details of how they are administered and the standards included in each tool. Input from several stakeholders focused on very specific issues such as whether the Demolition Delay Bylaw could enforce a longer period of delay (most communities in the Commonwealth have 12-, 18-, or even 24-month delays), or whether the standards within the Scenic Roads Bylaw are meeting the objectives of the Town as well as they could. A continued review of each of these tools should be used to identify areas for improvement and move changes through the adoption process. One issue identified by numerous participants in the Master Plan process was confusion over

the most basic protocols for identifying a historic structure and applying the appropriate review process (if any at all).

Town Organizations that Support, Protect, and Promote Historic and Cultural Identity

There are a large number of organizations that play important roles in the stewardship of historic and cultural resources in Sudbury. This is obviously a response to the richness and volume of these resources and the need to administer a diversity of preservation tools. It is also a response to a local culture that understands the value of these resources and the role they play in creating the character of the town. A summary of these organizations is provided below, with more detail included in the Baseline Report.

Organization	Highlights of Historic Preservation Efforts
Historic Districts Commission	<p>Governed by Chapter 40 of Sudbury's Bylaws, the Historic Districts Commission hold hearings for applications for Certificates of Appropriateness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approves or denies all requested changes to structures that are in an historic district that are visible from a public way.• Rules on applications to demolish structures in an historic district.• Supports the development, modification, and approval of new Local Historic Districts.
Historical Commission	<p>Advocates for the preservation, protection, and development of the historical and archaeological resources owned by the Town and/or fall outside of Local Historic Districts, per M.G.L. Chapter 40D. Administers the Demolition Delay Bylaw for Historically Significant Buildings, Structures, or Sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides oversight for the preservation, maintenance, and improvement of Town-owned historic sites and structures, such as the Hosmer House, Loring Parsonage, Town Hall, and Carding Mill.• Conducts historical research and develops inventories on Sudbury historic resources and prepares National Register nominations.• Provides comments and input to MHC and Federal Agencies regarding impacts to historic or cultural resources in Sudbury.
Community Preservation Committee (CPC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presides over the money raised by Sudbury's adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA).• Allocates a portion of CPA funds each year toward historic preservation initiatives or projects.
Planning Board	<p>Serves as one of the Town's primary development review authorities. Reviews Scenic Roads Applications and some developments in the Wayside Inn Historic Preservation Zoning District.</p>

Organization	Highlights of Historic Preservation Efforts
Sudbury Historical Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides research into historic resources and develops/curates inventories of Sudbury-related objects, photographs, and records. Develops educational materials in a variety of media (e.g., website, films, etc.). Provides public programing on Sudbury's rich history.
Goodnow Library Trustees	Curates the Local History Collection and various collections of official Town documents.
Sudbury Foundation	Philanthropic organization that supports a number of social issues, including the preservation of historic and cultural resources.
Sudbury Valley Trustees	Regional conservation group that can contribute to land preservation efforts in Sudbury (one of 36 member communities).
Wayside Inn Foundation	Non-profit organization to maintain landmark historic Inn, out buildings, and 100 acre campus to promote early American humanity and culture.

The Importance of Continued Education

In their surveys, residents expressed a lack of knowledge about the historic and archeological resources in Town. They also expressed a lack of guidance for new homeowners of historic properties on resources and agencies that can help them make informed decisions about their properties.

Preservation of historic and archaeological resources in the community can be supported through local regulations, but a great deal of the continued investment in these resources begins with education. With approximately 300 historic structures located outside of historic districts, Sudbury relies on the capacity of local homeowners to protect many of its historic resources.

While expansion of existing historic districts or the creation of new ones is an important tool to be considered it will never fully capture all of the historically significant structures in the community. Education resources for these homeowners and active engagement can provide an opportunity for them to learn more about the rich history of their properties and strategies to highlight and preserve that history as time goes by and maintenance is required.

In addition to homeowners, groups that make decisions about funding or review applications for development/property improvement also require education in order to make the best decisions for Sudbury. The ability for these groups to access well organized, accessible information about individual properties is critical to determining the best course of action related to construction, demolition, or financial investment. Further, ensuring there are clear protocols for identifying, recording, and reviewing information about historically significant properties will ensure that permitting processes are predictable and uniform.

Maintenance and Management of Town Owned Historic Properties and Sites

The Town is the largest owner of historic resources within Sudbury. Sudbury owns and manages historic properties and sites including the Loring Parsonage, Hosmer House, Town Hall, Haynes Garrison site, Carding Mill, and several historic cemeteries (Wadsworth, Mount Pleasant, North, and Revolutionary War). Maintenance, restoration, and rehabilitation of these properties and sites must be addressed on an ongoing basis. It is also worth examining if these resources are being used to their fullest advantage. For example, the Hosmer House, with its art collection and contents, is essentially a museum and could be leveraged for historical tourism and events.

Protection of Vulnerable Historic Structures

While Sudbury protects its historic structures through local bylaws and organizations many of its most important structures remain vulnerable to demolition and changes not compatible with their historic character. A building, a street, and a neighborhood can quickly lose much of its historic character when this happens. In discussions with residents directly involved with maintaining Sudbury's history, several of the tools available to the Town were considered for their effectiveness. Changes that should be considered to each of the following tools available to Sudbury involves a process that educates residents as well improve the tool's effectiveness,

Historic Structures Not in a District

Of the approximate 400 pre-1940 houses in Sudbury, only a third are in an historic district. While not all of these rises to the level of historic significance, a sufficient number do to cause concern for their protection. These houses are at risk of losing their historic identity or even being demolished. The demolition of the Boker-Walker House in the 1990s, one of only two houses in Sudbury that were on the National Registry of Historic Places, serves as prime example of what can happen when structures are not adequately protected.

Effectiveness of Current Sudbury's Demolition Delay Law

In 2004, in reaction to the loss of many historic properties, Sudbury adopted a six-month Demolition Delay Bylaw, although loss of historic fabric continues apace. In recent years the Town has seen the loss of some of the oldest extant properties and buildings, which necessitates examination of how current and new preservation tools could amended and adopted to stem these losses. In the case of archaeological resources, many of these sites remain unprotected, understudied, and/or unidentified.

Protection Against Neglect

While there are some tools to protect properties in and outside historic districts, Sudbury has no tool to protect them against neglect. In 2019, two of Sudbury's historic barns, each having a story to tell about Sudbury's farming past, fell victim to demolition by neglect. When structures are deemed dangerous or too costly to repair, there is little way to save them. Many of Sudbury's neighboring towns now have bylaws to protect against neglect and ensure their maintenance.

Development of a Town-Wide Historic Preservation Plan

The range of boards, commissions, committees, and organizations wholly or partly dedicated to historic and cultural resources in the community is a tremendous asset to the town and a testament to a strong local spirit of volunteerism. However, the large number of groups, who have different focus areas, ~~does~~ creates challenges for Sudbury. A critical part of making each group more effective is optimizing the way in which they work together. These groups do work to inform one another of their efforts, collaborate on specific initiatives, integrate permit review, and can have overlapping membership. However, in discussions during Master Plan development, many stakeholders agreed communication could be improved, and collaboration would be more effective with a more clearly documented town-wide strategy.

To better unify the work of stewardship groups in the community and create greater efficiency and communication among all regulatory organizations, Sudbury should in part pursue the development of a unified, town-wide Historic Preservation Plan. The resources available to Sudbury regarding the contents and approach to developing these plans. Guidance has been developed and published in various forms by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Historical Commission, MAPC, and various historic resource groups across the country. In Massachusetts, many communities have developed these plans and Sudbury has easy access to the wealth of examples that can help the Town get started.

Continued Development of Town Inventory of Historic Resources

The development of a town-wide plan and the ongoing use of existing regulatory tools requires accurate and up to date information. The Town should pursue ~~is-~~migrating the existing inventory of historic resources, particularly structures, to a more sophisticated and accessible database platform, distinct from the MACRIS. While the exact format of this database would be determined in more focused discussions, the final product would be able to provide user-friendly, accessible online information for the complete inventory of historic structures, buildings, and sites in the community. This would not only be a great resource for the general public, but local boards would have ready access to standardized information related to individual properties at their disposal. Committees such as the Community Preservation Committee would use this information to help deliberate on potential investments in historic preservation efforts.

With the development of a Town Historic Preservation Plan and a new data platform, Sudbury would be in a much stronger position to leverage the richness of its historic resources for economic development. While there is no question some enthusiasts visit Sudbury to visit historic sites, Sudbury has the resources to develop a stronger cultural tourism brand in the region. With its vast inventory of structures, sites, landscapes, and scenic roadways, there is little question the town could be viewed as a “hot spot” for history enthusiasts. Using the Town’s website, the websites of other groups, and potentially the development of tools like smart phone apps, self-guided local tours could be developed that lead participants through Sudbury’s most prized resources as well as through local commercial areas where tourists could support local business.

Arts and Cultural Resources

While Sudbury's historic resources are at the center of the town's cultural identity, there are many groups and institutions in Sudbury that work to cultivate other areas of cultural enrichment, adding depth and diversity to the core historic focus. Most obvious are the public schools, which provide Sudbury's youth with an outstanding education that includes exposure to visual arts, performing arts, and music within the curriculum and enrichment programming. While the Goodnow Library plays an important role in making historic records and collections accessible, it is also an important center for arts and culture education providing access to educational material, an incredible diversity of classes, and regular displays of artistic collections. In addition to these public institutions, a broad collection of religious, fraternal, and enrichment organizations provide additional layers of cultural education, awareness, and practice opportunities for Sudbury's residents (see Baseline Report).

One of the Town's most prominent cultural groups is the Sudbury Cultural Council, approved in 1982 by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. This organization works to develop and support cultural programming in Sudbury primarily by distributing money provided annually by the Commonwealth. In Sudbury, grants to local artists, the public schools, the Goodnow Library, and others are used to bolster events, projects, and awareness.

Policies and Actions

A. Sudbury will address historic preservation needs and emphasize collaboration ~~between~~ among its local historic preservation groups and coordinate their efforts town-wide.

- A.1 Re-evaluate the purpose, scope, and adequacy of regulatory tools to protect our historic and cultural resources
 - a. Consider the creation of new local historic districts and the expansion of existing districts. For significant structures and buildings outside of historic districts, consider a single-property or spot historic districts.
 - b. Examine the effectiveness of the Demolition Bylaw to protect properties outside historic districts and consider ways to enhance and update it.
 - c. Consider establishing a Minimum Maintenance Bylaw or a Demolition by Neglect Bylaw to maintain historic properties and protect them from demolition.
 - d. Consider the deletion of non-historic properties from historic districts so that so that attention and valued time is better focused on the purpose of the Historic Districts Bylaw.
- A.2 Appropriate funding for and develop a town-wide Historic Preservation Plan. Items addressed in the plan will include, but will not be limited to:
 - a. Ongoing survey and study of non-documented and under-documented historic resources and/or those not fully understood.

- b. A clear description of the responsibilities of each historic resource stakeholder in the community, including the town boards and commissions, historic property owners (homeowners and businesses), and the Town.
 - c. An assessment of needs and gaps in Sudbury's historic preservation administrative capacity, funding, and infrastructure.
 - d. An audit of existing historic preservation regulatory tools, how their effectiveness can be strengthened, and adopting new tools for preservation protections.
 - e. Identifying the appropriate situations for purchasing property, regulating property, and educating property owners to achieve historic preservation.
- A.3 Develop a sophisticated and accessible platform for its historic and archaeological resources inventory that can be used to support local permit review and educate residents and property owners.
- a. Create a complete digital inventory of historic structures, sites, landscapes, roads, significant features (i.e. stone walls), and archaeological sites throughout Sudbury.
 - b. Identify and inventory historic structures, buildings, sites, and landmarks that have not been inventoried or those inventories which are out of date.
 - c. Work with the Sudbury Historical Society and the Goodnow Library to include link historic photos of Sudbury with property addresses as part of the platform.
 - d. Link with GIS data to better inform and shape the effectiveness of preservation and planning policies.
- A.4 Develop better partnerships and collaboration among preservation organizations, Town boards and commissions, Town officials, and citizens to advance the protection, preservation, and development of historical archaeological resources and town character.

B. Sudbury will continue to develop educational resources and materials related to historical and archaeological resources in the community.

- B.1 Develop a Historic Preservation Primer for all local boards, commissions, and committees that clearly describes the variety of historic preservation regulatory tools in the community, powers and limitations, and how they function together.
- B.2 Increase awareness and support among residents about the value and benefits of Historic Preservation tools protections. Consider an education campaign for local realtors, Chamber of Commerce, community leaders, and other stakeholders.
- B.3 Develop more robust resources for historic homeowners such as a historic design library, better online resources the Town's webpage, and public seminars on how to preserve historic homes (how to restore historic windows, historic property maintenance, etc.).

- B.4 Working with the Historical Society, the Historical Commission, the Wayside Inn, the Cultural Council, and other interested parties, develop materials to support the development of a viable local tourist economy focused on Sudbury's historic resources.

C. Sudbury will continue to foster a vibrant local arts and culture network.

- C.1 Continue to provide local artists and arts organizations with access to municipal facilities as appropriate to display art, hold classes, and publicize events.
- C.2 Continue funding special projects in Sudbury Public Schools with grants from the Cultural Council as appropriate.
- C.3 Coordinate efforts between the Cultural Council, Sudbury Arts, and the Commission on Disability to increase access and offerings related to the arts for people with disabilities.
- C. 4 Encourage collaboration between local arts, cultural, historic organizations, and the local business community to create community-wide events and programming.