City-wide Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey of Newton, Massachusetts

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NOTE

To protect Newton’s archaeological resources, some maps have been deleted from the version of this presentation posted on the website of the Newton Community Preservation Committee:

www.newtonma.gov/cpa
Goals:

• To produce a comprehensive inventory of known archaeological resources in Newton

• To identify areas of high archaeological sensitivity in the city in order to provide a guide for planning, permitting and preservation
Specific Objectives:

• To identify known and possible pre-Contact and historical archaeological sites in Newton, and to assess possible eligibility of sites for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

• To develop city-wide archaeological sensitivity maps illustrating the likelihood for different sections of Newton to contain Native American and historical archaeological sites.
Specific Objectives:

- To develop management recommendations for the identification and protection of significant archaeological resources and archaeologically sensitive areas, including recommendations for a local bylaw/ordinance or review procedures, and for public and private land acquisition, protection and cultural resource management strategies.

- To incorporate the findings, sensitivity maps and recommendations into the city’s planning processes.
Authority:

• Archaeological Services conducted the reconnaissance survey project under contract with the Newton Planning Department.

• Funding was provided by the Community Preservation Committee of the City of Newton.

• The reconnaissance survey was conducted under a State Archaeologist’s permit, issued in accordance with 950 CMR 70.00.
Methods:

- Background research -
  - Native American site information (Donta)
  - Massachusetts Historical Commission site files
  - Archaeological literature
  - Previous surveys
  - University of Massachusetts archaeological records
  - Newton historic sources
Methods:

- Background research -
  - Historic site information (Donohue)
  - Newton town histories
  - Historic maps
  - Previous surveys
Methods:

- Interviews with local residents
- In city reconnaissance surveys
- Collections research
Methods:

• Preparation of sensitivity maps
  - Model for Native American sites
    - Known site characteristics; topography, soils, drainage
  - Model for Historic period sites
    - Areas of settlement; roadways; knowledge of city historic development
Methods:

• Planning and Recommendations (Mulholland)

• Other towns protections

• Bylaw/ordinance
Findings:

• For purposes of discussion, the City was divided up into 10 survey units, based primarily on historic village locations.
Findings:

• At start of survey, 13 Native American sites were recorded within the City.
Findings:

• During the survey, 7 additional Native American sites were recorded
Findings:

• At start of survey, 16 Historic period sites were recorded within the City
Findings:

• During the survey, 56 additional Historic period sites were recorded
Findings:

• In total, 13 Native American and 16 Historic period sites were known in Newton prior to the survey, for a total of 29 archaeological sites.

• Following the survey, there are now 20 recorded Native American sites, and 72 Historic period sites, for a total of 92 archaeological sites in Newton.
Findings:

• The inventory of archaeological sites in Newton serves as information on site distribution for planning purposes, as well as a historic resource for tourism and other economic possibilities.
Archaeological Sensitivity: Native American sites
Archaeological Sensitivity: Historic period sites, 1833
Archaeological Sensitivity: Historic period sites, 1856
Planning:

• Examples of protection of archaeological resources in other communities: Aquinnah, Barnstable, Boston, Brewster, Chilmark, Falmouth, Marion, Medfield, Wayland, West Tisbury, Westborough; as well as the Cape Cod Commission and Martha’s Vineyard Commission.
Recommendations:

- Consider city bylaw/ordinance, if supported by the community
- Ideas for signage, educational programs, displays, website inclusion that could promote tourism
Acknowledgements:

- Newton Planning Department, Newton Community Preservation Committee, Newton Historical Commission, Newton Historical Society, Newton Free Library, Massachusetts Historical Commission, among many others.

- Please feel free to contact me directly for any additional questions or archaeological information.

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