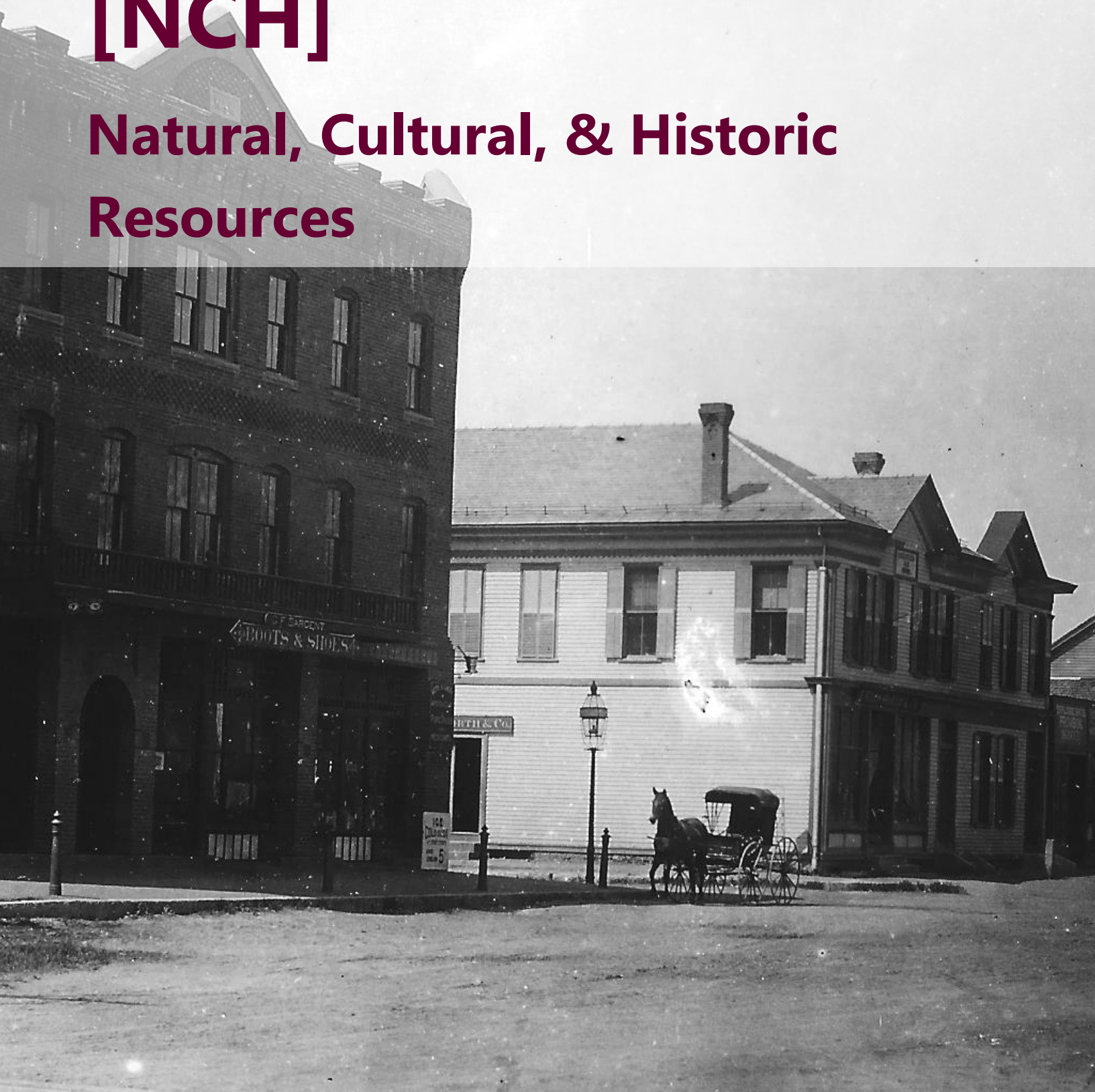


[NCH]

Natural, Cultural, & Historic Resources



Church Street, Old Fire Station

Photo Credit Northborough Historic District and Historical Commission

Natural, Cultural, & Historic Resources

3

The most valuable characteristics of a community, to a large extent, are defined by its unique natural environment along with the cultural and historic heritage accumulated through generations of human interaction with this environment. As development pressures continue to increase, the preservation and promotion of the Town's critical natural resources and cultural/historic assets are critical to the identity and sense of place the community values. This Element of the Master Plan inventories the Town's primary natural, cultural, and historic resources and identify strategies and priorities for the protection and enhancement of these resources.

Key Findings

- The Town has a rich agricultural past that is evident in its scenic landscapes and is celebrated through large community events including Applefest.
- Numerous dams without historical significance, including some with high or significant hazards, could be removed to enhance water-based recreational opportunities within Town such as kayaking along the Assabet River.
- Northborough is very community-spirited; local organizations support charitable causes, major cultural events such as Applefest and the Annual Harvest Craft Fair, and other community programming.
- Northborough is active in its own preservation and residents are engaged in its history, as exemplified by the Town's Demolition Delay Bylaw and the numerous organizations dedicated to conserving and communicating the Town's history.
- The Town has a robust inventory of historic resources that document Northborough's extensive heritage. A number of these resources, including the White Cliffs property, have uncertain futures.

Baseline Conditions Analysis

Natural Resources

The Town of Northborough has a wealth of natural resources that support the vitality of the environment and the quality of life at both the local and regional levels. Bodies of water, wetlands, and forests with extensive trail systems and conservation land offer critical habitat to wildlife and enable important ecological functions. Heritage landscapes⁹ and farmland provide scenic attractions and contribute to the Town's economic vibrancy. The Town and its residents reside in a mosaic of landscapes and rich bio-diversities formed by these valuable natural elements. This section of the Master Plan is developed upon the latest Open Space and Recreation Plan undertaken by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission in 2010. It intends to offer a high-level overview of the Town's natural resources as detailed in the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Geology, Soils, and Topography

Northborough contains six of the general soil types defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. The most prevalent soil type are well-drained soils on slopes of less than 15 percent. The Soil Conservation Service has mapped three dominant soil types in Northborough (see **Figure 3-1** at the end of this chapter). These are the Hinckley-Merrimac-Windsor soils, the Paxton-Woodbridge-Canton soils, and the Chatfield-Hollis soils. Mount Pisgah is notably composed of bedrock with a layer of glacial till. Near the top of the mountain, the soils are shallow and much closer to bedrock. The mountain is a heterogeneous mixture of different rock types, the most prevalent of which is mafic gneiss.

Topography has been one of the defining features of development patterns in Northborough. Most of the Town's land area, over 80 percent, has a slope of less than 15 percent, which is suitable for development. Soils capable of supporting residential, commercial, or industrial land uses make up about 40 percent of the Town. Additionally, approximately 75 percent of the Town's soils can support agriculture and 100 percent of the soils are beneficial for recreational and woodland uses.

Landscape

Northborough is characterized by a series of rolling hills with higher elevations in the Town's western half and gently sloping terrain in its eastern half. The local hills include Ball Hill, Boston Hill, Chestnut Hill, Edmund Hill, Fay Hill, Ghost Hill, Mount Pisgah, Rock Hill, Cedar Hill, Sulphur Hill, Tomblin Hill, Bartlett Hill, and Mount Assabet. The lowest elevation in Town is 250 ft. above sea level and the highest point is Mount Pisgah, with an elevation of 715 ft.

Water Resources

The most prominent water resource in Northborough is the Assabet River, which travels through the southeastern section of the Town. The river enters the Town at its border with

⁹ Heritage landscapes are landscapes that embody connections between natural landscapes and human history. They are often cited as special places that define the character of communities.

Westborough on Davis Street and exits near the intersection of Boundary Street and Hudson Street in the Tyler Site conservation land parcel. The river winds through the Juniper Hill Golf Course and eventually passes underneath Route 20 before flowing into Marlborough. The Organization for the Assabet River (OAR) has tested the health of the Assabet River and determined that the stream health and stream flow is of fair quality and the water quality is good. It is nutrient saturated, with high concentrations of phosphorous and nitrogen compounds, resulting in the overgrowth of aquatic plants and algae.

Additional open water bodies, not including the Assabet River and its tributaries, account for 162 acres, or 1.3 percent of the Town's total area. The largest bodies of water in the Town are the two great ponds¹⁰, Little Chauncey Pond and Solomon Pond, and the two man-made, fresh-water ponds, Bartlett Pond, and Smith Pond. **Figure 3-2** (located at the end of this chapter) depicts the Town's water resources.

Northborough is entirely in the Sudbury Assabet Concord (SuAsCo) Watershed. The four tributary watersheds of SuAsCo are the Howard/Cold Harbor Brook Tributary Watershed in the west and north, the Assabet Headwaters Tributary Watershed in the southwest and center, the North Brook Tributary Watershed in the north, and the Sudbury Reservoir Tributary Watershed in the southeastern corner of the Town.

The wetlands in Town serve as recharge areas, provide wildlife habitats, and act as natural flood retention areas. The principal wetland areas are associated with the SuAsCo flood control project, along Hop Brook, Cold Harbor Brook, Howard Brook, the Assabet River, Stirrup Brook and Barefoot Brook. The southeastern portion of the Cold Harbor Brook Flood Control Site includes a large deep marsh just north of West Main Street. Other deep marshes exist on the east and west sides of Smith Pond, on the north and south of Bartlett Pond, and on the north side of the South Street Park near the Westborough town line. In addition, Crane Swamp drains into the open-channel Wachusett Aqueduct, which discharges into the Sudbury Reservoir in Southborough.

The Northborough Wetlands Protection Bylaw and Regulations provide more stringent requirements than the State regulations to further protect wetland resources. The Wetland Regulations were put into effect in 1993 and amended in 2000. The Wetlands Bylaw grants authority to the Northborough Conservation Commission to establish wetlands-related definitions and create uniform procedures and standards to protect wetlands, as well as related water resources and nearby land areas. According to the Applicability Section 6-04-020 of the Town of Northborough Municipal Code, any type of wetland is not to be removed, filled, dredged, built upon, or altered unless permitted by the Conservation Commission. The Bylaw also restricts activity close to the wetland resource areas by requiring a 15-foot buffer of no disturbance and a 30-foot buffer prohibiting any type of structure.

Vegetation

The forests in Northborough are mostly comprised of white pine and hemlock trees. In the northwest and southwest sections of the Town, which are the only remaining large

¹⁰ A great pond is defined in Massachusetts statutes as a pond or lake that is in its natural state at least 10 acres (40,000 m²) in size. This includes ponds that met the criterion at one time but are now smaller. Massachusetts General Law states that all great ponds must be open for fishing and boating, including providing reasonable access to the pond, except for reservoirs.

unfragmented forested areas in the Town, there are also mixed hardwoods present. While some of the forested sections are owned and protected by the Town, other forests are privately owned and potentially vulnerable to development. The northwest area of Town also supports commercial agriculture and several orchards. The forests and farmlands provide scenic, recreational and conservation value. There are many small wooded areas scattered throughout Northborough that provide visual screens and add to the rural character of the Town. The Department of Public Works cares for the public shade trees, which are in public rights-of-way, Town-owned parks, and cemeteries.

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) maintains a list of all Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA)-listed species observed and documented in each town. The State-listed rare and endangered plants found in Northborough are the Lyre-Leaved Rock-Cress, which is endangered and last observed in 1951, and the Pale Green Orchis, which is threatened and last observed in 1946.¹¹

Fisheries and Wildlife

The Town-owned conservation land in Northborough is primarily forested. Most privately-owned lands are small farms, woodlots, or residential areas. Additionally, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife is responsible for a 107-acre wildlife management area adjacent to Mt. Pisgah. The varied habitats in Northborough provide wildlife diversity and may contribute to a greater diversity of species. Birds include herons, swans, hawks, backyard songbirds and numerous waterfowl and turkeys. The mammals are squirrels, rabbits, raccoons, skunks, woodchucks, deer, foxes, coyotes, beavers, mink, muskrats, porcupines, weasels, fishers, otters, and black bear. Several large tracts of early successional habitat exist in Northborough. The expansive, grassy areas provide critical habitat for a variety of species dependent on open lands such as insects, eastern meadowlarks, bobolinks, and sparrows.

Open water resources provide for excellent fishing. Streams are regularly stocked with trout and several ponds are used for ice fishing. The 11 certified vernal pools in Town provide habitats for animals such as salamanders, wood frogs, and fairy shrimps.

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) maintains a list of all Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA)-listed species observed and documented in each town. The rare species present in Northborough are the Blue-Spotted Salamander, the Twelve-Spotted Tiger Beetle, the Purple Tiger Beetle, the American Bittern, the Golden-winged Warbler, and the Wood Turtle. There are also several NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare and Endangered Species (see **Figure 3-3** at the end of this chapter).

Agriculture

Northborough once had an economy centered on farming. By 1885, the Town was located at the end of the Agricultural Branch Railroad and contained 132 farms. Presently, there are four active farms that provide fruits, vegetables, and plants for the immediate and surrounding community. The larger farms, including Tougas Family Farm, Berberian Farm, and Davidian Brothers Farm all grow various fruits and vegetables. Another small family-

¹¹ Because they are rare, many MESA-listed species are difficult to detect even when they are present. The fact that the 'Most Recent Observation' recorded for a species may be several years old should not be interpreted as meaning that the species no longer occurs in a town. However, Natural Heritage regards records older than twenty-five years historic.

operated farm on Hudson Street, Yellick's Farm, offers produce and cut flowers. There are also several tree farms in Northborough, including the Bigelow Nurseries, and three small Christmas Tree farms, namely the Ellsworth Christmas Tree Farm, Conifer Falls Farm, and Holloway Tree Farm. The Tougas, Berberian, and Davidian farms total 270 acres and were all cited by the Open Space Committee as picturesque landscapes with viewsheds that need to be preserved and protected. The Tougas and Davidian farms are enrolled in the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program. **Figure 3-4** (located at the end of this chapter) illustrates the agricultural resources in Northborough.

Northborough has an exceedingly popular community garden program with 30 plots on Valentine Road. The program is managed by the Town's Recreation Department. The adjacent community of Berlin, Massachusetts partners with Northborough to have their unclaimed community garden plots used by Northborough residents.

Threats to Natural Resources

Typical of other communities within the region, Northborough is faced with environmental challenges associated with land use changes and development trends that need to be addressed to achieve sustainability with respect to the Town's natural resources.

Hazardous Materials and Waste Sites

Northborough has a number of contaminated sites resulting from former industrial uses. As of June 2018, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has 119 Waste Sites/Reportable Releases listed for the Town; the earliest reported release was on January 15, 1987. These sites/releases extend across 94 locations associated with Exxon, Texaco, Raytheon, New England Telephone, Toys R Us, Sweetlife Foods, and the Westboro State Hospital, among others.

Development Impact

The historically forested, agricultural, and open land areas in Northborough have been encroached upon over time by residential and commercial/industrial development. Through development regulations, permitting practices, and resource conservation and acquisition, the Board of Selectmen, Town Planner, the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, and area residents work together to minimize negative development impacts and to promote positive smart growth principles in proposed development projects.

As a result of the increased development, higher rates of erosion have occurred at some roads in the Town, especially near densely populated areas, due to reduced filtration of surface water runoff from expansive asphalt-paved and other impermeable surfaces.

Environmental Equity/Access

Access to recreation and open space areas in Northborough is generally very good. Areas for passive recreation are present in all parts of the Town, from Mt. Pisgah and Edmund Hill Woods in the north, to Westborough Wildlife Management Area/Crane Swamp, with limited public accessibility, in the southeast, to the New England Forestry Foundation conservation area in the west. The active recreation areas are largely part of school grounds or on major arteries that are publicly accessible.

Dams

According to the most recent mapping data, there are 16 dams in Northborough. Of this number, three are labeled as a high or significant hazard. The two high hazard dams are Hop Brook Dam, just west of Route 20 over Hop Brook, and Cold Harbor Brook Dam, north of West Main Street over Cold Harbor Brook. The one dam labeled a significant hazard is the Assabet River Dam, located near Allen Street over the Assabet River (see **Figure 3-5** at the end of this chapter). Some of the dams in Northborough are located on private property. According to the Conservation Commission, the dams in the Town are potentially restrictive to increasing recreational pursuits on the Assabet River. Due to dam locations, there are few places on the Assabet River that provide the opportunity for extended and uninterrupted kayak or canoe trips. Additionally, dams can negatively impact the water quality and wildlife habits, and their removal can be a positive for habitat restoration. However, it should also be recognized that many of the dams are historic and affiliated with the old manufacturing industries in Northborough. Some of the dams still carry out significant flood control functions and should be restored or repaired, such as the Cold Harbor Dam at Hudson Street that holds back a scenic pond called Wallace Pond.

Invasive Species

Invasive species are non-native species that have spread into native systems. Invasive species cause economic or environmental harm by developing self-sustaining populations and becoming dominant and/or disruptive to native systems. These plants can outcompete and choke garden plants, bushes, and even trees.

Throughout the forested upland, wetlands, and grassed yards of Northborough, Oriental bittersweet and Japanese knotweed are a common and unwanted sight. The Massachusetts Invasive Plants Advisory Group maintains a current list of invasive species threatening these areas on their website and it is updated regularly. The group urges residents to look for tree of heaven, autumn olive, Asian honeysuckle plants and a weed known as mile-a-minute vine. The Northborough Conservation Commission manages aquatic nuisance vegetation in Bartlett Pond. Watermilfoil, fanwort, and water chestnut are often introduced when boats and equipment are not cleaned properly before entering the waterway.

Although never spotted in Northborough, residents are urged to watch for indicators of the Asian Longhorned beetle, which are a threat to hardwood trees. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is working on the control of a recent outbreak in nearby towns, and citizen observers play a key role in controlling the spread of this devastating pest. Other pests on the USDA's list of invasives currently in Massachusetts include the emerald ash borer beetle and the European gypsy moth. Residents are strongly encouraged to utilize information available online and at Town Hall to help manage and reduce the spread of invasive species.

Cultural Resources

Northborough's cultural assets help establish its character and sense of place. Consisting of active entities, Town-wide events, and an ever-changing roster of programming centered around the arts and the social culture of the community, these assets help link residents to one another, their heritage, and the Town that they all share. In turn, these

shared assets create the unique environment and experiences that distinguish Northborough and the expression of its evolving heritage.

For the most part, the entities and events through which Northborough's culture is shared extend into the Town's historical, religious, and community heritage as well. Far from being exclusive to the category of "cultural assets," they act as engagement points across a wide variety of community and neighborhood interests. Some of the major cultural assets in Northborough center around its cultural organizations and popular community events. Related assets are identified and discussed below.

Cultural Organizations

Northborough Cultural Council (NCC)

The NCC was established to promote the arts and help develop cultural programs throughout the community by funding community-oriented arts, music, humanities, and science projects in Northborough. As the local council representative of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the NCC has administered and distributed grant funding for a variety of projects, including concerts, literature programs, a historic trolley tour, an air-powered rocket workshop, and cultural programming at schools. Programs include collaborations with the Northborough Free Library and the Northborough Historical Society, and efforts to engage a diverse audience include working with the Northborough Moms and the Northborough Senior Center.

A recent shift in focus at the Massachusetts Cultural Council has provided more tools and latitude at the local level to serve as a convener, enabling community programming as well as distributing funding for projects.

Northborough Art Guild

This non-profit organization hosts demonstrations, workshops, and artist talks on a variety of subjects, including oil paintings, mosaics, mixed-media, and critiques, as well as serving as an important networking tools for local artists. The Art Guild's flagship event is an annual Art Show, displaying original works by members and non-members at the Northborough Historical Society.

Community Affairs Committee

The Community Affairs Committee is nine-member town committee that is responsible for the promotion of Northborough's community life through publicity and events. Programming arranged by the committee includes an annual Summer Concert Series, an annual holiday Tree Lighting ceremony, and an annual Town Cleanup.

Major Community Events

Northborough Applefest

Spearheaded by the Applefest Committee, this annual festival boasts attendees from throughout the region, attracted by a series of family-oriented events that extends over several days. Anchored by the Applefest parade and fireworks, this festival is truly community-oriented, with events sponsored by local partners such as the Junior Women's

Club, the Friends of the Library, the Historical Society, the American Legion, the Boy Scouts of America, the Fire Department, and the Rotary Club. A 5K Road Race brings a recreational component, and the Taste of Northborough features local businesses. An accompanying Farmer's Market features a number of local providers, including the Tougas Family Farm, Davidian Brothers Farm, and Berberian's Farm. Applefest celebrates Northborough's agricultural heritage, specifically its orchards past and present, which are products of the Town's proximity to the Assabet River and its many hillsides.

Annual Harvest Craft Fair

This annual event is the major fundraiser for the Northborough Junior Women's Club, an organization committed to enhancing the quality of life in Town through volunteering for several events, as well as local and regional organizations. As their main fundraising event, this juried craft fair is operated entirely by volunteers, who also arrange an accompanying raffle and café.

Through their fundraising efforts, the organization has supported the purchase of a "Jaws of Life" for the fire department as well as enabling the coordination for several community projects throughout the year: a "letters to Santa" mailbox at the post office, working with students to create Valentine's Day cards for veterans, collecting books for students through the "City that Reads" program, and organizing an annual Women in STEM conference for girls in Grades 5 through 8. Their "Pinwheels for Prevention" project, held during National Child Abuse Prevention Month, raises awareness for the cause through a visibility campaign at Town Hall.

Additional Programming

Northborough's institutions serve as vital cultural hubs for the community, both as physical gathering places and hosts for a variety of programs. In addition, these institutions also serve as stewards for some of the Town's most iconic buildings, both historic and soon-to-be-historic that feature the works of artists and craftsmen. The Northborough Free Library, Trinity Church, and First Parish-Unitarian Universalist are a few of the entities who sponsor concerts, open-mic events, support groups, community enrichment programs, dinners, film screenings, author's talks, exhibits, and skills workshops on a regular basis for Northborough's residents.

Northborough's houses of worship take an especially active role in the community. Outreach activities include financial and emotional support, spiritual growth, meals, communal activities, and job search assistance. Several of these institutions have formed the Northborough Interfaith Clergy Association to coordinate and share resources across congregations, which also includes Congregation B'nai Shalom in Westborough and the Church of Latter-Day Saints in Marlborough.

Historic Resources

Historic resources serve many roles, including creating a tangible link to a Town's heritage and providing the distinctive characteristics that define Northborough's neighborhoods. They inspire pride, provide solid building stock, and serve as a catalyst for economic development. They link the built environment to the natural environment and tell the story

of Northborough's communities. Striking a balance between the preservation of these resources, while allowing for the growth and evolution of the community in a way that respects the Town's historic character, will continue to be one of the biggest and potentially rewarding challenges facing Northborough.

While the term "historic resources" conjures images of buildings of a certain age, the term refers to a broad spectrum of resources that help illustrate Northborough's history. Important viewsheds, archaeological sites, historically agricultural land, infrastructure such as the Wachusett Aqueduct, community gathering places such as parks and churches, and memorials and monuments all contribute to the historic environment. The size, scale, and massing of houses, often influenced by the time period of their construction, help define different residential neighborhoods and contribute to their livability.

Northborough has hundreds of archaeological and architectural historic resources that have been documented by a variety of different entities, with the combined Northborough Historic District and Historical Commission serving as the primary driver of major survey efforts. The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) serves as the central repository for these files, which can be found in a searchable public database called MACRIS (Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System). **Figure 3-6** (located at the end of this chapter) depicts the types and distribution of the Town's historic resources as recorded in MACRIS.

Above-Ground Resources

This large category of historic resources includes buildings, structures, objects, sites, and landscapes that are physical reminders of Northborough's extensive heritage. These resources can be documented on an individual basis, such as a building or a farm, or grouped into districts that collectively tell a broader cultural story. Some resources have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), which is the national list of significant places that are especially worthy of preservation, while others have received similar recognition at the state and/or local level. As of May 2018, the MACRIS database identified more than 350 recorded individual historic resources and districts/areas in Northborough.

Local Historic Districts

- Meeting House Common Historic District
- Peter Whitney Parsonage (Single Building Historic District)

National Register

- Wachusett Aqueduct Linear District (much of the aqueduct is a recreational trail)
- Westborough State Hospital (lies in both Northborough and Westborough)
- First Baptist Church of Northborough (home of the Northborough Historical Society)
- Milestone 1767

Preservation Restriction

Preservation restrictions actively protect historic properties by restricting demolition or alteration of historically significant features. The restriction is filed at the Registry of Deeds and may run for a specified number of years or in perpetuity.

- First Church of Northborough – Unitarian Church/First Parish-Unitarian Universalist Church (40 Church Street)
- Northborough World War I Memorial (40 Church Street)
- Earl P. Taylor Memorial (40 Church Street)
- George L. Chesbro House (103 Bartlett Street)

Inventoried resources (documented but no designation as of yet)

Inventoried properties are documented in MACRIS with information regarding history, architecture, and importance to local development, but have not received an official local, state, or national designation. These resources, both individually and grouped into “inventoried areas,” are spread throughout the Town and form an important historical reference containing information about the everyday lives of Northborough residents (see **Figure 3-6** at the end of this chapter). There are 191 individually inventoried resources outside of inventoried areas and 12 inventoried areas in Northborough.

Among the inventoried resources, the Cliffs/Wesson Estate (now called the White Cliffs property) is listed in the Town’s Open Space and Recreation Plan as a historic asset. In an effort to prevent a developer from tearing down the building, the Town purchased this property at 167 Main Street in September 2017 using Community Preservation funds. This measure was approved at Town Meeting in 2016.

Archaeological Resources

Northborough is home to more than two dozen previously recorded archaeological sites, and likely dozens more that remain to be discovered. The resources that made this area a desirable Colonial and Industrial Era settlement benefitted the Native American populations as well, and Northborough boasts both pre- and post-contact archaeological sites. Although the locations and content of archaeological sites is generally considered confidential for protection purposes, Northborough is home to the well-known Mastodon Site, which has been the subject of amateur and professional analysis for over a century. Discovered in 1884 on William Maynard’s land near the Town’s boundary with Shrewsbury, the site contained teeth, bone and tusk fragments, and perhaps most intriguingly, a human skull. Despite the distribution of these sites throughout the Town, there are large areas that have not been subject to archaeological survey.

Historic Resources Entities, Stakeholders, and Bylaws

A number of entities in Northborough take an active part in the promotion and protection of historic resources. Northborough has bylaws that directly promote and preserve historic resources, as well as bylaws concerning the appointed commission(s) designed to help execute preservation of the built environment of the Town as it evolves over time.

Northborough Historic District Commission, Chapter 1-60 and 12-12

At Town Meeting, in 2015 the Northborough Historical Commission and the NHDC, which shared the same membership, officially merged into a single entity known by the latter. Responsibilities of the merged Commission include the exterior design review of improvements to properties with the local historic districts; recommending the certification of places of interest as historical landmarks to the Town Meeting for the purpose of protecting and preserving such places; acquiring in the name of the Town by gift, purchase, grant, bequest, devise, lease or otherwise, the fee or lesser interest in real or personal property of significant historical value and may manage the same. The Commission is also responsible for compiling and maintaining an inventory of the Town's historic assets; initiating and encouraging activities to educate and broaden the community awareness of Northborough's historical heritage; working with individuals and public and private groups to promote historic preservation; encouraging and supporting local historic districts; providing preservation information and guidance; maintaining a close working relationship with the Northborough Historical Society; and soliciting preservation funding from local, state, and private agencies.

Community Preservation Committee, Chapter 1-12

The Northborough Community Preservation Committee (CPC) administers the Town's CPA program, and includes at least one member of the NHDC along with representatives from other Town entities including the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Park and Recreation Commission. Responsibilities of the CPC include studying and making recommendations regarding the acquisition, creation, preservation, and support of open space, historic resources, recreational land, and affordable housing.

CPA funding is of vital importance to historic preservation in Northborough and has provided approximately \$3.5 million to such efforts. Projects made feasible through CPA funding include physical restoration projects at important Town buildings, historic cemetery delineations, preservation of Town records, historic resources surveys, and acquisition of threatened historic properties (see "Recent Initiatives" below for more information).

Northborough Historical Society

Founded in 1906, the objectives of this organization include:

- Collect and preserve the local and general history of Northborough and the genealogy of Northborough families;
- Ensure the continuous protection of collections; and
- Ensure the accessibility and effective use of collections for cultural and educational purposes.

The Northborough Historical Society and its collections are housed in the National Register-listed former Baptist Church, and its museum is open seasonally and by appointment. As an entirely volunteer operation, the Historical Society maintains an impressive programming calendar, marked by monthly events and speakers that typically draw 50 to 75 attendees. The cataloguing and development of finding aids (i.e., outlines

that support the organization of historical records to facilitate research) for the collections is an ongoing process; a recent finding aid for the Proctor Button and Comb Manufacturing Collection was developed through a grant funded by Mass Humanities.

Northborough Free Library – Local History Room

The Northborough Free Library is another important repository of reference materials related to Northborough’s history. Annual town reports, assessors’ lists, street listings, local histories, bibliographies of prominent family members, as well as the history of the library itself are housed in the Local History Room and are accessible by appointment. As a service to library patrons, the library also maintains a subscription to the popular genealogy website Ancestry.com, which is accessible within the library.

Demolition Review Bylaw, Chapter 2-36

Northborough has a demolition delay bylaw, overseen by the NHDC. Properties at least 100 years old are subject to demolition delay review, and a delay may be administered to properties that are:

- Researched and found by the NHDC to be historically significant, or architecturally significant; or
- Listed on the National Register, included in MACRIS, or listed in a local historic district.

Properties determined to be historically significant may be subject to a demolition delay of up to 180 days. When the 180-day delay is implemented, the Commission will work with the owner and/or developer to identify alternatives to demolition.

Scenic Roads Bylaw, 2-52

This bylaw protects the rural and historic character by establishing a local review procedure for the alteration of stone walls and the cutting and/or removal of trees within public rights-of-way on designated roads. Proposed work will be considered in regard to preservation of historic and natural resources and values, scenic and aesthetic characteristics, public safety, and mitigation. Northborough has the following designated scenic roads:

- Ball Street
- MacAlister Road
- Brewer Street
- Mentzer Avenue
- Brigham Street
- Monroe Street
- Cherry Street
- Newton Street
- Church Street
- Pleasant Street
- Crawford Street
- Reservoir Street
- Davis Street
- Rice Avenue
- Fisher Street
- School Street
- Gale Street
- Summer Street
- Green Street
- Washburn Street
- Howard Street
- West Street

- Hudson Street
- Whitney Street
- Lancaster Drive
- Winter Street
- Maynard Street

Recent Initiatives

As stakeholders in protecting Northborough's heritage, Town entities have celebrated a number of recent major accomplishments. Many of these have been supported through the CPA program, and require the cooperation of several entities and organizations.

- The completion of a historic resources survey of properties over 100 years old, which identified more than 23 individual properties and eight potential historic districts for listing in the National Register.
- The delineation of the Brigham Street Cemetery and survey utilizing ground penetrating radar to locate buried features.
- The restoration of Colonial Era grave markers in the Howard Street Burial Ground, including restoring and resetting headstones and footstones.
- The purchase of the threatened White Cliffs property.
- The preservation of Town records from 1766 to the present.
- Two restoration projects at the Northborough Free Library.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements to the Northborough Historical Society building (the former First Baptist Church).
- Two restoration projects and the creation of a Capital Improvement Plan for the current Town Hall at 63 Main Street.
- The development of guidelines and application forms for design review within the local historic districts.
- Two restoration projects at the First Parish-Unitarian Universalist Church.
- The installation of 15 historic markers throughout the Town.
- A collaboration between the NHDC and the Department of Public Works on the Church Street Bridge replacement.
- The celebration of Northborough's 250th anniversary in 2016.

Natural, Cultural, & Historic Resources Goals

G1

Preserve and enhance the natural landscapes of the community, including farmlands.

G2

Maintain and expand the protection of Northborough’s historic resources including: buildings, structures, landscapes, and documents.

G3

Repurpose surplus Town-owned buildings and facilities for community needs.

G4

Coordinate efforts among cultural, historical, and environmental organizations.

Natural, Cultural, & Historic Resources Recommendations

Goal 1: Preserve and enhance the natural landscapes of the community, including farmlands.

- NCH1-1** Continue to explore adding permanent protections to all Town-owned open spaces.
- NCH1-2** Continue supporting existing local farmlands and promote Conservation Restrictions and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions as a means to protect the Town’s agricultural resources.
- NCH1-3** Evaluate the removal of obsolete dams in order to facilitate habitat restoration and waterfront access.
- NCH1-4** Improve accessibility to information regarding resource protection efforts, successes, and community benefits.
- NCH1-5** Evaluate the potential to increase protection of local floodplains, wetlands, and water resources in order to preserve natural resources and provide hazard mitigation.

Goal 2: Maintain and expand the protection of Northborough’s historic resources including: buildings, structures, landscapes, and documents.

- NCH2-1** Prepare a Historic Preservation Plan for the Town of Northborough.
- NCH2-2** Continue to promote an awareness of Northborough’s history by publishing and facilitating the publication of articles in local community papers and social media, installing history related signage, and collaborating with other town organizations and agencies.
- NCH2-3** Promote the protection of antique properties, which include buildings, structures, documents, artifacts, landscapes, and agricultural lands.
- NCH2-4** Expand the Historic Assets Inventory to include additional resource types, time periods, and geographical locations. Utilize the expanded inventory to identify additional assets for protection.
- NCH2-5** Explore ways to incentivize restoration, rehabilitation, and beautification efforts for historic properties throughout Town.

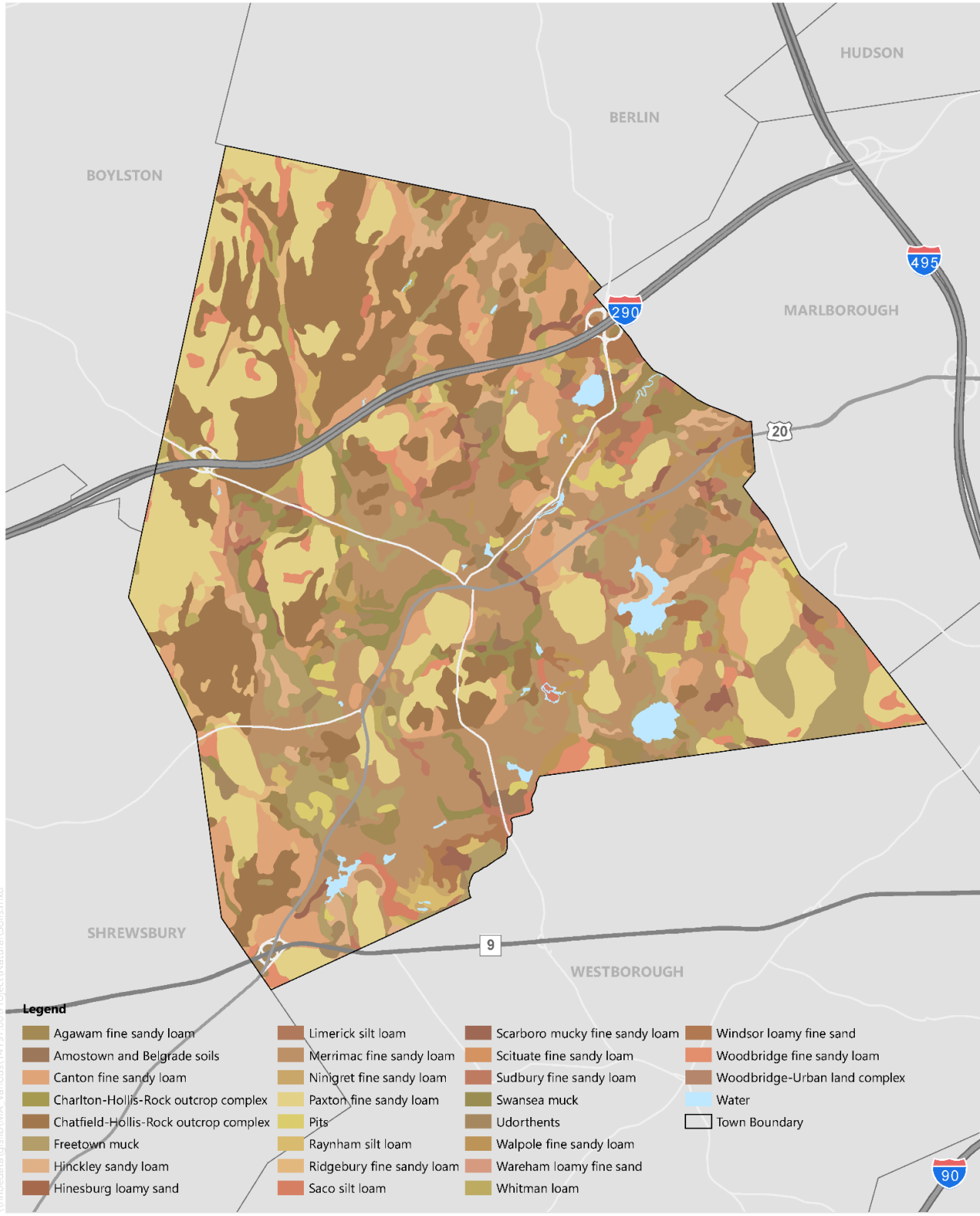
Goal 3: Repurpose surplus Town-owned buildings and facilities for community needs.

- NCH3-1** Identify short- and long-term planning goals for properties such as White Cliffs, Westborough State Hospital, 13 Church Street, Boundary Street, and 4 West Main Street (the Old Town Hall site).
- NCH3-2** Where appropriate, utilize surplus municipally-owned properties as community spaces while reuse studies are in progress.
- NCH3-3** Identify and support reuse efforts for Town-owned historic properties, prioritizing future use by the Town, community groups, and cultural organizations.

Goal 4: Coordinate efforts among cultural, historical, and environmental organizations.

- NCH4-1** Continue cooperating with local organizations and committees for the education and preservation of our historical heritage. These groups include: the Northborough Historical Society, Northborough Free Library, Northborough Trails Committee, Northborough Open Space Committee, Housing Partnership Committee, as well as schools, religious organizations, and local businesses.
- NCH4-2** Evaluate the potential of becoming a Certified Local Government, which will allow Northborough to participate directly in the review and approval of National Register nominations, as well as provide additional access to preservation funding and technical services, improve coordination with the planning and building departments regarding notifications of potential antique demolitions, and prompt investigation of zoning changes to promote antique property restorations.
- NCH4-3** Work with the Downtown planning/revitalization committee to avoid and mitigate potentially adverse impacts on historic homes along Main Street and neighboring streets.
- NCH4-4** Investigate opportunities to hire interns who have an interest in natural, historic, and cultural resources to support our local preservation projects, which will include seeking possible funding sources.

Figure 3-1 Soil Types



0 0.45 0.9 1.8 Miles

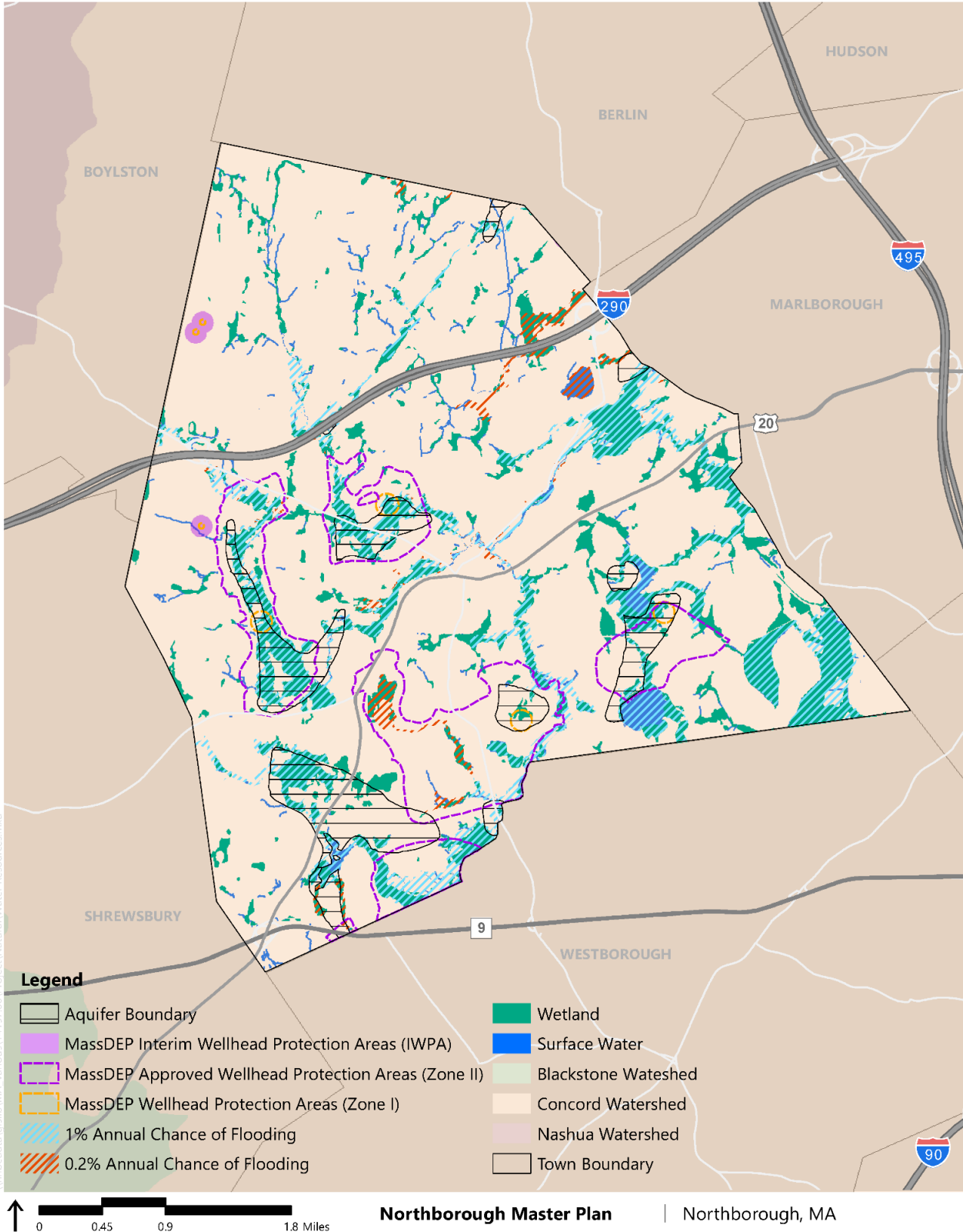
Northborough Master Plan

Northborough, MA

Source: Town of Northborough, MassGIS, VHB

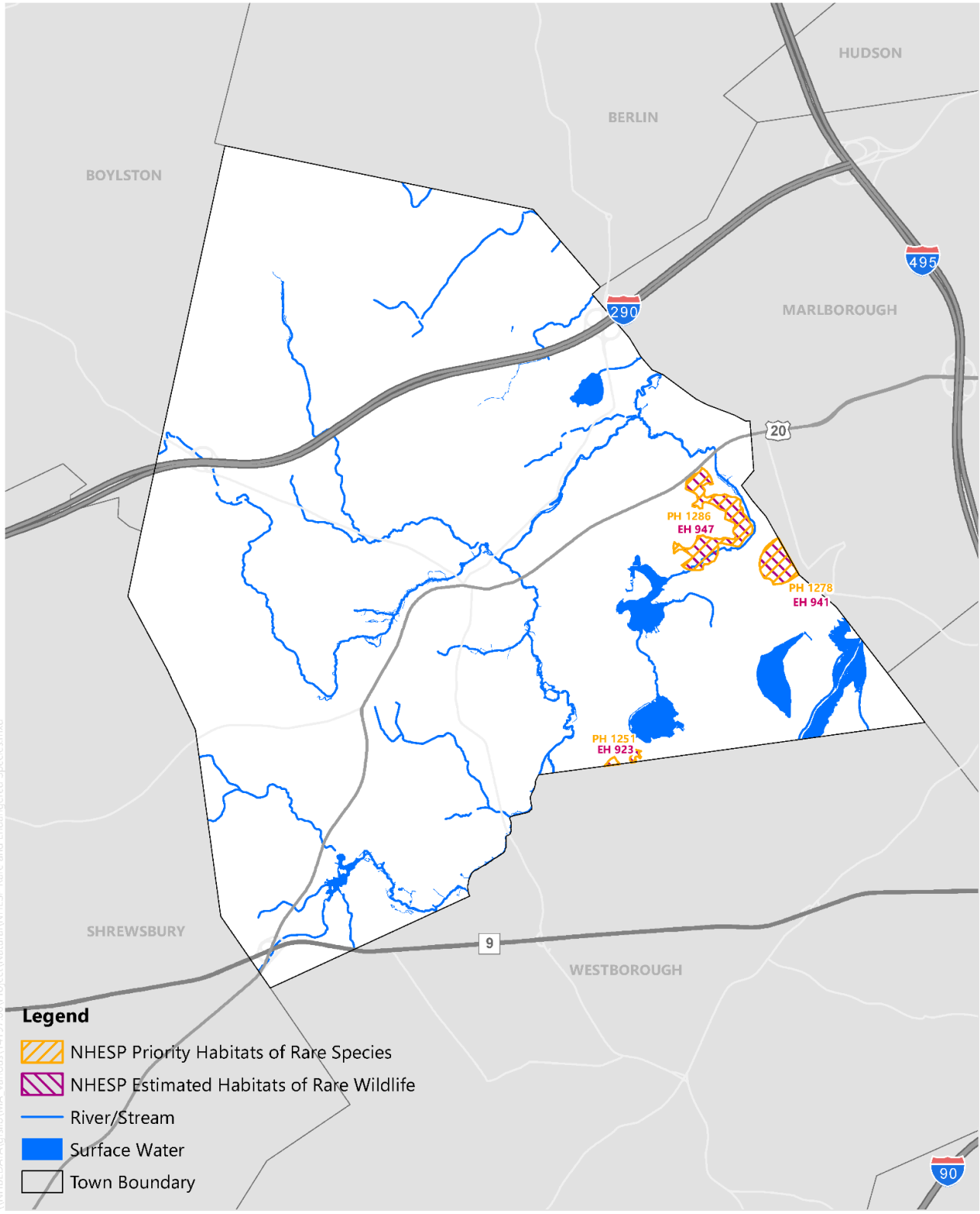
Soils Types

Figure 3-2 Water Resources



Source: Town of Northborough, MassGIS, VHB

Figure 3-3 NHESP Rare and Endangered Species



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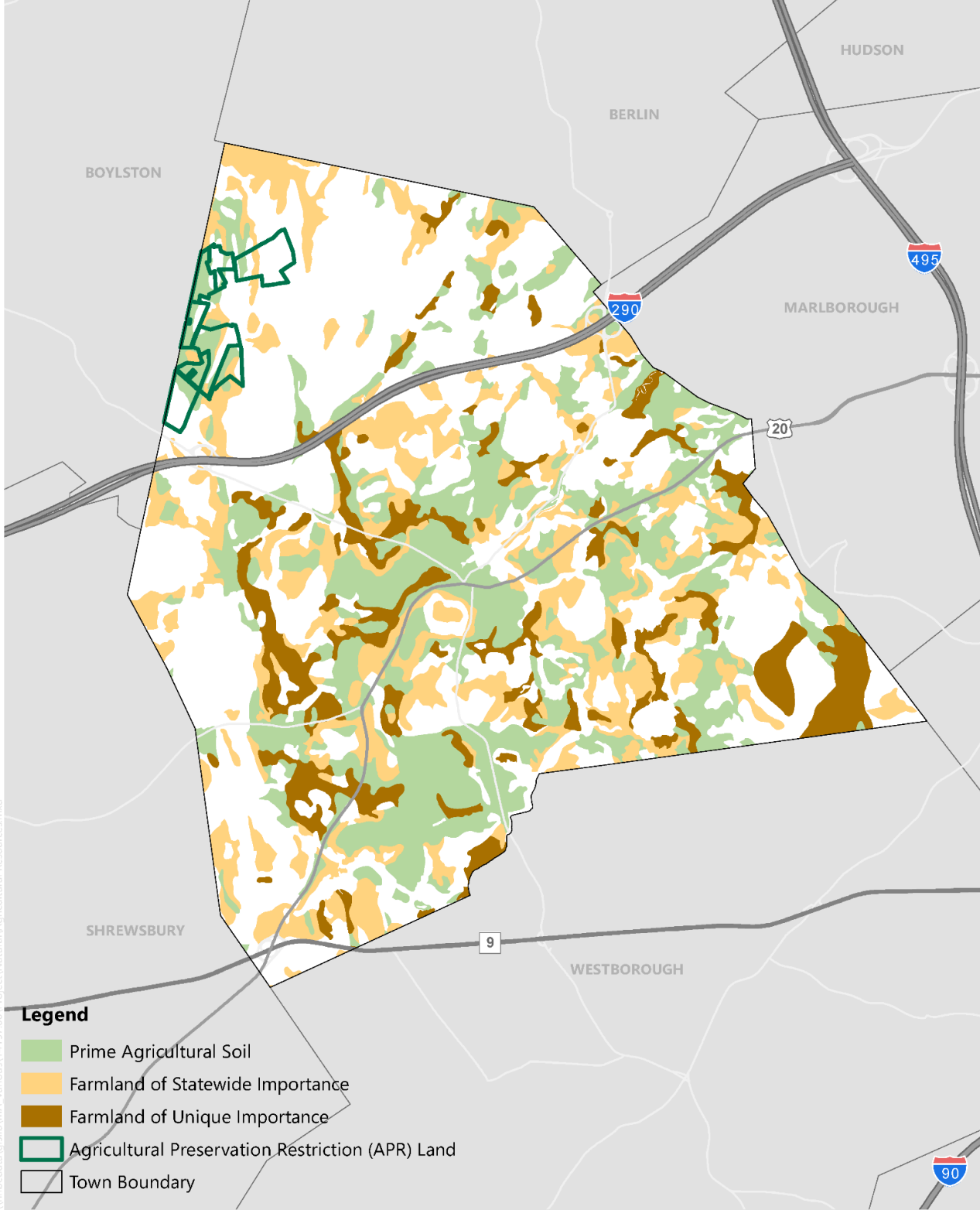
0 0.45 0.9 1.8 Miles

Northborough Master Plan | Northborough, MA

Source: Town of Northborough, MassGIS, VHB

NHESP Rare and Endangered Species

Figure 3-4 Agricultural Resources

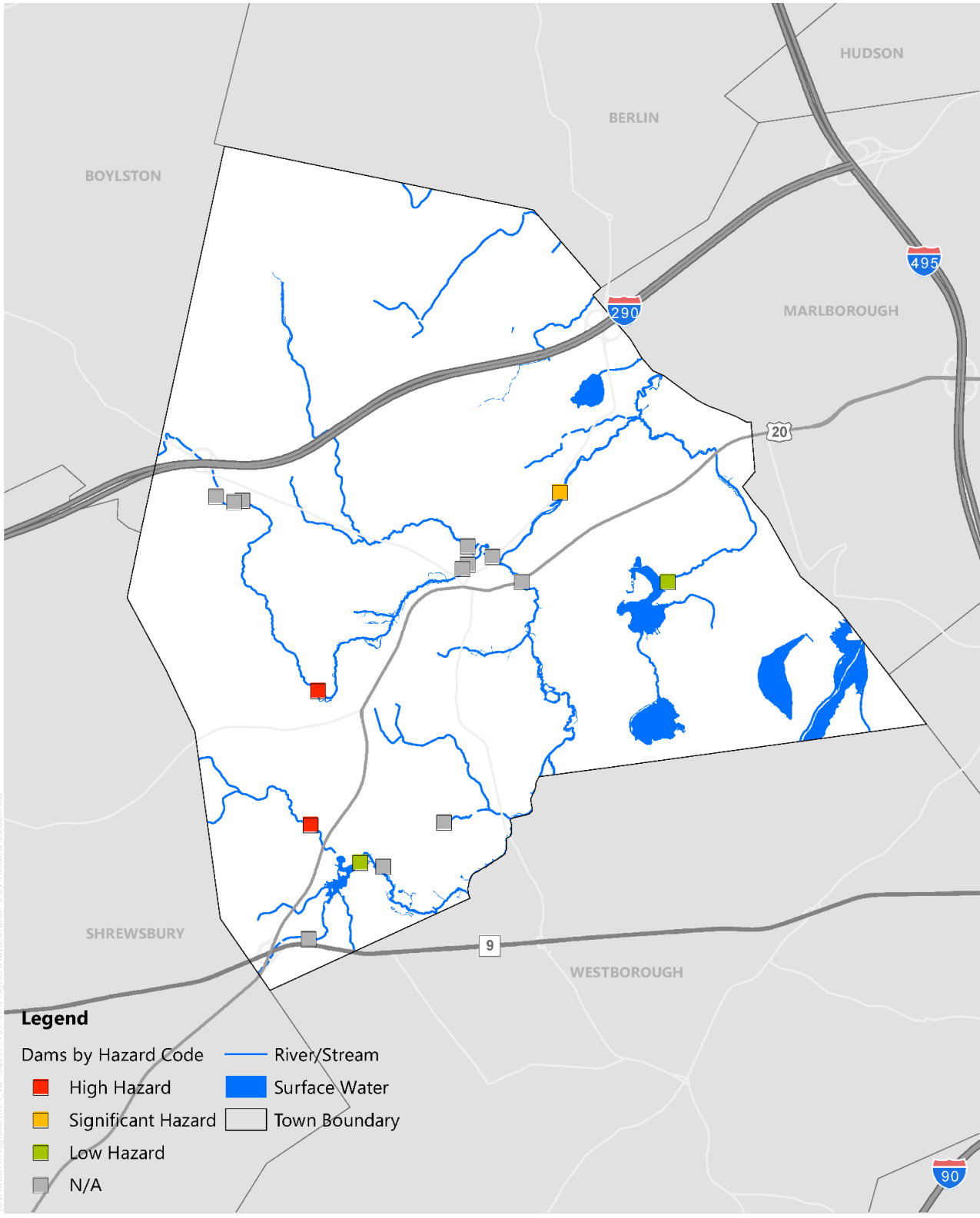


Northborough Master Plan | Northborough, MA

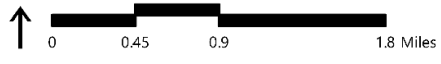
Source: Town of Northborough, MassGIS, VHB

Agricultural Resources

Figure 3-5 Location of Dams by Hazard Code

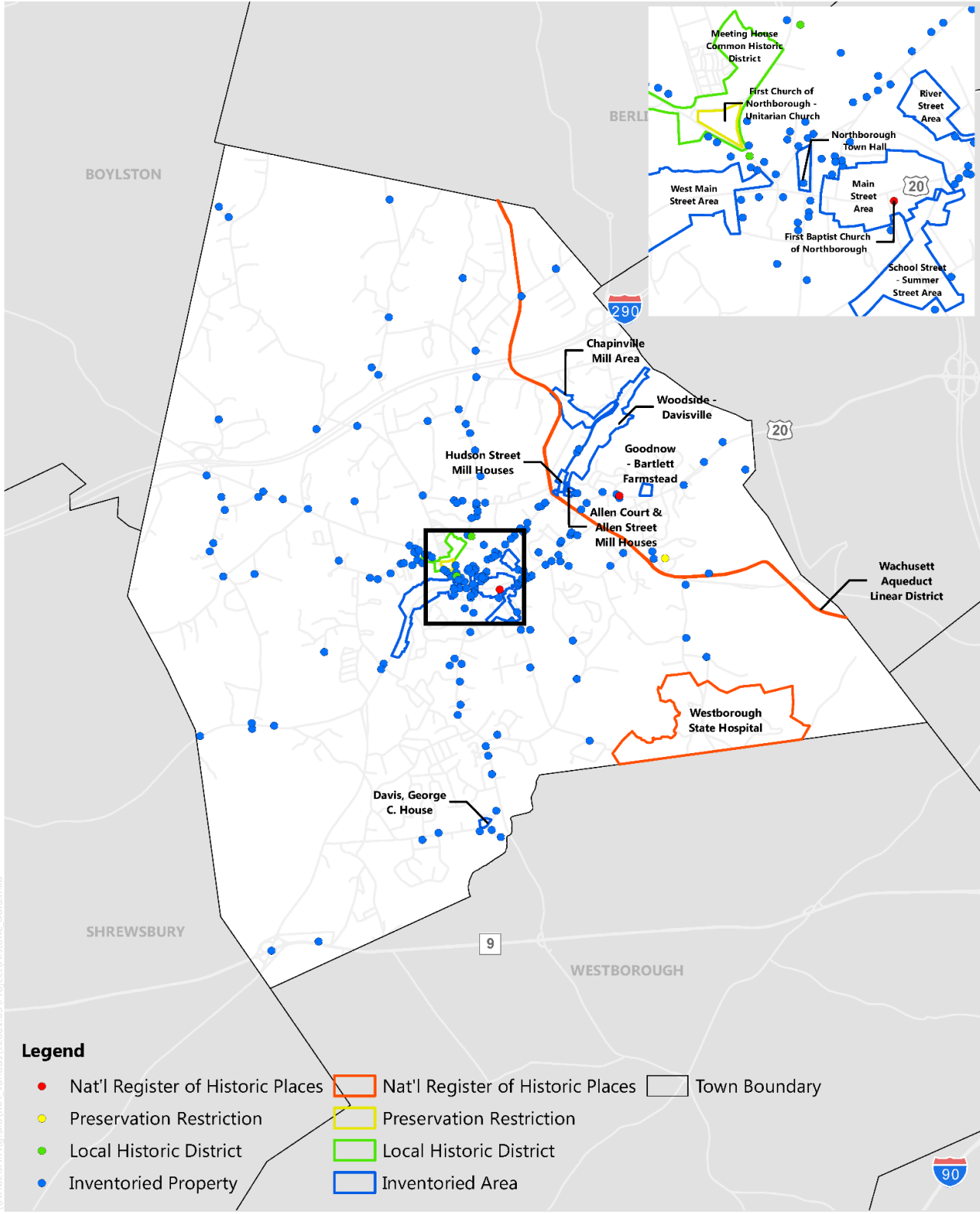


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Source: Town of Northborough, MassGIS, VHB

Figure 3-6 Historic Resources



Legend

- Nat'l Register of Historic Places
- Preservation Restriction
- Local Historic District
- Inventoried Property
- ▭ Nat'l Register of Historic Places
- ▭ Preservation Restriction
- ▭ Local Historic District
- ▭ Inventoried Area
- ▭ Town Boundary

