



History & Archaeology

The history of York is a key characteristic of the town that is important to residents and supports the town's tourism economy. While historic districts and national/local landmark status help protect historic resources, York lacks a centralized and well-funded advocacy organization coordinating all efforts around historic preservation. There is limited capacity to expand protection and education efforts, and to offer technical assistance and other resources to owners to encourage preservation and restoration efforts.

This topic includes...

- The history of settlement and development of the land the Town of York occupies
- Important historical and archaeological resources and sites within York
- Protection and management of historic resources in York
- What the community said
- Key takeaways

A Note about Terminology

This Comprehensive Plan uses the term “historic” to describe the full range of resources, including those before European colonial settlement and before written records. The term “prehistoric” is not used in this plan but instead, the term historic is used in an inclusive manner to include and acknowledge the importance of all human settlement as “history.” The term “prewritten record history” is used to describe resources and history before 1600 and “written record history” to describe from 1600 onward. The use of this language is an attempt to balance the telling of York's stories and history; much of the Native American history of the town was never written down but survived as oral history.

The term “precontact” is also used to describe the period of Native American inhabitation on the land that is now York, prior to European settlers taking the land and displacing native populations.



Historical and Archaeological Resources

The Town of York has a rich and long history of settlement by Native American populations who called this area home before and during the early colonial era. The land where York is settled was inhabited for thousands of years by native peoples who were displaced and whose land was taken from them by European settlers in the 1600s. While some of this long history of habitation remains visible, such as the buildings at the Old York Historical Society, many structures and other resources have been lost to time -- either destroyed, buried under land, or submerged under water. For this reason, these rich resources are described in state and other maps and documents as both historic and archaeological, where historic represents those resources that exist today and archaeological may include anything that could be underground, or in cellars or as foundations of buildings that are no longer standing. Archaeological sites are often discovered through research of historical documents or through finding artifacts in the soil or under water.

Archaeological sites can be classified in two varieties. The first variety is Native American or pre-European (precontact) arrival. These sites are often classified as “prehistoric,” since they often date from time before the written historical record and in this Comprehensive Plan we identify this history as prewritten record, although all state and Town maps in this plan use original labels. The second variety includes sites that are Colonial or European-American in nature, for which there are historical records starting around 1600 CE. These are identified in this plan as written record history.

Native American sites include campsites or village locations, rock quarries and workshops, and rock carvings (petroglyphs). While it is believed that there are many sites that remain unknown, areas are identified for potential based on settlement patterns and distance to canoe-navigable water.

Colonial archaeological sites can include cellar holes from old houses, foundations of houses, farm buildings, mills, wharves, and boat yards, as well as near-shore shipwrecks. These sites are often predicted through study of historical documents, deeds, and maps.

A Snapshot of Resources

Today, York is home to varied historic and archaeological resources of many types. There are 23 “prewritten record” and 207 “written record” sites known in the town. Some of these sites are estimated to be five to seven thousand years old. On the National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Parks Service, there are four historic districts and 13 listed buildings that fall within York’s borders. Locally, York has recognized three historic districts with more than 60 properties in total, 18 local historic landmarks, and one historic site.



A Concise History of York¹

York has a rich archaeological, cultural, and historical heritage, with the Native American Abenaki calling the York region home as early as 11,000 years ago. The people and place were referred to as [the] Accomintas, which relates to Agamenticus, both probably English attempts to write the sound of the indigenous word. The land the town occupies is the ancestral land of these Native American residents and part of the former Wabanaki Confederacy. The Native American residents of the land were displaced when European settlers took from them the land we know as York today. Edward Godfrey took this land in 1630 and led European settlement that grew to a town of about 200 people by 1650. The precontact past of Maine can be divided into three major temporal periods: the Paleoindian period, 9,000–7,000 BC; the Archaic period, 7,000–1,000 BC; and the Ceramic (or Woodland) period, 1,000 BC–1600 AD.² Subsequent developments fall within the written record period, with the earliest portion, 1600–1750 AD, known as the Contact period, when local Native American populations came into contact with Europeans and experienced the near collapse of their traditional lifeways due to epidemic diseases and the pressures of Euroamerican settlement and expansion.³

York's history of Euroamerican development began as a fishing village and as an early center of the lumber industry. The Town was originally called Agamenticus, which was derived from the Native American name for what is now the York River. The name was formalized in the Charter of 1641, making Agamenticus the first town chartered in Maine⁴. The Town was renamed Gorgeana in the subsequent Charter of 1642. The name was derived from the name of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, the original proprietor of the Province of Maine. As was then the practice in England, the land of the province was owned by a noble, and Sir Gorges was Maine's noble. Included in the second Charter were provisions for the City of Bristol. Though Bristol never developed as a city, this is the oldest city charter in New England.⁵ In 1652, the Town was re-incorporated as York when the Province of Maine was annexed by the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

York served as the county seat for York County after annexation by the Massachusetts Bay Colony. There was some contention about this, but it apparently was affirmed by a court decision in 1718. York County in those days included the entire Province of Maine (until 1760),

¹ The history in this section is sourced and adapted from the *York Comprehensive Plan Historical and Archaeological Resources Chapter* (2005) with some additions sourced from *Archaeological Survey of the York River Headwaters: A Community Approach for Identification and Management*, as well as additional information researched by the consultant.

² Hudgell, Gemma-Jayne, et al. *Archaeological Survey of the York River Headwaters: A Community Approach for Identification and Management*. 2017. Prepared for the York River Study Committee.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Banks, Vol.1, p.83.

⁵ Banks, Vol.1, p.126.



so this was an important status for the Town. In 1735, the county seat was shared by York and Portland (then known as Falmouth), and this lasted until 1760 when Cumberland and Lincoln Counties were split from York County. York remained the sole county seat from 1760 through 1802, when York and Alfred shared the seat. The county seat gradually transitioned to Alfred between the years of 1813 through 1832. The reason for the sharing and moving of county seats was for the convenience of remote communities. Given the difficulties of travel in the early years, a central location was important. In an apparent attempt to prevent or delay the shift of the county seat to Alfred, York expanded the Gaol (jail) and constructed the new County Courthouse (York's current Town Hall, completed in 1811).

From 1641 and its Charter, York played an important role in the larger community of the New England colonies. It can be argued that Gorges chartered the City of Gorgeana in an attempt to establish a capital city for England's new territory – a city conceivably on par with London. His grand plans never played out in this manner, but certainly York was the major community in Maine in its early years. It was a center of government and the economy and was relatively prosperous until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Around 1807, the American embargo along the Atlantic coast stifled coastal trade and severely curtailed shipping from York. The forests at the headwaters of the York River had been cleared, and a heavy silt load was being dumped into the river. The extended trade embargo prevented the use of the harbor by larger ships for about half a decade, and during that period the harbor silted in. After the embargo was lifted, the harbor was no longer in condition suitable for use of large ships and trading in York never fully recovered. By the end of the War of 1812, the local economy had collapsed, and didn't begin to recover for many decades. During this same period, the county seat was pulled away to Alfred. York's prosperity and high regard among colonial communities declined.

Slavery in Maine

*"In 1820, the U.S. passed an act that made participation in the slave trade an act of piracy. Yet, dozens of Maine vessels engaged in the slave trade illegally during this period. Thousands of enslaved people were transported and traded, leading to huge profits for slave traders--some of whom were Maine sea captains who are remembered as leading citizens of the day. Much of the millions of dollars from the slave trade funded the growth of New England's economy."*⁶

Because written records are scattered and scarce, the history of Maine's role in the slave trade has been largely invisible until recently. Efforts in the region, including a Kittery author's recent book, "Lives of Consequence,"⁷ are revealing more information about the

⁶ <https://www.mainepublic.org/show/maine-calling/2020-02-17/maines-role-in-the-slave-trade-little-known-history-of-slave-trading-in-new-england>

⁷ <https://blackheritagetrailnh.org/new-book-reveals-lost-history-of-slavery-in-maine-2/>



roles of important local families, merchants, and seamen in the slave trade. These efforts are examples of how the understanding of York's history is ever evolving.

York remained a small farming and fishing community until the post-Civil War period, when summer tourism began to broaden York's economy. During the late 1800s, as cities in the northeast industrialized and rail transportation made the York region more accessible to a larger segment of the population, tourism became a major industry and York became a fashionable summer resort by the early 1900s. Visitors to York appreciated the community's coastal location, its historic nature, and the beauty of both the coastal and riverine areas. To this day, York continues to be a haven for summer tourists and the town has also evolved into a year-round community, with tourism remaining a key economic driver. Significant population growth began in York following World War II, and it continues to affect the Town today.

History of York Timeline

- Paleoindians believed to arrive in this region about 11,000 years ago
- York and the region are home to members of the Wabanaki Confederacy
- Maine coast visited by Europeans – late 1500s to early 1600s
- Abenaki population displaced (many fled to Canada)⁸ and disease killed many of the local people between 1616 and 1619. Those not ill fled from disease or died due to conflict with Europeans. In 1623, what became York was reported to be abandoned. – from late 1500s onward
- First European Settler in York – 1630
- Present-day York incorporated as Agamenticus City in first Charter – 1641
- Agamenticus renamed Gorgeana in new Charter – 1642
- York Charter adopted following the Massachusetts takeover – 1652
- Abenaki Candlemas Raid burned York to ground – 1692
- Sewall's Bridge built over the York River - 1761
- American Revolution – 1775 to 1783
- President Jefferson Embargo Act – 1807
- Maine becomes a state – 1820
- County Seat completely shifted to Alfred – 1832
- Boston and Maine Railroad Corporation developed station in York Beach – 1906
- Atlantic Shore Railway develops stop in York Beach – 1912
- York Harbor and Beach Railroad Company is acquired by Boston and Maine Railroad Corporation - 1923
- York Harbor and Beach Railroad opened in 1887 and ran until acquired by Boston and Maine Railroad Corporation in 1923



- Street Trolley service provided by the Portsmouth, Kittery and York Electric Street Railroad, and Atlantic Shore Electric – 1897
- Establishment of York Harbor Village Corporation – 1901
- Establishment of York Beach Village Corporation – 1901
- Establishment of York Hospital - 1906
- All rail and street trolley service in York (to York Beach and York Harbor) ceases - 1923
- York Harbor Village Corporation enacts zoning – 1926
- Establishment of York Water District – 1929
- York Beach Village Corporation enacts zoning – 1939
- Opening of the Maine Turnpike through York – 1947
- Establishment of York Sewer District – 1951
- Town of York enacts zoning – 1962
- Termination of York Harbor Village Corporation – 1975
- Termination of York Beach Village Corporation – 1977

Historic Settlement Patterns

Over time the settlement patterns of York have shifted, favoring different areas as the prominent industry changed from boat-based to tourism-based businesses. Little remains of original colonial structures, but the patterns of historic settlement are still evident today. The concentration of smaller scale commerce and higher density buildings in the Villages, primarily in the regions along the York River and the coast (east of Route One), is one example of how today's land use and reflects historic settlements.⁹

Protection & Management of Historic Resources in York¹⁰

Federal

Title 54 of the United States Code is an aggregation of the general laws pertaining to the National Park Service. Enacted in 2014, it is broken down into three subtitles, with Subtitle III pertaining to Historic Preservation. Title 54 covers such things as the definitions and requirements for the National Register of Historic Places, State historic commissions, historic grants, and other information that regulates or provides assistance around historic preservation.

State¹¹

Maine's subdivisions statute (30-A MRSA 4401-4407) recommends review of impact on "historic sites" (Section 4404(8)), which includes both National Register listed and eligible

⁹ Adapted from the York Comprehensive Plan Historical and Archaeological Resources Chapter (2005).

¹⁰ Some information is adapted and Updated from the York Comprehensive Plan Historical and Archaeological Resources Chapter (2005).

¹¹ Information adapted from Archaeological Sites: Guidelines for Growth Management Planning (2013).



buildings and archaeological sites. Maine's Shoreland Zoning statute (38 MRSA 435-449) includes, as one of its purposes, "protect archaeological and historic resources" (Section 435). The state recommends that local growth management planning consider archaeological site protection for both of these statutes. Recommendations also suggest that subdivision or other construction review ordinances might contain language indicating applicability and subdivision plan requirements similar to the following:

"If there are archaeological sites within or adjacent to the proposed [subdivision, or other construction] which are either listed in or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or the proposed [subdivision or construction] is within or adjacent to an area designated as archaeologically sensitive or potentially containing such sites, as determined by the municipality or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, an appropriate archaeological survey shall be conducted."

"If one or more National Register eligible or listed archaeological sites will suffer adverse impact, appropriate mitigation measures shall be proposed in the subdivision plan and submitted for comment to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission at least 20 days prior to action being scheduled by the Planning Board."

York's Zoning Ordinance contains the recommended language from the state for protecting historical and archeological resources.

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) is the state agency responsible for historic and archaeological resource issues. It was created in 1971 pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. As described on its web page, the MHPC has the following overall responsibilities: "oversees the statewide survey program, nominates properties to the National Register of Historic Places, reviews development activities for their effect on cultural resources, co-ordinates rehabilitation projects under the Preservation Tax Incentives Program, assists local governments in survey work and the design of preservation guidelines, and is involved in a variety of public education activities."

Local

Zoning regulations as well as the Historic District Commission and organizations in York serve to protect York's historic resources and promote awareness and education about the history of the area.

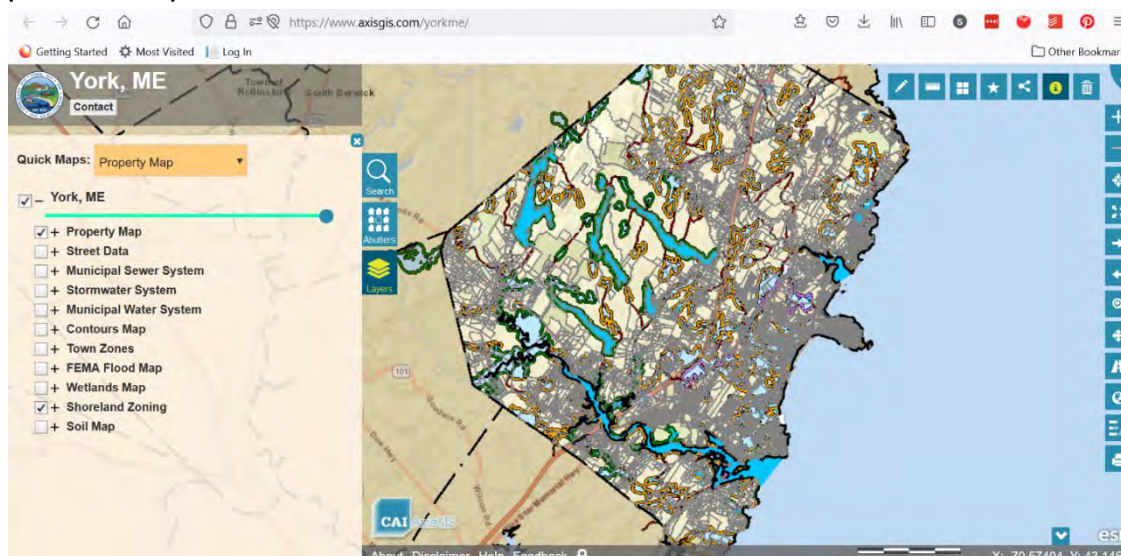


Zoning

All prehistoric archeological sites in York are found along the shoreline of either tidal water or ponds. To protect these sites from new construction, the Town established a 100-foot structure setback as part of the Shoreland Overlay District. The York Zoning Ordinance (8.3.7) sets guidelines for development that occurs in areas determined by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) to be in known or sensitive historic and prehistoric archaeological areas. In addition, any development in the Shoreland Overlay District must also follow these guidelines if archaeological items are discovered. If artifacts are known to be on site, the MHPC and the applicant for the development permit may come to an agreement on how to preserve the resource(s).

Section 12.14 of the York Zoning Ordinance also outlines the standards of review of historic properties in terms of renovation, reconstruction, alteration, and demolition. This Ordinance section outlines the process by which the Historic District Commission will oversee these applications and ensure they comply with Commission design guidelines to maintain the character of the district. The Town assists developers and property owners in understanding possible impacts to historic and archaeological resources by providing information in the Town's online map database (Fig. 1). In the Shoreland Zoning Overlay (available by clicking that online map layer), property owners and developers can zoom in to areas of interest and see if there are masked locations indicating all known archaeological sites. The town developed this mapping system in collaboration with MHPC to offer information to interested parties at the beginning of a building/renovation/improvement project without divulging specific information on sites and to streamline the process by offering early information without the need to contact the MHPC.

Figure 1. Town of York Map Online Database with Shoreland Overlay Zoning District (Screenshot)



Source:

<https://www.axisgis.com/yorkme/> accessed 1/24/22. The full map is provided later in this document.



Historic District Commission

The Historic District Commission (HDC) is a volunteer board governed by York Zoning Ordinance 12.2 with duties that include preservation of historic and archaeological resources. York's HDC was created in March 1985, when citizens at Town Meeting enacted the Historic District Ordinance. The purpose of the Ordinance, now an article of the Zoning Ordinance, is to provide a legal framework within which York's residents can protect the historic, architectural, and cultural heritage of historically significant areas, landmarks, and sites in the community. It is the Commission's responsibility to carry out this purpose, and it functions as both a regulatory and an educational body.

The HDC is also one of ten Certified Local Governments (CLG). The CLG program is designed to promote preservation planning and cultural resource protection efforts at the local level that are consistent with state and federal standards and guidelines. In its capacity as a regulatory body, the HDC has authority over the local historic districts and designated landmark properties. There are three local historic districts (Village Center, Lindsay Road, and York Harbor) with 60 properties in total including 18 designated local historic landmarks and one historic site. A total of 76 properties are regulated under this system.

The HDC has the following duties, functions, powers (Ordinance 12.3):

- To assist, advise, and educate owners of historic structures, buildings, or sites, and various departments of the Town of York, on physical and financial aspects of preservation, renovation, rehabilitation, and reuse.
- To assist, advise and educate owners in complying with the requirements of this Article to the extent possible under funding available to the Historic District Commission.
- To work to provide continuing education on historic preservation issues to local citizens.
- To process applications for Certificates of Appropriateness and Certificates of Demolition.
- To serve an advisory role to local government officials regarding local and cultural resources, and act as liaison between local government and those persons and organizations connected with historic preservation.
- To make recommendations for establishing and/or revising historic districts, historic landmarks, or historic sites, to the Selectboard, in accordance with the procedures detailed in Section 12.5. Town of York Zoning Ordinance Revised through May 22, 2021.
- To review all proposed National Register nominations for properties within the town.
- To conduct or initiate a continuing survey of local historic and cultural resources in accordance with Maine Historic Preservation Commission guidelines.
- To establish a schedule of reasonable fees based on notification costs, reviewing costs, and costs of construction.



- To receive fees; to accept grants, appropriations and gifts of money and services; and to use its financial resources to employ clerical and technical assistance, publish educational materials, conduct surveys of properties, or carry out any of its duties.
- To request reports and recommendations from Town departments and agencies and from other organizations and sources, who may have information or can advise on an application or its impact on the district.
- To appoint citizens' committees and testify before other Town boards whenever appropriate.
- To adopt bylaws or additional operating procedures and policy statements consistent with the intention of this Article and state enabling legislation.
- To waive any procedural rule adopted by the Historic District Commission by majority vote upon good cause shown.
- To administer the provision of the Property Tax Refund Program as established herein.
- To take any action necessary or appropriate to implement the purpose and intent of this Article.

Historic Tax Credits

Federal, State, and Local Historic Tax Credits are available for eligible work for historic properties.

- Local historic tax credits (10% of project cost of eligible work or total tax bill, whichever is less) are available for work on buildings in a local historic district, or designated as landmarks in York Zoning Article 12.16 Property Tax Refund Policy. The credits apply to work on any type of building and work must be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Structures. Eligible work includes maintenance of the historic fabric by rehabilitation, restoration, or preservation of the building.¹²
- State Historic Tax Credits¹³ offer a 20% tax credit to the developers of buildings on the National Register of Historic Places that undergo renovation and reuse. These tax credits are only available for income-producing historic properties for commercial or residential purpose (not private homes for use by the owner). The developer/owner gets the tax credit over the period of 5 years.

York Historic Markers Committee

This Committee was initially appointed by the Selectboard on May 10, 1994 to increase public awareness and appreciation of historic places in York. To accomplish its mission, the Committee placed interpretive displays at key locations, focusing primarily on sites of interest from the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Town has allocated funds to the Historic District

¹² Town of York Zoning Code, 12.16 Property Tax Refund Policy.

¹³ More information can be found at: <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/rehabilitation-credit-historic-preservation-faqs>



Commission and to Parks & Recreation for marker maintenance although little to no funds have been expended to date. The Committee's role is to undertake all tasks associated with creation and installation of the markers, including research, graphic layout, fundraising, contracting fabrication and installation, and maintaining. While not formally disbanded, this committee has been inactive for many years. The Committee has placed historic markers at the following locations:¹⁴

- York Street, across from Town Hall
- Fleet Bank at the Town Square in York Village
- York Street at the James Erwin Building in York Village
- Barrell Mill Pond near Wiggly Bridge
- Long Beach along U.S. Route 1A at the Sun & Surf Restaurant
- Sayward-Wheeler House
- Moulton Park in York Harbor
- Hartley Mason Reservation in York Harbor
- Harbor Hill in front of the York Harbor Inn

Old York Historical Society

The Old York Historical Society is a private, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to preserve and promote the history of York for the education and enjoyment of the public. Old York maintains ten historic museum buildings on six properties in York Village, open to the public for tours from June through mid-October. These buildings are furnished with items from Old York's collections of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artifacts, most of which have been donated by local families. Old York offers educational programs as well as a library and archives that include:

- Collections focused on the history of York Village, York Harbor, York Beach, and Cape Neddick.
- Personal papers of local civic and business leaders, deeds, town and church records, account books and business records, and photographs.
- Over 7,000 printed books and pamphlets about York history and related subjects.
- Rare book collection including memoirs, early textbooks, sermons, Sunday school books, and novels from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.
- Manuscripts including diaries, scrapbooks, and architectural drawings.
- Over 10,000 photographs.

The York Public Library

The library offers resources on local history and genealogy¹⁵ and occasionally offers programs and exhibits pertaining to the town's history. Resources include:

¹⁴ The Town Manager's office has a full inventory of markers installed since 2007.

¹⁵ <https://yorkpubliclibrary.org/resources/local-history/>



- History of York
- Cemetery records
- Digital maps of York
- Family histories
- Vital records

Historic and Archaeological Resources in York

National Historic Resources

In the National Register of Historic Places, maintained by the National Park Service, there are four historic districts and 13 historic landmarks listed (Fig. 2 and Table 1). Two of the four listed districts take the form of traditional multiple-site districts and two are single-site districts. Areas of national significance for each district are:

- **Boon Island Light District:** engineering, transportation
- **Brave Boat Harbor Farm:** architecture, landscape architecture
- **York Cliffs Historic District:** architecture
- **York Center Historic District:** commerce, exploration/settlement, politics/government, entertainment/recreation

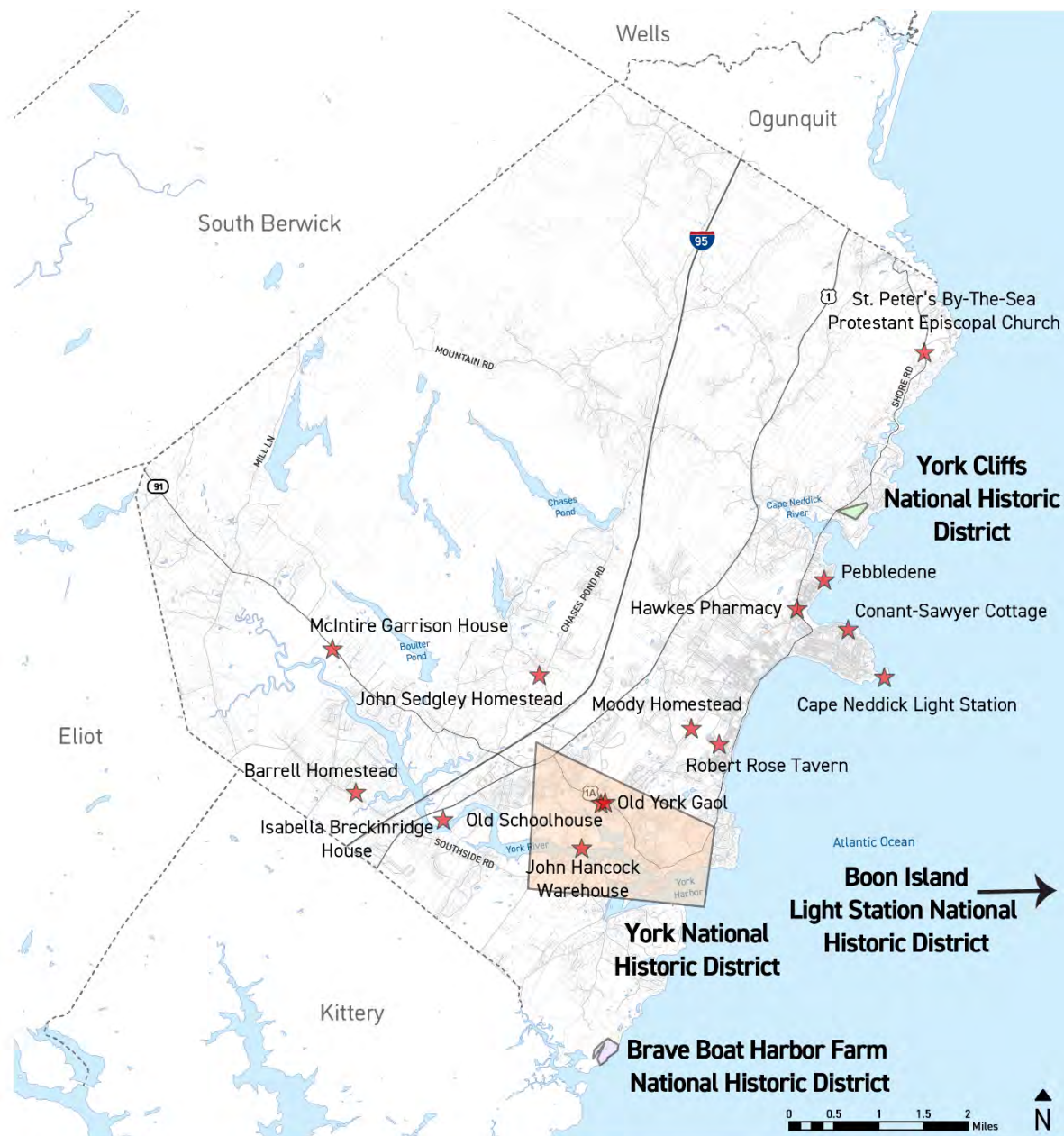


Left: Boon Island Light Right: Brave Boat Harbor Farm

Sources: Left photo: <http://www.uscg.mil/history/web/lighthouses/LHME.asp> Right photo: <http://www.gardenclubbackbay.org/tag/braveboat-harbor-farm/>



Figure 2. National Historic Resources in the Town of York



Data Sources: National Register of Historic Places, National Parks Service (September 2020), Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset. Map created by CivicMoxie.






-  National Register Historic Listing
-  York Cliffs National Historic District
-  York National Historic District
-  Brave Boat Harbor Farm National Historic District
-  Boon Island Light Station National Historic District (Not Pictured)



Table 1. National Historic Districts and Landmarks in the Town of York

Name	Type	Address
Boon Island Light Station	District	Boon Island
Brave Boat Harbor Farm	District	110 Raynes Neck Rd.
York Cliffs Historic District	District	Agamenticus Ave.
York Historic District	District	Roughly U.S. 1, U.S. 1A, ME 103 and Woodbridge Rd.
Barrell Homestead	Building	W of York Corner on Beech Ridge Rd.
Breckinridge, Isabella, House	Building	Off U.S. 1
Cape Neddick Light Station	Building	Cape Neddick
Conant-Sawyer Cottage	Building	14 Kendall Rd
Hancock, John, Warehouse	Building	Lindsay Rd
Hawkes Pharmacy	Building	7 Main St.
Montre Garrison House	Building	On ME 91 about 5 mi. W of York
Moody Homestead	Building	Ridge Rd
Old Schoolhouse	Building	York St (on the Village Green)
Old York Gaol	Building	4 Lindsay Rd
Pebbledene	Building	99 Freeman St
Rose, Robert, Tavern	Building	Off Long Sands Rd
Sedgley, John, Homestead	Building	N of York Corner on Chases Pond Rd

Source: National Register of Historic Places as of August 2021.

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>



Left: Pebbledene Summer Cottage Right: Conant-Sawyer Cottage

Sources: Left photo: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:YorkBeachME_Pebbledene.jpg Creative

Commons magicpiano Right photo: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ConantSawyerCottage.JPG>

Creative Commons Robn154



To meet National Historic Landmark (NHL) Status, a property must:

- Be of national significance under one or more of the six NHL criteria
- Retain a high degree of integrity

The six criteria for areas of national significance for NHL's are:

1. Be the location of an **event** that had a significant impact on American history overall.
2. Be the property most strongly associated with a **nationally significant figure** in American history.
3. Provide an outstanding illustration of a **broad theme or trend** in American history overall.
4. Be an outstanding example of an **architectural style** or significant development in **engineering**.
5. Be part of a group of resources that together form a **historic district**.
6. Be a property that can provide **nationally significant archeological information**.

Areas of determined national significance for the 13 National Historic Landmarks in York are listed below (Table 2).

Table 2. National Register of Historic Places, Areas of Significance

Name	Area of Significance
Barrell Homestead	military, literature, architecture
Breckinridge, Isabella, House	architecture
Cape Neddick Light Station	transportation
Conant-Sawyer Cottage	architecture, social history
Hancock, John, Warehouse	commerce
Hawkes Pharmacy	architecture
McIntire Garrison House	architecture
Moody Homestead	architecture
Old Schoolhouse	education, architecture
Old York Gaol	architecture
Pebbledene	architecture
Rose, Robert, Tavern	commerce, architecture
Sedgley, John, Homestead	architecture

Source: *National Register of Historic Places as of August 2021.*

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>



State and Local Historic Resources

Historic Districts and Local Landmarks in York

Historical and archaeological resources of local importance are included in the inventory below (Table 3) and shown on the accompanying map (Fig. 3). York's three Local Historic Districts (LHDs) are defined in the York Zoning Ordinance 12.6 (Figs. 4-6).

Table 3. Inventory of Local Historic Districts and Landmarks/Sites in York

Name	Type	Address
Village Center Local Historic District	District	Intersection of York St and Lindsay Rd.
Lindsay Road Local Historic District	District	Lindsay Rd between York River and Barrells Mill Pond
York Harbor Local Historic District	District	Between York St and the York River
Contributing Property	Building	70 Clark Rd
Contributing Property	Building	83 Clark Rd
Contributing Property	Building	77 Clark Rd
Cape Neddick Lighthouse	Building	13 Sohler Park Rd
Joseph Banks House (Also site of Richard Banks House)	Building	112 York St
Contributing Property	Building	31 Long Sands Rd
Contributing Property	Building	25 Sentry Hill Rd
Contributing Property	Building	17 Sentry Hill Rd
Contributing Property	Building	11 Sentry Hill Rd
Trinity Church	Building	546 York St
Contributing Property	Building	2 Norwood Farms Rd
Contributing Property	Building	16 Simpson Ln
Contributing Property	Building	416 York St
Contributing Property	Building	16 Sentry Hill Rd
Contributing Property	Building	450 York St
Contributing Property	Building	5 Orchard Ln
Contributing Property (A.K.A Grant House)	Building	200 U.S. Route One
District Nine Schoolhouse (A.K.A Agamenticus Schoolhouse, razed in recent years)	Building	301A Mtn Rd
Town Farm	Historic Site	178 Long Sands Rd

Source: Town of York Zoning Ordinance



York Historic Sites

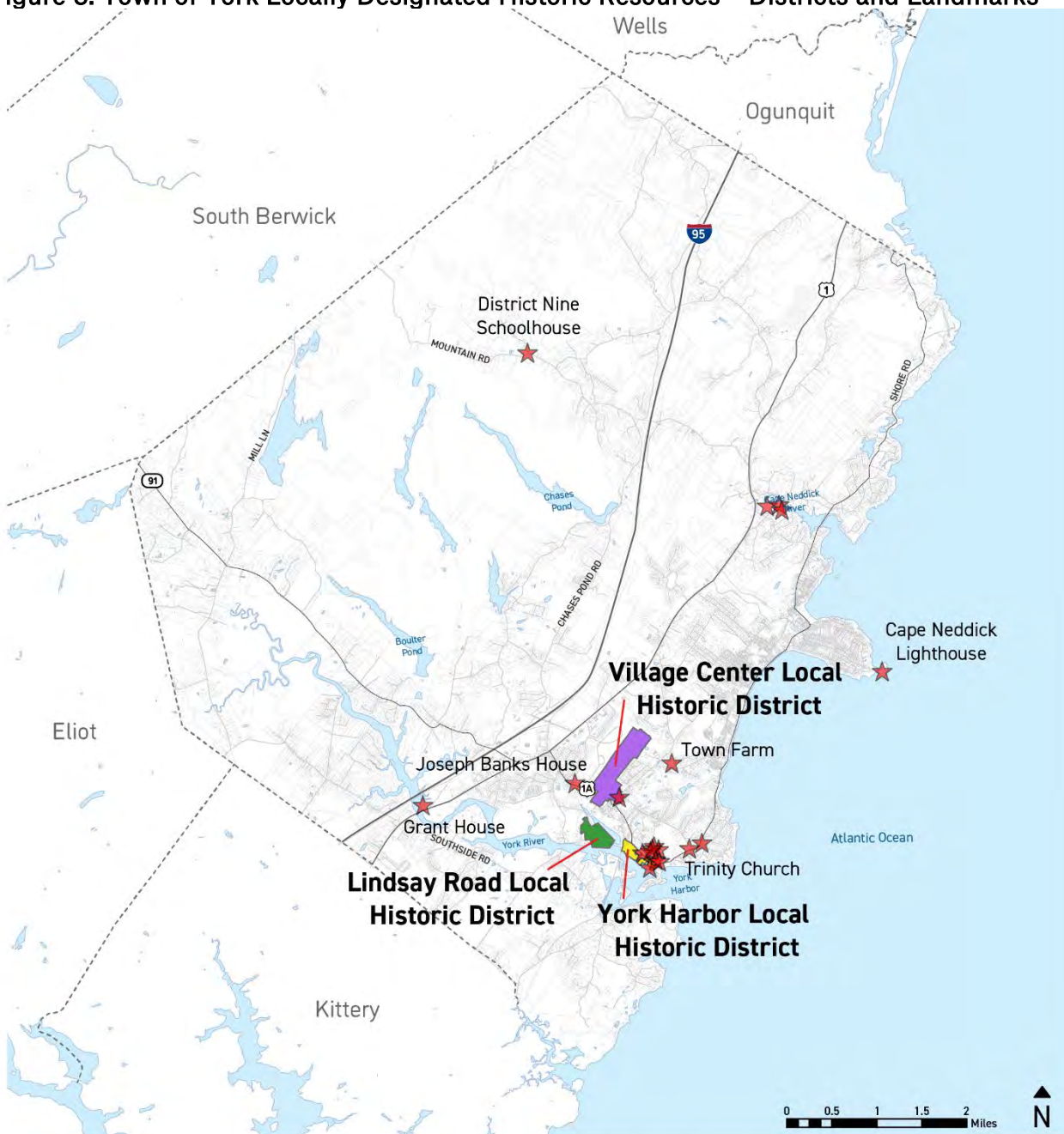
The local historic resources in Table 3 includes one Historic Site which is the Town Farm. This Historic Site (York Zoning Ordinance 12.6) consists of two lots of land owned by the Town of York which were part of the Town Farm, consisting of: the cemetery lot near the corner of Ridge Road and Long Sands Road (no street address or tax lot number, but identified as burial ground #192 in the book, *Maine Cemetery Inscriptions, York County Volume*); and 178 Long Sands Road (0039-0025) as its boundaries existed on May 21, 2011. The Zoning Ordinance states that:

Use and development of this Historic Site shall be limited to: utility lines; farming, including but not limited to the community gardens; historic/archaeological investigation, education and interpretation; and passive recreation, including but not limited to parks and pedestrian paths. Any new use of the site and/or any physical alteration of the site shall require a Certificate of Appropriateness of the Historic District Commission (HDC), except in the following circumstances:

1. Gardening in the existing community garden; and
2. Municipal trail development or maintenance, including any related buildings or other appurtenances not to exceed 500 square feet.



Figure 3. Town of York Locally Designated Historic Resources – Districts and Landmarks



Data Sources: Town of York GIS, Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset. Map created by CivicMoxie.


-  Local Historic Landmark
-  Village Center Local Historic District
-  Lindsay Road Local Historic District
-  York Harbor Local Historic District



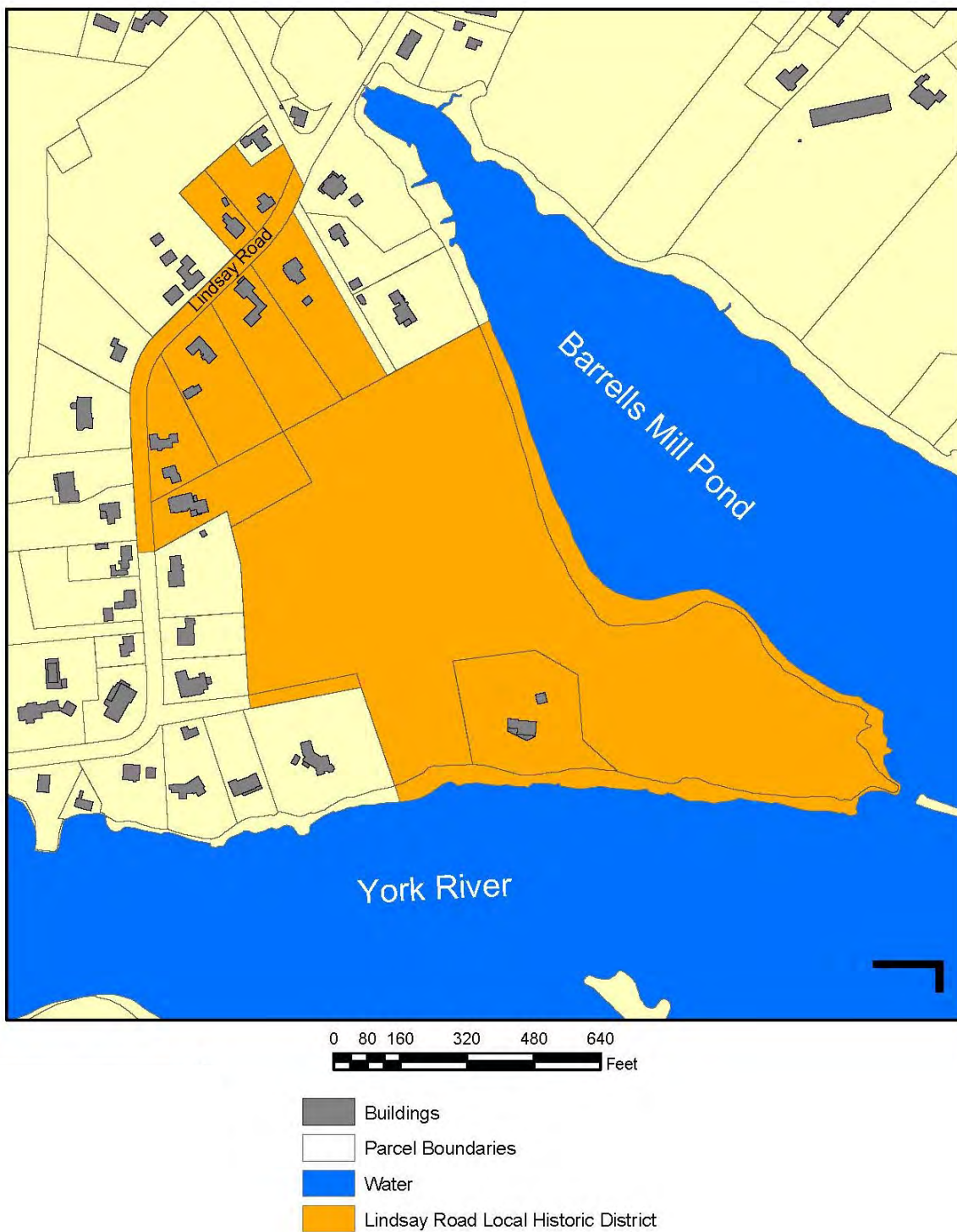
Figure 4. Town of York Zoning Ordinance: Village Center Local Historic District



Source: Town of York Planning Department, 6/17/16.



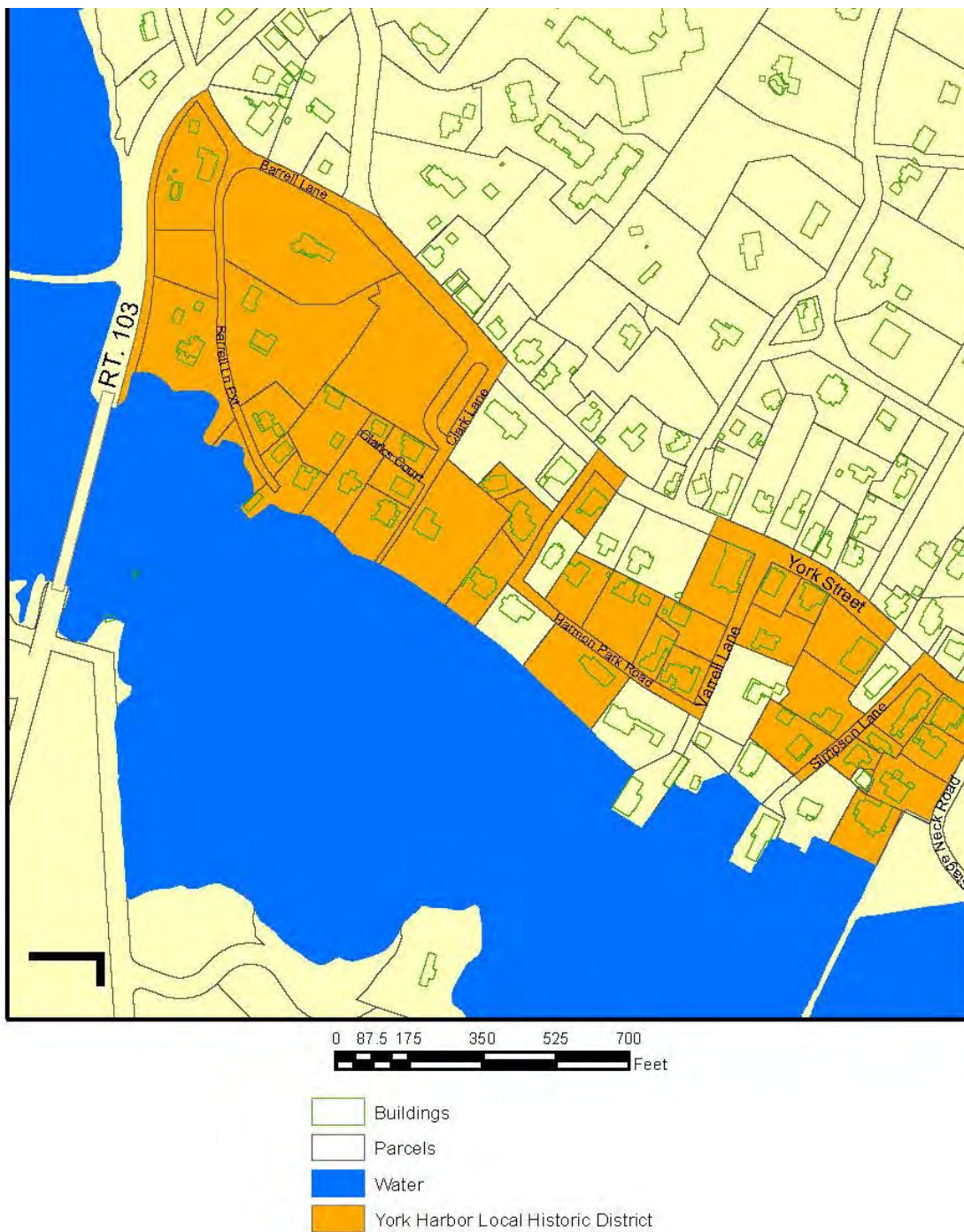
Figure 5. Town of York Zoning Ordinance: Lindsay Road Local Historic District



Source: Town of York Planning Department, 1/31/03.



Figure 6. Town of York Zoning Ordinance: York Harbor Local Historic District



Source: Town of York Planning Department, 9/16/03.



Many of York's local and national landmarks are in private ownership (Table 4).

Table 4. Ownership of Local and National Historic Landmarks in York

Property Name	Address	Owner
Barrell Homestead	71 Beech Ridge Road	Private
Isabella Breckinridge House	244 U.S. Route 1	Private
Cape Neddick Light Station	13 Sohier Park Road	Public: (U.S. Gov't, operated by U.S. Coast Guard)
Conant-Sawyer Cottage	14 Kendall Road	Private
John Hancock Warehouse	136 Lindsay Road	Old Museums of York
Hawkes Pharmacy	7 Main Street	Private
McIntire Garrison House	270 Cider Hill Road	Private
Moody Homestead	100 Ridge Road	Private: Moody descendants
York Corner Schoolhouse	3 Lindsay Road	Old Museums of York
Old York Gaol	4 Lindsay Road	Old Museums of York
Pebbledene	99 Freeman Street	Private
Robert Rose Tavern	298 Long Sands Road	Private
John Sedgley, Homestead	44 Chases Pond Road	Private
Emerson-Wilcox House Museum	187 York Street	Old Museums of York
First Parish Congregational Church	180 York Street	York Hospital
Jefferds Tavern	6 Lindsay Road	Old Museums of York
Perkins House Museum	394 Southside Road	Old Museums of York
Donnell-Hancock Warehouse	136 Lindsay Road	Old Museums of York
George Marshall Store	140 Lindsay Road	Old Museums of York
	70 Clark Road	Private
	83 Clark Road	Private
Preserve/open space	77 Clark Road	Private
Joseph Banks House (also site of Richard Banks House)	112 York Street	Unknown
	31 Long Sands Road	Private
	25 Sentry Hill Road	Private
	17 Sentry Hill Road	Private
	11 Sentry Hill Road	Private
Trinity Church	546 York Street	Trust
	2 Norwood Farms Road	Private
	16 Simpson Lane	Private
	416 York Street	Private
	16 Sentry Hill Road	Private
	16 Sentry Hill Road	Private
	5 Orchard Lane	Private
Grant House	200 U.S. Route One	Town: gifted by Goodrich/Breckenridge family)

Source: National Register of Historic Places and Local Historic Designation. Old York Historical Society. Town of York Assessor Database, 2020.



Lost Historic Landmarks

District Nine Schoolhouse, 301A Mountain Road. (a.k.a. Agamenticus Schoolhouse) was razed in 2015.

Changes to Ownership/Responsibilities

Changes in assumed ownership since the last Comprehensive Plan are noted here as they have a bearing on future land use and responsibility and ownership of historic village properties. On 11/5/19 town voters approved a settlement agreement¹⁶ between the Town of York and First Parish Church to settle disputes regarding ownership of the land in and around the Town Green (Fig. 8). The settlement provided clear ownership of the Village Green land surrounding Town Hall and the church and other land in York Village:

The Town of York gained clear title to:

- Land under the current Town Hall and land for the proposed expansion of Town Hall and parking
- Land under the Old Gaol
- Land under the Remick Barn, Jefferds' Tavern, the Old School House and adjacent parking area (buildings already owned by the Old York Historical Society)

First Parish Church gained clear title to:

- Land under Church buildings, grounds and parking
- First Parish Cemetery
- First Parish Woodlands (land behind Church Cemetery)
- The Ramsdell House property (across from Hospital entrance)
- The Old Burial Yard
- The Emerson Wilcox House property

Prior to this agreement, the Town already owned the Old Gaol and the Old York Historical Society owned the buildings consisting of: the Remick Barn, Jefferds' Tavern, and the Old School House.

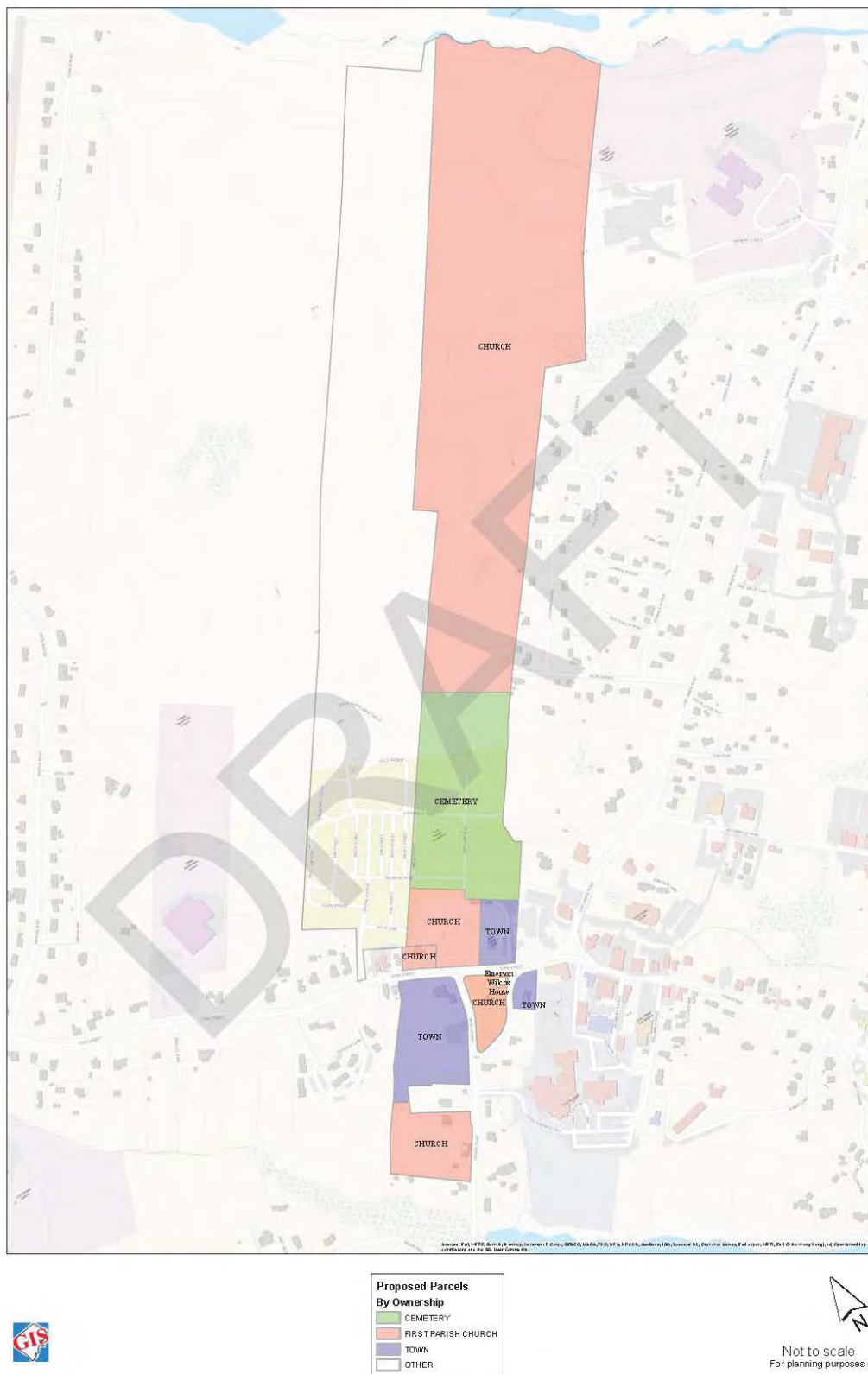
The First Parish Woodlands consist of approximately 65 acres behind Town Hall and stretching to Coastal Ridge Elementary School.

The Town finalized the agreement with First Parish Church in accordance with the draft map (Fig. 7) that was approved by voters, in a Reciprocal Easement Agreement on March 9, 2021.

¹⁶ <https://www.yorkmaine.org/DocumentCenter/View/3227/11-05-2019-Election-Results>



Figure 7. Town of York and First Parish Church Land Settlement Draft Ownership Map, 7/11/19



Source: <https://www.yorkmaine.org/DocumentCenter/View/2861/Proposed-Town-and-Church-Settlement-for-November-2019>



Potential Historic Properties of Significance

Other properties of historic significance exist in York and an overall sense of the possible historic resources can be determined from the Town Assessor Database which indicates the year of construction for all properties in the town. Buildings and other structures must be at least 50 years old to qualify for national status. In York, 75 years is the qualifying age for historic status consideration. It should be noted that age alone is not enough to determine historic status; a structure's significance regarding events, architectural style, engineering, links to political or government events/periods, etc., must be documented and confirmed. In addition, a property may have been significantly altered since the date of construction. Table 5 looks only at age and shows the number of properties in the town in 50-year groupings, from pre-1700 through 1950 and then properties from 1951 through 1972 in acknowledgement that any property over 50 years old (national) or 75 years old (town) qualifies for consideration for historic status if other conditions are met. This list is inclusive of all properties in the town built through 1971; the inventory of historically significant resources in Table 4 would be included in these numbers. The 12 buildings noted in Table 5 as 17th Century are speculative as there are no documented pre-1700 structures in York. The Historic District Commission reviews demolition applications for all structures 75 years or older.

Table 5. Residential Structures in York 50 Years or Older

Year Built	Number of Homes
pre-1700	12
1700-1749	35
1750-1799	39
1800-1849	55
1850 - 1899	388
1900-1922	595
1923-1949	499
1950-1972	1,709
100 years old or older	1,124
50 years old or older	3,332

Source: Town of York Assessor Data, 2019

Condition of Historic Resources

Historic and archaeological resources are all vulnerable to time and a variety of man-made and natural disasters. The preservation of these resources costs significant money due to the natural decay of materials as well as protecting against unforeseen incidents and disasters. A further challenge is that many of these resources are in private ownership, limiting Town control over preservation and conservation methods. Privately-owned properties are also not subject to easements or other restrictions requiring inspection by any Town entity. The condition of these properties can only be generally assessed from observation of their



exteriors and given the lack of resources or purpose for this, most of these conditions are unknown. Table 6 lists resources with known repair needs or recent improvements.

Table 6. List of Known Upgrade Needs or Recent Repairs for Historic Properties in York

Property Name	Address	Condition
Cape Neddick Light Station	13 Sohier Park Road	Recent exterior repairs and painting
Old York Gaol	4 Lindsay Road	Heating system to be installed by Town 2021-22
Emerson-Wilcox House Museum	187 York Street	Needs heating system

Source: Properties from National Register of Historic Places and Local Historic Designation. Information on property conditions provided by Town staff, Historic District Commission, and Old York Historical Society.

Archaeological Resources

Some of the earliest English archaeological sites in the State of Maine are located in York. In the York Harbor and York Village area, three important seventeenth century archeological sites were discovered. One is an early cellar that may prove to be the home of the first permanent European settler of both York and Maine. A second site is that of the Henry Donnell residence of about 1640. Donnell was a leading fish merchant and one of the first residents of York Harbor. The third site in this area is the Second Meetinghouse (1667-1712). In the Cider Hill and Scotland area, there is a major seventeenth century site, Point Christian Manor. It was the seat of government for York and the whole province of Maine during the 1630s and early 1640s. Excavations in 1985 and 1986 indicate it has rich archeological potential. Many of the artifacts have revealed much about life at Point Christian and, by extension, other sites in York.¹⁷

A Note about Mapping Archaeological Resources

Archaeological site locations are protected information in the State of Maine to prevent unauthorized digging and destruction of artifacts. These state maps indicate an area of one square kilometer which contains the known site; these sites are not necessarily located in the center of these squares. The known archaeological site areas, in coordination with the Shoreland Zoning Overlay District, help protect known and unknown archaeological sites since a majority of sites are thought to be along York's waterways.

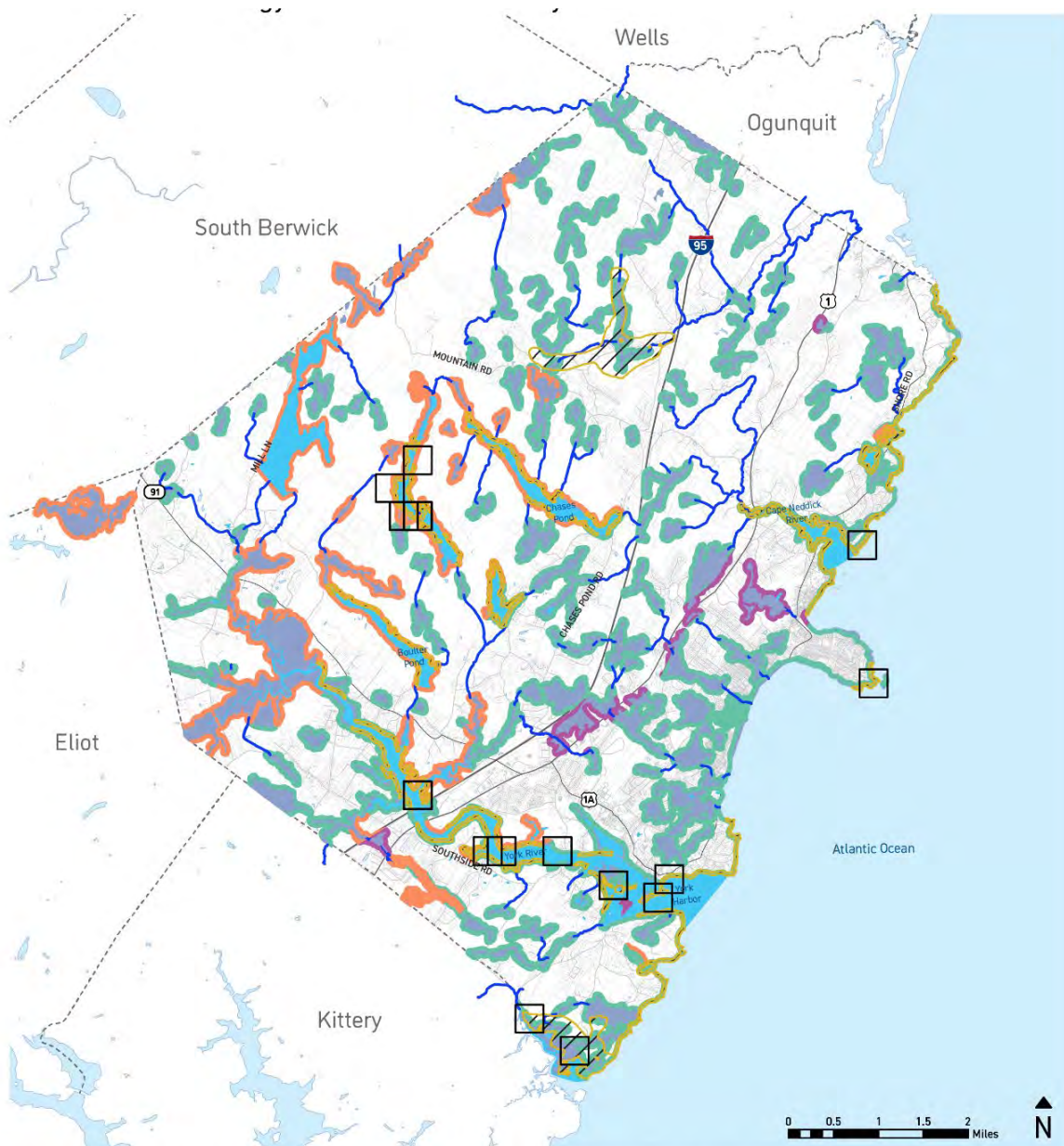
Prewritten Record Sites

There are 23 prewritten record archaeological sites known in York (Fig. 8). Seven are located around Folly Pond (inundated at full pool levels). Ten are located on the shores of the tidal York River. Four are located elsewhere on the tidal coast.

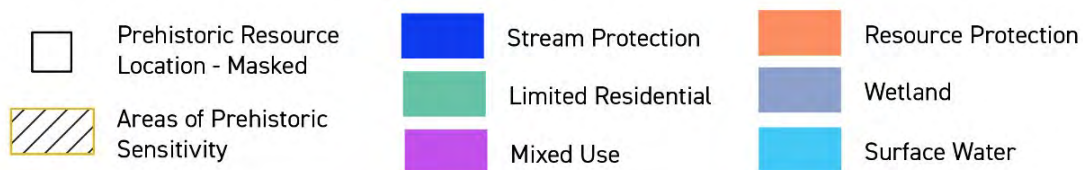
¹⁷ Adapted from Historic & Archeological Resources – Inventory & Analysis November 6, 2007 10
Comprehensive Plan – York, Maine.



Figure 8. Prewritten Record (Prehistoric) Archaeological Sites and Sensitive Areas in York with Shoreland Zoning



Data Sources: Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset. Map created by CivicMoxie.



Note that for the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, “prehistoric” sites are called “prewritten record” sites.



Written Record Sites

To date, a total of 207 written record (historic) archaeological sites¹⁸ have been documented in the town (Fig. 9 on the next page). There are 67 written record archaeological sites that are shipwrecks in the water off the coast of York. Of these, the location of 28 are known while the location of the remaining 39 is unknown.

Short Sands Shipwreck Site

One well-known and dramatic example of an archaeological site in the waters off the coast of York is the shipwreck that may be the vessel, the *Defiance*, a sloop that was wrecked on Short Sands Beach in a violent storm in 1769. The wreck is uncovered once or twice a decade and was last seen on the beach following a storm in February 2018. The area of the shipwreck is under the jurisdiction of the Town of York.



Shipwreck on Short Sands Beach after the Storm of 2018.

Source: Town of York Police Department

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission helped fund a scholarly study of the site for the purpose of understanding more about the origin and history of the shipwreck, and its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. Baseline data in the report is meant to guide “future management of the site and document overall integrity.” The report determines that the Short Sands Shipwreck is likely eligible under three criteria (the wreck must meet at least one of the criteria for eligibility), including:

¹⁸ “Site” means an area containing archaeological artifacts or materials or other evidence of habitation, occupation or other use by historic or prehistoric people. *Maine Legislature Title 27, §373-A: Definitions*



1. **Criterion A:** The wreck is associated with "events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history," including the broad themes of maritime history, transportation, commerce, and agriculture.
2. **Criterion C:** The wreck may possess significance because it embodies "the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction."
 - a. "Under architecture, "It is possible that the shipwreck is an early example of a "pink-sterned" vessel or "pinky". There are no other documented or known examples of a mid-18th-century or pre-Revolutionary War pinky in Maine and New England. It is also potentially a common type of mid-18th-century New England vernacular watercraft for which there are no other examples from this period or type of vessel.
3. **Criterion D:** The [site] has yielded or is likely to yield information important to history through the physical characteristics (or remains) of the vessel providing valuable information about her use, method of construction, and operation. The shipwreck is also a warehouse of environmental data that may contribute to understanding of historic environmental conditions."¹⁹

Report Recommendations

The report includes six recommendations²⁰ to support the "recovery of information before it is lost to vandalism and coastal erosion" and to "encourage stewardship of the wreck site and other coastal archaeological resources:"

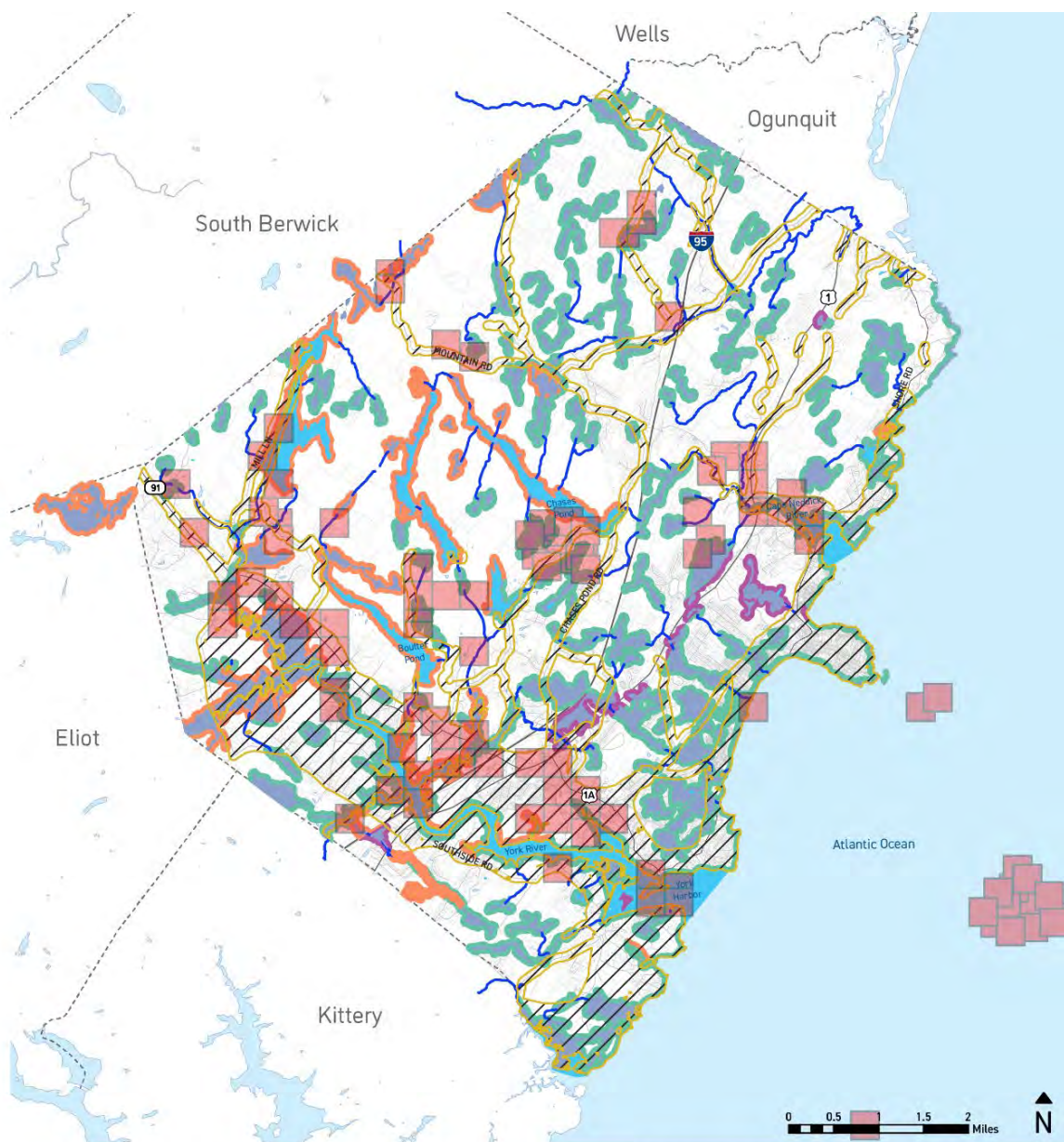
1. Establish local (with Town of York, York Police, and Public Works Department) and state agency Points of Contact (POCs) (MHPC, MEDOT) for communication in the event of future erosion and exposure of the shipwreck site.
2. Develop an archaeological documentation plan and protocols following storm events.
3. Identify protective measures to mitigate future damage to the shipwreck site because of storm erosion or beach replenishment activities.
4. Identify education, outreach, and stewardship opportunities.
5. Nominate the shipwreck site to the NRHP and signpost the site.
6. Review and determine the benefits and costs of excavation, recovery or removal, and *in situ* site preservation. For example, excavation and removal of the wreck site from its setting may make it ineligible for the National Register.

¹⁹ *Short Sands Shipwreck Project Documentation and Analysis Short Sands Shipwreck (ME497-004) York (York County), Maine*, prepared for the Maine Historic Preservation Commission by Nearview, LLC, June 27, 2018.

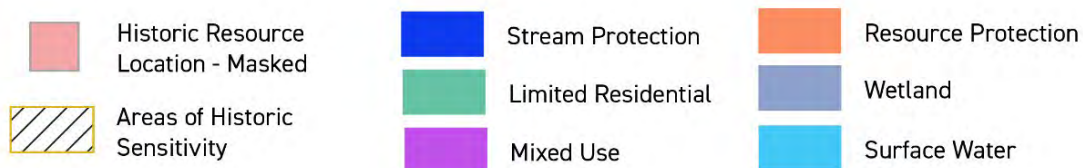
²⁰ Nearview, LLC has made a presentation to the Town of York Selectboard of report recommendations (email from Clearview dated 1/12/22).



Figure 9. Written Record (Historic) Archaeological Sites in York with Shoreland Zoning



Data Sources: Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset. Map created by CivicMoxie.



Note that for the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, “historic” sites are called “written record” sites.



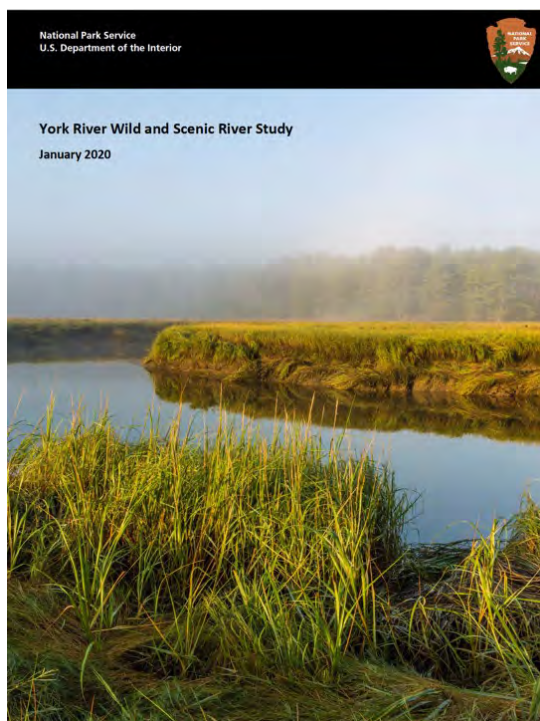
Pending/Proposed Designations

York River Wild and Scenic Designation (*Pending*)

After completion of a three-year study (Fig. 10) led by residents and advocates in York, and the submission of designation legislation application, a key U.S. Senate Subcommittee advanced efforts to designate the York River as part of the National Park System's "Wild and Scenic" Rivers program on 11/18/21. At that time, the Bill was set to head to the Senate for full consideration in the near future as of the publication of this plan.

The York River Wild and Scenic designation, if approved by Congress, would recognize the York River's natural, cultural, and recreational value and direct federal funding and technical assistance for its preservation. Federal money can be used for historic and archeological surveys and preservation efforts and designation will support local efforts to address long-term stewardship for the waterway.

Figure 10. National Park Service "York River Wild and Scenic River Study" Cover





Proposed York Village Center Historic District Expansion (Public Hearings 2019, no town vote)

The York Village Center Historic District proposed expansion (Fig. 11) was brought forth by the Historic District Commission in 2019. This expansion was specified as a goal in the last voter-approved York Comprehensive Plan and was supported by documentation in an intensive Architectural Survey of the area.²¹ The expansion sought to extend the district to the west along York Street to U.S. Route 1, a stretch of road that is one of Maine's oldest streets.

The Planning Board and Selectboard held a series of information sessions and public hearings in 2019.²² After these hearings and meetings, the Selectboard decided not to move the Historic District Expansion Proposal forward to a town-wide vote. However, the concerns and issues that prompted the proposal still remain. While this entire proposed expansion area falls within the York National Historic District, this National Historic District designation does not prevent demolition or significant changes that would alter the historic integrity of a structure. Within this proposed expansion area, only one property has local landmark status, protecting it from demolition or significant alteration on its public facing building elements.

The 2018 Architectural Survey which included the area shown in Fig. 11 below, reported the following findings:

"Though many buildings in the heart of York Village are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, none of the buildings surveyed between the existing district and U.S. Route 1 were identified as being individually listed on the National Register. Approximately 30% of existing buildings in the current survey area meet criteria for individual listing on the National Register. Only about 10% of structures in the surveyed area are "non-contributing" as per National Register requirements. The remaining 60% of surveyed structures meet requirements for "contributing resources" for an expanded York Village Historic District."²³

A report summary of the types of properties in the survey area states:

"The surveyed area encompasses a stretch of road dating to the 1640s, and which today includes existing properties dating from the early eighteenth century to the late twentieth century. The surveyed area is almost entirely small-town residential, with

²¹ *Architectural Survey Report* by Steven C. Mallory, Historic Preservation Consultant for the Town of York, conducted June 21 – September 30 2018. A part of the survey area was not included in the final map of the proposed Village Center Historic District Expansion.

²² February 19, 2020 Record of York Village Historic District Expansion Proposal Public Information Session and Public Hearings September 25, October 2, and October 30, 2019.

²³ Ibid. p. 3.



short sections of commercial real estate at the extreme east and west ends and one rural property in the midst of the survey area.

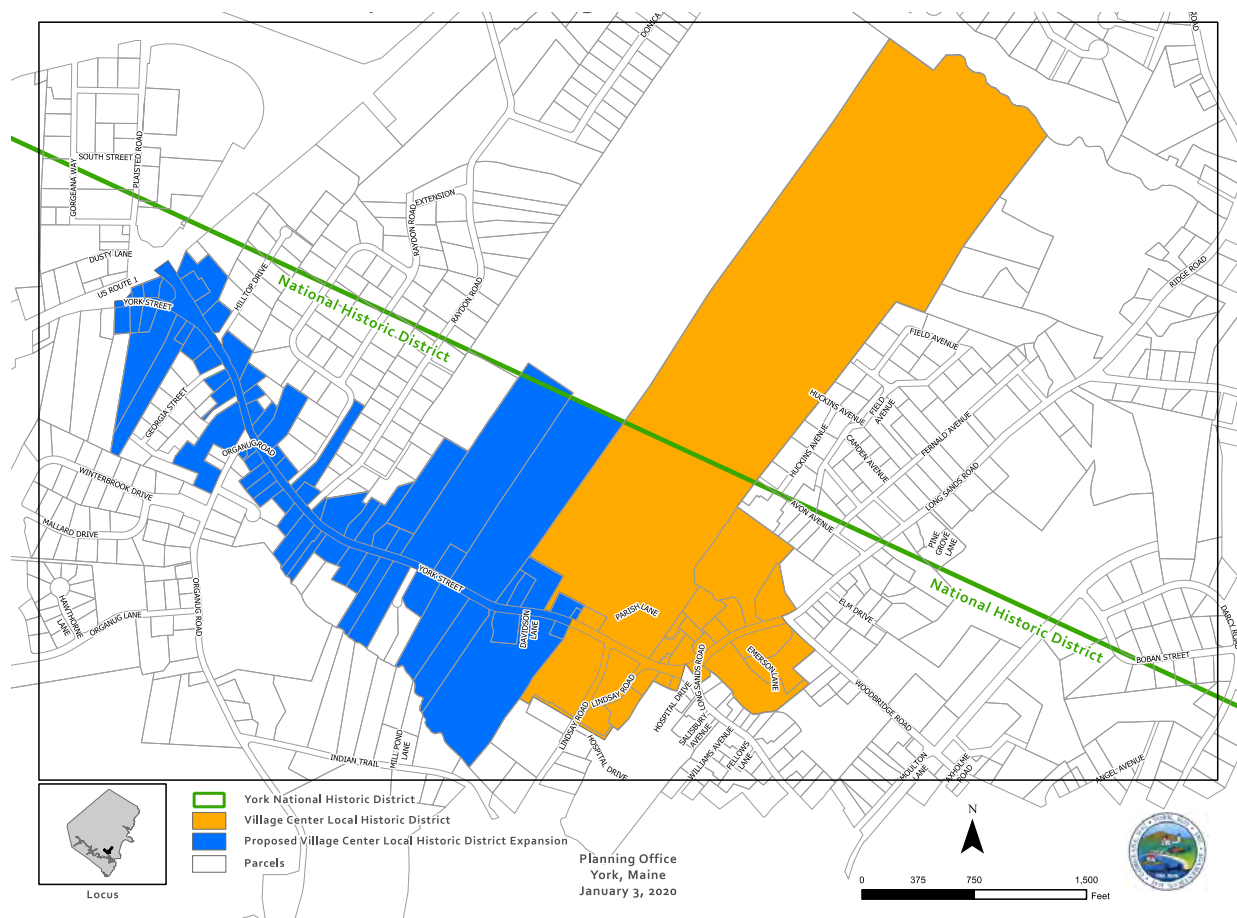
The surveyed area encompasses a full spectrum of architectural styles from the early eighteenth to the late twentieth century. Historic development patterns are as follows: the U.S. Route 1A/ York Street corridor is sprinkled with early to mid eighteenth-century houses that appear at irregular intervals. These occupy seventeenth- and eighteenth- century sites along the north side of the road only, all facing south, York Street/ Route 1a that had been known since the seventeenth century as "Scituate Men's Row" because it was initially settled by families who came from Scituate, Massachusetts. Arriving in 1642, they were given land grants upon the condition that they maintain a road across the four large lots. This road evolved and extended over time into current York Street/U.S. Route 1A.

The spaces between the earliest home sites have been filled in with later development, as most of the original parcels were subdivided over time. Only one, Property 79 (142 York Street), retains a significant amount of its original acreage and context Infill properties all date from the third quarter of the 19th century to the 1970s, with significant bursts of development at around the turn of the twentieth century and another from the World War II era. All of the latter structures relate to York's late 19th and early 20th century discovery as a summer destination. Many of the later houses occupy small lots subdivided from the larger earlier parcels."²⁴

²⁴ Ibid. pg. 6.



Figure 11. Proposed York Village Center Historic District Expansion



Source: Town of York Planning Office

What the Community Said

The summary of community feedback below represents the common themes heard during public meetings and events, as well as through other forms of outreach. When information is provided from the Fall 2021 Comprehensive Plan Community Survey²⁵ results, this is specifically noted with the percentage of respondents who replied in this way.

- York residents love the character the historical resources provide the town.
- Residents value the Old York Historical Society and the historic buildings it maintains, as well as the local churches.
- There is concern about losing the historic cemeteries and the Native American archaeological sites.

²⁵ There were 1163 responses to the survey. Not every question had a 100% response rate; the number of responses for questions listed below are noted.



- The Fall 2021 Comprehensive Plan survey revealed that 56% of respondents believe that preserving the town's historic character, buildings, and spaces should be an overall priority of the plan;²⁶ 62% think the Town should devote more resources and increase existing regulations to protect historic structures and sites.²⁷
- There is disappointment that a measure (specified in the voter-approved amended 1999 York Comprehensive Plan) to extend the Village Center Historic District was not placed on the ballot for resident discussion and vote. Concerns persist over the need to protect the historic character of York Street within this area.
- Local historic tax credits are available but have not been used. While there has been no survey to understand the lack of use, speculation is that the tax credits are not used due to the amount of paperwork and other aspects involved to receive the benefit, as well as the low amount of the credit (10% of project eligible project costs).
- Sometimes preservation of historic structures is not possible because of the difficulties and expense to bring these structures up to current building code, making them prime candidates for demolition.
- The lack of centralized and well-funded historic preservation and education efforts hampers efforts to assist property owners, education the public, and apply for grants and other resources that could help preserve the town's historic character.
- The Historic District Commission has no adequate space for its archives and files and lacks administrative support to manage applications and other duties.
- There are some programming and education efforts but more could be done; enhanced efforts could help make residents aware of these historic resources and perhaps support their adaptive reuse and preservation. This requires funding and staff time that is not possible with current Town or Old York Historical Society budgets.

Key Takeaways

Education and Technical Assistance

Enhanced education and technical assistance/support can contribute toward celebrating and protecting the historic resources and character of York. While the Old York Historical Society provides general education and programming, and maintains a core of buildings for public access and programming, it does not have the capacity to serve as overall historic resources advocate in the town. Increased funding and staffing for Old York or through Town staffing could enhance public education, owner outreach and support for historic tax credit applications, and technical assistance with navigating choices for building upgrades and rehabilitations. Providing information and assistance will become particularly important as property owners address climate change and the need for systems upgrades and potential for electric vehicle and solar power infrastructure, among other issues.

²⁶ Out of 950 responses.

²⁷ Out of 1155 responses.



A Compelling Narrative

York has all the elements to weave a strong narrative regarding its history, natural environment, and character. This narrative would benefit an overall sense of stewardship and vitality in the town. A coordinated approach to telling a story about environmental stewardship, the history of York's settlement and progression to modern town, and change, including climate change and technology, can support economic development, attract visitors interested in these things, and heighten awareness of residents of the treasures and resources of the town.

Unified Stewardship

Moving from a fragmented approach to protecting and rehabilitating the historic resources (buildings and landscapes) of York to a broader, more comprehensive approach to history and archaeology in the town can provide opportunities for strong unified stewardship of the town's resources. This unified stewardship would include things such a coordinated approach and oversight to land easements, comprehensive public signage and messaging about stewardship of historic and natural resources, and education at all levels including public schools, adult continuing education, and visitor education at lodging and visitor establishments.

Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

A significant number of archaeological sites and historic settlements are located along the York River and other waterways. As sea levels rise and the risks of storm surge and other flooding increase, these resources face major threats. Sea level rise (SLR) also effects the various shipwrecks found in the waters around York. Rising sea levels will change the access/visibility of these sites, including the best-known/most visible which is the sloop at Short Sands Beach thought to be the Defiance, shipwrecked in 1769. As the rate of SLR increases, considering the priority of documenting and/or stabilizing these sites will become more urgent.

Demolition

Most privately-owned historic structures are under threat. The Historic District Commission reviews demolition applications for all buildings in York that are 75 or more years old. The HDC can only delay applications for demolition for 60 days, and the most common application to the Commission is for demolition. There have been 28 buildings at least 75 years old demolished in the last four years (2017-2021).²⁸ The Commission is required to find something that is mutually agreeable with the owner, which in most cases is the approved demolition. The Commission doesn't delay applications for certificates of appropriateness (approving changes or additions) except where administratively necessary—these applications

²⁸ Email on 2/10/22 from Historic District Commission Chair



are either approved or denied. Some communities have longer periods of demolition delay and others work with local mission-driven developers with a passion for historic buildings or non-profit organizations to save important buildings slated for destruction.

Lack of Funding

Lack of funding for preservation techniques and historic resource management could threaten the loss of many historic and archaeological resources. Research, management, and preservation all have a significant monetary cost, often not met for adequate efforts to conserve historic resources. In addition, local historic advocates and leaders noted that they believe understaffing in the Town's code and planning offices leaves the Historic District Commission without the administrative support it needs to fulfill its duties properly. The issue of staffing and funding is one that needs more careful study to determine how increases will have positive impacts on preserving the historic resources in York.

Unknown or Private Historic/Archaeological Resources

There is no extensive historic inventory that has been conducted in York. Legal or systematic protections for historic and archaeological resources only apply to those resources that are known. Anything on private property or that is unknown to the Town or the state is at risk of being destroyed and lost to the cultural heritage of the region. Lack of available resources to conduct inventories and outreach to owners limits expanding the number of historic resources currently under protection.