

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Wakefield Historic District (Boundary Increase)

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: High Street, 238 Robinson Street

City or town: South Kingstown State: RI County: Washington

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

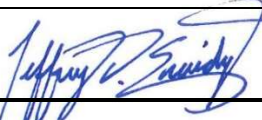
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

 Interim State Historic Preservation Officer	June 17, 2022
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local:
- Public – State:
- Public – Federal:

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s):
- District:
- Site:
- Structure:
- Object:

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**Number of Resources within Property (Boundary Increase only)**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use (Boundary Increase only)**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE: park

GOVERNMENT: post office

TRANSPORTATION: pedestrian-related

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE: park

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional

TRANSPORTATION: pedestrian-related

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification (Boundary Increase only)

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

### Materials: (Boundary Increase only)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; STONE; ASPHALT; WOOD

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Wakefield Historic District in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, is a linear district that contains the relatively dense commercial and industrial center of the village of Wakefield. Contributing resources are defined as those that relate to the early development of the village along the old Post Road (present-day Main Street) and/or the area's subsequent growth into South Kingstown's central commercial district. The district consists primarily of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings and includes examples of the Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival styles. The boundary expansion area includes three resources. **Saugatucket Park** (1934-36) on High Street is an approximately 3-acre public park designed by Olmsted Brothers, landscape architects. The **Saugatucket River Footbridge** (1941 et seq.) provides pedestrian access from the park to the village center. The **former Wakefield Post Office** (1934-36) on Robinson Street is a handsome civic edifice designed by Albert Harkness, a prominent Rhode Island architect. With the addition of these properties, the district is comprised of 66 contributing and 24 non-contributing resources occupying approximately 46 acres.

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#### Narrative Description

The Wakefield Historic District runs generally northeast/southwest along Main Street, from Columbia Street on the north to Belmont Avenue on the south. The district presents as a linear village – fairly typical for rural Rhode Island – with early to mid-nineteenth-century residential, commercial, and mill buildings, overlaid with a more urban, late-nineteenth-century through mid-twentieth-century downtown.

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### **Saugatucket Park (1934-36)**

High Street

Saugatucket Park (Photos 1-3) is an approximately 3-acre public park on the north edge of the village of Wakefield. It was designed by Olmsted Brothers in 1932 and constructed in 1934-36. The park is roughly triangular in shape, bounded by High Street to the west, the ca. 1965 Wakefield Elementary School parcel to the north, and the Saugatucket River to the southeast. The terrain is gently sloping, except on the park's southeast edge, where the riverbank drops steeply. The park's location permits long scenic vistas to the Wakefield Dam to the south and select views to the southeast, looking across the river and to the buildings of Main Street. The park includes an asphalt-paved, loop path that encircles a grassy bowl. There are four spurs off the main loop. One extends to the west and connects with High Street, across from its intersection with Highland Avenue. Another extends southwest and also connects with High Street, at a point approximately 200 feet to the south of Highland Avenue. A spur to the northeast leads to the Saugatucket River Footbridge (1941 et seq.; described below) and another to the north leads to the Wakefield Elementary School grounds. Park vegetation includes specimen trees planted along the loop path, leaving the center of the park open. Some, like the sweet gum, linden, ash, and maple trees at the park's southern end, date to the park's construction and are shown on the Olmsted Brothers plans. A row of mature deciduous trees, mostly Norway maple, lines the High Street edge of the park; these were likely planted around 1910 and were incorporated into the Olmsted Brothers design. The riverbank, once cleared and partially landscaped with Rhododendron maximum and willows, is now largely overgrown with non-native vines and brush, though some beech, maple, and holly trees are also present. A six-foot-tall chain-link fence, installed as a safety measure in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, runs along the top of the bank.

Two features have been added to the park since its original construction, both of which are non-contributing due to age, and neither of which detract from the park's overall integrity. A **war memorial** (NC) is located within the loop path, in the southeast part of the park. It includes a flagpole, with dedication plaques indicating it was erected in 1982; a granite platform, flush with the ground, in the shape of a star that measures approximately 25 feet across; and polished black granite walls, approximately 4 feet tall and arranged to form two "V"s, dedicated in 1990. The walls are inscribed with the names of residents of South Kingstown who served in foreign conflicts. The war memorial replaced an earlier war memorial that was in this location from 1943 to the mid-1960s. In 2007, an approximately 25-foot-by-30-foot, wood, gabled **pavilion** (NC), which is used as an outdoor classroom, was tucked into the northeast corner of the park, about 50 feet off the loop path and within a stand of trees by the river's edge.

### **Saugatucket River Footbridge (1941 et seq.)**

The Saugatucket River Footbridge (Photos 4-5) is a narrow, flat-arched trestle bridge that provides pedestrian access between Saugatucket Park on the northwest and the village center on

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the southeast. The bridge is approximately 150 feet long and about 8 feet wide and is supported by a series of six pile bents. Each pile bent is composed of two timber piles with a timber cap and wood cross-bracing. The bridge superstructure includes timber posts with knee-bracing. The bridge deck rests on timber longitudinal beams and the tread is composed of 2-inch-by-8-inch wood planks. A coated metal railing system, installed between the timber posts, is about 48 inches tall and includes a bottom rail, closely spaced spindles, two rails near the top, and intermediate metal posts. Although the bridge's superstructure – including the railing system and deck – are not historic, much of the original substructure remains.

### **Former Wakefield Post Office (1934-36)**

238 Robinson Street

The former Wakefield Post Office (Photos 6-7) is a north-facing, brick building executed in a stripped-down Federal Revival style. It is composed of a two-story, three-bays-wide, hipped-roof main block flanked by two one-story, one-bay-wide, flat-roofed wings that project slightly beyond the façade of the main block. The main block and wings create a T plan. The roof is asphalt shingle, and the brick coursing is set in a modified Flemish bond (two stretchers, one header). The projecting wings feature brick quoins in a running bond pattern. The principal entrance is centered on the northeast façade and consists of a modern glazed door with sidelights, a decorative pediment and multi-light glazing above, all set within a limestone-trimmed opening. The entrance is accessed via a set of concrete stairs that lead to a platform with decorative railings. A handicapped access ramp has been added to the east end of the platform. Fenestration includes large window openings on the first floor, with limestone trim and panels set beneath the openings. Second-floor window openings, also trimmed with limestone, are roughly square. Window sash are vinyl: ten-over-ten, double-hung with five-light transoms at the first floor and pairs of six-light, sliding sash at the second floor. Decorative elements include metal filigree panels set above the windows on the wings and a limestone stringcourse between the first and second stories. A datestone is set into the lower west corner of the façade, which identifies the architect as Albert Harkness. Now privately owned and used for offices, the building's original function as a post office is evident in lettering on the façade, above the entrance, which reads: UNITED STATES POST OFFICE / WAKEFIELD RHODE ISLAND. A one-story ell located at the juncture of the main block and the east wing was enlarged sometime after 1962.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Map of South Kingstown, Washington County, Rhode Island*, 1935, rev. 1944 and 1962.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria (District)

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property.
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

### Areas of Significance (Boundary Increase only)

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### Period of Significance (District)

ca. 1820-1962

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**Significant Dates**

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**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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**Cultural Affiliation**

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**Architect/Builder (Boundary Increase Only)**

Olmsted Brothers

Harkness, Albert

Holland, Leon L.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Wakefield Historic District contains the largest and densest collection of extant nineteenth- to mid-twentieth century commercial, industrial, residential, and civic buildings in the Town of South Kingstown. A variety of architectural styles, including the Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival, represent the village's development over the course of over 200 years, and streetscapes within the district are well-preserved and retain their turn-of-the-twentieth-century "downtown" character. The Wakefield Historic District is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A and under Criterion C and the period of significance extends from ca. 1820, the initial period of the village's development, to 1962, when the Route 1 Bypass was constructed and coincided with a shift of commercial activity to the intersection of Main Street, Kingstown Road and Old Tower Hill Road (known locally as Dale Carlia Corner), to the east of the district.

Saugatucket Park (1934-36), the Saugatucket River Footbridge (1941 et seq.), and the former Wakefield Post Office (1934-36), which are being added to the Wakefield Historic District through this Boundary Increase, fall within the period of significance, as described above. The former post office relates to one of the district's areas of significance: architecture. The Saugatucket River Footbridge and Saugatucket Park add new areas of significance to the district: community planning and development and landscape architecture.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Wakefield Historic District is a fabric of buildings that was woven over almost two centuries of industrial, commercial, and residential development. During its period of significance (ca.



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1820-1962), the district became the most important commercial center in the Town of South Kingstown. Numerous businesses were built in the district – including dry goods stores, grocers, and a hotel – along with several banks.

Perhaps the most significant village improvement effort in Wakefield began in the early twentieth century, with the acquisition of an approximately 3-acre parcel on High Street, along the northwest bank of the Saugatucket River. The development of what would become **Saugatucket Park** was spearheaded by local businessman Bernon Helme (1857-1944). Although Helme was not a Wakefield resident – he owned a general store and was the postmaster of Kingston Village, about four miles to the north – he served at various times as South Kingstown’s superintendent of public schools and as chair of the town’s park commission.<sup>2</sup> It was under his leadership that the Wakefield Grammar School was built in 1908 on a 5-acre lot on High Street, replacing a nineteenth-century school building on Main Street.<sup>3</sup> That same year, a footbridge was constructed to provide a safe and direct route for children in Wakefield Village to cross the river to the new school. Construction costs for the bridge were paid by Reverend J.W. Fobes of the Peace Dale Congregational Church, who served on the school committee with Helme. Based on an undated historic photo (see Figure 1), the design of the bridge was simple and a bit rustic, with a wood deck and a railing composed of unsawn timber posts and a handrail. The space between the posts was filled with chain-link fencing.<sup>4</sup>

With the construction of the Wakefield Grammar School in 1908, Bernon Helme saw an opportunity to create a significant public amenity by acquiring the lot immediately to the south of the school. He led the effort, soliciting funds from village residents in order to purchase the lot from the Wakefield Manufacturing Company. In one of his fundraising letters, Helme explained:

The people of Wakefield are trying to secure three acres of land in the heart of the village for a public park... It is an attractive site and can easily be developed so as to enhance its natural features... It also joins the five acre tract of land that the town is to secure as a site for its new eight room school house. If the park land can be secured it will make an area of eight acres in the center of the place forever set aside for public uses.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Helme identifies himself as the Chairman of the South Kingstown Park Commission in his correspondence with Olmsted Brothers regarding Saugatucket Park; see, for example, his letter dated February 13, 1934 (Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Job #9323, Saugatucket Park, Wakefield, RI, 1932 to 1934). The 1909 edition of the *Manual, with Rules and Orders, for the Use of the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island* lists Helme as the Superintendent of Schools in South Kingstown (*Manual, with Rules and Orders, for the Use of the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island, 1909* [Providence, RI: E.L. Freeman Company, State Printers, 1909]:258).

<sup>3</sup> The Wakefield Grammar School burned in 1963 and was replaced with the existing, ca. 1965 Wakefield Elementary School (Betty J. Cotter, *Images of America: Wakefield* [Dover, NH: Arcadia Press, 1997]:16-17).

<sup>4</sup> Cotter:17.

<sup>5</sup> Helme’s fundraising letters are in the collections of the South County History Center, Kingston, Rhode Island. (Helme to Woodward, August 17, 1908.)

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Helme raised the necessary funds and, in 1909, the parcel was donated to the town for the creation of a public park. Donors included members of the Robinson, Kenyon, and Sheldon families, who ran businesses on Main Street, as well as the Hazards of Peace Dale and Louis F. Bell, a prominent local builder (see the Bell Block at 345 Main Street).<sup>6</sup> Helme and the donors hoped that the park would not only provide a desirable setting for the school, but also serve as an amenity for the bustling village of Wakefield and perhaps encourage further beautification efforts.<sup>7</sup> Other than the planting of a row of trees along the east side of High Street, which likely occurred around 1910,<sup>8</sup> however, the parkland sat undeveloped for over twenty years.

In July 1932, Bernon Helme reached out to Olmsted Brothers in Brookline, Massachusetts – the preeminent landscape architecture firm in the country at the time – to inquire about the cost of preparing plans for Saugatucket Park. The firm was hired in November of that year.<sup>9</sup> Olmsted Brothers had been established in 1898 by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and John Charles Olmsted. Its portfolio included private residences, residential neighborhoods, metropolitan park systems, and college campuses. In Rhode Island, Olmsted Brothers – and predecessor firms, such as Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot – designed numerous country estates and residential grounds, including several projects in South Kingstown of which Helme and other proponents of Saugatucket Park surely would have been aware. These include the Rowland Hazard Estate (1891-94) and the site plan and plantings for the Hazard Memorial (1928), both in Peace Dale. In 1909-11, the firm designed gardens for Shadow Farm, just about a mile east of Wakefield. Olmsted Brothers was responsible for several urban parks in Rhode Island, such as Slater Park (1917) in Pawtucket, Miantonomi Park (1921) in Newport, and Goddard Memorial Park (1928) in Warwick.<sup>10</sup> Earlier, in 1894-1897, Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot had designed the main quadrangle at what would become the University of Rhode Island in the village of Kingston. Bernon Helme was instrumental in the selection of a site for the university and would likely have been familiar with the firm's work on the campus.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Helme's May 1, 1908 letter to Thomas Rodman includes a list of donors.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Helme's July 13, 1908 letter to Edward Welsh.

<sup>8</sup> The estimated age of the maples is based on the Olmsted Brothers 1932 plans, which show the trees with diameters ranging from 12" to 18", and on photos taken in 1935. (Olmsted Archives, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, Brookline, MA, Plans for South Kingstown Park [Saugatucket Park], Job #9323 and Photographs of South Kingstown Park [Saugatucket Park], Job #9323).

<sup>9</sup> See note to project file by Percival Gallagher, July 27, 1932 and Bernon Helme to Olmsted Brothers, November 9, 1932 (Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Job #9323, Saugatucket Park, Wakefield, RI, 1932 to 1934). In 1935, Olmsted Brothers produced plans for the school grounds, including a new entrance from High Street and children's play areas, a project that was also overseen by Helme (Olmsted Archives, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, Brookline, MA, Plans for Wakefield Grammar School, Job #9379; Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Job #9379, Saugatucket Park, Wakefield, RI, 1932 to 1934).

<sup>10</sup> Information on these projects may be found through the Olmsted Research Guide Online (<http://ww3.rediscov.com/Olmsted/>).

<sup>11</sup> *National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the University of Rhode Island*, 2017, on file, Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, Providence, RI; James L. Wheaton and Dr. Richard G. Vangermeersch, *Images of America: The University of Rhode Island* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999):7.

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By the end of 1932, Percival Gallagher (1874-1934), a partner in the Olmsted Brothers firm, had finalized the park design. Plans called for re-grading the site to create a gently sloping central lawn and installing a tree-lined, macadam path around the lawn, with four spurs leading west and southwest to High Street, north to the school grounds, and northeast to the Saugatucket River Footbridge, thus connecting the park to Main Street and the village center. The trees lining High Street would be retained, with the addition of a low stone wall to further establish the park edge; a landing for small boats was to be located at the cove at the southern end of the park; a wooden bandstand was proposed for the park's southeast quadrant, near the river; and eighteen benches would be installed along the path (see Figure 2).<sup>12</sup> In a letter to Helme, Gallagher explained:

The design of the park as I have worked it out is that of a "promenade" park, which, I believe, is its chief function. The lawn area may be used for children to romp and play upon, but not arranged for fixed games or sports. These should be provided for on the schoolhouse grounds. It seems to me that the park is not a playground in the usual sense, and it should cater to the elders of the community, together with little children.... As I pointed out to you and Mr. Bell on the ground, the limits of the park are more than the actual legal area. The views which extend from it are extensive and comprehend all the lands bordering the river.<sup>13</sup>

The park plans were drawn up during the height of the Great Depression and construction began with help from the Civil Works Administration (CWA), a federal jobs-creation program that operated during the winter of 1933-34.<sup>14</sup> Correspondence from Helme to Olmsted Brothers indicates that CWA workers were at the park in February 1934, re-grading the site as per the park plans.<sup>15</sup> In 1935, the town appropriated \$3,500 to seed the grounds; install light poles; and construct the walking path, which would be composed of 18" of gravel topped with amacite, a macadam-like substance similar to gravel-embedded asphalt.<sup>16</sup> In April 1935, staff from Olmsted Brothers took a series of photographs that show the loop path and spurs laid out with gravel, though not yet paved, with trees planted on the outside of the path and a grassy bowl in the center. Vegetation on the riverbank, shown on the Olmsted Brothers plans as covered with "existing shrubbery," appears to have been thinned to allow for views across the river and toward

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<sup>12</sup> Plans for Saugatucket Park and the grounds of the Wakefield Grammar School are in the Olmsted Archives at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, MA.

<sup>13</sup> Percival Gallagher to Bernon Helme, January 31, 1933. Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Job #9379, Saugatucket Park, Wakefield, RI, 1932 to 1934.

<sup>14</sup> The Civil Works Administration was designed to be short-lived, but its impact was significant: the program put over 4 million previously unemployed people to work and led to the creation of the Works Progress Administration in 1935 ("The Living New Deal" Glossary [<https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/>]).

<sup>15</sup> Bernon Helme to Olmsted Brothers, February 13, 1934. Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Job #9379, Saugatucket Park, Wakefield, RI, 1932 to 1934.

<sup>16</sup> "Saugatucket Park," *The Narragansett Times*, March 27, 1936, page 4.

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downtown Wakefield (see Figure 3).<sup>17</sup> A report from the Saugatucket Park Commission, published in the March 27, 1936 issue of *The Narragansett Times*, indicates that the work was complete by that time.<sup>18</sup> The final element of the design, the park benches, may have been installed in 1938, when the local newspaper reported that a prototype was being displayed on Main Street and that a local craftsman had offered his own design, but that has not been confirmed.<sup>19</sup>

Most aspects of the Olmsted Brothers' design were implemented, though it does not appear that the stone wall on High Street or the bandstand were ever built. Changes to the park have been minimal and include the construction of a war memorial in 1943 (since replaced); the installation of a basketball court in the southern end of the park, roughly in the location of the former boat landing, sometime between 1962 and 1972; the construction of an outdoor classroom pavilion in 2007; the removal of the light fixtures, at an unknown date; and the slight realignment of the southern spur to High Street, which was originally about 60 feet south of its current location, at an unknown date (the original alignment remains visible in the topography).<sup>20</sup> The overall organization of the park survives largely intact, however, with a tree-lined loop path; a central lawn; connections to High Street, the school grounds and the footbridge; and views toward and across the river.

At the same time that Saugatucket Park was being completed, the **Wakefield Post Office** was built across the river on Robinson Street, replacing an expansive commercial block. Like the park, the post office project received federal relief funds – this time, from the Public Works Administration. Built in 1934-36, the new post office was designed by Albert Harkness (1886-1981), a leading Rhode Island architect, under the supervision of Louis A. Simon and Neal A. Melick, architect and engineer, respectively, for the U.S. Treasury Department.<sup>21</sup> Its simple form and clean lines are typical of the New Deal era, while other design elements reference the Colonial Revival, including the use of brick, the symmetrical fenestration, multi-paned sash, hipped roof, and quoins (see Figure 4).<sup>22</sup> Harkness earned a degree in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1912. As a student he interned with the Providence firms Clark, Howe & Homer and Jackson, Robertson & Adams and, upon graduation, moved to New York where he worked at Delano & Aldrich and McKim, Mead & White. Harkness opened

<sup>17</sup> Historic photos of Saugatucket Park, dating from 1932 (pre-construction) and 1935 are in the Olmsted Archives at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, MA.

<sup>18</sup> "Saugatucket Park," *The Narragansett Times*, March 27, 1936, page 4.

<sup>19</sup> "Saugatucket Park," *The Narragansett Times*, March 25, 1938, page 7.

<sup>20</sup> The approximate construction dates for the basketball court are based on historic aerial photographs in the collection of the Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Statewide Planning, Providence, RI.

<sup>21</sup> The designers are identified on a datestone on the building façade. See also South County History Center, "The Economic Activities of the Narragansett Planters."

<sup>22</sup> On the interior, the post office once featured a mural, "The Economic Activities of the Narragansett Planters" (1939) by Ernest Hamlin Baker. It was removed in 1999 and is now on loan from the U.S. Postal Service for display at the South County History Center. (South County History Center, "The Economic Activities of the Narragansett Planters.")

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his own firm in Providence in 1919, completing a number of private residences that drew on English Renaissance, French Provencal and American Colonial precedent. In the 1930s, Harkness designed several buildings in Rhode Island under the auspices of the Public Works Administration, in addition to the Wakefield Post Office, including the Chepachet School and Harmony School in Glocester (1934-1935); the Gymnasium at the Sockanosset Training School (1936-1938, demolished), a boys' reform school in Cranston; and Eleanor Roosevelt Hall (1937) at the University of Rhode Island.<sup>23</sup> In the years following World War II, Harkness increasingly worked in the Modern style, in partnership with Peter Geddes, with whom he established the firm Harkness & Geddes in 1948.<sup>24</sup> Although decommissioned in 1999, the former Wakefield Post Office retains its original massing, fenestration pattern, and many historic architectural details.

In 1941, the Town of South Kingstown budgeted \$10,000 to build the **Saugatucket River Footbridge**, replacing the bridge that had been built in 1908. The new footbridge, which was located in the same spot as the old, was designed by Leon L. Holland, civil engineer, and built by the Engineering Service and Construction Company of Boston. Construction got underway in October 1941 and was complete by the end of the calendar year.<sup>25</sup> The narrow footbridge was supported by heavy timber piles driven into the riverbed and featured wood decking with a railing system that consisted of wood posts and chain-link fencing. Repairs have been made to the bridge over the years, notably in the 1960s, when the bridge was temporarily closed.<sup>26</sup> Additional repairs were made around 2010, when the wood decking was replaced in kind and a metal railing system was installed. With the exception of the cross-bracing and one pile bent, which appears to have been replaced during one of the repair projects, the bridge's heavy timber substructure from 1941 survives. The footbridge continues to provide an important link between Main Street and Saugatucket Park.

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<sup>23</sup> These projects are included in "The Living New Deal," which has an online catalog of projects completed as part of New Deal public works programs (<https://livingnewdeal.org/>).

<sup>24</sup> William H. Jordy with Christopher Monkhouse, *Buildings on Paper: Rhode Island Architectural Drawings, 1825-1945* (Providence, RI: Brown University, 1982):216.

<sup>25</sup> "Budget for Fiscal Year, February 20, 1942 to February 20, 1943," *The Narragansett Times*, March 20, 1942, page 4; "Council Establishes Emergency Fund," *The Narragansett Times*, December 12, 1941, page 6; "Work Commences on New Bridge," *The Narragansett Times*, October 10, 1941, page 4.

<sup>26</sup> "Footbridge Closed, Children Use Dangerous R.R. Crossing," *The Narragansett Times*, October 7, 1964, page 1.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository: South County History Center

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

Wakefield Historic District (Boundary Increase)  
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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property:** Approximately 6 acres added to the district

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

*For Boundary Expansion Area A, which includes Saugatucket Park and the Saugatucket River Footbridge:*

Latitude: 41.438663° Longitude: -71.501260°

*For Boundary Expansion Area B, which includes the former Wakefield Post Office:*

Latitude: 41.438449° Longitude: -71.497988°

**Or**

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

1. Zone: \_\_\_\_\_ Easting: \_\_\_\_\_ Northing: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Zone: \_\_\_\_\_ Easting: \_\_\_\_\_ Northing: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Zone: \_\_\_\_\_ Easting: \_\_\_\_\_ Northing: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Zone: \_\_\_\_\_ Easting: \_\_\_\_\_ Northing: \_\_\_\_\_

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

### Boundary Increase:

Lot 175 on the Town of South Kingstown Plat Map 57-4, which contains the former Wakefield Post Office at 238 Robinson Street, is being added to the Wakefield Historic District. The southern portion of Lot 58 on Town of South Kingstown Plat Map 56-3, which contains Saugatucket Park, is also being added. Finally, a section of the Saugatucket River, stretching from the northeast elevation of the Saugatucket River Footbridge southwest to the existing district boundary, is being added.



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**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The increased boundary represents the original historic district boundary as established in 1996 and expanded in 2019, plus three historic resources: Saugatucket Park, located on High Street; the Saugatucket River Footbridge, which meets the park at its northeast corner; and the former Wakefield Post Office at 238 Robinson Street. All of these resources abut the existing district boundary, were built during the district's period of significance, and retain sufficient integrity to demonstrate their significance. Saugatucket Park shares its lot with the Wakefield Elementary School (ca. 1965), which is not included in the expansion area because it falls outside the district's period of significance. The boundary therefore bisects that lot, following as closely as possible the park limits as shown on the Olmsted Brothers landscape plans (1932). A section of the Saugatucket River is being included in the expansion area in order to facilitate the inclusion of the Saugatucket River Footbridge.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Joanna M. Doherty, Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, and Richard C. Youngken, South Kingstown Historic District Commission  
organization: Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission  
street & number: 150 Benefit Street  
city or town: Providence state: RI zip code: 02903  
e-mail: joanna.doherty@preservation.ri.gov  
telephone: 401-222-4136  
date: June 17, 2022

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Wakefield Historic District (Boundary Increase)  
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### Photo Log

Name of Property: Wakefield Historic District (Boundary Increase)  
City or Vicinity: South Kingstown  
County: Washington  
State: Rhode Island  
Name of Photographer: Joanna M. Doherty (#1-3), M. Joan Youngken (#4-5),  
Erica Luke (#6-7)  
Date of Photographs: July 2021 (#1-3), April 2022 (#4-5); January 2019  
(#6-7)  
Location of Original Digital Files: Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage  
Commission, 150 Benefit Street, Providence RI 02906  
Number of Photographs: 7

- Photo #1 View of Saugatucket Park, looking north toward Wakefield Elementary School.  
Photo #2 View of Saugatucket Park, looking south toward war memorial.  
Photo #3 View of Saugatucket Park, looking southwest toward High Street.  
Photo #4 View of the Saugatucket River Footbridge, looking southeast.  
Photo #5 View of the Saugatucket River Footbridge, looking northwest toward the outdoor  
classroom pavilion (2007, NC) and Wakefield Elementary School.  
Photo #6 View of the former Wakefield Post Office, looking southeast.  
Photo #7 View of the former Wakefield Post Office, looking southwest.

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**Photo Key**



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**Figure 1**

View looking northwest across the Saugatucket River Footbridge toward the Wakefield Grammar School, both built in 1908. The school burned in 1963 and was replaced ca. 1965. The footbridge was replaced in 1941.

Source: Betty J. Cotter, *Images of America: Wakefield*, page 17

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**Figure 2**  
Olmsted Brothers, *Plan for Development of Park, Wakefield, Rhode Island*, November 23, 1932 (Detail). File No. 9323, Plan No. 4.

Source: Olmsted Archives, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, Brookline, MA

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**Figure 3**  
Olmsted Brothers. Views of  
Saugatucket Park under  
construction. April 1935.

Source: Olmsted Archives, Frederick Law  
Olmsted National Historic Site, Brookline,  
MA

Looking southeast from spur that leads to  
footbridge.



Looking south toward the Saugatucket  
River, with High Street on the right.



Looking southwest across central lawn  
toward High Street.

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**Figure 4**  
Former Wakefield Post Office, 238 Robinson Street, South Kingstown. View looking southwest, October 1936.

Source: South County History Center Photograph Collection

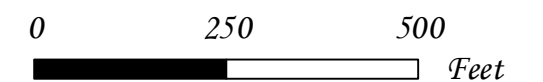
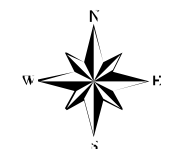
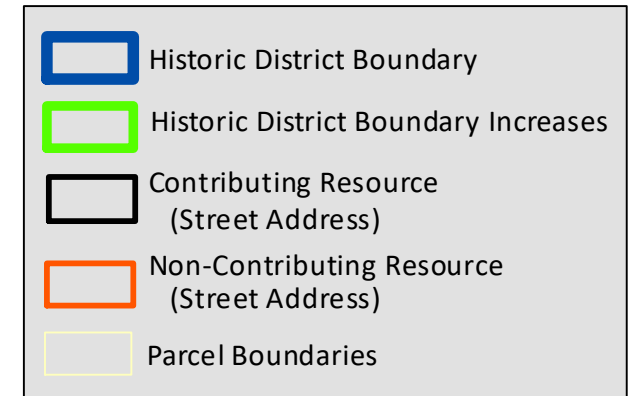
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC

Town of  
South Kingstown

# WAKEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT

## Boundary Increase 2022



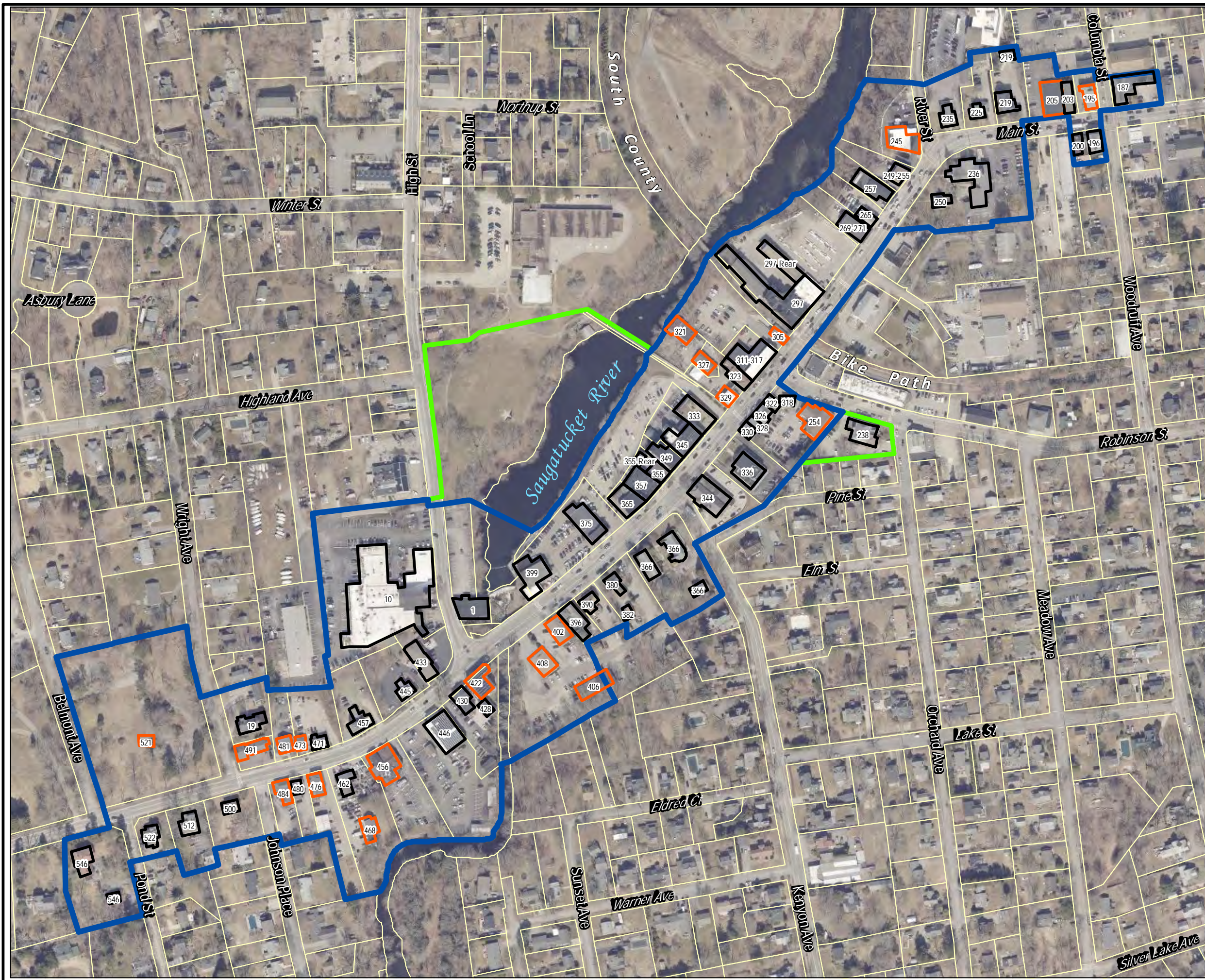
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One inch = 250 feet



Geographic  
Information  
System

Parcel Boundaries: SKGIS May 2022  
Aerial Photo: RIGIS March 2021

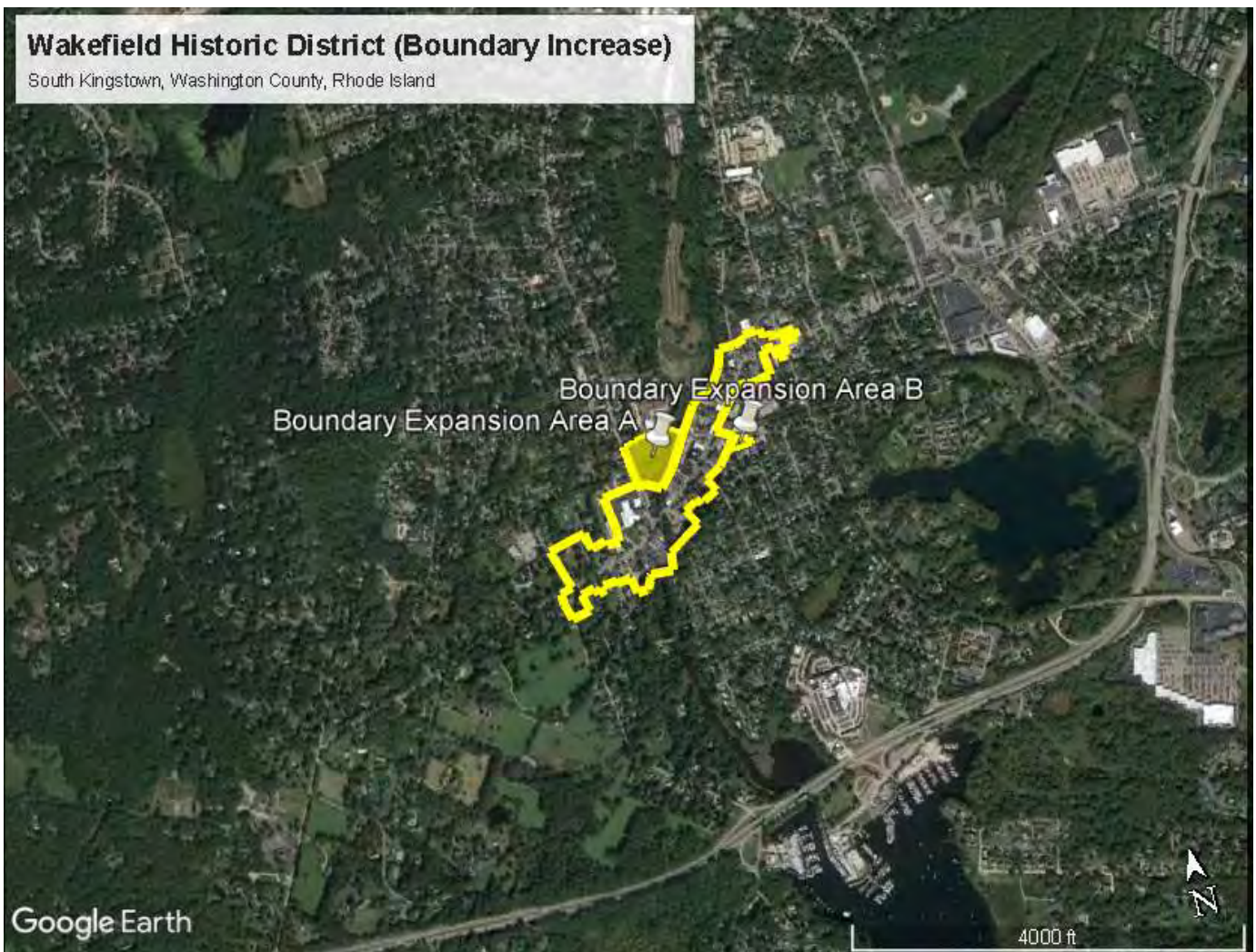
PL22-09 cpb 6/22





## Wakefield Historic District (Boundary Increase)

South Kingstown, Washington County, Rhode Island



### Coordinates

#### ***Boundary Expansion Area A***

Latitude: 41.438663° Longitude: -71.501260°

#### ***Boundary Expansion Area B***

Latitude: 41.438449° Longitude: -71.497988°

## Wakefield Historic District (Boundary Increase)

South Kingstown, Washington County, Rhode Island



### Coordinates

#### ***Boundary Expansion Area A***

Latitude: 41.438663° Longitude: -71.501260°

#### ***Boundary Expansion Area B***

Latitude: 41.438449° Longitude: -71.497988°



Photo #1



Photo #2



Photo #3

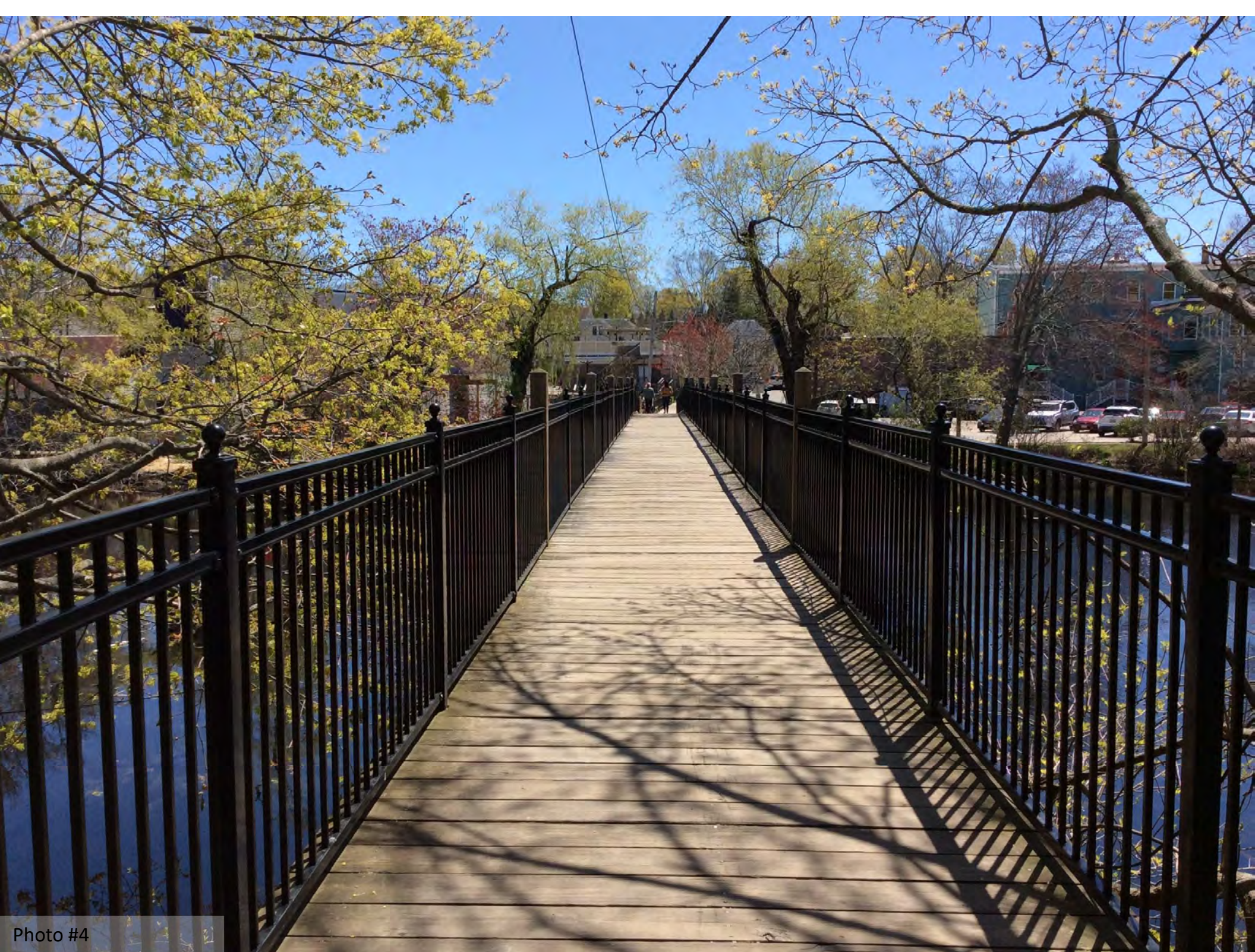


Photo #4



Photo #5



Photo #6





Photo #7