



Purpose: Support adoption of the Historic Landmarks Commission's (HLC) alternative text amendment requiring both Phase IA (research) and Phase IB (field testing) archaeological surveys for major subdivisions.

Why This Matters:

- Archaeological resources are non-renewable: once destroyed by development, they are gone forever.
- Jefferson County's history is often buried below ground, especially in river valleys, floodplains, and historic settlement areas.
- Without proper archaeological review, significant sites can be destroyed without ever being identified or documented.

What Phase IA and Phase IB Archaeological Surveys Do:

- A Phase IA Study identifies areas with a high likelihood of archaeological resources using:
 - Archival and documentary research
 - WV State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) site files
 - Environmental and cultural context analysis
- A Phase IB Survey is the only way to actually confirm what is underground, using:
 - Controlled surface collection
 - Remote-sensing techniques (e.g., ground-penetrating radar, magnetometry), used as a supplement
 - Systematic pedestrian survey
 - Shovel test probes (subsurface testing) conducted to professional standards

Why a Phase IA Study Alone Is Not Enough:

- Records reviews and surface inspections cannot detect buried sites.
- Many important archaeological resources leave no surface evidence at all.
- Relying only on a Phase IA Survey creates a false sense of protection while allowing irreversible damage to occur.

Professional Standards and Best Practice:

- The HLC's alternative amendment aligns county regulations with:
 - WV State Historic Preservation Office Guidelines
 - Federal archaeological standards
 - Practices already used by neighboring jurisdictions
- These are minimum professional standards, not new or excessive requirements.

What the Staff-Proposed Amendment Risks:

- Explicitly states that subsurface testing is not required.
- Allows applicants to bypass meaningful archaeological investigation.
- Weakens existing protections and increases the likelihood of unintentional destruction of historic resources.

Bottom Line:

- A Phase IA Study identifies *where historic resources might exist*.
- A Phase IB Survey determines *what is actually there*.

Both are essential to protect Jefferson County's history before development permanently alters the land.