



State of Connecticut
Department of Economic and Community Development
Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development

***State-Owned and Formerly State-Owned Brownfield Program
Application***

Program Description

The Connecticut State-Owned and Formerly State-Owned Brownfield Program will provide funds to municipalities and developers who are eligible to receive Brownfield funding under PA 15-193 secs. 3 and 4. The goal is to fund remediation, abatement, and demolition activities prior to redevelopment of the brownfield site(s) which are currently owned or were previously owned by the State of Connecticut or its agencies or affiliates. Additional goals include leveraging the maximum amount of non-State funds possible to increase the economic impact of the State's investment, reactivating long-stalled sites and encouraging job creation.

Note

This is a State of Connecticut funded program and this application will determine the eligibility of the applicant and/or project to apply for the program. This application may be reviewed by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and other state or quasi-state agencies.

Projects funded under this program may be subject to the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act ("CEPA"), as well as other environmental regulations, and DECD regulations related to procurement and bidding procedures. Please contact DECD at brownfields@ct.gov for further information on program requirements.



SECTION I APPLICANT INFORMATION

1. Applicant: Town of Groton

2. Address: 45 Fort Hill Road Groton CT 06340

3. Contact: Paige Bronk, Economic and Community Development Manager

Telephone: (860) 448-4095

Email: pbronk@groton-ct.gov

Fax: (860) 448-4094

4. Type of Organization

☒ Municipality

☐ Economic Development Agency

☐ Non-Profit ☐ For Profit

5. Amount of Financial Assistance requested: \$ 50,000

6. Have you ever participated in any funding programs managed by DECD? Describe program, amount, contract date, and current status: 2013 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant, \$400,000, grant fully expended (now managed by DOH), 2014 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant, \$800,000, grant fully expended (now managed by DOH). \$200,000 Municipal Brownfield Assessment Grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) for assessing the following two properties: 1208 Poquonnock Road and 244 Monument Street. Purpose is to identify costs associated with the remediation of the two properties. Budget Period 9/18/2014 to 9/18/2016.

7. Have you ever participated in any funding programs managed by other Connecticut State agencies? Describe program, amount, contract date, and current status: 2016 State DEEP EVConnecticut Reimbursement Grant Program, \$40,000, completed, inspected and submitted for reimbursement on May 31, 2016. The Town of Groton has managed two phases of a multi-million dollar Streetscape Project in Downtown Mystic which included both State (approx. LOCIP \$450k) and Federal (ARRA) funding.

SECTION II PROJECT INFORMATION – Attach supporting documents as needed for all responses.

1. Project Address: 9 Oral School Road Mystic, CT 06355 **Site Acreage:** 77.39 **# of Parcels:** 1 parcel of land with a division of management responsibility bisecting it between DEEP and DECD

2. Property Owner: State of Connecticut DEEP and DECD

If applicant is not the property owner, how and when will ownership be obtained? The Town will be embarking on a series of steps to properly market and solicit proposals for the redevelopment of the property. The Town will assist the State through a thorough marketing and promotional effort. There will

be an emphasis on the following considerations: quality of the developer, quality of the proposed use, financial feasibility, implementation schedule and financial offering.

- 3. Describe how this property is proposed to be developed in the future (mixed use, commercial, residential, industrial etc.)** There is no current development proposal, however, the Town of Groton anticipates moving through a solicitation and selection process to determine the highest and best use for the State of Connecticut and the Town of Groton. The goal of this marketing and promotion effort is to secure the best development team, timeline, property use, financing offering and implementation for the property. Also, there is an emphasis on getting the property into private hands so both the state and municipality can benefit from tax revenue.

Please provide a detailed overview of the proposed project. Include information regarding current interest for development, potential for job creation, housing creation, or improvement in health and safety. Based on anticipated future proposals, we anticipate a variety of positive outcomes including newly created jobs (construction and permanent), a diversity of housing options currently supported in the Plan of Conservation and Development, and newly created appropriately sited access that will improve the overall safety of accessing this parcel which is currently located off of a narrow, completely residential road. Additionally, there is a vision for increased access to River Road and waterfront for pedestrians.

4. Please describe the proposed development timeline (include attachments as needed):

The Town anticipates a twelve month time frame to appropriately market and solicit proposals for the property. The Town will engage in a multi-step process to properly advertise the availability of the property for redevelopment.

These steps anticipated during the process include:

- Professionally developed redevelopment signage for the property;
- Development and distribution of a marketing brochure/fact sheet about the property for redevelopment (example attached) that will generate interest from multiple parties (developers, builders and architects) engaged in property redevelopment on a competitive scale;
- Advertise the property in the New England Real Estate Journal, Northeast Real Estate Business, and other development publications and media sources;
- Solicit feedback from local stakeholders including neighbors;
- Town staff will show the property to interested parties and answer questions about the process and local development concerns;
- Cultivate concepts and ideas with private development entities in anticipation of their future submittal of development proposals;
- Develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) (example attached) to solicit formal proposals after marketing has been initiated;
- Coordinate with the State of CT regarding the distribution of the RFP to a wide audience;
- Assist with recommendations specific to development team proposals; and
- Evaluate potential zoning amendments for the property's redevelopment for eventual implementation in the Town of Groton;



- Initiate a preferred zoning amendment in conjunction with state and local decisions pertaining to accepting a preferred development proposal.

5. What is the appraised value of the site(s) if remediated ("if clean"): Loureiro Associates completed a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report in June 2013 that included an in depth assessment of the environmental condition of the site recommendations for cleanup. (please see attached table of contents from the report). We do not have an appraised value for this state owned property or estimate of future post-improvement value.

6. If applicable, please provide all relevant project financial information (i.e., development pro forma, development sources and uses; include attachments as needed):

The Town of Groton spent \$8,500 on a redevelopment feasibility analysis for this property (see attached).

Please describe how the State's financial investment is required to advance the remediation and/or redevelopment project (i.e., the "but for" rationale):

This comprehensive marketing strategy is particularly important for this unique project at the Mystic Oral School. The property has been sitting idle since 2010 and for a number of years prior was underutilized. Many buildings remain from the era when the parcel was used as a school, but many are in poor condition due to neglect. There is approximately 175,000 square feet of building space contained in the Administration and Boy's Wing, Pratt Gymnasium, Girl's Wing, Whipple Building, Crouter Building, Rainbow House, Maintenance, and Wood Shed.

7. Please describe status of discussions with municipal elected officials, relevant municipal committees (i.e., Planning and Zoning), community groups and other key stakeholders :

Conversations have occurred with commissions, community groups, and relevant stakeholders and the community. Both the Director of the Office of Planning and Development Services as well as the Manager of Economic and Community Development also conducted discussions with DECD in regard to the future of the property. Future community input meetings will be necessary.

Does the project have site plan approval from the host municipality?

Yes ☐ No ☒ Details: once a project is established then appropriate permitting will commence

8. How will this redevelopment project address an unmet need within its surrounding neighborhood, municipality and/or region?

The parcel represents a large acreage in a desirable location offering a unique redevelopment opportunity. The site is located one-quarter mile north of Interstate 95. The site is also just two miles north of the downtown Mystic village. This underdeveloped and underutilized property has tremendous potential under private ownership when added to the state and local tax rolls.

In 1872, the site was originally the Whipple School for the Deaf and was eventually changed to the Mystic Oral School for the Deaf which operated until 1921 when the State of Connecticut took ownership of the property. The school was closed in 1980. From then until 2010, the Town held a portion of their recreation opportunities on the adjacent fields and within the existing gymnasium and natatorium facilities. A portion of the property is leased to the Reliant Fire Department (Old Mystic) for training purposes. This lease expires in 2022.

Will the redevelopment project include affordable and/or mixed-income housing?

It certainly could include affordable or mixed income housing. A report was commissioned by the Town of Groton for \$8,500 from VHB (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc.) and Camoin Associates regarding the redevelopment of the Mystic Education Center. The report offers several reuse alternatives including: 1) housing for an aging population, 2) high end residential conversion, 3) hospitality/recreation, 4) institutional, 5) mixed use and 6) municipal possibilities. These alternatives are summarized as follows:

The housing for an aging population option addressed the concept of senior housing which could include different levels of care. The Town of Groton's Plan of Conservation and Development as well as Zoning Regulations have firmly supported a diversity of housing types across Groton as well as positively encouraging the concept of "aging in place" for our growing aging population.

The high-end residential conversion option discussed the idea that some of the existing structures could be reused creatively to create open floor plan high ceiling lofts with room on site for amenities. Location to the village as well as easy access to Interstate 95 could create a market potential for this type of high end conversion.

The hospitality/recreation option stressed the ability for the area to draw the area's tourism base and increase the potential for the property. Lodging and hospitality could be competitive markets that could generate additional interest around the area's recreational and historic resources. Increased hospitality could easily support some of the area's increasing market of youth sports and recreational tournaments.

The institutional option provides an opportunity because of the large uninterrupted parcel. The size of the parcel along provides an opportunity for an institution to grow in one location without having to amass a large number of parcels. This is certainly a selling point because so few of them are available in the region.

The mixed use option is a likely scenario given the size of the parcel, however, this could provide a variety of complementary services such as market rate and senior housing along with recreation and medical offices, hospital and recreation together, institutional use with residential or lodging components (such as a boarding school).

The municipal option is a possible scenario because the parcel could be developed to house town recreation uses for town programs or offices/operations. It should be noted that the Town is not interested in directly using the property, but the parcel is certainly suitable for this particular use especially for recreation.

9. Please provide a range of permanent jobs associated with the redevelopment project:

Constructions jobs would certainly be generated due to the redevelopment potential for the property. Permanent jobs are expected, but are dependent upon what is created on the property.

10. Experience: Please list the project team members (municipal, developer, environmental professional, financing sources, etc.) and indicate the level of experience the team has with similar projects. Include project size, scope, and whether completed on time and within budget.

Jonathan Reiner, AICP – Director of Office of Planning and Development Services – Jon’s experience spans more than 15 years of public sector experience focused on environmental, community and economic planning, land use/zoning programs, and project implementation and management. He has been the Director in Groton for over two years working on a number of high profile projects including an overhaul of Groton’s regulatory framework and the communitywide market analysis. Prior to Groton, he served for 10 years as the Director of Planning for the Town of North Kingstown, RI directing many progressive initiatives such as Transit Oriented Development at Wickford Junction involving the MBTA, implementation of the state’s first Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, numerous land acquisition projects, implementation of housing projects, and directing the North Kingstown Market Analysis project. Over \$5 million in grant funds were secured with focus on recreation, historic preservation, and redevelopment were secured through state and federal funding. All projects were completed within scheduled timeframe and budget. Jon’s talent is in managing projects, budgets, teams, and programs.

Paige Bronk, AICP – Economic and Community Development Manager - Paige’s 25 year diverse and professional career has involved public and private sector experience in Georgia; Kentucky; Rhode Island and Connecticut (Groton). He served for 13 years as the Director of Planning, Development, Zoning and Inspections for the City of Newport planning and implementing major redevelopment projects. Most involved grants with project totals valued in the millions and all were completed within projected timeframe and budget. The most relevant focus on public property including the following: Wickford Elementary School property redevelopment, Potter School property redevelopment, Lenthal School property redevelopment, Carey School property redevelopment, Coastal Extreme Brewing (Newport Storm/Thomas Tew Rum) public/private development project, Navy Housing Property Redevelopment - Community College of Rhode Island (APA “Best Implementation Project” Award 2007), Newport Cliff Walk Reconstruction, and Newport Harbor Shuttle implementation. Other significant projects included Groton Market Analysis, North Kingstown Market Analysis, Broadway Streetscape Improvement Project, and Newport North End Master Plan Implementation. Paige’s specialty is the redevelopment of property through partnerships between public and private sectors.



Susan Cullen, AICP, PhD, Planner II Neighborhood & Community – Susan is a seasoned professional who has generated and managed the majority of the Town of Groton’s grant funding for the last seventeen years for the Office of Planning and Development Services. Her experience includes: 80/20 Recreation Trails Grant Funding that built trails within Birch Plain Creek Park in 2002 on time and on budget, Long Island Sound License Plate Funding that partially funded the establishment of Birch Plain Creek Park, obtaining of all easements at no cost to the Town of Groton for the DOT/Downtown Streetscape Phase Two project, managed a million dollars in revolving loan funds from Small Cities Community Development Block Grants from the late 1990’s, applied for and managed \$400,000 in Small Cities Community Development Block Grants for Housing Rehabilitation Projects (income restricted) on time and on budget, applied for and managed \$800,000 in Small Cities Community Development Block Grants for the Groton Housing Authority (senior low income housing) on budget and 90 days ahead of schedule, \$40,000 in DEEP EVConnecticut Grant Reimbursements for the purchase of an electric vehicle and six public charging stations on time and under budget.

Sam Eisenbeiser, AICP – Economic Development Specialist – Sam has over 17 years of community and economic development experience both as an analyst and as a project manager. His most recent work experience over the past five years includes both municipal-level work and private consulting. As a private consultant working with the City of Meriden, he worked to devise a development plan for parcels in the heart of downtown Meriden near the train station. This effort included a comprehensive socioeconomic, market and industry analysis as well as working with area developers to assess market drivers for the area. The project was completed on time and within budget. Additionally, Sam served as the Economic Development Coordinator for the Town of North Stonington. Key achievements included managing the Economic Development Commission, overseeing the creation of a new website for the commission, marketing and promotion of the town's assets and available sites and working with a project team to develop long-term projections for town-wide utility systems. Sam’s most recent work for the Town of Groton included coordination with consultants to finalize a comprehensive market analysis, promotion of the town's incentive programs, business attraction efforts, and development of an economic development website for marketing and promotions. All projects and efforts have been achieved within designated schedules and within budget. Sam brings technical strength to the effort with emphasis on analysis, transportation, development and public engagement.

11. Does project have required floodplain, SHPO, or wetland permits, or have they been applied for? Note: Please include copies of any permits or communication regarding the same.

This project may require all of the above referenced permits dependent upon the location and scope of the project. A Phase I environmental assessment was prepared in 2013 by Loureiro Associates. No application has been made since the property is now owned by the State of Connecticut.

12. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), Public Transit and Pedestrian Environment:

Is the project site within walking distance (a half mile) of an existing or planned commuter train station or a bus stop? Yes ☐ No ☒ Details: The nearest Amtrak Rail Station is in Mystic at 2.4



miles away. The nearest bus stop is in Downtown Mystic Village which is 2 miles away. The Town anticipates a new connection of roadway from the parcel to River Road which is a scenic road that runs along the Mystic River and connects to the Downtown Mystic Village.

Does the property have any features nearby that would enhance walkability or bikeability?

(Example: Complete Streets design features, sidewalks, street trees, bicycle lanes, bicycle storage facilities, etc.)

Yes ☒ No ☐ **Details:** Due to the size of the property there could be bicycle storage and bicycle lanes accommodated on the property. The Town's Subdivision Regulations require street trees as part of any new plan. The Town does have a sidewalk plan that outlines priority areas to build new sidewalks. The adjacent River Road where a new road connection is anticipated is frequented at regular intervals by both bicyclists and pedestrians. Access to the property is currently from Oral School Road which is a narrow residential road and has not been well maintained since use of the property has declined. Additionally, the Town envisions improved pedestrian connection from the property down to the river with possible improvements to waterfront access.

13. Mixed-Use Development:

Will future development of this site include a mixed-use development (residential, commercial, retail)?

Yes ☒ No ☐ **Details:** Any future development would likely be a mixed use development based solely on the size of the parcel.

If so, is the neighborhood currently zoned for mixed-use development?

Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐ **Comments:** It is currently zoned RU-80 which is a two acre residential zone

If not, is the applicant pursuing the zoning changes to enable a mix of uses in the project site?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐ **Comments:** The Town will initiate the needed zoning amendment to enable a mixed use development project at the appropriate future time.

14. Summary of the subject property's tax contribution to the municipal tax base:

Subject Property Tax Impact	
Most Recent Year	Projected Year 1 After Development
\$n/a	\$n/a

***State owned - No current tax contribution to either the State or Town**

SECTION III PROJECT BUDGET INFORMATION

***SEE ATTACHED BUDGET BREAKDOWN**



State of Connecticut
 Department of Economic and Community Development
 Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development
 State-Owned and Formerly State-Owned Brownfield Program

Note: If budget information is based on contractor bids or other formal estimates, please attach copies of the bid/estimate documents.

Project Activity (Use of Fund)	Source of Fund					
	DECD	Other State	Federal	Local	Private	Total
Other	\$50,000 for marketing			\$28,500 in-kind staff		\$78,500
Land purchase						
Environmental						
Assessment						
Remediation						
Abatement						
Monitoring						
Demolition						
Construction						
Administration soft costs						
Legal costs						
Geotechnical						
Structural Engineer.						
Architectural						
Design Assessment						
Total	\$50,000			\$28,500		\$78,500

SECTION IV CERTIFICATION BY APPLICANT

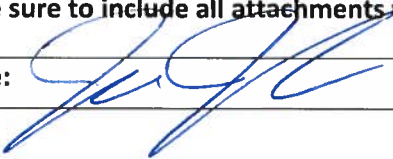
It is hereby represented by the undersigned, that to the best of my knowledge and belief no information or data contained in the application and attachments are in any way false or incorrect and that no material information has been omitted. The undersigned agrees that the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the federal Environmental Protection Agency are hereby authorized now, or anytime in the future, to give the Department of Economic and Community Development any and all information in connection with matters referred to in this application. Your application and the contents of your application and our discussions with you are subject to public disclosure. We may communicate with the municipality, state agencies (including the CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, the CT Department of Housing, the CT Office of Policy and Management, the CT Department of Public Health), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the general public. You or the owner may be requested to enroll in the DEEP Voluntary Remediation Program, and to cooperate with DEEP and the EPA. Projects funded under this program may be subject to the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act ("CEPA"), as well as other environmental regulations, and DECD



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and to cooperate with DEEP and the EPA. Projects funded under this program may be subject to the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act ("CEPA"), as well as other environmental regulations, and DECD regulations related to procurement and bidding procedures. State funding may require placement of a lien on project property. In addition, if the applicant is a private corporation, a personal guaranty may be also required from each owner of 10% or more. In addition, the undersigned agrees that any funds provided pursuant to this application will be utilized exclusively for the purposes represented in this application, as may be amended and agreed to by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). DECD reserves the right to request additional information at any time from one or more applicants, or to reject any or all such applications, in each case at DECD's sole discretion. DECD may exercise the foregoing rights at any time without notice and without liability to any applicant or any other party. Applications to this program shall be prepared at the sole expense of the applicant and shall not obligate DECD to procure any of the services described therein or herein from any applicant. DECD shall not be obligated to any applicant until a final written agreement has been executed by all necessary parties thereto and all applicable approvals have been obtained. As such, any funds expended by the applicant prior to these approvals will be done so entirely at the risk of the applicant.

Please be sure to include all attachments with your submission.

Signature: 	Title: <i>Planning Director</i>	Date: <i>6/29/16</i>
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***Submit Applications to DECD electronically,
via email to***

Brownfields@CT.GOV



THE TOWN OF NORTH KINGSTOWN WICKFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The former Wickford Elementary School is located at 99 Phillips Street (Plat 116, Lot 109) in the heart of Wickford on 5 acres.

The hilltop property overlooks “Academy Cove” and Wickford Village. The property slopes downhill from the school. The property is located within the Wickford Village Center (WVC) zoning district which allows mixed use. It is not within the local historic district zone.



BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The building was constructed in 1907 with an addition in 1948 increasing total size to 33,100 square feet. Building expansion potential exists on the property.

The three-story school is 2 ½ stories above grade and holds approximately fourteen (14) classrooms and a 2,100 square foot assembly space on the lowest level.

The assembly space was used as a multi-purpose auditorium/cafeteria.

PROJECT INTENT

The Town of North Kingstown is interested in attracting the best development team. A future Request for Proposals (RFP) will be issued shortly. North Kingstown’s primary goal is to ensure the planned and timely development of the former Wickford Elementary School property in a way that maximizes financial benefit to the Town and serves as an economic anchor to Wickford Village. Both the future sale and/or long term lease of the property will be entertained. The Town is motivated to work closely with the selected development team to expedite project completion.

CONTACT INFORMATION

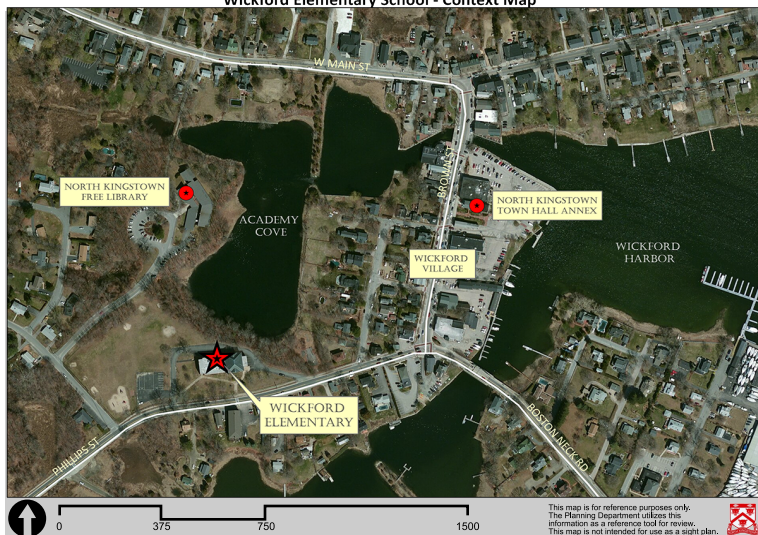
If interested in discussing this project, receiving additional information, or being placed on our distribution list for the future Request for Proposals (RFP), please contact:

Paige R. Bronk, AICP - Economic Development Manager
55 Brown Street, North Kingstown, RI 02852
P: 401.268.1572 E: pbronk@northkingstown.org



THE TOWN OF NORTH KINGSTOWN WICKFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Wickford Elementary School - Context Map



DEVELOPMENT ADVANTAGES

LOCATION: 1 minute to Wickford Village, 10 minutes to Quonset Business Park, 20 minutes to Newport, 30 minutes to Providence, 1.5 hours to Boston, and three hours to New York City. Direct and immediate access to: MBTA and Amtrak trains, highways (I-95, Routes 1 & 4), T.F. Green Airport, Wickford Harbor, and pedestrian and bicycle connections.

SEWERS: "Installed within the Village within 24-36 months.

ECONOMY: "Market analysis documented existing high household incomes and a growing demand for commerce.

PROPERTY TAXES: Incentives are available for non-residential development.

DOCUMENTATION: Survey, environmental, and other predevelopment information is available.

TIMEFRAME: Town desires to support and expedite a quality development initiative.

TOWN OF NORTH KINGSTOWN PROCESS

The Town is contacting prospective development teams. In the near future, a Request for Proposals (RFP) will be issued and all interested groups are invited to respond. Financial yield, quality of the proposed use/design, team experience, and ability to execute will all be considered in reviewing proposals. Interested parties are encouraged to inquire and view the property. The Town will work closely with the selected team to expedite project completion. A real estate broker's fee will be offered to the selected team's representative, if any.

LINKS OF INTEREST

NORTH KINGSTOWN SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE
http://www.northkingstown.org/sites/northkingstown.org/files/pdf-attachments/Socio-Economic%20Highlights%202013_o.pdf

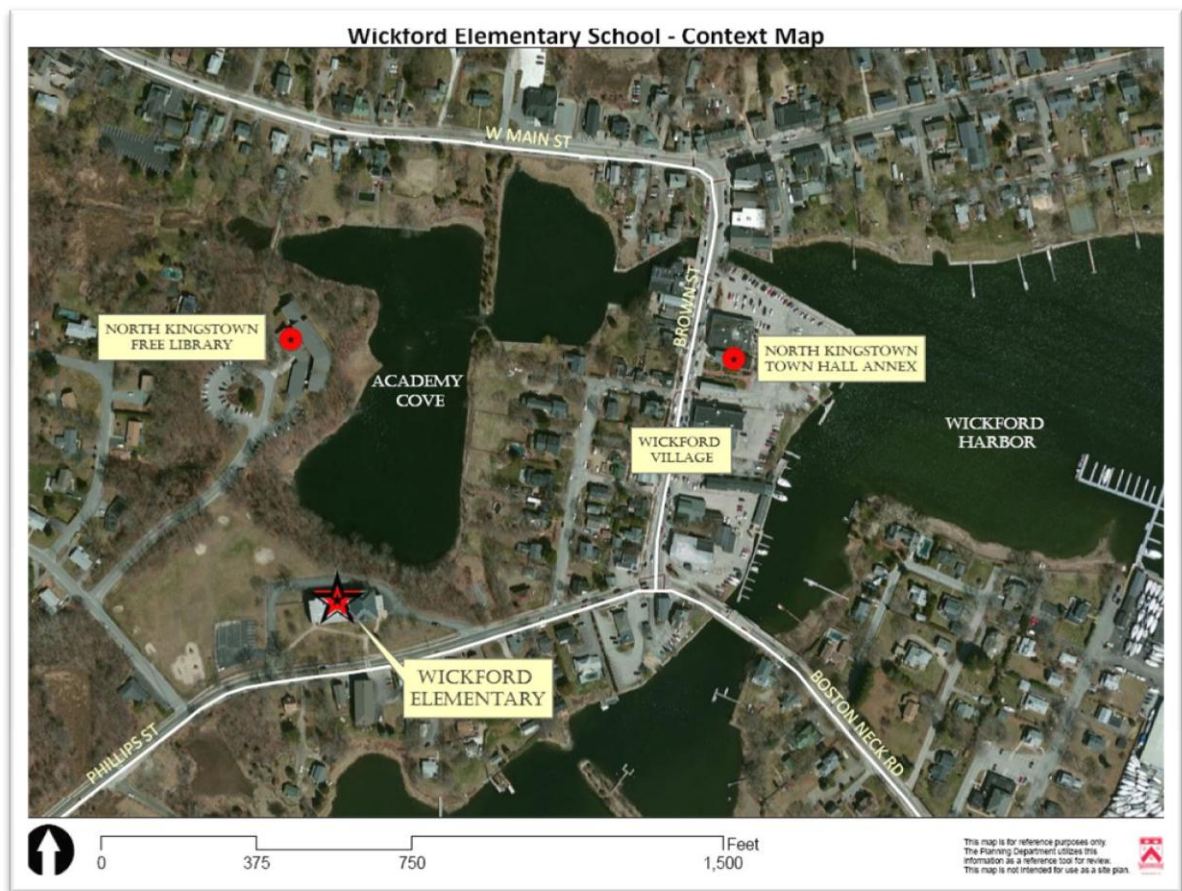
NORTH KINGSTOWN MARKET ANALYSIS
http://www.northkingstown.org/sites/northkingstown.org/files/pdf-attachments/North%20Kingstown%20Market%20Study_Full%20Report.pdf



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

WICKFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island



TOWN OF NORTH KINGSTOWN, RHODE ISLAND

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Issued: Friday, October 17, 2014

Sealed proposals are being requested for the long-term lease or sale of publicly owned property, in accordance with all terms and specifications contained herein, and will be received by the Town of North Kingstown, RI until the following deadline:

Two (2) o'clock P.M., Wednesday, December 17, 2014

Submittals must be delivered by mail or hand-delivered in sealed envelopes addressed to the Town of North Kingstown Planning & Development Department, 55 Brown Street, North Kingstown, RI 02852 c/o Paige R. Bronk, Economic Development Manager. The submittals should be marked referencing **"WICKFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT."** Please also provide one (1) electronic copy on CD.

**THERE WILL NOT BE A PUBLIC OPENING AND PROPOSALS RECEIVED
WILL NOT BE RELEASED UNTIL A PURCHASE AND SALES OR LEASE
AGREEMENT IS FINALIZED**

It is the proposer's responsibility to see that the proposal is delivered within the time and place prescribed within this RFP. Proposals received prior to the time of opening will be securely kept, unopened. Proposals may be withdrawn from opening by written request (on the letterhead of the proposer and signed by the submitter) which must be received prior to the deadline. Submitted proposals may be modified in the same manner prior to the deadline.

Any change or interpretation made during the process will be published in an addendum. Should a submitter still not be satisfied, he may, set out and stipulate an exception in writing, with enough explanation to be understood by the Town. The Town may, at its discretion, accept or reject any or all exceptions received.

TECHNICAL POINT OF CONTACT:

Paige R. Bronk, Economic Development Manager
Town of North Kingstown, Planning & Development Department
55 Brown Street
North Kingstown, RI 02852
(401) 268-1572
pbronk@northkingstown.org

GENERAL CONDITIONS AND TERMS:

1. The Town of North Kingstown (Town) reserves the right to access or reject any and all proposals in whole or in part, to waive any technical defects, irregularities, and omissions, and to give consideration to past performance of the proposers where, the interests of the Town will be best served.
2. The Town reserves the right to directly negotiate with any entity who submits a proposal in response to this RFP and to award a contract based upon those negotiations alone.
3. The Town may determine proposals to be technically and/or substantially non-responsive at any point in the evaluation process and may remove such proposal from further consideration.
4. All original documents and drawings shall become the property of the Town once submitted.
5. The Town reserves the right to request interviews of developers, discuss all project details, and to select and negotiate a preferred development proposal that is in the best interest of the Town prior to final award.
6. "Proposal" shall also mean quotation, bid, offer, qualification/experience statement, and services. Proposers shall also mean vendors, offerers, bidders, or any person or firm responding to a Request for Proposals (RFP).
7. All submitters are responsible for insuring that no addendums have been made to the original RFP package or that all addendums have been received and addressed. All bid packages and addendums are located at the Town of North Kingstown Planning & Development Department and on the Town municipal website.
8. All submitted proposal materials become the property of the Town. A mandatory \$200 filing fee is due upon the receipt of the submission. The filing fee must be paid by certified check only, made payable to "Town of

North Kingstown", and is non-refundable. The fee defrays the costs incurred in administering the RFP and proposal review process.

9. Proposals arriving after the deadline may be returned, unopened, or may simply be declared non-responsive and not subject to evaluation, at the sole discretion of the Town.
10. The Town is not responsible for any costs related to the preparation and/or submittal of proposals or any subsequent costs related to presentations or clarification pertaining to this RFP. All costs are to the responsibility of the submitter.
11. There is no official public opening of proposals. To best protect the solicitation and competitive negotiation process, the Town asks that companies refrain from requesting proposal information concerning other respondents until an award has been determined. Proposal materials become public information only after the execution of a purchase and sales or lease agreement.
12. The proposer warrants, by submission of a proposal, that he is not an employee, agent, or servant of the Town of North Kingstown, and that he is fully qualified and capable in all material regards to satisfy the requirements and fulfill the proposal as submitted. Nothing herein shall be construed as creating any contractual relationship or obligation between the Town and the proposer.
13. In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.1 ("Business Corporations") of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation shall have the right to transact business in this state until it shall have procured a certificate of authority from the Rhode Island Secretary of State.
14. The proposer warrants that he has not, directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of full competitive bidding.
15. The proposer warrants that he has not paid, and agrees not to pay, any bonus, commission, fee or gratuity to any employee or official of the Town of North Kingstown for the purposes of obtaining any contract or award issued by the Town of North Kingstown.

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1. Project Overview:

The Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island is soliciting proposals from qualified and experienced development teams for the sale or long-term lease of waterfront property described herein. It is the Town's desire to conduct a process to select a development team with a corresponding proposed plan that best serves the economic and community development interests of North Kingstown. Creative redevelopment proposals are encouraged.

The Town's primary objective is the planned and timely development of this former Wickford Elementary School property in a way that maximizes financial benefit to the Town and serves as an economic anchor to Wickford Village. Both the sale and/or long term lease of the property will be entertained. The Town is willing to enter a public/private partnership to work with the preferred developer including specific incentives and technical assistance (see "Project Incentives"). This property is unique to the Town of North Kingstown and Wickford Village given the relatively large size (building and land) and commercial zoning. It is the desire of the Town that the property be redeveloped to realize its highest and best use potential with proper neighborhood integration considerations.



2. Municipal Process:

Solicitation of qualified proposals begins with the issuance of this Request for Proposals (RFP). Proposals received will initially be reviewed and evaluated on responsiveness to the RFP. Submitted proposals will be reviewed by a municipal team tasked with determining the best qualified submittals based upon benefit to the Town of North Kingstown and the criteria and other objectives stipulated within the RFP. All materials provided by the proposals will be taken into consideration. Interviews or follow up information requests may be involved during the review process.

Following the initial evaluation process by the municipal review team, the proposals will be forwarded to the North Kingstown Town Council for further consideration and short list selections. There may be a need for direct communication between the Town Council and short list development teams. There will be ongoing discussions with short-listed firms prior to the final selection of the preferred development team and development proposal. This municipal process is intended to be somewhat flexible for premier firms and proposals. This allows the formulation of an ultimate development project that is feasible for the development team and also serves the best interests of the Town of North Kingstown.



3. Property Description and Redevelopment History:

The former Wickford Elementary School at 99 Phillips Street (Plat 116, Lot 109) overlooks Academy Cove in the heart of Wickford Village. The site is two miles from an MBTA rail station (Wickford Junction) and within close proximity to Routes 4 and 1. The property also abuts the North Kingstown Free Library. Quonset Industrial Park and the University of Rhode Island are within a 15 minute drive time. The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) serves this property with a bus stop on Phillips Street in front of the former school.

The property available for redevelopment contains approximately five (5) acres of land. The single parcel at this time holds approximately six (6) acres, but the reconfiguration of property lines is being finalized to accommodate a passive recreation heritage park on Boone Street and the placement of a historic town building on the land on the northernmost corner adjacent to the North Kingstown Public Library. As a result, the remaining developable land area will be decreased by approximately one (1) acre to five (5) acres. Academy Cove abuts the northern property line. The Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) has determined that the “coastal feature” boundary is approximately located at the edge of the cliff above Academy Cove. The building is located on a hill and not within a floodplain, but the lower undeveloped area of the property to the west is within a coastal floodplain (AE zone – elevation 13).

The existing building was constructed in 1907 with an addition in 1948 increasing its total size to 33,100 square feet. Building expansion potential exists on the site. The property's grade slopes downhill from the school to the undeveloped land. The 2½ story building holds approximately eighteen (18) full classrooms and a 2,100 square foot assembly space on the lowest level. The assembly space was used as a multi-purpose auditorium/cafeteria. Also, there are several smaller room areas formally used for administrative offices and storage.

The property was last used as an elementary school around 2005. Since that time, the Town had contemplated a conversion to a new municipal office complex. That effort was not implemented. The Town instead expressed a desire to redevelop the property. In 2014, the Town amended the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance to a business zone (Wickford Village District) for this property setting the stage for future economic development. Other properties along the Phillips Street also benefit from this change. Also, on June 17, 2014 the voters in North Kingstown overwhelmingly approved a referendum to add sewers to Wickford's Business District.

Prior to the zoning amendment and sewer approval, the Town had previously entertained a mixed use development including a boutique hotel, restaurant, and conference center which also involved a substantial building addition. Both parties mutually agreed to end the relationship since the prospective buyer's team could not satisfy the initial terms of the P&S agreement primarily relating to construction commitments. The Town was provided the due diligence materials which are being shared with interested future prospects. Materials available to prospects include the following:

Available documentation:

- Property Survey
- Phase I Environmental Report
- Community wide Market Analysis
- Market Demand Study and Market Projections for a Boutique Hotel
- CRMC Preliminary Determination
- Wetland Delineations
- Schematic Building Drawings
- Building Code Feasibility Study (contains floor plans)
- Zoning Certificate

This above-referenced material can be found on the Town of North Kingstown's "Economic Development and Business" webpage under the "Wickford Elementary School Project" title or hard copies can be viewed at the Town of North Kingstown Department of Planning and Development.

<http://www.northkingstown.org/business/economic-development>

As a result of the sewer initiative, the Wickford business district will be sewered within three (3) years including this Wickford Elementary School property. Conceptual design plans are completed and final designs are being prepared. All property owners within the district adjacent to the sewer main will be subject to an annual sewer assessment fee to be paid over a period of 20 years. Each property will be assessed based upon an estimated volume flow corresponding to use and intensity. The unit of measurement is

“Equivalent Dwelling Units” or “EDU’s”. As an illustrative example only, the former Wickford Elementary School redevelopment mixed-use development proposal was assigned about 34 EDUs relating to the proposed number of hotel rooms, conference center, restaurant, and other uses. The approximate cost in EDUs to the former redevelopment project was about \$95,000 per year for the 20 year assessment term. The Town understands that a developer desires to project a budget value for sanitary service, but the assessment is contingent upon the intensity of the proposed use. The current onsite septic system is not suitable for use. Also, the hypothetical installation of an advanced septic system is likely infeasible due to poor soils and the exorbitant up front capital cost. As a result of this researched knowledge, the Town combined the Wickford Elementary School property with other Village commercial properties to create a village business sewer system. This future public sewer system is cheaper for all and is financed through a low interest bond over a 20 year term for the benefit of the commercial property owners and Town.



4. Zoning and North Kingstown Market Analysis:

The property is zoned “Wickford Village Center” (WVC) encouraging business and residential uses. The property is not located in the local historic district. The Wickford Elementary School building and property is larger in size than all others within the WVC. As a result, the Town will work with the selected developer to ensure land regulations comply with the intensity, size, and scale of the preferred project. The WVC will likely

require a special use permit from the local Zoning Board of Review. The Town is prepared to assist the preferred project through this approval process. A copy of an official zoning certificate can be found on the Town's Economic Development webpage.

In 2014, the Town invested in the completion of a community wide market analysis. Prospective development teams are highly encouraged to take advantage of this 400+ page informational resource. It contains significant demographic, economic, and real estate data specific to market and consumer demands. General community findings include demand for mixed use, restaurants, hotels, higher quality retail, multi-family residential, and more. This analysis can be found on the Town of North Kingstown Economic Development webpage or the following link or a hard copy is available for review in the Planning and Development Department:

http://www.northkingstown.org/sites/northkingstown.org/files/pdf-attachments/North%20Kingstown%20Market%20Study_Full%20Report.pdf



5. Community Background:

The Town of North Kingstown was established in 1641 and incorporated in 1674. The Town of North Kingstown operates under a home rule charter and has a Town Council/Town Manager form of government including a 5-member Town Council and

Council President. The Town is 58.3 square miles in size located 22 miles south of Providence. Routes 1, 2, 4, 102, and 1A traverse the community, Route 403 provides direct access to/from Quonset Business Park to Route 4 and Interstate 95. North Kingstown is situated along Narragansett Bay with over 30 miles of coastline and two public harbors (Wickford and Allen). The southern terminus of the MBTA and 1,100 space parking garage is located in North Kingstown at the new Wickford Junction development. North Kingstown is known for having a high quality of life, excellent school system, an abundance of recreational opportunities, and the largest industrial park in Rhode Island. North Kingstown has over 1,789 acres of parks and recreation and nearly 10 miles of completed bike paths.

The population is 26,486 residents with 10,436 households. Median household income is \$77,477. The median single family sales price is \$304,505. There are 7,860 owner-occupied dwelling units occupied by 20,927 residents. There are 2,567 renter-occupied dwelling units occupied by 5,366 residents. Average employment is 14,428 jobs through approximately 999 establishments. The property tax rate is \$18.91/\$1,000 valuation and motor vehicle tax rate is \$22.04/\$1,000 valuation.

Land use in North Kingstown is a combination of both suburban and rural development with a number of key commercial and industrial areas experiencing development. There is a significant amount of residential growth with several hundred approved housing units in the construction pipeline.

Quonset/Davisville Industrial Parks, including the Port, constitute nearly 10% of the land in North Kingstown with nearly 10,000 jobs. Activity along Post Road, Wickford Junction, Wickford, and in other commercially and industrially zoned areas account for the remainder of the development activity.

Sewers are currently available along the southern portion of Post Road. The Wickford Business District sewer expansion will occur by 2017 as a result the overwhelming passage of a voter referendum on June 17, 2014.



6. Development Objectives:

The Town of North Kingstown seeks to develop the property in a manner consistent with the following development objectives:

- Implementation of a quality development including use, design and function.
- Completion of the project in a timely, planned, and well executed manner.
- Retain the existing building and any additions should be complimentary in design to the existing and surrounding neighborhood.
- Integration of the project into the high quality neighborhood
- Management of traffic circulation
- Retention of significant trees and implementation of new landscaping
- Adjust and shield all lighting so to minimize impacts to adjacent properties
- Incorporate limited public access for pedestrians allowing connection from the Village to the Library.
- Support the Town's effort to help implement the linear passive park on Town property with State awarded grant funds.

7. Project Incentives:

The Town of North Kingstown's primary goal is to attract the best team offering to implement a superior development in a timely and well-planned manner. Also, the Town

is interested in receiving a competitive offering for its property, one that maximizes financial and community benefits to North Kingstown.

In order to partner with a team and improve their success, the Town will assist the preferred development team, where possible through incentives. Potential incentives may include the following and are subject to the quality and caliber of the development proposal. Prospective developers may integrate these and other incentives into their proposals for review by the Town.

- Local technical assistance with local and state permitting.
- Waivers of local permit fees up to a pre-determined maximum value.
- Payment of a defined brokerage commission fee on behalf of the developer.
- Assignment of a local project liaison to assist with project completion.
- Approval of a tax stabilization program staged to pre-determined construction milestones – typically involving a six (6) year term.

The consideration and granting of incentives is contingent upon the total value of the developer's proposal. The decision to grant any incentives will be packaged with the final award to the selected development team.

8. Evaluation Criteria:

Each proposal will be evaluated by the Town based on the following criteria:

- Project Approach (25%):
 - Compliance with the RFP submission requirements
 - Clear and comprehensive submittal
 - Rational, detailed, and thorough approach to implementation
 - Degree to which project complies with local plans and regulations and community
- Team Qualifications and Experience (25%):
 - Demonstrated experience in completing similar projects
 - Strength of the team including project lead, engineering, architectural design, construction, financing, etc..
 - References for key completed projects
- Project Viability and Ability to Execute Project in Timely Manner (25%):
 - Demonstrated project marketability
 - Demonstrated evidence supporting project financing
 - Reasonable timeframe to initiate and complete project
 - Reasonable demands of needs or requests from the Town
- Benefit to Town (25%):
 - Financial offering to purchase or lease to the Town
 - Quantitative and qualitative benefits to the Town
 - Community benefits (public use, amenities, linkage to Wickford Village, other)

9. **Submittal Requirements:**

Please read these submission requirements carefully. The Town of North Kingstown is not responsible for errors and/or omissions.

Submission Format: Respondents are required to provide **five (5) hard copies** of their proposal plus one electronic copy on CD. Each proposal must contain all information as outlined below. Relevant supplemental information will be accepted within the guidelines of this format. Submissions that omit requested information may be subject to disqualification.

- Executive Summary
- General narrative description and site plan/sketch for the proposed project including basic some elevation renderings.
- Contact information (names, phone, address, email) for development team plus the identification of a primary contact person.
- Financial offer to purchase and/or lease. Respondents may include both a purchase and lease offer in their proposals. Note: sale and/or lease values are subject to final competitive negotiation.
- If applicable, estimated number, type, and salary range of created full and part-time jobs working at this redeveloped property.
- A description of the proposed development including, but not limited to:
 - proposed use(s) for building and land,
 - building(s) proposed design, configuration, size, height, units, etc.
 - traffic circulation, road improvements, and parking, and
 - preliminary site plan, conceptual floor plans, and any other submissions that best to illustrate the development.
- Proposed planning, design, approval, and construction schedule.
- Description of prior experience in completing similar development projects with references.
- Description of requested technical or financial assistance from the Town and why it is needed for project feasibility.
- Evidence of financing availability, including the names and addresses of financial references for the developer and any other named sources of equity capital.
- Project pro forma demonstrating the financial viability of the proposed development.
- Mandatory \$200 filing fee. This fee must be paid by certified check made payable to "Town of North Kingstown" and is non-refundable. The fee defrays the costs incurred in administering and executing the RFP and associated costs.
- For each individual with more than a ten percent (10%) interest in the development entity:
 - Respondent must execute a notarized affidavit of non-collusion. A copy of said affidavit must be attached hereto as Attachment A.
- Domestic corporations and other limited liability entities must submit a certificate of good standing from the Office of the Rhode Island Secretary of State, Corporations Division, 100 North Main Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903.

http://ucc.state.ri.us/Certificates/Certificate_Request.asp

- Respondents that are foreign corporations and those corporations not chartered in Rhode Island must hold a certificate authorizing said foreign corporation to do business in the State of Rhode Island. These certificates, or certified copies, are available from the Office of the Rhode Island Secretary of State, Corporations Division, 100 North Main Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903.

IMPORTANT: All proposal materials become the property of the Town of North Kingstown. A mandatory \$200 filing fee is due upon the receipt of the submission. The filing fee must be paid by certified check only, made payable to the "Town of North Kingstown", and is non-refundable. The fee defrays the costs incurred in administering the RFP and proposal review process.

10. **Submittal Deadline and Review Schedule:**

The Town of North Kingstown reserves the right to modify the Response Schedule. However, the Proposal Submission Deadline is final. Late proposals will not be considered.

- RFP Issuance and Distribution Friday, October 17, 2014
- Submittal Deadline Wednesday, December 17, 2014 by 2:00 p.m.

Submissions are due by the date specified above unless a formal extension has been granted by the Town of North Kingstown. It is incumbent upon respondents to ensure that proposals are delivered on time to assure consideration by the Town.

- Review by Town of North Kingstown December 2014
- Interviews with Developer(s) January 2015
- Recommendation of Preferred Developer January 2015
- Town Council Review and Selection February/March 2015

The proposal and all supporting documents must be received by the above-stated deadline at the following address:

Town of North Kingstown, Planning and Development Department
55 Brown Street
North Kingstown, RI 02852
c/o Paige R. Bronk

Attention: Wickford Elementary School Redevelopment

11. Reserved Rights/Disclaimer:

The Town reserves the right to select the proposal that, in the exercise of its sole discretion, the Town believes to be responsible and most advantageous to the Town. To this extent, the Town reserves the right to accept an initial offer without further discussion or negotiation. The Town also reserves the right to discuss or negotiate proposals with any proposers it believes may have a reasonable chance of being selected for award.

The Town shall not be responsible, in any manner, for the costs associated with responses to this solicitation. The individual responses to this solicitation, including all artwork, drawings, plans, photos, models, and narrative material, shall become the sole property of the Town of North Kingstown upon their receipt. The Town shall have the right to copy, reproduce, duplicate, publicize, or otherwise dispose of each response to this solicitation in any manner that the Town chooses unless otherwise agreed upon, in advance, with the proposer.

The Town reserves the right to waive any informality or irregularity when it is in the best interest of the Town to do so, to discuss modifications to any proposal, to re-advertise for additional proposals if desired or necessary, and to accept or reject any or all proposals, for any and all reasons.

The Town of North Kingstown reserves the right to postpone or reschedule any of the actual or proposed dates or deadlines.

12. Attachments:

- A. Non-Collusion Affidavit**
- B. Anti-Kickback Acknowledgement**
- C. Proposal Transmittal Sheet**
- D. Listing of Officers Sheet**

Attachment A.

NON-COLLUSION AFFIDAVIT

(Prime Bidder) _____

State of _____

County of _____

_____, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

That he/she is _____ (partner or officer) of the firm of _____, the party making the foregoing proposal or bid, that such proposal or bid is genuine and not collusive or sham, that said bidder has not colluded, conspired connived or agreed, directly or indirectly with any bidder or person, to put in a sham bid or to refrain from bidding, and has not in any manner, directly or indirectly, sought by agreement or collusion, or communication or conference, with any person, to fix the bid price or affidavit or any other bidder, or to fix any overhead, profit or cost element of said bid price, or of that of any other bidder, or to secure any advantage against the Town of North Kingstown or any person interested in the proposed contract; and that all statements in said proposal or bid are true.

Signatures:

Bidder, if the bidder is an individual; _____

Partner, if the bidder is a partnership; _____

Officer, if the bidder is a corporation; _____

Subscribed and sworn to before me

This _____ day of _____, 20____

Notary: _____

Printed Name: _____

My Commission expires: _____, 20____

Attachment B.

ANTI-KICKBACK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ALL BIDDERS/OFFERORS MUST ATTEST TO THE FOLLOWING:

The vendor acknowledges, under the pains and penalties of perjury, that he/she has not been offered, paid, or solicited for any contribution or compensation, nor has he/she been granted a gift, gratuity, or other consideration, either directly or indirectly by any officer, employee or member of the governing body of the Town of North Kingstown who exercises any functions or responsibilities in connection with either the award or execution of the project to which this contract pertains.

Further, the vendor acknowledges, under the pains and penalties of perjury, that he/she has not offered, paid, or solicited by way of any contribution or compensation, nor has he/she granted a gift, gratuity or other consideration either directly or indirectly to any officer, employee, or member of the governing body of the Town of North Kingstown who exercises any functions or responsibilities in connection with either the award or execution of the project to which this project or contract pertains.

SIGNATURE OF OFFEROR

DATE

TITLE

COMPANY

Title of RFP: _____

Attachment C:

PROPOSAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET –

WICKFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT

Date: _____

I/We _____ the undersigned do hereby submit a proposal to the Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island, for the sale or long-term lease of the Wickford Elementary School Property, in accordance with all terms and specifications contained within said RFP herein. The undersigned acknowledges that the submittal does not rely on the Town of North Kingstown regarding the condition of the property and will make their own investigation on the condition of the property or suitability for development.

1. Please attach your Proposal

NAME OF FIRM

SIGNATURE

TITLE

SIGNATURE

TITLE

SIGNATURE

TITLE

ADDRESS, CITY, ZIP CODE

TELEPHONE NUMBER

FAX NUMBER

E-MAIL ADDRESS

Attachment D.

LISTING OF OFFICERS SHEET

List the Officers of your Corporation or Principals of your LLC. Award cannot be completed without the attachment.

<hr/>	
Complete Company Name	
<hr/>	<hr/>
Name	Title/Officer/Position
<hr/>	<hr/>
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Name	Title/Officer/Position

**PHASE I
ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**Former Mystic Oral School for the Deaf
Groton, Connecticut**

June 2013

Prepared for

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION AND DEVELOPMENT
505 Hudson Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-7106**

Prepared by

**LOUREIRO ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES, INC.
100 Northwest Drive
Plainville, Connecticut 06062**

An Employee-Owned Company

Comm. No. 18HM3.01.001

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ACRONYMS

AAI	All Appropriate Inquiry
ACM	Asbestos-Containing Material
AOC	Area of Concern
AST	Above-Ground Storage Tank
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CERCLIS	CERCLA Information System
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGS	Connecticut General Statutes
CORRACTS	Corrective Action Sites
CSM	Conceptual Site Model
DAS	Department of Administrative Services
DEEP	Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
DECD	Department of Economic and Community Development
EDR	Environmental Data Resources, Inc.
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERNS	Emergency Response Notification System
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
ETPH	Extractable Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons
FINDS	Facility Index System
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
GIS	Geographic Information System
HBM	Hazardous Building Materials
LEA	Loureiro Engineering Associates, Inc.
LPG	Liquified Propane Gas

LUST	Leaking Underground Storage Tank
LWDS	Leachate and Wastewater Discharge Sites
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
OBRD	Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development
PCBs	Polychlorinated Biphenyls
PID	Photoionization Detector
PVC	Polyvinyl Chloride
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
REC	Recognized Environmental Condition
SCGD	Site Characterization Guidance Document
SDADB	Site Discovery and Assessment Database
SIMS	Site Information Management System
SVE	Soil Vapor Extraction
SVOCs	Semivolatile Organic Compounds
TSCA	Toxic Substances Control Act
USC	United States Code
USGS	United States Geological Survey
UST	Underground Storage Tank
VOCs	Volatile Organic Compounds

UNITS

mg/kg	milligrams per kilogram
ppm	parts per million
ppmv	parts per million by volume
µg/kg	micrograms per kilogram

Redevelopment of Mystic Education Center Groton, CT

Prepared for:
Town of Groton, CT
Planning and Development Services

Prepared by:
VHB, Inc.
Camoin Associates

January 4, 2016





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Introduction

This report evaluates the Town of Groton's opportunities relative to the potential reuse of the 48 acre former Mystic Education Center property located in Groton, CT. The goal is to identify potential development strategies that are consistent with the Town's vision of how the campus might be repurposed factoring in physical site conditions as well as the findings of the regulatory audit and market study currently being undertaken by VHB and Camoin Associates.

The Mystic Education Center, formally known as the Mystic Oral School, served as a residential school for the deaf from 1895 until 1980. In 1921, the State of Connecticut assumed ownership and supervision of the school, but discontinued its usage in 1980 as education policy shifted to encourage placement of hearing impaired children in local and regional programs. The state continued to use the facility and a wide range of uses by various organizations including the Groton Parks and Recreation Department, Special Olympics, a dance program, a business, a day care center and firefighting training programs were housed there.

The state notified the Town of Groton in the fall of 2011 that the campus would be closed. The state closed the campus in order to save an estimated \$400,000 per year in operating costs. The campus is currently owned and managed by the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services.

As part of the initial planning effort, VHB and Camoin Associates conducted a kick-off meeting and site visit with representatives from the Town of Groton and State of Connecticut to confirm goals and obtain relevant site information. Following the meeting and site tour, the consultant team reviewed information provided by the Town including zoning, previous economic and environmental reports, and other local and state regulations and site condition reports pertinent to development on the site. An economic and real estate market analysis was conducted for the Town as part of a separate effort. This report takes what was learned from that analysis and applies it to the Mystic Education Center site to inform decision making about potential redevelopment of the property.

Key Findings

The site and real estate market assessment examined several reuse alternatives and assessed their feasibility based on current market conditions and site-specific attributes. The scenarios are summarized below.

- **Housing for an aging population:** There will be a demand for new senior housing in the future and the site offers an ideal place in a quiet residential area

for future senior housing. Its campus layout lends itself to the continuing care retirement community model, which offers different types of facilities on the same site depending on the needs of a resident so that seniors can age in place. The buildings could be utilized for different levels of care (i.e., independent living, assisted living, and nursing home). There is the potential to have a limited amount of medical office on site given the market and needs of senior housing.

- **High-end residential conversion:** Residential conversion may be a feasible alternative. The unique amenities that would be featured are in demand including open floor plans, high ceilings, on-site recreation, and reused buildings with character. Residents would have quick commuting access to I-95 and would be close to the amenities and entertainment in Mystic. Groton has already attracted a concentration of high-end rent payers in Mystic, which shows market potential as a conversion would require higher rent levels to be financially feasible.
- **Hospitality/Recreation:** Close proximity to Mystic means that there is a large tourism base from which to draw. Despite the competitive market, a lodging and hospitality reuse would differentiate itself from existing offers because of the potential for unique on-site amenities such as high-quality food grown on-site. The recreational offerings on site would support a hospitality business by enabling sports tournaments and camps to be hosted. The market for youth sports tournaments is supported by the proximity to Mystic's tourism attractions.
- **Institutional:** With a history of past institutional use the site lends itself to institutional uses. The potential for institutional use is subject to the needs of individual institutional organizations. The Town should not turn away proposals for institutional uses; however, this represents an "ideal" yet unlikely scenario. Even with a significant marketing and recruitment effort, this scenario is highly unlikely.
- **Mix of uses:** It is likely that no single use would occupy the site given the significant size of the campus. The most likely development scenario is a mix of complementary uses such as:
 - Market rate and senior housing with recreation and medical office
 - Hospitality and recreation
 - Institutional use with a residential or lodging component (e.g., a boarding school)
- **Municipal:** The site could be purchased by the Town and developed for municipal uses such as town recreation and/or other town program/operations.

Next Steps

It is recommended that the Town take the following steps in regards to the site reuse/redevelopment:

- Encourage the state to market the site to prospective investors and developers. The Town should not invest its limited resources in leading this effort.
- Engage and work cooperatively with interested developers by sharing the Town's preferred scenarios for the site, sharing information about the site (including the building analysis and this market assessment), and facilitating site visits.
- Explore adding the site to the State's Register of Historic Places as a way to open up new historic tax credits and incentives for potential developers. There is however a potential downside to utilizing historic tax credits as there can be restrictive architectural and/or use requirements associated with their redevelopment.
- Enter into a public-private partnership with interested developers that will build a project that aligns with the Town's vision. Be clear to prospective developers that the Town is willing to provide support in this way. Support could include expedited permitting and investment in off-site infrastructure improvements such as roadways and utility upgrades.

Site Analysis

Location

The 48 acre site is comprised of two parcels - 0 Oral School Road (8 acres) and 240 Oral School Road (40 acres) and occupies a portion of a 150 acre parcel owned by the State of Connecticut. Note that parcel acreage is based on measurements derived from a 2013 Phase 1 Environmental Assessment prepared by Loureiro Associates.

The site is located in the northeast corner of Groton just north of the intersection of Oral School Road and Boulder Court and approximately ¼ mile north of Interstate 95. The site is zoned RU-80, a residential zoning category that requires a minimum of 80,000SF of lot area. The site is bordered on the south by single family homes and the Mystic River to the west. Heavily wooded steep slopes are on its west side. To the north, the slopes are more moderate and wooded. Existing 2-3 story buildings and

open fields occupy the cleared portion of the upper plateau which sits at approximately elevation 160 feet above sea level.

History

The site originally housed the Whipple School for the Deaf which moved to this location from Ledyard in 1872. In 1895 the name was changed to the Mystic Oral School for the Deaf which operated the school until 1921 when the State of Connecticut took ownership. The school was incorporated and brought into the Department of Education until its closure in 1980. The name was changed to the Mystic Education Center and Mystic Community Center and from that point until 2010 the gymnasium and natatorium facility was leased to the Town of Groton. The Town's Parks and Recreation Department used the recreation field on the north side of the campus until 2011. A portion of the site was also leased to the Reliant Fire Department for training purposes. This current lease runs out in 2022. The Old Mystic Fire Department also conducted training exercises here.

In 2011 the property was classified by the State as surplus property for sale. The Department of Administrative Services currently maintains the site and has the responsibility for its environmental clean-up and mitigation.

Access and Roadways

Access to the property is from Oral School Road, a narrow, two lane road that intersects with Mystic Street (Rt. 614) to the north and Cowhill Road, a residential street, to the south. Minimal maintenance has been given to Oral School Road in the ensuing years since the closure of the school. There are no curbs and the road edges have deteriorated and are in poor condition. There is a looped, one-way drive that accesses the buildings of the former campus. A dead-ended two-way drive off this loop provides access to the former gymnasium/natatorium building and the maintenance garage. Internal roads are also in poor condition. All roadways would have to be rebuilt and brought up to Town standards were the site to be redeveloped or reused. It should also be noted that Cowhill Road is a rural residential street not designed to handle major automobile traffic.

Topography

The developed area of the campus occupies a plateau at the upper portion of the site. From this plateau the site drops rapidly to the south, varying from 60 to 100 feet below the inner loop road. The former Durant Building was built into the upper portion of this slope and there is a cleared, flat area directly south of this former campus building site. Towards the west and the river from Oral School Road, the slopes are much gentler. The gymnasium/natatorium (Pratt Building) is located at the eastern edge on a flat portion of the site approximately 30 feet below the campus center. From the east edge of the building the land slopes away steeply to the east.

North of the former recreation field and pond the land slopes more gently to the north.

Buildings

Although many of the campus buildings remain today, most are in poor condition due to lack of maintenance and neglect. A Phase 1 Environmental Assessment Report completed in June, 2013 by Loureiro Engineering (prepared for the State Department of Administrative Services), addressed a host of environmental issues related to the site and its buildings. Most of the original buildings are located on the campus loop road. The interior of this loop is an assemblage of interconnected buildings - the Administration Building, a four story masonry structure built in 1938 in the center of the campus, and the Boys Dormitory wing, also four story and built in 1938 on the east end. This wing was leased to Alion Science and Technology in 1980, which occupied 28,000 SF of renovated office space until 2011. The Girls Dormitory Building, a four story structure built in 1923 connects to the Administrative Building on the west end. The Whipple Building, a two story structure built in 1969, connects to the Girls Dormitory on the west side. Due to serious mold problems, the Durant Building located at the south edge of the campus, outside the inner loop road, was demolished several years ago. Outside the loop road on the north is the Crouter Building, a one story masonry structure built in 1958 that once served as the maintenance/carpentry operation for the campus. There are several smaller structures located outside the loop road including the Rainbow House, a former residence and its' garage at the southeast edge and a maintenance garage to the west. Further to the west at the far edge of the campus is the Pratt Building, a two story masonry structure built in 1975. This 40,000 SF facility served as the recreation center for the campus, housing a natatorium, full gym, and bowling alley. This facility was leased to the Town until 2010.

The total square footage for the buildings that remain on the campus is approximately 175,000 SF, broken down as follows:

➤ Administration and Boys Wing	69,658 SF
➤ Pratt Gymnasium	40,000 SF
➤ Girl's Wing	28,711 SF
➤ Whipple Building	24,458 SF
➤ Crouter Building	7,588 SF
➤ Rainbow House	2,480 SF (Garage Building N/A)
➤ Maintenance	1,276 SF
➤ Wood Shed	<u>720 SF</u>
Total	174,891 SF

Source: Phase 1 Environmental Assessment Report, June, 2013, prepared by Loureiro Engineering and for the State Department of Administrative Services

Historic Context

The State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development maintains a register of Historic Places that lists structures and sites of importance in the state's historical development. The website lists the following criteria for the listing:

- The Connecticut Historical Commission's 1966-1967 survey of historic properties.
- All National Register nominations approved by the Review Board and all properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places or determined eligible for listing.
- All properties approved for Local Historic Districts and Local Historic Property designation by the Historic Preservation Council (even if they are not approved by the local municipality.
- All of the resources included in the survey of state owned buildings completed by the Commission
- All individual nomination of properties and districts approved by the Historic Preservation Council at their regularly scheduled meetings.

All files regarding listed properties and structures are held by the State Historic Preservation Office located in Hartford, CT. Unfortunately at the time of this writing, according to their website, "there is no database of list available" for the Mystic Education Center site so we are unable to determine if any of the current campus structures are included on the list.

Utilities

Town water and sewer are available to the property from Cowhill Road. According to the Environmental Assessment Report prepared by Loureiro Associates, prior to connecting to the Town system wastewater from the site was discharged to a series of filter beds located on State land southeast of the main campus. This facility was maintained by the State Department of Environmental Protection. Electric service, provided by Connecticut Light and Power, is available to the site. Heat and hot water were provided by on-site oil burning boilers.

Remediation

Loureiro Associates completed a Phase 1 Site Assessment Report in June, 2013 and a Phase 3 Subsurface Investigation Report in May, 2014. These reports provide an in-depth assessment of the environmental condition of the site and recommendations for site clean-up. Regarding clean-up, the State has a program to remediate State-owned brownfield sites including the Mystic Education Center property such that a "clean" site can be made available for redevelopment. The funding is set aside for active

redevelopment projects. If an agreement is made with a developer, funding can be made more easily.

Locational Factors

Reuse of the site depends on a combination of market, locational, and site-specific conditions. The market assessment focuses on how real estate market forces are likely to support or discourage different use types and how locational factors will help or hurt the feasibility of those uses. Key factors of the site's location that will affect its reuse potential include the following:

1. The site is easily accessible from major transportation systems. It is an approximately 3-minute drive from the nearest I-95 access point and a 10-minute drive from the Amtrak train station.
2. The site is within easy commuting distance from major employment centers and amenities. Mystic, Downtown Groton, the Naval Submarine Base and the City of New London are all within a 10-15-minute drive of the site.
3. Proximity to downtown Mystic, the Mystic Seaport and the Mystic Aquarium tourist attractions also means that there is a large existing tourism base in relatively close proximity to the site.
4. The immediate area is a quiet residential neighborhood, which means certain uses – especially high traffic volume inducing uses – will be incompatible with surrounding properties. Specifically, uses that would induce new truck traffic are especially problematic.
5. Other adjacent uses include large forested areas of parkland featuring trails that would complement most reuse options. These amenities should be highlighted in any marketing of the property.
6. The site is not located adjacent to any major roads and has poor visibility, which decreases the viability of many commercial uses that rely on foot traffic and visibility from major transportation corridors.
7. Access to the site is limited to low-volume residential streets. Local roads leading to the site are poorly maintained and in need of repair.

Figure 1: Site Context

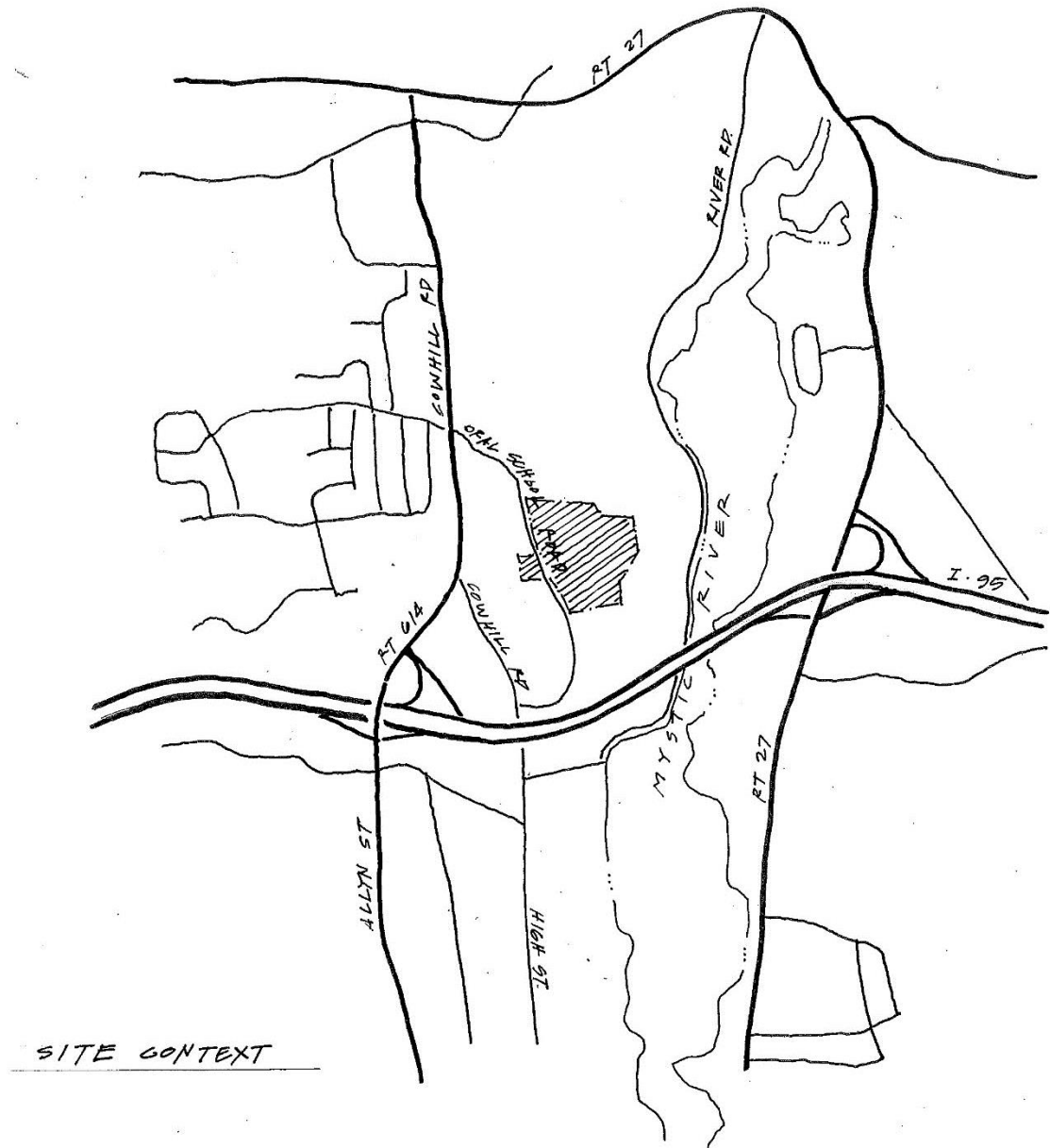


Figure 2: Existing Site Character

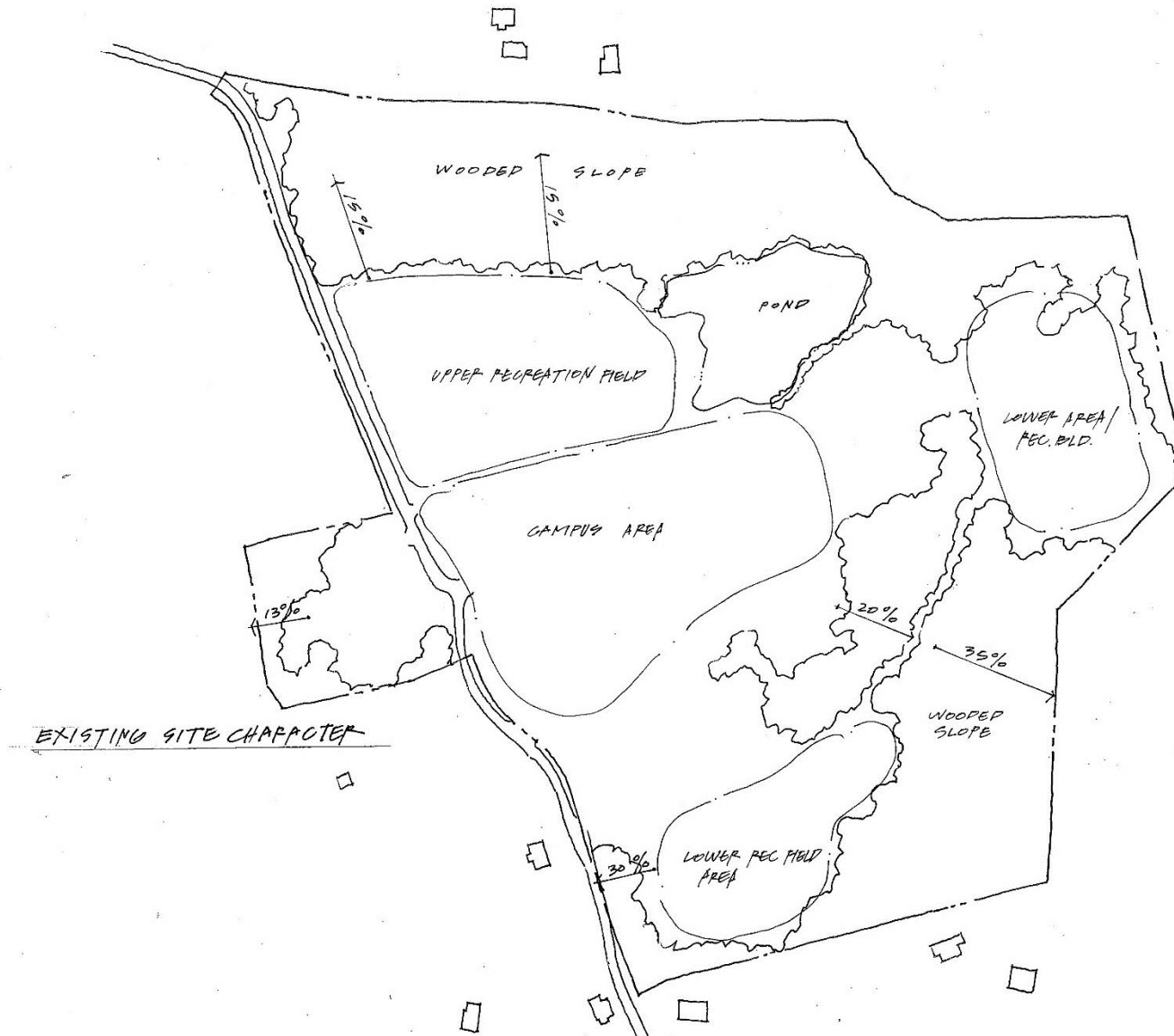


Figure 3: Existing Circulation

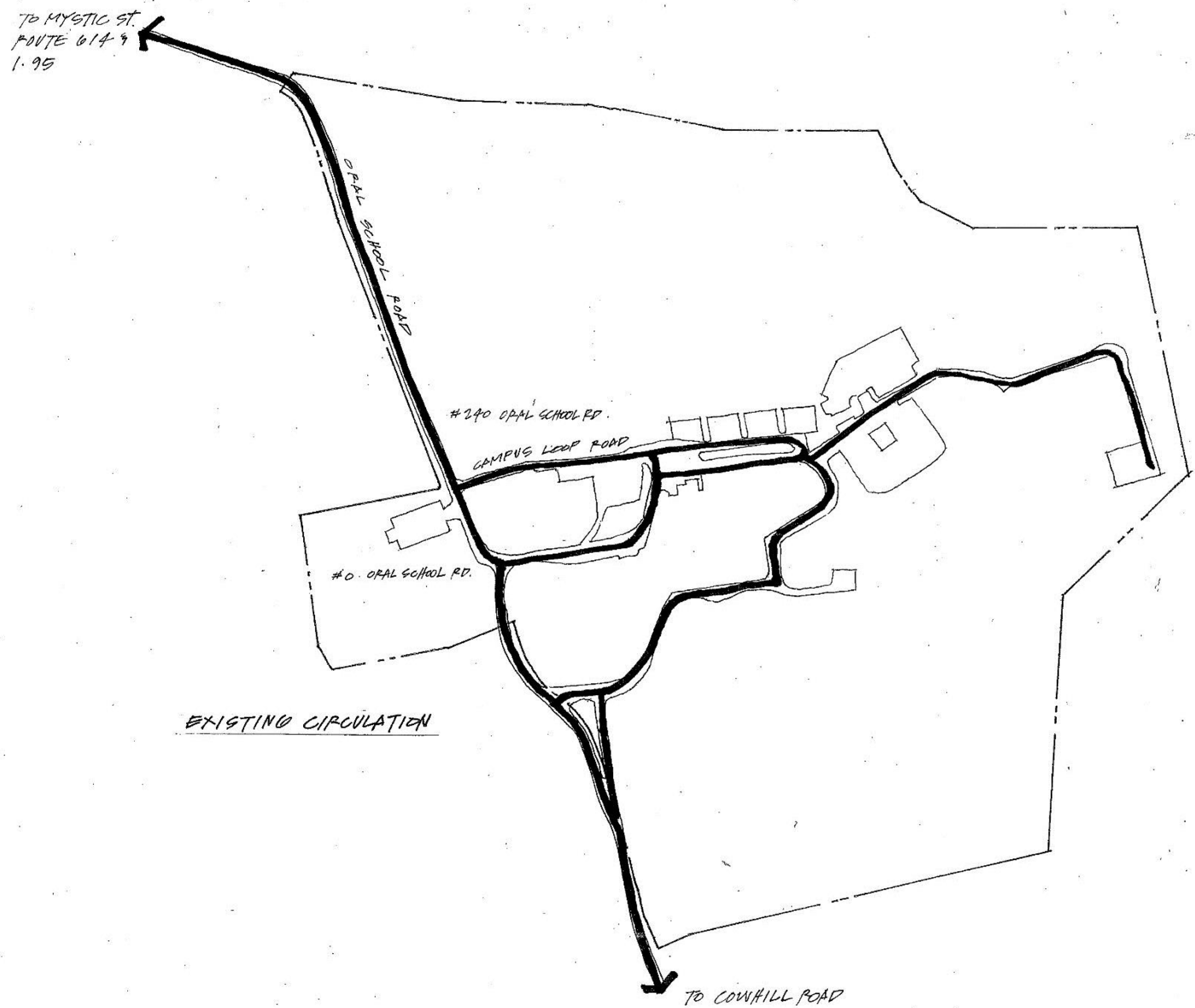


Figure 4: Existing Buildings

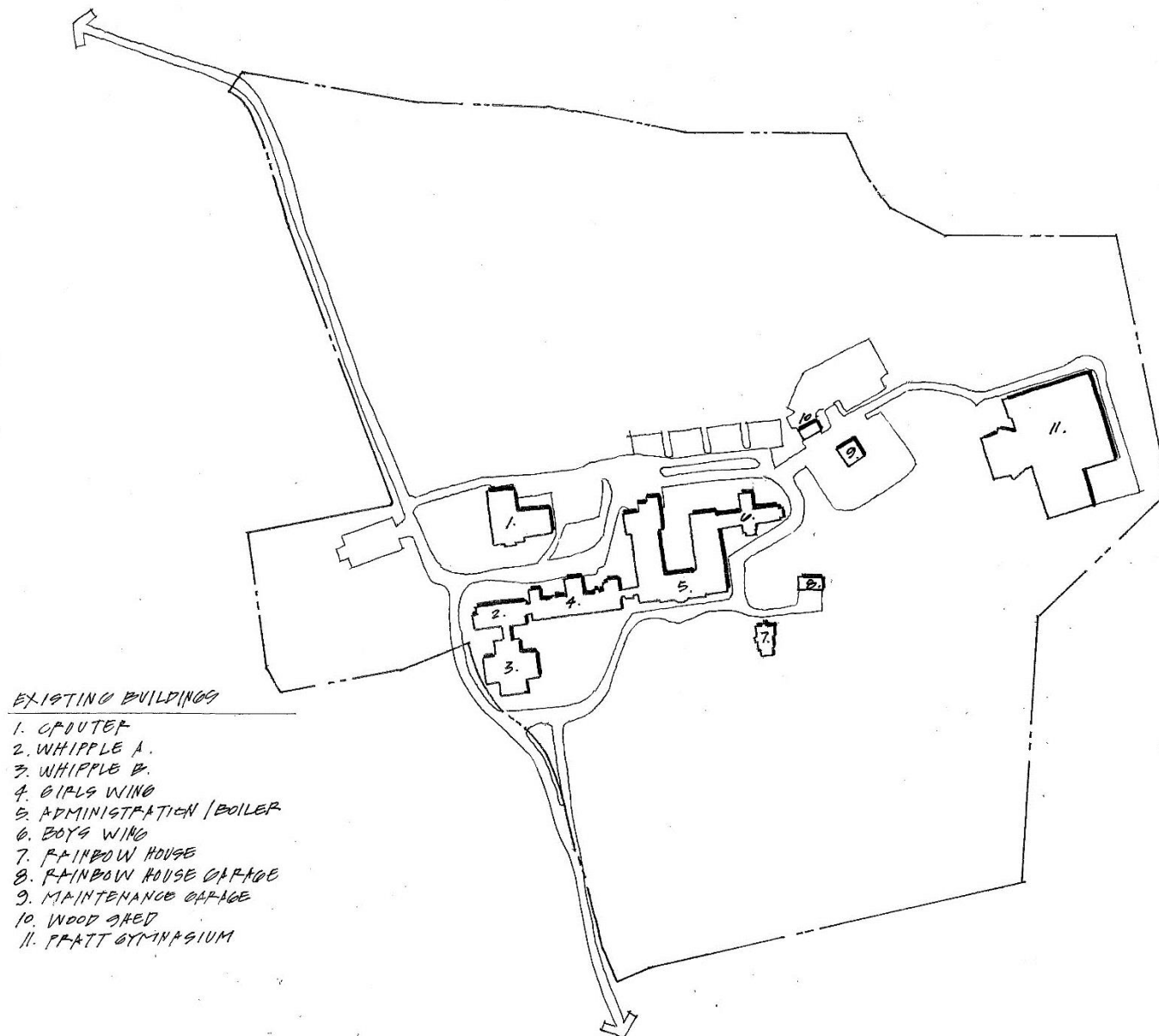
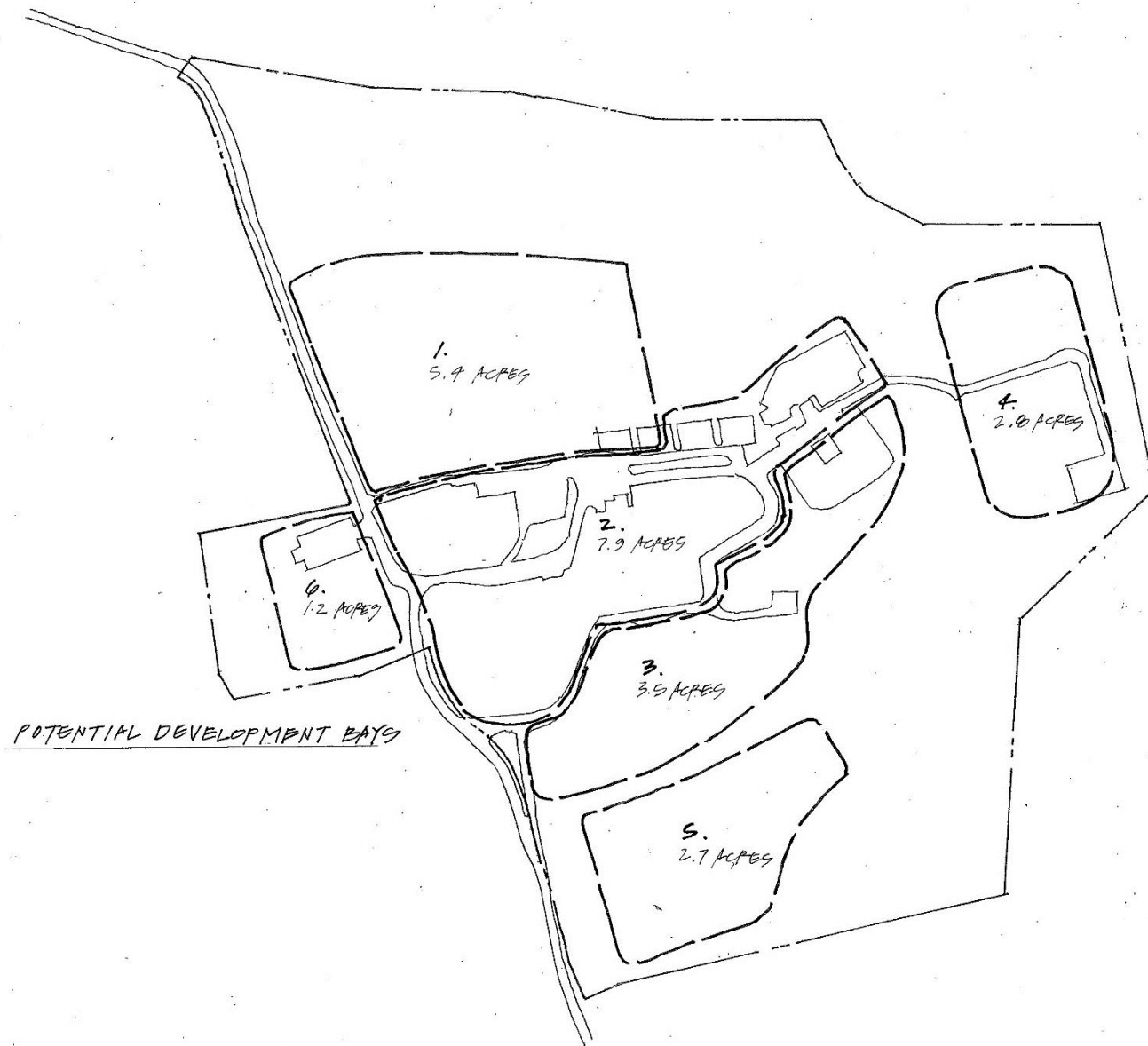


Figure 5: Potential Development Bays



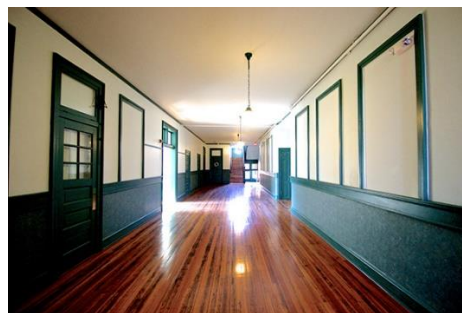
Market Assessment/Reuse Strategies

Market Assessment

Residential

The site location lends itself to residential use. A residential conversion would integrate well with the surrounding residential neighborhood, and while not within what is typically considered a reasonable walking distance, the site is still close to the amenities of downtown Mystic (approximately 1-mile). The site offers commuters very easy access to I-95 via exit 89 less than a mile (~3 minute drive) away and it is also less than 10 minutes from the Mystic Amtrak station.

Residential conversions have become a common adaptive reuse option for historic school buildings and properties that are no longer used for their original purpose. Developers often take advantage of historic rehabilitation and low-income housing tax credits for these types of projects. The photos below show an example of a school conversion named the Blair Central School Apartments in Blair, NV.ⁱ



When old school buildings remain in good condition, residential conversions can lend themselves to relatively easy re-use compared to other options. However, as noted earlier, the Mystic Education Center buildings are in poor condition due to lack of maintenance and general neglect.

A potential buyer/developer would conduct a detailed assessment of each building and prepare a financial feasibility analysis to determine reuse potential compared to building new and ultimately make that determination. It is also important to note that most developers have a niche or preferred focus; they might only do new construction or they might concentrate exclusively on historic re-development using historic tax credits.

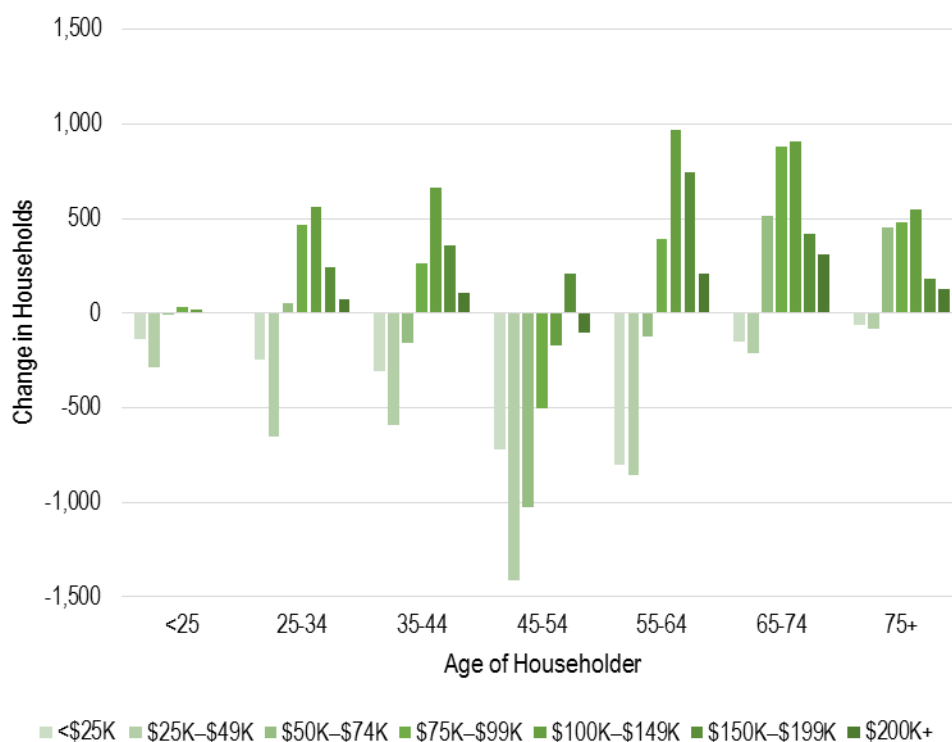
We caution against stipulating which route a developer must take. Instead, in order to enhance potential interest in the property, it is recommended that the Town and State

be flexible in terms of reuse vs. new construction. The target markets outlined below could be accommodated under either development approach.

Housing for an Aging Population

Groton is expected to add about 1,580 households by 2020. The real estate market analysis found that over the next five years, the group that will contribute the most to regional growth in the number of households will be higher-income seniors. That means that there will be growing demand for housing options for seniors who are looking to stay in the area but do not want to manage the upkeep of their single-family home. The following chart shows the expected change in households in the region in the next five years by age of householder.

Table 1: Projected Change in Number of Households by Income and Age of Householder, Groton Economic Region, 2015–2020



Source: ESRI Household Income Profile

National research has shown that about 90% of seniors prefer to stay in their homes as they age, which means that about 10% will be looking for alternative housing options. The County of New London's population aged 65 and older is expected to increase by about 7,450 people over the next five years. As a result, there will be approximately 600 and 900 older adults looking for different housing accommodations over the next five years.

Table 2: Projected 65+ Population, New London County

Population	
65+ Growth	7,452
Capture (8%)	596
Capture (10%)	745
Capture (12%)	894

“Senior housing” comes in many shapes and sizes depending on the preferred lifestyles and needs of residents:

- **Age-Restricted Communitiesⁱⁱ**: Also referred to as age 55+ communities, these facilities provide apartment, single-family, townhome, or condo housing in which younger people are not able to live. These communities typically have amenities that encourage an active life style such as tennis courts and golf courses. This housing option is designed for those that are healthy, independent, and prefer to live and socialize with their peers.
- **Residential Care Facilityⁱⁱⁱ**: These types of facilities typically provide each resident with assistance bathing, dressing, and help with medications on a 24-hour basis. Medical services are provided only under certain circumstances.
- **Assisted Living Facilities^{iv}**: This category of facilities are for those requiring a variety of in-home support services to assist them with activities of daily living. This models differs from nursing homes where residents receive a more continuous level of nursing care. Assisted living facilities often provide individual apartments complete with a kitchen area and bathroom. Some models use a dormitory or hotel style with common areas for socializing.
- **Nursing Homes**: Nursing home facilities provided nursing care and have doctors on staff. Nursing assistants provide most of the care and help with basic daily activities. Nursing homes provide the highest level of care outside of a hospital. All meals and housekeeping services are provided.
- **Continuing Care Retirement Communities^v**: For those requiring a comprehensive range of services including housing, residential services and nursing care there are these types of facilities that provide an opportunity for a resident to move from one level of care to the next, usually all within the same campus. Therefore, a resident could start off living in their own apartment, then move into an assisted living facility as their needs increase, and then ultimately could move again into a nursing home as they age.

The site is also ideal for senior housing because of its close proximity and easy access to existing medical facilities. This is a key factor for senior housing as residents need more frequent medical care. The proximity to existing medical facilities is discussed in the “medical office” section of this report.

Market Rate Housing

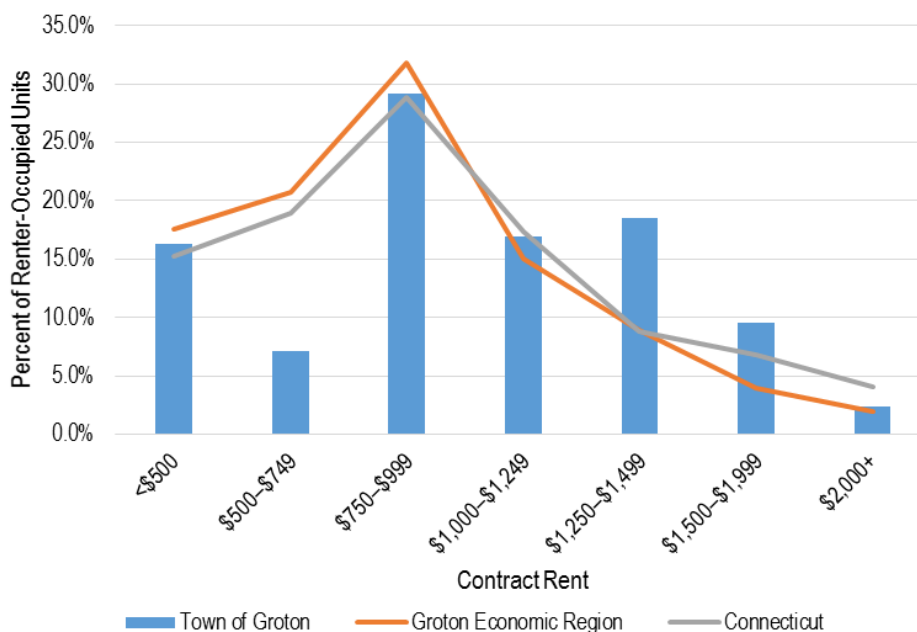
A market-rate residential project may have potential but would likely need to be a high-end project to be successful. The site is less ideal for apartment housing targeting a price-sensitive younger demographic as this market typically prefers to be located in community centers and downtown areas within walking distance of entertainment options and other amenities. The higher rent levels that would be necessary to make the project feasible require a market with relatively higher household incomes than this market segment.

As of 2010, the rental vacancy rate was approximately 11%. A healthy rental market generally has a vacancy rate of 5% to 10%. This indicates a slight weakness in the rental market that has likely not improved considering building permit data for residential development in Groton. Between 2010 and 2014 only 9% of residential building permits in the County were in Groton even though the town comprises 15% of the county’s total housing units.

There may, however, be potential for a high-end residential redevelopment because of the unique characteristics that the property would offer that are generally in demand in today’s upper-scale housing market. These include on-site trails, high ceilings, and open floor plans. Furthermore, residential units in converted historic buildings are popular in today’s housing market because of their unique characteristics. The market for this type of high-end residential development would include primarily professionals without children in the age 25-44 demographic and empty-nesters. Both of these age cohorts are expected to grow in the next five years.

Adding to the feasibility of a residential development scenario is that apartment units in Groton also rent for more on average than the surrounding region (\$976 compared to \$844 in the region). There are relatively more renters paying between \$1,250 and \$2,000 compared to the region and the state (about 2,200 housing units in Groton).

The higher rents in Groton are driven by military families receiving a Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), which varies by rank and family size between \$1,000-\$2,000 per month. If we know that there are about 6,500 military personnel in Groton and about 3,725 military housing units on the base, we can estimate that there are – at the most – 2,775 military personnel living off base nearby.

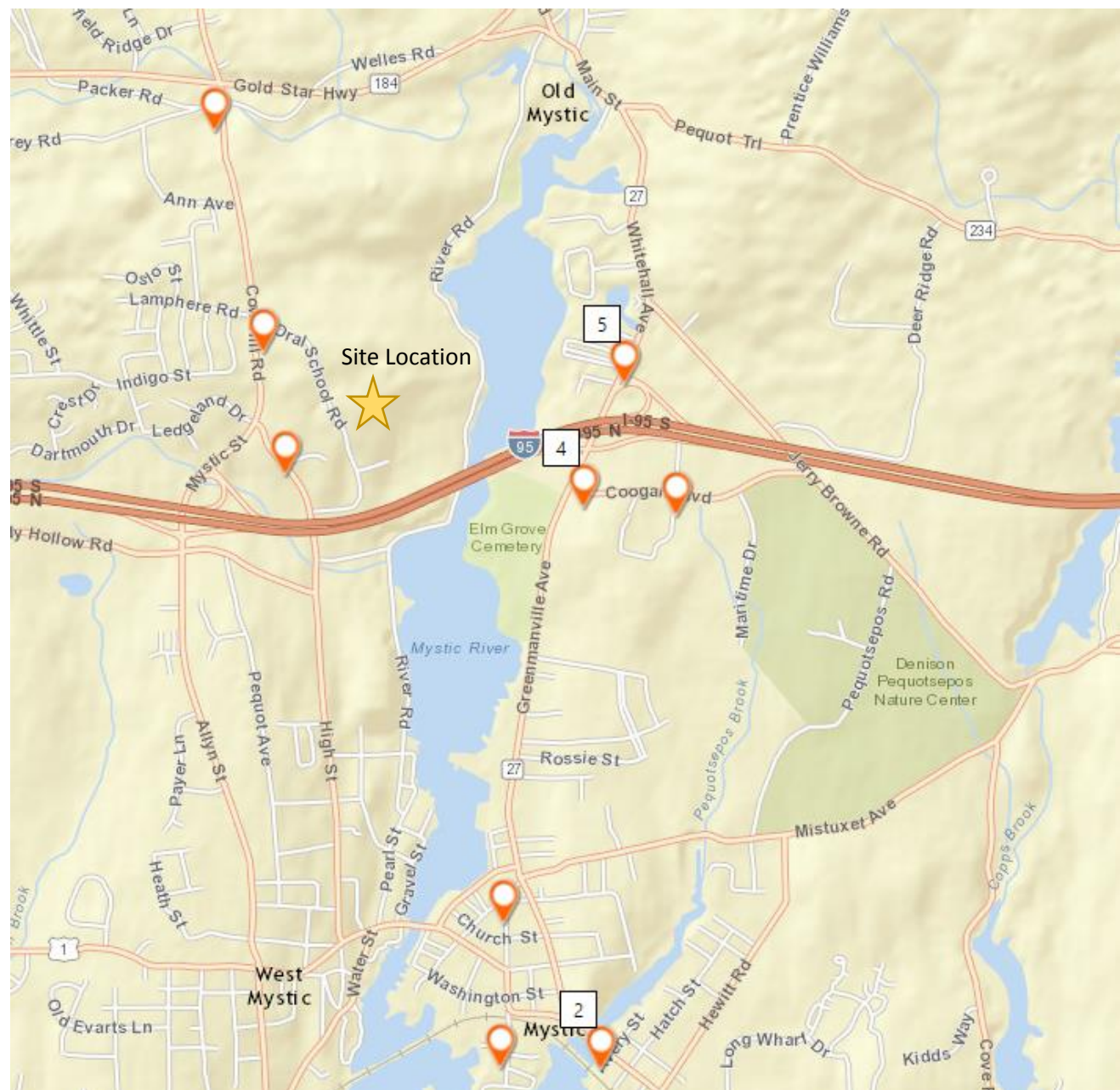
Table 3: Renter-Occupied Housing Units by Rent

Source: ESRI - 2009-2013 ACS Estimate

While there is a clear concentration of higher rents in Groton compared to the region, the same pattern does not hold true for owner-occupied units. This indicates that high end rental conversion is likely more feasible than a condo-conversion project; however, we would recommend that to the extent possible apartments be designed in a way so that conversion to condominium units is feasible to allow for any future shift in market demand.

Tourism/Hospitality/Recreation

The site is close to the major tourism destinations of Downtown Mystic and the Mystic Seaport. However, the existing hospitality and lodging market is competitive. There are 17 businesses that fall in the “accommodations” industry category in close proximity to the site including several national chain hotels just across the Mystic River. The competitive hospitality market will make it challenging for a new entrant into the market. The map below shows the location of nearby accommodation businesses.

Figure 6: Travel Accommodation Businesses

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Despite the competitive market, the site offers a unique setting with a potentially differentiating experience for visitors to the area compared to current offerings. The existing on-site amenities and potential future amenities could attract an owner or developer to create a unique destination resort. Guests at the resort would have appealing recreation offerings available including the on-site trails, gymnasium, and swimming pool. The resort could also capitalize on new trends in the food tourism industry by growing food on the property's lands in new gardens and orchards that would be served at an on-site restaurant. These types of farm-to-table establishments have proven successful in attracting visitors.

Recreation use on the site would complement any hospitality uses. Groton has seen significant recreation-focused development in the recent past including Mystic Indoor Sports, Fields of Fire, The Sandbox, and Fearless Flyers Academy. The site may be able to capture some of this recreation market and enhance Groton's image as a recreation destination.

The combination of lodging and sports fields would allow accommodation of businesses to host sports tournaments and camps where participants and family members could spend the night on-site. These types of events do well in markets where there are nearby attractions and amenities for family members of participants to enjoy. In that respect, the close proximity to the Mystic Seaport area would make the site an attractive location for major tournaments and camps. Limiting the potential for a tourism or recreation use is the limited access to the site and poor road conditions.

Office

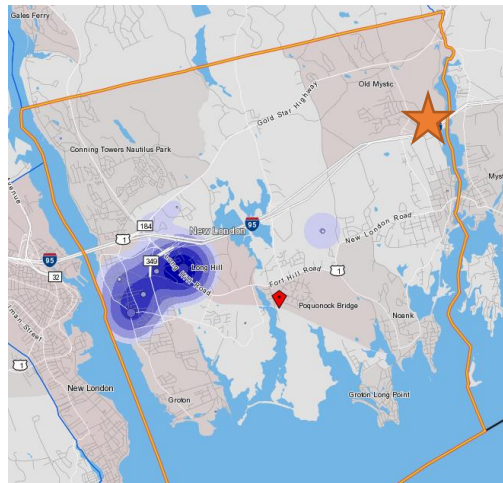
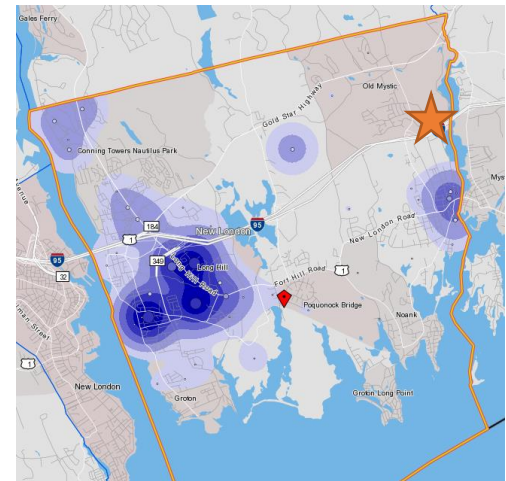
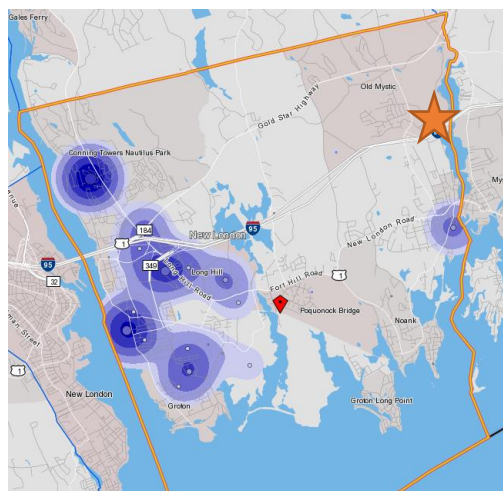
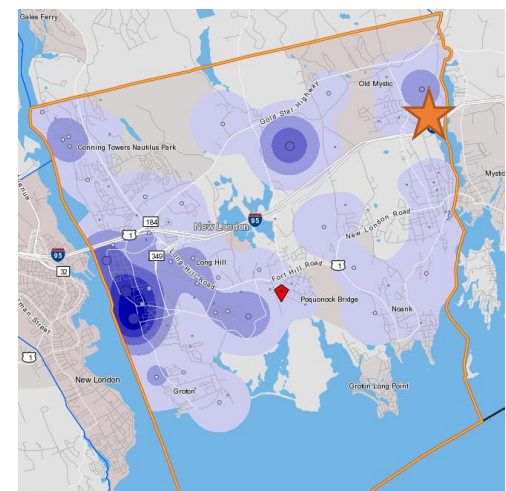
There are several factors that make office development a poor option for the site. The first is that the office market in the County is expected to be weak over the next ten years, with office-utilizing industries adding a net total of only 50 jobs – an increase of 0.1%. That equates to demand for approximately 7,000 square feet over 10 years, or an average of only 700 square feet per year. The lack of demand for office space in the region means that any office development on the site would have a difficult time attracting tenants and would very likely experience high vacancy rates and low lease rates. Given the resources that would be required to convert the existing space into usable office space, it is not anticipated that office would be a feasible option.¹

Additionally, the site is poorly situated for most office uses. In today's market, the locations closest to downtown areas and the core of communities are in the greatest demand. These types of sites are walkable to amenities and are easily accessible by different transportation options. The Mystic Education Center Site is in an isolated, largely residential area that is not attractive to most office-utilizing businesses. Furthermore, the Town should be encouraging any future office development to locate in its downtown areas as a way to increase vibrancy in these locations.

The maps below show where office employment is currently located in the Town. The patterns show clearly how the site (indicated by the star) is far removed from existing concentrations of office space (indicated by job concentration for the four major office-utilizing industries).



¹ We note that the exception to these trends are Electric Boat, which recently purchased office space to accommodate 700 to 800 employees in Groton. However, this large acquisition is a stand-alone project and not a reflection of larger industry trends in the region.

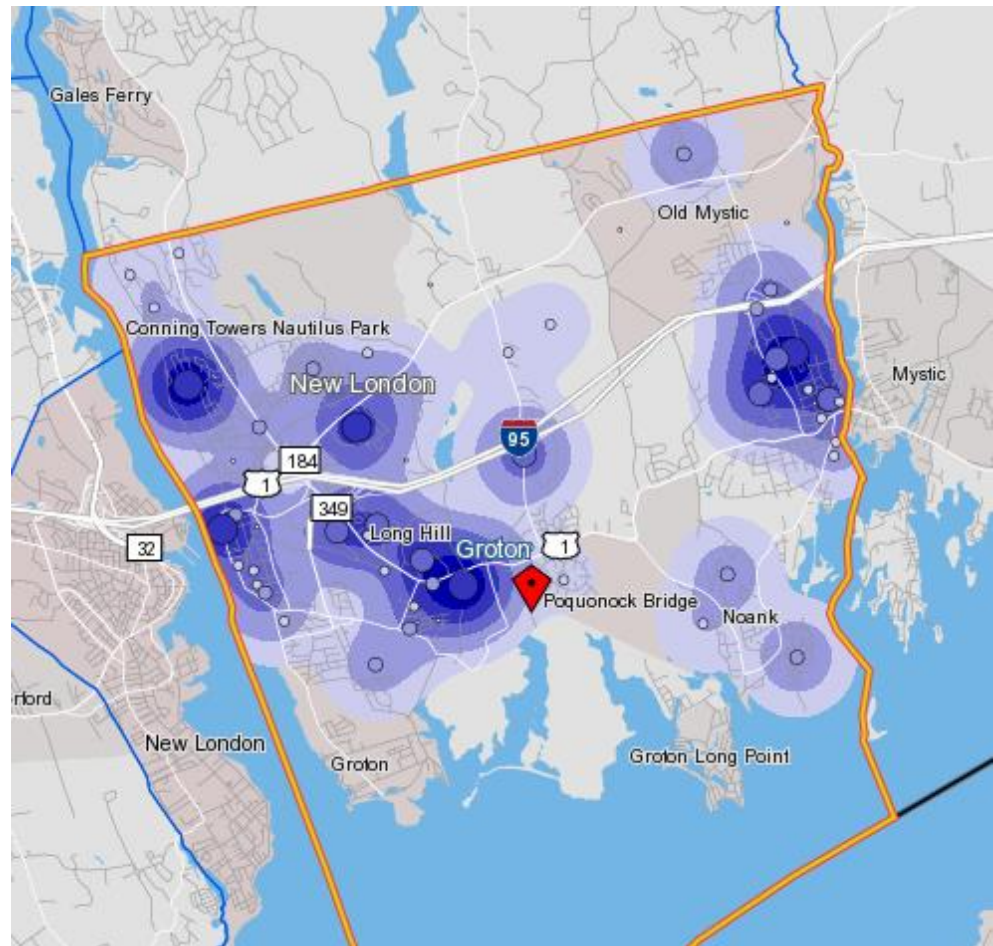
Figure 7: Office Employment in Groton**Information****Finance & Insurance****Real Estate Rental and Leasing****Professional, Scientific & Technical Services****Medical Office Buildings**

Medical office buildings have very specific characteristics and must be considered separately from the general office market. As estimated in the real estate market analysis, there will be demand for 33,250 square feet of medical office space over the next 10 years. The demand is driven by growth in the ambulatory care services sector, which will add about 190 positions in the Town over the next 10 years. Within the greater economic region, demand for medical space is expected to be nearly 240,000 square feet over the next decade.

There is clearly a market for medical office building development in the Town but that does not necessarily mean that the site is a feasible location for such development. Typically medical offices are located in clusters or close geographic

proximity to a hospital or major medical center. The adjacent map shows that the site is relatively close to a major concentration of existing healthcare businesses as indicated by the density of employment in the industry. The site is only 1 mile from the Mystic HealthCare facility. There is also easy access between the site and Mystic Medical Center across the Mystic River. There is only 2.7 miles driving distance (7 minutes) between the two sites.

Figure 8: Concentration of Existing Health Care Business



The site also has some unique characteristics that would play well in attracting medical office development. Its swimming pool, trails, and gym space may give the site a competitive advantage for medical uses that may require rehabilitation facilities. The cost to get the existing facilities up and running, however, may be too prohibitive for existing amenities to provide a competitive advantage compared to build-to-suit options.

While the proximity to the existing concentration of healthcare businesses and the presence of potentially useful amenities increases the feasibility of a medical office development at the site, there are strong factors limiting this feasibility. The site has poor visibility because of its isolation. Site selectors for medical office typically favor areas with high visibility (as measured by traffic count). Medical office is typically targeted towards places where people are already located such as retail shopping centers or big box retailers. Medical office buildings will locate near these “anchor tenants” because they draw specific types of markets that they are targeting (e.g., elderly populations).

Additionally, many (but not all) medical office buildings locate so that they are easily accessible by mass transportation. The Mystic Education Center site is only accessible by automobile, but could be potentially accessed via shuttle service. The condition of the roads to the site, however, is poor and the roads are ill-equipped to handle large traffic volumes.

The site will also need significant investment to upgrade it to the type of modern facility needed for medical office. It will likely be more cost-feasible for a developer to do new construction rather than rehabilitate existing.

The most feasible medical office development scenario on the site is in conjunction with a residential component for the elderly or the infirm. There are several models for this type of use that are discussed in the residential section. The medical office would then be servicing an on-site patient base rather than drawing patients who would increase traffic volumes significantly on the poor-quality residential access roads. This type of development could be complementary to existing healthcare facilities in the area providing long-term care for patients that will need frequent access to the local hospital and other medical offices. This scenario would also minimize the issues surrounding the lack of site visibility.

Retail & Industrial

There is some potential for retail development in Groton but the Mystic Education Center site is not well suited for this use. Its isolation in a residential neighborhood means it has low-traffic volume and poor visibility. Access to the site is limited to residential roads that are not suitable for the high traffic volume associated with retail uses. Retail businesses also prefer to locate in existing commercial centers in order to capitalize on the presence of customers already shopping at other local businesses.

The building style of the Mystic Education Center Property is also not in demand by modern retail establishments. The corridor style of the existing buildings do not align with the open floor plans required by the vast majority of retail businesses. Therefore, the site would need to be significantly demolished and redeveloped. This would make retail uses infeasible from a cost-perspective. Furthermore, the town should encourage any retail development in its commercial core areas to enhance the vitality and vibrancy of these areas.

Similarly, the site would be a poor option for future industrial uses. There is little market demand for industrial space and the site access roads would be unable to accommodate high traffic volumes or any truck traffic. The buildings on-site are also not likely suitable for industrial businesses and would require demolition.

Institutional

With a history of past institutional use the current construction on-site lends itself to institutional uses. The potential for institutional use is subject to the needs of individual institutional organizations. The Town should not turn away proposals for institutional uses; however, this represents an “ideal” scenario but even with a significant marketing and recruitment effort directed at local institutions, this scenario is highly unlikely.

The feasibility of a new institutional use is dictated primarily by the needs of local and regional organizations. There are number of colleges and other institutions that have a presence in or nearby Groton, including University of Connecticut Avery Point Campus (in Groton), Eastern Connecticut State University (classroom in Groton), Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (satellite campus in Groton), and Connecticut College (nearby in New London). There is no community college in Groton and the closest, Three Rivers Community College, is 20 to 30 minutes away from most of the town’s population. A satellite use may be feasible given the ability of students and faculty to access the site.

Town Recreation

This scenario assumes purchase of the land from the State following complete environmental cleanup and removal of most of the building on the site to make way for new recreation fields. While the State has the responsibility for the cleanup and environmental mitigation, it is assumed that the Town would carry the burden of building removal and preparing the site for future recreation use. If pursued, the Town may wish to consider keeping the following buildings for support to the various recreation programs.

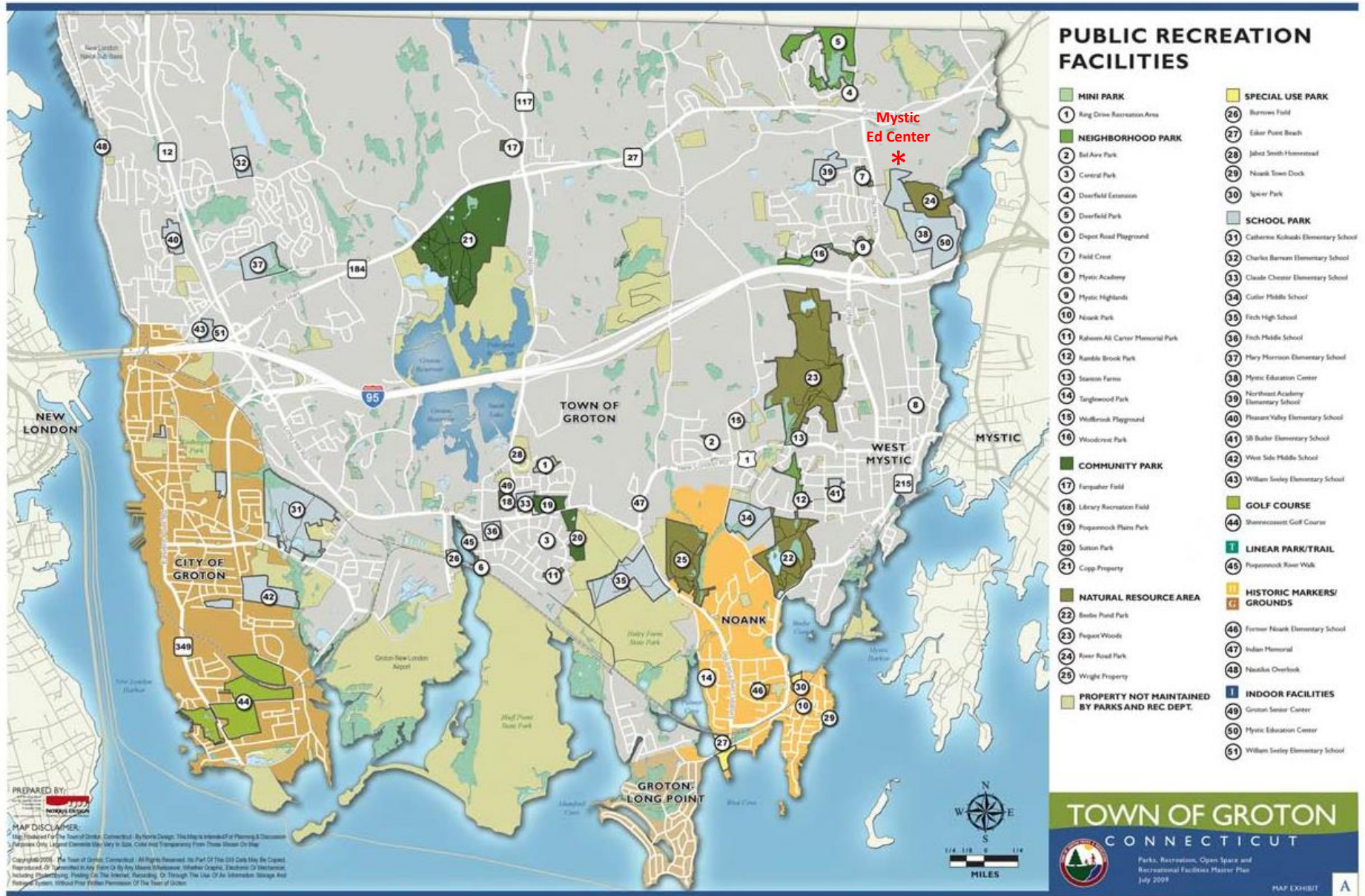
- Pratt Building - As this was once leased to the Town for active recreation programs (swimming, gymnastics, basketball, bowling) it would be logical to assume this would again be a vital part of the overall recreation program for the site. Parking would have to be provided to support this facility. Expansion to the north could provide space for approximately 100 spaces.
- Rainbow House – The Rainbow House could potentially serve as offices for the recreation staff.
- Crouter Building – The Crouter Building could provide space for indoor programs.
- Maintenance Building – The Maintenance Building could be used for storage of mowers and other maintenance related equipment.

It is assumed that the remainder of the site would be developed as outdoor recreation fields. The existing upper field area could become a regulation soccer field as the dimensions are appropriate. The cleared area of the main campus would support additional smaller soccer fields and courts for basketball. Parking could be provided at the periphery of the former campus area. As a major recreation center, an additional 100- 150 parking spaces should be provided. The lower flat area south of the former Dexter Building (now demolished) could serve as a site for a tennis center with 6-8 courts. The remainder of the site and its adjacency to State land could provide for a variety of trail experiences from mountain biking to hiking with connections down to the river, though it should be noted that the State has maintained ownership of the parcels that abut the river so river related activities would depend on State support and cooperation.

Reuse of the site for recreation provides an opportunity to create a focal area for Town recreation uses, both active and passive and to support and expand existing recreation programs.

While a study would have to be performed to determine actual yield for play fields and parking and their associated costs, this scenario would be very expensive even if the site acquisition cost was minimal. The Pratt Building has been minimally maintained since its closure and is in need of significant repairs. Though not as expensive, this would be true for other buildings as well. Costs for removing buildings would be high as would site preparation in the central campus area. As this site is not centrally located, traffic issues would have to be mitigated. As noted, the existing Oral School Road is in poor shape and would have to be brought up to meet Town standards.

Figure 9: Public Recreation Facilities



Summary

The following table offers a comparison of the pro's and con's by use type.

Use	Pros	Cons	Assessment
Senior Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demand exists from aging population - Compatible with adjacent uses - Close proximity to hospital and medical facilities - On-site amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong regional competition - Isolated from services 	Greatest potential because of suitability of site and future demand for senior housing
Market-Rate Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy conversion - High rents achievable - Proximity and access to employment centers - Compatible with adjacent uses - On-site amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Isolated from services - Isolated location - No significant population growth 	Moderate potential because of unique amenities and ease of commuting
Recreation/ Tourism/ Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-site amenities - Strong tourism market - Strength in recreation - Unique setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong competition - Not directly in tourism area - Traffic inducing 	Moderate potential because of strong market but traffic and access concerns
Office		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little demand for office space - Traffic inducing - Too far from employment centers - Incompatible with adjacent uses 	Low potential because of lack of demand and site location unsuitable for office. Low to moderate potential for medical office due to proximity to health facilities and projected demand
Retail & Industrial		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor visibility - Traffic inducing - Incompatible with adjacent uses - Limited demand 	Low potential because of lack of visibility, site isolation, and adjacent uses
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Least amount of conversion required - Complementary to other local institutional uses - Compatible with adjacent uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depends on specific needs of institutional users 	Low potential because of lack of market demand
Town Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to create a focal area for Town recreation uses, both active and passive - Opportunity to support and expand existing recreation programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expensive building restoration or removal, high site preparation and roadway improvement costs - Traffic inducing and mitigation 	Low potential because of high costs and isolated location. Not highest and best use of property

Reuse Strategies

Based on the site and market assessment, three potential reuse strategies have been identified:

1. Developer Partnership – the Town partners with a private developer to develop/reuse the site in response to market demand.
2. Other Town Uses – The Town utilizes some of the existing buildings for municipal purposes.
3. No Action – The Town does not pursue any development on the site.

Developer Partnership

Under this scenario, the Town and the State would enter into a public-private partnership in order to create an incentive for redevelopment. The partnership would utilize brownfield planning and clean-up funds that are currently available from the State. Uses on the site would be more market driven but the potential for the Town to maintain some use of the site if desired could still exist.

Advantage

The Town could maintain ownership of the land and provide a long term lease of the property. Such a partnership could be attractive to a developer. Partnering with a private developer will reduce the risk and burden to the Town compared to making preemptive investments such as infrastructure improvements for which the Town may not ultimately see a return on investment. In addition, this scenario would get the property back on the tax rolls.

Disadvantage

The Town would have to assume the cost for off-site improvements, such as Brownfield/clean-up liability, maintenance, etc. The Town would need to balance an interest in seeing the site redeveloped and not overextending its resources. Further, it should be noted that given the Town's desire to attract high quality mixed use development to the Downtown Design District, care should be taken to make sure residential development on the Mystic Education Center site not compete with the Town's vision for economic development along the Route 1 corridor.

Other Town Uses

This scenario assumes the Town would adapt some or all of the existing buildings for municipal use. Not knowing what the demand for municipal use is, it is hard to imagine that all of the existing buildings would be needed or what specific

programs/operations could potentially be located there. Given the site's residential context, it is assumed that this would not be an ideal site for town public works related uses.

Advantages

This scenario could meet current and future growth needs for the Town. The nature of the Pratt Building and its recreation potential suggests a possible joint recreation and Town use scenario.

Disadvantages

The costs associated with renovating existing buildings for municipal use could be considerable. Traffic mitigation and road improvement costs would be high given the nature of the existing road system. The site does not provide a central location for Town services and it is hard to imagine that this scenario would be the most effective way to meet Town space needs.

No Action

Under this scenario, Town does not take the lead in advancing development of the site and focuses its efforts on promoting economic development on other opportunity sites within the Town.

Next Steps

The goal for redeveloping this site is to see the property returned to active use and returned to the property tax rolls. Redevelopment should align with the town's vision and economic development goals that are currently being established in the town-wide economic and market analysis.

The town must also carefully balance its interest in seeing the site redeveloped and not overextending its resources. As owner of the site, the State has the primary responsibility for actively marketing the site. The Town's role should be to work with the state and interested developers to encourage the types of projects suggested in this market assessment and be willing to engage in mutually-beneficial public-private partnerships with potential developers.

Based upon the strong desire to get the property back on the tax role, it is recommended that the Town work with the State to investigate a public-private partnership redevelopment strategy. Partnering with private developers will reduce the risk and burden to the town compared to making preemptive investments such as infrastructure improvements for which the town may not ultimately see a return on investment.

There are several models and financing mechanisms that the town can consider to help facilitate the development of the site including:

- **Tax-Increment-Financing (TIF):** Connecticut has new TIF legislation that would allow the Town to enter into an agreement with a developer where all or a portion of the new real estate property taxes paid would be refunded to the developer for a set period of time as an incentive to redevelop the property and/or cover the cost of necessary improvements (e.g., improving access roads to the site).
- **Municipal Tax Abatement:** Each municipality in the state has the ability to offer, on a sliding scale depending on level of investment, local tax abatements for both real estate and manufacturing machinery and equipment. There are several eligible uses relevant for the site including permanent residential use, transient resident use, recreation facilities, and mixed-use development.
- **Incentive Housing Zone:** An Incentive Housing Zone is an area which has a zoning overlay that allows developers to increase housing density in exchange for creating mixed-income housing. The Town would receive up to \$50,000 upon approval of the IHZ. The Town would also receive payments when units are built up to \$50,000. The HOMEConnecticut Program also provides grants for analyzing and establishing an IHZ.
- **Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit:** This credit would be available if the property were added to the National or State Register of Historic Places, or located in a This credit would be available if the property were added to the National or State Register of Historic Places, or located in a district listed on either Register and certified by the State's Department of Economic and Community Development as contributing to the historic character of such a district.

Residential redevelopment scenarios would like qualify for a tax credit from this program that encourages the conversion of historic commercial, industrial, institutional, former government buildings, cultural buildings, or residential property of more than 4 units to residential use. A 25% tax credit of total qualified rehabilitation expenditures is offered up to \$2.7 million per building and \$15 million annually.

The Town should explore the option of adding the site to the state register of historic places as it would enable a developer to apply for this tax-credit and other historic preservation incentives. Listing on the register does not restrict the rights of private owners in the use or development of private historic property.

Endnotes:

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- ⁱ <http://www.seldin.com/blog/apartment-trends-converted-school-building-apartments/>
- ⁱⁱ American Association of Retired Persons, "Which Type of Housing is Best for You?" 2009.
- ⁱⁱⁱ National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Housing Options for Older Adults.
- ^{iv} National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Housing Options for Older Adults.
- ^v National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Housing Options for Older Adults.