



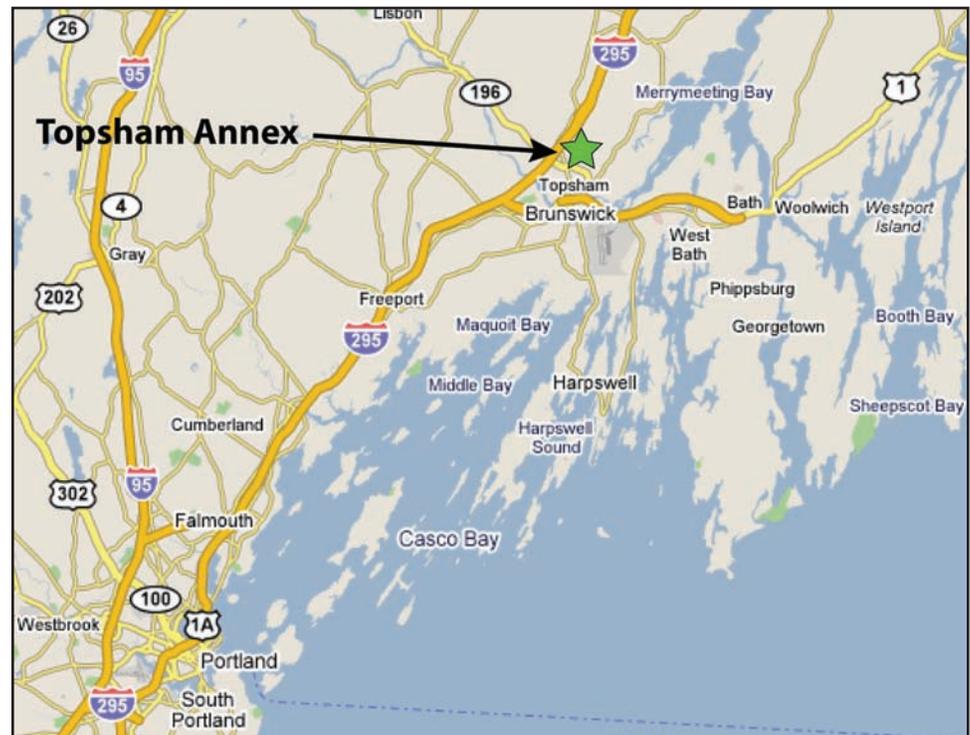
Section 2: Background and Overview



Property Setting and Description

On August 24, 2005, the Federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission voted eight to one to close the Topsham Annex, a separate 74-acre property associated with Brunswick Naval Air Station (BNAS), which was also closed as part of this decision; on September 15, 2005, the final list was approved by the President. By law, the base must be closed before September 15, 2011. The Topsham Annex is located within the Town of Topsham, in Sagadahoc County Maine, as shown in **Exhibit 1: Regional Context Map**. The site is accessible via State Route 201 (Main Street), and is located 1.5 miles from downtown Topsham (via Main Street) and approximately six miles northwest of BNAS (via Brunswick-Topsham Bypass and Route 1).

Exhibit 1: Regional Context Map



Source: Matrix Design Group

The property is adjacent to and between two local schools: Mount Ararat High School to the south and Mount Ararat Middle School to the west. Although the Annex is generally characterized by low-intensity development, it does include a moderately-high density residential neighborhood, a retirement community, several industrial facilities (including a gravel processing facility), and highway office and retail businesses along



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Main Street (Route 201); the northern portion of the site is bounded by rural farm land. The Annex is connected to the town's extensive pedestrian / bike trails as well as all public utilities. The facility opened in 1957 as the Topsham Air Force Station, initially operated as an early type of radar system. When the Air Force closed the radar facility, BNAS obtained use and responsibility for the property. Most recently, the Annex has functioned as a general support facility for BNAS and has included 177 units of base housing, a commissary, a training facility, office space, and a fire station. In addition to Navy facilities, the Annex provided operational facilities such as a reserve center and recruiting station for the Air Force, Marines, Army and other branches of the Department of Defense (DoD) serving the entire Midcoast region.

The multi-family housing located on the eastern two thirds of the site is owned by a private entity, GMH Partners (GMH), under a privatization contract with the Navy. GMH has demolished a portion of the housing units in an attempt to remodel and improve a smaller number of new homes on the site; this plan has been placed on hold due to the BRAC process. In addition, a portion of the Annex was conveyed to the local SAD 75 school district for the construction of the new Mount Ararat Middle School. **Exhibit 2: Historic Changes** shows the location of the current Annex property as well as the significant changes over time.

The Topsham Local Redevelopment Authority

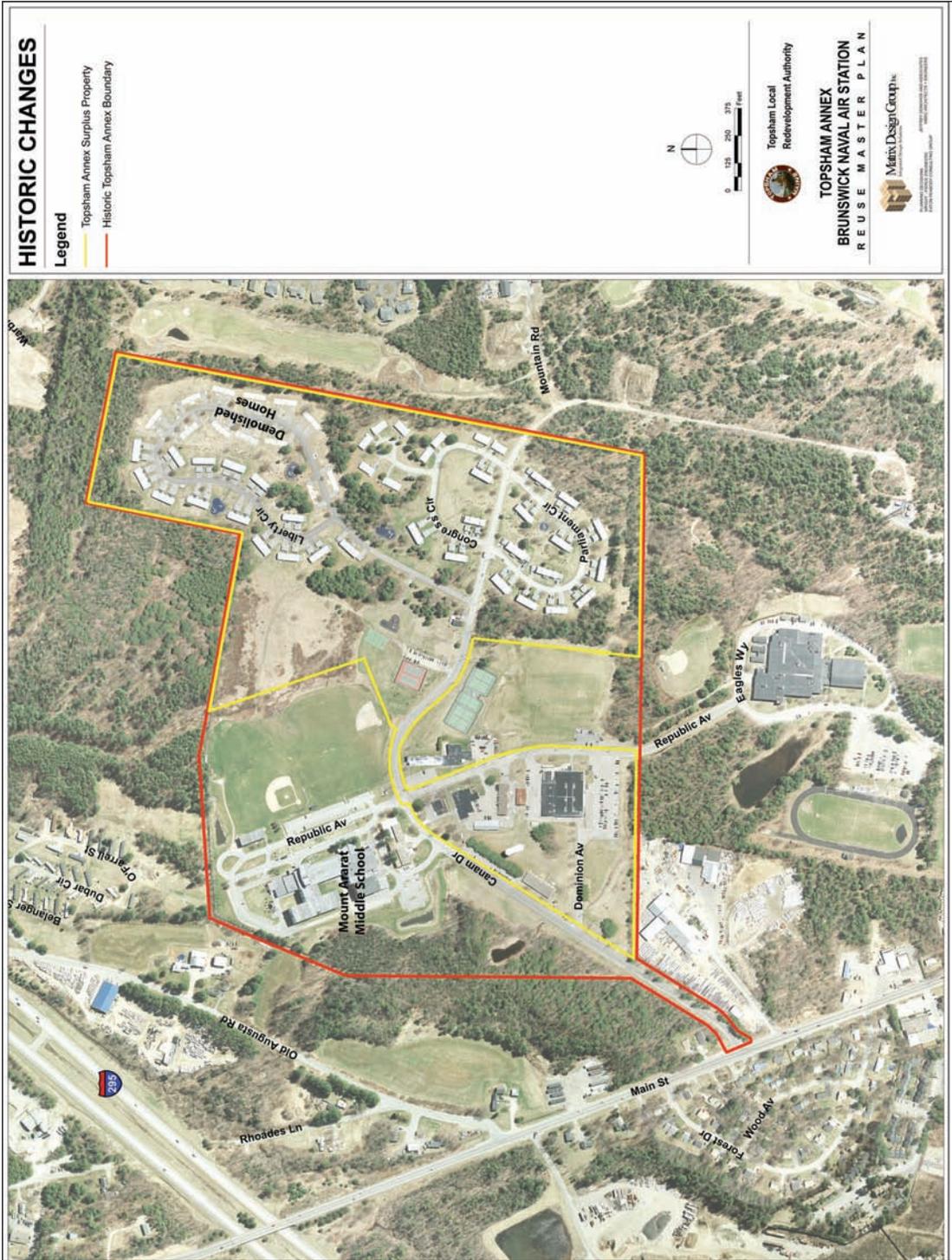
The Topsham Local Redevelopment Authority Board of Directors consists of nine members appointed by the Topsham Board of Selectmen; a tenth member was appointed by the Brunswick Town Council. The current membership is as follows:

- ▶ Bruce Van Note, Chairperson, and Topsham Resident
- ▶ Sue Spann, Vice Chair and Topsham Resident
- ▶ Jane Scease, Topsham Selectperson
- ▶ Tad Hunter, Topsham Selectperson
- ▶ Don Russell, Topsham Planning Board
- ▶ Cyndi Burne, Topsham Resident
- ▶ Gary Fogg, Topsham Planning Board
- ▶ Bob Hill, Topsham Resident and SAD 75 Representative
- ▶ David Whittlesey, Bowdoinham Representative
- ▶ Ryan Ewing, Brunswick Representative

The TLRA's Base Redevelopment Manager is Richard Roedner, Topsham's Director of Planning.



Exhibit 2: Historic Changes



Source: Matrix Design Group
The red outline shows the boundary of the Annex property as it existed before being partially acquired by the school district; the yellow boundary delineates the boundary of the Annex as it exists today.



The Federal Property Screening Process

The BRAC process allows for various federal, state, and local agencies and other non-profit organizations to apply for and be considered for property within a closed military installation. There are two levels of screening, the first of which is the “federal to federal” screening, during which other DoD organizations are notified by the Department of the Navy (or other applicable Military Department) of the availability of “excess” property. After consideration by these components, other federal departments are then given the opportunity to request portions of the property. The parcels within the installation remaining that are not transferred to these agencies under this first level screening activity are considered “surplus” property.

The second level of screening is conducted by the Local Redevelopment Authority, and considers the surplus property, as defined above. During this process, the LRA provides notice of the availability of surplus property to homeless provider organizations, state and local governments, and potential recipients of public benefit conveyances, or “PBCs.” The following sections of this Report describe this process as it relates to the redevelopment of the 74-acre Topsham Annex.

Federal Determination of Surplus Property

Part of the BRAC process is the identification of surplus property at the installation being closed. The federal government screens requests for buildings, land and equipment from other federal agencies and, once the government determines which properties will be set aside for federal agencies, the remaining properties are deemed as “surplus.” These surplus properties are then available to be considered by state and local entities as well as homeless providers to determine their requests for surplus property at Topsham Annex. Since there were no facilities or parcels identified on the Annex for use by any federal agency or department, all 74 acres within the boundary of the Topsham Annex were considered surplus.

There are 129 military family housing units currently remaining at the Topsham Annex, located at the eastern portion of the site; 48 units of the original 177 have been demolished or identified for demolition. These units (along with over 4,000 other Navy housing units located at eight installations throughout the northeastern portion of the United States) were transferred to Northeast Partners, LLC, a limited-liability company owned by the U. S. Navy and GMH Military Housing, a division of GMH Communities Trust, a large privately held real estate construction and management company. The Navy has transferred the units to the partnership under a 50-year lease, while retaining ownership of the land, all of which has been included as part of the designated “surplus” property to be considered as part of the BRAC closure process. The partnership’s original proposal included the demolition of all 177 housing units at the Topsham Annex and the construction of a smaller number of new homes. As of February of 2007, 48 of the units have been demolished, and 56 are “off-line,” unoccupied and fenced off from other



portions of the base. Of the 73 remaining, 72 are occupied, and one is vacant. No new homes have been built (or will be built) as a result of the BRAC decision to close the base.

GMH (the primary representative of Northeast Partners) currently manages the property and leases the remaining units to Navy personnel, rents for which are paid by the Navy from the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) provided to military personnel. GMH pays the Town of Topsham an annual service fee for police and fire protection, based on the number of available housing units, regardless of whether or not they are occupied; GMH also purchases water and sewer services from local utility providers, although the Navy owns the underlying distribution infrastructure. While the initial intent of GMH was to demolish, construct and/or upgrade the housing units on the Topsham Annex, improvement plans changed significantly after the decision was made to close the base. At that time, all demolition activities ceased at the Annex, and plans were made to relocate all personnel from units at the Topsham Annex to BNAS in the Town of Brunswick, over time as space became available. The contract with the Navy allows leasing in the open market if the Navy, its primary tenant, cannot make use of the units; GMH has indicated, however, that it is not interested in maintaining its operations at the base once the Navy's need's evaporate, and consequently, it will be pursuing strategies for divesting its interests in the area.

State and Local Screening Process

The Federal Base Closure Community Redevelopment and Homeless Assistance Act governs the process of how federal defense facilities are disposed. The Redevelopment Act was designed to accommodate the impacted communities' multiple interests in base reuse, including meeting the national priority to assist homeless individuals and families, and for economic development conveyances for business growth and expansion and Public Benefit Conveyances (PBC) to provide for reuse of land and building assets for a public purpose. The Act provides for a community-based process whereby government and not-for-profit organizations may propose the reuse of surplus military property to provide vital public services such as education, health care, open space or parks, parks and recreation related uses, law enforcement, prisons, transportation terminal facilities, aviation uses or other public buildings and facilities; the Act also provides for a community-based process whereby government and not-for-profit organizations serving homeless individuals or families participate in the local reuse planning process. The TLRA is responsible for developing a reuse plan for the Topsham Annex that appropriately balances the needs for economic redevelopment, certain public facilities and amenities, and homeless assistance.

The TLRA officially began its "state and local screening process" on January 3, 2007, after the federal determination of surplus. Notices were sent to the State of Maine, local governments, and not-for-profit agencies in the vicinity of the base, and advertisements were placed in local newspapers to solicit proposals. State and local government



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agencies and not-for-profit organizations that provide or propose to provide programs, services, or activities on the base were also contacted. The following process was followed to meet the federal requirements for state and local screening:

State and Local Screening Notice of Interest

The TLRA was notified by the US Navy on January 3, 2007 that the Topsham Annex was being placed on the surplus property list, along with Naval Air Station Brunswick in Brunswick, ME. The TLRA was required to begin the screening process for homeless providers and state / local agencies and eligible non-profits within 30 days of the official notice (**see Appendix E**). The TLRA prepared its Notice of Interest for distribution to state and local governments and other interested parties, which was approved by the TLRA Board on January 17, 2007. Elements of the Notice of Interest included the following:

- ▶ Application Timetable and Requirements
- ▶ State and Local Screening Notice of Interest and Background Information
- ▶ State and Local Screening Process Description
- ▶ The Application
- ▶ Contact Sheet and Certifications
- ▶ Application Checklist

On January 23, 2007, the TLRA requested an extension from the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment, to allow the screening process to begin on a time frame similar to the Brunswick LRA's timeframe. This request was granted by OEA.

On February 6, 2007, the TRLA published in the Times Record and the Portland Press Herald notices regarding the screening process for interested parties. The notices included the applicable deadlines for Notices of Interest (NOIs) to be submitted to the TLRA, as well as scheduled information meetings for interested parties. In addition, notices were mailed to a wide range of entities that had either expressed an interest in receiving notice, or who in the opinion of the TLRA staff might have an interest (**see Appendix E**).

On March 7, 2007, the TLRA hosted an informational meeting for state / Local and eligible non-profits regarding the areas of the Annex that were available through the surplus process. On March 14, a similar meeting was held for providers of services to homeless populations.

Finally, all Notices of Interest were required to be submitted to the TLRA no later than May 30, 2007.



Workshops

State and local governments and other interested parties were invited to attend a workshop held on March 7, 2007 to learn more about the state and Local Screening process; how public conveyances work with federal sponsoring agencies; to review the application, and to take a tour of the Topsham Annex.

Applicant Presentations

State and local governments and other interested parties were invited to make presentations to the TLRA Board.

Application Instructions

The TLRA, through its state and Local Screening Notice of Interest, directed interested parties to contact the respective federal sponsoring agency to discuss the potential for a public benefit conveyance, and to inquire about the federal sponsor's own application process; **Appendix A** of the Notice of Interest provided a list of federal sponsoring agencies for Public Benefit Conveyance.

Review Process

The TLRA Board and staff reviewed submitted applications, met with applicants, and made a set of recommendations for public benefit conveyance reuses for consideration in the Base Reuse Master Plan. A description of the specific requests received and how such uses might impact the Reuse Master Plan is provided in **Section 6** of this Report.

Homeless and Housing Assistance Screening Process

The TLRA officially began its six-month "homeless screening process" on January 3, 2007, after the federal determination of surplus property was made. Notices were sent to area homeless providers and advertisements were placed in local newspapers to solicit proposals from area homeless providers. State and local government agencies and not-for-profit organizations that provide or propose to provide assistance, programs or services that are not currently adequately meeting the need of homeless persons and families in the communities in the "vicinity of the base" were also contacted. The communities in the "vicinity of the base" were determined to be the towns of Topsham, Bowdoin, and Bowdoinham. The following process was followed to meet the federal requirements for state and local screening:

Homeless Agency Provider Notice of Interest

The TLRA prepared its Notice of Interest for distribution to state and local governments and other interested parties, which was approved by the TLRA Board on January 17, 2007. Elements of the Notice of Interest included the following:

- ▶ Understanding the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Process
- ▶ Homeless Assistance and the Homeless Screening Process, including



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- Outreach and Education Process
- Integration of Requests from Homeless Provider Organizations
- Legally Binding commitments
- ▶ The Application, including:
 - Homeless Provider Application Questions
 - Application Contact Sheet and Certifications
 - The Application Checklist
 - Goals of the Homeless Screening Process
 - Role of the Topsham LRA Board, Homeless Committee and Staff
 - Homeless Screening Process and Schedule

Workshops

Homeless agency providers were invited to attend a workshop held on March 14, 2007 to receive a briefing on the homeless screening process, a review of the Application, and to tour the Topsham Annex.

Applicant Submissions and Presentations

Homeless service providers were invited to submit and make presentations to the TLRA Board on June 20, 2007.

- ▶ Review Process – The TLRA reviewed submitted applications, and met with applicants and others to determine whether the agencies have sufficiently identified the availability of existing services to meet the needs of the homeless in the “vicinity of the base,” and how any unmet need could be addressed by property and building assets on the base. The TLRA then prepared its findings for incorporating into the master planning process.

Analysis of Homeless Needs in Midcoast Maine

The TLRA Board of Directors understood that it needed to better understand the issues related to the homeless in order to respond to applications from Homeless Providers, and to make informed and appropriate recommendations. The TLRA Board reviewed, therefore, a study prepared by the Matrix Design Group Planning Team that investigated issues and existing conditions related to homeless needs in the Midcoast Maine area. The purpose of this report was to provide a better understanding of the scope of needs in the area, so that it can more effectively engage with homeless providers in creating programs that will make a difference for the homeless in 2011. The analysis, along with supporting documentation, is provided in **Appendix E** of this Report. In summary, the following conclusions and/or recommendations from that study were made:

- ▶ Of the total users of the Tedford Shelter, 6 percent are from the Topsham service area of Topsham, Bowdoin, and Bowdoinham.



- ▶ There is only a modest demand, if any, for shelter beds for adults. There is some demand for family shelter beds, but if sufficient alternatives develop, and the average length of stay can be reduced to a few weeks, that demand nearly disappears. On the other hand, there does appear to be a need for 4-5 shelter beds for transient youth under any scenario;
- ▶ There is a much larger demand for supported housing apartments. The reason that this demand is so high, even though it is only for a portion of the homeless population, is that the length of stay is much longer. If seven single adults each month need supported housing, and each of the seven people stays in his or her apartment for a year, then this translates into a need for 49 beds.

Assuming there are adequate resources in the system to enable people to move quickly from shelters to supported housing to the private housing market, then the overall need for apartments, both shelter and supported housing, within the catchment area of both the Brunswick LRA and the Topsham LRA is a little over 20. **Exhibit 3: Estimated Range of Demand for Homeless Shelter and Supported Housing** shows this information.

*Exhibit 3: Homeless Shelter and Supported Housing Demand**

| Unmet need in 2011 | Families | Single Adults | Single Youth | Total Apartments |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Shelter | 2 apartments | 0 beds (0 apts) | 4 beds (1 apt) | 3 apartments |
| Supported Housing | 4 apartments | 34 beds (11 apts) | 12 beds (3 apts) | 18 apartments |
| Total Apartments | 6 | 11 | 4 | 21 apartments |

*under ideal circumstances - sufficient services are available so that people are not stuck in shelters or transitional apartments for longer than necessary

Source: Town of Topsham

- ▶ The low demand for shelter beds, and the high demand for supported housing, is problematic in the base closing process. The base closing process is designed to provide physical units to nonprofit agencies, not ongoing service funds. A challenge for the process will be to find creative ways to help nonprofit agencies find service funds.
- ▶ Along the same lines, the GA administrators and nonprofit staff both emphasized the importance of a physical location from which “one-stop” and referral services could be provided to homeless people.



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- ▶ An official working with Tedford Housing, a nonprofit dedicated to ending homelessness in Midcoast Maine, mentioned that even if more shelter beds aren't needed, it may be more efficient to convert existing shelter structures into supported housing, and to seek new shelter beds at the base. This is one way to increase supported housing, even though shelter beds would be what were requested at the base.

A description of the specific requests received and how such uses might impact the Reuse Master Plan is provided in **Section 6** of this Report.

The Master Planning Process

After soliciting proposals from national planning consultants, the Topsham Local Redevelopment Authority (TLRA) interviewed and selected Matrix Design Group, Inc. (Matrix) in August, 2006 to help it prepare a reuse master plan for Topsham Annex. Funded through a grant from the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA), Department of Defense (DoD), the Matrix Scope of Work developed for the project and approved by the TLRA Board was based, in part, on the following TLRA study parameters:

- ▶ A forward-thinking and inclusive approach, respecting important community interests and values
- ▶ A public outreach process to identify the needs of the community
- ▶ A detailed site and facility survey of the property to include land area, buildings, infrastructure, and environmental conditions
- ▶ A market study and identification of financial needs to implement the plans
- ▶ Identification of known environmental issues, using existing inventory and other information as may be needed to recommend a base reuse master plan that is environmentally acceptable to the Navy, regulators, and the community at large
- ▶ Development of a series of alternative reuse master plans and property disposition strategies using broad planning principles that the TLRA would utilize when working with the Navy in the future
- ▶ Identification of when, how and what disposition methods should be used for property transfer from the Navy
- ▶ Assistance to the community in the federal and state, local and homeless provider screening process

The Matrix Planning Team

In order to better understand and respond to local planning issues, community characteristics, and to ensure an understanding and compliance with local planning guidelines and regulations, Matrix included several local and regional planning and



engineering firms as part of its Planning Team; and, to bring a broader perspective on market and economic opportunities for base redevelopment, a national market and economics firm was included. The Matrix Planning Team, along with project roles and responsibilities, are noted below:

- ▶ Planning Decisions - Hallowell, Maine / Public Engagement Programming and Homeless Housing Screening Assistance
- ▶ Wright-Pierce Engineers - Topsham, Maine / Transportation and Utilities Infrastructure
- ▶ WBRC Architects + Engineers, Inc. - Bangor, Maine / Facilities Assessment and Land Planning
- ▶ Eaton Peabody Consulting Group - Augusta, Maine / Redevelopment Strategies
- ▶ Jeffrey Donohoe and Associates, LLC – Manchester, New Hampshire / Market and Economic Analysis; Implementation and Operational Strategies

The following sections of this Report, and the accompanying related Appendices provide (1) a summary of the Public Engagement Program and the results of this significant and highly successful community-driven process; (2) a summary of a broad range of readily available data inventoried, evaluated, and integrated into the planning process (including information related to local community issues and influences; local and on-base transportation and utility infrastructure; and an assessment of existing Topsham Annex buildings and facilities; natural systems; and environmental conditions and cleanup issues); (3) a description of the conceptual plan alternatives and plan refinement process, including alternative reuse master plans and results of comparative evaluations; and (4) a description of the Reuse Master Plan and strategy for implementation.

Components of the Planning Process

The ultimate Topsham Annex Reuse Master Plan for the redevelopment of the property, as described in **Section 6: The Topsham Annex Reuse Master Plan** is based on a planning process that has considered a variety of significant data related to physical characteristics, environmental conditions of the property, market, economic and financial issues, and regulatory considerations; pertinent on-base, as well as off-base issues have been addressed. The Plan is also the product of an extensive public engagement program that has generated local and regional public interest, serious comment and review, and active participation at many community levels, as described in **Section 3: The Public Engagement Process**, which follows this Section. No one issue has dominated the process, and no one issue is the basis for the Plan. As with all large-scale, complex, and multi-faceted redevelopment projects, the Topsham Annex Reuse Master Plan reflects the combination of conditions that best positions the property for successful long-term redevelopment, and balances that against community goals and objectives, environmental sustainability, and political / regulatory realities.



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The 16-month planning study followed a three-phased process that included:

- ▶ Phase A: Pre-Planning Activities, which focused primarily around the formulation and implementation of the Public Engagement Program and the Homeless / State and Local Screening Process
- ▶ Phase B: Inventory and Analysis, a three-month period during which physical, market and economic, and facility data was collected and evaluated
- ▶ Phase C: Conceptual Master Plans, during which conceptual plan alternatives were formulated, evaluated and compared, and the Topsham Annex Base Reuse Master Plan was finalized

