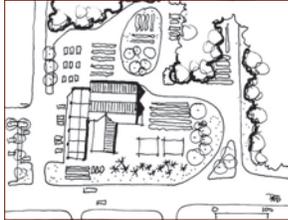




## Section 5: Reuse Alternatives and Plan Selection



Based on the results of the existing conditions assessment and public visioning process, a series of alternative reuse concepts were developed and evaluated, and the Reuse Master Plan was selected by the TLRA. As part of that process, Notices of Interest for public benefit conveyance requests were evaluated, with TLRA support and approval given to those requests that would best support the intent of the Reuse Master Plan.



The following section describes the process and events that led to the development of the plan alternatives, and ultimately to the Reuse Master Plan.

### Overview of Reuse Alternatives

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Following Public Meeting #2 (Community Visioning), the student visioning sessions, and the Planning Considerations workshops, the project team continued to interact with various stakeholders in beginning the alternative reuse master plan development process. During this time, meetings were held with organizations such as the Maine State Housing Authority, School Administrative District 75 (SAD 75), the Town of Topsham’s Interchange Study committee, the Topsham Board of Selectmen, homeless providers, Annex neighbors, the Chamber of Commerce, and others to receive additional input regarding the character of potential reuse master plan alternatives. Concurrently, and as a separate effort, the town also conducted a Townwide Market Study; the results of which helped inform the Reuse Master Plan alternatives, described in the following section.

### Formulation of Reuse Master Plan Alternatives

The irregular shape of the surplus property at the Topsham Annex creates essentially two separate reuse areas: (1) the 14-acre triangle-shaped area located west of Republic Avenue and south of Can Am Drive that includes the commissary and various military office functions (hereafter known as the “Military Triangle”); and (2) the 60-acre area east of the school district’s ball fields and tennis courts that includes existing housing and undeveloped land (hereafter known as the “Housing Area”).

It should be noted, as reported in previous sections of this report that the family housing area includes housing units currently owned and maintained by GMH under a long-term housing privatization agreement with the Department of the Navy; as such, only the underlying land has been surplus as part of this BRAC process, not the housing units on the land. Land use alternatives considered by the TLRA include designations that would allow for a continuation of those residential uses, as well as for other land uses and densities, depending on ultimate disposition options considered by the Navy.



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Given the different character of existing uses and facilities within the two identified planning areas and different transportation and land use attributes found outside the Annex adjacent to these two areas, the first alternative reuse planning stage consisted of identifying those land uses that would be most suitable for each area. The range of potential alternative uses for both the Military Triangle and the Housing Area were identified based on numerous factors that included:

- ▶ Citizen input
- ▶ Market demand
- ▶ Development costs
- ▶ Infrastructure costs
- ▶ Community benefits
- ▶ Fiscal impacts
- ▶ Job creation
- ▶ Traffic impacts

For the Military Triangle, land use alternatives initially considered the following uses:

- ▶ Community Service Center
- ▶ High School (for expansion of the existing school or for a new school)
- ▶ Recreation / Athletic Fields / Open Space
- ▶ Office Park

Subsequent to the formation of these alternatives, several meetings and discussions were held with stakeholders from the community in order to identify areas of concern and to gauge support for individual redevelopment concepts. For example, discussions with SAD 75 indicated minimal interest in developing a new high school on the Military Triangle, although SAD 75 did express an interest in the possibility of additional recreational and athletic fields in this location. Consequently, the list of conceptual land use alternatives for the Military Triangle was refined as:

- ▶ Community Service Center
- ▶ Recreation / Athletic Fields
- ▶ Office Park

For the Housing Area, the conceptual land use alternatives were initially identified as:

- ▶ Renovation of Existing Housing
- ▶ Higher Density New Housing
- ▶ Office Park



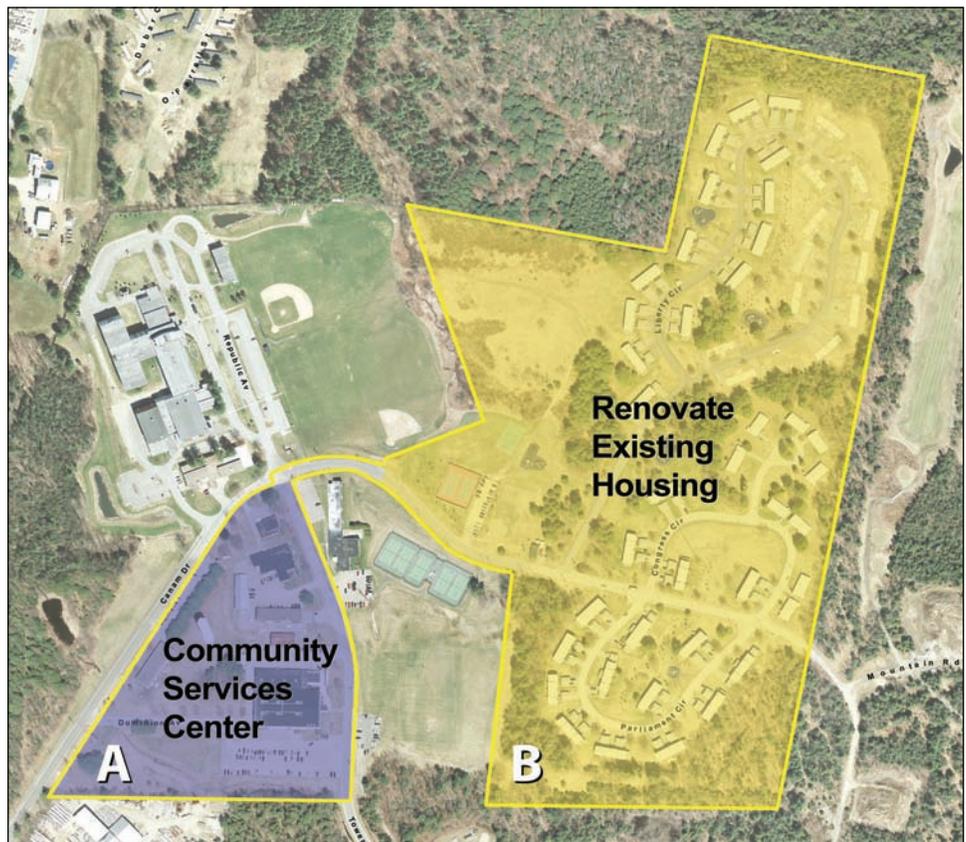
These various alternative uses for the Military Triangle and Housing Area were paired to create the following four Reuse Master Plan alternatives:

**Alternative 1**

Military Triangle: Community Service Center  
Housing Area: Renovation Existing Housing

Alternative 1 provided for the development of a Community Services Center (CSC) on the Military Triangle to include a variety of potential uses, such as a recreation center, teen center, senior center, community theater, skating rink, or other necessary facilities to support the needs of the community. Given the size of the Military Triangle parcel, this area could support up to 120,000 square feet of floor space to support uses of this type. There are a number of existing facilities on the Military Triangle parcel which could be considered for reuse. As an alternative, existing facilities could be demolished, and newer, more efficient facilities could be constructed.

*Exhibit 52: Alternative Plan 1*



Source: Matrix Design Group



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Alternative 1 also assumed that the existing housing units on the Housing Area could be renovated and reused. The Matrix Planning Team did not have the opportunity to sufficiently inspect the existing housing units at the Topsham Annex; consequently, the consideration of renovating these units is based primarily on the prior experience of the Matrix planning team in evaluating military housing. The purpose of this consideration was based on the possibility that the town could acquire the property from the Navy.

Specifically, Alternative 1 assumes that the existing 129 units of housing remaining on the property would be renovated and updated, and 48 new units would be developed on the concrete slabs where some units have already been demolished. In order to reuse the existing housing units, the local water and sewer districts have indicated that the systems would have to be updated. However, upgrading infrastructure is considered a common requirement for any redevelopment of the Housing Area.

***Alternative 1 Analysis:***

**Development Program:**

- ▶ Renovate 129 existing housing units
- ▶ Replace 48 previously demolished housing units
- ▶ Develop up to 120,000 square feet of community services facilities

**Tax Base:**

- ▶ Housing units add to tax base – possibly as much as \$23 million
- ▶ No tax base from Community Services Center – tax exempt

**Permanent Jobs:**

- ▶ Minimal permanent job creation in the housing
- ▶ Job creation in CSC would be dependent upon type and amount of services developed

**Fiscal Impacts:**

- ▶ Property tax revenues from housing, offset by costs for municipal services and education costs
- ▶ Developing age-restricted housing could help reduce education costs
- ▶ Operating costs for CSC likely to be tax funded, partially offset by potential fees for services



Market Desirability:

- ▶ Renovation of housing units as workforce housing (lower price points) could be attractive
- ▶ Need to evaluate likely renovation and acquisition costs against potential sale values
- ▶ Absorption of housing could require up to four years
- ▶ Public has expressed an interest in developing additional community services, though cost issues have not necessarily been considered thoroughly

Infrastructure Investment:

- ▶ Housing Area likely to require replacement or upgrade of water / sewer infrastructure, potential cost of up to \$5 million. Some utility infrastructure investments in the Military Triangle area may be necessary depending on the intensity of future development.
- ▶ No changes in roadway system expected

Need for Public Investment:

- ▶ Developer likely to fund infrastructure upgrades as part of the redevelopment project, need to ensure via development agreement
- ▶ Public funding likely to be required for CSC, possibly in the range of \$12 to \$24 million

Population Impacts:

- ▶ Housing could generate 350 to 400 residents

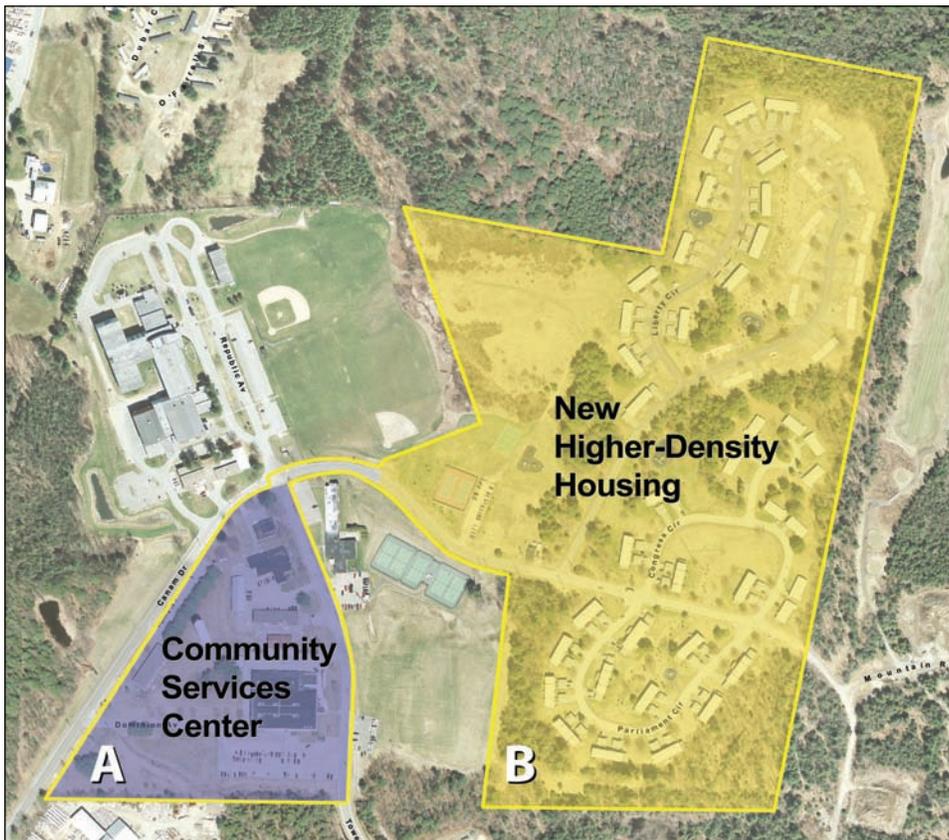


**Alternative 2**

Military Triangle: Community Service Center  
Housing Area: Higher Density New Housing

Alternative 2 also provided for the development of a Community Services Center on the Military Triangle site to include a variety of potential uses, such as a recreation center, teen center, senior center, community theater, skating rink, or other necessary facilities to support the needs of the community. Given the size of the Military Triangle parcel, this portion of the Annex could support up to 120,000 square feet of floor space to support uses of this type. There are a number of existing facilities in this area which could be considered for reuse. As an alternative, existing facilities could be demolished, and newer, more efficient facilities could be constructed.

*Exhibit 53: Alternative Plan 2*



Source: Matrix Design Group

Alternative 2 also anticipated that all of the existing housing units in the Housing Area would be demolished, and that the site would be redeveloped for housing uses at a higher density than what presently exists on the site. Historically, the site has supported 177 housing units. Under a higher density redevelopment, it is envisioned that the



density on the site could double, to approximately 350 units. This increased density would be required in order to economically justify the costs associated with replacement of infrastructure systems, as well as the costs of demolishing existing housing units.

***Alternative 2 Analysis:***

Development Program:

- ▶ Demolish 129 existing housing units, as well as slabs from 48 previously demolished housing units
- ▶ Construct up to 350 new high density housing units
- ▶ Develop up to 120,000 square feet of community services facilities

Tax Base:

- ▶ Housing units add to tax base – possibly as much as \$30 million
- ▶ No tax base from Community Services Center – tax exempt

Permanent Jobs:

- ▶ Only permanent job creation in the housing would be property management, if high density housing was apartment complex
- ▶ Job creation in CSC would be dependent upon type and amount of services developed

Fiscal Impacts:

- ▶ Property tax revenues from housing, offset by costs for municipal services and education costs
- ▶ Developing age-restricted housing could help reduce education costs
- ▶ Operating costs for CSC likely to be tax funded, partially offset by potential fees for services

Market Desirability:

- ▶ Development of a high density product is somewhat untested locally, could be difficult to market
- ▶ Absorption of new housing could require up to six years



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- ▶ Public has expressed an interest in developing additional community services, though cost issues have not necessarily been considered thoroughly

Infrastructure Investment:

- ▶ Housing Area likely to require replacement or upgrade of water / sewer infrastructure, potential cost of up to \$5 million. Some utility infrastructure investments in the Military Triangle area may be necessary depending on the intensity of future development.
- ▶ No changes in roadway system expected
- ▶ Demolition costs for housing could be \$1.5 to \$3.1 million

Need for Public Investment:

- ▶ Developer likely to fund infrastructure upgrades as part of construction of high density residential project on-site, need to ensure via development agreement
- ▶ Public funding likely to be required for CSC, possibly in the range of \$12 to \$24 million

Population Impacts:

- ▶ Housing could generate 700 to 800 residents

**Alternative 3**

Military Triangle: Recreation / Athletic Fields

Housing Area: Renovate Existing Housing

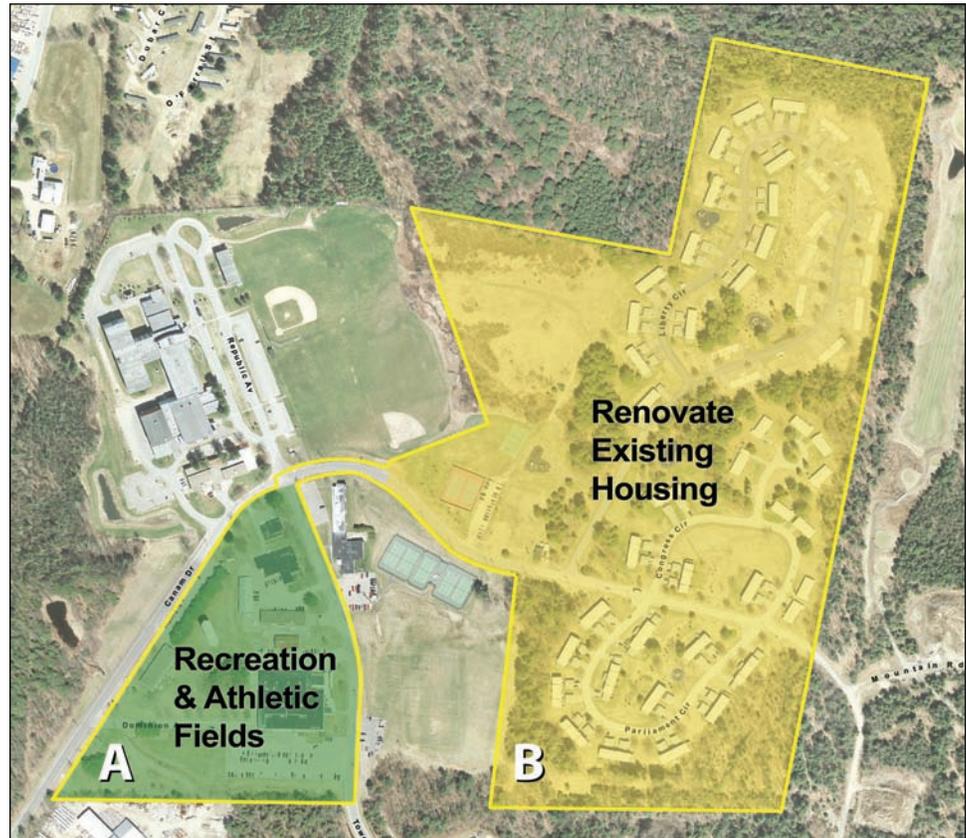
Alternative 3 provided for the development of new athletic and recreational fields on the Military Triangle site, such as baseball fields, basketball courts, softball fields, tennis courts, soccer fields and/or a football field. Given the size of the Military Triangle parcel, a wide variety of development programs could be used. Typical playing fields are in the range of two to three acres each (excluding grandstands and other support facilities), such that the Military Triangle could support development of four to six fields. Basketball and tennis courts require less land area.

Alternative 3 also anticipated that the existing housing units on the Housing Area would be renovated and reused. Specifically, the remaining 129 units of housing on the property would be renovated and updated, and 48 new units would be developed on the concrete slabs where some existing units have already been demolished. In order to



reuse the existing housing units, the local water and sewer districts have indicated that the systems would have to be updated. However, upgrading infrastructure is considered a common requirement for any redevelopment of the Housing Area.

*Exhibit 54: Alternative Plan 3*



Source: Matrix Design Group

***Alternative 3 Analysis:***

Development Program:

- ▶ Renovate 129 existing housing units
- ▶ Replace 48 previously demolished housing units
- ▶ Develop three to six new playing fields and associated support facilities and parking

Tax Base:

- ▶ Housing units add to tax base – possibly as much as \$23 million
- ▶ No tax base from Recreation Fields – tax exempt



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Permanent Jobs:

- ▶ Minimal permanent job creation in the housing
- ▶ Minimal job creation from Recreational Fields

Fiscal Impacts:

- ▶ Property tax revenues from housing, offset by costs for municipal services and education costs
- ▶ Developing age-restricted housing could help reduce education costs
- ▶ Operating costs for Recreational Fields likely to be tax funded, partially offset by potential fees for services and/or usage fees

Market Desirability:

- ▶ Renovation of housing units as workforce housing (lower price points) could be attractive
- ▶ Need to evaluate likely renovation and acquisition costs against potential sale values
- ▶ Absorption of housing could require up to four years
- ▶ Public has expressed an interest in developing additional community services, though cost issues have not necessarily been considered thoroughly

Infrastructure Investment:

- ▶ Housing Area likely to require replacement or upgrade of water / sewer infrastructure, potential cost of up to \$5 million. Utility infrastructure investments would be very limited in the Military Triangle area given the proposed use as athletic fields
- ▶ No changes in roadway system expected

Need for Public Investment:

- ▶ Developer likely to fund infrastructure upgrades as part of the redevelopment project, need to ensure via development agreement
- ▶ Public funding likely to be required for development of new recreational fields, possibly in the range of \$5 to \$10 million if fields are lighted



Population Impacts:

- ▶ Housing could generate 350 to 400 residents

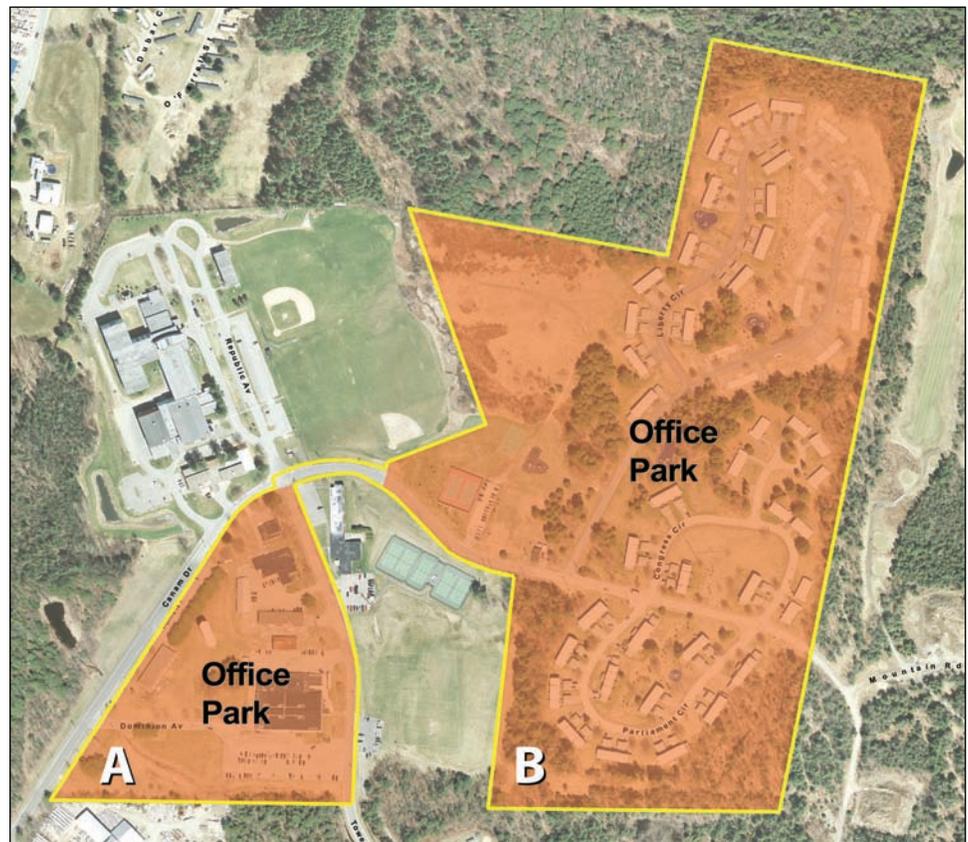
**Alternative 4**

Military Triangle: Office Park

Housing Area: Office Park

Alternative 4 provided for the creation of an office / business park on both the Military Triangle and Housing Area sites. Given the size of the combined parcels, as much as 500,000 square feet of office and commercial uses (including flex space) could be developed on the site. Water and sewer service would have to be replaced on the Housing Area site. While the infrastructure on the Military Triangle portion of the property was reportedly upgraded when the Middle School was constructed, some additional utility infrastructure investments in the Military Triangle area may be necessary depending on the intensity of future development.

*Exhibit 55: Alternative Plan 4*



Source: Matrix Design Group



**Alternative 4 Analysis:**

Development Program:

- ▶ Demolish 129 existing housing units, as well as slabs from 48 previously demolished housing units
- ▶ Develop up to 500,000 square feet of new office and non-retail commercial facilities

Tax Base:

- ▶ Office / Business Park development could add \$40 to \$60 million to tax base

Permanent Jobs:

- ▶ Office / Business Park of 500,000 square feet could employ 1,000 to 2,000 at build-out and full occupancy

Fiscal Impacts:

- ▶ Tax revenues for office and commercial uses, offset by fees for services for employees
- ▶ Fiscal benefit or cost will be dependent on number of employees and mix of uses

Market Desirability:

- ▶ Town has experienced new development of office and other non-retail uses in the recent past
- ▶ Length of time to develop large scale park may be considerable – could require up to 10 years or more
- ▶ Distance from Interstate and complex access may inhibit marketability
- ▶ Red Mill absorption has been slow for 36,000 square feet

Infrastructure Investment:

- ▶ Housing Area likely to require replacement of water / sewer infrastructure, potential cost of up to \$5 million. Some utility infrastructure investments in the Military Triangle area may be necessary depending on the intensity of future development
- ▶ Some changes in roadway system may be required to make an office park use more user friendly



Need for Public Investment:

- ▶ Developer may request financial assistance with infrastructure costs

Population Impacts:

- ▶ No direct population impacts expected

## **Evaluation of Reuse Plan Alternatives**

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In order to evaluate the four alternative reuse plans presented above, the Matrix planning team, along with the TLRA board, developed a list of criteria against which the alternatives were evaluated to assist in identifying the preferred reuse plan. These evaluation criteria were as follows:

### **Topsham LRA Guiding Principles**

- ▶ Becomes a Landmark / Special Place in town
- ▶ Enhances Quality of Living, Working, Learning, Playing in Topsham
- ▶ Is Consistent with Goals and Policies of Comprehensive Plan
- ▶ Is Consistent with Goals and Policies of Main Street Plan
- ▶ Is Consistent with Goals and Policies of Interchange Study
- ▶ Is Realistic and Achievable for a Small Site
- ▶ Is Complementary and Compatible with Adjacent Land Uses / Activities
- ▶ Preserves and Protects the Environment
- ▶ Is Sustainable and Energy Efficient
- ▶ Promotes Walking and Good Design

### **Other Guiding Principles**

- ▶ Public Input Preferences
- ▶ Mix of Land Uses
- ▶ Capitalizes on Existing Infrastructure
- ▶ Takes Advantage of Compact Building Design
- ▶ Transportation Access, Connectivity Impacts
- ▶ Positive Impact on Tax Base
- ▶ Job Creation



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- ▶ Consistent with Neighborhood Schools
- ▶ Environmental Clean-up Impact / Costs
- ▶ Ease and Predictability of Implementation

### Alternative Plan Selection

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On Saturday, June 9, 2007, the Topsham LRA board met at a special board workshop to evaluate the four alternatives against the criteria described above, and to select a preferred reuse strategy. In evaluating and discussing the alternative plans and subsequently formulating a viable reuse plan for the Topsham Annex, the TLRA Board of Directors considered not only the site's physical and natural assets, but also its strategic location and proximity to existing educational facilities, nearby businesses, retirement communities, and open space. The Board also revisited the overarching intent of its Guiding Principles, "...to encourage redevelopment of the property as a special place within the town – one that would enhance the live, work, learn, and play environment."

The Reuse Master Plan, therefore, reflects more than simply the identification of specific land uses for future redevelopment ; it incorporates the TLRA Board's vision for the Topsham Annex Reuse Master Plan that is grounded by the following broad concepts and potential elements:

- ▶ An educational and training complex to support not only middle and high school needs, but also adult education, arts and crafts, and other life-enhancing activities
- ▶ A variety of community support facilities and services addressing the needs of all segments of the Topsham population
- ▶ Expanded external connectivity and internal pedestrian linkages to encourage community-wide use, and safe and convenient pedestrian access among office, commercial, educational, and residential uses, as well as from adjacent and nearby neighborhoods
- ▶ A compatible mix of uses and synergistic relationships that will promote creative and productive interaction among the business and education institutions, expand training and research interests, and establish a healthy and safe interactive, shared environment for children, teens, and adults in the community

As a result of that workshop, and based on the vision expressed above, the board selected the following alternative as its preferred reuse plan from those evaluated:

Military Triangle: Office Park - Business & Community  
Housing Area: Parks & Recreation and Residential Uses



While the land use for Alternative 4 for the Military Triangle, Office Park, was the closest of the four alternatives in describing the vision, character, and use for the Military Triangle chosen by the TLRA board, the board modified the use from strictly office uses to a broader mix of commercial and community uses. Thus, the term “Business & Community” was assigned as the preferred land use designated for the entire Military Triangle.

For the majority of the Housing Area, the board recommended a continuation of residential land uses, which would support its overall future vision for the Annex. While the Board understands the redevelopment constraints placed on the parcel as a result of the existing long-term nature of the Navy / GMH housing privatization agreement, it also recognizes that the Navy could ultimately dispose of the property through a public sale to GMH or other private-sector developer. The designated residential land use and associated mix of densities, therefore, will ensure the Board’s vision, regardless of the ultimate disposition of the property. Densities recommended by the Board for the housing area include “Medium Density Residential” (up to four units per acre) proposed for the area north of Can Am Drive, and “Higher Density Residential” (up to eight units per acre) proposed for the area south of Can Am Drive. For the undeveloped portion of the Housing Area, the board identified Parks & Recreation as the most suitable land use for this area.

Based on these identified land uses, the consultant team prepared a preliminary draft reuse plan map and presented it to the board at their June 20, 2007 regular meeting. At that meeting, the board agreed to present the draft reuse plan map to Topsham citizens at Public Meeting 3 held on August 1, 2007. As a result of the public support for the Plan, as presented, and after further consideration by the TLRA board, the board voted unanimously at their August 15, 2007 regular meeting to approve the draft reuse plan map as the basis for the final Topsham Annex Reuse Master Plan.



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