

Section 8

Master Plan Recommendations

8.1 Park-Wide Concept

An Opportunities and Constraints Figure (Figure 9, Appendix A) was developed for the parcel to facilitate in siting the preferred land uses. This figure is based on the evaluation of existing site conditions, as well as other development constraints identified during a field visit. The park-wide concept was based on the Makerspace development model, the Opportunities and Constraints figure (Figure 9, Appendix A), and the results of two community-wide surveys. As discussed below in greater detail, the existing buildings are proposed for reuse as areas that will provide tools and programmatic spaces that will encourage community learning, collaboration, and creativity. The goal is to enable the community to work together to produce works that aren't able to be produced by individuals who are working in isolation. The park-wide concept provides a community space to facilitate collaboration between Winchendon residents and addresses active and passive recreation and conservation. The concept also seeks to minimize disturbance to sensitive environmental resources and vegetation clearing.

The park-wide concept is provided on Figure 10 (Appendix A). As shown on the figure, activities are sited outside of wetland resource areas and areas with challenging topography. Active recreation uses are generally located in the northern portion of the parcel. Passive recreation uses are generally located in the southern portion of the parcel in areas with slightly steeper topography. Access to the eastern portion of the project site is difficult without impacting the forested wetland. Based on this, the Master Plan depicts the eastern portion of the site as conservation land or for low impact passive uses. Factors that were considered while siting the various land uses are summarized below.

Viewing Areas – These areas were sited in portions of the site that provide scenic vistas and are otherwise not suitable for larger development due to the proximity of sensitive environmental resources and/or topography.

- **Western Walking Trail** – The concrete bridge on the western walking trail is currently informally used as a viewing area. This site offers a view of the forested wetland system. The area can be improved with the installation of a bench and garbage/recycling receptacle.

Another potential location for a viewshed area is on top of a hill just outside the wetland area on the western walking trail. Picnic tables and benches can be installed in this area.

- **Shoreline** – Areas along the shoreline provide a view of Whitney Pond. These areas are at the bottom of a slope and may be difficult to access. The installation of benches at these locations is recommended.

Picnic Areas – Picnic areas are shown throughout the parcel. A large picnic area is shown near the existing facilities at the top of the existing trail that leads to the water. With vegetation management, this area will have a clear view of the lake. As this area is already cleared, it may be a suitable location for a larger picnic pavilion that can be used for special events in addition to normal park use.

Educational Displays – Educational displays can be located throughout the site to create a nature trail or to provide information on what is in the viewshed. For example trees can be tagged with their species type and educational kiosks can provide information on plant species within viewing areas. Additional information can be provided to the user electronically via the utilization of QR codes to minimize the installation costs of these displays. The displays can provide information on items such as potential vernal pools, the bog located on the east of the site, forested wetlands, and local vegetation and wildlife.

Walking Trails – The trail network on the site can be expanded to provide additional connectivity. Depending on the results of a future wetland delineation, it may be possible to extend the eastern walking trail south to connect with the western walking trail. Note that permitting a new walking trail within a wetland resource area can be challenging. If possible, siting the new trails outside of wetland resource areas is recommended.

Boat Launch/Water Access – There is an existing trail from the house to Whitney Pond on the west side of the parcel. As indicated on Figure 4 (Appendix A), topography and slopes are challenging along the western portion of the site. However, the existing trail can be improved to facilitate access. Due to the steep topography, it is anticipated that parking for a boat launch / water access will occur near the existing structures. A kayak or canoe storage rack can be installed near the water which would allow boat storage, eliminating the need to portage the non-motorized boats. Benches also can be added along the waterfront to facilitate fishing at the pond.

Active Recreation – Active recreation has been located in areas that have already been disturbed and do not contain sensitive environmental resources. In addition to minimizing environmental impacts, this also creates a natural separation between more active uses (generally on the north side of the parcel) and passive recreation uses (on the south side of the parcel). The Town will have to be efficient with how the upland meadow area to the west of Ingleside drive is used for these activities. Note that the areas specified below will likely require site lighting to enable their use after sunset.

Active recreation uses include the following:

- **Splash Park / Playground** – It is recommended that these be located away from the top of any slope to minimize stormwater runoff into Whitney Pond. The splash park and/or water fountains at a playground will require a connection to the water system. These uses should be sited close to the water distribution system to minimize the cost of connecting to the system.
- **Community Gardening / Greenhouse** – This use was located in portions of the upland meadow area that are already disturbed and are not thickly vegetated. The upland meadow area is ideal for gardening as it receives adequate sunlight, requires minimal clearing to accommodate this use, and is relatively flat. The Master Plan also reserves an area for a greenhouse and shed. The community garden area was sited close to the existing house to take advantage of shared parking facilities with the existing structures. It will also require connection to a water distribution system to facilitate watering the gardens.
- **Athletic Fields / Skate Park** – Athletic fields and the skate park are located in the upland field and meadow portions of the site. These areas are previously disturbed and are relatively flat. A “Little League” sized baseball field is located

In the northwest portion of the site and a youth soccer field (approximately 240' x 150') is proposed in the existing cleared meadow in the northeast of the site. Volleyball and tennis courts and a skate park are also proposed. Parking lots located within these areas will encourage shared/overlapping parking.

- **Outdoor Theater** – The outdoor amphitheater is located on an area that is relatively flat and close to the existing structures to facilitate future utility connections. Another potential use with a smaller upfront cost is the showing of movies. A portable screen and movie projector could be located within the existing cleared area that is currently used as volleyball net. Individuals can bring their own lawn chairs and picnic blankets.

Conservation – The eastern portion of the site is recommended for passive recreation/conservation. Based on MassGIS data and field observations, this portion of the site is primarily comprised of a forested wetland area. Dependent upon the results of a future wetland delineation, this portion of the site could contain a network of walking trails and/or conservation land.

Building Re-Use and New Structures – As noted above, a change in occupancy use of the buildings will require compliance with the Massachusetts State Building Code. The code requirements for existing buildings is such that the structural work for alterations, repairs and additions to existing buildings must designed and constructed in accordance with the code requirements for new construction. Based on this, the proposed uses within the structures will largely determine the required alterations and improvements for each structure.

As shown on the Master Plan, the existing buildings are proposed for reuse as public spaces such as class rooms, art gallery, artist spaces, and workshops. Consistent with the Makerspace model, the proposed uses are intended to promote a learning environment that provides both the tools and the space for collaborative mentoring.

It is anticipated that the garage will remain as an unconditioned space. The garage bay doors can accommodate large pieces of equipment and machinery. Additionally, the open floor plan will allow safety clearances to be maintained around equipment and allow for the separation of active tools/machinery from work areas. Additionally, the garage can be used seasonally as a staging area to sell tickets or concessions during special events that are held on the site. It is anticipated that minor improvements would need to be made to the garage to provide a finished space that can accommodate reuse activities.

The barn can be used seasonally as a creativity center for uses such as a pottery area, metal working, teaching space, and other artistic endeavors. The barn can also be divided into studio spaces or collaborative work areas that individuals can rent or use to work on large projects; similar to the "studio and storage space" program at the Artisan's Asylum Makerspace in Cambridge, MA. Modifications for the barn space will primarily depend on the types of activities that are located in the structure.

As a heated building, the residential structure can be used year round as an art/creativity center that also offers classes to the public. The rooms can serve as an interactive art gallery where the individuals who are exhibiting their work can teach classes to members of the public. The space may be able to accommodate dedicated facilities for activities such as painting, drawing, and screen printing. The residential structure can also be used to encourage technology based collaboration by providing

access to computers and/or offering classes on Computer-Aided Design (CAD), design and engineering programs, computer programming, and graphic design and/or gaming development. Minor improvements would need to be made to provide adequate spaces that can accommodate these activities. Additionally, the residential structure should be connected to the municipal sewer system and restroom facilities should be constructed and upgraded to comply with the requirements of the MA building code and Americans with Disabilities Act. It is also recommended that portable sanitary facilities be provided in the northern portion of the property proximate to the proposed recreation facilities until such time as permanent sanitary facilities can be provided.

8.2 Implementation/Development Plan

An Implementation and Development Plan for the proposed uses was created to assist in planning the site's development. The due diligence phase is intended to occur prior to purchase and development of the property and includes completion of a Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA). One category of development (Site Readiness) focuses on preparing the site, identifying and obtaining funding sources, and addressing public safety related improvements. A second category of development includes activities to facilitate passive and active recreation on the site. A third category of development addresses re-use of the existing structures. **It is anticipated that the site will be developed over a period of approximately 5-10 years, though full build-out will depend on available funding. Similarly, development of the above categories will not occur linearly and will likely occur based on available project funding.**

The Implementation / Development Plan is summarized below.

Due Diligence Activities - The activities included in this phase generally represent due diligence activities that should occur prior to purchasing the parcel or during the purchase and sales agreement. The results of these items could impact the activities and uses that can occur within the existing buildings. Activities within this phase are summarized below.

- Perform Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA)
 - Perform comprehensive survey for Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) and lead based paint (LBP) in all three structures
 - Perform mold survey in basement of residential structure
 - Perform subsurface investigations around the garage and septic system to determine presence of environmental contamination

Site Readiness - The activities included in this phase generally represent activities associated with identifying and obtaining additional funding and minor expenses that seek to improve public safety. The majority of these activities should occur prior to opening the entire park to the public. Activities within this phase are summarized below.

- Signage on Maple Street/Route 202 indicating park entrance ahead
- Vegetation management at site entrance
- Installation of site security measures (access gates)
- Installation of signs at the two walking path trailheads

- Maintenance of existing trail network
- Installation of signage to connect the property to the North Central Pathway bike path and Winchendon's downtown area
- Installation of dry sewer line along Ingleside Drive
- Installation of gravel parking area

Roadway improvements to Ingleside Drive - If Ingleside Drive is paved and/or widened, it is recommended the Town install a dry line in conjunction with the roadway improvements to facilitate future connections to the sewer system and other infrastructure/utility systems.

Passive Recreation Land Uses - This phase contains activities that provide passive recreation amenities (parking, boat launch area, picnic tables, etc.). Activities within this phase are summarized below.

- Installation of benches and trash receptacles at viewshed areas
- Installation of picnic tables and grills at already cleared areas
- Installation of educational kiosks
- Expansion of trail network
- Creation of non-motorized boat launch area
- Creation of community garden areas / shed / greenhouse

Active Recreation Land Uses - As noted above, this phase includes activities to facilitate active recreation land uses on the property. Activities within this phase are summarized below. These activities generally constitute single focus, higher cost facilities, that depending upon available funding and priorities, the Town could pursue at any time.

- Design and installation of skateboard park
- Design and installation of playgrounds
- Design and installation of splash park
- Design and installation of athletic fields, fencing, lighting (little league field, U-11 soccer field, tennis court, volleyball, batting cages)

Building Reuse - As noted above, this phase includes activities to facilitate building reuse. Activities within this phase are summarized below. These activities also generally constitute single focus, higher cost uses, that depending upon available funding and priorities, the Town could pursue at any time.

- Perform barn re-use structural evaluation based on proposed uses and code required upgrades
- Repair chimney at single story residence structure and garage
- Sewer connection / restroom facility upgrades
- Building fit-out/reuse