



DEVÆENS



Reuse Plan

Prepared for
The Boards of Selectmen
• Town of Ayer
• Town of Harvard
• Town of Lancaster
• Town of Shirley
The Massachusetts Government Land Bank

Prepared by
Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

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Government Officials:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor William Weld
Lieutenant Governor Argeo Paul Cellucci

Elected State Officials

State Senator Robert Antonioni
State Senator Robert Durand
State Representative William Constantino
State Representative Geoffrey Hall
State Representative Augusta Hornblower (dec.)
State Representative Patricia Walrath

Massachusetts Government Land Bank

Timothy Bassett, Executive Director
Jeffrey Simon, Director of the Devens Division
Eric Knapp, Senior Project Manager
Heather Archer, Project Coordinator
Wendy Wissler, Project Assistant
Gary McMillan, Public Information Coordinator

Fort Devens Reuse Center Staff

Glenn Garber, Planning Coordinator
Kenneth Willette, Development Coordinator
Judith Kohn, Environmental Coordinator
Marge Shaw, Office Manager
Kirby Ryder, Administrative Assistant
Karen Foshay, Intern

Government Officials: Federal

U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy
U.S. Senator John Kerry
U.S. Representative Martin Meehan
U.S. Representative Peter Blute

Government Officials: Local

Joint Boards of Selectmen (JBOS)
Ayer - Pauline Hamel, Charles Miller,
Stephen Slarsky
Harvard - Dana Owens, Virginia Thurston,
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James Ford
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Kyle Keady
JBOS Coordinators
John Petrin, Timothy Higgins, Robert Hubbard,
Thomas Linden

Joint Planning Boards Steering Committee

Lucy Wallace, Hermann Field, Eugene Christoph,
Richard DeBoalt, John Woodward, James Williams,
Colleen Norstrom

Agencies and Interest Groups

Housing Alliance - Marge Darby
Massachusetts Audubon Society - Heidi Roddis
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Counsel to the Massachusetts Government Land Bank

Garrity and Knisely

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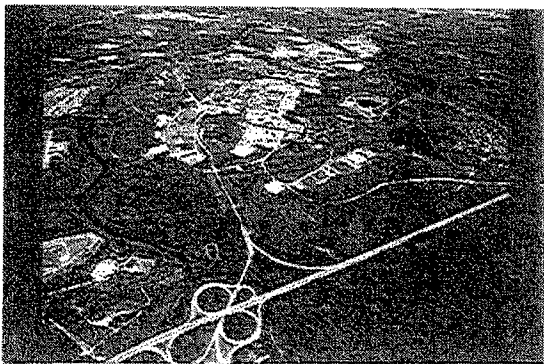
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1 INTRODUCTION

The Reuse Plan is a “blue print” for the conversion of the Fort Devens Military Reservation to civilian uses over the next 20 - 40 years. It is a plan that reflects the varied interests of the host communities, the region, and state government, based on the principle that economic development and environmental protection are common interests. The Reuse Plan provides a bold vision for the future founded on the unique attributes of the Devens property and a confidence in the talents and work ethic of the people of this region. While Devens benefits from significant advantages, the constraints which challenge its successful development must also be considered. These include: the realities of the 1990’s economy, both locally and globally; the need for extensive investment in infrastructure; significant environmental factors; a variety of administrative, regulatory and fiscal demands; and other market, site and operational constraints.

In January 1994, the Massachusetts General Court passed comprehensive and far reaching legislation, Chapter 498 of the Acts of 1993, (the “Act”), which established the legal parameters for the future governance of the Main and North Posts of Fort Devens over the next 40 years. This act created the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone (“Devens”) and established a new public agency, the Devens Enterprise Commission, as the agency responsible for reviewing and approving all future uses. It also designates the Massachusetts Government Land Bank (“Land Bank”) to be the exclusive public agency responsible for acquisition, control, maintenance, and redevelopment of Devens. The Act provides for \$200 million in bonding capacity to fund the redevelopment effort, which is geared to the creation of jobs and the protection of the towns from fiscal impacts that might occur if responsibility for the maintenance and redevelopment of Devens were returned immediately to the towns.

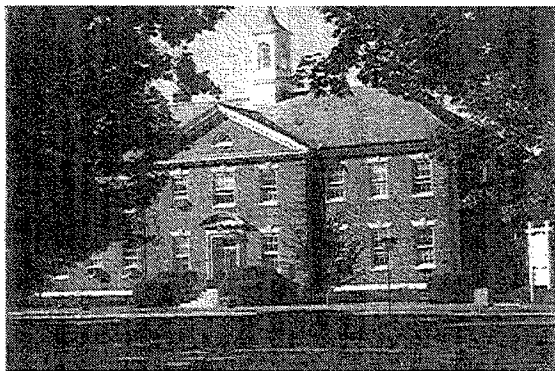
In order for the Devens Legislation to become effective and the \$200 million in bonding capacity to become available, the towns of Ayer, Harvard, and Shirley must approve this Reuse Plan and related Bylaws (the “Bylaws”) by majority vote at special town meetings, referred to as the “Super Town Meeting” to be held simultaneously in each of these three towns no later than December 31, 1994. This report documents the Devens Reuse Plan (the “Reuse Plan”) and the public process involved in its creation.



Under the Reuse Plan:

- Jobs in both the public and private sectors will be created to replace the 7,000 - 8,000 jobs lost directly as a result of the closure of Fort Devens.
- The potential worst case scenario - the entire base with all its abandoned buildings and land becoming the fiscal burdens of the three towns - will be avoided by the creation of the regional funding and management entity with state support.
- The strong transportation infrastructure (rail and regional highway), which served the military so well, will be used to attract immediate jobs in rail and trade-related industries.
- Long-term/high quality jobs will be fostered through an Innovation and Technology Center which will help technology businesses through a variety of business and training services to locate, grow and remain in Massachusetts.
- The great scenic and natural resources on Devens, such as the Nashua River Corridor, will be preserved through the designation of more than one third of the land to open space and recreation.

Background



In 1991, the Federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) recommended closing the North and Main Posts of the U.S. Army Military

Reservation at Fort Devens. With closure scheduled for July 1995, both local and state governments were galvanized into action to respond to this challenge. The four host communities, Ayer, Harvard, Lancaster, and Shirley formed the Joint Boards of Selectmen (JBOS) to represent the towns, and Governor Weld appointed the Land Bank as the lead state agency. Both parties recognized the need for an open public planning process to build on common goals and reach consensus on a Reuse Plan. This process, which drew heavily upon citizen input, was conducted by the professional staff of the Fort Devens Reuse Center established by the JBOS and Land Bank utilizing funds made available by the Federal government through its Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) and by the Land Bank.

Goals and Objectives

In early 1993, the JBOS and Land Bank conducted an extensive process of public input to establish a series of goals and objectives to guide the planning process and subsequent reuse of the base. Culminating in the July, 1993 Community Workshop on Goals, the overall goal established for planning the reuse of Fort Devens was as follows:

The Devens reuse challenge demands a visionary planning effort grounded in environmental, social, and economic reality. It must be realistic, pragmatic, market-driven, flexible and future-oriented.

Goals

Individual goals for reuse included the following:

- Development must be sustainable, which means achieving a balance of economic, social, and environmental needs, while maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base.
- Provide a diversity of uses to avoid dependence on one type of use, and to provide employment opportunities for a range of skill and experience levels.
- Achieve success. Demonstrate the interdependence of economic development and environmental protection and the symbiosis of public and private uses.
- Balance local, regional, and state interests.

Objectives

General

- Foster uses which will create, at a minimum, the equivalent number of the jobs and value of economic activity at Devens in 1990.
- Take advantage of the skills and experience of the regional work force, and match the skills of the future work force with the needs of industries of the future.
- Foster a long-term mix of uses which will enhance the regional economy through future growth potential.
- Build on Devens' unique characteristics to complement the regional economy and expand the economic base.
- Exhibit and foster an attitude that supports reuse goals, successful redevelopment, and the provision of economic activities for individual and collective prosperity.

Cultural and Social

- Protect and enhance Devens' historic resources.
- Promote public awareness and enjoyment of the Devens environment.
- Protect and enhance the quality of life of the citizens in the host communities, the region, and the Commonwealth.
- Provide education, training and retraining tied to business, industry, and institutions on base and in the region.

Environmental

- Ensure an effective, expeditious, and efficient clean-up of hazardous materials, including Superfund areas, tied to the needs of the Reuse Plan.
- Protect and enhance Devens' ecological resources of all kinds, particularly the aquifer and the Nashua River system.
- Ensure that uses which may negatively impact the regional natural resources will be allowed only with appropriate technology and proper mitigation.
- Minimize the off-base impacts for development in areas such as water resources, air quality, viewsheds, traffic and noise, limiting the impacts to those necessary to achieve reuse goals and objectives.
- Foster businesses which enhance the environment through technology.

Why Have a Plan?

The Reuse Plan provides for the future use of Fort Devens to achieve the defined community and state goals and objectives. Adoption of the Reuse Plan will result in the following positive impacts:

Avoidance of Adverse Fiscal Impact on Towns

The Reuse Plan will help to reduce the negative fiscal impacts on the towns by putting the burden and responsibility on the state for provision of services and management of Devens. Early studies, currently being updated, have shown that in excess of \$50 million of capital funding would be required for maintenance and improvement of such facilities as the wastewater treatment plant, roadways and utilities systems. In addition, operating deficits of several million dollars annually are projected to support Devens until new businesses can create a viable tax base. Financing the capital improvements and providing additional municipal services are beyond the capacity of the host communities for at least the next ten years. Educational expenses, wastewater treatment plant improvements, water system improvements and recreation facilities for all three communities, are all examples of needs which will be addressed by the state in a cooperative manner.

Orderly Redevelopment

The Reuse Plan provides a mechanism for the orderly transition from military to civilian use. It will advance the goals of new employment and environmental protection. The extensive public planning process, which involved a broad spectrum

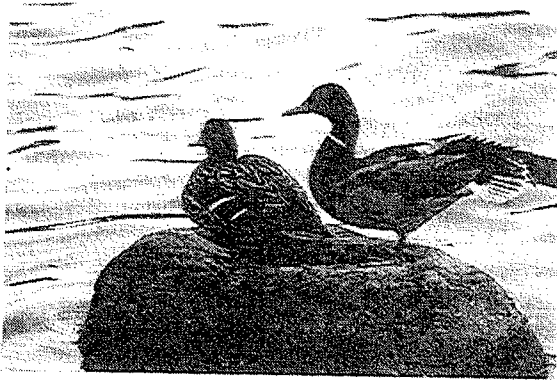
of citizens and state and local officials, has resulted in a plan that has benefits for everyone: economic development; provisions for environmental protection and open space; and preclusion of undesirable uses such as the second major airport. The Reuse Plan also affords an opportunity to guide federal decisions on land use for parcels slated to remain in government ownership, and to maximize the positive impacts on the communities.

The orderly development of Devens with the attendant financial and organizational supports provided by the Reuse Plan will, likewise, promote the orderly planning and fiscal management of the four host communities, particularly through the avoidance of the severe fiscal impacts likely to materialize without the approval of the Reuse Plan.

Accelerated Job Creation

The infusion of \$200 million of state money and resources will be used to prepare the site for development and to position and distinguish the site favorably in the very competitive real estate market. These state resources will be needed to develop the Innovation and Technology Center, provide infrastructure, and fund training programs and marketing efforts to attract technology-based companies and new jobs to Devens. Overall, it is expected that 7,000-8,000 jobs will be created at Devens through the implementation of the Reuse Plan.

Environmental Protection



The Reuse Plan offers a unique opportunity to protect and enhance the environmental resources in a coordinated approach for the entire 4,400 acres of the Main and North Posts. A fundamental element of the Plan is the approximately 1,300 acre open space network encompassing critical natural resources such as wetlands, floodplains, wildlife and plant habitat, and aquifers. Lands that provide logical connections as part of the open space and recreation system are also included. This open space and recreation system crosses town boundaries and allows for the sharing of recreation facilities by the communities. An impending Regional Recreation Management Plan will link together needs of the host communities with on-site facilities, and will identify feasible options for managing the programs and recreation facilities. Sensitive natural resources within the open space network will be mapped and preserved through various forms of land use restrictions. Requirements in the Bylaws that will protect water resources within Devens are based on the recommendations of the Water Resources Protection Plan.

A Water Resources Protection Plan has been developed for Devens. It is designed to protect and enhance critical water resources such as the Nashua

River and the aquifer that underlies portions of the site. Without a Reuse Plan and Bylaws containing a water resources protection element, it would be difficult to achieve as high a level of proactive protection and control. A community stormwater management system for some of the most sensitive aquifer areas of the site is included in the Water Resources Protection Plan. In addition, the Army's Superfund cleanup will be guided by the Reuse Plan, giving scheduling priority to certain sites which are likely to be developed sooner than others, so that the job creation objective can be achieved.

Strong Local Control of Development

The reuse planning process has provided the communities with the ability to determine the future of Devens, while leaving the cost of implementation to the state. The open, participatory planning process of monthly community workshops, task forces, and public outreach, has allowed tremendous public involvement in the preparation of the Plan. Based on detailed site information mapped for a variety of factors (habitat, wetlands, slopes, etc.), the public has not only selected the general land uses, but has also directly participated in more detailed master plan decisions about open space, recreation, roadways, infrastructure, environmental protection and quality of development. This level of input and control is unprecedented in local zoning controls, and the Reuse Plan has benefited from it. Once the Reuse Plan and related Bylaws are approved at the Super Town Meeting, substantial changes to the Reuse Plan and Bylaws cannot be made without further town meeting approval.

Highlights of the Reuse Plan

The focus of the Reuse Plan is to capitalize on the unique physical and infrastructure attributes of Fort Devens, to attract new businesses, to support existing industry clusters in the region, and to protect and enhance natural resources. These attributes include the availability of large, easily developable sites; access to utilities; excellent regional road and rail network; and a usable stock of existing buildings. The Reuse Plan is focused on using these resources to create economic development that will generate jobs.

The Devens Reuse Plan has three major themes which place the project in a long-term context and define a vision for the overall development. These themes are:

- Innovation and Technology Business
- Rail and Trade-Related Uses
- Open Space and Recreation Resource Protection and Enhancement

In addition to the preceding broad themes, the Devens Enterprise Zone will offer the following additional advantages:

- Sites that are attractive to both employers and employees.
- A truly Unified Permitting Procedure which avoids common regulatory pitfalls of excessive review and fragmentation.

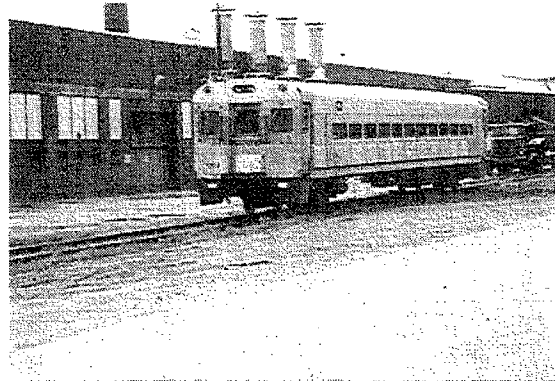
Innovation and Technology Business

This central economic theme of the Reuse Plan is based on Massachusetts' traditional strengths in development of new technologies through the

academic and research base of greater Boston. The reuse goal is to encourage businesses that are growing and have new products, technologies or services to locate at Fort Devens. Large sites with utilities and good vehicular access have been designated for high-profile technology-related users with research and development, manufacturing, and office needs.

The Plan includes an Innovation and Technology Center, housed in the historic Vicksburg Square Quadrangle. This Center is intended to serve as a catalyst for new development on the large sites located elsewhere in the Devens Enterprise Zone. It will play this role both by providing start-up and incubator space and by fostering connections to academic and research institutions.

Rail and Trade-Related Uses



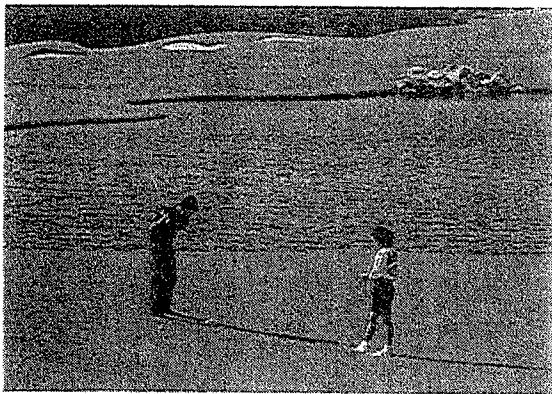
In order to capitalize on the site's unique rail, intermodal and highway attributes, and, on the current market demand for rail industrial, distribution, and trade uses, a large zone was designated for rail-related uses in the existing rail/industrial area. This zone is located in the northeast corner of the Main Post, adjacent to the Hill Rail Yard operated by Guilford Transportation. The area includes an intermodal facility which handles transfer of goods

and materials between rail and truck. The inter-modal facility is linked directly to the Port of Boston, providing Massachusetts' only direct ship-to-rail service. Development of the rail/industrial area will enhance trade-related and regional businesses in moving goods and materials to new markets and providing competitive rail service and lower shipping costs to businesses within the Commonwealth. The rail-related zone could also accommodate manufacturers who utilize "just-in-time" delivery practices, which require that raw materials and products be handled via rail directly to and from the factory floor.

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A key component of the rail-related use is an aquifer protection program to ensure that adequate safeguards and protective measures will be employed to protect the critical groundwater resource underlying the zone.

Open Space and Recreation



The development of the Reuse Plan began with the identification of the site's open space, recreation and critical natural environmental resources. These areas were incorporated into an "emerald necklace" of linked open spaces. This open space framework serves to protect and enhance environmental

resources; provides active and passive recreation and tourism opportunities; buffers development parcels from adjacent uses; provides attractive settings for new development; capitalizes on existing recreation facilities of the base; and provides connections to the regional open space network. Perhaps most importantly, the open space will preserve the great beauty of the Devens property and help distinguish Devens as a particularly attractive business location.

More than one third of the land area of Fort Devens will be devoted to open space and recreational use. While over 1,300 acres of the site are designated as a permanent open space network, more than another 1,500 acres will stand as open space within the developed portions of the site, created as a result of the land use density and coverage limitations within the Bylaws. Key elements of this open space framework include the expansion of the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge along the Nashua River, the Mirror Lake area, the Robbins Pond area, the Willow Run stream corridor, the active recreation resources near Verbeck Gate, and some of the existing golf course. Portions of the existing golf course will be retained and reconfigured to provide for the continuation of golf at Devens.

Other Uses

In addition to the three major uses described above, the Reuse Plan incorporates a diversity of land uses on both large and small parcels. The Reuse Plan recognizes that there will be a continued federal agency presence at Devens for the foreseeable future, including the following likely uses: the Department of Defense Army Reserve Enclave and Training Site and Aviation Facility; the Federal Bureau of Prisons Medical Facility, reusing the existing Cutler Army Hospital; the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge Expansion; special needs housing for homeless families under the McKinney Act Organizations requests; and the Job Corps Training Center.

The Reuse Plan and Bylaws provide for underlying zoning in those areas where federal agencies will exercise continued jurisdiction.

The Need for Approval

The Devens planning process has created a future-oriented and pragmatic program to achieve the appropriate balance of economic, social and environmental needs. Approval of the Reuse Plan and associated Bylaws will provide access to \$200 million of state investment to continue the economic development and environmental protection of 4,400 acres of land critical to the future of the host communities, while at the same time protecting the host communities from likely adverse economic consequences that would materialize without a coordinated Reuse Plan and its attendant organizational and financial resources.

