

Devens Project Updates



Date: July 2019
To: Devens Enterprise Commission
From: Peter Lowitt, FAICP, Director and Neil Angus, AICP CEP, LEED AP, Environmental Planner
RE: October, 2018 through June 2019 Project Updates

PREVIOUSLY PERMITTED PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION:

95 and 105 Walker Road – Little Leaf Farms: The third phase of Little Leaf's greenhouse expansion is underway and includes an office and greenhouse expansion on the undeveloped 12 acre parcel of land located at 95 Walker Road (39-14-500) immediately adjacent to their existing facility. The owner has combined the two parcels and has commenced clearing of the site and construction of the ~14,000 square foot office/production building expansion. The Phase 3 greenhouse expansion (an additional 165,000 sq.ft.) is expected to begin construction in the near future once the screening berm is fully complete and a new wash water septic system is approved and installed.



Existing production facility and greenhouse (left) and framing for new production facility expansion and cleared area for Phase 3 greenhouse (right) (picture taken from the top of the new landscape berm that will screen the production facility from Walker Road) – June 2019

When complete, this facility will have over 400,000 sq.ft. of greenhouse and production space for growing lettuce. The new expansion also includes a second rainwater harvesting basin which collects roof runoff from the greenhouse and uses it to irrigate the lettuce.



View of Phase 3 Production facility under construction and existing Phase 1 Greenhouse (background). Proposed Phase 3 greenhouse area (foreground). Picture taken from top of new proposed rainwater harvesting basin that is part of Phase 3 – June 2019

The informal trail that ran through this expansion parcel was relocated around the facility and now provides formal access from Walker Road (near the driveway entrance to the Devens Wastewater Treatment Plant) to other North Post trails on Devens and within the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge.



Aerial view of greenhouse Phases 1 and 2 and existing production , utilities and rainwater harvesting basin. Photo courtesy of DFortin Creative.

Little Leaf Farms provides lettuce to local grocers and food service providers in New England, as well as schools in Massachusetts. This project continues to contribute to the locally grown movement in Massachusetts and to the sustainable redevelopment goal of the Devens Reuse Plan.

38 Jackson Road – Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) Parking Lot Expansion:

In August of 2018, the DEC approved a Unified Permit for BMS to expand an existing surface parking lot on their campus by 156 parking spaces in front of their new Biologics Development Building. These spaces were needed to accommodate the growing number of employees at their Devens facilities (over 1000). The parking lot included features such as biofiltration landscape islands and preferred parking spaces for electric vehicles and new landscaping to reduce urban heat island impacts. The project ran into delays due to bedrock ledge that was encountered and had to be broken up to properly grade the parking area.



View of new biofiltration landscape islands in new BMS parking lot. Stormwater from the parking areas flows into these islands and the special soils and plants help naturally clean the stormwater before recharging it back into the ground. – June 2019

38 Jackson Road - BMS LOC Expansion:

Construction has commenced on a +/- 26,500 gross-square foot building addition to the existing Laboratory/Office/Cafeteria (LOC) building, between the LOC and the parking garage on the BMS campus. The building expansion will accommodate a mix of new office space, conference facilities, an expanded cafeteria, as well as a fitness center for employees. Drainage from the addition is proposed to be managed by the existing on-site stormwater management system which was already designed to accommodate runoff from this addition. Existing utilities on-site will be expanded to service the proposed addition. The intent of the proposed addition is not to accommodate additional employees, but to provide additional space for existing employees. The 156 parking spaces constructed in front of the new BDB and CMB buildings are expected to be utilized by employees who currently park in the parking garage, freeing up spaces in the parking garage for employees that will be moving in to this new LOC addition. A covered walkway will connect the new addition to the parking garage and BMS is proposing to expand their on-campus trail/walkway network with a series of walkways/trails connecting the LOC and the Large Scale Cell Culture (LSCC) Facility as well as new proposed outdoor patios on the east and west side of the new addition.



Rendering of new Lab/Office/Cafeteria building expansion.



Foundation holes for new Lab/Office/Cafeteria building expansion – June 2019

64 Jackson Loading Dock Expansion:

Quiet Logistics (QL) has moved into the existing +/- 354,500 sq.ft. building (former American Superconductor building) at 64 Jackson Road and is in the process of constructing 10 new loading docks to add to the six that currently exist at the site. This site will become home to QL's new corporate headquarters and customer service operations center. The facility will also accommodate research and development associated with their on-line order/warehousing and distribution logistics operations.



Rear of 64 Jackson with new loading docks under construction – June 2019

Shebokin and MacPherson Well PFAS/PFOA Treatment: The recent changes in the MADEP regulatory environment have created a need to implement additional treatment on the Devens drinking water wells to remove low levels of per and poly fluorinated compounds (PFAs) found at the Shebokin, Patton and MacPherson wells. The treatment will consist of filtration using Granular Activated Carbon (GAC), a common filter media used throughout the United States and Europe. Temporary cement pads are currently under construction to accommodate the new filters at both Shebokin and MacPherson Wells. Once the pads are completed, the filters and associated piping will be trucked to the site and installed using a truck mounted crane. Subsequent delivery of the GAC filtration media and filling of the filters will require trucking and temporary hoses to sluice the carbon into the filters. This activity is expected to take 3-4 weeks. Startup procedures will require filter backwashing and filter-to-waste activities. Backwashing to remove fine carbon dust will require the setup of two 20,000-gallon frac tanks. These will be used to capture backwash water, allow carbon fines to settle out, and then be decanted to the ground. Filter bags will be used to remove residual particulate media. A temporary structure will be erected over the filters and pad area over the winter to protect them.



Shirley Commons Senior Housing: Construction has begun on the Women's Institute 58 unit deeply affordable senior residential housing development (Shirley Commons) at 27 Hospital Road in the Shirley Village Growth District at the corner of Hospital Road and Elliot Road. This area was a former military housing neighborhood and former brownfield site that has been remediated to unrestricted standards. The project will consist of 58 units of rental housing for seniors (age-restricted to 62+) in a single three-story building. The project is designed to address the



Artist's rendering of Shirley Commons

housing and service needs of seniors with incomes ranging from 60% Area Median Income (AMI) to 30% AMI. Housing units will be rental units and include both one- and two-bedroom apartments with a full kitchen and bath in each, along with hallways designed to support the needs of those with disabilities. The building will include community spaces that will be used for social programming and offices for service staff, property management,

flexible program space, community meetings and on-site medical visits. Site development, in addition to the building, includes a proposed 60-space parking lot and associated grading, drainage, lighting and landscaping.

This is a proposed independent living facility (not an assisted living facility). The project is within walking distance of the Shirley Library and MBTA commuter rail station and MassDevelopment will be upgrading drainage and sidewalks along Hospital Road to help further connect this parcel/area with these area amenities. A shuttle stop (Devens Shuttle) is also being planned to provide additional mobility options for residents.



Site Clearing and foundation excavation underway at the intersection of Hospital Road and Elliot Road – June 2019.

Grant Road Housing – Emerson Green Phase 2: Construction is complete on the first phase (17 units) of this 124-unit mixed residential community off of Grant Road and Phase 2 is currently under construction. Phase 2 includes the complete reconstruction of a major portion of Grant Road, along with all the housing units abutting Grant Road, including the two 20-unit apartment buildings. The portion of Grant Road from Pine Street to West Main Street is



currently closed while the new utilities and infrastructure are being installed. As of June 2019, building permits have been issued for two duplexes (4 units) and seven (7) single family units in Phase 2 (see phasing map on previous page for locations). The foundations of the homes in Phase 2 are using a composite wall made of fiberglass instead of concrete and they incorporate insulation, vapor barrier, top plate and stud framing all in one which makes construction faster, while maintaining durability and increased energy efficiency. This method of construction has a lower carbon footprint than concrete foundations, making it a more environmentally responsible construction method.

This new portion of Grant Road, once completed, will have narrower road widths, on-street parking, street trees and sidewalks on both sides of the street, coupled with a raised intersection at Chance and Grant – creating a much more pedestrian-oriented streetscape designed for multiple modes of transportation, not just cars. Like phase 1, the narrow pavement widths, coupled with the reduced lot sizes, minimal setbacks, and front porch designs help bring the homes closer to the street to help facilitate a safer, walkable, and more socially interactive community. Phase 2 also includes

a wider mix of housing types, including single family, duplex, triplex, four-unit townhomes, and apartments, some of which will be deed restricted low income (<80% AMI) and workforce (=<100% AMI) affordable units. This helps to meet the Devens housing diversity and affordability goals in the Reuse Plan. These homes continue to be highly energy efficient with Home Energy Rating Scale (HERS) scores in the mid to high 40's and 50's – 50-60% more efficient than a traditional home built to base code.

Clear Path for Veterans: Clear Path for Veterans New England recently purchased 84 Antietam (former Egломise building and base hospital) and received approval for a number of building and site modifications to accommodate the new uses and services for veterans. The project was reviewed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the improvements were deemed to have no significant impact on the historic character of the building. The preservation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of this historic structure will preserve a cultural and historic part of former Fort Devens.



New duplex under construction at the intersection of Chance Street and Grant Road - Emerson Green Phase 2 – June 2019



New duplex (foreground) and single family (background) composite foundation walls under construction along Grant Road – June 2019



Clear Path New England - 84 Antietam Street.

249 Barnum Road: The redevelopment of the former Civilian Military Training Camp (CMTC) buildings on

Barnum Road includes the renovation of 3 existing buildings totaling +/- 9,500 sf, and construction of a new +/- 4,665 sf building, including new parking, utilities and associated site improvements. The first of the three buildings has been completely renovated and is occupied by Manilow's Canine Playground/Dog Daycare. As part of the approval for this use, new fencing was placed to help screen the outdoor play area from nearby residences. Plantings still need to be installed to soften the visual impact of the wood fencing.



249 Barnum Road privacy fencing for outdoor dog run. – June 2019.

100 Hospital Road - New England Studios: The studios have been extremely active over the past couple of years as a number of new streaming television series have been filmed in their sound stages as well as in the surrounding region.

Netflix series such as "The Society", Hulu's "Castle Rock" and Apple TV series by Paramount Studios called "Defending Jacob". There have also been a number of feature length films shot here such as Daddy's Home 2, Little Women, Slender Man and Central Intelligence. The DEC has been administering and issuing a large number of off-site filming permits for many of these filming activities. These permits (issued in accordance with the Devens Filming Permit Guidelines) have helped ensure filming activities have the least impact on residents and businesses in Devens, while still allowing the production crews to get the shots they need outside of the studio space in places such as Mirror Lake, former Grant Road Housing, Salerno Circle, Robbins Pond, MacPherson Road and Antietam Street). Filming has also been happening outside of Devens in towns like Harvard, Ayer, Shirley, Groton, Clinton, Lancaster, Acton, Hudson, Concord and Orange, to name a few. With all this activity, the studio sound stages have been completely full and productions have been leasing extra space in other Devens buildings such as 112 Barnum and 78 Barnum Road. All of this activity is bringing significant economic investment and exposure to Massachusetts.



Off-site filming activity at Robbins Pond – July 2019.

RECENTLY PERMITTED PROJECTS (NOT YET UNDER CONSTRUCTION):

McInnis Cement – 35 Saratoga Boulevard: In June of 2018, the DEC approved McInnis Cement's proposed development of a Portland cement (ASTM C150) dry storage and distribution terminal on an existing 9.12 acre parcel of land located at 35 Saratoga Boulevard. The facility will consist of a gated (card access) one-way entry drive off of Barnum Road that would lead to two (2) 90+ foot high storage bins and associated loading/unloading equipment. The facility will be supplied with cement via trucks from McInnis Cement's receiving port in Providence, RI. Trucks will be loaded in Providence, travel to Devens and off-load into the storage bins where it will be re-distributed to customers. The cement is kept dry at all times and is used by



Rendering of McInnis dry cement storage facility.

customers to produce concrete and concrete-related products (off-site). There is no manufacturing or mixing of this material on-site.

Due to the nature of the proposed facility operations (storage, loading and unloading processes), the project was granted a height variance for the cement storage silos from the 75' permitted maximum height, up to 93'.9" (not in Viewshed Overlay District). The Applicant also incorporated a number of design measures to minimize dust, odor, and noise from the facility operations, to ensure compliance with the DEC

Industrial Performance Standards.

Construction has been delayed and the

Applicant will be coming before the DEC to request an extension of their Unified Permit approval and height variance. In the meantime, McInnis is currently operating an interim facility on Devens at 78 Barnum Road.



McInnis Dry cement trailer storage at 78 Barnum Road – June 2019.

33 Lake George Street - Applewood Controls: On September 28, 2018, the DEC issued a Level 2 Unified Permit application for the development of a one story, 15,000 square foot (SF) building off of Lake George Street, just behind the Mount Wachusett Community College building and west of the Nashua River. The site is located on a plateau high above the river and borders the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge property. The site contains a cleared open field area (fill from past Army activities) and is adjacent to a brownfield site (former landfill area remediated by the Army). The northern and western boundaries of the site are heavily forested and drop off steeply to a large wetland system and floodplain associated with the Nashua River. After additional geotechnical investigations revealed unstable material underneath the proposed building footprint, the Applicant determined the site was unsuitable for their anticipated needs. They are currently looking at other potential locations in Devens.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND OTHER COMMUNITY UPDATES:

Devens Special Events: Throughout the spring of 2019, the DEC permitted a number of special events such as the 7th annual MS Muck Fest, a multiple sclerosis fundraising event that includes a 5KM on and off road race course with approximately 20 obstacles along the way that include climbing walls, cargo nets, pools and swings, among others. This event took place on Saturday, May 18th. Around 5,000 people attended over the course of the day. All permitted events were well managed and went off without any problems.



Nashua Wild and Scenic River Designation:

The “Nashua Wild and Scenic Rivers Act” was signed into law by the President on March 12, 2019. Sections of our Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers are now officially designated as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System! This was a decade-long effort of the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA), the Nashua River Wild and Scenic River Study Committee, and eleven Massachusetts & New Hampshire communities. Last spring the eleven communities -- Ayer, Bolton, Dunstable, Groton, Harvard, Lancaster, Pepperell, Shirley, and Townsend in MA, and Brookline and Hollis in NH -- voted affirmatively at their Annual Town Meetings to accept the Committee’s Stewardship Plan and its recommendation to seek designation. Robert Pontbriand, Ayer Town Manager and Chair of the Study Committee’s Outreach Committee commented, “There was tremendous public support evidenced by the Town Meeting votes and the scores of support letters offered by state and

federal agencies, the Governors of MA and NH, sportsmen's groups, conservation organizations, regional planning commissions, chambers of commerce, and businesses."

With over 5 miles of the Nashua River running through the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone, the DEC has been an active participant and supporter of the Nashua River Wild and Scenic River Study Committee for a number of years. On April 28, 2019, the Committee hosted a Wild and Scenic official designation celebration at the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge Bill Ashe Visitor Facility in Devens. Numerous local and state officials attended and offered congratulations to all those involved for this great accomplishment. There is a nice short 5 minute video highlighting the beauty of the Nashua River and the Wild and Scenic River Designation Process:

<http://bit.ly/NashuaWSR> . There is also a full video of the April 28, 2019 celebration on-line at:

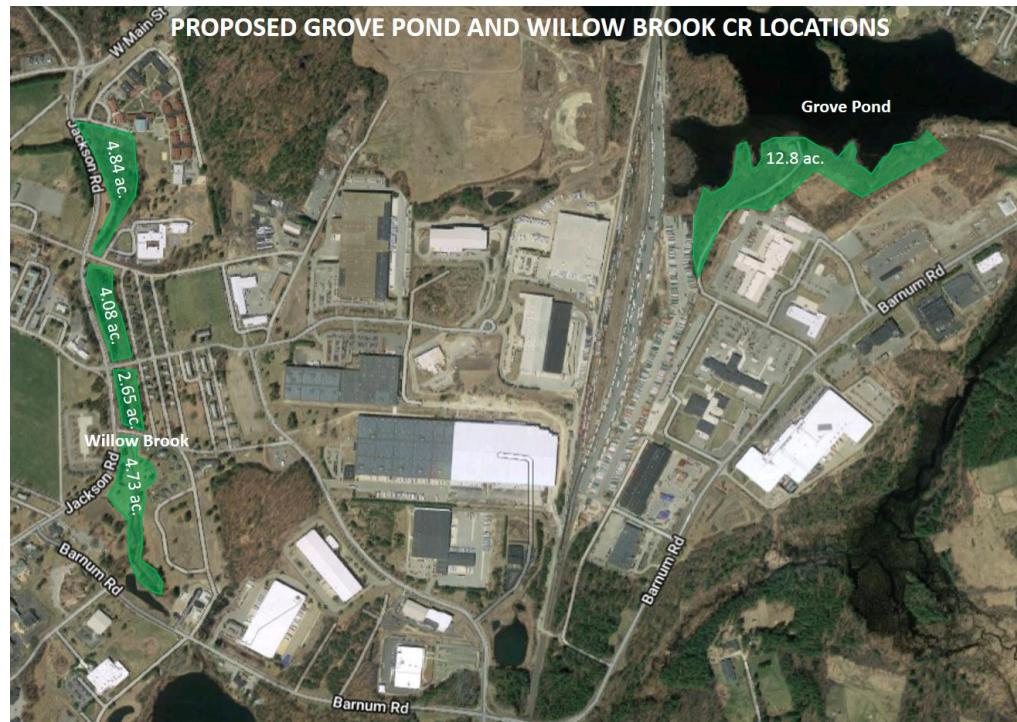
<http://bit.ly/NRWSRCelebration> . The full report and details of the study and committee activities is available at: <https://www.wildandscenicnashuarivers.org/> .

Devens Open Space and Recreation Plan: Work continues on the permanent protection of key parcels of land identified for permanent protection in the Devens Open Space and Recreation Plan. MassDevelopment has recently completed surveys for two of the final remaining parcels to be protected: a 12.8 acre parcel along the shoreline of Grove Pond, and four (4) parcels (separated by roadways) along Willow Brook totaling 16.30 acres:

Both of these areas are identified for protection in the 2008-2013 Devens Open Space and Recreation Plan and they contain a multitude of natural and ecologically sensitive natural resources and are important for water resource protection as well as wildlife habitat/corridors. In May 2019, the DEC, in its capacity as the local Conservation Commission, endorsed the permanent protection of these parcels for their natural resource values. Since then, staff has drafted the Conservation Restrictions and is working with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to finalize them for recording.



Representative Lori Trahan speaking to the audience at the April 28, 2019 Celebration at the Bill Ashe Visitor Facility in Devens.



Enforcement Actions: Monitoring and enforcement of the designated truck route has continued throughout 2019 with MA State Police, Devens Public Works and DEC Staff. Designated truck route reminder notices were sent out to various businesses and violation notices sent to businesses and trucking companies found violating the "No Trucks" signage on Buena Vista Street. Staff has also visited a number of businesses along Saratoga and Independence to ensure they continue to direct truck traffic to and from their facilities to the designated truck route. The number of trucks cutting through the Buena Vista neighborhood has declined but this has raised new concerns about the volume of car traffic coming to and from the businesses through Buena Vista Street. In response, MassDevelopment conducted a traffic study along Buena Vista and found higher than normal volumes of vehicle traffic during certain times of the day. As a result, MassDevelopment is in the process of installing new wayfinding signage and implementing turning restrictions on Buena Vista to further reduce truck and vehicle traffic on the residential portion of Buena Vista Street.



Little Leaf Farms has had a few truck idling complaints from a nearby resident on Walker Road however staff has been unable to confirm/witness any actual violations of the Massachusetts Anti-idling law. The state police periodically patrol the area and have been assisting with policing and enforcement. The owner has been actively addressing these complaints by posting signage, installing auxiliary power units at the loading docks and continually informing all drivers of the "no idling" law.

Board of Health Updates: Water use restrictions went into effect May 1, 2019 as stream levels continue to remain low due to lack of precipitation. Working with MassDevelopment, the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health, and the State Department of Public Health, the DEC continues to publish health alerts to raise awareness and provide the general public with tips and resources for protecting themselves and their loved ones from tick and mosquito-bourne illnesses and other public health threats. The DEC also continues to partner with the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health to provide access to local health events and clinics for all Devens residents and employees of Devens businesses.

In May, after a fire, a residential hoarding case resurfaced and forced the DEC to condemn an existing residential home in Devens. Due to numerous public health code violations, the home was boarded up. The house has been cleared out of all material and is currently being evaluated for water damage from the fire (sprinkler system). The owner must rectify all health code violations before the condemnation order can be lifted.

MassDevelopment continues to work on a permanent solution to the health advisory alert regarding Devens drinking water and PFAS and PFOA contaminants of concern. Treatment facilities are under construction at MacPherson and Shebokin Well sites (see “Previously Permitted Projects Under Construction” section of this report) and Devens has been providing bottled water to affected residents and vulnerable populations. Devens Utilities has hosted public informational sessions and notified all customers within Devens by mail and has posted this information, along with fact sheets and additional details on-line at: <http://www.devensec.com/news.html> (scroll down to “Devens Public Drinking Water Supply Information Concerning PFAS — April 2019” bullet).

Website Updates: The DEC continues to update its website with meeting and public hearing notices, staff reports, important community news and events information, and other general information on living, working and developing in Devens <http://www.devensec.com/news.html>.

Recent news and events postings include information the Fort Devens Community Involvement Plan update by the Army and details on the temporary closure of the Jackson Road bridge over the Nashua River. The Devens Sustainability page continues to highlight many of the accomplishments of the DEC and its partners: <http://www.devensec.com/sustain.html>.

Devens sustainable redevelopment efforts were recently featured in an article in Business In Focus Magazine: <http://bit.ly/DevensBIFarticle>



Ranch house in Devens boarded up by order of DEC and Nashoba Associated Boards of Health – June 2019

Holistic REDEVELOPMENT IN New England

Written by Samita Sarkar

This university-recognized U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) standard means Devens will meet the modern requirements under LEED for Communities version 4.1. Devens has been working to become an environmental leader since it became a state park in 1996, when Fort Devens was closed and turned over to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for redevelopment.

One unique feature that makes this historic, self-contained community of engaged residents and thriving small-businesses so desirable is its eco-industrial park. The fully serviced industrial park, accessible via public transportation, provides a space for businesses to conduct by-product exchanges and improve efficiency. These exchanges are facilitated by the Devens Eco Efficiency Center, a one-of-a-kind nonprofit that offers educational forums, technical assistance, networking venues, and partnership opportunities to keep the community's businesses running smoothly.

For instance, while a local aircraft company was searching its supply chain for more cost-effective parts, a machine tool company, Worcester Machine Inc., was looking for a new site in packaging. The Eco-Efficiency Center bought two 96-gallon totes that allowed for the companies to arrange swaps. Nothing enters the landfill and both companies are now saving money at a win-win.

Business in Focus Magazine article featuring Devens sustainable redevelopment - June 2019

DEC Facebook Page: The DEC

continues to keep the public informed through its own Facebook page. This page was launched to supplement the DEC website and provide an additional media outlet to help keep residents, businesses and interested parties up to date on projects, meeting announcements and notices from the DEC. Recent posts include Jackson Road Bridge

detours, the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center Great Exchange events, and shuttle schedule updates. Be sure to follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/devensec/>

Biometrics of Design Phase 2: In 2017, the DEC partnered with Tufts University Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning on an innovative research project: "Seeing the 'Unseen' in Devens: A Biometric Pilot-Study to Better Understand the 'Unconscious' Human Experience at Devens, Massachusetts". This study looked at how people unconsciously respond to different elements of the built environment, using one of the newest residential developments in Devens as a case study. Phase 1 of the study found that the DEC's Innovative Development Regulations, combined with the architectural styles and layout of the homes and streetscape in the Grant Road housing project, contribute to a more engaging development pattern that is visually more appealing and interesting to people.

Phase 2 of this study began in 2019 and involves a review and analysis of different types of residential and commercial development in Devens and Ayer to help us evaluate the walkability of neighborhoods and understand why some developments are visually more appealing and feel safer and more "comfortable" than others. Peter Lowitt presented the preliminary findings of this study at the Ux + Design/2019 Conference at Tufts University in April, 2019. This was the 1st International Conference on Urban Experience and Design – an emerging field in the planning and architecture community.

These studies are helping us better understand what the important design elements are to include when designing and developing communities for people first, not cars. The Phase 1 report is available on-line at: <http://bit.ly/DevenseyetrackingP1> and the phase 2 report is expected to be completed shortly and the results will be presented at the July 2019 DEC meeting.

First Mile/Last Mile Transportation Report: DEC Director Peter Lowitt was featured in a WGBH news radio spot on April 29, 2019 speaking about the Devens Shuttle service and how it successfully connects the first/last mile for commuters coming to and from Devens on the MBTA Fitchburg Line. The Devens shuttle connects Devens businesses, residents and organizations with Ayer and Shirley, as well as Fitchburg and Leominster. The interview talks about how this type of service helps support economic development by attracting employees from a wider region without placing additional strain on our busy road networks. The full piece can be viewed at: <http://bit.ly/DevensShuttlepiece>

Trends in Green Roof Policy Presentation: DEC Director Peter Lowitt also led a panel discussion on Green Roof Policies at the 2019 American Planning Association National Planning Conference in San Francisco, CA on April 14, 2019. This session featured the City of San Francisco's adoption of a green roof policy requiring the deployment of solar and green roofs on all projects above a certain size, as well as Portland, Oregon and Denver's new green roof policies. Peter spoke about Devens Green Roof Policy and Guidelines and how they are serving as a model for low-impact development.



Ann Sussman and Peter Lowitt presenting *Seeing the "Unseen" in Devens, MA – A Biometric Study to Understand the 'Unconscious' Human Experience of a New Development at the Ux + Design Conference at Tufts University - April 2019*

Spanish Influenza Memorial Dedication: On May 17, 2019 the Fort Devens Museum and the Devens Enterprise Commission held a ceremony at the Rogers Field Memorial Park to unveil a memorial to commemorate the influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 in remembrance of the men and women who died in Devens and those who cared for them during that time. During the fall of 1918, almost half of the approximately 35,000 soldiers at Camp Devens were stricken with influenza, resulting in more than 800 deaths. Dr. Sandra Smole, Director of the MA State Public Health Laboratory Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences spoke at the event, and representatives from Fort Devens Museum, Mass Development and the Devens Enterprise Commission offered insight into the pandemic and the research that went into making this memorial project a reality.



Spanish Influenza Memorial Dedication (from left to right: Dr. Sandra Smole, Dr. Marcia Synott, Jessica Strunkin, Col. Slaughter, and David King - May 2019)

Ayer Rail Trail and Commuter rail parking garage groundbreaking: an official groundbreaking ceremony was held on May 24, 2019 for the \$5,000,000 2-story parking garage that has begun construction in downtown Ayer just off of Groton Street. This 180 space, two-level parking garage will be linked to downtown Ayer and the Ayer MBTA commuter rail station via the Nashua River Rail Trail and the Devens Shuttle. This project has been in the works for almost 20 years and many local and state officials attended this groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate this accomplishment (including our own DEC Commissioner Melissa Fetterhoff!). The garage, when completed, will provide much needed parking for commuters as well as free parking for trail users.



Local and State Representatives and officials at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Ayer Commuter Rail parking garage - May 2019

DEC SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES:

Devens STAR Community Rating makes national headlines: Devens was featured in an article in the March 2019 edition of PLANNING magazine that highlighted STAR's merger with the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) LEED for Cities and Communities rating system. After this merger, the USGBC recognized Devens as a LEED Certified Community. LEED for Cities and Communities is an internationally recognized urban sustainability rating systems that helps advance healthy, green, and economically strong cities and communities. STAR and LEED for Cities and Communities merged in November 2018. Devens is one of the 75 STAR certified cities and communities that have now transferred into the family of LEED for Cities and Communities. A press release went out in November 2018 and featured this quote from DEC Chairman William Marshall: *"In our efforts to transform the former Fort Devens, the Devens Enterprise Commission and our state partner, MassDevelopment, have worked hard to create a national model for successful, sustainable redevelopment of a former military base – and this third party certification brings great credit to our work."* Devens continues to lead by example in Massachusetts by continuing to implement, monitor, track and prioritize actions that will further the sustainable redevelopment goals of the Devens Reuse Plan and make Devens an even better place to live, work, learn and play. The U.S. Green Building Council President & CEO Mahesh Ramanujam added: *"Devens is to be congratulated for its commitment to ensuring a place where people, nature and businesses can all thrive."* Devens is now one of the first communities in Massachusetts to achieve LEED for Cities and Communities designation.



Devens, Massachusetts, which received its STAR community rating in December 2017, is already signed up to be a beta city for the new LEED for Cities and Communities program.

LEED-STAR Launch Sustainability Beta

CITIES ACROSS THE WORLD now have a new community-wide framework that applies Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards to future development. Last June, STAR Communities—a well-known environmental building assessment rating system—merged with the U.S. Green Building Council to develop a new program that aims to help cities assess sustainability on a broad scale by adding standards for social justice, emissions reductions, transportation infrastructure, and more. That new program, LEED for Cities and Communities, is now open for beta registration.

Beyond buildings

Developed by the USGBC, LEED has been the gold standard in sustainable building since its launch in 2000. With the help of STAR Communities, USGBC will expand LEED beyond buildings into a rating system that assesses large-scale sustainability policies' effectiveness in cutting emissions and improving residents' lives.

"LEED was designed to be more about performance and STAR for planning. Our new system can include both," Roger Platt, senior vice president for the USGBC.

The program functions as a scorecard for a city's overall performance in every aspect of sustainability. Eight categories—including transportation, natural resource management, energy, and water

efficiency—are scored, for an overall total of 110 "points."

The scorecard also includes a quality-of-life component that will assess emergency response, environmental justice, equitable development, poverty alleviation, and other social justice concerns. When STAR proposed partnering, LEED was thrilled, Platt says—LEED staff learned a great deal from the STAR rating system that has been integrated into the new program, including STAR's social justice assessment, which helps get past surface-level statistics like college graduation rates that can disguise inequality.

Holding cities accountable

The new program will include elements

of accountability to ensure stakeholders are taking the actions they promise. Those plans could include transportation infrastructure, conservation, or poverty alleviation (LEED's program Arc currently serves as an accountability tool and will be integrated into the new program).

Community-level certification will also allow for types of regenerative and climate-adaptive design that individual building certification cannot. It is much more effective for cities to plan for eventualities like sea-level rise than individual developers, for example.

Neil Angus, AICP, CEP, an environmental planner in Devens, Massachusetts, thinks the merger represents great opportunities for sustainable design. Registering to be assessed under the new rating system gives cities a chance to be independently verified and receive feedback that can improve their climate and sustainability initiatives.

"You can't manage what you don't measure," Angus says.

Devens, a former military base that was declared a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency superfund site in the early 1990s, was recently STAR certified. Sustainability is a key goal for community leaders, and the STAR rating helped them assess their plans. Devens is already set to be a beta city for the rating system, Angus says.

"The STAR integration into LEED incorporates the best elements of the STAR Certification program and will allow the new rating system to reach out to a broader audience," he says.

Because the program is international, it will raise the profile of communities prioritizing environmental protection and climate adaptation and connect leaders in sustainability worldwide. The program will serve as a universal language for environmental assessment that can be applied even to vastly different cities. ■

—Casey O'Brien
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Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Climate Action Plan: Building off the successes of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program and Devens 4-STAR and LEED Community Sustainability Rating, the DEC, in partnership with MassDevelopment conducted a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory for Devens. Results of the inventory are currently being finalized and will be presented to the Commission, MassDevelopment and the general public shortly. This GHG study will set the baseline for development of a climate action and resiliency plan for which Devens has received a \$142,000 action grant from the State Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs through its' MVP program. This climate action and resiliency plan will provide a roadmap to achieving further reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the Devens region. This plan is being developed to serve as a model for the region and will include resources that other communities can use to reduce their emissions and address climate change, while improving overall air quality and the health and safety of their populations at the same time.

Developing a Climate Action Plan is directly in line with the Devens Reuse Plan sustainability goals but this will also build on our STAR certification and recent Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Planning work. Implementing this process would also benefit existing and future businesses in Devens by providing them with additional data to help businesses achieve their own corporate sustainability objectives. Completing an inventory and developing a reduction plan will also open Devens up to many increased opportunities for grant funding for capital improvements and ongoing operations.