

BROX Property Community Land Master Plan: 2014 Update and Recommendations

Report to the Milford Planning Board by the BROX Community Land Master Plan Committee

Accepted by the Planning Board: August 19, 2014

I. INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE and CHARGE

In 2013 the Milford Planning Board undertook the stated goal in the Milford Master Plan to ‘reevaluate the 2005 BROX Community Lands Master Plan to reflect projected changes in community facility needs’ (Chapter 3, Community Facilities, 2007). The 2005 Plan, prepared by Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP, laid out areas within the “community lands” portion (Tax Map 38/Lots 17 and 58) of the Town-owned BROX Property to accommodate potential future suitable locations for Town and School facilities in order to proactively guide long-range development. Although no development has occurred on the properties since that time there will continue to be Town needs for future facility locations. Over the past two years, inquiries into the near-term use of the property, specifically from recreation and conservation interests, has further necessitated an effort to review the 2005 plan relative to current Town circumstances and anticipated future needs.

The Planning Board appointed a seven-member ad-hoc committee to review the 2005 Study in the Fall of 2013. The Committee was given the following charge:

Using the 2005 BROX Property Community Land Master Plan Study as a foundation, provide updated recommendations to the Planning Board on the best use of the BROX “community lands” (Tax Map 38/Lots 17 and 58) to meet the anticipated needs for municipal, school and recreation facilities and incorporating priority conservation actions through the year 2035. The recommendations shall be provided to the Planning Board no later than January 31, 2014.

II. BACKGROUND ON THE BROX “COMMUNITY LANDS”

BROX Industries approached the Board of Selectmen in 1994 to see if there was interest in Town acquisition of approximately 320 acres of undeveloped property the company owned in west Milford. The site consisted of several parcels located adjacent to both sides of the NH Route 101 Bypass, east of Whitten Road, and north of Great Brook to the south. After several years of review and analysis on its value to the Town by a voter-established BROX Commission, and input from boards, commissions, and the public, the Town authorized purchase of 270 acres in March 2000 for \$1.4 million. 50 acres had previously been purchased by the Milford School District in 1999 for the site of Heron Pond Elementary School.

At the time of purchase approximately 123 acres of the property were zoned Industrial (subsequently rezoned Integrated Commercial-Industrial 2, “ICI-2”, in 2007). Two parcels (Map 38/Lots 17 and 58) make up the “community lands” and consist of 146.87 acres. These parcels are zoned Residence “R” and lie within the Commerce and Community overlay district. The Industrial/ICI-2 parcels have since been designated to be sold for

property tax generating development, while the “community lands” have since been set aside for municipal, recreational, educational, and conservation uses.

The Planning Board adopted a report prepared by the Planning Department in October 2000 which provided an assessment of land area projections for future community uses, inclusive of schools, recreation, emergency services, cemeteries, and conservation. An ad-hoc committee representing the above stakeholder groups further refined land area needs for the community lands, and upon further direction from the Board of Selectmen the committee sought Town authorization for the 2005 Study. This Study included an approximate delineation of wetlands from available topography and mapping, a conceptual master plan, an analysis of gravel resources and estimated value, and a preliminary estimate of construction costs for a road connection and utilities. The 2005 Study was distributed for review by the Planning Board and Community Facilities Committee and additional public input. In October 2005 this Study was accepted as the conceptual master plan for development by the Board of Selectmen.

The BROX community lands are currently undeveloped and consist of significant wetlands, extensive wooded areas, and large open unreclaimed area created from BROX Industries earth removal activity during the 1970s through 1990s. Based on the 2005 Study there are approximately 88 buildable acres located in the BROX community lands. Buildable area was calculated as:

$$\text{BUILDABLE AREA} = (\text{TOTAL AREA}) - (\text{AREA OF WETLANDS} + \text{AREA IN SETBACKS} + \text{SIDE SLOPES})$$

III. 2014 UPDATE OF 2005 PLAN

The seven member ad-hoc committee appointed by the Planning Board to update the 2005 Plan consisted of the following representatives: Planning Board: Tom Sloan; Conservation Commission: Audrey Fraizer; Recreation Commission: Tim Finan; MCAA Fields Committee: Dan Ayotte and Justin Wisbey; Department of Public Works: Rick Riendeau; and citizen-at-large: Jerry Guthrie. Town staff support was provided by Bill Parker, Community Development Director and Jodie Levandowski, Town Planner/GIS Coordinator. The Cemetery Trustees and the Milford School Board were invited to send a representative to sit on the Committee and instead chose to submit input.

The Committee utilized the 2005 BROX Community Land Master Plan Study, its associated conceptual plan, and prior studies and reports as baseline information. Population growth projections were provided by the Community Development Office and the Committee utilized for planning purposes a ‘moderate’ growth rate for the Town, with a projected 2035 population of approximately 17,700 (2013 population estimated at 15,129). The Committee solicited input from the following Town departments and organizations on what each entity anticipated for land needs at the BROX Property for the future planning period of 2015-2035: Fire Department, Ambulance Service, Public Works Department, Recreation Department, MCAA Fields Committee, the Cemetery Trustees, the Milford School Board, and the Conservation Commission. The base mapping utilized by the Committee consisted of the 2005 conceptual master plan, 2013 Town of Milford aerial orthoimagery; GIS topography; and a current (July 2013) certified wetland delineation conducted by Fieldstone Land Consultants, which was mapped on the 2005 conceptual master plan.

Facility land requirements and recommendations as submitted by potential users of the community land for the 2014 update are as follows:

Emergency Services:	2 acres located on the southerly side of existing Heron Pond Road, near the intersection with Whitten Road. Site would allow for a future west end substation for the Fire Department, consisting of a 2-3 bay fire station with a full training facility. Site would allow for colocation of an ambulance if determined necessary. The facility is listed in the 2014-2019 Capital Improvements Plan for the year 2022.
Public Works:	4 acres located adjacent to the existing Heron Pond Road and adjacent to future west end substation. The facility is anticipated to be needed in the year 2021/2022.
Recreation Fields/Facilities:	25 acres located southerly of the proposed extension of Heron Pond Road for recreation playing fields for soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, baseball, and softball; with associated parking and structures for maintenance, concessions, storage, and restrooms. Recreation fields are an immediate need based upon findings documented in the 2013 MCAA Needs Analysis, MCAA BROX Property Project.
Cemeteries:	16-17 acres located in eastern portion of community land identified on the 2005 Plan. Current cemetery capacity in Town should be sufficient for the next twenty-year timeframe. Additional cemetery space may be needed in 2035.
Schools:	40 acres located southerly of proposed Heron Pond Road extension. Depending upon future school construction needs and based on State of New Hampshire Department of Education minimum school site requirements, an elementary school with a capacity of 600 students requires 11 acres; a middle school with a 1000 student capacity requires 20 acres; and a high school with a 1400 student capacity requires 29 acres.
Conservation:	The Conservation Commission requested the minimum calculation for open space, as required in the Town's zoning and development regulations, be designated upon initial development, including planned recreation uses. Priority conservation areas include what is necessary for protection of the significant wetlands, inclusive of the 'fen' area, vernal pools, and buffers. Additionally, existing trails should be incorporated in future development areas where feasible and trail connections and pedestrian linkages should be created both internal to the properties and outside property boundaries.
Earth Materials and Natural Resources:	As identified in the 2005 Study, there are significant earth material and natural resources (timber) contained within the BROX community lands that can provide the Town revenue. Additional engineering should be undertaken after the completion of a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) to

develop a feasible earth material removal plan that anticipates reclamation consistent with future uses and conservation. Timber management plans should also be undertaken to insure good forestry best management practices.

BROX Community Land Needs: 2014 Update

<u>Facility/Use</u>	<u>Buildable Area Needed</u>	<u>Year Needed</u>	<u>Location Considerations</u>
Emergency Services/ Fire Substation/Training Facility	2-3 acres	2022	For best access, south side of existing Heron Pond Road, close to intersection with Whitten Road
Public Works Facility	4 acres	2021-2022	Preferred location is co-located with Emergency Services
Recreation Field Complex <u>Phase I-A - temporary</u>	4-5 acres	2015	South side of existing Heron Pond Road, to be utilized until such time as Emergency Services and/or Public Works facility is needed
<u>Phase I and future phases</u>	25 acres	2018	Southerly side of Heron Pond Road extended alignment; planned phased development easterly along Heron Pond Road; potential joint use with possible future school facilities
Cemeteries	16 acres	2035	Location that minimizes traffic impacts; additional land needs not foreseen for 20 years based on current cemetery capacity
Schools	40 acres	2035	Good multi-directional access; large developable area to accommodate potential facility/facilities and minimum site requirements
Conservation/Open Space	Based on zoning	Ongoing	Where necessary to minimize development impacts and protect environmental priorities; trail connections and open space corridors are high priority
Earth Material Operations	Based on phasing	2015	Based on further geotechnical and engineering review; reclamation plans must be designed with future facility location/development and Heron Road alignment

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2014 UPDATE

After a review of all available materials, knowledge and discussion generated within the Committee, and input from the community use groups the BROX Community Land Master Plan Update Committee has reconfirmed or determined:

- The BROX “Community Lands” contain suitable buildable and available land to meet the needs for emergency service, public works, recreation, cemetery, school, and conservation needs for the next 20 – 25 years.
- Facility land area needs have not significantly changed over the past ten years on which the 2005 Plan was formulated.
- There continues to be a demonstrated shortage of recreation field space in Town. Of all community needs appropriate for development within the BROX community lands, addressing this shortage is most immediate and should begin in 2015.
- A new location for a Public Works facility was identified for the 2014 Plan that was not included in the 2005 Plan.
- There are significant wetland areas and vernal pools that should continue to be protected from the impacts of future development and should be dedicated as conservation land/permanent open space immediately (2015).
- The 2013 wetlands delineation indicates that Tax Map 38/Lot 17 is unbuildable due to the apparent extent of wetlands and should be dedicated as conservation land/permanent open space immediately (2015).
- The delineated wetland areas identified in by Fieldstone Land Consultants in 2013 should be reevaluated prior to any site development.
- The 2005 Study remains a solid foundation to utilize for future detailed engineering and site design for development.
- The 2005 Study includes a Geotechnical Engineering Report/Soil Mining Feasibility Study for the property that remains a solid foundation for Town initiatives to harvest and sell a significant amount of earth materials.
- There is potential for joint use of school and recreation facilities.
- Given that the planning horizon for this area is 20 plus years, conditions, priorities, and locations for community facilities may change over time.

Recommendations for the development of the BROX Community Lands are:

Site development should follow a phased approach that follows these steps:

A. Phasing of recreation fields

1. Phase 1A – 2014/2015
 - a. Using Town of Milford resources with cooperation from invested stakeholders, build recreation field space along the southerly side of the existing stretch of Heron Pond Road within the next two years to help alleviate documented shortage of recreational field space in Town.

- b. Acknowledgement that these fields may be temporary in nature as this location is designated for a future emergency services/fire department substation.
- 2. Phase 1 – 2014/2018
 - a. Coordinate with the Board of Selectmen and Town departments to develop an earth material removal and associated reclamation plan to incorporate design and engineering for the first phases of recreational field development and extension of Heron Pond Road easterly according to the 2014 conceptual plan. This should be completed by end of 2015 to allow for next phase of field development scheduled for the year 2018 in the 2014-2019 Capital Improvements Plan.
 - b. Form a partnership between the Town and the MCAA/MCAA Fields Needs Committee to obtain funding for a design, engineering, and construction costs to implement the Phase 1 of recreational field development in the area as shown on the 2014 conceptual plan.
- 3. Future Phases – 2018 to 2035
 - a. Develop a phasing and implementation plan for ongoing development of recreational fields incorporating estimated costs and timeframe for construction.
 - b. Locate future field development south of the Heron Pond Road extension for likelihood of joint use with any potential school facility.
 - c. Identify and incorporate those capital projects associated with recreation field development that have a cost of \$75,000 or more into the annual Capital Improvements Plan process.

B. Conservation and Open Space Planning

- 1. Open space for permanent protection should be identified and designated in the northerly area of the community lands adjacent to the significant Heron Pond wetland complex at the time any development or alteration of terrain begins.
- 2. A Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) that would identify, describe, and compile data on the natural resources of the BROX community lands should be undertaken by the Milford Conservation Commission prior to any site development.
- 3. Development of open space areas should occur under the direction of the Conservation Commission and in accordance with NHRSA 36-A and Section 6.04.0 of the Zoning Ordinance (Open Space and Conservation District).
- 4. Additional open space, trail connections, and bicycle and pedestrian connections should be integrated into future facility site development.

C. Extension of Heron Pond Road

1. Design the extension of Heron Pond Road to Town of Milford road standards and specifications to provide a street connection to developable parcels to the north, as well as allowing for a practical street connection to developable parcels to the east.
2. Adjust the proposed alignment of Heron Pond Road northerly and maintain the area north of the roadway as open space to create a sizable buffer zone between the wetlands and facility development south of the roadway.
3. Incorporate within the Heron Pond Road engineering design the extension of a six-foot detached sidewalk/bike path as currently exists on the built portion of Heron Pond Road.

D. Considerations of Future Development of Land to the North and East of the BROX Community Land

1. If future private development interests on abutting parcels approach the Town for use of BROX community land for uses other than those designated in the 2014 Update, consider these interests only if there is a reasonable and comparable area/plan to replace designated municipal or school land areas.
2. Future development of the BROX Community Lands and abutting parcels is subject to applicable Commerce and Community District overlay zoning requirements.
3. Undertake a review of the 2014 BROX Community Lands Update Study every five years to evaluate its timeliness and consistency with changing Town conditions.

V. EXHIBITS

- A. 2014 BROX Community Land Conceptual Master Plan
- B. Schematic Future Development Plan

VI. LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. *Report and Recommendations on Providing and Preserving Land for Future Community Needs*; Town of Milford Planning Board and Department of Planning and Community Development; October 17, 2000
2. *BROX Property Community Land Master Plan Study, Milford, New Hampshire*; prepared by Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP; February 17, 2005
3. *Geotechnical Engineering Report; Soil Mining Feasibility Study for Milford, New Hampshire*; prepared by Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP; October 8, 2004

4. *Needs Analysis, MCAA BROX Property Project*; Milford Community Athletic Association; 2013
5. *Milford Master Plan, Chapter 3 – Community Facilities*; 2007
6. *Wetland Classification Report, BROX Community Lands, Map 38, Lots 17 & 58, Heron Pond Road, Milford, NH 03055*; prepared by Fieldstone Land Consultants, PLLC; June 9, 2013
7. *Information and Materials About Wetland Complex, Habitat and Wildlife, at the BROX Property for Use in Planning for Conservation*; BROX Environmental Citizens; December 2, 2013
8. Various BROX property-related file documents from the Office of Community Development, Milford, NH

EXHIBIT B
Schematic Future Development Plan



LEGEND

SYMBOL	ITEM
	Edge of Wetlands
	Wetland Buffer Setback
	Property Line
	Proposed Spot Elevation
	Proposed Building
	Proposed Parking
	Proposed Tennis Court
	Proposed Basketball Court
	Proposed Bleachers
	Shrubs / Trees / Woods

EXHIBIT 2
SCHEMATIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Scale: 1" = 200'	CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN / LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN	
Date: 1/12/2014	BROX COMMUNITY PROPERTY	L - 1
File: 2022	PREPARED BY :	
Drawn by: J G	BROX COMMITTEE	
Rev.	MILFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE	Drawg # 1
	Bill Parker Community Development Director 1 Union Square, Milford, NH 03055 (603)249-0620	