



**Medfield State Hospital
Strategic Reuse Master Plan
Town of Medfield, MA**

2018

Medfield State Hospital Master Plan Committee

I Executive Summary

Medfield State Hospital is located in the northwest corner of Medfield along the town line bordering Dover. The hospital grounds, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, are on top of a hill overlooking the Charles River and the surrounding countryside. To the west is state land currently operated by the Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance (DCAMM) with a lookout point and trails winding through the trees to the river. It is scenic. One senses when looking across the trees and the vista that one may be enjoying the same sights viewed a century earlier.

Today, one finds area residents taking hikes, enjoying the vast open spaces, walking with their dogs amidst the trees and the red brick nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings, along with the occasional rider on horse sauntering through the campus. The buildings are closed and boarded waiting for new life.

The MSH Strategic Reuse Master Plan sets forth the realistic vision of what Medfield residents desire and prefer. It includes designation of seventy-six acres for open space inclusive of agriculture, reuse of Lee Chapel in the center of the campus as a cultural center, possible development of the area south of Hospital Road for a publicly-owned and operated parks and recreation facility, historic rehabilitation of twenty-eight buildings and selective in-fill new construction to create a mixed-use development with a

variety of housing types, including senior housing with continuing care and affordable housing for persons of all ages, along with commercial spaces for restaurants, small businesses, offices, services and an inn with meeting and gathering spaces.

The MSH reuse plan calls for redevelopment and new construction spanning 661,000 square feet of building space amongst forty-four existing and new buildings north of Hospital Road. Twenty-eight buildings are slated for historic rehabilitation and reuse using historic tax credits. Sixteen new buildings would be erected, including cottage-style homes in the Arboretum area, a new nursing and memory care facility, and two new market rate residential condominium buildings, as well as a possible public parks and recreation facility south of Hospital Road. The required private investment to implement the plan will be significant.

This Strategic Reuse Master Plan for Medfield State Hospital is the outcome of four years of study, extensive community outreach, discussion and consensus building by the Medfield State Hospital Master Planning Committee (MSHMPC) and the MSHMPC Resource Committee. MSHMPC conducted three different surveys in 2015 with an average of 945 responses per survey on residents' desires and fears, as well as questions on land use, housing, open space, arts and commercial development.

MSHMPC hosted numerous informational meetings and workshops; a web site, <https://www.town.medfield.net/556/Medfield-State-Hospital>; a booth at Discover Medfield Day in 2015, 2016 and 2017; a Facebook page with over 700 followers with some posts peaking over 1000; regular cable TV series feature – Our Town, Our Land, Our Future – on MSH with ten different broadcasts, also available on YouTube, and weekly newsletters which reached thousands of residents and interested parties. MSHMPC’s social media outreach includes over 300 followers on Twitter and 115 on Instagram. The Catalyst Sub-committee conducted over 30 meetings with developers, companies and organizations to gain insights on innovative ideas and test assumptions being made in the plan. In February 2017, MSHMPC vetted four concepts at an Open House that drew over 400 persons to the high school and solicited feedback with an in-person and online survey on the concepts.

Drawing on the feedback from the Open House, two alternative scenarios were developed and discussed at a May 2017 Community Workshop which drew nearly 300 people. The extensive community engagement process has informed the development of the preferred vision and plan for the future redevelopment of MSH.

The preferred plan takes a balanced approach. It responds to the desires of town residents; to the development parameters established in agreements with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the MA Division of Agricultural Resources and the Disposition Agreement entered into with the Commonwealth as part of the MSH purchase; and to the Board of Selectmen’s charge for a comprehensive and coordinated vision for the sustainable development and reuse of the state hospital grounds. Shortly after Town Meeting in 2014 approved the purchase of 128 acres



Figure I-1. The Medfield State Hospital campus, aerial view looking north.

from the Commonwealth, the Selectmen appointed MSHMPC and the Resource Committee. Medfield's priorities for reuses of MSH are to:

1. **Maintain and enhance the character and values of the Town of Medfield and its residents**, including the site's scenic and natural features, spaces for passive and active recreation, and the site's cultural, historic, agricultural and architectural significance.
2. **Address Town housing needs**, which may include smaller-footprint housing that is affordable for Medfield residents who are downsizing and would like to stay in the area, or any housing that brings more diversity into Medfield's housing stock in alignment with the Town's Housing Production Plan.
3. **Achieve reasonable economic and financial impacts on Medfield residents and Town services**, assuring that the master plan is in the Town's economic best interests.

Control of the future use of this prime site was a driving factor in Town Meeting's decision to purchase MSH. Medfield had previously engaged in various planning processes with the state, rejecting the notion of highest and best use development with scores of new houses. Medfield chose instead to forge its own path to a redevelopment plan with a lower density of housing that balances school costs with needed real estate tax revenues as well as lower density of buildings to protect the vistas and views around MSH, the open space and agricultural lands that embody the bucolic character of Medfield.

The preferred reuse plan provides for 294 to 334 housing units, with twenty-five percent affordable housing units of all types – senior housing, millennial housing, in-fill cottages, apartments in historic properties, and new construction condominiums. The use of historic and low-income housing tax credits are a critical tool and source of private investment for MSH redevelopment.

The financial viability of the preferred plan has been scrutinized from multiple perspectives. Cost estimates for historic rehabilitation and new construction of buildings were prepared by a professional cost estimating firm, Project Management & Cost. Order of magnitude cost estimates for infrastructure were prepared by professional engineers, Pare Corporation, and compared with previous estimates by VHB and the Commonwealth's engineers, and with comparable utility and road improvement projects. MSHMPC spoke with private developers through its Catalyst meetings. Market analyses were commissioned from Jones Lang LaSalle and RKG Associates and supplemented by McCabe Enterprises.

MSHMPC established three tests for financial viability of the preferred plan. The plan needs to work for the private sector development partner, for the Town, and for the individual taxpayer. To further examine and test the financial viability of the plan, MSHMPC applied a Monte Carlo analysis, a probability simulation model, which assesses the likelihood or risk and uncertainty of multiple variables simultaneously. The results indicated that the Town realizes a positive net present value in nearly all trials. Once the plan is fully implemented, the Town could realize a net positive annual cash flow from real estate taxes upwards of \$1 million after school and municipal operation costs and expenses.

The preferred plan works for the Town. The preferred plan works for the Medfield taxpayer. The preferred plan can work for a private developer, but success could be enhanced with additional housing units. MSHMPC believes that with the right private sector partner who has experience with large-scale redevelopment and historic preservation, the MSH strategic reuse plan is viable. The plan is Medfield's vision for the sustainable reuse of MSH.

To achieve the vision, the focus needs to be on both placemaking and redevelopment. Placemaking activities help assure continued public access, and feature the establishment of community gardens, places for recreation, exercise, hiking, walking, and exploration, community concert series and festivals that welcome and involve all residents of Medfield to MSH grounds. Placemaking helps assure MSH is a unique special place in Medfield and is a necessary complement to building improvements.

The preferred reuse plan is balanced and features a mix of housing types, commercial spaces, restaurants, small business offices and services, with a cultural center at Lee Chapel, a possible parks and recreation center adjacent to McCarthy Park south of Hospital Road, retention of Sledding Hill for winter sports, and the inclusion of agriculture.

To actualize the vision and make it into a reality, the Town will need to seek private development partner(s) to implement the plan. A land leasing strategy has been developed which provides the Town future protection as to reuse of the site, along with the desired measure of control and a continuing source of revenue from MSH. Redevelopment of MSH will be a major project for Medfield and will require the Town to retain additional expertise such as a Development Manager and specialized legal assistance for the next several years to successfully launch the plan's implementation.

Implementation of the Strategic Reuse Master Plan is expected to occur over many years. MSH redevelopment will likely be phased incrementally as undertaken by the Town or its private

sector partner. Often times, the private sector establishes a phasing plan that is responsive to the needs of its public partner – the Town, market demands, and favorable financing conditions. Phasing plans are often modified over the course of a redevelopment project as these factors change with time. The Town could opt to phase the disposition process, selecting various developers for different components of the plan, or it could work with a single development partner to outline an optimal phasing strategy. Several phasing strategies have been contemplated and analyzed as part of the development of the master plan. The details are included in the final three sections of the Master Plan.

MSHMPC recommends the adoption of design guidelines to encourage appropriate new construction and redevelopment and foresees adoption of new zoning to support redevelopment. The proposed zoning has been designed strategically to offer the right amount of flexibility and control so the Town can be responsive to the market without sacrificing the overall vision of the plan. The use of innovative financing tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), District Improvement Financing (DIF) and historic tax credits can help Medfield achieve the desired lower-density redevelopment and preservation of the landscape and open spaces at MSH.

About this Report

In the following pages, the reader will find the history and evolution of Medfield State Hospital and the review of existing conditions and agreements governing MSH reuse and redevelopment. The planning process and public engagement is documented, which provides the rationale for and understanding of the preferred plan. The preferred plan for the physical redevelopment of MSH, with the inclusion of arts and culture and placemaking is discussed. Strategies for control, disposition, development, and financing are specified. Implementation tools, such as rezoning and adoption of design guidelines, are detailed.

MSHMPC has researched, listened, discussed, debated, and deliberated the development of the Strategic Reuse Master Plan for Medfield State Hospital. It reflects the hard work, best thinking and effort by MSHMPC to provide the Town with a guide for the reuse and redevelopment of the 128 acres known as Medfield State Hospital. The plan provides the needed direction that advances Town goals and priorities, reflects the desires of residents, and is financially sound.

This report is broken out into five distinct sections:

Introduction:

An overview of the MSH site can be found in Section II: Introduction and Section III: The Planning Area.

Medfield State Hospital Grounds:

This portion of the report outlines the physical characteristics of the Medfield State Hospital site, Medfield's goals for the property, evolution of the plan and public input into the Master Plan, which is outlined in Section VIII. Sections in this portion of the report include:

- IV. Medfield State Hospital History
- V. Site Characteristics and Existing Conditions
- VI. Agreements Informing Development
- VII. The MSH Master Planning Process

Preferred Plan:

- VIII. The Preferred Redevelopment Scenario

Redevelopment Process:

This portion of the document outlines the technical and financial mechanisms around development of the property including:

- IX. Overall Financial Strategy
- X. The Development & Permitting Process for MSH
- XI. Disposition and Control
- XII. Implementation Tools for the Reuse Master Plan
- XIII. Phasing
- XIV. Summary

Appendix

As a companion document to the Master Plan, the Appendix provides information such as:

- Lot 3, Hinkley property and areas south of Hospital Road that were discussed and considered by the committee.
- Documentation of public feedback and comment during the process.
- Existing agreements
- Proposed zoning

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