A Vision for the Future

Southampton Commons - 0 College Highway, Southampton, MA



SOUTHAMPTON, MASS. A DISTRICT: 1753 ~ A TOWN: 1775

Catalyst for Regional Progress
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DODSON & FLINKER
Landscape Architecture and Planning

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Planning and Design Process:

- Working Group Meetings
- Focus Group Meetings
- Public Design Workshop
- Public Forum
- On-line Survey

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What We Learned at the Public Workshop

Opportunities:

- Creating a new “celebrated center” in town
- Weaving together existing uses beautifully & holistically
- Adding commercial parcels to the tax base
- Creating enough demand to justify public transportation
- Adding traffic calming elements to address Rt 10 traffic
- Well-organized parking

Threats:

- Many people are worried about more growth.
- Development impacts to “small town feel”, water supply and underlying aquifer, visual aesthetic, and open space
- Could exacerbate existing stormwater issues
- May add more children to the school system
- Access from Lynn Dr. is not desired by residents of the street



People like traditional Southampton Style

Common Preferences

- Mixed-use village with traditional architecture
- Cohesive site
- Walkability
- Open space
- Townhomes with pedestrian streetscape
- Restaurant/commercial opportunity

Common Dislikes

- Garage dominant facades
- Monotonous building designs
- Visible parking
- Large ‘hotel-like’ structures
- Buildings and sites with an urban look



People identified local needs

- All groups identified Older Adults as a group with needs that the site could fill, including housing, senior center walking paths, community gardens, and public transit connection
- Many groups noted that others need affordable or attainable housing, including single people, and young families
- Several groups said multi-generational spaces were needed by people of all ages: a “true town center” where people can run into each other
- Bike path uses need access to the bike path with parking, bike racks, restrooms, and shaded resting places

How could the site meet the needs of different groups of people in Southampton?



People saw that the size of the site provides a lot of options











Public Safety Complex Feasibility Study

by HKT Architects Inc

FACILITY OPERATION GOALS INCLUDED:

- Main public entrance
- Shared administration areas
- Community use rooms on same floor level
- Drive-through bays and sally port
- Separate emergency vehicle, staff, public parking
- Separate emergency vehicle access to main road
- Concealed sally port entrance from public view





Senior Center Feasibility Study

by Abacus Architects + Planners



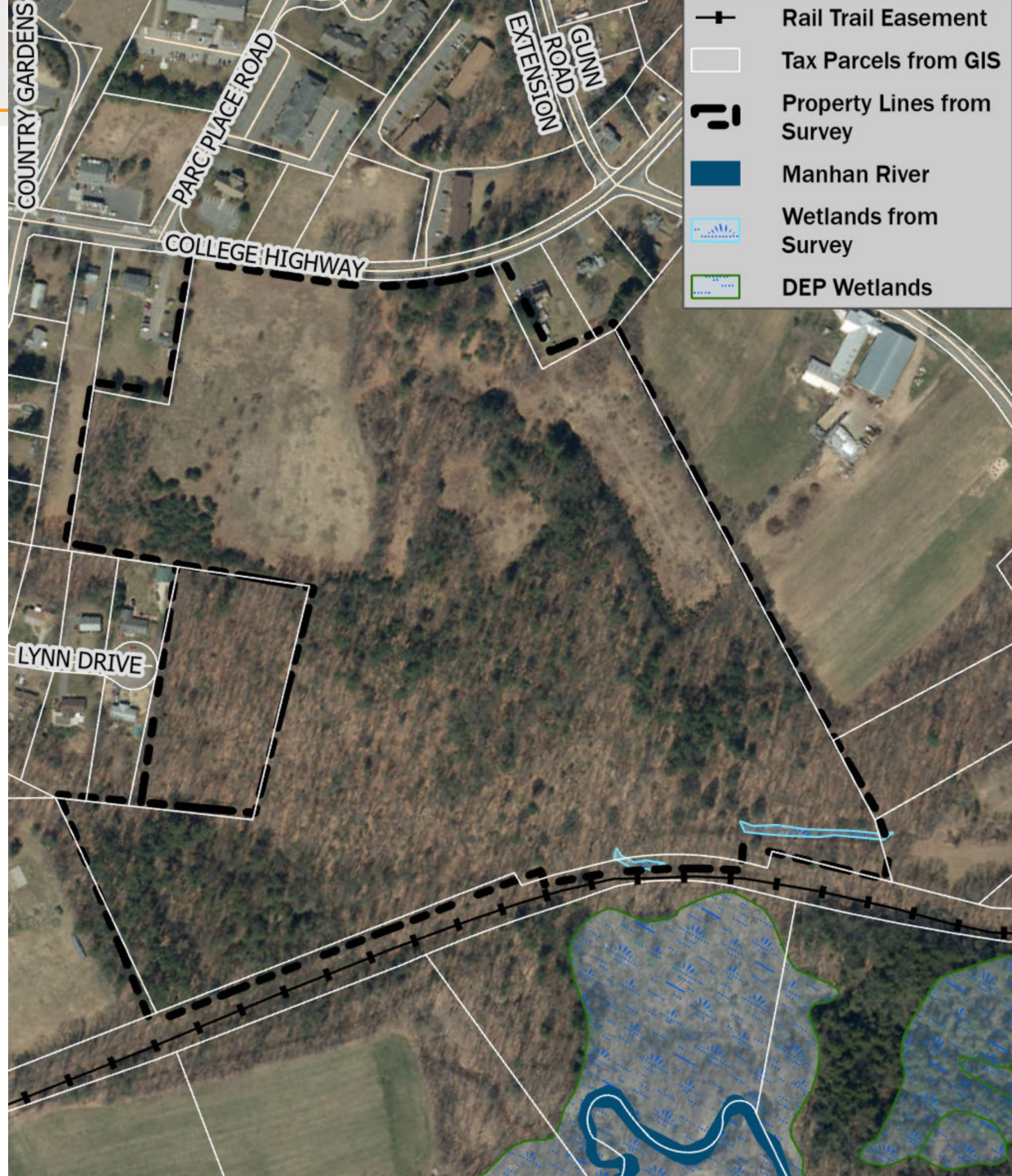
- Design suited for a town the size of Southampton
- Operable partitions to expand rooms
- Central social space
- Welcoming layout
- Informal gathering spaces
- Dynamic configuration
- Cozy nooks
- Multi-purpose rooms
- Art/craft spaces
- Ample storage
- Connections to outside
- Outdoor terraces



12,300 SQ FT CONCEPTUAL BUILDING LAYOUT

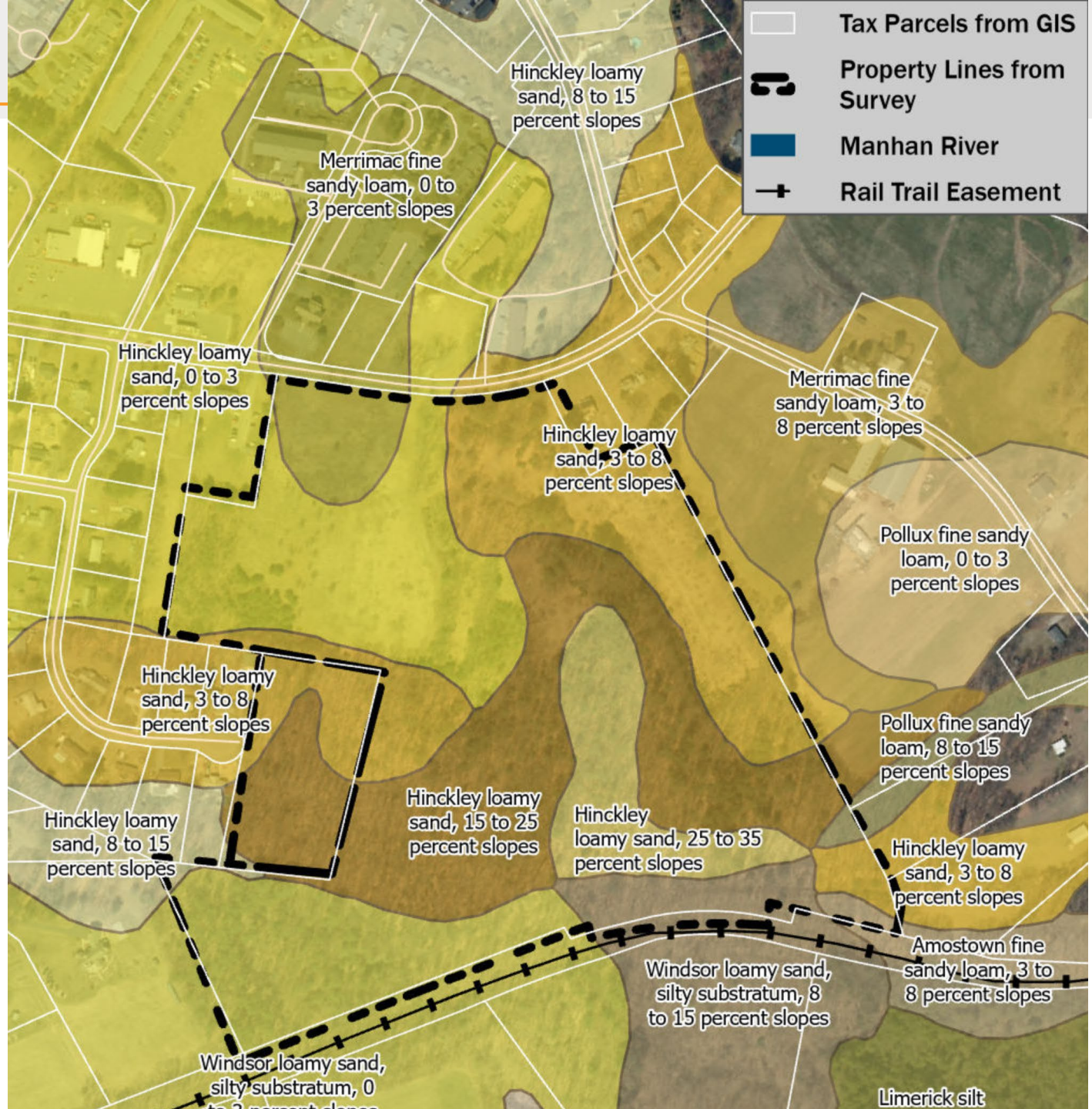
Development Constraints: Wetlands

- Two isolated wetlands were surveyed at the SE corner of the property along the old rail bed
- DEP data shows additional wetlands bordering the Manhan River
- No wetlands near the likely development area.



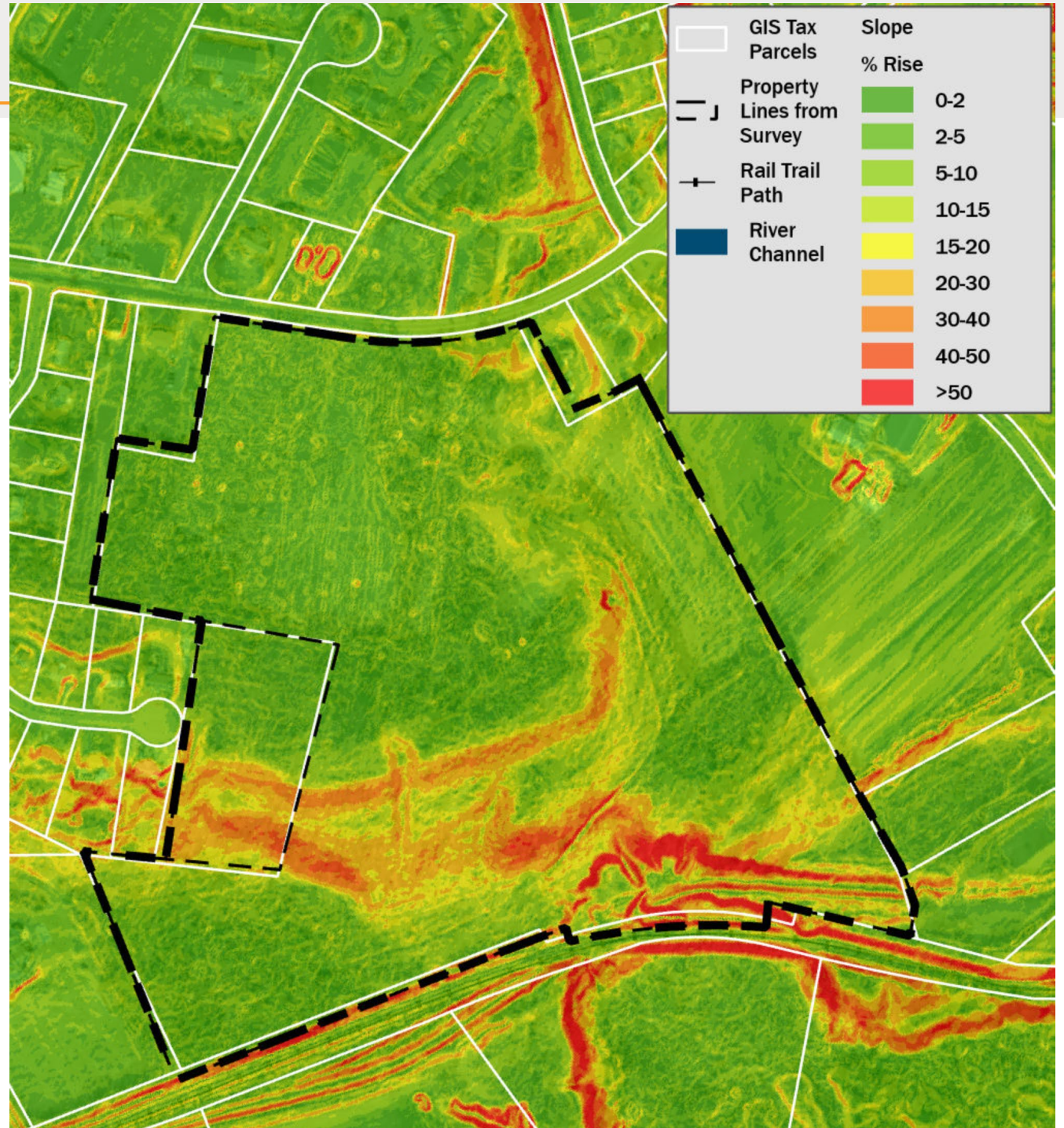
Soils

- Most of the site is Hinckley loamy sand. It is a glacial outwash soil that is very deep and well-draining and has a relatively fine texture.
- An area along Rt.10 is Merrimac fine sandy loam, a well-drained “prime farmland” soil.



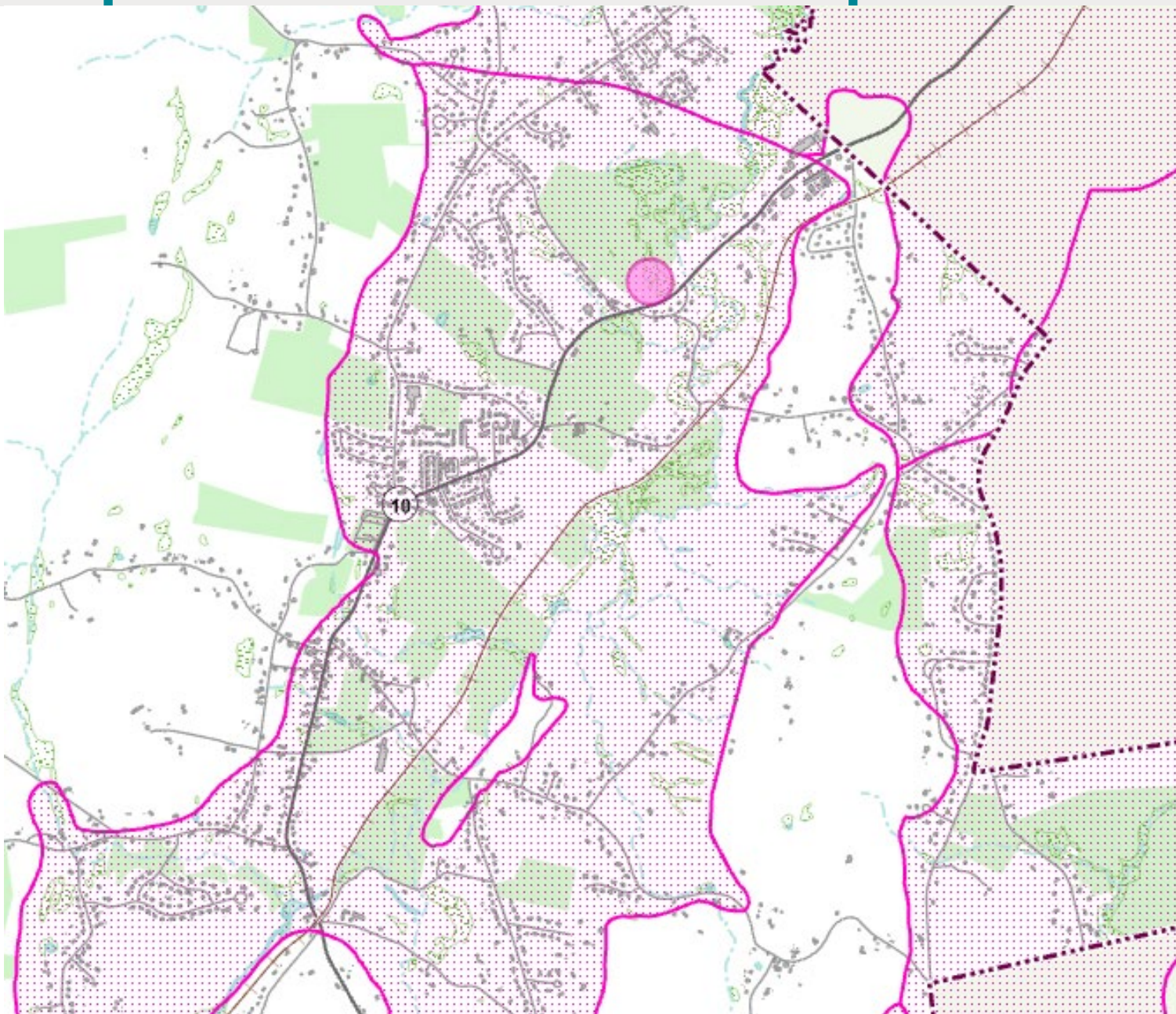
Slopes

- The site has a large, relatively flat area of shallow slopes along Rt 10 the north.
- There is a steep drop-off across the middle of the site where slopes exceed 20%.
- Terrain levels out along the former RR rail bed/future bike path.

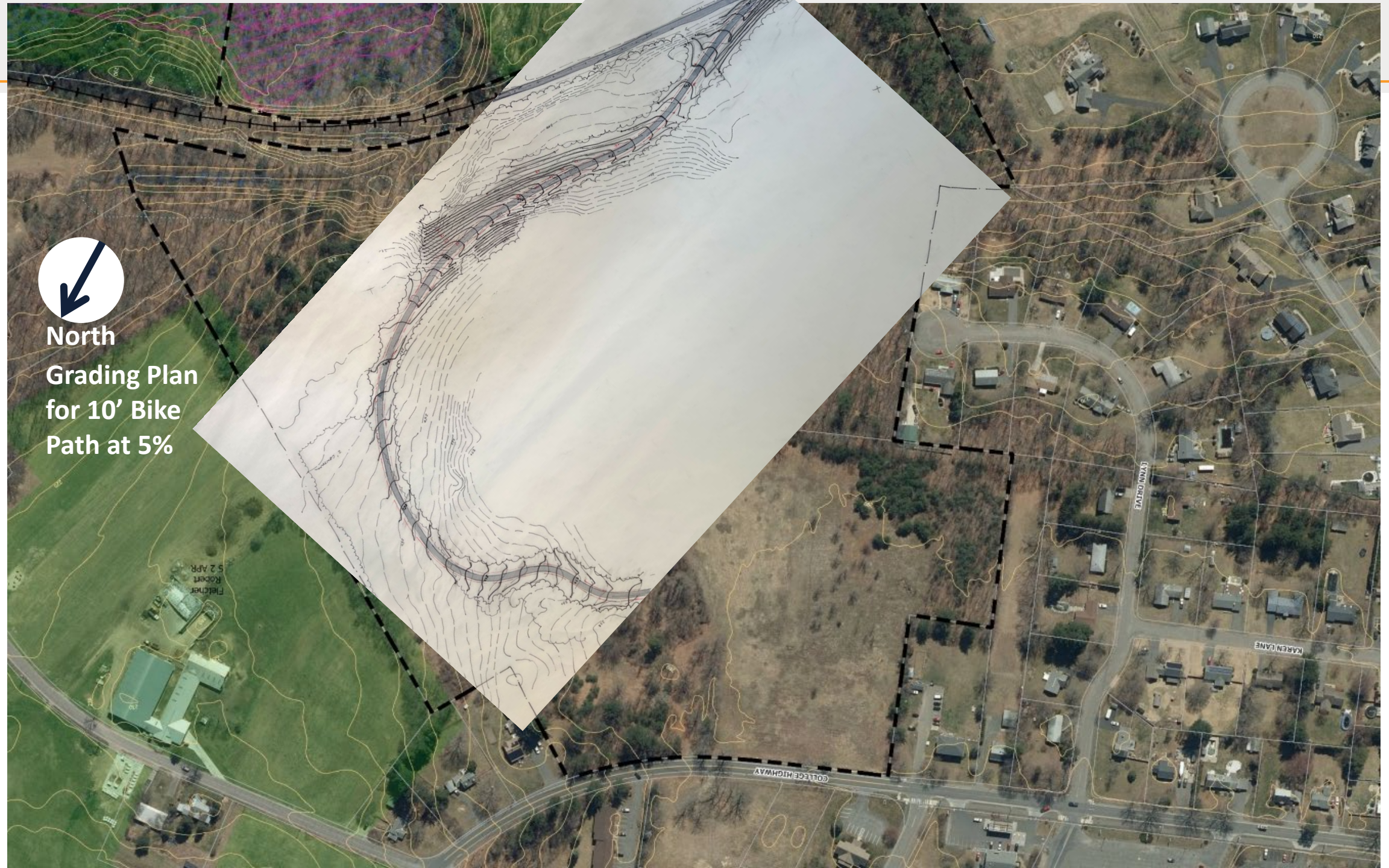


Wastewater Treatment Requirements Limit Development

- Under Title V, land in a Zone II wellhead protection area is designated as “Nitrogen Sensitive Area” and wastewater discharge is limited to 440 gallons of wastewater per 40,000 sq ft of lot area
- 45 acres can thus support a maximum of 21,562 gallons/day
- At 110 gal/day per bedroom, that’s a **theoretical** maximum of 196 bedrooms, or 98 two-bedroom homes.




North
Existing
Conditions
Route of
old farm
lane
Steep
Slopes
Drainage
Corridors
1950s Extent
of Farmland
Farmstead
Site


North
Grading Plan for 10’ Bike Path at 5%
COLLEGE HIGHWAY
KAREN LANE
TWIN DRIVE


North
COLLEGE HIGHWAY
KAREN LANE
TANA DRIVE

Road Access

Public Safety

Mixed Use

Senior Center

Residential

Parks

Secondary Access

Multiuse Trail

Preliminary Mixed-Use Village Alternatives















Preliminary Open-Space-Focused Alternatives

- Public Safety
- Residential
- Mixed Use
- Farmland & Parks
- Senior Center

Existing Conditions



Option A: Village Focus with Senior Center and Public Safety Complex on West Side



Option B: Village Focus with Senior Center and Public Safety Complex on East Side



Option A: Senior Center and Public Safety on the West Side.



Option B: Senior Center and Public Safety on the East Side



View From North: Existing Conditions



View From North: Option A



View From North: Option B




View From South: Existing Conditions


View From South: Option A


View From South: Option B



View From College Highway: Existing Conditions



View From College Highway: Option A



View From College Highway: Option B



View From Northwest: Option B



Sidewalk and Café Spaces along Entry Road – Facing South



Homes and Private Yards, Public Path and Village Green



View of Homes Across Village Green



Homes Fronting Village Green



Interior Courtyard



Residential Street Providing Vehicle Access to Homes



Trailhead Facilities at Start of the Greenway Connector

Southampton Commons Design Principles

Describing the town's preferred approach to designing a walkable village on the site, including:

- the layout of streets and sidewalks;
- the location of buildings and parking areas,
- the relationship of buildings to streets and open spaces; and
- the design of parks and other open space elements.



Organize the Village Around the "Public Realm" of Streets, Parks and Greenways.

- Create simple, interconnected grid of streets.
- Locate parks in the centers of activity areas.
- Orient buildings to streets, parks and pedestrian spaces to tie them into the overall pattern.
- Connect open spaces together to create movement corridors for people and wildlife.
- Coordinate connected green spaces and corridors with the stormwater management plan.
- Create an interconnected pedestrian network.



Use a Compact, Efficient Form that Conserves Resources Now and in the Future

- Build 2-3 story buildings and locate them close to each other so that buildings relate to each other instead of standing on their own.
- Balance increased density with open space (showing about 60/40).
- Direct the cost savings from compact development toward providing higher quality materials in buildings, and the public realm.
- Design for renewable energy production and to minimize building energy use.



Design Buildings that Reflect Southampton's Built Heritage

- Use relatively simple building forms that reflect historic precedents in Southampton.
- Combine smaller masses into larger ones to make it look like buildings have grown over time.
- Use locally appropriate materials like wood and brick, or similar alternatives
- Ensure that buildings have attractive, clearly visible entrances along streets.



Visualization of farmhouse style townhouses as seen across the green.





Village Hill in Northampton







Traditional styling for Affordable Housing

Provide Diverse Housing Choices for Every Stage of Life.

- Include a variety of building types.
- Provide a variety of unit sizes and levels of finish quality.
- Provide affordable housing and intersperse it throughout a development project.



Visualization of farmhouse style townhouses.



Affordable apartments in Brookline.



A mixed-use building in Manchester.

Build According to the Principles of Universal Design

- Provide at-grade entrances to buildings.
- Provide a seamless, interconnected pedestrian system.
- Separate vehicles from pedestrians as much as possible.
- Provide some single-level, fully-ADA accessible units, as well as including universal design features everywhere.
- Include people with the lived experience of a disability in the planning and design process.



Visualization of accessible pedestrian network.



Universal Design goes beyond ADA: improving comfort and safety for everyone.



Accessible crushed stone path at Mt. Tom North Park in Easthampton

Promote Walking and Biking

- Minimize the width of vehicle travel lanes.
- Provide on street parking.
- Reduce the visual and environmental impacts of parking lots
- Provide a continuous pedestrian network.
- Provide wide sidewalks with ample street furniture, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and a complete canopy of street trees.
- Ensure that street crossings are safe.
- Create a network of comfortable routes for bicyclists and connect to the future Southampton Greenway Trail.



A visualization of the main entry road



A visualization of potential facilities at the start of the greenway connector trailhead.

Connect to the Surrounding Landscape and Enhance Ecological Functions

- With 60% of the site preserved, avoid clearing of areas with older forest to reduce ecological impacts.
- Preserve farmland adjacent to farmland on neighboring parcels.
- Connect green spaces into larger greenways.
- Plant regionally-appropriate native and naturalized plant species.
- Utilize a low impact development (LID) approach to stormwater management.





Stormwater collection and treatment systems incorporated into streets and parking lots.



Restored meadow at Mt. Tom North



Integrated public farm and garden spaces.

Provide publicly accessible open spaces and recreational opportunities.

- Provide diverse public open spaces.
- Provide spaces for both active and passive uses.
- Provide parks with a range of micro-climates.
- Locate public open spaces in prominent locations with welcoming entrances.
- Locate private open spaces further from activity areas with private entrances.
- Create a clear separation between private and public spaces.



Public and private spaces and paths are clearly marked and separated by fences and landscaping.



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Extra Slides

Southampton Commons Design Strategies

① **Village Design:** The new neighborhood is laid out as a compact, walkable village, with new buildings and parking areas clustered on an area of about 16 acres at the northwest corner of the property, including 4-5 acres of internal parks and other open spaces. That means that about 25.5 of the entire 41.5 acre parcel can be preserved as open space, amounting to over 60% of the site. Within the development area, streets are no wider than necessary, and parking areas are laid out efficiently to reduce the total amount of pavement – limiting environmental impacts and making the project cheaper to build and maintain over time.

② **Traditional Village Street**: A new street provides shared access to the property for all users. This will limit turning movements on and off College Highway to a single point to improve safety. This is designed as a traditional street, lined with sidewalks and street trees. It loops through the site, providing access to each of the various parcels. It can be laid out as a separate subdivision street to provide individual frontage for private residential or commercial parcels. The public right of way could continue to join Lynn Drive, allowing for a connection to existing water service lines there. To limit traffic impacts on Lynn Drive, any actual road connection would be for emergency access only.

③ **A Village Green** provides a visual and functional focus that unifies the surrounding civic, commercial and residential uses while providing space for informal recreation, community gatherings and other uses. Depending on soil conditions, this can also provide space for stormwater infiltration or shared septic drain fields. Public sidewalks and walking paths line the periphery of the space, shaded by a continuous tree canopy.

④ **Open Space and Trails:** with much of the site preserved as open space, there are many opportunities to create natural surface trails. These could be laid out in what is sometimes called a stacked loop system, with shorter and more gently sloping trails close to the edge of the village and more challenging loops extending down the slope to the rail trail and beyond it to the Manhan River. Some of these could be simple forest trails constructed using existing soils, others could be improved with a crushed stone surface to provide accessibility for people with disabilities, older folks, families with young children in strollers, etc. Trails would be laid out to provide an interesting experience incorporating restored meadows, forested areas with large trees, and viewpoints looking out over the valley. Along the rail trail there are opportunities to view the remains of the historic canal.



Southampton Commons Design Strategies

⑤ **The Public Safety Building** floor plan and general parking requirements are taken from preliminary plans developed by the Public Safety Building Committee with the help of another consultant. One of the key requirements is direct access to College Highway, and in these scenarios that means it could be located either north or south of the main entrance. In either case trees and landscaping help to mitigate the visual impact of the structure, and to the extent possible, parking areas are placed in the rear. Part of the parking lot could be shared with the senior center, making efficient use of the pavement. Landscaped islands and areas along the parking lots could serve as rain gardens and bioswales.

⑥ **The Senior Center** is given pride of place overlooking the village green, and could be located on either the east or west side of the village. In both cases it could be on the same parcel as the public safety building, and could share parking and wastewater treatment facilities. There is ample space for an outdoor terrace, community gardens and other open space adjacent to the building. There could also be an accessible trail leading from the senior center, looping around the open space, and connecting to a larger network of trails on the property and the Southampton Greenway.

Like the public safety building, the building design, footprint and parking totals are based on a preliminary plan developed for the Senior Center Building Committee by another consultant. The building as shown may not fit perfectly with the given site, access to parking, etc. As the plan is revised to fit a chosen site the final location of entrances, windows and outdoor spaces can be optimized to take advantage of the chosen location.

⑦ **An extension of the Southampton Greenway Trail** follows the route of a former farm lane from the northwest corner of the new village south through the open space to connect to the rail trail at the southwest corner of the property. It appears possible to lay this out at no more than a 5% grade, making the path safer for bicyclists and allowing it to meet accessibility standards. This would likely be a paved asphalt trail, 10 feet wide to match the Greenway Trail layout – though it could also be done with a narrower cross section and a crushed stone surface to reduce costs. Parking and a trailhead kiosk could be located at the northeast edge of the village.



Southampton Commons Design Strategies

⑧ **Townhouse Neighborhood:** 45 townhouses are clustered on 4-5 acres on the south side of the town green, with vehicular access from a quiet residential street that loops through the property and connects to other uses. The new homes will likely be built on a separate parcel and served by their own shared septic system, which is limited by Title 5 to a total flow of 10,000 gallon-per-day. At a design-flow of 110 gallons per bedroom per day, that amounts to 45 two-bedroom units on average (there would likely be a mix of 1,2 and 3 bedroom units).

In these scenarios, each home has a private entrance on the street side, with a driveway leading to a one-car garage integrated into the building. Depending on the builder and market demand, garages may not be included. In that case there is room for head-in parking along the edge of the street in front of each unit. A continuous sidewalk parallel to the street leads to walkways to a private entrance for each home, framed by trees and other landscaping. Each unit also could have a quiet patio space on the opposite side of the building facing out on shared open space. In some cases this is a shared garden or courtyard; other homes look out to the woods.

Each home has an exclusive use space that includes an individual driveway, entry walk and stoop, and a private patio. These private spaces are separated from shared public spaces by sidewalks or walking paths, lined with fences and/or hedges, perennials or other low plantings. Trees are planted around each structure, close enough to eventually form a continuous canopy. This can include a combination of taller shade trees where shade is needed, and smaller flowering trees to allow more sun, create privacy, and attract wildlife.

⑨ **Commercial and Mixed-Use Neighborhood:** Another separate parcel could be set aside along the College Highway frontage for several mixed-use buildings. These could have shops, restaurants, or other businesses on the ground floor and apartments on upper stories. Parking is kept to the rear of the buildings and accessed through shared driveways to limit the number of curb cuts. This creates a more continuous pedestrian area along the street and between buildings, opening up opportunities for outdoor dining, displays, gardens and landscaping. Existing vegetation, including the large oak trees along the edge of Route 10, could likely be retained as part of the project.



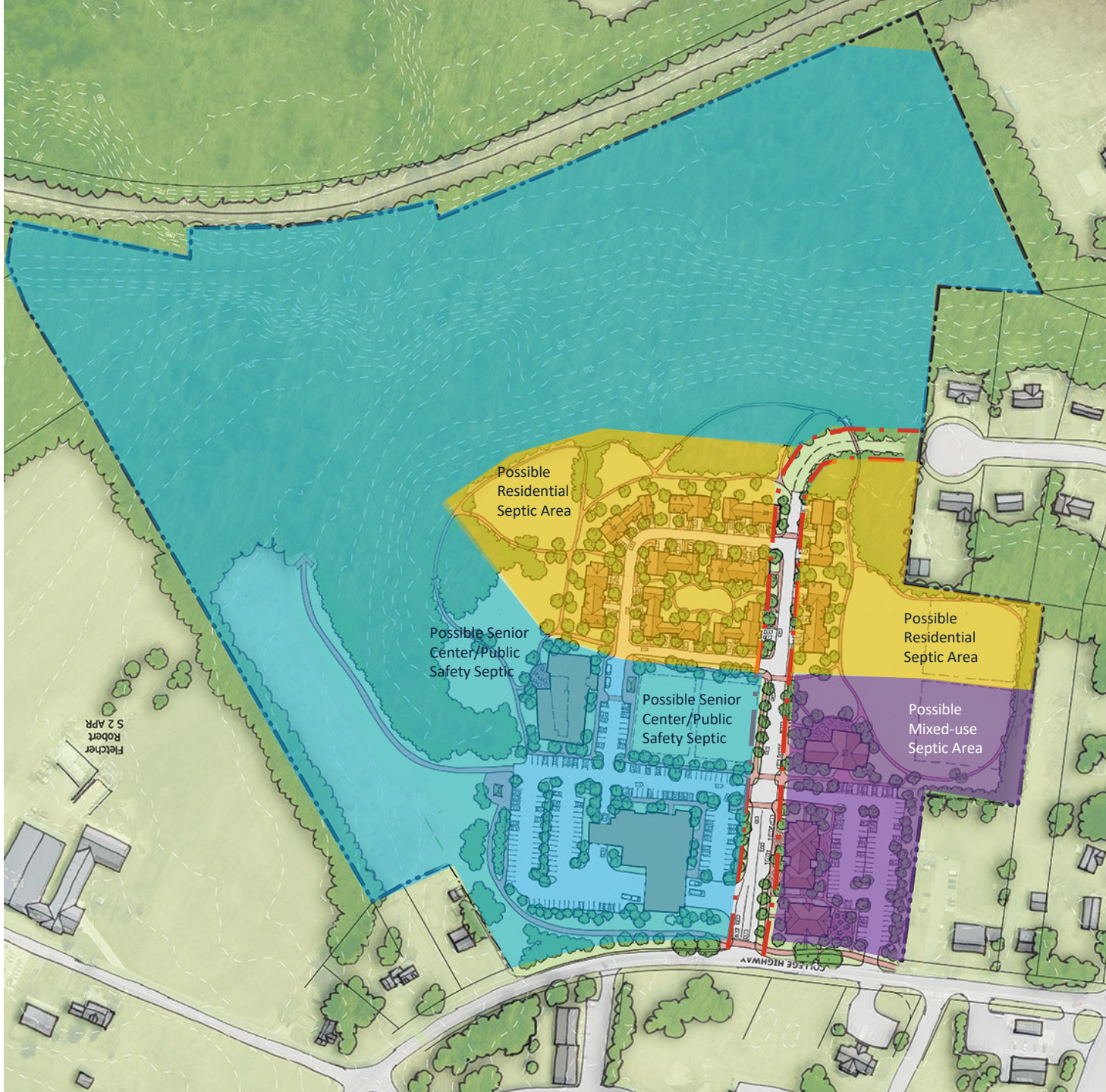
Southampton Commons Design Strategies

⑩ **Subdivision Options:** The new village will likely include both private and public ownership of separate lots. Public properties would include the road right-of-way and a single lot or multiple lots for the public safety complex, senior center, conservation land and recreational amenities, including the greenway connector and other trails. The commercial and/or mixed-use elements will likely be sold as a separate parcel to a private developer, and another developer would take control of a parcel for the residential area.

One way to divide the parcel would be through a subdivision plan that would establish a new town road, off of which each of the new parcels would get its required access and frontage (if applicable under zoning). This could extend from College Highway to Lynn Drive (whether or not the connection is paved), allowing for water and other utilities to be connected to existing lines on Lynn Drive.

Separate parcels for each use would require enough area to meet zoning requirements and provide room for septic drain fields and stormwater management. In the map shown at right, this could be configured as two residential lots (yellow) totaling about 7 acres; a commercial or mixed-use lot (purple) of around 3.75 acres, and the town facilities lot (blue) of about 30.75 acres.

Since on-site wastewater disposal will likely be required, however, the boundaries and lot size of each parcel may need to be adjusted to meet the requirements of Title 5. Because the entire site is within the Zone II wellhead protection area, it is designated a “nitrogen sensitive area” and there is a limit of 440 gallons of wastewater per 40,000 square feet of lot area. The 41.5 acre property can therefore support wastewater flow of almost 20,000 gallons per day – more than enough to support the entire development program. While Title 5 does allow all uses to be aggregated across the entire parcel, if the ownership is divided it may be necessary to reconfigure the lots so that each one contains 40,000 square feet of area for each 440 gallons of wastewater. For example, a residential development with 40 2-beroom units could require its own 22.5 acre lot. There does not appear to be a problem complying with that provision, if it is required.



Southampton Commons Design Strategies

Conceptual Lot Layout, Option A: This plan shows a potential layout for lot lines that would allow each property to include the necessary nitrogen loading area. This assumes that lots on either side of the roadway, but in the same ownership, could be aggregated for the purposed of calculating nitrogen loading. Road right of ways vary from 50-60 feet wide and should comply with the town's subdivision regulations.



Conceptual Lot Layout, Option B: Both plans also incorporate the potential areas for wastewater treatment systems within the boundary of the respective lots, along with suitable area for stormwater management systems.

