

May 8, 2023

To: Beth Moreau, City Councilor, and Chair of the Land Use Commission

Re: Staff Review of City-Owned Parcels for Potential Reuse as Workforce Housing

As requested, the planning staff reviewed the total list of 197 city-owned parcels to evaluate the potential reuse of any parcels for workforce housing.¹ Importantly, as part of the initial review, staff focused on the city-owned parcels over one acre in size as these offered the biggest opportunity to produce higher density, multi-family workforce housing. Staff utilized the city's mapping software (MapGeo) and other information collected on a site visit to each of the 12 properties potentially suitable for multi-family, workforce housing.² The site suitability assessment identified site constraints including, but not limited to, the following:

- Lot Shape and Size
- Access Availability
- Wetland Resources
- Natural Features
- Steep Slopes
- Soil Conditions
- Available Utilities and Infrastructure
- Proximity to Employment Centers, Services and Recreational Amenities
- Conservation, Utility, or Other Easements
- Existing Use(s)
- Abutting Land Use(s) and Development Patterns

After an evaluation of these site constraints (Shown in Table 1), staff shortlisted 12 properties for further evaluation and performed an on-the-ground site-visit.³ The site-visit proved to be invaluable in understanding the attributes of these properties and assessing their suitability for use as a multi-family workforce housing project.

In nearly all instances, the shortlisted properties had significant and obvious conservation value as active or passive park land. Additionally, a number of properties also had the presence of active recreational facilities such as regulation-sized ball fields with associated parking, concessions, and lighting. Other properties, such as the Sagamore Creek parcel behind the High

¹ Although this study was focused on city-owned properties the PHA owns several parcels that may be suitable for redevelopment or expanded housing. Given the Committee's focus on workforce housing, such a review would be helpful.

² Note that all the short-listed large parcels are currently zoned "municipal" so they would require rezoning if sold and redeveloped by a for-profit developer.

³ Note that 195 Greenleaf Ave. was added to the list after discussion at the Land Use Committee on 5-5-23.

School, demonstrated enormous ecological and passive recreational value with the potential to become landmark parks with walking trails and substantial wildlife conservation areas.

In summary, our preliminary review and recommendation to the land use committee would be to focus on four (4) of the larger city-owned properties for further study and reuse potential as multi-family, workforce housing.⁴ The properties and their projected developable area are as follows:

1. 1 Junkins Ave. (the lower city hall parking lot – approx. 1 acre)
2. Falkland Way (the open parcel in front of the PHA property / approx. 1 acre)
3. 35 Sherburne Rd. (the Lister Academy / approx. 5 acres)
4. 195 Greenleaf Ave. (Greenleaf Rec Center / approx. 3 acres)

Importantly, this assessment is not an endorsement for any particular density or layout on any of these properties. Rather, it is simply a recognition that these properties – either due to their available land area and/or existing buildings that may lend themselves to redevelopment – appear to offer opportunities for multi-family housing.

Table 1 below illustrates the assessment criteria we used when evaluating each property.⁵ If requested by the City Council we can provide further detail on this assessment at a subsequent City Council or Land Use Committee meeting.

Respectfully,

Nicholas Cracknell, Principal Planner

Cc: Peter Britz, Planning Director

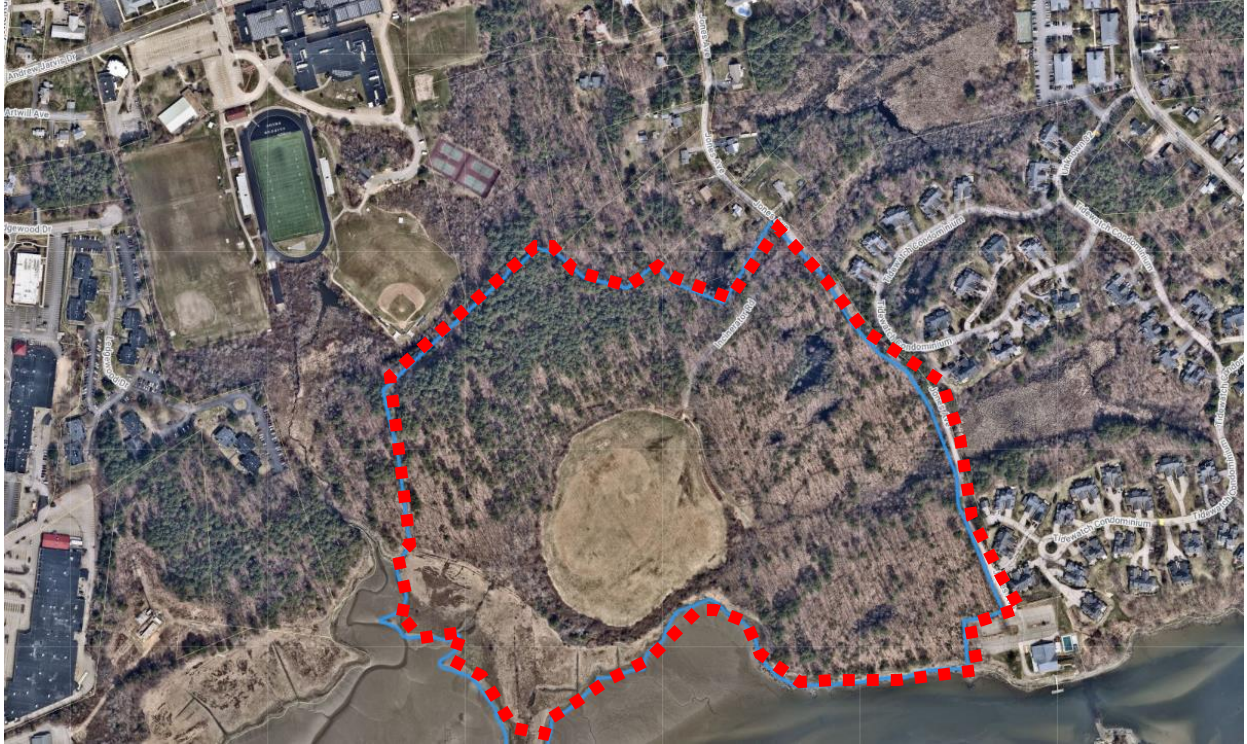
⁴ Although some city-owned smaller parcels could support additional workforce housing opportunities, staff initially focused on these larger parcels to provide a substantial likelihood of supporting larger, multi-family housing projects.

⁵ Rather than a detailed assessment and evaluation of engineering or geo-technical information, Table 1 represents preliminary staff findings after map review and a site visit. Thus, further investigation would be recommended for any of the short-listed parcels prior to a final determination of suitability for multi-family housing. Similarly, the project size and density of any multi-family housing development on these properties has not been determined given the need for further site information.

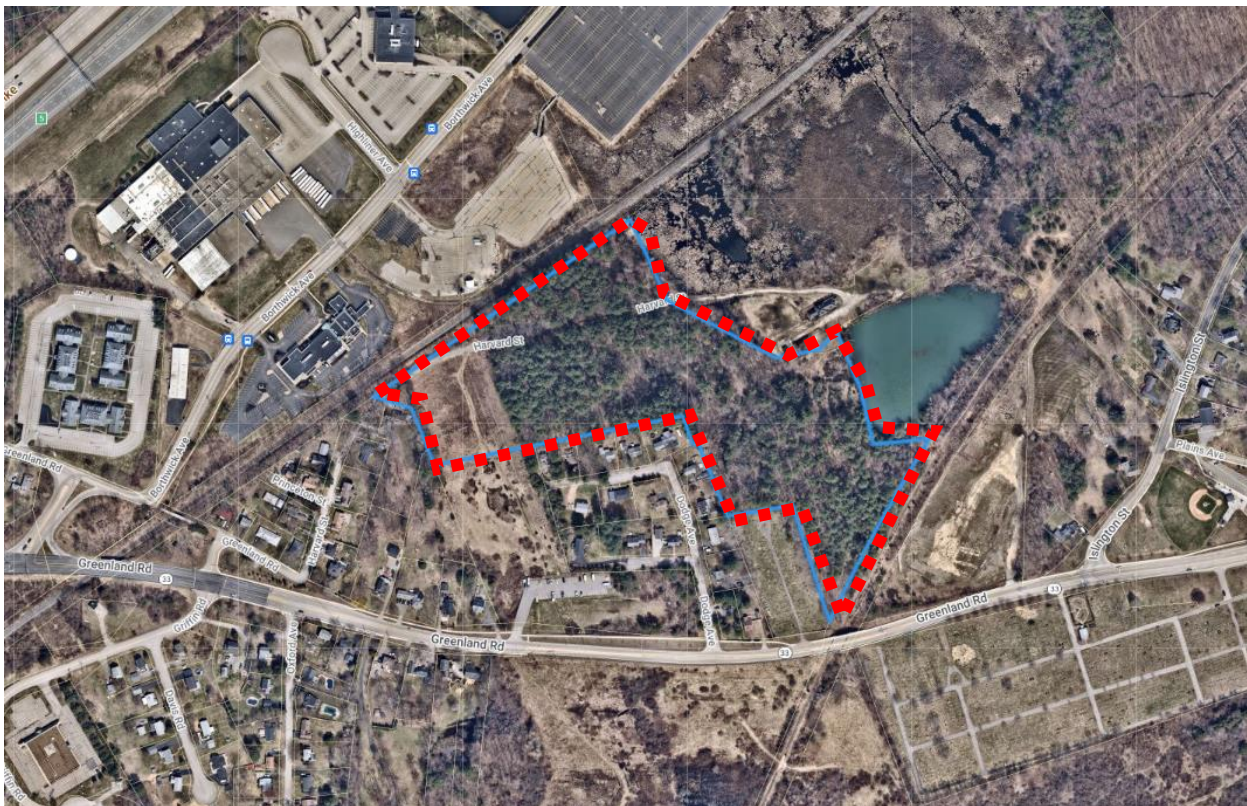
Table 1 – Property Assessment Matrix

SITE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (5 = Highest and 1 = Lowest)															
PROPERTY		Location	Lot Shape	Developable Area (Ac.)	Access Availability	Wetland Resources	Natural Features	Steep Slopes	Soil Conditions	Available Utilities and Infrastructure	Proximity to Employment Centers, Services and Recreational Amenities	Conservation , Utility, or Other Easements	Existing Use(s)	Abutting Land Use(s) and Development Patterns	Total Score
1	Jones Avenue	Off Jones Avenue	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	26
2	Greenland Road	Off Harvard Street	2	3	1	2	2	4	2	3	3	1	2	2	27
3	Sagamore Avenue	Along Wentworth Road	3	1	4	2	2	3	2	4	2	1	2	2	28
4	Sherburne Road	Off Sherburne Road	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	31
5	445 Borthwick Avenue	Off Borthwick Avenue	3	3	3	1	2	3	1	5	3	2	2	3	31
6	Sagamore Avenue	Off Sagamore Avenue	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	1	1	3	32
7	134 Preble Way	Besides park	5	2	4	3	2	3	3	5	3	3	2	2	37
8	25 Granite Avenue	Off Granite Way	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	5	5	5	1	4	46
9	Falkland Way	Along Bedford Way	3	2	4	5	4	4	4	5	3	5	5	4	48
10	1 Junkins Avenue	City Hall Lower Lot	5	3	5	5	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	4	54
11	195 Greenleaf Ave.	Off Holiday Drive	5	5	5	3	4	5	4	5	5	5	3	5	54
12	35 Sherburne Road	Off Sherburne Road	5	5	5	4	5	3	4	5	4	5	5	5	55

Exhibit 1 – Aerial Images of Properties



1. Jones Ave. (66A) – Passive Recreational Park and Conservation Area



2. Greenland Road (30A) – Passive Recreation and Conservation Area



3. Sagamore Ave. (16A) – Passive Recreation and Conservation Area



4. Sherburne Road (4.3A) – Passive Recreation and Conservation Area



5. 445 Borthwick Ave. (17A) – Passive Conservation Area



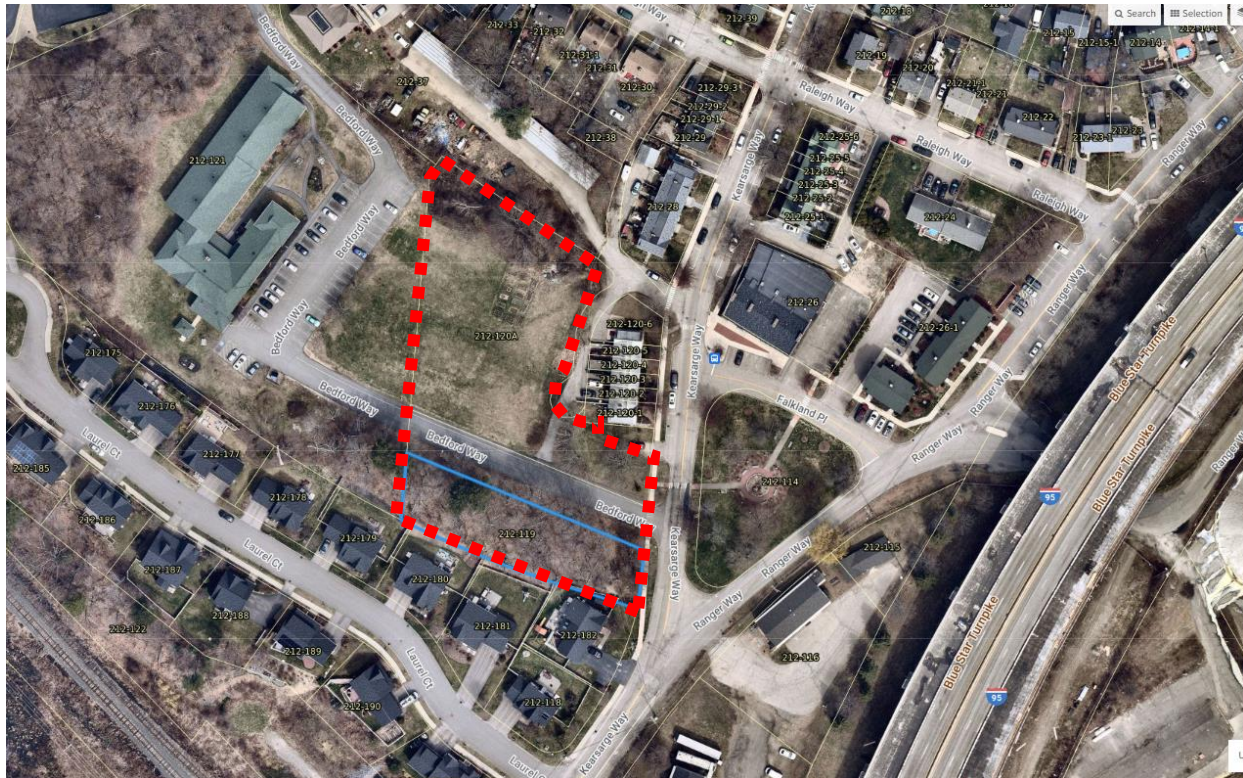
6. Sagamore Ave. (10.6A) – Passive Conservation Area



7. 134 Preble Way (5.2A) – Active and Passive Recreational Facility



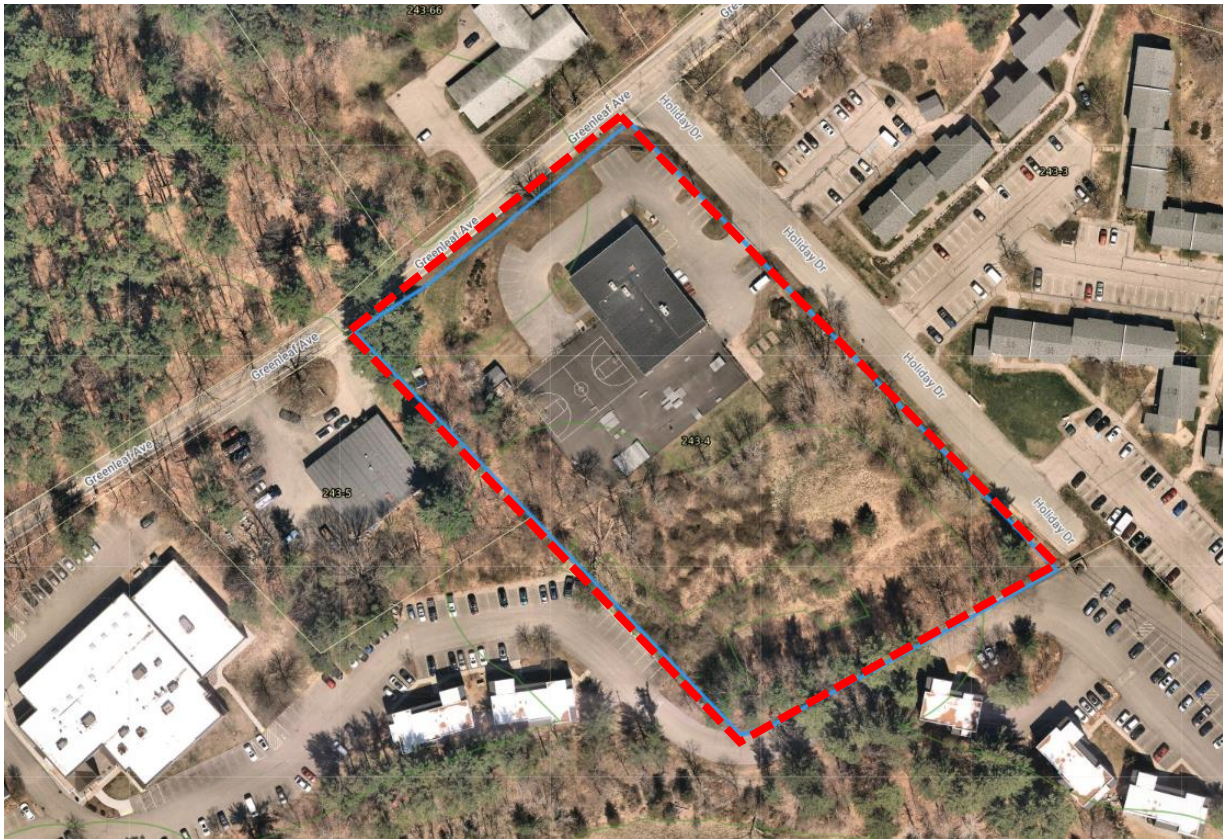
8. 25 Granite Ave. (4A) – Active Recreational Facility



9. Falkland Way (.9A) – Potential for Multi-Family Housing



10. Lower Parking Lot – 1 Junkins Ave. (1A) – Potential for Multi-Family Housing



11. 195 Greenleaf Ave. (3.5 A) – Multi-Family Housing and Active Recreational Facility



12. 35 Sherburne Rd. (5.3A) – Potential Reuse as Multi-Family Housing