

Fairfield Hills Recreational Master Plan

A Presentation to Fairfield Hills Authority

March 23, 2015



Presenters:

Amy Mangold – Director, Newtown Parks & Recreation Department

Edward Marks – Chairman, Newtown Parks & Recreation Commission

**FAIRFIELD HILLS CAMPUS
NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT**

**MASTER PLAN
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

TOWN OF NEWTOWN

JULY 1, 2003



Fairfield Hills Master Plan Ad Hoc Committee

Robert Geckle, Chairman
Richard Sturdevant, Vice Chairman
Alan Clavette
Kevin Cragin
Al Cramer
Mary Ann Currie
John Martocci
Moirra Rodgers
Janice Roman
Charles Wrinn

Board of Selectmen

Herbert Rosenthal
Joseph Bojnowski
William Brimmer

Town Staff

Jan Andras
Elizabeth Stocker, AICP

Consultant Team



Harrall-Michalowski
Associates, Inc.

SmithGroup JJR SmithGroup JJR



Milone and MacBroom, Inc.



Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc.



Fuss and O'Neill, Inc.



The Downes Group

Fairfield Hills Master Plan

Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

In June 2001 at the Town Meeting, the voters of Newtown approved the bonding for the purchase of a 186-acre southerly portion of the Fairfield Hills Hospital site containing the main campus at its core, a significant amount of undeveloped property, and a small two-acre parcel on the north side of Wasserman Way containing the fire station and machine shop. The larger balance totaling 336 acres of the original Fairfield Hills Hospital property has been retained by the State of Connecticut for the Governor's Horse Guard and related uses; transferred to the CT Department of Agriculture for permanent open space; proposed for permanent open space to protect Deep Brook; and proposed for sale to the Town for expansion of the Commerce Road Business Park. In addition, 19.2 acres is the site of the new John Reed School. Figure 1 shows these various parcels. Figure 2 shows existing conditions on the 186 acre parcel.

The Town Meeting vote authorized a variety of activities to be undertaken by the Town including preparation of a Master Plan for the 186-acre area. The material distributed at the Town Meeting established five themes for this Master Plan. These themes were:

- The Campus should contain a substantial open space component inclusive of both active playing fields and passive open space.
- One or more of the existing structures should be renovated and adapted for use as Town offices and possibly educational uses.
- Selected structures within the entry plaza portion of the Campus should be renovated for economic development activity, such as small professional offices.
- A core area of the Campus could be reserved for revenue generating economic development activities compatible with other uses and the surrounding area.
- All components should be provided within the context of a master plan that preserves the campus environment, with the Town maintaining overall control of the Campus.

In addition to preparation of the Master Plan, the Town Meeting authorized the following program components:

- Secure all agreements/approvals for water rights.
- Secure environmental insurance.
- Purchase the property.
- Construct playing fields for a net increase of seven fields.
- Remediate site conditions.
- Remediate and demolish buildings needed to accomplish program components.
- Renovate a building for Town and Board of Education purposes.
- Improve the general site and infrastructure.

These activities were assigned a budget of \$20,123,600 as part of Phase I and Phase II of the Fairfield Hills Campus Cost Estimates. A Phase III was included for the disposition of additional buildings including demolition if required. There was no funding approved for these Phase III activities. It was assumed that such activities would be funded from other sources including the possibility of non-town investment. It was clear to the voters that the funds approved would be used to accomplish the Phase I and Phase II activities with the three main accomplishments being:

- Purchase and long-term control of the site.
- The provision of seven additional playing fields.
- The provision of a building to accommodate Town and Board of Education administrative needs over the next 15 to 20 years.

THE PROCESS

Based on the direction provided at the Town Meeting, the Board of Selectmen established a process to refine the Master Plan for Fairfield Hills, gain resident input, and move the Master Plan through the local approval process including approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission in accordance with the Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse section of the Newtown Zoning Regulations. A key component of the process was the appointment by the Board of Selectmen of a ten-person Fairfield Hills Master Plan Ad Hoc Committee. As shown in Figure 3, the committee has held 26 meetings, invited 45 community groups to present needs for the Campus, held two community workshops of two sessions each, hosted a tour of the Campus and produced a video tour of the Campus for broadcast on local access TV. The entire process was covered extensively by the Newtown Bee including the publishing of a two-page insert describing alternative plans for discussion at community workshops. The central philosophy of the Committee has been one of flexibility. The Master Plan proposed by the Committee addresses immediate needs as expressed by the community while retaining future opportunities which come with purchase of the Campus from the State. Decisions as to these opportunities will be made over several decades by Newtown residents.

THE PLAN

The Master Plan is a strategic plan for the use of Fairfield Hills to the benefit of the Newtown Community. The components of this strategic plan are described in this section.

Town Hall

The recommended Master Plan shown in Figure 4 addresses all the themes/program components approved at the Town Meeting in June 2001. The plan proposes a three story 40,000 square foot Town Hall located at a choice of keystone locations on the Campus. One location is at the northern end of the Green where the old entrance from Wasserman Way approaches Newtown and Woodbury Halls. The second location is at the southern end of the Green generally where Shelton House is currently located. Figure 5 shows the potential layout of the building and some perspective views. The location and design of the building will provide outstanding views to and from the building; modern, efficient space to meet town needs; meeting space for numerous community groups and

governmental commissions; and the capacity to expand over time as needed in a cost efficient manner, with the building systems needed for expansion in place.

Playing Fields

The playing fields including four multi-purpose fields, two full size baseball fields, two softball fields and two youth baseball fields, and retention of the two existing youth baseball fields are proposed at locations shown on Figure 6 established in consultation with the Parks and Recreation Commission. The fields can be constructed in a sequence and within a schedule to meet the priorities of the Parks and Recreation Commission and users as well as coordination with other demolition and construction activities proposed in the Master Plan.

Open Space/Land Banked For Future Use

It is important to note that vast majority of the 186 acre site comprising the Campus is proposed to be land banked, open space, and recreation fields. The land banked portions of the site are comprised primarily of the West, East and High Meadow areas shown on Figure 6. The specific use of these areas will be decided over several decades. In the near term, these areas will be primarily passive natural areas. Such areas include 134 acres or 72% of the Campus. An additional six acres of open space is within the core for a total of 140 acres or 75% of the Campus.

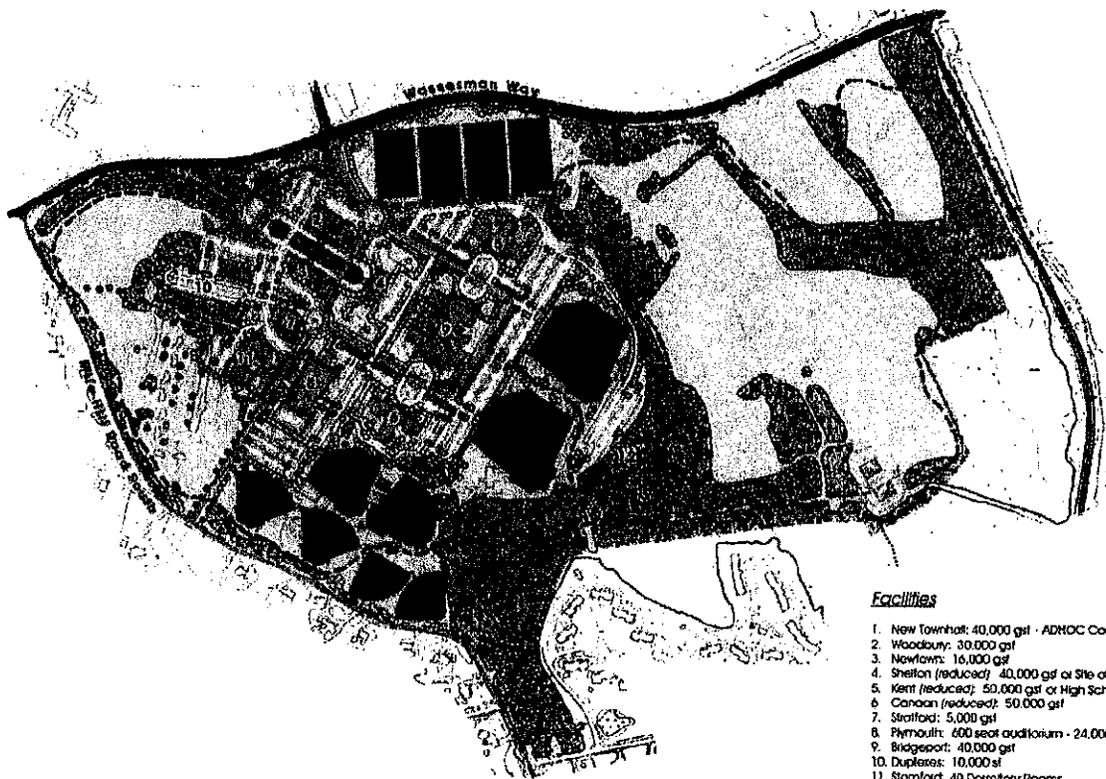
Road Changes/Parking

Figure 7 highlights on the Master Plan the locations proposed for road changes and parking areas. The road changes highlighted by circles are design features and not needed to increase traffic capacities. The areas highlighted with asterisks include the closing of the old entrance from Wasserman Way other than for emergency vehicles and some lane widening at the main entrance. Newtown zoning regulations require approximately 1,175 spaces for the Plan and 1,040 spaces if Shelton is demolished. This does not include spaces for the high school academy concept or the playing fields. There are between 1450 and 1500 provided in the Plan for basic plan components as well as these two uses or an alternate use of the Kent House site for a 50,000 square foot office use. The major need within these 1450-1500 spaces is generated by Plymouth, Bridgeport and the playing fields which are all community benefit uses.

Utilities

Figure 8 presents a preliminary layout for the sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water systems to serve the Campus. All of these systems are currently in place and are capable of serving the Campus in the near term. However, there are features of the water and sewer systems that due to age, materials used and design should be replaced. For example, roof drains from existing buildings are connected to the sanitary sewers and the clay pipes result in ground water infiltration. During storms with heavy rain or times of ground saturation, the sewage treatment plant must process high volumes of effluent. While the plant has the capacity to handle these levels, the correction of this condition should be addressed over the longer term. The Town is currently in discussion with private

Figure ES 6 Fairfield Hills Master Plan – Playing Fields

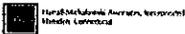


Facilities

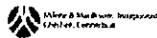
1. New Townshat: 40,000 gsf - ADHOC Committee Recommendation
 2. Woodbury: 30,000 gsf
 3. Newtown: 16,000 gsf
 4. Shelton (reduced): 40,000 gsf at Site of New Town Hall per Selectmen Recommendation
 5. Kent (reduced): 50,000 gsf or High School Academy Site
 6. Canton (reduced): 50,000 gsf
 7. Stratford: 5,000 gsf
 8. Plymouth: 600 seat auditorium - 24,000 gsf
 9. Bridgeport: 40,000 gsf
 10. Duplexes: 10,000 sf
 11. Stamford: 40 Dormitory Rooms
 12. Environmental Education Center: 3,000 gsf
 13. Museum
- Twelve Recreation Fields

Fairfield Hills - Master Plan (Playing Fields)

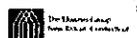
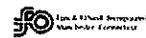
Newtown, Connecticut



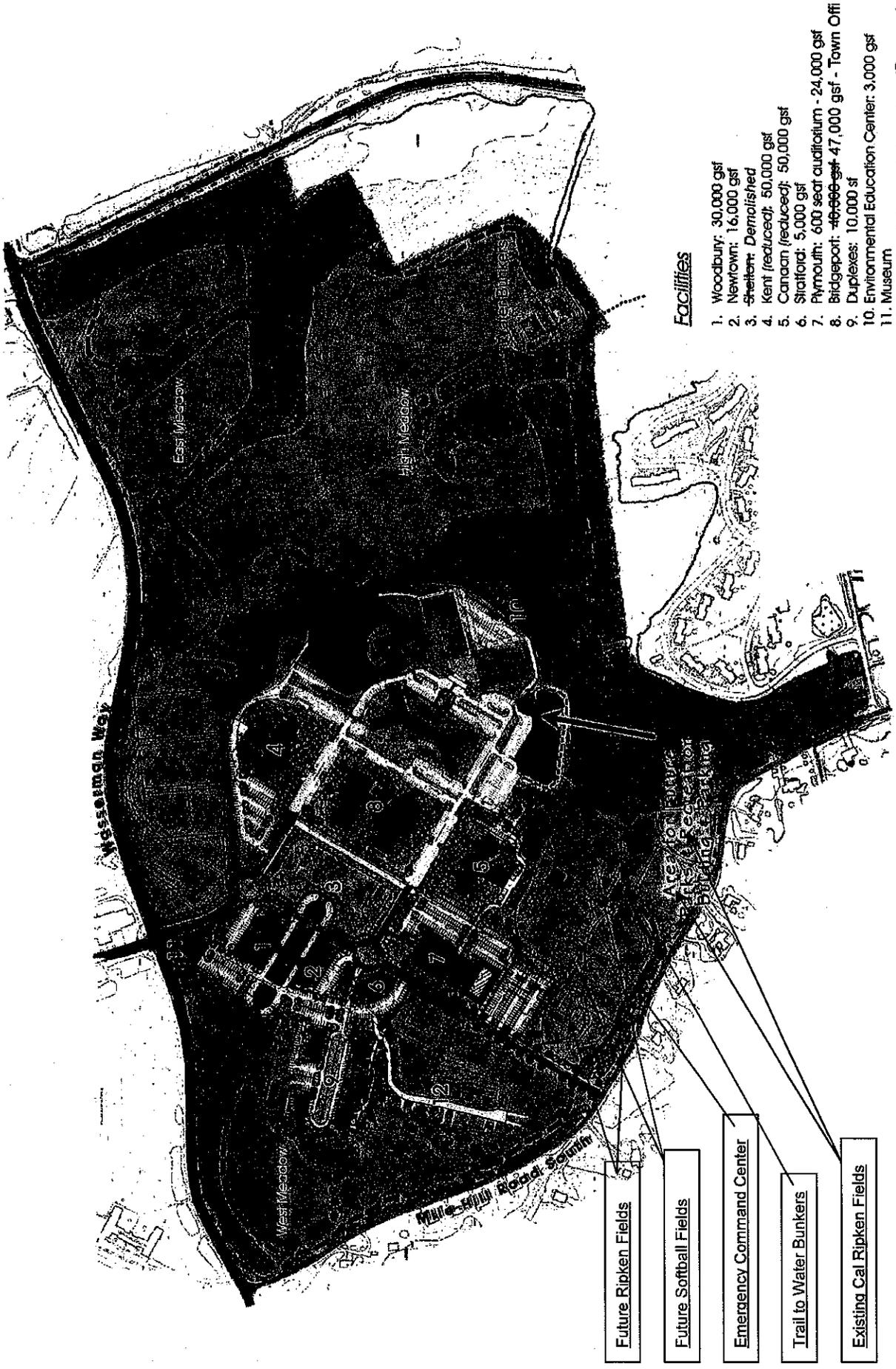
Scale: 1" = 100' (Not to Scale)



Scale: 1" = 100' (Not to Scale)



May 2003



Facilities

1. Woodbury: 30,000 gsf
2. Newtown: 16,000 gsf
3. Shelter: Demolished
4. Kent (reduced): 50,000 gsf
5. Canaan (reduced): 50,000 gsf
6. Stratford: 5,000 gsf
7. Plymouth: 600 seat auditorium - 24,000 gsf
8. Bridgeport: ~~46,666 gsf~~ 47,000 gsf - Town Off
9. Duplexes: 10,000 sf
10. Environmental Education Center: 3,000 gsf
11. Museum
12. Single-Family Homes to Remain - (Removed)
13. 12 Recreation Fields

Fairfield Hills - Master Plan

Newtown, Connecticut



Harold-Michalowski Associates, Incorporated
Hartford, Connecticut

SmithGroup JJB, SmithGroup JJB, L.L.C.
Ann Arbor, Michigan



Moore & MacBroom, Incorporated
Ceshire, Connecticut



Needle Box Associates, Incorporated
New Britain, Connecticut



F&O
Fuss & O'Neill, Incorporated
Manchester, Connecticut



GRAPHIC SCALE
1" = 100'
1" = 100'



SITE PLAN RENDERING
AUGUST 26, 2013

FAIRFIELD HILLS - MASTER PLAN