BOXFORD VILLAGE CENTERS

188 WASHINGTON STREET & 4 MIDDLETON ROAD

PROGRAMMING & PLANNING STUDY

Boxford, MA

TOWN OF BOXFORD MASSACHUSETTS

MassDevelopment

STUDIO LUZ ARCHITECTS

BOXFORD VILLAGE CENTERS
PROGRAMMING & PLANNING STUDY

The following report summarizes the programming study for two surplus properties located at 4 Middleton Road and 188 Washington Street.

The goal of this study is to develop consensus of future use for 4 Middleton Road and 188 Washington Street and to produce comprehensive documentation of programming scenarios to inform a subsequent request for proposals for the redevelopment of the two properties.

TEAM

STUDIO LUZ ARCHITECTS

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TOWN OF BOXFORD

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I. Introduction

Project Overview

The Town of Boxford and MassDevelopment have come together to create a new vision for two surplus properties located at 4 Middleton Road and 188 Washington Street that will benefit the surrounding Boxford community. These new visions for 4 Middleton Road and 188 Washington Street will be based off community input, market analysis, and the programmatic needs of the town, defining the future programming and connecting the vision to the Boxford Town Facility Municipal Plan. Studio Luz Architects was engaged for architectural assistance to help evaluate future programming for the property and the resultant architectural needs of the space.

I. Introduction
Project Overview

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Scope Overview

The scope includes a new vision for reprogramming two surplus properties owned by the Town of Boxford, located at 4 Middleton Road and 188 Washington Street, for potential use as assets to the community with architectural improvements that can support the new programmatic requirements. This programming study for the two properties provided an in-depth community engagement process, an economic market analysis, and conceptual design schemes that incorporated the recommended programming, summarized here in this visioning document for the Town of Boxford.

This programming study aimed to provide a comprehensive look at future programming scenarios for two surplus properties at 4 Middleton Road and 188 Washington Street. Studio Luz's scope of work included pre-schematic phase services to provide the following scope of work.

Community Engagement Process:

Gathering community input through a series of workshops and an online survey, Studio Luz was able to determine the programming needs of the surrounding community to inform future programming scenarios for the two surplus properties. An in-depth community engagement process across multiple platforms allowed for consensus of programming from multiple user groups.

All data recorded from the workshops can be found in Appendix II: Community Engagement

Economic Analysis:

The planning studies for 4 Middleton Road and 188 Washington Street utilized a market analysis, conducted by RKG Associates, to understand existing gaps in community services and amenities as well as include future uses by the municipality, affordable housing, potential benefits of disposing of the property, feasibility of use for affordable housing, as well as market analysis.

The full market analysis can be found in Appendix I: Market Analysis

Programming Scenarios:

Based on the initial site analysis and community feedback, Studio Luz provided the town with conceptual design schemes that incorporated the preferred programming.

Each programming scenario aims to maximize the existing conditions to preserve the existing structure and complement the character of the Town of Boxford.

The conceptual design schemes presented here offer options for layouts and the corresponding upgrades required to reposition the buildings as 21st century assets that will benefit the community of Boxford.

See II. 188 Washington Street: Programming Study and III. 4 Middleton Road: Programming Study

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT OVERVIEW
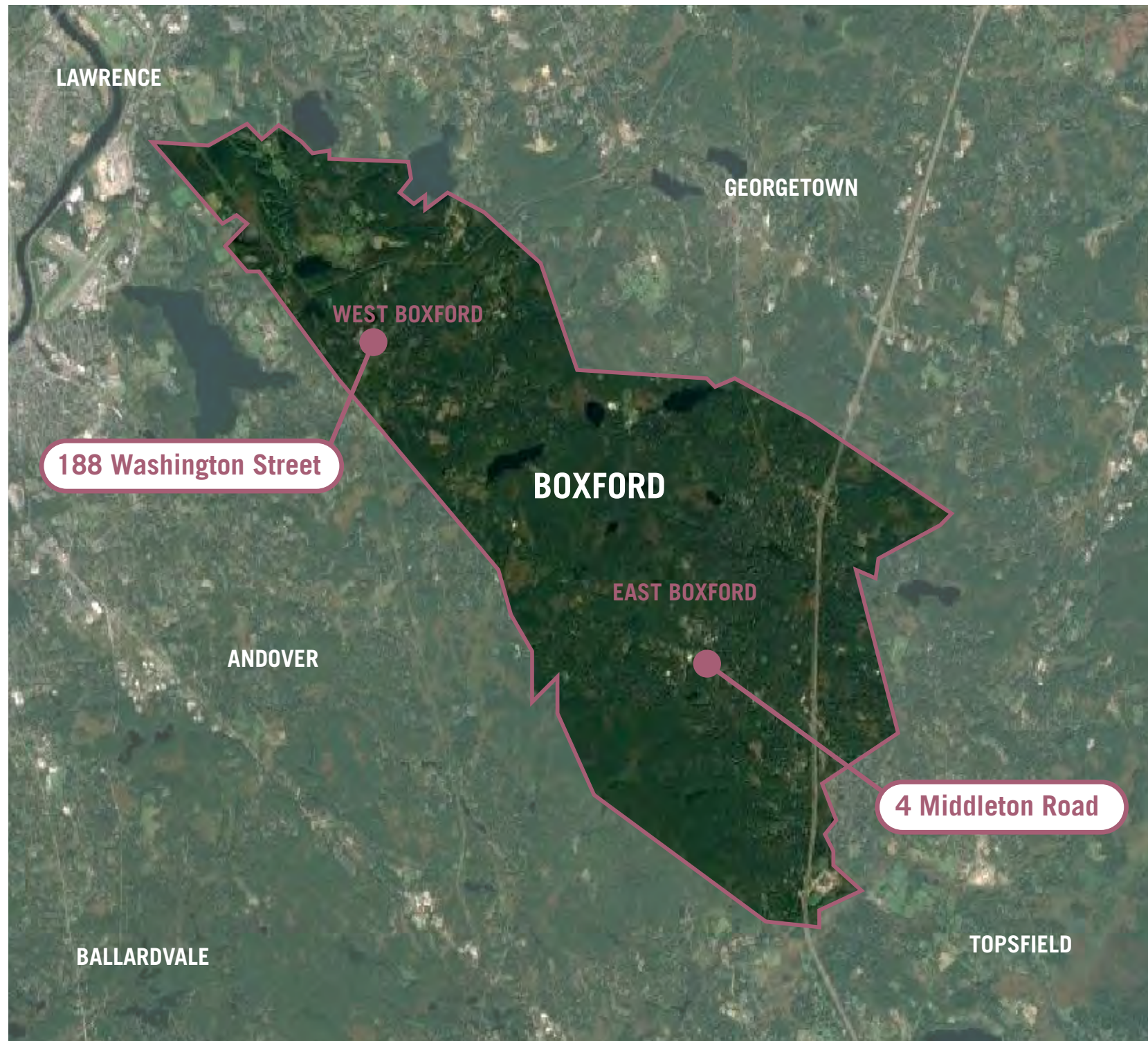
Site Context

Surrounding Context

Situated at the heart of East Boxford and West Boxford respectively, the two sites at 4 Middleton Road and 188 Washington Street have served the community of Boxford for years. With each site acting as a cornerstone of the community, this reprogramming study aims to maintain the prominence of each of the two buildings as assets to the surrounding community.

4 Middleton Road

4 Middleton Road is located in the Boxford Village Historic District, in East Boxford, located between Middleton Road and Elm Street. Originally built around 1890 as the original town hall of Boxford, the buildings has since served several municipal functions over time.

188 Washington Street

188 Washington Street, previously the Morse School as well as the West Boxford Library, is located in the center of West Boxford along Route 133.

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II. Programming & Planning

Market Analysis

A comprehensive market analysis completed throughout the duration of the project, informed programming discussions for the two properties, providing guidance for viable programming within the area.

Key Findings

The key findings, summarized here, influenced the chosen programming recommendations for each site to determine the most impactful programming scenarios to support the surrounding community. The following findings regarding demographics, economic base, and real estate & development provided a basis for evaluating new programming in the area with the best chance of economic success.

See Appendix I: Market Analysis for full results

Demographics

POPULATION: 8,188

The town's **median age of 49.5** is quite high compared to the county (40.8) and the Workforce Development Area WDA (40.1) and average household size in Boxford is decreasing. Furthermore, an increasing number of people are living alone. While this generally means that residents are more well-established and financially secure compared to places with low median ages, it does suggest that many residents are approaching or have reached retirement age and staying in place. This **spending power** can be a **draw for businesses**, particularly those reliant on consumer spending such as **retailers** or **food and beverage.**

Economic Base

Nearly 2,200 more people leave Boxford to go to work than travel to Boxford to work, **decreasing the town's daytime population** by more than a quarter. This can make it more difficult to support commercial activity, since the number of **hyperlocal customers decreases** so significantly for much of the day. However, Boxford has an opportunity to build off the **consistent presence of residents from neighboring communities**, enticing them to return during nights and weekends or otherwise frequent local businesses. The largest industries by employment in Boxford are **Educational Services, Government, and Construction.**

Real Estate & Development

Existing office real estate trends and projections of regional employment growth suggest that there may be **demand for office space**. The retail sector in Boxford's trade area is a net exporter of sales —indicating that overall, people leave Boxford to shop elsewhere. The **retail gap of $582 million** could reflect **demand for 16,900 sf 33,900 sf** of additional retail space, depending on Boxford's ability to capture a small portion of spending that is currently leaving the trade area. The biggest beneficiaries of recaptured sales are likely to be **food and beverage stores, general merchandise stores, and restaurants and drinking establishments.**

MARKET ANALYSIS
COMMERCIAL PROGRAMMING

Commercial Programming Recommendations

An analysis of the existing market in Boxford led to the following commercial programming recommendations for each site. The opportunity for housing was considered, however, it was determined that both sites are not suitable to accommodate residential programming within the existing structure and would require more extensive approach for development at each site, which would be in conflict with the desires voiced by the community.

188 Washington Street

COMMERCIAL PROGRAMMING:

- **Restaurant**
- **Food & Beverage Stores**
- **Retail**
- **Office**

Because it is a higher-traffic location with excellent visibility and ample parking retail uses such as **restaurant, food and beverage store, misc. retail, or personal care** would be appropriate. Retail would also complement existing uses along this stretch of Washington St, creating **an expanded activity hub**. Office could also be feasible, but analysis suggests that retail is probably in higher demand in the near term. These proposed commercial uses would not restrict or prevent the utilization of the baseball field and recreation on the site, but would compliment the existing public recreation while further activating the site.

4 Middleton Road

COMMERCIAL PROGRAMMING:

- **Offices**
- **Small Business**
- **Professional Services**

As a multistory building with a small footprint, the Middleton Road property is likely a better fit for **office** users. Focusing on the flexibility of the layout and targeting **small businesses** in the **professional services** sectors will help ensure that the space stays accessible to as many **businesses, non-profits, self-employed workers, and extended proprietors** as possible.

See Appendix I: Market Analysis for full results

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
ONLINE SURVEY, VIRTUAL WORKSHOP, + IN-PERSON WORKSHOP (371 PARTICIPANTS)

Community Engagement

Community engagement allows the creation of spaces which foster a sense of ownership, amplifying a collective sense of belonging and place. In order to achieve goals of equity, diversity, justice, and inclusion, we need to create spaces that nurture a sense of community amongst all.

The project team underwent an in-depth community engagement process to gain a better understand of the needs of the community and help develop a shared vision for the future use of 4 Middleton Road and 188 Washington Street. The project team gathered feedback from community members through three different forms of engagement (an asynchronous survey, a virtual workshop, and an in-person workshop) to ensure that the community engagement process captured as many audiences as possible. The results gathered throughout this process are summarized here in this report.

See Appendix II: Community Engagement for full results

*Disclaimer: The online survey did not limit the number of allowed responses and therefore community members may have voted more than once.

Community Engagement Participants

With a total of 371 participants, the community engagement process for this project gathered feedback representing nearly 5% of the total population of Boxford.
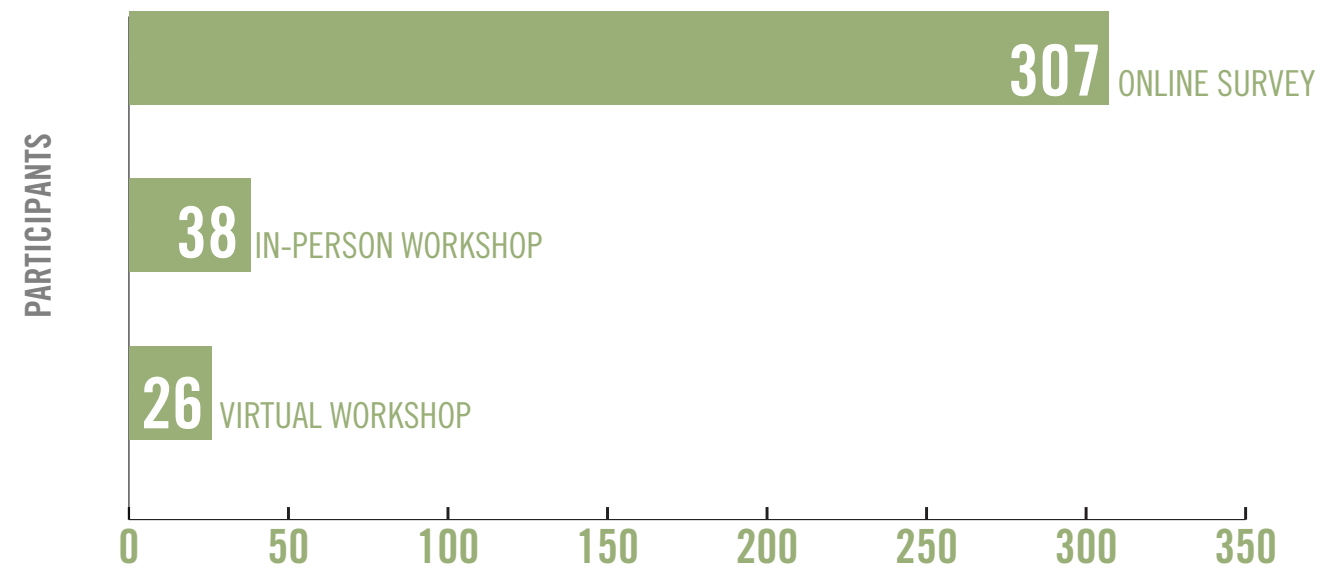
5/15 IN-PERSON WORKSHOP: Project Presentation, Group Discussion, and "Be the Architect Activity"

5/18 VIRTUAL WORKSHOP: Project Presentation and Group Discussion

1 MONTH ONLINE SURVEY: Discussion Questions and Open Answer Comments

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ONLINE SURVEY, VIRTUAL WORKSHOP, + IN-PERSON WORKSHOP (371 PARTICIPANTS)

What is Boxford Missing?

Community engagement results across the three different modes of engagement led to consensus of the top programming missing in Boxford. With the majority of participants listing **Food & Beverage, Recreation, Community Programming,** and **Retail** as the top four responses.
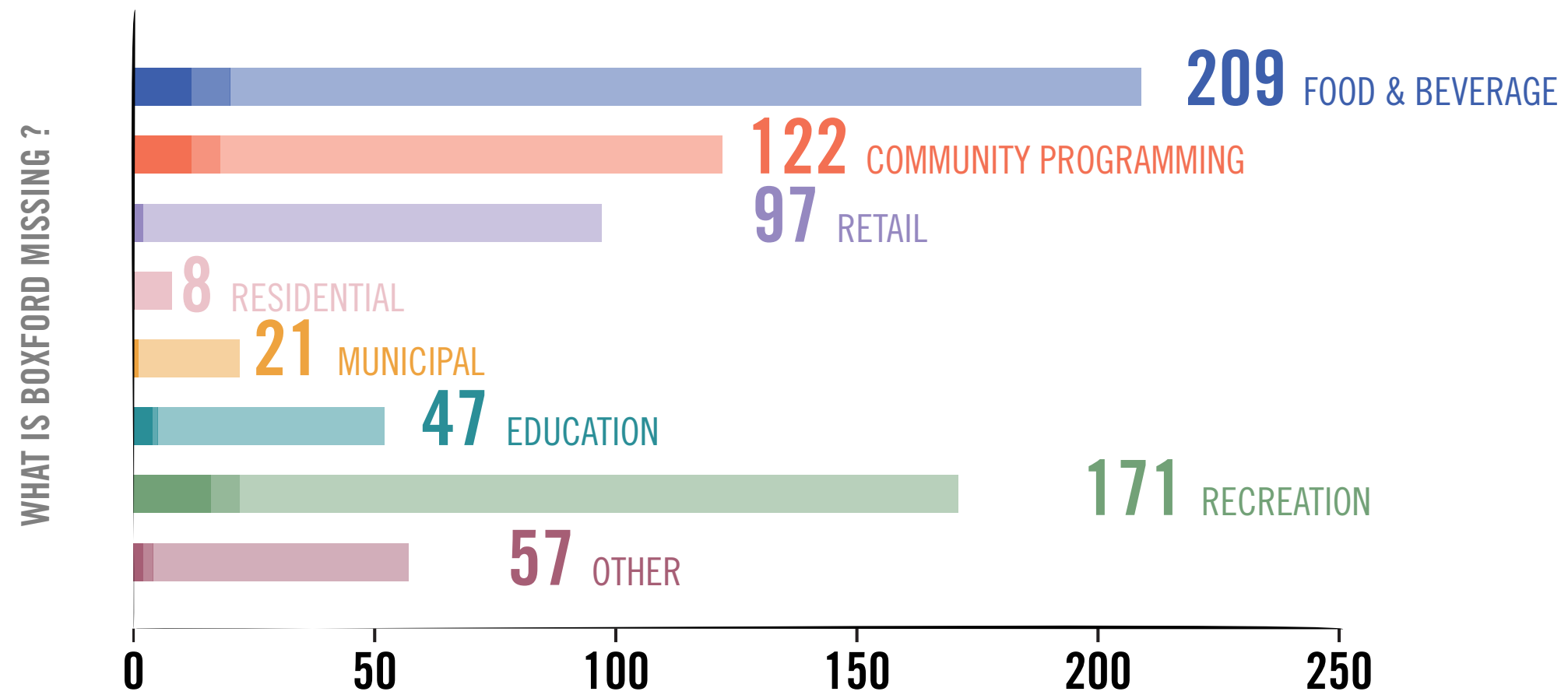
WHAT IS BOXFORD MISSING ?

- 209 FOOD & BEVERAGE
- 122 COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING
- 97 RETAIL
- 8 RESIDENTIAL
- 21 MUNICIPAL
- 47 EDUCATION
- 171 RECREATION
- 57 OTHER

0   50   100   150   200   250

See Appendix II: Community Engagement for full results

*Disclaimer: The online survey did not limit the number of allowed responses and therefore community members may have voted more than once. However, consensus from in-person and virtual workshops reflected similar results.

PROGRAMMING
PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Programming Recommendations

An analysis of the programming results from the community engagement process in conjunction with the results of the market analysis helped determine the following set of programming recommendations.

188 Washington Street

1 FOOD & BEVERAGE
#1 Response from Community | Supported by Market Findings

2 RECREATION
#2 Response from Community

3 RETAIL
#5 Response from Community | Supported by Market Findings

4 COMMUNITY CENTER
#3 Response from Community

4 Middleton Road

1 NON-PROFIT YOUTH PROGRAMMING
#1 Response from Community

2 RETAIL
#2 Response from Community | Supported by Market Findings

3 PERFORMANCE / ARTIST SPACE
#3 Response from Community

4 FOOD & BEVERAGE
#4 Response from Community | Supported by Market Findings

Each site having unique conditions, the programming for the two properties was determined separately. Accounting for factors of site location and adjacent programming, the chosen programming aims to complement the existing programming and site conditions surrounding each property. With community feedback to preserve the existing structures, another important factor for determining programming is the building structure itself. Ensuring that the existing layout can support the new program requirements, the recommended programming aligns with the existing conditions at each site, with additional recommendations for accessibility and systems upgrades (See Town of Boxford Facility Municipal Plan (2018)).
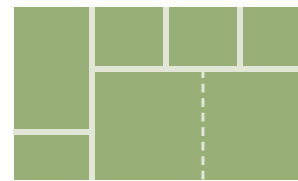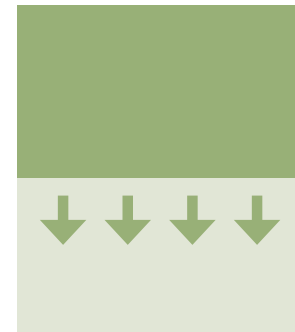
Site Approach

A. MINIMAL RE-USE

Minimal renovation to support new programming and re-use of the space.

B. EXPANSION

Increased building footprint to provide more square footage for new programming.

C. TEAR-DOWN

Demolish existing structure to allow space for new construction to support new programming.

The three site approach strategies shown above of A) Minimal Re-use, B) Expansion, and C) Tear-down can serve as a tool when opening up discussions about redeveloping the two surplus properties at 188 Washington Street and 4 Middleton Road. These three site strategies were discussed throughout the duration of this study, with the project team, the ARBA committee, and community members alike. Depending on the chosen programming scenario, the three different site approaches each have benefits and challenges. While some site strategies lend themselves to certain programming, other can open up new possibilities. Whereas a site approach of minimal re-use may be limiting based on factors of square footage and existing building conditions, it can also help ensure that the reprogramming of the site complements the character of the town. Meanwhile, a site approach that looks to expand the existing building, can allow for additional square footage opening up new possibilities for programming to support the town's needs. Finally, a site approach that looks to demolish the existing structure is the most drastic approach, and although it can allow for new programming opportunities, it can also have drawbacks in the possible impacts on the surrounding area.

II. Programming & Planning
Site Approach

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Site Approach

A. MINIMAL RE-USE

54%

A. MINIMAL RE-USE

70%
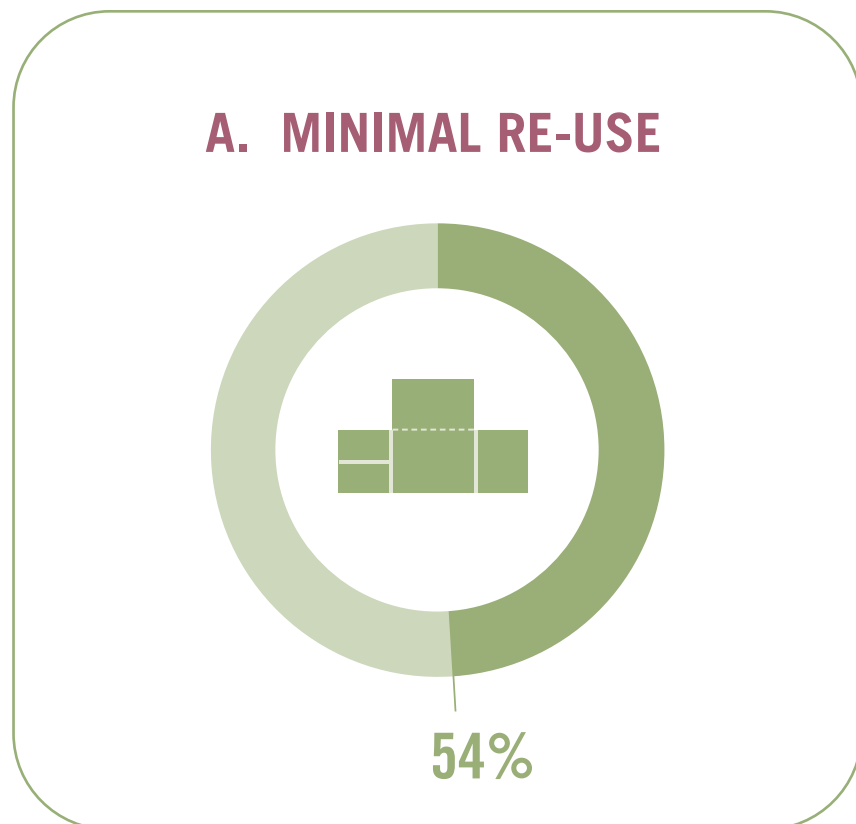
188 Washington Street

The findings of this study indicate that the community would prefer that the existing structure be preserved at 188 Washington Street, with only minimal renovation to bring the building into it's new programming. More than half of community engagement participants voted for this approach. However, the required accessibility upgrades and systems upgrades at this site are substantial and may inform decisions to expand the existing square footage.
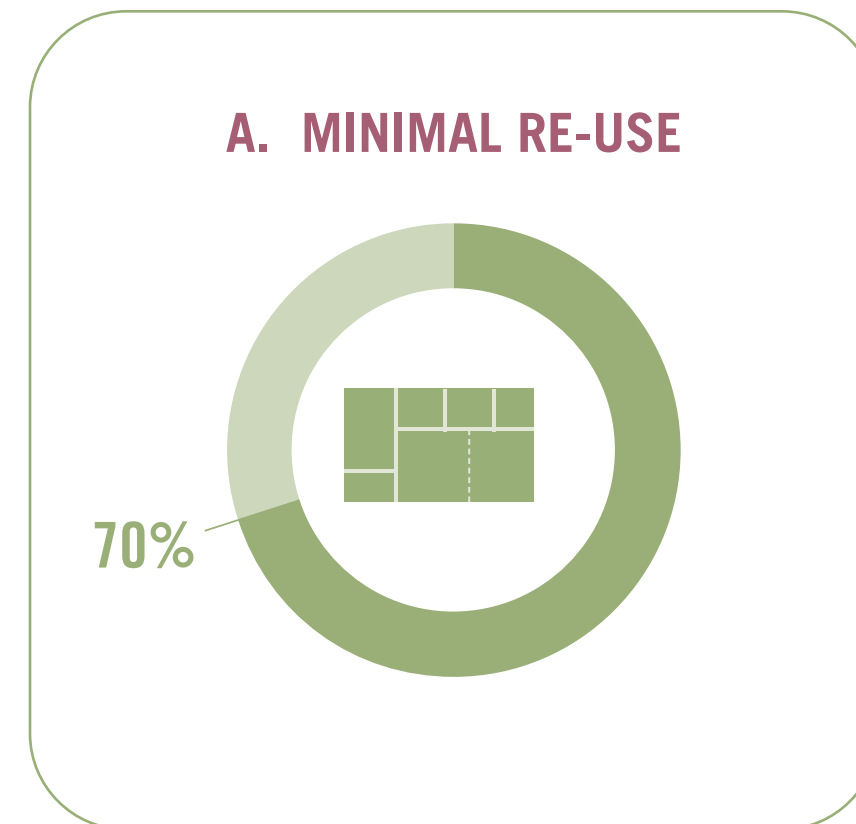
4 Middleton Road

The findings of this study indicate that the community would prefer that the existing structure be preserved at 4 Middleton Road. Sited in the Boxford Village Historic District, 70% of the community engagement participants voted for minimal re-use. It is recommended that the future programming work within the existing envelope, while implementing an interior renovation to support new programming and surface-level upgrades to the exterior.

II. Programming & Planning
Ownership Models

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II. 188 Washington Street

EXISTING CONDITIONS

188 WASHINGTON STREET

188 Washington Street

~ 5000SF (on 5.13 acres)

Previously the West Boxford Library, 188 Washington Street is a single-story brick building located along Route 133 in West Boxford. 188 Washington Street has sat vacant in recent years after the library relocated to a new location in West Boxford. The building is currently used only for storage. While the ground floor of the one-story structure has an accessible front entry, the unfinished basement is not accessible. The building is accompanied by 34 parking spaces along with other recreation spaces across the site.

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EXISTING CONDITIONS

188 WASHINGTON STREET

Exterior

Reading Room (106)

Work Room (104)

188 Washington Street

~ 5000SF

- Ground floor consists of a 1,500 sf reading room and a small office.

- Unfinished basement currently used as storage only.

- Construction of a septic system for any new building program.

- Requires accessibility and systems upgrades.

Basement Storage (001)

Basement Storage (002)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

188 WASHINGTON STREET

Site Conditions
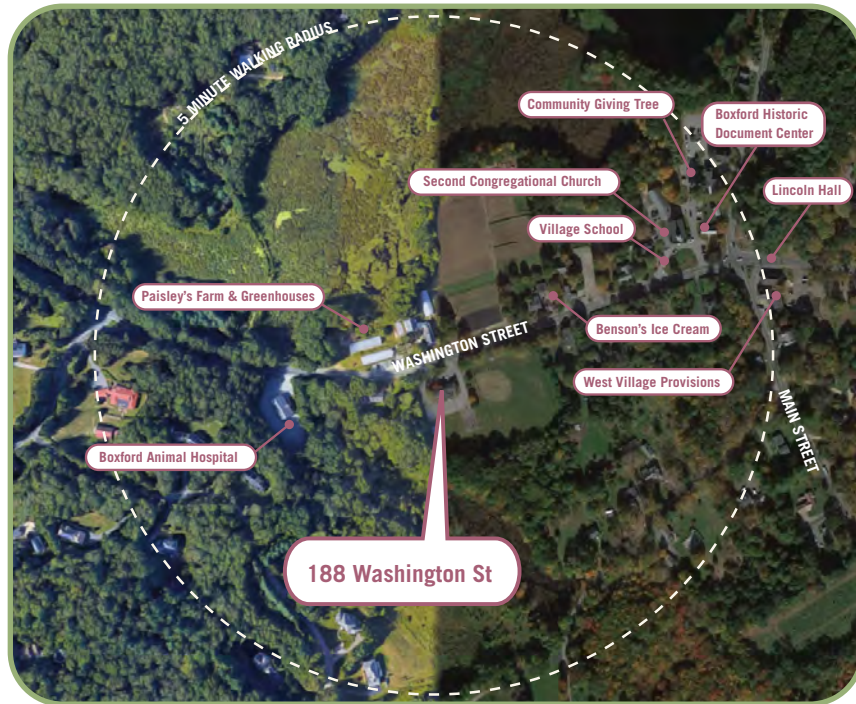
Site Activity

Situated at the center of West Boxford, 188 Washington Street has a variety of activity surrounding the site that should be considered in any future planning. Some of the key site activity that should be considered in any future planning for the site include traffic from Route 133, existing seasonal activity, as well as a mix of activity from the existing programming at intersection of Washington St and Main St. Existing activity on the site should also be taken into consideration with an existing baseball field, basketball court, and a gazebo.

Existing Conditions Site Plan at 188 Washington Street.
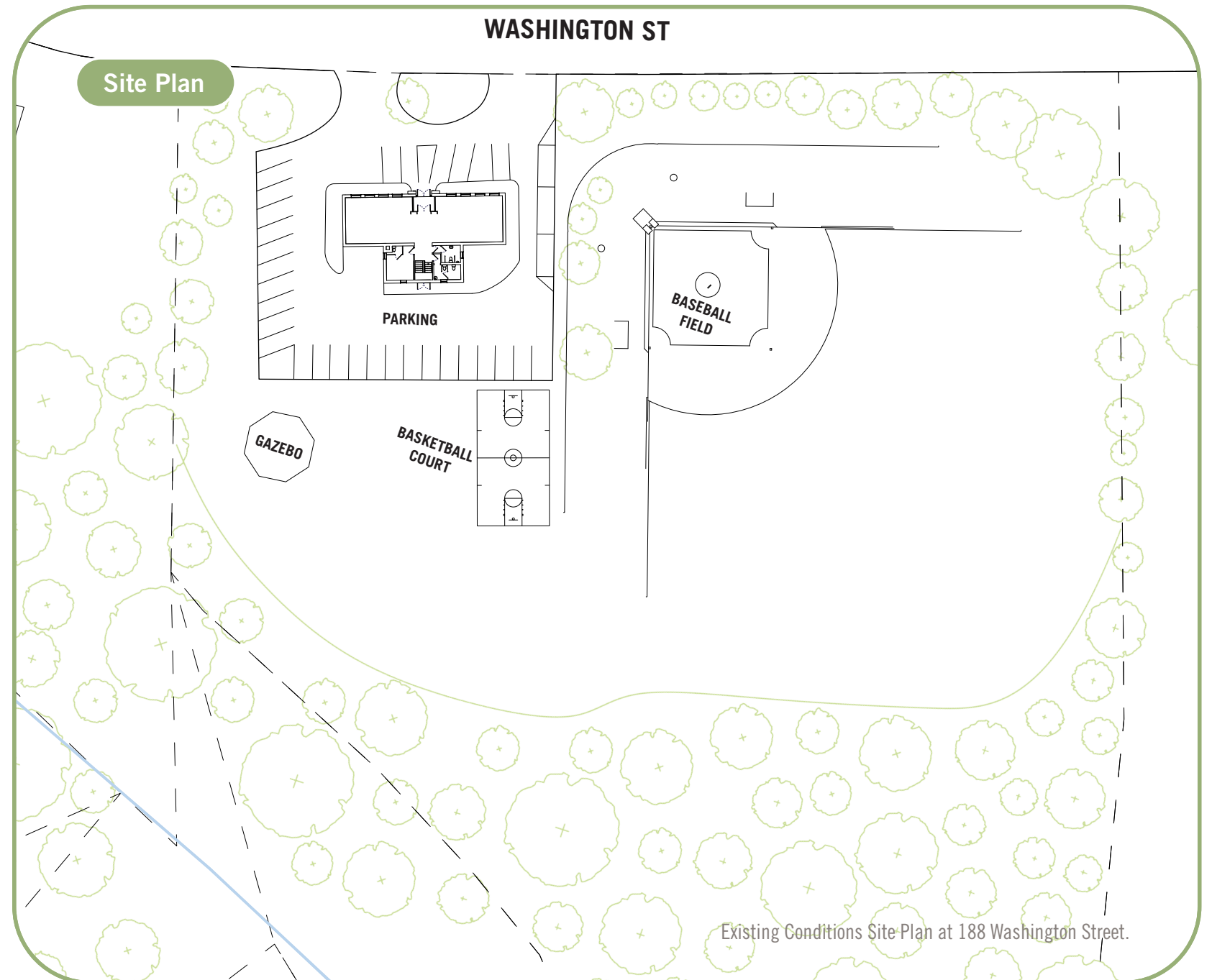
EXISTING CONDITIONS

188 WASHINGTON STREET

Ground Floor Plan

GROSS SQUARE FOOTAGE: 2,500 SF

WOMEN
102

OFFICE
104
200 sf

MEN
101

BATHROOM
105

DN

LIBRARY
106
1,500 sf

VESTIBULE
107

0'   4'   8'   12'
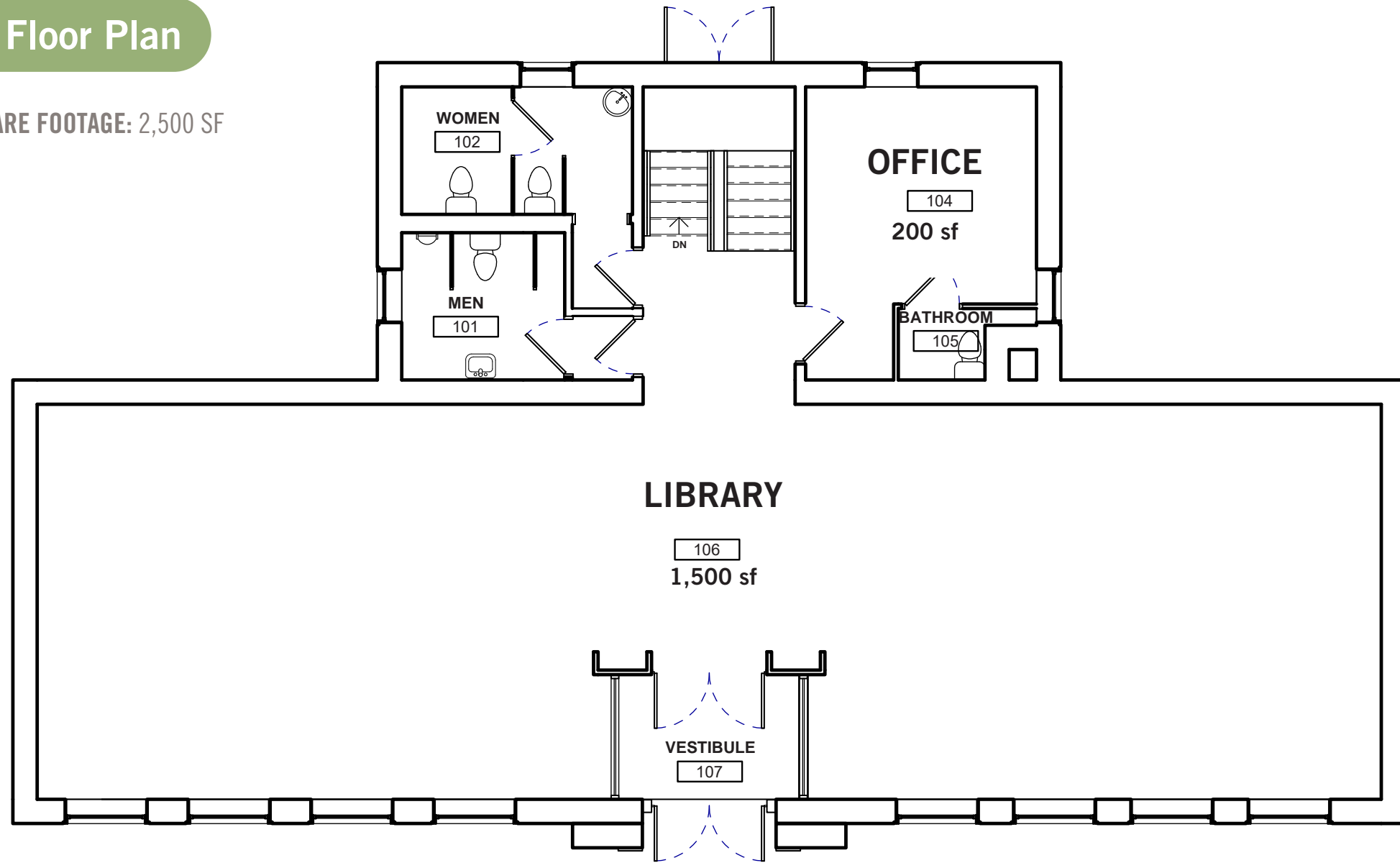
Source: Town of Boxford, MA Targeted Municipal Facilities Master Plan | Harriman

II. 188 Washington Street
Existing Conditions

Basement Floor Plan

GROSS SQUARE FOOTAGE: 2,500 SF

Not for Public Use, Storage Only
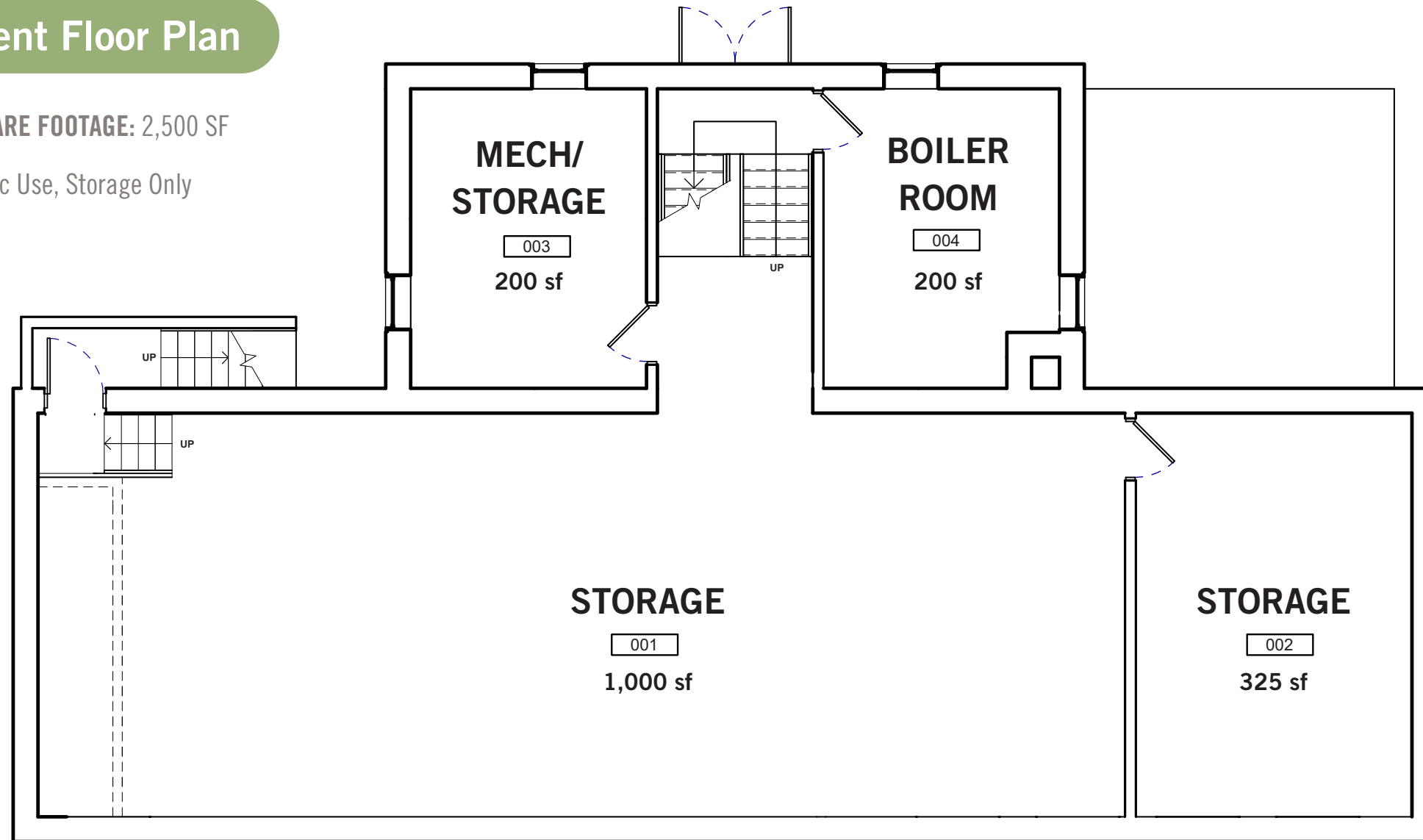
MECH/ STORAGE
003
200 sf

BOILER ROOM
004
200 sf

UP

UP

UP

STORAGE
001
1,000 sf

STORAGE
002
325 sf

0'   4'   8'   12'

Programming Scenarios

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMMING:

1 **FOOD & BEVERAGE**

2 **RECREATION**

3 **RETAIL**

4 **LIBRARY / COMMUNITY CENTER**

Based on the recommended program for 188 Washington Street of food & beverage, recreation, retail, and community center, a set of programming scenarios was developed. These programming scenarios aim to address the different possibilities to help guide any future planning efforts for the property.

A pre-schematic level set of plan schemes was developed to evaluate the spatial implications of each program scenario. Each program scenario will also require key accessibility and systems upgrades required to support the new programming.

Scenario 1 - Tavern / Retail

PROGRAMMING:

Restaurant + Pub, Small Retail, Basement Storage

Scenario 1 rethinks 188 Washington Street as a new commercial hub in the town, complete with a small restaurant & pub, complemented by niche retail programming.

Scenario 2 - Community Center

PROGRAMMING:

Community Programming, Basement Library Archive

Scenario 2 rethinks 188 Washington Street as a new community center, complete with classrooms, a library archive, and a large gathering space to host events.

Scenario 3 - Retail Market

PROGRAMMING:

Retail & Open Market

Scenario 3 rethinks 188 Washington Street as a new retail space in town, bringing in opportunities for small business owners with an open market for pop-up vendors and two small retail spaces available for lease.

PROGRAMMING SCENARIO 1

188 WASHINGTON STREET (5,000 SF)

Ground Floor Plan

PROGRAMMING:

Restaurant & Pub, Small Retail

OCCUPANCY:

60 People
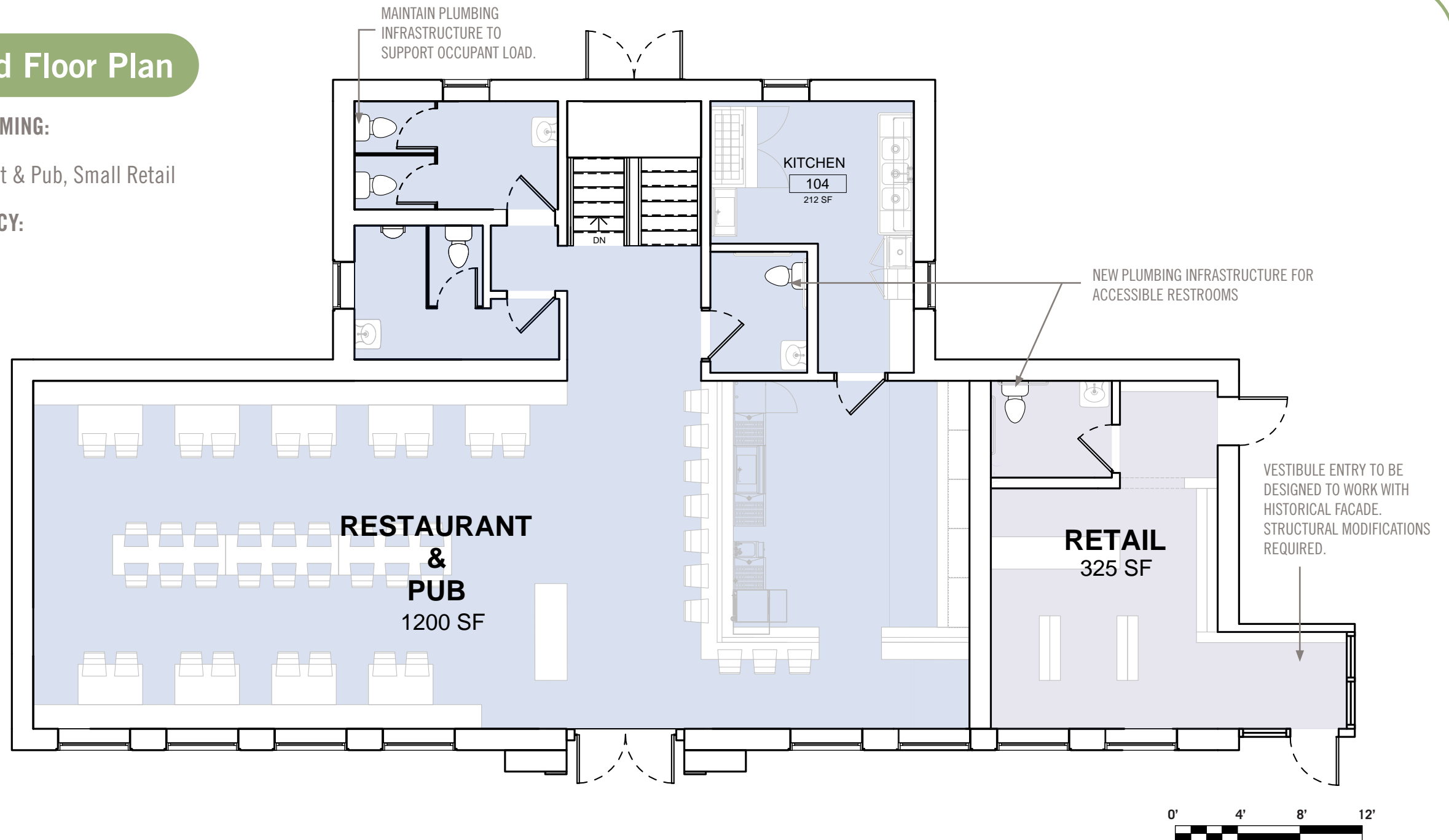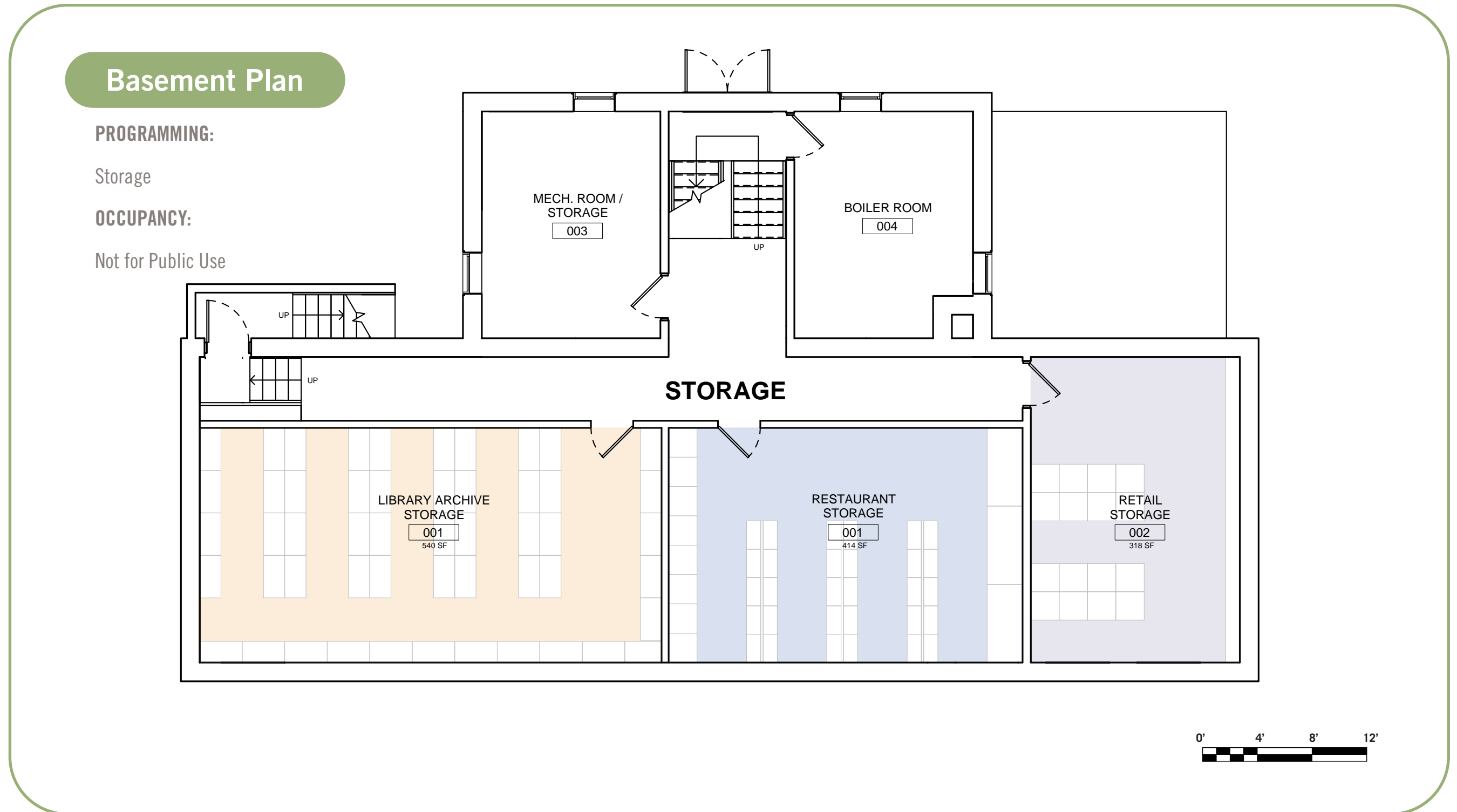
MAINTAIN PLUMBING INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT OCCUPANT LOAD.

KITCHEN
104
212 SF

NEW PLUMBING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ACCESSIBLE RESTROOMS

DN

RESTAURANT & PUB
1200 SF

RETAIL
325 SF

VESTIBULE ENTRY TO BE DESIGNED TO WORK WITH HISTORICAL FACADE. STRUCTURAL MODIFICATIONS REQUIRED.

0'   4'   8'   12'

PROGRAMMING SCENARIO 1

188 WASHINGTON STREET (5,000 SF)

Basement Plan

PROGRAMMING:

Storage

OCCUPANCY:

Not for Public Use

MECH. ROOM /
STORAGE
003

BOILER ROOM
004

UP

UP

UP

STORAGE

LIBRARY ARCHIVE
STORAGE
001
540 SF

RESTAURANT
STORAGE
001
414 SF

RETAIL
STORAGE
002
318 SF

0'   4'   8'   12'

PROGRAMMING SCENARIO 2

188 WASHINGTON STREET (5,000 SF)

Ground Floor Plan

PROGRAMMING:

Community Programming

OCCUPANCY:

50 People

ACCESSIBLE RESTROOMS.

RESTROOM
102

PRIVATE
MEETING ROOM
104
184 SF

DN

RESTROOM
101

LIFT

LIFT FOR ACCESS TO
BASEMENT LEVEL

COMMUNITY CENTER
2000 SF

0'   4'   8'   12'

PROGRAMMING SCENARIO 2

188 WASHINGTON STREET (5,000 SF)

Basement Plan

PROGRAMMING:

Community Center Classrooms

OCCUPANCY:

50 People

MECH. ROOM /
STORAGE
003

BOILER ROOM
004

LIFT

LIFT FOR ACCESS TO
BASEMENT LEVEL

UP

UP

UP

**COMMUNITY CENTER /
LIBRARY ARCHIVE**

CLASSROOM
001A
255 SF

CLASSROOM
001B
255 SF

CLASSROOM
002
414 SF

LIBRARY ARCHIVE
002
318 SF

0'   4'   8'   12'

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PROGRAMMING SCENARIO 3

188 WASHINGTON STREET (5,000 SF)

Ground Floor Plan

PROGRAMMING:

Retail

OCCUPANCY:

40 People

MAINTAIN PLUMBING INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT OCCUPANT LOAD.

OFFICE
104
159 SF

ACCESSIBLE RESTROOM

DN

RETAIL
600 SF

LOBBY
300 SF

RETAIL
600 SF

0'   4'   8'   12'
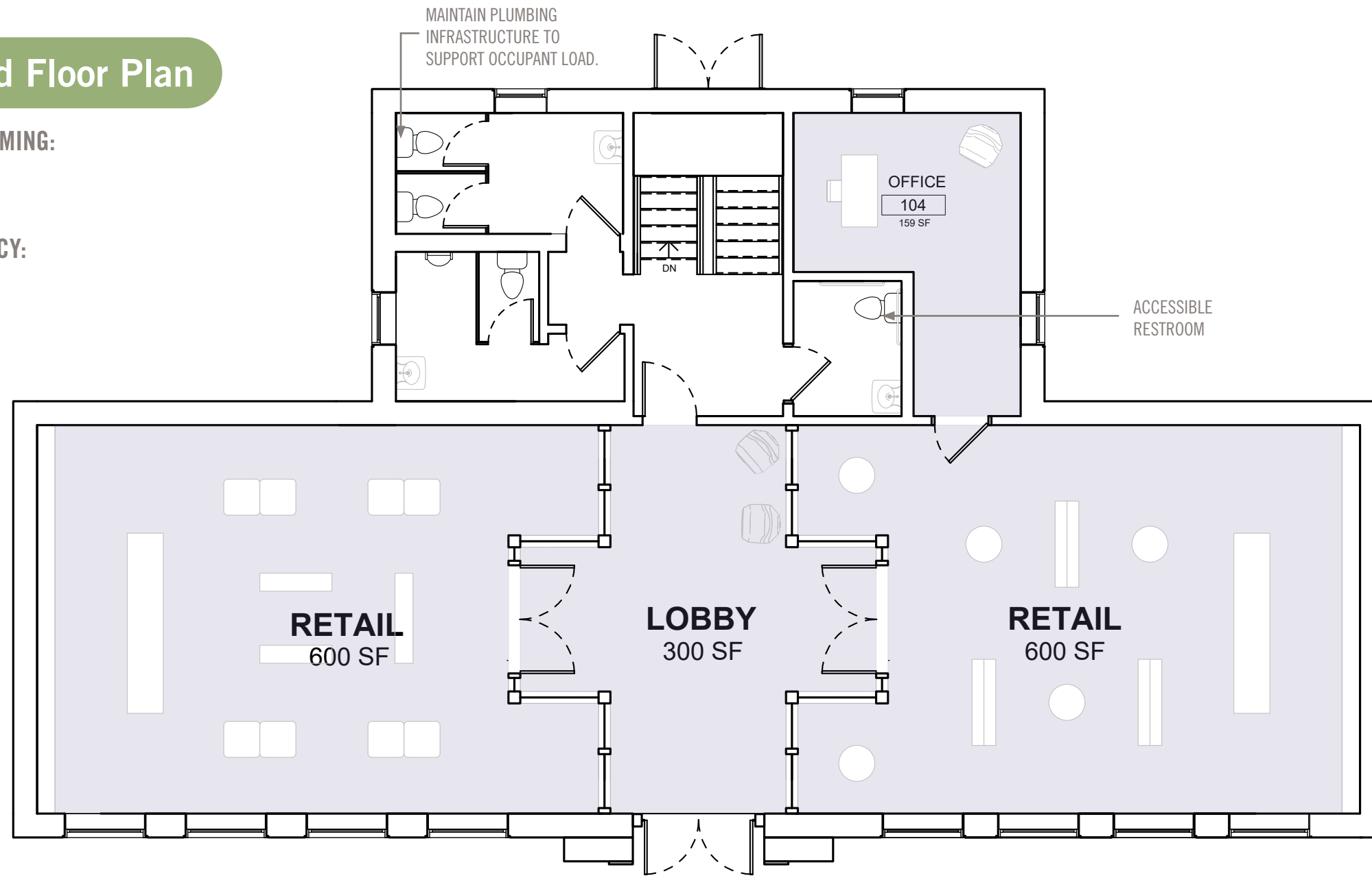
III. 4 Middleton Road

III. 4 Middleton Road
Existing Conditions

4 Middleton Road

~ 3200SF (on .54 acres)

Previously the Boxford Community Center and Boxford Council on Aging, 4 Middleton Road lies in the Boxford Village Historic District, across from Historic Cummings House and the new Community Center for the Council in Aging at 10 Elm. Originally the first town hall of Boxford, built in 1891, the structure has served several municipal functions over time.

The building was vacated in 2023 when the Council on Aging moved across the street. This change, leaves space for a new vision for 4 Middleton Road to be reprogrammed as a 21st century asset for the community.

Recent upgrades to the building have improved the accessibility of the space, providing an accessible entry from the rear parking lot and elevator access to the first and second floor.

III. 4 Middleton Road

Existing Conditions

Exterior

Meeting Room (106)

Kitchen (109)

4 Middleton Road

~ 3200SF

- Ground floor program consists of small offices and one 400sf meeting room with an adjoined kitchen.

- Second floor program consists of 900sf auditorium with adjacent support spaces of stage, kitchen, and an office.

- Ramp + Lift Access added recently. Additional accessibility, systems, and deferred maintenance issues still remain.

Auditorium (201)

Office (202)

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III. 4 Middleton Road
Existing Conditions

Site Conditions
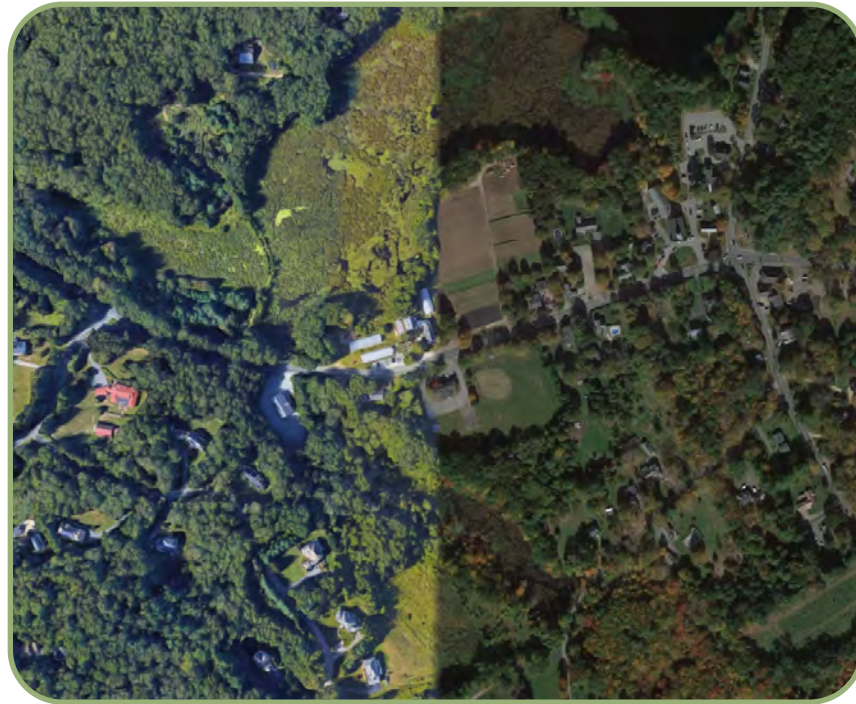
Site Activity

Situated in the center of the Boxford Village Historic District in East Boxford, 4 Middleton Road previously served as the Boxford Community Center and Council on Aging. The site is surrounded by a variety of existing programming with an emphasis on community activity, including new programming at 10 Elm, with additional food & beverage activity at Boxford Community Kitchen (AKA Wayne's / Jack's). The site currently sits vacant, apart from remaining storage for the CoA and occasional use of green space for community events.

Site Plan

MIDDLETON RD

PICNIC / EVENT SPACE

PARKING

ELM ST

STORAGE SHED

Existing Conditions Site Plan at 4 Middleton Road.

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III. 4 Middleton Road
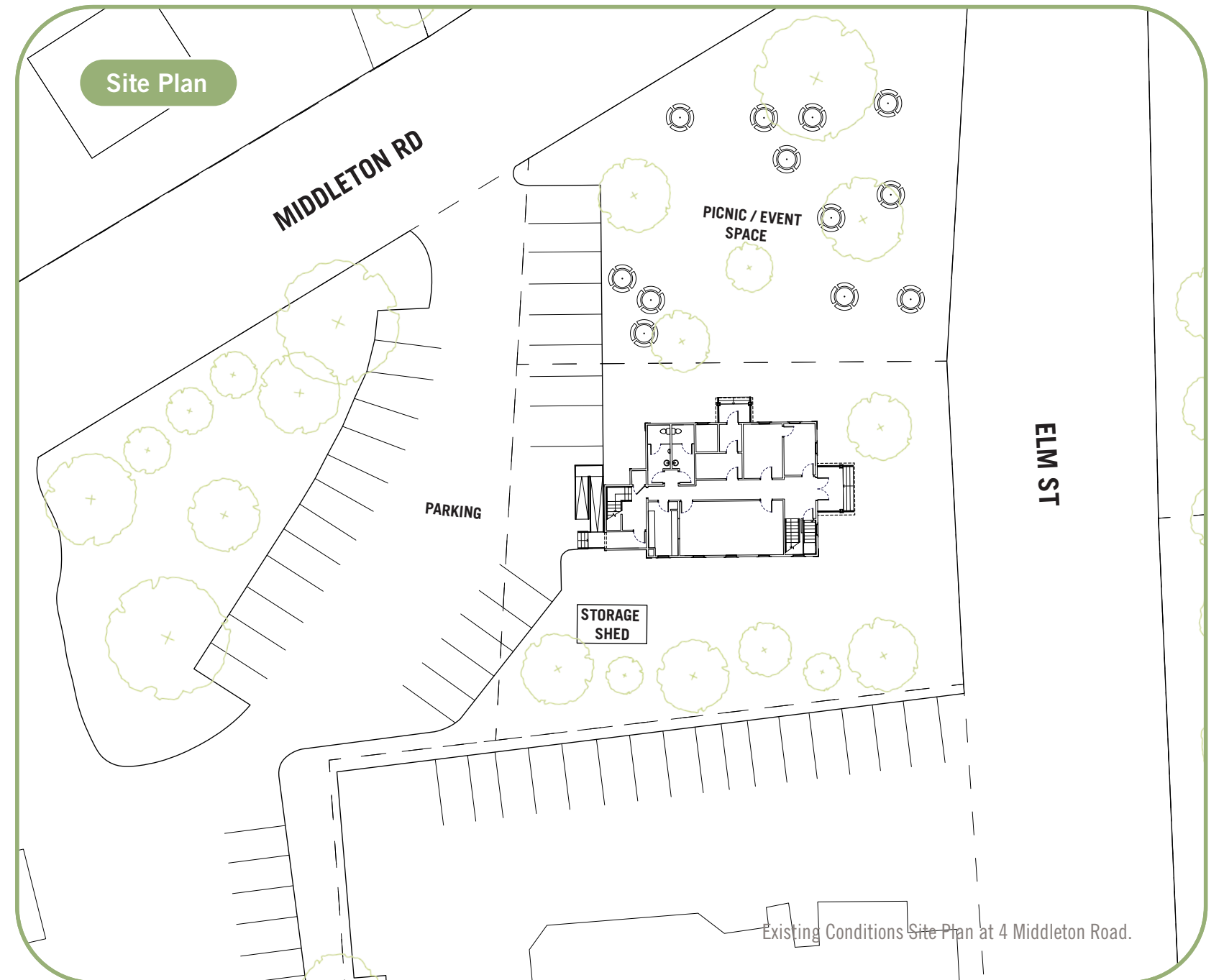
Existing Conditions

Ground Floor Plan
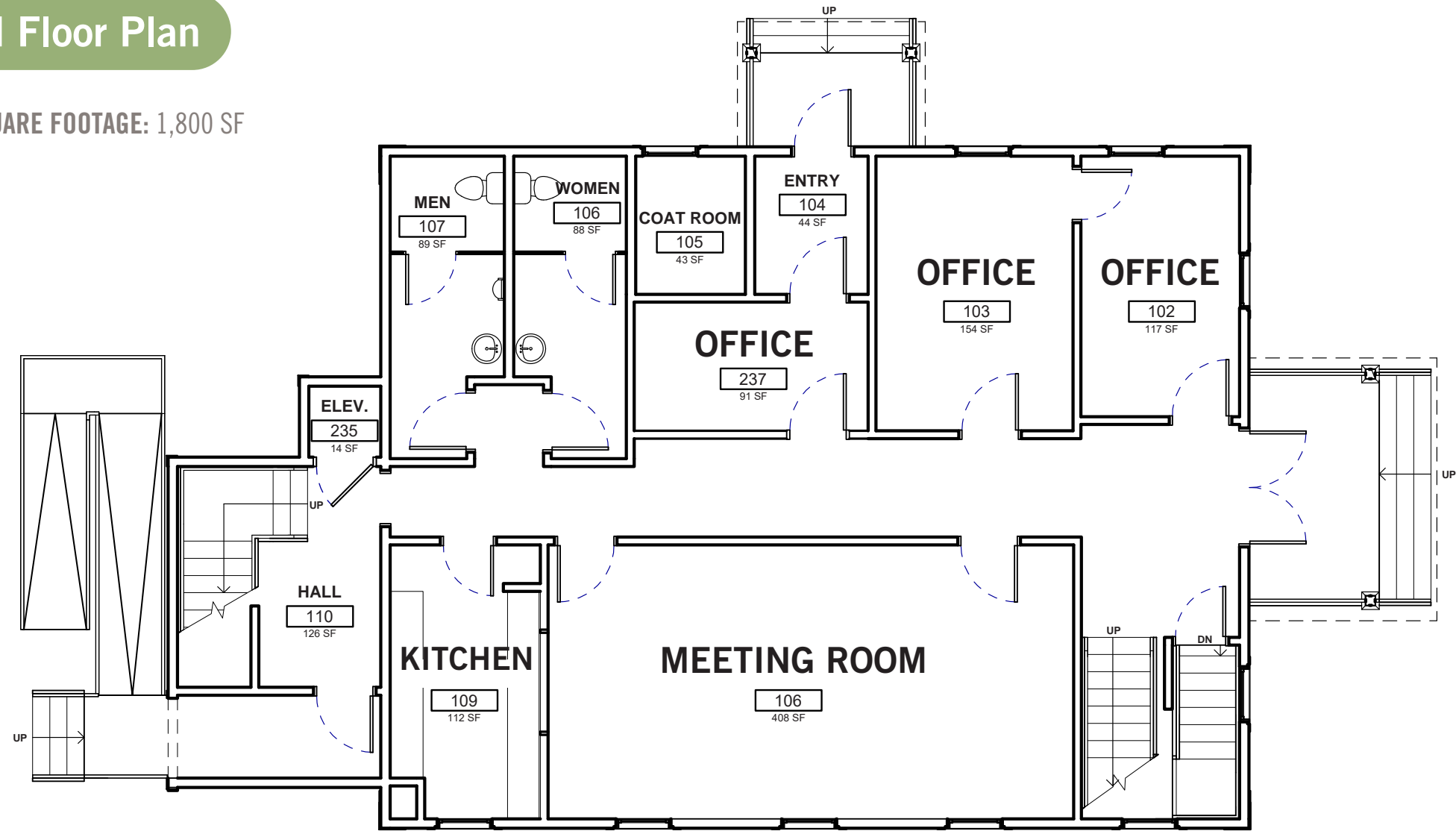
GROSS SQUARE FOOTAGE: 1,800 SF

MEN 107 89 SF

WOMEN 106 88 SF

COAT ROOM 105 43 SF

ENTRY 104 44 SF

OFFICE 237 91 SF

OFFICE 103 154 SF

OFFICE 102 117 SF

ELEV. 235 14 SF

HALL 110 126 SF

KITCHEN 109 112 SF

MEETING ROOM 106 408 SF

UP

0'   4'   8'   12'

Boxford, MA | Village Centers Programming & Planning Study

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III. 4 Middleton Road
Existing Conditions

Second Floor Plan

GROSS SQUARE FOOTAGE: 1,800 SF

KITCHEN
203

MEZZANINE LEVEL ABOVE

OFFICE
202
117 SF

ELEV.
235
14 SF

STAGE

AUDITORIUM
201

DN

UP

UP   DN

0'   4'   8'   12'

III. 4 Middleton Road
Programming Scenarios

Programming Scenarios

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMMING:

1 YOUTH PROGRAMMING
2 RETAIL
3 PERFORMANCE / ARTIST SPACE
4 FOOD & BEVERAGE

Based on the recommended program for 4 Middleton Road of a youth center, retail, performance or artist space, and food and beverage, a set of programming scenarios was developed. These programming scenarios aim to address the different possibilities to help guide any future planning efforts for the property.

A pre-schematic level set of plan schemes was developed to evaluate the spatial implications of each program scenario. Each program scenario would require key accessibility and systems upgrades required to support the new programming.

Scenario 1 - Arts Hub

PROGRAMMING:

Artist Co-working Space, Art Gallery, and Performance Space

Scenario 1 rethinks 4 Middleton Road as a new arts hub in the town. This vision for a flexible artist co-working space on the ground floor can support local artists with artist classrooms and workspaces that can be converted into an art gallery for artist display along with a refurbished performance hall upstairs.

Scenario 2 - Restaurant & Youth Center

PROGRAMMING:

Food & Beverage, Pop-up Retail, Non-profit Youth Center

Scenario 2 rethinks 4 Middleton Road as a new commercial and community hub, complete with a small restaurant and pub, complemented by a pop-up retail space on the ground floor and a non-profit youth center on the second floor.

Scenario 3 - Professional Office & Co-working Space

PROGRAMMING:

Professional Office, Co-working Space

Scenario 3 rethinks 4 Middleton Road as an office space to accommodate a professional office on the ground floor and open work space for a co-working space on the second floor.

PROGRAMMING SCENARIO 1

4 MIDDLETON ROAD (3200 SF)

Ground Floor Plan

PROGRAMMING:

Artist Co-working Space / Art Gallery

OCCUPANCY:

40 People

ART GALLERY
1200 SF

MAINTAIN PLUMBING
INFRASTRUCTURE TO
SUPPORT OCCUPANT LOAD.

UP

NEW FULL-SIZE
ELEVATOR

MEN
107
89 SF

WOMEN
106
88 SF

ARTIST CO-WORK
CLASSROOM

ADMIN
OFFICE
114 SF

ELEV.
235
14 SF

UP

ARTIST CO-WORK
1200 SF

UP

HALL
110
126 SF

KITCHENETTE

BREAK ROOM
179 SF

ARTIST WORKSPACE

UP

DN

UP

0'   4'   8'   12'

MassDevelopment

STUDIO LUZ
ARCHITECTS
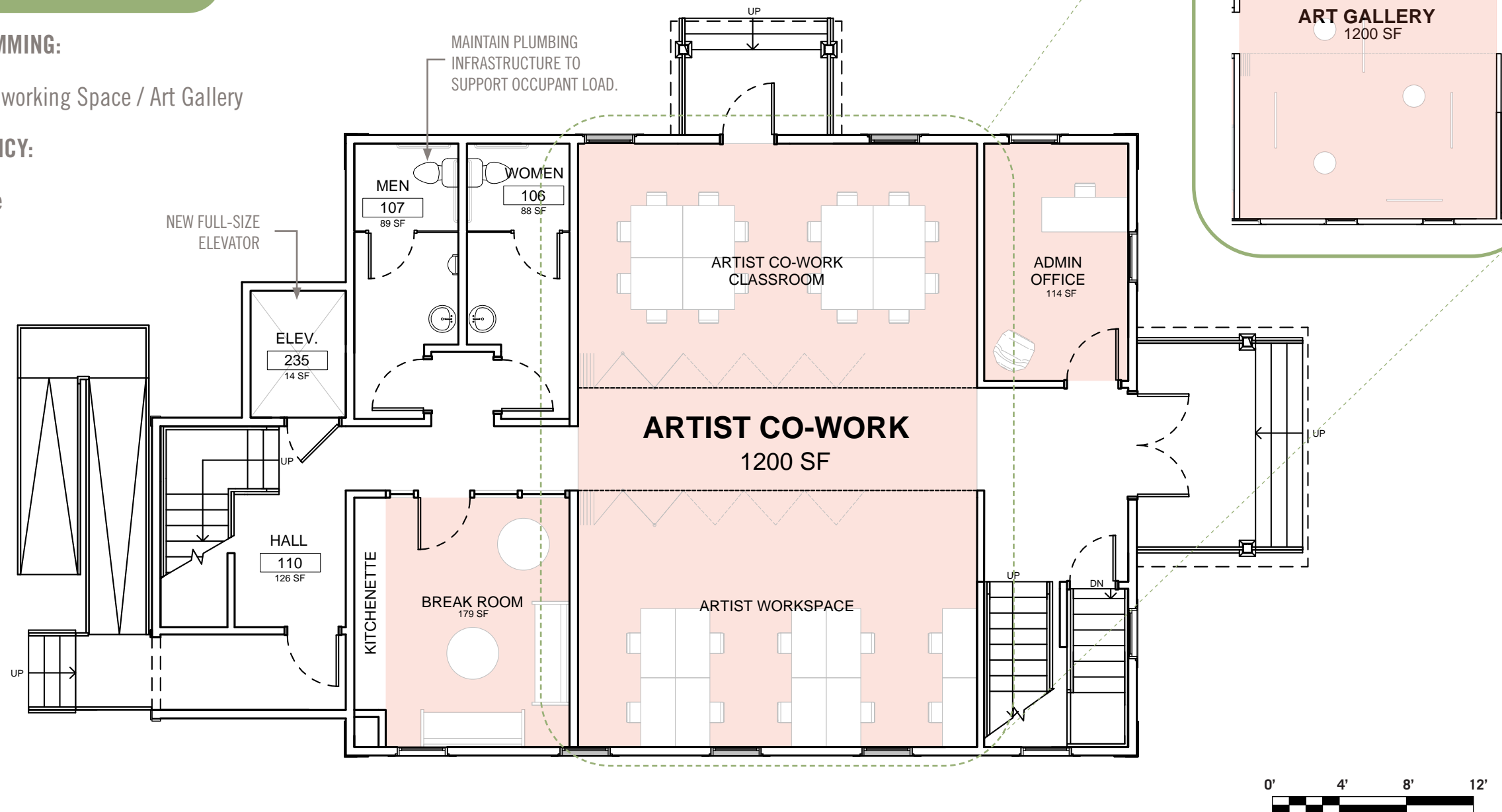
PROGRAMMING SCENARIO 1

4 MIDDLETON ROAD (3200 SF)

Second Floor Plan

PROGRAMMING:

Performance Space

OCCUPANCY:

60 People

NEW FULL-SIZE
ELEVATOR

OFFICE
203
74 SF

MEZZANINE LEVEL
ABOVE

NEW PLUMBING
INFRASTRUCTURE TO
SUPPORT OCCUPANT LOAD.

ELEV.
235
14 SF

STAGE
158 SF

**PERFORMANCE
SPACE**
1200 SF

UP

DN

DN

UP

0'   4'   8'   12'

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36

Ground Floor Plan

PROGRAMMING:

Food & Beverage, Pop-up Retail

OCCUPANCY:

Restaurant: 60 People

Retail: 20 People

NEW FULL-SIZE ELEVATOR

RESTROOM UPGRADES TO SUPPORT OCCUPANT LOAD.

UP

MEN
107
89 SF

WOMEN
106A
88 SF

POP-UP RETAIL
120 SF

ELEV.
235
14 SF

MEN
107
89 SF

WOMEN
106B
88 SF

UP

FOOD & BEVERAGE
1200 SF

UP

HALL
110
126 SF

UP

DN

KITCHEN

UP

0'   4'   8'   12'
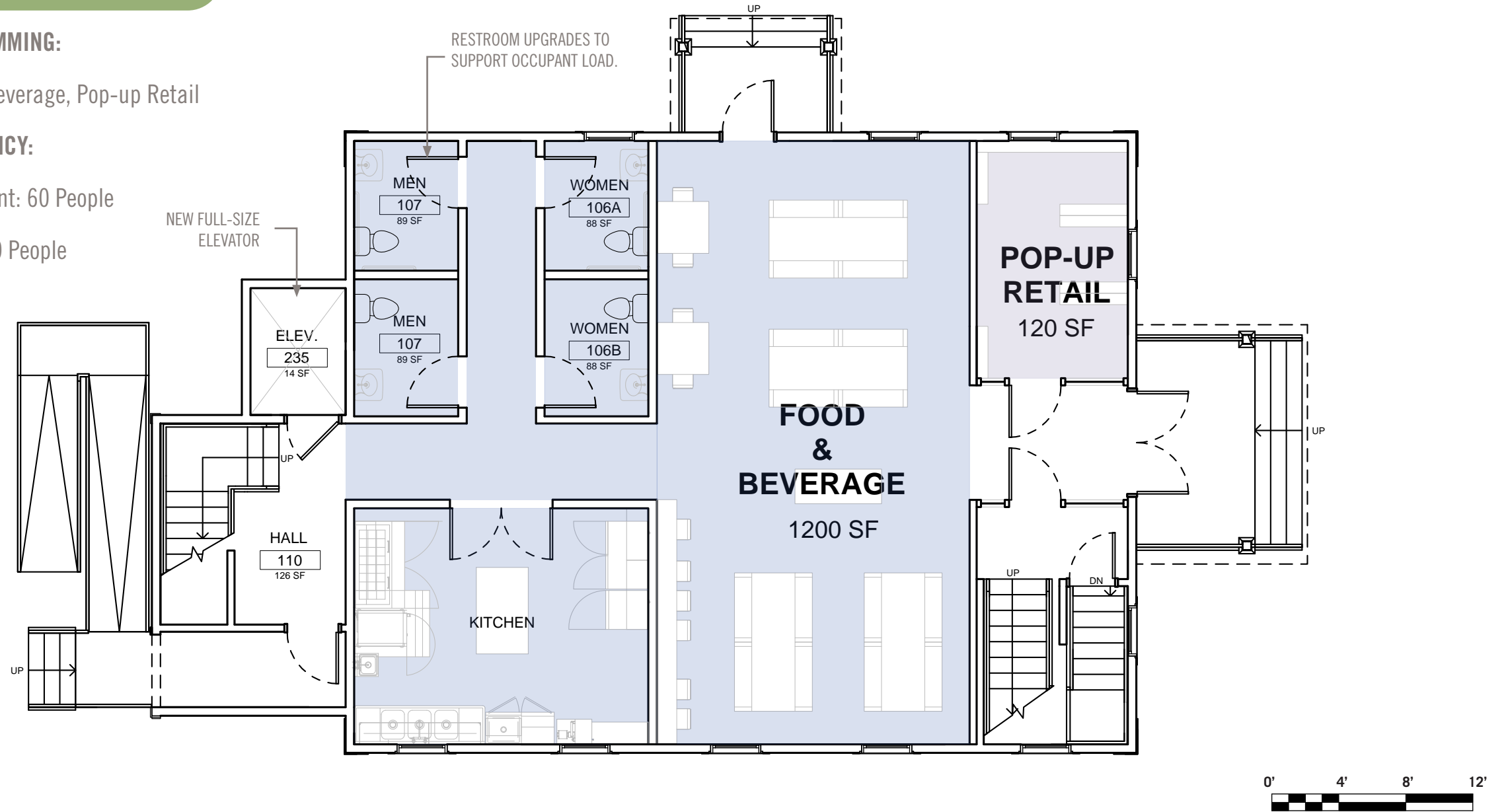
PROGRAMMING SCENARIO 2

4 MIDDLETON ROAD (3200 SF)

Second Floor Plan

PROGRAMMING:

Non-profit Youth Center

OCCUPANCY:

20 People

NEW PLUMBING INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT OCCUPANT LOAD.

MEZZANINE LEVEL ABOVE

NEW FULL-SIZE ELEVATOR

CO-WORKING AREA

OFFICE
115 SF

ELEV.
235
14 SF

OFFICE /
SILENT SPACE
64 SF

OFFICE /
SILENT SPACE
65 SF

NON-PROFIT YOUTH CENTER
1500 SF

LOUNGE AREA

DN

UP   DN

0'   4'   8'   12'

MassDevelopment

STUDIO LUZ
ARCHITECTS
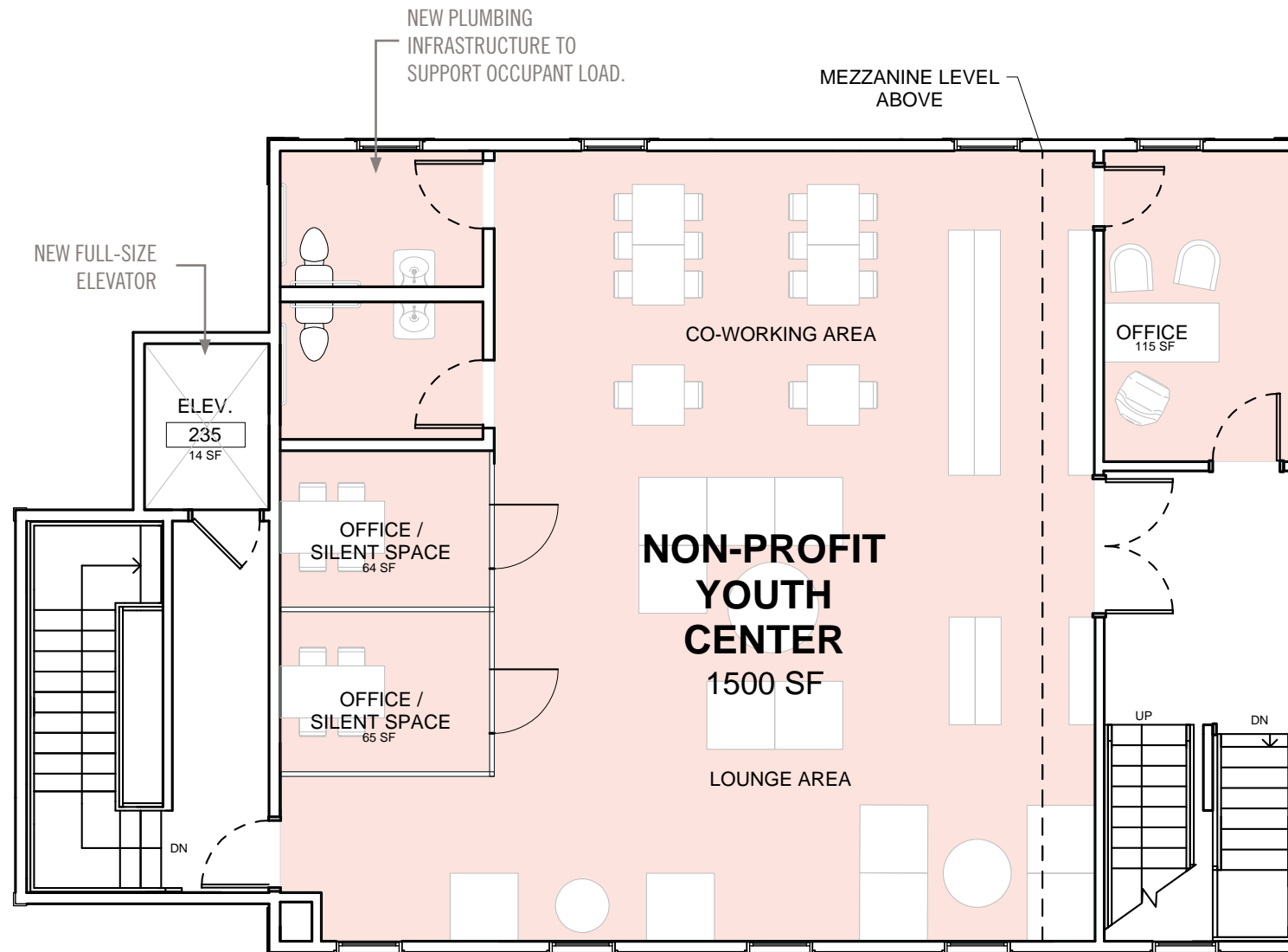
PROGRAMMING SCENARIO 3

4 MIDDLETON ROAD (3200 SF)

Ground Floor Plan

PROGRAMMING:

Professional Office

OCCUPANCY:

20 People

MAINTAIN PLUMBING INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT OCCUPANT LOAD.

NEW FULL-SIZE ELEVATOR

UP

MEN
107
89 SF

WOMEN
106
88 SF

OFFICE
103
154 SF

OFFICE
102
117 SF

ELEV.
235
14 SF

RECEPTION

UP

PROFESSIONAL OFFICE
1500 SF

HALL
110
126 SF

KITCHENETTE

BREAK ROOM
179 SF

DIR. OFFICE
104
175 SF

OFFICE
104
150 SF

UP

DN

UP

0'   4'   8'   12'

PROGRAMMING SCENARIO 3

4 MIDDLETON ROAD (3200 SF)

Second Floor Plan

PROGRAMMING:

Co-working Space

OCCUPANCY:

20 People

NEW PLUMBING INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT OCCUPANT LOAD.

NEW FULL-SIZE ELEVATOR

MEZZANINE LEVEL ABOVE

QUIET MEETING ROOM
202
117 SF

ELEV.
235
14 SF

CO-WORKING SPACE
1500 SF

CONFERENCE ROOM
130 SF

UP

DN

DN

0'   4'   8'   12'

MassDevelopment

STU DIO LUZ ARCHITECTS
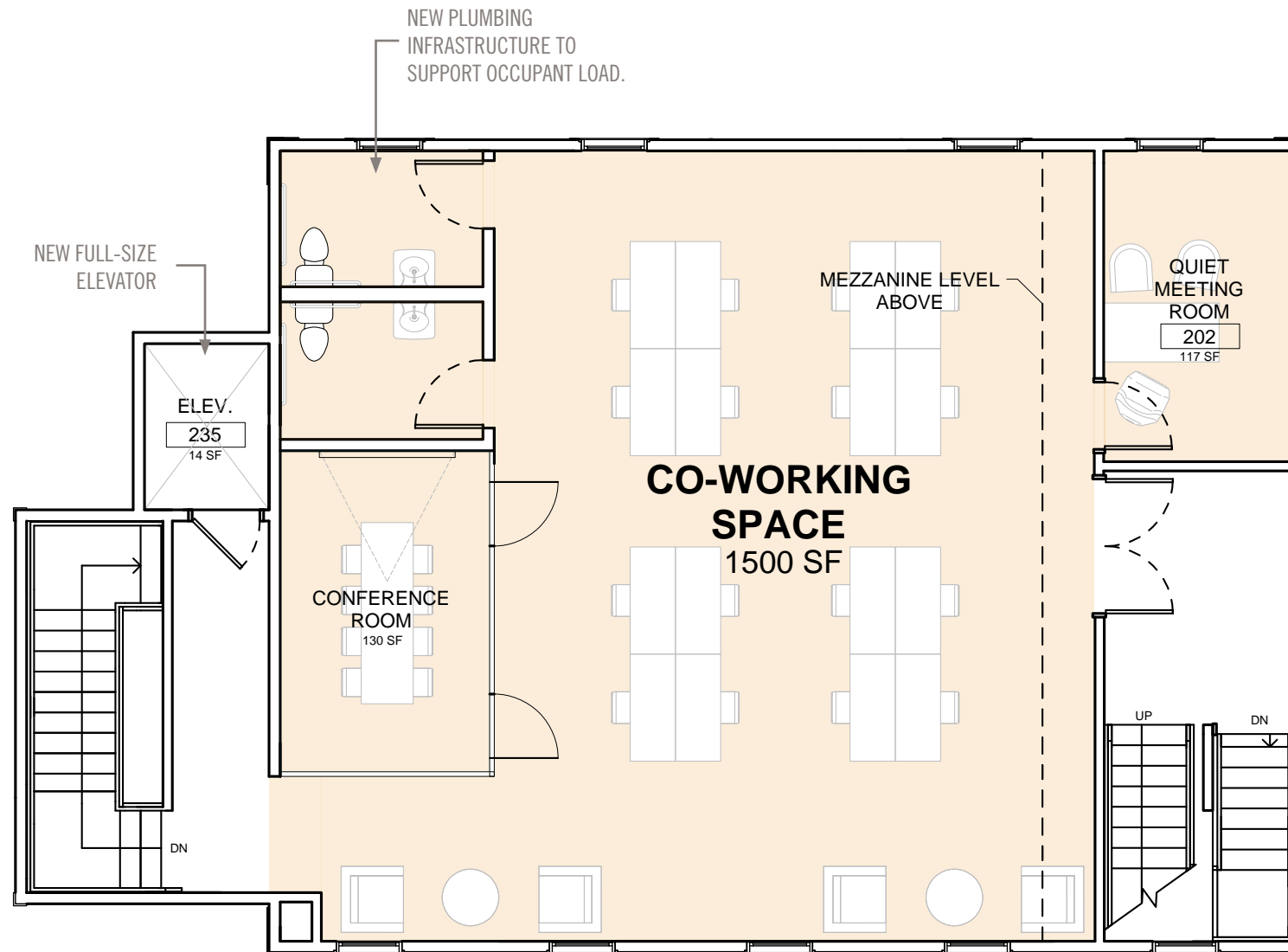
V. Next Steps

OWNERSHIP MODELS

The town should consider which ownership model (A. Town Ownership, B. Leasing, or C. Selling) it would like to pursue for the two surplus properties.

PARTNERSHIPS

The town should answer key questions to create a framework that can help support and facilitate a mutually beneficial partnership.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The town should consider which implementation strategy (i.e. Request for Proposal, Shell-ready, or Gauging Interest) it would like to pursue for reprogramming each site.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The town should consider key factors, such as required building upgrades, zoning restrictions, cost, and additional consultant services on the path to implementing new programming at each site.
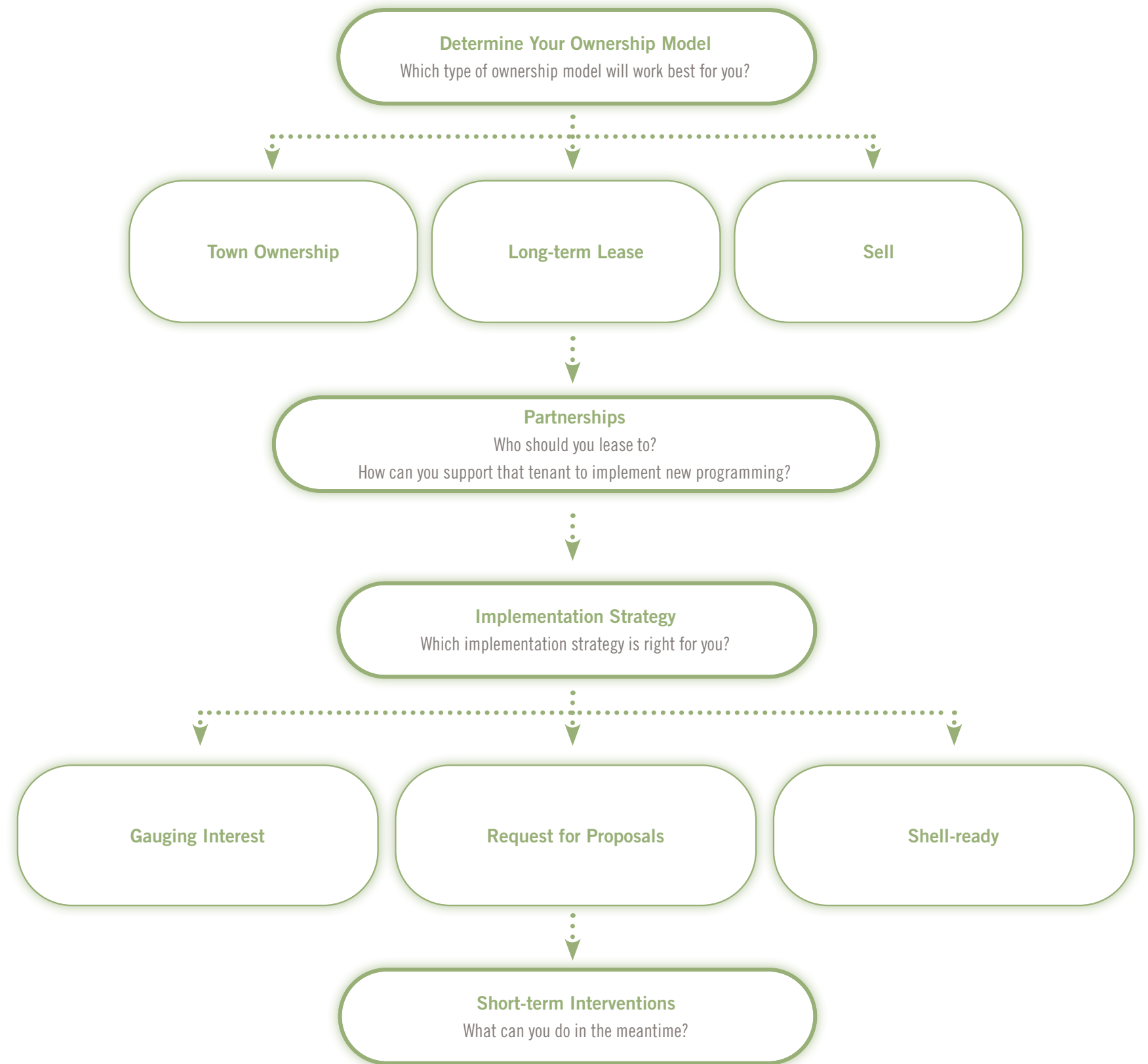
SHORT-TERM INTERVENTIONS

The town may also choose to implement temporary short-term programming to help activate the sites.

V. Next Steps
Path to Reprogramming

Path to New Program Use

With the possible programming scenarios determined by this study, the path to implementing new programming at each site can be challenging. This guide for next steps on the path to reprogramming each site can help the town on the way to implementing this new use. From determining the desired ownership model for each site to deciding how to implement site improvements that can support new programming, the town will need to address key factors that will ensure that the vision for reprogramming each site is properly executed. This guide aims to help the town outline the key criteria that the town will need to establish in order to bring in new programming at each site.

V. Next Steps
Path to Reprogramming

Determine Your Ownership Model
Which type of ownership model will work best for you?

Town Ownership

Long-term Lease

Sell

Partnerships
Who should you lease to?
How can you support that tenant to implement new programming?

Implementation Strategy
Which implementation strategy is right for you?

Gauging Interest

Request for Proposals

Shell-ready

Short-term Interventions
What can you do in the meantime?

Ownership Models

A. TOWN OWNERSHIP

Maintain town ownership and bring in new programming.

An ownership model to maintain town ownership would require that the town maintains the property while implementing the required improvements for each site to support new programming by the town.

B. LEASING

Short-term or long-term leasing for new programming with restrictions.

An ownership model to maintain town ownership with short-term or long-term leasing would require that the town develops a lease agreement for each site to support new programming by a new tenant. This agreement can have restrictions to ensure that the maintenance and use of the site maintains the historic character of the buildings and provides site access to the recreation and open fields.

C. SELL

Sell parcels to local developer for redevelopment at their discretion.

An ownership model to sell the property to a local developer would allow for new development in the town that could support new programming and additional economic value for the town. This ownership model would allow the developer to implement improvements for the site as they see fit.

Defining three ownership models for the two surplus properties can help guide the town in any future planning efforts to reprogram or redevelop the two sites. Evaluating the ramifications of each ownership model when looking at new programming for the site can serve as a basis for decision-making and developing next steps for future planning efforts at each site. The three different ownership models of A) Town Ownership, B) Leasing, or C) Selling each have their own benefits and challenges. Should the town choose to maintain ownership of the properties, this will affect the possibilities for reprogramming each site depending on the town's budget for implementing the required building upgrades, maintenance, and programming. Should the town choose to develop a lease agreement for the property, the town should take into consideration the responsibilities between the town and the tenant for the required building upgrades and maintenance to support the new programming. Should the town choose to sell the two properties, the town should take careful consideration of how the planned development will impact the surrounding community.

V. Next Steps
Ownership Models

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Ownership Models

A. TOWN OWNERSHIP
with long-term leasing

53%
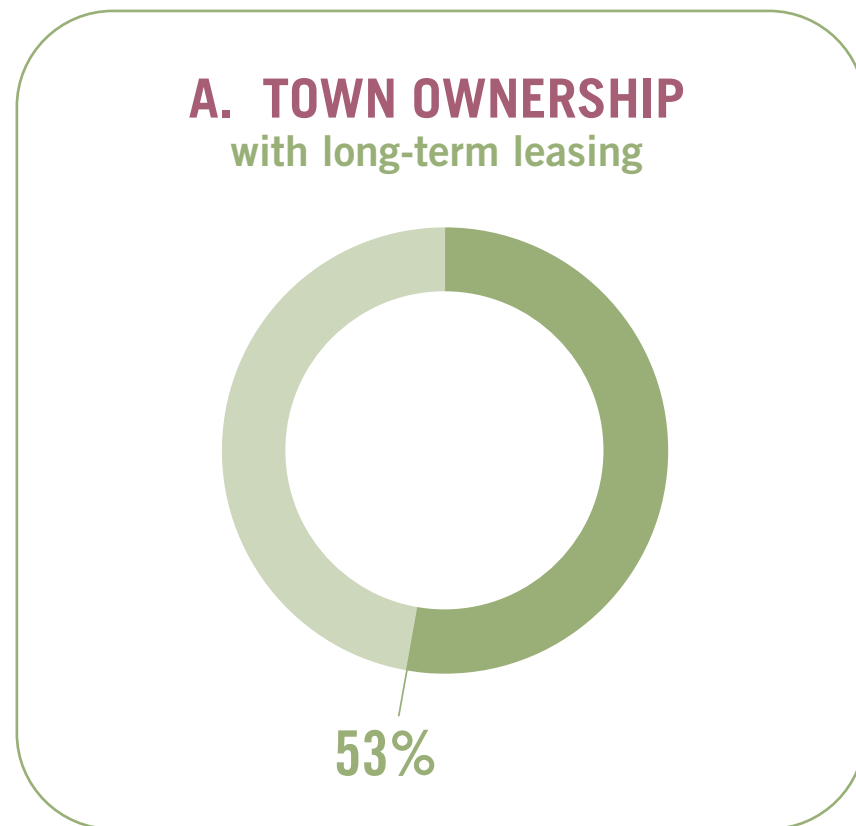
Community Feedback

The findings of this study would indicate that the community would prefer that the town retain ownership of both properties. More than half of community engagement participants voted for town ownership across both sites. However, additional feedback from the community, suggested long-term leasing to outside tenants in order to activate the properties and ensure they are well-maintained.

Ownership Model Recommendations

If the town is to remain ownership of both properties, it is recommended that the town provide accessibility and systems upgrades to support the new programming. Should the town find a tenant for a long-term lease of the property, possibilities for renovation by the tenant or the town to support the chosen programming should be discussed.

With one of the main concerns revealed by the community engagement process being the maintenance of the buildings, it is recommended that the town sets in place conditional requirements in any lease agreement to ensure proper maintenance of each site.

Partnerships

When seeking a partnership for reprogramming the site, the town should consider the following key questions:

Who should the town lease to and why?

Choosing a partner is a key component when looking to reprogram the sites. If the town can establish a partnership with an interested party that can bring in the desired programming early on in the process it can help establish key criteria for decision-making on the path to reprogramming. The town should determine their criteria for a partnership, prior to engaging interested parties. With the results of this study reflecting the preference for the town to maintain ownership It is recommended that the town partners with a local tenant or operator that has similar expectations for the space.

How can the town incentivize and support a partnership?

When looking for a partnership, the town should consider how they can support the respective partner in their programming needs when redeveloping or renovating the site. The town can also consider specific incentives to support small business and entrepreneurs that may be interested in tenanting but may require additional support to bring in new programming or mechanical infrastructure (i.e. kitchen, bathrooms, etc.) to the site.

Implementation Strategies

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Town to put out a request for proposals for developers.

The most common method for implementing new programming at each site would be to issue an RFP to local developers. It is important that the town establishes strict criteria for the evaluation of each proposal prior to issuing the RFP to ensure that each proposal meets the town's vision for the redevelopment of each site.

The town can also seek assistance for issuing the RFP by means of a consultant or an advisory committee. A consultant could be hired to help the town develop an RFP along with an advisory committee to help ensure that the RFP aligns with the needs of the town's vision for each site.

Upon receiving proposals, an evaluation committee can also be appointed to aid in the review process (proposals review, interviews, etc.) and make a recommendation to the town council.

SHELL-READY

Town to provide a "shell-ready" space for tenants to bring in new programming.

Another method for implementing new programming at each site would be for the town to make key improvements at each site for a shell-ready space that would enable the desired programming to be brought in by a new tenant. Each space will require key upgrades to ensure that each structure meets current code regulations and MEP/FP requirements that can support the desired programming.*

Should the town decide to take on a renovation at either of the sites for a shell-ready space, it is recommend that the town develops a budget for the project and ensure that all funding is acquired prior to engaging an architect for design services.

*Please reference the Town of Boxford, MA Targeted Municipal Facilities Municipal Plan for full facilities assessment noting the existing conditions and recommended upgrades for each site.

GAUGING INTEREST

Town to engage interested parties for feedback on required spatial improvements.

To help determine interest for the site and develop a set of criteria for the desired programming, the town can begin to engage developers, operators, and entrepreneurs to get a sense of existing interest and gain insight on any spatial improvements that the interested party would require.

Gaining a sense of existing interest and receiving feedback on desired spatial improvements directly from interested parties can help guide the town to then set up an subsequent RFP or provide a shell-ready space for lease.

One method for beginning this process to gauge existing interest would be to invite a focus group of commercial brokers to view the space and set up connections with any interested commercial tenants.

V. Next Steps
Implementation Strategies

STUDIO LUZ ARCHITECTS

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Implementation Considerations

BUILDING UPGRADES

This study revealed that the community would prefer to preserve the existing structure at each site while bringing in new programming. It should be noted that the desire to work within the existing structure may present challenges for reprogramming and have added cost implications. A facilities assessment for each site was conducted in 2018 as part of the Town of Boxford's, "Targeted Municipal Facilities Master Plan." Each facilities assessment notes the existing conditions of each site and lists recommended upgrades. The town should reference this facilities assessment along with any applicable code regulations throughout all future planning efforts. Some of the most significant building upgrades and renovation considerations that would be required to support the new programming are listed below:

188 WASHINGTON STREET

- **Septic**
  Currently utilizing a cesspool, the town would need to explore wastewater issues based on the proposed potential reuses (particularly for restaurant use)

- **Structural Integrity for Renovations**
  The existing masonry construction may create challenges for future renovations and require seismic upgrades.

- **System Upgrades**
  Electrical, plumbing, septic, life safety, and mechanical systems upgrades are required.

- **Accessibility Upgrades & Code Implications**
  Code implications and accessibility upgrades should be reviewed for all new potential programming.

4 MIDDLETON ROAD

- **Structural Integrity for Renovations**
  A more detailed structural review should be performed based on the preferred programming scenario.

- **System Upgrades**
  Mechanical ventilation, life safety, and fire protection should be upgraded to improve occupant comfort.

- **Accessibility Upgrades & Code Implications**
  Code implications and accessibility upgrades should be reviewed for all new potential programming, including a new elevator.

Implementation Considerations

ZONING

With both properties zoned in the Official/ Open Space District, both sites would require a variance for commercial use. It is recommended that the town should look into re-zoning the two properties to allow for the recommended programming uses.

As 4 Middleton Road also falls within the Village Historic District, the town should also engage the Boxford Historic Districts Commission to seek approval for all proposed exterior construction, alteration, repairs, or full or partial demolition.

COST ESTIMATE

It is recommended for the town to pursue a high-level cost estimate for each site to evaluate the viability of implementing the desired programming at each site.

Should the town decide to proceed upon receiving a high-level estimate, it is recommended that a full assessment of the existing conditions be performed along with a cost estimate to implement the desired programming scenario.

CONSULTANT SERVICES

Implementing new programming at either site will require further due diligence to ensure the feasibility of reprogramming the existing structures for the new proposed use. The town should engage consultants to provide:

- A full code report
- A building assessment report
- Full architectural and engineering services

Short-term Interventions

With both of the surplus properties currently sitting vacant, the town may consider short-term interventions to bring in new programming and activate the sites. Implementing temporary short-term programming can help activate the sites and support the surrounding community while the planning for longer-term programming is underway.

Potential short-term programming at each of the sites can be considered to activate the existing vacated buildings as well as the outdoor spaces at each site. When considering short-term indoor programming, the town should reference current code standards to ensure that any new programming is in compliance with all applicable codes.

Short-term ⟶ Long-term

The town should also consider how short-term upgrades can be part of a phased approach that can help to support the long-term goals for the property. Should the town decide to implement any short-term upgrades to support interim programming, these upgrades should be carefully considered to ensure that they align with the future plans for the site.

For instance, should the desired long-term programming require upgrades to comply with current code regulations, these specific code upgrades could be implemented prior to the full renovation of the building to allow for short-term programming.

Potential short-term upgrades that could help to support long-term programming for the spaces may include:

- Restroom upgrades to support new occupancy
- Egress and accessibility upgrades to comply with applicable codes
- MEP/FP upgrades
- Sewer/Septic

V. Next Steps
Short-term Interventions

Short-term Interventions (Indoor)

Some potential short-term interventions to bring in the desired programming with minimal upgrades include:

- Reading Room

- Co-work Space

- Community Gathering

- Snack Shack

City Library, Mechelen, Belgium

Reading Room

Air BnB Office, Tokyo, Japan

Co-work Space

Tom Bradley International Terminal, Los Angeles, California

Community Gathering

Nupe Kiosk, Fortaleza, Ceará

Snack Shack

V. Next Steps
Short-term Interventions

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Short-term Interventions (Outdoor)

Some potential short-term interventions to bring the desired programming to the site with minimal upgrades include:

- Pop-up Market
- Outdoor Events at the Gazebo
- Food Trucks
- Picnic Area

Pop-up Market

Outdoor Events at the Gazebo

Food Trucks

Picnic Area

Short-term Interventions (Indoor)

Some potential short-term interventions to bring in the desired programming with minimal upgrades include:

- Community Gatherings
- Performances
- Co-work Space
- Youth Gathering Space

Community Gatherings

Performances

Co-work Space

Youth Gathering Space

Short-term Interventions (Outdoor)

Some potential short-term interventions to bring the desired programming to the site with minimal upgrades include:

• Pop-up Market

• Community Garden

• Food Trucks

• Community Events

Pop-up Market

Community Garden

Food Trucks

Community Events

V. Next Steps
Short-term Interventions

VI. Appendix: Market Analysis

Table of Contents

Overview

Study Sites

188 Washington Street

2,500 SF facility located across Washington Street from Paisley's Farm. Single story 2,500 SF brick building with parking in the front. At one time was used as the West Boxford Library.

4 Middleton Road

3,000 SF community center located between Middleton Road and Elm Street was the original town hall of Boxford and has since served several other municipal functions.

Purpose of Analysis

RKG Associates was hired by the Town of Boxford to work closely with Studio Luz Architects on identifying potential reuse options for the two facilities. RKG's role on the project was to conduct a market assessment for retail, office, and residential uses and determine different options the Town and residents could consider for these buildings and properties.

The data in this document are intended to provide decision makers with a point-in-time understanding of:

- **Demographic** baseline conditions and changes

- **Employment** baseline conditions and changes

- Existing **Real Estate** conditions

The analysis is intended to illustrate how these conditions may influence development decisions, local and regional real estate trends, and to identify strategic locations and potential uses for these properties.

Methodology

- This analysis is a snapshot, made during the first quarter of 2023.

- It is based on the best available data sources.

- The analysis focuses on the potential for housing, commercial office, and retail in Boxford.

- The analysis does not examine the potential for industrial, hotel, or recreational uses in Boxford.

- Projections are made using recent trends in demographics, development, and market performance.

- Sources for data include:

US Census Bureau (American Community Survey, LEHD/OnTheMap)

ESRI Business Analyst

Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development (EOLWD)

Lightcast/Emsi

Moody's Analytics/REIS

The Warren Group

Methodology

RKG collected and analyzed data for this report at the town-level and the regional level.

For the regional level data, RKG used the geographic boundary of the Lower Merrimack Valley Workforce Development Area. Those communities are shown in the red outline on the map to the right.
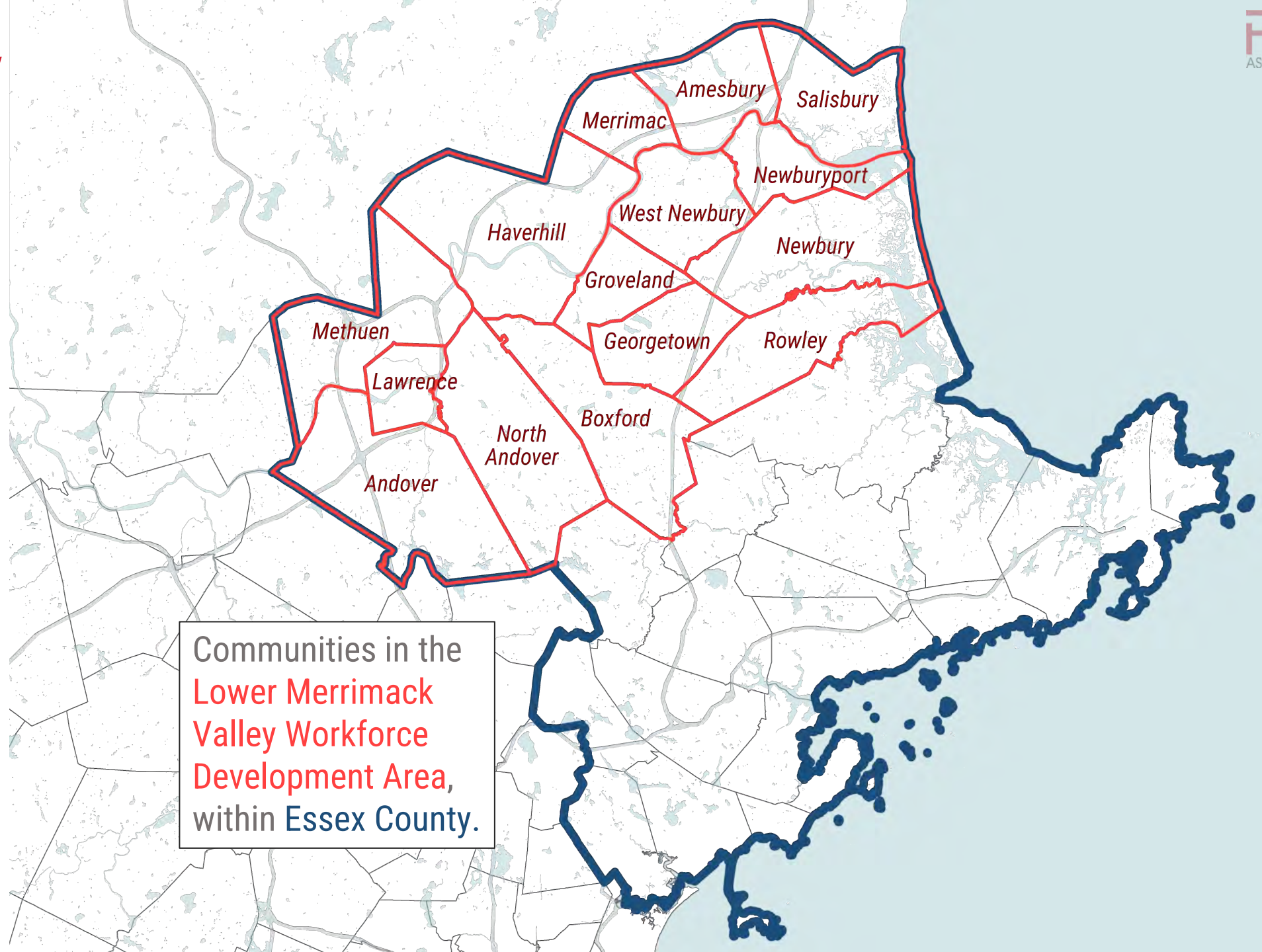
Communities in the
Lower Merrimack
Valley Workforce
Development Area,
within Essex County.

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Demographics

Demographics | Population Trends: Total Population & Age

Boxford Total Population Trend
Source: US Census, 2010 to 2021 5-year ACS's
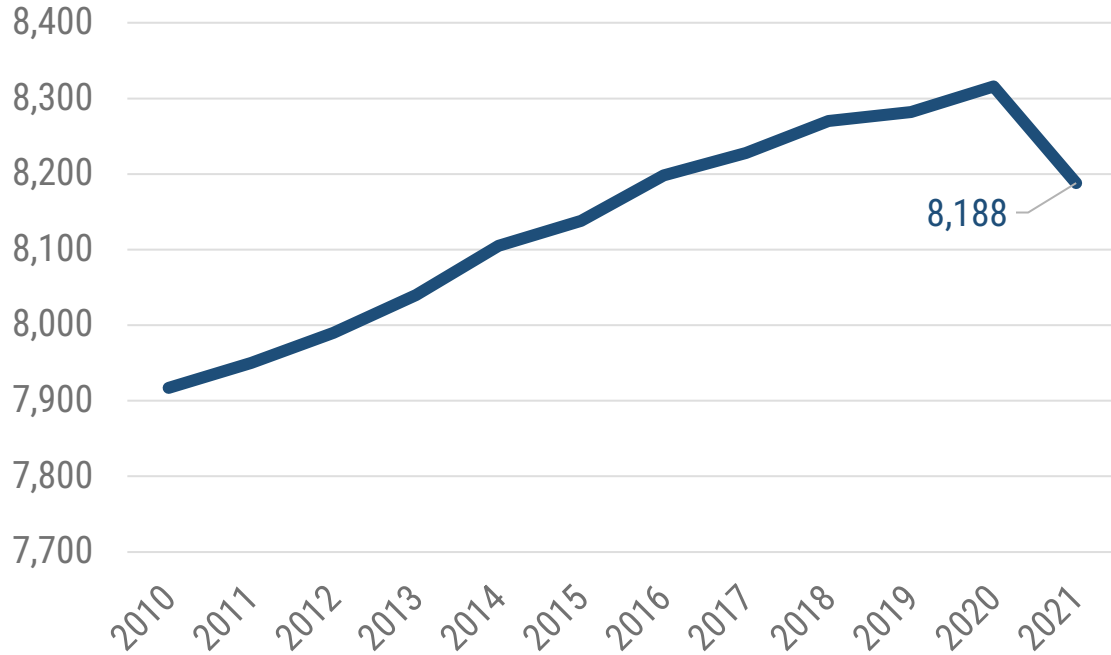
Age Distribution
Source: US Census, 2016 & 2021 5-year ACS's

8,188

Legend: Boxford 2016 — Boxford 2021 — Essex County 2021
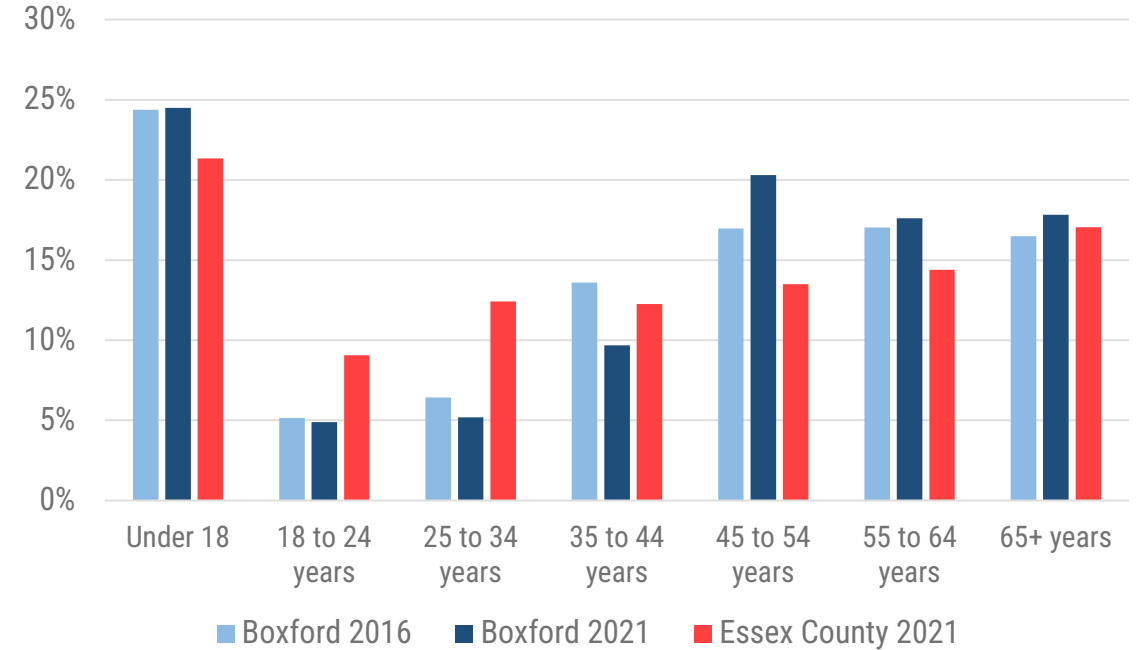
Boxford's population has increased gradually since the 2010 5-year ACS, following several decades of strong growth; however, the 2021 estimates show a slight decrease. Overall, Boxford's population is older than the county's with a higher median age (49.5 years vs. 40.8). Boxford has higher proportions of particularly young and particularly old residents, with a much smaller percentage of those age 18-44. Projections from ESRI indicate that the population is expected to remain effectively unchanged between 2021/22 and 2027.

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Demographics | Population Trends: Education & Income

Boxford has an exceptionally well-educated population. Almost 69 percent of residents 25 years or older have at least a bachelor's degree, which is 17 percentage points higher than Essex County. Very few people in town stopped their education before college: just under 14 percent, compared to 34 percent for the county.

Unsurprisingly, as a result, incomes in Boxford are quite high; nearly double those of the Workforce Development Area (WDA). Furthermore, Boxford's median household incomes are extremely unevenly distributed, with more than 46 percent of households earning over $200,000 per year and just 19 percent of households in the middle-income brackets ($75k to $150k).

Educational Attainment
Source: 2021 5-year ACS

No High School Diploma 2.7%

High School Diploma or Equivalent 10.9%

Some College 10.6%

Associates Degree 7.0%

Bachelor's Degree 40.9%

Graduate or Professional Degree 27.9%

Essex County: 10% / 24% / 16% / 8% / 25% / 17%

Income Metrics	Boxford			Lower Merrimack Valley WDA		
	2022	2027	% Δ 2022-2027	2022	2027	% Δ 2022-2027
Median Household Income	$200,001	$233,801	16.9%	$92,942	$109,829	18.2%
Per Capita Income	$95,968	$111,012	15.7%	$50,661	$59,278	17.5%

Sources: Esri Business Analyst, "Demographic & Income Profile"; RKG Associates
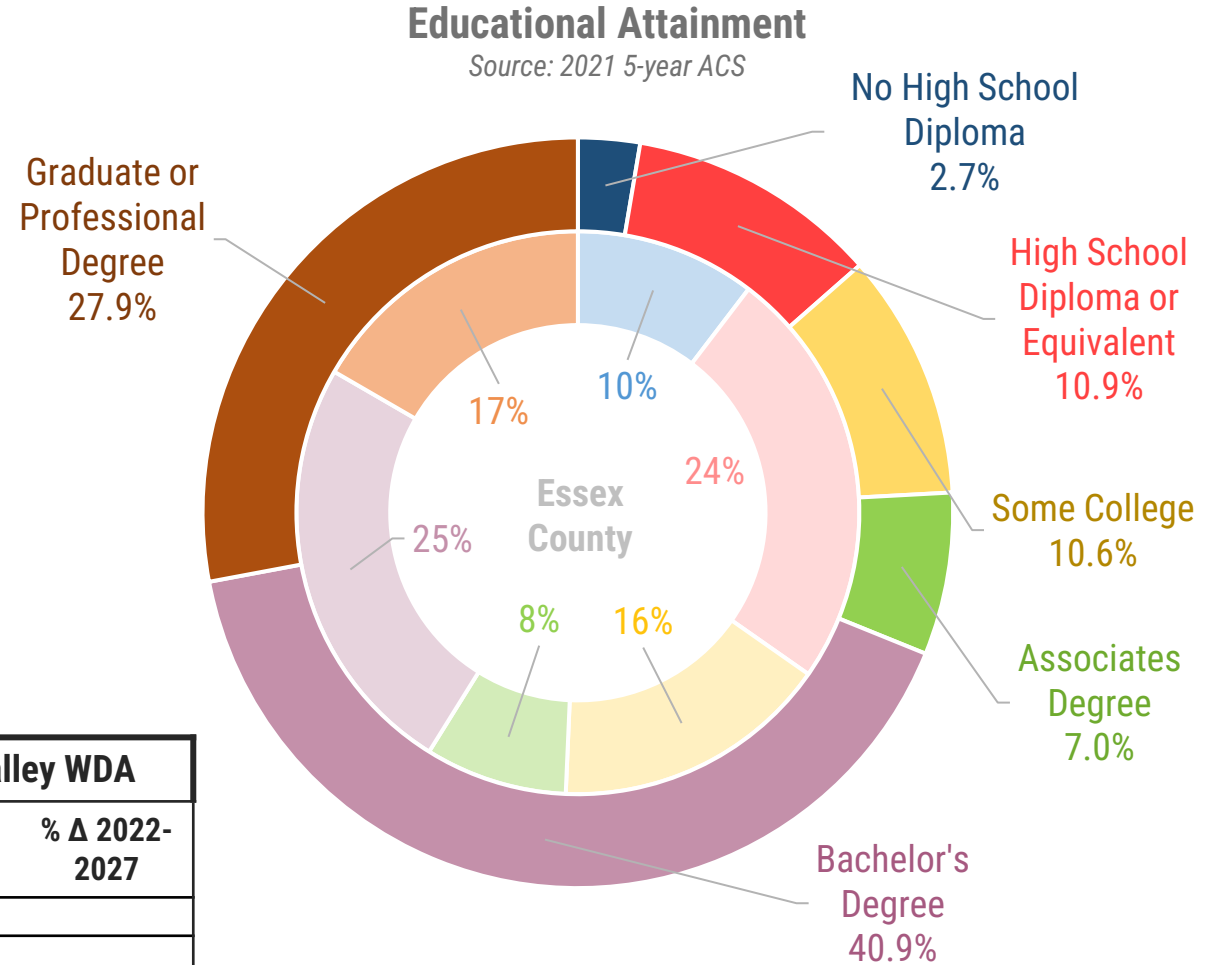
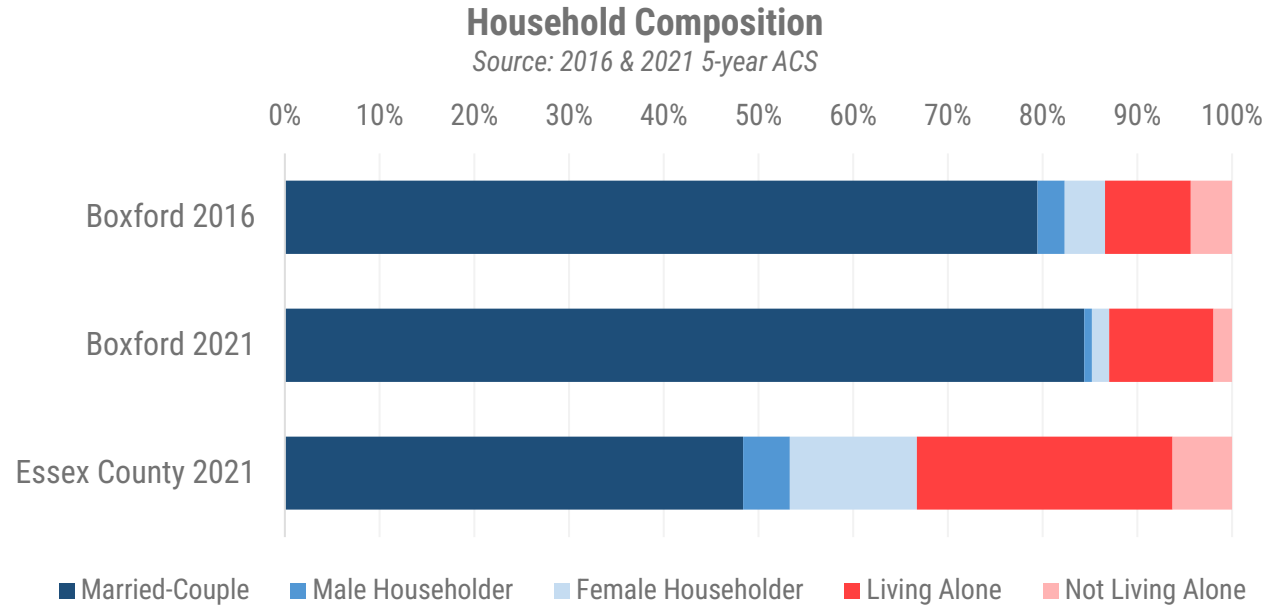# Demographics | Population Trends: Households

Between the 2012 and 2021, Boxford's household composition did not dramatically shift between family and non-family households. However, the proportion of married couple households and the number of people living alone have both increased notably. Overall, average household size in Boxford decreased, from 3.03 to 2.86.

Boxford has a much smaller percentage of households that are renter-occupied than the broader Workforce Development Area. However, in both geographies the number and proportion of renter households are expected to decrease – this is likely because very little rental housing is being built, demand for ownership is high (incentivizing conversion from rental to owner-occupied housing), and short-term rentals continue to proliferate, driving seasonal vacancy.

Household Composition
Source: 2016 & 2021 5-year ACS

■ Married-Couple ■ Male Householder ■ Female Householder ■ Living Alone ■ Not Living Alone

Household Metrics	Boxford, MA			Lower Merrimack Valley WDA		
	2022	**2027**	**% Δ 2022-2027**	**2022**	**2027**	**% Δ 2022-2027**
Total Households	**2,736**	**2,710**	**-1.0%**	**137,379**	**137,587**	**0.2%**
Owner Households	2,641	2,623	-0.7%	86,196	88,017	2.1%
	96.5%	96.8%		62.7%	64.0%	
Renter Households	95	87	-8.4%	51,183	49,570	-3.2%
	3.5%	3.2%		37.3%	36.0%	
Owner Median Value	**$704,352**	**$766,862**	**8.9%**	**$517,345**	**$606,093**	**17.2%**

Source: Esri Business Analyst, "Housing Profile"

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Demographics

Key Findings

- At 8,188 people, Boxford's population is near an all-time high after several decades of steady growth. However, recent estimates indicate that the population declined slightly, and projections suggest that growth may have plateaued.

- The town's median age of 49.5 is quite high compared to the county (40.8) and the WDA (40.1) and average household size in Boxford is decreasing. Furthermore, an increasing number of people are living alone.

  - While this generally means that residents are more well-established and financially secure compared to places with low median ages, it does suggest that many residents are approaching or have reached retirement age and staying in place. This may limit opportunities for new, younger households to move to or within Boxford.

- Boxford's population is very highly-educated, corresponding to high household incomes and stable income growth.

  - This spending power can be a draw for businesses, particularly those reliant on consumer spending such as retailers, food and beverage.

- The proportion of owner-occupied households is expected to remain very high, representing nearly 97 percent of households in Boxford.

  - As a result, there is not a well-understood local residential rental market, though regional trends may be able to provide some insight. Additionally, the owner to renter ratio suggests that there is a limited range of housing options in Boxford. The limited housing options in Boxford could offer an opportunity to add smaller unit types to the market to support single-person households, and those at the younger and older ends of the age spectrum.

Economic Base

Unemployment Rates
Source: MA EOLWD, Local Market Information

Legend: Massachusetts — MVPC/LMVWDA — Boxford
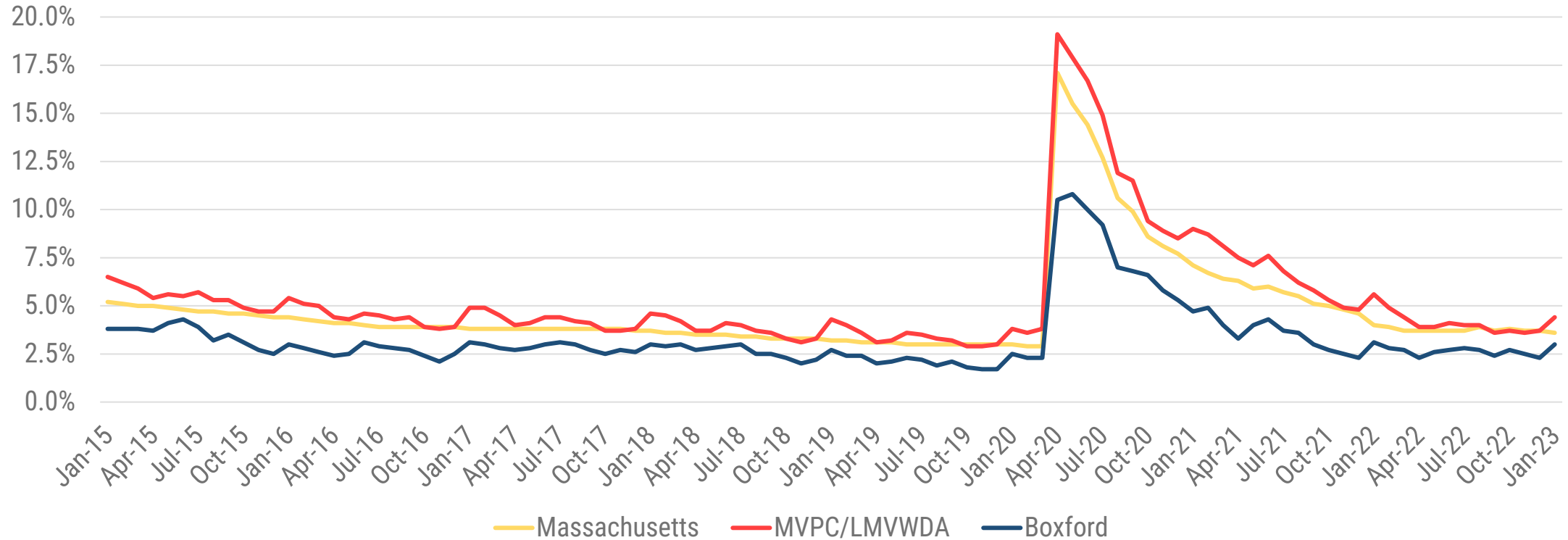
After a significant rise during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rates have essentially returned to pre-pandemic levels. Current unemployment is below what economists consider "full employment", the point at which essentially everyone who is willing and able to be employed is already in a job. Unemployment is lower than state and county levels, and regional labor force participation levels are high (66 percent in 2022Q4) suggesting that hiring may be challenging for businesses.

Economic Base | Commuting Patterns

Approximately 3,000 Boxford residents leave town to head to work, while fewer than 900 workers come from outside Boxford to work in the town. This leads to a net decrease in daytime population of nearly 2,200.

42 percent of people who work in Boxford are from the town or an immediately adjacent community, and 21 percent of resident workers in Boxford travel to an adjacent community or stay in town.

Haverhill, Newburyport, Danvers, and Topsfield are other common sources of local workers, while Boston is the most common destination for Boxford working residents.

860 — People who live elsewhere and work in Boxford

3,022 — People who live in Boxford and work elsewhere

237 — People who live and work in Boxford

Home Area		Count of Workers	Share
Boxford, MA		237	21.6%
Haverhill, MA		61	5.6%
Newburyport, MA		53	4.8%
Danvers, MA		44	4.0%
Topsfield, MA		40	3.6%
Middleton, MA		30	2.7%
Beverly, MA		29	2.6%
Georgetown, MA		29	2.6%
Amesbury, NH		27	2.5%
Groveland, MA		23	2.1%

Work Destination Area		Count of Workers	Share
Boston, MA		333	10.2%
Boxford, MA		237	7.3%
Danvers, MA		152	4.7%
Peabody, MA		109	3.3%
Burlington, MA		102	3.1%
Beverly, MA		101	3.1%
Andover, MA		99	3.0%
North Andover, MA		89	2.7%
Haverhill, MA		75	2.3%
Topsfield, MA		72	2.2%

Source: US Census LEHD, OnTheMap tool

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Economic Base | Industries by Employment

RKG
ASSOCIATES INC

Overall, employment in Boxford has grown by a significant percentage between 2011 and 2021, the latest year for which EOLWD data are available. The total number of jobs in town increased by 387 to 1,172 over that period.

Though the precise figures for Educational Services were suppressed in 2011, analysis suggests that it added more jobs than any other industry. Other industries with notable growth include Construction, Accommodation & Food Services, and Health Care & Social Assistance.

Educational Services and Government are the industries with the highest Location Quotients, i.e., they are the most overrepresented jobs in Boxford compared to the WDA.

The only predominant, private industry that saw decreases in employment over that timeframe was Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services. However, recent trends suggest that this sector is likely to grow across the region in the future.

NAICS	Description	2021 Jobs	2011 - 2021 % Change	Average Annual Earnings	LQ vs. LMV WDA
61	Educational Services	376	N/A	$67,392	3.46
92	Government	181	-8.6%	N/A	3.83
23	Construction	130	75.7%	$79,300	1.87
72	Accommodation & Food Services	84	223.1%	$21,476	1.02
54	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	73	-33.0%	$97,396	0.98
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	70	150.0%	$36,088	0.31
56	Admin. & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services	67	N/A	$30,628	0.92
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	46	17.9%	$33,176	1.40
51	Information	30	233.3%	$140,192	1.91
52	Finance & Insurance	29	93.3%	$123,032	1.04
11, 21, 22, 31-33, 42, 44-45, 48-49, 53, 55, 71, 99	All Others	86	-63.7%		0.21
TOTAL		**1,172**	49.3%	$63,648	

Source: MA EOLWD, ES-202

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Economic Base

Key Findings

- High regional labor force participation and very low unemployment rates indicate that there are few available workers locally and regionally which could constrain certain industry sectors from expanding in Boxford or the region in general.

- Nearly 2,200 more people leave Boxford to go to work than travel to Boxford to work, decreasing the town's daytime population by more than a quarter. Many of the workers coming to Boxford are from adjacent communities, while Boxford residents tend to travel further afield.

  - This can make it more difficult to support commercial activity, since the number of hyperlocal customers decreases so significantly for much of the day. However, Boxford has an opportunity to build off the consistent presence of residents from neighboring communities, enticing them to return during nights and weekends or otherwise frequent local businesses.

- The largest industries by employment in Boxford are Educational Services, Government, and Construction. Of these three industry sectors, Government is the only one that has not grown substantially in the last decade.

  - Construction, Accommodation & Food Services, and Health Care & Social Assistance have all grown since 2011. The increase in employment in Accommodation & Food Services is notable given the impacts of the pandemic on service-based industries. This may suggest an opportunity for growth locally.

Real Estate & Development

Real Estate| Housing: Local Market & Recent Trends

For Sale

Home Sale Prices
Source: The Warren Group, Banker & Tradesman, Town Statistics

Legend: Boxford, Single-Family — Essex County, Single-Family — Essex County, All Homes
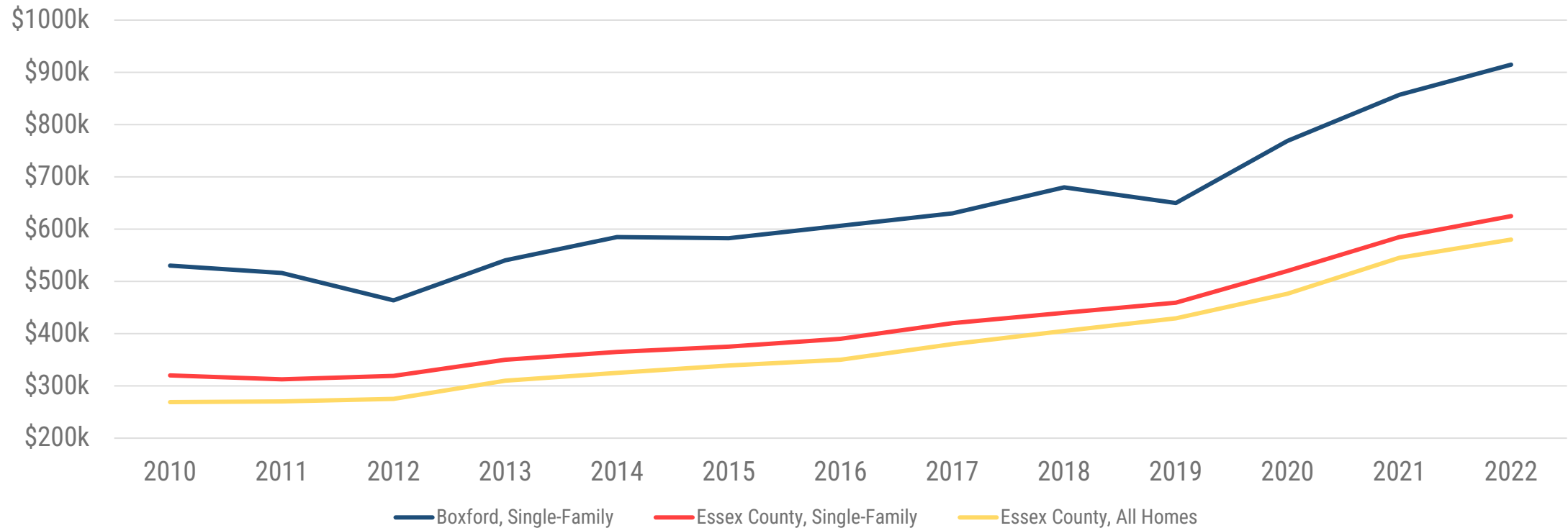
Median sale prices for homes in Boxford are significantly above those in Essex County generally. Median single-family home prices in Boxford increased by 72 percent since 2010, reaching $915,000 in 2022. According to Redfin, Boxford's housing market is also very competitive, with a sale-to-asking price ratio of 1.09 and median days on market of 14.

Rental

Apartment Vacancy Rates & Asking Rents
North Shore/Merrimack Valley Submarket Area
Source: Moody's Analytics, REIS

Legend: Vacancy Rates, Asking Rents

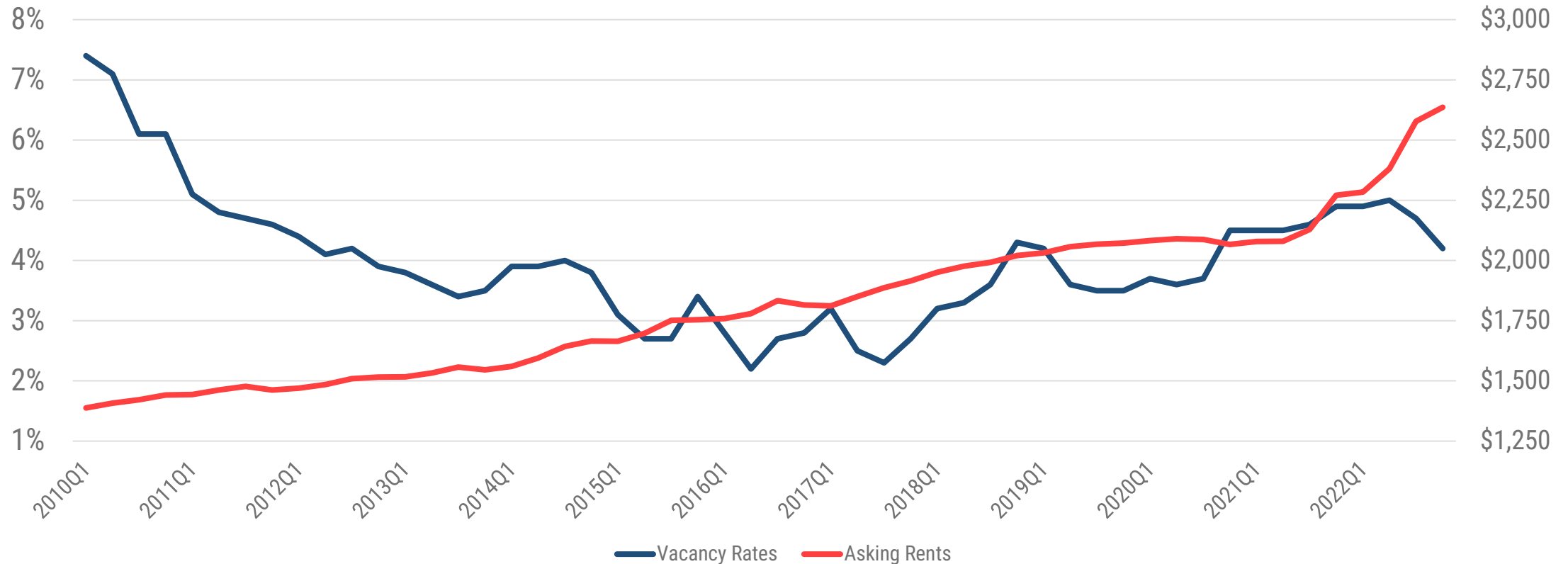Across Boxford's rental submarket, vacancy rates are near decade-lows while rents have been steadily increasing since 2010. Furthermore, asking rents have jumped dramatically since the middle of 2021. Trends for these two metrics suggest that the rental market within the region is quite strong. However, it is worth noting that currently Boxford is home to fewer than 90 renter households, and thus the rental market in Boxford itself is much more difficult to quantify.

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Real Estate | Office: Recent Trends & Local Inventory

According to Moody's Analytics, there is only one property with leasable office space in Boxford, which contains a total of roughly 6,700 sf of rentable area. Across the county, there are nearly 2,200 leasable office properties, with an average size of approximately 10,200 sf.

While the market in Boxford is too limited to provide precise estimates of rents, across the county the average rent is $21.43/sf.

There are currently three new office buildings with rentable space under construction in Essex County, demonstrating that spec development is possible in the region.

Comparison of Office Leasable Property, Boxford & Essex County

Metric	Boxford	Essex County
Number of Properties	1	2,177
Average Size	6,676 sf	10,158 sf
Average Year Built	-	1955
Average Rent, per SF	-	$21.43

Source: Moody's Analytics REIS

Real Estate | Office: Recent Trends & Local Inventory

Office Vacancy Rates & Asking Rents
North Shore/Route 128 North Submarket Area
Source: Moody's Analytics REIS
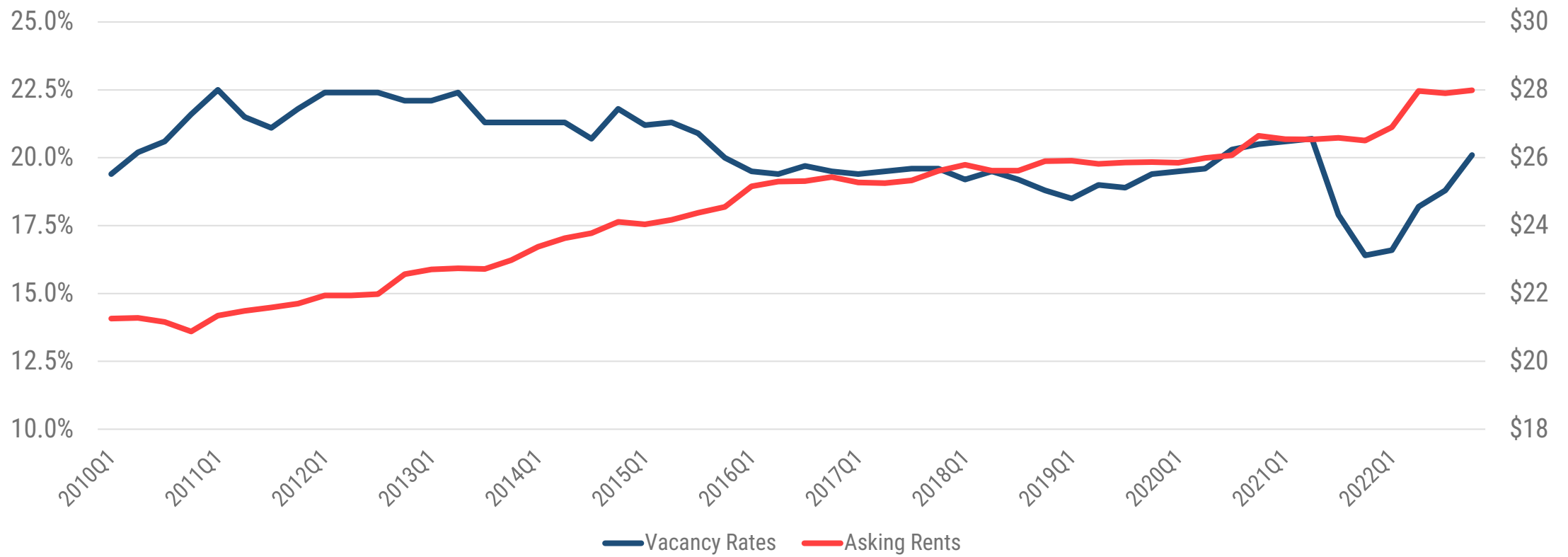
Boxford is part of the North Shore/Rt 128 North office submarket area. Asking rents in this area have increased steadily since 2010, even through the pandemic years. Likewise, vacancies have trended downward, though with more volatility, particularly over the last two years. While these trends indicate a fairly stable office market, there is uncertainty surrounding office uses in the future as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on remote work continue to take shape.

Real Estate | Office: Regional Growth & Local Opportunities

To estimate office demand, changes in office-using industries' employment levels were projected to 2033, and the growth in employment regionally was then applied to Boxford using a "fair share" estimate. Space needs are the results of applying a square feet-per-employee conversion for each code.

Demand for office space in Boxford is expected to grow modestly over the next decade, with a total increase in demand of approximately 5,400 sf, or 540 sf per year.

The number of Self-Employed and Extended Proprietors (which include those with second jobs) in the WDA is expected to grow by more than 17 percent over the next decade. While these workers are not captured in the estimates here, their growth over the next decade represents another source of space demand.

Note that backfilling of some existing vacancies and conversions from other uses are likely to occur before new ground-up construction takes place to meet local and regional demand.

NAICS	Description	LMV WDA Job Growth		Boxford Space Demand		
		2023 Jobs	Projected Growth (2023-2033)	Fair Share of Job Growth	Projected Space Needs (SF, Annual)	Projected Space Needs (SF, 10 Year)
51	Information	898	(125)	(2)	(34)	(340)
52	Finance & Insurance	3,259	88	1	20	204
53	Real Estate and Rental & Leasing	1,224	86	0	6	64
54	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	8,944	1,104	9	172	1,721
55	Management of Companies	2,844	(81)	0	0	0
56	Administration & Support & Waste Mgmt	10,684	1,647	12	247	2,466
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	21,177	3,495	9	132	1,319
	Total	**6,593**	**88**	**29**	**543 sf**	**5,433 sf**

Sources: MA EOLWD, ES-202; RKG Associates

Real Estate | Retail: Recent Trends & Local Market

Retail spaces in Boxford are limited, with only seven such properties in town according to Moody's Analytics. These spaces tend to be much smaller than those across the county, at 4,200 sf vs. 11,000 sf. Furthermore, they are more than 50 years older, on average.

On one hand, this suggests that Boxford's retail spaces may not be competitive in the region. On the other hand, Boxford's retail spaces are so old that they represent an entirely different kind of property which may attract tenants looking for a specific style, while not necessarily appealing to the broader market.

Note: These statistics describe traded retail-only rental properties, and do not account for owner-occupied structures or mixed-use structures.

Existing Retail Stock

	Boxford	Essex County
Number of Properties	7	3,641
Average Size	4,199 sf	10,980 sf
Average Year Built	1894	1946
Average Rent, per SF	-	$36.59

Source: Moody's REIS

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Real Estate | Retail: Gap Analysis

15-Minute Drive Time - 7A Spofford Road (Town Hall) - Boxford, MA

Merchandise Category	Demand/HH	Total Demand	Total Sales	(Export)/Import	Potential SF w/ 10% Re-Capture
TOTAL, ALL CATEGORIES	**$48,063**	**$908,250,141**	**$326,701,809**	**($581,579,143)**	**33,868**
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	$12,858	$34,561,572	$10,494,945	($24,066,627)	1,374
Electronics & Appliance Stores	$18,540	$49,835,915	$30,030,006	($19,805,909)	1,367
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	$29,840	$80,211,160	$63,579,781	($16,631,379)	1,816
Food & Beverage Stores	$81,741	$219,719,601	$74,433,497	($145,286,104)	8,195
Health & Personal Care Stores	$27,414	$73,688,136	$35,970,563	($37,717,573)	2,392
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	$32,136	$86,381,585	$9,675,705	($76,705,880)	4,099
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	$16,860	$45,319,956	$8,928,454	($36,391,502)	1,895
General Merchandise Stores	$52,714	$141,694,695	$30,843,694	($110,851,002)	6,156
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	$17,129	$46,043,090	$22,049,361	($23,993,729)	1,489
Food Services & Drinking Places	$48,659	$130,794,431	$40,695,803	($90,129,438)	5,084

Sources: Esri Business Analyst, Retail MarketPlace Profile; RKG Associates

Within a 15-minute drive of Town Hall (central point in town), there are 18,897 households with an average annual spending demand, among the selected retail sectors, of $48,063 – translating to an aggregate demand of $908m. Total sales are estimated to be $327m in that geography, indicating a net of $582m in exported sales.

Especially large retail gaps exist in Food & Beverage Stores, General Merchandise Stores, and Food Services & Drinking Places.

Note:

"Import" indicates that in the aggregate, sales at retailers in the 15-minute drive time area are greater than the demand from households in that geography.

"Export" indicates that in the aggregate, demand from households in the 15-minute drive time area is greater than sales at retailers in that geography.

Real Estate | Retail: Demand

Given existing levels of demand and spending, a large retail gap exists within the 15-minute drive time area.

Assuming Boxford can capture a limited amount of retail spending resulting from that gap, a total of between 16,900 sf 33,900 sf of retail space could be supported.

Some of the supportable square footages are not large enough to suggest a new retail location/store will open. Figures for home furnishing stores or florists, for example may suggest the ability of existing retailers to diversify their product lines or make small expansions to existing stores.

Others like restaurants and health care stores could support new or expanded spaces if Boxford could capture some of the leaked spending from local households.

The categories that may present the best fit for a use conversion of the properties under consideration are detailed in the table to the right.

Note: Not all of this space will be created in new development. Existing vacant spaces are likely to fill first, and some retailers may repurpose existing space for new or different inventory.

Merchandise Category	NAICS Code	Demand at Recapture Rates	
		SF at 5% recapture	SF at 10% recapture
Total, All Categories		**16,934**	**33,868**
Total, Categories Relevant to Study Sites		**12,265**	**24,528**
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	**442**	**687**	**1,374**
Furniture Stores	4421	442	884
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	245	490
Food & Beverage Stores	**445**	**4,097**	**8,195**
Grocery Stores	4451	3,682	7,364
Specialty Food Stores	4452	-	-
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	415	831
Health & Personal Care Stores	**446,4461**	**1,196**	**2,392**
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	**448**	**2,050**	**4,099**
Clothing Stores	4481	1,415	2,830
Shoe Stores	4482	248	496
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	4483	387	773
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	**451**	**948**	**1,895**
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	4511	815	1,630
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	4512	133	266
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	**453**	**745**	**1,489**
Florists	4531	73	147
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	241	481
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	43	85
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	388	776
Food Services & Drinking Places	**722**	**2,542**	**5,084**
Restaurants	7221	2,246	4,493
Special Food Services	7223	106	213
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	189	378

Source: Esri Business Analyst; RKG Associates

Real Estate & Development

Key Findings

- The local and regional housing for-sale markets are quite strong, with prices consistently increasing. The Boxford market appears to be particularly robust, with homes selling for 9 percent more than asking price, on average, and the typical home remaining on the market for just 2 weeks.

- Though the local rental housing market is quite limited, rents continue to increase, and vacancies are near historic lows across the Merrimack Valley and North Shore, suggesting that rental housing is in high demand across the region. This may translate to demand locally in Boxford as well.

- Existing office real estate trends and projections of regional employment growth suggest that there may be demand for office space.
  - The regional office rental market has been stable in spite the pandemic's effects, and there are a small number of speculative office projects currently in the pipeline on the North Shore.
  - Industry sectors that drive demand for office space are expected to grow by nearly 15 percent by 2033 across the LMV WDA – based on the town's current fair share of regional employment, that could translate to 5,400 sf of new demand for office space in Boxford over that 10-year period.

Real Estate & Development
Key Findings

- The retail sector in Boxford's trade area is a net exporter of sales – indicating that overall, people leave Boxford to shop elsewhere.

- The retail gap of $582 million could reflect demand for **16,900 sf 33,900 sf** of additional retail space, depending on Boxford's ability to capture a small portion of spending that is currently leaving the trade area.

    - The biggest beneficiaries of recaptured sales are likely to be **food and beverage** stores, **general merchandise** stores, and **restaurants and drinking establishments**.

    - However, **food and beverage** stores, **restaurants and drinking establishments**, **clothing and accessories** stores, **health care and personal** stores are the retail categories with the highest recapture potential that are also potentially good fits for the kinds of spaces under consideration at the study sites.

Real Estate & Development

Conclusions

- The profile of Boxford residents could be a major attractor for businesses – residents are highly-educated have higher than average incomes, and currently have few choices but to spend that income further outside of Boxford. For these reasons, retail appears to be a market viable use.

- Uncertainty in the long-term office market created by the COVID pandemic and remote work trends should inform any plans for new office creation – office space should be adaptable, smaller-scale, and unique in its design.

- While the two buildings themselves may not have the amount of space or layouts for easy residential conversion, there does appear to be demand for residential uses in Boxford. If any undeveloped portions of the sites were available and appropriately sized, residential uses could be supported.

- The sites on Washington St. and Elm St. are both good candidates for redevelopment for certain types of commercial uses.

  - **188 Washington St:** Because it is a higher-traffic location with excellent visibility and the building is single-story, retail uses such as restaurant, food and beverage store, misc. retail, or personal care would be appropriate. Retail would also complement existing uses along this stretch of Washington St, creating an expanded activity hub. Office could also be feasible, but analysis suggests that retail is probably in higher demand in the near term.

  - **4 Middleton Rd:** As a multistory building with a small footprint, the Middleton Rd property is likely a better fit for office users. Focusing on the flexibility of the layout and targeting small businesses in the professional services sectors will help ensure that the space stays accessible to as many businesses, non-profits, self-employed workers, and extended proprietors as possible.

Appendix

Real Estate | Retail: Gap Analysis

15-Minute Drive Time - 7A Spofford Road (Town Hall) - Boxford, MA

Merchandise Category	NAICS Code	Demand/HH	Total Demand	Total Sales	(Export)/Import	Est. SF based on Avg. Sale/SF	Est. Store Count	Est. Avg Sales/ Store	Est. Avg. SF/ Store	Potential SF w/ 10% Re-Capture
TOTAL, ALL CATEGORIES		**$48,063**	**$908,250,141**	**$326,701,809**	**($581,579,143)**	**822,630**	**252**	**$1,296,436**	**3,264**	**33,868**
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	**$12,858**	**$34,561,572**	**$10,494,945**	**($24,066,627)**	**51,011**	**11**	**$954,086**	**4,637**	**1,374**
Furniture Stores	4421	$6,776	$18,215,221	$1,565,182	($16,650,039)	5,217	2	$782,591	2,609	884
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	$6,081	$16,346,351	$8,929,763	($7,416,588)	45,794	9	$992,196	5,088	490
Electronics & Appliance Stores	443	**$18,540**	**$49,835,915**	**$30,030,006**	**($19,805,909)**	**85,800**	**16**	**$1,876,875**	**5,363**	**1,367**
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	**$29,840**	**$80,211,160**	**$63,579,781**	**($16,631,379)**	**165,149**	**26**	**$2,445,376**	**6,352**	**1,816**
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	$27,473	$73,846,628	$60,839,074	($13,007,554)	152,098	19	$3,202,057	8,005	1,584
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	$2,368	$6,364,532	$2,740,707	($3,623,825)	13,051	7	$391,530	1,864	232
Food & Beverage Stores	445	**$81,741**	**$219,719,601**	**$74,433,497**	**($145,286,104)**	**128,296**	**24**	**$3,101,396**	**5,346**	**8,195**
Grocery Stores	4451	$69,502	$186,821,798	$45,422,673	($141,399,125)	82,587	11	$4,129,334	7,508	7,364
Specialty Food Stores	4452	$3,052	$8,202,519	$17,689,204	$9,486,685	35,028	6	$2,948,201	5,838	-
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	$9,187	$24,695,284	$11,321,620	($13,373,664)	10,681	7	$1,617,374	1,526	831
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	**$27,414**	**$73,688,136**	**$35,970,563**	**($37,717,573)**	**55,339**	**7**	**$5,138,652**	**7,906**	**2,392**
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	**$32,136**	**$86,381,585**	**$9,675,705**	**($76,705,880)**	**31,983**	**18**	**$537,539**	**1,777**	**4,099**
Clothing Stores	4481	$22,510	$60,506,134	$7,876,893	($52,629,241)	28,643	14	$562,635	2,046	2,830
Shoe Stores	4482	$3,847	$10,341,433	$782,702	($9,558,731)	2,372	2	$391,351	1,186	496
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	4483	$5,779	$15,534,018	$1,016,110	($14,517,908)	968	2	$508,055	484	773
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	**$16,860**	**$45,319,956**	**$8,928,454**	**($36,391,502)**	**39,221**	**13**	**$686,804**	**3,017**	**1,895**
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	4511	$14,829	$39,861,651	$8,491,134	($31,370,517)	37,738	12	$707,595	3,145	1,630
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	4512	$2,031	$5,458,305	$437,320	($5,020,985)	1,482	1	$437,320	1,482	266
General Merchandise Stores	452	**$52,714**	**$141,694,695**	**$30,843,694**	**($110,851,002)**	**78,874**	**11**	**$2,803,972**	**7,170**	**6,156**
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	4521	$37,742	$101,449,948	$6,211,236	($95,238,712)	12,299	2	$3,105,618	6,150	4,969
Other General Merchandise Stores	4529	$14,972	$40,244,748	$24,632,458	($15,612,290)	66,574	9	$2,736,940	7,397	1,187
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	**$17,129**	**$46,043,090**	**$22,049,361**	**($23,993,729)**	**92,547**	**42**	**$524,985**	**2,204**	**1,489**
Florists	4531	$1,589	$4,271,890	$1,861,900	($2,409,990)	6,206	7	$265,986	887	147
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	$5,721	$15,378,913	$8,837,108	($6,541,805)	40,169	7	$1,262,444	5,738	481
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	$1,369	$3,678,961	$2,851,372	($827,589)	10,760	9	$316,819	1,196	85
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	$8,450	$22,713,327	$8,498,981	($14,214,346)	35,412	19	$447,315	1,864	776
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	**$48,659**	**$130,794,431**	**$40,695,803**	**($90,129,438)**	**94,411**	**84**	**$484,474**	**1,124**	**5,084**
Restaurants	7225	$44,135	$118,633,604	$39,541,141	($79,092,463)	90,899	79	$500,521	1,151	4,493
Special Food Services	7223	$1,816	$4,882,069	$1,123,852	($3,758,217)	3,512	5	$224,770	702	213
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	$2,708	$7,278,758	$0	($7,278,758)	0	0	N/A	N/A	378

Note:

"Import" indicates that in the aggregate, sales at retailers in the 15-minute drive time area are greater than the demand from households in that geography.

"Export" indicates that in the aggregate, demand from households in the 15-minute drive time area is greater than sales at retailers in that geography.

Sources: Esri Business Analyst, Retail MarketPlace Profile; RKG Associates

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Market Assessment
Boxford, MA
March 2023

VI. Appendix: Community Engagement

188 WASHINGTON STREET

What would you like to see here?

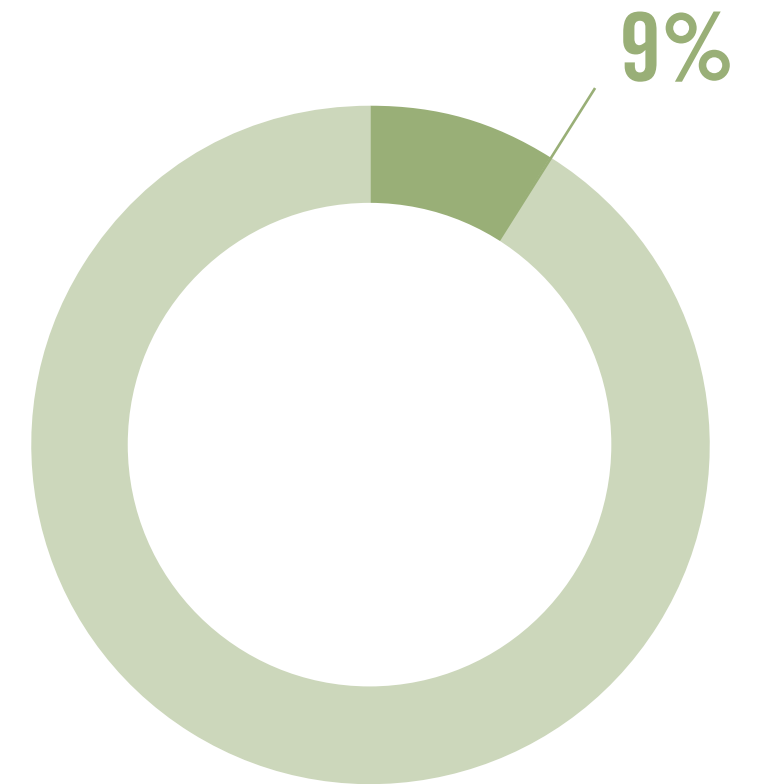ONLINE SURVEY, VIRTUAL WORKSHOP, + IN-PERSON WORKSHOP (371 PARTICIPANTS)

A. RESTAURANT / PUB — 116
SIX -National on 10th
Calgary, CA

B. HOUSING — 9
Affordable Housing
Memphis, TN

C. PROFESSIONAL OFFICES — 19
Architecht Information Systems Offices
Istanbul
Studio 13

D. RECREATION — 80
San Jacinto Plaza
El Paso, TX
SWA

E. MUNICIPAL USE — 16
City Hall
New Hope, MN
Wold Architects & Engineers

F. PLAYGROUND — 33
Learning Landscapes
Denver, CO
Design Concepts

G. MICRO GROCERY — 27
Meny Supermarkets
Norway
Household

H. CHILDCARE — 37
Vivvi Early Learning
New York, NY
Frank Oudeman/Otto

I. CO-WORK SPACE — 16
Co-work Space
Munich, Germany
Adler Parkett

J. SMALL RETAIL — 45
Aesop
Washington D.C.
Clare Cousins

OTHER: BASEBALL — 43

OTHER: LIBRARY — 49

OTHER: COMMUNITY CENTER — 48

OTHER — 36

- Fitness
- Artist Space
- Education
- Youth Center
- Convenience Store
- Ice Rink
- Butcher Shop
- Marketplace (2)
- Yout Programming
- Pavilion
- New Construction
- Event Space (4)
- Cafe/Gallery
- Small Business (3)
- Open Space
- Conference
- Gallery (2)
- Outdoor Events (2)
- Parking (2)
- Concessions
- Artisan Market

188 WASHINGTON STREET

What would you NOT like to see here?

ONLINE SURVEY, VIRTUAL WORKSHOP, + IN-PERSON WORKSHOP (371 PARTICIPANTS)

A. BAR / CLUB

52

Del Campo Dance
Sacramento, CA

B. CHAIN RETAIL

95

Target
Rick Wilking/Reuters

C. CHAIN RESTAURANT

96

Pizza Hut

OTHER: HOUSING

39

OTHER: MUNICIPAL

14

OTHER

- Storage
- Offices
- Senior Programming (2)
- Commercial
- Library
- Community Center (2)
- Industrial
- Private Business
- New Construction
- Conservation Land
- Baseball Fields (3)

- Gas Station
- Noise
- Education
- Park
- Childcare
- Recreation
- Yoga
- Parking
- Historical Center
- Soccer Field
- Fitness

42

188 WASHINGTON STREET

Which site approach would you like to see here?

ONLINE SURVEY, VIRTUAL WORKSHOP, + IN-PERSON WORKSHOP (371 PARTICIPANTS)

54%

25%

21%

A. MINIMAL RE-USE

Minimal renovation to support new programming and re-use of the space.

B. EXPANSION

Increased building footprint to provide more square footage for new programming.
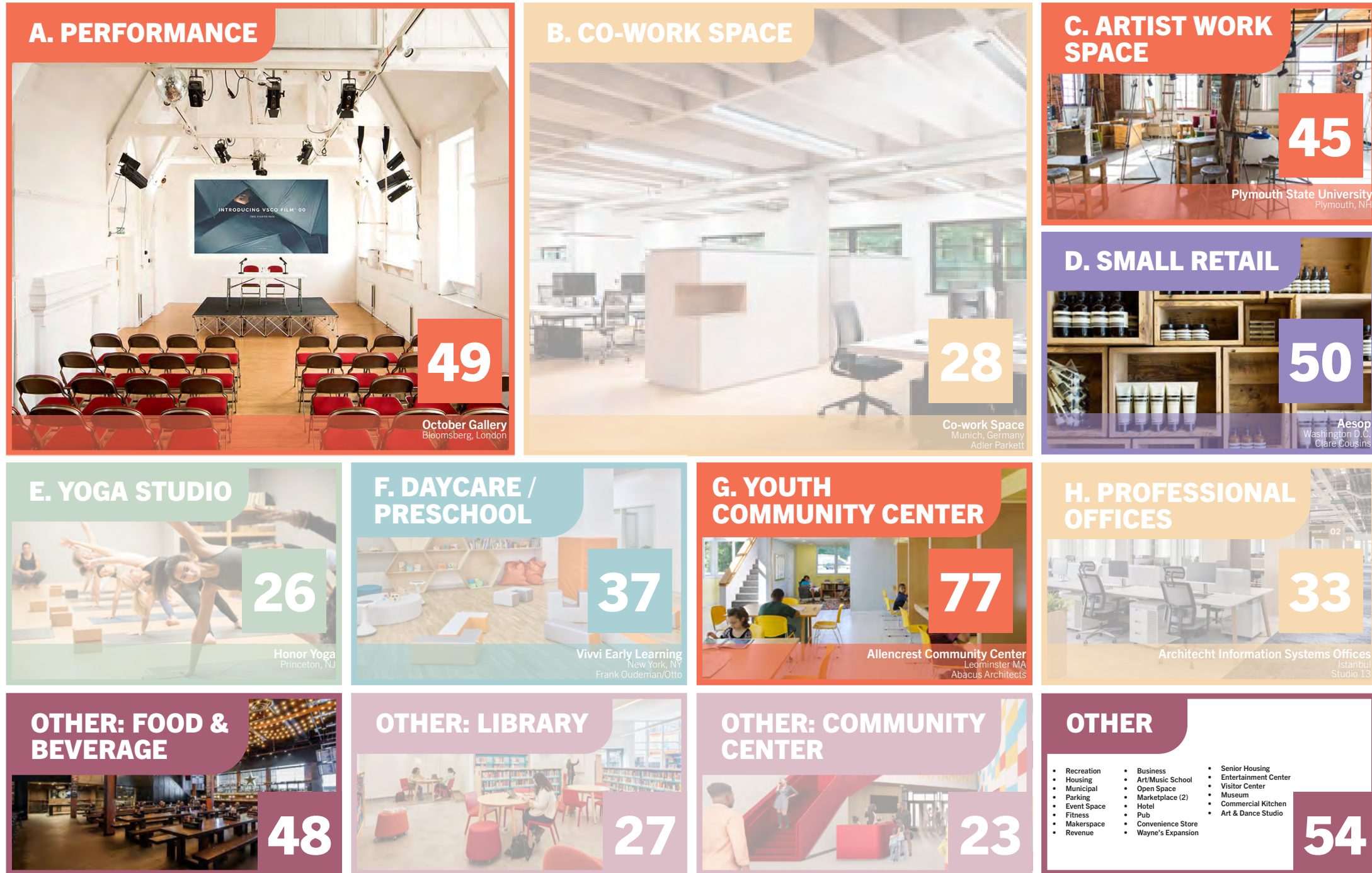
C. TEAR-DOWN

Demolish existing structure to allow space for new construction to support new programming.

4 MIDDLETON ROAD

What would you like to see here?

ONLINE SURVEY, VIRTUAL WORKSHOP, + IN-PERSON WORKSHOP (371 PARTICIPANTS)

A. PERFORMANCE
49
October Gallery
Bloomsberg, London

B. CO-WORK SPACE
28
Co-work Space
Munich, Germany
Adler Parkett

C. ARTIST WORK SPACE
45
Plymouth State University
Plymouth, NH

D. SMALL RETAIL
50
Aesop
Washington D.C.
Clare Cousins

E. YOGA STUDIO
26
Honor Yoga
Princeton, NJ

F. DAYCARE / PRESCHOOL
37
Vivvi Early Learning
New York, NY
Frank Oudeman/Otto

G. YOUTH COMMUNITY CENTER
77
Allencrest Community Center
Leominster MA
Abacus Architects

H. PROFESSIONAL OFFICES
33
Architecht Information Systems Offices
Istanbul
Studio 13

OTHER: FOOD & BEVERAGE
48

OTHER: LIBRARY
27

OTHER: COMMUNITY CENTER
23

OTHER
54

- Recreation
- Housing
- Municipal
- Parking
- Event Space
- Fitness
- Makerspace
- Revenue

- Business
- Art/Music School
- Open Space
- Marketplace (2)
- Hotel
- Pub
- Convenience Store
- Wayne's Expansion

- Senior Housing
- Entertainment Center
- Visitor Center
- Museum
- Commercial Kitchen
- Art & Dance Studio

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4 MIDDLETON ROAD

Which ownership model would you like to see here?

ONLINE SURVEY, VIRTUAL WORKSHOP, + IN-PERSON WORKSHOP (371 PARTICIPANTS)

53%

32%

15%
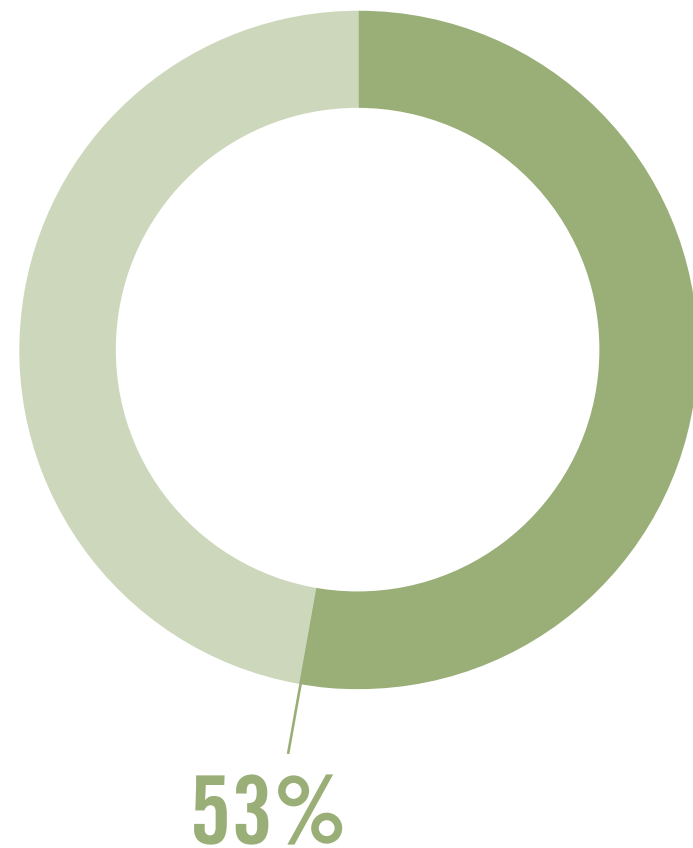
A. TOWN OWNERSHIP

Maintain town ownership with new tenant to bring in new programming.

B. LEASING

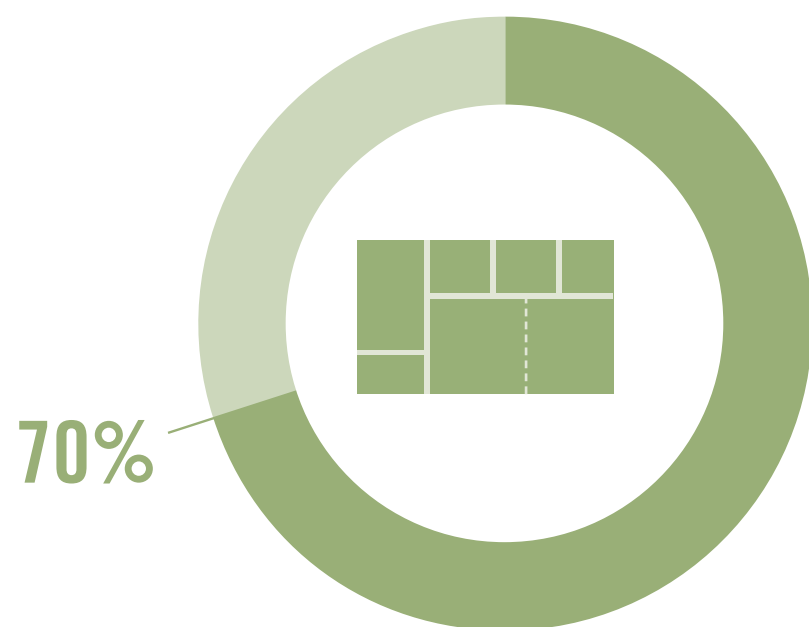*Short-term or long-term leasing for new programming with restrictions.*

C. SELL

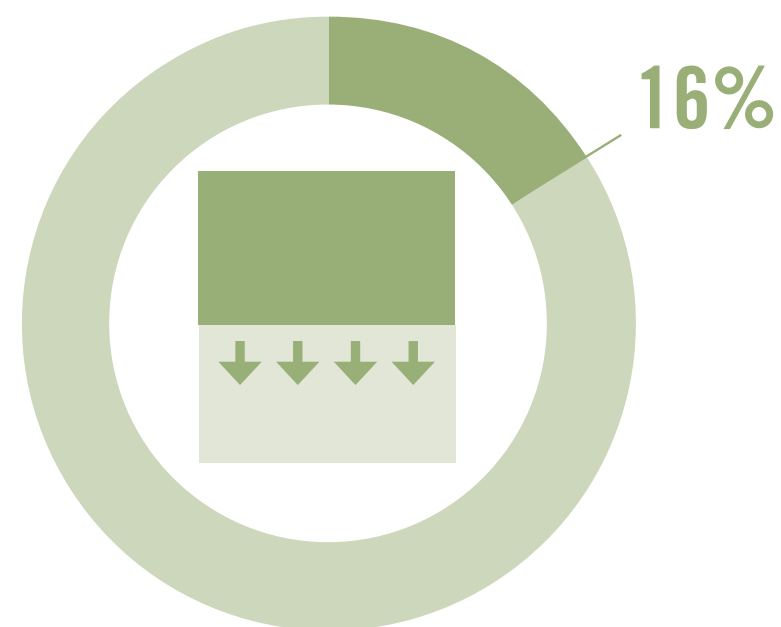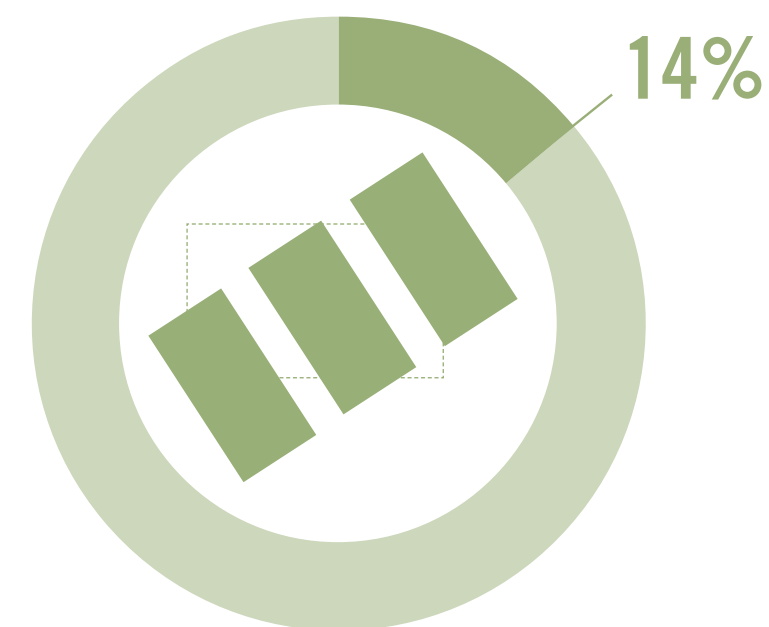*Sell parcels to local developer for redevelopment at their discretion.*

VI. Appendix: References & Citations

Boxford Facilities Municipal Plan

Town of Boxford, MA "Targeted Municipal Facilities Master Plan," Harriman Associates, September 18, 2018 , https://www.town.boxford.ma.us/FacilitiesMasterPlan-FinalReports

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