

Proposed Changes to the Devens Reuse Plan To Facilitate the Redevelopment of Vicksburg Square

Revised March 9, 2009 (E. Starzec)

Note: Proposed new text is shown underlined. Deletions are shown in ~~strike-through~~.

Change #1: Highlights of the Reuse Plan (page 7)

Purpose: Eliminate reference to the Innovation and Technology Center incubator facility, to be housed in Vicksburg Square.

“The central economic theme of the Reuse Plan is based on Massachusetts’ traditional strengths in development of new technologies through the academic and research base of greater Boston. The reuse goal is to encourage businesses that are growing and have new products, technologies, or services to locate at Fort Devens. Large sites with utilities and good vehicular access have been designated for high-profile technology-related users with research and development, manufacturing, and office needs.

~~The Plan includes an Innovation and Technology Center, housed in the historic Vicksburg Square Quadrangle. This Center is intended to serve as a catalyst for new development on the large sites located elsewhere in the Devens Enterprise Zone. It will play this role both by providing start-up and incubator space and by fostering connections to academic and research institutions.”~~

Change #2: The Core: Innovation and Technology (page 25)

Purpose: Revise discussion of Innovation and Technology Center to exclude Vicksburg Square.

“The Innovation and Technology theme is the boldest physical reuse pattern in the Plan. ~~The physical and thematic core of the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone is centered on the Innovation and Technology Center (ITC) proposed to be located in historic Vicksburg Square with its campus-like atmosphere.~~ The environment is expected to generate larger spin-off Innovation and Technology Businesses to be constructed on other locations on the site. Innovation and Technology Businesses are expected to exhibit one or a combination of the following qualities:

- new or improved product or service

- growing
- educational/academic links
- research and development component

The Innovation and Technology Business (ITB) zones have been designed to serve as a physical and development outgrowth of the Innovation and Technology Center (ITC). Physical siting of these businesses and industries are to be located in areas which surround the ITC that provide ample space and resources to further promote the healthy evolution of these uses.”

Change #3: Housing and Community Facilities (page 27)

Purpose: Revise discussion of housing and community facilities at Devens to include potential for housing at Vicksburg Square, including affordability guidelines and an expanded housing cap.

“Concerns raised during the original Reuse Plan public workshop process made it clear that housing and community facilities play an important role in the comprehensive land use approach envisioned for Devens. These uses, while not the central themes of the Reuse Plan, are expected to serve important regional needs as well as providing balance in the use mix of Devens.

At the time the Reuse Plan was approved in 1994, aAn inventory of the existing housing units currently on Devens revealed that there were approximately 1,700 units scattered around the site. A housing plan based on market research and public input was developed to best determine the role of housing in the reuse Plan. Of the existing 1,700 units, it was determined that a maximum of 282 units of housing, primarily existing units, should be accommodated in the Reuse plan based on a series of factors including regional needs, projected demand, projected land use of the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone, and potential negative fiscal impacts on the host communities and on the off-site housing market. The housing units that will be retained are located in areas that best promote and enhance a stable and diverse residential core. Some of the highest quality housing is currently located in and around the core area. Some of the units are in the historic district. Advantages to locating the housing in the core area include access to recreational and community facilities, the strong open space network buffering the residential core, and access to the institutional campus. Only the best housing stock relative to location and compatibility with surrounding land uses was considered for reuse. The areas selected for residential use are already well established neighborhoods that will serve as a natural extension of land use patterns surrounding Devens and will avoid isolation of the residential core.

In 2009, after a process of public hearings and collaboration between the Joint Boards of Selectmen and MassDevelopment, the 20-acre Vicksburg Square property was rezoned as the “Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District” to allow for multi-family residential uses. A separate housing “cap” of 400 units was approved for the new district. The location of Vicksburg Square complements the locations of Devens’ other residential districts, creating a “ring” of residential uses around Rogers Field.

In order to accommodate the needs of a broad range of income groups, and to ensure the stability of the residential core, approximately twenty-five (25%) of the originally allowed 282 units to be reused or constructed under the Reuse Plan as well as the 400 units potentially allowed within the Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District will reserved for low and moderate income individuals or families, and/or special needs populations. It is recognized that the success of the residential reuse is dependent on a balance between market rate and the affordable/special needs population.

A wide range of community facilities such as schools, meeting halls, libraries, etc. currently exist on Devens. It has been recognized that there is a strong need to retain the majority of these uses not only for the sake of the new users and residential population at Devens, but to serve the needs of the host communities and the region. As a result, many of these uses will be retained and additional uses will be encouraged to better complement and to serve the area needs. These uses should be encouraged in areas that best complement the spirit and intent of the Reuse Plan.

Change #4: Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District (page tbd)

Purpose: Provide a description for the new proposed Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District

Recognizing the importance of Vicksburg Square to the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone as a whole, the goal of the Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District is to facilitate the redevelopment of the historic Vicksburg Square structures by allowing for a broad range of uses including office uses; certain types of light industrial and research and development uses; cultural facilities; health care establishments; academic, institutional, and civic uses; “small-scale retail: accessory use”; multi-family residential dwellings; and business incubator uses.”

Change #5: Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District (page tbd)

Purpose: Provide goals and objectives for the new proposed Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District.

“Goals and Objectives

- Preserve the historic Vicksburg Square buildings through adaptive reuse
- Provide for a range of allowed uses

Example Uses

- Office
- Research & Development
- Cultural
- Health Care, Nursing Home, Elderly Housing
- Academic/Institutional/Civic
- Multi-Family Residential
- Incubator”