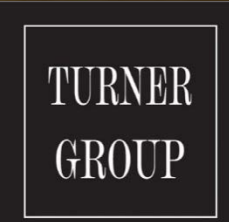


Town of Milford
Community Center
Feasibility Study
Final Report
07/05/23



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Specifically, the team would like to thank the following individuals, town departments and stakeholder groups for their time and feedback as the team conducted the study.

Town of Milford

Board or Selectmen

Milford Recreation Commission

Planning Board

Lincoln Daley – Director, Office of Community Development

Arene Berry – Director, Recreation Department

Public Works Department

Milford Community Athletic Association (MCAA)

Wadleigh Library Board of Trustees

Keyes Memorial Park Expansion Committee

Keyes Memorial Park Trustees Milford

Milford School District

Souhegan Valley Boy's and Girl's Club

Residents of Milford

Milford, NH Community Center Feasibility Study

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1.0 Executive Summary / Introduction

The HL Turner Group along with Ironwood Design Associates was retained by the Town of Milford to conduct and prepare a needs assessment and feasibility study to develop options for a possible Community and Senior Center through the reuse/renovation of an existing 30,000 square foot commercial/industrial building located at 127 Elm Street or the construction of a new facility on the subject property and Keyes Memorial Park property. The scope included evaluating the current/future recreational and social programming within the Town and collaboration/partnerships with non-profit, private organizations, and community groups within the Community to determine the footprint and spatial requirements of the Center and facilities.

This study builds off a previous study completed by the Keyes Memorial Park Expansion Committee in December 2016. which detailed information about the Committee's findings, process, and recommendations focusing on integration of the parcels, public awareness, public safety, traffic improvements, asset management, and long-term planning. (See Appendix VI for copy of full December 2016 Report) This report should be viewed as a continuation of that 2016 effort. The Community Center Feasibility Report was commissioned and funded by the Milford Recreation Commission in 2020 after the Board of Selectmen determined that more information was required to assess the viability and reuse of the 127 Elm Street property for Town use and recreational programming.

Since the issuance of the 2016 report, the east entrance to the Keyes Memorial Park (formally referred to as the Fletcher Paint Superfund Site) has been fully restored and renovated. A new performance stage has been constructed on the site and the entrance now acts as an attractive eastern gateway to the park. In addition, the Town received approximately 7 acres of land abutting the 127 Elm Street property located to the north by way of a private donation. The donated property was subsequently consolidated with 127 Elm Street property and will become the location for a 1 acre community dog park. The park master plan designed as part of this report shows a potential access point directly from within expanded Keyes Memorial Park to the new dog park and trail system.

The design team was tasked with assessing the existing building and lot at 127 Elm Street and conducting stakeholder interviews and public surveys in order to assess the needs that a new community center could serve. The information gathered and the design team's assessment of the existing property would result in a recommendation regarding the best approach for the incorporation of 127 Elm Street building/property and renovation of Keyes Memorial Park as the site for a new community center and park complex.

Summary of key findings and recommendations are :

- There is an identified need for a community center in Milford.

- The community center should be centrally located within a newly expanded Keyes Memorial Park.
- The existing buildings at the 127 Elm Street lot should be demolished to make way for the newly expanded Keyes Memorial Park. This should include the relocation, construction, and expansion of existing recreational facilities and fields.
- Implement a phased project approach similar to the phases laid out in the 2016 report to help manage costs over time.

The design team's review of the community's needs indicates that a community center could meet several needs examined during the interview and information gathering process. The study identified the following needs which a new center and park could help fulfill:

- Centrally located offices for the Recreation Department and creating additional space at the town hall for other agencies by Recreation Department vacating that space
- A local, dedicated seniors space in the Town to allow for regularly scheduled programs and social events.
- A large multi-purpose room, served by a kitchen in which catered events could be held.
- Moving hard surface courts out of flood plain areas.
- An accessible multi-modal (walking, biking) path within the park serving a variety of uses such as pet walking and providing an off-road walking path that connects with area walking trails, Town parks, Souhegan Valley Boys & Girls Club, and the future dog park.
- Improved park storage facilities for the Recreation Department.
- An additional gymnasium within the Town – the Town's current gymnasiums struggle to provide enough gym space for local programs and organizations.
- Program rooms within the center for educational, art, and exercise focused community programs.
- The improvement of the 127 Elm Street property, it is currently un-sightly, a safety concern, and a maintenance issue for the Parks & Recreation Department.
- Additional playing field surfaces, and re-arrangement of current fields and courts to provide better simultaneous uses.
- Improving field surfaces and material cross section for better field resiliency and drainage characteristics.
- Additional strategically located parking to better serve large scale events at the park such as sports tournaments.

- Enhancements to the swimming pool facility such as modernized locker rooms, accessible bathrooms accessed from the exterior of the center, and improved pool staff facilities.

In addition to the needs identified above, the project team recommends removing the existing structures located at the 127 Elm Street parcel in their entirety. As described in later sections of this report, the challenges presented by maintaining the existing structures outweigh the benefits. The considerations to be made when assessing a re-use or build new scenario include, but are not limited to:

- Renovation projects are typically higher cost per square foot when compared to new construction projects due to the logistics of working with and around existing elements and materials.
- Significant financial investment would be made by the town to end up with a 'square peg in a round hole' final design solution.
- Structural upgrades would be required due to the change in use group of the building regardless of the upgrades needed to repair the structure due to deterioration from moisture intrusion through the failing building envelope.
- Relocation of the community center to a new location within the site opens up new opportunities for better use of the parcels as a whole.
- The internal layout of the buildings are not conducive to meet recreation department programming needs. For instance, a gymnasium space (a key program element in the new rec center design) would require either prohibitively expensive structural modifications (removal of interior columns along the center of each building, raising existing roof height) to the existing pre-engineered metal building frame, or the complete demo of one of the existing building wings.
- The amount of demolition required as outlined in the existing conditions report results in very little of the existing structure and building systems remaining as viable for re-use. This reduces the validity of the entire concept of re-using the building as opposed to building new.

To conclude, the project team concurs that there are identified needs within the community currently not being met by the various existing facilities that are used for community and regional programming events. As stated by the 2016 committee report: Keyes Memorial Park is a valuable resource for the community as a vibrant and centrally located open park space, and as an opportunity to be a drawing point to attract visitors to the community. Continued enhancements of the park will serve to strengthen the quality of life in Milford and help fulfill the Town of Milford Master Plan.

It is our recommendation that the Town further explore the options set forth in the team's report

to renovate/best utilize Keyes Memorial Park and incorporate the 127 Elm Street parcel into the park culminating in the construction of a new, centrally located, multi-generational community center.

2.0 STUDY PROCESS & METHODOLOGY

It should be noted that this study was conducted against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, this affected the methodology utilized and facilitation of the stakeholder involvement. The team limited physical in-person meetings and instead relying heavily upon virtual meetings and interviews throughout the study.

While the study presented some unique challenges, this did not affect the quality of the information gathered, the ability to successfully conduct the interviews and meetings over the virtual meeting software or the ability to effectively reach the findings/conclusions contained herein.

Building and Property Assessment

The team visited the site soon after the project began to assess both the 127 Elm St parcel and the Keyes Park parcel. An in-depth report was made on the conditions of the existing buildings located at 127 Elm St. The report found that the buildings are in dis-repair and pose little value to the town's vision for the two parcels. As described in the assessment report and in following sections of this document, the town would be better served to remove the deteriorating structures to fully realize the project's potential.

Online Surveys

Two online surveys were conducted prior to the virtual meetings and presentations. These included a stakeholder survey questionnaire and a Facebook survey open to the public. The team feels the response volume was adequate and representative of a good cross section of public opinion. The results of these surveys and raw survey data can be seen in Appendix IV.

Stakeholder Interviews

The team, with the help of the Town, identified several stakeholders. These entities or individuals were viewed as having a vested interest in the programs and activities that would take place at a renovated park and new community center. The stakeholders the team engaged included: MCAA (Milford Community Athletic Association), Milford Recreation Commission, Milford Recreation Department, Milford Office of Community Development, Wadleigh Memorial Library Trustees, Keyes Memorial Park Trustees, Milford Department of Public Works, Granite Town Media, Meraki Volleyball, Milford School District Representatives, the Milford Board of Selectmen, and several individuals representing community businesses among others. The summaries of the interviews can be seen in Appendix V.

Public input sessions – 1/6/21 & 1/14/21

Concurrent with the online survey efforts, the team conducted two online public meetings utilizing virtual meeting software.

Two meetings on weeknights in early January of 2021 were held. The intent of these meetings

was to present the results of online surveys and gather feedback from the community regarding the vision for a community center and renovated Keyes Park. These meetings provided useful feedback to the team as the audience participation was quite active through both the chat sidebar session as well as live audio questions during the meetings.

Public Presentations

Milford Recreation Commission – 2/10/21

The team made a presentation to the Recreation Commission during one of the commission's regular scheduled monthly meetings. The team presented site design concepts during this meeting. Highlights from the comments raised during the meeting included:

- Demolition of the 127 Elms St. buildings as soon as possible
- Space is needed for indoor sports at an affordable rate
- An access road within the site with two entrances to Elm St is preferred
- A space is needed for serving luncheons to seniors
- Teens and seniors are the two groups most lacking program space in the town

The full minutes of this meeting can be seen in the appendix sections.

Milford Board of Selectmen – 2/22/21

The team presented to the board of selectmen to keep the board apprised of the project progress. Highlights from the comments during this meeting included:

- Flood plain location relative to the new building footprint location
- Building square footage and how the proposed size was determined
- Regional vs local community use was discussed
- Phased construction was recommended by the selectmen
- The ADA walking path was recommended to be connected with the larger network of walking trails in the area

Public Presentation – 6/02/21

A final follow up virtual public meeting was held in early June of 2021 to present the design team's recommendations based on all the information gathered through the stakeholder and public input processes. Highlights of some of the responses at this presentation included:

- Future expansion of the community would be ideally planned for in the initial building construction.
- Outdoor work out stations would be desirable along the walking path
- Providing office space for the Parks & Rec department in the new building will be important
- The parking layout was discussed – the team stated that smaller parking areas spread

throughout the site is more efficient and attractive than a larger centralized lot

Milford Board of Selectmen – 6/14/21

The team presented the final site and building concepts to the board of selectmen during the June 2021 meeting. The following comments were raised during discussion:

- It was recommended that the demolition of 127 Elm St be placed into the town CIP, and be put on the town ballot for the upcoming voting session.
- The concern about batted balls entering the playground was discussed – the team explained that this scenario was highly unlikely

The meeting minutes from both board of selectmen presentations can be seen in the appendix.

The team presented the final draft of this report to the Board of Selectmen on July 10, 2023.

3.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS 127 ELM STREET PROPERTY & KEYES MEMORIAL PARK

The team surveyed the Town-owned property and building at 127 Elm Street, as well as the adjacent Keyes Memorial Park on September 17, 2020 and again on November 15, 2020.

The following summarize the team's findings during its site visits. This site assessment was conducted during the initial phase of the project, before the information gathering process was started. The team wished to understand the site characteristics first-hand, so to inform site analysis and the schematic site evaluation process.

127 Elm Street Parcel (Tax Map 19, Lot 10)

Property Description

The subject parcel is listed as Tax Map 19, Lot 10 within the Town of Milford. The lot is



approximately 13 acres (566,280 square feet). The south side of the site abuts a wooded sloping hill and commercial businesses along Elm Street. To the north, the property is framed by the banks of Souhegan River and adjacent to an office building, residences, and Town owned ball fields

(MCAA fields). To the north side of the building, the property is bisected small ridge that is wooded and descends down to a stream that connects to the Souhegan River to the east. The east end of the site opens onto the Keyes Memorial Park. The western property boundary line borders the Granite Town Plaza property and the multi-family residential development, Brookstone Manor.

The site is accessed on the south west side by a narrow shared drive that descends down about 20' in elevation from Elm Street. A portion of the share drive represents the only legal frontage for the lot totaling approximately 17 linear feet. The entrance was reconstructed in 1990 as part of site plan amendment to improve

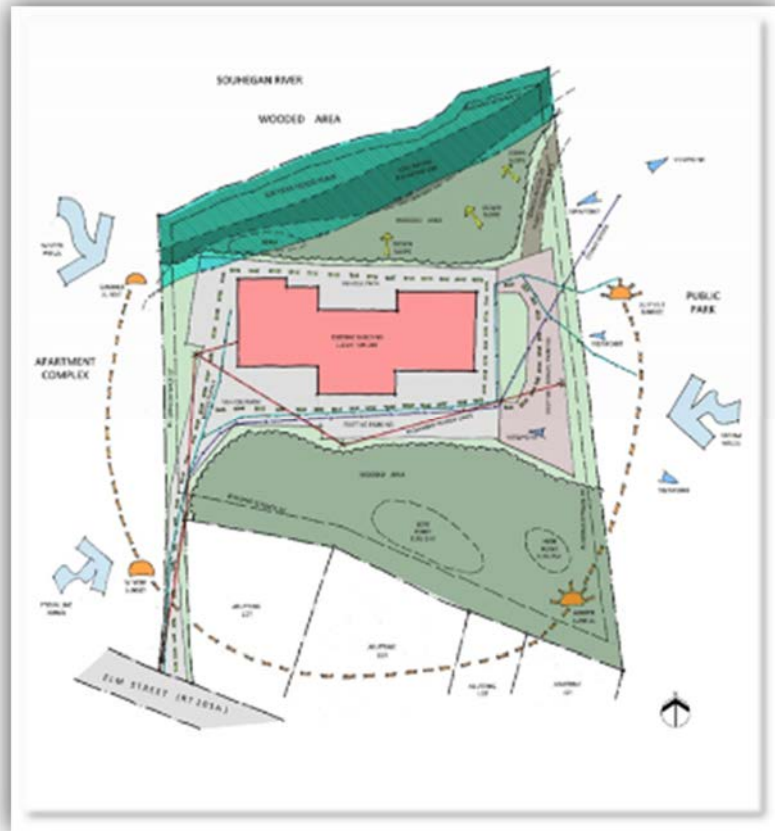
access and turning movements to accommodate larger vehicles. Site distance on Elm Street is somewhat challenged and may need driveway improvements. To improve the egress due the volume of traffic on Elm Street, a flashing yellow caution traffic light was installed at the intersection. The light is currently not functional and would need to be reconnected.

A secondary 10 foot wide gravel maintenance drive is located to the east of the building providing vehicle and pedestrian access to the abutting Keyes Memorial Park.

A sewer and water utility access and maintenance easement bisects the northerly portion of the property in proximity to the Souhegan River. Access to the easement(s) is via abutting Granite State Plaza property located at Tax Map 19 Lot 25.

40,000 square feet of asphalt. There is asphalt paving striped for parking on the west, south, and east sides of the building. The asphalt exhibits a large amount of cracking throughout all areas where it is located on the site.

The southern half of property falls outside of the 100 and 500 year flood zones. The area around the building and south of the previously referenced ridge and stream appears to be dry and free of



surface drainage problems at the time of the site visit. Due to age of the property and building, minimal There were, however, remnants of a puddle along the southwest edge of the south side parking, and no catch basins or other sub-surface drainage components were observed.

An overhead power line cuts across the parking lot on the south side of the building. There is a stone border around the perimeter of the building foundation that is approximately 5' wide.

Building Description



The building formerly occupied by the Permattach Diamond Tool Corporation consists of a one- and two-story pre-engineered metal building located at 127 Elm Street in Milford, NH. The building is made up of three separate metal building frames and the front entrance walls all face due south. The middle and western buildings were built in 1984, and the eastern building was built in 1989. The three structures comprise an approximately 30,000 square foot

building footprint in total. Each metal building is approximately 10,000 square foot in area individually. The middle building frame contains a two-story space at the front.

This second floor is approximately 5,000 square foot in area and contains office space on both levels, as well as a former break room area and kitchenette. The western and eastern metal buildings are predominantly open inside and are both single story. All 3 buildings have low pitch gable roofs that pitch into each other. The building was in disrepair and had been vacant when the Town acquired the lot in 2016. It has been used periodically for the Public Works, Police, and Recreation Departments and storage since that time.



Building & Site Reuse Considerations

Regarding the potential to re-use the buildings on this lot as a new community center there are several identified deficiencies that would need to be considered and/or addressed.

Site Deficiencies

- The building is not ideally suited for a successful park master plan layout. A more centrally located building allows better field, roadway, and parking dispersion. The buildings' current location leaves it somewhat isolated from the east park entrance which is the preferred entrance from a traffic standpoint. The west entrance has sight line issues and is preferred to be left as a secondary exit only used in high volume events.



- The buildings are deemed an on-going maintenance expense. Vandalism is also a concern

and increases the liability of the Town.

Building/Life Safety Code Deficiencies

- The occupancy use group change to a place of public assembly from a business and mercantile use puts the building into a category of use factor higher than it currently is. Because of this higher factor of use category, the building code requires building enhancements to provide a certain level of safety and well-being to the general public. Due to the higher risk category of use the building is required to meet current code required gravity, wind, snow and seismic loads for a new construction building. This would most likely result in structural upgrades to the building frames. The change in use group removes the advantage typically realized in the existing building code through grandfathering of certain elements.
- A change of occupancy to a community center building would likely be a mixed-use with Assembly, Business, and Storage occupancies. While a review of specific plans would be necessary to make final code determinations, it is highly likely that an automatic sprinkler system and an automatic fire alarm system with voice evacuation would be required. NFPA 101, Chapter 43 guides the process for code application in the renovation of existing buildings, including changes of use and occupancy, and would require the renovated building to comply with new construction codes for sprinklers and fire alarm systems (101-43.7.2.2).
- The second floor space is not accessible and is of a size that triggers the accessibility requirement. An elevator or vertical chair lift is needed to achieve code compliance.



- Pursuant to New Hampshire RSA 153:14 II, the Milford Fire Chief issued an Order to Remedy Dangerous Conditions on February 22, 2013. The Milford Fire Chief determined

that the building violated the New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rules, State Fire Code, Saff-c-6000 and is dangerous to the lives and safety of the public. The order is still in effect and is the legal responsibility of the Town of Milford as the property's current owner to remedy.

Space Deficiencies

- The building's arrangement as three separate frames presents layout challenges for potential adaptation to a new community center use. The interior column layout is not conducive to large open recreational spaces such as a gym, nor is the height of the frames adequate for gym use.



Extensive re-work of the roof drainage is needed. The volumes of the three separate gables pitch towards each other and is not a desirable layout from a water management standpoint. This arrangement is not conducive to roofing material longevity, or a low maintenance design. There are gutter spillover indications down the face of the brick veneer on the south elevation near the downspouts.

- The building does not distinguish itself visually or stylistically and is also not deemed to be historically or culturally significant within the Town of Milford. Because of this its re-use is entirely a function of practicality, not necessity.

Building System Deficiencies

- The HVAC, electrical and plumbing systems all require total replacement. The current equipment is well past its usable life, and has sat in a state of non-operative dis-repair exposed to the elements, for close to a decade.
- Due to the lack of building maintenance, the property suffered a catastrophic failure of the sprinkler system on January 29, 2013. As a result, the entire building suffered extensive water damage, resulting in the shutdown of all utilities and damage to the building's fire alarm system. Should the building be renovated, the entire sprinkler

system most likely need to be replaced at the cost of several thousand dollars. Replacement is most likely the only option due to the extent of the damage to the system.

- Although, the extent of the damage to the fire alarm system is not fully known, similar to the sprinkler system, the fire alarm system will need to be repaired/replaced as well.

Envelope Deficiencies

- The building would require total removal of all existing finishes both interior and exterior back to the steel frame elements. There are very little salvageable exterior wall components that would be adequate protection against the elements in their current state. The brick veneer is in a state of disrepair and requires replacement in many locations.
- A completely upgraded insulation package will be required for both wall and roof systems. The current energy codes require higher levels of insulation than in the past and the extent of this renovation would trigger these requirements. It is also highly likely that the majority of the insulation has been damaged by water intrusion.
- All windows and doors need to be replaced.
- There will be large amounts of patching of exterior walls, siding, and the roof where ducts and pipes specific to the buildings' previous use need to be patched.



- In general, there is very little cost savings per square foot of area when extensively restoring existing building elements to a usable state. Typically the amount of labor is higher in these types of restorative projects as the logistics of working around existing in place elements requires more time. It is the teams feeling that the existing structures do

not possess an inherent value that makes their renovation worthwhile.

- When considering all of these factors, the team recommends that the existing structures on the 127 Elm Street lot be demolished and the site returned to a level surface ready for re-development in the future.

Keyes Memorial Park

Property

The Keyes Memorial Park parcel is approximately 21.3 acres located on the Souhegan River immediately east to 127 Elm Street parcel. The Keyes Memorial Park property has limited frontage on Elm Street; the east entrance is adjacent to the remediated Fletcher Paint site at 21 Elm Street. The property is generally flat in grade, although there is a several-foot-high drop at the bank of the Souhegan River. The banks of the river are vegetated with mature trees. Existing wooded areas buffer the athletic fields from the residential parcels with frontage on Elm Street. Apart from the vegetative buffer, there are very few shade trees at the park.

A well-used foot path runs along the river; there are picnic tables and grills adjacent to the path in the wooded area.

Public access to the park is available from the west at the 127 Elm Street parking lot; this access point appeared well used by the public. Public access and parking are also available from the east entrance on Keyes Drive. This parking location is most convenient to the existing tennis courts and skateboard park. These tennis courts and parking area are located in the river flood plain.

Electric utilities are above ground; the utilities cabinet is found in line with the paved asphalt walkway to the public entrance of the Keyes Memorial Pool administration building.

The 127 Elm Street parking location provides access to a gravel trail that leads to a paved pathway connecting the pool and other centrally located amenities (playground, volleyball court, pavilion and pergola). The paved pathway extends around the tennis and basketball courts to the east entrance parking lot off Keyes Drive.

The Keyes Memorial Park amenities included:

- Chain link fenced-in swimming pool and wading pool
- Keyes Memorial Pool administration building
- Concession stand
- Playground with swings and jungle gym
- Sand volleyball court

- Horseshoe pits
- Pavilion, attached pergola, and picnic tables
- Picnic area with grills
- Performance stage/bandstand
- Skateboard park
- Tennis courts
- Basketball court
- Baseball diamond
- Softball field
- Youth baseball diamond with dugouts and backdrop fencing
- Multi-purpose field
- Port-a-potty temporary outdoors bathroom facility

Buildings

Keyes Memorial Park contains several outbuildings. The following list describes the outbuildings.

- Dugouts – These structures are located at the softball fields, and the baseball field. The walls are concrete block, and the roofs are wood framed.



Typical ball field dugout

- Keyes Field Pavilion – dedicated 2007 – This structure is a wood framed gazebo with an attached wood frame pergola.



Pavilion

- Storage shed – This is a concrete block building, with a wood framed roof located adjacent to the pool patio.



Storage Shed

- Pool patio and pool administrative building dedicated in June, 1965 - The administrative building is a single story painted concrete block building with a wood framed roof. The building is in good condition but lacks adequate locker rooms and pool staff support space. The pool filtration equipment is located within this building. There is a concession window on the east side of the southern wall. There are two pools located within the pool patio. A larger pool with lap lanes is used for swimming events. There is a smaller toddler pool in a separate fenced area located on the pool patio.

Pool administration Building



Toddler Pool



Main Pool

- Pump house –This is a painted concrete block wall, and wood frame roof structure.



Pump House

- Band stand dedicated in 2007. This is a wood framed gazebo structure and will remain in its current location.

Band Stand



- Milford Skate Park – dedicated in 2000 and recently renovated. This is a concrete terrain park for bikes and skateboards. This will remain in place throughout the park renovations.



Skate Park

- The Stage at the park entrance-completed 2020. This is a new open air, stone wall and wood frame roof stage structure fronting on amphitheater style graded seating. This is beyond the extents of the current park master plan and would remain an anchor of the park.



Granite Stage

4.0 STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC INPUT

Before developing specific plans to improve the park and upgrade or replace the existing buildings on the 127 Elm Street property, the design team was interested in collecting input from residents and stakeholders.

Online Surveys

Public Survey Highlights

The online public survey covered several topics ranging from desired elements within the park and community center building, to the frequency with which an individual would see themselves using park and building amenities, to the geographic location and demographic of respondents. There were 231 total respondents to the online community survey.

Frequency of use

39% of survey respondents said they would use a community center once a week, 20% would use center a couple times a month, and 10% said they would use the center daily. 18% would attend specific, while the remaining 13% indicated they would not utilize the center.

In favor?

In response to a simple yes or no if in favor of the town constructing a new community center next to Keyes Memorial Park 80% were in favor of the community center project.

Desired activities and amenities

The survey asked respondents to select activities from a list that the respondent or respondent's family would most enjoy. The top-ranking activities/services selected were:

- Universally accessible paved walking path throughout the park Multi-purpose community space
- Aerobics/Dance/Yoga Studio Gymnasium
- Seniors lounge Rock climbing wall

The respondents were also asked to identify from the same list of activities which they or their families would participate in least often. The top five activities garnering the most votes were:

- Child Care
- Indoor soccer
- Library space – mobile/satellite space – reading programs, internet access
- Seniors lounge
- Racquetball

It would seem that the appearance of services such as the senior lounge on both lists is due to its mutual exclusivity to user groups. Those of age to utilize such a service would prioritize it, and those not of age would easily not prioritize it. The presence of library type functions and

indoor soccer space could indicate that they are already well served within the community.

Geographic data

Survey respondents were asked how far they would be willing to travel to utilize a community center. No respondents indicated that they would be willing to travel over 20 miles. 8% of respondents would travel from 15-20 miles away, and 21% indicated they would travel up to 15 miles. The remaining respondents said they would not travel more than 10 miles to utilize the park and center.

92% of respondents indicated their town of residence. 95% of those responding to this question were from Milford, 5% were from Amherst and the other 5% were from Mount Vernon.

Concerns

Respondents were able to leave comments at the end of the survey, as well as on social media platforms used for the survey. The following topics appeared the most often in these comments:

Financial concerns -The comments asked how this project would be financed, and how it would affect tax rates. There was also concern about spending money on a project such as this while other needs within the town such as maintenance related spending is needed. Other comments related to a private vs public funding mechanism if the community center came to fruition.

Regional vs Local – The financial concern comments correlated with comments regarding the target users. Respondents asked if this were to be regional would that include other towns sharing in project costs, or would membership fees be charged?

Several respondents expressed concerns about user groups that were currently under-served in the community, with senior citizens and older kids or teenagers being mentioned specifically.

Stakeholder Survey Highlights

The online stakeholder survey sought to identify areas of opportunity that stakeholders could help meet through operational, programming or project development assistance. The questions posed in this survey included if there was interest in partnering with the development and operation of a new center, as well as specific amenities desired and what resources the stakeholder could bring to the table.

Partnership opportunities in development or operation

Several stakeholders replied that they envisioned areas in which they could help develop and or operate activities at the center. These areas included athletic programs, senior center services, and transportation support. The transportation support would include assisting seniors in accessing any senior related programming. Several stakeholders also indicated support in providing programming that could utilize the multi-purpose space that would be provided in the center.

Resources

Stakeholders indicated they could help provide resources ranging from expertise in specific activity space design, to programming and staffing assistance for certain programs. Once again, transportation resources were offered to support a new community center.

Stakeholder Interviews Highlights

The team held several virtual interviews with stakeholders after the online survey responses had been collected. These interviews yielded the following information.

MCAA (Milford Community Athletic Association)

The team interviewed several representatives of the MCAA all present on a single virtual call. The MCAA noted that one of their goals is to host more tournaments thus generating more foot traffic near local businesses. An improved park layout with additional fields would help accomplish this. They noted that basketball space is a challenge to get within the community and they currently have to scatter programming around several locations and at odd hours. An extra gymnasium space would greatly help this situation. A gymnasium would also help them in conducting indoor tryouts/assessments for sports such as baseball. Indoor space would also help them overlap sports seasons instead of having to wait for one to end before the next can begin on outdoor playing fields. The MCAA also indicated they could greatly benefit from readily available space to hold board monthly board meetings and other such functions.

Milford Recreation Commission

The team attended a regularly scheduled recreation commission meeting and briefly presented the project before taking input from the commission members. The commission noted that indoor sports at an affordable rate are lacking in this town due to the limited availability of facilities to host these types of events. The commission would also like to see a space capable of hosting luncheons for seniors. The commission recommended expanding the Keyes Memorial Park playground and upgrading and grooming the existing path along the river within Keyes Memorial Park. The commission also recommended an intrinsically safe but functional through road connecting both the 127 Elm Street entrance and the existing Keyes Memorial Park entrance.

Wadleigh Memorial Library Board of Trustees

The team attended a board of trustees meeting and presented the study there while also gathering feedback. The board indicated that weather and space affect options for teen programs, so the library might possibly consider utilizing a community center for programs such as yoga and could offer music programs if a performance space were available. The board also indicated the computer related classes run by the library could possibly use space in the community center. The board said they would like to be kept informed regarding decisions made for the community center.

Department of Public Works

The team interviewed the director of Milford DPW and noted the following items. The director noted that the existing 127 Elm Street property and building is a maintenance and vandalism concern. A new community center at the site would help prevent daytime vandalism at the park itself with a full-time presence in the building. The director would like to see the Keyes Memorial Park entrance functionality improved as part of any park renovation. The department could also utilize storage space at a facility within the park. The director also mentioned that he would like to see parking kept to exterior of the park space.

Milford School District

Discussions with the Milford School district revealed that performing arts space and indoor and outdoor athletic court/field space would be most valuable as a need that a new community center and renovated Keyes Memorial Park could provide. The schools have a tough time offering court time to programs such as the MCAA and adult rec programs with their current gymnasium facilities.

Milford Department of Recreation

The department of rec indicated several areas of need specific to the department that the new community center could provide. Among others, the department needs better centralized storage space, a central facility out of which rec programs could be offered, and improved pool facilities. The department of rec of course would be the key stakeholder and would operate the center. The department would desire to have their office headquarters within the new building.

Public input sessions Highlights

The public input sessions proved to be effective methods for the team to present ideas and for the public to interact and give feedback to the team. The following comments came from the early January 2021 presentations:

- An attendee asked if the project would create duplication of spaces within the town. Arene Berry stated that there is a need for additional programming space and that this project would not create a duplication of such spaces.
- An attendee asked who would run the facility. The team responded that the Recreation department would operate the community center.
- It was stated that membership only clubs and gyms in the area have gotten expensive and a town run no fee venue would be a welcome addition to the area.
- The senior population in Milford was discussed. It was noted that this is a growing and under-served group in the town. One attendee noted several other towns that have exemplary senior programs that should be referenced.
- A gymnasium space was discussed and the particulars of what it could entail were noted. It should be large enough to host special events and also accommodate multiple types of activities and sports including volleyball, basketball and pickle ball.
- A multi-purpose room was discussed. This could be used by groups such as the Lions Club and the Rotary Club among others for meetings and other functions.
- Program rooms were mentioned that could be used for small group instruction in crafts, painting, and even game playing. The possibilities for uses of these rooms were noted to be very flexible and wide ranging.
- Office space for the Recreation department was discussed. It was noted that this space should include a well-lit reception desk area where visitors to the center can be helped by Recreation Department staff.

Survey Summary

The team finds several key takeaways from the survey data generated. The team feels that the 231 respondents represent an accurate cross section of the community. The responses were wide ranging – it is apparent that respondents weren't afraid to make their feelings known whether positively or negatively. Across this range of responses there seems to be support for the development of a new community center and park renovations with 80% responding favorably.

- The typical tension between offering increased town services as a tradeoff to a possible tax increase was frequently mentioned. The true tax impact would not be known until hard costs are determined. This stresses the importance of offering a multi-generational community center that can benefit all age groups, thereby allowing everybody to benefit from their tax dollars. This is an advantage of a community center project over a more demographically limited project such as a school.
- The willingness of stakeholders to assist in operations through planning and staffing of events seems to be an indicator that there are many resource gaps currently in the town that a community center can help fill. Specifically, the gym, classroom, and field space that could be offered seem very valuable. This should give confidence that if built, the park and center would be well utilized.
- As noted by one stakeholder, there could be residual economic benefits due to the sites' ability to better host tournaments and other events. These types of events could result in businesses in the park vicinity seeing increased foot traffic. The opportunity for local food service vendors to service such events on site would also be a positive economic development.
- Improved vehicular site circulation and the safety of the park entrances are key improvements to explore. These topics were mentioned several times regarding the ability to now traverse the 127 Elm Street and Keyes Memorial Park lots within the expanded park itself. The team will factor this into the park master plan. It would be advantageous to commission a study of the 127 Elm Street entrance to explore safety improvements at that intersection. The possibility of increased traffic volume turning onto Elm Street at this intersection is a concern.

5.0 FEASIBILITY STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the needs identified during the information gathering processes, the Design Team formulated a park master plan and a conceptual building design to better serve the Milford community and surrounding region.

It should be noted that the goal of any future building development and park improvements would be to complement and enhance the services currently being offered to the community by various organizations and businesses. It is not the intent to compete with or duplicate the services of entities that already adequately serve the community's needs.

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

127 Elm Street Property

- Demolish the existing building located on the lot. As outlined earlier in the report, the team concludes the existing building does not offer enough value to rehabilitate for use as the community center building. The building location is not conducive to realizing a successful park master plan layout. In addition, the current condition and interior layout of the buildings are not viable.
- Incorporate the 127 Elm Street lot into the Keyes Memorial Park parcel to create one park across both parcels.

Keyes Memorial Park

- Provision for an accessible walking path within the park would serve a variety of uses, such as pet walking and connecting area walking trails with the future dog park. An accessible walking trail would connect to destinations within the park and to sidewalks on Elm Street.
- Creation of additional playing field surfaces, and re-arrangement of current fields and courts will afford improved simultaneous uses.
- Improvements to the field surfaces and soils will support playing field resiliency and drainage characteristics.
- New centrally located vehicular parking will better serve large scale park events such as sports tournaments and provide facile access to the new community building and pool. Relocation of the tennis courts and basketball court on the expanded park site is recommended, thereby moving these impervious surfaces from their current location in the flood plain of the Souhegan River.

- Of the more than 21-acre Keyes Memorial Park parcel, the park master plan includes redevelopment of approximately 19 acres of it. The greatest areas of disturbance include reconfiguration, expansion, and refurbishing of athletic playing fields.
- When built out, the new park would have nearly 4 times as many striped and paved parking spaces as it does currently. Thus, the new park design includes green infrastructure to mitigate these additional paved surfaces.

Community Center Building

The centerpiece of Keyes Memorial Park will be the community center itself. The building would offer programming space for all ages and function as a truly multi-generational community center. The building's central location in the park allows it to be easily accessible from the east and the west access points, enhancing the relationship between building use and park use. This provides park users with ease of access and increases efficiency of operation for staff. The building's central location also consolidates many different amenities within one footprint within the better organized park green space. The 32,000 square foot footprint of both phases of the new building equals the 32,000 square foot footprint of the existing buildings at 127 Elm Street. that are recommended for demolition. The incorporation of the 127 Elm Street parcel into the new park layout allows for a net increase in open space while maintaining the same building footprint square footage across both lots. The team feels the park amenities will be better laid out across the new larger park area. The new building is situated within Keyes Memorial Park such that the existing pavilion, bandstand, storage shed, pool and the skate park can all be maintained in their current locations. These factors should result in the park's current open space character being maintained and enhanced.

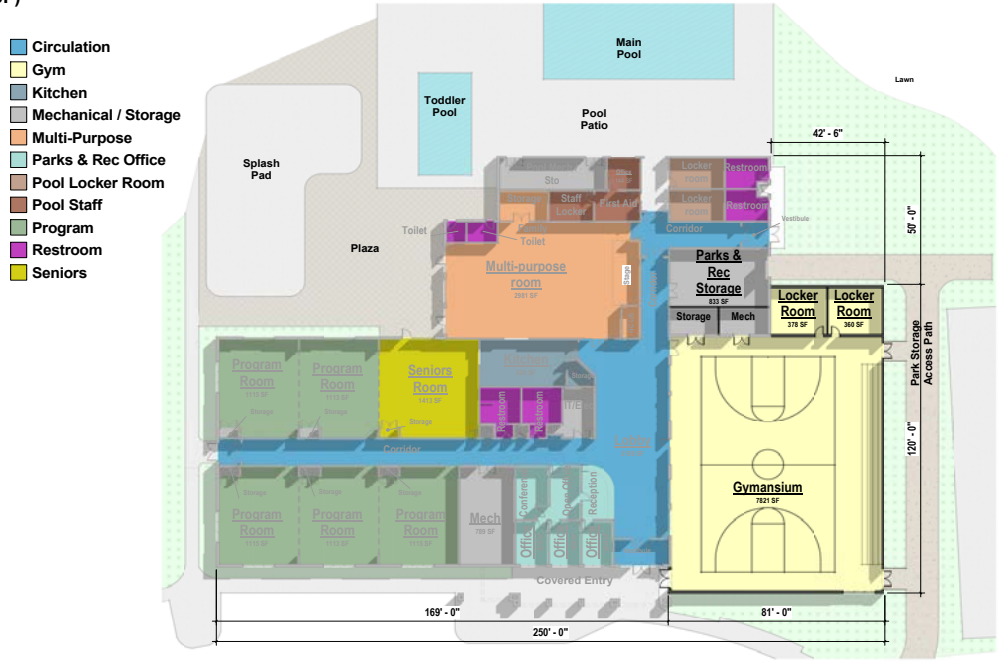
Based on survey responses regarding what programming elements a community center building should contain, and in close collaboration with the recreation department, a proposed community center building design was developed. The proposed design is highlighted by the following features .

- Office space for the entire Recreation Department - This would allow the space currently occupied at the Town Hall by the Recreation Department to be available to other Town agencies. The offices would be connected to the reception area of the building allowing department staff to provide assistance during regular office hours to visitors upon arrival.
- Park storage space - The building concept contains storage space for the recreation and public works departments, served by an overhead door and access road from the main circulation drive. The recreation department currently lacks storage space on the ground of the park and would greatly benefit from a centralized storage space at the building.
- Increased pool functionality - The concept was developed with pool functionality in

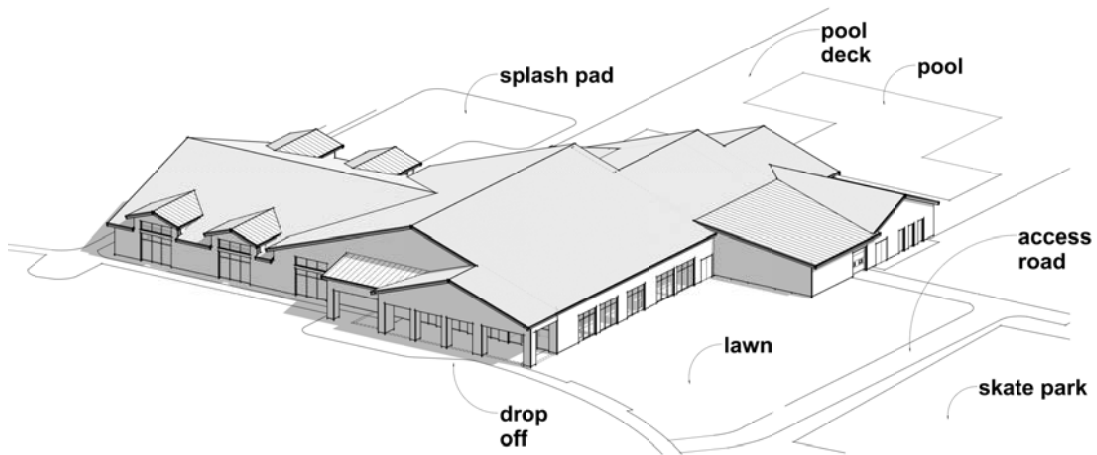
mind. In the current concept, the existing Pool administrative building would be demolished. The new building is designed to abut the pool patio edge, with offices, first aid, locker rooms and bathrooms immediately adjacent to and accessible from the pool patio. This area, while located within the community center is designed to operate separately from the center through strategically located doors sectioning off the rest of the building as needed. The enhanced pool facilities will better. summer time pool events.

- Seniors' Space - A 1,400 square foot seniors' room is another key feature of the proposed building concept. This space would be dedicated to the senior group functions and social events and allow for a regularly scheduled calendar of events. The room borders the kitchen and could be served by a service counter opening from the kitchen space.
- Large multi-purpose room with an attached kitchen - This area is envisioned as a flexible space able to accommodate a wide range of events from sit down functions with table and chairs, to lecture style events with an appropriately located stage area. The attached kitchen would allow for catered events.
- Program Rooms - These classroom style spaces would allow for educational, art and even group exercise offerings. The dividing walls between the program rooms are proposed to be movable creating greater flexibility for the rooms to serve different types of programming activities.
- Gymnasium -This space is envisioned as a future phase in the construction sequence, and is located to allow for easily adding to and incorporating within the building floorplan. This space would offer valuable additional indoor athletic court space to the town and schools. The demand for this type of readily available gym space is high and currently underserved.
- Future vertical expansion - This concept was discussed during some of the stakeholder and public meetings. If accommodated in the initial design, the structural framing support system could allow for the development of second story space within the roof volumes. Park space is at a premium and the ability to expand the building is considered something worth investigating should the concept be further developed.

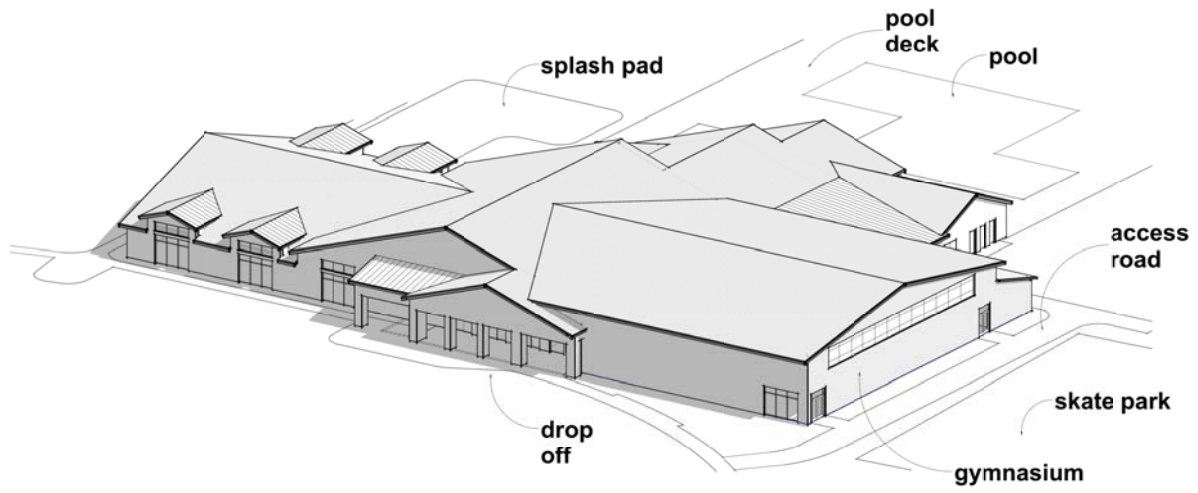
**FOOTPRINT STUDY
PHASE 1&2 - 32,245 SF
(PHASE 2 = 8,860 SF)**



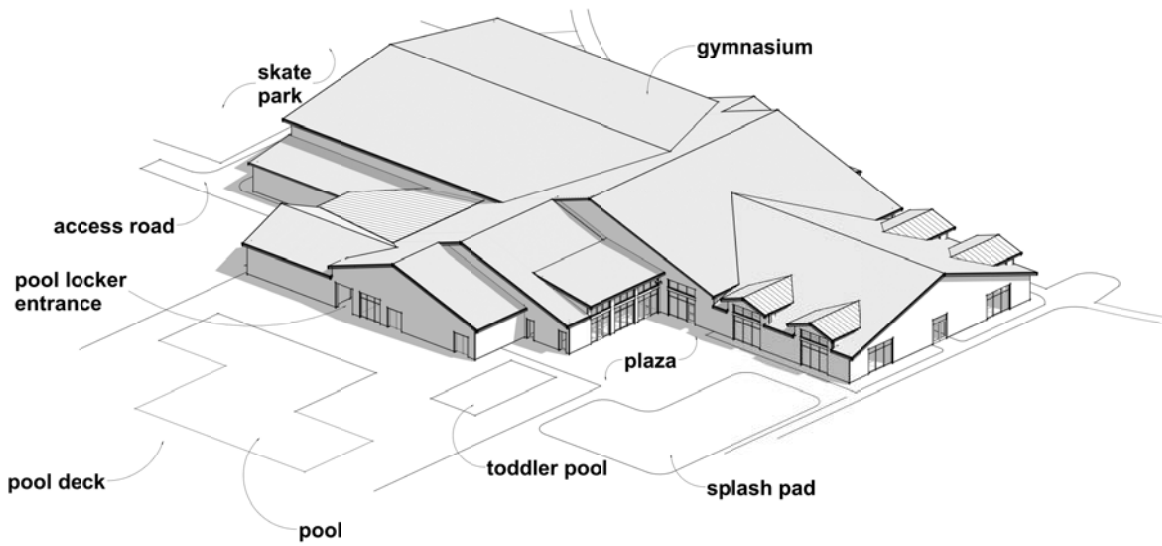
Phase 2 Floor Plan – See Appendix for full size drawing.



Southeast Aerial View Phase 1



Southeast Aerial View Phase 2



Northwest Aerial View

Park Master Plan



Park Master Plan – See Appendix for full size drawing.

The final conceptual master plan was created according to the design recommendations for the park and to accommodate the programming desires of residents and meet the practical needs of Town staff and the Recreation Department. To optimize the use of the entire parcel and reach these programming goals, the master plan requires the demolition of the building at 127 Elm Street.

As envisioned, the conceptual master plan for the park accomplishes these goals:

- Provides accessible paved walking paths throughout, including a 10-foot wide universally accessible path along a nearly half mile stretch of the Souhegan River in the park.
- Allows for the simultaneous use of three new ball fields.
- Provides new playground facilities, including pavilion and plaza, and splashpad.
- Improves and increases parking spaces for new facilities and expanded uses.
- Provides 20,000+ square feet of green infrastructure for stormwater management and water recharge, where currently there is none, keeping thousands of gallons of stormwater from reaching and polluting the river during each rain storm.
- Accommodates improved vehicular circulation, connecting the east and west ends of the park.

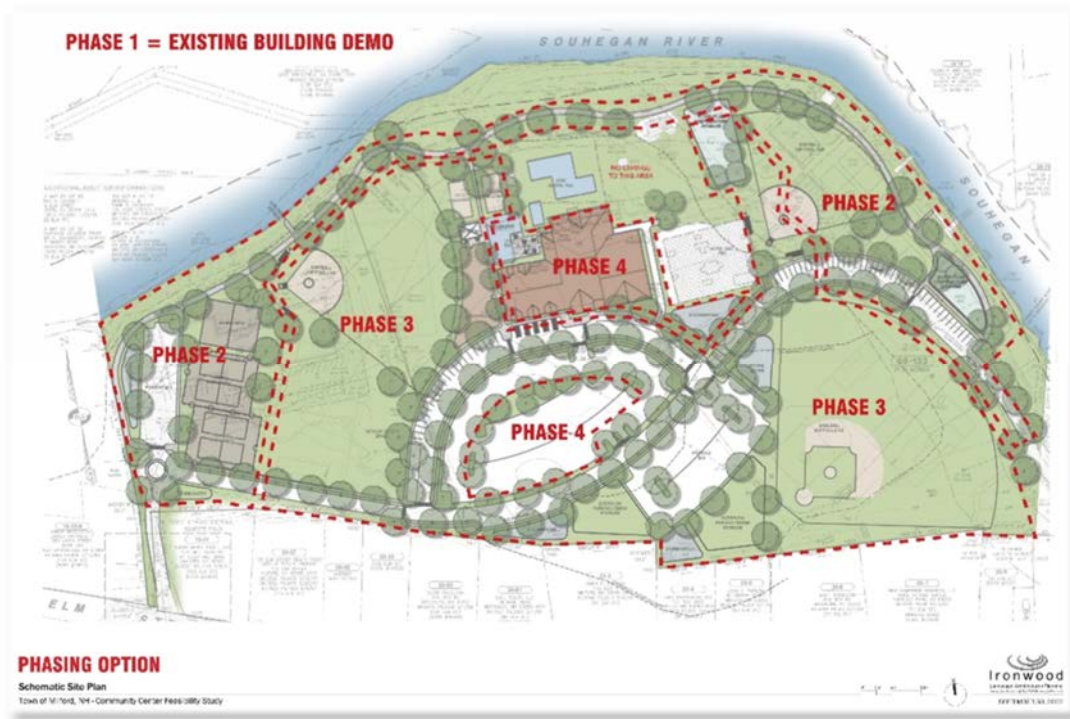
- Minimizes recreational resources in the flood plain and provide locations for flood plain compensation.
- Provides open areas as multi-purpose fields and park events.
- Includes generous plantings of shade trees and lawn areas for passive enjoyment.
- Accommodates strategically located overflow parking on lawn areas.
- Affords central placement of a new community center building.
- Maintains use of the existing skate park, pool, pavilion, and bandstand/performance space.
- The court sport resources in the flood plain are removed, relocated, and expanded at the 127 Elm Street property location.

CONSTRUCTION APPROACHES & ESTIMATES

The Design Team recommends a phased approach to help Town staff plan for and budget the project. Phasing could be key to the project’s viability and ultimate completion.

Park Master Plan with Phased Implementation

- The Design Team has created a phasing strategy to manage the financial impacts of park improvements. The advantages to this phased strategy are:
 - An incremental implementation of the master plan will spread cost impacts over time. Phasing allows Town staff and administrators to identify and prepare grants for the most valuable State and Federal funding sources.
 - There is no loss of function of the existing ball fields; the addition of the new softball field in Phase 1 without decommissioning the existing ball field facilities will accommodate the need to hold three ball games simultaneously.
 - New impervious surfaces will include coordinated and measured stormwater mitigation efforts that meet the Town’s stormwater management needs and MS4 obligations.



Phasing Plan – See Appendix for full size Drawing.

MILFORD COMMUNITY CENTER PHASED SITE IMPROVEMENTS					
	Approximate area of park impacted	Site improvements	New athletic facilities at phase completion	Estimate of striped paved parking spots at phase completion [#]	Planning-level cost estimate*
EXISTING CONDITIONS				92	
PHASE 1	45,100 sf	At the east entrance around demolished building and adjacent parking, install expanded turf area near dog park and river path access	0	79	\$588,760
PHASE 2	211,00 sf	Create paved walking path along river, pedestrian connection between east and west Relocate all courts out of flood plain Improve east entrance driveway Add new parking for courts and dog park access area Add compensatory flood storage	2 tennis/4 PB courts 2 basketball courts	61	\$1,267,120
PHASE 3	556,000 sf	Create through road, vehicular connection between east and west Add new bus and car parking Reorient and reconstruct ball fields and overlay sports fields Install new playground and pavilion Add compensatory flood storage	1 LL ball field 2 adult ball fields 1 soccer/multi-function field 2 overlay fields	251 plus 3 bus parking spots	\$2,757,439
PHASE 4	65,800 sf	Add additional parking for new community center building	0	359	\$901,792
No updates to pool or skateboard park are anticipated; plumbing connections between existing pool and new building occur in Phase 4. [#] Assumes 10-foot X 20-foot size for existing and new parking spaces. *Planning-level cost estimates do not include cost of demolition of buildings, design / engineering fees, nor cost of utility infrastructure. There may be some shared costs between Phase 1 site improvements estimated here and building demolition cost estimates. Abbreviations: LL, little league; PB, pickle ball					

See Appendix For full size Chart

Phase 1 – \$588,760

In Phase 1, the 127 Elm Street building at the west entrance would be demolished; a portion of the adjacent pavement would be removed and replaced with turf. The new grassy area would ease the negative visual impact of the eliminated building and disjointed parking around the building foundation, while reserving the large majority of paved parking at that location.

Estimated Landscape / Park Cost - \$70,469.00

Estimated Building Demolition Cost - \$518,291.00

Demolition Break down:

• HazMat Hygienist/Monitoring	\$ 32,890.00
• Abatement	\$121,550.00
• Demolition (All Buildings)	\$150,150.00
• Equipment Demolition/Rigging	\$ 35,750.00
• Foundations Removal/Sitework	\$ 55,000.00
• General Conditions	\$ 33,000.00
• Contingency	\$ 42,834.00
• Fee	\$ 47,117.00
TOTAL	\$518,291.00

Phase 2 – Landscape / Park - \$1,267,120

- During Phase 2, the Town would invest in new tennis courts, pickleball courts, and basketball court constructed at the 127 Elm Street property, as well as new parking lots serving this location. Improvements would be made at the east entrance driveway.
- A segment of accessible walking path, originating from the east entrance and following along the river, would be constructed.
- In the location of the existing courts and parking area, a new softball field would be built, as well as a new adjacent parking area and flood plain compensatory storage area.

Phase 3 – Landscape / Park - \$2,757,439

- In Phase 3, a new roadway and parking lot would be built connecting the east and west end park vehicular access points; additional parking spaces, including bus parking, would be a part this phase for improved vehicular accommodations in the park.
- Reconfiguration of the central field areas will allow construction of new optimally orientated baseball and softball fields. The ballfield layout would allow for the coordinated construction of a multi-purpose sporting and event field that doesn't impact the other ball playing locations.
- New stormwater management elements would be built to manage run off from new paved

areas on site.

- A new playground, as well as a new pavilion and plaza, would be built to the west of the existing pool area.
- A flood plain compensatory storage area would be developed in the place of the existing playground; a new accessible walking path be built connecting the paths on the east and west ends of the property.

Phase 4 -Landscape / Park - \$901,792

- In Phase 4, the new community building would be built following demolition of the existing structure. To accommodate the additional parking needs associated with community programming at the facility, the central parking area would be expanded. Additional pedestrian walkways would be installed around new parking locations to enhance safety.
- A splash pad would be added in close proximity to the existing pool and the new community building.
- This phase would also include additional stormwater management areas and snow storage to accommodate the additional impervious surfaces on site.

Planning-level Estimate of Landscape and Park Construction Costs

The Design Team has prepared a planning-level cost estimate for site and landscape improvements at the park. These estimates are not all inclusive and are meant to be used as a yard stick for planning and for measuring implementation costs against the value of the improvements to the community.

Cost Estimate Summary

PHASE 1	\$588,760
PHASE 2	\$1,267,120
PHASE 3	\$2,757,439
PHASE 4	\$901,792
SUB TOTAL	<hr/> \$5,515,111
10% CONTINGENCY	\$551,511
TOTAL	<hr/> \$6,066,622 <hr/>

Planning-level Estimate of Community Center Building Construction Costs (Planned to happen during Phase 4 of park improvements)

The construction of the community center building could possibly be split into two phases, with the gymnasium being built at a later date to allow for better cost control. The following numbers are an estimate of the community center building construction project both with and without a gymnasium.

New Building w/o Gymnasium (23k s.f) - Estimated Project Construction and Soft Cost

Conceptual Budget

• Geotechnical services	\$11,000
• Telecommunication Systems	\$70,000
• Architecture & Engineering Fees	\$391,600
• Furniture & Equipment	\$203,500
• Construction Manager Fees	\$326,700
• Miscellaneous Moving Cost	\$16,500
• Building Construction	\$6,424,000
• Miscellaneous Legal Fees	\$3,300
• Site Work	\$781,000
• Owner Construction Contingency	\$110,000
• Building Demolition	\$137,500
• Facility Support Services (Monitoring)	\$33,000
• Utility Fee	\$22,000
• Building Commissioning	\$66,000
• Independent Testing Agency	\$10,780
• Bond Costs	TBD
• Security & Access Systems	\$77,000
• Hazmat Abatement	\$44,000
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS (incomplete)	\$8,734,880

New Building w/Gymnasium (32k s.f) - Estimated Project Construction and Soft Cost Conceptual Budget

• Geotechnical Services	\$13,200
• Telecommunication Systems	\$88,000
• Architecture & Engineering Fees	\$508,200
• Furniture & Equipment	\$225,500
• Construction Manager Fees	\$387,000
• Miscellaneous Moving Cost	\$16,500

• Building Construction	\$8,404,000
• Miscellaneous Legal Fees	\$3,300
• Site Work	\$781,00
• Owner Construction Contingency	\$110,000
• Building Demolition	\$137,500
• Facility Support Services (Monitoring)	\$33,000
• Utility Fee	\$22,000
• Building Commissioning	\$77,000
• Independent Testing Agency	\$11,880
• Bond Costs	TBD
• Security & Access Systems	\$88,000
• Hazmat Abatement	\$44,000
• TOTAL PROJECT COSTS (incomplete)	\$10,950,080

Total Project Cost Estimate

LANDSCAPE & PARK	\$6,066,622
COMMUNITY CENTER BUILDING (w/ GYM)	\$10,950,080
TOTAL	\$17,016,702

Concept Recommendation Presentation Zoom Meeting

The team presented the above recommendations to the community during a zoom presentation in early June of 2021. The concepts and recommendations were well received. See Appendix 9.0 for meeting comments.

Funding Recommendations

There are several avenues of project funding that the Design Team would recommend aside from typical taxpayer funded mechanisms.

- Government funded grants – There are several federally funded grant programs available. The community facilities grant program, outdoor recreational grant program, and the state administered community development block grant program may be applicable to a project of this size. Many of these grants are aimed towards towns under certain population sizes for which Milford could qualify. Other site improvement grants might include outdoor recreation grants, stormwater and water quality grants, and

funds to provide universal accessibility.

- Privately funded grants – Private corporations or foundations offer grants for community based programs focused around education, youth activities, arts, and culture among others.
- Individual/Philanthropic Donations
- Membership and space rental fees – Some community/recreation centers offset project costs and operational costs through space rental fees and membership fees. Member fees if instituted should be kept affordable so as not to interfere with the projects' mission of serving the community within which it is located. The multi-purpose room, the gymnasium and program rooms could be candidates for space rental scenarios.
- Fundraising – Fundraising committees are typically formed to establish monetary goals, and campaign strategies. Items could be made available for individual or corporate sponsorships. Park equipment such as benches and playgrounds or sidewalk pavers, and rooms within a building bearing the name of corporations or individuals are common sponsorship opportunities. Fundraising events such as walkathons, road races could offer company sponsorships as well as individual donor drive opportunities such as team donations.

Professional fundraising and consulting – Professional fundraiser companies and consultants are highly experienced in capital campaigns for a wide variety of organizations. Many of these companies offer consulting services to aid in crafting fundraising campaigns or can be hired to run campaigns themselves. Other organizations such as the National Council of Nonprofits could be a valuable resource for fundraising assistance.

Regional vs Local

One of the questions posed to the public and stakeholders was if the future community center should serve just the local community or the surrounding towns as well. The Design Team feels that a regional community center would be advantageous in several ways, and this was also reflected in the survey responses. Some of the benefits of a regionally focused community center might include the following.

- Financial and operational cost sharing – Collaboration with other municipalities could include the ability to share project costs across different towns. In addition to initial construction funding, the staffing and operational resources available from additional municipalities could help offset the burden on just one town. The current economic climate may also lend credence to the regional approach. The current elevated material

cost ,supply chain issues, and higher energy costs are very challenging and it is not known when or if these issues will subside. This could be a motivating factor to explore sharing the costs regionally to achieve the project.

- Addressing gaps in regional resources – Not only would the center address resource gaps in Milford, but it could also benefit from being available to serve those same gaps in other surrounding towns. Similar to cost sharing, expanding service to additional local communities of lower populations that may have less resources should serve to maximize the value of this project. This increased value to other communities could motivate surrounding towns to offer the financial and operational assistance discussed previously.
- Economic benefits – The increased traffic from these surrounding communities into Milford for the use of the center should stand to economically benefit the local businesses. In addition, a regional center not limited to Milford alone could be important in both attracting families to and retaining those already living in the greater Milford region that the local Milford businesses serve.