



# ATTLEBORO DYE WORKS SITE MARKET ANALYSIS & REUSE PLAN

PREPARED BY THE ICF TEAM VIA U.S. EPA BROWNFIELDS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Seekonk, MA  
JUNE 2023

## REGIONALLY-DIRECTED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

This project was performed through regionally-directed technical assistance provided by ICF and SGA, with support of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 1 through the EPA Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization (OBLR) Program. The project was supported by the dedicated staff and elected officials of the Town of Seekonk.

Successful brownfield reuse and redevelopment often depend on early consideration of the range of potential future uses for each brownfield site. Local community priorities, market conditions, infrastructure availability, environmental contamination, public health issues, and local ordinances shape brownfield site reuse opportunities. Having this Reuse Plan grounded in these local conditions will directly influence how the site is characterized, assessed, and cleaned up.

General planning activities may be necessary to help determine the reuse option for redevelopment. Knowing the redevelopment reuse options for the site will inform the appropriate remedy selection, helping to ensure the site remains protective after it is redeveloped.

Envisioning how site reuse contributes to the community's revitalization vision and overall land use plans already in place and determining feasible site reuse opportunities are critical planning steps in the brownfield redevelopment process. Examples of general brownfield planning activities include developing a reuse vision for a brownfield site or area; conducting a site reuse assessment, market evaluation/feasibility assessment, infrastructure evaluation, and/or land use assessment; and developing a disposition framework for a site. Please review the Planning Information Sheets on the U.S. EPA's website for details.



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### Disclaimer:

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### TA Recipient:

Town of Seekonk

### Site Address:

36 Maple Avenue  
Seekonk, MA 02771

### Previous U.S. EPA Brownfield Grant:

FY21 Brownfield Cleanup Grant  
(BF 00A00559)



**SEEKONK**  
MASSACHUSETTS

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The U.S. EPA defines a brownfield as "a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant." Often, the perception of contamination on a property can be just as much of a barrier to productive reuse as real contamination, particularly with former heavy industrial sites. According to the U.S. EPA, cleaning up and reinvesting in brownfield properties provides numerous benefits to communities, including increasing the local tax base, facilitating job growth, utilizing existing infrastructure, taking development pressure off undeveloped and open land, and both improving and protecting the environment.

# Executive Summary

In 2019, when the Town of Seekonk purchased the site of the former Attleboro Dye Works along the Ten Mile River near the northwest corner of town, it did so with an eye to remediate and reuse the 7.8-acre former industrial property, which has sat vacant after a roof collapse at the main building in 2009 and a catastrophic fire in 2012.

Remediation activities are ongoing and are being funded by a FY 2021 Brownfield Cleanup Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and a FY 2023 Brownfields Redevelopment Cleanup Grant from the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency (MassDevelopment). There are several environmental concerns on site resulting from the site's past industrial uses, including the presence of heavy metals (arsenic, antimony, and copper), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and hydrocarbons that have impacted the groundwater, soil, sediment, and surface water, as well as evidence of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), lead-based paint (LBP) and PCBs associated with the industrial building. The satellite buildings on site that were not destroyed by the 2012 fire have also undergone preliminary investigation.

With the site's proximity to North Seekonk's established residential neighborhoods along Central Avenue (Massachusetts State Route 152), the Town is interested in redeveloping the 2.5-acre former building footprint into a modern, neighborhood-appropriate use and the remaining 5.3 acres of the property into a combination of open space and walking trails to take advantage of its location next to the Ten Mile River and the adjacent woodlands and wetlands.

In 2021, the Town received a FY 2022 technical assistance grant from MassDevelopment to perform an initial reuse study of the property, with the goal of identifying a range of redevelopment options for possible uses that could lead to a targeted developer's request for proposals (RFP). This grant resulted in the *Maple Avenue on the Ten Mile River* report, completed in June 2022, which provided a detailed property description, three potential redevelopment scenarios, and an implementation strategy.

Subsequent to the *Maple Avenue* study, the Town secured the support of the U.S. EPA's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization (OBLR) Technical Assistance Program to build upon the

recommendations from that study, advance reuse planning efforts, and provide additional detail on the potential uses of the site to bring the site closer to marketability through a developers' RFP. This Reuse Plan is a product of the Town's OBLR technical assistance request and includes significant refinement of the three redevelopment scenarios from the *Maple Avenue* study, a fourth redevelopment scenario (shown below), a site plan and renderings for this new scenario, build-out analyses, and level-of-magnitude costs. From this Reuse Plan, the Town will be equipped to issue an RFP to procure developers and design teams in implementing one of the redevelopment options.

The Town will ultimately be able to either choose its preferred redevelopment scenario or allow the developer/design team response to be flexible to any of the four options provided in this Reuse Plan. While flexibility with the RFP would potentially encourage a greater number of developer/design team responses, this Reuse Plan does identify an "optimal" site reuse scenario that takes into consideration previous visioning coordinated by the Town and MassDevelopment, the site's location and natural features, connections to other planning efforts and existing greenspaces, potential neighborhood and school district impacts, and Seekonk residents' desire for access to open space, walking trails, and water. This "optimal" scenario, the fourth scenario presented in this Reuse Plan, is a conceptual site plan anchored by an environmental center with office space targeted to nonprofit organizations. Along with the environmental center, it also includes walking trails, interpretative signage and kiosks, a wetland pool, a pond overlook, and potentially a kayak launch point and boardwalk trail across the location of the existing dam of Ten Mile River Pond.



Figure 1: Optimal Site Reuse Plan of a Sustainable Office and Environmental Center



Figure 2: Site Review Meeting from October of 2022

# Market Analysis Summary

## LOCAL DEMOGRAPHICS AND LABOR FORCE TRENDS

Local demographic and labor force trends are important indicators of the potential for redevelopment. This summary discusses socioeconomic, demographic, and labor market conditions for the town and county surrounding the Attleboro Dye Works Site. Overall, Seekonk is in a stronger position than Bristol County as a whole, with higher population growth and income but with an older median age. All values in this section are derived from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, unless otherwise cited.

In 2020, there were 15,613 residents in Seekonk, representing an 8.6 percent increase in population since 2015. In contrast, the population in Bristol County increased by only 1.9 percent over the same period to 56,301 residents in 2020. The median age in Seekonk was 46.1 in 2020, which is aging slightly from 2015. There were similar aging trends at the county level and a lower median age of 41.0 years. The

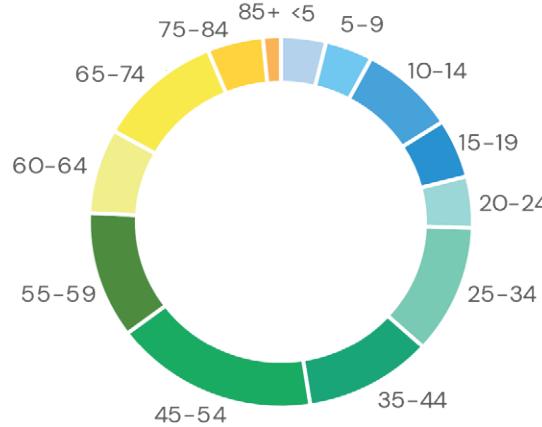


Figure 3: Seekonk Population by Age, 2020

median household income in Seekonk was \$94,611, a 23.1% increase from 2015, shown in Figure 4. This is higher than both the county and statewide median (\$71,450 and \$84,385, respectively).

In 2020 the Seekonk had a lower unemployment rate than the county, with a decrease from 2015 to 2020 of 5.7 percent to 3 percent unemployment. Similar to national trends following the COVID-19 pandemic, Seekonk experienced an increase in residents working from home, up to 11.4 percent of the labor force. There was a decrease in workers driving alone, walking to work, and commuting by other means within the town, and the average commute time for residents was under 25 minutes, similar to the county commute time. The largest group of the employed population worked in management, business, and science and arts occupations, followed by sales and office occupations, as shown in Table 1. The largest group of the employed population worked in educational services, and health care and social assistance industries followed by manufacturing and retail trade industries, shown in Table 2.

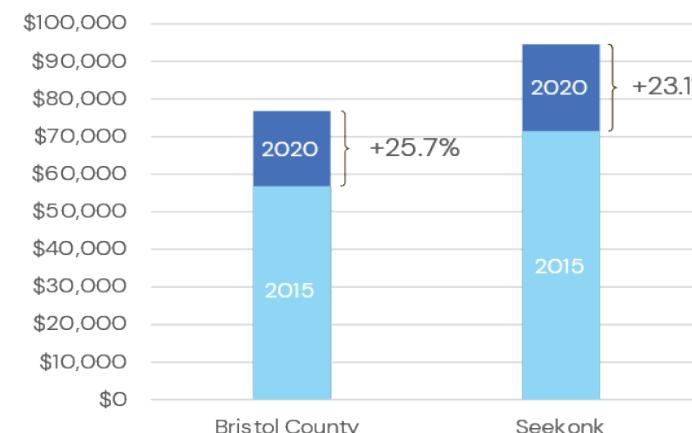


Figure 4: Median Income Growth

Table 1: Top 5 Occupations by Percent of Total Workers, 2020

Occupation	Seekonk	Bristol County
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	49.2%	38.1%
Sales and office occupations	20.7%	21.4%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	11.7%	12.6%
Service occupations	10.1%	18.1%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	8.4%	9.8%

Source: USCB Selected Economic Characteristics (ACS)

Table 2: Top 5 Industries by Number of Workers, 2020

2017 Industry Group	Seekonk	Bristol County
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	28.1%	26.7%
Manufacturing	12.5%	10.8%
Retail trade	12.4%	12.6%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	9.7%	9.4%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.8%	5.9%

Source: USCB Selected Economic Characteristics (ACS)

# Existing Conditions & Site Analysis

This section provides a brief overview and site analysis of the former Attleboro Dye Works site and reviews other recent plans and studies as well as the completed environmental assessments and ongoing remediation work. The site program and vision for development presented later in this report is informed by the previous plans and assessments as well as available data related to property ownership, zoning and land use, transportation and utilities, hydrology, and other site features.

## PROJECT LOCATION

The Attleboro Dye Works site is situated near the northwest corner of Seekonk, a community of around 15,500 people located in Bristol County, Massachusetts, just across the state line from Rhode Island and five miles east of Downtown Providence. The site fronts the south bank of the Ten Mile River, a tributary of the Seekonk River and, in turn, the Providence River, a tidal waterway that empties into Narragansett Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. Massachusetts State Route 152 (Central Avenue), the nearest major road to the site, is the primary thoroughfare for the northern half of Seekonk, connecting the town with Attleboro, Massachusetts to the north and Pawtucket and East Providence, Rhode Island to the west. Interstate 95 and the South Attleboro station of the Providence/Stoughton Line of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Commuter Rail service can be accessed at the U.S. Route 1A interchange, located just over two miles to the west of the site and connecting Seekonk residents by public transit to Providence and Boston.

The Attleboro Dye Works was just one of many former textile mills along the Ten Mile River, stretching from Attleboro to East Providence. Each of these mills dammed sections of the river to use its water for industrial processes, forming a series of ponds and reservoirs along the river. Several of the dams, reservoirs, and impoundments still exist today, including the Ten Mile River Pond that once served the Attleboro Dye Works. The next major ponds upstream from the site are Hebronville Pond and Dodgeville Pond, in South Attleboro, both of which, like the Attleboro Dye Works, were used by former textile mills. The next major ponds downstream are the Ten Mile River Reservation and Central Pond, located along Seekonk's border with Pawtucket and East Providence, respectively. Ten Mile River Reservation and Central Pond are both lined by the three-mile-long Ten Mile River Greenway bike path and many acres of connected parkland on the Rhode Island side of the border. On the Seekonk side of the border, open space along the Ten Mile River is more disconnected, with the privately owned Pawtucket Country Club, the Water Lane baseball fields (on Seekonk Water District property), Seekonk Meadows (behind the Seekonk Public Library), Seacunke Sanctuary, and the sports fields of Seekonk High School.

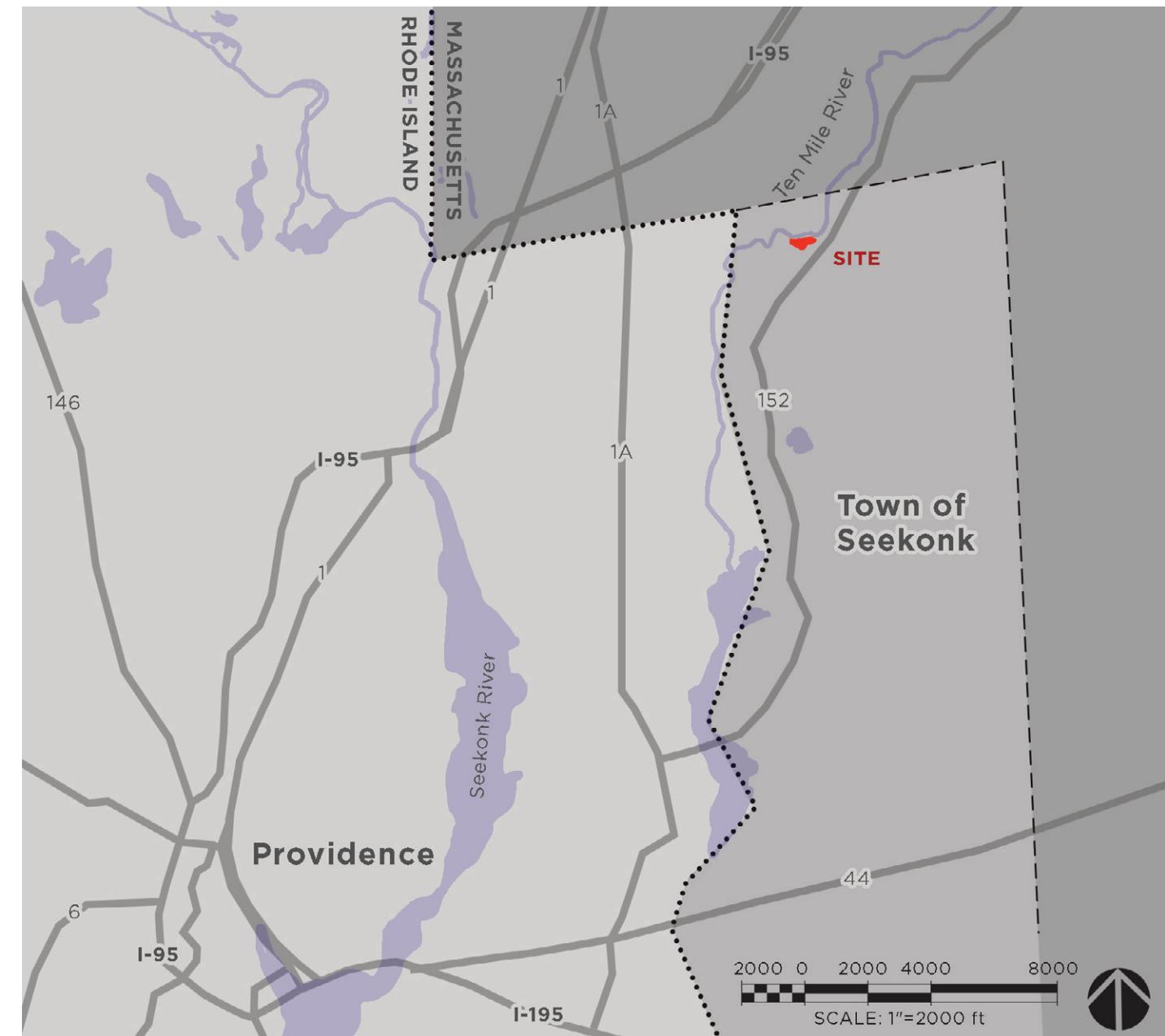


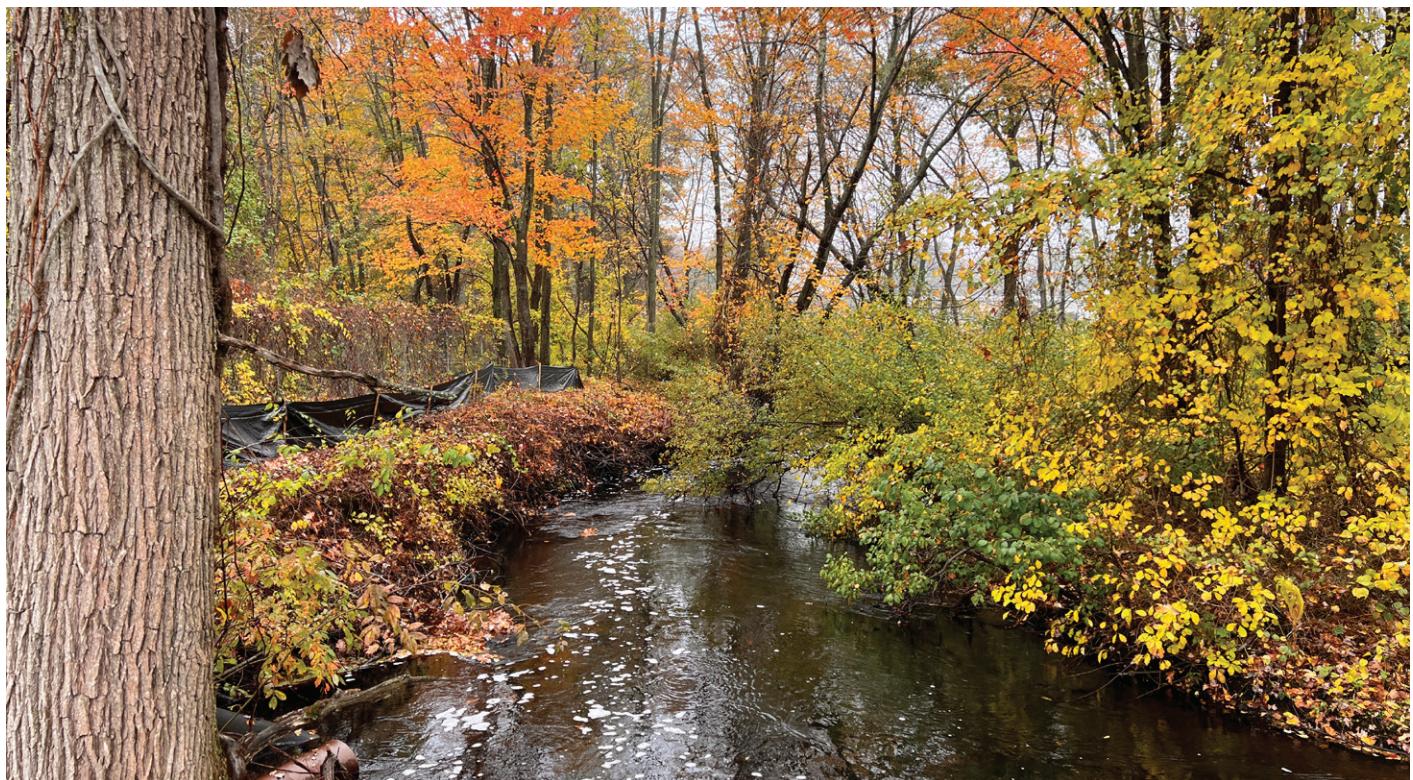
Figure 5: Site Location Map



Figure 6: Photo of Ten Mile River Reservoir from the Pond Street bridge.

## PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AND SITE HISTORY

The Attleboro Dye Works site is owned by the Town of Seekonk and is intended to remain under Town control until a developer is chosen to redevelop the site through the RFP process. The site was acquired by the Town government in November 2019 due to unpaid taxes, seven years after the corporate entity for the previous owner, R.O.C. Realty, dissolved. Access to the site is restricted by a chain-link fence and gate with MassDEP wetlands Notice of Intent (NOI) numbers posted, indicating the NOI numbers for the remediation work associated with the on-site settling ponds.



## ZONING & LAND USE

The existing zoning classification for the Attleboro Dye Works site, other than its very eastern corner, is the Industrial District. Although the site abuts other properties of an industrial nature in the Orion Industrial Park across the Ten Mile River on Pond Street, the only direct access to the site is from Maple Avenue, a short dead-end access drive off of largely residential Central Avenue.

The Industrial District permits all listed industrial uses by right as well as smaller offices, non-residential mixed-use developments, agriculture on protected lands, and institutional uses protected by law. Certain additional non-industrial uses are permitted by special permit, including all listed commercial uses, accessory residential apartments above the ground floor of commercial buildings (at a maximum of eight units), raising of crops on nonprotected agricultural lands, greenhouses, recreational uses, institutional uses not protected by law (including some schools,

colleges, libraries, museums, hospitals, municipal buildings, utility facilities, cemeteries, and other such uses), bed and breakfasts, and boarding houses.

The eastern corner of the site is zoned in the R-1 Residence District, as are all of the parcels immediately to the south and east of the site. The R-1 District represents older or otherwise well-established residential areas within Seekonk and generally includes the densest of the town's residential neighborhoods, at approximately three dwellings per acre.

Baker's Corner, located about one-half mile from the site, is primarily zoned under the Local Business District (LBD) classification, shared with most of the other commercial and mixed-use corridors in Seekonk that do not consist of highway-oriented commercial development. The LBD also extends to a handful of parcels along Central Avenue starting about three-tenths of a mile north of the site to the Attleboro border.

Dwelling types other than single-family dwellings, such as two-family and multi-family dwelling units, are not permitted by right in any of Seekonk's zoning districts, other than in the Luther's Corner Village District (LCVD) in the southern part of town centered at the intersection of Fall River Avenue (Massachusetts Route 114A) and County Street. However, accessory residential apartments above ground-floor commercial uses, at a maximum of eight apartment units, are permitted by special permit in the LBD, Highway Business District (HBD), and Industrial District.

The Mixed-Use Overlay District is the only area in Seekonk that permits mixed-use development incorporating residential units in which the residential units are detached, are not incorporated into the upper floors of commercial buildings, and consist of more than eight units. Two separate areas of town are covered by the overlay, with almost all of the underlying zoning district consisting of the R-3 Residence District, representing residential areas of low density. The two Mixed-Use Overlay areas include a stretch of Fall River Avenue (U.S. Route 6) adjacent to the Seekonk Speedway in the very south of Seekonk and most of the Taunton Avenue (U.S. Route 44) corridor passing through the central part of the community.

## EXISTING PLANS AND STUDIES

This section lays the groundwork for the recommendations found later in this report, reviewing recent existing plans and studies that provide the policy basis for this Reuse Plan. In keeping these documents in mind, this Reuse Plan presents redevelopment alternatives that look to put the former Attleboro Dye Works site back into productive use without creating negative externalities for the North Seekonk community. The overall intent is to cultivate the development of a place that

takes advantage of and seamlessly blends in with the natural surroundings of the Ten Mile River corridor and functions as a recreational asset for Seekonk and its residents.

### *Maple Avenue on the Ten Mile River Report (2022)*

Completed between March and June 2022, the *Maple Avenue on the Ten Mile River* report provided a site description and background, proposed three redevelopment scenarios, and outlined an implementation strategy to advance the former Attleboro Dye Works site toward eventual redevelopment. The purpose of the report was to explore the potential for redevelopment of the site in order to return the site to the active tax rolls through disposition to a developer. The report served as a launchpad for the work completed in this Reuse Plan, which is effectively the next phase of reuse planning for the site in advance of a developers' RFP. The *Maple Avenue* study was conducted under a MassDevelopment Real Estate Technical Assistance grant and was led by the Town of Seekonk and project consultants Madden Planning Group and Goode Landscape Studio.

Public engagement completed as part of the *Maple Avenue* work included a community forum to discuss the site and potential redevelopment options. Neighbors advocated for a balance between the desire for additional trails and recreational amenities on the Ten Mile River with not overextending the site with too many visitors, too much parking and traffic, an overburdening of the school system, and impacts to the environment and fiscal resources.

Based on the feedback received from the community, the consultants proposed three redevelopment scenarios — industrial, residential, and mixed-use — with associated concept plans on the 2.5-acre footprint of the previously developed area of the

site. The study then provided brief analysis related to the feasibility of each redevelopment scenario, based on sewage needs, site visibility, proximity to transportation routes, zoning allowances, and potential for noise, odors, and other nuisance impacts. Finally, a series of suggested development guidelines were included that recommended certain parameters around which redevelopment should take place.

In the study's implementation strategy, it was recommended that the Town of Seekonk complete further analysis about the feasibility of the three proposed redevelopment scenarios and to establish site design guidelines for a developers' RFP. This Reuse Plan provides that further analysis, with more specific site design feasibility, a higher level of detail in site programming, more specific design guidelines, and an additional redevelopment scenario.

### Seekonk Master Plan Update (2021)

Beyond the *Maple Avenue* report, the Land Use Element and Economic Development Plan from the 2021 Seekonk Master Plan Update are the most recent planning documents that discuss the Attleboro Dye Works site in detail and that formulate specific goals and strategies targeted to the site. Those documents expressed a goal to encourage traditional economic development in a few key areas, including at the Attleboro Dye Works site, which would involve the pursuit of economic development opportunities and land uses in strategic locations that balance growth and conservation.

The Master Plan Update's Land Use Element mentions the Attleboro Dye Works site in two different land use strategies: retrofitting and right-sizing key parcels, including the Attleboro Dye Works site, to improve development outcomes (Strategy 1-2),

and continuing to actively remediate the Attleboro Dye Works brownfields and returning the site to an active use (Strategy 1-5), both of which the Land Use Element considers high-priority strategies. With the second strategy, the Plan Update recommends that upon full remediation of the site, the Town work with local and regional partners to identify a range of development scenarios that meet its economic goals and that complement mixed-use development envisioned for Baker's Corner, a major intersection and cluster of more traditional development patterns in Seekonk about one-half mile south of the Attleboro Dye Works site and a key focus of the Master Plan Update.

The Master Plan Update's Economic Development Plan mentions the Attleboro Dye Works site under Goal 3, which encourages mixed-use development at Luther's and Baker's Corners. The Economic Development Plan notes that as a bedroom community for Providence, Seekonk lacks a true "downtown" or traditional town center but that

opportunities exist at Baker's Corner and Luther's Corner to attract well-educated younger residents to walkable, compact neighborhood nodes that provide a mix of housing types. As Seekonk is an older community demographically than both Metro Providence and Massachusetts as a whole but generally affluent and well-educated for the region, the Economic Development Plan proposes that Seekonk encourage mixed-use growth in these two traditional development clusters to build upon and reinforce the town's existing socioeconomic strengths while attracting younger residents.

Strategy 3-3 of the Economic Development Plan recommends "pursu[ing] a transformative development at Attleboro Dye Works or other underutilized sites." The strategy explains that even though the Attleboro Dye Works property is just outside of Baker's Corner, the site could be key to transforming the area and could be a catalyst that jumpstarts Baker's Corner as a mixed-use node. The strategy adds that through an RFP process, "the town

should identify a range of redevelopment scenarios that meet both its overall goals for economic development and its desire to bring a mix of uses to Baker's Corner."

### Seekonk Open Space and Recreation Plan (2021)

Public engagement completed as part of the development of the 2021 Seekonk Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) included an online survey of Seekonk residents that asked for their priorities in conserving open space, participating in recreational activities, and having access to certain recreational facilities. Over 500 residents took the survey.

When asked how important certain values of open space were (wildlife habitat; water supply, wells, and aquifers; agricultural purposes; scenic areas and views; historic features; and rural character), the top choices among respondents (those most selected as "extremely to very important") were "water supply,



Figure 7: A portion of the existing building one of the few walls remaining.

wells, and aquifers" at 86%, "wildlife habitat" at 74%, and "scenic areas and views" at 74%.

When asked to rank the importance of 21 recreational activities and facilities to respondents' households, the following activities and facilities were most selected as "extremely to very important": "hiking/walking on trails" at 75%, "biking on paved roads/paths" at 64%, and "accessing neighborhood playgrounds" at 61%.

### Environmental Assessments and Remediation (2017-Present)

A number of environmental assessments and remediation efforts have been completed for the site, primarily taking place since 2016, when the U.S. EPA performed a removal of asbestos-containing materials and 12 drums of hazardous waste. Upon being

awarded \$350,000 from the U.S. EPA and \$450,000 from MassDevelopment and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, full site assessments were completed from 2017 to 2020, in which Phase I, II, III, and IV Massachusetts Contingency Plans (MCPs) and U.S. EPA Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) took place. This assessment work, completed by Ransom Consulting, included soil and groundwater drilling and sampling within the building footprint, a hazardous building assessment for the warehouse structure and office building, and a remediation action plan.

Remediation of the site began in 2021 after the completion of the environmental assessments and is being undertaken by Verdantas (formerly ES&M Engineering). Work is ongoing and focused initially on the settling ponds (lagoons). Lagoon #3 was remediated in the second half of 2021,

with the other two ponds, Lagoons #1 and #2, undergoing remediation in the summer of 2022. Known contaminants on site include heavy metal impacts to soils, including antimony, cadmium, nickel, and zinc; sediment impacts from fabric dye water and wastewater discharges to the settling ponds, including elevated levels of heavy metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs); sediment impacts to the Ten Mile River, including antimony, arsenic, beryllium, cadmium, calcium, cobalt, copper, lead, mercury, nickel, silver, vanadium, and zinc; and localized petroleum impacts identified in a 2013 sampling, which showed evidence of petroleum release near the western footprint of the warehouse structure. Underground storage tanks (USTs) used to hold 20,000 gallons of fuel oil and 4,000 gallons of toluene were removed from the site in 1998.

In addition to remediation work, Verdantas also recently performed an analysis of wastewater options for the site and adjacent Baker's Corner, with funding from the Commonwealth's Community One Stop for Growth grant program. The study evaluated the feasibility of connecting sewer lines from the existing sewer system in neighboring Attleboro and of implementing either a conventional septic system or a package treatment plant. Additional recent planning and engineering efforts have included an assessment for removing the dam on the Ten Mile River that formerly served the mill operations as well as engineering for the replacement of the Pond Street Bridge just northeast of the site.



Figure 8: An interior view of the existing structure still upright.

# Development Alternatives Analysis

The *Maple Avenue* report included three redevelopment scenarios for the former Attleboro Dye Works site — one for an industrial development, one for a residential development, and one for a mixed-use development. The scenarios analyzed how much development could fit on the site under the three land use categories. As the *Maple Avenue* report indicated: “In subsequent project phases, more detailed design, layout alternatives, and specific programs will refine these accommodation studies, so [the] development concepts and programs [in the *Maple Avenue* report] should be considered preliminary.” This Reuse Plan includes these detailed designs, layout alternatives, and programs, refining the concept plans first proposed in the *Maple Avenue* report as well as adding a fourth development alternative.

## INDUSTRIAL

The industrial development alternative builds on the industrial scenario proposed in the *Maple Avenue* study, which was an approximately 25,000-square-foot one-story facility with a loading dock and 40 parking spaces. The exact nature of the potential industrial facility was not specified, but the study cited manufacturing in innovative and emerging technologies (e.g., clean technology, alternative energy, medical devices, metal manufacturing, etc.) as a sector that could be attracted to the site and its amenities, including the open space. The study also recommended working with local colleges and universities to build connections to potential local industrial users that could support high-paying

jobs. This Reuse Plan does not make changes to the use or size of the industrial facility; however, the components of the redevelopment scheme have been physically reconfigured to promote better site access.

### Advantages

The biggest advantage to redeveloping the site into another industrial use is that the site is already zoned for industrial uses. The previous uses of the site dating back to the mid-19th century have all been industrial in nature, primarily centered around manufacturing and the dyeing of textiles. Industrial uses do not need as high visibility as commercial uses, and, depending on the type of industrial use, may have relatively low daytime occupancy and traffic generation. Additionally, the development footprint of an industrial use can be more easily consolidated into a single structure than the footprints of other types of uses.

### Challenges

Industrial uses are not the best fit for the current neighborhood context, which is primarily residential. While the site is located in Seekonk’s Industry zoning district, it directly abuts a large concentration of the R-1 Residence District, which represents older or otherwise well-established residential areas in the community. Depending on the nature of the industrial use, truck traffic and the externalities associated with it could be an issue in the surrounding residential area and on the narrow and quiet Maple Avenue, even if other types of traffic are relatively low. There could also be issues with noise or odors from industrial processes. Additionally,

there could be high demands on sanitary sewer and water use from certain industrial uses. Lastly, given that the remaining existing buildings are in a state of disrepair and unlikely to be reused, the site will need to undergo remediation, so the site would not provide immediate benefits to new industrial users that a more convenient site elsewhere might entail.

### Recommendations and Changes from the Industrial Concept Plan in the *Maple Avenue* Study

If the site were to remain industrial, a one-story light industrial flex building of approximately 25,000 square feet would be the most feasible use, as recommended in the *Maple Avenue* study. Ease of access would be the primary guiding principle to make the site more attractive to a prospective industrial tenant. An improvement to the concept plan shown in the *Maple Avenue* study could include the implementation of a turnaround and drop-off point for quick deliveries. The parking lot



Figure 9: The existing building slab with rubble piles pushed aside,

in the concept plan could also move to the front of the building for improved access and an increased building setback from the adjacent residential neighborhood, and the loading dock could be moved toward rear of the building, away from the main path of traffic and the parking lot. 40 parking spaces would serve the industrial facility and could be used after-hours by those looking to access the on-site walking trails.

## RESIDENTIAL

The residential development scenario in the *Maple Avenue* study proposed approximately 41 units of townhome housing arranged around a central looped street with parking spaces in the middle. The two- and two-and-a-half-story townhomes were arranged in groups of six to eight units each with front-facing garages. The *Maple Avenue*

study cited the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' smart growth policies, the compact size of the development footprint, and the existing character of the surrounding residential neighborhood as factors that support townhome-style housing as the optimal residential development scenario for the site. This Reuse Plan modifies the configuration of the townhomes and the central looped street from what was shown in the *Maple Avenue* study and also reduces the total number of units to accommodate a needed septic drain field.

### Advantages

Townhomes would provide a healthy balance of maintaining the character of the existing residential area with the regional need to create more housing. They were the recommended style of housing in the *Maple Avenue* study, and this Reuse Plan has carried that forward, as the townhomes would contextually

fit within the neighborhood without overburdening the local school district. Additionally, the 5.3 acres of open space would likely be well-used by the residents, who would enjoy access to and views of the Ten Mile River and a robust system of walking trails in their own backyard.

### Challenges

Townhomes — or any residential uses at all — are not permitted in the Industry District. This means that the use of the site for residential development would require a rezoning. Additionally, given the small footprint of the developable area on the site, the townhomes would themselves need to be laid out in a compact footprint, which would likely necessitate three-story units to achieve market-desirable square footages. (Almost all of the dwellings in the neighborhood around the site are only one or two stories.) While the residential development scenario in the *Maple Avenue* study included private front-facing garages, such garages and their associated driveways reduce walkability in front of the townhomes. Because of the location of the garages in the *Maple Avenue* study's concept plan, outdoor parking spots were to be located around the center of the internal looped street. This configuration for the outdoor parking may create accessibility issues for some residents during inclement weather due to the potential distances needed to walk and the need to cross the street. Availability of parking could also be a challenge if residents have more than one vehicle or if there are guests. Depending on the outcome of the proposed dam removal on the Ten Mile River and the hydrological changes that such removal may entail, there may need to be measures taken to improve flood resilience for a residential development, such as constructing higher first-floor elevations. The initial study does not account for the need for a septic drain field and underground stormwater tanks. This would effectively remove one townhome cluster from the plan.

## Recommendations and Changes from the Residential Concept Plan in the *Maple Avenue* Study

To remedy the pedestrian access issues with the *Maple Avenue* study's concept plan, this Reuse Plan proposes eliminating the garages and relocating the outdoor parking spots to be in front of the townhome units. This would also free up the center of the internal looped street for a central plaza with a gateway sign and plantings for a more formalized entrance. It would also provide room for a vehicularly accessible mailbox cluster and a dumpster enclosure to be located on site. To accommodate the need for a septic drain field and underground stormwater tanks, the westernmost cluster of townhomes has been removed in this Reuse Plan, reducing the total number of residential units from 41 to 36. This also slightly reconfigures the number and position of townhomes in each grouping.

## COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE

The mixed-use development scenario included in the *Maple Avenue* study proposed a two-story structure with approximately 36,000 square feet of development, one-third to one-half of which would be for commercial or industrial uses and the balance of the development would be made up of 15 to 20 residential units. The *Maple Avenue* study cited the lack of visibility from Central Avenue as making retail and restaurant uses unlikely, unless such uses were more of a regional destination, such as a brewery. Other uses the study suggested included small manufacturing and craft workshops, studio spaces, and maker spaces, which could be integrated with loft apartments in a "live/work" model. The uses, the study noted, would need to be carefully considered to minimize noise, odors, and tenant conflicts.



Figure 10: Both standing and fallen portions of the pre-existing factory with trees and vines growing through the rubble.

## Advantages

The mixed-use development proposed in the *Maple Avenue* study is a single building shaped like the letter C and situated next to the existing dam on the Ten Mile River, allowing building tenants to take advantage of the views. The condensed building footprint allows for a large parking area of 73 spaces and simplified utilities and seems to respond to the alignment of an underground raceway that formerly powered machinery when the site was home to a mill.

## Challenges

A mixed-use development is less compatible with the existing neighborhood than a residential or industrial use, as the former is within the context of the surrounding residential area and the latter is permitted by right in the zoning by-laws and a continuation of hundreds of years of prior industrial activity on the site. Additionally, while a condensed building footprint may allow for simplified utilities and a maximization of tenants' views, the corresponding parking area is significantly larger and more site-dominant than the building itself, which makes the development feel auto-oriented, monolithic, and imbalanced relative to the dimensions of the site as a whole. The location of the loading dock, which is in the first part of the building that one encounters upon entering the site, also adds to the auto-oriented nature of the development and may be difficult to access as well due to its placement.

## Recommendations and Changes from the Mixed-Use Concept Plan in the *Maple Avenue* Study

The Town of Seekonk's 2021 Master Plan Update and Economic Development Plan identified nearby Baker's Corner as a focus area for mixed-use development. Baker's Corner is located at the

intersection of Central Avenue, Newman Avenue, and Pine Street, just one-half mile from the Attleboro Dye Works site, and is home to a variety of retail, restaurant, and office uses. The existing development there is primarily suburban and auto-oriented in nature, but the Master Plan Update proposes actively encouraging a more walkable, compact mixed-use neighborhood center at Baker's Corner by investing in complete streets improvements and strengthening the town's zoning by-laws.

Baker's Corner was identified in the Master Plan Update as the community node in Seekonk that has the most mixed-use potential. This is because of the presence of existing anchor tenants there, including

a Stop & Shop supermarket and a CVS Pharmacy, as well as fixed-route bus service to the South Attleboro MBTA Commuter Rail Station, via Route 16 (Seekonk/Attleboro) of the Greater Attleboro and Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA).

Given the recommendations in the Master Plan Update and that the building blocks for a mixed-use node are already present at Baker's Corner, it would likely make more sense for mixed-use redevelopment to be focused at Baker's Corner than at the former Attleboro Dye Works site.

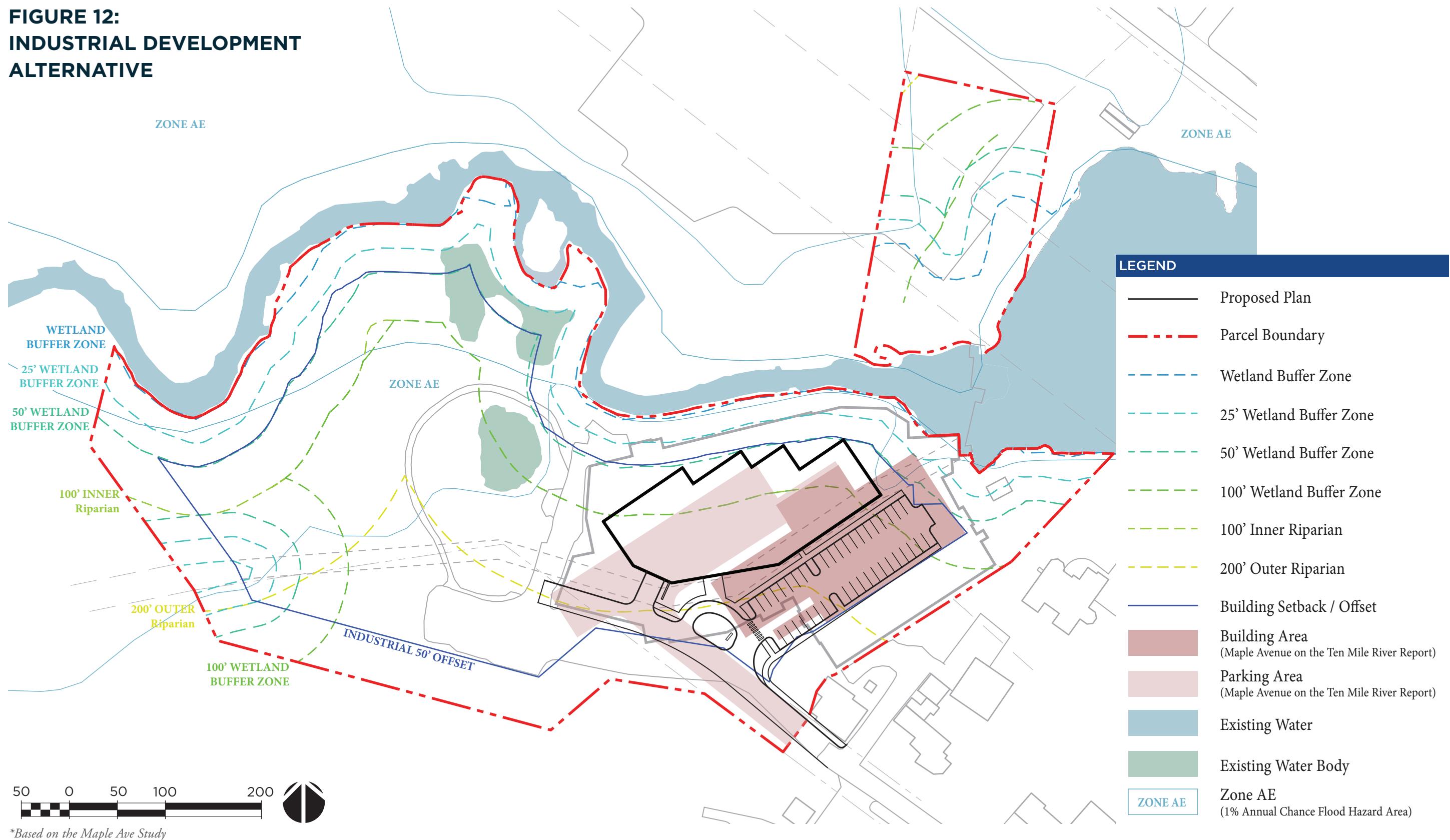
If a mixed-use development were to be located at the site, however, some recommendations would include breaking up the appearance of the monolithic

structure by reshaping it into several separate structures or sections, taking full advantage of the Ten Mile Riverfront with the building footprint, and moving the loading area to a less prominent and easier-to-access location. Regarding the blend of development in the mixed-use scheme, mixed office would likely be more site-appropriate than commercial and residential lofts.

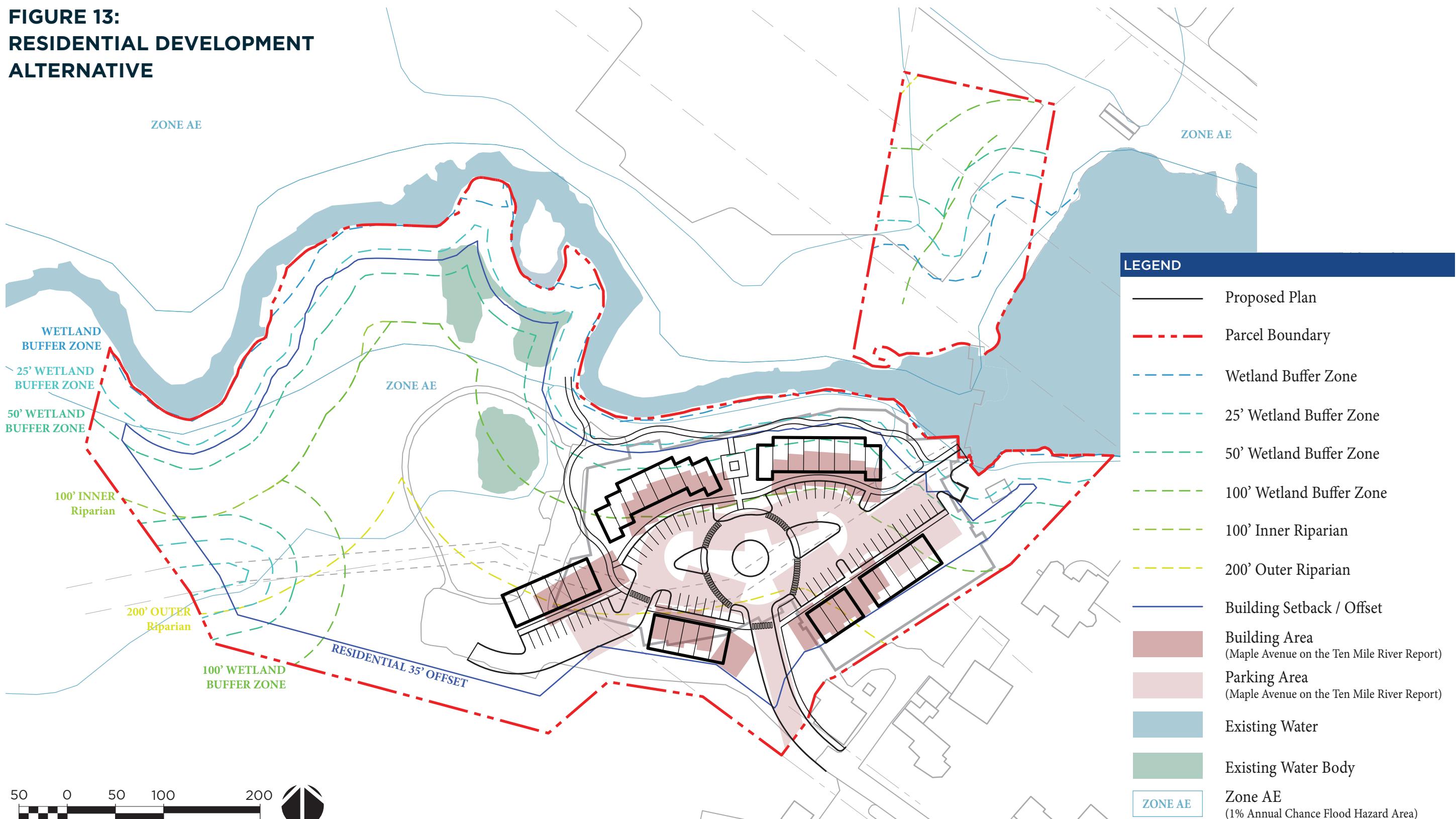


Figure 11: Steel structural members from the pre-existing factory warped and collapsed from the heat of the fire.

**FIGURE 12:**  
**INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**ALTERNATIVE**



**FIGURE 13:**  
**RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**ALTERNATIVE**



\*Based on the Maple Ave Study

**FIGURE 14:**  
**COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE**  
**DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE**

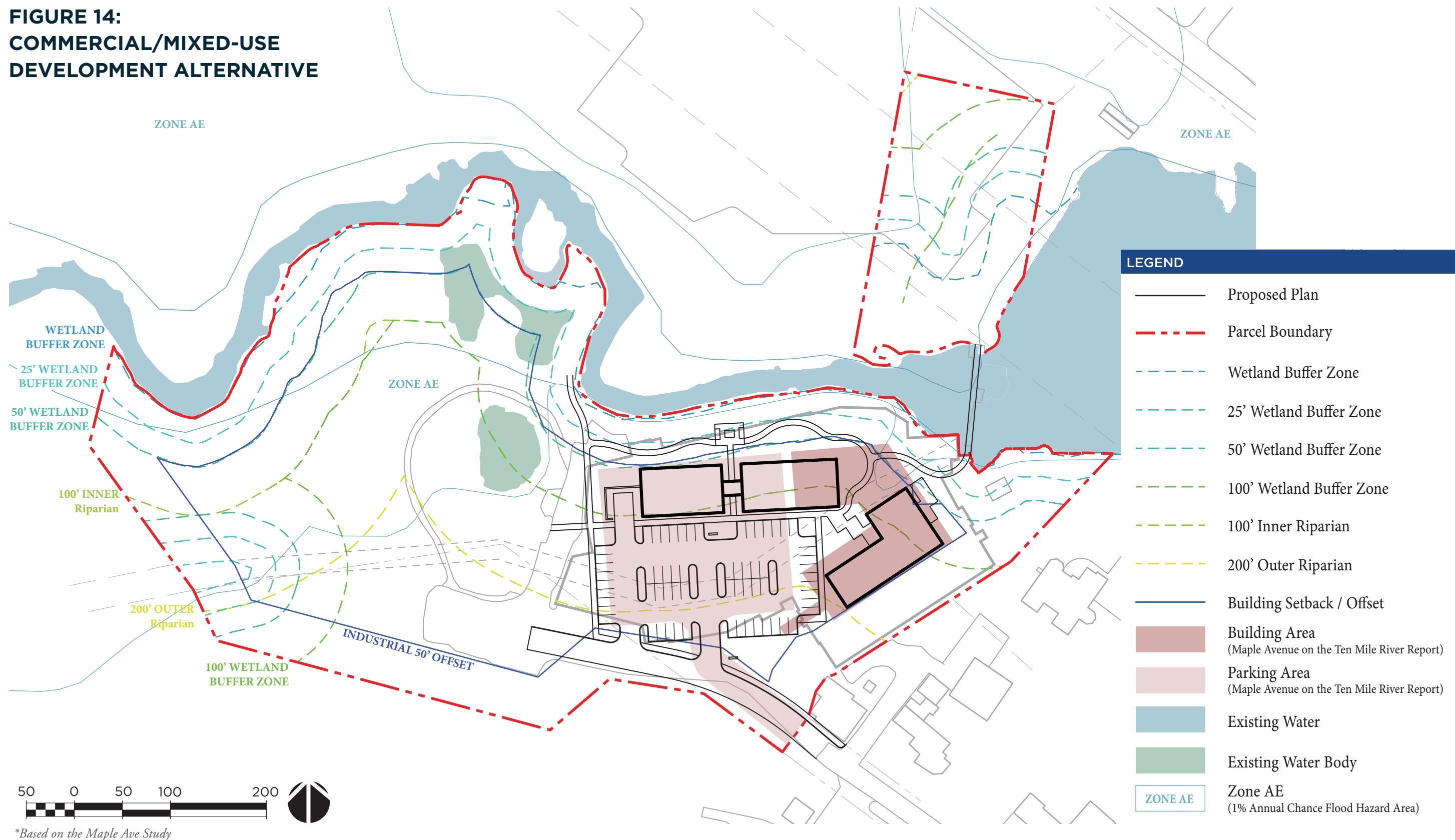




Figure 15: A pile of rubble within the pre-existing factory footprint.

# Site Reuse Plan Alternative

## ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER / SUSTAINABLE OFFICE

Beyond the industrial, residential, and mixed-use/commercial scenarios described above, this Reuse Plan provides a fourth development alternative that seeks to more directly connect the use with its surrounding natural environment: an environmental center with office space targeted to related nonprofit organizations. This alternative is an optimal redevelopment option that takes advantage of the site's location and natural features, minimizes impacts to the neighborhood and school district, and complements the town's desire for access to open space, walking trails, and water.

In spite of the centuries-long industrial use of the site, the presence of contaminants including petroleum, heavy metals, asbestos-containing materials, lead-based paint, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and the fire that destroyed multiple buildings on site, the Ten Mile River, the Ten Mile River Reservoir, and their associated wetlands and woodlands have been surprisingly resilient, and the development alternative of an environmental center would speak to this resilience.

### Advantages

The environmental center development alternative provides a good balance — environmentally, economically, and socially — for the reuse and redevelopment of the former Attleboro Dye Works site. If the “triple bottom line” definition of sustainability measures success in terms of reducing

negative impacts to people, planet, and profit, then this development alternative addresses those three areas to a greater extent than the other alternatives, returning the site to a productive use while minimizing the impact of that use.

The environmental center / sustainable office space would fit seamlessly with the rest of the site, potentially anchoring a riparian corridor and future park space with a welcome facility and educational center. This concept would provide residents, visitors, non-profit groups, and university programs with a sort of outdoor lab and state-of-the-art space for hands-on, experiential environmental education. The environmental center would serve as the classroom base for programming that extends into the surrounding park woodlands, streams, meadows and trails.

Replete with nature trails, interpretative signage, and cultural cues and identifiers, the site can also retain local history and speak to the transformation of the land use and site over time.

The environmental center could also potentially tie into any future connections between the site and the Ten Mile River Greenway just one mile downstream in adjacent Pawtucket, Rhode Island. This section of the river already includes a three-mile multipurpose trail and a string of parks that could become a building block to a regional, bi-state trail network and river corridor, with the environmental center as a key point of interest on that corridor. There are potential connections that could be made through the landlocked parcel across the dam. This property is part of the factory site and would be important to

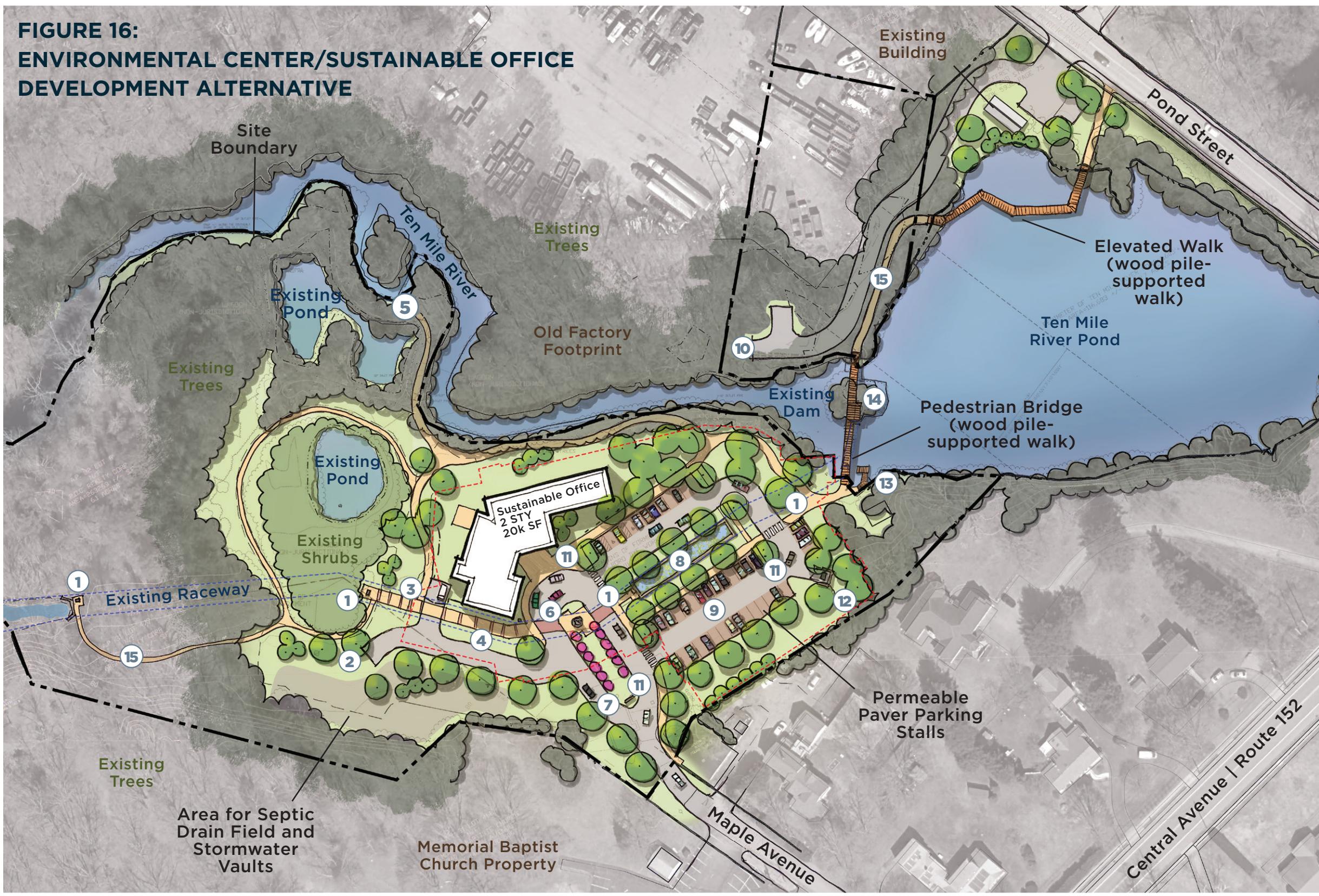
have access to it if only to maintain the other side of the dam. There are also opportunities to consider broader pedestrian linkages and connections to Pond Street through easements or through future right-of-way adjustments from roadway or stormwater projects.

Incorporating an environmental center and sustainable features would directly address Goal 4 of the 2021 Master Plan Update, which seeks to maintain Seekonk's rural character by preserving open space and encouraging growth that is sensitive to natural resources and climate resilience.

### Challenges

An environmental center / sustainable office space can be somewhat of a niche use more than the other three development alternatives. Finding the proper organization to run the center, if it is not the Town of Seekonk's Conservation Commission or Parks and Recreation Department, could be challenging. Additionally, it could be difficult to find a complimentary mix of tenants for the office spaces, especially if the target tenants are non-profit sustainability-focused organizations. Outreach may be needed and/or partnership with local colleges and universities in order to understand the market and to provide more confidence in this land use.

**FIGURE 16:**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER/SUSTAINABLE OFFICE**  
**DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE**



## LEGEND

- ① Interpretive Kiosk
- ② Park Maintenance Access
- ③ Loading Area
- ④ History Walk
- ⑤ Trail to connect to looping riparian trial
- ⑥ Focal Point
- ⑦ Entry Sign
- ⑧ Wetlands Pool
- ⑨ 45 Parking Spaces
- ⑩ Vehicular Maintenance Access & Turnaround for Dam/Crossing
- ⑪ Crosswalk (typical)
- ⑫ Dumpster Enclosure
- ⑬ Kayak Launch
- ⑭ Overlook
- ⑮ Trail

## PHASED PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

TABLE 3

Priority	Project	Opinion of Probable Costs	Description
Phase 1A	Building Demo & Remediation	Construction, Design, & Permitting \$1M to \$1.5M	Removal of existing collapsed building and foundations. Permitting and environmental remediation under the building footprint.
Phase 1B	Sustainable Office Center & Parking	Construction \$9.3 to \$12M	New Sustainable Office Building, asphalt drive aisles, permeable paver parking, sidewalks, site grading, utilities, stormwater, signage, dumpster enclosure, lighting, sculptural focal point, new septic drain field, stormwater vaults, and minimal planting.
		Design & Permitting \$600k to \$900k	
Phase 2	Trail Access & Site Restoration	Construction \$570k to \$700k	New nature trails & grading, interpretive educational history walk, signage, kiosk, solar lighting, additional native habitat restoration and minimal site furnishings such as benches and waste receptacles.
		Design & Permitting \$80k to \$120k	
Phase 3	Wetland Access Structures	Construction \$200k to \$250k	Complete land swap parcel exchange. Waterfront park improvements for wood pile supported pedestrian bridge & elevated walk along with maintenance access asphalt road. Regrading to accommodate new nature trail, kayak launch, solar lighting, additional native habitat restoration and minimal site furnishings such as benches and waste receptacles.
		Design & Permitting \$100k to \$150k	
<b>TOTAL PROJECT:</b>		<b>\$11.85M to \$15.62M</b>	



PHASE 1A/1B

PHASE 2

PHASE 3

## Project Phasing & Costs

The Environmental / Sustainable Office Development Alternative can logically be phased into three main components, or phases. The development pad itself (the building and essential site components to make the building function), parks and recreation access and trails area, and the adjacent trail and river crossing elements, which are considered as long-term opportunities. The development pad in Phase 1 would need some preliminary work for demolition of the old factory remains which are collapsed and in a corroded condition which makes this work more complicated. There are also likely unknown conditions within and under the building footprint that need to be discovered and remedied. This work is considered as Phase 1A and may need to be completed or at least funded prior to gaining developer interest. Phase 1B would largely encompass a traditional building / site redevelopment when Phase 1A is complete. This phase would include implementation of storm vaults and a sanitary septic field to support the building. These elements would be constructed in the clear area upslope of the site. Phase 2 entails secondary uses on the site and connecting trails and maintenance access to the natural and restored areas of the site. Phase 3 would make final connections to Pond Street through the adjacent landlocked parcel, which is part of the site, and potentially portions of the neighboring lot and public right-of-way given that adjacent reuse opportunities can be fully realized.

Figure 17: Proposed Development Phases

# Renderings



Figure 18

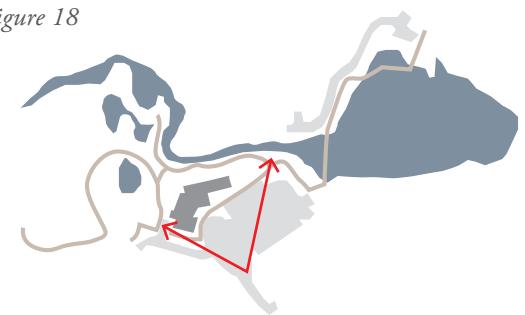




Figure 19



Attleboro Dye Works  
Site Market Analysis & Reuse Plan

# Next Steps

The *Maple Avenue* report was a critical step toward envisioning opportunities to reuse the Attleboro Dye Works brownfield site and laid the groundwork for reuse by analyzing three different redevelopment scenarios. The report spoke extensively to the history of the site, which holds unrealized marketing value, and depending on the end use, may prove to be a selling point for the site's redevelopment.

This Reuse Plan expands upon the three redevelopment scenarios from the *Maple Avenue* study with analyses of advantages and disadvantages and recommendations on improving the scenarios to increase the development viability for each land use scenario. In addition to these three scenarios, a fourth redevelopment alternative seeks to take advantage of the site's proximity to the Ten Mile River and represents a less-intensive land use than the other three scenarios. This fourth alternative may prove more favorable with respect to the history of the land and to compatibility with the surrounding residential neighborhood.

The dam adjacent to the former mill building is the reason why Ten Mile River Pond exists, even as a breach in the dam has resulted in the pond being intermittently dry. Removing the dam will nevertheless alter the character of the river corridor, and the dam's function as part of the site's industrial history should be interpreted as part of the "story" told by the reuse and redevelopment of the site. Assuming the dam is ultimately removed, it may serve well to have the past alignment of the dam creatively represented in some way, such as with trails, signage, or even a pedestrian river crossing.

To fully realize the potential of the site's frontage along the Ten Mile River and to provide improved access and visibility, the Town should inquire with adjacent property owners regarding land availability, purchases, or swaps. This will simplify some development constraints and improve access to the site through pedestrian linkages.

Garnering support from adjacent property owners, identifying other key stakeholders, and confering with local environmental groups can help clarify the specific desired vision for reuse. This would be a driving factor for a redevelopment RFP.

The Town should consider available funding opportunities for cleanup and remediation of the collapsed building and anything discovered underneath it to help defray cost that would otherwise limit financial feasibility for development.

It may also benefit the Town to use a third-party to review development proposals for conformance with the vision, which would help improve leverage in negotiating pro formas of any potential suitor.



Figure 20: A clearing in the ruins of the old factory.