

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN**  
**HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES REMOVAL - FAIRFIELD HILLS DUPLEXES 60,**  
**61, & 63**  
**VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS RECOVERY ACT BROWNFIELDS**  
**CLEANUP REVOLVING LOAN FUND GRANT**  
**TOWN OF NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT**  
**November 2010**

**OVERVIEW**

The purpose of this Community Relations Plan (CRP) is to delineate the communication strategy that will address the needs and concerns of the citizens of the Town of Newtown, particularly the residents who are directly or potentially affected by the proposed removal of hazardous substances and asbestos-containing materials present at the Fairfield Hills campus Duplexes 60, 61, & 63. This CRP explains how the town has involved and will continue to involve affected residents, town officials, and local organizations in the decision-making process regarding the proposed removal of hazardous substances and asbestos-containing materials present at the Fairfield Hills campus Duplexes 60, 61, & 63. The town, acting through the First Selectman and/or the Fairfield Hills Authority, is primarily responsible for the coordination, facilitation and implementation of community outreach and community relations pertaining to the property.

Active residents and organizations in the community are essential resources for the success of the CRP as they hold positions of responsibility within the community. The Town of Newtown perceives these citizens and organizations as key points of contact and communication. One measure of success of the redevelopment of the Fairfield Hills campus hinges on informed citizen and organization involvement in each step of the redevelopment process.

**SPOKESPERSON AND INFORMATION REPOSITORY**

The spokesperson for this project is Elizabeth Stocker, AICP, Director of Economic and Community Development for the Town of Newtown, who may be contacted at the Office of Economic and Community Development, Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose St., Newtown, Connecticut 06470; phone: (203) 270-4271.

The Information Repository for the project is located at the Newtown Office of Economic and Community Development, Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose St., Newtown, Connecticut. Project information and the project administrative record will be available from 9 AM until 4 PM, Monday through Friday at the Economic and Community Development office.

**SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY**

The Fairfield Hills campus is the location of the former State of Connecticut Mental Health Hospital property. The campus is located to the south of Wasserman Way in Newtown, Connecticut (see the attached "Fairfield Hills-Location Map"). The hospital was operated by the State of Connecticut from the mid 1930s until it was closed in 1996. The property was farmland prior to the purchase and development of the property by the state.

The portion of the property that contained the institutional buildings, the "campus" portion of the property and a portion of the property along Deep Brook was offered by the State of Connecticut to the Town of Newtown for purchase. As part of the offer the environmental remediation of soil and groundwater contamination; and the removal of hazardous materials and asbestos-containing materials were to be the responsibility of the Town of Newtown.

After deliberation by town officials, study by a committee established by the town, and public input, the town decided to purchase the property and created a master plan of redevelopment. The master plan indicated a mix of town use and private use. Private use is to be through the renovation and leasing of existing buildings with the town retaining ownership of the buildings and land.

Environmental remediation of the soil and groundwater to State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection standards is complete and redevelopment is underway. One building was demolished and a town baseball field was constructed in its place. Two additional buildings were demolished to make way for the construction of a private indoor athletic facility. Prior to demolition of the buildings, hazardous substances and asbestos-containing materials were removed in accordance with state regulations and guidance. Two other buildings are in the process of removal of hazardous substances and asbestos-containing materials, and demolition to make way for the construction of a community center. Also the former main dining facility/building was renovated for use as a new town hall/municipal center. Prior to starting the renovation, hazardous substances and asbestos-containing materials were also removed from this building.

Private concerns have expressed interest in leasing and renovating existing buildings for various enterprises, but no deals have been consummated. This is likely in a large part due to the poor economy and lack of financing, but also because of the cost of building renovations. A significant portion of the cost of these renovations is the removal of hazardous substances and asbestos-containing materials from the buildings.

In 2008, the town was awarded an EPA Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Grant in the amount of \$200,000 to remove hazardous substances and asbestos-containing materials from the Fairfield Hills Stratford building and two of five campus duplexes, designated as Duplexes 58 and 59. See the attached annotated "Fairfield Hills' Trails, Concept Plan" figure for the locations of the buildings on the Fairfield Hills campus. The purpose of this project was to eliminate the potential exposure of the public, town personnel, and contractors to these materials, and to

facilitate the leasing and renovations of these buildings by lowering the cost of renovation to private party/enterprise(s).

In November of this year the town was awarded a Recovery Act Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund Grant from the Valley Council of Governments in the amount of \$100,000 for removal of hazardous substances and asbestos-containing materials from the remaining three campus duplexes, Duplexes 60, 61, and 63. In addition to the actual cost of removal of these materials, this grant will also be used to provide project coordination; provide community outreach services; secure an environmental engineering consultant to prepare the hazardous substances and asbestos-containing materials removal specifications, and oversee and monitor the work.

### **NATURE OF THREAT TO PUBLIC HEALTH**

The current threat to public health is the exposure to hazardous substances and asbestos by individuals entering the building. Certain asbestos-containing materials and lead paint in the building are in poor condition that could cause the release of asbestos fibers to the air, and lead paint chips to building floors and surfaces.

Asbestos is a concern because asbestos minerals have a tendency to separate into microscopic-size particles that can remain in the air and are easily inhaled. Persons occupationally exposed to asbestos have developed several types of life-threatening diseases, including asbestosis and lung cancer. Exposure to asbestos would be likely to occur in those areas identified as containing friable asbestos-containing materials.

Since the asbestos-containing materials identified are currently damaged or have the potential for significant damage, it may be assumed that airborne asbestos fibers are present in the buildings and will continue to be present in the buildings, if the asbestos-containing materials are not removed. The main exposure pathway in this case would be inhalation of airborne asbestos fibers for those inside the buildings. Additional exposure could occur through ingestion. Indirect exposure could occur through transport of asbestos fibers out of the buildings on occupants' clothing or hair, with subsequent inhalation or ingestion.

Additional exposure to asbestos can be expected from identified areas of non-friable asbestos-containing materials if any future maintenance or renovation activities result in damage to these materials. Such damage could occur during activities such as drilling or cutting of existing asbestos-containing flooring/mastic material. Typical maintenance activities such as floor polishing or buffing could also release asbestos fibers. Under these conditions, the exposure pathways would be the same as described above.

Exposure pathways for lead-based paint include inhalation and ingestion of lead dust from the deterioration of lead-based paint and ingestion of paint chips or paint. Lead dust can be created by walking on and disturbing lead-based paint chips on the floors of the buildings.

Increased levels of the metal lead in the blood due to inhalation or ingestion of lead may cause irreversible neurological damage as well as renal disease, cardiovascular effects, and reproductive toxicity.

### **COMMUNITY BACKGROUND**

The Town of Newtown occupies approximately 60 square miles and is one of Connecticut's larger towns. The population of Newtown is approximately 27,000. The town is primarily rural. Approximately 2% of the town's households have incomes below the poverty line.

To the north of the Fairfield Hill campus are Wasserman Way, a Town of Newtown Middle School, and town and state lands; to the east is the state-owned Gardner Correctional Institute; to the south is an elderly housing project and residences; and to the west are single family homes and businesses.

### **COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

The former Fairfield Hills Mental Health Hospital was once a major employment center in Newtown having employed over 3,000 workers at its peak. The downsizing and eventual closing of the hospital in 1996 caused a great loss in jobs in the community.

At the time of closing of the hospital the campus area contained 17 institutional buildings, 5 brick duplexes, seven single family homes, and one mechanical building. There was approximately 1.2 million square feet of floor area contained in these buildings. To date, five buildings have been demolished or are in the process of demolition. These buildings are identified as the former Fairfield, Bridgewater, Greenwich, Litchfield, and Yale laboratory buildings. One additional building, the former Bridgeport building, has been renovated for municipal office space including the town hall.

Currently, the remaining buildings sit abandoned and unheated. This has led to the deterioration in the condition of these buildings. These buildings are becoming an eyesore and the deterioration has led to hazardous conditions in the interior of the buildings. Asbestos materials are becoming deteriorated leading to the possible disbursement of asbestos fibers into the air, lead paint is chipping and peeling off of the woodwork causing a dispersion of lead, and mold is growing on the interior of the buildings. The mold is facilitated by wet conditions in many of the buildings due to rainwater getting into the buildings and seepage of groundwater from a naturally high groundwater table.

The Newtown community will benefit from this additional Brownfields grant in five primary ways. First, the removal of the hazardous substances and asbestos-containing materials from the buildings will halt the release and spreading of these substances within the buildings; second, the removal of the hazardous substances and asbestos-containing materials from the buildings will reduce threats to human health in that the threat of exposure to individuals entering the building by authorized or illegal means will be eliminated; third, the cleanup will facilitate the campus's redevelopment as it will lower

the cost threshold and financing requirement for those contemplating the establishment of an enterprise in the buildings; fourth, the leasing of the buildings will provide funds to the Fairfield Hills Authority for the construction of new walking trails and playing fields that will enhance the property as a local and regional asset; fifth, the cleanup and leasing of the buildings will advance the conversion of the site from a community eyesore into a community asset; sixth, the cleanup will provide temporary jobs in the environmental building and construction trades; and seventh, the reuse of the buildings promotes sustainable development practices and job creation.

Potential health effects caused by exposure to asbestos fibers, and lead paint chips and dust, by individuals entering the buildings, will be mitigated by the removal from the interiors of the buildings of asbestos-containing materials and lead paint chips. The interior building surfaces will also be cleaned to remove existing asbestos fibers and lead paint dust.

### **CHRONOLOGY OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

The State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health closed the hospital in 1996. In 1999, the state undertook a two-stage selection process for evaluating qualifications and proposals from interested entities or teams for the development of the property. It was the intent of this process to select a proposal to be used as a basis for negotiation for the sale and disposition of the property to the selected development team by the State of Connecticut. This process resulted in four development entities being invited to submit proposals following the Request for Qualifications stage. Three of the four invitees submitted proposals.

As part of the process of review of the proposals that had been received by the state, the Newtown First Selectman appointed a Fairfield Hills Advisory Committee consisting of volunteer citizens. This Committee conducted a vigorous public process of review of the three proposals, which supplemented the public dialogue sponsored by the state. The town also hired a consultant to conduct a public planning design charrette to determine potential town uses for the property.

As a result of this process the Committee released a report entitled "Fairfield Hills Advisory Committee Recommendations" on March 22, 2000. It was the unanimous decision of the Committee to recommend that the town purchase Fairfield Hills from the state. The report presented a Reuse Plan for the property consisting of 6 elements:

1. Open Space for both active and passive recreation
2. Land for two schools with inclusion of an additional 21 acres occupied by Watertown Hall, which is not part of the 185-acre parcel. (Since the issuance of the report, the Newtown Board of Education selected the Watertown Hall site for the location of a new 5/6 grade school, which was constructed. The possibility of an additional site on the 185 acre parcel is being considered)
3. Conversion of existing buildings for town offices
4. Conversion of existing buildings into active recreation facilities including community/recreation center

5. Conversion of existing buildings for a mixed-used entry plaza (mixed commercial uses)
6. Conversion of existing buildings into revenue generating buildings (core campus)

The Committee recommended the adaptive re-use of the majority of the buildings with the understanding that some buildings must be demolished to provide parking for the remaining buildings. This Re-use Plan was used as a reference document to provide a framework for building re-development proposals.

While the private proposals were under review by the state, the Town of Newtown was invited to exercise its right of first refusal to purchase the site under Section 3-14 (b) of the Connecticut General Statutes. On March 3, 2000, the First Selectman submitted a letter of intent to purchase the property. At that point, the state suspended review of the three development proposals and entered into negotiations for sale of the property to the town.

In June 2001, at a Town Meeting, the voters of Newtown approved the bonding for the purchase of the 186-acre southerly portion of the Fairfield Hills Hospital site containing the main campus at its core. The Town Meeting vote authorized a variety of activities to be undertaken by the town including preparation of a Master Plan for the 186-acre area. The material distributed at the Town Meeting established five themes for this Master Plan. These themes were:

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

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

1. Secure all agreements/approvals for water rights
2. Secure environmental insurance
3. Purchase the property
4. Construct playing fields for a net increase of seven fields
5. Remediate site conditions
6. Remediate and demolish buildings needed to accomplish program components
7. Renovate a building for town and Board of Education purposes
8. Improve the general site and infrastructure

Based on the direction provided at the town meeting, the Board of Selectmen established a process to refine the Master Plan for Fairfield Hills, gain resident input, and move the Master Plan through the local approval process including approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission in accordance with the Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse section of the Newtown Zoning Regulations. A key component of the process was the appointment by the Board of Selectmen of a ten-person Fairfield Hills Master Plan Ad Hoc Committee.

The committee held 26 meetings, invited 45 community groups to present needs for the campus, held two community workshops of two sessions each, hosted a tour of the campus and produced a video tour of the campus for broadcast on local access TV. The entire process was covered extensively by the Newtown Bee, the local weekly newspaper, including the publishing of a two-page insert describing alternative plans for discussion at community workshops. The central philosophy of the committee was one of flexibility. The Master Plan proposed by the committee addressed immediate needs as expressed by the community while retaining future opportunities which come with purchase of the campus from the state. Decisions as to these opportunities will be made over several decades by Newtown residents.

In addition, the town commissioned the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut (CSRA) to conduct a survey of residents to evaluate attitudes toward the Fairfield Hills property. A key issue also explored in the survey was the residents' opinions on the Fairfield Hills. A total of 400 town residents, ages 18 and older, were interviewed for this survey.

The resulting reports, studies, master plan and meeting minutes are available to the public on the Town, Economic Development Commission and Fairfield Hills Authority web sites.

Prior to removal of hazardous substances and asbestos-containing materials from the Stratford building and Duplexes 58 and 59 funded by the 2008 EPA Brownfield's grant information on the proposed work and alternatives to the proposed work were made available to the public and a public comment meeting was conducted to obtain input from the public and interested organizations. No opposition to the proposed removal of hazardous substances of asbestos-containing materials were expressed by the public or organizations at that time.

The property is currently managed by the Fairfield Hills Authority (the Authority) an 8-member board of town citizens appointed by the First Selectman and approved by the Board of Selectmen. The Authority conducts monthly meetings open to the public on the third Wednesday of each month to discuss the Fairfield Hills campus redevelopment progress and issues. Ongoing opportunities for public comment and input are available at these monthly meetings and during office hours at the Newtown Municipal Center.

Throughout the entire process, and currently, the Newtown Bee extensively covered activities related to Fairfield Hills. It is rare that an issue does not have an article, or published letter regarding Fairfield Hills.

### **KEY COMMUNITY CONCERNS**

The identified community concerns currently based on previous public input have been:

1. The use of the property – whether it will be used only for municipal purposes or also include commercial enterprises
2. The cost to the town of the purchase, remediation, and redevelopment of the property
3. Retaining the “character” of the campus
4. Performance of environmental work in a safe manner and in accordance with state requirements

### **CONTINUED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

In effect, the public has already had extensive input into the work being contemplated by this Recovery Act Brownfields grant; in that the work is consistent with the Fairfield Hills Master Plan, the Master Plan has had extensive public involvement, and public opinion was solicited on similar grant-funded work on the duplexes. Also, identical work of removal of hazardous substances and asbestos has been performed at each of the campus buildings that have been demolished or renovated to date.

Because there is an established public participation framework and process for work at Fairfield Hills, the public participation for the EPA Recovery Act grant work will be structured within this framework. If conducted within the framework it has a greater likelihood of reaching and involving the organizations and individuals that have the most interest in the campus work.

The following activities have been accomplished or are anticipated:

1. The public repository has been established for the planned clean up. The record includes an “Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives” (ABCA) document.
2. A legal notice was placed in the November 26, 2010 issue of The Newtown Bee announcing award of the Recovery Act Brownfields grant; the intended actions to be performed under the grant; the establishment of a 30-day comment period; the location of the document repository; and to notify the community of a public meeting (Dec. 6, 2010) to discuss the proposed actions and the alternatives to the proposed actions.
3. Local interested organizations were notified directly by electronic mailings. These organizations include the Housatonic Valley Council of Governments, the Naugatuck Valley Corridor CEDS, the Valley Council of Governments, the Fairfield Hills Authority, the District Health Department, the Town DPW, the Pootatuck Watershed Association and the town land use agency.



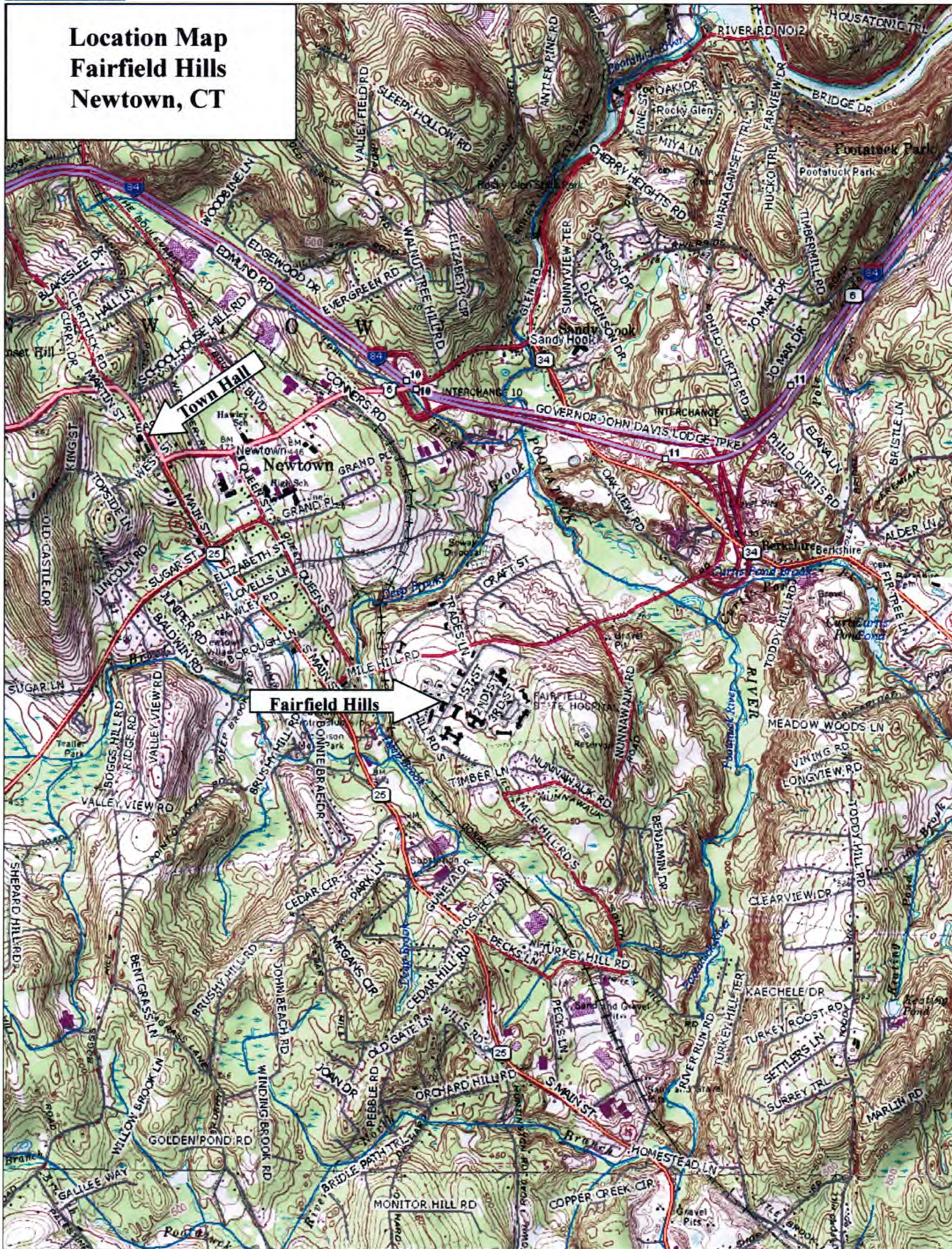
4. The notice of the public meeting and the establishment of a repository and the ABCA have been posted on the town and Fairfield Hills Authority websites.
5. A public meeting for purposes of solicitation of comments about the clean up was held on December 6, 2010, approximately two weeks after the public notice was published in The Newtown Bee. Meeting minutes are posted on the Town's web site.
6. The town will accept comments on the planned work during the comment period and during the clean up. Written responses that will become a part of the administrative record will be provided.
7. The information repository will be updated with the inclusion of all meeting minutes, status reports, and other communications as they are generated. Information will be specific as it relates to meeting town, state and federal requirements.
8. Information on the progress of the work will be disseminated by the issuance of fact sheets and progress reports that will be sent to the Newtown Bee, the Fairfield Hills Authority, the First Selectman's Office, and posted on the town and Fairfield Hills Authority websites.

The anticipated schedule of community involvement activities are as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Public Involvement Activity</b>
11/19/10	Establish public repository and install sign at clean up site	Inform public of grant and of availability of documents for review - invite comments
11/19/10	Post grant information, ABCA, and CRP to town webpage	Inform public of grant and of availability of documents for review - invite comments
11/26/10	Publish public notice in local newspaper (Newtown Bee)	Inform public of grant and of availability of documents for review - invite comments
12/6/10	Hold public meeting	Obtain public comments on grant, grant activities, ABCA, and CRP
12/6/10 to 12/20/10		Respond to public comments and add comments and responses to public repository
12/20/10	Complete/finalize QAPP	Add to public repository
12/31/10	Complete/finalize plans and specifications, and bid documents	Add to public repository and notify interested organizations and individuals of the availability of the documents
1/14/11	Obtain bids and recommend award	Add to public repository and notify interested organizations and individuals of the availability of the documents, issue fact sheet
1/21/11	Make award and set start date	Notify interested organizations and individuals of the start of site work, issue fact sheet, and request local newspaper publish article on beginning of work
2/31/11	Complete work	Notify interested organizations and individuals of project completion, issue fact sheet, and request local newspaper publish article on completion of work.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Public Involvement Activity</b>
3/31/11	Issue final completion report	Add to public repository and notify interested organizations and individuals of the availability of the document

# Location Map Fairfield Hills Newtown, CT

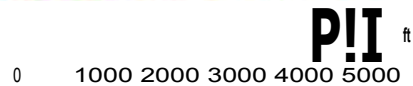


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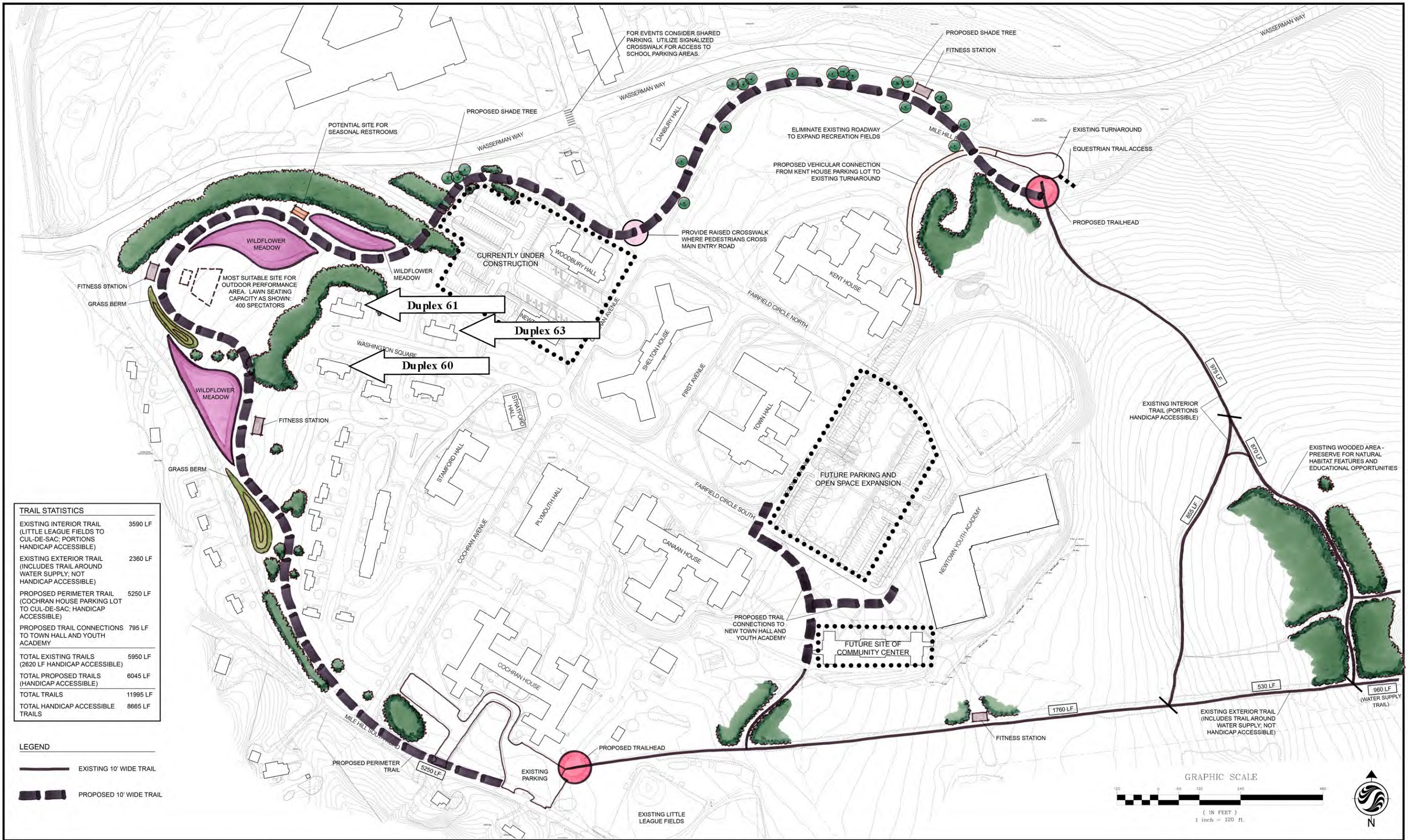
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Data Zoom 12-6



**TRAIL STATISTICS**

EXISTING INTERIOR TRAIL (LITTLE LEAGUE FIELDS TO CUL-DE-SAC; PORTIONS HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE)	3590 LF
EXISTING EXTERIOR TRAIL (INCLUDES TRAIL AROUND WATER SUPPLY; NOT HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE)	2360 LF
PROPOSED PERIMETER TRAIL (COCHRAN HOUSE PARKING LOT TO CUL-DE-SAC; HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE)	5250 LF
PROPOSED TRAIL CONNECTIONS TO TOWN HALL AND YOUTH ACADEMY	795 LF
<b>TOTAL EXISTING TRAILS (2620 LF HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE)</b>	<b>5950 LF</b>
<b>TOTAL PROPOSED TRAILS (HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE)</b>	<b>6045 LF</b>
<b>TOTAL TRAILS</b>	<b>11995 LF</b>
<b>TOTAL HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE TRAILS</b>	<b>8665 LF</b>

**LEGEND**

	EXISTING 10' WIDE TRAIL
	PROPOSED 10' WIDE TRAIL

**FAIRFIELD HILLS' TRAILS**  
**NEWTOWN, CT**

**CONCEPT PLAN**  
**MAY 12, 2009**