



Request for Council Discussion or Action

Initiator Town Council	Item Groton Family Farm
Department Town Manager	Date 1/12/2022

Background

Issue:
Groton Family Farm

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Dr. Warrant Burrows, a co-owner of the Groton Family Farm, will be updating the Town Council on the history and potential plans for this long-established farm which has been in the Burrows family since the late 1700s.

Recommended Action (Draft Motion)

No motion has been made in advance for this agenda item.

Attachments

Groton Family Farm Master Plan



RE-VISIONING GROTON FAMILY FARM
SITE RESTORATION + RE-DEVELOPMENT

SITE

The Groton Family Farm is located right in the middle of the town of Groton, CT. It sits adjacent to the Town Hall, the middle and elementary schools, the public library, community hockey rink, and the senior community center. The site is well situated being one mile from interstate highway 95 (exit 88), and just a two hour drive both from New York City and from Boston. It is also one hour from New Haven and Providence, RI. The property is also near the town of Mystic, Stonington, and New London, Ct. and the popular Bluff Point State Park.

The site consists of:

- (a) 3.5 acre pasture.
- (b) 2.5 acres lot containing a historic farm house built in 1784 and a historic horse barn built in 1899.
- (c) 0.5 acre lot containing a historic house built in 1890 (restored in 1996).



5 MILE RADIUS



1 MILE RADIUS



1/4 MILE RADIUS

- civic amenity
- public open space



SITE



(a) PASTURE 3.5 acres



(b) HISTORIC FARM HOUSE c. 1784



(c) HISTORIC HOUSE c. 1890



(b) HISTORIC HORSE BARN c. 1899

HISTORY

The property has been in the Burrows family since the late 1700's. The historic farm house was built in 1784 by Silas Burrows. The large horse barn was built by Calvin Burrows of the Union Army Calvary after the Civil War, in 1899. In the 1930's the house was home to Judge Warren Burrows, who served as State Attorney General of Connecticut from 1931 - 1935. For most of the twentieth century the property functioned as a productive family farm, until the 1990's. The farm was restored to working order in 2005, raising pastured layer hens, Shetland sheep, and a large organic vegetable garden. Produce was sold on the farm, to local stores, restaurants and at farmers markets. Visitors enjoyed visiting the farm animals, including friendly goats, ducks and farm dogs Betsy, Wheeler, Zeus and Zo-Zo.

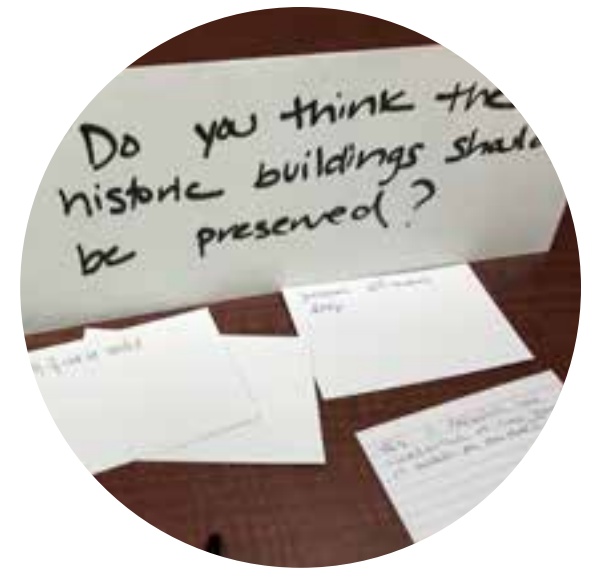
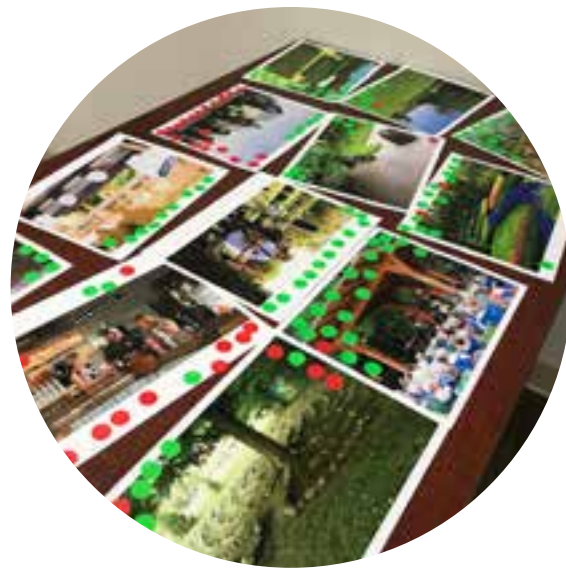
Since 2015, the Groton Family Farm has not been in operation and a new future awaits. The Burrows family wants to do something with the property that they, the town, and the neighbors can be proud of. The family has started working with an urban designer, the town planners and other local parties to develop a creative plan that keeps the property as a vital amenity for the future of Groton.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A community meeting was held at the Groton Public Library in March 2018. Local residents, town representatives, and other interested parties gathered to share stories about the farm and ideas for the potential of the property.

Community members voiced their interests and priorities relating to how the property could fit into the future development of the Town of Groton.



OPPORTUNITIES / PRECEDENTS



POCKET HOUSING

Third Street Cottages
Langly, WA

“This was the first contemporary ‘pocket neighborhood’ that set the stage for all the others that followed. It demonstrated that eight smaller cottages have less impact than four large homes on the same site. It also confirmed there is a market for cottages designed for one and two-person households in a community-oriented setting.

It was the result of involvement of people on every level who paved the way: a forward-thinking state government, a pro-active planning director, an innovative architect, a sensitive developer, an enlightened banker, and a supportive community.

The community of eight detached cottages is located on four standard single-family lots (31,000 SF total area). The homes are approximately 650 SF, with lofts up to 200 SF, and are conveyed as condominium ownership. They are situated around a shared garden with a Commons Building and Tool shed. Parking is detached and open and every residence has a storage room.

The new homeowners were active singles and couples (one with a 3-year-old) between the ages of 40 and 65—computer software trainer, graphic artist, musician, secretary, realtor, retired librarian, attorney and therapist. Nearly all own only one automobile. Cottages within the group that have resold have been for as much as 250% of original price, proving their enduring value.”

source: <http://rosschapin.com/projects/pocket-neighborhoods/third-street-cottages/>



MIXED USE VILLAGE

Boise International Market (BIM)
Boise, Idaho

“BIM is a business incubator and multicultural marketplace for small businesses specializing in food, grocery, retail, unique international products, art, dance, music, languages and performance. The market is a vibrant public and commercial space to promote community diversity, cultural integration, economic growth, and individual opportunity.

The Market is a business incubator offering small affordable spaces, mentoring and business development, marketing, promotion and programming to new and expanding small businesses. BIM also promotes infill and revitalizes the Bench neighborhood by recovering an abandoned building and bringing life and commerce back into the community.

Boise International Market is about helping individuals reach their potential. Many people come to the Treasure Valley from other places in the US and abroad with skills, talents and dreams. BIM provides the opportunity for individuals to follow their passion, have their own store, and share their skills and talents with the broader community.”

source: <http://www.boiseinternationalmarket.com/>



FARM PARK

City Slicker Farm,
Oakland, CA

“The West Oakland Urban Farm and Park is a public park and working urban farm located in West Oakland, CA.

Their mission is to “empower community members to meet the immediate and basic need for healthy fresh food or themselves and their families by creating high-yield urban farms and backyard gardens.”

The space features open green space designed for public events such as exercise, outdoor movie screenings, and speaking events. The paved plaza has card table and a large community table. There are two public bathrooms on site.

There is a farm demonstration area with in-ground farm beds a chicken coop with 25 chickens, a compost demonstration area, and a greenhouse.

City Slicker Farms and the landscape architectural design team facilitated a community design process to prepare a conceptual plan for an urban farm/park on an underutilized lot in West Oakland. The team engaged local groups including neighbors, seniors, elementary and high school students to talk about the importance of healthy food and parks, and received tremendous support for the project.

The work led to a parks grant from the State of California, which allowed City Slicker Farms to purchase the land and is funding the construction of the park. The farm/park hybrid a public space amenity and provide healthy food for this under-served community.”

source: <http://www.cityslickerfarms.org/>

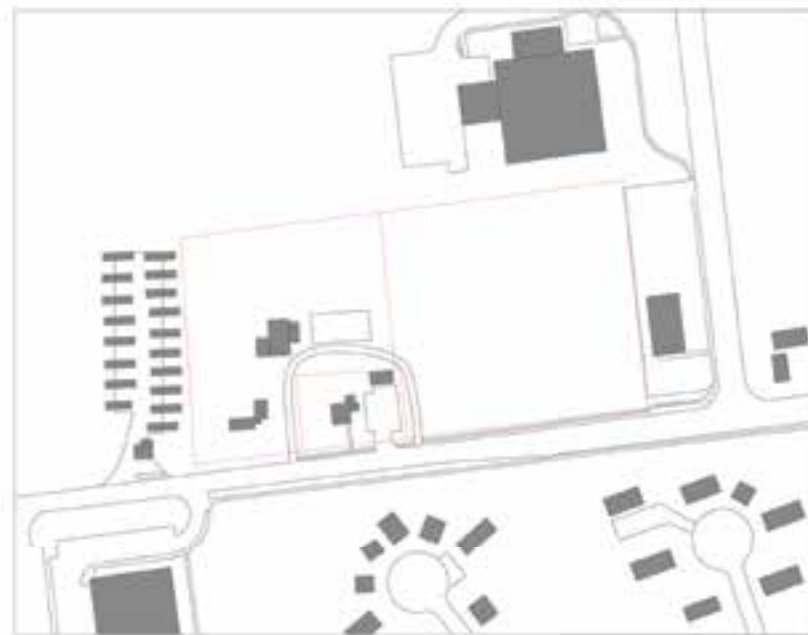
HOUSING STUDY



POCKET HOUSING PROTOTYPE

Pocket neighborhoods are an example of small-scale housing that fosters a strong sense of community among nearby neighbors, while preserving their need for privacy. Each home has a ground level square footage of up to 700 sf, with total building square footage around 1,000 - 1,200 sf. Houses can be spaced 30 - 50 feet apart, facing a shared green commons.

Source: <http://pocket-neighborhoods.net/>



EXISTING



LOW DENSITY
10 HOUSES

HOUSING STUDY

MED DENSITY
17 HOUSES



MED DENSITY
17 HOUSES



MED DENSITY
18 HOUSES



HIGH DENSITY
41 HOUSES



EXISTING SITE PLAN



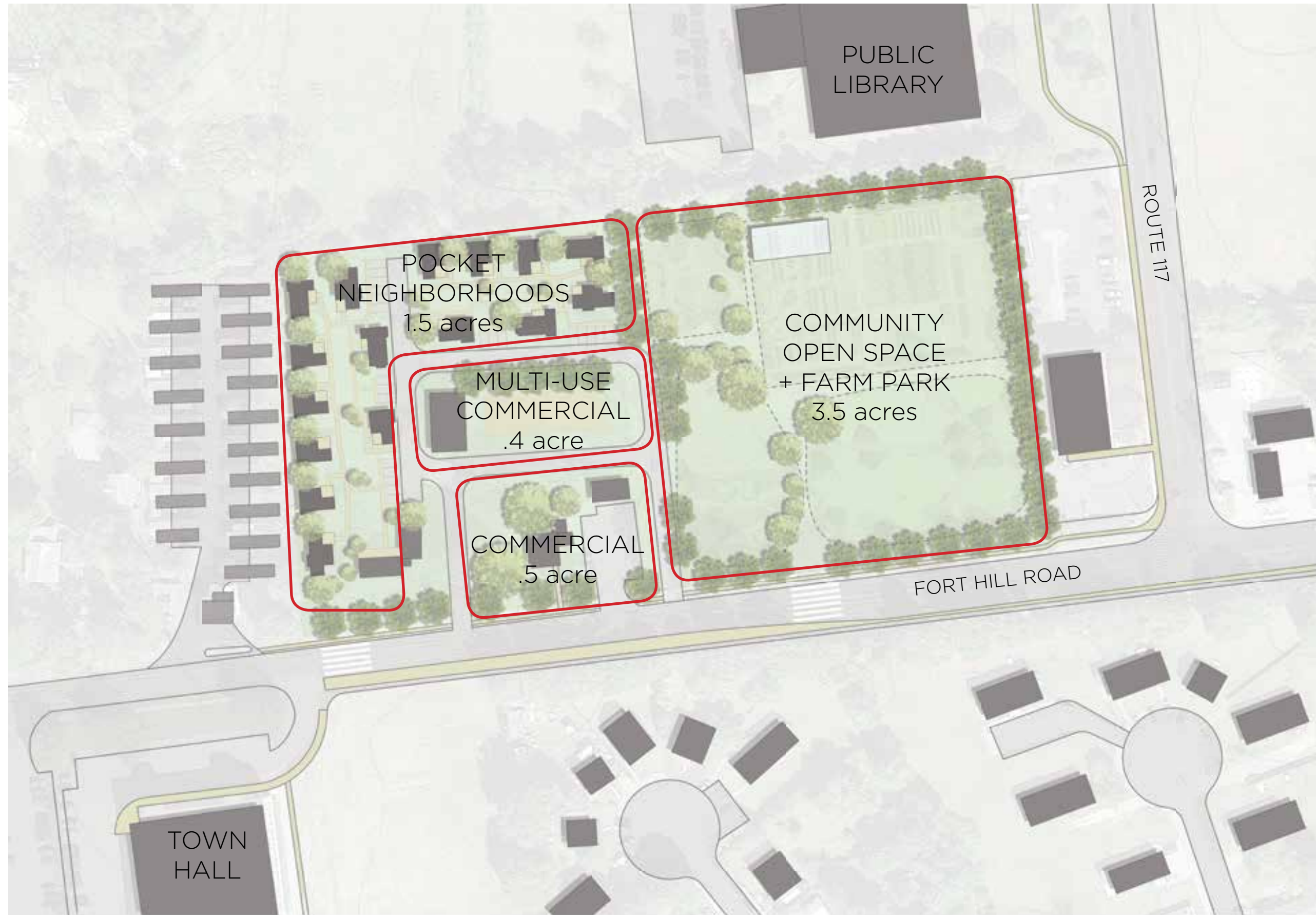
POSSIBLE SITE PLAN

OPT. A



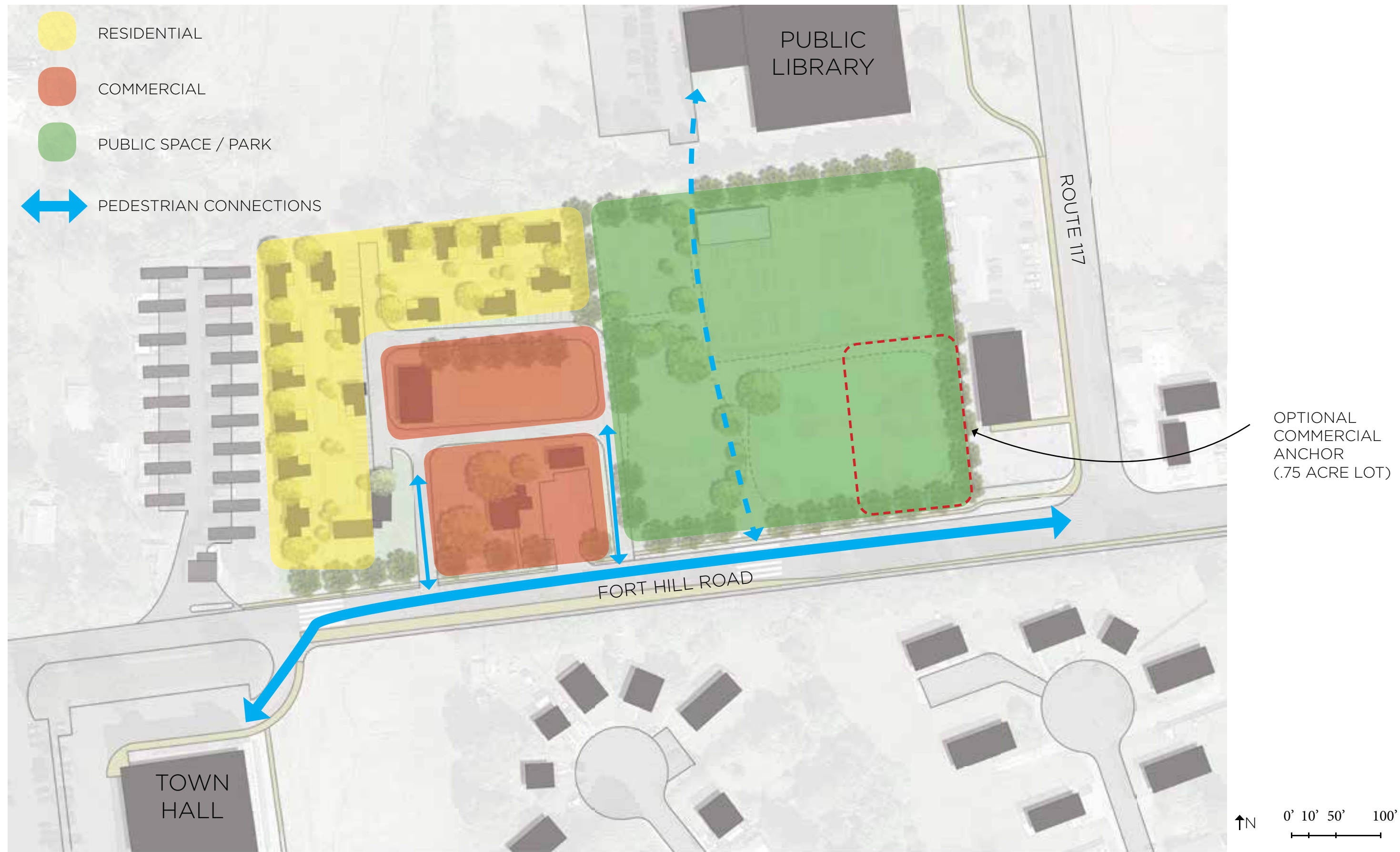
POSSIBLE SITE PLAN

OPT. A



POSSIBLE SITE PLAN - LAND USE

OPT. A

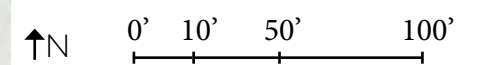


POSSIBLE SITE PLAN - PROGRAM

OPT. A



- 1. FARM PARK
- 2. GREENHOUSE
- 3. NATURAL PLAYGROUND
- 4. CONTEMPLATIVE GARDEN
- 5. TOWN GREEN
- 6. POCKET NEIGHBORHOOD COMMON GREEN
- 7. RESTORED FARM HOUSE / OFFICE / CARE-TAKER RESIDENCE
- 8. OUTDOOR MARKET SPACE
- 9. RESTORED BARN - MULTI-USE COMMERCIAL SPACE
- 10. RESTORED RESTAURANT
- 11. RESTORED BARN CAFE / MARKET



SITE PLAN ENLARGEMENT

OPT. A



INDOOR / OUTDOOR MULTI-USE MARKET
 The historic horse barn can be restored to contain mixed-use commercial activity such as flexible work space, maker spaces and vendors. Outdoor markets and a test kitchen can take place under a covered outside space for year-round use.



CAFE/RESTAURANT
 The historic house can be converted to a commercial kitchen for farm to table dining.



POCKET NEIGHBORHOODS
 New 1,200 sf homes can be built affordably and sustainably for families and individuals who want to be part of a tight-knit community.



The farm house could be restored to accommodate management offices and the caretakers residence.

SITE PLAN ENLARGEMENT

OPT. A



NATURAL PLAYGROUND
Where kids can explore their imaginations and play outside.



VEGETABLE GARDENS
Supplying the local community with fresh organic produce, educational opportunities and community gardens.



TOWN GREEN
Open space for passive recreation; picnicking, pick-up games, lounging or strolling, outdoor concerts, and farmers markets.



CONTEMPLATIVE GARDEN
A strolling garden to wander and contemplate. Seasonal and sensory blooms can offer shady and comfortable spaces to relax.



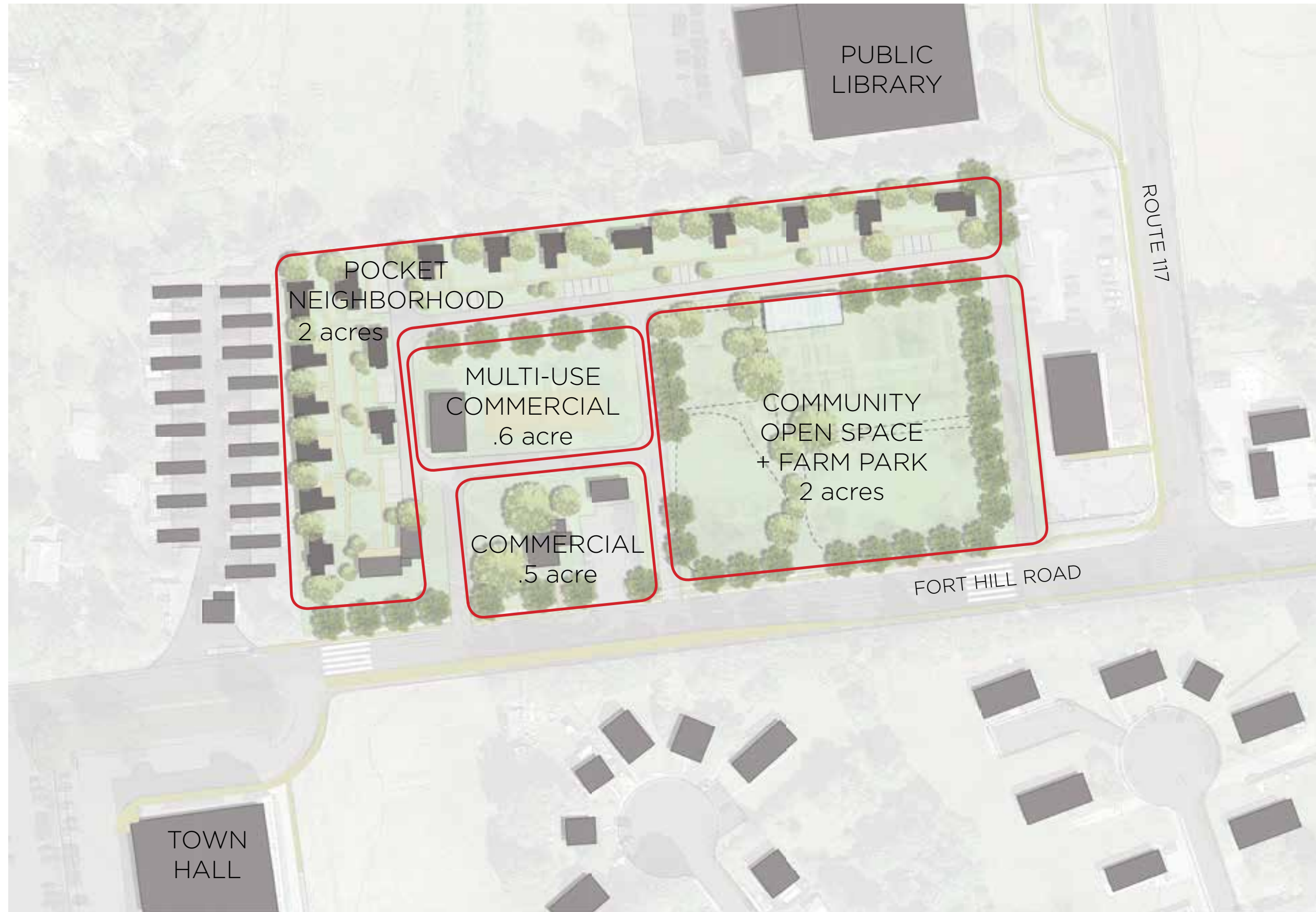
POSSIBLE SITE PLAN

OPT. B



POSSIBLE SITE PLAN

OPT. B



POSSIBLE SITE PLAN - LAND USE

OPT. B



POSSIBLE SITE PLAN

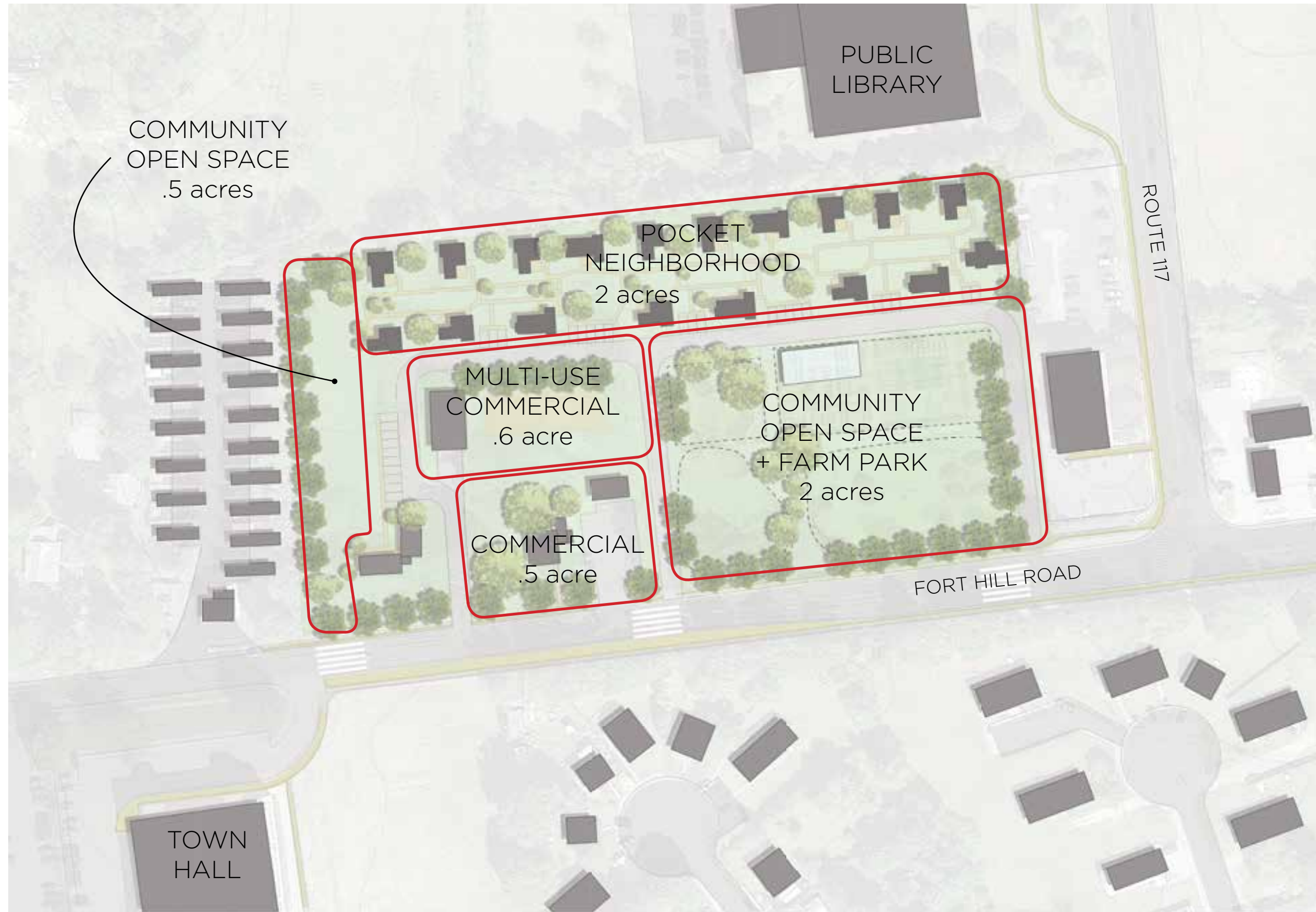
OPT. C



↑N 0' 10' 50' 100'

POSSIBLE SITE PLAN

OPT. C



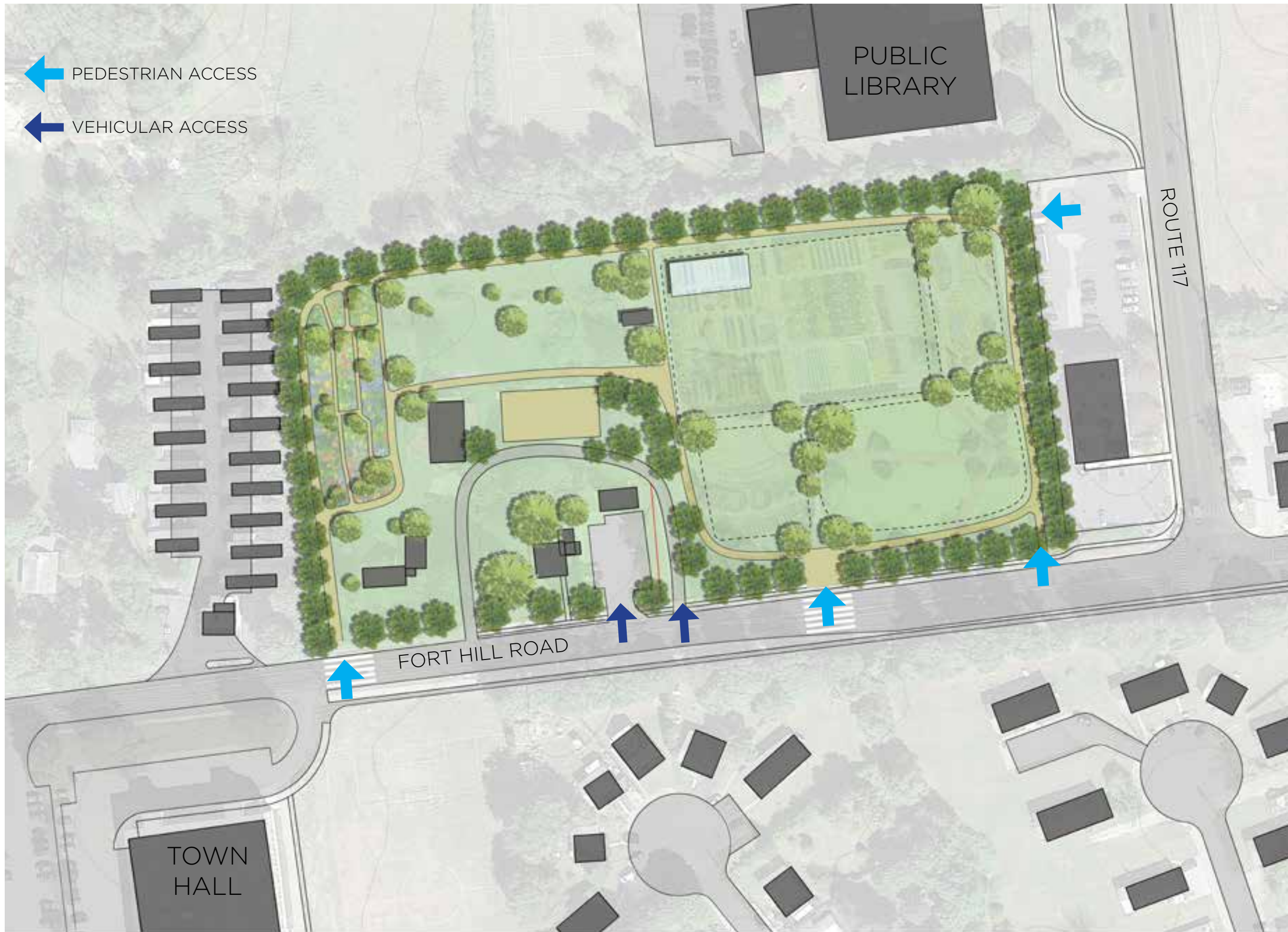
POSSIBLE SITE PLAN - LAND USE

OPT. C



POSSIBLE SITE PLAN - FARM PARK

OPT. D

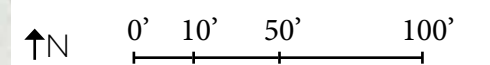


POSSIBLE SITE PLAN - FARM PARK

OPT. D



- 1. WALKING LOOP
- 2. VEGETABLE + COMMUNITY GARDENS
- 3. NATURAL PLAYGROUND
- 4. CONTEMPLATIVE GARDEN
- 5. TOWN GREEN
- 6. ANIMAL PARK
- 7. WILDFLOWER GARDENS
- 8. RESTORED FARM HOUSE / OFFICE / CARE-TAKER RESIDENCE
- 9. OUTDOOR MARKET SPACE
- 10. RESTORED BARN - MARKET SPACE
- 11. RESTORED RESTAURANT
- 12. RESTORED BARN CAFE / MARKET



A FARM PARK FOR THE PUBLIC

OPT. D

WALKING LOOP (1)

A year round 1/2 mile path for walking and running, In the winter one could snowshoe or even cross-county ski.



VEGETABLE GARDENS (2)

Supplying the local community with fresh organic produce, educational opportunities and community gardens.



NATURAL PLAYGROUND (3)

Where kids can explore their imaginations and play outside.



CONTEMPLATIVE GARDEN (4)

A strolling garden to wander and contemplate. Seasonal and sensory blooms can offer shady and comfortable spaces for relaxation.



TOWN GREEN (5)

Open space for passive recreation; picnicking, pick-up games, lounging or strolling, outdoor concerts, and farmers markets.



ANIMAL PARK (6)

A half acre of pasture for farm animals that can be visited by families and friends.



WILDFLOWER GARDENS (7)

Low-maintenance and native wildflowers, pollinators and grasses with seasonal blooms.



INDOOR / OUTDOOR MULTI-USE MARKET (9/10)

The historic horse barn can be restored to contain mixed-use commercial activity such as flexible work space, maker spaces and vendors. Outdoor markets and a test kitchen can take place under a covered outside space for year-round use. Movie nights can be projected on the outside of the barn.



Good things come when a shared interest is developed for the common good. In a time when small towns, farmland and open space are threatened, the Groton Family Farm offers an opportunity for investment in meaningful place-making that multiple generations and families can enjoy. It is a chance to reflect on the history of place, and how a central feature in the Town of Groton can be a catalyst for growth and community.

“The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life. Without proper care for it we can have no community, because without proper care for it we can have no life.”

- Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*

