

AN OVERVIEW TO ARTICLE 1: DEVENS – REVISIONS TO THE DEVENS BY-LAWS, DEVENS ZONING MAP, AND DEVENS REUSE PLAN – EXPANDING THE INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS ZONE

Summary: Article 1 would rezone 32.7 acres of land in the vicinity of Beech and Plum Streets for Innovation and Technology Business (ITB) uses, creating a large site for appropriately-buffered office, light industrial, industrial, research and development, and similar facilities.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What has changed about this Article since it was voted down at the June, 2015 Super Town Meeting?

The Article has been simplified and revised in response to community comments. Most importantly, the current Article clarifies that the rezoned land will be zoned for ITB uses only whereas the 2015 Article would have allowed for an undesirable mix of residential and ITB uses. Additionally, the proposed changes have been more accurately delineated on the zoning map, allowing for the use of more precise acreages in the text of the zoning change.

Why is this change important? This proposed change would rezone 32.7 acres of land for ITB uses which, in conjunction with adjacent land already zoned ITB, would create a 40+ acre development site. This would be by far the largest commercial development site currently available at Devens and would meet the needs of modern manufacturing and research and development users seeking a “campus like” environment. The largest commercial site currently being marketed at Devens is 45 Jackson Road at 22.3 acres. While Devens’ Salerno and Airfield parcels are both large sites, their development is constrained by a combination of ongoing environmental cleanup, access limitations, rare species issues, and height restrictions.

Where is this district located? The land in question is located in the western portion of Devens adjacent to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Oxbow Refuge, west of Spruce Street and north of the former Oak and Maple housing areas. See Figure 1 on the following page.

How would this zoning change work? 28.4 acres of land currently zoned Residential I (labelled Parcel A on Figure 2) will be rezoned to Innovation and Technology Business. The 4.2-acre former open space buffer area (Parcel B) between Parcel A and the adjacent Oak and Maple parcels (zoned Innovation and Technology Business) will be rezoned to Innovation and Business Technology as well, as a buffer is not needed between similarly-zoned parcels. A new 4.7-acre open space buffer (Parcel C) will be created between Parcel A and the remaining Residential I zone. Additionally, all land owned by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service within the Residential I district will be rezoned as open space.

Is this land adequately buffered from surrounding uses? The new parcel would be buffered from the new Emerson Green neighborhood by existing topography, specifically the two wooded ridges. The parcels, which would sit approximately 40 feet below the level of the Grant Road neighborhood, would be further offset by a new forested, 100-foot-wide buffer strip running east of Spruce Street. Uses on the new parcels would also be required to meet the DEC’s stringent performance standards for noise and light emissions. Existing roads connecting the Emerson Green neighborhood with the parcels would be closed or gated for emergency vehicle use only.

How will this impact the Nashua River and adjacent U.S. Fish & Wildlife Oxbow Refuge? The zoning district in question was specifically delineated in the 1994 reuse planning process to avoid impacts to the Nashua River and Oxbow Refuge. At its closest point, the zoning district is approximately 500 feet

from the river. As far as the change from residential use to commercial use, based on 2015 conversations with senior representatives of the Oxbow Refuge and local environmental advocacy groups, commercial uses are likely to have less environmental impact than a residential neighborhood. Additionally, all U.S. Fish & Wildlife land within the Residential I district will be rezoned to open space.

Which town's historic boundaries does this land lie within? All of this land lies within the historic boundaries of Harvard.

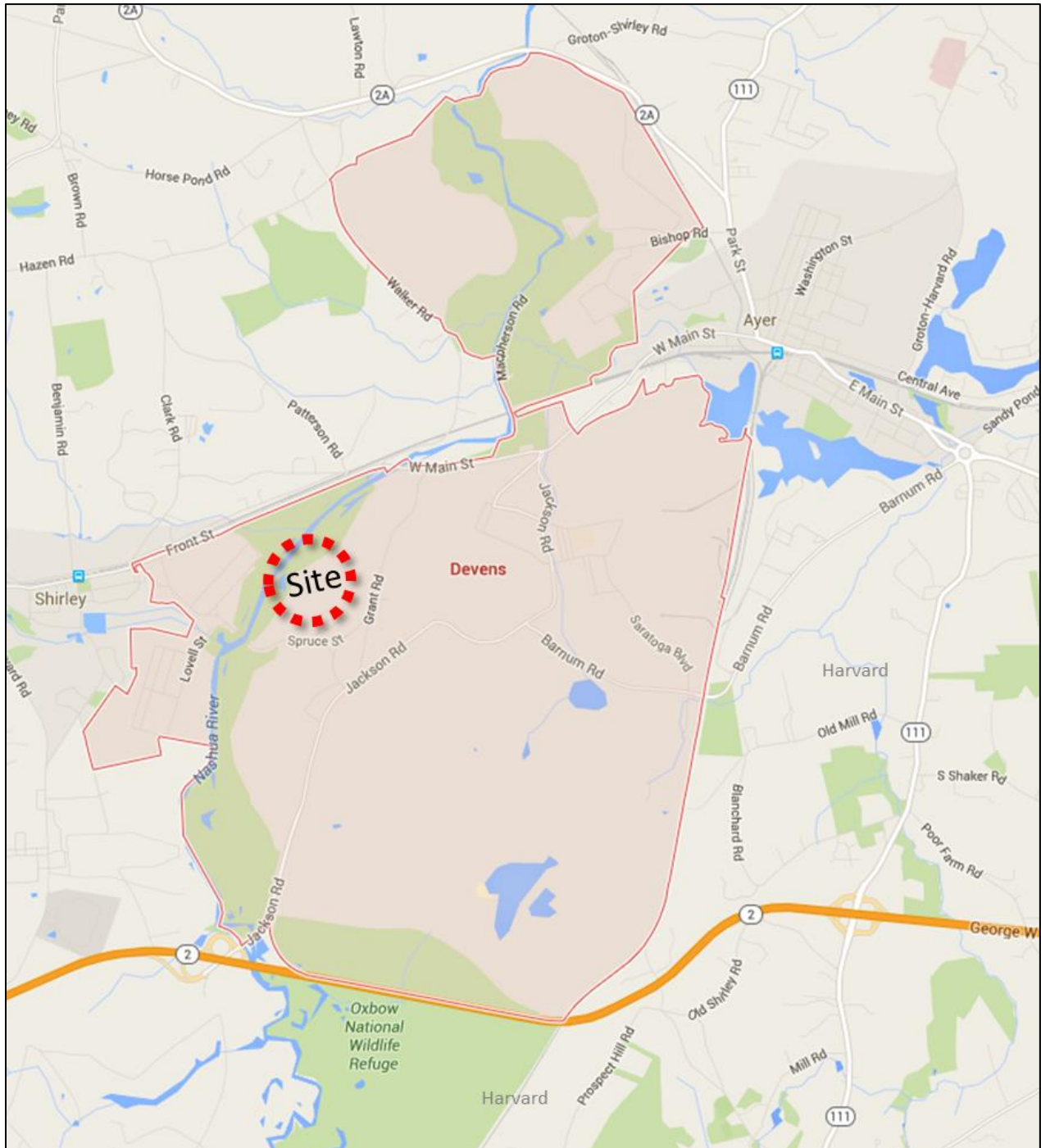


Figure 1. The approximate location of the proposed zoning change. See Figure 2 for more detail.

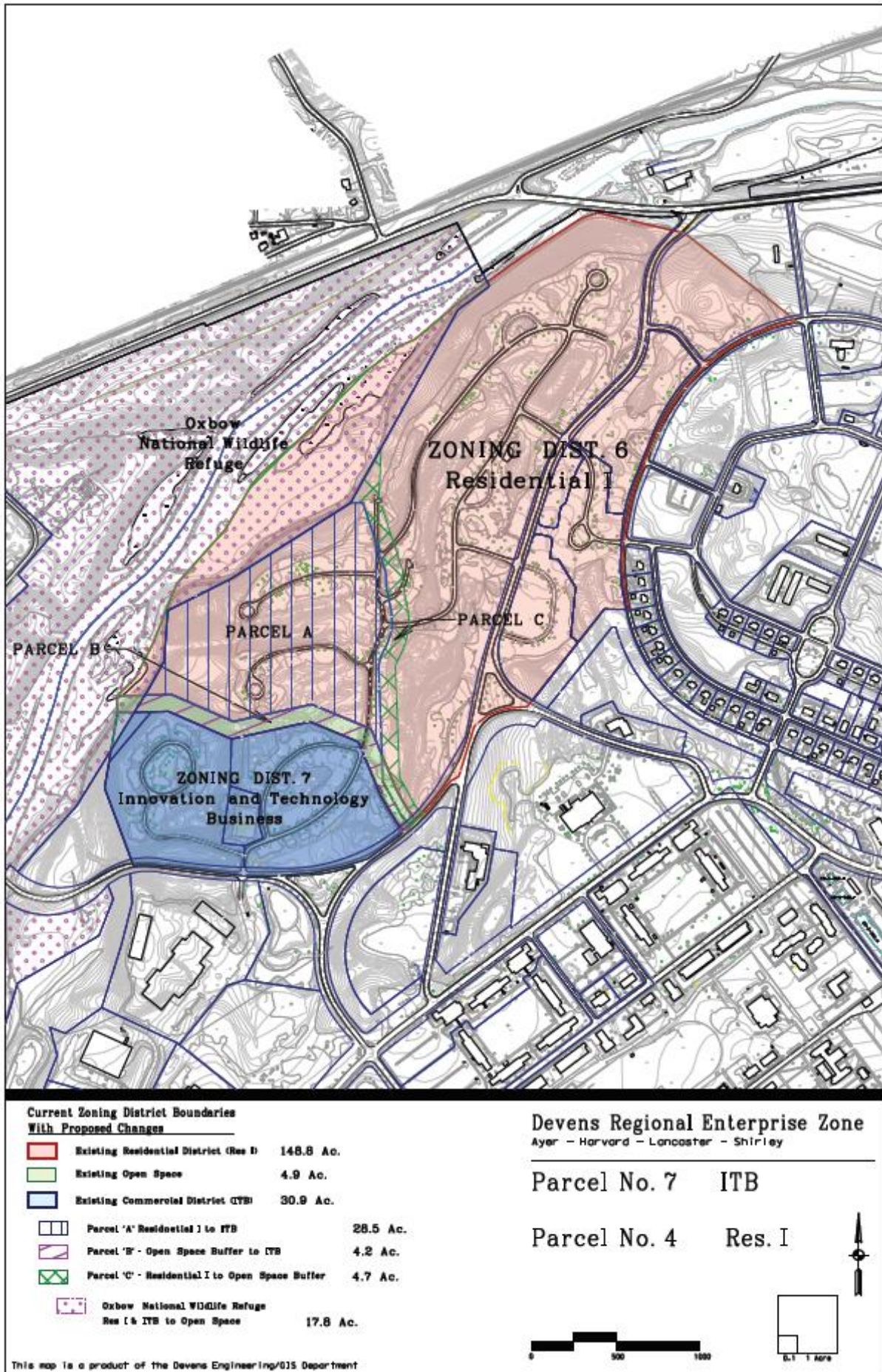


Figure 2. Plan showing proposed changes to the Devens Zoning Map.