



MEMORANDUM

TO: Diane Barnes, Town Manager
FROM: Brett Richardson, Economic & Community Development Director (ECD)
SUBJECT: Worumbo Redevelopment Elevation Study
DATE: October 6, 2020

Over the last several months, Lisbon's Public Works Department has completed site upgrades at Worumbo that have cleared and graded an additional +/- 2.5 acres of the Worumbo site behind the adjacent DOT Park & Ride along the western boundary of the property. On August 24th, over 60 local residents and business owners participated in a community visioning session for the Worumbo site. The session kicked-off a public input process to assess the community's priorities for redevelopment of the Worumbo parcel. Since that time, over 418 residents and business owners have completed a survey to provide further input.

Based on survey results, a plurality of respondents would like to see the Worumbo parcel redeveloped with a combination of community green space, views of the Androscoggin River, and high-quality commercial and/or residential development that features:

- "design standards for a dense, mixed-use development focused on retail and dining options to extend the Main Street village area to the River with retail on the first floor, office space on the second floor and residential on the third floor."
 - 38% of respondents selected this statement as the top priority and an additional 40% selected this option as their second priority; 78% of survey respondents ranked this scenario as a high priority.
- "A balanced mix of green space and river views, limited commercial development and ample parking for village businesses."
 - 38% of respondents selected this option as their top priority and 27% selected this choice as their second priority; 65% of respondents ranked this scenario as a high priority.

Regarding zoning at the site, a plurality of 47% of respondents also prefer that the Town "Adjust current zoning to prioritize future uses that will help position Lisbon as a "live/work/play" destination and are consistent with the mixed-use nature of the surrounding downtown area, particularly retail, hospitality, office, professional services, small-scale food and beverage production, and residential development and public space."

Additional comments shared at the August 24th public meeting and shared via the community survey demonstrate a strong community desire for green space at the Worumbo site with views of the river and an attractive eastern gateway to Lisbon.

To accommodate the mix of land use desired by the community, the portion of the Worumbo parcel best suited for development is located adjacent to the railroad tracks that separate the Town-owned parcel from the abutting railroad and DOT Park & Ride. This prime development area includes the footprint of the former mill building and portions of recently cleared and graded by Lisbon's Public Works Department. Siting appropriate commercial and/or residential development along the railroad tracks will balance the community priorities by protecting a corridor of green space adjacent to the

River and maintaining river views from Main Street and the eastern gateway from Topsham on Route 196.

Currently, much of this area along the railroad tracks that is best suited for development is located within the federally-designated flood plain. Public Works has conducted preliminary site elevation estimates that suggest that much of the prime development area at Worumbo is only 6" to 10" below the flood plain elevation of 107' NAVAD.

Following research and a conversation with State of Maine's Flood Plain Program Manager, it is Town staff's understanding that:

- Lisbon's Planning Board has regulatory authority to permit appropriate activities within the designated flood plain, including altering elevations by adding fill;
- With Planning Board approval, the Town will have the right to add appropriate fill to raise the prime development areas of Worumbo above the 107' flood plain elevation;
- Following the addition of fill, the Town will be positioned to apply to FEMA for a *Letter of Map Adjustment-Fill* (LOMA-F); and
- A successful LOMA-F process would remove the prime development areas of Worumbo from the designated flood plain and eliminate the requirement for special flood insurance and/or additional design and engineering requirements/expenses for design and construction.

The next step to determine existing elevations within the prime development areas of Worumbo is to conduct an elevation study. The elevation study will clarify the:

- Elevation increase in inches or feet required to bring the prime development area up and out of the flood plain
- Volume of fill required to elevate prime development areas out of the flood plain
- Estimated cost of the fill and site work required to position the Town to petition FEMA with a LOMA-F to remove the prime development areas from the flood plain
- Determine elevation-based property boundaries, as budget allows

During the Lisbon Town Council meeting of February 18, 2020, Council unanimously approved item 2020-34 to "authorize the Town Manager to allocate up to \$15,000 from the Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) account to retain outside consulting from subject matter experts to inform the Town's design for the redevelopment of the Worumbo site."

Therefore, we respectfully request that Council approve the use of Downtown TIF funds as authorized via Council item 2020-34 to retain a qualified consultant to conduct an elevation study of the Worumbo parcel with a primary focus on the prime development area along the railroad tracks between Canal Street and the western property boundary to determine the feasibility and associated costs to pursue a Letter of Map Adjustment from FEMA.