



Mystic Education Center (MEC) Redevelopment Project Fact Sheet

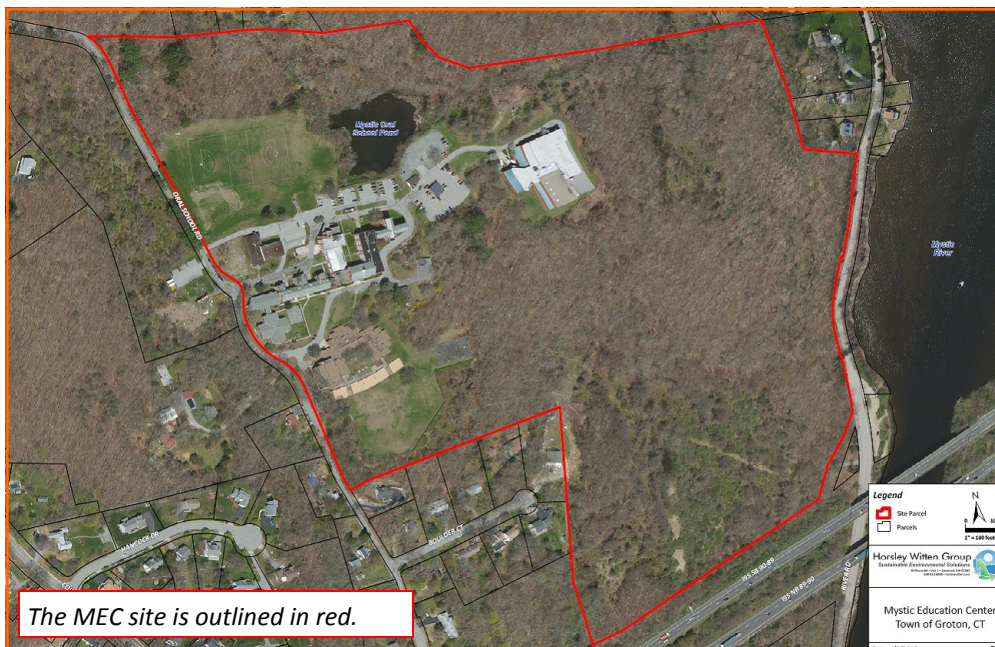
What's Going On?: Highlights of the Mystic Education Center Redevelopment

The Mystic Education Center (MEC) is a special property in Groton with a long history, a beautiful setting, and many unique facilities. Though it has been sitting vacant since 2011 and many of its remaining buildings are falling into disrepair, the property has a lot of potential and both the state and town would like to see this asset become active again.

The state owns the MEC property (see map below) and is partnering with the town to market it to potential buyers. The portions of the property that have already been built on, including play fields, could be reused or developed, while the forested parts of the property will be kept as active or passive recreational open space land. *This property is an asset for the entire town. Groton is working to make sure the site is redeveloped in a way that will benefit the town as a whole, to eventually place the asset on the grand list.*

A Brief History of the MEC Property

This site was home to a family-run school for the deaf from 1872 until 1921. Originally called the Whipple Home School for Deaf-Mutes, it was changed to the Mystic Oral School in 1895, which lent its name to Oral School Road—the address of the property today. The state took ownership of the school in 1921 and operated it as a public institution until 1980. After 1980, the campus had many uses. Most notably for Groton residents, the play fields and indoor recreation facilities, including a heated swimming pool, were open to the public as part of the town's Parks & Recreation services. Since the property was declared as surplus by the state in 2011, several buildings have been demolished, and the state has been working to clean up and prepare the property for sale. Meanwhile, the town commissioned a market feasibility study and received a state grant to market the property to potential buyers.



The MEC site is outlined in red.

The MEC sits on a 77-acre parcel of land along Oral School Road and I-95, and also includes the strip of land between River Road and the Mystic River. The property is very close to downtown Mystic and Olde Mistick Village, and is surrounded by single-family homes and forested lands.

How is this redevelopment process going to occur?

The Town is marketing now and planning to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) during the Fall of 2017. The town will review proposals based on a set of clearly articulated criteria, including proposed use, development team experience, financing capability, schedule, and community benefit. A selection committee will interview finalists and select a preferred developer.

How can residents get involved in this process?

There are many ways you, as a town resident, can get involved in this exciting opportunity. While the state owns the property, the town has decided to partner with the state in order to ensure town residents have input in the process. Before the RFP is released, the town will be hosting a public workshop and a survey to get feedback from residents throughout Groton.

What did the Market Feasibility report have to say?

While the town does not want to prescribe what developers may propose, the Market Feasibility report for the property suggests that institutional and residential uses are the most likely to be successful. The town anticipates proposals for other uses such as schools, assisted living facilities, related medical facilities, higher-end rental and/or condominium homes, etc.

What if the proposed use isn't allowed by current zoning?

The MEC is currently zoned R-80, a residential zone that allows one home per 80,000 square feet of land. **Any** private redevelopment of the site, regardless of use, will therefore have to seek a rezoning.

What do we know about the environmental conditions of the site?

Environmental concerns on the property are largely centered in and around the buildings. An assessment completed in 2011 shows there were 13 above ground and under ground storage tanks on the property, but that six have been removed. Over the years, there have been several spills on site, including heating oil and diesel fuel. Old mechanical and electrical equipment on site, as well as issues related to mold, asbestos, and lead paint, are being addressed, at least partially, by the State in advance of the property's sale. In short, the environmental concerns are what would be expected of a property of MEC's age and condition.



In short, the MEC is an exciting opportunity for the town to reuse a property that is currently sitting vacant. It will protect many acres of forest land, raise tax revenues, and provide a combination of public and private uses needed by the community. **Keep an eye out for more information soon on how you can get involved.**

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