

NORTH ANDOVER

Osgood Landing: Designated a State PDA

Land Use: Osgood Landing is a 169-acre site located at 1600 Osgood Street in North Andover. The site is home to over 1.5 million square feet of building, which previously housed the operations of Lucent Technologies. Approximately 126 acres of this Priority Development Area has been approved by the commonwealth as a Chapter 43D Priority Development Site (PDS), and the remaining 43 acres has been approved as a Chapter 40R Smart Growth Overlay district. In the spring of 2004, the Town entered into a tax increment-financing plan with the owners of the property, Ozzy Properties.

The Osgood Landing Master Plan and its zoning favors a mix of uses to complement the existing office and manufacturing space, and at the same time encourage a pedestrian oriented campus. Zoning allows for a wide range of complimentary uses including retail, restaurant, and professional services such as banks, office supplies, and day care. The high-density 40R residential district, which accommodates up to 650 housing units, is but a 5-minute walk from the principle structure.

Infrastructure: The Osgood Landing site is served by existing municipal water and by a private sewer line that leads directly to the greater Lawrence sewer district. The property is bordered on the north by the Haverhill line of the MBTA commuter rail, with a spur onto the property for freight.

Access: The Osgood Landing PDA is located 2.5 miles from interstate 495 via route 125 and the Ward Hill connector. Route 125 is a four-lane road from the site to the connector. Access to Interstates 93 and 95 are an easy 10 and 15-mile drive on route 495. Several well-defined entry points access the site from route 125, two of which are controlled by traffic signals.

As mentioned, the Haverhill line of the commuter rail borders the site. The possibility of constructing a commuter rail station has been discussed and would provide a benefit to the greater North Andover community. The proposed rail station would accommodate approximately 300 parking spaces.

Pedestrian access around the site is currently very limited, but the master plan calls for the provision of walkways and trails, and a clear hierarchy for pedestrian, car and truck circulation.

Environmental: There are some wetlands on site but they appear to be well defined and only subject to local jurisdiction through the Wetlands Protection Act. There is however a wetland on the west property line that is identified as a perennial stream which will be subject to permitting through the Rivers Protection Act. Stormwater management throughout the site is antiquated and will need to be updated and improved as the property is redeveloped.

Recommended Strategies: Osgood Landing has a well thought out master plan, which should allow the area to develop into a true smart growth center. MVPC has conducted a corridor analysis taking into account the development of Osgood Landing as well as the surrounding area. Specific corridor improvements and zoning recommendations were made, namely: limited cub cuts, Route 125 widening and signalization control and sensitive design that allows for clustering of development to maximize open space retention. Some of the recommended zoning upgrades have been approved. Access to the rail spur is limited and improvements are needed.

Route 114 Corridor: Designated a Local PDA

Land Use: The Route 114 Corridor PDA comprises 394 acres along this state roadway. Boundaries: Lawrence City line (north); centerline of Route 114 (east); Flagship Drive / Route 114 intersection (south) and Andover town line (west). Prominent landmarks include Merrimack College @ Routes 114/125 intersection; the Willows Business Park complex; restaurants, numerous commercial enterprises, and multifamily housing developments. About 17% is presently developed and has well over 1 million square feet of building space. The zoning is variable according to location: one industrial (Willows Business Park); four businesses, and three residential. The industrial zone allows public buildings, professional offices and educational institutions; manufacturing and medical uses, research & development, and some recreational uses. Other recreation uses and daycare centers require a special permit. Residential is prohibited. The business zones in general allow religious, professional offices, public buildings, research and development, and retail of varying types/sizes; like industrial zones, residential uses are generally prohibited. The residential zones allow various types of housing units and agriculture. Most recreational uses, nursing facilities, daycare and public buildings require a special permit.

Manufacturing, storage yards, medical uses, warehouses and wholesale distributors are prohibited in the residential zones.

Infrastructure: Properties are well served with Town water and sewer; National Grid electric, and Columbia and National Grid natural gas. Two telecommunications companies provide cable and Internet service; DSL is available. Fiber optic to sites along the corridor is not yet available.

Access: Route 114 from I-495 in Lawrence to Willow Street in North Andover is a very congested corridor with several different individual problem areas. Traffic congestion during peak travel periods occurs between Willow Street and the Andover Bypass (Route 125) and between the Shawsheen River Bridge and Waverly Road (in Lawrence), due to the roadway narrowing, thereby reducing its carrying capacity of these two choke points.

Some intersections along Route 114 may experience safety problems. The intersection of Route 114 and the Andover Bypass (Route 125) saw 32 accidents between 2009-2011. During this period, the intersection of Peters Street and Route 114 experienced 35 accidents and the intersection of Andover Street and Route 114 experienced 38 accidents.

The MVRTA does not operate fixed bus services along Route 114 within this site. Bus Route 39A ends at Waverly Street; Bus Route 33, which runs along Route 125 ends at Route 114, and the Andover Shuttle ends just short of Route 114.

Pedestrian access is inconsistent along Route 114. Sidewalks are absent east of the Andover Bypass. West of the Bypass, sidewalks are evident primarily on the north side of the street. Crosswalks are evident and crossing signals are also present north of Route 125. Development has been structured so that businesses are set back from the road with large parking lots. Route 114 is not a recommended bicycle route by Rubel Maps.

MassDot conducted a road safety audit in 2013 along this section of Route 114, and several improvements are needed to make the road safer for both automobiles and pedestrians.

Environmental: 47.39 acres (12%) are classified as wetlands; approximately 81 acres (20%) are within a 100-year floodplain. 11.75 acres (2%) are classified as Rare Species Habitat. Vernal pools are present in select locations.

Recommended Strategies: The Town has strategically planned for development to occur on Route 114, and to preserve or limit growth in outlying Town areas. The fragmented zoning in this corridor will limit this desire and should be reviewed for appropriate uses and densities to ensure that the existing infrastructure can support the desired development. The review of the zoning should consider the role Merrimack College can play in the corridor. The College is a core of the corridor and creates more of a sense of place than the current strip development feel of Route 114.

To accomplish this, the town where possible, should convert the linear strip commercial development along route 114 into more functional compact nodes of mixed-use development. Two such potential mixed-use “nodes” appear to exist. The area between route 133 and Waverly Street has high density housing and retail/commercial uses in very close proximity to each other. More attractive streetscape and better pedestrian connection between the two could transform it into a 21st century multi-use center. Another such area is at Merrimack College and Royal Crest which are within easy walking distance to nearby retail stores and services, but not easily walk-able. Given the number of people at both Royal Crest and the college, it makes economic sense to produce aesthetically attractive corridors that connect these folks with the nearby businesses. Consideration of providing MVRTA services to the corridor should be considered, connecting the College and other residential neighborhoods to the corridor and the community at large. Improvements are vital to Route 114 in order to improve traffic flow and improve pedestrian access from the residential complexes to the retail stores and restaurants. The Town should work to get these improvements designed and the project placed on the MPO - Transportation Improvement Program.

Machine Shop Village: Designated a State PDA

Land Use: This 89-acre area is part of a nationally recognized 600-acre “Machine Shop Village District.” Its industrial roots define its character; local residential streets and neighborhood commercial uses cluster around several rehabilitated mill structures on Cochichewick Brook. The area is generally urbanized and particularly suited to ‘smart growth’ development. Following recommendations provided in the 2009 PGS, the Town adopted a “Downtown Overlay District” the purpose which is to encourage a diverse mix of residential, business, commercial, office, governmental and entertainment uses for workers, visitors, and residents. By right uses include general merchandise retail stores, banks, professional offices, medical offices, restaurants, multi-family dwellings less than 18 units, and mixed-use structures.

The underlying zoning districts are variable according to location and include: Industrial-S which allows research and development facilities, business and professional offices, light manufacturing, and warehousing; General Business which allows retail stores, banks, restaurants, automobile filling and service stations, and residential uses provided they occupy no more than 50% of total floor space; Residential-3 which allows single family residences, rooming houses, public and private educational facilities, and golf courses.

Infrastructure: Municipal water and sewers, and natural gas are available throughout. Two telecommunications firms provide cable and Internet service: DSL is available; fiber optic to the premises is not yet available.

Access: Main, Water, Elm and High Streets are four of the area’s principal roadways. Interstate 495 is less than one mile northwest; the best connections are to Main Street and Massachusetts Avenue. MVRTA Route 33 connects to MBTA Commuter Rail at the McGovern ITC in Lawrence. Trucks provide local freight service. Bicyclists share local streets; pedestrians have use of a well-developed sidewalk/crosswalk network.

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS (PDA)

Environmental: 3.58 acres or 4.02% is wetlands; 4.17 acres or 4.68% are within a 100-year floodplain; 56.48 acres or 63.46% are classified as Rare Species Habitat.

Recommended strategies: MVPC continues to support the Town's improvement plans for this area. Since the PGS was adopted in 2009, the Town has made improvements to Elm Street (sidewalks, curbing, paving) and they plan to replace the old streetlights with decorative period lighting in 2015. The Town has also hired an engineering firm to redesign Water Street at the intersection with High/Elm and will install new signage in the area. A rail trail for the inactive right-of-way at the northern boundary will be designed shortly. MVPC applauds these efforts.