

MARRA



Midcoast Regional  
Redevelopment Authority

# Brunswick Landing & Topsham Commerce Park

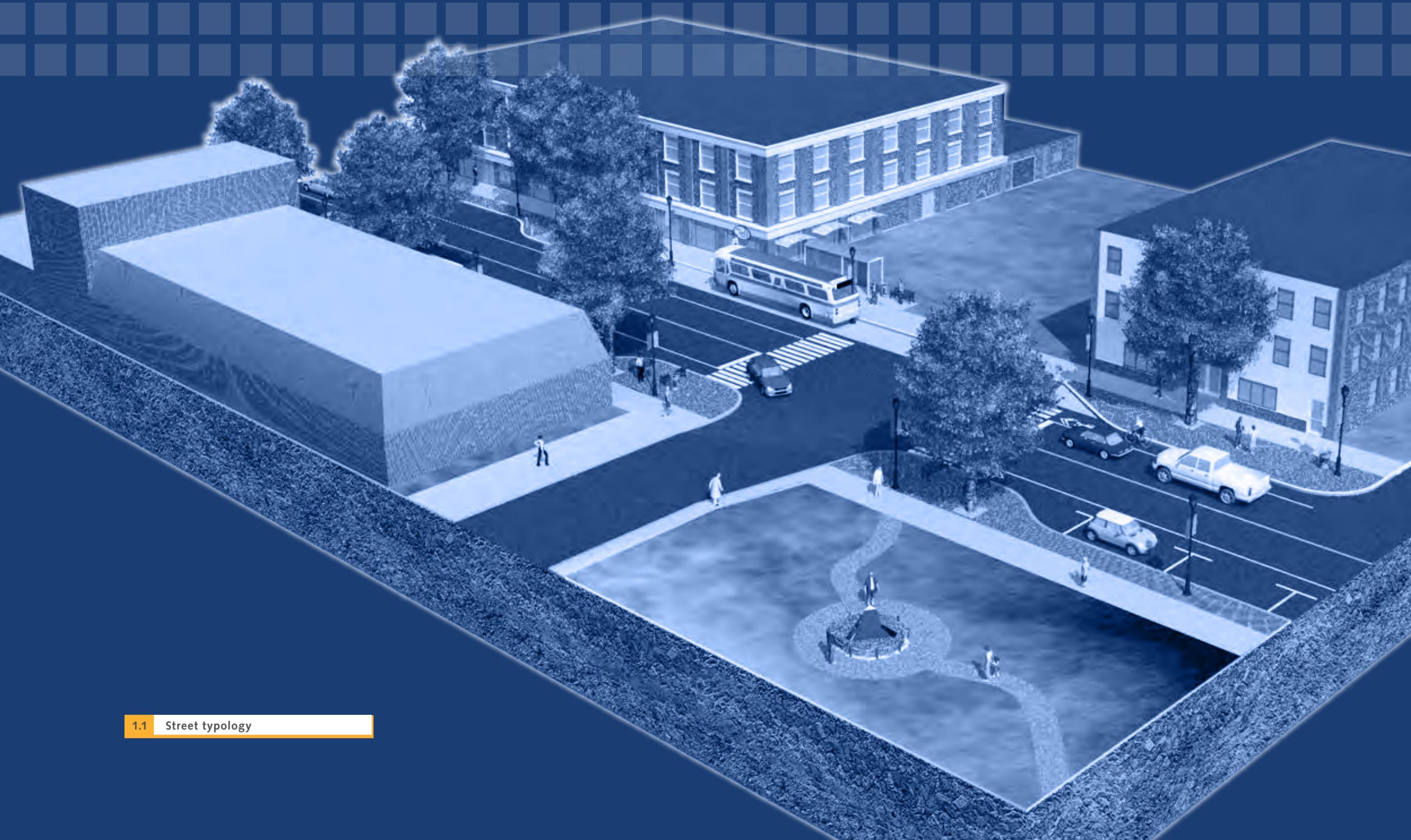
## Community Design Guidelines



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# Contents

|  |    |   |    |                                   |    |
|--|----|---|----|-----------------------------------|----|
| Origins.....                           | 5  | Public Realm Guidelines.....  | 23 | Implementation .....              | 69 |
| Introduction.....                      | 5  | Roads .....   | 23 | Design Submission Checklist ..... | 71 |
| Purpose of the Design Guidelines ..... | 5  | Sidewalks & Streetscape.....  | 28 | Color Palette .....               | 75 |
| Submittal Process .....                | 6  | Parks & Open Space.....   | 30 | District Maps .....               | 79 |
| Background Studies .....               | 7  | Sustainability of the Neighborhood .....  | 33 | Definitions.....                  | 83 |
| Local Regulations.....                 | 8  | Multi-Use Trails.....   | 34 | Zoning References.....            | 87 |
| Planning Context .....                 | 9  | Stormwater Management.....  | 35 |                                   |    |
| Reuse Master Plans.....                | 9  | Signage & Wayfinding .....  | 36 |                                   |    |
| Guiding Principles .....               | 15 | Private Realm guidelines.....   | 39 |                                   |    |
| Sustainability Principles .....        | 16 | Brunswick Landing: Aviation Related Business.....                               | 39 |                                   |    |
|  |    | Brunswick Landing: Business & Technology Industries.....                        | 43 |                                   |    |
|  |    | Brunswick Landing: Community Mixed Use ..                                       | 47 |                                   |    |
|  |    | Brunswick Landing: Professional Office.....                                     | 51 |                                   |    |
|  |    | Brunswick Landing: Residential.....   | 56 |                                   |    |
|  |    | Topsham Commerce Park:<br>Business & Community .....                            | 59 |                                   |    |
|  |    | Topsham Commerce Park: Parks & Recreation.....                                  | 62 |                                   |    |
|  |    | Topsham Commerce Park: Residential .....  | 63 |                                   |    |
|  |    | Brunswick Landing & Topsham Commerce Park:<br>Environmental Sustainability..... | 66 |                                   |    |



# 1: Origins

## Introduction

On August 24, 2005, the Federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission voted eight to one to close Naval Air Station Brunswick (NASB) and move its aircraft operations to Jacksonville, Florida. After the BRAC decision to close NASB was final, Governor John E. Baldacci, the local legislative delegation, and the Brunswick Town Council and the Topsham Board of Selectmen respectively established the Brunswick Local Redevelopment Authority (BLRA) and Topsham Local Redevelopment Authority (TLRA).

In 2006, the BLRA and TLRA developed Reuse Master Plans for both locations. The resulting Brunswick Naval Air Station and Topsham Commerce Park Master Reuse Plans were the products of an extensive public engagement program and outlined a redevelopment vision that balances community goals and objectives, environmental sustainability and smart growth, job creation, and political and regulatory realities.

The reuse plans considered a mix of land uses including, but not limited to; businesses with potential for high employment growth; capital investment and tax revenue; open space and public recreation uses; academic and research facilities; governmental/public services; housing; and aviation.

Subsequent to the development and adoption of the reuse master plans, the redevelopment authorities (LRAs) were merged into a single entity entitled the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRRA). The MRRRA is a non-profit, quasi-public organization established by the Maine State Legislature to implement the Reuse Master Plans.

The Reuse Master Plans developed planning districts, which were subsequently reviewed with town staffs, reviewed with the planning boards and approved by the Brunswick Town Council and Topsham Town Meeting. These reuse master plans and associated zoning amendments, in combination with the principles and guidelines identified in the Community Design Guidelines document, are intended to support and strengthen the important role that land use and design play in creating a community that is characterized by attractive and functionally efficient development.



1.2 Character of downtown Brunswick



## Purpose of the Design Guidelines

The Reuse of NASB (Brunswick Landing) and the Topsham Commerce Park represent a unique opportunity to establish:

1. A vibrant live, work, learn, and play environment
2. Centers of excellence for technology innovation, environmental sustainability, and green community development
3. A variety of corporate, business, academic, recreational, and community services
4. A strong sense of place based on Smart Growth principles
5. Development that embraces sustainability and Smart Growth principles.

With an emphasis on guidance over requirements, the goal of the Community Design Guidelines is to create a document oriented toward performance-based criteria. These Guidelines outline specific goals and provide design professionals, property owners (applicant), and community residents with a clear and common understanding of the MRRRA's expectations for the planning, design, and review of development proposals within Brunswick Landing and the Topsham Commerce Park. Additionally, these Guidelines serve to increase the community's awareness and appreciation of design considerations.

Given the wide range of circumstances and potential solutions, designers are given flexibility and are encouraged to use their creativity and expertise to satisfy the stated design objectives. Although the MRRRA Design Review Board does have authority to administer the design guidelines through the design submission review process, MRRRA does not advocate a particular architectural style, and will consider all applications on their own merit.

All projects within Brunswick Landing and The Topsham Commerce Park will be reviewed against the design guidelines identified in this document. To facilitate that effort, applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the section(s) applicable to the private and public realm in their respective district or district(s), and to complete the application submission checklist included in Appendix A.

### *How do the guidelines apply?*

The design guidelines outlined in this document will apply to all development and redevelopment that will occur at Brunswick Landing and / or Topsham Commerce Park. Development will still be subject to the zoning ordinances and guidelines for either Brunswick or Topsham, and developers are encouraged to review the respective development review process. It is the intention that the MRRRA review process would occur concurrently with the approval process of the local development review board.

These guidelines will be used by the MRRRA as an evaluation tool in the development review process. The guidelines are in addition to the local land use regulations, including, but not limited to, zoning, site plan, and subdivisions. If conflicts exist between local ordinances and these design guidelines, the more restrictive applies.

## Submittal Process

In order to facilitate the review of all buildings and landscape improvements proposed for Brunswick Landing and the Topsham Commerce Park, and to ensure that the design intent and quality of each development is consistent with the objectives of this publication as administered by MRRRA, all property buyers, renters, leasees, etc, hereby referred to as *applicant* are required to submit design documents and supporting material to MRRRA staff to review, as outlined.

Three (3) submission packages and two (2) formal approvals are required of an applicant by the MRRRA.



### Process

After an applicant notifies the MRRRA of its intent to develop, a copy of the Community Design Guidelines will be provided to assist in preparing the documents necessary for the Design Review Board (DRB) submission. Applicants are encouraged to read the entire document for guidance in the design review process. Additionally, since Town approval may be required for projects exceeding certain thresholds within either community, applicants should simultaneously review the application requirements for those communities, as that may affect the content of the design submission to the MRRRA (see Process Checklist in Appendix A).

To ensure consistency of process for each application, a pre-application conference with MRRRA staff is encouraged. The conference may be waived with MRRRA approval.

There are three (3) MRRRA submission levels:

- » Concept Plan submission (for informal, non-binding review by MRRRA staff);
- » Design Development submission (for Preliminary DRB approval);
- » Final Design submission (for Final DRB approval).

Due to the amount of effort required to complete the Final Design submission package, applicants are encouraged (but not required) to obtain Town development review board approval, if applicable, following preliminary DRB approval, prior to the final Design Submission Package.

### Background Studies

There is no shortage of background material from which to base the final design guidelines for NASB and the Topsham Commerce Park. Some of the material focuses specifically on the reuse of the Navy base like the Reuse Master Plan and the Recommended Guidelines for Development guidelines. Peripheral studies (open space plans, design guidelines, etc.) provide other contextual objectives which help inform the guidelines and ensure compatibility with surroundings. A summary of these studies is provided below.

#### Reuse Master Plans (2007)

The Brunswick Naval Air Station and Topsham Commerce Park Reuse Master Plans, produced by the BLRA and TLRA respectively, represented a unique opportunity to establish the planning framework for a vibrant, multi-faceted, green development. The NASB plan outlined a land use framework and transportation structure which included seven (7) land use districts (which ranged from residential districts to an airport operation district) and two (2) open space districts (Recreation and Natural Areas). The Topsham Commerce Park plan identified three (3) districts.

#### Recommended Guidelines for Development guidelines (2007)

In 2007, Dover, Kohl & Partners were hired for NASB by EPA to prepare guidelines for development guidelines. While these guidelines were general in nature and not specific to the land use divisions outlined in the Reuse Master Plan, there are still some valuable guidelines which have been carried over into these more detailed development guidelines. These include some of the 'general guidelines' for development, architectural and signage guidelines and road guidelines.

#### Property Condition Assessments (2006–2008)

As part of the Base reuse planning efforts at Topsham Commerce Park and Brunswick Landing, property condition assessment reports were prepared by WBRC, for a majority of the 'significant' buildings accessible for viewing. These documents are available on the MRRRA website, and contain information relative to site location, floor plan, elevation, and basic building systems.



1.5 Navy jets at Brunswick

## Local Regulations

Several key planning documents and ordinances are integral to these design guidelines. The topical issues relevant to this study are summarized below:

### *Town of Brunswick Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance Amendment(2008)*

The Town of Brunswick's Comprehensive Plan, updated in 2008, provides an opportunity to examine how the Town's values have evolved over the last decade, and strikes a new vision for moving forward to the future. Based largely on the Town's values and vision as a community, the Comprehensive Plan outlines eight major policy areas for further focus and refinement. Brunswick envisions itself as a community with strong schools, a thriving and vibrant downtown, and a strong workforce and local economy, and is defined by the protection of its natural resources, the provision of high quality public and open spaces, and the diversity of its housing alternatives.

The Town of Brunswick Zoning Ordinance is the document that specifically regulates the location, design, construction, alteration, occupancy, and use of all structures and lands within the Town.

### *Town of Topsham Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance (2005)*

The Town of Topsham's 2005 Comprehensive Plan sought to improve the manner in which services and facilities are provided to the Town's residents and businesses. The Town's vintage New England charm is built upon its historic downtown, densely developed village character, established neighborhoods, wooded landscapes and tidal marshes. Over the next two decades, the Village core will remain the center of the community, containing a vibrant mixture of shops, historic homes, parks and open space, and public services. The Naval Commerce Park forms an important linkage in the Town's principal commercial corridor, and as it is redeveloped, could form a new, pedestrian-oriented village.

The Town of Topsham Zoning Ordinance is one of the documents that specifically regulates the location, design, construction, alteration, occupancy, and use of all structures and lands within the Town. The ordinance is used to guide and evaluate all land use and building decisions within the Town, and is consistent with the Maine Growth Management Act. Other land use codes exist in the site plan and subdivision regulations.

## Planning Context

Other background and preceding studies informed the development of this document. The topical issues relevant to this study are summarized below:

### *Brunswick Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan (2004)*

The Brunswick Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan focused on the creation of a safe and welcoming alternative transportation system. The plan focuses on a number of infrastructure improvements for traffic calming and cycling facilities, such as shared lanes, multi-use paths, curb extensions, and chicanes. By phasing in these infrastructure improvements, the Town will move closer towards its goal of being a bike and pedestrian friendly community.

### *Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan for Brunswick, Maine (2002)*

This plan, formally titled From the River to the Bay, was the result of the work of a citizen task force created in 1999 and the work of countless other volunteers. The task force worked to develop a plan that established the town's priorities with regard to the preservation and enhancement of the rural character and water features of the community. Although the base was not yet scheduled for closure at the time of the plan's completion, the document includes many references to the attributes and resources, both natural and man-made, of the facility. Now that many of these attributes and resources are available for town use on a much broader basis, the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan has served and will continue to serve to inform the Brunswick Landing redevelopment. For example, much of the thought given to the Recreation & Open Space District is related to the information gathered, analyzed and presented in the River to the Bay plan.

### *Scenic Inventory, Brunswick, Maine (2004)*

The Scenic Inventory for Brunswick, Maine, was the result of a volunteer effort to collect information on Brunswick's scenic resources. The 2004 inventory was identified as an important action in the aforementioned Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan. It was coordinated by a landscape architect, and largely carried out by a volunteer team. The landscape elements and characteristics categorized in this inventory were meant to be a starting point in the determination of the aesthetic and cultural significance of various roads, views, and land areas. This information is extremely valuable, as it establishes the baseline for evaluating future land use changes over time, and will serve as a metric for determining the success of scenic resource preservation

### *Cooks Corner Design guidelines (2002)*

The Town of Brunswick adopted the Cook's Corner Design guidelines to help guide development form of this Growth Area just east of the NASB site. Recently the epicenter of Brunswick's most significant commercial growth, Cook's Corner also includes residential development, and a hospital. The Town of Brunswick, wishing to guide future development of this key area, established a Cook's Corner master plan, in 1988. Building upon this early vision, the Cook's Corner Design guidelines were completed in 2002.

This document outlines guidelines for street furnishings, walkways, signage, lighting, roadways, parking, retail and mixed use architecture. Despite the fact the design guidelines were created for this single special district, there are aspects of the design guidelines that are transferable to NASB, particularly as they relate to public guidelines and appropriate plant species. Applicable guidelines from Cook's Corner have been incorporated into the NASB guidelines to ensure continuity of form between the two adjacent districts.

## 1.6 Open space



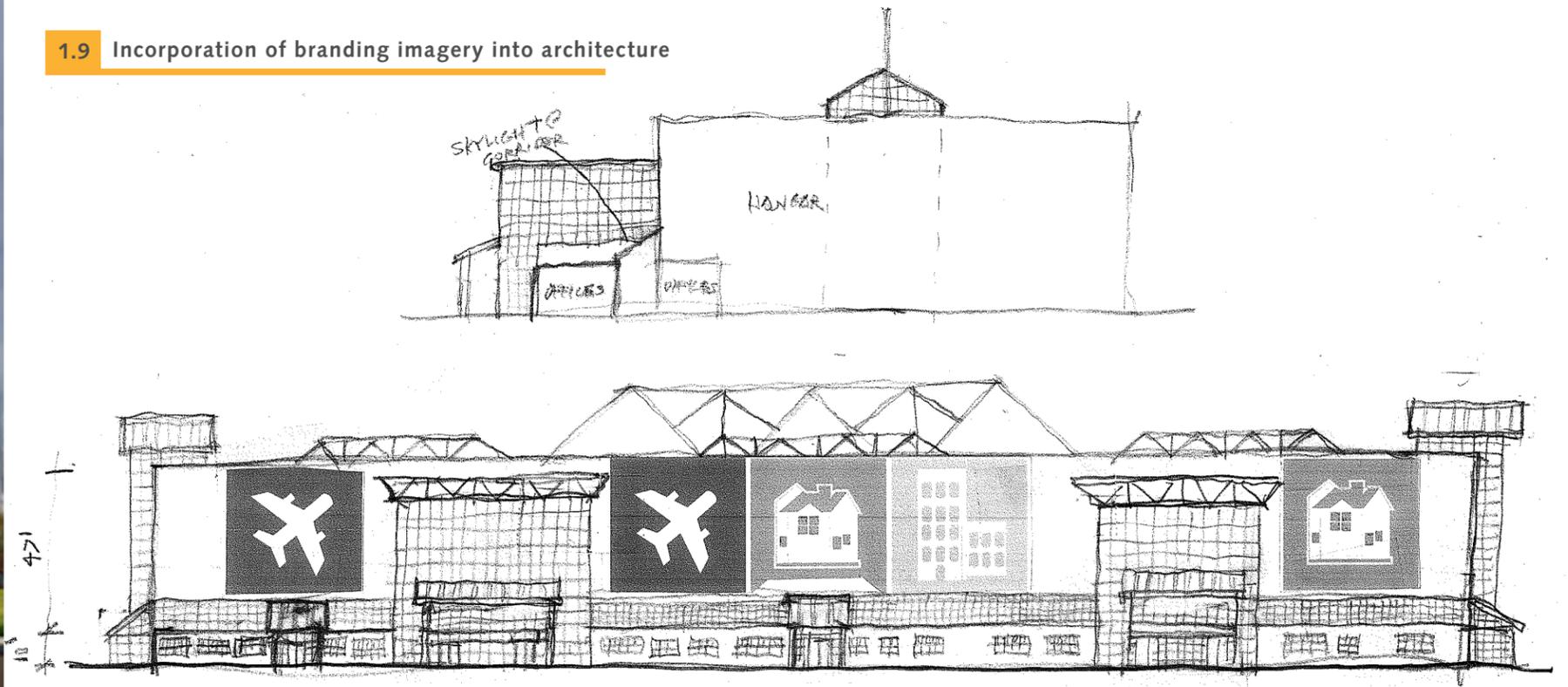
## Reuse Master Plans

The Reuse Master Plans outline the districts proposed for Brunswick Landing and Topsham Commerce Park. The general intent of each of the districts is described below and forms the basis for 'district specific' design guidelines for private parcels within each district in later chapters.

### *Brunswick Landing:*

#### **Brunswick Landing: Recreation & Open Space (R-R/OS)**

The Recreation and Open Space District is a continuous, linked network of environmentally sensitive areas, trails and greenways, and focal open space areas for each of the districts. The open space network will become the pedestrian spine for the entire development and the key means for preserving and enhancing sensitive landscapes. A range of open space options have been proposed including urban multi-use trails, neighborhood parks, nature reserves, wilderness trails and interpretive and educational areas.



**Aviation Related (R-AR)**

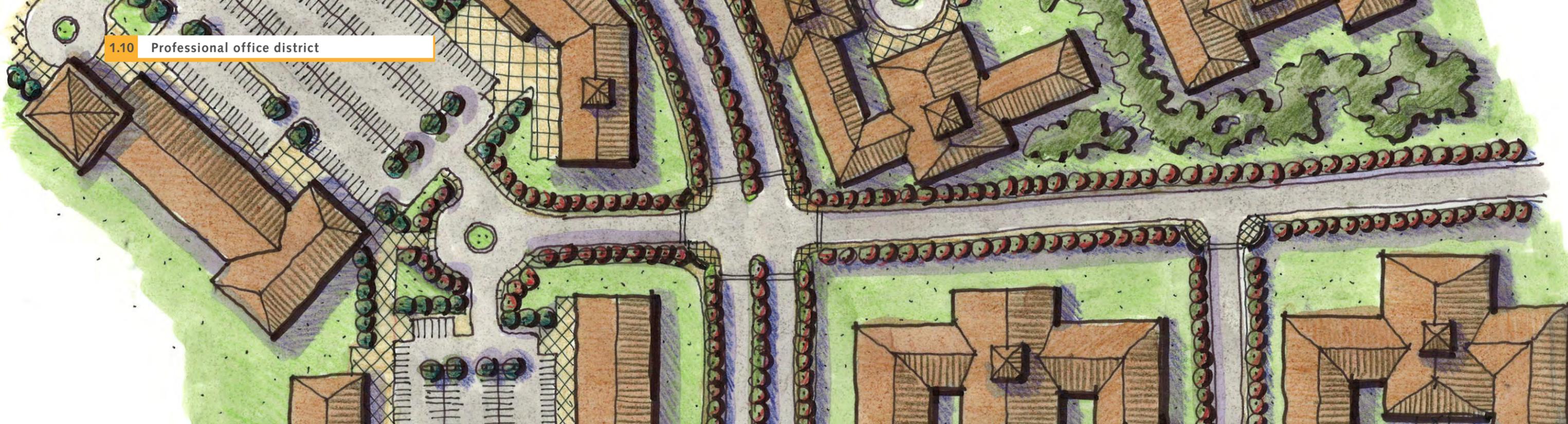
The Aviation-Related Business District supports aviation and related enterprises, such as industrial, transportation, distribution, and technology. This district consists of 230 acres and includes the runways and taxiways of the former Naval Air Station Brunswick as well as all aircraft storage and maintenance buildings of the base.

There are four major buildings in this district, and a variety of much smaller structures that support the maintenance and service of aircraft. The existing buildings represent significant infrastructure for aviation-related uses. Two are massive aircraft hangars that are of a size and capability rarely found outside of major airports and military bases. One is a mixed use structure containing hangar space and a substantial amount of office space and support spaces. The fourth is a substantial shop building for maintaining aircraft service vehicles. These buildings are valuable resources in the marketing of Brunswick Landing and are to be retained and subject to maintenance, renovation, and possible expansion. They have been well-maintained, and are visible from most of the study area.

**Business & Technology Industries (R-B&TI)**

The Business and Technology Industries District is ideal for development as a high-tech employment center. This district will serve large-scale companies such as technology firms, renewable energy companies, research laboratories (with or without a manufacturing component), light manufacturing, and warehouse and distribution operations. These facilities could be accommodated by individual buildings on multi-acre sites or by groups of buildings in a campus or corporate park situation. Town zoning permits industrial uses in this zone (Class I or Class II), though MRRA will limit such uses to those that produce few, if any, external effects that may be adverse to nearby properties or to Brunswick Landing or adjacent communities in general.

This district consists of 190 acres and includes two areas: a northern segment bounded by Pegasus Street on the east, Fitch Avenue on the south, Orion Street on the west, and Seahawk Avenue on the north, and is adjacent to the R-CMU and R-AR districts. The larger, southern segment is bounded by Orion Avenue to the west, the R-CMU District to the north, the R-R/OS District to the east, and the base boundary to the south. In general, the R-B&TI District contains a variety of sizes of nondescript, service-oriented buildings, most of which are pre-fabricated metal structures of no architectural value. Some of these buildings are to remain available for redevelopment; others are to be demolished or have an uncertain future at present. None of these buildings are "image" buildings, nor do any of them have any historical value.



#### Community Mixed Use (R-CMU)

The Community Mixed Use district is the most diverse of the reuse plan. Existing buildings were previously used for single and multi-family residences, Bachelor Officers Quarters, the Navy Exchange, and the Former Wing Headquarters. In terms of building types and architectural styles, the variety is equally broad. This mixture of architecture characterizes this district, and as most of the buildings are in relatively good condition, they will be retained as redevelopment moves forward.

The diversity of the resources is comparable in some ways to two of the most revered areas of Brunswick: the Bowdoin College Quadrangle, and Maine Street in downtown Brunswick. In both cases, a large group of buildings of many types and styles is held together by strong urban design and landscape features. The core of the R-CMU District exhibits many of these same characteristics, though without the architectural, landscape, and urban design quality of the Maine Street and the Bowdoin Quad.

#### Professional Office (R-PO)

The R-PO District contains approximately 120 acres of land and sits at the north end of the base. Bounded to the north by Bath Road, this area is ideal for a campus-style corporate and professional office employment center. Primarily intended for administrative, corporate, or professional offices, this area may also include uses such as education, hotels, parking, recreation, religious institutions, restaurants, and retail establishments.

This district is particularly important in that it faces Bath Road, the principal access route to the site, and it forms one edge of the new main entrance gateway. None of the buildings that currently exist within the R-PO District are slated for retention.

#### Residential (R-R)

There are currently 702 units of military housing on the Naval Air Station Brunswick base. These are all located in a relatively compact area along the east side of the base, just south of the Cooks Corner retail complex and bounded on the east by State Route 24. There are a variety of housing types in the R-R district, including single family houses, duplexes, and townhouse developments. The residential units are distributed among nine clusters and along Neptune Drive and Fitch Avenue.

Most of the residential building stock on the base can best be described as New England residential vernacular in terms of an architectural style. Existing housing features gable roofs, often with dormers, porches, and wings. Walls are clapboard or shingle and roofs are asphalt shingle. Windows are plentiful, with many being multi-light or having that appearance. Almost all multi-family housing is two-story, while many of the single-family houses are one story in height. The residences that are now on the base are, for the most part, relatively small. This small scale and the clustering of the duplex and townhouse structures contribute to the small town feel of the existing residential areas.



*Topsham Commerce Park:*

**Business & Community (R-B&C)**

The Business and Community area is one of four distinct areas of the Topsham Commerce Park. Comprised of 14 acres, this area is the only one of the four that is being planned for non-residential uses (the other three include parks, recreation, and residential uses only). The B&C area is the gateway to the Commerce Park, located just off U. S. Route 201 on Canam Drive, and bounded by Canam Drive and Republic Avenue. It is strategically located between Topsham Middle School and Mt. Ararat High School. It is in a town-designated Growth Area, and is convenient to I-295 and routes 201 and 196, zoned Business Park 2.

**Medium Density Residential (R - MDR)**

The area to the north of Canam Drive has been slated for medium density residential development, with the potential for up to four residential units per acre. With 31 acres of land available, this would result in 124 units if developed to the maximum allowable density. Single family detached dwelling and / or two-family attached homes are the preferred building type for the area.

**High Density Residential (R-HDR)**

The area to the south of Canam Drive has been designated for high-density residential development, with the potential for up to eight residential units per acre. With 15 acres of allowable land available, this would result in 120 units if developed to the maximum allowable density. Multi-family housing in the form of apartments, townhouses, or condominiums is envisioned for this area.

**Parks & Recreation(P & R)**

The Parks and Recreation district is being conveyed to the SAD 75. The property adjoins existing School District holdings, comprised of a mix of open space and recreational (ballfield) uses.



2.1 Community Mixed Use District

