



Annual Report: 2023 DEVENS ENTERPRISE COMMISSION

THE COMMISSION:

The Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC) is the local regulatory and permitting authority for the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone (DREZ). It is empowered to act as the local planning board, conservation

commission, board of health, zoning board of appeals, historic district commission and, in certain instances, as board of selectmen. The DEC carries out these duties in the context of a unique and innovative one-stop unified permitting system, which greatly streamlines the local regulatory process. The DEC consists of 12 gubernatorial appointees, six (6) of whom are nominated by the host communities of



DEC Commissioners - front row left to right: Jim Pinard (Ayer), Chris Lilly (Regional), William Marshall (Chairman, Regional), Deborah Seeley (Shirley), Duncan Chapman (Harvard). Back row left to right: Marty Poutry (Ayer), Melissa Fetterhoff (Regional), Paul Routhier (Regional), Debra Rivera (Regional Alt.) Robert Gardner (Regional), Carl Sciple (Harvard – pending nomination to governor).

Ayer, Harvard and Shirley. Each host community and the Governor also nominate an alternate member. The Commission began operating on 6/22/95.

DEC Commission members include Chairman William Marshall (Regional), Vice Chair Deborah Seeley (Shirley), Treasurer Martin Poutry (Ayer), Paul Routhier (Regional), Robert Gardner (Regional), Melissa Fetterhoff (Regional), Chris Lilly (Regional), Jim Pinard (Ayer), Duncan Chapman (Harvard), Debra Rivera continues to serve as the Regional Alternate. The Ayer, Shirley, and Harvard alternate positions remain vacant as does one Shirley Commissioner position. 2023 saw the retirement of two long-standing commissioners: Jim DeZutter (Harvard) and Dix Davis (Regional). The Town of Harvard nominated Carl Sciple to replace Jim DeZutter, and Michelle Collette was nominated replace Dix Davis. Both nominations are pending confirmation by the Governor. The Commission greatly appreciates the long-standing dedication and commitment of Mr. DeZutter and Mr. Davis and thanks them for their service and wishes them all the best in their future endeavors.

2023 included a change in leadership in DEC Staff, as long-time Director/Land Use Administrator Peter C. Lowitt, FAICP retired. Mr. Lowitt has been with the Commission since 1999. DEC Environmental Planner Neil Angus, FAICP, LEED AP, LFA, took over as Director/Land Use Administrator in July. Mr. Angus now oversees the day-to-day operations of the DEC, while remaining involved in numerous supporting organizations, including the Nashua Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council, Assabet Regional Housing Consortium, Montachusett Regional Transit Authority, American Planning Association MA Chapter and Sustainable Communities Division, the Built Environment Plus (US Green Building Council MA Chapter). Participation in these organizations helps further the sustainable redevelopment goals of the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone.

Working under the supervision of the Director, Associate Planner Beth Suedmeyer, provides planning, operational and technical support to the DEC and the public on permitting and regulatory compliance in Devens, in addition to leadership on multiple special projects, including the Ayer-Devens Pocket Forest projects and the Intersections of Communities and Cultures Public Art Project (see page 14 for more information).

Dawn Babcock continues in her role as Executive Assistant to the Commission and is a critical part of the day-to-day operations of the Commission. Dawn is a notary public and supports bookkeeping, permitting, inspectional services, and general office management.

The Commission is supported by the following consultants on a contractual basis:

- Building and related inspectional services are provided by Gabe Vellante, Building Commissioner, along with his assistant inspector Roland Bernier. Gabe's inspection team includes Alan Parker as the DEC's electrical inspector and Jim Bakun as the plumbing and gas inspector.
- Development review services are provided by Nitsch Engineering Inc. (civil, stormwater and traffic engineering), IBI Group (landscape architecture) and Tech Environmental (industrial performance standards) LEC Environmental (wetland science), and Public Archeological Laboratory (historical/archeological services). This contract was renewed for an additional three years in 2021.
- Affordable Housing Monitoring services are provided by the Assabet Regional Housing Consortium through the Town of Hudson, MA.
- Legal services provided by Lampke Law LLC
- Health inspectional and permitting services are provided by Nashoba Associated Boards of Health.
- Accountant oversight provided by Brenda Blood.
- Auditing services are provided by Roselli Clark.

A complete description of the DEC Organizational Structure is available on-line at: <http://bit.ly/DECorg>.

The Commission, staff, and the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center hosted a retirement celebration for Peter Lowitt in July to honor his 24 years of service to the Devens Enterprise Commission and the Devens region. Peter's

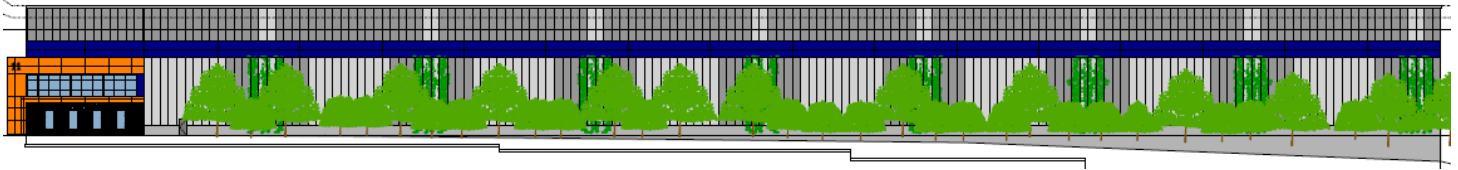
dedication and leadership has helped lead the transformation of Devens into a thriving and sustainable development that is a model for military base reuse throughout the country. Through Peter's work, he brought the eco-industrial park concept to Devens and made it a reality by helping to create the EcoStar environmental branding and achievement program that has led to the formation of the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center and international recognition as an eco-industrial park. Thank you for all you've done for Devens, Peter!



DEC Staff Neil Angus, along with Commission chair William Marshall, Devens Eco-Efficiency Center Executive Director Dona Neely, and DEC staff Beth Suedmeyer and Dawn Babcock presenting Peter Lowitt with a living green wall frame, representing his work on sustainable growth in Devens – July 2023

2023 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

2023 was one of Devens busiest construction years yet, as we saw many projects previously permitted in 2022 commence. In 2023 the DEC reviewed and issued a unified permit for the development of **11 Grant Road (former Army Sports Arena site)** - a new 232,320 gross square foot industrial building on a 13.2 acre parcel of land. This building is being built to accommodate Werfen, a biotech company currently occupying a portion of 18 Independence Drive. Once this new building is complete, Werfen will move in and SMC, a medical device manufacturer that owns 18 Independence Drive, will expand into the vacated space. This project is another good example of Devens retaining and accommodating manufacturing business growth in Massachusetts.



Rendering of building at 11 Grant Road. Significant landscape screening and green wall trellises will aid in screening the massing of the building. June 2023

As part of the approval, the DEC required a reduced building size and significant amount of landscaping to help screen the scale and massing of the building. Green wall components will also be added to help further screen the building and break up the long facades of the building. Site clearing and grading commenced shortly after approval and continued through 2023 to prepare for building construction that is expected to commence in early 2024.

The following is a summary of the previously permitted construction projects that continued to progress through 2023:

41 Lake George Street – Accumet Engineering: Construction was completed on this +/- 40,000 square foot

single-story pre-engineered office/industrial building located off of Lake George Street. Accumet Engineering - a precision laser machining light industrial/manufacturing business is taking advantage of their location in Devens as an eco-industrial park and partnering with other local businesses in Devens to share resources and maximize efficiencies. The facility uses propane as part of their operations and the DEC issued a License to store flammables and combustibles in late 2023.



Accumet Engineering new building shell at 41 Lake George Street – July 2023

16 Bulge Road – Scannell Properties: Watson Marlow Fluid Technology Solutions – a biotechnology, medical diagnostics, and process industries company completed construction of this +/-150,843 sf building on the site of the former Davao Circle Housing. The building includes cleanrooms, warehousing and offices. Watson Marlow collaborates with other biotech companies within Devens and helps to advance cell and gene therapies. The building was built to MA Stretch Code energy efficiency standards and the owner and tenant are pursuing green



building certification through the USGBC LEED rating system and will include a 1MW solar photovoltaic system on the roof to generate of clean renewable electricity on-site. The facility is expected to employ over 300 people.

Commonwealth Fusion Systems (CFS) 111 and 117 Hospital Road: Commonwealth Fusion completed construction of their new office headquarters and high temperature superconductor magnet factory (CFS-1) at 117 Hospital Road. This +/- 164,000 square foot manufacturing and office building includes 60,000 square feet of office space that serves as CFS' corporate offices. By the end of 2023 CFS was already employing more than 600 people.

CFS continued construction of their SPARC facility at 111 Hospital Road. This is CFS's research and development facility that will be home to the tokamak - a fully contained magnetic bottle that simulates the vacuum of space and uses superconducting magnets (produced in CFS-1) to confine a super-heated plasma in which the fusion reaction will occur. The central portion of this building will house the tokamak. CFS continues to provide community updates and tours of their facility as it develops, reviewing construction progress and answering many questions about the project. Their goal is for CFS-2 to be operational by 2025.



View of CFS Headquarters and Magnet Factory – August 2023



**Aerial view of CFS-2 SPARC building – August 2023*



**Photos courtesy of Commonwealth Fusion Systems*



**Interior of SPARC – ("Tokamak Hall") under construction – August 2023*

King Street Properties (KSP) 33, 39, and 45 Jackson Road: KSP completed construction of their first phase of their +/- 42 acre campus along Jackson Road with a total of 510,000 square feet of research and development biotech and clean energy lab space in the Innovation and Technology Business zoning district.



Aerial view of King Street Properties Campus Phase 1 – September 2023. Photo courtesy of King Street Properties

KSP 33 Jackson Road: This 220,000 square foot building shell was completed in 2023 and by the end of 2023, the DEC had issued a building permit to Electric Hydrogen for interior fit-up for research, development, manufacturing and testing of electrolysis equipment and related equipment. Their building will include lab, office, and storage space to support its primary R&D and manufacturing functions.



View of the front of 33 Jackson – August 2023

KSP 39 Jackson Road: This +/- 140,000 gross square foot building shell was also completed in 2023 and was leased to Ascend Elements – an electric vehicle battery recycling company who plans to use the building to conduct light manufacturing and research and development. A publicly accessible paved multi-purpose pathway along the front of Jackson Road connects this building to the entire KSP campus and the Devens trail network.



KSP 45 Jackson Road – Construction on the core and shell of this 150,000sf +/- Research and Development/bio-manufacturing building was completed in 2022 and interior fit-up continued throughout 2023 to accommodate Azzur Clean Rooms On-Demand.

Azzur will provide space for biotech and pharmaceutical clients with cleanrooms, as well as good manufacturing practices, labs, and compliance services for the biotech industry.

KSP 57, 65, and 75 Jackson: With the first three buildings in KSP's Jackson Road campus substantially complete, KSP started construction on the second major phase of their campus project, including an 8,500 sq.ft. amenity building and a 145,000 sq.ft. and 275,000 sq.ft. building. A demolition permit was issued in 2023 to remove the former Netstal building at 57 Jackson as it was unable to be reused.

At the end of 2023, King Street announced that Sterling Street Brewery will be opening a tap room in the Amenity building which was nearing completion by the end of 2023. Other small service recreational amenities and outdoor patio space are expected to be included and available to employees on campus, as well as the general public. By the end of 2023, site clearing and grading had commenced and building construction is expected to start in the spring of 2024.



Front view of 45 Jackson Road - July 2023



King Street Properties Jackson Road Campus showing the locations of 57, 65, and 75 Jackson Road September 2023 (Photo courtesy of KSP)

To ensure compliance with the DEC's Greenhouse Gas Mitigation requirements, all buildings within the KSP campus, except for the Amenity building due to its small size, are being built to meet MA Stretch Energy Code requirements. Electric vehicle charging stations have been included around all buildings as well to help promote low-carbon transportation options and cleaner air quality. KSP will also be hiring a Transportation Demand

Management Coordinator for their campus to help promote and implement initiatives such as biking, preferred carpool parking spaces and access to the Devens shuttle system, which will help to further reduce the demand for parking as well as greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion. The development of the KSP campus includes a number of low-impact development techniques for stormwater management, including porous pavement, bio-filtration landscape islands and permeable pavers on portions of the walkways – reducing the overall impervious surface coverage on these parcels and associated urban heat island impacts. Together, these six buildings will add almost 1 million square feet of energy efficient buildings that represent a \$500 million investment in Devens.

35 Saratoga Boulevard- GPR/Avantor:

Construction of this +/-154,000 sq.ft. new industrial building is well underway on this 9.12 acre parcel of land between Ryerson and Avantor that fronts on both Barnum Road and Saratoga Boulevard. The proposed tenant is Avantor who is planning to expand their operations at 29 Saratoga Boulevard into this new space. Avantor provides design, manufacturing, and logistics to support the biomedical process.



View of the foundation walls for the new building at 35 Saratoga – August 2023

Grant Road Housing – Emerson Green Phase 2: Phase 2 construction has continued along Grant Road and Powell Street. To date, 58 units of housing have been completed (single family, duplex, and triplex units) along Chance Street, Grant Road, Powell Street and Bradley Circle. The three duplexes on Powell Street are the most recently finished homes fronting directly on Central Park. The Central Park kiosk is complete and contains all the mailboxes for this whole development – creating a centrally located area to help foster community engagement, social interaction, and active living. The diversity of housing types in Phase 2 helps to meet the Devens housing diversity and affordability goals in the Reuse Plan. All of these units continue to be designed and constructed to meet higher energy efficiency standards as required by the DEC Innovative Development Regulations. Construction on the 46-unit multifamily apartment building continued to stall throughout 2023 pending financing



To the right: New Duplexes off of Powell Street fronting on Central Park. To the left: New central mailbox pavilion for the entire Grant Road neighborhood accessible right off of Grant Road - July 2023

resolution of financing issues. The applicant is expected to re-commence construction in the spring of 2024. Phase 3 construction, which includes two additional duplexes on Powell Street, a 46-unit townhome on Marshall Street, a series of single family homes along Goodard Street and Cummings Street, will not be permitted to move forward until the construction of the multi-family apartments moves forward. Additional traffic calming measures have been installed in the neighborhood by Devens DPW to help reduce the speed of vehicles driving through the area. State police also periodically monitor this area to assist with speed enforcement.

4 Andrews Parkway: Rapid Refill - Beer and Wine License: In September 2022, the legislature granted the authority to the DEC, the local licensing authority for Devens, to issue an additional license for the retail sale of alcohol, restricted to the sale of beer and wine for off-premised consumption only (package store). In December 2022, Volta Oil, the owners of the Devens Rapid Refill gas station, off of Andrews Parkway, applied for this license and the DEC held a public hearing and conditionally approved the license with restrictions on the hours of alcohol sales, limiting the areas alcohol can be displayed, prohibiting single serve alcoholic beverages, and requiring special training by all employees who sell alcohol. These measures were put in place to help protect public health and safety. The DEC's decision was submitted to the state Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC) and they issued the package store license in early 2023.

Devens Public Infrastructure Projects:

Patton and Shabokin Well Water Treatment Facilities: Construction on the new water treatment plants off of Patton and Sheridan Road continued throughout 2023. These treatment plants were permitted by the DEC in 2020 to replace existing facilities and filter iron, manganese, and PFAS. These facilities will replace the temporary PFAS filter facilities that were built in 2019. By the end of 2023, the Patton facility was operational. The Shabokin Well site off of Sheridan Road is expected to be operational in early 2024.

131 MacPherson Rd. – Wastewater Screening Building

Addition: Devens Utilities is proposing an addition to the existing screening building off of MacPherson Road. This building is part of the Main Pumping Station that discharges to the Devens Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). The building addition is a 3-sided structure with an open front to allow access to the screening's dumpster. The project includes a minor pavement expansion and will utilize low-impact development techniques to safely manage Stormwater in this sensitive area near the Nashua River. An application is currently pending.



New Shabokin Water Treatment Facility off Sheridan Road: August 2023

West Main Street-Verbeck Gate Improvements - MassWorks/Complete Streets Grant Partnership with Ayer:

Work on the \$3.16 million Public Infrastructure/Economic Development MassWorks grant project for the “West Ayer Village” infrastructure upgrades was completed this past spring. The project included over 5,000 linear ft. of new water lines, new wastewater lines, new stormwater management, new roadway surface, new & complete ADA compliant sidewalk network, new bicycle lanes, a new Devens Shuttle Bus station, new sidewalk shade trees, and on-street parking. The project included historic improvements to the Verbeck Gatehouse and walls, making the intersection of Jackson Road and West Main Street safer for pedestrians and cyclists, along with a new ¾ mile long multi-purpose



New Landscape islands, bike lanes and pedestrian crossing at the newly restored historic Verbeck Gate – August 2023

trail that now connects pedestrians and cyclists to Ayer, Devens, Shirley (and a little slice of Harvard!) sidewalks along West Main Street.

Devens New Public Safety Building – 270 Barnum Road: In 2022, the DEC approved a Level 2 Unified Permit for the redevelopment and expansion of an existing building at the corner of Barnum And Queenstown to accommodate the new Devens Public Safety Facility in the same building as the regional emergency dispatch center. This expansion will allow the Devens Fire Department, State Police, and Emergency Dispatch to all be located in the same building and provide the Devens Fire Department with much needed space as they expand their operations to accommodate the substantial increase in development in Devens over the past several years.



Rendering of new apparatus bay being added to the existing building at 270 Barnum Road that will become the new public safety building – August 2023

The development includes the repurposing of a +/- 24,000 sq.ft. existing building with a new 7,200 square foot apparatus bay and a 1,040 square foot sally port addition, as well as a training tower. Construction began in late 2023. The project is pursuing USGBC LEED Green Building Certification to help further the sustainable redevelopment goals for Devens and to lead by example.

The DEC provides periodic updates on all projects within Devens on its website at:

<https://www.devensec.com/meetings.html> (see “Development Project Updates” bullet for the most recent).

2023 PERMITTING SUMMARY:

2023 was another busy year for the DEC, as many of the larger projects that were permitted in 2021, 2022, and early 2023 began, or continued construction. While there was a reduction in the overall number of permits issued in 2023, compared with 2022, the value of permits reflected the complexity of the work associated with many of these permits, including the construction of a number of clean rooms, the interior fit-up of 45 and 33 Jackson, and ongoing construction of the SPARC facility by Commonwealth Fusion Systems. 2023 saw the Commission's average time to issue a Level 2 Unified Permit drop from 71 days in 2022, to 64 days in 2023 – below the statutory 75-day limit.

| Permit Type | # Issued in 2023 | # Issued in 2022 | Difference |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Level 2 Permits | 2 | 16 | (14) |
| Reconsideration | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Level 1 Permits | 57 | 71 | (14) |
| Wetland Request for Determination of Applicability | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Wetland Notice of Intent (Order of Conditions) | 0 | 2 | (2) |
| Wetland Certificates of Compliance | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sign Permits | 12 | 13 | (1) |
| Tent/Event Permits | 11 | 14 | (3) |
| Demolition Permits | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Level 1 Lotting Plans | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Septage Hauling Permits | 18 | 17 | 1 |
| Certificates of Occupancy | 31 | 31 | 0 |
| Electrical Permits | 82 | 96 | (14) |
| Plumbing Permits | 32 | 33 | (1) |
| Gas Permits | 18 | 17 | 1 |
| Sheet Metal Permits | 11 | 14 | (3) |
| Common Victualler License | 12 | 11 | 1 |
| Common Victualler Transfer of License | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Flammables License | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| Liquor License | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| Pledge of Liquor License / Transfer of License | 0 | 1 | (1) |
| 1 Day Liquor License | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Violation Notices | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Certificates of Inspection - School | 3 | 5 | (2) |
| Filming Permits | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Raffle | 2 | 4 | (2) |
| Beaver Removal Permit | 0 | 1 | (1) |
| BYOB Permit | 0 | 1 | (1) |
| Total | <u>312</u> | <u>364</u> | <u>(52)</u> |

Tracking Square Footage of New Development in 2023:

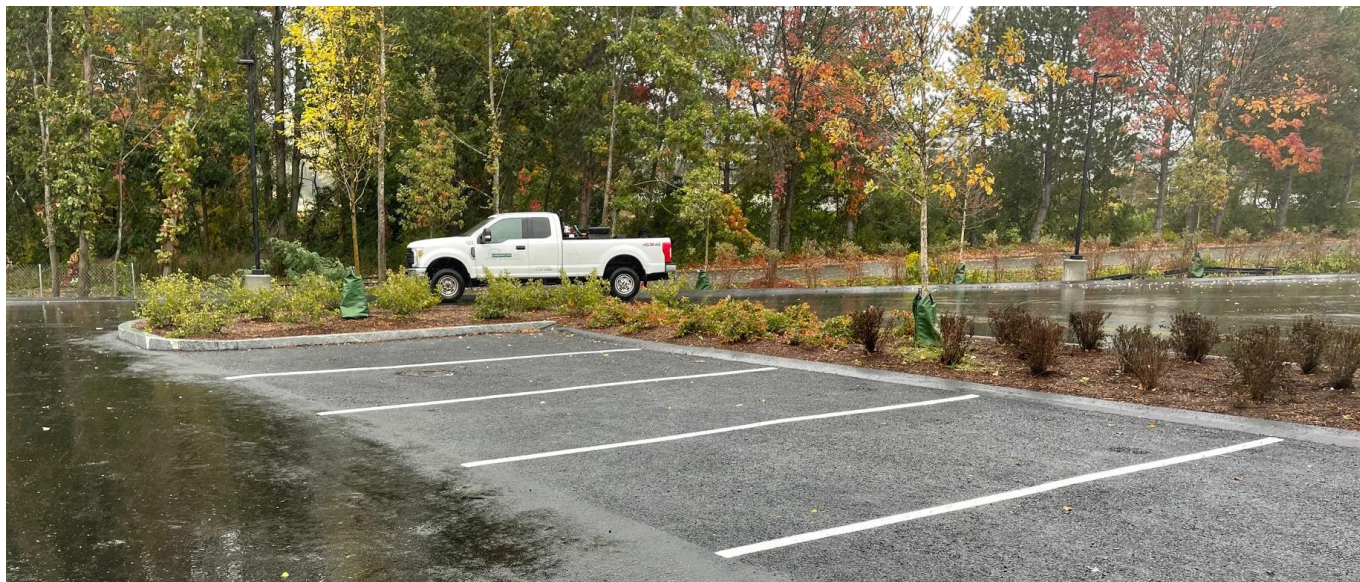
As part of the 2022 economic development bill, the MA Legislature approved increasing the commercial development cap in the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone by 12 million net new square feet over the current 8.5 million square foot building cap. The square footage cap was eliminated as part of the 2008 Notice of Project Change that was approved as part of a MA Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review. This approval demonstrated that development to date has had much less of an environmental impact than originally estimated – due, in part to the sustainable development initiatives created by the DEC. All other environmental impacts in the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) continue to govern redevelopment at Devens.

Impervious surface area is another metric that the DEC is keeping an eye on to help ensure development remains below the threshold of 984 acres in the FEIR. The following chart summarizes the new development permitted in 2023 and the corresponding impervious surface created as a result:

| 2023 New Development Permitted | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Square Feet of new buildings | 232,320 sq.ft (5.33 acres) |
| Total Impervious surface area added | 329,033 sq.ft (7.55 acres) |
| Reduction in Impervious due to LID | 20,596 sq.ft. (0.47 acres) |

New development in 2023 raised impervious surface coverage in Devens from approximately 824 acres in 2022, to approximately 832 acres. However, Commonwealth Fusion Systems came back to the DEC for a minor modification in 2023 that resulted in a reduction of approximately 37,000 square feet of impervious on their project. In addition, the DEC issued a demolition permit for 57 Jackson Road, which included the removal of almost 60,000 square feet of impervious surface, resulting in a net gain of only 5.32 acres of impervious in 2023 and just below 830 acres total.

The DEC continues to require Low-Impact Development (LID) techniques and smart growth strategies on all projects to minimize impervious surface coverage and advance the sustainable development goals of the Devens Reuse Plan. LID techniques such as biofiltration landscape islands, porous pavement, subsurface infiltration systems, landscaping requirements, and parking maximums resulted in more than 20,000 square feet (6%) less impervious surface than traditional development.



Existing Porous pavement parking spaces and bio-filtration landscape islands behind 33 Jackson Road. – September 2023

This reduction results in more localized groundwater recharge, less urban heat island and stormwater runoff impacts, while helping to maintain better air and water quality in Devens and the surrounding region. LID techniques make sites more adaptable to changing weather patterns and the more frequent and intense storm events that are a result of climate change.

DEVENS DISPOSITION:

Although not required to be initiated until 2030 in accordance with Section 23 of Chapter 498 of the Acts of 1993, in 2019 the Devens Jurisdictional Framework Committee, comprised of representatives from Harvard, Ayer, Shirley, Devens, DEC, and MassDevelopment, was formed. The role of the Committee is to *“develop a process for a comprehensive and fact based analysis and planning effort, with the assistance of professional consultants, whereby a Study and Joint Report, consistent with Section 23 of Chapter 498 of the Acts of 1993, shall be prepared concerning the permanent government structure for the ongoing operation and administration of the jurisdiction known as the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone (Devens).”* The committee continued to work on the draft Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) to engage a consultant to help lead and manage this process for assessing various options regarding the future of the existing Devens Regional Enterprise Zone consistent with Chapter 498. MassDevelopment, a key stakeholder, continues to be absent from this process.

By the end of 2023, the committee finalized the draft RFEI and focused on exploring options for re-zoning Vicksburg Square to help promote the preservation and rehabilitation of these historic structures and provide additional housing options for the region. Such a process would require a supertown meeting to change the zoning and address the 282 unit housing cap in Devens (of which only 12 units remain). The hope is that this process could run parallel with the disposition process and bring MassDevelopment (the owner of Vicksburg Square) back to the table. Funding for the RFEI process is still unknown; however, the DEC has offered to match any monetary contributions from any of the participating towns to help share costs among all parties. State legislators included \$400,000 in a 2022 bond bill to support funding for the future disposition of Devens. It is unclear whether or not this funding, if available, could be used for any parallel efforts to re-zone Vicksburg Square. The Commission has continued to support the inclusion of a level of service analysis comparing existing Devens service levels for businesses and residents, with any and all proposed disposition scenarios to ensure existing levels of service are considered and maintained under any disposition options generated. The DEC remains committed to participating in the process and continues to encourage MassDevelopment to reengage in this important planning study.

ENFORCEMENT:

The DEC continues to enforce the Devens Bylaws and Rules and Regulations to help avoid and minimize nuisance conditions ensure public health and safety within the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone. Enforcement actions throughout 2023 included:

Water Restrictions: Water use restrictions were enacted throughout most of 2023 in Devens, in accordance with the Devens Water Management Act permit requirements and 974 CMR 8.09. Few violations were reported. Those violations that were, were quickly rectified. The DEC continues to promote water conservation tips such as addressing leaks as soon as possible, conducting water audits, rainwater harvesting, minimizing lawns and choosing drought-tolerant plantings and groundcover.

Devens Designated Truck Route: Monitoring and enforcement of the designated truck route continued throughout 2023. The DEC has received periodic complaints from a few residents about trucks cutting through Buena Vista Street to access the Industrial Park. DEC staff continues to partner with MassDevelopment and the State Police on enforcement, signage, reaching out, educating, and raising awareness to businesses and trucking companies of the Designated Truck Route: https://www.devensec.com/maps/Designated_Truck_Route_2019.pdf

Little Leaf Farms Truck Idling: Staff received periodic complaints about extended truck idling at Little Leaf Farms off of Walker Road. The owner and logistics manager have implemented a number of measures to help ensure compliance with the MA anti-idling laws and help reduce noise, GHG emissions and improve the sustainability of their operations. The company has engaged with the EPA Smartway program <https://www.epa.gov/smartway> for assistance with logistical improvements that will also help reduce truck idling.

67 Buena Vista Noise Violation: this past spring, a Notice of Violation was issued to Sequens at 67 Buena Vista Street for operating outside of their proposed hours of operation and emitting noise in excess (rooftop exhaust and HVAC equipment) of the allowable limits in the DEC Industrial Performance Standards. Sequens has undertaken permanent measures to bring their facility into compliance and implemented operational restrictions to ensure compliance at all times. The violation was resolved in October.

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY:

Local Inspections and Health Clinics: The DEC continued contracting and partnering with the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health for all food and health-related inspectional services in Devens and coordinates with the Board to provide access to local health events and clinics for all Devens residents and employees of Devens businesses, including COVID-19 and flu vaccination clinics. The DEC and Nashoba Associated Boards of Health, promoted the importance of vaccination and provided the Devens community with access to free COVID-19 test kits.

Temporary Central Intake Center for Homeless Families: The state Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), in collaboration with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) continued to operate a temporary intake center at the Bob Eisengrein Community Center in Devens as part of the Commonwealth's response to the substantial increased demand on the state's emergency assistance shelter system. The temporary shelter shut down in March 2023. This location was used is being used for processing homeless families for 3-4 days maximum where they received case management services and assessments before being transferred to an emergency assistance site or another more permanent housing solution. The intake center closed down in March of 2023. Since opening in November of 2022, the Devens facility sheltered more than 900 parents and children. Throughout its operation, DEC staff coordinated with MassDevelopment, MEMA, DHCD, and our local building, public safety, and health agents to ensure the health, safety and security of Devens residents and businesses and individuals and families coming to and from this facility.

PFAS: Devens Utilities continues to move forward with constructing permanent PFAS water treatment systems for all its wells in Devens to replace the interim water treatment facilities at MacPherson, Patton, and Shabokin drinking water wells. In 2023 the permanent Patton and MacPherson treatment facilities were brought on-line. The permanent Shabokin well treatment plant is expected to come on-line in early 2024. The Army, EPA, MA DEP and MassDevelopment continued to provide regular PFAS updates to the general public through the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB). The Army has been updating [their website](#) with additional information on their activities and meetings.

Mosquito Management: Devens continues to participate in the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project to help control the mosquito population and reduce the risk of mosquito-borne illnesses such as EEE and West Nile Virus. The [DEC website](#) provides residents and businesses with seasonal information on how to protect themselves and what they can do to reduce the risk of contracting these viruses.

TRANSPORTATION:

Advancing multi-modal transportation and active recreation options plays an important role in the redevelopment of Devens and the surrounding region. The DEC supported many advancements in bicycle, pedestrian, freight, and transit options throughout 2023:

West Main Street Multi-Use Path Extension: Devens and the Town of Ayer completed a project that extended sidewalks, bike lanes and a multi-use path between Jackson/Verbeck Gate and Grant Road. This project provides improved pedestrian and bicycle connections and safety between Devens, Ayer and Shirley and will help support the 2020 Devens Forward Climate Action Plan goals as well as our Green and Complete Streets goals.

Devens Shuttle Program: Devens continued working with the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority to re-launch the Devens shuttle service as an on-demand service for residents and visitors. The goal of this service is to provide increased accessibility to Devens between the surrounding communities and businesses, as well as connect to the MBTA commuter rail system. In 2023, we have coordinated with Shirley Meadows, Commonwealth Fusion Systems, Parker Charter School, and a couple organizations holding conferences at the Devens Conference Center. A local ride service is a tremendous tool for businesses to attract employees in this tight job market. The service is promoted on the [DEC website](#).



Nashoba Regional Greenway Coalition (NRG): Devens staff continue to partner with a group of towns in the Nashoba Valley Region working together to facilitate on and off-road bike connections. The group includes representatives from Acton, Ayer, Bedford, Bolton, Boxborough, Carlisle, Concord, Devens, Harvard, Hudson, Lincoln, Littleton, Stow, and Sudbury and is partnering with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and the Montachusett Regional Planning Agency to connect trail networks in the Boston region as well. Work on connecting Harvard and Devens via a public trail also continued throughout 2023.

Innovative Green, Complete, and Open Streets: The DEC adopted a [Green and Complete Streets Policy](#) in 2021 and continues to work with Devens DPW and Engineering on implementation. Work with Tufts Urban and Environmental Planning (UEP) program and the DEC's Peer Review Engineers, produced a series of Green and Complete Streets Guidebooks for the [General Public](#), [Developers and Planners](#), and [Public Works](#).

Rail and Intermodal: The State is in the process of updating its 2017 Freight Plan and the DEC participated in this process throughout 2023. With the intermodal facility on Barnum Road and the recent acquisition of Pan Am by CSX, the DEC has been in discussions with CSX to collaborate on improving operations and management of the intermodal facility. Opportunities include additional rail spurs to Devens businesses, connections between CSX and Devens businesses to streamline operations, reduce locomotive idling, and improve air quality in the region. The DEC is engaging with the US Environmental Protection Agency through their SmartWay program to explore partnership and grant opportunities to improve the efficiency of both trucking and rail in Devens. The DEC is participating in the Northern Tier Commuter Rail study undertaken by MassDOT to assess reinstating passenger rail services from North Adams to Boston along the Fitchburg Commuter Rail line.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION:

As of 2023, the total amount of land in Devens that has been permanently protected remains at over 1,400 acres. DEC Staff and MassDevelopment have finalized a Draft Conservation Restriction (CR) for the remaining Willow Brook and Grove Pond parcels and the plans for Willow Brook were filed with the registry in 2023. With over 32% of Devens land area permanently protected, Devens has already done its part to meet President Biden's [America the Beautiful](#) initiative goal of conserving at least 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030. The DEC also continued to work on open space protection and management in the region with the Squannacook, and Nissitissit Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council on the implementation of the [Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Plan](#).

DEVENS SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES:

The DEC continued to integrate sustainability and resiliency elements into all projects throughout 2023, advancing a number of goals and strategies of the [Devens Forward Climate Action and Resilience Plan](#). With the support of KLA Associates, the DEC continued to publish [blog](#) and [social media](#) posts to highlight Devens efforts. Blog posts included our Farmers market, green and complete streets, and the new Devens Public Safety building. Our sustainable business spotlight series highlighted the work of Comrex, Vulcan Forms, and SMC. Other sustainability initiatives in 2023 included the following:

Embodied Carbon Reduction Guidelines:

In July of 2023, the DEC developed and adopted a set of guidelines to assist applicants with reducing the carbon footprint of their development projects in Devens. Embodied carbon is the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions associated with building materials throughout their whole lifecycle. These guidelines provide developers with resources that allow them to evaluate their building material choices – helping them build more with less and contributing to the sustainable redevelopment mission of the Devens Reuse Plan and our local and state GHG reduction targets. Lower embodied carbon materials not only reduce carbon emissions, they also contribute to



Embodied Carbon

Manufacture, transport and installation of construction materials

Illustration by Stacy Smedley, Skanska- from Carbon Leadership Forum website

healthier and more resilient buildings that can improve worker productivity. Decarbonization, combined with the energy efficiency measures in Devens has positive impacts on the long-term value of buildings. [These guidelines](#) evolved from the Green Building Incentives study conducted in 2022. [Read the Press Release.](#)

Ayer-Devens Pocket Forest Project: It was a busy year for the pocket forest community resiliency project with a goal of increasing the quality of life in our neighborhoods. The Town of Ayer and the Devens Enterprise Commission through the Ayer-Devens Pocket Forest Project installed a pilot pocket forest on East Main Street in Ayer, engaged the communities to identify potential sites for future installations, and received a second Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant for the Pocket Forest Project to install four more sites in the next two years. In 2023, the Ayer-Devens Pilot Pocket Forest Project engaged residents of Ayer/Devens in planning and designing the pocket forests through a series of neighborhood walking tours, public meetings, and planting and maintenance events. A pilot pocket forest was installed on East Main Street in Ayer in April. More than 100 participants attended the planting day to learn about the project and support climate resiliency. Monitoring and management of this site continues, and additional sites were prioritized for pocket forest planning in the future.



Ayer/Devens Pocket Forest in bloom – September 2023

The second MVP Action Grant will fund two Devens sites which will be installed in 2024 at the Devens Playground and the Ayer Shirley Regional Middle School. Two additional Ayer sites which will be installed in 2025. An additional goal of the project is to further engage students, residents, and businesses in this meaningful community resilience project. Ayer Shirley School District and the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School are partnering to develop curriculum and use the pocket forest sites on Devens as outdoor classrooms. As a green infrastructure tool, these Pocket Forests are being located and designed to increase carbon sequestration, enhance biodiversity and ecosystem connectivity, improve soil health, filter stormwater runoff, mitigate air pollution, cool concentrated areas of impervious surfaces, and provide opportunities for residents and businesses to better connect with nature. DEC staff were involved in significant community and statewide outreach related to the pocket forest project. Pocket forest project presentations and site visits were given to the Rotary Club, United Native American Cultural Center, Ayer Shirley Regional Middle School students, Parker Charter School students, the DEC, and the Devens Committee. The statewide MVP Winter Webinar #2: Heat Waves in a Changed Climate featured a presentation by Beth Suedmeyer of DEC and Alan Manojan of the Town of Ayer highlighting how pocket forests help reduce urban heat effects and improve livability. The [pocket forest project website](#) will continue to provide updates.

Nashua River Trail and Pollinator Meadow Project: With support from a Nashua Wild and Scenic Stewardship Council Community Grant, the Town of Ayer, DEC, Mass Development, and the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge installed a new trail along the Nashua River and a pollinator meadow off of MacPherson Road within the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge. Appreciation is extended to the Devens Public Works Department for their support in the site clearing and preparations. On June 22, 2023, more than 700 native plants of 15 species were installed by approximately 25 volunteers at the meadow. Interpretive signs were installed, and a grand opening event took place on November 21, 2023. [Information on both the Trail and the Meadow may be found on the DEC website.](#)



Pollinator meadow & interpretive sign – Sept. 2023



Opening of the Nashua River Trail off of MacPherson Road – Nov. 2023

Sustainable Local Food! The Devens Farmers Market operated every two weeks on Tuesdays from 11:30am – 1:30pm from July through October 10 and featured live music performances. [Dick's Market Garden](#), a local farm offering everything from apples to zucchini (fruits, vegetables, and herbs), remains the primary market vendor and has a free, farm-grown produce delivery service to Devens businesses. DEC has promoted healthy foods and supported local enterprises through the local Community Supported Agriculture program and offering the Devens Farmers Market for residents, businesses, and surrounding community members to purchase healthy, affordable produce. This season, pre-ordered locally grown and seasonally available produce was delivered to Devens Recycling and Commonwealth Fusion Systems employees. An end of summer fair was celebrated at the Farmers Market on August 29th and featured food trucks, lawn games, story time, and a local hula dance performances. Access to affordable and healthy foods is an important part of creating a sustainable community. The market is helping bring together Devens residents, employees and visitors, while providing healthy food options for Devens and supporting local farms in the region. In November a special Thanksgiving Farm Share was offered by Dick's Market Gardens. Participants were treated to a large box of seasonal and storage vegetables to help fill holiday tables with delicious local foods.



Intersections of Communities and Cultures - Willard Field Public Art Mural Project: Devens is one of 11 Massachusetts communities participating in the 2023 Cohort for Making it Public for MA Municipalities, hosted in collaboration with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA). The program aims to foster a community of practice that inspires more vibrant, cultural, and just public spaces through public artmaking. The grant award includes \$15,000 to work with an artist and fund a temporary public art installation. The site for the temporary art installation will be the intersecting paths at Willard Field adjacent to a section of the historic Sherman Avenue (once the tree lined entrance to Fort Devens and now a car-free road segment frequented by bicycle and pedestrian users). The goal for the art installation is to attract visitors and reflect on Devens' cultural and community identity, engage with the art piece and the space, bring joy, color, beauty, a sense of belonging, and hope, as well as to support local artists. Staff attended a number of community fairs and meetings to present the concept of the public art project and solicit community input. The Call for Artist was published in late 2023 and an artist will be selected by a volunteer review committee early in 2024. [Full details are on the DEC website](#).

Devens Intersections of Communities & Cultures

CALL FOR ARTISTS



Call for Artists – Devens, MA

The Devens Enterprise Commission and MassDevelopment invite artists from Massachusetts to submit application materials for consideration for the award of a \$15,000 grant to create a temporary public art installation, including a mural on pavement. Responses are due January 31, 2024.

For more information, please visit <https://www.devensesec.com/publicart.html>.

Earth Day Open Streets Event on McPherson Road: On Friday, April 21, 2023 Devens and Ayer closed down MacPherson Road to vehicle traffic to co-host the 2nd annual 2023 Open Streets and Greenways event with the Town of Ayer and US Fish and Wildlife Service to promote active living in the region and get people out to enjoy the beauty of this portion of the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge. There was an Environmental Fair along the “triangle” of Bishop and MacPherson Roads that allowed local non-profits and municipal partners to highlight their work in protecting natural resources. The event also included a story time provided by the Ayer Library and dance performance by Chris Croucher Arts, entitled Letting the Land Lead. Special thanks to employees from Jabil on Barnum Road for conducting a roadside clean-up prior to the event!



Sustainable Freight Forum: The Devens Enterprise Commission, the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center, and the US EPA SmartWay program, partnered to host the Devens Sustainable Freight Forum on May 12. Devens and regional businesses with freight operations learned about key opportunities to improve the efficiency of operations, gain valuable resources, and network with regional colleagues. This event will help Devens and surrounding area businesses maximize logistical efficiencies, reduce fuel costs, lower the number of trucks on the road, and help contribute to greenhouse gas reductions in Devens.



Ezekiel Wheeler, owner of Intelligent Labor and Moving explaining his all-electric box truck operation at the Devens Sustainable Freight Forum – May 2023

Tours highlight Devens Eco-Industrial Park and Nature-based Solutions:

International and regional interest in the successful redevelopment of Devens was highlighted in three tours conducted by DEC staff in 2023. In February, the DEC and the Eco-Efficiency Center hosted a delegation from Chungbuk National University in Korea that came to Devens to research and learn about how Devens is operating as an eco-industrial park. DEC Staff presented the history and sustainable practices at Devens, and provided an orientation tour of the Devens Community, visiting several premier businesses, notably Little Leaf Farms, New England Studios, Pathways at King Street Properties, and Commonwealth Fusion Systems (CFS). The Devens Eco Efficiency Center and The Great Exchange were also highlights of the tour. An information exchange partnership was forged between the DEC and Chungbuk National University and was formalized during this Devens visit with the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to promote educational and academic exchange via sharing of information, meetings, and potential joint research project partnerships.



Delegation from Chungbuk National University in Korea touring Commonwealth Fusion Systems - February - 2023

In April the DEC hosted a group of graduate students from Yale University's Industrial Symbiosis Seminar. Led by Professor Marian Chertow, the group was impressed to see the success of the Devens Redevelopment Plan and real examples of sustainable production and eco-efficiencies.



Yale University Graduate Students studying industrial ecology and circular economy take photos of Little Leaf Farm's greenhouse during their tour of Devens -April 2023

A Nature-based Solutions Tour of Devens was led by Neil Angus and Beth Suedmeyer in October as part of Massachusetts Association for Conservation Commissions (MACC) Fall Conference. The double session involved a presentation on Innovative Nature- Based Solutions for Climate Resilience, highlighting Devens' multifaceted approach to implementing nature-based solutions via regulations, guidelines and trainings, pilot project/case studies, and regional partnerships. The presentation was followed by a tour allowing participants to see firsthand the green infrastructure and nature-based solutions installations at Devens.

Presentations Devens Forward Climate Action and Resiliency Plan:

Devens remains a leader in sustainability and resiliency planning. DEC staff presented a regional planning conference session in conjunction with our climate action plan consultants KLA at the Southern New England American Planning Association regional conference in New Haven, Connecticut in October to share implementation progress on our Climate Action and Resilience Plan and encourage other municipalities to develop climate resiliency blueprints to meet the demands of the climate crisis. Staff also presented Devens work on Nature-based Solutions and sustainable development to a variety of audiences across the country, including the following:

- American Planning Association Sustainable Communities Div. Sustainability & Resiliency Webinar Series
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Center for Watershed Protection series on Best Stormwater Solutions – What Developers need to know
- Living Building Challenge Roundtable Presentation on NBS and ecosystem services in Devens

These presentations continue to highlight the important work of the Commission and help share the Devens redevelopment story with a broader audience – providing education and resources to help others implement more sustainable development practices.

New Street Trees at Ayer Shirley Regional Middle School: The DEC funded the installation of 12 street trees (2 Black Gum, 4 White Oak, and 6 Red Maple) at the Ayer Shirley Regional Middle School. The trees were installed by the Shirley DPW with support from the Devens DPW.

This project demonstrates a collaboration between the DEC, MassDevelopment, the Town of Shirley, and the Ayer-Shirley Regional School District. [Street trees play an important role in climate resilience and quality of life.](#)

Along with our Pocket Forest projects, these trees will play an important role in our Nature-based Solutions work as we continue to integrate the natural and built environment and provide more green infrastructure connections throughout Devens.



Shirley DPW, Ayer-Shirley Middle School Principal, Superintendent and School Committee member, DEC Commissioners and Staff at the tree planting – August 2023

Biometric Research Featuring Devens: The DEC has continued to partner with Tufts and the Human Architecture and Planning Institute using biometric tools to help understand our unconscious response to the built environment using Devens redevelopment as a case study. This cutting-edge planning research is looking at how development patterns can affect us subconsciously and how this can also impact our mental, physical, and emotional well-being. Research on this topic continued through 2023 and is looking at how our green and complete street elements are impacting our unconscious response to the built environment. The report is due out in early 2024.

All of these sustainability initiatives are helping to transform Devens into a community that is better equipped to adapt to the changing climate and meet our sustainable redevelopment goals of the Devens Reuse Plan and Devens Forward Climate Action and Resiliency Plan and maintain our certification as a STAR and LEED for Cities and Communities Certified Green Community.

Devens Eco-Efficiency Center 2023 Highlights:



The Devens Eco-Efficiency Center has been providing programs and services to help establishments make efficient use of resources and strengthen the sustainability of their operation since 2007. The Devens Enterprise Commission provides funding for this nonprofit to support its activities that facilitate sustainable business practices and collaborations in Devens and the surrounding towns.



The Great Exchange provides an alternative solution for valuable resources that commercial, industrial, and service facilities cannot use internally and would otherwise be destined for the trash. Enhanced marketing efforts combined with the continued economic impacts of Covid contributed to the best year the program has had since its launch in 2007.

The Great Exchange offers close to 900 different types of new and like new items that not-for-profits and small businesses can obtain for 30-70% off their retail value. In addition to preventing waste, the program helps these entities be able to invest more of their funds in the programs and services they deliver to their community. The Great Exchange's inventory includes classroom resources, creative materials, office supplies, janitorial and kitchen products, health/safety resources, packing/shipping needs, storage containers, specialty gifts and seasonal items, furniture/fixtures, shelving, and wall hangings. Pictures of items are organized in 29 categories and posted at www.tgedevens.com.

Over 39,000 pounds of resources were recovered from 50 sources in 2023, primarily from manufacturers, service providers, schools/universities, and retailers that were closing or moving their operations. Materials rescued by The Great Exchange (TGE) were estimated to be worth more than \$250,000.

The largest source of recovered resources was Seaview Senior Living in Salisbury, where TGE invited the nonprofit Partners for World Health to help preserve the value of over 8,600 pounds of medical supplies and equipment recovered from the closing facility. The Great Exchange was also fortunate to be invited by Brookside Consulting in Acton to rehome more than 3,600 pounds of furniture, office supplies and creative materials that were no longer needed by the company that was transitioning to a fully virtual operation. Another notable partnership was with Spry Moving in Woburn who provided over 3,400 pounds of furniture that had been abandoned by a closed business.

The average number of monthly shopping trips to The Great Exchange reached an all time high of 54. Equally impressive was the total of 243 different organizations that benefited from the program's inventory and savings, 160 of which were new visitors. Nearly 650 trips were made in 2024, an increase of 35% over 2023. Shoppers included schools (40%), businesses (22%), municipal departments (21%), and nonprofits (17%) from 58 towns. The Great Exchange also passed recovered residential items along to not for profit entities Household Goods and Wachusett Earth Day, where they would be more easily rehomed.

Presentations on The Great Exchange and its ability to prevent waste were given to a delegation from South Korea, students from Yale University, staff of Lincoln Property Company (managers of King Street Properties), and the



*Above: TGE staff packing resources from Brookside.
Below: Adjustable desks donated by Spry Moving.*



members of nonprofits MassRecycle and RecyclingWorks. Staff also hosted a table at the Devens Earth Day event where they offered program information and encouraged kids to create crafts out of repurposed materials.

The Great Exchange benefited significantly from volunteer hours provided by Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School students. The team and their advisors came several times during the school year to help manage new inventory. The Great Exchange also benefited from publicity



WCVB Channel 5's television show Chronicle crew and TGE staff.

generated by several media feature stories, including a full page article in the [Worcester Business Journal](#) and a story in Nashoba Valley Voice and related area [newspapers](#). Most exciting was a feature segment on WCVB Channel 5's television show [Chronicle](#). The story was televised multiple times and remains on their website.

DEC OPERATIONS:

In 2023 the DEC and Devens Eco-Efficiency Center staff implemented a number of voluntary initiatives to green our own office environment, including reducing vehicle miles traveled through telecommuting, and continued use of an electric assist bicycle and personal hybrid and electric cars for site inspections and local DEC business. The efficiencies in DEC operations continued to provide significant triple-bottom line savings:

| Year | Reduced Gas VMT (miles) | Energy savings (kWh) | Waste diverted from landfill (lbs.) | CO2 equiv. reductions (tons) | Savings |
|-------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------|
| 2015 | 8,214 | 1,918 | 933 | 8.195 | \$1,659 |
| 2016 | 11,588 | 3,496 | 458 | 9.193 | \$1,798 |
| 2017 | 11,698 | 3,364 | 460 | 9.293 | \$1,809 |
| 2018 | 20,047 | 3,364 | 458 | 11.793 | \$2,803 |
| 2019 | 24,161 | 3,364 | 458 | 13.193 | \$2,959 |
| 2020* | 36,677 | 12,088 | 359 | 22.286 | \$4,680 |
| 2021* | 35,590 | 12,088 | 275 | 22.176 | \$4,312 |
| 2022* | 19,640 | 6,158 | 359 | 10.186 | \$3,521 |
| 2023 | 4,628 | 2,374 | 275 | 3.786 | \$1,409 |

*COVID-19 Pandemic year

As things began to return more to normal after the COVID-19 pandemic, staff were back in the office more often, which led to higher energy bills and more VMT. While we added a staff member in 2022, we lost a staff member in 2023 with the retirement of DEC Director Peter Lowitt. Devens Eco-Efficiency Center staff also moved out of the DEC offices, further reducing office activity and all metrics across the board. While there were reduced savings, there were also a number of reduced costs with fewer people in the office. DEC Staff spent a large portion of 2023 working with OpenGov to move a number of our permitting applications to an on-line platform. These include building, plumbing, gas, electrical, sheet metal, demolition, event, tent, temporary trailers, and Certificate of Occupancy applications. These are some of the most common permits the DEC issues. The on-line functions will make permitting even more streamlined and accessible, and convenient for applicants, improving our level of service to all that live and do business in Devens. Permit are expected to go live starting January 1, 2024 at: <https://devensec.portal.opengov.com/>. On-line permitting will help the DEC office further its sustainable operations by minimizing the use of paper even further. The DEC continues to seek ways to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible to keep energy, waste and CO2 emissions to a minimum in accordance with the Devens Climate Action Plan and to further the sustainable redevelopment goals of the Devens Reuse Plan.

FIVE YEAR REVIEW UPDATE:

The Devens By-Laws (Article V.A.) and Chapter 498 require the DEC to conduct progress reviews of the status of Devens redevelopment every five years. In 2021 the Commission completed its [latest five-year review covering the period between 2016 and 2020](#). The DEC established focus areas for 2021-2025 to ensure its actions and decisions continue to further the goals and objectives of Chapter 498 and the Reuse Plan. The following chart provides a status update on those efforts.

Five Year Review: Status Update – 2023*

**Annual Reports from 2016-2020 show yearly progress towards each area of focus. These reports can be viewed [here](#).*

| Area of Focus | 2023 Status |
|---|--|
| Working with existing and new Homeowners and Condo Associations to streamline residential permitting consistent with new Residential Regulations as well as Historic District requirements. | Accomplished/Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working closely with the developer and new residents of Grant Road and collaborating with existing Home and Condo Assoc. |
| Sustainable Indicators Report – measurement and verification of sustainable development. | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> STAR and LEED for Cities and Communities Designations |
| Continued support and growth of the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center (DEEC) as a strategy for sustainable redevelopment and a value-added feature for business and industry locating at Devens. | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEC continues to lead the DEEC Board) and annual funding support \$125,000. US EPA Smartway joint partnership |
| Regional efforts: Develop Regional Affordable Housing Coordinator to oversee and manage new and existing and affordable housing units in Devens and surrounding communities to ensure they remain affordable in perpetuity | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract with Metro West Collaborative Development to provide affordable housing monitoring services for the DREZ. Working with Shirley Meadows and Emerson Green to increase access to more affordable housing |
| Working with MassDevelopment, local businesses and surrounding communities to support regional transportation plans and establish additional commuter options for businesses and residents to and from Shirley, Devens, Ayer and Littleton. MART Transportation Plan, State Freight Rail Plan and fixed route bus service between the train stations in Ayer and Shirley via Devens. Continue to support Fitchburg Line reverse commute service to foster options to/from Devens. | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-demand shuttle shuttle. Working closely with MART and MassDevelopment to design new services to better meet needs. MBTA Fitchburg Line Commuter Rail service & participation in the Northern Tier Rail Study. Collaboration with CSX and US EPA SmartWay program to improve rail operations in the region. |
| Working with MassDevelopment and the Devens Open Space and Recreation Committee on updating the Devens Open Space and Recreation Plan (for 2023-2028) and permanent protection of identified properties. | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willow Brook Conservation Restriction (CR) finalized in 2023. Grove Pond is next. Cold Spring Brook CR – ongoing Army remediation (no transfer until remediation is complete). |
| Maintain expedited permitting process (75 days max.) as a model for the Commonwealth. | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Averaged 64 days for Unified Permits in 2023. |
| Continue to maintain fiscal independence. | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2023 was another one of the most productive and profitable years for the Commission. Audit confirms this. |
| Implementation of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs collectively as well as on a project-by-project basis, recognizing Fitchburg Line improvements and opportunities it will create to reduce VMT for Devens employees and residents (reverse commute options). | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued collaboration with MART Implementation of TDM plans prepared by larger projects. On-demand shuttle service Exploring regional collaboration for increased service |
| Continue integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation into all development and conservation projects and build on creating a network of more resilient Green Infrastructure that can better adapt to changing weather patterns. | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued promotion and implementation of Devens Forward Climate Action and Resilience Plan. Evaluated and prioritized green building initiatives for future regulatory and incentive changes. Completed the regional MVP-funded Pocket Forest project with the Town of Ayer and was awarded funding to build 4 more pocket forests and create an educational curriculum for schools. Completed pollinator meadow on North Post with funding from Nashua Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council. Adoption of Embodied Carbon Guidelines |

Five Year Review: Status Update – 2023 continued...

| Area of Focus | Status (2023) |
|---|--|
| Improving safety, accessibility and connectivity in Devens, surrounding communities through new trails, sidewalks and bike lanes, and working with MassDevelopment to adopt a Green and Complete Streets Policy and continue to ensure all modes of transportation and accessibility are taken into account on all development projects that impact the right-of-way. | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting sidewalks, bike lanes and multi-use trails between Devens, Ayer and Shirley (joint MassWorks Grant with Town of Ayer, working with Harvard on Old Mill Road trail connection) Working with Nashoba Regional Greenway Coalition to connect pedestrian and cycling routes through our region. Hosted the Open Street Earth Day event on MacPherson Road. Completed pollinator meadow and trail on North Post with funding from Nashua Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council. |
| Coordination with railroad, MassDevelopment and new projects within the Rail-Industrial Trade Related Uses (RIT) District to incorporate important rail connections in the RIT to help further reduce local traffic impacts and facilitate noise reduction efforts | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued discussions with MA DEP and Republic on additional rail spurs to improve rail operations and reduce truck traffic. Meeting with new owners and operators of PanAm (CSX) US EPA Smartway program participation for freight efficiency |
| End point to Chapter 498 and process to reach it | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEC participating in the Devens Jurisdictional Framework Committee meetings being conducted with the Towns of Ayer, Harvard and Shirley. Also working on parallel efforts to build consensus for rezoning Vicksburg Square to support historic restoration and provide more affordable housing for the region and the commonwealth. |
| Development and Implementation of a strategic planning effort to help prioritize ongoing sustainable redevelopment initiatives of the DEC. | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing Devens Forward Climate Action Plan Using STAR Community Rating to continue prioritizing initiatives. Implementation of Green Building Incentive program priorities and recommendations. |
| Manage Conservation Restrictions (CRs) held by the DEC as the Devens Conservation Commission. | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually walk properties for which we hold Conservation Restrictions and enforce them as needed. |
| Continue integrating public health criteria into all decisions (healthy communities declaration) | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued coordination with Nashoba Associated Boards of Health NABH on COVID, the Flu, and other community health related issues. Ongoing biometric research to promote healthy living through better design. Trail connections for all projects along Jackson Road. |
| Forge new, mutually beneficial partnerships with organizations that share similar mission and vision as the DEC and Devens. | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voting member of the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council. Continued financial/technical support to the Eco-Efficiency Center. Work with the Nashoba Regional Greenway Coalition to support regional bike and pedestrian connections. EPA Smartway program partnership for sustainable transportation. Continue to collaborate regionally on nature-based solutions planning and implementation. |
| File management and organization to improve efficiency and service to the public and meet MA Records Retention laws. | Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued record digitization and paper reduction efforts. Consolidation of files by street address for better organization. Developing on-line permitting and payment system |

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH:

DEC Website: The [DEC website](#) is the primary source of information on the Commission and its activities in Devens. All application and meeting materials continue to be posted on the website to ensure the public can access all information. Quarterly development updates also help keep the public current with ongoing projects and commission business.

Social Media: The DEC [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages are used as an additional tool to help inform the public on the work of the Commission and local activities and help us share important information with a larger audience.

FINANCIAL & PERFORMANCE AUDITS:

2023 was another fiscally responsible and sustainable year for the DEC. The DEC continues to maintain sufficient funds to properly manage its finances responsibly and without debt. Roselli & Clark conducted the audit, and Dawn Babcock and our part time accountant, Brenda Blood provide ongoing support that helped streamline the auditing process. The completed audit for 2023 is posted on the [DEC web site](#).

OUTLOOK FOR 2024:

Devens streamlined Unified Permitting process and business friendly environment, balanced with a commitment to sustainable development, remains a key to attracting and retaining businesses in Devens, and remains a priority for the DEC. In 2024 the DEC expects to focus on implementing our new online permit and payment system, deploying green incentives as identified by the Sustainable Performance Institute, and making regulatory changes to address more sustainable approaches to development in line with the Final Environmental Impact Report for Devens. Additional work in 2024 will include the installation of more nature-based solutions such as pocket forests, in partnership with Ayer, Parker Charter School, and the Ayer-Shirley Regional Middle School. The Making it Public Art project will also offer great opportunities for increased beautification, social engagement, and celebration of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of this region.

The Commission will continue its support and collaboration with the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center and The Great Exchange program to further advance Devens as an internationally recognized eco-industrial park and work with the Devens Jurisdictional Framework Committee on the future disposition of Devens. We will accomplish this through the application of healthy, smart, and climate-friendly planning processes to further the sustainable redevelopment goals of the Reuse Plan.

Respectfully submitted by DEC Commissioners:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <i>William P. Marshall,</i> | <i>Duncan Chapman</i> | <i>Debra Rivera</i> | |
| <i>Marty Poutry</i> | <i>Melissa Fetterhoff</i> | <i>Jim Pinard</i> | <i>Paul Routhier</i> |
| <i>Chris Lilly</i> | <i>Robert Gardner</i> | <i>Deborah Seeley</i> | |