

27384 - Wamsutta Mills, New Bedford, Mass.

1. Executive Summary

Inventories can be a valuable development and preservation tool for vacant or underutilized industrial buildings, revealing potential development opportunities, attracting attention to targeted properties for reuse, and highlighting successfully completed projects.

The two main objectives of this mill inventory are to:

1. Identify mill sites that will provide the greatest redevelopment opportunities that are consistent with the city's economic development strategies, infrastructure needs, environmental and land use planning requirements.
2. Identify mill structures that possess significant architectural or historical value and therefore reflect the unique character and identity of the community.

101 mill sites and structures were surveyed as part of this inventory, and while several stand as individual structures, most are clustered together, remnants of the great complexes that once employed thousands of New Bedford textile workers.

Mill spaces offer attractive spaces and use potential to emerging economic sectors and provide excellent

opportunities for business relocation, growth, and development. This inventory is part of an overall strategy to proactively position New Bedford for future growth and development and is intended to be used as a tool to identify the opportunities that exist to redevelop underutilized industrial buildings for commercial, residential, and mixed-use projects.

The key findings of this inventory illustrate that there is significant sustainable development potential for many historic mill structures with existing infrastructure in place. One third of the mills surveyed have high economic development potential and it is recommended that these mills be specifically targeted for redevelopment. The majority of these mills are located in the Hicks/Logan/Sawyer Growth Initiatives District and the Upper Harbor Redevelopment District, as indicated in the mapping incorporated in this report.

In May 2008, Governor Deval Patrick designated The Hicks/Logan/Sawyer (HLS) area as the state's first Growth Initiatives District. The HLS District was identified as a promising location for growth due to its many assets, such as its geographic location on the harbor, nearby intermodal transit options, waterfront public access opportunities and its significant collection of historic mills.



The City of New Bedford, MassDevelopment, and the New Bedford Economic Development Council (NBEDC) have partnered together to undertake a comprehensive and community based planning effort concentrated on the Upper Harbor. This area, designated as the Upper Harbor Development District, will focus on how the district's key assets: the river, historic mills, and adjacent neighborhoods, can be linked together for sustainable and responsible economic and community growth.

Within the Upper Harbor and HLS districts, the state is partnering with local government and the private sector in supporting economic development. Expedited permitting, site preparation, infrastructure improvements and marketing will be directed to these two districts. Identifying the mills within these districts that will be compatible to future development is an important local step in the city's intention to generate economic revitalization while retaining its unique and valuable historic character.

The inventory also identifies that approximately one third of the 101 mills surveyed are not likely to experience significant redevelopment. Generally, the mills identified

as not possessing meaningful development potential are not clustered, but are located singularly and do not have assets such as water views, accessible transit orientation or architectural significance. Selective demolition and sensitive infill construction as part of redevelopment is the recommended approach for these properties. Although adaptive reuse is generally considered the preferred development approach, selective demolition of non-significant structures can also be a tool of site redevelopment where adaptive reuse is not likely.

Due to New Bedford's sheer quantity of mill structures still standing from the textile era, the opportunities for adaptive reuse projects using historically significant mill structures are abundant. These opportunities are generally concentrated in the upper harbor and Hicks-Logan areas.

It is intended that this inventory serve as an instrument to determine which industrial mill properties will be considered vital in their contribution to the City's strategy for urban revitalization and long-term sustainable development.