

Norwood School District Site

Redevelopment and Reuse Options Report

1-13-2025



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Introduction

This report is made possible through the Colorado Brownfields Partnership (CBP), which is funded by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. CBP offers resources and assistance, at no cost, to help Colorado communities advance plans to remediate and redevelop brownfields properties and bring them back into productive use with community benefit. By request of the Town of Norwood and Norwood School District, CBP provided targeted planning assistance as summarized in this report. The assistance included a market opportunity analysis of viable reuse and redevelopment options and conceptual site plans for potential scenarios that respond to existing market conditions.

Background

The Norwood School District ("The District") currently owns the 8.6 acre site on which it operates a pre-school, elementary school, middle school, and high school that currently serves approximately 190 students. There are seven buildings for a combined total of 90,300 square feet (sq. ft.). The oldest building on campus was completed in 1958 with an addition in 1968. The newest buildings are from the late 1990s and early 2000s. All buildings were built to the applicable requirements of the times. The site also includes a baseball diamond, football field, and playground.

The middle and elementary school buildings remain sound and functional. The pre-K, field house locker room and weight room, and tech buildings have some functional deficiencies. The high school buildings were built with asbestos materials that do not meet today's standards of safety and health for the students and staff. They also have developed significant functional problems due to age and deterioration, such as leaking roofs and compromised electrical systems. The site has inadequate parking and vehicle circulation problems, and no undeveloped acreage to improve on those issues..

The high school buildings must be demolished and rebuilt. The District has acquired an alternative 19-acre site. The District completed a community survey which found that the majority of the community supports building a new high school on the new site, rather than rebuilding on the existing site. The District is looking to build not just a new high school, but an integrated PreK-12 school campus on the new site.

The District is applying for a BEST grant to help fund rebuilding the school(s). A requirement of the BEST grant is that the District certify that all buildings on the current site will be demolished or reused, so that the community is not left with vacant buildings that could deteriorate and become a nuisance.

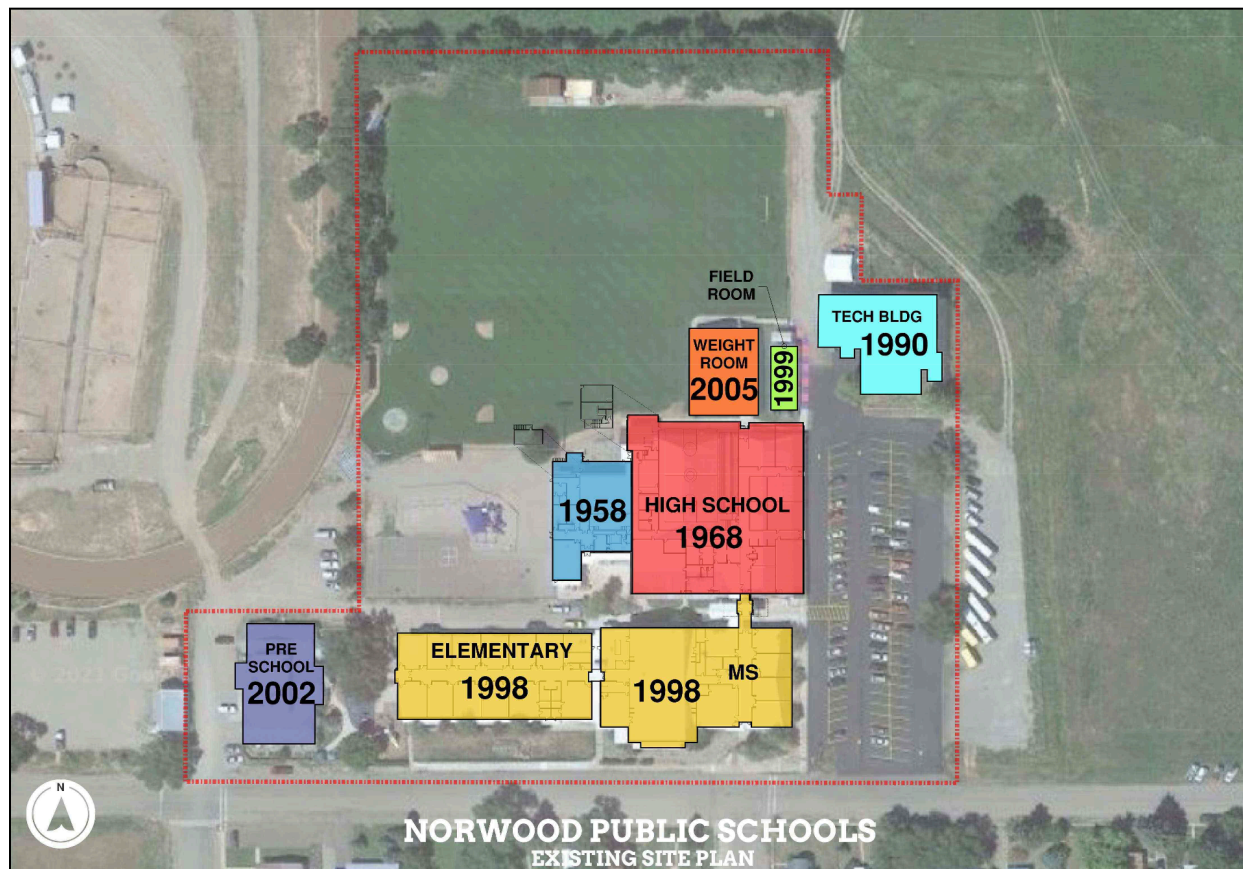
This study explores building and site reuse options for the existing 8.5 acre school site that are viable under the current local market conditions. The report depicts five conceptual site layouts of viable reuse or redevelopment scenarios.

Existing Conditions Summary

The existing 8.5 acre site has seven buildings with a combined total of 90,300 square feet.

Site Plan

The existing site plan, below, illustrates the existing buildings, ball fields, play area, and parking lot on the site. Each building is further labeled with its year of construction. Each of these, and other site features, are further described below.



High School Buildings

The high school buildings were built in 1958 and 1968 with masonry and steel structure and have been tested and shown to have environmental contamination in the form of asbestos in a wide range of building materials. Asbestos is present throughout much of the building, including in the mortar between bricks of exterior walls, the concrete block of the interior walls, and the mastic below the floor tiles. Remediation of the asbestos is not possible without full building demolition due to it being integrated into all of the structural walls. Another concern is that the heating and ventilation system in the multipurpose auditorium/gymnasium contains asbestos insulation. The older gymnasium contains asbestos floor tiles and lead pipes, because of which it is now used in a very limited capacity for storage and concessions for sports games.

Elementary and Middle School Building

These buildings were constructed in 1998 as using pre-engineered metal building structures, which was necessary to meet the square footage requirements of the time with the limited local funding available. The elementary school is approximately 14,250 square feet and the middle school is approximately 13,000 square feet. While the construction technique is lower quality, the existing structure and foundation is in good condition and could be reused.

Pre-K Building

This modular residential structure from the early 1990s was brought to the site in 2002 for use as a staff residence. It has an approximately 7,800 square foot footprint as well as a small second story. It is now utilized as two school district operated preschool rooms with the remainder of space leased by a private daycare facility. The Pre-K building has several deficiencies for public school use. It is separate from the main school building with no administrative oversight. The second floor has a wooden exterior egress stair that is loose and unsafe. The building has no elevator to reach the second floor, making it non accessible for persons with mobility restrictions.

Technology Building

This building is a wood framed structure built in 1990 and that is of low-quality construction. It currently houses a space for district maintenance and space that is donated to non-profit organizations because the building doesn't meet classroom standards.

Fieldhouse Locker Room & Weight Room

The is a pre-engineered metal building built in 1999. It was built with no plumbing which limits its function. The adjacent weight room, built in 2005, is a metal building of inexpensive construction with minimal insulation. Though newer, these buildings have little value.

Parking & Access

The existing parking lot and access configuration has no separation of car and bus traffic, creating congestion and unsafe walking routes for students; parents and buses use the same lot for drop-off across 3 lanes. There is not enough space on site for bus parking on the site. Currently, bus parking is on a leased portion of an adjacent neighbor's private property. The owner has made it known that he does not intend to renew the lease, thus a new location for district bus parking is necessary in the near future.

Ballfields and Playground

The site includes a well maintained baseball diamond, football field, and playground. These facilities were funded in part with third-party grants. The baseball and football facilities are important regional amenities, as the only ballfields in this remote rural region that meet high school competition standards. However, the site has never had irrigation water rights and the district is currently borrowing water from the neighboring ranch through a handshake deal.



Existing ball fields

Summary of Limitations

In 2022, Corbel Engineering was asked to perform a due diligence assessment of the buildings to identify significant conditions that could affect the feasibility and cost of redeveloping the buildings or site. This summary relies on Corbell's findings as reported in this [Document](#).

The following page is an illustration prepared in 2022 by Neenan Archistructure that identifies instructional limitations of buildings, health and environment issues, safety and security issues, and maintenance, quality, and longevity concerns.

Opportunity Analysis

In order to better understand what opportunities exist on the School District site, 9th Path Advisors has provided technical planning assistance to investigate the market conditions, real estate and land uses by type in order to assess the feasibility of reuse and redevelopment options. The below table is a summary of findings with the full analysis provided in the appendix.

Land Use/Product Type	Application
<p>Residential Overall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Norwood currently has 263 housing units with 11.5% vacancy, mostly concentrated in the residential neighborhoods around Grand Ave and the Town core. ● Housing tenure (occupancy) is skewed heavily toward owner-occupied units with only 26% of the housing stock occupied by renters. ● The Town's housing stock is rapidly aging with almost 75% of units being built before 1989 and average built year of 1980. More than 21% of housing units were built before 1939 and less than 10% having been built after 2010. This data would suggest that many of these older units are already, or are soon to be, falling into states of disrepair which could account for the slightly higher vacancy rate in Norwood overall. ● At 73%, single-family units make up the vast majority of the current housing stock while multi-unit buildings account for less than 8% of the overall inventory and mobile homes account for nearly 18%.

<p>Low -Medium Density Workforce Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Single-Family● Duplex● Townhome● Apartments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Overall, there is a feasible development opportunity for low to medium density workforce-housing on the School District Property. Despite a relatively high vacancy rate, the rapidly aging housing stock and limited housing types indicate that there is likely demand for varied typologies of new residential product at an affordable price point.● In order to balance Norwood's housing tenure, which is heavily skewed toward owner-occupied housing, a mix of rental and for-sale housing is recommended.● Land Use Allocation<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 10-15% (0.8-1.2 acres) Infrastructure○ 15-20% (1-1.5 acres) Green Space○ 60-70% (6-7 acres) Residential Units● Product Type:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Single-Family homes (attached garage) at 8-10 units per acre○ Duplex/Townhomes at 10-12 units per acre○ Apartments if supported by community○ Average unit size of 1,100 -1,500 rentable square feet● Price Point<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Whether for-rent or for-sale, should be priced at 80-120% of the Area Median Income (AMI) to align with the financial capacity of local residents and workforce
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<p>Commercial Overall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Considering the already small economic base in Norwood and limited local-serving retail, retail is not considered feasible on this site and should be limited to the existing commercial core of Norwood. ● The significant opportunities for commercial development in Norwood will be based upon taking advantage of the existing economic attributes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Capture the overflow of commercial, industrial and service-sector businesses that serve Telluride and would be attracted to a better-value space in Norwood. ○ Leverage Norwood's strategic location and high volume of pass-through traffic with a potential hospitality offering.
<p>Mixed-Use Business Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-Storage ● Business Warehouse ● Light Industrial ● Commercial space ● Flex Warehouse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A mixed-use business park on the School District Property could be a feasible and strategic development that leverages its proximity to the Telluride resort economy and addresses both local and regional demands. ● Commercial and Light-Industrial warehouse space could capture the economic overflow from Telluride and develop a centralized distribution hub that plays to Norwood's available space and affordability. The project would also support the service needs of the Telluride region and alleviate labor shortage challenges while providing local employment opportunities. ● Self-Storage and Warehousing would be successful in addressing both seasonal and year-round storage and operations needs. ● Developing a successful mixed-use business park in Norwood will require strategic planning and execution tailored to the unique opportunities and challenges of the area including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Market-Driven Planning ○ Cost Effective Development ○ Efficient Infrastructure ○ Mixed-Use Design and Flexible Spaces ○ Scalable, Phased Development

<p>Hospitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traditional Lodging ● RV Park/Campground ● Tiny Home/Trailer Rental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A hospitality or lodging offering in Norwood would likely be a feasible development opportunity due to its strategic location, economic connections to the Telluride resort area, and a growing demand for affordable, convenient and adventure-based accommodations. ● Strategic opportunities include tapping into the overflow for high-season demand, establishing a cost-effective alternative, leveraging Norwood's access to outdoor recreation, building upon its strategic location, offering workforce housing, and integrating local events and attractions. ● Recommendations for a successful hospitality/lodging offering on the school site include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifying Target Markets ○ Addressing Seasonal Trends ○ Cost-Effective and Scalable Design ○ Unique concept with multiple accommodation offerings including motel, RV, and car camping sites, tent camping, as well as Airstream and tiny home rentals (examples include Camp Eddy in Grand Junction and Big B's in Paonia) ○ Offer amenities and services for diverse audiences
<p>Norwood Community Center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Based on community input and stakeholder interviews, repurposing the middle and elementary schools into a new civic community center for the Town is considered a feasible site reuse option. ● The existing school buildings could become home to a variety of community-based uses that are currently in need of space including the post office, recreation center, public gym, fire department, Town Hall Offices, public works and equipment maintenance, community daycare, and food bank. ● Additional civic and nonprofit users and tenants could include workforce training programs, adult education classes, community meeting spaces, health and wellness clinics, or co-working spaces for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Additional

	<p>civic uses could include additional space for town government, a polling station, or a venue for public hearings and workshops. Additional institutional uses might support nonprofits or cultural organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● A strong precedent for this type of project on the Western Slope has been set by the Third Street Center in Carbondale, where a defunct school building was renovated to become a hub for high-quality meeting rooms, affordable spaces for nonprofit business incubation, a community hall for meetings, concerts and events - all in a solar-powered facility.● Conversion of the existing schools into a community center will be a cost-intensive project up front that will also require on-going funding for maintenance and upkeep. Determining the ownership and funding will be key to success. When planning for these uses, it's essential to consider the building's current condition and layout, building regulations, and accessibility for all community members. Factors like parking availability, ADA compliance, HVAC systems, and adaptability of classrooms for diverse functions must also be addressed to ensure a functional, cost-effective, and community-driven space.
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Reuse & Redevelopment Concept Options

The Town of Norwood and the Norwood School District are exploring potential reuse options for the existing site after the removal of the 1958 and 1968 high school buildings. These site plans explore the potential for reuse of middle, elementary, and pre-k buildings as well as whether to retain the ballfields in their current location.

The five concepts depicted in the conceptual site plans are:

1. Lower School Campus
2. Norwood Community Center
3. Residential Redevelopment
4. Business Park Redevelopment
5. Lodging Redevelopment

Concept 1 shows how the site could be reconfigured if the existing high school buildings are demolished and rebuilt, but funding is not secured to build the new integrated campus and move the lower schools.

Concept 2 shows reuse of the existing buildings as a community civic center. The Town Council passed a resolution indicating that if the new integrated campus is built, the Town desires to acquire the existing site to house public and civic uses.

Concepts 3, 4, and 5 explore market-driven redevelopment options for the site, as alternatives if the District vacates the site but the Town is unable to fund a civic center reuse.

Only Viable Uses Shown

The uses shown on each of the site plan options are viable. Some are local public uses that are currently housed in deficient buildings. Others are uses identified by the consultants as viable to be developed under the current local market conditions. Non-public uses would require that the Town rezone the site to an applicable new designation.

Layouts are Illustrative

The specific layouts shown are examples only. Each plan depicts the amount of each type of development that could fit on the site, with appropriate parking and drive aisles. Other configurations for the use concepts are also possible. Within some logistical limitations, it is possible to combine some of the concepts, mixing and matching the uses shown.

Redevelopment Lead

Some of the concepts show primarily public uses and others private uses or a mix. Public redevelopment would be led by the Town. Redevelopment in non-public uses would be accomplished by the District identifying an interested, qualified developer and selling the land. Selling the site would earn revenue that the District could put toward rebuilding a new integrated school campus.

Concept 1 - Lower Schools Campus

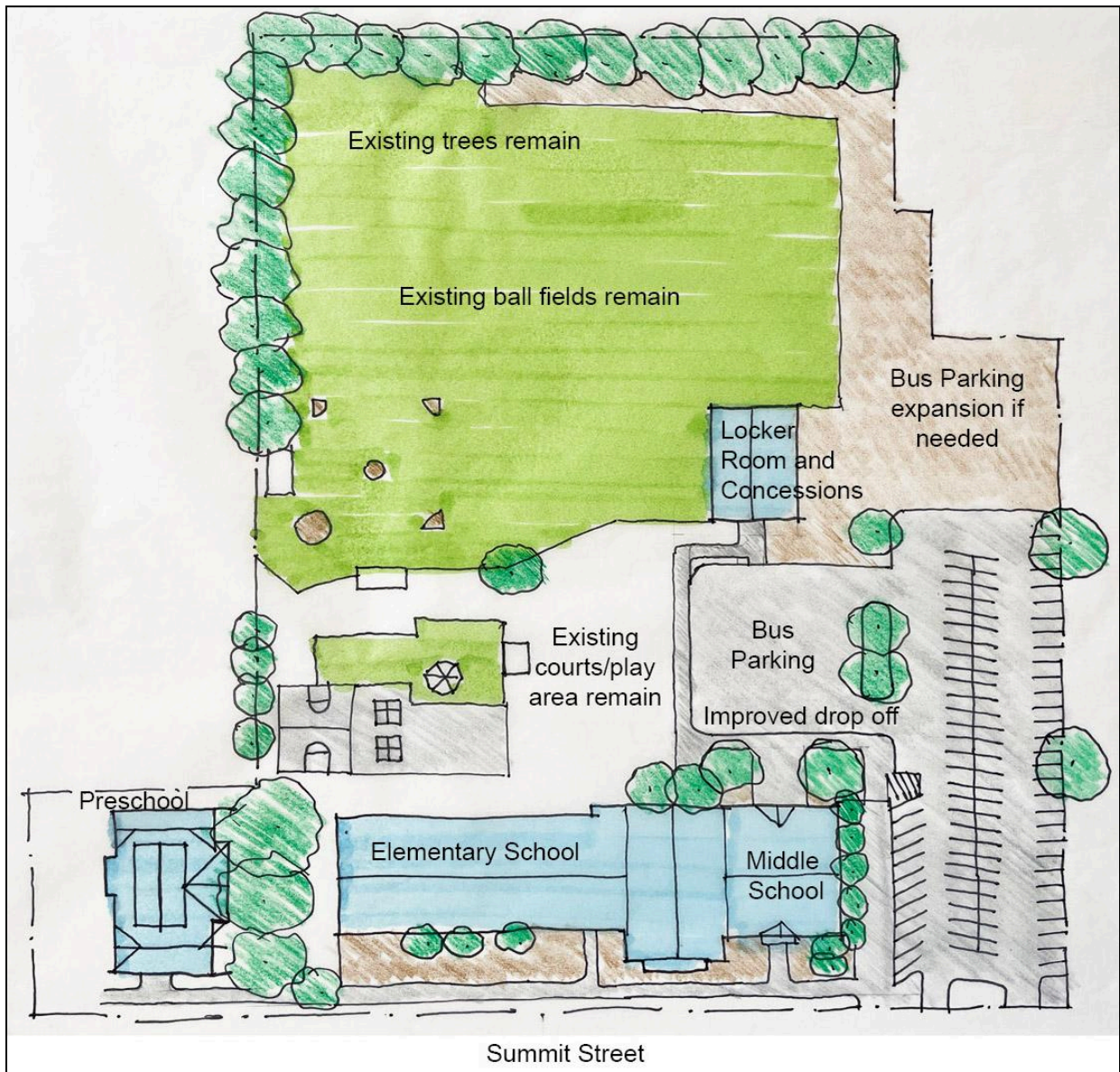
This option depicts the preschool, elementary, and middle school, and ballfield uses being maintained on the site in their current configuration. Although the District prefers to develop a new, integrated Pre-K-12 Campus on the site where the high school will be rebuilt, funding is not yet secured for that vision. This concept shows how the site could be used if only the high school is rebuilt. The lot area where the high school and auditorium buildings are removed would accommodate a reconfigured drop off and pick up area and bus parking, eliminating the related existing safety and vehicle storage concerns.

The existing weight room building could be upgraded into functional locker rooms and space for concessions for sports competitions, with modest building improvements including plumbing. It may be possible to also include a desired community amenity, such as a pool, if a funding stream for maintenance of that amenity is identified.

Below left is the existing preschool and below right is the existing elementary school.



Conceptual Site Plan 1 - Lower Schools Campus



Concept 2 - Norwood Community Center

This concept shows the site continuing in primarily public uses as a new civic community center, which the Town has proposed if funding can be secured. In this concept, all the schools move to an integrated campus on the District's new site. While the high school buildings are demolished, other existing buildings are renovated and reused to house public and civic uses as well as some workforce housing. The ballfields and basketball courts remain for District and public use.

The elementary and middle school buildings comprise approximately 27,250 sq. ft. They are structurally sound and could be remodeled to house all of the following uses:

- Town Hall offices (~ 2,000 sq. ft.)
- Town shop with a garage for up to 4 vehicles (~ 2,700 sq ft.).
- Fire station (~ 6,000 sq. ft.)
- Post office
- Food bank and other local non-profits
- Private daycare (leased space)

The existing 4,800 sq. ft. weight room building could be renovated and expanded up to 6,750 sq. ft. into a small recreation center/public gym that could include locker rooms and concessions to serve sports competitions at the ballfields. A small enclosed pool could potentially be built near the play area and basketball courts, if a funding stream for maintenance is identified.

The existing preschool building could be renovated and reverted back to a 5-7 unit apartment building. There is also space for a new 3-story, 24 unit workforce apartment building where the high school was. This could potentially be Town- or Housing Authority-owned, or a joint public-private development.

An example of a community center/civic anchor that also is in a renovated elementary school is the [3rd St. Center](#) in Carbondale, CO. The image, right, shows an example of a three story affordable apartment building in Eagle, CO.



Conceptual Site Plan 2 - Norwood Community Center



Concept 3: Residential Redevelopment

This concept is one of three that shows a market-driven redevelopment opportunity, in the event the Town does not get support or funding for a Civic Center. The strongest market demand in the area is for housing from both locals and the commuter workforce, depending on price points. In this concept, all schools and the ballfields are rebuilt at the new site, and all existing buildings on the site are demolished.

To address a community need for affordable housing, the District could give the site to the Housing Authority or affordable housing developer with conditions on the type and pricing of homes, which could result in all affordable or a mix of market rate and affordable units. This concept is shown using the entire site (versus leaving the ballfields in place) as that would help create economies of scale to keep per unit home prices down.

Alternatively, the District could sell the site to a private housing developer, possibly with conditions on the type and number of homes. Selling the site would earn some funds to use toward rebuilding the schools and ballfields. Without subsidies, housing built by a for-profit developer would cost more than most locals can afford.

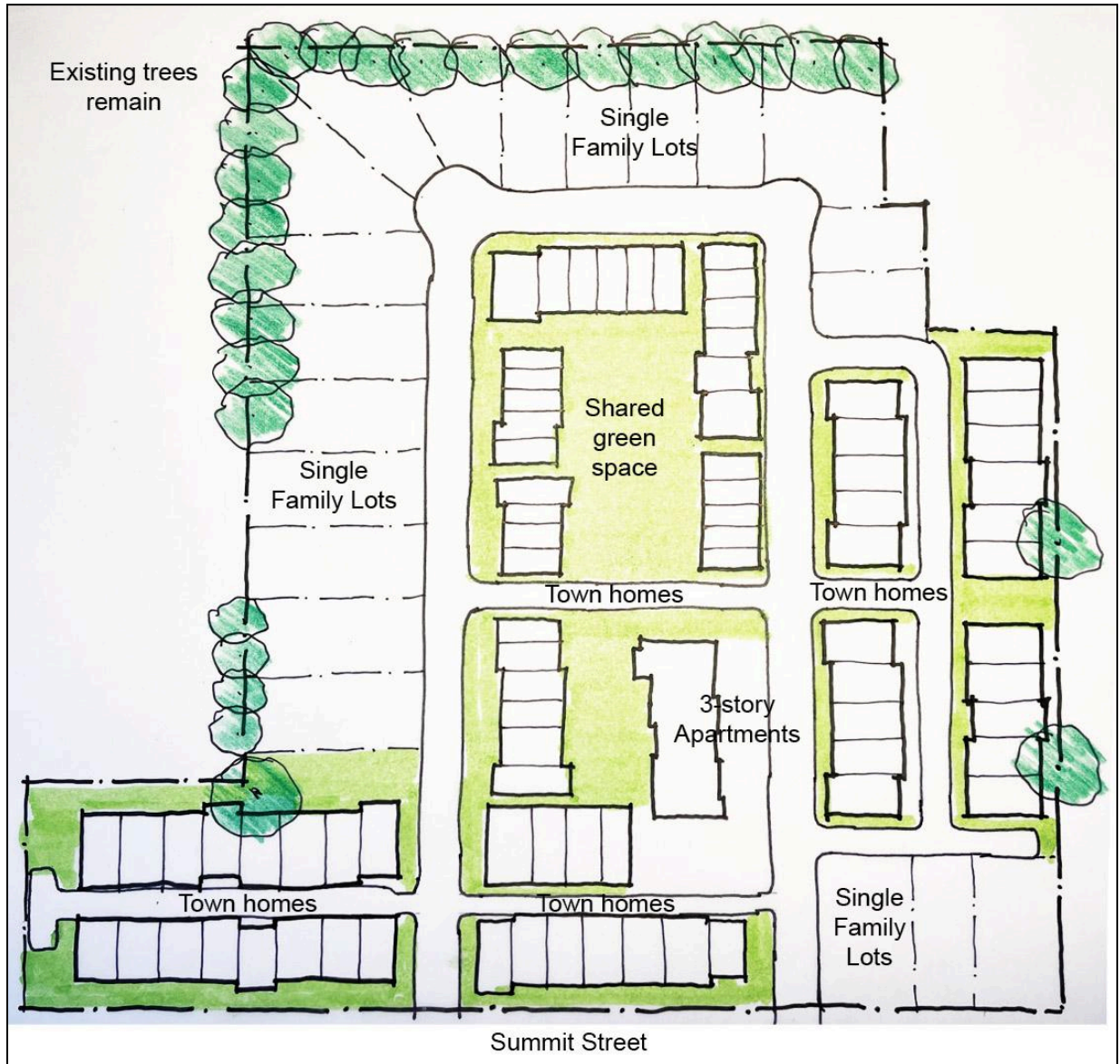
Many different layouts and mixes of the types of housing are possible. The concept sketch illustrates a mix of single family lots, townhomes, and a 3-story, 24 unit multi family apartment building, creating a range of housing types and prices. All of the housing types could be either modular or on-site construction.

For parking, the concept assumes single family homes with garages, townhomes with "tuck-under" parking on the ground floor of the units, and apartments with a combination of surface and tuck-under parking. On-street parking should also be provided on all public streets. The site should also include central shared green space for the entire development.

The adjacent image is an example of an affordable townhome development in Eagle, CO.



Conceptual Site Plan 3: Residential Redevelopment



Concept 4: Business Park Redevelopment

This concept is one of three that focuses on a market-driven redevelopment opportunity, in the event the Town does not get support or funding for a Civic Center. In this concept, all schools and the ballfields are rebuilt at the new site, the entire site is rezoned for commercial mixed use, and it is sold to a private developer. Selling the site would earn some funds to use toward rebuilding the school facilities.

The preschool building could be renovated and reverted back to a 5-7 unit apartment building. The existing elementary school and a portion of the middle school could affordably be converted to self storage or flexible commercial/light industrial buildings.

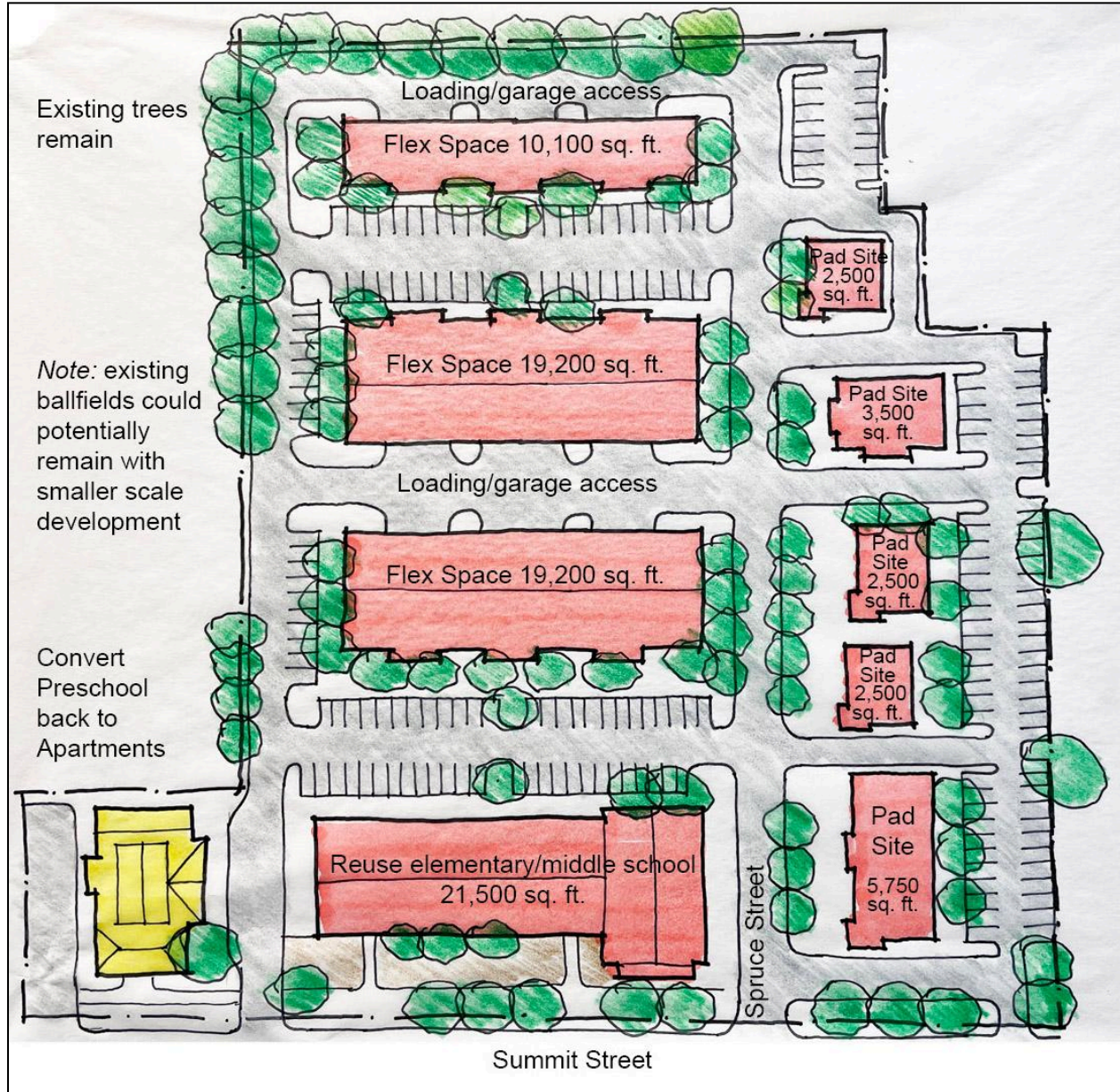
This concept illustrates a variety of small pad sites ranging from 2,500 sq. ft. to 6,000 sq. ft. that could be used for auto oriented service or light industrial uses with high parking demands that are not a strong fit for Grand Avenue. The larger flex space buildings ranging from 10,000 - 19,200 sq. ft. are easily subdivided into smaller or larger modules that could include small business warehouses with garages, laundry facilities, showroom, office, and light manufacturing. A comparable example of this type of use can be found in the new [Montrose Colorado Outdoors Campus](#) (shown below) and examples of the flex space in this development can be found [here](#). Other examples of flex space developments can be found at [flexshops.com](#).

A private developer would typically be interested in acquiring the entire site, and phasing development over time to meet paced demand for business flex space. However, this concept could also be accomplished at a smaller scale by selling only a portion of the site, with the Town or District retaining the Pre-K building, ballfields, and access to the ballfields.

Below, the image on the left is the flex space in Montrose, CO and the image on the right is a pad site in Basalt, CO with a Big O Tire shop on the ground floor and apartments above.



Conceptual Site Plan 4: Business Park Redevelopment



Concept 5: Lodging Redevelopment

This concept is one of three that focuses on a market-driven redevelopment opportunity, in the event the Town does not get support or funding for a Civic Center. In this concept, all schools and the ballfields are rebuilt at the District's new site, and all existing buildings except the Pre-K building are demolished. The entire site, or the portion not including the ball fields, could be rezoned and developed as an RV campground and motel.

The pre-K building could be renovated and reverted back to a 5-7 unit apartment building. The existing elementary school and a portion of the middle school could be scraped down to the foundation, enabling a motel to be built there cost-effectively as the footprint is similar. Depending on ownership, either the Pre-K building or a portion of the motel could be renovated as a visitor center/general store for the campground.

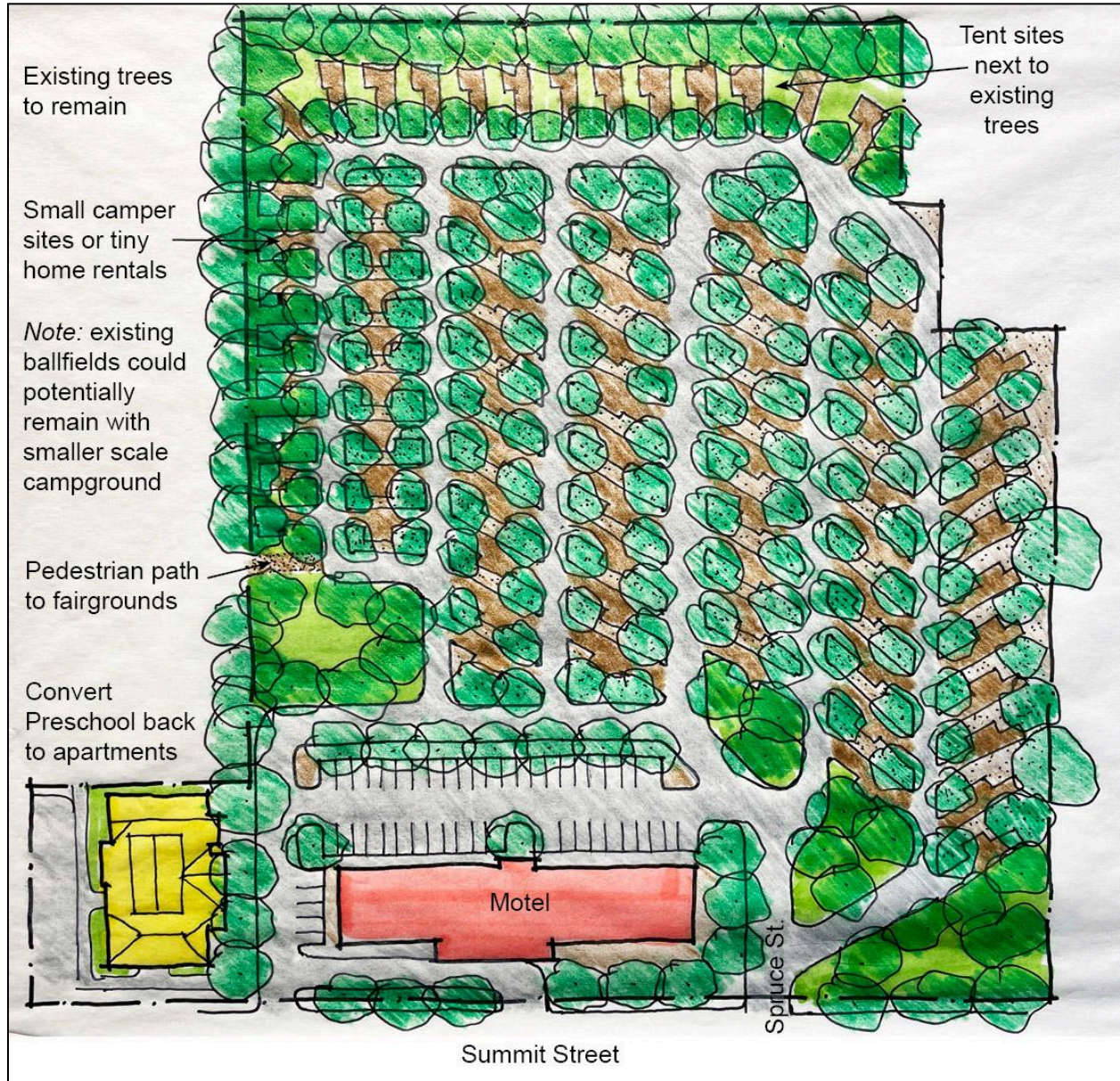
The campground could have a variety of sites to accommodate large recreation vehicles, fifth wheels, smaller campers or vans, and tent sites located at the northern edge of the site under the large existing trees. In addition, some sites could include tiny homes or camper trailers for short term rentals. Some of the grass areas from the existing ball fields can remain as green space for the campground. The site could be designed with pedestrian access to the fairgrounds.

One option would be to rezone the site and sell it to a private campground developer. Alternatively, the Town could build and run this, likely at a profit, creating more local control over the visitor amenities in the area and a new revenue stream to support public services. If the Town owned and operated the site, rezoning would be unnecessary.

Examples of Town-owned RV parks include [Clear Creek RV Park](#) in Golden and Telluride [Town Campground](#) Park. A comparable example of a recently developed, privately owned campground can be found in Grand Junction at [Camp Eddy](#). Below are images of Camp Eddy tiny home rental and RV sites.



Conceptual Site Plan 5: Lodging Redevelopment



Appendix

Norwood School District Site Opportunity Analysis

Background

- The Norwood School District currently owns an 8.5 acre site on which it operates a pre-school, elementary school, middle school, and high school.
- The high school building, which is attached to the middle school via a breezeway, has been tested and shown to have asbestos contamination in a wide range of building materials, including structural components, rendering remediation impossible without full demolition.
- Due to widespread contamination and other functional problems with the school and site, the Norwood School district is planning to build a new integrated PreK – 12 school on an alternative site, in alignment with a community survey that indicated that the majority of the community prefers to build on the new site, rather than rebuild on the existing site.
- The School District is applying for a BEST grant to help fund a new school, which requires the District to certify that all buildings on the current site will be demolished or reused.
- While the high school portion of the building must be demolished, the Town and District are exploring potential reuse options for the middle, elementary, and Pre-K buildings as well as whether to retain the sports fields in their current configuration.
- In order to better understand what opportunities exist, the District has engaged the Colorado Brownfields Partnership for support in identifying community needs, assessing the feasibility of potential uses, and identifying resources for the effort. Through CBP, 9th Path Advisors is providing Technical planning assistance to investigate the market conditions, real estate and land uses by type in order to assess the feasibility of reuse and/or redevelopment options for Norwood School District Site.

Site Analysis

Norwood, CO Market Overview

- The Town of Norwood is located in southwestern Colorado, approximately 33 miles west of Telluride and serves as a key community hub and the County seat for San Miguel County.

- Norwood sits atop Wright's Mesa, which is a larger agricultural area known for its farming and ranching heritage.
- The town is situated along the San Miguel River and at the crossroads of Highways 145 and 62, making it a convenient stopping point for travelers heading to Telluride, Moab, or the nearby national forests and recreation areas. Telluride, a renowned mountain town and ski destination, draws both tourists and seasonal workers, which benefit Norwood's visibility
- Although Norwood is in a remote rural area, its strategic location at the intersection of two key highways brings a high volume of vehicle traffic and creates opportunities to engage visiting travelers and attract new residents to the area.
- The town's stunning natural surroundings and lower cost of living compared to nearby resort communities appeal to young professionals, families, and retirees seeking a balance between lifestyle and affordability.

Population

- The population in the region is characterized by a mix of long-time residents, retirees, and younger families drawn to the area for its affordability, slower pace of life and proximity to both outdoor recreation and the economy of the nearby Telluride resort community.
- The Town's current population is estimated to be 558 within the incorporated municipality, although roughly 1,700 people live on Wright's Mesa overall and are considered to be part of the greater Norwood Community. The Wright's mesa population has remained steady over the past years as the mortality rate equals or exceeds the birth rate.
- Additionally, Norwood is part of the "West End" which is comprised of several rural communities in both Montrose and San Miguel counties that share proximity and similar economies. The total population of the West End communities is estimated to be 4,465 and growing.
- Norwood's population grew by nearly 10% in 2024 as result of both natural growth and a new modular workforce housing product, Pinion Park Townhomes, indicating that there is a shortage of adequate housing and pent-up population growth potential. However, it should be noted that the incorporated Town has largely been built out to nearly its full potential with limited new development opportunities. There seems to be a "if you build it, they will come" scenario and the School District site may provide a unique opportunity to do so.
- The median age in Norwood is 34 which is significantly younger than the surrounding areas which have a median age of 52.5. This age difference indicates that the Town of Norwood is attracting younger residents and families that work elsewhere and also represents the affordability in the Town compared to the larger properties outside of Town.

Economy

- Despite a rich history of farming and ranching, Norwood is primarily a bedroom community, with the local economy shaped by its proximity to the affluent resort town of Telluride. Many Norwood residents commute 45 minutes each way daily to work in the tourism, hospitality, and service sectors that support the resort town.
- Mining in the region has ebbed and flowed over the years and is currently making a bit of comeback although its impact on the Norwood economy is anticipated to be negligible. Oil and gas prospecting in the area has also begun to have increased interest and potential although it is too early to determine near-term economic impacts.
- Norwood itself has a small economic base, including agriculture, construction, local-serving retail, the Norwood School District, other civic services, and some outdoor recreation industries. The largest local employers are the School District and other civic services such as the sheriff's office, county government, etc.
- The vast majority of the Town's workforce is working in commercial, industrial, and service-sector businesses that serve Telluride. As the high-end tourism demand of Telluride continues to grow and businesses are priced-out of in-town locations, there is a significant opportunity to expand commercial, industrial and other mixed-use business space in Norwood. This would not only capture local spending but could also provide a space for local-serving businesses to expand as well.
- The town is also known for its affordability relative to Telluride, which attracts workers, families, and retirees seeking a lower cost of living.
- Additionally, Norwood benefits from its scenic location and access to public lands, contributing to a growing interest in eco-tourism and outdoor activities like camping, hunting and fishing. Norwood is directly between the massive tourist destinations of Moab and Telluride, meaning there may be opportunity to capture vehicle, RV and other pass-through traffic.
- One notable hurdle to development in Norwood is its water infrastructure with both municipal and agricultural water coming from a single source that is impacted by a damaged dam. Faulty infrastructure combined with increased usage have the Town's current water resources almost fully accounted for. There are opportunities to pay for additional water from the San Miguel River and pump to another reservoir but those options are costly and it may be an impediment to economic growth.

Site, Location & Adjacent Uses

- The School District site is 8.63 acres and is located on Summit Avenue just one block North of the Town's main thoroughfare, Grand Avenue, which carries an average of XX vehicles per day.

- Despite its proximity to Main Street and the Town's businesses, the site is also very much on the edge of Town with rural lands adjacent and beyond.
- To the North and East of the property is abundant vacant agricultural land owned by local farmers. Although the District currently uses a portion of the Eastern neighbor's land for bus and vehicle storage, it is highly unlikely that the neighbor will continue to allow any shared use going forward.
- West of the property are the San Miguel County Fairgrounds with rodeo grounds and athletic fields including a track, baseball fields, equipment sheds etc.
- To the South of the School District property, across Summit Ave is a block of residential homes before hitting Grand Avenue.

Zoning

- The property is currently zoned for public use, which supports community-focused purposes such as government buildings, schools, or parks. However, rezoning could be considered in the future based on the proposed use and alignment with local development plans. Potential rezoning would require approval from the appropriate planning and zoning authorities to ensure compatibility with community goals and regulations.
- The property has the potential to meet parking, height, and space requirements for various development options, making it a generally feasible site for future projects. However, the primary challenge will likely be community pushback against higher-density developments or uses perceived as altering the small-town character of Norwood. Addressing these concerns through thoughtful design, community engagement, and alignment with local values will be critical in gaining public support and approval for any proposed changes.

Residential land Use Analysis

Overview

- According to ArcGIS Business, the Town of Norwood currently has 263 housing units with 11.5% vacancy. Most of these units are concentrated in the residential neighborhoods around Grand Ave and the Town core.
- Current housing tenure shows that the solid majority of units, 62% are owner-occupied with less than 26% housing being renter occupied, which is very low overall and would indicate a need for more rental product to balance out the housing tenure in Town. Among the roughly 30 or so vacant units, only 2 are available for rent, further supporting the point that more rental units could be absorbed.

- Most notably, the Town's housing stock is rapidly aging with almost 75% of units being built before 1989 and average built year of 1980. More than 21% of housing units were built before 1939 and less than 10% having been built after 2010. This data would suggest that many of these older units are already, or about to be falling into states of disrepair which could account for the slightly higher vacancy rate in Norwood overall.
- At 73%, single-family units make up the vast majority of the current housing stock while multi-unit buildings account for less than 8% of the overall inventory and mobile homes account for nearly 18%.

Development Opportunity

- Overall, there is a feasible development opportunity for low to medium density workforce-housing on the School District Property. Despite a relatively high vacancy rate, the rapidly aging housing stock and limited housing types indicate that there is likely demand for varied typologies of new residential product at an affordable price point. This notion is further supported by the successful occupancy of Norwood's only recent housing development, Pinion Park Townhomes.
- In order to balance Norwood's housing tenure, which is heavily skewed toward owner-occupied housing, a mix of rental and for-sale housing is recommended.
- A successful development that meets community needs and standards will require a balance of aesthetics and rural character while maintaining efficiency, affordability and functionality.
- Land Use Allocation
 - Given the recent community pushback against high and even medium density housing proposals, a more traditional land allocation should be used on the 8+ acres to ensure that the development does not clash with the existing character of Norwood. Roughly 10-15% (0.8-1.2 acres) of land should be allocated to infrastructure requirements such as roads, parking, sidewalks, stormwater management, utilities, etc. 15-20% (1-1.5 acres) should be dedicated to green space including parks, playgrounds, walking trails, open space, etc. that will be helpful in breaking up density and maintaining Norwood's rural, community-based character. This leaves 60-70% of land available for residential units that can be provided in whatever density is supported by both the developer and the community.
- Product Type
 - Primarily single-family, duplex and Townhome product are recommended in order to maintain low to medium density.
 - Single-family homes with garages and small private yards at a density of about 8-10 units per acre would be considered lower-density in most regions.

- Townhome or duplex product at a density of 10-12 units per acre could be ideal for increasing affordability and could be clustered in a manner that preserves ample open space.
- A mix of product types is encouraged to serve a range of users but generally, an efficient workforce but an efficient unit would be between 1,100-1500 rentable square feet in varying layouts.
- If the community would support multi-family product, a 3-story walk-up apartment (or condominium) building, typically in a 24-unit layout, can be a very efficient and cost-effective development approach. Although these structures may not align with the existing character of Norwood's housing stock, the higher-density buildings leave more room for open space overall.
- Price Point
 - Any new housing product, whether for-rent or for-sale, should be priced at 80-120% of the Area Median Income (AMI) to align with the financial capacity of local residents and workforce. This range ensures affordability for essential workers who are critical to the community's stability and should attract other workforce households from throughout the region. By targeting this income bracket, the housing market can address workforce needs while supporting sustainable local economic growth.

Commercial Land Use Analysis

Overview

- The commercial land use and opportunity analysis for this project is based upon the assumption and scenario in which all existing operations on the site are moved to the new school district development and that the Town sells or otherwise transfers the property to a private entity for redevelopment. The commercial opportunities discussed below are considered to be feasible for a private developer on the School District site.
- Considering the already small economic base in Norwood and limited local-serving retail, retail is not considered feasible on this site and should be limited to the existing commercial core on Grand Avenue.
- The significant opportunities for commercial development in Norwood will be based upon taking advantage the following existing economic attributes:
- Capture the overflow of commercial, industrial and service-sector businesses that serve Telluride and would be attracted to more cost-effective space in Norwood.
- Leverage Norwood's strategic location and high volume of pass-through traffic with a potential hospitality offering.

Mixed-Business Park

- A mixed-use business park on the School District Property could be a feasible and strategic development that leverages its proximity to the Telluride resort economy and addresses both local and regional demands.
- This type of project would aim to capture the economic overflow from Telluride. The limited space for business expansion and high cost of both operations and real estate in the resort community make Norwood, the next closest municipality, a logical choice for value-conscious businesses that are looking to grow or relocate.
- Norwood's available space and lower property costs make it an ideal site for commercial and light-industrial businesses supporting the resort economy. This includes warehousing, logistics, and light manufacturing, such as furniture or décor production tailored to luxury resorts. Developing a centralized distribution hub for goods needed in Telluride, such as building materials, food supplies, and hotel equipment, could significantly streamline operations for up-valley businesses.
- The project could support the service needs of the Telluride region by fostering businesses like cleaning services, maintenance companies, event planners, and professional service providers (e.g., IT, accounting, and marketing). These businesses would help alleviate the labor shortage challenges in Telluride while providing stable employment opportunities for local residents in Norwood.
- Self-Storage and Business Warehousing are generally in high-demand in the proximity of resort communities but would also be successful in addressing both seasonal and year-round storage and operations needs. These offerings would serve businesses and residents impacted by the fluctuations of a seasonal economy and could also support year-round enterprises that need operations space protected from seasonal ebbs and flows.
- Developing a successful mixed-use business park in Norwood will require strategic planning and execution tailored to the unique opportunities and challenges of the area including:
 - Market-Driven Planning: Prior to development, demand segments should be identified by researching the needs of businesses and industries tied to Telluride's economy as well as potential local tenants and businesses.
 - Cost Effective Development: The project should leverage Norwood's current affordability to attract smaller, resort-oriented businesses with a real value proposition.
 - Efficient Infrastructure: The vertical development cost of warehouse and flex space is generally lower than that of other development typologies but it will be critical to efficiently design utilities, parking and circulation infrastructure in a manner that keeps horizontal costs low while supporting commercial activity and traffic flow.
 - Mixed-Use Design and Flexible Spaces: The project should focus on the design of adaptable spaces that can accommodate diverse businesses, from

- construction warehousing and offices to light manufacturing and service businesses. Modular options are available that allow tenants to expand or downsize as needed. [Flexshops](#), a small business space provider offering scalable warehouse solutions across the Mountain West, is a great comparable project.
- Scalable, Phased Development: The project should be designed with flexibility to adapt to growing demand and diverse users from the start. Early development should begin with a smaller footprint, using existing infrastructure and frontage, and scale up as demand grows. It will be key to start with essential facilities that cater to high-demand sectors and expand into additional uses as the park becomes established. Flexible warehouse space is an obvious and widely demanded use but other offerings such as auto-oriented retail pads or office space could be incorporated in subsequent phases.
 - The project could also incorporate the adaptive reuse of an existing building on-site by converting it into self-storage units or office space, depending on its structural suitability and market demand. If the conversion proves unfeasible, the building's foundation—assuming it is in good condition—could still be utilized as a base for new construction, maximizing the value of the site and minimizing waste,

Hospitality & Lodging

- A hospitality or lodging offering in Norwood would likely be a feasible development opportunity due to its strategic location, economic connections to the Telluride resort area, and a growing demand for affordable, convenient and adventure-based accommodations.
 - Overflow for High-Season Demand: Telluride, as a major resort destination, often experiences a lack of sufficient accommodations during peak seasons and Norwood is well-positioned to absorb this overflow, offering an alternative for budget-conscious travelers or those seeking a quieter environment.
 - Cost-Effective Alternative: Lodging in Telluride can be prohibitively expensive, making Norwood an attractive option for tourists who want to stay near the resort and other outdoor recreation without paying resort prices.
 - Access to Outdoor Recreation: Norwood is surrounded by outdoor recreation opportunities that are growing in popularity such as the Uncompahgre National Forest, the Dolores River, the Paradox Valley and more. Whether biking, hiking, hunting, fishing or any other activity, lodging in Norwood could cater to adventure travelers who want a central location for exploring nearby opportunities and the Western Slope in general.
 - Strategic, Gateway Location: Norwood serves as a Western gateway to Telluride and the broader San Juan Mountains region when coming from

Moab and other destinations to the West, making it a convenient stop for tourists exploring the area, especially those on RV or personal vehicle road trips.

- Workforce Housing Needs: There is a significant workforce housing shortage in the region, especially for imported labor, and the existing hotels and motels have already been purchased by developers and other labor-intensive businesses for employee housing on a medium to long-term basis. In shoulder seasons when tourist traffic is low, a hospitality or lodging offering could cater to this demand to increase annual occupancy rates.
- Integrate Local Events & Attractions: The Town of Norwood and the region overall, including Telluride, have several local events and attractions throughout the year that attract visitors. A hospitality project in Norwood would be well-positioned to cater to the lodging demand from these events. The County fairgrounds and rodeo facilities next door are also an obvious and relatively simple source of business to leverage.
- The strategic opportunities above are foundational to the feasibility of a hospitality or lodging redevelopment on the School District site but a successful effort will require a strategic approach including:
 - Identifying Target Markets: Primary audiences should be defined such as Telluride overflow guests, adventure tourists, business travelers, workforce housing needs, and long-distance road trippers, with the offering tailored to these demands.
 - Address Seasonal Trends: It will be key to understand the visitation trends, particularly the peak seasons tied to Telluride's resorts and festivals, as well as Norwood's local attractions, such as hunting, rodeos or dark sky tourism. A successful project should optimize peak season occupancy and consider alternative strategies such as workforce housing during the off-season.
 - Cost-Effective and Scalable Design: The project should leverage Norwood's lower land and construction costs to develop a cost-effective alternative to the high-end options closer to Telluride. A focus on affordable pricing and a range of options will appeal to a wider audience. As with the other concepts, the project should start with a smaller development and expand as demand grows. Modular designs or phased construction can reduce upfront costs and adapt to market needs.
 - Unique Concept & Multiple Accommodation Types: The project should consider the growing popularity of having multiple accommodation types to capture a wider range of visitors.
 - A motel, offering traditional accommodations and amenities, could be developed on the Summit Ave frontage using the existing foundation of the middle and elementary schools.
 - An RV Park/Campground offering full hookups for pull-through sites, back-in sites, and van/camper sites would capture road trippers and

- seasonal travelers such as hunters. Tent sites can further expand the adventure traveler appeal and offer even more cost-effective options.
- Airstream/Tiny home Rentals, which can easily be placed on standard RV sites, offer a non-traditional alternative to motel rooms. These can appeal to a wider range of travelers and create memorable experience while still providing the ease of standard lodging.
 - Comparable projects for this include [Camp Eddy](#) in Grand Junction and [Big B's](#) in Paonia.
 - Amenities & Services for Diverse Audiences: No matter the accommodation types, the project should have the essential amenities for all travelers including comfortable beds, Wi-Fi, secure parking, and laundry. Additionally, the project could offer more diverse amenities and services such as kitchenettes, workspaces, gear storage, and pet-friendly policies, to cater to extended stays, adventure travelers and more. A clubhouse, exercise facility and social gathering spaces would further differentiate the project from alternatives and collaborations with local businesses would create an even stronger offering that supports the local economy.
 - A successful hospitality project in Norwood must be affordable, accessible, and aligned with the region's character and demands. By focusing on community engagement, sustainability, and targeted marketing, developers can create a lodging offering that meets the needs of diverse visitors while contributing to the economic vitality of the Norwood area.

Norwood Community Center Analysis

- Based on community input and stakeholder interviews, repurposing the middle and elementary schools into a new civic community center for the Town is considered to be a feasible reuse option for the site.
- The existing school buildings, which are considered to be structurally sound, could become home to a variety of community-based uses that are currently in need of space including the post office, recreation center, public gym, fire department, Town Hall Offices, community food bank, public works and equipment maintenance, and community daycare. There is far more than enough space to accommodate all of the above uses.
- Additional users and tenants could include workforce training programs, adult education classes, childcare services, community meeting spaces, a public library extension, health and wellness clinics, or co-working spaces for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Additional civic uses could include additional space for town government, a polling station, or a venue for public hearings and workshops. Additional institutional uses might support nonprofits or cultural organizations.
- There is also potential to provide workforce housing, if desired, as part of the project on the site of the former high school once it is demolished.

- A strong precedent for this type of project on the Western Slope has been set by the [Third Street Center](#) in Carbondale. After the middle and high-school were moved elsewhere, the 45,100 square foot building was renovated to become a hub for high-quality meeting rooms, affordable spaces for nonprofit business incubation, a community hall for meetings, concerts and events - all in a solar-powered facility.
- It should be noted that a conversion of the existing schools into a community center will be a cost-intensive project up front that will also require on-going funding for maintenance and upkeep. Determining the ownership and funding will be key to success. When planning for these uses, it's essential to consider the building's current condition and layout, building regulations, and accessibility for all community members. Factors like parking availability, ADA compliance, HVAC systems, and adaptability of classrooms for diverse functions must also be addressed to ensure a functional, cost-effective, and community-driven space.