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An Evaluation of Potential Development for Pernet Family Health Facilities in Worcester

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Proposal:

An Evaluation of Potential Development for Pernet Family Health Facilities in Worcester

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Abstract

The goal of this research project, which has a sustainability focus, is to research and compare avenues of growth for Pernet Family Health Services, which is a non-profit organization in Worcester by exploring the feasibility of rebuilding, renovating and relocating of its current facilities. Specifically, the following steps were taken to conduct the research: conduct a survey of the employees; get expert analysis of the structures and methods for construction, research feasible relocation options, and other factors influencing Pernet's decision.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who helped make this project possible and give a special thanks to the following people.

First we would like to thank our project advisor, Professor Aaron Sakulich for his excellent guidance, support and insight on the project. Also, we would like to thank Derren Rosbach, our co- advisor for his insight in data collection and coding. We are extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to work with such great leadership and experience.

We thank those at Pernet Family Health Service for supplying us with all the information and tools the team needed, and for making our visits pleasant and productive. In particular, we thank Sheliah Dooley and Johanna Lolax, as our main contacts at Pernet, they helped make the project run smoothly and efficiently.

We would like to thank Professor Leonard Albano and Mark Harasimowicz for their insight on structural aspects of the buildings and the best avenues of construction. Their experience taught us that when seeking for answers, you have to ask the right questions to the right people.

Executive Summary

This project assesses the challenges and opportunities currently presented to Pernet Family Health Services regarding their facilities located at 237 and 243 Millbury Street, Worcester, MA. Using Baily’s method of qualitative field research, sixteen significant variables were coded through interviews with several of the organization’s program directors, their finance committee, and a professional engineer and contractor as well as 21 completed questionnaires received from employees and volunteers. These options were also assessed to address the functionality, room for growth, and structural competence of their existing facilities.

Using these results as guidelines for areas of improvements and obstacles in Pernet’s facilities, an assessment of feasible options for facilities was conducted. All the potential options for the growth in Pernet’s services were considered including variations of renovation, rebuilding, and relocating. All the options were assessed for their feasibility as a non-profit organization facility functioning at its highest potential. In correlation, Pernet will be able to perform its mission of providing family and community services to the Greater Worcester Area.



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1 PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this project is to provide Pernet Family Health with a variety of options that will fulfill their need for an improved space, to enhance their quality of operations, and set the stage for many years of growth. The current facilities serve several different purposes, including use for an early intervention program for local youth, a food pantry, and a counseling center for domestic problems.

The organization plans to run a capital campaign, seeking grants and government funding for facility improvements, citing this report as evidence of need. The direction in which the Pernet Family Health Services is going to proceed has yet to be determined. This assessment of the current situation at 237 and 243 Millbury St. will provide an overview of the three most feasible options:

- Renovate: Making renewals and modifications to the current building.
- Rebuild: Find a new vacant spot or demolish the current buildings to rebuild using a prepared site.
- Relocate: Seek alternate buildings available to perform to the rising standard.

The initial plan of execution included a thorough assessment of the ability of the current situation in 237 and 243 Millbury St. through an audit of the buildings as well as an assessment of the options. As discussed on 10/29/2013 this report will take into consideration the current budget and agenda of the organization to achieve this goal. The three options would involve Pernet Family Health having to decide on whether or not to remain in their current location. There is no fixed path with each option and one option may encompass another in order to reach Pernet's final goal. By reviewing the concerns with the current facilities a determination as to which option will not work will be evident as well as through recommendations of qualified professionals.

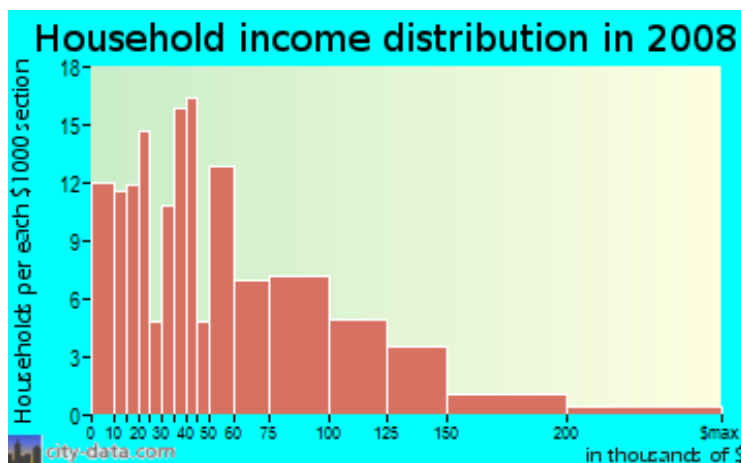
2 BACKGROUND

Pernet Family Health Service is a Department of Public Health-certified home health agency located in Worcester's Green Island District. Pernet was founded Little Sisters of the Assumption, a nationally respected Christian organization working in the field of community development. Their goal is to bring together the lesser privileged to inspire everyone to create a just society.¹ In Worcester alone they serve over 10,000 impoverished people a year. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 20.1% of the city of Worcester's population lives below the poverty level, a higher percentage than that of New York City, Washington D.C, or Los Angeles.²

Green Island is home to just over 2,000 people. Most of the residents make well below the median income of \$42,000 per year in Worcester. About 30% of Green Island's population was born outside of the U.S., and many of them do not speak fluent English. Half of the properties in Green Island are family households and nearly half of those are single-mother households.³ The

neighborhood median age for males is 30 and median age for females is 32. Pernet's work in family and child development is crucial to the improvement of the Green Island neighborhood as a whole.

The Little Sisters of the Assumption originated during the Industrial



Revolution in 1865. It was founded by Marie Antoinette Fage and Father Etienne Pernet who was a Professor at the College of the Assumption in Nimes. After meeting in Paris, France they began the mission of providing a variety of services to the poor of the communities in city. Their service to the city included home-based nursing, child care, and homemaker help for the workers who were tremendously overburdened.⁴ The LSA was approved as a congregation in

¹ *LSA Family Health Service*

² US Census Bureau."

³ Green Island Neighborhood

⁴ Family Shelters of Greater Boston

1897 by the Vatican and with the turn of the 19th century the Sisters reach was as far as Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, and the United States.

In 1955 the Little Sisters of the Assumption began their Mission in Worcester to provide health care, support, and the revitalization of the spirit of those impoverished in the area. The Little Sisters followed almost a hundred years of tradition in Father Pernet's footsteps, bringing sustenance back to Worcester. As the tradition grew in Worcester, the Little Sisters moved the location of their nunnery in 1978 to the triple decker houses at 237 and 243 Millbury Street. This provided more ideal living quarters for them, housing around a dozen Sisters. Over the past decades, with fewer women committing to sisterhood and joining convents, the facilities have undergone the transformation from a fulltime convent into a working non-profit organization.

Pernet's staff now has close to 30 full time employees and up to 200 volunteers a year including nurses, social workers, and volunteers who work to renew the people of the community in need of physical, social, and spiritual support.⁵ Pernet Family Health looks to support the community's individuals' development and that of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights with hope to improve society one person, one family, and one community at a time.

Today Pernet Family Health Services accomplishes what the LSA established through a variety of services and programs that all show great value and tremendous growth over the past years. Listed below are the programs available by Pernet Family Health:

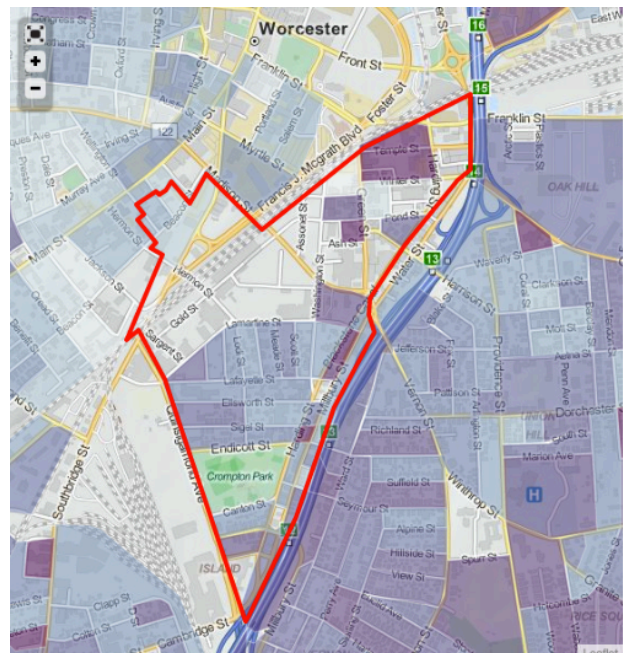
⁵ Pernet Family Health Services

- Early Intervention
- Maternal and Child Nursing
- Fathers and Family Program
- Parent Aides
- Homemakers Program
- Young Parent Support Group
- Parenting Classes
- Food Pantry and Infant Supplies
- English as a Second Language
- Computer Lab
- Holidays Program
- Youth Group/Homework Club
- Information and Referral
- Neighborhood Leadership Development
- Nutrition Classes
- Parent Advisory Council
- Spiritual Life Programs

Classes

Each of Pernet’s buildings holds different responsibilities for programs and activities. Each rises three stories high with full non-finished basements. The house at 243 Millbury St. also has a full attic the dimensions of the house. During a recent structural analysis Pernet Family Health was advised to move the majority of their miscellaneous files from the attic with the assessment that the weight of the cabinets was too much for the house to bear. With the help of the community, the files were moved to the basement only to be soaked during a flood in March of 2010. These floods came to the neighborhood in part due to the 10 days of rain it received and also due to the history of the surrounding neighborhood and the buried Blackstone Canal.

The Green Island district is one of the lowest points in Worcester and prior to the burial of



Maps.google.com

the canal most of the district was a swamp. There is currently a large amount of groundwater to the West of Pernet's facilities due to a lack of protocol during the burial and conversion of the Blackstone Canal into a drainage system in the 1890's. Since the canal has been buried, 237 and 243 Millbury St. have experienced many cases of flooding and structural faults like other properties in the neighborhood. The basements have dealt with other floods reaching two or three feet high and seeping in fast through the cracks of the foundation. Cracks throughout both houses can be seen as the structure continues to settle on this swampy land, especially in humid Worcester summers.

Another obstacle consistently encountered by Pernet is the amount of snowfall Worcester receives in the winter. On average the city receives 67.2 inches of snowfall per year, ranking in the top 25 cities in the U.S. The variable of snow adds more to the obstacle of flooding when the springtime comes and melts the snow into nearly seven inches of water. Several years ago the Town of Worcester began a project to improve the roadside, utilities and sidewalk directly in front of Pernet's facilities. The project, specifically the storm water drainage connection, was not finished before the winter came. When the snow melted that year, it left significant damage by leaking through the foundation. Volunteer work and a persistent, hardworking staff helped in avoiding a severe impact on the facilities.



2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The current neighborhood of the Worcester Pernet Family Health has a rich history that inevitably effected the houses they adopted from the Sisters. The foundation of Pernet's facilities is settled near what was formerly the Blackstone Canal. In 1825 the Blackstone Canal pushed central New England into the Canal Era. The canal connected Worcester to Narragansett Bay and Providence stretching about 45 miles long with 48 granite locks.⁶

Worcester's infrastructure underwent a major transformation with the construction of the canal. Pernet's location falls right near its old path as the canal comes from the South, past the College of Holy Cross, and up to the East side of Crompton Park, which is visible from the Pernet facilities. This area of Worcester was known as The Island or Scalping Town for the new landscape the canal brought made it a very swampy location.⁷ Houses built during this period in the area would most likely have constant water in their cellars. This swamp turned into the home of many Irish workers who eventually buried the canal manually in the 1890's. This process made the canal a central artery for the drainage of the district. The canal turned into a large sewer pipe that ultimately removed all the surface water allowing the people of Worcester to settle. Since then a large amount of immigration went on to shape the neighborhood with the traditional triple decker houses, two of which are used by Pernet today.



⁶ Narragansett Bay

⁷ Canal

2.2 NON PROFIT FACILITY TRANSITIONING

The task of guiding Pernet Family Health Services through a potential transition between facilities requires a strong understanding of their logistical situation. Assessing the best alternatives involves what could be limitless factors that need to be prioritized. These factors could affect whether a non-profit organization will renovate, relocate, or rebuild. It is important to keep in mind several key factors to take into consideration during a transition.⁸

- How long will the transition take?
- What services can still operate without a facility?
- Will any programs be able to continue to use the current facilities during the transition?
- Where else can the organization look to hold programs during the transition?
- Which patrons will not be able to utilize the organizations programs and how can they be aided in the meantime?

These are issues that any organization would need to evaluate. Every different organization will possess different needs and concerns with a new situation. This job will in many ways be the theme to the project.

It's possible that new opposing factors for every potential opportunity will be encountered. The task of managing the potential priorities during a transition will involve the filtering of options that address the more important issues as the project progresses. The use of many different interpretations will be vital to have an accurate vantage point of the situation. The project will demonstrate how to thoroughly assess the different opinions and pinpoint any consensus seen throughout the organization and outside sources. Since Pernet Family Health affects such a vast array of people, it is important to take as many factors as possible into consideration.

⁸ Moving: Nonprofit Office Relocation Guide

2.3 CAPITAL FUNDING PROGRAM

As Pernet Family Health seeks to grow and help at an increasing rate throughout Worcester, correspondingly the demand for capital and donation has reached its greatest point. There is no doubt for Pernet that a facility more fitted towards their needs would increase their production. While working with what was available for the LSA for several decades, Pernet's facilities have provided the community with a successful emergency food shelter, a prenatal clinic, after school programs for dozens of children, and many more community programs and services. With the help of a Capital Funding Program, Pernet Family Health believes that they can carry out their duties to the Worcester community more efficient and grow exponentially. The hope is for this project to provide options to further their growth by the means of their facilities.

Through Worcester's Consolidated Action Plan Pernet is entitled to Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)⁹ and Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds (NSP)¹⁰ administered by HUD (Housing and Urban Development). As Pernet moves forward with their facility improvements for serving low and moderate income areas and clientele, they will consider these potential activities: acquisition of real property, site clearance, relocation, interim assistance, and public services. With this plan as a guideline Pernet can discover alternatives to pressing problems that it may undergo with their current facilities and give them some potential figures in terms of the necessary capital funding for the completion of their expansion.¹¹

⁹ Community Development Block Grant Program

¹⁰ Neighborhood Stabilization Program

¹¹ Capital Fund Financing Program

2.4 SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS

The process of expansion for non-profit organizations can become a complicated affair with so many potential variables. When asked about any other non-profits that had recently gone through a transition similar to Pernet's current situation, staff members cited Project Hope in Roxbury, MA and the Little Sisters of Assumption in Harlem, NY.¹² Both organizations are very similar to Pernet, providing health and social work for each of their communities. Much like Pernet, they hit a point in their growth where it was time to make some changes.¹³

The Little Sisters of Assumption have had a presence in East Harlem or "El Barrio" since 1958. Their service have been growing ever since. Their services now include a fully operational thrift store for the community. The focus of their new facility is much like Pernet's. After raising \$7 million through capital campaigning the facility is leading the way in family and child development in the area. With their transition to a new facility their outreach has grown substantially. LSA now has the ability to raise millions of dollars each year.

Project Hope, like Pernet, was founded by The Little Sisters of the Assumption.¹⁴ It began as a house of the Sisters, who provided health and social work to the surrounding neighborhood. They later expanded and became one of Boston's first family shelters. Through the 80's and 90's they continued to grow a great deal, until in 2006, it was finally time to relocate. They were able to build an environmentally friendly, four-story building to facilitate the majority of their operations. This new building houses their education, workforce development, and housing resources in their entirety. They were also able to



¹² LSA Buildings Gift to Pernet

¹³ Relocate Your Business

¹⁴ Project Hope

keep their old building, and today it houses 11 families in need of a home. Project Hope has since said that their new building has allowed them to expand their services even more, helping them serve more and more low-income families every year.¹⁵

¹⁵*Low-income Education and Housing*

3 METHODOLOGY

Pernet has three potential alternatives to staying in their current situation. These options are to renovate their current facilities, rebuild a new facility on an emptied or vacant lot, or to relocate to a facility that better fits their needs.

In order to know which options will fit their needs best, questionnaires and interviews will be conducted. The questionnaires were distributed to Pernet through email and all employees and volunteers were encouraged to take part in filling them out. The interviews were held with several program directors at Pernet including Executive Director Sheilah Dooley. A separate interview was held with all the members of the Financial Committee. These will narrow down what improvements need to be made for the functionality of their organization. Using the method of coding, the suggestions and objectives will be categorized and prioritized.

The methodology will also review how to determine which facility options are available. This includes suggestions given by the employees of Pernet because of their knowledge of the area. The determination of what is available will also include a review of the government improvement plan for urban renewal. This source will lay out the properties that are available for consideration, by cross-analyzing what is available and what Pernet needs.

3.1 ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

After gathering the data, there was a need to organize this data, in order to efficiently analyze Pernet's situation and propose logical solutions. The best method of organizing qualitative data was found in the text *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research* by Carol A. Bailey.¹⁶ The method used to organize the data is called coding. Coding is "the process of organizing a large amount of data into smaller segments, that, when needed, can be retrieved easily." This method could be applied perfectly to this project, as a large amount of data was collected from many different sources. This method provided a way to focus efforts on the most prevalent problems faced by Pernet, by guiding the organization of data by creating codes and looking for similarities in the data gathered between many different interviews and questionnaires. The text laid out a specific process to follow, which is as follows:

1. Making notes in the field
2. Writing up or transcribing field notes
3. Editing: correcting, extending or revising field notes
4. Coding: attaching key words or tags to segments of text to permit later retrieval
5. Storage: keeping text in an organized database
6. Search and retrieval: locating relevant segments of text and making them available for inspection.
7. Data "linking": connecting relevant data segments with each other, forming categories, clusters or networks of information.
8. Memoing: writing reflective commentaries on some aspect of data, as a basis for deeper understanding
9. Content analysis: counting frequencies, sequence or locations of words and phrases
10. Data display: Placing selected or reduced data in a condensed organized format, such as a matrix or network, for inspection

¹⁶ *A guide to qualitative field research*

11. Conclusion drawing and verification: aiding the analyst to interpret displayed data and to test or confirm findings
12. Theory building: developing systematic, conceptually coherent explanations of findings; testing hypotheses
13. Graphic mapping: creating diagrams that depict findings or theories
14. Preparing interim and final reports

Given that the data was coming from several diverse sources, the method needed to be tweaked a bit, so that this method would better fit the needs of the project. Each method of data retrieval was individually coded: interviews with Pernet's staff, the assessment from Professor Albano and Mr. Harasimowicz, interviews with the finance committee, and the questionnaires distributed to Pernet's staff. This was deemed the most efficient way to code the data, as each different group would provide very different information from one another. For example, the finance committee would provide information that would not be expected from Pernet's everyday staff, and vice versa.

This method of coding was crucial to the advancement of the project. After coding and linking all of the data, it was made very clear to what aspects of Pernet's business needed to be focused on. This method led to much more efficient efforts, and the ability to fully focus on areas of Pernet's operations that required the most immediate attention in order to allow Pernet to in turn run more efficiently and effectively.

3.2 METHODS OF GATHERING DATA

3.2.1 Site Visits

In order to analyze the facilities and the functionality within the facilities, one important thing to do was to actually be on site during a typical work day by performing volunteer work. . Some of the tasks that Pernet would typically assign to students volunteering included salting and shoveling the sidewalks, and stocking and taking inventory of the food pantry around the holidays.

This volunteer work provided an opportunity to see how Pernet's staff operates on a daily basis, and additional time to talk to staff members and gather their thoughts regarding the expansion of Pernet's services. Other times which were utilized to observe the facilities more thoroughly occurred during the initial meeting and tour of the site, and during follow up interviews throughout B and C terms.

3.2.2 Interviews

The first course of action for C-Term was to head down to Pernet, in hopes of interviewing as many employees as possible. The goal with this was to gain a better of understanding of what day to day operations are like at Pernet Family Health Services, in an attempt to further educate ourselves on what exactly physical expansion for Pernet would entail. After conducting a questionnaire with Johanna Lolax, Pernet's Director of Community Affairs and Development, it was found that many of the employees would not be available for interview. The decision was made to sit down and interview with Johanna, Chris Nelson (Pernet's Director of Family Support), and Michael Rezkalla (Pernet's Director of Operations). The three of them were able to provide a great deal of valuable information.

The discussion began with Johanna, asking her about the spaces she used on a daily basis. She explained that although her office on the third floor was small, she felt it was sufficient for her needs. She said that most of her work was done from her computer, and a larger office was not necessary for her. She did go on to say, however, that the real issue was a lack of workflow throughout the buildings, due to the layout of the buildings and the fact that there are two separate buildings, which were both initially intended to be triple decker style houses. Some

things that she saw which would be slightly easier fixes were insulation issues within the buildings. Noise is a big issue, and creates a problem between separated rooms due to a lack of insulation. The other was the difficulty heating and cooling the building caused by poor ventilation, which also led to some later discussions later on with Johanna, regarding energy efficiency.

Next it was important to know what programs they were seeing growth in, and whether or not the growth of these programs would result in a need for increased space. Michael and Chris addressed these problems. Chris discussed the need for a larger, more conventional multipurpose room to support many of his programs. Support groups such as the Fathers and Family Program, which served over 200 fathers last year, typically could not utilize spaces at 237 Millbury St. The size of the group meetings was often too large to utilize the small meeting space available in the current facilities. Chris went on to mention the Fathers and Family Program often were able to utilize the basement of the Carpenter's Union building, around the corner from their current facilities, and informed as that the Carpenter's Union was looking to sell this property (located at 29 Endicott St.).¹⁷ Michael's main concern for Pernet's programs was continuing the growth of their early intervention program. The early intervention program is viewed by many within the organization as their premiere program, especially in terms of revenue generation. The program promotes continuity for growth and success for the youth of the Green Island district. Michael would like to see improvements in the computer lab and play areas, in order to help promote even more growth within the Early Intervention program.

A better understanding of what potential improvements could be made through available funding was necessary. The interviewees were asked what they saw as options moving forward through fundraising and the Capital Funding Program. Michael and Johanna had detailed visions.

Johanna, who has only been with the organization since June of 2013, felt that Pernet is moving in the right direction for expansion. As Director of Development, she felt confident in their involvement in government affairs and presented interest to a number of municipal authorities

¹⁷ 29 Endicott St, Worcester

in the urban redevelopment of the Green Island District. She thought further development of Pernet would involve changing the face of their approach. She insisted they must persist with the mission guided by spirituality established by the LSA but needed more coordination with government agencies and funding. Johanna's personal idea for moving forward would include relocation, utilizing all sorts of green technology, similar to Project Hope, seeing that the city is promoting energy efficient development. Moving forward, this plan would take time for funding and development. The agenda for the completion of this project would take about 10 years.

3.2.3 Questionnaires

By distributing questionnaires, a broader interpretation of views would be produced. 21 employees and volunteers completed the General Questionnaire. There would be differences in the opinions based on the nature of their position and where in the facilities each individual worked. Questions for Relocation were surveyed to several of Pernet's program and administrative Directors as well as the members of the Financial Committee. These questions reveal a consistent and coherent response.¹⁸

General Questionnaire for Pernet Employees:

- What is your position within the organization?
- How long have you worked at Pernet?
- Which spaces do you use regularly (building and floor?) and for what purpose do you use them?
- What difficulty/ies, if any, do you have concerning a lack of space for your needs?
- How often do these difficulty/ies arise and why?
- What would an ideal situation look like in place of this difficulty?

¹⁸ Surveys for Data Collection

- Outside of your own needs, what difficulties do you see concerning available/useful space for the different programs or business operations?
- What do you like best about your current facilities?

Questions for Relocation

- Is Pernet personally tied to the current neighborhood?
- Are there any unique parts of your facility that would be inaccessible at another location?
- How often are pre-existing facilities, within the neighborhood Pernet is currently located, relied upon for events, and for what events?
- Is there a limit to how far Pernet could move from its location and support its patrons in Worcester?

The resulting factors were stored in a comprehensible submittal log. Through the use of coding the data gathered was categorized.

3.3 ASSESSING POTENTIAL OPTIONS

The search for locations for Pernet to relocate will be found through Worcester's Consolidated Action Plan. This plan was employed by both the city and state HUD programs enabling Pernet to acquire funds within the restraints of the Plan. This plan reviews the urban renewal of much of the Worcester including the Green Island District. Vision Government Solutions is a database that observes all the locations under government provision in need of urban renewal and/or improvement. This database lists all parcels by street number providing their value based on tax returns of the land and their buildings. Using this as source all the options within the Green Island District can be assessed.

4 RESULTS

After retrieving data throughout the second term of the project, through a series of live interviews and questionnaires distributed to Pernet's staff, there were many categories of coded data. In order to make this data useful towards the goal of the project, there needed to be a method capable of systematically implementing the findings. These results were would lead towards a conclusion, providing an inside look at exactly what problems Pernet's employees are facing on a daily basis. This was the basis of the project: to alleviate the problems Pernet's employees were facing, in order to help their business run more efficiently, and allow them to improve the quality of their services. Through the methodology, a finer point of view was translated from the entire organization so that a solution could more easily be distinguished.

The coding process for the interviews proved to be the most involved task included in this process of data analysis. A large amount of data were gathered between the interviews with the members of the administrative team, Sheilah, and members of the finance committee. Such a broad array of topics was covered within these interviews, providing a great wealth of data. These data, however, were extremely scattered and unorganized, and is what initially led to using the aforementioned method of data analysis: coding. The most important steps within this method for organizing data (which was the primary concern) are data linking: connecting relevant data segments with each other, forming categories, clusters or networks of information, and memoing: writing reflective commentaries on some aspect of data, as a basis for deeper understanding.

4.1 CODING RESULTS

4.1.1 Interviews

The following categories were formed during analysis of the interviews, along with their corresponding memos:

Expansion of Early Intervention Program

Pernet's Early Intervention Program was frequently mentioned throughout interviews with Pernet's staff. Several members spoke about it as Pernet's most valuable program, and see a great deal of potential for expansion. The early intervention program is Pernet's premiere program, and one of their primary sources of revenue, making it something they would very much like to see improved upon in coming years. This program is part of a statewide developmental service, which is utilized by families with children between birth and 3 years of age. These children typically have developmental difficulties due to disabilities, or children whose typical development is seen as at risk due to certain birth or environmental circumstances.



Multipurpose meeting space

One complaint that came up in nearly all interviews was the lack of a multipurpose meeting space. Pernet's programs do not all require their own space, as most of them are capable of utilizing the same areas at different times during the



day/week. If Pernet was able to rearrange the floor plans of the current buildings, a few large, multipurpose meeting rooms could potentially house many of the current programs in place at Pernet. As it stands now, the current facilities contain one small meeting area, which exists only through the use of a retractable wall, dividing the already small room into two, separating a small office area, and a “conference room” area.

Parking Issues

Parking has also been seen as a cause for concern for Pernet, especially for employees. While it is certainly a problem which is lower on the list of major concerns, especially in terms of Pernet’s expansion, it is something that many employees would like to see addressed if a new location were acquired.

Location

In order to seek out potential new locations for Pernet, any ties to the Green Island neighborhood had to be clarified in order to find out if these ties could potentially limit the search radius for potential relocation sites. One thing that was made very clear in each interview was that Pernet has very close ties with their current neighborhood, and in order to maintain their current volume of clients, they would have to remain in their current neighborhood. This was important information, as it refined the search to only include the very small Green Island area.

Carpenters Union

While discussing the potential for relocation, one thing that was mentioned frequently was the potential acquisition of the carpenters union building, just a block away from Pernet’s current facilities. Pernet’s staff told



us of their prior discussions with the carpenters union regarding this acquisition, and that it was very much a real option for them. This building could be used to house several of Pernet's programs, primarily the youth program. With the building's relative location to Crompton Park, it would provide the youth program with a more functional indoor space, and easy access to the park.

Real office space & Work Flow

One of Pernet's major deficiencies is a lack of a true office space. Their current facilities are formatted poorly to fit the needs of any business, as they were originally homes of the LSA. This lack of office space is creating a major work flow problem amongst the staff. With offices split between the 2nd and 3rd floors, communication between staff members is very inefficient. This point was a common complaint throughout the interview process, and something that could be easily fixed through a variety of solutions.

Youth Program

Pernet's youth program has been something that they have really been trying to improve, but as was discovered throughout the interviews, they are facing some challenges in doing so. During the initial tours of the facilities, the current youth program facilities were shown. It is a very limited space, which creates a capacity problem for the program. Things are very cramped, restricting the effectiveness and capabilities of the program. With an upgrade for the youth program facilities, Pernet has many great ideas for expansion that could finally be put into effect, including an expansion of the computer lab, creating opportunities for Pernet to provide kids with technological experience, which is an important skill to acquire at an early age in today's society.

Food Pantry

The food pantry is an area in Pernet that is desperate for more space. It is one of the few things the finance committee is actually able to see firsthand, and is something they definitely would like to see improved in the future. The way it is currently configured, it is essentially a small hallway in the back of the buildings, which creates major issues, especially around the holidays,

in terms of their ability to efficiently distribute food. It's been something the staff sees as a thing that could be expanded upon greatly, and would make this program much more effective for the community.



Worcester Consolidated Action Plan

The finance committee brought to attention several potential sources of funding for any future expansion. Of these, the Worcester Consolidated Action Plan was something that was emphasized. This is a source of government funding, geared toward low-income areas, to develop both housing and the surrounding community. This is a source of funding Pernet will seek to acquire in the coming years, as they look to begin their expansion process.

4.1.2 Building Structure Analysis

The next set of data which needed to be coded was gathered from a visit to Pernet with Professor Albano and Mr. Harasimowicz. The help of these two men was sought out in order to provide an analysis of the quality of the two structures Pernet is currently occupying. This information would prove useful in guiding the project moving forward, providing valuable information on necessary steps with regards to renovations especially.

Data was collected through note taking, as the two men toured the buildings, and discussed anything they saw with regards to the structural soundness of the buildings, and anything which could affect any potential renovations. With a much more narrow focus compared to the

interviews, the coding process was much smoother for this tour, and provided the following categories and memos:

Demolition of Buildings not a good option

When Professor Albano, and Mr. Harasimowicz visited the buildings of Pernet, they were looking to find out what the options would be in terms of either performing renovations, or possibly taking down both buildings and rebuilding. The two of them both stressed that demolishing the buildings would not be a good option, as the demolition would be very expensive, and would not be necessary, as the buildings are still structurally sound.¹⁹

Gutting interior of buildings

Professor Albano and Mr. Harasimowicz felt the best option for renovations would be to keep the foundations and exterior walls already in place, and gut the interior of the buildings. This would allow Pernet to reconfigure the layout of the floors, and solve the different problems they face within the current facilities.

Renovations require entire building to be brought up to Code

With renovations to the buildings as a serious option on the table, learning the process for any renovations done to the buildings would require that the rest of the building be brought up to code as well. This is something that would have to be figured into an estimate for the total cost of a project, as it is something that can be costly, especially given the age of the current facilities.

4.1.3 Questionnaires

The questionnaires were the last of the data to be coded. With the quality of responses received differing greatly from each questionnaire, it was a bit difficult to form useful categories. Responses were also received from staff members of greatly varying responsibilities, leading to extremely diverse answers, with many staff members rarely using the same spaces within the buildings. The following categories and corresponding memos were formed using the data analysis technique:

¹⁹ Demolition Cost

Lack of Meeting Space

A lack of meeting space was a complaint heard in the interviews, and it was consistently heard throughout the questionnaires as well. This lack of available meeting space makes staff meetings extremely difficult, as the one area Pernet does currently have on site is not large enough to house the entire staff for a meeting.

Poor Configuration

Many staff members had complaints regarding the configuration of the buildings as they stand now. As stated before, the current facilities are converted apartment buildings, with the floors not ideally suited for office spaces. This poor configuration creates problems such as a very cramped feeling, and a lack of privacy for phone calls with clients.

Parking

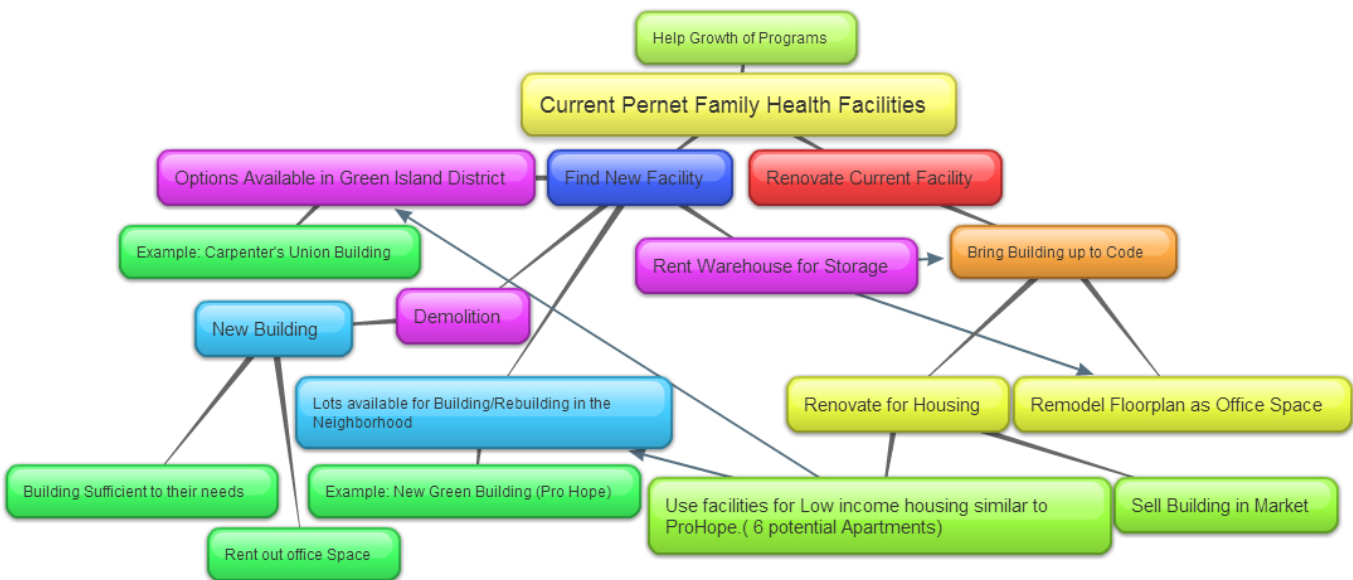
Parking continued to be a chief complaint amongst staff members. With Pernet's hope for expansion, this could create more positions on staff, and increase the number of employees working out of the two current buildings. Their parking problems will only continue to worsen as the organization continues to expand.

Space for Files

One problem that is continuing to grow at Pernet is the amount of space taken up by old charts. Pernet is required to hold onto inactive charts for 5 years, before they can move them elsewhere. The only problem is they have nowhere else to put them. Acquiring an offsite location to store these charts could help alleviate some of the space issues caused by the piling up of old charts.

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS FOR FACILITIES

The options for Pernet Family Health Services moving forward are not definite in any direction, being renovate, rebuild, or relocate. By mapping out all the potential options, the ability to compare the coding of priorities and needs the conclusion as to which ones will work in the best interest of Pernet moving forward became clearer. Based on what the organizations highest priorities are from the coding a recommendation can be made from the resulting options for facilities.



4.3 POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS

Throughout much of the preliminary research with Pernet, several potential limitations were discovered, many of which have been pressing issues for too long. There will be several roadblocks encountered during some of the ideas of this transition for Pernet. While the available options and plans are fairly straight-forward and simple, a few potential issues will always exist in this process.

One of the most basic and important limitations present is the issue of the deed to the property. Prior to 2008, the buildings Pernet currently operates out of were owned by the LSA. Pernet paid an annual rent of \$7,000, along with all other ownership costs such as utilities. The LSA were having financial problems, and did not want their own problems to disrupt Pernet's mission. To ensure this, the LSA decided to transfer the deed over to Pernet.²⁰ Due to Pernet's weak financial position themselves, the LSA also wanted to put some covenants in the deed to protect themselves as well. One of these covenants deals with the issue of relocation.

The covenant reads: "During the first 10 years, Pernet cannot sell the buildings unless prior approval is received from the LSA. The LSA has sole discretion over whether to grant permission." This covenant leaves things slightly unclear, however, Pernet has clarified that the LSA has verbally told them they will not deny permission to move, however the sale is required for Pernet to continue its mission. The overall feeling at Pernet has been that the LSA has no intention of getting in the way of Pernet, as long as they are continuing their current mission.

Another potential limitation with relocating would be Pernet's ties to the current neighborhood. They have implemented many neighborhood-based services. This has a tremendous effect on the area in which the search will encompass while looking at new site for relocation. If their clients rely on their current location as a deciding factor of whether or not they can access Pernet's services, it will greatly reduce the search radius.

²⁰ McCabe

The most evident problem is their issues with flooding. The neighborhood they are located in is at a low elevation, and also located in the former canal district. This combination of factors creates a tremendous flooding problem for most of the homes in the neighborhood. This limits Pernet's ability through renovations or rebuilding to utilize a basement area for functional space. A significant amount of money will be needed for renovations to counteract the flooding. This problem may very well be present in other locations in consideration for Pernet's facility transition.

A problem was encountered almost 20 years ago when there was a failed attempt to connect the two buildings. Plans were made to have a connection built in between the two buildings, but the plans fell through for unclear reasons. One issue in the attempt to build this addition was discovered was that the two buildings are on slightly different elevations. This means that if a connector was built, the floors of the buildings would not match up exactly, and the floors of the connector would have to be altered. Rather than a connector creating a significantly larger space of each floor, it may instead just make more of the spaces smaller, as the floors of the buildings will not match up.

Lastly is their location relative to I-290, and the potential difficulties that could arise due to this location in terms of potential construction or demolition. Their buildings are located essentially right underneath the highway. Any major construction may face some possible limitations or at least some difficulties because of their extreme closeness to the highway.

These obstacles all represent priorities that are already factoring into the options of renovating, rebuilding, and relocating. It is necessary to decide which factor has the potential to limit the most alternatives. It's probable that many of these will have an effect on multiple potential directions. The hope is for these hurdles to guide the project toward the most practical conclusion due to the consideration of these limitations.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 RENOVATIONS

5.1.1 Small Scale Renovation

The next option that was investigated for renovating the structure was a small-scale interior renovation of the rooms and halls. This would include altering interior non-load bearing walls and general floor-by-floor reconstruction. This option was one of the least attractive options due to the logistical problems it would entail when trying to bring the building up to code. Associated with any small-scale renovation of the building would be the need to bring all aspects of the building up to the most recent Massachusetts building code.

This is a pivotal point to take into consideration because if the entire building did not have to be brought up to code then a small-scale interior renovation would most likely be the best option for renovation. Since things like the sprinkler, heating, plumbing, insulation and electrical system would need to be brought up to code throughout the entire building, even if the only alteration to the existing structure was minimal, it continues to make small-scale renovation an unattractive and expensive option.

With a partial renovation of the interior of the building, some other problems that can be foreseen are an increase in contractors' costs due to the amount of time they would be spending to work around the existing structure. This sometimes leads to other building code violations; if the existing structure may be in the way of new construction. Another problem with doing a floor-by-floor renovation of the structure is the scheduling of work to be done. With this smaller scale renovation, there would be many scheduling hurdles to overcome due to the size of each individual workspace. With smaller workspaces for contractors to be in, it usually only allows for one contractor at a time to work on the space, therefore extending the time of construction and ultimately pushing the cost of construction up. Although there are many negatives associated with small-scale or partial renovation, there are some positives to be heard.

5.1.2 Large Scale Renovation

The most cost efficient, and overall beneficial avenue of construction for Pernet was observed to be to do a large-scale renovation of the entire interior of the structure. This renovation would entail an interior demolition of the building including everything except the exterior walls. By choosing this avenue of construction, it allows for maximum cost efficiency in terms of scheduling, by allowing multiple contractors to have the ability to work on the space at the same time. This also enables the contractors to have an easily accessible space to work on, this also helps keep construction within budget and helps to make sure everything meets the customer's expectations and Massachusetts building code.²¹ General large scale renovation usually cost between \$100-\$120 per square foot which means that for a total renovation of both buildings Pernet operates out of could cost anywhere from \$1.4 - \$1.7 million. As with any construction project there are always exclusions associated with the final cost, some of the exclusions that Pernet may run into are thing like asbestos remediation, which depending on the amount of asbestos in the buildings (if any) could drive the cost up. Other items to take into consideration are things like building ordinances and ADA regulations. This type of renovation will yield a product that the customer will be happy with, the only problem with this avenue is that for the amount of money that would be spent in construction, the buildings net worth would not justify the amount of money spent.

5.1.3 Residential Renovation

Renovating the residential-style buildings to an open concept office space is a necessity. Project Hope, when they built their new green building, renovated their existing structure into an updated residential-style building. This is an excellent option to increase revenue but it also helps on the expansion front as well. By renovating their building into livable apartments it allows them to collect an income from the tenants and it also allows them to give back to the community. This option for expansion and giving back to the community is a very good option for Pernet because Project Hope has already successfully executed it.

²¹ *Massachusetts Regulations, Code of (CMR)*

5.2 REBUILD

5.2.1 Demolition

One initial option discussed included the demolition of both current buildings. This option would include building one large building, post demolition, on both of the properties, as they are considered one lot by the city of Worcester. This option was discussed prior to the analysis of the structural soundness of the buildings with Mr. Harasimowicz and Professor Albano. The reason this was considered one of the more feasible options was due to the assumption that the buildings' structures were compromised, and their timeline of usefulness was very limited.

After a structural analysis of the buildings with Mr. Harasimowicz and Professor Albano, it was discovered that the foundations of both buildings were in much better shape than Pernet initially anticipated. Because of this, both of the professionals stressed that demolition was not a good option for several reasons.

The first and probably most important argument against demolition has to do with the cost associated with it. Aside from the cost of an expensive rebuild building from scratch rather than using the current foundations, and the high cost of connecting a new building to the necessary utilities, is the cost of the demolition itself. Demolition, depending on several variables, can become an extremely expensive project. These variables which can affect the price of a demolition project include: requirements/ restriction in your area, project location/ accessibility to structure, project size, scope of work, type of material (wood, concrete, etc.), hauling/ disposal fees, salvage material value, and hazardous materials. Without any specific knowledge about many of these variables in regards to a potential demolition of Pernet's current facilities, a rough estimate can be made based off of the square footage of the two buildings. Demolition of a 10,000 square foot warehouse/ office building can cost anywhere from \$40,000 to \$80,000. With a combined square footage of 14,000, this would be the best estimate of potential cost of demolition.

This costly demolition would also lead to a costly rebuild, as building from scratch would be much more expensive than using the skeleton of the buildings that already exists. With good foundations already in place, it would not be cost effective to demolish these buildings entirely,

when it is simply not necessary. On top of this would be the added cost of connecting a new building to the necessary utilities. The buildings as they stand are already connected to all necessary utilities, and reconnecting them would be just another unnecessary cost to add. Refraining from demolition would also help avoid any potential zoning issues that could arise with a rebuild.

5.3 RELOCATION

Throughout the Green Island District there are vacant lots of varying sizes.²² The following are two parcels of land within the vicinity of Pernet's current location, both worth further investigation for purchase. If these options were to be pursued by Pernet, it would undoubtedly have a beneficial for the Green Island community and Worcester as an entirety. However the logistics of pursuing this scale of project would be in the hands of a capital campaign. Remaining in their current facilities and building for the future, possibly 5 to 10 years down the road. There are many locations within the Green Island District in need of a purpose and an increase of aesthetic value.

5.3.1 Lamartine Street²³

On 19 Lamartine Street, less than half a mile North of Pernet's current facilities, there is a 16,193 square foot paved parcel. This property is currently under the ownership of WG Washington Street LLC. The last government assessment of the site was prepared in 2013 listing the property worth at \$107,500 and potential improvement to be worth \$45,200 coming to a total of \$152,700. In comparison the most recent evaluation of 241 Millbury Street was listed at \$65,900 for the land pricing and \$108,200 for the price of potential improvements, coming to a total of \$174,100.

This property will provide Pernet with solutions to many of its obstacles found in throughout coding if a new facility were to be built.

One advance Pernet will make from its current facilities is the possible addition of a parking lot within its property. Another positive is that the lot is also located one block down from Worcester's Department of Health and Human Services on Lamartine Street. Starting fresh in

²² Green Island

²³

this location would also allow Pernet to address the issues of cramped office space; lack of meeting space; provide sufficient space for the food pantry, hard copy files and other resources; and expansion of the Early Intervention Program. Starting at a new location would give Pernet the ability to approach their new facility as Project Hope did in Roxbury. A building on this parcel of land would also be capable taking on LEED certified project putting Pernet at the forefront of revitalizing and beautifying the area. If Pernet were able to ratify their vision through the support of their patrons this is an ideal location to rebuild.

While the site is already paved it is not being held to any performance standard as it has been vacant for at least a decade during construction the lot will need an excessive amount of work. The cost of work on this site may outweigh its potential for use.



5.3.2 Ashmont Ave.

One other location within the Green Island District worth further investigation as a site for relocation and a new building is located 0.2 miles away at 17 Ashmont Ave. This 9,032 square foot lot was last assessed on Vision Government Solutions to be worth \$57,600 in 2014. The land is currently owned by New Garden Park INC. who is currently partnered with the Worcester Business Development Corporation (BDC). The Worcester BDC has incorporated this lot as part of a larger scale redevelopment project of the former J.J. Nissen Baking Co.. The BDC was founded in 1965 under the mission of collaborating with community officials to create a

comprehensive approach to the economic challenges facing the Greater Worcester area. They may be an invaluable resource for Pernet based on the similarity of goals.

The separation of this parcel for the benefit of Pernet from the BDC's overall goal is a possibility at this time. This ability would be given at the discretion of the BDC and the head of this project, Jon Weaver. Weaver has already concluded that if there was an attractive reason for the BDC to split up the project that they would be willing and fully cooperative with their services. However the specific lot possesses many of the same attributes seen on 19 Lamartine Street without the extra costs of site preparation. Pernet will be able to rebuild addressing its issues of cramped office space; lack of meeting space; provision of a sufficient space for the food pantry, hard copy files, and other resources; and expansion of the Early Intervention Program. One obstacle this property does not address is parking spaces. Pernet would remain in a similar situation to what they have available to them now. There is a parking lot next to the lot currently but it remains as part of the BDC's development plan for 75 Quinsigamond. Ave.



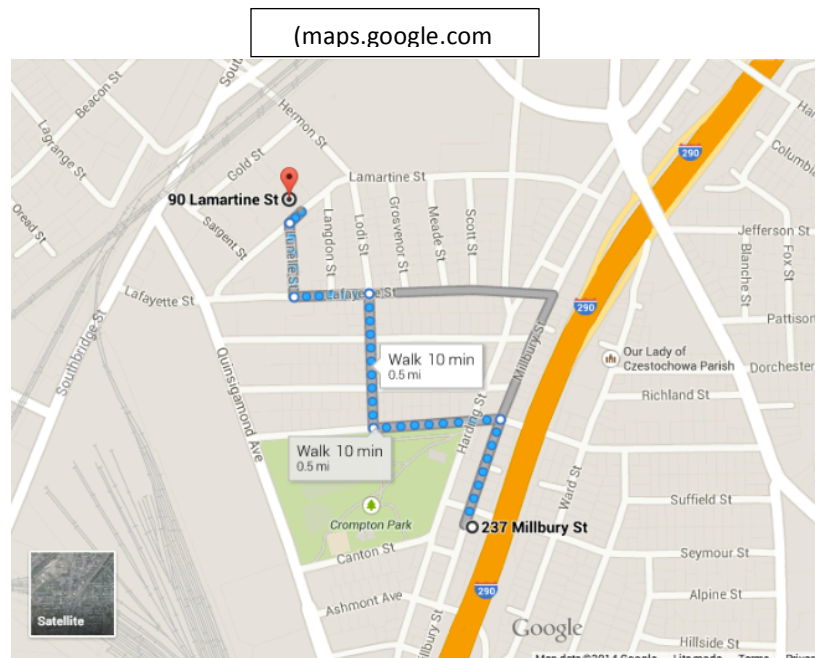
5.3.3 Storage Options

Many of Pernet's problems stem from a general lack of space, and crowding within their current buildings. While it has been made pretty clear that their current setup will not suit their needs moving forward, it is possible to temporarily alleviate some of the crowding issues they are currently dealing with, and it all starts with utilizing certain spaces more efficiently.

As was learned throughout interviews and surveys with the staff at Pernet, their current system of storage for files is a bit of a mess. Pernet is required by law to retain the files of patients for 5 years after they become inactive. After 5 years, Pernet no longer needs them readily available. If Pernet were to move charts off site after 5 years, it could free up a considerable amount of space.

Another problem has been created by the storage of baby formula within the current buildings. Pernet currently has massive piles of baby formula boxed up in their attic. This baby formula often ends up sitting up there for a long time before it is ever distributed. If there were a place Pernet could store this formula outside of the current facilities, it could free up this space in the attic for other uses.

There is a U Haul Self-Storage located at 90 Lamartine St., which is just 0.4 miles from Pernet's current facilities.²⁴ These storage units could be utilized by Pernet to help alleviate some of their crowding problems by moving some old files and boxes of baby formula off site. There are many different sizes of



storage units available for varying prices, all pretty affordable, and any of them could at least help towards decreasing the crowding problems within Pernet's current facilities. These options are listed in Table:

²⁴ U-Haul: Self-storage

| Size | Price | Features |
|----------------|--------------------|---|
| 5' x 5' x 8' | \$38.00 per month | 1st floor interior climate controlled, roll-up door Miscellaneous storage (Up to 2 rooms) |
| 5' x 10' x 8' | \$48.00 per month | 1st floor interior climate controlled, roll-up door 1-2 Bedroom Home (Up to 1,200 sq. ft.) |
| 8' x 10' x 8' | \$76.00 per month | lower level interior climate controlled, double doors 1-2 Bedroom Home (Up to 1,200 sq. ft.) |
| 10' x 10' x 8' | \$94.00 per month | 1st floor interior climate controlled, roll-up door 2-3 Bedroom Home (1,200 - 1,600 sq. ft.) |
| 10' x 15' x 8' | \$148.00 per month | 1st floor interior climate controlled, roll-up door 2-3 Bedroom Home (1,600 - 2,000 sq. ft.) |

5.3.4 Carpenters Union

One of the primary relocation options discussed was the Carpenter’s Union building, located at 29 Endicott Street. Several Pernet employees suggested it as a potential new location, based off of their prior relationship with the Carpenter’s Union and utilizing some of their offices in the past. It is a versatile space, and could help alleviate some of Pernet’s problems, depending on which parts of the building they’d be interested in acquiring.

One of the major benefits of the Carpenter’s Union building is its location. The acquisition of this property would allow Pernet to remain in the Green Island neighborhood, which is essential to the continued expansion of their operations. The location would also allow Pernet to potentially continue operations at their current facilities. With the Carpenter’s Union being

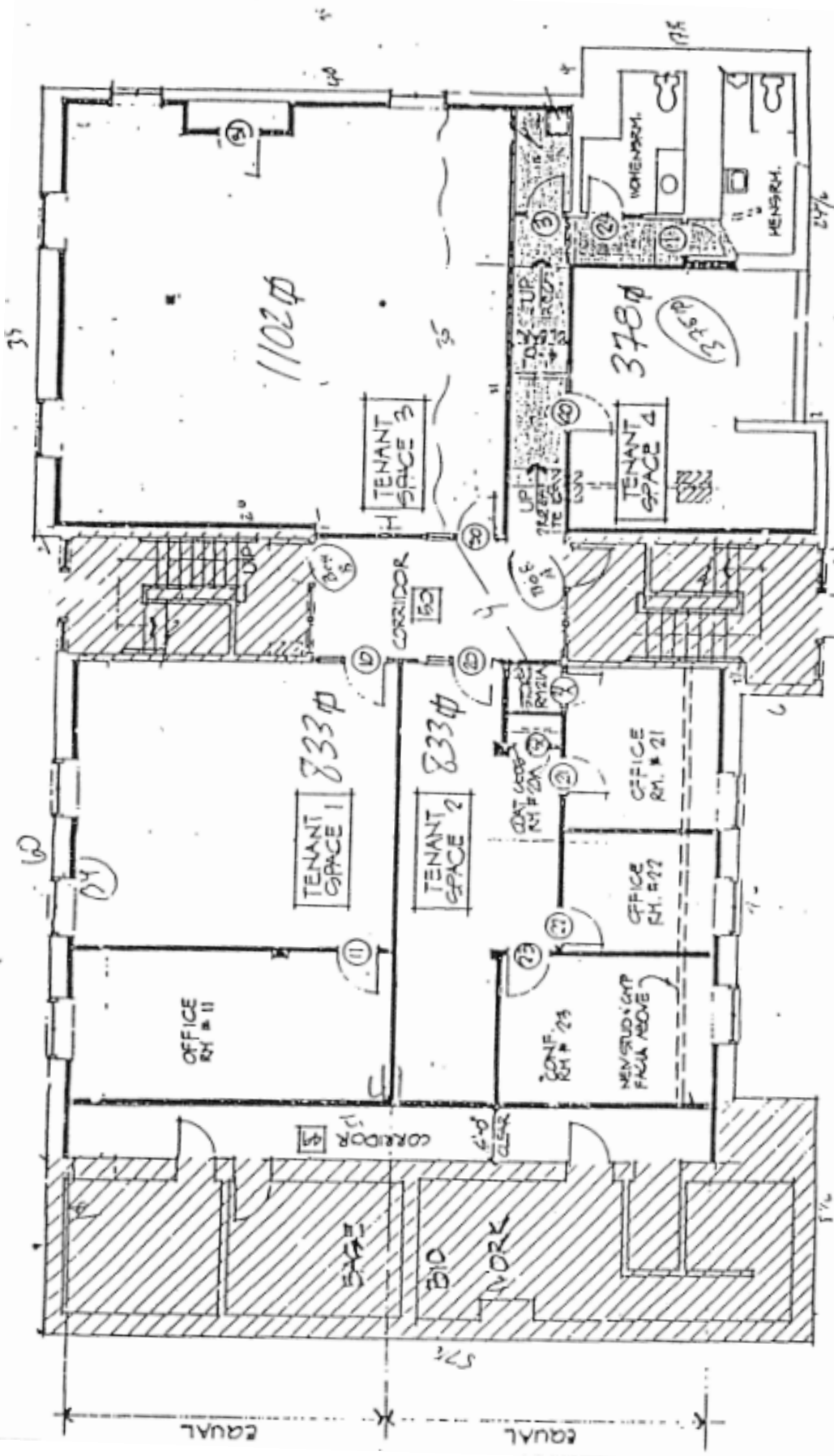
located essentially right around the corner, operating out of both locations would not create much of a burden at all for Pernet employees. The Carpenter's Union is also located directly across the street from Crompton Park. If Pernet were to potentially move the youth program or early intervention program into this new building, they would be able to potentially utilize the park's facilities for the children's benefit.

The first floor of the Carpenter's Union building is currently occupied by both the Carpenter's Union and another business, each occupying half of the floor. The Carpenter's Union is currently looking to downsize a bit in terms of space. One potential option they saw was for them to move to the smaller office on the second floor, as they no longer need the larger area on the first floor. If Pernet were interested in the space, it could suit their needs in terms of increased office space. This first floor area does include a conference room, which Pernet has utilized on several occasions, because of their existing relationship with the Carpenter's Union. While this space would help to solve some of Pernet's existing problems, it is not the dramatic increase in space that they really need.

The basement of the Carpenter's Union is another option that Pernet could look into in the future. The basement is currently unfinished, but is ready to be completed to the future tenant's desires. As it stands now, it is currently a very large, open floor plan. The total size is about 4,112 square feet and completely open. This is exactly the type of situation Pernet could use, as it can be modified to fit any needs or programs they may be interested in relocating. Initial discussions with Pernet about relocation included a lot of discussion about an open floor plan, leaving them the option to divide it as they see fit. This is a near ideal situation, especially given its relative location to the current facilities.



| | Gross Floor Area | Gross Finished Area | Rentable Space |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| First Floor | 5301 sq. ft. | 5301 sq. ft. | 2521 sq. ft. |
| Second Floor | 5301 sq. ft. | 2611 sq. ft. | 583 sq. ft. |
| Basement | 5347 sq. ft. | 4112.25 sq. ft. | 5347 sq. ft. |
| Totals from 3 levels | 15,949 sq. ft. | 12,025 sq. ft. | 8451 sq. ft. |



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

6 RECOMMENDATION

Through the scope of this project it is unmistakable that Pernet Family Health Services is an organization working under a selfless tradition deserving of facility improvements which in no doubt will be focused on the betterment of Worcester's community development. The recommendation of this project is given under the assumption that Pernet Family Health Services will receive the upmost support through Worcester's Consolidated Action Plan and proceeds towards the betterment of Worcester in its entirety.

Pernet's avenue for expansion is not obvious, but it was decided to recommend a combination of renovation and relocation of 243 Millbury. The main focus is that the progression of their early intervention program was necessary. Along with renovation, the team thought it was necessary that for the duration of construction on 243 Millbury all programs be moved into the carpenters union so that there is minimal conflict during construction. The carpenters union provides to be a very useful asset to Pernet because of the space it offers. A large open space is not very common to Pernet but with the space available Pernet will be able to satisfy all the needs of the early intervention programs, as well as have usable office space to be able to properly function out of. While moving portions of Pernet's operation to other locations, the team thought it would be necessary to utilize the space it has more efficiently by obtaining a storage unit for things like baby formula and paper records.

Though there are many different types of renovation that could take place in 243 Millbury but the most cost efficient and fastest method of renovation would be to do a large-scale renovation of the entire interior of the building. This entails removing all walls, floors, ceilings, stairs etc. In the building and updating it to a more modern and accessible floor plan. Along with modern renovations, updating the building to be more energy efficient would be highly beneficial. After construction is complete, early intervention programs would move back into 243 Millbury and shortly after there would be a grand opening of the new space. Since the carpenters union offers a great collaborative workspace, after the early intervention programs are moved back into 243 Millbury, This space could be retained as office space for many if not all of the employees as well as providing easily accessible parking right across the street. By using a combination of renovation and relocation Pernet will be able to successfully foster the

growth of the programs they already provide to the city as well as continue to develop new programs that will thrive for years to come.

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