



City of Taunton, Massachusetts

About ULI – the Urban Land Institute

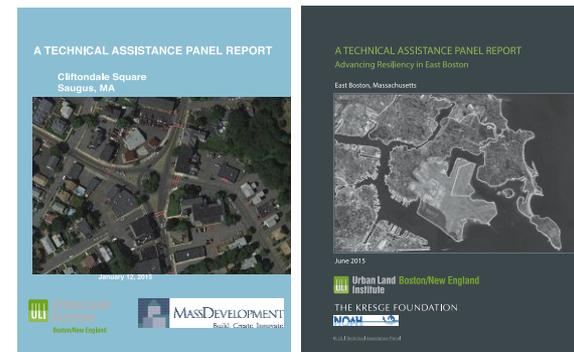
Mission

To provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

ULI is a research and education institution with nearly 36,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.

ULI at the local level

- Boston/New England District Council covers nearly all of New England
- Over 1,200 Members—developers, architects, planners, public officials, financiers, students, etc.



Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)

City of Taunton, MA

ULI Boston/New England is committed to supporting communities in making sound land use decisions and creating better places. A TAP brings together a group of ULI members with a range of professional expertise to provide focused, collaborative consultation to a local government or qualifying non-profit organization.

This TAP

- **Sponsored by the City of Taunton and MassDevelopment.**
- This panel looked at the full range of options from an unbiased perspective.
- Panelists include experts in the fields of architecture, planning, design, law, and landscape architecture.
- **Panelists have donated their time**
- Final Deliverable – Written report (8 weeks) will be available at <http://boston.uli.org>



The Panel

Nyal McDonough, Co-Chair
Director, Asset Management
Berkshire Group
Boston, MA

Jeremy Wilkening, Co-Chair
Director of Real Estate
Urban Edge
Boston, MA

Fran DeCoste
Chief Operating Officer
TR Advisors
Boston, MA

Heather Gould
Assistant Chief Development Officer
City of Worcester
Worcester, MA

Gary Kane
Senior Project Manager
The Architectural Team
Boston, MA

Amanda Maher
Vice President, Real Estate Services
MassDevelopment
Boston, MA



David Matton
Principal of Public Infrastructure
Howard Stein Hudson
Boston, MA

Matt Marotta
Designer & BIM Leader
ICON Architecture
Boston, MA

Matt Zahler
Senior Project Manager
Trinity Financial
Boston, MA

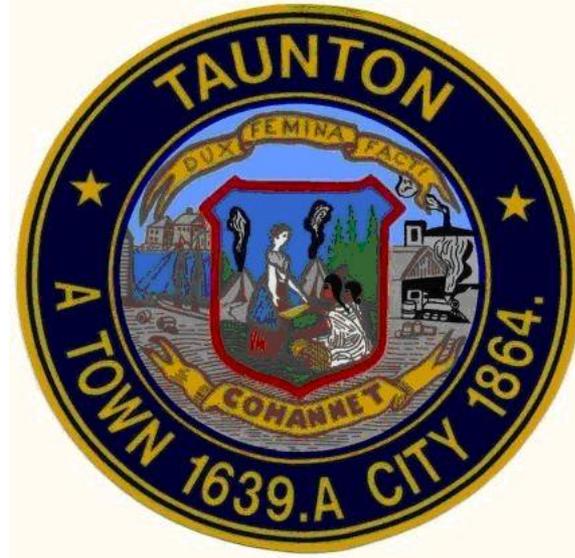
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Panel Sponsors



MASSDEVELOPMENT

Build. Create. Innovate.

Panel Assignment – Address these questions

- Based on the existing physical, demographic, and market conditions of downtown Taunton, what types of investments are most likely to take place and make the most sense for the City?
- How can investments in the downtown best be attracted and are there measures the City can take to attract more investment?
- What are the City's most important strengths and assets and how can those strengths and assets be incorporated into future redevelopment strategies?
- Is the City's vision for downtown clear enough for future redevelopment efforts?



The Process

Briefing

- Panelists met with sponsor and received briefing materials

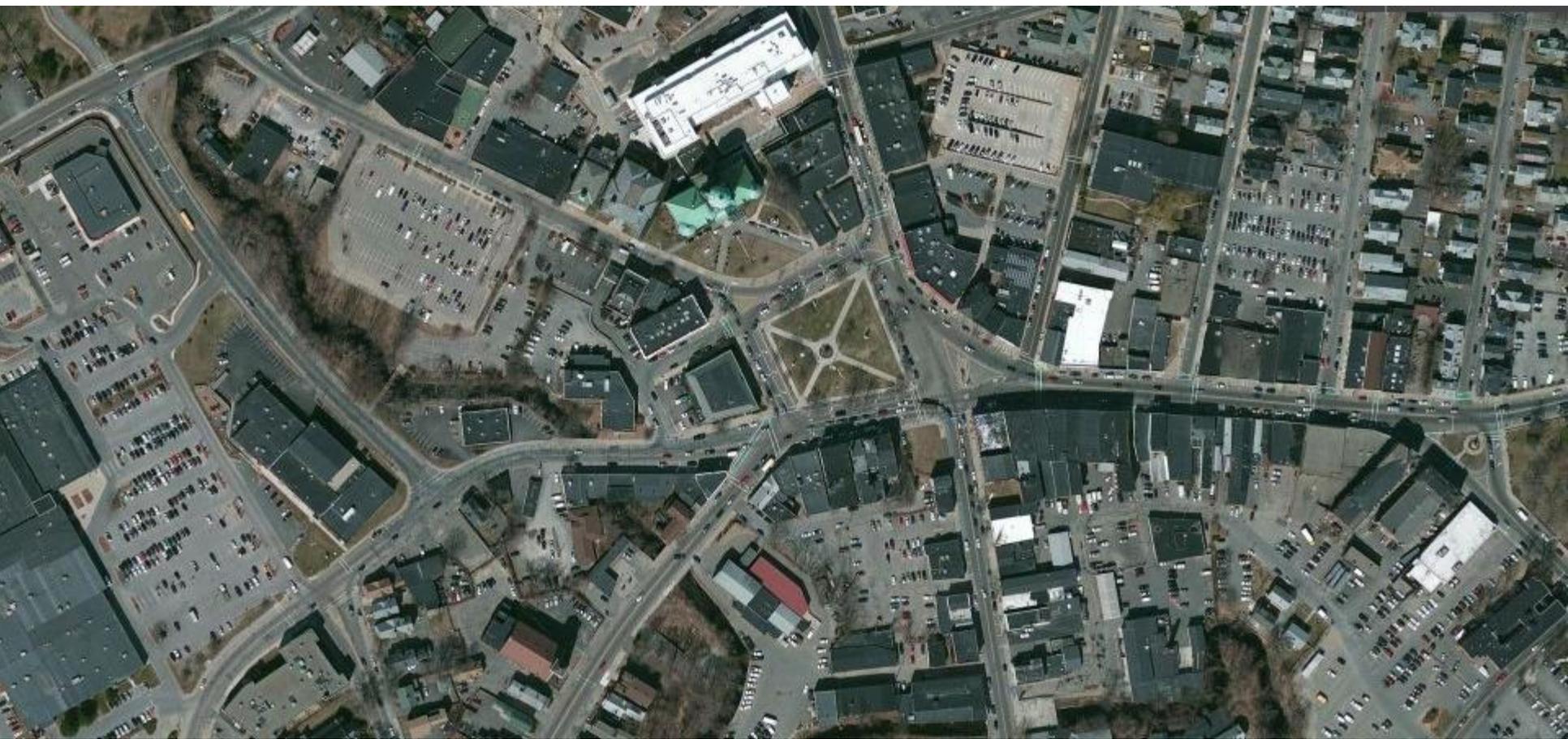
Site Visit:

- Panelists toured downtown Taunton

Panel interviewed stakeholders today including:

- Town officials
- Local business leaders
- Private property owners
- Local merchants
- Local residents





What did we hear?

Common themes

- Challenging for small businesses – permitting, zoning process, inconsistencies within city departments, high commercial taxes, grease traps
 - No one to help navigate bureaucracy
 - Need small business liaison
 - Need for technical assistance – for both first-time business owners & growing businesses
- Significant time/capital required for growing businesses
- Real vs. perceived safety
- Need to draw more foot traffic
- Parking challenge
- A lot of traffic – combination of thru traffic and locals
- Lack of master plan, capital plan
- Need for market study
- Need for an anchor – City Hall? Theater? Higher Ed?
- Desire for more residential in downtown
 - Perception of limiting housing to certain demographics
- Preexisting nightlife and growing restaurant scene

Assets

- High volume of vehicular traffic
- Availability of parking
- Invested property owners
- Interest in improving selection of retail in downtown
- Commitment by downtown BID
- Loyalty of town residents
- Commitment to social services
- Opportunity to market to casino visitors
- The Green – The Jewel
- Beautiful architecture
- Political commitment
- Pro-development
- Interest by small-scale developers
- Nightlife on Weir Street



Challenges

- Lack of clarity on capital plan for city overall
- Undefined value proposition (why downtown Taunton?)
- Unclear identity/vision for future
 - Outdated master plan
- Parking management
- Pedestrian connectivity to the green and throughout downtown
 - Need for complete streets (pedestrian connectivity, bicycle access, shared roadways)
- Getting people out of cars & visiting retail
- Disengaged landlords
- Building use obsolescence
 - Building depths, ADA accessibility
- Lack of clarity on how to open business and develop property



Development Feasibility

Development Concept – Potential Reuse of Upper Floors

Assumptions:

- Housing rehabilitation on upper floors
- Total development costs of \$315 per foot or \$197,000 per unit
- Uses state and federal historic tax credits

Market Analysis – average 2 bedroom rent is \$1,259

- Rent required to justify redevelopment of 2 bedroom rent is \$1,843 or requires subsidy of \$63,000 per unit

Things to Consider

- Building dimensions
- Accessibility
- Zoning & permitting process
- Types of housing options
- Parking ratios



What Does Downtown Taunton Want to be?

Planning

- Solicit broad community involvement in creating vision for downtown Taunton
 - Chamber, BID, entrepreneurs, residents, workers, cultural/religious institutions, customers
- Revisit 2009 “Downtown Taunton Development Study” recommendations
- Develop market analysis and marketing strategy

Implementation

- BID/Downtown Taunton Foundation
 - Direct marketing to businesses: tenant attraction
 - Use BID funds for increasing and improving signage
 - Create home base for arts, culture, performance
 - Programming, placemaking and special events to activate the downtown
 - Invest in murals and public art
 - Lighting
- Design guidelines with regard to façade and signage

The Jewel – Connecting Taunton



Connecting Downtown



Opportunities & Recommendations

- Bring City Hall back to the downtown
- Improving vibrancy & perception
 - Programming/events
 - A downtown community police officer (on foot/bike)
- Strengthen local businesses
 - Simplify and streamline town approval processes
 - Checklist of approvals
 - Timeline of approvals
 - List of approval costs
 - Guidance through approval process
- Capturing vehicular traffic
- Improving shopping and pedestrian experience
 - Parking signage & parking management
 - Traffic calming
 - Road, parking area and public space improvements



Funding and Technical Assistance

- State and federal Historic Tax Credits
- Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD)
 - District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA)
- Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD)
 - Planning Assistance Towards Housing Grants (PATH)
 - 40R
- Community Compacts (through Commonwealth) – funding to create a capital plan
- Community Preservation Act
- MassDOT
 - Complete Streets funding
- MassDevelopment Technical Assistance
- Cultural Facilities Fund
- AIA – Urban Design Assistance Team (downtown visioning)
- Congress for New Urbanism DoTank
- WalkBoston
- MassWorks



Questions?

