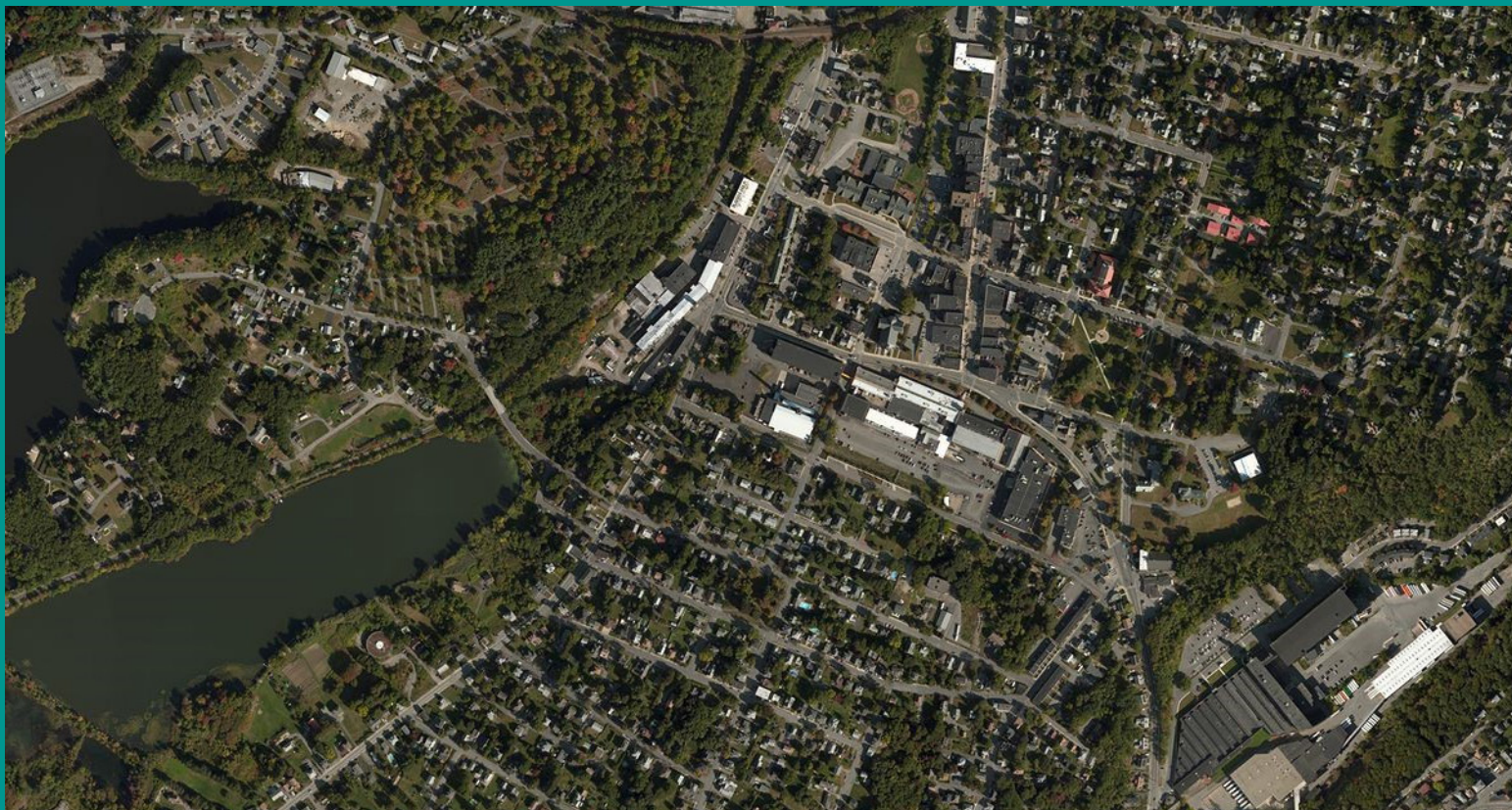


A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

Town of Clinton

Clinton, MA



February 1, 2017



**Urban Land
Institute**

Boston/New England



MASSDEVELOPMENT

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Executive Summary

The Clinton Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) convened on February 1 at The Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, under the direction of the Urban Land Institute's Boston/New England District Council. Over the course of the day, the members of the TAP, made up of eight real estate and land use professionals, met with Town and state officials, business and property owners and other key stakeholders to devise a viable redevelopment strategy for the Bigelow Mills, an underutilized but mostly occupied 19th century mill complex comprised of buildings in varying states of deterioration and use. An additional component of the TAP was to provide guidance on how to better connect Bigelow Mills to the core downtown district, particularly the historic retail district on High Street, located just three blocks away.

Chapter 1 ULI and the TAP Process Offers an overview of the Urban Land Institute's Boston/New England District Council and its Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs), while also providing a list of the panel members and stakeholders who took part. The chapter also outlines the study area for the TAP, and describes the process undertaken by the panelists and stakeholders to arrive at the recommendations presented at day's end during a public presentation at the Town Hall.

Chapter 2 Background and History This chapter provides a brief overview of the Town of Clinton's desired outcomes for the TAP; the manufacturing history of Bigelow Mills, the redevelopment site; a physical description of the property's layout; and a thumbnail sketch of the current economic state of the location and the buildings on the site (more detail provided in Chapters 3 & 4). It also looks at the Town of Clinton as it is today – a regional economic center with a rich architectural and manufacturing history. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the Downtown Clinton Historic District and its retail area.

Chapter 3 Assets and Opportunities Examines both Bigelow Mills and the Town of Clinton's many assets and how these assets can be translated into future redevelopment opportunities. Nestled

in the middle of mostly rural communities, Clinton serves as the economic center for the region. Its rich architectural history and interesting topography lend itself well to heritage tourism, and the enthusiasm on the part of the Town for change also bodes well for redevelopment. The mill buildings, while suffering from deferred maintenance, are structurally sound, and are currently sustaining manufacturing as well as a host of other uses.

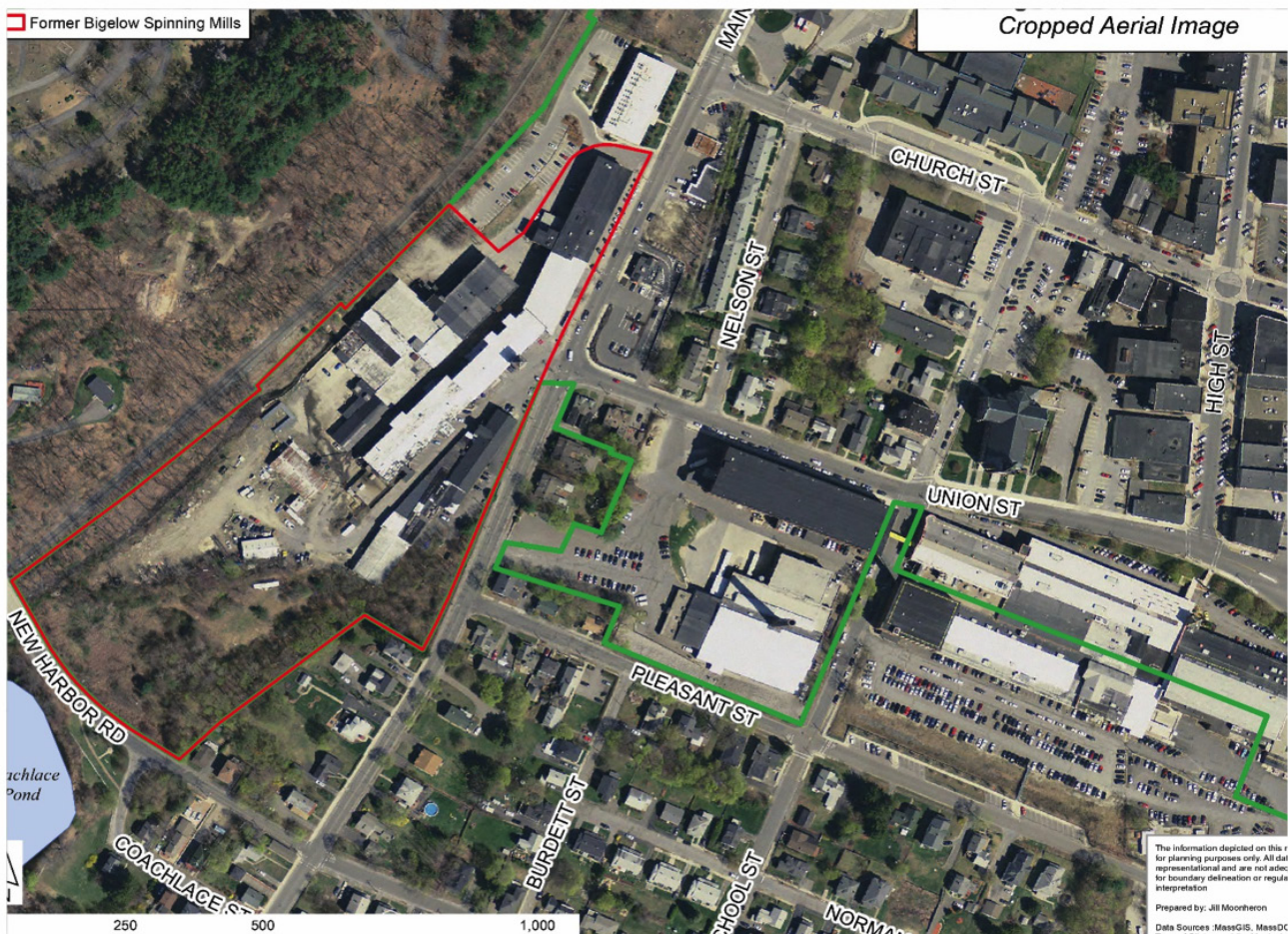
Chapter 4 Challenges Bigelow Mills has a number of issues that need to be addressed in order for the redevelopment to succeed. There is also the conceptual problem of deciding the right manufacturing/retail/entertainment mix for the site, but with four entities owning nine parcels on the land within the mill, there could be a lack of a cohesive vision for the site. The Town of Clinton needs a clear identity that can be communicated both within the community and beyond. The Town has trouble attracting and retaining younger people and could benefit from economic diversification. But the larger issue may be that without access to public transportation, the Town may have trouble attracting that younger workforce.

Chapter 5 Recommendations Panelists made a wide a range of recommendations at the close of the day, both for the Bigelow Mills site as well as for the Town as a whole. The panelists connected the revitalization of Bigelow Mills to the vitality of Clinton's Downtown. Recommendations for the mill site included structural improvements to the buildings, thus improving the visual impact on the heavily trafficked Main Street; increasing site accessibility; and exploring further development possibilities of the unused acreage. Panelists also suggested seeking creative uses for the redevelopment, including experiential retail, a brewery/restaurant; co-working space; and agricultural uses. Suggestions included developing a campaign to link Clinton's industrial heritage to the innovation economy; conducting a market analysis of the region's needs; examining zoning regulations; and soliciting input from large existing employers (specifically Nypro, Inc./Jabil).

Chapter 6 Community Feedback Although feedback was limited following the presentation, four issues were raised during the brief Q & A session: developing relationships with educational institutions; strengthening relationships with major employers; creating a program to foster intergenerational leadership; and willingness of the Town to consider Live/Work zoning.

Chapter 7 Funding Sources Lists some suggested funding sources for recommendations.

Chapter 8 Conclusions The panelists determined that despite its challenges, the Bigelow Mills site offers a myriad of options for successful redevelopment. In addition to the site's adaptable building stock, onsite water resources, and a thriving Downtown within a short walking distance, there is a genuine enthusiasm on the part of the Town to make the redevelopment work.



Aerial photo of Study Site.

ULI and the TAP Process

Urban Land Institute (ULI)

The Urban Land Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members. Founded in 1936, the Institute now has nearly 40,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service, including developers, architects, planners, lawyers, bankers, and economic development professionals, among others.

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places. The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and to help sustain and create thriving communities. The Boston/New England District Council serves the six New England states and has over 1,300 members.

Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)

The ULI Boston/New England Real Estate Advisory Committee convenes Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) at the request of public officials and local stakeholders of communities and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use challenges who benefit from planning and development professionals providing pro bono recommendations. At the TAP, a group of diverse professionals specially assembled with expertise in the issues posed typically spends one to two days visiting and analyzing existing conditions, identifying specific planning and development issues, and formulating realistic and actionable recommendations to move initiatives forward in a way consistent with the applicant's goals and objectives.

MassDevelopment Support

MassDevelopment is the state's economic

development and finance authority. The authority works closely with state, local and federal officials to boost housing and create jobs. With the power to act as both a lender and developer, MassDevelopment also works to fill in gaps in infrastructure, transportation, energy and other areas that may be holding back economic growth. MassDevelopment has worked with ULI since 2011 to help sponsor and support the TAP process in cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

Panel Members

ULI Boston/New England convened a volunteer panel of experts whose members represent the range of disciplines necessary to analyze the challenges and opportunities facing Clinton, MA. Disciplines represented included real estate attorneys, architects, urban planners, and development consultants. The following is a list of panelists:

Co-Chairs

James Heffernan, Attorney, Rich May, P.C.
Emily Keys Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND, Senior Urban Planner, Harriman

Panel

Patrick Campbell, Principal, Commonwealth Development Consulting
Ted Carman, President, Concord Square Planning and Development
Phil Colleran, Principal, CRJA-IBI
Claire O'Neill, VP of Planning & Development, MassDevelopment
Laurie Zapalac, Principal, Zapalac Advisors
Andrew Zimmerman, Development Manager, RCG

ULI Staff

Manikka Bowman, Manager, Policy & Outreach
Ileana Tauscher, Senior Associate

TAP Writer

Mike Hoban
Hoban Communications
Newton, MA

Panelists volunteered their time in completing this TAP and this report.

Stakeholders

The TAP benefited from the participation of the diverse group of stakeholders – property owners and managers, Town officials, business people, and other regional officials – who met with the panel and shared information, ideas, and opinions on a range of issues affecting the redevelopment of Bigelow Mills and the Town of Clinton. The following is a list of stakeholders:

Mary Ann Castillo, Executive VP, TYCA Corporation
460-470 Main Street
Dick Donovan CCHM Property Management, Owner's Rep for 470R – 490 Main Street
Kevin Coleman, FJC, LLC Owner's Rep for 500 Main Street
Michael Ward, Town Administrator
Chris McGown, DPW Superintendent
James Tomolo, Chair of Clinton Finance Committee
Michael Dziokonski, Member, Board of Selectmen
Dale DiMeco, member, Clinton Planning Board
Roy Nascimento, President and CEO, North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce, Johnny Appleseed Trail Association
Glenn Eaton, Executive Director, Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
John Hume, Chief Planner, Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
Bob Paulhus, President, Clinton Savings Bank
Rep. Harold Naughton, State Representative
Susan Templeton, District Chief of Staff for Rep. Naughton
Chris Starr, Owner, Starr Development

TAP Process

The Clinton TAP convened on February 1, 2017. Panelists were greeted at the Museum of Russian Icons by Phil Duffy, Director of the Office of Community & Economic Development for the Town of Clinton. Duffy led the ULI panel on a 90-minute walking tour that wound through the Downtown district and down to the Bigelow Mills site.

The group toured the exterior site, as well as the interiors of a number of the historic buildings.

Included among the stops was a tour of the 15,000 SF vacant second floor of 474 Main Street (courtesy of Property Manager Dick Donovan). With its brick and beam interior and large floor plates, panelists could visualize the possibilities for building out “cool space” now gaining popularity in office markets. A second building at 470 Main Street (built in 1819) features a fully renovated lobby and office space, and houses the manufacturing functions of Tyca Corporation, which creates custom embossing molds for a range of customers. Owner Mary Ann Castillo told the panelists that the deeply discounted onsite water supply was a critical element to the firm's manufacturing process.

Following the tour, the ULI panel interviewed stakeholders, listed in the previous sub-section, in two separate but simultaneous panel discussions. The panelists then engaged in an intensive “closed door” charrette to develop recommendations addressing some of the critical issues associated with redevelopment of the Bigelow Mills site as well as the connectivity possibilities to the Downtown. “Next step” recommendations were then shared with the Town of Clinton staff and some members of the public at a public presentation that evening.

Background and History

Town of Clinton's Objectives for the TAP

The Town of Clinton sought the help of the TAP to devise and implement a viable redevelopment strategy for Bigelow Mills, as well as guidance on how to connect the site to the core downtown retail district on High Street. While the market for housing development in Clinton has been strong in recent years, the Town is more interested in examining the market for job-creating redevelopment (such as manufacturing) rather than residential uses. The panelists were asked to address the following:

What can be developed there?

- What is the market?
- What is the fitness of existing inventory to contemporary desires?
- How will site circulation work?

How do we make it happen?

- What is the organizational structure that moves this forward?
- What needs to change? On-site? Near the site? In the Town?
- Who do we need to engage?

How is it integrated into the Town?

- What are the connections?

Bigelow Mills (Study Site)

Bigelow Mills has been an industrial center since a saw mill was established on the site in 1657, and has been used continuously for manufacturing purposes since that time. The original mills manufactured barrel staves, hoops and nails in the early 18th century, before giving way to textile manufacturing in the

1800s. The site has long been a hub of innovation, as its namesake original owners Erastus and Horatio Bigelow developed power looming technology to produce fabrics, and later applied that technology to carpet manufacturing. Production of carpet became the dominant use for the site until 1932 when Bigelow merged with a New York carpet manufacturer and later ceased operations, but Bigelow Mills has always maintained a strong manufacturing base.

The site encompasses 12.3 acres, and is composed of nine parcels owned by four separate entities. The site is bounded to the south by Coachlace Pond (which also supplies water for manufacturing purposes to the site); to the west by Counterpane Brook and by the Pan Am Railways right-of-way (which connects the firm's distribution facility in Ayer to CSX yards in Worcester); to the north by a previously re-developed mill (now Lofts at Bigelow Mills); and to the east by Main Street, which provides high visibility (approximately 13,000 vehicles per day) for businesses. A 5.5 acre southerly portion of the site is undeveloped. The site was identified as a Priority Development Area (PDA) by the Town in 2009, and again by the Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission in 2012.

Bigelow Mills was designated as a National Historic District in 1983. The buildings on the site total approximately 279,000 square feet, and were mostly constructed prior to 1900, with the earliest built in 1819. There are also two smaller, lesser quality buildings of no historical significance on the site. Despite being used for industrial purposes for centuries, there is no known environmental contamination. While many of the buildings suffer from deferred maintenance, they are still home to a number of businesses (employing 70-100 people), including several successful manufacturing companies, artist studios, low-density commercial recreation (e.g., batting cages, a dance studio, and a boxing gym), personal services (doggy day care), self-storage and other smaller businesses.

Town of Clinton

Clinton is an historic manufacturing community in northern Worcester County, located 13 miles north of Worcester and 35 miles west of Boston. Surrounded by predominantly rural towns, Clinton has a decidedly urban feel and functions as an economic center for the region, despite being the Commonwealth's 19th smallest town (7.3 square miles). The town is also considered affordable in terms of housing costs in comparison to neighboring communities, with rental units comprising 46 percent of the housing stock. Rich in architectural heritage, with a number of structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Clinton is also home to the Wachusett Reservoir, which supplies drinking water to 2.5 million residents of eastern Massachusetts.

Downtown Clinton

Located within walking distance to Bigelow Mills, the Downtown Clinton Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

It extends along High Street, between Union Street in the south, and Ring and Prospect Streets in the north, and includes several adjacent buildings on Church Street. The retail district is located on High Street, and is home to several thriving shops and restaurants, with a relatively low vacancy rate. The district features one spectacularly successful destination restaurant (Clintons Bar and Grille), and the desire for another such establishment was communicated by stakeholders. The Strand Theater, which offers beer, wine, and a casual light menu to movie goers, is also a successful attraction on High Street.

Downtown Clinton has been the focus of economic and community development efforts in recent years, including the establishment of a Downtown Merchants Association and the completion of multiple capital projects, including infrastructure and recreational area improvements.



Site configuration is just one challenge of the Bigelow Mills complex



Bigelow Mills complex

Assets and Opportunities

Surrounded largely by rural communities, the Town of Clinton is uniquely positioned as a municipality with a thriving urban environment that features an active and vibrant downtown, while still retaining the positive aspects of a rural community. Bigelow Mills is home to a variety of viable businesses, and its connections to the Downtown are an integral part of any redevelopment strategy. The site is located within walking distance to rental housing, restaurants and shops, and the downtown area also has ample on-street parking.

It should be noted that while the TAP specifically concerns Bigelow Mills, the panel views the opportunities for the site as integral with the success of the entire Downtown, so the report includes an assessment and recommendations for the Town of Clinton as well.

Bigelow Mills

Size of Site

The 12.3 acre site includes some unused acreage that creates a number of options for potential redevelopment, including much-needed onsite parking, open space amenities for the public and employees of the businesses, and a future opportunity for an additional building.

Location

Access to onsite water provided by Coachlace Pond is a potential draw for a certain class of manufacturers or indoor agriculture uses. The proximity of Bigelow Mills to the Downtown – walking distance to retail and services – is a mutually beneficial asset. The site's historic bell tower provides high visibility for potential Bigelow Mills' employers.

Buildings

The buildings appear to be of high quality and are

relatively intact, but will require some work in order to attract potential users. The large floor plates of the Bigelow Mill space provide flexibility and can accommodate a wide range of uses. The brick and beam interiors have a strong aesthetic appeal in today's office market. The space between the buildings could potentially be transformed into an engaging pedestrian walkway. The buildings are also eligible for federal and state historic tax credits, which would lower the costs for adaptive re-use.

Occupancy

All buildings have some level of occupancy across a wide variety of uses (including manufacturing, distribution, recreation, and auto repair), and are revenue-generating for their owners, providing evidence of the site's ability to support businesses.

Asset Positioning

Bigelow Mills' industrial heritage and existing manufacturing base may also serve as a symbolic bridge to attracting companies operating in the 21st century innovation space.

The Town of Clinton

Location and Town Character

Located one hour from Boston and 20 minutes from Worcester, Clinton is close enough to large urban centers to attract a varied employment base (office, manufacturing, retail) while allowing residents convenient access to the business, cultural and retail opportunities that cities provide. During the 90-minute walking tour of the Bigelow Mills site and the Downtown, TAP panelists found Clinton's business owners and residents to be remarkably friendly and welcoming. Clinton is also a culturally diverse town, with minorities making up 14.6 percent of the population, including Spanish-speaking households, which comprise nine percent of the total.

Attitudes Towards Redevelopment

Clinton developed a Master Plan in 2009 (finalized in 2012) with many infrastructure, community and cultural improvements to the Downtown already either implemented or in various stages of planning. During the panel interviews with stakeholders and public officials (as well as at the public hearing), there appeared to be an eagerness and enthusiasm on the part of the Town to implement changes to encourage further economic growth via the redevelopment of Bigelow Mills. During interviews with stakeholders and public officials, there was a stated feeling that “Clinton is on the cusp” and that the Bigelow Mills site redevelopment is pivotal to affirming the idea that Clinton is continuing to change and evolve. It was also expressed that “if outside businesses were to come in, it would create excitement.”

Architectural Heritage and Natural Beauty

The Town of Clinton has many intact and well-maintained architectural structures, and Bigelow Mills, Downtown Clinton and several churches and



Refurbished area of Bigelow Mills shows the complex's strong architectural character

schools are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The buildings, the beautiful views offered by the reservoir, and the dramatic topography of the landscape provide the necessary components for heritage tourism that could supplement that existing foliage tourism in September and October.

Existing Manufacturing and Employment Base

Clinton is home to several manufacturing employers, including Nypro (950 employees) and Weetabix (175), as well as a number of smaller firms, testament to the Town's ability to attract and maintain a sophisticated manufacturing base.



Panelists touring area surrounding Bigelow Mills

Challenges

Despite the many positive attributes of both the Bigelow Mills site, and the Town of Clinton, there are still a number of challenges to be addressed in order to achieve a successful redevelopment of the site and the revitalization of the Downtown.

Bigelow Mills

Getting Tenant Mix Right

Determining the “magic mix” of traditional anchor tenants and startups, as well as the types of businesses that will occupy the redeveloped space, is crucial to the long-term success of the redevelopment.

Parcel Ownership Issues

The nine parcels are owned by four separate entities, although two of the owners are willing to sell and the other two appear to be willing to re-invest in redevelopment. There is also a question of ownership of the internal road that runs through the site.

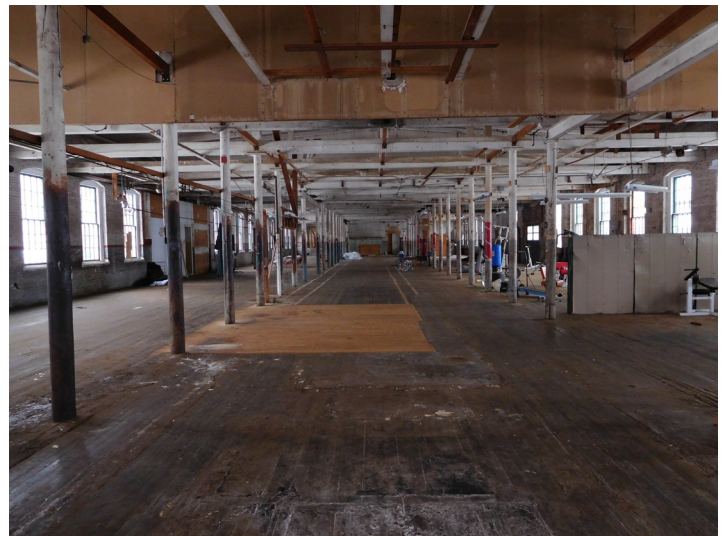
Condition of Buildings

Many of the buildings on the site were constructed prior to 1900 and suffer from deferred maintenance. While the “bones” of the building appear to be structurally sound, most buildings would require upgrades to more energy efficient windows, updated HVAC systems, and improvements to the façades. At least two elevators would need to be installed in the connected buildings. In addition to the historic buildings, there are two buildings, which while currently fully occupied and functional, may better serve the site by being removed.

Town of Clinton

Transportation Issues

The number one problem when considering various forms of expanded use for the Bigelow Mills site is a lack of access to major roadways. While the quality of decompression that Clinton offers as a “rural” community is appealing to residents, the 6.5 mile stretch to I-495 provides limited access for industrial purposes. Also, there is currently no public transportation (such as buses or passenger rail service) in Clinton, a situation that could possibly be addressed by emerging technologies such as the Uber, Lyft or Bridj models.



Parts of the complex have suffered from deferred maintenance

Recommendations

As previously stated, although the original intent of the TAP was to concentrate on the redevelopment of the Bigelow Mills site, panelists view the future of the site as being indelibly intertwined with the prospects for the entire downtown area. Therefore, the recommendations will focus on the how to best make the physical and economic connections between the site and the Downtown, without cannibalizing the existing businesses.

Bigelow Mills

Devise Redevelopment Strategy for Buildings



Figure 1

Figure 1 above breaks down the site into five major groups to emphasize the various stages of redevelopment of the site. Buildings 1 and 2 are income generating, profitable businesses, and should remain relatively intact for the short term (5-7 years), but would benefit from redevelopment in the longer

term. Buildings 3 and 4 are not fully occupied and should be redeveloped in the short term to bring them to full occupancy. Connecting these buildings is also recommended, along with pedestrian access through either Building 3 or 4 and a walkway between Buildings 1, 2, 3 and back Building marked "KEEP." Light Grey buildings (marked REMOVE) are non-historic structures that could be removed to improve site accessibility and provision for parking. Long term future development could potential see buildings along the New Harbor Road side of the site.

Conduct Feasibility Study

Conduct a feasibility study for Buildings 1-4 (supported by public funds in collaboration with the existing owners) that will examine what is needed to make the buildings viable for redevelopment, including adding elevators, replacing HVAC systems, and replacing windows for energy efficiency. The feasibility study should:

- Conduct an existing conditions assessment with as-built drawings
- Identify rental history to use as threshold to determine rental rates
- Develop schematic plans including removal of non-contributing buildings, parking, streetscape and circulation patterns
- Conduct a code analysis
- Prepare an order of magnitude redevelopment cost analysis
- Prepare potential development plan and related pro-formas
- Identify sources of funding

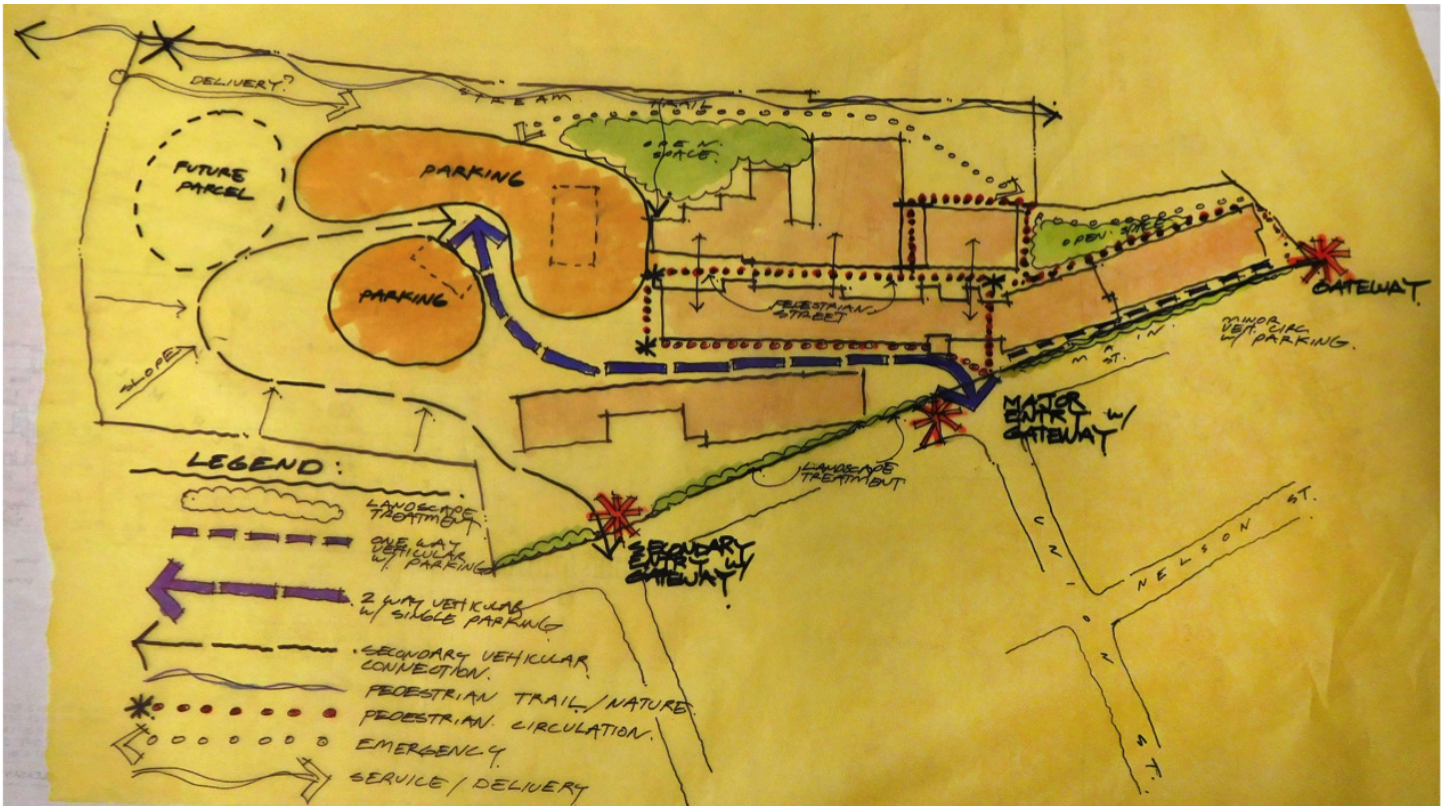


Figure 2

Increase Site Accessibility (See Figure 2)

Additional site accessibility points (see Figure 2, above) should be created to better support overall site circulation for future programs. A master entry gateway would be constructed at the intersection of Union and Main Streets, creating an additional access way at Pleasant Street and at the back of the site. Parking would also be re-worked along Main Street to create more distance between the street and the site and to develop a consistent landscape character. Creation of an additional access point along Pleasant St., and the removal of the aforementioned buildings (light grey buildings in multi-colored aerial photo) would allow for much-needed onsite parking. This would also allow for increased pedestrian access and will also permit the development of a pedestrian walkway between the main buildings.

Improve Visual Impact on Main Street

Strategic improvements to the building façades along Main Street, in conjunction with a consistent strategy for lighting, signage/wayfinding, and landscape improvements will go rebrand the complex as a vibrant, welcoming destination that could support a variety of uses. It may be possible to seek funding through MA Green Communities or other funding sources.

Plan for Circulation Improvements and Future Development

The creation of the additional access points allows for further development, including a possible pedestrian walkway that would connect the buildings to Coachlace Pond. An additional parcel could also be created that would support a variety of uses, from recreational activities to additional buildings. In addition, the panel proposed creating a “corridor” from the site to Downtown (Figure 3, next page) using paving, lighting and place making elements such as sculpture, landscape treatments and wayfinding

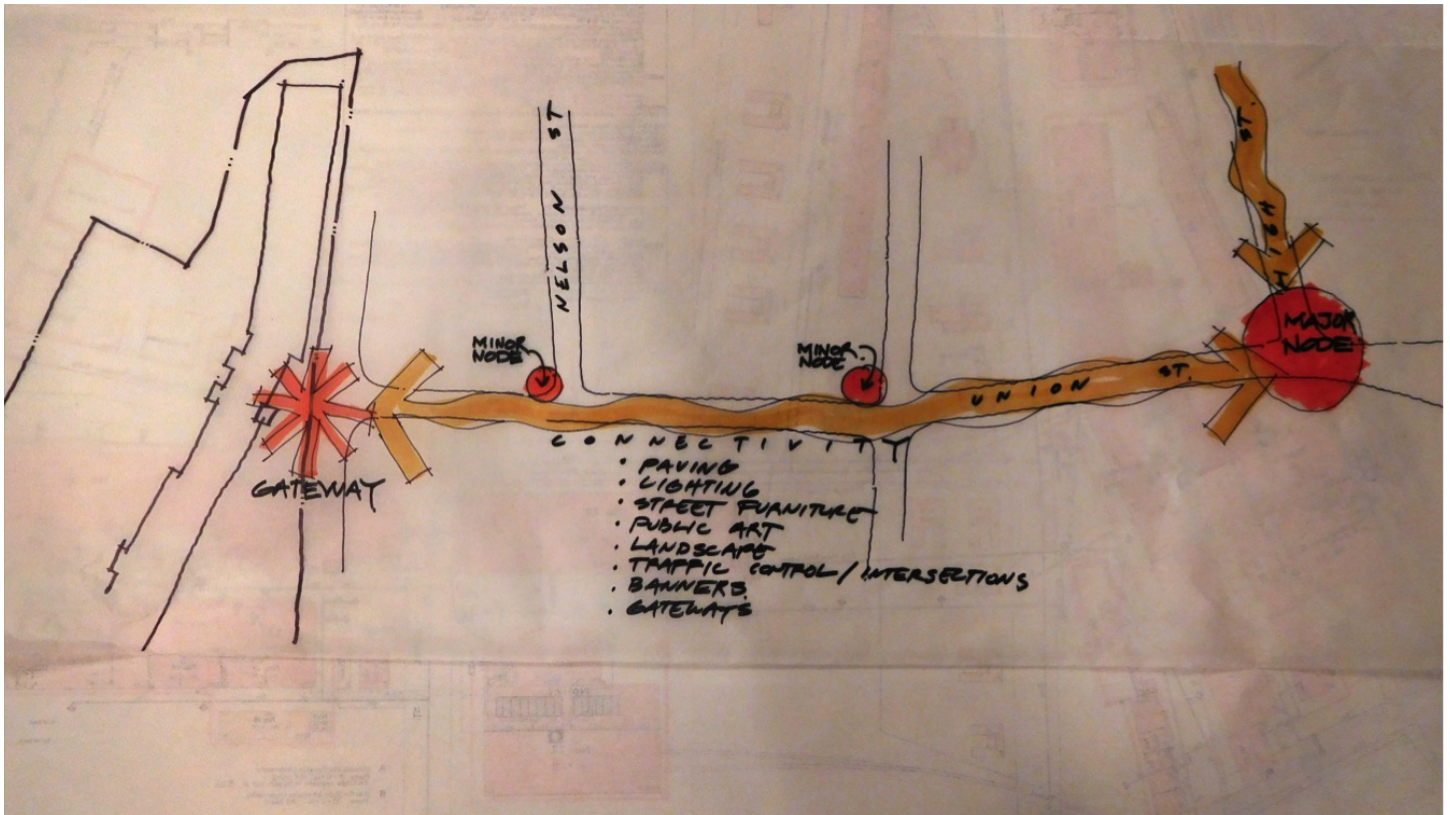


Figure 3

components.

Seek Creative Solutions for Redevelopment

The redevelopment of the site is expected to occur in phases, with Building 1 and 4 being the most likely candidates for re-purposing. The panel closed the presentation by proposing several possible development concepts, illustrated in Figure 4.

- Brewery/restaurant – A combination brewery/distillery/restaurant in Building 1 could take advantage of the available water source on the site, while filling the demand for an additional destination restaurant, and providing additional attractions to the tourist trade. More parking would be needed to support these customers.
- Experiential retail – Experiential retail encompasses such uses as fitness, glass or photography studios which combine the retail components with classes and events, and draw

the millennial cohort. Establishing the mill as a location for experiential retail would supplement the more traditional retail in the Downtown, creating a more vibrant relationship between the two.

- Co-Working and Live/Work Space (In first floor of Building 4 or top floor of Building 1) In addition to providing workspace for entrepreneurs, co-working entities often serve as incubators to startup companies that later may seek additional space within Bigelow Mills as they grow. The opportunity to combine co-working with live-work space may provide unique opportunities for collaboration and cost-effective incubation for young entrepreneurs.
- Agricultural Uses – Old mills have been successfully re-purposed in many markets as hydroponic or aquaculture facilities, which would also be a natural fit, given the site's water resources.

Some recent Massachusetts redevelopment projects

that may provide inspiration include:

- Eastworks, Easthampton, MA: <http://www.eastworks.com/>
- Orange Innovation Center, Orange MA: <https://www.orange-innovation.com/>
- Phoenix Park, Shirley MA: <http://www.phoenixparkonline.com>

Town of Clinton

Link Clinton's Industrial Heritage to Future Opportunities

Develop a campaign to translate the 19th Century spirit and innovative thinking that resulted in developing successful mill businesses into a plan for creating innovative new businesses such as incubator/maker/creative spaces for 21st Century businesses.

Conduct Market Analysis

Determine what would be the best adaptive re-use of the buildings to meet the needs of both the existing and evolving business models in the market, and see how those needs align with the Town's vision.

Review Town Regulations

Ensure that as the redevelopment plans begin to evolve, zoning regulations for parking, density, usage, etc. are consistent with the proposals.

Solicit Input From Existing, Potential Employers

Further engage Nypro and other existing large employers in Clinton to understand what else they need or desire that redevelopment of this site could help provide. Examples might include certain types of food purveyors, such as "healthy fast food" or services and amenities, such as a yoga studio.

Undertake spatial analysis to get a clearer picture of the range of growing companies already located in a 15- or even 30-mile radius of Clinton. Focus on manufacturers that might have logical relationships to existing companies and institutions in Clinton, and engage them to see if they might be a good match for Clinton's unique location attributes and its workforce.

Flesh out the "manufacturing narrative" so that people in Clinton and beyond understand the wide range of activity it can support.

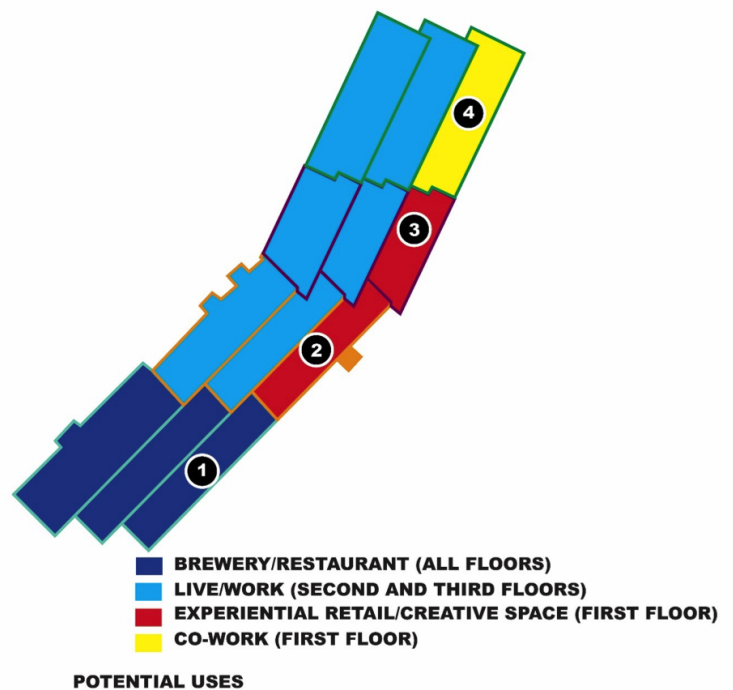


Figure 4

Community Feedback

Although the feedback from the Town of Clinton was limited (possibly due to the large volume of information communicated at the presentation), Phil Duffy, Director of the Office of Community & Economic Development for the Town of Clinton, addressed topics that were directly or indirectly broached during the public presentation.

- Developing relationships with educational institutions – Duffy said that he had recently been approached by a sophisticated manufacturer looking to build a facility at another site who was interested in cultivating relationships with local universities, and the suggestion made during the presentation reinforces the importance of such a strategy.
- Town Leadership – In 2015, the Town completed an Economic Development Self-Assessment offered through the Dukakis Center of Northeastern, and the Town recognizes the importance of “devising an arena in which business people could meet and build social

capital,” to replace the now defunct Chamber of Commerce.

- Strengthen Relationships With Major Employers – Duffy concurred that pro-active efforts with Nypco and other employers need to be strengthened, something that had not been recognized as a priority before.
- Live/Work Space – Although owners of mill buildings have sought zoning changes to accommodate Live/Work space, the response from the Town has been unenthusiastic. However, facility program development (and zoning) might look specifically at “work-live” space concepts that allow tenants the flexibility to use space as full time or part time living space, but with leasing stipulations to ensure that work-related uses are required. Note, for instance, the number of people using AirBNB for work trips and sometimes for actual work activities and the flexibility this can afford, especially in locations with low hotel inventory.

Funding Sources

Bob Paulhus, president of Clinton Savings Bank, indicated at the meeting with stakeholders that his institution would be willing to explore more creative financing solutions than other lending institutions could provide.

MassDevelopment, the state’s economic development and finance agency, works with businesses, nonprofits, financial institutions, and communities to stimulate economic growth across the Commonwealth. Through these collaborations, the agency helps create jobs, increase the number of housing units, revitalize urban environments, and address factors limiting economic growth including transportation, energy, and infrastructure deficiencies. Several agency programs should be explored including Real Estate Technical Assistance, the Site Readiness Program, Predevelopment and Real Estate Loans, and the Collaborative Workspace Program.

Suggested Reading: Reaching for the Future: Creative Financing for Smaller Communities (ULI)

<http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/Creative-Finance-for-Smaller-Communities.pdf>

Conclusion

The potential for the Bigelow Mills is strong, despite physical challenges with the buildings and site and systemic challenge for the Town of Clinton in terms of transportation and proximity to the major highways. The Town has been active in improving infrastructure and addressing other elements that affect the quality of life for residents and employees.

Stakeholders were enthusiastic about the various redevelopment scenarios discussed at the meeting. One of the strengths of Bigelow Mills is the ability to phase redevelopment over time, taking advantage of existing revenue-generating uses. Any redevelopment will require significant investment for both upgrades to the buildings themselves and site clearance and preparation to provide needed amenities, such as additional parking and pedestrian connections.

The Town should develop a vision for Bigelow Mills and the Downtown that addresses the possibilities identified in this report. This planning study should include the Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board, the Town Manager, the Town Planner, the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce, Johnny Appleseed Trail Association, the Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, property owners, financial institutions, and other stakeholders.

Appendix

Suggested Readings:

Cultivating Development: Trends and Opportunities at the Intersection of Food and Real Estate (ULI)
<http://uli.org/report/cultivating-development-trends-opportunities-intersection-food-real-estate/>

A Recipe For Cooking (Downtown View) <http://northendwaterfront.com/2017/01/downtown-view-recipe-cooking/>

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BIGELOW MILLS

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
A. Devise Redevelopment Strategy for Buildings		
B. Conduct Feasibility Study		
C. Increase Site Accessibility		
D. Plan for Circulation Improvements and Future Development		
E. Seek Creative Solutions for Redevelopment		

Table to provide framework for devising timeline and identifying key decision makers for redevelopment

TOWN of CLINTON

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
A. Link Clinton's Industrial Heritage to Future Opportunities		
B. Conduct Market Analysis		
C. Review Town Regulations		
D. Solicit Input from Existing and Potential Employers		