



Urban Land  
Institute

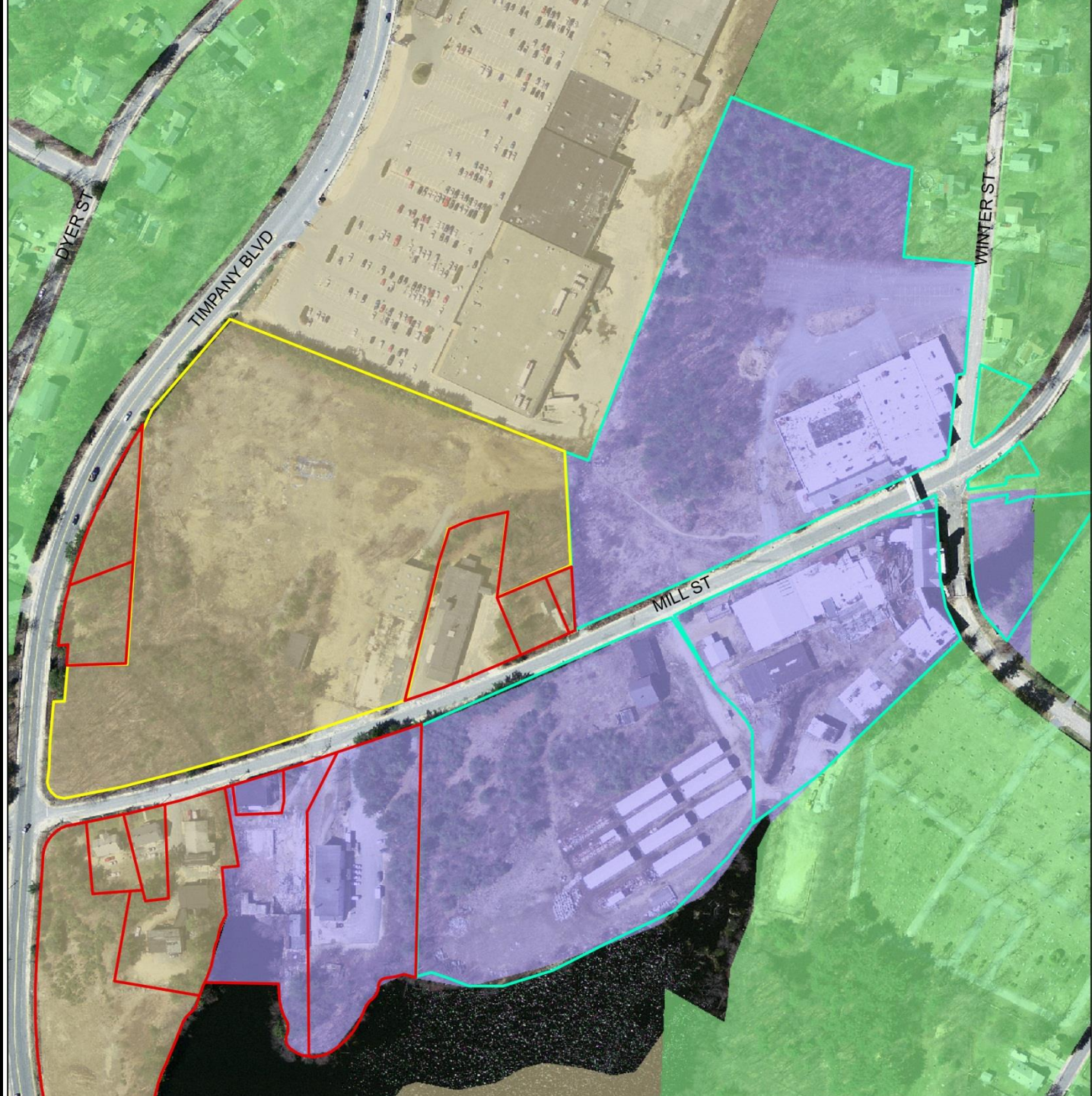
Boston

Serving the Six New England States

# Mill Street Corridor - Gardner, MA









## **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 over 35,000 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 District Council covers nearly all of New England
- 1,100 Members—developers, architects, planners, public officials, financiers, students, etc.

## **Emphasis on sharing best practices and providing outreach to community**

- Over 2,000 attendees last year
- UrbanPlan High School Program
- Technical Assistance Panels
- Trends in Real Estate Conference



## Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)

### City of Gardner, MA

ULI Boston is committed to supporting the communities of New England in making sound land use decisions and creating better places. A Technical Assistance Panel (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 Gardner Redevelopment Authority
- This panel looked at the full range of options from an unbiased perspective.
- Panelists include experts in the fields of architecture, development, engineering, marketing and planning.
- Panelists have donated their time
- Final Deliverable – Written report (within 6 weeks) will be available at <http://boston.uli.org>



## TAP Co-Chairs

Richard Lampman – Tocci Building Corporation

Gabriel Safar – Dionne & Gass

## TAP Panelists

Ira Baline – Bergmeyer Associates

Mika Brewer – MassDevelopment

Russ Burke – BSC Group

Tony Caner – Grub & Ellis

Craig Lizotte – VHB

Caitlin Bowler – ICON architecture, report writer

Michelle Landers – ULI Boston Manager





## The Panel's Assignment

### **Address the following questions:**

- Are the current plans for cleanup and demolition of blighted buildings on the S. Bent and Garbose properties adequate? If not, what additional steps should be taken?
- What are the most appropriate targeted industries and end-users for the Mill Street Corridor, with a focus on the S. Bent and Garbose properties?
- What is the best strategy to attract new end-users, with a focus on the S. Bent and Garbose properties?
- Does the MSC provide opportunities for clean/green technology and renewable energy sectors based on the skill base available from Mt. Wachusett Community College Sustainable and Energy Management Program?
- Does the rail spur present an opportunity to attract rail-dependent end-users?
- Are there federal/state programs and incentives to help prepare and implement an appropriate marketing campaign?
- Management and implementation of a redevelopment plan is expected to center on a partnership between the City and the GRA, but the framework of the partnership is conceptual at this time. What organizational/management options should be considered to move this project forward.



# The Process

## **Site Visit:**

- Mill Street Corridor

## **Panel interviewed stakeholders today including:**

- Town Officials
- Town Staff
- Property Abutters
- State Officials



# Stakeholder Perspectives

- Jobs, Jobs, Jobs
- Growing Tax Base
- Gardner's Manufacturing Reputation & Livability
- Recently completed downtown renewal plan
- Devens
- City Strengths – Mt. Wachusett Community College, Heywood Memorial Hospital
- Limited Industrial Growth Opportunities
- Existing Workforce
- Brownfields Support Team
- Proactive City Government
- Small Industrial Facilities for Advanced Technology Companies



## Site Opportunities

- City Ownership
- Robust Utility Infrastructure
- Rail Spur
- Financial Incentives/Designation of Brownfields Support Team Site
- Commercial and Industrial Zoning
- Quality of Life/Attractive Site
- Proximity to Route 2
- Low Cost of Doing Business
- Timpany Plaza
- Superior Kitchen – Operating Business on site (Growth Potential)

- Environmental Contamination
- Wetlands, Rivers and Floodplains limit developable land
- Topography/Geometry of site limit developable land
- Low Visibility for S. Bent Site
- Proximity to Residential Abutters
- Access for S. Bent Site
- Title Issues for Infill Land
- Condition of Dams



# Development Considerations

- Timing
- Ownership Mechanisms
- Financial Issues
  - Remediation Funds
  - Land Value
  - Economic Incentives
  - End User Rents
- Market Analysis



## Recommendations

- Existing Conditions Survey
- Flexibility – Consider mix of commercial and industrial uses and lot sizes. Approach Timpany Plaza
- Parallel Actions
  - Clean up
  - Demolition
  - Permitting
  - Master Planning
  - Market Analysis
- Incubator?
- Rail Spur. Great Opportunity, but wait and see





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# Questions?

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