



Southborough, MA

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 with over 1,300 Members—developers, architects, planners, public officials, financiers, students, etc.



Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)

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

The Panel

Co-Chairs

Jamie Simchik, Simchik Planning & Development
Jillian Bargar, Anderson & Krieger

Panelists

Tim Cummings, City of Nashua NH
Sarah Eisinger, MassDevelopment
Tulin Fuselier, Weston&Sampson
David Valecillos, North Shore CDC

Panel Associate

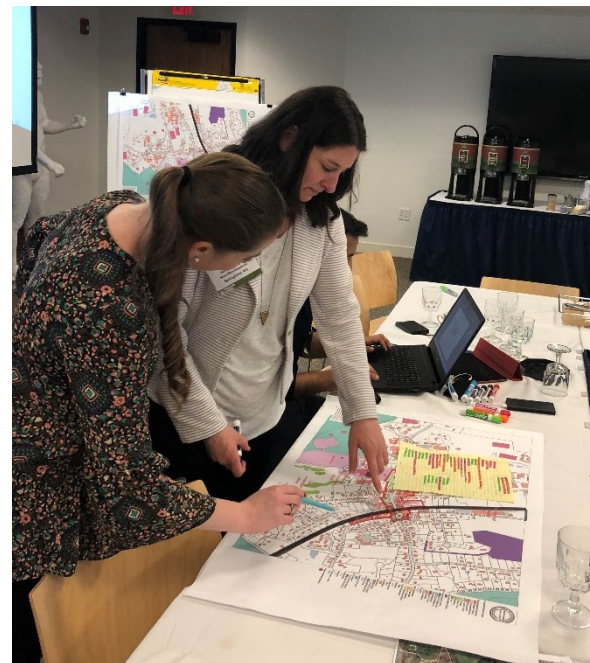
Spencer Grassie, The Roseview Group

ULI Staff

Manikka Bowman
Sara Marsh

TAP Writer

Michael Hoban



Panel Sponsors



**Urban Land
Institute**

Boston/New England

Panel Assignment – Address These Questions

Question One: What planning and/or zoning changes and design features will encourage and allow for small-scale business growth on privately-owned parcels that will compliment residential, local amenities desired by residents?

Question Two: Will the Town need to consider infrastructure capacity accommodations, including, but not limited to, collective wastewater treatment option to serve the Downtown businesses for expanded growth? If so, what are the septic infrastructure options for such systems and the associated funding sources to plan, design and build?

Question Three: How should the Town plan, design and fund (promote and execute) the residents' desire for streetscape improvements, enhanced trail and recreational connectivity, and improved “public spaces” within the Downtown?



The Process

Briefing

- Panelists met with sponsor and received briefing materials

Site Visit:

- Panelists toured downtown Southborough

Panel interviewed stakeholders today including:

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



What did we hear?

Assets and Opportunities

- Inventory of architecturally distinct buildings & historic charm
- Walkable downtown corridor
- Strong institutions and their close proximity to downtown (St. Mark's, Fay School)
- Overall fiscal health of the community (AAA bond rating)
- Diverse employment base (Southborough Medical Group)



Assets and Opportunities

- Open spaces
- Engaged residents
- Corner parcel (2 Newton, corner of Main St)
- Affluent & educated demographics
- Senior Citizen Center & Community House



Challenges

- No shared vision among community stakeholders
 - Balancing historic renovation and commercial development
- Infrastructure
 - Wastewater management
 - Pedestrian connectivity: Sidewalks and trails
- Branding, Identity, and wayfinding
 - Dual town centers (Main Street vs. Town Center Plaza)
 - Lack of placemaking/sense of place

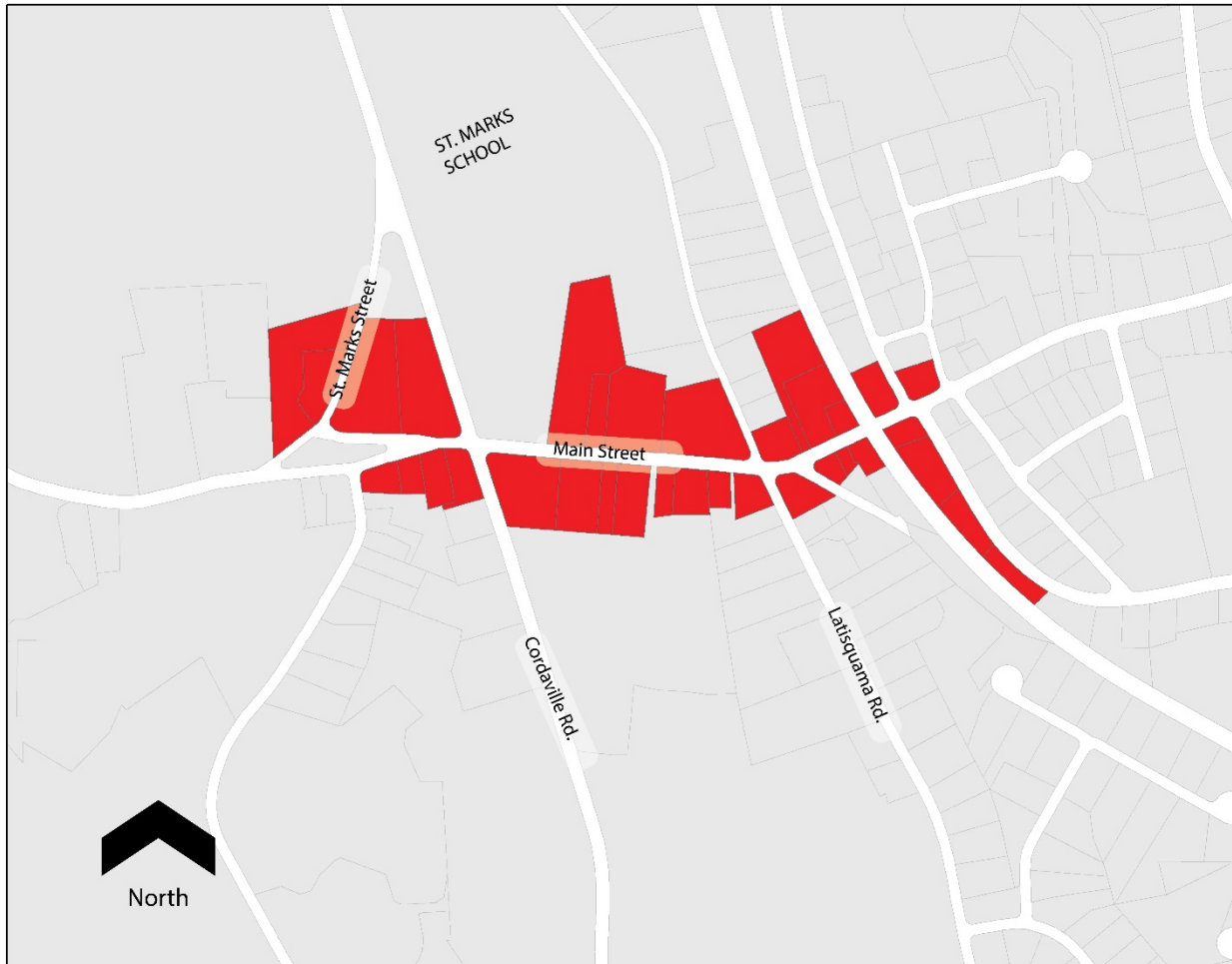


Challenges

- Perceived lack of local business support
- No anchor retail tenant for downtown
- Student engagement/customer base
- Perceived lack of parking



Setting the Context...What is Downtown?



Downtown corridor bookended by Town Hall and Main Street Bank

Setting the Context...What is Downtown?



Inventory of parcels and development potential

Recommendations – Short Term (1 to 3 years)

1) Create A Sense of Place

a) Branding – “Historic Downtown”

- i. Telephone pole banners
- ii. Decorative lighting/string lighting
- iii. Hanging flower pots

b) Events

- i. Summer streets (activate one of the causeways for recreational activities)
- ii. Movie nights
- iii. Family-friendly events

c) Activating Underutilized Downtown Parcels

- i. Partnership development: Community House and St. Mark’s
- ii. Crowdsourcing funding opportunity
- iii. Pop-up ice cream stand, food trucks, farmers market, etc.

Recommendations – Short Term (1 to 3 years)

2) Develop a Consensus on Downtown Development

- a) Downtown Vision and Action Plan
 - i. Public engagement (what should the land use be?)
 - ii. Project overview
 - iii. Zoning diagnostics and framework
 - iv. Infrastructure improvements
 - v. Market assessment (demand study for private sector investment)
 - *Third Party Vendor, \$30K-\$50K, 3 to 6 months*
- b) Identify parcels the town should control
 - i. RFP for priority uses
- c) Set aside liquor license for downtown establishment

Recommendations – Short Term (1 to 3 years)

3) Economic Development Committee Quick Wins

- a) Bring Youth Downtown! - Point of Sale Pilot Program at 3 Local Businesses
 - i. Rewards program (build brand loyalty)
 - ii. Student discounts

- b) Downtown Business Representative
 - i. Expand your existing economic development coordinator
 - ii. Advocate for existing and potential businesses
 - ii. “Town and Gown” coordinator

Recommendations – Short Term (1 to 3 years)

4) Wastewater Feasibility Planning

- a) Downtown development is currently limited, restricts revitalization
- b) Create a Sewer Assessment Technical Committee
 - i. Solution will require a partnership to support investment
 - ii. Growth should be managed by regulations, not under investment in infrastructure
 - iii. Identify viable solutions to the town's wastewater problem
 - iv. Evaluate onsite wastewater disposal systems for specific parcels
 - v. Establish a priority district to receive a treatment system

Recommendations – Short Term (1 to 3 years)

5) Identify a Local Champion to Shepard Implementation

- a) Strategically implement recommendations
 - I. Trusted community leader/stakeholder
 - II. Free from conflicts
 - III. Professional staff, Elected Official, or Community Activist or professional third party consultant
- b) Quarterly public reporting on benchmarks and milestones

Recommendations – Long Term

1) Create Form-Based Code / Design Guidelines

- a) Zone downtown by form, not use, to maintain historic character
- b) Specify the appearance of rehabilitated and newly constructed buildings
- c) Establish some by-right development
- d) Signage and wayfinding



Recommendations – Long Term

2) Establish BID/DIF

- a) Increase Town support of downtown businesses
- b) Reinvest downtown property taxes locally
- c) Help fund infrastructure improvements and community programming

3) Implement Vision

- a) Wastewater Management Plan from Feasibility Study
- b) Vision and Action plan

Funding & Resources

- **MassDevelopment Real Estate Technical Assistance Program**
 - Works with municipal officials, planners, local stakeholders, and others to provide technical assistance that uses creative solutions and clear action steps to address site-specific and district-wide economic development challenges. Next application round is Spring 2019.
- **Public Infrastructure Financing**
 - Tax-Exempt Bonds for Public Infrastructure
 - State Revolving Fund (SRF)
 - MassWorks Grant
 - MassDevelopment issues tax-exempt bonds for improvements to roadways, sidewalks, parks, parking garages, bridges, tunnels, wharves, and a range of public facilities. Infrastructure programs that use this tax-exempt financing includes
 - District Improvement Financing (DIF)
 - Special assessments
- **Predevelopment Loans**
 - MassDevelopment provides low interest rate loans up to \$100,000 with deferred repayment terms to finance predevelopment real estate projects.

Funding & Resources

- **MassDevelopment Commonwealth Places**
 - Creative funding program, Commonwealth Places, in partnership with the crowdfunding platform Patronicity to help improve public spaces around the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
 - Current crowdfunding projects funded by MassDevelopment (<https://www.patronicity.com/commonwealthplaces#!/>)



PITTSFIELD, MA

Dynamic Lightscapes in Downtown Pittsfield!


Let's create artistic LED lightscapes on buildings and public spaces to actualize a well-lit, safe environment attracting more visitors downtown.

\$40,470
of \$50,000

7
days left

★ Matching Grant: Commonwealth Places

[VIEW](#) [⚡ SUPPORT](#)



SOMERVILLE, MA

Bow Market Courtyard

A Place for Community and the Arts in the Heart of Union Square

\$26,482
of \$50,000

8
days left

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LYNN, MA

Beyond Walls Mural Festival 2018

Support the vibrant energy happening RIGHT NOW in Downtown Lynn!

\$35,360
of \$50,000

22
days left

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Questions?