



ULI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

BROCKTON, MA

BROCKTON, MA

SEPTEMBER 10, 2019



**Urban Land
Institute**

Boston/New England

URBAN LAND INSTITUTE (ULI)

The Urban Land Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members. The mission of ULI is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and to help sustain and create thriving communities. 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.

The Boston/New England District Council of ULI serves the six New England states and has over 1,300 members. As a preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum,

ULI Boston/New England facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, and regional leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

The Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) works with communities to create innovative policy and financing solutions that provide affordable homes and better lives for the people of Massachusetts. A statewide public non-profit affordable housing organization, MHP works in concert with the Governor, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the state's other quasi-public housing organizations. MHP was established in 1985 to increase the state's overall rate of housing production and work with cities and towns to demonstrate new and better ways of meeting our need for affordable housing.

ABOUT ULI BOSTON

ULI Boston/New England is a District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), a non-profit education and research organization supported by its members. Founded in 1936, the Institute today has more than 42,000 members worldwide. ULI members represent the full spectrum of land use planning and real estate development disciplines working in the private, public, and non-profit sectors.

The ULI Boston/New England District Council is committed to advancing ULI's Mission to "provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities" through its evolving platform as the leading real estate organization for convening and sharing best practices in our region. Our community outreach programs enables local ULI leaders to identify challenges to better development, feature best practices from across the country and devise new solutions to improve land use patterns.

ABOUT THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL (TAP) PROGRAM

ULI Boston's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Program provides expert, multidisciplinary, and non-partisan advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in Boston and New England. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI Boston conducts panels offering objective and pragmatic advice to local decision makers on a variety of land use and real estate issues, ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP Program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues.

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 spend 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.

Learn more at: <https://boston.uli.org>

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Executive Summary

The Brockton Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) convened on September 10, 2019, at the Metro South Chamber of Commerce at 60 School Street in Brockton, under the direction of the Boston/New England District Council of the Urban Land Institute. Over the course of the day, the TAP, consisting of six real estate and land-use professionals, along with a ULI staff representative and a report writer, met with local business owners, representatives from the City of Brockton, Massasoit Community College, and other key stakeholders.

This TAP day was sponsored by the Massachusetts Housing Partnership and the City of Brockton.

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 and provides a list of the panel members and stakeholders who took part in this particular TAP. The chapter also outlines the study area for the TAP and describes the process undertaken by the panelists and stakeholders during the information gathering sessions and subsequent charrette.

Chapter 2: Background and History

Provides a brief overview of Brockton as well as the city's three main questions for the TAP concerning the Quincy Street/Crescent Street study area; a brief history of the city; a physical description of the site under consideration, including its unique natural characteristics and its geographical location in relation to its neighbors in City of Brockton; and key population and demographic information that provide insight into the issues facing Brockton today.

Chapter 3: Assets and Opportunities

Following the TAP panel's review of the resource

binder, tour of the general study area, and three morning interview sessions with stakeholders, the TAP panel identified assets and opportunities, some time-sensitive, presented by this key location, which can be utilized.

Chapter 4: Challenges

In keeping with both the background provided by the city, the Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), and Massasoit Community College, as well as concerns raised by the stakeholders, the TAP panel identified concerns for the City of Brockton, DCAMM, and the college to consider moving forward. Challenges include the economic realities facing brick-and-mortar retail in an increasingly Internet-focused age, transportation and logistical issues, and alignment of timing and desired land use outcomes of the different stakeholders.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

Following its afternoon charrette, the TAP panel came up with a range of recommendations for the City, DCAMM, and the college to consider in response to the questions posed concerning the general study area.

Chapter 6: Funding

Identifying sources of funding for various improvements.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Depending on the level of investment of resources and time that the shareholders wish to expend, the general study area can be turned into a resource and conceivably meet the needs of DCAMM and the college and transform this side of the City of Brockton for years to come.

The TAP Process

The Panel

ULI Boston/New England convened a volunteer panel of experts whose members represent a wide range of commercial real estate disciplines. The task was to analyze the opportunities and challenges the public disposition of a state-owned site could provide the City of Brockton. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has been working on the redesign of the adjacent intersection and the City is assessing the area for re-zoning to better leverage the real estate potential of the area and support a more vibrant corridor. The City's goal is to revitalize and increase the economic vibrancy of this major corridor and create a connection to the downtown.

The site is owned by the Massachusetts Division of Capital Management and Maintenance and Massasoit Community College. The property was originally slated to be the site of a Life Sciences center for the college. However, funding for this ambitious expansion has not been continued under the current state administration, and DCAMM and the college now seeks to sell the parcel to finance expansion and rehabilitation of

existing buildings on campus to create the new center. Panelists included architects, planners, and developers. The following is a list of the panelists:

Katie Bosse, Program Coordinator,
Massachusetts Housing Partnership

Spencer Gracie, Commercial Real Estate
Advisor, Madison Marquette

Chris Johns, Founding Partner, ThoughtCraft
Architects

Ben Weissbourd, Real Estate Developer,
Harvard University

Co-Chairs:

Susan Connelly, Director of Community
Assistance, Massachusetts Housing
Partnership

Scott Pollack, Principal, Arrowstreet

These panelists donated their time.

ULI Staff

Sara Marsh, Urban Land Institute—Boston

TAP Report Writer

Clea Simon



TAP Panelists and
stakeholders during interview
session

Stakeholders

The TAP benefited from the participation of a diverse group of stakeholders—representatives from the local business community, as well as the city, DCAMM, and Massasoit Community College—who came together to discuss issues relating to the overall community and economic future of Brockton.

The following is a list of the stakeholders:

Amanda Chisholm, MassDevelopment
Gerald D. Cohen, CGI Management
Richard Cohen, CGI Management
Michael Mather Sr., Property Owner
Michael Mather Jr., Residential Realtor
Brian Droukas, Droukas Realty (Commercial)
Tom Plouffe, Brockton Housing Authority
Sara Yunis, Massasoit Community College
Bill Mitchell, Massasoit Community College
Abigail S. Vladeck—DCAMM

The purpose of the TAP was to answer three questions posed by the City of Brockton concerning the Crescent/Quincy Street area. These questions are:

1. What opportunity is there to leverage the TAP study area as a catalyst for healthy, mixed-use development of Brockton's Crescent Street Corridor?
2. Given Brockton's existing low rent, what is the financial feasibility of a mixed-used space that can allow Massasoit Community College to receive payment for their property on the site?
3. What are the necessary zoning changes and public resources, not already identified, that can be catalysts for a mixed-use corridor to the nearby downtown?

Through the course of the day, the panel also fielded general inquiries about possibilities for the city to improve both traffic patterns and access to the college as well as questions about the impact of any development on surrounding businesses and the nearby residential area. These queries, as well as the original three questions, were raised during a tour of the sites and adjacent parts of the city as well as in three sequential meetings with stakeholders held during the morning and through lunch. As per the TAP process, the panel then spent the afternoon in charrette addressing possible solutions that would require differing levels of investment and intentional coordination, by the city, the college, and DCAMM. These options were then presented to stakeholders and city officials, including members of Brockton's state legislative delegation, in an hour-long presentation following dinner at the end of the TAP day.

Background and History

The Brockton TAP was held on September 10, 2019. Panelists from ULI Boston/New England were greeted at the Metro South Chamber of Commerce by Rob May, Director of Planning and Economic Development and Shane O'Brien Staff Planner for the City of Brockton, who led the ULI panel on an hour-and-a-half-long tour of Brockton by Brockton Area Transit (BAT) bus.

The tour began with a visit to the site under consideration, the Crescent/Quincy Street parcel, which consists of vacant paved lots and the college's now-vacant conference center, a standalone building which had initially been slated to be replaced by a new Life Sciences Center for Massasoit Community College. As panelists walked the paved but

rutted lot, abutting businesses—including a fully occupied strip mall, a gas station, and a nursing home—were pointed out and their concerns were noted. The surrounding mix of residential, commercial, retail and light industrial uses on either side of the busy two-lane state highway (Crescent Street, Route 27) create a connectivity challenge. North of the TAP subject area is a nursing home, south directly across Crescent Street is a large elderly public housing community, and east along Quincy street is a planned multi-family market-rate development. Directly adjacent to the site is a fully-occupied, lower-rent strip mall with no curb appeal. The Crescent/Quincy streets corner of the subject area was a gas station and may have contamination

Southeast view of the study area



issues. The parcel west of the college's Massasoit Drive entrance contains a small, well maintained strip of retail, including a popular restaurant. The parcel east of the entrance is a used car lot and abuts a stream and wetlands (an unused natural resource) and may be encroaching on publicly-owned property. These land uses played into the panel's considerations as part of a larger vision for this east side of the city, and for Brockton as a whole. The subject site is just four miles west of the Brockton/Whitman town line, and the intersection is under city assessment for redesign. The attention given to the area provides the opportunity to mark a bucolic entrance to Massasoit Community College and the westerly entrance to the City of Brockton.

The panelists then proceeded by bus to the nearby Brockton Hospital, several blocks north and west of the general study area. Located in a residential area, recent expansion has often incorporated or replaced residential structures with low-rise medical and office buildings. Surrounding medical businesses have sprung up, creating a medical area or node of similar industry that extends into the surviving residential area.

From the medical area, the panelists then traveled back past the general study site south and east, through the Crescent Street-Massasoit Drive intersection and onto the campus of Massasoit Community College, entering the campus off Route 27, via the one-time service entrance, which now often serves as the main entrance to the campus. This intersection is slated for repaving and possible redesign by the state Department of Transportation by 2022, and this entrance is one of the areas that the college seeks to improve. Currently this entrance does not have any pedestrian or bike access, nor does it have sidewalks. On campus, the panelists saw buildings that will serve as the interim Life Sciences Center, exiting the college via its official main entrance, which is accessed via a

The panelists then met with stakeholders in three meetings. Issues raised included the strengthening of the city's residential market, for both rentals and sales, and the

importance of the subject site generating funding for redevelopment of Massasoit Community College buildings, particularly in light of the loss of anticipated state funding for the proposed Life Sciences Building. Other concerns broached the quality of neighborhood and possibility of additional retail. In addition, the fear that projects, such as a possible hotel, would be built on the subject site and then fail, leading to re-use as emergency shelter, which would change the character of the neighborhood, was voiced.

Following the stakeholder meetings, the panelists then engaged in an intensive "closed door" charrette to develop recommendations based on the information provided in their research prior to the meetings as well as the input from the stakeholders. "Next step" recommendations were then shared with citizens of Brockton, including elected officials, business owners and representatives of DCAMM and the college at a public presentation at the Chamber of Commerce that evening.

The TAP panel was asked if there is a financially feasible way to leverage the study area as a catalyst for a healthy, mixed-use corridor along Crescent Street, what zoning and other resources would be needed, and can enough value for the DCAMM parcels be created to support the college's fiscal goals.

History:

Brockton is justly proud of its history as a scrappy New England industrial town that has learned to re-invent itself time and again. In addition to being the home of undefeated boxing great Rocky Marciano (1923–1969), Brockton has several other claims to fame, from Edison to education and shoes to solar energy. The area of present-day Brockton was first settled in the 17th century and was known as North Bridgewater. The area—comprising the communities of Brockton, West Bridgewater, East Bridgewater, and Bridgewater—became a city in 1881. Inventor Thomas Edison came to Brockton soon after, and two years later, established the Brockton Edison Electric Illuminating Company. With the first ever underground three-wire electrical

distribution system, the precursor to our current alternating-current system, this power plant illuminated 1,600 lamps.

That innovation helped spur a rise of manufacturing, and Brockton became known as “Shoe City.” By the end of the Civil War, about a thousand residents were producing \$1.5 million worth of shoes annually. This industry reached its peak in the early 20th century, when the city had a population of 40,000, and more than 6,000 were employed by the over 100 separate shoe manufacturers that made Brockton their home.

Brockton remains the home base of several industries, including W.B. Mason, which began as a small warehouse specializing in printed products and stamps in 1889. In 2006, the city converted the long-dormant Brockton Gas Works site into the pioneering Brockton Brightfields, a New England first as a source of renewable energy source. In cooperation with state and federal government, the Brockton Brightfields outfitted the polluted industrial site with solar panels, producing enough solar energy to power City Hall.

Today the city’s primary employers are the Brockton Hospital, and the corollary medical industries, and Massasoit Community College. Thanks to its convenient location 20 miles south of Boston, along State Route 24, and commuter rail, Brockton is also considered a gateway city to Boston and to Providence RI, one that is growing in importance as a commuter hub that offers both access to Boston and an affordable cost of living. The general perception represented to the TAP panel is that Brockton residents leave town/commute to higher-wage jobs, while employment within the town tends toward lower-wage jobs.

Within the city, Brockton residents benefit from Brockton Area Transit (BAT), a successful public transportation system that not only traverses the city but also provides access to the commuter rail lines to Boston; Providence, RI; and beyond.

Overall, the city is in good shape. With an economy that is considered adequate, the city has a strong budgetary performance, with a

slight operating surplus in its general fund and an operating surplus in its total governmental fund level in fiscal 2018. The city has strong liquidity and a very strong debt and liability profile. It also benefits from a strong institutional framework score.

Although it has an urban downtown, the overall feel of Brockton is suburban, with high-rise office buildings quickly giving way to neighborhoods of single-family homes. Roughly divided into East Side and West Side, which are the more residential and suburban areas, and Downtown, which is more urban, it is also divided by income, with the two suburban areas being more affluent than the urban downtown. The area of study is on Brockton’s East Side.

Following the unexpected death of Mayor Bill Carpenter last year, the city was in the midst of political upheaval, with a field of seven mayoral candidates on TAP day. Since then, Robert Sullivan, Councilor-at-large was elected as mayor. As the college, the hospital, and the general study area are spread over several city wards, various political players as well as citizen and business groups are actively involved in zoning and development issues.

Demographics:

The East Side of Brockton, where the general study area is located, is estimated to have grown over twice as fast as the City of Brockton since 2010 and is predicted to continue growing at a rapid pace, projected at 2.8%. (Citywide growth is projected to be 2.03% through 2021). Median household income, at \$44,943, is lower than the city’s, at \$50,669. East Side residents are slightly less likely to own (54%) than the city average (56%), and slightly more likely to rent (46% as opposed to 44%). Median housing price is \$307,695, according to the Chamber of Commerce. A family would need to earn approximately \$57,000 annually to afford a home at this price.

Brockton has its own school system, with a total enrollment of 16,651.

Brockton enjoys great demographic diversity.

A majority minority city, as of the 2010 Census, Brockton was 42.8% white, 43.1% African American, 0.4% Native American, 10.3% from other races, 3.9% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 7.8% of the population.

Brockton has the largest population of Cape Verdean ancestry in the United States, with 9% of its population reporting this ancestry. Brockton also reportedly has one of the largest communities of Angolans in the United States.

Assets and Opportunities

Serendipity has lined up many factors to make this a perfect time for this parcel to be considered by the city as a catalyst to the greater area. DCAMM and Massasoit Community College are seeking to sell this land and use the proceeds to finance rehabilitation projects on the college campus, while the city of Brockton is planning to reconfigure, widen, and repave the intersection that runs between the parcel and the college campus by 2020. The timing of this state-financed repaving will allow any DCAMM-Massasoit Community College project to capitalize on the street and intersection improvement, without incurring additional costs.

Meanwhile, both Massasoit Community College and Brockton Hospital are planning expansions around healthcare. There are now several nursing programs in the area, between the Signature HealthCare Brockton Hospital School of Nursing, a 122-year-old program that this year is expanding into a larger state-of-the-art facility and offering a four-year nursing program; Fisher college's long-established RN-BSN program, and a new four-year program at Massasoit Community College. Considering these programs, as well as the college's plans for a new Life Sciences Center and the hospital's expansion, it is clear that there are opportunities for synergies in healthcare and

healthcare education. Both the college and the hospital are also major employers in the area, and both appear aligned in growth areas.

The area under consideration is currently vacant and connects on a north-south axis to the residential area abutting the hospital campus, with retail/commercial on Crescent Street and MCC. The greater study area includes a nursing home and senior housing, both of which benefit from proximity to the medical node. Traditional small-lot residential development (single-family homes) make up nearby neighborhoods.

Brockton, and the study area, are well served by accessible public transit. The Brockton Area Transit (BAT) bus lines have several stops in or near the site, and these provide access within the city as well as to the suburban rail line that conveys commuters to Boston.

The area is also adjacent to the Beaver Brook and its adjoining wetlands, which the TAP group saw an underutilized natural resource that could be made more accessible for recreation and beautification as part of the intersection improvements and MCC entrance redesign.

Challenges

Crescent Street resembles many commercial thoroughfares throughout the country with empty and underutilized retail spaces reflecting a changing market and the impact of on-line shopping. It is an area that people are mostly driving through to get to downtown or traveling east towards Whitman. Land use appears to be 'by parcel' with no uniting planning. The lack of integration of uses and density along this state highway drags on its potential for economic growth and development.

Although the general study area was proposed as a possible corridor into downtown Brockton, it currently lacks any sense of place. It contains no social amenities or natural gathering places

(unlike the donut shop, several blocks away, or the Beaver Brook, which could be better utilized) and has no defining characteristic, other than its emptiness and car-centric retail, which would establish it as a neighborhood destination. Currently, it feels like a vacant lot in an otherwise suburban area, rather than a destination or a draw.

The surrounding commercial space is underutilized. The TAP request envisioned the subject parcel as a catalyst to create a mixed-use and retail "corridor" along Crescent Street into Brockton's downtown. What the TAP panel realized is that there is insufficient retail demand to fill this east to west almost two-mile



Brockton Local Commercial District Map

stretch and the connection opportunity was really north to south between two of the city's major employers. As the trend away from brick-and-mortar retail and toward Internet services continues, it is the consensus of the panel that this lack of demand is unlikely to change and in order to increase retail viability in a diminishing storefront marketplace, planning and zoning in the area must include multi-family residential.

Although the general study area does enjoy mass transit access, it suffers from a limited transportation infrastructure beyond its Brockton Area Transit (BAT) bus stops.

For example, a number of the surrounding streets do not have sidewalks. This is especially problematic in that students who choose to take the bus to the campus must then walk in the street leading into the campus.

In addition, there are no bike lanes in the area. Because the vast majority of college students are commuters, this leaves those who seek to use alternative transportation at a disadvantage. The panel stresses that with the state repaving/reworking of the intersection scheduled, the timing for improvements such as sidewalks and bike lanes is optimal and should be capitalized on. The panel supports the city's efforts to plan for a future Brockton that reflects state and national demographic changes, including the use of multi-modal transportation.

Although the area does enjoy mass transit, it is currently not organized to best connect major east side institutions. Even though they are only a half mile apart, the college and the hospital are on different bus lines, which do not interconnect. To travel between MCC and Brockton Hospital by bus, you have to travel to downtown, transfer buses and ride back out. This isolates both, making them into far-flung "islands" set apart from each other and outside the city center.

The physical disconnection of these two major employment and visitor nodes hinders any chance of synergy, despite their shared growth, areas of interest (such as nursing education), and concerns going forward. It also undermines potential retail use along Crescent Street that could support customers and workers of both the hospital and MCC.

The site is a significant distance from downtown and the streets leading from the study area to downtown are two-lane, mostly residential streets. Turning this entire length of low-density, residential character streets into a retail/mixed-use corridor would be both infeasible and inappropriate.

Residential development is currently hindered by production costs. Although new developments can only charge "Brockton rents," new construction is seen as priced at "Boston costs." Therefore, extensive new development—such as larger buildings that require steel framing and elevators—may be viewed as prohibitively expensive in terms of what developers would be able to recoup in rent or sales. Rezoning should take this into account but allow enough flexibility for market changes.

The study area's biggest challenge is outdated zoning. The existing zoning was created in a moment in time that no longer reflects market realities and community needs. Without a healthy amount of retail users, the value of the retail space is diminished. Surrounding residential areas (within a one-mile radius) are mostly small-scale single-family homes on small lots creating typically well-loved neighborhoods. In order to preserve these neighborhoods and maintain some viable retail and commercial uses in the study area, and to support an economically thriving east end, denser housing must be planned as part of a rezoning effort. The study area is a perfect transition from single-family to commercial and retail.

The outdated zoning includes existing parking requirements, which hinder possibilities such as housing in the area. Seeking either exceptions or special permits for this and other onerous zoning takes time, abandons best practices for municipal planning and adds costs to potential revitalizing development. Rezoning the area to allow as of right development reflecting current realities, would move positive transformation of the area in the least costly and most effective way.

Recommendations

The TAP panel discussed the assets, opportunities, and challenges facing the parcel in light of the three questions posed by the City of Brockton. The following goals were identified, as were two options for achieving these goals.

The TAP panel recommends that the stakeholders consider the DCAMM/MCC parcel and the state-financed redesign of the adjoining intersection as a single, time-sensitive, opportunity.

This opportunity could be used to create a new gateway to the college, to the city's educational and medical area, as well as to the entire City of Brockton.

After viewing the area, and although this was not broached in the original three questions, the panel recommends creating an intentional north/south connection between the hospital/medical area and the college, to capitalize on their shared areas of interest and growth and create a critical mass centered around medical education. Such a connection could include new green areas, improved sidewalks, a pedestrian corridor, and bike lane. Areas for these types of infrastructure investment would be along Sterling Road, to Beaumont Avenue, to Quincy Street, connecting to Crescent and Hammond Avenue. While this would involve the surrounding residential area, it is the opinion of the panel that such improvements would be welcomed as improving housing/neighborhood value.

The panel had concerns about further expansion of Brockton Hospital and ancillary uses, into the surrounding neighborhoods and recommends that the city consider a zoning plan that would encourage future expansion south of the hospital campus, towards Crescent Street. Also, the currently vacant Baker

School, north of the hospital should be under consideration in the mixed-use planning of this north/south education and medical node.

The panel strongly urges the stakeholders to move quickly to capitalize on the upcoming state road improvements and to create maximum impact.

Option 1:

DCAMM and the college could invest in the future by creating a medical/educational campus on the site that would have the ripple effect of positive change throughout the East Side and the city as a whole.

This would involve a long-term goal of redeveloping the site for mixed medical, educational, and residential use.

Such an option could involve the sale of the parcels to a private developer, who could then lease these back to institutional users, including the college, hospital, or other government uses.

A directed sale-leaseback for such purposes would have several benefits. It would increase the value of the property by providing a guaranteed income to the developer, in the form of institutional leases. As it would be owned by a private developer, it would provide taxable income to the city. Because the project would involve a private developer, it would not require state bonding.

To promote this option and, once again, capitalize on the state-funded repaving that is already scheduled, the city could re-zone the parcel to increase its value to a third party and create predictability and transparency which would improve the RFP process.

Such a project would successfully create an area that would offer a sense of arrival—a

proper “gateway” — to both the city and the college.

Although there is currently little or no demand for medical use development on the site, the city could stimulate this demand by directing change toward the Quincy/Crescent area through zoning and other development restrictions and/or incentives. This would not only spur the synergy of a medical/education north/south node, it would have the additional benefit of controlling “institutional sprawl” around the current hospital area into residential areas.



Study area with identified North & South connections

construction disparity discussed earlier— “Brockton rents” vs. “Boston construction costs” —the panel recommends focusing on less expensive modes of construction. These would include wood frame, as opposed to steel frame buildings, and thus, of necessity, not include high-rise multi-family towers. Such lower-rise construction would also negate the necessity of elevators, or other features required in residential towers. In addition, lower-rise construction, such as triple-deckers, would fit seamlessly into the existing residential neighborhood.



Study area with identified North & South connections and proposed residential development

Option 2: Residential

The second option presented by the TAP panel would require a smaller investment of time and money and would result in a quicker turnaround of the parcel, answering DCAMM and the college’s immediate needs for funding, it would also produce smaller rewards. Option 2 would also improve the immediate area, but it would not serve to re-direct the East Side or the city for future growth.

This option calls for selling the parcel for development as housing. This could be a mix of single-family and as well as multi-family dwellings.

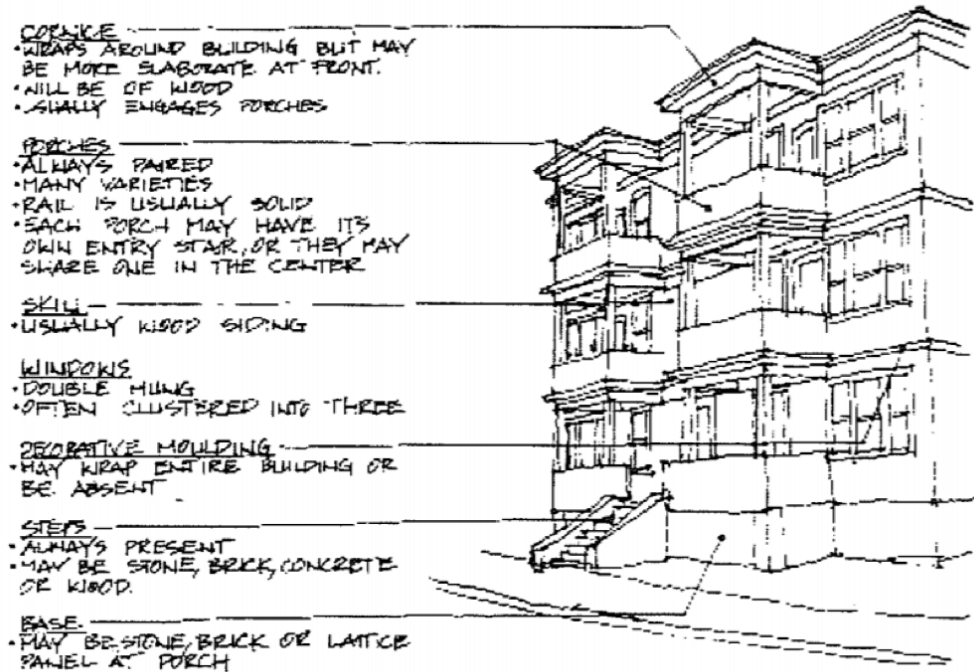
The surrounding residential neighborhood currently consists primarily of 0.2-acre (8,712 square foot) parcels. The study area could be subdivided into similar parcels. Taking into consideration the income vs. cost of

Current zoning would have to be updated to allow an economically feasible use of the property for residential purposes. Parking requirements, for example, would need to be updated.

Once this hurdle was cleared, the area could be used for such traditional Brockton housing styles as triple-deckers, double-triple-deckers, or single-family homes. Updated versions of these traditional styles would make the study area a welcome extension of the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Developing the Crescent/Quincy parcel for residential use should focus on:

Cost-effective housing types, such as triple-deckers and double-triple-deckers, which provide density at better scale. They are efficient and would also allow any potential



Example of a 6 family walk up,
photo credit: MHP (Boston
Pattern Book)

developer to build over time, rather than on a strict timetable. In addition, the properties could be a mix of rental and owned homes, giving both the developer and the potential residents options.

Next steps:

In order to proceed with either option, the City needs to work with DCAMM and Massasoit Community College and engage community residents, business owners, Ward councilors, and other stakeholders to present the ultimate vision for the parcel and solicit their support before DCAMM presents it for disposition. This process must be time sensitive and defined. This will ease the process of development for any future developer through permitting and construction.

Zoning issues must be addressed before any development can proceed. The area needs to be rezoned in a way that updates parking requirements and also updates allowable uses.

Again, timing is of the greatest importance. The repaving of the intersection offers an unparalleled opportunity for the City, DCAMM and the college to participate in the intersection redesign as well as DCAMM disposition.

Timing, and the upcoming state-funded road work, will determine the fiscal feasibility of this option in the current market.

Massasoit Community College's development/redevelopment timeline and program needs are also of pressing concern and the community should support their on-campus investment goals which can only benefit the City when properly leveraged.

Funding

While the primary goal of DCAMM and the college is to raise funds through the sale or use of the study area, the TAP panel has identified several sources of funding for additional investment and improvement, which could significantly increase the value and ultimate gains from the project.

These include the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) through its community assistance program. Created to build support for affordable housing in communities across the Commonwealth, MHP is a leader in permanent financing for affordable, education and technical assistance. Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), has multiple resources and reports such as its parking utilization report, to help inform current best zoning practices.

In addition, commercial development in the general study area (likely healthcare or education uses) may be eligible for New Market Tax Credits.

Conclusion

At the close of the TAP day, the panel revisited the three questions posed to it and responded with a series of detailed answers.

Concerning opportunity to leverage the TAP study area as a catalyst for a healthy, mixed-use development of Brockton's Crescent Street corridor, the panel sees the initial impulse as misdirected. In light of the lack of retail demand (and the poor prognosis for additional demand for brick-and-mortar storefronts), the panel advises reconceiving of the area as a north-south district or node, not an east-west corridor.

Taking into consideration the potential for synergy between the nearby hospital and college campus, as well as the upcoming state-funded road work, there is great potential for development of the study area as a district. The panel advises DCAMM and the college to take into consideration these existing factors and to focus on the immediate opportunity.

In terms of the financial feasibility of a mixed-use space the panel had a mixed response. Under the existing zoning, a mixed-use site as originally envisioned will be difficult. However, the panel has identified two options that would allow the college to realize funding for its needs. One would be longer-term and require

significant reorganization of priorities and resources, with potentially greater benefits not only to the college but to the East Side and the City of Brockton as a whole. The other, residential option would still require updating of existing zoning, but would require less overhauling of the system and would still meet the immediate needs of the college.

Finally, the panel outlined zoning changes for both building and parking zoning that would be necessary for any of the proposed steps forward, depending on the project. The biggest public resource needed is political will to re-zone not only the study area, but the greater area, for the future. Other public resources have been mentioned under each option.

In conclusion, the City, DCAMM, and Massasoit Community College have a unique opportunity at this time to capitalize on existing synergies and also on upcoming investment by the state. Depending on the level of effort and investment expended, this parcel can be turned into a productive, income-producing asset for the college, the City, and the state.



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