



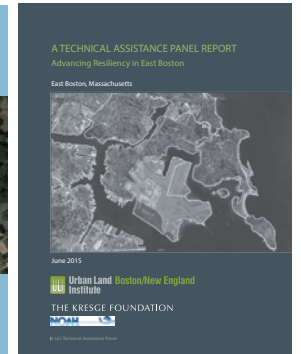
**Amesbury Lower Millyard TAP**  
May 4, 2021

# About ULI – the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising nearly 45,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

## 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)

## Amesbury, MA

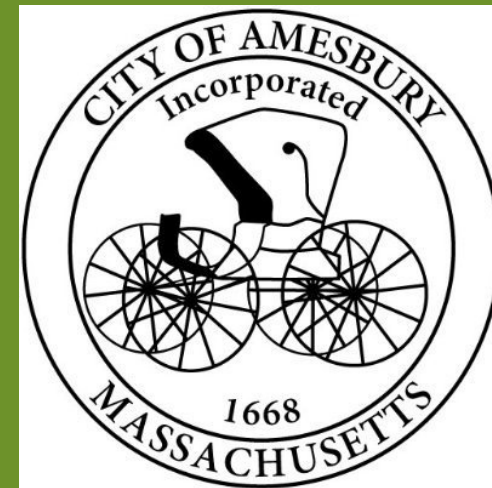
ULI Boston/New England is committed to supporting communities in making sound land use decisions and creating better places. A TAP brings together ULI members with a range of professional expertise to provide focused, collaborative consultation to a local government or qualifying non-profit organization.

### TAP Impact on Communities:

- **82%** said their behavior and approach to **Municipal Planning and Economic Development Strategies** was affected
- **67%** said there were **increased municipal investments** related to the stated goals and recommendations of their TAP report.
- **62%** said at least **one key developable asset addressed in their TAP report had been redeveloped consistent with ULI Boston/New England recommendations**

**Final Deliverable – Written report (10 - 12 weeks) will be available at <http://boston.uli.org>**

# PANEL SPONSOR:





# The Panel

## Co-Chairs

- **Nyal McDonough**
- **Michael Wang**, Form + Place

## Panelists

- **GerryLynn Darcy**, Lupoli Companies
- **Ileen Gladstone**, GEI Consultants
- **Iris Lin**, Halvorson | Tighe and Bond Studio
- **Alyson Stein**, POAH
- **Bob Uhlig**, Halvorson | Tighe and Bond Studio
- **Eleni Varitimos**, MassDevelopment

## ULI Staff

- **Michelle Landers**, Executive Director, ULI Boston/New England

## TAP Writer

- **Kelly Annis**, ULI Staff



# The Process

## Briefing Meeting

Panelists received briefing information from the city regarding the study area including zoning, past studies, current conditions, etc.

## Site Visit

On April 30, Panelists toured the Lower Millyard District including Water Street, Oakland Street, and Chestnut Street, as well as the parking area and transportation/community center.

## Stakeholder Interviews

On April 30, the panelists interviewed property owners, business owners, and public officials via Zoom to better understand the needs of district tenants and the community.



# Panel Assignment: Address These Questions





## Study Area – Lower Millyard Overlay District





- What is/are the best use(s) for this District, including City-owned land and historic buildings?
- How do we make a stronger connection to our transit/community center?
- How can we make a stronger connection between this District and our Central Business District?

A grayscale photograph of a man and a woman sitting at a table, looking at a tablet together. The man is on the left, wearing glasses and a beard, and the woman is on the right. They are both focused on the screen. The image is dimmed to serve as a background for the text.

# What did we hear?

# Assets and Opportunities

## Location

- Proximity to Main Street
- Walkability
- Access to riverwalk
- Opportunities for connectivity
- Transportation access
- Waterfront Activation
- Accessible parking
- Nearby residential neighborhoods

- Engaged Community – Public and Private
- Community spirit for outdoor recreation
- Opportunity to activate greenspace
- New Leadership
- Economic diversity – demographically and commercially
- Willingness to "think big"
- Pedestrian focus
- Compelling History



# Assets and Opportunities

## Site Conditions

- Historic Architecture
- City owns major parcels in district
- Breweries are destinations
- Upper Millyard is a current destination
- Large developable parcels that can spawn economic activity
- Environmental cleanup has been performed
- Parking deck requires attention
- National Grid site may come into play

## Economics

- Market conditions are favorable
- EDIC Grant
- Suburban Appeal

# Challenges

## Location

- Floodplain
- Wetlands
- Topography
- Heritage Park not well connected to downtown/Upper Millyard
- No direct access to commuter rail

## Community

- Historically there has not been a cohesive approach – Bartley parcel is a missed opportunity
- Suboptimal uses for downtown location – visually unappealing
  - Salvage yard
  - Auto shop
- Refocus community attention to investing downtown/urban core
- Masterplan is dated

# Challenges

## Site Conditions

- Environmental conditions (known and unknown) on development parcels (typical for historic manufacturing sites)
  - Chestnut and Oakland – can be managed
  - Salvage yard and auto shop – more uncertain
- Carriage House is not a viable structure
- Streetscape – not inviting, challenging to navigate, disconnected from downtown
- Riverwalk is tucked away – not clearly marked
- Riverwalk ends abruptly/unceremoniously
- Connectivity within district

## Economics

- Largest developable parcels are privately owned
- Limited resources for public investments
- Lack of critical mass of downtown housing
- Competing retail/visitor destination in Newburyport (more established shopping district)
- Mill ownership (Oakland and Chestnut) not engaged – plans for use unclear
  - Lack of investment in strategic parcels





# Recommendations

# Recommendations – Short Term (*1 year and under*)

- Signage
  - Length of Riverwalk to upper Millyard
  - Better signage for vehicles as well
  - Promote business in districts – breweries, etc
- Establish Heritage Park as a destination within district
  - More robust activation of park with plan for year-round programming (skating, curling, etc)
  - Open Market or pop up event concept
  - Activate fountain



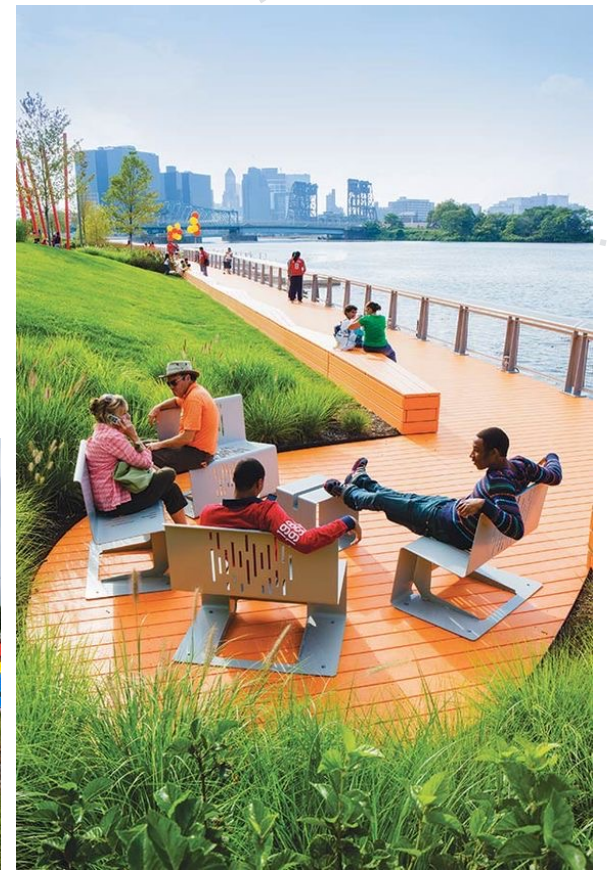
# Recommendations – Short Term *(1 year and under)*

- Enhanced lighting throughout the district
- Public Art – Murals or sculptures
- Eliminate Parking on Water Street for enhanced pedestrian access
- Conduct a Parking Plan
- Resolve issues with parking deck
- Address sidewalk and walkability on Chestnut street and Oakland to improve safety
- Open Studios tour/events
- Make Riverfront more appealing (Frederick MD Example)





# Placemaking Strategies



# Recommendations – Medium *(1 to 3 years)*

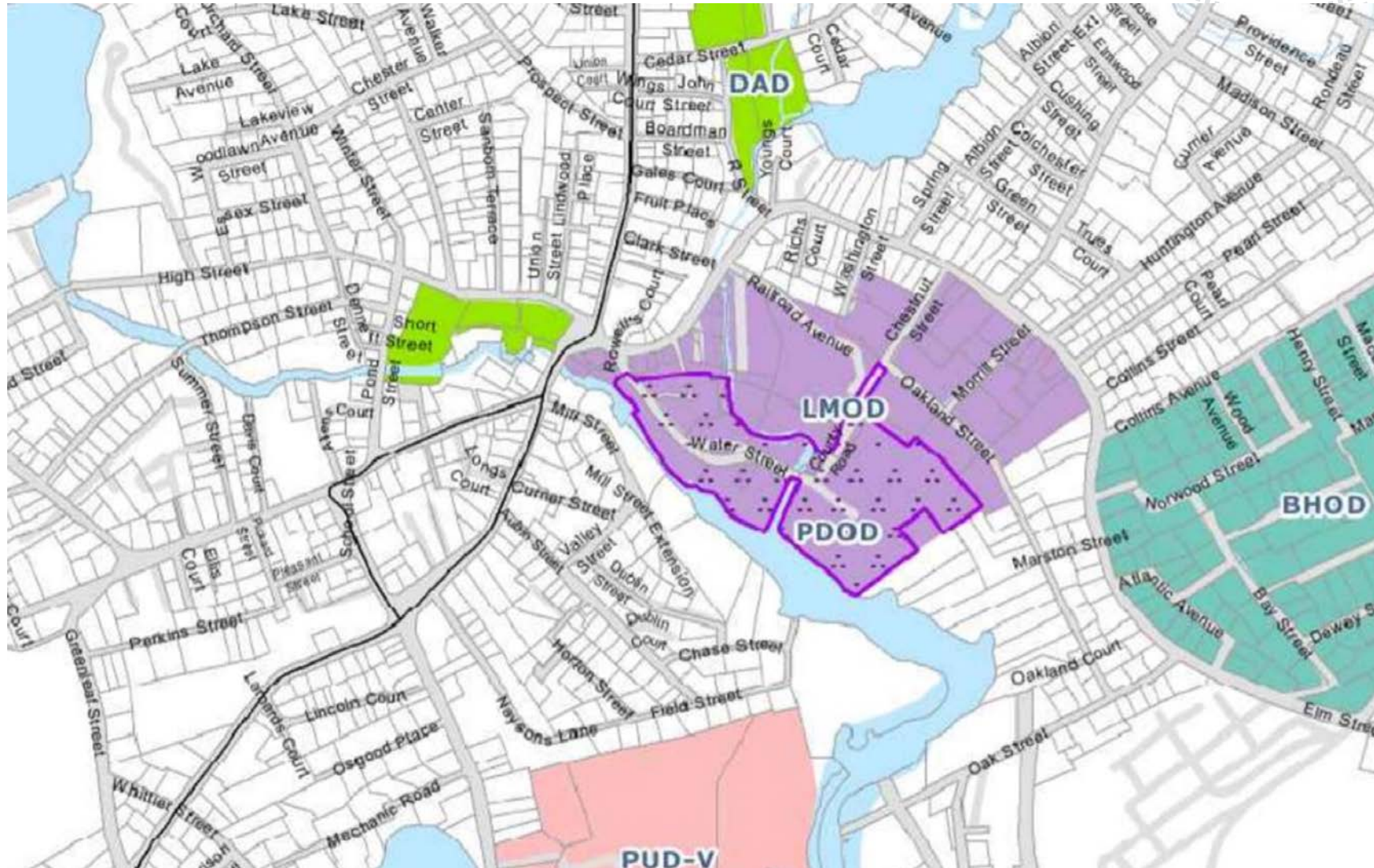
- Carriage House – demo and removal
- Parking Deck - Resolution is critical to future of district/area
  - Study viability of wrapped parking structure to replace parking deck
  - Study viability of RFP for public-private partnership on parking parcel
- Acquire National Grid Parcel if possible
- Secure funding for Masterplanning district (perhaps rethink zoning)
- Explore valuation and viability of relocating suboptimal uses
- Area-wide environmental assessment
- Public Space Interventions

# Recommendations – Long term (3 – 10 years)

- Relocation of salvage yard and German Motor Sport
- Provide Housing Opportunities for downsizing seniors (Assisted or Independent Living) and new families, with an affordability component.
- Potential to provide affordable housing for town employees, middle-income earners
- Increase public amenities



# Possible Redevelopment Scenario



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# Possible Redevelopment Scenario

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# Funding & Resources

# Supplemental funding and financing resources

Brownfields Area Wide Assessment Grant  
EDIC Grant

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# Q&A

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Urban Land Institute Boston/New England