



ULI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

MILLIS, MASSACHUSETTS TOWN CENTER REDEVELOPMENT

JUNE 24–28, 2021



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 shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. Founded in 1936, the Institute has grown to over 45,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines working in private enterprise and public service. ULI membership includes developers, architects, planners, lawyers, bankers, and economic development professionals as well as other related disciplines.

The Boston/New England District Council of ULI serves the six New England states and has nearly 1,400 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.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS (TAPs)

The ULI Boston/New England Real Estate Advisory Committee convenes TAPs at the request of public officials and local stakeholders of communities and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use challenges, who benefit from the pro bono recommendations provided by the TAP members.

A TAP consists of a group of diverse professionals with expertise in the issues posed. The Panel 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.

A recent independent study by Rivera Consulting surveyed municipalities that received assistance from the TAP programs and reported a positive impact by the TAP process on communities. Eighty-two percent of participating municipalities said their behavior and approach to municipal planning and economic development strategies were affected; 67% said there were increased municipal investments related to the stated goals and recommendations of their TAP report; and 62% said at least one key developable asset addressed in their TAP report had been redeveloped, consistent with ULI Boston/New England recommendations.

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



©2021

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
ULI and the TAP Process	6
Background and Assignment	9
Assets and Opportunities	11
Recommendations	14
Next Steps/Implementation	23



Executive Summary

Under the direction of the Urban Land Institute's Boston/New England District Council, the Town of Millis Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) conducted a virtual briefing session on June 17, 2021. One week later an in-person tour of the Town of Millis, Massachusetts took place on June 24, 2021. The following day, June 25, 2021, the panel of planning, design, engineering, and development professionals held two virtual interview sessions with approximately 20 stakeholders: business representatives, community leaders, developers, and residents. The focus of these sessions was to identify the issues, constraints, and opportunities present at Exchange Street, Main Street (MA Route 109) as well as potential development opportunities on neighboring sites. The report that follows,

which summarizes the TAP recommendations, comprises five chapters.

ULI and the TAP Process

Gives an overview of the Urban Land Institute's Boston/New England District Council and its Technical Assistance Panel (TAPs) and provides a detailed list of participants in the Millis TAP, including City officials, stakeholders, and the panel of land use professionals.

Background and Assignment

Gives background information about the Town of Millis and provides an overview of recent public and private investment areas. This chapter also reviews the Town of Millis's objectives for the TAP, as stated in its initial



This aerial photograph shows the study area in the Town Center of Millis. Important landmarks include 1: Exchange Street and 2: GAF and Clicquot sites. Source Google Images.

application, which were to recharacterize the core of Millis to create a Town Center, determine affordable housing development opportunities, transportation opportunities, and how to attract new businesses to the Town Center to increase and sustain Millis's tax base.

Assets and Opportunities

Outlines the various positive attributes the panel observed about the Town Center of Millis, including well-designed and conveniently located civic structures, appreciation of local history and landmarks, its strong housing market, highly regarded school system, rural characteristics, and proximity to the commuter rail, retail plazas, and restaurants. There are also two expansive properties, previously used for industrial manufacturing, that are well suited for a simplified approach to zoning that can accommodate and would encourage new housing developments.

Recommendations

Outlines the panel's recommendations for the Town, broken down into four categories: focus on revitalizing Exchange Street, focus on redevelopment at GAF and Clicquot sites, investigate Rail Trail connectivity, and revise the Master Plan from 2000.

Next Steps/Implementation

Discusses the near-term and long-term steps that the Town can take to begin revitalizing its Town Center.

ULI and the TAP Process

The Urban Land Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members. The organization, comprising more than 45,000 real estate and urban development professionals are dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

Established in 1936, the organization's goal is to provide advisory service programming and bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. The Boston/New England District Council serves the New England states and has over 1,300 members – developers, architects, planners, public officials, financiers, students, etc.

Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) Acknowledgements

The members of the Technical Assistance Panel would like to thank the sponsor of this Advisory Services Panel, MassDevelopment, for inviting them to Millis, Massachusetts. The panel would also like to give special thanks to Robert Weiss - Economic Development Coordinator, Planning Director & Energy Manager, Jim McKay - Department of Public Works Director, Michael Guzinski - Town Administrator, and the Town of Millis staff involved in putting together the briefing materials and planning of the Technical Assistance Panel, as well as Sandy LaBarge, the Transportation Coordinator.

Interviews with the nearly 20 stakeholders: representing the business community, community activists, faith-based

communities, and residents provided valuable information and perspectives through their passion and understanding of the issues, greatly aiding the panel in its analysis. The panelists thank all those who consented to be interviewed.

Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)

The ULI Boston/New England Real Estate Advisory Committee convenes Technical Assistance Panel (TAPs) at the request of public officials, local stakeholders, and nonprofit organizations facing complex land challenges and who benefit from planning and development professionals providing pro bono recommendations. TAP panelists are a group of diverse professionals specially assembled with expertise in the issues posed. They work together to provide creative and practical solutions for local communities tackling redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation for development potential, growth management, affordable housing, asset management and more.

The typical agenda for a panel assignment is intensive one day in-person process, however; due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a modified schedule was created, and the panel review was spread out over several days. The panels modified review included a virtual briefing session one week prior, a socially distance in-person tour to analyze the existing conditions, virtual interviews with stakeholders and community representatives, and a virtual charette to formulate realistic and actionable recommendations to move initiatives forward in a way consistent with the applicant's goals and objectives.

On the final day, a hybrid public meeting was held with select members: James McCaffery, Peter Jurmain, and Erin Underhill, where the

panel and sponsor made an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions. This written report summarizes the TAP's collective expertise, and the recommendations are comprised in five chapters.

The presentation is available electronically at the ULI Boston/New England website <http://boston.uli.org>. More information is available at uli.org. Follow ULI on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

MassDevelopment Support

The MassDevelopment is the state's finance and development authority. Both a lender and developer, the agency works with businesses, nonprofits, and local, state, and federal officials and agencies to strengthen the Massachusetts economy. Through these collaborations, MassDevelopment helps create jobs, increase the number of housing units, eliminate blight, and address factors limiting economic growth, including transportation, energy, and infrastructure deficiencies.

Recognizing the alignment between ULI Boston/New England's Technical Assistance Panels and MassDevelopment's mission to support sustainable redevelopment across the Commonwealth, in 2011 the two organizations partnered to support TAPs in four Gateway Cities throughout the Commonwealth. The success of that initial year's collaboration led to continued support.

MassDevelopment partnered with ULI Boston/New England to sponsor the Millis TAP.

Panel Members

ULI Boston/New England convened a panel of volunteers whose members represent a range of the disciplines associated with the planning and development challenges presented by the Town of Millis.

Disciplines represented include architecture, urban planning, and design, development, and civil/traffic engineering. Members were selected with the intent of convening a robust array of professional expertise relevant to the Town of Millis' objectives for this TAP. The following is the list of panelists:

Co-Chairs

Claire O'Neill, Senior Vice President of Real Estate Planning at MassDevelopment, (TAP Co-Chair)

Lawrence Spang, AIA, Principal, Arrowstreet (TAP Co-Chair)

Panel

Mark Allen, AIA, Principal, HGA

Andrew Arbaugh, ASLA, PLA, Principal, Copley Wolff Design Group

Andrew Consigli, AIA, Managing Member, Civico Development

Amanda Gregoire, Vice President, Real Estate Planning, MassDevelopment

Beth Reynolds, Economic Development Director, Town of Ashland

David Valecillos, Director of Design, North Shore CDC

Panelists have donated their time.

ULI Staff

Michelle Landers, Executive Director of the Urban Land Institute Boston/New England provided organizational and technical support in preparation for and during the TAP event. Colleen Brewster served as the consulting technical writer.

Stakeholders

The TAP benefited from the participation of a diverse group of stakeholders – policy makers, City staff, business owners, residents, and representatives of area institutions – who met with the panel and shared information, ideas, and options on a range of issues affecting the Town of Millis. Stakeholders in the session included:

Norah Foraker and Brandon Siebecker, Represented St. Thomas Apostle Parish

Ellen Rosenfeld, Milliston Common

Eli Leino, Atty for Owners, 114 Union St., LLC

Tony Devito, Owner of STACK'D Sandwich & Pizza Bar

Lisa Duhamel, Homeowner

John Jacobs, Owner of Naper Tandy's Restaurant

Michael Chase, Sam Chase, Ann & Hope Owners

Jim Cooke, Owner of 114 Union St LLC

John Tresca, Owner of Tresca Brothers
Concrete, Sand & Gravel

Megan E. Bedell, Real Estate Council for GAF
Brooks Corl, represented the Church of Christ
Congregational, Millis Public Library, and
Council on Aging

Bob Yeager, American Legion Post
Commander

Christy Lagos, Homeowner

Scotty Wright, Owner of F. C. Repair and other
properties in Town Center

Lewis Randa, Life Experience School

TAP Process

The panelists participated in a virtual briefing session on June 17, 2021, where they were informed of current conditions and studies the town had undertaken. A site tour of the Town Center and surrounding area was held on June 24, 2021, guided by Robert Weiss. Interviews with stakeholders followed by an intense charrette between the panel of experts was held on June 25, 2021.

The tour began on a school bus at the Town Hall/Veterans Memorial Building (900 Main Street), that headed West on Main Street (MA Route 109), north past Prospect Hill Cemetery on Auburn Road, then proceeded

to Curve, Ridge, and Exchange Streets where they visited the Lansing Millis Memorial Railroad Station (64 Exchange Street.) After a brief history by Mr. Weiss on the towns founder, Lansing Millis, the panelists walked south on Exchange Street past several storefront businesses toward the Main Street intersection. The group briefly stopped at the former Niagara Engine House 1 (4 Exchange Street) and the Millis Public Library (691 Main Street) before returning to the school bus.

The tour then headed west on Curve and Union Streets for a brief stop at the GAF site, continued west on Curve and Adams Streets for a brief stop at the Herman Shoe Factory site where a friendly 40B project is being planned, then south on Main Street past the Ann & Hope with a brief stop at the Clicquot sites. The tour then crossed Main Street into Milliston Commons and beyond, to Stoney Brook Village and Quail Hill Condominiums.

The panelists proceeded south on Plain Street, over the Plain Street Bridge (Wishing Bridge), passed the Tangerini Farm on Spring Street, and the new Clyde Brown School, before returning to the Town Hall/Veterans Memorial Building for a debriefing session.



Panelists touring Millis. Source: TAP Panel.

Background and Assignment

History of Millis

Lansing Millis and his wife, Harriet Philadelphia Lavender, moved from Boston to East Medway in 1880, in search of pastoral life. He amassed his fortune through profits from his dairy farm, Oak Grove Farm, and as a railroad executive.

When East Medway separated from Medway in early 1885, they honored Lansing's contribution to the town by incorporating it as the town of Millis. Sadly, Lansing died in April that same year. His children, Henry and Helen, received permission from the town to construct the Lansing Millis Memorial Building/Train Depot (64 Exchange Street) in his honor. Most of the stones used in this Richardsonian Romanesque style building were local, and many were inscribed with messages of his close business associates.

Lansing's heirs continued his legacy of public services and entrepreneurship. With manufacturing jobs on the rise and the town's population growth, the Millis Companies financed the construction of several neighboring streets, including Lavender Street named after Lansing's wife, and nearly 60 single-family homes for local factory workers.

Millis Center Historic District

(Exchange Street from the Lansing Millis Memorial Building/Train Depot to Main Street)

Small scale commercial spaces have been popular throughout Millis's history. In 1891, a five-store commercial block was constructed along 6-18 Exchange Street, next to the Niagara Engine Company. There were a

steady stream of businesses and vacancies over the years and in 1910's the string of shops was replaced with slightly smaller low-rise commercial spaces.

In 1935, a second row of single-story storefronts 26-30 Exchange Street, the Winiker Block, was constructed. These two multi-space commercial buildings, two stand-alone restaurants, and a multi-family structure are what currently exist between the Niagara Engine Company building and the historic Lansing Millis Train Depot. Today, despite the high rate of national retail vacancies, this short commercial retail corridor has no commercial storefront vacancies. The salons, restaurants, and antique store provide the personalized experience that one can expect in a tight knit community such as Millis.

GAF and Clicquot sites

In 1929, the Safepack Paper Mills (60 Curve Street) was purchased by the Ruberoid Company, which after World War I, began to manufacture roofing products. The Ruberoid Company was acquired by GAF Corporation in 1967, and it continued to operate as one of their 14 roofing plants until 2009.

The Clicquot Club site (60 Curve Street) was started by Henry Millis and was comprised of several stone structures, a stone tower, and an exhaust stack. The company was sold to the Cott Beverage Corporation in 1962 and the plant eventually closed in 1980. The stone chimney bearing the name "Clicquot", a square stone tower, and remnants of the stone structures are all that remain. This expansive site is situated on the north side of Main Street



Clicquot Chimney. Source: TAP Panel.



Panelists touring the Lansing Millis Memorial Building/Train Depot. Source: TAP Panel.

and is adjacent to the railroad that runs east to west, and once provided a dedicated train station for plant workers and freight rail distribution services.

Town of Millis's Objectives for the TAP

Robert Weiss asked the Technical Assistance Panel to address the following questions:

1. How can we find a design plan that re-characterizes the Town Center into a cohesive dynamic core of the future of Millis?
2. How can Millis's Town Center best contribute to the Town's lack of affordable housing? How can the state's Housing Choice policy's emphasis on density and transportation be implemented to create a livable Center?

3. Can new businesses be attracted to create a renewed dynamic mixed-use focal point in the Town Center? One that attracts both Town residents and people from the surrounding area and contributes to increasing and sustaining Millis's tax base?

This report analyzes what can realistically and successfully be achieved, including proposed strategies for actions to revitalize specific areas, and suggests specific tasks and tools to accomplish the town's desired vision.

Assets and Opportunities

As the town seeks to redefine their Town Center, the panel identified several important and attractive assets to draw upon, including:

Well Designed Civic Buildings

The town has centrally located civic structures; public library and courtyard, Niagara Engine House 1, Lansing Millis Memorial Building, Veteran's Memorial Building/Town Hall, Clyde Brown School, Junior & Senior High School, as well as the Plain Street Bridge (Wishing Bridge), that welcome community engagement opportunities and promote social cohesion.

Millis's public leadership has invested in its civic infrastructure, however; programming is needed to maintain the activation of these spaces and to encourage meaningful and

consistent participation by the residents. These efforts will work towards the creation of a strong town center that encourages community development.

Rural Character / Quality of Life

There are significant benefits of living in such a pastoral community. Millis's Master Plan from 2000 encourages the town to retain its semi-rural character of fresh air and open space. Protecting and maintaining the integrity of undeveloped land should be a priority and will allow it to continue to serve as a buffer between newly developed land and natural zones outside the town center.

The proximity to Tangerini's Farm is also an asset. While some consumers prefer shopping at chain grocery stores, such as Roche



Millis Public Library Courtyard. Source: TAP Panel.



Tangerini Farm. Source: TAP Panel.

Brothers Supermarket in Millston Commons, the option to purchase fresh produce direct from a farm, offers a unique experience that also supports local farmers.

Appreciation of Historic Assets

The Master Plan advises Millis to preserve the town's character and historic structures. One structure for example, the Niagara Engine House 1, was constructed in 1878. Over the course of 20-years, the structure was restored and reinvented as a living history museum and community center, by former Selectman Jeff Hardin, the Historical Commission and other community members.

Their undertaking demonstrates that residents want to preserve Millis's historic buildings that help tell the story of the community. The Historic Commission will continue to protect these significant and treasured properties and

the development of a comprehensive strategy regarding their future use will ensure that they are effectively managed.

Parking

In many instances a lack of parking can hurt local businesses. Despite the high percentage of vehicle ownership and vehicle use in Millis, there is sufficient on-street and municipal lot parking behind the public library.

Exchange Street

The Master Plan indicated that many residents found the strip retail shopping center unattractive. A façade refurbishment along Exchange Street would make the smaller Mom-and-Pop establishments more appealing to customers looking for a personalized experience while supporting the local shops and keep their dollars in the local community.



Panelists touring Exchange Street. Source: TAP Panel.

Recommendations

The panel was tasked with addressing the questions outlined in the background and assignment portion of this report. Based on the panelist's recommendations, the panel introduced the following two areas of focus as priorities for the town and community to strategically implement, Exchange Street and the GAF and Clicquot sites, as well as the potential creation of a recreation area behind St. Thomas Church.

Focus Area 1: Exchange Street

An investment in the visual appearance of Exchange Street would enhance the perception of this corridor. Implementing a Sign/Storefront Improvement Program, with matching grants from the town, would encourage business owners to make that investment. This could be achieved without displacing existing long-term commercial tenants and by utilizing Design Guidelines to ensure that the New England streetscape and a small-town feel is retained.

The current businesses near the Exchange/Main Street intersection are pedestrian friendly but the conditions could be improved upon. The businesses are adjacent to the library, Niagara and the Lansing Millis Building which also has a lot of potential.

Organize sponsored events

The commercial end of Exchange Street could be the venue for special public and community events: street fairs, seasonal events, festivals, and/or events related to the history of Millis. Town sponsored special events will assist in strengthening the sense of place and community and will highlight the purchasing power among residents.

Public spaces such as the library courtyard or new Library Commons could be utilized along with a street closure at the end of Exchange

Street. A Cultural Council or Arts Association could assemble a committee to lead event efforts, and the town could study the similar efforts of Andover and Newburyport.

Stakeholders noted that events do take place in Town Park, the field beyond the Veterans Memorial Building/Town Hall, and mostly hidden from view. Exchange Street provides an alternative location, and street closure adjacent to Main Street would catch the attention of passersby and potentially attract new customers for the Exchange Street businesses.

The proximity to the municipal parking lot from Exchange Street is a benefit because it will allow people outside the Town Center to participate in events. Overflow parking for well attended events could also be arranged at the neighboring religious institution or at the Veterans Memorial Building/Town Hall.

Lansing Millis Memorial Building/Train Depot

Investing in the Memorial Building will prepare the structure for a future use, as stated in the feasibility study. The town could issue an RFP for a ground lease and solicit potential future uses that would turn the vacant building into a variety of destinations: brewery, restaurant, or daycare and Senior Center/Council on Aging to activate a multigenerational use.

A Complete Streets movement would use state funds to enhance the streetscape between the Lansing Millis Memorial Building and the Exchange/Main Street intersection and providing a safe pedestrian experience would promote more foot traffic.

The public library and Lansing Millis Memorial Building would be the end points of the revitalization effort. The town can also look for potential redevelopment opportunities or the creation of a new civic space.

Create a Business Association

The creation of a Business Association, Business Improvement District (BID), or business Development District, would be a great benefit to the local business owners. Communities such as Mansfield, Hudson, and Reading have formed similar organizations. Associations of this type allow business owners to collaborate with other stakeholders and the public sector on future needs, share marketing opportunities, sponsor shared events and more.

Recreation Areas

This end of Exchange Street is near a rear parcel of land owned by St. Thomas Church, which has shown interest in a partial redevelopment of their wetland property. This area could become an extension of existing town owned public spaces and has the potential to extend pedestrian pathways. New walking trail pathways could connect behind the municipal lot, north to Richardson Pond, and reconnect further down Exchange Street next to the Lansing Millis Memorial Building.

Focus Area 2: GAF and Clicquot Sites

Strong Housing Market

Millis has a robust housing market with quick selling inventory; however, the community has a low inventory of affordable housing. Amending the ordinances, guidelines and policies that restrict potential uses on existing industrial sites and considering the use of form-based code, will incentivize developers to construct affordable residential projects consistent with Millis. Adding uses to these and future sites will discourage “spot zoning.”

The GAF and Clicquot sites would provide much-needed affordable housing and the sites are well suited to accommodate that growth, particularly given that residents are open to new development. Creating a new neighborhood with diversified housing will help grow the young family population and expand the towns tax revenue. Sustainable development principals could be identified and adopt for these future developments.

The type of new developments can also be diversified by creating; single-family starter homes, townhouses, cottage housing for sites over 2 acres, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), Live/Work units with ground floor office/business use and living space above, as well as mixed-use buildings up to 2 ½ stories. A mix of housing types can be explored utilizing the CHAPA housing toolbox as well as Inclusionary Zoning.

New developments can be phased so they evolve over time through a long-range plan. The Near Term: Phase 1 development could be located between the Clicquot site and Main Street and could be a transformative development with first-floor commercial spaces to encourage pedestrian activity along the streetscape. The Long Term: Phase 2 development could be reduced in scale as the structures move away from Main Street and extend towards Curve Street and across the potential Rail Trail. Lavender Street could potentially be extended to connect the existing residential community to the new development.

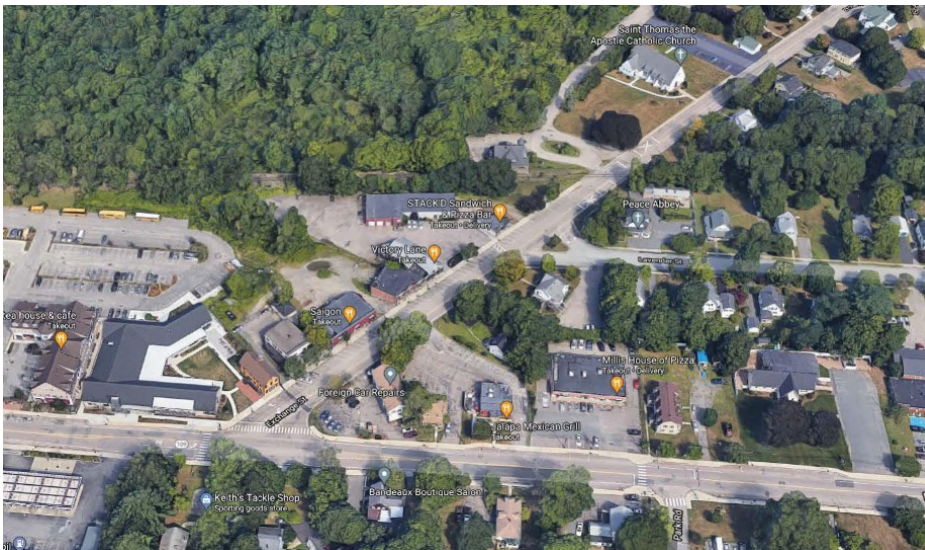
Rail Trail

The town can explore state-level opportunities to decommission the railroad and create a Rail Trail. Converting the underutilized railroad would allow it to become a vibrant recreational area and thought of as a spine knitting together the commercial areas and residences of Millis and beyond.

Investing in Complete Streets along Main Streets will enhance the vehicular and pedestrian connection between the two areas of focus and link parts of this new emerging neighborhood. A Rail Trail with open green space would provide a secondary connection and form a sense of place.

Master Plan from 2000

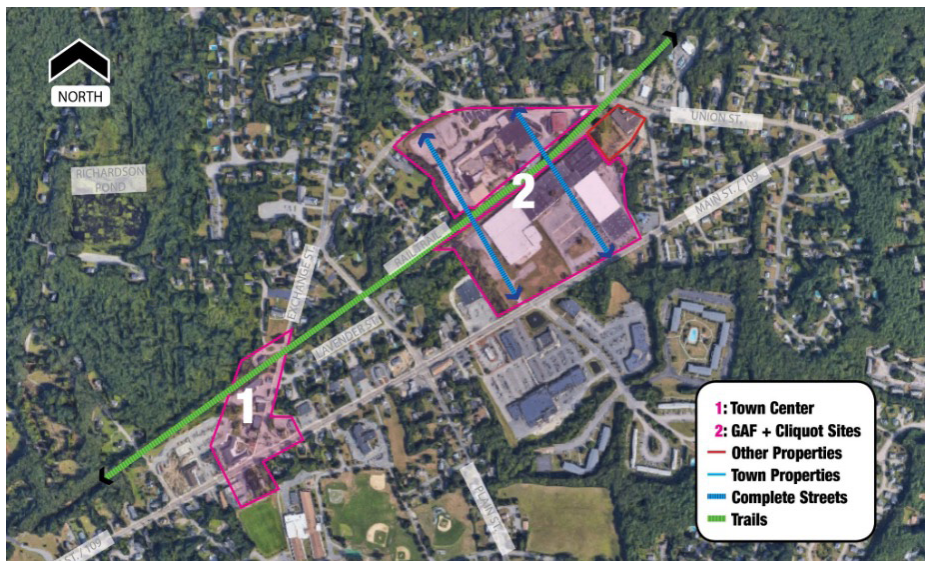
The Master Plan encouraged the strengthening of design standards, residential designs with rural character, and encouraged



Focus Area 1: Exchange Street. Source: Google Maps.



Focus Area 2: GAF and Clicquot sites between Main Street (MA Route 109) and Curve Street. Source: Google Maps.



Focus Areas 1 and 2: Exchange Street (left), GAF and Clicquot Sites (right). Source: Google Maps/TAP Panel.

new developments to be set back from the road to preserve the land along the roadways. The community should be engaged to determine if the Master Plan should be updated.

Connectivity

The panel recommended prioritizing pedestrian-oriented connections within the new developments through a network of sidewalks and crosswalks. Stakeholders noted that although the sites are a great distance from one another with significant open space, the lack of sidewalks do not promote walkability. Planned pathways that connect these underutilized areas of Millis will create a safer, walkable, and bike-friendly environment that encourages alternative methods of travel to explore the Town Center and encourages healthy communities. Connections to the retail areas along Main Street and to the potential Rail Trail could also be established. Appropriate intersection design and traffic controls can improve the flow of both pedestrian traffic across Main Street to Milliston Commons.

The GAF and Clicquot sites could be thought of a single site, with new through connections over the existing rail line. The rail line between the GAF and Clicquot site could be widened to incorporate an open space that becomes the heart of the community. Stakeholders commented on their desire for more greenspace, a playground, off-leash dog park, and bike path along the rail line. New housing developments could be structured around this plan for more greenspace.



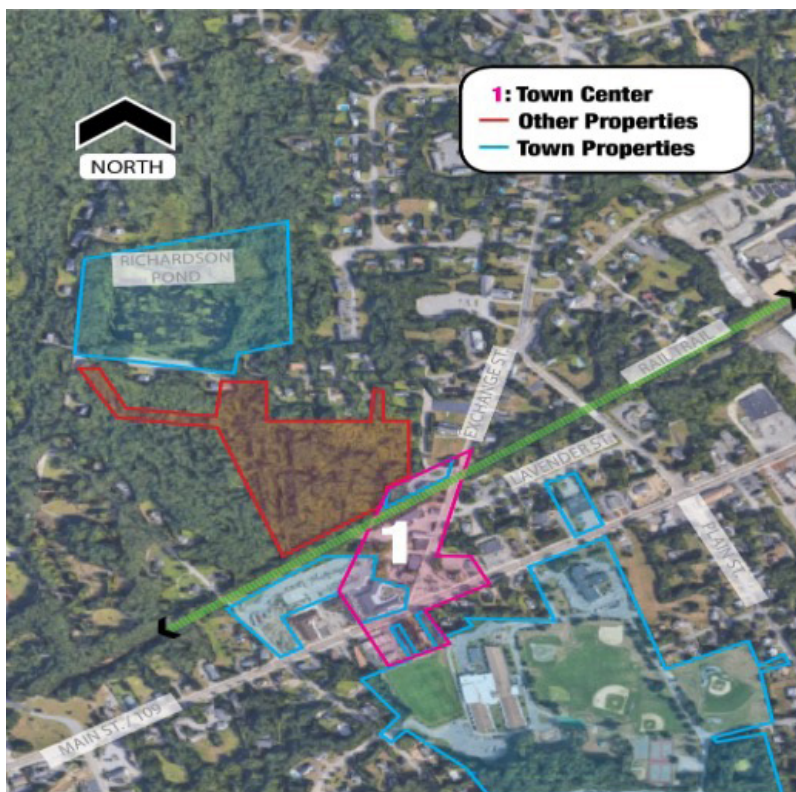
Focus Areas 1 and 2: Current Conditions at Exchange Street (left), GAF and Clicquot Sites (right). Source: Google Maps.



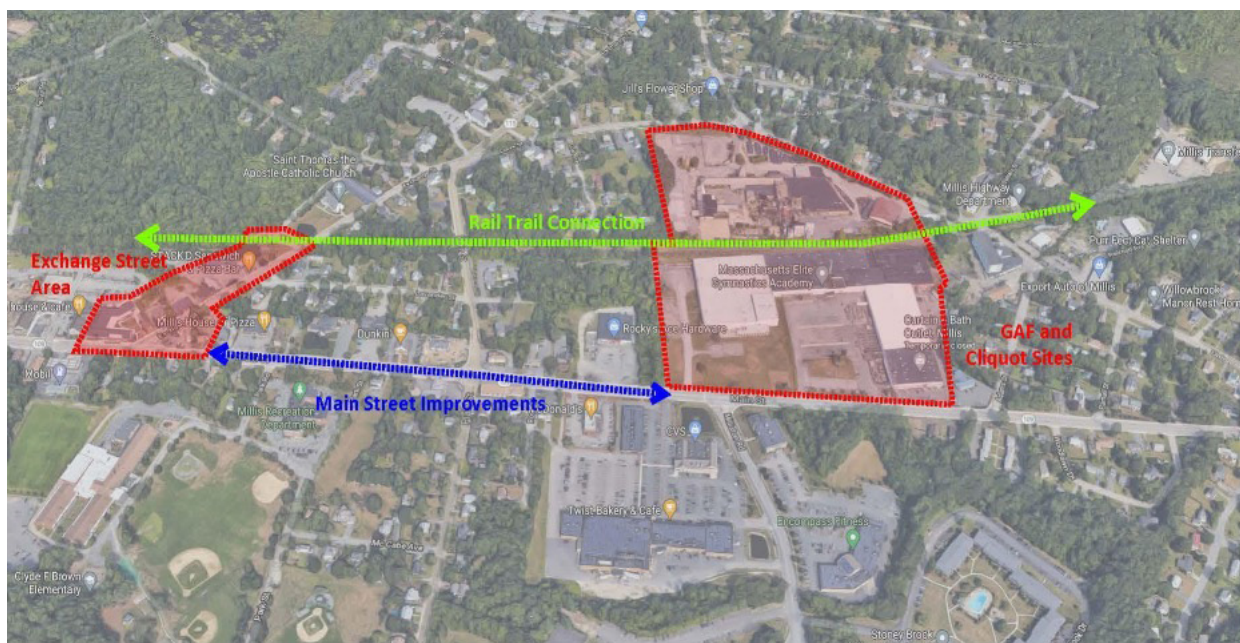
Focus Area 1: Exchange Street. Source: Google Maps.



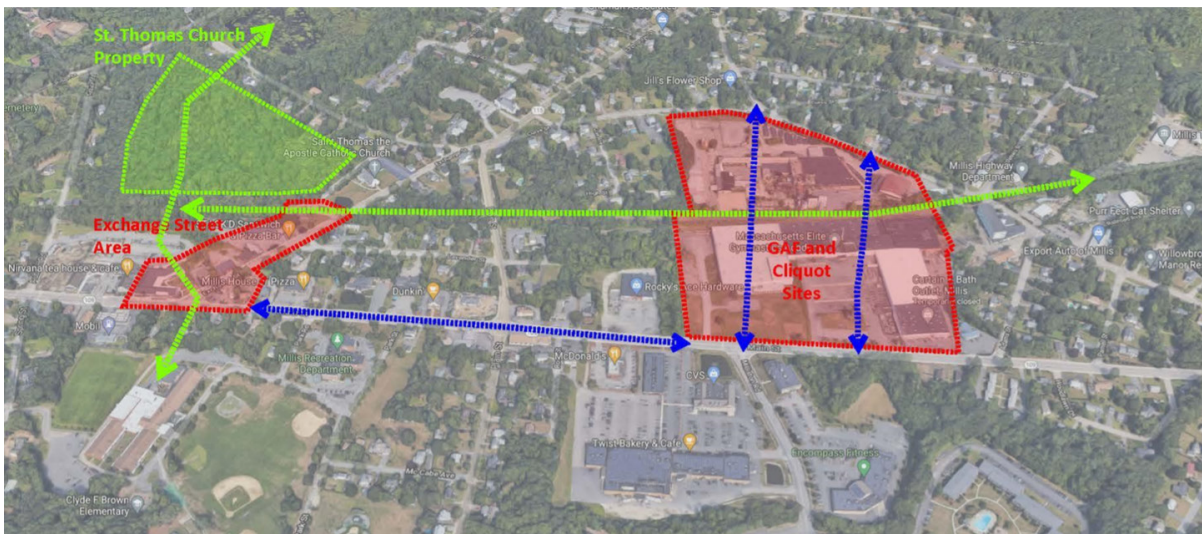
Focus Area 1: Exchange Street with potential Walking Trail connections behind St. Thomas Church. Source: Google Maps/TAP Panel.



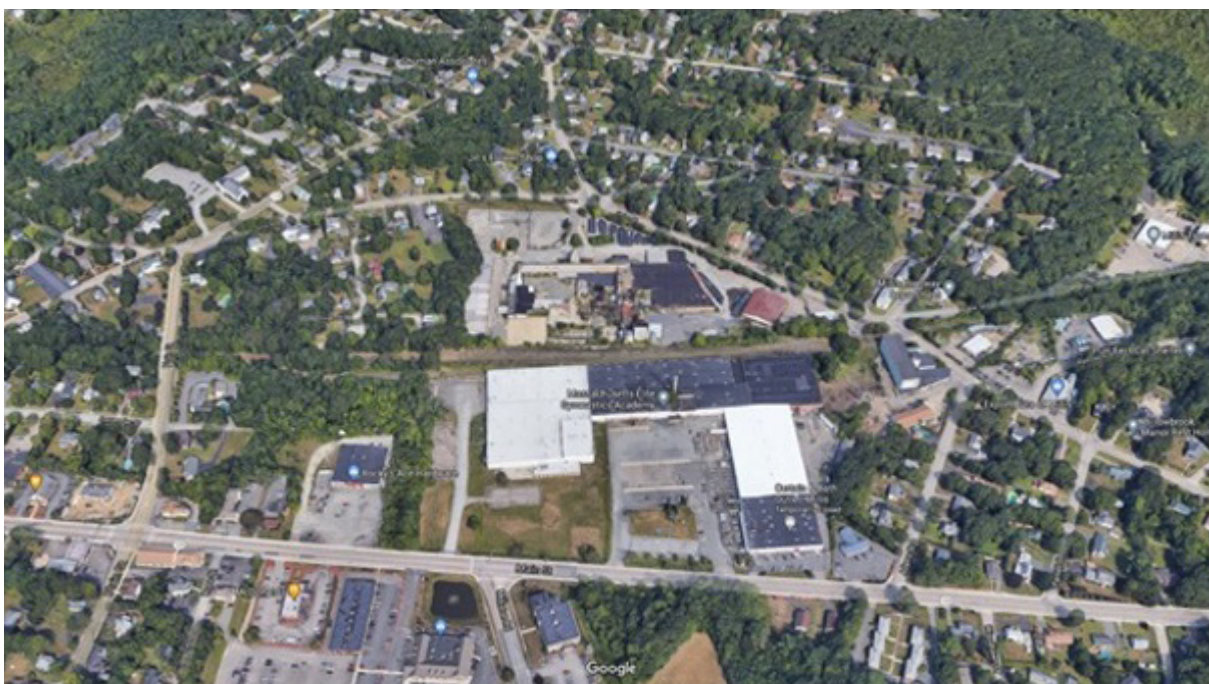
Focus Area 1: Exchange Street with potential Walking Trail connections behind St. Thomas Church. Source: Google Maps/TAP Panel.



Focus Areas 1 and 2: Exchange Street (left), GAF and Clicquot Sites (right), connections between area. Source: Google Maps/TAP Panel.



Focus Areas 1 and 2: Connectivity between the two sites and potential recreational space behind St. Thomas Church. Source: Google Maps/TAP Panel.



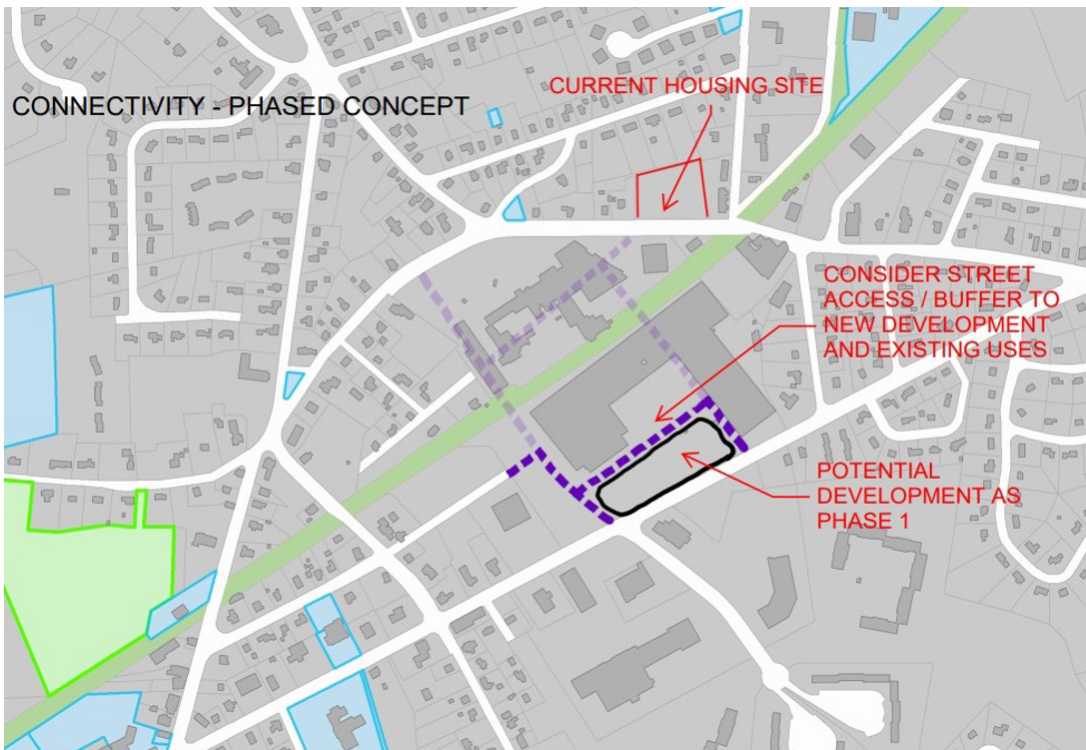
Focus Area 2: GAF and Clicquot Sites between Main Street (MA Route 109) and Curve Street. Source: Google Maps.



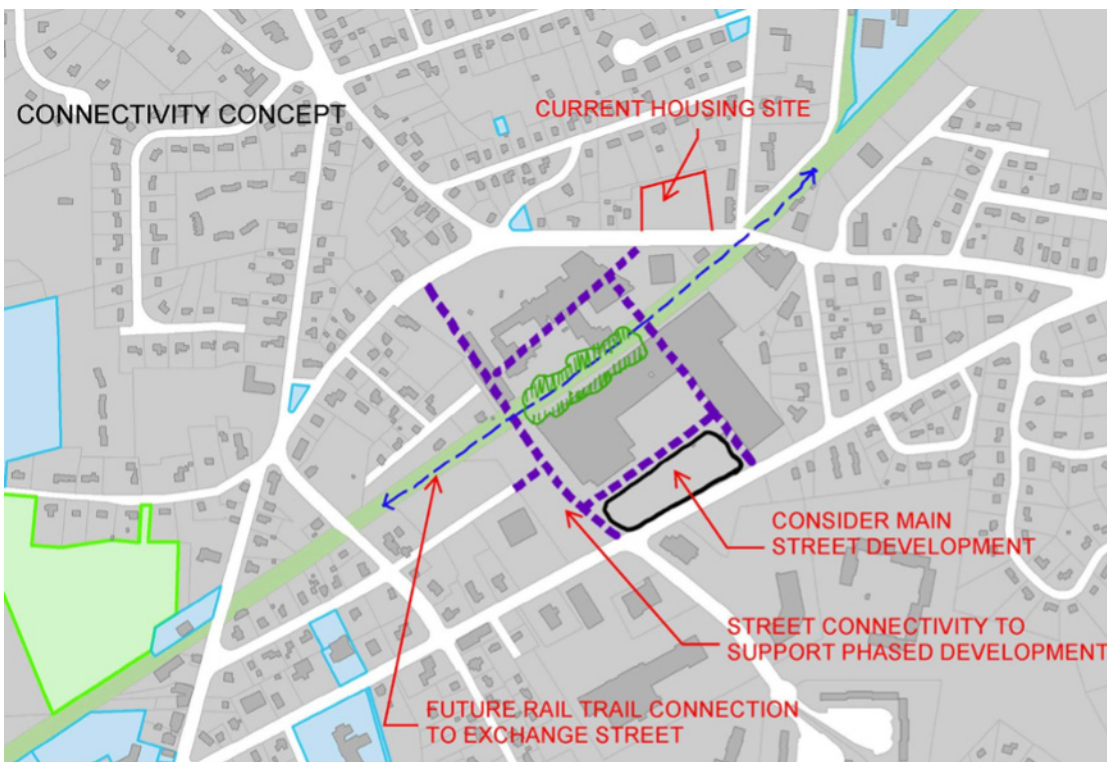
Focus Area 2: GAF and Clicquot sites, Herman Shoe Company site (right). Source: Google Maps/TAP Panel.



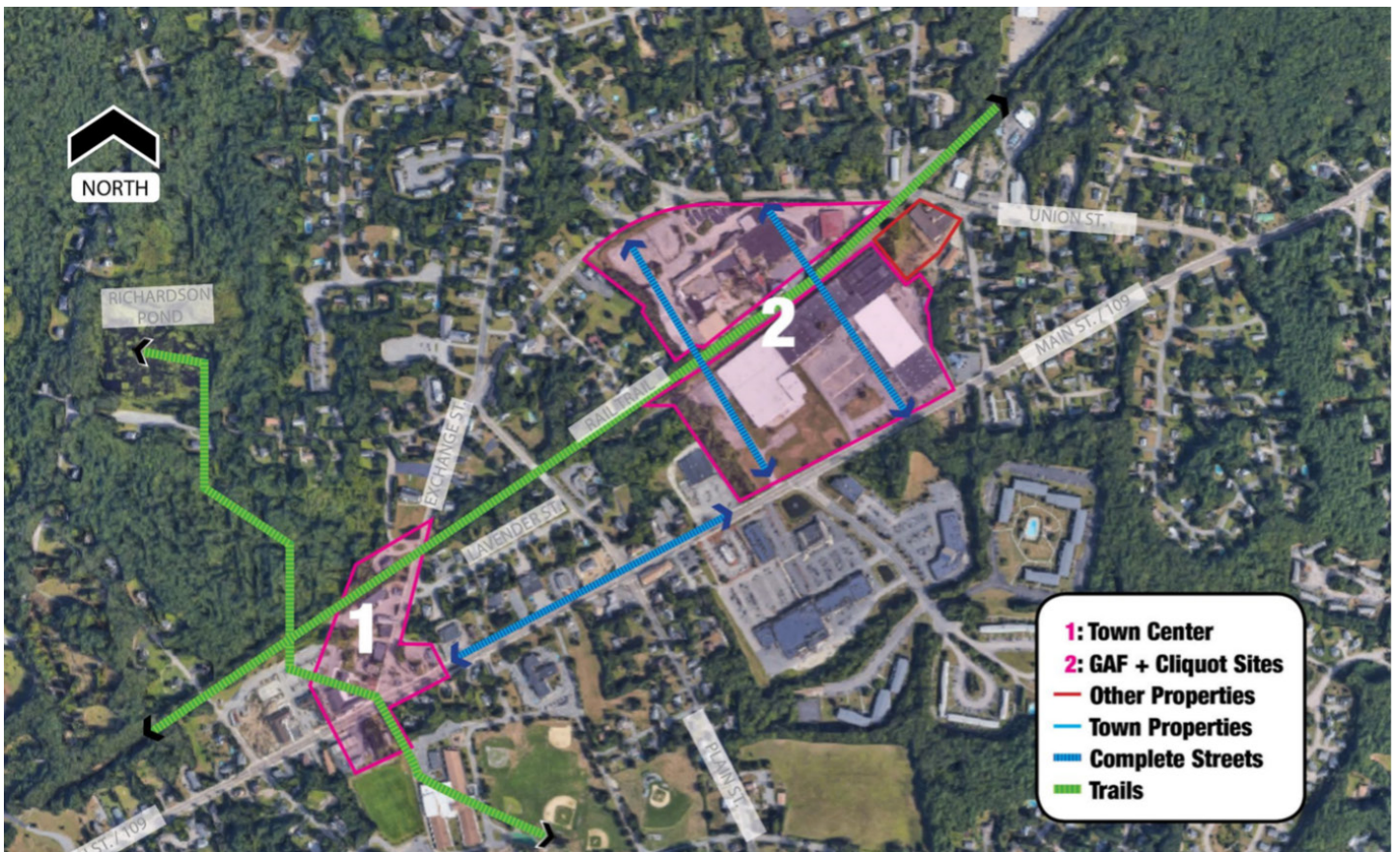
Focus Area 2: Connectivity through and across the rail line /potential Rail Trail from the GAF to the Clicquot site. Source: Google Maps/TAP Panel.



Near Term: Phased approach to development at Focus Area 2. Source: TAP Panel.



Long Term: Phased approach to development at Focus Area 2. Source: TAP Panel.



Millis Town Center: Long Term Vision. Source: Google Maps/TAP Panel.

Next Steps/Implementation

The ULI panel concluded that town center has significant potential and will require some work on the town's part to create a unified town center.

Funding and Financing Sources

Business Development

The panelists suggested that locally, a small amount of federal stimulus funds to allocated towards starting a Business Association and seed programming. The town should consider dedicating some of the local meals tax and cannabis revenues to supporting these Association initiatives. CPA funds could also be used to support preserving the Lansing Millis Memorial Building/Train Depot.

On a state level, if local business owners are interested in a Business Improvement District (BID) the town could apply to Mass Downtown Initiative (MDI) through **Community One Stop for Growth** for BID planning support. **Commonwealth Places** would be the best resource for activating Exchange Street public spaces. Funding for architectural / accessibility / renovations to the Lansing Millis Memorial Building could be sought from the **Underutilized Property Program or Collaborative Workspace / Massachusetts Preservation Project Funds**. Organizations such as the National Association of Realtors and AARP could be approached for implementing small scale improvements. If the town were to apply to **MassDevelopment Real Estate Services** to assist with an RFP for the Lansing Millis Memorial building.

Transportation/Connectivity

With the manufacturing plant and associated train station a thing of the past, Millis lacks a

transportation network. More rural populations are isolated and tend to rely heavily on private vehicular travel for everyday activities.

Stakeholders noted the lack of transportation in and around Millis. The town could consider a Transportation Demand Management (**TDM**) initiative to understand the community transit needs and to optimize resources.

The panelists suggested that state level, the town could apply to Mass Downtown Initiative (**MDI**) through **Community One Stop for Growth** for wayfinding support. The town can also engage with **MassTrails** to develop a long-range plan for Rail Trail planning and funding sources. By seeking **EOEEA** planning and acquisition funds to support open space / recreation, greenspace could be created in proximity to the town center. By collaborating with **MACP** and surrounding towns for the support of Rt. 109 (Main Street) improvements through **DOT / TIP** funding, Millis will be able to tackle its broader public transportation challenges.

Housing / Development Parcels

Millis could dedicate local funds and staffing to review and update the Millis Master Plan as well as zoning analysis. CPA affordable housing funds could also be used to fund town center projects that meet certain development / neighborhood criteria.

The panel recommended seeking **Community Planning Funds**, **MassWorks** and **Housing Choice Funds** through **Community One Stop for Growth** to support new housing in the town center as well as associated infrastructure upgrades.



**Boston/
New England**

boston.uli.org