



Massachusetts
Boston/
New England

Auburn Pond

Auburn Public Library

Dr Robert H
Goddard Park

Auburn TAP

Witt Orthodontics PC

Wassim Assaf

June 8, 2026

About ULI – the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising nearly 50,000 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 1,200 Members—developers, architects, planners, public officials, financiers, students, etc.



Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)

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. **All panelists have donated their time to participate on the TAP.**

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

Chairs

- **Richard Lampman**, Berkeley Building
- **Michael Wang**, Form + Place

Panelists

- **Barry Abramson**, Abramson & Associates
- **Rob Anderson**, MassDevelopment
- **Richard Galehouse**, Sasaki (retired)
- **Edd Hamzanlui**, MassCan Capital
- **Ravi Parmar**, Historic Built

ULI Staff

- **Michelle Landers**, Executive Director

MassDevelopment Staff

- **Alejandro Lopez**, MassDevelopment

TAP Writer

- **Mike Hoban**

The Process

Briefing Meeting

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

Site Visit

Panelists toured the Drury Square area starting at the Shaw's/Planet Fitness Center, around to the rear of the Verizon Store in Drury Square, and over to the Auburn Mall.

Stakeholder Interviews

The panelists interviewed community members and public officials to better understand the needs of the neighborhood and the community.

Charrette

The panelists met in a closed-door session to explore all possibilities related to the assignment and develop recommendations.



Panel Assignment: Address These Questions

Key Questions

Market Issues: What are highest and best uses for both the vacant areas of the Auburn Mall site and infill and redevelopment opportunities in Drury Square?

Planning & Design: What are the infrastructure investments and branding needs to create a unified identity for the corridor and integrate commercial and municipal spaces at the pedestrian level, and adjust current regulations as needed?

Feasibility & Financing: What funding mechanisms including grants and financial instruments are needed to facilitate the redevelopment of these sites?



What did we see?

Study Area



Study Area



Study Area



Study Area



Study Area





What did we hear?

What did we hear...

- Desire for walkability
- Desire for locally owned full-service restaurants/cafes
- Desire to activate Goddard Park
- Lack of nightlife
- Growing population, but declining school enrollment
- People unhappy with density in neighborhoods, but open to density in commercial areas
- Wayfinding and signage is lacking
- Perception issues around Auburn Mall
- Aspects of Drury Square are aesthetically pleasing



Opportunities and Challenges

Assets

- Bucolic areas where town has site control
- Public uses create potential town center – high school, library, Goddard Park, Auburn Pond
- Highway Access
- History – Goddard rocket launch
- Desire for community
- Retail Destination
- Auburn Mall – still functioning, large taxpayer
- Influx of daytime population
- Student walk policy

Challenges

- **No town center**
- **Lack of cohesiveness** - auto-centric and not pedestrian friendly
- **Gateway to Drury Square is unattractive library parking lot**
- **Fire Station obstructs view of pond**
- Auburn Mall occupies a prominent location - underutilized
- Multiple owners in study areas
- Library is only third-space in town
- Limited housing options
- Economics make new development challenging



Recommendations

What are highest and best uses for both the vacant areas of the Auburn Mall site and infill and redevelopment opportunities in Drury Square?

There are not many suitable parcels available for larger ground up development.

Existing retail in Drury Square comprises more than a dozen scattered sites in active use.

Mixed use redevelopment with active street level retail could replace current retail-only parcels, but this requires assembling larger parcels.

What are the infrastructure investments and branding needs to create a unified identity for the corridor and integrate commercial and municipal spaces at the pedestrian level, and adjust current regulations as needed?

Invest in placemaking at Auburn Pond, Goddard Park, and the Public Library site to create a town amenity to benefit residents and increase the value of surrounding property to spur redevelopment.

- Walking path/Boardwalk around pond
- Public amenities like a café or patio at library or fire station site
- Farmer's Market
- Community Garden
- Relocate fire station within local area

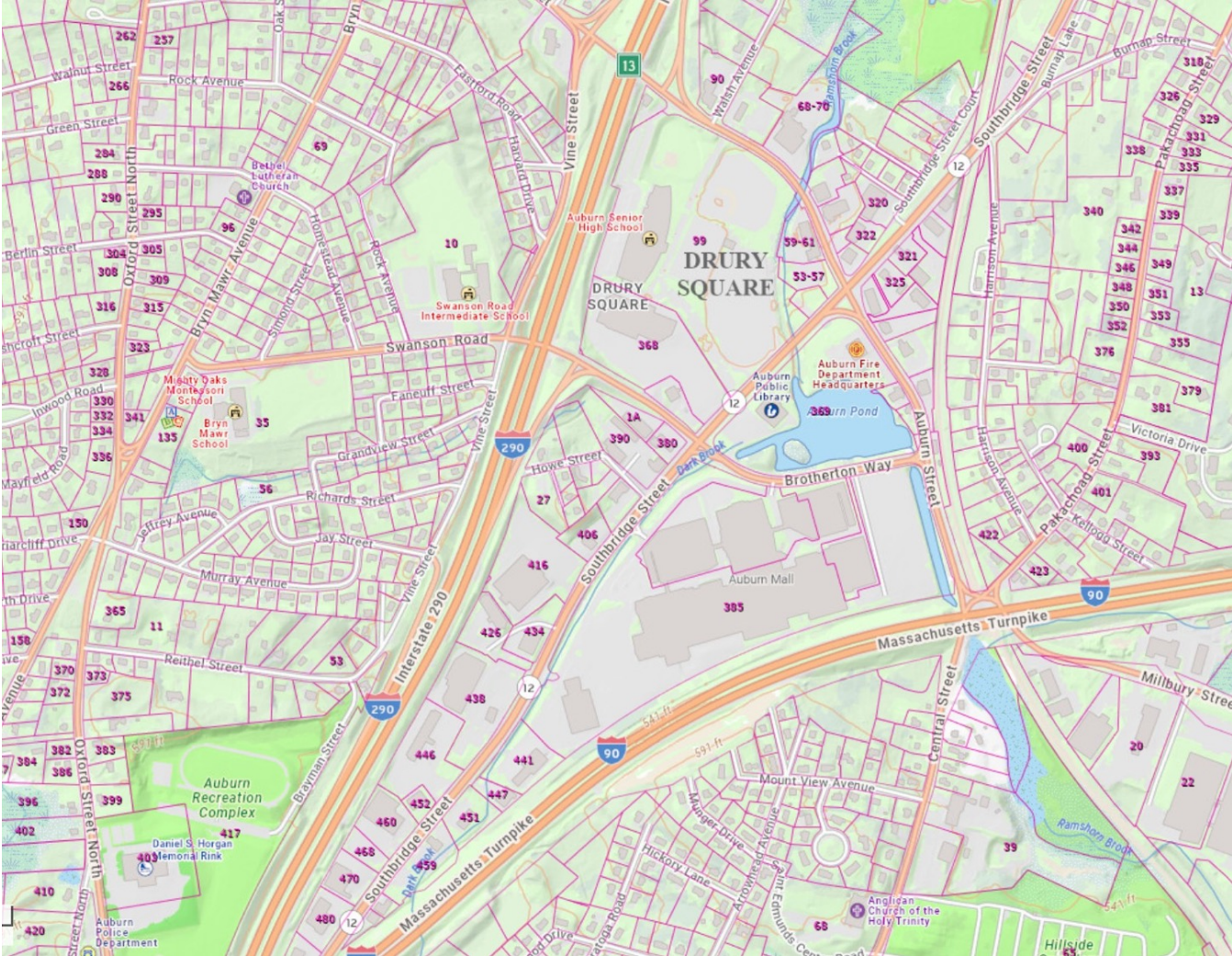
Commission traffic study to enhance transportation network. Move the sidewalk away from the busy street and adding street trees would make the area more inviting while improving safety for pedestrians. Enhance pedestrian experience, open sight lines to pond and brook.

Public investment and adjusting zoning to facilitate as-of-right development will incentivize parcel assemblage and make redevelopment more attractive to the private sector.

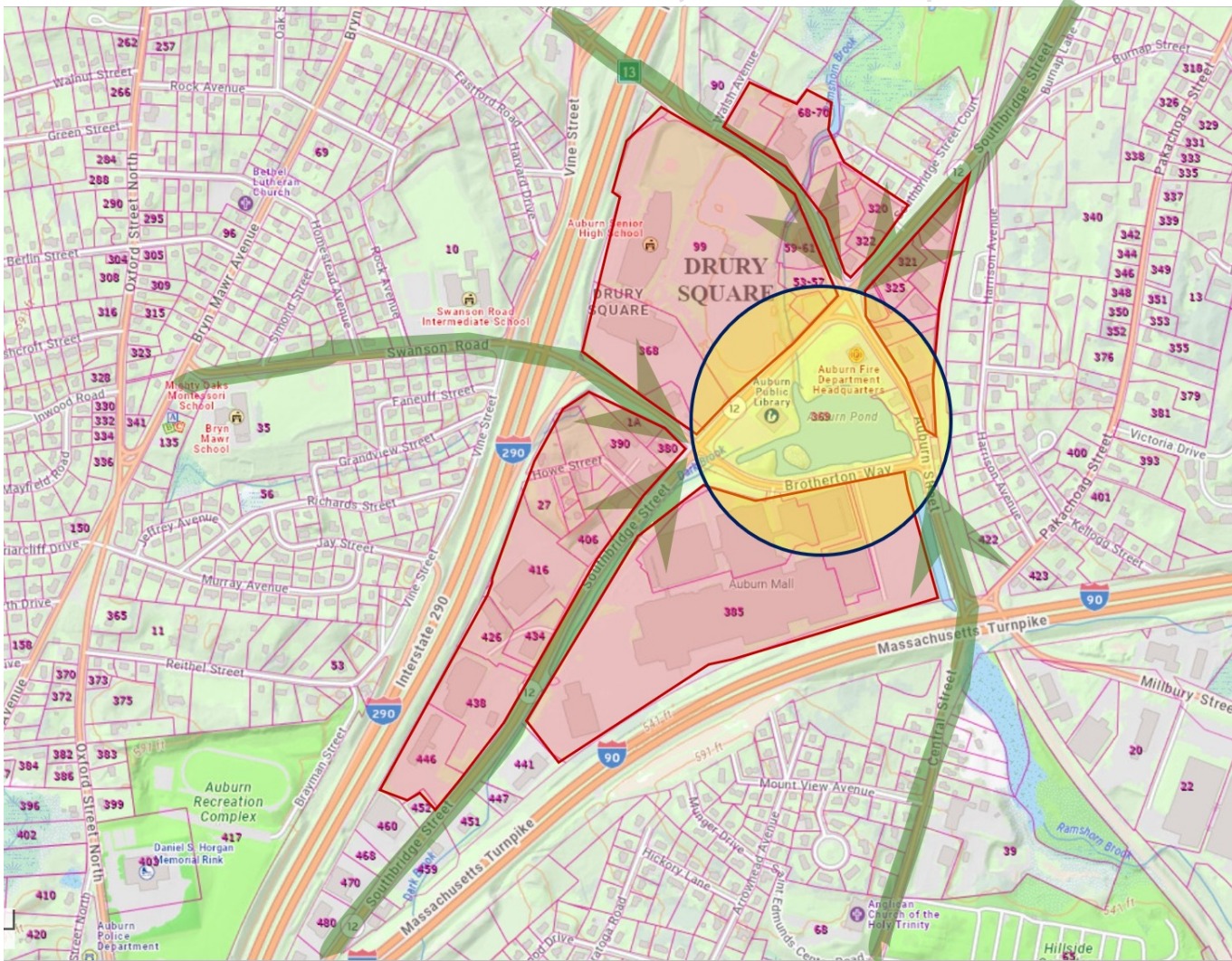
Auburn TAP Site Aerial



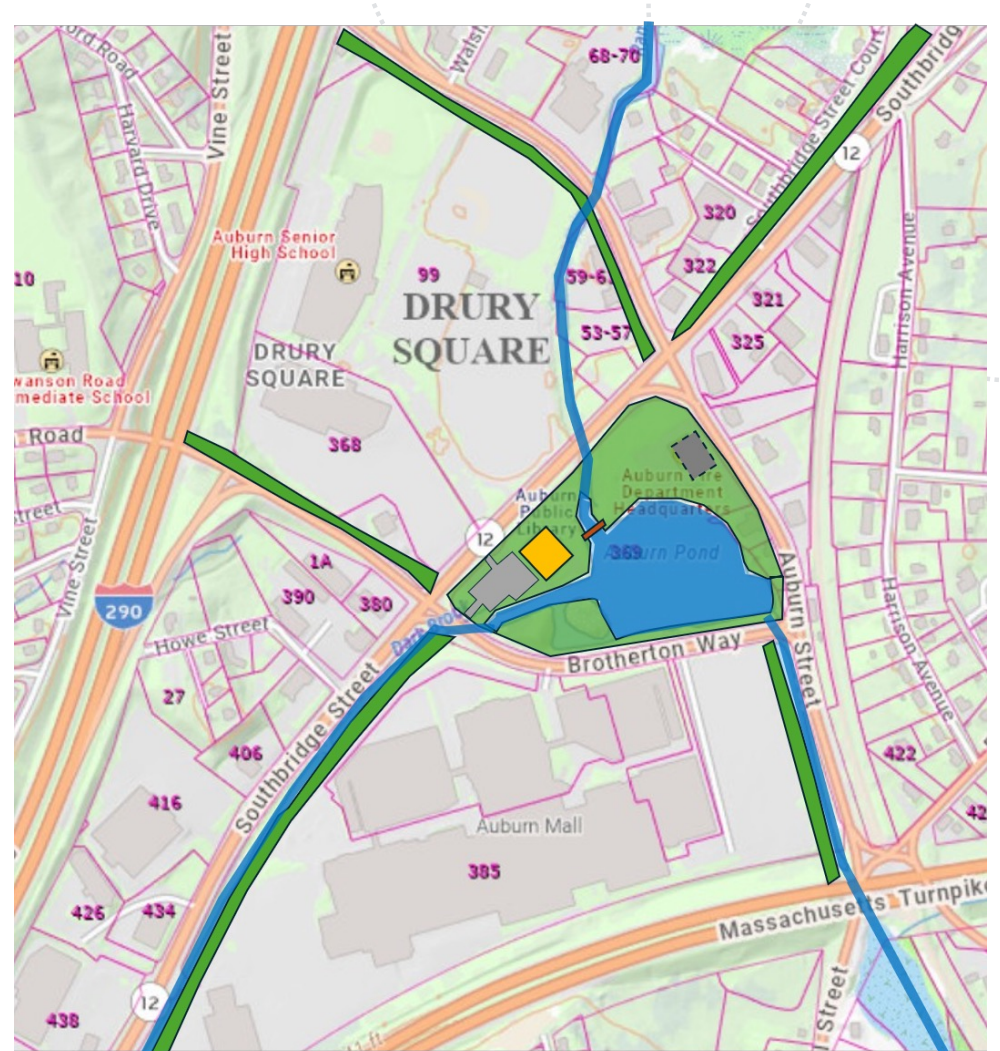
Auburn TAP Site GIS Map



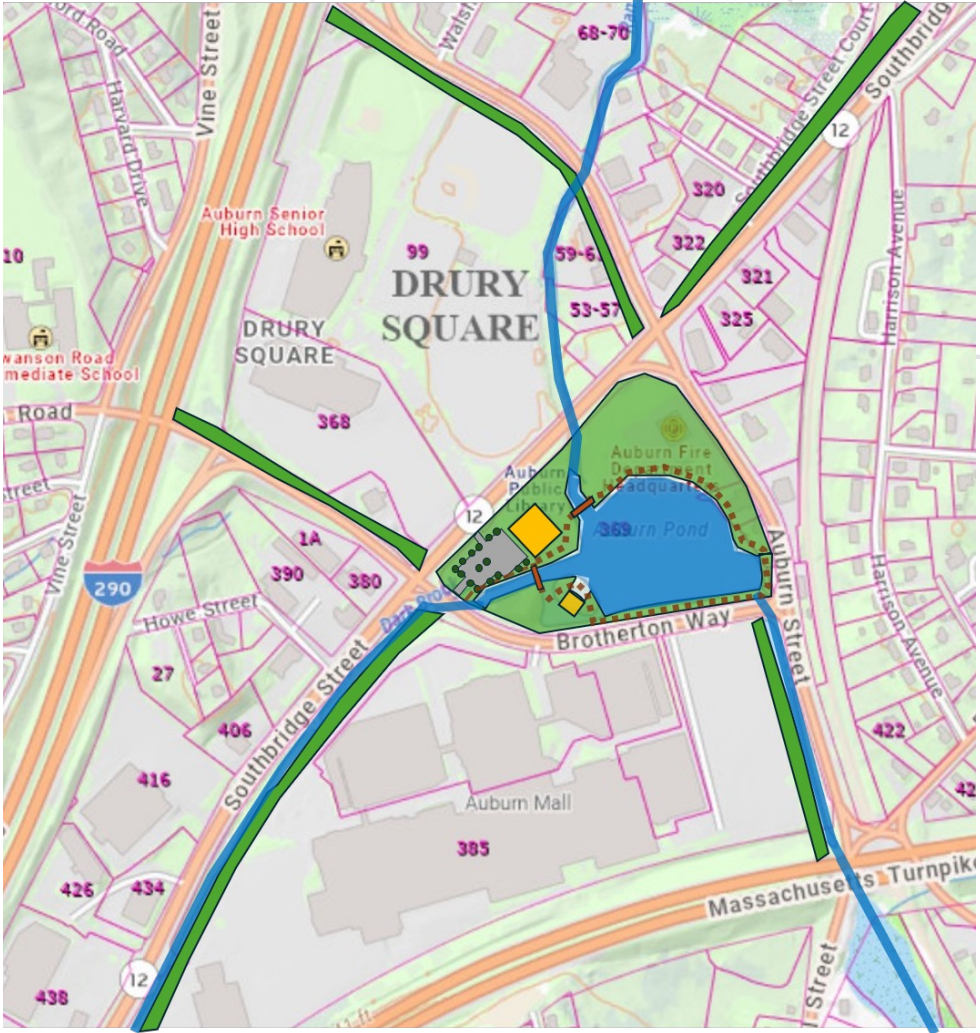
Auburn TAP Site Adding Value



Auburn TAP Site "Walkability"



Auburn TAP Site "Amenity"



Auburn TAP Site Parcel Redevelopment



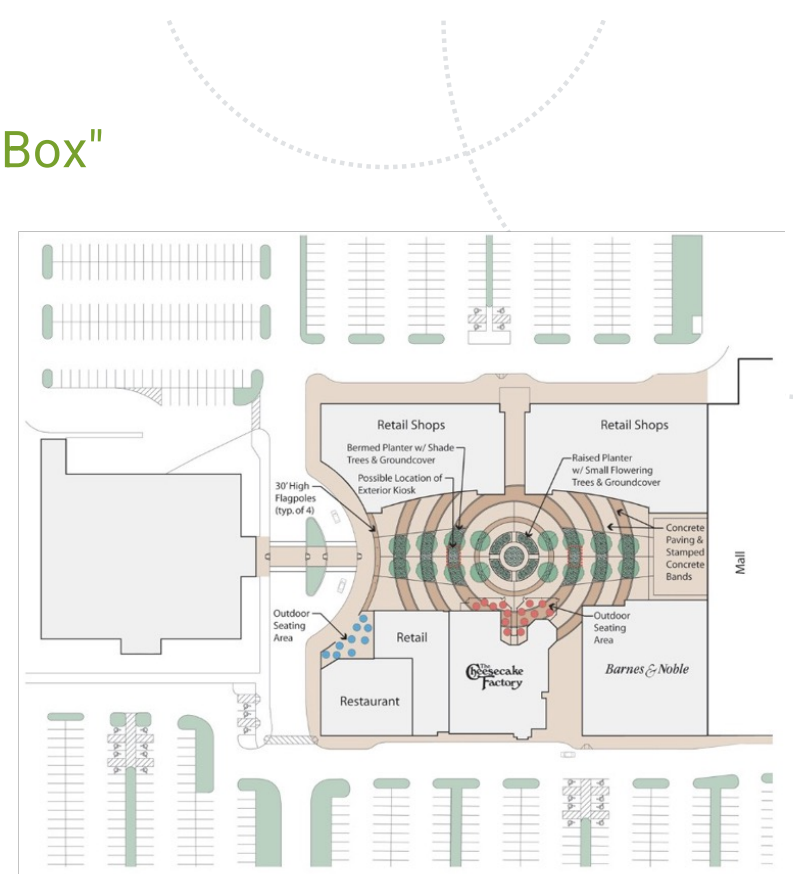
Capital Square, Providence
13 apartments [in 2 mixed-use buildings]
Height: 3-story
Site area: 0.72 acres
Density: 18 DU/acre



Auburn TAP Site Repositioning the Mall - "Reorienting to the Outdoors"



Auburn TAP Site Repositioning the Mall – "Breaking Down the Box"



Auburn TAP Site Repositioning the Mall – "Integrating Open Space"



Auburn TAP Site Repositioning the Mall - "Mixed-Use, Street Edge & Usable Open Space"



What funding mechanisms including grants and financial instruments are needed to facilitate the redevelopment of these sites?

- For Auburn Mall site - Incentivize development with streamlined permitting and tax incentives
- Adopt CPA which can fund Affordable Housing, Open Space, and Historic Preservation
- Select Board could adopt a policy where meals or lodging taxes could serve as dedicated funding to support development in this area
- Explore PACE Community adoption to fund new construction and adaptive reuse
- MassDevelopment's One Stop for Growth
 - Site readiness, underutilized properties, Real Estate Services TA,
- Mass Downtown Initiative can help fund wayfinding



Q&A

Auburn, MA TAP
June 8, 2026