ULI Boston/ New England

Montague TAP
Farren Hospital Site
March 10, 2026

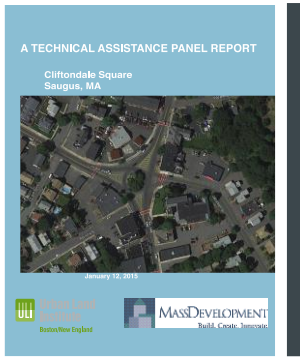
MHP Massachusetts Housing Partnership
Moving affordable housing forward

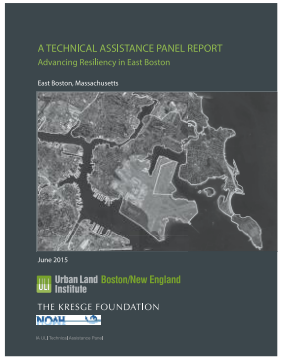
About ULI – the Urban Land Institute

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.





The Massachusetts Housing Partnership

MHP is a public nonprofit organization, funded in part by Massachusetts banks, that works in concert with the governor, legislature, and civic leaders to increase housing production, expand access to affordable housing and promote housing equity in communities across the Commonwealth.

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 SPONSORS:

Massachusetts Housing Partnership

Moving affordable housing forward

The Panel

Chair

Michael Fergus, CBRE

Panelists

- **Andrew Arbaugh,** Copley Wolff Design Group
- **Mark Mascia**, Collaborative RED
- **Emma McGurren,** MHP
- **David Reed,** SustainMobility
- **Ben Murphy,** MassDevelopment

ULI Staff

- **Michelle Landers,** Executive Director

TAP Writer

- **Mike Hoban**

The Process

Briefing Meeting

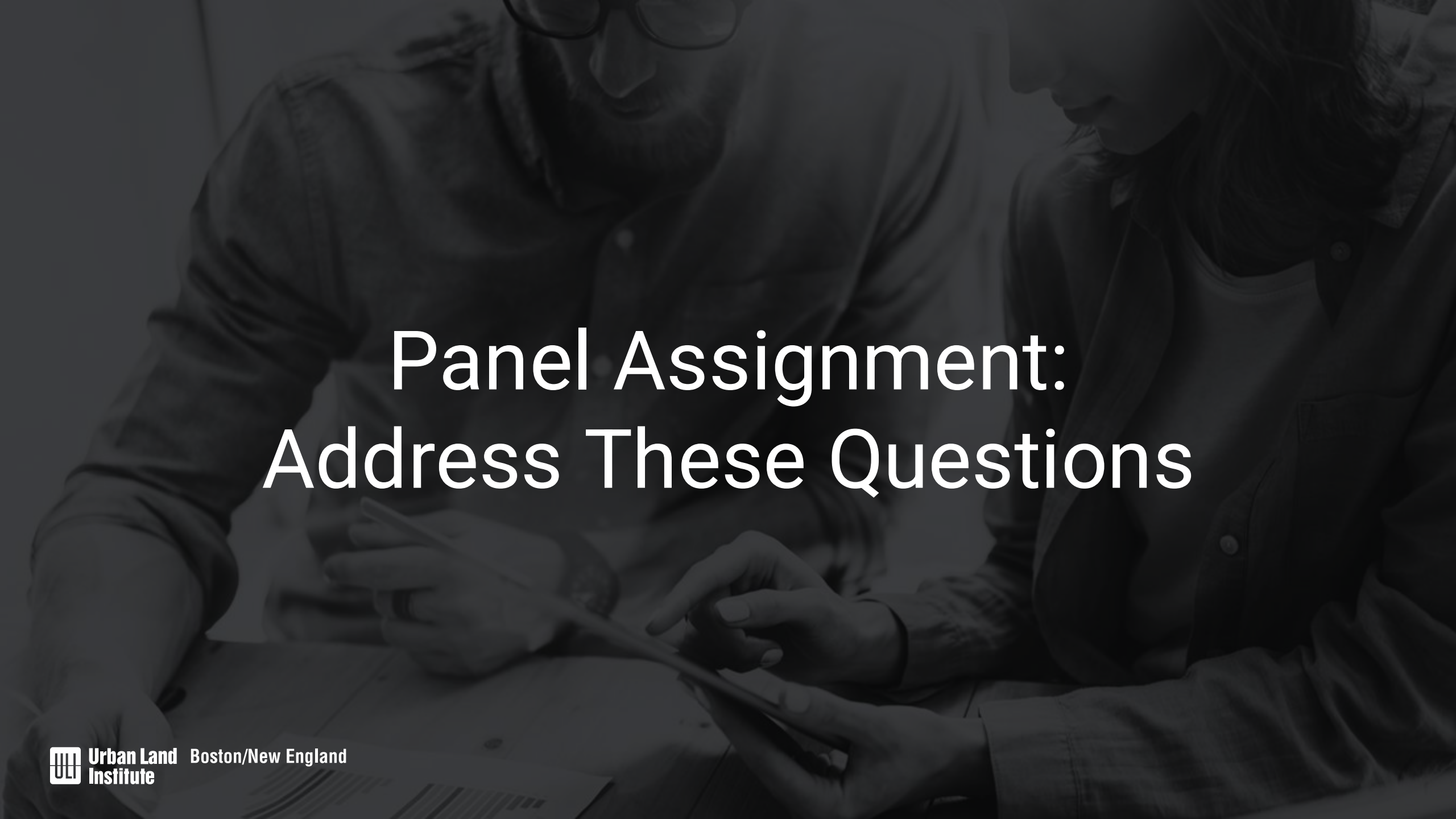
Panelists received briefing information from the Town of Montague regarding the study area including zoning, past studies, current conditions, etc.

Site Visit

Panelists toured the site at 340 Montague City Road as well as Farren Street and Cabot Street.

Stakeholder Interviews

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



Panel Assignment: Address These Questions

Urban Land Institute Boston/New England

Key Questions

Regarding 340 Montague City Road

Planning & Feasibility: Should the site be subdivided prior to disposition? What are the benefits and disadvantages of subdivision?

Implementation: If subdivision occurs, should the Town issue an RFP for a master developer or multiple RFPs?

Market & Financing: What are the benefits and disadvantages of selecting a master developer for a site of this size and condition in Franklin County?

What did we see?

Study Area – 340 Montague City Road (former Farren Hospital)

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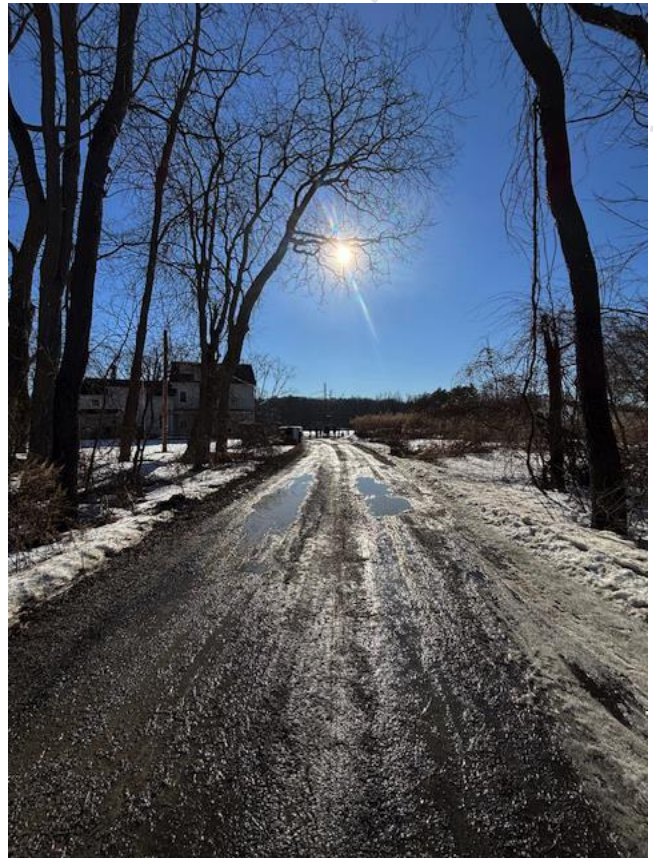

Existing Conditions

Former community hospital with ties to Montague

Flat

Good access

Frontage on major road

Transit access

Bike path connection

Pedestrian crossing

Existing power, water and sewer infrastructure

Existing structures on site – garage, pavilion, gazebo

356 Montague City Road (former hospital offices)

“Wetlands” perennial stream

Asphalt parking area (across street)

What did we hear?

What did we hear...

Site has meaning and history within Town of Montague

Desire to create a village center in Montague City – local identity

Desire for local amenities – café

Desire for safe connect to bike path

Balancing desire for new development with existing economic conditions is a challenge

Need for housing – Affordable, Workforce, Senior, Family

Community Pride

Residents value closely knit community

Desire for contextual design/architecture

Opportunities and Challenges

Assets and Opportunities

Site is mostly clear and flat – Shovel-ready
Municipal and community openness to growth and development
Approved flexible zoning for density
Bike Trail access – amenity for development
Forward looking – embracing the future
Proximity to Turners Falls downtown – with many amenities and low vacancy
Bus stop

This site can strengthen the identity of Montague
Enhance housing stock and diversity
Opportunity to grow school-age population
Opportunity for residents to age in place (within Montague) or stay housed in community
Increase the tax base

Challenges

Site is disconnected from commercial center and generally car dependent

Bus is infrequent

Wetlands

Not walkable to commercial district

Many competing goals for the site

Economics of Franklin County

Limited housing affordability

Macroeconomic factors

Costs of materials and labor cannot be support by rents/sales prices

New construction market slow down

Scarce new development in greater Montague – Limited experience with large scale site development (market rate/mixed use)

Recommendations

Key Question #1

Planning & Feasibility: Should the site be subdivided prior to disposition? What are the benefits and disadvantages of subdivision?

- The panel recommends the site be subdivided into two development sites and one public amenity open space.
  Develop cohesive streetscape design guidelines that provide identity without being overly prescriptive

- The site is most suitable for housing on the development sites along with flexible commercial space (for food trucks, pop up café, etc.) on retained park site.

- Housing typologies include townhomes, apartments, for-rent and for-sale. Small development parcels target smaller scale developers (middle income housing). Larger parcel would be suitable for multifamily (mixed income).

- RFP process could express preference for certain housing types while leaving flexibility for creativity from developers – utilize scoring criteria to evaluate responses.

Key Question #1

Considerations for Town of Montague:

- Subdivision Technical Assistance available from MHP
- Town may access grant funding for site infrastructure
- Costs associated with park build out
- Management of commercial space

Key Question #2

Implementation: If subdivision occurs, should the Town issue an RFP for a master developer or multiple RFPs?

The panel recommends multiple RFPs. This would allow for different scales of development and a phased approached. It lowers the risk that comes along with one master developer and diversifies the pool of potential respondents. This may provide opportunities for local small-scale developers.

Key Question #2

Implementation: If subdivision occurs, should the Town issue an RFP for a master developer or multiple RFPs?

Canalside rail trail
Farren Ave
Depot St
Montague City Rd
Montague City Rd
Sandy Ave

Key Question #3

Market & Financing: What are the benefits and disadvantages of selecting a master developer for a site of this size and condition in Franklin County?

Streamlined process from town's perspective
Ease of implementing overall design guidelines
Consistency over phases of development – consultant teams, etc.
A larger developer would have more experience and access to capital

Limits opportunity for local developers
Limited pool of larger scale developers
Lack of interest from larger scale developer may mean a longer timeline for development
Longer timeline means site does not generate tax revenue

Potential Funding Sources

Commonwealth
Massworks
Housing Works EOHLC through Community One Stop for Growth
Site Readiness Grants

MHP
Complete Neighborhoods Partnership could help with predevelopment including subdivision consultant

Relevant Examples to Consider

Holyoke MA

Example

Glen Brook Way Apartments
Medway

48 rental apartments at or below 60% AMI

Developed by MetroWest Development Collaborative

Example

Noquochoke Village
Westport

50 rental apartments,
20 at 60% AMI

Developed by
The Community Builders

Example

Tavernier Place
Acton

31 rental apartments at or below 60% AMI

Developed by Common Ground, Inc.

photo © Maugel Destefano Architects

Example

Village at Nauset Green
Eastham

39 rental apartments at or below 60% AMI

Developed by Pennrose

Example

Little Pond Place
Falmouth

40 rental apartments
at or below 60% AMI

Developed by
Affirmative
Investments

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