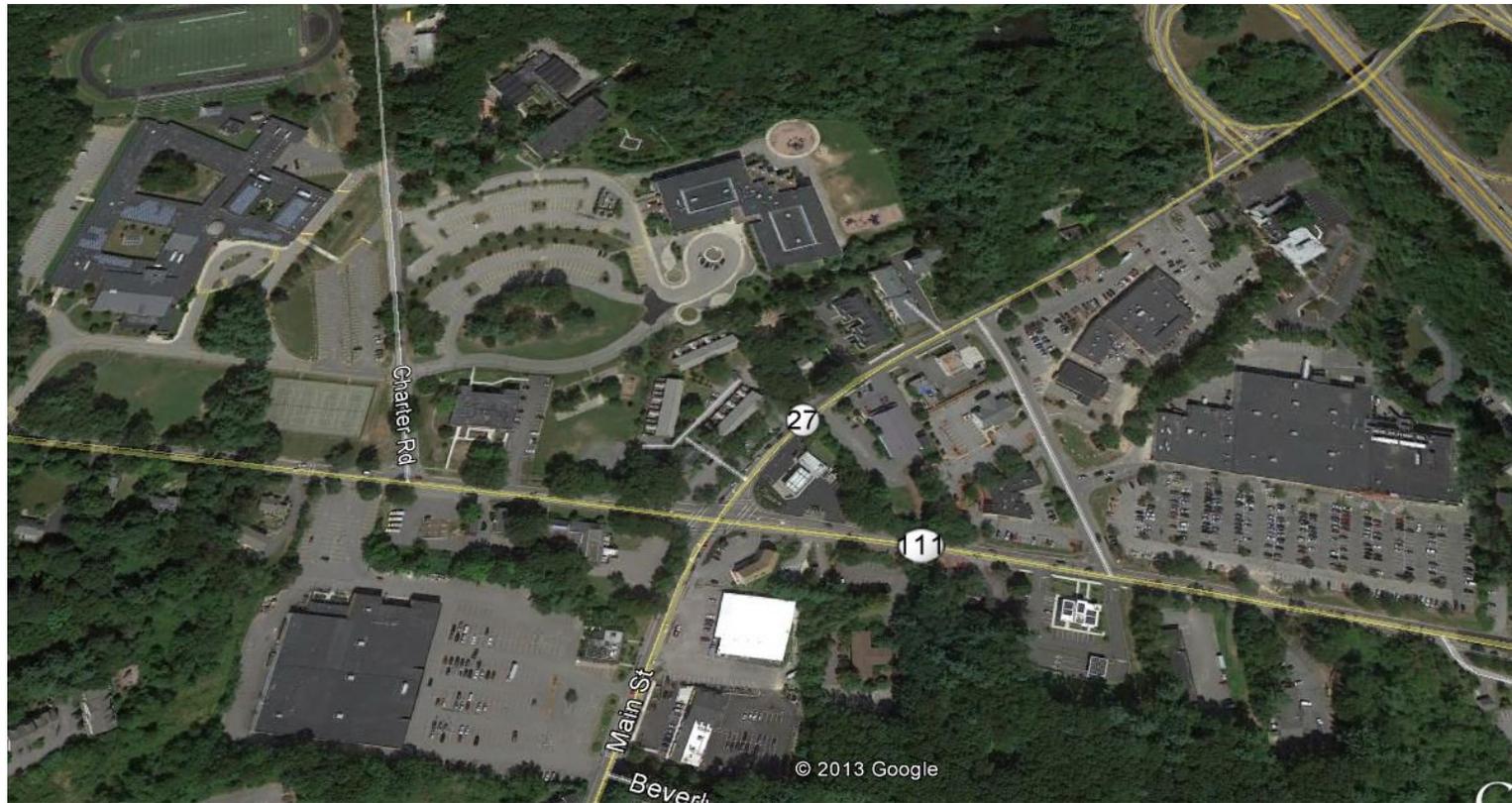


# ULI Boston Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Program

## Kelly's Corner, Acton MA



## **Mission**

To provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

**ULI is a research and education institution with over 35,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.**

## **ULI at the local level**

- Boston District Council covers nearly all of New England
- 1,100 Members—developers, architects, planners, public officials, financiers, students, etc.

## Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) (Dick)

A Technical Assistance Panel (**TAP**) brings together of a group of ULI members with a range of professional expertise to provide focused, collaborative consultation to a local government or qualifying non-profit organization.

### This TAP

- Sponsored by the Town of Acton
- This panel looked at the full range of options from an unbiased perspective.
- Panelists include experts in the fields of architecture, development, landscape architecture, construction and law.
- **Panelists have donated their time**
- Final Deliverable – Written report is available at <http://boston.uli.org>

# TAP Panelists (Dick)

## TAP Co-Chairs

**Dick Lampman** – Barr & Barr Inc

**Ed O'Rourke** – GEI Consultants

## TAP Panelists

**Sarah Barnat** – ULI Boston

**Fred Kramer** – ADD Inc

**Ruth Loetterle** – Carol R. Johnson Associates

**Sandi Silk** – Jefferson Apartment Group

**Andrew Sutton** – Riemer & Braunstein

**Virginia Quinn** – Report Writer

**Michelle Landers** – ULI Boston



# The Process (Dick)

## Site Visit:

Town planning staff led the panel on a tour of:

- Main Street/Route 27
- Kelley's Corner Shopping Plazas
- Massachusetts Avenue/Route 111
- Prospect Street, Beverly Road, Nadine Road



## Panel interviewed stakeholders today including:

Town Officials, Local Business Owners, Town Staff, Acton 2020 members, Local residents

## The Panel's Assignment (Fred)

The Town requests the services of the Technical Assistance Panel to provide review the Kelley's Corner study area and

- Identify overarching impediments that, to the extent they exist in addition to unsuitable zoning standards, inhibit or impair Kelly's Corner's transformation into a vibrant, walkable, mixed use center;
- Offer suggestions for overcoming the impediments and moving forward and;
- Within a holistic, problem-solving approach, focus on the projected market conditions, trends and challenges for commercial and residential real estate that may conflict with Acton's town center redevelopment goals, and recommended tools and initiatives that Acton can pursue to further its goals.

# Assets (Fred)

School System's proximity to / influence on Kelley's Corner

Political momentum

- Acton 2020
- Majority Vote
- Approved Funding for Planning Study

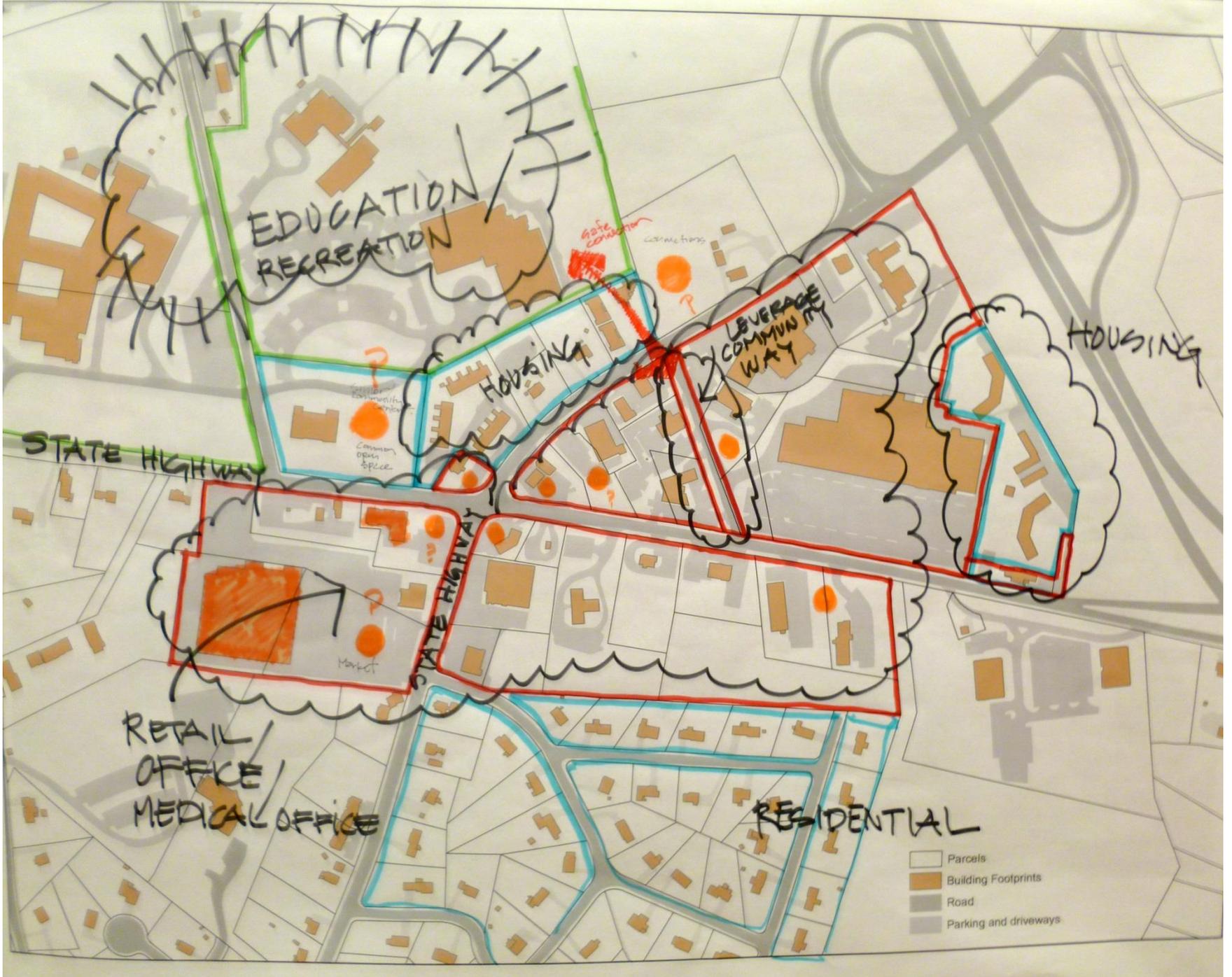
Quality mix of uses

- Medical
- Educational
- Office
- Residential/40B
- Excellent retail – both national credit tenants and locally-owned businesses

Solid Infrastructure Foundation

- Sidewalks
- Sewer





# Kelley's Corner as Town Center (Ed)

Mix of uses already present

Vibrant Retail

Vehicular access

Appropriate parking ratios

High Visibility

Good Tenant Mix

Employment Center – medical, education, office, and retail jobs

Mix of housing – for sale, for rent, affordable, single-family, multi-family

Food and Entertainment



Imageable (memorable) gathering space (town green)

Branding/District Identity

Programming

Cohesive, safe and attractive pedestrian experience

Civic amenities

Full service dining – white tablecloth restaurant

Family Entertainment

Central location

Public parking (not site specific)



# Challenges (Sandi)

## Technical/Political

- Defining an achievable vision
- Town Meeting/Political Process/Distinguishing this effort from previous efforts
- Fragmented land ownership
- Zoning – disincentives and lack of incentives
- Existing high-value land uses

## Physical

- Linkages throughout Kelley's Corner
- Linkages from school to Kelley's Corner
- Major state controlled thoroughfare – 80% of traffic passes *through* area
- Limited bicycle access

# Recommendations (Sandi)

## Reframe the mindset

- Recognize and design from strengths
- Focus on what you can fix/control
- Define an achievable vision



## Recommendations (Sarah)

- Identify town resources for streetscape improvements and KC programming to emphasize health, safety and sustainability
- Activate underutilized spaces with innovative programming
- Optimize the retail, dining and entertainment mix for the district
- Identify an economic development strategy to formally engage business owners (Verizon, Banks, Edens, MassDOT, Stop & Shop/Kmart)



# Recommendations (Ruth)

- Evaluate opportunities for town-owned properties for senior/community center
- Formalize path from school to Main Street (for safety)
- Explore mid-block crossings on Massachusetts Ave and Main Street



# Recommendations (Andrew)

## Regarding the comprehensive planning study

- Adjust Cecil Study scope – less background study, more design/vision that leverages existing assets
- Engage regional school district stakeholders in planning process
- Maximize retail potential
- Resist temptation to completely revision the area
- Acton 2020 – 6 year timeframe – focus on near term improvements



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# Questions?