

Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2022

EDC Members:	Councilor Melanie Hamblen, Chair; Councilor Cobi Frongillo, Vice Chair; Councilor Patrick Sheridan; Councilor Glenn Jones
Town Staff:	Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator; Alecia Alleyne, Assistant to the Town Administrator; Brian Taberner, Director of Planning and Community Development

Chair Hamblen called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m. and read announcements.

Agenda:

1. [Urban Land Institute - North Grove PDA, Nu-Style Property](#): Clean up and redevelopment follow up and discussion [*Presentation Attached*].
 - a. Biotech overlay and zoning
 - Town Administrator Hellen (TA Hellen) discussed concerns about landowner buy-in, our options if we do not have landowner support, and funding difficulties in an inflation environment. There was discussion regarding overlay zoning and zoning changes.
 - Bryan Taberner discussed the concept of putting in an access road and how this would allow the three landowners without frontage to redevelop their properties and revitalize the area. He also discussed the proposed plan by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) of purchasing one property and doing a land swap with others, which would benefit the property owners but present a liability to the Town and be extremely expensive. Mr. Taberner commented that if we are not going to redevelop the neighborhood, we should focus on Nu-Style and get out of the brownfields business by cleaning the site up. We are applying for grants.
 - There was a discussion regarding remediation of the hazardous chemicals that has been done and what is remaining, and an anticipated timeline and costs of work ahead. Mr. Taberner will continue working on the brownfield aspects of this land and try to get some grants.
 - There was discussion about what a biotech overlay is and how it works.
 - There was discussion about the value of the property with contamination vs. what it could be worth once cleaned up and methods of selling the land once cleaned up. There was further discussion of the contamination, what we know vs. what we do not know and how this affects future development. There was discussion regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the Town purchasing the neighboring contaminated lot to redevelop, and discussion regarding possible future municipal uses of the property.
 - There was discussion regarding the safety of residents and businesses in this area, how they may or may not be affected by the contamination.
 - There was discussion about the neighboring Mass Highways lot and whether we could take ownership of it.
 - There was discussion on how to proceed with Nu-Style going forward, a timeline for applying for grants and when to meet on this topic again.

Meeting adjourned at 6:41pm.

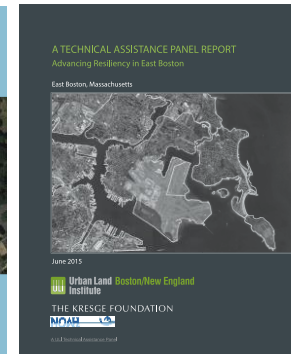
This is a meeting of the Franklin Town Council Sub-Committee; under the Open Meeting Law, this subcommittee is a separate "public body" from the Town Council. Therefore, unless the Town Council has separately noticed and posted its own meeting, Councilors who are not members of this subcommittee will not be permitted to speak or otherwise actively participate @ this meeting, although they may attend and observe. This prohibition is necessary to avoid the potential for an Open Meeting Law Violation

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)

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

- **Ed O'Rourke**, Azzur Group
- **James Heffernan**, Rich May Law

Panelists

- **Joe Marini**, Gibson Sotheby's International Realty
- **Mary Ellen DeFrias**, Mass Development
- **John Kucich**, Bohler
- **Phil Giffie**, NOAH CDC

ULI Staff

- **Tim Moore**, Manager ULI Boston/New England

TAP Writer

- **Mike Hoban**



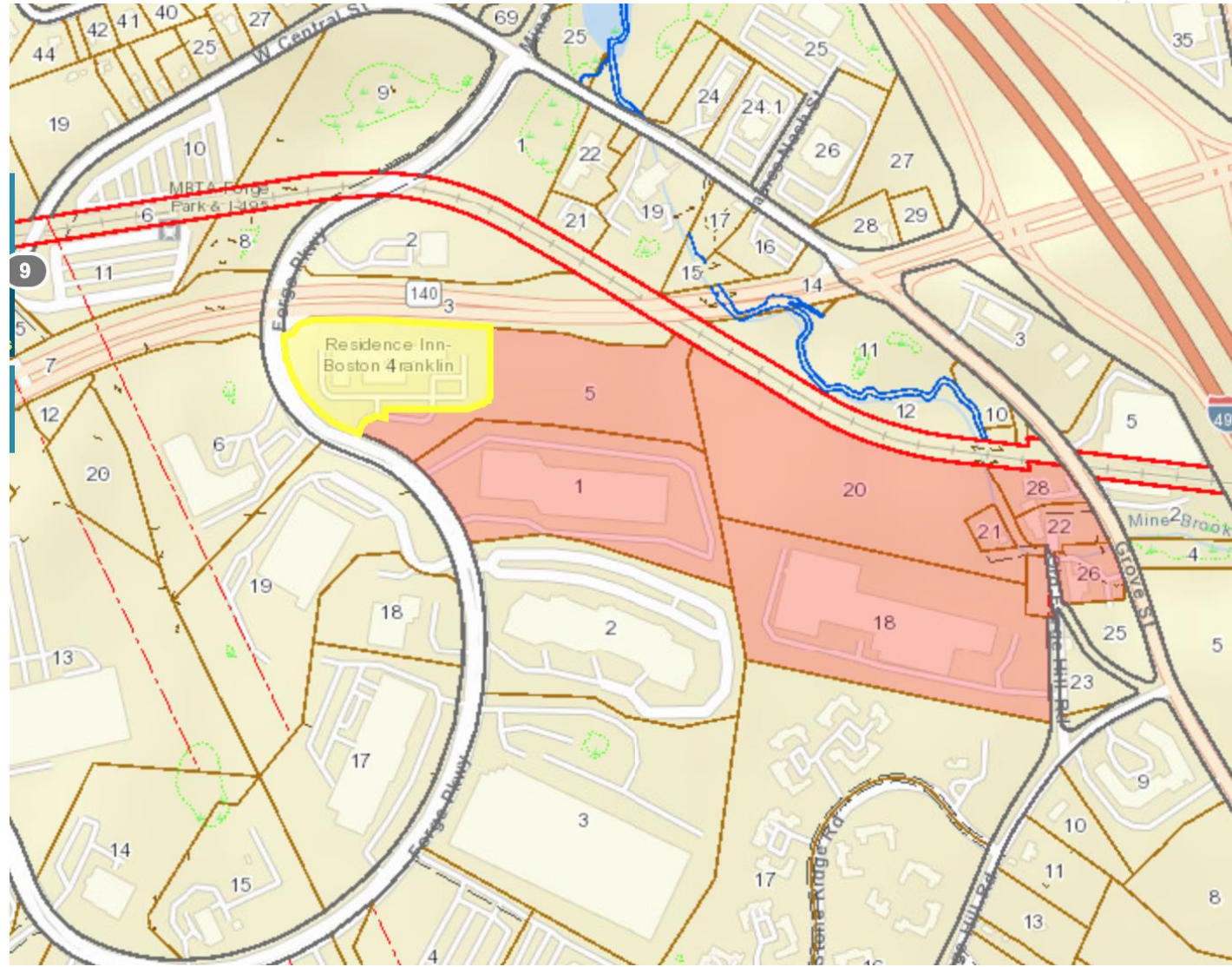


Panel Assignment: Address These Questions

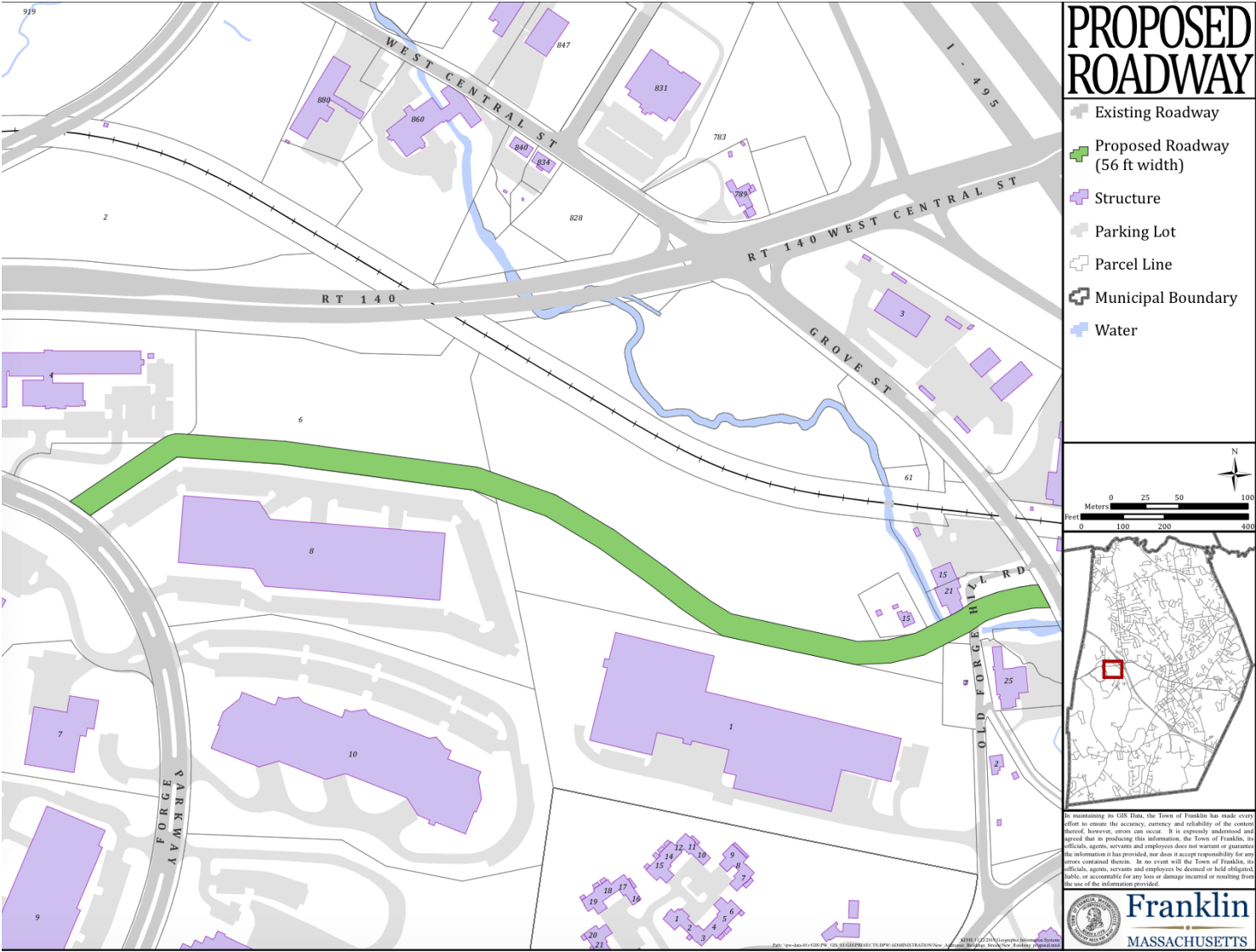


- Is the Town's North Grove PDA/EOA Revitalization and Access Roadway Project feasible given existing constraints, or are there better options to clean up and redevelop the Town's Nu-Style property and stimulate private investment in the North Grove PDA?
- Can the Town create a public/private development partnership to implement the Proposed Project (or other project conceived during the TAP) where all parties gain in the end?
- What specific process should the Town (and/or public private partnership) take to implement the chosen revitalization project?

Study Area – North Grove PDA



Study Area – North Grove PDA Proposed Rodeway



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 June 8th, Panelists toured North Grove PDA/EOA.

Stakeholder Interviews

On June 6th and 8th, the panelists interviewed property owners, business owners, and public officials via Zoom and in person to better understand the needs of district tenants and the community.



What did we hear?

Stake Holder Input

- Nu-Style property needs to be cleaned
- Challenge to develop on Old Forge Rd because of layout, topography, and the fact it's no longer a recognized road
- All stakeholders need to get on the same page
- Each stakeholder has considered selling, buying and some have explored market potential
- Lack of appetite for discussion around a roadway

Existing Conditions

- North Grove PDA



Existing Conditions

A number of the current parcels have environmental contamination, these chemicals include:

- CVOCs (chlorinated volatile organic compounds)
- PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons)
- Metals
- TCE (trichloroethene)
- PCE (tetrachloroethene)

Assets and Opportunities

- Town already owns a parcel and has already commenced some remediation
- Accessibility from Route 140 and I-495
- Commuter Rail Station nearby
- Forge Parkway
- Existing Zoning Bylaw



Challenges

- **Site contamination**
- **Multiple parcel owners**
- **Landlocked sites / Lack of street frontage**
- **Location of Mine Brook**
- **Topography**
- **Existing building conditions**





Recommendations

Recommendations

Is the Town's North Grove PDA/EOA Revitalization and Access Roadway Project actually feasible given existing constraints, or are there better options to clean up and redevelop the Town's Nu-Style property and stimulate private investment in the North Grove PDA?

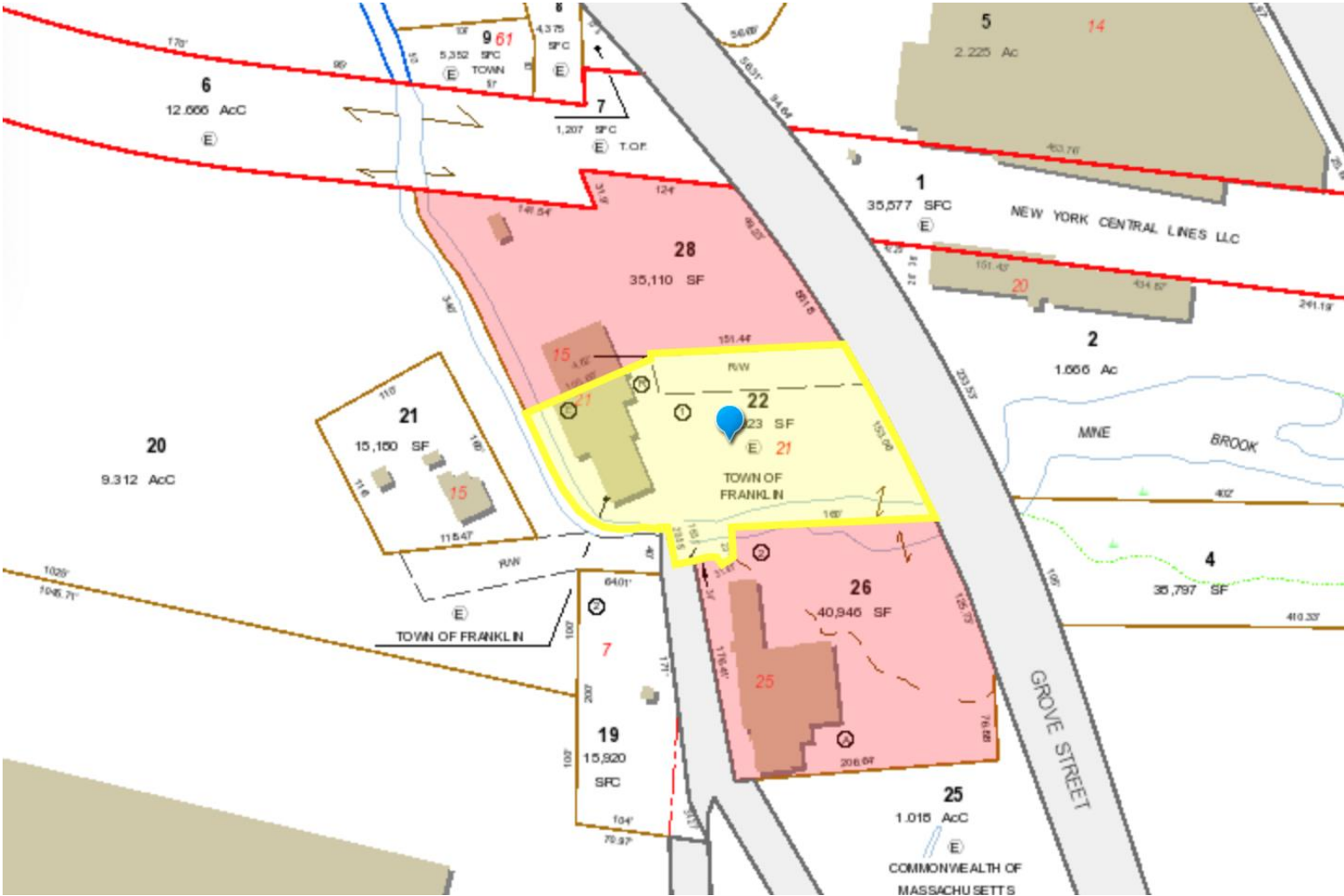
To address the question above at the North Grove PDA, the panel has concluded that given the existing constraints, while the Access Roadway Project is an attractive solution, there are better options to remediate and develop the Town's Nu-Style property and stimulate private investment in the site.

One of the options that we feel is a better option, is the Town of Franklin becoming an active partner and facilitating a land swap between 15 Grove Street (Lot 28, Map 276) and 25 Grove Street (Lot 26, Map 276), allowing the town owned Lot 22 and 15 Grove Street (Lot 28) to be joined and remediated, leading to a larger developable parcel with the additional benefit of increased curb appeal.

Additionally, the panel recommends extending the biotechnology overlay district, also known as the biotechnology use overlay. This overlay currently includes lots on Forge Parkway. The extension of this overlay district to Grove Street, provides economic incentive and increases the likelihood of private investment.

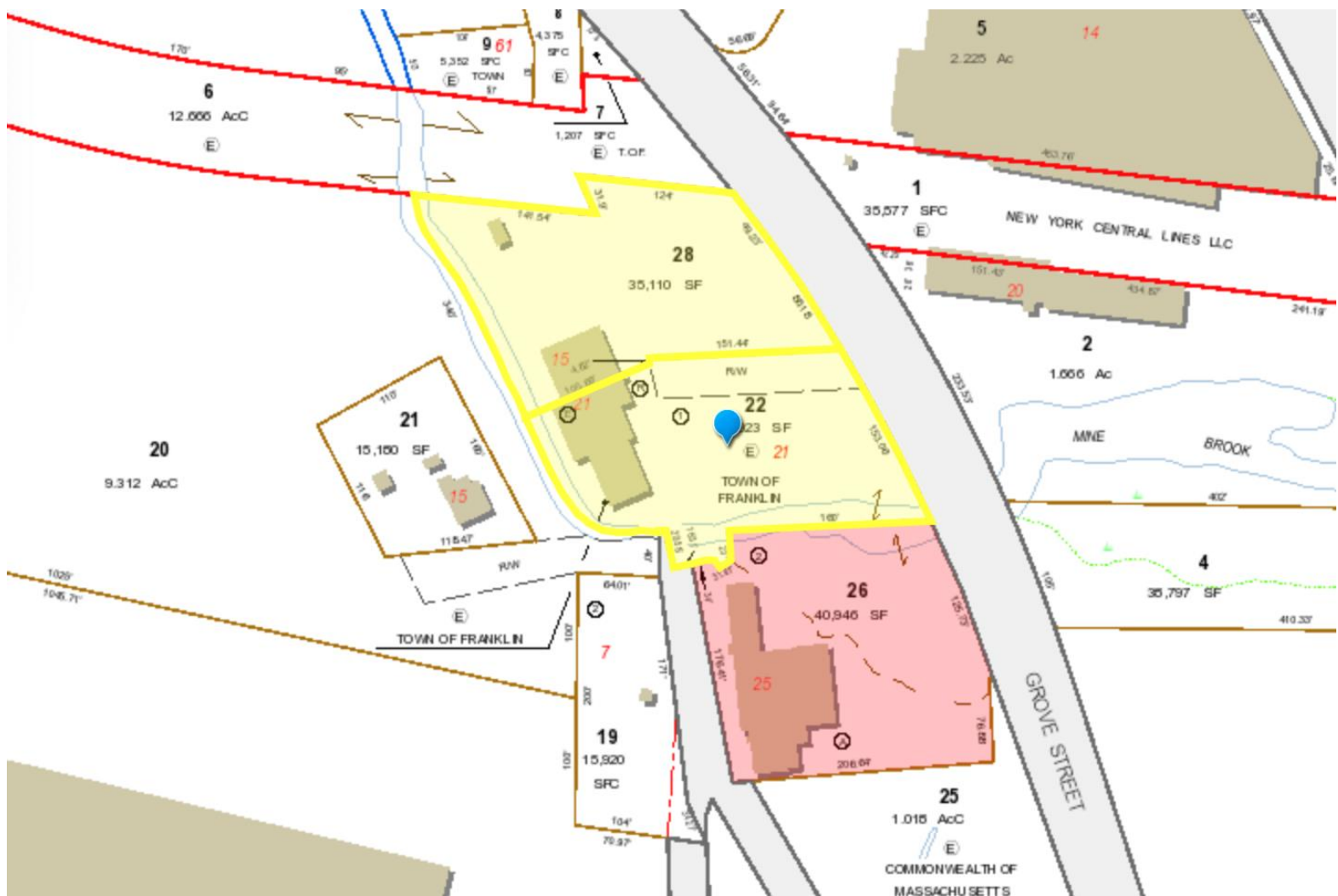
North Grove PDA Land Swap

Current



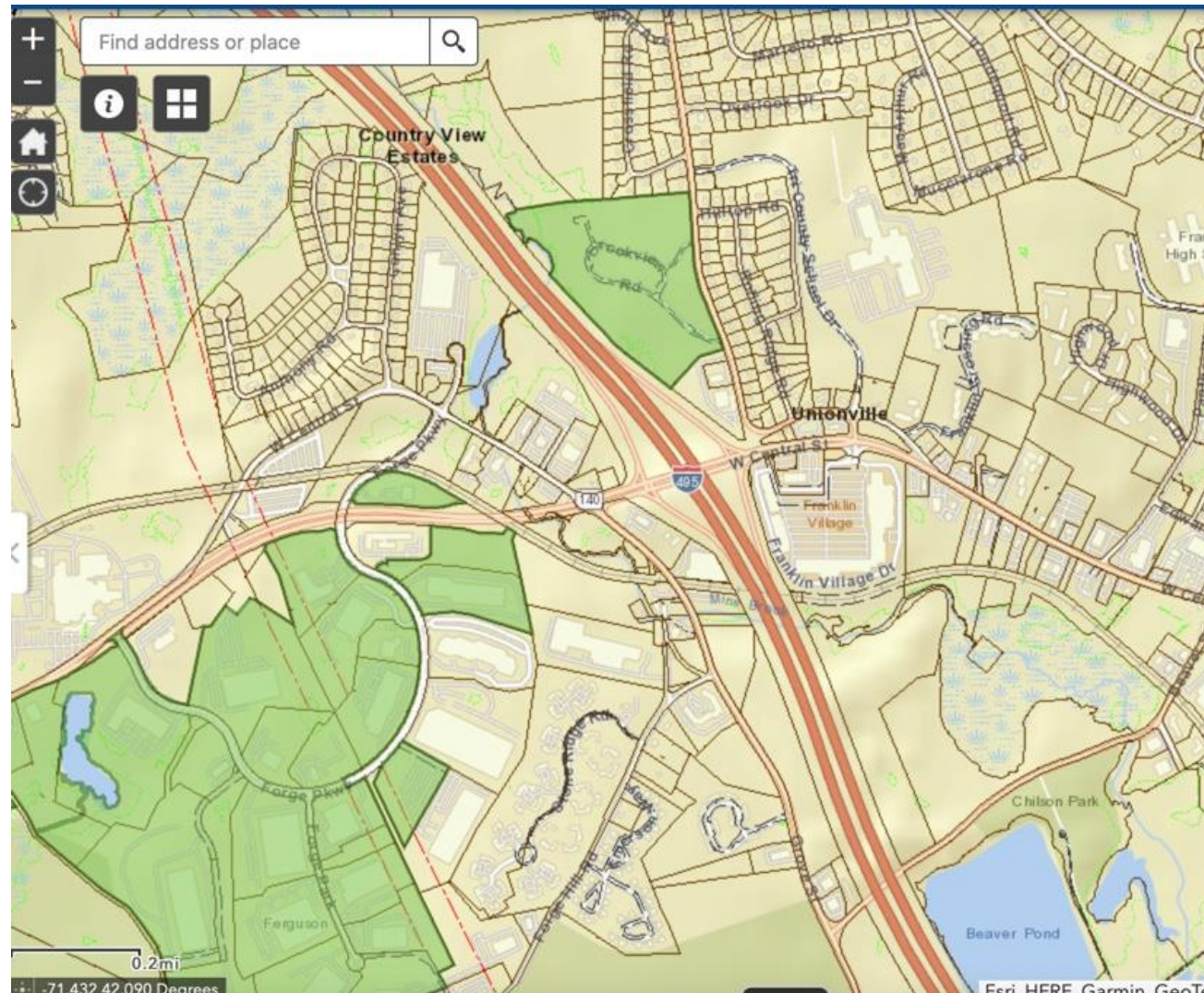
North Grove PDA Land Swap

Proposed



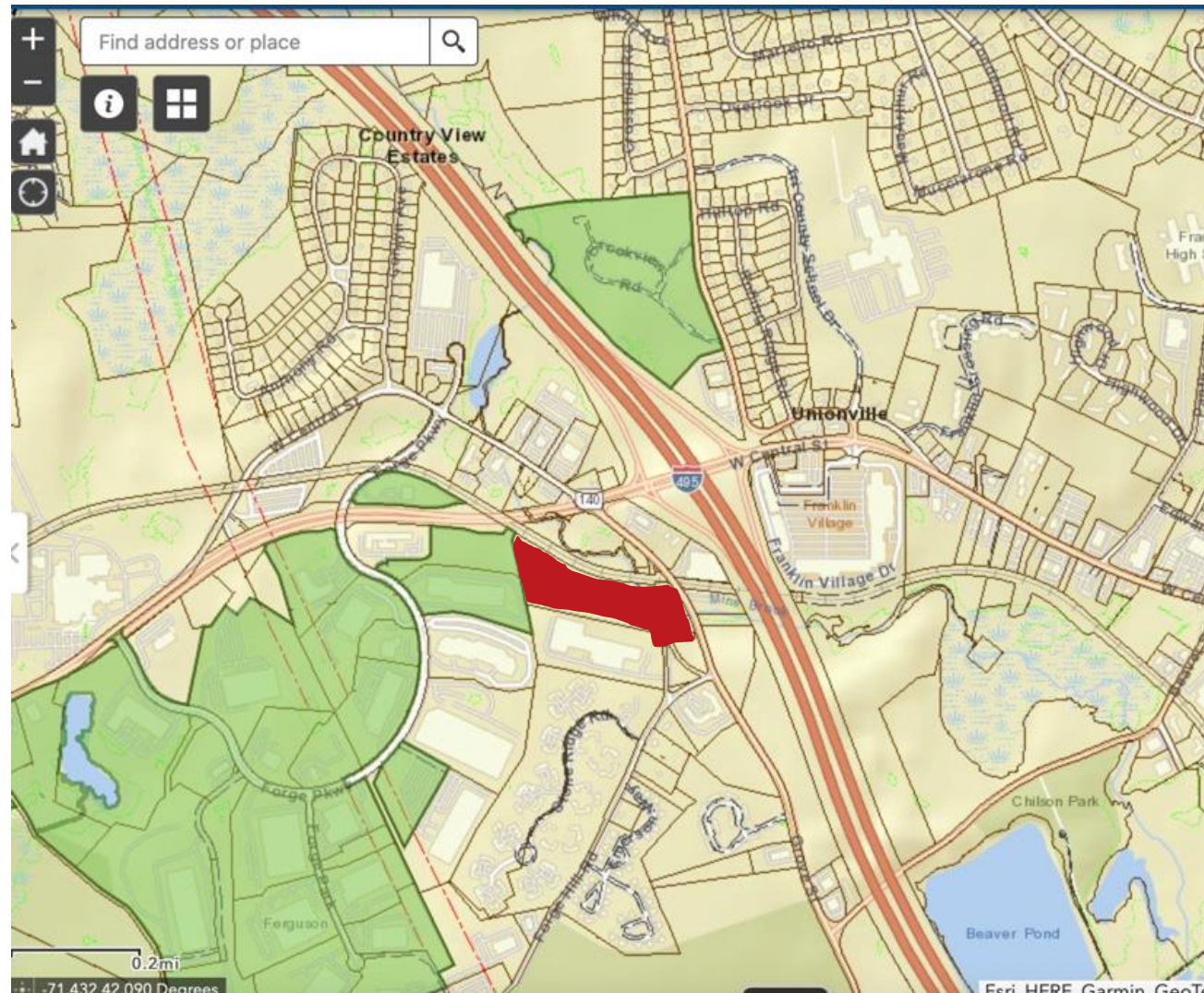
North Grove Biotechnology Use Overlay

Current



North Grove Biotechnology Use Overlay

Proposed



Recommendations

Can the Town create a public/private development partnership to implement the Proposed Project (or other project conceived during the TAP) where all parties gain in the end?

To address the question, the panel recommends that the community works with the EPA, Mass DEP and Mass Development to create a comprehensive remediation plan which will lead to future private investment at the site.

Recommendations

What specific process should the Town (and/or public private partnership) take to implement the chosen revitalization project?

Property Acquisitions

- Discuss the sale 25 Grove Street to the Town and acquire if possible
- Approach 15 Grove Street about an opportunity to relocate to 25 Grove Street, as a land swap
- Once 15 Grove is acquired by the Town of Franklin, the town can combine the lots and use grant money to remediate the combined lot (21 Grove Street and 15 Grove).

Remediation

- Using a combination of EPA, Mass DEP, Mass Development funding a site assessment and remediation on 15 and 21 Grove will be completed.
- Concurrent with the remediation effort the Town should amend the existing biotechnology overlay district (biotechnology use overlay) to be extend to Grove Street.

Recommendations

What specific process should the Town (and/or public private partnership) take to implement the chosen revitalization project?

Marketing

- Once remediation is complete, the new parcel will benefit from additional hardscaping and landscaping.
- The site benefits from highly flexible zoning, which is currently a business district. We recommend expanding the biotechnology overlay district (biotechnology use overlay).
- The final phase is to contract with a local commercial broker to divest from the property. Uses may include coworking, makerspace (artists/creative economy), retail, gym/yoga/fitness, and other community focused business uses.

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Q&A

Franklin TAP
June 8, 2022