

# URBAN RENEWAL PLAN MILL STREET CORRIDOR GARDNER, MA

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## **List of Acronyms**

CDBG – Community Development Block Grant  
DIF – District Increment Financing  
DHCD – Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development  
EEA – Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
EDIP – Massachusetts Economic Development Incentive Program  
EOA – Economic Opportunity Area  
EOHED – Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development  
GRA – Gardner Redevelopment Authority  
IRD – Invested Revenue District  
MART – Montachusett Area Regional Transit  
MassDOT – Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
MCP – Massachusetts Contingency Plan  
MEPA – Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act  
MHC – Massachusetts Historical Commission  
MWCC – Mount Wachusett Community College  
URP – Urban Renewal Plan  
URA – Urban Renewal Area



# Executive Summary

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Mill Street Corridor Urban Renewal Plan (URP or the Plan) was initiated by the City of Gardner through the City Council, the Mayor, and the Gardner Redevelopment Authority (GRA). The URP process involved collaboration with stakeholders, including area property owners, residents, town officials and the Mill Street Corridor Steering committee. Stakeholders have the mutual interest of revitalizing this once-vibrant industrial area by attracting new or expanding existing industrial and business users, brownfields remediation and the preservation of nearby natural resources.

## II. URBAN RENEWAL AREA DESCRIPTION

The Mill Street Corridor Urban Renewal Area (the URA or Project Area) is an industrially developed section of South Gardner. Much of the URA historically contained now-defunct furniture manufacturing businesses, including the S. Bent & Brothers Company that operated from about 1867 to 2001. The URA is approximately 45 acres, including sections of Mill and Winter Streets and a short segment of an inactive railroad spur. The area is bounded by Timpany Plaza shopping center to the north and west, a residential neighborhood along Winter Street to the east, Ramsdell Pond to the south, and Timpany Boulevard to the west and northwest. Access into the area for commercial vehicles has gained primarily from Timpany Boulevard (Route 68), with secondary access from West Broadway (Route 2A) via either Winter Street or the northern end of Mill Street.

The Project Area straddles an approximately 1,800-linear foot segment of Mill Street extending east from Timpany Boulevard, crossing over a stream via a two lane bridge constructed in 1938. The URA boundary extends slightly past the intersection of Mill Street and Winter Street (see **Section 12.02(1) Characteristics**). The 45-acre URA comprised of 14 parcels; 12 privately-owned parcels comprising 31.3% or approximately one third of the URA, and two City-owned 68.7% or two parcels that comprise two thirds of the URA. Seven structures are located on the privately owned parcels, including two buildings of a cabinet manufacturing business, the Gardner Horseshoe Club, a two-family dwelling, and a partially-occupied industrial property. The City-owned land was acquired in the early 2000's; the northwest portion was formerly the Garbose Scrap Metal Company, and the eastern portion was the S. Bent Furniture company. The URA boundaries are based on an assessment of a predominant number of properties contained therein which match the **Eligibility Criteria** articulated in **Section 12.02(2)**.

A portion of one of the parcels on the former S. Bent property is on historic filled land which has been used openly and adversely by the former owner and their predecessors. This represents a title issue which must be resolved prior to ultimate disposition of the property

The western portion of the URA is zoned for general business. This section abuts Timpany Plaza, which is an established retail shopping center anchored by Stop and Shop supermarket. Other major tenants include a discount retailer, smaller specialty retailers, and a six screen cinema multiplex. The shopping center was recently purchased by Cedar Realty Trust, a major owner/developer of retail shopping centers from the mid Atlantic states to New England, and is undergoing an exterior renovation. A Wal-Mart store is located on Timpany Boulevard less than a quarter-mile south of Mill Street. The store is currently undergoing a 50,000-square foot expansion to add groceries to its product line. This commercial activity along Timpany Boulevard indicates favorable market forces for commercial development in the western portion of the URA along Timpany Boulevard. General business zoning comprises 40% of the URA. The remaining portion (about 60%) is zoned light industrial.

As noted previously, most of the URA formerly contained furniture manufacturing companies dating back to the 1800's. A scrap metal recycling enterprise (the Garbose Company) operated from the 1950's to [] in the southwest section. The remaining active uses consist of a successful kitchen cabinet manufacturer with a building on either side of Mill Street, the Gardner Horse shoe Club, a two family dwelling, and a semi-occupied industrial property containing two buildings.

### III. STATEMENT OF NEED

This URP evaluates data from a variety of sources to support the recommendation that the Project Area meets the eligibility standards defined in M.G.L. c. 121B for consideration as "decadent" and a "blighted open area" and that it is improbable that the area would be redeveloped per the ordinary operations of private enterprise. Data evaluated includes parcel ownership, land and building assessments, parcels size and current conditions. The finding that the URA is decadent and a blighted open area is based upon all properties within the URA and not limited to the properties slated for acquisition.

A major deterrent to redevelopment is the contamination found throughout the URA. Asbestos in buildings and contaminated soils need to be addressed, though the cost of such efforts will greatly exceed the value of the land once it is cleaned. The City gained possession to the two major properties within the URA (the former S. Bent and Garbose properties) through tax title after the previous owners ceased business activities. The Mill Street Corridor's streets, sidewalks and water infrastructure need to be upgraded to support modern development. Most of the structures in the Project Area have been demolished due to serious safety and health issues associated with condemned buildings and, with the notable exception of a kitchen manufacturing facility and small sports club, the few remaining buildings are dilapidated and obsolete for current manufacturing needs.

The proposed Mill Street Corridor Project Area qualifies as an Urban Renewal Area under the requirements of M.G.L. c. 121B. The most appropriate designations for the URA are "decadent" and "blighted open area" because the area's characteristics are consistent with the definitions of these terms, as follows:

- **Decadent:** an area which is detrimental to the sound growth of a community as a result of the existence of buildings which are out of repair, physically deteriorated, unfit for human habitation, obsolete, or in need of major maintenance or repair, or because much of the real estate in recent years has been sold, or taken for nonpayment of taxes upon foreclosure of mortgages, or because buildings have been torn down and not replaced and under existing conditions it is improbable that the buildings will be replaced, or because of a substantial change in business or economic conditions, or because of inadequate light, air, or open space, or because of excessive land coverage or because diversity of ownership, irregular lot sizes or obsolete street patterns make it improbable that the area will be redeveloped by the ordinary operations of private enterprise, or by reason of any combination of the foregoing conditions (M.G.L. c. 121b, § 1)
- **Blighted Open Area:** a predominantly open area which is detrimental to the safety, health, morals, welfare or sound growth of a community because it is unduly costly to develop it soundly through the ordinary operations of private enterprise by reason of the existence of ledge, rock, unsuitable soil, or other physical conditions, or by reason of the necessity for unduly expensive excavation, fill or grading, or by reason of the need for unduly expensive foundations, retaining walls or unduly expensive measures for waterproofing structures or for draining the area or for the prevention of the flooding thereof or for the protection of adjacent properties and the water table therein or for unduly expensive measures incident to building around or over rights-of-way through the area, or for otherwise making the area appropriate for sound development, or by

reason of obsolete, inappropriate or otherwise faulty platting or subdivision, deterioration of site improvements or facilities, division of the area by rights-of-way, diversity of ownership of plots, or inadequacy of transportation facilities or other utilities, or by reason of tax and special assessment delinquencies, or because there has been a substantial change in business or economic conditions or practices, or an abandonment or cessation of a previous use or of work on improvements begun but not feasible to complete without the aids provided by this chapter, or by reason of any combination of the foregoing or other condition; or a predominantly open area which by reason of any condition or combination of conditions which are not being remedied by the ordinary operations of private enterprise is of such a character that in essence it is detrimental to the safety, health, morals, welfare or sound growth of the community in which it is situated. (M.G.L. c. 121b, § 1)

As noted previously, the city owns the S. Bent and Garbose properties, which comprise 75% of the URA. The S. Bent property was acquired by the City via Tax Title Taking for nonpayment of taxes. The Garbose property title was transferred to the City when the owner was unable to perform remediation of the contamination found on the property. Both properties were found to be contaminated with hazardous material and are subject to the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP). They are currently undergoing environmental assessment and mitigation planning and activities. The S. Bent property contained numerous vacant buildings in severely deteriorated condition. All of the buildings except one have been razed by the City for public health and safety concerns. The sole remaining building on the property is slated for removal pending final environmental clearance and funding availability.

The Garbose property has been identified as a contaminated site resulting from its former use as an open air auto and metal salvage yard. The property contains two small concrete block industrial buildings along Mill Street that are in severe disrepair and will be targeted for removal.



Existing conditions in the Mill Street Corridor Urban Renewal Area

The rest of the Project Area is made up of 12 privately owned parcels. Six structures are located on the

privately owned parcels, including two buildings of a cabinet manufacturing business, the Gardner Horseshoe Club, a two-family dwelling, and a partially occupied industrial property. The balance of the area is vacant land.

The URA has many characteristics that contribute to the current decadent and blighted open area conditions. Specifically, the Project Area has experienced:

- A large percentage of properties with contaminated soil and buildings, with remediation and other site costs that are unduly expensive to complete without public intervention;
- A diversity of ownership and irregular lot shapes and sizes that make it unlikely the area will be redeveloped under the normal operation of the private market;
- A large number of vacant buildings and parcels;
- Substantial changes in business and economic conditions;
- Existing conditions that are detrimental to public health, safety and welfare and which are unlikely to be resolved by the operation of private enterprise;
- Infrastructure that is in need of improvements to supply adequately service; and
- Properties that have been taken by the City for nonpayment of taxes.

#### **IV. PROJECT GOALS & PRINCIPLES**

As described in **12.02 (3) Section 1 Urban Renewal Area Goals and Objectives**, the overall goal for the Project is to create a framework for the redevelopment of the Mill Street Corridor, thus restoring unproductive and contaminated properties to productive use that will generate commercial and industrial training and job opportunities, provide business opportunities for economic development, and increase the City's tax base. The objectives described below were established in order to achieve this goal.

- Foster an environment for businesses to thrive and create sustainable jobs.
- Transform Gardner's historic manufacturing economic base to serve 21<sup>st</sup> century industry through redevelopment of former industrial properties, and in so doing increase the number and diversity of well-paying jobs in the City.
- Encourage and preserve economic diversity and quality of life by providing opportunities for businesses serving a diversity of incomes and skills.
- Increase real estate tax income generating properties in the URA.
- Encourage private sector investment and utilize public funds judiciously and strategically as a catalyst for private investment.
- Facilitate land assembly and disposition to advance the goals, objectives and activities of the URP.
- Integrate the URA with adjacent residential and commercial uses, as well as transportation networks, be developing an improved roadway network and recreation trails.

#### **V. PROJECT VISION**

Gardner seeks to transform its economy from the dislocation associated with the decline of the furniture-manufacturing and industrial transition to a vibrant 21st century economy. Gardner looks to reinforce its role as a regional employment and commercial center. In essence, Gardner's Mill Street Corridor URP is a tool for building a robust economy, environment and community. The proposed URP activities are

completely consistent with the City's planning efforts for this area.

Through the rehabilitation and reuse of this area, the City expects to clean-up brownfields sites, increase employment opportunities, increase tax revenue, and improve the adjacent neighborhood area. The proposed redevelopment of the URA will include strategic acquisition, potential business relocation, spot clearance, environmental assessment and remediation, parcel assemblage, infrastructure improvements and ultimately the disposition of development sites.

Within the URA, the former S. Bent property has undergone extensive building demolition, environmental assessment and remediation with funding from city, state and federal sources. The entire Project Area has been the focus of a Brownfield Strategic Team (BST). The BST program was established by the Office of the Lt. Governor to coordinate the various responsible state, federal, and local agencies and officials in an effort to reclaim brownfields sites and return them to productive economic use. The area was also the subject of an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) that performed a preliminary development feasibility review to determine the economic development potential of the area. Based on these efforts it was determined that the Project Areas would benefit from the provisions of the URA designation pursuant to the M.G.L. c. 121B for the assembly of land, environmental remediation, infrastructure improvements, planning, and disposition of construction-ready development parcels for private redevelopment.

The actions and budget contained within this URP take advantage of the resources and funding the City has secured to begin the Urban Renewal process for the entire Mill Street Corridor Area. In summary, proposed actions include acquisition of key parcels, relocation of up to five businesses, demolition of obsolete buildings, remediation, roadway and infrastructure improvements and the creation of new construction-ready parcels for disposition. The suggested master plan for the redevelopment of this Area includes the potential for the following improvements and results:

- Creation of up to 15 new parcels comprising approximately 225,000 square feet of developable area;
- Potential construction of approximately 10 new industrial/commercial buildings with a total floor area of approximately 67,000 square feet;
- Potential construction of approximately four new commercial buildings containing 153,000 square feet of floor area to leverage the site's proximity to Timpany Plaza and Wal-Mart;
- Photovoltaic Solar Array on a 6.5 acre site abutting Ramsdell Pond to provide clean alternative energy;
- Potential creation of up to 200 new jobs;
- Upgrading existing roads and associated public infrastructure;
- Creation of approximately 7.8 acres of open space comprised of a small park at Winter Street, trails along Ramsdell Pond, and a wooded area;
- Improvement of pedestrian circulation via 4,000 linear feet of pedestrian trails providing internal circulation and links to adjacent properties and Timpany Boulevard which is targeted for increased pedestrian access through a Complete Streets upgrade ;
- Redesign of the Mill Street/Winter Street intersection to prevent cut through traffic on the residential portion of Mill Street; and
- Additional actions proposed for the Project Area include the repairing the S. Bent Pond and

Ramsdell Pond Dams and upgrading the undersized sewer lines which are down gradient of the Project Area.

The URP does not propose to alter the Horseshoe Club's facilities, except to add a small public parking area behind the building. The URP proposes to consolidate the kitchen cabinet manufacturer's facilities on the south of Mill Street, with the provision of additional land, if necessary for future expansion. On the north side of Mill Street (and behind Timpany Plaza), the URP proposes smaller spaces for a mix of manufacturing, research & development, flex and/or incubator opportunities. On the south side of Mill Street, a photovoltaic solar array that can provide renewable energy is envisioned for a 6.5 acre site.

The recommendations of this report have been developed by integrating the conclusions of an economic study completed by Ninigret Partners, the proposed resolution of contamination issues as outlined in a report prepared by Tighe and Bond, Inc., and the vision for the URA resulting from neighborhood, property and business owners' participation in the formulation of a Mill Street Corridor concept plan.

## **VI. COMMONWEALTH'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

The Commonwealth has established ten principles that encourage smart growth and sustainable development. Below is a discussion of how effectively the Mill Street Corridor URP promotes these principles using redevelopment, open space and transportation improvements to attract economic development to the URA.

### **Concentrate Development and Mix Uses**

*Support the revitalization of city and town centers and neighborhoods by promoting development that is compact, conserves land, protects historic resources, and integrates uses. Encourage remediation and reuse of existing sites, structures, and infrastructure rather than new construction in undeveloped areas. Create pedestrian friendly districts and neighborhoods that mix commercial, civic, cultural, educational, and recreational activities with open spaces and homes.*

The Mill Street Corridor URP advances the principle of concentrating development and mixed uses. The Project will revitalize a former industrial area and brownfield. The Project Area is close to residential neighborhoods and a busy commercial development. The URP enhances pedestrian connections and walkability throughout the URA as well as encourages mixed commercial and industrial in appropriate areas. The URA is situated in a previously developed and built-up area with known contamination issues, and the Plan calls for extensive brownfields remediation. The City is focused on reusing and redeveloping existing commercial and industrial properties that are no longer functional. Although no residential development is included in the conceptual plan, the URP is sensitive to nearby neighborhoods, and Gardner anticipates that the redevelopment will provide employment opportunities to these residents.

### **Advance Equity**

*Promote equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development. Provide technical and strategic support for inclusive community planning and decision making to ensure social, economic, and environmental justice. Ensure that the interests of future generations are not compromised by today's decisions.*

The URP seeks to advance public and private investment in a community of need. The City of Gardner has undertaken outreach to include residents, stakeholders and advocates, and incorporated their input into the URP. The planned activities of the URP include expanding accessibility, increasing job opportunities for local residents; preserving and providing expansion potential for existing businesses, implementing energy conservation measures, and remediation of environmental contamination. These URP activities promote equity for current and future generations of Gardner residents.

## **Make Efficient Decisions**

*Make regulatory and permitting processes for development clear, predictable, coordinated, and timely in accordance with smart growth and environmental stewardship.*

The City of Gardner has adopted a streamlined permitting process to promote efficient and coordinated decision-making, which is being used for all development in the URP. In addition, the S. Bent and Garbose properties are a designated 43D site, which means that they are preferred development locations where projects are guaranteed that local development permits will be acted upon within 180 days of application. Thus, the URP complies with the Make Efficient Decisions Principle.

## **Protect Land and Ecosystems**

*Protect and restore environmentally sensitive lands, natural resources, agricultural lands, critical habitats, wetlands and water resources, and cultural and historic landscapes. Increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces and recreational opportunities.*

A significant URP activity that protects natural resources is the performance of an environmental assessment of the Project Area and the preparation and implementation of a Remediation Action Plan. The City has already initiated remediation at the S. Bent property and is participating with the Brownfield Support Team established by the State to reclaim the brownfields that characterize the Project Area. The Mill Street Corridor URP furthers the principle of protecting land and ecosystems by preserving approximately 7.8 acres of open space for walking trails, a small park and a wooded area.

## **Use Natural Resources Wisely**

*Construct and promote developments, buildings, and infrastructure that conserve natural resources by reducing waste and pollution through efficient use of land, energy, water, and materials.*

The Mill Street Area URP seeks to use natural resources wisely by promoting connections between the built environment and natural areas, such as Ramsdell Pond with a pedestrian pathway that will offer access to internal and external destinations as well as providing public access to Ramsdell Pond. Reinvestment in the URA promotes the efficient use of land, energy, water and materials since it is a previously developed area. Thus, the Mill Street Corridor URP adheres to the principle of using natural resources wisely.

## **Expand Housing Opportunities**

*Support the construction and rehabilitation of homes to meet the needs of people of all abilities, income levels, and household types. Build homes near jobs, transit, and where services are available. Foster the development of housing, particularly multifamily and smaller single-family homes, in a way that is compatible with a community's character and vision and with providing new housing choices for people of all means.*

Due to the industrial and commercial character of the Project Area, the creation of .of housing is not proposed. Environmental remediation measures are expected to include Activity Use Limitations (AULs) which restricts sensitive uses, such as residential, from locating in areas that may continue to pose a risk with prolonged exposure or proximity to contaminants. The Project will enhance adjacent neighborhoods by redirecting Mill Street traffic onto South Winter Street, thus diverting truck or equipment traffic away from residential areas.



## **Provide Transportation Choice**

*Maintain and expand transportation options that maximize mobility, reduce congestion, conserve fuel and improve air quality. Prioritize rail, bus, boat, rapid and surface transit, shared-vehicle and shared-ride services, bicycling, and walking. Invest strategically in existing and new passenger and freight transportation infrastructure that supports sound economic development consistent with smart growth objectives.*

The Mill Street URP will introduce pedestrian circulation in the Project Area with 4,000 linear feet of trails, most of which is along Ramsdell Pond. The trail will link the Winter Street residential area with Timpany Boulevard, thus providing internal and external connectivity. Timpany Boulevard is scheduled to be upgraded with new bicycle and pedestrian amenities between Wal-Mart and Broadway. Two existing CMRTA bus routes provide service between Gardner Center and Mill Street. The GRA purchased a railroad spur serving the Project Area from the Providence Worcester Railroad which connects to the Gardner Worcester rail line. This spur is available for a potential user if the need for rail freight service arises. If a new development utilizes the rail spur, it could potentially reduce the need for truck transport, in turn reducing congestion, fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Increase Job and Business Opportunities**

*Attract businesses and jobs to locations near housing, infrastructure, and transportation options. Promote economic development in industry clusters. Expand access to education, training, and entrepreneurial opportunities. Support the growth of local businesses, including sustainable natural resource-based businesses, such as agriculture, forestry, clean energy technology, and fisheries.*

The Mill Street Corridor URP seeks to create the foundation for new job and business opportunities. The URA is located in the Greater Gardner region, which has a strong transportation network and is adjacent to residential neighborhoods. The URP supports existing small businesses, provides for relatively low-cost flexible space to enable new business growth; and connects with local resources, (e.g., MWCC) to provide opportunities for advanced manufacturing and business opportunities. Training and businesses incubator space are also a key aspect of the redevelopment strategy for the Mill Street Corridor URP. The URP advances the principle of increasing job and business opportunities.

## **Promote Clean Energy**

*Maximize energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities. Support energy conservation strategies, local clean power generation, distributed generation technologies, and innovative industries. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and consumption of fossil fuels.*

The URP calls for energy conservation to be incorporated in all projects, particularly commercial renovation and redevelopment. The Mill Street Area URP also contemplates the development of photovoltaic (PV) solar arrays as an interim use for parcels that are awaiting interest from the market place. PV solar arrays will provide an alternative source of clean energy and will be a productive use of land that may otherwise remain vacant awaiting it's time to be developed. Thus, the Mill Street Area URP incorporates the clean energy principle.

## **Plan Regionally**

*Support the development and implementation of local and regional, state and interstate plans that have broad public support and are consistent with these principles. Foster development projects, land and*

*water conservation, transportation and housing that have a regional or multi-community benefit. Consider the long-term costs and benefits to the Commonwealth.*

Gardner is the regional employment center and is a net employer, with slightly more jobs in the City itself than resident work force. The focus on economic revitalization in the central city of the seven-town region strengthens the region. The document *Building a Better Montachusett: Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Five Year Annual Report, Evaluation and Work plan* (Draft), September 2009 was prepared by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) contains nine goals for promoting regional growth. Gardner's URP proposal is consistent with these regional growth strategies, which focus on economic development through transportation system improvements, business sector and employment growth, education and health care development. The URP also furthers Gardner's Open Space and Recreation Plan through the creation of public open space and the creation of a pedestrian pathway network throughout the Project Area. Thus, the Mill Street Corridor URP furthers the principle encouraging regional planning.

## **12.02 (1) Characteristics – Requisite Plans and Associated Information**

### **SECTION 1: LIST OF MAPS**

The plans and information in this section are included to show the existing characteristics of the Project Area, as well as the proposed future conditions. These plans are included to meet state requirements for Urban Renewal Plans.

#### **Required Maps**

- A-1 Project Location and URA Boundaries
- A-2 Aerial Photograph with Project Boundary
- A-3 Topography
- B Boundaries of Proposed Clearance and Rehabilitation Areas
- C-1 Existing Property Lines, Building Foot Prints and Parking Areas
- C-2 Proposed Property Lines, Building Foot Prints and Parking Areas
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- G-1 Parcels to be Acquired
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#### **Supplemental Maps**

- S-1 Project Area Location - USGS Locus
- S-2 Brownfields Existing Conditions Overview
- S-3 Brownfields Conceptual Cleanup Plan
- S-4 Project Area Infrastructure
- S-5 URP Concept Plan
- S-6 URP Concept Plan – Interim PV Array

### **SECTION 2: EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS**

Most of the maps are self-explanatory, but some warrant a brief narrative to provide necessary insight into the information provided. This section describes the Project Area and expands on the information presented in the above-listed maps, as appropriate.

#### **Map A-1 Project Location and URA Boundaries**

The URA is located in South Gardner, Massachusetts. The area is bounded by Timpany Plaza shopping center to the north and west, a residential neighborhood along Winter Street to the east, Ramsdell Pond to the south, and Timpany Boulevard to the west and northwest. An approximate description of the Project Area's perimeter boundary is as follows:

- Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of Timpany Boulevard and Mill Street, extending in a northerly direction for approximately 989 feet, following the perimeter of the public roadway;
- Thence approximately 710 feet in a southeasterly direction;
- Thence turning in a northeasterly direction for approximately 707 feet, skirting the perimeter of the Timpany Plaza parking lot;
- Thence in a southeasterly direction for approximately 353 feet;
- Thence in a southerly direction for approximately 164 feet;
- Thence in a southeasterly direction for approximately 131 feet to Winter Street;
- Thence the boundary follows Winter Street in a southerly direction for approximately 183 feet;
- Thence turning in a southeasterly direction and crossing Winter Street for approximately 125 feet, stopping at the intersection of Mill Street;
- Thence in a southwesterly direction along Mill Street for approximately 98 feet;
- Thence in a southerly direction, crossing Mill Street and the City-owned railroad spur ROW for approximately 167 feet;
- Thence in an easterly direction for approximately 116 feet;
- Thence turning sharply to the southwest for approximately 325 feet, then, at the intersection with Winter Street veering north for approximately 59 feet;
- Thence in a southwesterly direction, crossing Winter Street towards Ramsdell Pond for approximately 558 feet;
- Thence continuing in an irregular line along the shore of Ramsdell Pond for approximately 1,366 feet;
- Thence turning in a southerly direction for approximately 313 feet;
- Thence in a southwesterly direction for approximately 195 feet, where the boundary intersects with Timpany Boulevard; and
- Thence extending for approximately 928 feet in a northerly direction, following the perimeter of the public roadway, to the point of beginning at the intersection with Mill Street.

#### **Map A-2 Aerial View of Project Area**

The URA is highly disturbed due to its industrial past, and ongoing demolition and remediation activities mean that the onsite existing conditions are dynamic. The aerial views available during the preparation of this URP are somewhat inaccurate in that they depict structures that have been or are being removed. For example, the aerial photograph shows the S. Bent property before the demolition of buildings on the south side of Mill Street, as well as two residential structures that were recently demolished by the private

property owners. The aerials are included in the URP because, despite the known inaccuracies, they provide important information that is difficult to convey in a schematic plan. It is important to note that the schematic drawings of the URA provided herein (e.g., Maps A-1, A-3 and D-1) accurately depict the standing structures within the URA as of the URP submittal date.

### **Map A-3 Topography**

Overall, the topography of the Project Area is relatively flat, but there is a gentle downward slope from east to west. (Refer to Map A-3) An exception is in the northwest segment of the Project Area, where the banks of the outlet stream from Ramsdell Pond are steeply sloped. Additionally, there is a slight topographic divide at the westerly property lines of the former S. Bent property on both sides of Mill Street.

### **Map C-1 Existing Property Lines, Building Foot Prints and Parking Areas**

The URA encompasses 14 parcels totaling approximately 45 acres, including streets and railroad property. Of this, individual parcels comprise approximately 42 acres, streets comprise approximately 2.8 acres, and a railroad spur owned by the Gardner Redevelopment Authority that connects the URA to the Providence-Worcester main line via the intersection of Mill Street and Winter Street is approximately 0.34 acres.

### **Maps D-1 and D-2 Existing Land Use and Existing Zoning**

According to records from the City of Gardner Tax Assessor's Office and site inspections conducted by the BSC Group, the Project Area parcels consist of six major land use categories (refer to Table 1 and Map D-1). Excluding the network of streets and railroad tracks, the largest land use within the Project Area is classified as "Vacant Industrial." This category comprises approximately 79% of the URA, and includes parcels with abandoned structures or no structures. For example, the disturbed land on the south side of Mill Street that previously contained S. Bent manufacturing buildings, now demolished, and the large cement block S. Bent manufacturing building the north side of Mill Street that has been condemned by the Gardner Fire Department. Asbestos has been removed from this building, and the structure is targeted for demolition once funding can be secured. Another example of Vacant Industrial land in the Project Area's is the Garbose property, which is also primarily vacant and disturbed with two abandoned cement block buildings targeted for eventual demolition in concert with the environmental remediation to be performed on the property.

"Vacant" and "Industrial" land uses comprise approximately 11% and 9% of the Project Area, respectively. Land categorized as Vacant is located primarily along Timpany Boulevard in the southwest section of the URA. Land categorized as Industrial includes the kitchen cabinet manufacturer, which has active facilities on both sides of Mill Street, as well as the partially vacant industrial property currently used for vehicle storage and contractor space.

Approximately 0.5% of the Project Area is classified as "Residential" due to the two-family house located near Timpany Boulevard. Approximately 0.3% of the Project Area is classified as "Sports Club" that being the Gardner Horseshoe Club located at 186 Mill Street. This facility is one of the oldest indoor horseshoe clubs in the country.

**Table 1: Land Use Classification Information**

Land Use Classification	Area (sf)	Area (Acres)	Percentage of Total Property Area (%)
Horseshoe Club	5,986	0.14	0.3%
Industrial	178,596	4.10	8.7%
Vacant Industrial	1,389,794	31.91	79%
Vacant	236,050	5.42	11.5%
Residential	9,700	0.22	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,820,126</b>	<b>41.78</b>	<b>100%</b>

The City of Gardner Zoning Ordinance identifies a series of districts with varied regulated uses regarding building size, setbacks, parking, signs, and other related characteristics that promote the orderly improvement or development of land. The Project Area is designated by two zoning districts. (Refer to Figure D-2). The largest zoning district within the Project Area is Industrial 1 (“Ind 1” or “Light Industrial”), which comprises approximately 62% of the total area, followed by land zoned as Commercial 2 (“Comm 2” or “General Business”), which comprises approximately 38% of the total area. (Refer to Table 2).

**Table 2: Zoning Districts**

Zoning Classification	Zone Area (Acres)	Percentage of Total Project Area (%)
Comm 2/General Business	16.97	38%
Ind 1/Light Industrial	24.81	62%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>41.78</b>	<b>100%</b>

In general, zoning is consistent with the underlying land use. However, as with many older urban neighborhoods, land use on every parcel is not always consistent with zoning.

### **Maps E-1 and E-2 Proposed Land Uses and Zoning**

Land uses proposed for the URP consist of light manufacturing, incubator and flex-space along Mill Street, and commercial uses along the more heavily traveled Timpany Boulevard. Open space and recreational land use is proposed along Ramsdell Pond. The forested area in the Northwest section of the URA will remain as is. No change is proposed to the horseshoe club.

Proposed zoning for the Project Area is envisioned as an overlay district that will incorporate development standards and design guidelines yet offer flexibility to promote creativity. The overlay district will include a special permit process that will foster predictable and transparent permitting.

### **Map G-1 Parcels to be Acquired**

Map G-1 depicts the URA parcels to be acquired. Table 3 lists the privately owned parcels that are contemplated for potential acquisition by the City as part of the project initiative. The table notes the present use of the parcel as well as the proposed use. There is a 3.2 acre parcel adjacent to Ramsdell Pond that appears to be filled land that was used historically, openly, adversely, and continuously by the S. Bent Company. This 3.2 acre parcel was not part of the conveyance to the City of Gardner for past due taxes as the S. Bent Company did not have clear title to the parcel. The City assessor’s records have no

information on this parcel. A property “taking” by the City may be a viable option for clearing title to this property.

Ten parcels totaling 10.04 acres have been identified for potential acquisition. The City will coordinate its efforts in implementing the URP with incentives for property owners in order to encourage the redevelopment of their properties and maximize strategic private investments.

**Table 3: Potential Property Acquisition Parcels**

Owner	Address	Lot Size (acres)	Current Use	Zoning	Assessors Map	Proposed Use
Tom & Alice Kymalainen	222 Mill Street	0.24	vacant lot	Comm 2	R12-1-7///	Commercial
Tom & Alice Kymalainen	Timpany Blvd	2.53	vacant lot	Comm 2	R12-6-8///	Commercial
The Gardner Group, Inc.	216-218 Mill St	0.22	duplex	Comm 2	R-12-1-6///	Commercial
Walter Dratner	200 Mill Street	1.05	factory bldgs.	Ind 1	R12-1-10///	Commercial
The 129 S. Main St Corp.	170 Mill Street	1.50	vacant land	Ind 1	R12-6-2///	Parking/Open Space
EmeryMcCaie	149 Mill Street	1.05	Warehouse	Comm 2	R12-1-9	Commercial
Asgard Realty LLC	131 Mill Street	0.34	vacant land	Comm 2	R12-2-2///	Industrial
Asgard Realty LLC	Timpany Blvd	0.42	vacant land	Comm 2	R12-1-4///	Commercial
Eugene Butler	Timpany Blvd	0.39	vacant land	Comm 2	R17-21-3///	Commercial
Unknown	60 Mill Street	3.20	Vacant filled land	Ind 1	NA	Industrial
<b>Total</b>		<b>10.94</b>				

### Map S-3 Project Area Infrastructure

Map S-3 depicts the location of water mains and sewer lines and two existing dams. The availability and capacity of infrastructure within the URA is a major consideration for prospective development. Of particular interest in the URA are water, sewer, stormwater, flood control and electrical, each of which is discussed below.

#### Sewer:

United Water ([www.UnitedWater.com](http://www.UnitedWater.com)) operates and maintains the Gardner wastewater treatment facility and the sewer collection systems. United Water’s provides routine maintenance of the collection system, such as repairing known breaks in the pipes and pipe cleaning. The City of Gardner is responsible for all inflow and infiltration (I/I) elimination projects as well as all replacement, upgrade, and expansion projects or any other capital improvement project.

There are no known combined sewers remaining in the City.

The Gardner Water and Sewer Department has an active I/I elimination program including a \$2/gallon sewer connection fee for new sewer connections. This program is primarily focused on removing infiltration (groundwater intrusion into the sewer system). This is mostly done by slip lining existing piping to prevent groundwater intrusion. The City believes that it has eliminated the majority (at least approximately 75%) of the infiltration issues in this manner.



The Gardner Wastewater Treatment Facility (WTF) has sufficient capacity for future development and has the ability to expand, if needed, although redevelopment of the URA is not expected to require expansion. The City has an issue with significant infiltration inflow (I/I) (i.e., non sewer flows entering the system). Since there are no combined sewers, the inflow is assumed to be the result of illegal sump pump and other storm drain connections. Within a few hours of large storm events, the WTF sees a large surge of inflow that, at times, causes capacity issues and can result in the bypass of untreated water.

While there are no capacity issues at the Mill Street area, there are several issues downstream of the URA towards the WTF. When a large development is proposed in Gardner, the City has, in the past, waived the \$2/gallon I/I fee and, instead, required the developer to replace a downstream section of the collection system where capacity problems exist. Therefore, rather than focusing on eliminating I/I, the URP proposes to improve and upgrade downstream capacity issues between the site and the WTF to accommodate the proposed development. This is consistent with the city's approach.

There is an existing 27-inch concrete sewer main running roughly east to west along Mill Street. Just west of the existing S. Bent warehouse, the sewer main turns northwest and runs through the Garbose property. At the west edge of the property, this main turns south, then west again, crosses Timpany Boulevard, and has another cross country run to Dyer Street. There is a 20-foot wide easement through the Garbose site for this sewer main.

Presently sewer service is not available to properties in the south westerly portion of the URA. It is proposed that the sewer service be extended westerly on Mill Street to the rear of the proposed lots on Timpany Boulevard south of Mill Street. these areas would flow to a proposed sewer pumping station located off Mill Street that would connect via a force main traveling east on Mill Street connecting with the 27 inch main which flows through the Garbose site. In order to make this site attractive to developers, sewer improvements are proposed prior to sale of the property to make the site "pad ready." It is likely that grant money or low interest rate loans from the state and/or federal government could facilitate this approach.

## **Water**

United Water ([www.UnitedWater.com](http://www.UnitedWater.com)) also operates and maintains the Gardner water treatment facilities, pump stations, water storage tanks and the water distribution systems. United Water's maintenance of the collection system entails routine maintenance such as repairing breaks in the pipes. The City of Gardner is responsible for all replacement, upgrade, and expansion projects or any other capital improvement project.

There is adequate water supply for any redevelopment of the Mill Street corridor as there are no known water supply issues in the City. As of 2000, the City had replaced the oldest water mains in the City that dated from pre-1930 with new, cement lined ductile iron (CLDI) mains.

From Winter Street to a point just east of the sluiceway crossing, there is an 8-inch water main of unknown material built in Mill Street in 1930. From this point running west across Timpany Boulevard to Dyer Street, is an 8-inch cement lined cast iron (CLCI) water main built in 1937. This 8-inch CLCI pipe crosses through a wooden box over the sluiceway culvert enclosed in Rockwool insulation. The pipe then crosses through the bridge footings, under the stream bed in a wooden box. There is no water service in this area of Timpany Boulevard There is a 12-inch Ductile Iron Cement Lined DI CL water main in Winter Street south of Mill Street and an 8-inch main of unknown material in Winter Street north

of Mill Street

While there are no current water supply issues in this area, a large redevelopment would be ill served by maintaining the existing 8-inch water mains in Mill Street. These pipes are at least 75-years old and of unknown condition. Therefore, it's appropriate to include the full replacement of the 8-inch main with a 12-inch DICL main at least from Winter Street to Timpany Boulevard, with a full replacement to Dyer Street being more desirable.

The City would normally require a developer to bear the cost of the water main replacement. However, the URP could incorporate the water main replacement as part of the Mill Street roadway improvements. These improvements will position the sites more marketable as "pad ready" sites. The costs associated with this water main replacement (possibly upwards of \$300,000 to replace Winter Street to Timpany Boulevard; an additional \$100,000 to replace to Dyer Street), would otherwise be a major deterrent to potential developers.

### **Stormwater Drainage**

The Gardner DPW owns and operates the city's public storm drain systems. There are no known combined sewers remaining in Gardner. The city is operating under an MS4 NPDES permit. While it does not have a specific stormwater ordinance, there are various stormwater requirements included in other city ordinances (e.g., Zoning, Wetlands, and Subdivision Rules and Regulations) that direct development to provide stormwater in line with the stormwater requirements of the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA).

The city is currently working with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) under a grant provided by the MRPC to develop a LID stormwater ordinance to better meet the city's MS4 permit obligations and promote sustainable stormwater management.

Current stormwater drainage in Mill Street is minimal, consisting of chained catch basins that discharge to nearby water bodies.

### **Future Considerations**

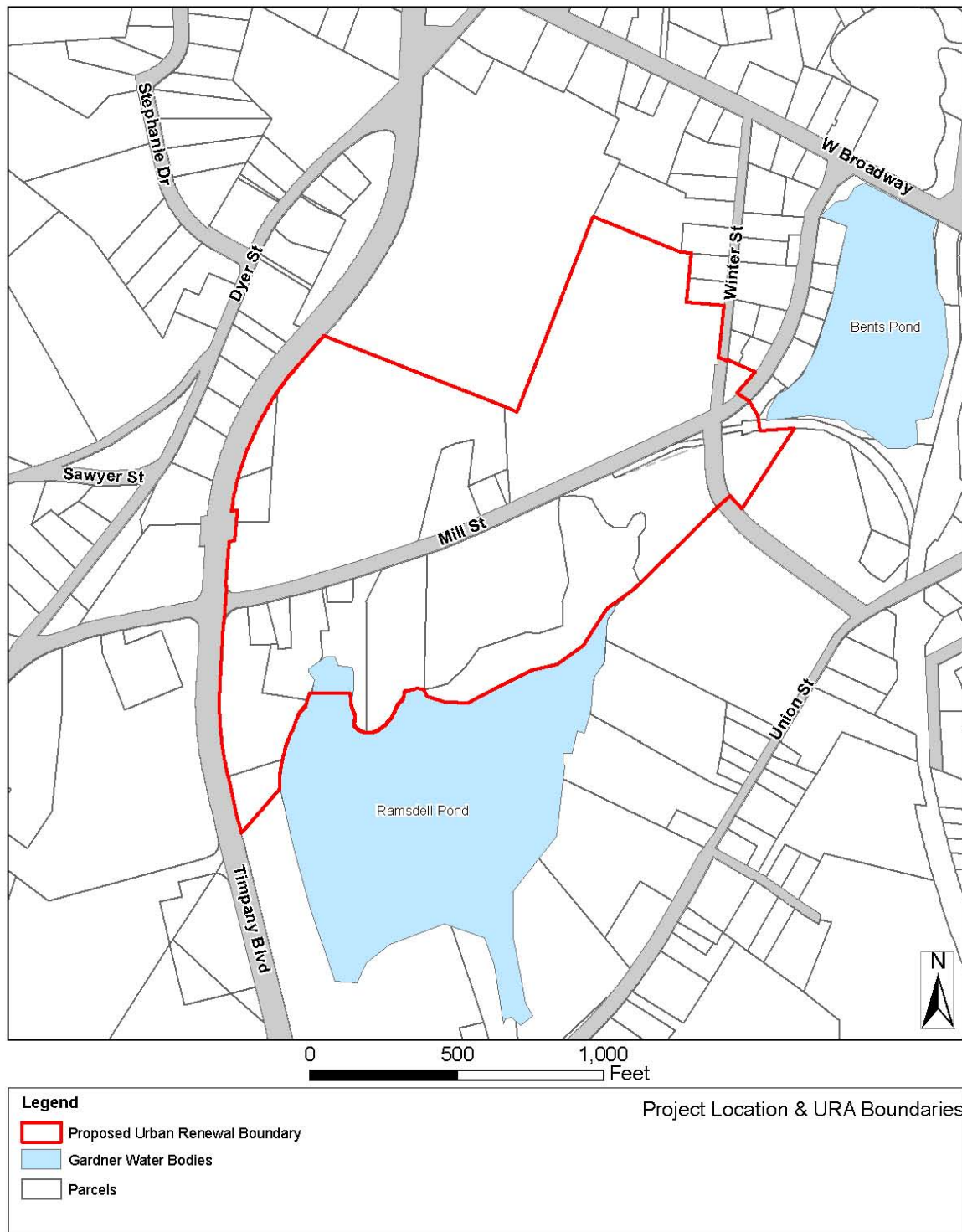
Stormwater management improvements could occur concurrent with improvements to Mill Street, and could include treatment of stormwater with, as possible, some level of infiltration.

It is not possible to make site specific stormwater drainage improvements prior to redevelopment because drainage and appropriate stormwater treatment varies greatly based on the type of development. As such, stormwater management systems would ultimately fall under the ownership of specific site developers. As there are no significant stormwater facilities in Mill Street, all on site drainage would ultimately discharge to nearby water bodies and/or wetlands.

### **Map S-4: URP Conceptual Design**

The Conceptual Design is presented as Map S-4, but described in detail in 12.02 (3) Section 2 of the URP.

**Figure A-1: Project Location and URA Boundary**






**Figure A-2: Aerial Photograph with Project Boundary**



**Legend**

 Proposed Urban Renewal Boundary

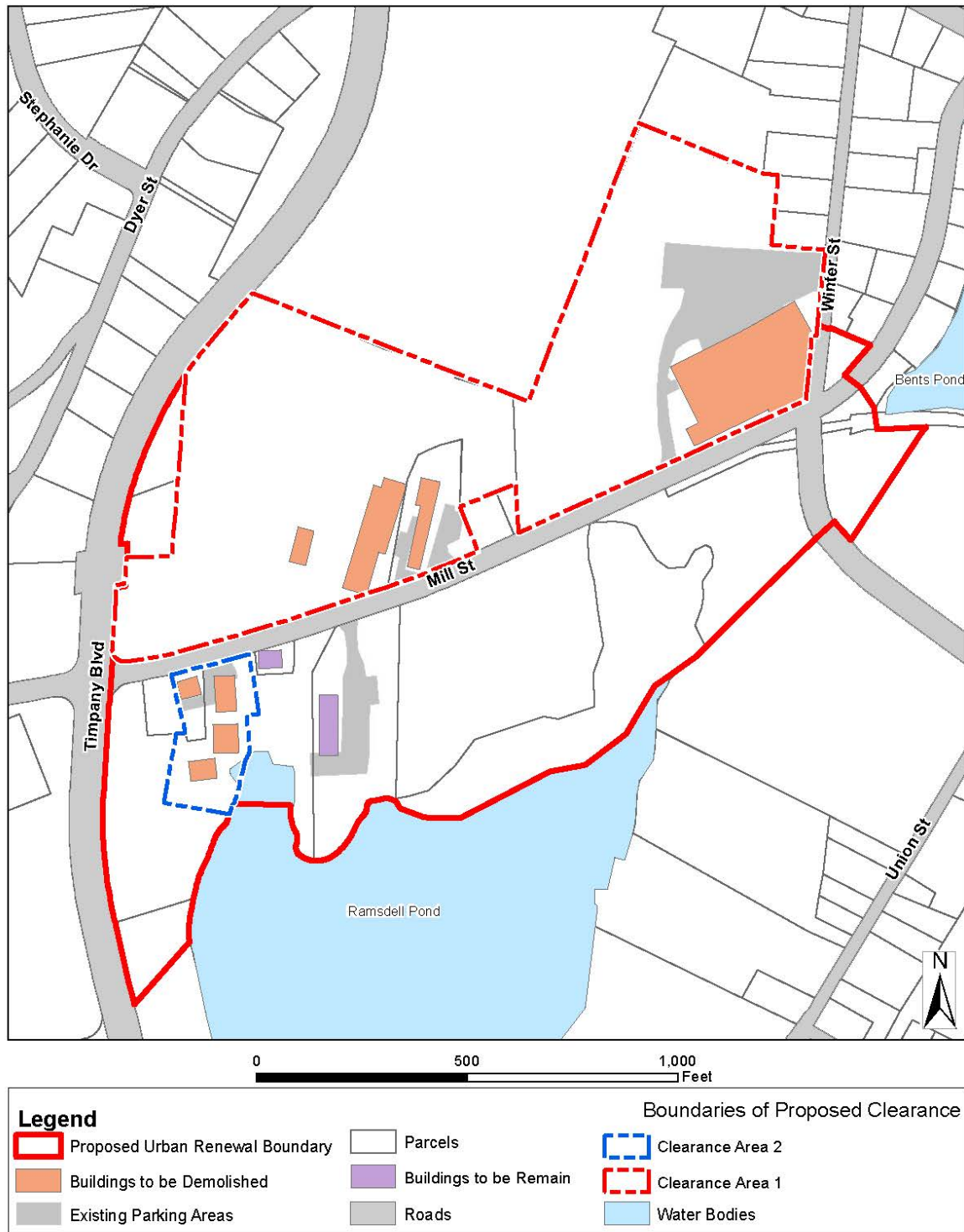
Aerial View with  
Project Boundary

**Figure A-3: Topography**

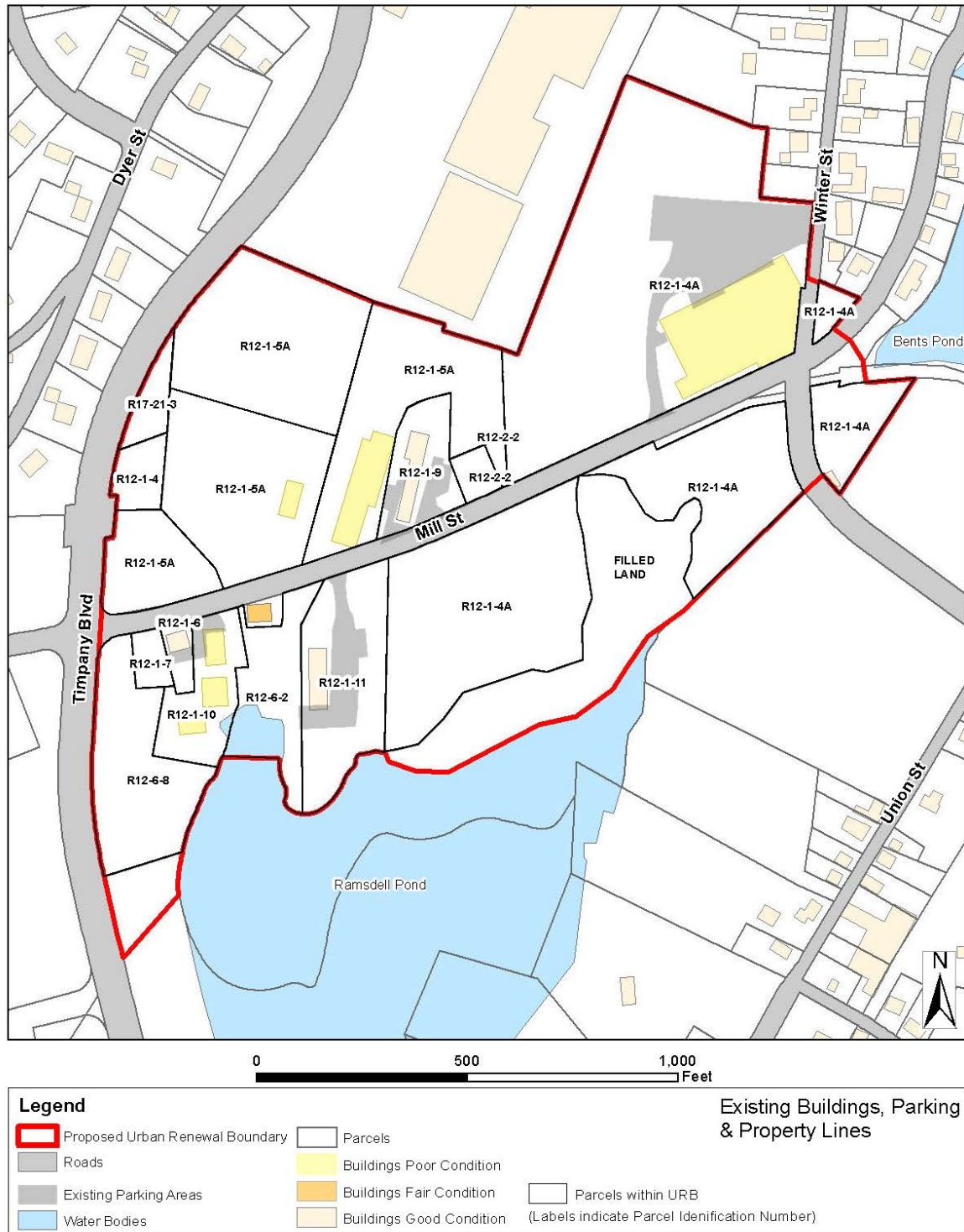




**Figure B: Boundaries of Proposed Clearance and Rehabilitation Areas**

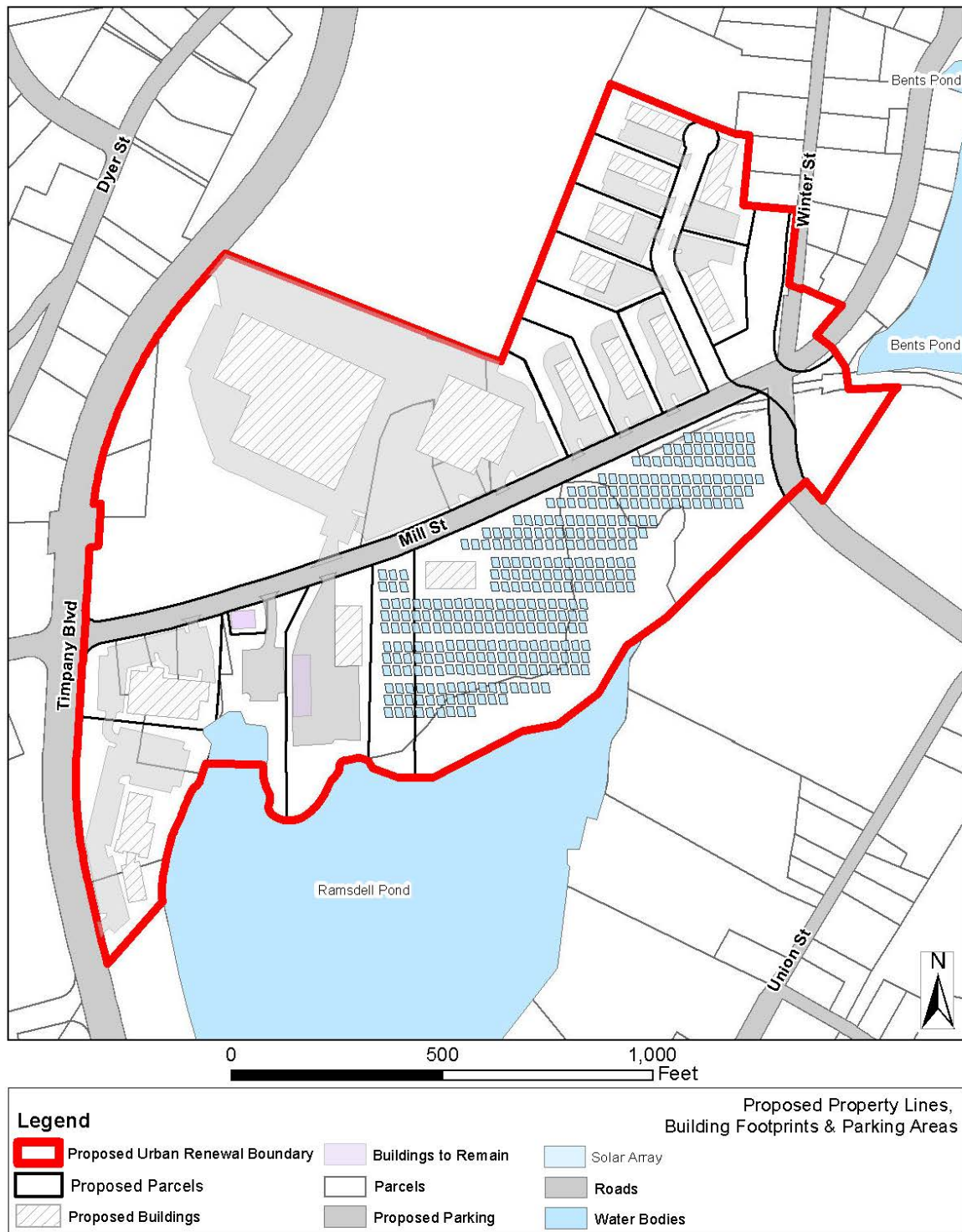


**Figure C-1: Existing Property Lines, Building Foot Prints, and Parking Areas**

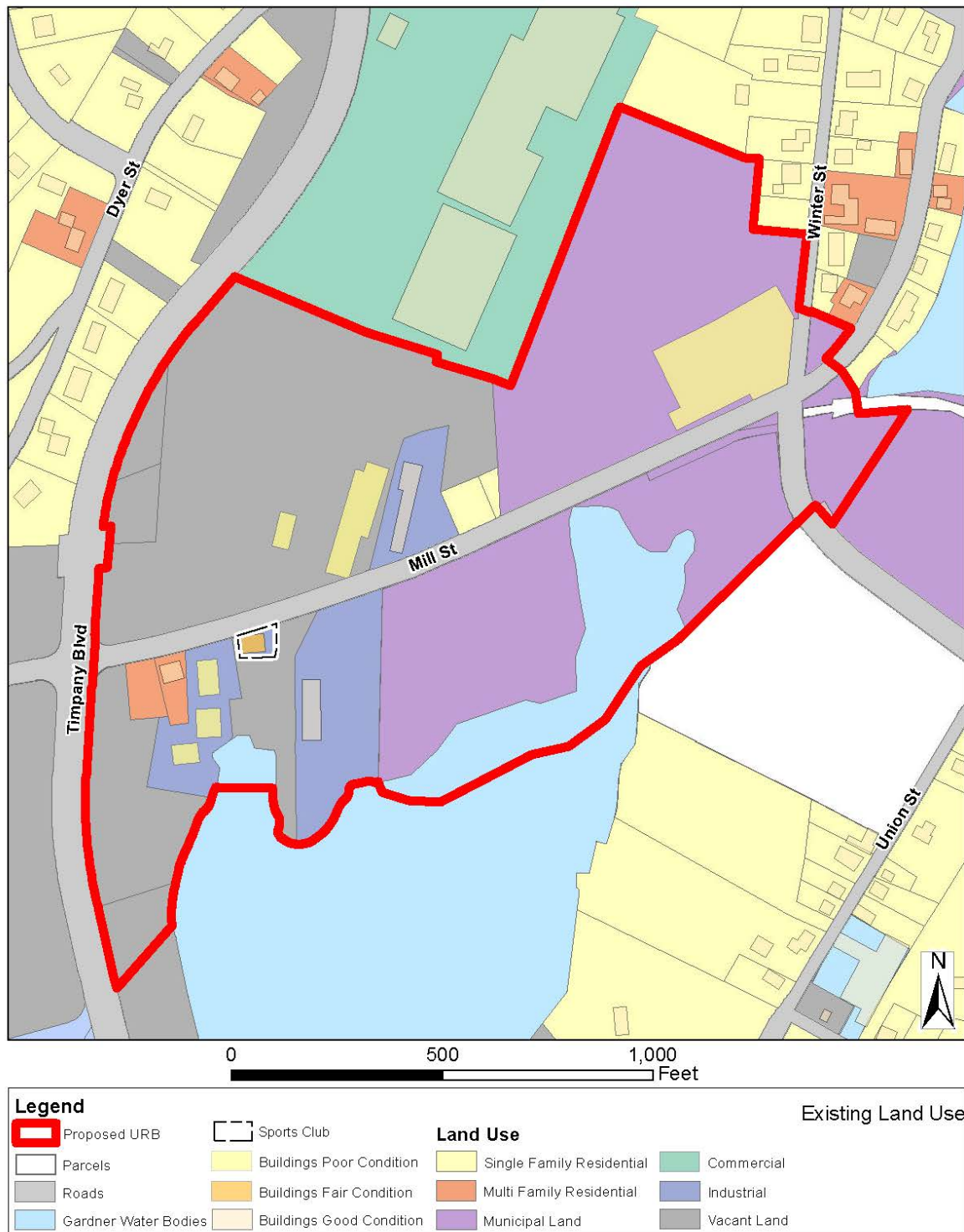




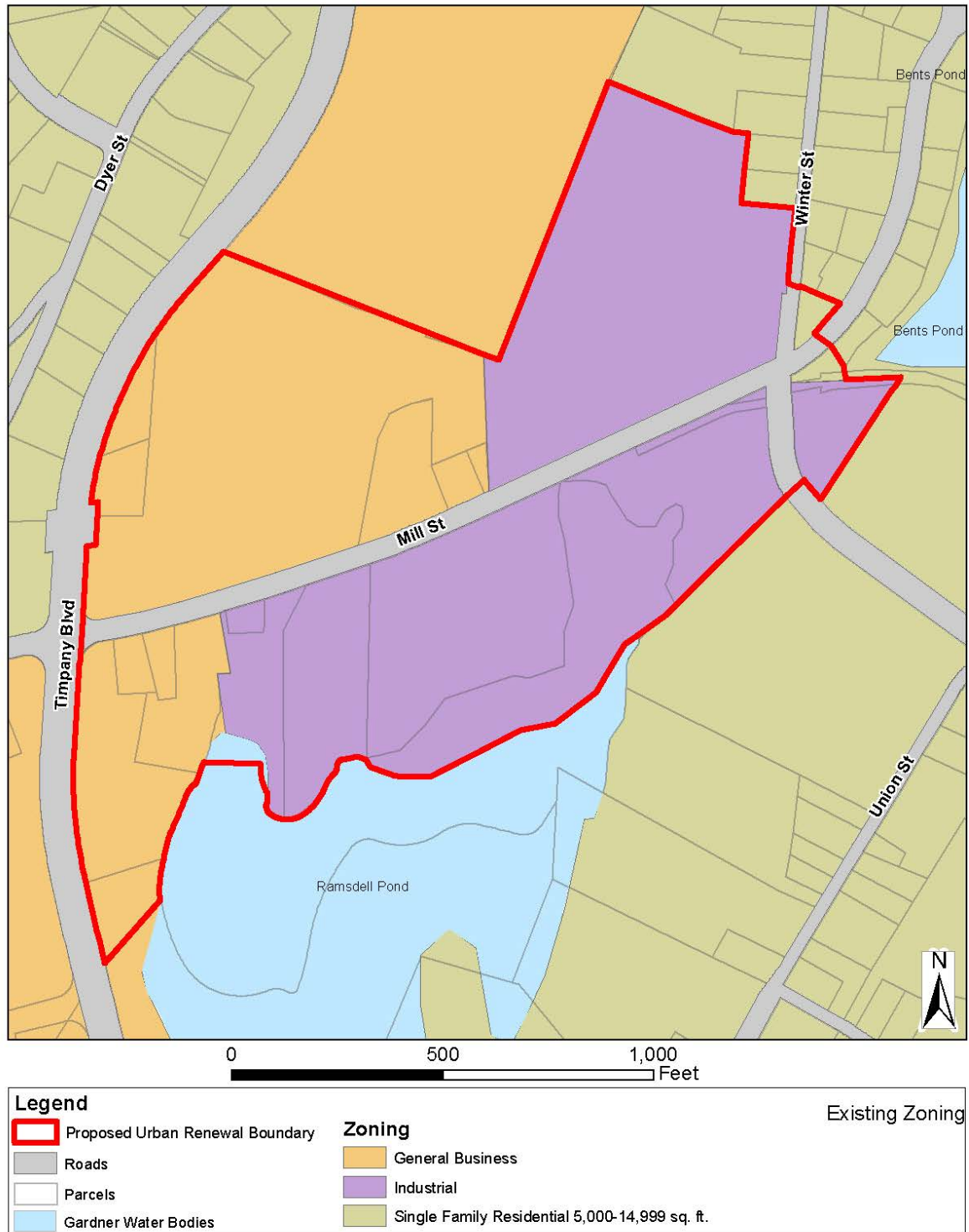
**Figure C-2: Proposed Property Lines, Building Foot Prints, and Parking Areas**



**Figure D-1: Existing Land Use**

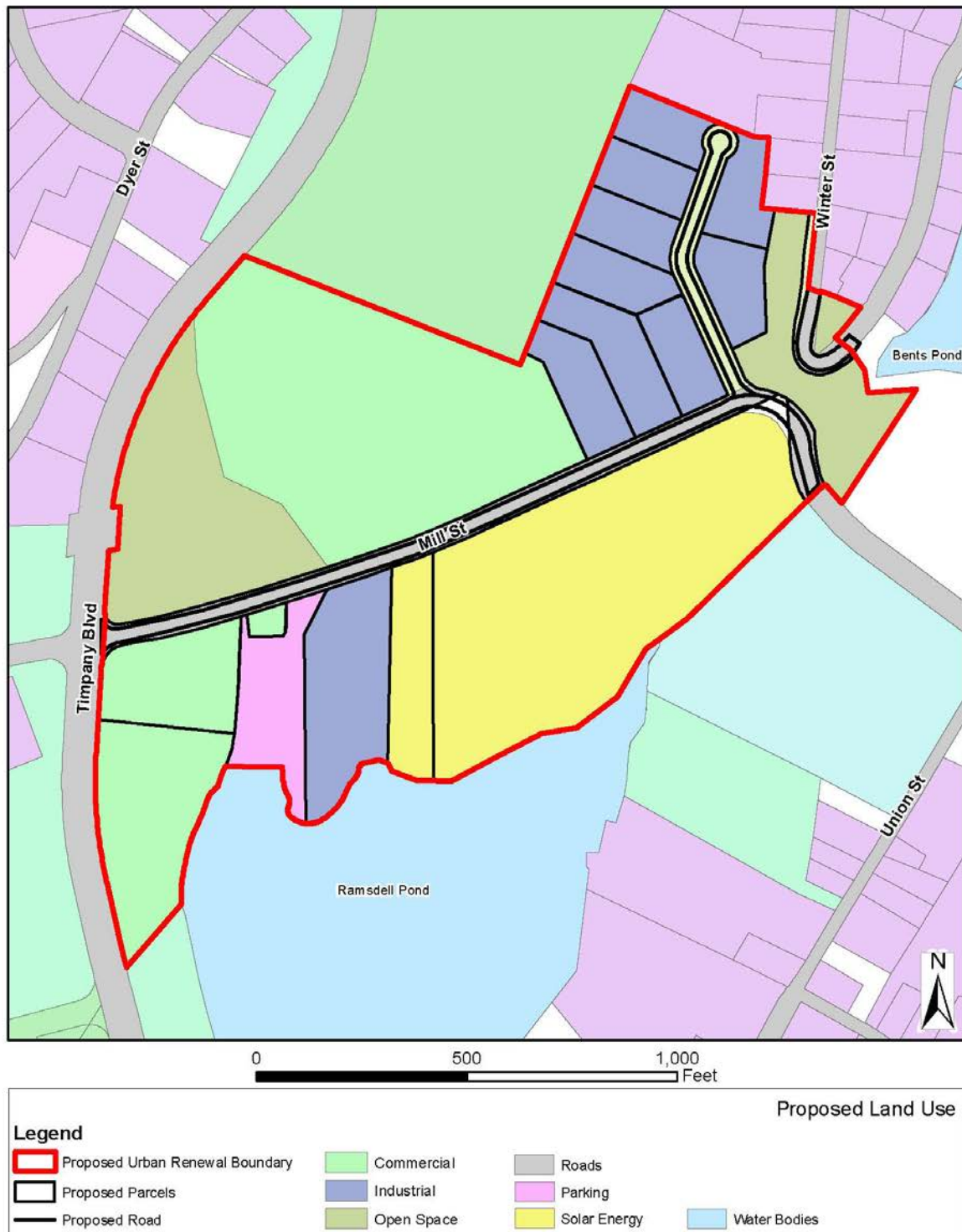


**Figure D-2: Existing Zoning**

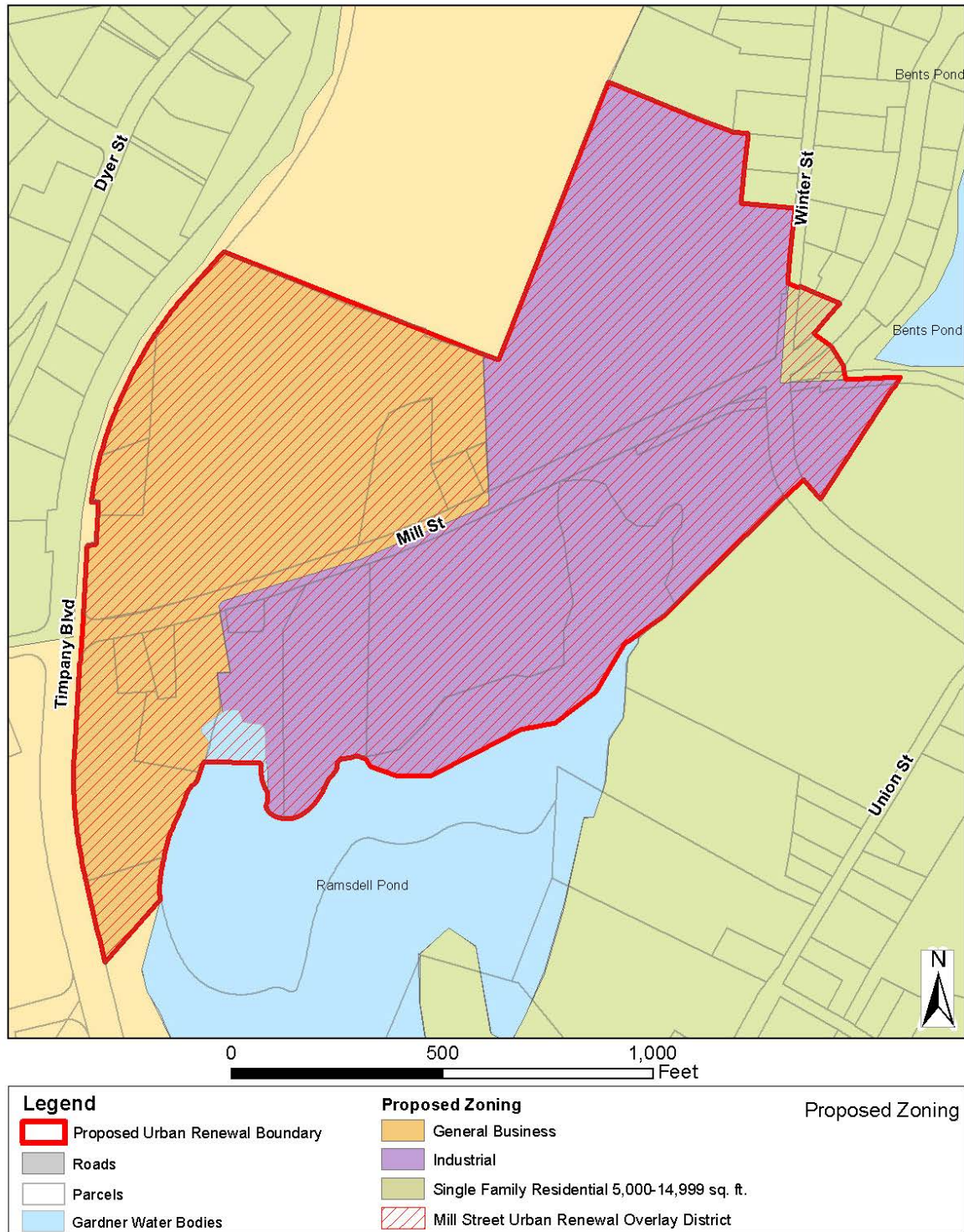




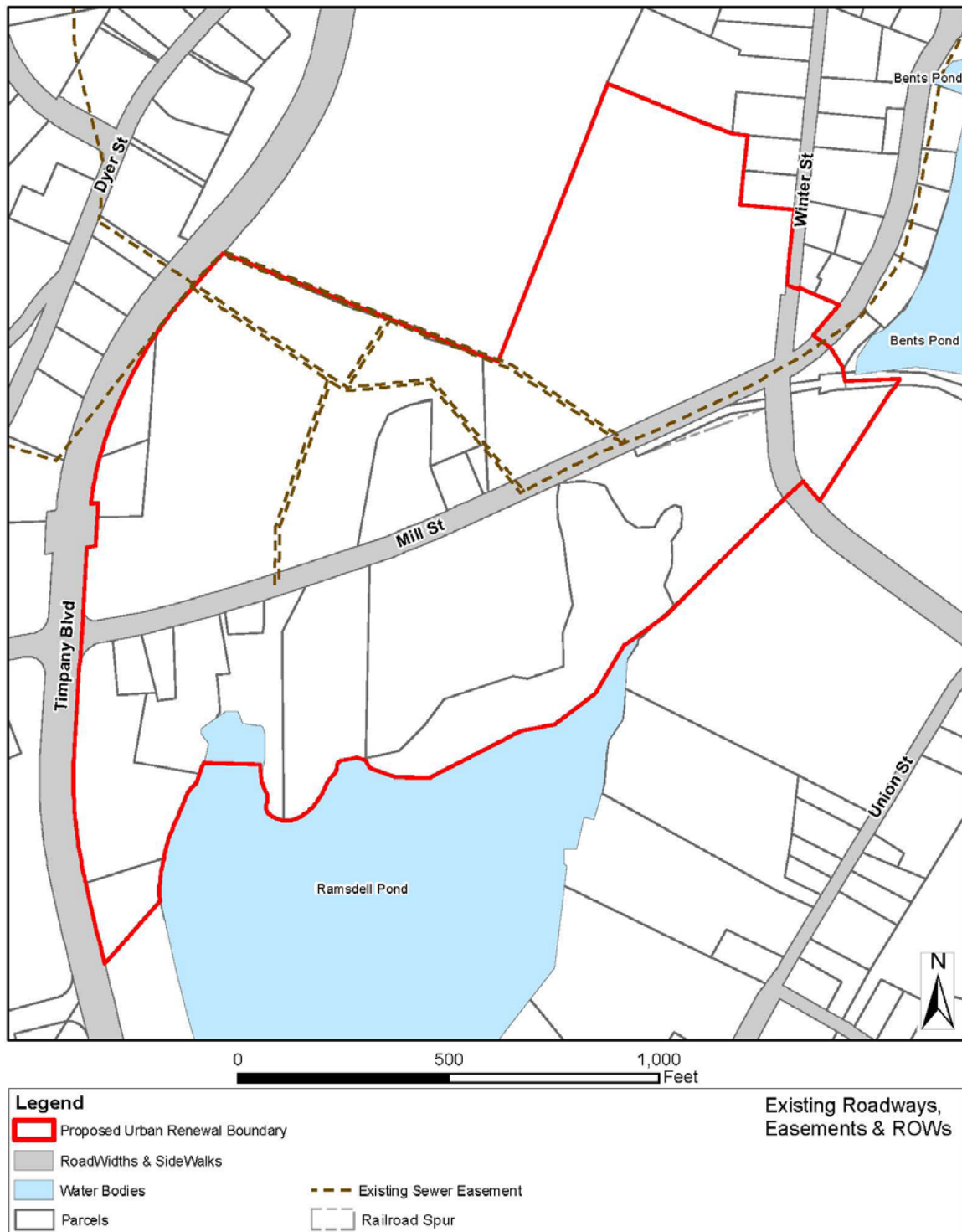
**Figure E-1: Proposed Land Use**



**Figure E-2: Proposed Zoning**

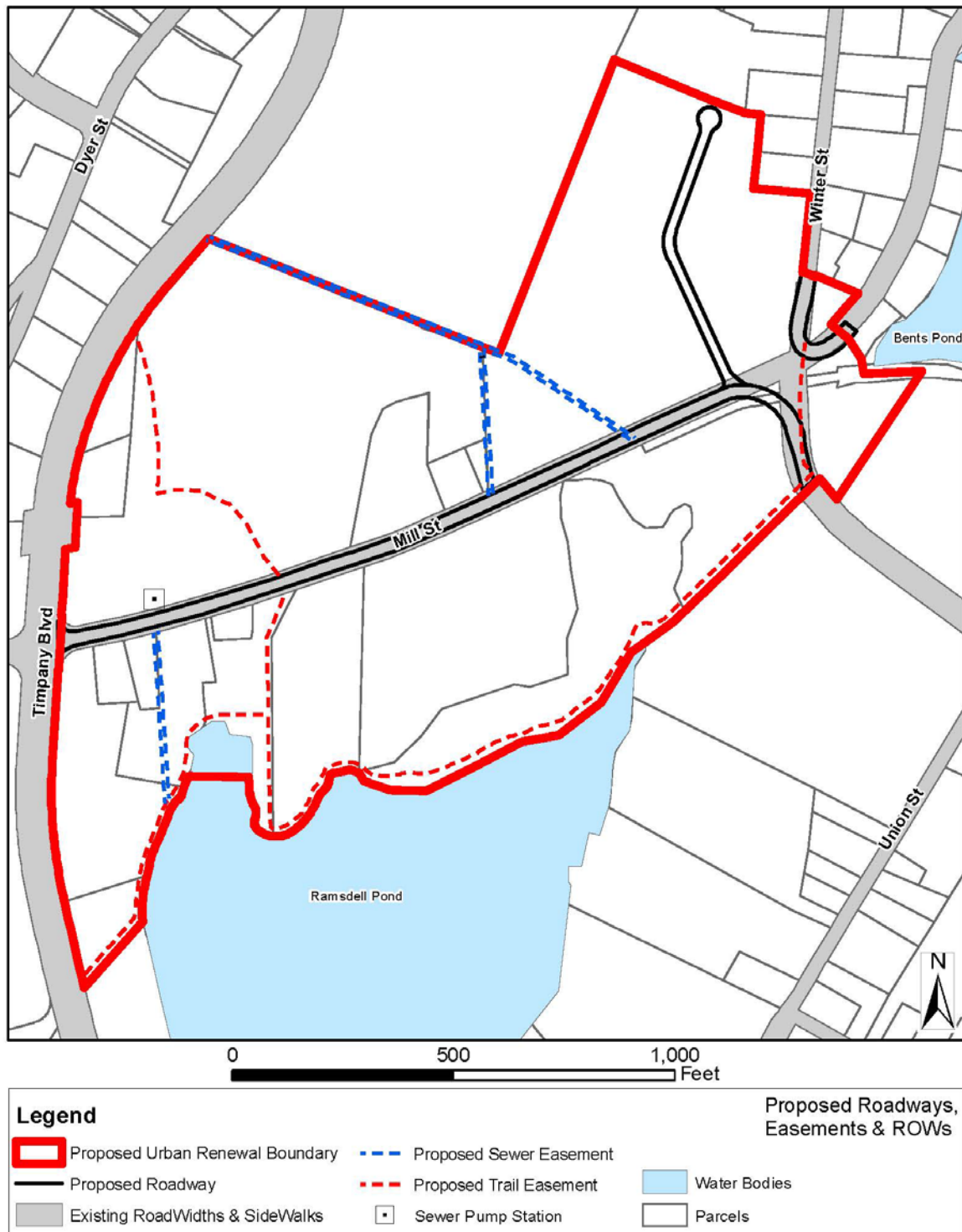


**Figure F-1: Existing Roadways, Public Rights-of-Ways and Easements**



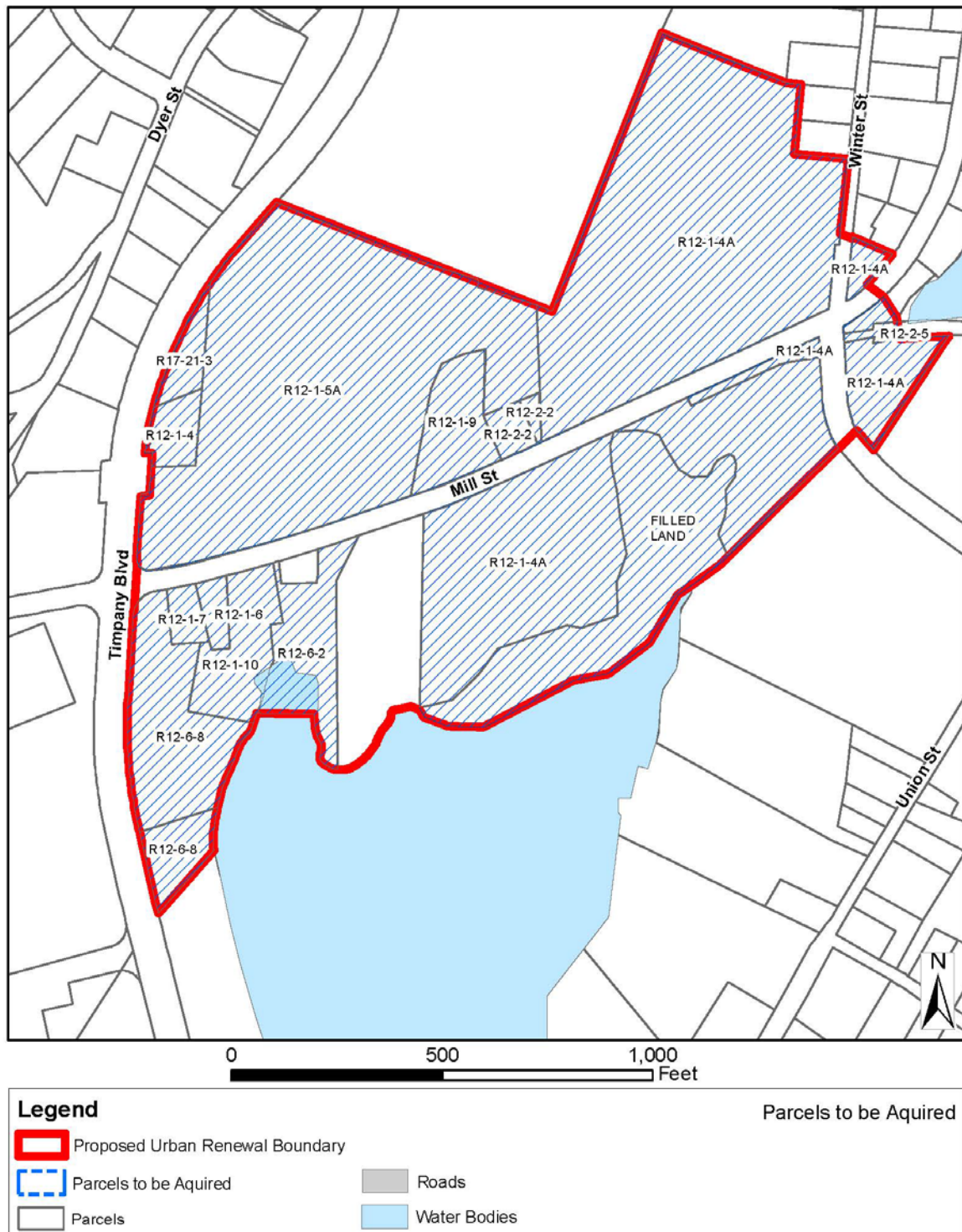


**Figure F-2: Proposed Roadways, Public Rights-of-Ways and Easements**

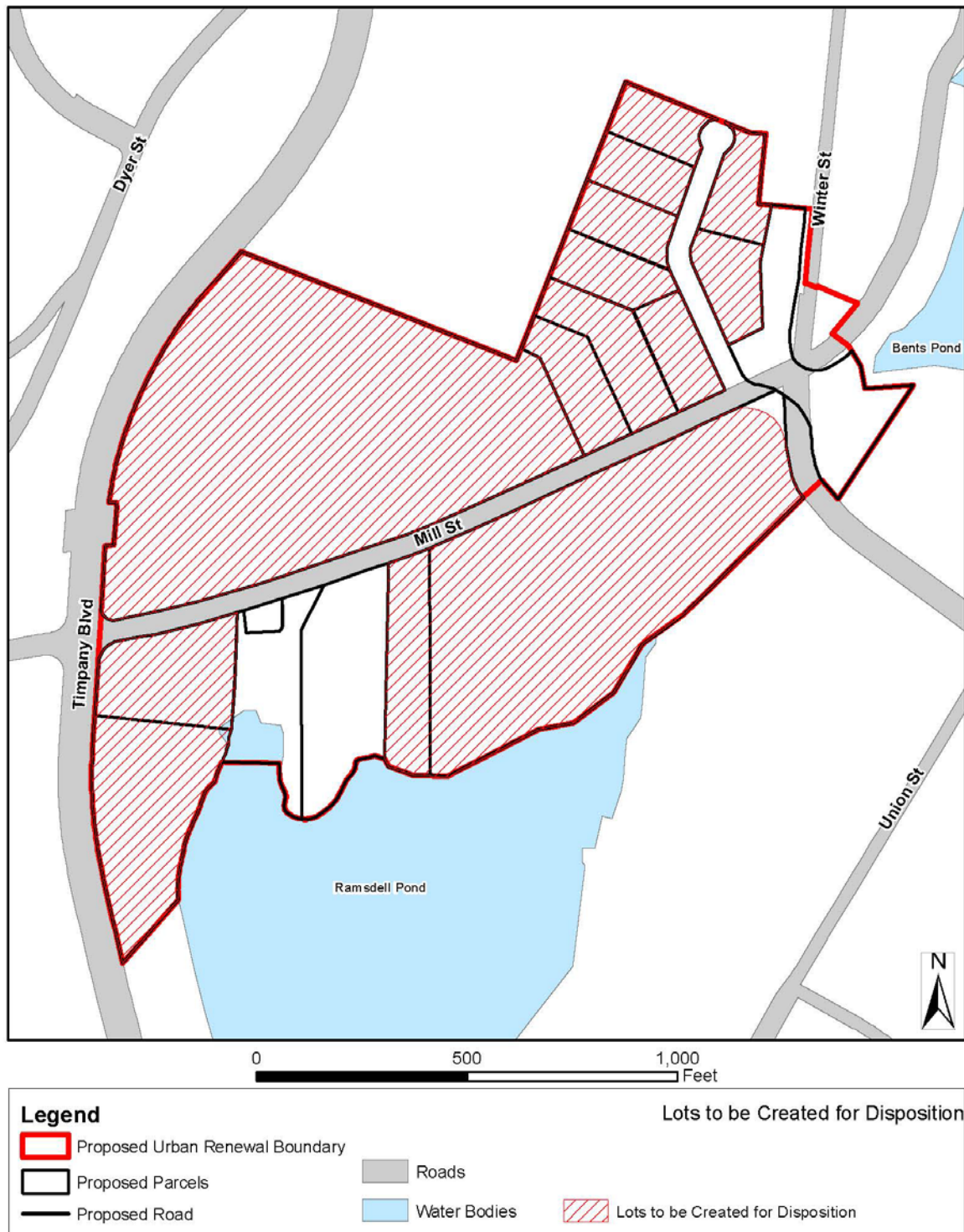




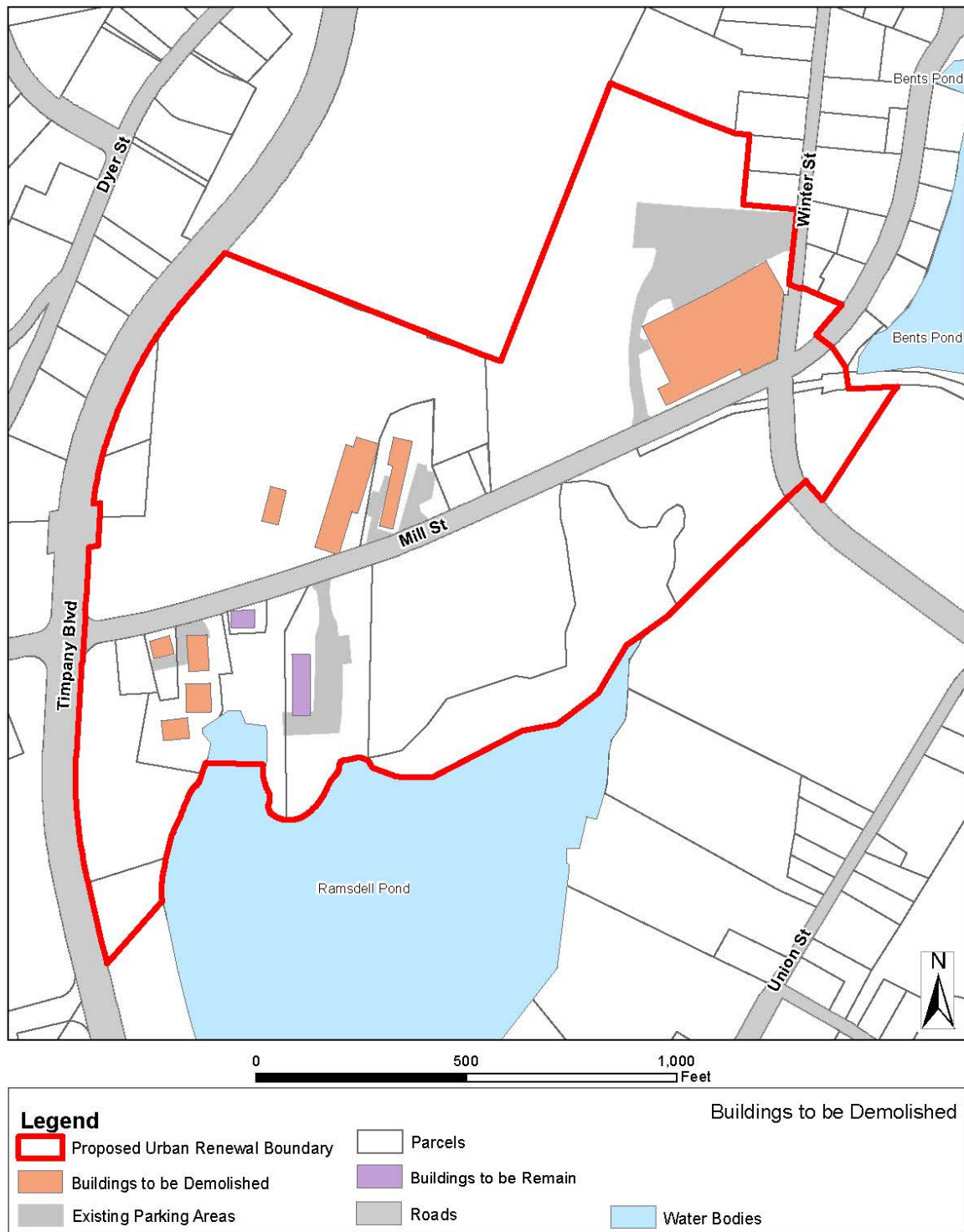
**Figure G-1: Parcels to be Acquired**



**Figure H-1: Lots to be Created for Disposition**

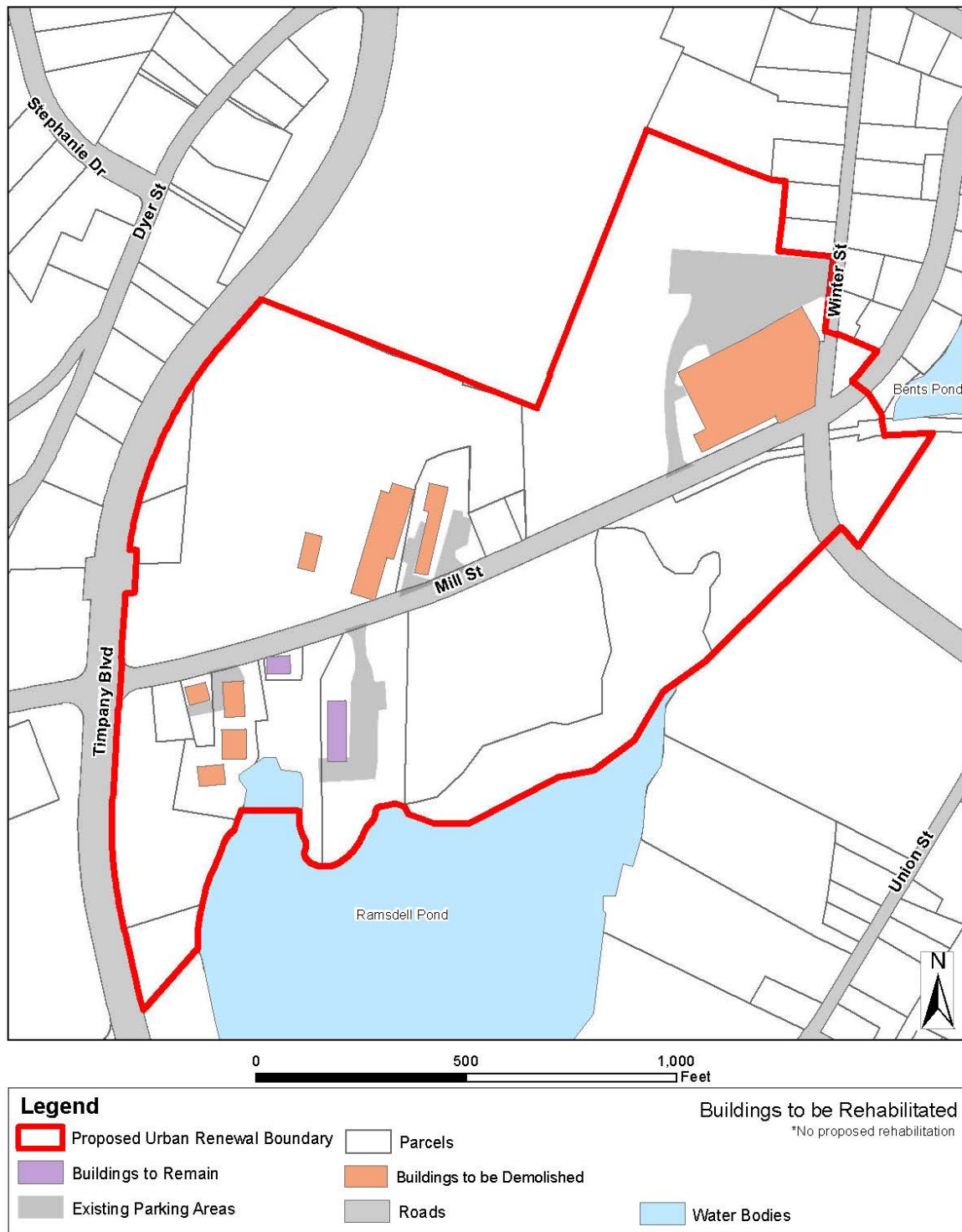


**Figure I-1: Buildings to be Demolished**





**Figure J-1: Buildings to be Rehabilitated**



**Figure K-1: Buildings to be Constructed**

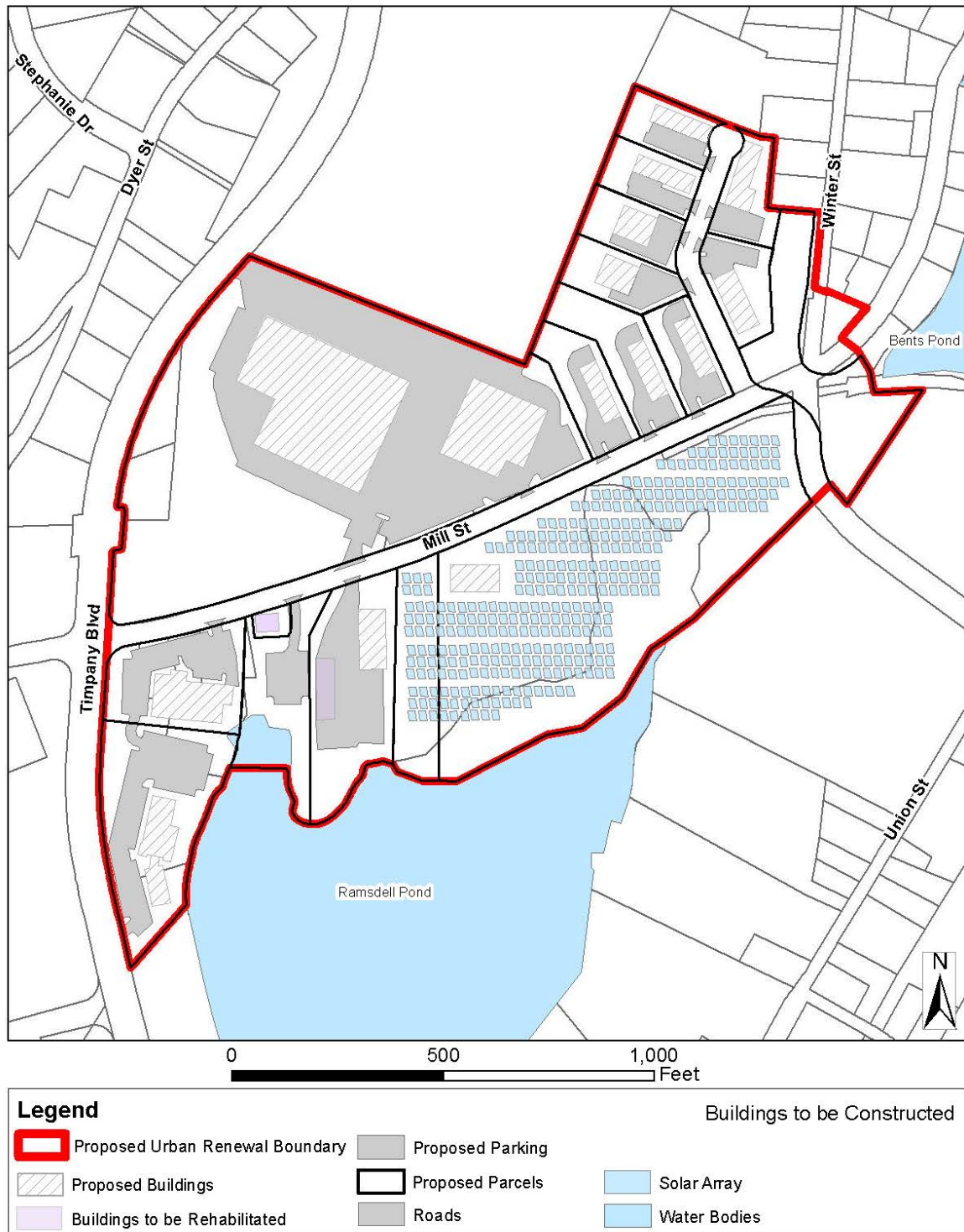
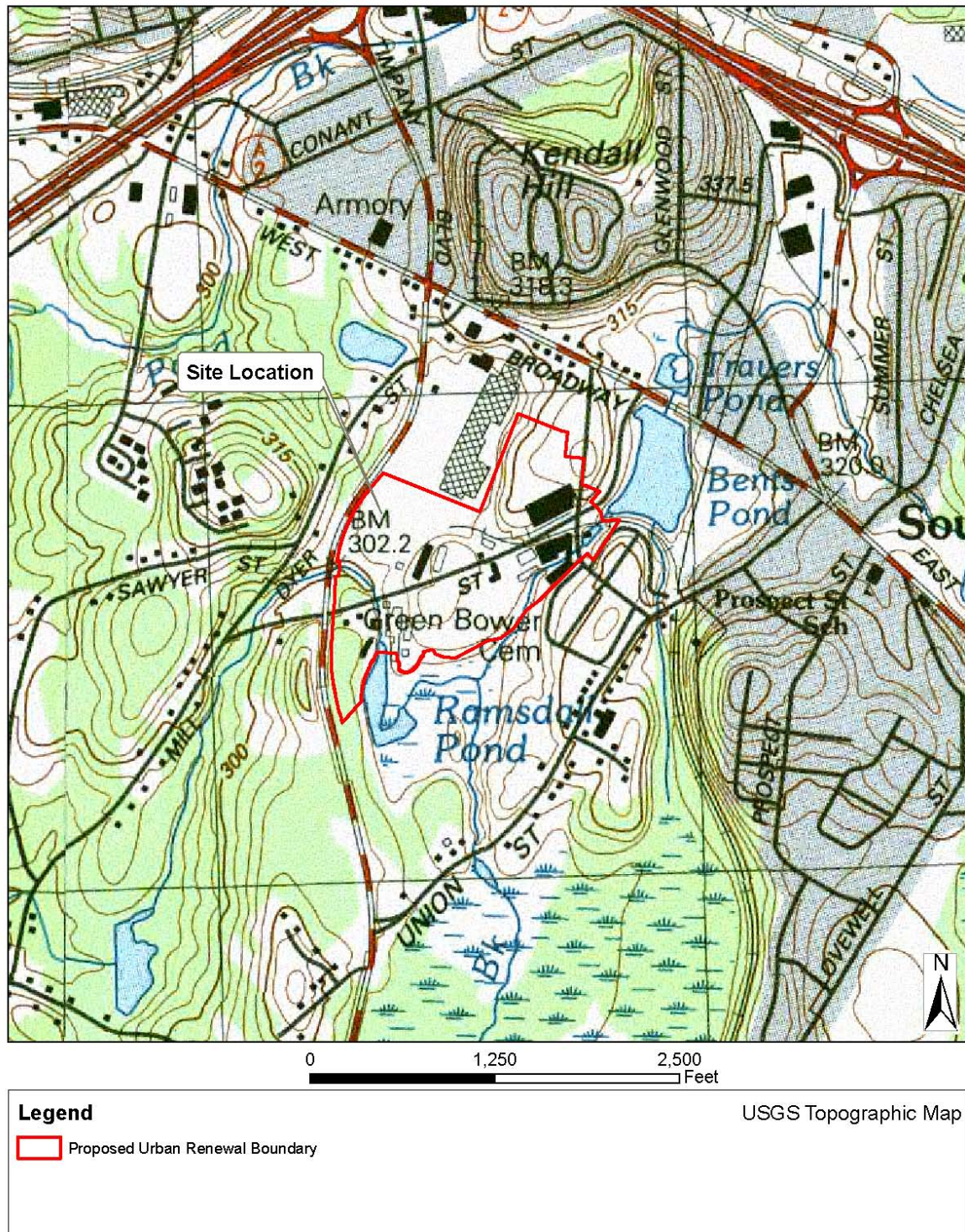


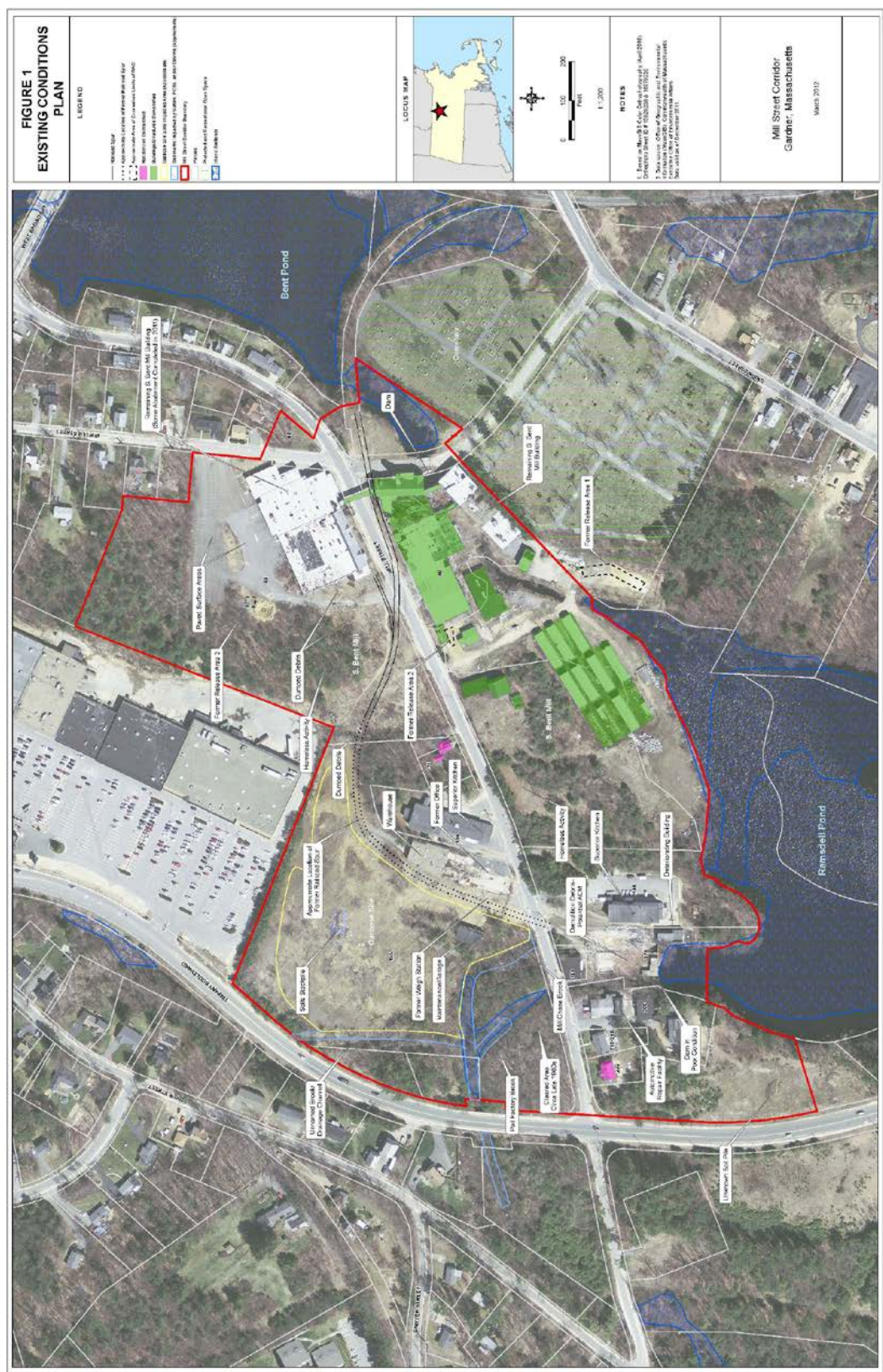


Figure S-1: Project Area Location – USGS Locus





**Figure S-2: Brownfields Existing Conditions Overview**





**Figure S-3: Brownfields Conceptual Clean Up Plan**





### Figure 3-4: Project Area Infra Structure

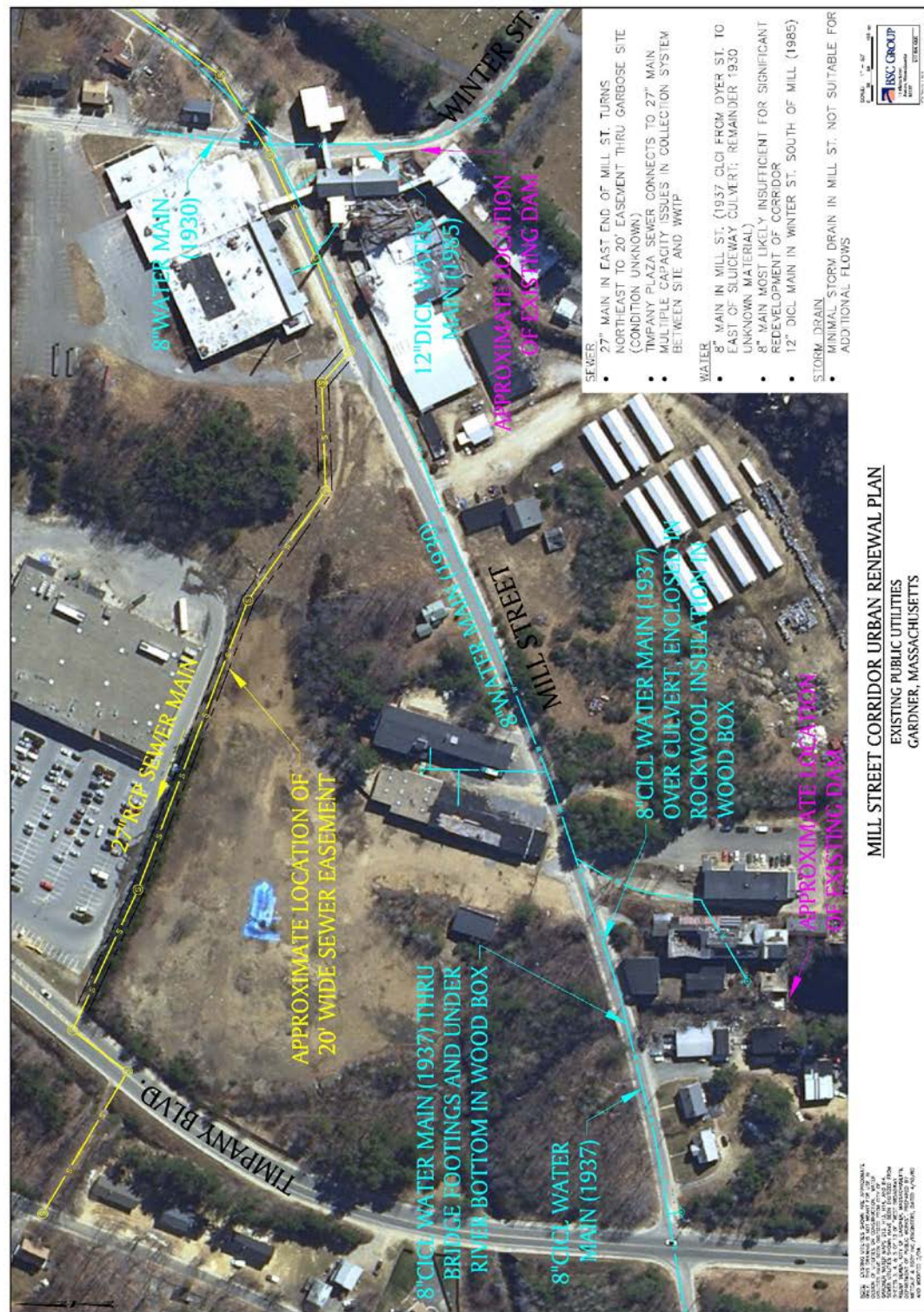
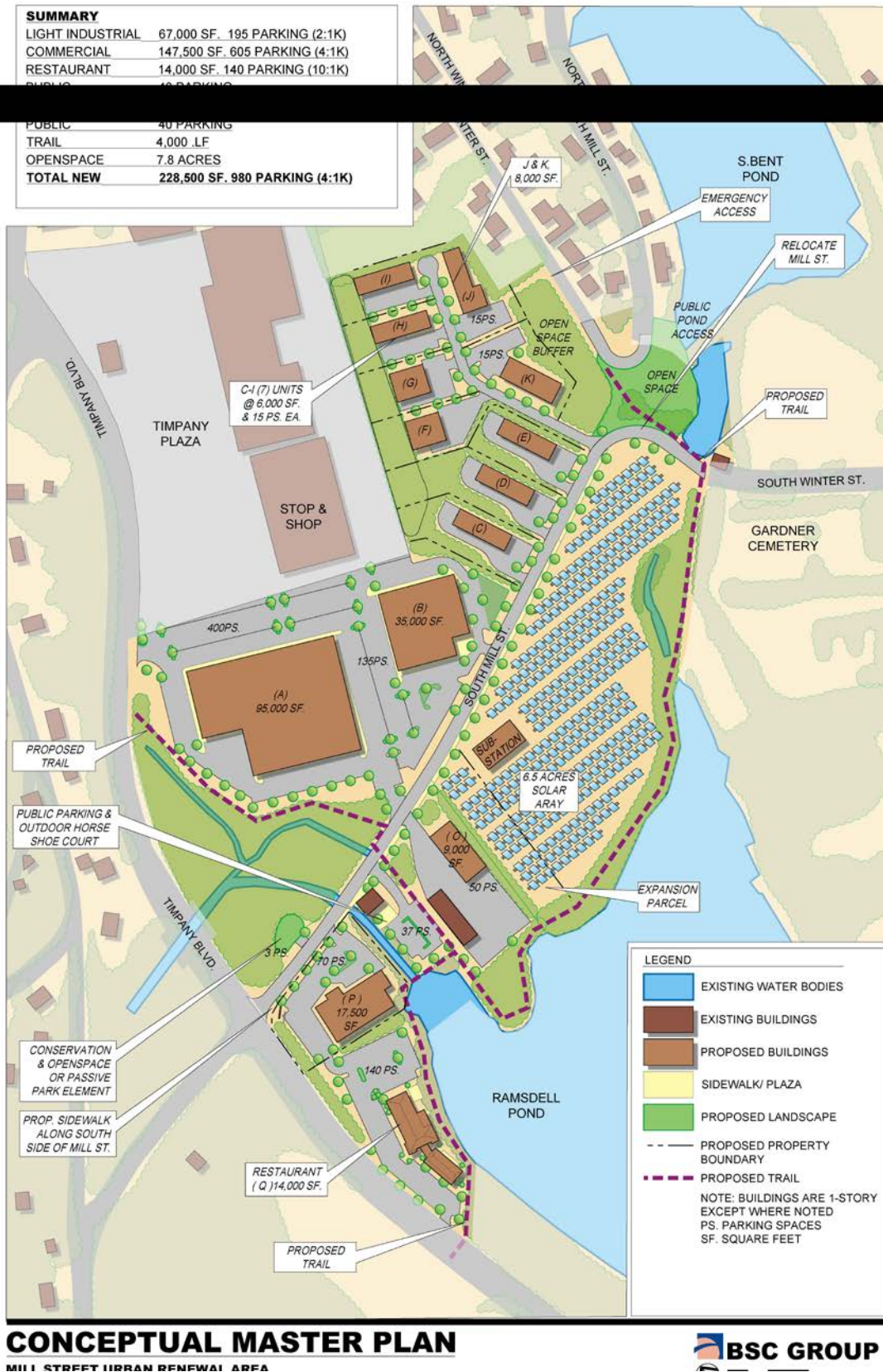




Figure S-5: Urban Renewal Concept Plan



## **12.02 (2) Eligibility**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has specific criteria that must be met in order for an area to be designated as an urban renewal area. This section provides an overview of the City of Gardner and its history, followed by a description of the trends and conditions within the URA that demonstrate the physical and economic deterioration which has accompanied its decline. This information presents data and other descriptive material which demonstrate that the Project Area is a blighted open, a decadent, and/or a substandard area within the definitions of M.G.L. c. 121B, § 1.

### **SECTION 1: ELIGIBILITY - BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **URA Location**

Gardner is located in north Central Massachusetts approximately 30 miles north of Worcester and 60 miles west/northwest of Boston. Gardner has a land area of approximately 23 square miles and is bordered by Winchendon and Ashburnham to the north; Westminster to the east; Hubbardston to the south; and Templeton to the west.

Gardner is part of Worcester County and is home to 20,770 people with a population density of approximately 900 people per square mile (2000 US Census). Gardner is the center of a seven-town region in northwest Worcester County, consisting of the towns of Ashburnham, Hubbardston, Phillipston, Templeton, Westminster, Winchendon and Gardner, with a total population of 58,311 (2008 American Community Survey), with a regional population density of 239 persons per square mile. The nearest cities to Gardner are Leominster and Fitchburg. Leominster, located about 15 miles to the southeast, has a population of approximately 41,000 residents. Fitchburg, located just over 12 miles east of Gardner, has a population of approximately 40,000 residents. Thus, Gardner is viewed as a small city within the region and the county.

The City's main highway connection is State Route 2, also known as the Mohawk Trail, which is a major regional east/west highway serving northern Massachusetts communities linking Boston to New York and provides access to Interstate 91 in Greenfield. There are two Gardner exits from Route 2, with exit rotary ramps located respectively at the southwestern edge and just a quarter-mile beyond the southeastern boundary of the Gardner URA. Interstate 190 lies 15 miles east of Gardner and interconnects with the Massachusetts Turnpike and Route 290 in Worcester.

Gardner is served by freight rail service, which played a major role in the industrial history of the City known for its furniture manufacturing. The Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) provides bus service to the greater Gardner area, with routes within the City as well as intercity routes connecting to Orange, Winchendon, Fitchburg and Leominster. In addition to scheduled service, MART offers dial-a-ride for the elderly, handicapped and medical trips. Currently, Gardner does not have commuter rail service to Boston; the closest commuter rail stop is the Intermodal Center located in Fitchburg, and an extension to Wachusett Station located nine miles east of Gardner is in the planning/design phase.

Gardner is home to Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC), a public two-year community college offering over 40 associate degrees and certificates, as well as a wide range of continuing education opportunities, located on a 269-acre campus. MWCC recently donated about 10 acres to the newly opened Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified Northeast Veteran Training and Rehabilitation Center. The privately-funded facility serves recovering veterans and their

families by combining rehabilitation services, housing and opportunities for academic advancement. Veterans are also allowed a tuition waiver.

Heywood Hospital, initially opened in 1907, is also located in Gardner. The hospital provides a broad range of medical, surgical, obstetrical, pediatric and psychiatric services on an inpatient and outpatient basis. The hospital is currently undergoing a \$30 million dollar expansion.

### **Local History**

Gardner was settled in 1764 and incorporated in 1785. The city was named in honor of Col. Thomas Gardner, a Massachusetts political figure and soldier from the American Revolution who was mortally wounded in the Battle of Bunker Hill. When incorporated, Gardner received land grants from the surrounding towns of Ashburnham, Westminster, Templeton and Winchendon. Gardner was reincorporated as a City in 1923.

By the early 1800s Gardner was a center for lumber and the furniture industry began to expand. Early manufacturers included Heywood-Wakefield Company, Conant Ball Company, Nichols and Stone Company and S. Bent & Brothers, Inc., with many more operating in Gardner and throughout the region. Manufacturers built facilities in Gardner's downtown and Sherman Road industrial area, but pockets of furniture manufacturers were scattered throughout town. Work was plentiful, and the middle years of the nineteenth century brought an influx of immigrants to the Gardner area from England, Ireland and Canada. Russians, Finns, Swedes and Poles joined them in the 1890s.

Furniture manufacturing was concentrated in the Northeast during the early 1800s, but the industry was fiercely competitive and by the mid-19th century, the centers of American furniture production had moved away from the Northeast to Midwestern centers like Cincinnati and Chicago, and particularly Grand Rapids, Michigan. After the Civil War, the South began to build factories that took advantage of abundant supplies of hardwood, plentiful cheap labor and more efficient production technologies<sup>i</sup>. Although furniture companies continued to open in Gardner between 1900 and 1950, the shift to the west and the south grew in momentum. Mills in the Northeast were shuttered as North Carolina, in particular, began to flourish. Some of the last large manufacturers in Gardner to close were Heywood-Wakefield in 1979, the Conant Ball Company in 1990, Nichols & Stone in 2000 and S. Bent & Brothers in 2001.

### **Area History**

The Mill Street Corridor is in South Gardner, approximately 1.5 miles south of downtown Gardner. Historic uses include furniture manufacturing by S. Bent & Brothers, Inc. and L.B. Ramsdell Company. S. Bent opened in 1867 as an offshoot of the Heywood-Wakefield Company. The factory initially made five-spindle chairs, and then expanded to Colonial chairs and rocking chairs. Around 1870, S. Bent began making children's chairs, rockers and stools. From the 1920s to the 1950s they manufactured breakfast sets and institutional furniture, including college and university chairs<sup>ii</sup>. S. Bent was the last remaining large-scale furniture factory in Gardner when they closed in 2001.

The L.B. Ramsdell Company was began operations in 1879, and by 1897 was the largest manufacturer of doll carriages in the United States. The company later expanded to manufacture toy furniture, high chairs and juvenile furniture and adult furniture. The facility was situated on Ramsdall Pond, and incorporated a sluiceway system. The Ramsdell facility was sold to American Mills, Inc. in 1957, and the facility was eventually demolished in 2007.

From the 1950s to the 1990s the Garbose Metal Company operated a metal salvage company at 155 Mill

Street. At its peak, the company had about 20 employees and recycled about 40,000 tons of metal annually.

Almost all of the Mill Street Corridor URA has been extensively disturbed for commercial and industrial purposes. Currently, Superior Kitchen (166 Mill Street) occupies two buildings, one on each side of the street. The company manufactures a full range of custom cabinetry.

The URA encompasses what was once an area of thriving manufacturing. Over time, the demise of the furniture manufacturing industry in the U.S. and the legacy of contamination left behind by manufacturing and scrap metal activities have cumulatively resulted in reduced activity within the URA. As various businesses left the area, the neighborhood has been left with vacant parcels, vacant buildings and some significant contamination issues associated with past uses. Thus, the URA is underutilized with potentially hazardous conditions. The trends and conditions described above demonstrate that the URA is a blighted open, a decadent, and/or a substandard area.

### **Project Area Data**

Table 4 presents an overview of land distribution within the URA. About 7% of the URA is owned by the city for streets and the railroad spur, and the remaining 93% is made up of 14 separate parcels which contain 41.78 acres. These parcels are predominately vacant land or land with vacant buildings. The two largest parcels are owned by the City and are documented brownfield sites that require remediation before they may be ready for redevelopment. A 3.20 acre parcel of unknown ownership abuts the City owned parcel at 60 Mill Street. This parcel had long been thought to be part of the former S. Bent property as several of its buildings were located thereon. However title records indicate the land was never part of the S.Bent property description and it appears this land may be the result of historic filling of Ramsdell Pond.

***Table 4: Summary of Land Ownership***

<b>Land Distribution</b>	<b>Area (sf)</b>	<b>Area (acres)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Parcels, various owners	1,820,126	41.78	93%
Streets, City of Gardner	121,968	2.80	6%
Railroad Spur, Gardner Redevelopment Authority	14,810.	0.34	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,956,904</b>	<b>44.92</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5 lists the owner of each parcel along with pertinent property information. Active businesses occupy only two parcels. These two parcels contain Superior Kitchen facilities (149 and 166 Mill Street) which are located opposite one another on Mill Street. Another partially occupied property is 200 Mill Street, which contains two masonry buildings that are partially occupied for storage use by the property owner and an antique automobile enthusiast who uses the rear building for the restorations and storage of his vehicles. Two additional parcels have active but non-industrial uses, specifically the Gardner Horseshoe Club at 186 Mill Street and the two-family structure at 216-218 Mill Street used as community residence for military veterans transitioning to civilian life. The remaining five parcels, including two owned by the city, are vacant land.

**Table 5: Property Ownership**

Property Owner	Address	Lot Size (acres)	Current Use	Zoning	Assessors Map	Proposed Use
City of Gardner	155 Mill Street	10.74	vacant industrial building	Comm 2	R12-1-5A	Commercial
City of Gardner*	60 Mill Street	17.97	vacant industrial building	Ind 1	R12-1-4A	Industrial
Tom & Alice Kymalainen	222 Mill Street	0.24	vacant lot	Comm 2	R12-1-7	Commercial
Tom & Alice Kymalainen	Timpany Blvd	2.53	vacant lot	Comm 2	R12-6-8	Commercial
The Gardner Group, Inc.	216-218 Mill St	0.22	duplex	Comm 2	R12-1-6	Commercial
Walter Dratner	200 Mill Street	1.05	factory bldgs.	Ind 1	R12-1-10	Commercial
Morse, HHR Hubbard	186 Mill Street	0.14	Horseshoe Club	Ind 1	R12-1-3	Horseshoe Club
The 129 S. Main St Corporation	170 Mill Street	1.50	vacant land	Ind 1	R12-6-2	Open Space Parking
Superior Kitchen Rheal McCaie	166 Mill Street	2.00	active company	Ind 1	R12-1-11	Active Company
Superior Kitchen Emery McCaie	149 Mill Street	1.05	active company	Comm 2	R12-1-9	Active company
Asgard Realty LLC	131 Mill Street	0.34	vacant land	Comm 2	R12-2-2	Industrial
Asgard Realty LLC	Timpany Blvd	0.42	vacant land	Comm 2	R12-1-4	Commercial
Eugene Butler	Timpany Blvd	0.39	vacant land	Comm 2	R17-21-3	Commercial
Unknown	Mill Street	3.20	vacant land	Ind 1	NA	Industrial
<b>Total</b>		<b>41.78</b>				

\*includes 3.2 acres of filled land with clouded title

### **Vehicular and Pedestrian Access**

The Project Area is located approximately a half-mile south of State Route 2, the region's major east-west transportation corridor. Route 2 connects to Interstate Route 190 (which connects with Interstate 290) about 6.5 miles to the east and Interstate 495 located 12 miles to the east. Two interchanges on Route 2 provide access to the Project Area. Timpany Boulevard (Route 68) runs north-south and is located immediately to the east of the Project Area. Timpany Boulevard is a commercial corridor in the vicinity of the Project Area, and is the main route to Gardner Center, located 1.5 miles north of the URA. The commercial development along Timpany Boulevard terminates approximately 0.5 mile south of Mill Street at Wal-Mart. The City permit recently granted allowing expansion of the Wal-Mart Store included conditions requiring Wal-Mart to improve the 10-foot wide shoulders on either side of Timpany Boulevard from its site to the intersection with Broadway. Such improvements will incorporate "Complete Streets" design elements and better accommodate pedestrian and bicycle travel and provide access to the proposed trails within the URA.



Mill Street is a two lane roadway without curbing or sidewalks with a varying paved width. Mill Street runs east to west and connects Timpany Boulevard with Route 2A (Broadway) which is a quarter-mile to the east of the Project Area. The lack of pedestrian amenities is consistent with the historic manufacturing use of the URA, where there was minimal demand for pedestrian access in the URA.



Mill Street Bridge



Abandoned Railroad Spur



Mill Street Facing East



Timpany Boulevard Facing North

### **Rail Access**

Rail access is possible to the Providence and Worcester Rail line that runs to the east of the Project Area. The line provides service between Gardner Center and Providence via Worcester. An abandoned rail spur which runs directly onto the URA was purchased by the GRA in 2009. In the event a future user in the URA requires rail service to their site the GRA is able to convey access rights.

### **Corridor-wide Summary of Environmental Conditions**

A report prepared by Tighe and Bond for the City of Gardner and is attached as Attachment A.

Documented releases of oil hazardous materials (OHM) have occurred at the former S. Bent Mill and former Garbose Site properties. According to MassDEP records, no reportable release of OHM has occurred on any of the other parcels within the Corridor. Remediation of known contaminants and further assessment will continue as part of the site preparation activities outlined in the URP.

A summary of the releases of OHM and on other documented information for other potential environmental concerns on the Corridor parcels is presented below.

**60 Mill Street (former S. Bent Mill) -**

Under-ground storage tanks (USTs) and above ground storage tanks (ASTs) reportedly located at the former S. Bent Mill site have included the following:

Two 10,000-gallon USTs containing fuel oil, which were removed from the site. One of those tanks was subject of the closed RTN 2-00612.

One 500 gallon UST - the contents and closure status of this tank are unknown.

One 4,100 gallon AST used for the storage of stain, sealer and topcoat materials.

One 275 gallon fuel tank.

Environmental investigations were conducted in identified areas of concern and across much of the 27-acre parcel. In general, the portions of the property where potential environmental impacts were identified included areas of stressed vegetation, areas of stockpiled solid waste debris, a waste oil staining area a former gasoline UST area, a dry well area, areas of pad-mounted electrical transformers, the fill area near Ramsdell Pond, former drum storage and hazardous waste storage areas, and other former OHM storage areas. Based on those findings, three separate release areas (to soils) were identified, and closed out in 2009.

In 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) removed asbestos and other hazardous materials from the existing building north of Mill Street using EPA funding.

**155 Mill Street (former Garbose Site)**

A 2,000-gallon fuel oil UST was reportedly installed in 1971 near the weigh station platform immediately off Mill Street, and that tank was reportedly removed without incident in 1991. Additionally, a permit to maintain one tank truck vehicle for the storage of No. 2 fuel oil (not to exceed 1,700 gallons) was issued for the property in 1978.

Nine ASTs were reportedly located in the Garbose Site buildings. The tanks included the following:

Office/Warehouse Building: Two former 275-gallon fuel oil ASTs.

Maintenance/Garage Building: Two 275-gallon fuel oil ASTs, one 300-gallon waste oil AST, and one 50-gallon hydraulic oil AST. Two 275-gallon ASTs (reportedly the fuel oil ASTs) currently remain in the lower basement level of the building.

Bailer Building: One former 275-gallon fuel oil AST, and one former 275-gallon diesel AST.

Alligator-Shear Building: One former 275-gallon fuel oil AST.

Environmental investigations conducted at the Garbose Site between 1996 and 2006 revealed included a total of approximately 184 soil samples, 35 groundwater samples, 45 sediment samples, and 8 surface water samples collected from the site. Of the 184 soil samples, 167 of those samples were collected from surficial soils or from shallow depths of less than 3 feet below surface grade. Groundwater samples were collected from approximately 18 monitoring wells installed across the site.

The sampled media were analyzed for PCBs, metals [RCRA 8, Priority Pollutant (13), or individual



metals], total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH), extractable petroleum hydrocarbons (EPH), target PAHs, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), volatile petroleum hydrocarbons (VPH), and/or dioxins.

The current status of the Garbose property, based on the studies conducted between 1996 and 2006, reveal the following conditions

- Elevated concentrations of metals, PCBs, petroleum compounds, and dioxins were detected in soil, groundwater, sediment and/or surface water at the site.
- Metals of concern include arsenic, antimony, barium, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, mercury, nickel, and zinc. Metals impacts are to soils across the vast majority of the un-wooded areas of the site (i.e., where former site operations occurred), and in sediments in the unnamed brook/drainage swale, in a portion of the mill chase brook, and in Pail Factory Brook. The metals impacts to site soils are reportedly to depths of less than approximately four feet below grade.
- PCB impacts to site soils and sediments are generally similar to the metals impacted areas. PCB concentrations greater than 10 parts per million (ppm) were detected in approximately 15 soil samples and 1 sediment sample, and total PCB concentrations greater than 50 ppm were detected in 3 of the soil samples. The vast majority of the higher PCB concentrations in soils were identified in the area where electrical transformers were dismantled during previous site operations on the west central portion of the site, to the south of the former Bailer Building and to the north of the existing Maintenance/Garage Building.
- Petroleum impacts to site soils are in the vicinity of the former Bailer Building, the existing Maintenance/Garage Building, along the Railroad Spur, and the northeast corner of the site. The vertical extent of petroleum impacts to soil was between approximately 0 and 8 feet below grade, with the deepest impacts in the former Bailer Building area.
- Dioxin impacts to shallow site soils are in the area where electrical transformers were dismantled, and on the northwestern portion of the site. Dioxin impacts to sediments are also in the mill chase brook.
- Site groundwater is impacted by PCBs and metals, but no dissolved concentrations of PCBs and metals in site groundwater were above applicable risk-based standards. NAPL was detected in one site monitoring well located in the footprint of the former Bailer Building, but no EPH concentrations in site groundwater (including in that well) were above applicable risk-based standards.
- Surface water in the mill chase brook, the unnamed brook/drainage swale, and Pail Factory Brook is impacted by PCBs and metals, but no dissolved concentrations of PCBs and metals in these surface water bodies were reported above Ambient Water Quality Standards.

**170 Mill Street (abandoned industrial site)** – No known environmental investigations have been conducted on this abandoned industrial property.

Municipal records indicate the following:

A 1,000 gallon AST was installed in 1969 and removed from this property in 2007. The tank was reportedly located directly behind the Gardner Horseshoe Club at 186 Mill Street.

In 1998, the property was cited for having an unsafe building and violations of the Sanitary Code for the

presence of loose, crumbled, and powdered asbestos throughout the abandoned building and over Pail Factory Brook.

In 2007, a demolition permit was issued for a two-story post and beam factory building on the property. This is the location, where piles of construction debris remain.

**166 Mill Street and 149 Mill Street (Superior Kitchen)** – No known environmental investigations have been conducted on these occupied industrial properties

**200 Mill Street (occupied industrial site)** – No known environmental investigations have been conducted on this occupied parcel.

**216-218 Mill Street (occupied residence)** – No known environmental investigations have been conducted on this occupied residential parcel.

**222 Mill Street (former residence)** – No known environmental investigations have been conducted on this former residential parcel.

### **Description of Market Context**

An Economic and Market Analysis was prepared for the Mill Street Corridor by Ninigret Partners and is included as Attachment B. The study identified the market conditions and challenges associated with Gardner in general and the Mill Street Area in particular. The summary findings of this analysis are presented below:

#### **Market Considerations from the Economic and Market Analysis**

- Market area real estate availability is sufficient to meet the majority of commercial/industrial needs for the foreseeable future;
- The best position for development is to become “pad ready”;
- “Establishment Growth” rate, an indicator of future real estate need, has been primarily in entrepreneurial service industry ventures which require small footprints and inexpensive space;
- Mill buildings easily fill that gap;
- Construction and distribution need workspace and laydown areas;
- Gaps in the market clearly exist for contemporary high bay flex space between 20,000 to 50,000 square feet with expansion potential but ;
- Real estate price points create substantial financing gaps for any speculative development;
- The cost of site preparation and environmental remediation will exceed the market value of the land
- Current rent and sales data do not support land sale values that will recapture site preparation and remediation costs
- Rail access is not a unique attribute in this market; and
- Interim uses for these sites should receive strong consideration given likely development timeframes.

## Municipal Demographic Data

Table 6: Demographic Data, below, summarizes demographic data for Gardner based on information from the 2010 US Census and the 2008-2010 American Community Survey (ACS). As of the 2010 US Census, the population of Gardner was 20,228, with 8,224 households and 4,939 families residing in the City. The population density of the City was approximately 900 people per square mile (362.4/km<sup>2</sup>). The census indicates the presence of 9,126 housing units at an average density of 398.3/sq mi (153.8/km<sup>2</sup>).

**Table 6: Demographic Data**

	City of Gardner
Population	20,228
Households	8,224
Median Household Income	\$50,502*
Per Capita Income	\$23,791*
Individuals Below Poverty Level	10.4%*
Housing Units	9,126
Occupied	8,224
Vacant	902
Owner-Occupied	54.9%
Renter-Occupied	45.1%
Educational Attainment	
High School Graduate or Higher	82.1%*
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	20.4%*
Median Age	40.6 years

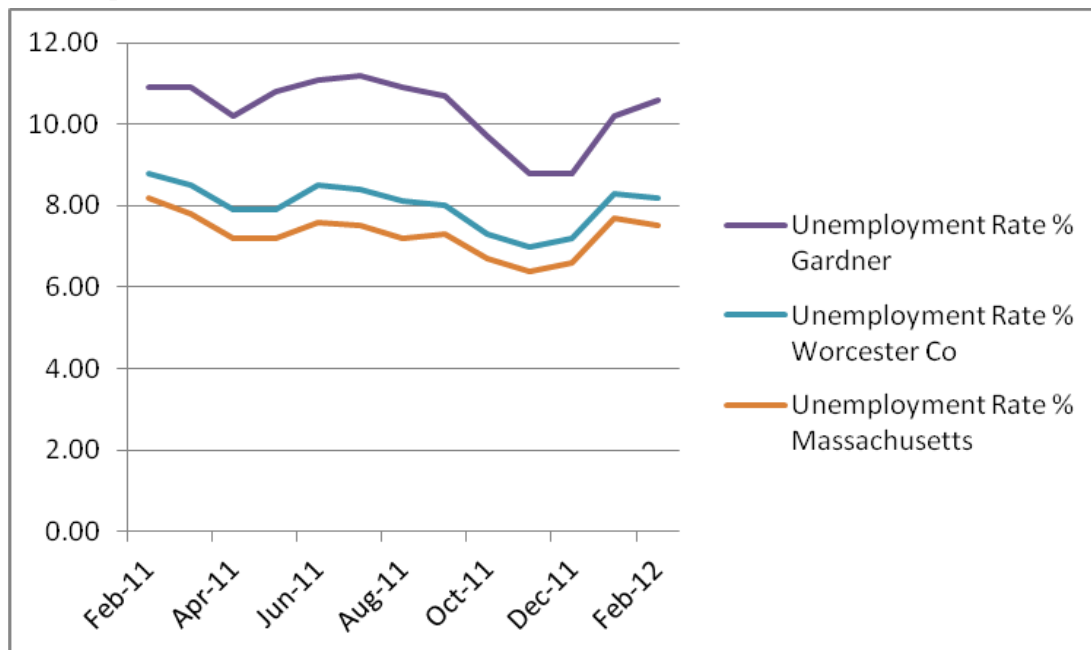
Sources: US Census 2010 and 2008-2010 ACS; \* denotes ACS estimate

The 2010 Census population for Gardner was 20,228 comprised of 8,224 households with a median income of \$50,502. Per capita income was \$23,791 with 10.4 percent of the population below the poverty level. Of the total 9,126 housing units 8,224 were occupied. The ratio of owners to renter is 55% to 45%. 82% of the population has graduated from high school and 20.4% possess a bachelors degree or higher.

According to Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development the City of Gardner has lagged behind Worcester County and the State in employment. Table 7 Unemployment Rates reveals unemployment rates in Gardner remain above 10% despite a slight dip at the end of 2011. Gardner

unemployment rates track over 2% above Worcester County and three points above the State average.

**Table 7: Unemployment Rates**



### **Economic Development Implications**

Among the conclusions from the Mill Street Corridor Market and Economic Analysis were findings that link the economic vitality of the URA to that of the greater Gardner market:

The competitive real estate situation coupled with anemic job growth requires consideration of a different development pathway;

In part the economic viability of these sites is tied to the overall strengthening of the Gardner and regional economy;

The Mill St Corridor should be considered as part of the overall job creation / tax base development portfolio for Gardner and not a singular solution; and

Ongoing parallel efforts of getting the sites “pad ready” coupled with an overall economic development program done in conjunction with community and state partners is critical;

### **Property Conditions**

Of the 14 parcels which make up the Project Area nine are vacant. Of the remaining five parcels field inspections were made to assess their condition. BSC conducted property evaluations of the exterior of the properties within the Project Area. BSC used a rating system that included the categories of “acceptable”, “serviceable”, “moderate disrepair”, and “severe disrepair”, to assess the condition of the foundation, walls, windows, doors, cornices/eaves, porch/balcony, exterior stairs, loading dock, chimney, and roof, where applicable, of the structures. Exterior conditions of the structure aspects ranged from “acceptable” to “severe disrepair” based on the below-described rating system classifications. If a

property had more than one structure in varying conditions, it was rated based on the predominant condition of the primary building.

- **ACCEPTABLE:** *Conditions of the parts of the building span from new to “kept up” so as to appear new, well cared for, and in no need of cleaning or maintenance.*
- **SERVICEABLE:** *Condition of the building parts are in deteriorating shape, in need of paint, washing, caulking, re-pointing, scraping rust, etc. Structure is still able to function at its intended purpose. The condition/deterioration is surficial.*
- **MODERATE DISREPAIR:** *Conditions have worsened past cosmetic repairs. Thin cracks in masonry walls would allow potential for moisture penetration. Damaged exterior walls would be indicative of constant dampness or interior moisture reaching into the interior. The need for repair and attention to the underlying causes would represent moderate disrepair. Broken glass, damaged frames, missing roof shingles, broken, disrupted, or sagging cornice, eaves, and gutters are individual items of this category. These items can be repaired or replaced. Yet entire systems of enclosures have not failed.*
- **SEVERE DISREPAIR:** *Worsening conditions are now past the weather protecting exterior materials of the building. Water/ice entering under or behind these exterior materials will or has degraded the entire structure. Severe disrepair include wide cracks in masonry walls, a sinking foundation, the broken or rotted out conditions of walls, sills, windows, doors, eaves, metal fasteners severely reduced by rust, and entire roofing assemblies missing. It would be disrepair at a level that indicates, or at least suggests, compromised structural integrity.*

The Project Area has experienced the demolition of several dilapidated structures on which posed a threat to public safety and health. Currently there are ten (10) structures, three of which are vacant and are in severe disrepair. They include 2 abandoned buildings on the City owned Garbose property (155 Mill Street) and the former S. Bent manufacturing building (60 Mill Street). The two buildings on the Garbose property are masonry block construction with doors and windows missing and have deteriorated due to prolonged exposure to the elements. The remaining building on the S. Bent Property is of masonry and wood construction and continues to be a location for transient squatters. It was recently abated of asbestos under an emergency grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and remains a priority for demolition due to structural, safety, and fire hazards. Of the remaining seven (7) buildings, three buildings are in acceptable to serviceable conditions - two belonging to McCaie and occupied by Superior Kitchen (149 and 166 Mill Street) and a two family duplex (216-218 Mill Street). Four remaining buildings are in moderate to severe disrepair - the Gardener Horseshoe Club building (186 Mill Street) is in moderate disrepair and the three partially vacant industrial buildings at 200 Mill Street are in moderate to severe disrepair.

Applying the classification rating system to building conditions indicates that 7 of the 10 buildings on properties with buildings fall into the Moderate to Severe Disrepair categories. Thus approximately 70 percent of the properties with buildings in the URA have significant repair and condition issues.





Vacant S. Bent Building



Vacant Garbose Building



Ramsdell Mill Building Remains



Gardner Horseshoe Club

## SECTION 2: AREA ELIGIBILITY DESIGNATION

In order to designate the Project Area as an URA, the GRA is required to make a finding that the Project Area is either substandard, decadent, or blighted open in accordance with the Regulations under M.G.L. c. 121B. Such a designation will enable the GRA to undertake certain revitalization activities to stimulate economic development within the Project Area.

Consequently, this report assembles data from a variety of sources to support its recommendation that the Project Area can be designated as decadent and that it is improbable that the area will be redeveloped by the ordinary operations of private enterprise.

The data includes city records identifying parcel ownership, land and building assessments, square footage of land and buildings, building usage, and utility or other types of easements. In addition, BSC staff performed site inspections of the parcels.

Undertaking urban renewal action, such as the taking of private property, requires that an area be substandard, decadent or blighted open. The most appropriate finding for this area is that it is “decadent” and “blighted open”. *Decadent* and *blighted open* are defined as:

**Decadent** – an area which is detrimental to the sound growth of a community as a result of the existence of buildings which are out of repair, physically deteriorated, unfit for human habitation, obsolete, or in

need of major maintenance or repair, or because much of the real estate in recent years has been sold, or taken for nonpayment of taxes upon foreclosure of mortgages, or because buildings have been torn down and not replaced and under existing conditions it is improbable that the buildings will be replaced, or because of a substantial change in business or economic conditions, or because of inadequate light, air, or open space, or because of excessive land coverage or because diversity of ownership, irregular lot sizes or obsolete street patterns make it improbable that the area will be redeveloped by the ordinary operations of private enterprise, or by reason of any combination of the foregoing conditions (M.G.L. c. 121B, § 1)

**Blighted open area** - a predominantly open area which is detrimental to the safety, health, morals, welfare or sound growth of a community because it is unduly costly to develop it soundly through the ordinary operations of private enterprise by reason of the existence of ledge, rock, unsuitable soil, or other physical conditions, or by reason of the necessity for unduly expensive excavation, fill or grading, or by reason of the need for unduly expensive foundations, retaining walls or unduly expensive measures for waterproofing structures or for draining the area or for the prevention of the flooding thereof or for the protection of adjacent properties and the water table therein or for unduly expensive measures incident to building around or over rights-of-way through the area, or for otherwise making the area appropriate for sound development, or by reason of obsolete, inappropriate or otherwise faulty platting or subdivision, deterioration of site improvements or facilities, division of the area by rights-of-way, diversity of ownership of plots, or inadequacy of transportation facilities or other utilities, or by reason of tax and special assessment delinquencies, or because there has been a substantial change in business or economic conditions or practices, or an abandonment or cessation of a previous use or of work on improvements begun but not feasible to complete without the aids provided by this chapter, or by reason of any combination of the foregoing or other condition; or a predominantly open area which by reason of any condition or combination of conditions which are not being remedied by the ordinary operations of private enterprise is of such a character that in essence it is detrimental to the safety, health, morals, welfare or sound growth of the community in which it is situated. (M.G.L. c. 121B, § 1)

Presently, the Project Area exhibits many of the physical attributes ascribed in the definitions of decadent and blighted open areas. Further, this study finds that the Project Area has the potential of generating major public benefits that could not otherwise be achieved by the ordinary operations of private enterprise. This section will explain this conclusion, and, therefore, the need for governmental intervention.

### **Area Eligibility Findings**

As described below, the Project Area can be considered decadent because there is a high percentage of vacant land. Redevelopment has been hindered because of a diversity of parcel ownership, irregular lot sizes and shapes, title issues associated with filled land, site contamination issues with the need for further assessment and costly remediation, aging water infrastructure, the presences of two mill ponds with aging dam outfall, and buildings that are unfit for reuse or have been taken down.

### **Vacant and Underutilized Parcels**

*Finding: Of a total of 1,820,126 square feet of developable land area within the Project Area (excluding streets and railroad property) approximately 1,625,844 square feet (or 90.5%) are vacant or contain vacant buildings.*

Field survey information, along with information from the City of Gardner Planning and Assessing

Departments was used to compile a profile of parcel usage within the Project Area. Analysis of this data led to the finding that approximately 90.5% of the developable lot area within the Project Area is presently vacant of contain vacant buildings in dilapidated conditions.

#### **Foreclosure of Property due To Back Taxes**

*Finding: The City has taken numerous parcels due to the Owner's inability to pay property taxes.*

Over the last five (5) years, the City has acquired two (2) parcels within the Project Area. The S. Bent Property was acquired for back taxes after the company ceased operations and abandoned the property. The Garbose property was acquired by the City at the behest of the owner who was unable to fund the remediation of the contamination contained in the property. The City assumed ownership and executed a release of liability and indemnification agreement approved by the State to facilitate the conveyance. Together these two properties total 28.71 acres or 66% of the entire Project Area. Additionally Notice of Tax Taking was filed by the City and later discharged on 216-218 Mill Street when the owner paid the outstanding tax obligation

#### **Underutilization**

*Finding: Vacant land use typifies the Project Area.*

BSC used field observations and City of Gardner land use and zoning information to compile a profile of the existing land uses versus land uses permitted by present zoning regulations. Based on analysis it was determined that only 5 parcels with a total area of 4.46 acres or 10.6% of the Project Area contain active uses. The balance of the site is comprised of vacant land

#### **Diversity of Land Ownership and Irregular Lot Size**

*Finding: Small and irregular lot size maximizes problems of assembling development parcels.*

The ownership and use of the privately owned land within the Project Area is quite varied. Within the Project Area there are many different private landowners and, in general, parcels are small and irregular in shape. There are a limited number of large parcels that can accommodate major redevelopment or expansion. Therefore, businesses that wish to relocate or expand into the area must do so in a haphazard way as from time to time property goes on the market for sale. Actions to assemble large parcels for redevelopment and expansion are necessary.

#### **Unresolved Title Issues**

*Finding: A 3.2 acre parcel of unknown ownership adjoins the S. Bent property*

This property had been used openly and noxiously by the S.Bent Company for decades. However S. Bent's deed to the City did not include this property. It appears the property was originally part of the Ramsdell Pond and was filled to create additional land for S. Bent. The City proposes to acquire the property through eminent domain to clear title and assemble it with adjoining land for development.

#### **Public Infrastructure Deficiencies**

*Finding: The Project Area lacks suitable infrastructure to accommodate future development*

Mill Street contains 8inch water mains made of transite pipes. The deficiencies resulting from the brittle

nature of the transit pipes coupled with their age is further compounded by their size which is insufficient to serve the contemplated uses of the area.

Wastewater disposal is only available to limited portion of the Project Area. The southerly side of Mill Street west of Pail Brook is currently served by private septic. The S. Bent property south of Mill Street has no access to sewer. Additionally the City has identified sewer mains down gradient of the Project Area which are or will soon be surcharged. This effectively blocks the path to the wastewater treatment facility.

Mill Street is a two lane road of variable paved width without curbing or sidewalks and minimal provisions for stormwater. The pavement is in poor condition with no shoulders.

The Project Area contains two dam structures which were built to create S. Bent and Ramsdell Ponds which were the mill ponds that provided hydro power to the early manufacturing uses. The S. Bent dam is owned by the City of Gardner as part of its acquisition of the S. Bent property in 2006. It has been evaluated in 2009 by the Maguire Group for the City of Gardner and was determined to be in fair condition. Major deficiencies include an inoperable sluice gate, a rotten observation deck, intruding vegetation, and loose and missing masonry components. The Ramsdall Dam was most recently inspected in October of 2000 and is listed in the Mass DCR Office of Dam Safety Inventory as in good condition with a significant hazard potential. Recent visual inspections of the Ramsdall Dam reveal signs of seepage along its berm and in an abandoned sluiceway. The current owner has not provided an updated inspection report to the Office of Dam Safety and has been issued a Notice of Non-Compliance from the DCR Office of Dam Safety dated May 29, 2012.

### **Contamination**

*Finding: Due to the extent and high cost of contamination remediation, it is unlikely the land will be cleaned of contaminants that will enable the site to be redeveloped.*

Analysis conducted by Tighe and Bond for the City of Gardner for the S. Bent and Garbose properties reveals significant contamination on both properties. Assessment and mitigation has commenced on the S. Bent property in conjunction with demolition of structures that posed a risk to public safety on the south side of Mill Street. Remaining mitigation needs to be performed on the north side of Mill Street in conjunction with the demolition of the remaining building. An assessment of the Garbose property was performed for the previous owner and has been reviewed by Tighe and Bond. The site is contaminated resulting from the previous use as an auto salvage and metal reclamation facility. Mill Street is the site of the former Ramsdell Mill and most of the structures have been demolished by its owners though the site is strewn with demolition debris of uncertain nature. No known environmental assessment have been performed on the property though it is highly likely to contain contaminants given the history of the site. The high cost of contamination remediation for just the Project Area, estimated at just over \$3 million, (asbestos removal, environmental remediation, consulting and 15% contingency) is a hindrance to redevelopment as this cost would greatly exceed the value of the property after it is cleaned and prepared for redevelopment.

## **SECTION 3: AREA ELIGIBILITY ACQUISITION, CLEARANCE, AND DISPOSITION**

### **Clearance and Acquisition**

Based on inspections of the buildings recommended for demolition, it is reasonable to assert that well over 50 percent of the floor area of the buildings is functionally obsolete, structurally substandard or is

not reasonably capable of being rehabilitated for productive use. Some of the buildings were torn down by private owners during the preparation of this study; others have been declared unsafe or condemned by the City. Areas were designated for clearance as a last resort because rehabilitation and reuse is not a feasible option. In addition, given the age and industrial history of the structures, it is likely there are additional issues with hazardous materials that must be addressed to achieve successful brownfields reuse. *Table 12.02 (2)-3* (see next page) presents a list of the acquisition, clearance, and disposition parcels. Clearance is necessary and justified because more than 50 percent of the floor area of the buildings proposed for clearance is functionally obsolete, structurally substandard, or not reasonably capable of being rehabilitated for productive use.

Per the guidance materials for M.G.L. c. 121B, if conditions warranting clearance do not exist, the appropriate treatment may be spot clearance to remove substandard buildings and blighting influences or spot clearance to provide land for project improvements and supporting facilities that are necessary to achieve the objectives of the URP. Spot clearance may involve buildings that are in good condition but whose demolition is necessary to achieve Plan objectives (e.g., reduce density, infrastructure improvements to improve access to and within the area).

The Mill Street URP identifies two clearance areas.

Clearance Area 1 consists of three properties containing four structures: the former Garbose property (155 Mill Street) with two vacant dilapidated buildings; part of the former S. Bent property (60 Mill Street) on the north side of Mill Street that contains a severely deteriorated building; and the Superior Kitchen warehouse building (149 Mill Street) which is in serviceable condition but is located across Mill Street from its production facility and main office.

Clearance Area 2 is made up of two properties containing four structures: 216-218 Mill Street contains a duplex in acceptable condition and 200 Mill Street which contains three partially vacant industrial buildings in severe to moderate disrepair.

The balance of the properties to be acquired for assemblage and disposition are vacant and are listed in Table 7: Parcels for Acquisition, Clearance, and Disposition on the following page.



**Table 8: Parcels for Acquisition, Clearance, and Disposition**

Owner	Address	Lot Size (acres)	Assessors Map	Current Use	Zoning	Building Area	Substandard Obsolete Area	Substandard Obsolete %	No. of Bldgs	Proposed Use	No. DU	No. Bus.
City of Gardner	155 Mill Street	10.74	R12-1-5-A	vacant lot	Comm 2	8,063	8,063	100	2	Comm		
City of Gardner	60 Mill Street	17.97	R12-1-4A	vacant lot	Ind 1	33,920	33,920	100	1	Ind/ Solar Array		
Tom & Alice Kymalainen	222 Mill Street	0.24	R12-1-7	vacant lot	Comm 2	NA				Commercial		
Tom & Alice Kymalainen	Timpany Blvd	2.53	R12-6-8	vacant lot	Comm 2	NA				Commercial		
The Gardner Group, Inc.	216-218 Mill St	0.22	R12-1-6	duplex	Comm 2	2,376	0	0	1	Commercial	2	
Walter Dratner	200 Mill Street	1.05	R12-1-10	factory bldgs.	Ind 1	9,778	9,778	100	3	Industrial		
The 129 S. Main St Corp.	170 Mill Street	1.50	R12-6-2	vacant land	Ind 1	NA	0	0		Parking		
Superior Kitchen	149 Mill Street	1.05	R12-1-9	Active company	Comm 2	18,752		0	1	Commercial		1
Asgood Realty LLC	131 Mill Street	0.34	R12-2-2	vacant land	Comm 2	NA				Commercial		
Asgood Realty LLC	Timpany Blvd	0.42	R12-1-4A	vacant land	Comm 2	NA				Commercial		
Eugene Butler	Timpany Blvd	0.39	R17-21-3	vacant land	Comm 2	NA				Commercial		
Unknown	Mill Street	3.20	NA	vacant land	Ind 1	NA				Ind/ Solar Array		
<b>Total</b>		<b>39.65</b>				<b>72,889</b>	<b>51,761</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Clearance Area 1</b>						<b>60,735</b>	<b>41,983</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Clearance Area 2</b>						<b>12,154</b>	<b>9,778</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

#### SECTION 4 URP CONFORMITY WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This URP is in conformance with the Gardner Community Development Plan (2004), which is the most recent comprehensive plan undertaken for the City. The following are key elements of the plan:

- **Economic Development:** The City should encourage and facilitate retention and expansion of Gardner's businesses; diversify local economy and increase employment by facilitating the attraction of new businesses; conduct strategic planning efforts to reinvest in older industrial and commercial properties; offer development incentives and create unique opportunities for reinvestment in older industrial and commercial properties; enhance community amenities and promote positive image to improve quality of City life; and encourage regional collaboration.
- **Transportation:** Identify and improve pavement conditions and consolidate curb cuts to promote safe and convenient access to employment and commercial areas of the City.
- **Open Space:** Protect Gardner's natural resources; and improve Gardner's recreation resources and facilities. The open space improvements contained in the URP also advance the goals of Gardner's 2006 Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan.

The URP's Goals and Objectives, described in **Section 12.02 (3) Objectives**, reflect and promote the above listed action items from the comprehensive plan

This Plan and the information contained within the Plan are based upon efforts of the City's Planning and Community Development Office commencing with the Tax title taking of the S.Bent property in 2009 and followed with the acquisition of the Garbose Property in 2010. Both of these properties contained vacated buildings in deteriorated condition and the sites were identified as contaminated from their previous industrial uses. The City has embarked on a program to identify and assess the extent of contamination and formulate a remediation/re-use action plan. The Urban Land Institute (ULI) convened a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) to evaluate the Mill Street Corridor and make recommendations for its future redevelopment. The area was also selected as one of six sites to be the focus of a Brownfield Support Team (BST). BST's have been created by the State as a means to focus the attention and efforts of State Departments and Agencies involved in brownfield redevelopment. The efforts of the City have been rewarded with funding from the Environmental Protection Agency and MassDevelopment to undertake an assessment and initial remediation of contaminate areas. Additional funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Agency, which was matched by MassDevelopment and the GRA, has underwritten the cost of the Urban Renewal Planning Process for the Mill Street Corridor.

As part of the URP planning process, a survey of the Project Area was performed by consultants to the City of Gardner during 2012. An economic and market analysis for the Mill Street Corridor was performed to identify the industry sectors and uses to target and to evaluate the local economic development market potential. Based on the survey of existing conditions, the market survey, public input gained through an area planning process that built on the ULI and BST and included community and stakeholder participation at public forums and Steering Committee meetings, a vision for the Mill Street Corridor was developed in the form of the Urban Renewal Concept Plan (Figure S-5).

The vision for the Economic Redevelopment of Mill Street hinges on the successful development and build-out of the Mill Street Corridor. To achieve this vision, the City, in coordination with stakeholders

will use the following framework to encourage and guide its future development:

- Facilitate the expansion of existing businesses and to attract new industrial and commercial uses to the Project Area.
- Minimize the need for the public taking of private land in order to implement the plan.
- Make strategic infrastructure investments that will support business activity.
- Articulate a cohesive image for Mill Street businesses.
- Preserve and maintain the integrity of the abutting residential neighborhood.

## 12.02 (3) Project Objectives

### SECTION 1: URBAN RENEWAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal for the Project is:

***Goal: To create a framework for the redevelopment of the Mill Street Corridor, thus restoring unproductive and contaminated properties to productive use that will generate commercial and industrial training and job opportunities, provide business opportunities for economic development, and increase the City's tax base.***

#### Objectives:

In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives were established.

- To foster an environment for businesses to thrive and create sustainable jobs.
- Transform Gardner's historic manufacturing economic base to serve 21<sup>st</sup> century industry through redevelopment of former industrial properties, and in so doing increase the number and diversity of well-paying jobs in the City.
- Encourage and preserve economic diversity and quality of life by providing opportunities for businesses serving a diversity of incomes and skills.
- Increase real estate tax income generating properties in the URA.
- Encourage private sector investment and utilize public funds judiciously and strategically as a catalyst for private investment.
- Facilitate land assembly and disposition to advance the goals, objectives and activities of the URP.
- Use an improved roadway network and recreation trails as to facilitate the integration of the URA with adjacent residential and commercial uses, as well as transportation networks.

Following the development and analysis of various master plan options for the Mill Street Corridor, a final scheme was prepared that addressed these objectives, and thus the overall goal. Following is a description of how the Mill Street Corridor URP, as presented in this report, meets these objectives.

*To foster an environment for businesses to thrive and create sustainable jobs.*

In general, when looking to invest in a new project, business owners, developers and property owners typically consider "certainty of development". This means, they want to know that their development plans are consistent with an overall master plan and supported by the local government and neighborhood residents. Such support enables them to proceed through the permitting and approval process in an expedited manner with local support and little, if any opposition.

To meet this need, the Concept Plan was developed and incorporated into this URP to provide a description of uses preferred for the area. Existing businesses can expand and new businesses can locate in the area knowing they are doing so in a manner consistent with an overall plan. Not only do they know their plans are consistent with the master plan, they also know the type and extent of development that will be occurring around them. Adherence to a plan reassures prospective developers that their proposed

investment is consistent with what the City and the neighborhood wants and what future developers' investment will be like. It is about reducing risk and uncertainty.

The URP provides these certainties. Industrial uses are recommended in a defined area, mostly within the central core of the Area. Commercial uses are recommended on the Timpany Boulevard side of the area. Within these defined areas, the master plan provides flexibility so that existing businesses can remain. However, the plan also promotes removal of obsolete buildings and the creation of new development areas that can better accommodate new, modern manufacturing facilities that may be necessary to attract new businesses into the area.

*By transforming Gardner's historic manufacturing economic base to serve 21<sup>st</sup> century industry through redevelopment of former industrial properties the URP will increase the number and diversity of well-paying jobs in the City.*

By retaining the mixed-use character of the entire neighborhood in the URP, industrial, commercial and abutting residential uses can co-exist within and adjacent to the Project Area. Within this framework, existing businesses can expand and new businesses will be attracted into the neighborhood.

These economic development activities will result in the creation of new job opportunities. Furthermore, with the adjacency of residential neighborhoods, the opportunity will exist for people to live and work within the larger neighborhood.

*Encourage and preserve economic diversity and quality of life by providing opportunities for businesses serving a diversity of incomes and skills.*

The URP proposes a mix of commercial and manufacturing use in the Project Area. These uses will require a diverse work force for the businesses that locate in the URA. Positions will range from retail sales, managers, clerical, administrative, manufacturing, transportation, research, professional, and technical. It is anticipated these businesses will benefit from the job training opportunities that are available at nearby Mt Wachusett Community College that has established a reputation for responsive workforce development in the area and has been an active participant in the formulation of this Plan.

*Increase real estate tax income generating properties in the URA.*

Over the years, the City of Gardner has seen the property values in the South Gardner area decline as businesses have closed and left the neighborhood leaving behind an inventory of dilapidated, abandoned and tax delinquent old industrial buildings. Through the initiation of this URP, Gardner looks to stimulate many positive changes in the neighborhood, such as job creation and improved housing along with increased property values that will result in an improved tax base.

This Plan's recommendations provide a framework within which existing businesses can improve or expand their property, thus improving their value. In addition, should buildings be obsolete, the URP provides recommendations for demolition, site clearance and new parcel configuration and building locations that meet modern needs, thus encouraging new development, again resulting in improved property values.

Most importantly, the Plan encourages the redevelopment of vacant property for all types of uses, including industrial, commercial and residential. Putting these vacant parcels back into productive use will certainly improve the value of these individual parcels as well as the overall property values in the neighborhood.



*Encourage private sector investment and utilize public funds judiciously and strategically as a catalyst for private investment.*

The environmental degradation that characterizes the URA has been a major stumbling block to private investment. The cost and uncertainty associated with site cleanup has discouraged the development of the area along with aging infrastructure and fragmented ownership. Through the strategic deployment of public funds for environmental remediation and infrastructure upgrade, the major barriers preventing private development will be eliminated.

*Facilitate land assembly and disposition to advance the goals, objectives and activities of the URP.*

While the City is presently in possession of two thirds of the URA, there are other parcels that need to be assembled to create attractive development sites. Through the assemblage of these critical parcels the City will be in a position to make attractive development sites available for sale.

*Use an improved roadway network and recreation trails as to facilitate the integration of the URA with adjacent residential and commercial uses, as well as transportation networks.*

Mill Street is currently in need of upgrade and repair. The pavement condition is poor and there are no sidewalks, curbing and drainage is minimal. The URP proposes to upgrade Mill Street, perform streetscape upgrades, and improve the stormwater management. Additionally the URP proposes to construct over 4,000 linear feet of pedestrian trail within the URA for improved connectivity within and throughout.

## **SECTION 2: OVERALL REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The URP established the Mill Street Urban Renewal Area which is comprised of 14 parcels and contains 45 acres. Once a thriving industrial area the Mill Street Urban Renewal Area, is presently characterized by vacant, obsolete buildings in deteriorated condition, extensive environmental degradation resulting from its industrial past, vacant under-utilized properties, and significant public ownership (66% of the project area) resulting from tax title and environmental burdens.

The URP planning process included a public engagement process, marketing analysis, and planning assessment, which guided the formulation of a vision for the Mill Street Corridor.

The Overall Development Strategy proposes a comprehensive approach to address the area needs described in Section 12.02 (2) Eligibility and proposes specific development objectives and strategies to achieve its objectives.

The URP compiles information necessary to assist private investors in understanding the City's work with the community and to develop goals and specific development objectives and requirements for development in the Project Area. The Plan will also give the GRA the ability to negotiate directly with potential developers for the development of parcels and will provide a mechanism for acquiring select parcels necessary to accomplish redevelopment objectives. Additionally, the strategy identifies certain public actions to make Mill Street and economically vibrant, pedestrian friendly, and a sustainable area.

### **Mill Street Vision**

Gardner seeks to transform the Mill Street economic base from the dislocation associated with the decline of the furniture manufacturing industry to a vibrant 21<sup>st</sup> century economic base. Through the URP Gardner seeks to expand its role as a regional employment and commercial center by reinvigorating and expanding commercial development along Temporary Boulevard and reestablishing the industrial and

manufacturing presence on Mill Street

### **Timpany Boulevard Area**

The Timpany Boulevard portion of the URA is highly visible and easily accessible. Mill Street is well-positioned between two regional retail destination locations. The URP capitalizes on this by recommending retail development along Timpany Boulevard and the adjoining Mill Street parcels. North of Mill Street a larger footprint building with smaller pad locations are proposed to be developed either in conjunction with Timpany Plaza or on a standalone basis. South of Mill Street a smaller footprint retail plaza and a restaurant site overlooking Ramsdell Pond is envisioned. This location should benefit from the area's synergy as well as an unimpeded view of the pond.

### **Mill Street North**

The north side of Mill Street comprised mainly of the S Beat Property and several smaller parcels is proposed to be developed into smaller industrial lots utilizing the existing frontage on Mill Street and a proposed new road off Mill Street that will serve six lots. This area will target users in the 10,000 to 30,000 square foot market and will look to provide users with expansion potential.

### **Mill Street South**

The South Side of Mill Street is envisioned to contain limited industrial manufacturing in addition to a solar photovoltaic array which will provide a source of renewable energy. The City proposes to lease this land to a developer/operator of solar energy photovoltaic arrays to take advantage of the market opportunity. This will allow land, that might otherwise be vacant and generating no income, to become immediately productive in supplying clean renewable energy and generating income. The existing Gardener Horseshoe Club and Superior Kitchen are to remain and would be potential targets for private rehabilitation and expansion respectively.

A parking area is contemplated on the former Ramsdell Mill property to serve the Horseshoe Club and users of the proposed trails along Ramsdell Pond. The property will require clean up of the left over building debris. The dams serving S. Bent and Ramsdell Pond will also require repairs. The S. Bent Dam has been evaluated and recommended repairs identified. The Ramsdell Dam will require inspection and evaluation in order to identify the necessary repairs.

## **SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Regulatory**

The City will make appropriate modifications to the Zoning Ordinance and Design Guidelines to accommodate and direct the redevelopment of the URA. While the current zoning generally reflects the Commercial and Manufacturing emphasis of the area, the specific provisions will require adjustments to the use and dimension controls. The URP proposes the adoption of a "Mill Street Urban Renewal Overlay Zoning District" that promotes creativity and flexibility, articulates review and performance standards, and defines a predictable and transparent review process.

Design guidelines and performance standards will be developed which are consistent with the vision of the URP and will be part of the provisions of the Overlay District. In general, the guidelines will address sustainable principles such as energy efficiency and low impact development (LID), while minimizing large expanses of paved areas through landscaping, and interconnectivity. Specifically in the commercial areas the design guidelines will promote and integrating of larger and smaller footprint buildings;

placement of smaller footprint building closer to the street, and pedestrian circulation. For the manufacturing areas the guidelines will promote flexibility for expansion of smaller growing businesses; buffers to residential areas; and alternative energy. Performance standards will provide guidance as to the allowable limits for the operating characteristics associated with businesses and industries such as noise, vibration, electro magnetism, dust, quantity and nature of wastewater discharge, water usage, traffic, stormwater, energy usage. As the Mill Street area is an Expedited Permitting/Priority Development site pursuant to M.G.L. c. 43D, the City has in place an expedited permitting process to insure approvals within 180 days.

### **Timing**

The implementation of the recommendations contained in this Mill Street Corridor URP will be completed over a number of years. This Plan focuses on the improvements that will be implemented in the Project Area, which require the integration of both public and private improvements. The public improvements will include roadway reconstruction, utility upgrades, streetscape improvements and traffic improvements. Public funds will also be spent to prepare sites for redevelopment and will include actions such as site acquisition, building demolition, assessment and contamination remediation. The private improvements will include site preparation, new building construction, parking and loading facilities, landscaping/buffer plantings and associated improvements. Currently, the city is prepared to proceed with the URA improvements. Private investment and development will be predicated on public improvements and will market driven. It is anticipated that initial demand will be focused on the Timpany Boulevard commercial area and the solar photovoltaic array. Public improvements will be cognizant of the market demand/opportunities to strategically leverage private investments.

## **SECTION 4: ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

Consistent with the URP Objectives, the economic benefits from this plan focus on the creation of sustainable jobs and transforming the economic base to serve 21<sup>st</sup> century industry and returning vacant and underutilized land to the tax rolls. The redevelopment of the URA will return property that is currently underutilized into places of commerce and productivity that increases employment opportunities for the local workforce. No jobs are expected to be lost or retained as a result of the proposed acquisitions because the properties do not contain any places of active employment.

The URA will have the potential to employ workers temporarily during construction, and then provide permanent employment opportunities upon completion. During construction it is anticipate as many as 50 to 100 jobs will be created on a temporary basis. It is anticipated the commercial component of the URA will produce 75 to 100 new permanent positions and the industrial component will bring 125 new permanent positions to Mill Street.

## **12.02 (4) Financial Plan**

### **SECTION 1: LAND ASSEMBLY**

The financial plan for the Mill Street Corridor URP is based on cost estimates of the programs and projects proposed for the URA that will fulfill the Project's goals and objectives. A brief summary of each item is provided, with additional detail in the budget presented at the conclusion of this section.

Estimated cost of each parcel to be acquired and identification of any property in which any officer or employee of the municipality or of the operating agency has, or is believed to have, any direct or indirect interest.

Appraisals for each parcel to be acquired will be submitted under separate cover. The estimated cost shown in Table 9 is based on available appraised values where noted. Where appraisals have not yet been completed, the acquisition cost has been estimated based on the City's recent experience in the relationship of assessed value to sales price.

No properties have been identified in which any officer or employee of the municipality or of the operating agency has, or is believed to have, any direct or indirect expense.

### **SECTION 2: SITE PREPARATION COSTS**

Cost estimates for site preparation include environmental remediation of the Project Area to meet MassDEP requirements for future industrial and commercial use, building demolition, removal of asbestos, fencing, soil erosion control and grading of parcels. These figures are also shown in Table 9. Environmental clean-up costs and building demolition costs were based on the data summary and cost estimates for site remediation and demolition prepared for the City of Gardner by Tighe and Bond dated March 2012.

### **SECTION 3: PROPOSED PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS**

The proposed public improvements are listed as follows:

- New cul-de-sac with a public park at the intersection of Mill Street and Winter Street;
- Pedestrian trails network, primarily along Ramsdell Pond;
- Open space/wooded area on the northwest corner of Mill Street;
- Sewer relocation extension, and pump station;
- Sewer capacity improvements down-gradient of the URA;
- Replace water mains in Mill Street;
- Repairs Ramsdell Pond and S. Bent Pond dams;
- Improve the streetscape along Mill Street; and
- Improve the Mill Street Bridge, as necessary.

### **SECTION 4: RELOCATION EXPENSES**

Relocation costs are expected to be associated with two residential units. The cost estimates for relocation expenses are summarized in Table 9 and supported by the detailed pages that follow.

### **SECTION 5: GROSS PROJECT COSTS**

Table 9 presents detailed costs estimates of the following proposed public improvements:

**Table 9: Mill Street. Urban Renewal and Development Project Budget**

<b>Uses of Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>A. Property Acquisition</b>	\$750,000	Appraisals
<b>B. Site Preparation</b>		
Mitigation/Demo Garbose and S Bent	\$2,800,000	T & B Estimates
Demolition		
200 Mill Street	\$100,000	
216-218 Mill Street	\$25,000	
149 Mill Street	\$50,000	
<b>C. Relocation</b>	\$150,000	2 Res and 1 Bus
<b>D. Public Improvements</b>		
Sewer		
Relocation/Extension	\$175,000	
Sewer Pump Station	\$125,000	
Down Gradient Capacity Improvements	\$200,000	
Water mains	\$425,000	\$250 per lf
Dam Repairs	\$325,000	McGuire Report for S Bent
Traffic/Circulation		
Relocation of Mill Street	\$750,000	
Mill Street Bridge	\$50,000	
Mill Street Improvements/Streetscape	\$850,000	\$500 per lf
S. Bent Cul de Sac	\$420,000	\$700 per lf
Pedestrian Trails	\$300,000	\$75 per lf for unpaved trails
Open Space	\$300,000	
<b>E. Planning/Design/Consultants</b>		
Engineering Design	\$300,000	
Environmental Mitigation Permits	\$50,000	T & B estimate
Relocation Consultant	\$50,000	
Environmental Wetland Permits	\$25,000	
Environmental Assessment	\$245,000	T & B estimate
Appraisal Reports	\$25,000	10 properties @ \$2500
Dam Assessment	\$25,000	WAG
<b>F. Administration</b>	\$300,000	30 k per year
<b>G. Legal</b>	\$100,000	10 k per year
<b>Contingency 10%</b>	\$911,500	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,826,500</b>	



## SECTION 6: SOURCES OF FUNDING

Table 10 presents the anticipated sources of funds for each phase of development.

*Table 10: Mill Street Urban Renewal and Development Project Funding Sources*

Sources of Funds		
	Total	Notes
Sale of Properties	\$1,300,000	
Revenues from Solar PV Array	\$750,000	Assume 50 k/yr land lease
Grants		
o Mass Works	\$1,500,000	
o EPA	\$700,000	
o EDA	\$200,000	
Other funding		
o CDBG	\$300,000	\$20 k per year
o MassDev	\$500,000	
o City of Gardner	\$0	
o Bonds	\$2,000,000	
o Gardner Redevelopment Authority	\$0	
o DIF	\$1,000,000	
o Urban Revitalization Development Grant	\$315,000	
o Scenic Trails	\$315,000	
o Chapter 90	\$500,000	
o Local Infrastructure Development Program	\$500,000	
o MassDOT Bridge Program	\$75,000	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$9,955,000</b>	
<b>Gross Project Cost</b>	<b>\$9,826,500</b>	
<b>Net Project Cost</b>	<b>\$128,500</b>	

## **12.02 (5) Requisite Municipal Approvals**

As required by c.121B, Section 48, evidence of the required municipal approvals is to be included in the Attachments of the final URP. Specifically, Final URP Attachments include the below-listed items.

Declaration of Necessity from the GRA – Attachment B

Evidence of a public hearing (of which MHC was notified) – Attachment C

Approval of the Plan by local boards and officials (City Council, Mayor, GRA, Planning Board) – Attachment D

Legal counsel's opinion that the URP is in compliance with applicable laws – Attachment E

The MEPA ENF for the URP has not yet been filed by the City, but a copy will be sent to DHCD when the document is submitted to MEPA.

### **Public Hearing**

A public hearing was held on \_\_\_\_\_. A transcript of that hearing has been submitted as part of this plan. *(to be added at a later date)*

### **Municipal Approvals**

Copies of the City Council Vote approving the Plan and the Planning Board Resolution and Vote follow. *(to be added at a later date)*

### **Opinion of Counsel**

A copy of the Opinion of Counsel follows. *(to be added at a later date)*

## **12.02 (6) Site Preparation**

Site preparation activities will be limited to those parcels contained in the Project Area, and will include the demolition of any remaining obsolete buildings and structures following asbestos removal, and then site remediation. Building demolition and site remediation will be required in some areas, but some parcels are already vacant and only require site remediation. This work, described in more detail in the Tighe and Bond, Inc. report provided in Attachment F, will involve the following:

- Utilities within the street will be retained; the existing drainage system will be upgraded and continue to service the area.
- The site preparation activities will be engineered and permitted with the intent to consolidate the demolition and site remediation; will be bid and conducted accordingly.
- PCB-contaminated soils will be excavated and removed from the site.
- Petroleum impacted soils will be managed on-site under the provisions of the MCP.
- All utility services to the structures will be cut and capped within ten feet of the existing building foundations.
- Any remaining slabs or building foundations of the demolished buildings will be removed and disposed/recycled off-site.
- Any open excavations will be backfilled with on-site soils and will be graded “level”. Some clean fill might be necessary.
- The project site will be enclosed by chain link fencing to prevent access during remediation activities.
- Erosion controls will be implemented to prevent erosion and sedimentation beyond the site boundaries.
- The site will be stabilized with annual rye grass (or similar vegetation) upon completion to minimize erosion following demolition and prior to redevelopment.
- Any retaining walls will stay in place.

## **12.02 (7) Public Improvements**

### **SECTION 1: INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

The proposed infrastructure improvements are critical to the implementation of the project. Many of the infrastructure improvements within the URA are related to traffic and utility expansion and upgrades. These improvements are described in more detail below. Section 4.0 Financial Plan contains more detailed information within the cost estimate for infrastructure improvements. The existing 8-inch water main in Mill Street will be replaced with a 12-inch service. The sewer lines will be relocated and extended to provide service for proposed development parcels. This may require the installation of a force main and pump station. The two existing dams will be rehabilitated, as appropriate, to address any deficiencies. The current lack of accommodation for pedestrian travel will be addressed with the construction of 4,000 linear feet of trails throughout the URA that will also provide public non vehicular access along the shore of Ramsdell Pond

### **SECTION 2: ROADWAYS AND CIRCULATION**

The main access route to the URA is the Mill Street/Timpany Boulevard intersection, which is adequate and no significant changes or improvements are recommended. At the eastern end of the URA, a public open space will separate Mill Street into South and North Mill Streets. Winter Street will likewise be separated into South and North Winter Streets. These improvements are necessary to mitigate potential impacts to residential streets from increased industrial truck and commercial traffic. The issue of increased truck traffic was raised as a concern during the Public Forums. Proposed improvements include:

- Separating South and North Mill Streets, and South and North Winter Streets, with public open space;
- Allow an additional emergency access via North Winter Street;
- Upgrade South Mill Street from Timpany Boulevard to South Winter Street to include streetscape improvements, lighting, consolidation of curb cuts, and accommodation for pedestrian and bicycle travel.

### **SECTION 3: PARKING**

No on-street parking is proposed as part of the Project. A small area of public parking (approximately 37 parking spaces) will be available behind the Gardner Horseshoe Club at 186 Mill Street. All other parking shall be provided on each development parcel to accommodate the proposed building and use. All parking areas will comply with MADEP Stormwater Management Standards and incorporate low impact development drainage elements.

### **SECTION 4: DRAINAGE/ SYSTEM**

There is currently no known stormwater collection or treatment on individual parcels, and Mill Street has minimal provisions for stormwater. This will be corrected with appropriate stormwater best management practices (BMPs). Upgrades to Mill Street will include low impact development (LID) stormwater management consistent with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) standards. Development of individual parcels will also incorporate LID stormwater management practices consistent with MassDEP standards.

### **SECTION 5: PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE CIRCULATION**

Because Mill Street will be upgraded, accommodations will be made for improved sidewalks for

pedestrian circulation and the ability to accommodate a bicycle lane along the roadways. Sidewalks will be handicap accessible with lighting. Pedestrians and bicycles will also be able to utilize the proposed trail between Winter Street and Timpany Boulevard.

#### **SECTION 6: OPEN SPACE**

Open space is proposed at both ends of the Mill Street corridor. A wooded open space area is proposed northeast of the Mill Street/Timpany Boulevard intersection that will straddle the brook which exits from Ramsdell Pond. Another open space area is proposed in conjunction with the Mill Street relocation at Winter Street. This area will provide an open space buffer for the abutting residential neighborhood.



## **12.02 (8) Relocation**

All businesses and residents displaced by public action are entitled to receive relocation assistance and payment under M.G.L. c. 79A. In accordance with the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 27.02 and 27.03, the City of Gardner intends to provide fair and equitable treatment to all parties displaced due to the public actions documented in the URP.

The City will prepare a detailed relocation strategy for any property which involves public acquisition of property for redevelopment. The cost of relocation has been estimated on the basis of current occupancy, which consists of two residential units and one commercial property with one tenant but will likely be revised based on tenancy, use and market conditions at the time of site assemblage. The relocation cost estimated in **Section 12.02 (4) Financial Plan** is estimated based on similar projects requiring site assemblage or land acquisition. The total relocation cost estimate is \$150,000 for parcels to be publicly acquired. The City will retain the services of a relocation consultant experienced in relation matters to directly assist the City, including assistance in finding alternative sites, data regarding relevant zoning issues, review of moving cost estimates, etc. The City and the GRA anticipate designating a point person on staff to serve as the relocation officer to be assisted by a relocation assistant.

The City acknowledges that each occupant in legal occupancy at the time of the acquisition are entitled to remain on the said property for not less than four months from the date of its receipt of notice to vacate. The City will consult with the Bureau of Relocation in advance of property acquisition to ensure that 760 CMR 12.00, M.G.L. c. 79a, and 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 24 are met.

A detailed relocation plan will be conducted to determine the final relocation costs

## **12.02 (9) Redeveloper's Obligation**

To the maximum extent possible, the City seeks to stimulate and leverage private investment and activities within the URA. After approval of the URP, the GRA will be responsible for the disposition of properties requiring public acquisition for redevelopment. The GRA, in consultation with the City, will outline the desired uses for the parcels in accordance with this URP report. For each public acquisition and disposition event, potential redevelopers shall be required to provide, at a minimum, the following information to the GRA:

- a full description of the proposed development;
- a detailed description of the nature and location of any public improvements being sought;
- financial strength of the developer with financial sources;
- proposed job creation and job retention – temporary, permanent and construction jobs;
- timetable for design, permitting and construction;
- past experience and references; and
- partners or development team.

When submissions are made by interested developer(s), GRA will check each proposal for completeness and adherence to submission requirements. Then GRA will evaluate each proposal and take into consideration such factors as:

- job creation and retention;
- the proposed acquisition cost of City or GRA parcels;
- commitment to add new industrial, commercial and/or retail activity;
- advancement of the URP's goals and objectives, including job creation; a clean safe, physical and natural environment; energy efficiency and renewable energy; access and circulation;
- fulfillment of the goals and objectives of the URP;
- adherence to applicable City design principles; and
- representation that the developer shares the City's vision for the revitalization of the URA.

Following this evaluation by the GRA, a preliminary designation will be made for a preferred developer. The selected development entity and the GRA will be required to enter into a Land Disposition Agreement to be approved by the DHCD as required by 760 CMR 12.00; and a Development Agreement. Designated developers will be required to comply with the goals and objectives of this URP, current zoning regulations, and with Design Guidelines

## **12.02 (10) Disposition**

Under M.G.L. c. 121B and c. 30B, the sale or lease of industrial or commercial real property by redevelopment authorities or their successors, engaged in the development and disposition of the real state in accordance with an approved plan, is exempt from public disposition procedures required of all other local entities. The GRA, vested with the powers of an urban renewal agency, will exercise this authority and negotiate directly with any business within the Project Area who wishes to relocate onto one of the new parcels, provided they meet the requirements of this Plan. Following any such negotiations, the GRA will move forward with a process that will solicit proposals from outside entities to facilitate the redevelopment of the remaining disposition sites.

The proposed building, parking and service area improvements shown for each new lot on Figure S-5 in 12.02 (1)Section 1 are conceptual in nature and are intended to depict one option for maximizing development in the Area consistent with the goals of this Plan. In addition, Figure H-1 depicts e 17 disposition parcels for redevelopment by the private sector. These parcels and their locations have been chosen to provide the maximum opportunity to facilitate private redevelopment of this area. However, any proposed redeveloper(s) of the site will be provided with the opportunity to propose an alternative building and/or parcel arrangement for the Area provided such an arrangement meets the requirements of this Plan, the goals and objectives of the City/GRA and applicable law. Any such development proposal will be reviewed by the GRA Director and then the GRA and the appropriate City representatives in accordance with the goals and objectives of the URP and the terms of the Land Disposition Agreement(s) to be negotiated with the proposed redeveloper.

## 12.02 (11) Citizen Participation

This URP incorporates input received from public outreach efforts undertaken during the urban renewal planning process for the Mill Street Corridor. The main components of the City's overall approach to citizen participation throughout the URP process include:

- URP Steering Committee;
- Public forums;
- Private meetings upon request;
- Online availability of Urban Renewal forums, presentations, handouts, and reports; and
- Media outreach (e.g., recording forums for broadcast on local cable channel television, newspaper).



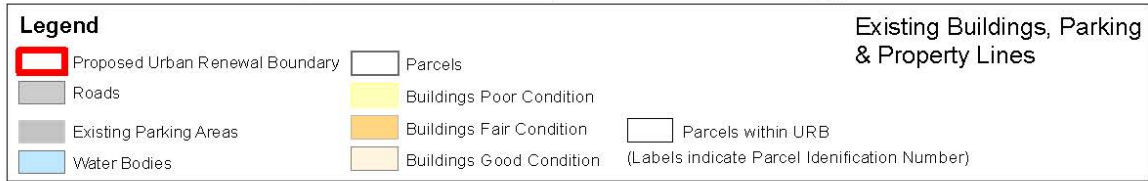
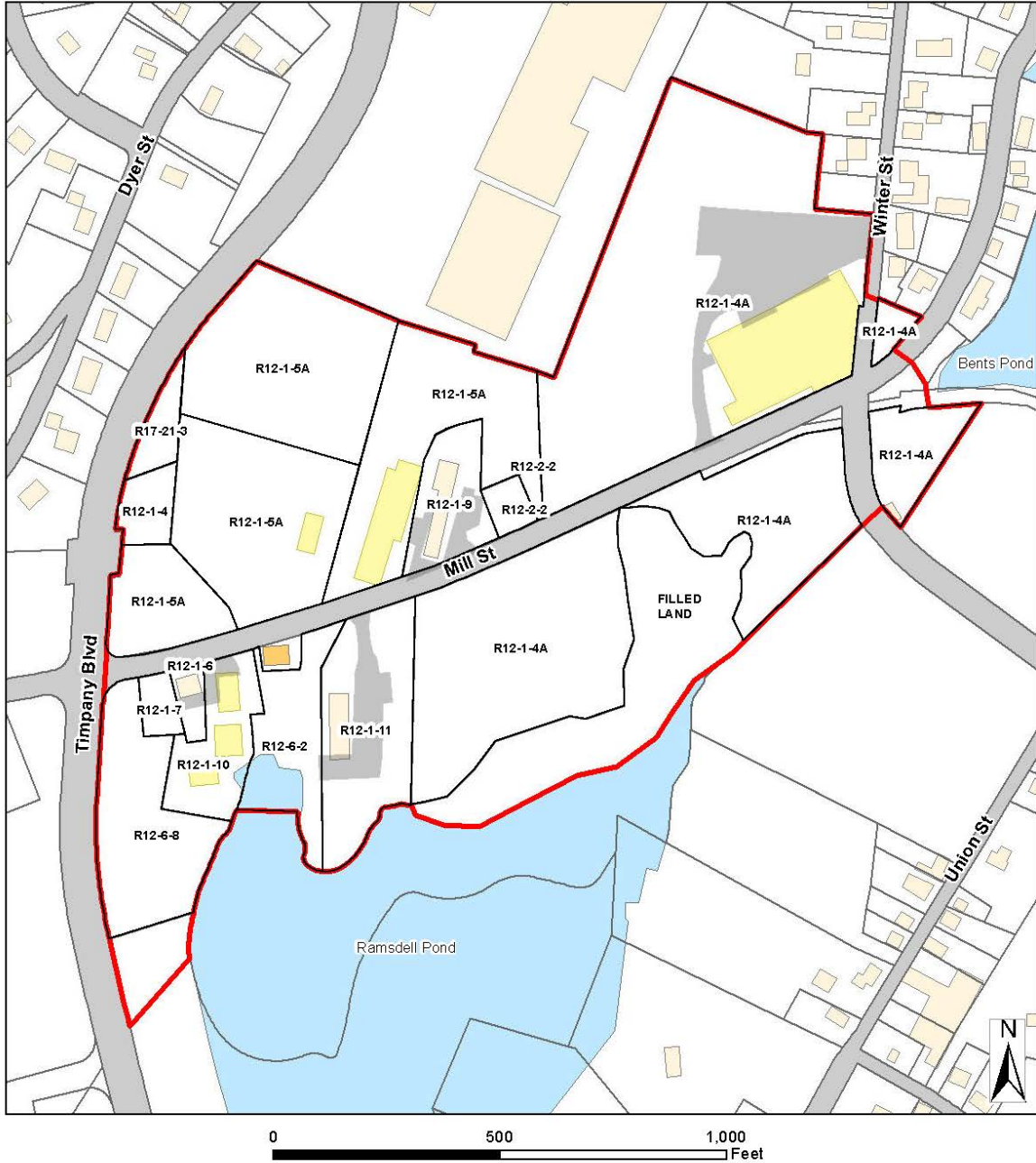
The citizen involvement process was initiated in December 2011. A URP Steering Committee was formed to address the Mill Street Corridor. The Committee is comprised of a dedicated group of stakeholders, including local residents, business owners and municipal officials who are committed to the development and implementation of the URP. The committee has approved the URA boundary and defined the framework of this URP. The GRA is grateful for the commitment of the Steering Committee (see member list in Attachment G: Public Participation), and plans to meet with the group on a regular basis during URP implementation. In addition, if amendments to the URP are proposed, they will be presented by the GRA to the Steering Committee for review and comment.

Two public forums have been held in 2012 to discuss urban renewal in the Mill Street Corridor, define issues of concern, and collect information relative to the URP and its objectives. Information presented at meetings has included site conditions, redevelopment options, elements of this URP, proposed infrastructure improvements, and implementation strategies and funding initiatives. Discussions, question and answer periods, and future planning steps rounded out the forums. The URP has been well received by Forum attendees, who have included local residents, business owners, steering committee members, public officials and elected officials. The residents, in particular, are eager to see the area remediated and productively redeveloped. Comments and concerns expressed at public forums regarding such matters as traffic volume and circulation, remediation, the dams and ponds, recreation/open space, public infrastructure improvements, and private property physical improvements are reflected in the URP's goals and objectives, defined in **Section 12.02 (3) Objectives**.

## Attachment A: URA Parcel Owner Information and Map

Property Owner	Address	Lot Size (acres)	Current Use	Zoning	Assessors Map	Proposed Use
City of Gardner	155 Mill Street	10.74	vacant industrial building	Comm 2	R12-1-5A	Commercial
City of Gardner*	60 Mill Street	17.97	vacant industrial building	Ind 1	R12-1-4A	Industrial
Tom & Alice Kymalainen	222 Mill Street	0.24	vacant lot	Comm 2	R12-1-7	Commercial
Tom & Alice Kymalainen	Timpany Blvd	2.53	vacant lot	Comm 2	R12-6-8	Commercial
The Gardner Group, Inc.	216-218 Mill St	0.22	duplex	Comm 2	R12-1-6	Commercial
Walter Dratner	200 Mill Street	1.05	factory bldgs.	Ind 1	R12-1-10	Commercial
Morse, HHR Hubbard	186 Mill Street	0.14	Horseshoe Club	Ind 1	R12-1-3	Horseshoe Club
The 129 S. Main St Corporation	170 Mill Street	1.50	vacant land	Ind 1	R12-6-2	Open Space Parking
Superior Kitchen Rheal McCaie	166 Mill Street	2.00	active company	Ind 1	R12-1-11	Active Company
Superior Kitchen Emery McCaie	149 Mill Street	1.05	active company	Comm 2	R12-1-9	Active company
Asgard Realty LLC	131 Mill Street	0.34	vacant land	Comm 2	R12-2-2	Industrial
Asgard Realty LLC	Timpany Blvd	0.42	vacant land	Comm 2	R12-1-4	Commercial
Eugene Butler	Timpany Blvd	0.39	vacant land	Comm 2	R17-21-3	Commercial
Unknown	Mill Street	3.20	vacant land	Ind 1	NA	Industrial
<b>Total</b>		<b>41.78</b>				





Existing Buildings, Parking  
& Property Lines

## **Attachment B: Declaration of Necessity**

## **Attachment C: Evidence of Public Hearing**

## **Attachment D: Local Approvals**

## **Attachment E: Legal Counsel Opinion**



## **Attachment F: Brownfields Summary Information**

## Catalogue of Existing Conditions and Conceptual Cleanup Plan - Mill Street Redevelopment Corridor, Garner, MA

**TO:** Trevor M. Beauregard - Economic Development Coordinator

**FROM:** Marc J. Richards, P.E., LSP

**COPY:**

**DATE:** March 13, 2012

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This memorandum describes the Existing Conditions and a Conceptual Cleanup Plan for the Mill Street Redevelopment Corridor (the "Corridor") in Gardner.

### Catalog of Existing Conditions

A catalog of existing conditions within the Corridor was conducted through a preliminary site reconnaissance visit and through a review of the following:

- Information provided by BSC Group
- Previous available environmental investigation reports
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) files
- Municipal files
- Historical aerial photos, historical mapping, and websites with historical information.

An Existing Conditions Plan (Figure 1) that is based on MassGIS Orthophotographic imaging from April 2009, and a Summary Catalogue of Existing Conditions (Table 1) are attached to this memorandum for reference.

### Existing Land Uses within Corridor

**Overview Description:** As defined herein, the Corridor is comprised of 13 individual parcels totaling approximately 55.34 acres, all of which have frontage on either Mill Street or Timpany Boulevard. The Corridor is also bordered on the east by Winter Street. Parcel boundary information is included on Figure 1.

The parcel identifications, address listings, size, and owner information are provided in Table 1. As summarized, the City of Gardner currently owns the two largest parcels, which are both abandoned properties. These include the former S. Bent Mill parcel at 60 Mill Street (approximately 27 acres) and the former Garbose Metal Company (i.e., Garbose Site) parcel at 155 Mill Street (approximately 10.58 acres).

A railroad spur (that stems from mainline located to the east of the Corridor) travels along the Bent Mill Property, crossing Mill Street, and enters the Garbose Site. While the spur once served these properties, it is no longer operational and many of the railroad ties have been removed or are damaged.

Current zoning within the Corridor includes Industrial 1 (IND1) along the eastern/southeastern portion of the Corridor, and Commercial 2 (COM2) along the western/northwestern portion of the Corridor.

The Corridor is serviced by municipal water and sewer, and there are no known private potable water wells on the Corridor parcels. An inactive irrigation well is reportedly on the Garbose Site parcel. Two abutting residential parcels on the western portion of the Corridor are serviced by septic systems despite the believed availability of sewer.

**Resource Areas:** According to MassGIS Priority Resource mapping, no Potentially Productive Aquifers, Wellhead Protection Areas (Zone II), Sole Source Aquifers, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, permitted Solid Waste Landfill, or Rare or Endangered Species Habitat are located within 500 feet of the site. A Protected and Recreational Open Space area associated with the Green Bower Cemetery abuts the Corridor to the southeast.

Ramsdell Pond and associated wetlands are situated along the southern perimeter of the Corridor. This surface water body is fed by Bents Pond (and its tributaries) situated to the east/northeast of the Corridor through an unregistered dam off Winter Street. Below the dam, water travels through a "waste way" located on the the S. Bent Mill parcel, then discharges into Ramsdell Pond. Through another unregistered dam further to west on a Corridor parcel, Ramsdell Pond ultimately discharges to the north (beneath Mill Street) to Pail Factory Brook. To the east of the dam is an abandoned water raceway, which discharges to the "Mill Chase Brook" on the north side of Mill Street. Mill Chase Brook discharges into Pail Factory Brook on the Garbose Site parcel. An unnamed southerly-flowing brook/drainage channel (and its associated wetlands) traverses along the western portion of the Corridor and also discharges into Pail Factory Brook. Pail Factory Brook ultimately flows towards an unnamed receiving pond situated off-site to the west of Timpany Boulevard. Each of these water courses is highlighted on Figure 1.

**Current Parcel Uses:** Based on site observations and available records reviewed, the current use of each Corridor parcel is summarized in Table 1. The table also includes a summary description of the existing buildings (e.g., type, size, approximate age, etc.) on the parcels. In general, five of the parcels are vacated properties and include the following:

- 60 Mill Street - former S. Bent Mill
- 131 Mill Street – former residential property
- 155 Mill Street - former Garbose Site
- 170 Mill Street - former manufacturing site
- 222 Mill Street - former residential property

Five of the parcels are currently occupied and include the following:

- 149 Mill Street - Superior Kitchen Designs. Inc. (a kitchen cabinetry manufacturer)
- 166 Mill Street - also occupied by Superior Kitchen Designs
- 186 Mill Street - Gardner Horseshoe Club (an indoor horseshoe facility)
- 200 Mill Street - an apparent automotive repair facility (site access not available)
- 216-218 Mill Street parcel - a residential duplex

The other three parcels within the Corridor are currently undeveloped land.

During the site reconnaissance, the two parcels owned by the City were accessed, as well as the former manufacturing site at 170 Mill Street, the two former residential properties located at 222 Mill Street and 131 Mill Street, and the undeveloped 2.53-acre parcel off Timpany Boulevard. The other privately-owned parcels within the Corridor were not accessed during the site visit. In general, no overt evidence of a new release or threat of a release of oil and/or hazardous materials (OHM) was observed on the parcels and/or the areas accessed during the site reconnaissance. Further descriptions of site observations are as follows:

60 Mill Street (former S. Bent Mill) – There are currently two abandoned structures at the former S. Bent Mill property, as further summarized in Table 1. There are also several remaining concrete foundations from former manufacturing buildings and storage structures associated with the former mill complex to the south of Mill Street. [Note: These former buildings or structures which are shown on the aerial photography image from April 2009 (Figure 1) were demolished in 2010 and 2011.] There was evidence of illegal dumping in areas to the north of Mill Street, and there was also evidence of homeless activity on two different portions of the parcel (see Figure 1). The majority of the dumping appeared to be associated with household items. There was no visual evidence of a release of OHM observed, but there was evidence that one or more dumped containers may have previously contained OHM. An abandoned railroad spur runs along Mill Street onto the northern portion of the parcel, and that spur previously continued across the western portion of the parcel towards the 155 Mill Street property (see Figure 1).

131 Mill Street (former residence) - This vacant parcel previously housed a single-family residence that was demolished in 2011. No potential environmental concerns were observed on the property. An apparent groundwater monitoring well was observed on the northeast portion of the parcel. The well may have been associated with monitoring of groundwater conditions for the documented release of contamination on the 155 Mill Street property (Garbose site) to the north and west (further discussion below).

155 Mill Street (former Garbose Site) – This vacant site is generally surrounded by chain-link fencing on the southern and eastern portions of parcel, and a wooden stockade fence along the northern portion of the parcel. There is an abandoned garage and an abandoned warehouse structure on the southeastern portion of the parcel, as further summarized in Table 1. Three 55-gallon drum containers and two other small containers of potential oil/hazardous materials (OHM) were located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the garage building, and two above ground storage tanks (ASTs) are located in the lower basement level of this building. A weigh station platform and a remaining slab from a former office building are also located on the southeastern portion of the parcel, off Mill Street. Evidence of an abandoned rail spur line was also observed on this portion of the parcel (see Figure 1).

The central, northern, and northeastern portions of the parcel are mostly unpaved and un-vegetated land where former metal recycling operations occurred. Small pieces of plastic, rubber, glass, and metal from former metal recycling operations were scattered on the surface of this area, and evidence of former electrical transformer equipment pieces were also observed. Stockpiles of soil (one is partially covered by a deteriorated blue tarp) were observed on the north central portion of this area, and larger pieces of debris were observed on the western and southwestern side-slopes of this cleared area, abutting the surface water channels. The surficial debris noted on the slopes suggests that a considerable volume of fill exists along this side of the property (upwards of 10 feet in depth). Abandoned concrete pieces were also observed in the undeveloped, wooded area to the west Pail Factory Brook (see Figure 1).

170 Mill Street (abandoned industrial site) – This former industrial site contains remnants of buildings and foundation areas on the southern and central portions of the parcel. An ancillary building in deteriorating condition is currently situated on the southeast corner of the parcel, adjacent to Ramsdell Pond. The exterior of this building contains broken asbestos transite siding, with pieces of this siding visible on the ground surface abutting the structure. Miscellaneous drums, equipment, wood debris, and treated wood ties were observed within the open building. Piles of demolition debris containing brick, concrete, wood, asphalt, roofing materials, etc. were also observed on the exterior portions of the site. Mastic material which may contain asbestos was observed on some of the brick debris, and the roofing materials in the debris piles may also contain asbestos. The concrete spillway for the on-site dam (which is the discharge point for Ramsdell Pond) appears to be in poor condition. Building demolition debris was also observed in the raceway to the east

of the dam and Pail Factory Brook. The concrete-based raceway was sealed by a water gate at the dam is is alos on very poor condition.

Timpany Boulevard (vacant 2.53-acre parcel) – The southern portion of this undeveloped parcel was accessed to review the cleared area on the southern portion of the parcel (see Figure 1). A mound of soil with overgrown vegetation was observed on the cleared area (see Figure 1). The origin and source material for this soil mound is unknown. There was no other evidence of activities on this undeveloped parcel.

The five privately-owned parcels that are currently occupied were generally not accessed, and therefore exterior observations are limited. Some observations made from property boundaries are noted below:

149 Mill Street and 166 Mill Street (Superior Kitchen) - Observations from property boundaries of the two Superior Kitchen parcels did not reveal notable environmental concerns.

186 Mill Street (Gardner Horseshoe Club) - Exterior observations around the small horseshoe club building did not reveal overt environmental concerns.

200 Mill Street (occupied industrial site) - Exterior observations from property boundaries of the apparent automotive repair facility were hindered by nearby property features, vegetation and existing buildings.

216-218 Mill Street (occupied residence) - Exterior observations from property boundaries of the residential duplex did not reveal overt environmental concerns.

## Historic Land Use of Corridor

A summary of historical uses of each Corridor parcel is provided in Table 1.

In general, the Corridor has been developed since at least the 1860s with the establishment of the S. Bent Mill facility. Further development of the Corridor area occurred between 1968 and 1971 with the construction of Timpany Boulevard. A railroad spur also previously serviced the former S. Bent Mill, former Garbose Site, and the former L.B. Ramsdell Company properties within the Corridor.

Further site-specific history for the developed Corridor parcels is presented below.

60 Mill Street (former S. Bent Mill) – The S. Bent Mill facility was founded in 1867. Based on earlier land surveys, the northeast portion of Ramsdell Pond was partially filled to allow for the expansion of the S. Bent Mill facility. The facility was first used to make five-spindle factory chairs, as well as children's chairs, rockers and stools. Other furniture specialties included "breakfast sets and institutional furniture" (1920s to 1950s) and the "college and university chair" (1960s).

In 1992, P. Alcock Acquisitions obtained ownership of the property and continued furniture manufacturing operations until circa 2000. Between circa 2001 and 2006, two known businesses operated at the site. These included Bob's Auto Service, which operated out of garage bays situated on the north side of the existing building to the north of Mill Street, and a metal fabricator. The City of Gardner acquired the property in 2006, and the remaining businesses were evicted. Between 2010 and 2011, the City had all but two of the facility buildings demolished.



155 Mill Street (former Garbose Site) – From approximately 1885 to 1957, the southern portion of the parcel was used by the L.B. Ramsdell Company (situated at 170 Mill Street) for the general storage of dry stock.

From approximately 1958 to 1998, the Garbose Metal Company operated a recyclable metal salvage yard on the parcel. Those operations included the collection, separation, and storage of scrap metal, as well as the crushing of automobiles and the dismantling of electrical transformers. As part of metal recycling operations, used oil from the transformers was burned or drained on site. The Garbose Site owner also reported that a portion of the parcel was also used as a “landfill” during the rerouting of Route 2 before 1958. However, no documents were reviewed that identified the location of potential buried debris from that reported site use, and the property is not listed as a closed or inactive landfill by MassDEP.

At least four buildings were located at the site during Garbose’s operations. These included the following:

- **Office/Warehouse Building:** This building is situated on the southeastern portion of the site and was used as office area and for the storage of scrap metal. This building, which was originally constructed in early 1900s, was previously used by the L.B. Ramsdell Company for dry storage. The warehouse and the foundation of the former office area remain on site.
- **Maintenance/Garage Building:** This building is situated on the southern portion of the site and was reportedly used to maintain and store trucks and other equipment associated with site operations.
- **Bailer Building:** This building was situated on the western/central portion of the site and was reportedly used for metal crushing. A sump pump reportedly located in this building, and was used for pumping “fluids” from the crushed automobiles and other metal components, to the exterior ground surface. The building was demolished circa 1998.
- **Alligator-Shear Building:** This building was situated on the northern portion of the site and was reportedly used for metal cutting. The small building was demolished circa 1998.

Garbose’s scrap metal operations occurred across the currently open, un-vegetated portions of the 10.58-acre parcel. No reported operations occurred on the wooded areas on the southwestern and western portions of the parcel. Aerial photographs from 1968 and 1971 indicate that a small area to the west of Pail Factory Brook off Mill Street was cleared for a short period of time. The former use of that cleared area is unknown.

Since approximately 1999, the Garbose Site parcel has been abandoned, and the City obtained owner of the parcel in 2010.

166 Mill Street and 149 Mill Street (Superior Kitchen) - The buildings located on these two parcels have been occupied by Superior Kitchen Designs since circa 1992. These parcels were previously part of the L.B. Ramsdell Company facility, as described below.

170 Mill Street (abandoned industrial site) – In approximately 1879, the L.B. Ramsdell Company began manufacturing of doll carriages on this parcel (which contains the dam and raceway). The manufacturing of toys and children’s furniture later occurred at the facility. Historical mapping indicates that the L.B. Ramsdell Company facility complex was also situated on the abutting parcels at 166 Mill Street (currently occupied by Superior Kitchen Designs), 186 Mill Street (currently occupied by the Gardner Horseshoe Club) and 200 Mill Street (currently automotive repair facility), as well as on parcels across Mill Street at 155 Mill Street (former Garbose Site) and 149 Mill Street (currently occupied by Superior Kitchen Designs). The company ceased operations circa 1957.

After 1957, other industrial operations may have occurred in the buildings on the 170 Mill Street parcel, but those former uses are unknown.

Demolition of some of the facility buildings occurred circa 2007.

200 Mill Street (occupied industrial site) – In addition to the former L.B. Ramsdell Company operations, historical mapping indicates that one of the current buildings on this parcel was used for manufacturing plastic goods (circa 1949) and as a machine shop (circa 1968). Municipal records also indicate that a complaint was issued to the KC Pallet Company in 1995 for burning operations on this parcel. More recent company listings for this property address have included Gil's Auto Body and Powerhouse Plastering.

## Corridor-wide Inventory of Environmental Conditions

Documented releases of OHM have occurred at the former S. Bent Mill and former Garbose Site properties. According to MassDEP records, no reportable release of OHM has occurred on any of the other parcels within the Corridor.

Further site-specific information on the releases of OHM and on other documented information for other potential environmental concerns on the Corridor parcels is presented below.

60 Mill Street (former S. Bent Mill) - MassDEP has assigned four separate Release Tracking Numbers (RTNs) to the former S. Bent Mill parcel. The releases included the following:

- RTN 2-00612 was assigned to the site in 1989 for the release of No. 6 fuel oil from an underground storage tank (UST), which was subsequently removed. The RTN was closed out by MassDEP in 1996 with no further action requirement.
- RTN 2-16651, RTN 2-16652, and RTN 2-16653 were each assigned to the property in 2007. RTN 2-16652 involved a reportable release of petroleum compounds and target polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in fill soils situated off the southern portion of parcel (see Release Area 1 on Figure 1). These miscellaneous fill soils contained asphalt shingles, railroad ties, and bricks. RNT 2-16653 involved a reportable release of petroleum compounds in shallow soils situated near the entrance to the facility to the south of Mill Street (see Release Area 2 on Figure 1). The impacts were reportedly associated with a release of waste oil in a former shed structure in this area, which appeared to be related to the former automobile repair facility operations (i.e., Bob's Auto Service) on the property in the 2000s. Lastly, RTN 2-16651 involved a reportable release of target PAHs in fill soils situated to the northwest of the existing building on the north side of Mill Street (Release Area 3 on Figure 1). These miscellaneous fill soils contained railroad ties, bricks, and other solid waste. Each of the three RTNs were remediated (via contaminated soil removal and disposal) and closed out by Tighe & Bond with a Class A-2 Response Action Outcome (RAO) Statement in 2009, in accordance with Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP; 310 CMR 40.0000).

USTs and above ground storage tanks (ASTs) reportedly located at the former S. Bent Mill site have included the following:

- Two 10,000-gallon USTs containing fuel oil, which were removed from the site. One of those tanks was subject of the closed RTN 2-00612.
- One 500 gallon UST - the contents and closure status of this tank are unknown.
- One 4,100 gallon AST used for the storage of stain, sealer and topcoat materials.
- One 275 gallon fuel tank.

Tighe & Bond conducted environmental investigations in identified areas of concern and across much of the 27-acre parcel. In general, the portions of the property where potential environmental impacts were identified included areas of stressed vegetation, areas of stockpiled solid waste debris, a waste oil staining area (subject of closed RTN 2-16653), a former gasoline UST area, a dry well area, areas of pad-mounted electrical transformers, the fill area near Ramsdell Pond, former drum storage and hazardous waste storage areas, and other former OHM storage areas. Tighe & Bond's investigations included the excavation of exploratory test pits, soil boring advancement and the installation of groundwater monitoring wells, and hand auger advancement for the collection of surficial soil samples. Based on those findings, three separate release areas (to soils) were identified, and those RTNs were closed out in 2009 as discussed above.

A summary of other documented environmental conditions of concern for the former S. Bent Mill property is as follows:

- MassDEP issued various Notices of Noncompliance (NONs) and Administrative Consent Orders (AOCs) to the property for violations of air quality, hazardous waste management, and industrial wastewater regulations during furniture manufacturing operations at the site.
- In 2003, MassDEP issued a NON letter to Bob's Auto Service because the company was not registered as a waste oil generator and for smoke and wood stove operations on site.
- In 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) removed asbestos and other hazardous materials from the existing building north of Mill Street using EPA funding.

155 Mill Street (former Garbose Site) - MassDEP has assigned five separate RTNs to the former Garbose Site. The releases include the following:

- RTN 2-11321 was assigned in 1996 for the detection of metals and petroleum compounds at elevated concentrations in site soils. The RTN was closed without remediation with a Class B-2 RAO Statement in 1996, and with a deed restriction placed on the property. The RAO and deed notice were retracted in 2003 following the detection of higher levels of contamination in site soils during subsequent investigations.
- RTN 2-14627 was assigned in 2003 for the detection of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in site soils at elevated concentrations. This RTN has been linked to the primary site RTN 2-11321.
- RTN 2-14896 was assigned in 2003 for the detection of chromium in surficial soils at elevated concentrations, which triggered an Imminent Hazard condition. Further assessment findings indicated that an Imminent Hazard condition did not exist, and the RTN has been linked to the primary site RTN 2-11321.
- RTN 2-15974 was assigned in 2005 for the detection of Non-aqueous Phase Liquid (NAPL; identified as motor oil or waste oil) in one on-site monitoring well situated in the footprint of the former Bailer Building. This release triggered Immediate Response Action (IRA) requirements under the MCP. Response actions under the IRA were initiated but were not completed, and this release has been linked to the primary site RTN 2-11321.
- RTN 2-16137 was assigned to the site in 2006 for the detection of metals and dioxins at elevated concentrations in site soils and/or sediments. This RTN has been linked to the primary site RTN 2-11321.

The primary site RTN 2-11321 is classified as a Tier IC site, and the RTN is currently out of compliance with the MCP.

A 2,000-gallon fuel oil UST was reportedly installed in 1971 near the weigh station platform immediately off Mill Street, and that tank was reportedly removed without incident in 1991. Additionally, a permit to maintain one tank truck vehicle for the storage of No. 2 fuel oil (not to exceed 1,700 gallons) was issued for the property in 1978.

Nine ASTs were reportedly located in the Garbose Site buildings. The tanks included the following:

- Office/Warehouse Building: Two former 275-gallon fuel oil ASTs.
- Maintenance/Garage Building: Two 275-gallon fuel oil ASTs, one 300-gallon waste oil AST, and one 50-gallon hydraulic oil AST. Two 275-gallon ASTs (reportedly the fuel oil ASTs) currently remain in the lower basement level of the building.
- Bailer Building: One former 275-gallon fuel oil AST, and one former 275-gallon diesel AST.
- Alligator-Shear Building: One former 275-gallon fuel oil AST.

An overview of the environmental investigations conducted at the Garbose Site between 1996 and 2006 is as follows:

- A total of approximately 184 soil samples, 35 groundwater samples, 45 sediment samples, and 8 surface water samples were collected from the site. Of the 184 soil samples, 167 of those samples were collected from surficial soils or from shallow depths of less than 3 feet below surface grade.
- Groundwater samples were collected from approximately 18 monitoring wells installed across the site.
- Sediment samples and surface water samples were collected from the on-site mill chase brook, Pail Factory Brook (samples were collected on site and downstream of the Corridor, across Timpany Boulevard), the unnamed brook/drainage swale that traverses along the western portion of the Garbose Site (samples were collected on site and upstream of the Corridor across Timpany Boulevard), Ramsdell Pond (located upstream of the Garbose Site), and an unnamed downstream (off-site) receiving pond for Pail Factory Brook.
- The sampled media were analyzed for PCBs, metals [RCRA 8, Priority Pollutant (13), or individual metals], total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH), extractable petroleum hydrocarbons (EPH), target PAHs, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), volatile petroleum hydrocarbons (VPH), and/or dioxins.

As reported by other environmental consultants, the impacts to the Garbose Site are summarized as follows:

- Elevated concentrations of metals, PCBs, petroleum compounds, and dioxins were detected in soil, groundwater, sediment and/or surface water at the site.
- Metals of concern include arsenic, antimony, barium, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, mercury, nickel, and zinc. Metals impacts are to soils across the vast majority of the un-wooded areas of the site (i.e., where former site operations occurred), and in sediments in the unnamed brook/drainage swale, in a portion of the mill chase brook, and in Pail Factory Brook. The metals impacts to site soils are reportedly to depths of less than approximately four feet below grade.

- PCB impacts to site soils and sediments are generally similar to the metals impacted areas. PCB concentrations greater than 10 parts per million (ppm) were detected in approximately 15 soil samples and 1 sediment sample, and total PCB concentrations greater than 50 ppm were detected in 3 of the soil samples. The vast majority of the higher PCB concentrations in soils were identified in the area where electrical transformers were dismantled during previous site operations on the west central portion of the site, to the south of the former Bailer Building and to the north of the existing Maintenance/Garage Building.
- Petroleum impacts to site soils are in the vicinity of the former Bailer Building, the existing Maintenance/Garage Building, along the Railroad Spur, and the northeast corner of the site. The vertical extent of petroleum impacts to soil was between approximately 0 and 8 feet below grade, with the deepest impacts in the former Bailer Building area.
- Dioxin impacts to shallow site soils are in the area where electrical transformers were dismantled, and on the northwestern portion of the site. Dioxin impacts to sediments are also in the mill chase brook.
- Site groundwater is impacted by PCBs and metals, but no dissolved concentrations of PCBs and metals in site groundwater were above applicable risk-based standards. NAPL was detected in one site monitoring well located in the footprint of the former Bailer Building, but no EPH concentrations in site groundwater (including in that well) were above applicable risk-based standards.
- Surface water in the mill chase brook, the unnamed brook/drainage swale, and Pail Factory Brook is impacted by PCBs and metals, but no dissolved concentrations of PCBs and metals in these surface water bodies were reported above Ambient Water Quality Standards.

A summary of other documented environmental conditions of concern for the former Garbose Site is as follows:

- Municipal records indicate that asbestos abatement occurred for unidentified building in 1999 (likely either the former Bailer Building or former Alligator-Shear Building) and for the Office/Warehouse Building (for the office area) in 2005 prior to their demolition.

166 Mill Street and 149 Mill Street (Superior Kitchen) – No known environmental investigations have been conducted on these occupied industrial properties.

In 2003, MassDEP issued NON/AOC letter to Superior Kitchen Designs for violations of air quality emissions and hazardous waste management. A follow-up inspection by MassDEP indicated that the facility was in compliance.

170 Mill Street (abandoned industrial site) – No known environmental investigations have been conducted on this abandoned industrial property.

Municipal records indicate the following:

- A 1,000 gallon AST was installed in 1969 and removed from this property in 2007. The tank was reportedly located directly behind the Gardner Horseshoe Club at 186 Mill Street.
- In 1998, the property was cited for having an unsafe building and violations of the Sanitary Code for the presence of loose, crumbled, and powdered asbestos throughout the abandoned building and over Pail Factory Brook.



- In 2007, a demolition permit was issued for a two-story post and beam factory building on the property. This is the assumed location of the current foundation on site, where piles of construction debris were observed during the site reconnaissance.

200 Mill Street (occupied industrial site) – No known environmental investigations have been conducted on this occupied parcel.

As discussed above, a complaint was issued to the KC Pallet Company in 1995 for burning operations on this parcel. No air pollution violations were reported during a follow-up inspection by the City.

216-218 Mill Street (occupied residence) – No known environmental investigations have been conducted on this occupied residential parcel.

Municipal records indicate that the property is serviced by a septic tank that is situated to the south of the residence. A system failure was reported in April 2003, which was corrected by September 2003. The tank was most recently pumped out in March 2011.

222 Mill Street (former residence) – No known environmental investigations have been conducted on this former residential parcel.

Municipal records indicate that the property was serviced by a septic tank that was situated to the south of the former residence. The tank was most recently pump out in September 2010. It is unknown whether the tank was removed during building demolition in 2011.

## Conceptual Cleanup Plan

In addition to environmental considerations, the “cleanup plan” for individual Corridor parcels and/or for select areas within the Corridor is contingent upon many factors, including redevelopment plans and future site uses (e.g., industrial, commercial, residential, open space, etc.), planned reuse or demolition of existing structures, ownership issues and/or displacement of existing businesses, and planned stages of redevelopment.

For the two largest Corridor parcels which are both owned by the City, there is a significant amount of information already available relative to the environmental conditions on those two properties. In addition, building demolition and further assessment beneath foundation areas is already scheduled for the former S. Bent Mill site and a cleanup plan was previously established for the former Garbose Site under an earlier MCP submittal to MassDEP by the previous property owner’s consultant.

Based on this background, conceptual approaches to cleanup plans for the two City-owned parcels and a recommended action plan for the other Corridor parcels/areas (where the need for “cleanup” is unknown at this time) are addressed separately below.

### Conceptual Cleanup Plans for City-Owned Parcels

A Conceptual Cleanup Site Plan (Figure 2) and a Summary of the Conceptual Cleanup Plan/Recommended Action Plan (Table 2) are attached to this memorandum for reference.

60 Mill Street (former S. Bent Mill) – As reviewed above, Tighe & Bond recently completed environmental investigations in identified areas of concern and across much of the exterior portions of this 27-acre parcel, and four separate releases of OHM to the environment were addressed and properly closed out under the MCP remediation process. Therefore, the cleanup of known environmental impacts on the exterior portion of the parcel is not warranted at this time.

As summarized in Table 2, the City has scheduled the demolition of the remaining mill building to the south of Mill Street for the spring/summer of 2012. Prior to demolition, the abatement of asbestos containing materials (ACM) and other hazardous building materials will be conducted. [Note: A survey of those items has already been completed.] Also as part of this scheduled work, the remaining concrete slabs from former buildings and structures on the south side of Mill Street will also be removed (see Figure 2), and the assessment of environmental conditions beneath these slabs will be conducted through a test pit exploration and monitoring well installation programs, and laboratory analysis of soil and groundwater samples.

Following the completion of that work, the City has preliminary plans to demolish the remaining mill building to the north of Mill Street. That work will first involve the survey of ACM and other hazardous materials remaining on the interior and exterior portions of the building, followed by the abatement of those items, then building demolition. [Note: Building demolition would also include the removal of the dumped solid waste material present on the exterior portions of the building.] Following building demolition and foundation removal, the assessment of environmental conditions beneath the building footprint would also be warranted similar to the approach summarized above for the south side of Mill Street. Our preliminary opinion of probable costs for these items is included in Table 2.

A "cleanup plan" with an opinion of probable costs for addressing impacts or other environmental concerns identified beneath the slabs cannot be established at this time because it is not known whether those actions will be warranted.

155 Mill Street (former Garbose Site) - As reviewed above, environmental investigations were completed across the developed portions of the former Garbose site, as well as in the abutting surface water channels. According to available MCP report submittals to MassDEP, the delineation of the impacts to subsurface conditions on site and to the abutting surface water channels was completed by those investigations. In addition, a preliminary cleanup plan was established.

Based on our site reconnaissance visit and our review of the available site information, it is our opinion that limited additional assessment would likely be warranted to further delineate the vertical extent of the impacted fill soils and/or to identify whether there is a significant volume of and/or unknown buried debris from the former scrap metal operations. Of particular concern are the varying PCB concentrations across the site, former dismantling of electrical transformers on site, and the volume of fill and debris observed along the western slopes adjacent to the surface water channels. Additional assessment would likely be conducted through test pit explorations and laboratory analysis of a limited number of additional soil samples.

Consistent with the earlier MCP submittal for RTN 2-11321, our Conceptual Cleanup Plan for the Garbose Site also includes the following:

- The excavation of the higher-level impacted soils (driven by PCB levels) in identified "hot spot" areas for proper off-site disposal under the Federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) regulations (40 CFR Part 761).
- The excavation of impacted sediments for anticipated re-use on site as backfill (as appropriate), and the proper restoration of these wetland resource areas following that work.
- The consolidation of the impacted area footprint to reduce the requirements of a future cap. This would likely include relocating certain areas of impacted fill soils along western side-slopes (which will also provide further protection of the abutting resource areas), and the removal of larger solid waste debris identified within the fill for off-site disposal.

- The on-site stabilization of leachable metals (that are determined to be above hazardous waste levels through laboratory analysis) using phosphate-based binders in the excavated sediments and in other impacted soils, as needed, prior to off-site disposal and/or re-use on site as backfill.
- Periodic bailing or pumping (as needed) or excavation and dewatering of non-aqueous phase liquid (NAPL or floating oil on groundwater) present on groundwater on a limited portion of site, and the proper off-site disposal of the oily water material.
- Capping of the remaining footprint of impacted soil area with either an engineered barrier system (consisting of soil layers, warning barriers, and/or pavement) to reduce exposure to the soils, and the placement of a restriction on the parcel deed to limit future exposure scenarios and to restrict future site uses to commercial and/or industrial operations only (i.e., no residential, school, day care facility, playground, etc.). The type and extent of a capping system should be based on a specific redevelopment scenario and end use for the property.

Future site redevelopment scenarios that are closely integrated into the cleanup strategy for the property will need to address site-specific cleanup values that are consistent with proposed end uses for the property, the extent of property deed restrictions, and meet regulatory permitting requirements (particularly with the EPA).

The Conceptual Cleanup Plan for the Garbose Site also includes the demolition of the two abandoned buildings because soils beneath the Maintenance/Garage Building are already known to be impacted and the re-use of the Warehouse Building as part site redevelopment is unlikely. Demolition would involve the survey of ACM and other hazardous materials in the buildings, abatement of those items, and then building demolition. Assessment of environmental conditions beneath the Warehouse Building and the slab of the former office area would also be conducted, as warranted.

Table 2 summarizes the Conceptual Cleanup Plan tasks and includes preliminary opinions of the cost for the completion of those tasks. As shown, the preliminary cost opinions include engineering services relative to completing supplemental assessment, regulatory permitting (EPA and MassDEP), confirmatory sampling, MCP reporting, site-risk characterization, and wetlands/waterways permitting.

## **Recommended Action Plan for other Corridor Parcels**

As reviewed above, no historical releases of OHM have been reported on any of the privately-owned Corridor parcels. However, no known environmental investigations have been conducted on any those parcels to date. In addition, the parcels or areas identified for future redevelopment and the type of redevelopment are not known at this time. Therefore, a conceptual "cleanup plan" for these parcels could not be developed.

Future property transfers and development scenarios will drive the decision process on whether certain non City-owned parcels undergo further evaluation. Typical with a proposed property transfer, certain environmental due diligence actions are often performed which may include the following activities:

- Conduct a Phase I environmental site assessment in accordance with ASTM Standards to help identify potential Recognized Environmental Concerns (RECs).
- Conduct Phase II subsurface investigations as necessary to address the identified potential RECs, as warranted. At a minimum, it is assumed that potential RECs would likely be identified at each of the industrial sites, which include the following five parcels:

- 149 Mill Street (Superior Kitchen)
- 166 Mill Street (Superior Kitchen)
- 170 Mill Street (abandoned manufacturing site)
- 186 Mill Street (Gardner Horseshoe Club)
- 200 Mill Street (occupied industrial site)

The scope and nature of any future Phase II subsurface investigation are very dependent on parcel size and the complexity of the potential environmental concerns identified at the site. Additional Phase II assessment costs are incurred if a release to the environment is detected, and further delineation of that release condition is warranted.

- Conduct cleanup as necessary, to address the environmental impacts identified during the Phase II investigations. Since the extent and complexity of environmental impacts can vary widely and these conditions are currently unknown, cleanup scenarios cannot be developed at this time.
- Conduct a survey of ACM and other hazardous materials in parcel buildings scheduled for renovation or demolition. As reviewed, parcels with existing buildings or remaining structures include the five industrial site parcels mentioned above, and the residential duplex at 216-218 Mill Street.

# Summary of References

## General Resources Reviewed

<http://www.historicaerials.com/>

<http://mwcc.edu/gardnerfurniture/BriefHistory.htm>

Municipal records reviewed from Assessors' office, Board of Health, Engineering Department, and Fire Department.

MassDEP files reviewed on-line @<http://public.dep.state.ma.us/SearchableSites/Search.asp>, and at the offices of MassDEP-Central Region

Site reconnaissance visits conducted on January 10, 2012 and February 15, 2012.

## Former S. Bent Mill

The environmental investigation reports reviewed for the S. Bent Mill property included the following:

- Status of Historical Site Assessment of S. Bent and Brothers Facility report, prepared by Environmental Compliance Services (ECS), Inc.
- Phase II Environmental Site Assessment prepared by Tighe & Bond, Inc. in April 2007
- Phase I Initial Site Investigation and Tier II Classification prepared by Tighe & Bond, Inc. in April 2008
- Additional Site Investigation Results Letter prepared by Tighe & Bond, Inc. in November 2008
- Response Action Outcome Statement prepared by Tighe & Bond, Inc. in September 2009

## Garbose Site

The environmental investigation reports reviewed for the Garbose Site included the following:

- Phase II Comprehensive Site Assessment (CSA) report prepared by Corporate Environmental Advisors, Inc. (CEA) in February 2006\*
- Phase II Remedial Action Plan report prepared by CEA in February 2006
- Immediate Response Action (IRA) Status Report letter prepared by CEA in March 2006
- Phase II, Phase III, Tier Classification Linking report prepared by CEA in November 2006 (which included results from additional Phase II assessment activities)
- Phase IV Remedial Implementation Plan (RIP) report prepared by CEA in January 2007
- Method 3 Human Health Risk Characterization report prepared by CEA in January 2007
- Stage II Ecological Risk Assessment report prepared by ENSR/AECOM in January 2007
- Conceptual Remedial Cost Estimate letter prepared by CEA in April 2007
- Draft Targeted Brownfields Assessment Report / Phase I Environmental Site Assessment prepared by Advanced Environmental Solutions, Inc. (AES) in January 2010
- AAI/ASTM Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Update letter report prepared by CDW Consultants, Inc. in December 2010

\*Note: The Phase II CSA report included references to several earlier environmental investigations and reports prepared for the site, and included data previously collected from the property in 1996, 1999, and 2003.



## **Attachment G: Public Participation**

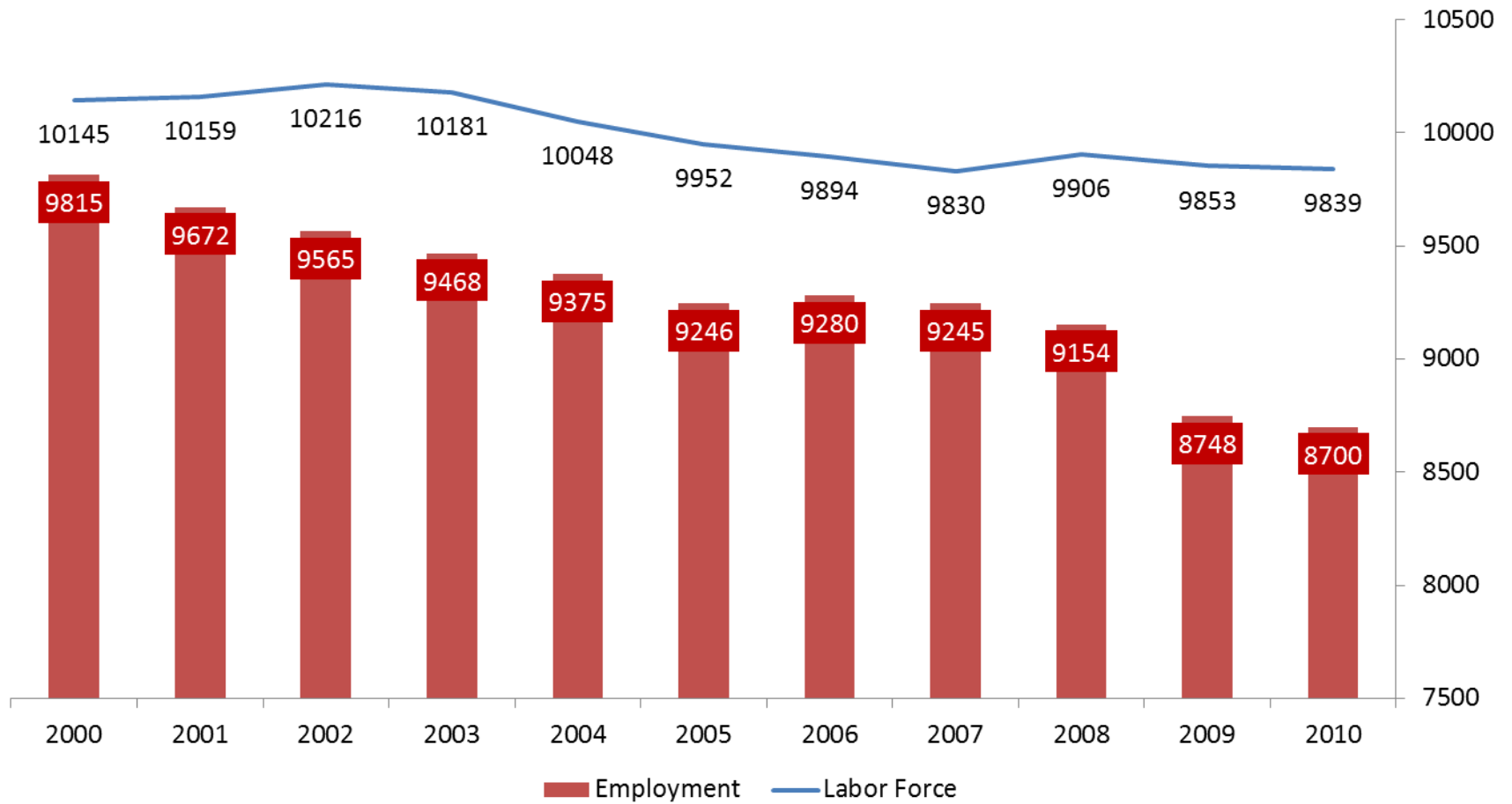
## **Attachment H: Market and Economic Analysis**



## **Gardner Economic Overview Market Trends Analysis – Working Draft 2/2/2012**

## **Gardner Economic Activity and Base**

## Gardner reached its private employment peak in 2000

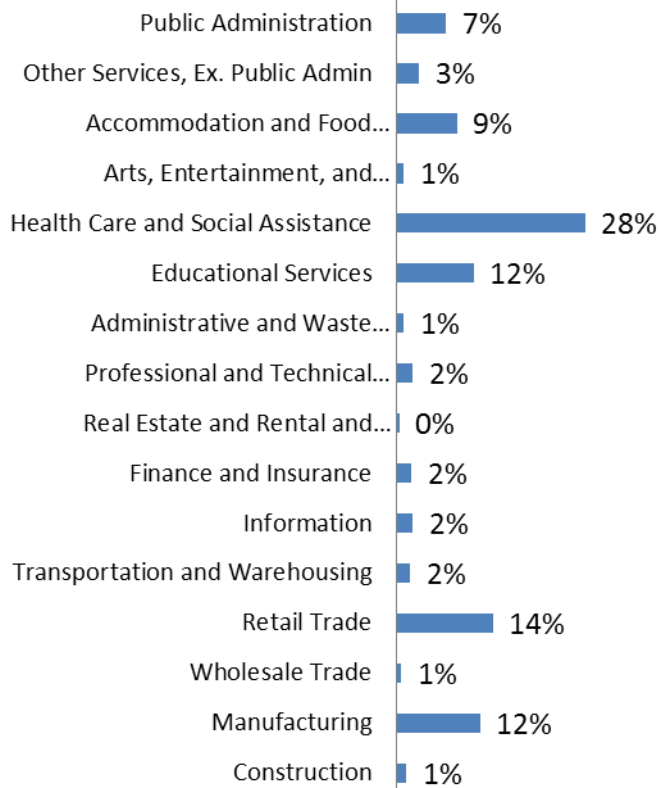


Source: MASS LMI ES 202 data  
CY2010 last full year available



# Manufacturing remains an important part of the Gardner economy

**Gardner Employment by Industry  
2010**



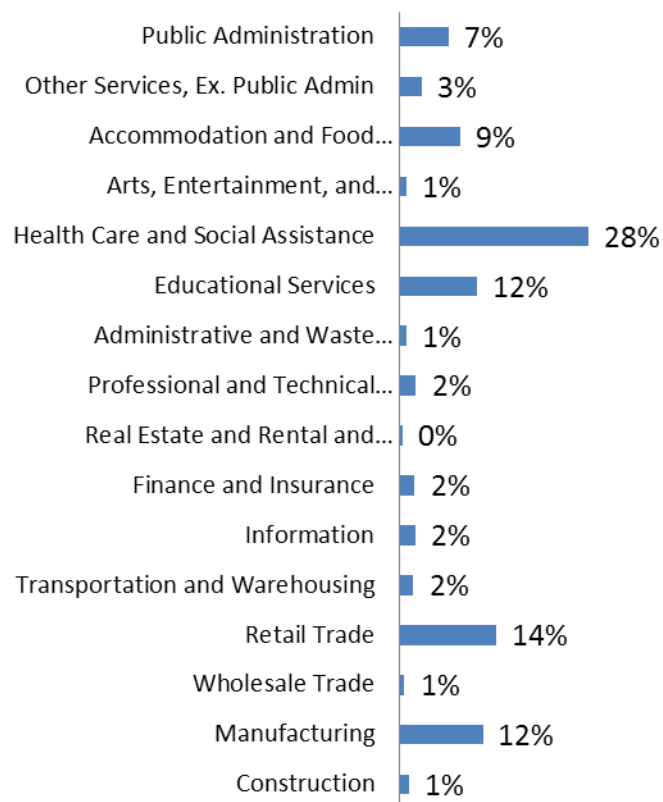
Description	No. of Establish-ments	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Manufacturing	35	1,000	\$955
Wood Product Manufacturing	4	26	\$654
Paper Manufacturing	3	224	\$937
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	6	31	\$875
Machine Shops and Threaded Products	4	31	\$875
Furniture and Related Product Mfg	6	91	\$1,264
Household and Institutional Furniture	5	80	\$1,316



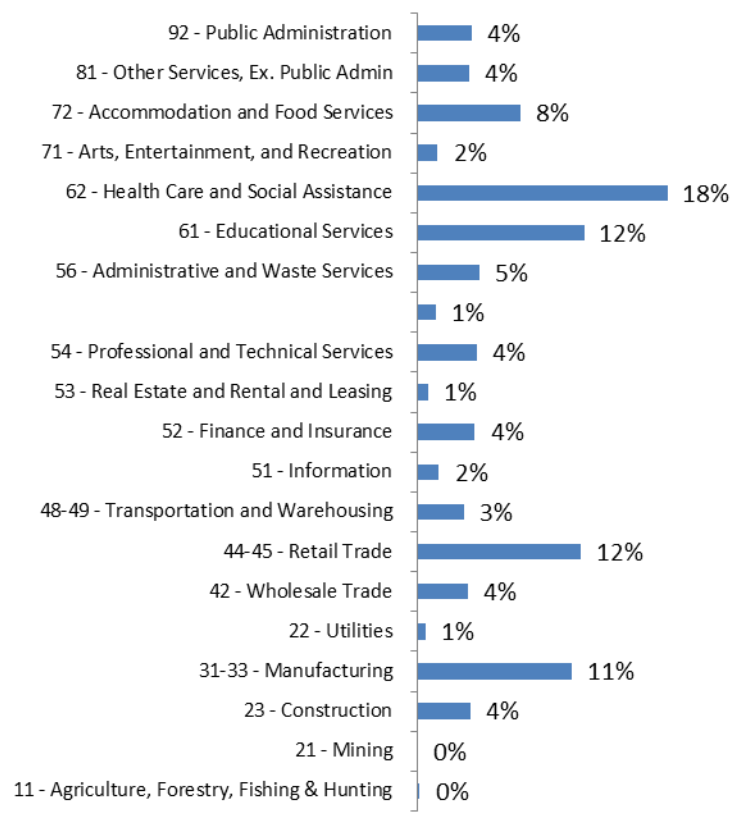
Source: MASS LMI ES 202 data  
\* Last full year available

# Gardner's employment mix parallels Worcester County

**Gardner Employment by Industry  
2010**

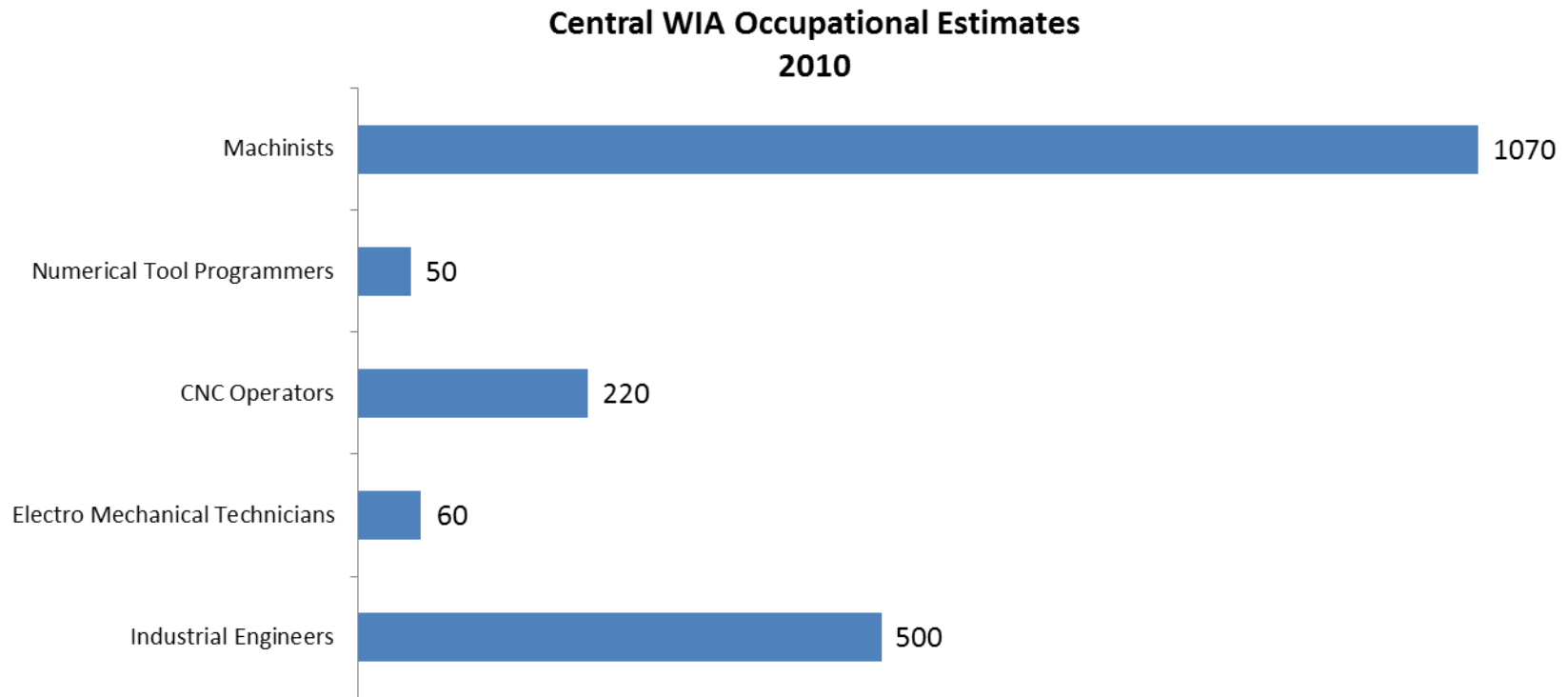


**Worcester County Employment 2010**



## Labor force dynamics may play a key role in the economic future of the region

- The overall region has relatively few employees with skills required for most forms of advanced manufacturing

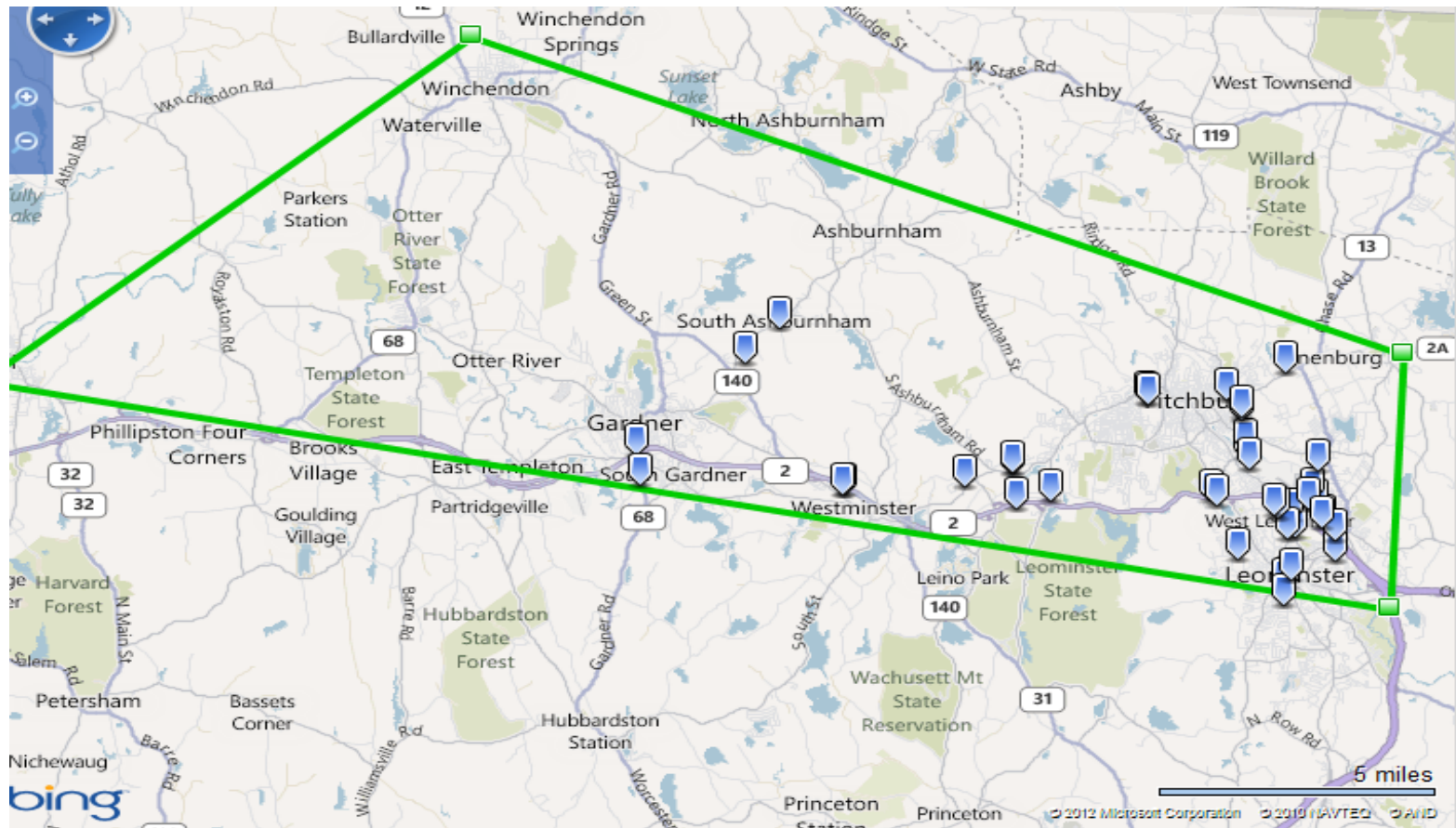


Source: NP calculations from MASS LMI Occupational Survey

## **Defining the Market Area**

## Competitive market area for Gardner – listed properties

- The competitive market area runs from Leominster / Fitchburg to Athol along Rt 2



## **Corporate Real Estate Market Conditions**



## A note of caution

- Any market study conducted today will indicate negative square foot absorption of space
- Market analysis / forecasting in these economic conditions is exceptionally difficult
  - Past trends can't be applied – particularly since credit markets are likely to stay tight for the foreseeable future tapering real estate development
  - Employment forecasts suggests a jobless recovery with a lack of clear indications of leadership in rehiring
- Moreover, space demand over the much of the last decade was created by smaller companies in tech industries, healthcare businesses, educational services, retail distribution and financial services – many of which have significantly scaled back expansion plans or in other cases are simply not easily accessible to Gardner

## There is a substantial inventory of preexisting space available in the regional market

	Office Space Available/ Vacancy Rate	Office Lease Rates	Industrial Available / Vacancy Rate	Industrial Lease Rate (NNN)
I190 Corridor (excluding Worcester)	55.2ksft	\$8-\$12	613ksft	\$2.95-\$4.50
Boston MetroWest	11.2 million sft	\$20.25	7.2 million sft	\$6.10
Gardner Competition Zone	560 ksft	\$3.95 - \$6.00	2.2 million sft	\$1.45 – \$3.85

Source: NP calculations based on CBRE market reports, Loopnet searches, Mass site finder

## Framework for examining competitive supply

- Level 1: Building at move-in quality
- Level 2: Building needs refurbishment, modifications, or final build-out
- Level 3: Building in place but requires substantial renovation or code upgrades (mill and older industrial buildings)
- Level 4: Developed “pad ready” site with full site approvals, site plans and infrastructure in place
- Level 5: Raw land, zoned industrial or office / industrial
- Level 6: Raw land not necessarily zoned but designated for future business use

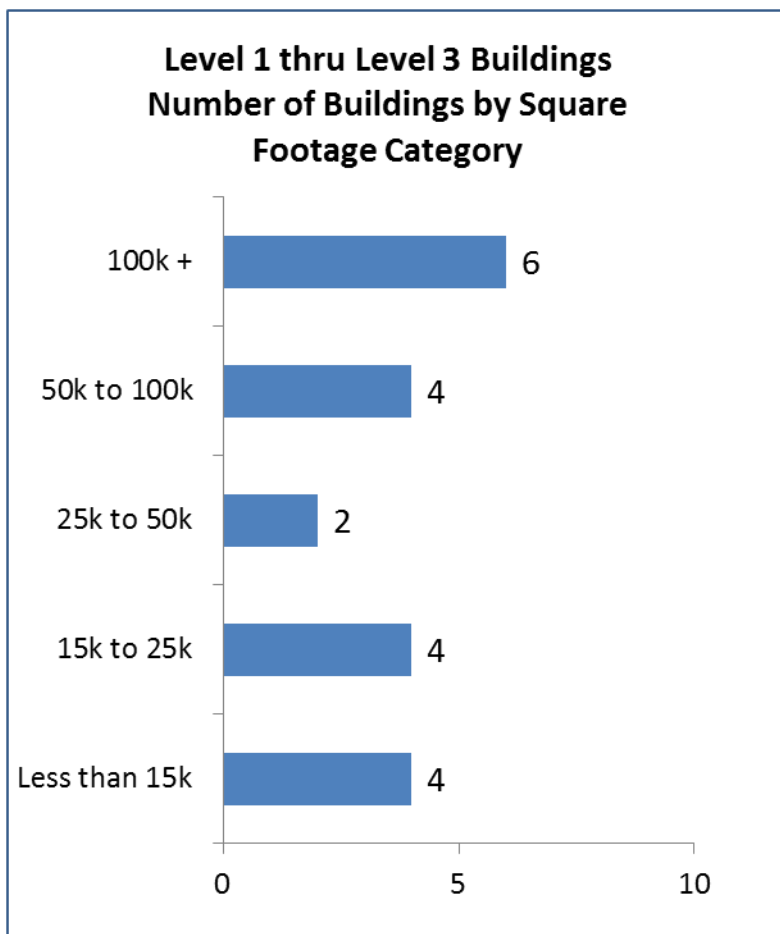
## Contemporary high tech flex building – NY Energy Park - Saratoga



## Examples of available product in the area at various stages of market readiness



## Market ready industrial space in the North Central region



- The marketplace is dominated by large scale vacant industrial buildings
  - Some are special purpose buildings like a 28 acre chemical factory
  - Some will have limitations on the ability to subdivide
  - Many of these space can serve as flex space
- Nearly all of the midsize space is more than 20 years old and a substantial portion are mill buildings
- Potential issues for these sites:
  - Electric utility adequacy
  - Space utilization efficiency
  - Ceiling heights
  - Internal column / load bearing

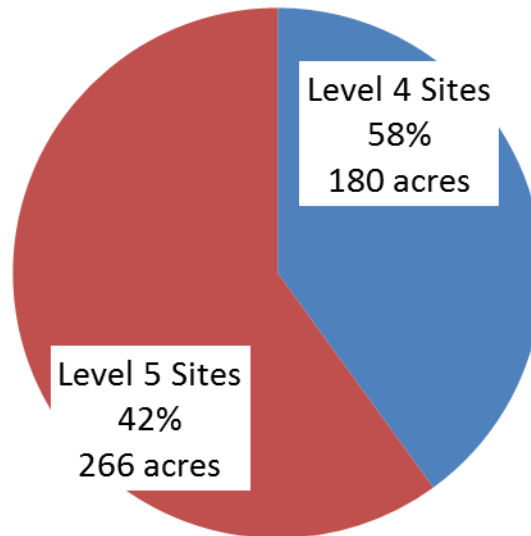
Source: NP calculations based Loopnet and Mass Econ site finder data



## 446 acres of land is presently available for commercial or industrial development across the area

- 70% of this acreage has rail access
- The Westminster Business Park has 7000 ft of railroad frontage
  - Maximum proposed build out for this site is 1.6 million square feet

**Estimated Development Acreage  
by Site Readiness  
Thru 1/28/2012**



## A major challenge for any development will be existing real estate price points

- An examination acreage pricing has the following asking prices as follows (1):
  - Randall Pond: \$30k per developable acre
  - Unimproved farm land: \$13k per acre
  - Industrial lots Fitchburg: \$76k per acre
- Asking prices for existing buildings range between \$8 to \$91 per foot depending on location and building age
  - Older industrial/mill buildings have asking prices between \$8 and \$30
  - Level 1 / Level 2 commercial/industrial buildings range between \$70 - \$91
- Existing real estate price points are well below development economics

*Ex. Randall Pond Industrial Park*

### **Available Lots\***

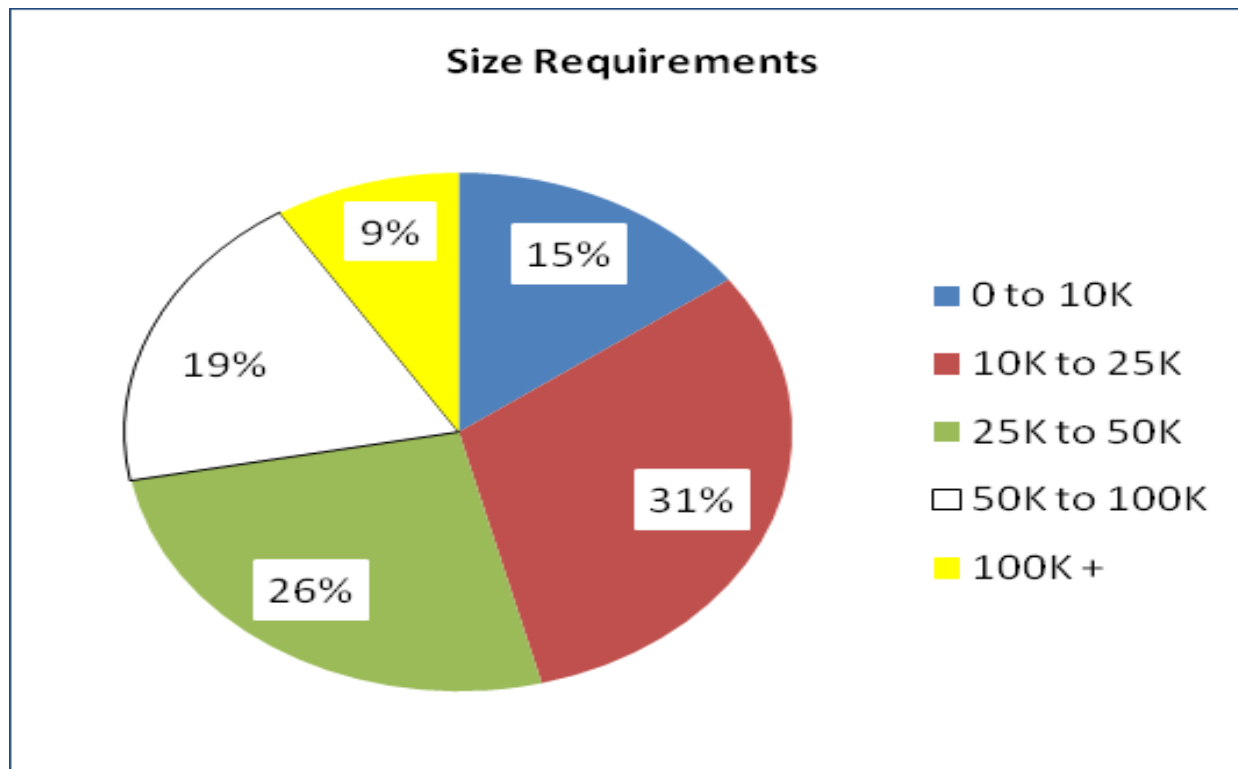
Lot	Size (Acres)	Price	Location
2B	2.317	\$69,510	Quabbin Blvd.
3	4.917	\$147,510	Quabbin Blvd.
4	4.552	\$135,660	Quabbin Blvd.
5B	4.5	\$135,000	Quabbin Blvd.
6	6.189	\$185,670	R.W. Moore Ave
7B	8.509	\$255,270	R.W. Moore Ave
9	4.113	\$123,390	R.W. Moore Ave

*\*Availability and price subject to change without notice.*

## **Potential Demand and Real Estate Product Implications**

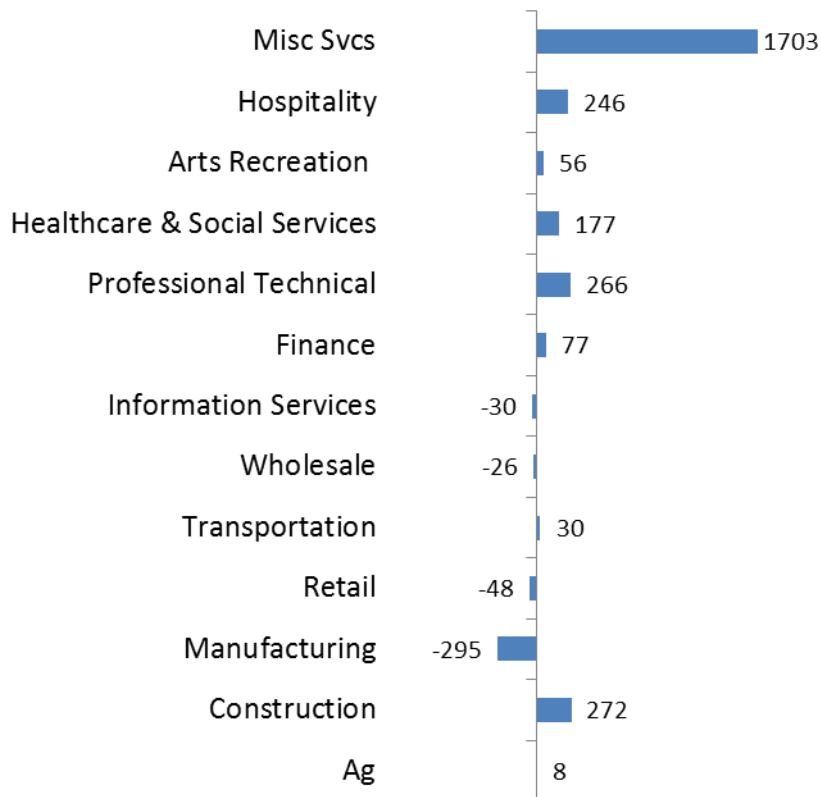
## At the height of the Massachusetts economy 72% of space requirements were less than 50ksft

- This information is presented since making investment decisions solely on present economic conditions misses the long-term potential
- The Gardner area clearly has a lack of standalone buildings in this category but several buildings could be subdivided



# Changes in establishments are a key indicator of real estate demand

Change in Establishments Worcester County  
2001 to 2010

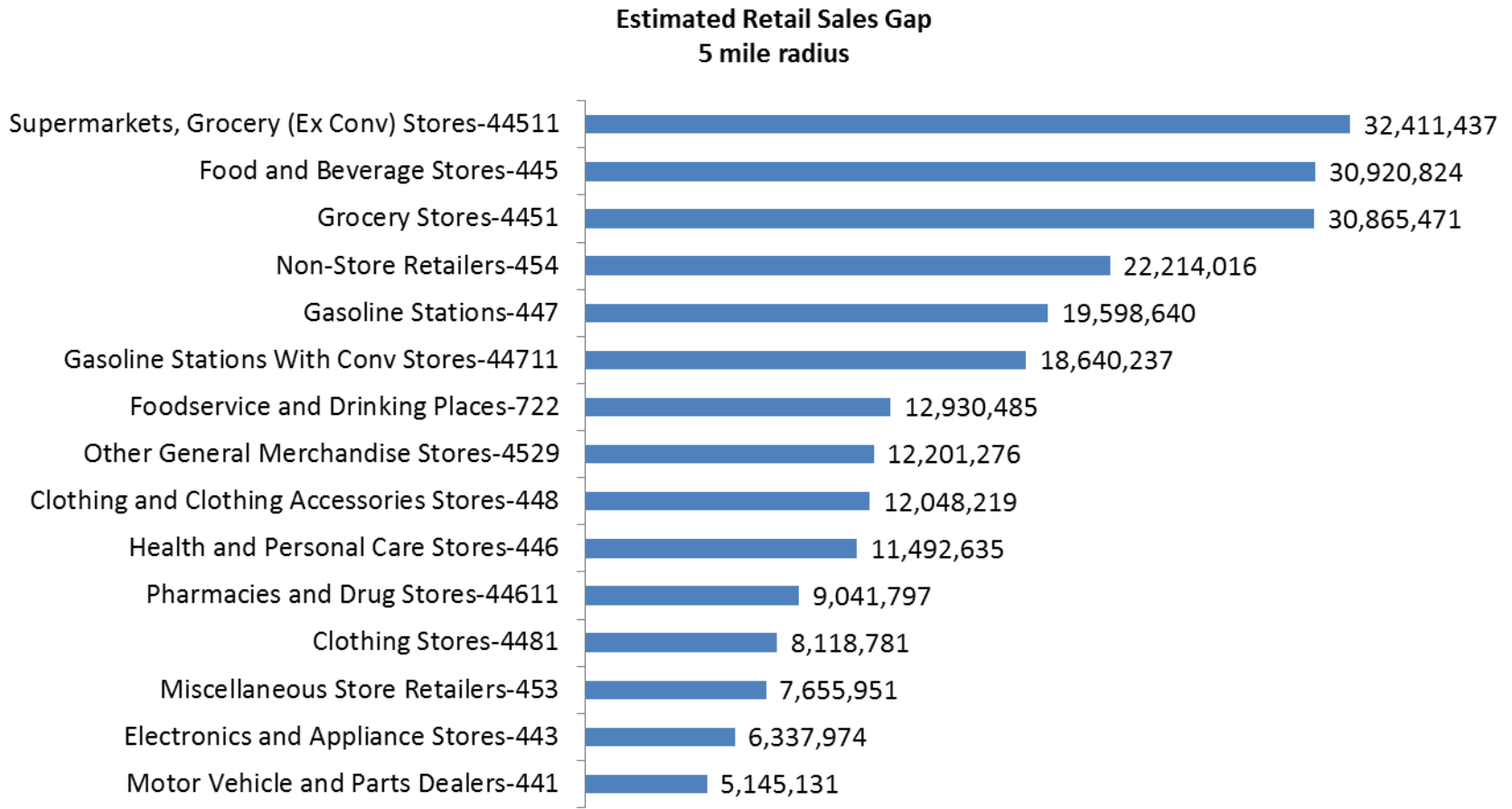


- This data shows a couple of key dynamics at play in the Worcester county region
  - Growth of self employment / entrepreneurial activity
    - Professional technical employment
    - Miscellaneous services
    - Arts and recreation
    - Construction (Example: construction employment is down 2756 from 2001 but establishment growth is up 272)
  - Increasing demand for healthcare and social services
  - Shrinkage in key employment drivers like retail



*This reemphasizes a key issue:  
Real estate development is  
not per se economic development*

## There is an indication of local market need for additional grocery / convenience retail



Source: Nielsen Site Reports, 2012



# Findings and Conclusions

## *Real Estate Market*

- There appears to be sufficient real estate availability in the market area to meet the majority of commercial/industrial needs for the foreseeable future therefore to best position the site for this type of activity means becoming site ready
- Establishment growth, an indicator of future real estate need, has been primarily in entrepreneurial service industry ventures which require small footprints and inexpensive space
  - Mill buildings easily fill that gap
  - Construction and distribution need workspace and laydown areas
- Gaps in the market clearly exist for contemporary high bay flex space between 20 – 50 ksft with expansion potential but...
- Real estate price points create substantial financing gaps for any speculative development
- Rail access is not a unique attribute in this market
- Interim uses for these sites should receive strong consideration given likely development timeframes

## *Economic Development Implications*

- The competitive real estate situation coupled with anemic job growth requires consideration of a different development pathway
- In part the economic viability of these sites is tied to the overall strengthening of the Gardner and regional economy
  - The Mill St Corridor should be considered as part of the overall job creation / tax base development portfolio for Gardner and not a singular solution
- Accordingly parallel efforts to get the sites “pad ready” coupled with an overall economic development program done in conjunction with community and state partners is critical

*At the moment its easier to “see”  
an economic regeneration  
strategy for Gardner; how the  
sites fit into that vision is still  
unclear*

## Next Steps

Conventional retail / industrial flex site planning with BSC

PLUS

More in depth assessment of the following:

- Evaluation of entrepreneurial new build precedents that may have applicability to Gardner
  - Site development linked to economic positioning
- Healthcare/social service programming opportunities

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Furniture Making in America: History of High Point, <http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/furniture-making-in-america-hi-152371>, January 11, 2012.

<sup>ii</sup> Greater Gardner Furniture History Documentary Project, Brief History of Furniture Companies, <http://mwcc.edu/gardnerfurniture/BriefHistory.htm>, January 11, 2012.