

# Thanks to the following people for their help and support in making this panel possible:

- The Honorable Angel Taveras, Mayor
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# Catalyzing economic development in Olneyville Square



## Rose Center for Public Leadership

# What is the Urban Land Institute?

Mission: Provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.



30,000 members worldwide:

- Developers
- Investors, Bankers and Financiers
- Architects and Designers
- Public officials
- Academics

ULI expertise:

- Research
- Education
- Best practice
- Advisory panels
- Ideas exchange



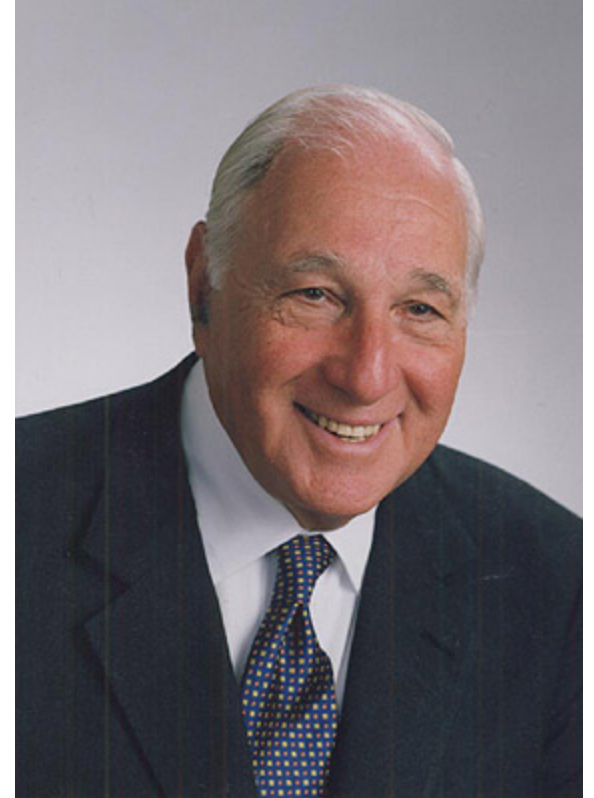




Urban Land  
Institute

**Rose Center for Public Leadership**

Mission: To encourage and support excellence in land use decision making. By providing public officials with access to information, best practices, peer networks and other resources, the Rose Center seeks to foster creative, efficient, practical, and sustainable land use policies.



Daniel Rose



# Rose Center Programming

## Forums: invitation-only events for public officials

- 2011 Shaw Forum on Future of Redevelopment (June, San Francisco)
- Local leadership and innovation during the financial crises (DC, September with the German Marshall Fund)
- Multifamily Housing Development and Finance (November, Houston with Terwilliger Center)



## Workshops and webinars

- Implementing Sustainable Development in Your Community Workshop (Charleston, Fayetteville, Atlanta with Home Depot Foundation, 2011)
- Responding to Multifamily Foreclosure Webinar (June 2011)



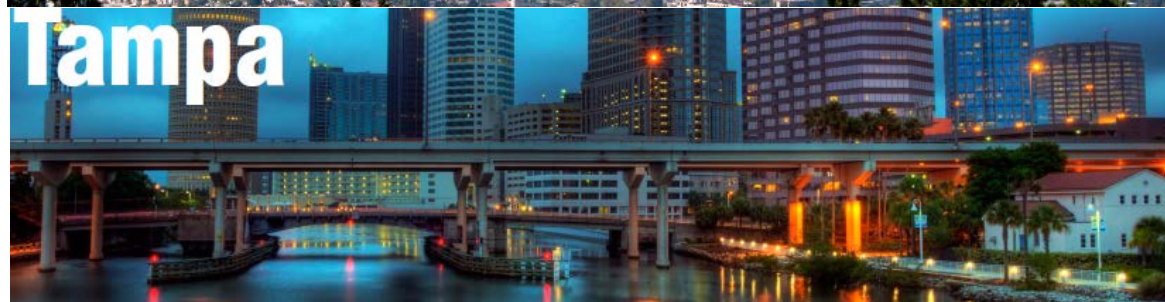
# Daniel Rose Fellowship

- Four cities selected for yearlong program of professional development, leadership training, assistance with a local land use challenge
- Mayor selects 3 fellows and team coordinator
- Participating cities to date: Charlotte, Detroit, Houston, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Nashville, Oakland, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Providence, Sacramento and Tampa



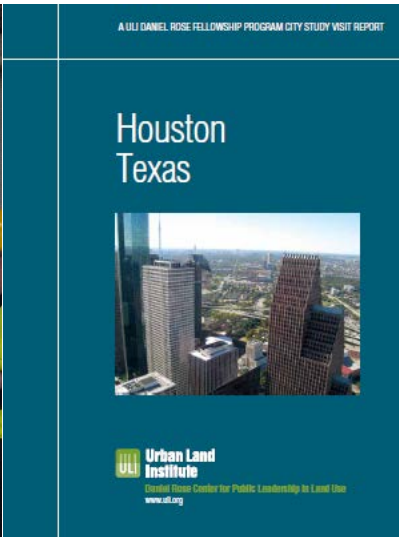


# 2011-2012 Class



# City Study Visits

- Based on ULI Advisory Services Program
- Assembles experts to study land use challenge
- Provides city's fellowship team with framework and ideas to start addressing their challenge





# The Panel



# The Panel

- **Co-Chair:** M.D. “Mike” Higbee, DC Development Group, Indianapolis, IN
- **Co-Chair:** Ashley O’Connor, AECOM, Alexandria, VA
- Carlton Brown, Full Spectrum of New York, LLC, NY
- Crissy Fanganello, Public Works Department, City&County of Denver, CO
- Ana Gelabert-Sanchez, former planning director, City of Miami, FL
- Abby Hall, US EPA Office of Sustainable Communities, San Francisco, CA (Rose Center Advisory Board)
- Jim Kienle, Moody Nolan, Indianapolis, IN
- Bob Langenkamp, Assistant City Manager, City of Kansas City, MO (Daniel Rose Fellow)
- Jim Shimberg, City Attorney, City of Tampa, FL (Daniel Rose Fellow)



# Land Use Challenge



How can Providence catalyze job creation and urban revitalization in Olneyville Square?





# Presentation Outline

1. Observations
2. Key Concepts & Recommendations
3. Concluding Thoughts & Homework



# Citywide Observations

- Providence has a track record of achieving transformative projects (e.g., Capital Center rail relocation, river walk, I-195 teardown)
- City has embraced its historic building stock as a strategic asset
- Providence has strong institutional assets that are key to its economic future
- City is transitioning from a suburban development pattern to more urban context
- Artist community has been a partner of city for economic changes and new development



# Olneyville Observations

- Olneyville is a self-reliant community with strong social networks
- The neighborhood's built environment does not physically reflect its social strengths
- There is tension between pedestrians and amount of pass-through traffic in the square
- Historic mill properties represent both a liability and opportunity for future investment





# Olneyville Observations

- Loss of mill industry has left no large business/institutional anchors, no clear identity or consensus on its future economic role in the city
- The river is a potential asset that could enhance the neighborhood but is neglected today
- Several Olneyville organizations are collaborating with each other and building community capacity





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# Street and Streetscape Issues

- Bigger challenge than just car traffic
- Lack of design for pedestrians, need for complete/livable streets
- Fixing basic pedestrian infrastructure needs is more urgent than big capital projects
- Need for streetscape improvements
  - Crosswalks/pedestrian signals
  - Sidewalks
  - Signage and wayfinding
  - Lighting
  - Street furniture







# Street Recommendations

## **Near-term (1 year)**

- Basic maintenance and upkeep of right of way
  - Striping crosswalks, fixing sidewalks, repairing bridge
- Coordinate with other infrastructure projects (e.g., CSO) to implement cohesive streetscape improvements
  - Design
  - Funding





LEFT HAND  
MUST  
TURN LEFT

OLNEYVILLE  
NJ SYSTEM

# Street Recommendations

## **Mid- to long-term**

- Develop and implement a signage, wayfinding, branding program with community
- Undertake physical capital improvements
  - Traffic island, intersections, common design features
  - Repaving
  - ADA













Developed by Steve Price  
in association w/ Dover Kohl & Partners  
& Glatting Jackson  
for Johnson City Tennessee



# Multi-Modal Transportation Issues

- Provide transportation choices
  - Bus service and bike lanes as important as traffic challenges
  - Improve connectivity to employment centers and other regional destinations
- Develop a parking plan for the neighborhood
- Address routes 6/10 interchange reality: timing and benefits



# Multi-Modal Transportation Recommendations

## **Near-term (1 year)**

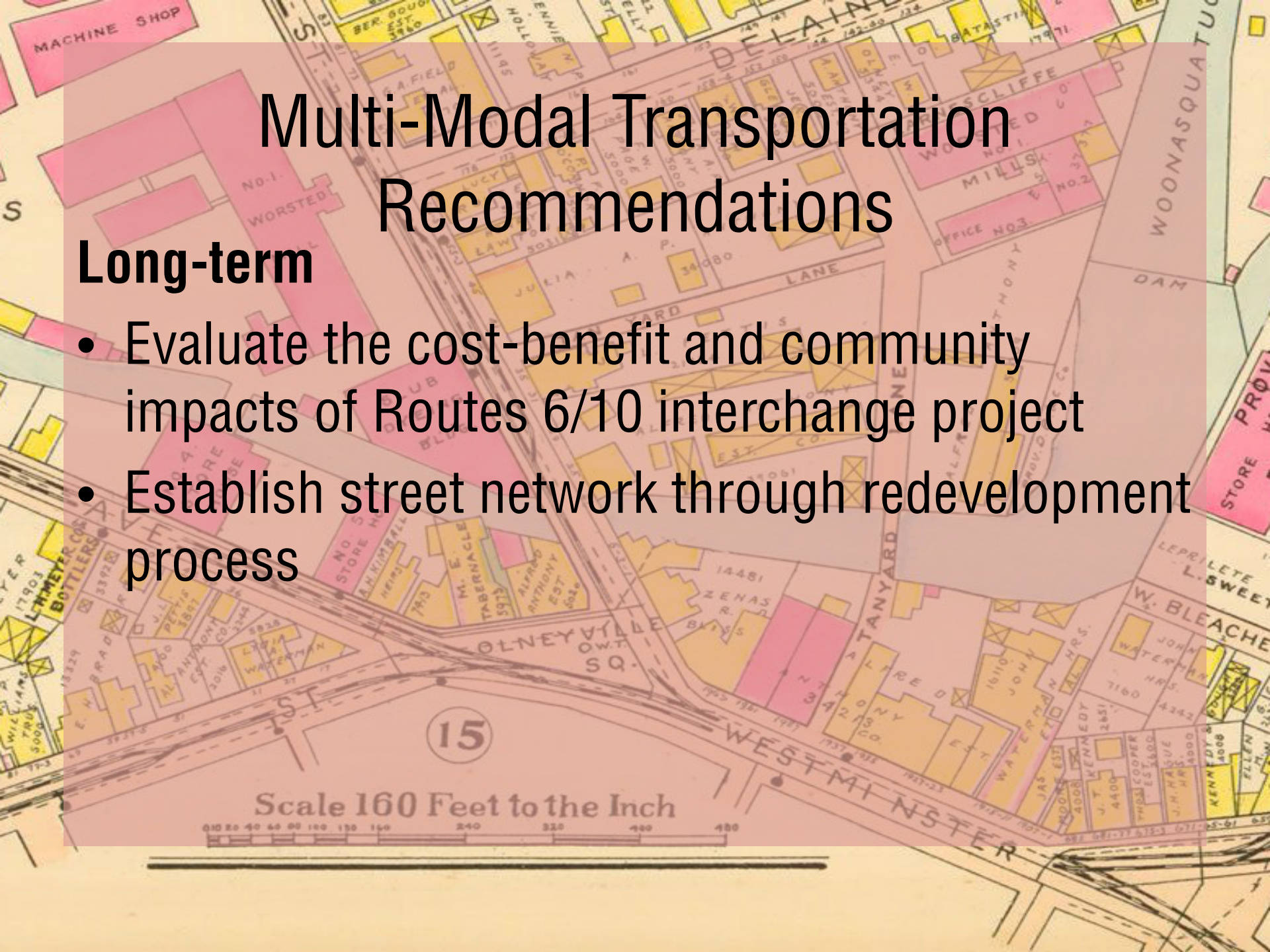
- Use transportation study resources to do more comprehensive analysis
  - Local and regional traffic demand
  - Bus access, routes, and schedules
  - Bike network and infrastructure
  - Operational intersection improvements
- Use study to inform next steps on transit and bike network improvements
- Consider zoning pilot to test creative neighborhood parking solutions
- Think ahead about parking trust fund (or other financial structure)



# Multi-Modal Transportation Recommendations

## Long-term

- Evaluate the cost-benefit and community impacts of Routes 6/10 interchange project
- Establish street network through redevelopment process





# Public Space Issues

- Identify public space for naturally creative community use for festivals, cultural events, farmers market, etc., in the heart of Olneyville Square
- River connections
  - Take advantage of this key asset
  - Improve access and recreational opportunities
  - Highlight its place in the community



Joslin  
c. Center

*Riverside Mills Park*

US HWY 6

RTFORD AVE

STATE HWY 10

# Public Space Recommendations

## Near-term (1 year)

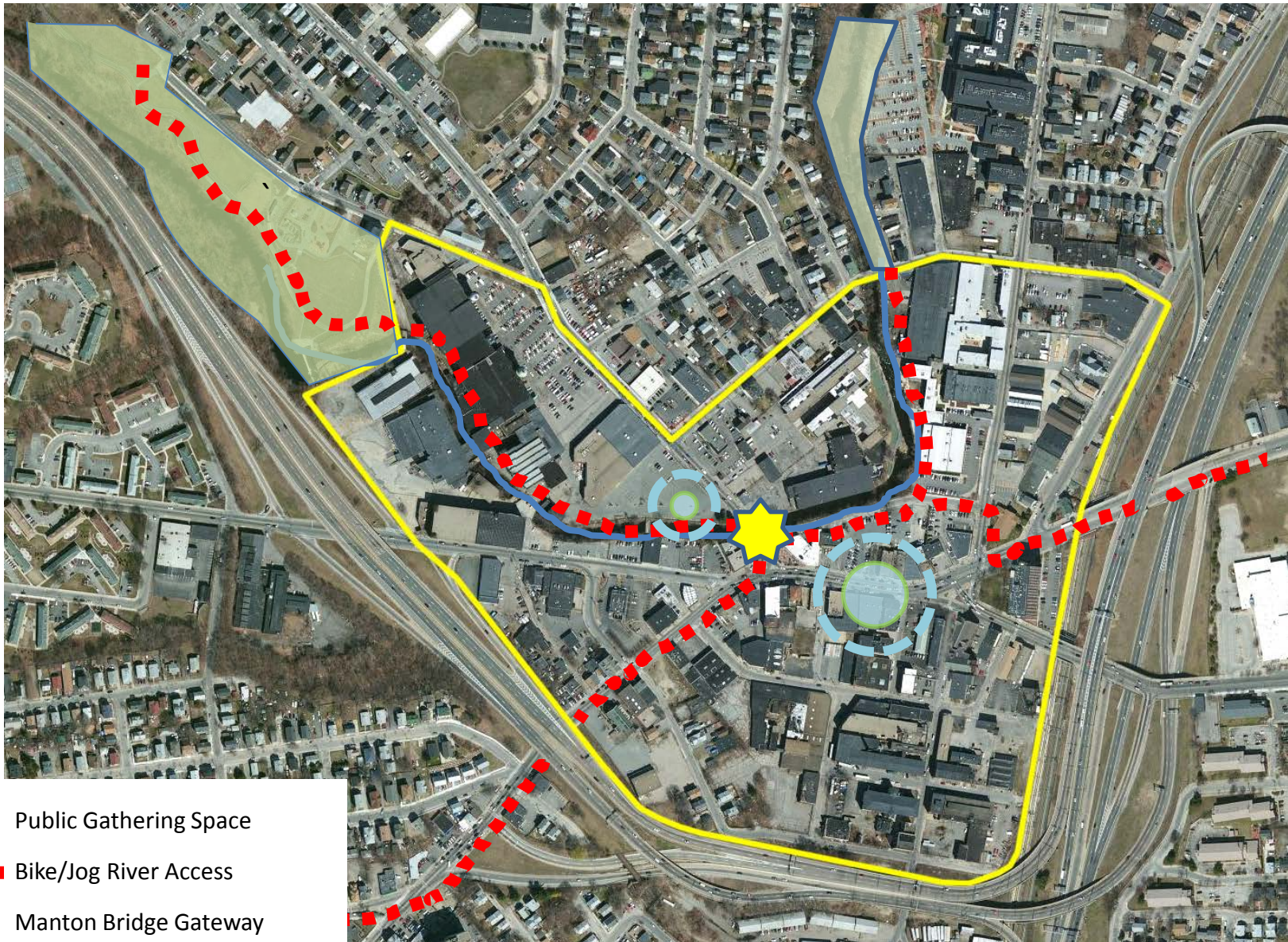
- Develop riverfront park at Manton and connect to greenway
  - CSO project easement and acquisitions
- Improve bike path connections

## Long-term

- Work with community to identify a quality gathering space in Olneyville Square
- Redesign “rebar” bridge gateway (Manton Avenue)



# Public Amenities Bike & Green Connectivity





# Current Context for Investment

- Organic, opportunistic investment by new developers, artists, community pioneers
- Negative perception by outsiders is deterrent
- Economically challenged by bad economy and local market
- Transition from traditional industry to what?
- High-tech jobs: sustainable or relocating?
- Emerging neighborhood capacity (informal and formal collaboration)



# Impediments to Investment

- Economically challenged area
- Regulatory process can be onerous and unpredictable
- Available incentives inadequate and unpredictable
- Negative perception of area
- Lack of effective partnerships to implement investments

# Investment Opportunities

- Underutilized buildings and land (e.g., grocery store site)
- Expansion/ relocation of public library
- Historic building stock, unique mill architectural heritage
- Arts and entertainment activity
- Potential mixed-use, work-live district
- Good regional highway access
- Incubator for local small business development
- Affordable real estate prices
- Supply of creative talent (e.g., Brown, RISD, Johnson & Wales, URI, Providence College)
- Proximity to downtown and airport



# Recommendations for New Investment

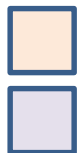
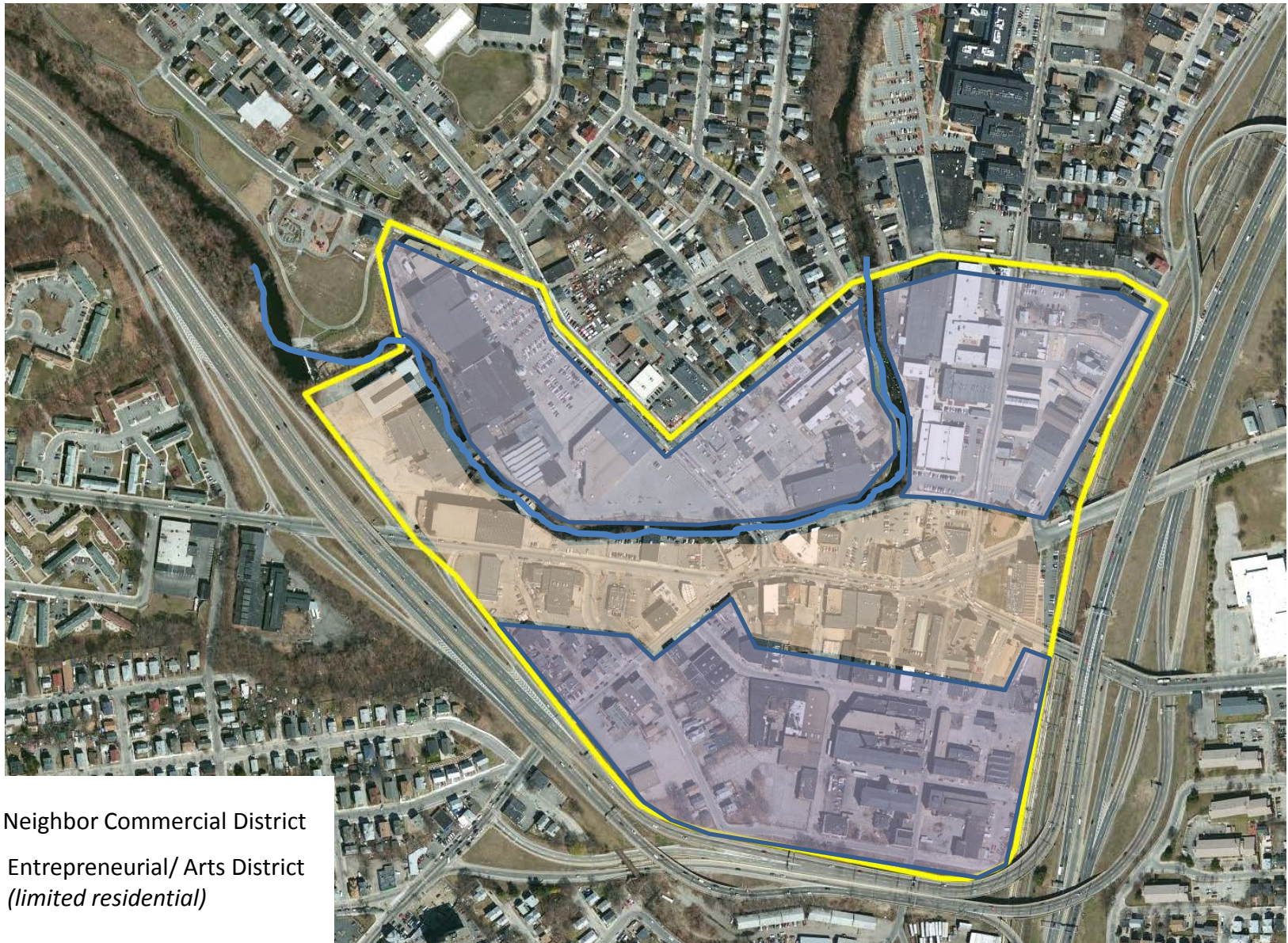
- Assemble task force to create a strategy to support industrial arts and dining/entertainment business development
- Reach out to local higher education institutions to form partnership opportunities in Olneyville
- Target key parcels for placemaking and redevelopment
- Investigate long-term maintenance partnership for public realm

# Recommendations for New Investment

- Employment anchor is a great solution, but hard to find and needs to:
  - Be compatible with community
  - Provide opportunities for neighborhood employment and/ or skill training
  - Represent the highest and best use



# Entrepreneurial/ Arts District Use Map



Neighbor Commercial District

Entrepreneurial/ Arts District  
(*limited residential*)

# Development Process Context

- Lack of coordination and unclear communication between city, other regulatory agencies, stakeholders and development and investment community
- No unified voice for marketing Olneyville Square



# Process Impediments

- Perception of uneven enforcement and application of code requirements (e.g., fire safety versus building)
- Missing key public and private leaders in city's economic development planning strategy (e.g., large employers, economic drivers)
- Lack of execution and tangible outcomes from several recent planning processes (city and non-profits)
- Limited public resources for maintenance and capital improvements

# Opportunities for Improvements

- Fresh political leadership
- Private sector interest in working with city
- Reevaluation of city zoning code is planned
- Strengthen small business liaison/ support program
- Marketing can change perception of Olneyville





# Process Recommendations

- Engage with regional economic development institutions/ organizations to attract interest in neighborhood development
- Seek input from development community, business and community leaders on improvements to regulatory processes
- Consider Olneyville for pilot program for smart growth zoning and regulatory processes





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# *Conclusion:* Infrastructure

Upgrade existing public infrastructure elements to:

- build trust with the community
- foster multi-modal connectivity
- create community public space that mirrors, attracts and builds civic pride
- embrace the river
- regenerate the community into a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use, urban district

# *Conclusion: Amenities & Services*

- Olneyville's history as an employment center has left it with few amenities and services
- A focus on open space, recreation and retail services for a diverse growing community is essential if Olneyville is to thrive



# *Conclusion:* Economic Development

- Assess the economic impact opportunities for arts and entertainment; local organic food production; and attracting cluster industry to match other high-tech manufacturing.
- Work with a broad array of stakeholders including educational and medical institutions to create entry-level and creative class entrepreneurial jobs that leverage untapped resources
- The city and community create a strategy to engage developers, local and small businesses, and stakeholders to encourage sustainable reuse and development.

# *Conclusion:* Process

Working with users and stakeholders, the city needs to create a development process that is:

- transparent and predictable
- establishes communication linkages and partnerships with key economic development groups
- reflects current development standards and practices
- fosters a positive development and investment climate



# Homework

- Identify 3 short-term infrastructure projects in collaboration with neighborhood
- Conduct focus group meeting with development entities to understand impediments in regulatory process citywide
- Identify decision maker and staff member from each relevant city agency to “own” Olneyville redevelopment and coordinate with development community
- Consider using HUD challenge grant to test new zoning ideas by piloting them in Olneyville Square

Progress report at working retreat in April 2012

## **Thank you to the following people; their assistance was essential to the panel's work:**

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