

Council Study Session

October 03, 2022

Agenda Item	Croman Mill District Redevelopment	
From	Brandon Goldman	Interim Community Development Director
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Item Type	Requested by Council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Update <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Request for Direction <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/>	

SUMMARY

Townmakers LLC is in the process of developing a conceptual plan for the redevelopment of the 61 acre former Croman Mill site. This evening’s study session is an opportunity for Townmakers LLC to present and discuss the vision with the City Council as part of the design process before a formal proposal to amend the Croman Mill District is prepared and presented to the City for consideration.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

The Croman Mill District currently includes five zones, Compatible Industrial (CM-CI), Mixed Use (CM-MU), Neighborhood Center (CM-NC), Office Employment (CM-OE), and Open Space/Conservation (CM-OS) and is regulated as a special district within Ashland’s Land Use Ordinance ([chapter 18.3.2](#)).

The *Ashland Comprehensive Plan* includes a goal in the Housing Element to “ensure a range of different dwelling types that provide living opportunities for the total cross section of Ashland’s population (6.10.01).” Included with this goal are the following applicable policies:

Policy 1: Provide for a mix of housing types that are attractive and affordable to a diversity of ages, incomes, household sizes, and household types.

Policy 3: Integrate housing with other compatible land uses through flexible zoning provisions.

The *Ashland Comprehensive Plan* includes a goal in the Economy Element “to ensure that the local economy increases in its health, and diversifies in the number, type, and size of businesses consistent with the local social needs, public service capabilities, and the retention of a high quality environment (7.07.03).” Included with this goal is the following applicable policy:

Policy 1: The City shall zone and designate within the Plan Map sufficient quantity of lands for commercial and industrial uses to provide for the employment needs of its residents and a portion of rural residents consistent with the population projection for the urban area.

The 2021-2041 Housing Capacity Analysis (HCA) is a technical study required by state law and was adopted by the City Council on [August 17, 2021](#) as a technical report and supporting document to the *Ashland Comprehensive Plan*. The HCA provides a number of recommended policy changes to

address Ashland’s unmet housing needs that relate to increasing opportunities for residential development within employment zoned lands:

Strategy 1: Ensure an adequate supply of land is available and serviced

- *Strategy 1.3: Identify opportunities to increase allowances for residential uses on the ground floor of buildings within commercial and employment zones.*
- *Strategy 1.4: Evaluate decreasing multifamily parking requirements.*

Strategy 2: Provide opportunities for housing development to meet the City’s identified housing needs

- *Strategy 2.2: Evaluate opportunities incentivize smaller units through amendments to allowable densities.*
- *Strategy 2.4: Evaluate increasing allowances for residential dwellings in commercial and employment zones, such as allowing an increased amount of residential uses in ground floor commercial spaces.*

Strategy 5: Align housing planning with the Climate and Energy Action Plan

Strategy 5.4: Evaluate opportunities to develop new housing closer to downtown and commercial centers to reduce dependence on automobiles for transportation.

The *Climate and Energy Action Plan* (CEAP) includes an action to “Revise community development plans to favor walkable neighborhoods and infill density. Ashland has a series of long-range planning documents that guide development across Ashland districts, neighborhoods, and natural areas. Revisiting these plans to ensure that they support climate-ready development needs, such as walking, biking, transit, parking management, and climate adaptation features, will ensure that Ashland development is consistent with the City’s climate goals and commitments. It will be important to ensure that these activities do not come at the expense of higher housing costs, which could disadvantage low-income populations (CEAP ULT-4-2).”

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In September of 2021, the owners of the former Croman Mill site, and the development team named Townmakers LLC, began conceptualizing the future development of the property for a mixed-use development incorporating commercial, employment, light industrial and residential uses.

The property is comprised of multiple parcels totaling 60.92 acres in size and is currently within the Croman Mill District. All but 6 acres of the property are currently within the City Limits. The 6-acre portion of the property outside the City Limits is located along Siskiyou Blvd., is within the Urban Growth Boundary, and would be annexed as part of the development proposal.

The Croman Mill master planning effort began in December 2007 and the plan was adopted in August 2010. Concurrent with the adoption of the Croman Mill Site Redevelopment Plan in 2010, the City adopted the [2007 Economic Opportunity Analysis \(EOA\)](#), added the Croman Mill Plan designation to the Comprehensive Plan map, added the Croman Mill District including five zones to the Zoning map and added [Chapter 18.3.2 Croman Mill District](#) to Title 18 Land Use of the Ashland Municipal Code.

The key elements of the adopted master plan are the preservation of industrial and office use lands, buffering the neighborhood to the west, mitigating traffic impacts to Tolman Creek Road, the preservation of natural features (creeks, pond, and wetlands), a central open space element, improving access into the property, creating a street network incorporating truck, transit, pedestrian and bicycle access, maintaining access to the railroad and creating a unique identity to improve visibility of area.

In 2018 The City Council approved directed staff to move forward with developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and scope of work for further consideration at the [March 5, 2018](#) meeting to collaborate with the owners of the Croman Mill site, Croman Corporation to consider the revision of the Croman Mill District to allow for the development of additional housing units. This project did not move forward following approval of a Memorandum of Understanding. At the end of 2021 A development group named Townmakers LLC approached the Croman Corporation regarding acquisition of the property, and then began a visioning process for its future redevelopment as a mixed employment and housing center.

Townmakers LLC. has created a draft conceptual plan for the site's future development and held a public open house to present the concept to the public on January 12, 2022. Approximately 60 people attended the open house (in person and virtually via zoom), and were able to ask questions of, and provide comments to, the development team. On January 25th the Planning Commission held a study session to discuss the concept of amending the Croman Mill Master Plan to accommodate the variety of uses envisioned by Townmakers LLC.

In staff's assessment development of the property in the manner initially envisioned by Townmakers LLC will require changes to the Croman Mill District's underlying zoning designations, allowable uses, road and multi-use path layout, site and building design standards, and residential allowances and densities. To redistribute housing to portions of the district where it was not previously envisioned, provide expanded opportunities for mixed-use development, and propose adjustments to the street system plan, a comprehensive Land Use Ordinance Amendment to the Croman Mill District would be the most appropriate procedure to accommodate the applicant's objectives. Land Use Ordinance Amendments, and Large Zoning Map Changes, are legislative actions, with hearings before both the Planning Commission and the City Council.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The fiscal impacts related to the project fall into two categories – City staff time and specialized analysis requiring outside expertise. Review of a proposal to amend the Croman Mill District implementing ordinances will require the dedication of Staff time from the Community Development, Public Works, and Legal departments to review proposed amendments to the land use ordinances and proposed infrastructure development plans. Approval of amendments to the Land Use Ordinance amendments and Transportation System Plan (TSP) relating to a Croman Mill District Redevelopment plan will be necessary and may require outside expertise to conduct a Traffic Impact Analysis and economic assessment regarding the need for employment zoned lands. Consideration of the formal proposal and would be a legislative decision with public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

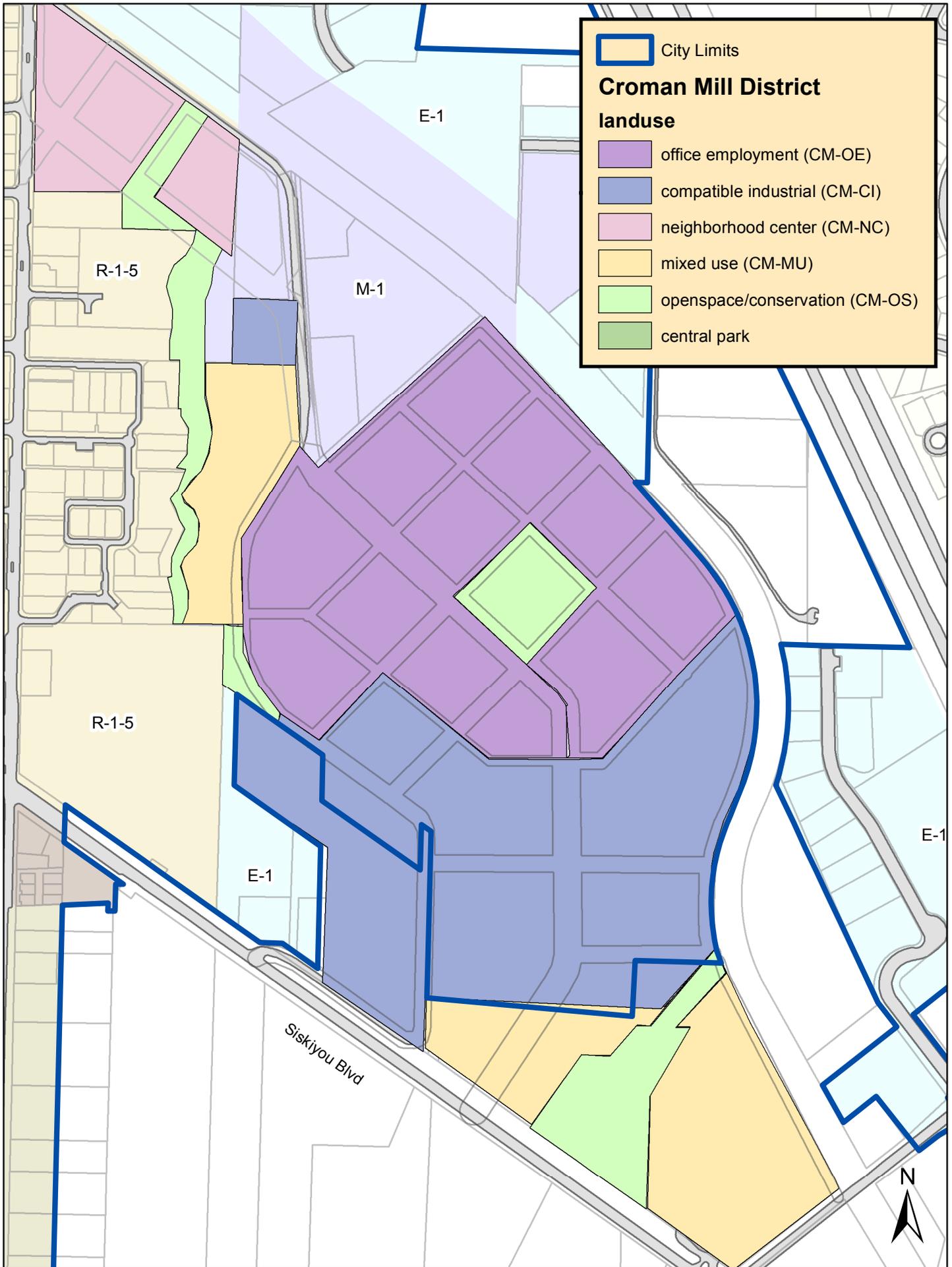
Townmakers LLC is presenting their concept at this Council study session to address questions the Council may have and receive initial feedback prior to formalizing a development proposal to submit for consideration.

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

1. Croman Mill District Aerial Photo
2. Croman Mill District Existing Zoning Map
3. TownMakers LLC – Croman Mill webpage
<https://www.townmakers.net/croman-mill>
4. Croman Mill District Land Use Ordinance - [chapter 18.3.2](#)



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Welcome to Townmakers

*Creating walkable
live-work-play neighborhoods*

Thanks to everyone (60 total) who came to our Croman Mill Open House on January 12th! The video can be seen [here](#), at the bottom of the page, and comments are posted [here](#). To stay in touch and get email updates, or to email comments or questions, please [click here](#). *Thank you!*

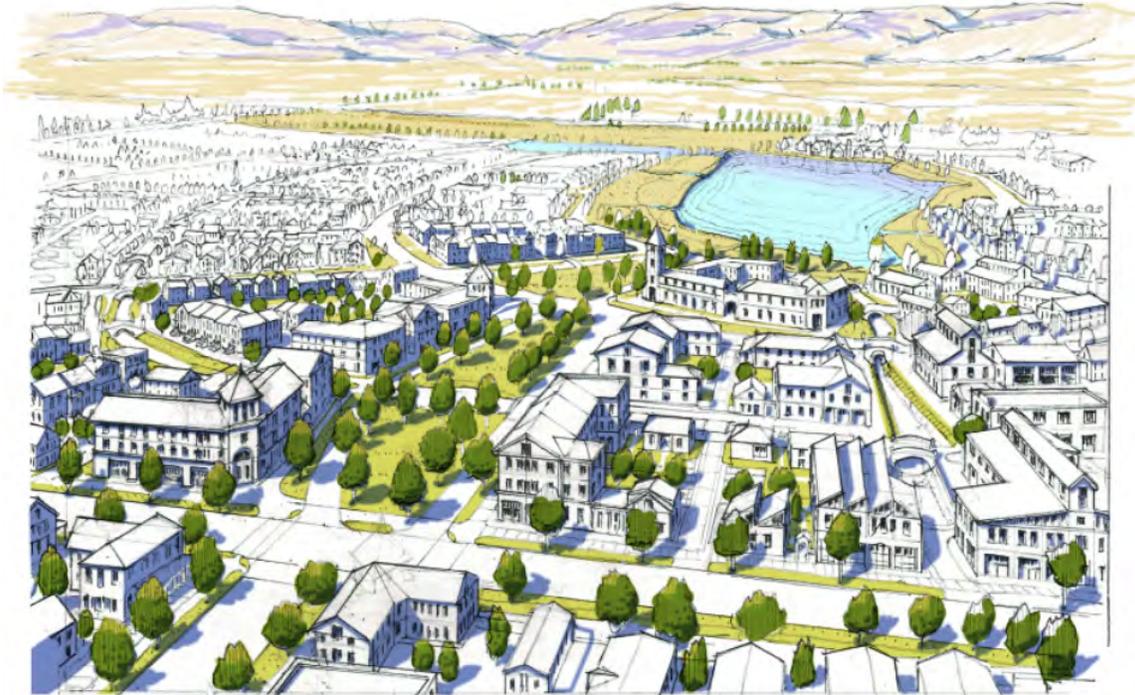
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Townmakers is headed by Mike Weinstock, a town builder with over thirty years of experience on projects across the US. Mike grew up on the East Coast but came to the West Coast as a young man, starting in the world of construction and urban development by selling wood windows, and later graduating to larger projects.

Mike's interest is in walkable, healthy, mixed use neighborhoods with the livability of great old American towns, combined with cutting-edge technology and resource-efficient design. Currently he is working on projects in Ashland, Oregon and Ellensburg, Washington, both university towns offering exciting opportunities for locally appropriate economic and urban development to meet local needs and challenges.

Lead urban designer Laurence Qamar, architect, has played a key role in creating some of the most popular and successful walkable mixed-use neighborhoods and even entire new towns in the Northwest, including Seabrook, Washington. Laurence has worked in many cities in Oregon and Washington. In Ashland, Oregon, he was a planner for North Mountain and Old Mill Districts in the early 2000s, and in Kennewick, Washington, he played a key role in masterplanning the Vista Field project, a redevelopment of a former airfield. He has also played a key role in designing popular and industry-leading communities across the USA. Laurence lives with his wife in Portland, Oregon, where she teaches art at Reed College (the alma mater of Steve Jobs).

Lead planner Michael Mehaffy, Ph.D., has played key roles in industry-leading projects in the USA and internationally. He was project manager of Orenco Station in Portland, Oregon, an acclaimed walkable mixed-use and transit-oriented neighborhood. Michael is also a noted educator and author, having had seven university appointments in six countries. He is also the author or co-author of five books, and many scientific and professional articles, and he is on the editorial boards of three international journals of urban design. He currently teaches a popular university course in sustainable urban planning at Arizona State University, and he has developed several pilot curricula in the field. While working in London for the Prince of Wales, he developed an education program in sustainable urban development that has since become a Masters' and Ph.D. program at the University of Oxford. He received his own Ph.D. in architecture at Delft University of Technology in The Netherlands, and did undergraduate work in liberal arts, music and design at The Evergreen State College in Olympia and California Institute of the Arts in Los Angeles, and graduate work in philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin, and in architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, studying and working closely with the pioneering architect Christopher Alexander. Michael currently lives in the Columbia Gorge in Washington near two daughters and seven grandchildren, and he has also lived in Oregon for many years. One of his daughters graduated in the 1990s from Southern Oregon University in Ashland with a degree in

biology. Two other daughters graduated from Portland State University, with degrees in environmental science and neuroscience.

Executive Team Coordinator Carlene Chin has owned and operated multiple wholesale and manufacturing businesses in the Pacific Northwest since 1989. Her background in Sales, Marketing, Team Leadership and B2B relationship building is extensive. Carlene thrives on facilitating strong lasting partnerships with all of those around her.

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Croman Mill, Ashland, Oregon



CROMAN MILL DISTRICT - ASHLAND, OREGON - MIKE WEINSTOCK, TOWNMAKERS LLC.
TOWN PLANNERS AND DESIGNERS: QAMAR & ASSOCIATES, AND STUCTURA NATURALIS - JANUARY 1, 2022

Drawing by Laurence Qamar

Croman Mill is the site of a former timber mill that was closed in 1996. The site lies at the southern end of Ashland, and it offers the opportunity for an urban extension of Ashland into a walkable mixed use, live-work-play development that responds to the City's current needs and challenges. Goals of the project include:

1. Redevelop a brownfield site that is currently in need of cleanup, and is generating truck traffic and noise.
2. Provide a livable amenity for the City of Ashland, with parks, trails, neighborhood center, and compatible businesses, that is able to be used by all the neighbors.
3. Provide a walkable, bikable, mixed-use, live-work-play neighborhood.
4. Provide family-wage jobs, and support the development of new locally-appropriate businesses, products and services.
5. Provide needed housing, including affordable and mixed-income housing.
6. Provide energy-efficient, resource-efficient, low-carbon neighborhood and building systems.
7. Focus on health and wellness, including health-oriented business recruitment, healthy lifestyles, and building technologies (e.g. Passivhaus et al.)
8. Develop innovative urban formats with new technologies where feasible, including electric and data systems, live-works, satellite offices, incubators, neighborhood markets, affordable housing types, "makerspaces," etc.
9. Support Ashland's economic development beyond tourism, including local products, knowledge economy, synergies with Southern Oregon University, et al.
10. Create an "urban extension" of Ashland that builds on its best qualities, including its livability, and its natural and historic beauty.

About the team:

1. Mike Weinstock, the town builder, has a long history and personal connection with Ashland, and is committed to seeing its best qualities preserved and enhanced.
2. Lead Urban Designer Laurence Qamar has a long history of working in Ashland. Laurence was a planner for North Mountain and Railroad Districts in the early 2000s.

3. Lead Planner Michael Mehaffy also has a long history with Ashland. Michael's daughter graduated from Southern Oregon with a degree in biology in the late 1990s, and he and his wife spent many days in Ashland.
4. Executive Team Coordinator, Carlene Chin has owned and operated multiple wholesale and manufacturing businesses in the Pacific Northwest since 1989. Her background in Sales, Marketing, Team Leadership and B2B relationship building is extensive. Carlene thrives on facilitating strong, lasting partnerships with all of those around her.
5. The team from Parametrix civil, infrastructure and transportation engineers has been working with Laurence and Michael for many years. Their technical expertise in delivering walkable, mixed, ecologically sensitive communities is unsurpassed.

We hope you'll help us make the vision for Croman Mill a reality!

