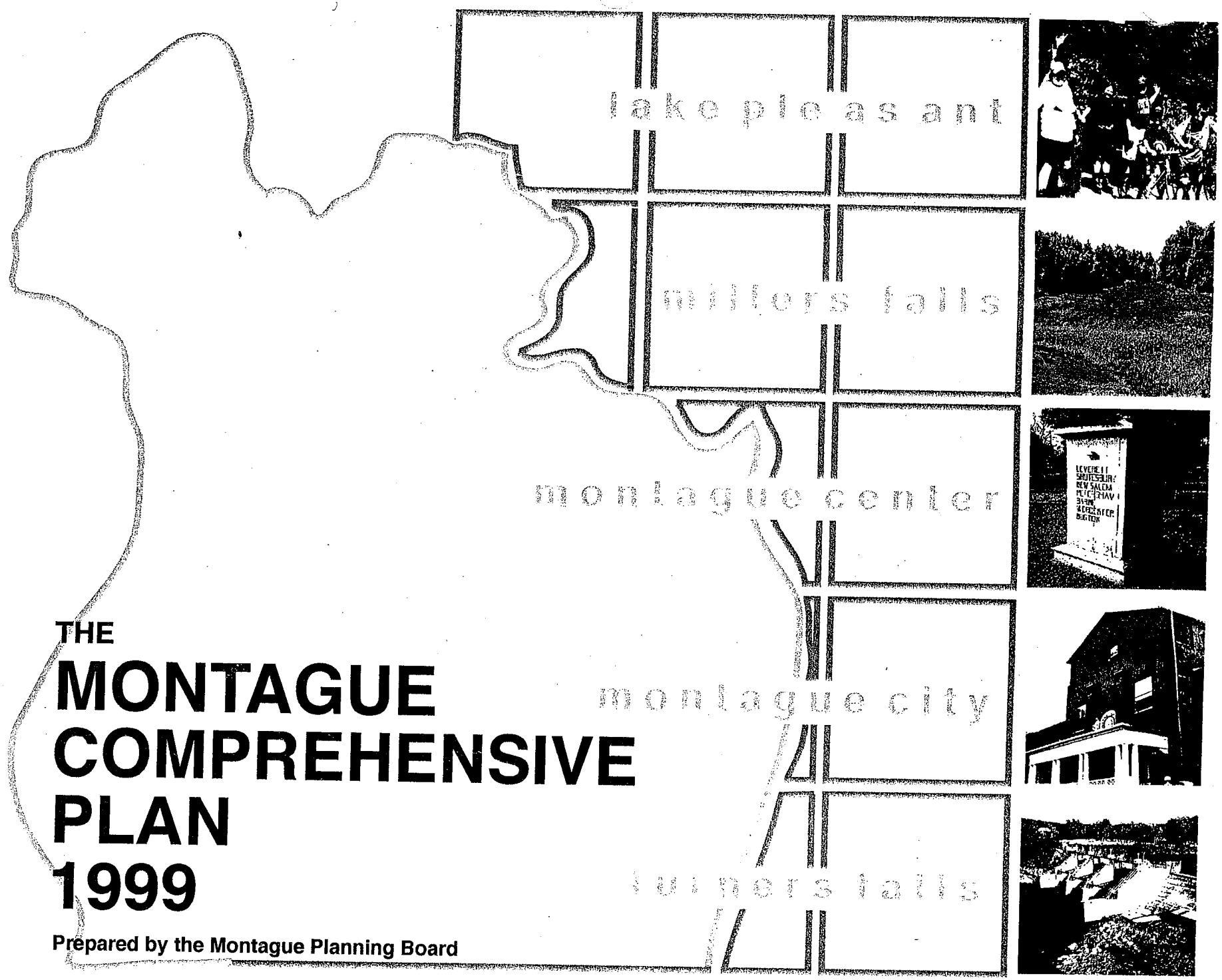


THE MONTAGUE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 1999

Prepared by the Montague Planning Board

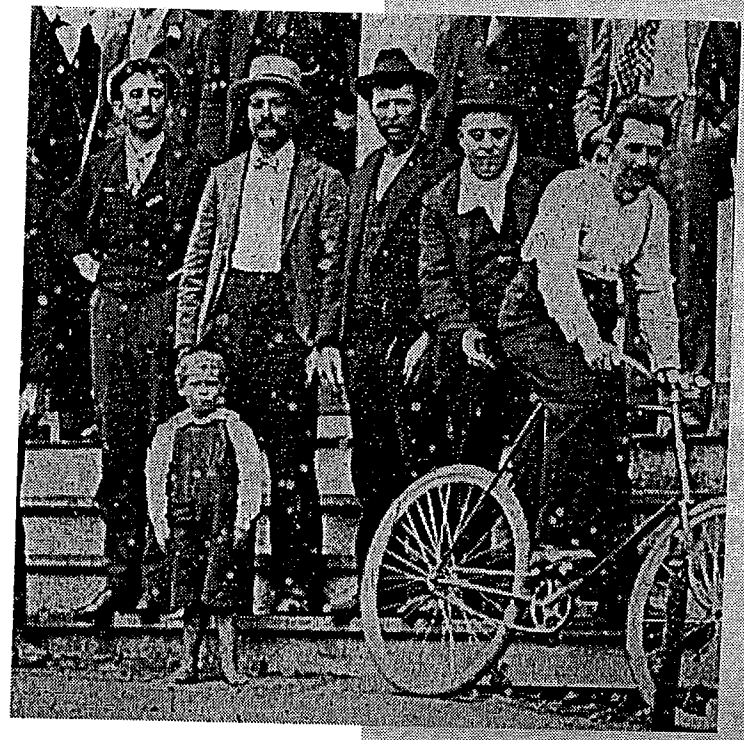
Mission Statement

The fundamental mission of the Town of Montague is to ensure its residents the highest possible quality of life using all available resources in an efficient and effective way. The Comprehensive Plan is a primary tool of public policy which can be used to accomplish this mission by identifying critical issues, developing possible solutions, and establishing ways to measure our progress.

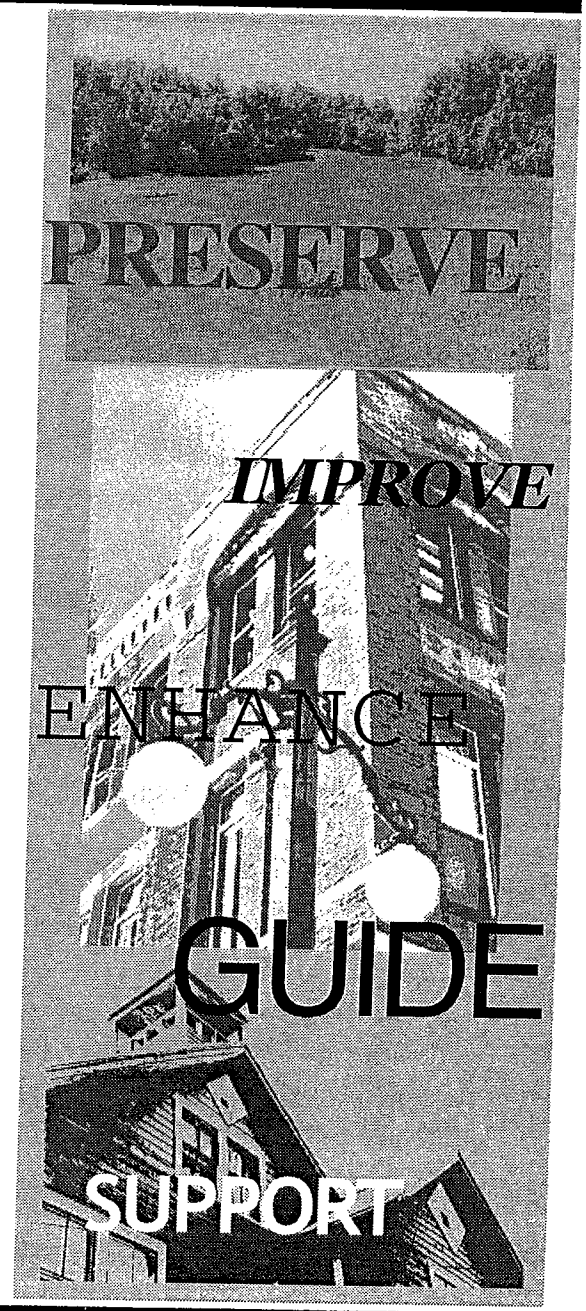
Table of Contents

1 OVERVIEW
2 EXISTING LAND USE
3 HOUSING
4 CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES
5 COMMUNITY ISSUES
6 OPEN SPACE
7 NATURAL RESOURCES
8 RECREATION
9 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
10 PUBLIC FACILITIES
11 INFRASTRUCTURE
12 CIRCULATION AND TRANSPORTATION
13 REGIONAL ISSUES
14 FUTURE LAND USE
15 IMPLEMENTATION
16 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

APPENDICES
A GOALS AND POLICIES
B RESOURCES



OVERVIEW



The fundamental mission of the Town of Montague is to ensure the highest quality of life for all its residents at a reasonable cost. Behind this simple statement, however, are a multiplicity of interpretations of what constitutes that quality of life, and an abundance of possible paths toward ensuring that quality. For this reason, community input was of key importance to formulation of this document, this call to action.

Eight goals have been defined in this plan as a context for a number of future action steps. This plan has been prepared to insure that over the next 10 years these goals are met to the maximum extent possible and feasible. The goals are as follows:

- Preserve and enhance the historic, architectural, and cultural character of our town.
- Ensure the quality of our residential neighborhoods and our residential growth.
- Improve our climate for quality commerce and industry, including agriculture & forestry.
- Improve our active and passive recreational opportunities.
- Support a safe and harmonious community for all our residents.
- Guide appropriate use of regionally significant resources of our town.
- Guide appropriate use of our open space and sensitive natural resources.
- Support quality educational opportunities for all our residents.

Reaching these goals will be our challenge. This Comprehensive Plan is meant as a living guide, directing the initiatives of all of us for the next 10 years. It must be a focal point for town staff, boards, and committees as they serve the town residents, and for the residents themselves.

This plan contains a set of action steps to get us to our goals. These actions, the heart and soul of this plan, are found in Sections 3-12, Housing through Transportation. They are intentionally integrated with one another, since a haphazard carrying out of initiatives will

FOUR MAJOR THEMES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- The health of our downtown areas must be improved.

- The vitality of all five of our villages must be retained and enhanced.

-We must guide the future of the Montague Plains.

- Finally, we must carefully plan our capital improvements.

make our efforts less efficient and will undercut our success. For example, an action step in Section 5 (Community Issues) asserts that we should *identify areas for the creation of "Neighborhood Centers"*. Section 9 (Economic Development) states that we should *create 'mixed use' zoning* in our more built up areas to support traditional commercial/ residential buildings. Section 3 (Housing) encourages us to *develop strategies to deal with severely negligent landlords*. All of those steps can work with one another to help revitalize our downtowns.

The plan takes a practical approach, too, by incorporating a separate section on Implementation. It names the staff or board or group which should be responsible for carrying out each action step, both in a lead role and in supporting roles. There are short, medium and long range strategies. There are steps which have low resource needs and some which will be quite costly. To measure progress, benchmarks need defining as well.

In looking at the goals and actions, four overriding planning issues seem to stand above all the others and affect all the other issues in some way.

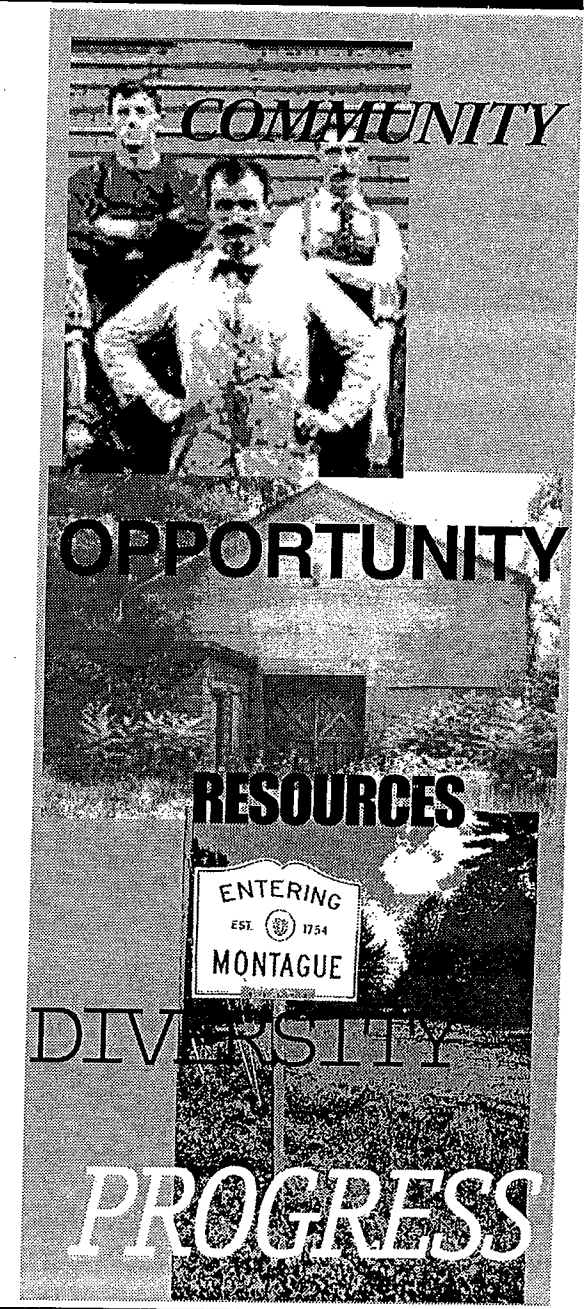
- **The health of our downtown areas must be improved.** Specifically targeted should be the commercial/residential core of Turners Falls (roughly delineated by L St., 7th St., and the Connecticut River) and the smaller core of Millers Falls. More than any other areas in town, these are in need of help to address both physical and human problems. The livability of these neighborhoods and the health of businesses are interrelated, and improvement will mean better lives for the residents and a better experience for visitors to our town.

- **The vitality of all five of our villages must be retained and enhanced.** Montague draws much of its strength from the variety and quality of experience in Montague Center, Montague City, Lake Pleasant, Millers Falls and Turners Falls. Also, these villages draw sustenance from their surrounding rural areas, often rich farmland or quality open space, and in turn the rural areas benefit from the nearby communities. Although each of the villages has at least some attendant problems, people genuinely like living in them. This needs to continue and people need to be proud of where they live. Our community life is focused in these villages and we must take steps to continue their viability as living centers while maintaining the sense that we are still one town.

-**We must guide the future of the Montague Plains.** This tremendous resource in the center of our town offers much to us, both in its natural state and in its possibilities for being developed. For too long we have been fortunate while waiting upon the actions of one large property owner. If the whole area were heavily developed, it would fundamentally alter the nature of our town. Yet, protecting all these acres against development would be a poor choice for a future where we need good jobs and a stable, more robust tax base. We must take steps to set aside the southern section of the undeveloped Plains as preserved open space or a wildlife management area while beginning planning for developing the northern section.

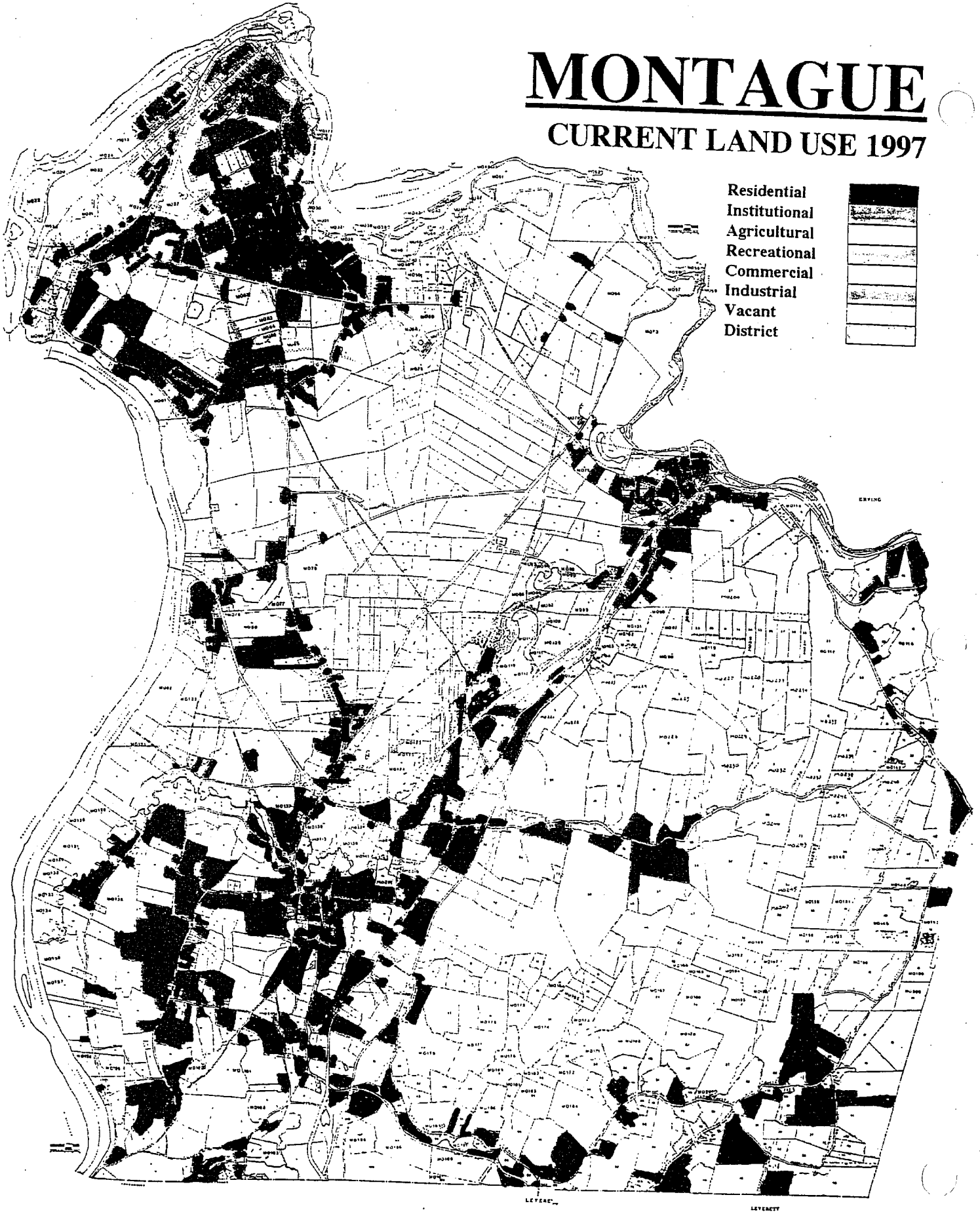
- **Finally, we must carefully plan our capital improvements**. Many of the steps this plan calls for require large amounts of money. As much as we may want to improve our facilities and infrastructure, we simply cannot do it all at once. We must do a better job of anticipating all needed large capital costs, choosing which ones we need most, and scheduling them over a number of years so that we can afford them.

Montague has many, many strengths but we must recognize its faults as well. There are no ills, however, so severe that they cannot be cured. We can take a town that already has a diverse richness and an abundance of resources and make it an even better community. All parties realize that there is much to be done. While the schedules and priorities in carrying out the action steps will evolve, everything here can be accomplished. Every committee, every department, and every resident will find something here to get involved in and to help with. In doing so we will be true to our mission, and the improvements in quality of life will follow naturally.



MONTAGUE

CURRENT LAND USE 1997



EXISTING LAND USE

Growth and development in the Town of Montague has occurred primarily in and around the five villages of Turners Falls, Montague Center, Millers Falls, Lake Pleasant, and Montague City. Developed areas outside the villages tend to be residential in nature and are often geographically scattered beyond the reach of water and sewer services. Most of the business and industrial areas in Montague remain within or near by Turners Falls with nearly all of the new industrial growth occurring in the recently expanded Airport Industrial Park. The town remains open and undeveloped throughout much of the area known as the Montague Plains. The lands to the east and south of the Plains are protected through the Turners Falls Water District as part of the Hannigan Brook watershed. Agricultural uses are located primarily on the fertile plains of the Connecticut River along the western edge of Montague. The Route 63 corridor continues to reflect a diverse development pattern. Older, agriculture oriented businesses continue to operate next tolow density residential neighbors. The Millers Falls Road corridor connects the historic industrial/business areas of Turners Falls and Millers Falls with the newer areas at the Airport Industrial Park. Moderate density housing exists primarily on both ends of the road with large undeveloped areas remaining on the portion of the corridor which passes through the Montague Plains. The Turners Falls-Montague City corridor continues to serve as a connector between Route 2 and Routes 5 & 10 although this has not affected land use along the corridor. With the exception of the Farren/Rod Shop area in Montague City, the corridor remains residential in character interrupted by the Thomas Memorial Golf Course approximately half-way between the village centers.

Population (and building) densities remain the greatest in our villages, particularly in our "urban villages" of Turners Falls and Millers Falls. Nearly two-thirds of the town's population lives in these two villages although the Existing Land Use Map-1997 visually indicates that residential *use* occupies more acreage in and around Montgue Center due to the larger lot sizes.

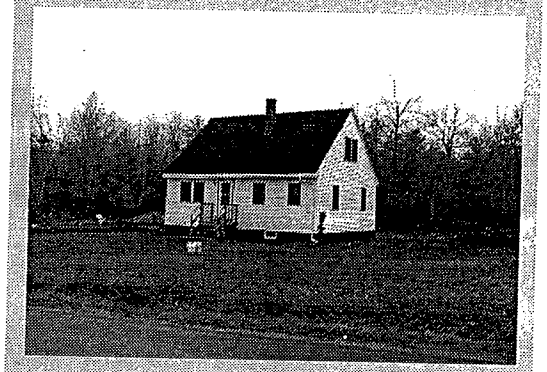
The downtown areas in Montague continue to support mixed-uses due to the prominence of

Population (and building) densities remain the greatest in our villages, particularly in our "urban villages" of Turners Falls and Millers Falls. Nearly two-thirds of the town's population lives in these two villages...

older, pre-zoning structures which remain in these neighborhoods. Although not reflected as such on the map, mixed uses also exist throughout our villages in isolated cases.

With the exception of the water district lands, most of the institutional/government use land is comprised of school, church, and municipal property,

HOUSING



The quality of housing in Montague has an obvious and direct impact on every household in the town. This is true of both the current housing and future housing options. In particular a fundamental challenge to the well being of the town and many of its residents is the quality of the housing experience and housing stock in downtown Turners Falls and, to a lesser extent, Millers Falls. Beyond these two villages, however, there are housing concerns which impact all areas of town and all portions of the population.

Improving the livability of neighborhoods by reducing crime, improving the availability of goods and services, resolving traffic problems and maintaining parks and open spaces is as important as the physical condition of the housing stock. The future construction of new or redeveloped housing in the community will occur only if individuals and families choose to make Montague their home.

"The future construction of new or redeveloped housing in the community will occur only if individuals and families choose to make Montague their home."

ACTION STEPS:

The need to take action on housing issues is addressed most especially by one of the eight comprehensive goals, **Ensure the quality of our residential neighborhoods and our residential growth.** In order to do so the following steps should be taken.

Substandard housing in the downtown areas.
The town needs to address the substandard housing situation in downtown Turners Falls and, to a lesser extent, in downtown Millers Falls with a coordinated approach.

Inventory the housing stock in the downtown areas.
(Lead: Community Development Planner; alternate lead: Building Inspector)
(Others: potential help from community members and/or student interns)

Create a team to improve the housing.
The town must bring together a team of town staff and community members to identify areas needing

Implement flexible open space development options.
One or more of the following bylaw changes should be implemented: open space subdivision, farmland back lot development, transfer of development rights.
(Lead: Planning Board; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

Future housing needs.

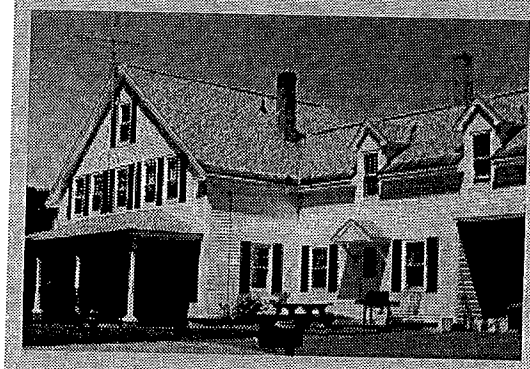
Inventory the housing stock throughout the remainder of the town.
Inventorying of the housing stock in downtown Turners Falls and Millers Falls has been addressed in an earlier action step. The housing stock throughout the other parts of town should be systematically inventoried, including both village and rural areas.
(Lead: Community Development Planner; alternate lead: Building Inspector)
(Others: potential help from community members and/or student interns)

Closely assess demographic trends.
Demographic trends and their possible future impacts on the housing in Montague should be closely analyzed.
(Lead: Community Development Planner; alternate lead: Planning Board)

Encourage private market answers to future needs by modifying bylaws.
Subdivision and zoning changes that encourage private market answers should be developed, depending on the identified need for future housing for family, elderly, and non-family households, Among suggested changes are the addition of greater flexibility in subdivision bylaws; changes to the type of housing allowed by right versus by special permit; and/or additional flexibility in zoning bylaws to allow more infill development, such as smaller lot sizes.
(Lead: Planning Board; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

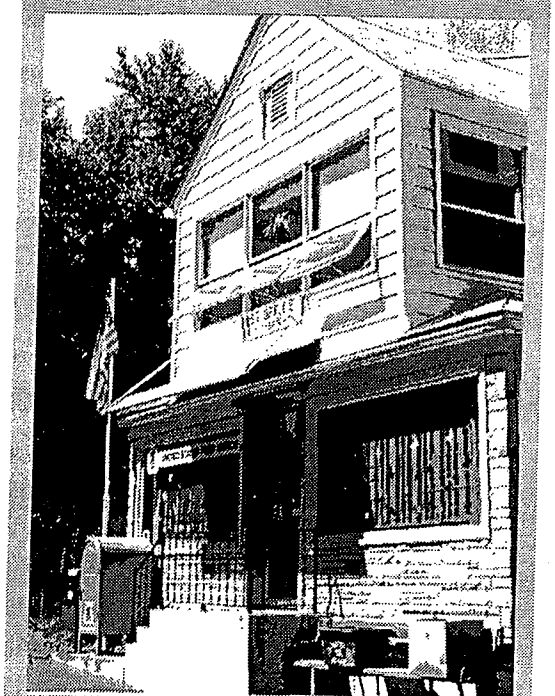
Pursue public housing strategies when appropriate.
Public housing strategies should be pursued where projections indicate an increased demand for housing for special needs populations, the homeless, and lower income elderly and family households. A point person should be selected to facilitate this initiative.
(Lead: Housing Team; alternate lead: Town Administrator)
(Others: Board of Selectmen, Montague Housing Authority, partnership with Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority)

Encourage an assisted living retirement facility.
An affordable facility which would allow residents to remain in town could be considered either as a private development or as a public venture.



"The Town needs to develop housing options that help keep residential development off prime agricultural lands while protecting the viability of those farm businesses."

Well-landscaped and walkable streets and sidewalks provide the context for many successful neighborhoods.



Neighborhood meeting places such as the Post Office in Lake Pleasant can be a key element in maintaining healthy places to live.

(Lead: Housing Team; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)
(Others: Town Administrator)

Extend infrastructure to designated residential growth areas.
Potential growth areas are identified on this plan's "Conceptual Future Land Use Map." Infrastructure would include water and sewer as well as gas and cable. This should be incorporated into the town's overall capital improvements planning effort.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen; alternate lead: Highway Dept.)
(Others: Town Administrator, Community Development Planner, Waste Water Treatment Facility, Turners Falls Water Dept., Cable Commission)

Develop phased growth bylaw.
The impact of phased growth bylaws on other towns should be studied. Such a bylaw would prepare the town for sudden heavy residential growth were it to develop, and ease the growth strains on schools and infrastructure.
(Lead: Planning Board; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

New septic disposal regulations and technology.
The impact of these on current land use should be evaluated.

Study the updated Title V regulations.
In particular the updated Title V regulations need to be closely studied and, if needed, subsequent actions determined. The updated state Title V regulations allow more flexibility for newer septic disposal technological solutions. This could lower the lot size required in areas where soil constraints have traditionally mandated large lots. If so, the town should balance this against the desire for areas that support wildlife and other ecological needs.
(Lead: Community Development Planner; alternate lead: Planning Board)
(Others: Health Agent, Health Board, Conservation Commission)

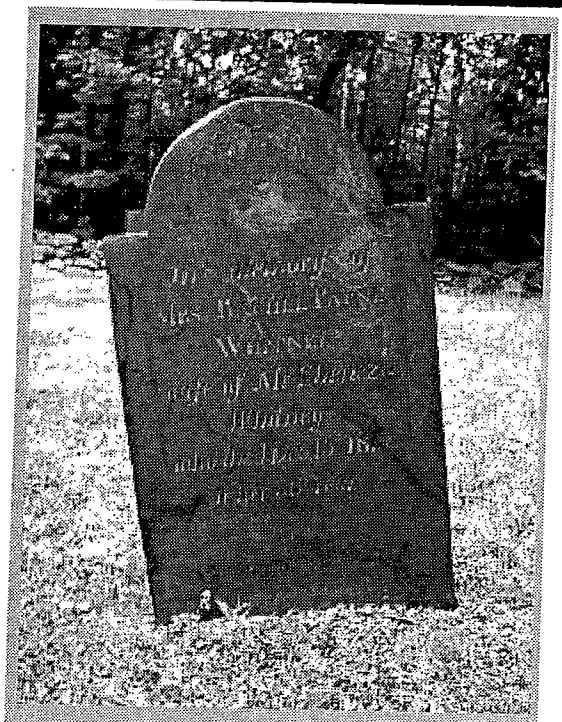
CULTURAL and HISTORIC RESOURCES

In many ways Montague still reflects its rich and diverse historical legacy. Parades and celebrations thrive in the town's parks and commons. Citizens gather at the post offices, libraries, churches and clubs to exchange companionship and information. Old Home Days demonstrate continued interest in the villages' histories and people. A rich collection of photographs, artifacts and other memorabilia has been maintained commemorating Montague's heritage. The Shea Theatre has brought new cultural energy to the region as it entertains and expands the town's horizons.

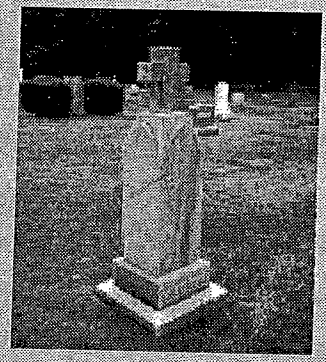
Each of the villages has maintained its historic identity to some degree. Montague Center maintains its town common, Grange, classic Congregational church, and houses with out-buildings. Lake Pleasant remains an enclave of small, private homes, its flavor compact and highly individual, harkening back to its 19th century heyday as a spiritual tent community. Montague City was once a focused village with a cohesive identity and strong connections to the river, canal and industry but now has lost much of this identity. Millers Falls physically remains much as it was at the turn of the century, although there remains little connection to the river. Because of the retention of the buildings, there is some sense of history, but the loss of industry and commercial activity has led to an undermining of vitality. Turners Falls maintains a very strong physical mill village presence with its urban brick architecture, well-laid out streets and dense, multi-family housing although it too has suffered from the loss of industry. Historically the churches and fraternal organizations provided strong structure and community and this continues to be true. Many significant historic structures still exist within the village.

Outlying areas of Montague continue to preserve traditional farms, forests, stone walls, and cemeteries. Rivers as an impetus for economic development have lost their impact except for a few pockets of industry; however, they are beginning to be seen as a strong force for tourism through low-impact recreational uses, viewsheds and renewed public investment.

"In many ways Montague still reflects its rich and diverse historical legacy."



"Markers must be cleaned and restored to preserve individual stones and to chronicle our community's history for the future."



Because of our relatively small scale we can successfully integrate our historic sites with many of our social and civic needs thus strengthening our ties to our town's heritage, maintaining a human scale and creating a stronger, more vibrant community. Much of this cultural and historic character is still accessible and offers a sense of community that is difficult to replicate in contemporary structures and settings. These attributes could, with proper care, provide important tourist attractions and sources of revenue for the Montague of tomorrow.

ACTION STEPS:

The need to take action on cultural and historic resources is addressed by our comprehensive goal to **preserve and enhance the historic, architectural and cultural character of our town** as well as by the goals to **improve our climate for quality commerce and industry, support a safe and harmonious community and guide appropriate use of regionally significant resources.**

Protect rural historical texture of the community.

Preserve historic viewsheds.
Town bylaws will be redesigned to achieve necessary protective covenants, such as cluster zoning, to ensure continuation of the rural character of the community in the future. The town will support public and private agencies in making appropriate purchases of land or easements, coordinate efforts with the Connecticut River Scenic Farm Byway Project and use any other means available, including APRs and tax incentives, to protect designated areas. See Section 7 (Natural Resources).
(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead: Conservation Commission)
(Others: Historic Commission)

Promote the Montague section of the Connecticut River Regional Heritage Corridor Project.
The town will coordinate efforts with MEDIC and other regional and state agencies to encourage the development of the heritage corridor within our boundaries. This project will increase awareness of our local cultural heritage, encourage tourism and enhance economic growth and stability for Montague.
(Lead: Community Development Planner, Alt Lead:Town Administrator)
(Others: Historic Commission, MEDIC, Planning Board)

Restore town cemeteries, boundaries and markers.
Surveys, deeds and town records must be completed to ensure the integrity of the cemetery sites as well as access to them. Markers must be cleaned and restored to preserve individual stones and to chronicle our community's history for the future. Local groups such as the Boy Scouts and the Honor Court could be used to implement this program.
(Lead: Montague Cemetery Commission, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)

Create educational programs and exhibits for our schools, citizens and visitors.
Awareness of the historical aspects of the area needs to be preserved and strengthened through pro grams which could include walking tours of the villages, touring exhibits for the schools, senior centers, other towns and museums, and the local Visitor's Center. Systematic inventorying of private and public collections and aggressive procurement of these historical archives is necessary to ensure continuity of knowledge and eventual development of a permanent repository within town.
(Lead: Discovery Center, Alt. Lead: GMR School District)
(Others: Library Director, Historic Commission)

Preserve and enhance existing historic buildings to maintain the town's character.

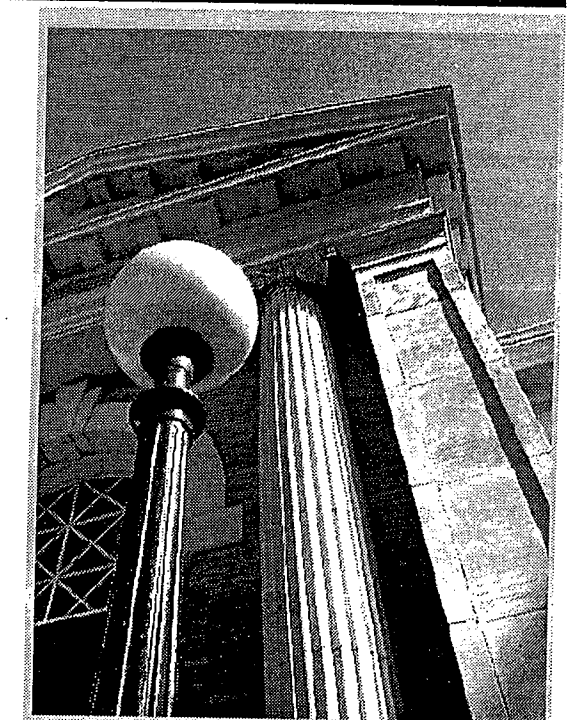
Inventory all historic, architectural, and cultural elements/sites.
All sites in town must be catalogued in order to prioritize renovation and grant funding efforts. A systematic listing and schedule will allow the town to be proactive in development and preservation.
(Lead: Community Development Planner, Alt. Lead: HistoricCommission)
(Others: Planning Board, Franklin County Chamber ofCommerce)

Develop incentives to facilitate a variety of historic preservation efforts for priority sites.
Local historic groups with support from town staff should be involved in analysis of appropriate and feasible measures for preservation including possible National Register and / or Historic District designation.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead:)
(Others: Historical Society and Commission)

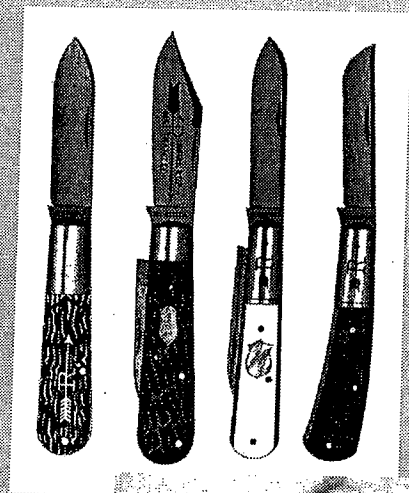
Develop design guidelines and streetscape plans to preserve historical and architectural integrity while preserving commercial viability.
While preservation is a positive force for quality of life, strict adherence to historical authenticity purely for its own sake can undermine the town's future economic viability. Careful structuring of by laws and village-specific design guidelines, as well as appropriate construction and development techniques, will support both our historic resources and our economic assets.
(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead:Community Development Planner)

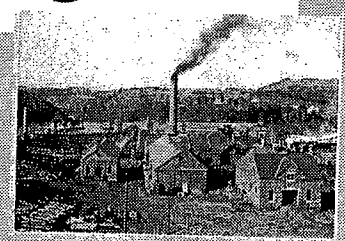
Encourage reuse of historic industrial areas in Turners Falls and Millers Falls and specific historic buildings in the residential villages .

Aggressively promote adaptive reuse of vacant/underutilized historic buildings and redevelopment of brownfield sites.
The historic downtown character of the two urban villages is created mostly from its turn-of-the-century brick, industrial buildings. Loss of this urban framework will drastically effect the villages and

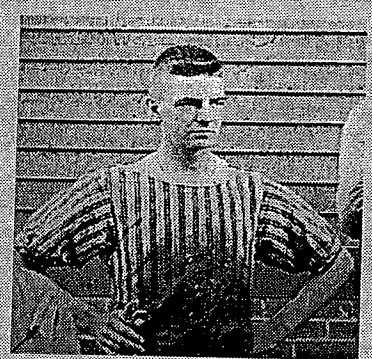


"Preserve and enhance existing historic buildings to maintain the town's character."





Images of Montague's Industrial Heritage



undermine the town's physical structure as well as its viability for quality commerce. Town staff with direction from MEDIC must seek funding for design, marketing and re-construction of appropriate sites to resurrect their strengths. See Section 9 (Economic Development).
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)
(Others: Planning Board, MEDIC)

Work with owners to redevelop important industrial buildings.
Town staff should coordinate with MEDIC, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and the regional planning department to develop strategies to assist private owners in rehabilitating specific structures such as the Crocker, Strathmore, Colle, Montague Machine and Railroad Salvage Buildings in Turners Falls and the Powers Block in Millers Falls. See Section 9 (Economic Development).
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)
(Others: MEDIC)

Support reuse of the Rod Shop buildings in Montague City.
Town agencies with the guidance of MEDIC and the county planning department should study reuse prospects for the Rod Shop site. Although a probable brownfield site, its contained, fairly small size ought to make this an attractive project for a developer with modest capital resources. With immediate access to the upcoming regional bikeway through Montague City, this site offers an ideal location to capture the cycling traffic. Possible enterprises might include a museum, commercial site, medical specialty site, or a crafts incubator site.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)
(Others: MEDIC, Planning Board)

Lend town professional support to affiliated groups.
The Town Administrator's office can offer technical advice to private groups, such as the Masonic groups and the Grange, who are seeking to renovate or reuse their buildings thus adding another dimension of stability and reinvigoration of the villages.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)
(Others: Building Inspector, Health Agent)

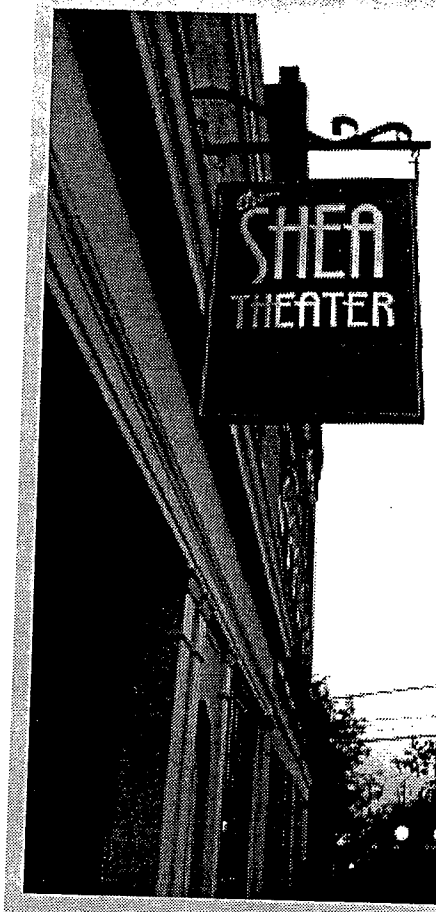
Support cultural community resources, both local and regional ,as enhancements for residents and visitors.

Design and develop a town-wide network of library / exhibit spaces.
Short-term up-grade programs and long-term strategies need to be developed for the libraries and museum spaces, individually and in conjunction with each other. Both must include the allocation of resources for appropriate physical space needs and acquisitions and current technology. Maintenance of library facilities within the villages is a priority although a coordinated network of spaces and programs throughout the town could be created to house all the ecological, historic and industrial

heritage material available. Perhaps by unifying the needs of the libraries with various exhibition spaces envisioned by the Historical Society and Discovery Center, optimum usage, accessibility and involvement among residents can be achieved in a cost-efficient manner for the town. An integrated approach would allow enhanced educational opportunities as well as greater access to private collections and regional, state and national grants. With the establishment of a single town-wide system, centered in Turners Falls, tourism benefits should multiply.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Community Development Planner)
(Alt. Lead: Library Director and Trustees, Discovery Center)
(Others: Historic Commission)

Maintain and enhance the Shea Theater.
Since the Shea is Montague's major regional cultural resource, it is imperative that the town continue to support the Shea in its endeavors to become more self-sufficient. Coordination through theTown Administrator's office of professional guidance for the Civic Center Commission and the Shea Board in seeking grant applications for structural as well as programming needs will benefit all involved. Development of a long-term parking solution for downtown Turners Falls will also enhance the Shea's prospects enormously.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Community Development Planner
(Alt. Lead: Downtown Improvement Organization)
(Others: Civic Center Commission, Shea Board, Planning Board)

Design and build a new outdoor performing space
The creation of a performing space is seen as a catalyst for a vibrant downtown community. Location of this space could be in Peskeomskut Park. Clear guidelines and flexibility of space will encourage participation by local groups such as the Montague Community Band and the Shea Theatre. Private fundraising efforts to assist in the creation of this structure should be encouraged.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Town Planner, Alt. Lead: Downtown Improvement Organization)



"Since the Shea is Montague's major regional cultural resource, it is imperative that the town continue to support the Shea in its endeavors to become more self-sufficient."

COMMUNITY ISSUES

Planning must concern itself with the real problems of individuals, and of individuals interacting with others. The essence of Montague community life is tied to issues like expectations of good health, freedom from fear, acceptance by others, and availability of quality housing and education.

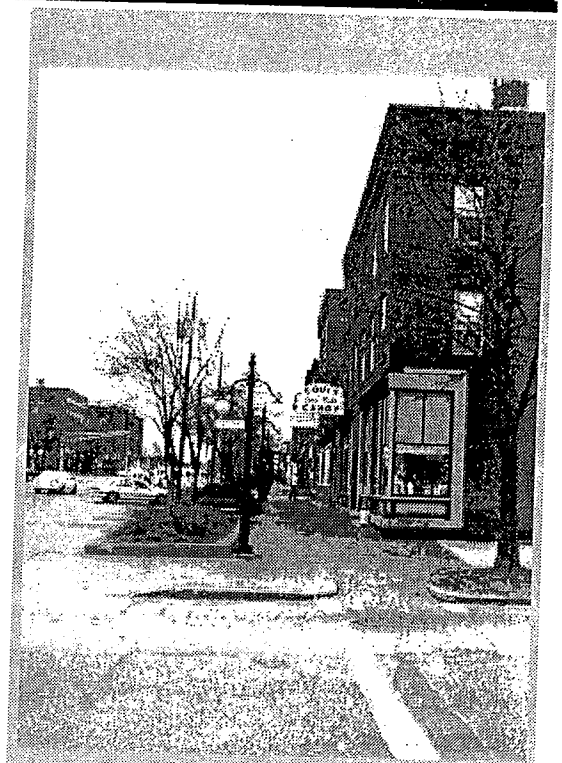
The town of Montague is made up of five villages: Turners Falls, Millers Falls, Lake Pleasant, Montague City and Montague Center. Although these villages are separate and distinct communities, they are inextricably bound together within the larger community. Each village presents us with social and economic concerns which need to be addressed.

In particular the urban villages of Turners Falls and Millers Falls present us with a different set of problems from the other three villages. They are densely populated areas and provide the bulk of our commercial and economic activity. At the same time they are unhealthy in certain aspects. For example, both villages have more than their share of unemployment and under-employment, health problems, and poorly maintained residential and commercial spaces. For these reasons our main focus of attention must be the commercial village centers.

For Montague to thrive, we should encourage this mosaic of differing styles within our villages. However, we must bring all our citizens together as a single town to work on the issues that confront us. We must resolve our differences in order to work effectively. Through support of diversity and respect between all residents, creation of a more livable community for all of us is attainable.

ACTION STEPS:

The need to take action on community issues is addressed through most of our eight comprehensive goals including: **preserve and enhance the character of our town, ensure the quality of our residential neighborhoods, improve our climate for quality commerce and industry, guide appropriate use of regionally**



"...our main focus of attention must be the commercial village centers."

"Creation of viable economic downtown areas will stabilize neighborhoods in Turners Falls and Millers Falls and lead towards a sense of cohesion and community."

significant resources, and support quality educational opportunities, but most importantly through our goal to **support a safe and harmonious community for all our residents**. In order to accomplish these goals, the following steps must be taken:

Livability of neighborhoods.

Improve the quality of housing.
A team of town staff and community members must inventory current housing stock and neighborhoods. This team will develop strategies to access programs and funding to rehabilitate and develop those residential areas needing improvement. Since Millers Falls and Turners Falls contain the majority of the population as well as the largest number of problem sites, they should constitute the major focus of the team's efforts. For more detail see Section 3 (Housing).

Identify and create areas for outdoor "neighborhood centers".
Design and implementation of informal outdoor meeting spaces is critical to increasing community involvement and pride and a sense of ownership. Within Turners and Millers Falls key sites will be targeted for creation of neighborhood "pocket" parks and community gardens.
(Lead: Community Development Planner, Alt. Lead: Planning Board)
(Others: Communtiy Partnership for a Safe Montague, Downtown Revitalization Organization)

Develop programs to improve the commercial areas within Turners Falls and Millers Falls.
Creation of viable economic downtown areas will stabilize neighborhoods in Turners Falls and Millers Falls and lead towards a sense of cohesion and community. Mechanisms to foster and maintain a vibrant economic climate must be implemented including streetscape plans and funding from federal and state grants. For more detail see Section 9 (Economic Development)

Amend zoning to encourage economic vitality in Turners Falls and Millers Falls.
Amended zoning regulations such as reduced frontage and setback requirements to guide future uses will encourage appropriate commercial development within the villages.
(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead: Building Inspector)
(Others: Community Development Planner)

Amend zoning to allow limited mixed uses in the rural villages.
Rural villages derive strength from a low-key approach to commercial activity. For example a convenience store, post office or gas station support immediate short-range needs of citizens without generating a large influx of visitors. Amending zoning to allow limited mixed-use will sustain the integrity of the rural villages and maintain the viability of characteristic "outbuildings" in the rural villages.
(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead: Building Inspector, Others: Community Development Planner)

Seek appropriate infill development.
Vacant and blighted lots in downtown neighborhoods engender distrust and fear. Encouraging appropriate interim uses for these lots, such as community gardens and play areas, will abate this sense of alienation while more permanent solutions are pursued. Some of these permanent solutions might include new housing.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)
(Others: Board of Selectmen, Building Inspector)

Seek funding and space for community social service organizations.
Local agencies require flexible, stable locations to provide services necessary for a healthy community and to serve as anchors for the neighborhoods. Town staff should continue their efforts to target appropriate sites and seek federal and state funding to support these groups with their space needs.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner, Others: Health Agent)

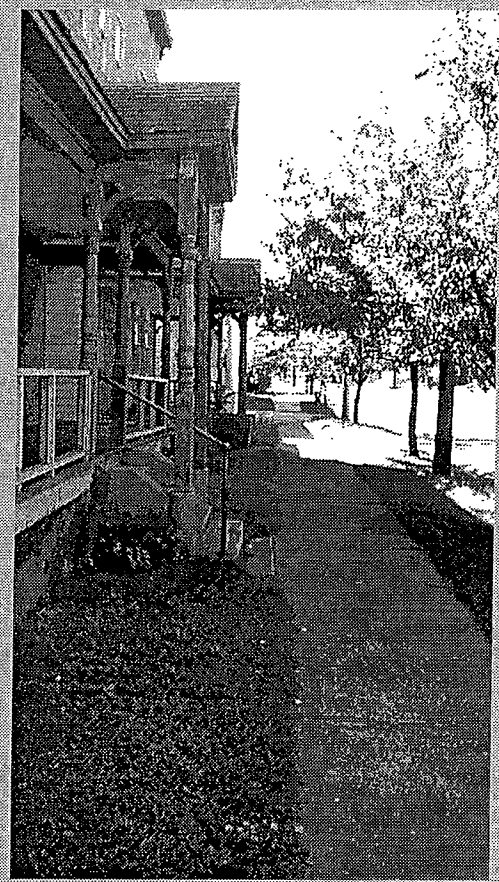
Create spaces and programs to support multi-generational interactions.
Today's changing family structures require more flexible treatment in not only physical layout but also in zoning ordinances to fit within the context of our community. Creating senior and teen centers and developing mentoring programs within the school and recreation departments will increase inclusion and inter-dependence of different age groups vital to the town's cohesion and stability. See Section 10 (Public Facilities)
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Planning Board)
(Others: Parks & Recreation Dept., GMR School District)

"Creating senior and teen centers and developing mentoring programs within the school and recreation departments will increase inclusion and inter-dependence of different age groups vital to the town's cohesion and stability."

Safe communities.

Support organizational efforts to create a sense of community and to empower residents.
Community-based organizations should be supported by the town whenever appropriate. Local agencies and town departments should work with community members to develop programs which address the social issues of residents. Creation of a town-wide diversity, or human rights, commission and continued widespread dissemination of information are two such avenues to pursue.
(Lead: Grass roots community organizations , Alt. Lead: Board of Selectmen)
(Others: Health Agent, GMR School District, Montague Catholic Social Ministries, Brickhouse)

Increase police visibility in all areas of town.
Town departments should work with the police department to develop efficient use of materials, resources and manpower. Ongoing job and educational training should be encouraged. Increased foot and bike patrols in appropriate areas of town should be actively supported.. Benefits of successful police endeavors such as TRIAD need to be spotlighted.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: Police Department)
(Others: Town Administrator, GMR School District, Board of Health, Community Partnership)



"Our system of...sidewalks must be maintained to protect the safety of all our citizens..."

Support the fire departments.
Town departments should work with the fire department to continue efficient use of resources and manpower. Ongoing job and educational training should be supported for both volunteer and permanent fire personnel. Benefits of fire prevention techniques such as smoke detector programs and inspections should be spotlighted.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: TF and MC Fire Depts.)

Facilitate handicap accessibility, especially to community and government facilities.
All our residents should be assured fair and appropriate access to town facilities. Access needs must be inventoried, appropriate mechanisms / structures designed that meet code standards, and funding sought to modify structures as needed.
(Lead: Building Inspector, Alt. Lead: Health Agent)
(Others: Veterans Agent, Community Development Planner)

Ensure quality and maintainability of town roads and sidewalks.
Our system of roads and sidewalks must be maintained to protect the safety of all our citizens, while also being well-engineered to promote circulation. See Section 12 (Circulation and Transportation).
(Lead: Highway Department)

Access to town and regional community health services

Assess the need for, and type of, town-wide community health services.
The town should inventory existing town-wide and regional health services. With the expertise of regional agencies potential trends in community health issues can be addressed and a comprehensive plan prepared to ensure access and availability of necessary facilities, medicines and procedures for Montague residents.
(Lead: Board of Health, Others: Franklin County Community Health Services, Town Nurse)

Develop and enhance targeted health services.
Local health agencies should re-enforce their access to regional health services such as the Community Health Center of Franklin County. Flu and blood pressure clinics as well as other health immunization efforts should be expanded and efforts increased to publicize accessibility for all residents.
(Lead: Health Agent, Alt. Lead: Town Nurse
(Others: GMR School District, Council on Aging)

Provide physical accessibility to services and facilities.
Integrating healthcare facilities with handicap and mobility-impaired features will ensure access for all our residents. In addition development of an integrated system of transportation through the help

of the local transportation authorities, such as GMTA, to these sites as well as mobilization of home delivery systems will also provide better service.
(Lead: Health Agent, Alt. Lead: Building Inspector)
(Others: FRCOG, GMTA, FRTA, Community Development Planner)

Community facilities

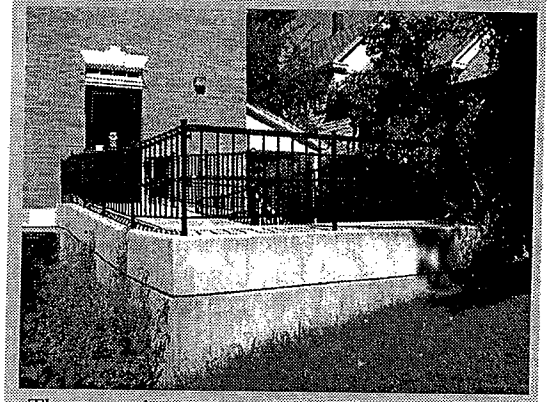
Assess the need for a new or expanded senior center as well as a teen center.
Since demographics indicate that Montague can expect to see its largest increase in the elderly population, their needs must be addressed. At the same time the town's youth have no central indoor facility for their needs. Both population segments need community focal points for socializing and support. A team should survey residents to determine criteria and locations that would best suit their needs and then pursue funding to implement appropriate projects. See Section 10 (Public Facilities).
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Board of Selectmen)
(Others: Council on Aging, GMR School District, community groups, Community Development Planner)

Integrate the use of school facilities with community needs.
In order to make efficient use of limited resources school facilities should be available year-round for adult education, non-traditional, and alternative early childhood educational programs. In addition facilities could be used by community groups, summer educational and sports camps, as well as Elder Hostel type programs. Any new construction should incorporate the need for community access.
(Lead: Gill-Montague Regional School Dept., Alt. Lead: Town Administrator)

Quality educational opportunities for all our residents.

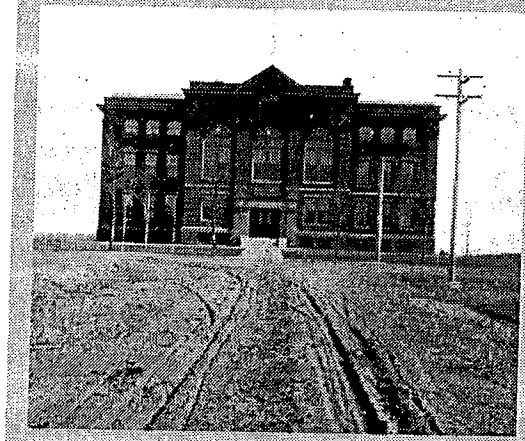
In order to attract new residents and businesses, a community must have a strong, academic reputation. By ensuring the educational system has the appropriate technology, infrastructure and flexible space for varied and innovative teaching techniques, the town will find itself an attractive destination for students. This is also a key to the future as school choice becomes more the norm.

Promote quality of excellence in educational programs in the Montague schools.
Support of the highest quality curriculum must be unstinting, and the creation of magnet schools should be considered. Strong support of continued professional development and training will lead to teachers feeling highly valued and to a greater sense of self-worth. In addition alternatives to traditional education, whether special education or gifted and talented programs, must be studied and coordinated with the goals of the school department.
(Lead: Gill-Montague Regional School Dept., Alt. Lead: citizens)



The recently constructed handicap-accessible entry to the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls.

"Facilitate handicap accessibility, especially to community and government facilities."



The Oakman School (high school) stood at the terminus of Marshall Street in Turners Falls serving the needs of students for nearly a century before burning to the ground in the 1980s. The site is currently home to the Sheffield School.

"Provide flexible infrastructure, buildings and technology to address the needs of school programs."

Provide flexible infrastructure, buildings and technology to address the needs of school programs.
The ability of our structural and exterior spaces to adapt to changing programs and educational goals, to effectively house and support growing technological needs, to encourage participation in sporting and artistic endeavors, and to provide efficient adjunct spaces is paramount to success with our stated goal of quality of excellence in education. Utilizing the feasibility study generated by the Building 2000Committee in 1999, the town must embark on the systematic follow-through of these goals.
(Lead: Gill-Montague Regional School Dist., Alt. Lead: Capital Improvements Committee)
(Others: Finance Committee)

Strengthen accountability and prepare for the future.
Appropriate long-range goals and capital improvement plans need to be developed. The school system's budget must be addressed within the context of the town's entire budget. With this information openly accessible, support will be gained from the townspeople.
(Lead: Gill-Montague Regional School Dist.., Alt. Lead: Finance Committee)
(Others: Capital Improvements Committee).

Leverage programs of the Franklin County Tech School.
Since the Tech School exists within its boundaries, Montague is fortunate to have its unique strengths readily available. Working with the Tech School faculty and staff, the Gill-Montague School System should be able to access its facilities, expertise and outreach programs. Effective coordination of programs and new initiatives could serve as the basis for a "magnet" school.
(Gill-Montague Regional School Dist., Alt. Lead: Franklin County Tech School)

Coordinate and develop adult education and job training.
Employers will locate near the well-trained employees they need for their businesses to succeed. By supporting efforts of the Franklin County Tech School and GCC's Center for Business and Industry through programs such as School-to-Work, Life-Long Learning and on-site specialized job training the town can offer those businesses a long-term location to develop and thrive. The town should encourage coordination and accessibility to these programs.
(Lead: Gill-Montague Regional School Dist., Alt. Lead: Montague Business Association)
(Others: Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, MEDIC, GCC, Industrial Park Tenants Assoc.)

Town regulations and processes

Ensure town regulations and procedures are efficient and integrated.
Some procedures seem confusing, frustrating many residents and outside businesses. New

regulations should be adopted that address the needs of a changing community while retiring those laws which no longer accomplish their intended goals. Each board or committee should regularly review its regulatory and procedural tools for relevance, efficiency, and ease of use and develop manuals and brochures to guide applicants through the process.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Town Clerk)
(Others: Building Inspector, Community Development Planner, Planning Board, Zoning Board)

Consider reorganization of town departments.
The current perception of Montague's departments is of well-intentioned but non-coordinated, independent agencies. Consideration might be given to combining several town offices into one, which would allow sharing of resources and more effective communication on common projects.
(Lead: Town Administrator)

Streamline permit application process.
The Town should work to make the permitting processes as easy to use and understand as possible. Adequate resources should be allocated to departments to ensure they have the resources available to serve the public well. On-line information including procedural guidance, application forms, and sample application materials should be pursued.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead:Town Clerk)
(Others: Building Inspector, Community Development Planner, Health Agent, Highway Supt.)

Use technology to provide access to town government.
Citizens must be assured they will learn of important meetings in a timely manner and must receive the depth of information they need to make informed decisions. Use of all media including cable, newspaper and radio integrated with various electronic means should be encouraged. The Town should take advantage of its Internet presence to provide regulatory information. The town might hire an outside consultant or student intern to help coordinate the creation of this system.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Cable Advisory Commission, Others: Board of Selectmen)

Develop crisis response team and procedures.
Town agencies and local social agencies should implement protocol for dissemination of accurate information to the media and citizens in times of crisis and coordinate efforts with local agencies such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army.
(Lead: Town Administrator)
(Others: Fire Depts., Police Dept., community groups, Health Agent)

Simplify zoning and subdivision bylaws.
The Planning Board will work on the town's bylaws to eliminate inconsistencies and duplications, to

"The Planning Board will work on the town's bylaws to eliminate inconsistencies and duplications, to ensure the by-laws are in compliance with the state enabling act, and to coordinate the goals of the plan with the town's primary land-use planning tools."

"Use technology to provide access to town government."

ensure the by-laws are in compliance with the state enabling act, and to coordinate the goals of the plan with the town's primary land-use planning tools. The revised zoning map should be guided by the Future Land Use Section of this plan and include descriptions of "Purpose" when developing or amending zoning districts and other land use regulations.
(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)
(Others: Building Inspector, Zoning Board)

OPEN SPACE

The aquisition and maintenance of adequate open space for citizens of Montague is a crucial step in fostering a healthy community. In addition to providing critical habitat for wildlife and natural vegetation, open space also provides opportunities for active recreation, land-based business such as farming, and spiritual and mental well-being.

This Comprehensive Plan seeks only to set forth broad concepts regarding open space in the Town. The following goals and actions can provide a starting point for the Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee which is scheduled to complete its work on the Montague Open Space and Recreation Plan in 1999.

"Maintain a variety of open spaces in the villages (parks, town common, pedestrian trail system)"

ACTION STEPS:

The overall goal to **"Guide appropriate use of our open space and sensitive natural resources"** gives the most direct and obvious impetus to our open space action steps. However, these steps are also related to the following goals:

- **ensure the quality of our residential neighborhoods and our residential growth;**
- **improve our active and passive recreation opportunities;**
- **guide appropriate use of regionally significant resources of our town;** and
- **improve our climate for quality commerce and industry, including agriculture & forestry business.**

Maintain key ecological parcels and corridors

- Foster the continued establishment of a Montague wildlife corridor that forms a 'necklace' of open space adorning the town
- Identify and protect natural and scenic viewsheds, particularly those along the Scenic Farm Byway Corridor
- Study the impact of recent Title 5 amendments that alter the underlying environmental constraints to development on open and natural lands
- Seek development of water access points on town's waterways
- Encourage continued open space uses for privately-owned clubs should they discontinue operation by current owners

"Revise zoning and subdivision regulations to allow for more flexible residential development that maintains viable agricultural parcels"

-Seek to establish or continue open space uses on Northeast Utilities properties along the Connecticut River and canals
-Utilize private land trusts to maximize resources being spent by public efforts to protect open spaces

Village open spaces

-Identify existing vacant and under-used lots in the five villages
-Maintain a variety of open spaces in the villages (parks, town common, pedestrian trail system)
-Identify and protect historic viewsheds in theTown
-Encourage the establishment of interim open spaces on vacant or cleared lots (gardens, pocket parks)

The Montague Plains

-Maintain land use control by retaining control of roads across the Plains
-Use aquifer protection strategies to protect the water supply and the natural ecosystems sustaining it
-Seek permanent protection of the lower two-thirds of the Plains
-Develop strategies for preventing the dumping of residential trash and large objects on thePlains

Healthy agriculture and forestry businesses

-Leverage all resources to maximize participation in the Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction program
-Encourage local farmers to participate in the MassDFA's Farm Viability program that merges business planning, land restrictions, and cash grants
-Establish an Agricultural Advisory Committee to provide feedback to town officials regarding agricultural issues
-Revise zoning and subdivision regulations to allow for more flexible residential development that maintains viable agricultural parcels
-Utilize all available technical resources including the Natural Resources Conservation Service (former SCS) and UMASS Cooperative Extension Service.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Montague is blessed with a richness of natural resources. At its heart lies the Montague Plains, several thousand acres of sandy pine barrens (rare in non-coastal New England) with its rich aquifer. Along half of the town's periphery run the Millers River and the Connecticut River — a major Northeast river fed within the town by the Sawmill River. Other streams drain the ecologically significant wildlife area of the forested hills east of Route 63 and the Mt. Toby area south of town. Rich floodplain soils support farming along the river systems, most particularly along the Connecticut River but also along the Sawmill. The major aquifer serving the town's primary current municipal well also lies within the area of the Sawmill. Two kettle hole ponds left from receding glaciers offer additional resources for water supply and potential for recreation. All of these features combine to form enriching natural views throughout the town.

To a great extent the quality of life in Montague is defined by these natural resources. The importance of good water for residential, commercial, and industrial needs cannot be overstated, and Montague's watersheds, aquifers, and ponds support a high quality current supply as well as the potential for future supplies. Small farms supported by the excellent local soils are still important businesses in the town and offer pleasing vistas to all residents. Both passive and active recreation opportunities are offered by the Montague Plains, the forested lands east of Route 63, and by the rivers, streams, and ponds. The amount of contiguous open space in several areas of town supports important wildlife corridors and environmental diversity. Many of these resources have significance that stretches beyond the borders of Montague.

"The amount of contiguous open space in several areas of town supports important wildlife corridors and environmental diversity."

ACTION STEPS:

Actions on natural resources issues follow most directly from the goal to **"guide appropriate use of our open**

"The town must guide future uses of the currently undeveloped Montague Plains..."

space and sensitive natural resources." The action steps also have ties to the following goals:

- **-improve our climate for quality commerce and industry, including ag/forestry business;**
- **-improve our active and passive recreation opportunities;** and
- **-guide appropriate use of regionally significant resources of our town.**

The Montague Plains

The town must guide future uses of the currently undeveloped Montague Plains area south of Millers Falls Road and east of Turners Falls Road. These uses should be split between larger scale industrial development in the northern section and no development, except for supporting passive recreation or wildlife management, in the southern two thirds.

Retain control over the roads

The Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting members must retain control over the roads that cross the Plains for as long as needed to ensure carrying out of the policy stated directly above (i.e., the one-third industrial development/two-thirds no development split).
(Lead: Board of Selectmen; alternate lead: Planning Board)
(Others: Town Meeting members)

Extend water supply overlay to the Plains

The Plains includes a significant natural resource in its aquifer. Implementation steps for preserving the southern section of the Plains from development should begin immediately. Strategies should include extension of the Water Supply District to this section of the Plains.
(Lead: Planning Board; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)
(Others: Town Administrator, Conservation Commission, Turners Falls Water Dept.)

Encourage sale to conservation entities

Town officials should encourage any sale by Northeast Utilities to public or non-profit conservation entities, such as the Conte Fish and Wildlife Refuge, The Nature Conservancy, regional conservation land trusts, or state departments like the Department of Environmental Management.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen; alternate lead: Conservation Commission)
(Others: Community Development Planner)

Plan future infrastructure needs

Town officials need to anticipate the infrastructure requirements for any large scale industrial uses on the northern part of the undeveloped section of the Plains. The Town Administrator should convene a working group to assess potential water, sewer, road, and other needs.
(Lead: Town Administrator)
(Others: Community Development Planner, Waste Water Control Superintendent, Highway Dept., Building Inspector, Turners Falls Water Dept.)

Assess impact on town finances
Any significant withdrawal of lands from industrial status will have significant impact on tax revenues, thus the Finance Committee should be involved in laying out these scenarios.
(Lead: Finance Committee; alternate lead: Town Accountant)

Natural resources of regional significance
There needs to be a clear realization that Montague includes natural resources that are significant not only to its own people but also to the region. Thus, there needs to be a willingness to cooperate with other entities to preserve and leverage these resources for the benefit of its citizens and of the region.

Cooperate with the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program and Agricultural Viability program.
These programs retain our prime agricultural soils for future generations while also enabling farms to continue as viable businesses. The Conservation Commission should head up town response to any proposals to put farmland into APR or AVP status.
(Lead: Conservation Commission; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

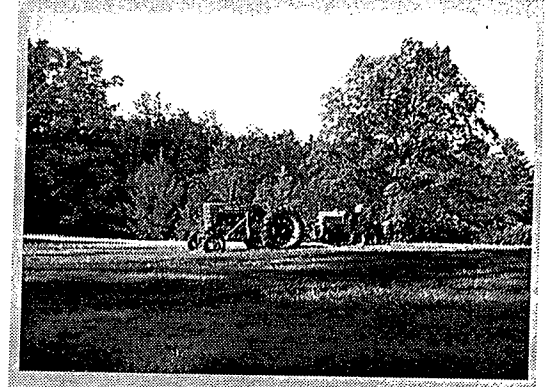
Protect sensitive natural areas by working with land trusts.
The town should work with other public and non-profit entities to protect sensitive natural areas. With the help of interested citizens, it should aggressively pursue national, state, and regional land trusts (e.g., Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust, Valley Land Fund) as key pieces of land are identified for preservation.
(Lead: Conservation Commission; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

Support continued operation of the state fish hatchery.
This rare resource aids sportsmen but is also a unique area to visit. If the fish hatchery ceases to operate, Montague should consider setting the land aside as a nature preserve.
(Lead: Conservation Commission; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

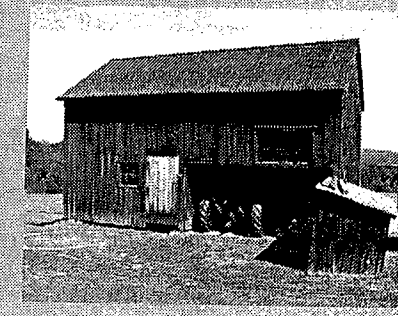
Participate in the scenic farm byway.
The town should participate in the Route 47/Route 63 Scenic Farm Byway corridor designation.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen; alternate lead: Planning Board)
(Others: Town Meeting members, Community Development Planner, Highway Dept.)

Cooperate with the plans for development of the Conte Fish and Wildlife Refuge.
The Conservation Commission should head up town response to proposals from the refuge officials.
(Lead: Conservation Commission; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

Study Connecticut River Heritage Corridor
The town should consider participation in the Connecticut River Heritage Corridor, especially as it aligns



"Cooperate with the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program and Agricultural Viability program.
These programs help to retain our prime agricultural soils for future generations while also enabling farms to continue as viable businesses."



"The town should take steps to preserve its most significant natural viewsheds."

with the programs of the Discovery Center. Town staff should study and recommend to the Select Board and Town Meeting members on the appropriate degree of support and participation.
(Lead: Discovery Center; alternate lead: Town Administrator)
(Others: Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting members, Community Development Planner)

Encourage natural resource education
Environmental education and the fate of key natural resources often go hand in hand.

Work with the Soils Conservation Service.
The town should continue a working relationship with the Soils Conservation Service. This can ensure that the best use is made of the soils in Montague by active ag/forestry businesses. It will also help ensure these businesses remain viable, which is one of the best ways to encourage preservation of these resources
(Lead: Conservation Commission; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

Encourage environmental education.
Montague should urge and support any efforts by public or quasi-public entities for environmental education on their lands. This would include the Turners Falls Airport Commission, Turners Falls Water Department, and Northeast Utilities. The town should facilitate partnerships between the schools (both Gill-Montague and Franklin County Tech) and these public land owners.
(Lead: Gill-Montague Regional School District; alternate lead: Conservation Commission)
(Others: Turners Falls Water Dept., Turners Falls Airport Commission)

Natural viewsheds
The town should take steps to preserve its most significant natural viewsheds.

Inventory viewsheds
Using SPAC maps from the late 1980s as one input, these natural viewsheds should be inventoried.
(Lead: Community Development Planner; alternate lead: Planning Board)
(Others: Conservation Commission)

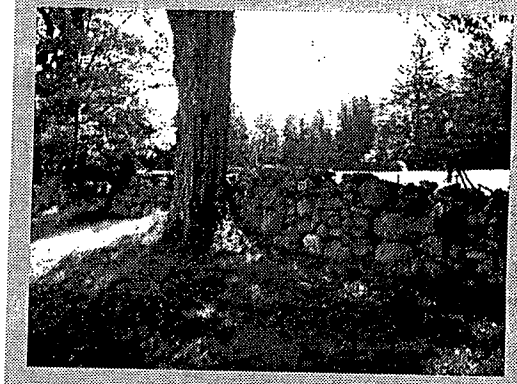
Create scenic view bylaws/overlays
The Planning Board should consider creation of bylaws and scenic viewshed overlays.
(Lead: Planning Board; alternate lead: Community Development Planner)

Work with conservation entities.
As with preservation of many other natural resources, working cooperatively with national, state, and regional public and non-profit conservation entities should be considered a prime strategy. The town can

also leverage any Scenic Byway designation for the Rte. 63/Rte. 47 corridor.
(Lead: Community Development Planner; alternate lead: Conservation Commission)

Recycling
Recycling helps preserve natural resources, but also helps keep the town's natural resources from becoming dumping grounds.

- ***Continue and expand the recycling program***
  The town should continue its support for this program.
  (Lead: Highway Dept.; alternate lead: citizens)
  (Others: Finance Committee, Highway Dept., Town Meeting members)



"The Planning Board should consider creation of bylaws and scenic viewshed overlays."

RECREATION

Recreation is vital to the physical and emotional health of all citizens. While it is not solely the responsibility of the Town to provide recreational opportunities for residents, our local government is in a unique position to provide facilities, programs and funding to people throughout the community.

It is not practical or affordable for a community the size of Montague to provide every recreational facility or program in every village and neighborhood in the Town. Rather, Montague should strive to offer a broad array of recreational opportunities for all residents and seek ways in which these opportunites can be made more accessible by members of the community.

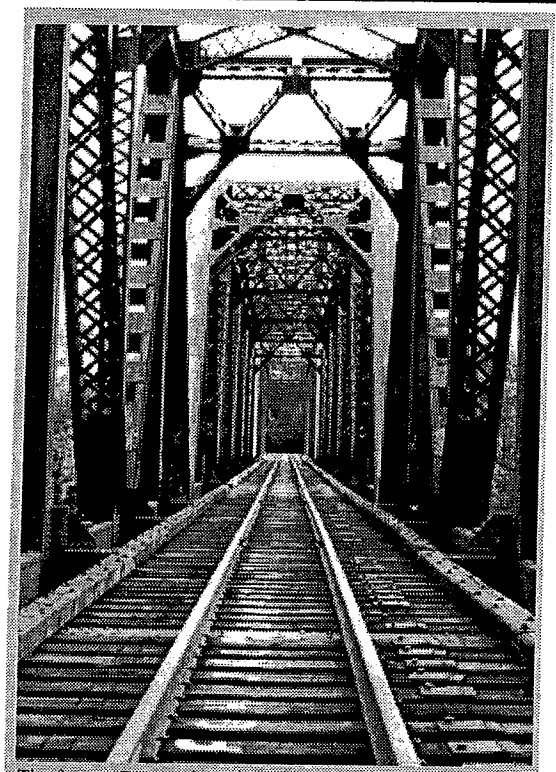
Montague should seek ways in which existing facilities and programs can be enhanced or expanded and town officials should fervently hunt for alternative sources of money to accomplish these projects. New facilities should be designed in such a way as to maintain maximum flexibility over time to accomodate the changing interests of users. Partnerships with surrounding communities as well as private organizations should be explored and developed as a way of providing even more recreational opportunities for citizens.

Above all, the Town must not allow recreation to be marginalized in its importance to the community. Maintaining a happy and healthy citizenry enhances all of our lives economically and socially by helping to establish Montague as a premiere place to live, work and play.

The Connecticut, Millers, and Sawmill Rivers currently offer little access to residents for recreational use. Access to the rivers in and around the town should be enhanced. Newly developed public access points should be focused on serving town residents.

ACTION STEPS:

The obvious goal addressed by this section is **"to improve our active and passive recreation opportunities."**



The former Boston & Maine Railroad's bridge at Montague City crosses the Connecticut River into Deerfield near the Montague wastewater treatment plant on Greenfield Road. The structure is slated to be refurbished as part of the Franklin County Bikeway project.

"Support development of the Franklin County Bikeway."

However, steps to improve recreation also support other goals as follows:

- **ensure the quality of our residential neighborhoods and our residential growth;**
- **improve our climate for quality commerce and industry, including ag/forestry business;** and
- **guide appropriate use of our open space and sensitive natural resources.**

Note: The following actions will be more fully fleshed out when the Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee completes its work in 1999.

Maintain and enhance the current Parks & Rec offerings.
Fine-tuning of recreational program offerings should continueand result in a variety of activities for a wide audience of participants with varying skill and interest levels. The town should support these programs with adequate staffing and funding support as well as with safe and adequate physical equipment and facilities. Continued use of school facilites should be encouraged to insure that facilities are used to their fullest extent. New facilities to be constructed should include: a skateboarding facility in Turners Falls; ice-skating areas in the villages; and, an outdoor swimming area (pool or natural water body).

Take advantage of Montague's access to natural resources for recreation.
A town beach facility should be developed somewhere in the Town to serve local residents seeking an outdoor swimming experience during the warmer seasons. Generally, access to the rivers in and around the town should be enhanced. The Connecticut, Millers, and Sawmill Rivers currently offer little access to residents for recreational use. Newly developed public access points should be focused on serving town residents.

Support development of the Franklin County Bikeway.
A regional system of bikeways should be supported fully by town officials and citizens. The Franklin County Bikeway, currently being designed in 1999, will serve as a cyclist's link to the network of cycling trails throughout the Northeastern United States and the town should do what it needs to do to insure development of Phase I of the Bikeway in Montague. To enhance theFranklin Bikeway and to provide enhanced cyling opportunities in Montague, a town-wide network of 'off-' and 'on-road' bike trails should be developed over the next 10 years. This Montague Bicycle System may also serve as an alternative commuting network, jogging/walking trail system, and a cross-country skiing web across the town. The town should leverage the asset it has in the Airport by seeking ways in which the airport can link to and enhance the bikeway system. Development of a cyclist's/hiker's facility at the airport will provide a superb gateway to the Connecticut River, the Montague Plains, and the historical and cultural resources in the town.

Support viability of private and public recreation clubs.

Montague should support local private and public recreational facilities that provide opportunities for local residents but which are not a part of the Parks and Recreation system. Such facilities include: Thomas Memorial Golf Course; Turners Falls Rod & Gun Club; Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club. The town might also pursue the development of a an exercise or health club by privateoperators.

Assess use of landfill area for recreation.

An area plan for the former landfill and surrounding lands should include a strong recreational compo nent. Located between Turners Falls and Montgue City, this town-owned land provides an excellent opportunity to develop a park offering active, as well as passive, recreational facilities.

A view of the one-half acre site located at the eastern end of Second Street, in Turners Falls.

New facilities to be constructed should include: a skateboarding facility in Turners Falls

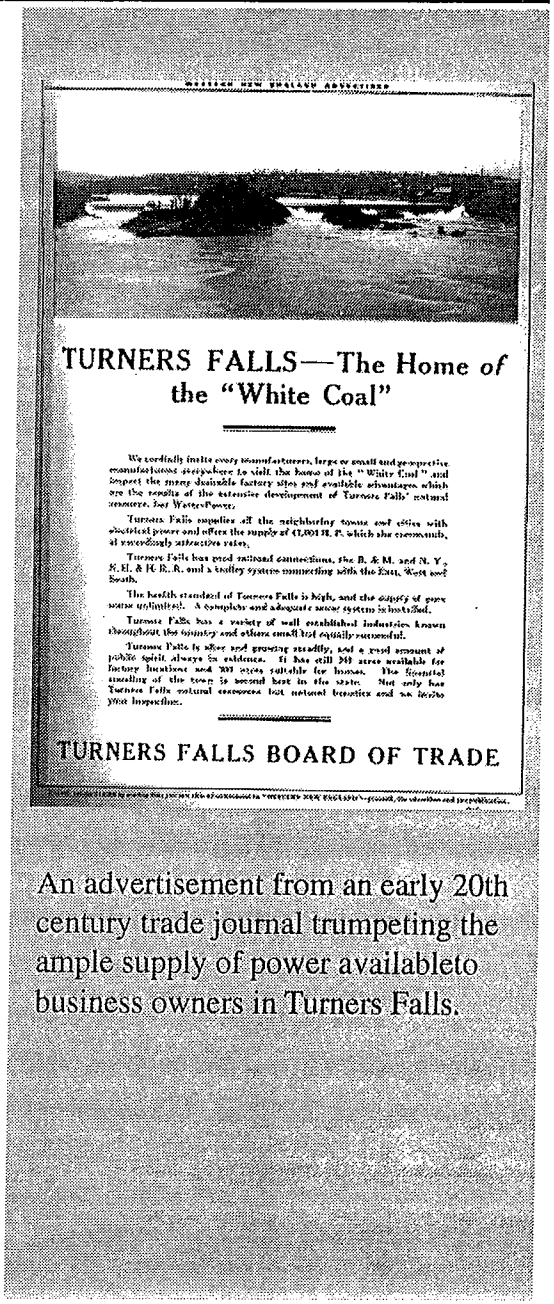
The Skateboarding park will be developed to allow flexible arrangement of the site. Other activities on the leased property may include off-road bicycling areas and an ice-skating area for winter use.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic well-being is of vital importance in considering the health and future of a community. In this way, Montague is no different from other communities. Although originally rural in nature, the economy of Montague has developed over the past 125 years as largely dependent on the growth of manufacturing and power generation. With the rise and decline of Montague's two industrial villages - Turners Falls and Millers Falls - the Town has found itself struggling to make the transition to a new economy - one less dependent on the fortunes of the large corporate producers of goods, and defined to a greater extent by the ability to be flexible in an era of relocation, consolidation, and fundamental change.

The town should strive to develop a locally-rooted, community-sensitive, sustainable economy that is flexible enough (and savvy enough) to respond to the globalization of the marketplace. The flexibilty needed to succeed economically in the future is attainable if we nurture our most valuable resource - our citizens. Educational and training opportunities must be available for all members of our community. We should seek to develop highly-trainable, creative thinkers who can bring about an economic renaissance in Montague without having to depend on outside fiscal and intellectual capital.

The town must also remain flexible in its pursuit of economic development by maintaining an open government that is unafraid to seek out constructive criticism. Economic policies must insure that we make wise use of our limited resources by protecting our natural environment, spending our tax dollars only after careful consideration of the alternatives, and maintaining a flexible and fair regulatory environment.



TURNERS FALLS—The Home *of* the "White Coal"

We cordially invite every manufacturer, large or small and prospective manufacturers everywhere to visit the home of the "White Coal" and inspect the many desirable factory sites and available advantages which are the results of the extensive development of Turners Falls' natural resource, Our WaterPower.

Turners Falls supplies all the neighboring towns and cities with electrical power and offers the supply of 41,000 H. P. which she commands, at exceedingly attractive rates.

Turners Falls has good railroad connections, the B. & M. and N. Y., N. H. & H. R. R. and a trolley system connecting with the East, West and South.

The health standard of Turners Falls is high, and the supply of pure water unlimited. A complete and adequate sewer system is installed.

Turners Falls has a variety of well established industries known throughout the country and others small but equally successful.

Turners Falls is alive and growing steadily, and a good amount of public spirit always in evidence. It has still 300 acres available for factory locations and 300 acres suitable for homes. The financial standing of the town is second best in the state. Not only has Turners Falls natural resources but natural beauties and we invite your inspection.

TURNERS FALLS BOARD OF TRADE

An advertisement from an early 20th century trade journal trumpeting the ample supply of power availableto business owners in Turners Falls.

ACTION STEPS:

The action steps in this section of the plan have evolved primarily from the goal **to improve our climate for quality commerce and industry**. In order to accomplish this goal, the following actions should be undertaken:

"The town should strive to develop a locally-rooted, community-sensitive, sustainable economy that is flexible enough (and savvy enough) to respond to the globalization of the marketplace."

Planning

Land resources in Montague shall play an important role in determining the form and location of business development in the future. Planning for particular projects must begin with an inventory of those resources under the direct control of the town.

Institutionalize Capital Improvements Planning in Montague

Capital Improvements Planning should be reconstituted in a way that allows the town to plan appropriately in support of the community's capital needs. A Capital Improvements Plan which details expenditures for a minimum of five years into the future (with annual updates) will enable the town to prepare for capital purchases years in advance, potentially saving money that the community can invest elsewhere. The town should continue to set aside funds for use during economic crisis and establish the fiscal discipline to maintain this effort into the future.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: CIP Committee)

Inventory town-owned lands

An inventory of town-owned lands should be completed by which the Town can identify the economic development potential of these parcels as well as other characteristics which might be considered beneficial to the community. As a short term action, this inventory can allow the town to act quickly in response to demand for appropriately-zoned un- or under-developed acreage.
(Lead: Community Development Planner, Alt. Lead: Building Inspector)

Create physical plan for Turnpike Road landfill area

The town must create a physical plan for the development of the remaining land at the Turnpike Road landfill area. It is only through this process that decisions can be made as to the potential of the property for economic development. Small scale industries could be located in this area with careful planning.
(Lead: Community Development Planner, Alt. Lead: Planning Board)

Plan for Farren area "medical services cluster" and former "Rod Shop Revitalization" area

The existing Farren area medical services cluster and the former 'Rod Shop" areas in Montague City should be planned to allow for future growth and expansion. The Planning Board may be proactive in this endeavor by working with the owners and operators of the existing properties in the area to

develop a plan which recognizes potential expansion and development in the neighborhood.
(Lead: Community Development Planner, Alt. Lead: Planning Board)

Develop Phase Three of the Airport Industrial Park

This third phase of the park could be developed to encourage businesses of the size and scale currently locating in the "loop" area of the park. Expansion for this phase would extend south and east of the loop to West Mineral Road.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: MEDIC)

Establish industrial use zone on the northern portion of the Montague Plains while establishing protective tools for the southern portion

Planning for the future of the Montague Plains, in terms of natural resource development and business development, should be a project of paramount importance. The Town should create an industrial area for large scale businesses on the northern portion of the Plains to take advantage of existing industrial development, proximity to transportation routes, and proximity to services and amenities such as the tech school and airport. Even in its natural state, the Plains has the potential to generate jobs in areas such as wildlife and recreational management. The Town should pursue the establishment of protective devices for the southern portion of the Plains. As an indicator of lifestyle or "quality of life", the Plains will continue to be a prime amenity in the Town of Montague. The Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, and Water Districts should all contribute to the effort of generating and assessing proposals for the Plains.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: MEDIC)

Coordinate Airport Plan with other planning efforts

Plans for the development of Montague's airport facility should be coordinated with otherplanning efforts in the Town. The airport currently serves as a regional facility and can continue to serve this function as long as town interests are also protected. The town should leverage the assets of the airport to promote industry, tourism, transportation, and concern for the environment. The location of the facility on the northernmost portion of the Montague Plains provides an excellent opportunity for seeking out synergistic projects which complement existing and planned development in the area.
(Lead: Airport Manager, Alt. Lead: Planning Board)

"The existing Farren area medical services cluster and the former 'Rod Shop" areas in Montague City should be planned to allow for future growth and expansion."

Infrastructure

"The maintenance of our current water and wastewater system connections to our commercial and industrial centers should be a high priority."

Ensure adequate infrastructure to supply the needs of appropriate development

In terms of economic development the town must ensure an adequately designed and maintained infrastructure to supply the needs of appropriate planned development. The maintenance of our current water and wastewater system connections to our commercial and industrial centers should be a high priority. The town should study the possible need for future capacity expansion and/or improvement of these systems and plan accordingly.

(Lead: Special Districts, Alt. Lead: Highway Department, WWTP)

(Others: MEDIC, Montague Business Assoc., Industrial Park Tenants Assoc.)

Consider reorganization of Special Districts

The Special Districts which supply water, fire fighting, and street lighting to residents in many parts of the town should be reconsidered to ascertain whether there are lost opportunities in cost/service efficiencies that could be remedied by reorganization. Appropriate economic development can be attracted by a healthy delivery system for vital services. The Special Districts *are* that delivery system for many of our infrastructure needs in Montague and the Town must seriously study their effectiveness. Changes to the existing structure of the Districts would require the efforts of the Selectboard, the existing Districts, and our State Representatives.

(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: Special Districts)

Develop adequate parking facilities in commercial areas

Vehicular parking must be accommodated through the efficient use of our existing parking areas and the development of new parking facilities which respect the character of the neighborhoods in which they are located. This is of particular importance in our historic commercial centers where commercial development will be concentrated. The success of the Shea Theater in downtown Turners Falls has required the consideration of parking issues. These efforts should continue in the near future.

(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Montague Business Assoc.)

Develop parking facilities for canal industrial area in Turners Falls

Efforts should be made to accommodate vehicular parking in the canal industrial area in Turners Falls where a lack of available parking spaces will continue to limit the full development of the historic industrial structures.

(Lead: MEDIC, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner, Town Administrator)

Develop regional sludge plant at Turnpike Road landfill area

The town should aggressively pursue the continuing development of a viable proposal for the regional sludge plant on the site of the former landfill. The plant, in addition to being an environmentally responsible method of sewage sludge disposal, would serve as a regional asset as well by allowing for a locally controlled, sustainable and affordable disposal option for communities in the greater Franklin County region. The plant would serve Montague's interests through the generation of income from host fees and tax revenue.

(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: WWTP)

<u>*Preservation*</u>

A key to economic well-being in Montague rests in it's history and culture. Some preservation of the town's physical heritage should be undertaken with an eye towards the economic potential of the historic landscapes, villages, buildings, and structures that define our Town. Preserving certain portions, layers, or elements of our natural environment will also serve our economic needs by continuing to sustain a livable and workable environment for all citizens of the town.

Develop downtown streetscape plans

The town should develop downtown streetscape plans that preserve historical, architectural, natural, and commercial integrity in the urban villages. In addition to being a wise use of existing as sets, this preservation effort shall also serve to prepare the stage upon which vital portions of our new economy may be built.

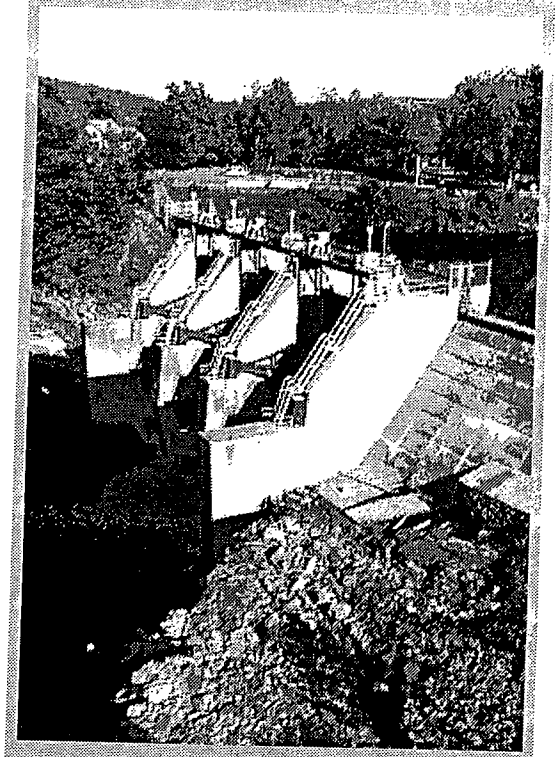
(Lead: Community Development Planner, Alt. Lead: Montague Business Assoc.)

Support establishment of the Scenic By-Way

The development of the Connecticut River Scenic Farm By-Way along routes 47 and 63 offers the op portunity for Montague to work with the resources allocated to this program in preservingappropriate business uses along the corridor. In leveraging the benefits of this By-Way status, the Town should carefully consider the balance between economic development which enhances the corridor and economic exploitation which could eventually destroy the resource itself.

(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead: Board of Selectmen, Franklin Regional Planning Commission)

<u>*Re-use*</u>



"Ensure adequate infrastructure to supply the needs of appropriate development."

"The redevelopment of 'brownfield sites'... is a natural path for the town to take in re-establishing vital neighborhoods and business districts in the downtown areas."

Promote "adaptive re-use" of historic buildings by providing technical, fiscal, and regulatory support

Clustered primarily in the urban villages of Turners Falls and Millers Falls, older structures should be promoted as re-usable assets for incoming and start-up businesses. In the smaller rural villages of Montague, efforts should be made to promote the use of barns and outbuildings for their economic potential. Appropriately scaled, neighborhood-friendly businesses may find in these buildings the perfect "start-up" space. Investors should be given every opportunity to access technical support and funding support so that the town might once again see our mature buildings producing jobs and tax revenues.

(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)

Seek redevelopment of "brownfield sites"

The redevelopment of "brownfield sites" (vacant industrial sites often contaminated to some degree with the effluvia of historic industry) is a natural path for the town to take in re- establishing vital neighborhoods and business districts in the downtown areas. Specific sites such as the former Rod Shop tract in Montague City and the canal industrial area in Turners Falls immediately come to mind as potential brownfield redevelopment sites for special attention by the town.

(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)

<u>Regulation</u>

Prepare informational materials to help applicants understand town regulations

Town departments should continue to produce brochures, manuals, and outlines that explain regulations and procedures to applicants, board members, and interested citizens. Samples of completed forms and other application materials should be prepared for planning and conservation applicants. The Town should take advantage of its Internet presence to provide these materials in electronic form to allow 24-hour, on-demand, access to regulatory information.

(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Department Heads)

Develop incentive tools for attracting and retaining employers in our commercial and industrial areas.

The Town should continue to develop incentive programs for businesses wishing to locate in Montague. These tools can also be crafted to retain businesses in the community. Examples include: tax incentive programs; enterprise zones; and, expansion or marketing of our Economic Opportunity

Areas. Additionally, our zoning by-laws should work in concert with these programs to provide focus on redevelopable areas in the Town such as the canal industrial area in Turners Falls and the rod shop parcels in Montague City.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: MEDIC, Community Development Planner)

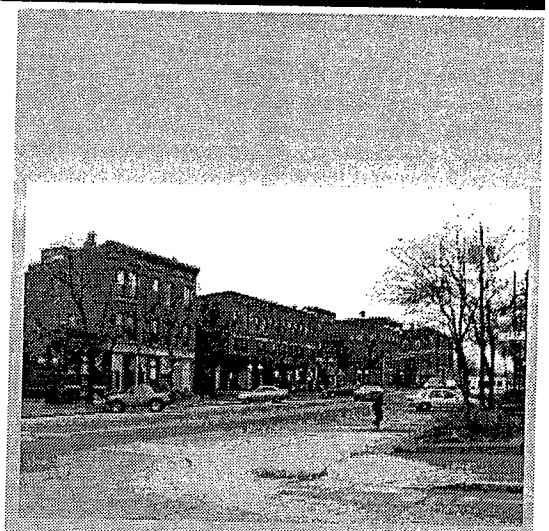
Amend "General Business" zoning district/s to guide future use
The "General Business" Zoning District should be amended to incorporate concepts of mixed use, de sign guidelines, signage regulations, and appropriate parking requirements.
(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner, Building Inspector)

Create "Mixed Use" zoning
Mixed Use zoning in our older downtown areas should be adopted to re-establish the traditional pattern of development in these critically important neighborhoods. Commercial viability and livability can be heightened by allowing a mix of business, institutional, and residential uses to coexist within a single building, on the same site, or in the same neighborhood. In our rural villages, mixed use zoning can be used in a limited form to allow the adaptive re-use of outbuildings.
(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner, Building Inspector)

Develop "Village Business" Designations
Appropriately scaled and designed business activity should be reintegrated into our rural villages. These areas might serve as incubation zones for home-based or small start-up businesses which can serve the needs of the villages. Design guidelines or standards shooed be considered for these desig nated areas to protect the physical and historical character of the villages.
(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner, Building Inspector)

Maintain or establish zoning to support medical facilities
The revised zoning map and by-law should allow for the continued use, and possible expansion of, the medical services cluster in the Farren area of Montague City. Other appropriate areas of the Town may also be zoned for this type of economically and socially beneficial development.
(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner, Building Inspector)

Study potential industrial areas for exemption from the Rivers Act (Massachusetts Wetlands Act)
The Town should consider seeking out exemptions from the Rivers Act regulations for the historic in



"Commercial viability and livability can be heightened by allowing a mix of business, institutional, and residential uses to coexist within a single building, on the same site, or in the same neighborhood."

dustrial areas in Turners Falls. This will allow for a simplified permitting process for businesses wishing to locate on these older sites in the "Riverfront Area". This exemption is allowed by the Rivers Act though it does not exempt these sites from other requirements of the Wetlands Act. Other historic mill sites in the town, including those in Montague Center, are also exempt from the regulations of the Rivers Act.

(Lead: Conservation Commission, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)

Image

The image of our Town, as it is rendered by citizens and outsiders alike, plays a pivotal role in determining our economic future. Anecdotal evidence supports the notion that residents of our own community are the least optimistic about our downtown areas. The Town must make the point to its citizens that marketing begins at home. Every resident, every employee, and every business owner is a living commercial for the quality of living and working in Montague. In terms of economic development, we must aggressively market our assets in a focused and effective way to attract appropriate new business development and to retain existing businesses that have chosen Montague as their home.

"The image of our Town, as it is rendered by citizens and outsiders alike, plays a pivotal role in determining our economic future."

Attract and retain preferred businesses through programs to market the downtown areas

The downtown areas of our urban villages are valuable assets to the Town. We must continue to search out new and creative ways of marketing these areas to businesses wishing to locate in Montague. The Town should actively market the downtown areas with the same effort and resources applied to the marketing of our industrial park.

(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Montague Business Assoc.)

Encourage "Downtown Business Associations" through training and other resources

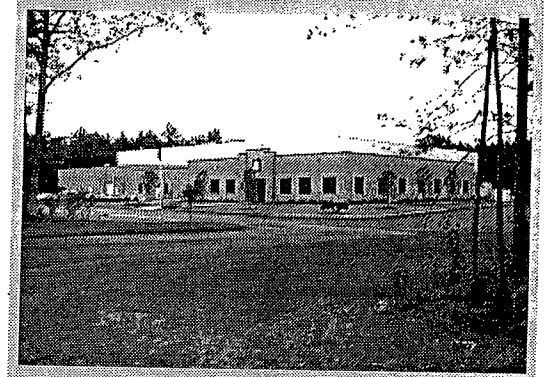
The Town should nurture the development of downtown business associations through training, organizational aid, and the provision of other resources required to build strong business representation in community issues. The Town should heartily endorse the formation and further development of business associations which can work effectively with the local government, resolve conflicts within the business community, and identify key issues and projects that impact the ability to do business in Montague

(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Montague Business Assoc.)

Encourage use of Montague sites for the location of regional, state and federal government organizations

The Town should encourage the continued and new use of its sites and structures for the physical location of government agencies. These facilities can often serve as catalysts to additionaleconomic development in the area.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: MEDIC)

Pursue industrial uses that complement each other in the Airport Industrial Park
In marketing our industrial park, we must aggressively pursue *participants*, not occupants. The Town must establish a synergy at the Park which becomes self-perpetuating. Spin-off businesses and businesses which serve the industries in the Park should be accommodated and encouraged. If we succeed, the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: Town Administrator, Community Development Planner)



"Pursue industrial uses that complement each other in the Airport Industrial Park."

Organization
The Town should manage its efforts for economic development by utilizing existing groups and efforts where possible and by creating new groups when appropriate. An overall organized approach to economic issues will allow the community to act quickly and decisively when opportunities arise.

Support or create an "agricultural issues focus group"
An agricultural advisory or focus committee should be formed in Montague to advise the Select board, Town Meeting, and town staff on issues affecting agriculture in the community. Members should include farmers and those involved in farm-related businesses.
(Lead: Community Development Planner, Alt. Lead: Board of Selectmen)

Participate in regional and state programs to help stabilize farm businesses.
The Town should participate in programs which contribute to the viability of farm businesses in Montague. This should include, but is not limited to, the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program (which purchases Development Restriction Easements on farms), regional marketing programs, the agricultural viability program, and technical assistance resources. Products and services offered by resource-based businesses, by definition, can be geographically scattered and are often times aided less effectively by community supports than those businesses that set up shop in commercial districts and industrial parks. The Town should work to actively market its farm and forestry businesses using any resources available from the regional and state governments.
(Lead: Community Development Planner, Alt. Lead: Agricultural Advisory Committee)

"An agricultural advisory or focus committee should be formed in Montague to advise the Selectboard, Town Meeting, and town staff on issues affecting agriculture in the community."

Creative Thinking

Just a few of the creative ideas that could lead to economic success in the future:

Study possibilities for a regional meteorological training center at the airport

A regional facility of this type would broaden the range of educational and training opportunities in Montague. At the same time, the airport itself can continue to grow as a regional facility by expanding its role as a provider of business training services for employers.
(Lead: Airport Manager, Alt. Lead: Franklin County Technical High School)

Study possibilities for a regional crafts micro-industry training center

The Town should offer support to efforts underway to establish a "micro-industrial" training center to allow artisans and craftspeople the opportunity to share their skills with student apprentices. The center could also serve to provide centralized business supports such as marketing, reception, and accounting. There are existing models for this type of center which takeadvantage of shared facilities for manufacturing and retail uses. This idea would also dove-tail with the "School-to-Work" program in the GMRSD.
(Lead: Artisan groups, GMR School District, Alt. Lead: Communtiy Development Planner)

Establish an "art-stead" district in Montague to attract artisans and craftspeople to our urban villages

Create a program similar to the homestead act that allows artisans to set up businesses in older structures for a nominal fee. If the business succeeds, the property is transferred at very desirable rates to the 'art-steader'.
(Lead: Communtiy Development Planner, Alt. Lead: Artisan groups)

Develop an eco-industrial park that is established to attract environmentally-sensitive (if not pro-active) businesses to the town.

The Town should study the feasibility of developing a research or industrial park built on the principles of community and environmental sustainability. This type of development could allow Montague to aggressively market its land to a defined set of users that would heighten awareness of the location for smart growth and a high quality living environment.
(Lead: Communtiy Development Planner, Alt. Lead: Town Administrator)

PUBLIC FACILITIES

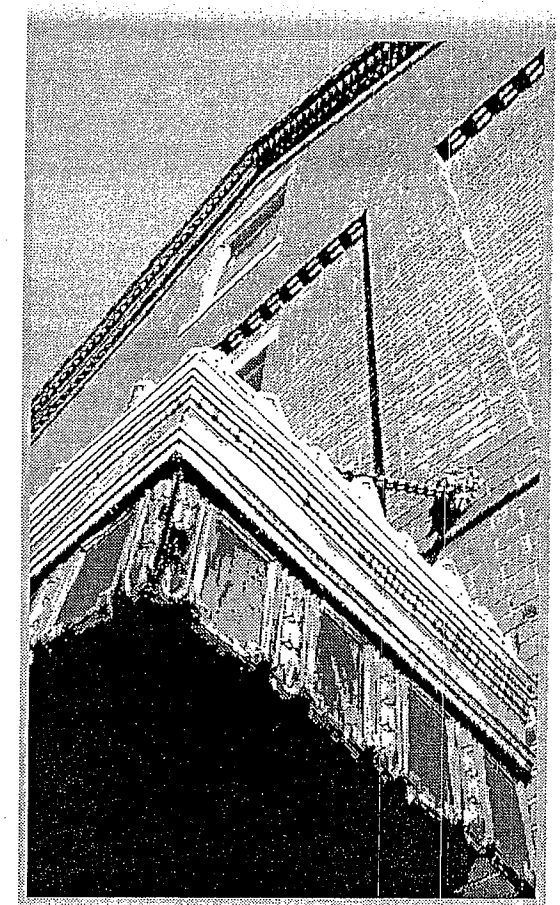
Our public facilities are the tangible representation of our interest in our community. We must provide broad access to well-designed sites whether institutional, recreational or cultural in order to ensure a safe and harmonious environment for citizens. Ever-changing issues and spiraling costs require that we create flexible, adaptable spaces for all of our public facility needs.

Indoor community facilities afford our residents of all ages opportunities to congregate with their peers, to seek help when needed, and to reinforce our commitment to the town and each other.

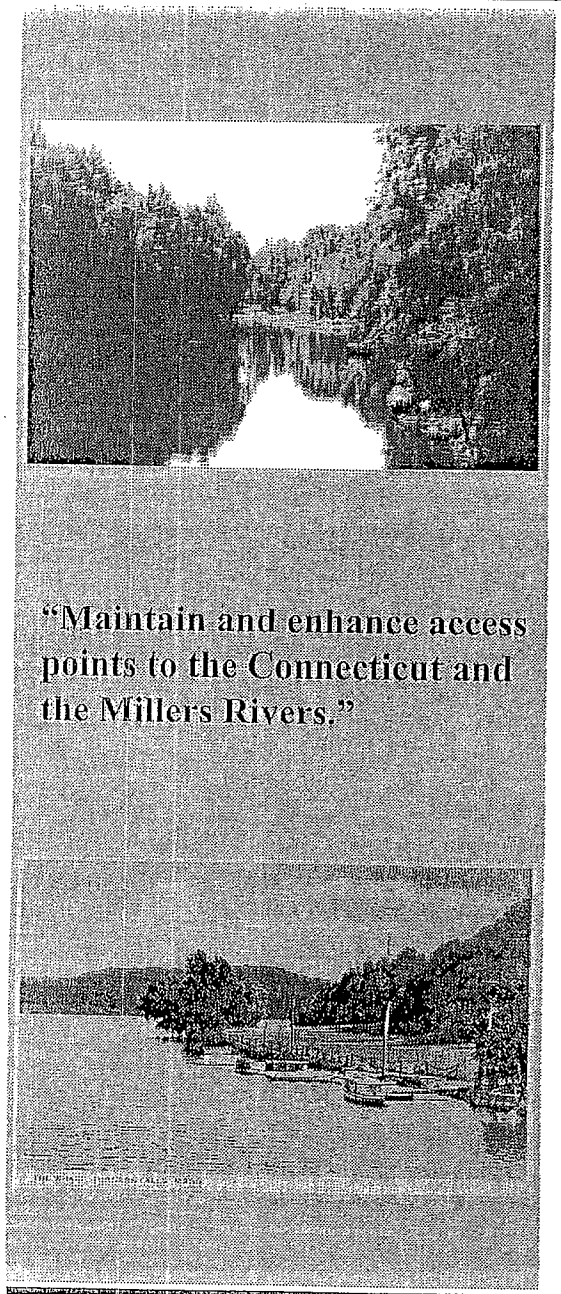
Long range school facility goals must address possible renovation, expansion, and / or new school plans. They must also reflect educational excellence needs, flexibility, and adaptability for technology. In addition to making efficient use of limited resources in town, school facilities should be available year-round for adult education as well as non-traditional and alternative early childhood educational programs, summer educational and sports camps and lifelong learning programs. A strong educational system is necessary for the town's economic strength as well as the personal growth of its residents.

All town departments need to be studied to determine how and where expansion, renovation and physical consolidation could take place. Evaluation of facilities needs to be coordinated to ensure the most appropriate use of existing space, effective inter-departmental communication, efficiency of working conditions and cost effectiveness to the town. Municipal services should remain downtown unless renovation or expansion would jeopardize commercial revitalization.

Recreational activities - whether structured like basketball and tennis or unstructured like exercise stations on the bikepath - maintain and improve individual and community health and significantly add to the desirability of living and working in Montague. Providing access to our natural environment will also serve to strengthen our town's livability.



"Our public facilities are the tangible representation of our interest in our community."



ACTION STEPS:

The need to take action on public facilities is addressed by most of our eight comprehensive goals including **improving our climate for quality commerce and industry, improving our recreational opportunities, supporting a safe and harmonious community, guiding appropriate use of regionally significant resources and supporting quality educational opportunities for all our residents.** In order to accomplish our goals, the following steps should be taken:

Community centers:

Assess the need for a new or expanded senior center
While the elderly require specialized housing provisions, they also need community focal points for socializing and support. The current senior center attempts to address these needs. However, its single, inflexible space is not conducive to the variety of programs they wish to offer nor are mobility and handicap accessibility issues handled. Relocation to allow ample parking, first floor access and flexibility of space is needed. Criteria and locations must be found, and funding obtained to implement the project.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)
(Others:Council on Aging, Community Partnership for a Safe Montague)

Assess the need for a teen center.
As with most communities social functions and support for teens has been undersupported. A teen center is a natural extension of recent facilities including basketball courts and a proposed skateboard park. This would provide indoor space in a supervised, safe setting. Input should be gained from students as well as the school department, parents, and other towns. Fundraising - private and public - and renovation of an existing structure would be appropriate directions to take.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Brick House)
(Others: Gill-Montague Regional School District)

Consider a combined senior-teen center.
With the limited financial resources available and the possible benefits of inter-generational interaction, the concept of a combined senior-teen center should be explored. A community exercise facility to serve the entire population might be incorporated within this structure.
(Lead: Town Administrator, Alt. Lead: Board of Selectmen)
(Others: Council on Aging, Community Partnership for a Safe Montague, Brickhouse, MCSM)

School facilities:

Develop strategic capital improvement plans for the school system.

The Gill-Montague School Board and Superintendent have recently created a Building Committee to develop a feasibility plan. This study covers all educational levels within the district and includes educational services as well as capital needs. Coordination with Erving and Gill are critical to the success of the final plans. The town must support this endeavor by sponsoring citizen input forums as well as financial support.
(Lead: GMR School Dist., Alt. Lead: Capital Improvements Committee, Finance Committee)

Study possibility of creating a regional meteorological training center.
With the proximity of the Turners Falls Airport, the opportunity exists to develop an educational and training facility that could coordinate studies at the Tech School, the Gill-Montague High School and Greenfield Community College. Other possible spinoff uses should be pursued. See Section 9 (Eco nomic Development).
(Lead: Airport Manager, Alt. Lead: Franklin Co. Tech. School, GMR School Dist.)

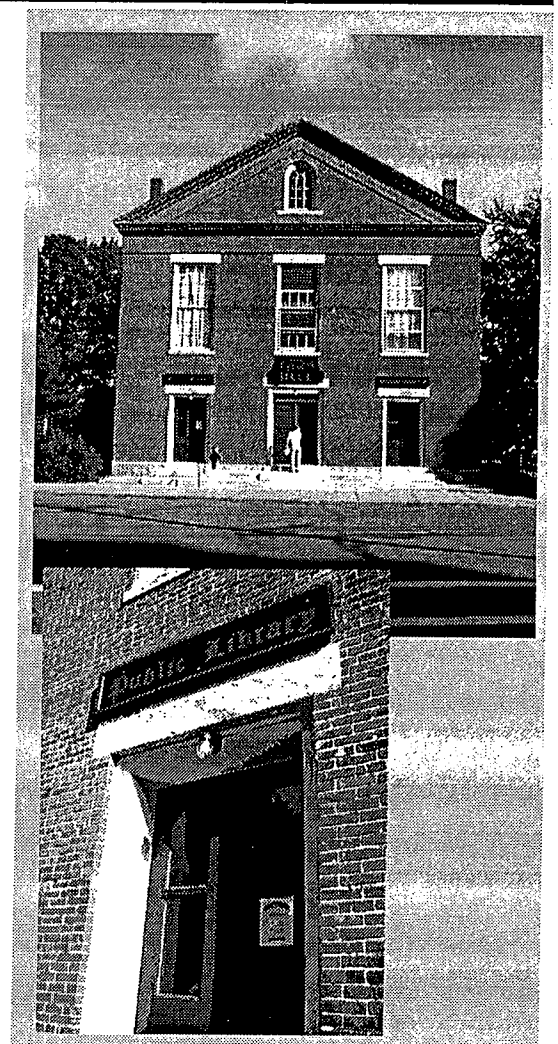
Incorporate community access to school buildings particularly to "media center" areas.
Integration of community needs such as libraries, meeting spaces and athletic sites through renovation and new construction of school facilities will enable the town to offer a wider range of support activities for all citizens. Consolidation and efficiency will produce cost-effective results: a particular bonus for a community with limited resources.
(Lead: Gill-Montague Regional School Dist., Alt. Lead: Town Administrator)
(Others: Library Board, Parks & Recreation Dept.)

Municipal Facilities:

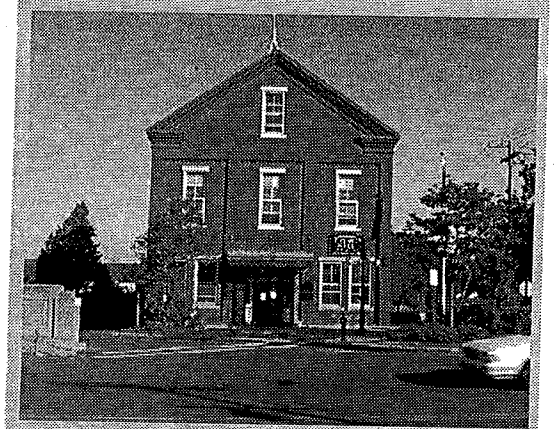
Assess Highway Department physical needs.
Develop a long-range plan for consolidation of highway department facilities that addresses their needs for a single-site location for all their services including a transfer and recycling stations as well as enclosed storage spaces for salt and sand. This location must address neighbors' concerns about noise, traffic, safety and spillage. The current recycling area should be reconfigured.
(Lead: Highway Dept., Alt. Lead: Capital Improvements Comm.)

Evaluate requirements of the fire stations.
Develop a feasibility study of the fire departments' facilities and spaces to maintain their high level of protection and response. Consider consolidation of departments for efficiency and cost effectiveness to include volunteer and full-time professionals in order to take best advantage of human resources.
(Lead: Fire Depts., Alt. Lead: Capital Improvements Comm.)

Assess need for a new police station
At present the police station, located in the basement of the Town Hall is centrally located; however,



Prior to the development of Turners Falls, the town hall in Montague Center hosted the offices and meeting spaces of local government in the community. Today, the building houses a branch of the Montague Library on the lower level while providing space upstairs for indoor recreational activity and community gatherings. The building has been modified little since its construction yet it remains a vital and valuable public asset, particularly for the residents of Montague Center.



The building currently used as the Montague Town Hall at the foot of Avenue A in Turners Falls was built to house the newly-formed Turners Falls Company around 1868. The building later served as headquarters of the Western Massachusetts Electric Company before being sold to the town in 1964.

"Assess need for a new or renovated town hall."

the facilities are entirely inadequate for the needs of the department. A study should be coordinated with that of the town hall to determine solutions to space needs for both facilities at the same time. If renovation of the town hall for the police is not appropriate and a new station is required, then a sub-station should be sited in downtown Turners Falls. After results of the study are completed, plans must be developed and implemented.
(Lead: Police Dept., Alt. Lead: Capital Improvement Committee)

Consider creation of a single dispatch center.
Utilization of a single dispatch center for the fire and police departments as well as other emergency agencies, possibly including ambulance and underwater rescue services, could lead to clearer communication, better efficiency and lower response time.
(Lead: Police and Fire Departments, Alt. Lead: Finance Committee)

Assess need for a new or renovated town hall.
Develop a feasibility study of the town hall, including the needs of the police department. The town should work to configure spaces which will encourage employee and department intercommunication as well as provide adequate storage and resource areas for the public. This may, or may not, require a new facility. Upgrading technology will allow all departments and boards immediate access to information they need to be informed on issues as they arise. At present there is no large (50 seat or larger), handicap accessible space within the town hall to accommodate meetings involving public involvement. Any new town hall facility should remain in downtown Turners Falls. After results of the study are completed, plans must be developed and implemented.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: Capital ImprovementsCommittee)
(Others: Town Administrator, Building Inspector, Finance Committee)

Recreational facilities:

Maintain and enhance access points to the Connecticut and the Millers Rivers.
The Connecticut River is easily reached from Gill but not from Montague. The Millers River is virtually inaccessible for most residents of Montague. Low-impact use (i.e., fishing, hiking) might be provided through canoe ramps at access points near Northeast Utilities' stone camp, in Millers Falls, and Montague City. The town and the Discovery Center should take advantage of the benefits of both rivers while protecting environmental concerns.
(Lead: Open Space Planning Committee, Alt. Lead: Conservation Commission)
(Others: Northeast Utilities, Discovery Center, Bikeway Committee)

Support community outdoor recreational sites.
Support the Parks and Recreation Department in sustaining existing, and designing new, programs for

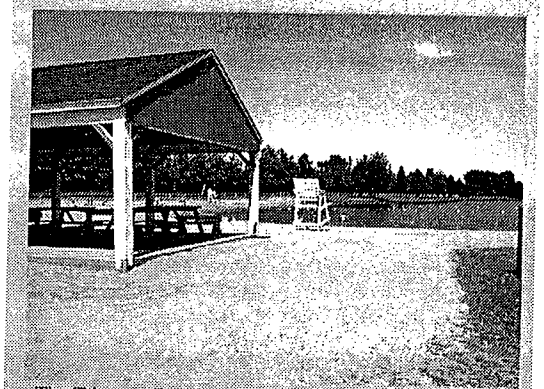
a wide range of citizens. Current tennis and basketball courts, baseball fields and tracks, as well as playgrounds need to be maintained. Sites for new interests, for example BMX, in-line skating, skateboard parks and ice skating areas, should be developed in a cost-effective manner. Low impact exercise programs for the elderly and educational nature hikes through certain areas of the Water Department's lands, coordinated with their forestry consultant, might be considered. Expanding programs and utilizing school facilities in the summer, perhaps in coordination with the YMCA, could be desirable. See the inventory and plan created by the Open Space / Recreation Subcommittee.
(Lead: Parks and Rec. Commission)
(Others: Highway Dept., Turners Falls Water Dept., Finance Committee)

Develop a town beach and possible access for non-motorized boats.
The town, encircled on three sides by water, has no outdoor swimming facility. Town departments should work to create a community facility that would include parking areas, changing facilities, and perhaps a snack bar. Possible public transportation access for downtown Turners and Millers residents who don't have personal transportation should be considered for the summer months. If Green Pond is not found to be appropriate, other sites must be explored.
(Lead: Parks and Rec. Commission, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)
(Others: Town Administrator, Turners Falls Water Dept., Finance Committee)

Create appropriate rest stations / information kiosks along the Montague portion of the bikeway.
As the Franklin portion of the regional bikeway is developed, the town must be responsive to ways it can support their endeavors. The Airport Manager has proposed the use of the airport facility as a possible way station / information center. The town should continue to be included in discussions with the Bikeway Committee to determine where interconnections could be made.
(Lead: Community Development Planner, Alt. Lead: Bikeway Committee)

Accessibility:

Facilitate handicap accessibility, particularly to community and government sites.
In order to provide all our citizens with the services they need to maintain a high quality of life, we must ensure that they have direct and easy access to the facilities themselves. All renovation and construction must include appropriate design considerations to promote accessibility.
(Lead: Building Inspector, Alt. Lead: Board of Selectmen)
(Others: Health Agent, Community Development Planner)


The Tri-town Beach facility in Whately, Massachusetts.

"Town departments should work to create a *town beach* facility that would include parking areas, changing facilities, and perhaps a snack bar."

INFRASTRUCTURE

The health and future of our community depends heavily on the condition and supply of our infrastructure. Infrastructure: the systems which allow us to travel, communicate, drink clean water, dispose of waste, illuminate our homes and workplaces, and control our environments. These systems are expensive to build and expensive to maintain. Yet, to fail to plan for an adequate infrastructure can be the most expensive choice of all.

It is in the best interest of the town to plan for, and construct high-quality infrastructural systems that will minimize maintenance costs and allow for the greatest amount of shared use. The town must take advantage of its existing systems and plan to use them more intensively. In this way, the community can maximize the benefits while minimizing the costs.

Transportation systems, a specialized segment of our infrastructure, are covered in Section 12, **Circulation and Transportation.**

"The town must take advantage of its existing systems and plan to use them more intensively. In this way, the community can maximize the benefits while minimizing the costs."

ACTION STEPS:

Infrastructure issues are driven by the following overall goals:

- **Support a safe and harmonious community**
- **Ensure the quality of our residential neighborhoods**
- **Improve our climate for quality commerce and industry**

Planning

Planning for adequate infrastructure can help a community prepare for growth and development, conserve precious natural resources, and make better use of its limited dollars.

Reconstitute sensible Capital Improvements planning

Infrastructure needs are capital needs. To effectively plan for future maintenance and construction of these physical systems, a five-year, annually-updated Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) should be

"Develop zoning by-law changes to encourage infill development in appropriate areas."

adopted by the Town. Proper planning can identify future capital needs well before systems or equipment fail and require immediate replacement. This system may even reduce the Town's need to borrow, since funds can be saved prior to their expenditure.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: CIP Committee
(Others: Water, Fire & Lighting Districts, Highway Department, WWTP, Town Administrator)

Develop zoning by-law changes to encourage infill development in appropriate areas
The Town should use the "carrot" approach to entice development on existing vacant and underdeveloped lots in developed areas. Zoning and subdivision tools should allow for creativeapproaches to development of these 'in-between' lands so that the Town might conserve its resource lands while maximizing use of its infrastructural systems.
(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)

Designate residential 'growth areas'
Growth Areas are designated by the Town on its "Future Land Use" map to indicate areas for future development.
(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)

Extend water, sewer, and other infrastructure to designatedgrowth areas
Infrastructure construction (and re-construction) should be focused on these growth areas to prevent sprawling systems which are ultimately too expensive to maintain.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: Highway Dept.)
(Others: Utility companies, Special Districts)

Determine the appropriateness of a 'phased-growth by-law' in Montague
A phased-growth by-law places limits on the type and scale of development within a given time period. This allows the orderly planning and construction of appropriate infrastructure to serve the development. During periods of heavy development activity, this type of by-law would provide the needed time for the Town to make rational and sensible decisions regarding growth.
(Lead: Planning Board, Alt. Lead: Community Development Planner)

Move toward a merging of Special Districts
The need for multiple Special Districts which supply water, fire fighting, and street lighting to residents in many parts of the town should be reconsidered. It should be ascertained whether there are

currently lost opportunities in cost/service efficiencies that could be remedied by reorganization.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: Special Districts)

Water & Solid Waste

Maintaining our existing residential communities, commercial centers, and industrial areas will mean maintaining the supply of clean water as well as providing ample capacity at our waste water treatment facility to handle liquid and solid wastes. Although the focus is often on wells, filtration plants, reservoirs, and settling tanks, the distribution networks for these systems also require on-going maintenance and repair. Future expansions of these systems should utilize simple cost/benefit analysis and resource conservation in determining appropriate types and levels of growth as well as the ability of the community to live with the accompanying growth.

Determine growth capacity and condition of water supply, water distribution lines, sewer lines, and waste water treatment plant

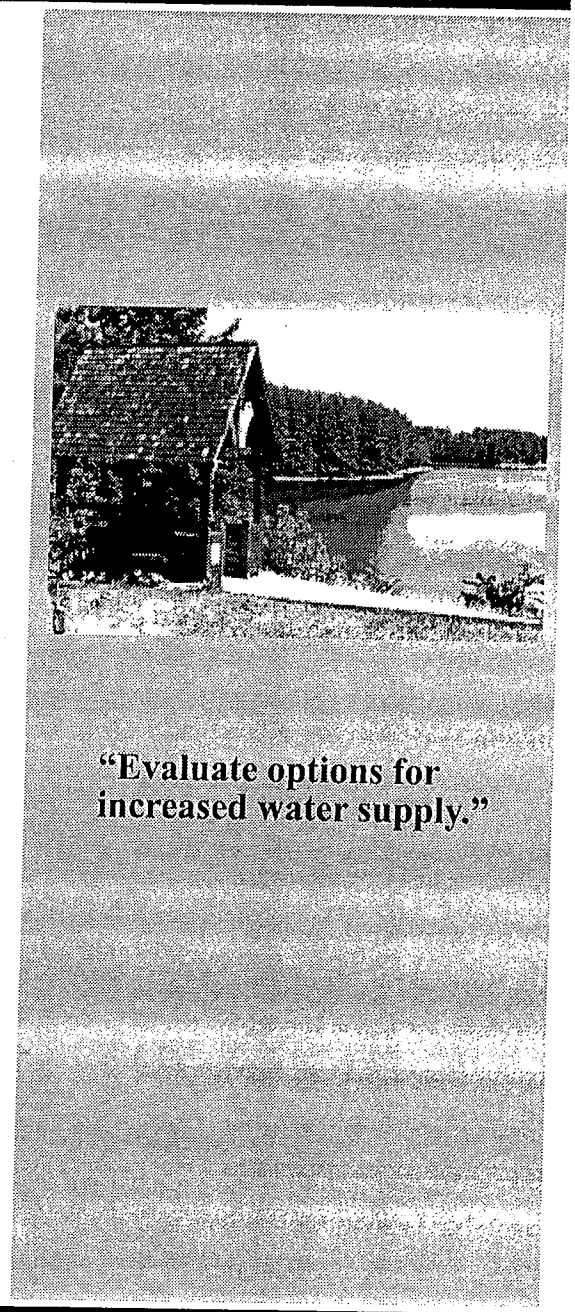
Determining growth capacity of these systems should accomplished with a level of accuracy that allows the Town to proceed with repairs and/or new construction as soon as possible. Distribution systems must be mapped accurately in a format that is accessible by all Town agencies. In addition to capacity, characteristics of these systems including age, construction material, design, size, and probable life span should be recorded and mapped.
(Lead: Community Development Planner, Alt. Lead: Special Districts, WWTP, Highway Dept.)

Implement phased increase in sewer line capacity and improve aging lines where necessary

The aging sewerage distribution system is ill-equipped in some areas to handle new growth. An increase in capacity may require reconstruction of some sewer lines and pump stations. Sewer lines should be extended to serve designated growth areas.
(Lead: Highway Dept., Alt. Lead: WWTP)

Evaluate options for increased water supply

All practical options for increasing the Town's water supply should be considered. This would include tapping Lake Pleasant, establishing new wells, and focused efforts to educate existing users as to the importance of conserving existing supplies. Technical and financial assistance should be available for those wishing to undertake projects in their homes and businesses which lead to water savings.
(Lead: Water Districts)



"The Town should be flexible in allowing alternative energy technologies in new and existing construction."

Create long-term, sustainable method of sewage sludge disposal

The Town should strive for a solution which treats the sludge regionally, if not in Montague itself. The construction of a regional sludge composting plant at the site of the former landfill should be the preferred option.

(Lead: WWTP, Alt. Lead: Franklin County Solid Waste Council)

Information

Ensure that schools have appropriate technology and technology training for effective teaching

The copper, fiberoptic, and wireless network that brings information into and out of our schools is be coming critically important to educational system. The network which will bring this data stream into our educational institutions may be on the drawing table or hanging from a pole. The existing phone, cable or wireless network may provide us with ample bandwidth for data transmission in the next century or it may be that this new system must be built from scratch. Either way the Town must ensure that it can secure a system which can adequately serve our information needs in education, commerce, and government.

(Lead: GMRSchool District, Alt. Lead: Cable Advisory Comm.)

Support greater services for citizens via the cable system

The existing cable system can continue to provide passive transmission of television signals as well as provide a conduit for the flow of interactive media such as internet connections, telephony, and other digital communications. The Town should aggressively pursue cable providers willing to invest in our community.

(Lead: Cable Advisory Comm., Alt. Lead: Board of Selectmen)

Power & Utilities

Encourage an ample supply of affordable and clean power

Business, residential, and institutional customers will depend upon the future availability of sufficient power. As with the water supply, technical and financial assistance should be availableto those homes and businesses wishing to make energy-saving improvements. The Town should be flexible in allowing alternative energy technologies in new and existing construction. Local regulations should acknowledge solar access.

(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: Utility Companies)

Encourage burial of utility lines

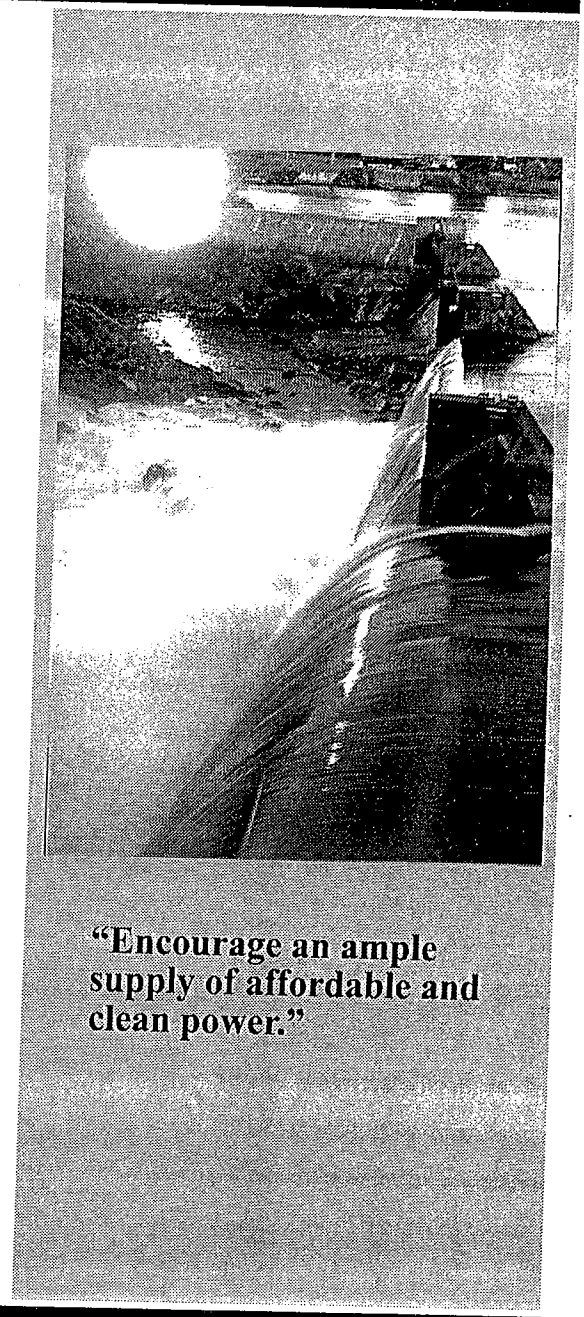
The burial of utility lines serves a practical and aesthetic purpose. Storm damage to power, cable, phone, and internet service lines can be minimized if lines do not have to travel in close proximity to, or through, trees. Aesthetically, the burial of lines allows for the elimination of unsightly, poles, transformers and cables.

(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: Utility Companies)

Encourage expansion of natural gas distribution network

The Town should encourage the expansion of this competitor in the fuel supply market. Although gas is a non-renewable resource (with a few limited exceptions) its clean-burning properties have made it the fuel of choice for many industrial and residential users.

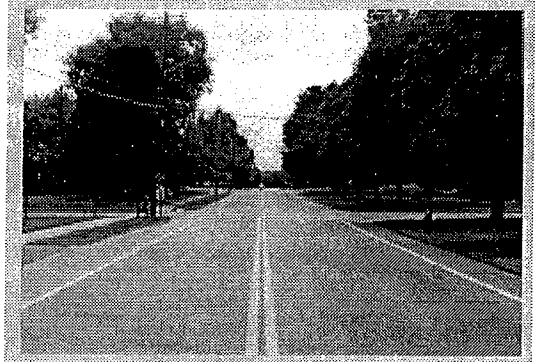
(Lead: Board of Selectmen, Alt. Lead: Utility Companies)



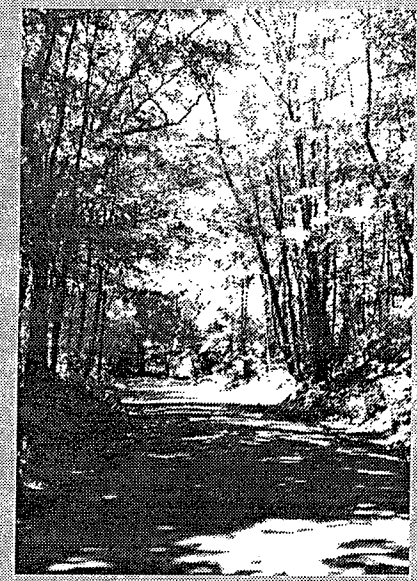
CIRCULATION AND TRANSPORTATION

To repeat a theme begun in the Infrastructure section (Section 11), the health and future of our community depends heavily on the condition of various parts of our infrastructure. The transportation parts — such as roads, bridges, parking facilities, and sidewalks as well as means that enable travel by air and rail — are just as important as the other systems. moving people and goods from one point to another is a fundamental need for our community. Moving people and goods from one point to another is a fundamental need for our community, whether it's for local transportation needs to get to and from homes, or as an important cog in the support of commerce and industry.

Maintaining the systems to support local transportation is a complex and expensive process. Many of the needs demand long term funding, and thus they will compete for funds with other capital needs of the town. The challenge lies in identifying and prioritizing the critical components of the system. The establishment of clear policies will expedite all other phases of transportation development from design to engineering to construction.



Montague Street in Turners Falls follows the path of the former street railway line to Montague Center. Today the street runs through a neighborhood of homes built after the Second World War, passing ballfields, two schools, and a senior housing complex.



A rural road near Millers Falls.

ACTION STEPS:

Our transportation and circulation actions directly support the overall goal to **"support a safe and harmonious community for all our residents"** and the goal to **improve our climate for quality commerce and industry, including ag/forestry business"**. They also help with the goal to **"guide appropriate use of regionally significant resources of our town"**.

Planning

Participate in reconstituted Capital Improvements Planning.

It makes little or no sense to plan for upgrading roads and bridges with town funds outside the context of overall capital improvements planning for the town.
(Lead: Highway Dept.; Alt. lead: Capital Improvements Committee)
(Others: Town Administrator, Finance Committee)

The Gill-Montague Bridge crosses the Connecticut River linking Turners Falls and Montague to Gill, Greenfield, and the Route 2 corridor. Montague benefits from this connection as Route 2 provides quick access to I-91 and a direct route to the Boston area and I-495.

Completed just prior to WWII, this bridge replaced an older span a few thousand feet upstream which was severely damaged during flooding in 1938. For a brief time, both spans bridged the Connecticut River until the older structure was scrapped for the war effort.

This view of the bridge taken from the Gill side of the river reveals an obstructed view of the Turners Falls Dam which stands parallel to the structure.

The Gill-Montague Bridge is slated for major repair work by the state over the next three years.

Update the Airport Master Plan.
This plan is now approximately 5 years old, and the new airport manager has many creative ideas that need to be included in the plan. Consistency with this plan should be emphasized.
(Lead: Airport Manager; Alt. lead: Planning Board)
(Others: Community Development Planner)

Work with Scenic Farm Byway program for Rte. 47/Rte. 63.
If this corridor receives official byway designation, the town will be eligible for funds for aesthetic guard-rails and signage as well as preservation of viewsheds along the corridor.
(Lead: Planning Board; Alt. lead: Conservation Commission)
(Others: Highway Dept., Montague Business Association, Community Development Planner)

Develop yearly transportation improvement plan.
Such a plan should be presented to the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen, but also made available to the general public. Also, this plan can serve as input to the Franklin Council of Government's Transportation Improvement Plan.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen; Alt. lead: Highway Dept.)
(Others: Planning Board, Community Development Planner)

<u>Roads and bridges</u>

Ensure quality and maintainability of main connector roads while protecting safety of residents.
All roads serve at least some local traffic, including local residential traffic. Roads which serve primarily as commuter roads include Greenfield Rd., Turners Falls Rd., Leverett Rd., North Leverett Rd., and Prospect St./Wendell Rd. Roads which serve primarily as commercial/industrial roads are Avenue A/ Montague City Road/Main Street and Millers Falls Road. Route 47/63 is not only a commuter and truck corridor, but a tourist route as well.
(Lead: Highway Dept.; Alt. lead: Board of Selectmen)
(Others: Planning Board, Community Development Planner)

Ensure quality and maintainability of side roads.
Side roads are not meant to carry substantial commercial/industrial traffic. The emphasis for these roads should be on safety as well as maintainability.
(Lead: Highway Dept.; Alt. lead: Board of Selectmen)
(Others: Planning Board, Community Development Planner)

Use traffic calming approaches where appropriate.
Some of the calming techniques (various physical designs that force traffic to slow down) are fairly new but have been used successfully elsewhere. These should be incorporated into the road network to increase safety and efficiency for local traffic and pedestrians.

(Lead: Highway Dept.; Alt. lead: Community Development Planner)

Address conflicts between commercial and residential uses of roads.
In Montague these conflicts will logically occur most often along Millers Falls Rd. and Avenue A/ Montague City Road. Currently, trucks use inappropriate routes in some areas of town.
(Lead: Board of Selectmen; Alt. lead: Highway Dept.)
(Others: Planning Board, Community Development Planner)

Parking

Address commercial needs by efficiently using existing parking areas and creating new ones.
This action is particularly relevant to the downtown areas.
(Lead: Town Administrator; Alt. lead: Capital Improvements Committee)
(Others: Board of Selectmen, Highway Dept., Community Development Planner)

Address parking needs in historic industrial area of Turners Falls ` by building new parking lot.
This action is imperative if the historic canal industrial area is to remain viable as a site for industry.
(Lead: Town Administrator; Alt. lead: Community Development Planner)

Airport

Support plans for development of the airport.
Improvements in the runway, in the buildings, and in other safety-related aspects are all possible.
(Lead: Airport Manager)

Leverage airport assets to promote industry/tourism/respect for the environment.
Ideas (mentioned elsewhere in this Comprehensive Plan) include airport land uses that will serve the Franklin County Bike Path or environmental education.
(Lead: Airport Manager; alternate lead: Montague Economic Development Industrial Corp.)
(Others: Montague Business Association)

Access

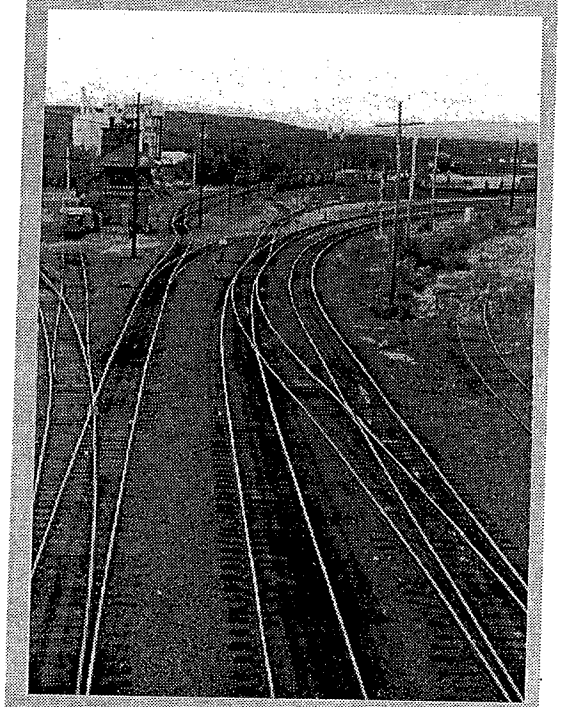
Facilitate handicapped accessibility, particularly to community and government sites.
This refers to both sidewalks and entrances to buildings. A combination of town funding and Community Development Block Grant funding may be necessary to bring buildings into compliance with the American Disabilities Act.
(Lead: Building Inspector; alternate lead: Board of Selectmen)
(Others: Town Administrator, Highway Dept.)

Ensure quality and maintainability of sidewalks.
The Community Development Block Grant process has in the past played a crucial role in upgrading such

Transporting Goods in 19th Century Montague

"Hartford was the market for the farmers in the summer by way of the river from 'Taylor's landing'; and Boston in the winter. The practice of teaming to Boston for the sale of produce and bringing back rum and foreign goods, continued through a hundred years, until the completion of the railroad. One of the early thoroughfares accordingly was the old County Road over Dry Hill. This was our 'Bay path', to borrow a name from another distinguished Boston road, to the valley. This was the only route for more than fifty years, until the road was opened by way of Grout's corner and Miller's river."

Excerpt from History of Montague, by Edward Pearson Pressey (1910)



This photograph shows the classification yard at East Deerfield, MA. In the distance is the area of Montague Center.

The resurgence of freight rail transportation in recent years offers an opportunity for many New England towns to reestablish railroads as primary movers of raw materials and finished goods. Montague is traversed by two major rail lines: the New England Central Railroad (formerly the Central Vermont line), and Guilford Transportation's Springfield Terminal Railway (formerly the Boston & Maine Railroad). Currently, local businesses which require the shipment of goods by rail must use facilities located in Palmer, MA.

infrastructure. We should give priority to those areas in town which pose the greatest safety risk to pedestrians.
(Lead: Highway Dept.; Alt. lead: Board of Selectmen)
(Others: Town Administrator)

Railroads

Encourage freight rail stop in Millers Falls to benefit Airport Industrial Park tenants.
An up-to-date assessment of this need must be carried out. and action taken where appropriate.
(Lead: Community Development Planner; Alt. lead: Town Administrator)
(Others: Montague Economic Development Industrial Corp., Industrial Park Tenants group)

Encourage passenger rail stop (Amtrak) in Millers Falls to support tourism and other commerce.
Such a stop would be a catalyst leading to a renaissance of the Millers Falls downtown area as well as being beneficial to the rest of Montague and to the region.
(Lead: Town Administrator; Alt. lead: Community Development Planner)
(Others: Montague Economic Development Industrial Corp., Montague Business Association)

Take steps to control the future of abandoned railroad rights of way.
We should utilize the concept of "rail banking" to acquire sections of right of way. (It is obvious that cooperation from the owner of any such rights is key to successfully carrying out this action.) This may enable future wildlife corridor or recreation or development uses.
(Lead: Community Development Planner; Alt. lead: Highway Dept.)
(Others: Town Administrator, Conservation Commission, Parks & Recreation)

Other transportation means

Develop Montague portion of Franklin County Bike Path.
This initiative, already underway, will benefit not only the recreational bikers, but also businesses within Montague. It will also help improve the image of Montague to outsiders who now know little about our villages, byways, and heritage.
(Lead: Highway Dept.; Alt. lead: Montague Economic Development Industrial Corp.)
(Others: Montague Business Association)

Work with regional transportation entities to define future mass transportation needs.
A functional mass transit system is both environmentally sound and integral to serving our lower income residents and those who cannot (or will not) drive. Connecting Turners Falls, our most populous village, with the Airport Industrial Park is critical to linking our workforce to our jobs.
(Lead: Community Development Planner; Alt. lead: Montague Economic Development Industrial Corp.)

(Others: Industrial Park Tenants group, Montague reps on the GMTA (Greenfield-Montague Transportation Area) and FRTA (Franklin Regional Transit Authority) boards)

Support recreation needs through busing.
It is important that the youth of our various villages have access to the full range of recreation assets of our town. For example, Montague Center youth may not easily be able to get to the swimming pool at Turners Falls High School. Another future example may be an outdoor swimming area which would not be easily reachable for youth from some of our villages.
(Lead: Town Administrator; Alt. lead: Parks & Recreation)
(Others: Montague reps on the GMTA (Greenfield-Montague Transportation Area) and FRTA (Franklin Regional Transit Authority) boards)

The historic directional marker in Montague Center points the way to towns and cities across the Commonwealth. The marker recalls a time in the history of the town when horses and stage coaches provided a primary means of transportation for those travelling long distances. Today, the antique post continues to provide less confident motorists with a reassuring "pointing hand" gesturing the correct way to Barre and Boston.

REGIONAL ISSUES

The Town of Montague exists not only as an independent town in the Commonwealth, but as a municipal citizen of a community of towns in the region. One need only study the list of possible local identifiers to reveal our regional interests: Connecticut River Valley, Pioneer Valley, Mohawk Trail, Western Massachusetts, Franklin County, I-91 corridor, Route 2 corridor, and Western New England. Our region offers much to our citizens and we have much to offer those around us. Many efforts which can benefit Montague can be accomplished faster, cheaper, and more effectively when accomplished on a regional level. Economic development, transportation improvements, and recreational resources are all areas of interest to the region as well as this community and we should participate in these efforts not only because they benefit our town, but because they benefit our neighboring communities as well.

"One need only study the list of possible local identifiers to reveal our regional interests: Connecticut River Valley, Pioneer Valley, Mohawk Trail, Western Massachusetts, Franklin County, I-91 corridor, Route 2 corridor, and Western New England."

Transportation

Regional Roads

The system of roadways serving the area extends into our town along several key corridors. State roads include Routes 63 & 47 which form a north-south spine through the east central section of Montague. This corridor serves moderate numbers of pass-through users as well as local residents heading south into the five college area and north into Keene, NH. Route 63 also serves as a link to Route 2 in Erving, north of Millers Falls. The transportation benefits of the 63/47 Corridor should be maintained as a town and regional asset while taking steps to enhance the rural character of the road and its environs. Establishment of the Connecticut River Scenic Farm Byway will make available some of the resources necessary to accomplish this in the coming years.
Millers Falls Road, the connector between Turners Falls and Millers Falls, forms a key east-west spine through Montague allowing regional access to the Airport Industrial Park, future industrial areas on the northern Plains, and the Turners Falls Airport (a general aviation facility). This is a key transportation corridor that will eventually contain the Franklin County Bikeway as well as provide automobile access to a future passenger rail platform and/or freight rail siding in Millers Falls. Enhancements to this roadway should be sensitive to other users along its path while ensuring its adequacy for commercial and industrial users.
Avenue A/ Montague City Road serves as a connector for traffic emanating from, and passing through,

Deerfield, Greenfield, and other points south and west of the town. While only modestly developed along its midsection, this corridor passes through the primary commercial downtown area in Montague before passing over the Gill-Montague Bridge to a connection with Route 2. This corridor has been established as an Economic Opportunity Area making it a focal point for business retention and growth in the coming years. Speed control and road drainage issues continue to offer areas of potential improvement on this roadway.

Greenfield Road, which connects Montague Center (and points south) and Montague City, serves as a convenient connector to the Greenfield/Deerfield area along Rts. 5 & 10. While the town should maintain the road as an internal connector, improvements should not encourage the use of Greenfield Road as a rural highway.

"A freight siding could easily be developed at the interchange in Millers Falls where the two rail lines converge, creating a freight and materials loading/unloading area for local and regional industries."

Rail service

Currently, rail service into the town can be described as "through freight traffic". There are no destination points for freight or passenger railroads at this time although this potential exists. Amtrak passenger trains pass through Montague twice daily north (in the AM) and south (in the PM). There is interest in the Franklin Regional Council of Governments in developing a rail passenger platform at Millers Falls to offer residents of the region a convenient and accessible alternative to Brattleboro, Amherst or Springfield. A local passenger station is likely to increase ridership on the line both from individual travelers and private boarding school students. The town should work closely with the Franklin Regional Planning Office to develop the rail platform as well as any improvements needed to create a functional station.

Rail freight moves through Montague along the tracks of two railroads: Guilford Transportation's Springfield Terminal Railroad and the New England Central Railway. A freight siding could easily be developed at the interchange in Millers Falls where the two rail lines converge, creating a freight and materials loading/unloading area for local and regional industries. This project could also have regional implications as many industries currently transport rail product to Palmer, MA. The town should also consider working with the freight rail companies to determine the feasibility of expanding rail lines to serve current and future industrial areas in Montague.

Bikeways

Two bikeways are currently under development in the town. The *Franklin County Bikeway* system will pass through Montague en route to points north and south of the town. Phase One of the Bikeway, which is currently being designed, will connect Deerfield/Greenfield and Gill/Northfield via the existing railroad rights-of-way connecting Montague City and Turners Falls. Completion of the locally-developed *Connecticut River ParkLink Corridor* should be supported both as a local spur of the regional bikeway and as an invaluable connector linking our natural and historic resources in Turners Falls. The town should continue to work closely with the

regional planning agency (county bikeway) and MEDIC (parklink corridor) to facilitate the completion of all phases of these bike paths so that the Montague portions of the routes are ultimately connected to the greater western Massachusetts trail system.

Airports

Turners Falls has been home to a general aviation airport since the early days of flight. With its proximity to the industrial park, the technical high school, our urban villages, the Connecticut River, and the Montague Plains, the airport is poised to establish its role as a hub of activity for visitors, employers, and residents alike. The current facility has seen much growth and improvement in recent years as private individuals have constructed hangars and a general terminal facility has been constructed for the Airport Manager and visitors to the town. The town, through the Planning Board, should find ways to complement the airport's planning efforts. This might include joint planning meetings with the Airport Commission, a continued partnership with the Airport Manager, and the on-going effort to maintain consistency in establishing goals and objectives for development of the town's transportation network. Because of its regional role, the airport must maintain a broad transportation outlook and be made more "user friendly" for those flying into or out of the area.

TEA 21

Recently reconstituted federal transportation funding legislation will continue to be a critical element in planning for and constructing non-highway portions of the transportation network. Of particular interest to the town is the Enhancements Program of TEA 21. This funding is made available to the towns in the area through the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Without the FRCOG, the town would find itself competing against a pool of applicants across the Commonwealth making it much more difficult to receive funding for these transportation projects. The town should consider focusing its TEA 21 applications on projects of regional concern in order to create highly competitive funding applications. In this way, the town may be able to accomplish more with the limited resources available and at the same time move forward with projects that will provide regional, as well as local, benefits.

"Because of its regional role, the airport must maintain a broad transportation outlook and be made more 'user friendly' for those flying into or out of the area."

Industry & Commerce

New Industry

While New England continues to recover from the recession of the late nineteen-eighties, the remainder of the nation continues to improve its ability to attract business and commerce. Montague must recognize that the regional benefits to an industry play a major role in its site selection decisions. The surrounding business climate, including the ability to find local vendors and customers, shapes the image of the region and in so

doing may bolster or taint the image of a town in that region. There are two possible economic development scenarios for the town. The town may compete for employers on a national (and global) playing field by itself, or the town may choose to compete with a team of towns - as a region. The regional approach is certainly the better choice for Montague.

Re-location

The town should approach the subject of business re-location with a regional approach in mind. While the town maintains viable areas of land for economic development, it should be understood that there will be times when a Montague industry will not be able to meet its needs within the boundaries of the town. When this happens the town should attempt to accommodate the needs of the business by assisting the industry in finding a viable location elsewhere in the local region.

"The town should work with the FRCOG to maintain a workable regional marketing plan which demonstrates the benefits of locating in the region and in Montague."

Regional marketing

Efforts to market the area should be coordinated with the Chamber of Commerce, the FRCOG, and all appropriate state agencies involved in steering businesses into the state. The town should work with the FRCOG to maintain a workable regional marketing plan which demonstrates the benefits of locating in the region and in Montague. Regional marketing of our downtowns must present our commercial areas as part of a network of attractions in the region. This marketing approach should cross county lines when feasible so that visitors to Western Massachusetts will be aware of our business presence.

Regional Industrial Park

Consideration of a "regional industrial park", in which a partnership of towns develops a park and shares both the development/marketing cost and the tax revenue, should continue perhaps with the leadership of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

Business location

While our commercial areas should continue to offer "convenience market" products and services for residents, the town should also consider taking steps to foster the development or re-location of businesses that will attract outside consumers. The concept of product differentiation should be carried through into the economic development arena so that our commercial areas complement other regional downtowns rather than compete against them. The town should work to develop a theme for its urban village commercial areas. With the continued development of the Airport Industrial Park (including planned future expansions) and the creation of the Scenic Farm By-Way, Millers Falls sits at an important juncture along Rt. 63 which could provide opportunites for new

business development. Turners Falls should be nurtured as Montague's primary commercial center, perhaps with an emphasis on a particular good or service which is unique to the area.

Entrepreneurial training/support

Continued training and technical support should be made available to business owners in the region. Currently, the Franklin County Community Development Corporation offers entreprenuerial training to owners of new and developing businesses. Montague should support these offerings as a way of making the town and region more competitive in the greater marketplace. The town can offer space for classes and seminars, funding support through direct payments to the FRCOG and through grant funding, and information access to make citizens aware of these local resources. Land use controls can be flexible enough to allow businesses in their infancy to find appropriate and affordable space for their endeavors.

Tourism

Historically, regional tourism in Western Massachusetts has been based on natural resource attractions. Visitors came to the area to experience the fall foliage season along the Mohawk Trail and roadside farmstands, souvenir shops, and motor lodges dotted the visual and entrepreneurial landscape of Franklin County. This trend should continue as long as it can be accomplished without exploitation of these irreplacable environmental and historical resources. Recent efforts to attract visitors have evolved into more appropriate and 'real' experiences such as local craft outlets, 'Bed & Breakfast', and *actual* historic and cultural interpretation sites that investigates the rich heritage of our Native American, industrial , and natural histories. Farmstands continue to be a presence along most rural roads in the region to this day albeit with product offerings geared to a new generation of consumers. The Scenic Byway program should be leveraged to improve our ability to attract visitors to the town while minimizing the negative impact of increased automobile traffic along our rural corridors. Further development of the bikeway system (and its connections to the regional network) within the town would be one important step in offering visitors an accessible way to experience the many facets of the our community personality.

"The Scenic Byway program should be leveraged to improve our ability to attract visitors to the town while minimizing the negative impact of increased automobile traffic along our rural corridors."

Housing

Regional neighborhoods

The town should begin to view itself as a 'neighborhood' in the larger community of Western Massachusetts. Residents of the region move about freely commuting to homes, jobs, and shopping districts. In this sense, town boundaries are less critical to the daily experiences of a citizen. Neighborhoods that are clean, vital, served by adequate infrastructure, and allowed to develop in a way that meets the needs of those who live in them, will be attractive places to live and work. While the town may not wish to encourage large numbers of new residents in

the foreseeable future, it should nonetheless continue to seek improvements in the livability of all neighborhoods which will result in an improved condition for present and future residents.

Housing choice

A full range of housing options should be available to residents of the region and the town. Qualities which affect the housing decisions of those seeking a home in the area include location, availability of services, scale, ownership/rental status, and affordability, and style. The proximity to jobs, family, educational institutions, or recreational resources may also affect the decision to rent, purchase, or build a home. Add to this the fact that an individual or family is likely to experience varying housing needs throughout a lifetime and it becomes clear that no town in the region can possibly provide housing for everyone at all times. For this reason it is imperative that Montague seeks to maintain and create a variety of housing options while supporting projects which benefit surrounding communities as well.

The complex and sometimes controversial issue of affordable housing is one which demands regional attention and regional action. Working with the Franklin Regional Housing Authority, Montague citizens have built, purchased and rented affordable living spaces in Montague and in other area towns. The town should support these efforts through funding support, program support, and the establishment of regulations which create the opportunity for new and renovated affordable housing.

"Watershed protection, recreational planning, and habitat restoration are activities that can best be accomplished by coordinated regional and state efforts..."

Open Space/Recreation

Rivers

Three rivers - the Connecticut, the Millers, and the Sawmill - as well as several larger brooks and streams help to define the geography of Montague. The rivers are certainly a shared resource both in terms of land area and in the actual flow of water (including the life it supports). Watershed protection, recreational planning, and habitat restoration are activities that can best be accomplished by coordinated regional and state efforts such as the Connecticut River Heritage Corridor.

The Montague Plains

The area known as the Montague Plains has been a regional asset (albeit on an informal basis) for many years. Although the area is privately owned, recreational users of the land bike, hike, ski, snowmobile, pick berries, and enjoy the surrounding natural environment. Northeast Utilities (NU) has maintained a policy of tolerance and stewardship regarding recreational users of their property - disturbed only by encroachments which challenge legal ownership or result in the dumping of trash and debris on the largely unpoliced land area. As discussed earlier in the plan, the town should work to maintain the majority of the Plains as an open and natural

place to be enjoyed by local and regional visitors.

Greenways, Trails & Bikeways

Montague should work in concert with neighboring towns, state agencies, public and private land trusts, as well as individuals to establish regionally significant wildlife, open space, and recreation corridors. By clearly indicating areas to be protected and the points at which these corridors cross political boundaries, beautiful and effective natural systems such as the *Mt. Toby-Wendell State Forest* corridor can be protected and enhanced. Similarly, the town should continue to coordinate its efforts with other towns, the FRCOG, and the state to develop the regional trail network in and through the town.

Recreational facilities

Some public and private recreational facilities should be considered regional assets particularly where their existence is unique within the area. Facilities which require outside users for fiscal survival such as camp grounds, golf courses, trails, skateboard parks, gun clubs should be encouraged. Thomas Memorial Golf Course, the Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club, and the Turners Falls Rod & Gun Club are facilities which currently serve the area. Facilities maintained by organizations which include some recreational activities include the Elks Club, the St. Stanislaus Society, the St. Kazimierz Society, the Montague Grange, the Veterans Clubs of Millers Falls and Turners Falls, and the Masons Lodge in Montague Center. However, neighborhood and village facilities should be developed and structured for the use of town residents.

Culture & History

Industrial & commercial history

The industrial and economic history of Montague is representative of the development of much of New England and the town should assess preservation, interpretation, and restoration efforts in light of their regional significance. A list of sites, structures, or traditions of regional importance would be a useful tool for many of the towns in the area when assessing the significance of an historic resource. Montague should also recognize the unique aspects of more recent history that could have (or will have) value for future generations.

Regional cultural attractions

The town should highlight and build upon the success of regional cultural attractions such as the Montague Book Mill in Montague Center and the Shea Theater in Turners Falls. Efforts to improve facilities for visitors, while maintaining neighborhood character, will help to generate return trips to the town.

"The town should highlight and build upon the success of regional cultural attractions such as the Montague Book Mill in Montague Center and the Shea Theater in Turners Falls."

FUTURE LAND USE

The primary goal of establishing future land use designations in the town is to direct growth to appropriate areas while discouraging growth and development in inappropriate regions of Montague. Yet, the existing built environment has set a direction for certain parts of the town, and natural features will also constrain future options. However, future land use in Montague does not have to religiously follow current land use practices, as the town's undeveloped areas offer many opportunities to direct future growth.

The "Future Land Use" map shows the configuration Montague should strive for over the next 5 to 10 years. It emphasizes taking advantage of currently developed areas, and targeting other areas for varying uses at varying densities or for preservation. The Action Steps of the Plan Elements (Housing through Transportation) are reflected in this map. Additionally, the concepts in the map support the overriding planning issues described in the "Overview" Section of this plan; especially the emphasis on the five villages and on the Plains.

A walk through this map can take several different paths: exploring the villages, investigating other residential areas, hiking open space areas, viewing industrial areas, and following transportation routes.

The inner and outer concentric circles around the Lake Pleasant, Millers Falls, Montague Center, Montague City, and Turners Falls villages indicate that their continued future vitality is key to the health of the town. It is anticipated that the villages will gain strength over time. The outer circles represent some natural dispersing from the immediate centers. Extension of infrastructure and/or infill development will also support the physical and social vitality of the five villages.

The reach of Turners Falls is of course larger than that of the other villages, both in the size of its core downtown and in its outlying areas. The intent for commercial uses is to leverage existing centers, particularly the downtowns of Turners Falls and Millers Falls. In addition, the influence of the medical industry in

"The primary goal of establishing future land use designations in the town is to direct growth to appropriate areas while discouraging growth and development in inappropriate regions of Montague."

"The 'Future Land Use' map is of key importance to the evolution of Montague's land uses. The map serves as a template for future zoning changes, and the existing zoning map should be brought into compliance with it. When this happens, appropriate growth and preservation will be correctly guided."

Montague City should be encouraged tofurther strengthen the village.

Reflected in the map are two types of residential areas beyond the direct influence of the villages. One type is the "R" areas, geared toward infrastructure-supported, small lot development, especially between Greenfield and Turners Falls Roads. Second is the "RR" rural residential areas, meant to accommodate larger lots, for those households interested in multi-acre parcels but where there will be need for private wells and septic systems. Areas just to the east of Millers Falls, outside Montague Center, and east of Rte. 63 are appropriate for this type of development.

An emerald crescent of mostly wooded open space ("Woodland") is conceived to strengthen an existing wildlife corridor east of Rte. 63. This takes in preserved lands already owned by the state (the Montague State Forest plus lands in the Chestnut Hill area) and the Turners Falls Water Dept. (along Hannigan Brook) and connects them with adjoining, privately held lands. Crossing Rte. 63 toward the west would also join this crescent with the "Pine Barrens" of the Montague Plains. Two thirds to three quarters of today's industrially zoned land south of Millers Falls Road should comprise this large wildlife management or conservation area. Finally, and of high importance to retaining the critical swath of high quality farmland along the Connecticut River, is the "PA" Prime Agriculture space, joining together existing lands protected under the state's Agriculture Preservation Restrictions Program with other farmlands.

Industrial lands should be divided into four types. These include the "Historical Industrial" area along the canal in downtown Turners Falls; the lands of the former landfill on Turnpike Road, suitable for new, "Small Industrial" uses compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhoods; the existing Airport Industrial Park and future contiguous extensions, appropriate for "Medium Industrial" uses; and a portion of the current Northeast Utilities lands south of Millers Falls Road that can be developed for "Large Industrial" users, preferably those that might fit with an eco-industrial theme.

Finally, the transportation corridors tie the other elements together. Of particular interest for the next 5 to 10 years will be having Millers Falls Road become more of a Rural Character Business corridor and Rte. 63 become more of a Rural Character corridor. The former will tie in with current and future industrial development both north and south of Millers Falls Road. The latter will emphasize the recent efforts toward creation of the multi-county, multi-state Scenic Farm Byway.

The "Future Land Use" map is of key importance to the evolution of Montague's land uses. The map serves as a template for future zoning changes, and the existing zoning map should be brought into compliance with it. When this happens, appropriate growth and preservation will be correctly guided.

IMPLEMENTATION

A great deal of time, community input and assessment has been incorporated into developing this Comprehensive Plan. To ensure that the plan remains viable and responsive to Montague's needs over the next ten years, this section dealing with plan implementation has been developed. A system of notations has been included both here and within the text, to make this document readily understandable and, most importantly, a catalyst for the successful completion of the plan's stated goals and action steps.

Each action step is defined by several parameters and included within the following Plan Schedule:

1. A lead person, group or committee has been identified for each action step. By assigning specific key people to take control of a particular project, accountability will be clear and straightforward. It will be this person's or group's responsibility to see the action step through to completion and to make adjustments as necessary to meet the Town's goals. When appropriate, memos of agreement could be established with these groups to further clarify the lines of authority and direction.

2. Each action step has been keyed to a time frame considered appropriate to accomplish its task. Short-term are fairly simple tasks that can be accomplished quickly, inexpensively, and with a minimum of change to "business as usual" procedures or roles. Mid-term projects require more coordination among groups, some planning and funding, and may require completion of other tasks first. Long-term projects often require sustained efforts and coordination, integration with other plans and action steps, and reliance on substantial funding. Such aspects as reorganization, retraining, and feasibility studies my be involved.

3. Each action step is also analyzed for its impact on the Town interms of required

"A lead person, group or committee has been identified for each action step. By assigning specific key people to take control of a particular project, accountability will be clear and straightforward."

human effort, needed financing, and implied pattern changing (e.g., reorganization or retraining) so that the success of that action is ensured.

4. The parties involved in each step should develop benchmark indicators for those steps. For example, "Number of jobs created" is a benchmark that partially indicates the amount of economic development from year to year. "Number of building per mits" will be an indication of how quickly the town is growing.

For information purposes the Planning Board will report to Town Meeting members on an annual basis during the ten year life of the plan to provide progress reports as measured against the Plan Schedule. This will help also to keep the Comprehensive Plan fresh in the minds of citizens, officials, and planners. The annual review will serve as a test of how well the Plan Schedule has been formulated, as well as a guide for adjustments based on changing circumstances.

"Public forums will be held every few years to ascertain public opinion as to the success or shortcomings of the plan."

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A general update of the Comprehensive Plan will be conducted during Year 5.

HOUSING

section	step id.	step	lead	alt. lead	time frame	impact, time	impact, money	impact, pattern changes	impact - avg.	level of difficulty
03	A1	Inventory housing stock-downtown	CDP	BI	M	4	4	5	4.3	A-easy
03	A2	Create housing team	BOS	TA	S	3	4	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
03	A3	Develop strategies to deal with landlords	HT	TA	L	2	5	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
03	A4	Develop housing upgrade strategy	HT	CDP	L	2	2	3	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
03	A5	Allow mixed comm./res. uses in the DT areas	PB	CDP	S	3	5	4	4.0	A-easy
03	B1	Implement open space development zoning options	PB	CDP	M	3	5	3	3.7	B-somewhat easy
03	C1	Inventory housing stock-remainder of town	CDP	BI	M	4	4	5	4.3	A-easy
03	C2	Assess demographic trends	CDP	PB	L	5	5	5	5.0	A-easy
03	C3	Encourage private market housing thru zoning	PB	CDP	S	3	5	3	3.7	B-somewhat easy
03	C4	Pursue public housing strategies	HT	TA	L	2	2	3	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
03	C5	Encourage assisted living facility	HT	CDP	L	3	4	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
03	C6	Extend infrastructure to residential growth areas	BOS	HWY	L	2	2	3	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
03	C7	Develop phased growth bylaw	PB	CDP	M	3	4	2	3.0	B-somewhat easy
03	D1	Study Title V regulations	CDP	PB	M	4	5	4	4.3	A-easy

CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

section	step id.	step	lead	alt. lead	time frame	impact, time	impact, money	impact, pattern changes	impact - avg.	level of difficulty
04	A1	Preserve historic viewsheds, including thru zoning	PB	CC	L	4	3	3	3.3	B-somewhat easy
04	A2	Promote Conn. River Heritage Corridor	DISC	TA	M	4	4	4	4.0	A-easy
04	A3	Restore town cemeteries	CEM	HIS COM	M	4	4	5	4.3	A-easy
04	A4	Create educational programs/exhibits	DISC	GMRSD	L	3	3	4	3.3	B-somewhat easy
04	B1	Inventory historic/cultural sites	CDP	HIS COM	S	5	5	5	5.0	A-easy
04	B2	Develop incentives/preservation efforts	TA	HIS COM	M	4	4	3	3.7	B-somewhat easy
04	B3	Develop design guidelines etc. to preserve hist. integrity	PB	CDP	M	3	3	2	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
04	C1	Promote adaptive reuse of historic bldgs/brownfields	PB	TA	M	3	4	3	3.3	B-somewhat easy
04	C2	Work with owners to redevelop industrial bldgs	TA	MEDIC	L	4	4	4	4.0	A-easy
04	C3	Support reuse of Rod Shop Buildings	PB	CDP	M	3	3	4	3.3	B-somewhat easy
04	C4	Lend town support to affiliated groups (Grange, Masons)	TA	CDP	L	4	5	5	4.7	A-easy
04	D1	Design network of library/exhibit spaces	LIBRARY	HIS COM	L	2	3	2	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
04	D2	Maintain and enhance Shea Theatre	TA	CCC	L	4	3	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
04	D3	Design/build new outdoor performing space	CDP	DIO	S	4	4	4	4.0	A-easy

COMMUNITY ISSUES

section	step id.	step	lead	alt. lead	time frame	impact, time	impact, money	impact, pattern changes	impact - avg.	level of difficulty
05	A1	Improve quality of housing	HT		L	2	2	4	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
05	A2	Identify/implement neighborhood centers	CDP	PB	M	4	4	2	3.3	B-somewhat easy
05	A3	Develop programs to improve downtowncommercial areas	TA	MEDIC	L	2	3	2	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
05	A4	Amend zoning (setbacks) to encourage economic vitality	PB	BI	S	4	5	3	4.0	A-easy
05	A5	Amend zoning to allow limited mixed uses in rural villages	PB	BI	S	3	5	4	4.0	A-easy
05	A6	Seek appropriate infill development	TA	CDP	L	4	4	4	4.0	A-easy
05	A7	Seek funding/space for social service organizations	TA	CDP	M	3	3	4	3.3	B-somewhat easy
05	A8	Create spaces/programs for multi-generational interaction	TA	PB	M	3	3	2	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
05	B1	Support efforts to create sense of community	BOS	CPSM	L	2	4	3	3.0	B-somewhat easy
05	B2	Increase police visibility	BOS	POL	M	4	3	3	3.3	B-somewhat easy
05	B3	Support fire departments	BOS	FIRE	S	4	4	5	4.3	A-easy
05	B4	Facilitate handicap accessibility	BI	HLTH AG	L	4	2	3	3.0	B-somewhat easy
05	B5	Ensure quality town roads and sidewalks	HWY		L	2	1	4	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
05	C1	Assess need for townwide health services	HLTH BD		M	4	4	5	4.3	A-easy
05	C2	Develop/enhance targeted health services	HLTH AG	NURSE	M	4	3	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
05	C3	Provide physical accessibility to services & facilities	HLTH AG	BI	M	4	3	3	3.3	B-somewhat easy
05	D1	Assess need for/pursue senior center & teen centers	TA	BOS	M	2	2	4	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
05	D2	Integrate use of school facilities with community needs	GMRSD	BOS	M	4	4	3	3.7	B-somewhat easy
05	E1	Promote excellence in schools	GMRSD	citizens	L	1	2	2	1.7	D-difficult
05	E2	Provide flexible infrastructure/bldgs/technology for schools	GMRSD	CIP	M	2	1	3	2.0	C-somewhat difficult
05	E3	Strengthen school accountability/prepare for future	GMRSD	FIN	S	4	5	2	3.7	B-somewhat easy
05	E4	Leverage Franklin County Tech programs	GMRSD	FCTECH	M	4	4	3	3.7	B-somewhat easy
05	E5	Coordinate/develop adult education/job training	GMRSD	MBA	M	3	3	3	3.0	B-somewhat easy
05	F1	Ensure efficient/integrated town regs and procedures	TA		S	3	5	3	3.7	B-somewhat easy
05	F2	Consider reorganization of town departments	TA		S	3	4	3	3.3	B-somewhat easy
05	F3	Streamline permit application process	TA	CLERK	S	4	4	3	3.7	B-somewhat easy
05	F4	Use technology to provide access to gov't	TA	CABLE	M	4	3	3	3.3	B-somewhat easy
05	F5	Develop crisis response team and procedures	TA		S	4	5	3	4.0	A-easy
05	F6	Simplify zoning and subdivision bylaws	PB	CDP	S	2	4	3	3.0	B-somewhat easy

OPEN SPACE

		step	lead	alt. lead						level of difficulty
6	A1	Foster establishment of open space "necklace'								
6	A2	Identify & protect natural & scenic viewsheds								
6	A3	Study impact of Title 5 changes regarding development constraints								
6	A4	Seek development of water access points on town waterways								
6	A5	Encourage continued open space uses for private clubs								
6	A6	Establish open space uses on NU properties along waterways								
6	A7	Utilize private land trusts								
6	B1	identify existing vacant/under-used lots in villages								
6	B2	Maintain variety of open spaces in villages								
6	B3	Identify/protect town's historic viewsheds								
6	B4	Encourage interim open space uses on vacant lots								
6	C1	Plains: maintain control of roads, land use								
6	C2	Use aquifer protection strategies to protect water supply								
6	C3	Plains: seek permanent protection of lower 2/3's								
6	C4	Plains: Develop strategies for preventing dumping rubbish								
6	D1	Leverage resources to maximize APR participation								
6	D2	Encourage farmer participation in Farm Viability program								
6	D3	Establish Agricultural Advisory Committee								
6	D4	Revise bylaws to allow Flexible residential development								
6	D5	Utilize all available technical resources (NRCS, Extension)								

NATURAL RESOURCES

section	step id.	step	lead	alt. lead	time frame	impact, time	impact, money	impact, pattern changes	impact - avg.	level of difficulty
07	A1	Retain control over Plains roads	BOS	PB	M	5	4	4	4.3	A-easy
07	A2	Extend water supply overlay to Plains	PB	CDP	M	4	3	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
07	A3	Encourage sale of Plains to conservation entities	BOS	CC	M	4	3	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
07	A4	Plan Plains infrastructure for industrial uses	TA		M	3	3	4	3.3	B-somewhat easy
07	A5	Assess financial impact of rezoning Plains	FIAC		S	5	5	5	5.0	A-easy
07	B1	Cooperate with Ag. Pres. Restrictions program	CC	CDP	L	4	3	5	4.0	A-easy
07	B2	Work with land trusts to preserve natural areas	CC	CDP	L	4	4	4	4.0	A-easy
07	B3	Support cont'd operation of fish hatchery	CC	CDP	L	5	5	5	5.0	A-easy
07	B4	Participate in Scenic Farm Byway	BOS	PB	M	4	5	4	4.3	A-easy
07	B5	Cooperate with Conte F&W Refuge	CC	CDP	M	4	5	5	4.7	A-easy
07	B6	Study Conn. River Heritage Corridor	DISC	TA	M	4	4	4	4.0	A-easy
07	C1	Work with Natural Resources Conservation Service	CC	CDP	L	5	5	5	5.0	A-easy
07	C2	Encourage environmental educ. by public entities	GMRSD	CC	L	4	5	4	4.3	A-easy
07	D1	Inventory natural viewsheds	CDP	PB	S	5	5	5	5.0	A-easy
07	D2	Create scenic viewshed bylaw	PB	CDP	L	4	5	3	4.0	A-easy
07	D3	Work with conserv. entities to preserve views	CDP	CC	M	4	4	4	4.0	A-easy
07	E1	Expand recycling program	HWY	citizens	L	4	3	3	3.3	B-somewhat easy

RECREATION

			step	lead	alt. lead						
8	A1	Maintain & enhance Parks & Rec. offerings									
8	B1	Take advantage of town access to natural resources for recreation									
8	C1	Support development of Franklin County Bikeway									
8	D1	Support public & private recreation clubs									
8	E1	Assess use of landfill area for recreation									

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

section	step id.	step	lead	alt. lead	time frame	impact, time	impact, money	impact, pattern changes	impact - avg.	level of difficulty
09	A1	Institutionalize Capital Improvements Planning	BOS	CIP	S	3	5	3	3.7	B-somewhat easy
09	A2	Inventory town-owned lands	CDP	BI	S	5	5	5	5.0	A-easy
09	A3	Create physical plan for Turnpike Road landfill site	CDP	PB	S	4	3	3	3.3	B-somewhat easy
09	A4	Plan for Farren medical cluster & Rod shop areas	CDP	PB	M	3	4	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
09	A5	Develop Phase 3 of Industrial Park	TA	MEDIC	M	3	2	4	3.0	B-somewhat easy
09	A6	Establish Plains industrial & open space zones	PB	CC	M	2	2	2	2.0	C-somewhat difficult
09	A7	Coordinate Airport plan with other planning efforts	AIR MGR	PB	M	4	5	3	4.0	A-easy
09	B1	Ensure infrastucture for economic development	SPDIST	HWY	L	2	1	4	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
09	B2	Consider re-organization of Special Districts	BOS	SPDIST	M	2	3	1	2.0	C-somewhat difficult
09	B3	Develop adequate parking in commercial areas	TA	MBA	M	3	2	3	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
09	B4	Develop parking for canal industry buildings	MEDIC	CDP	S	3	2	4	3.0	B-somewhat easy
09	B5	Develop regional solid waste processing at landfill site	TA	WWTP	M	3	3	3	3.0	B-somewhat easy
09	C1	Develop downtown streetscape plans	CDP	MBA	M	3	2	4	3.0	B-somewhat easy
09	C2	Support/work with resources of Scenic Farm By-Way	PB	BOS	M	4	5	3	4.0	A-easy
09	D1	Promote adaptive re-use of historic buildings	TA	CDP	L	2	3	3	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
09	D2	Seek redevelopment of brownfield sites	TA	CDP	L	2	2	4	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
09	E1	Prepare informational materials-town regulations	TA		S	3	4	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
09	E2	Develop incentive tools to attract & retain employers	TA	MEDIC	M	3	3	4	3.3	B-somewhat easy
09	E3	Amend "General Business" district to guide future use	PB	CDP	S	3	4	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
09	E4	Create mixed-use zoning in DT & rural areas	PB	CDP	S	3	5	4	4.0	A-easy
09	E5	Develop "Village Business" designations	PB	CDP	M	3	4	2	3.0	B-somewhat easy
09	E6	Maintain/establish zoning to support medical facilities	PB	CDP	S	4	4	5	4.3	A-easy
09	E7	Study potential industrial areas -Rivers Act exemption	CC	CDP	S	4	5	4	4.3	A-easy
09	F1	Attract/retain businesses through downtown marketing	TA	MBA	M	2	4	3	3.0	B-somewhat easy
09	F2	Encourage "Downtown Business Associations"	TA	MBA	S	3	4	3	3.3	B-somewhat easy
09	F3	Encourage use of Montague sites for gov't/institutional	BOS	MEDIC	L	3	3	5	3.7	B-somewhat easy
09	F4	Pursue complementary business in Airport Ind. Park	BOS	TA	M	4	3	2	3.0	B-somewhat easy
09	G1	Support/create "agricultural issues focus group"	CDP	BOS	M	4	5	3	4.0	A-easy
09	G2	Participate - regional/state farm stabilization programs	CDP	AG ISS	M	3	5	4	4.0	A-easy
09	H1	Consider regional meteorological training ctr. @airport	AIR MGR	FCTECH	M	3	4	5	4.0	A-easy
09	H2	Consider regional crafts/micro-industry center	ARTISANS	GMRSD	M	3	4	3	3.3	B-somewhat easy
09	H3	Consider "Art-stead" crafts district in urban villages	CDP	ARTISANS	L	3	3	1	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
09	H4	Establish "eco-industrial" park	TA	CDP	L	2	2	2	2.0	C-somewhat difficult

PUBLIC FACILITIES

section	step id.	step	lead	alt. lead	time frame	impact, time	impact, money	impact, pattern changes	impact - avg.	level of difficulty
10	A1	Assess/implement new/expanded senior center	TA	CDP	M	2	2	4	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
10	A2	Assess/implement teen center	TA	BRICK	M	2	2	4	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
10	A3	Consider combined senior/teen center	TA	BOS	M	2	2	4	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
10	B1	Develop/implement school capital improvements	GMRSD	CIP	M	1	1	1	1.0	D-difficult
10	B2	Study regional meteorological training center	AIR MGR	FCTECH	L	2	2	4	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
10	B3	Incorporate community access to schools	GMRSD	TA	M	3	3	3	3.0	B-somewhat easy
10	C1	Assess Highway Dept. physical/facilities needs	HWY	CIP	S	4	2	4	3.3	B-somewhat easy
10	C2	Evaluate requirements of fire stations	FIRE	CIP	M	4	5	5	4.7	A-easy
10	C3	Assess/implement new/renovated police station	POL	CIP	M	3	2	2	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
10	C4	Consider creation of single dispatch center	POL	FIRE	S	3	4	5	4.0	A-easy
10	C5	Assess/implement new or renovated town hall	BOS	CIP	M	2	2	3	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
10	D1	Maintain/enhance access points to rivers	OPSPAC	CC	M	4	3	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
10	D2	Support community outdoor recreational sites	PARKS		M	3	3	4	3.3	B-somewhat easy
10	D3	Develop town beach	PARKS	CDP	L	3	3	3	3.0	B-somewhat easy
10	D4	Create appropriate info stations on bikeway	CDP	BIKE	S	4	4	5	4.3	A-easy
10	E1	Facilitate accessibility to community sites	BI	BOS	L	3	2	4	3.0	B-somewhat easy

INFRASTRUCTURE

section	step id.	step	lead	alt. lead	time frame	impact, time	impact, money	impact, pattern changes	impact - avg.	level of difficulty
11	A1	Reconstitute Capital Improvements Planning	BOS	CIP	S	3	5	3	3.7	B-somewhat easy
11	A2	Develop zoning to encourage infill development	PB	CDP	S	2	5	3	3.3	B-somewhat easy
11	A3	Designate residential growth areas	PB	CDP	S	4	5	4	4.3	A-easy
11	A4	Extend infrastructure to growth areas	BOS	HWY	L	2	1	3	2.0	C-somewhat difficult
11	A5	Determine if phased-growth by-law is appropriate	PB	CDP	M	3	4	2	3.0	B-somewhat easy
11	A6	Move toward merging of Special Districts	BOS	SPDIST	L	2	3	1	2.0	C-somewhat difficult
11	B1	Determine growth capacity-water & sewer	CDP		S	5	5	5	5.0	A-easy
11	B2	Implement construction/repairs to sewer lines	HWY	WWTP	L	2	1	5	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
11	B3	Evaluate/implement water supply options	SPDIST		L	2	1	4	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
11	B4	Create sustainable method for sludge disposal	WWTP	FCSWD	M	3	2	3	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
11	C1	Ensure appropriate technology for schools	GMRSD	CABLE	M	3	2	4	3.0	B-somewhat easy
11	C2	Support greater cable TV services	CABLE	BOS	S	3	4	5	4.0	A-easy
11	D1	Encourage ample supply of clean energy	BOS	UTIL	M	2	3	3	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
11	D2	Encourage burial of utility lines	BOS	UTIL	L	3	1	3	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
11	D3	Encourage expansion of natural gas lines	BOS	UTIL	M	3	2	5	3.3	B-somewhat easy

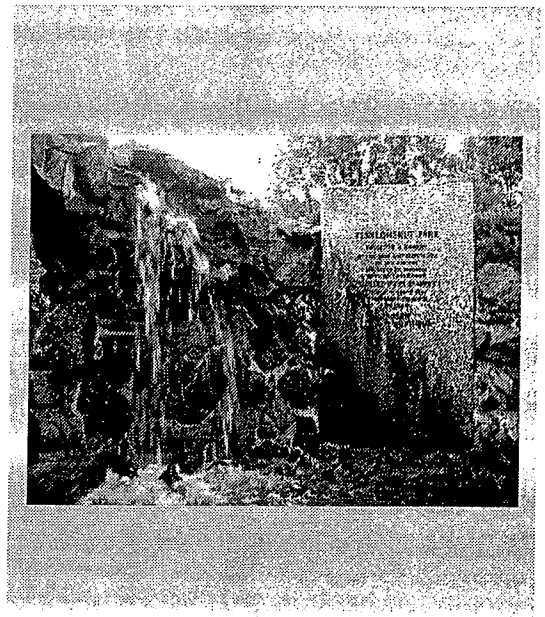
CIRCULATION & TRANSPORTATION

section	step id.	step	lead	alt. lead	time frame	impact, time	impact, money	impact, pattern changes	impact - avg.	level of difficulty
12	A1	Participate in reconstituted capital planning	HWY	CIP	L	4	4	4	4.0	A-easy
12	A2	Update the Airport Master Plan	AIR MGR	PB	S	3	3	4	3.3	B-somewhat easy
12	A3	Work with Scenic Farm Byway - guardrails, signs, views	PB	CC	M	4	3	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
12	A4	Develop yearly transporation improvement plan	BOS	HWY	L	3	4	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy
12	B1	Ensure quality and maintainability of main connector roads	HWY	BOS	L	2	2	2	2.0	C-somewhat difficult
12	B2	Ensure quality and maintainability of side roads	HWY	BOS	L	2	2	3	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
12	B3	Use traffic calming approaches where appropriate	HWY	CDP	M	3	2	3	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
12	B4	Address conflicts: commercial, residential uses of roads	BOS	HWY	L	3	4	3	3.3	B-somewhat easy
12	C1	Address commercial needs through parking areas	TA	CIP	M	3	2	3	2.7	C-somewhat difficult
12	C2	Address parking needs: build new lot in historical area	TA	CDP	S	3	2	4	3.0	B-somewhat easy
12	D1	Carry out plans for development of airport	AIR MGR		L	2	2	3	2.3	C-somewhat difficult
12	D2	Leverage airport assets to promote industry/tourism	AIR MGR	MEDIC	M	3	3	4	3.3	B-somewhat easy
12	E1	Facilitate handicap accessibility to community/gov't. sites	BI	BOS	L	3	2	4	3.0	B-somewhat easy
12	E2	Ensure quality and maintainability of sidewalks	HWY	BOS	L	3	2	4	3.0	B-somewhat easy
12	F1	Encourage freight rail stop in Millers Falls	CDP	TA	L	3	2	4	3.0	B-somewhat easy
12	F2	Encourage passenger rail stop in Millers Falls	TA	CDP	M	3	3	3	3.0	B-somewhat easy
12	F3	Take future steps toward "rail banking"	CDP	HWY	L	4	4	4	4.0	A-easy
12	G1	Develop Montague portion of Franklin County Bike Path	HWY	MEDIC	M	3	3	4	3.3	B-somewhat easy
12	G2	Work with regional entities on mass transportation needs	CDP	MEDIC	L	4	4	4	4.0	A-easy
12	G3	Support recreation needs through busing	TA	PARKS	M	4	3	4	3.7	B-somewhat easy

Abbreviations

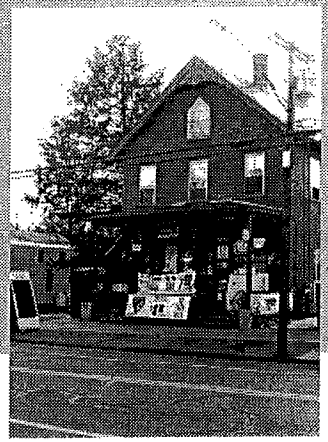
ACCT	Town Accountant
AGING	Council on Aging
AG ISS	Agricultural Issues group
AIR COM	Airport Commission
AIR MGR	Airport Manager
ARTISANS	Artisans group
BI	Building Inspector
BIKE	Franklin County Bikeway Committee
BOS	Board of Selectmen
BRICK	Brick House
CABLE	Cable Advisory Committee
CC	Conservation Commission
CCC	Civic Center Commission
CDP	Community Development Planner
CEM	Cemetety Committee and/or Cemetery Commission
CIP	Capital Improvements Planning
citizens	common, ordinary, salt of the earth citizens
CLERK	Town Clerk
CPSM	Community Partnership for a Safe Montague
DIO	Downtown Improvement Organization
DISC	Great Falls Discovery Center
FCSWD	Franklin County Solid Waste District
FCTECH	Franklin County Technical School
FIAC	Financial Impact Advisory Committee
FIN	Finance Committee
GMDEPT	Gill Montague RSD Department
GMRSD	Gill Montague Regional School District
GMTA	Greenfield Montague Transportation Authority
HIS COM	Historic Commission
HIS SOC	Historical Society
HLTH AG	Health Agent
HLTH BD	Health Board
HT	Housing Team
HWY	Highway Dept.
IP TEN	Industrial Park Tenants
LIBRARY	Library director and/or board
MEDIC	Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation
NU	Northeast Utilities
OPSPAC	Open Space Planning Committee
PARKS	Parks and Recreation
PB	Planning Board
POL	Police
SHEA	Shea Theater
SPDIST	Special Districts
TA	Town Administrator
TMTG	Town Meeting members
UTIL	Utilities in town
WATER	Water departments
WWTP	Waste Water Treatment Plant
ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals

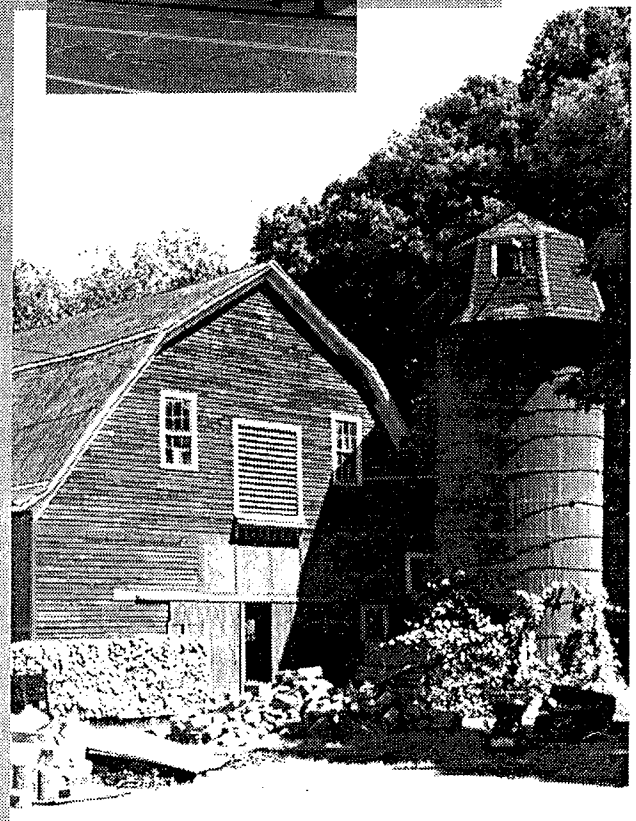
Acknowledgements



This Montague Comprehensive Plan was created, reviewed and refined through the combined efforts of the individuals, departments and boards in the town. Without their thoughtful and positive input, this plan would lack validity and universality. The Montague Planning Board appreciates thesupport of all who participated with particular emphasis on the following:

All residents who attended the winter / spring 1996-1997 public sessions
Montague Board of Selectmen: Clark Edwards, Brad Councilman, Ed Voudren
Town Administrator: Frank Abbondanzio
Building Inspector: Dave Jensen
Health Director: Joan Barry
Assessors Department: Chris Saulnier and staff
Treasurer: Patty Dion
Town Clerk: John Zwyna
Conservation Commission
Zoning Board of Appeals
Police Chief: Pat O'Bryan
Turners Falls Fire Chief: Rich Morin
Highway Superintendent: Ed Parks-Mleczko
WWTP: Bob Trombley
Senior Center: Director Bunny Caldwell and The Board
MEDIC: Jay DiPucchio, Sarah Campbell, Nancy Dubosque
Library Director: Susan SanSoucie
Parks and Recreation Director: Jan Hogan
Montague Historical Society: Richard Colton
Water Dept: Don Hanley, Dick Cade, Bob Green(street?),
Tom Pleasant, Harold Suprenant, Michele Wilson
Ed Hartley
Deb Radway





Housing and Redevelopment Authority
Channel 6 / Phoenix and Ron Bosch
Gill-Montague Regional School Superintendent: Tony Serio, the School Board and Bob Mackie
Bob Newton
Franklin Regional Technical School Superintendent: Fred Green
Turners Falls Airport Manager: Larry Beaudoin

Thank you,

The Montague Planning Board Comprehensive Plan Committee:

Mike Bosworth, chair
Pat Allen
Sam Lovejoy
Marge Levenson
Doug Dziadzio
Steve Ellis
Denis Superczynski, Planner

Goals and Policies

1. Preserve and enhance the historic, architectural, and cultural character of our town.

   1.A. Retain and enhance historic, architectural, and cultural elements of the villages

   1.B. Retain and enhance distinct character of the village neighborhoods

   1.C. Retain and enhance historic elements of the outlying areas

2. Ensure the quality of our residential neighborhoods and our residential growth.

   2.A. Improve livability of neighborhoods

   2.B. Improve quality of housing stock

   2.C. Anticipate future housing needs

3. Improve our climate for quality commerce and industry, including ag/forestry business.

   3.A. Ensure best use of infrastructure in support of commercial/industrial uses, while protecting important natural resources

3.B. Support and catalyze vital downtown areas

3.C. Encourage reuse of viable historic industrial areas

3.D. Support limited commercial activity in the rural villages

3.E. Support best uses for town-owned undeveloped lands

3.F. Discourage commercial strip development

3.G. Focus industrial development of the Plains in its northern section while preserving the remainder of the Plains.

3.H. Support appropriate commercial/industrial activity through better customer service by the town

3.I. Support ag/forestry businesses.

3.J. Encourage development of the Airport Industrial Park and other industrial zones.

4. Improve our active and passive recreational opportunities.

4.A. Wisely use water bodies as recreational resources

4.B. Maintain and improve existing parks and recreation

4.C. Develop new recreational opportunities

5. Support a safe and harmonious community for all our residents.

5.A. Support diversity of and respect between residents

5.B. Create physically safe communities

5.C. Improve citizen participation and simplify town regulations

5.D. Develop community facilities as needed to support the population

5.E. Develop government facilities as needed, to support the population

5.F. Ensure upkeep of roads and sidewalks

5.G. Plan for new capital assets and for upkeep of existing capital assets

6. Guide appropriate use of regionally significant resources of our town.

6.A. Support regional cultural and tourist resources

6.B. Support regional natural resources

6.C. Support regional transportation facilities

6.D. Support and create partnerships with regional medical facilities

6.E. Support regional government facilities

6.F. Support regional education & training facilities

7. Guide appropriate use of our open space and sensitive natural resources.

7.A. Preserve prime farmland

7.B. Focus industrial development of the Plains in its northern section while preserving the remainder of the Plains.

7.C. Preserve ecology of forested areas, sensitive natural areas, and wildlife corridors

7.D. Protect sensitive aspects of water body resources.

7.E. Preserve significant natural viewsheds

7.F. Support recycling of materials

8. Support quality educational opportunities for all our residents.

8.A. Provide future resources to meet K-12 educational needs

8.B. Provide future resources to meet adult education and job training needs

8.C. Integrate use of school buildings with community needs

8.D. Provide resources to serve alternative education needs

8.E. Integrate education and environmental awareness needs

I do not believe any equal plot of New England ground has had so many varied visions, at different times, under such varied circumstances, of a golden age waiting for it in the future. Perhaps this vision of future greatness is the very thing that has kept her people plodding so faithfully through the centuries, paving the way for some kind of glory. Nature itself marked this patch of valley, surrounded by gorges and steep hills and myriad rushing streams as an especially desirable place in which to live.

- E.P. Pressey 1910

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Resources

Future Land Use

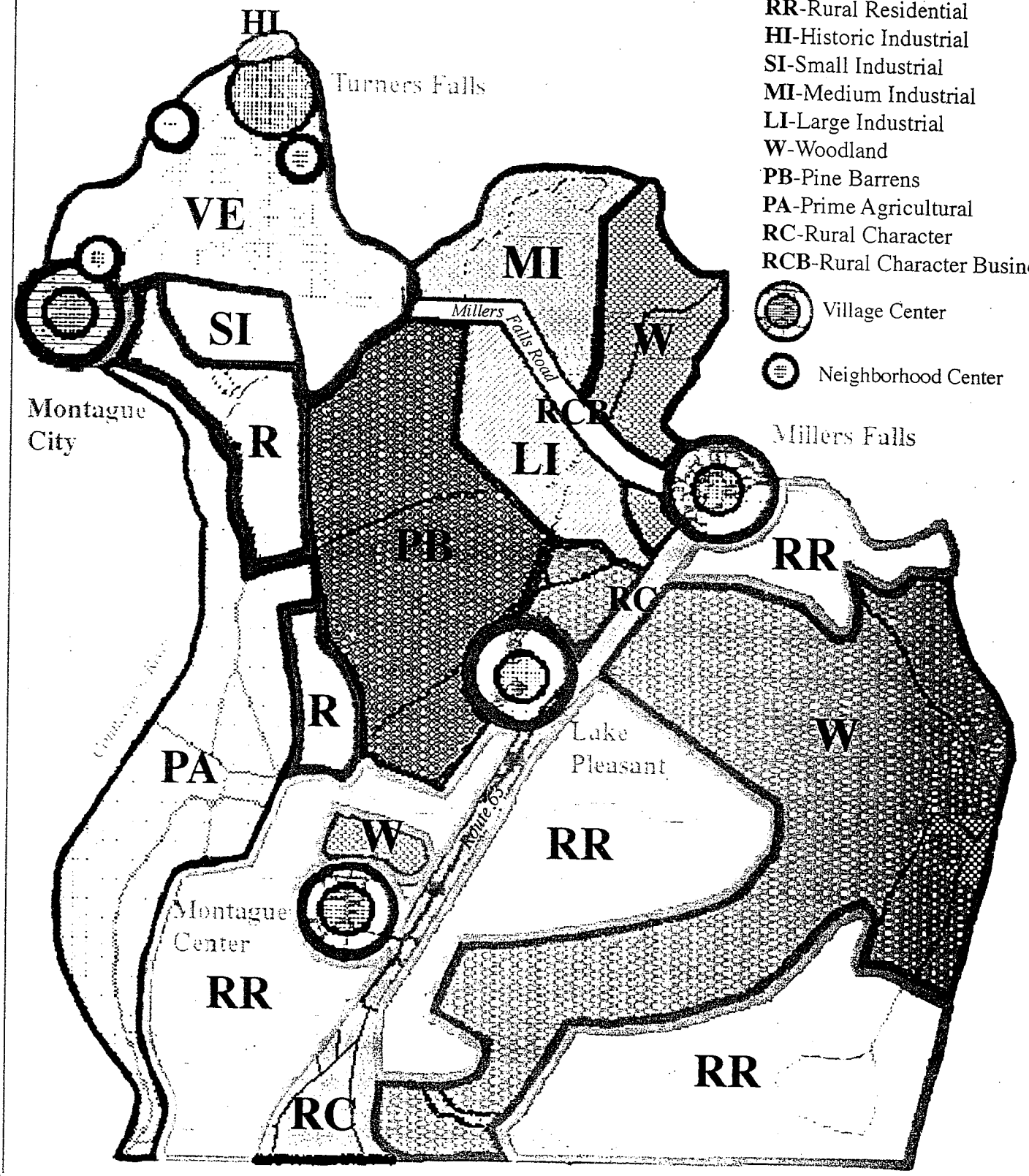
Town of Montague - Comprehensive Plan

KEY

VE-Village Expanded
R-Residential
RR-Rural Residential
HI-Historic Industrial
SI-Small Industrial
MI-Medium Industrial
LI-Large Industrial
W-Woodland
PB-Pine Barrens
PA-Prime Agricultural
RC-Rural Character
RCB-Rural Character Business

Village Center

Neighborhood Center



Montague Planning Board

April 28, 1998