

# Town of Montague Smart Growth Overlay Districts

Griswold Mill Site and First Street

Montague Planning Department

February 2022

# What are Smart Growth Overlay Districts



- ▶ Mass General Law Ch. 40R
- ▶ • “[D]ense residential or mixed-use smart growth zoning districts, including [...] affordable housing units[...] in areas of concentrated development such as existing city and town centers, and in other highly suitable locations.” (Mass.gov)

# 40R Zoning Overlay Districts

- ▶ Does not change underlying zoning
  - ▶ Developer may choose to build project under either Smart Growth or underlying zoning
- ▶ Encourages “mixed-use” or housing development in designated areas by allowing it “by-right” subject to strict design guidelines.
- ▶ Requires at least 20% of residential units be “Affordable”
- ▶ Provides incentive payments to the Town for approving a bylaw and for each housing unit that is developed



# Why is the Town doing this?

- ▶ Access to State Incentive Payments
  - ▶ The Town receives an upfront payment of \$75,000+/- just for adopting the bylaw.
  - ▶ The Town also receives \$3,000 per unit that is actually developed
- ▶ To encourage the revitalization of historically developed properties to benefit the general health and welfare of Montague residents and support a thriving downtown.
- ▶ To maintain or increase the supply of Affordable dwelling units and to control the quality of their design
- ▶ To encourage the production of market rate housing within mixed income projects in downtown
- ▶ A means to induce housing production in appropriate locations and at appropriate densities.

# Montague's Housing Needs

- ▶ Wages have not kept pace with cost of living
  - ▶ Over 30% of homeowners and over 50% of renters in Montague are cost-burdened by housing, paying more than 30% of monthly income on housing
- ▶ Households are smaller now and people need smaller, affordable options
- ▶ Few Vacancies and lack of supply increases prices
  - ▶ There is a gap of over \$80,000 between what a family earning median income in Montague could afford to pay for a home and the median sale price of homes on the market

**Affordable sale price for a household earning Montague's median income (\$54,430): \$187,000**

**2021 Median single family sale price in Montague: \$269,900**

# affordable v Affordable housing

## ▶ affordable

- ▶ Household spends no more than 30% of gross monthly income on housing costs
- ▶ Can be naturally occurring in the marketplace
- ▶ No restrictions on rent or sale price
- ▶ Sometimes housing affordable because it is in poor condition or due to location

## ▶ Affordable

- ▶ Has a restriction on the rent or sale price to keep affordable over time
- ▶ Often built or operated with local, state or federal funds
- ▶ Can be rental, owner occupied, single or multi household
- ▶ Contributes to the tax base (investment on vacant lands)

Residents who are not cost burdened by housing can more readily contribute to the local economy

# What are the Benefits of 40R?

## Local Control

- ▶ Design guidelines allow town to control character of development at these sites
- ▶ Currently, a housing project could be developed at any location with 100% Affordable housing units with **virtually no input/ design control from the Town** under MGL 40B.
  - ▶ An approved 40R bylaw is the only protection from such a development

## Funding

- ▶ State grant programs favor communities with Smart Growth Bylaws
- ▶ Easier access to capital and incentives for developers
- ▶ Initial incentive payment plus \$3,000 for each unit that is developed.
- ▶ Expanded tax base

# 40R Requirements

## Affordability

- ▶ No less than 20% of developed housing units must be dedicated to “Eligible Households”

Households with income less than 80% of Area Median Income (*See next slide*)

## ▶ Bylaw Language

The language of bylaw must be in substantial conformance with State’s model bylaw.

# Affordability Criteria

Median Family Income		Household Size					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>\$82,900</b>	FY21 HUD 80% Area Median Income	\$47,150	\$53,850	\$60,600	<b>\$67,300</b>	\$72,700	\$78,100
	Maximum Rent*	\$1,179	\$1,346	\$1,515	<b>\$1,683</b>	\$1,818	\$1,953
	*includes utilities						

- ▶ An individual in Montague could make up to \$47,150 per year and qualify to live in an “Affordable” Unit under 40R.
- ▶ A family of 4 could make up to \$67,300 per year and qualify.

# Montague Subsidized Housing Index

Total Housing Units (2019 Estimate)	4097*
40B 10% Affordability Quota	410
Current Affordable Units	375
<b>Units needed to reach 10% quota</b>	<b>30</b>

*\*subject to change pending 2020 Census Data*

# Zoning Overlay Requirements

## By-right Uses

- ▶ Single and two family in subdistrict B (First Street Only)
- ▶ Multi-family housing
- ▶ Mixed use with at least 50% dedicated to housing

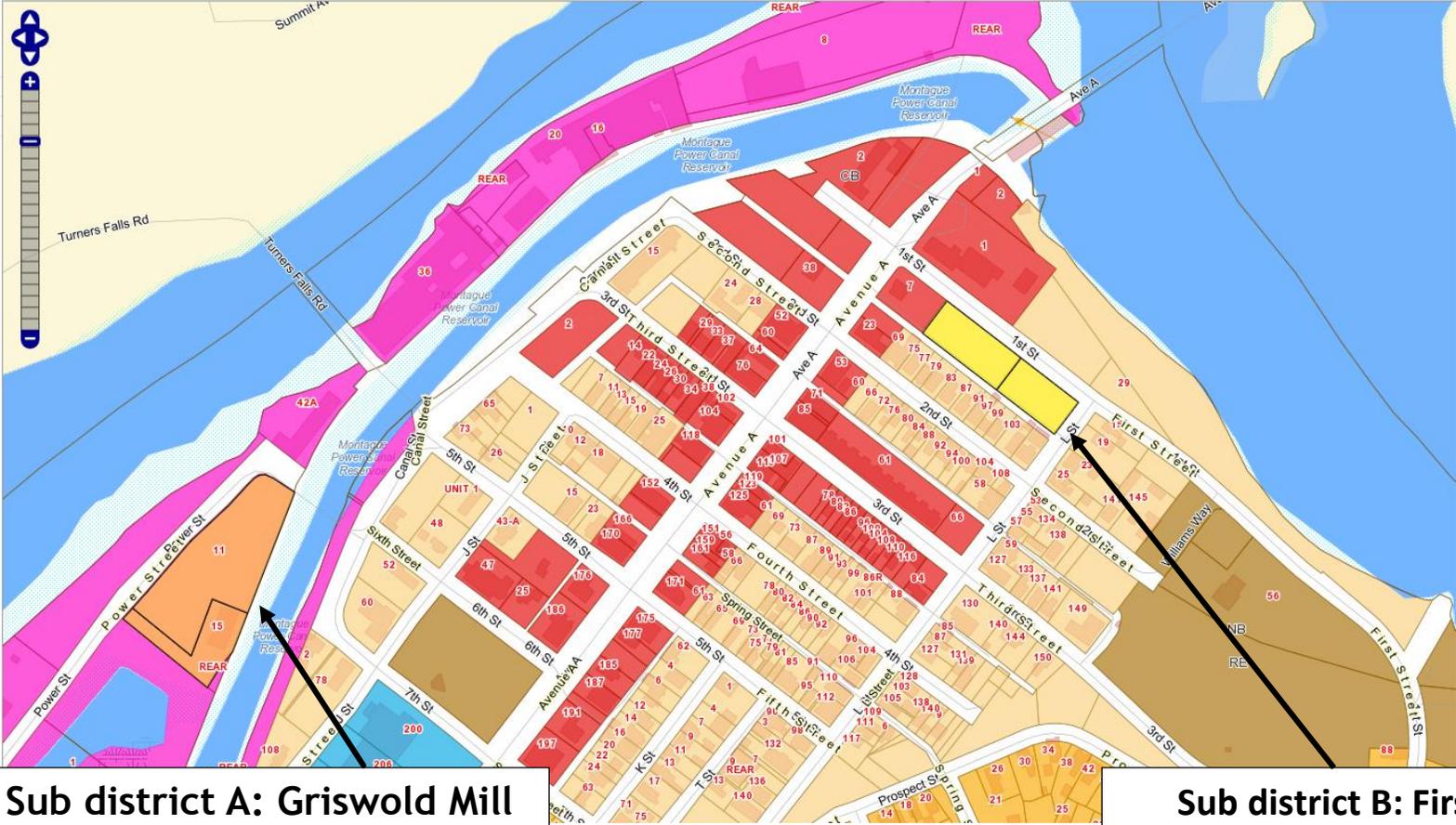
## Dimensional

- ▶ Flexible setbacks
- ▶ 20% open space required
- ▶ Min. Density:
  - ▶ 20 units/acre for multi-fam
  - ▶ 12 units/acre for 2 or 3 family
  - ▶ 8 units/acre for single family
- ▶ Parking:
  - ▶ min- 1 space/unit
  - ▶ max 2 space/unit
- ▶ Max height
  - ▶ Griswold: 5 stories/60 feet
  - ▶ First St: 3 stories/40 feet

# District Selection

- ▶ Surgically focused on developable parcels in downtown that have a reasonable path to success and have been determined by the Planning Board+ existing plans to be highly suitable for residential and mixed use development.
- ▶ Parcels outside of downtown and in other villages likely would not qualify.
- ▶ Strathmore Mill not suitable for this intensity of development
- ▶ Farren Property in Montague City could be future 40R site
- ▶ District could be expanded in the future.

# Proposed Smart Growth Overlay District



**Sub district A: Griswold Mill**  
Assessors Map 3 lots 27 and 89  
2.8 Acres  
Underlying zoning: Historic Industrial

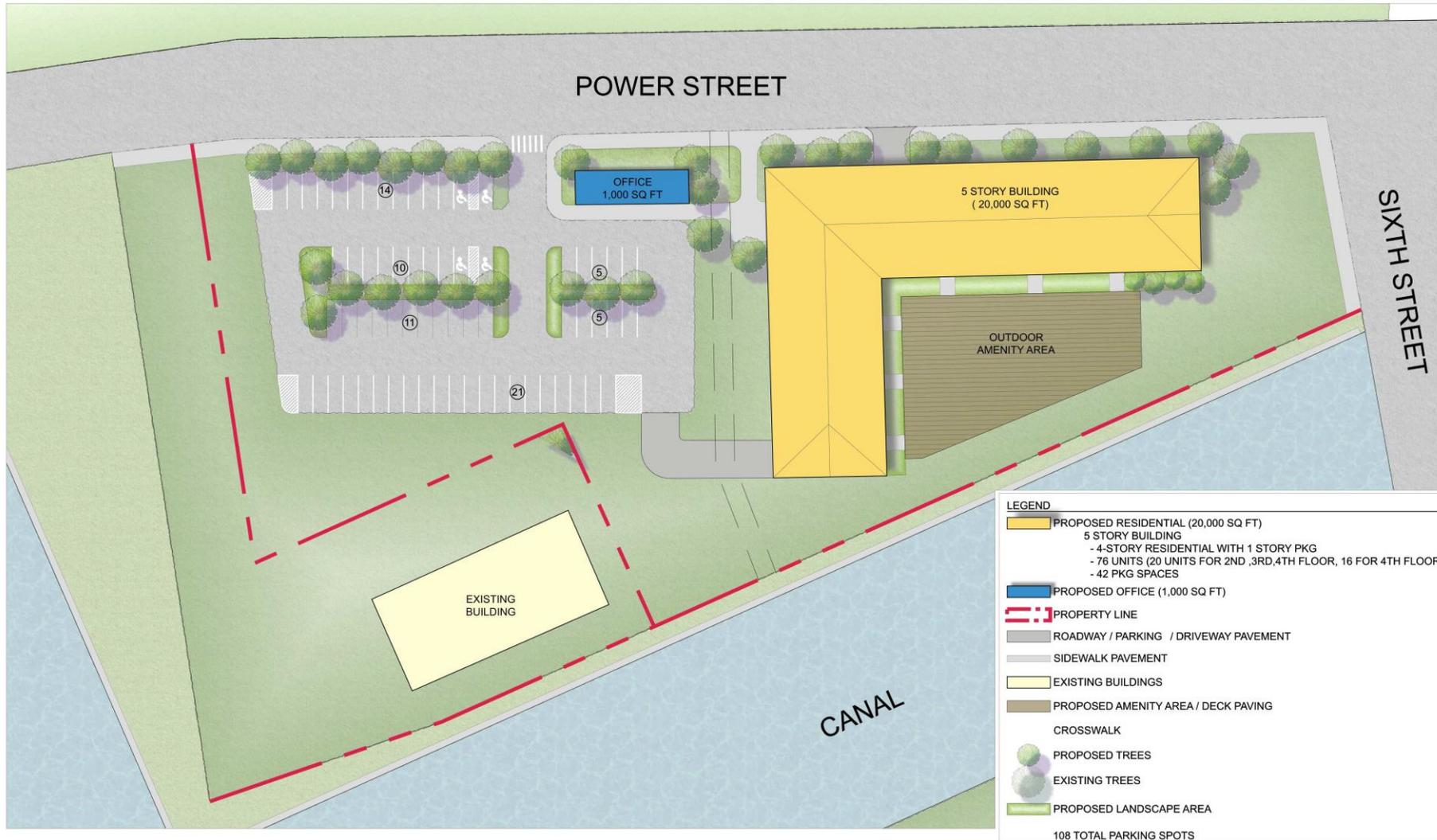
**Sub district B: First Street**  
Assessors Map 4 lots 31, and 24  
1.1 Acres  
Underlying Zoning: Neighborhood Business

# Subdistrict A: Griswold Mill (11-15 Power Street)

- ▶ 2.8 acres
- ▶ Zoned Historic Industrial
- ▶ Blighted mill removed 2021
- ▶ 6<sup>th</sup> St bridge programmed for 2026
- ▶ On Bike Path, 10 minute walk to downtown
- ▶ Potential for 76+ units







## 11TH AND 15TH STREET CONCEPT 2 - SITE PLAN

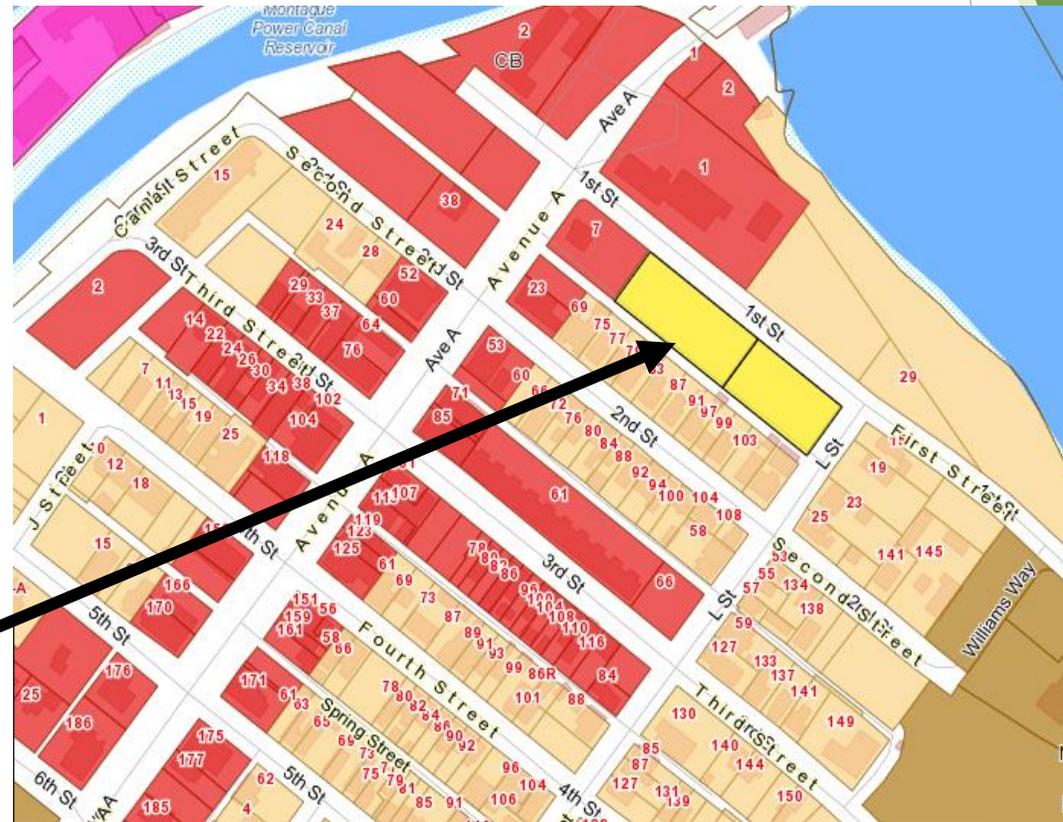
MONTAGUE, MA



**BSC GROUP**  
Landscape Architecture • Planning

# Subdistrict B: First Street

- ▶ 1.1 acres
- ▶ Zoned Neighborhood Business
- ▶ Bike Path, Unity Park, Downtown
- ▶ Potential for 20+ units
- ▶ Potential for owner occupied single or two household units



**Sub district B: First Street**  
**Assessors Map 4 lots 31, and 24**

# Subdistrict B: First Street



# Subdistrict B: First Street

First Street row housing circa 1895- From Montague Historical Society Archives



Town Hall

Building  
Removed

Connecticut River

# Subdistrict B: Downtown Gateway



TOWNHOUSE RESIDENTIAL LAYOUT -  
1ST AND 2ND FLOOR

## FIRST STREET CONCEPT SITE PLAN

MONTAGUE, MA

- LEGEND**
- TOWNHOUSE  
EACH UNIT 18'x30'  
12 UNITS
  - PROPERTY LINE
  - ROADWAY / PARKING PAVEMENT
  - SIDEWALK PAVEMENT
  - EXISTING BUILDINGS
  - PROPOSED DECK PAVEMENT
  - CROSSWALK
  - PROPOSED TREES
  - EXISTING TREES
  - PROPOSED LANDSCAPE AREA
- 18 TOTAL PARKING SPOTS



# Municipal (non-zoning) Actions to support housing production

First Street (Town Hall parking lot) *Between 6 and 12 units*

- ▶ Obtain authority to sell for housing from Town Meeting
- ▶ Conduct Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (recommended, \$6-8K)
- ▶ Issue solicitation for development
  - ▶ Break Ground in 1-3 years

Griswold Mill - *up to 76 Units*

- ▶ Obtain Site Control and authority to sell for housing from Town Meeting
- ▶ Work with MassDOT+ elected officials to expedite 6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Replacement
- ▶ Complete Environmental due diligence closeout
- ▶ Issue solicitation for development
  - ▶ Break ground in 4-6 years

Consider use of ARPA funds to establish an affordable housing fund in induce development

# Next Steps

- ▶ Incorporate public comments
- ▶ Request Determination of Eligibility from DHCD
- ▶ Planning Board Public Hearing (TBD in April)
- ▶ Town Meeting Adoption (Anticipated May)