

MUNICIPAL STRATEGIES TO EXPAND HOUSING OPTIONS MONTAGUE, MA

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Revision date: January 22, 2025



PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Local & Regional Context
- Explore Montague's strategies to expand housing options
- Examples and lessons learnt



Cutlery Block Historic Workers' Housing
Turners Falls Village Center



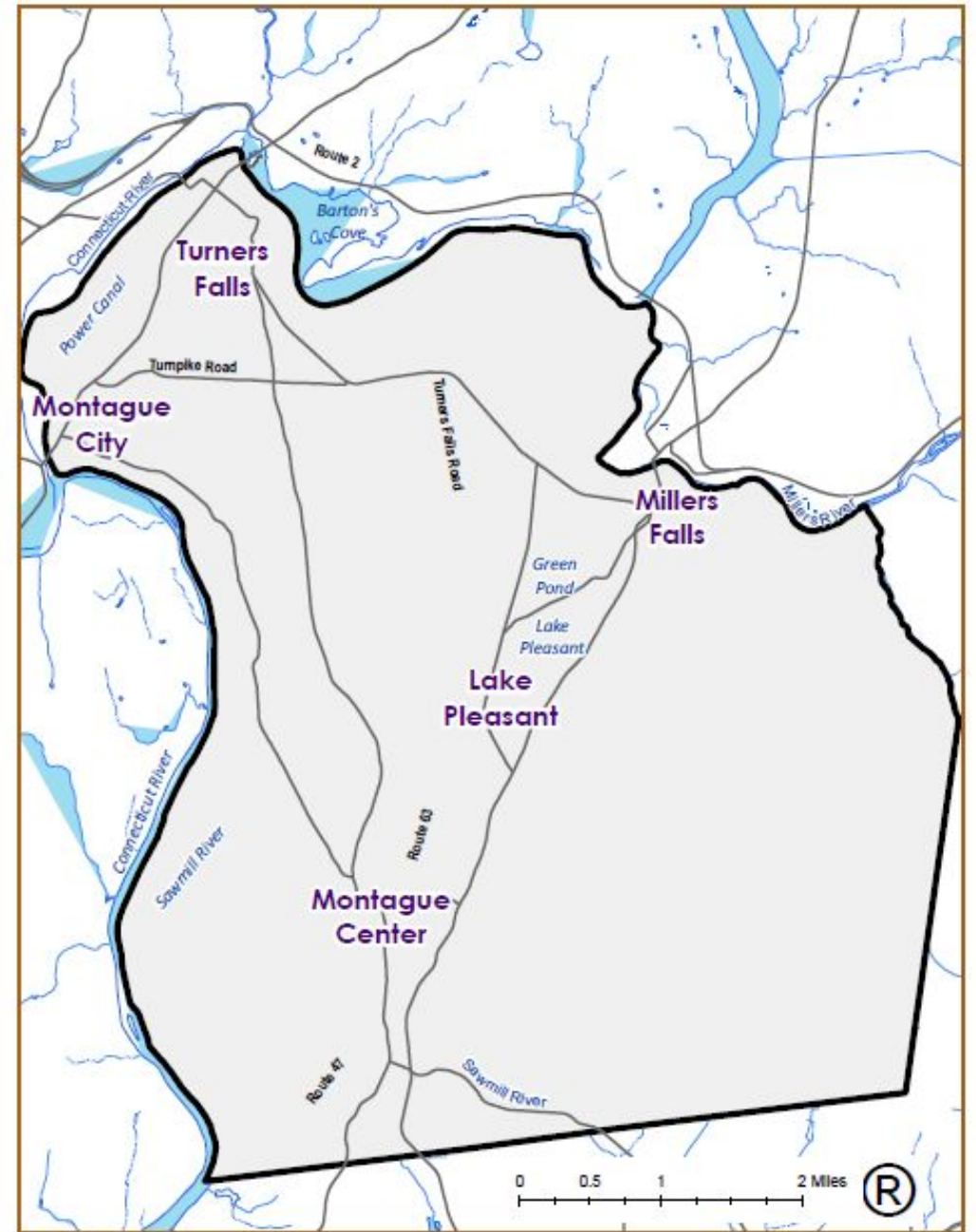
Regional Context

- Franklin County is one of the most rural counties in state. Residents value rural character, protected farmland and natural landscapes, limited development & slow economy, limited sewer/water infrastructure
- Projected populations are declining, but need for more housing options & the various housing types are increasing. WHY? smaller household sizes, & need for more housing that's accessible & affordable
- Housing prices & average incomes are lower than other parts of state, so housing that is affordable is disproportionately out of reach for existing residents
- Old housing stock in need of rehab & updates



Local Context

- Total population is 8,850. Half of total population resides in densely developed village center of Turners Falls, followed by the other 4 village centers.
- Very limited development occurs, community engagement and buy-in is key.
- Opportunities to promote infill development in village centers. WHY? Close proximity to public facilities & amenities, goods/services, walkability, transit stops, and existing water/sewer infrastructure. Residents value rural character and want to protect outlying farmland.
- Villages of Turners Falls + Montague City are comprised of Environmental Justice populations based on income
- SHI: 9.18% of housing units (375 units) in Montague are affordable under the Chapter 40B definition.



Key strategies to promote the expand housing options:

- ***Comprehensive Planning:**

- Updated Comprehensive Plan (2024) – includes Housing Infill Analysis
- MVP 2.0 Process (on-going)
- Updating Housing Production Plan (2025) - to chart a path toward addressing the affordable housing needs of low- and moderate-income people in Montague

*Community Engagement + Public Outreach - This is key. Start early + provide often. Include in overall project scope + budget.

*Comprehensive planning is more important than one may think. It's instrumental to town planners in advocating for new or expanded projects and initiatives, seeking grants, and supporting land use decisions. And it can build coalition!



Key strategies to promote the expand housing options:

- ***Zoning Amendments to encourage housing + streamline process:**
 - Approved 40R Smart Growth Overlay District
 - Approved duplexes “by-right” (in certain Zoning District, rest by SP)
 - Ongoing:
 - Updating existing ADU bylaw to comply with the new state legislation
 - Exploring zoning amendments to encourage increased density in village centers, based on Comprehensive Plan recommendations + Housing Infill Analysis!

*Community Engagement + Public Outreach - This is key. Start early + provide often. Include in overall project scope + budget.

*Are any proposed zoning amendments recommended in your comprehensive plans? If so, please mention this as part of your rationale.



Case Study: Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity's affordable housing development in downtown Turners Falls



KUHN·RIDDLE
ARCHITECTS

- Town adopts 40R Overlay District
- Town solicits RFP for affordable housing development (on town land)
- Habitat for Humanity is selected as developer.
- MassHousing awards Habitat \$1.2M.
- Habitat holds neighborhood stakeholder meetings to seek feedback to help guide design.
- Soil contamination found. Permitting is paused. Town seeks guidance from EPA, MassDevelopment, MassDEP+ regional planning agency to strategize next steps and to seek clean-up funding. **Partners are key!



Case Study: Revisioning the former Farren Care Center site Montague City Village Center



Former Farren Care Center buildings, before demo



Former Farren Care Center site, post-demo, now owned by Town



Case Study: Revisioning the former Farren Care Center site + Montague City Village Center



Public Forum #2

- Town engages community in developing a vision for a new neighborhood on an 8-acre former nursing and rehab site that has been given to the town to help shape project. (2023-2024)
- Conducting due diligence work (on-going)
- Exploring zoning changes to allow for a mixed-use, campus-style project. (2025)
- Continue to provide community engagement + public outreach and update Planning Board & Selectboard about project. (on-going)
- In future, Town will release a RFP for development(s)
- Mass Housing Partnership continues to be a tremendous partner and collaborator!



Thanks! Comments/Questions?

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