

MEMORANDUM

To	Maureen Pollock, Planning Director
From	Paula Ramos Martinez, Chief Resilience Officer
Date	September 4, 2025
Project	340 Montague City Road Zoning
Subject	Zoning Draft - Base District and Overlay
Cc:	Emily Keys Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND, President Marc Sanchez Olivares, Senior Design Technology Specialist

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Amend SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS to include the following definitions.

CRAFT WORKSHOP: Refers to the space used by an artist for the creation of art or craft, including but not limited to, painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, jewelry-making, basket weaving, pottery, or

other art or craft. Retail sales of art produced on-site and arts instruction by the artist are allowable accessory uses.

HOTEL, BOUTIQUE: Small lodging facility with 40 or fewer guest rooms that are rented to occupants on a daily basis. Such uses may provide additional services such as restaurants, meeting rooms and/or recreation facilities. The boutique hotel may be housed within a single building or a group of buildings. Rooms shall be rented for no more than thirty consecutive days to a single occupant or group of occupants travelling together. Access to each guest room shall be through an inside lobby supervised at all hours.

LIGHT ASSEMBLY WORKSHOPS: A workspace for assembling, packaging, or treating goods inside a fully enclosed building. It may be used by one or multiple users and can include shared tools like 3D printers, laser cutters, or woodworking equipment. Selling products made on-site is allowed as an accessory use.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT: A combination of two or more distinct land uses, such as commercial, lodging, research, cultural, artistic/creative production, artisanal fabrication, with residential dwelling units in a single multi-story structure or within more than one building per lot to maximize space usage and promote a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented live-work environment.

MULTI-UNIT DWELLING: A building that consists of four (4) or more dwelling units.

OPEN SPACE: Refers to any outdoor area on a property that is intended for people to use, whether for recreation, relaxation, or gathering.

OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPE: Open space designed and planted for pleasant appearance with trees, shrubs, ground cover and grass. Such space may not include lot area used for parking, loading, access drives, walks and terraces or other areas with hard surfaces.

OPEN SPACE, PRIVATE: An amenity space accessible only to the tenants or residents of the building or project with which the Private Open Space is associated.

OPEN SPACE, PUBLIC. Open Space which is accessible to the public.

PERMEABLE SURFACE: Permeable surface allows water to infiltrate through the surface down to underlying layers of soil and gravel. Including but not limited to landscaped areas, porous asphalt, pervious concrete, paving stones, gravel or grass pavers.

ROWHOUSE: An attached residential building intended and designed to contain one dwelling unit. Each Rowhouse has a separate entrance from the street and shares one or more common side walls and roofline. Each Rowhouse has its own lot.

TOWNHOUSE: A residential use consisting of one or more buildings containing no fewer than three attached dwelling units, each of which has a separate private entrance on the ground level and where no building is more than three stories in height. Individual town house dwelling units extend from foundation to roof, and may consist of more than one floor, with each unit having fully exposed walls on at least two sides for access, light, and ventilation. A Townhouse does not have its own lot; each group of attached Townhouses is on a single lot.

Amend SECTION 4.1 Types of Districts. Add the following row to the table of zoning districts, as shown below:

4.1 Types of Districts

Abbreviation	District Name	Statement of Purpose
MU-VC	Village Center Mixed-Use	The purpose of the MU-VC District is to provide areas within the village centers of Montague that allow for a mix of uses, including retail, commercial, office and housing of moderate to high density.
Overlay Districts		
DOD	Design Overlay District	The DOD is intended to guide the transition from single-family homes to more mixed-use and higher-density areas, while encouraging walkable and bike-friendly environment. It helps shape a strong sense of place through design standards and ensures high-quality design and site planning throughout the district.

Add New SECTION 5.2.10 Village Center Mixed-Use District

- (a) Uses Permitted with Site Plan Review (See Section 9.1.2):
- i. Two-family, Three-family, Multiplex, Rowhouse and Multi-unit Dwelling (including Townhouse), any of which may include live/work units, if it meets the requirement under Section 8.3.
 - ii. Mixed-use Developments, incorporating multifamily residential uses and any of the permitted non-residential uses, where the minimum gross floor area devoted to residential uses shall be 51% of the gross floor area of the project.
 - iii. Bakeries and artisan food or beverage producers.
 - iv. Boutique Hotel, accommodating 20 or fewer guest rooms.
 - v. Craft workshops or light assembly workshops, equal or under 2,000 square feet of floor area, and light assembly workshop activities shall meet the noise, odor, smoke, vibration, and electrical standards in this Zoning Ordinance.
 - vi. General service establishments and personal service establishments.
 - vii. Private Educational use, such as a dance studio, art or photography studio that gives classes, or similar use.
 - viii. Health, gym, or fitness club.
 - ix. Museum.
 - x. Offices, including medical offices and co-working facilities, equal or under 2,000 square feet of floor area.
 - xi. Restaurants and cafes, indoor or outdoor, without an accessory drive-through component, equal or under 2,000 square feet of floor area.
 - xii. Retail stores, including banks, but excluding wholesale establishments and establishments with drive-through windows, equal or under 2,000 square feet of floor area.

- (b) Uses permitted with a Special Permit, by the Planning Board (See Section 9.2):
 - i. Boutique Hotel, accommodating more than 20 and up to 40 guest rooms.
 - ii. Offices, including medical offices and co-working facilities, over 2,000 square feet of floor area.
 - iii. Parking Garage
 - iv. Restaurants and cafes, indoor or outdoor, without an accessory drive-through component, over 2,000 square feet of floor area.
 - v. Retail stores, including banks, but excluding wholesale establishments and establishments with drive-through windows, over 2,000 square feet of floor area.
 - vi. Craft workshops or light assembly workshops, over 2,000 square feet of floor area, light assembly workshop activities shall meet the noise, odor, smoke, vibration, and electrical standards in this Zoning Ordinance.
- (c) Accessory uses to a permitted principal use above shall be allowed in accordance with Section 5.4.
- (d) More than one (1) principal use is allowed per lot in the MU-VC District. If all uses are subject to Site Plan Review, then that process shall control. If at least one use is subject to a Special Permit, then the Special Permit process shall be used for the entire project.

Amend SECTION 5.3 Multiple Principal Uses.

The provisions of this section shall not apply to the MU-VC District. Instead, projects within MU-VC shall be governed by the standards and requirements of its Base District, Section 5.2.10, and the Design Overlay District, Section 6.4.

Amend SECTION 5.5 Dimensional Requirements Add the following row to the table of zoning districts, as shown below:

	Minimum Lot Size (square feet)	Minimum Lot Frontage (linear feet)	Minimum Front Yard Setback (a) (linear feet)	Minimum Side Yard Setback (linear feet)	Minimum Rear Yard Setback (linear feet)	Maximum Building Height (linear feet)
MU-VC ¹	4,000	30	0	10 feet	10 feet.	Any building whose principal façade is within 30 feet of the lot line contiguous with the public right-of-way for Cabot Street or Farren Avenue: three (3) stories, forty (40) feet. All other buildings: Up to four (4) stories, fifty (50) ft.

- 1. Within the MU-VC, a Rowhouse has no minimum lot size, a minimum lot frontage of 20 feet, and a side yard setback of 0 feet. All other dimensional standards for the MU-VC, as listed in Section 5.5 Dimensional Requirements, apply.**

Amend SECTION 5.5.3 Dimensional Relief to include the new district.

- Special Permit Granting Authority

The Zoning Board of Appeals shall be the Special Permit Granting Authority for dimensional relief pursuant to § 5.5 except the Planning Board shall be the Special Permit Granting Authority for dimensional relief in the Industrial (ID), Historic-Industrial (HI), General Business (GB) **and Village Center Mixed-Use (MU-VC)** Districts, unless otherwise specified in this Bylaw.

Amend SECTION 7.2.3 District Parking Requirements. Add Village Center Mixed-Use District parking requirements.

(e) Village Center Mixed-Use.

- i. Residential project: Minimum one parking space per residential unit, maximum 2 parking spaces per residential unit.
- ii. Mixed-use Development: Same formula for residential units plus the applicable quantity computed in the following table:

Restaurant	1 per six (6) seats of the occupancy rating
Outdoor café	0.7 per guest table
All other uses	2 per 1,000 sq. ft. GFA

Amend SECTION 7.4.2 Access over front lot line by adding the following text in bold:

Vehicular egress and access to a lot must be across the front lot line meeting the minimum frontage requirements. However, the Planning Board may issue a Special Permit permitting vehicular egress/access to a lot over a front lot line having less than the required minimum frontage, or over any side lot line or rear lot line. **In the MU-VC district, a Special Permit shall not be required for access to parking over a side lot line or rear lot line. Such access shall be reviewed under the Site Plan Review process.**

Amend SECTION 9.1.2 Applicability by adding the following:

- (f) **All uses identified as requiring Site Plan Review in Section 5.2.10 Village Center Mixed-Use District.**

Amend SECTION 9.1.3 Authority. To appoint the Planning Board as the Site Plan Review Authority for the new district.

The Planning Board shall be the Site Plan Review Authority in the General Business, Industrial, Historic-Industrial **and Village Center Mixed-Use** District. The Board of Appeals shall be the Site Plan Review Authority in all other districts, unless otherwise stated in the Bylaws.

Add a New Overlay District to SECTION 6. OVERLAY DISTRICTS.

6.4 Design Overlay District

6.4.1 Purpose

The purposes of this Overlay District are:

1. To promote a transition from single-family residential areas to those with a mix of uses and a range of residential unit types and densities.
2. Encourage a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environment so that commercial enterprises and consumer services do not rely on automobile traffic to bring consumers into the area.
3. Create neighborhood character and a sense of place through site and building design standards.
4. Provide an efficient permitting and review procedure that will ensure appropriate high-quality design and site planning.

6.4.2 Applicability

The Design Overlay District, herein referred to as the “DOD,” is an overlay district having a land area of approximately 9 acres in size that is superimposed over the underlying zoning district(s) and is shown on the Zoning Map as set forth on the map entitled “Design Overlay District, dated September 2025, prepared by Franklin Regional Council of Governments.” This map is hereby made a part of the Zoning Bylaw and is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk.

- (a) The provisions of the DOD are supplemental to any requirements or restrictions of the underlying zoning districts.
- (b) All applications for projects within the DOD that are subject to Site Plan Review or Special Permit are subject to the requirements of this DOD.
- (c) Routine maintenance and repairs that do not alter the exterior appearance of structures are exempt from these provisions.

6.4.3 Additional Dimensional Requirements

- (a) Density:
 - i. Multi-Unit Dwellings and Mixed-Use Developments with at least 51% of the Gross Floor Area dedicated to the residential use shall have a minimum density of twenty (20) dwelling units per acre of Developable Land.
 - ii. Projects with any combination of Two-family Dwelling Units and Three-family Dwellings shall be developed at a minimum density of twelve (12) dwelling units per acre of Developable Land.
 - iii. All residential projects shall require Site Plan Review per Section 9.1.3 Authority, above.
- (b) Maximum Front Yard Setback. The maximum yard setback shall be applied in addition to the required minimum yard setback. The maximum allowable setback shall be determined based on the designated use on the ground floor as follows:
 - i. Residential use: Up to 10 feet from the minimum street setback is allowed for the purpose of creating a green landscape.

- ii. Non-residential uses: Up to 20 feet from the minimum street setback is allowed for the purpose of creating an active public space. The setback may include one or more of the following features: terraces, seating areas, and rain gardens.
- (c) Open Space. A minimum of 20 percent of the lot area shall be open space. Such Open Space may be a combination of Public Open Space and Private Open Space. Landscaped areas contained within parking areas, such as islands, stormwater drainage areas, or other isolated areas not available for public or resident use, shall not count toward the required minimum open space.
- a. Public Open Space may be located at ground level or one or more upper levels, and may include landscaped, natural, or built elements, provided it is not used for structures, sidewalks, driveways, or vehicle parking. Trails, pathways, or other non-sidewalk pedestrian circulation may count as Public Open Space.
 - b. Private Open Space. This amenity space shall meet a minimum standard of twenty-four (24) square feet per dwelling unit. This required space may be provided individually, such as through balconies, patios, or porches; or consolidated into one or more shared areas accessible to all residents. Shared amenity spaces may include patios, terraces, rooftop decks, or internal community areas. The total square footage of the combined Private Open Space shall be no less than the product of 24 square feet multiplied by the total number of dwelling units in the project.

(d) Permeable Surface, minimum.

A minimum of thirty percent (30%) of the total lot shall be permeable surface. The minimum shall be calculated by dividing the total area of pervious surfaces on the lot by the total area of the lot. Only the following shall be considered pervious surfaces for the purposes of calculating the pervious surface area:

- i. Grass, mulched groundcover, all areas of a vegetated roof planted with a growing medium, and other planted areas.
- ii. Permeable pavers or paving that facilitate the infiltration of water into the soil; and
- iii. Decks or porches constructed above the surface of the lot that are erected on pier foundations, and that maintain a permeable surface underneath that can facilitate the infiltration of water into the soil.

Two-thirds of the Permeable Surface shall be dedicated to Landscape Open Space. The remaining one-third of the required Permeable Surface may be walkways, terraces, overflow parking, or other hardscape surfaces comprised of permeable materials.

6.4.4 Parking Requirements

(a) Shared Parking.

The use of shared parking to fulfill parking demands that occur at different times of day is strongly encouraged. Minimum parking requirements may be reduced by the Planning Board, if the Applicant can demonstrate that shared spaces will meet parking demands by using accepted methodologies (e.g. the Urban Land Institute Shared Parking Report, ITE Shared

Parking Guidelines, or other approved studies) or the Planning Board is otherwise satisfied that the reduced parking is nonetheless sufficient and consistent with smart growth practices.

(b) Reduction in parking requirements.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, any minimum required amount of parking may be reduced by the Planning Board through Site Plan Review or the Special Permit process, if the Applicant can demonstrate that the lesser amount of parking will not cause excessive congestion, endanger public safety, or that lesser amount of parking will provide positive environmental or other benefits, taking into consideration:

- i. The availability of surplus off-street parking in the vicinity of the use being served and/or the proximity of a bus stop;
- ii. The availability of public or commercial parking facilities in the vicinity of the use being served;
- iii. Shared use of off-street parking spaces serving other uses having peak user demands at different times;
- iv. To the extent consistent with 760 CMR 59.04(1)(g) and 760 CMR 59.04(1)(i)1., age or other occupancy restrictions which are likely to result in a lower level of auto usage;
- v. Impact of the parking requirement on the physical environment of the affected lot or the adjacent lots, including reduction in green space, destruction of significant existing trees and other vegetation, destruction of existing dwelling units, or loss of pedestrian amenities along public ways; and
- vi. Any applicable transportation demand management strategies that will be integrated into the Project or such other factors as may be considered by the Planning Board.

Any project that provides additional parking for bicycles may reduce its total parking requirements in the ratio of two (2) bicycle spaces to one (1) car space. Such reduction shall be no more than ten percent (10%) of the total required spaces. These additional bicycle parking spaces shall be located on-site and shall be available to residents and commercial tenants as long-term parking. This reduction may be used in addition to other reductions in parking requirements.

(c) Location of Parking.

Any surface parking shall be placed at the rear of the lot whenever possible. If rear placement is not feasible, as determined by the Planning Board, the surface parking may be located at the side of a building, relative to any principal street, public open space, or pedestrian way.

(d) Size of Parking Spaces.

Parking spaces shall be 9 feet x 18 feet. Parallel spaces shall be at least 9 feet x 20 feet. Up to thirty-five percent (35%) of the parking spaces may be designated as compact spaces (at least 8 feet x 15 feet).

6.4.5 Design Principles. Design of the proposed project shall:

- (a) Promote pedestrian access and safety by encouraging design strategies to reduce conflicts between drivers and pedestrians;
- (b) Provide retail, restaurant, and other lively pedestrian-friendly uses on the ground floor. These spaces should foster social interaction, support recreational activities, and contribute to the vibrancy and identity of the district.
- (c) Require buildings on a corner lot to have a façade that relates to both streets.
- (d) Create development strategies for buildings and site design that facilitate, accommodate, and encourage use by pedestrians.
- (e) Connect public open space to a continuous sequence integrated throughout the district. The primary purpose of public space is to activate the neighborhood by incorporating diverse elements such as playgrounds, event plazas, pocket parks, and other community-oriented features.

6.4.6 Design Guidelines. The Planning Board may adopt and, from time to time, amend, by simple majority vote, Design Guidelines, which shall be applicable to all rehabilitation, redevelopment, or new construction subject to this DOD.

6.4.7 Development Standards.

Development standards are mandatory regulatory requirements that must be adhered to.

- (a) Site Standards:
 - i. **Connections.** Sidewalks shall provide direct connections among building entrances, the public sidewalk (if applicable), bicycle storage, and parking.
 - ii. **Sidewalk Materials.** Sidewalks shall be continuous across driveways, using the same materials and grade and level as the sidewalk on either side of the driveway.
 - iii. **Vehicular access.** Individual buildings or parcels within a project site shall have coordinated street access. Only one (1) driveway (curb cut) per 50 feet of frontage shall be permitted. Shared vehicular access is strongly encouraged. Curb cuts for one-way access shall be no more than twelve (12) feet in width, while curb cuts for two-way traffic shall be no more than twenty (20) feet in width. Designated drop-off and pick-up areas for deliveries and ride-sharing companies should be incorporated to reduce conflicts associated with double-parking and blocking of bicycle lanes, crosswalks, and bus stops. These areas should be clearly marked with signs and conveniently located near entrances to buildings and major destinations.
 - iv. **Circulation.** Parking and circulation on the site shall be organized to reduce the amount of impervious surface. Where possible, parking and loading areas shall be connected to minimize curb cuts onto public rights-of-way.
 - v. **Open Space.** Open Space shall be contiguous and connected to the pedestrian network. Isolated pockets of space that cannot be accessed for maintenance are prohibited. Open Space may be either private or public.
 - vi. **Screening for Surface Parking.** Surface parking adjacent to a public sidewalk shall be screened by a landscaped buffer of sufficient width to allow the healthy establishment of trees, shrubs, and perennials, but no less than six (6) feet. The buffer may include a fence or wall of no more than three (3) feet in height unless there is a significant grade change between the parking and the sidewalk. Chain-link and vinyl fences are prohibited.

- vii. **Parking Materials.** The parking surface may be concrete, asphalt, decomposed granite, bricks, or pavers, including pervious materials but not including grass or soil not contained within a paver or other structure.
 - viii. **Plantings.** Plantings shall include species that are native or adapted to the region. Plants on the Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List, as may be amended, shall be prohibited. In addition, plant selections should prioritize species that support pollinators, to enhance ecological value and biodiversity within the development.
 - ix. **Lighting.** Light levels shall meet or exceed the minimum design guidelines defined by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) and shall provide the illumination necessary for safety and convenience while preventing glare and overspill onto adjoining properties. Lighting design shall also minimize skyglow and comply with the principles for outdoor lighting defined by DarkSky International to reduce light pollution and preserve nighttime visibility.
 - x. **Mechanicals.** Mechanical equipment at ground level shall be screened by a combination of fencing and plantings. Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be screened if visible from a public right-of-way.
 - xi. **Waste Management:** On-site storage and management of waste and recycling shall occur on the interior of the building of the Principal Use, within an attached garage or other accessory outbuilding, or screened appropriately from public view.
 - xii. **Stormwater management.** Strategies that demonstrate the compliance of the construction activities and the proposed project with the most current versions of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Stormwater Management Standards, the Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook, Massachusetts Erosion Sediment and Control Guidelines, and the Town of Montague Stormwater System Policy. The applicant shall also provide an Operations and Management Plan for both the construction activities and ongoing post-construction maintenance and reporting requirements.
- (b) General Building Standards:
- i. **Position relative to the principal street.** The primary façade and entrance of the primary building is deemed to be the one facing the street with the highest pedestrian intensity.
 - ii. **Entries.** Where feasible, entries shall be clearly defined and linked to a paved pedestrian network that includes the public sidewalk. Development shall be designed to encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel to and within the site and provide a safe and aesthetically attractive pedestrian and bicycle environment to the greatest extent practical.
 - iii. **Multiple buildings on a lot.**
 - 1. Location of Mixed Uses. For a mixed-use development, uses may be mixed within the buildings or in separate buildings.
 - 2. Orientation. The orientation of multiple buildings on a lot should reinforce the relationships among the buildings. All building façade(s) shall be treated with the same care and attention in terms of entries, fenestration, and materials.
 - 3. Position relative to the street. Building(s) adjacent to a public street shall have a pedestrian entry facing that public street.
 - iv. **Mixed-use development:**
 - 1. Access. In a mixed-use building, access to and egress from the residential component shall be clearly differentiated from access to other uses. Such differentiation may occur by using separate entrances or egresses from the building or within a lobby space shared among different uses.

2. Connections. Paved pedestrian access from the residential component shall be provided to residential parking and amenities and to the public sidewalk, as applicable. Paved surfaces may include pervious paving materials.
 3. Material Storage. Materials for non-residential uses shall be stored inside or under cover and shall not be accessible to residents of the project.
 4. Shared Outdoor Space. Multi- Unit Dwellings and Mixed-Use Development shall have common outdoor space that all residents can access. Such space may be in any combination of ground floor, courtyard, rooftop, or terrace. All outdoor space shall count towards the project's minimum Open Space requirement.
- v. **Corner Lots:** A building on a corner lot shall indicate a primary entrance either along one of the street-facing façades or on the primary corner as an entrance serving both streets.
1. Connections. Such entries shall be connected by a paved surface to the public sidewalk, if applicable.
 2. Façade Design. All façades visible from a public right-of-way shall be treated with similar care and attention in terms of entries, fenestration, and materials.
 3. Fire Exits. Exterior stairs for secondary fire access that serve more than one story shall not be located on either of the street-facing façades.
- vi. **Parking.** Parking shall be subordinate in design and location to the principal building façade.
1. Integrated garages. The principal pedestrian entry into the building shall be more prominent in design and placement than the vehicular entry into the garage.
 2. Parking structures. Above-grade parking structures (stand-alone or within a residential, commercial, or mixed-use building) shall be subordinate in design and placement to the primary uses. Ground-floor parking levels shall be wrapped with active uses such as commercial/retail, community spaces, or residential amenity spaces, unless the building does not face a street. Exposed facades of upper parking levels shall incorporate design treatments such as public art installations, vertical planting, or other architectural features for visual interest and to disguise the parking uses within. Vehicular openings shall have doors.
 3. Bicycle parking. For a Multi-unit Dwelling or a mixed-use development, a minimum of 50% of the required bicycle spaces shall be covered or integrated into the structure of the building(s).
- (c) **Waivers.** Upon the request of the Applicant, the Planning Board may waive the requirements of this Section 6.4.7. Development Standards, in the interests of design flexibility and overall project quality, and upon a finding of consistency of such variation with the overall Design Principles in Section 6.4.5.

6.4. 8 Conflict with Other Bylaws

The provisions of this bylaw shall be considered supplemental to the existing zoning bylaws. To the extent that a conflict exists between this bylaw and others, the more restrictive bylaw or provisions therein, shall apply.