



# MONTAGUE CITY ZONING STUDY: FARREN SITE

Town Meeting  
October 22, 2025

# AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Presentation of Draft Zoning
3. Discussion

# WHO'S WHO

## **Working Group Members**

Colleen & Skip Descavich

Dorinda Bell-Upp

Gregg Garrison

Janel Nockleby

Jeremy Toal

Kristi Bodin

Mary Kay Mattiace

Roberta Potter

Sam Guerin

Robert Steinberg

## **Town Staff**

Walter Ramsey  
Town Administrator

Chris Nolan-Zeller  
Assistant Town  
Administrator

Maureen Pollock  
Planning Director

# WHO'S WHO

## **Innes Land Strategies Group, Inc.**

Emily Keys Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND  
President

Paula Ramos Martinez  
Senior Urban Designer/Planner

Marc Sanchez Olivares  
Design Technology Specialist

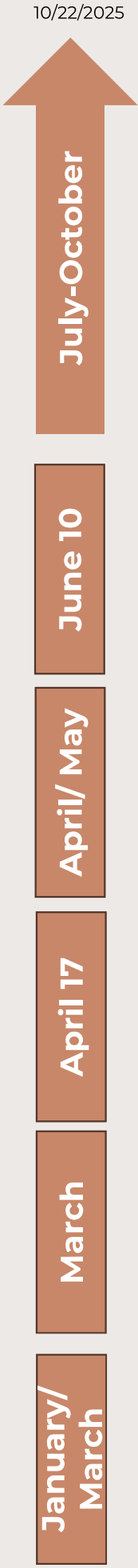
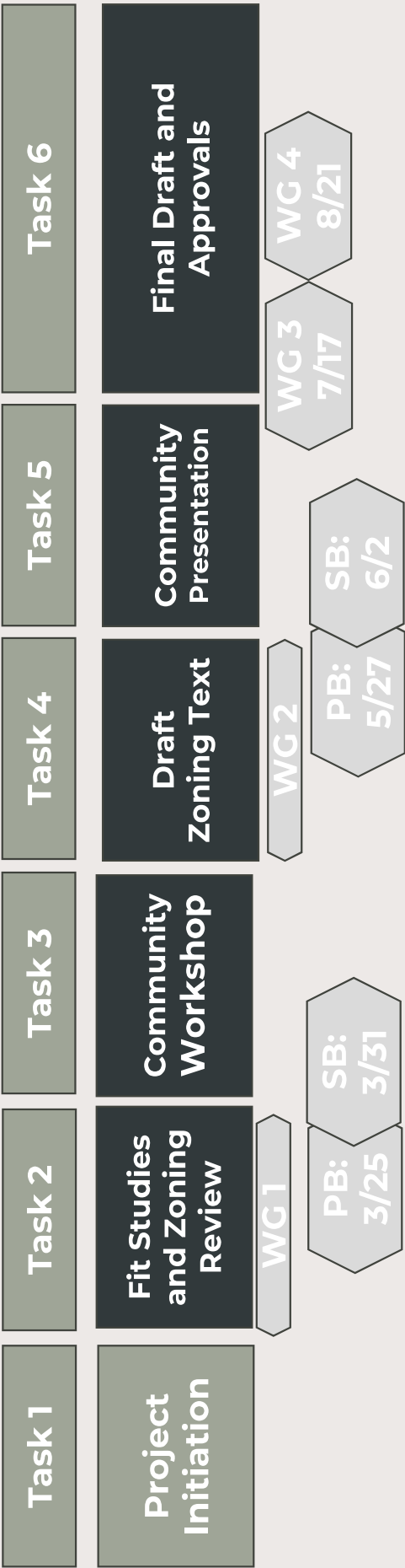
Amelia Morton  
Planner

## **Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP)**

Christine Madore, AICP  
Director of Community Assistance

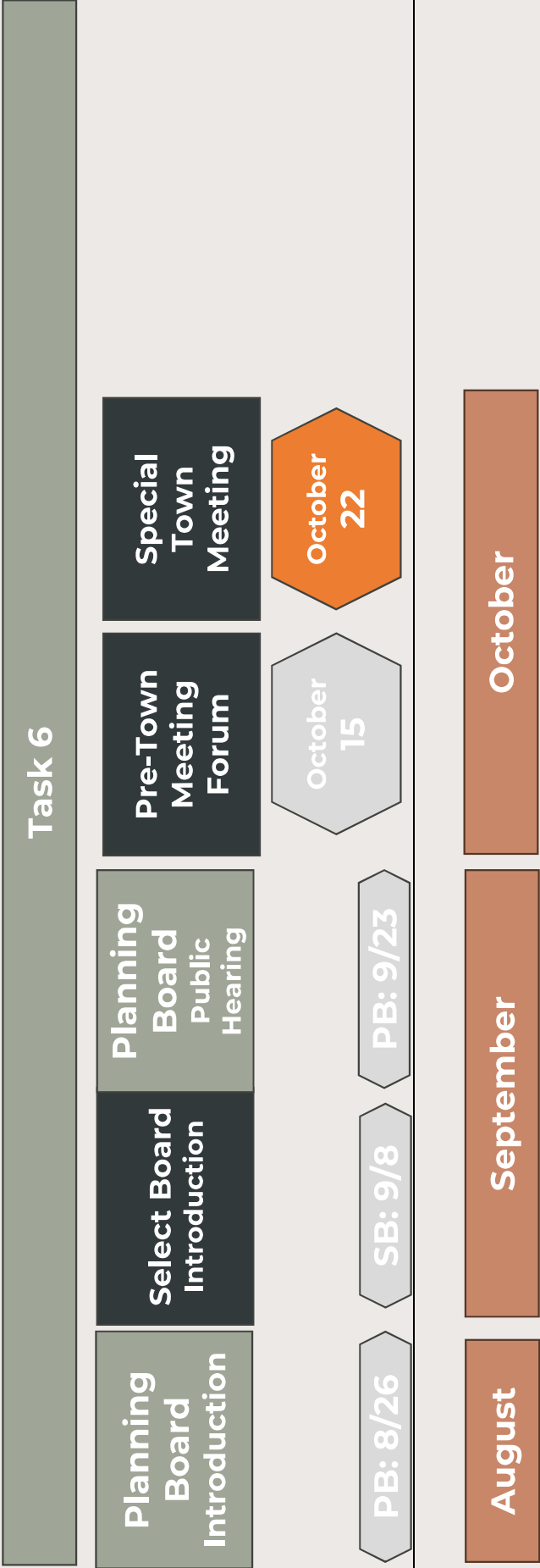
# PROJECT GOAL & TIMELINE

Goal: Create zoning to realize community visions for the site of the former Farren Care Center



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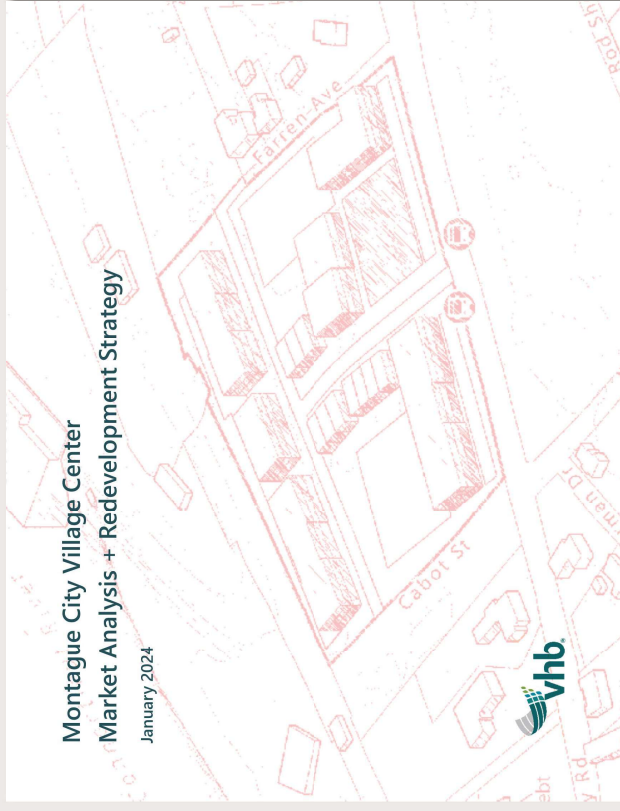


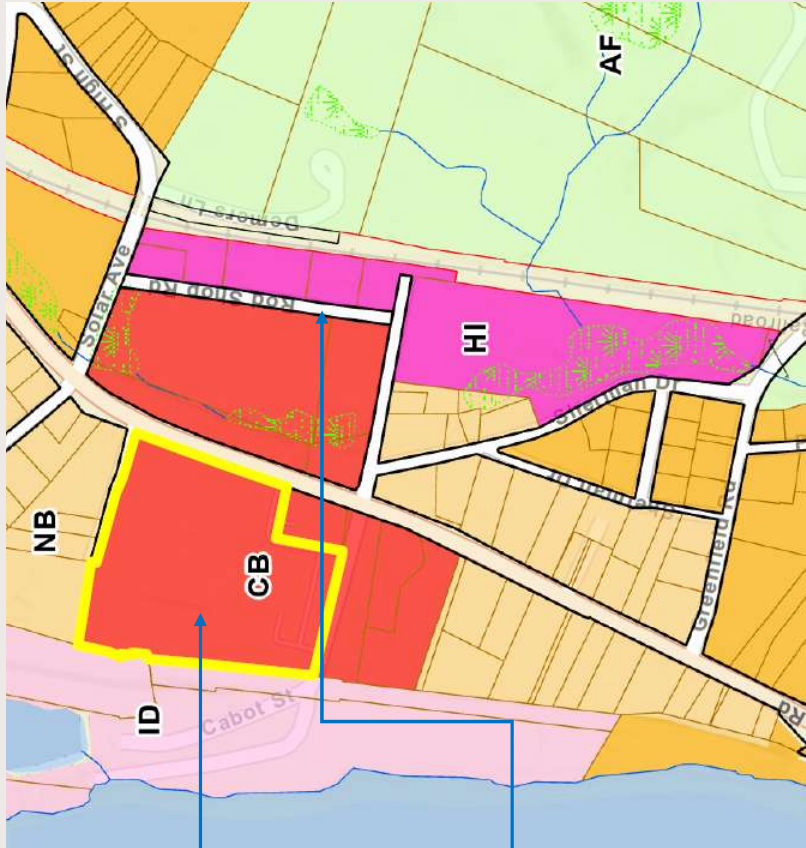
**Montague City's new Village Center will be a dense, mixed-use hub that unites the surrounding community and unlocks new housing and economic opportunities in Montague.**

**The Village Center will be focused on inclusivity, meeting the needs of all residents and visitors, regardless of age or income.**

**New development within the Village Center will enhance the quality of life and showcase Montague City's commitment to public health, arts and culture, and natural resources.**

## 2024 VILLAGE CENTER VISION





Zoning Map: Town of Montague

Farren Site: Central Business (CB)

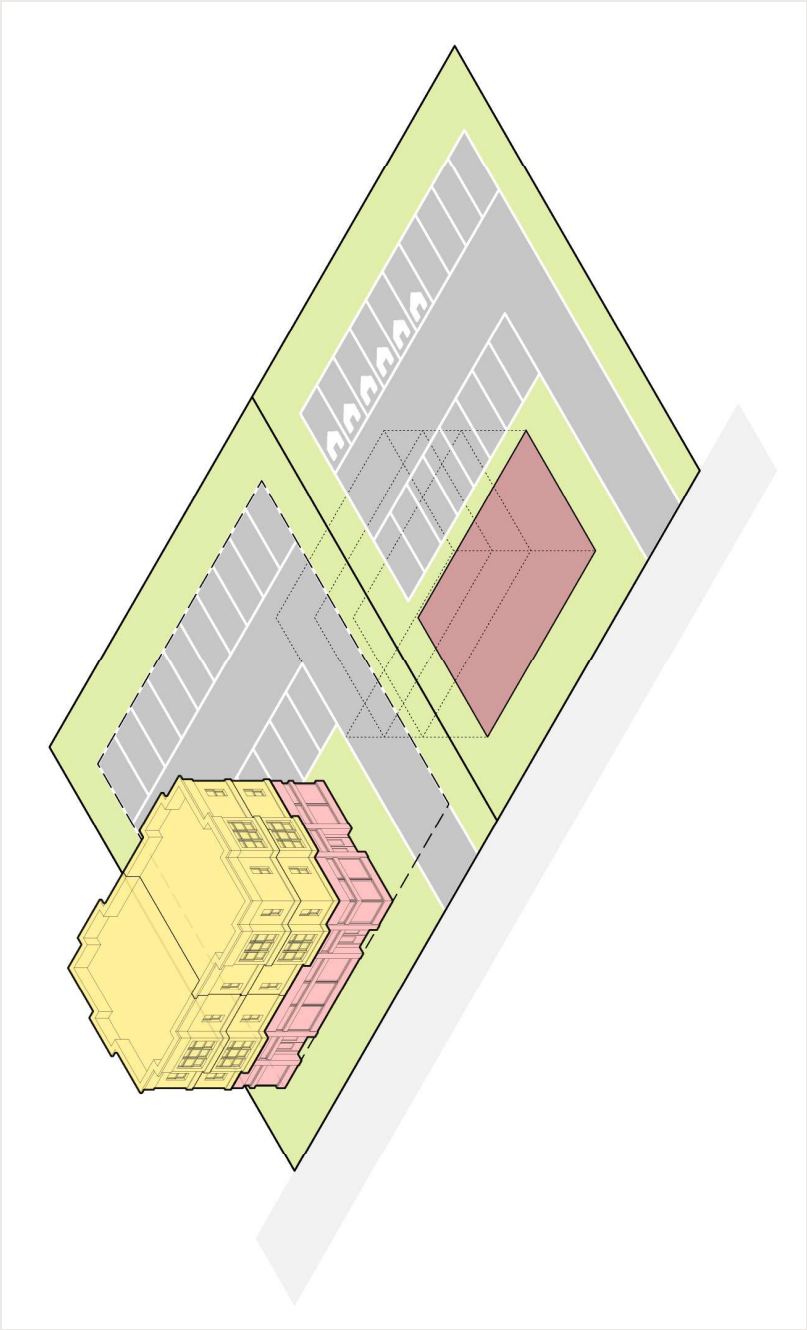
Rod Shop Road: Central Business (CB)  
Historic Industrial (HI)  
Neighborhood Business (NB)

# CURRENT ZONING

|                                                                                                                 | CB - Permitted | CB - SP-ZBA   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Business, professional, or medical office                                                                       | ✓              | n             |
| Craft workshop or light assembly shop                                                                           | n              | w/ retail     |
| Farming and forestry on 5 acres or less                                                                         | n              | n             |
| Hotels                                                                                                          | n              | ✓             |
| Marijuana retailer, medical marijuana treatment center, cultivation, production, research or testing, per §8.10 | n              | retail only   |
| Mixed-use with the street level as a commercial use and dwelling units on upper floors                          | <= 4 dwellings | > 4 dwellings |
| Multi-family dwelling                                                                                           | n              | n             |
| Parking lots or parking garages                                                                                 | n              | ✓             |
| Public utilities                                                                                                | n              | ✓             |
| Retail sales and services without an accessory drive-through component                                          | <5,000 SF      | >5,000 SF     |
| Single and two-family dwellings                                                                                 | n              | n             |
| Social clubs or lodges                                                                                          | ✓              | n             |

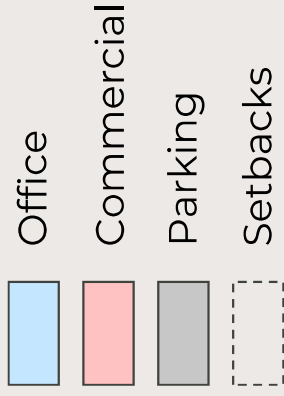
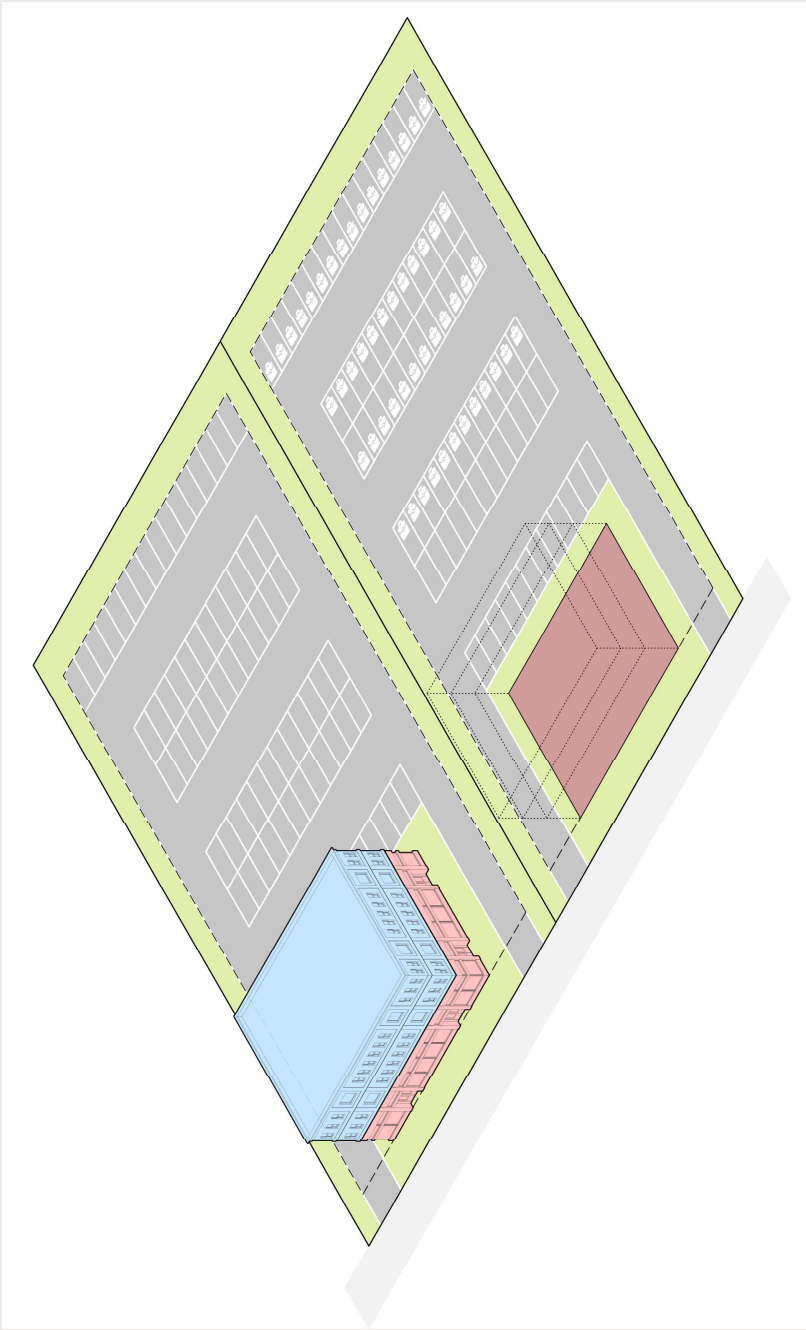
|           | Lot Size<br>(min - sf) | Frontage<br>(min - ft) | Front Yard*<br>(min - ft) | Side Yard<br>(min - ft) | Rear Yard<br>(min - Ft) | Height<br>(max - ft) |
|-----------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>CB</b> | None                   | None                   | Sidewalk or<br>10 ft MAX  | 10                      | 15                      | 36                   |

\* Front Yard is also the Street Line Setback; No building need provide a street line setback greater than that of the principal buildings on 3 out of 4 adjoining properties on the same side of the street.

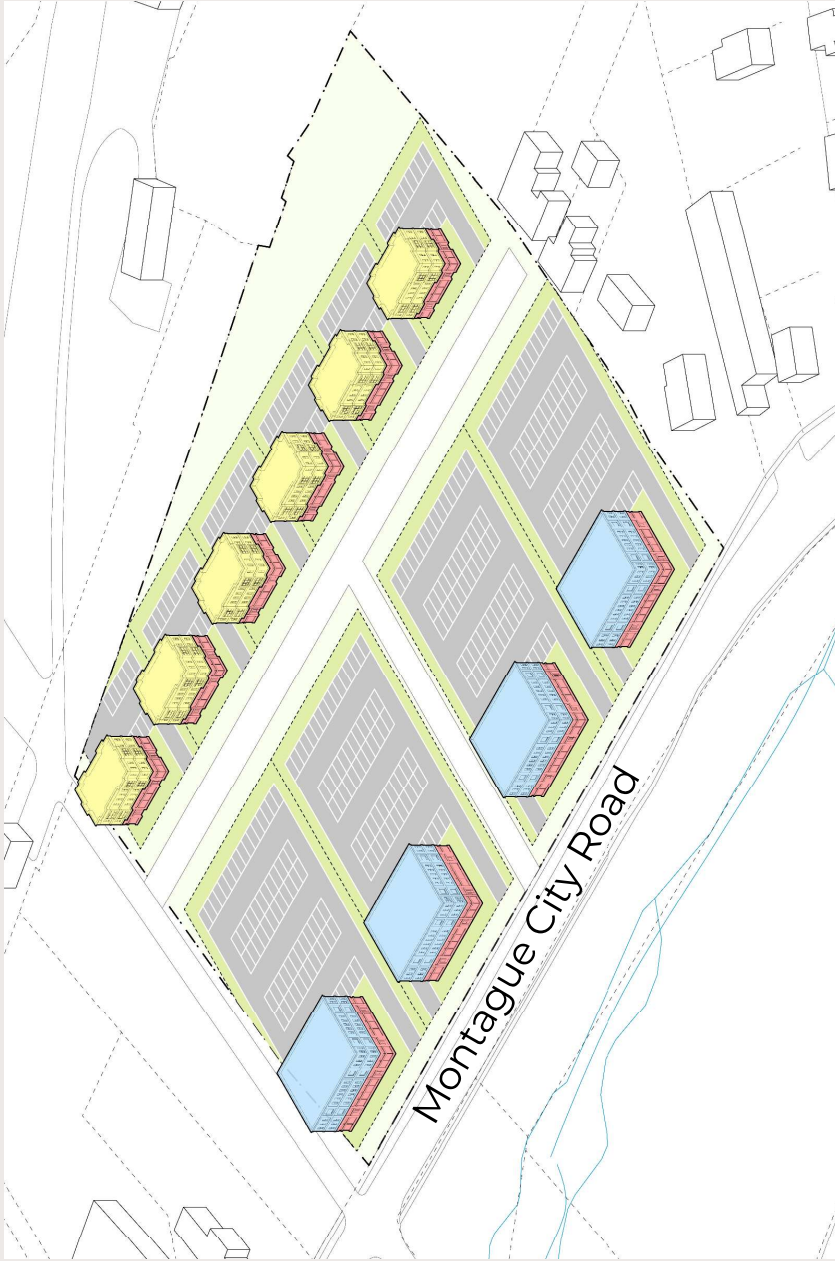


- Residential
- Commercial
- Parking
- Setbacks

Mixed-use with the street level as a commercial use and dwelling units on upper floors. 4 Dwelling Units



**Ground floor:** Retail sales and services without an accessory drive-through component. Less than 4000sf.  
**Other floors:** Business, professional, or medical office.



- Office
- Residential
- Commercial
- Parking
- Setbacks

Current zoning applied on the Farren Site. **This is NOT a proposal.**

## 2024 Village Center Vision. Market Assessment Findings

### **Recommendations for Housing:**

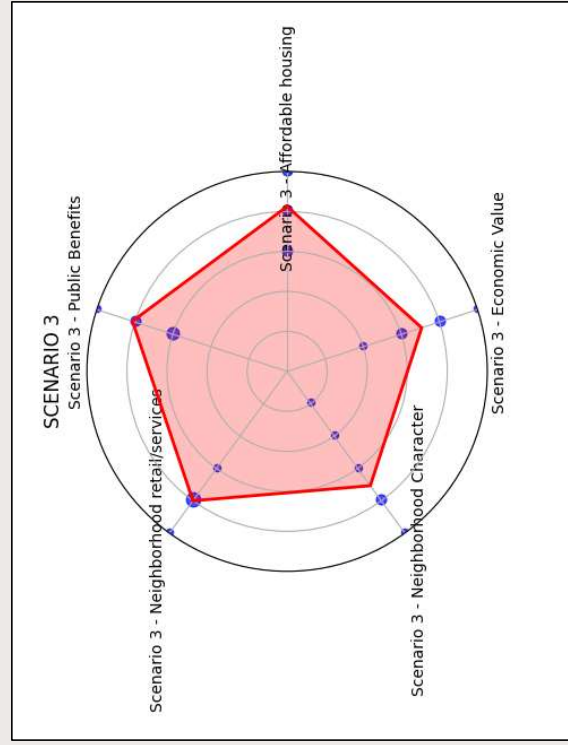
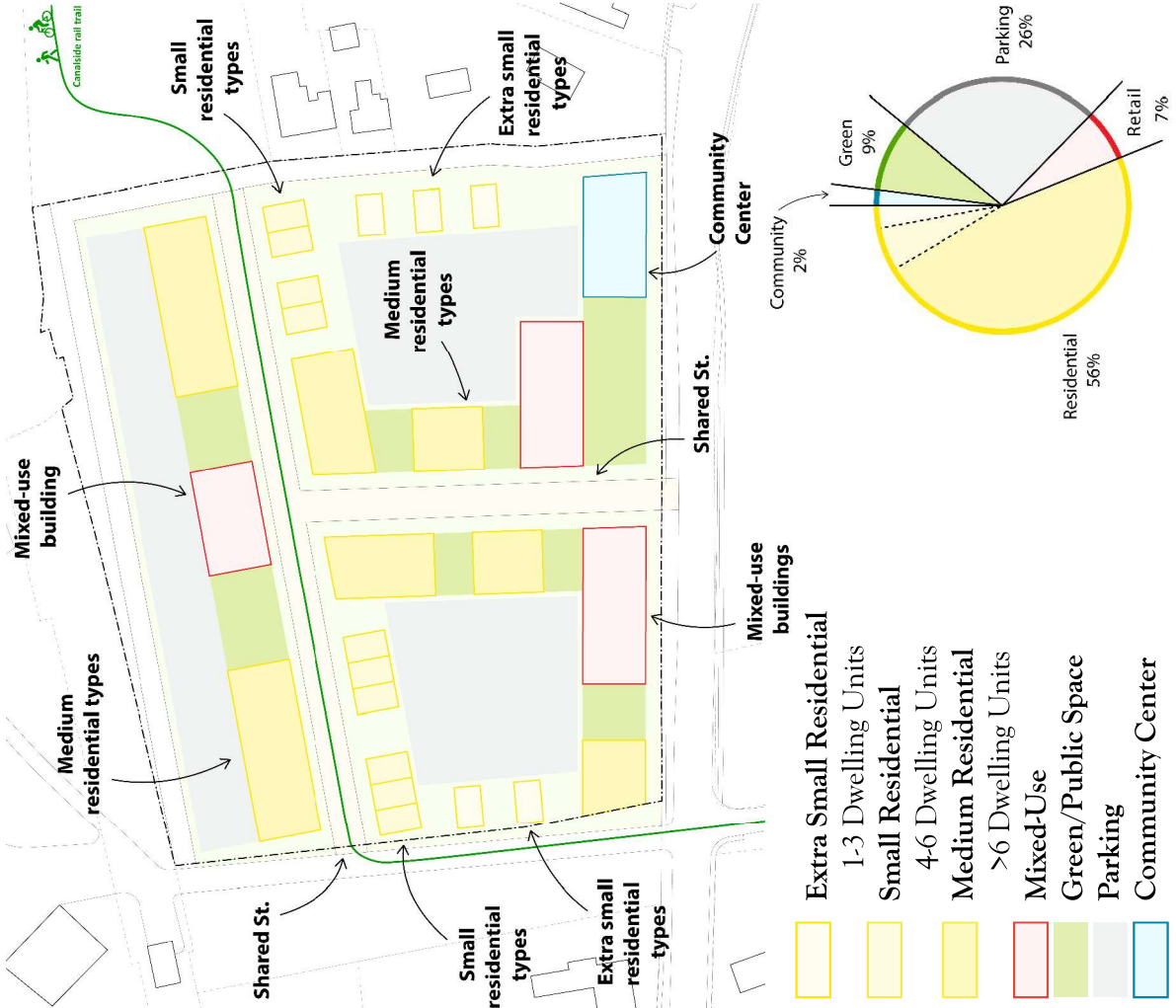
- Encourage dense residential development at the Farren Care Center Site, to help address the community's unmet housing needs while at the same time creating a vibrant Village Center for Montague City.
- According to input from the community, the ideal housing for the Farren Care Center Site is a mix of unit sizes, a mix of building typologies, and a mix of unit prices and rents.

### **Recommendations for Retail:**

- The Town should also explore the potential for encouraging the development of retail spaces at the Farren Care Center Site, such as a small grocery store, daycare, restaurant or cafe, makerspace, or hotel.
- Retail development would address several needs at once: it would support local business owners, create jobs, provide residents with services and/or entertainment, and elevate the Town's tax base. It would also promote social activity in the Village Center.

THE EXISTING ZONING DOES NOT ALIGN  
WITH THE 2024 VILLAGE CENTER VISION

# PREFERRED SCENARIO FROM JUNE ONLINE WORKSHOP



**Per July Working Group Meeting:**

- **Insert into existing zoning format (i.e. not a Form-based Code)**
- **Evaluate existing 40R District to see if it was appropriate**

**First Draft to Town Staff:**

- **Tested 40R: not as flexible as the Town needs for this site; Town has better controls through the RFP and disposition process**

**Second Draft to Town Staff (and tonight's draft)**

- **New Based District – Village Center Mixed-Use**
- **Design Overlay District that could be expanded to additional areas**

## **DRAFT ZONING**

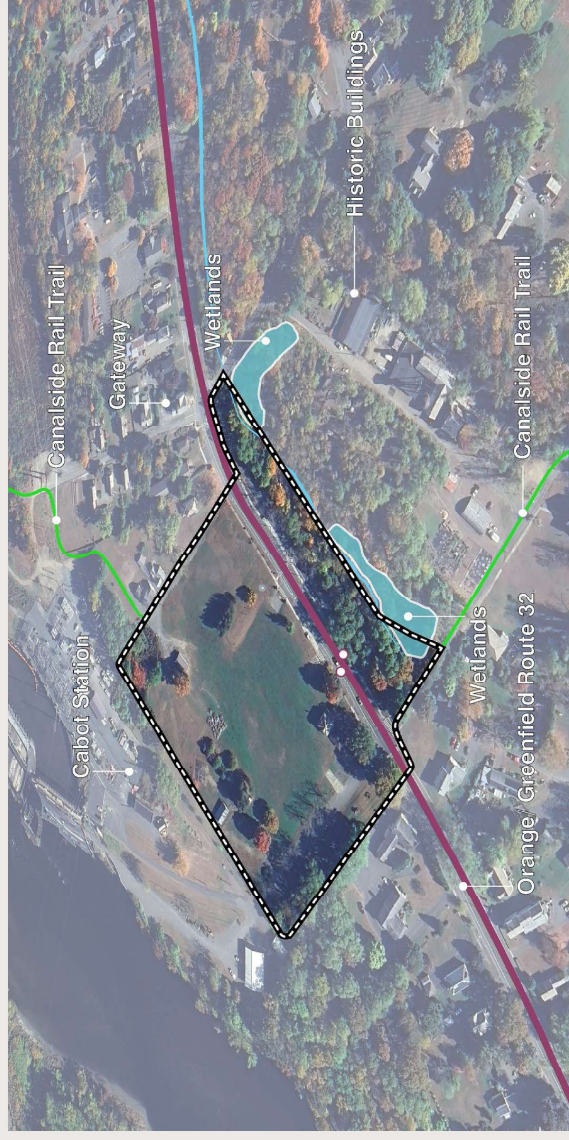
## Districts: Section 4.1

### New Base District

Mixed-Use Village Center (MU-VC)

### New Overlay District

Design Overlay District



DRAFT ZONING

**Base District: Uses**  
**Section 5.2.10**

Site Plan Review

Two- or three-family; Multiplex;  
Rowhouse, Townhouse; Multi-unit Residential  
Mixed-use development; must include multi-family  
Bakeries, artisan food or beverage producers  
General or Personal Service  
Private educational use  
Health, gym, or fitness club  
Museum

Site Plan Review

Special Permit

|                                                              |                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Boutique Hotel with 20 or fewer guest rooms                  | Boutique Hotel with more than 20 and up to 40 guest rooms. |
| Offices 2,000 SF or less                                     | Offices over 2,000 SF                                      |
| Restaurants and Cafés 2,000 SF or less; no drive-thru        | Restaurants and Cafés over 2,000 SF; no drive-thru         |
| Retail stores 2,000 SF or less                               | Retail stores over 2,000 SF                                |
| Craft workshops or Light assembly workshops 2,000 SF or less | Craft workshops or Light assembly workshops over 2,000 SF  |

Parking Garage

DRAFT ZONING

# Base District: Dimensional Standards Section 5.5

|       | Minimum Lot Size (square feet) | Minimum Lot Frontage (linear feet) | Minimum Front Yard and Street Line Setback (a) (linear feet) | Minimum Side Yard Setback (linear feet) | Minimum Rear Yard Setback (linear feet) | Maximum Building Height (linear feet)                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MU-VC | 4,000                          | 30                                 | 0                                                            | 10                                      | 10                                      | 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.<br><br>All other buildings: Up to four (4) stories, fifty (50) ft. |

DRAFT ZONING

**Base District: New Definitions**  
**Section 2**

| <b>Jobs-Related</b>      | <b>Housing-Related</b> | <b>Open Space-Related</b>                                             |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Craft Workshop           | Multi-Unit Dwelling    | Open Space                                                            |
| Boutique Hotel           | Rowhouse               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open Space, Public</li></ul>  |
| Light Assembly Workshops | Three-Family Dwelling  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open Space, Private</li></ul> |
| Mixed-Use Development    | Townhouse              | Landscape Open Space                                                  |
|                          |                        | Permeable Surface                                                     |

DRAFT ZONING

## Section 6.4 DOD Overlay: Purpose

- To create a **transition from single-family residential areas to mixed-use developments** and higher residential density developments.
- 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.
- Create **neighborhood character and a sense of place** through site and building design standards.
- Provide an **efficient procedure** that will ensure appropriate **high-quality design and site planning**

DRAFT ZONING

## Section 6.4 DOD Overlay: Design Principles

- **Promote pedestrian access and safety** by encouraging design strategies to reduce conflicts between drivers and pedestrians;
- **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.
- Require buildings on a corner lot to have **a façade that relates to both streets.**
- Create development strategies for buildings and site design that **facilitate, accommodate, and encourage use by pedestrians.**
- **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.

**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.**

# DRAFT ZONING

## Section 6.4 DOD Overlay: Development Standards

### Dimensions

#### Density

- Multi-unit Dwellings and Mixed-Use Development: minimum 20 units per acre
- Two- and three-family: Minimum 12 units per acre

#### Open Space

- 20% minimum
- 30% permeable surface
- 2/3 of permeable shall be landscaped

### Setbacks

#### Front Yard Setback

Minimum

- 0

Maximum

- 10 additional feet for residential
- 20 additional feet for mixed-use

#### Side and Rear Yard Setbacks

- 0 feet between buildings on the same site (governed by building code)

### Parking

- Shared Parking
- Reduction in requirements
- Location
- Size

# DRAFT ZONING

## Section 6.4 DOD Overlay: Development Standards

### Buildings

Position relative to the street  
Multiple buildings on a lot  
Mixed-use development  
Corner lots  
Relationship of parking to buildings

**The Planning Board may grant waivers for one or more development standards if the result is a better design and higher project quality.**

### Site

Connections and sidewalks  
Vehicular access and circulation  
Open Space  
Parking (screening and materials)  
Plantings  
Lighting  
Mechanicals  
Waste Management  
Stormwater Management

# DRAFT ZONING

**Other Changes**

Amend Section 5.2 Multiple Principal Uses

**Not applicable to the new Districts.**

Amend Section 5.5.3 Dimensional Relief

**Planning Board is the Special Permit Granting Authority for Dimensional Relief.**

Amend Section 9.1.3 Authority

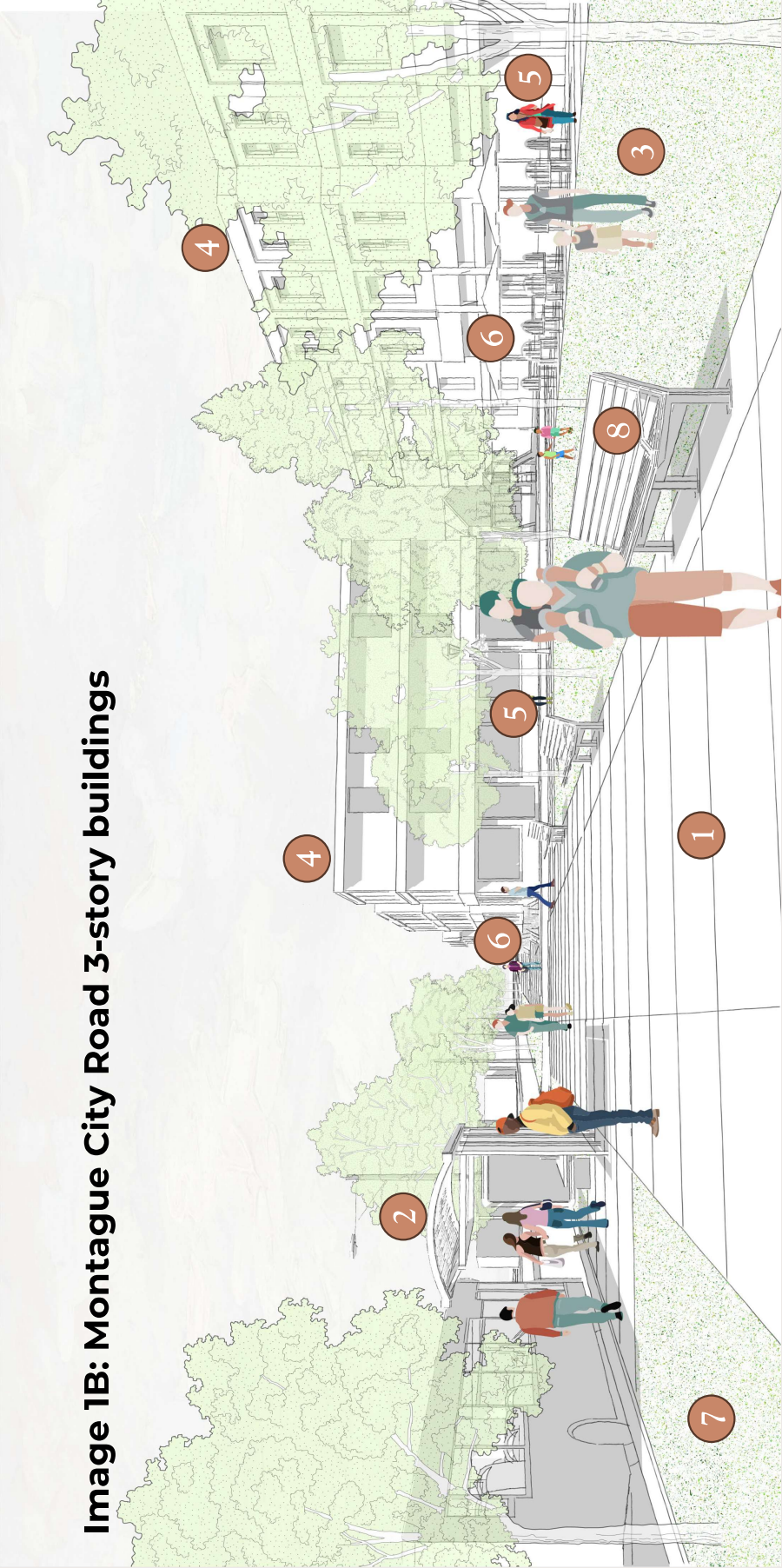
**Planning Board is the Special Permit Review Authority for both Districts.**

Amend Section 7.2.3 District Parking Requirements

|                |                                             |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 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                     |

DRAFT ZONING

Image 1B: Montague City Road 3-story buildings



- 1 Montague City Road
- 2 Bus Station
- 3 Square
- 4 Building height along Montague City Road: 3 stories
- 5 Ground Floor Commercial
- 6 Terraces
- 7 Street Green Infrastructure
- 8 Street Furniture

Image 2A: Internal Street 4-story buildings



- 1 Pocket Park
- 2 10-foot green setback
- 3 Bike Parking
- 4 Building height
- 5 Ground Floor Commercial
- 6 Terraces
- 7 Street Green Infrastructure
- 8 Street Furniture
- 9 Bike Trail

