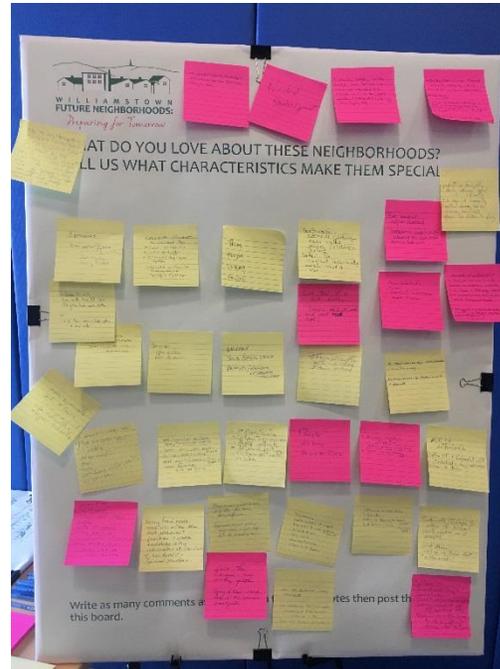
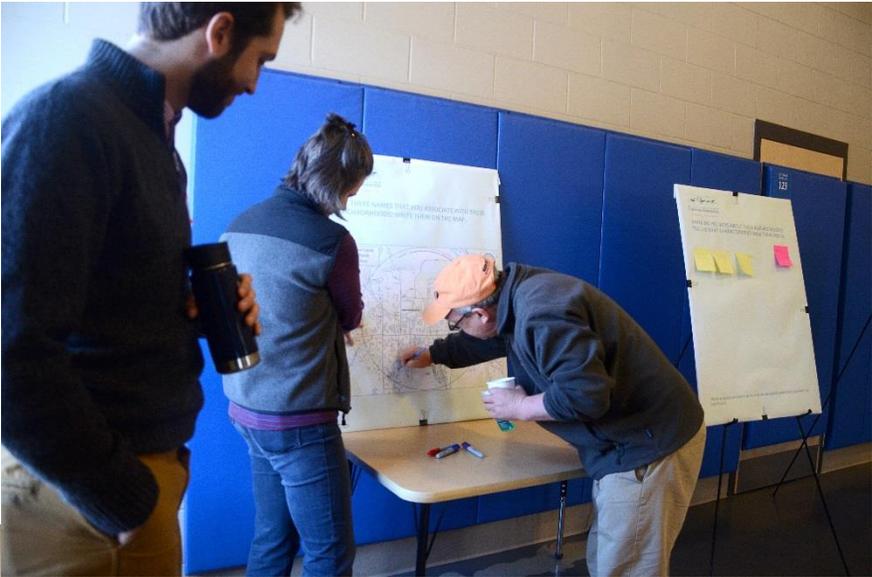


Housing Open House

- ▶ February 4th, 2017
- ▶ 44 attendees
- ▶ Four stations:
 - ▶ Defining the Neighborhood- Physically
 - ▶ Defining the Neighborhood- Conceptually
 - ▶ Zoning
 - ▶ Let's Talk about Housing



Housing Open House



Workshop

- ▶ April 11, 2017
- ▶ 15 attendees, including most planning board members
- ▶ Mini open house exercise, presentation, and group exercise

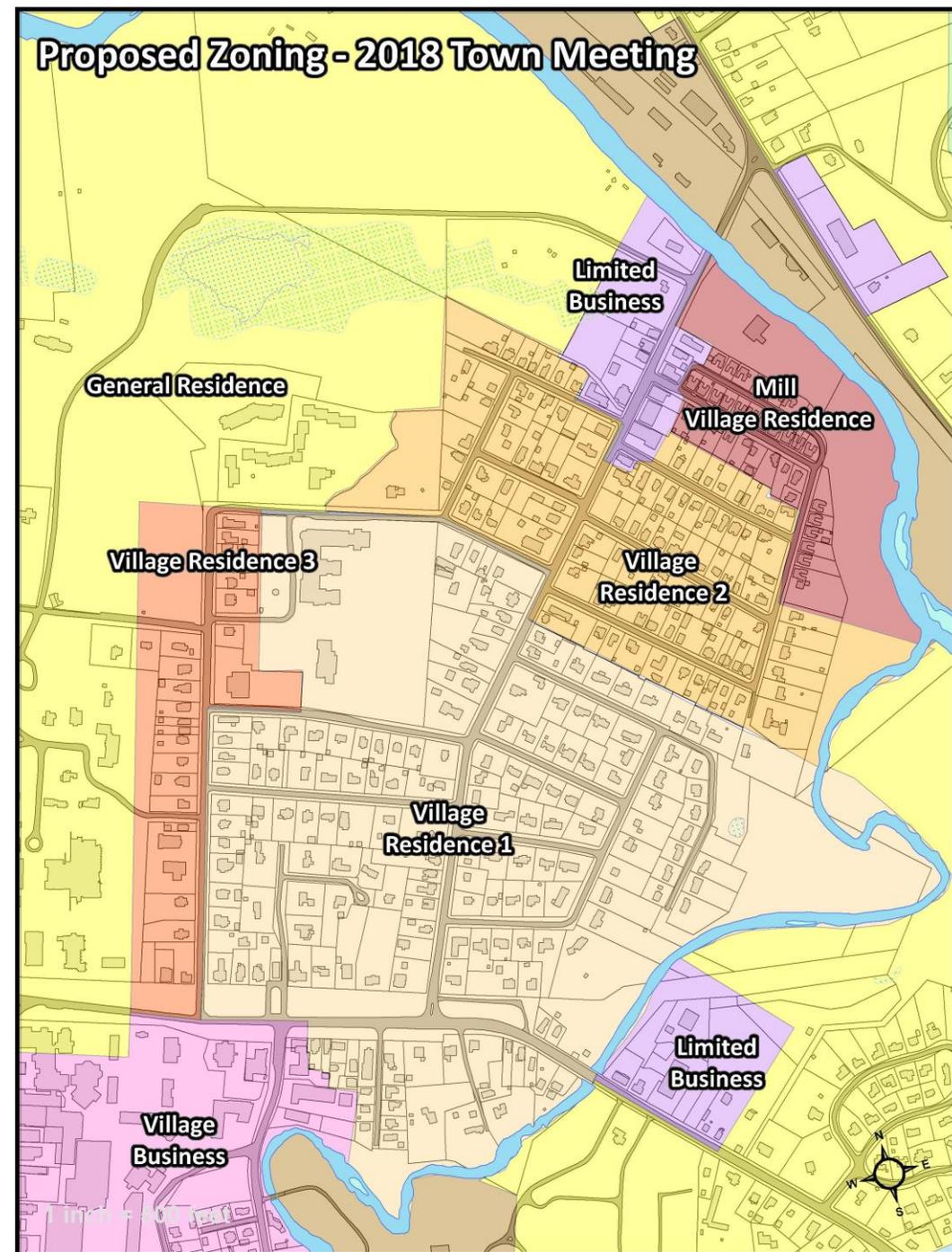


Results and Lessons Learned

- ▶ Results of Visual Preference Survey and comments
 - ▶ Adaptive reuse into multifamily
 - ▶ Accessory apartments
 - ▶ Mixed-use
- ▶ Favored potential zoning amendments:
 - ▶ Allow conversion to multifamily
 - ▶ New construction of multifamily with thoughtful design
 - ▶ Accessory apartments
 - ▶ Allow mixed-use
- ▶ Lessons Learned
 - ▶ This approach invites a more thoughtful and reasonable discussion
 - ▶ Education is important!
 - ▶ Integrating coUrbanize into the process requires a lot of activity and outreach and success may depend on make-up of community
 - ▶ Turnout is difficult to achieve
 - ▶ Marketing included press coverage, web posts, neighborhood signage, postering, Facebook advertisements, ads at local movie theater, and direct mail
 - ▶ Participation was still less than desired

Creating New Zoning

- ▶ A Board subcommittee met between August and October 2017 to develop framework.
- ▶ Minor housing related amendments were proposed for November 2017.
 - ▶ Increased opportunity for Multi Family in Business & Mixed Use Zones and Density Increase for Cable Mills.
 - ▶ All passed by unanimous voice vote.
- ▶ Planning Board then moved forward on broader change.
 - ▶ Proposed new map and dimensional standards based on built era.
 - ▶ Each zone to have different small scale MF regulations, ranging up to 8 units.
 - ▶ Development allowed by right with strong development standards.
- ▶ Proposal also included in law apartments by right throughout town.



Process

- ▶ The Board met December through February and refined the proposal.
- ▶ Individual members met privately with various community stakeholders.
- ▶ Feedback and participation at public meetings was encouraged, but there was little attendance.
- ▶ Entire process received accurate and fair local press coverage.
- ▶ The little feedback heard during this time was largely positive.
- ▶ Planning Board voted to move forward and propose articles for Town Meeting.
- ▶ Vote to send articles to Selectboard passed unanimously.

Pushback

- ▶ March 13: Planning Board presented proposal to Selectboard, calls Public Hearing for April 11. Selectboard votes favorably to start amendment process.
- ▶ March 25: Selectboard Meeting overwhelmed by capacity crowd to opposed re-zoning effort.
- ▶ April 3: Planning Board calls special meeting to attempt to address concerns.
- ▶ April 11: Planning Board Public Hearing. Planning Board votes to table all amendments, withdraw them from Town Warrant. Community members commit to stay engaged in process.



Public Criticisms of the Plan

▶ Distrust of Renters

- ▶ "I fully appreciate that neighborhoods must change ... but I am concerned the Planning Board is proposing changes that may only meet transient needs."

▶ Opposition to MIL Apartments

- ▶ "It's designed for mother-in-law apartments," W*** said. "It's a great goal. Unfortunately, buildings outlast mothers-in-law. ... I fear the way it's going to be used is for Airbnb type things. If my neighbor builds a 20-by-40 foot home 10 feet from my sideline, I'm seriously offended."

▶ Concern for Property Values

- ▶ "You can imagine these rules ... creating a panic and leading to a collapse in housing prices... With any reform, there are going to be winners and losers, and there's a huge amount of uncertainty in this room. The losers will have invested a considerable amount of their savings on mortgages. You can imagine a panic situation where there's a run on these houses. One thing I've thought of doing in coming to this meeting is I should put my house up for sale immediately because I want to get ahead of this panic."

▶ Concern for Equality

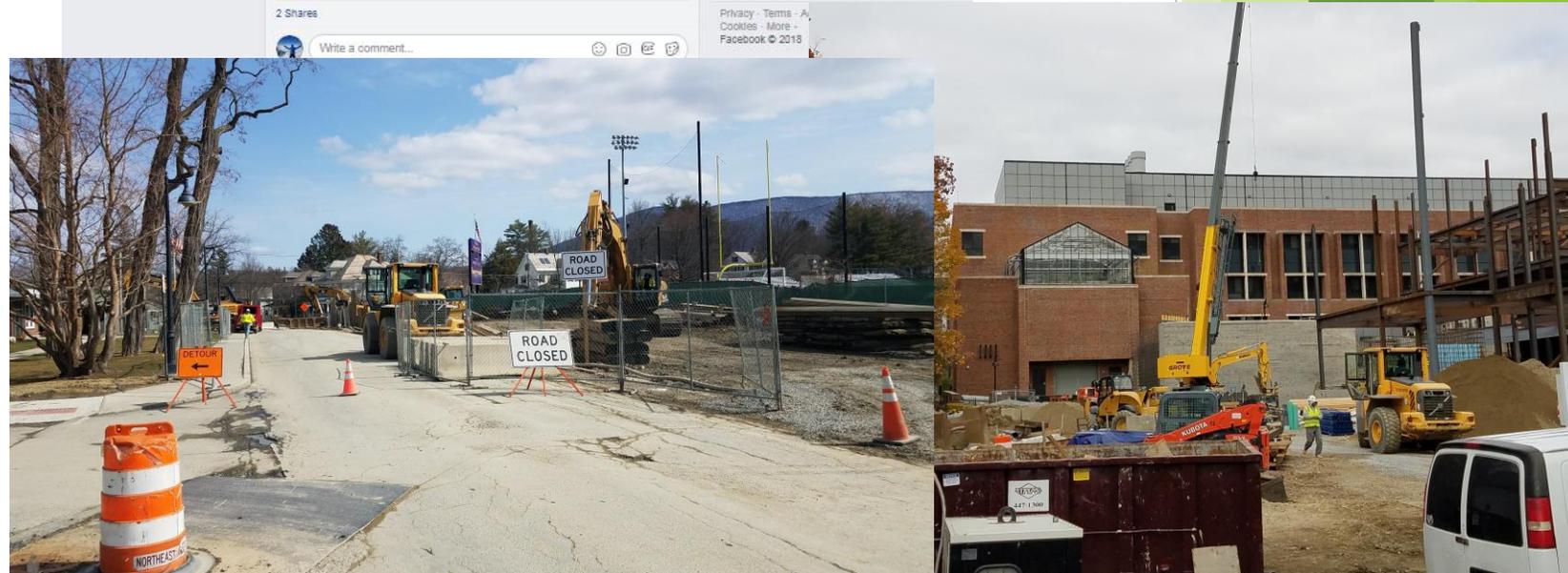
- ▶ "I fear that the districts designed to respect 'the existing character of each unique area' may perpetuate and exacerbate socio-economic inequities that currently exist between several of the these areas."

▶ Distrust of the Market & Developers

- ▶ "Using the zoning code to create affordable housing is a complete lost cause. Housing can only be created through other methodologies and other efforts such as subsidization. Narrowing down all of these issues into the zoning code is not appropriate."

What Happened?

- ▶ The Planning Board lost control of its narrative
- ▶ Town Gov't "frequent fliers" were underestimated
 - ▶ They began canvassing neighborhood unknown to Planning Board
 - ▶ Through handouts and social media misinformation spread quickly
- ▶ The anxiety level of the community was poorly understood
 - ▶ Massive (for Williamstown) construction projects by Williams & The Clark have given many "change fatigue"
 - ▶ Demographic turnover is also a contributor to this issue.



Next Steps?

- ▶ The Planning Board is currently planning a new engagement strategy
- ▶ Leaders of several neighborhood groups have pledged to stay engaged
- ▶ Goals are to keep the conversation positive, move zoning towards increased housing production, keep that production within existing community scale
- ▶ The Board plans to move now a slower and more incremental pace and phase changes in in stages as they coalesce



Thank You!

Questions ?