Redevelopment of the Station Mill Site

An Environmental Planning Project by

Peter K. Endres, Jonathan Langer, Saerom Park, Carlos Silva

Client: Peter Fohlin, Williamstown Town Manager

Overview

- Community & site background
- Relevant regulations
- Potential funding sources
- Our proposal
- Financial analysis of proposal
- Final recommendations

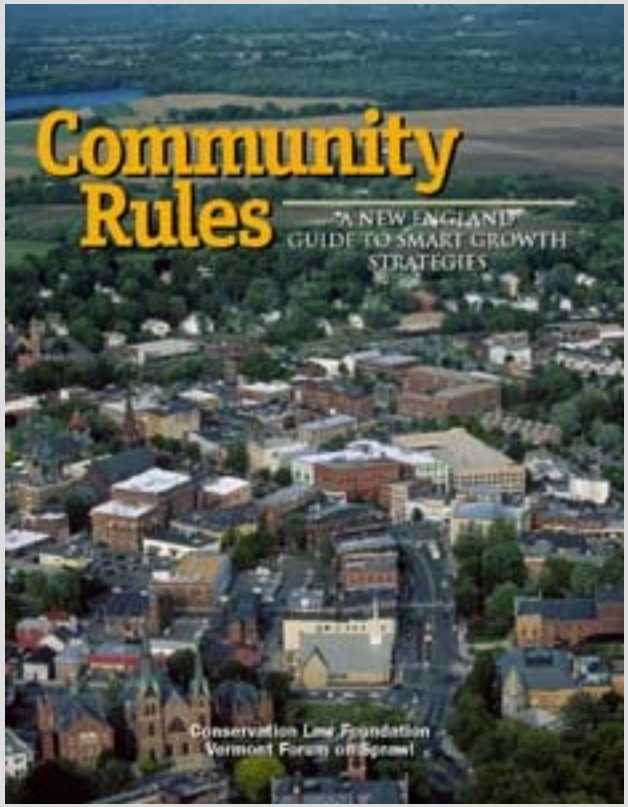
Project Objectives

1. Design an economically feasible proposal

Mike Card,
Building Inspector

Peter Fohlin,
Town Manager

2. Be environmental planners



Our Starting Point: Goals

- Affordable housing
- Local historical preservation
- Recreation with river access
- Commercial revitalization

Our Roadmap

Survey

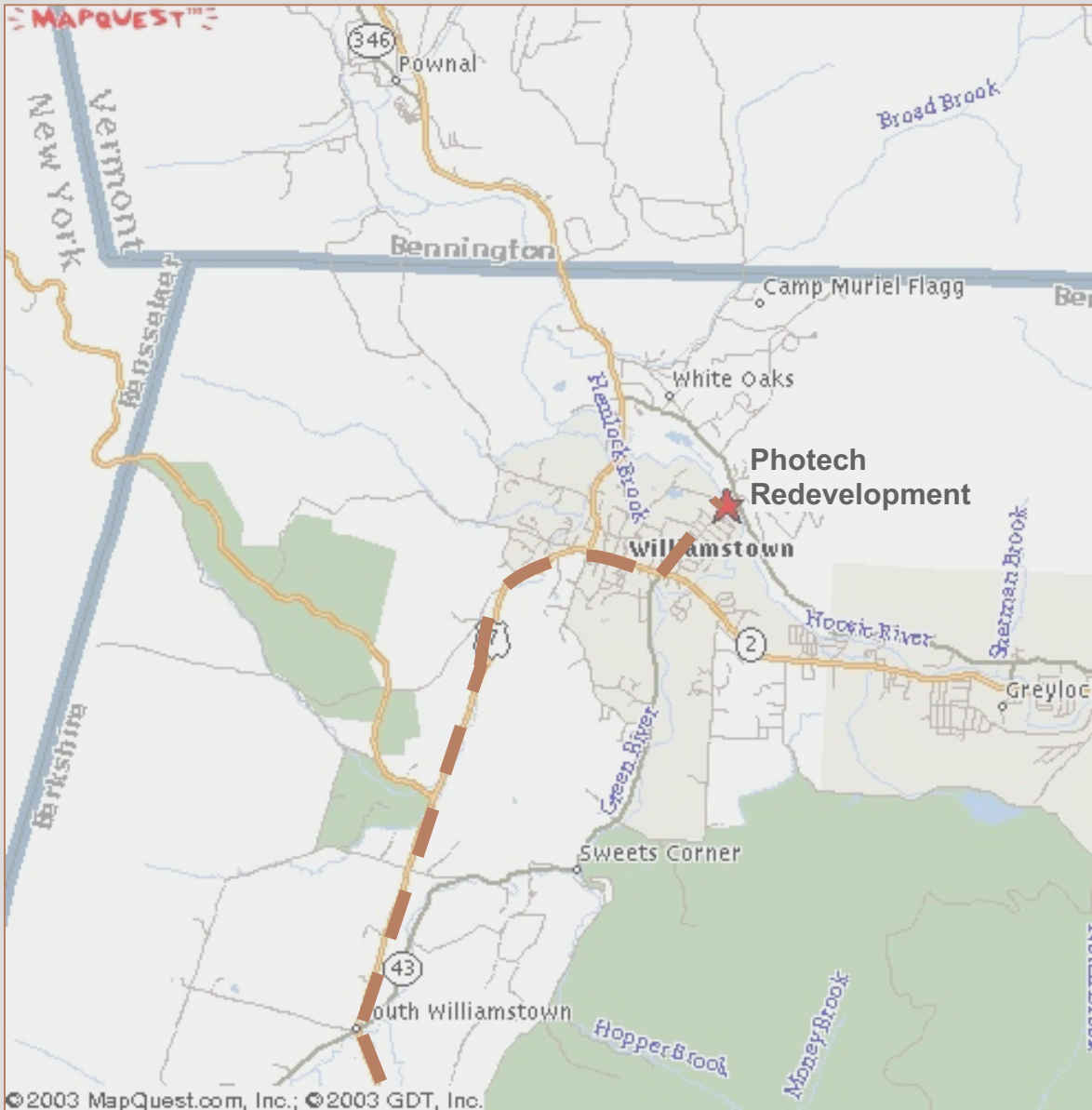
Community needs and preferences

Maps

Site information

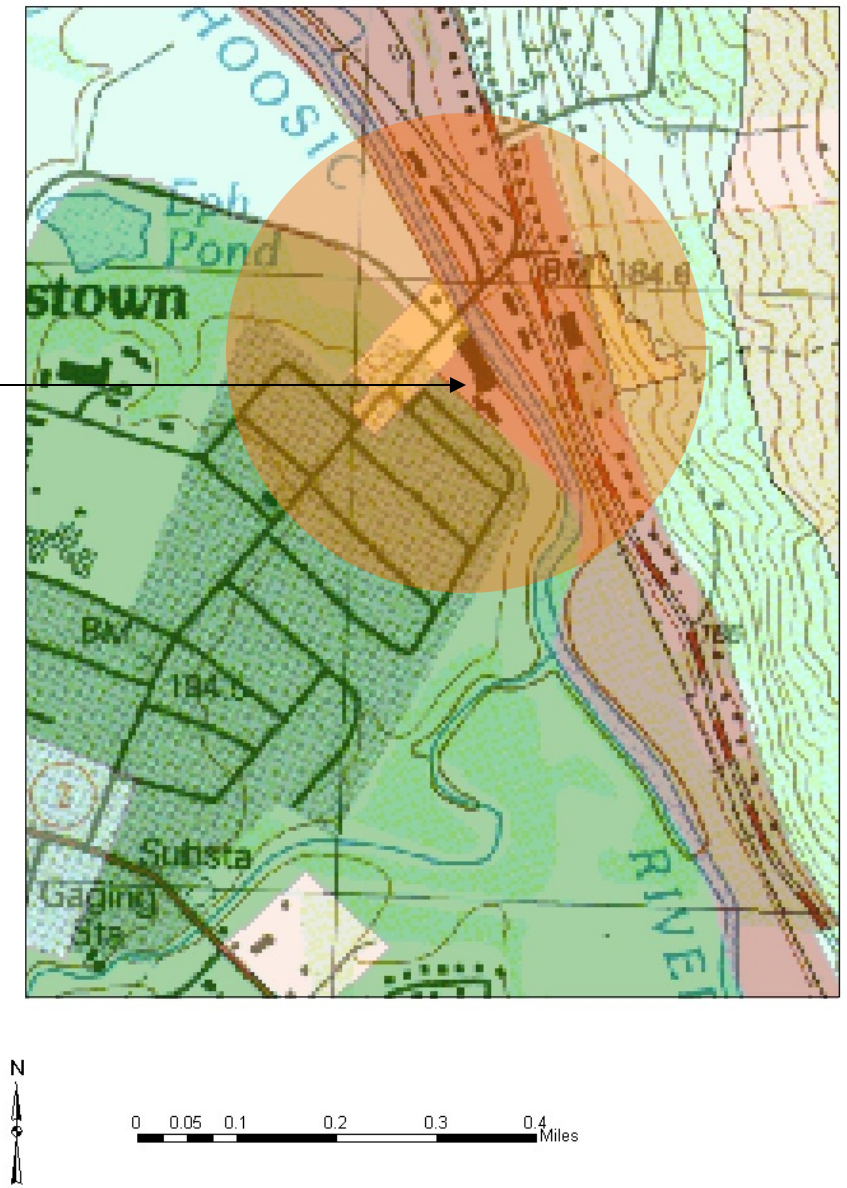
Personal interviews

Market information
Funding sources
Relevant regulations and bylaws



The Site

Station Mill and Surrounding Neighborhoods



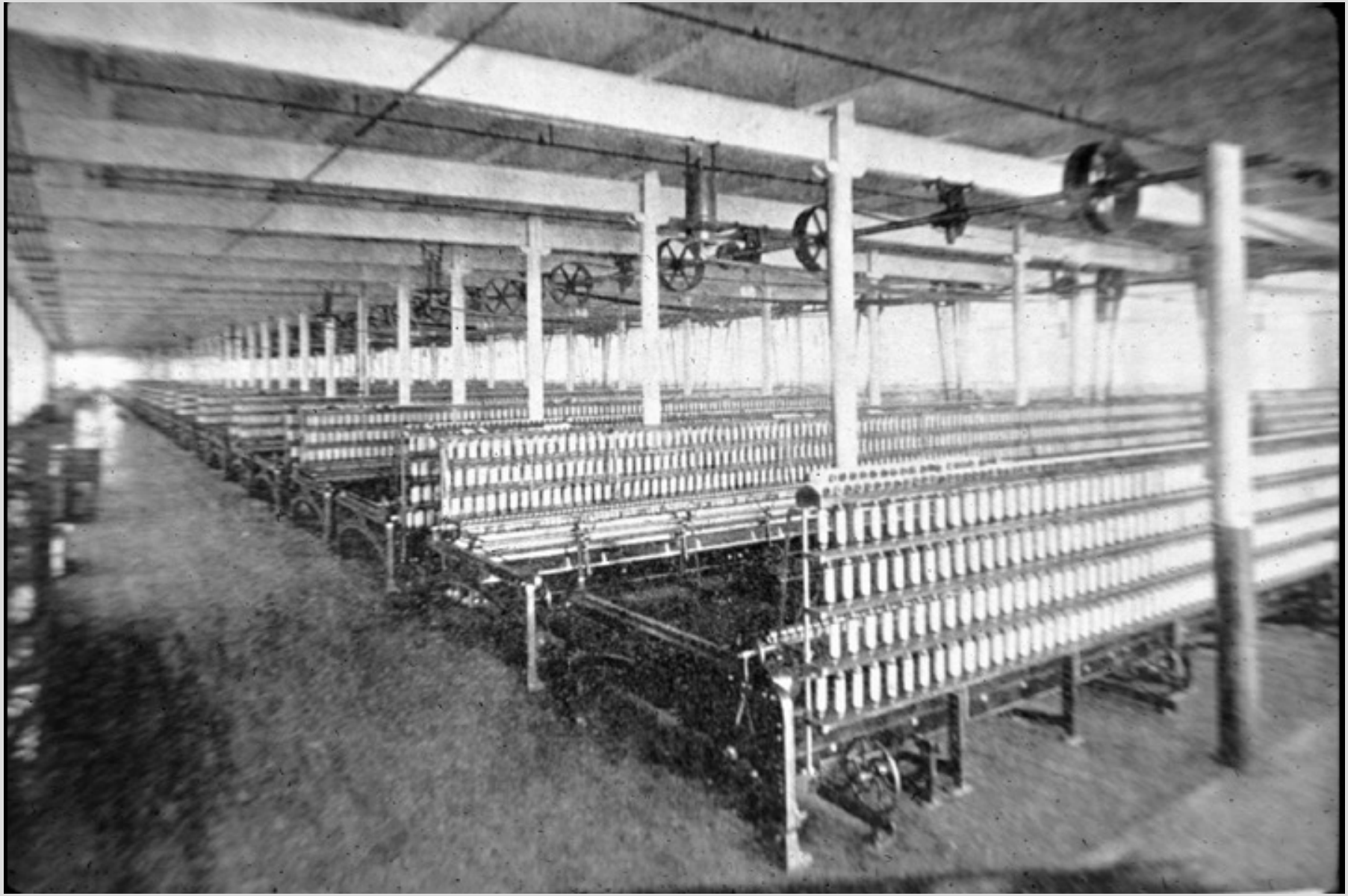
Existing Businesses

Historic Station Mill Housing

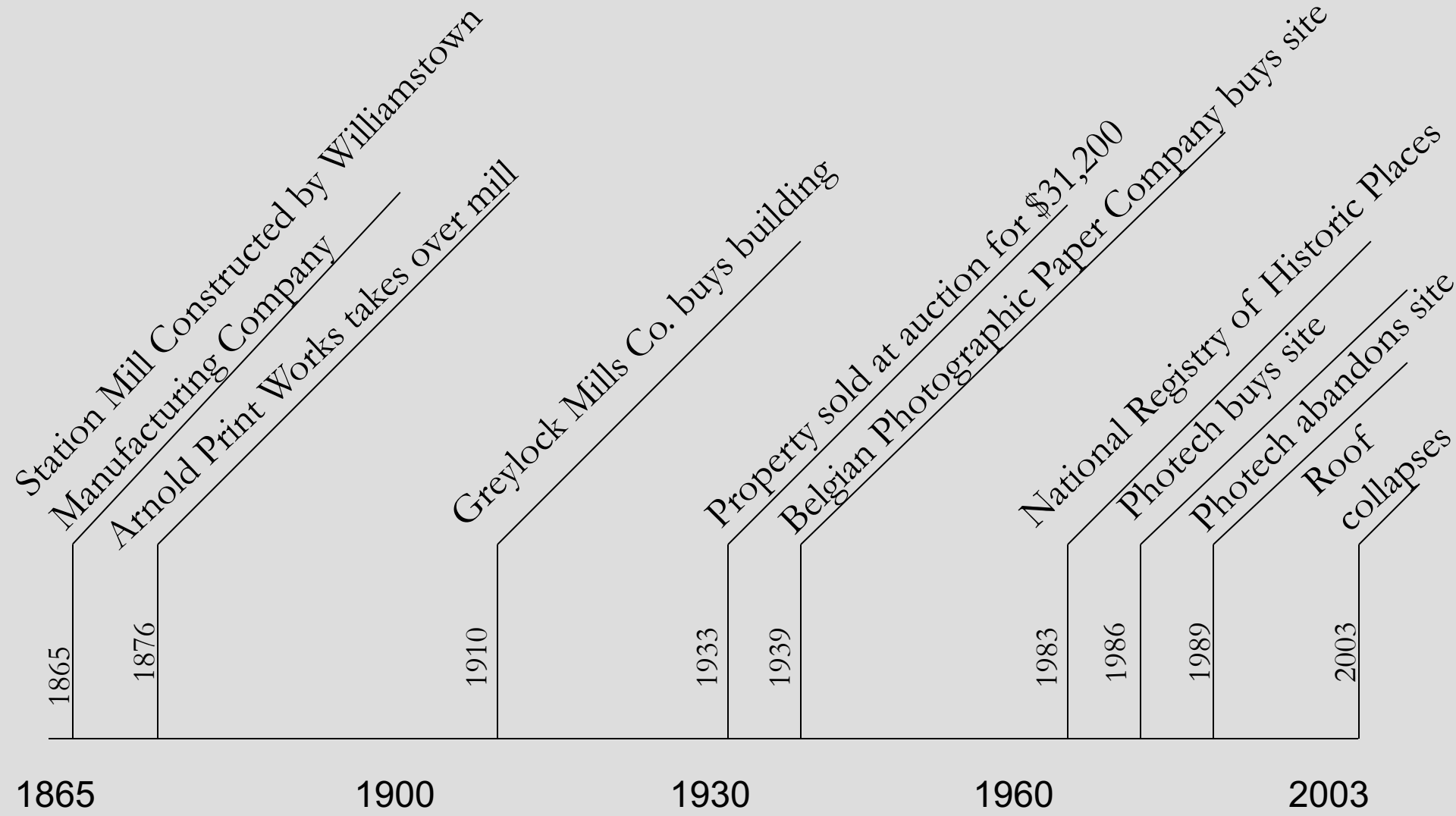
nces

Businesses


Site History

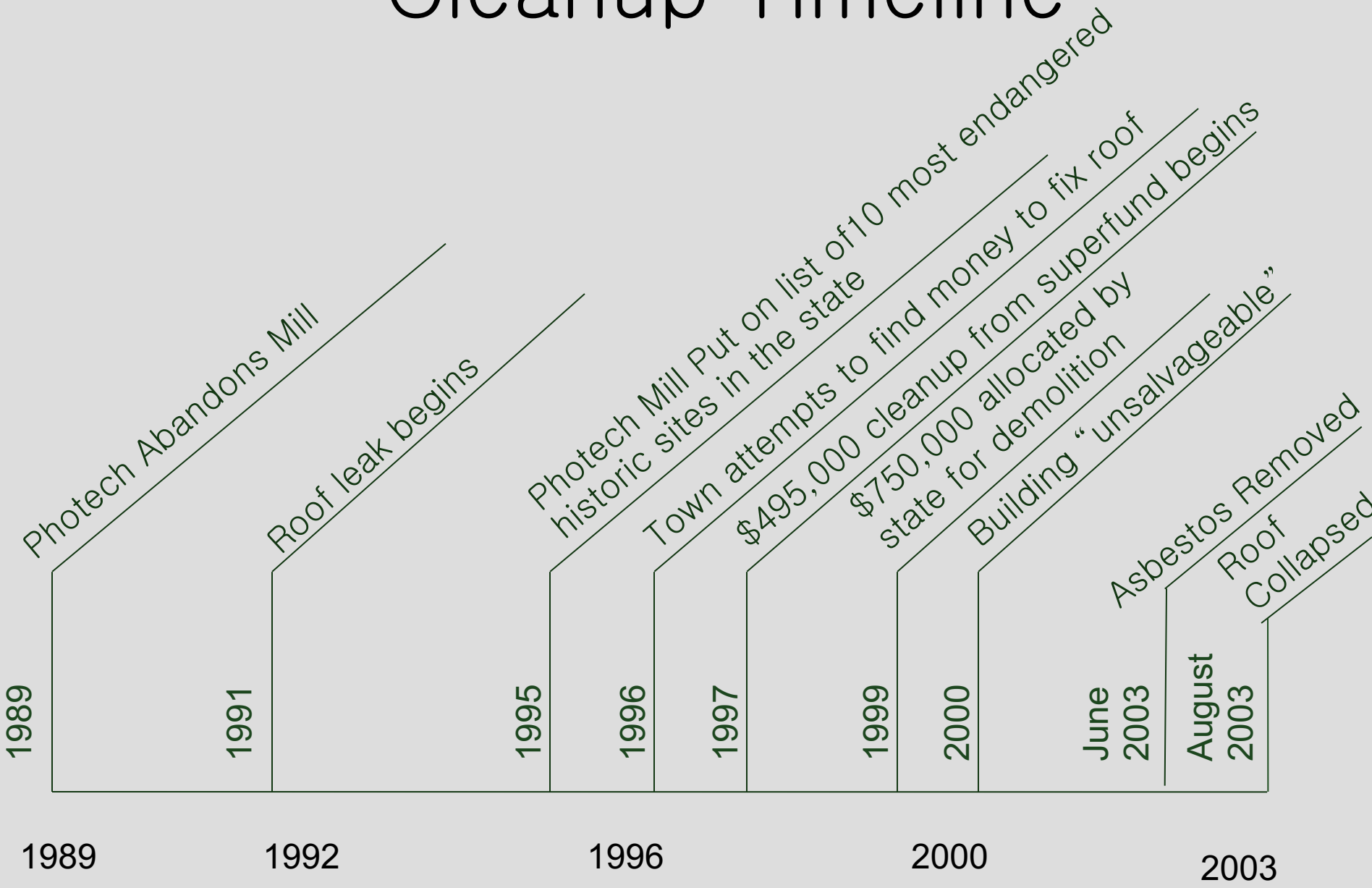


Station Mill Timeline



All dates from: “Unwanted HIstory: Williamstown, ‘the Village Beautiful,’ and its Station Mill

Cleanup Timeline



From "Unwanted History: Williamstown, 'the Village Beautiful,' and its Station Mill

What Was Removed?

188 tons of contaminated waste sludge

160 barrels of hazardous waste

1,000-3,000 gallons of water/fuel mix

40 cubic yards of asbestos (before 2001)

From "Unwanted History: Williamstown, 'the Village Beautiful,' and its Station Mill

Money Spent on Site

1995- $3,940 spent by town to secure site from graffiti, drug dealers, and vagrants

1997- $495,000 for site cleanup

1999- $750,000 for site cleanup and demolition from state of Massachusetts

From "Unwanted History: Williamstown, 'the Village Beautiful,' and its Station Mill

Money Spent on Cleanup

Town of Williamstown:

$3,940

State of Massachusetts

$750,000

Federal Government:

$495,000

From "Unwanted History: Williamstown, 'the Village Beautiful,' and its Station Mill

THE PHOTECH SITE: A VISUAL TOUR


HANK ART, 10/03


HANK ART, 10/03

HANK ART, 10/03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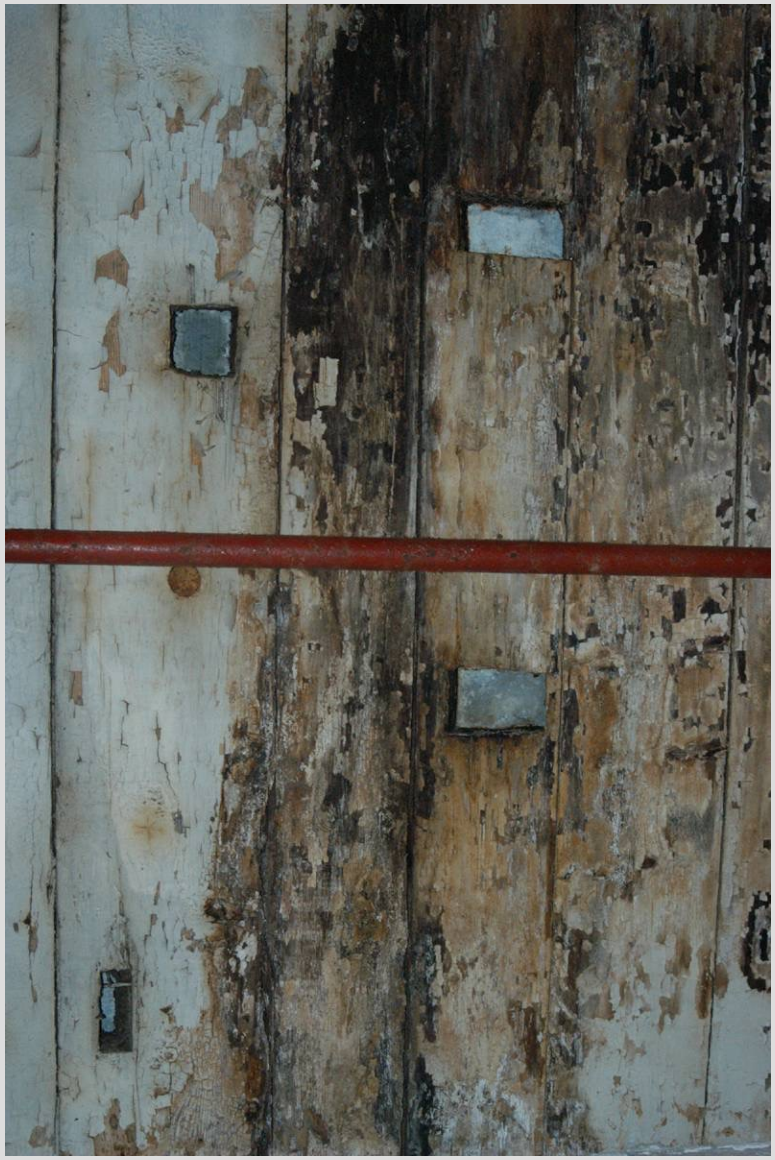

HANK ART, 10/03


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The Photech Mill:

A History of Potential Redevelopment, 1988 to Present

1988:

- Photech owes $600,000 to town in back property taxes and sewage bills
- Negotiates sale of property with Michael Capizzi, a Boston-based developer
- Prior to any major building deterioration on site
- Capizzi had just completed renovation of the Berkshire mill in nearby Adams
  → planned for similar renovation at Photech, with designation for 10% affordable

Capizzi and the Berkshire Mill: A Visual Comparison

Photech Mill- Williamstown

Berkshire Mill- Adams

From Mill to Luxury Apartments

Adequate Parking

Commercial space
on ground floor

3 stories of apartments, center atrium,
historical preservation

Problems facing Capizzi and Photech:

1) Opposition from town- Pine Cobble disasters
2) Black Monday Stock Market crash
3) Bottoming of real estate market

NO $$$

↓

Deal falls through

Progressive deterioration to today:

- Minor roof leakage early 90's, heightening around 1995
- Town does no repair work
- Other developers still interested
- Lafayette and Kuehn

→ General Cable Mill, 2003

Building demolition may finally make site look attractive *and* feasible

→ But EPA funds lacking

Where we are today

Where we could be

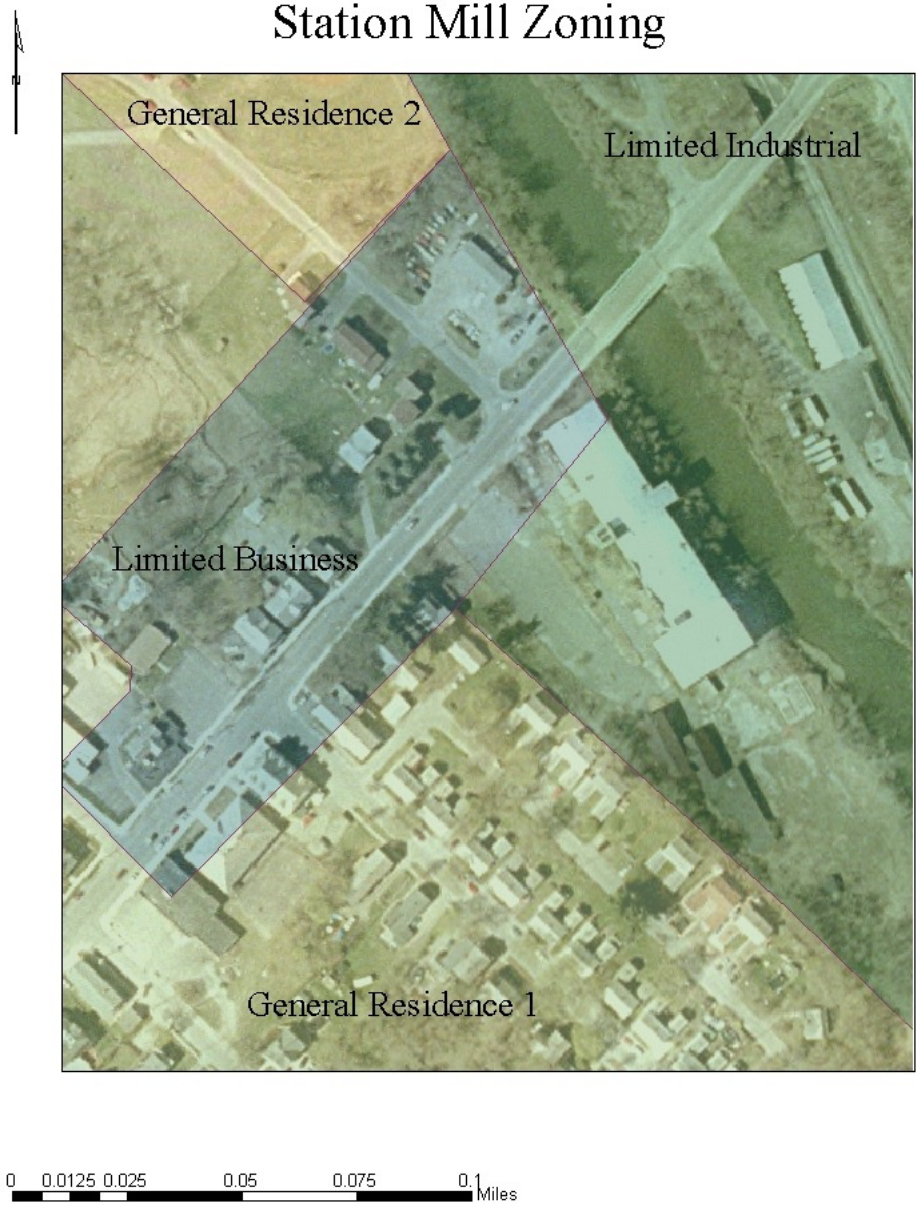
Where we're going?

Regulations Relevant to Development on the Photech Site:

1) Zoning
2) Zoning Overlay Districts: Confined Aquifer and Wellhead 2
3) Massachusetts Wetlands and Rivers Protection Acts (1972, 1996)
4) 40B (Comprehensive Permit)

1) Zoning

Limited Industrial



2) Zoning Overlays: Confined Aquifer

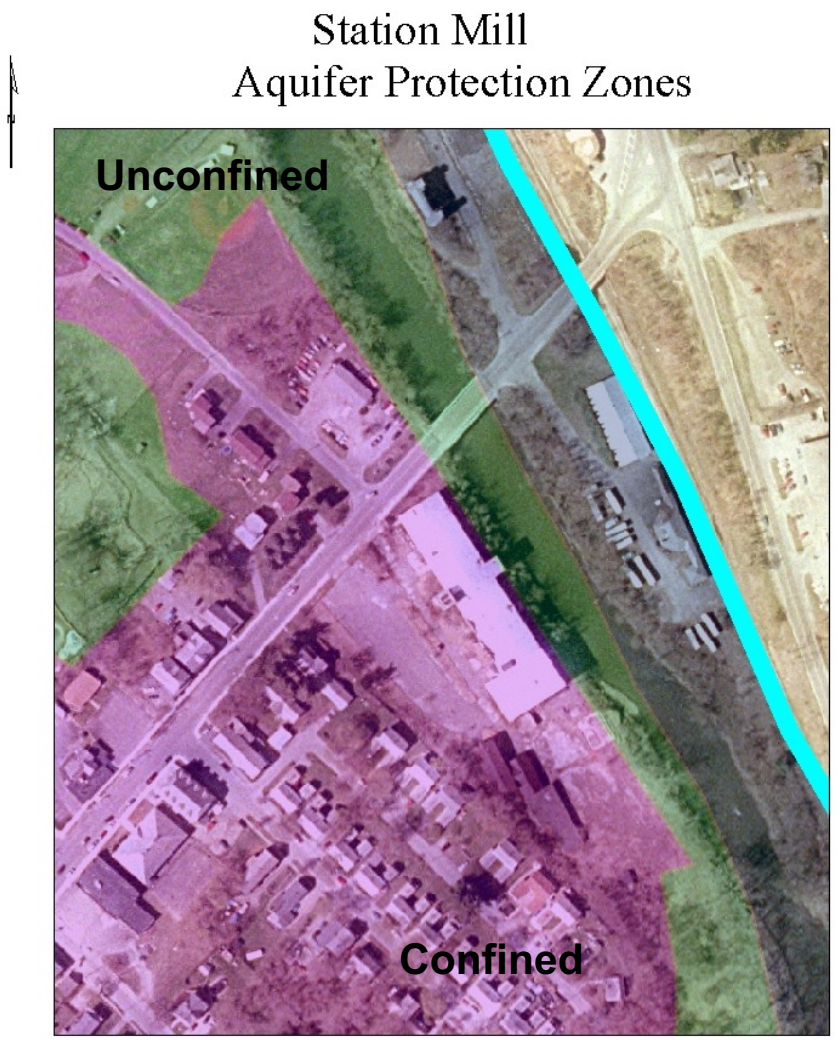
(Source of Williamstown drinking water)

-No 40B exemptions for overlays

- All excavations, wells, borings or intrusions into aquifer only allowed by special permit

-Little bearing to potential developers

→Water already supplied at site



2) Zoning overlays: Wellhead Protection District 2

-More regulatory than Confined Aquifer overlay

-Limits on allowable uses:

→Storage of hazardous materials and commercial fertilizers not allowed unless well contained

(industrial limits)

→Application of pesticides (incl. herbicides) and fertilizers by special permit only

(maintenance limits for recreational area)

→Any use rendering more than 15% or 2,500 square feet impervious by special permit only

(parking limitations)

Wellhead protection zones:

3) Massachusetts Wetlands and Rivers Protection Acts

-Portion of site located within 100 year fp, 100' buffer zone, BLSF

-Normal regulations

-Historic Mill Complex

→Exemption from RPA for inner/outer riparian zones

→No exemption from WPA, NOI or RDA must be filed with Con Com before construction within resource areas

4) Chapter 40B: the Comprehensive Permit

MA state law passed in 1969 that encourages affordable housing

Purpose: *"Increase supply and regional distribution of low and moderate income housing by allowing a limited suspension of existing local regulations which are inconsistent with construction of such housing"*

<http://www.state.ma.us/dhcd/components/hac/4summ-mc.htm>

- does NOT exempt redevelopment from meeting Conservation Commission-related regulations
- streamline and bypass zoning bylaws that are not compatible with the site redevelopment
- tap into funds for redevelopment through a government subsidy program specifically for affordable housing

Comprehensive Permit – Eligibility

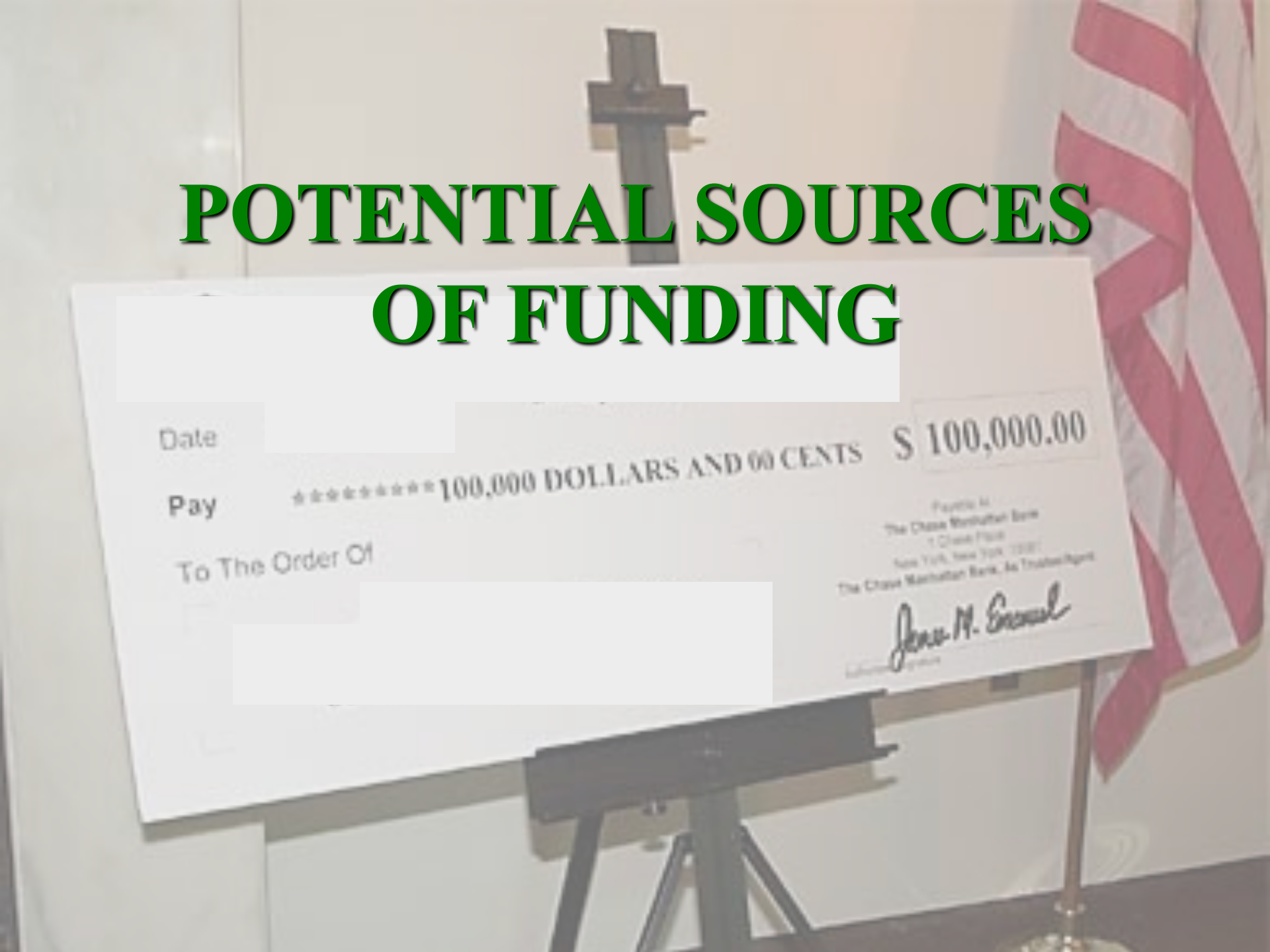
- public agency, non-profit organization, or limited dividend organization
- current low income housing in municipality is below 10%
- at least 25% must be affordable for 80% of median area income

	Williamstown	Berkshire	MA
median income	$51,875	$39,047	$50,502
low/moderate income	$41,500	$31,238	$40,402

Comprehensive Permit Process

- Determination of Project Eligibility (Site Approval) from state institution
  - MassHousing → Housing Starts
  - Financial Institutions Belonging to the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston (FHLBB) → New England Fund

- obtain single permit from local Zoning Board of Appeals



POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

Demolition Funding

Berkshire Eagle, November, 2003:

"Funds for Photech cleanup lacking"

- FY 2004 EPA funds for New England hasn't come through yet
- $1million request for Mill building demolition is stalled

New England EPA Coordinator, Michael Barry:

- funding authorization to take action at Photech will happen as soon as funds are available … sometime this winter
- since the building has collapsed, site does rank relatively high

Funding Programs	*Maximum Amount*
CDAG (Community Development Action Grants) **MA Dept of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)**	**$1 million**
BEDI (Brownfield Economic Development Initiative) **US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**	**$2 million**
Section 108 Loan Program **HUD**	**Public loan program**
Revolving Loan Fund **MassDevelopment**	**$500,00**

Project Construction

- Loans and Grants
- Rentals and Home ownership

Funding Programs	*Maximum Amount*
Housing Development Support Program	400,000
MA Community Capital Fund	100,000-500,000
Real Estate Fund	250,000
CDAG	1,000,000
Community Enterprise Economic Development Program	60,000
Affordable Housing Program	627,000
OneSource and OneStop	250,000-10,000,000
Permanent Rental Financing Program	250,000-9,000,000
Permanent Plus Program	2,000,000
Small Scale Rental Production	90,000 (per unit)
MA Tax-Exempt Credit for Housing	3,000,000-10,000,000

Project Construction

- Loans and Grants
- Rentals and Home ownership

Potential Resource Pool

= $39,174,000

The Community Survey

Intended to assess community preferences in developing the Photech site

- Questions regarding priorities for redevelopment, housing, commercial and recreational preferences

1) Sent 200 to Station Mill District residents

→ 40% response rate

2) Distributed 3 boxes (to Library, Banknorth and Cold Springs on Spring St.)

→ 40 respondents

What do we view as the 3 main considerations for redevelopment?

- Commercial Space
- Residential Units
- Recreation

Why Commercial Space?

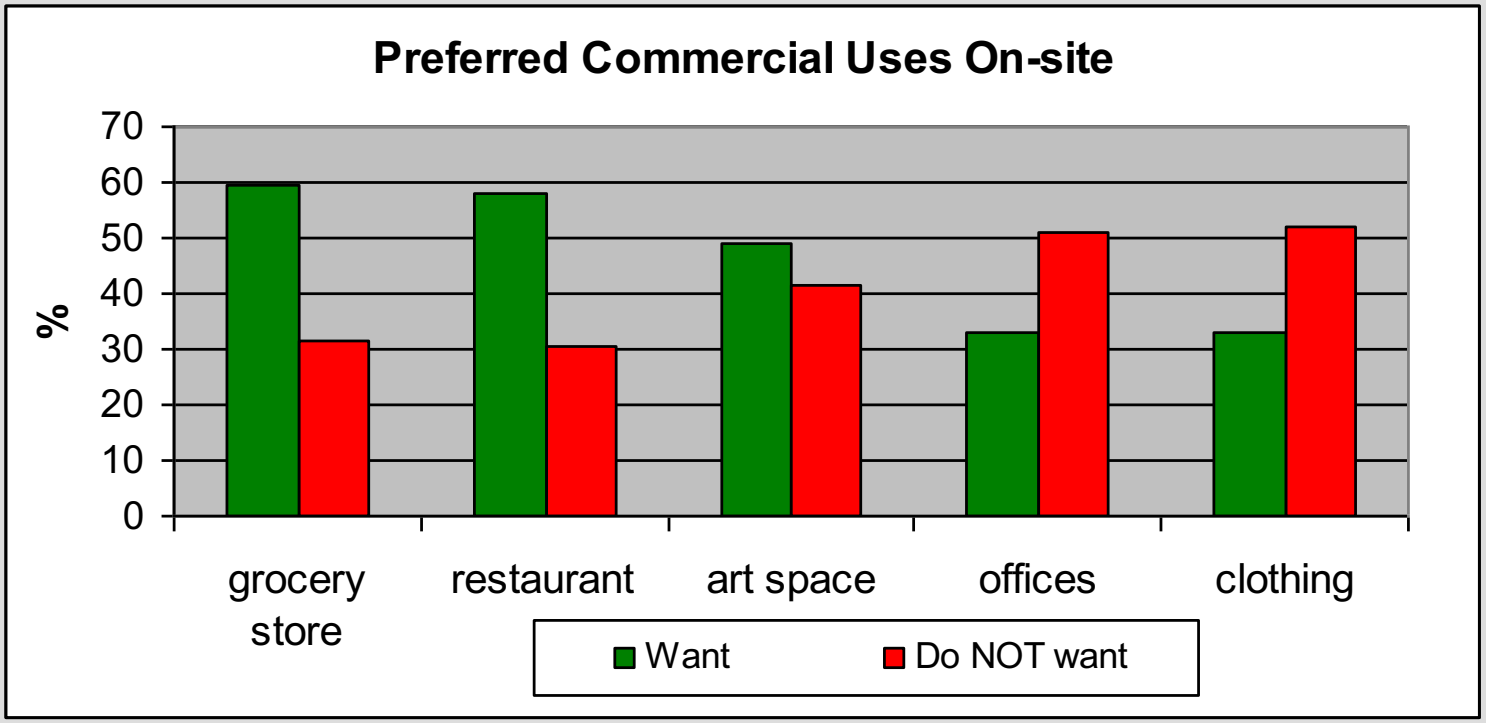
Survey Results

Only 12% chose commercial use as his/her first priority for the site

→ 3rd after recreation and housing

NOT a major priority

Survey Results



Grocery/General Store & Restaurant ... over half said YES

Clothing and office space ... just over half said NO thanks

Art Space ... current vacant spot for art gallery on Water Street

What kind of commercial?

Master Plan

"The number of payroll jobs offered by **town employers** has been growing faster than the resident labor force over the past several years; the number of jobs in Williamstown exceeded the labor force by more than 750 in 1999"

"While job levels have been stable ... new jobs tend to be either relatively high- or low-paying, fostering a sharp income disparity in the community. This disparity can be addressed by creating **more diverse employment opportunities**"

"Lower Cole Avenue (Photech, silos and train station parcels) be considered as a single area for **mixed use development**"

What kind of commercial?

Municipal Regulations

Wellhead Protection District 2

- Storage of hazardous materials and commercial fertilizers not allowed unless well contained → limit industrial activity

Compatibility with other uses & neighborhood

Mixed use development

- Recreation and housing are top priorities

Commercial on Photech

Adams Mill – vacant commercial floor

- limit commercial space to 9000 ft^2

  ~ 2-3 businesses

- encourage businesses that meet the daily local needs of the surrounding community or offer something unique (perhaps connected to recreation) that will draw people to the site

Why Residential Units for the Photech Site?

1) The Williamstown Master Plan:

In 2002, RKG Associates "Housing Element" determined the following in Williamstown:

1) Declining # of housing units being built each decade from 1970 to today

2) Rising property values

3) Availability of affordable housing in Williamstown more pressing than in surrounding areas

→ Difficult to find affordable, starter or rental homes at low to middle income

ALSO:

Town Master Plan survey revealed an "unmet need for affordable starter housing and moderately priced homes"

→ Community, not just town planners see need for affordable housing

Master Plan also envisions:

1) Expanding the availability of affordable housing in Williamstown
   → goal of 100 units affordable to various income levels over next 10 years

2) Efficient use of public services in development such as water and sewer

3) Preservation of historic structures

4) Mixed-use redevelopment

ALL OF WHICH CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED AT THE PHOTECH SITE!

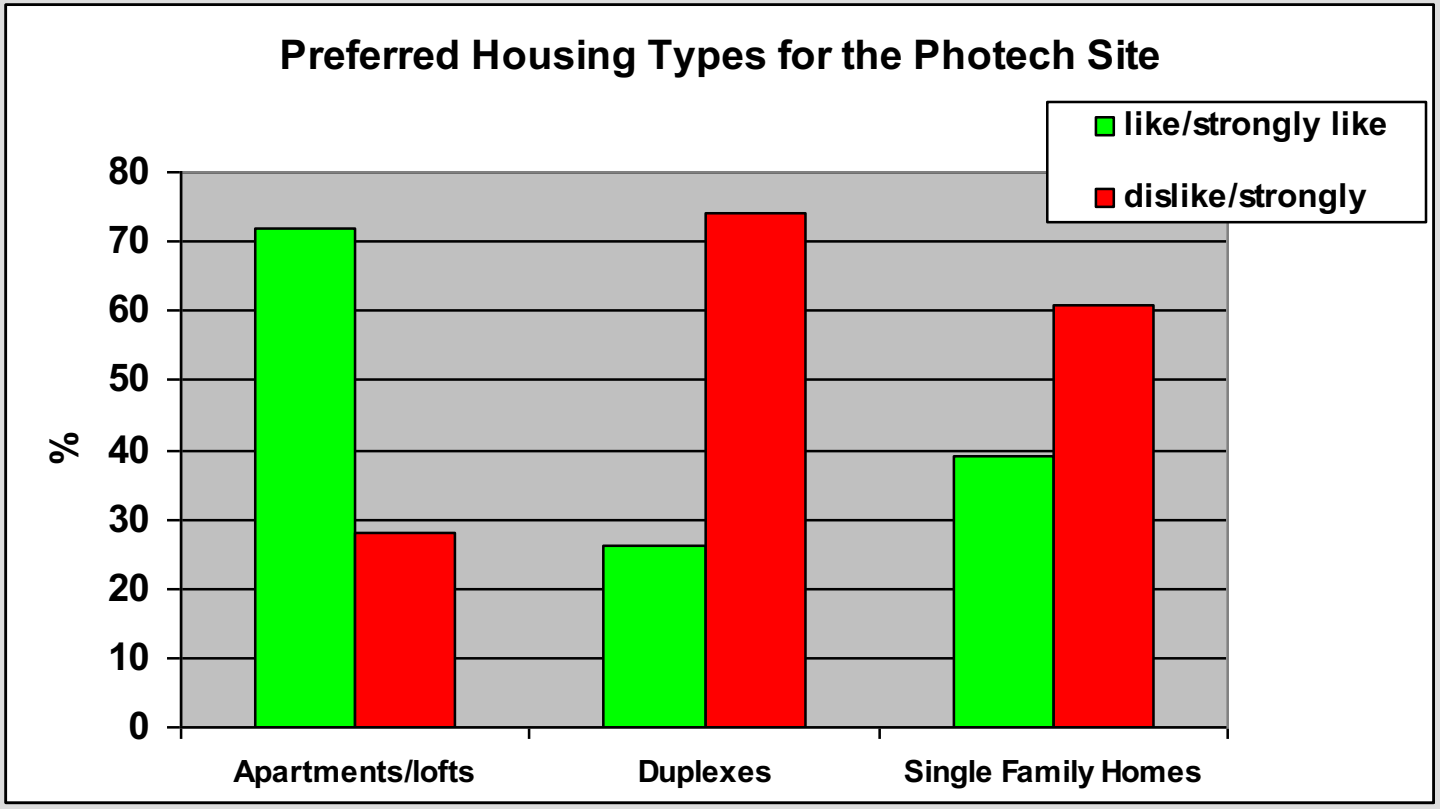
"The Photech Mill site (should) be evaluated as a possible location for affordable/assisted rental housing as a component of a larger mixed-use redevelopment strategy for that site, and target the surrounding Cole Avenue neighborhood for housing rehabilitation"

–Master Plan Steering Committee, 2002

2) ENVI 302 Community Survey:

-When asked to rank possible development options on site, *housing was picked as the #1 priority by 28% of respondents*

→ Only second to recreation, and "affordable" suggested by many



Lastly: 63% of respondents prefer a mix of rental and owner occupied residences on site

→ suggesting not simply rental units like Master Plan calls for

Why Recreation?

Park and Bikepath

River

Why build a Park?

Community Support

53% of those surveyed wanted a park with river access as their first choice of development options

77% of those surveyed wanted a park as their first or second choice

Why Build a Park?

Master Plan Support

"Existing public open spaces in town... do not invite gathering and lingering, and are hard to travel to by foot or bike." (p. 14)

"Williamstown has abundant recreation potential, *particularly with two rivers running through town.* Although improvements have been made, both general and handicapped acces to existing recreation facilities and in-town natural areas (including rivers) is inadequate." (p. 14)

"Recreation programs and facilities [should] be expanded within or close to the town center." (p. 17)

"A plan [should] be developed to provide access to and maintenance of town rivers." (p. 17)

Why Build a Park?

Municipal Regulations

- *Limits Impervious Surfaces:*

  In the Wellhead Protection District, "any use that will render impervious more than 15% or 2,500 square feet of any lot" should be limited.

  Williamstown Zoning Bylaws, section 70-7.4

- *Concentrates porous lot areas in a usable manner*

- *Responsible and productive use of land within 100 year flood plain*

The site

and its recreation potential

Whitewater Parks

In Golden, Colorado a recent economic impact study has shown that a course that costs less than **$170,000** brings more than $**1.7 million** into the local economy

-Recreation Engineering and Planning, Boulder, CO

All that is needed for a park is a volume of 100 cfs and a drop of three feet.

-Recreation Engineering and Planning, Boulder, CO

Logistics

Park

Zoning: Need zoning board approval

Conservation Commission Approval:

Required for 100 year flood plain

Benefit:

- Brings People to Site
- Gathering Point for Neighborhood
- Extends Existing Linear Park Trails

Park Cost

To develop approximately 2 acres

ITEM	COST	NUMBER	TOTAL
Topsoil and Grass	$ 12,000.00	1	$ 12,000.00
Shrubs	$ 60.00	20	$ 1,200.00
Trees	$ 350.00	10	$ 3,500.00
8' Picnic Table	$ 530.00	2	$ 1,060.00
24 gallon trash receptacle	$ 510.00	3	$ 1,530.00
8' park bench	$ 310.00	4	$ 1,240.00
Childrens toy (e.g.) Swingset	$ 900.00	1	$ 900.00
Performance Area	$ 7,300.00	1	$ 7,300.00
TOTAL			**$ 28,730.00**

Logistics

Bike Path

Zoning: Need zoning board approval

Conservation Commission Approval: Required if planned construction is in the 100 year flood plain

Cost: Paid for by trail development

Benefit:

- Brings People to Site
- Non-motorized transportation
- Tourist Attraction

Logistics

Canoe Launch

Zoning: Need zoning board approval

Conservation Commission Approval:

Required for modification of river bank

Benefit:

- Brings People to Site
- Increase river awareness
- Tourist Attraction

Canoe Launch Cost

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL PRICE
Erosion Control Fence	30	lin. ft.	$3.00	$90.00*
Earth Excavation	215	cu. yd.	$10.00	$2,150.00
Aggregate Base Course 8"	215	cu. yd.	$25.00	$5,375.00
Furnish & Place Topsoil 6"	135	sq. yd.	$2.00	$270.00**
Seeding Class 1	0.03	acre	$4,000.00	$120.00
Mulch Method	0.06	ton	$1,000.00	$60.00
Cable Gate	1	ea.	$1,000.00	$1,000.00
Sign - Entrance	1	ea.	$3,000.00	$3,000.00
Sign - General Info.	1	ea.	$500.00	$500.00
Sign - Preserve Regulations	1	ea.	$200.00	$200.00
Sign - No Dumping/Fine	1	ea.	$200.00	$200.00
Sign - No Recycle	1	ea.	$150.00	$150.00
Sign - Take Out	1	ea.	$50.00	$50.00
Sign - Stop	1	ea.	$90.00	$90.00
Wheel Stops	3	ea.	$40.00	$120.00***
Refuse Can	1	ea.	$100.00	$100.00
Recycle Can	1	ea.	$100.00	$100.00
TOTAL				**$ 13,575.00**

From Illinois Openlands project: www.openlands.org

Logistics

Whitewater Park

Zoning: Need zoning board approval

Conservation Commission Approval:

Required for modification of river bank and bottom

Cost: $10,000-$200,000, depending on scope

Benefit:

- Unique recreation tourist attraction
- Increase river awareness
- Outdoor recreation in center of town

Redevelopment Proposal:

1. Reconstruct Building 1 (3 floors)
2. Renovate the "Cube" (4 floors)
3. Townhouses/Brownstones (3 floors)
4. One-way street to enter/exit site

Zoning Options:

1) Limited Business or Village Business: No multi-family housing, no elderly housing, no residential units on first floor

    a) Setback requirements: Front (30 ft.), Side (15 ft.)

2) General Residence: No commercial space

    a) Setback requirements: Front (30 ft.), Rear (15 ft.), Side (15 ft.)

    More flexibility needed to fulfill community preferences

    Recommendation: Planned Unit Development

Planned Unit Development:

1) A fully planned community, either residential, commercial, industrial, or mixed use in nature.

2) The district is flexible in terms of dimensions, uses, and designs.

3) Amesbury, MA: Using PUD to renovate historic mill buildings

Residential plan:

1) 2 & 3 bedroom apartments in Building 1 and Cube

    a. 2 bedroom apartment = 1,100 net sq. ft.

    b. 3 bedroom apartment = 1,400 net sq. ft.

2) Building 1 and Cube total sq. ft. = 59,862 gross sq. ft.

21 (2 bedroom) x 1,100 sq. ft. = 23,100 net sq. ft.

+21 (3 bedroom) x 1,400 sq. ft. = 29,400 net sq. ft.

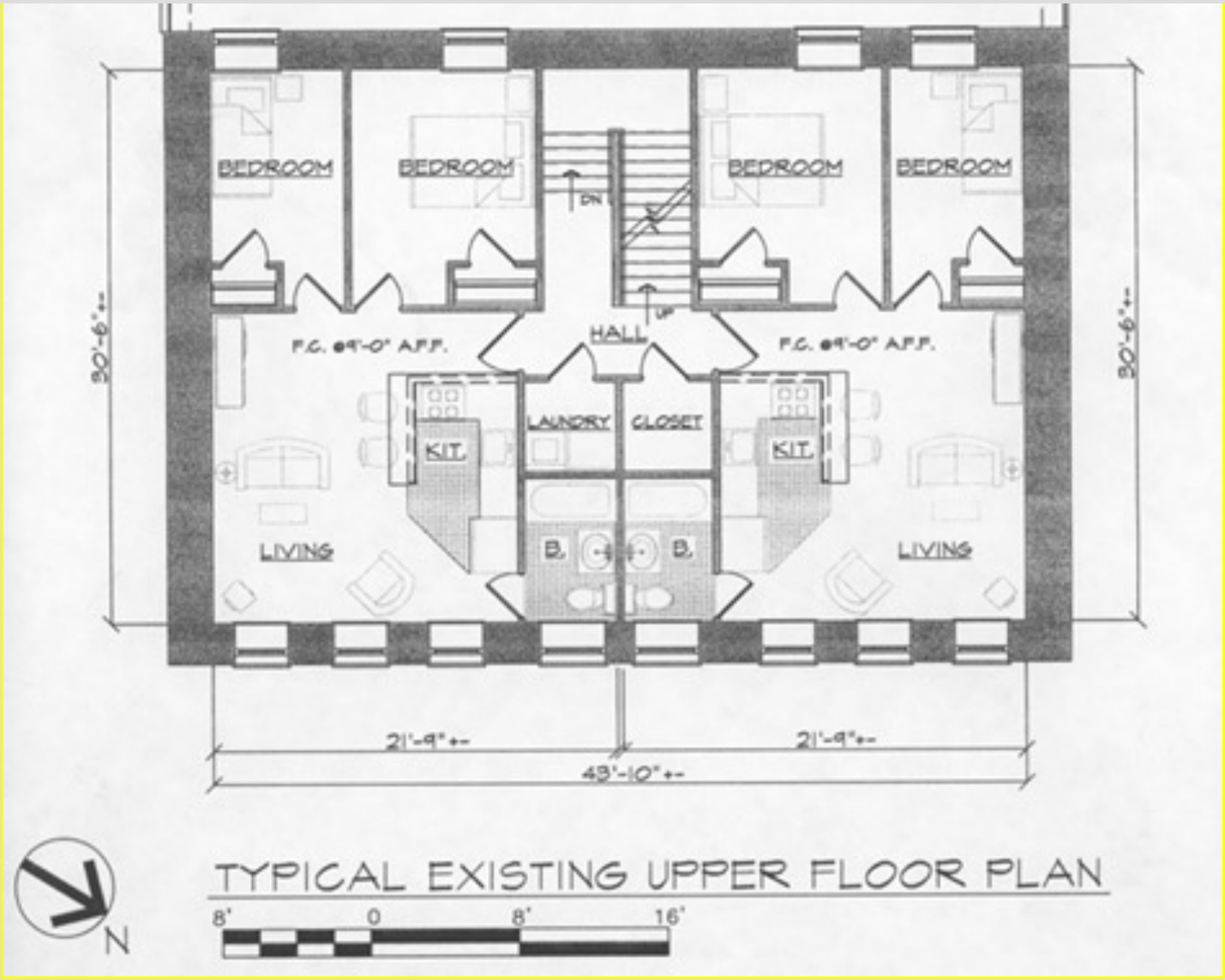
52,500 net sq. ft.

3) 42 apartments

    a. 11 affordable

    b. 31 market rate

Possible 2-Bedroom Apt. Floor Plan



Source: 586 Merrimack St., Lowell, MA. Developed by Mill City Properties, http://www.millcityproperties.com/project13.htm

Townhouse Construction Cost:

Source: Glenwood Park

Cost per sq. ft. = $150

x 32,400 sq. ft.

$4,860,000

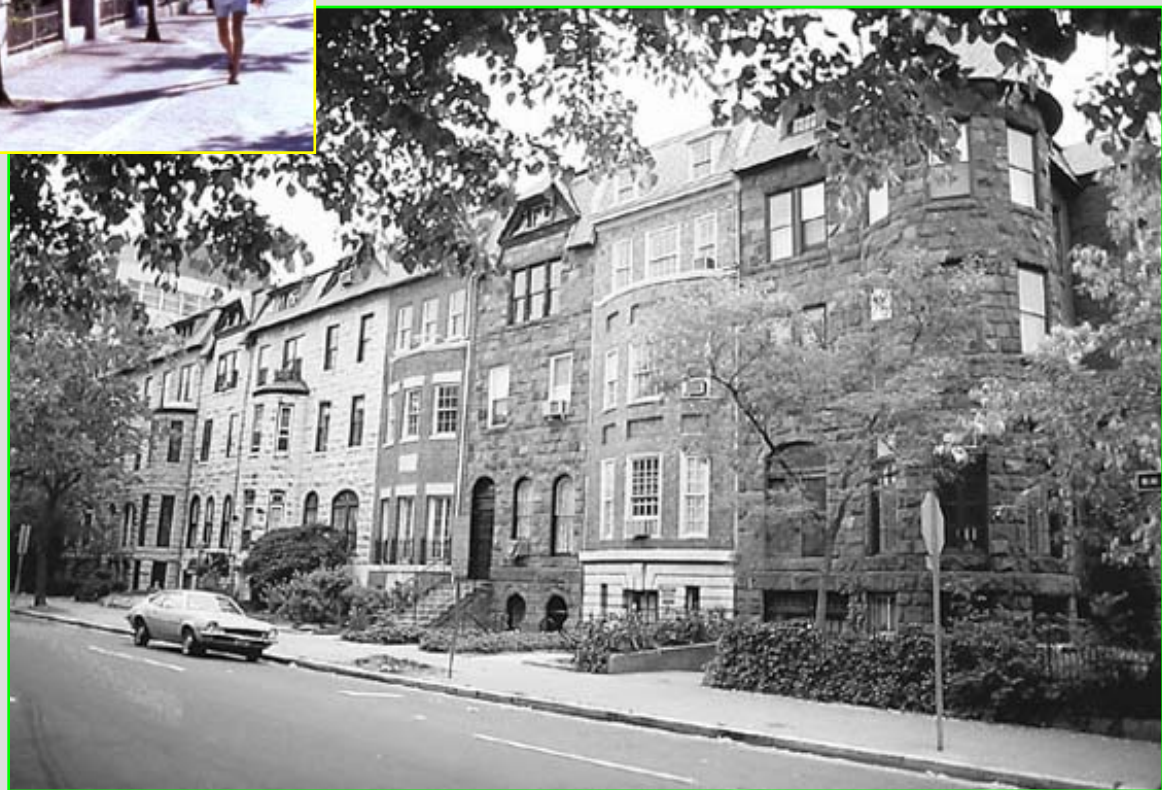
- Five 3-story Townhouses (footprint: 80 ft. x 30 ft.)
- Rent one apt. on each floor or sell entire house
- Potentially 15 apts.

  a. 4 affordable

  b. 11 market rate

Source: Congress for the New Urbanism

Other Possible Townhouse Designs:



Source: Congress for the New Urbanism

Commercial Property in Williamstown:

Property	Square Footage	Annual Rent
16 Water St.	3,000 ft.^{2}	$14 per ft.^{2}
290 Cole Ave.	1,500 ft.^{2}	$10 per ft.^{2}
Doc's Video Rental	4,800 ft.^{2}	$10 per ft.^{2}
General Cable Mill	30,000 ft.^{2}	$14 per ft.^{2}
Colonial Plaza	--	$12.50-$15 per ft.^{2}
Spring Street	--	$13-$20 per ft.^{2}

Recommendation: $14 per ft.^{2} for Photech commercial space

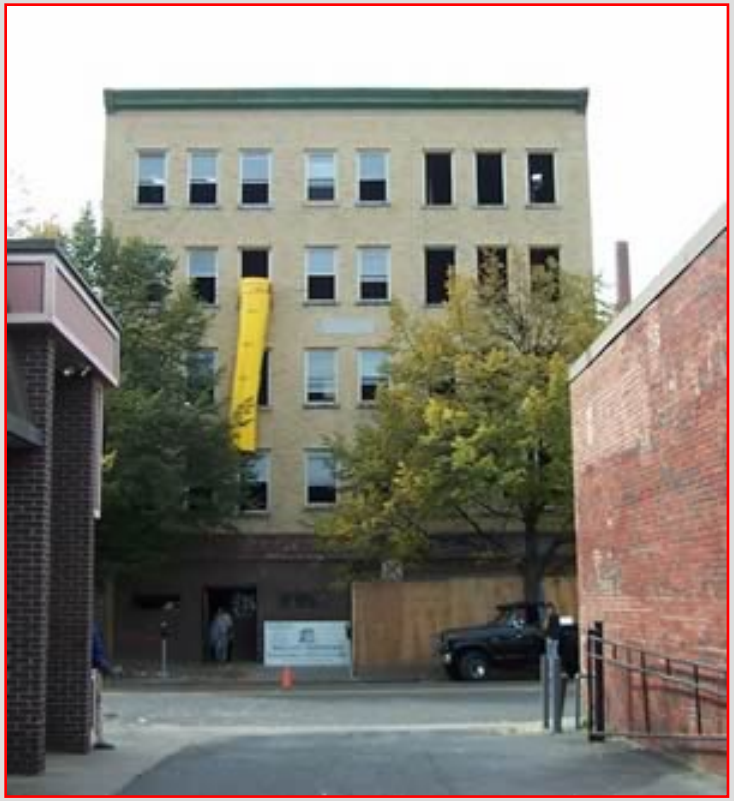
Annual rent collected on commercial space:

$14 per sq.ft. per year

x 9,000 net sq.ft.

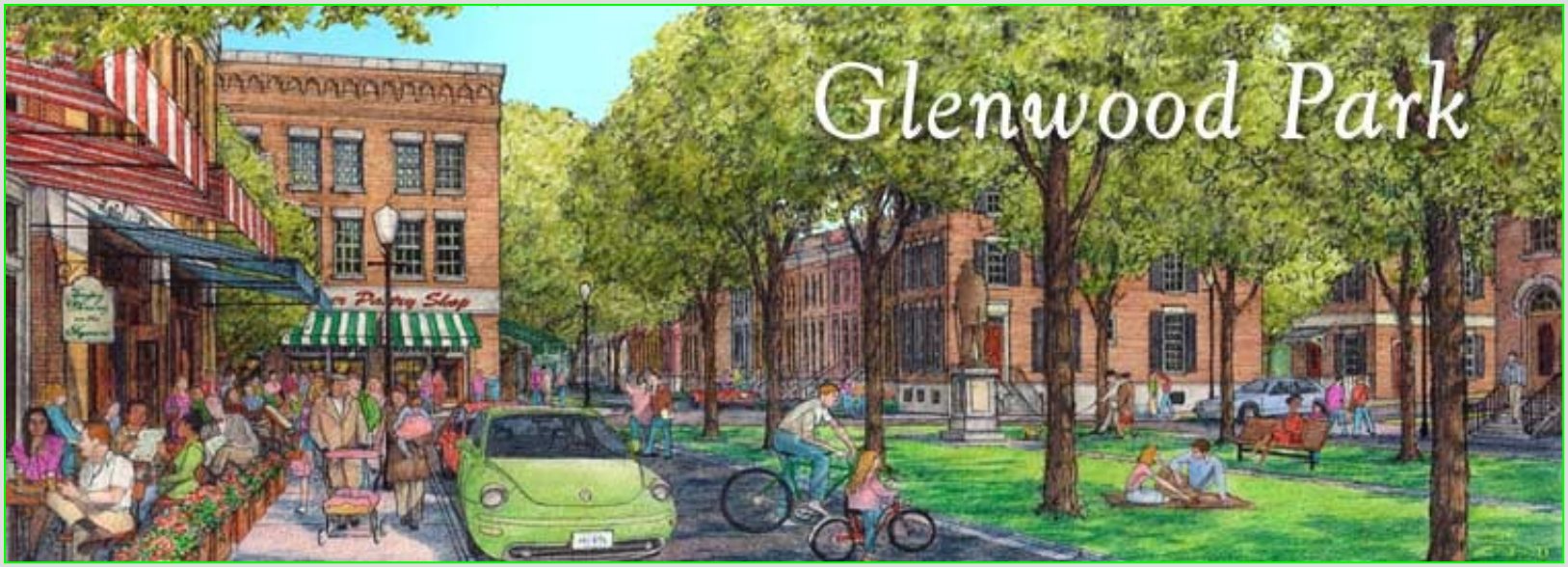
$126,000

Lowell, MA

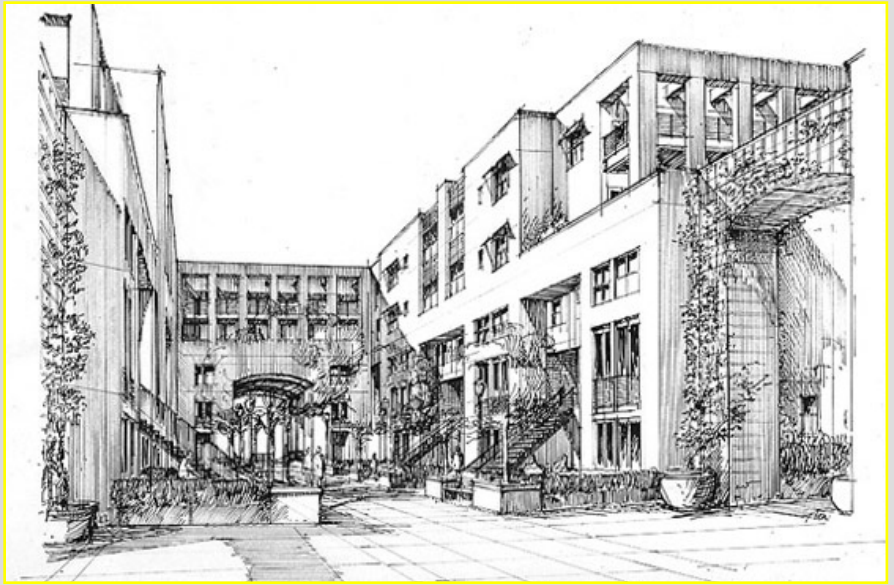


Source: 586 Merrimack St., Lowell, MA. Developed by Mill City Properties, http://www.millcityproperties.com/project13.htm

Courtyard and public garden/park:



Source: Green Street Properties



Source: Congress for the New Urbanism

Recommended Commercial Uses:

- General store/Small grocery store
- Restaurant/Café/Deli
- Recreation outfitter

Source: Congress for the New Urbanism

Parking Construction Costs

Zoning requirements:

- 2 off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit plus 1 off-street space for every 3 dwelling units
- 1 off-street space per 250 square feet of non-storage commercial space plus one space per 2 employees

Proposed spaces:

57 dwelling units: 114 parking spaces

9,000 net sq.ft. of commercial space: 27 spaces

$4,000 per space

x 150 spaces

$600,000

Recommendation: Decentralize parking on site, widen Cole Ave.

Source: Peter Endres

Berkshire Mill, Adams

Road Construction Costs:

Road dimensions:

- 20 ft. wide
- Additional 10 ft. on both sides for para or angled parking

Cost per linear foot: $300

x 640 ft. of road

$192,000

Monthly rent for different apt. types:

- Affordable rate = $0.70 per sq. ft.
- Affordable 2-bedroom = $770
- Affordable 3-bedroom = $980
- Affordable story of townhouse = $1,680

- Market rate= $1 per sq. ft.
- Market rate 2-bedroom = $1,300
- Market rate 3-bedroom = $1,600
- Market rate story of townhouse = $2,400

Annual Revenues from Monthly Rent Collected:

Affordable = $194,880

2-bdrm = 6 apts. x $770 x 12 months = $55,440

3-bdrm = 5 apts. x $980 x 12 months = $58,800

Townhouse = 4 apts. x $1,680 x 12 months = $80,640

Market rate = $858,000

2-bdrm = 15 apts. x $1,300 x 12 months = $234,000

3-bdrm = 16 apts. x $1,600 x 12 months = $307,200

Townhouse = 11 apts. x $2,400 x 12 months = $316,800

TOTAL ANNUAL REVENUE: $1,052,880

Total Up-Front Costs to developer:

Building 1: $10,935,600
The Cube: $3,599,040
Townhouses: $4,860,000
Road and parking: $792,000
Park:

Sale value of property: $250,000

$20,436,640

Total Annual Revenues to developer:

$126,000 + $1,052,880 = $1,178,880

(commercial) + (residential) =

Budgetary gains/losses for Town of Williamstown

Gains:

Sale value of property = $250,000

Annual taxes = $14.72 per $1,000 of assessed value

Assessed value = ($1,178,880 x .95 x .80)/.1 = $8,959,488

Annual taxes = ($8,959,488/$1,000) x $14.72 = $131,884

Costs:

No significant fire, police, sewer, water costs

Perhaps increased education costs

Positive net gain for local government of Williamstown

Respecting basic site restrictions:

1) Sewer easement

2) 100 year flood plain

3) No more than 15% impervious cover (aquifer protection)

15% of 9.9 acres = 1.5 acres

Proposed site plan is 50% impervious cover

HOWEVER, no increase in existing impervious cover, perhaps even a reduction

Final Recommendations:

1) *Re-zone Planned Unit Development (mixed-use)*
2) *Seek Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit (25% affordable housing)*
   → consider mix of owner-occupied/rental
3) *Reserve 100 yr. flood plain as recreational area (green space, canoe launch, etc.)*
4) *Consider connecting recreational area on site to Linear Park for nature area with trails*
5) *Provide commercial spaces that meet the daily needs of the local community*

Final Recommendations:

6) Preserve historical significance of site → build in similar 'mill' style, reuse bricks

7) Avoid large parking area, maximize on-street and parallel parking, shared parking arrangements

8) Connect redeveloped site to surrounding neighborhood

9) Hold public design meetings, invite local organizations (e.g. Housing Task Force, HooRWA, Historical Commission)

10) Capitalize on site's unique features and location (e.g. whitewater park) and bring bike path through site

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Redevelopment Site Plan