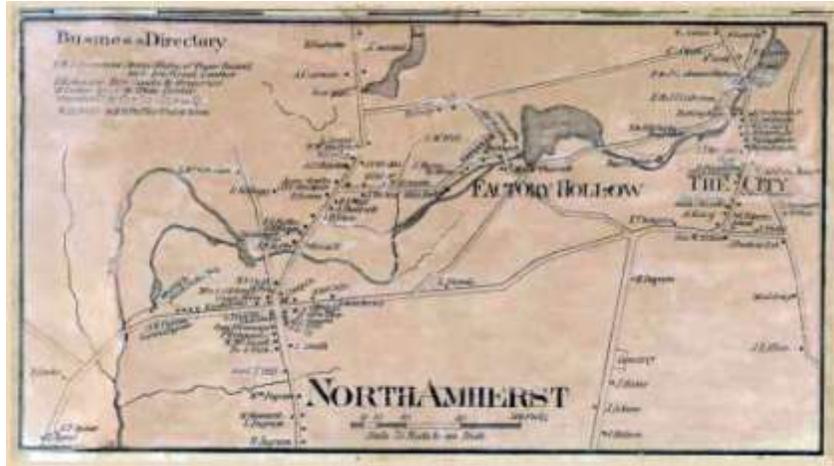


# NORTH AMHERST'S ZONING HISTORY

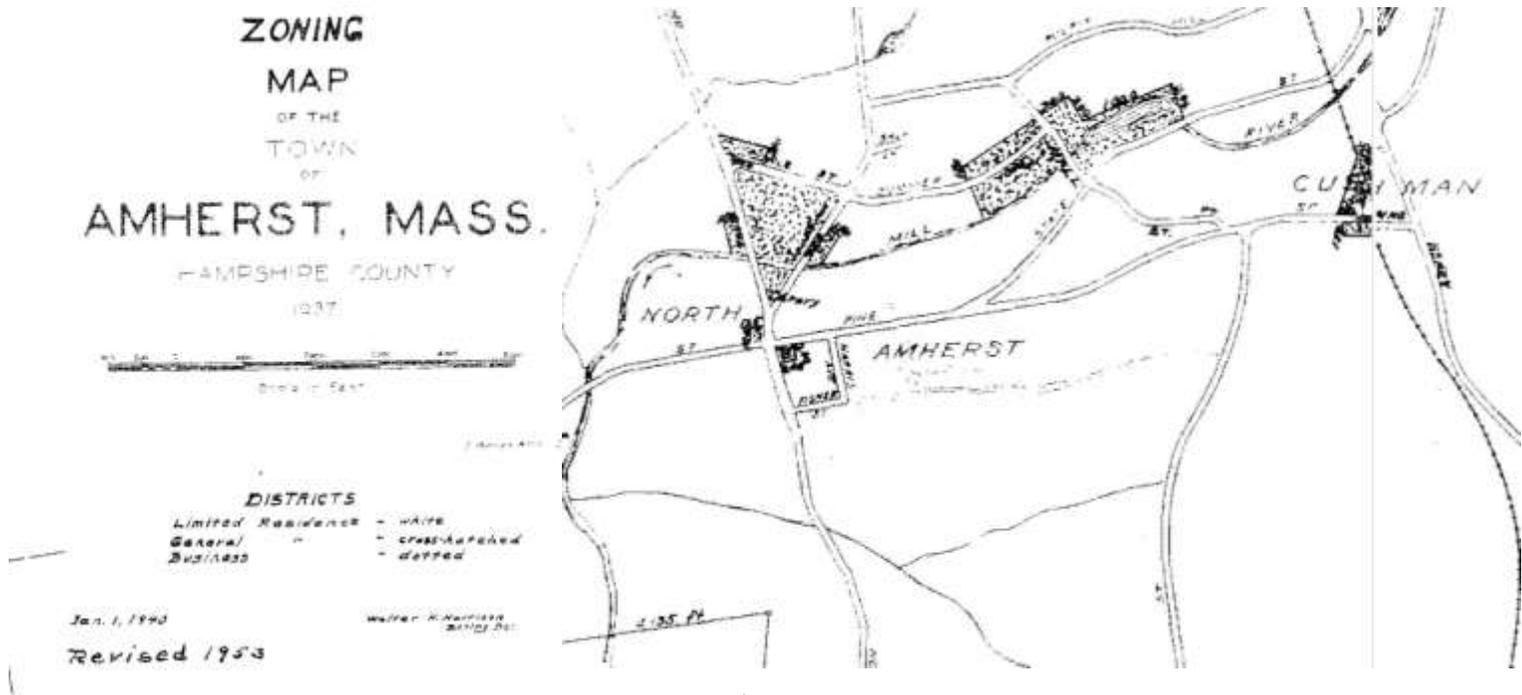
*This document was prepared by W. D. Cows, Inc., with the help of Historian James Avery Smith, as part of Cows' redevelopment of its sawmill site and associated properties in North Amherst.*

Throughout North Amherst's history, numerous businesses were located north of the Mill River, between what's now Sunderland Road and Montague Road, and on both sides of Cows Road. This long time business/commercial core is the likely reason behind Amherst's early zoning of North Amherst Village Center's Commercial Triangle.



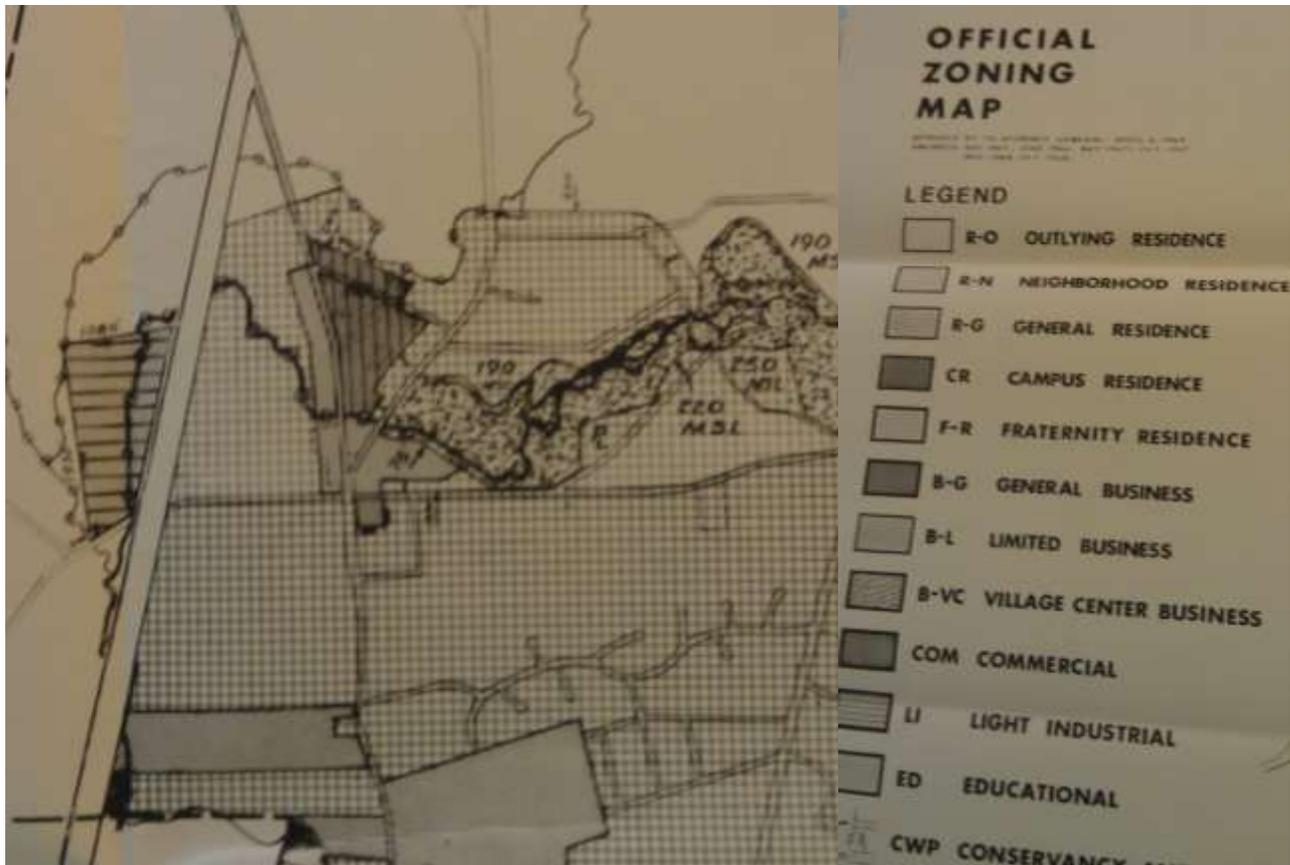
1869 Map of North Amherst Businesses

Comparing North Amherst's 1869 Business Directory (pictured above) to the 1937-1953+ Amherst zoning map (pictured below) it's clear that around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, business intensity migrated north from the crossroads at the North Church to the Triangle primarily North of the Mill River.



1937 Zoning Map with updates through 1953

Zoning in North Amherst between 1964 and 1968+ further defined the commercial center of North Amherst being north of the Mill River. It also encouraged higher residential density immediately around the commercial center, including along Cowls and Montague Roads.

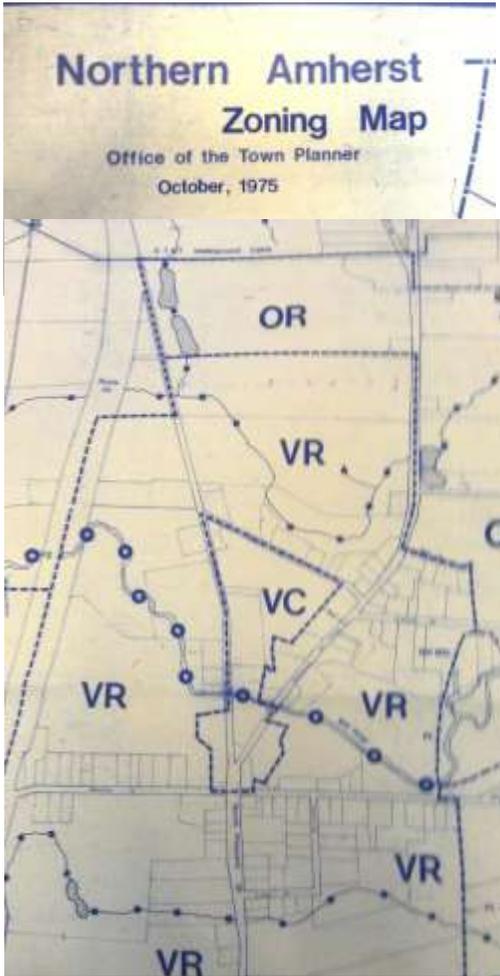


1964 Amherst Zoning Map

In the early 1970s, Paul Jones (8<sup>th</sup> Generation Cowls) built the Riverside Park Stores and 48 units of Riverside Park Apartments, in the Village Center residential zone which surrounded Village Center businesses.



Riverside Park Stores from Amherst, MA GIS



1975 "North Amherst Zoning Map" found in Cows' archives

It is unclear what official zoning changes were implemented in the 1970s but a Town of Amherst zoning map dated October 1975 was found in the Cows' archives. It has not been determined if the zoning indicated on this map was ever adopted but it contains the village center and village residential zoning districts that clearly progressed from the 1968 map.

Since the 1970s many towns in the Pioneer Valley grew at alarming rates due to the success and growth of the Five Colleges. Zoning in Pioneer Valley towns encouraged sprawling development. After decades of large house lots being developed on outlying open space, Valley towns are realizing the economic and environmental benefits of Smart Growth that concentrates new development near existing Village Centers.

Today, zoning in North Amherst includes nearly every zone on the books. Many longstanding individual parcels are in two zones. It encourages what some consider "undesirable uses" within the village core.

The adoption of Amherst's Master Plan and Village Center rezoning efforts are the first steps toward correcting existing zoning that doesn't adequately prioritize development in existing Village Centers and provide incentives to protect open space.

