

City of Newton  
Zoning & Planning Committee



# Village Center Rezoning Phase 4: Version 2.0 Draft Zoning

May 08, 2023

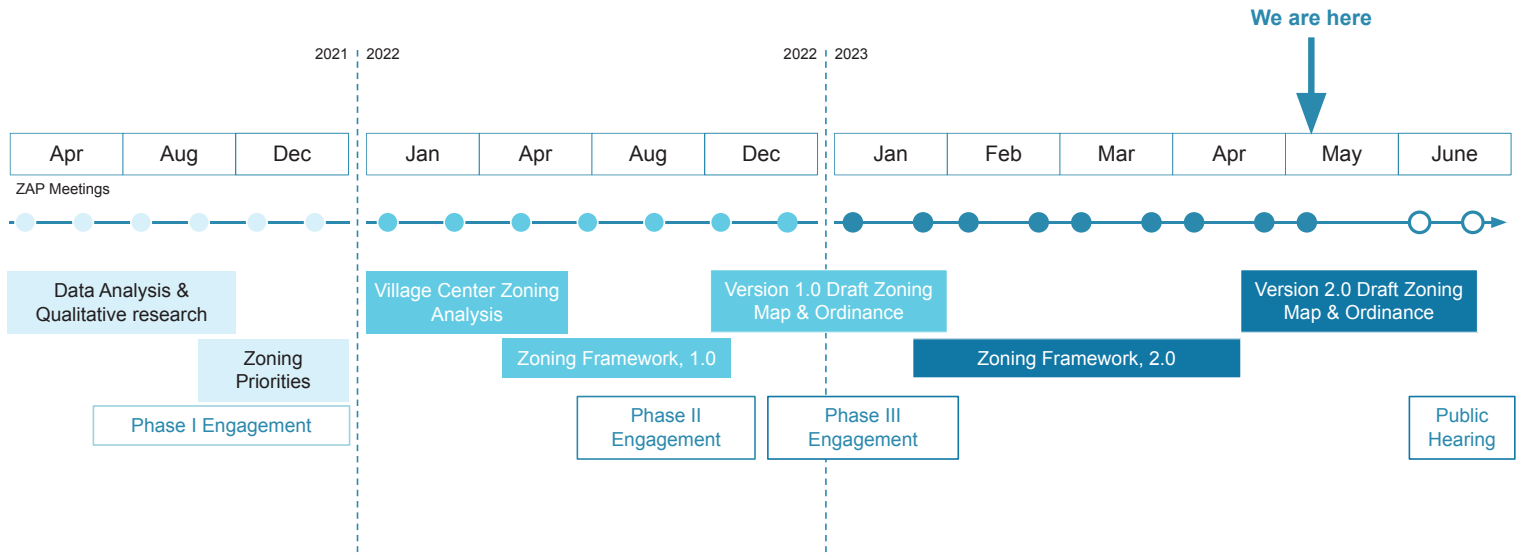
Docket #38-22, #39-22

## Agenda

- 1. How We Got Here**
  - a. Timeline: Where We Are
  - b. Zoning Approach
  
- 2. Version 2.0 Zoning Updates**
  - a. Purpose of Zoning Overlay
  - b. Approval Process
  - c. Dimensional Standards
  - d. Affordability Bonus
  - e. Parking
  - f. MRT
  
- 3. Next Steps**

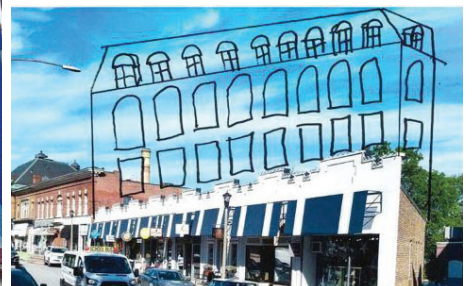
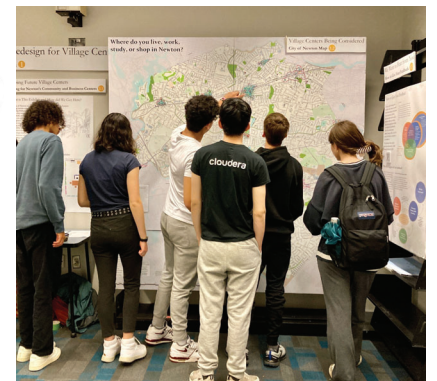
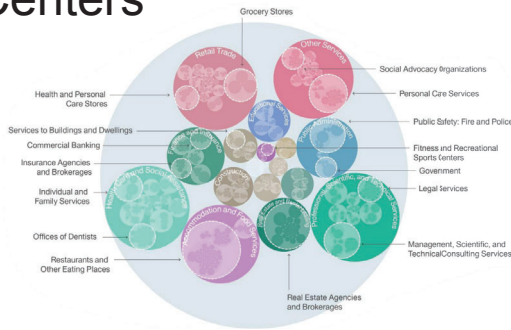
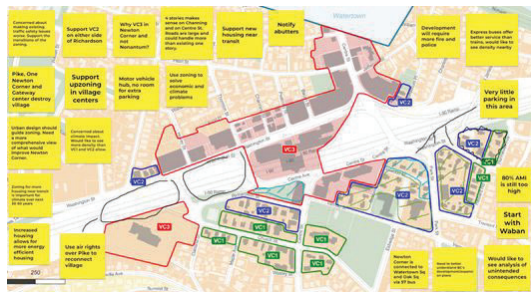
Timeline: Where we are

# Building Upon A Multi-Year Effort



Zoning Approach

# Creating Vibrant Village Centers



This code regulates urban form through the following principal mechanisms:

**1 Building Footprint**  
Sets the maximum area per story

**2 Building Height**  
Sets the maximum height in stories/feet

**3 Roof Form**  
Provides options for a flat or pitched roof half-story

Zoning Approach

\*The figures below represent proposed by-right zoning allowances for new construction

**MRT\***

**2.5** Stories  
**45** Feet tall, max.  
**1,500** SF, max. Footprint

Residential development allowed



**VC1**

**2.5** Stories  
**45** Feet tall, max.  
**4,000** SF, max. footprint

Residential & Limited Retail development allowed



**VC2**

**3.5** Stories  
**62** Feet tall, max.  
**10,000** SF, max. footprint

Mixed Use/Commercial, & Residential development allowed



**VC3**

**4.5** Stories  
**75** Feet tall, max.  
**15,000** SF, max. footprint

Mixed Use/Commercial, & Residential development allowed



\* MRT metrics may be revised based on financial feasibility and urban form studies

# Draft Village Center Zoning Ordinance

- 1. [How We Got Here](#)
- 2. **Version 2.0 Zoning Updates**
- 3. [Next Steps](#)

The following pages present key updates to the draft zoning for the Village Center Overlay Districts.

**Key Items:**

- Purpose of Zoning Overlay
- Approval Process
- Dimensional Standards
- Affordability Bonus
- Parking Requirements
- MRT

Draft Village Center Zoning Ordinance

## Purpose of Zoning Overlay

Numerous advantages:

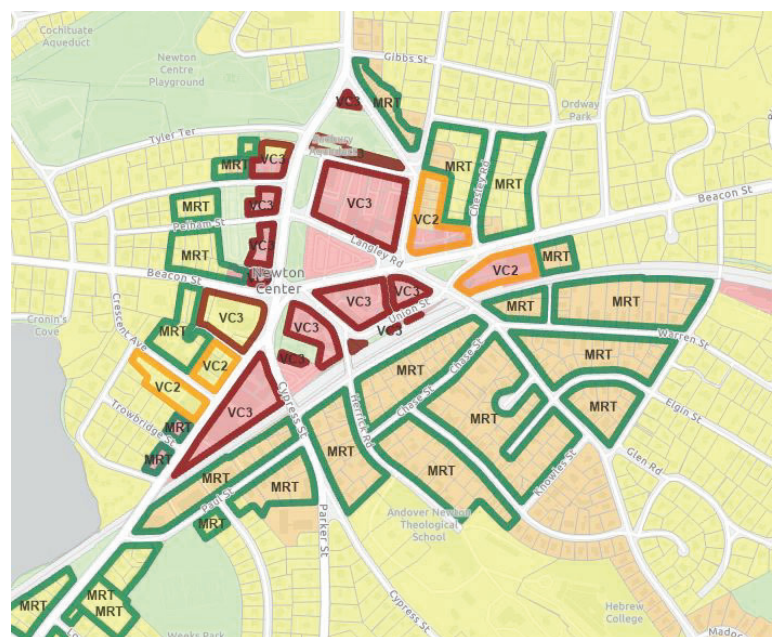
- Additional choice and opportunity for property owners
- Tailored solutions appropriate for each village center
- Greater level of design standards
- Allows for gradual change over time

**Existing Zoning**

- Business (BU)
- Manufacturing (LM, M)
- Multi-Residence (MR)
- Single Residence (SR)
- Mixed Use (MU)
- Public Use & Open Space (PU, OS/R)

**Proposed Zoning Overlay**

- MRT
- VC1
- VC2
- VC3



<https://gis2.ci.newton.ma.us/vczoningcompare.html>

# Approval Process

	Item	Review Required	
		Special Permit	Site Plan Review*
Lot Standards	Development on lots greater than 30,000 sf**	X	
	Development on lots between 20,000 and 30,000 sf		X
	Rear Lot Development (MRT and VC1 only)	X	
	Retaining walls greater than 4 feet	X	
Building Standards	Multiple buildings on a lot in MRT (new construction)	X	
	Multiple buildings on a lot in MRT (conversion)		X
Parking Design Standards	Parking relief (location, size, spacing, screening, etc.)	X	
	Bicycle parking (alternative technologies and methods)	X	
Use Standards***	Uses (allowed uses determined by VCOD)	X (see use table)	

**Notes:**

\* The Planning Board will conduct Site Plan Review at the proposed thresholds. The Site Plan Review process will review conditions related to site layout, pedestrian safety, internal circulation, and other public safety considerations.

\*\* In the VCOD districts, projects utilizing the Adaptive Reuse provisions require Site Plan Review, not a Special Permit.

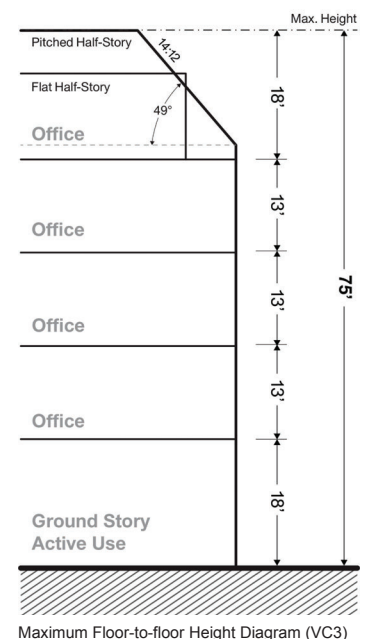
\*\*\* Uses are allowed by-right, by Special Permit, or additional standards per the VCOD use table

# Building Height

	MRT	VC1	VC2*	VC3*
<b>Building Height in Stories (max.)</b>				
-	Pitched: <b>2.5</b> Flat: <b>2.0</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Pitched Roof, Building Height in Feet (max.)</b>				
-	<b>45'</b>	<b>45'</b>	<b>62'</b>	<b>75'</b>
<b>Flat Roof, Building Height in Feet (max.)</b>				
-	<b>27'</b>	<b>40'</b>	<b>56'</b>	<b>69'</b>







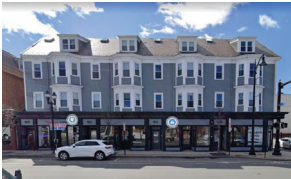

**Notes:**

- The maximum building heights have been simplified to allow for greater code legibility and ease of use (the heights were previously broken out by commercial and residential use)
- The proposed heights allow for flexibility of use as well as greater variety in building form, which we don't see now
- Not all development will be built to its maximum allowable height  
\* Additional stories can be added if pursuing the affordable housing bonus



Maximum Floor-to-floor Height Diagram (VC3)

# Building Footprint

	MRT	VC1	VC2*	VC3*
<b>Building Footprint, in SF (max.)</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>15,000</b>
				
				

\* An additional 2,500 sf in building footprint is allowed when providing additional affordable units

# Requirements When Abutting R-Districts

	MRT	VC1	VC2	VC3
<b>Side Setbacks (min.)</b>				
Abutting a building without a Party Wall in non-R District	<b>7.5'</b>	<b>10'</b>		<b>0'</b>
Abutting an R District	<b>7.5'</b>		<b>15'</b>	
<b>Rear Setbacks (min.)</b>				
Abutting a non-R District		<b>15'</b>		<b>5'</b>
Abutting an R District		<b>15'</b>		
<b>Building Height in Stories (max.)</b>				
Development within 50' of lot line abutting R-District	Pitched: <b>2.5</b> Flat Roof: <b>2.0</b>	<b>2.5</b>		<b>3.5</b>
<b>Pitched Roof, Building Height in Feet (max.)</b>				
Development within 50' of lot line abutting R-District		<b>45'</b>		<b>62'</b>
<b>Flat Roof, Building Height in Feet (max.)</b>				
Development within 50' of lot line abutting R-District		<b>40'</b>		<b>56'</b>

**Notes:**

- Increased side and rear setbacks abutting R-Districts for VC1, VC2, and VC3
- VC3 maximum building heights step down by one (1) story within 50' of a lot line abutting an R-District to transition to the residential context.
- Screening required abutting R-Districts

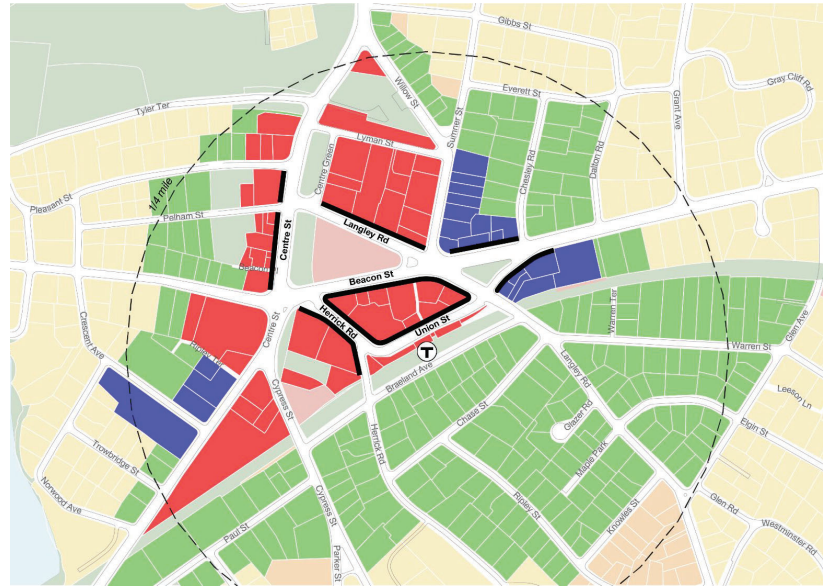


Dunstan East stepping down in height to adjacent neighborhood

# Ground Story Active Use

## Promote vibrancy and placemaking in village centers

- Lots with Mixed Use Priority Street frontage must provide ground story Active Use space for 100% of the total width of the building
- Lots with Mixed Use Priority Street frontage must provide Active Use space at a minimum depth of 25'
- Only VC2 and VC3 lots are considered for Mixed-Use Priority Streets



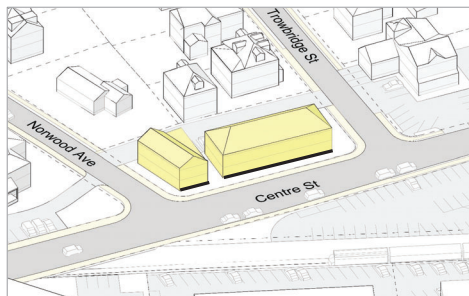
Newton Centre Mixed-Use Priority Streets map

# Facade Articulation

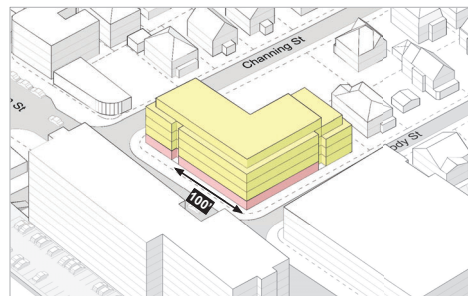
	MRT	VC1	VC2	VC3
<b>Facade Build-Out Ratio (min.)</b>				
Facing a public right-of-way	N/A	75%, or Lot Width within side setbacks minus 15', whichever is less		
<b>Articulation</b>				
Length of continuous facade (max.)		100'		

**Notes:**

- A minimum facade build-out of 75% encourages positive urban design and an activated streetfront.
- The facade of any building greater than 100 feet in width must be divided vertically by a recess or an offset at least seven (7) feet deep and ten (10) feet wide and designed as two (2) or more distinct facades of differing architectural treatment so that the building appears to be multiple buildings.



VC1 Example, Newton Centre  
Facade Build-Out: 72%



VC3 Example, Newton Corner  
Facade Articulation: Recess

# Architectural Features

## 1. Bay

A bay is a window assembly extending from the main body of a building to permit increased light, provide multi-direction views, and articulate a building wall.

## 2. Balcony

An unenclosed platform with a railing that provides outdoor amenity space on upper stories. The portion of the balcony extending into the setback or right of way must comply with the dimensions below.

## 3. Canopy

A wall-mounted structure that provides shade and weather protection over a storefront or building entrance.



# Affordability Bonus

Current Zoning

Proposed Zoning\*

	Base Conditions	Option 1 (VC2 and VC3)	Option 2 (VC3 only)**
<b>Allows For</b>	Height Bonus (stories)	N/A	+2
	Building Footprint Bonus (sq ft)	N/A	+2,500
	Required Affordable Units (min)	17.5%	25%
<b>Must Provide+</b>	Required AMI for Affordable Units** 50-80% Rental / 80% Ownership		



An example of a VC3 development utilizing Option 1, 5.5 stories

\* Bonus cannot be used within 50 feet of a lot line abutting a MRT or residential district.

\*\* VC3 lots abutting a VC1, MRT, or residential district cannot opt in.

+ Both options has been analyzed for financial feasibility with no additional City funding/resources

++ The average AMI can be no more than 65% AMI for a rental development



# Parking Placement

The draft zoning ordinance keeps parking out of view and away from the front lot line.



28 Austin Street provides parking that is located behind the building, out of sight from the street



## Parking Setbacks:

Facing a right of way	12'
Not facing a right of way	4'

- No parking spaces are allowed between the Front Elevation and the Primary Front Lot Line
- Curb cuts are prohibited along the Primary Front Lot Line when access along another lot line is available
- Parking Lots must be separated from the right of way by a building or screening within the parking setback. Screening shall consist of one or a combination of the following:
  - A min. 5'-wide planting strip with planting that provides a buffer from the R.O.W.
  - A wall, barrier, or fence of uniform appearance

# Parking Requirements, Allowed but not Required



No curb cuts or garage entryways along Main Street - Brattleboro, VT

- Not requiring parking improves:
  - Streetscape/pedestrian experience
  - Environment
  - Traffic congestion
- Parking standards ensure quality design when parking is provided
- Bike parking is required
  - Smaller residential exempt
  - Ensures safety

# MRT

The **Multi-Residence Transit (MRT)** district acts as a transition between the mixed-use cores of village centers and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The goal of the MRT district is to:

- Facilitate new small-scale multi-family buildings similar in size to the surrounding residential neighborhoods
- Preserve existing homes through conversion to multiple units



94-96 Madison Street, Newtonville  
5 units  
Footprint: 1,700 sq ft



384 Newtonville Avenue, Newtonville  
4 units  
Footprint: 1,289 sq ft

# MRT

The MRT district allows for two development options:

## New Construction

Front Setback	<b>10'</b>
Side Setback	<b>7.5'</b>
Rear Setback	<b>15'</b>
Building Height, Pitched Roof	<b>2.5 stories / 45'</b>
Building Height, Flat Roof	<b>2.0 stories / 27'</b>
Building Footprint, max.	<b>1,500 sf</b>
Number of Units, max.	<b>4</b>
Multiple Buildings per Lot	<b>Special Permit</b>

## Multi-Family Conversion

Front Setback	<b>20' (for new addition)</b>
Side Setback	<b>7.5' (for new addition)</b>
Rear Setback	<b>15' (for new addition)</b>
Building Height, Pitched Roof	<b>2.5 stories / 45'</b>
Building Height, Flat Roof	<b>2.0 stories / 27'</b>
Building Footprint, max.	<b>Can be exceeded by 50%</b>
Number of Units, max.	<b>6</b>
Multiple Buildings per Lot	<b>Site Plan Review</b>

# MRT

Converting existing homes to multi-family has challenges.

Incentivize conversion through:

The following renovations are anticipated:

- Building Code requires upgrades for access/egress to each unit
- Plumbing chases for new kitchens and bathrooms
- Soundproofing between units
- Separate utility metering for units
- Increase allowable addition to existing home from 400 sf to 50% of existing footprint
- Allow up to 6 units
- Allow multiple buildings by Site Plan Review

# MRT

- Potential to produce smaller units at a lower price point will help **produce affordable units**, allowing young families to enter the Newton market and encourage empty-nesters to sell their homes.
- Existing homes have **high embedded value**; as a result, the **ability to add additional square footage** will be necessary to make projects attractive to developers.
- The **condition of the existing structure will have an impact on viability**. The highest-and-best use for fixer-uppers is likely to be multi-family conversions if additional square footage can be added.
- **Larger lots that allow for additions and/or a second structure will be most attractive** to developers since an increase in per square foot values does not cover the constructions for multi-family conversion.
- **Additional analysis is necessary** to compare attractiveness of the proposed MRT zoning with the existing MR1/MR2 code.

Timeline: Where we are  
**Next Steps**

