

Alternate VCOD Zoning Plan That complies with MBTA Community Act

**Pam Wright
July 24, 2023**

Docket Items being addressed

#38-22 Request for discussion and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map regarding village center districts ZONING & PLANNING COMMITTEE requesting review, discussion and amendments relative to Chapter 30 zoning ordinances by **adding a new Village Center Overlay District**, consisting of four (4) district tiers, by establishing requirements for such District, and requesting amendments to the Zoning Map to include the Village Center Overlay District.

#39-22 Requesting discussion on state guidance for implementing the **Housing Choice Bill** COUNCILOR CROSSLEY on behalf of the Zoning & Planning Committee requesting discussion on state guidance for implementing the Housing Choice element of the MA Economic Development legislation. (formerly #131-21)

Total 18,319 units in all village centers will be zoned by right, not including additional lot subdivisions or allowed multiple buildings on a lot

MBTA Communities Act requires zoning to provide 8330 units by right with no special permit, variance, waiver or other discretionary zoning approval

Utile and Planning Dept. calculate 10,000 units in limited areas to meet the MBTA Communities Act

High Level Recommendations

And will meet the MBTA requirements

- Change the number of lots designated VC3
- Change special permit threshold to 15,000 sf
- Reduce number of lots in the village overlay districts
- Require minimum lot requirements for MRT and VC1 designated lots to promote Adaptive Reuse of existing buildings, versus lot subdivisions
- Include Auburndale and Newton Corner in the MBTA calculations

Methodology to create Village Zoning Database

- Downloaded data from the Assessor's database
- Classified each property as MRT, VC1, VC2 and VC3 and eliminated duplicates
- Determined priority streets properties and abutting residential or non residential lots
- Used variables for setbacks, average unit size, max footprint, special permit threshold, story heights, and more
- Each lot is a stand alone even though one building on multiple lots and/or one owner for adjacent lots
- **Calculated:**
 - Maximum footprint, maximum building size, village center units, MBTA units, special permit lots and units with density variable, MRT dividable lots and more

Database created by Councilors John Oliver and Pam Wright

Variables that can be easily changed to calculate city wide and MBTA Communities units in optimizing village zoning

- **Change Special Permit thresholds**
- **Change setbacks and/or building heights**
- **Change VC lots to another designation**
- **Change priority street locations**
- **Change unit density for Special Permit lots**

Database will soon have a shared link

Various Parameter changes and the effect on units

And still meet MBTA Communities Act

Zoning Options Examples	VCOD units
Utile/Planning Dept Baseline VCOD unit count	did not calculate
Baseline VCOD by right without lot subdivision or multiple bldgs on lot; Special Permit threshold 30,000 sf	18,319
Replace all VC3 with VC2, Special Permit threshold 30,000 sf	15,890
Add VC3 in select locations, Replace all other VC3 with VC2, Special Permit threshold 30,000 sf	16,381
Above VC3 in select locations; Special Permit threshold 20,000 sf	14,781
Above VC3 in select locations; Special Permit threshold 17,000 sf	13,984
Above VC3 in select locations; Special Permit threshold 15,000 sf	13,175
With database, changes can be easily made to optimize unit count	

2659 Special Permit Multifamily units approved since 2020

Multifamily projects	Residential units	Multifamily projects	Residential units
Total	2659	106 River St	9
Riverdale	204	416-418 Langley	6
Northland/Needham St	800	1114 Beacon	34
Riverside	550	136-144 Hancock (Walker)	16
Dunstan East	292	120 Norwood	4
Walker & Washington St.	28	1 Jackson St	6
West Newton Armory	43	20 Clinton St	4
300 Eliot St.	4	71 Comm Ave	6
50 Highland Ave.	4	77 Hartford St	4
145 Warren St.	5	283 Melrose	16
386-394 Watertown St.	10	432 Cherry	3
667 Boylston St.	4	15-21 Lexington	24
1092-1094 Chestnut St.	4	280 Newtonville	18
1149-1151 Walnut St.	25	956 Walnut	7
Mr. Sushi/ 383 Boylston	12	160 Stanton Ave	69
Craft St senior Living	185	264 Pearl	3
24 Wilson Cir	5	20 Kinmouth	24
63-65 Broadway	3	34 Prescott St	4
Santander Bank (50)	50	2 Life Golda Meir House	174

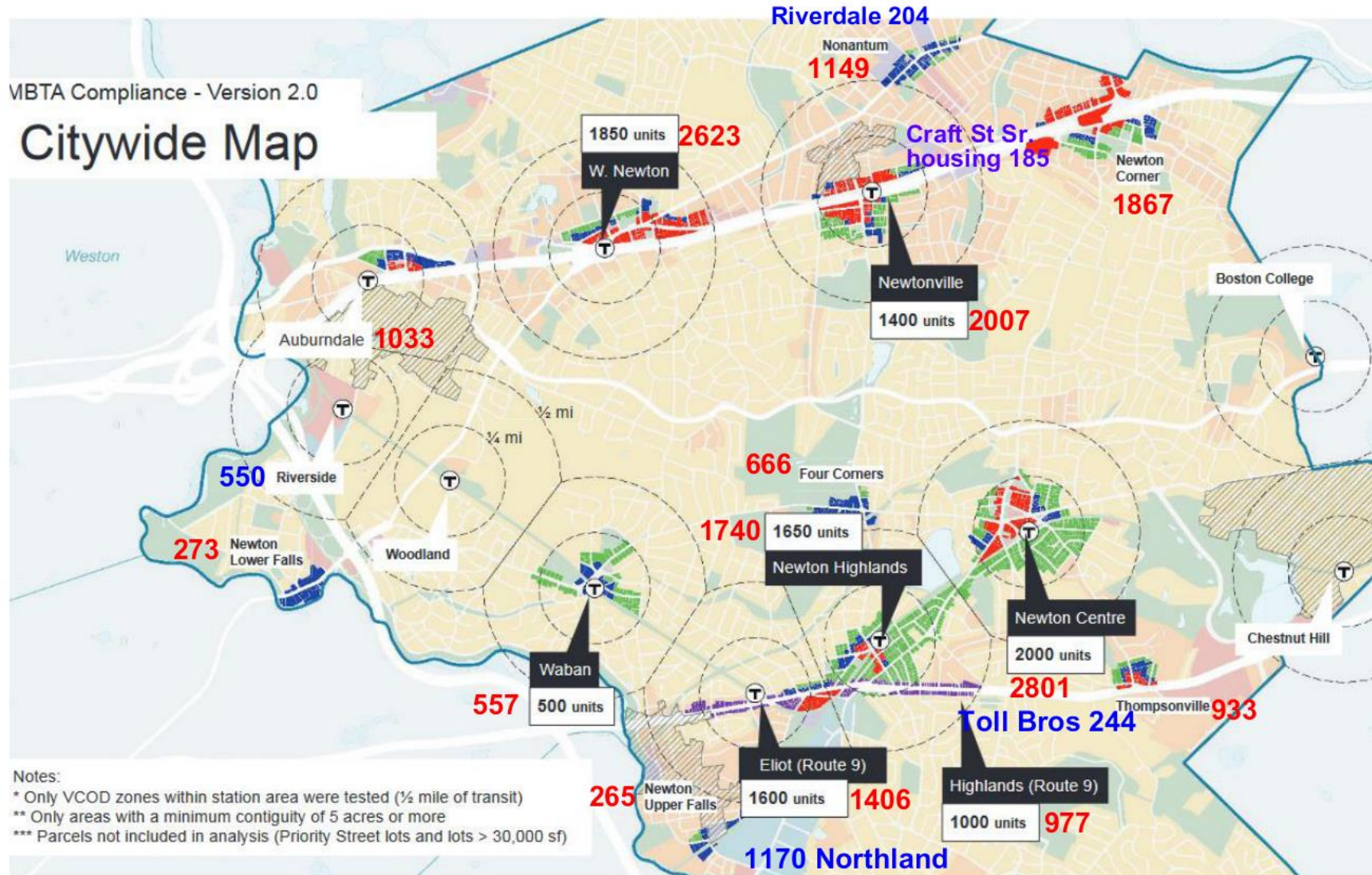
Two 40B projects soon to be approved outside of Village Centers: additional 568 Units

Additional analysis required with the large increase in by right units

- **Infrastructure**
- **City services – police, fire, school, recreation fields, etc**
- **Fiscal**
- **Traffic**

**Using the database, we can meet the
8330 MBTA Communities Act units
and optimize overall
unit count**

VCOD permits by right including all villages and priority streets: 18,319 units
Additional 40B and large special permits approved by not built: 2,353 units



Red numbers: number of units by right including priority street lots
Black numbers: number of units calculated by Utile excluding priority street lots
Blue numbers: 40B and large special permits approved but unbuilt and not in the village zoning

End

Various Parameter changes and the effect on units

Zoning Options	VCOD units	MBTA units
Utile/Planning Dept Baseline MBTA unit count	did not calculate	10,000
Baseline VCOD by right without lot subdivision or multiple bldgs on lot; Special Permit 30,000	18,319	9,782
Replace all VC3 with VC2, Special Permit 30,000 sf	15,890	8,694
VC3 in select locations	16,381	9,029
Above VC3 in select locations; Special Permit 20,000 sf	14,781	8,059
Above VC3 in select locations; Special Permit 17,000 sf	13,984	7,565
Above VC3 in select locations; Special Permit 15,000 sf	13,175	7,203
Above VC3 in select locations; Special Permit 15,000 sf; add Auburndale and modified Newton Corner to MBTA count	13,175	8,688
With database, changes can be easily made to optimize unit count		

Note: VCOD unit column includes all villages and priority streets. MBTA unit columns include only designated villages in Planning Dept Map 2.0 excluding priority streets for MBTA Communities Act count.

Additional suggestions

- Reduce residential areas in villages to meet 8330 unit requirements
- Add Auburndale and 38A of Newton Corner to MBTA unit count
- Require site plan review for lots greater than 8000 sf in VC zones
- Allow one extra floor incentive in certain areas in the village centers
- Require special permit for priority street lots greater than 8000 sf
- Increase building separation
- Require usable open space in MRT and VC1 lots

Additional Data

Calculation Parameters	VC Special Permit lots	VC SP units 50 units/A	VC lots with multiple bldgs	Corner Lot and large MRT lot subdivision	
				lots	units
Total VCOD by right without lot subdivision or multiple bldgs on lot; Special Permit 30,000	59	4591	70		
Remove all VC3, Special Permit 30,000 sf	59	4591	87		
VC3 in select locations (VC4)	59	4591	87		
VC3 in select locations (VC4); Special Permit 20,000 sf	97	5,824	46		
VC3 in select locations (VC4); Special Permit 17,000 sf	116	6,316	28		
VC3 in select locations (VC4); Special Permit 15,000 sf	138	6,769	16		
VC3 in select locations (VC4); Special Permit 15,000 sf; add Auburndale and modified Newton Corner to MBTA count	138	6,769	16		
note 1: multiple bldgs only when VC1/2 is 40% larger and VC3/4 is 35% larger					
note 2: corner lot subdivision >10,000 sf; lot subdivision > 12,000 sf					

Can reduce contiguous land to 50% and add 10% outside station area

And still meet the MBTA Communities Act 8330 units and reduce overall Unit count.

MBTA Communities Compliance

Version 2.0 VCOD Meets MBTA Compliance

MBTA Compliance Summary (rounded)

	MBTA Requirements (min.)	Version 2.0 VCOD Results	MBTA Compliant
Unit Capacity	8,330 units	10,000 units	YES
Aggregate Gross Density	15 units/acre	35 units/acre	YES
Total Land Area	50 acres	288	YES
% of District to be Located in Station Area	90%	100%*	YES
% of Contiguous Land for Multi-Family Zoning District(s)	50%	69%	YES

Notes:
 * Only VCOD zones within station area were tested
 ** Parcels not included in analysis (Priority Street lots and lots greater than 30,000 sf)
 *** Assumes no minimum parking requirements

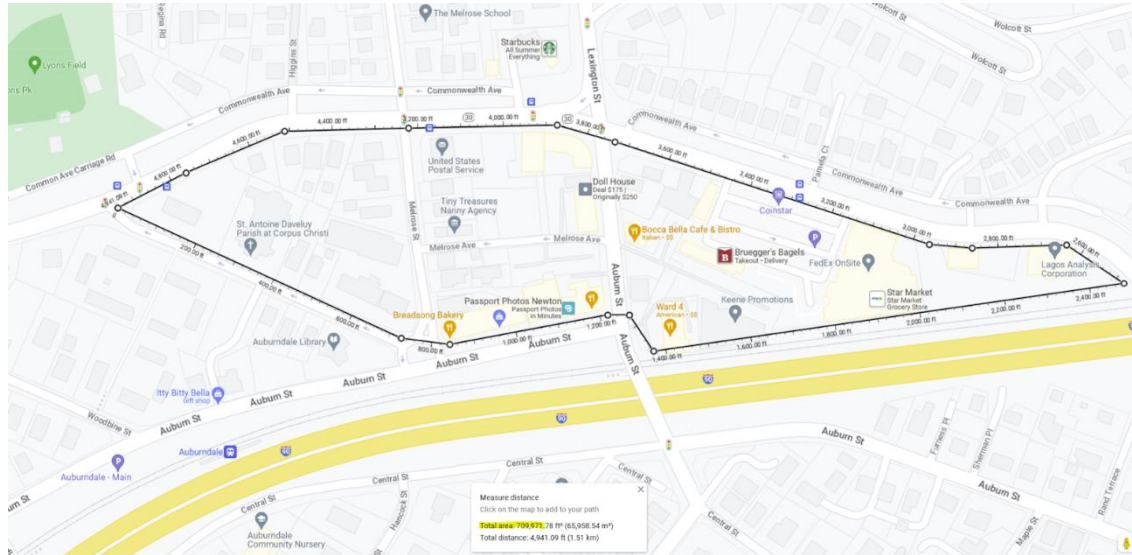
Must meet every requirement to reach compliance

Calculations:

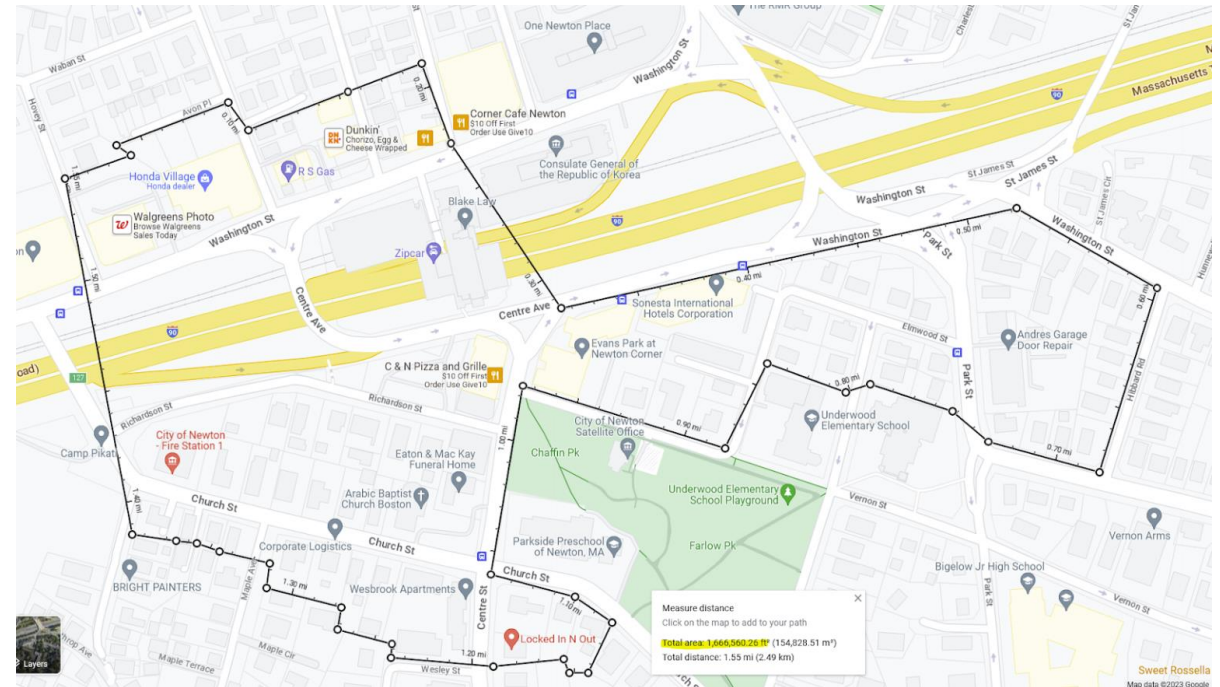
		Acres
now	total land	288
now	contiguous land - 69%	199
	can add the following for 50% contiguous	109
	can add 10% outside transit	40

Additional villages added to MBTA Communities Act units

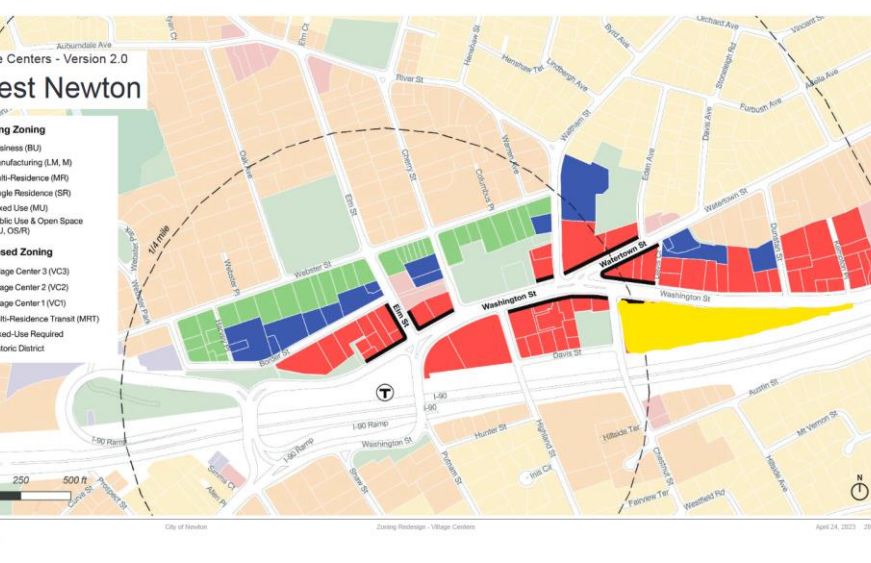
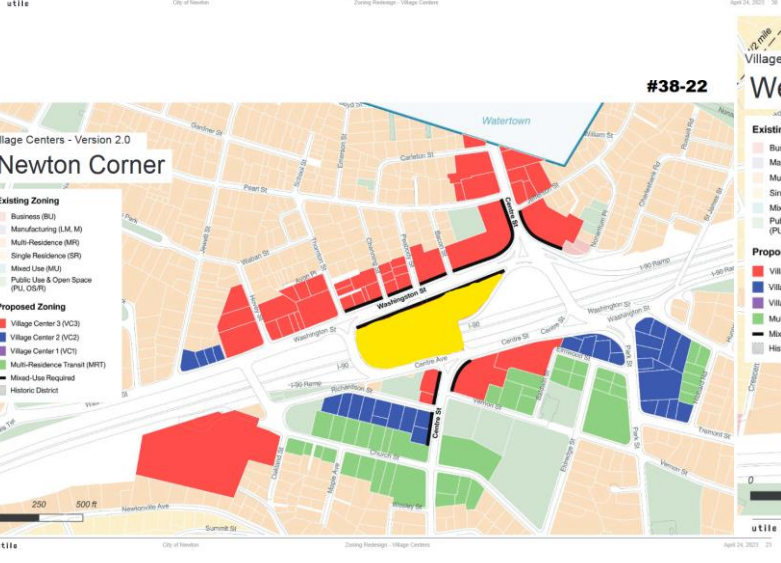
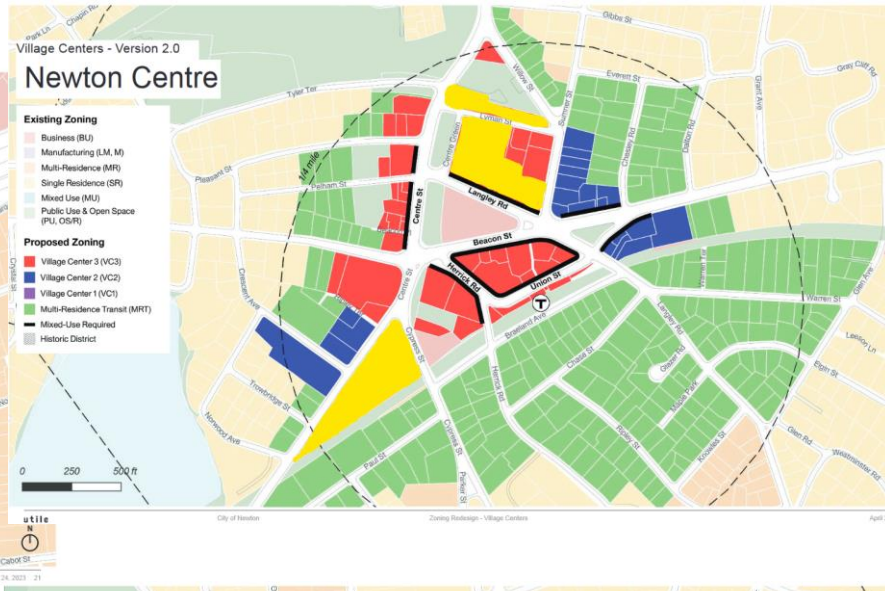
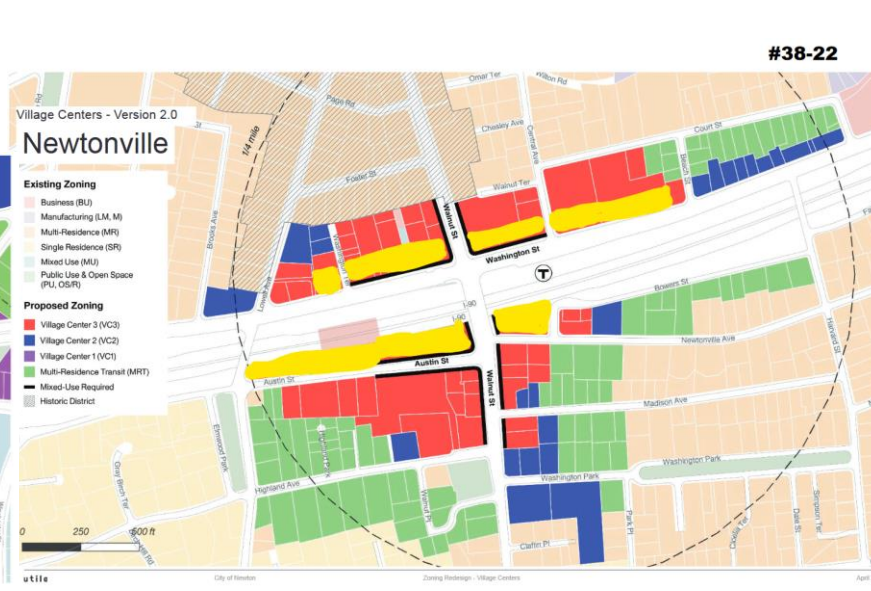
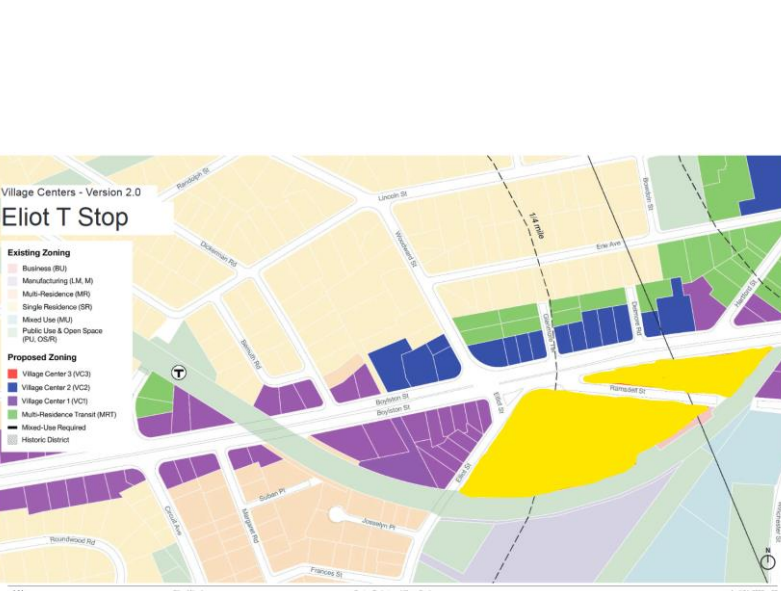
Auburndale 16.3 acres within 0.5 miles of transit



Modified Newton Corner 38.3 acres outside transit



Propose changing all VC3 to VC2 except areas in yellow below



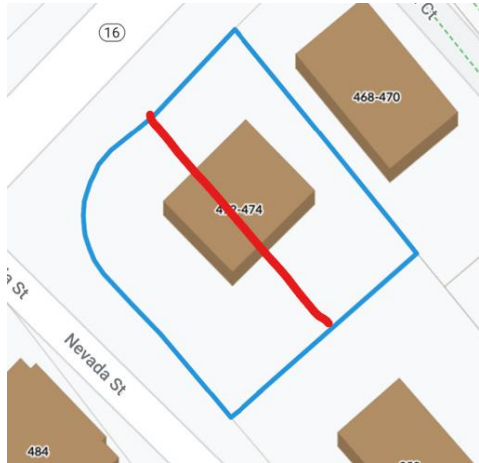
Proposed Corner lot subdivision example

472-474 Watertown St

Each building is a 3 family with two 9'x19' parking stalls, 4' parking setbacks and 12' driveway

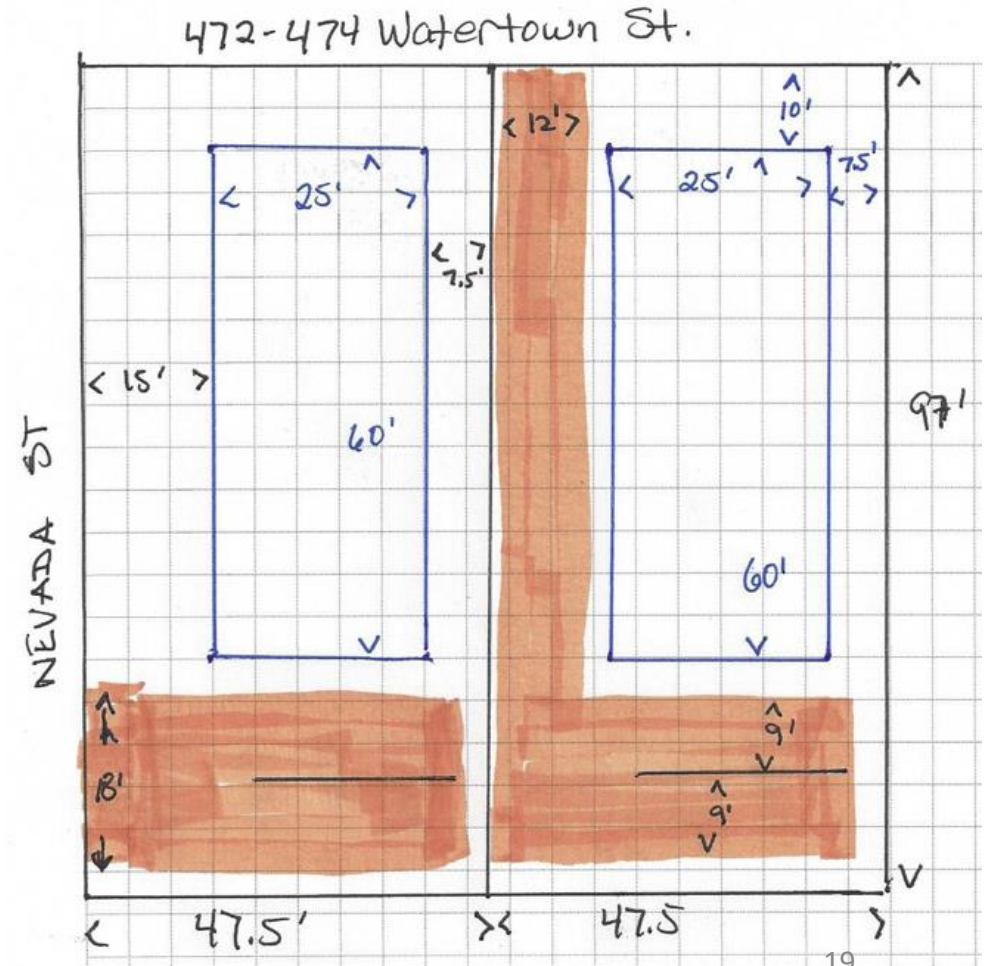
3 units are 1620 sf each

25'w x 60'l and 45' tall



9234 sf lot = 95' x 97' Could it be subdivided into two 47.5' x 97' lots

In this example, if house is 27' x 56' then 3 parking stalls would fit in the back



Easily modified database variables

				abutting			Not abutting				
	scale factor	max footprint	footprint threshold	rear setback	side setback	front setback	rear setback	side setback	front setback	Stories + half	
VC 1	0.4	4000	5600	15	15	10	15	10	10	3.7	
VC 2	0.4	10000	14000	15	15	0	5	0	0	3	
VC 3	0.35	15000	20250	15	15	0	5	0	0	4	
MRT	0	1500	1500	15	15	10	15	15	10	2.8	
VC 4	0.35	15000	20250	15	15	0	5	0	0	4	
Special Permit Threshold			30000	Special Permit sf calculation for unit numbers; units/acre			50				
Sqft / Unit			1000								

Note: scale factor used to Determine multiple buildings On a lot

sample database

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	M	U	V
1														
2	Village	Proposed VCOD	Priority st	abut R	VC 1 abut	R rear	R side	shape factor	note	SI	No1	Street	Frontage	Lot size
428	Newton Centre	VC 2	yes	no		no	no			8	22	UNION ST	45	3617
429	Newton Centre	VC 3	yes	no		no	no			6	49	UNION ST	147	8735
430	Newton Centre	VC 3	no	no		no	no			5	50	UNION ST	120	3958
431	Newton Centre	VC 3	yes	no		no	no			6	65	UNION ST	75	4148
432	Newton Centre	VC 3	no	no		no	no			5	70	UNION ST	80	2842
433	Newton Centre	VC 3	yes	no		no	no			6	93	UNION ST	267	31455

K	M	U	V	AI	AJ	AK	AL	AM	AN	AO	AP	AQ	AR	AS	AT	AU
														1000	sf unit size	
No1	Street	Frontage	Lot size	lot depth	rear setback	side setback	front setback	calc footprint	max footprint	max fp or mult bldg	BLD volume All res	priority st res volume	volume of units	SP units	subdivided corner lots	
22	UNION ST	45	3617	80		5	0	0	3392	3392	3392	12079	8687	9	0	
49	UNION ST	147	8735	59		5	0	0	8000	8000	8000	37376	29376	29	0	
50	UNION ST	120	3958	33		5	0	0	3358	3358	3358	14914	14914	15	0	
65	UNION ST	75	4148	55		5	0	0	3773	3773	3773	17307	13534	14	0	
70	UNION ST	80	2842	36		5	0	0	2442	2442	2442	10859	10859	11	0	
93	UNION ST	267	31455	118		5	0	0	30120	15000	30120	67396	52396	SP	36	

Column AS formula: =if(or(\$B428="MRT",\$C428="dup"),0,if(\$V428<pivots!\$F\$32,if(\$H428>0,ROUND(min(\$AQ428,\$AR428)/\$AS\$1,0)*\$H428,ROUND(min(\$AQ428,\$AR428)/\$AS\$1,0)), "SP"))