



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney Heath
Director
Planning & Development

Joseph Iadonisi
Planning Associate

Members

Kelley Brown, Chair
Kevin McCormick, Vice Chair
Lee Breckenridge, Member
Amy Dain, Member
Peter Doeringer, Member
Jennifer Molinsky, Member
Barney Heath, *ex officio*
Laxmi Rao, Alternate
Jyothsna Buddharaju, Alternate

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JOINT ZONING & PLANNING COMMITTEE AND PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 26, 2023

Members present:

Kelley Brown, Chair
Kevin McCormick, Vice-Chair
Lee Breckenridge, Member
Amy Dain, Member
Peter Doeringer, Member
Jennifer Molinsky, Member
Jyothsna Buddharaju, Alternate
Barney Heath, *ex officio*

Staff present:

Meeting held in the City Council Chamber (Room 207) and virtually by Zoom at 7:00 p.m.

1. Joint Public Hearing on docket item #38-22 Request for discussion and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map regarding village center districts

Members of the Department of Planning and Community Development, Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director of Planning, and Zachary LeMel, Chief of Long Range Planning presented the latest version of the Village Center Overlay District. Their presentation lasted about 30 minutes. The presentation can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/live/5AJCvOo12Jc?feature=share&t=1034> from 17:14-45:18 on the video and the presentation slides can also be found in Appendix A: Zoning and Planning Committee Report June 26, 2023.

Following the presentation, the Zoning and Planning Committee voted 8-0 to open the Public Hearing. Public comments can be viewed from the 45:18 until the 3:18:12 marks [here](#) or at the above link and will be available in a forthcoming revised version of the Zoning and Planning Committee Report June 26, 2023.

After the public comment portion of the meeting concluded, the Planning Department provided clarifying comments and additional information until from the 3:18:12-3:26:25 marks. This was followed by comments, clarifications, and questions from Zoning and Planning Committee members for the Planning Department and Committee Chair from 3:26:25-3:58:00 marks [here](#).

The Planning and Development Board was present for the meeting, but was not called upon to speak during the meeting.

2. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Councilor Joshua Krintzman to adjourn, the meeting concluded at 3:59:16 or on or about 9:59:16PM. The Public Hearing was not closed and would continue at the July 24, 2023 and July 31, 2023 Joint Zoning and Planning Committee and Planning and Development Board meetings.



Appendix A

Zoning & Planning Committee Report

City of Newton **In City Council**

Monday, June 26, 2023

Present: Councilors Crossley (Chair), Albright, Danberg, Wright, Krintzman, Leary, Baker, and Ryan

Also Present: Councilors Oliver, Greenberg, Lucas, Norton, Kelley, Malakie, Gentile, Markiewicz, Downs, Humphrey, Danberg, Bowman, Noel, Laredo, Lipof, and Kalis

City Staff: Barney Heath, Director of Planning; Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director of Planning; Zachary LeMel, Chief of Long Range Planning; and Jaclyn Norton, Committee Clerk

Planning & Development Board: Kelly Brown, Peter Doeringer, Lee Breckenridge, Kevin McCormick, Laxmi Rao, Jennifer Molinsky

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link: [Zoning & Planning Committee - June 26, 2023 \(newtv.org\)](https://www.newtv.org/Zoning-Planning-Committee-June-26-2023)

#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.

Action: **Zoning & Planning Held 8-0; Public Hearing Continued**

Note: The Chair outlined the procedure for the public hearing during this meeting and that the Committee will continue the public hearing at future meetings. Zachary LeMel, Chief of Long Range Planning, and Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director of Planning, presented the attached presentation which provided an overview of the proposed Village Center Overlay District (VCOD). Their approximately 20 minute presentation is a shortened version of that which was presented at the 6/20 ZAP meeting for Council. A recording of the presentation can be found [here](#).

A revised report with public testimony will be posted at a later date.

The meeting adjourned at 10:56pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah J. Crossley, Chair

City of Newton
Zoning and Planning Committee



Village Center Rezoning Public Hearing: Draft Zoning Proposal

June 26, 2023

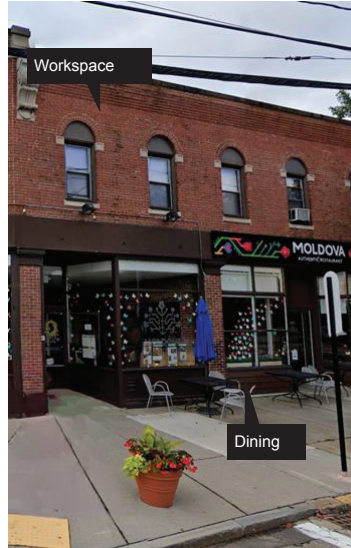
Agenda

1. **Introduction**
 - a. Village center goals
 - b. Challenges facing Newton
 - c. Purpose of village center rezoning
2. **Village Center Overlay District (VCOD) Zoning Proposal**
 - a. Overview
 - b. Development and design standards
3. **MBTA Communities and VCOD**
 - a. General requirements
 - b. Newton requirements and VCOD compliance
 - c. Deadline for compliance
4. **Expected Outcomes to VCOD Zoning**
 - a. Benefits to the City
 - b. Engagement and Outreach
5. **Conclusion**
 - a. Timeline and next steps

Introduction

Village Center goals

Build upon existing successes and strengths to create vibrant village centers

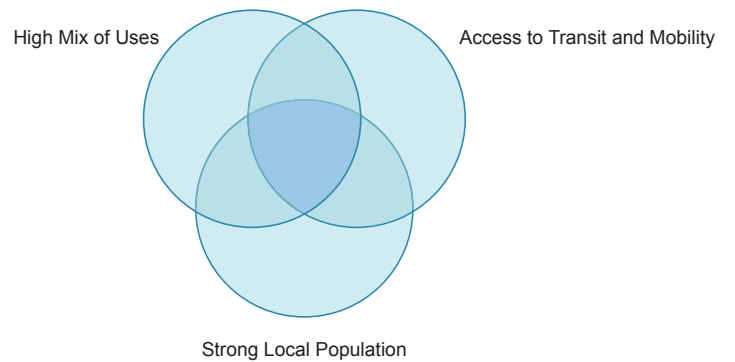


Introduction

Village Centers can Address Challenges Facing Newton

1. Lack of housing options (size, price point, and accessibility)
2. Struggling local business trying to compete with online retail
3. Climate change
4. Transportation and traffic issues
5. Aging in place / welcoming new families
6. Lack of space to gather and socialize

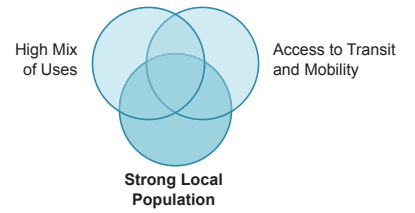
Metrics for Successful Village Centers



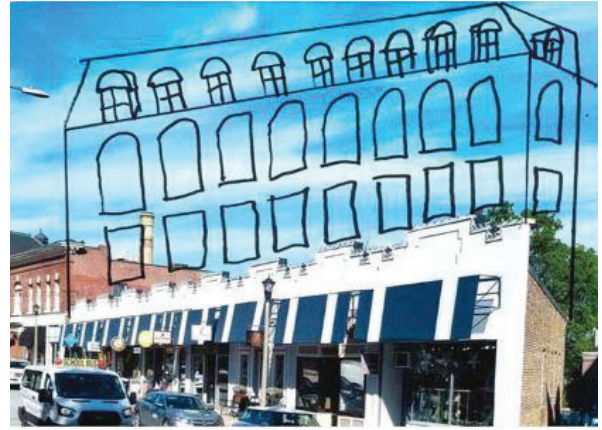
Introduction

Why Updates are Needed

Multi-family housing is difficult to build or not allowed



One and two-story retail in Newton Centre



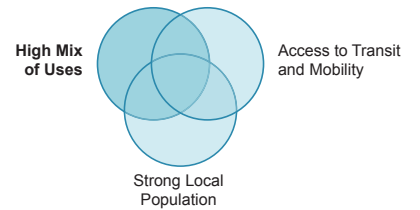
Vision Kit submission of housing above retail

Source: Community Vision Kit Submissions

Introduction

Why Updates are Needed

Restrictions make it difficult for businesses to open and grow



Vacant commercial spaces



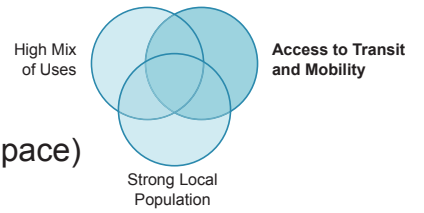
Pop-up Commercial Space in Newton Highlands

Source: EDC 2020 COVID Recovery Plan, Project Pop-Up, Boston Globe

Introduction

Why Updates are Needed

Parking requirements prevents quality design (buildings, streetscape, open space)



Austin Street parking lot, pre-development

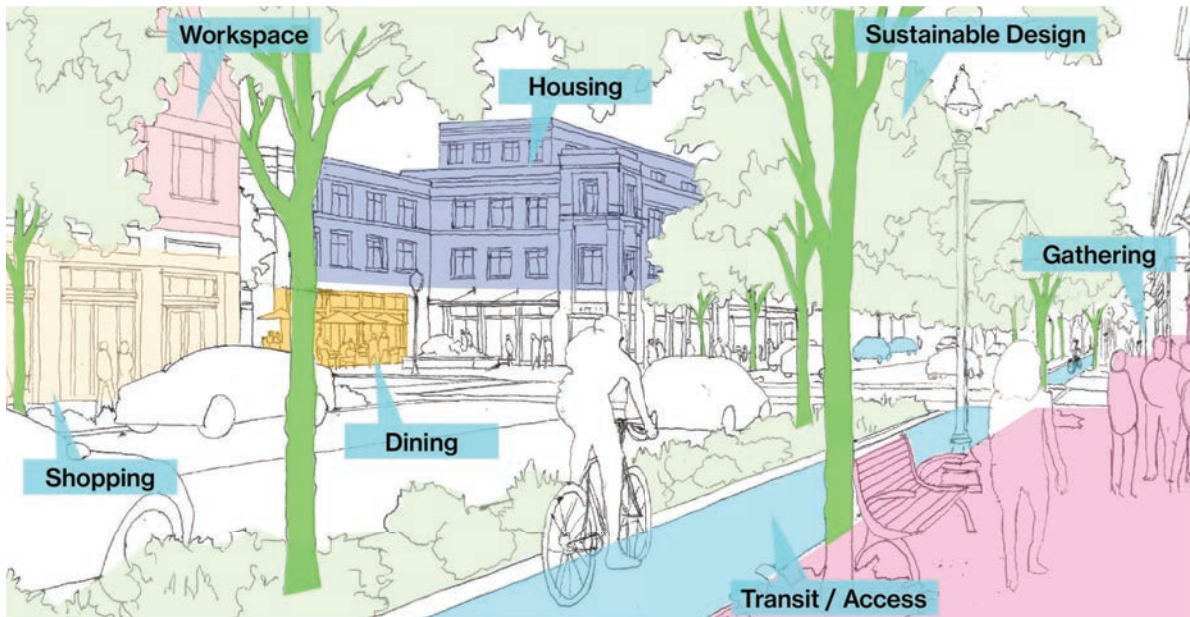


Bram Way Plaza hosting live music

Source: City of Newton, Newton Community Pride

Introduction

Intended Outcomes - Achieving the Community Vision



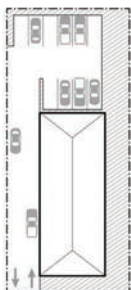
VCOD Zoning Proposal

- Zoning approach
- Development and design standards

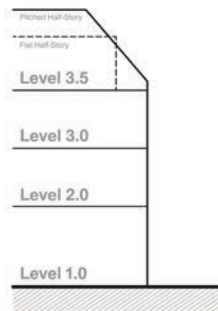
Zoning Approach

Three Principal Mechanisms Regulate Urban Form:

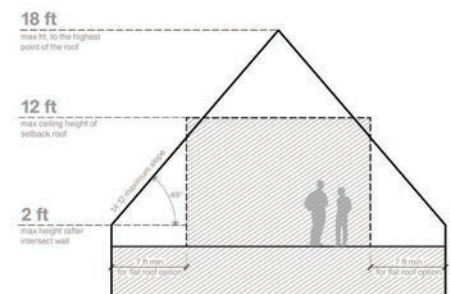
1 Building Footprint
Sets the maximum area per story



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

Four Sub-Districts Customized to Each Village Center

MRT*

2.5 Stories
40 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



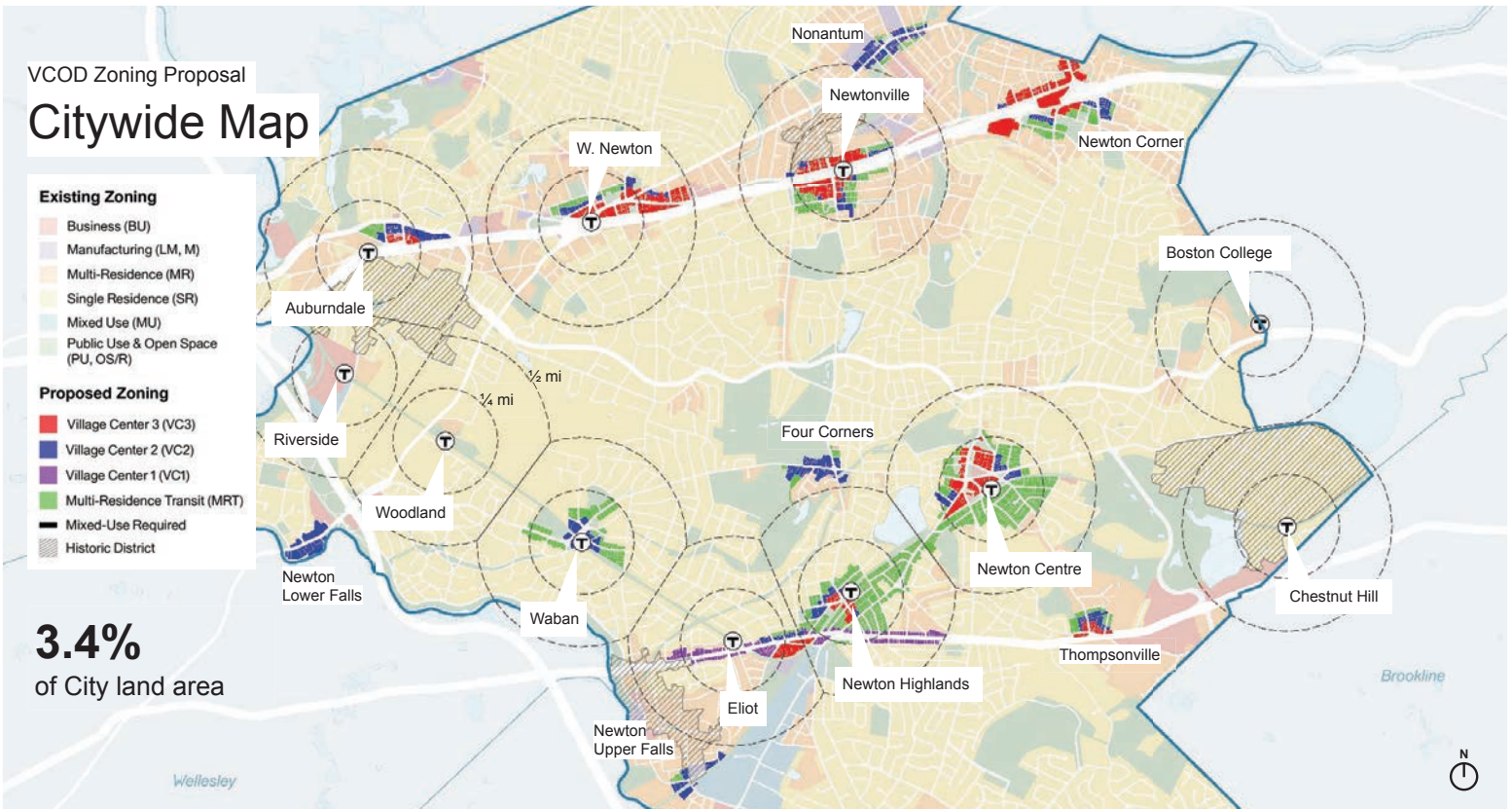
VC3

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
 + The figures represent proposed by-right zoning allowances for new construction



Zoning Approach

Alignment with Newton's Historical Development Patterns



Newtonville



Newtonville



Upper Falls



West Newton



Newton Corner



Newton Corner



Newton Centre

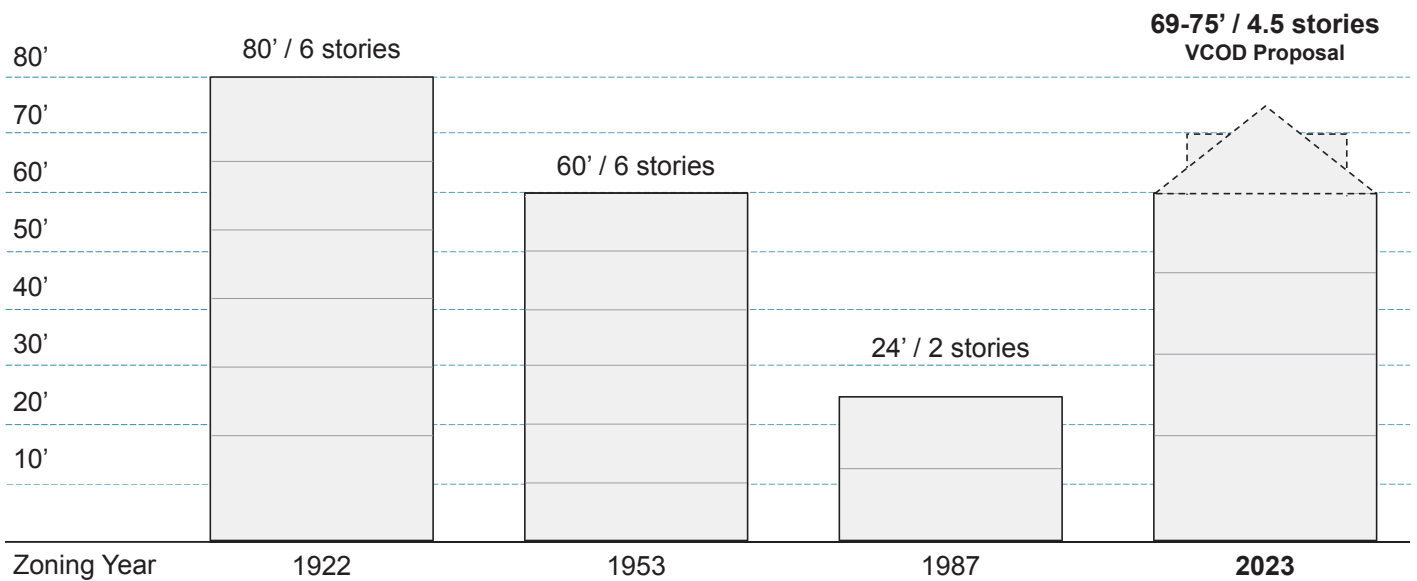


Thompsonville

Zoning Approach

Alignment with Newton's Historical Development Patterns

Maximum By-Right Building Heights Allowed in Village Centers



VCOD Zoning Proposal

Walnut St, Newtonville: Existing



Existing Street View

Existing Context

Uses: single-story small retail; two-story bank; three-story function hall with ground story retail



VCOD Zoning Proposal

Walnut St, Newtonville: Potential Development

Design Standards

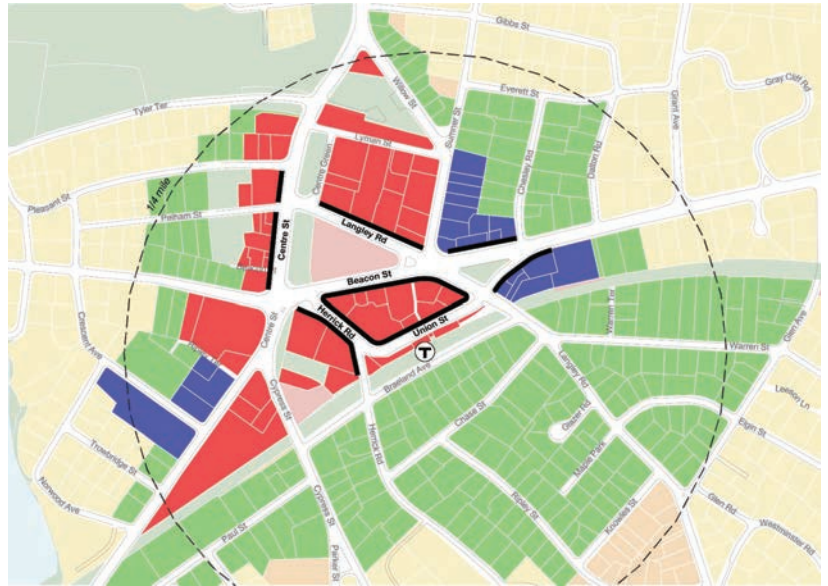
1. **Building Placement:**
When development occurs on any lot abutting a sidewalk that is <12' in total width, inclusive of the Furnishing Zone, buildings must be set back an additional distance such that a paved area meeting City sidewalk standards of at least 12' width is provided, inclusive of the Furnishing Zone.
2. **Building Entrances:**
Principal entrances must either be recessed from the plane of the facade, or have a projecting Awning or Canopy, to signal building entry and provide adequate protection from the elements.
3. **Architectural Features: Canopy**
A wall-mounted structure that provides shade and weather protection over a storefront or building entrance.
4. **Fenestration:**
For ground story fenestration, glazing must have a min. 60% Visible Light Transmittance (VLT) and no more than 15% Visible Light Reflectance (VLR) as indicated by the manufacturer.
5. **Number of Stories:**
A pitched roof may be composed of roof planes with different slopes. The slope of any pitch must not be greater than 14:12 (49 degrees). The roof rafters must intersect the wall plate or top of wall frame of the exterior walls at a height no more than 2' above the finished floor of the half-story.
6. **Half-Story Step-Back:**
A required distance that certain upper stories of a building must be recessed from the plane of the facade of the stories below.
7. **Parking Lot Access:**
Access to parking lots and structures parallel to the Front Elevation is prohibited when access along another lot line is available.



Mixed Use Required

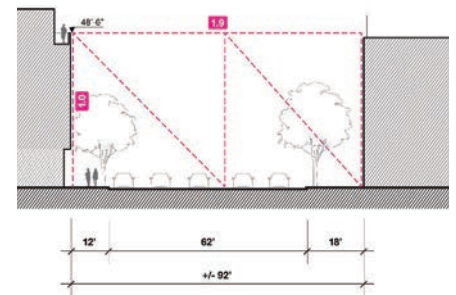
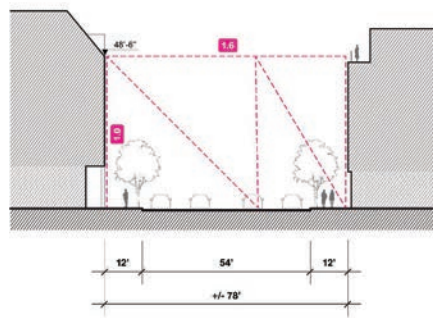
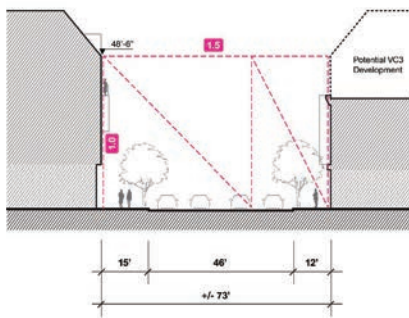
Promote vibrancy and placemaking in village centers

- 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

Potential Development in Different VCs



Lincoln St, Newton Highlands



Walnut St, Newtonville



Washington St, Newton Corner

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
 - Cost of construction
- Half of existing multifamily parking sits empty



Unused parking from Newton multi-family housing

More Affordable Housing Provided

Current Zoning Proposed Zoning*

	Base Conditions	Option 1 (VC2 and VC3)	Option 2 (VC3 only)**
Allows For			
Height Bonus (stories)	N/A	+1	+2
Building Footprint Bonus (sq ft)	N/A	+2,500	+2,500
Required Affordable Units (min)	17.5%	25%	30%
Must Provide⁺	Required AMI for Affordable Units ⁺⁺ 50-80% Rental / 80% Ownership		

- More opportunities for base requirements:
 - Applies to all 7+ unit projects
- Bonus option for more and deeper levels of affordable housing

* 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

MBTA Communities and VCOD

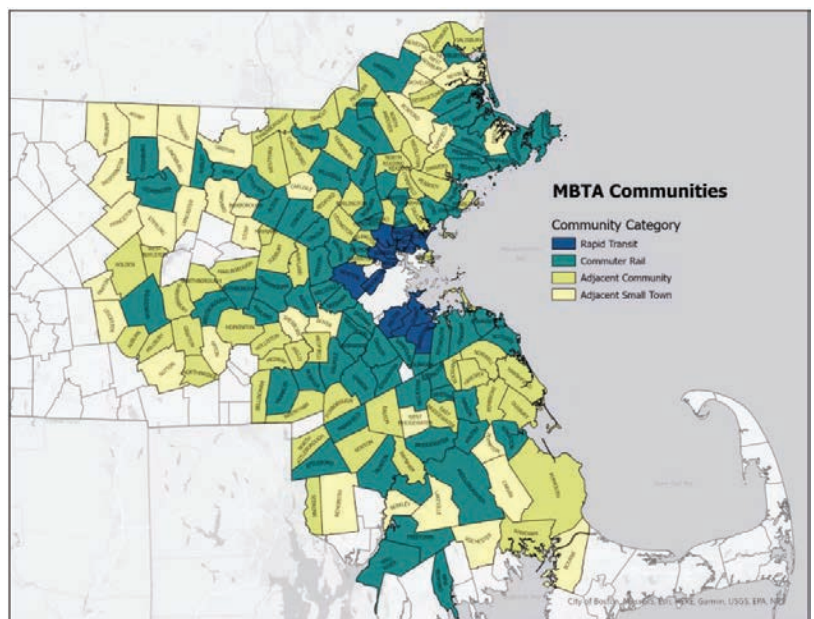
- General requirements
- Newton requirements and VCOD compliance
- Deadline for compliance

MBTA Communities and VCOD

Newton is One of 177 MBTA Communities

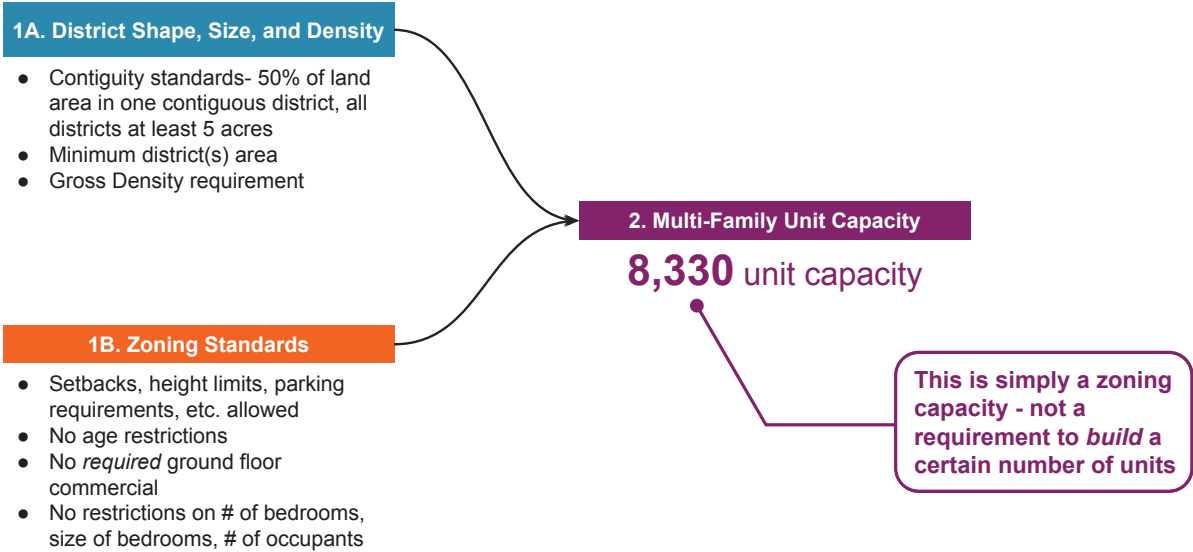
Appendix I: MBTA Community Categories and Requirements (top 20 communities)

Community	Community category	Minimum multi-family unit capacity*
Cambridge	Rapid Transit	13,477
Worcester	Commuter Rail	12,642
Quincy	Rapid Transit	11,752
Somerville	Rapid Transit	9,067
Newton	Rapid Transit	8,330
Brookline	Rapid Transit	6,990
Malden	Rapid Transit	6,930
Lowell	Commuter Rail	6,522
Medford	Rapid Transit	6,443
Revere	Rapid Transit	6,135
Brockton	Commuter Rail	5,596
Lynn	Commuter Rail	5,517
Everett	Rapid Transit	4,552
Lawrence	Commuter Rail	4,501
Framingham	Commuter Rail	4,355
Haverhill	Commuter Rail	4,189
Waltham	Commuter Rail	3,982
Weymouth	Commuter Rail	3,813
Braintree	Rapid Transit	3,769
Taunton	Commuter Rail	3,745



The total unit capacity across all MBTA Communities is over 280,000 residential units

Criteria for 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 by December 31, 2023 deadline

Expected Outcomes to VCOD Zoning

- Benefits to the City
- Engagement and Outreach

Expected Outcomes to VCOD Zoning

Benefits to the City



New housing options

New housing will provide options at sizes and price points that currently do not exist in Newton

Opportunities for older adults to downsize

Less expensive options for young adults and families

New affordable and accessible housing

New housing will be energy efficient



Support for businesses

Increased customer base

Less onerous requirements

Greater height for first floor uses

Wider sidewalks



Sufficient city services

New housing would be near transit and in walkable village centers, reducing congestion

Limited number of new students living in recent mixed use buildings

Opportunities to coordinate with schools and other city services

Increased tax revenue

Engagement and Outreach

Engagement Process

Phase 1: Visioning

Quantitative and Qualitative Research (April 2021 - April 2022)

- **Vision Kit:** 290 participants; 102 submissions
- **Online interactive forum:** 1,249 participants
- **Equitable focus groups:** 139 participants; 18 community facilitators
- **Economic Development engagement:** 41 participants
- **On-the-spot surveying:** over 500 engaged in person

Phase 2: Workshopping

Zoning Framework (May - Oct 2022)

- **Library exhibit:** up from Sept 1 - Oct 17
- **Feedback tool**
- **Focus groups:** 3 total
- **Community Engagement Network:** 90 members

Phase 3: Refining

Version 1.0 Zoning Text and Map (Nov 2022 - Jan 2023)

- **Info sessions:** 7 to discuss Version 1.0 maps
- **Postcards mailed to owners within VCOD**
- **ZAP meetings:** 2 meetings opened up to feedback from community groups

Phase 4: Finalizing

Public Hearing and Beyond (Feb 2023 - Present)

- **Public Hearing:** opens June 26
- **Postcards mailed to owners/occupants within VCOD and abutters:** 6,039
- **Zoning and Planning Committee:** discussed at 40 ZAP meetings



NHA & NHN in Newton Centre



NHA & NHN in Newtonville



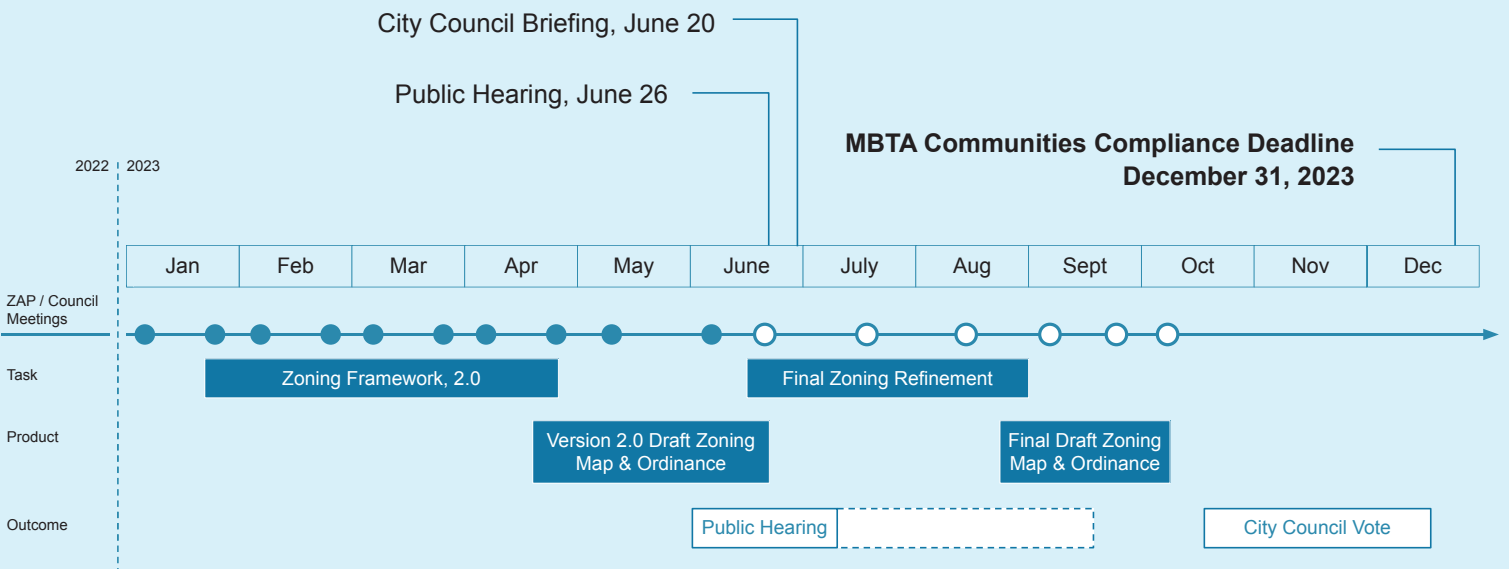
Newton Public Library Exhibit



Planning intern at Festa in Nonantum

Timeline: Where we are

Next Steps





Appendix B

Zoning & Planning Committee Report **Revised**

City of Newton **In City Council**

Monday, June 26, 2023

Present: Councilors Crossley (Chair), Albright, Danberg, Wright, Krintzman, Leary, Baker, and Ryan

Also Present: Councilors Oliver, Greenberg, Lucas, Norton, Kelley, Malakie, Gentile, Markiewicz, Downs, Humphrey, Danberg, Bowman, Noel, Laredo, Lipof, and Kalis

City Staff: Barney Heath, Director of Planning; Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director of Planning; Zachary LeMel, Chief of Long Range Planning; and Jaclyn Norton, Committee Clerk

Planning & Development Board: Kelly Brown, Peter Doeringer, Lee Breckenridge, Kevin McCormick, Laxmi Rao, Jennifer Molinsky

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link: [Zoning & Planning Committee - June 26, 2023 \(newtv.org\)](https://www.newtv.org/Zoning-Planning-Committee-June-26-2023)

#38-22 Discussion and review relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance regarding village centers

ZONING & PLANNING COMMITTEE requesting review, discussion and possible ordinance amendments relative to Chapter 30 zoning ordinances pertaining to Mixed Use, business districts and village districts relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance. (formerly #88-20)

Action: Zoning & Planning Held 8-0; Public Hearing Continued

Note: The Chair outlined the procedure for the public hearing, emphasizing that there would not be time to hear from all who wish to speak on this item during this first meeting and that the Committee will continue the public hearing at future meetings. Zachary LeMel, Chief of Long Range Planning, and Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director of Planning, presented the attached presentation which provided an overview of the proposed Village Center Overlay District (VCOD). Their approximately 20 minute presentation is a shortened version of that which was presented at the 6/20 ZAP meeting for Council.

A recording of the presentation can be found [here](#).

The Chair

The Public Hearing was opened.

Sarah Rahman, 33 Staniford St, Chair of the Economic Development Commission (EDC), expressed her support for the proposal. She particularly noted how the proposed VCOD would help small businesses be more vibrant and resilient. She noted that the EDC would be meeting soon to vote on a statement to Council on the VCOD proposal.

Lisa Adams, 40 Converse Ave, a member of the EDC, described how the proposed VCOD would strike a good balance between preserving existing neighborhoods while also increasing housing near public transit. She also stressed the need for the City to comply with MBTA Communities Guidelines.

Chuck Tanowitz, 51 Harding St, also a member of the EDC, described the benefits he has seen from living in a community that can be more easily traversed on bike or foot, and that the VCOD proposal will allow others to experience these benefits.

Matt Segneri, 45 Cedar St, also a member of the EDC, described the extensive community engagement performed by the Planning Department throughout the process of developing this proposal. He stated support for the VCOD proposal and that it promoted village centers being inclusive spaces that are a hub for both residents and visitors of Newton.

Lynn Weissberg, 5 Alden St, is a member of the Engine 6 Zoning Working Group and stated how the proposal serves the goal of incentivizing more multi-family housing near public transit. She also urged that while the proposal is controversial that Council should not reduce the scale or scope.

Carolyn Stone, 66 Verndale Rd, described her connection to the Newton Highlands village center through previously renting office space. She expressed support for the proposal stating that it will make our village centers more vibrant.

Peter Harrington, 157 Lowell Ave, expressed opposition to the proposal stating that it is counterintuitive to the goals of helping alleviate climate change and reducing the cost of housing. He also noted inadequacies with the MBTA and why more housing shouldn't be built near public transit until it is improved.

Kimberly Gladman, 206 Sumner St, described how the proposed VCOD will benefit renters and encouraged the City to look at options that earmark units for civil servants.

David Decosimo, 70 Vernon St, expressed concerns that the proposal could be counterintuitive to the goals of preserving existing structures through the sections on adaptive reuse and the multi-family conversion option in the MRT zone.

Lorraine Sanik, 411 Newtonville Ave, described how the proposed VCOD will make village centers less accessible and expressed a desire to reduce the density. She further described

how the proposal places an unfair burden on village centers near a Commuter Rail Station (versus south side villages along the Greenline).

Peter Barrer, 60 Endicott St, noted how the proposal is very complex and takes time to fully understand. He also expressed support for the proposal.

Kathy Pillsbury, 34 Carver Rd, stated that it is time to change the zoning to allow more people to live near transit. During her testimony, she also noted the written testimony she previously submitted which details the positive fiscal impact of new development in Newton.

Marcia Cooper, 170 Evelyn Rd, president of Green Newton, expressed support for the proposal and described how it will help address climate change. This proposal in combination with the adoption of the Specialized Code and the Ten Communities Program will result in much more environmentally friendly development.

Jeremy Freudberg, 102 Clark St, spoke on behalf of the Newton Highlands Area Council, expressing concern regarding the height of VC3 in Newton Highlands along with concerns regarding Four Corners becoming purely residential over time. He also advocated for getting a 3D model of potential build-out within the VCOD.

Ann Houston, 45 Wedgwood Rd, on behalf of the Newton Affordable Housing Trust, who support the proposal. She described how the VCOD proposal will incentivize more development on smaller lots and more affordable housing within village centers. She noted, in particular, that NAHT supports the height and building footprint bonuses proposed subject to developers providing more deed restricted affordable housing that what is already required by the inclusionary zoning ordinance, and that the ordinance removes lot area per unit and parking minimums.

Jay Walter, 83 Pembroke St, during his testimony, expressed support for the proposal, but emphasized his concern that people have tried to defame others during public comment periods regarding this proposal.

Carolyn Gabbay, 11 Doris Circle, noted how the Newtonville Area Council conducted a survey that received 534 responses. 70% of respondents were opposed to the proposal with 30% supporting the proposal. She also read comments from survey respondents regarding the VCOD proposal.

Peter Bruce, 11 Claflin Place, expressed opposition to the proposal along with describing the unit capacity requirements complying with MBTA Communities as unrealistic, citing that people are moving out of urban environments.

Jennifer Sulla, 17 Munroe St, voiced support for the proposal and stated the need to prioritize transit-oriented development and walkable communities.

Dan Powdermaker, 119 Lincoln St, who rehabilitates and expands older homes in Newton, commented how the proposed MRT district would have changed his approach to a development in Newtonville from being a two-family home to a four-unit multi-family residence. If this proposed district had it been in effect would have kept the exterior of the building the same while creating more affordable housing options, by virtue of more smaller units.

Henry Dorkin, 75 Evergreen Ave, described how traffic has impacted his commute and that while he agrees with the transit goals, he is skeptical of the outcome. He also echoed concerns about not having sufficient infrastructure to support the increased population.

Emily Cagwin, 57 Taft Ave, voiced support for the VCOD proposal. She also described how the lack of affordable housing options in Newton prevents those who work in Newton from living in Newton.

Laura DeVeau, 12 Proctors St, similar to Carolyn Gabbay noted the survey conducted by the Newtonville Area Council. However, Ms. DeVeau in describing the survey results presented that the results differed between newer and longer-term residents of Newton. Residents of Newton who had been living in the City for less than 5 years were more supportive of the VCOD proposal according to Ms. DeVeau.

Emma Vesey, 186 Highland Ave, expressed concern with the VCOD proposal potentially being counter-intuitive and limiting green space and affordable housing. She also advocated for required mixed-use development to be counted toward compliance with MBTA Communities Guidelines.

Note: During previous meetings, it has been noted that where mixed-use development is required on the ground floor, that DHCD will not count multifamily units above toward MBTA compliance.

Fred Smith, 89 Needham St, noted his experience living at the Avalon and how the affordable units in that development have led to a more diverse community.

Dan Ruben, 175 Waban St, further emphasized the need for more housing options and more affordable housing within Newton citing that this proposal will increase the housing stock and subsequently reduce housing prices.

Constance Cork, 876 Beacon St, lives on the edge of the VCOD and described difficulties in only using transit in Newton Centre. These difficulties led to her buying a car and believes that others will have similar experiences leading to increased traffic. She also noted recent increases in traffic and urged the City to work to alleviate traffic congestion.

Ray Hoefling, 153 Cherry St, noted that some people will still need a car if this proposal is passed due to not everyone being able to get around on a bike. He also expressed concern with the proposal potentially increasing traffic and straining public infrastructure within the City.

Howard Rosenof, 153 Cherry St, described how the VCOD proposal has a higher unit capacity than what is required under MBTA Communities Guidelines. He further advocated for the reduction of density in the VCOD district until the unit capacity matches that of the MBTA Communities Guidelines.

Cyrisse Jaffee, 8 Hallron Rd, advocated for the preservation of architectural character within village centers and suggested that the City find a way to increase housing without increasing density.

Marc Hershman, 162 Cynthia Rd, stated that the proposed VCOD will lead to increased traffic and that the greater density will not lead to more affordable units. He also advocated for the preservation of open space in the proposal.

Mark Webster, 15 Owatonna St, Auburndale, expressed support for the proposed VCOD and commended the extensive community engagement conducted regarding this item. He described how the VCOD proposal will enable more affordable housing within Newton and promote a wider array of businesses within village centers. Mr. Webster did raise concern that the height and footprint bonus for greater affordable units is too tall for smaller village centers.

Jerry Riley, 12 Spring St, emphasized a point made during the Planning Department's presentation that the current buildings that we love in our village centers cannot be built under the existing zoning and voiced support for the proposal. He also described that the current zoning is broken and needs to be revised.

Lisa Monahan, 1105 Walnut St, described the vast community outreach that has been done regarding this proposal and voiced support for the proposal as a whole. She also described the extremely accurate street view renderings of development that the proposed zoning would allow would look like, drawn by Utile and the less accurate/ misleading illustrations drawn by some citizens' groups.

Ron Blau, 111 Wood End Rd, admired the thoughtfulness of the proposal and described how the proposal will enable more people to live within the City and create a more diverse community.

Cory Alperstein, 19 Hibbard Rd, is a board member of Green Newton and described how this proposal will help produce new construction that is fossil fuel free.

Ms. Alperstein also read a testimony on behalf of Halina Brown, 56 Cloverdale Rd, who is chair of the Citizens Commission on Energy. This testimony voiced support for the VCOD proposal and noted the benefits of the proposal in limiting greenhouse gases, invigorating economic life in village centers, and incentivizing small and medium size housing.

Ari Zeren, 301 Woodcliff Rd, described how the proposal will increase the quality of life for Newton residents by enabling more people to live close to public transit. He stated that the proposal is a good first step at creating an accessible community where younger residents will eventually want to raise a family.

Claire Sokolof, 41 Oxford Rd, spoke in support, describing how the proposal will provide more housing options within Newton and make village centers livelier.

Robert Gifford, 41 Oxford Rd, spoke in support. He described the previous work of a Newton Centre Task Force years ago, which failed, and commended the clear goals and framework used by the Zoning & Planning Committee, which would have been helpful to that earlier effort. He also noted how the increased density in village centers will help drive down the cost of housing and allow for more affordable housing options.

Nora Zizlsperger, 164 Linwood Ave, indicated that the VCOD proposal is a good start and looks forward to other zoning reforms that enable more people to live in Newton.

Reverend Devlin Scott, 196 Linwood Ave, cited issues with the current zoning that need to be amended and voiced support for the proposal.

Debra Waller, 10 Bonaire Circle, spoke against the proposal and stated that the increased density enabled by this proposal will not decrease the cost of housing.

Paul Fair, 20 Merton St, also raised concerns regarding traffic within Newton and advocated for the traffic to be reduced before increasing density.

John Dundon, 71 Fordham St, expressed support for the proposal and cited how it is difficult for many to live in Newton due to the lack of affordable housing options.

Russel Feldman, 85 Langley Rd, supports the proposal. He noted that the VCOD proposal does not require a minimum number of units to be built and that no community has zoning that is 100 percent built out. He also stated how this proposal can lead to rethinking the zoning for other areas in addition to the VCOD.

Kathleen Kouril Grieser, 258 Mill St, opposes the proposal claiming that it will lead to gentrification, displacement of current residents, increased housing prices, demolitions of existing homes, and loss of green space. She also stated that increasing density only will

benefit wealthy developers and that any elected official who supports the proposal should be removed from office.

Sumukh Tendulkar, address unknown, is a member of the Waban Area Council and proposed that development within the mixed-use priority streets be by special permit only.

Julian Goldman, address unknown, expressed uncertainty about how the VCOD proposal would affect traffic and inquired about the secondary impacts of this increased density.

Jonathan Kantar, 672 Chestnut St, voiced support for the proposal noting the extensive community engagement performed. He also echoed the comments from previous speakers regarding how this proposal will diversify housing options, help combat climate change, and help more individuals live without a car.

Alice Ingerson, 1923 Beacon St, described how the current zoning code was designed to promote large single-family homes with previous changes being to incentivize cars. This proposal moves away from this and incentivized multi-family housing near public transit.

Jason Harburger, 15 Perkins St, is a member of the Engine 6 Zoning Working Group and described how this proposal will create more walkable communities and diversify housing options. He also noted multiple examples of exclusionary zoning and how this proposal helps remove some of those barriers.

Stephen Farrell, 30 Winston Rd, expressed opposition to the VCOD proposal. He inquired about the possible penalties for non-compliance with MBTA Communities Guidelines and what will be done to make sure existing businesses can continue operation during construction if development happens at that location.

Lizbeth Heyer, 25 Freeman St, advocated for the city to do more to increase affordable housing and voiced support for the affordability bonus in the VC2 and VC3 districts.

Sean Roche, 42 Daniel St, voiced support for the VCOD proposal. He also agreed with previous speakers on how the proposal will increase affordable housing options and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Chagit Steiner, 48 Woodward St, expressed support for the proposal and cited the need for more affordable housing within village centers.

At 10:15 the Chair noted that no further public testimony would be entertained during this meeting and that the public hearing will be continued at a future meeting.

Ms. Caira in response to points raised during public testimony provided clarifying statements: In response to parking concerns, she noted they are seeing some individuals living with less

than 1 car per unit in recent developments. In response to concerns about churches being torn down, she stated that under current zoning churches may be redeveloped, and for those sites under the new zoning often what is being proposed is less than what is already allowed. Allowing more uses, like housing units within churches would provide more options for keeping the church. In response to concern that amenities that can be negotiated during the special permit process could no longer be negotiated, Ms. Caira noted that many of these amenities are required by the design standards, and that large projects will still go through the special permit process. In response to several concerns raised about protecting historic resources, she noted that all local historic districts have been removed from the VCOD, and anything landmarked would have to follow the current process of being approved by the Newton Historical Commission. In response to concerns raised about preserving open space, she reminded that no parks or public open spaces are being removed or rezoned as part of the proposal.

A councilor noted that earmarking affordable apartments for Newton civil servants are not allowed under fair housing law. Ms. Caira confirmed this, but noted there is a local preference process that can be provided to 25% units for those that live, work, or go to school in Newton.

A Councilor asked if the Planning Department could provide context as to why the unit capacity isn't an accurate number. Ms. Caira stated that the unit capacity number is derived from the MBTA compliance formula, which makes numerous assumptions and is only useful to show compliance. The formula only considers the absolute maximum that could be built, assuming nothing exists on the site currently, and that no on-site parking would be built that would take space away from potential unit development. The formula is blind to actual site existing conditions within the district. It is highly unlikely that all parcels within the VCOD could be built to maximum by-right allowances according to this formula.

She also directed individuals to the [FAQ](#) on the Planning Department's website for more discussion on this topic.

Regarding the process for going forward, the Committee will continue discussion throughout the summer and take straw votes on sections of the text and maps. During this time Councilors may offer amendments to the draft text and maps.

Committee members voted 8-0 on a motion to hold and continue the public hearing from Councilor Krintzman.

#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)

Action: Zoning & Planning Held 8-0

Note: This item was discussed concurrently with item #38-22. A written report can be found with item #38-22.

The meeting adjourned at 10:56pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah J. Crossley, Chair