



Finance Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Tuesday, October 28, 2024

Present: Councilors Gentile (Chair), Malakie, Grossman, Bixby, Micley, Humphrey, and Greenberg

Absent: Councilor Lipof

City staff present: Financial Analyst II Trevor Goehring; Manager of Financial Planning & Analysis Perry Rosenfield; Comptroller Stephen Curley; Director of Transportation Planning Jenn Martin; Director of Planning and Development Barney Heath; Deputy Commissioner of Public Works Shawna Sullivan; HR Generalist Caroline Wilson; Director of Human Resources Michelle Pizzi O'Brien; Acting Police Chief George McMains; CPA Program Manager Mollie Hutchings; Chief Preservation Planner David Lewis; Deputy Comptroller Stela Zaloshnja; and Assistant City Solicitor Andrew Lee

Others Present: Community Preservation Committee Chair Susan Lunin

All Finance agendas and reports, both past and present, can be found at the following link:
<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/city-clerk/city-council/council-standing-committees/finance-committee>

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link:
[Finance Committee - October 28, 2024](#)

#400-24

Appointment to the Financial Audit Advisory Committee

PRESIDENT LAREDO appointing JP Nahmias, 15 Burrage Rd, Newton, as a member of the FINANCIAL AUDIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE for a term to expire on November 4, 2027. (60 days: December 20, 2024)

Action: **Finance Approved 7-0**

Note: JP Nahmias joined the committee to discuss his appointment to the Financial Audit Advisory Committee. Mr. Nahmias explained that he has worked for startups throughout his career and has a background in public policy.

A councilor shared their recommendation for Mr. Nahmias to join the Financial Audit Advisory committee.

A councilor asked if Mr. Nahmias had experience with audits and Mr. Nahmias confirmed he did.

Councilor Micley motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#401-24 Appointment to the Financial Audit Advisory Committee

PRESIDENT LAREDO appointing Patrick Moriarty, 9 Hill Side Rd, Newton, as a member of the FINANCIAL AUDIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE for a term to expire on November 4, 2027. (60 days: December 20, 2024)

Action: Finance Held 7-0

Note: Patrick Moriarty did not attend tonight's discussion.

Without discussion, Councilor Humphrey motioned to hold, which passed unanimously.

#384-24 Requesting to accept and expend a \$53,015.90 grant from Massachusetts' Executive Office of Public Safety & Security

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to accept and expend fifty-three thousand fifteen dollars and ninety cents (\$53,015.90) from a FY2025 grant for Municipal Road Safety from Massachusetts' Executive Office of Public Safety & Security for the purpose of funding traffic safety enforcement overtime, safety equipment, pedestrian and bike enforcement overtime, safety activities, professional development on safety, and bike/ped safety items, including bike lights, reflectors and flags.

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Acting Police Chief George McMains joined the committee to discuss this grant from the Massachusetts' Executive Office of Public Safety & Security. Acting Chief McMains explained that this is an annual grant NPD has received over the last 5-10 years, but it is lower than normal because there were more municipalities that applied for the grant. \$38,000 of the grant will go to traffic safety enforcement overtime and the rest will be split up for the remaining items listed above.

A councilor thanked Acting Chief McMains for getting this grant for the City.

Councilor Bixby motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#390-24 Transfer and expend \$29,056.47 for rectangular rapid flashing beacon pedestrian signal

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer and expend twenty nine thousand fifty six dollars and forty seven cents (\$29,056.47) from Trio mitigation funds for the purchase and installation of a new rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) pedestrian signal for the crosswalk across Lowell Avenue at Page Road.

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Deputy Commissioner of Public Works Shawna Sullivan joined the committee to discuss this purchase of a new RRFB pedestrian signal for the crosswalk across Lowell Ave. at Page Rd. Ms. Sullivan noted that this intersection is a high priority in the City's RRFB ranking and will create a safer crossing along a heavily used pedestrian corridor.

A councilor expressed their support for these installations and asked about the financing and prioritization of these projects. Ms. Sullivan explained that DPW has a prioritization method on their website.

A councilor asked if this was the average cost for a RRFB and Ms. Sullivan said this one will be above average in cost due to the need for an additional component.

A councilor asked about creating a more competitive bidding process for these projects and Ms. Sullivan said these projects fall under DPW's on-call contracts and they rebid them every three years.

Councilor Micley motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#367-24 Authorization to accept and expend a \$50,000 grant from the FY25 Community Compact Grant Program

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of a fifty-thousand-dollar (\$50,000.00) grant from FY25 Community Compact grant program for the development of a Wage and Classification Plan.

Finance Held 6-0 on 10-15-24

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Director of Human Resources Michelle Pizzi O'Brien joined the committee to discuss this grant for the development of a Wage and Classification Plan for the City. Ms. Pizzi O'Brien explained this project will cost more than the grant amount and she would like to work with the Collins Center. This plan will manage employee pay and job classification (i.e. titles and job descriptions) to ensure equitable compensation for similar work. She estimates the plan will be complete in a year and a half.

A councilor asked when the last time was the City went through a similar process and Ms. Pizzi O'Brien responded that she was not able to find that information but the City currently uses a system that was popular in the 1990's so she estimated that was the last time.

A councilor asked if this plan would apply to union positions or if it was separate and Ms. Pizzi O'Brien said it would apply to only non-union positions which include about 134 titles. The same councilor asked for further explanation of factors such as gender that would be considered in this process and Ms. Pizzi O'Brien explained that they look at pay equity in broad terms including gender.

A councilor asked about the remaining funding that this project will require after the grant money is used. Ms. Pizzi O'Brien explained that this project is estimated to cost between \$80,000-100,000 so the HR department set aside money in their budget to cover the difference.

Councilor Malakie motioned to approve, which passed unanimously.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees**#389-24 Authorization to acquire Christina Street Bridge land**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to acquire a 11,210 square foot portion of the Price Center parking lot at 25-27 Christina Street for the price of four hundred thirty thousand dollars (\$430,000) to be used for development of access to a new shared-use path bridge over the Charles River.

Program & Services Approved 6-0 on 10-23-24**Action: Finance Approved 7-0**

Note: Director of Planning and Development Barney Heath and Director of Transportation Jenn Martin joined the committee to discuss this land acquisition. Ms. Martin shared the attached slides. Mr. Heath explained the City hired an appraisal firm which valued the property at \$391,000 while the Price Center conducted their own appraisal which came in at 1.7 million dollars and both parties agreed on \$430,000.

A councilor asked for clarification on the price difference between the two appraisals and Mr. Heath explained the City could only offer 10% above the appraised value, which is where the final amount came from. The same councilor asked if there was any expected increase in parking pressure due to the reduction in the parking lot and Mr. Heath answered no because that area that was sold was mostly just used for snow storage.

A councilor asked about discussions from the Program & Services Committee about including an open space restriction and Mr. Heath explained that the City plans to put the property, once acquired, in control of the Parks and Recreation Department so that it will have Article 97 protection.

A councilor commented that if a restriction is needed, it can be added later but they are trying to move this through efficiently because the funding has a deadline for the end of 2024.

Assistant Solicitor Andrew Lee answered that the Article 97 protection is determined based on the purpose the land was acquired for and since this land was acquired for park purposes, it will have Article 97 protection.

Councilor Humphrey motioned to approve, which passed unanimously.

#402-24 CPC Recommendation to appropriate \$17,500 in CPA funding

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending appropriation of seventeen thousand five hundred dollars (\$17,500) in Community Preservation Act funds from the FY25 CPA Unrestricted Budgeted Reserves (58R10498 579000) to the control of the Planning & Development Department for a grant to the Newton Planning Department for Phase II of the Midcentury Architectural Survey.

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: CPA Program Manager Mollie Hutchings and Community Preservation Committee Chair Lunin joined the committee to discuss this grant for Phase II of the Midcentury Architectural Survey. Ms. Lunin shared the attached slides. This project will be matched by grant funds from the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Survey and Planning Grant Program and will survey approximately 140 properties constructed between 1940 and 1975.

A councilor asked if Phase II will complete a survey of all buildings built in this period or if there will be a Phase III and Ms. Hutchings answered that there will most likely be more to do.

A councilor asked what the desired outcome of this survey is, and Ms. Hutchings responded that it provides data that the preservation planners can use to inform recommendations they make to the Historic Commission. Chief Preservation Planner David Lewis confirmed this data is helpful when properties come up for demolition review. Mr. Lewis also pointed out all this data will become public record, so it is a benefit to the public not just City staff.

A councilor asked if the goal is to identify every property that was constructed during this period and Ms. Hutchings responded that the goal is to catalog every property that is still intact and hasn't been altered to the point where they are no longer considered a historic resource.

Councilor Malakie motioned to approve, which passed unanimously.

#382-24 Reappointment of Antonio Bianchi as a Constable

HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing Antonio Bianchi, 15 Colonial Avenue, Newton as a Constable for the City of Newton for a term to expire on November 1, 2027. (60 days: December 20, 2024)

Action: Finance Approved 7-0

Note: Chair Gentile confirmed that Mr. Bianchi's paperwork and bond are on file. Councilors expressed no concerns.

Without discussion, Councilor Greenberg motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

The Committee adjourned at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Gentile, Chair

Christina St. Bridge

Finance Committee

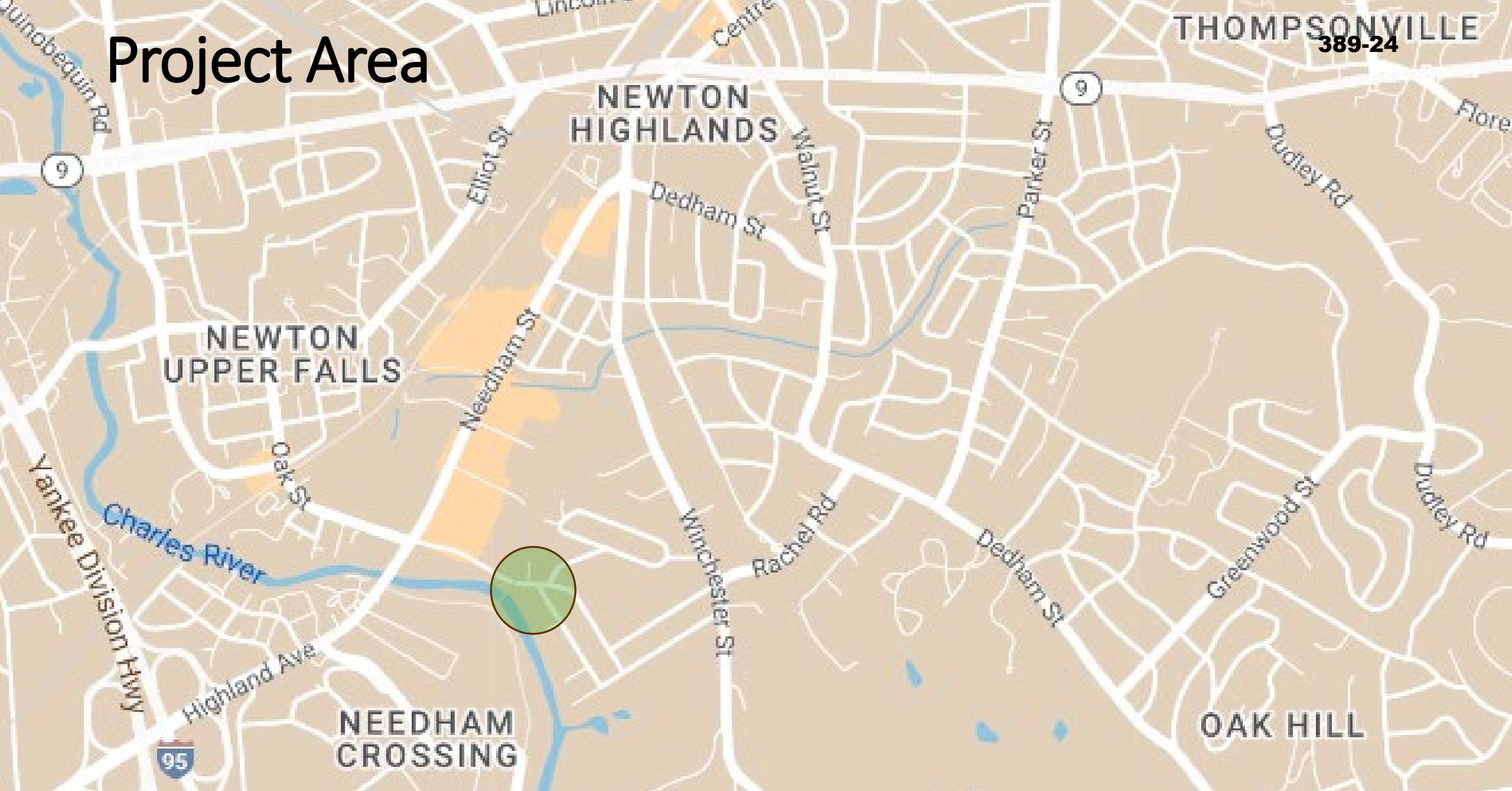
October 28, 2024

#389- 24 Authorization to acquire Christina Street Bridge land

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to acquire a 11,210 square foot portion of the Price Center parking lot at 25-27 Christina Street for the development of, and access to, a new shared-use path bridge over the Charles River for the price of four hundred thirty thousand dollars (\$430,000).



Project Area

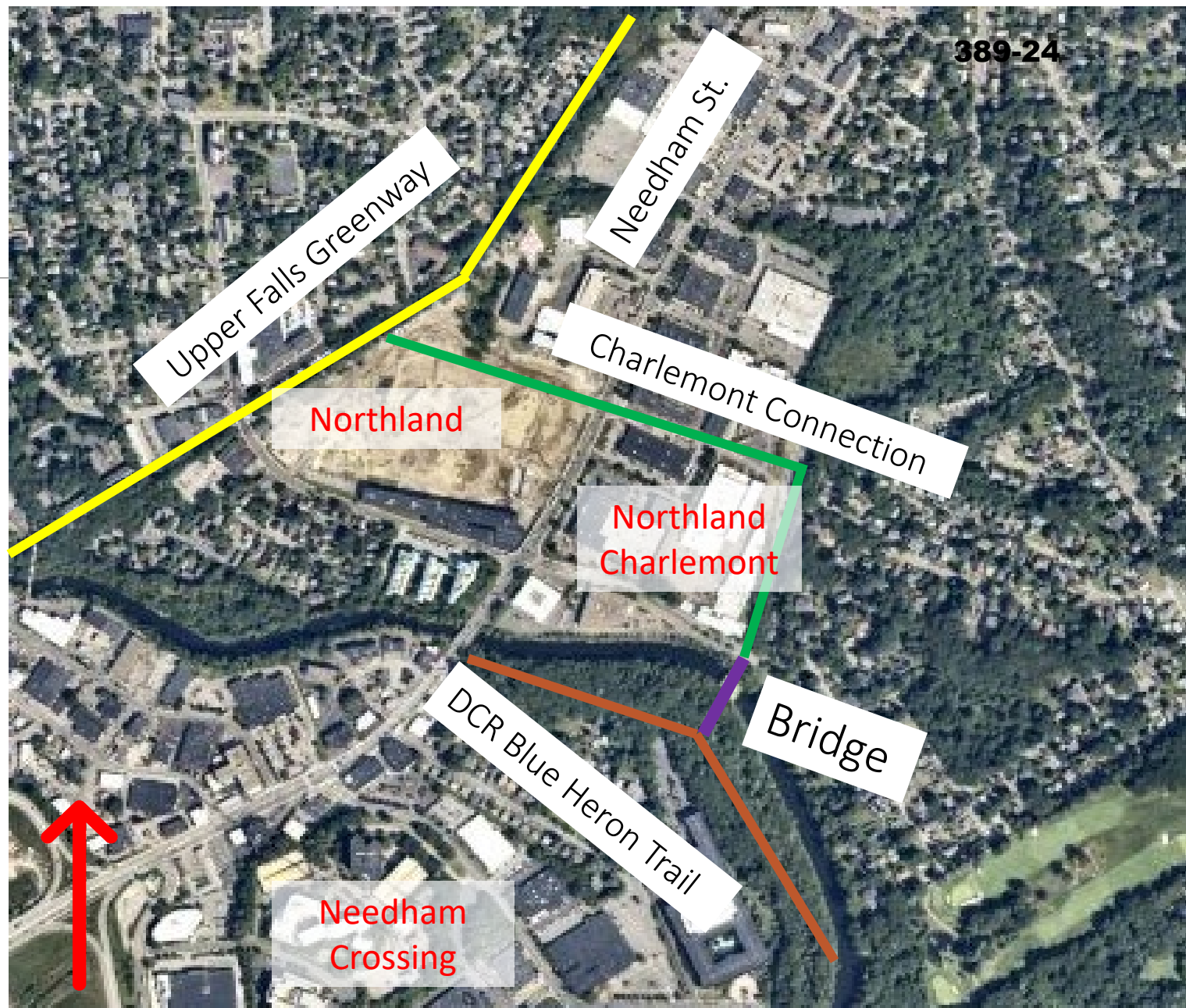


389-24



Extending Connections

- Upper Falls Greenway/ "Community Way"
- DCR Blue Heron Trail in Needham
- Connection through Northland Charlement and Northland

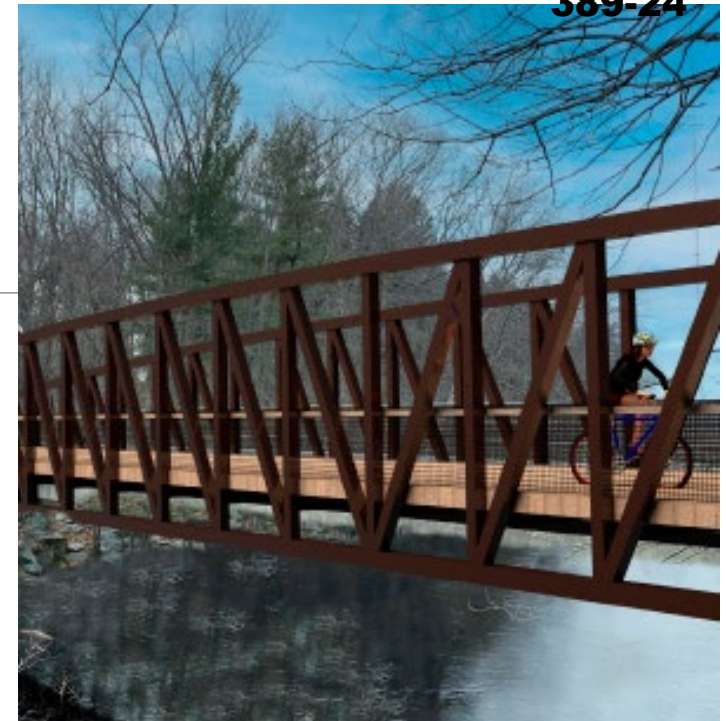




Current Condition



Current Condition



Planned

Feasibility Study

- Completed with VHB in 2021
- Included extensive public outreach
- Preferred design: new single-span, pre-fab truss bridge

CURRENT FUNDING

- \$1.25 million ARPA earmark through the 2022 Economic Development legislation.
- The funding must be committed by 12/31/2024 and spent by 12/31/2026.
- Will fund design and land acquisition

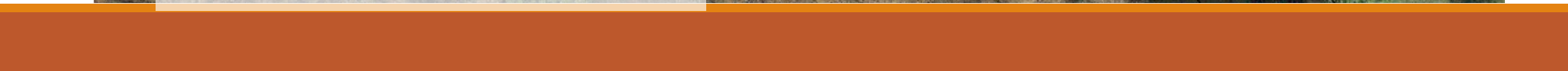
FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- TIP: MassDOT Project #613594.
- Estimated total contract cost is \$4,468,750. Estimated Total Federal participating construction cost is \$4,785,787.50
- Mitigation funds from the Northland and Northland Charlemont Developments may also be available.

Barry Price Center

- Friendly land acquisition
- 11,210.36 ft² parcel
- \$430,000 negotiated price

11,210.36 ft²



Approved
Northland Charlemont
40B

Barry Price
Center

Proposed Land
Acquisition



Schedule

- Programs & Service Oct 23
- Finance Committee Oct 28
- Subject to City Council approval, the Law Department will move forward with the land acquisition
- VHB is beginning design work, which will include public outreach in 2025



Newton Architectural Survey, 1940 to 1975

Presentation to the Finance Committee

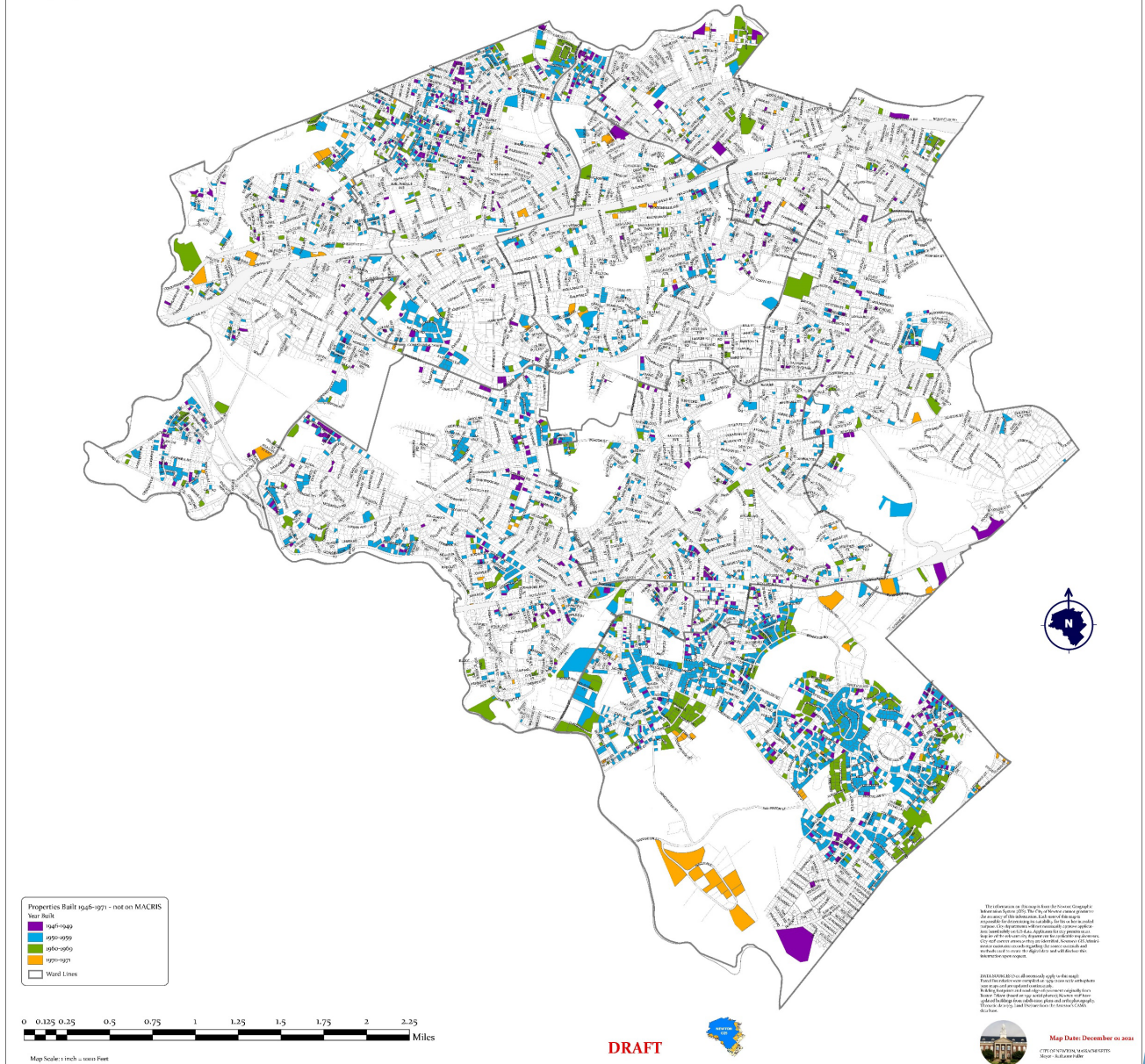
October 28, 2024

Properties Built 1946-1971, not listed on MACRIS

City of Newton, Massachusetts

Project Overview

- ▶ This is the second phase of this survey project, which initially was funded in FY22.
- ▶ In a typical year, half of the Demo Review applications received by the NHC are for post 1945 structures
- ▶ Buildings constructed between 1940 and 1972 make up roughly 16.8% of the City's building stock.
- ▶ Phase I of the survey inventoried 241 new buildings, providing preservation planners with valuable data on our city's architecture.
- ▶ Phase II is particularly highlighting areas and neighborhoods that were flagged for further study in the previous phase.



Current Funding Request

CPA is requested to provide half of the project funding needed to hire preservation consultants to complete an in-depth architectural and historical survey of approximately 140 properties constructed between 1940 and 1975.

This project will be matched by grant funds from the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Survey and Planning Grant Program.

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

24001 0001

Newton

NWT. >>>>

Town/City: Newton

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Newtonville

Address: 33-41 Austin Street

Historic Name: Star Market

Uses: Present: supermarket

Original: supermarket

Date of Construction: 1962-1963

Source: Boston Globe (June 2, 1963)

Style/Form: Contemporary

Architect/Builder: Samuel Glaser/Perini Corporation

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: concrete, brick veneer/concrete

Roof: rubber membrane [?]

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: n/a

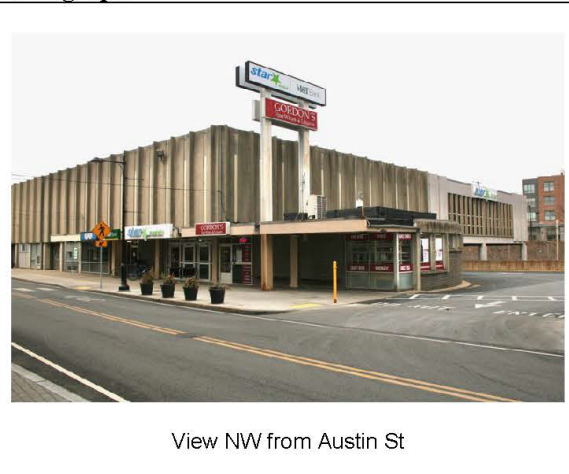
Major Alterations (*with dates*): n/a

Condition: good

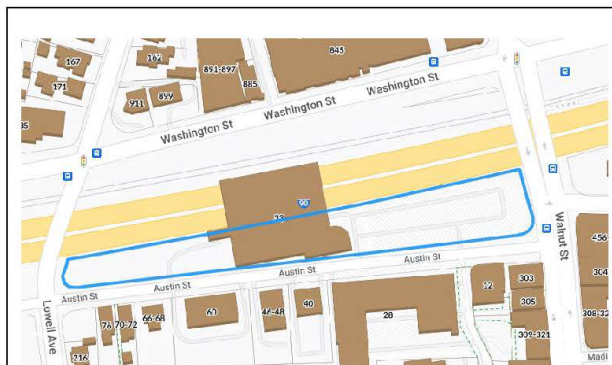
Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 2.09 acres (within parcel boundary)

Setting: historic village setting on Austin Street, with building flanked by surface customer parking lot on east and delivery area on west; northern half of building extends above Mass. Pike (Interstate 90) right-of-way

Photograph**Locus Map**

↑
north



Note: northern half of building (outside parcel boundary) extends above Mass. Pike right-of-way

Google/AppGeo and City of Newton

Recommended CPA Project Funding

402-24

CPA Funding Accounts	Amount
FY25 General Budgeted Reserves (58R10498 579000).	\$17,500
TOTAL CPA PROJECT FUNDS:	\$17,500

CPA Funding is recommended to be Historic Resource Funding.

Project Funding Sources

Funding Sources	Amount
CPA Recommended Funding	\$17,500
MHC Survey and Planning Grant	\$17,500
TOTAL CPA PROJECT FUNDS:	\$35,000

Questions & Discussion

▶ Thank you!