



**Zoning & Planning Committee**  
**and**  
**Land Use Committee**

**Joint Meeting Report**

**City of Newton**  
**In City Council**

**Monday, September 9, 2019**

Present: Albright (Chair), Danberg, Baker, Kalis, Krintzman, Brousal-Glaser, Downs, Leary.

Present: Schwartz (Chair), Greenberg, Kelley, Laredo, Markiewicz, Auchincloss, Crossley.  
Absent, Lipof.

City Staff Present: James Freas (Deputy Director of Planning & Dev.), Neil Cronin (Senior Planner), Jonah Temple, Jen Caira (Chief Planner), Jonathan Yeo, Donna Whitham (Committee Clerk).

Planning Board: Peter Doring (Chair), Sonia Parisca (VC), Chris Steele, Kelley Brown, Kevin McCormick, James Robertson, Jennifer Molinsky.

**#140-19(3) Zoning amendments for Riverside Station**

RIVERSIDE STATION/355 GROVE STREET AND 399 GROVE STREET requesting amendments to Chapter 30, Newton Zoning Ordinance, in Sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 relative to the Mixed Use 3 District.

**Note: Both items #140 & 187-19 discussed together note below.**

**#187-19 Zoning amendment from Newton LFIA for Riverside Station**

LOWER FALLS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION RIVERSIDE COMMITTEE requesting to amend Chapter 30, City of Newton Zoning Ordinance, Sections 4.2 and 7.3.5 pertaining to the Mixed Use3/Transit-Oriented zoning district.

**Action: Both items #140-19 & #187-19 discussed and voted upon together.**

**Zoning & Planning Committee Held: 7-0 (Krintzman not voting)**

**Land Use Committee Held: 7-0**

**Note:** Stephen Buchbinder, Attorney for Mark Development started by describing the zoning amendments to the proposed Riverside project. He stated that the project has evolved and has become smaller. Mr. Buchbinder mentioned they continue to have meetings and receive feedback from residents and City Council members.

Damien Chaviano, Mark Development (MD), addressed the Council members with a PowerPoint (attached). Through his presentation he spoke of the evolution of changes within the scope of the project and the alterations for the Special Permit. Three prominent concerns they continue to hear are; heights of the buildings, density and setbacks all along Grove Street. He explained they understand the design concerns specific to each building and have had community meetings, 3<sup>rd</sup> party peer reviews and are in the process of getting feedback from the City Council members. The plan shows where they were in the original proposal to where they are now after the amendments. He noted Mark Development is not yet prepared to discuss their thoughts with regards to setbacks on Grove Street, though they anticipate doing so at the next meeting September 23, 2019 jointly with Zoning & Planning and Land Use. Changes Mr. Chaviano referenced gross floor area (GFA) of retail, residential, hotel, office and MBTA areas. These figures are reflected on page 2 of the presentation:

- Retail: Increased +7,976 GFA
- Residential: Decreased -170,898 GFA
- Hotel: Decreased -31,356 GFA
- Office: Decreased -39,452 GFA
- MBTA: Decreased -1,894 GFA

Residential units, hotel keys and parking spaces were also reduced:

- Residential Units: -151
- Hotel Keys: -40
- Parking Spaces: -164

According to the renderings, he indicated an array of changes with reductions in heights, stories, complete removal of the 18-story condominium structure, now a 6-story hotel. The modification to the long contiguous building will now be detached and create passageway from Grove Street to the Main Street eliminating the massive barrier effect. Buildings adjacent to Grove Street have also been reduced by a story. He cited more usable green space within the center of the project will yield more outdoor community activities and public living spaces. Mr. Chaviano exhibited representations of distant sightlines with outlined lower views from many vantage points via Route 128 North & South and Lower Falls: Ashville Rd./Pine Grove Ave./Grove Street.

Randall Block, Chair of the Lower Falls Improvement Association-Riverside Committee (LFIA) also provided a PowerPoint (attached). Through his presentation on behalf of the LFIA, he described key components of LFIA's proposed amendments in June 2019, in comparison to the amended Mark Development (MD) revisions. Mr. Block described Grove Street as a designated scenic road between Auburndale and Lower Falls with the necessity to preserve its natural amenities and open space that Newton has treasured for generations. LFIA proposed setbacks alongside of Grove Street to be at a 45-ft distance from the curb in contrast to 30-ft which Mark Development has submitted. The LFIA would like to know why the extra 15-feet is so important to the design. They maintain the treelined character and neighborhood charm will vanish if the setback is reduced. He further stated the 45-ft measurement is more equivalent to abutting structures such as Riverside Office Center, Woodland Park Apartments and current Hotel Indigo all of which measure at least 45-ft.

The LFIA is concerned with the aspect of losing visual green space and more troubled by the lack of safety accommodations to separate bike and pedestrian pathways. Mr. Block provided information that MassDot bike path regulations are recommended at 10-ft for a two-way path. The Developer's 30ft setback does not provide a suitable area for pedestrians, bikers or a landscape buffer. He conveyed that residents have recognized the reductions, but do not appreciate the appearance of a wall as an uninviting and unwelcoming obstruction. He further noted that the number of stories still exceeds the Civic Moxie Vision Plan recommendation of 3 stories. The building height of 205ft-210ft would be the tallest on Route 128 and in Newton, he urges the Committee to uphold the 135 feet limitation in the existing zoning ordinance. Mr. Block expressed concern with the decrease in residential percentages; March 2018 reflected 60%, reduced to 50% in March 2019 and now a further reduction at 45%, allowing more commercial and less housing. Mr. Block informed that Mark Development insists only a 1.5million square foot plan would be economically viable. He opposes this and referenced a development feasibility study prepared by Urban Focus. On page 14 of the document it displays a graph of return on costs for different size developments. This graph maintains at least a 5% rate of return on every sized project analyzed, even for Normandy's 2013 approved plan. He notes a modest rate of return is economically viable at 5% and not 7%.

The traffic volume is critical, inside the project and surrounding it, with Riverside Park, park & ride commuters, residential and recreational T-riders to Boston. This will all compound congestion issues. The LFIA urges the Committee to set 70% of Riverside for housing and utilize commercial, hotel and retail taxes to support the City services for the new project. The LFIA and neighbors would like to see a creative plan that fits within the landscape of the area and works with the zoning rules.

A Councilor asked if the Developer and Planning Department have a determination on the appropriate setbacks on Grove Street. Mr. Chaviano did not. Mr. Freas also did not have the figures available and stated they were still formulating the setbacks. The Councilor asked if they were addressed in the previous Special Permit and by the next meeting they would like to hear from the Developer and Planning Department. The Councilor also asked Mr. Chaviano about the variation in building height from 145-190ft and to explain the difference. Mr. Chaviano explained the difference in the two heights where the break happens; one building will be 145ft and the other 190ft. The Councilor mentioned to keep consistent number of stories compared to what the renderings reflect, as there was a discrepancy between 13-14 stories. The Councilor mentioned there was not an actual increase regarding open space and requested to learn more from Planning about the Zoning requirements and what the intentions are to increase.

A Committee member referenced the traffic memorandum comparison proposal and felt the report was missing the weekday total. They would like to know what the increase/decrease might be on Grove Street during these hours. In addition, they asked if there were any homeownership. Mr. Chaviano will send that data regarding the traffic study and replied Riverside is an all rental product. One Councilor inquired with Mr. Block about Urban Focus analysis report on the appendix of the Vision Plan. He stated the plan presented is now 1.2million sq. ft and when the focus was done the measurement was 1.6million, with the 7%

rate of return. He mentioned the LFIA consulted with other developers and there is no standard of 7% rate of return. It varies with developers. Another Committee member wondered if they can combine components of the 2 zoning petitions instead of choosing one over another. They would like to frame the decisions with specific criterion and asked how this will work within the Special Permit process. The Chair requested Mr. Temple and Mr. Freas to prepare a framework considering zoning decisions.

One Councilor asked Mr. Chaviano why the decrease in residential and increase in retail. He replied the hotel and office could utilize more retail for the scope of the project and will be more accommodating for residents.

One Councilor asked if this project is going to blend within the 2 neighborhoods and help to bridge Auburndale and Lower Falls. They questioned if the massing in design was reasonable, or will it become a divide. They want Riverside to interface with the two neighborhoods, have walkability and to build connections. They are concerned with traffic between the transit, commuters, residents and visitors and hope this project will create pioneer thinking transportation innovation, by planning traffic and developing a reduction in cars in the neighborhood.

A Councilor stated their appreciation from both, the LFIA and the Developer. They feel confident that many dimensions of the plan are viable. They feel this project has sound parts and mentioned the economics and the unanswered questions. The Councilor said they once doubted, but seeing the project can work. A major concern is the traffic, especially when the Mass Pike is under construction for 10 years. They also asked Mark Development to accurately depict the project sketches, as some slides displayed a wider amount of green space on Grove Street.

A Councilor felt it is not within the Council's purview to discuss the financial feasibility of the project as it is not in the council's purview to measure this. They also mentioned they would like to develop a zoning code according to the site and not what the Developer dictates. The Councilor agrees with several other Councilors and they look forward to seeing actual traffic studies on Grove Street and mentioned the traffic demand management study. The Developer will research and provide that information. Another Councilor also mentioned this type of project is fitting for this site, but it needs to be right size, built right and have suitable parking. The transportation and traffic projected issues are paramount and incentivizing residents and alternatives are something for which they look forward. A question was posed to the Planning Board by a Councilor, who asked for future clarity on the zoning for the mechanical penthouse. Another question was asked regarding the parking projections; they are not expecting definitive answers now, but look forward to addressing this later.

**Public Hearing Item**

**#165-19** **Adoption of Washington Street Vision Plan as part of the Comprehensive Plan**  
**DIRECTOR OF PLANNING** requesting approval and adoption of the Washington Street Vision Plan as an amendment to the 2007 Newton Comprehensive Plan.

**#Action:** **Zoning & Planning Held 7-0 (Krintzman not voting)**



**Note:** James Freas began a PP presentation (attached) informing Council members and the public, of the July 2019 draft of the Washington Street Vision Plan which would amend the Comprehensive Plan. The draft focuses on action items and policy supporting the research and studies provided by the team of consultants. The plan has 4 sections; introduction, larger vision section, implementation and summary of the guiding principles. Mr. Freas explained that one of the fundamental goals is to maintain a distinction between the 2 Villages within the project area from West Newton to Newtonville. He pointed out that the lower density area of traditional family homes will be preserved for the future and will maintain its identity. He described an array of anticipated building heights, facades and characteristics with many different fabrics and materials that will help to conserve traditional appearances. (He presented a historic building graph outlining the distinguishable exteriors, all which were built over a period of time with unique styles of roofing, heights/widths and fabrication).

Mr. Freas stated that the transportation component is essential and promoting safety is paramount for all. Washington Street will be structured with care and control for the well-being for drivers, bikers and walkers, as the roadway will be designed with a more boulevard feel. All modes of transportation will have accessibility and the intent to enhance public transportation will ensure improvements and a higher degree of frequency to accommodate commuters, this will be strategized with MassDot. He expressed that diverse housing needs will be met for many types of household configurations to reside in Newton. In addition, he talked about business development and the opportunity for retention of small independent businesses while anticipating new office buildings and retailers. The Economic Development identified Washington Street as a major prospect for development due to its proximity plan to Boston, accessibility to major roadways/highways and user-friendly transit.

He also referenced environmental issues addressing climate change as part of the draft. Improving and redesigning the local environment will consist of planting new plants, revitalization and creation of recreational parks and eco-friendly areas. Improving Cheesecake Brook will not only be an enjoyable public amenity, but will also contribute to becoming a sustainable natural asset. Mr. Freas looks forward to the adoption of the amended plan in early fall and welcomes additional input as his staff will be preparing an updated version incorporating changes.

A Councilor requested that it be known a number of recommended edits had been made to Mr. Freas, which were not yet incorporated in the presentation. The Councilor assumed they are still working off this draft form; Mr. Freas answered affirmatively. A Committee member asked how the redesign of Washington Street will accommodate traffic on Washington Street as well as deliveries, transportation services and daily commuters. He wonders if this plan will create a spillover effects onto residential side streets. Mr. Freas stated once the multi-model visual idea of the community is adopted, the next step is design implementation to help solve challenges.

**The Public Hearing was opened:**

Peter Bruce, President of the Newtonville Area Council (NAC) also presented a PowerPoint (attached). He stated that the NAC is an elected body and part of the Newton Government. Mr. Bruce stated that a survey had been conducted to ascertain public opinion, targeting Wards 1-3, which are most affected. He informed that the NAC received over 2500 responses and that

approximately 2/3 of the respondents supported minimizing the development of Washington Street. The community also supported keeping newly developed housing to under 250 units, in addition to what is already newly constructed in Newtonville. He explained that the Planning Department was advocating for 5-6 times greater than the amount that the NAC survey reflected. Height is of concern and Mr. Bruce noted that 82% respondents favored 3-4 stories. He cited the inevitable deficits on the City's infrastructure with burdens reaching the Newton Public Schools, Police/Fire, water systems and inquired if there had even been a financial impact study on the new development. Mr. Bruce represents NAC with the hope that all entities can work as one city with mutual respect. At this time the NAC does not accept this current draft vision plan.

Arthur Jackson/Shaw Street reiterated the sentiment of Mr. Bruce from the Newtonville Area Council. He stated the Planning & Development Department and the Developers are not listening to the people in the community. He feels it is a terrible plan and will create traffic chaos and havoc to the City's infrastructure. Mr. Jackson stated the plan is not well thought out and seems to be the same plan from the beginning, merely being reintroduced.

Julia Malakie/Murray Road stated setbacks of small retailers reflected in the plan are incorrect. The plan reveals 20-25ft, but some frontages in West Newton are as narrow as 13-15ft. She feels the greater the build, the more likelihood of losing character and historic value. She is concerned with unnecessary demolition of buildings that are newer and being purchased at multiple times the assessed values. She is not in favor of up zoning, upselling and overdevelopment of buildings, especially landmark sites to the community which have not been protected with landmark status.

Pam Wright/Eden Avenue described development done in the correct way is acceptable. The heights and intensity are what residents do not want. She is interested in referring to maximum height in footage, not stories. She believes 45ft should be a maximum height and learning that some buildings could be double the Police Station or even 10 stories is unacceptable. She feels setbacks are imperative to allow treescapes and natural flora. She said the newly constructed Washington Place and Austin Street in Newtonville are too close to the street and reflect too much shade.

Pam Shufro/Blithedale Street feels economic diversity will be phased out with the commercial sized residential buildings with extreme rent disallowing most people to afford. It will keep the low to moderate people out of the market, despite the affordable housing percentage. She urges to keep Newton a welcoming city, not an exclusive one.

Lynn Weisman/Alden Street spoke of the past 2 years' worth of community engagement regarding the appearance of Washington Street. She mentioned residents want housing and development that will be appropriate in accordance with Green Newton.

Lois Levin/Chestnut Street mentioned there are many views according how this will affect individuals. She feels the plan will create communal places for residents to interact and provide more housing. She expressed Washington Street will be safer, the villages will be lively, and revenue will be enhanced for the City.

Doris Sweet/Lexington Street likes the aspect of people orientation of the plan; safety for bikers, pedestrians and children. She is happy at the prospect of multi housing opportunities and the attention to pocket parks and wider streets where people can connect and maintain a collective feel. She stated the Armory should be reserved exclusively for very low housing income residents.

John Vascalakis/Grove Hill Avenue is concerned with the financial aspects and cost to the City of Newton. He asked if the one million dollars had been paid to the City for the Austin Street parking lot and other various payments. He would like to see the cost analysis and if debts have been paid to the City. He stated with so much commercial expected revenue to the City, why are there continuous increases to residential property tax.

Dave Bronstein/Park Place is supportive of the vision plan. He suggests looking at the plan in whole rather than individual building structures. He would like to make sure Newton is available to all by providing new services, sound transportation and a cohesive community feel.

Larry /Williston Road wanted to complement the vision plan and feels it respects the past and is providing for the future. With the growth of Boston, it is necessary for the growth of Newton to provide housing to accommodate the increase in population.

Marty Kofka/Beaumont Avenue is encouraged by the development, but strongly against any building over 6 stories; it is too out of character for the area.

Anita Lishblau/Adella Avenue stated she is a progressive liberal and in favor of housing being affordable for all. She does not like or support the plan and feels the heights are too high and excessive. The heights should remain at 3 stories and not more than the level of the CVS in West Newton. She would like to preserve the character of Newton and thinks this plan is excessive. She would like to maintain the village character and the historic value within the City. In favor of development, not all in one area Washington Street. She would like it to spread it across the Newton and mentions constructing similar builds in the other villages.

Richard Burnell/Adella Avenue tends to agree with his peers that the buildings are too tall and too massive. He suggests Austin Street is a sound example at 45ft for which he can tolerate and that should be the maximum. Walking by Washington Place is too intimidating and urges City Council not to support the plan.

Robin Winnick/Adella Avenue stated she has resided in Newton for 30 years. She is interested in a traffic study. She is very concerned after the additional housing, retail and office are implemented. She feels people will not even shop on Washington Street because of the traffic, much like people do on Needham Street. She stated Washington Street is a residential neighborhood and the excessive buildings will be up against homes. She is against the plan.

Lorraine Zannick/Newtonville Avenue has worked with immigrants and low-income families for 30 years. She feels the affordable housing that is mentioned, is not a true accounting of the

affordability needs that real people need. She is disappointed that the landmarking has ceased to protect many buildings and disappointed with the intentions of the plan.

Christine Cary/Strafford Road also has a business in Nonantum and cited that the developers would rather have vacancies due to high rent, than to reduce monthly rentals. This is a financial benefit for the developers, as she stated developers/building owners do not pay taxes if the building is not rented. Therefore, anticipated revenue for the City is jeopardized.

Mike Halle/Cherry Place asked where the vision of the City was when Washington Street was a broken street with broken lights and dangerous for kids, families, bikers etc. He was disappointed that competing developers had to come to enhance the street. He also thinks a well-designed building is more important than the height. He does believe there should be varied building styles and make design decisions in a progressive manner.

Lizbeth Heyer/Freeman Street represents the Newton Housing Partnership and stated she endorsed the plan and looks forward to housing opportunities for diverse residents. She feels Washington Street is a great asset and feels the plan is thoughtful in transportation and addresses ecological enhancements. She supports this plan and has made additional recommendations to Mayor Fuller regarding land, Armory and researching ways of affordability for residents to move into Newton.

Ann Houston/Wedgewood Road is a 30-year resident and is looking forward to enhancements on Washington Street. She notes the need for long term deed restricted affordable housing and excited for retail revitalization and neighborhood character. She is interested in the underlying environmental sustainability and improvements.

Liz Mennes/Wedgewood Road a 26-year resident and architect and feels the plan is comprehensive. She believes it will yield revenue to address other needs of the City, especially in the climate realm and to invest in the infrastructure. Looks forward to the community being enriched and diverse. She believes heights are secondary to well-designed buildings and can be effective in a cumulative grouping. A comparison to Coolidge Corner was mentioned, she referenced the character of old charm and modern with varying heights, shapes, hotel and retail.

Laura Foote/Otis Street would like to see Village character preserved. She mentions most of the Villages possess beautiful 19<sup>th</sup> Century early 20<sup>th</sup> Century architectural significant buildings. She urges the Council to ensure that the Planning Department proactively identifies these buildings and protects them from demolition.

Sean Roche/Daniel Street is in favor of development across the City of Newton with respect to environmental, social and economic justice. He believes that zoning is a powerful tool and has been used as a means for racial segregation. He believes there has been historical damage by using zoning this way and urges the Council to listen very carefully and discourage this.

Bryan Barrash/Lowell Avenue stated he is a candidate for City Council. He commends the City on proactively planning for the future with development. He is hopeful additional development

will take place across the City, not just Washington Street. He is excited to have a more walkable Village with bike improvements and agrees with building design grouping and features. He is particularly interested in ensuring and creating affordable housing and strongly recommends the building heights be decreased in the commercial development area near Crafts Street.

Kathleen Hobson/Dorset Road believes Newton needs to grow and change. She supported 3 development plans in Waban that failed. She would like to see growth in the Waban area near the T parking lot in her neighborhood.

Tammara Bliss/Lewis Street commends the City Council for taking a proactive stand and thinking through holistically. She believes the plan addresses the future need for affordable housing and believes 6 stories would be sufficient, not 10. She stated there needs to be population of growth in school aged children, so schools do not close as they did in the 1970's. She is in favor of growth and revitalizing of Washington Street to make it safe and appreciates the opportunity for the public to provide opinion.

Ken Galdston/Fair Oaks Avenue voiced a concern about historic preservation and feels 10 stories is really out of character for the area. He wonders if the question of affordable housing that is spoken of by developers is real. The City is being pushed by developers and being questioned by citizens. He thinks the Green Newton have some good points, but citizens who live in the neighborhood have real challenges. He mentioned the actual scale of developing is too much and would like for the Committee and developers respect the historic precedent in these settings. He recommends for Committee members and developers to read the *"The Death and Life of Great American Cities"* by Jane Jacobs and encourages them to reflect on this book.

Jane Rosenoff/Vincent Street is in favor of a reasonable amount of development, but does not want it to be overwhelming to the infrastructure and negatively affect transportation. She appreciates some of the ideas in the Vision Plan although she is not supportive of the massive heights and concerned about the lack of a corrected fiscal impact in the fiscal report. She has read all versions of the plan and questions many changes. She asked why the plan was altered to increase allowable heights in many areas and requested before approving a plan, to please revert back to original version #2 map, but with lower stories.

Howard Rosenoff/Vincent Street cited version #2/page 178 of the Vision Plan where it read the increase of population would be greater than a factor of 5 and asks how the expects could say it would only minimally affect the community merely because Newton has the Commuter Rail. There are no MBTA plans or funds to increase service, only to provide accessibility enhancements. He added, the Vision Plan did not reflect this new information, yet expects residents to advocate for increased service. He is concerned with the spillover effect onto adjacent side streets for those residents living in rental buildings without parking facilities; the neighborhoods already experience the spillover during the parking winter ban. He stated if aggressive development proceeds without adequate transit, the result will be detrimental.

Grant Hauber/Commonwealth Avenue stated he endorsed the plan and feels the process has been inclusive. He stated churches and temples in Newton are several stories and his own house is 45ft high, varying heights is part of what makes architectural interest. Newton needs housing, rentals, condos and feels densification creates convenience, which creates community. Washington Street should be reclaimed by lessening the street, creating wider setbacks and beautifying the sidewalk.

Cedar Pruitt/Wyoming Road is on Washington Street every day and looks forward to a street with convenience. She asks for the heights of the buildings to be much less, as it would create overshadowing and will not fit with the character of the area. She thinks it will give the appearance of a cavernous distant vision.

Ann Cedrone/Walker Street suggests Committee to walk the length of Washington Street and the on Newtonville Avenue to imagine the view of 10 story buildings. She stated these buildings will be monstrosities at the very end of her street. She expressed that she supports growth and change, but not for buildings over 4 stories. Ms. Cedrone expressed “she” and her 4 children are the vision of Newtonville.

Rich Shield/Eliot Avenue supports development on Washington Street, but not for the Vision Plan as currently drafted. He stated when Mayor Fuller campaigned, she would move away from development on a per project manner and use long range planning with a holistic view on what costs and impact will be. He phrased, decades of development will meet fiscal needs head on and will improve quality of life for residents. He feels they are moving away from this pledge and going back to a per project view. He noted the importance of accurate fiscal reporting and referenced some towns are experiencing too much too fast and are at a standstill and even putting a moratorium. Newton needs to get this development right and put the smart into smart growth.

Ellen Serino/Hamlin Road expresses that this vision is more like a nightmare and is disrespectful to the neighbors. She feels it does not support the infrastructure and worries about over usage of the City’s resources. Her concern is adding traffic and the view of tall buildings, especially since the Mass Pike is lower it gives the illusion of much higher.

Annette Seward/Davis Street is concerned about size and scale of the Vision Plan. She feels Newton does not have the infrastructure to support the anticipated density and the character will be lost. With so much more housing buildings, it will not feel like Newton and its small-town village charm and will be more like Brookline. She has attended many meetings and thoroughly aware that the general consensus is that residents do not support any more than 4 stories.

Jim Eckenrode/Byrd Avenue likes many aspects in the Vision Plan and is in favor of human scale development. He is concerned with the 7 acres of Cheesecake Brook marked for redevelopment with 5-6 stories. He further stated with the 1 million square feet of commercial office buildings anticipated, will yield 6600 people into Newton daily and questioned how this would work with only 2 trains from South Station to Newton every morning, 5:00am & 10:50am arrival and similar schedule from west. He feels many commuters will be traveling via the surface road. He

stated there are too many questions unanswered and urges the Committee not support the plan until many items are addressed.

Nathaniel Lichten/Pine Crest Road stated there are several aspects to like about the plan and asks for the height and density to be looked at more closely to see if the infrastructure and streets can handle the maximum buildout of capacity. Traffic is already abysmal in Newton and he is worried about 6 story dense buildings without being equipped with traffic solutions, is not a good mix. He would like for Committee to take a closer look and moderate the plan down, so that the vast majority of people would like.

Tarik Lucas/Central Avenue explained 18 months ago the Council approved ½ million dollar no bid contract to hire a consultant to create a vision plan and zoning code for Washington Street. He said residents were told this consultant was uniquely qualified and would be engaging to the community, 18 months later he is still waiting. The consultant did not reach out to any of the several neighborhood groups and finally sent a survey for which residents requested to minimize development on Washington Street and learned the consultant developed a plan to maximize potential development. Consultant gave illusion that the process would be led by the residents and it was not. He noted the bottom line was that the Vision Plan is incomplete, did not follow its own research, provided no financial details as to the costs and did not consider other projects in Newton, School impacts or MBTA. This plan has too many flaws. He urges the Committee not to approve this plan.

Rick Frank/Brookside Avenue also had an office in Newton Centre for 25 years. He is not in favor of mixed use and residential on top of restaurants. He stated people do not want to live like that and understands that now a bank is proposed for Washington Place. He mentioned overnight deliveries with noise, tractor-trailers and rodents. He also mentioned the noise on the Mass Pike is 100 decibels and is it realistic that all of these buildings will rent out.

Maura Harrington/Lowell Avenue also has an office on Washington Street. She commented on the community impact and that the developers should be required to pay a community impact fee. She feels this will offset some costs to the City. She referenced Somerville recouped over 100 million dollars in community impact revenue, Boston receives millions. It is unrealistic to plan a vision and not determine how much it will cost.

Carolina Ventura/Prospect Street commended the City on hearing the public and allowing this discussion. She thinks the plan is a good start and hopes to move forward.

Peter Harrington/Lowell Avenue has lived and worked on Washington Street for over 50 years. He is thoroughly familiar with residents and their desire to have affordable housing and not have 6 stories and above on Washington Street. He compared to Cambridge where narrowing the street and adding retail establishment, provides no parking for potential shoppers, or residents. He also cited an earlier speaker and was frustrated at the comments made about zoning and racism.

Ellen Eckenrode/Byrd Newton expressed emotional concern that this community is being changed for the worse. Several people she knows are all ready to move. She stated the traffic

already has increased and the patterns will only be worsened. She is sad to think about moving after raising her family and residing in West Newton for 25 years.

**#277-19      Reappointment of Michael Quinn to the Zoning Board of Appeals**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing MICHAEL QUINN, 115 Staniford Street, Auburndale, as an Associate member of the ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS for a term to expire April 30, 2020.

**Action:      Zoning & Planning Approved 7-0 (Krintzman not voting)**

**Note:**      The Committee was pleased to reconfirm Mr. Quinn to the Zoning Board of Appeals and appreciated his continuation of service.

**#278-19      Reappointment of Lei Z. Reilley to the Zoning Board of Appeals**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing LEI Z. REILLEY, 130 Pine Street, Auburndale, as an Associate member of the ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS for a term to expire April 30, 2020.

**Action:      Zoning & Planning Approved 7-0 (Krintzman not voting)**

**Note:**      The Committee was pleased to reconfirm Ms. Reilley to the Zoning Board of Appeals and appreciated her continuation of service.

**#279-19      Reappointment of Vincent Farina to the Zoning Board of Appeals**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing VINCENT FARINA, 24 Manemet Road, Newton Centre, as an Associate member of the ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS for a term to expire April 30, 2020.

**Action:      Zoning & Planning Approved 7-0 (Krintzman not voting)**

**Note:**      The Committee was pleased to reconfirm Mr. Farina to the Zoning Board of Appeals and appreciate his continuation of service.

**#280-19      Reappointment of Treff LaFleche to the Zoning Board of Appeals**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing TREFF LAFLECHE, 1603 Commonwealth Avenue, West Newton, as an Associate member of the ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS for a term to expire April 30, 2020.

**Action:      Zoning & Planning Approved 7-0 (Krintzman not voting)**

**Note:**      The Committee was pleased to reconfirm Mr. LaFleche to the Zoning Board of Appeals and appreciate his continuation of service.

**#281-19      Reappointment of Timothy Durken to the Zoning Board of Appeals**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing TIMOTHY DURKEN, 15 North Gate Park West Newton, as an Associate member of the ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS for a term to expire April 30, 2020.

**Action:      Zoning & Planning Approved 6-1 (Brousal-Glaser opposed)**  
**(Krintzman not voting)**



**Note:** The Committee was pleased to reconfirm Mr. Durken to the Urban Design Commission and appreciate his continuation of service.

**#282-19 Reappointment of John Downie to the Urban Design Commission**  
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing JOHN DOWNIE, 285 Auburndale Ave, Auburndale, as a member of the URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION for a term to expire March 31, 2021.

**Action:** Zoning & Planning Approved 7-0

**Note:** The Committee was pleased to reconfirm Mr. Downie to the Urban Design Commission and appreciate his continuation of service.

Meeting adjourned 10:15pm

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Susan S. Albright, Chair**

# Riverside Station Redevelopment

September 9, 2019

---

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT

## What we heard?

**Overall Project Density**

**Building Height**

**Grove Street Massing and Setbacks**

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT





### Special Permit Filing

March 29, 2019

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT

	[A] Original Special Permit Filing	[B] Revised Special Permit Filing	[C] Variance
Retail GFA (1)	56,200	64,176	7,976
Residential GFA	727,392	556,494	(170,898)
Hotel GFA	111,039	79,683	(31,356)
Office GFA	562,961	523,509	(39,452)
MBTA GFA	11,894	10,000	(1,894)
<b>Total GFA (2)</b>	<b>1,469,486</b>	<b>1,233,862</b>	<b>(235,624)</b>
<b>Parking GFA</b>	<b>999,143</b>	<b>941,184</b>	<b>(57,959)</b>
<b>Total GFA with Parking</b>	<b>2,468,629</b>	<b>2,175,046</b>	<b>(293,583)</b>
Residential Units	675	524	(151)
Hotel Keys	194	154	(40)
Parking Spaces	2,922	2,758	(164)

Footnotes:

- (1) Approximately 6,900 SF of retail GFA was mischaracterized and has been reallocated to the residential.
- (2) GFA excludes mechanical penthouse space.
- (3) Each garage has 1-floor of parking on the roof.

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT



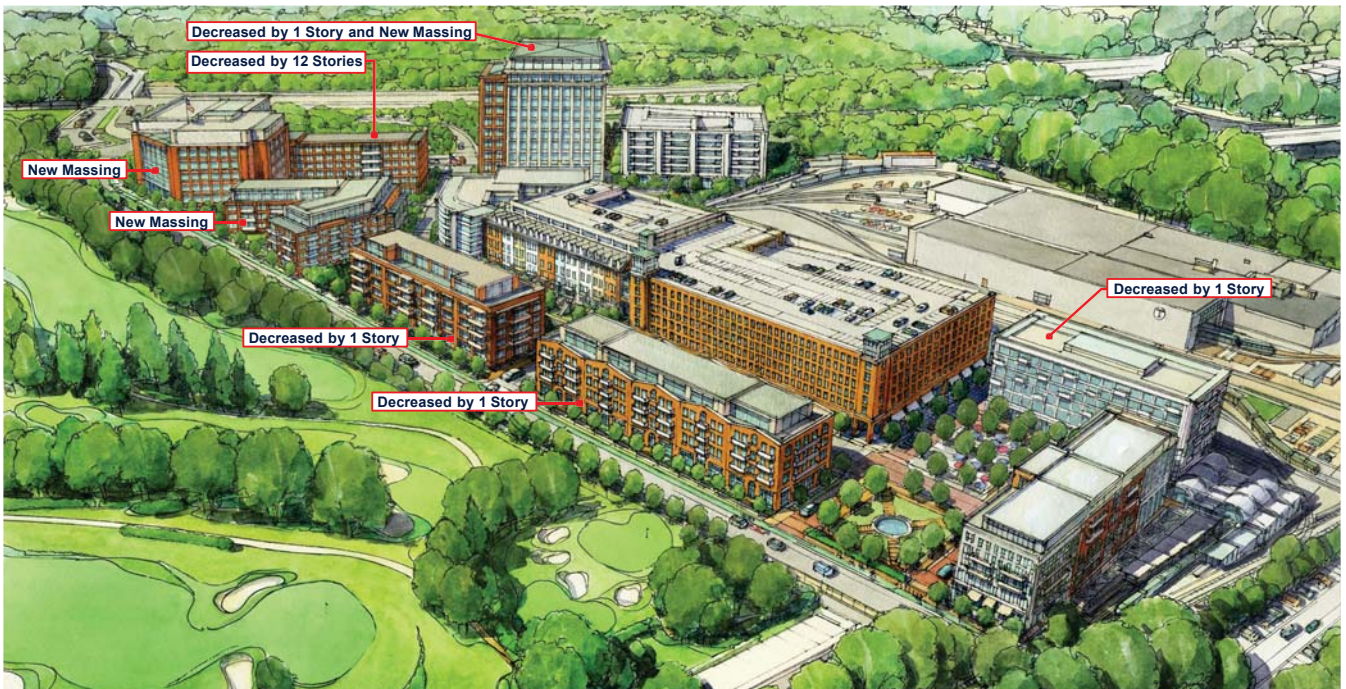


**Revised Special Permit Filing**

September 2019

140-19

**MARK**  
DEVELOPMENT



**Riverside Station (2)**

September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

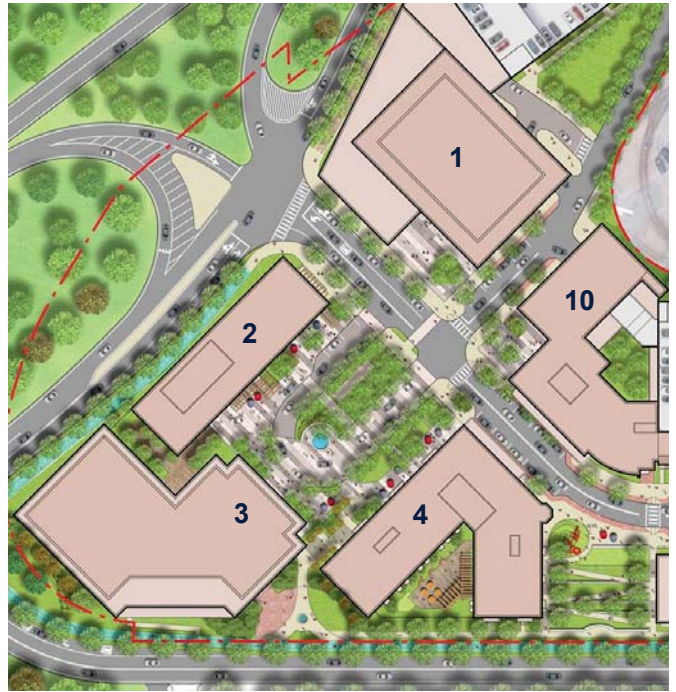
140-19

**MARK**  
DEVELOPMENT





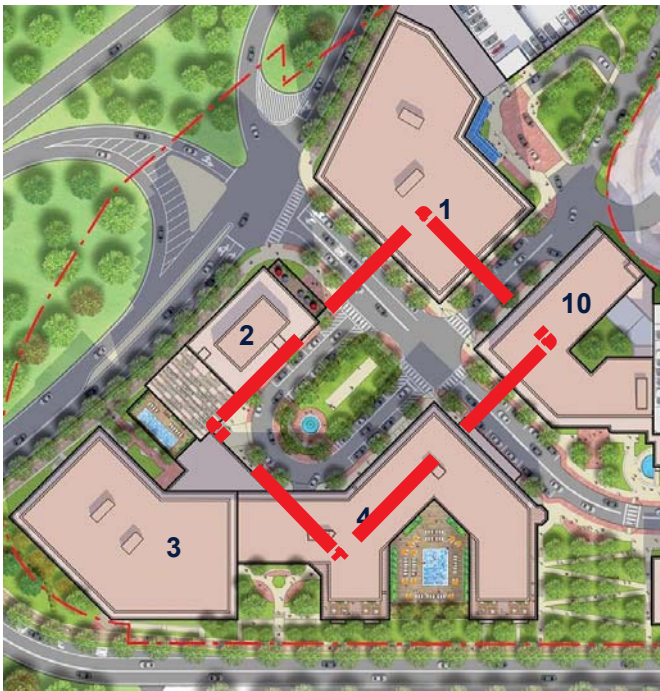
March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



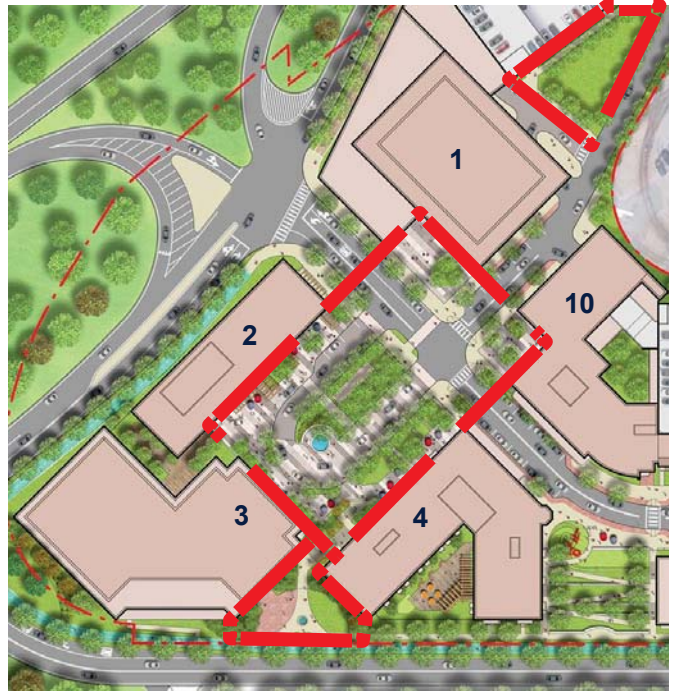
September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT



March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT





March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT

Bldg 1	Bldg 2	Bldg 3
Decreased by 1 Story and New Massing	Decreased by 12 Stories (No longer in view)	New Massing



March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT



March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT

**Bldg 2**  
Decreased by 12  
Stories  
(No longer in view)

**Bldg 1**  
Decreased by 1 Story  
and New Massing



March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT





March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

MARK DEVELOPMENT



March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

MARK DEVELOPMENT





**Revised Special Permit Filing**  
September 2019

140-19

**MARK**  
DEVELOPMENT



March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

**MARK**  
DEVELOPMENT



**Bldg 1**  
Reconfigured for  
creations of outdoor  
public space

**Bldg 10**  
Reconfigured for  
creations of outdoor  
public space



March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

**MARK**  
DEVELOPMENT



March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

**MARK**  
DEVELOPMENT





March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

**MARK**  
DEVELOPMENT



**Revised Special Permit Filing**  
September 2019

140-19

**MARK**  
DEVELOPMENT





**Revised Special Permit Filing**

September 2019

140-19

**MARK**  
DEVELOPMENT



**Revised Special Permit Filing**

September 2019

140-19

**MARK**  
DEVELOPMENT





March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT



March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT



March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

### Pine Grove Ave at Grove Street

140-19



March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing



September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

### Hamilton Field

140-19







March 29, 2019 - Special Permit Filing

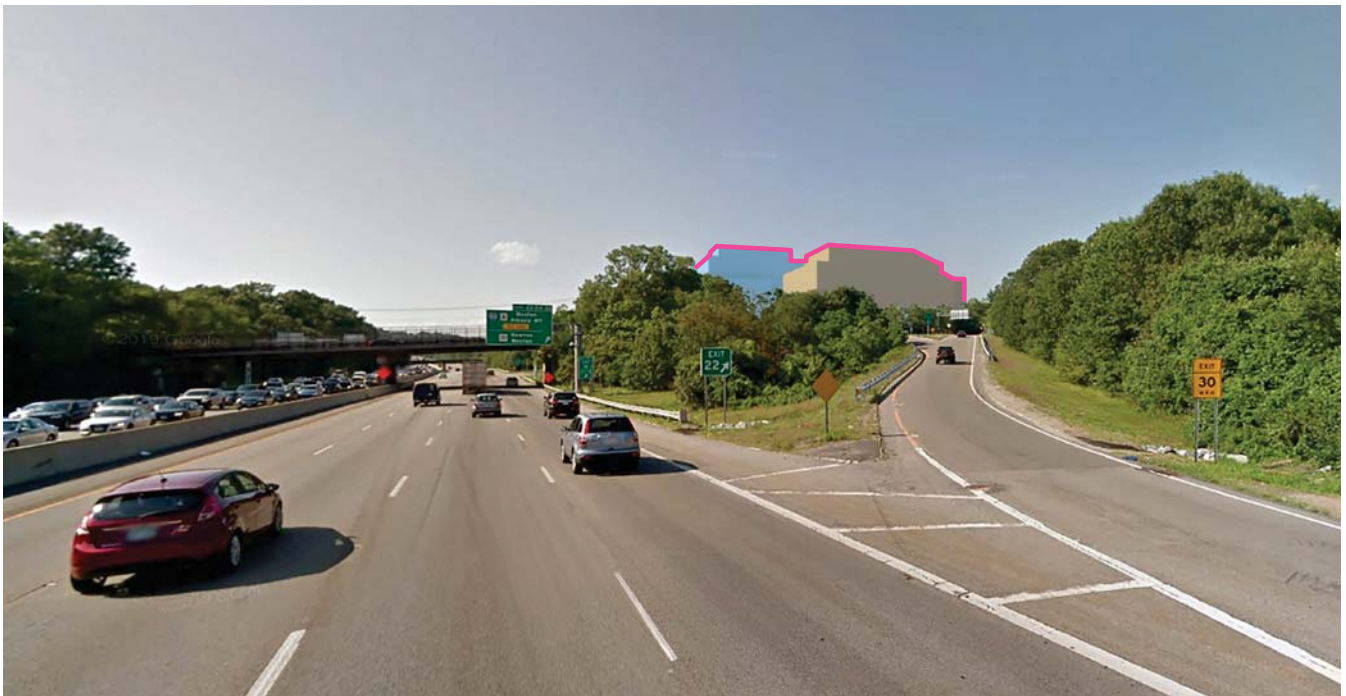


September 2019 - Revised Special Permit Filing

### Asheville Road at Grove Street

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT



**Revised Special Permit Filing**  
September 2019

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT





### Revised Special Permit Filing

September 2019

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT

Riverside Fiscal Comparison	Original Filing 1.469M SF		Revised Filing 1.233M SF	
	NPS Methodology	3rd Party Method	NPS Methodology	3rd Party Method
City of Newton Tax Revenues	\$7,230,000	\$7,230,000	\$5,591,000	\$5,591,000
Less: Newton Police & Fire Expenditures	(\$605,000)	(\$605,000)	(\$504,000)	(\$504,000)
Less: City of Newton School Expenditures	(\$2,560,000)	(\$1,490,000)	(\$2,162,000)	(\$1,298,000)
Less: City of Newton General Fund	(\$617,000)	(\$617,000)	(\$596,000)	(\$596,000)
City of Newton Net Fiscal Benefit	\$3,448,000	\$4,518,000	\$2,329,000	\$3,193,000
Less: Existing Development Fiscal Benefit	(\$548,000)	(\$548,000)	(\$548,000)	(\$548,000)
<b>City of Newton New Net Fiscal Benefit</b>	<b>\$2,900,000</b>	<b>\$3,970,000</b>	<b>\$1,781,000</b>	<b>\$2,645,000</b>
<i># of SAC</i>	161	94	138	83
<i>Ratio of SAC for total Units</i>	23.85%	13.93%	26.34%	15.84%

140-19

MARK  
DEVELOPMENT



**Revised Special Permit Filing**  
September 2019

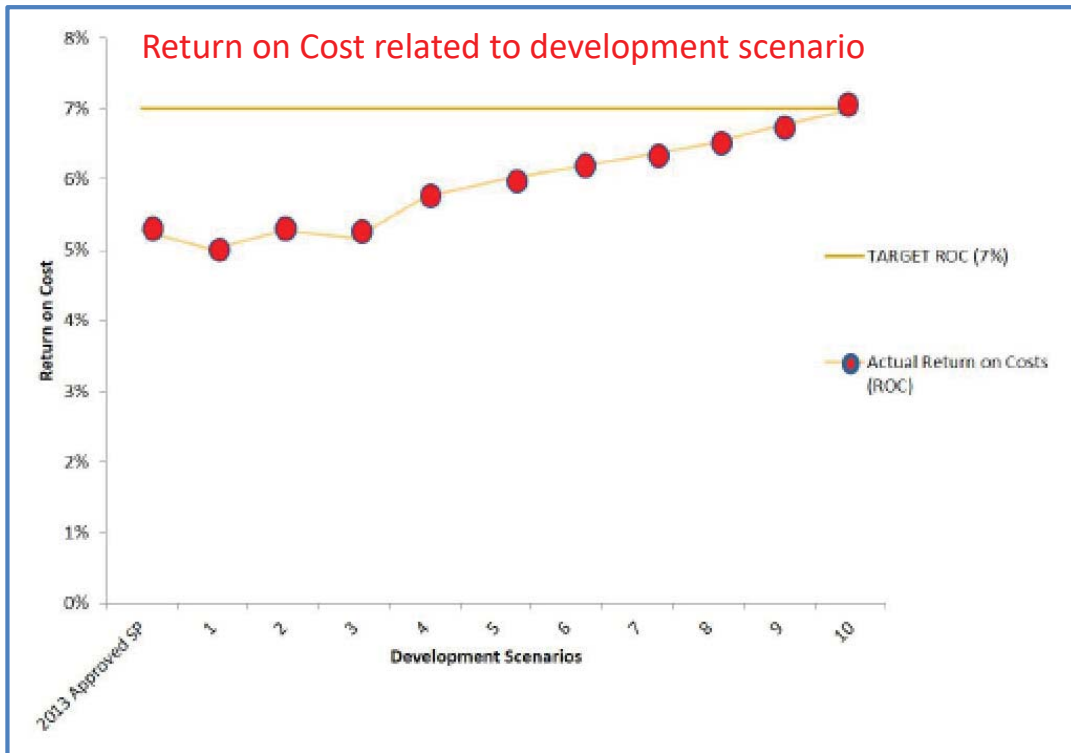
140-19

**MARK**  
DEVELOPMENT





# LFIA Riverside Committee



4/29/19

LFIA Community Meeting



# LFIA Riverside Committee

Riverside Development Plan Comparisons				
	BH Normandy		Mark Development	
	Approved Plan	Plan Presented	Initial Filing	Plan Submitted
Date	10/2013	3/2018	3/29/19	8/21/2019
Retail GFA	20,000	61,208	64,655	71,070
Residential GFA & units	335,000 <b>290</b>	745,883 <b>663</b>	738,709 <b>675</b>	552,100 <b>524</b>
Hotel GFA & keys	85,681 <b>191</b>	121,840 <b>203</b>	103,852 <b>194</b>	79,683 <b>154</b>
Office GFA	225,000	305,824	562,268	531,009
Community Center	11,000	0	0	0
Parking spaces	2,050	2,881	2,922	2,758
<b>Total GFA</b>	676,681 <sup>(1)</sup>	1,234,755 <sup>(2)</sup>	1,469,484 <sup>(2)</sup>	1,233,862 <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Residential / Commercial Ratio</b>	<b>50/50</b>	<b>60/40</b>	<b>50/50</b>	<b>45/55</b>
<b>Height Overview</b>	<b># of Stories</b>			
Building 1	NA	13	14	13
Building 2	NA	7	18	6
Building 3	NA	7	8 (5 at Grove)	8 (5 at Grove)
Building 4	NA	6	7 (4 at Grove)	7 (4 at Grove)
Building 5	NA	5	6	4.5
Building 6	NA	5	6	4.5
Building 7	NA	5	6 (5 at Grove)	5.5
Building 8	NA	6	7	6
Building 9	NA	6	7	7
Building 10	NA	6	7	6

(1) Plan excluded Indigo Hotel. However, hotel square footage of 85,681 is included for comparison with subsequent plans.  
 (2) Excludes 43,905 to 56,144 sf mechanical penthouse space for Mark Development Plans, includes 10,000 sf of MBTA space.

9/9/19

ZAP / Landuse Meeting





# LFIA Riverside Committee

## Riverside Development Plan Comparisons

	BH Normandy	Mark Development		
	Approved Plan	Plan Presented	Initial Filing	Plan Submitted
Date	10/2013	3/2018	3/29/19	8/21/2019
Retail GFA	20,000	61,208	64,655	71,070
Residential GFA & units	335,000 <b>290</b>	745,883 <b>663</b>	738,709 675	552,100 <b>524</b>
Hotel GFA & keys	85,681 <b>191</b>	121,840 <b>203</b>	103,852 194	79,683 <b>154</b>
Office GFA	225,000	305,824	562,268	531,009
Community Center	11,000	0	0	0
Parking spaces	2,050	2,881	2,922	2,758
<b>Total GFA</b>	676,681 <sup>(1)</sup>	1,234,755 <sup>(2)</sup>	1,469,484 <sup>(2)</sup>	1,233,862 <sup>(2)</sup>

4/29/19

LFIA Community Meeting



# LFIA Riverside Committee

## Riverside Development Plan Comparisons

	BH Normandy	Mark Development		
	Approved Plan	Plan Presented	Initial Filing	Plan Submitted
Date	10/2013	3/2018	3/29/19	8/21/2019
<b>Residential / Commercial Ratio</b>	<b>50/50</b>	<b>60/40</b>	<b>50/50</b>	<b>45/55</b>
<b>Height Overview</b>		<b># of Stories</b>		
Building 1	NA	13	14	13
Building 2	NA	7	18	6
Building 3	NA	7	8 (5 at Grove)	8 (5 at Grove)
Building 4	NA	6	7 (4 at Grove)	7 (4 at Grove)
Building 5	NA	5	6	4.5
Building 6	NA	5	6	4.5
Building 7	NA	5	6 (5 at Grove)	5.5
Building 8	NA	6	7	6
Building 9	NA	6	7	7
Building 10	NA	6	7	6

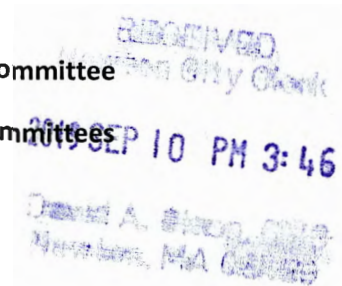
4/29/19

LFIA Community Meeting

Prepared Statement by Randall Block, LFIA Riverside Committee

Newton City Council Zoning and Planning/Land Use Committees

September 9, 2019



Councilor Albright, Councilor Schwartz, Members of the Zoning and Planning Committee, Members of the Land Use Committee, Members of the City Council. Thank you for allowing the Lower Falls Improvement Association Riverside Committee to provide some brief comments.

My name is Randall Block. I am chair of the LFIA Riverside Committee.

Let us review some of the key components of the Riverside Committee's proposed zoning amendment, which we presented here in June, and how they compare with what Mark Development has presented.

Grove Street is a designated scenic road and the primary connection between Lower Falls and the rest of Newton. We proposed a 45-foot setback from the curb compared with Mark Development's 30 feet from the curb. Why is this extra 15 feet so important? First, it is crucial for the preservation of the scenic nature of Grove Street and the commitment to open space that Newton has cherished for so many years. Even at 45 feet, much of the existing tree-lined character of Grove Street will be lost, but it will allow for a significant landscaping buffer which would be impossible if the setback is only 30 feet. A 45-foot setback will also be more consistent with the existing abutting structures. The Hotel Indigo, the Riverside Office Center, the Woodland Park Apartments all have at least a 45-foot setback.

The need for a larger setback is not simply aesthetic. As we stated in our presentation on June 25, it is necessary to accommodate separate bike and pedestrian pathways. Mass DOT bike path guidelines recommend 10 feet for a two-way bike path. We believe that a 30-foot setback will not accommodate an appropriately sized bike path, pedestrian sidewalk, and landscaping buffer.

We urge you to visit Lower Falls! Let us show you how it feels to drive and walk on Grove Street and why an extra 15 feet – an increase of 50% distance from the curb – would make such a difference.

The height and length of buildings on Grove Street are also important for aesthetic reasons, to ensure that the development does not present an uninviting appearance. Mark Development has made some height reductions on Grove Street, but they still exceed the four stories or 44 feet (whichever is lower) proposal made by the Riverside Committee. Four stories is already higher than the three stories recommended by Civic Moxie in its Vision Plan report. In addition, Mark Development's new proposal retains two very long buildings on Grove Street, promoting the appearance of a wall. We again ask you to prevent such a monolithic, unwelcoming barrier by establishing building length limitations on Grove Street, as we proposed in our zoning amendment.

We continue to have concerns regarding hotel and office tower heights. It is true that the previously proposed 18-story building for a rebuilt hotel topped with luxury condominiums has been reduced to a

six-story building by removing the condominiums. However, this concession is barely different from the March 2018 plan, which included a seven-story hotel.

The 13-story office building now proposed is only one story lower than the 14 stories in the initial plan. While this modest reduction is welcomed, even at 13 stories – an estimated 205' to 210' tall – it would still be the tallest building on Route 128 and still the tallest building in Newton. We urge the committee to leave in place the height limitation of 135' in the existing ordinance.

Another critical issue is the allocation of the square footage between commercial and residential space. Mark Development's first plan, from March 2018 was 60% residential. This was reduced to 50% in the March 2019 special permit filing. Now Mark Development proposes a further reduction to 45% residential. This is heading in the wrong direction.

The housing-commercial ratio matters for several reasons. First, it is vital that a larger portion of the development be housing. There is an unquestioned need for housing, including affordable housing, in Newton and in the Boston metropolitan area, which you have heard extensively in public comments. Second, the ratio will affect traffic volume and flow, both inside and outside the project. Office use generates significantly more vehicle trips than residential. Further, office users will arrive and depart at the same time as Riverside park-and-ride commuters, compounding the congestion problems. Residential users, on the other hand, are likely to come and go at a variety of different times during the day, placing less strain on peak traffic flow.

We believe that for all these reasons, fully 70% of the approved square footage should be for housing. We urge the committee to require that Riverside be used primarily for housing and that the commercial, hotel, and retail space be just large enough to assure that the cost of city services will be covered by the site's property taxes.

Finally, allow me to address a question often unspoken that hovers over these proceedings. Although you may consider our proposal reasonable perhaps even desirable, you may wonder if it is economically feasible. Mark Development has maintained from the outset that only a 1.5 million square foot plan was economically viable. However, there is important evidence to the contrary.

The Vision Plan for Riverside completed last May includes a Development Feasibility Analysis prepared by Urban Focus. On page 14 of this document, there is a graph showing the Return on Cost for different size developments. This graph shows the return is at least 5% for every size development analyzed -- even for BH Normandy's 2013 approved plan. We are not proposing zoning limitations on the Riverside parcel that make it impossible to develop. On the contrary, a creative plan at a modest rate of return is eminently doable. So let's not worry about what a particular developer will or won't do. Let's focus on deciding what we as a city want Riverside to look like and have the confidence that a developer now or some time in the future will be able to work with the zoning rules we adopt.

Thank you for your time and attention.

# Riverside Development Plan Comparisons

187-19

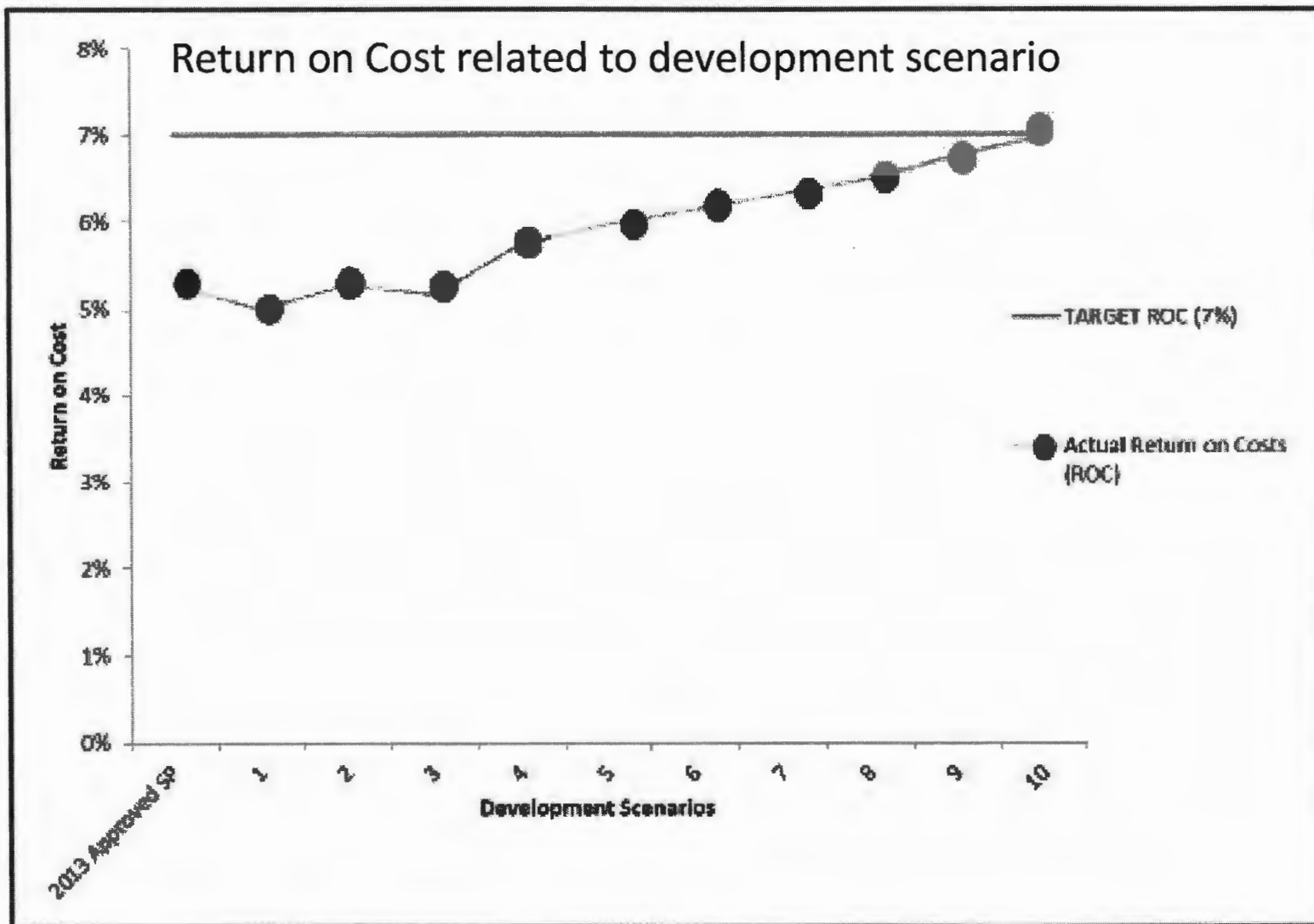
	BH Normandy		Mark Development					
	Approved Plan		Plan Presented		Initial Filing		Plan Submitted	
Date	10/2013		3/2018		3/29/2019		8/21/2019	
Retail GFA	20,000		61,208		64,655		71,070	
Residential GFA & units	335,000	290	745,883	663	738,709	675	552,100	524
Hotel GFA & keys	85,681	191	121,840	203	103,852	194	79,683	154
Office GFA	225,000		305,824		562,268		531,009	
Community Center	11,000		0		0		0	
Parking spaces	2,050		2,881		2,922		2,758	
<b>Total GFA</b>	676,681 <sup>(1)</sup>		1,234,755 <sup>(2)</sup>		1,469,484 <sup>(2)</sup>		1,233,862 <sup>(2)</sup>	
<b>Residential / Commercial Ratio</b>	50/50		60/40		50/50		45/55	
<b>Height Overview</b>			# of Stories					
Building 1	NA		13		14		13	
Building 2	NA		7		18		6	
Building 3	NA		7		8 (5 at Grove)		8 (5 at Grove)	
Building 4	NA		6		7 (4 at Grove)		7 (4 at Grove)	
Building 5	NA		5		6		4.5	
Building 6	NA		5		6		4.5	
Building 7	NA		5		6 (5 at Grove)		5.5	
Building 8	NA		6		7		6	
Building 9	NA		6		7		7	
Building 10	NA		6		7		6	

(1) Plan excluded Indigo Hotel. However, hotel sf of 85,681 is included for comparison with subsequent plans.

(2) Excludes 43,905 to 56,144 sf mechanical space for Mark Development Plans, Includes 10,000 sf of MBTA space.



# Development Feasibility Analysis by Urban Force p. 14





# Washington Street Vision Plan

**Public Hearing  
Comprehensive Plan Amendment  
09.09.19**

165-19



## WASHINGTON STREET VISION PLAN DRAFT 07.29.2019

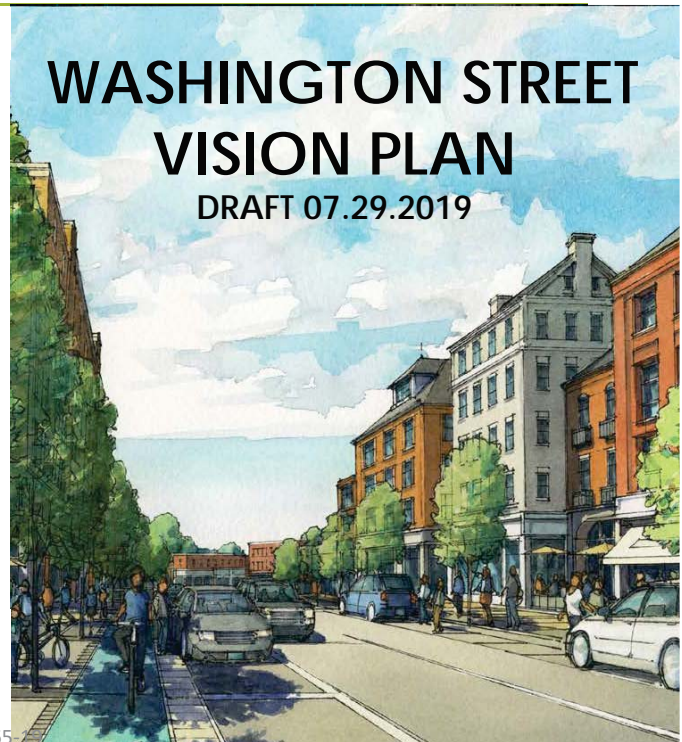
165-19



# Document Structure

## Washington Street Vision Plan Comprehensive Plan Amendment

- Introduction
- A Vision for Washington Street
- Implementing the Vision Plan
- Summary of Guiding Principles



# Document Structure

## Washington Street Vision Plan

- **Introduction**
- A Vision for Washington Street
- Implementing the Vision Plan
- Summary of Guiding Principles

### Washington Street will showcase Newton's values.

- The villages of West Newton and Newtonville will be lively
- Washington Street will be safe for everyone
- Diverse housing options will be available
- Newton residents will have places to connect with their community
- Decisions will be sensitive to climate and environmental necessities
- Excellence in placemaking principles will be incorporated

# Document Structure

## Washington Street Vision Plan

- Introduction
- **A Vision for Washington Street**
- Implementing the Vision Plan
- Summary of Guiding Principles

### Outline

- **Vibrancy in the Village Centers**
- Safe Multimodal Transportation
- Housing Diversity
- Global Climate and Local Environment
- Excellence in Placemaking and Design

91 pages

165-19

# Document Structure

## Washington Street Vision Plan

- Introduction
- **A Vision for Washington Street**
- Implementing the Vision Plan
- Summary of Guiding Principles

### *Hierarchy of information*

#### **A. Vibrancy in the Village Centers**

- Promote Unique and Vital Village Centers
  - Design for Engaging Walks
  - Invest in Public Art and Programming
  - Strengthen the Business Climate
- Guiding Principles:
- Promote the village centers' competitive advantages
  - Create clusters of office & lab activity in each village
  - Explore incentives and investments in locally-owned businesses

1

2

3

165-19

# Highlights

- Reinforce the distinct separate identities of West Newton and Newtonville
- Influence new development with the character of historic buildings, preserve the village cores
- Make transportation safe for all while increasing options
- Support diverse housing choices
- Address the challenges posed by climate change and improve the local environment
- Supporting a diverse and vital business community

165-19

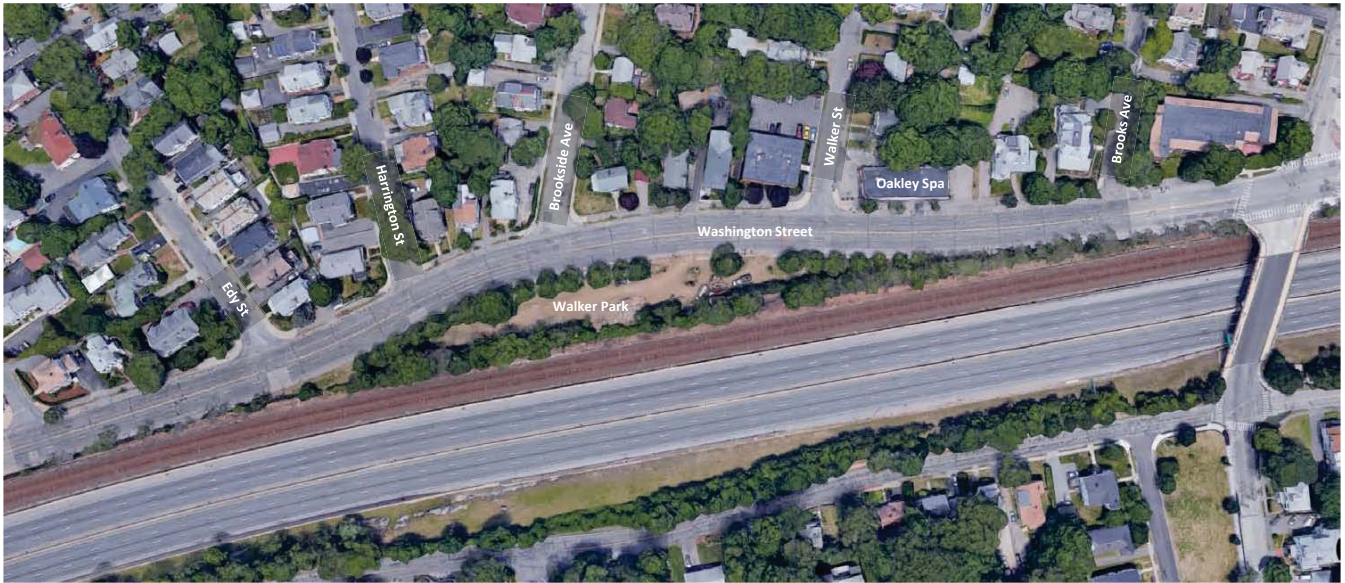
# Highlights

Maintain distinction between village centers



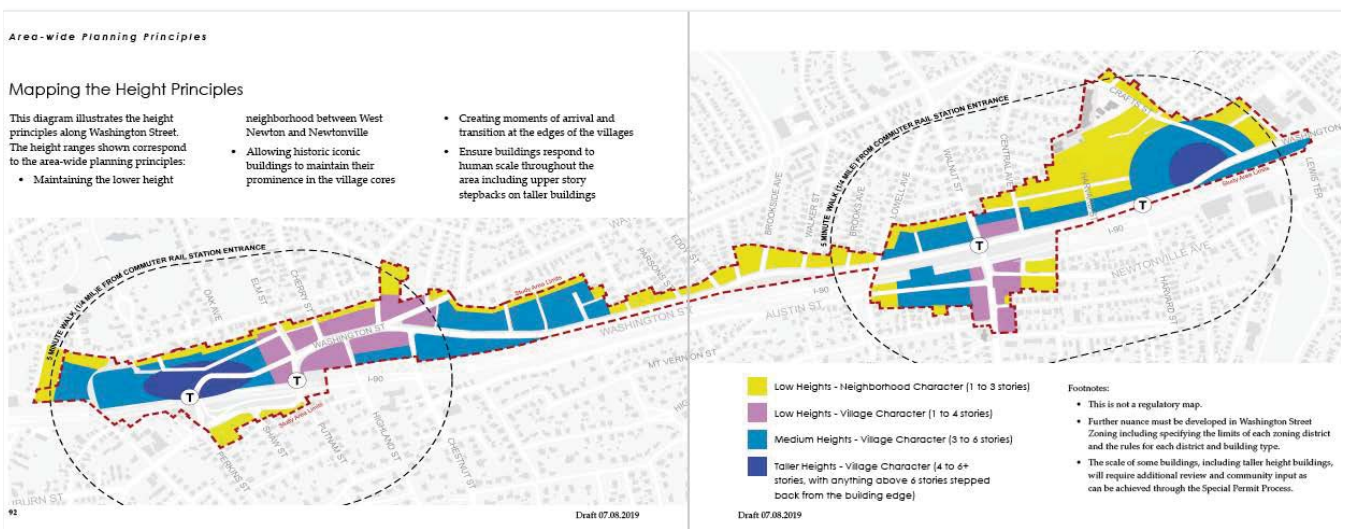
165-19





165-19

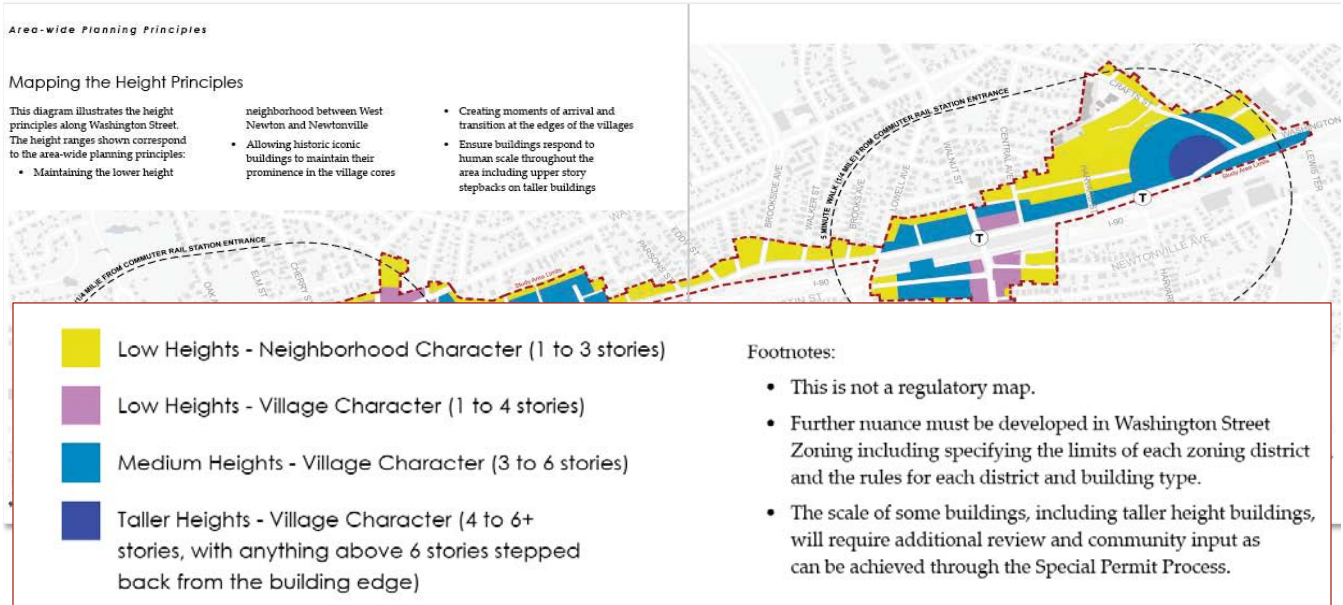
# Highlights



165-19



# Highlights

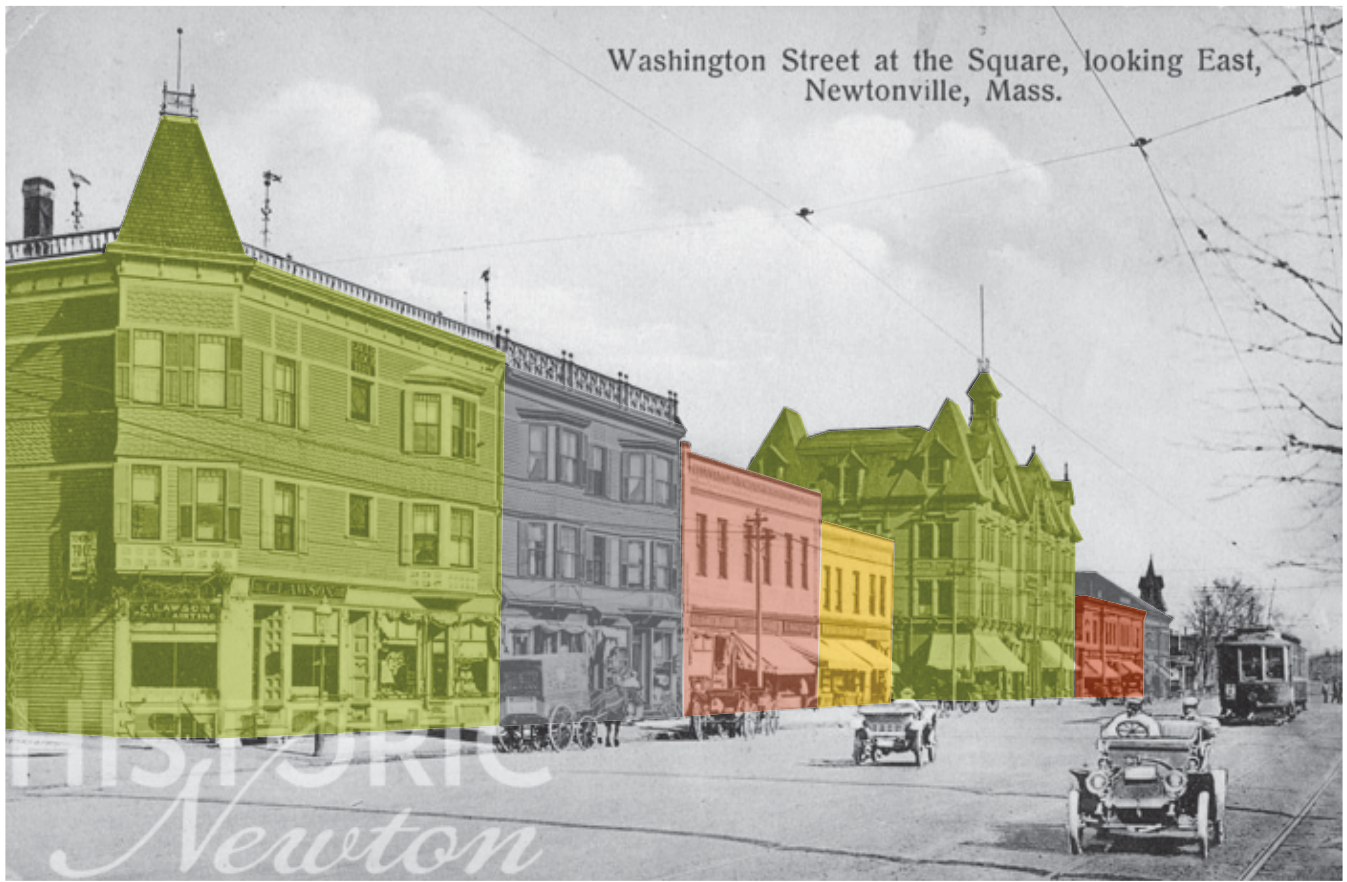


165-19



Influence from the Historic Character

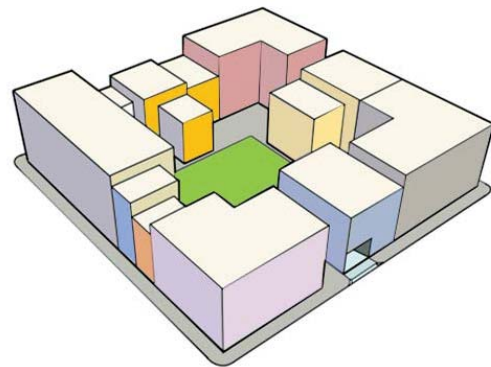
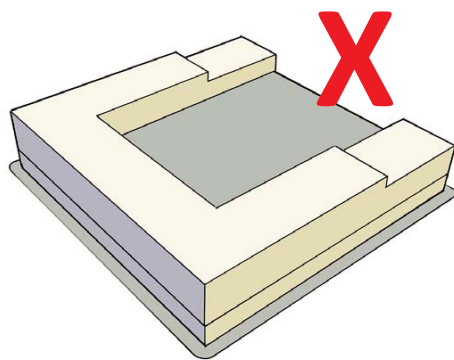
165-19



Variety of Buildings – Height, Materials, roofs, etc

## Highlights

---





# Highlights

## Transportation

- Safety for All
- Accessibility
- Frequency



## Diverse Housing Needs





# Highlights

## Environment

- Climate Change
- New Trees
- Parks



## Village Vitality



# Highlights

---

## Washington Street Vision Plan

- Introduction
- A Vision for Washington Street
- **Implementing the Vision Plan**
- Summary of Guiding Principles

## Proposed Early Actions:

- Develop a Concept Design for Washington Street Enhancements
- Adopt Washington Street Zoning
- Pursue Acquisition of the West Newton Armory for Public Purpose
- Develop Parking Management Strategies for West Newton & Newtonville
- Prepare a Finance Strategy for Washington Street Infrastructure & Public Spaces
- Incorporate the Vision Plan into Ongoing Citywide Strategies
- Convene a Commuter Rail Conference
- Pilot Pop-Up Retail Pavilions
- Host a Design Imagination Day at Walker Park

165-19

---

# Next Steps

---

## Fall 2019 – Vote to adopt amendment to the Comprehensive Plan

Staff will prepare an updated version for the Committee's consideration incorporating comments received

## Fall/Winter 2019 – Reintroduction of proposed Washington Street zoning

New draft will be produced.

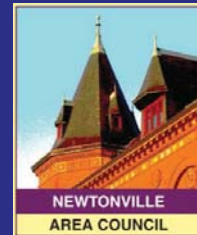
165-19

---

# NEWTONVILLE AREA COUNCIL

## Public Opinion and Washington St. Visioning

Zoning and Planning Committee  
September 9, 2019  
Newton City Hall



Slides produced for NAC by Survey Action Associates 2019

1

## The NAC Has Standing

- NAC is an elected body, part of Newton govt.
- Newton's City Charter says NAC's purpose is to "encourage citizen involvement."
- NAC is a voice for its residents.
- We conducted a major survey to express that voice.
- Newton's Comprehensive Plan: That voice "should be given great respect."

2

# NAC Survey – Outreach and Methodology

- Invitations to every household (10,809) in Wards 1-3, closest to new developments.
- All adults 16+ in these wards had an equal opportunity to participate.
- Large sample – 2529 responses!
- 45 detailed questions; almost 700 respondents wrote comments. Great effort by them!

3

## Importance of Minimizing Development on Washington St. (from Principle Group)



Minimize amount of development on Washington St.

4



# Density of New Housing Units Preferred

Number of Units	Total		
0	35%	} 74%	
1-100	22%		
100-250	17%		
250-500	11%		
500-750	4%		
750-1000	3%		
1000 or more	6%		

\*Includes only respondents who expressed opinions

5

# First Draft Vision: Housing Alternatives

(Figures = number of housing units)	Market Driven	Court-yard	Incre-mental	'Lined Bridges'	'Decked Park'
WN Cinema Block	205	187	134		
WN Cheesecake Block	376	419	446		
NV McGovern site	125	83	95		
Crafts St.	620	537	481		
WN Station (incl. Border St.)			383	527	527
Newtonville Sq.		Lo	Hi	10	18
TOTAL	1326	1226	* 1539		

\* These totals are 5 to 6 times greater than what most NAC Survey respondents want!

6

## Respondents' Preference for Maximum Building Size

	All Respondents	Respondents with Height Preference*
3-story maximum	41%	57%
4-story maximum	18%	25%
5-story maximum	8%	12%
Greater than 5-story maximum	4%	6%
Architecture and site placement are more important than height	28%	0%
Prefer mix of heights from 1 to ___ stories tall	0%	

\* 82

7

## A Blurry Vision

- Public opinion about height and density has been ignored.
- Visioning process has produced no financial impact study.
- Transportation infrastructure is too uncertain to accommodate the building vision.
- Vision is so blurry that we can't foresee what's in store for us and our quality of life.
- NAC does not endorse the Vision at this time.

8

165.19



A STAKEHOLDER'S VISION AND COMMENTS ON  
HELLO WASHINGTON STREET

RECEIVED  
CITY CLERK  
2019 SEP 10 PM 3:46  
Peter F. Harrington

Peter F. Harrington





# **A STAKEHOLDER'S VISION AND COMMENTS ON HELLO WASHINGTON STREET**

Newton claims to be a city of villages. A generally accepted definition of a **village is “a clustered human settlement or community, larger than a hamlet but smaller than a town, with a population ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand.”**

The concepts set out in Hello Washington Street will forever change the villages of Newtonville and West Newton and, most probably, turn Washington Street into a Needham Street nightmare. It will create a physical tall building barrier between the north and south sides of the villages.

Neighbors for a Better Newtonville did a survey of Towns to the west and north of Newton. It found that in village centers buildings rarely exceeded two or three stories and outside Village Centers there was little commercial or high density development.

## **Washington Street Now Showcases Newton's North Side Village Values [page 3]**

- Washington Street traverses six distinct village; Newton, Newton Corner, Newtonville and West Newton, Auburndale and Newton Lower Falls. Two, Newtonville and West Newton are the subject of the Vision plan. The City's vision will turn Washington Street into a two mile long Newton “Main Street” (see page 34) or a north side Needham Street. The citizens of the area are against this vision and would like to preserve the separation of the villages.
- A variety of locally owned and/or operated village businesses that cater to a moderate income and ethnically diverse village population, including a variety of eateries, a bakery, bank, cobbler, dentist, drug store, food market, gift shop, hair salon & barber shop, realtor renting local apartments, tailor, and other personal service and retail businesses. These businesses will not be able to operate profitably under the rent structure for new buildings. See Attachment A.
- Diverse and moderately priced housing options;
- A safe and secure east/west roadway that moves traffic through and out of our villages, with the exception of the West Newton intersection of Watertown & Washington Street that needs a change in the timing cycle. Parts of Washington Street now exceed recommended guideline for creating a road diet for Washington Street. Additional commercial space and residential units will only exacerbate the traffic problems created by a road diet. See front cover photo of Washington ST, Traffic in West Newton.

- There is clear and compelling evidence that local citizens and stakeholders do not agree with the City's Vision for Washington Street. See Newton Area Council's surveys of 2019 and 2016.

### **What is a Vision Plan [page 4]**

A Vision Plan is a zoning and development tool that sets forth, in the vaguest of terms, a plan to expand and develop a certain area of the City.

It often contains conflicting content, particularly with language that appears to protect existing villages, local citizens and stakeholders. Decisions and projections are often based upon outdated studies and reports, misrepresented data and inaccurate research material. The existing Comprehensive Plan has extensive language concerning protecting neighborhoods and abutters adjacent to new projects. However, in practice, little regard is given to neighborhood concerns by the City Council.

### **Why Plan Now [page 5]**

Page 5 of the Newton Vision Plan says "the vision for Washington Street written in the Comprehensive Plan is: "... that the time is approaching, ... to seriously consider air rights projects over the Mass Pike." Such consideration will be the third such attempt in 60 years to divide the city with a series of tall buildings over the Turnpike. Rather than include this vision in the Comprehensive Plan, the time has come to remove it.

### **How the Vision was Developed [page 6]**

Page 6 of the Newton Vision Plan describes a robust and active outreach to Newton citizens. However, it fails to report inclusion of similar activity by the Newtonville Area Council and the fact that the Principle Group survey reflected results similar to the NAC survey and the fact that many of the comments referred to by the Planning & Development Department were from the same people at different events. See Attachment B, A defense of the NAC Survey.

Further, the NAC has published all of the responses to its survey, along with participant's comments, suggestions and questions. See NEWTON AREA COUNCIL web site [www.newtonma.gov/gov/neighborhood/newtonville](http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/neighborhood/newtonville).

The NAC survey and the Principal Group surveys show that, by a large margin, Newtonians do not want 5, 6, 8, 10 or more story buildings along Washington Street. However, it seems that the City Council continues to advocate for such changes. The Director of Planning and Development says that the vision plan his department is preparing is done at the direction of the City Council.

**Blank Pages** The vision report contains a number of blank pages. Blank pages in legislation always raise concern as to the future content and how will relate to the existing language,



## **Promote Unique and Vital Village Centers [pages 14 -18]**

### **To be completed**

#### **Design for Engaging Walks [page 20]**

A 17 square mile suburban city of villages is not designed to be a walkable city. There are vast acres of single family homes on oversized lots of 15,000 and 25,000 square feet of land. Many of those lots do not have sidewalks and are not required to do so. There is limited public transportation and these citizens mostly travel to village centers by automobile.

Before we proceed with inserting the concept of “Engaging Walks” into the Comprehensive Plan we should define “Engaging Walks”. Will it be limited to walking for fun, as suggested in the “Vision”? Many cities have proscribed walk routes that include more than a sidewalk along one of the city’s busiest streets. There are preserved buildings with architectural detail or of historic interest; camera friendly views and other attraction it be identified. The distance of each walk should be measured and some can be interconnected. Exercise routes can be designated identifying the number of steps and the degree of physical difficulty. If the “Engaging Walks” are designed as a retail experience they should be so identified so the walkers can be prepared.

Newton is promoting increasing our commercial base. Customers visiting these new businesses come from outside the walkable circle. Provision should be made for the storage of their personal transportation equipment (automobile, motor bike, motor cycle, ordinary bicycle, skate board or other. The concept that people will come by public transportation is, at this time, in conflict with reality.

Clearly, walkable streets need definition to give developers and citizens an understanding of municipal needs and goals, present and future. To create a safe sidewalk in a commercial district for shoppers or a safe path to a bus stop or commuter rail station is not presenting engaging walks.

#### **Activate the Pike Edge [page 21]**

To create small scale storefronts along the edge of the Mass Pike sounds like a wonderful idea. Reality intercedes with questions of where and why. There is a small area of green space at Walker Street (photo on page 36 of the Vision). Why should we sacrifice that needed green space for a few storefronts to compete with the neighborhood businesses across the street? Will we allow parking or will customers be limited to those who can take a bus or walk?

The next location is near the intersection of Washington & Crafts Streets. Will we tear down and replace the buildings? Will the new buildings be limited to one or two stories or will they be five or ten stories?

There is a third location in West Newton that is now occupied with businesses and buildings, including the refurbished “Mayflower Building”.

Who will the building wall sound barrier protect? Will the sound rebound off the walls and reverberate up into West Newton Hill?

We have a shortage of green space. Why should we give it up space for an eatery or bank or a hip hop shop selling trendy merchandise?

The proposal to strengthen the “village shopping experience” is speculative as the available areas are mostly outside the village centers and shoppers will use private transportation to go to and from the designated areas. Those that walk or use bikes will usually limit their purchases to light weight or intangible merchandise.

The economic reality is that the types of business one would like to see and occasionally use have difficulty surviving in high rent quarters on a busy roadway, with limited parking.

### **Narrow Shopfronts [page 22]**

The regulation of shopfront widths belongs in a special section of the zoning ordinance or a Comprehensive Plan. Shopfront widths are a function of local economics and intrude on ownership rights unless the building is in a district that is regulated for a specific purpose such as historic preservation and appearance. To allow 5 and 6+ story buildings to be located in the same district or immediate area is not conducive to creating visual harmony within a village. There is an apparent conflict between preservation and modernism. Further, such a policy could lead to favoritism in the granting of tall building permits.

### **Outdoor Dining [page 23]**

Outdoor dining is a seasonal enterprise and, as with most restaurant business requires a customer base that expands beyond the local neighborhood. Most people in this out of neighborhood customer base will come by personal transportation vehicle. Provision for storage must be mandated within the Comprehensive Plan otherwise speculators and developers will attempt to avoid the question and rely on surrounding streets to provide storage space.

### **Places to Linger [page 24]**

A hardscape adjacent to automobiles, delivery vehicles, motorcycles and buses does not create an inviting area for lingering.

Plaza is another word that needs definition. At Austin Street it appears to be a wide sidewalk. At Washington Place it appears to be a reuse of Bailey Place.

In the minds of most ordinary citizens, a plaza is an expansive open space that might or might not be an attractive place to congregate. They abound in Italy and trace their origin to medieval times, but not so in New England. Like outdoor dining facilities, plazas have

a limited annual use life. They are uncomfortable in the rain, unhealthy for an ageing population use in winter months and uneconomic for speculators and developers to include in a project as there is little profit return, a driving factor in most development.

### **Public Art [page 25-28]**

The guiding Principles are noteworthy but the content to accomplish such goals is still in preparation. It is difficult to predict how the economic dependency of artists will be incorporated into a practical Comprehensive Plan without reinventing a status for patrons or other funding vehicles. For example, one of Newton's favored developers objected to the All Newton Music School creating an outdoor theater because of the expected noise resulting from performances. Public appreciation for art is often clouded.

### **Strengthen Business Climate [page 29]**

The claim that Newton has more people commuting into Newton for work than commute out is new information should be further explained. Where do they commute from? How do they commute? Where do Newtonites commute to?

The concern that "lagging commercial development relative to residential may bear an increasing share of the tax burden ..." needs further explanation, particularly in light of the fact that present municipal policy seems to encourage a disproportionate share of new residential construction and discourages construction of facilities for the storage of their personal long distance travel vehicles.

### **Village Center's Advantages [page 30]**

The claim that Newtonville and West Newton have superior or even adequate modes of public transportation is, at best, erroneous. Commuter rail and express busses are point to point modes of transportation and useful to a limited number of potential workers. Such transportation modes rely upon secondary transportation lines to get workers to the point of departure/return. Ease of access and conditions of travel must also be taken into account. The recent death at the Newtonville commuter rail stop raises safety concerns. Calling him a trespasser does not diminish the concern that Newtonville is a "flag stop" and commuters must waive down the train during non commuter hours.

The concept of prominent signage along the Mass Turnpike brings back memories of billboards and a honky tonk atmosphere of advertising days gone by and best not repeated.

### **Incentives and Investments in Locally-Owner Businesses [page 32]**

If small business assistance programs are intended to introduce government spending to support private business into the Comprehensive plan, I would recommend against it. For a municipality to become involved in such a program might well lead to disaster. The problem is that small, local businesses need low to moderate rents to survive. See Attachment A for a review of the problem.



### **Safe Multimodal Transportation [page 33 - 56]**

Again, this subject of public transportation is mostly beyond the influence of the City. Other than seek political favor with State officials, public transportation is outside the city's domain.

A question arises as to why much of what is set forth in this section of the Vision is not present policy and if it is present policy why is to be inserted in the Comprehensive Plan. Safe sidewalks, bicycle lanes providing more crosswalks are budgetary priorities and not projects to be put off to future discussion. If the Council is dissatisfied with the mayor's priorities it should discuss its concerns with the Mayor (pages 34 -37)

### **Break Up Mega Blocks [page 39]**

To compare Venice Italy to Newton for the purpose of reducing block size is a disservice to the entire Vision project. Venice, founded in the fifth century and is built in a lagoon on more than 100 islands. It has no roadways. Transportation is via canals. It is a memorable, walkable city, but it is not similar to Newton.

The concept of buying land and building new roads and sidewalks to create smaller blocks certainly needs a more robust discussion than is allowed during the consideration of this Vision plan. Newton has its own history that many would like to preserve rather than embark on a plan to create a new urban area.

### **Charles River Greenway [page40]**

Again, an interesting idea, but it needs more study. At present the Charles River Greenway is shared by walkers, families with children, recreational bicyclists and commuter bicyclists. For Newton to unilaterally decide to expand commuter bicycle use without Greenway authorities participating and establishing safety rules to protect walkers and families will cause many new problems.

### **More Bridges Over the Turnpike [page41]**

First, such bridges are not a municipal function. The City has no authority to build such bridges. Any such bridges would have to be negotiated with the Turnpike Authority. The air rights would not be free. The collateral problems will lead to the claim and acceptance of a need to build taller buildings to support the costs. This would lead to the problem of creating a "Wall Effect" dividing some villages on a north/south axis. The negative aspects of this proposal far outweigh the benefits.

### **Make Traffic Speeds Safe [page47]**

Again, does this subject belong in the Comprehensive Plan? We have a Traffic Commission. Will the Comprehensive Plan supersede the Commission's authority? If there are differences between the Commission and the Planning & Development Department will such differences give rise to new defenses for violations or new theories of liability for accidents?

### **Housing Diversity [page57 - 68]**

This section is filled with goals and platitudes that have long been accepted in Newton. What it does not address is a policy for implementation. At present the City Council is embarked on a plan of gentrification, not implementation of a plan to provide diverse housing along Washington Street. There is little to no diverse moderate income housing. New units are outside the ability of moderate income families. If 30% of income is an accepted cost of housing, a person or a family must earn \$160,000.00 per year to afford a \$4,000.00 per month (current asking price at Austin Street) apartment. If we increase formula rate to 40% they will still need \$120,000.00 in annual income. Once you add in child care or other child related family costs, food, taxes, transportation (automobile or other), pension/retirement contributions, work clothing, insurance and TV/internet there is little or nothing left for discretionary spending. Moderate income people, who are not eligible for assistance, are being driven out on Newton.

### **Climate and Environment [page 69 – 84]**

Page 71 calls for a reduction in unit size as a means to address the problems of climate change and cites, as an advantage, an increased use of bus transportation. In fact, throughout the Vision plan there seems to be a reliance on an increase in bus transportation. Perhaps such an increase will "... help people significantly reduce their individual greenhouse gas emissions" (page 70), however, we should not forget that buses rely on fossil fuel and, from life experience, appear to make a significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. There may be studies that say otherwise, but have you driven behind a bus belching noxious fumes, in an open air car? Page 70 also states that transportation systems are one of the "... two greatest areas of emissions, and therefore the most needed areas of change ...". Yet, throughout the Vision and in current practice the constant promotion of bus use is the norm.

### **Tree Canopy and vegetation [page 80]**

There is a conflict between a planner's view of a tree canopy and a business owner's opinion of streetscape. The Planner's views, set out in the Vision, are multiple and, in some instances, difficult to accept. A business owners seek to protect the display of their goods and their signage. The photo on page 80 is a good example of the problem. The trees in the photo (Faneuil Hall or look alike) is an example. The trees in the photo have been carefully groomed so that they do not intrude into the space below and they do not block the space users views of the various commercial enterprises. The failure of the City to take the shopkeeper's needs into consideration in its tree program has resulted in a disproportionate loss street trees, in relation to their life expectancy.

### **Mitigate the Mass Pike's Effect [page 81 - 84]**

Most certainly, a plan to construct mid-rise and tall buildings over the Massachusetts Turnpike creating a "wall effect" separating different constituencies and dividing a new designated area of dense development north of the Pike from the protected "Village Style" southern portion of the city will, in the opinion of many close residents and abutters, exacerbate the effect of the Turnpike rather that mitigate it. As a point of reference, the traffic noise from Lowell Avenue or Walnut Street is more disrupting than the noise from the Turnpike.



Again, building along the Pike, first referenced on page 21, has conflicting views. Where? There are limited sites. We have limited green space now. Will we be forced to give it up? Will there be parking? Will there be safe pedestrian crossings? Will the buildings require more traffic lights?

Will building over the turnpike require exhaust fans and ventilator ducts. Where will the noxious fumes will be collected and then discharged. Will this create an increased health hazard for people working, walking and living in the discharge area?

### **Excellence in Placemaking [page -]**

This section of the Vision is an outline of a “Go Forward” Plan to convert Washington Street to a vision that is in conflict with the vision of the voters and stakeholders in the area. It is, on a lesser scale and longer development time line akin to Urban Renewal plans of the 1960’s and 1970’s.

For example, the reference to assuring Newtonville and West Newton remain distinct villages, the plan is to connect them with a series of 6, 8 and 10 or more story buildings (page 87). The reference to 8 and 10 story buildings, not included here, are included in other parts of the Go Forward Plan, including the Zoning Section, yet to be finalized and publicly presented.

There is a claim of a housing shortage in Newton. The testimony to support this claim comes often from those who claim their children can not find housing in Newton. This empty nest cry, while unfortunate, is complicated by other factors, including income and unexpressed concerns about living independently. To be fair, there may be a housing shortage in Boston as it seeks to develop its waterfront, attract national and international business offices. However, Boston’s plan is for Newton and other nearby communities to provide housing for workers without making any contribution of the increased costs to the host community.

### **Marking Villages with Tall Buildings [page 89]**

One of the unique qualities of Newton villages is the fact that they are easily identifiable by their character, their one, two and three story appearance and their commercial facades. Another is that immediately adjacent to our villages are single and two family homes; often Victorian in style. There is a blending of commercial and residential life that is unique and gives an identity to the quality of life in our city. The termination of this exceptional feature of our village life, by demarking 6 to 10+ story buildings as village markers, will forever change the image of desirability of our city.

Other question include, how many tall buildings will be enough, one, five, more? Will this plan create a spot zoning situation? How will we prevent an application of the domino effect that results in a row of 10 story buildings along Washington Street.

We now have a gentle transitions (page 90). There is no need to remark the transition line by building tall buildings and transitioning them down in scale. How much space will be required to do this step down without infringing on the rules against spot zoning? The step down will not be linear (along Washington Street) but, according to the maps (pages 92 & 03) will it extend north and south into our village neighborhoods. Including this in the Comprehensive plan will create a step down zone for future development that will create urban enclaves along our village perimeter.

### **Comfortable and cozy spaces [page 91 - 93]**

It seems that cement and brick canyons are preferable to open spaces and low rise buildings. If the person on the sidewalk can not see the top of a building the height shouldn't bother anyone. No discussion about those living in the building shadow or people walking a block away who feel closed in by the massing and height of our "Village Markers".

The Vision says that a design principle for setting building height. "... the height of buildings at the street edge are equal to the width of the open space." Greater heights (not limited as to the number of stories) if they are set back. There is no language or footnote to indicate that these principles are intended to be applied to village communities or suburban living. Where did these principles come from? Where are they applied? Are they intended to apply in residential sections?

**What is the recommended height formula to establish a comfort level for single and two family homeowners that about the project? Are they comfortable sitting in their back yard and gazing at tall buildings? Are they comfortable being gazed at by the occupants of those tall buildings?**

For example, if the "open Space" in Newtonville is defined as the street width, including sidewalks, the Commuter Rail right of way and the Mass Turnpike, we might end up with two and three hundred foot tall buildings along significant portions of Washington Street, perhaps with towering additions set back at the top.

Again, the maps (pages 92 & 93) indicate that this sidewalk to sidewalk principle will extend into or residential neighborhoods

In another section of the Vision the building height is capped at a higher ratio of street width to building height.

### **Site Planning Principles [page 94 - 98]**

The lofty principles set out on page 95, including the preserving of distinctive forms of the various buildings were totally disregarded at Washington Place (corner of Washington and Walnut Streets). Rather than clean the yellow brick of the corner building, it was torn down. Rather than restore the historic siding to an adjacent workforce housing complex, it was torn down. Rather than, well, it was done in the name of progress, not principle. Why can we not expect the same for the rest of Washington Street?



An example is the one story Newtonville Post Office. Certainly it can be considered an historic building, capable of being reused when the lease expires in two years. There is a problem; the building was sold for 6+ million dollars. Neighbors ask, "What has he been promised he can do with that site?"

### **Limit Visible Parking [page 96]**

It is generally known that large numbers of shoppers do not like underground parking, particularly where there is no security. For many it has an unsafe feeling. Suburbanites are often more concerned about seeing their surroundings and avoiding potential problems.

There is also the question of the City Council policy to alter transportation options by depriving people of space to park motor vehicles. Without workable satellite parking spaces new development along Washington Street will become an insular urban enclave.

### **Underperforming Structures [page 97]**

It is a generally accepted economic principle that structures do not underperform. Profits may be underperforming based on expectancy or potential, but the building is not at fault. The value of the building is based upon expected use. To say that a one story Post office building must remain a one story building indicates the value range. The entrepreneur may increase or decrease that value in determining the use of the building. For the city to say that the building can be torn down and replaced with a 3 story building sets another value and to say it can be replaced with an 8 story building sets yet another value.

### **Building Design Principles [page 99 - 104]**

It might be best to re-write this section as it appears to open one door to municipal control of architects work product and another to mixing the Building Code with Zoning regulations. This perception will most probably lead to strong opposition and may have a negative influence on the Comprehensive Plan, particularly after administrative rules and regulations are in place.

## ATTACHMENT A — COSTS & RENTS

In most instances one of the key factors in comparing rents is the size of the unit. Others include Tenant fit out, architectural layout, location and customer access.

### COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

**Municipal Fiscal Policy:** For over 50 years Newton government officials have bemoaned, complained and decried the fact that we do not have a large enough commercial tax base to offset the growing costs of our residential community. At the same time they run for election and re-election citing their participation in helping Newton win award after award for being a most livable city, with an excellent infrastructure and quaint business centers that cater to the village residents.

To meet the fiscal shortfall the City has adopted a number of strategies:

- i) It decided to charge the owners of business property nearly twice the tax on residential property based on the theory that the Landlord can pass the cost on to the Tenant who can pass it on to the customer.
- ii) It sold schools in the face of declining enrollment expecting responsible Newtonites would limit their offspring to one or two.
- iii) The City Council rezoned manufacturing and commercial land, then granted Special Permits to allow the building of more residential homes.
- iv) The City has discharge hundreds of municipal employees with the claim that privatizing municipal services will reduce coast. The results seem to say that sometimes it works and sometimes it does not work.

Recently, the City Council created a mixed use zone to encourage the construction of projects containing residential and commercial uses. It appears that little consideration was given to our municipal concerns about the lack of a sufficient commercial tax base.

**In new development projects the Developers always estimate that there will be a net surplus in tax revenues. The Washington Street Vision seems to accept this projection.**

### IMPACT ON LOCAL BUSINESS:

50 years ago the typical Newton Village one or two hardware stores, two or three pharmacies, restaurants, a bakery, a candy shop, a grocery store or market, commercial offices, a barber shop, a hair saloon, a jewelry store, a gift shop, a book store and other local service businesses.

With the introduction of Big Box businesses, regional and national chains, many small, local, merchants were unable to survive as their businesses were incorporated into the regional and national chains.

If rents for new commercial construction average \$50.00 to \$60.00 per square foot and CAM charges average \$5.00 to \$10.00 per square foot, the monthly operating expenses for a tenant will be \$50.00 to \$70.00 per square foot. The residential rate for 900 square feet at \$4,100.00 per month is \$54.00 per square foot.

If we split the difference on projected commercial rates and use \$60.00 per square foot as the monthly charge for the new rental space we can anticipate the following rents:

Unit Size	Monthly charge
1,500 sq. ft. (20X75)	\$ 7,500.00
2,000 sq. ft.	\$10,000.00
2,500 sq. ft.	\$12,500.00
3,000 sq. ft.	\$15,000.00
4,000 sq. ft.	\$20,000.00
5,000 sq. ft.	\$25,000.00

To support these rents the tenants will have to attract a steady flow of business throughout the day and evening. Newtonville customers will not be sufficient.

The tenants will have to draw customers from Brighton, Watertown, Waltham, Wellesly and other surrounding communities. They will need to create a destination shopping experience that will compete with nearby village centers, including, Newton Corner, Newtonville, West Newton and Newton Center. The tenants will be concerned that the landlord provide adequate parking. They will not be satisfied with an expert report that says that more parking is not needed

This does not compare favorably with the Newton Ordinance Requirement of 1 space per each 300 square feet for a retail store plus 1 space for each 3 employees on the largest shift.

#### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS**

**Anchor Tenant.** The primary tenant that will secure the financial viability of a project. In most significant projects the developer, the Lender and the Investors have a plan to secure an Anchor Tenant that will insure the success of the project. In this particular the Developer has not disclosed and such plan, In reference to an Anchor Tenant the developer has suggested CVSD, a food market, a restaurant and others as potential tenants, but each, in its time has declined.

**CAM** Common Area Maintenance fee or charge, is any expense incurred by the landlord that can be passed on to the Tenant, including, but not limited to:

- Electric & other Common Area metered utilities
- Insurance
- Landscaping
- Open Space maintenance costs
- Parking lot attendant
- Parking lot cleanup
- Reserve
- Snow Removal
- Taxes



**Market Area.** The communities from which you expect to draw customers for the commercial tenants. **Local Market Area** would be defined as including the immediate neighborhood or village where the business is located.

**Municipal Market Area** would include the city and some small portion of nearby communities within a defined radius.

**Regional Market Area** would include communities within a 10 to 15 mile radius.

**Market Area Population.** The size of the population available to draw customers for the commercial tenants. The needs of the individual tenant will vary and is based upon industry experience.

**Market Rent.** In Newton the current Market Rent for new commercial space is \$35.00 to \$40.00 per square foot. The CAM & tenant build out costs are additions to the rent and are usually negotiated prior to the signing of the lease.

**Monthly rental formula,** using a basis of \$37.50 per square foot of space = \$37.50 times total square feet of space divided by 12 months. The CAM is paid monthly and is usually added to the monthly rental payment. For example: 5,000 square foot space =  $\$37.50 \times 5,000 / 12 = \$15,625.00$  per month. For 1,250 square feet of space the rent would be \$3,906.00 per month.

**CAM Costs and Total Monthly Rent:** In the Metropolitan area the CAM averages between \$8.00 and \$15.00 per square foot. If we apply an average of \$10.00 per square foot to the above example the additional CAM charges for 5,000 square feet would be \$4,166.00 per month for a total monthly charge of \$19,791.00 per month, rounded up to \$19,800.00 per month.

For 1,200 square feet the monthly CAM charges would be \$1,042.00 per month for a total monthly charge of \$4,950.00 per month

**Parking and Convenience of Location.** The ease of access to the site and the suitability of parking amenities, including street access, size of parking spaces, proximity to commercial entry points and customer personal safety.



**MEMORANDUM — DEFENSE OF NAC SURVEY**

The first rule for a survey is to establish a pool of potential respondents. Some may want to manipulate the pool. For example, if you want an opinion about bicycles you might limit your group to bicycle owners and/or users. If you want an opinion about elections you might limit your group to people with a history of voting in elections. Over manipulation may produce false or inaccurate results such as the recent Australian election polls.

The second rule is to select a random sample from the pool. The theory being that a random group is more likely to reflect the opinion of the general population.

The third rule is to draft impartial questions.

The fourth rule is to get a big budget to cover the costs.

The Newtonville Area Council wanted to conduct a public opinion poll. They wanted to know what the public thought of development along Washington Street. They did not want to limit their poll to likely voters, or to development opponents or supporters or to households earning less than six figures.

Updating the 20<sup>th</sup> century "Scientific" process, they contacted all 10,809 households in Wards 1, 2 and 3 (the affected area) and asked if they would like to participate in a public opinion survey. Rather than cull the respondent pool to eliminate certain groups or uninterested persons, the Area Council adopted a self-selection process to establish their respondent sample. Those unable or not interested in responding withdrew from the process by non-participation. One can say that this is "unscientific". An alternative method could be to call each of the 10,809 households and ask if they would be interested in participating in a 15 or 20 minute survey. This method is popular in today's business survey community.

The Area Council members carefully crafted impartial questions. Being at the bottom rung of the political ladder, the Area Council had no budget. They asked those interested in expressing an opinion to go on line and take a 15 to 20-minute survey. They received about 2,000 responses from the "affected area" and another 500 from outside the area. They tabulated and published the results that can be found on line at the Newtonville Area Council Home Page. Surprisingly, the responses from within the affected are and from outside the affected area were in similar percentages.

Critics, who do not like the results, complain the survey was "unscientific". The principle Group, to whom the City paid \$500,000.00 did a less scientific survey and came up with similar results. They invited people to come and talk about their plan for Washington Street, asked questions and published the results. Their results were not dissimilar to the NAC Survey results.

Peter F. Harrington, Newtonville

RECEIVED  
Newtonville, MA  
019 SEP 10 PM 3:46





Julia Malakie  
Washington Street Vision comments — Sept. 9, 2019 public hearing

The Vision Plan (pg 22) correctly promotes narrow shopfronts but incorrectly says that some of our current storefronts are as narrow as 20-25ft. In fact, some of our unique businesses in West Newton are as narrow as 13-15ft frontage - Paper Mouse Atelier, Putting on the Knitz, and others. Shopfronts that size should be part of any Vision Plan, and the Vision Plan should get facts right.

But the main point I'd like to make is that massive upzoning of the scale this Vision Plan supports, will lead to throwing out the baby with the bath water. The more that you permit to be built, the greater the likelihood of losing historic buildings like the **Brezniak Rodman Funeral Home**, which is already on demolition delay. Or the **Seth Davis Tavern** built in 1831, literally a landmark in West Newton Square, which has still not been protected with landmark status. Why not? Does someone want to preserve Mr. Korff's ability to buy it and hold it for ransom?

Upzoning will also lead to wasteful demolition of newer buildings whose only crime is to be smaller than what new zoning would allow. Case in point, the **RL Tennant Building**, built only 10 years ago, attractive and well-maintained, parking in back, assessed at \$1.7 million (\$ .054 007 FV %). Mark Development paid \$4.8 million for it in June, almost 3x assessed value. The Assessors office is not going to tax it at that value, because they don't think anyone else would pay that much. It's an amount based on what Mr. Korff expects to be allowed to build.

This building also disproves the idea that our only choice is to upzone, or be stuck with ugly parking lots. RL Tennant was built under current zoning. Without the prospect of upzoning on the horizon, we would return to more gradual, in-scale development of properties along Washington Street.

We'll also lose buildings that may not look that exciting, but house things of value, like the Shepherd & Maudsleigh artists studio at 27 Dunstan Street, just featured in a front-page article in the Tab. They've only been there a year. It's in the block Korff plans to develop west of the 40B.

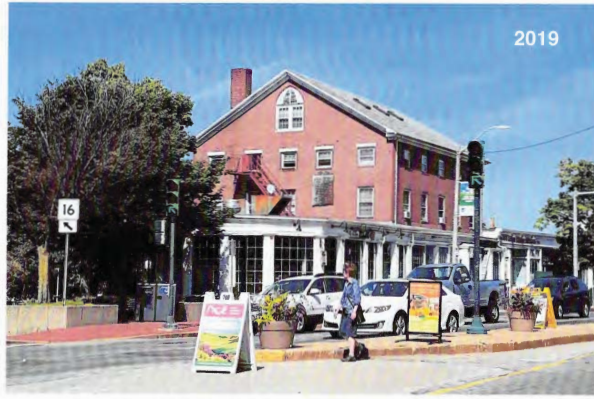
And what is the rush to incentivize more development with current building standards? Anything built today, heated with natural gas, we're likely stuck with for 40 years. If it takes longer for redevelopment to occur, we'll have time to require net-zero energy use buildings that we all aspire to.

RECEIVED  
2019 SEP 10 PM 3:46  
CITY OF WEST NEWTON  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Brezniak-Rodman funeral home.jpg



**Seth Davis Tavern/Railroad Hotel  
(built 1891)**



RL Tennant Building.jpg







Shepherd & Maudsley 27 Dunstan St.jpg



POLICE  
GUNS  
STOLEN  
FROM  
HOME

WICKED LOCAL

adar .....A5  
iflads ..... B7-12  
s .....A5  
aries ..... A2  
on ..... A8



**C**ontract talks between Newton and its educators spilled over onto the City Hall lawn Wednesday, as teachers face the likelihood of starting the school year with expired contracts. Going back to school without a new contract is demoralizing, said Elisse Ghitelman, a Newton North High School teacher who was among the crowd of hundreds. "It feels very sad. It feels devaluing not to have a

See **CONTRACTS**, B1



Guitar-playing Newton teachers lead the way during a protest of unresolved contract negotiations in front of City Hall Wednesday morning. [DAILY NEWS AND WICKED LOCAL STAFF PHOTO/KEN MCGAGH]

population. There are allergies and food restrictions, pressure to offer newer and healthier choices while also increasing participation rates (read: more revenue), and federal food guidelines that are changing under the current presidential administration. Add it all up, and the question of "what's on the menu today?" is more complicated now than ever before. Lynch guesses she has made more than 2,000 peanut butter (or in recent years, due to

See **LUNCHES**, B1

## Creativity flows at Dunstan Street art studio

Shepherd & Maudsleigh Studio celebrates one-year anniversary

By Julie M. Cohen.  
jcohen@wickedlocal.com

Sept 4, 2019  
Newton Tab

The plain exterior walls of 27 Dunstan St. offer no hint at the riot of color and creativity taking place behind the doors at Shepherd & Maudsleigh Studio, which is celebrating its one-year anniversary.

On a recent weekday, Suzanne Moseley used a squeegee to spread vibrant yellow paint across a silkscreen frame to transfer the color onto her artwork. Hanging on a nearby wall, several of her finished pieces featured abstract shapes in strong greens, blues and reds layered on top of each other. Already a printmaker, Moseley took a

silk-screening class at the West Newton studio and liked it so much she decided to rent time in order to use the specialty equipment.

Owners Liz Shepherd and Rebekah Lord Gardiner have been helping local artists like Moseley find space to create their work and offering workshops in silkscreen printing, monoprint, transfer printing, artist books, eolograph, papier mâché, sculptural sewing and indigo dyeing, to name a few.

Working in his own space within Shepherd & Maudsleigh Studio, Todd Brugman of Somerville concentrated on his oil painting. "It's a really wonderful environment," he said. Brugman said it is difficult to find adequate and reasonably priced studio space

See **ART**, B1



From left, Elende Connor and Shannah Biala, interns at Newton's Shepherd & Maudsleigh Studio, help out on a project by artist Liz Shepherd, a co-owner of the space. [WICKED LOCAL STAFF PHOTO/JULIE M. COHEN]

Whatever home financing you need, we have you covered.

30-Year Fixed Rate Mortgage

2.75% 2.10%



## YMCA OFFERS SUMMER EATS TO NEWTON

eight weeks, the program distributes and serves 5,722 meals to children in the community. The West Suburban site summer day camp is one of the 45 percent of the free lunch program.

Lunches consisted of healthy options for children that included an entrée, a side and a choice of 1 percent or chocolate milk. A second, different side option was available later in the day as an afternoon snack. Free lunches were available to children from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday and an afternoon snack was offered between 2:30-3:30 p.m.

All children ages 18 and younger were eligible to receive a free lunch and/or snack, and no ID or registration was required. Summer Eats is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered in Massachusetts by the Massachusetts Department of Education, who selected the West Suburban YMCA as an eligible site for

the program. Bentley University sponsored the program at the Y, preparing and delivering the meals as well as providing additional funds to help promote the program. The West Suburban YMCA and Bentley University plan to offer the Summer Eats program again in 2020. For information: <http://www.wyymca.org>.

they have to make the choice to buy at school," he said.

### Fit in regulations

In late 2018, the United States Department of Agriculture, under the direction of then Secretary Sonny Perdue, finalized plans to set regulations for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 that were later updated by then-First Lady Michelle Obama. Specifically, the roll-back lowered sodium standards for whole grains, flavinoids and the sodium content of foods served in school cafeterias.

Whitson said it is ultimately up to individual districts to decide if they want to change nutritional offerings, but Whitson cautions that the guidelines outlined in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. For instance, the new regulations will require 50 percent whole grain offerings, but Whitson notes that to offer a 100 percent whole grain meal. Whitson acknowledged some districts might consider it a positive to be able to offer whole grains, if they think kids will be more likely to try the alternatives. She said plain bagels and white rice are examples of this. This gets at the heart of offering healthy foods providing options kids will actually eat. "A lot of it is a perception," she said. "We're more familiar with white products, what they want to eat. But the fact that students, the more likely it is they will have been given those options whole lives." Whitson said Newton will continue to follow the guidelines in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, even though participation in the school lunch program is at 50 percent, a number he considers "very low."

Whitson said it would be a big step back to undo all the hard work we did in the Obama-era regulations were set," he said. "I think a lot of people value the value of eating healthier and cutting certain things out of their diets."

## ART

From Page A1

In the Boston area, and appreciates the fact artists interact with each other at Shepherd & Maudsleigh, rather than stay behind their walls.

"This is more of a communal workspace," he said, noting that there is a sense of camaraderie especially around lunchtime, when people often get together for a meal inside the facility. "There's a lot of chance to have those cross conversations that don't happen in studios with doors that close," said Gardiner.

"Artists can be very lonely and isolated when they work in their homes, or their basement, or their attic," said Jamaica Plain resident Shepherd, a sculptor and printmaker. However, at Shepherd & Maudsleigh Studio, the walls between artist spaces do not go up to the ceiling, adding to the open, welcoming atmosphere.

On any given day a visit or might find people taking classes, working on sketches, quilting, painting or making art on one of their very large printing presses - including a Charles Brand press they purchased from the DeCordova Museum and an American French Tool press that has a massive wheel. FIBER (Fiber Arts Boston Resource & Innovation Center), which is located inside the studio, offers instruction on quilting, including on the "long-arm" quilting machine that can move in multiple directions over a piece of fabric.

Talya Marshall of Waltham, a FIBER member, used that machine on her own fabric on a recent weekday.

"There's a lot of steps that you have to take... first in the end you get tangible, beautiful pieces," said Marshall.

### Creative coworkers

"We're very proud that we have made it through our first year," said Gardiner, a mixed-media artist focusing on printmaking and textiles who lives in Weston.

The women-owned business is a 6,000-square-foot space that has a large printmaking studio and adjacent space for painters, textile and mixed media artists, among others. They are in the process of purchasing their fifth printing press.

The business opened in Newton after the lease at Shepherd's 3,000-square-foot Shepherd Print Studio in the South End was not renewed. She and Gardiner subsequently became partners and decided to look for a new space.

"Any place in the Boston area is so expensive, and what we needed was a lot of space," said Shepherd. They found what they were looking for in West Newton.

"We like being in Newton because we can draw from a very large population that are already artists or they're new to art and we can provide the experiences they're looking for," said Gardiner.

For their classes, Shepherd said the duo want to continue learning more about what "Newton residents really want to do, art-wise" so they can be an art resource.

Gardiner concurred saying they hope to bring in more people who want to learn different techniques and continue to create, whether they're professionals or amateurs.

Shepherd & Maudsleigh Studio is located at 27 Dunstan St. in West Newton. For more information, visit <https://shepherdmaudsleighstudio.com/>.

## CONTRACTS

myself, really struggle to be able to



165.19

From: Sarah Quigley <sarah.p.quigley@gmail.com>  
Date: Mon, Sep 9, 2019 at 3:50 PM  
Subject: Opposition to #165-19 - Adoption of Washington Street Vision Plan as part of the Comprehensive Plan  
To: <citycouncil@newtonma.gov>

Dear City Councilors,

I oppose docket item # 165-19 - Adoption of Washington Street Vision Plan as part of the Comprehensive Plan, and urge the City Council not to approve it.

I do not believe there is evidence that the majority of residents support the proposed zoning changes described in the Vision Plan draft which would allow significant increases in height, massing, and density in the Washington Street area. I attended many of the Hello Washington Street sessions where residents submitted feedback, and I read the Newtonville Area Council and Principle Group survey results. Most of the feedback indicated residents preferred more limited increases in the size and scale of development allowed in the area.

In contrast, the Vision Plan is proposing dramatic increases in the scale of development which would be allowed by right in the area. Developers could also apply for special permits requesting additional zoning relief, which could result in a much larger built environment on Washington Street and in adjacent neighborhoods.

The Vision Plan also does not analyze potential fiscal impacts of the proposed zoning changes thoroughly.

I do not recommend that the City Council approve adoption of the Washington Street Vision Plan as part of the Comprehensive Plan because it would embed a plan which does not reflect most resident's interests into a document which the city refers to for development recommendations. I suggest the Vision Plan be returned to the Zoning and Planning Committee, and that the committee revisit the recommendations with a critical eye, keeping in mind written feedback submitted by residents in the Hello Washington St sessions, and the responses to the Newtonville Area Council and Principle Group surveys which indicated many residents value village scale development and more limited growth.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Quigley

RECEIVED  
CITY COUNCIL  
2019 SEP 10 PM 3:46  
SARAH P. QUIGLEY  
CITY COUNCIL