



Newton Zoning Redesign

Developing a context-based zoning code for an evolving city.

13 MARCH 2017

Newton's Overall Zoning Reform Process

PHASE 1:
ZONING REFORM

PHASE 2:
ZONING REDESIGN

PHASE 3:
ONE-YEAR REVIEW

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PHASES 1-4:
GOAL SETTING, MANAGEMENT, DATA ANALYSIS,
IMMEDIATE ISSUES

PHASE 5:
PATTERN BOOK

PHASE 6: DRAFT ZONING ORDINANCE

PHASE 7: FINAL DRAFT ORDINANCE

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Pattern Book Development

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS:
OUTREACH, COMMUNITY TOURS, RESEARCH,
GIS ANALYSIS, FOCUS GROUPS

PATTERN BOOK PRODUCTION
TEST METHODOLOGIES, REVIEW WITH CITY STAFF, FINALIZE
DRAFT, PRESENT TO CITY COUNCIL, PRESENT TO PUBLIC

TRANSITION TO ORDINANCE
EVOLVE PATTERN BOOK, USE
PATTERN BOOK IN CRAFTING CODE

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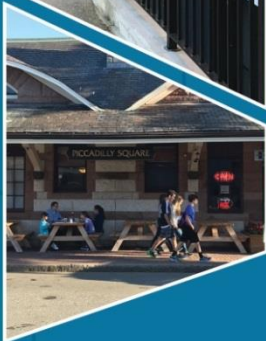
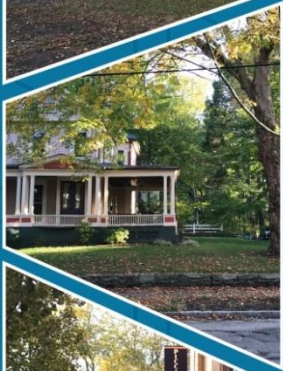
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The background is a soft-focus photograph of an outdoor setting. On the left, a large tree trunk is visible, with its canopy extending towards the top of the frame. The sun is shining from the upper left, creating a bright, hazy glow. In the middle ground, there's a paved path or road. To the right, a building with a blue roof and a brick chimney is partially visible. The overall atmosphere is bright and airy, with a bokeh effect on the background elements.

Draft Pattern Book Materials

The Newton Pattern Book was produced on behalf of the City of Newton as part of the 2017 Comprehensive Zoning Reform initiative.



Newton Pattern Book

2017

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1. Introduction to the Pattern Book
2. The Development of Newton
3. Newton's Patterns
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1. Introduction to the Pattern Book

- Purpose of the Pattern Book
- The Pattern Book & The New Zoning Ordinance
- The Pattern Book Methodology
- Using the Pattern Book to Inform Development/Redevelopment in Newton

WORK IN PROGRESS!

Introduction to the Pattern Book

Purpose of the Pattern Book

Newton is a city defined by and renowned for its rich historical character and overall high quality of life. Over the past three centuries, Newton has developed from a quiet agricultural town consisting primarily of pastureland and small clusters of housing to a modern—almost entirely built-out—city of nearly 90,000 residents. Today's Newton is a rich tapestry of buildings, institutions, and places simultaneously representing the past, present, and future of Newton—all working in concert to create a high quality, twenty-first century place to live, work, learn, play, and create.



Masonic Building in Newtonville

Anyone who spends time exploring Newton's various neighborhoods and village centers will come to realize the city comprises a great diversity of development patterns. These patterns reveal themselves in the size, shape, and character of the streets, parcels, and buildings that together compose a neighborhood or village center, and can be understood in the context of their development era, proximity to historical thoroughfares and rail lines, and the planning and design decisions made by the city and other governing entities over generations. As part of the City's 2017 comprehensive zoning reform initiative ("Zoning Redesign"), Newton sought to catalog these existing development patterns to best understand the city's context. The resulting analysis is documented in this pattern book. It is the goal of the City to use this pattern book to serve as the foundation of a new context-based zoning ordinance (described in greater detail below) and to serve as a resource for regulators, property owners, developers, and designers who wish to reimagine and reshape areas of the city with new development/redevelopment.

Pattern books—in the context of planning and development—were historically used primarily to guide design decisions in communities seeking a degree of consistency between existing and future development. In more recent years, planners and designers have repurposed the pattern book concept to work alongside tools like form-based

codes—and zoning more broadly—in service of a new approach to guiding development within cities. This new approach is called context-based zoning, and it will serve as the foundation of Newton's zoning and regulatory framework for years to come. The core concept underlying context-based zoning is that the city we're planning for is already a place of significant history and beloved character. While the city must encourage growth and development to maintain equality of access, its revered diversity, and the economic vibrancy that keeps Newton humming—that which makes Newton great today can serve as a model for the future.

To build a zoning ordinance that respects and responds to that which is working and celebrated in Newton today, the various patterns that makeup Newton must first be understood and cataloged. The pattern book aims to fulfill that objective with a rigorous analysis based on geographic

information system data, historical records, regulatory/policy documents, existing conditions measurements, and first-hand interactions with Newtonians who know the city best. Following this information-gathering stage, the planning team (Cassaki and the City of Newton Department of Planning and Development) began to identify and categorize development patterns across the city. These patterns were grouped, illustrated, and described to detail the underlying conditions that constitute each pattern. This process involved both quantitative and qualitative deliberation to determine which factors were most important in defining patterns, and therefore which factors would be relevant to future designers and property owners who look to the pattern book to make decisions with respect to their own development goals. The specific patterns identified and the factors considered in defining those patterns are outlined, in detail, in chapter 4: Newton's Patterns.



A home in Newton Centre

2. The Development of Newton

- Newton's Development (1630 - 2017)
- Newton Today
- The Evolution of the City
- Zoning History
- Recent Planning Initiatives

The Development of Newton

Newton's Development (1630 - 2017)

Newton has historically existed as a residential and farming suburb to Boston's commercial and industrial centers. Otatate con num fugitibus solent mi, ides pro in porrore, nimped etur, optate quam quasperum que aut quamus dolorestio consequas sitiunt plecto experch illabore, atur? Asperch itiust, sit audit doloro te nost officipiet et fugitio nsentur atur ma quam aliam res sinulpa ipsusae aborescid ut as es ius expe consedit fuga.

The Settlement of Newton

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Boston Regional Growth (17XX - 18XX)

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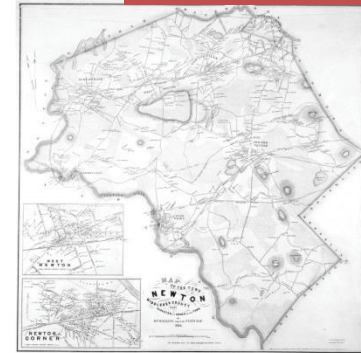


Historic Photo



Historic Photo

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Historic Newton
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Newton Connects Boston Westward

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3. Newton's Patterns

- Pattern Book Organization
- Citywide Analysis
- Development Types
- Pattern Subsets
- Village-based Areas
- Building Inventory

Village-Based Areas

2. West Newton Area

Development Types & Pattern Subsets

With close proximity to both Waltham and Watertown to the north, the West Newton set of neighborhoods and centers includes all seven categories of residential building type and five of the six development types cataloged in this pattern book. The area includes a pedestrian-scale street network with consistent, walkable sidewalks and a mix of

small and large development blocks. Residential properties are tightly packed within this area's neighborhoods, with average side setbacks as small as ten feet in several places. The main commercial area is the linear West Newton village center situated along I-90.

Village Center

The West Newton Area's only village center is the West Newton village center, located in the south, along I-90. This center is medium in size, relative to Newton's several village centers, with a substantial mix of 19th and 20th century buildings and styles and a dense, highly-walkable urban form.



Regional Center

West Newton is home to two regional employment centers (on either side of the West Newton village center) and two regional legacy industrial centers to the north, abutting Waltham. The employment centers are strung along Washington Street and primarily house uses such as offices, a grocery store, automotive service shops, and other larger-scale commercial/retail operations. The legacy industrial centers in the north comprise offices, small manufacturers, storage facilities, a music studio, and small retail spaces.



Campus

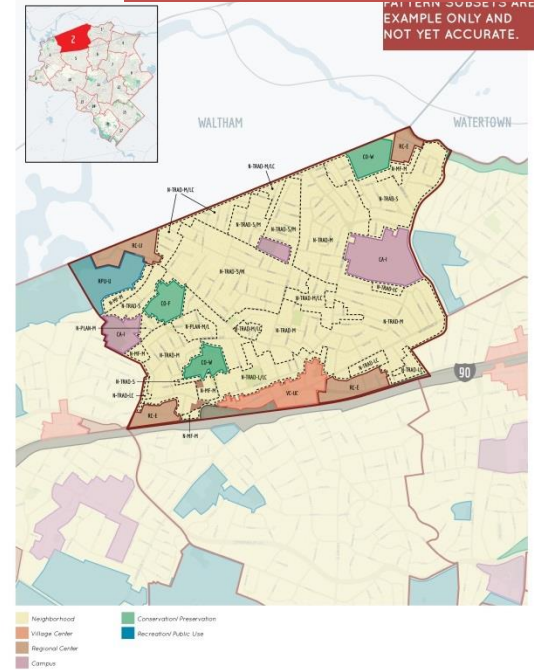
The West Newton Area contains one campus development type—the Fessenden School. This private 41-acre primary school comprises academic and recreation facilities as well as playgrounds, outdoor sports fields and courts, and large landscaped open space.

Neighborhood

The neighborhoods of West Newton developed in the city's early years in response to development types and the introduction of rail service to the area. The neighborhood patterns predominantly include traditional 1 and traditional 2 subsets, featuring mainly one-, two-, and three-family residential properties on small lots. Larger residential properties and denser building types are primarily clustered near the village and regional centers.

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PATTERN SUBSETS ARE EXAMPLE ONLY AND NOT YET ACCURATE.



4. The Pattern Book Process

- Research/Analysis
- GIS Operations
- Public Engagement
- Revising the Pattern Book

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4

The Pattern Book
Process



Chapter 3: Newton's Patterns Deep Dive

Citywide Analysis

This analysis shows several data sets at the city scale. The maps are intended to convey the composition of Newton and the systems operating citywide through various data lenses. The layers in these maps reveal patterns and allow users to draw conclusions from a citywide perspective.

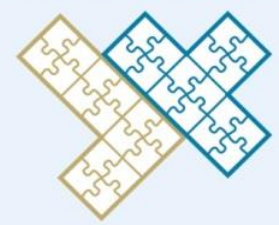
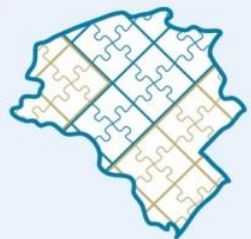


Seeing data sets on the citywide scale is useful for understanding the similarities and differences between Newton's various neighborhoods and centers. To understand these data on a more local scale, they have been broken down by VBA.

Data compiled in the citywide analysis informed the definitions of development types and pattern subsets.

Development Types & Pattern Subsets

Development types (blue squares in the diagram to the right) are broad categories describing the predominant land use and composition of Newton's neighborhoods and centers. Pattern subsets (gold puzzle pieces in the diagram to the right) are the more specific areas within development types that describe the more detailed form, scale, and density of development within each development type.



Development Types

Development types are large, generalized areas describing the predominant use(s) and the development composition of Newton's neighborhoods and centers. The pattern book breaks the city into six development types: neighborhood, village center, regional center, campus, recreation/public use, and conservation.

Pattern Subsets

Pattern subsets are the more specific and measured patterns comprising each development type. Each development type contains a menu of detailed subsets describing the scale, form, and density of development as well as the relationship of buildings to each other and to the street.

Village-Based Areas

After reviewing the city's data layers and experiencing firsthand the unique mix of styles, densities, development eras, and uses that comprise Newton's neighborhoods and village centers, the planning team broke the city into seventeen "village-based areas" (VBA). The intent of these areas is to distinguish neighborhoods from one another in order to understand the composition and shared characteristics of development within an area, and of areas relative to each other.



Area Overview

Each VBA is described in terms of its boundaries and development composition.



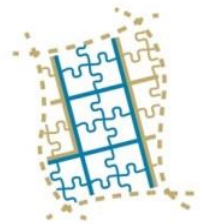
Land Use Analysis

A generalized land use map shows the patterns of development within each VBA. Key development metrics are measured by land use.



Street Type Analysis

Street types are mapped within each VBA and key development metrics are displayed by street type.



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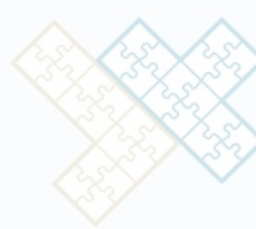
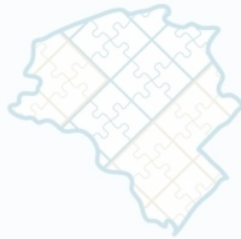


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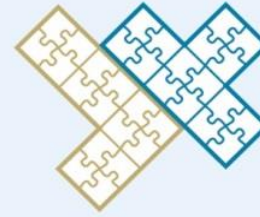
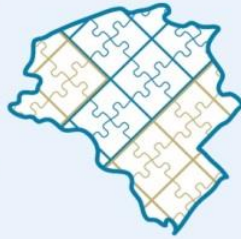


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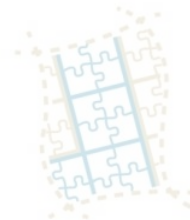
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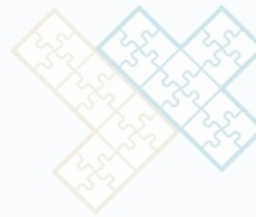
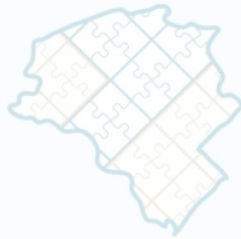


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Pattern Subsets

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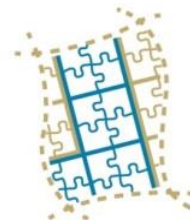
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Development Types & Subsets

Each VBA is broken down and analyzed using the same development types and subsets described above.

1. Citywide Analysis

Citywide Systems

- Circulation: Walkability
- Circulation: Transit Access
- Circulation: Automobile Access
- Circulation: Parking
- Open Space
- Physical Barriers
- Watersheds

Development Forms

- Land Use
- Business Centers
- Lot Sizes
- Gross Square Feet (development)
- Development Height in Stories
- Streetwall
- Accessory Structures
- Mean Tax Revenue/Acre
- Nonconforming Parcels (existing zoning)
- Changes in Density Over Time
- Permeable & Impermeable Surfaces

1. Citywide Analysis

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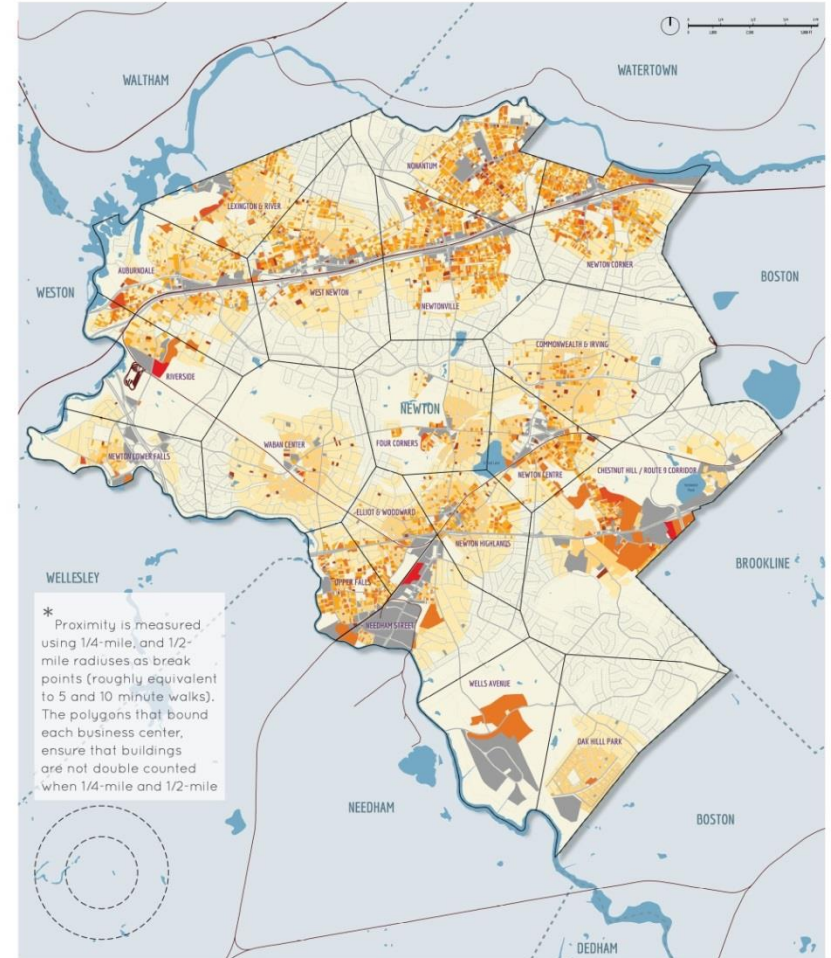
Development Forms

Business Centers

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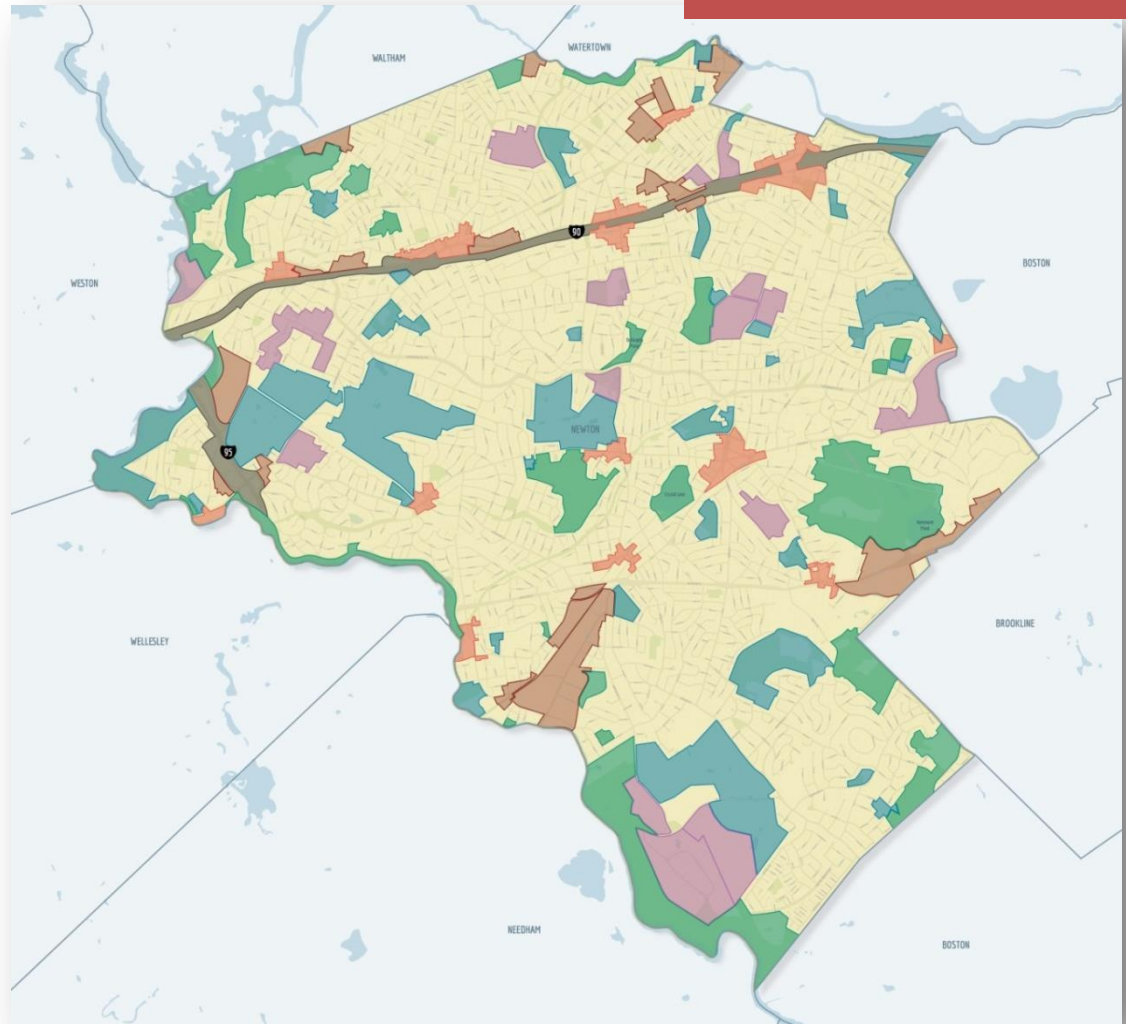
Legend

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| Single Family (1/4M) | Multi Family (<10) | Apartment (100+) |
| Single Family (1/2M) | Mixed Use | Commercial / Industrial |
| Two Family | Apartment (10+) | |

2. Development Types

- Neighborhood
- Village Center
- Regional Center
- Campus
- Recreation/Public Use
- Conservation

WORK IN PROGRESS!



2. Development Types

WORK IN PROGRESS!

Development Types & Pattern Subsets

Neighborhood

Newton is today a predominantly residential community. Over the course of its three centuries of history, the majority of structures within the city have been single family homes. These homes when clustered together form unique neighborhoods comprising XX% of Newton's land area.

While the neighborhood classification is primarily composed of residential structures, neighborhoods in cities like Newton are almost always dotted with additional uses and building typologies. It is not at all uncommon for small commercial and retail establishments to become embedded in these areas, in the form of doctors' offices, dental practices, small commercial offices, banks, coffee shops, small grocers, and restaurants. These outliers offer local residents the benefit of convenience and small instances of the vitality that comes with a mix of uses in a neighborhood.

Traditional Neighborhoods

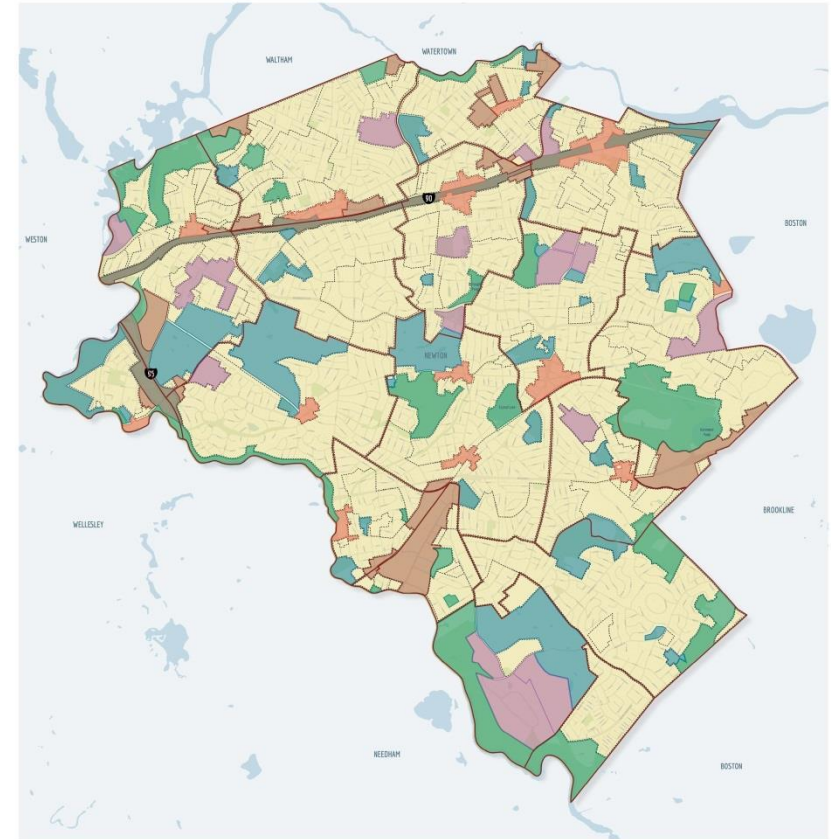
These neighborhoods evolve over time and are typically arranged on grid-like streets with rectilinear lots, pedestrian friendly, etc

Planned Neighborhoods

These neighborhoods are typically developed over a short period of time by one or a few builders and feel architecturally uniform. Street patterns are more curvilinear and can be disconnected from the larger urban fabric; feeder streets connect to larger arterials.

Manor Neighborhoods

Manor neighborhoods often have large houses with large setbacks, which can reduce the feeling of walkability of the neighborhood.



Newton's Neighborhoods

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2. Pattern Subsets

Neighborhood

- Traditional - Small
- Traditional - Medium
- Traditional - Large Compact
- Traditional - Large
- Manor
- Planned
- Planned Unit Development
- Multifamily - Medium
- Multifamily - Large

Village Center

- Convenience Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Urban Center
- Gateway Center

Regional Center

- Employment Center
- Retail Center
- Legacy Industrial Center

Campus

- Civic
- Corporate Park
- Institutional

Recreation/Public Use

- Regional/Neighborhood Park
- Golf Course
- Utility
- Cemetery/Burial Ground

Conservation

- Easement
- Natural Landscape/Formation
- Wetland/Ecological Resource
- Water Body
- Forest

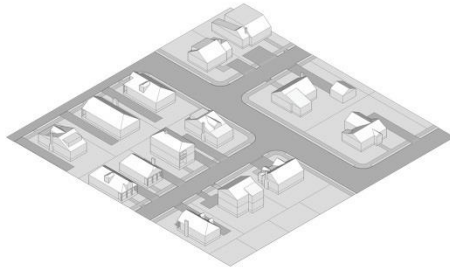
2. Pattern Subsets

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Development Types & Pattern Subsets

1. Small Traditional

Small traditional neighborhoods have a grid-like street structure with a relatively high frequency of intersections, creating small, walkable blocks. They are characterized by their small lot size and short, uniform front setbacks, which contribute to a continuous streetwall that defines the public realm. These neighborhoods often have contiguous sidewalks on both sides of the street, interrupted for driveway curb cuts that are most typically wide enough for one car.



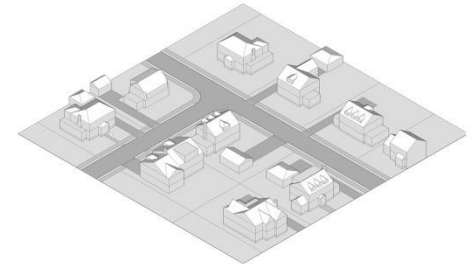
Typical Dimensions

| | |
|------------------|---|
| LOT SIZE | 1,000 - 7,000 SF |
| DEVELOPMENT SIZE | 0 - 2,000 SF |
| HEIGHT | 1.0 - 1.75 stories |
| STREETWALL | Continuous |
| SETBACK | 0 - 25 FT |
| SIDE SETBACK | xx - xx |
| DEVELOPMENT FORM | Buildings are relatively small for Newton. They range from single-story to 1.75 stories, which are as tall as two-story homes but have steeply pitched roofs which limit the habitable space on the second floor. They may be accentuated with window dormers that allow for light, but are not large enough to accommodate significant additional habitable space. |



2. Medium Traditional

Medium traditional neighborhoods have a grid-like street structure with a relatively high frequency of intersections, creating small, walkable blocks. Lot sizes range from 7,000 gross square feet to 15,000 gross square feet, which typically allows for a driveway, backyard, and side yards between structures. Uniform building setbacks, contiguous sidewalks, and limited curb cuts enhance the pedestrian quality of the public realm, though generous front setbacks ranging between 15 and 35 feet separate the public realm from the private homes.



Typical Dimensions

| | |
|------------------|--|
| LOT SIZE | 7,000 - 15,000 SF |
| DEVELOPMENT SIZE | 2,000 - 4,500 SF |
| HEIGHT | 2.0 - 2.5 stories |
| STREETWALL | Continuous |
| SETBACK | 15 - 35 FT |
| SIDE SETBACK | xx - xx |
| DEVELOPMENT FORM | Most buildings in these neighborhoods are medium-sized single family homes. They range from two stories to 2.25 stories, which are two-story homes but have pitched roofs with small dormers and small attics that may have a limited amount of habitable space. On occasion, an office or a corner store is present in these neighborhoods. |



Neighborhood

3. Village-based Areas

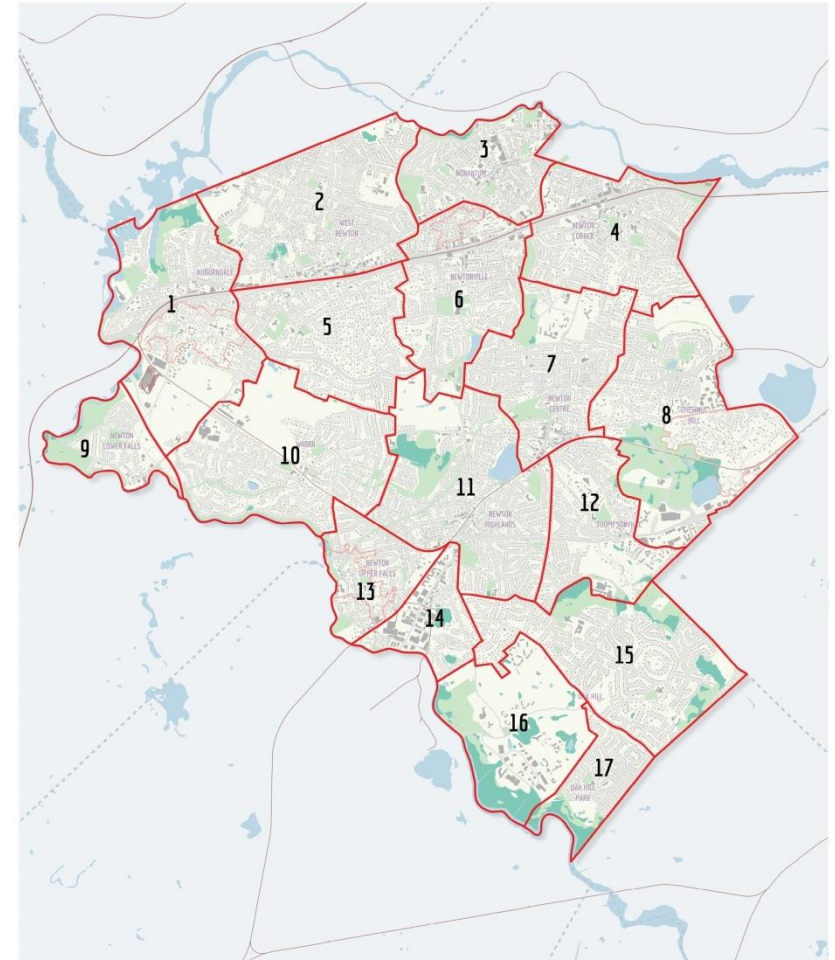
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Village-Based Areas

What is a Village-Based Area?

Newton is a city defined by its villages. Whether resulting from historical settlement patterns, transit and transportation decisions made decades ago, or the interventions of mid-twentieth century city planners, Newton's many villages and centers take on a variety of character types and patterns. To best understand the unique character of the city's many areas, it made sense to use these villages to inform a more localized analysis. As there are no official boundaries to Newton's villages—as well as some debate about how many there are—these village-based areas can be understood as approximations of their boundaries.

While these 17 areas may not directly correspond to popular understanding of a village's composition, they serve as a good starting point for the in-depth pattern analysis on the following pages. By analyzing patterns in a more finite geography than the city holistically, we can understand the differences between areas and compare development dimensions between village-based areas.



3. Village-based Areas

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Village-Based Areas

2. West Newton Area

Area Overview

The West Newton Area is one of the most diverse collections of neighborhoods and centers in all of Newton. Representing a wide range of uses and building types, and spanning multiple centuries of development, the area has changed significantly over time and represents pieces of many eras and bygone development types.

West Newton contains some of the city's most dense and walkable neighborhoods. With an intersection density of 171 intersections per square mile as compared to the city's average of _____, The area contains approximately 36 acres of publicly accessible open space, comprising 3.8% of the area's 939 acres, counting it among the most urban areas of Newton.

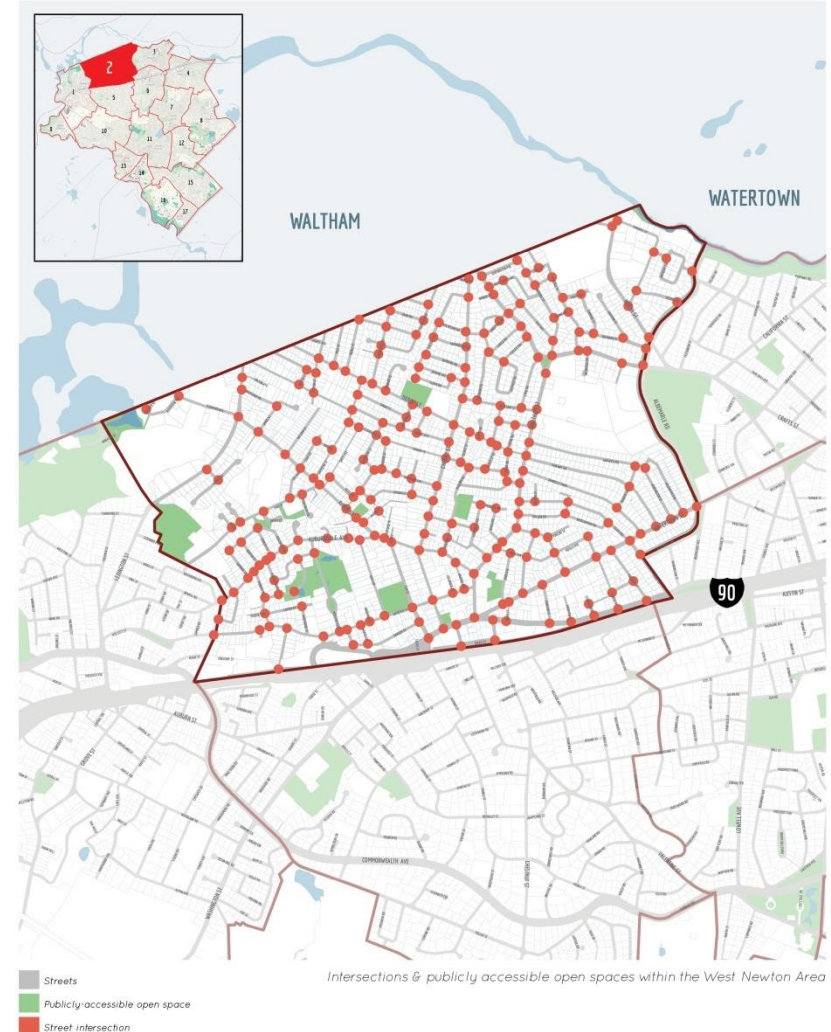


939 total acres

171 intersections per square mile

3.8% publicly accessible open space

\$XXk Average tax revenue per acre



3. Village-based Areas

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Village-Based Areas

2. West Newton Area

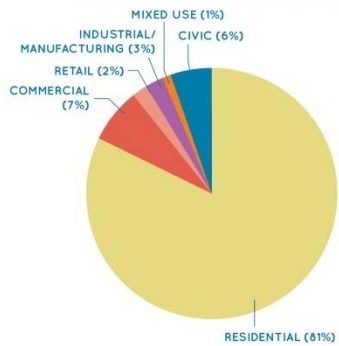
Land Use Analysis

The West Newton Area is framed by the Newton city boundary to the north, I-90 to the south, the Burr Elementary school to the west, and Albermarle Road to the east. This area is one of Newton's most diverse with respect to land uses and residential typologies. This area is home to the West Newton village center, which comprises a variety of

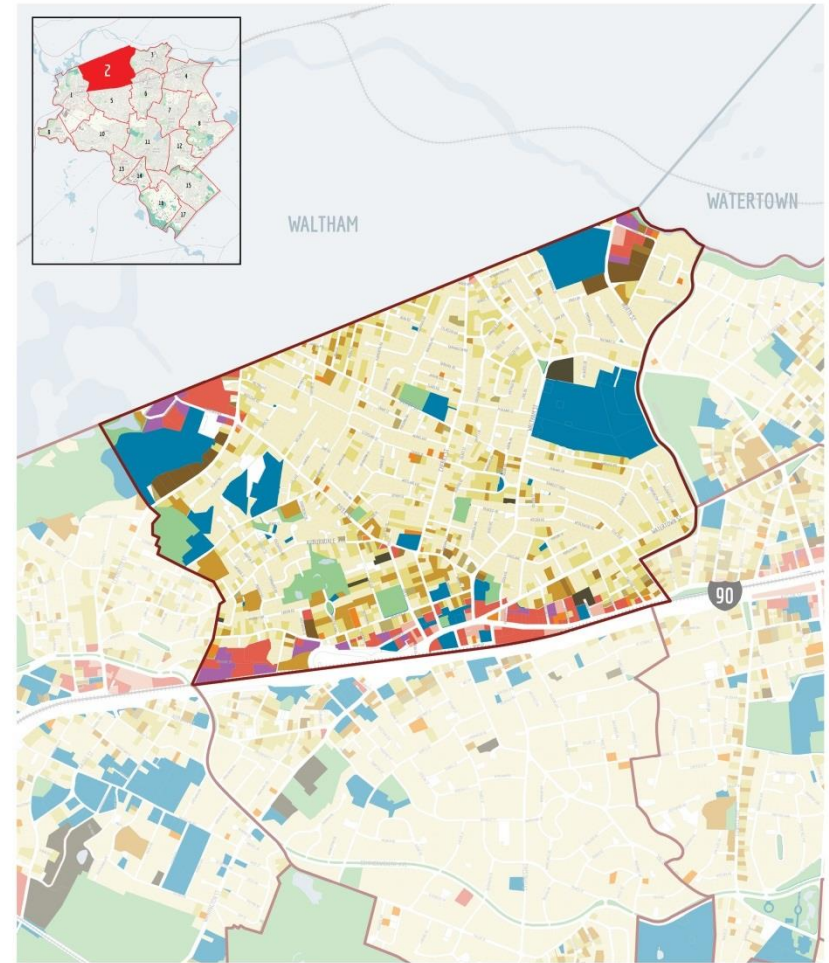
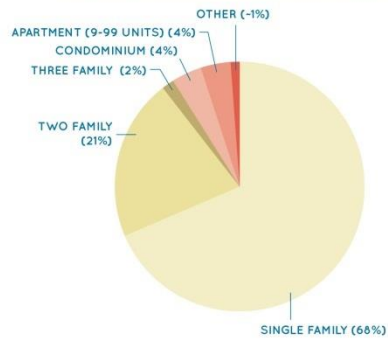
commercial, retail, industrial/manufacturing uses strung out along I-90. This is where the greatest concentration of multifamily residential products can be found in this area. As West Newton was one of the earlier areas of the city to develop, building and development lots tend to be smaller than those found in other parts of the city.

| USE CATEGORY | PARCEL COUNT | BUILDING SQ. FOOTAGE (TOTAL) | PARCEL AREA (MEAN) | BUILDING SQ. FOOTAGE (MEAN) | SETBACK (MEAN) | STORIES (MODE) |
|------------------|--------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| RESIDENTIAL | 2,682 | 9,676,471 SF | 7,786 SF | 3,335 SF | 23' | 2.0 |
| SINGLE FAMILY | 2,039 | 6,633,566 SF | 7,691 SF | 3,119 SF | 24' | 2.0 |
| TWO FAMILY | 460 | 2,024,801 SF | 7,571 SF | 4,321 SF | 21' | 2.0 |
| THREE FAMILY | 26 | 152,804 SF | 10,969 SF | 5,744 SF | 25' | 2.0 |
| CONDOMINIUM | 131 | 378,163 SF | 9,479 SF | 2,624 SF | 24' | 2.0 |
| APARTMENT (4-8) | 10 | 73,855 SF | 13,544 SF | 7,265 SF | 16' | --- |
| APARTMENT (9-99) | 11 | 374,673 SF | 49,707 SF | 28,430 SF | 27' | --- |
| COMMERCIAL | 81 | 828,983 SF | 13,265 SF | 5,806 SF | 13' | --- |
| RETAIL | 21 | 231,415 SF | 11,715 SF | 9,564 SF | 3.5' | --- |
| MIXED USE | 23 | 128,177 SF | 9,502 SF | 4,865 SF | 20' | 2.0 |
| INDUST./MANUF. | 34 | 358,098 SF | 21,364 SF | 8,465 SF | 24' | --- |
| CIVIC/INSTIT. | 101 | 667,389 SF | 8,891 SF | 3,296 SF | 20' | 1.5 |

Total Development Square Footage by Land Use



Total Residential Development Square Footage by Building Type



3. Village-based Areas

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Village-Based Areas

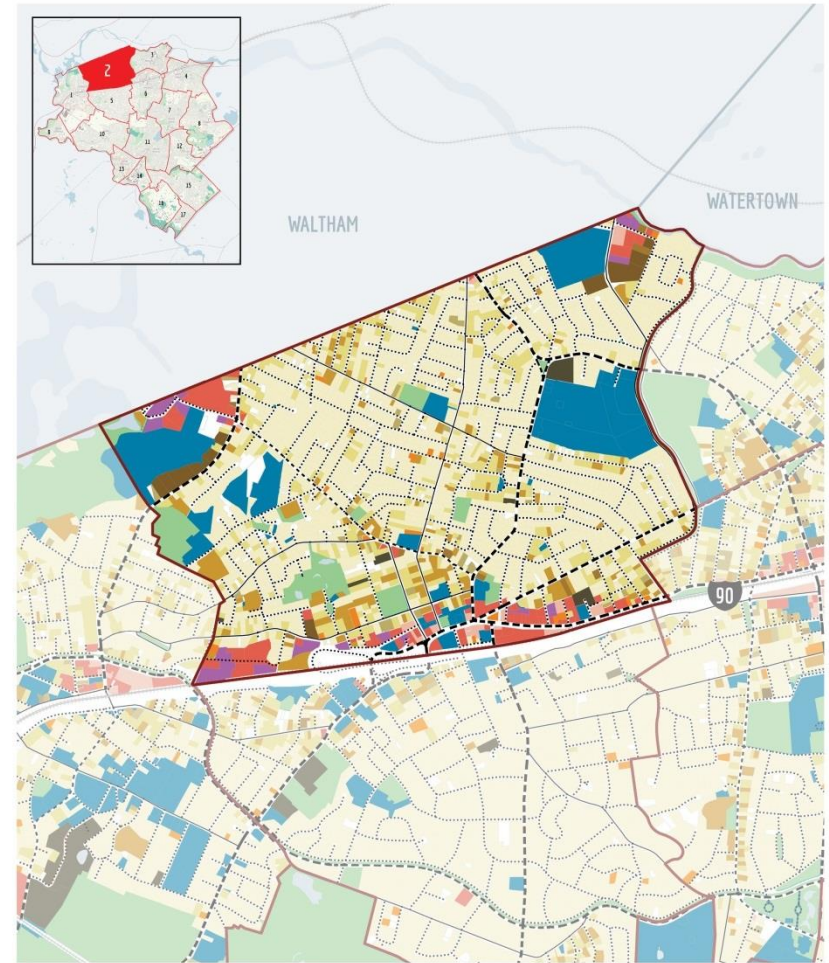
2. West Newton Area

Average Development Form Metrics by Street Type

The West Newton area includes at least one of each major street type—arterial, major collector, minor collector, and local. As is the case with many of Newton's village centers, the West Newton village center developed at the confluence of several major roadways, including Washington Street, Watertown Street, and Waltham Street. As is typical, the greatest development density is clustered within this village

center, with most of the lower density residential products distributed along minor collector and local streets to the north of the West Newton village center. As shown in the table below, dimensional patterns can be seen with respect to the various uses and building types that have built up along each street type within this area.

| USE CATEGORY | ARTERIAL ROAD | | | | MAJOR COLLECTOR STREET | | | | MINOR COLLECTOR STREET | | | | LOCAL STREET | | | |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | GSF MEAN | PARCEL AREA MEAN | STORIES MODE | SETBACK MEAN | GSF MEAN | PARCEL AREA MEAN | STORIES MODE | SETBACK MEAN | GSF MEAN | PARCEL AREA MEAN | STORIES MODE | SETBACK MEAN | GSF MEAN | PARCEL AREA MEAN | STORIES MODE | SETBACK MEAN |
| RESIDENTIAL | 3,832 | 9,083 | 2.0 | 25' | 3,081 | 7,985 | 2.0 | 21' | 3,444 | 8,436 | 2.0 | 22' | 3,264 | 7,535 | 2.0 | 23' |
| SINGLE FAMILY | 3,515 | --- | 2.0 | 25' | 2,774 | 8,681 | 2.0 | 23' | 3,058 | 8,756 | 2.0 | 22' | 3,310 | 8,025 | 2.0 | 24' |
| TWO FAMILY | 4,586 | 8,481 | 2.0 | 23' | 4,109 | 9,185 | 2.0 | 17' | 4,394 | 9,236 | 2.0 | 20' | 4,278 | 7,744 | 2.0 | 21' |
| THREE FAMILY | 6,573 | 15,306 | 2.5 | 33' | 5,279 | 14,402 | 2.5 | 39' | 6,268 | 12,301 | 2.0 | 27' | 4,951 | 8,337 | 2.5 | 18' |
| CONDOMINIUM | 2,828 | 12,940 | 2.5 | 26' | 2,142 | 9,127 | 2.0 | 17' | 3,091 | 10,748 | 2.5 | 24' | 2,385 | 14,521 | 2.0 | 25' |
| APARTMENT (4-8) | 7,447 | 14,091 | --- | 34' | 10,412 | 13,444 | 1.5 | 8' | 3,643 | 8,542 | 2.0 | 2.5' | 6,762 | 16,690 | --- | 14' |
| APARTMENT (9-99) | 23,329 | 44,752 | --- | 24' | --- | --- | --- | --- | 63,064 | 87,743 | --- | 25' | 22,755 | 37,752 | 2.0 | 59' |
| COMMERCIAL | 6,008 | 11,489 | --- | 13' | 3,092 | 11,701 | --- | 10' | 9,122 | 16,486 | --- | 32' | 5,873 | 18,249 | --- | 11' |
| RETAIL | 780 | 9,547 | --- | 1.5' | --- | --- | --- | --- | 780 | 18,225 | --- | 9' | 780 | 14,288 | --- | 13' |
| MIXED USE | 6,900 | 9,846 | 1.0 | 15' | 5,691 | 6,921 | --- | 6' | 5,958 | 11,919 | 1.5 | 29' | 4,093 | 11,165 | 2.0 | 26' |
| INDUST./MANUF. | 4,450 | 25,608 | --- | 47' | --- | --- | --- | --- | 9,360 | 51,060 | --- | 41' | 13,122 | 26,335 | --- | 17' |
| CIVIC/INSTIT. | 10,003 | 56,084 | --- | 24' | --- | --- | --- | --- | 8,700 | 140,087 | --- | 43' | 425 | 13,552 | --- | 3.5' |



Washington Street in West Newton (2016)



Washington Street in West Newton (1920's)

A blurred background image of a red wooden fence in a rural setting. The fence is made of three horizontal rails and a vertical post. In the background, there is a white house with a blue roof, surrounded by green trees and a clear sky. The overall scene is out of focus, creating a soft, dreamy atmosphere.

Next Steps

Newton Zoning Reform

Next Steps in Public Engagement

PHASE 5: Pattern Book

- Ongoing Online Engagement – coUrbanize + Sign Campaign
- Draft Pattern Book Review with ZAP (April)
- 2nd Pattern Book Open House (late April/early May)
- Revisit Focus Groups (May-June)
- Draft Pattern Book Review with City Council (May)

PHASES 6 & 7: Draft Zoning Ordinance

- Public Presentation (June)
- Draft Ordinance Focus Groups (June-July)
- Draft Ordinance Review with ZAP & P&D (August/September)
- Ward Meetings & Subject Specific Meetings (early September)
- Draft Ordinance Presentation to City Council (early September)
- Public Presentation (October)