

Meeting 4  
Land Use &  
Economic Development

**Needham Street Area  
Vision Plan**



Community Engagement Group  
February 12, 2018

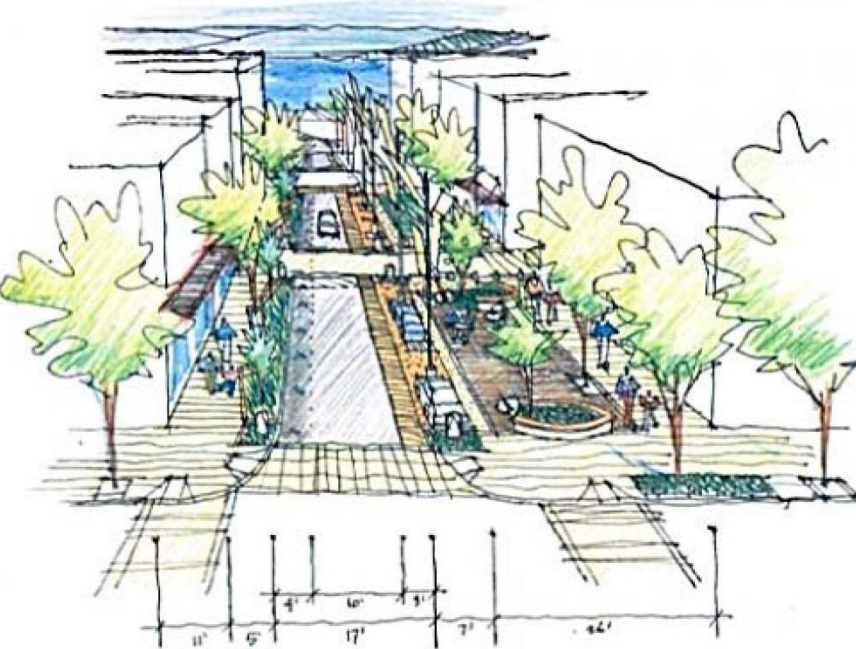
# Meeting goals

*Community Engagement Group discusses a sense of identity of the Needham Street Corridor; recognizes and evaluates current and future land use challenges and opportunities to inform City of Newton Planning Team.*

# Agenda

- Welcome
- Engagement Group's Vision Statements
- Land Use Existing Conditions
- Land Use Evaluation
- Guest: Camoin Associates, author of the *N2 Innovation Corridor*
- Public Comment

# Needham Street Corridor Visions



# Needham Street Corridor Visions



Washington D.C.



Greenville, SC

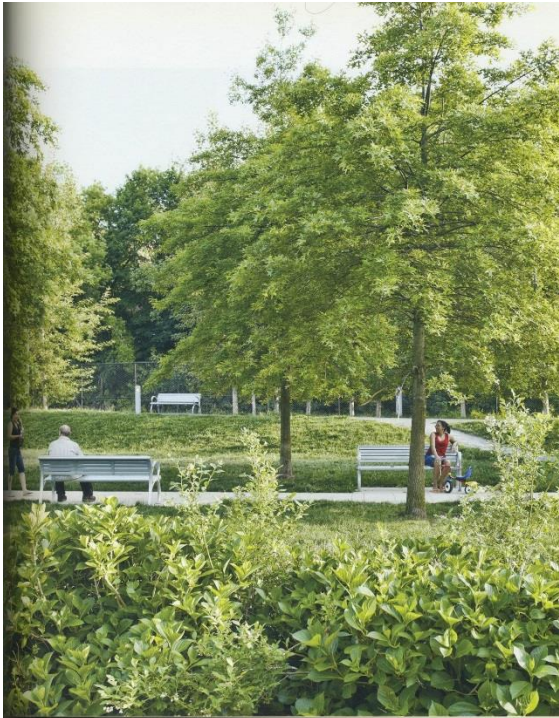


New York

# Needham Street Corridor Visions



Central Wharf Plaza – Boston, MA



Edward Leathers Community Park – Somerville, MA

# Needham Street Corridor Visions

Assembly Row- Somerville, MA

Bethesda Row-Bethesda, MD



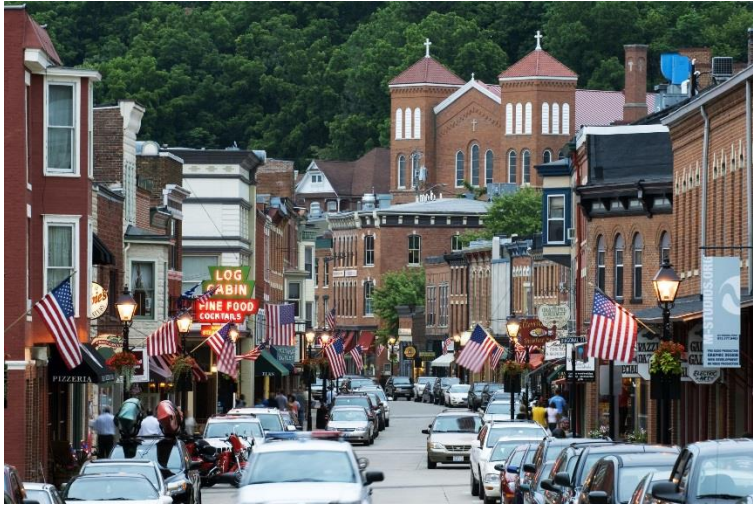
Vanderbilt Ave – Brooklyn, NY

# Needham Street Corridor Visions





# Needham Street Corridor Visions



# Needham Street Corridor Visions



Grafton St – Dublin, Ireland

# Needham Street Corridor Visions



# Needham Street Corridor Visions



# Needham Street Corridor Visions



Grand Avenue – St. Paul, MN

# Needham Street Corridor Visions



Pisa, Italy

# Needham Street Corridor Visions

Contextually appropriate new transit-oriented development, buildings 2-4 stories, mixed use commercial, office, and residential



Pleasant pedestrian streetscapes with human-scaled buildings, minimal front and side setbacks



The industrial district could be transformed into a walkable mixed-use center anchored by a new park.



# Needham Street Corridor Visions



Rob Ketcherside

**Broadway Avenue in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.**



# Needham Street Corridor Visions



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# Needham Street Corridor Visions

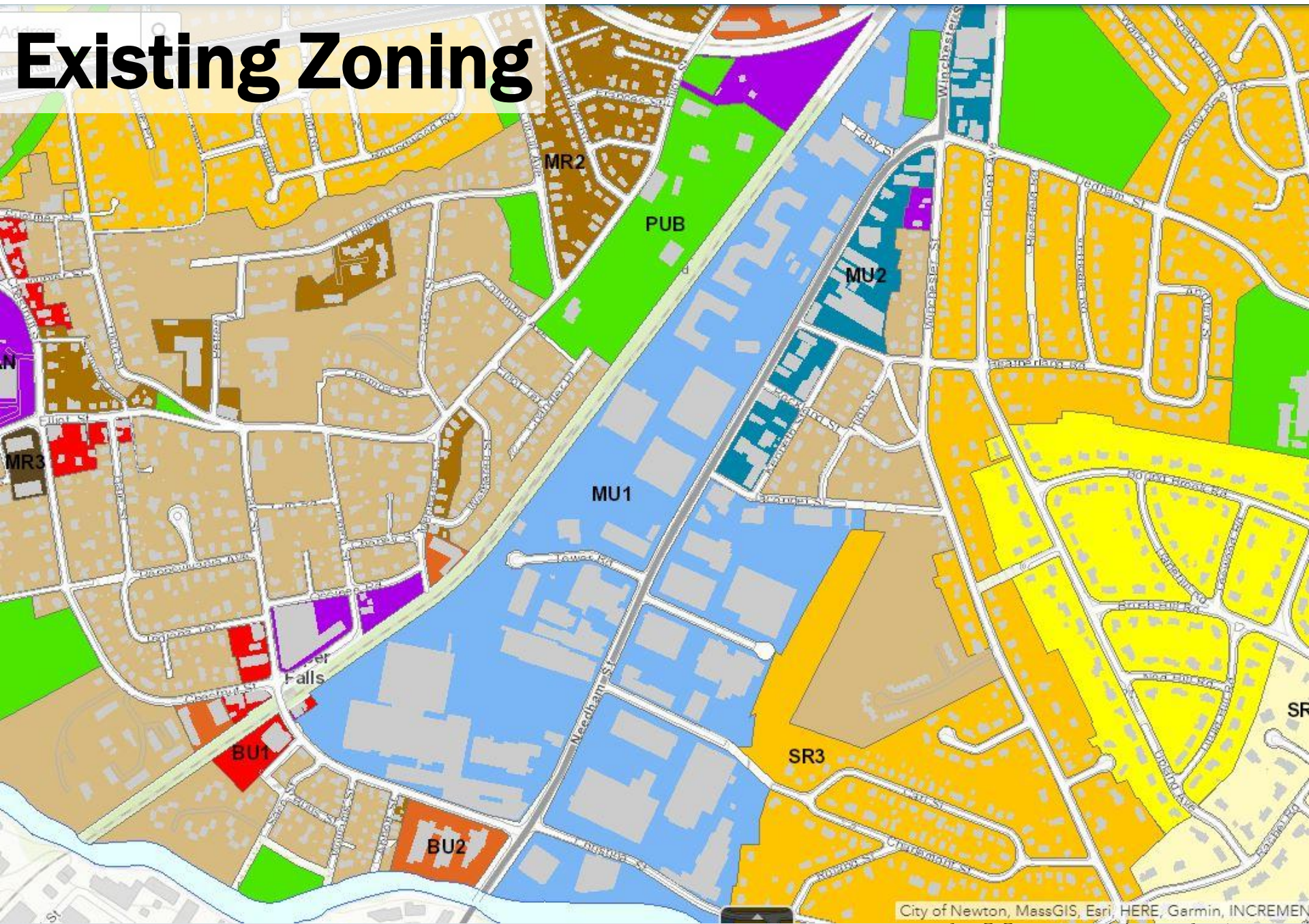


**Senior Center**



**Eco-Friendly High Rise**

# Existing Zoning



# Existing Zoning

## Mixed Use 1

### Allowed:

- Residential\*
- Cemetery\*
- Schools
- Animal Boarding\*
- Bank\*
- Dry Cleaner\*
- Health Club
- Office
- Retail >5k sq. ft.\*
- Restaurant\*
- Storage\*
- Agriculture\*
- Lab & Research
- Manufacturing
- Vehicle sales
- Adult business\*
- Keno\*
- Medical Marijuana\*

### Not Allowed:

- Single family homes
- Live/work
- Community Space
- Library or Museum
- Theatre, hall
- Bowling Alley
- Car share/rental
- Bike rental
- Fast food
- Hotel
- Broadcasting Studio
- Retail <5k sq. ft.
- Building Material
- Sale & Storage

**\*Requires Special Permit**



# Existing Zoning

## Mixed Use 2

### Allowed:

- Residential\*
- Cemetery\*
- Schools
- Library or Museum
- Theatre, hall
- Animal Boarding\*
- Bank
- Dry Cleaner
- Health Club
- Office
- Retail >5k sq. ft.
- Retail <5k sq. ft.
- Restaurant\*
- Hotel\*
- Agriculture\*
- Lab & Research
- Manufacturing
- Vehicle sales

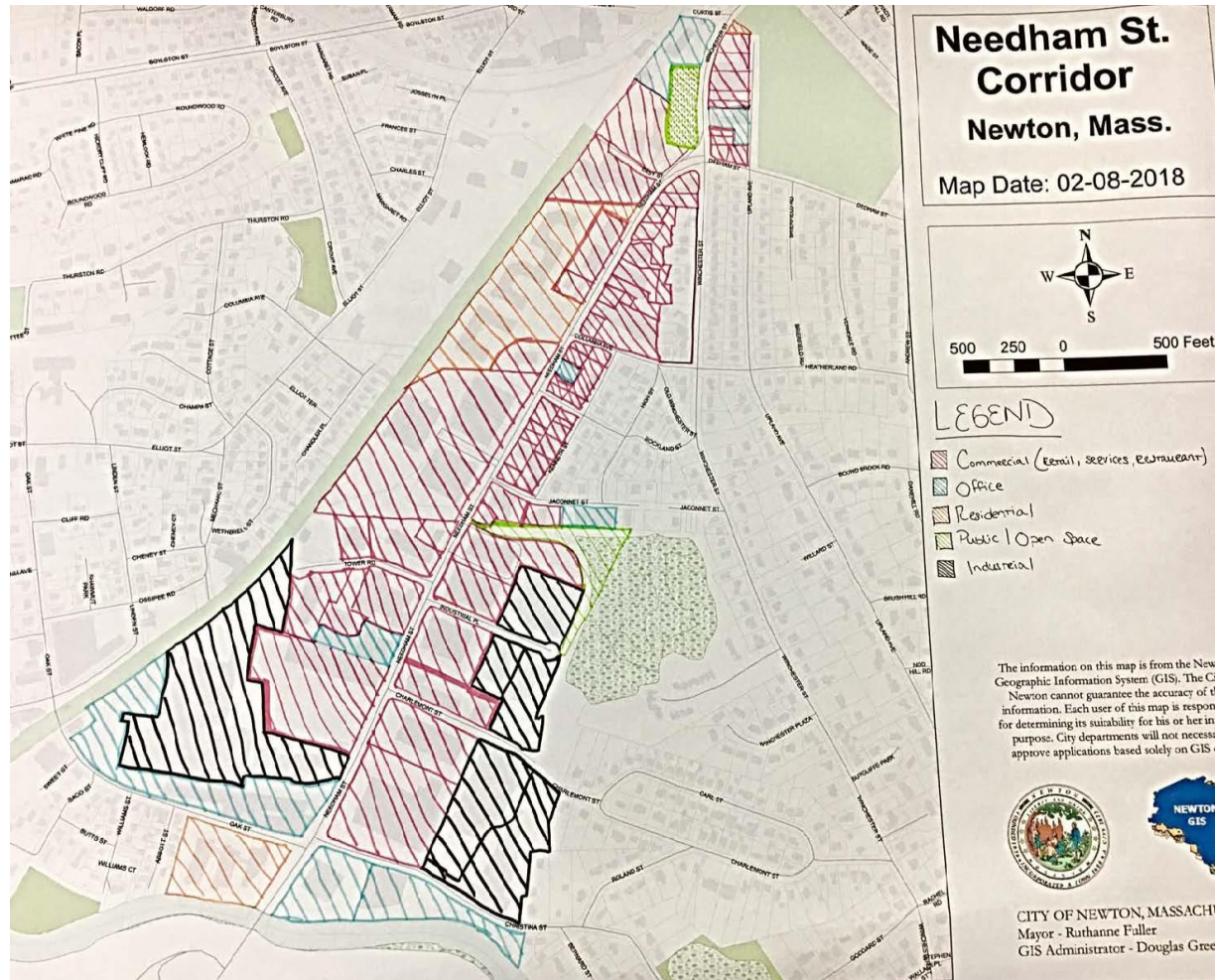
### Not Allowed:

- Single family homes
- Live/work
- Community Space
- Bowling Alley
- Car share/rental
- Bike rental
- EV charging station
- Fast food
- Hotel
- Building Material
- Sale & Storage
- Storage
- Adult Business
- Medical Marijuana

*\*Requires Special Permit*



# Existing Uses



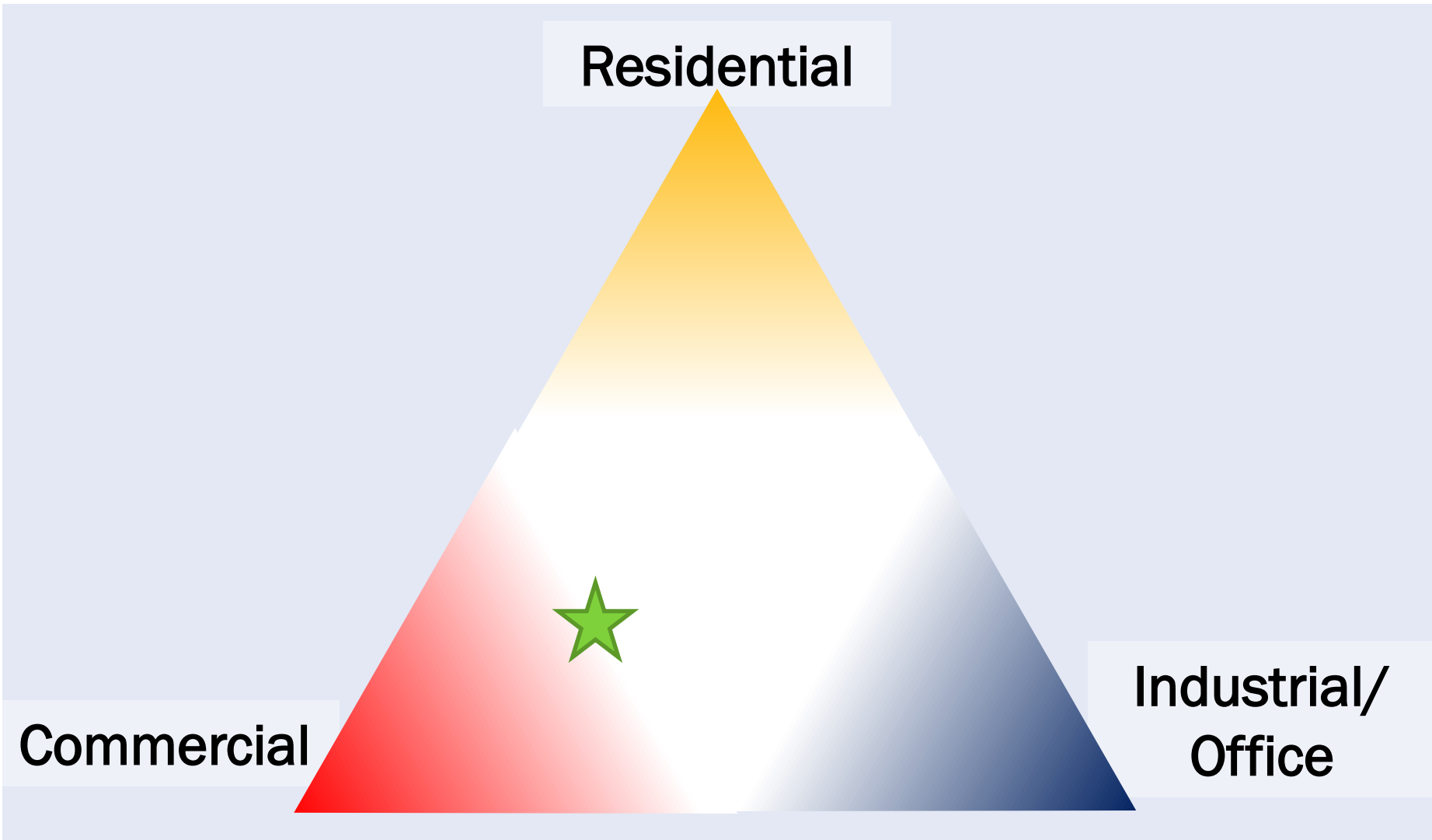
# Needham Street

## Wireless Undergrounding

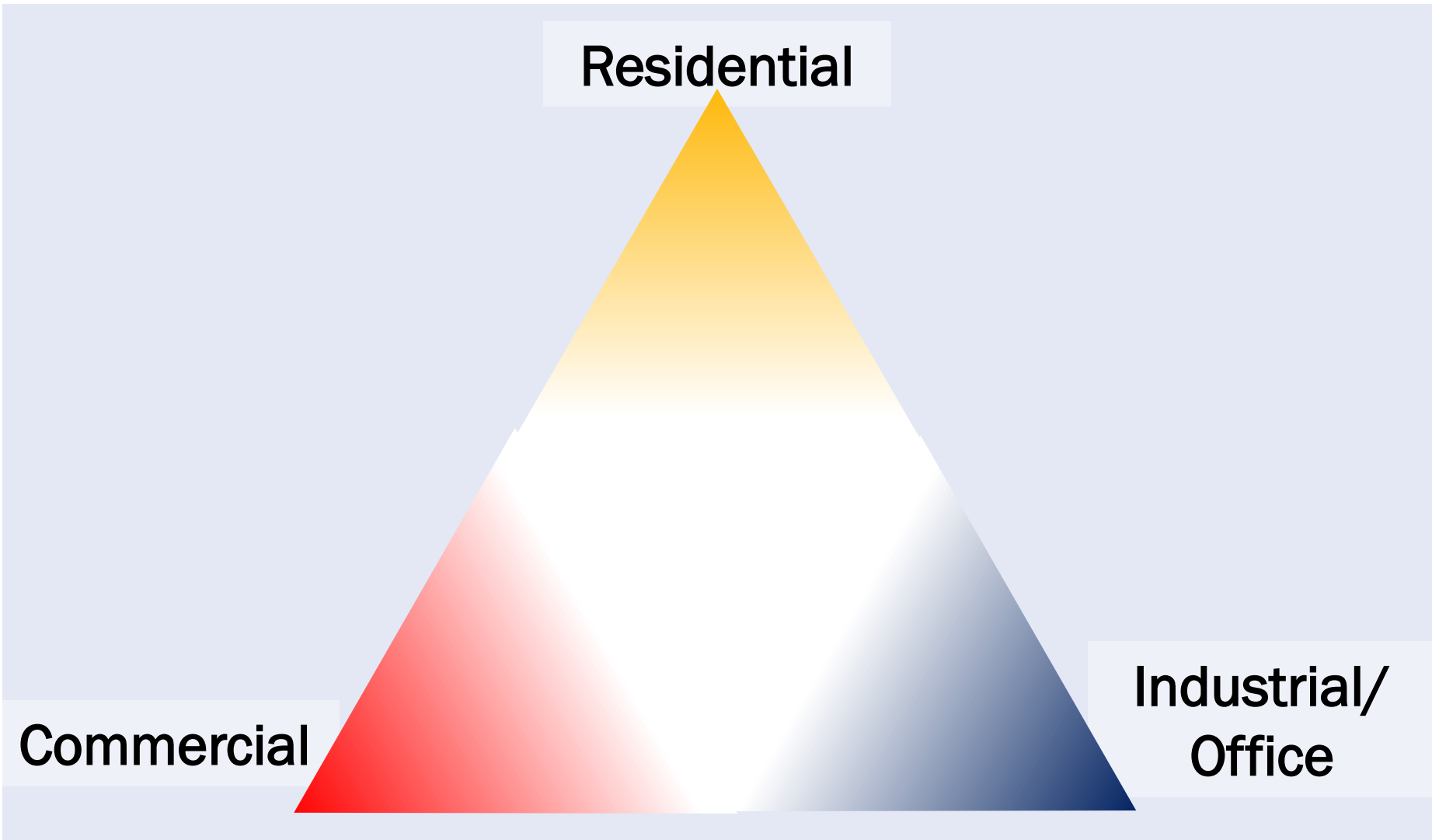
- Staff reviewed past special permits for developments in Needham Street area:
  - None include money for undergrounding study
  - Some include ability for City or State to petition for funds to underground a portion (~ ¼ mile) if/when commencing undergrounding *with sufficient funding in place*
- City of Newton Utilities Division: **estimated construction cost \$22 million (2014)**
  - Does not include cost of engineering design, project coordination, or legal services (approx. + 10-30%)
- **Cost to each commercial property owner (estimated \$25,000+ dependent on site)**
- Formal agreement needed from each property owner
- Agreement and participation needed from each utility company
  - National Grid, Verizon, Comcast, RCN, Eversource (regional and local), City Fire
- City must pass ordinance under MGL c.166, sections 22A-22N
  - Wait 9 – 21 months to enact after adoption
- Utility customers would experience surcharge to supplement costs
- City would be responsible for any necessary changes to water/sewer lines
- Underground utilities are more difficult to maintain, may be longer repair times
- **Future development projects could underground each site or pay into fund**



# Land Use Mix – Existing



# Land Use Mix – Proposed



**What Would You Like  
to See on Needham  
Street?**

# Mapping Needham Street

- What uses would you like to see along the Needham Street corridor?
- Draw districts and/or write notes on the map with the overall use and specific uses you would like to see or would not like to see
- Be as specific as you'd like
  - Examples: *grocery store, community center, bowling alley, microbrewery, research and development, live/work, medium density residential*
- Tools provided:
  - 5-minute walk bars
  - Other locations for scale: Newton Highlands, Newton Centre, and Newtonville
  - Trace paper

# City of Newton

## Needham Street Vision



Jim Damicis  
Rachel Selsky  
Tom Dworetsky

Chris Forinash  
Alyson Fletcher



Presented on: February 12, 2018

# Agenda

- I. Introductions
- II. Project overview
- III. Economic context
- IV. Market opportunities



# Project Overview

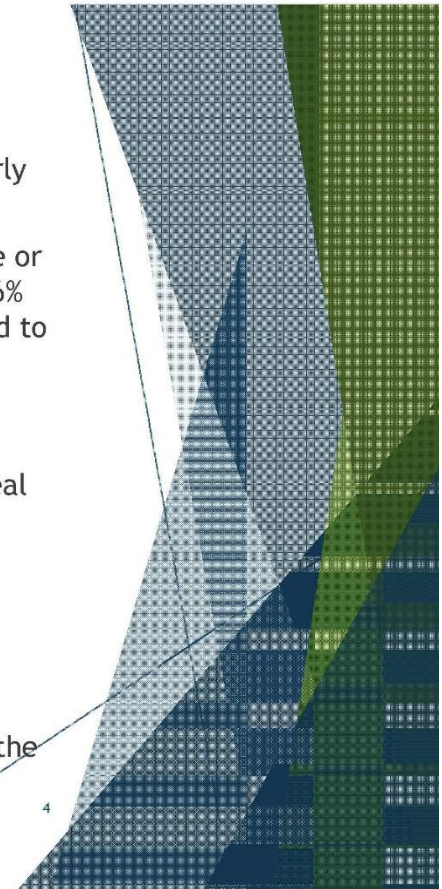


- Task 1. Project Initiation
- Task 2. Communications and Engagement
- Task 3. Existing Economy Report
- Task 4. Existing Economic Report Public Meeting
- Task 5. Strategy Development
- Task 6. Strategy Refinement and Public Meeting
- Task 7. Final Strategy Development
- Task 8. Final Public Meeting



# Economic Context

- ▶ **Population:** Recent growth and projected to continue to see growth - nearly 90,000 in 2016.
- ▶ **Demographics:** High education level with 50% of residents having graduate or professional degree. 21% of the population is foreign born, compared to 16% of Boston, and 13% in the US; High Income \$130K median income compared to \$79K Boston, \$56K US
- ▶ **Industry Base:** 10 largest industries in Newton include mix of education related, local services, health care, and professional and technical (IT). Growth driven by social assistance and IT. High concentrations in Educ, Real Estate, Arts/Enter, Healthcare/Soc, and Prof/Tech.
- ▶ **Occupations:** Concentrated in higher ed, health, services, and IT
- ▶ **Tax base:** Residential accounts for over 82% of city's assessed value. Compared to its 7 neighbors, Newton has second lowest share of commercial/industrial property.
- ▶ **Transportation** - A high percentage of Newtonians drive to work. City has the highest share of telecommuting compared to peers.





# Market Opportunities

- ▶ **Office:** Overall vacancy rates have increased slightly to 16% as of Q3 2017. Office space concentrated in Newton Corner, Newton Centre, Wells Ave
  - ▶ Demand driven by life science and tech priced out of urban market
  - ▶ Repositioning of aging properties. Mixed-use/TOD properties in demand
- ▶ **Lab Space:** No significant lab space in Newton (i.e. as tracked by commercial brokerages).
  - ▶ Greater Boston - largest concentration of life sciences researchers in US
  - ▶ Core suburbs becoming increasingly attractive as a “release valve”
- ▶ **Industrial:** Strong industrial space demand regionally. Land availability and high land values in Newton limit development opportunities
- ▶ **Retail:** Solid demand regionally due to high-wage job growth. Growth of ecommerce continues to impact dated, lower-quality space
- ▶ **National/Regional Trends:** High amenity developments, connectivity, “surban”

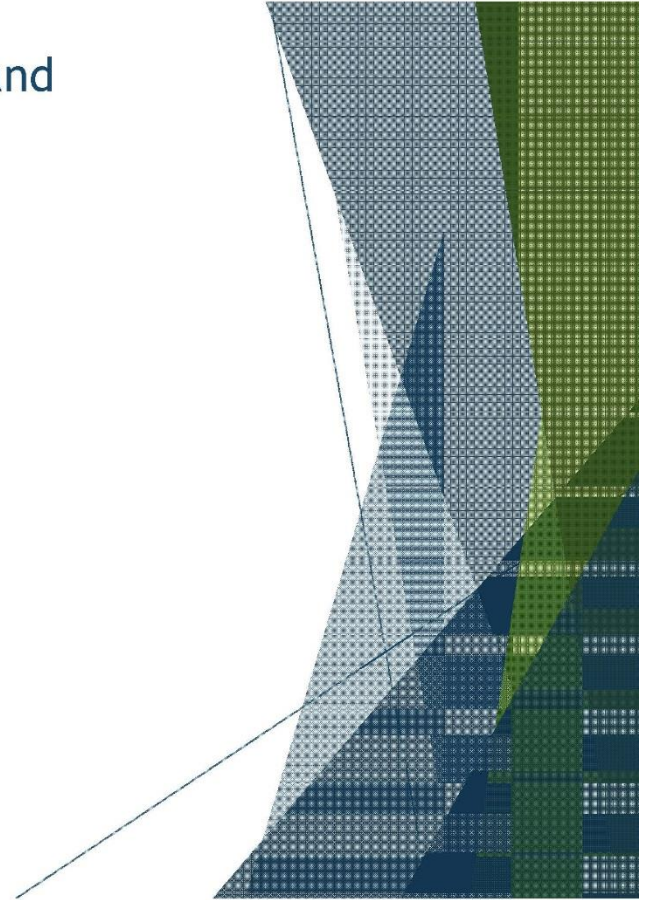
# Emerging Trends in Economic Development

- The Tech of Everything
- Opportunities at the at the cross-sections of industry sectors
- Workforce, Workforce, Workforce! - Talent
- Place-based economic development - high amenities and connections; mixed-use, entertainment and food, neighborhood feel
- Importance of Ecosystems - entrepreneurs and innovation but also economic development, local governments, neighborhoods, education, etc....



## Opportunities and Challenges for Newton and Needham Street

- ▶ Robust regional growth
- ▶ Talent - regionally and locally
- ▶ Tight real estate market
- ▶ Innovation Corridor within and Innovative Region
- ▶ Transportation issues
- ▶ Land use and urban design
- ▶ Available space (building and land)
- ▶ Housing - limited workforce options
- ▶ Name recognition and perception



# Questions



# Upcoming Meetings

- March 12, 2018 – Overall Design and Building Considerations
- March 26, 2018 – Fiscal and Other Considerations
- April 5, 2018 – Synthesis of Engagement Group Feedback
- April 23, 2018 – Public Meeting to Present Group Feedback
- April 30, 2018 – Recap of Public Meeting/ What Happens Next