

**Meeting 6**  
**Policy Considerations**  
***Realizing City Goals***

**Needham Street Area**  
**Vision Plan**



Community Engagement Group  
March 26, 2018

# Meeting Goals

**The Community Engagement Group learns how the City evaluates projects from a policy standpoint and provides feedback on policy objectives to the City of Newton Planning Team.**

# **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 1. Fiscal impact**
- 2. Housing affordability and choice**
- 3. Business-friendly climate**
- 4. Community vitality and identity**
- 5. Climate change resilience**

# **1. FISCAL IMPACT**

# Fiscal Impact Analysis

**Fiscal impact analysis is a tool that compares, for a given project or policy change, changes in governmental costs against changes in governmental revenues**

**So that the City can plan for the future.**

# Fiscal costs and revenues from new development

New development in the city may mean more services and facilities:

- Fire and police protection
- Libraries
- Schools
- Parks
- Trash
- Water, sewer
- And others

The City will receive new revenues from development:

- Property tax revenue
- Local sales tax revenue
- Meals and hotel taxes revenue
- Other taxes and fees

**Marginal & Average  
Costs and Revenues**

# Primer on School Impact

- 1. How does NPS project enrollment?**
- 2. How does NPS manage enrollment shifts and changes?**
- 3. How are financial impacts evaluated from a facility capacity perspective?**
- 4. How are financial impacts on regular school operations evaluated?**

# Enrollment Projections

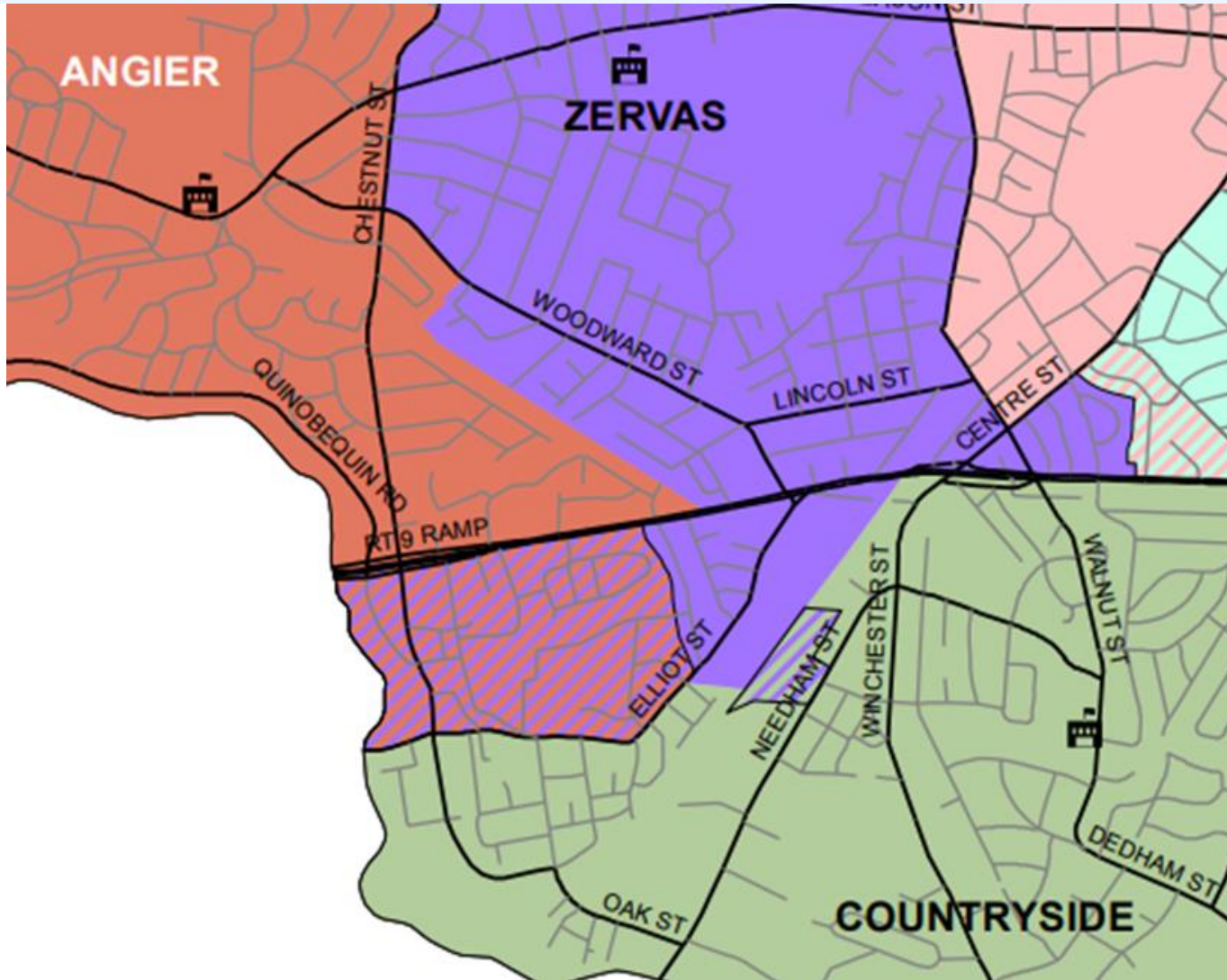
- Annual 5-year enrollment projections
- Use the ‘cohort survival methodology’
- Projections have good accuracy
- Potential enrollment from residential development is added when projects have building permits
- Estimates of potential students from new developments are based on experience ratios at other large residential developments in Newton



# School Boundaries and Buffer zones

- **Student assignment in NPS is based on school districts and buffer zones**
- **Buffer zones are a key tool used to balance enrollment**
  - Residents in buffer zones are assigned to 2 schools and apply to the district for placement
  - Buffer zones are reviewed and adjusted annually
- **All large residential complexes currently are in buffer zones**

# Needham Street Area



# Financial Impact - Facilities

- **Newton's long-range facility plan includes a mid-size renovation at Countryside in the next 5-8 years**
  - **Not currently expected to add classrooms**
- **Incremental constructions costs associated with a school with 24 classrooms versus 20 classrooms**
- **Size of building impacts whether a renovation/addition remains feasible (versus a new building)**

# Newton's Long-Range Facilities Plan

School		Angier (MSBA) 1919	Zervas 1954	Cabot (MSBA) 1929	Lincoln- Eliot & PreK (MSBA) 150 Jackson	Ward (MSBA) 1928	Horace Mann 1965	Lincoln- Eliot as Swing Space 1939	Countryside (or Franklin) 1953
FY19	2018-19				Feasibility		Summer 2019: Access (CIP)	Summer 2019: Windows/HVAC (CIP)	
FY20	2019-20			Completed: +4 Classrooms SEP '19	Design		Moves to Carr: +1 Classrooms SEP '19 <b>5</b>	Summer 2020: Windows/HVAC (CIP)	
FY21	2020-21				Construction <b>4</b>	Start MSBA	Use as Second Swing Space	Summer 2021: Windows/HVAC (CIP)	Feasibility (joint)
FY22	2021-22					Feasibility			Design
FY23	2022-23				Completed: +4 Classrooms SEP '22	Design	TBD		Construction <b>6 or 8</b>
FY24	2023-24					Construction <b>7</b>			Completed +0 Classrooms SEP '23

# Financial Impact – Operating Budget

- **Fixed versus variable costs in teaching and learning budgets**
  - Variable costs change due to enrollment
- **It is no longer a 1 to 1 relationship of teachers and classrooms**
- **Classrooms have Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Specialists, ELL, Literacy Intervention, Math Coaching, Social and Emotional Supports**



## **2. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND CHOICE**

# Newton's Residential Housing Market

Newton's housing market is dominated by single family units on very valuable land. Through the ups and downs of the housing market since 2003 Newton has demonstrated extremely strong market desirability and this trend is likely to continue.

## Single Family Home Sales Prices

The median sales price for a single family home in Newton has nearly doubled since 2003. *Source: The Warren Group*

MEDIAN SINGLE FAMILY HOME SELLING PRICE IN THOUSANDS, CITY OF NEWTON 2003-2016

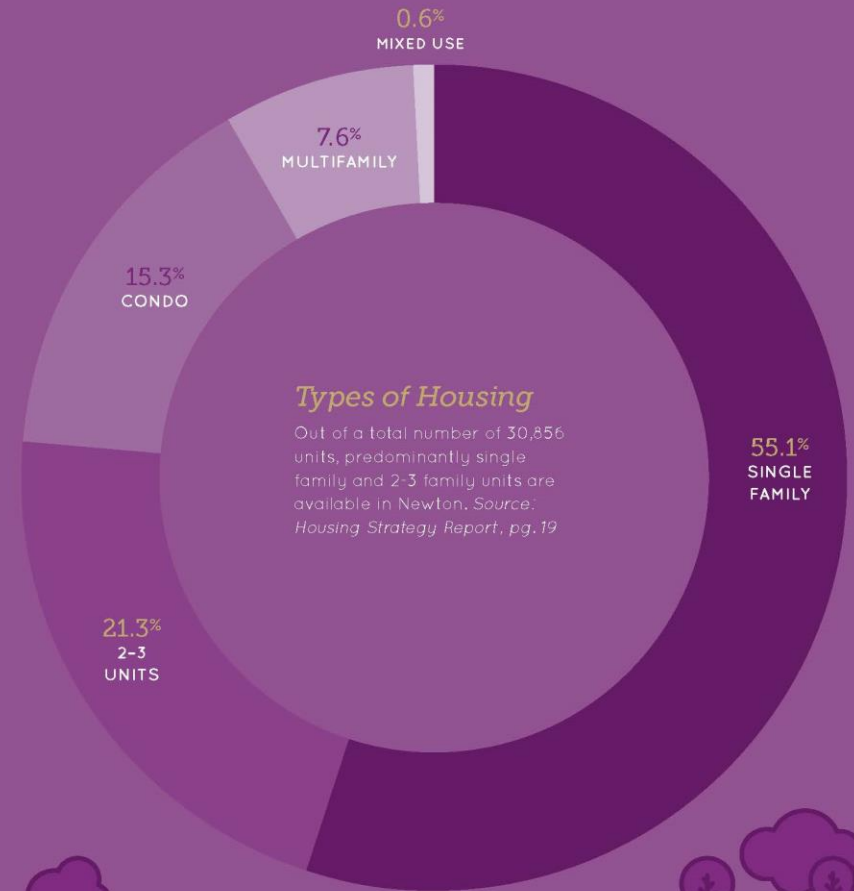


# Newton's Residential Housing Market

Currently there is a lack of housing options in Newton for smaller households and residents that seek to downsize. Demand for high value housing and costs of development in Newton are affecting development patterns.

"Simply put, the scarcity of land in Newton is motivating the development community to maximize the lots they can acquire."

Source: Housing Strategy Report, pg.15



The average value per acre of developable vacant land is **\$1.6 million dollars.**



# Newton's Residential Housing Market

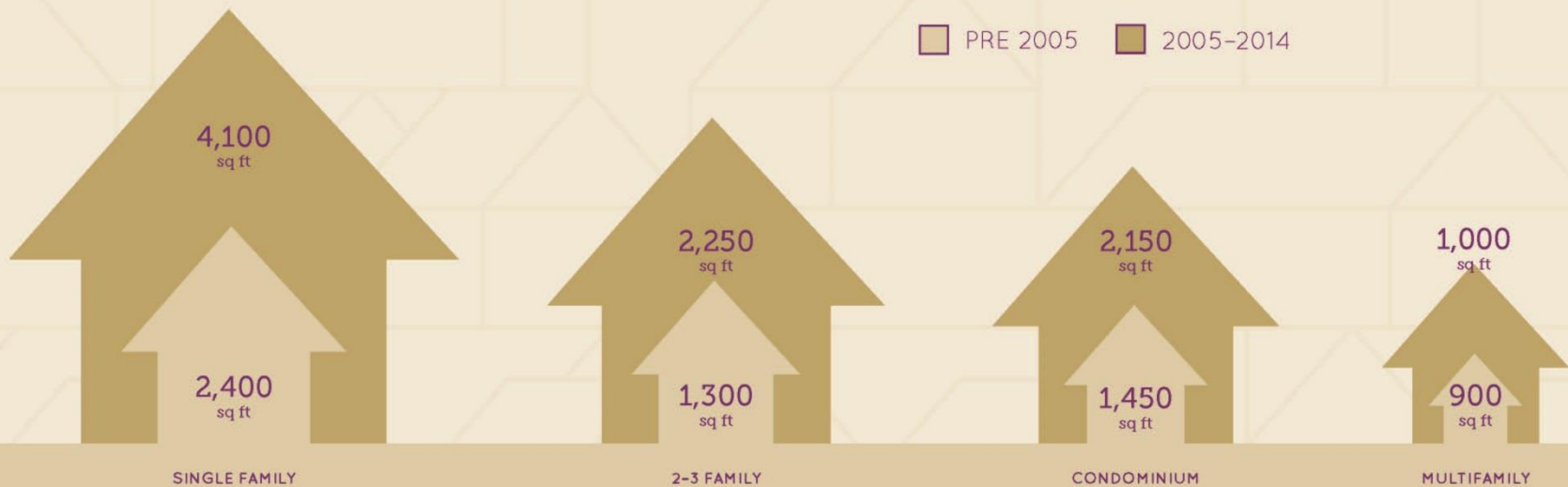
The average housing unit size in Newton has increased dramatically as developers have attempted to maximize the return on very expensive land as allowed by existing zoning. This data is in direct contrast with shrinking household size.

## Housing Unit Size Increases

Housing unit sizes are growing in size.  
Source: RKG Associates, Inc., 2015

AVERAGE LIVING AREA PER UNIT (SQ FT), CITY OF NEWTON

PRE 2005 2005-2014



# Changing Trends in Newton's Residential Housing Market

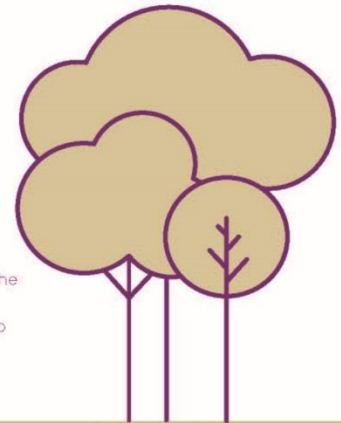
Newton's villages are a core part of the City's identity and one of the defining characteristics of its quality of life. At the same time, these small commercial districts face on-going competition from lower cost shopping centers and online shopping. Their competitive advantage is in their attractiveness as a place to be, their vitality, and their local customer base.

Mixed-use buildings offer the ability to expand housing while retaining storefronts on main streets. The more people living within a short walk of a store or restaurant, the greater the number of potential customers who may view that establishment as their convenient and local option.

Newton's is the Garden City - a mix of suburban villages, residential neighborhoods, and open green spaces. The City is committed to preserving large natural areas and parks as part of this housing strategy. In addition, in the context of high land costs, it is important to create pocket parks, plazas, and similar community spaces as part of creating housing. These types of gathering spaces add strength and quality to our village centers.

## Economic Development: Maintaining the Vitality of Newton's Villages

There is a need to bring more customers to the doorstep of businesses in Newton's villages. Village green spaces encourage customers to stay and enjoy.



### Types of Housing Production

Out of a total number of 1,286 units produced, no mixed use housing units were delivered between 2005 to 2014. Source: Housing Strategy Report, pg.19

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN 2005-2014, CITY OF NEWTON

41.1%

SINGLE FAMILY

23.1%

CONDO

0%

MIXED USE

31.0%

MULTIFAMILY RENTAL

4.7%

2-3 FAMILY RENTAL

## Rental Trends in Newton

Rental apartments generally represent the greatest opportunity for affordable housing. Apartments are frequently the initial choice for young professionals starting their careers, are increasingly the choice of downsizing seniors, and have always represented the primary option available to lower income individuals and families.

Given demographic trends and the City's limited affordable housing options, rental apartments represent the greatest housing need and opportunity. These units should be provided in a range of forms, from accessory apartments to larger apartment buildings, all scaled appropriately to the local context.

There are **only four**  
un-subsidized rental  
units in Newton  
available to a family  
earning \$55,000.

# Making the Case for Housing in Newton

The evidence is clear: without taking action, the state of Newton's housing market will continue on a path of limited diversity. Results from the analysis demonstrate Newton will continue to see larger housing units for fewer people, unaffordability except to the most wealthy of residents, and decreasing options for younger and older Newtonians.

According to Massachusetts law, subsidized affordable housing units should represent 10% of all housing units in Newton. Approximately 800 units need to be built to achieve this goal.

BETWEEN 2000-2013

**+4,200**  
HOUSEHOLDS  
MAKING \$200K  
OR MORE

**-4,700**  
HOUSEHOLDS  
MAKING \$125K  
OR LESS

## Loss of Low and Middle Income Households

Between 2000 and 2013 Newton gained 4,200 households earning \$200,000 or more, while at the same time losing 4,700 households earning \$125,000 or less.

Source: Housing Strategy Report, pg.12

## Number of units in Newton currently on Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)

Source: Newton Consolidated Plan 2016-2021

**800**

ADDITIONAL SUBSIDIZED  
UNITS NEEDED

**10%**

THRESHOLD SET IN MGL  
CHAPTER 40B

**2,438**

CURRENT SUBSIDIZED  
AFFORDABLE UNITS IN  
NEWTON

# **3. BUSINESS-FRIENDLY CLIMATE**

# N2 Innovation District Vision

The N2 Innovation District is home to an increasing number of innovative businesses—new and established, large and small. It features a **mixed-use community** with retail, office space and open space integrated with housing and nearby transit, providing an affordable and desirable place to create, prosper, and adapt to an evolving business climate. The N2 Corridor will become increasingly recognized as a destination for investment by innovation-driven industries and will enhance the quality of life in the Newton-Needham region by providing employment, tax revenues, and educational, entertainment, recreational, and cultural amenities.

# **Role of Municipal Government**

## ***Setting Preconditions for Economic Growth***

- **Regulatory Environment**
- **Transportation**
- **Placemaking**
- **Diverse Housing Choices**

## Setting Preconditions for Economic Growth

## Regulatory Environment

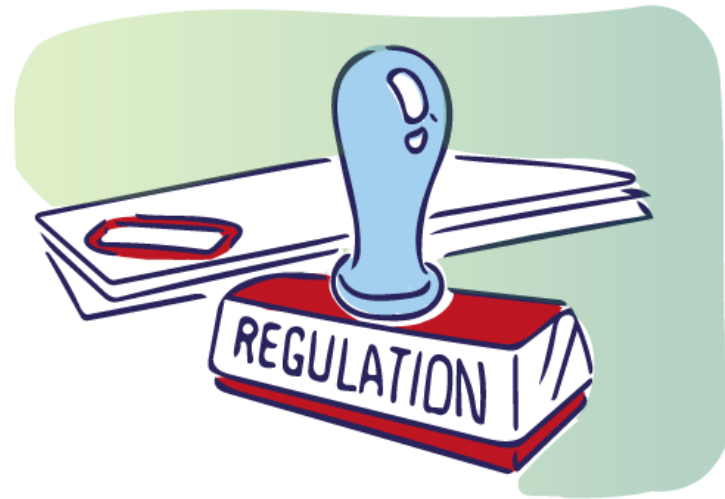
## Transportation

## Placemaking

## Diverse Housing Choices

# Striking the Right Balance

- Regulatory review processes can be costly
- Create proactive policies that make community goals explicit
- Define clear pathway for permitting





## Setting Preconditions for Economic Growth

Regulatory  
Environment

Transportation

Placemaking

Diverse Housing  
Choices

## Safe transportation options are vital for business

- Transportation investment and growth should go hand-in-hand
- Support new transit service
- Continue to enhance bike/walk infrastructure
- Improve interconnectivity – create more options, including more route options



## Setting Preconditions for Economic Growth

Regulatory  
Environment

Transportation

Placemaking

Diverse Housing  
Choices

## Social destinations are essential for innovation

- Good design goes a long way
- Live, work, play are symbiotic
- Community spaces and open spaces complement business environment



## Setting Preconditions for Economic Growth

Regulatory  
Environment

Transportation

Placemaking

## Diverse Housing Choices

## Housing options close to jobs makes it work

- Tech/innovation companies compete for talent
- Diverse housing choices and high quality of life attract talent
- Housing affordability benefits retail and service industries





# **4. COMMUNITY VITALITY AND IDENTITY**

# Guiding Land Use to Enhance Community

**1**

**Contribute to  
sense of place  
and community  
identity**

**2**

**Enhance  
community  
partnerships with  
local services and  
businesses**

**3**

**Provide  
connections to  
surrounding  
neighborhoods  
and transportation**

## **“Sensitivity to place and openness to creativity:**

*Both rules and practices should assure that the special characteristics of locations are respected in development without stifling creativity and individual choice. At the very least, new development should not damage the valued qualities of that which exists in the vicinity. Guidance materials and practices must protect these special characteristics...”*

- City of Newton’s Comprehensive Plan





Promote connections  
to the Greenway, the T,  
the neighborhoods...



# NEEDHAM STREET AREA VISION PLAN

*“We should provide a clear statement of intentions and goals for the City as a whole and for each of our neighborhoods, village centers, and other places so that proposals and actions can be measured against them.” – City of Newton’s Comprehensive Plan*



Vibrant place at all  
times of the day with  
a mix of uses





# **5. CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE**

**Climate Mitigation**  
(reduce contributions to climate change)

**Climate Adaptation**  
(plan for the 'future climate')

**Carbon Emissions in Building Design**

**Carbon Emissions in Transportation**

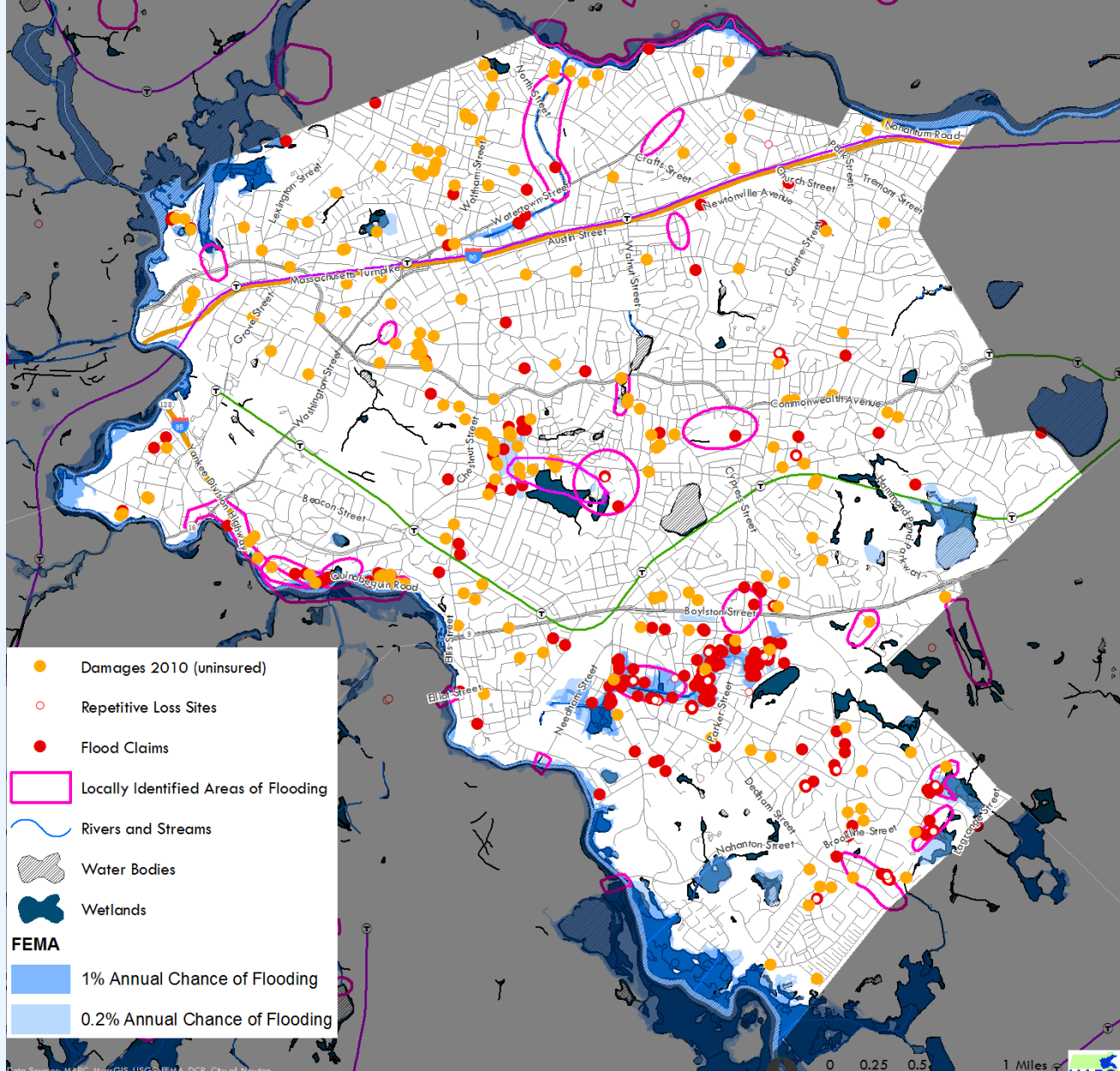
**Heat Island Effect**

**Stormwater Management**

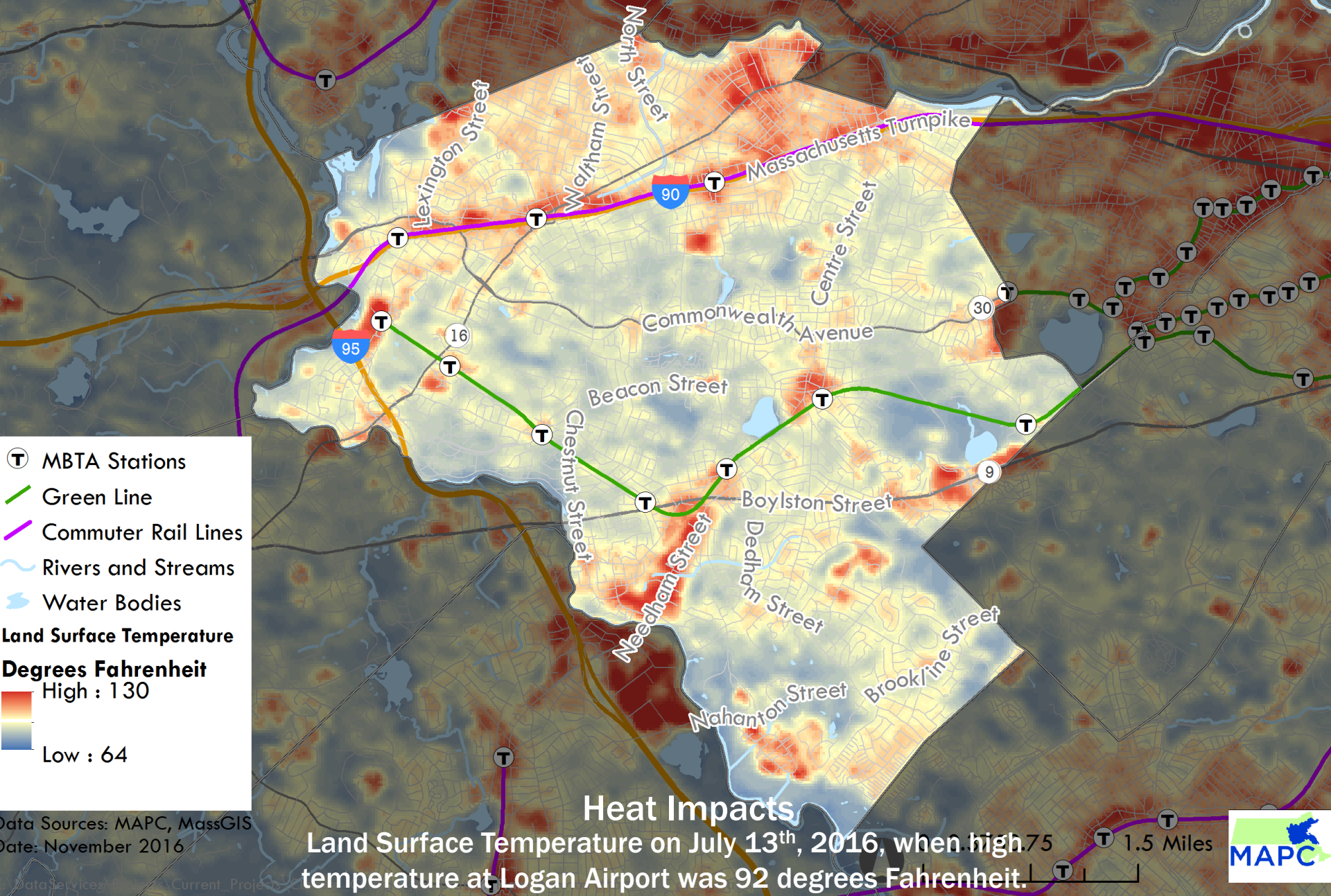
**Natural Resource Protection**



**Tree Canopy and Plantable Areas**



# Flooding



- Medical Facilities
- Affordable Housing
- Shelters
- ▨ Hot Spots\*
- ▨ 1% Annual Chance of Flooding
- ▨ 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding
- Water Bodies
- Environmental Justice 2010 Populations
- Open Space



The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analyses.

Produced by:  
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Data Sources:  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)  
Esri/DeLorme Geographic Information System (MapInfo)  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)  
Census 2010  
FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer

March 2017

\*Hot Spots represent the hottest 5% of land surface area in the MAPC region.

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

# Temperature Hot Spots and Critical Facilities

# 5. Climate Change Resilience

	<b>Climate Mitigation</b> (reduce contributions to climate change)	<b>Climate Adaptation</b> (plan for the 'future climate')
Carbon Emissions in Building Design	Be Energy Efficient & Build Renewables Production	Make critical systems storm-ready
Carbon Emissions in Transportation	Reduce dependence on automobiles	Make walking, biking, and transit easier and add EV charging
Heat Island Effect	Limit paved surfaces	Add tree cover and native landscaping
Stormwater Management	Conserve Water Resources	Capture and clean stormwater
Natural Resource Protection	Promote Awareness of Natural Features in the Neighborhood	Invest in open space enhancement

# **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 1. Fiscal impact**
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- 5. Climate change resilience**



# **Group Discussion**

# Vision Plan Outline Update

## I. Executive Summary

*Vision = 2040*

*Short-term Actions = goals for accomplishments by 2025*

## II. Purpose of the Vision Plan

- *Summarize the reasons this plan is being done now.*
- *Include a listing and summary of previous plans.*
- *Sidebar on accomplishments from the past plans*

## III. Community Participation: Needham Street Area Vision Plan Engagement Group

- *Purpose (from Charter)*
- *Forming the Group*
  - i. Outreach*
    - I. Outreach methods*
    - II. Map of area*
  - ii. Group composition*
  - iii. Charter and Operating Protocols*
- *Engagement Group Input*
  - i. What we heard*
  - ii. MassDOT Plan & group feedback*
  - iii. Methods and Results of Group Work*
    - I. Individual Homework*
    - II. Group Work during meetings*
    - III. Public Meeting and Comments*
  - iv. Ongoing Community Engagement – recommendations for implementing the vision plan and review of future development*

# Vision Plan Outline Update

## IV. Vision Statement

- *Overall Statement*
- *Vision for Public Realm Statement*
- *Vision for Transportation Statement*
- *Vision for Land Use Statement*
- *Vision for Design Statement*
- *Vision for Implementation Statement*
  
- *Key Words*
  - i. *Quality of Life*
  - ii. *Innovation Economy*
  - iii. *Identity*
  - iv. *Mixed Use*
  - v. *Commercial Corridor*
  - vi. *Vibrant 18-hours a day*
  - vii. *Highlight Unique Geographic Features*
  - viii. *Connected*
  - ix. *All Age Friendly*
  - x. ...

# Vision Plan Outline Update

## V. A Vision for the Public Realm

- Natural Features
  - i. Showcasing South Meadow Brook
  - ii. Connecting to the Charles River
  - iii. Extending the Greenway
- Great Strolling (Streets & Squares)
  - i. Needham Street
    - Long standing challenges to the streetscape along Needham street
    - Commercial front yards
  - ii. Public Plazas
  - iii. Outdoor dining
  - iv. Street design with comfort in mind: Lighting & furniture & landscaping
- Short Term Actions and Priorities for 2025

## VI. A Vision for Transportation

- Connected Network
- Efficient and Shared Parking

## VII. A Vision for Land Uses

## VIII. A Vision for Design

## IX. A Vision for Implementation

## X. Synthesis Map

## APPENDICIES:

# April 23<sup>rd</sup> Public Forum Discussion

- What ideas do you have?
- What would be a successful event for your neighbors and community?
- How do you want to be involved?

## Our ideas:

- Potential open house format
- Stations by topic
- Planning for community engagement in future

# Public Comment