

The Need for Affordable Home Ownership Opportunities in Newton

In 2000, Newton had 31,201 households, containing approximately 83,000 people. Despite an average single family house price of \$725,000, Newton only has 26 permanently affordable ownership units. Whose needs are not being met? ¹

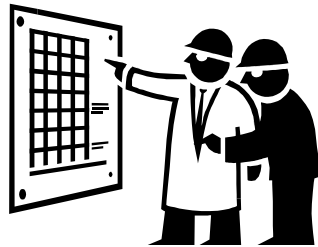
Municipal Employees

With an average Newton single family home price of \$725,000, many municipal employees are unable to afford purchasing a home.²

Sample Municipal Salaries (2005 Budget)

- Reference librarian - \$39,010
- Certified school nurse - \$42,792
- Police department head clerk - \$38,763,
- DPW Foreman - \$37,000

These employees are a target market of the Covenant Residences on Commonwealth.



Market Renters

Market renters will have a broader choice to spend their housing budget more effectively, while maintaining ties to their chosen community.

Market rent on a two bedroom unit in the Chestnut Hill/Newton area ranges between \$1,400 and \$2,600 per month.⁶

In the event that the renter's income qualifies for the affordable units, the projected total housing payment on an affordable two bedroom condominium in the Covenant Residences is \$1,302.⁴

Affordable Renters

There is a quantifiable demand for affordable housing in Newton.

The new Avalon at Newton Highlands, with its 74 affordable rental apartments, had a waiting list of 1300 when it opened its doors in Fall 2004. After open approximately one year, the list had grown to 1379. Approximately 275 of these people are Newton residents, trying to stay in their home community.

Because of the comparable rates between projected total housing payment at the Covenant Residences and the affordable rents at Avalon at Newton Highlands, buying at the Covenant Residences will enable affordable renters to move up the "housing ladder."⁷

The Newton Workforce

Newton has significant local employers, with Educational Development Center, Boston College, and Newton Wellesley Hospital combining to employ more than 4,000 people. However, many workers with salaries below the Newton household median income of \$86,502 cannot afford to live near their employer.⁵

Sample Salaries — Boston Area

- Proofreader - \$38,471
- Admissions representative - \$35,636
- Licensed Practical Nurse - \$40,491



The Covenant Residences will provide opportunities for people to live near their place of work.

¹Respectively are Census 2000 Data and the Warren Group.

²Census 2000

³Town of Newton Annual budget

⁴Assumptions include 70% of the median income at \$52,080, down payment of \$7,950 a maximum mortgage of \$151,050, and a permanent loan with an interest rate of 6.25%

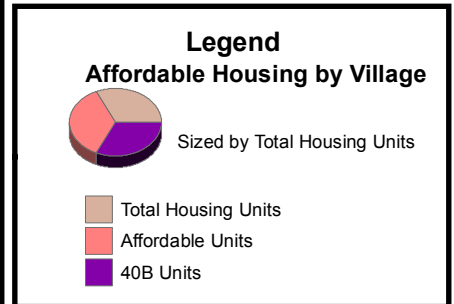
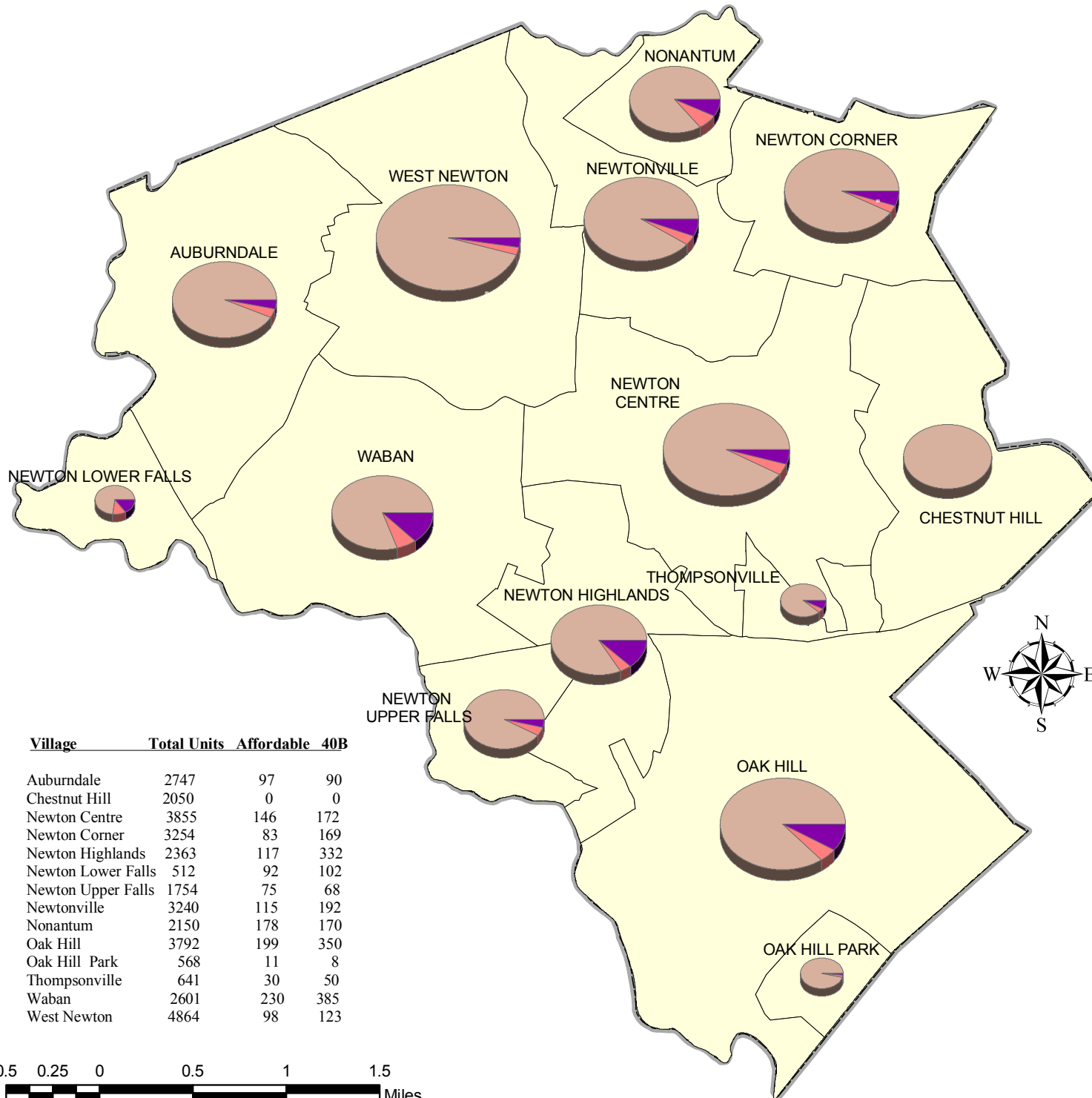
⁵Monster.com salary wizard for Greater Boston area. Median (50th percentile) salaries for a given profession.

⁶Craigslist, Avalon at Newton Highlands, and The Copley Group (Hammond Pond Parkway)

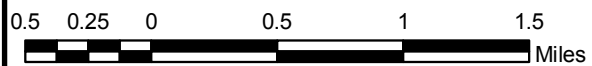
⁷Rent for a 2 bedroom affordable apartment in Avalon at Newton Highlands is \$798-\$1356. Projected monthly mortgage payments on a 2 bedroom at the Covenant Residences is \$1302. See note 4.

Affordable Housing Units by Village

City of Newton, Massachusetts



Village	Total Units	Affordable	40B
Auburndale	2747	97	90
Chestnut Hill	2050	0	0
Newton Centre	3855	146	172
Newton Corner	3254	83	169
Newton Highlands	2363	117	332
Newton Lower Falls	512	92	102
Newton Upper Falls	1754	75	68
Newtonville	3240	115	192
Nonantum	2150	178	170
Oak Hill	3792	199	350
Oak Hill Park	568	11	8
Thompsonville	641	30	50
Waban	2601	230	385
West Newton	4864	98	123



The information on this map is from the Newton Geographic Information System (GIS). The City of Newton cannot guarantee its accuracy or nor approve applications based solely on GIS data. Applicants for city permits must inquire of the relevant city department for applicable requirements.



City of Newton
 Mayor - David B. Cohen
 GIS Administrator - Douglas Greenfield

MAP DATE: July 27, 2005

Friends of the Covenant Residences on Commonwealth

Benjamin Abrams
Philip Abrams
David Abromowitz
Nancy Beckerman
David Begelfer
Stephanie Benner
Lawrence Berman
Susan Bernstein
Marina Breydo
Richard Brimley
Andrew Chaban
Samuel Chiel
Betsy Closs
Howard Cohen
Ken Cummins
Annie Cummins
Ed Dailey
Jonathan Davis
Margot Davis
Sheila Decter
Natalia Dementyev
Yuriy Dementyev
Charles Eisenberg

Bernice Abramson Fanger
Irving Fanger
Bob Fishman
Jay Gardner
Fran Godine
Robert Golden
Donna Golden
Susan Goodman
Aaron Gornstein
Hindell Grossman
Steve Grossman
Elizabeth Gruber
Kevin Halligan
Meryl Starr Herman
Ann Houston
Morris Jablon
Marsha Jacobson
Ellen Kantrowitz
Harriet Katz
Allan Katz
Adam Katz
Marie LaBollita
Deb Lakin

Zezette Larsen
Liz Levin
Marc Levin
Russell Lightman
Barbara Marder
Steven Marder
Frank Marmorek
Kathy Marmorek
Emily Marmorek
Katherine McDonough
Peter McLoughlin
Peggy McLoughlin
Sonia Michelson
Selma Mirsky
Meghan Murphy
Vince O'Donnell
Eleanor Pearlman
Jon Pearlman
Ric Phillips
Peter Poras
Patti Poras
Deborah Raub
Jeffery Raub

Sidney Rosenthal
Judi Ross
Peter Sargent
Esther Schlorholtz
Ed Schreider
Linda Schreider
Bill Shaevel
Fran Shifman
Jan Silverman
Allan Stone
Jeanne Stolbach
Benjamin Summers
Mary Supple Dailey
Maura Swan
Lou Tobasky
Judy Weber
Eleanor White
Tony Winsor
Ros Winsor
Edward Zuker

(In Formation)

December 19, 2005

Jennifer Goldson
Planning and Development Office
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459

Re: Covenant Residences on Commonwealth

Dear Ms. Goldson:

Thank you for your consideration of the proposed Covenant Residences on Commonwealth Avenue. We urge the Community Preservation Committee's support of this vital project for Newton.

We are a rapidly growing group of more than 80 supporters of B'nai B'rith Housing's initiative to build 56 one and two-bedroom condominiums on the Commonwealth Avenue site. We strongly believe that this location is appropriate for mixed-income condominiums and will provide a home ownership opportunity for many households who could not otherwise own a home in Newton.

The City of Newton "Consolidated Five Year Plan for Housing and Community Development: July 1, 2005 - June 30, 2010" (The Consolidated Plan) provides data on the severe shortage of affordable and working family housing in Newton. As the median home price for Newton approaches \$725,000, many people who grew up in Newton or work in this city cannot afford to

live here. As it currently stands, only the well-to-do can afford to enter the Newton housing market.

Because of this, children and grandchildren find far too often that they have to move a great distance to get a chance to purchase a home. Empty nesters and seniors are unable to maintain themselves in communities that they love because they cannot find housing appropriate to their needs.

The Consolidated Plan clearly identifies the lack of affordable housing in Newton and offers solutions to this problem. The Covenant Residences fulfill two of the priorities that are highlighted as solutions. The Covenant Residences will both “increase the overall supply of a variety of affordable housing options and reduce the housing cost burden of extremely low and moderate income residents...” and “create homeownership opportunities for low, moderate and middle income residents.”

With close to 7,000 low or moderate-income households already based in Newton, there is a great need for affordable and reasonably priced housing. The 14 new affordable units will increase the affordable ownership stock in Newton by more than 50%. Even families who make the Newton median household income of \$86,000 have a very difficult time purchasing a home in Newton. In fact, it is well documented that even among Newton’s existing homeowners, a majority of the families who own homes in Newton would not be able to buy their own homes today.

B’nai B’rith Housing is committed to producing affordable housing in Newton. They are willing to put their resources of time and money behind this effort. While it is not easy, it is their mission and they are worthy of broad support.

Join with us and make this project a win for Newton.

Sincerely,

Fran Shifman
219 Fuller Street
West Newton

On Behalf of the Friends of the Covenant Residences on Commonwealth

December 19, 2005

The Honorable David Cohen
President Lisle Baker and Members of the Board of Aldermen
Chairperson Andrew Stern and Members of the Community Preservation Committee
Chairperson Cathleen Clement and Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals

Re: Covenant Residences on Commonwealth

The undersigned members of the Newton clergy wish to convey our support for the proposed B'nai B'rith Housing project on Commonwealth Avenue. This development will include fifty six homeownership units, eleven of which will be affordable to families at or below 80% of median income. We strongly urge the City to provide the financial support needed to bring this project to fruition.

As clergy of differing faiths, we are united in our strong belief that providing shelter for the less wealthy among us is a shared responsibility. This obligation arises out of our humanity, and our concern that housing that is affordable, safe, and sanitary is available to people at all income levels.

The fourteen new units of housing that are included in the proposal for B'nai B'rith Housing's fifty-six unit development that will provide an option for people who cannot purchase a house at Newton's average price of \$800,000. Today, the median income of families in Newton is \$86,000. Having more affordable units will help Newton to keep its doors open to families and elders who do not have these kinds of resources, and cannot afford Newton's average prices. We are confident that all of Newton will be enriched by the addition of these new units, and by the presence of the people who will inhabit them.

The voters of Newton chose to implement the Community Preservation Act, which provides funding for City support for affordable housing. The B'nai B'rith plan will provide such housing options, and would be a wonderful use of our CPA funds. As City officials, we hope that you will decide to allocate CPA funds to this project so that we can add to the affordable housing stock in our City.

Thank you for your attention, and your efforts to ensure that Newton welcomes those at all income levels within our City.

Respectfully yours,

The Rev. Kenneth F. Baily, Newton Highlands Congregational Church
Rabbi Samuel Chiel
Dr. David Dean, Interim Executive Director, Greater Boston Baptist Association
The Rev. Miriam C. Gelfer, Grace Episcopal Church
Rabbi Eric Gurvis, Temple Shalom of Newton
Sister Marie LaBollita, Our Lady of Christians Church
Rabbi Paul H. Levenson, Temple Chayai Shalom
Rob Mark, Exec Dir, Community Day Center of Waltham

Rabbi Barbara Penzer, Temple Hillel B'nai Torah
Rabbi Scott Rosenberg, Temple Reyim
Rabbi Benjamin Samuels, Congregation Shaarei Tefillah
Rev. John Stendahl, Lutheran Church of the Newtons



Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action - www.jewishalliance.org.
18 Tremont Street, Suite 320, Boston, 02108 - tel: 617-227-3000 fax: 617-227-3453

13 Tammuz 5765

July 20, 2005

Helping to Encourage Affordable Housing

Meeting Reminder: CLSA meets on Thursdays during the summer, *JALSA Office, 12:30 p.m., 18 Tremont Street, Boston, Suite 320*. If you can't attend meetings and want to be on our action list for potential assignments, please email decter@jalsa.org. This is a special list of persons who want to receive highlights from CLSA meetings. There are many projects under current discussion where individuals may help from home or office.

Alliance for High Standards NOT High Stakes, *Thursday, July 21, 10 am. JALSA Office, 18 Tremont Street, Boston, Suite 320*. Continuing editing of report.

JALSA is pleased that the Attorney General has not certified the proposed referendum to overturn the Massachusetts stem cell bill on the grounds that issues dealing with religion may not be the subject of the initiative or referendum process. Thanks to Joel Eigerman and Mark Michelson who prepared our most recent brief on the subject of exclusions to the initiative process in the case of Wirzburger v. Galvin where the US Court of Appeals upheld the Massachusetts constitutional language dealing with exclusions to the initiative process.

Dear Friends,

JALSA members have a long history of supporting the creation of affordable housing. Now we have an opportunity to really make a difference.

B'nai Brith has a proposal to create a project in Newton that would create 132 units of housing, 33 of which will be affordable to low-income families and individuals. They are facing some opposition, and are now creating a "Friends" group to show that there is strong support in the community for this worthy development. JALSA would like to ask our members who live in Newton to sign on as "Friends" of the project, and to forward this e-mail to others in Newton who would also be interested in signing up. More details about the project and how to become a "Friend" are below and attached. If you would be willing to have your name listed as a "Friend" please e-mail the JALSA office at decter@jewishalliance.org.

There will also be many opportunities during the process for people to speak out at meetings, write letters to the editor, and generally show support for

7/21/2005

affordable housing. JALSA is now involved in forming an interfaith coalition in Newton to demonstrate support for this development. If you would like to be involved in JALSA's work on this project, please contact the JALSA office at 617-227-3000 or e-mail decter@jewishalliance.org so that we keep you updated.

Many thanks.

Background Information on Becoming a Friend of B'nai B'rith Housing

B'nai B'rith Housing New England is proposing to build 132 one and two-bedroom condominiums adjacent to the Boston College T station on Commonwealth Avenue. Known as the Covenant Residences on Commonwealth, 25% of the condominiums will be available for people who are at or below 70% of area median income and the remainder will be available at market rate. These units will be available to both individuals and families.

Attached is a fact sheet with a rendering of the project and detailed information about the Covenant Residences and B'nai B'rith Housing New England. This project is essential to providing affordable housing in Newton.

A "Friends of The Covenant Residences on Commonwealth" group is forming, and we hope that you can join. Joining the Friends means that you will be doing the following:

1. Lending your name to this cause and putting your name on our "Friends" letterhead.
2. Encouraging others to support the Covenant Residences on Commonwealth.
3. If possible, attending an occasional public meeting to show your support.

Over the next few months, B'nai B'rith Housing New England will provide the Friends with progress updates on the project.

Please call or email me back any questions and your agreement to be a Friend of Covenant House. Also, please indicate whether you might be interested in opportunities to speak at public meetings or to the media.

We appreciate your consideration of this worthy endeavor, and thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Sheila Decter
Executive Director
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action

SUPPORT THE JEWISH ALLIANCE

The Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action---
dedicated to continuing a strong, progressive, inter-generational voice
inspired by Jewish teachings and values for social justice, civil rights, and civil liberties.

Membership is open to all who wish to work for progressive goals in the development of public policy.

7/21/2005