

Why Orr Block Development Must Stay within Current Limits

**Neighbors for A Better Newtonville
Presentation to the City of Newton
Land Use Committee**

June 7 2016

Our Issue with Orr Development

- Mark Newtonville, LLC wants to create a mixed use development of massive proportions relative to the population and current built environment of Newtonville.
- The development as proposed would present significant problems to the Village and the City.
- To realize his plan, the developer requests special permitting and rezoning.
- ***The question at issue: Is there a net benefit to the residents of our city and our village that would justify granting these changes?***
- We believe the answer is No. The rest of our presentation explains why.

Sequence

Topic

1. Introduction and context
2. Some problems with the developer's plans
3. Housing
4. Parking, traffic and public transportation
5. Impact on the physical environment
6. Impact on schools and infrastructure
7. Conclusion

Newton and Newtonville As They Are

Some Relevant Context for The
Decision

Newton: The Garden City

“Newton is renowned as a City of Thirteen Villages.

“The villages are home to distinctive shops, independent restaurants, neighborhood services, and professional offices, as well as civic buildings, places of worship, cultural organizations...

“Many residents and businesses have great loyalty to their distinct, local village.”

—City of Newton web site

One of The Best Places To Live

- Money Magazine, September 2014 — Best Places to Live 2014:

15. Newton, Massachusetts

14. Irvine, California

13. Centennial, Ohio

12. Woodbury, Minnesota

11. Eagan, Minnesota

One of The Best Places To Live

- USA Today, September 2014 — America's 50 best cities to live in:

- 1. Newton, Massachusetts***

2. Bellevue, Washington

3. Mountain View, California

4. Pleasanton, California

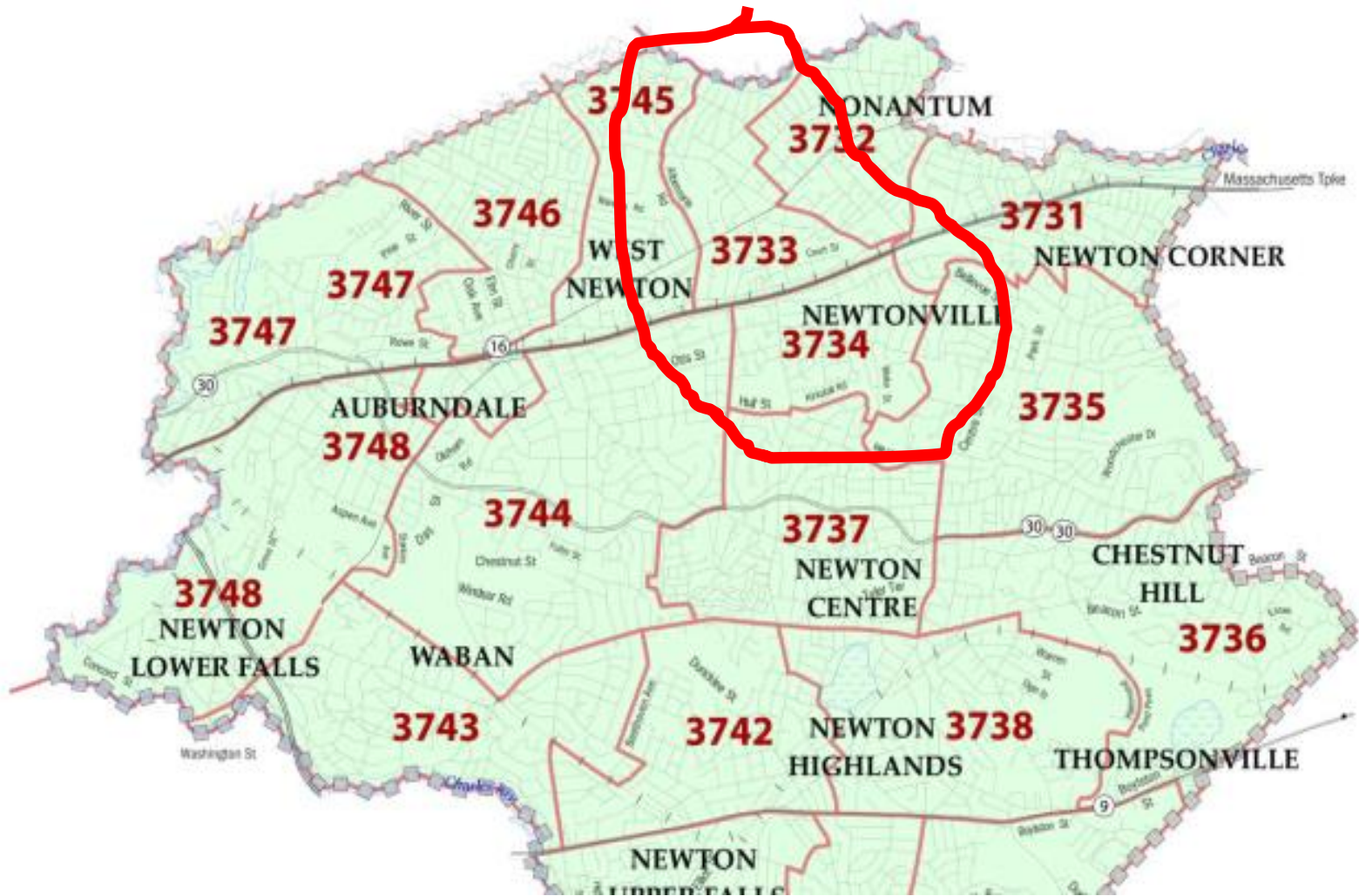
5. Evanston, Illinois

Where Is Newtonville?

We turn to a report compiled by Barry Bluestone and Tracey A. Corley: *Demographic Trends and Housing in the City of Newton, Massachusetts*, May 2014 — based mainly on data from the 2010 Census.

The report provides data by census tract. Tract boundaries do not always coincide with Village boundaries.

We will look at the two Newtonville tracts (3733 and 3734) that surround the Orr Project. These tracts include Newtonville's commercial center.

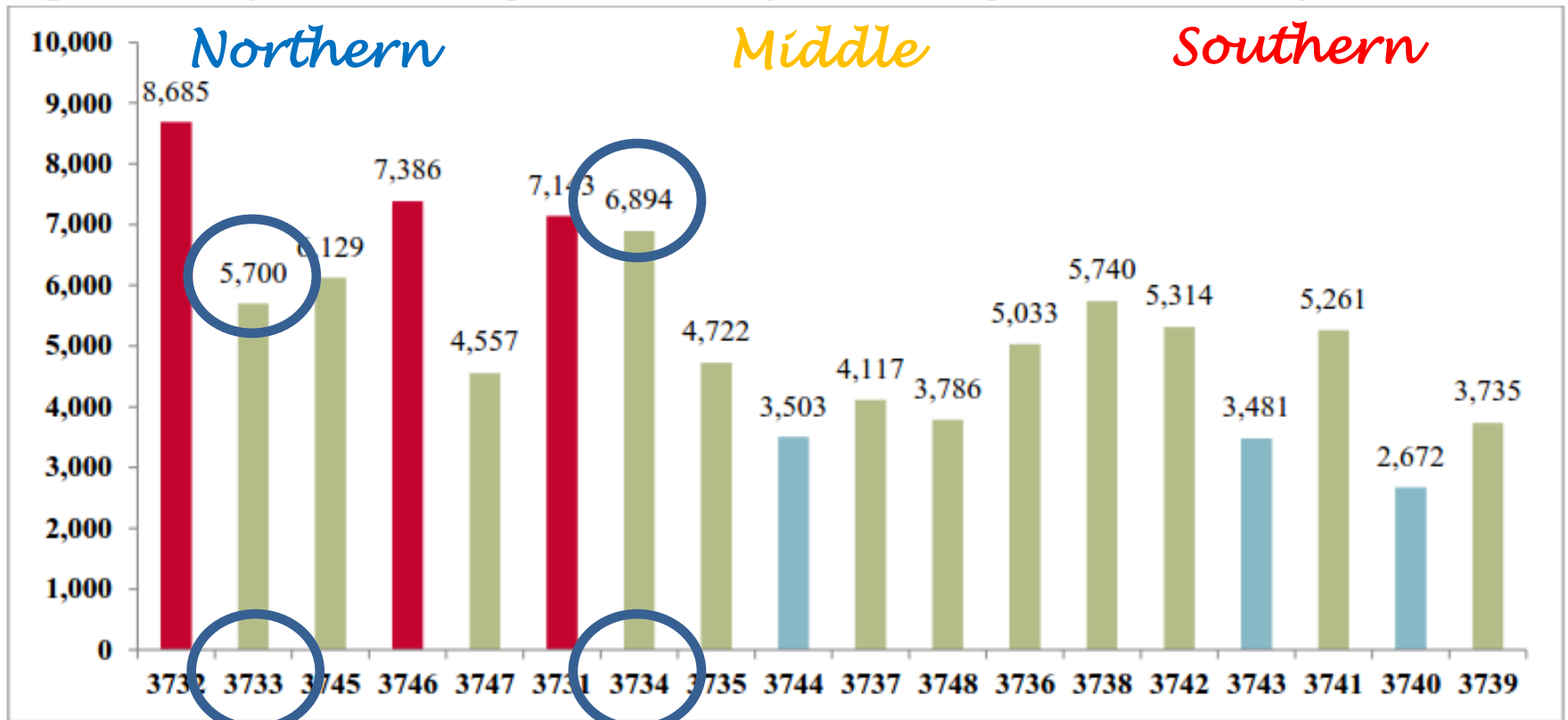


Density

- Newton's North side (which includes Newtonville) is overall more dense than the South side.
- The North side includes the 5 densest tracts (out of 18) in all of Newton.
- One of the Newtonville Tracts (3734) is the fourth densest in the city.

Density

Figure 23: City of Newton Population Density (Persons/Square Mile) 2010 by Census Tract



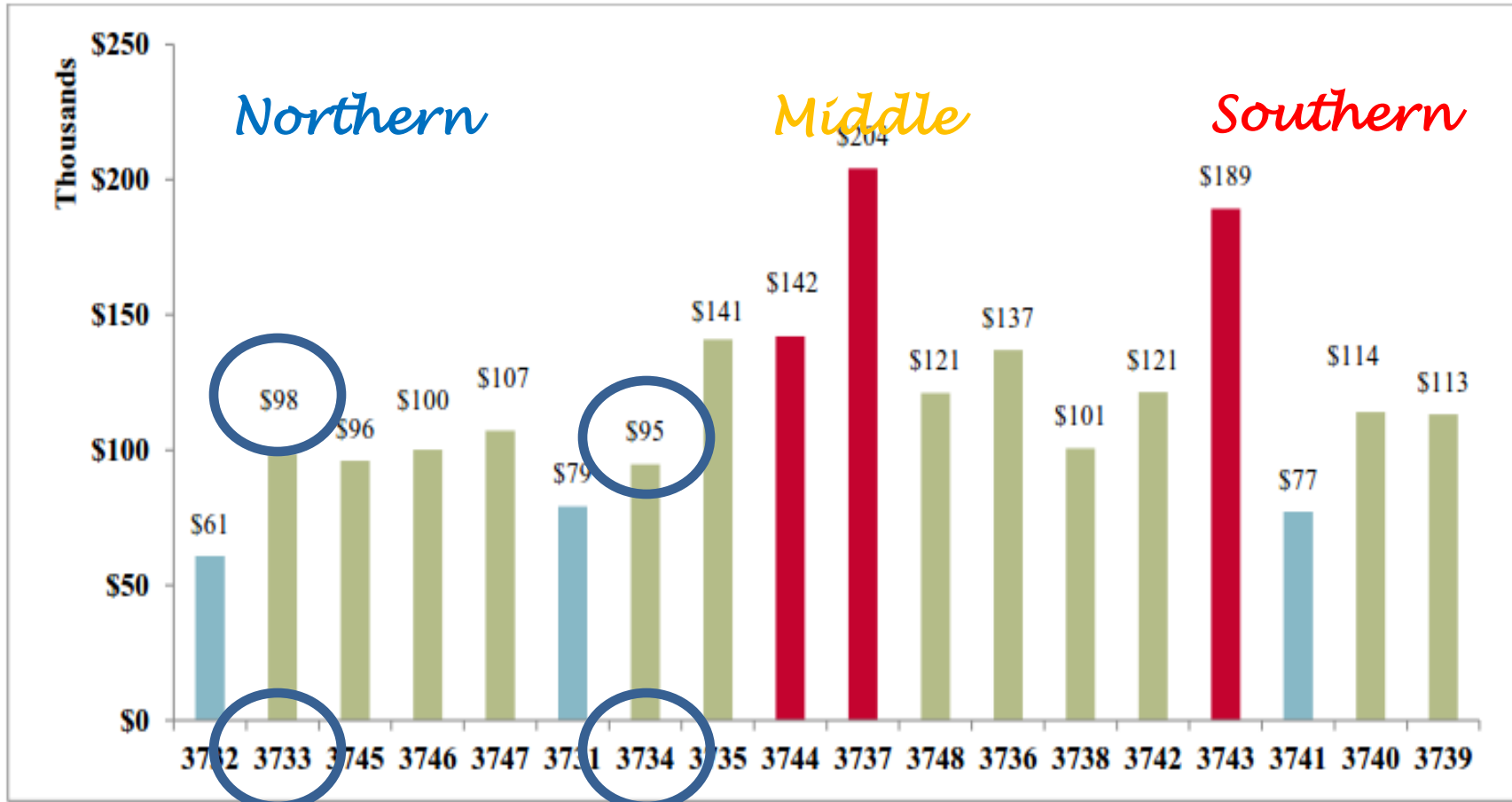
Source: USA.com Census Tract data for the City of Newton

Income

- Newton's North side is overall less affluent than the middle and south.
- N'ville tract 3734 has fourth lowest median income in the city. N'ville tract 3733 is sixth lowest.
- N'ville is overall not a low-income area, but relative to much of Newton, it is moderate income.

Income

Figure 25: City of Newton Median Household Income 2010



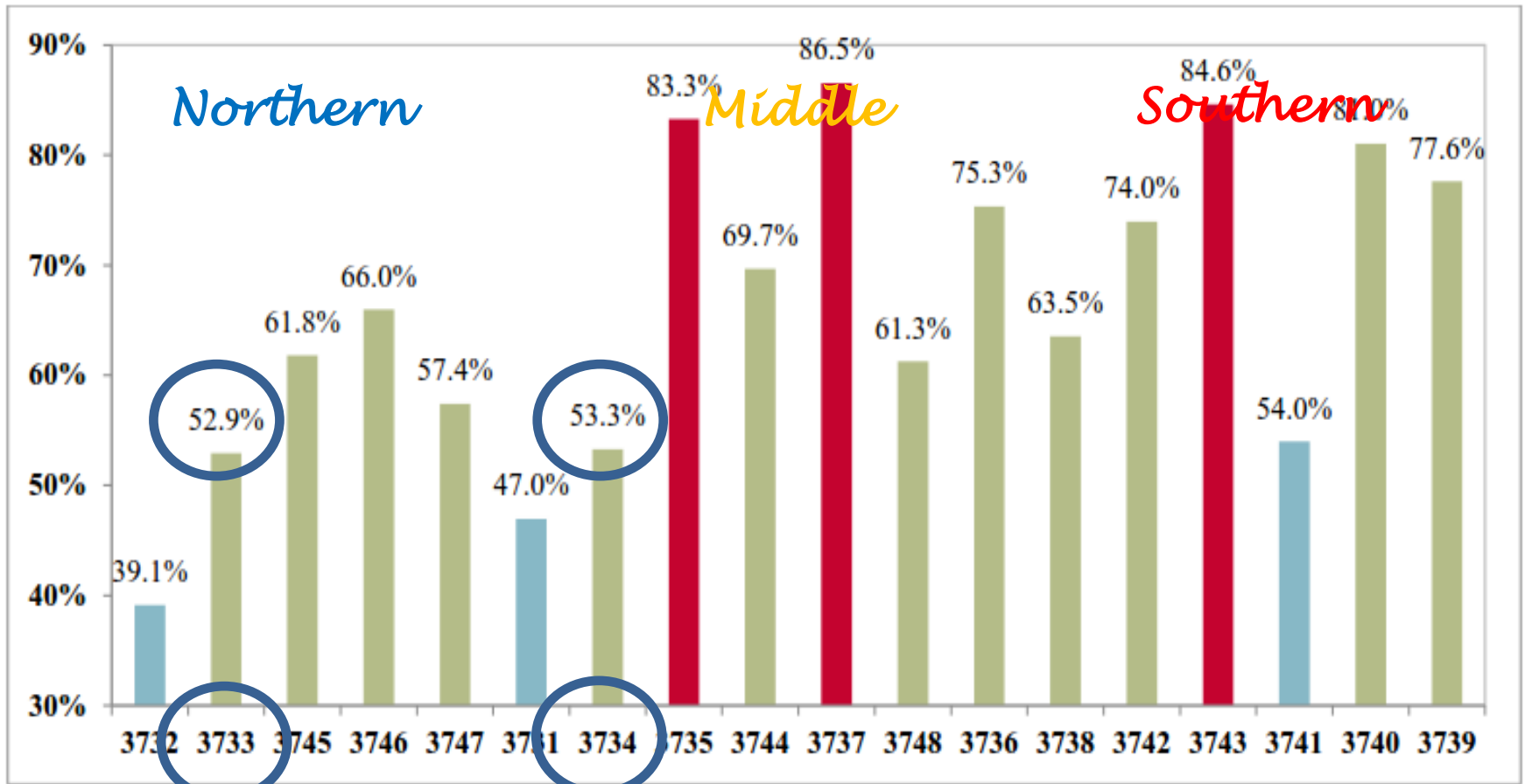
Source: USA.com Census Tract data for the City of Newton

Renting versus Owning

- The North side of Newton is much more renter-heavy than the Middle and Southern sides.
- The Newtonville tracts have the third and fourth highest portion of rental living — lowest proportion of owner occupied units — in the city.

Renting versus Owning

Figure 29: Percent Owner-Occupied Housing Units 2010



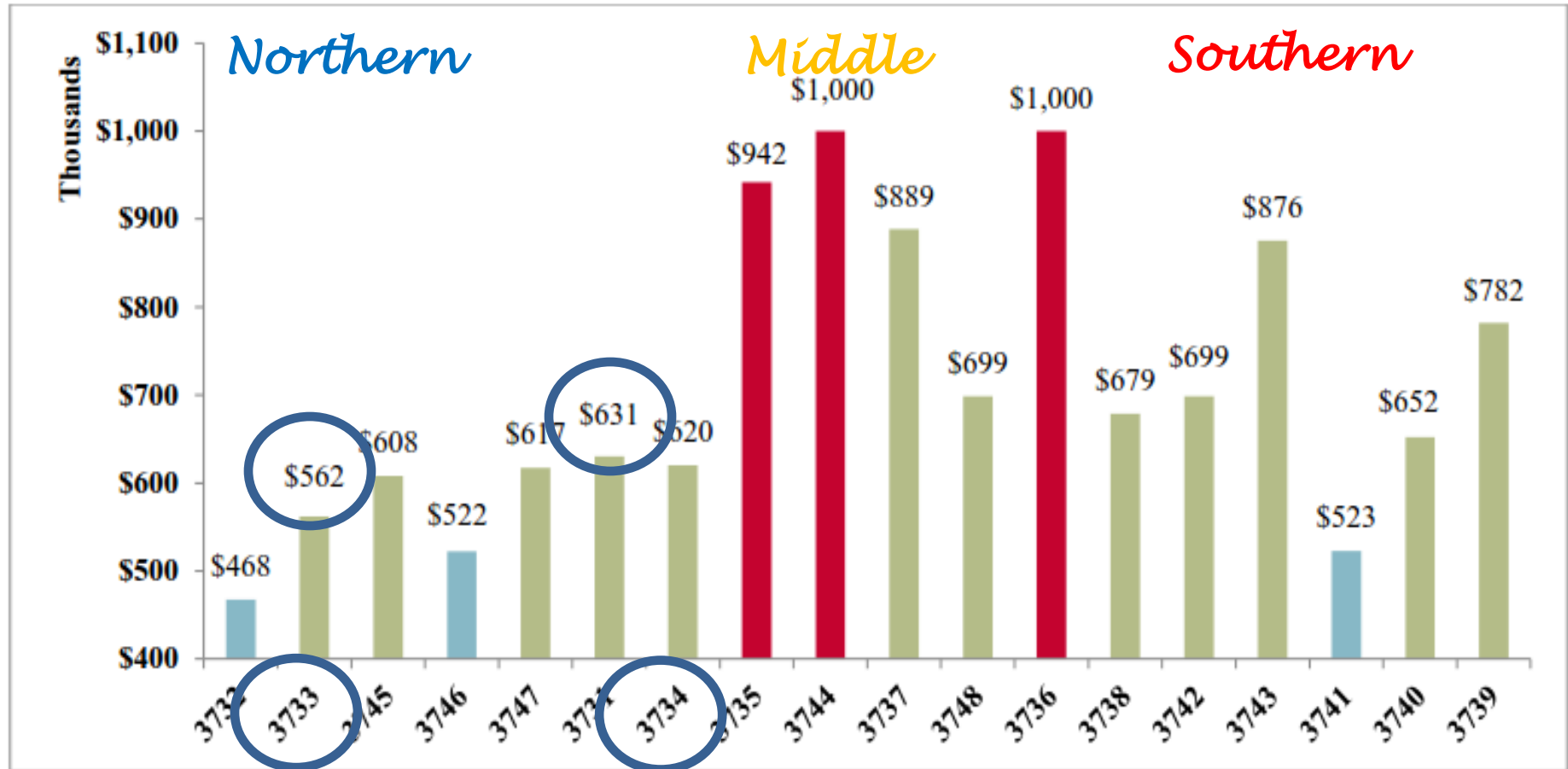
Source: USA.com Census Tract data for the City of Newton

Home Prices

- The North side as a whole has strikingly lower home prices than the Middle and South.
- The Newtonville tracts are in third and fourth place for percent of living units that are rentals.

Home Prices

Figure 32: City of Newton Median Home Price 2010



Source: USA.com Census Tract data for the City of Newton

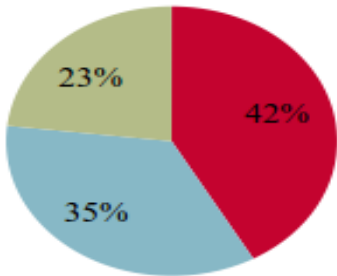
Prevalence of Multi-Unit Buildings

- The two Newtonville tracts have the second and third lowest proportion of single-family homes of all the tracts in the city.
- Tract 3734 has 38% single family homes.
- Tract 3733 has 42% single family homes.
- Only Newton Corner (3731) has a lower proportion of single family buildings (36%).

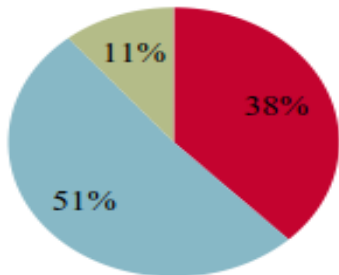
Prevalence of Multi-Unit Buildings

*N'ville
tracts*

Census Tract 3733

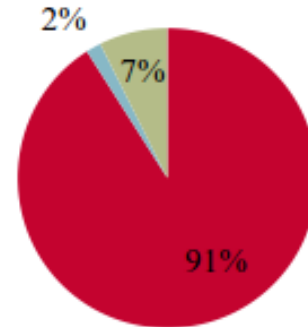


Census Tract 3734



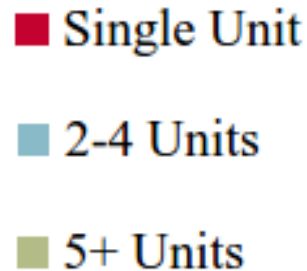
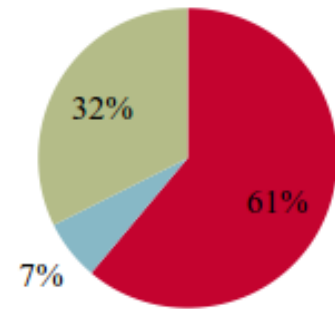
*Middle tract
sample
(Waban)*

Census Tract 3743



*Southern
tract sample
(Oak Hill)*

Census Tract 3739



Summary of Context Points

- Newton's North side is different from most of the Middle and South — denser, lower income, more renters...
- N'ville follows this pattern. Relative to other Villages (especially Middle and South), N'ville:
 - Is more densely populated
 - Is less affluent
 - Has a higher proportion of renters
 - Has more multi-unit homes

Implications

- N'ville already welcomes diverse incomes and housing types.
- Our village should not be burdened by development that will make it still more dense and more renter-heavy.
- The Orr project will raise rents on their property. Current renters and businesses are being forced out and will never return.
- The project as proposed will also increase property taxes for other homes in the area. This will cause displacement moderate- and lower-income residents throughout the Village.
- We welcome a plan that would better suit the needs of our Newtonville Village.

SOME PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT PROPOSAL



Proposed Conceptual Site Plan

HOUSING

Newton Needs **Affordable** Housing

Neighbors for a Better Newtonville

“Newton is experiencing a change in the income diversity of its households as **high housing costs and rents** lead to a community that is **increasingly high-income and exclusive.**”

“Between 2000 and 2013 a large number of households earning less than \$125,000 left the City and were **replaced in large part by households earning more than \$200,000.**”

**What Newton Doesn't
Need—**

UnAffordable Housing



Current Prices: Single-Family Homes

Source: MLS, June 5, 2016

\$2-10M	59
\$1.5-2M	26
<u>\$1-1.5M</u>	<u>43</u>
Total high	128
\$600-999K	45
<u>\$300-599K</u>	<u>6</u>
Total moderate	51

Current Prices: Condos

Source: MLS, June 5, 2016

\$1,000,000 plus	29
\$500K-999K	47
Under \$500K	14

Current Prices: Rentals

Source: MLS, June 5, 2016

\$4K-10K	33
\$3K-4K	42
\$2500-3K	27
\$2000-2500	20
\$1500-2000	10
Below \$1500	2



Newton Needs Housing for City Workers and Our Seniors



What Is Affordable?

Workforce Housing at 30% Household Income

\$20,000	x	.30	==	6,000	\$ 500/month
\$40,000	x	.30	==	12,000	1,000/month
\$60,000	x	.30	==	18,000	1,500/month
\$80,000	x	.30	==	24,000	2,000/month

Washington Terrace and Bailey Place

20 Units to Be
Demolished

Rents:

\$1000 1 BR to

\$1500 2- or 3-BR

Residents displaced:

33



Modest Size

As you have heard others suggest, Newtonville is a village of **modest proportions**.

However, we are experiencing a **large development on Austin Street**.

Large density projects are a **poor excuse** for affordable housing.

We can accomplish **affordability** with modest developments and **still retain our village character**.

Washington Place/ORR Block

Does this make sense?



Squeeze in a few affordable units
in a huge complex?

Do the Math

+26 “Affordable” units (15%)

-20 Naturally affordable units
demolished

6 Net gain “Affordable” units

Let's Agree

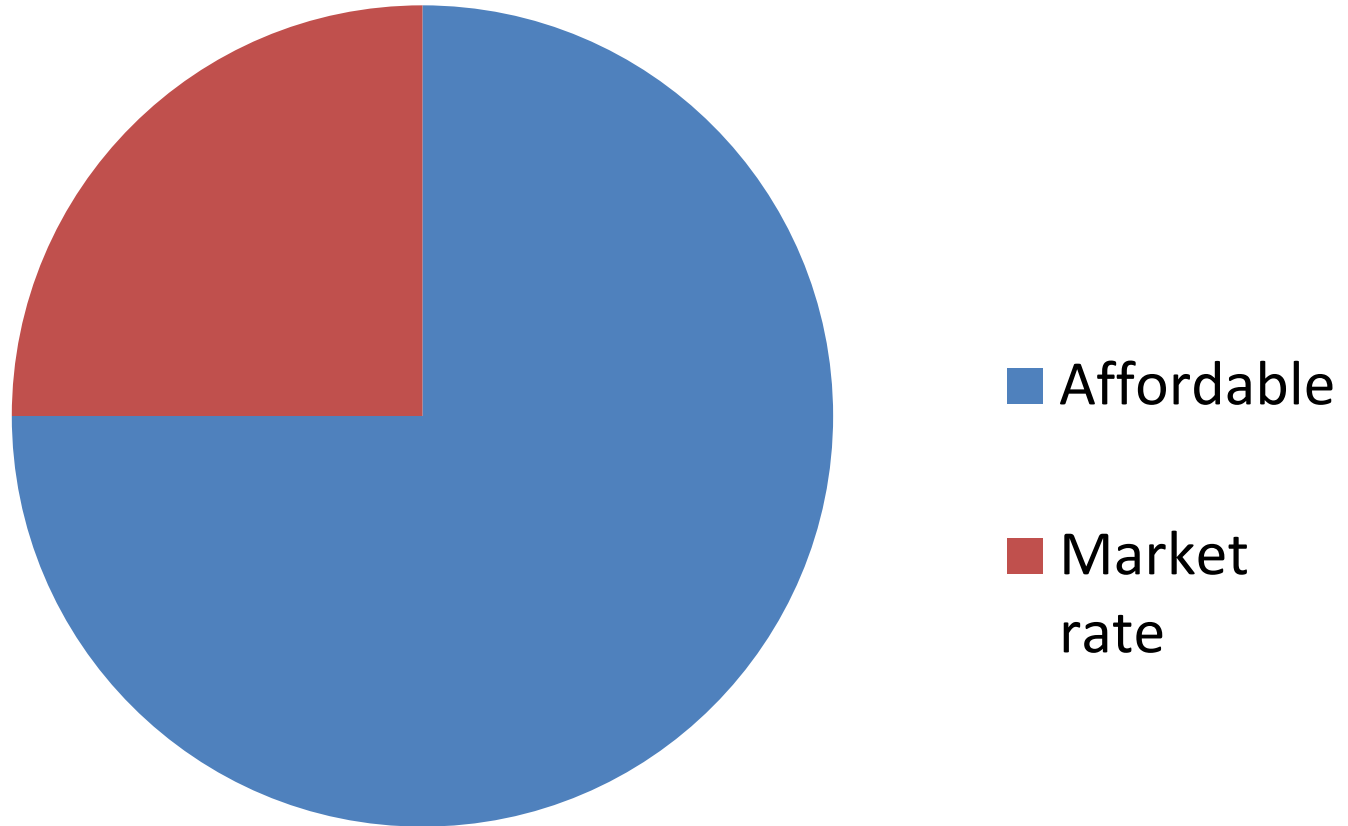
Retain, not displace, renters who **have** affordable rents

Prioritize affordable rents for workers and seniors

Provide **reasonably sized** rental structures, not aggressive, high-density projects



Sample Scenario: 75% Affordable



Sample Scenario: Here's How...

Number One:

Retain 20 existing
“naturally affordable” rental units

(With a **smaller footprint**,
there is NO NEED TO DISPLACE TENANTS.)

What Is Reasonable:

Low density project: **40 units**

@High affordability: **75 %** affordable

= **30** Affordable units: **50-80% AMI**

Sample Scenario

For example:

20 One-bedrooms

10 Two-bedrooms

10 Luxury Units

10,000 sq ft Commercial

Grand Total: **40** Units plus Commercial

CDBG Zone



**Newtonville
CDBG
Target Neighborhood
and Street Conditions**
City of Newton

Legend

□ Newtonville_Target_Area

Pavement Segments

PCI

- 0 - 80 / Poor
- 61 - 72 / Deficient
- 73 - 84 / Fair
- 85 - 92 / Good
- 93 - 100 / Excellent

Census Tract 3733 (S)
41 (N) Low/Moderate Income
2000 U.S. Census



The information on this map is from the National Geographic Information System (GIS). The City of Newton cannot guarantee the accuracy of this information. Each user of this map is responsible for determining its suitability to his or her intended purpose. City Department will not necessarily accept any legal liability in this matter.



MAP DATE: February 12, 2010

Keep Newton Affordable and Welcoming

Retain 20 Existing Affordable Units

Add 30 New Affordable Units

Total 50 Affordable Housing units
for a community that cares!

Innovative Social Investment

Given that Newton is the home of many very affluent, socially conscious individuals, we are confident that Newton philanthropists, perhaps the developer himself, can be persuaded to provide an innovative social investment for the common good.

We welcome further discussion of this important idea.

Thank you!

PARKING, TRAFFIC AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

PARKING

**“PARKING IS THE LIFEBLOOD OF OUR
COMMERCE.”**

— Councilor Victoria Danberg

Newtonville's Metered Public Parking System Crucial to Commerce



Taken from
GPI study

Capacity and Overcapacity

- The 85% Rule
- In recent years, we've typically had at or near 85% capacity for 5 hours each weekday.
- Those 5 hours could withstand 45 more vehicles before becoming dysfunctional.
- According to current zoning, the Austin Street project will be short 80 spaces, and Orr will be short 97 spaces.

Waivers

- Developers are requesting waivers for 177 parking stalls they'd otherwise be required to provide
- The resulting number of vehicles would be
 - four times what the system can bear in high usage times
 - even more than that in peak times

Waivers — Dubious Assumptions

- Residents need only 1.25 vehicles per household
- People won't mind parking in spaces smaller than required by zoning, with little maneuverability
- Newtonville has great mass transit
- New commercial establishments won't generate larger than anticipated clienteles
- New employees won't try to park in public metered parking

Conclusion

- Circling for parking. Parkers will become discouraged from doing business in Newtonville.
- Customers will take their business elsewhere, with serious negative impacts on local businesses.
- Rezoning and special permitting should be denied.

IMPACT ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

IMPACT ON SCHOOLS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

CONCLUSION