

# Village Center Community Engagement

ZAP Presentation 5.24.21

# Agenda

Introduction ⇒ Zoom In: Engagement Efforts ⇒ Discussion



# Introduction

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**Purpose of Engagement:** to hear community members' experiences of and visions for village centers to inform the areas of research that staff + Utile identify.

The qualitative information to compliment Utile and staff's quantitative analysis.



# Introduction: **Engagement Efforts**

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## **Vision Kit & Polis Survey**



Self-Led  
Vision  
Kits

Community  
- Led  
Vision  
Kits

Equitable  
Focus  
Groups

Economic  
Development  
Engagement

On-the-  
Spot  
Surveying

# Introduction: **Timeline - This Phase** *\*updated*

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Community Engagement to learn:  
Experiences of & Visions For  
Village Centers

Compilation of  
Learnings &  
Presentations to  
ZAP and the  
Public

# Introduction: **Timeline - The Long Road**

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Experiences of  
+ visions for  
Village Centers

Compilation of  
Learnings &  
Presentations  
to ZAP and the  
Public

**Continued engagement  
with the public:**  
City-wide events to  
review policy and  
technical proposals

# Vision Kit

To activate ideas and  
collect community members'  
stories (written + visual)



# Zoom In: Vision Kit

Self-guided  
tour of any  
village center

Coming soon:  
Spanish,  
Chinese,  
Russian,  
text-only

## Vision Kit for Newton's Village Centers

Explore Newton's village centers, reflect on how you currently experience them and imagine what they could be in the future. Your stories will help guide the City of Newton on how to update zoning for village centers!

### Instructions

- Step 1: Pick the village center** you want to focus on with the Vision Kit
- Step 2: Prepare!** Invite neighbors & find a time to carry out the vision kit in person or virtually. Print the vision kit out, upload it on your phone, read it on your computer, or pick up copies from the Planning Department Office at City Hall.
- Step 3: Explore with this Vision Kit:** Do 1, 2 or more of the themes listed here! Take photos or draw!
- Step 4: Tell Us Your Story:** Send in your photos and ideas as you complete the themes, either on your phone at [tinyurl.com/NewtonPhotos](https://tinyurl.com/NewtonPhotos), by emailing [zoningredesign@newtonma.gov](mailto:zoningredesign@newtonma.gov), or bring a hard copy to the Planning Department Office at City Hall. These will be shared on our Instagram and Facebook!
- Step 5: Optional: Learn more with the Vision Kit Companion:** Read each theme's history facts, policy considerations, and the City of Newton's proposals for zoning - download here
- Final Step:** After you and your neighbors explore your village center, weigh in on the interactive community discussion board called Polis, found here: <https://pol.is/4vfmwzdds>

### Themes

#### What's a Village Center?

What are the defining features of a village center? Where does it begin and end? Why did you pick this one?

#### Environment



Find elements in your village center(s) that support a greener future.

What does the 'green future' of your village center look like? Are there more places for things like walking and biking, trees and plants, rainwater collection, or solar panels?

#### Economic Development



Go to the stores and restaurants you often visit, or ones you are looking forward to revisiting when safe to do so. What do you prefer to buy in person versus online?

What businesses would you like to open up? Would you like to be able to work in a village center?

For questions or help, contact [zoningredesign@newtonma.gov](mailto:zoningredesign@newtonma.gov)  
Learn more at [newtonma.gov/zoningredesign](https://newtonma.gov/zoningredesign)

#### Housing



Go to one of your village center public transit stops and observe what kind of housing you see. Find a multi-family building (3 or more units). If you don't see any, find one in/around your village center. Guess what year the building was constructed.

What types of housing do you envision in your village center in the future?

#### Inclusive, Diverse + Welcoming Spaces



Find a part of a village center that feels most welcoming and safe for you and your identities. What makes it feel inclusive? Examples include community centers, non-profits, places of worship, a place where your language is spoken, where you see and interact with people who share your identity, places that are age-friendly.

How could your future village center welcome people of all ages, genders, races, socioeconomic statuses, sexualities, and more backgrounds?

#### Arts + Culture



Find a place in a village center that creatively engages you. Examples include art (statue, mural, painting) or an area that is used for a pop-up, temporary event or creative activities (outdoor market, concert, parade).

How are village centers currently encouraging creative practices? What would a more 'creative' village center look and feel like?

Share Images & Ideas @  
[tinyurl.com/NewtonPhotos](https://tinyurl.com/NewtonPhotos)

#### Accessibility



Find a place in your village center that feels most accessible for you, and a place that feels least accessible. This can be considered physically (abilities to physically move, see, hear, speak and more) as well as emotionally & in terms of senses (noise, smell, how calm a place feels, or access to public furniture).

What would a fully accessible village center look and feel like?

#### Transportation



How do you get to your village center (walk, bike, public transit, car)? Is there infrastructure that makes this safe and easy, like sidewalks/crosswalks, bike lanes/racks, sheltered transit stops, parking (lots/garage/on-street)? How do you move through your village center? Are there any alleyways or cut-throughs that break up the different spaces?

How will you get to and from your village center in the future? What will be the most visible transportation features in your village center? Parking for cars? Bike lanes? A public transit station?

#### Anything Else?

Take a photo of, draw or imagine anything else that feels important to you about the village center(s).

Is there anything else that would make your 'future' village center come to life? Is it something new or something old?

Contact [zoningredesign@newtonma.gov](mailto:zoningredesign@newtonma.gov)  
Access material at [newtonma.gov/zoningredesign](https://newtonma.gov/zoningredesign)



# Zoom In: **Vision Kit**

Step 1: Pick the village center you want to focus on with the Vision Kit



Newton Village Guides

*Image From* Welcoming Newton +  
Newton Neighbors Helping Neighbors

# Zoom In: **Vision Kit**

## Step 2: Prepare!

- Invite neighbors & pick a time to do this in person or virtually
- Get the Vision Kit:
  - Print it out
  - Use on your computer
  - On your phone
  - Pick up copies from the Planning Department Office at City Hall



## Themes

### What's a Village Center?

What are the defining features of a village center? Where does it begin and end? Why did you pick this one?

[Click Here](#) to submit your photo & idea

[Click Here](#) to submit just text

### Environment



Find elements in your village center(s) that support a greener future.

What does the 'green future' of your village center look like? Are there more places for things like walking and biking, trees and plants, rainwater collection, or solar panels?

[Click Here](#) to submit your photo & idea

[Click Here](#) to submit just text

### Shopping, Eating & Working



Go to the stores and restaurants you often visit, or ones you are looking forward to revisiting when safe to do so. What do you prefer to buy in person versus online?

What businesses would you like to open up? Would you like to be able to work in a village center?

[Click Here](#) to submit your photo & idea

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# Zoom In: **Vision Kit**

## Step 3: Explore with the **Vision Kit**

Do 1, 2 or more of the themes listed in the Kit

### Housing



Go to one of your village center public transit stops and observe what kind of housing you see. Find a multi-family building (3 or more units). If you don't see any, find one in/around your village center. Guess what year the building was constructed.

What types of housing do you envision in your village center in the future?

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How could your future village center welcome people of all ages, genders, races, socioeconomic statuses, sexualities, and more backgrounds?

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What would a fully accessible village center look and feel like?

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How will you get to and from your village center in the future? What will be the most visible transportation features in your village center? Parking for cars? Bike lanes? A public transit station?

### Anything Else?

Take a photo of, draw or imagine anything else that feels important to you about the village center(s).

# Zoom In: **Vision Kit**

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## **Step 4: Tell Us Your Stories!**

Take photos or draw as you go through the themes. Send in your visuals and ideas:

- Email worksheet (coming soon) to [zoningredesign@newtonma.gov](mailto:zoningredesign@newtonma.gov) or drop off a hard copy at City Hall
- Submit to [tinyurl.com/NewtonPhotos](https://tinyurl.com/NewtonPhotos)



@NewtonPlanning



@Newton Planning  
and Development



# Step 4: **Tell Us Your Stories** (example)

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Theme:

**Shopping, Eating + Working**

Village Center:

**Newton Centre**

Description:

The shared dining space means that my family and friends can each get food from their favorite restaurant (or bring it from home if they are picky) and we can all share a meal together and bring our dog, too!



Newton Alfresco  
Source: Jenn Martin

# Zoom In: **Vision Kit Companion** *Coming Soon*

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## **Optional:** Learn more with the Vision Kit Companion + Staff Presentation on Village Center History

- Images/graphics and history/policy considerations for each theme
- Table of past City strategies/goals and actions/objectives for village centers
- Staff presentation that explores the history of village centers

# Images/graphics and history/policy considerations for each theme (example)

## Transportation



Blue Bikes /  
Newton Corner

## Housing



Live-Work Building /  
Newton Highlands

# Table of past City strategies/goals and actions/objectives for village centers (example)

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<b>Environment</b>		
<b>Strategy/Goal</b>	<b>Action/Objective</b>	<b>Document</b>
Work with City Council to adopt Zoning Ordinance amendments that require and/or incentivize high-efficiency performance, such as Passive House and/or net-zero new construction.	Work with the City Council to adopt Zoning Ordinances that encourage additional, appropriate low-carbon housing near public transportation.	Climate Action Plan (2019)
<b>Arts and Culture</b>		
Build dynamic and varied cultural spaces.	Support arts and creative uses in designated commercial areas through zoning.	Arts and Culture Plan (2019)



Staff presentation that explores the history of village centers (example)

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River Mill Villages

18<sup>th</sup>-Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Villages

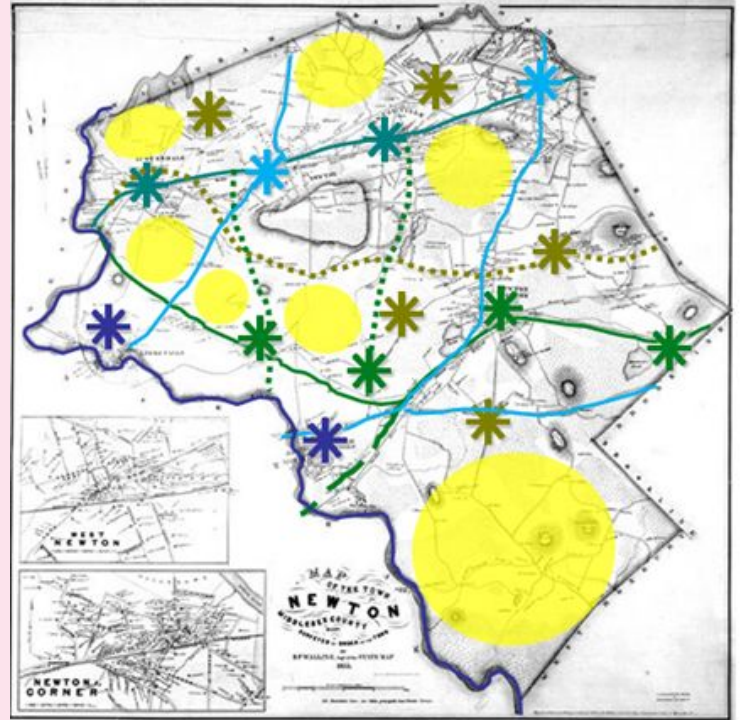
1840s-1870s Railroad Villages

1880s-1920s Railroad Suburbs

1890s-1930s Streetcar Suburb

More auto-dependent suburban development fills in around village centers

### Newton Development Periods



Map of Newton / 1855

# Polis Survey

Online interactive  
community discussion board



# Zoom In: Polis Survey

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<https://pol.is/4vfmwwzdds>

\*Language accessible



## Newton Village Centers

You'll see statements written by other participants. Start by reading and voting on those statements. For each statement, you can Agree, Disagree, or Pass. You might decide to pass, for example, because a statement is vague or confusing, or it does not apply to you, or maybe the statement makes more than one point and you don't agree with all of it.

After you've voted on several statements, you should add your own if you didn't see your point of view represented. To add your own statement, click in the field underneath the conversation, type your statement, and then click Submit.

You can see a report about all votes and comments submitted so far at <https://pol.is/report/r8aupmcmvjppbydmuemk>.

*Welcome to a new kind of conversation - vote on other people's statements.*

 Anonymous wrote: 4 remaining

The current mix of businesses in the village centers is good for the community.

Agree  Disagree  Pass / Unsure

*Are your perspectives or experiences missing from the conversation? If so, **add them** in the box below.*

# Focus Groups

Striving for Equitable  
Community Engagement

Facilitated conversation,  
using the Vision Kit as an  
agenda



# Zoom In: Focus Groups

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Younger People (Ages 15-24) + Youth Commission

Younger People (Ages 25-35)

People with Disabilities + Commission on Disability

Black, Indigenous & People of Color + Human Rights Commission

Renters +NHA +NCDF +More

LGBTQ+ + Human Rights Commission

Older Adults (Ages 65+) + Council on Aging

Creative Communities + Cultural Development of the Parks,  
Recreation & Culture Department

**Dates TBD**

**Fill out a Focus  
Group Interest Form  
at**

[newtonma.gov/zoningredesign](https://newtonma.gov/zoningredesign)

# Zoom In: **Focus Groups**

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**Equality**



**Equity**

# Zoom In: Outreach

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## Neighborhood Area Councils

- Newton Highlands
- Newtonville NAC
- Upper Falls NAC
- Waban NAC

## Commissions/ Committees

- Commission on Disability
- Council on Aging
- Youth Commission
- Human Rights Commission
- Transportation Advisory Group
- Economic Development Commission
- Citizens Commission on Energy

## Stakeholders

- 350Mass Newton Node
- Bike Newton
- Boys & Girls Club
- Chinese American Association of Newton (CAAN)
- Culture Center of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office
- Defund Newton Police
- Engine6
- Families Organizing for Racial Justice (FORJ)
- FUUSN - Social Action Council
- Green Newton
- Green Newton - School Connections
- Harmony Foundation
- Hyde Community Center
- League of Women Voters - Newton

- Myrtle Baptist Church
- New Art Center
- Newton Center for Civic Engagement
- Newton Coalition of Black Residents
- Newton Community Development Foundation
- Newton Housing Authority
- Newton Interfaith Clergy Association (NICA)
- Newton Lower Falls Improvement Association
- Newton Neighbors Helping Neighbors

- Newton Public School System (PTOs + Teachers + Social Workers + Students)
- NNHS NextGen Voices
- Right-Size Newton
- Safe Routes to School Task Force
- Temple Emanuel Social Justice Group
- Temple Shalom
- The Village Bank
- U-CHAN
- Understanding Our Differences
- Waban Improvement Society
- Welcoming Newton

# Economic Development Engagement

**With Economic Development  
Commission**

Focus Groups + Storefront  
Surveying

Fill out [Interest Form](#)

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# On-the-Spot Surveying

Dog parks, playgrounds,  
athletic events, transit  
stops

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# How Can Councilors Help Increase Participation + Directly Hear from Newton communities?

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Spread Word

Newsletters + Emails + Social Media

Host Your Own 'Vision Kit'

Can host both in-person & virtual

Help Flyer Village Centers

Staff can help with logistics

Additional Ideas?

Staff will create a public calendar of when 'Vision Kits' will be held

# Website Tour

[newtonma.gov/zoningredesign/VC](https://newtonma.gov/zoningredesign/VC)

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