

City of Newton Zoning & Planning Committee

Village Center Zoning: Phase 1 Engagement



Agenda

1. Introduction

Context of Engagement

2. What We Learned

Takeaways

3. Looking Ahead

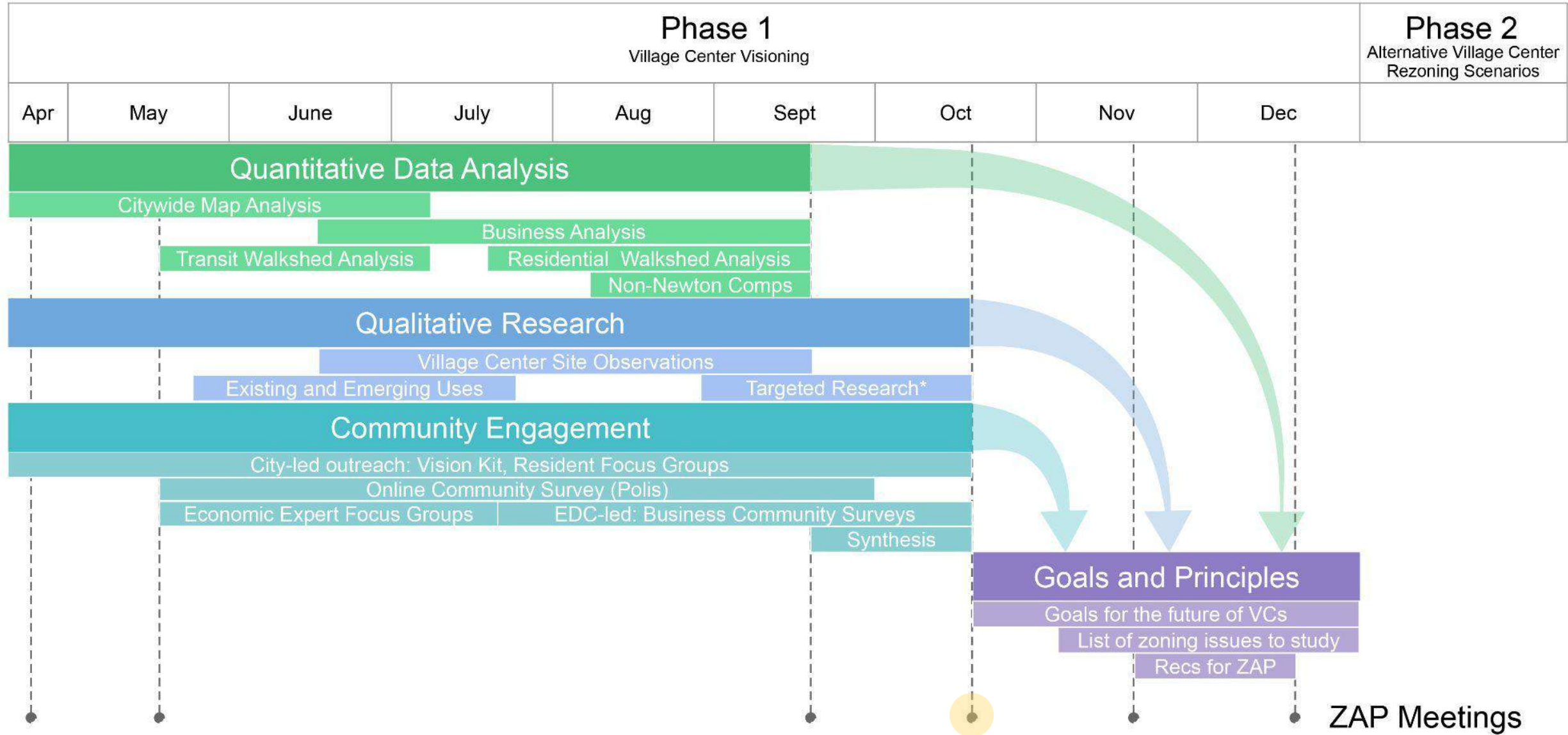
Zoning Considerations
Calendar

4. Discussion

2021 Calendar



Today
Present engagement results.

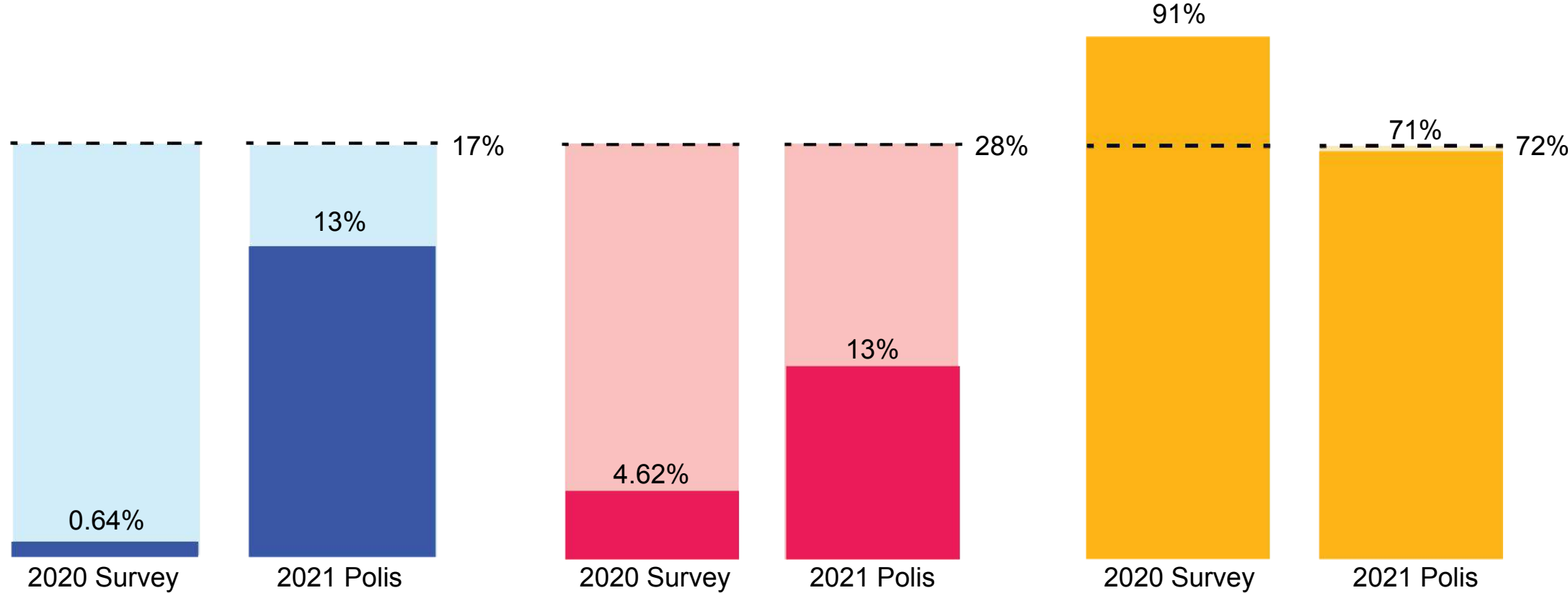


Context of Engagement



Engagement participation - broader representation (~2000 voices)

Total of Population (2019 5-year ACS Estimates)



Ages 15-24

Renters

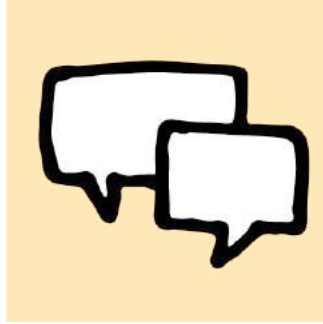
Homeowners

What the engagement was - what we had planned



Vision Kit

290 participants /
102 submissions



Online interactive forum

1,249 participants



Equitable focus groups

139 participants
18 community facilitators



Economic development engagement

41 participants



History presentation

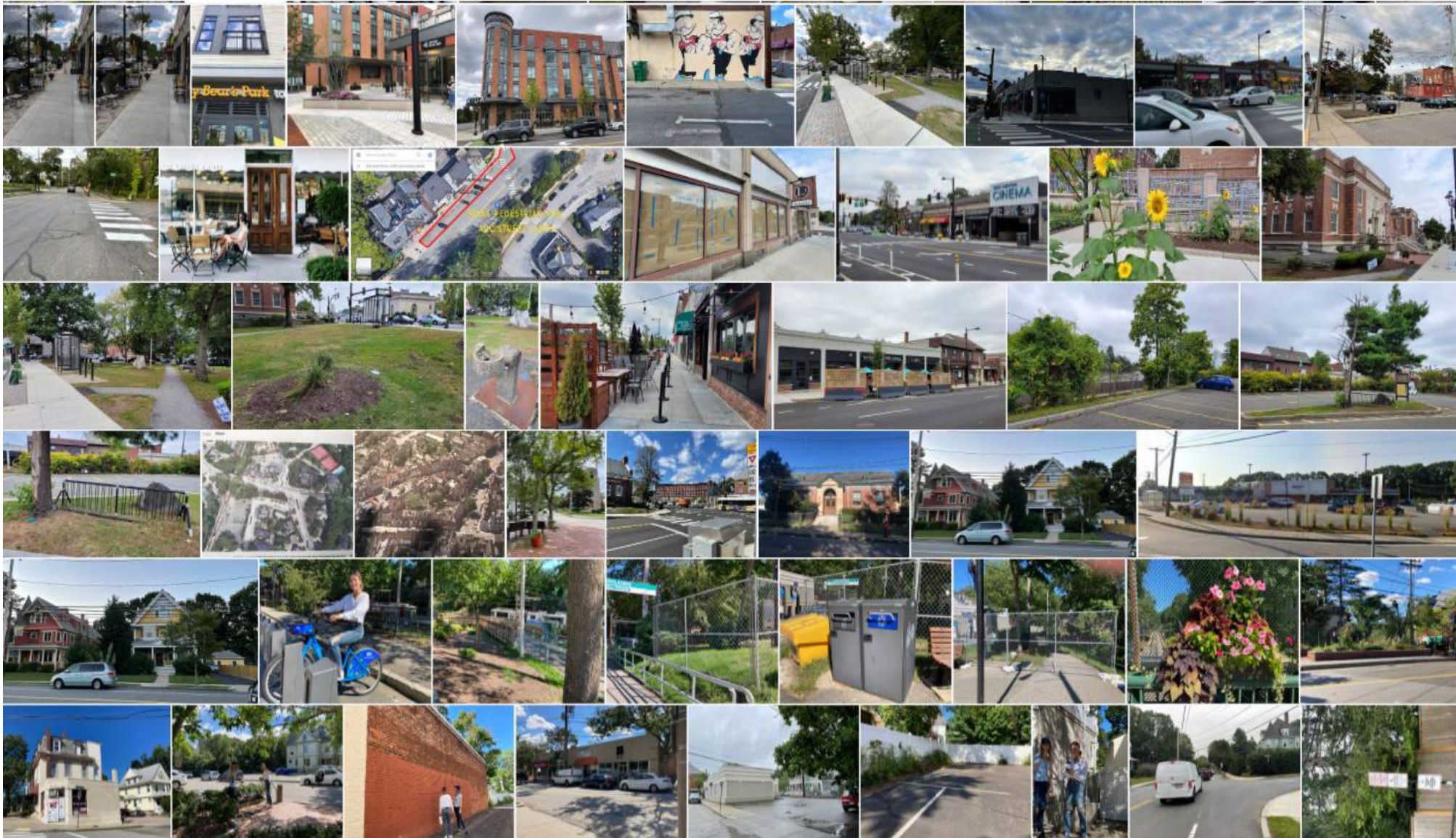
88 attendees/
viewed 165 times



On-the-spot Surveying

Over 500 engaged in-person

Vision Kit submissions



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



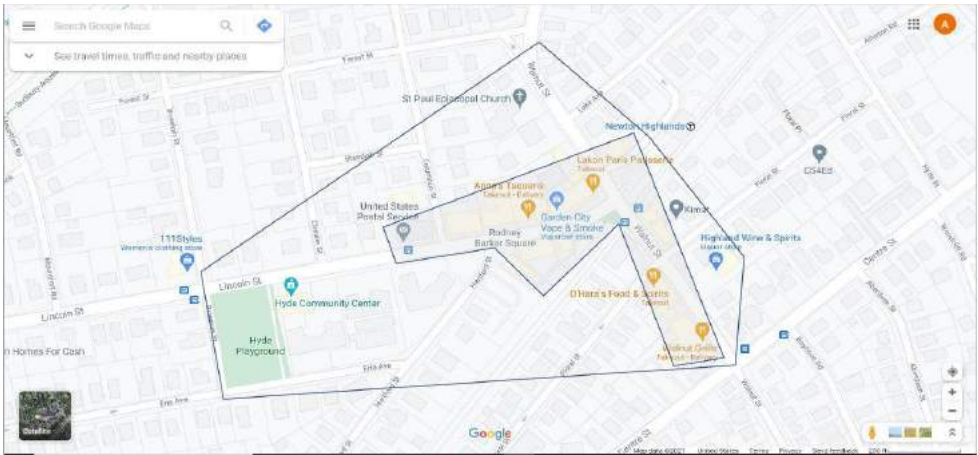
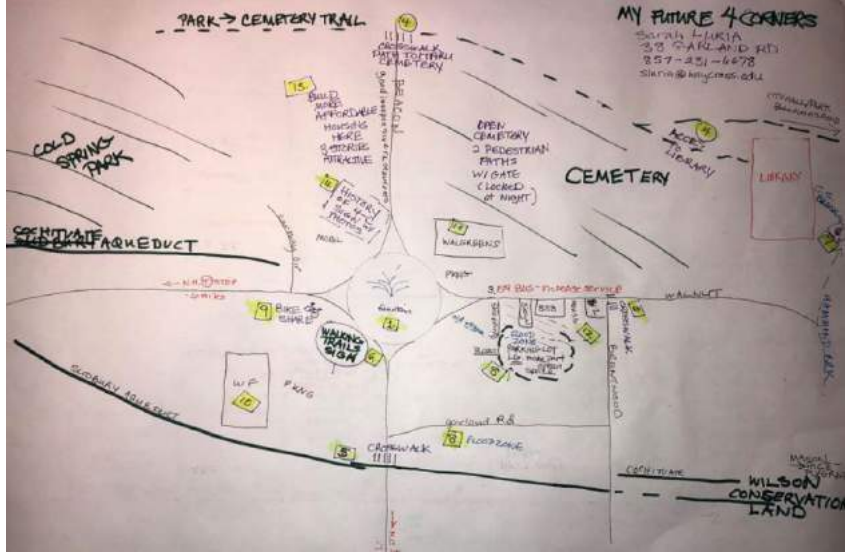
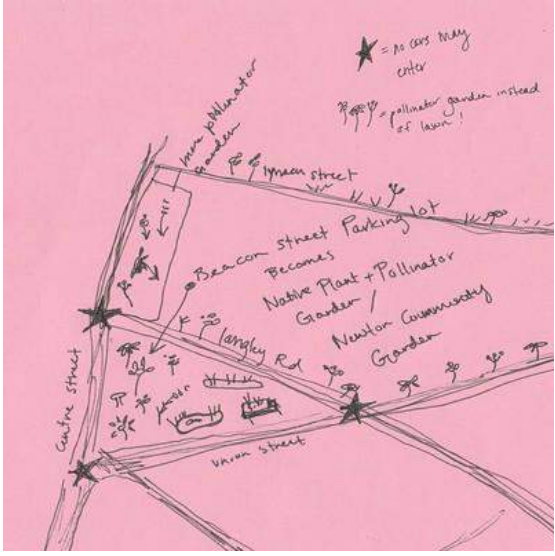
Go to the stores and restaurants you often visit, or ones you are looking forward to revisiting when safe to do so. What do you prefer to buy in person versus online?

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

[Click Here](#) to submit just text

Vision Kit submissions - maps



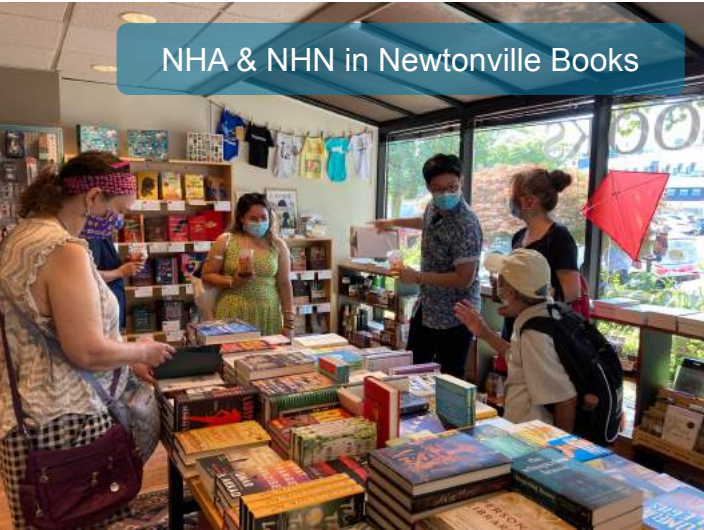
Vision Kit submissions - collages



Vision Kit submissions - historic and other images



What the engagement was - additional opportunities



What the engagement was - additional opportunities



YMCA



Interns' Vision Kit in Newton Centre



Festa in Nonantum



Newton Free Public Library



Upper Falls Village Day

Where?

Site Observation



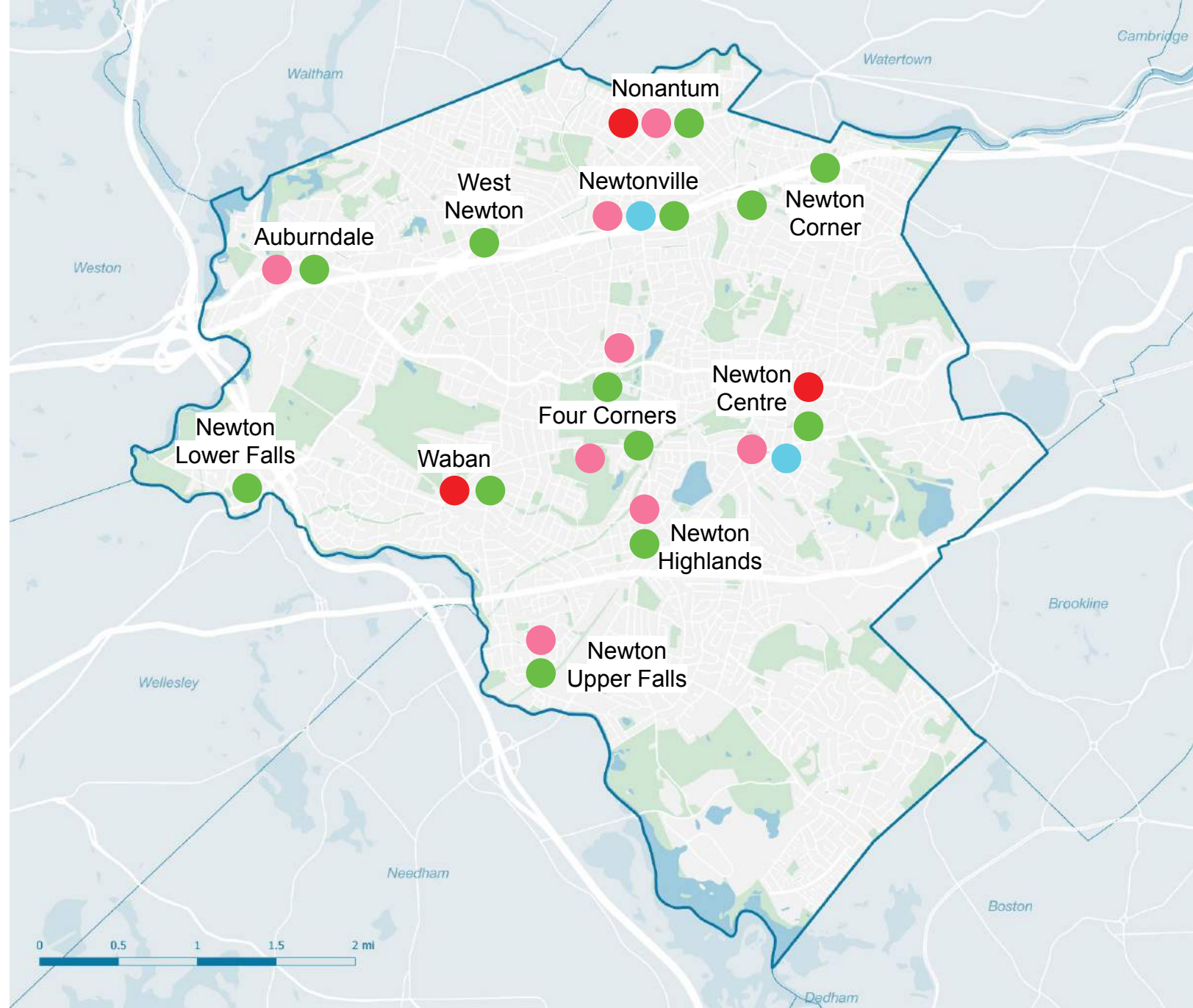
NHA & NHN Tours



High School Interns



Staff Tabling



Who we reached out to & heard from

- co-hosted focus group
- submitted a Vision Kit
- staff tabled at event of

Neighborhood Area Councils

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

Commissions, Committees & Departments

- Commission on Disability
- Council on Aging
- Youth Commission
- Department of Health & Human Services (workers)
- Department of Planning & Development (workers)
- Historic Newton
- Human Rights Commission
- Newton Senior Center
- Transportation Advisory Group
- Economic Development Commission
- Citizens Commission on Energy
- Parks, Recreation + Culture Planning & Development Board

Councilors

- Reached out to all Councilors
- 12 Councilors of 5 Wards

Stakeholders

- 350Mass Newton Node
- Bike Newton
- Boston College Graduate Student Union
- Boys & Girls Club
- Chestnut Hill Association
- Chinese American Association of Newton (CAAN)
- ● *Cultural Development (City)*
- 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

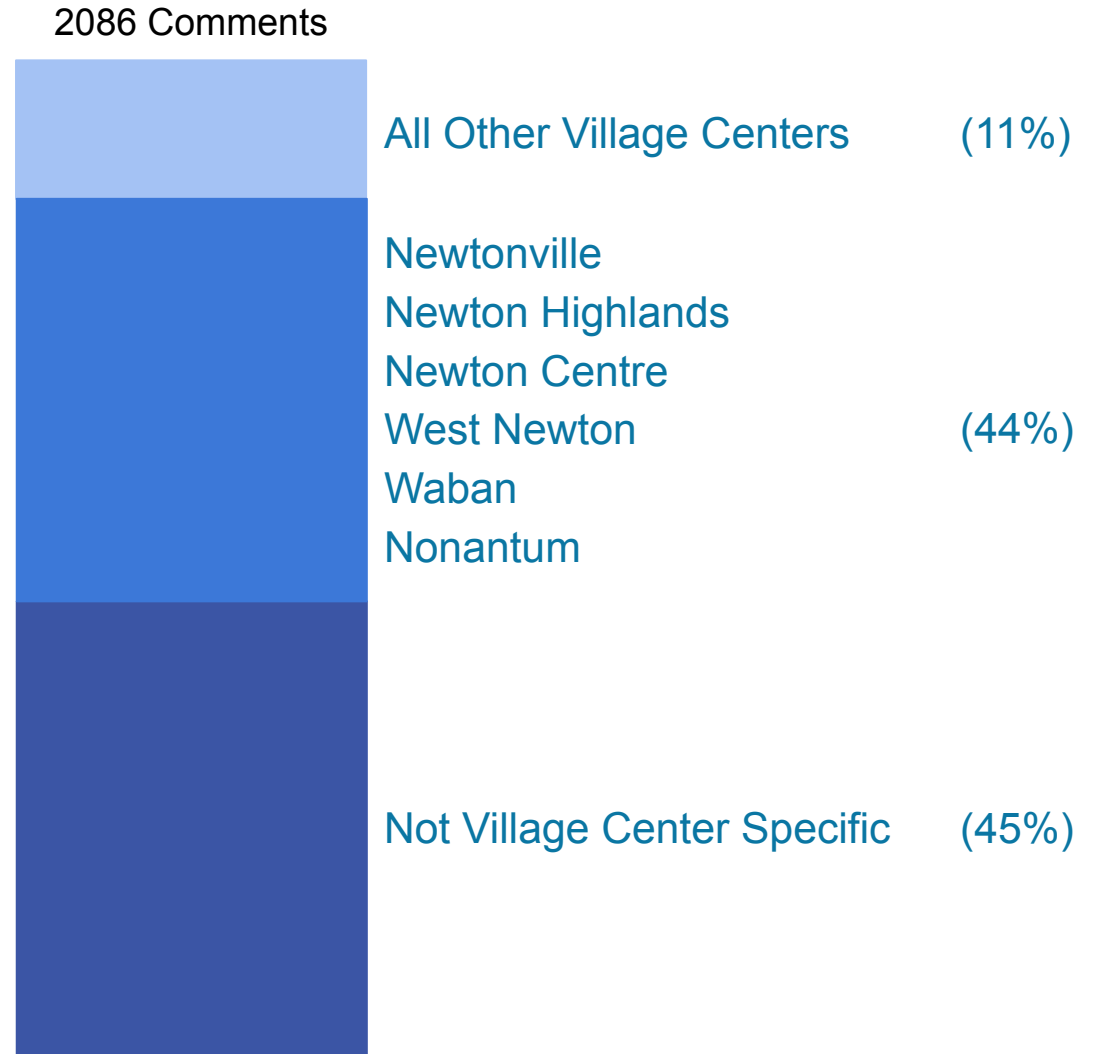
- Green Newton - Youth Group
- Harmony Foundation
- Hyde Community Center
- League of Women Voters - Newton
- Myrtle Baptist Church
- New Art Center
- Newton Center for Civic Engagement
- Newton Coalition of Black Residents
- Newton Community Development Foundation
- *Newton Housing Authority*
- Newton Interfaith Clergy Association (NICA)
- Newton Lower Falls Improvement Association
- *Newton Neighbors Helping Neighbors*
- NNHS & NSHS's Sustainability Courses
- Newton Open Studio

- Newton Public School System (PTOs + Teachers + Social Workers + Students)
- Newton Talks Race
- Newton Teachers Association
- NNHS NextGen Voices
- Right-Size Newton
- Safe Routes to School Task Force
- St. Mary of Carmen Society
- Team Sangiolo
- Temple Emanuel Social Justice Group
- Temple Shalom
- The Village Bank
- Tour de Newton
- U-CHAN
- Understanding Our Differences
- Waban Improvement Society
- Welcoming Newton

How much we heard about each village center

Staff asked community members to cite specific examples of village centers that already modeled what they hope for.

Community members reflected on hopes for village centers in general as well as cited specific wants or needs.



How we synthesized the information - tagging

Vision Kits

Equitable
Focus Groups

EDC Focus Groups

Value T	Theme	Sub-Theme/Category	Specific comment	Village Center
4.8	Environment Environment	Create and implement sidewalk lighting standards	Dense shrubbery, changes in level and inadequate pedestrian links between the upper and lower parts of the village fragment it, leading to a suboptimal retail environment and/or excessive car travel over very small distances. Without eliminating the well-tended planting, it should be quite easy to establish a better connection, both visual and pedestrian between the two parts of the village.	Waban West Newton
4.12	Environment	Use shared parking to reduce parking footprint in village centers	this is a very sad water fountain There are a lot of surface parking lots in west newton, both private and public. These spaces create "heat islands" and incentivize driving. Is there a way to consolidate these lots into a garage and adapt the parking lots for more environmentally conscious uses?	West Newton
4.5	Environment	Embrace alternatives to driving	A multi-modal bike/bus interchange that makes it easy to get around without a car! It would be nice if there were more destinations in Newton I could take the bus to	West Newton
2.1	Housing	Balance Housing Needs with the Need for Commercial Space	This area would be a great place for housing with retail on the 1st floor. Though it has been nice to have the empty space for outdoor dining	Newton Highlands
2.1	Housing	Balance Housing Needs with the Need for Commercial Space	Two or three stories of housing should be built above these stores on Lincoln St., including Post Office	Newton Highlands
2.1	Housing	Balance Housing Needs with the Need for Commercial Space	Housing should be built here, 3 stories above the stores. Stores could remain.	Newton Highlands
-	Housing	Seek high-quality design that is responsive to context	Can DRT define encourage building styles and elements and such that work for each village rather than responding to individual projects each time?	Newton Highlands
2.3	Housing	Pursue diverse housing choices to meet changing housing needs of a diverse population.	While Newton Highlands is one of the more compact Village Centers and one with a narrower thru street and narrower sidewalks, I do not feel like the buildings are too tall. In fact I think they all ought to be able to be at least 3 stories.	Newton Highlands
2.3	Housing	Pursue diverse housing choices to meet changing housing needs of a diverse population.	Is there an opportunity to build a multi-use building over the public parking lot? It is over 16k square feet of space.	Newton Highlands
2.6	Housing	Need more affordable housing	MU4 should have 25% affordable.	Newtonville
2.11	Housing	Encourage mixed-use projects in villages and commercial corridors, especially those with mass transit.	Good location for multi-unit development at the corner of Langley and Union across for the T. The building to the right is currently for sale. Redeveloping these properties would help strengthen governance so the city and developers and businesses are working together to improve our city centers, MBTA and T stations.	Newton Centre
1.13	Housing	Require new construction and major renovations to maximize energy efficiency, maximize the use of renewable energy including thermal energy, and use electricity for heating and cooling.	1188 Centre St Citizens Bank--very ugly and has potential to be beautiful and multifunctional and in a perfect location walking distance from everything essential. Any similar development must be done in tandem with building complete streets so that new residents will not worsen traffic and increase GHG emissions by driving. High energy efficient and 100% fossil fuel free development should be prioritized and other environmental benefits to restore local ecology through rain gardens/landscaping/trees. In the heart of Newtonville, 28 Austin St, a Mixed-use development with affordable units. Allowing more similar development could strengthen	Newton Centre



Environment [1.01-1.07]

Housing [2.01-2.10]

Shopping, Eating + Working [3.01-3.12]

Transportation [4.01-4.10]

Village Center Context [5.01-5.06]

Regulatory Process [6.01-6.05]

Accessibility [7.01-7.06]

Arts + Culture [8.01-8.04]

Inclusive, Diverse + Welcoming Spaces [9.01-9.09]

Zoning Redesign Engagement + Process [10.01-10.08]

How we synthesized the information - tagging

Environment [1.01-1.07]

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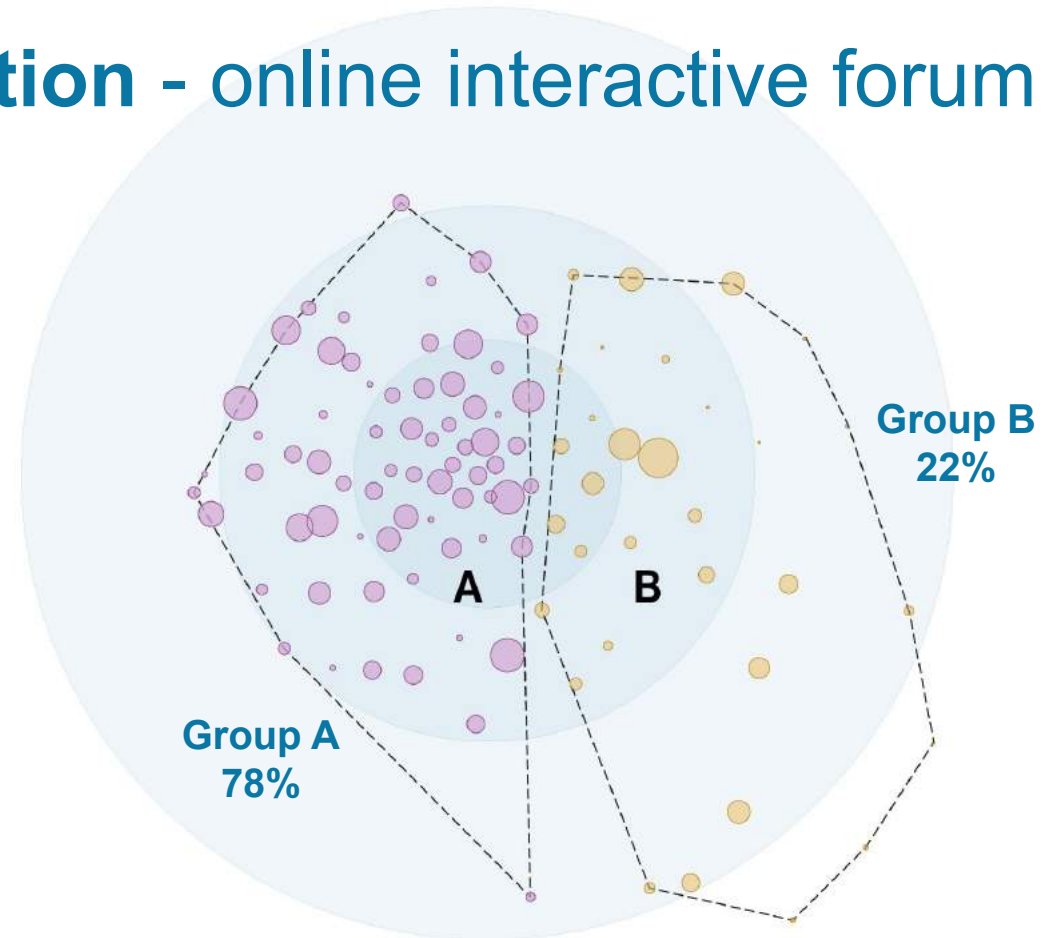


Accessibility [7.01-7.06]

Theme	Sub-Theme	Tag #	Count
Accessibility			7
Accessibility	Make sidewalks and curbcuts more accessible for people with physical disabilities	7.01	50
Accessibility	Incorporate Universal Design into spaces and amenities, through updates to current infrastructure and requirements of new development	7.02	35
Accessibility	Need more seating options in public space	7.03	13
Accessibility	Accessible all four seasons (including winter!)	7.04	3
Accessibility	Need more accessible parking stalls	7.05	2
Accessibility	Observation - accessibility options currently in VCs	7.06	1

How we synthesized the information - online interactive forum

- **1,427** people voted (based on logins or individual devices)
- **1,249** people grouped (978 in Group A, 271 in Group B)
- **124,427** votes were cast
- **484** statements were submitted
- **87.19** votes per voter on average



Groups - online interactive forum

Group A (78% of respondents)

Group A agrees with
and Group B disagrees with:

Increasing density in village centers will increase walkability and encourage people to do more trips without their cars.

We need multi-unit housing in and near the village centers. Preferably by right.

Group B (22% of respondents)

Group B agrees with
and Group A disagrees with:

I moved to newton for what it was, don't try to radically change it.

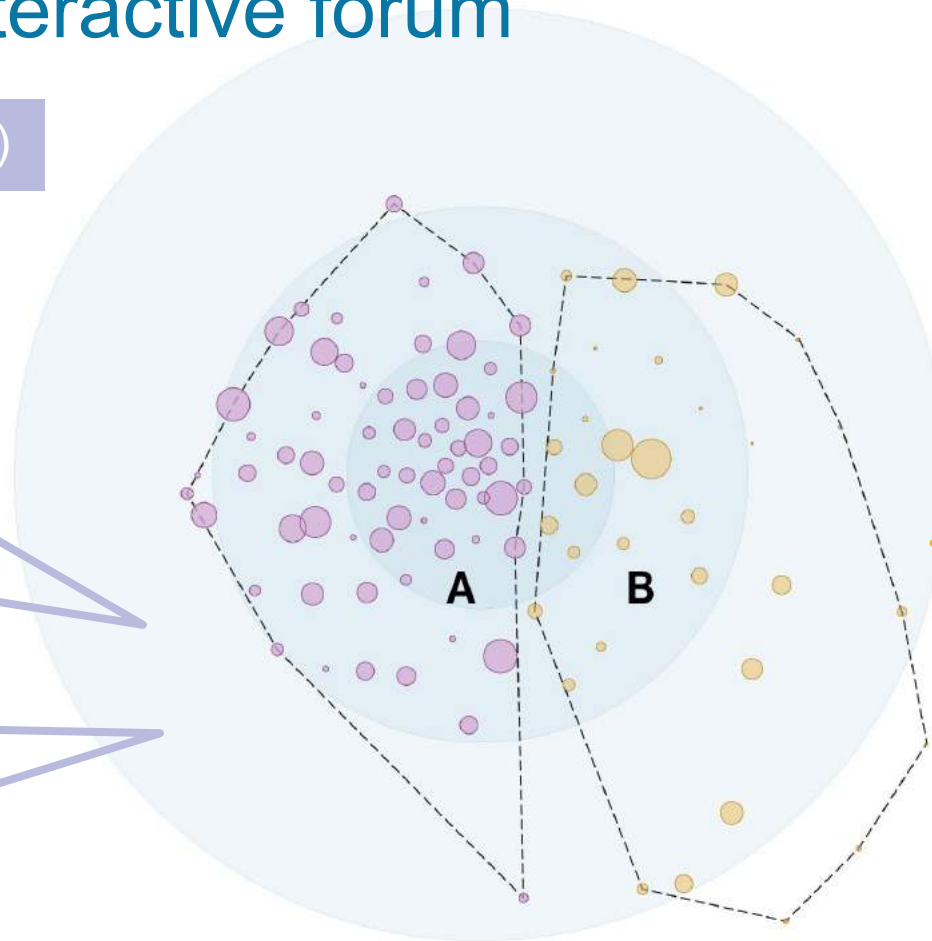
3-4 story blgs a in VCs is a major change/bad idea. It only takes a few taller buildings to make a canyon. NO MORE TRIO HULKS

Both Groups Agree:

Village Center should have places to do errands, get a bite to eat, go to an event and also to "just hang out" and talk and people watch.

Once I am in a Village Center, being able to easily and safely walk to all the businesses is important to me.

More outdoor seating, dining, meeting places. COVID has taught us that we can (and like to) hang out outdoors.



What We Learned



***almost all photos in this presentation come from community member Vision Kit submissions**

What we learned - takeaways

Climate resiliency through built structures and green spaces

Communal & Public Space + Activation

More Diverse housing options and encourage mixed-use projects

Increase ease to get to Village Centers, especially through alternatives to driving

Increase accessibility to buildings and infrastructure within Village Centers

Make the permitting process easier, clearer and multi-tiered

Increasing the ability for small businesses to begin, stay and thrive in Village Centers

Communal & Public Space + Activation

People want more communal and green spaces: indoors + outdoors where they can naturally bump into people, activated for events and public art and markets, and feel included and seen.



Communal & Public Space + Activation

Keep and expand outdoor dining

Rethink parking lots for these uses

Some current public spaces do not feel inclusive nor representative

Use zoning tools to encourage or require public art and creative uses in public and private new development

Love the NewArt OutDoors and Murals

Limited space for teens/young people to gather

Create village center branding for arts, culture, history, and civic life

Balance housing needs with the need for open/ public space

Appreciation for existing park/recreational areas

What We Learned:

Communal & Public Space: More + Activated



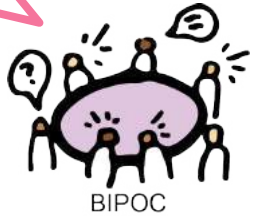
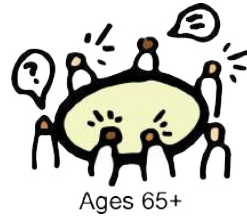
Great night for music and community gathering at the Hyde Playground. Could there be places like this in other villages?
(Vision Kit Submission)



Rehab Nonantum Children's Library roof, stairs, landscaping, open for community use, restore library use

(Vision Kit Submission)

Communal & Public Space: More + Activated



Because I live in a building, with limited space for storage and other extra needs, and on a fixed income, I want my village center to help fill/provide my needs, and other general community needs that could be met through the public realm.

(Renter Focus Group)

I have to go to other cities and towns to eat my food, hear my music, etc. I know this won't happen overnight. But maybe we can have more temporary spaces so these things can happen on a regular basis. I love my community and I want to keep my money here.

(BIPOC Focus Group)

Because of the resistance a number of Newton citizens demonstrated when they learned that a group home was opening in their village/neighborhood, there needs to be public education about the value and benefit of inclusion.

(People with Disabilities Focus Group)

Dedicated spaces to just be a young person that is not affiliated with a school or actual building. Example: open space with tables and chairs, green spaces to sit on and play games, spaces for young people to just "be."

(Age 15-24 Focus Group)

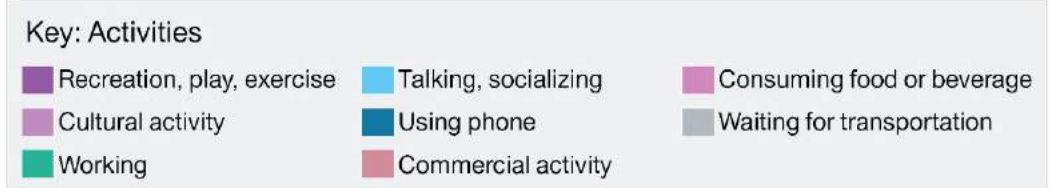
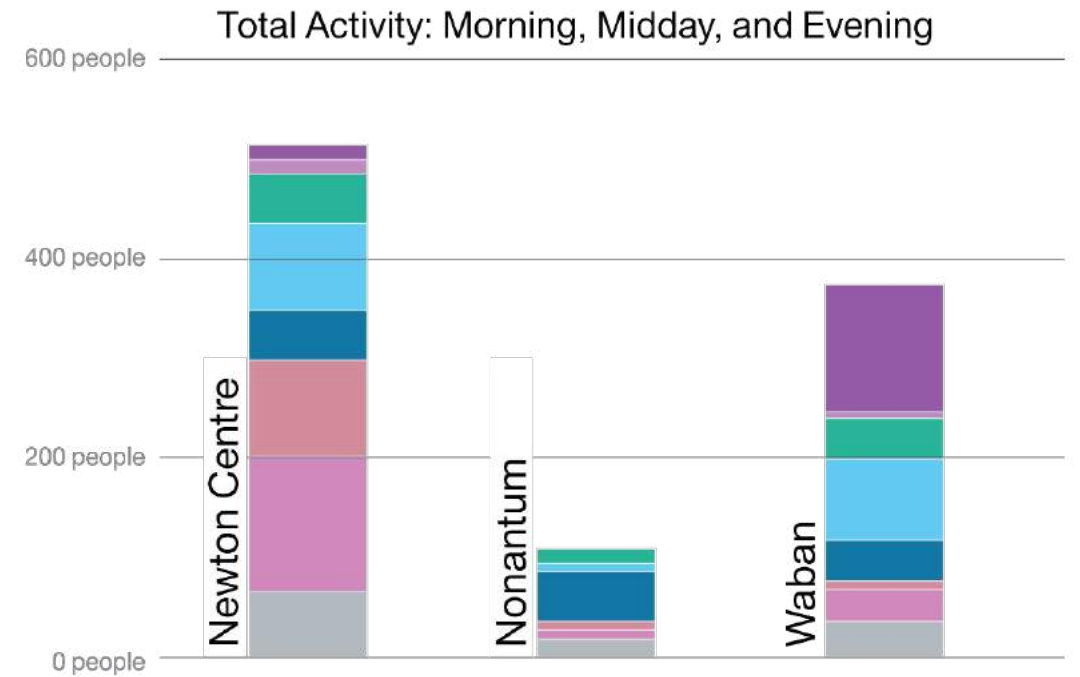
Ages 15-24

Ages 25-35

Communal & Public Space: More + Activated



Encourage activity at all times of day to support businesses
(Economic Development Focus Group #2)



Observed July 2021, 7-9am, 12-2pm, and 4-6pm. Gathered information contains aberrations due to the season, weather, the pandemic, differences in the data collectors, etc.

Communal & Public Space: More + Activated

More Agreement

Less Agreement



Outdoor dining brings vibrancy to village centers

87% agree

The pandemic has shown the importance of sidewalks and streets for businesses. We should (...) make it easier for businesses to use the open space in village centers moving forward.

82% agree

Outdoor performance space (for music, visual art, theatre) belongs in our village centers.

67% agree

There should be public spaces which can be enjoyed without buying anything

85% agree

Village centers should have a center-- a public green space to congregate-- in the spirit of a European plaza.

70% agree

Each village center will have a space for cultural & community events that can be used by all.

60% agree



What We Learned:

Climate resiliency through built structures and green spaces.

People want more and better green spaces, more trees, and stronger commitments to climate resiliency



Climate resiliency through built structures and green spaces.

Increase green space and street/park tree canopy coverage throughout the City in public and private spaces

Want better maintenance of and improvements to city parks, playgrounds, public spaces, and other recreational facilities

Appreciate existing park/recreational areas

Focus on natural climate resilience - encourage natural areas, native species habitat, stormwater management capacity, and passive recreational potential

Environmental justice is important

Focus on built climate resilience - require new construction and major renovations to maximize energy efficiency, maximize the use of renewable energy, and use electricity for heating and cooling

Promote pollution and waste reduction through allowing residents to live low-carbon lifestyles

Climate resiliency through built structures and green spaces.

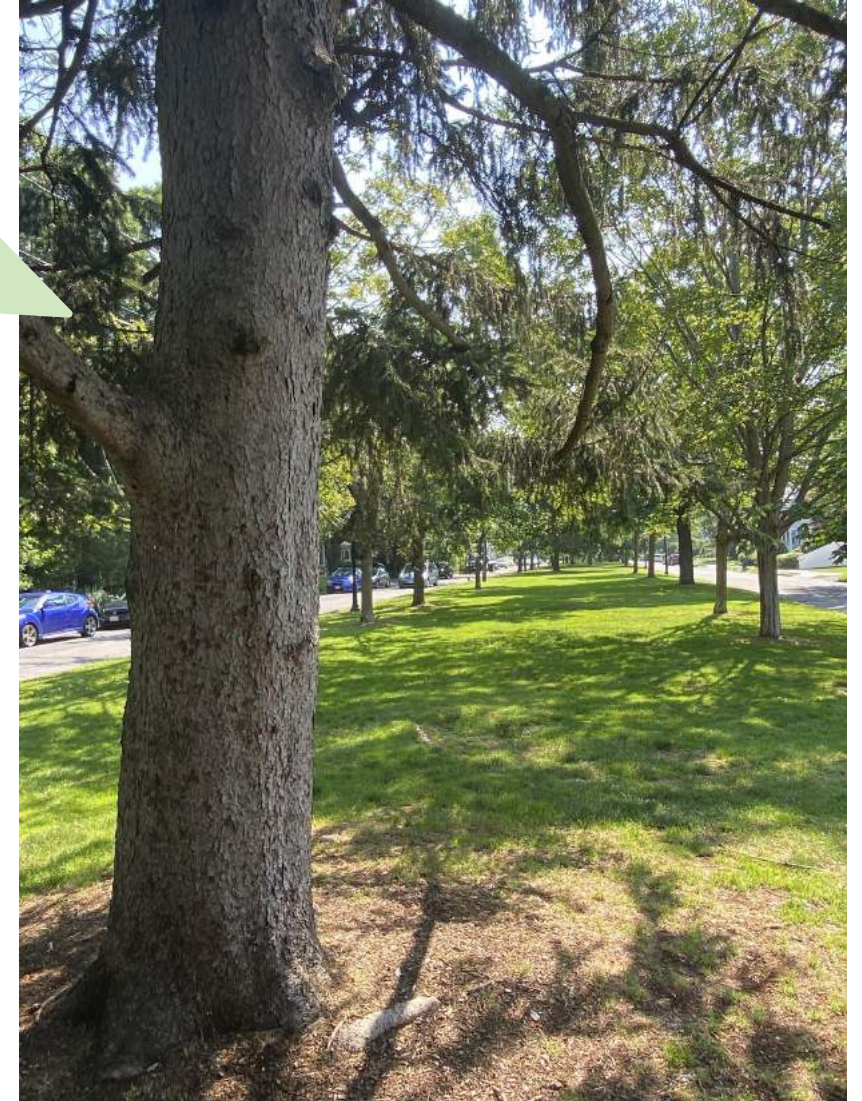


Want more green spaces, nature and beautification required in all new developments.

(Vision Kit Submission)

A good location for pollinator gardens is the green space along Centre St across from CVS and Tango Mango. Pollinator gardens help with biodiversity and promote healthy ecosystems, educate the public about the importance of pollinators, encourage community beauty and peace.

(Vision Kit Submission)



Climate resiliency through built structures and green spaces.



Village centers should strive to be net zero or as close to zero GHG emissions if possible, and should support nature/biodiversity and water replenishment.

(Vision Kit Submission)



Attendees suggested requiring solar panels on buildings especially those with flat roofs, commercial parking lots, and the Cold Spring Park parking lot. Parking lots with longer term parking should include electric charging stations. However, concerns about the aesthetics of parking lot solar panels were raised.

(Vision Kit Submission)

Parking lot behind Walgreens - good for slower chargers, biggest lot with most open spaces often and easy to get in and out. Another idea: this space could be developed into new apartment buildings with some affordable housing units and then add EV charging spaces at the end of that process.

(Vision Kit Submission)



Climate resiliency through built structures and green spaces.

More Agreement

Less Agreement

We should believe the scientific consensus on climate change and plan for a sustainable future that is less car dependent

71% agree

It would be great for the environment/climate change and for local businesses if more people could live in or near village centers

65% agree

Buildings like the one just approved in Newton Highlands are good for village centers and the environment. There should be more like this

41% agree

The city should prioritize planting trees where there are fewer trees in the city

79% agree

More public green spaces -- parks, playgrounds on the north side of Newton

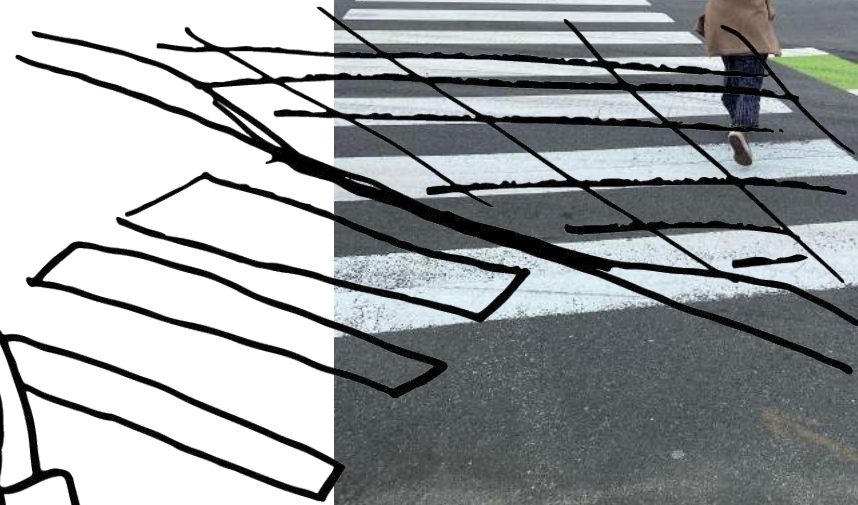
65% agree

We need to find ways for people to live near villages to help deal with climate change. Less driving. Fewer cars.

60% agree

Increase accessibility to buildings and infrastructure

Increasing accessibility across a broad spectrum is a key value, and we should work towards inclusivity through updates to current infrastructure and requirements in future development



Increase accessibility to buildings and infrastructure

Make sidewalks and curbcuts more accessible for people with physical disabilities

Need more seating options in public space

Accessible all four seasons (including winter!)

Need more accessible parking stalls

Incorporate Universal Design into spaces and amenities, through updates to current infrastructure and requirements of new development

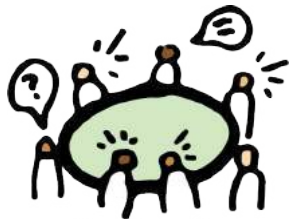
Increase accessibility to buildings and infrastructure

Accessibility is an issue ..it's really hard to get fully accessible housing without getting buildings that are big enough to have an elevator. But if we build multi-families where each flat is one floor instead of townhouses, maybe that could work.

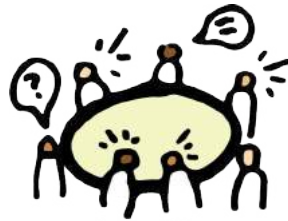
(Older adults Focus Group)

The many non-vehicle interests are competing for a small amount of space... We simply need more outdoor non-vehicular space in our villages for people

(VIsion Kit Submission)



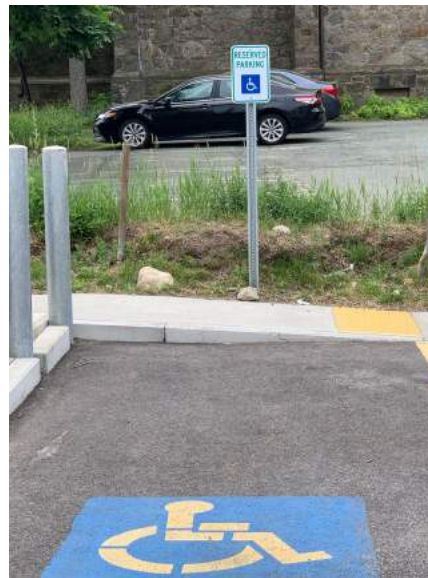
People with Disabilities



Ages 65+

Everyone who makes policy for the city should try to navigate the city for a day in a wheelchair and see how hard it is with the way things are now.

(People with disabilities Focus Group)



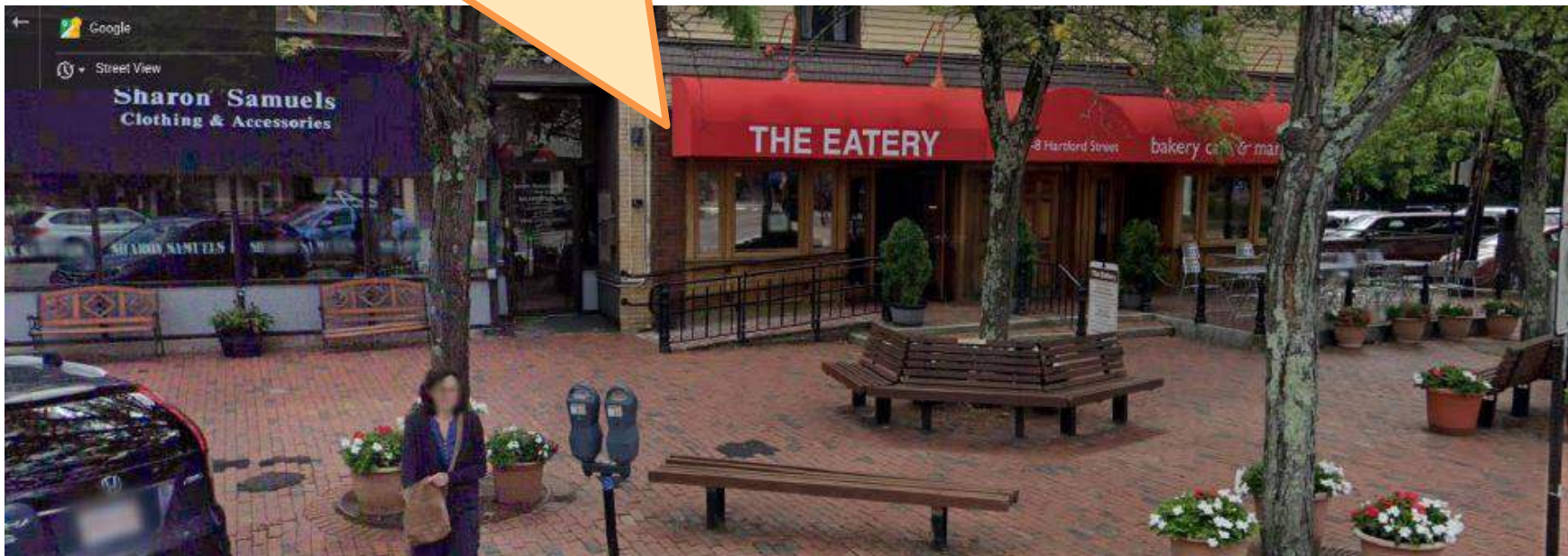
Increase accessibility to buildings and infrastructure

BAD: The brick, while pretty, is difficult to keep smooth enough to not impede safe travel by foot and for people with limited mobility or in a wheelchair. **GOOD:** Benches. Ramp up to historic building.

(Vision Kit Submission)

My ideal village would have a number of crosswalks, traffic lights with crossing instructions that you can hear and enough time to cross the street, curb cuts for wheelchairs and strollers, benches near the bus stops, a bank, a pharmacy, a restaurant or pizza place, and a post office. Also, store owners would be very good about shoveling their sidewalks in winter.

(People with disabilities Focus Group)



Increase accessibility to buildings and infrastructure

More Agreement

Less Agreement



Once I am in a Village Center, being able to easily and safely walk to all the businesses is important to me.

84% agree

Traffic in village centers and neighboring streets needs to be slowed down and intersection violations addressed

51% agree

We need to include renewable energy technology and accessibility modifications for disabled people in our village center buildings.

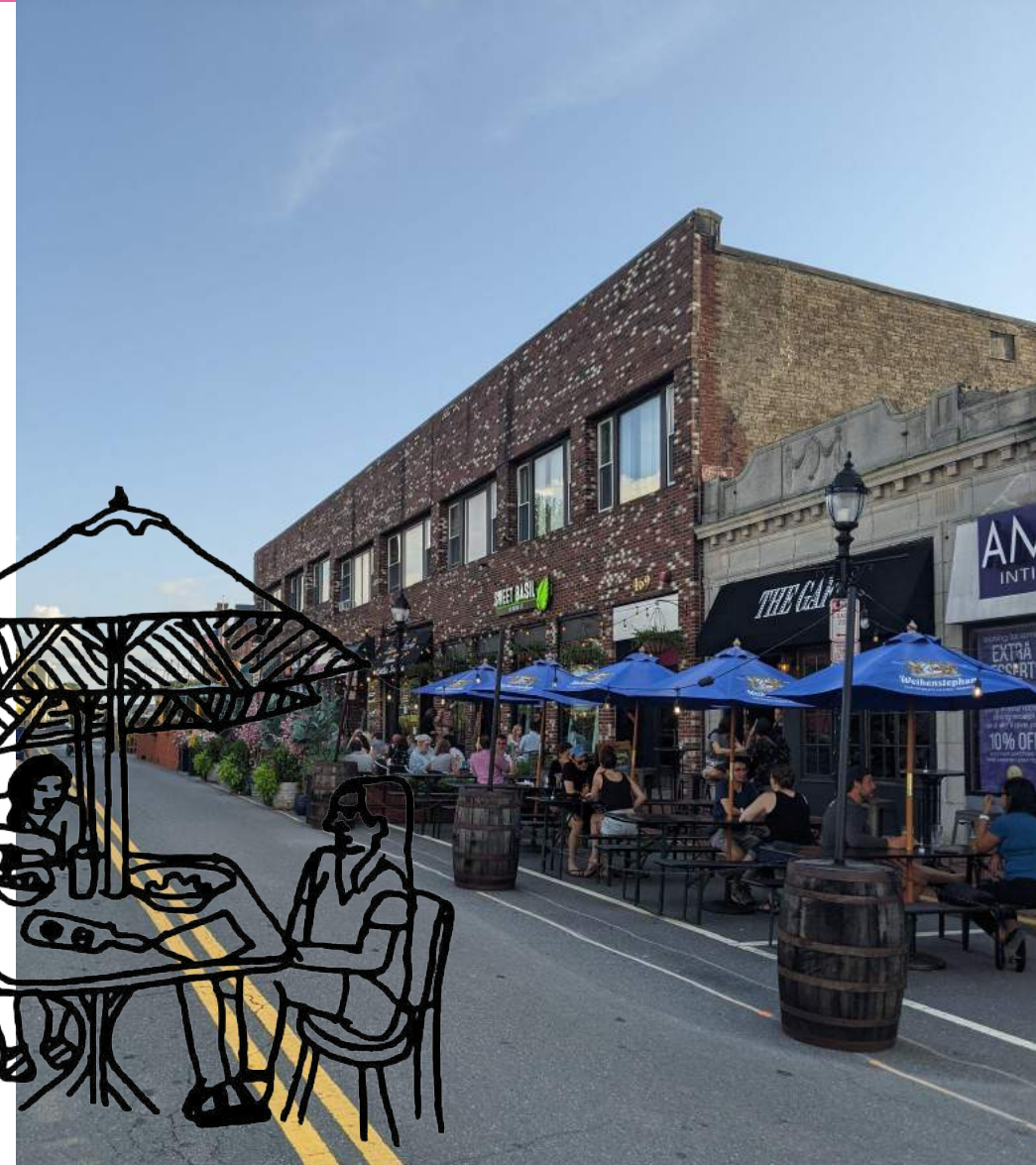
69% agree



What We Learned:

Allow small businesses to begin, stay and thrive

Encourage and support small, local, and independent business that contribute to the vibrancy of village centers



Allow small businesses to begin, stay and thrive

Encourage a mix of commercial uses (retail, office, etc.) in village centers

Observation - Newton has strong purchasing power

Promote businesses that have longer operating hours and nightlife uses

Develop more programs to attract small businesses in village centers (incubator spaces, pop-ups in vacant storefronts, and subsidized rent)

Better understand and provide more support to existing businesses

Allow small businesses to begin, stay and thrive

The adaptability of retail space is important. Allowing larger spaces to be broken down into smaller spaces, with shared infrastructure, creates density and the conditions for smaller more local retail.

(Brokers and Consultants and Developer Focus Groups)



Pop-up retail can incubate new businesses

(Brokers and Consultants and Developer Focus Groups)



Nonantum has something special - mix of uses? narrowness of street? It is a tight knit community where business owners know each other. (Business Owners Focus Group)



Likely increase in demand for offices, both typical and co-working, as well as fast-casual dining for lunch meetings.

(Brokers and Consultants and Developer Focus Groups)

Allow small businesses to begin, stay and thrive



These are some of the businesses that make West Newton Square interesting and unique. Need to keep small storefronts like these, some <15ft wide, to have room for variety, and affordable small spaces.

(Vision Kit Submission)



***Too many banks!
newton center NEEDS
more PRODUCTIVE
businesses!!!***

(Vision Kit Submission)

Waban small businesses have closed in part because there is insufficient housing and more housing built above these businesses would help them thrive.

(Vision Kit Submission)



Allow small businesses to begin, stay and thrive

More Agreement

Less Agreement



Village Centers need a variety of boutique businesses, not just banks and nail salons.

86% agree

My village center needs more useful everyday shops like a grocery, hardware, clothing, and shoe stores.

67% agree

There's a chronic lack of small business stores, somehow rents must be come down to have more diversity.

63% agree

Village centers could do more to attract arts and cultural uses, including permanent venues and pop-up/temporary opportunities.

71% agree



More Diverse Housing Options and Encourage Mixed-Use

Housing in village centers should be varied (size, type, price, etc.) to meet the needs of Newton's diverse population. Designs should be sustainable and high quality to fit within the different village centers.



More Diverse Housing Options and Encourage Mixed-Use

Encourage development projects in villages and commercial corridors, especially those with transit

Pursue diverse housing choices to meet changing housing needs of a diverse population

Create more affordable housing options overall, as well as specific projects for people with disabilities, seniors, and other vulnerable populations

New development of big apartment complexes is not affordable and increases prices overall in the neighborhood

Seek high-quality design that is responsive to context

Balance housing needs with the need for commercial space and open/public space

Maintain, reduce or limit density currently permitted

Concern about teardowns

More Diverse Housing Options and Encourage Mixed-Use

More Agreement

Less Agreement

Allow more housing above stores in our villages

72% agree

Housing should be part of our village centers.

68% agree

3-4 story mixed use buildings in VCs would keep our village economies strong, provide needed housing in walkable locations, build community.

62% agree

I would like to see more housing in the villages but it needs to be aesthetically congruent with interesting architecture...

61% agree

I think it's important for the local stores and restaurants in villages to have enough people living nearby to support their businesses.

66% agree

We need to find ways for people to live near villages to help deal with climate change. Less driving. Fewer cars.

60% agree

I'd like to make sure that the spirit of the village and not a high density city, including traffic, is preserved in all improvements.

54% agree

3-4 story blgs a in VCs is a major change/bad idea. It only takes a few taller buildings to make a canyon. **NO MORE TRIO HULKS**

31% agree

More Diverse Housing Options and Encourage Mixed-Use

More Agreement

Less Agreement

Newton needs more affordable housing for different income levels.

68% agree

Not everyone can afford a down payment so there should be more rental opportunities near village centers

60% agree

Newton needs more homes or ... apartments that are smaller so they will be less expensive

58% agree

I wish there were smaller housing to own options in Newton!! I bought a house twice as big as what I wanted ... 55% agree

working class people should be able to live in Newton

78% agree

Young people/ students should be able to afford a place to live near/around a village center in Newton

60% agree

Older adults (like me) need apt. bldgs. near village centers – small, but big enough for elevators (12-24 units?) -- so we can drive less.

58% agree

People who already own houses please stop gatekeeping homeownership for millenials. There's not enough houses at any size in boston area. 50% agree

If we make Newton high density we leave people no choice - all cities around will be high density - let's keep Newton single family!

21% agree

More Diverse Housing Options and Encourage Mixed-Use



The new apartment buildings in Newtonville have breathed fresh air into this village center. It has felt slow and almost dying for almost a decade, but the improvements (such as Bram Way) are palpable. We need denser housing with commensurate retail to continue to revitalize this part of the city.

(Vision Kit Submission)

In order for Newton to remain a viable city, it needs an availability of housing options. I live in West Newton village center and see that place in dire need of help. I think having more housing there will actually be very helpful.

(Older adults Focus Group)



Ages 65+



We need to continue addressing housing shortages in village centers (ownership & rentals, market rate & affordable).

More Diverse Housing Options and Encourage Mixed-Use

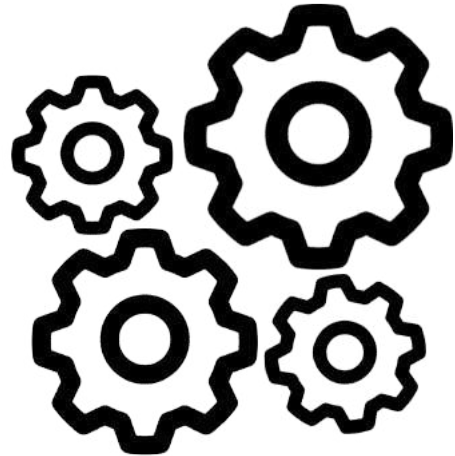
Housing of all levels and housing that's affordable for young people to move into. Common experience for Newton young people to be asked "why don't young people stay here?" It's point blank, too expensive. (Ages 15-24 Focus Group)



What We Learned:

Make the permitting process easier, clearer, and multi-tiered

Fix the regulatory barriers that prevent desired projects at all scales



Make the permitting process easier, clearer, and multi-tiered

Align the Zoning Ordinance with the City's Contemporary values

Develop village center design guidelines

Incentivize the preservation and reuse of the City's historic fabric

Maintain the Special Permit process for larger projects

Make the permitting process easier, clearer, and multi-tiered

If village zoning could allow for more flexibility on how space is used and allow for faster transitions, ability to pivot as opportunities arrive,
(Vision Kit Submission)

As an affordable housing developer, we do not even look at zoning, we just assume 40B.
(Developers Focus Group)



Certainty is needed and Newton doesn't have it! The City needs to make the rules before the developers show up, otherwise we are always reacting and behind the curve.
(Developers Focus Group)



Lots of potential for old factory buildings along California Street.
(Vision Kit Submission)

Make the permitting process easier, clearer, and multi-tiered

More Agreement

Less Agreement

It should be easier to building housing that is more affordable right near or in villages -- simplify the process with clear guidelines.

60% agree

Newton should make the process easier to build affordable housing by either non-profit or private developers -- whatever it takes to do it.

50% agree

If want to attract more business to village center then streamline process at city hall to make more business friendly and cost effective

44% agree

Multifamily buildings should be easy to build near transit

61% agree

We need multi-unit housing in and near the village centers. Preferably by right.

49% agree



Increase ease to get to Village Centers, alternatives to driving.

People want to be able to visit village centers easily- and not just by car. There is a strong interest in embracing alternatives to driving, prioritizing the pedestrian experience, and increasing connectivity overall.



Increase ease to get to Village Centers, alternatives to driving.

Embrace alternatives to driving by expanding access to public transit, local transit, and walking and biking infrastructure

Re-envision major traffic corridors to improve safety for all travel modes

Improve public transit routes and frequency

Improve road safety for pedestrians at crosswalks and intersections

More development will cause more traffic

Prioritize pedestrian-focused core of village center

Find ways to decrease, de-emphasize, combine, or repurpose parking

Availability and quality of parking is an important aspect of village centers

Concern about potential impacts of creating new bike lanes

Increase ease to get to Village Centers, alternatives to driving.



I would like to bike more, but I don't always feel safe. I take public transit when I can, but need greater interconnectivity.
(25-35 Focus Group)



We moved our business to Newton Highlands from Newtonville 3 and half years ago with the hopes that locating on the green line would make it easier to attract young staff. It's generally turned out to be true and I also take advantage of the bus from Needham. It is one of the top two or three reasons we stay in this location.
(Vision Kit Submission)

New Blue Bikes rack and newly accessible T stop are both great. This makes Newton Highlands a great place for more people to live near.
(Vision Kit Submission by 350mass.org)



Increase ease to get to Village Centers, alternatives to driving.



There are a lot of surface parking lots in west newton, both private and public. These spaces create "heat islands" and incentivize driving. Is there a way to consolidate these lots into a garage and adapt the parking lots for more environmentally conscious uses?

(Vision Kit Submission)



This area with the large parking lot and one story buildings could be a multi story multi-use building. Could have a design like Austin Street with parking and retail on the 1st floor. This is just blocks from the T.

(Vision Kit Submission))



Increase ease to get to Village Centers, alternatives to driving.

More Agreement

Less Agreement

Living within walking distance of a village center is important to me.
74% agree

Village Centers should be safely reachable by bicycle
73% agree

It's difficult to get between city centers without a car
70% agree

It is not realistic to not expect folks to drive their cars. We need parking in the village centers
56% agree

Easy parking in the village center is more important to me than the walking and biking experience
32% agree

It should be easy, safe, and cheap to travel without a car (using public transportation, biking, walking, etc)
74% agree

I prefer a balanced, or shared approach to transport in Newton and our village centers (between cars, bikes and walking).
66% agree

Increasing density in village centers will increase walkability and encourage people to do more trips without their cars
55% agree

Looking Ahead



Continued discussion

- More information, including raw data, available at <https://www.newtonma.gov/government/planning/village-centers>
- ZAP discussion to continue on November 8

Engagement Results



[Click here for the Community Feedback Compilation](#)

The 'Community Feedback Compilation' document shows how city staff organized all of the community input, gathered through the channels listed below (except for the Online Interactive forum, which has [its own report](#)), and identified patterns in thoughts and observations.



VISION KITS -
PHOTOS



VISION KITS -
OTHER



INTERACTIVE
FORUM



HISTORY
WEBINAR



FOCUS
GROUPS



BUSINESS
COMMUNITY

Spanish, Chinese & Russian



Vision Kit



Online Interactive Forum



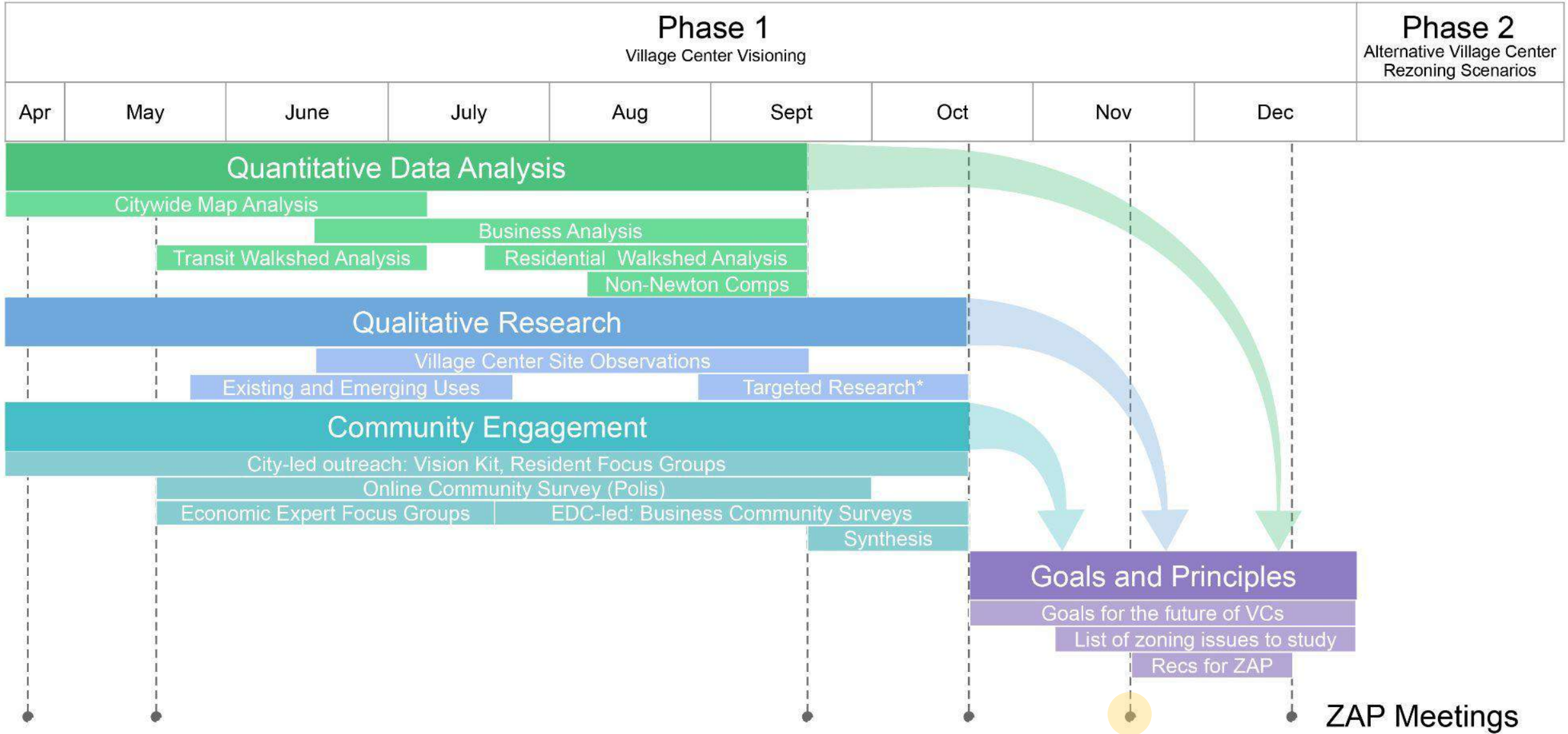
Where does zoning come in? - zoning impact matrix

	Zoning Considerations						Non-Zoning Considerations
	Dimensional Standards	Development Standards	Allowable Uses	Allowable Density	Permitting/ Process	Incentive	
Communal & Public Space: More + Activated		X			X	X	X
Increase the ability for small businesses to begin, stay and thrive in VCs	X	X	X	X		X	X
Climate resiliency through built structures and green spaces		X		X		X	X
Increase accessibility to buildings and intersections within VCs		X			X		X
Make permitting process easier, clearer + multi-tiered	X	X	X		X		X
More diverse housing options and encourage mixed-use projects	X	X	X	X	X		X
Increasing ease to get to Village Centers, especially through alternatives to driving				X		X	X

2021 Calendar

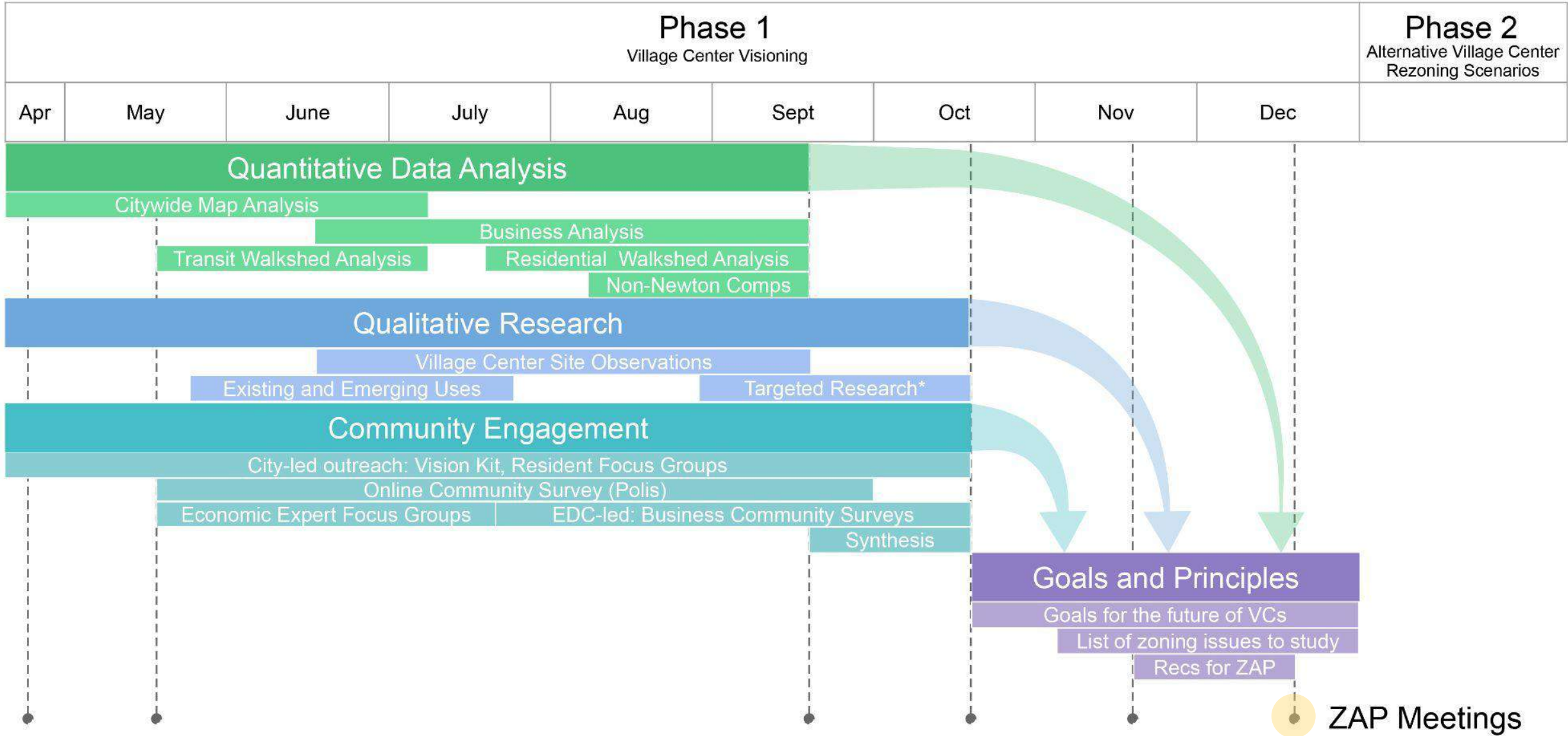
November 18 ZAP Meeting

Present draft goals and principles for the future of Village Centers based on engagement and analysis.



2021 Calendar

December ZAP Meeting
Present zoning issues to study in the next phase based on goals and principles.



Public info session - 6pm on Monday, November 15

Virtual webinar version of this presentation with a Q+A for community members until 7:30pm

[Register here](https://newtonma.gov/zoningredesign/vc), at newtonma.gov/zoningredesign/vc or email zoningredesign@newtonma.gov for the registration link



Thank you!

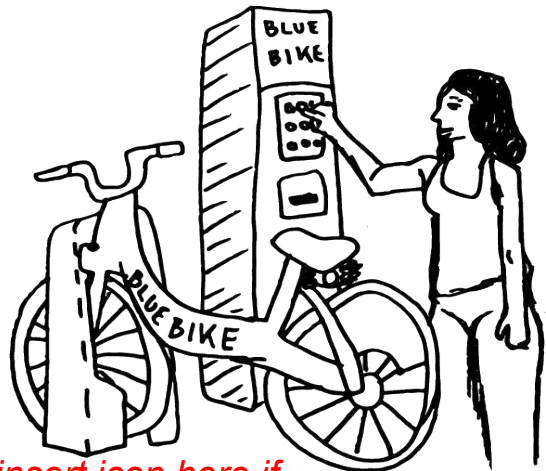


Templates



title here

Birds-eye view of main
takeaway here.



*insert icon here if
there's enough space.*

Sub-theme here.

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Adjust boxes per
of sub-themes
you want to
highlight.

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title here: 1 template for supportive channels (VK + FGs)

[insert Focus Group quote here]

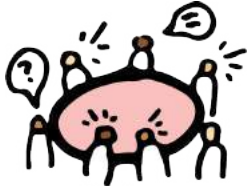
- [type of] Focus Group



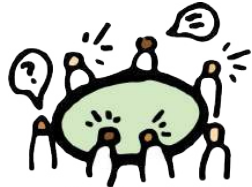
Creative Community



LGBTQ+



Renters



People with Disabilities



BIPOC



Ages 15-24



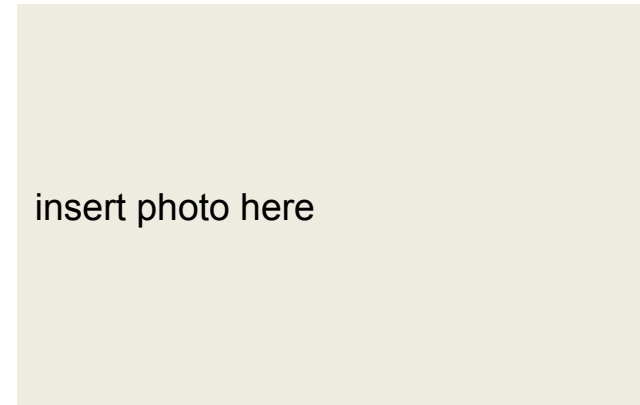
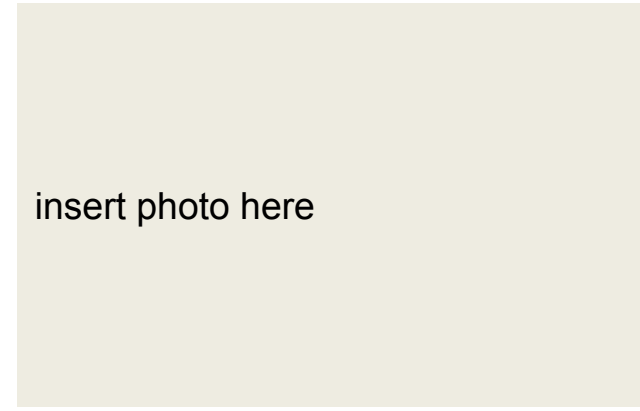
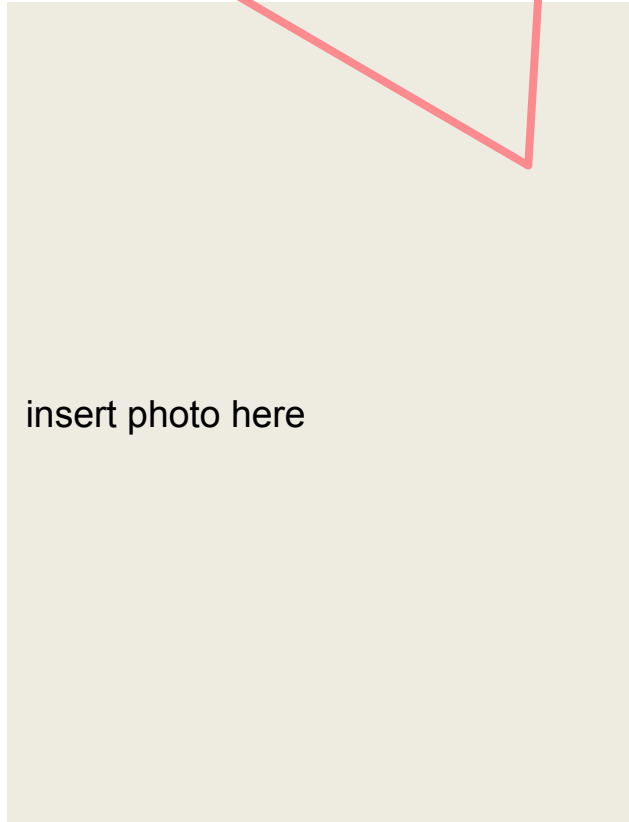
Ages 25-35



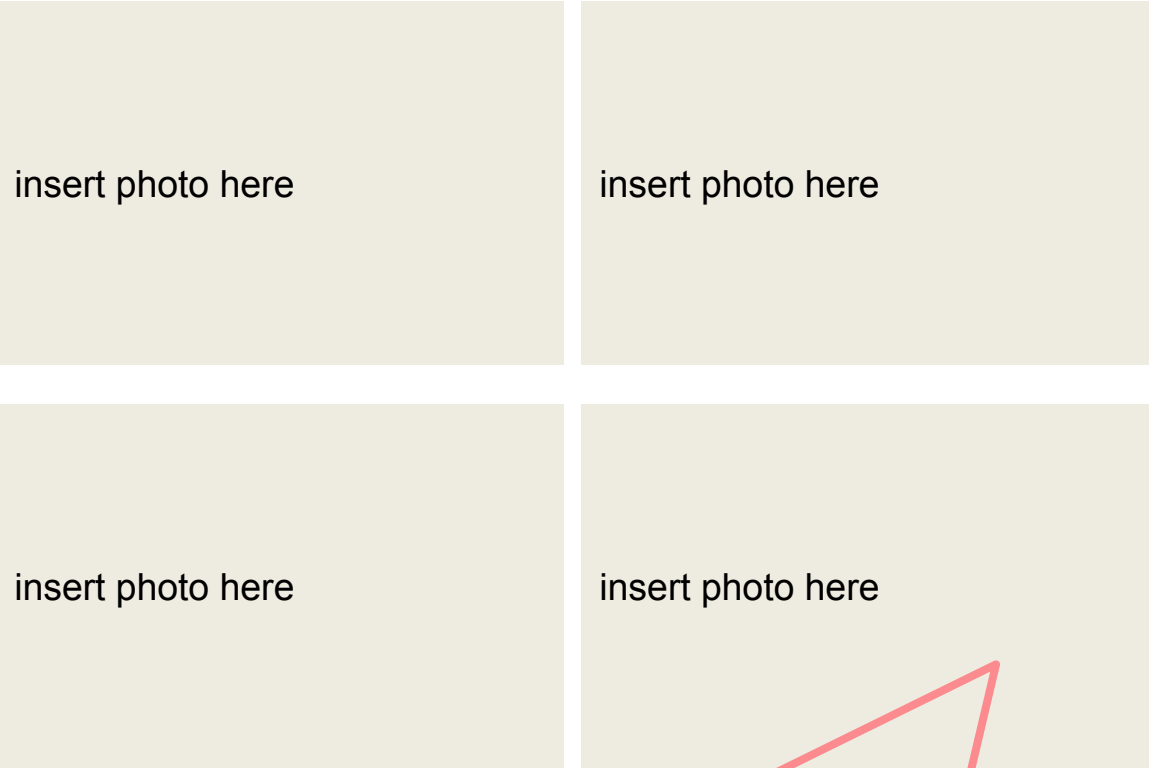
Ages 65+

[insert Vision Kit quotes here]

- Vision Kit by [insert whether Individual or Group]



title here: 1 template for Vision Kits



[insert Vision Kit quotes here]

- Vision Kit by **[insert whether Individual or Group]**

[insert Vision Kit quotes here]

- Vision Kit by **[insert whether Individual or Group]**

insert photo here

Backup



What We Learned: Themes

Arts and Culture

Communal & Public Space + Activation

Housing

More Diverse housing options and encourage mixed-use projects.

Economic Development

Increasing the ability for small businesses to begin, stay and thrive in Village Centers.

Accessibility

Increase accessibility to buildings and intersections within Village Centers.

Transportation

Increase ease to get to Village Centers, especially through alternatives to driving.

Environment

Climate resiliency through built structures and green spaces.

Process

Make the permitting process easier, clearer and multi-tiered.

What We Learned

Climate resiliency through built structures and green spaces.

Communal & Public Space + Activation

More Diverse housing options and encourage mixed-use projects.

Increase ease to get to Village Centers, especially through alternatives to driving.

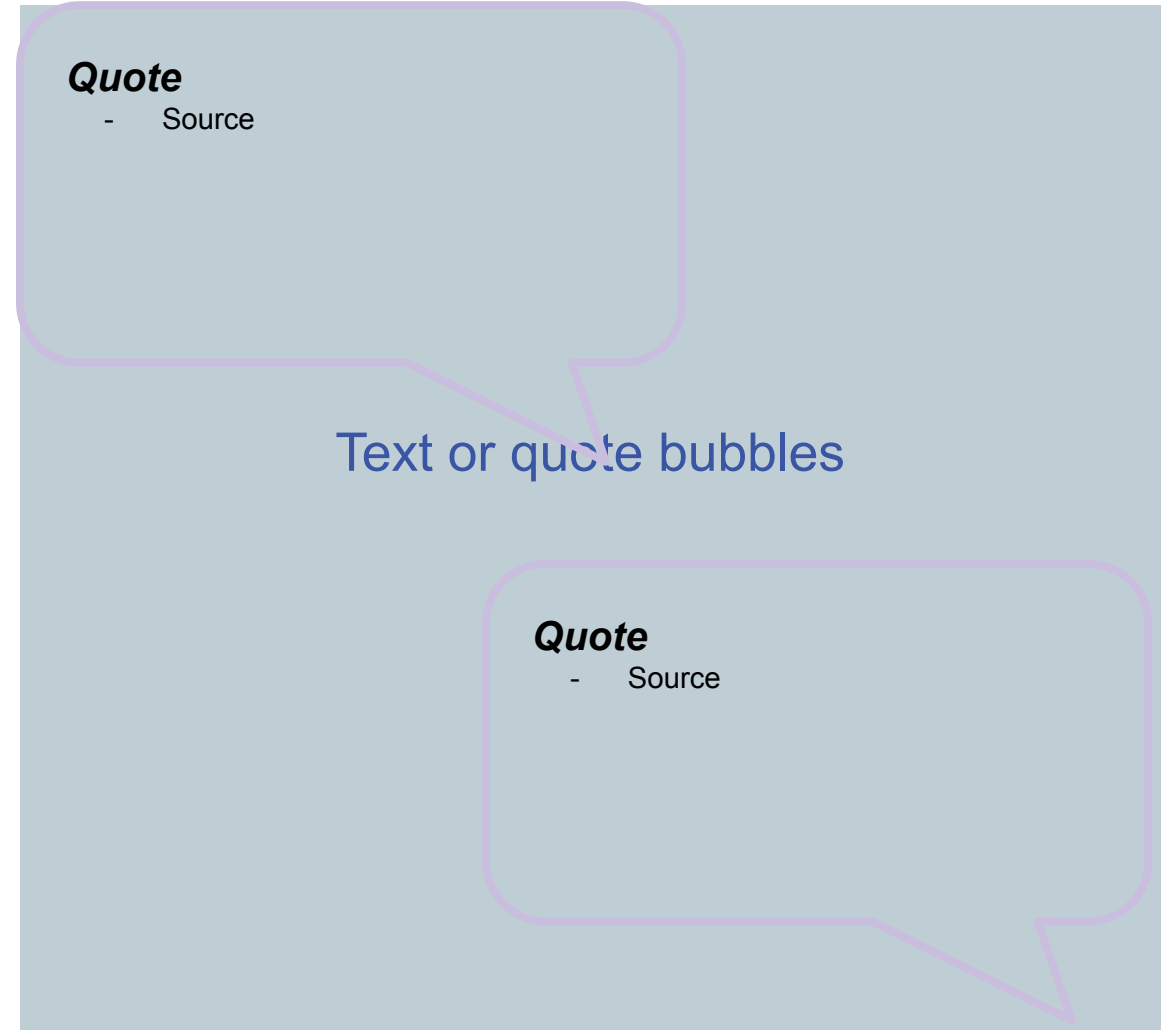
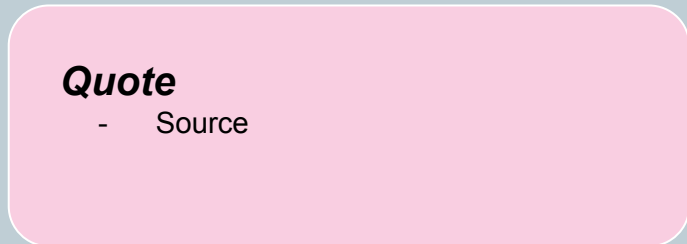
Increase accessibility to buildings and intersections within Village Centers.

Make the permitting process easier, clearer and multi-tiered.

Increasing the ability for small businesses to begin, stay and thrive in Village Centers.

Title

Image



Title

Text / image / quote bubbles

Quote

- Source

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Quote

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Communal & Public Space + Activation

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“More outdoor seating, dining, meeting places. COVID has taught us that we can (and like to) hang out outdoors.”
- Polis



More Diverse Housing Options and E



alternate slide

Group A is 79% of respondents
Of Group A, 71% agree with:

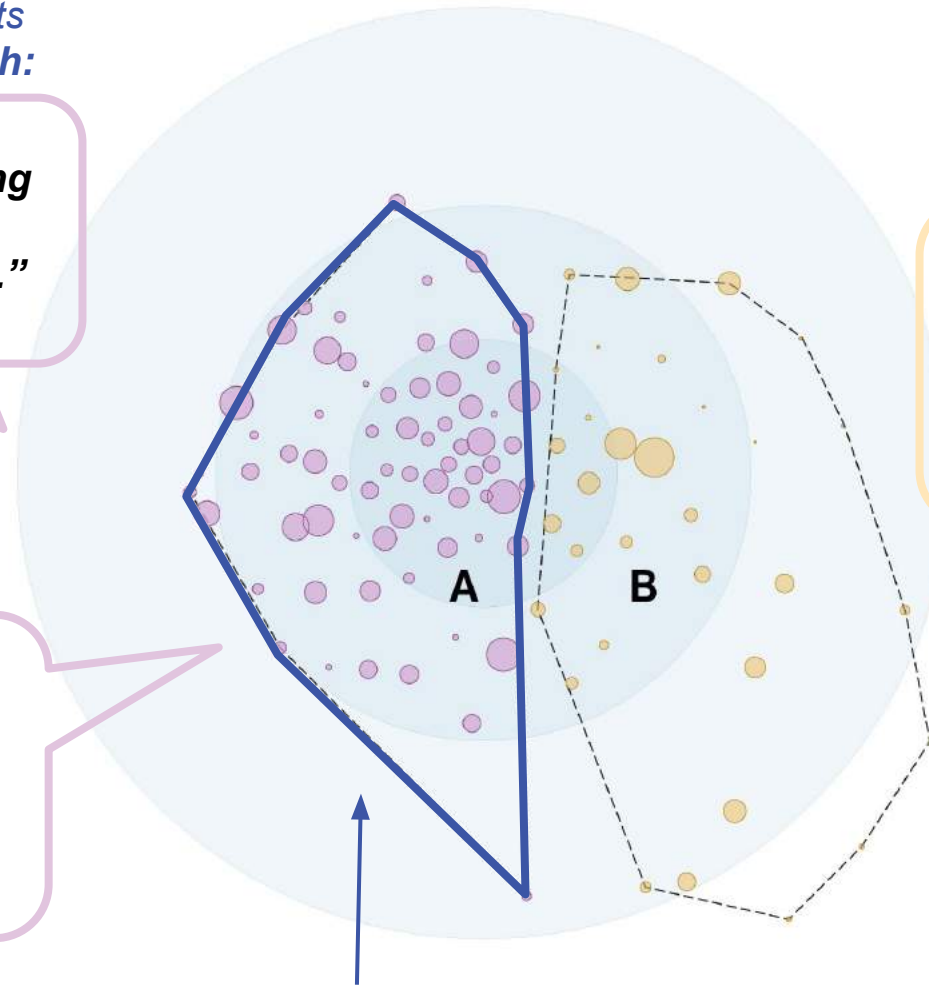
“ We need multi-unit housing in and near the village centers. Preferably by right.”

Group B is 21% of respondents
Of Group B, 76% agree with:

“ 3-4 story blgs in VCs is a major change/bad idea. It only takes a few taller building to make a canyon. NO MORE TRIO HULKS”

Group A is 79% of respondents
Of Group A, 81% agree with:

“ I hope zoning rules will allow for commercial and multi-family housing. Housing could be constructed on 2d, 2d, or 4th floors of buildings”



69% of respondents

CURRENT ORDER

- **introduction & grounding**
- introduction of calendar (Nev)
- context of engagement (Nevena)
- how we synthesized info: tagging (Nev)
- how we synthesized info: polis (Utile)
- **what we learned**
- public space (cat - jen as understudy)
- climate resiliency (cat - J A U)
- increase accessibility (cat - J A U)
- increase ability for small businesses (utile)
- housing (utile)
- permitting (zack)
- increasing ease to get to village centers (transit) (zack)
- **conclusion**
- zoning matrix (utile)
- and what's not zoning related (nev)
- public info session (nev)
- calendar reminder (jen)

Communal & Public Space: More + Activated



The Open Door project exemplifies the intersection between arts and culture and diversity within Newton. This project has allowed many Newton artists to display elements of their culture or the culture of the whole city. This includes languages spoken by various ethnic groups within the city, depicted in the image. Not only this, but the door also includes braille to represent the blind population of Newton.

- Vision Kit



Because I live in a building, with limited space for storage and other extra needs, and on a fixed income, I want my village center to help fill/provide my needs, and other general community needs that could be met through the public realm.



Renters