Zoning Redesign

The City of Newton's project to redesign the zoning code

Village Center Zoning

- **Discussions on Zoning Redesign Next Week:** Next phase of Zoning Redesign for village centers & public hearing for a citizens petition to amend zoning for village center districts
- **MBTA Communities Law Assessment** for Newton
- **Tentative Agenda for February 28th ZAP Meeting**

Image Description: A collage of six multi-family buildings in Newton.

Discussions on Zoning Redesign Next Week (ZAP On February 28th)

Next Phase of Zoning Redesign: In 2021, City Staff partnered with community groups, commissions, boards and councilors to carry out a robust engagement effort to ask community members, "What do you envision for your village centers? What values should guide zoning for them?" This was complemented by consultant Utile's initial analyses of the built and economic elements of current village centers that need to be considered for zoning considerations.

It is now time to reflect on possible development scenarios for Newton's village centers that align with what we heard from community members, consider market conditions, and are possible to achieve through zoning. Join the Zoning and Planning Committee's meeting to watch proposed methodologies and timeline by Utile and Staff for this second phase of village center zoning.

Citizens petition to amend zoning for the village center districts: Community member Peter Harrington submitted a citizens petition*, signed by over 50 residents, to present on and discuss his proposal for the creation of a new village center zoning district, followed by a public hearing. The proposal includes increasing the number of floors allowed by-right, with the condition that housing is provided on the upper floors with a percentage of the housing at certain levels of affordability.

*Community members can submit discretionary petitions (where it's at city council's discretion to take action) or group petitions, such as Peter Harrington's (where if a petition is signed by at least 50 Newton voters, city council must hold a public hearing.) Learn more about your civic rights in Article 10 of the Newton Charter.
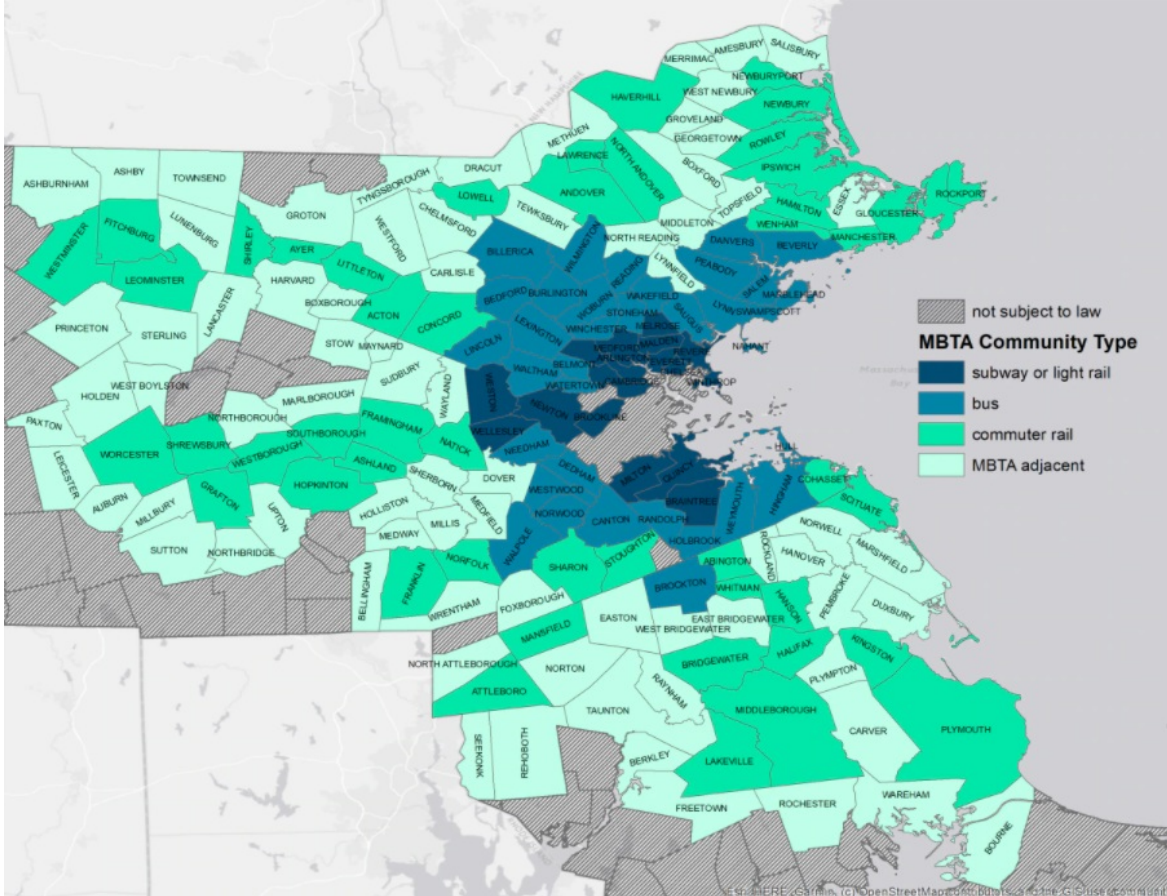
Image Description: A map of every city or town in the Boston area categorized as one of these MBTA Community Types: subway or light rail, bus, commuter rail, MBTA adjacent, or not subject to law. Newton is categorized as subway or light rail.

Multi-Family Zoning Requirements for MBTA Communities

Last year the state enacted a bill that includes new rules for communities served by the MBTA. This new law requires MBTA communities, including Newton, to have at least one zoning district in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right and meets several other criteria determined by the Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD). City Staff have shared some initial analysis, resources, and data about what this could mean for Newton at ZAP and on our website, available here, and will continue to assess policy changes that could enable our zoning to come into compliance with the guidelines for this new regulation. The public comment period to solicit feedback on the draft guidelines is open until March 31st, 2022; comments can be submitted here. DHCD is expected to issue final guidelines in summer 2022.

Dates of Upcoming ZAP Meetings *(agenda items are not finalized and subject to change)*

Review January and February's meeting reports at ZAP's website. For February:

February 28th, 2022 at 6:30pm (note the earlier start time)

- #113-22 - Request for Amendment to Zoning Ordinance to allow restaurants for nine months to add outdoor seating (Public Hearing)
- #42-22 - Citizens petition to amend the village center district (Public Hearing)
- #38-22 - Discussion and review relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance regarding village centers (formally #88-20)

Visit Zoning Redesign on the web

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