Dear ZAP Colleagues,

Over the last few months we have been presented with a great deal of work by Planning and Utile on both our community’s future vision for village centers – as well as various quantitative analyses probing the metrics of success for vibrant village centers, both in Newton and elsewhere. This was to build a foundation from which we can improve the regulatory framework within which our village centers can thrive.

Before diving into the work of village center zoning, we should continue to discuss the work from Phase I, which Planning synthesized into seven community takeaways:

* Creating more communal & public space + activation
* Increasing accessibility to buildings and infrastructure within village centers
* Incorporating climate resiliency through built structures and green spaces
* Helping small businesses to begin, stay and thrive in Village Centers
* Making the permitting process easier, clearer, and multi-tiered
* Adding more diverse housing options and encouraging mixed-use projects (although to what extent had a spectrum of opinion)
* Prioritizing safe and accessible routes to and through village centers, especially walking and biking

The takeaways come from where Planning and Utile have observed overall consensus; they are not simple majority positions. Lessons (from on-the-spot surveys, focus groups, event tabling, vision kits, Polis, and quantitative analysis), can be thought of as a framework for both the Committee (via zoning) as well as other city departments to use to further Newton’s overall planning efforts for village centers.

These ‘takeaways’ generally align well with the many adopted policy and planning documents that we have been using to guide future development. To compare, Planning synthesized the strategies and goals from these documents relevant to village center zoning into a table saved here:

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/70377/637577264339330000>

**Homework!!**

**At our December 16 meeting we need to discuss how well these takeaways align with our values and future vision for village centers. Your responses to the following questions will help guide our discussion on December 16th and help determine the path ahead for the coming year.** Please follow the link below:

<https://forms.gle/kqXEp1tdwjjiY1Bu5>

By establishing priorities about what the end result of Newton’s village centers should be, we can begin to identify the right zoning tools to achieve those ends. Do we agree that these takeaways represent the components that make better village centers? If so, discussions around zoning, development, and density have a common end goal in mind and we can focus on what we need to determine to what degree a zoning proposal can help to achieve that end.

For your convenience, below are links to all the relevant material presented to ZAP.

***September 13, 2021 - Quantitative Analysis: Village Center Metrics of Success***

ZAP Memo - <https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/74058/637668804968330000>

ZAP Presentation - <https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/77583/637726624712900000>

ZAP Report -

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/76259/637704278887530000>

***October 25, 2021 - Community Engagement Results and Key Takeaways***

ZAP Memo - <https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/76311/637705088696800000>

ZAP Presentation - <https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/77793/637731840749430000>

ZAP Report -

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/77187/637719810822230000>

***November 18, 2021 - Linking Takeaways to Zoning Tools***

ZAP Memo - <https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/77441/637723271656330000>

ZAP Presentation - <https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/77793/637731840749430000>

ZAP Report -

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/78029>

In addition, Planning has posted all the “raw data” collected on their village center webpage here: <https://www.newtonma.gov/government/planning/village-centers>. If you have any trouble locating a piece of information please reach out to Zachery LeMel, zlemel@newtonma.gov.