



Zoning Redesign: Village Centers

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

March Recap & Looking Towards April



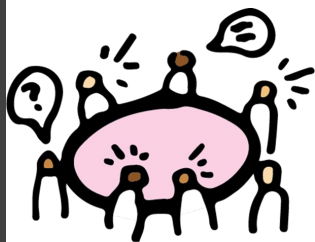
- Beginning Discussions in ZAP of Development Scenarios for Village Centers
- 10 More Days to Apply for Zoning Redesign 'Community Engagement Network'!
- Fair Housing Month of April
- Last Mile Delivery - Microfulfillment Centers
- Tentative Agendas for April ZAP Meetings



Image Description: An illustration of 6 apartment windows with neighbors sharing food, information about housing vouchers, children's toys, and flowers. One window has the sign 'Black Lives Matter' in it.

Beginning of Phase II of Village Center Zoning Updates: Development Scenarios

At the [February 28, 2022 ZAP meeting](#), Planning Staff, Utile, and Landwise introduced and kicked-off the phase 2 Zoning Redesign: Village Center work. Phase 2 will translate [the community takeaways](#) into tangible design scenarios for "large" and "small" village centers. These scenarios will be tested against their alignment with the community visions, financial feasibility, and zoning process. Working with ZAP and the broader community, the goal will be to come up with a set of recommended scenarios that will lead to a concrete set of zoning regulations and standards calibrated to Newton's "large" and "small" village centers. After analyzing typical development sites in a "large" village center under the existing zoning ([see 2/28/22 presentation](#)), and providing ZAP with additional time to discuss the results at the [March 14, 2022 meeting](#), we returned to ZAP on [March 28 with similar analysis](#) (urban form and financial feasibility) on the same development sites using alternative zoning standards.



10 More Days to Apply to the Zoning Redesign 'Community Engagement Network'!

[Click here to apply](#) for the Zoning Redesign 'Community Engagement Network' - applications are due by the end of Sunday, April 10th! The network aims to be a space where community members and city staff work together to design and bolster engagement efforts carried out in the Fall for the second phase of village center zoning updates.

Find all details about the network, along with the easy application, at <https://tinyurl.com/ZRNetwork>. And find slides, a blurb, and social media images that you can share with your community at newtonma.gov/zoningredesign/vc.

Fair Housing Month in April & WestMetro HOME Consortium Workshop

Every April celebrates the [Fair Housing Act](#), a federal law enacted on April 11, 1968 that prohibits discrimination in the purchase, sale, rental, or financing of housing—private or public—based on race, skin color, sex, nationality, religion, disability, and family status. And in 2021, [President Biden extended protections](#) to prohibit discrimination in housing due to gender identity or sexual orientation. For this month, the WestMetro HOME Consortium (WMHC)*, of which Newton is the lead member, invites you to celebrate Fair Housing Month by attending the WMHC Fair Housing Workshop (described below) and exploring the city’s [Fair Housing Month website](#) and [sharing this flyer](#).



This year’s website lists Fair Housing Month events and workshops, highlights the role of community power and direct action in housing justice, lists current affordable housing opportunities and housing assistance, explores creative housing models, and reviews the roles of zoning and the state’s recent MBTA Communities in context of this month.

WMHC Fair Housing Workshop: “Fair Housing Past to Present - Insights from the Field”

Tuesday, April 26, 3-5pm

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/FHM2022>

Attorneys from the Suffolk School of Law Housing Discrimination Testing Program will examine the history of the real estate industry and government’s roles in racial discrimination, current roles in housing discrimination, and ways to mitigate implicit biases to ensure that everyone has fair and equal access to housing. The workshop will begin with remarks by Mayor Ruthanne Fuller.

**WestMetro HOME Consortium (WMHC) is made up of thirteen communities including the Cities of Newton, Framingham, Waltham, and Watertown, and the Towns of Bedford, Belmont, Brookline, Concord, Lexington, Natick, Needham, Sudbury, and Wayland. [Click here to learn more about WMHC.](#)*

Last Mile Delivery - Microfulfillment Centers

Over the last few years, spurred largely by the pandemic, cities across the United States have seen a rapid rise in the number of last mile delivery services, also known as dark stores or mini-warehouses. These storefronts, not open to the public, are stocked with groceries and other home goods that are marketed as deliverable within 15- to 30-minutes. Based on our existing Use Regulations (Article 6), the Inspectional Service Department (ISD) determined that this type of business would be categorized as a Retail Sales use (Sec. 6.4.30), which is allowed by-right in Newton’s business zones (BU). Newton’s village centers are primarily zoned BU1 and BU2. Working closely with an advisory group made up of members from the Planning Board, Economic Development Commission (EDC), and the Regional Chamber, City staff are recommending a new zoning use definition, Microfulfillment Center, to properly regulate this emerging business model. ZAP has scheduled a public hearing for their April 25, 2022 meeting, where the following

alternatives will be discussed:

	Alternative 1	Alternative 1a	Alternative 2
Allowed in village centers	Yes, subject to standards	Yes, by Special Permit	No
Located on the street	No, only allowed in the rear away from the street	No, unless allowed by Special Permit	No
Reasoning	Not allowing at the street mitigates the negative impacts on the public realm	The Special Permit process allows each site to be reviewed individually	The use is not compatible with village centers

Upcoming ZAP Meetings in April

Review March's meeting reports at [ZAP's website](#). See the tentative agendas for April (these are not finalized and are subject to change):

Monday, April 11th, 2022 at 6:30pm (note earlier start time)

- #193-22 - Appointment of Jennifer Pucci to the Zoning Board of Appeals
- #194-22 - Appointment of John Sisson to the Newton Historical Commission
- #195-22 - Appointment of Anne Marie Stein to the Newton Historical Commission
- #196-22 - Appointment of Laxmi Rao to the Planning and Development Board
- #38-22 - Discussion and review relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance regarding village centers (discussion)
- #192-22 - Request for review and amendments to Section 6.7.1 Accessory Apartments (discussion)
- [No docket item yet] - Ordinance to regulate embodied carbon in new construction (discussion)
- #85-22 - Amend zoning ordinance special permit criteria related to energy conservation (discussion)
- #52-22 - Discussion and possible ordinance amendments regarding the utilization of electric vehicle charging stations (discussion)
- #184-22 - Discussion on Regulating Building Energy Reporting and Reduction

Monday, April 25th, 2022 at 7pm

- #127-22 - Request for amendment to the Zoning Code to regulate “last mile” delivery services (Public Hearing)
- [No docket item yet] - Sign Ordinance discussion and possible amendments
- #38-22 - Discussion and review relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance regarding village centers (discussion)



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[Click here to find a link to or a PDF of this Newsletter \(under 'Monthly Newsletters'\)](#)