




Community Input on Village Center Zoning

The City of Newton wants to hear what the Newton community thinks about a set of proposed changes to the zoning rules in the city's village centers. These rules determine what kind of new development can be built and where it can be built.

If you are a Newton community member - including residents (both people who rent and who own homes), workers, business owners, and students - we want to hear from you!

Have some time and want to learn more about each of the zoning proposals? Ways to do this on your own or with a group:

-  Visit the library exhibit either in-person or virtually and submit opinions after walking through it. [Click here for visiting details](#). Otherwise, please click the blue 'Next' button below to fill this form out.

This feedback tool will close on **October 16th, 2022**.

For questions and support:

Contact zoningredesign@newtonma.gov for questions.

If you need a reasonable accommodation: Please contact the City of Newton's ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: jfairley@newtonma.gov or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089.



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What to expect?

You are invited to participate in a feedback exercise for the City of Newton regarding changes to zoning. You will be asked to respond to some questions regarding your preferences, and give feedback to certain proposals. The responses to this survey will be shared with the City without additional personal identifiers. This data will be published by the City, so please do not include personal data. This will approximately take you 20 to 30 minutes.

Stanford Crowdsourced Democracy Team

Collaboration with Stanford Crowdsourced Democracy Team

This exercise has been put together in collaboration with the Stanford Crowdsourced Democracy Team ([SCDT](#)). You are also invited to optionally participate in their research study that is meant to improve how responses to such exercises are aggregated and reported. If you agree to this, you will be asked a few additional questions and your data will be analyzed by the Stanford Crowdsourced Democracy Team. This may take you approximately an additional 1-4 minutes. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your feedback to the City.

Participants under the age of 18 are asked not to participate in this study. Your participation is very valuable in the development of this work. But there is no payment offered for your participation, and no guarantee of personal benefit to you. In accordance with scientific norms, the data from this study may be used or shared with other researchers for future research (after removing personally identifying information) without additional consent from you. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions. Please contact Professor Ashish Goel at goel_admins@lists.stanford.edu if you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns. You may also contact the Stanford Institutional Review Board at irbnonmed@stanford.edu if you have questions about your rights or concerns about how the study is conducted.

- Yes, I consent to participate in both
- Participate only in the Feedback Exercise for Newton
- I am less than 18 years old

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Introduction to the Feedback Tool & Zoning Changes

The City of Newton is considering changes to the zoning regulations for its village centers.

What is zoning? Zoning laws regulate the use of land within a municipality - they control how the land can be developed and what uses are allowed (i.e. office vs. industrial). Zoning changes can, and often will, lead to changes in the built space, both in terms of how it looks and how it's used and feels.

What are the zoning changes on the table? There are 12 proposed changes to the village centers' zoning regulations that the Newton City Council's Zoning and Planning Committee (ZAP) have given City staff the green light to further refine and get community feedback on. These involve new building's height, parking requirements, building footprint, and more.

What is this 'feedback tool'? This tool is meant to collect community input on the core parts of the proposed changes. Zoning rules often function like a pulley system - you pull on one pulley, it impacts other pulleys in different ways. Similarly, these 12 proposals are in dialogue with one another working individually and together to create a complete zoning framework.

That's why this 'feedback tool' consists of just three zoning questions that try to get at the core reasoning behind the 12 proposals. These questions ask:


- Do you think Newton should have differently scaled zoning districts tailored for differently sized village centers?
- Which zoning heights of buildings (in terms of # of floors) do you think are appropriate for which village centers?
- What is your opinion on the proposal to reduce parking requirements in village centers?

How do I complete this 'feedback tool'? ↓

- **Do I have to answer every question?** No, every question is optional. You will have the ability to go back-and-forth between sections.
- **How do I know how far along I am in the feedback tool?** The blue scale at the bottom shows how far along you are in completing the tool.
- **What if I don't agree with the multiple choice options?** Every question has an additional open-ended response, where you can explain why you chose the answer(s) you did, or, to add on or to highlight a different answer if you did not agree with any of the ones listed.
- This tool is open until October 16th.
- Each question will have background information for you to read and consider. The background information comes from the 'Library Exhibit' - an exhibit at the Newton Free Library where you can walk through a room, beginning with zoning history in the U.S. and in Newton, moving through the village center zoning proposals, and wrapping up with you submitting your feedback. [Click here to learn more](#) about the exhibit and it's visiting hours.
- If you have questions about this feedback tool, or need help completing it, please contact Nevena, the city's community engagement planner, at npilipovicwengler@newtonma.gov or call her at 617-796-1140.

How are zoning changes made?↓

By law, The Newton City Council is the ultimate decision maker on any zoning changes. Your response will be collected by the Newton Department of Planning & Development. **Staff will then present the results for consideration by the Zoning and Planning Committee (ZAP)**, a subcommittee of the Newton City Council. ZAP determines what zoning changes move on to the full City Council to accept or reject. If you want to directly reach out to a ZAP member, or your ward's City Councilor, please [click here](#) to see the Councilors' names and contact information.

 Before you get into the nitty gritty, let's think about what a village center can include. Mark which of the things below you've enjoyed or used in a Newton village center (click to enjoy enlarged images):

Shopping for yourself, family, or others
(Customers peruse a bountiful number of books in the Newtonville Books store in Newton Centre.)



Visiting a public art exhibition (A crowd of people are seated outside, on the ground or on folding chairs, under trees. They are listening to a singer and a bassist.)



Eating at a restaurant or cafe
(A restaurant with a green awning that reads 'Buff's Pub' with several diners eating outside.)



Attending regular community events, such as Winter Fest
(Two children in winter clothes and face masks pose next to an ice sculpture of a penguin family.)



Getting together with friends, family, or coworkers

(Many people celebrate Holi in Newtonville and have brightly colored powder on their faces and clothes.)



Purchasing staples for home (groceries, medicine, etc.)

(People shop in the produce section of a grocery store.)



Exercising at a gym or doing yoga

(A group of people do a yoga class indoors.)



Running errands (post office, dry cleaning, etc.)

(A person walks in front of the West Newton Post Office.)



Using community centers, such as the Senior Center

(3 people pose for a photo while completing a puzzle on a wooden table with bookshelves in the background in the Waban Library.)



Living in an apartment building

(One of the 5-story brick buildings of Trio in Newtonville, with large windows, is in front of a gray evening sky. At the street level is a restaurant with outdoor dining and lighting.)



Taking public transportation, such as the Green Line

(Two Green Line MBTA train cars are on the tracks at Waban Station. Several passengers wait to board.)



Living in housing with services, such as senior housing

(A senior center van is parked in front of a brick residential building.)



Biking or walking to or through a village center, such as Blue Bikes

(A Blue Bikes docking station is full with bicycles outside of a brick building in Nonantum.)



Spending time in a park or a playground

(One child is being pushed on a swing by another child wearing a helmet at a playground.)



Seeing a movie, theatrical play, or live music

(A building with a large sign reads "West Newton Cinema." Films are listed below on a marquee. Several people are crossing the street for the cinema.)



Supporting local agriculture

(Two people are selling produce at a farmers market under a tent with a sign that says "Newton Community Farm.")



Which Village Centers do you spend time in?

The amount of time you spend in a village center, and what you do when you are there, can influence how you relate to the area and what you hope to see there in the future. Which ones do you feel connected with? Which ones do you shop at or spend time in?

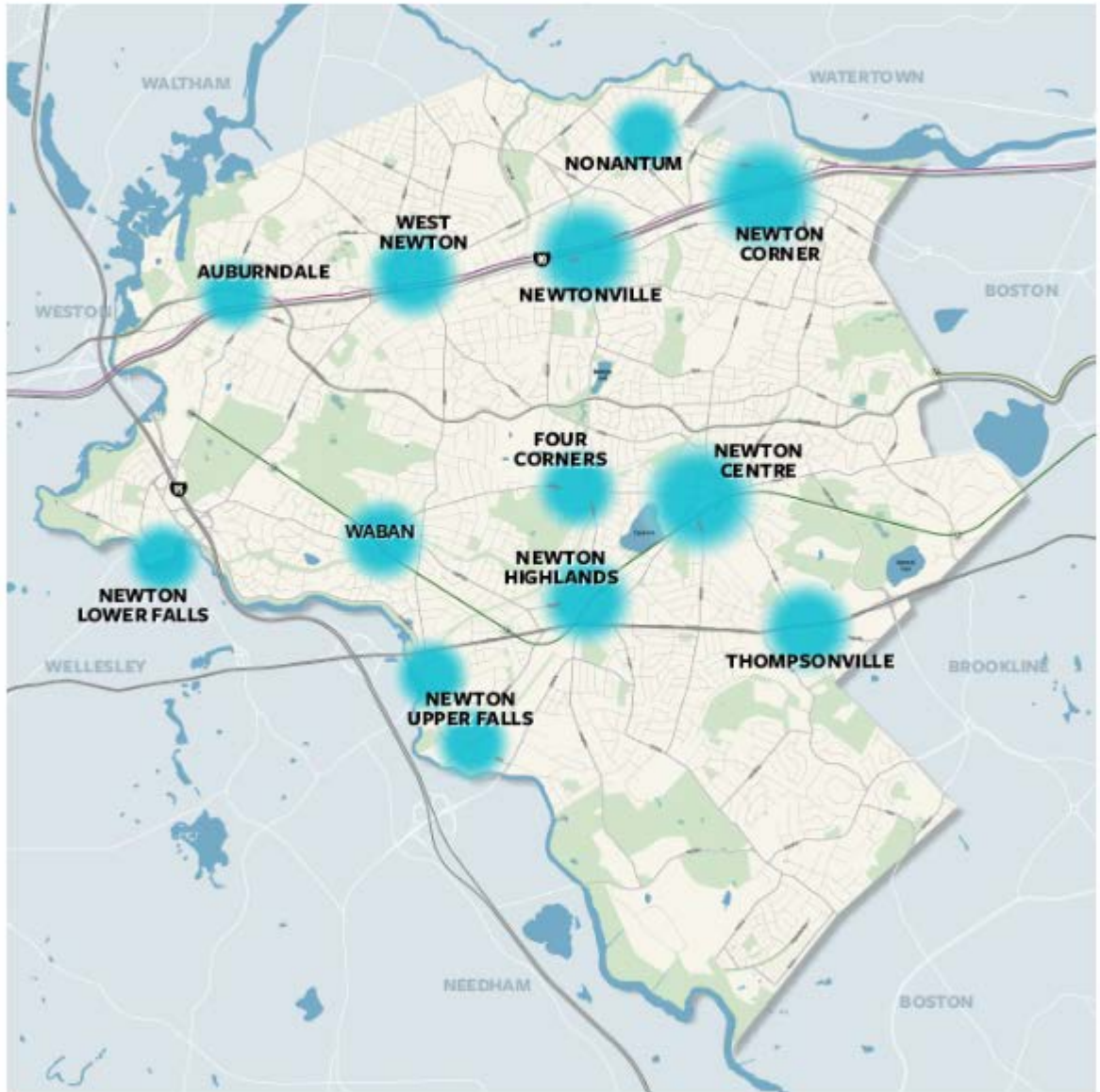


Image description: A map of Newton with the village centers under consideration for the zoning proposals, all of different sizes, outlined in blue circles and marked by their names. From south to north, approximately, they are: Newton Upper Falls, Thompsonville, Newton Lower Falls, Newton Highlands, Waban, Newton Centre, Four Corners, Auburndale, West Newton, Newtonville, Newton Corner, Nonantum.

How does this project define a village center in Newton? ↓

Newton has 13 officially recognized village centers. Zoning establishes rules for allowed uses and building types by dividing land into distinct zones or districts, but the boundaries for each village center are not always clear and rarely align perfectly with what many would consider the outline of each village center. Staff plan to use the village center boundaries described in [the Pattern Book](#) as a jumping off point to determine boundaries for each village center.

In the first phase of engagement, when asked "How do you define a village center?," there was a shared sense from community members that a village center is a hub for social and commercial activity. People highlighted stores (for shopping & public goods), gathering spaces (through parks, community centers, schools, etc.) and maybe a transit stop (the green line, commuter rail or buses.)

Why are village centers like Chestnut Hill, Oak Hill and Oak Hill Park not included here?



Though the important cultural and historical role that Chestnut Hill, Oak Hill and Oak Hill Park continue to play in the city remains, the lack of a central commercial area in those neighborhoods means that they are not necessarily the best candidates for some of the changes proposed here. For that reason, you will not see questions regarding certain village centers that are officially recognized.

 Select all of the village center(s) you feel connected with:

Auburndale

Four Corners

Lower Falls

Newton Centre

Newton Corner

Newton Highlands

Newtonville

Nonantum

Thompsonville

Upper Falls

Waban

West Newton

A center outside of Newton

None of the above

Scaled Zoning Districts

Currently Newton essentially has the same zoning districts for all of its village centers. Do you think there should be a variety of zoning districts for the variety of village centers?

When looking at Newton's [current zoning map](#) you will find that the village center commercial districts have similar zoning across the board- primarily as Business Use-1 (BU1) or Business Use-2 (BU2) districts.

Currently, for example, Newton Centre and Newton Corner have the same zoning designation as Waban and Auburndale even though the size and scale of these commercial districts are quite different.

In addition, while BU1 and BU2 are the zoning districts that regulate the commercial core of village centers, there is somewhat of a patchwork of other zoning districts including manufacturing and residential that many consider part of the commercial core - learn more in the drop box below.

Definitions ↓

Current (orange) vs Proposed (blue) Scales of Zoning Districts

The proposed new village center commercial district zoning would establish a set of three scaled districts that can be applied selectively according to the relative size and attributes of a given village center.



Image description: The figure is a bar chart, with the bars illustrated to look like buildings with either a flat or pointed roof. The chart indicates that the current zoning in all village centers allows 2 stories by-right, and up to 4 stories by Special Permit. Under the proposed new zoning, village centers would have different heights allowed based on their size. The proposals are described below.

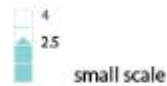
Birds-eye view of Current (orange) vs Proposed (blue) Scales of Zoning Districts

The diagram below shows the comparison between the current zoning districts in Newton's village centers in contrast to the proposed districts. With a birds-eye view, you are looking down on a map of buildings along roads in the core of a hypothetical village center.

Small village centers



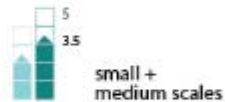
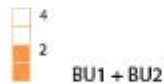
zoning district(s)



Medium village centers



zoning districts



Large village centers



zoning districts

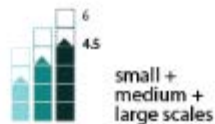
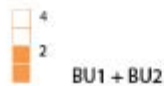




Image description: In the current zoning, for Newton village centers of all sizes (small, medium and large), the two same zoning districts are applied to all - Business 1 and Business 2. These two districts allow up to two floors by right, and up to four floors by special permit.

In the proposed zoning, three different districts are proposed - one scaled for small village centers, one for medium, and one for large. The diagram shows that in a small village center, it would only have the small scale district - which allows up to 2.5 floors by right, and 4 by special permit. In the medium village center, it would have the small scale district and the medium scale district, allowing up to 3.5 floors by-right and 5 by special permit. In a large village center, it would have the small scale, medium scale, and large scale districts - where the large scale allows up to 4.5 floors by-right and 6 by special permit.

Councilors' arguments for and against: ↓

Arguments for

- The height allowances better align and differentiate between the different scales and types of village centers in Newton
- Allowing additional height will lead to more housing units, more housing units means more deed restricted affordable housing
- Will help Newton come into compliance with the state MBTA communities requirements*

Arguments against

- These new districts do not do enough to mitigate the impact allowing taller buildings on the surrounding neighborhood

*This is a recent law passed by the state to address some of the causes of the regional housing crisis, including low housing supply. It requires towns and cities served by the MBTA to create zoning districts that allow multi-family housing by-right. If they do not, they are made ineligible for some state funds that support affordable housing. [You can learn more about MBTA communities here.](#)

 Does this approach of using a mix of three scaled zoning districts, tailored to the particular attributes of Newton's village centers, seem appropriate?

Doesn't go far enough - there should be more variety of scales

Appropriate / strikes the right balance

Goes too far - there should be fewer variety of scales

Needs an entirely different strategy

Unsure

 Why did you select this response to the question above?

You can use this space to give more details about your reasoning

Prev

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Mapping Zoning Districts

Which allowed heights, for new buildings, do you think are appropriate for village centers?

The previous question asked, do you think there should be different zoning districts for differently sized village centers? This question asks, what heights should those new zoning districts allow, and for which village centers?

The number of floors allowed by-right or through a special permit influences the area's density - meaning, the number of people, jobs, housing units, and the size of buildings. In turn, density impacts a place's commercial activity, housing, transportation, socializing and more.

Which kinds of density do you think are appropriate for each of the village centers? See below for the proposed development standards and what other zoning tools, and policies, are at play in this question.

Current (orange) and proposed (blue) requirements:

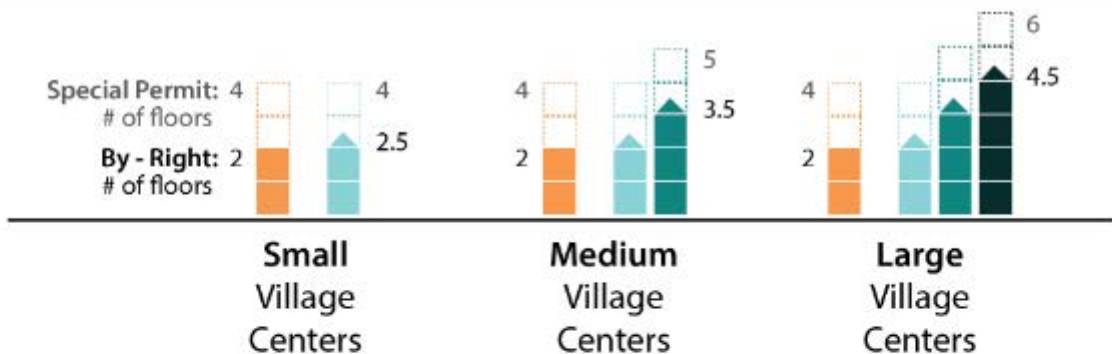


Image description: The figure is a bar chart, with the bars illustrated to look like buildings with either a flat or pointed roof. The chart indicates that the current zoning in all village centers allows 2 stories by-right, and up to 4 stories by Special Permit. Under the proposed new zoning, village centers would have different heights allowed based on their size. The proposals are described below.

The proposal is to allow for the following heights (# of floors) for future buildings, based on the village center's size. (You can use the 'definitions' section below to look up terms in this proposal that you're not familiar with.)

Definitions ↓

By-right: This refers to new buildings or uses allowed in a zoning district that do not require a more involved review process. As long as these developments check off all the boxes required by local and state regulations, they cannot be prohibited.

Special permit: Buildings that do not check off all the boxes required for by-right development have to get a special permit in order to get built. The application triggers a more involved and lengthy review process, and the ultimate decision is up to Newton's City Council.

However, it's not like any development can qualify for a special permit. Just like zoning districts have limits on what can be by-right, they also have limits on what can apply for a special permit. Beyond that, is not allowed. In other words, special permits basically enable a more thorough review process, to make sure that a building that may be taller or bigger than the majority of buildings in a village center, but not that much taller or bigger, still 'fits' into the area.

Not allowed: If a development does not qualify to be by-right nor to apply for a special permit within that zoning district's regulations, it is not allowed to be built there. In very limited circumstances where there is a unique hardship due to physical constraints on the property (for example, a significant amount of ledge limits the ability to build outside of the setbacks) the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) may grant a variance.

Building footprint: The area contained within the outside edges of a structure at the ground level. In other words, it is the bottom portion of the building that touches the ground.

Small-scale zoning district for small village centers



Special Permit: 4

By-right: 2.5

Building footprint:

5,000 sf



By-Right 2 floors



By-Right 2.5 floors



Special Permit 3 floors



Special Permit 4 floors



Not Allowed 4+ floors

Image description: Title says "small-scale zoning district for small village centers." The graph indicates that the proposed zoning would allow 2.5 story buildings by-right, 4 by special permit, and a maximum building footprint of 5,000 square feet. A sketch shows a block of buildings no taller than 2.5 floors. 5 different, existing Newton buildings exemplify what would be allowed by-right, by-special permit, or not allowed.

Medium + small-scale zoning districts for medium village centers



Special Permit: 5

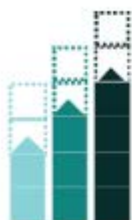
By-right: 3.5

Building footprint:
10,000 sf



Image Description: Title says "medium and small-scale zoning district for medium village centers." The graph indicates that the proposed zoning would allow 3.5 story buildings by-right, 5 by special permit, and a maximum building footprint of 10,000 square feet. A sketch shows a block of buildings no taller than 3.5 floors. 5 different, existing Newton buildings exemplify what would be allowed by-right, by-special permit, or not allowed.

Large + medium + small-scale zoning districts for large village centers



Special permit: 6

By-right: 4.5

Building footprint:

15,000 sf

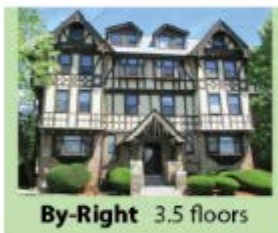
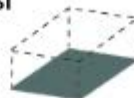


Image Description: Title says "large and medium and small-scale zoning district for medium village centers." The graph indicates that the proposed zoning would allow 4.5 story buildings by-right, 6 by special permit, and a maximum building footprint of 15,000 square feet. A sketch shows a block of buildings no taller than 4.5 floors. 5 different, existing Newton buildings exemplify what would be allowed by-right, by-special permit, or not allowed.

How are building footprints important in village centers?↓

Since the building footprint is the total area of a building's base, it functions as a tool to limit the overall 'massing' of the building. (Remember - a total building's size involves both the height and the building footprint, like figuring out the volume of a cube.)

A maximum building footprint can mitigate and address concerns about how allowing more development could impact the feel of the village centers. It can:

- Reduce the amount of land a building takes up (balancing out increased height)
- Make a building, or multiple buildings next to one another, more diverse and dynamic (rather than letting a building take up all of its plot of land or be a big box).

Working with other design standards, the maximum footprint could, for example, create smaller buildings side-by-side (even if all on the same plot of land), being more typical of older New England villages and main streets.

See some of Newton's familiar building footprints below, and compare their scale to the changes being proposed here:

Newton buildings & structures



Hyde Community Center ~6,100 sq ft



Gath Pool ~7,500 sq ft



West Newton Cinema ~10,800 sq ft



Newton Free Library ~25,000 sq ft



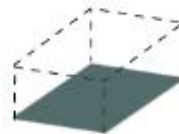
Proposed zoning districts



5,000 sq ft
small scale



10,000 sq ft
medium scale



15,000 sq ft
large scale



Image Description: On the left, 4 structures in Newton are shown in photographs with the square footage of the structure listed to show scale. On the right, the building footprint allowed in each proposed scale of the village center is shown as a volume of a simple rectangle. The Hyde Community center is approximately 6,100 square feet, which is a little over the 5,000 square feet allowed in a small village center. Gath Pool (7,500 square feet) and West Newton Cinema (10,800 square feet) correspond to the medium scale village center, which allows up to 10,000 square feet in building footprint. The largest, Newton Free Library at 25,000 square feet, is larger than what would be allowed by-right in the large-scale proposed zoning district (15,000 square feet.)

Zoning tools at play in these proposed scales & heights ↓

While this question asks you about just building heights, there are multiple zoning tools at play here. In order for increased heights to work, proposals are on the table for all of the zoning tools listed below. *This gets into the nitty gritty and is here for the curious type.*

- **Floor-to-floor height:** The heights of individual floors are important for the space's functionality. Floor-to-floor height is defined as the distance from the top of a floor to the top of the next floor. This space is for mechanical equipment, insulation/ soundproofing, and anything else that needs to go into the ceiling. Some uses have greater needs for what goes into the ceiling - such as restaurants' needing ventilation or bookstores wanting larger bookshelves.

- Current regulation: Each floor has to be 12 ft high, no matter what
- Proposal 2: Adjust heights for different uses, as well as a minimum height so that floors do not get too cramped

- **Design standards:** These are requirements for a development's overall design quality - including its architecture and how it interacts with its surrounding space. Examples include the development requiring public open space (such as the plaza at Austin St), wider sidewalks, sustainability features (such as green roofs or pollinator gardens), or transparency (the ability to see into a ground floor's store.)

- Current regulation: Does not exist
- Proposal 9: Adopt these so that new developments 'fit' into Newton's village centers better.

- **Minimum lot size:** This is the minimum size of a lot allowed for constructing a specific building type. For example, Newton has a minimum lot size of 10,000 sq ft.. Removing the minimum lot size requirement will allow for smaller projects on smaller lots, which can better fit into the current village center fabric.


- Current regulation: 10,000 sq ft. (for context, 54% of current lots in Newton's village centers are smaller than 10,000 sq ft.)
- Proposal 5: To remove the minimum lot size, and to allow developers to build smaller projects on smaller lots.

- **Regulation of roofs:** These days, most new developments in Newton have flat roofs - leading more to a box-like feeling on streets. This is largely because the current rules in Newton's village centers set maximum floors at whole numbers - such as, 2 floors by-right. Alternatively, proposal 3 suggests setting maximum floors at halves - such as 2.5 floors by-right. And, for those half floors to be either 'setback' (pushed farther back from the building's edge) or as a 'pitched roof' (a triangle roof, rather than rectangle). Both cases could result in a greater diversity of roofs and buildings that appear smaller.

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Councillors' arguments for and against: ↓	
Arguments for	Arguments against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The height allowances better align and differentiate between the different scales and types of village centers in Newton • Combined with other proposals it can incentivize smaller lots to develop, which will lead to more contextual and diverse projects • Will help Newton come into compliance with the state MBTA communities requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The allowed heights, particularly for the zoning district allowing 4.5 stories, are too tall for Newton's village centers • Allowing these heights by-right means the City Council loses their discretionary review through the special permit process, which produces better projects

This is a recent law passed by the state to address some of the causes of the regional housing crisis, including low housing supply. It requires towns and cities served by the MBTA to create zoning districts that allow multi-family housing by-right. If they do not, they are made ineligible for some state funds that support affordable housing. [You can learn more about MBTA communities here.](#)

 Which proposed scales (aka zoning districts) do you think are most appropriate for each village center for new or redeveloped buildings? Match the village center(s) with the grouping of scales you think is best.

*You do not need to answer for the village centers you don't feel well acquainted with.

Map ↓

	Small scale (2.5 floor by-right, 4 by special permit)	Small scale + medium scale (3.5 floors by right, 5 by special permit)	Small scale + medium scale + large scale (4.5 floors by-right, 6 by special permit)	No Opinion
Auburndale	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Four Corners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lower Falls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newton Centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newton Corner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newton Highlands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newtonville	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nonantum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thompsonville	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Upper Falls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Waban	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
West Newton	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

 Why did you select this response to the question above?

You can use this space to give more details about your reasoning

Reducing Parking Requirements

Do you agree with the proposal to reduce the parking requirements for new buildings in the village centers?

Newton's zoning currently requires a minimum number of parking spaces for residential and business uses in village centers. This means that a new building, or a change of use in a current building, typically requires the owner to provide a number of parking spaces on their property.

Current & proposed requirements:

The proposed requirements would only apply to the village centers (this does not include residential districts).

	Minimum parking requirements (as in, the developer has to build at least the amount(s) listed below)	
Type of Use	Current	Proposed changes
Residential (building with 3 apartments or more)	2 parking spots per unit	1 parking spot per unit within the building
Office (for work spaces)	1 parking spot per 250 sq ft, for buildings up to 20,000 sq ft	Ground floor: exempt Upper floors: 1.5 spots per 1,000 sq ft
Retail (such as restaurant, store, health club, bank, entertainment)	Varies by retail type	Ground floor: for all retail types, exempt Upper floors: varies by types of retail

How much does Newton's current parking in private developments get used?

A [report by the MAPC](#) (the regional planning agency of Metropolitan Boston), conducted in 2019, observed inconsistencies between the parking units required in private development and the use of those parking spots in Metro Boston. The graphs below show this:

Average Supply and Demand by Municipality

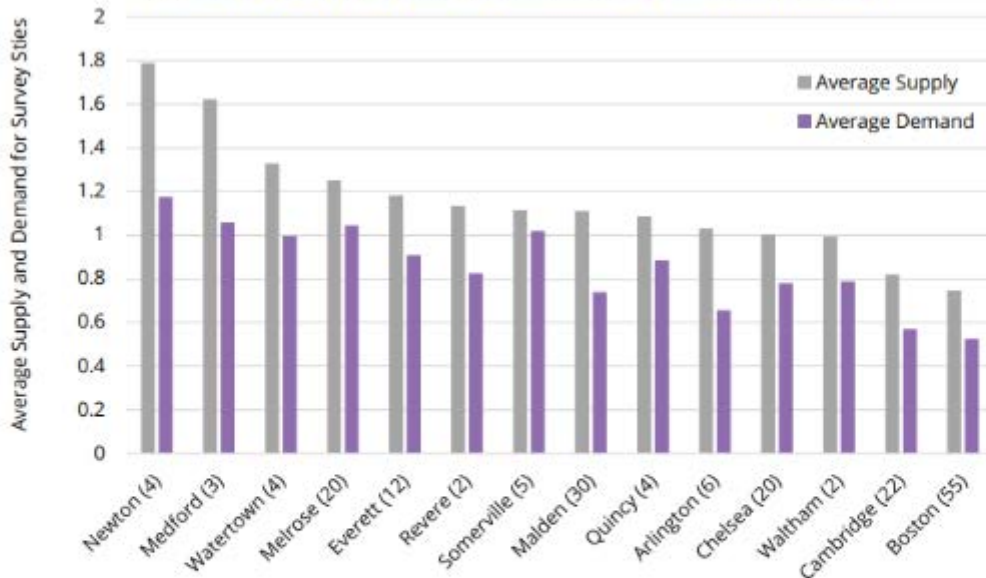


Image description: The graph shows the average supply (amount of parking spots) and demand (overnight parked cars per occupied housing unit) in private developments. Data shows 14 cities and towns of Metro Boston. Newton is tied with Medford to have the highest difference, showing an average supply of 1.8 parking spots for every 1 housing unit, against the average usage of about 1.2 spots per housing unit. The resulting difference is ~0.6 spots not getting used. All of the remaining cities and towns have higher supply than demand. The differences for each are: Malden (0.4), Arlington (0.4), Watertown (0.3), Revere (0.3), Everett (0.3), Quincy (0.2), Cambridge (0.2), Boston (0.2), Melrose (0.2), Chelsea (0.2), Waltham (0.2), Somerville (0.1).

The average 50-unit residential building has 50 parking spaces with 14 empty spaces.



Each purple box represents a parked car. This building has 36 parked cars.



Each gray box represents an unoccupied parking space. This building has 14 unoccupied spaces.



Figure 9: Perfect Fit Parking Summary Graphic

Image description: Text says “The average 50-unit residential building has 50 parking spaces with 14 empty spaces.” An apartment complex stands next to its parking lot. 36 parking spots have parked cars. 14 spots are empty.

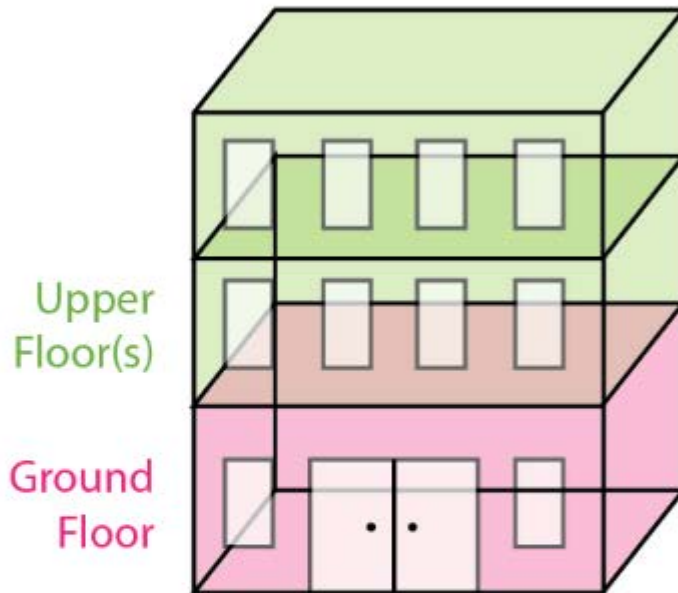


What the parking lot and building graph above does not show is that each parking spot requires additional space for a car to maneuver itself in and out. Therefore, when two parking spots are required for each new unit in Newton – it is about ~495 sq ft for the two spots, with ~165 sq ft for that maneuvering space.

Image description: Two parking spots, with space for maneuvering, that takes up a total of 660 sq ft.

What's the difference between a building's ground floor and its upper floors?↓

The types of uses found at the ground floor of buildings play a special and important role in the vibrancy of village centers. Activities and uses found at street level are a big part of how we experience and enjoy public space. It is at the ground floor where we tend to find more active and engaging uses- things like coffee shops and restaurants, retail that allows for window shopping, or galleries and event spaces. City staff want to reduce barriers to success across the board for those who wish to locate in a village center, but because the ground floor is so critical to public life, ground floor uses are given special treatment in this proposal.



What kinds of impact can parking requirements have on village centers?↓

Parking requirements are one of the most significant factors shaping how new uses and new buildings can or cannot fit within Newton's village centers. High minimum parking requirements require valuable, limited space in village centers to go towards parking by default, regardless of how much parking that area needs. By requiring parking, minimums push homes and businesses farther apart, take up space that could be used for greenery or other more vibrant uses, impede the walkability of our neighborhoods, raise the cost of housing, and place an especially costly burden on small, local entrepreneurs.

With reduced parking minimums, we will still have parking—but property owners can decide how necessary it is for a viable project and weigh its value against the other things they could do with the same finite, precious land.

What additional parking options exist in Newton?↓

In addition to parking provided by private buildings, Newton has additional parking opportunities for those who work or visit village centers. This includes municipal parking lots, street parking, centralized parking garages, visitor parking, and pick-up and drop-off locations. Below is a map of Newton's municipal lots (you can find specific locations at [this city parking website.](#))

There are also alternative modes of transit to driving a car, such as NewMo, biking, and public transportation.

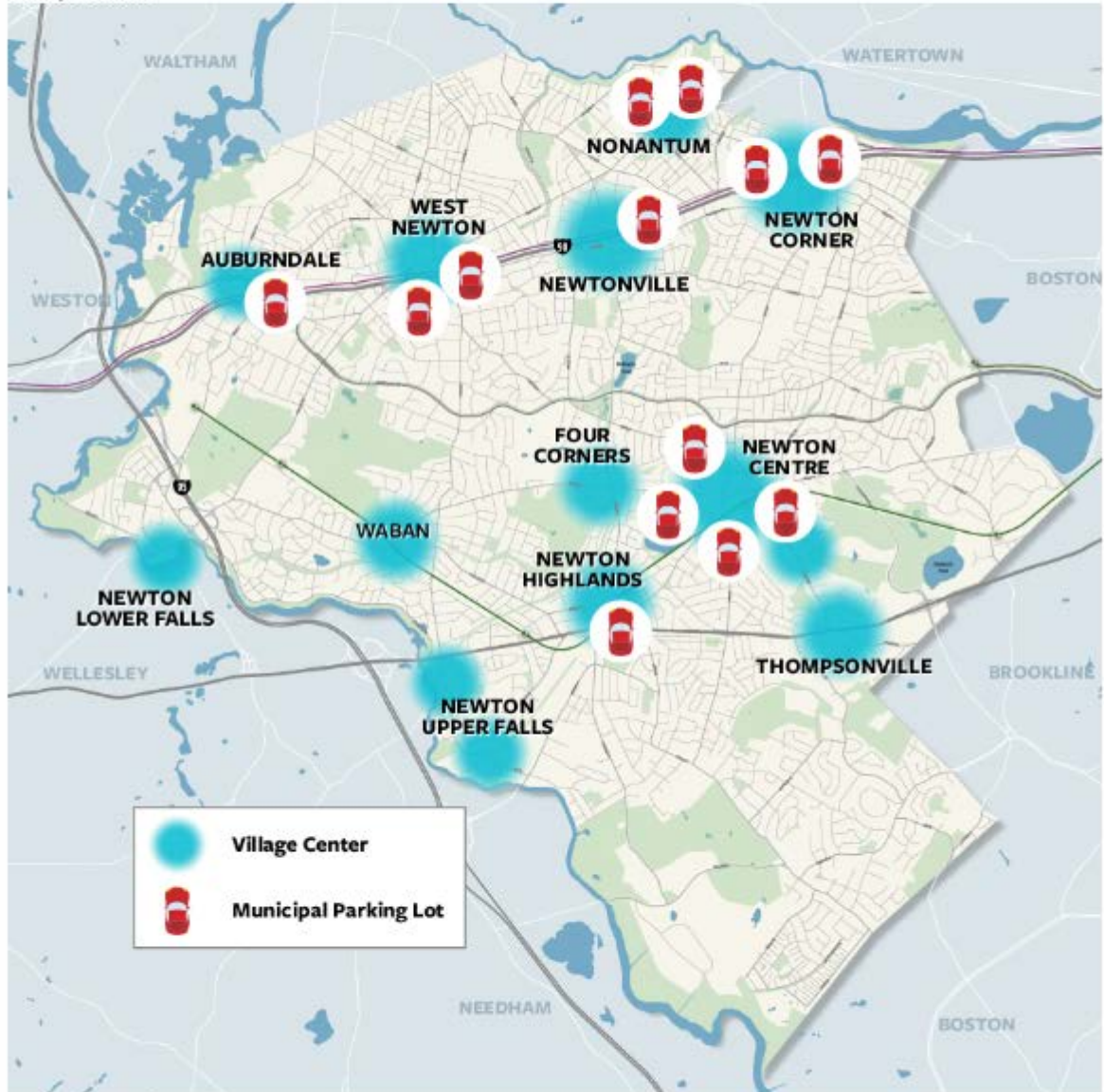


Image Description: A map of Newton with the village centers under consideration for the zoning proposals, all of different sizes, outlined in blue circles and marked by their names. The map also depicts municipal parking lots in Newton with car icons. Municipal parking lots are denoted in (from west to east: Auburndale, West Newton, Newton Highlands, Newtonville, Newton Centre, Nonantum, and Newton Corner).

Common arguments for and against: ↓

Common arguments for these changes	Common arguments against these changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parking takes up a lot of space in village centers, which could be used in other ways that contribute more to a vibrancy• Some village centers have underutilized parking, so adding more parking at the rate that is currently required may be unnecessary• Providing parking is expensive, which means that high commercial parking requirements are a barrier for small local businesses to locate in village centers. Requiring less parking will decrease construction costs for most projects• City Council regularly waives parking for ground floor, commercial & residential projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If residential development is built without parking, the people living in those apartments may park their cars on the neighborhood streets or in the municipal parking lots typically used by visitors to the village centers.• feel that if adequate parking is not provided in the village centers that shoppers will be discouraged from visiting.

 Rate your opinion on the proposal to reduce the parking requirements for village centers:

	Doesn't go far enough (there should be lower parking requirements or eliminated entirely)	Appropriate / strikes the right balance	Goes too far (the current requirements work)	Wrong direction (there should be more new parking spots required)	Unsure
Residential	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

 Why did you select this response to the question above?
You can use this space to give more details about your reasoning

Who's Filling This Out?

The City is assessing (1) demographics in order to assess how well it's reaching all of Newton's communities, and, on a separate note, (2) community use of the library exhibit (in-person or virtual).

All questions are optional.

Which of the following apply to you or your household in Newton? (Check all that apply.)

We own an apartment, condo or home

We rent an apartment, condo or home

We work here

We own a business here

Unsure or prefer not to answer

How old are you?

Under 18

18 to 24 years

25 to 34 years

35 to 44 years

45 to 54 years

55 to 64 years

65 to 74 years

75 and older

Unsure or prefer not to answer

What race (s) do you identify as?

- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latina, Latino, or Latinx*
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or more races
- Unsure or prefer not to answer

*Latinx is a label to describe gender-expansive people of Latin American origin or descent.

Do you, or does someone you live with or care for in Newton, currently have a disability? (People with disabilities, under the ADA, are those persons with a physical or mental impairment, or history of such impairment, which limits one or more major life functions, including major life activities such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.)

- Yes
- No
- Unsure or prefer not to answer

Have you visited the library exhibit (either in-person or virtually)?

- Yes
- No



Is there anything else that you want to share? If you'd like to, you can elaborate on what influenced your answer(s) to the previous question(s).

[Prev](#)



[Next](#)

Thank you for submitting your opinions on the proposed zoning changes for Newton's village centers.

To stay updated on zoning engagement opportunities and events: Sign up for the Zoning Redesign newsletter [by clicking here](#).

Next Steps: After this feedback tool closes at the end of Sunday, October 16th, city staff and the Stanford Crowdsourced Democracy team will synthesize the results and present it to the Zoning and Planning Committee (ZAP). ZAP will consider the community engagement results and move towards a vote closer to the end of 2022.

What else can you do as a Newton community member? We encourage you to send your opinions along to your ZAP or city-wide councilors as well, as they are the ones who ultimately will decide on whether to vote against or in favor of zoning changes. [Click here](#) to learn who the ZAP committee members are, and [click here](#) to find their contact information.



0% ————— 100%