



Zoning Redesign: Village Centers

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

Draft Maps + Text for Village Center Zoning _ 12.22.22

- Community input on **first draft maps for village center zoning**
- **First draft of zoning text for village center zoning** presented to ZAP
- **Tentative Agendas** for January ZAP Meetings



Image Description: Drafted maps for village center zoning with notes from the info and input sessions.

Community input on Draft Zoning District Maps for Village Centers

Since early November, City staff have been collecting input on [version 1.0 of the village center zoning districts](#). The City hosted seven virtual 'Info + Input' sessions on the first version of draft zoning district maps for village centers. City staff took live notes of community members' input as all attendees observed the map of discussion. Access all of the sessions' recordings and notes at the draft maps' website: <https://newtonma.gov/vcmaps>.

In addition, City staff have been collecting input from Newton businesses through storefront visits and direct outreach. And community members can submit written input [through this online form](#), open until the end of this year.

Outreach included postcards sent to all properties within the current and proposed zoning districts, highlights in the Mayor's newsletter, the Zoning Redesign newsletter, and social media. A synthesis of this input will be presented to the public and ZAP in January 2023.

Next steps in January ZAP will shift its attention to hearing from City commissions, boards, and community groups on the first versions of the draft maps and the zoning text during the month's two ZAP meetings - January 9th and 23rd.

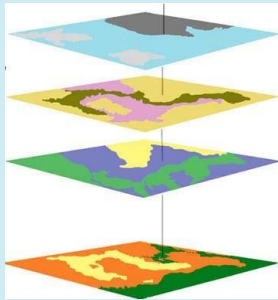
To reserve a spot for your organization to speak at the one of these two meetings, contact the Zoning & Planning Committee Clerk, Jaclyn Norton, [by completing this information form](#) and emailing it to Ms. Norton at jnorton@newtonma.gov. Ms. Norton will contact the person listed on

the form to determine which of the two meeting dates they are scheduled to speak.

First draft of zoning text for village center zoning presented to ZAP

Planning staff and consultant Utile presented [version 1.0 of the village center overlay district \(VCOD\)](#) zoning text to ZAP at [their November 28 meeting](#). The draft zoning text works in connection with the [version 1.0 maps](#) previously presented to ZAP in October. The maps and zoning text build upon two years of research, analysis, engagement, and discussions with the City Council.

Version 1.0 of the VCOD proposes an **overlay district** for 12 of Newton's village centers (other areas, such as Route 9 in Chestnut Hill will be part of a future effort). The overlay district allows property owners to continue to utilize their existing zoning or to opt into the overlay district* for new buildings or uses. The VCOD includes three sub-districts - Village Center 1 (VC1), Village Center 2 (VC2), and Village Center 3 (VC3). Combinations of these three districts have been applied across the village centers in the version 1.0 maps. VC1, VC2, and VC3 allow buildings up to 2.5, 3.5, and 4.5 stories, respectively. The VC1 district is intended to be predominantly residential, while the VC2 will allow for a mix of residential and commercial uses and the VC3 will strongly incentivize mixed-use developments.



What is an overlay district?

This is a zoning district applied *over* previously established zoning district - rather than *replacing* an established district. If the proposed overlay is adopted, and a property owner decides to build or redevelop on their parcel, their development project has to come into compliance with either the current zoning district or the overlay district. And it's up to them to choose which one.

The draft zoning also includes additional controls such as setbacks in all three districts and reduces the parking requirements for residential and commercial uses. Design standards are included to ensure larger projects provide sufficient open space, to limit the length of buildings, and to enhance pedestrian orientation through controls on driveways, parking locations, and minimum transparency requirements and sidewalk widths.

This first draft is meant to be reviewed and updated and Planning staff presented the areas where there is work still to be done, such as further refining VC1 and creating incentives for affordable housing and preservation of existing buildings. At the November 28 meeting Councilors felt this was a good start and looked forward to future iterations. Councilors were particularly interested in how this zoning may contribute to compliance with the MBTA Communities Multifamily Zoning requirements and whether the zoning, particularly in VC1, could incentivize teardowns.

Planning staff presented [further analysis of the VC1 district](#) at ZAP's December 12 meeting. The Councilors were very interested in finding the right balance of allowing for more housing and preserving existing buildings.

Check out the ZAP conversation on the video recording from November 28 [here](#) and from December 12 [here](#) (start at 1:10:40). You can also view the memos and presentations from Planning [here](#). ZAP will continue to discuss the draft maps and zoning text in the new year and will open up a portion of their January meetings to take public comment, focusing on comments from City boards and commissions and community groups.

Upcoming ZAP Meetings in January

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

Monday, January 9, 2022 at 7pm

- Public comment by City boards and commissions and community groups on Version 1.0 of Village Center Zoning

Monday, January 23, 2022 at 7pm

- Additional public comment
- Planning presentation on Village Center Zoning



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