

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 6, 2023



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney Heath
Director
Planning & Development

Members

Kelley Brown, Chair
Kevin McCormick, Vice Chair
Lee Breckenridge, Member
Amy Dain, Member
Peter Doeringer, Member
Jennifer Molinsky, Member
Barney Heath, *ex officio*
Laxmi Rao, Alternate

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Members present:

Kelley Brown, Chair
Kevin McCormick, Vice-Chair
Lee Breckenridge, Member
Amy Dain, Member
Peter Doeringer, Member
Jennifer Molinsky, Member
Barney Heath, *ex officio*

Staff present: Jennifer Caira, Deputy Planning Director

Meeting held virtually by Zoom Meeting at 7:45 p.m.

1. Rezoning Petition #355-22 Request to Rezone 2 parcels (11 Florence Str/318 Boylston St) to Business Use 4 (BU4)

This item was continued until the March 6th regular Planning Board meeting.

2. Village Center Zoning Discussion

Ms. Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director, presented on the parameters for developing version 2.0 of the proposed village center zoning (attached ZAP presentation from January 23rd, 2023). Ms. Caira reported that the Planning Dept's consultant, Utile, was working to develop an estimate of MBTA compliant unit capacity under the proposed version 1.0 of the zoning. Ms. Caira shared that it is likely that the proposed village center zoning will not achieve complete compliance with the full MBTA Communities requirement of 8,000 units. Ms. Dain indicated that she had written to DHCD to request that they reconsider their position not to count units in zones where mixed-use is required.

Ms. Caira reported that the team is rethinking the VC1 zone to both reduce the footprint of the allowed new construction and incentivize the reuse of current building stock by allowing some amount of additional construction and conversion to multi-units. The idea would be to make conversion a more attractive alternative. For VC2 and VC3, the staff is also looking at providing additional incentives to provide the reuse of older historic structures and churches. Mr. Brown expressed some reservations about over emphasizing preservation given that there are existing tools including landmarking to protect significantly historic structures.

Ms. Caira also indicated that the staff and Utile are working on updated perspectives of the VC3 zone. The staff is also closely examining parking requirements for the village center zoning. Thought is given to reducing parking requirements to incentivize affordable housing, reuse, and for properties close to transit.

Ms. Caira also shared that Utile is looking at what level of additional development would be required to provide affordable housing beyond the City's inclusionary zoning. Ms. Molinsky offered that this strategy helps to even the playing field for affordable housing developers.

City of Newton Planning and Development Board

Lastly, Ms. Caira indicated that there will be consistency with respect to zoning public properties with parking lots being rezoned but public buildings remaining public use.

3. Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Doeringer, seconded by Mr. McCormick, the minutes from January 19th were approved unanimously.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned unanimously at 8:55 p.m.

City of Newton
Zoning & Planning Committee



Village Center Rezoning Phase 3: Draft Zoning

January 23, 2023
Docket #38-22

Info + Input Session Recap

City of Newton: Department of Planning & Development

Info + Input Sessions on Proposed Zoning Districts for Village Centers



All virtual sessions @ 5:30 - 7 pm

Tuesday, 11.29
Upper Falls + Waban

Wednesday, 11.30
Four Corners + Newton Highlands

Thursday, 12.01
Newton Centre + Thompsonville

Tuesday, 12.06
Lower Falls + Auburndale

Wednesday, 12.07
West Newton

Thursday, 12.08
Newtonville

Wednesday, 12.14
Nonantum + Newton Corner

Register here



Image description: Draft maps for the 12 village centers under consideration, available online



Recordings and notes available here >>> <https://newtonma.gov/vcmaps>

What we heard

Main Themes:

MBTA Communities compliance

Housing

Historic preservation

Parking

Economic development

Design

Open space

VC1

Special permit thresholds

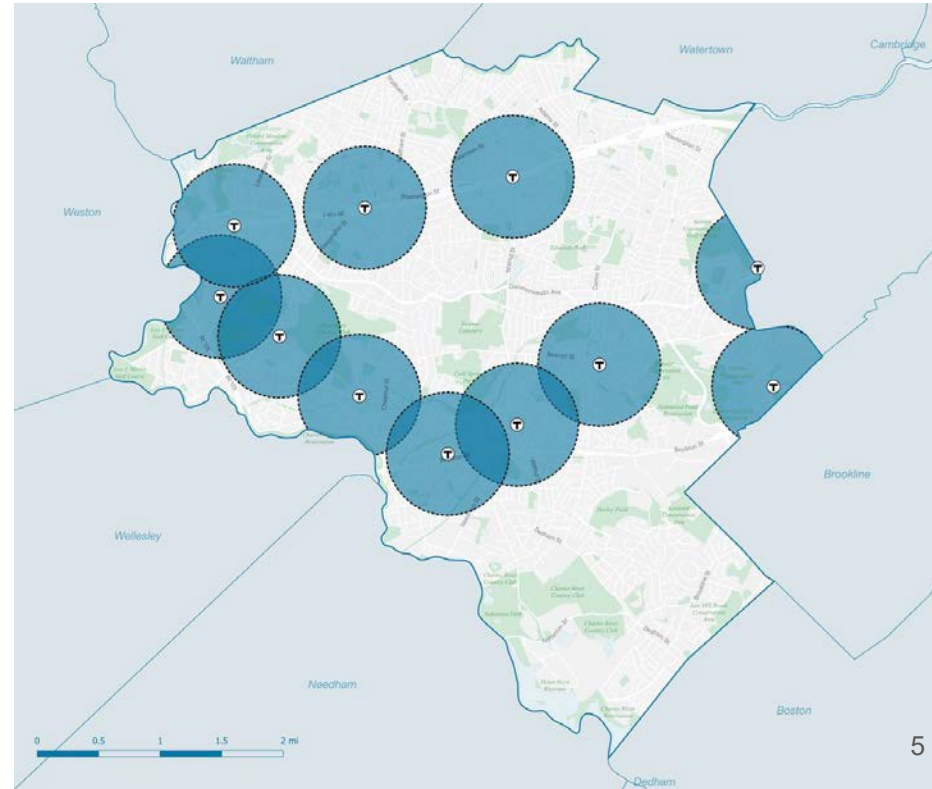
Zoning for city-owned properties

Village Center locations

What we're working on

MBTA Communities Compliance

- Rough estimate of village center zoning unit capacity
- Look at options for coming into compliance, including potential new zoning districts for corridors and areas around non-village center Green Line stations



What we're working on

VC1

- Adjusted metrics and boundaries
- Disincentivize demolition

Historic Preservation

- Identify significant resources on maps
- Incentives for preservation and reuse of existing structures



What we're working on

Updated Visuals

- Updated perspectives incorporating design standards

Comparison of VCOD to Existing Zoning

Parking

- Updated proposal based on local data, transit proximity, reuse, and/or affordability



What we're working on

Zoning for Churches

- Incentivize reuse instead of demolition

Affordable Housing Incentives

- Working with Newton Housing Partnership to analyze options for increased height/footprint in exchange for more affordable housing

Mixed-Use

- Targeting areas for mixed-use and refining strategy per MBTA Communities guidelines



Next Steps

Calendar

