

4/11/2022

# City of Newton Zoning & Planning Committee

## Village Center Rezoning Phase 2, Scenarios



## Important Links

1. 3/28 ZAP presentation and report:

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/82561/637841543812970000> (presentation)

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/82915/637844260116000000> (report)

2. 2/28 ZAP presentation and report:

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/81553/637819174426530000> (presentation)

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/81715/637820084381300000> (report)

3. Zoning Redesign Village Center Webpage:

<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/planning/village-centers>

# Agenda

1. What was presented and takeaways from the 3/28 ZAP meeting
2. Looking ahead to the 4/25 ZAP meeting
3. Discussion

# What was presented at the 3/28 ZAP meeting

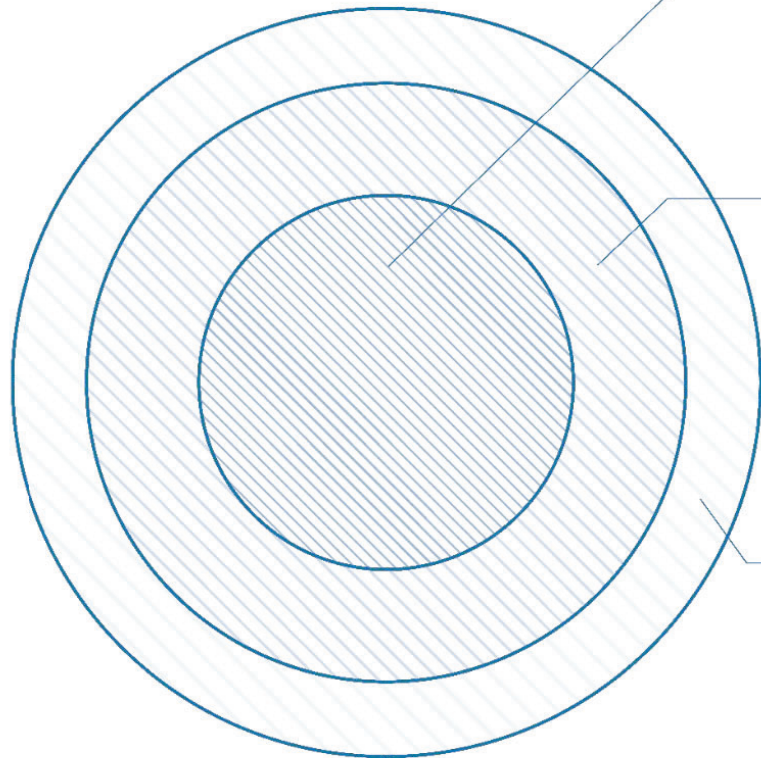
## Analysis of potential zoning in large village centers

1. Select a large village center for analysis: Newton Centre
2. Development scenarios on “hypothetical sites” using REVISED ZONING:
  - a. Example with Mixed Use District 4 (MU4)
  - b. Example with Business District 3 (BU3)
  - c. Example with Business District 2 (BU2)
3. Analysis of:
  - a. Zoning constraints
  - b. Economic feasibility
  - c. Achieves community takeaways



Zoning Scenarios

# Tiered Framework\*



## Center

The heart of the village center, closest to transit.

## MU4

*FAR special permit*..... 2.5  
*Stories special permit*.. 5  
*FAR by-right*..... 1.5  
*Stories by-right*..... 3

MU4 is a relatively new zone that has led to mixed-use multi-family developments in village centers. It is currently mapped in limited areas. It could be a promising model to apply near transit in village centers.

## Consider changing

- FAR
- Height
- Parking ratio etc

## Periphery

The area around the center of the village, that is less intense than the center but more intense than the edge.

## BU3

*FAR special permit*..... 2.0  
*Stories special permit*.. 4  
*FAR by-right*..... 1.5  
*Stories by-right*..... 3

BU3 allows less height and FAR than MU4, and allows for slightly more height than BU2. It is not currently mapped.

## Consider changing

- FAR
- Height
- Parking ratio etc

## Edge

The furthest extent of the village center's area of influence.

## BU2

*FAR special permit*..... 2.0  
*Stories special permit*.. 4  
*FAR by-right*..... 1.0  
*Stories by-right*..... 2

Current BU2 special permit zoning creates almost viable developments at a low scale. It is commonly mapped in village centers. With revisions, the BU2 zoning could allow for modest development.

## Consider changing

- FAR
- Height
- Parking ratio etc

\*This would require remapping the districts accordingly

## Findings From Applying Revised Zoning (existing districts)

### MU4 (center)

1. By-right doesn't pencil out.
2. Special permit pencils out for mixed-use residential development with underground parking.
3. Stepbacks can result in unpredictable and undesirable urban form.
4. Floor-to-floor heights (rather than number of stories) should be increased to allow for market-standard heights.
5. Lower parking requirements will result in better design outcomes.

### BU3 (periphery)

1. By-right doesn't pencil out.
2. Special permit can pencil out for residential with surface parking but leads to less desirable urbanism. Factors like minimum lot area per unit make other special permit options infeasible.
3. Floor-to-floor heights (rather than number of stories) should be increased to allow for market-standard heights.
4. Lower parking requirements will result in better design outcomes.

### BU2 (edge)

1. By-right doesn't pencil out.
2. Special permit doesn't work in most cases, medium-size parcels are potentially viable.
3. Floor-to-floor heights (rather than number of stories) should be increased to allow for market-standard heights.
4. Lower parking requirements will result in better design outcomes.

# Ensuring viability and desirability in Village Centers

## Viable Development

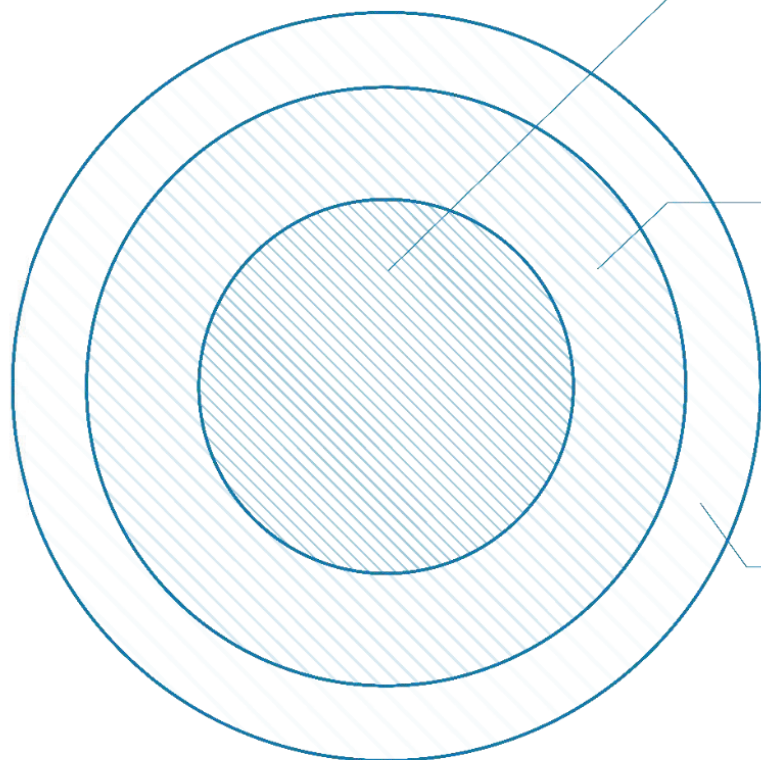
1. Lower parking requirements
2. Heights increase to allow for minimum standard floor-to-floor heights.
3. Remove maximum building area by-right. Instead, lot size is the threshold, with lots over 1 acre requiring a special permit.
4. Remove minimum lot size

## Desirable Urban Form

1. Introduce maximum building footprint size
2. Establish a minimum threshold for site plan review.
3. Introduce design standards.

Zoning Scenarios: Summary

# Tiered Framework\*



Center	MU4 (Special Permit)	Example Revised MU4
FAR	2.50	2.50
Height	5 stories, 60'	5 stories, 65'
Lot area per unit	--	--
Bldg Footprint	--	15,000 sf max
Parking Ratio		
Retail	1 per 300 sf	exempt for ground floor commercial
Office	1 per 250 sf	1 per 700 sf
Multi-family	1.25 per unit	1 per unit
Allowed Uses	Retail, Office, Multi-family	Retail, Office, Multi-family

Periphery	BU3 (Special Permit)	Example Revised BU3
FAR	2.00	2.00
Height	4 stories, 48'	4 stories, 52'-6"
Lot area per unit	1,200 sf	eliminate requirement
Bldg Footprint	--	10,000 sf max
Parking Ratio		
Retail	1 per 300 sf	First 5,000 sf ground floor commercial exempt, otherwise 1 per 350 sf
Office	1 per 250 sf	1 per 500 sf
Multi-family	1.25 per unit	1 per unit
Allowed Uses	Retail, Office	Retail, Office, Multi-family

Edge	BU2 (Special Permit)	Example Revised BU2
FAR	2.00	1.75
Height	4 stories, 48'	3.5 stories, 41'-3"
Lot area per unit	1,200 sf	eliminate requirement
Bldg Footprint	--	10,000 sf max
Parking Ratio		
Retail	1 per 300 sf	First 5,000 sf ground floor commercial exempt, otherwise 1 per 350 sf
Office	1 per 250 sf	1 per 500 sf
Multi-family	1.25 per unit	1 per unit
Allowed Uses	Retail, Office	Retail, Office, Multi-family

\*This would require remapping the districts accordingly. #s may be updated to reflect ZAP input from the 3/28 meeting.



## Looking ahead to the 4/25 ZAP meeting

1. Run recommended development scenarios on “hypothetical parcels”
  - a. Further revise zoning tiers based on ZAP discussion, engagement takeaways, urban design best practice, and financial feasibility
2. Additional financial analysis looking at condos vs. rentals
3. Tiered framework application to different scales of village centers
4. Analysis of existing zoning in small village centers