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Barney S. Heath
Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 24, 2023

TO: Councilor Deborah Crossley, Chair, Zoning & Planning Committee
Members of the Zoning & Planning Committee

FROM: Barney Heath, Director, Department of Planning and Development
Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director Department of Planning and Development
Zachery LeMel, Chief of Long Range Planning

RE: **#38-22 Discussion and review relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance regarding village centers**
ZONING & PLANNING COMMITTEE requesting review, discussion and possible ordinance amendments relative to Chapter 30 zoning ordinances pertaining to Mixed Use, business districts and village districts relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance. (formerly #88-20)

MEETING: March 27, 2023

CC: City Council
Planning Board
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer

Village Center Zoning

Under the direction and guidance of the Newton City Council Zoning and Planning Committee (ZAP), Planning staff drafted ["version 1.0" of the Village Center Overlay District \(VCOD\) Zoning Ordinance](#). This first draft builds upon nearly two years of research, analysis, City Council deliberation, and community engagement. The VCOD zoning is tailored to complement each village center, while also guiding development that addresses Newton's current and future needs.

Incentivizing Affordability in Newton's Village Centers

Throughout the village center zoning process Planning staff have heard from the City Council, Boards & Commissions, and community members about the desire to increase affordability within new development. With this guiding principle, Planning staff, City consultants, and members of the Newton Housing Partnership (NHP) undertook an analysis to understand if providing a by-right increase in building height and massing could incentivize more affordable units within the proposed VCOD. The following information summarizes the results of that analysis and resulting policy recommendation.

Incentive Allowance

	Village Center 3 District (VC3)			Village Center 2 District (VC2)		
	Base Condition	Option 1	Option 2	Base Condition	Option 1	Option 2
Allowance (max)						
Height (stories)	4.5	5.5 (+1)	6.5 (+2)	3.5	4.5 (+1)	5.5 (+2)
Building Footprint (sq ft)	15,000	17,500 (+2,500)		10,000	12,500 (+2,500)	

Summary of Initial Findings from Test Fits

	Village Center 3 District (VC3)			Village Center 2 District (VC2)		
	Base Condition	Option 1	Option 2	Base Condition	Option 1	Option 2
Height (stories)	4.5	5.5	6.5	3.5	4.5	5.5
Building Footprint (sq ft) *	12,847	16,801	16,801	6,544	11,043	11,043
Total Square Feet	55,249	89,164	105,124	23,940	51,870	62,843
Total Units	48	82	98	24	52	63
Affordable Units	8	24	33	4	15	22
% Affordable	17.5%	30%	34%	17%	30%	35%

* The maximum footprint is based on actual properties in Newton, compliant with all VCOD zoning

This initial analysis is based on a rental property development. The VC3 option includes ground floor retail, while the VC2 option is fully residential. Additional information on the analysis, including initial pro forma input ranges and sites used for the test fits, can be found in Attachment A.

Policy Recommendation

	Village Center 3 (VC3) & Village Center 2 (VC2) Districts		
	Base Condition	Option 1	Option 2
Height Bonus (stories)	N/A	+ 1	+ 2
Building Footprint Bonus (sq ft)	N/A	+ 2,500	+ 2,500
Required Affordable Units (min)	17.5%	25%	30%
Required AMI for Bonus Affordable Units (average)	65%		

Next Steps

Planning staff look forward to a discussion with the NHP regarding this material and hope the NHP will vote to endorse this policy recommendation in advance of presenting this material to the City Council at the March 27,2023 ZAP Committee meeting.

Attachments

Attachment A Test Fits for Additional Affordability Requirements within the VCOD