

City of Newton
Zoning and Planning Committee



**Village Center Overlay District (VCOD)
Public Hearing: Draft Zoning Proposal**

September 26, 2023
Docket #38-22 & #39-22

Agenda

- 1. Introduction**
 - a. Village center goals
 - b. Challenges facing Newton
 - c. Purpose of village center rezoning

- 2. Village Center Overlay District (VCOD) Zoning Proposal**
 - a. Overview
 - b. Version 3.0 Updated

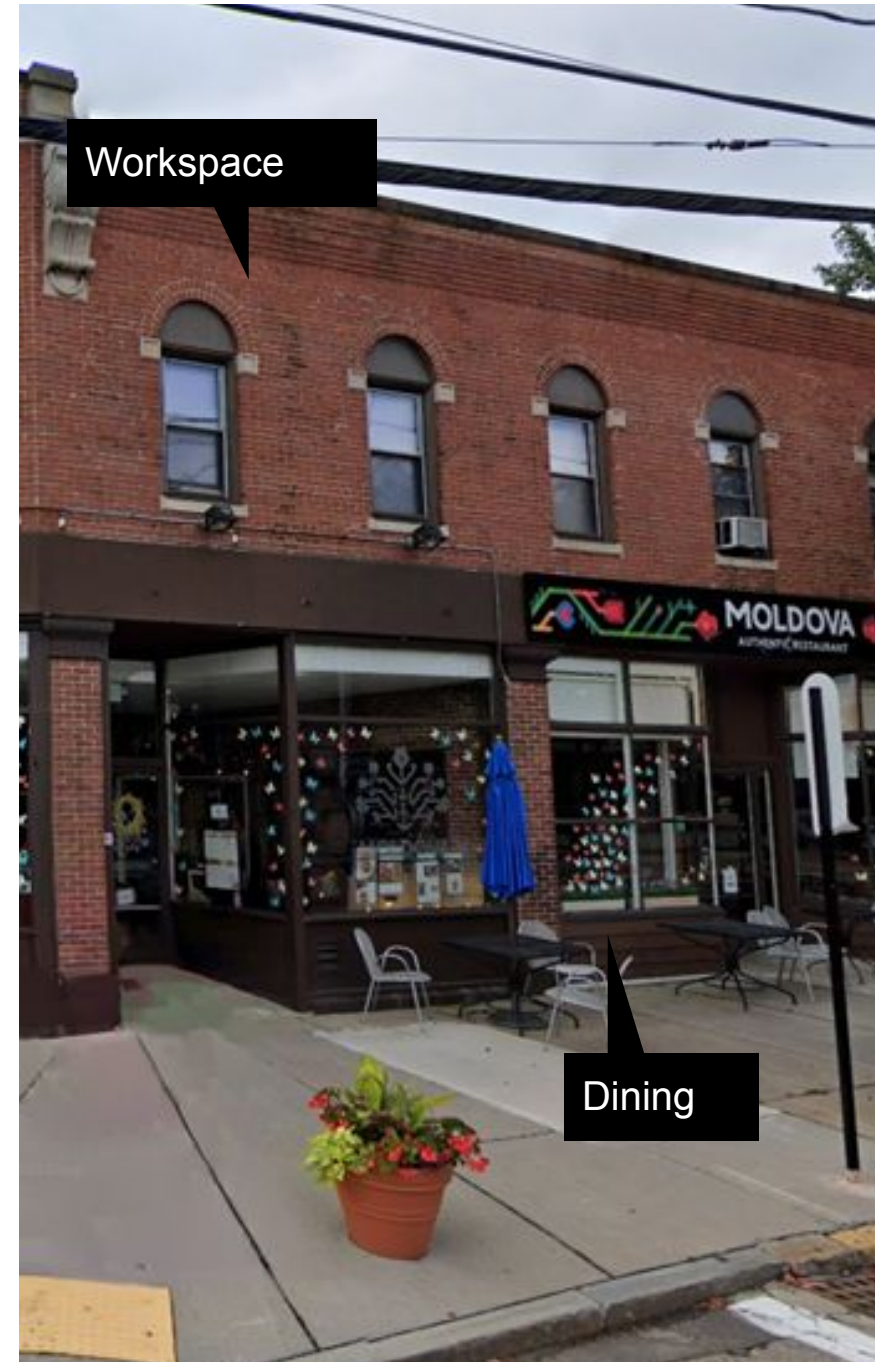
- 3. MBTA Communities and VCOD**
 - a. Newton requirements and VCOD compliance
 - b. Deadline for compliance

- 4. Expected Outcomes to VCOD Zoning**
 - a. Benefits to the City
 - b. Engagement and Outreach

- 5. Looking Ahead**

Village Center goals

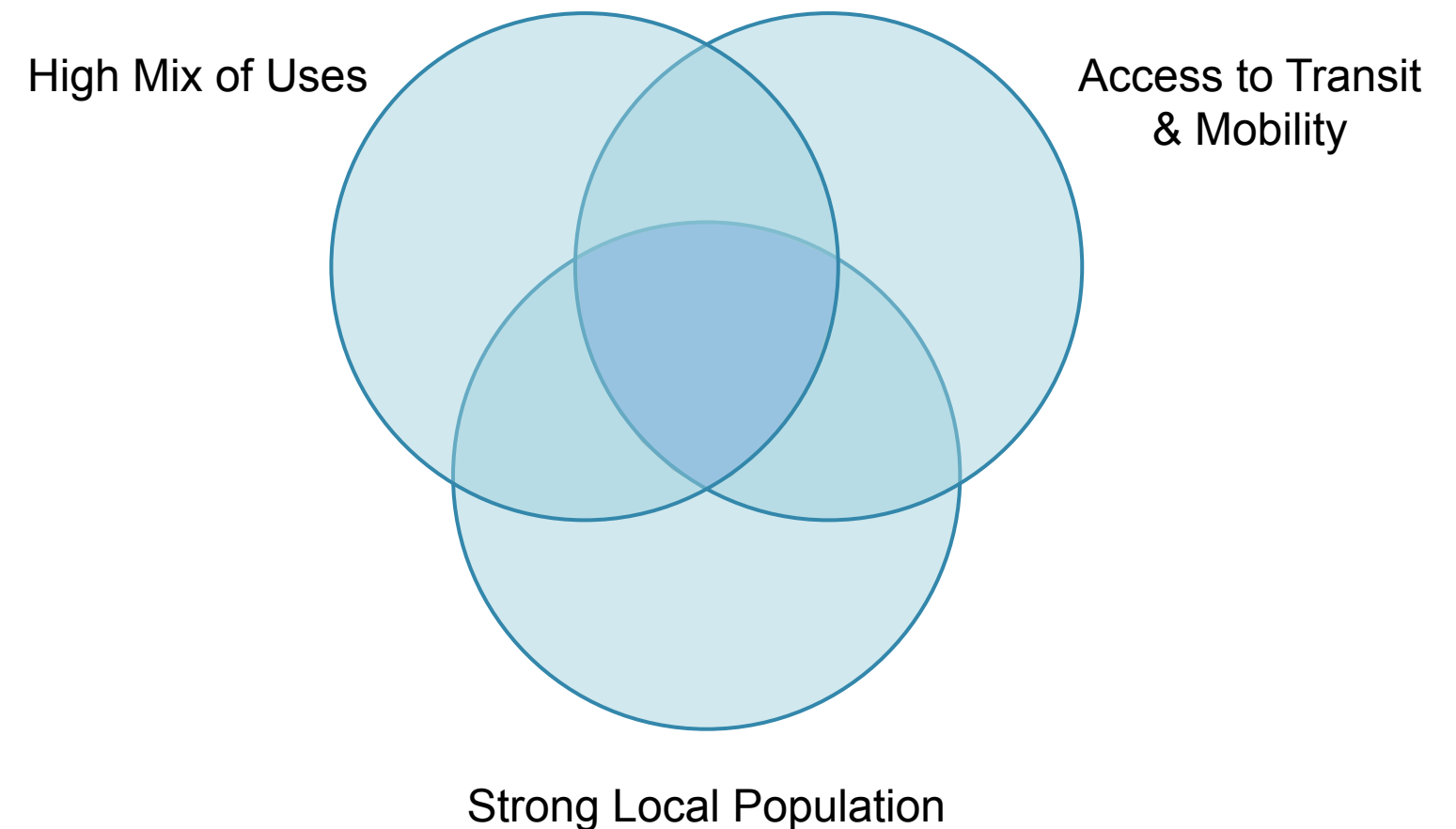
Build upon existing successes and strengths to create vibrant village centers



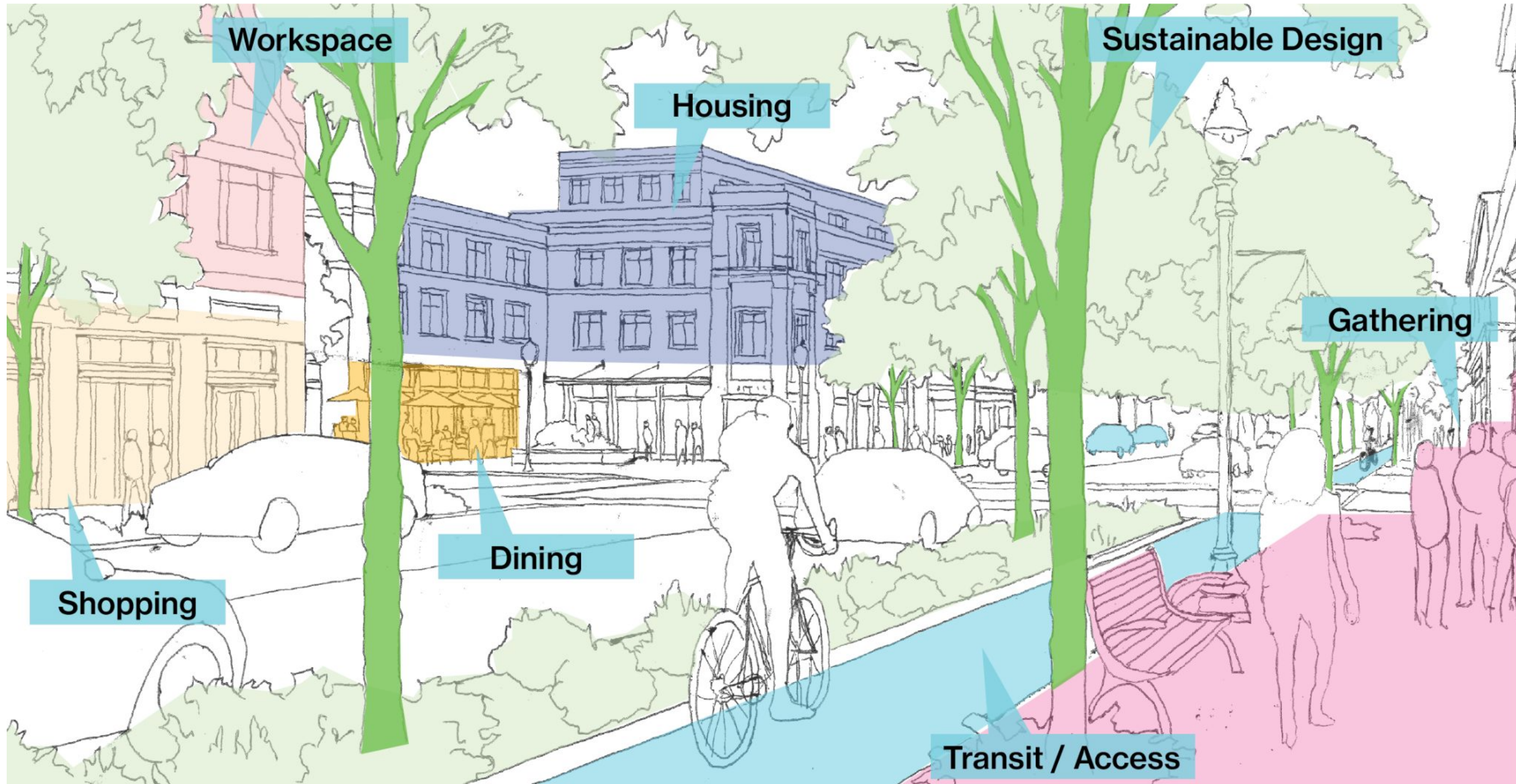
Village Centers can Address Challenges Facing Newton

1. Lack of housing options (size, price point, and accessibility)
2. Struggling local business trying to compete with online retail
3. Climate change
4. Transportation and traffic issues
5. Aging in place / welcoming new families
6. Lack of space to gather and socialize

Metrics for Successful Village Centers



Intended Outcomes - Achieving the Community Vision



VCOD Zoning Proposal

- Overview
- Version 3.0 Updates
 - Increasing protections for village center adjacent residential neighborhoods
 - Ensuring additional open space in the Multi-Residence Transit (MRT) zone
 - Eliminating the Village Center 1 (VC1) district from the proposal
 - Reduction of VCOD properties within the proposal

Three Sub-Districts Customized to Each Village Center

VC3

4.5 Stories

71-75 Feet tall, max.*

15,000 SF, max. footprint

Mixed Use/Commercial, & Residential development allowed



VC2

3.5 Stories

58-62 Feet tall, max.*

10,000 SF, max. footprint

Mixed Use/Commercial, & Residential development allowed



MRT

2.5 Stories

40-45 Feet tall, max.*

1,500 SF, max. Footprint

Residential development allowed



* Maximum height allowed for pitched roof only
+ The figures represent proposed by-right zoning allowances for new construction

Alignment with Newton's Historical Development Patterns



Newtonville



Newtonville



Upper Falls



West Newton



Newton Corner



Newton Corner



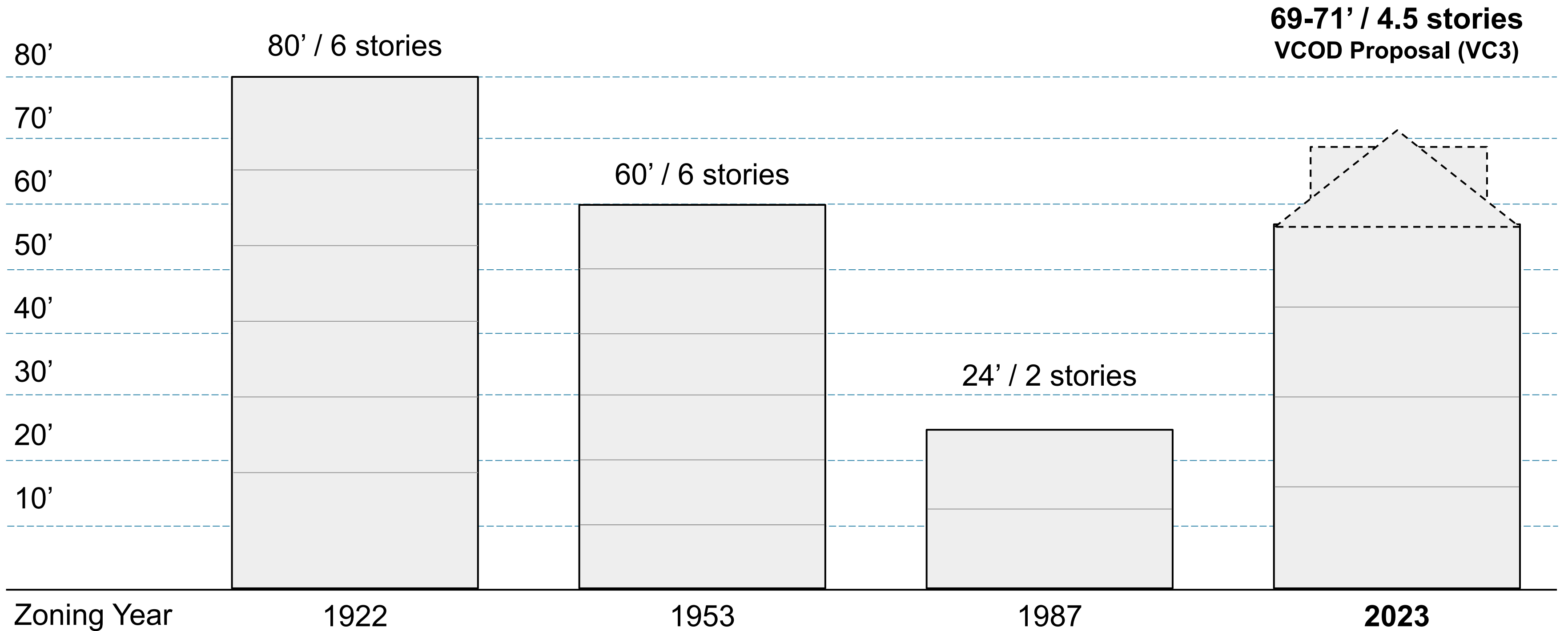
Newton Centre



Thompsonville

Alignment with Newton's Historical Development Patterns

Maximum By-Right Building Heights Allowed in Village Centers



Citywide Map 3.0

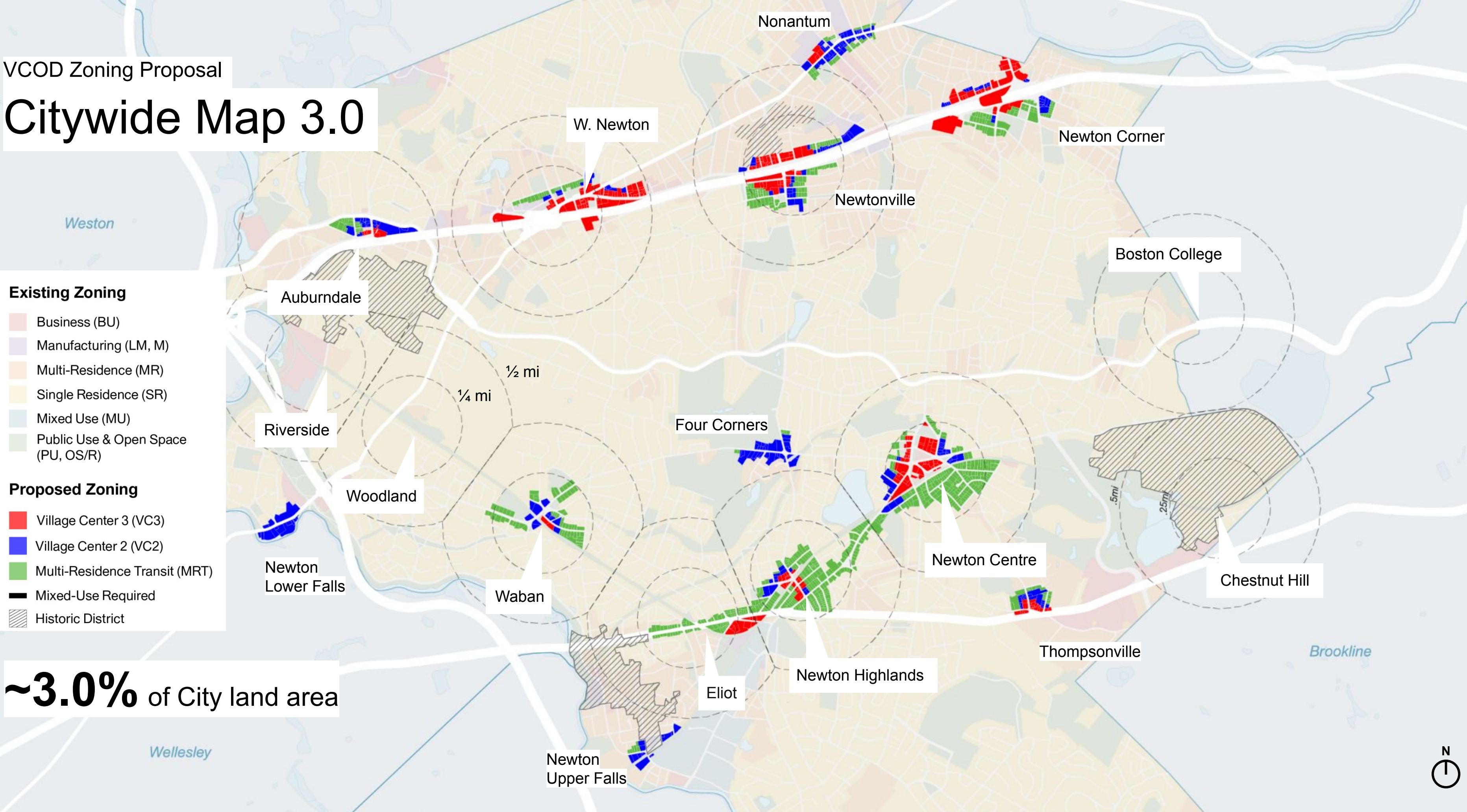
Existing Zoning

- Business (BU)
- Manufacturing (LM, M)
- Multi-Residence (MR)
- Single Residence (SR)
- Mixed Use (MU)
- Public Use & Open Space (PU, OS/R)

Proposed Zoning

- Village Center 3 (VC3)
- Village Center 2 (VC2)
- Multi-Residence Transit (MRT)
- Mixed-Use Required
- Historic District

~3.0% of City land area



Increasing protections for VC adjacent residential neighborhoods

Removed Option 2, Affordable Housing Bonus, which would have allowed 6.5 story buildings

		Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning	
		Base Conditions	Option 1 (VC2 and VC3)	Option 2 (VC3 only)**
Allows For	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%
Must Provide⁺	Required AMI for Affordable Units ⁺⁺	50-80% Rental / 80% Ownership		-

+ This option has been analyzed for financial feasibility with no additional City funding/resources

++ The average AMI can be no more than 65% AMI for a rental development

Increasing protections for VC adjacent residential neighborhoods

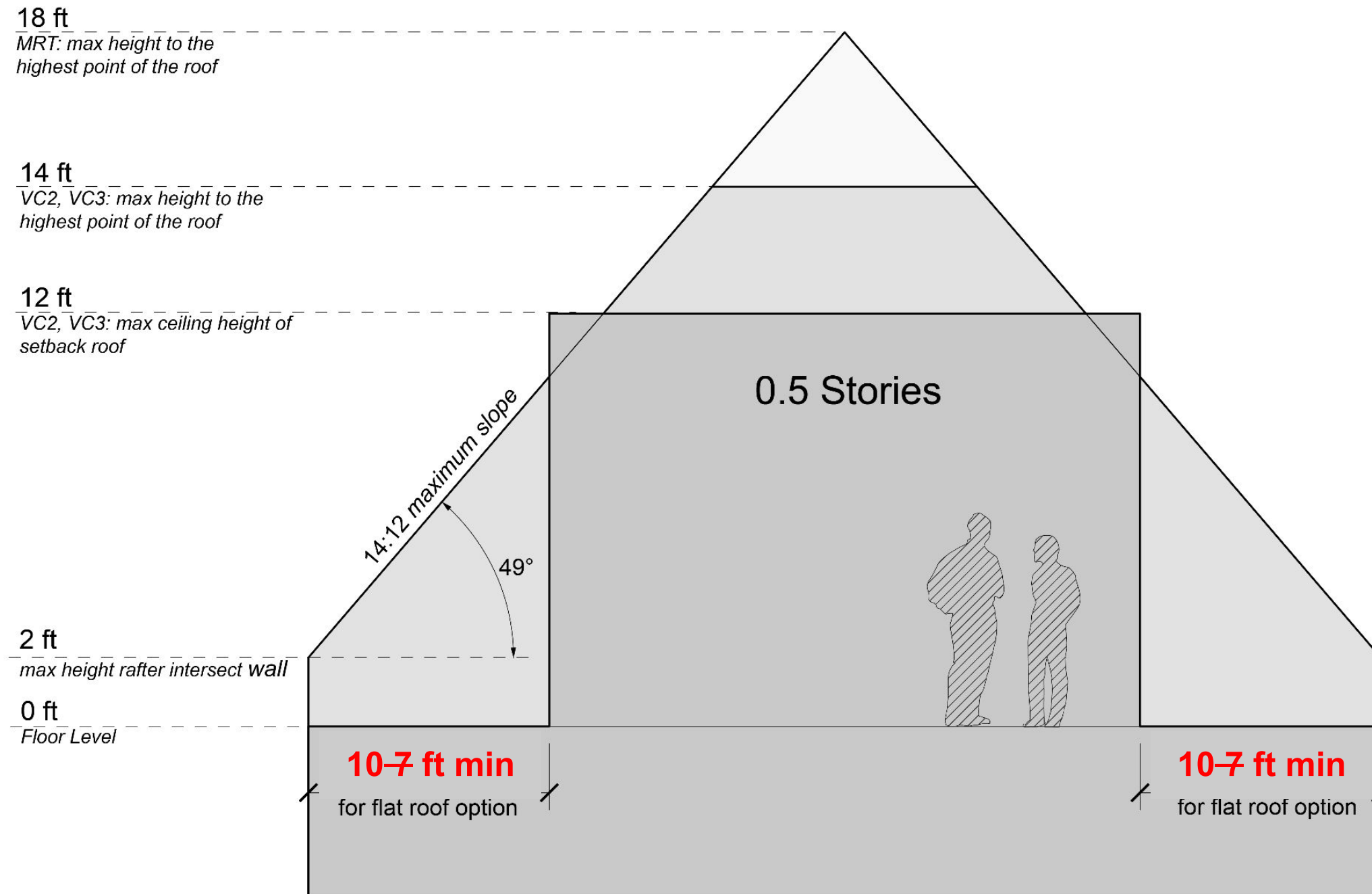
Greater side and rear setbacks adjacent to adjacent neighborhoods

Side and Rear Setback Requirements (min.)			
Version 2.0 - previous		Version 3.0 - current	
Village Center 2 (VC2)	Village Center 3 (VC3)	Village Center 2 (VC2)	Village Center 3 (VC3)
15 ft	15 ft	20 ft	20 ft

+ No building may exceed the maximum number of stories allowed, 3.5 stories in VC2 and 4.5 stories in VC3.

Increasing protections for VC adjacent residential neighborhoods

Greater half-story setback from the floor below along the front and rear⁺



+ Half-story must be set back along all lot lines when adjacent to a residential neighborhood

Ensuring additional open space in the MRT zone

Added a minimum open space requirement

Open Space Requirement (min.)	
Version 2.0 - previous	Version 3.0 - current
MRT	MRT
N/A	35%

+ The maximum building footprint is 1,500 sq ft for new construction, regardless of lot size.

Ensuring additional open space in the MRT zone

Greater front and side setback requirements

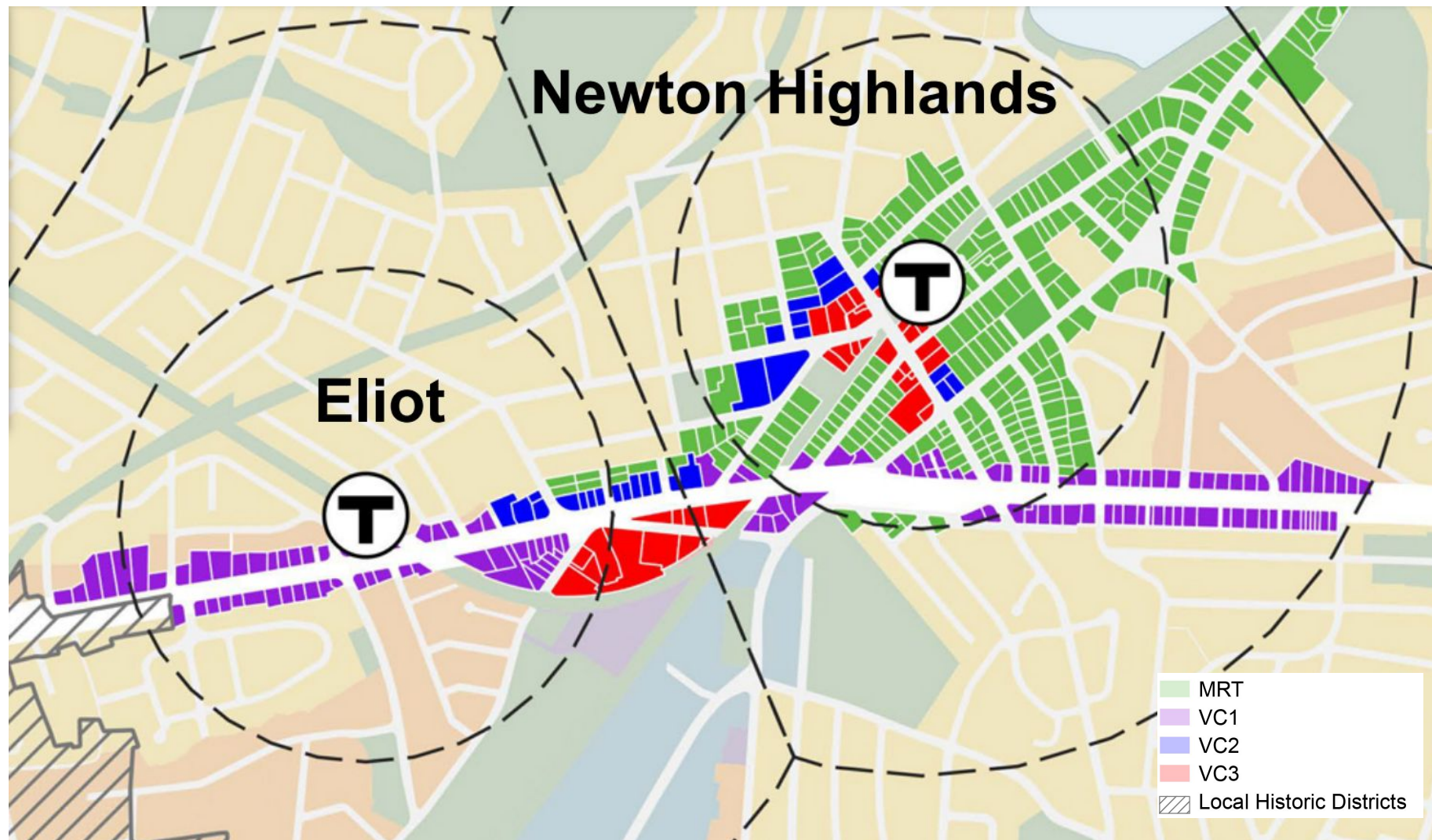
Front and Side Setback Requirements (min.)			
Version 2.0 - previous		Version 3.0 - current	
Front Setback	Side Setback	Front Setback	Side Setback
10 ft or average	7.5 ft	20 ft or average	10 ft

+ No building may exceed the maximum number of stories allowed, 3.5 stories in VC2 and 4.5 stories in VC3.

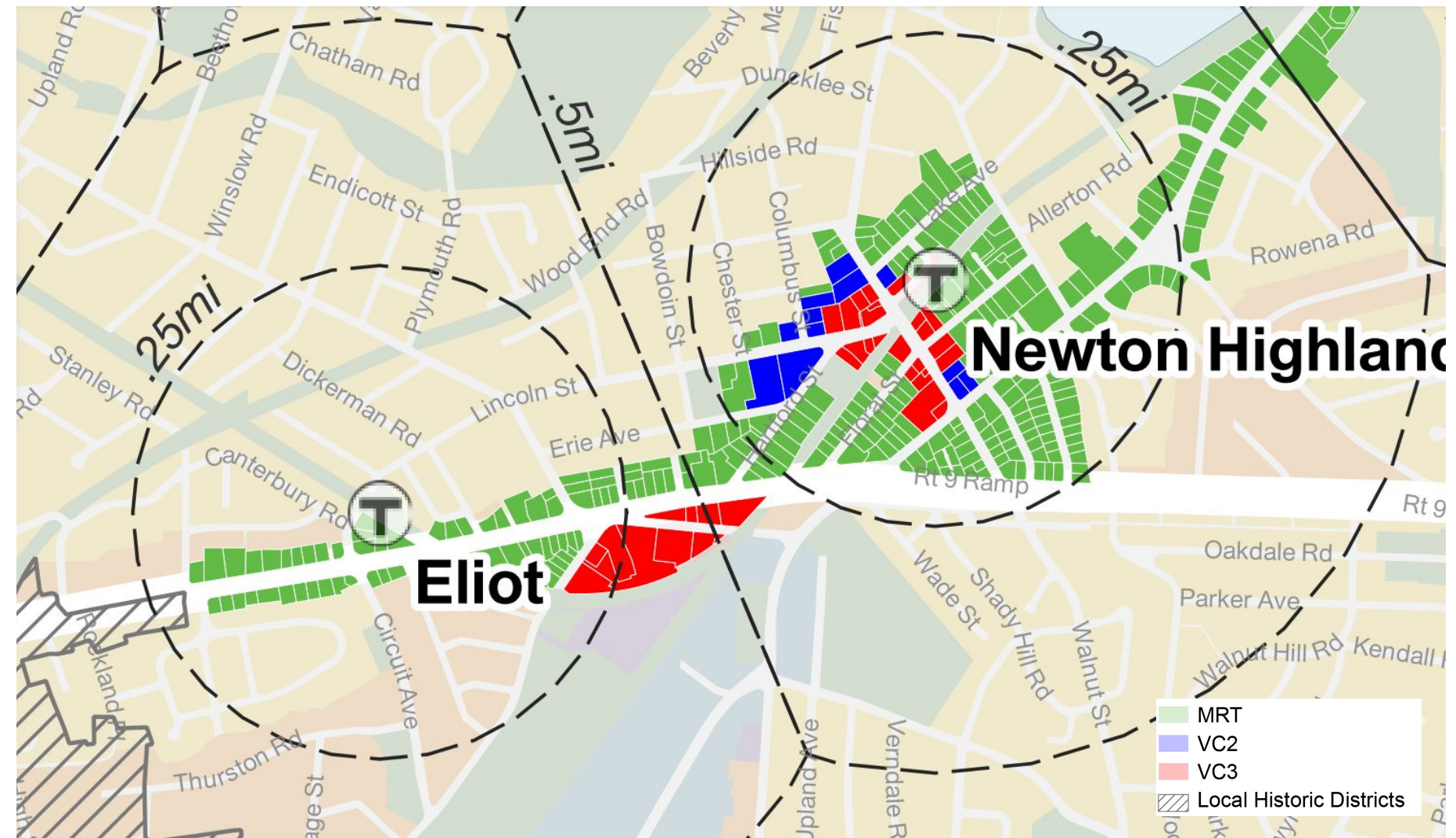
Eliminating the VC1 district from the proposal

Remove VC1 (purple) along Route 9, or updated to MRT (green)

Version 2.0 - previous



Version 3.0 - current



Reduction of VCOD properties within the proposal

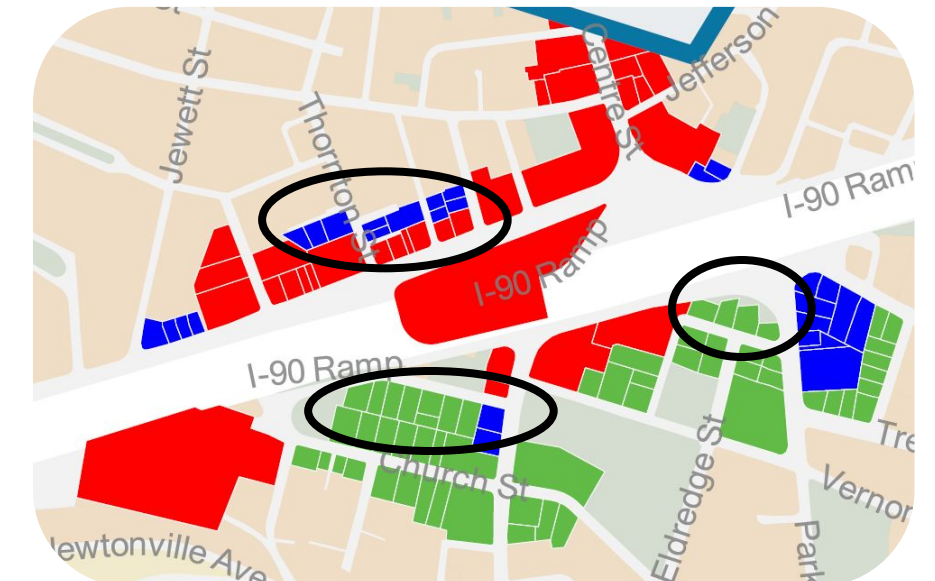
Lots and Included in the VCOD	
Version 2.0 - previous	Version 3.0 - Current
# of Lots	# of Lots
1,464	1,264

Newton Corner

Version 2.0

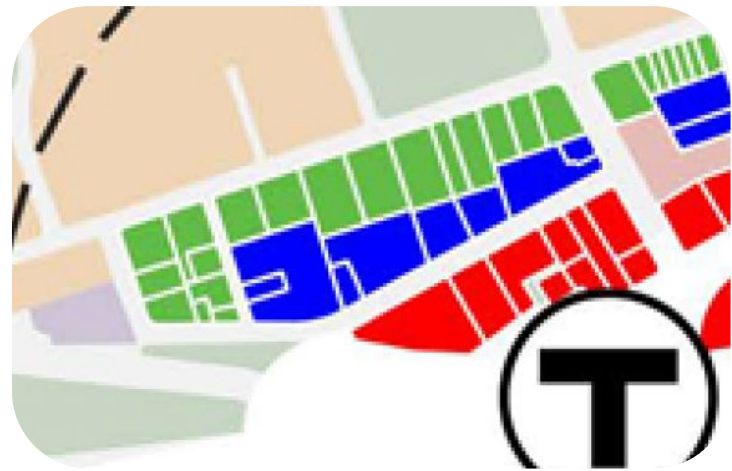


Version 3.0

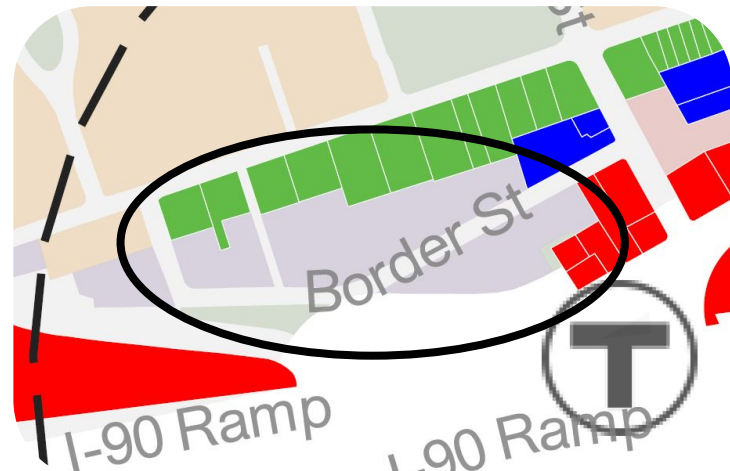


West Newton

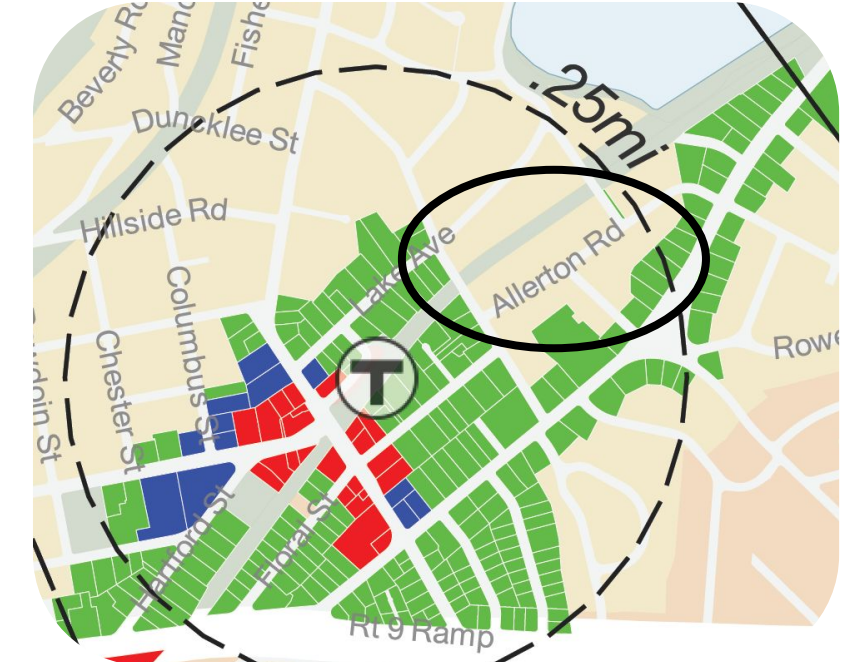
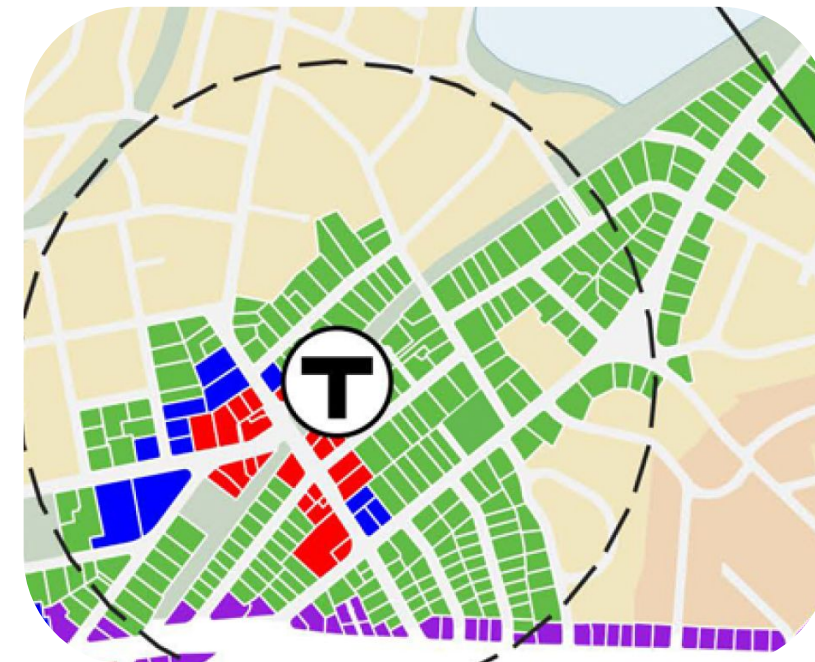
Version 2.0



Version 3.0



Newton Highlands



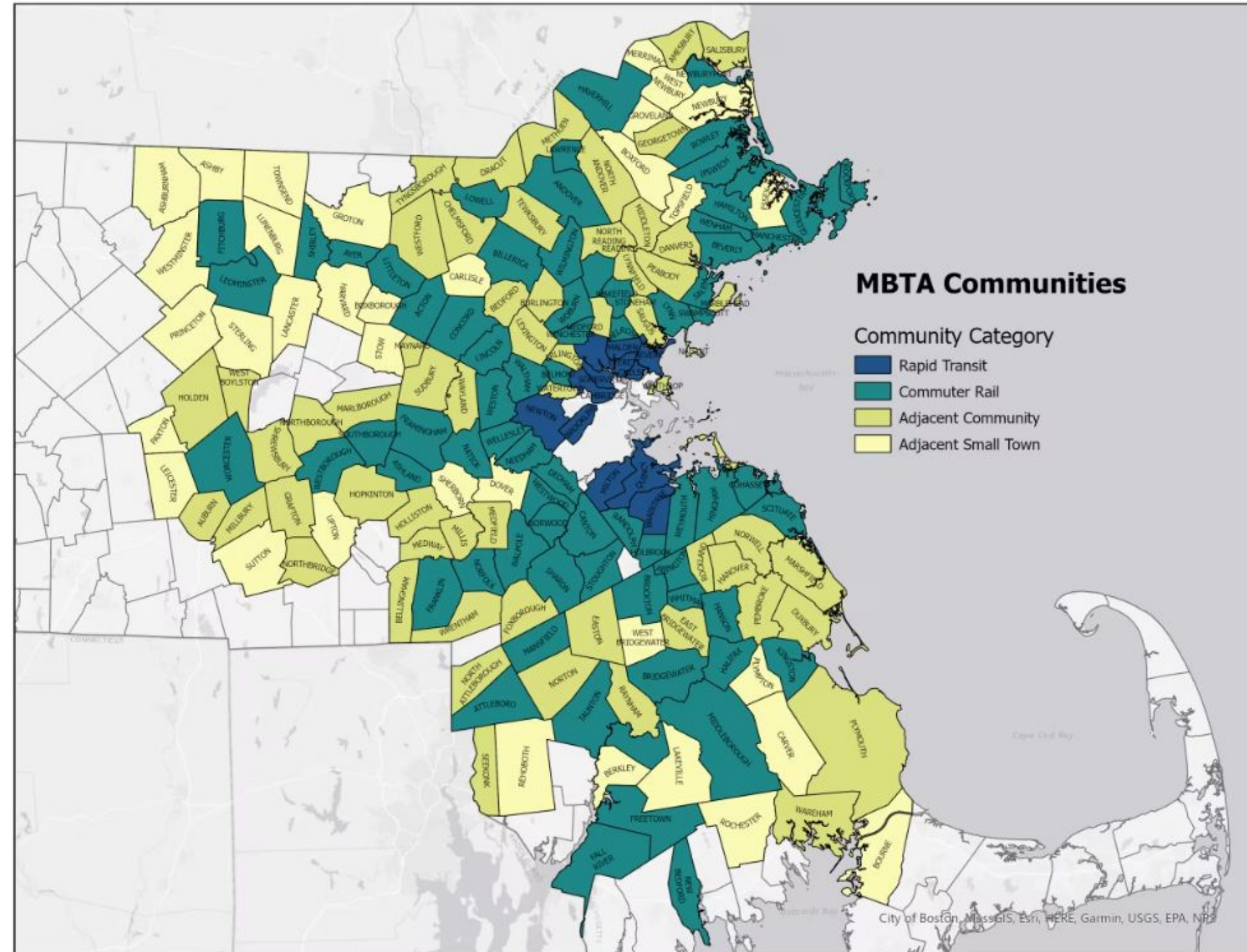
MBTA Communities and VCOD

- Newton requirements and VCOD compliance
- Deadline for compliance

Newton is One of 177 MBTA Communities

Appendix I: MBTA Community Categories and Requirements (top 20 communities)

Community	Community category	Minimum multi-family unit capacity*
Cambridge	Rapid Transit	13,477
Worcester	Commuter Rail	12,642
Quincy	Rapid Transit	11,752
Somerville	Rapid Transit	9,067
Newton	Rapid Transit	8,330
Brookline	Rapid Transit	6,990
Malden	Rapid Transit	6,930
Lowell	Commuter Rail	6,522
Medford	Rapid Transit	6,443
Revere	Rapid Transit	6,135
Brockton	Commuter Rail	5,596
Lynn	Commuter Rail	5,517
Everett	Rapid Transit	4,552
Lawrence	Commuter Rail	4,501
Framingham	Commuter Rail	4,355
Haverhill	Commuter Rail	4,189
Waltham	Commuter Rail	3,982
Weymouth	Commuter Rail	3,813
Braintree	Rapid Transit	3,769
Taunton	Commuter Rail	3,745



The total unit capacity across all MBTA Communities is over 280,000 residential units

Version 3.0 **DOES NOT** meet MBTA Compliance without Mixed-Use

Unit capacity of the multifamily district(s)* alone is below the minimum required

MBTA Compliance Summary - Multifamily Districts Only (rounded)

	MBTA Multifamily Requirements (min.)	Version 2.0 VCOD Results	Version 3.0 VCOD Results
Unit Capacity	8,330 units	10,000 units	7,300 units
Aggregate Gross Density	15 units/acre	35 units/acre	33 units/acre
% of District to be Located in Station Area	90%	100%	100%
% of Contiguous Land for Multi-Family Zoning District(s)	50%	69%	64.5%**

* The multi-family district(s) required under the MBTA Communities Law cannot include any parcels that require mixed-use.

Must meet every requirement to reach compliance by December 31, 2023 deadline

Version 3.0 **DOES** meet MBTA Compliance **WITH** Mixed-Use

Unit capacity of the multifamily and mixed use districts meets the minimum requirement

MBTA Compliance Summary - Multifamily and Mixed-Use Districts (rounded)

	Requirements		Results	
	MBTA Multifamily (min.)	Mixed-Use District (max.)	Version 3.0 VCOD Multifamily District	Version 3.0 VCOD Mixed-Use Districts*
Unit Capacity	8,330 units	25% of MBTA Multifamily Unit Capacity	7,300	2,000 units**
Total Unit Capacity	8,330 units		9,300 units	

Notes:

* Unit capacity of mixed-use districts within village centers submitted for MBTA compliance

** These mixed-use units existed in Version 2.0

Expected Outcomes to VCOD Zoning

- Engagement and Outreach
- Benefits to the City

Engagement Process

Phase 1: Visioning (April 2021 - April 2022)

- **Vision Kit:** 290 participants; 102 submissions
- **Online interactive forum:** 1,249 participants
- **Equitable focus groups:** 139 participants; 18 community facilitators
- **Economic Development engagement:** 41 participants
- **On-the-spot surveying:** over 500 engaged in person

Phase 2: Workshopping (May - Oct 2022)

- **Library exhibit:** up from Sept 1 - Oct 17
- **Feedback tool**
- **Focus groups:** 3 total
- **Community Engagement Network:** 90 members

Phase 3: Refining (Nov 2022 - Jan 2023)

- **Info sessions:** 7 to discuss Version 1.0 maps
- **Postcards mailed to owners within VCOD**
- **ZAP meetings:** 2 meetings opened up to feedback from community groups

Phase 4: Finalizing (Feb 2023 - Present)

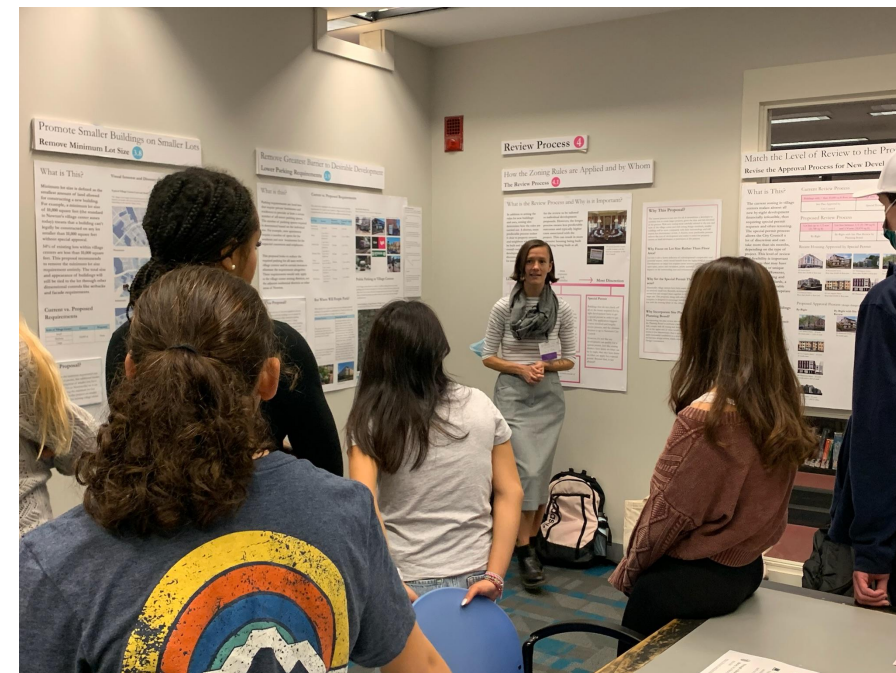
- **Public Hearings:** June 26, July 24, September 26
- **Written Testimonials:** ~250
- **Postcards mailed to owners/occupants within VCOD and abutters:** 6,064
- **Zoning and Planning Committee:** discussed at ~50 ZAP meetings



NHA & NHN in Newton Centre



NHA & NHN in Newtonville

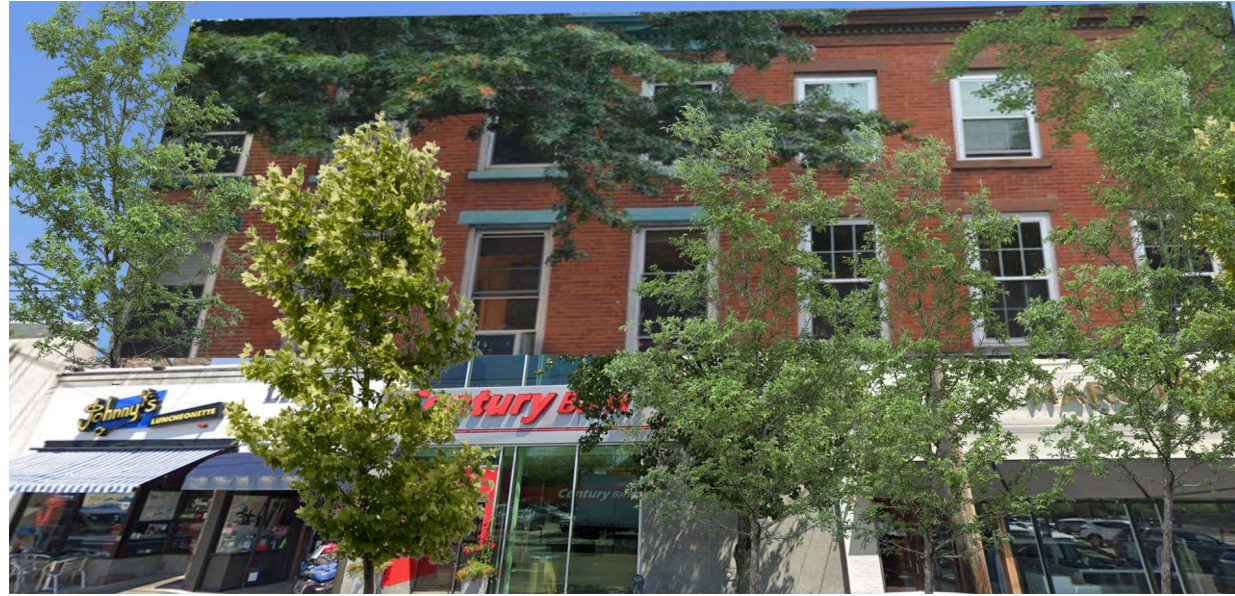


Newton Public Library Exhibit



Planning input at Festa in Nonantum

Benefits to the City



New housing options

New housing will provide options at sizes and price points that currently do not exist in Newton

Opportunities for older adults to downsize

Less expensive options for young adults and families

New affordable and accessible housing

New housing will be energy efficient



Support for businesses

Increased customer base

Less onerous requirements

Greater height for first floor uses

Wider sidewalks



Sufficient city services

New housing would be near transit and in walkable village centers, reducing congestion

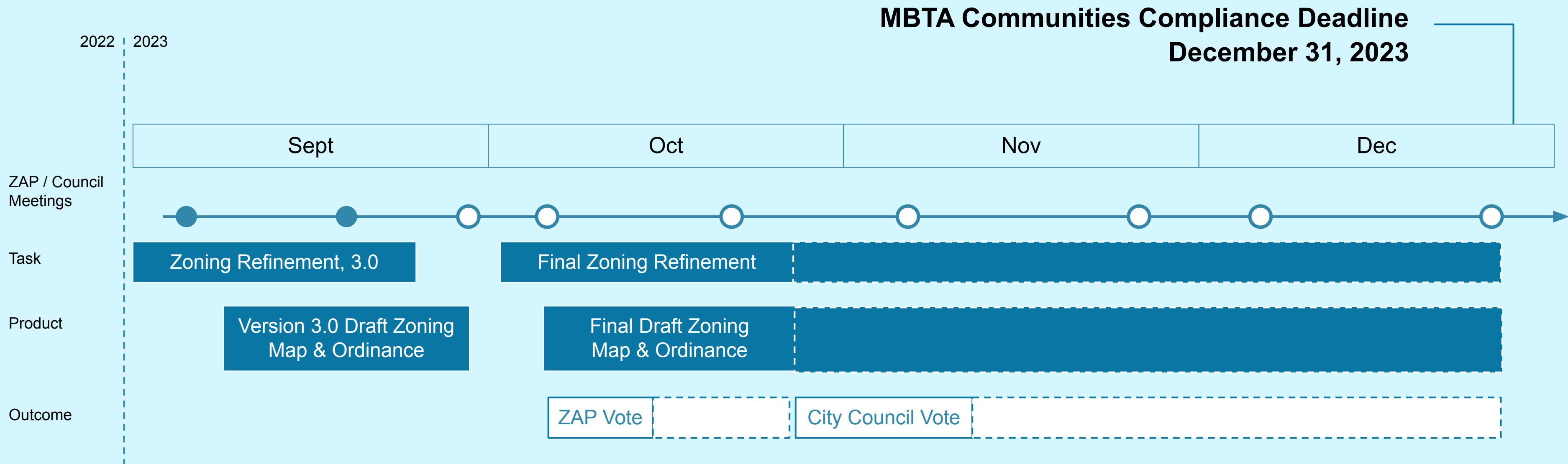
Limited number of new students living in recent mixed use buildings

Opportunities to coordinate with schools and other city services

Increased tax revenue

Timeline: Where we are

Looking Ahead



More information and Version 3.0 draft maps and ordinance:

<https://www.newtonma.gov/zoningredesign/vc>

