Newton is a vibrant cultural community with over 60 arts organizations and 30 community performance spaces and galleries. Residents of the city include professional artists, makers, cultural sector leaders, as well as students and emerging artists.

Vibrant cultural uses are engines of economic development. Every $1 spent by an arts and cultural organization generates $2.30 in sales for nearby businesses.

In 2017 the Newton Festival of the Arts showcased 100 performances and events, drawing over 1,000 attendees to the city.

Zoning Redesign is an opportunity to establish a strong connection between creative uses and Newton’s built environment, with zoning serving as a tool to facilitate expansion of arts related uses.

On February 15 we will explore how Newton’s new Zoning Ordinance could:

- Include a purpose statement of supporting a vibrant cultural sector
- Define cultural uses, including newer use types like makerspaces
- Allow greater flexibility for cultural activities in zones
- Create a pathway for creating murals on private property
- Encourage new development to allocate 1% for the arts
- Allow live/work studios and create more affordable housing that could benefit artists
- Reduce barriers to cultural uses including parking requirements and encourage transportation options
- Consider an Arts & Culture District that could enhance economic development and deepen local cultural capacity
Zoning shapes our city. It ensures that buildings and uses of land promote positive outcomes for the community and are consistent with the neighborhood context.

Zoning is the regulation of our built environment: types of buildings, their locations, and their uses.

Central Elements of Zoning

- **The Zoning Ordinance** is the book of rules and regulations for how private property lots are divided, how buildings are constructed on those lots, and how those buildings are used.
- **The Zoning Map** divides the city into districts, each of which represents a different set of land uses and scales of building types.
- **Dimensional Requirements** control the dimensions of private property lots and the buildings constructed on them, including: width and depth of properties, height and overall scale or mass of buildings, as well as how far buildings are from the street and from neighboring property lines.
- **Development and Use Standards** sets rules and performance standards relating to specific aspects of land development, e.g. rules for signage and parking. Many land uses, like restaurants or health clubs, have their own specific rules as well.
- **Decision Making Processes** for applying the zoning rules are outlined in the ordinance as well.

Zoning is... our opportunity to shape the future of Newton

What is Zoning Redesign?

The City is working to make a new zoning ordinance that is **effective, responsive, predictable, and fair**. Newton’s current zoning does not reflect the existing context - 95% of properties are inconsistent with current zoning. The new zoning will incorporate community input, data-driven analysis, and best practices in order to adequately protect neighborhoods and prepare the city for long-term growth.

With this project, the City will be rewriting the Zoning Ordinance to more closely respond to the **Comprehensive Plan**, to better respect the **current built environment** of the city, and to reflect the **values** of Newton’s residents and businesses.

The City Council’s zoning reform efforts began in 2011. **Phase One** was completed in 2015. It **successfully reorganized the existing ordinance**, making it easier to understand, but Phase One did not alter the content.

Now in **Phase Two**, Zoning Redesign is a project to update the ordinance’s content with a “context-based” approach. The first step was to **catalogue and analyze the patterns** of Newton’s built environment in the **“Pattern Book”** and gather initial ideas. The next step is to **engage the public** in developing new and revised zoning content. After this, we will be developing a draft based on the Pattern Book and the **community conversations** from this event series.

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**Dec 14, 2017: Housing for Whom? Zoning, Affordability, and Fair Housing**

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**A New Newton Zoning Ordinance**

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Zoning Redesign Phase Two

Analysis & Ideas Gathering

Zoning Event Series

Sept 2017-May 2018

Drafting the Ordinance

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