Newton Zoning Redesign

Building Shape, Size, and Form in Neighborhoods and Village Centers

03.15.18
Welcome!

6:35  Zoning 101

6:45  Building Shape, Size, and Form in Neighborhoods and Village Centers

7:20  Q&A

7:30  Table-top Sessions
Zoning 101
Zoning Is...

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 Map
- The Zoning Ordinance
- Dimensional Requirements
- Development and Use Standards
- Decision Making Processes

The Zoning Map divides the city into districts, each of which represents a different set of land uses and scales of building types.
Central Elements of Zoning

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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.
Central Elements of Zoning

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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.
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For each use
- Define it. State Intent.
- Set standards - Specific application materials, specific site layout standards, specific operations standards
Central Elements of Zoning

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- Dimensional Requirements
- Development and Use Standards
- Decision Making Processes

Who approves? What standards for approval are applied?

City Council
  e.g. Special Permit
  Zoning Amendments

Zoning Board of Appeals
  e.g. Variance

Inspectional Services Department
  e.g. Building Permit

Decision Making Processes for applying the zoning rules are outlined in the ordinance as well.
30-Second History of Zoning in Newton

1922 – First zoning code in Newton
1940 – Introduce lot sizes & setbacks
1953 – Increase required lot sizes
1987 – Major reorganization, and update to commercial zones
2011 – Zoning Reform Group
2015 – Phase One completed
2018 – Phase Two – TODAY!

Current efforts
What is Zoning Redesign?

The Zoning Redesign initiative aims to create a zoning code that is more **flexible**, **predictable**, and **context-based** in order to encourage development / redevelopment within Newton that is in keeping with the city’s celebrated **character** while **directing growth** and economic development to the most appropriate areas.
The Pattern Book

The Pattern Book represents several months of effort collecting first-hand data and analysis. Final version forthcoming Spring 2018.

Complete draft online at: www.courbanize.com/newtonzoning
Zoning Redesign Timeline

Pattern Book

A New Newton Zoning Ordinance

Analysis & Ideas Gathering

Zoning Event Series
Sept 2017-May 2018

Drafting the Ordinance
Zoning is our opportunity to shape the future of Newton
Building Shape, Size, and Form in Neighborhoods, and Village Centers
Building Shape, Size, and Form in Neighborhoods and Village Centers

March 15, 2018 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Newton Free Library, 330 Homer Street

www.courbanize.com/newtonzoning

Zoning is one of the most important tools the City has to ensure that the basic design principles that define Newton’s great villages and neighborhoods are maintained even as buildings change over time. In Newton’s villages the streets are lined with open shopfronts and frequent building entrances that make for a lively and interesting pedestrian environment. For many of Newton’s neighborhoods, there is a consistent context of building scale and setback that makes for a pleasing sense of community. In either of these environments, the architectural style and the building materials can vary, as long as these design principles are reinforced and maintained.

What are the design principles that make for a great village center or neighborhood?

On March 15th, we will explore how Newton’s Zoning Ordinance could:

- Maintain and enhance the great design found in many of the city’s villages and neighborhoods.
- Introduce these same design principles into other parts of the city so that we improve our commercial areas and provide greater contextual consistency in neighborhoods as they change.
- Provide options for addressing the issue of tear-downs / mansionization in residential neighborhoods.
- Guide appropriate building forms in areas that transition between village centers, commercial areas, and neighborhoods.

Wheelchair accessible location. For ADA accommodations, contact Jini Farley at least two business days in advance at farley@newtonma.gov or 617-796-1553. For City’s TTY/TDD: 617-796-1089. For TTY, dial 711.
The Zoning Redesign initiative aims to create a zoning code that is more flexible, predictable, and context-based in order to encourage development / redevelopment within Newton that is in keeping with the city’s celebrated character while directing growth and economic development to the most appropriate areas.
Zoning...

...is the rulebook that determines the shape, size, and form of new buildings and changes to existing buildings.
Neighborhoods + Village Centers + Commercial Corridors
Neighborhoods

Village Centers

+ Commercial Corridors
The Trick or Treat Test
Setbacks
Neighborhood Design Policy

Goal: To promote compatibility in neighborhood design

1. Front doors for the “Trick-or-Treat” test
2. Update contextual front setbacks for neighborhood context
3. Character features in setback: porches, vestibules, front entries, cornices & trims
Zoning cannot stop tear downs altogether, but can regulate what gets rebuilt.
Scale
Height & Massing
Façade Treatment – Windows & Roof Line
Residential Building Types

- Cottage
- House
- Large House

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot size range</th>
<th>House width min/max</th>
<th>House depth min/max</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Lot Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Flat roofs are an unintended consequence.
Large House Review
Large House Policy

Goal: To promote compatible houses in neighborhoods and provide predictable outcome for the community

1. Disincentivize incompatible construction
   - Limit size of house that can be built by right & discourage bulky construction
   - Reduce minimum lot size to allow contextual building types
   - Eliminate unintended consequences – i.e. pedestal houses, low pitched roof
   - Design Review
Neighborhoods + Village Centers + Commercial Corridors
Massing & Façade Treatment
Active Store Fronts
Lighting

Pedestrian entrances should be lit
Parking lots need to be lit but at the right level
Village Centers & Commercial Corridors Policy

Goal: Promote design excellence and compatibility with context for new and infill projects

1. Incorporate design elements into commercial zones (as is currently in MU4)
   - High percentage of transparency on ground floors
   - Sign reviews
   - Update lighting standards
Village Centers & Commercial Corridors Policy

Goal: Promote design excellence and compatibility with context for new and infill projects

2. Be compatible with scale at transitions to residential neighborhoods

3. Require parking behind buildings & walk-up entrances from the street

4. Add design criteria for public open spaces
Stay involved

We’ve only scratched the surface today. Participate in future events and online at:

www.courbanize.com/newtonzoning
City of Newton Zoning Redesign
Event Series: September 2017 - May 2018

Location: Newton Free Library, 330 Homer Street, Druker Auditorium*
Time: 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.*
RSVP online at www.courbanize.com/newtonzoning

Wednesday, September 27th
Think Globally, Act Locally: Zoning for a Sustainable Newton

Wednesday, October 19th
Newton’s Advantage: Zoning and Economic Development

Wednesday, November 29th
Cracking the Code: Understanding Zoning for Homeowners

Thursday, December 14th
Housing for Whom? Zoning, Affordability, and Fair Housing

Thursday, January 18th
A parking Lot for Goldilocks: Zoning for Just the Right Size

Thursday, February 15th
Tapping the Creative Economy: Zoning, Arts, and Artisans

Thursday, March 15th
Building Shape, Size, and Form in Neighborhoods and Village Centers

Thursday, April 12th
What’s the Process? How Stuff gets Built in Newton

Thursday, May 10th
A New Zoning Map for Newton

*All the events will be held at this location and time.
The location of this meeting is wheelchair accessible and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities who require assistance.
If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the city of Newton’s ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator, Jim Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: jfairley@newtonma.gov or (617) 796-1253.
The city’s TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1385. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711.
Thank You!