

## Feedback Tool

That's why this 'feedback tool' consists of just three zoning questions that try to get at the core reasoning behind the 12 proposals. These questions ask:

- Do you think Newton should have differently scaled zoning districts tailored for differently sized village centers?
- Which zoning heights of buildings (in terms of # of floors) do you think are appropriate for which village centers?
- What is your opinion on the proposal to reduce parking requirements in village centers?
- **What if I don't agree with the multiple choice options?** Every question has an additional open-ended response, where you can explain why you chose the answer(s) you did, or, to add on or to highlight a different answer if you did not agree with any of the ones listed.
- This tool is open until October 16th.

### Question #1

 Does this approach of using a mix of three scaled zoning districts, tailored to the particular attributes of Newton's village centers, seem appropriate?

Doesn't go far enough - there should be more variety of scales

Appropriate / strikes the right balance

Goes too far - there should be fewer variety of scales

Needs an entirely different strategy

Unsure

 Why did you select this response to the question above?

You can use this space to give more details about your reasoning

Topic:

- Allow for Reasonably Taller Buildings 3.2
- Mapping the Village Center Zoning Districts 5.1

**Boards:**

**Increased Height Proportionate to the Village Center Size (3.2)**

Slide #23

**Increased Building Height Proportionate to the Village Center Size**

**Building Design**

**Story Heights**



The bar charts (above), illustrates buildings as bars with either a flat or pointed roof. The chart indicates the current village center zoning permits 2 stories by-right (orange bars) and in the proposal (blue bars), building height can be increased by 2 stories through the special permit process (yellow shading). The village center designation (BU2 - small, BU3 - medium, and MU4 - large) determines the by right or special permit final building story height.

Slide #34

**MU4 revised**

Existing Conditions

Proposed Allowance



By right development of 2.5 stories – revised BU2



By right development of 3.5 stories – revised BU3

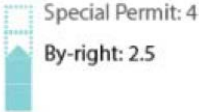


By right development of 4.5 stories – revised MU4

**BU2**  
revised

**Small-scale zoning district  
for small village centers**

Story  
Height



Building footprint:  
5,000 sf



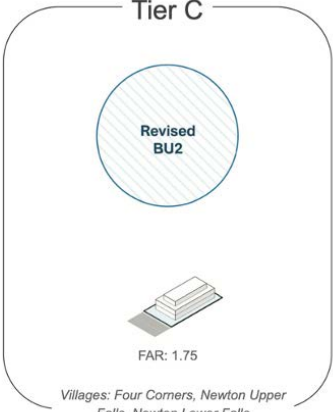
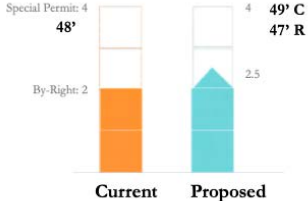
Illustration:  
By Right Build  
2.5 stories

**BU2 revised**

**Building  
Design**

Story  
Height  
(ft)

Small Village Centers



**FAR (allowable)**  
**Current:**  
by right - 1.0  
by SP - 2.0  
**Proposed:**  
by right - 1.75



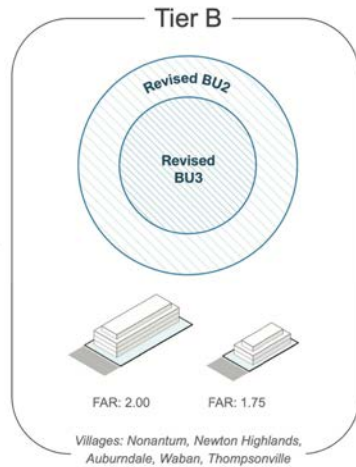
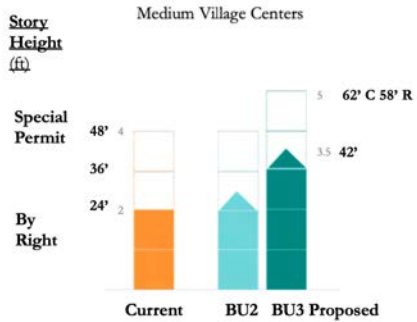
BU3 revised

### Medium + small-scale zoning districts for medium village centers



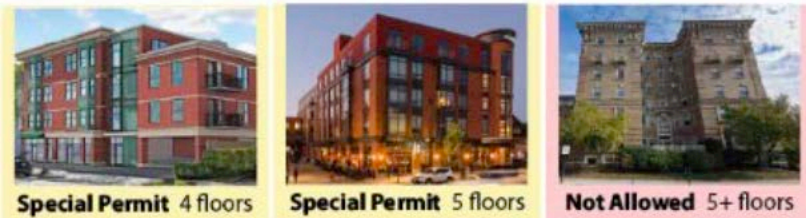
Illustration:  
By Right Build of 3.5 stories with top Half-Story, Stepback

### BU3 revised



FAR  
Current:  
by right - 1.5  
by SP - 2.0

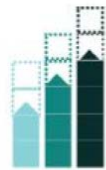
Proposed: 2.0



# Large + medium + small-scale zoning districts for large village centers

MU4 revised

Story Height



Special permit: 6  
By-right: 4.5

Building footprint:  
15,000 sf

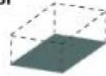


Illustration:  
By Right Build of 4.5 stories with top Half-Story, Stepback

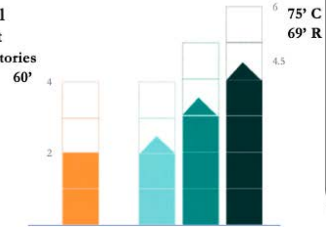
## MU4 revised

Story Height

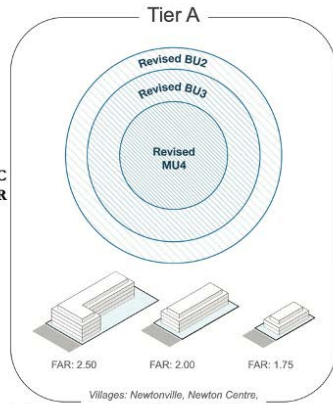
Special Permit

By Right

Large Village Centers



Current BU2 BU3 MU4 Proposed



Villages: Newtonville, Newton Centre, Newton Corner, West Newton

FAR (allowable)  
by SP - 2.5 current  
by SP - 2.5 proposed



# Building Design - Village Center Core Districts

Building Design

Large Village Centers  
(modified MU4)



Medium Village Centers  
(modified BU3)



Small Village Centers  
(modified BU2)



Maximums

Existing / Proposed

Existing / Proposed

Existing / Proposed

Building Height  
(# of floors)

3.0 / 4.5

3.0 / 3.5

2 / 2.5

BR / SP

5 / 6 SP - Ht = 69' R 75'C

3 / 5 - Ht. = 58'R 62'

4 / 4 - Ht = 47'R 49'C

Building Footprint

-- / 15,000 sf

-- / 10,000 sf

-- / 5,000 sf

% delta over Existing (BR - SP) 50% - 100%

17% - 67%

25% - 100%

FAR

By Right

1.5 / 2.5

1.5 / 2.0

1.0 / 1.75

Increase FAR  
(delta over Existing)

67%

33%

75%

Allow Industry Standards for Floor-to-Floor Heights  
for residential & commercial uses

**Increase** ground floor-to-floor height for commercial use.

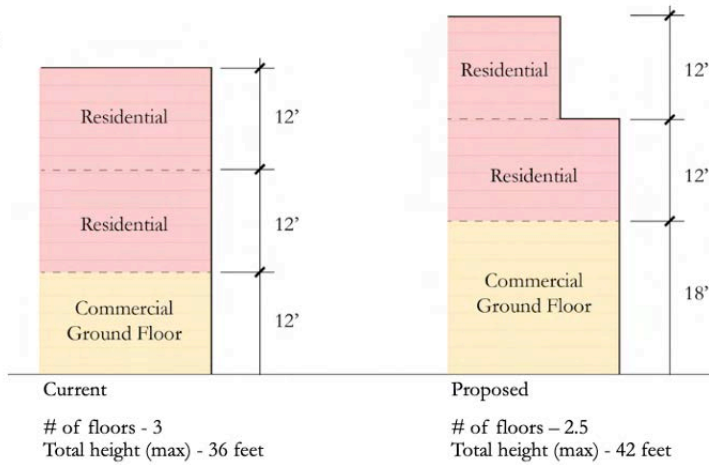
The proposal recommends linking the maximum heights to the given use as follows:

- 12 feet – Residential
- 13 feet - Commercial (upper floor)
- 18 feet - Commercial (ground floor)

Currently the overall height of a building is tied to 12 feet floor-to-floor heights, regardless of use.

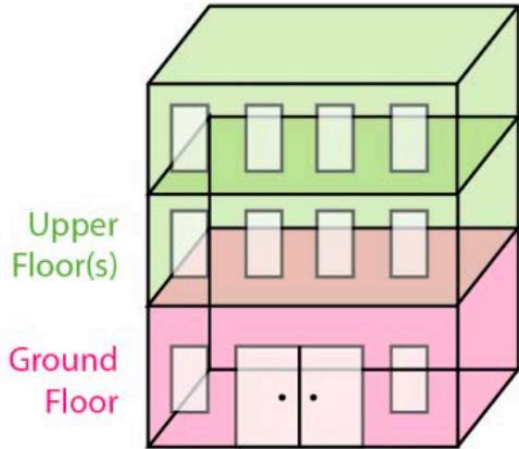
Current vs. Proposed Requirements

**BU3**  
example



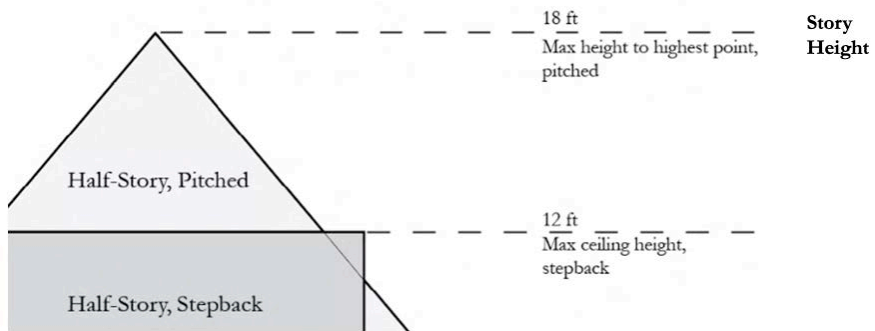
What's the difference between a building's ground floor and its upper floors?↓

The types of uses found at the ground floor of buildings play a special and important role in the vibrancy of village centers. Activities and uses found at street level are a big part of how we experience and enjoy public space. It is at the ground floor where we tend to find more active and engaging uses- things like coffee shops and restaurants, retail that allows for window shopping, or galleries and event spaces. City staff want to reduce barriers to success across the board for those who wish to locate in a village center, but because the ground floor is so critical to public life, ground floor uses are given special treatment in this proposal.



### Set Maximum By-Right Building Height at a Half-Story

to encourage a greater diversity of roofs and buildings.

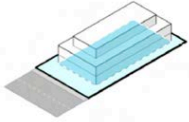




## Establish a Maximum Building Footprint

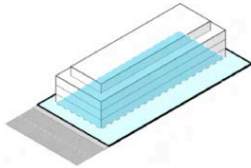
### Village Centers

Small  
BU2



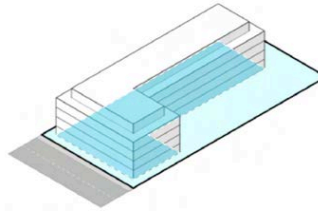
5,000 sq ft

Medium  
BU3



10,000 sq ft

Large  
MU4



15,000 sq ft

## Incorporate Strong Design Standards

**Design standards** define how a development should complement the area around it and achieve quality of design based on public interest purposes or community vision. At their best, design standards provide a menu of options that architects can creatively incorporate into the development designs.

**Effective design standards** can:

- Establish clear and consistent criteria applied consistently
- Utilize a common vocabulary of terms and concepts through charts, images, and diagrams
- Provide practical guidance with clear expectation for property owners, designers, or community members

**Design standards cannot:**

- Create unreasonable requirements that would prevent by-right development
- Create design solutions specific or unique to an individual project
- Conflict with other applicable laws and regulations

Ensure Design Quality and Compatibility

**Incorporate Strong Design Standards**

Proce

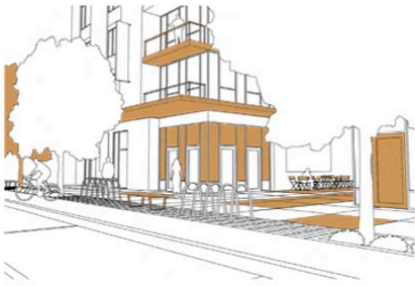


Sustainable Design



Façade Treatment

## Incorporate Strong Design Standards



### Examples of Watertown Design Standards

## Remove Minimum Lot Size

### Promote Smaller Buildings on Smaller Lots

Current vs. Proposed Requirements

Scale of Village Center	Current	Proposed
Small	10,000 sf	None
Medium		
Large		

Promote Variety of Apartment Sizes

Eliminate Lot Area Per Unit Minimums


Lot Configuration

Scale of Village Center	Current	Proposed
Small	1,200 sf / unit	None
Medium	1,200 sf / unit	
Large	1,000 – 1,200 sf / unit	

## Mapping the Village Center Zoning Districts (5.1)

Slide #53

### Mapping the Village Center Zoning Districts



The planning department will use historical development patterns and existing development as a starting point.

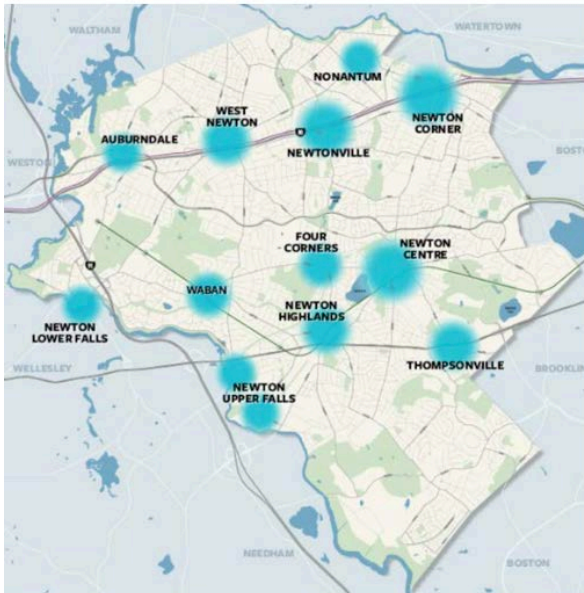
They will reference boundaries established in the Pattern Book and the City's existing zoning map.

Input from the public will be essential to the updated Zoning Map.

Planning staff will bring a draft zoning map, with boundaries for new village center zoning districts, to Zoning and Planning for their deliberation.

## Where in Newton will the proposed districts be located?

Slide #54



### Village Center - # of lots within Village Center - Pattern Book

Auburndale - 35 lots

West Newton - 47 lots

Newtonville - 52 lots

Nonantum - 39 lots

Newton Corner - 87 lots

Newton Center - 88 lots

Thompsonville - 30 lots

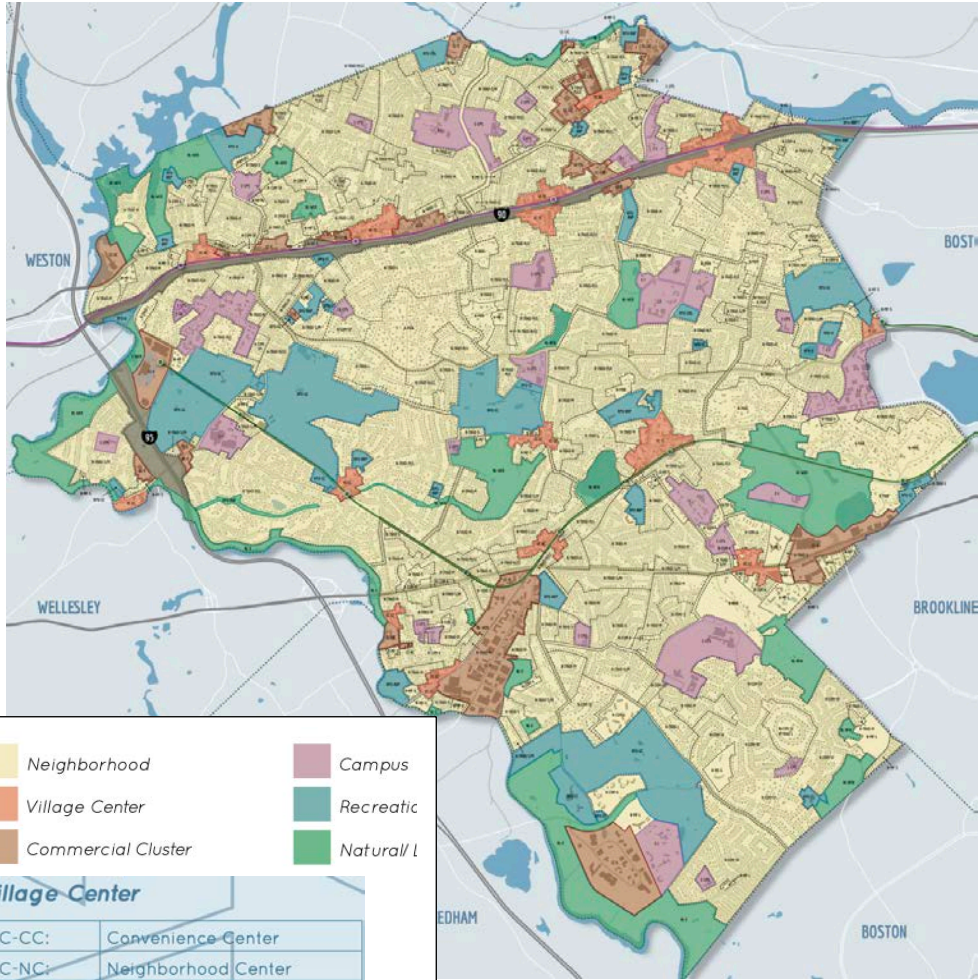
Four Corners - 22 lots

Newton Highlands - 39 lots

Newton Upper Falls - 33 lots

Waban - 14 lots

Newton Lower Falls - 16 lots




Neighborhood	Campus
Village Center	Recreatic
Commercial Cluster	Natural/L

Village Center	
VC-CC:	Convenience Center
VC-NC:	Neighborhood Center
VC-TC:	Town Center
VC-GC:	Gateway Center

Pattern Book ([link](#))

## Question #2

 Which proposed scales (aka zoning districts) do you think are most appropriate for each village center for new or redeveloped buildings? Match the village center(s) with the grouping of scales you think is best.

\*You do not need to answer for the village centers you don't feel well acquainted with.

Map ↓

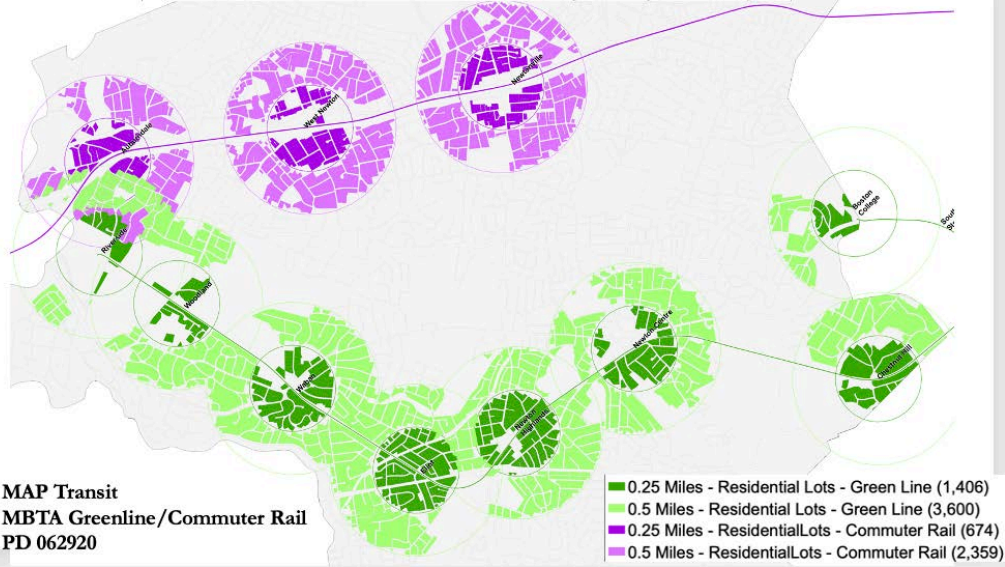
	Small scale (2.5 floor by-right, 4 by special permit)	Small scale + medium scale (3.5 floors by right, 5 by special permit)	Small scale + medium scale + large scale (4.5 floors by-right, 6 by special permit)	No Opinion
Auburndale	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Four Corners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lower Falls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newton Centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newton Corner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newton Highlands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newtonville	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nonantum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thompsonville	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Upper Falls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Waban	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
West Newton	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Topic:

- Mapping and the MBTA Communities 5.2

Slide #58

Green Line & Commuter Rail Residential (SR/MR) Lot Analysis



Slide #59

## Mapping and MBTA Communities Incorporating State Requirements for Allowing Multi-Family Housing

The zoning reforms Governor Baker enacted as a part of the [Economic Development Bill](#) in January 2021 year created a requirement that MBTA communities have at least one zoning district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right and meets other criteria, including:

- Minimum gross density of 15 units per acre
- No age restrictions
- Suitable for families with children
- Not more than 1/2 mile from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry or terminal or bus station, if applicable

Slide #60

## Mapping and MBTA Communities Incorporating State Requirements for Allowing Multi-Family Housing

The MBTA Communities requirement is notable for being the rare comprehensive zoning mandate by the State, requiring rezoning portions of 175 different communities in Metro Boston.

Newton is classified as a **Rapid Transit Community** due to the Green Line. Rapid Transit Communities are required to provide zoning that allows multifamily housing to be built by-right near transit, equivalent to 25% of the City's existing housing.

Newton – Rapid Transit Community				
2020 Housing	Minimum Multi-Family Unit Capacity	Minimum Land Area	Developable Station Area	% of District to be Located in a Station Area
33,320 units	8,330 units	50 acres	2,833 acres	90%

### Question #3

 Rate your opinion on the proposal to reduce the parking requirements for village centers:

	Doesn't go far enough (there should be lower parking requirements or eliminated entirely)	Appropriate / strikes the right balance	Goes too far (the current requirements work)	Wrong direction (there should be more new parking spots required)	Unsure
Residential	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

 Why did you select this response to the question above?  
You can use this space to give more details about your reasoning

### Topic

- Lower Parking Requirements 3.9

### Lower Parking Requirements

Parking requirements are local laws that require private businesses and residences to provide at least a certain number of off-street parking spaces. The number of parking spaces required is determined based on the individual use. For example, new apartments require a number of spots for the residents and new businesses for the expected customers and employees.

**This proposal looks to reduce the required parking for all uses within village centers and in certain instances eliminate the requirement altogether. These requirements would only apply to the village center zoning districts, not the adjacent residential districts or other areas of Newton.**



### Current & proposed requirements:

The proposed requirements would only apply to the village centers (this does not include residential districts).

	Minimum parking requirements (as in, the developer has to build at least the amount(s) listed below)	
Type of Use	Current	Proposed changes
Residential (building with 3 apartments or more)	2 parking spots per unit	1 parking spot per unit within the building
Office (for work spaces)	1 parking spot per 250 sq ft, for buildings up to 20,000 sq ft	Ground floor: exempt Upper floors: 1.5 spots per 1,000 sq ft
Retail (such as restaurant, store, health club, bank, entertainment)	Varies by retail type	Ground floor: for all retail types, exempt Upper floors: varies by types of retail

#### What kinds of impact can parking requirements have on village centers? ↓

Parking requirements are one of the most significant factors shaping how new uses and new buildings can or cannot fit within Newton's village centers. High minimum parking requirements require valuable, limited space in village centers to go towards parking by default, regardless of how much parking that area needs. By requiring parking, minimums push homes and businesses farther apart, take up space that could be used for greenery or other more vibrant uses, impede the walkability of our neighborhoods, raise the cost of housing, and place an especially costly burden on small, local entrepreneurs.

With reduced parking minimums, we will still have parking—but property owners can decide how necessary it is for a viable project and weigh its value against the other things they could do with the same finite, precious land.