



# 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...

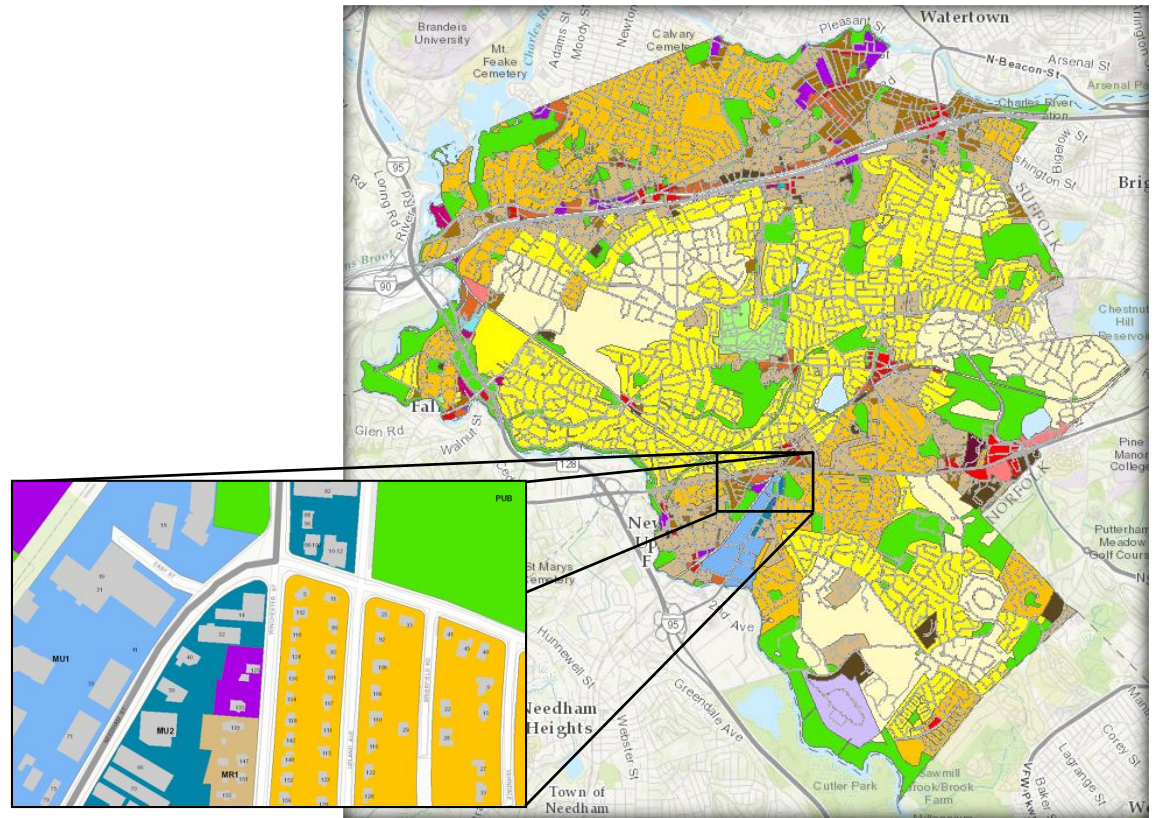
Zoning shapes our city. It ensures that buildings and uses of land promote positive outcomes for the community and are consistent with the neighborhood context.

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



# Central Elements of Zoning

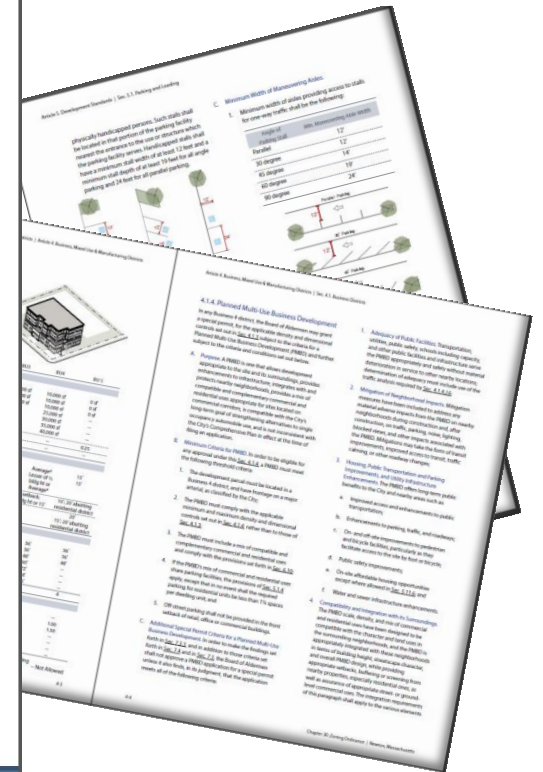
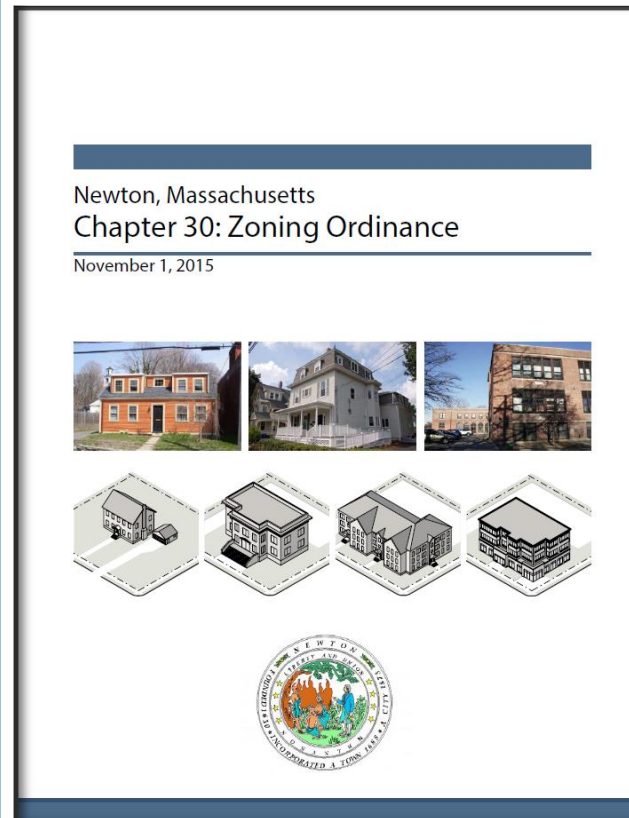
- The Zoning Map
- The Zoning Ordinance
- Dimensional Requirements
- Development and Use Standards
- Decision Making Processes



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

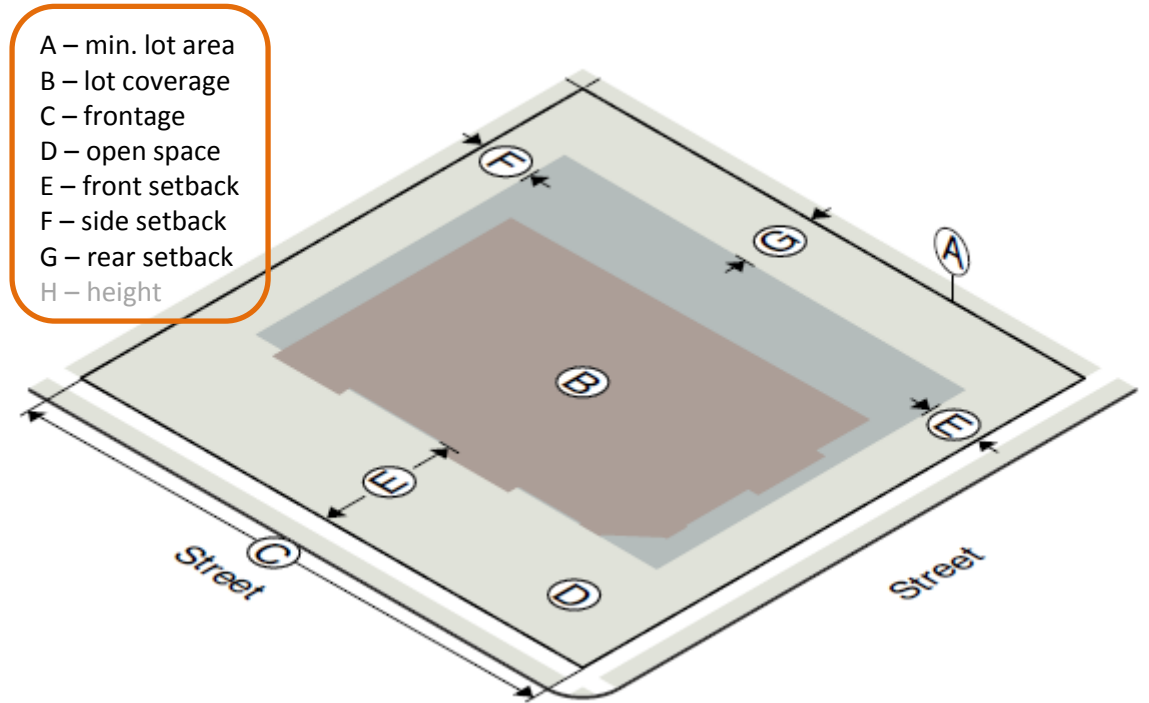
- The Zoning Map
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The Zoning Ordinance is the book of rules and regulations for how private property lots are divided, how buildings are constructed on those lots, and how those buildings are used.

# Central Elements of Zoning

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

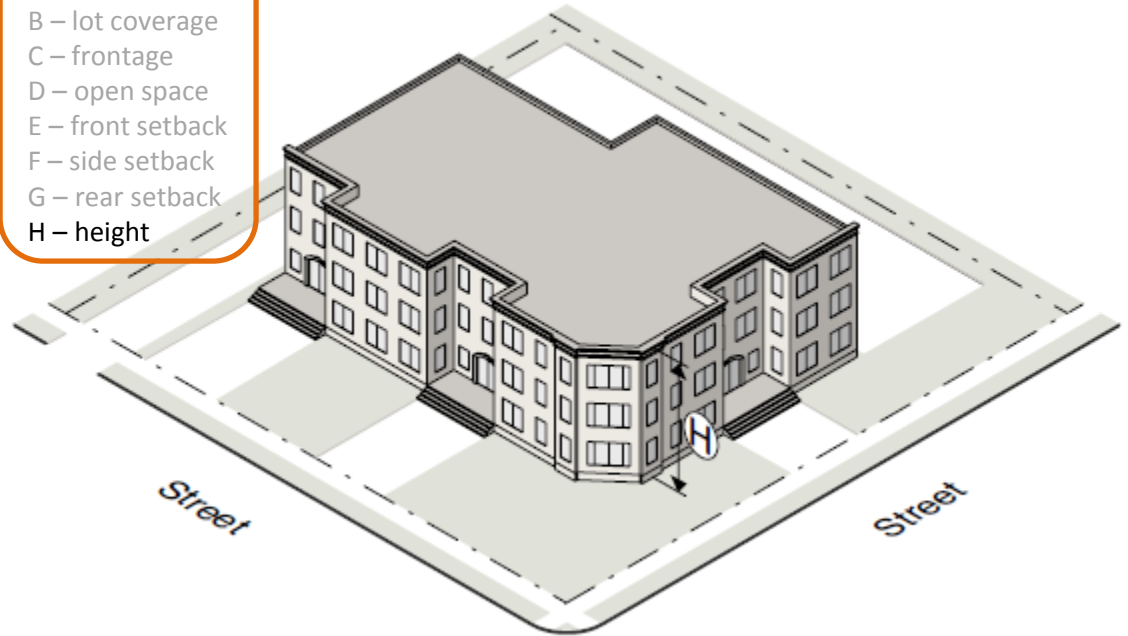


Dimensional Requirements control the dimensions of private property lots and the buildings constructed on them, including: width and depth of properties, height and overall scale or mass of buildings, as well as how far buildings are from the street and from neighboring property lines.

# Central Elements of Zoning

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

A – min. lot area  
B – lot coverage  
C – frontage  
D – open space  
E – front setback  
F – side setback  
G – rear setback  
H – height



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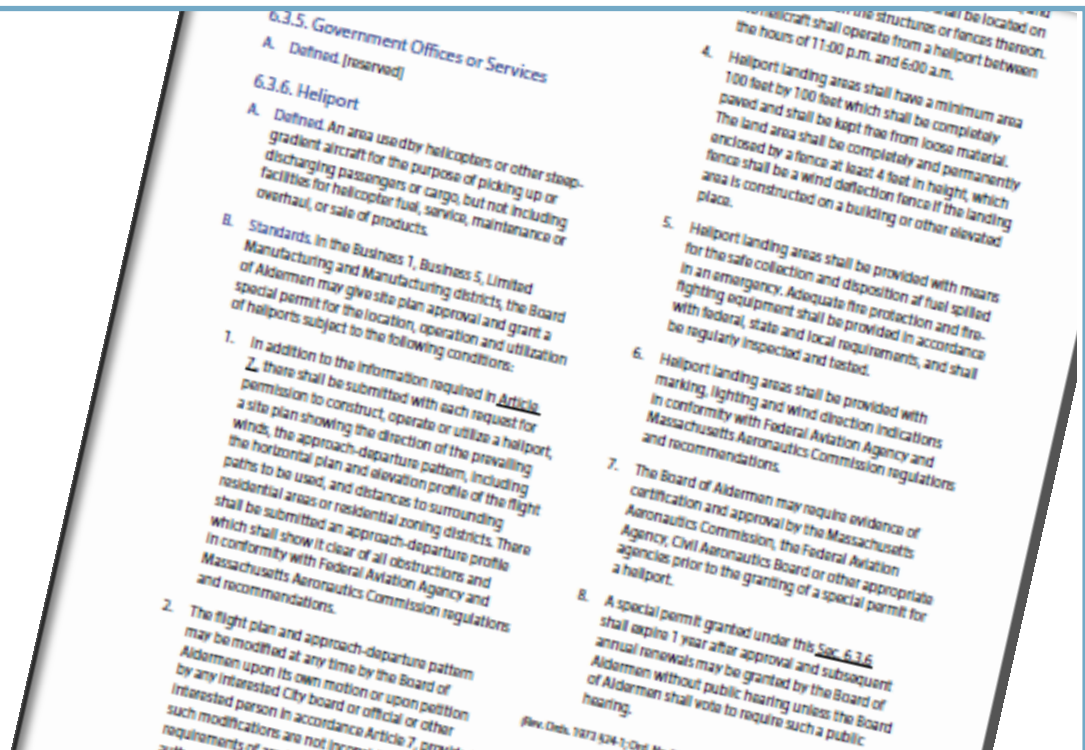


# Central Elements of Zoning

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

## For each use

- Define it. State Intent.
- Set standards - Specific application materials, specific site layout standards, specific operations standards



# Central Elements of Zoning

- The Zoning Map
- The Zoning Ordinance
- 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**

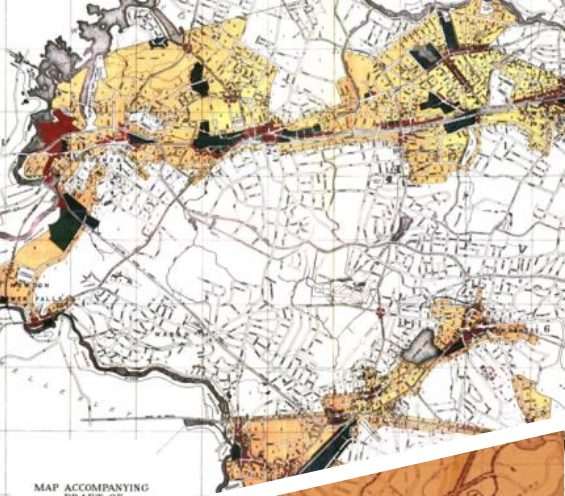
**Department**

*e.g. Building Permit*



Created by Creative Stall  
from Noun Project

Decision Making Processes for applying the zoning rules are outlined in the ordinance as well.

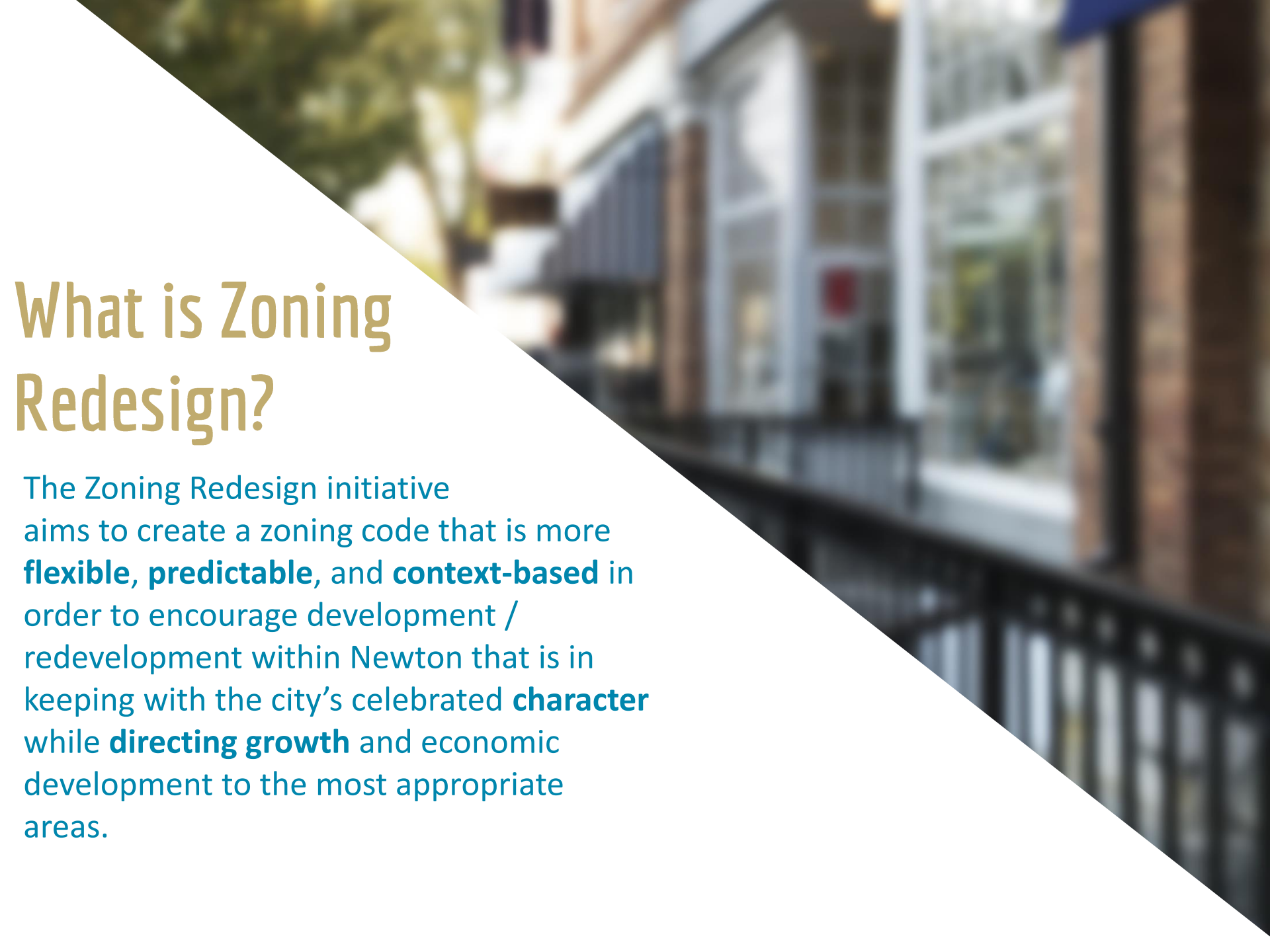


# 30-Second History of Zoning in Newton

- 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](http://www.courbanize.com/newtonzoning)

# Zoning Redesign Timeline





**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](http://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.



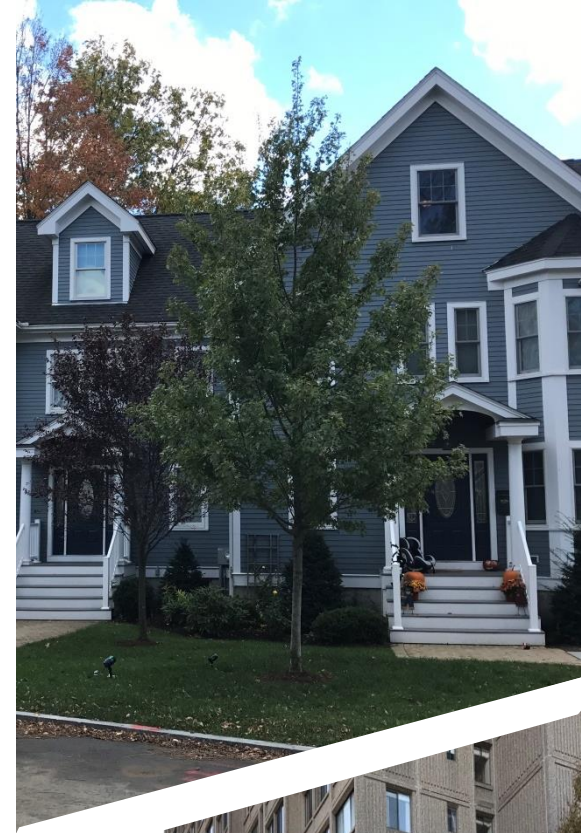


# What is Zoning Redesign?

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.

# 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

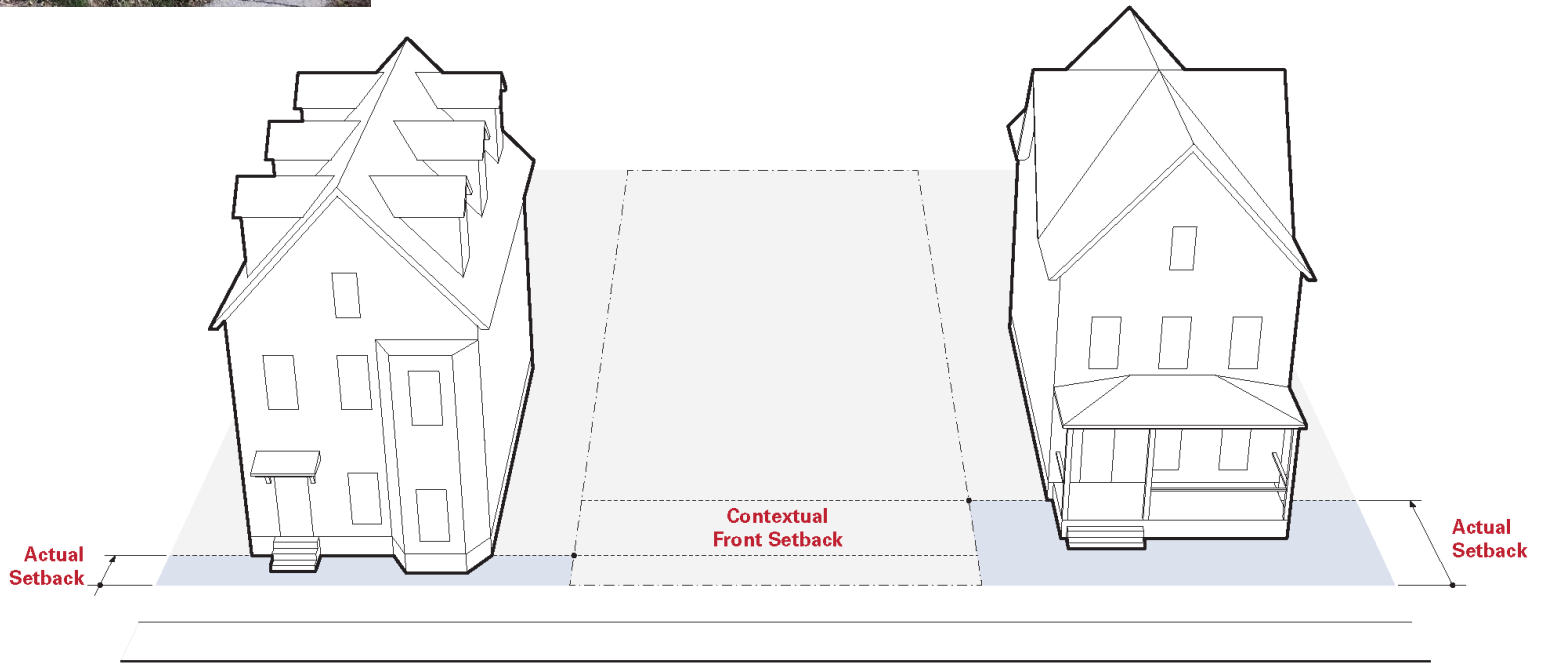
Village  
Centers

+

Commercial  
Corridors



The Trick or Treat Test



# Setbacks



Character Features in Setback



# 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



Large Houses



Scale



Height & Massing



Façade Treatment – Windows & Roof Line



Cottage



House



Large House

Lot size range

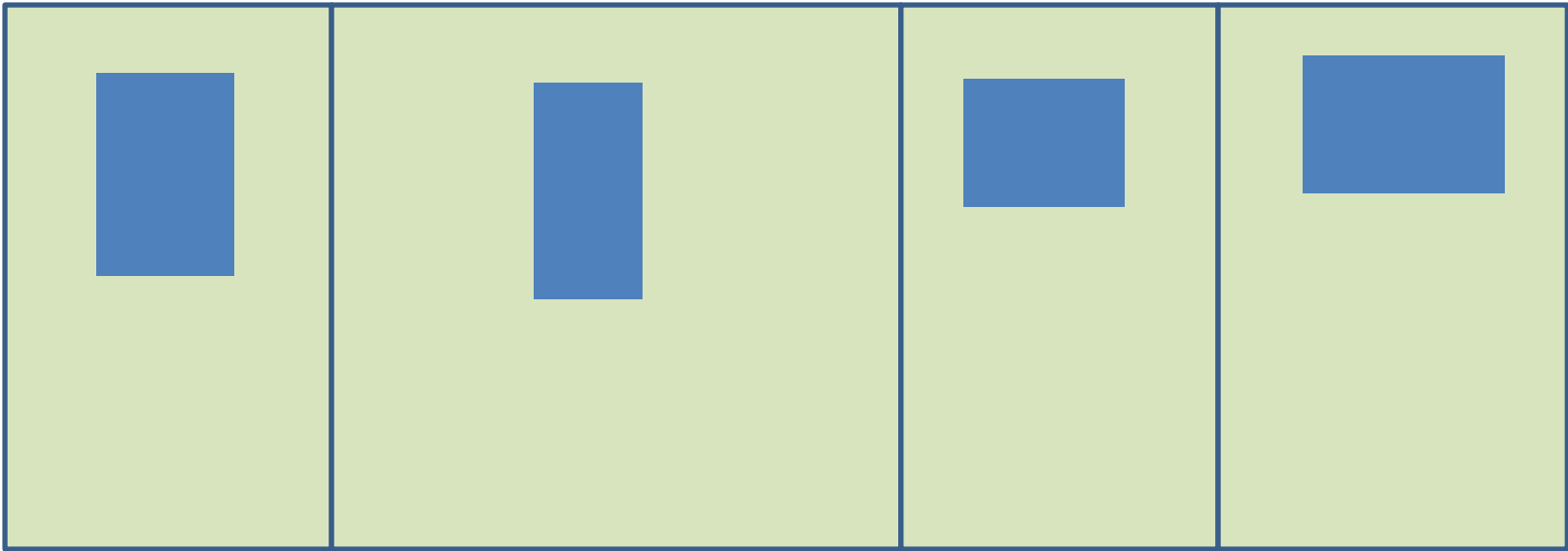
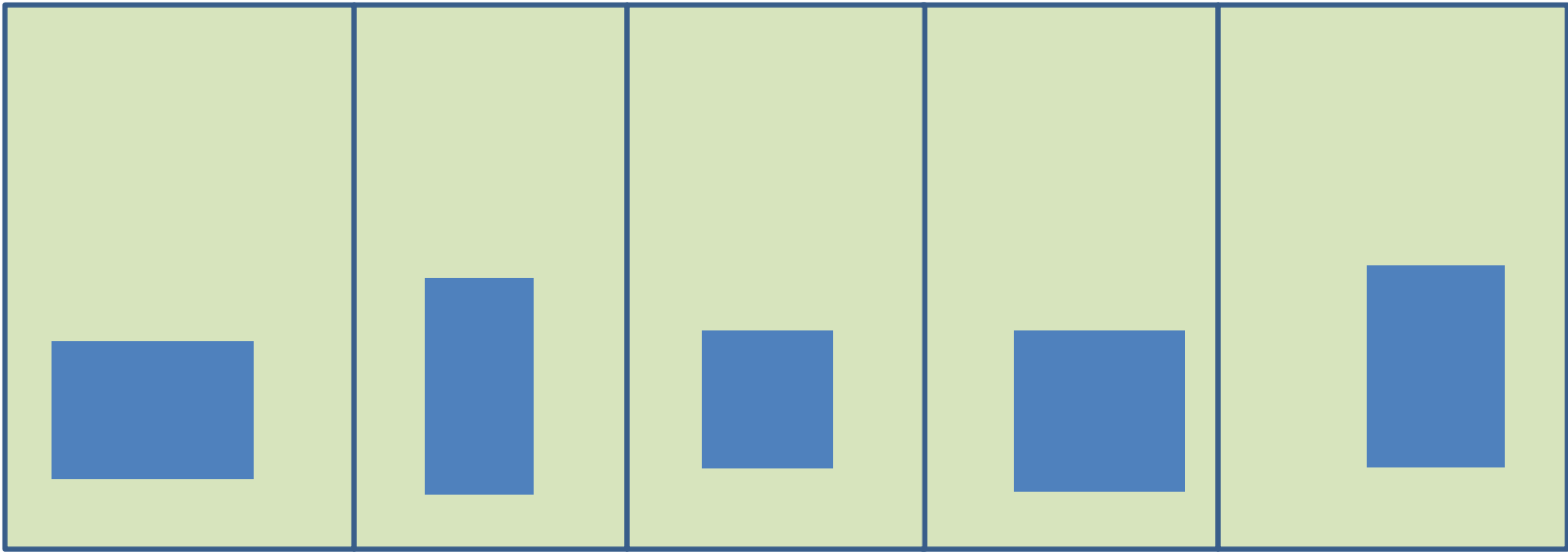
House width min/max

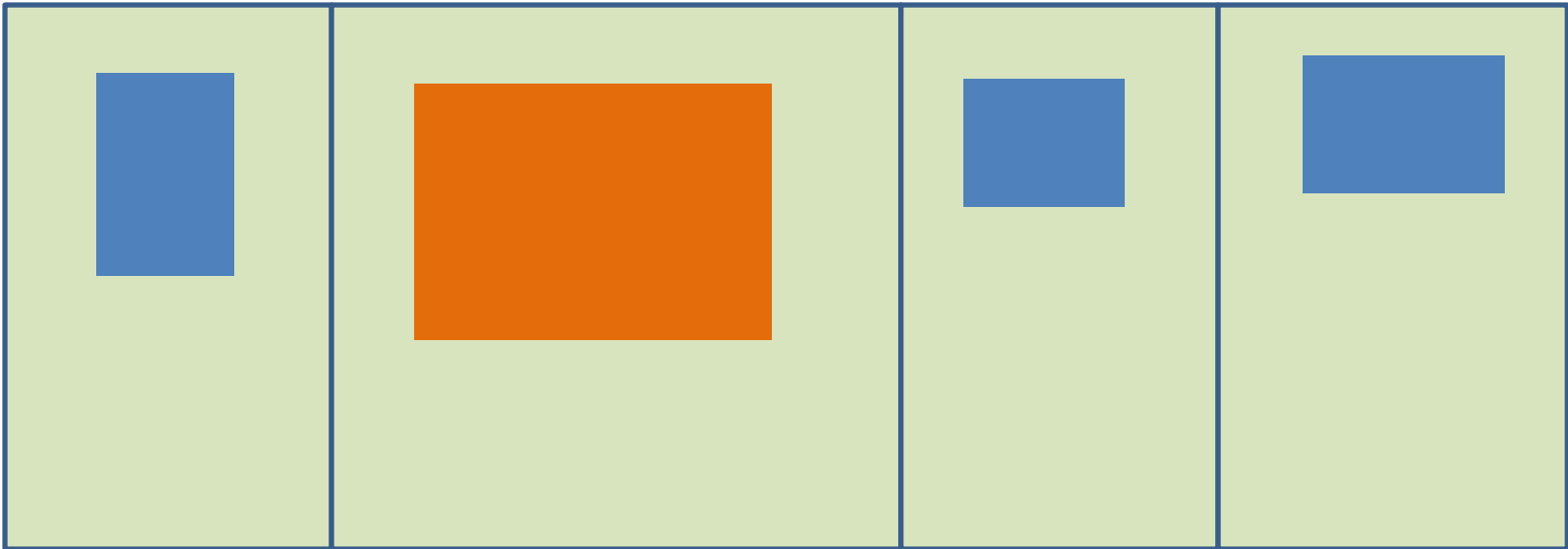
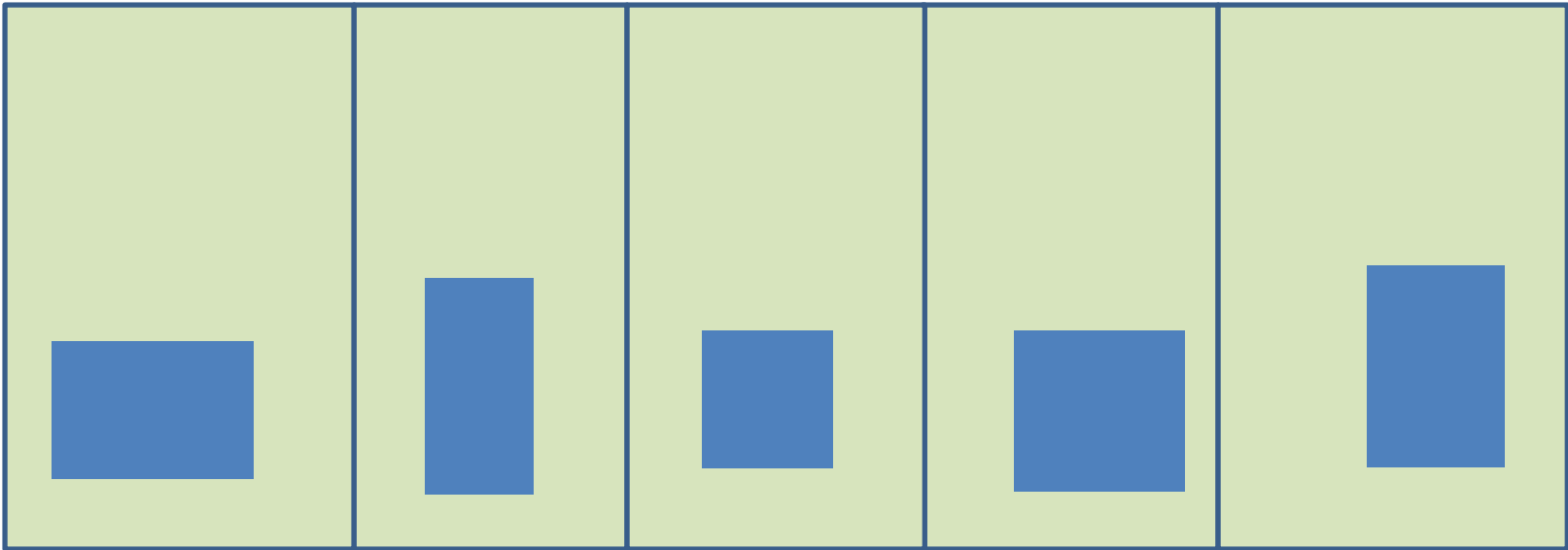
House depth min/max

Height

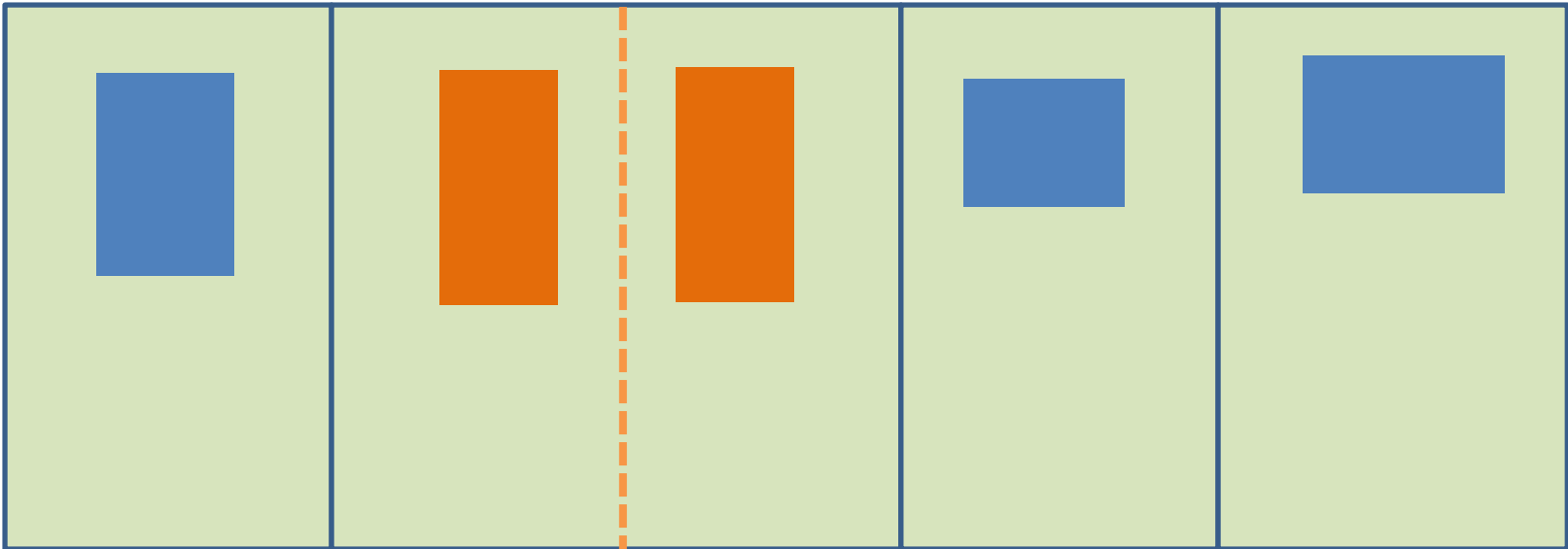
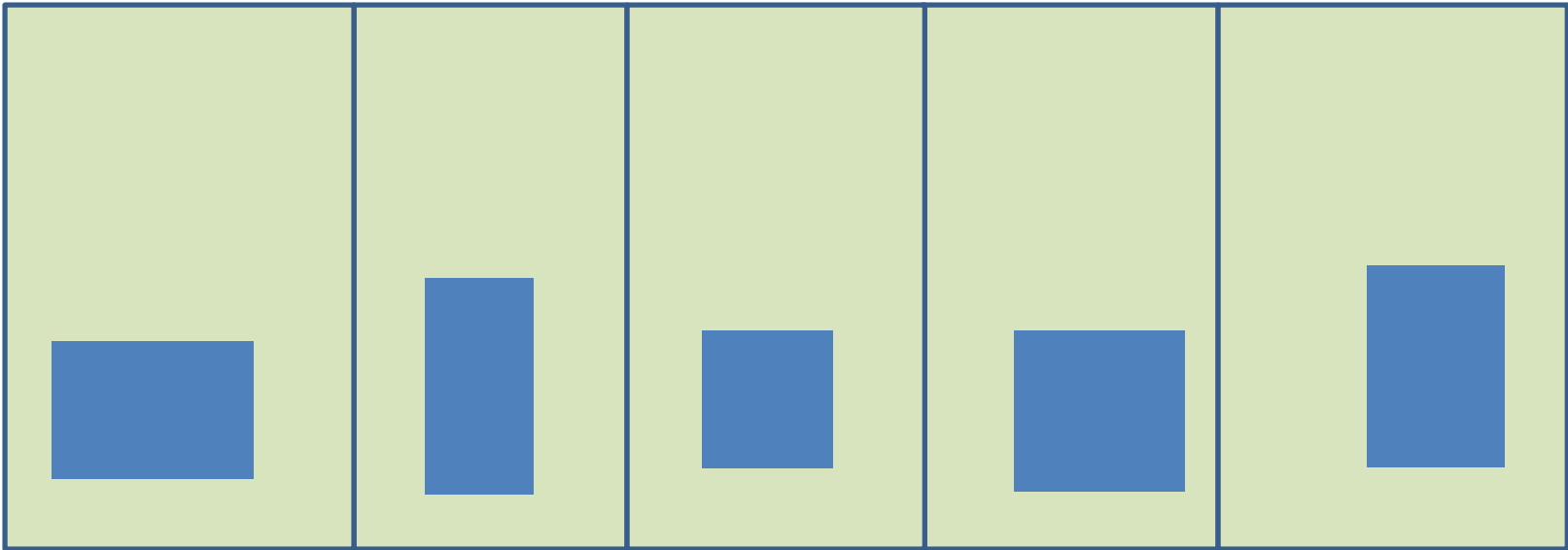
Lot Coverage

# Residential Building Types











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



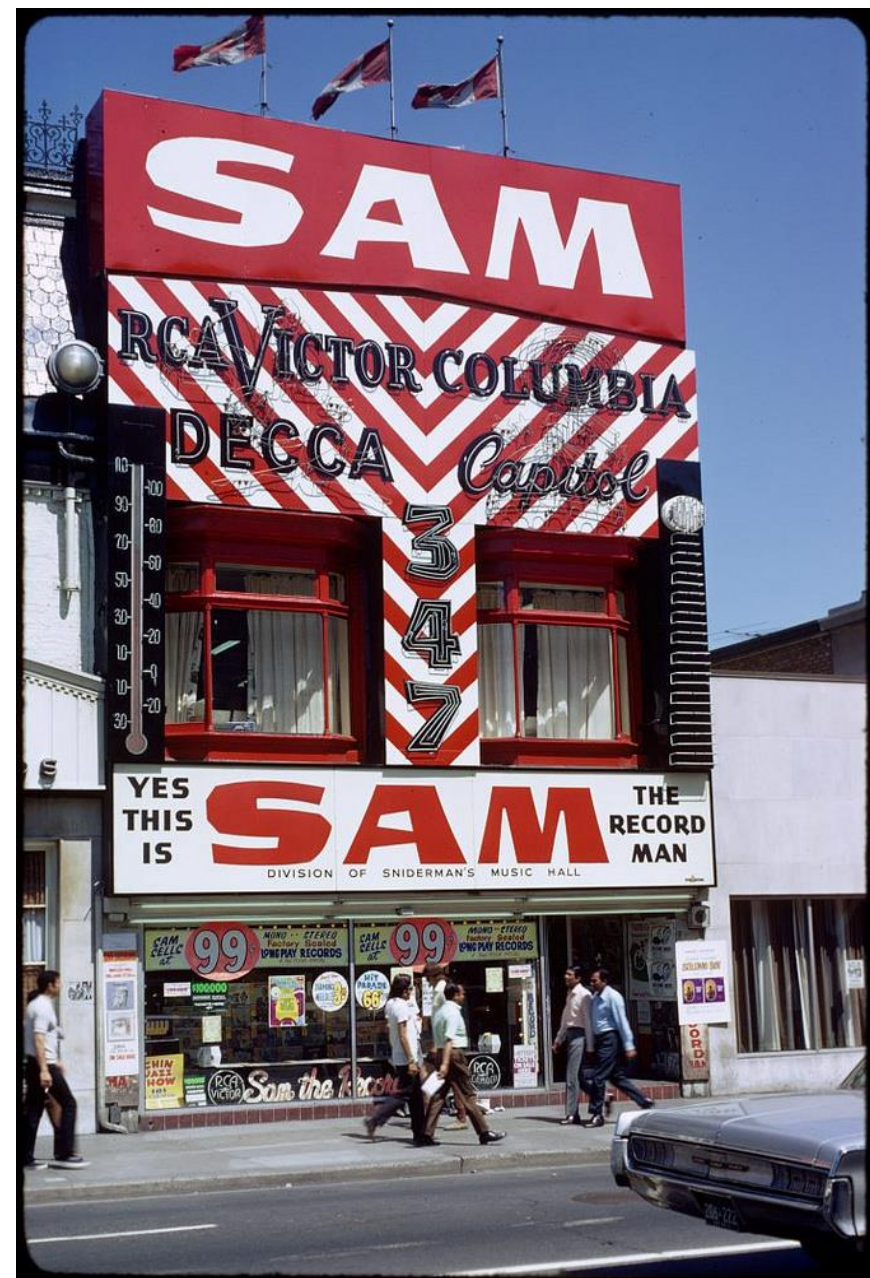
## Active Store Fronts







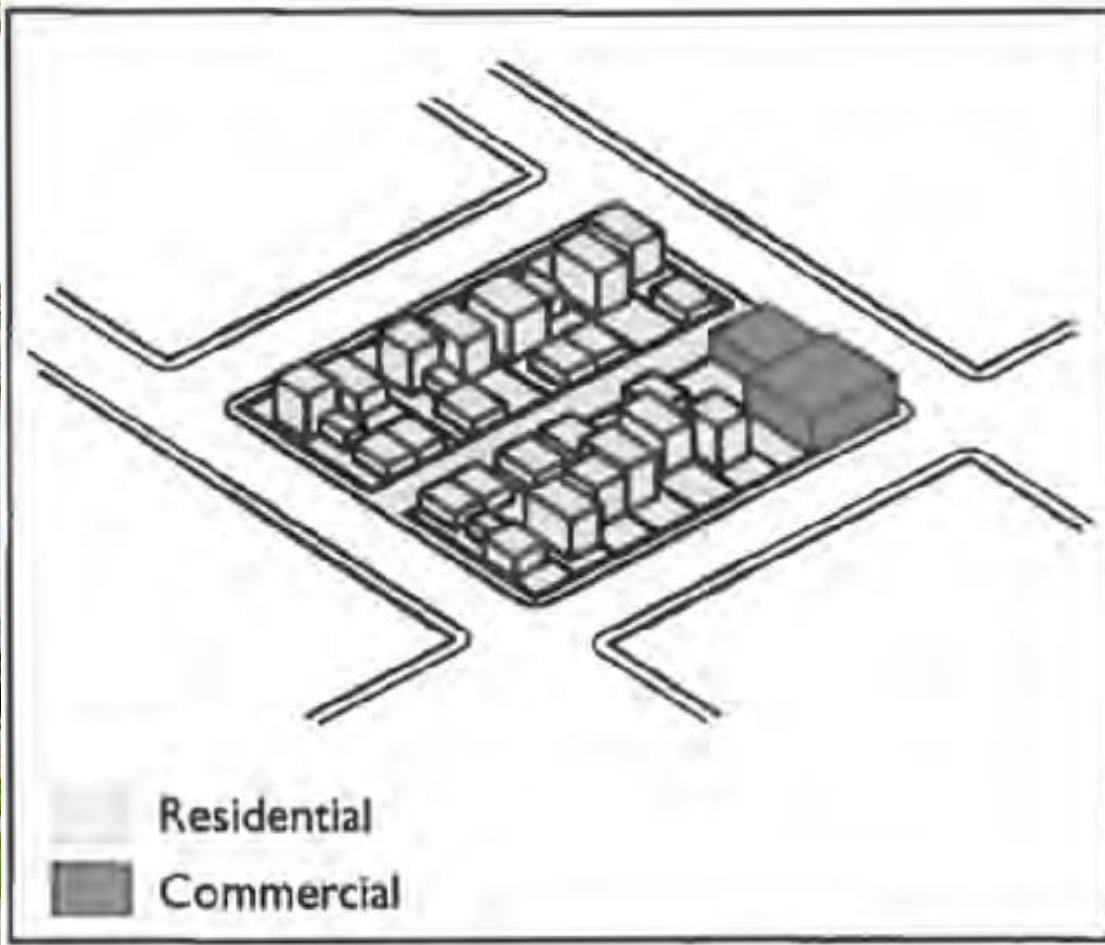






# Lighting

Pedestrian entrances should be lit  
Parking lots need to be lit but at the right level



# Transitions



## Public Open Space







# 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](http://www.courbanize.com/newtonzoning)

# City of Newton Zoning Redesign

## Event Series: September 2017 - May 2018

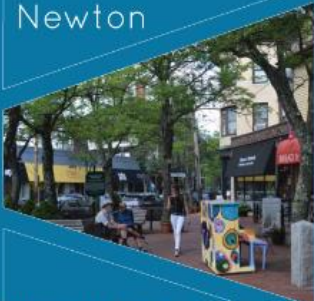
**Location:** Newton Free Library, 330 Homer Street, Druker Auditorium\*

**Time:** 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.\*

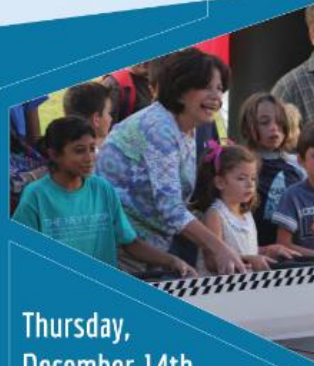
**RSVP online at** [www.courbanize.com/newtonzoning](http://www.courbanize.com/newtonzoning)

**Wednesday,  
September 27th**

Think Globally,  
Act Locally:  
Zoning for a  
Sustainable  
Newton



**Thursday,  
October 19th**  
Newton's  
Advantage: Zoning  
and Economic  
Development



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

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

**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, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: [jfairley@newtonma.gov](mailto:jfairley@newtonma.gov) or (617) 796-1253.

The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711.



**Thank You!**