

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEWTON

EDUCATIONAL FORUM NORTHLAND REFERENDUM

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEWTON
FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Agenda

- Review Forum Ground Rules
- Ballot Question
- Overview of the project, based on the city's Planning Department documents.
- Presentations by the campaigns:
 - *Committee for Responsible Development*
 - *Yes for Newton's Future*
- Questions & Answers

Ground Rules for this Educational Forum

- Commit to learning, not debating.
- Questions will be submitted in writing
- Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- It is about listening actively and with an ear to understanding others' views
- Tackle issues, not people ...

IDENTIFY & SUBMIT QUESTIONS



BALLOT QUESTION TO APPROVE A CHANGE OF ZONE FOR THE NORTHLAND PROJECT: The question as it will appear on the ballot is as follows:

Shall the following measure which was passed by the City Council be approved?

A measure which changes the zoning of parcels of land located at 156 Oak Street, 275-281 Needham Street and 55 Tower Road (commonly known as the Northland Project) from Mixed Use 1 District (MU1) to Business 4 District (BU4). The zoning change would allow for the construction of the Northland Project as described in a special permit and site plan approval granted by the City Council.

A “YES” vote on this question would allow the zoning change that was passed by the City Council to take effect, and the Northland Project, as approved in the Special Permit, may be constructed.

A “NO” vote on this question would stop the zoning change that was passed by the City Council from taking effect, and the Northland Project, as approved in the Special Permit, may not be constructed.

Source – David Olson, City Clerk

Public Source of Information – Newton Planning & Development Department

[http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/c
urrent/devrev/hip/northland.asp](http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/current/devrev/hip/northland.asp)

Initial Proposal Summary: Planning Memo for Public Hearing on September 25, 2018

- Mixed-use development
- 1,924,273n SF of gross floor area with 13 structures ranging from 3 – 8 stories with tallest measuring 95.6Ft.
- There would be large mixed-use structures with commercial, residential and parking uses
- An existing historic building along Oak Street would be occupied by commercial uses.
- 822 residential units
- Subject to the IZ ordinance – no fewer than 15% to be affordable units.
- Proposed 123 on-site affordable units
- 430,297 gross square feet (SF) retail, personal service, restaurants, and office space
- 4,000 SF of community space
- 1,408 on-site parking stalls within garages and surface parking
- The site to be accessed by 4 driveways located off Tower Rd., Needham St. (2) and Oak St.
- Accommodations for 1,106 bicycles
- Request to rezone to Business 4 (BU4)

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Evolution

Summary of Changes

January 2019	<p>The TDM focused on 4 shuttle routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Newton Circulator would run every 30-45 minutes to the Newton Highlands Green Line, Newton Center and the N'ville commuter rail.• The Needham Connector would run every 30-45 minutes to the Needham commuter rail• The Cambridge Express would run every hour to the Seaport and South Station
April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The TDM largely stayed the same with 4 shuttle routes, except the Needham Connector was replaced with a Newton Highlands shuttle running every 20 minutes
June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The TDM changed to focus on a free electric shuttle to the Newton Highlands Green line, running every 10 minutes, 16 hrs/day, 7 days/week

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Evolution

Summary of Changes

July
2019

- A goal was set for office and residential uses of a 37% reduction in the weekday morning peak trips and 58% in the weekday evening trips.
- The initial proposal included measuring trip counts entirely by a one-day intercept [real-time/on-site] survey at all entry/exit points for office and residential buildings.
- It established a remedy fund with up to \$294,000 that would be added if the trip generation targets were not met.
- \$50,000 - \$100,000 additional funding, based on the percent above the goal.
- A monitoring phase of 7 years and if the goal is not met for 3 consecutive years during that period any money remaining in the fund would be released to the City and the petitioner would no longer be obligated to meet the TDM goals.
- Still contained Newton Highlands Green line, running every 10 minutes, 16 hrs/day, 7 days/week
- A monthly MBTA LinkPass reimbursement for each unit without a vehicle and 50% reimbursement for any resident/office employee participating
- Provide a minimum of 4 car share spaces onsite for common use and increase this number to meet demand as per car share operators.
- Provide on-site access to shared bikes, scooters or alternative shared non-vehicular transportation, subject to City approval

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Evolution

Summary of Changes

TDM Program

- Shuttle System: Petitioner abandoned the multi-route system and proposed an electric shuttle with service between the proposed Mobility Hub and the MBTA's Newton Highlands Green Line Station every 10 minutes, operating 16 hrs/day 7 days/week.
- The petitioner agreed to “unbundle” parking charges for market rate residential units (affordable units will continue to have parking included in the rent).
- Providing residents and full-time office employees a free MBTA LinkPass for every resident unit leased without a parking space and a 50% reimbursement for every resident who chooses to take advantage of the program.
- Provide a minimum of 4 car share spaces onsite for common use and increase this number to meet demand as per car share operators.
- Provide on-site access to shared bikes, scooters or alternative shared non-vehicular transportation.
- Provide 1,100 weather protected, secure bicycle storage spaces, with bike repair accommodations, for residents and retail employees. Office employees will have access to shower facilities. Outdoor bicycle storage will be available for customers and visitors.
- A fulltime on-site TDM Coordinator - responsible for providing information to tenants and residents. S/he will also coordinate MBTA passes and monitor transit usage.

Planning Memo for Public Hearing on March 12, 2019

Summary of Changes

Site Design & Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parking for Buildings 5 & 6 has been pushed below grade allowing the massing of these 2 buildings to be broken down into smaller, individual buildings separated by “residential scaled laneways” This creates additional open space and opportunities for circulation.• The Village Green has increased in size as previously proposed parking and general vehicle access along its perimeter has been eliminated.• The size of building 4 and the surface parking lot have been reduced• Total number of parking spaces has been reduced from 1,953 to 1,595.• The community building and playground [which has been expanded] have been relocated adjacent to the Greenway near the intersection of Pettee Lane and Main St.• A location for a dog park has been identified in the north end of the site west of Tower Road extension.• The amount of retail space has been reduced from 185,200 to 115,200 sf [40%]• An existing historic building along Oak Street would be occupied by commercial uses.
Housing & Economic Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Office space remains unchanged (180,000 sf in the mill building), the number of dwelling units has been reduced from 822 to 800 (2.7% decrease)• The amount of retail space has been reduced from 185,200 sf to 115,000 (40% decrease)• The reduction of retail space by 70,200 sf means that project would create a total of approximately 41,200 sf of net new retail space.• 40,000 sf of the proposed retail space is foreseen to be used for up to 6 restaurants.

Planning Memo for Public Hearing on November 18, 2019

Proposal – November 18, 2019

Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project is required to obtain LEED for Neighborhood Development certification for the entire site.• LEED Core and Shell certification of the renovation of the Saco-Petee Mill building• LEED Certifiability for the remaining buildings onsite and Passive House certification for the residential portions of 3 buildings.• Utilization of electric heat pumps for heating and cooling, all electric appliances (aside from domestic hot water), rooftops for solar panels, 66 electric vehicle charging stations plus an additional 66 EV ready spaces, rainwater harvesting, bicycle parking etc.
Community Mitigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$1.85 million towards inflow and infiltration (I&I) fees• \$5 million towards off-site transportation improvements in the vicinity of the project• \$1.5 million towards the construction of the new Countryside School• The design and construction of a public splash park on land near the greenway and a proposed playground, to be leased to the city for \$1.00.• Improvements to South Meadow Brook and commitment to reserve 10,000 SF of ground floor space for non-chain retail
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dwelling units reduced from 822 to 800• 15% of the units (120) will be made to households earning up to 80% of area median income (AMI) at an average of 65% of AMI in perpetuity.• An additional 20 units (2.5%) will be made available to households earning up to 110% of AMI in perpetuity.• Half of the fully accessible units will be affordable units.

November 18, 2019

Proposal – November 18, 2019

TDM

- Free electric shuttle to the Newton Highlands Green line, running every 10 minutes, 16 hrs/day, 7 days/week
- There will be 1,350 parking stalls on site with the ability to increase capacity by 250 vehicles through valet parking. Parking will be shared amongst uses.
- MBTA subsidies for all residents, office and retail employees
- A fulltime on-site TDM Coordinator - responsible for providing information to tenants and residents. S/he will also coordinate MBTA passes and monitor transit usage.
- Car share and bike share accessibility
- A standard [focused on peak hour residential & office trips as well as the total number of trips coming and going from the site] will be set and compliance will be monitored and enforced.
- The Planning Department will oversee the trip counts and surveys. Monitoring will begin 6 months after issuance of the certificates of occupancy for 400 residential units and will initially happen every six months until the project is complete and the petitioner has been compliant for 2 consecutive years. Then monitoring will happen annually until 5 consecutive years of compliance

Zoning – Most likely a Special Permit is Required

MIXED-USE 1 (MU1)

- This zoning district is geared towards big box retail, office and manufacturing uses.
- Does not permit retail less than 5,000 sf, most community-oriented uses or personal services.
- Limits height to 4 stories
- Oriented towards industrial uses and businesses with large footprints
- Very little housing is permitted: one unit per 10,000sf
- To-date no housing as been built under the MU1 zone.

BUSINESS USE 4 (BU 4)

- The BU 4 district allows most community-oriented uses or personal uses.
- This district allows one housing unit/1200 sf
- This district allows up to 8 stories.

Zoning

Comparison – Proposed Project & Zoning		
	Max Buildout under <u>current</u> zoning w/ a <u>special permit</u> (MU1)	Proposal (BU4) w/ a <u>special permit</u>
Number of Housing Units	98	800
SF of office/Commercial	1.97 million SF (inclusive of all uses)	308,200 SF; 1.39 million SF total (inclusive of all uses)
Maximum Height	48 feet	96 feet
Open Space	None required	9.4 acres provided
Affordable Housing	17 Units (17.5%)	140 Units (17.5%)

Northland and 40B – Memo to the Council December 2019

- Site is made up of 3 separate parcels
- Each parcel could contain a separate project; could be subdivided into additional parcels by-right as long as each parcel meets City's frontage and lot area requirements.
- The developer could pursue multiple individual projects on separate parcels, at the same time.
- It would be expected that the maximum number of units for a project on a single parcel is 646.
- A project can contain non-residential elements as long as the primary use, at least 50%, is residential.
- The city completes a safe harbor calculation each time a comprehensive permit is filed. These calculations can only count units that have already received permitting [special & comprehensive permits] approval.
- Any proposed units and acreage would not count towards the calculation of determining if Newton has met a safe harbor at the time of a Northland application.
- If one or more Northland 40B projects are filed before approval of one or more of those pipeline (Riverside, Dunstan East, Riverdale) projects, it is unlikely the ZBA would be able to invoke a safe harbor.
- The City does anticipate that the ZBA's approval of one or more initial large scale 40B projects at Northland (in conjunction with approval of all the above-referenced pipeline projects) would likely allow the City to reach the 10% safe harbor.

Northland and 40B

- In the event the City Council's rezoning of the Northland project is repealed by a referendum, the Northland developer may consider one or more 40B projects at the same site. The Northland site is currently made up of three separate parcels. The developer could ultimately choose to pursue multiple 40B projects, as each parcel could contain a separate 40B project. The developer could also subdivide into additional parcels by right as long as each parcel meets the frontage and lot area requirements in the City's zoning ordinance.
- There would be no cooling off or waiting period before the developer could pursue a 40B project. There is also nothing that prevents the developer from pursuing multiple individual 40B projects on separate parcels at the same time. For any 40B project, the first step by the developer would be filing for and receiving a Project Eligibility determination from a subsidizing agency before submitting a 40B application with the City of Newton's ZBA.
- Given the "large project" safe harbor, it would be expected that the maximum number of units the developer would propose for a 40B project on a single parcel is 646 units. A 40B project can also contain nonresidential elements such as office or retail uses. Mixed-use projects are not disfavored under 40B so long as the nonresidential elements complement the primary residential use.
- There is minimal guidance on the allowable limit of nonresidential elements within a 40B project, but because the primary use must be residential, likely at least 50 percent of a 40B project should be residential. While it is impossible to predict the details of any potential 40B projects, one or more initial 40B projects at the Northland site could each contain 646 units located on separate portions of the 22-acre site.

Northland and 40B

- As the City's safe harbor calculations are made anew each time a comprehensive permit is filed, in the event a Northland 40B project is ever submitted to the ZBA, the City will again determine its safe harbor status at the time an application is filed.
- Both safe harbor calculations can only count units that have already received permitting approval. This means that the SHI eligible units and acreage associated with the above-referenced pipeline projects would only be counted after they are approved by special permit or comprehensive permit.
- It also means that the proposed units and acreage of any Northland 40B itself would not count towards the City's calculations of determining whether it has met a safe harbor at the time of a Northland 40B application.
- While there are many variables involved in a potential 40B project or projects at Northland, the timing of any 40B application will be important. It is possible that the City could be close to attaining the 10% safe harbor prior to a Northland 40B if the first Northland application were to be filed after approval of the pipeline projects referenced earlier (Riverside; Dunstan East; Riverdale).
- If one or more Northland 40B projects are filed before approval of one or more of those pipeline projects, it is unlikely the ZBA would be able to invoke a safe harbor. The City does anticipate that the ZBA's approval of one or more initial large scale 40B projects at Northland (in conjunction with approval of all the above-referenced pipeline projects) would likely allow the City to reach the 10% safe harbor. As previously stated, however, achievement of the 10% safe harbor in 2020 or early 2021 is likely to be for a short duration until the availability of the 2020 census of total housing units

City of Newton Income Limits (AMI)

FY 2019 Income Limits Summary - Newton, MA				
Income Level	Household Size			
	1	2	3	4
50% AMI	\$41,500	\$47,400	\$53,350	\$59,250
65% AMI	\$51,552	\$58,916	\$66,281	\$73,645
80% AMI	\$62,450	\$71,400	\$80,300	\$89,200
110% AMI	\$87,241	\$99,704	\$112,167	\$124,630

Updated February 16, 2020 with information from the City's website

http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/lrplan/inclusionary_zoning.asp

	<u>1 Person</u>	<u>2 Person</u>	<u>3 Person</u>	<u>4 Person</u>	<u>5 Person</u>	<u>6 Person</u>
Very Low Income 50%	\$41,500	\$47,400	\$53,350	\$59,250	\$64,000	\$68,750
Low Income 80%	\$62,450	\$71,400	\$80,300	\$89,200	\$96,350	\$103,500
Area Median Income 100%	\$79,310	\$90,640	\$101,970	\$113,300	\$122,364	\$131,428

Boston-Cambridge-Quincy HUD Metropolitan Area - AMI

QUESTION & ANSWER TIME

