



# **Zoning & Planning Committee Report**

## **City of Newton** **In City Council**

**Monday, January 22, 2018**

Present: Councilors Albright (Chair), Leary, Brousal-Glaser, Krintzman, Downs, Danberg, Baker and Kalis

Also Present: Councilor Gentile, Ciccone, Norton, Cote, Rice, Noel, Grossman, Lappin Crossley, Scibelli Greenberg, and Kelley

City Staff: Barney Heath (Director of Planning & Development), James Freas (Deputy Director of Planning & Development), Lily Reynolds (Community Engagement Manager), Rachel Blatt (Long Range Planner), Alice Ingerson (Community Preservation Planner), Angela Smagula (Deputy City Solicitor), Lou Taverna (City Engineer), Sue Dzikowski (Comptroller), Maureen Lemieux (Chief Financial Officer) and Jonathan Yeo (Chief Operating Officer), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

### **Referred to Zoning & Planning and Finance Committees**

**#85-18**

#### **Appropriate funds to develop an action plan for Washington Street Corridor**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) from Free Cash for the purpose of developing an actionable plan for the Washington Street Corridor that addresses land use, economic development, transportation, fiscal impacts, and other issues that may arise, as well as a new zoning district(s).

**Finance Held 8-0 on 01/22/18**

**Action:** **Zoning & Planning Held 8-0**

**Note:** The Zoning & Planning and Finance Committees met jointly to discuss this item. Please refer to the January 22 Finance Committee report for details of the discussion. Councilor Baker moved hold in the Zoning & Planning Committee and Councilor Ciccone moved hold in the Finance Committee. The motions carried unanimously in both Committees.

### **Referred to Zoning & Planning and Finance Committees**

**#86-18**

#### **Add a full-time position in the Planning Department**

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization of the addition of one full-time employee position in the Planning & Development Department to create a Director of Transportation Planning position.

Finance Committee

**Finance Approved 6-0-2 (Ciccone, Lappin abstaining)**

**Action:** **Zoning & Planning Approved 7-0-1 (Councilor Krintzman abstaining)**

**Note:** The Zoning & Planning and Finance Committees met jointly to discuss this item. Maureen Lemieux explained that there is a tremendous amount of work being done in the transportation

realm for the City, both in the Planning Department and Public Works Department. Nicole Freedman will be filling this new position as Director of Transportation Planning. She is vacating the Director of Transportation Operations position in the Public Works Department, which will be filled by an interim Director of Transportation Operations until a permanent Director can be hired. The position will be paid through existing funds in the Planning Department budget through the end of this fiscal year. In the new fiscal year, the position will be added to the budget. Ms. Lemieux said the salary is in the \$105K range. The salary for the existing operations position will be determined based on the candidates experience and credentials.

The administration believes this position is imperative to the operation of the City because there is too much work for one person to be handling. Barney Heath, Director of Planning also stated that with the many and varied transportation initiatives that are being undertaken in the City, there is a need for a dedicated person for planning and a dedicated person for operations.

#### Committee Questions/Comments

A Councilor was concerned that Nicole Freedman, who has hired in an operations capacity, is being made a planner by moving her into this new position. The Councilor wanted to make sure the right person was being selected to fill the role and he is not convinced she would be the right person based on her experience. David Koses had originally been in that role in the Planning Department until he was moved to the Department of Public Works. Then there were a number of traffic engineers that have come and gone. He is also concerned about a divided role between Planning and Public Works feeling a more unified effort would be more effective.

Committee members asked about how the two positions will interact with each other and what the job description is for that role. Members would also like to better understand the structure of the Transportation department. Ms. Lemieux said the Planning Department and the Public Works Departments have completely different roles, but work together closely. Public Works implement the vision that comes from the planners.

A Councilor noted that historically there has been concern there are not enough staff positions in the Planning Department. This is an opportunity to get a jumpstart on seeing how this new arrangement will work before the FY19 budget discussions begin.

Councilor Cote moved approval of the item in the Finance Committee with the understanding that the Planning Department would provide a job description and salary for the new position and the Department of Public Works would provide the job description for the existing Transportation Director and Deputy Transportation Director in the Public Works Department before the full Council meeting on Monday, February 5, 2018. The Committee voted six in favor with two abstentions to support the motion.

Councilor Baker moved approval in Zoning & Planning with the same requests. The Committee voted to approve with seven in favor and one abstention.

**#74-18 Mayor's appointment of Christopher Steele to the Planning Board**

CHRISTOPHER STEELE, 254 Elliot Street, Newton, appointed as a member of the PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD for a term to expire February 1, 2023. (60 days 03/17/18)

**Action: Zoning & Planning Approved 8-0**

**Note:** Barney Heath, Director of Planning, explained that there is an urgency to appointing members to the Planning & Development Board. Jonathan Yeo resigned as he is now working as the Chief Operations Officer in the Mayor's office. Sonia Parisca has a medical issue and is not able to meet with the Board at this point in time. There are several public hearings on the calendar for the Planning Board so moving this appointment forward would be helpful.

Councilor Albright explained that new appointees generally meet with the Committee before their appointments are confirmed, however, Mr. Steele is traveling and was unable to attend. He provided a letter for the Committee which was attached to the agenda.

The Committee is well acquainted with Mr. Steele as he has served on the Economic Development Commission for many years and has been involved in the community in other ways as well. Councilor Danberg moved approval of his appointment and the Committee voted in favor unanimously.

*Public Hearing assigned for February 12, 2018*

**#77-18 Zoning Amendments for Recreational Marijuana Establishments**

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING requesting amendments to the City of Newton Zoning Ordinance, **Chapter 30**, to add a definition of recreational marijuana establishment and to create a temporary moratorium on the placement of recreational marijuana establishments in the City of Newton to allow the city adequate time to complete a planning process to consider in what districts and under what conditions recreational marijuana establishments will be allowed.

**Action: Zoning & Planning Held 8-0**

**Note:** Barney Heath explained the Planning Department has been working with the Law Department to draft this proposed moratorium ordinance. Jennifer Caira, Chief Planner joined the Committee. She noted the state voted in favor of allowing recreational marijuana in 2016. Newton voted in favor of the law so may only ban recreational marijuana through a referendum at a regular or special election.

The Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) is tasked with the licensing and development of regulations for this statute. They have provided draft regulations, but their final version will not be available until March 15, 2018, at the latest. They will start accepting applications for recreational marijuana establishments on April 1, 2018. By April 1, municipalities need to have in place either zoning for the establishments, or a moratorium. Many other cities and towns have passed

moratoriums and the Attorney General has been approving them through December 31, 2018. The recommendation of the Planning Department is for the adoption of a moratorium through that date to allow time for study of the issue and propose zoning.

Cities and towns need to provide meaningful opportunities for these establishments and have to allow a minimum number based on the number of liquor licenses (package stores) in a city. Cities can set a minimum cap of 20% of the liquor licenses. Newton has 26 package store liquor licenses so the minimum allowed establishments would be 7 or 8. To restrict them to a lower number would require a ballot question.

The CCC will notify municipalities of any applications they receive. From that time, the City has 60 days to respond as to whether or not the establishment is within 500 feet of an existing private or public K-12 school. If the City does not respond, it is assumed an approved location. It is still unclear as to how all of this will relate to Newton's special permit process. For reference, for medical marijuana establishments are approved only by special permit without those timeline restrictions. Newton currently recommends a 500-foot buffer, not only from schools, but also from daycare facilities, anywhere children congregate, and places of worship. It is still unclear if and how those buffer distances can be changed and if other sensitive uses can be added while still providing meaningful opportunities for the establishments, as required.

Ms. Caira said it is unclear whether the zoning in place for medical marijuana establishments can carry over for recreational establishments. This needs to be reviewed. Also, recreational use has different requirements than medical use. For instance the medical dispensaries are in a more enclosed space and outside of village centers but recreational may be treated as more of a retail use so zones need to be evaluated.

The CCC contemplates a different license process for cultivation, crop cooperatives, retailers, and on-site social consumption. This is also something that needs to be considered because some uses may be more appropriate in different zones. The City will now be required to negotiate a community host agreement with all new and existing medical and recreational establishments. This is a contract to negotiate up to 3% of gross revenue of the establishment but it has to somehow relate to a cost to the City. There is currently no protocol in place to negotiate the contracts and what the city-related costs are and where that money would go. This is also something that needs to be researched.

The law also allows existing medical facilities to convert to recreational businesses if they have had a license by last June. Garden Remedies fulfills that requirement but it is unclear if any others had obtained a provisional license by that time. None have come through the City's process but they will have to check with state database.

Based on all these factors, the Planning and Law Departments need to have time to review the regulations that come out in March, and study and review the other issues stated in order to propose appropriate zoning and have it adopted. There is not enough time to accomplish that

before April 1<sup>st</sup>. Staff recommends adopting a moratorium through December 31, 2018. If the work is completed before then, the moratorium can be lifted.

#### Committee Comments/Questions

Councilor Albright told the Committee that the Mass Municipal Association had a session on the new cannabis laws. The sessions were very helpful and a handout was provided which relates to developing local policy. The Clerk will distribute copies to Committee members.

A Committee stated that a working group has been working on the cannabis issue and she wondered if they would be involved in the process. Mr. Heath said that is an internal group but they will share information.

She also asked who decides on the 3% tax. Marie Lawlor, Assistant City Solicitor, explained that it is a local option law similar to the meals tax. The City would have to adopt it through a City Council vote and Mayoral approval. There is also a host agreement of up to 3%, which relates to the city costs as explained earlier by Ms. Caira.

There was some question as to whether the city could limit the number of recreational establishments to fewer than the number of medical establishments. Ms. Lawlor was not aware of that but understands that a medical establishment can convert to recreational use, unless a municipality has voted to ban recreational use.

This moratorium will not affect any medical marijuana establishment applications.

A Councilor said that the medical and recreational regulations have been combined into one statute. She asked if these changes should be made in the ordinances to be consistent with the new statute. Ms. Lawlor suggested that there will likely be one ordinance, with a section on medical and a section on recreational.

This item will be heard in public hearing on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

The Committee voted unanimously to hold this item, unanimously.

#### **#75-18      Discussion relative to the Zoning Redesign Event Series**

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING requesting discussion of topics, issues, and ideas from the Zoning Redesign Event Series, with Committee feedback leading to staff preparation of the draft policy content outline for the new Zoning Ordinance

**Action:      Zoning & Planning Held 8-0**

**Note:** Rachel Blatt, Long Range Planner joined the Committee. She explained that the Planning Department held their fifth session of their Zoning Redesign workshop on January 18<sup>th</sup>. The topic was: A Parking Lot for Goldilocks: Zoning for Just the Right Size. Ms. Blatt presented a PowerPoint which is attached to this report. Please refer to it for details of the session.

The two main places that zoning and transportation intersect are in transportation studies and parking. Newton's zoning has been a cycle of building for the worst case scenario. Every project that comes in has two problems: not enough parking and too much traffic. Newton requires a high number of minimum parking spaces based on the worst case scenarios, which leads to more traffic and large lots left empty. The balance is to achieve a safe, smart accessible, livable and sustainable transportation system and help ensure convenient and available parking for those who need it.

The zoning tools for transportation are transportation demand management (TMD), right size parking requirements, optimized parking resources and good site design.

TMD includes a suite of tools to help make things easier for people including locating housing near transit and jobs, investing in other modes of transportation in the infrastructure, provide information on options, on-site carsharing, etc. Please refer to the presentation for examples of TMD implementation in other communities.

Right size parking is the goal – providing enough parking without leaving large lots empty. Instead of providing parking based on highest use day numbers, a review of shareable resources, and mix of uses can allow for a better approach. For example, the Shops at Chestnut Hill has a special permit and parking waiver and recently did a parking space use count. On Black Friday, which is a peak use day, 638 spaces were empty, which is 30% of their spaces. The immediate front door spaces were full, but the top of the garage had one car. Design does matter. Better placement of buildings and parking will make a difference along with a proposed parking maximum instead of minimum.

Shared Parking is another avenue to optimize parking resources. Off-peak times in certain locations could provide parking spaces, for instance, a church parking lot during the week. During peak times in Newton Centre, 43% of all public and private parking spots are empty. Sharing spaces would maximize the use of what is already available. Decoupling housing and parking spots on the residential side and subsidizing public transit or charging for private parking optimize parking resources.

The proposed parking policy is to set maximums, recalculate/remove parking minimums, allowed sharing parking and encourage parking to reflect true costs.

Site design that encourages routes for walking and biking, as well as creating safe and pleasant parking lots will also encourage modes other than cars. Environmentally friendly parking lots can also progress sustainability goals.

Autonomous cars are expected to be a part of everyday experience in 5-7 years to the City needs to prepare for future technology. Adding electric car chargers, designating Uber and Lyft pickup/drop off areas and convertible parking garages all add to better design for the future.

The proposed site design policy includes sidewalk and bike access in site design criteria, enhancing safety and sustainability in parking design standards and preparation for emerging technologies.

The summary report from the session is attached to this report

#### Committee Comments/Questions

It was asked if other communities can provide some models and outcomes. Ms. Blatt said that Watertown has a TDM policy with their properties. Everything along the Pleasant Street corridor has been built into their permitting process. Businesses have to contribute to the creation of a TDM Association which is a pooling of resources. In addition to joining, they also have to contribute to a fund for pilot shuttles. The way TDMs work is that they have territories and Newton is split between two territories which include the 128 Business Council and the Watertown Council. Watertown is now moving towards a Cambridge model so that involvement and payment into a TDM is not part of the special permit process, it is just an upfront requirement.

A Councilor asked how the reduction in parking spots will mitigate the problem of space seeking. Mr. Freas said that most of the communities around Newton eliminated the minimum parking requirements. When parking requirements were added to zoning ordinances, there was an already built environment to deal with. The question was would buildings be required to provide parking on site or will the community take on parking as a publicly managed resource. Most communities decided on the latter. Newton did both but provided a waiver process. Communities are saying that if there are people driving around looking for parking, then there is a problem with how the community is regulating parking as a resource in that area and it needs to be addressed in that way. That could include street regulations, varied pricing for parking, and then additional parking if it is warranted. It is a problem, however, that will never fully and forever be solved, but it can certainly be managed better in a number of ways. There can be a more comprehensive look at land use and parking.

A Committee member noted that a business owner in West Newton said he tried to share parking on his lot but Inspectional Services told him he could not. Mr. Freas said that is currently true. Ms. Blatt said there are some zoning hurdles to shared parking including definitions. Accessory parking is the only parking allowed by right – you have to park at the business you are patronizing and if you leave your car there and go to a property next door, that is not allowed. There is not a definition of public parking either, which needs to be established. There is also the problem of allowing shared parking but then being able to retract the privilege at some point in time. People are also concerned about insurance and taxes on their land. There are apps which can help people connect with parking spots which might be available on one's property. These apps handle insurance and taxes and can also shut down the availability of a lot or spaces at any time.

There were some concerns that Newton was a place to park to get somewhere else, such as Red Sox games. This can crowd some neighborhoods that have all day, on street parking and commuters or sports fans end up parking there. It is a major concern in neighborhoods near public transportation. There is the battle of residents who do not like the all-day parkers, and the right of

people to use a public street for parking. The restaurant owners are also have a difficult time on Red Sox game days because their patrons cannot find parking. Brookline implemented a \$10 per hour meter on game days, but they stopped that practice for unknown reasons. Some sort of surge pricing on meters might make sense for the area around Newton Centre and other areas near public transit.

A Councilor noted that the Red Sox game scenario is a regional problem and is not just a Newton problem. While Newton does not like the cars lining the streets while people park here and take the T, there is also a desire not to have so many people driving into Boston. Riverside lots are filled up, Woodland is not as full because it costs more. She wondered if there was some agency they could work with on this problem.

Ms. Reynolds explained that they are looking at the redesign of West Newton Square. They are trying to find the right balance to be sure that the streets of Newton really serve the residents of Newton and not just a cut-through to get to the Mass Pike.

A Committee member said she was very pleased that other transportation choices were highlighted in the session. Some perceive this initiative as “anti-car” but in fact it is a way to give people more choices and reduce congestion on the streets. Coordinating with other communities and the MBTA is important in order to find ways to maximize the opportunities that make sense for residents Ms. Blatt said that Watertown is interested in collaborating with Newton on creating shuttle options through the northern part of the City.

A Councilor noted that there had been a parking in-lieu docket item. That ordinance would require a fee to be paid in lieu of providing parking spaces and that fee could be used for traffic or pedestrian related improvements in the area. Ms. Blatt explained that the goal is to move away from waivers and to implement TDMs so that businesses are actively participating in getting people to their businesses in other ways. Providing incentives such as T-passes could be beneficial. The requirements could be written into the zoning ordinance and into the special permit process as another tool.

A Committee member was concerned about the residential neighborhoods. He would not like to see residents having to bid on space in front of their own house to preserve their privacy and peace and quiet. He was concerned about a shared parking system with Boston College. He wants to be sure they are taking care of their own parking needs and not providing parking to others. He suspected this could be a problem with other institutions in the City as well. Thirty years ago, he worked on the plan to prohibit parking on football game days and it has had a hugely positive effect on traffic. Uber and Lyft are being used by game attendees so that is becoming a bit of a problem. Ms. Blatt noted that New York is piloting preferred pick-up spots for Uber and Lyft that is something Newton might consider to avoid the double-parking issues.

He also noted that shared parking requires understanding which clusters of businesses would make sense and be the most beneficial. He would like to see some real examples of how this would work compared to the current model.

A Councilor noted that if the goal is to get people to park further away from their destination in order to take advantage of shared parking, then the walking experience should be a pleasant and safe one. Currently the walking experience in Newton Centre is challenging because of the multi-crossings and traffic. In other areas it is very different so varied approaches need to be taken. It may be challenging to come up with a set of rules that can cover all the interstitial places in the City.

It was also pointed out that employees of the businesses tend to take up the closet parking spaces. Maybe there could be some requirements that they park on the roof of a parking garage or further away from stores that do not have garages.

The Committee thanked the Planning staff for their work.

The Committee voted to hold the item, unanimously.

**Chair's Note:** *There will be a brief discussion on process relative to Zoning Redesign.*

Councilor Albright explained to the Committee that she has worked with James Freas on a general calendar of work to be accomplished in Zoning & Planning this year. Mr. Freas distributed a calendar, which is attached.

Councilor Albright said she has been looking at other communities' form-based zoning ordinances. They all seem to have an intent section which organizes the issues of village centers, parking, development, etc. She wondered if there could be a similar framework for the Committee in order to discuss all the pieces of the policy document that will be brought to Committee in May.

Councilor Baker felt that some samples needed to be provided for the Committee to understand how new concepts will work on the ground. Councilor Kalis felt that there needed to be a conversation, then a follow-up with a more refined policy. He asked that perhaps a binder be developed with the highlights of each discussion so they can easily refresh their memories.. Councilor Crossley said she would like to see an intent statement in front of every section and rule.

Mr. Freas said he sees this going forward by talking about these three concepts: Intent or goal principles; how to reach the goals through application; and Implications of the practical application. Staff will look at this and try to determine arrangement of the ongoing conversations.

Councilor Albright has spoken to President Laredo and Vice President Kalis about scheduling some Committees of the Whole to discuss this at the appropriate times to update the rest of the Council

and take questions or concerns. She also asked the Mr. Freas to add the City Council to the slide presentation to show that it is involved in this process.

Councilor Albright noted that there are some on-line courses on form based zoning. Each unit is about an hour and there is a charge, but the City Clerk said there is money available for training. Committee members felt this would be a good idea. Councilor Baker stated that he did not believe that form based zoning was an inherently desirable outcome. He would like to understand more and be able to explain to the rest of the City Council, and residents, why it would be better than what is already in place.

Meeting adjourned.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Susan S. Albright, Chair**



## Summary Report

### A Parking Lot for Goldilocks: Zoning for Just the Right Size

Transportation, parking and zoning were the topics of the fifth event in the Zoning Redesign event series held on Thursday January 18, 2018. Similar to past events in the series, staff presented background information on Newton current zoning ordinance. The presentation highlighted how the current zoning ordinance affects transportation planning via development review and parking requirements. Consequences of the current ordinance include less than optimal transportation planning, unwanted traffic and congestion, and high parking requirements. Staff presented four opportunity areas for improvement in the following proposals.

#### Community Feedback: Transportation Demand Management

A graphic titled "Proposed Transportation Demand Management Policy". It includes a goal statement and two numbered points. To the right of the text are three small images: a car on a road, a person walking, and a multi-story building.

**Proposed Transportation Demand Management Policy**

Goal: Require new developments to reduce drive alone trips at peak times.

1. Set a mode-split goal
2. Require developments to implement T.D.M. until they reach their mode-split goal

Group discussions demonstrated interest in using zoning to seek greater transportation benefits from developers, both at the time of construction and throughout the course of the building's operation over time. Working with larger employers and larger buildings were identified as good starting points for new zoning. Several tables discussed how transportation behaviors are changing meanwhile technology advances are allowing greater capabilities for transportation to be user friendly, responsive, and more sustainable. Among attendees there was a **range of opinions in how much non-driving options should be prioritized versus planning for driving among commercial and residential users.**

Newton's existing **connection to MBTA** transportation networks, while very advantageous, was mentioned as a necessary area for increasing service and reliability in order to make some of the

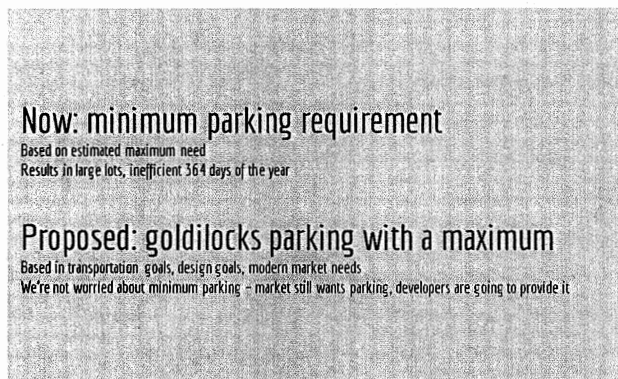
features of TDM work. At least one table talked about the “chicken or egg” conundrum of increasing transit ridership in order to increase transit service. Attendees want the City to continue to advocate to the state to invest more in transit and prioritize Newton routes. Increasing the gas tax was one state level policy. One person brought a map to the meeting indicating potential connection between the Commuter Rail and the Green Line, although it was noted this has already been studied and has many barriers to feasibility.

**Shuttles** were discussed among numerous tables. Connecting Newton locations better to MBTA rail stations and bus stops was a priority among attendees at the event. Groups expressed interest in joining forces with neighboring communities like Watertown and large employers in the region, like Trip Advisor who already has a shuttle service for employees. The shuttle service at Woodland Station that services Newton Wellesley Hospital was an example the one group said currently works great.

One table asked whether zoning for TDM would scare away potential employers to Newton. It was suggested that the **benefits to employers** be quantified and included in the conversation – increased employee health, productivity, happiness, as well as the reduced construction costs when less parking is required. When setting TDM goals, zoning should identify different goals in different areas of Newton. Zones should have **different requirements of parking based on proximity to transit**. One person noted that people can make choices as to where they live and work based on whether or not parking is included. One group wanted to see more future-oriented TDM proposals, such as autonomous shuttles and Newton might be a good location for that.

## Community Feedback: Right Sized Parking Requirements

### Right Sized Parking Requirements



Attendees discussed the parking requirements in zoning and many were in favor of proposals to more accurately predict the amount of parking needs and reduce the likelihood that excess parking is built. Other people in attendance expressed concern about reducing the convenience of parking and questioned to what degree excess parking is truly detrimental. There was enthusiasm over what could be **gained from the space freed up from parking**. Those who were supportive of reducing or eliminating the parking minimum wanted to allow for more valuable community assets – commercial space,

housing, greenspace. Most participants agreed that it's okay to let the market play a larger role in determining parking needs.

Those who were skeptical of removing the parking minimum stated concerns about people circling looking for limited parking, and concerns about neighborhood streets being used for parking by people who are visiting or working at nearby businesses. **Convenience** in parking is a priority among many people. Several tables identified **flexibility is critical and neighborhood context should be considered when determining parking requirements**. At least one group was unclear as to the **benefits of maximum parking requirements** and where that would be relevant. Other had questions about the role of parking waivers. If parking requirements are reduced, one group wondered how to ensure that parkers are not parking in public lots and overwhelming them.

Other questions included making sure low income tenants were not negatively impacted by shared parking. They also had concerns over the impact on families, older adults, and other groups that likely need a car and wanted to make sure this didn't become a tax on them.

One table talked about **accessible spaces** and wanted to make sure the zoning and development review process includes a process to ensure siting in the proper locations especially when there are multiple tenants in the same building. The table also requested a similar review process for commercial loading to reduce double parking and to ensure loading spaces do not replace too many regular parking spaces.

### Community Feedback: Optimize Parking Requirements

How do we make private parking lots available for more public or shared use? A majority of attendees were interested in finding new ways to answer this question. Even some attendees that were skeptical about other proposals from the evening saw the need to make better use of excess parking that sits empty and reduce the likelihood that more unused parking spaces be built in the future. Tables pointed out how optimizing the use of spaces that are already built would allow for space owners to gain revenue, people to park easier, and allow Newton to respond to changing retail behavior. People encouraged the City to be creative and make it easy to allow shared parking.

#### Proposed Parking Policy

Goal is to ensure convenient parking without excessive parking

1. Set parking maximums
2. Recalculate/remove parking minimums
3. Allow shared parking
4. Encourage zoning to reflect true costs



One table wanted the **City to take the lead in developing parking scheme for village centers** – then develop zoning to accommodate the allowable space – anything beyond the zoning would need a special exception. In this plan, satellite parking lots should be encouraged and allowed to provide parking for both commuters and employees. District parking plans which allow employees to park on residential streets with permit should be experimented with.

Some people in favor of shared parking questioned how it would be **enforced**. If a church uses an app to allow others to park there, who will enforce someone else parking there without using the app or without paying? Another group asked if there would be available tax abatement if private owners allow public parking. Groups raised the question of **liability** over public parking on private lots – and staff explained that working with an app mediates this with a **group insurance policy**. One group supported a **hierarchy of parking** – some buildings will charge for covered parking but allow free surface parking.

Many attendees were supportive of **separating the residential rent from parking costs** saying this was very important for reflecting the true cost of building and maintaining parking.

The presentation sparked discussion about **public parking management**, although this falls outside the area of zoning. Suggestions from the table discussions included creating more spots that only allow short-term parking (15 minutes); a mix of length of parking – even as low as 5 minute parking; first 10 minute free parking at a meter to encourage short-term parking; ensuring enough long-term parking near T stops; more 12-hour spaces in residential areas as well; creating long-term spaces for employees (such as in Newton Centre); analyzing the need and feasibility for a parking garage over T in Newton Centre; and parking enforcement during Red Sox game nights.

#### Community Feedback: Site Design

### Site Design Policy

Goal: Site design policies reinforce transportation options and sustainable design.

1. Include sidewalk & bike access in site design criteria
2. Enhance safety & sustainability in parking design standards
3. Direct developments to prepare for emerging technologies



Table discussions on site design resulted in some specific site design suggestions including making parking spaces smaller, increasing the number of spaces and **efficient design of sites**, incentivizing building of spaces for hybrid or electric vehicles as well as shared vehicles like Zip Cars, requirements for planting at least 1 tree for every 10 parking spaces and other landscaping requirements, ensuring

parking lots have safe pathways for pedestrians, and ways for zoning to incentivize permeable parking lot materials. Other considerations included limiting the width of driveways in order to limit unwanted increases in car ownership. Groups were supportive of **solar panels and stormwater treatment** on lots. Attendees also asked to see existing parking lots utilized for things like farmers markets, shuttle stops, and other uses. Consider underground parking whenever possible.

There was strong support for **improving bike and pedestrian infrastructure** and enhancing the public realm along corridors. There was also discussion of the need to create a culture around biking with local youth, but it was pointed out that the lack of safe infrastructure is an impediment. In order to add bike racks, one group suggested replacing one parking spot with a **bike rack in commercial corridors and village centers** like Needham Street and Newton Centre. Attendees want zoning site design to encourage electric bikes by encouraging **electric bike charging spaces**. One group suggested electric bike and car chargers in developments should be required by zoning.

