

The Town of Newton

Urban Design Plan

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The Town of Newton
Urban Design Report

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

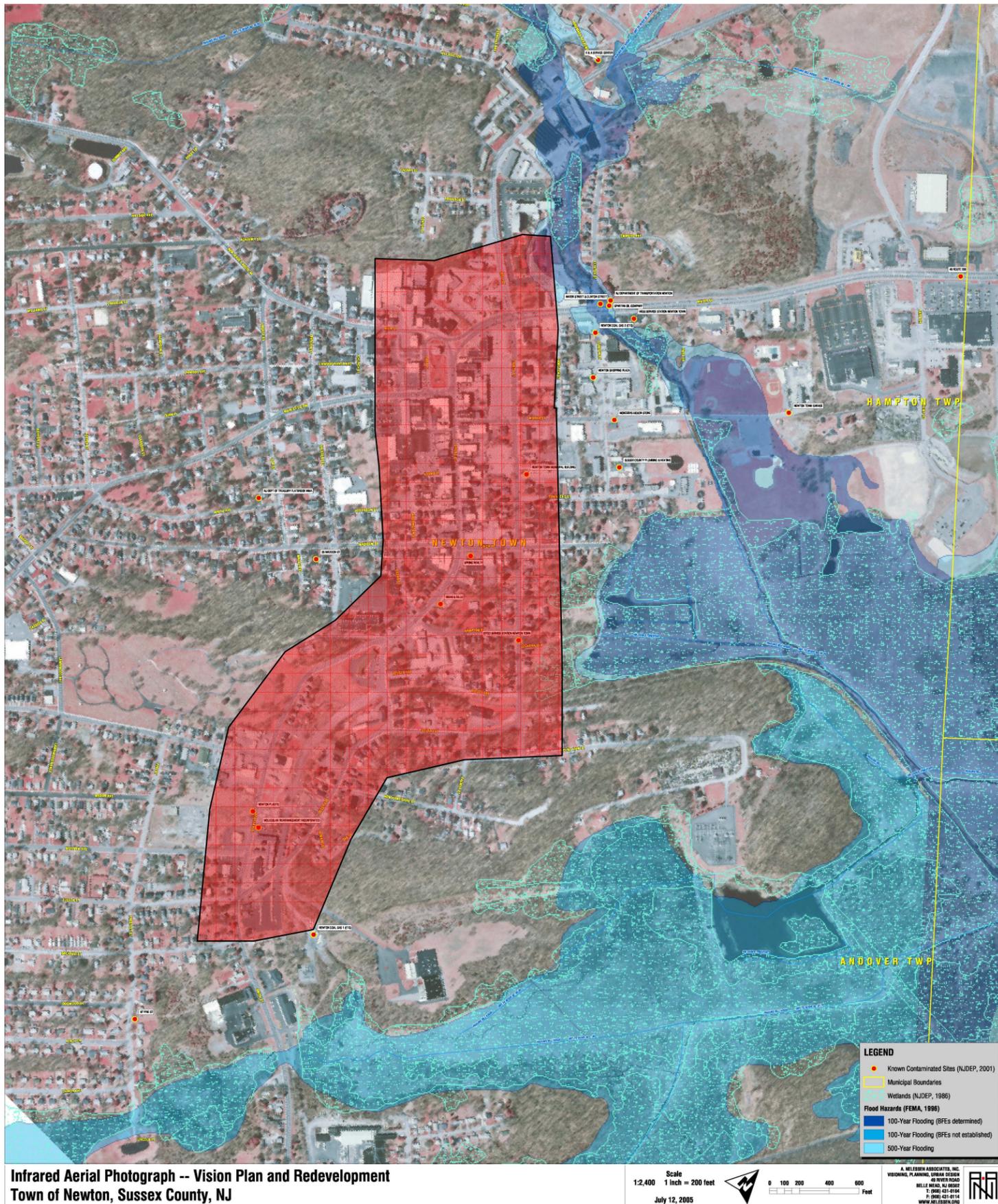
Mayor
Councilmembers
Town Manager
Economic Development Director
Planning Board Chair
Historic Board Chair
Newton Business Owners
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Aerial Photograph of Study Area

The Town of Newton

The Town of Newton, with its historic downtown, has an extraordinary potential for redevelopment. This Urban Design Project focused on underutilized buildings and parcels in the downtown area of Newton, with specific attention given to the areas around the Green, the Spring Street corridor, the Sparta Avenue and Diller Avenue corridors and Trinity Street. The approximate study area, depicted under the red overlay on the aerial photograph to the left, comprises approximately 8,270,000 square feet or 190 acres. While focusing on the study area, the process also encouraged consideration of conditions and future planning actions for the entirety of Newton where it was deemed important and or necessary.

The resulting conceptual vision plan is characterized by suggested redevelopment that is Smart Growth oriented with the potential of transit oriented or transit friendly development. The plan will make the downtown more pedestrian friendly, greener, allow more people to live in up-scale residential within or closer to the downtown, generate more customers, visitors and tourists, generate more retail and business uses, and accommodate existing and proposed parking needs.

This Urban Design Plan recommends an image change for the downtown area of Newton that both the community and professionals feel is the most appropriate for Newton. Using the trademarked Visual Preference Survey process, an analysis and review by participants of the current visual and spatial characteristics of the study area and its environs, along with computer simulations of potential future conditions, provides a quantitative measure of the community's preferences. The recommendations summarized in this report were generated through both a stakeholder Beta test and a public visioning workshop, followed by a professional synthesis and presentation of results. The plan presented here is a vision plan, as opposed to a Master Plan or Redevelopment Plan, a roadmap of community supported preferences for future planning actions.



Spring Street

Town of Newton Recommendations



The Planning and Design Recommendations for downtown Newton started with a consensus Vision, generated from the Visual Preference Survey and the Vision Translation Workshop, which provides a holistic pictorial vision of places where the people of Newton want to live, work, and feel connected to. This vision is that of a pedestrian friendly place, which can be translated into feasible development opportunities to provide the opportunity for urban living for non-children generating households, with additional services and amenities for the entire community.



Two workshops, a Beta Test and a public workshop, were held in Autumn 2005 to gain knowledge of the vision of the public and stakeholders. A total of 50 participants rated images from +10 to -10 on a computer scan form. Images ranged in categories such as parks and plazas, pedestrian realms, streets, commercial, mixed-use, and housing. The results were tabulated by mean and standard deviation.



The highest rated images represent the visual and spatial characteristics desired for Newton. These highest rated images were formulated into the Recommendations for Newton. When the positive results from the visioning survey are translated into two and three dimensions, a development plan emerges that can be adopted and approved with public support.

Community Consensus

Responses from the Visual Preference Survey™ (VPS) and community questionnaire provide an understanding of what the community envisions as appropriate for their future.

Each image was rated based on the question, "How appropriate or inappropriate is the image you are seeing for the present and future of Newton?"

The more positive the values the greater the opportunity for wealth creation and improved quality of life.

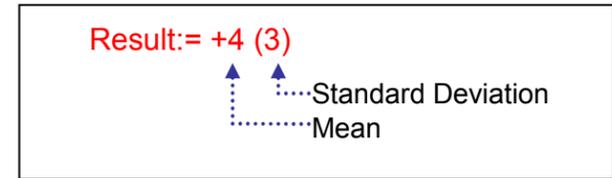
An example of a VPS and Workshop, similar to the sessions held in Newton, are featured in the images to the right.



What People Want



The intensity of the reactions to each various image provides direction for future planning, zoning, development, and redevelopment options. Two statistics are used to analyze each image; the mean (larger number) is the average image score generated from the participants who took the survey. The standard deviation (smaller number in parentheses) is an approximate range of the participants' scores. To best understand the degree of consensus, add or subtract the standard deviation from the mean to approximate the range. The narrower the range the greater the consensus towards the image.



The image to the right is an example of a scantron survey form that is electronically scanned. Results are calculated by mean and standard deviation to reveal positive and negative imagery.

Date: _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 HERE

-10 **NEGATIVE** **0** **POSITIVE** **+10**

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Negative images illustrate examples of places which are unacceptable, though having high opportunity for redevelopment (based on rating).



Images which received the highest positive ratings in a single category suggest the highest priority for future planning and engineering policies.



Demographic Results of Newton

Resident Perceptions

In the past five years, 35% of participants feel that Newton has become more of a place where they want to live and work.

38% of participants feel it has remained much the same come less a place where they want to live and work.

New Mixed-use Infill Redevelopment

87% of participants either agree or highly agree that Newton would benefit from new residential, office and retail mixed-use redevelopment in the future.

Interest in Newton

60% of participants were interested in Newton as concerned citizens. 18% of participants interest was as property or business owners while 15% of participants interests was as an elected official.

Why People Come to Newton

For 32% of participants, working in the downtown area of Newton was the primary reason for visiting the study area. At 18% of each group respectively, the primary reason for being in the downtown area of Newton was that they either live, shop, or live, work, shop and dine in the study area of Newton.

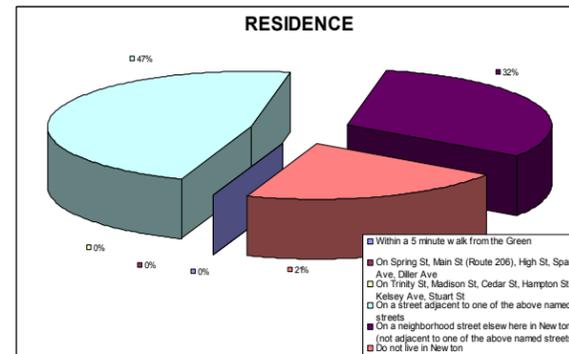
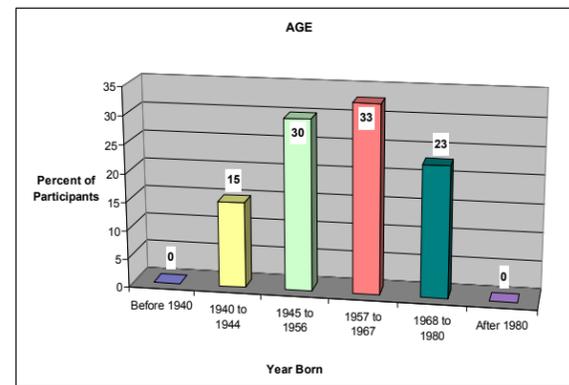
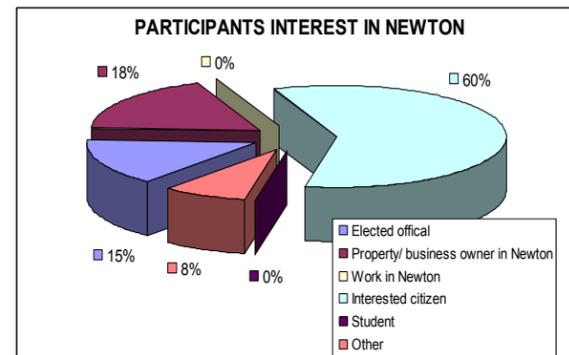
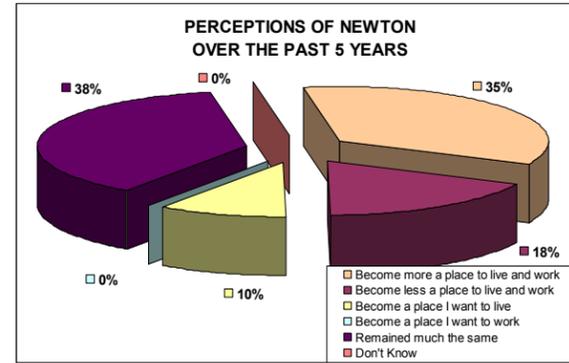
Age Distribution

The largest group of VPS participants at 33%, were born between 1957 and 1967, the second largest at 30% from 1945 to 1956, making the Baby Boom generation the largest contributor to the survey at 63%. For the remainder of participants, 23% were born between 1968 and 1980 and 15% were born before 1945.

Nearly twice the number of males to females participated in the survey, 65% male versus 35% females.

Geographic Distribution

The largest group of participants at 47%, live on a street adjacent to the downtown. 32% of participants live on a neighborhood street not adjacent to a downtown street.



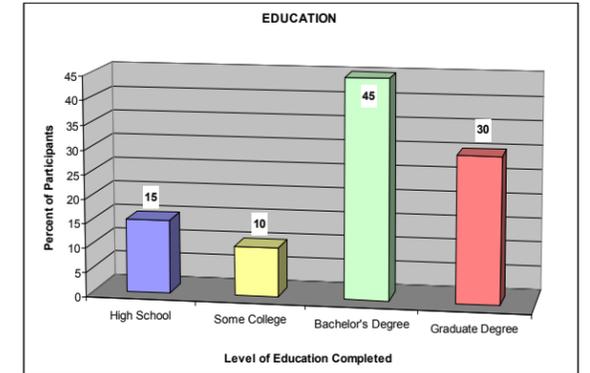
Education

45% of participants have a bachelor's degree

30% of participants have a graduate degree

10% of participants have some college experience

15% of participants have completed high school.



Income

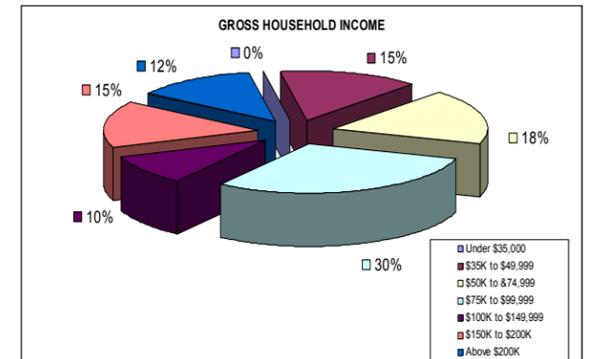
30% have household incomes between \$75,000 and \$99,999

18% have incomes between \$50,000 and \$74,999

15% have incomes below \$50,000

15% have incomes between \$150,000 and \$200,000

12% of the survey have incomes above \$200,000



Residency

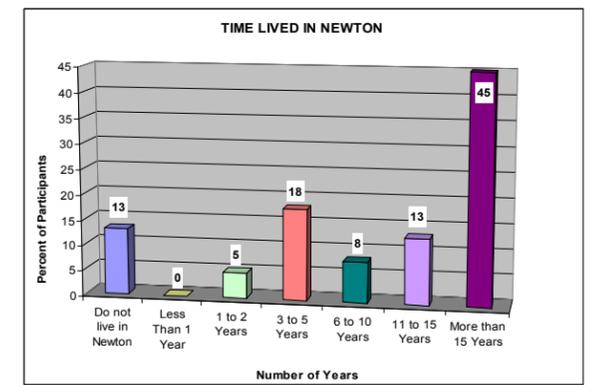
45% of participants have lived in Newton for over 15 years

18% of participants have lived in Newton for between 3 to 5 years

13% have lived in Newton for between 11 to 15 years

8% have lived in Newton for between 6 to 10 years

5% have lived in Newton for 2 years or less



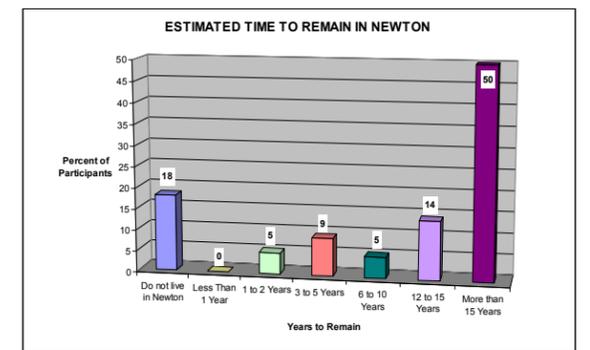
Intent to remain in Newton

By far the largest group at 50%, intend to live in Newton for more than 15 years or the rest of their lives

14% intend to live in Newton for between 12 to 15 years

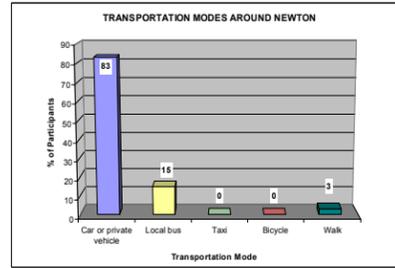
14% intend to remain in Newton for 5 years or less

5% intend to live in Newton for between 6 to 10 years

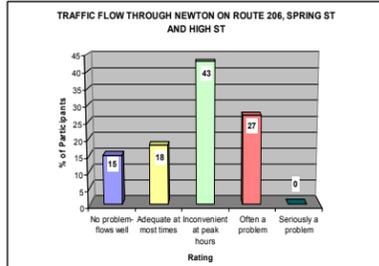


Streets and Traffic

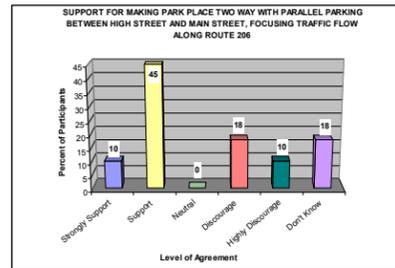
83% of participants travel in and around Newton by car or private vehicle. 15% travel in and around Newton by local bus. 3% travel in and around Newton by walking.



78% of participants believe the Town should improve the gateways into Newton to better identify the Town and better reflect its historic and unique character.



For 43% of participants, traffic through Newton on Route 206, Spring Street and High Street is an inconvenience at peak hours. While 27% of participants think that traffic through Newton is often a problem, 18% think that traffic is adequate at most times and 15% think there is no problem, traffic flows well.



55% of participants support returning two-way traffic to Park Place with parallel parking, if it was feasible from a traffic management perspective. By focusing traffic flow along Route 206 the Green could become more of an attraction to the Town with greater accessibility to pedestrians.

Streets form a community's most important public spaces. Both the initial and overall impressions of place are strongly influenced by the perceived character of its streets.

Guidelines and Policy Recommendations

Streets in the downtown area of Newton should include the following characteristics:

- plant trees along all Downtown streets; trees must be from an approved list of appropriate species;
- street trees may be planted in tree wells within the sidewalk envelope or in tree wells in bump-outs into the street where appropriate; trees at 15 to 20 foot intervals, planted between the curb and the sidewalks in residential area; street trees in commercial areas, every 30 to 40 feet, trim at least 12 feet high and plant at property lines where adjoining buildings meet;
- streets should be two way with narrow lanes and parallel parking where possible to slow traffic;
- street furniture/street trees on property lines in commercial area;
- sidewalks of varying width based on land-use and type;
- building with "street wall" of mixed-use buildings in commercial areas, two to four stories to create proper height to width proportions of street 1:2 to 1:3;
- use of textured paving and paving materials where possible and appropriate;
- continuous and interesting street wall of separate but complementing buildings at a small- town scale and spacing;
- pedestrian realm includes textured sidewalk surfaces, textured crosswalks, lighting and furniture
- replace above ground utilities with underground utilities or utilities along rear alleys where appropriate;
- provide curbs on all streets and sidewalks on both sides as necessary, with at least a 4 foot wide planting strip between curb and sidewalk;
- institute design standards to regulate both commercial and residential streets
- improve gateway streets into Newton with identifiers including signage, landscaping and textured intersections and crosswalks where appropriate.

Positive Street Type Images from VPS



Result: +5 (5) Park Place on the green with streetscape improvements and infill



Result: +5 (5) Textured street, parallel parking, pedestrian friendly



Result: +5 (4) Residential street with pedestrian realm and street trees



Result: +5 (4) Residential street with pedestrian realm and street trees



Result: +3 (6) Residential street with new multi-family infill



Result: +2 (4) Main Street with streetscape improvements and infill



Result: +2 (5) Trinity Street with streetscape improvements mixed-use infill



Result: +2 (5) Existing commercial "Main Street", parking on one side, street trees

Negative Street Type Images from VPS



Result: -5 (4)



Result: -4 (4)



Result: -3 (5)



Result: -2 (5)



Result: -2 (5)



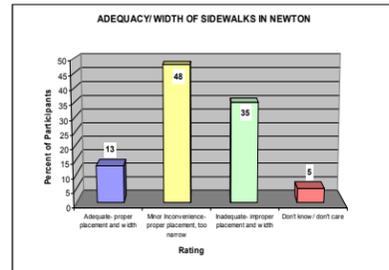
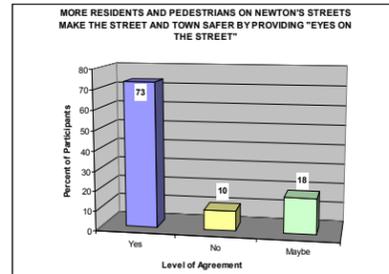
Result: -2 (5)

Pedestrian Realm

73% of participants believe More Residents and Pedestrians Make Newton Safer. 18% of participants believe More Residents and Pedestrians Might Make Newton Safer.

48% of participants believe Sidewalks are a Minor Inconvenience in Newton - Mostly where they should be but not wide enough. 35% of participants believe Sidewalks are Inadequate – Improper placement and not wide enough.

73% of participants believe sidewalks in Newton are in fair condition.



Guidelines and Policy Recommendations

The Pedestrian Realm should include the following characteristics:

- institute design standards to guide both commercial and residential pedestrian realms;
- amend street standards to require street trees; standards should specify species and regular maintenance practices
- encourage and allow texturing of sidewalks and crosswalks within strict design and construction standards
- sidewalks wide enough to accommodate projected pedestrian traffic for the development type; widen downtown sidewalks where possible in specified locations, including in front of new mixed-use buildings;
- commercial buildings built to the sidewalk edge;
- encourage commercial uses which spill out into the pedestrian realm (cafes, retail, etc.), particularly during warmer seasons/weather
- design guidelines to ensure uniformity of realm;
- pedestrian furniture such as benches, trash baskets, planters, etc.;
- on-street parking where possible to provide pedestrian protection;
- continuous awnings in commercial areas to provide protection;
- require semi-public edge treatments, such as fencing or hedging, and landscaping in residential areas;
- pedestrian scaled lighting fixtures;
- regulate appropriate signage along commercial pedestrian realms

Positive Pedestrian Realm Images



Results: +7 (2) Textured sidewalk, mixed-use, pedestrian furniture and amenities



Results: +7 (3) Textured sidewalk, street trees, mixed-use, pedestrian amenities



Results: +3 (5) Textures residential sidewalk, street trees, semi-public edge



Results: +6 (4) Mixed-use, pedestrian furniture, outdoor eating, street trees



Results: +5 (3) Textured sidewalk, outdoor café, street trees, pedestrian amenities



Results: +4 (4) Textured sidewalk, street lighting, street trees, pedestrian amenities



Results: +4 (4) Textured crosswalks, street trees, pedestrian amenities



Results: +3 (3) Multiple textured sidewalk, street trees, pedestrian amenities



Results: +3 (4) Mid-block pedestrian walkway, retail frontage, pedestrian amenities

Negative Pedestrian Realm Images



Results: -7 (3)



Results: -6 (5)



Results: -6 (4)



Results: -2 (5)



Results: -2 (4)



Results: -3 (5)



Commercial Development Options

95% agree or strongly agree that deteriorated, poorly maintained and vacant buildings detract from the economic value, marketability and overall quality of Newton.

90% of participants either agreed or highly agreed that the Town should have design standards to achieve and maintain better designed buildings, properties, streetscapes and landscaping throughout the town.

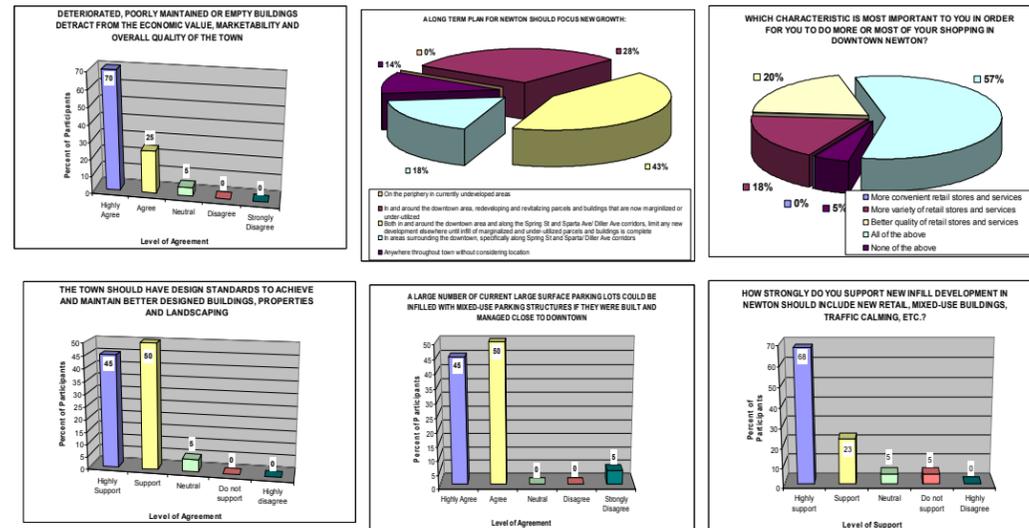
90% either agreed or strongly agreed that there is a need for new infill development in Newton that would include new retail, new mixed-use buildings with retail, offices, housing and parking, as well as streetscape improvements and traffic calming.

95% either agreed or strongly agreed that existing surface parking lots could be infilled if replacement parking (mixed-use parking structures, were built and managed in close proximity to the downtown area.

63% of participants considered as appropriate an architectural scale and character maintaining a 2 to 4 story character in the Downtown allowing buildings to step up to 5 to 6 stories if setback and with parking incorporated.

43% of participants believe New Growth should be Focused both in and around the Downtown and Sparta Ave with Development Limited Elsewhere Until Downtown Infill is complete. 30% of participants believe All Development should be Focused in and around the Downtown until infill is complete.

60% of participants believe the highest intensity of redevelopment should occur around the Green and downtown, the Spring Street Corridor and Sparta/ Diller Avenue corridors. 18% would include development along Route 206 north of the downtown for future high intensity redevelopment.



57% of participants would like to see a combination of better quality, more variety and greater convenience of stores in order to shop more frequently in the downtown. For 20% of participants, better quality of stores in the downtown was most important.

Future retail preferred for the downtown includes: a Farmers' Market, Bookstores and Coffee Shops, Gourmet Restaurants and Cafes, Locally Owned Galleries and Antique Stores, Locally Owned Fashion and Specialty, Professional and Personal Services, Gardening and Flower Shops, Home Furnishings, Financial Services, Professional and Personal Services, a Movie Theater and Movie Rental Stores.

Guidelines and Policy Recommendations

New Commercial Development should include the following characteristics:

- institute policies to place stronger emphasis on infill, revitalization and redevelopment of the Downtown area; a redevelopment plan should be heavily weighed toward mixed-use residential
- incorporate characteristics from the positively rated VPS images into commercial streetscapes and building design;
- institute design standards which address all aspects of building infill in the T-6 Downtown and T-4 commercial area;
- infill mixed-use buildings, buildings built up to the sidewalk edge;
- all parking under building or in rear lots accessed from center block lanes, incorporate parking into mixed-use buildings; on-street parking- parallel, diagonal where possible;
- retail frontage with large display windows; pedestrian shelter in the form of continuous awnings; pedestrian amenities including lighting and furniture;
- 3 to 5 stories possible, with recommended set back of 3rd to 5th stories; masonry with 25 to 40 foot bays; 40 to 60 percent of the façade is transparent; 70 percent of ground level façade is transparent; articulated lower and upper cornice lines;
- redevelopment should be at a highest density within building height envelope;
- infill mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail and/or services.

Positive Commercial Development Images



Results: +6 (5) Mixed-use infill with pedestrian realm improvements



Results: +5 (3) Existing mixed-use, well maintained



Results: +5 (4) Mixed-use infill with pedestrian amenities



Results: +4 (3) Existing mixed-use with pedestrian amenities



Result: +4 (5) New infill "Main Street"



Results: +3 (4) Mixed-use infill with streetscape improvements



Results: +2 (5) Mixed-use infill with streetscape improvements



Results: +2 (6) Mixed-use infill with streetscaping and embedded parking

Negative Commercial Development Images



Results: -1 (4)



Results: -4 (4)



Results: -4 (5)

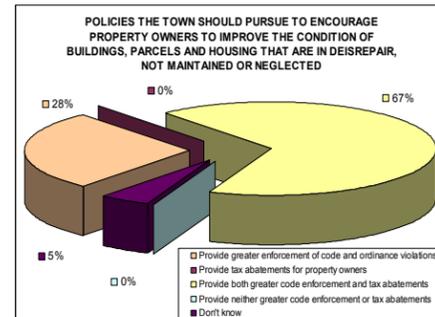
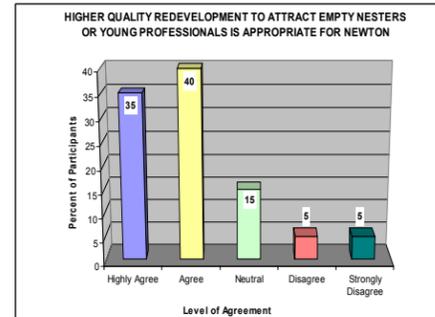
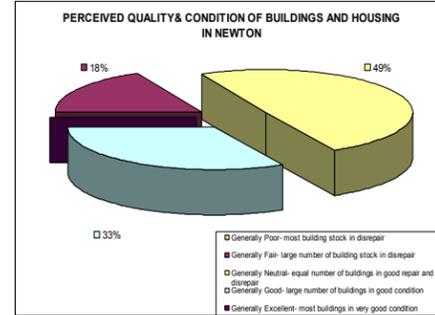
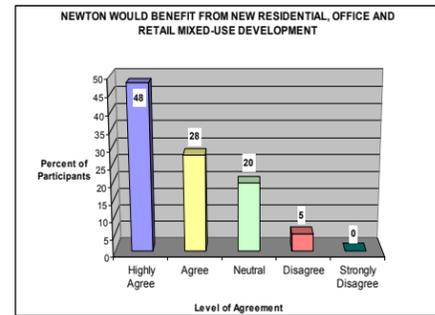
Residential Development Options

76% either agreed or strongly agreed that Newton would benefit in the future from infill residential, office and retail mixed-use development.

49% of participants believe the quality and condition of buildings and the housing stock in Newton is an equal number of housing in good condition and housing in disrepair and neglected. 33% believe buildings and the housing stock is generally good, with a large number of buildings and housing maintained and in good condition.

75% agree or highly agree there should be Higher Quality Infill Development in the Downtown to Attract Empty Nesters and Young Professionals, Even at a Higher Cost to Build and Afford.

67% of participants believe the town should provide both greater code enforcement and public capital investments to encourage property owners to improve the condition of buildings and housing in Newton which are in disrepair or neglected. 28% believe the Town should provide greater code and ordinance enforcement to encourage property owners.



Guidelines and Policy Recommendations

New Residential Development should include the following characteristics:

- institute policies to place stronger emphasis on infill, revitalization and redevelopment of housing in the Downtown area;
- the redevelopment plan should be heavily weighed toward mixed-use residential in the urban core. The redevelopment plan should be heavily weighed toward multi-family residential on adjacent downtown streets;
- incorporate characteristics from the positively rated VPS images into residential building design;
- institute design standards which address all aspects of residential building infill in the T-6 Downtown, T-5 area around the core and T-4 areas;
- infill mixed-use buildings with residential on upper floors to provide a range of housing types and sizes to accommodate young professionals and retiring baby boomers;
- redevelopment should be at a highest density within building height envelope; 3 to 5 stories possible, with recommended set back of 3rd to 5th stories; masonry with 25 to 40 foot bays; articulated lower and upper cornice lines; all parking under building or in rear lots accessed from center block lanes, incorporate parking into mixed-use buildings;
- single use, multi-family residential should range from 2 to 4 stories;
- infill multi-family buildings on adjacent downtown streets to provide a range of housing types and sizes to accommodate young professionals and retiring baby boomers
- residential buildings should be set back to provide green space; a semi-public edge must separate housing from sidewalks;
- residential streets lined with street trees, sidewalks and appropriate street lighting; pedestrian amenities including lighting and furniture;
- institute a rigorous and comprehensive code enforcement program to ensure on-going maintenance of housing stock.

Positive Residential Development Images



Results: +4 (4) Multi-family infill house



Results: +7 (3) Single-family housing adjacent to downtown



Result: +3 (6) Multi-family infill housing



Results: +3 (6) Multi-family infill housing



Results: +3 (6) Multi-family infill housing



Results: +5 (3) Single-family housing adjacent to downtown



Results: +1 (7) Multi-family infill housing

Negative Residential Development Images



Results: -1 (5)



Results: -2 (4)



Results: -1 (6)



Results: -2 (5)

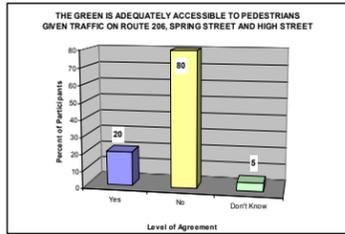


Results: -3 (6)



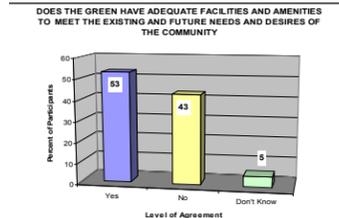
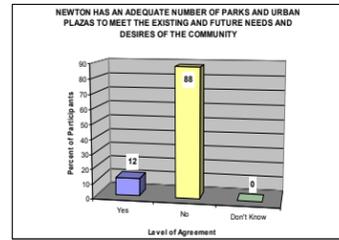
Open and Public Space

88% of participants believe that Newton does not have an adequate amount of parks and urban plazas to meet existing and future community needs in Newton.



80% believe the Green is not adequately accessible to pedestrians given the surrounding traffic patterns on Route 206, Spring Street and High Street.

53% believe the Green has adequate facilities and amenities to meet existing and future community needs. 43% believe the Green does not have adequate facilities and amenities for the future.



Guidelines and Policy Recommendations

Public Spaces should include the following characteristics:

- institute a program in conjunction with Sussex County government to ensure maintenance and upkeep of both County and Town owned public parks and open space;
- institute design standards for parks and plazas in the T-6 Downtown and T-5 neighborhoods surrounding the Downtown;

- identify potential locations in the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods for additional future parks and plazas;
- these parks and plazas must be designed to be part of the everyday experience, not just a special event;
- parks and plazas should have features of a well designed pedestrian realm including: benches, trash receptacles, trees, planters and lighting;
- parks should be integrated with and be part of a continuous pedestrian realm;
- incorporate plazas and small parks into future redevelopment plans;
- study how to make the Green more accessible to pedestrians while facilitating traffic flow.

Positive Open & Public Space Images



Results: +6 (3) Traditional Town Green, pedestrian amenities, furniture



Results: +5 (5) Public plaza with textured pavement, plantings, furniture



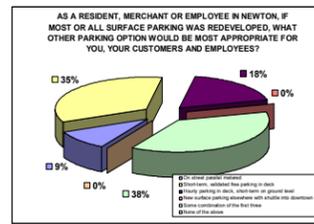
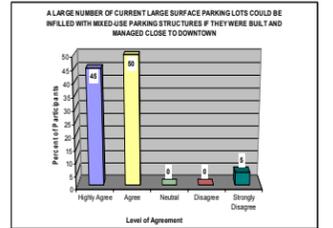
Results: +4 (5) Public plaza with water feature, textured pavement, furniture



Results: +4 (5) Public plaza on corner, outside seating, landscaping

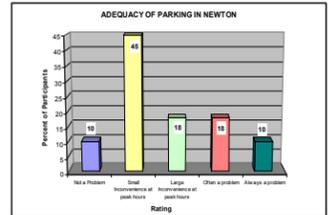
Parking

95% either agreed or strongly agreed that existing surface parking lots could be infilled if replacement parking (mixed-use parking structures, were built and managed in close proximity to the downtown area.



38% of participants would like to see some combination of metered on-street parallel parking, short term in parking deck which is free with validation, and hourly parking in a deck with short-term parking at the ground level. 35% would like to see short term, validated free parking in a deck with short term at the ground level.

45% of participants believe parking is a small inconvenience at peak hours. 18% believe parking is a large inconvenience at peak hours.



Guidelines and Policy Recommendations

Parking should include:

- off-street parking should be incorporated into new infill buildings as rear parking decks, located mid-block behind buildings, or underground; all developable surface lots must be screened from the street with liner buildings and may be accessed by service lane;
- develop a phased infill plan for mixed-use parking buildings as replacement for all surface parking lots in the downtown area of Newton;
- develop mixed use residential and office building prototypes with parking incorporated into the base, half levels and in mixed-use, predominantly parking buildings;
- on-street parallel parking provided where possible on Downtown streets, to be counted as the required parking per lot frontage; incorporate streetscape improvements into on-street parking facilities, including bump-outs, textured pavements, street trees, etc.

Positive Parking Images



Result: +6 (3) Parking in the rear yard accessed under building at mid block



Result: +5 (4) Parking located behind mixed-use residential building



Result: +4 (3) Surface parking screened from street and sidewalk



Result: +3 (5) Embedded parking located behind liner building



Result: +3 (5) parking located under the building



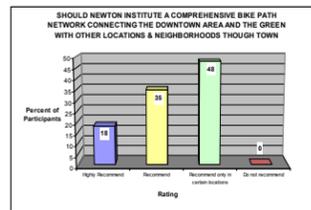
Result: +2 (5) Mixed-use parking building with ground floor retail

- incorporate bump-outs along parallel parking, bump-outs should be spaced every 3 to 5 parking spaces;
- parking decks should be screened or constructed to resemble residential or office building type or screened with liner buildings;
- remaining surface parking lots must be landscaped, with a hedge, fence, low wall or combination there of with internal landscaping and one tree for every 4 parking spaces;



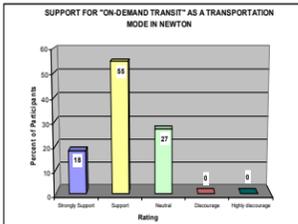
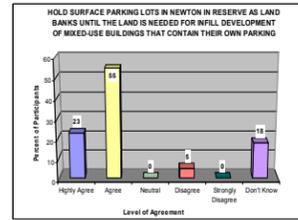
Transit and Mobility

43% of participants believe traffic flow through Downtown Newton is inconvenient at Peak Hours. 27% of participants believe Downtown traffic flow is often a problem.



53% recommend or highly recommend a bicycle path/ lane network connecting the Downtown and Green with other locations and neighborhood centers throughout the Town. 48% recommend bicycle path/ lane only in certain locations.

73% support or strongly support an “on-demand”, point-to-point computer transit/limo service that would operate between designated points within a 15 minute drive from the center of the Downtown. 35% would use it only in an emergency or special occasion; 28% would use it a couple of times a week.



Guidelines and Policy Recommendations

Transit and Mobility should include the following:

- conduct a transportation needs assessment study; develop a transportation plan emphasizing walking, public circulator service, bicycle ridership and on-demand transit as future mobility;
- Incorporate pedestrian-friendly characteristics into Downtown and surrounding neighborhood streetscapes to facilitate greater walkability;
- insure that bus stops are coterminous with the most positive and accessible pedestrian realms;
- promote and pursue alternative modes of transportation through policy and land use. Alternative transportation modes should include reinstated rail service, circulator transit, public transit, on-demand transit/limo, walking, bicycle;
- improve existing transit stops throughout the Town, coordinated with street furniture
- where appropriate designate bicycle lanes and/or signed bicycle routes to establish a comprehensive bicycle network; provide street furniture for bike riders.
- allow vehicular traffic in the Downtown, but at reduced speeds to provide greater safety.

Positive Transit and Mobility Images



Result: +6 (3) Walking



Result: +6 (4) Circulator bus



Result: +6 (4) Covered shelters



Result: +2 (6) On-demand transit



Result: +3 (5) Privately owned vehicles



Result: +3 (6) Bike lanes



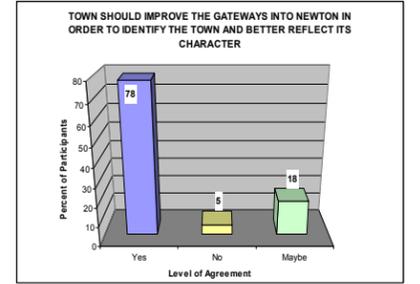
Result: +3 (6) Bicycle facilities



Result: +2 (5) Multi-modal transit- bus with bike rack

Signage

78% of participants Believe the Town should improve the gateways into Newton to better identify the Town and better reflect the Town’s character.



Guidelines and Policy Recommendations

Signage should include the following:

- institute design standards to strictly control commercial signage characteristics including appropriate size, shape, color and lighting;
- limit commercial signage in the downtown area to include: signs mounted on building fronts, small hanging signage, awning signage, window signage, and signage mounted on transoms;
- coordinate commercial signage with the architecture of the buildings;
- keep commercial signage predominantly pedestrian in scale;
- enforce code violations to ensure conformity to design standards and maintenance;
- institute design standards for way-finding signage throughout Newton to maintain consistency and clarity;
- way-finding signage should be distinctive, highly visible and easy-to-read;
- gateway signage should be located at gateway entrances to Newton.

Positive Signage Images



Result: +3 (5)
Signage: Mounted on building front



Result: +2 (5)
Signage: Hanging retail signage



Result: +2 (5)
Signage: Gateway signage



Result: +3 (5)
Signage: Mounted on building front



Result: +2 (5)
Signage: Mounted building front



Result: +2 (5)
Signage: Way-finding signage

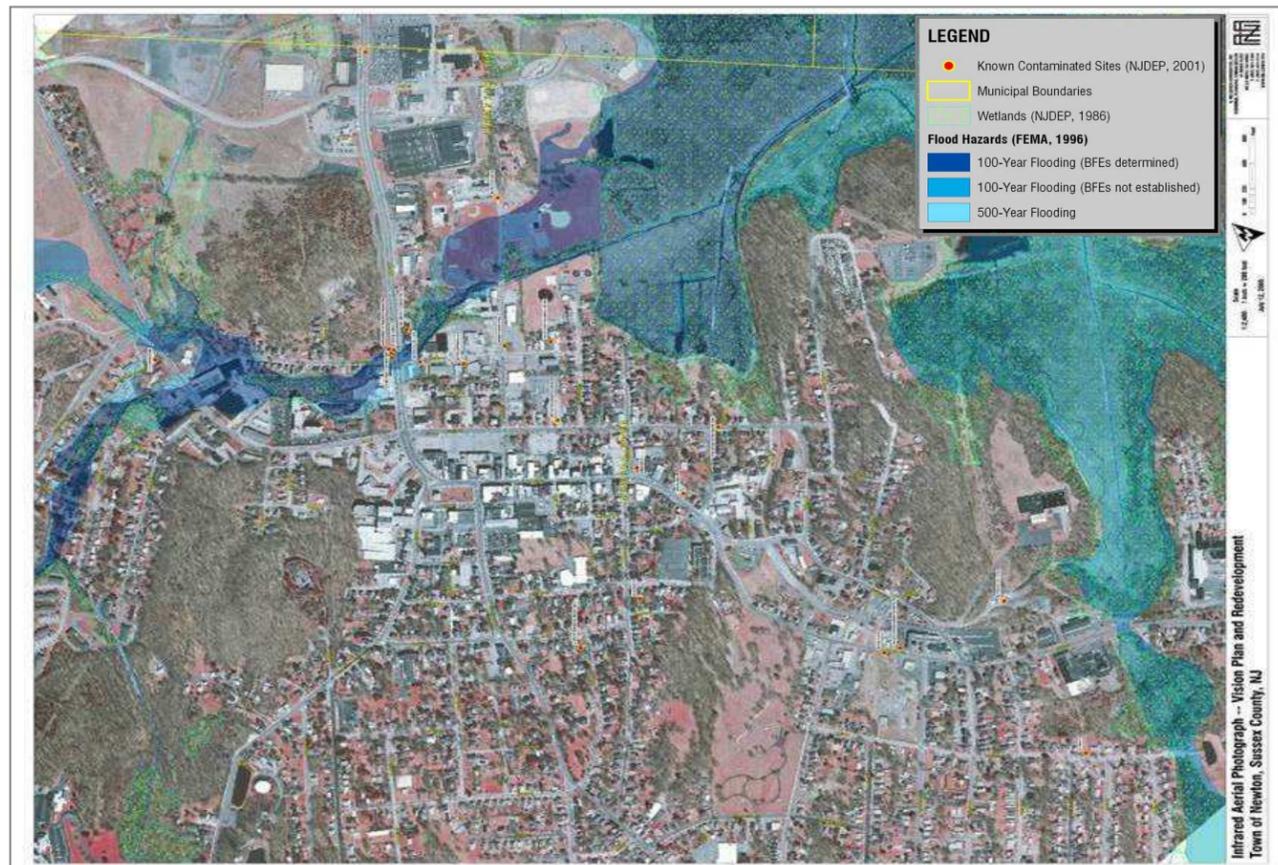


Synthesis Results of Vision Translation Workshop

The Vision Translation Workshop was held after the VPS. The key to the workshop is the use of the most positively rated images in the various categories tabulated from the VPS as a catalyst for public response.

The Translation Workshop takes the positive vision and policies established by the VPS and questionnaire results and tasks the participant group to identify with a structured set of tasks both current conditions and where the positive visual images would be located on a specially prepared base map (prepared by ANA with data sourced from Sussex County, NJ DOT and NJ DEP). Community members and stakeholders have a good idea as to where various urban design features might be most appropriately located when applied to places they know. The product of the Vision Translation Workshop is to develop a community-supported working plan. The following is a list of Tasks the participants completed:

- TASK 1 - Susceptibility To Change
- TASK 2 - Existing Conditions
- TASK 3 - Identifying the Smart Code Transect
- TASK 4 - Identifying Future Land Uses
- TASK 5 - Identifying Future Bicycle Routes/ Lanes and Street Landscaping



Vision Translation Workshop ORIGINAL BASE Map

Task One: Susceptibility to Change

HIGH SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHANGE (RED)

One-story deteriorated or vacant buildings, underutilized parking areas or land uses that are deteriorated, obsolete, visually unacceptable, or pose a concern for safety. Likely candidates for redevelopment.

MODERATE SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHANGE (ORANGE)

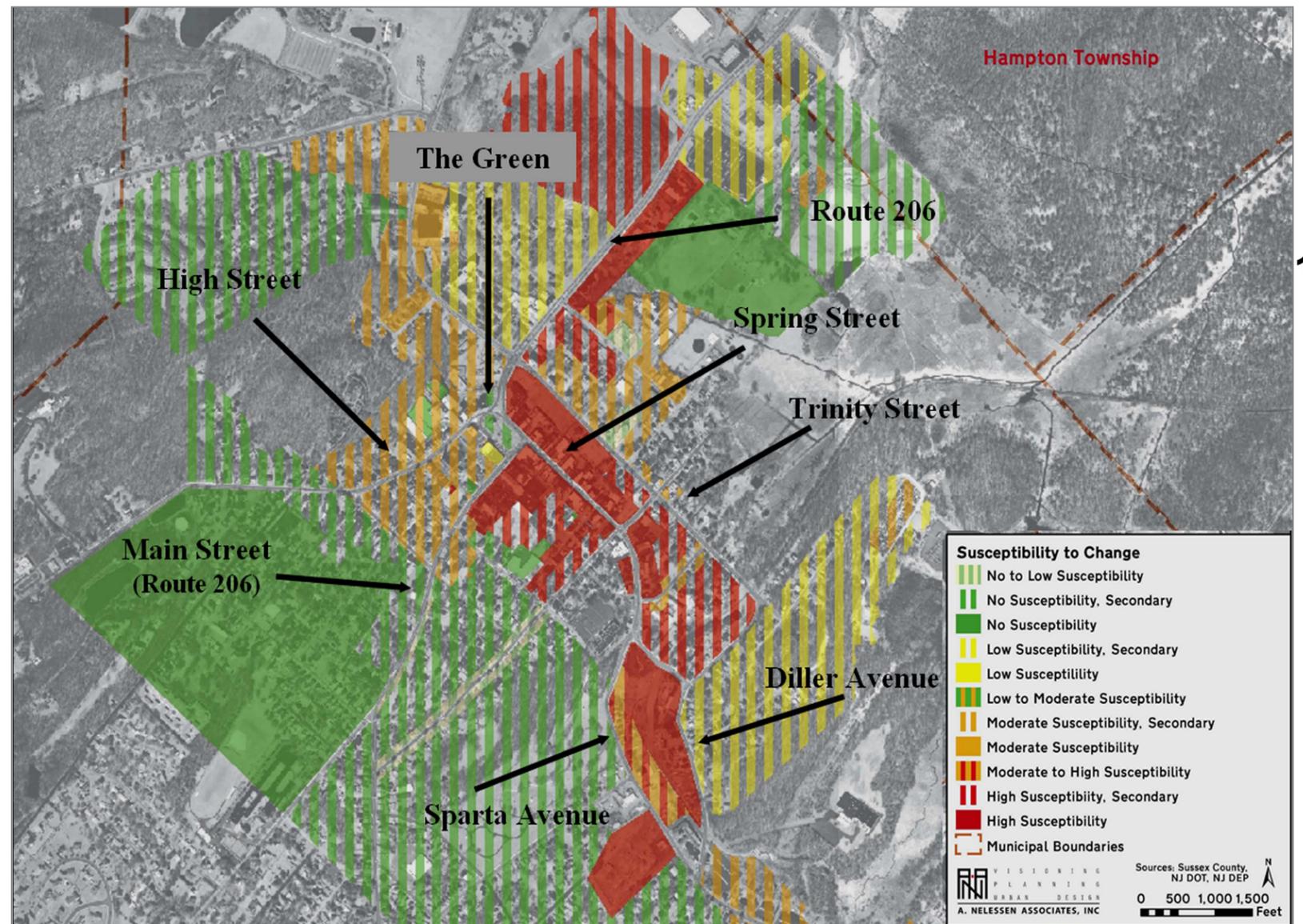
Deteriorating buildings that still have some use, however, need significant improvement. Likely candidates for redevelopment or revitalization.

LOW SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHANGE (YELLOW)

Reasonably good condition, but need improvement. May need minor revitalization.

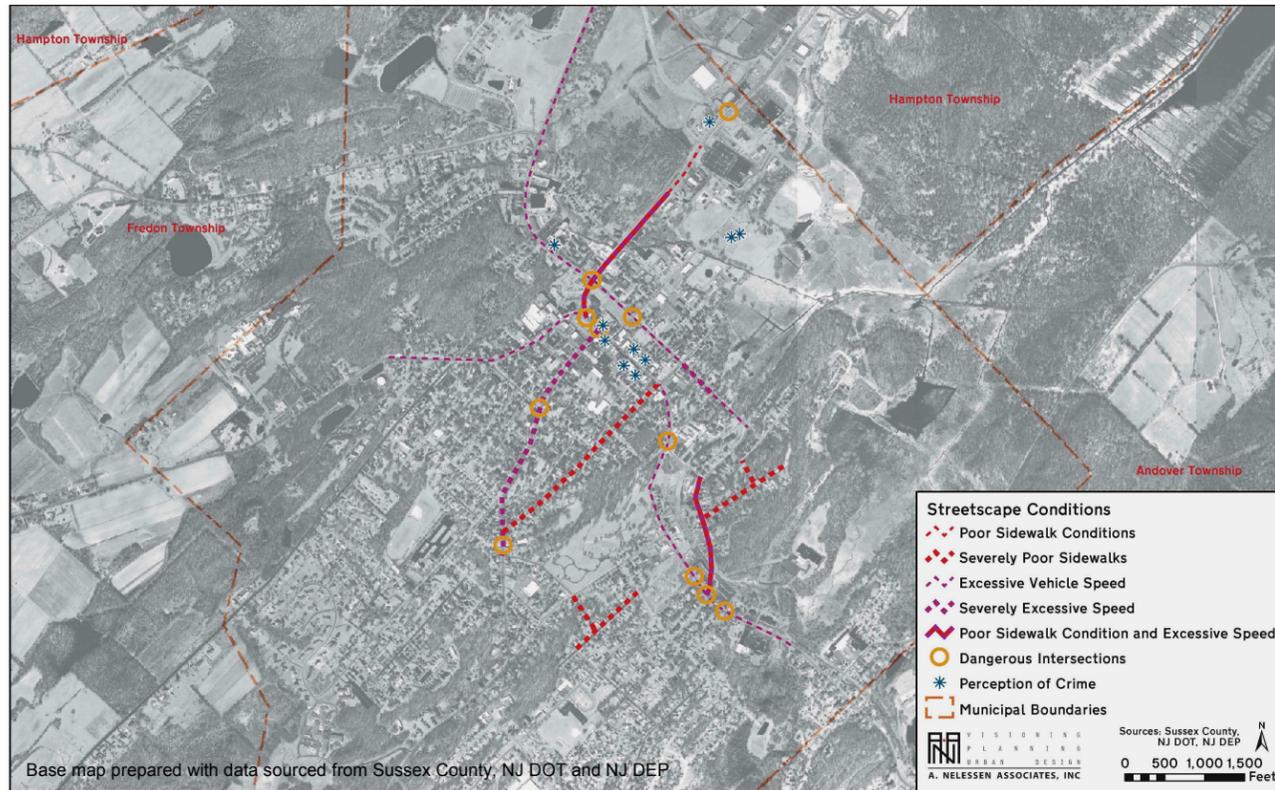
LITTLE OR NO SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHANGE (GREEN)

New Building, buildings in good condition or with historic value. No or minimum revitalization needed.

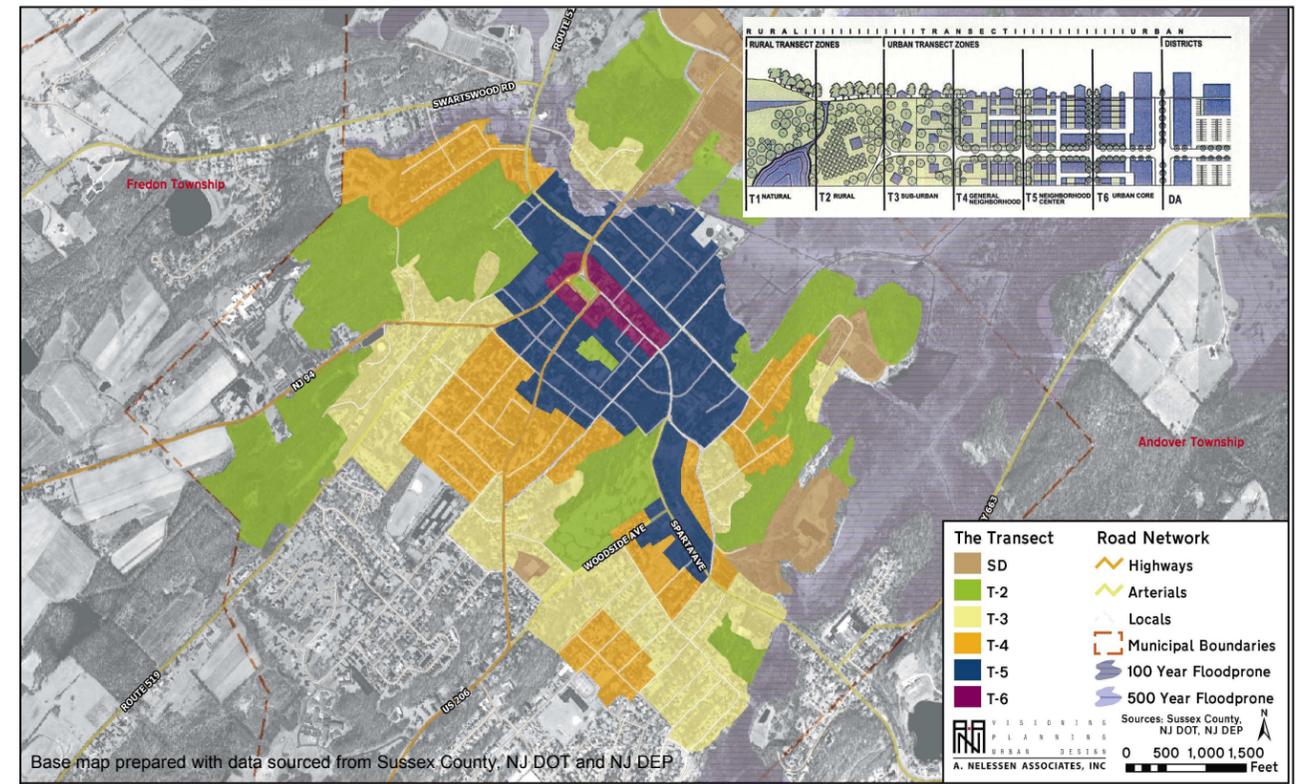


The above map is the susceptibility to change after reviewing all inputs from participants

Task Two: Analysis of Existing Conditions



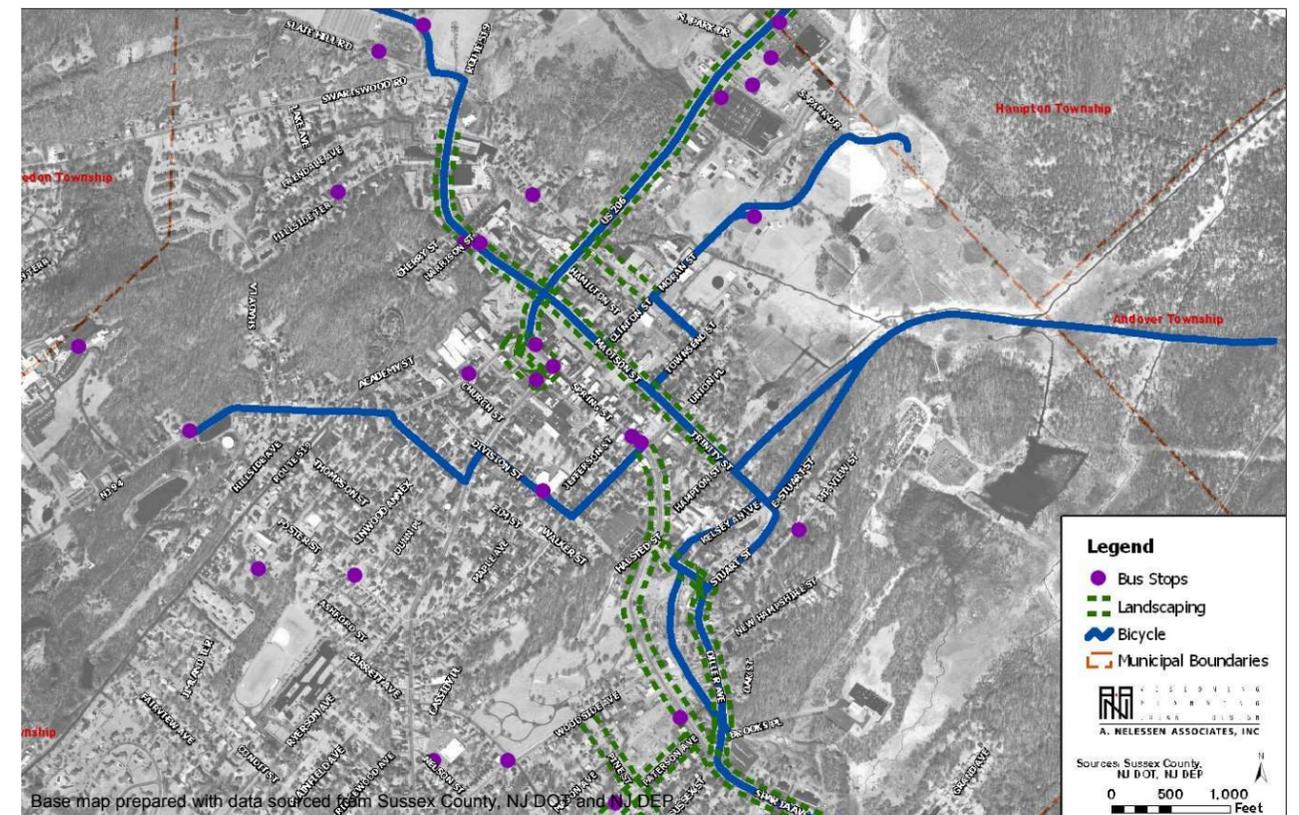
Task Three: Identifying the Smart Code Transect



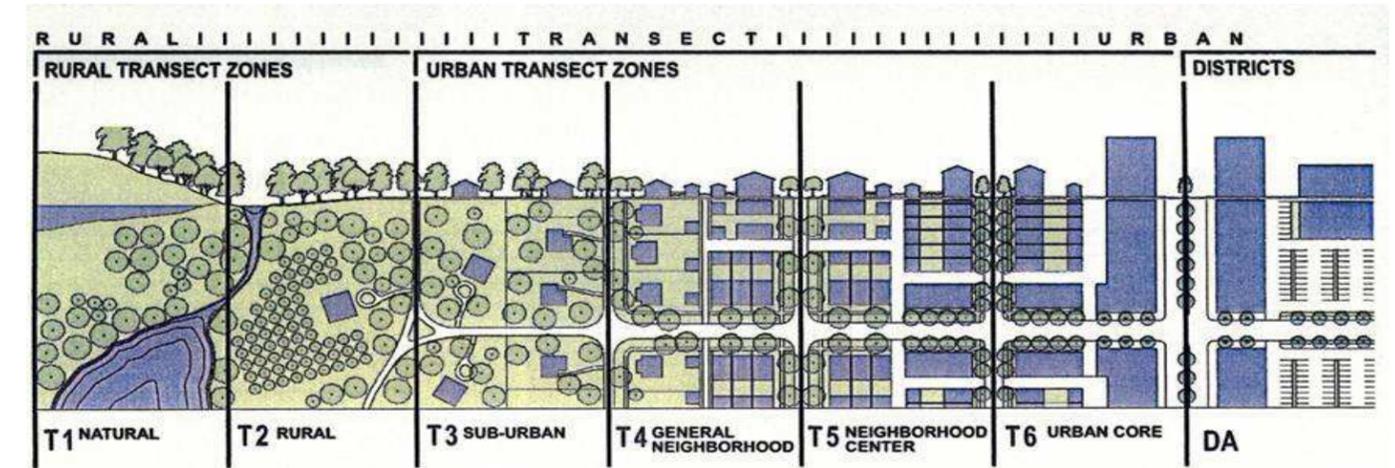
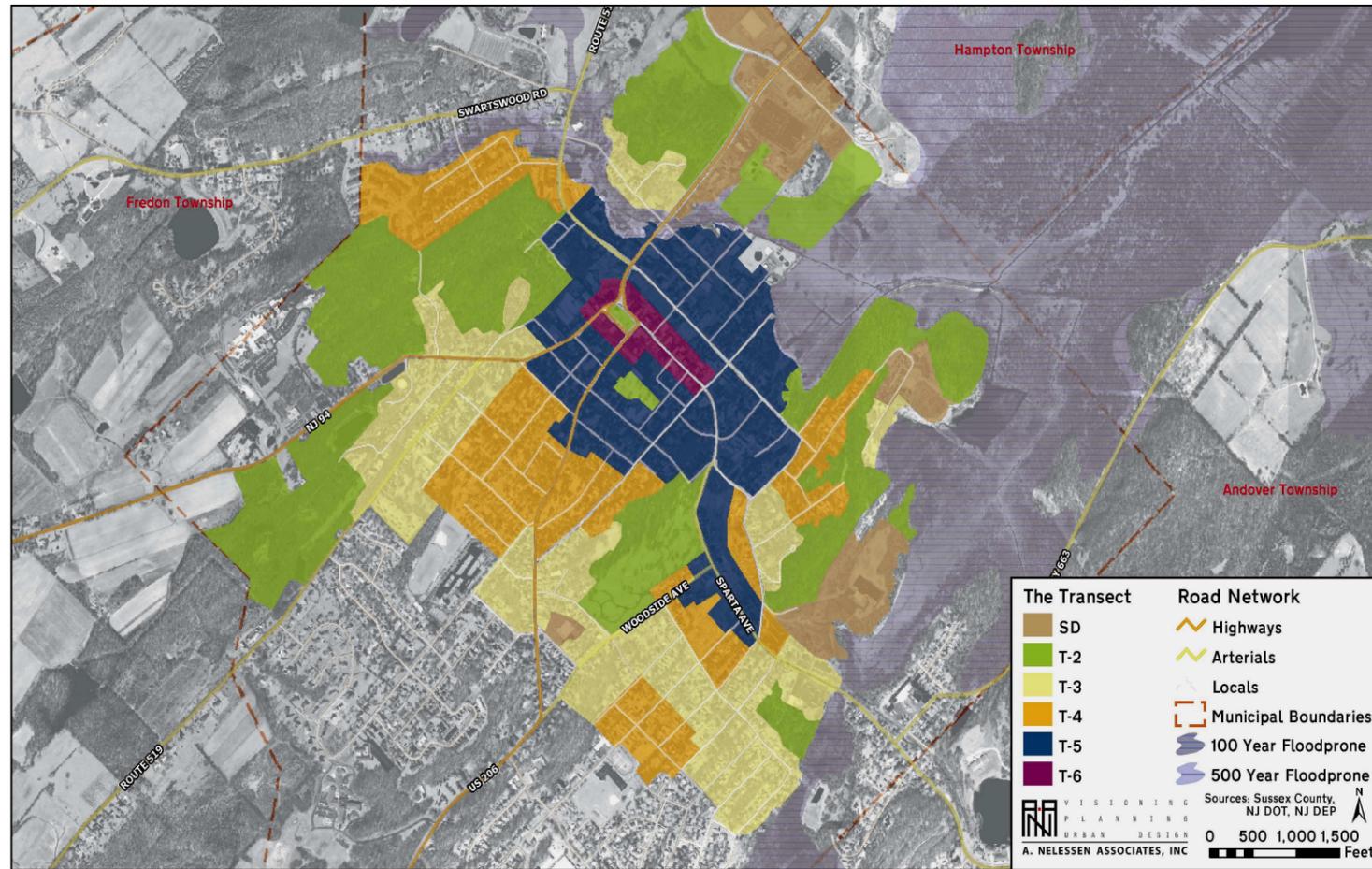
Task Four: Identifying Future Land Uses



Task Five: Identifying Future Transit & Street Landscaping



Transect Coding for a Small Town



The Workshop identified six Transect Zones within and surrounding Downtown Newton along with the primary retail core of Spring Street:

- T-2 Preserved Areas** – Areas to be reserved for future growth with limited growth potential.
- T-3 Neighborhood Service Area** – Residential areas which support Neighborhood Centers and the core
- T-4 Neighborhood Centers** – Smaller Mixed-use retail cores serving as the center of a neighborhood
- T-5 Town Core Housing Area** - Medium Density Urban, directly supports the Town Core.
- T-6 Town Core** - Higher Intensity Mixed and Multiple use Urban (Retail, Commercial, Residential)
- DA Special Districts** - Areas with specialized uses not appropriate in other Transect areas

Natural and Preserved Areas (T-1 and T-2)

Areas within the town which because of physical or environmental constraints are off limits for development or are eligible for restricted development in an effort to preserve the natural landscape.



T1 Natural Zone - include all water, wetland, and floodplain areas currently not developed.
 T2 Preserved Zone - include all areas that are currently not developed. In Newton these include cemeteries, any existing parks and any other undeveloped land.



Neighborhood Service Areas (T-3)

Areas located within a 5 minute walk from a neighborhood center. The neighborhood service area may be in close proximity to the town core, but does not have to be.



Neighborhood Centers (T-4)

A neighborhood commercial center has a higher density and may be located on a major street. It may also be in close proximity to a town core, but does not have to be. A neighborhood center provides a sense of place for the overall neighborhood which surrounds it.



Town Core Housing Area (T5)

The core housing areas directly support the town core retail area. T-5 areas consist of higher residential densities than other places in town within a maximum 5 minute walk from the town core.



ST - R- T5 Example of a T-5 residential building 60 feet deep with raised first floor, a small front yard, vertical windows, and parking below at a half level.



Town Core (T6)

The Town Core contains major retail, commercial, civic, mixed-use development and high-density residential functions. Spring Street and the Green identify Newton's Center.



ST - MU - T6 Example of a mixed use building with ground floor retail, housing and/or offices on upper floors with a two story lower cornice below setback upper stories.

Special Districts (SD)

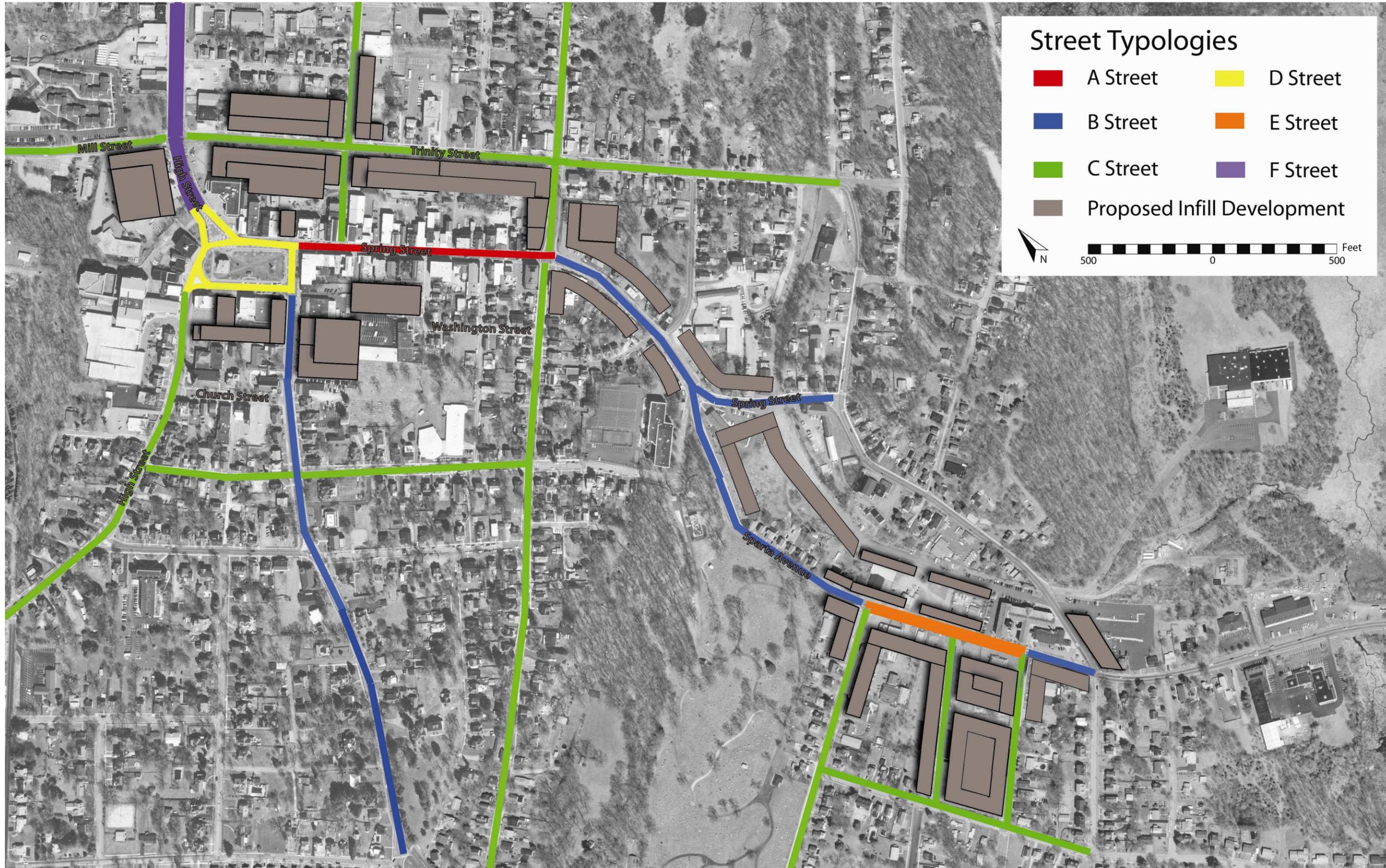
Special Districts are areas within the Transect with uses not appropriate in other Transect areas and/or specialized uses not found elsewhere.

Among uses found in special districts are areas of Strip Commercial, Light Industrial and Big Box Retail.



Street Typologies

Streets are a place's most important public spaces. In Newton, a number of traffic conflicts were identified by the Workshops. Existing conditions render some areas unpleasant and unsafe for pedestrians. A new street regulating plan is proposed for Newton, transforming it into a more functional and visually appealing public place that will accommodate the volume of cars more efficiently and will be pleasant to walk and bicycle along and across.



Street Type A

Spring Street: A - 48:28



Street Type B

Spring Street/Sparta Avenue: B - 60:40



Type A :

- Emphasis on pedestrian; high to moderate vehicular traffic street
- Primary commercial/retail street in town
- Commercial-scaled sidewalk, relatively narrow at 10' width
- Trees planted in tree wells on sidewalk – possibility of planting in street tree bump-outs to conserve sidewalk width for pedestrians
- On-street parallel parking on one side of the street
- Textured pavement of parallel parking stalls to expand the pedestrian realm when vehicles are absent.

Type B:

- Equal emphasis on vehicle and pedestrian; high to moderate vehicular traffic street
- In commercial areas, commercial-scaled sidewalks 6' to 8' in width; in residential areas, residential-scaled sidewalk 4' to 6' in width
- Trees planted in tree wells on sidewalk in commercial areas where densities are higher, trees planted in parkway between curb and sidewalk in lower density residential areas
- On-street parallel parking on both sides of street where possible; textured pavement of parking stalls where possible to expand the pedestrian realm
- Primary land use is residential and live/work residential units

16



Street Type C

Trinity Street: C - 60:40



Type C:

- Emphasis on pedestrian; moderate to high vehicular traffic street
- Residential-scaled sidewalk, 4' to 6' in width with grass parkway between curb and sidewalk; sidewalk can be wider fronting mixed-use buildings
- Trees planted in parkway or in tree wells on sidewalk – possibility of planting in street tree bump-outs if necessary
- On-street parking
- Bicycle lane could replace one side of parallel parking to facilitate bicycle network



A. Nelessen Associates, Inc

Street Type D

Park Place/ Spring Street: D - 60:40



Type D:

- Emphasis on vehicle; high vehicular traffic street
- One way street around Green
- Commercial-scaled sidewalk, 10' to 15' in width
- Trees planted in tree wells on sidewalk
- On-street parking on both sides of street
- High traffic volume impedes pedestrian access to Green



Town of Newton Urban Design Plan

Street Type E

Sparta Avenue: E - 120:50

Type E:

- Equal emphasis on vehicle and pedestrian; moderate vehicular traffic street
- Public park/ plaza on one side of street
- Commercial-scaled sidewalk; 10' to 15' in width fronting commercial area; 6' to 10' fronting live/ work units
- Trees planted in tree wells on sidewalk and in public green space
- Diagonal parking fronting public green space; parallel parking on opposite street side



Street Type F

Water Street (north of Clinton St: F - 75:48

Type F:

- Emphasis on vehicle; high vehicular traffic street
- Landscaped median; Trees planted in median and parkway where appropriate; textured pavement of left turn lane to extend the median
- Sidewalk of 6' to 8' in width fronting strip commercial area; parkway between curb and sidewalk where appropriate
- Bicycle/ pedestrian path on one side of roadway
- Parallel parking on both sides where appropriate



Access Lane

Access Lane:

- Vehicular and service access lanes behind buildings
- Provides access to off street parking in rear of building for both commercial and residential uses



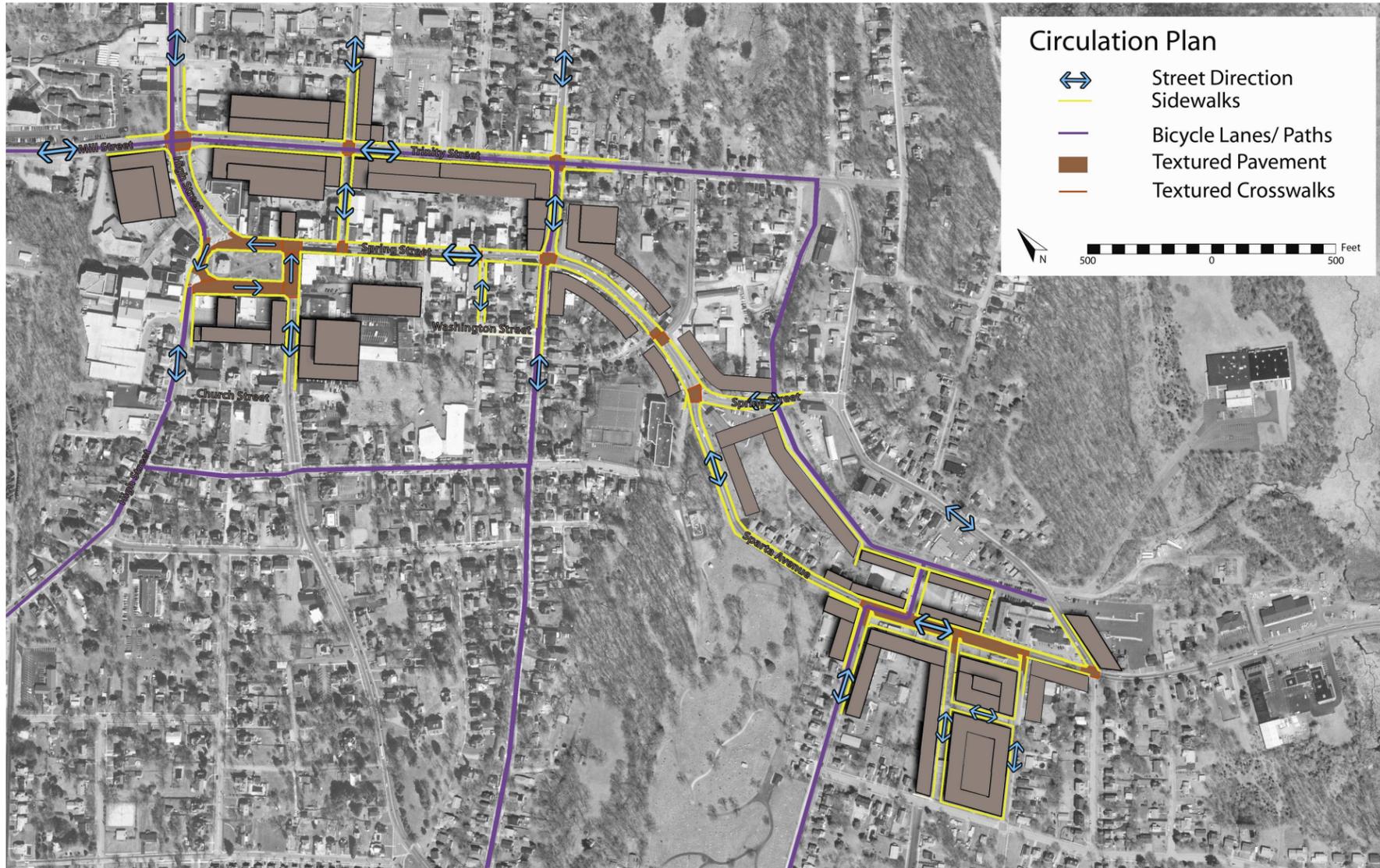
Pedestrian Alley

Pedestrian Alley:

- Pedestrian access between blocks and to mid-block parking
- Potential for additional retail frontage opportunities



Circulation Plan



Primary commercial street



Downtown arterial w/ pedestrian oriented improvements



Multi-family Residential Street



The Newton Urban Design Plan is a classic example of balanced Pedestrian Friendly Development, as well as Transit Oriented Development. The proposed area will accommodate the automobile, while putting people and transit at a higher priority.

Since Pedestrian Oriented Development is walking oriented, the area must not be designed to suburban (total auto oriented) standards. The key to a successful plan is to provide walkability. To achieve this, four strategies are incorporated:

1. Of utmost importance is a safe and compelling pedestrian realm. To make the pedestrian realm safe, pedestrian walkways are clearly marked through the use of signage and textured continuous walkways along and across streets.
2. The street and spaces are made compelling with amenities such as wide sidewalks, planters, trees to provide shade, a semi public edge, bicycle lanes and a parkway buffering car traffic.
3. A mix of residential, retail and mixed-use will provide for walkable shopping with a five minute walk time of the downtown core and neighborhood centers.
4. Limit parking within a high quality urban character.

**Traffic + Transit + Pedestrians + A Safe and Compelling Pedestrian Realm
= Walkability**

Service Lane



Pedestrian Walkway



Service Lane



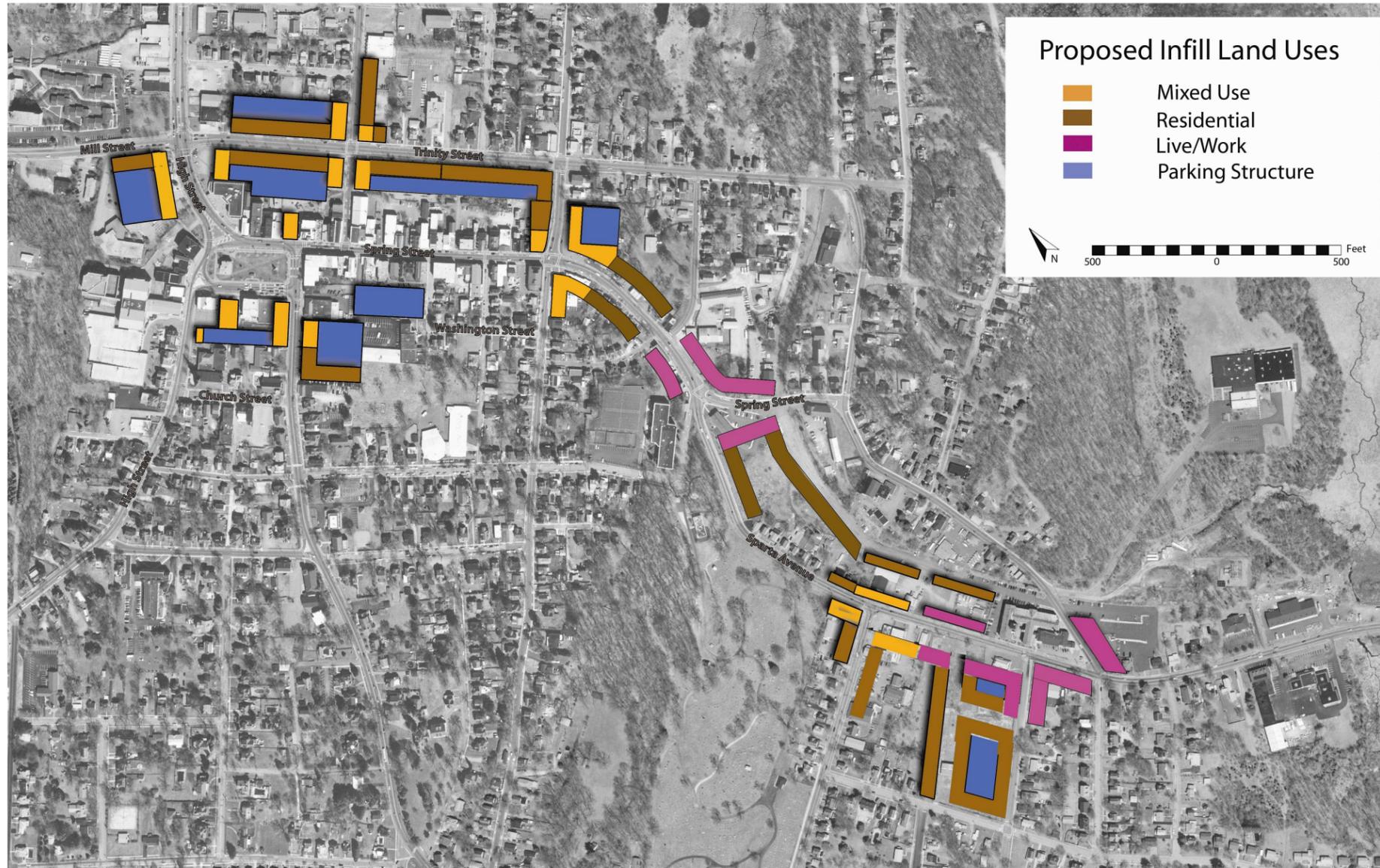
Urban Design Plan

Total New Land Uses		
Land Use	Area	Units
Mixed-Use	348,700	n/a
Residential	960,700	719
Live/Work	215,200	n/a
Retail	174,600	n/a
Parking (net)	1,163,700	442
Total	2,862,900	

The Newton Urban Design Plan includes approximately 2,863,000 square feet of new infill development. The resulting new land uses will be a market-based and consensus driven combination of retail, residential, mixed-uses of office and residential and parking, with integrated open space.

The Urban Design Plan incorporates mixed-use developments totaling approximately 349,000 square feet which will include both residential and office as the market dictates. Without including mixed-use residential, approximately 719 new housing units are provided. New residential unit counts are based on an average housing unit size of 1,350 square feet.

Live/work units will provide 215,000 square feet of space in the plan. New retail space totals approximately 175,000 square feet and a net gain of 442 parking spaces is anticipated in the plan.



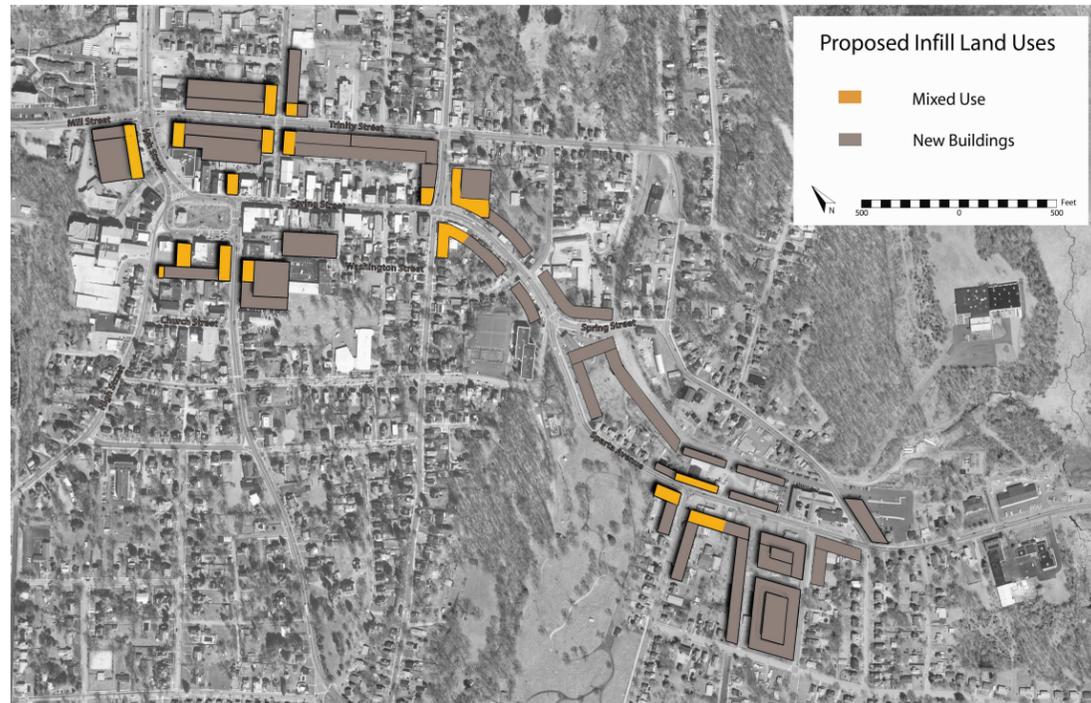
Synthesis of the recommended future land uses around the Downtown area of Newton based on the Vision Translation Workshop.



3-D massing model of recommended potential infill in Downtown Newton.



Mixed-Use



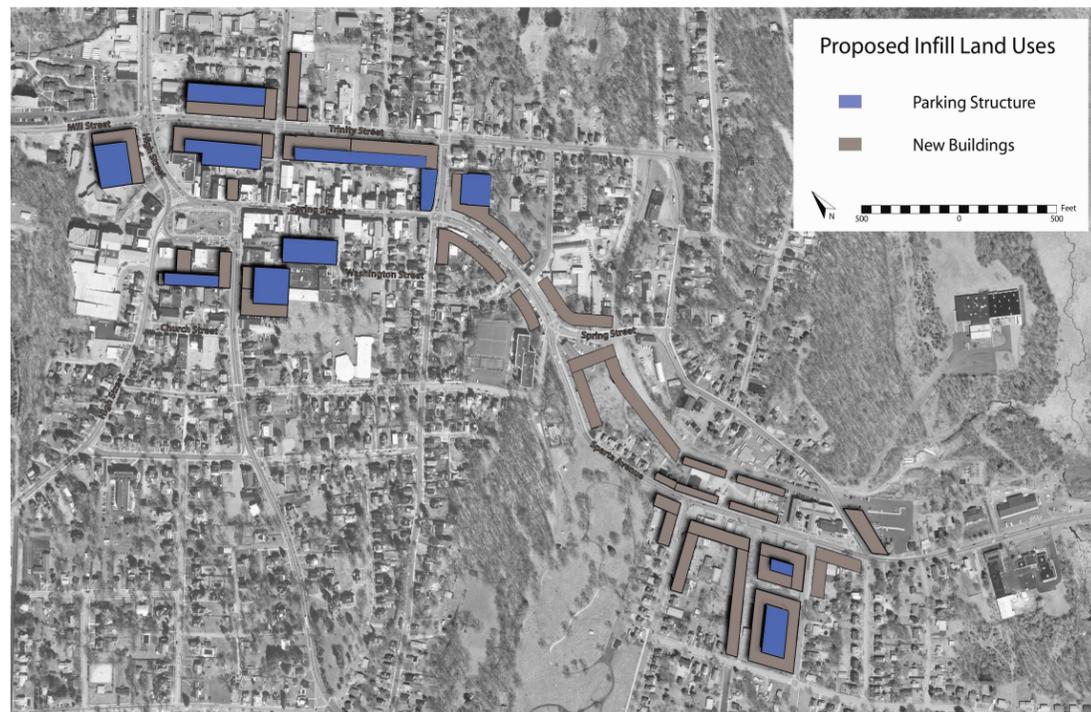
Recommended locations for Mixed-Use development uses are shown above in the brown colored building mass.

Multi-Family Residential



Recommended locations for Multi-Family Residential are shown above in the orange colored building mass.

Embedded Parking Facilities



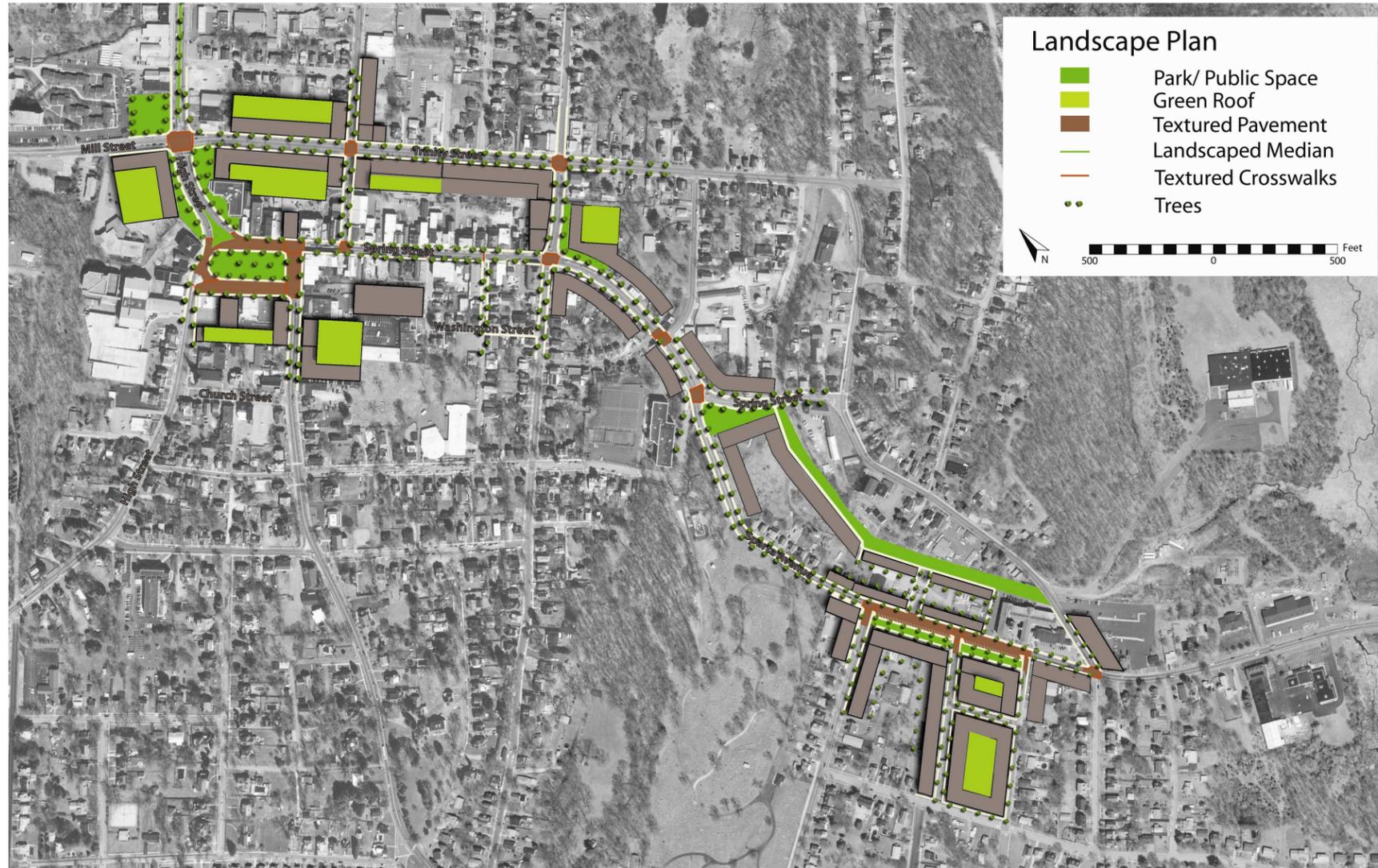
Recommended locations for embedded parking structures are shown above in the blue colored building mass.

Live-Work



Recommended locations for Live-Work Residential are shown above in the Pink colored building mass.

Landscape Plan



As part of the Landscape Plan, a variety of green, pedestrian oriented spaces have been incorporated into the plan, positioned as an integrated feature of the pedestrian choreography.

The Landscape Plan expands the public green space north of the Green to include a pedestrian plaza at the intersection with Trinity Street and better ties the Green into the open space at the corner of Mill Street. The plan also calls for semi public/private open space, private open space, and streetscaping, shown on the above plan. It is recommended that publicly accessible green spaces be incorporated into infill buildings, specifically as parks and plazas over embedded parking structures. In addition, a landscaped median is recommended along Route 206 north of Mill Street to the municipal boundary to serve as both a landscaping feature and a gateway feature. Pedestrian plazas are also recommended at the intersection of Spring Street and Union Place and fronting new infill development along the south side of Sparta Avenue. It is also recommended that a textured pavement treatment be incorporated into the streetscape around the Green and fronting the pedestrian plaza on Sparta Avenue to create the illusion of a larger pedestrian space in these two locations.

Recommended plantings throughout the downtown also include hedges, flowers, street trees, and planters. It is recommended that street trees be planted in regular intervals on those streets that are primarily residential with a sparser planting form in commercial/retail areas. Because ROWs on Spring Street and some other downtown streets are relatively narrow, it is recommended that street trees be planted in bump-outs within the street to conserve edges for pedestrian accessibility. In commercial/ retail areas, trees are recommended on the property lines where possible and they should be trimmed high enough (approximately 10-12 feet) so as not to obscure retail display windows.



Publicly Accessible Park above parking



Small Plazas



Park - could be above parking deck



Streetscape- Trees 22



Small Plaza

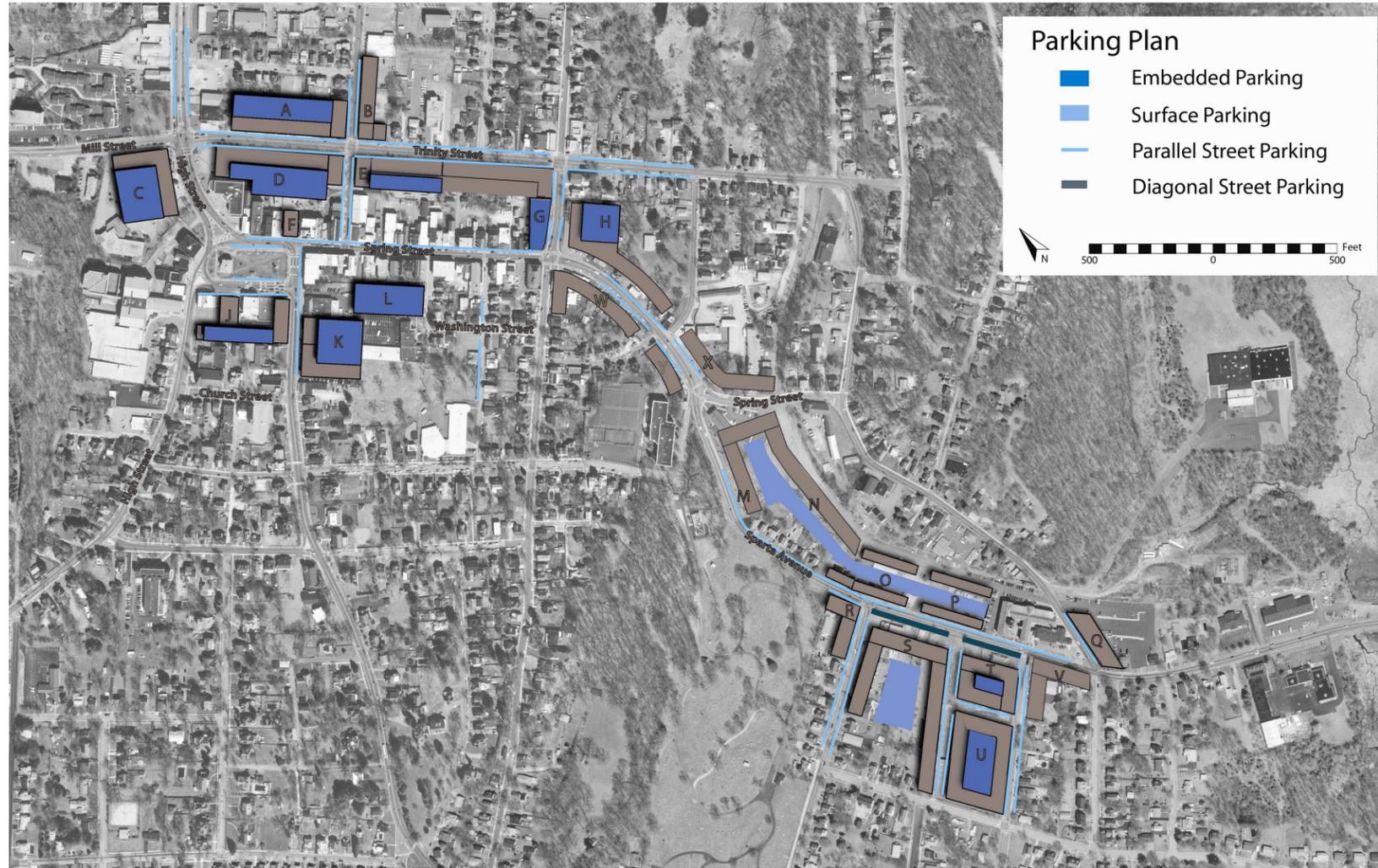


Interior Courtyard



Street Tree Bump-outs

Parking Plan



A range of parking recommendations have been prepared to accommodate both the existing parking and the future parking demand. Since the majority of existing surface parking lots are recommended for infill development, the plan not only has to carefully phase the accommodation of the existing parking while new mixed-use buildings are built, but must also accommodate the new parking demand. To address these factors it is recommended that an infill parking structure be the first phase of redevelopment to accommodate existing parking which will be displaced as surface parking lots are developed.

The unique factor of this parking plan is the emphasis on both the physical character of the buildings and the street, access to the commercial core of Spring Street and walkability. The plan calls for parking embedded in mixed-use and residential buildings, mixed-use parking structures, under-building parking, on-street parking and a very limited number of surface parking lots off of Sparta Avenue. A total of 1,613 parking spaces are provided in the plan with a demand of 1,132 new spaces, based on the new buildings. The remaining 471 spaces will accommodate the 410 spaces on existing surface parking lots removed to provide a new off-street parking surplus of 61 spaces.

On street parking spaces are not included in the above parking count and add additional parking to the downtown.

Existing Off-Street Parking



Open parking lots with impervious surfaces are land banks for future pedestrian oriented development. There are approximately 1,410 surface parking spaces in the downtown and Sparta Avenue area.

Redevelopment will require the replacement of lost existing parking spaces, as well as the provision of new parking spaces to accommodate new development.



Mixed-use parking building; ground floor retail



Liner building with embedded parking



On-street parking with textured pavement



Embedded parking beneath building

Building and Parking Program

Building	New Parking Provided	Residential # of Units	Retail (square feet)	Live Work (square feet)	New Parking Demand	Parking Removed	Net Parking
A	66	84	7,300	0	124	49	-107
B	41	42	7,200	0	71	90	-120
C	274	22	8,900	0	51	122	101
D	674	64	14,000	0	115	231	328
E	240	43	17,700	0	99	62	79
F	0	0	5,400	0	14	0	-14
G	0	0	13,000	0	33	47	-80
H	180	40	10,000	0	75	38	67
J	96	0	21,600	0	54	89	-47
K	252	28	3,400	0	44	30	178
L	384	0	0	0	0	90	294
M	100	37	0	30,000	107	79	-86
N	0	53	0	0	67	0	-67
O	54	9	6,400	0	28	10	16
P	65	11	7,800	0	34	0	31
Q	135	7	10,000	10,000	54	19	62
R	28	26	8,000	0	53	18	-43
S	144	115	18,500	0	191	91	-138
T	120	22	0	47,200	123	35	-38
U	301	90	0	0	113	0	188
V	48	0	0	48,000	96	31	-79
W	50	26	15,400	0	72	10	-32
X	51	0	0	56,000	56	31	-36
Y	14	0	0	24,000	24	5	-15
Totals	3,317	719	174,600	215,200	1,698	1177	442

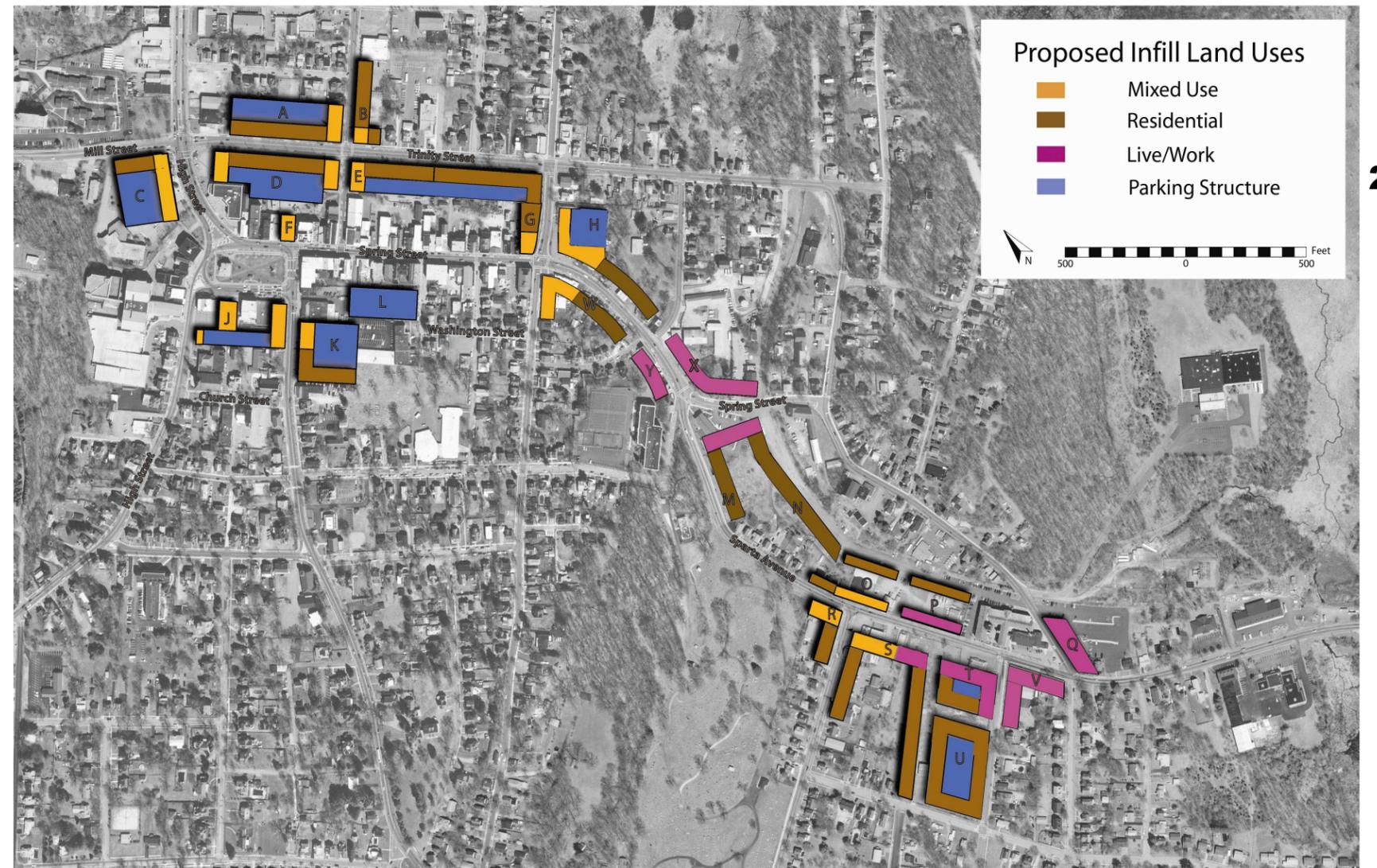
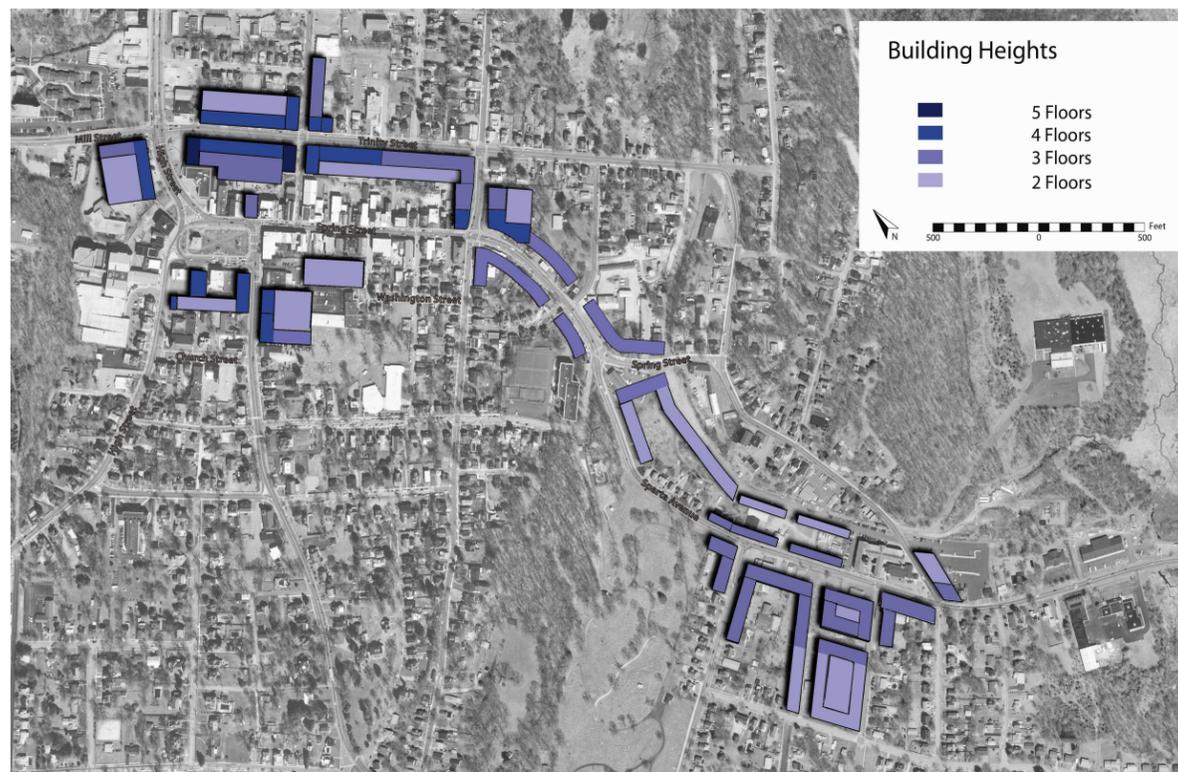
The table to the left identifies each of the recommended infill buildings in Downtown Newton alphabetically, indicated on the *Proposed Infill Land Uses* map below. The projected uses for each building are specified, based on the footprint and the projected number of floors.

Redevelopment requires the replacement of each existing parking space, as well as the provision of new parking spaces to accommodate new development. The table also indicates the approximate number of existing public off-street parking spaces each building will remove, if any, and the number of new off-street parking spaces the building is projected to provide.

The parking demand for each building is specified, based on recommended SmartCode development parking ratios of 1.25 parking spaces per new housing unit, 2.0 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail, 2.0 parking spaces per unit of live/work and 2.5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of office space. Parking numbers have been averaged for mixed-use building areas between residential and office uses.

Recommended building heights for new infill are indicated on the *Building Heights* map below. The highest building heights and most intense infill is recommended on Trinity Street and around the Green. Building heights are recommended based on a combination of the results of the Visioning Process and the existing streetscape characteristics.

Recommended Building Heights



Retail Frontage

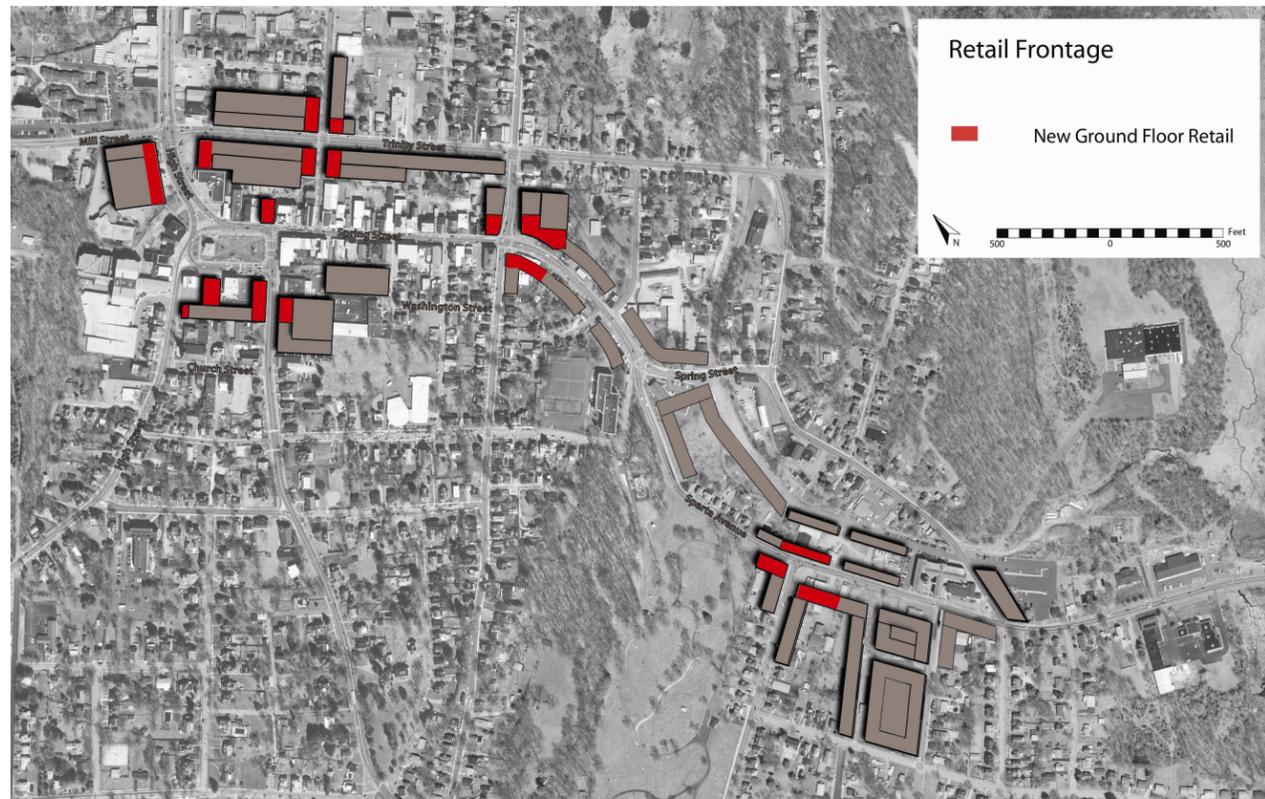
The map below indicates the recommended retail frontage in red. This linear frontage should exhibit the standards listed below

Standards for Retail Frontage in Small Town Center

- Wide, textured Sidewalks
- Street furniture and trees
- Large show windows with transoms – 70% transparent
- Recessed entrances
- Small signs
- Outdoor display
- 20ft minimum to 40ft maximum bay spacing/modulation
- Stepped façade/building wall
- Façade projection
- Lower Cornice



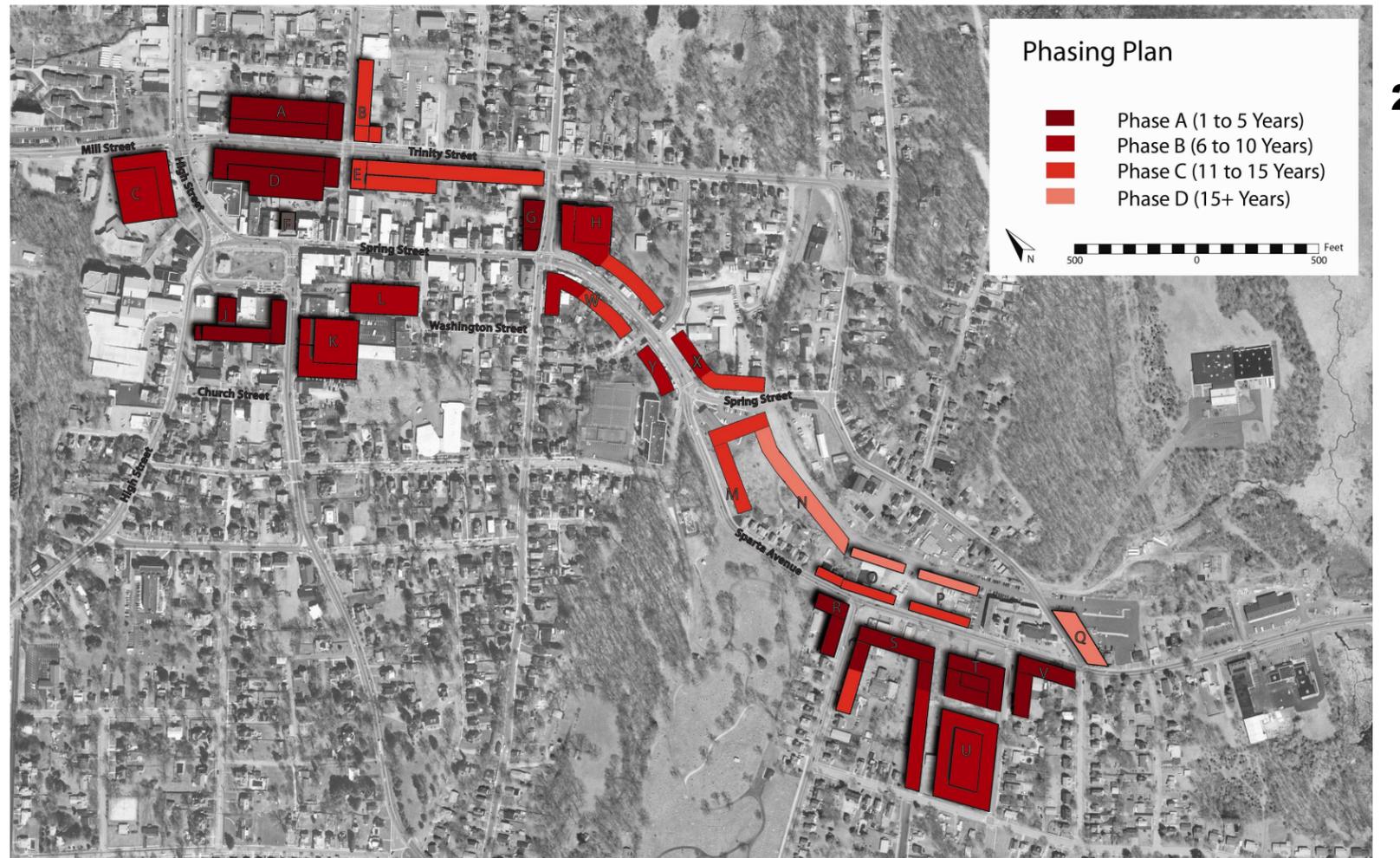
Illustrations of recommended retail frontage



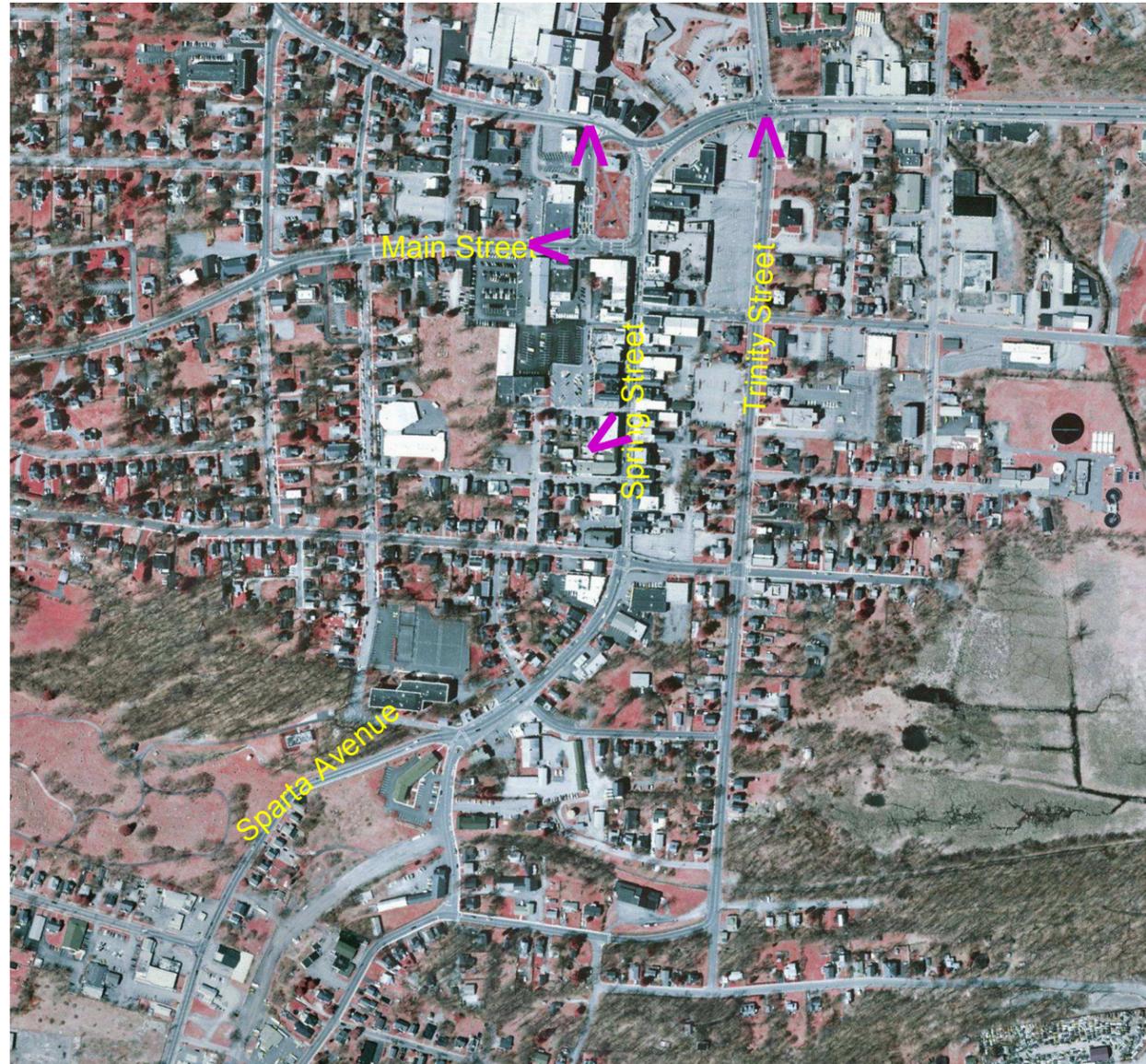
Phasing Plan

Phasing is an important factor in the successful implementation of a vision plan. The various shaded areas in the plan below suggest the sequence of the phasing, with the darkest shading being the first phase. As a general approximation of the phasing, the time frames for each phase are roughly 5 years each. The actual phasing of an eventual Redevelopment Plan, which is generated based on the Vision Plan, can be altered as economic conditions wax and wane.

The existing surface parking lot site located adjacent to the County administration building between Spring Street and Trinity Street is recommended as the first phase of infill in the plan along with the parking lot located at the corner of Spring Street and Union Place. The first phase of the vision plan also calls for redevelopment of the single story buildings and parking lots around the Green and a first phase of redevelopment of the vacated industrial site on Sparta Avenue. Success in the infill of this first phase will drive the future phases of redevelopment.



Simulations of Downtown Newton



Park Place and the Green Improvements and Infill



Main Street Improvements and Infill



Spring Street Improvements and Infill



Trinity Street Improvements and Infill



Simulations of Downtown Newton



Spring Street with Improvements



Residential Improvements



27

Mixed-use Infill with Embedded Parking



Residential Infill on Sparta Avenue

