



City Council Candidate Questionnaire 2023

Name Deb Crossley

Candidate for Councilor at large from ward 5

1. Do you support the current proposal for Village Center Zoning Resign, (Village Center Overlay District (VCOD) Version 2.1) before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee? Explain your answer.

Yes.

By changing the rules to allow a bit more density, we can protect village life for future generations. Our village business districts have been struggling to survive and thrive, particularly since 1987, when city leaders dramatically reduced what could be built by right from six stories to two, requiring a special permit for anything more.

I think our staff and the ZAP committee continue to do a very solid and methodical job crafting, deliberating and refining the proposed overlay district, which is still being refined, but not substantially changed. The VCOD presents property owners with an alternative set of rules to that allow moderate flexible growth to happen without excessive discretionary review, but according to a clear requirements and design standards. Predictable rules require less discretionary review, allowing development can

respond to community needs more effectively. By allowing multifamily housing at the right density, within and near village centers, walkable to goods, services and public transit, we get both desperately needed housing and in turn., more feet on the street to support local business.

2. Do you support the current proposal before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee to meet the requirements of the state MBTA Communities Law?

Yes. – The VCOD is the vehicle we will use to comply with the Law, though only part of the VCOD will be submitted to achieve compliance. This is necessary and important, but secondary to doing what is right to serve the housing, economic and environmental needs that can assure the future vitality of our community.

Some folks are getting stuck on the unit capacity numbers generated by the MBTA compliance formula, which generates numbers of potential units the zoning could allow based on an empty landscape. These numbers do not reflect how likely redevelopment of existing parcels would be, and is not additive to what exists.

The MBTA regulations did not emerge perfectly designed. I have been working with Newton and state leaders to effect two important changes to the MBTA compliance rules. Last November we were successful in getting DHCD, who are charged to administer the program, to allow Newton and several other communities to apply our more robust affordable housing requirements to the district. This year, we are making

progress toward allowing housing over commercial retail to count toward the compliance formula. Revised rules are expected soon.

If you have reservations about the Village Center Zoning Redesign proposal or the MBTA Communities proposal, what alternatives would you support? Explain your answer. **No laws are perfect.** We are and will continue to test and monitor results, and be ready to amend and improve the rules, even after the ordinance is passed. I think that the existing zoning in the proposed MRT zone needs to be repaired in our existing MR and SR3 zones, so that the new zoning can outcompete it. This means reducing the size of building allowed in these existing zones to prevent the boxy overpriced duplexes that our existing zoning allows. I also have concerns about the VC1 zone as it is mapped along route 9. In some places it is too restrictive, in others there does not exist sufficient egress to accommodate.

3. Do you support housing policies that would increase the economic and racial diversity of the city? If so, what specific policies would you propose? **Yes.** I believe that the more compact slightly denser housing units enabled by the VCOD will help our city evolve to accommodate a more economically diverse population. It is a first step. I'd also like to see using CPC monies and other funds at the disposal of our Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, to buy deeper affordability at some of the housing development seeking permits today.
4. Do you think the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) should allocate more than 30% of its yearly funding to housing

in the city? I am open to this, but the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, whose members comprise a vast body of knowledge and experience, are just beginning to act. This is a complicated time for the development and construction industry as it struggles to emerge from market instability that persists since COVID. Some projects are stalled, others going back to the drawing board. I think we need to see some successful projects, including using CPC monies to buy down affordability to deeper levels.

5. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the city's response to climate change? Please explain. **Yes.** Allowing more compact housing near public transit and business centers, reduces the need for auto travel, and shares energy and resources in a more efficient way. City infrastructure, like water systems, roads and parks, require ongoing investments to rehabilitate, operate and maintain. By optimizing the scale of development to create more attainable housing accessible to key uses, goods & services and providing infrastructure for multiple transit options – we better share the costs of these investments.
6. For each project, please state whether you support or oppose it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure, skip it.
 - 528 Boylston St. – Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal. It is an appropriate site for housing, and well buffered from the neighborhoods to the south. Traffic on route 9 is difficult, but the number of car trips added by a development of this size would be relatively small compared to

the 50-60,000 trips per day on route 9, about 70% of which are through traffic. I trust the ZBA has and will evaluate site circulation and egress and decide the project on its merits.

- Northland Charlemont - Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal. **Yes.** I think the ZBA has done a good job deliberating this project and Northland has been responsive to their concerns by modifying their design. When we get to reevaluating zoning along our major corridors however, I do want to see studies regarding how we can support more commercial uses in such areas.

I was and remain a huge supporter of the Northland Properties' visionary project across Needham Street. It is a few blocks from me – “in my backyard” so to speak, and I serve on the community liaison committee with Councilor Holly Ryan and others to monitor construction progress. The Northland Team consists of top rate professionals who have exceeded all expectations as they continued to perfect the project throughout design development and construction documents. They have embraced the highest standards of energy efficient construction and renewable energy sourcing. They are expertly and carefully managing this complex construction and keeping the community well informed throughout the process. I expect nothing less from the project across the street!



City Council Candidate Questionnaire 2023

Name Andreae Downs

Candidate for Councilor at-Large, Ward 5

1. Do you support the current proposal for Village Center Zoning Resign, (Village Center Overlay District (VCOD) Version 2.1) before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee? Explain your answer.

Yes. While this is unfinished, the discussion so far has been thorough and thoughtful. If anything, I think it may not go far enough. Zoning is not development. The market is fickle. Many of these properties haven't changed hands in generations, and the owners are remote or in trusts. So, it may not do much in the short term to meet the city's dire need for housing at all price points and for foot traffic for local businesses. Density in villages makes sense. I am staunchly in favor of removing costly parking mandates to allow for the re-use of quality or iconic structures and to make new buildings less massive, ugly, expensive, or separated from the pedestrian realm.

2. Do you support the current proposal before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee to meet the requirements of the state MBTA Communities Law?

Yes

3. If you have reservations about the Village Center Zoning Redesign proposal or the MBTA Communities proposal, what alternatives would you support? Explain your answer.

I wonder at the willingness to put density right next to highways like Route 9. Highway tire dust and other emissions cause a number of health issues. I would

prefer putting more housing along streets with bus transit, or nearer to T stops where people will have more and more pleasant options for getting around.

The MRT zoning is, at this point, less attractive than the underlying MR zoning for developers looking to maximize profit. I want to change that incentive to allow for more and smaller units, where appropriate, in existing buildings (this is also less wasteful than tearing down structures, although there are arguments I would accept for the utility of starting fresh with very high quality).

4. Do you support housing policies that would increase the economic and racial diversity of the city? If so, what specific policies would you propose?

Yes. I am not a housing and land use expert, but from what I read, building more units, smaller units, and leveraging government and non-profit funding would help (supply and demand are real in the housing market). I have supported several large developments of affordable housing despite their being located sub-optimally (the JCC property is too remote, Haywood House is almost atop a culverted creek), as well as the West Newton Armory project, which I think is well located. I supported increasing the inclusionary zoning percentage up to what our consultants said was still feasible for the private market. There are probably other policies that might enhance the diversity of Newton of which I am unaware and would happily be educated about.

5. Do you think the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) should allocate more than 30% of its yearly funding to housing in the city?

We do not control the CPC, as you probably know. I believe they have some funding which must include 33% for housing, 33% for historic preservation, and 33% for open space. There is also unallocated funding that may go for recreation or any of the above three categories. Cambridge has dedicated the maximum it can of its CPA allocation to housing. They, however, have a richer tax and PILOT base than Newton, and our needs for open and park space funding is high. We have also just created a Housing Trust Fund, using CPC and inclusionary funds, which is just getting started (and the climate currently is not favoring construction). It would be good to see what happens with that trust before dedicating a higher percentage of CPC funds to it. I would leave the discussion to the CPC, as I know they balance Newton's competing needs thoughtfully.

6. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the city's response to climate change? Please explain.

I think it is one of the most impactful responses the city has at its disposal. Meeting some of the intense regional housing demand in close-in suburbs like Newton reduces the destruction of forests and farms further out, and reduces (mostly car) transportation emissions (40% of MA emissions). Resources for things like water and sewer pipes are also better spent inside the 128 belt on repair rather than expansion. This is particularly the case when housing is clustered near services and transit. Newer housing is much more efficient and resilient than many structures built before full air sealing and insulation were possible, and can be made Net Zero. I would like Newton to be able to require Net Zero efficiency, but we would need the state's permission (help us work on our state delegation for that!).

7. For each project, please state whether you support or oppose it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure, skip it.

I assume you know that Council does not have a vote on 40B projects, and that our advocacy is only slightly more effective than that of other citizens.

- 528 Boylston St. – Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal.

I have joined the Ward 8 councilors and Councilor Bowman on a letter to the ZBA explaining what we support and do not support in this proposal. Our letter is in the public record and I am happy to share a copy. Our concerns are about wetlands on site, flooding, traffic, and the massing near some of the neighbors, not about the housing itself, which we support. I feel that the amount of parking is probably excessive and we agreed that a better car-free connection to Parker Street and to the schools to the south were essential for this to be a neighborhood asset.

- Northland Charlemont - Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal.

Again—this is a draft letter still, but I plan to weigh in on this with Councilor Bowman and the Ward 8 councilors. I will share when it is finalized, if you wish. Our concern is that the structure is completely surrounded by driveways—basically cutting the

backyard park off from the building—when the back could be a bike/pedestrian nirvana and play area for families there. Imagine heading outside with a toddler and having to navigate the main entry drive with Uber, Amazon, and Door Dash vehicles! I am delighted it could share the Northland amenities across the street and extend car-free trails across the street and across the river to DCR's parks in Needham. I support more housing here than some of my sign-on colleagues.



City Council Candidate Questionnaire 2023

Name ___Alicia Bowman_____

Candidate for _City Council Ward 6 At-Large_____

1. *Do you support the current proposal for Village Center Zoning Resign, (Village Center Overlay District (VCOD) Version 2.1) before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee? Explain your answer.*

I support the Village Center Zoning Redesign as I believe it will help address important city-wide goals of increasing housing including more affordable and accessible housing, supporting Newton businesses, and reducing greenhouse gases emissions. The consultants working with the Planning Department have done a great job analyzing the various components of the current and proposed zoning for economic viability. I have attended more than two years of ZAP meetings even though I am not on the committee and have observed the extensive community engagement process.

That said, I do have some changes I am currently advocating for, including ensuring that we don't down zone any commercial or residential properties from their current use. I also believe the MRT zoning needs some additional work to ensure it delivers the much-needed smaller units in a way that integrates into the residential neighborhoods where it is placed.

2. *Do you support the current proposal before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee to meet the requirements of the state MBTA Communities Law?*

Housing is critically needed across the region, including in Newton. Having 177 communities address this at the same time will ensure a more equitable distribution of this housing in the coming decades. And the requirement to have communities served by the MBTA begin to zone for more housing makes the most sense environmentally.

I support Newton's specific proposal to meet the requirements of the state MBTA

Communities Law. They have centered the zoning close to public transportation for 100% of the units and in locations in the city where new housing will not only support businesses but provide the best opportunities to have robust walkable, 15-minute neighborhoods that will benefit so many residents including seniors, a growing population in Newton.

3. *If you have reservations about the Village Center Zoning Redesign proposal or the MBTA Communities proposal, what alternatives would you support? Explain your answer.*

As I said above, I support the proposal for Village Center Zoning Redesign but do have several changes I would like the committee to consider. In addition to changes on the map, I think additional work needs to be done to MRT, including rules on lot subdivision, and open space requirements.

4. *Do you support housing policies that would increase the economic and racial diversity of the city? If so, what specific policies would you propose?*

Housing policies that would increase economic and racial diversity of Newton support Newton residents, are good for businesses and are our moral and ethical responsibility. And under the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the restoration of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Provision in 2021, it is our legal responsibility. An important policy to increase economic and racial diversity is multi-family development near transit in Newton and other MBTA communities. Housing here will allow more people to live without a car or live with only one car, thus reducing transportation costs and increases affordability. I also support the efforts of Newton's Fair Housing Committee to address the racial inequities that exist in our affordable housing lottery process and what can be done to ensure residents in affordable units feel welcomed in Newton. And as the Council Appointee to the Affordable Housing Trust, I support continued work to increase the number of affordable housing units in Newton.

5. *Do you think the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) should allocate more than 30% of its yearly funding to housing in the city?*

Housing is a critical need in the city and I support additional funding, including a higher allocation from the CPC going to housing, especially for more deeply affordable housing.

6. *Do you think housing policy should play a role in the city's response to climate change? Please explain.*

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gases and the only sector that is growing. Where we build housing matters. Building housing in places like Newton will enable residents to walk, bike or drive very short distances to amenities such as groceries, restaurants, pharmacies, and coffee shops. Residents also have attractive non-car alternatives such as the MBTA and biking to get to close by job centers such as Boston, Cambridge, and Waltham. Even if many residents continue to drive, they will drive significantly less than if they lived in communities further from the urban core where it may be easier for developers to build housing. Additionally, housing built in more rural areas of the state, tend to be built on still undeveloped land, reducing trees, open space, and requiring more roadways and storm and sewer infrastructure. There is a significant carbon impact from this additional infrastructure that would not be necessary if the housing were built where the infrastructure exists and generally has the capacity to handle additional housing.

7. For each project, please state whether you support or oppose it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure, skip it.

- 528 Boylston St. – Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal.

Given its current use, I believe housing on this parcel will be an improvement to the neighborhood. However, I do have some questions about the project as it is being proposed, including traffic patterns and opportunities to better integrate the design into the existing neighborhood. I have met with neighbors to hear their concerns. I have joined other councilors in a letter to the ZBA stating our thoughts on this project.

- Northland Charlemont - Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal.

This location is a great place for additional housing especially given the soon to be completed renovation of Needham Street. This development is well positioned to take advantage transportation support of the Northland project across the street. It is also close to many amenities including stores, restaurants, open space and a reasonable walk for many to the MBTA.

Name **Vicki Danberg**

Candidate for **Councilor at Large, Ward 6**

1. Do you support the current proposal for Village Center Zoning Resign, (Village Center Overlay District (VCOD) Version 2.1) before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee? Explain your answer.

Yes, I support the current proposal for Village Center Zoning Redesign. Our thirteen villages vary in size and design. The Planning Department has been working for several years on this proposal. It has been presented many times for public comment and comment continues to be heard and incorporated.

It is basically a good plan that is still fluid and changing to meet the needs and expectations of all interested parties.

2. Do you support the current proposal before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee to meet the requirements of the state MBTA Communities Law?

Yes, I support the proposal before the Zoning and Planning Committee to meet the MBTA Communities Law. The Governor has made clear that the 177 communities that have MBTA and Commuter Rail connections must comply with the number of units that they must permit for (not necessarily build) or suffer what would be for Newton severe financial consequences in the loss of state funding (Chapter 90 monies) that Newton has relied on heavily to fund road and infrastructure improvements in the City. It makes no sense to refuse to comply.

3. If you have reservations about the Village Center Zoning Redesign proposal or the MBTA Communities proposal, what alternatives would you support? Explain your answer.

I am on board with the Village Center redesign. The Ward 6 councilors have gone carefully over the plans for rezoning in Ward 6 areas and have submitted to the Planning Department a number of suggested revisions and comments that we feel will create a better plan both for the villages and for the surrounding neighborhoods. Together, we feel we will arrive at a good plan workable for all.

4. Do you support housing policies that would increase the economic and racial diversity of the city? If so, what specific policies would you propose?

Yes, I support housing policies that would benefit needed economic and racial diversity in our City. Newton's strength is in its diversity, which is increasingly threatened by soaring real estate and rental prices, which keep all but the most affluent from residing within its borders.

Children especially need to see others who look like them in order to feel that they truly belong in a community. In addition to reserving some affordable units for local residents (which I favor), we should also proactively open affordable units with a policy that encourages families of diverse racial and economic backgrounds to come to our City to live.

5. Do you think the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) should allocate more than 30% of its yearly funding to housing in the city?

Yes, I would support that. Lack of affordable housing is the most critical issue that faces Newton (as well as most other communities). Since the City can prioritize percentages spent on Historic Preservation, Open Space and Housing, (with a minimum of 10% on each) I would support the City spending 30% or more on Housing.

6. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the city's response to climate change? Please explain.

Yes I do. City housing policy needs to take into account all of the recommendations of the City's Environmental Action Plan, which include responding to climate change.

Multifamily housing can take advantage of economies of scale in many ways including heating, cooling, triple paned windows, and all electrical appliance requirements. Since such a large percentage of the City's carbon emissions comes from its buildings, we can greatly help lower our carbon footprint by making sure our housing policy responds to climate change.

7. For each project, please state whether you support or oppose it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure, skip it.

528 Boylston St. – Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal.

I am in favor of a housing project being built on this site. The size of this project has some challenges due to wetland and other issues that can and will be sorted

out by the Engineering Department. 40B projects are outside of the control of City Council.

Northland Charlemont - Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal.

Again, I am in favor of a good project being built here. Since it is a 40B project, it is by right and outside of the purview of City Council. The Engineering Department will make sure that all water is kept on the site and that all City requirements are met.



City Council Candidate Questionnaire 2023

Name: Dan Gaynor

Candidate for Ward 2 City Councilor

- 1. Do you support the current proposal for Village Center Zoning Resign, (Village Center Overlay District (VCOD) Version 2.1) before the Council’s Zoning and Planning Committee? Explain your answer.**

Yes. The core pillars of my campaign are walkability, affordability and sustainability. The proposed VCOD plan amplifies all three—ensuring that Newton remains the best place to live, at any age. At the same time, the VCOD plan balances the *preservation* of the green space and historic neighborhoods in “the Garden City”, while also offering *progress* in terms expanding greater diversity of housing options for families at every phase of life.

- 2. Do you support the current proposal before the Council’s Zoning and Planning Committee to meet the requirements of the state MBTA Communities Law?**

Yes.

- 3. If you have reservations about the Village Center Zoning Redesign proposal or the MBTA Communities proposal, what alternatives would you support? Explain your answer.**

I support that, in the proposed VCOD, different parts of the same street will have different height restrictions. Put simply, not all parts of, say, Walnut Street will allow for a 6.5 story building. Given that neighborhood feedback may vary by location, the City Council should be open to discussion around a potential maximum height of 5.5 stories—in select places—with *affordability incentives* that would require 25% of the units to be offered at affordable rents.

4. Do you support housing policies that would increase the economic and racial diversity of the city? If so, what specific policies would you propose?

Yes. Newton should welcome all backgrounds, irrespective of their ethnicity, country of origin, age, sex, ability, faith, family size, or sexual preference. A comprehensive society encompasses young kids, adolescents, business employees, and senior citizens, representing diverse cultures and family histories. I support the incentives to increase the number of affordable housing units in new buildings.

As Newton needs to expand its array of housing options for residents at all stages of life—from young families to senior citizens—I support policies like allowing for an extra story (plus additional 2,500 sf footprint) in exchange for 25% of the units being offered at a permanently affordable rent. It’s also important that these affordable units are distributed equitably throughout the building: at a representative array of sizes, on a variety of floors, and with access to the same amenities as all residents.

I also support the development of more fully-affordable housing initiatives like the Armory—which the City acquired for just \$1.00, and is now developing into 43 apartments, all of which will be affordable.

This is important in a city where the average price for newly-constructed units is \$1.6 million, as increasing access to lower-priced housing options will ensure families can both grow in Newton and age in place.

5. Do you think the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) should allocate more than 30% of its yearly funding to housing in the city?

Yes.

6. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the city’s response to climate change? Please explain.

As City Councilor, I will hold developers accountable for protecting our priorities and preserving what makes Newton “the Garden City”. In the Obama Administration, I fought for more funding for renewable energy projects, energy efficiency upgrades to historic buildings, and data-driven carbon emissions measurement.

As a longtime sustainability professional and policy advocate, I know that sustainability is a core component of our housing policy. I’ll work to embrace a greener future for

Newton by widening sidewalks, protecting historic trees, enhancing energy efficiency, reducing the use of fossil fuels, and ensuring new buildings incorporate clean tech.

That also includes maintaining our critical infrastructure—starting by rapidly accelerating repairs to pot-holed roads that clog traffic, slow commutes, and endanger commuters. If we can enhance *walkability*, we can reduce car trips (one of Newton’s biggest contributors to carbon emissions) and promote pedestrian lifestyles.

7. For each project, please state whether you support or oppose it, and your reasons (briefly). If you’re not sure, skip it.

N/A – need more information and a site tour.

- 528 Boylston St. – Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal.
- Northland Charlemont - Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal.



City Council Candidate Questionnaire 2023

Name: Doris Ann Sweet

Candidate for: Ward 4 City Councilor

1. Do you support the current proposal for Village Center Zoning Redesign, (Village Center Overlay District (VOCD) Version 2.1) before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee? Explain your answer.

Yes. The proposal is intended to both allow more multifamily housing in village centers near transit, reducing the need to drive cars, and to create a vibrant, walkable neighborhood that will support local small businesses—a win for housing and for addressing climate change.

2. Do you support the current proposal before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee to meet the requirements of the state MBTA Communities Law?

Yes. Not only does the proposal comply with the Law, but, over time, it will allow more much-needed housing to be built, while also supporting local businesses, and helping reduce GHG as residents are able to walk to stores and services in the neighborhood.

3. If you have reservations about the Village Center Redesign proposal or The MBTA Communities proposal, what alternatives would you support? Explain your answer.

I do not have reservations about the proposal.

4. Do you support housing policies that would increase the economic and racial diversity of the city?

Yes. The Boston Foundation's 2019 Greater Boston Report Card states that "communities in Greater Boston that experienced greater housing production between 2000 and 2017 experienced greater reductions in racial segregation over the same time period, and finds this association

held particularly strongly for communities that produced more multi-family housing.” The statement suggests that MBTA Communities Law compliance could have the effect of increasing the economic and racial diversity of Newton’s population.

5. Do you think the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) should allocate more than 30% of its yearly funding to housing in the city?

As a housing advocate I would like to answer yes. But I recognize that the charge to the CPC includes three program areas, and I don’t think I have the expertise to make a judgement as to where a cut should be made in order to increase the Affordable Housing portion.

6. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the city’s response to climate change? Please explain.

Yes, the two are inextricably connected. Multi-family housing is inherently more energy efficient than the same number of units built as single family homes. Allowing more multi-family homes as required in the MBTA Communities Act is a step in the right direction.

7. For each project, please state whether you support or oppose it, and your reasons (briefly). If you’re not sure, skip it.

528 Boylston St.: It is a little early to declare support for this project, while there are still significant issues to work out regarding wetlands and a brook, and potential for flooding, as well as traffic safety issues related to Rte 9 entrances and exits. I am not impressed by 1K signatures on a petition opposing it, though, because I know that can result from an app that circulates petitions widely without regard to where the person signing it lives.

Northland Charlemont seems like a more solid proposal and I am impressed that they will have 19 affordable units at 50% AMI and are considering offering discount MBTA passes to at least some residents. Again, it seems a little early to support, although I am inclined in that direction.



City Council Candidate Questionnaire 2023

Name: Martha Bixby

Candidate for Ward 6 Councilor

1. Do you support the current proposal for Village Center Zoning Resign, (Village Center Overlay District (VCOD) Version 2.1) before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee? Explain your answer.

I am supportive of the overarching efforts to create more and more varied housing options through the zoning redesign proposals, and I look forward to seeing them improved as they are finalized. I support an emphasis on affordable housing, protecting and supporting our small businesses, encouraging a variety of diverse retail options, safe and complete streets design, environmental protections - especially limiting pavement - and establishing and protecting existing accessible and low-cost public spaces. I will continue to promote these areas of emphasis over the remaining months of this village center zoning process, and I also believe that once the proposals are passed there are productive ways to support these goals such as through ordinances, public awareness, and negotiations with developers.

2. Do you support the current proposal before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee to meet the requirements of the state MBTA Communities Law?

Newton must comply with the MBTA Communities Act or find ourselves in violation of a state law, risking key funding for our city. Most of the areas chosen under the current proposal fulfill the requirements and spirit of the law and position multi family opportunities near Newton's most frequent and reliable transit service, the green line. Over the next few months there are opportunities to refine the current proposal; ensuring that all of the chosen streets are appropriate for the possibility of increased density, minimizing the amount of paving for parking, and prioritizing green spaces.

I also believe that the MBTA Communities Act is an opportunity for advocacy *from* Newton on issues we care about. We must push for better MBTA service - a more safe and reliable and frequent green line, accessibility improvements to the commuter rail, restoring and increasing bus service. We also should look at ways we can better connect to and support our other major cities in the Commonwealth, such as Worcester, Springfield, Brockton, etc. - these cities are also our neighbors and our economic futures are also all connected.

3. If you have reservations about the Village Center Zoning Redesign proposal or the MBTA Communities proposal, what alternatives would you support? Explain your answer.

To elaborate on two concerns mentioned above, I believe the protections for small businesses and efforts to limit pavement and parking both need work before the process is concluded. Some of this could possibly happen through ordinances after the current zoning process is complete but I believe more can and should be done to protect our small businesses in particular. There are a number of tools at our disposal. Some are already being implemented but I believe we should consider set-asides for small and independent businesses and a business diversity ordinance. We must also use all the tools at our disposal to keep existing small businesses open during any potential future construction.

4. Do you support housing policies that would increase the economic and racial diversity of the city? If so, what specific policies would you propose?

A few policies I'd like to see:

- Emphasize creating affordable housing opportunities for families, including making sure affordable units in new big projects have 2 / 3 bedrooms for families
- Support projects like the proposed FamilyAid shelter
- Consider establishing a voucher mobility program which would facilitate housing voucher holders connecting with housing in Newton. This could include landlord outreach, moving-cost assistance, tenant guidance, coaching, and translation as needed
- Increasing diversity on the city council and other housing decision-making bodies

5. Do you think the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) should allocate more than 30% of its yearly funding to housing in the city?

Yes, and we have seen many cases in Newton where multiple of the CPC's goals are accomplished while creating community housing opportunities.

6. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the city's response to climate change? Please explain.

Yes. Transportation accounts for 40% of greenhouse gas emissions in MA and facilitating more people living near transit, near vibrant village centers with diverse shopping options, and close to work and school, can help reduce these emissions. We also should be encouraging green building projects and reuse of current buildings for housing options. And we should be protecting our open spaces - including trees and garden spaces to keep our streets cool.

7. For each project, please state whether you support or oppose it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure, skip it.

- 528 Boylston St. – Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal.
- Northland Charlemont - Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal.



City Council Candidate Questionnaire 2023

Name __Holly Ryan_____

Candidate for ___Ward Councilor W-8_____

1. Do you support the current proposal for Village Center Zoning Resign, (Village Center Overlay District (VCOD) Version 2.1) before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee? Explain your answer.

Yes, and as a member of the Zoning and Planning Committee we continue to fine tune VCZ.

2. Do you support the current proposal before the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee to meet the requirements of the state MBTA Communities Law?

Yes

3. If you have reservations about the Village Center Zoning Redesign proposal or the MBTA Communities proposal, what alternatives would you support? Explain your answer.

Yes and we need to continue to work with the state on incorporating MBTA Communities housing and mixed use in Village Centers.

4. Do you support housing policies that would increase the economic and racial diversity of the city? If so, what specific policies would you propose?

Yes, I want more workforce and housing at 30% AMI and below.

5. Do you think the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) should allocate more than 30% of its yearly funding to housing in the city?

Yes

6. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the city's response to climate change? Please explain.

Yes, greener construction, adaptive reuse and walkable communities with housing close to businesses.

7. For each project, please state whether you support or oppose it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure, skip it.

- 528 Boylston St. – Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal.

Not as proposed.

- Northland Charlemont - Chapter 40B project pending before the Zoning Board of Appeal.

I support the new changes.