

To gather opinions from a broader base of residents and businesses, two separate surveys were carried out. The resident survey was conducted on-line through the City's website, although hard copies were made available upon request. We received a total of 327 completed forms. The business survey was mailed out to businesses in the Newton Centre zip code (02459) and the list was obtained from the Assessor's database. We mailed out 280 survey forms and received 45 completed forms, a 16 percent response rate.

#### RESIDENT SURVEY

The survey form contained 24 questions, of which six were qualitative in nature. The first two questions were on likes and dislikes about Newton Centre. Likes included "T" access, stores and restaurants, parks and playground, convenience of location and "village feel." Dislikes included traffic congestion, parking, and mix and types of stores. Of the survey respondents, most of them do not work in Newton (93%) but do commute from Newton Centre (62%).

People go to Newton Centre for many reasons, but top five ones are: restaurant, bank, shops, post office, and "T." Additionally, they tend to frequent 2-3 places per visit (55%), and do so several times a week (60%) and on weekdays and weekends (72%). Afternoon is the preferred time (43%) to go to Newton Centre and more often they drive there (65%) than walk (32%) or take the "T" (2%). Eighty five percent of drivers park in either a municipal lot (45%) or on the street (40%). Just more

than half have had difficulty finding parking (52%), with 43% of respondents finding afternoons to be the most challenging time to find parking. In fact, 40% of respondents have left Newton Centre due to inability to find parking.

When asked about preferences for more of certain land uses, 32% preferred more open space and recreation, 23% desired more retail, and 22% would like to see more public/civic use. Sixty-eight percent of respondents answered that they or an immediate family plan to move in the next five to ten years and for 70% of the respondents, Newton Centre is a desirable living option. When asked what amenities would make Newton Centre more attractive, some answers include bookstore, grocery store, hardware store, and a movie theatre or other forms of entertainment.

As for information on survey respondents, majority of them live in Newton Centre (61%), little more than half were female (56%), and 76% of them were between the ages of 31 and 60.

#### BUSINESS SURVEY

Two hundred and eighty Newton Centre businesses, identified from the Assessor's database, were mailed a survey form with questions about their business operation, parking concerns for employees and customers, and improvements that would be helpful to their business.

Forty-five responses, or 16%, were received and 83% of the forms were completed by business owners (versus managers). Newton Centre businesses have longevity; 72% of them have been in business over 6 years, and 21% of them have operated in Newton Centre for over 20 years (which would explain why nearly 90% were satisfied with their current location). They're typically open Monday through Saturday, with over 70% of respondents closed on Sunday. Most open at 9am, but close at a more varied time ranging from 5pm to 10pm.

More businesses serve an average of less than 50 customers per day (75%) and 58% of them have five or less employees during the busiest shift. Afternoon is the busiest shift for 44% of businesses, and 35% find mornings to be the busiest time. Seventy-five percent of employees drive to work, yet only 23% of business owners provide off-street parking for employees or have entered into shared parking arrangement with other property/business owners (24%). Employees park at municipal lots (38%), on street (31%) and on-site (24%). Only 5% of respondents offer incentives to employees to not drive to work.

When asked about suggestions for improvement that would help the business, need for additional and long-term parking was the dominant answer. In rating different factors on their influence on Newton Centre, following is the ranking based on total number responding that the factor had a positive influence:

- More parking (37)
- Proximity to public transportation (36)

- Improved streetscapes and other public areas (34)
- Greater mix of available goods and services (30)
- Design standards for building appearance (22)
- Proximity to other Newton commercial and retail centers (22)
- More restaurants (21)
- Proximity to schools and universities (19)
- More special events (18)
- More housing in the enter (8)
- Current zoning and land use regulation (8)

What do businesses like and dislike about Newton Centre? Location and parking.

# **List of Attachments**

- A. Property Information**
- B. Existing Zoning Map**
- C. Public Land Map**
- D. Resident Survey Results**
- E. Business Survey Results**
- F. Historic Maps of Newton Centre**