

# City of Newton Comprehensive Plan

A Vision for the Future

2017 Revision  
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# City of Newton Comprehensive Plan

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## A Vision for the Future

### INTRODUCTION

The City of Newton began the “planning process” to develop this plan in November of 2009. The City Council of Newton, along with the Jasper County Economic Development Cooperative, U of I Extension, and the citizens of Newton and Jasper County worked together in its preparation.

Historic and current information used to comprise this plan was gathered by several methods. One method for collection was by public surveys. Surveys for both youth and adults were created and distributed amongst the population. Responses were gathered, analyzed and utilized in this Plan. A series of public meetings were held to develop the Vision Statement, participate in the SWOT analysis, and outline goals for the future. Lastly, the City Council, City Department heads, and other involved parties met to break the goals into specific initiatives and offer insight to future land uses based upon the public goals outlined.

In 2017, the city decided it was time to update the 2010 plan. It began this process by first collecting public input through a community survey and through local organizations. This information was used to guide the development of the goals and objectives set forth for the next decade. In addition, the Vision Statement was refreshed, demographics and data was replaced with current facts, figures, and estimates, and a new section named “Planning Accomplishments” was added to report the city’s progress in executing the goals and objectives outlined in the original plan. Lastly, a Marketing Plan was created and is now included as an appendix to the *City of Newton Comprehensive Plan 2017 Revision*.

This document is designed to preserve and enhance existing development and to assist in guiding decisions in the future. The plan details present conditions in the city and should guide the city for the next 10 years. The plan is not a prediction of the future and is meant to guide the decision-making process on future proposals of physical, community, and economic development in the City of Newton.

The plan should remain flexible and be reviewed yearly. At that time it may be amended or supplements added to detail new goals and new directions of the city.

## CITY OF NEWTON VISION STATEMENT

The City of Newton is a great place to live, work, play, worship, and retire. It is founded on strong morals and faith-based values with modern infrastructure, pleasing aesthetics, and steady growth in both diverse industries and population. The City of Newton and Jasper County are shared stakeholders. The trends and successes of one greatly impact the other. The City is conscious of this relationship and works to fulfill the needs of all Jasper County residents. The City's energy and pride aids in:

Retaining and attracting youth by offering a safe and clean environment, quality education, opportunities for faith-based and community fellowship, and many affordable housing options;

Retaining and attracting retirees by offering adequate housing options, senior-focused activities, and the necessary community and health care services;

Offering good jobs for residents by attracting and maintaining stable and diverse mix of industrial, professional services, and commercial businesses;

Communicating local happenings clearly and accurately through the collaboration with local media and service organizations;

Serving as the hub of Jasper County, providing shopping and services to satisfy the local needs and plenty of entertainment opportunities;

Valuing the importance of cultural and artistic experiences demonstrated by the museum and public arts center located in the Newton Public Library;

Showing support for and growing local entrepreneurs and valued businesses by providing space and services available through the local Chamber of Commerce and incubator; and

Maintaining and growing its relationship with Jasper County by partnering to accomplish shared goals and representing the best interests of all residents.

# CITY OF NEWTON PROFILE

## HISTORY

The City of Newton was founded in 1835 and is the County seat in Jasper. It is located at the intersection of Illinois Routes 33 and 130. Fifty years after incorporation, G & M Railroad constructed a line through town, creating a bustling community. The Litzelman Hotel, now known as the Pub, was once a fine hotel known for its food and hospitality and brought travelers down on the train from as far away as Chicago. In 1878, the Jasper County Courthouse was constructed in the center of the town square and is still considered one of the most beautiful and well-kept courthouses in the area. The beautiful Jasper County War Memorial adorns the courthouse lawn and is visible as you pass through town on Route 33. The Embarras River Bridge was constructed in 1890, creating the main entrance into town at that time. It is one of the few Pratt Through-Truss bridges remaining in Illinois. The bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. The bridge has been closed to automobile traffic for many years, but in 2014 it was restored as a pedestrian bridge and is an important part of Eagle Trails.

At the present time, the City of Newton is a thriving agriculture and service-oriented community. Newton is home to manufactures such as GSI, Evapco, and TPS. The City contains many service industries including three banking facilities, tax services, contractors, automotive sales and services, insurance companies and law offices. In addition, Newton has a decent base of retail businesses including Jasper Clothiers, Ardnt's, Dollar General, and IGA. Finally, the City of Newton has one hotel, a motel and a few eating establishments and fast food restaurants.

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Preserving the natural environment is an important aspect in developing the Newton Comprehensive Plan. This section identifies the natural environmental features of the City of Newton; and is broken into four component parts. These parts include: Climate, Geology, Soils, and Hydrological Features.

### Climate

Generally, the climate for the area is considered as Humid Continental Climate. The weather of the area is influenced by cold, dry air masses from the north and warm, humid air masses from the south. These air masses often collide creating frequent changes to the area's temperature, precipitation, and other weather features.

The average high temperature in Newton is 62.2 degrees Fahrenheit. The average low temperature in Newton is 42.9 degrees Fahrenheit. Therefore, the average year around temperature is 52.6 degrees Fahrenheit. The average yearly precipitation is 41.3 inches. June through September usually see the highest temperatures and March through July see the largest amounts of precipitation each year.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Avg. High-in degrees F	34	40	51	63	73	82	85	83	78	66	52	39
Avg. Low-in degrees F	19	22	33	42	52	62	66	63	55	43	34	24
Avg. Precipitation-Inches	2.36	2.36	3.86	3.9	4.41	3.74	4.37	3.43	3.19	2.76	3.98	2.91

### Geology and Soils

According to the Jasper County Soil Survey (2006), Jasper County is entirely within the Springfield Plain of the Till Plains Section of the Central Lowland physiographic province. Most of the present surface materials and landforms are the result of the glacial ice, glacial meltwater, and wind passing over the landscape during the most recent glacial episodes.

During the Illinoian episode, glaciers deposited till ranging in thickness from several feet to more than 100 feet over Pennsylvanian sandstone, shale, and limestone throughout the county. The relief in Jasper County is low on the nearly level and gently sloping, broad uplands. The greatest change in relief is in areas along major drainage ways. In these areas, there can be as much as a 50-foot drop in elevation from the adjacent uplands. Elevation ranges from 624 feet above mean sea level at Island Grove to 440 feet above mean sea level where the Embarras River crosses the county line into Crawford County.

### Hydrology

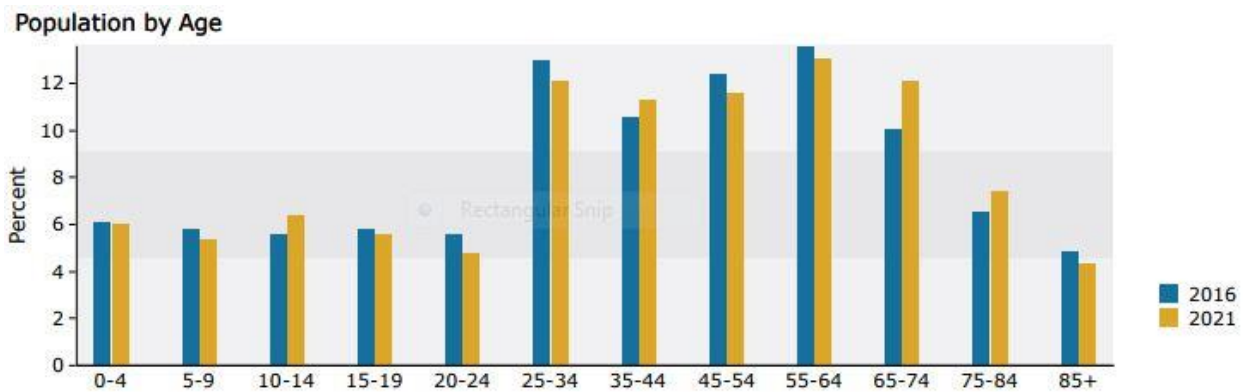
The Embarras River and its tributaries drain most of Jasper County, eventually flowing into the Wabash River. The southwestern part of the county is drained by tributaries of the Little Wabash River, which also drains into the Wabash. The flood plains along these rivers and tributaries, if not protected by levees, generally are subject to annual flooding, and the soils in these areas often have a seasonal high water table. Because the county has such low relief, ponding occurs on many soils. Most areas are sufficiently drained for the crops commonly grown. An extensive system of surface drainage ditches supplements the natural drainage. These drainage ditches must be regularly maintained.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic profile and population characteristics of the City of Newton for this comprehensive plan are based on information gathered from the United States Census Bureau. Throughout this section, the figures of Newton will be compared to the figures of Jasper County. Population characteristics in this plan include data on: age, gender, race, household characteristics, income levels, and education levels.

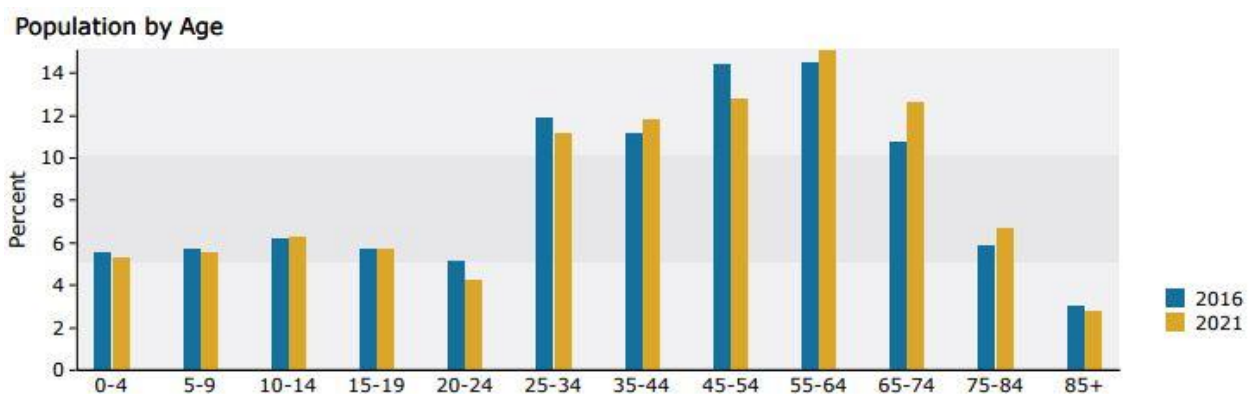
### Age

The following graph illustrates the age trends of the City of Newton projected for 2016 and 2021. These trends are projections made using the data collected in the 2010 U.S. Census survey.



The projected median age for 2016 is 42.8 years. The projected median age for 2021 is 43.5. The trends lean toward a rising population for the City of Newton in the years to come, which demonstrate an increased need to provide public facilities and community services for this aging population and the senior citizen group.

The graph below illustrates the age trends for the County of Jasper as projected for 2016 and 2021. These projections are based off the 2010 U.S. Census survey.



The projected median age for 2016 is 43.9. The projected median age for 2021 is 45.1. These estimates are slightly higher than those of the City of Newton and the median age is rising at nearly the same rate for both the city and the county.

## Race

A breakdown of the racial composition of the City of Newton shows the community as being predominately white with the most prevalent minority being Hispanic.

Race and Ethnicity	Census 2010		2016		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	2,800	98.3%	2,724	97.4%	2,696	97.4%
Black Alone	4	0.1%	4	0.1%	4	0.1%
American Indian Alone	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
Asian Alone	6	0.2%	8	0.3%	8	0.3%
Pacific Islander Alone	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	10	0.4%	19	0.7%	19	0.7%
Two or More Races	27	0.9%	39	1.4%	39	1.4%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	34	1.2%	65	2.3%	65	2.3%

Below is the breakdown of racial composition for the County of Jasper comparatively for years 2010, 2016, and 2021. Although the county remains predominantly white, the population is projected to diversify slightly. It continues to have a similar ethnic makeup as the city.

Race and Ethnicity	Census 2010		2016		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	9,564	98.6%	9,457	97.9%	9,425	97.9%
Black Alone	11	0.1%	11	0.1%	11	0.1%
American Indian Alone	13	0.1%	13	0.1%	13	0.1%
Asian Alone	24	0.2%	31	0.3%	31	0.3%
Pacific Islander Alone	2	0.0%	2	0.0%	2	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	26	0.3%	54	0.6%	54	0.6%
Two or More Races	58	0.6%	89	0.9%	89	0.9%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	79	0.8%	158	1.6%	158	1.6%

## Housing

Below is a glimpse at the historic and current housing trends in Newton. Projections show a 3% increase in vacant housing from 2010 to 2021. This trend could stem from the increase in dilapidated/condemned structures, unoccupied rental houses, unoccupied for sale, or homes used for recreation/vacation purposes. When looking at trends in home value, the median home is projected to be worth 15% more in 2021.

Housing Units by Occupancy Status and Tenure	Census 2010		2016		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	1,375	100.0%	1,375	100.0%	1,372	100.0%
Occupied	1,229	89.4%	1,201	87.3%	1,186	86.4%
Owner	895	65.1%	844	61.4%	833	60.7%
Renter	334	24.3%	357	26.0%	353	25.7%
Vacant	146	10.6%	174	12.7%	186	13.6%

Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value	2016		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	844	100.0%	834	100.0%
<\$50,000	207	24.5%	200	24.0%
\$50,000-\$99,999	358	42.4%	260	31.2%
\$100,000-\$149,999	140	16.6%	195	23.4%
\$150,000-\$199,999	65	7.7%	86	10.3%
\$200,000-\$249,999	19	2.3%	34	4.1%
\$250,000-\$299,999	3	0.4%	4	0.5%
\$300,000-\$399,999	52	6.2%	55	6.6%
\$400,000-\$499,999	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
\$500,000-\$749,999	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
\$750,000-\$999,999	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
\$1,000,000+	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Median Value			\$80,028	\$91,731
Average Value			\$99,763	\$110,222



Below is a snapshot of the historic and current housing trends in the County of Jasper. Projections show a 1% increase in vacant housing from 2010 to 2021. This trend could stem from an increase in dilapidated/condemned structures, unoccupied rental houses, unoccupied homes for sale, or homes used for recreation/vacation purposes. When looking home value, the median value is projected to increase by 30% in 2021.

Housing Units by Occupancy Status and Tenure	Census 2010		2016		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	4,345	100.0%	4,346	100.0%	4,341	100.0%
Occupied	3,940	90.7%	3,911	90.0%	3,892	89.7%
Owner	3,306	76.1%	3,213	73.9%	3,194	73.6%
Renter	634	14.6%	698	16.1%	698	16.1%
Vacant	405	9.3%	435	10.0%	449	10.3%

Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value	2016		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	3,213	100.0%	3,194	100.0%
<\$50,000	660	20.5%	631	19.8%
\$50,000-\$99,999	995	31.0%	619	19.4%
\$100,000-\$149,999	522	16.2%	652	20.4%
\$150,000-\$199,999	425	13.2%	557	17.4%
\$200,000-\$249,999	193	6.0%	289	9.0%
\$250,000-\$299,999	114	3.5%	147	4.6%
\$300,000-\$399,999	255	7.9%	255	8.0%
\$400,000-\$499,999	20	0.6%	18	0.6%
\$500,000-\$749,999	17	0.5%	17	0.5%
\$750,000-\$999,999	6	0.2%	5	0.2%
\$1,000,000+	6	0.2%	4	0.1%
Median Value		\$97,563		\$126,610
Average Value		\$132,944		\$145,265

When comparing the city’s housing stock with the county’s housing stock, it is clear the average and median home values in the county are higher. This phenomenon is due in from the amount of new home construction that has occurred in the last several years. Many individuals have chosen to erect new homes outside the corporate limits of the City of Newton. Also, there are four times more houses outside the City of Newton than within its borders. Both jurisdictions contain many homes that are within the \$50,000 - \$99,000 range but the County contains many that are within the \$100,000 - \$199,000 boosting the median and average value significantly.

### Income Status

As displayed within the following tables, both the 2010 Census data and the 2016/2021 projections show city residents’ income to be less than that of the county residents. Also note that according to the U.S. Census Bureau, persons below poverty in the City of Newton (2015) equaled 19% of the population, while the 2015 percentage for the County of Jasper was 9.2%. Those that live within the incorporated limits of Newton tend to be less advantaged.

### **City of Newton Income**

	2010	2016	2021
Median Household Income	\$32,135	\$38,081	\$39,495
Average Household Income	\$44,212	\$55,114	\$59,237
Per Capita Income	\$19,593	\$23,888	\$25,601

## County of Jasper Income

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2021</b>
Median Household Income	\$46,546	\$50,449	\$54,696
Average Household Income	\$52,356	\$60,284	\$65,780
Per Capita Income	\$21,467	\$24,463	\$26,647

## EDUCATION & EDUCATION STATUS

### Primary & Secondary

The City of Newton is served by Jasper County Unit School District #1 which also serves the entire County of Jasper. The District is comprised of four schools: Ste. Marie Elementary School, Newton Community High School, Newton Elementary School, & Jasper County Junior High School. The city and the county are also served by St. Thomas School, which is a private, Catholic school providing pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade education. St. Thomas serves approximately 170 students.

The City of Newton and Jasper County saw a decline in school enrollments from 2012 to 2016 in the Jasper County CUSD #1 (K-12 grades). The district's enrollment was 1,435 in 2012 and only 1,387 in 2016. This equates to a 3.3% loss of students during the five-year period. This can be expected considering the declining Jasper County/Newton population and the national trend of fewer children per household.

### Higher Education

The City of Newton is very close to several community colleges and traditional universities in East Central Illinois. The community is within the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC) district, which includes four community colleges: Lincoln Trail College, Olney Central College, Frontier College, and Wabash Valley College. The city is also near Lake Land College in Mattoon which serves the northwest corner of Jasper County. Eastern Illinois University in Charleston is also nearby.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 377 Newton residents were enrolled in college in 2015. Of those, 316 were working toward an undergraduate degree, while 61 were working on a graduate or professional degree. It is estimated that 130 of those students were male and 247 were female. Although both the city and county both show an increase in residents with a college degree, these individuals account for a higher percentage within the City. When comparing the City of Newton with the State of Illinois, Newton has a higher percentage of residents with Associate degrees but roughly 50% less of those with a Bachelor's or Master's degree.

## POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The City of Newton’s population has declined since 1990. During this period, the City experienced some substantial company closings that have impacted the population, but the community did recover from this downfall by attracting new employers and creating new jobs. Although the population continues to decline, it is at a much slower pace. When examining the county’s growth patterns, it shows a declining population as well, but at a slower rate (as compared by percentages). As seen below, the 1960 – 2010 populations are from the U.S. Census. The 2020 and 2030 populations are projections derived by using a forecasting model utilizing U.S. Census past population data.

City of Newton			County of Jasper		
Year	Population	% Change	Year	Population	% Change
1960	2901		1960	11346	
1970	3024	4.24%	1970	10741	-5.33%
1980	3186	5.36%	1980	11318	5.37%
1990	3224	1.19%	1990	10609	-6.26%
2000	3095	-4.00%	2000	10117	-4.64%
2010	2849	-7.95%	2010	9698	-4.14%
2020	2769	-2.81%	2020	9625	-0.75%
2030	2683	-3.11%	2030	9437	-1.95%

## ECONOMIC BASE AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The City of Newton is located in East Central Illinois at the intersection of State Routes 33 and 130. Newton is centrally located to a number of major Midwest cities, which include: Chicago (232 miles), St. Louis (124 miles), and Indianapolis (137 miles).

The information below provides general details regarding the current economy of Newton. The information is based on information gathered from the 2010 U.S. Census as well as information obtained through the City's representatives and other State and Federal agencies.

### Community Income

The personal income of Newton is based on the total income of households in the community. According to projections made from the 2010 Census, there were 1,201 households making an average of \$55,114 in 2016. Using these figures, the total community personal income is approximately \$66,191,914.

### Work Force Characteristics

When examining a community's workforce, one must investigate details regarding its educational attainment and labor force characteristics.

When examining educational attainment, the focus is on residents 25 years of age and older. According to estimates based off the 2010 Census, in 2016, 40.4% of Newton residents had a high school diploma or the equivalent of. The population is comprised of 14.2% with an Associate's Degree and 8.6% with a Bachelor's Degree. Lastly, 10.2% of residents hold a Graduate or Professional Degree.

The labor force of Newton is based on the population of the residents aged 16 and older. As according to the U.S. Census, the labor force is defined as all persons classified as employed (over 16 years old and who are "at work" or "with job but not at work") or unemployed (16 years old and over who were neither "at work" or "with job but not at work", or were looking for work during the last 4 weeks and were available to accept a job). Some of those not included in the labor force are: students, homemakers, retired workers, and institutionalized persons. In 2016, approximately 1,474 Newton residents were employed. This projection was calculated using the 2010 Census labor force figure.

### Economic Trends

In order to discuss economic trends, it is first necessary to describe the City of Newton's employment characteristics to give context to the trends occurring. First, it is necessary to understand a community's employment mix to study the diversity present, and at the same time, to analyze how dependent a community is on certain business categories.

**2016 Employed Population 16+ by Industry**

Total	1,474
Agriculture/Mining	2.2%
Construction	5.2%
Manufacturing	13.9%
Wholesale Trade	3.1%
Retail Trade	12.6%
Transportation/Utilities	9.3%
Information	1.0%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	5.8%
Services	41.7%
Public Administration	5.2%

The major employers in Newton and Jasper County are as follows:

Company	Industry Type	Employees	Union Affiliation	Year Established
JCCU #1	Education	243	Ed. Assn.	1971
TPS Enterprises, Inc.	U.S. Govt Printer	100	None	1973
Newton Power Station	Electric Generator	80	I.B.E.W.	1977
Skyline Steel	Welding	80	None	1980
Norris Electric	Electricity Coop.	75	I.B.E.W.	1938
Jesse B. Holt, Inc.	Trusses & Construction	50	None	1948

Also important in terms of economic trends is the unemployment rate. It is the most critical indicator of the economic health of a community. According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security, Jasper County’s unemployment rate as of May 2017 was 4.1%, ranking 36<sup>th</sup> out of the 102 counties in Illinois. This is 1.4% lower than the rate in May of 2016. The rate was then 5.5%, with Jasper ranking 62<sup>nd</sup> in the State. Illinois’ unemployment rate as of May 2017 was 4.3%, while the U.S. rate was 4.1%. Illinois’ unemployment rate in May of 2016 was 5.3%, while the U.S. rate was 4.5%. As you can see the county’s rate is in line with the rates of both the state and the country.

Note: Unemployment rates as shown are not seasonally adjusted.

Unemployment Rates		
Labor Market Area	May '16 Rate	May '17 Rate
U.S.	4.5%	4.1%
Illinois	5.3%	4.3%
Jasper County	5.5%	4.1%

## Economic Programs

Over the past several years, the City of Newton has developed or employed effective economic programs which, in turn, has enabled the City to undertake a wide variety of economic activities. These are as follows:

1. The Jasper County Enterprise Zone Program

The Jasper County Enterprise Zone offers property tax abatements, sales tax exemptions, investment tax credits, and fee waivers to certain industries who locate or expand in the designated zone.

2. The Newton Revolving Loan Fund Program

The Newton Revolving Loan Fund's balance is currently \$8,900. At this time \$61,000 in funds are loaned out to an entity at an interest rate of 3.5%. The amount that can be borrowed is based on the number of jobs a new/existing business is creating or retaining. Applicants are screened and approved by a committee.

3. Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The TIF was established in 2008 and is compliant with the state code. If a business locates within the TIF district certain incentives can be offered to entice prospects.

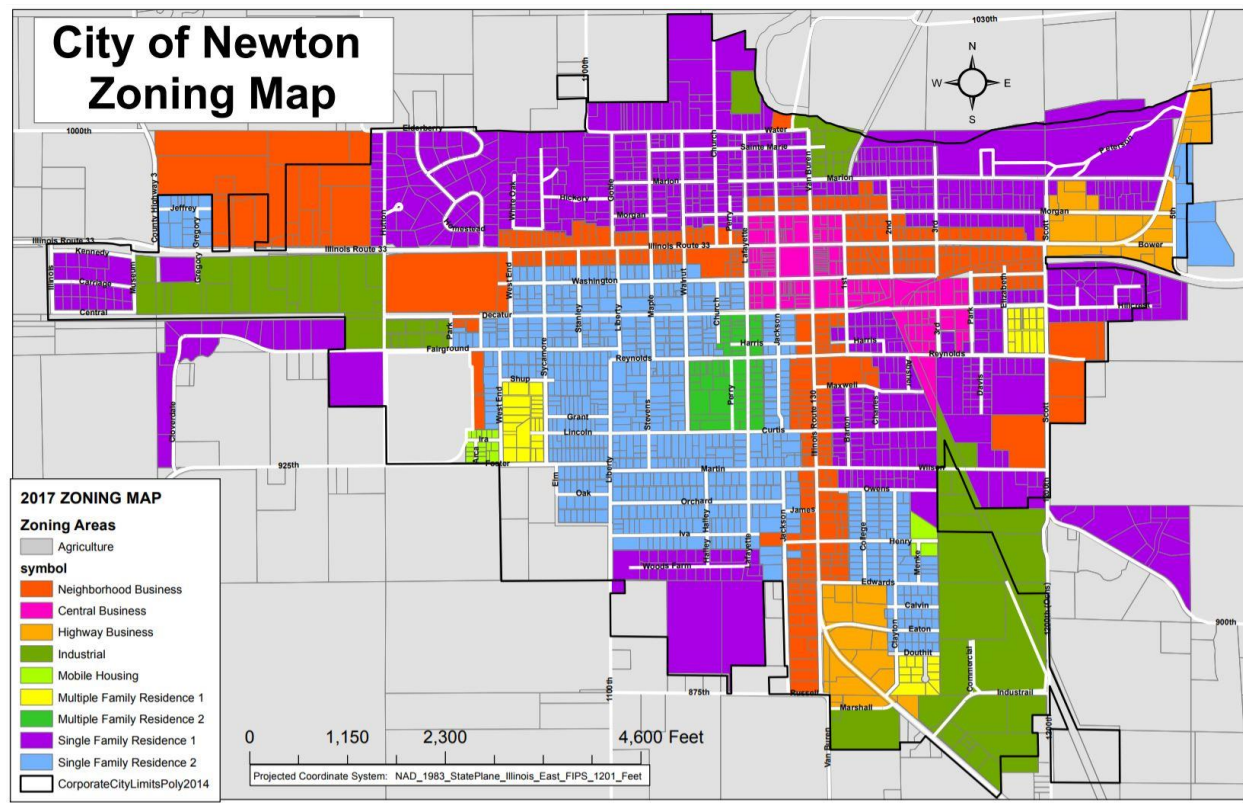
4. Establishing the Jasper County Economic Development Cooperative and hiring an Executive Director

Jasper County and the City of Newton share the costs of employing a full-time economic developer with the U of I Extension. This person is responsible for coordinating the City and County's economic development activities.

5. Additional Resources and Sources of Funding

The city works with various regional, state and federal organizations to identify and capture funding for specific projects. Depending on the project's scope, these funds are available through a competitive application process.

## EXISTING LAND USE



The Zoning Code of the City of Newton regulates structures and land uses in order to preserve, protect, and promote public health, safety and welfare. The Code is found in Chapter 40 of the City of Newton's Codes.

More specifically, this Code is intended to assist in achieving the following objectives:

- (A) To encourage the development of buildings and uses on appropriate sites in order to maximize community-wide social and economic benefits while accommodating the particular needs of all residents, and to discourage development on inappropriate sites;
- (B) To assist in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, if any;
- (C) To protect and enhance the character and stability of sound existing agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial areas, and to gradually eliminate nonconforming uses and structures;
- (D) To conserve and increase the value of taxable property throughout the city;
- (E) To ensure the provision of adequate light, air and privacy to the occupants of all buildings;
- (F) To protect persons and property from damage caused by fire, flooding, and improper sewage disposal;
- (G) To provide adequate and well-designed parking and loading space for all buildings and uses, and to reduce vehicular congestion on the public streets and highways;
- (H) To ensure the proper design and improvement of mobile home parks;
- (I) To promote the use of signs which are safe, aesthetically pleasing, compatible with their surroundings, and legible in the circumstances in which they are seen; and
- (J) To provide for the efficient administration and fair enforcement of all the substantive regulations in this Code. (See 65 ILCS Sec. 5/11-13-1)



In order to implement this Code, and to achieve the objectives in Article I, the entire municipality is hereby divided into the following zoning districts:

DISTRICT	DESIGNATION	MINIMUM AREA*
Agricultural	A-1	3 acres
Single Family Residence (Large)	SR-1	5 acres
Single Family Residence (Small)	SR-2	5 acres
Multi-Family Residence	MR-1	5 acres
Multi-Family Residence	MR-2	3 acres
Mobile Housing	MH-1	3 acres
Neighborhood Business	B-1	1 acre
Central Business	B-2	2 acres
Highway Business	B-3	3 acres
Industrial	I-1	5 acres

\* The “minimum area” requirement (which is intended to prevent spot zoning) refers to the smallest total area of contiguous parcels that can properly be given the particular district classification. The minimum area requirement is not satisfied merely because the acreage of numerous noncontiguous parcels, when aggregated, happens to equal or exceed the minimum area indicated above.

**“A-1” - AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT.** The “A-1” Agricultural District encompasses areas that are presently undeveloped or sparsely developed and that, for various reasons, should remain so for the foreseeable future. Some tracts of land in this district are fertile and relatively level and best suited for agricultural pursuits. Other tracts in this district have such poor soils, steep slopes, inadequate natural drainage, and/or other problems, or are simply so distant from existing developed areas that the provision and maintenance of roads, utilities, and storm water drainage systems would be impractical or burdensomely expensive to the tax-paying public.

**“SR-1” - SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT (LARGE LOT).** In the “SR-1”, Single-Family Residence District, land is principally used for or is best suited for detached, single-family dwellings and related educational, religious and recreational facilities. The regulations for this district are intended to stabilize and preserve sound existing single-family neighborhoods, and to promote the development of subdivisions offering a range of new conventionally constructed single-family housing. Other types of residences (mobile homes, manufactured mobile homes, duplexes, apartments, etc.) are prohibited uses in this district.

**“SR-2” - SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICT (SMALL LOT).** The “SR-2”, Single-Family Residence District encompasses areas suitable for single-family dwellings as well as related educational, religious and recreational facilities. The regulations for this district are intended to stabilize and preserve sound existing subdivision offering a range of new single-family housing. Other types of residences (mobile homes, manufactured homes, duplexes, apartments, etc.) are permitted in this district by special-use.

**“MR-1” - MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT.** The “MR-1”, Multiple-Family Residence District is established to stabilize and conserve existing neighborhoods that predominantly consist of single-family and multiple-family dwellings and to promote the development of comparable new areas in order to accommodate all persons desiring this type of residential environment.

**“MR-2” - MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT.** The “MR-2”, Multiple-Family Residence District is established to stabilize and conserve existing neighborhoods that predominantly consist of multiple-family dwellings and to promote the development of comparable new areas in order to accommodate all persons desiring this type of residential environment.

**“MH-1” - MOBILE HOUSING DISTRICT.** The “MH-1”, Mobile Housing District is primarily intended to provide areas suitable for the placement of manufactured homes on individual lots and for the establishment of mobile home parks. This district is intended to preserve other residential districts for conventionally constructed single-family dwellings.

**“B-1” - NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT.** The “B-1”, Neighborhood Business District, as delineated on the zoning map, encompasses small commercial enclaves located within predominantly residential areas. Only selected small-scale sales and service facilities that constitute a convenience to residents of the immediate neighborhood may locate in this district. These commercial establishments must be compatible in design and operation with an essentially residential environment.

**“B-2” - CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT.** The “B-2”, Central Business District encompasses the concentrated pedestrian-oriented commercial area of this municipality. Stores and other facilities providing a wide range of retail goods and services to the general public may be located within this district.

**“B-3” - HIGHWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT.**

The “B-3” Highway Business District is intended to accommodate and regulate strip commercial developments and compatible uses. Since such businesses--both retail and wholesale--draw their patrons primarily from the motoring public, they typically require direct access to major streets and large lots for offstreet parking and loading.

**“I-1” - INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT.** The “I-1”, Industrial District is intended to provide for areas where light industry, research facilities, warehouses, and wholesale businesses may locate without detriment to the remainder of the community. In these areas, a satisfactory correlation of factors required by such uses exists or can be readily achieved.

# PUBLIC INPUT

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In May of 2017, a questionnaire was mailed to the citizens of Newton to gather input for this comprehensive plan update. A total of 1,392 questionnaires were mailed. The City received 462 responses, a 33% response rate. As an incentive to respond, the City offered a \$3 credit on the resident's utility bill if the survey was completed and returned.

In addition to the questionnaire, input was solicited and received from the NCHS CEO class and the members of JEDI. The same questions were used as were displayed on the questionnaire but this input was gathered during multiple working sessions. The median length of Newton residency of respondents was 30 years. The range was from 6 months to 85 years.

All responses have been reviewed and combined. The results are shared here within this section. This input then guided the newly developed goals and objectives outlined in the next section.

The questionnaire contained seven questions. Those included four open-ended questions, a ranking question, a yes/no question, and a checkbox question allowing respondents to check all that apply and provide any "other" items that were not already listed.

## Newton's Best Kept Secrets/Strengths

Survey respondents and meeting participants reported that Newton is a good place to raise a family (27) with its safe environment (26) and good quality of life (7). Contributing to that quality of life are several recreational opportunities. Those mentioned are: the river (4) and canoe ramp, opportunities for youth (9) with the city parks, Sam Parr State Park, Jasper Co. Boys and Girls Park, the aquatic center and numerous sporting opportunities including fishing/nature/hunting (19), tennis, disc golf and Geocaching.

Also contributing to the quality of life is the strong spiritual vibe found in Newton, namely through the diverse group of churches (10) and the strong ethics (5) shared amongst citizens. Several respondents mentioned the residents of Newton as a best-kept secret because of their sense of community pride (3), willingness to lend a hand (67) during difficult times, and shared culture/experiences. The local workforce (4) was complimented, with the City employees mentioned. The youth and their activities (9) are a source of pride. Ms. Cheyenne Goss (2) was cited as a well-kept secret as she pursues her career in music.

Many respondents valued several local services and businesses, including the library (4) and the Jasper County Health Department. Locally owned businesses that were mentioned are (16): Peoples State Bank, The Freeze, Joe's Italian Foods, Filler Up Buffet, China King, Arndt's Stores, Yesterdays/Todays Pub, Solid Grounds, Steve Jones Plumbing, Expert Collision Center, and the drive-in movie theater. The three ag equipment dealerships and three car dealerships, along with the used-car businesses, contribute much to the area as well.

The excellent schools (26) were mentioned often with top-notch bands and modernized curriculum (CEO class cited) with dedicated teachers and staff and an improved security in schools. The Eagle Trail (7) and renovated historic bridge are popular. The cooperative governments, affordable cost of living, low taxes,

low poverty rate, low unemployment, slow pace and the proximity (3) to nearby cities and highways were also mentioned. The employers providing good-paying jobs (Newton Power Plant named twice) are especially appreciated as are the service clubs.

Respondents believe the history of the city is a large strength, including Burl Ives and activities like the Veterans' Day program, Strawberryfest, Fall Festival and the Shriner's Dance. Other secrets listed were the executive session meeting minutes, economic development tools (7) like the Jasper County Enterprise Zone and TIF district, strong agriculture (5), good internet service and fiber optics, business variety, room and opportunity for growth (6), HSHS health assessments, EJ Water, Newton being the county seat, and the large amount of traffic that travels through town.

### Weaknesses

Respondents and meeting participants were also invited to share their thoughts on the city's weaknesses. Many stated a big weakness is being in the State of Illinois (7). Others stated weaknesses like the lack of a sizeable workforce (2), erosion of the tax base (9), apathy and lack of energy in people/volunteers (4), only one main town in the county with low population density in rural areas, heavy reliance on the power plant for property taxes and good paying jobs, through-traffic doesn't stop in Newton, no "pop" in architecture, declining population (6), huge reduction in farm youth, poor location (3), lack of job stability, high poverty rate, lack of property options for recruiting new businesses/industry, high taxes and high utility rates/deposits (8), and the lack of semi-parking at businesses.

Some additional comments that were submitted on the questionnaires regarding things that Newton is lacking or is short of include: phone services, an animal control officer, community services, Chamber member involvement, tornado sirens, spraying for mosquitoes, more not-for-profits, help for middle-income families, licensing ATV's with lights and signals, stronger ethical and moral values, generating revenue from semi-trucks, involving more citizens in updates, grain mill, more grain storage, expanding townships (2), promoting the community foundation, developing a vocational "CEO", and a community center.

### Improvements Made in Last 10 Years

Survey respondents and meeting participants were asked in what ways has Newton improved in the past ten years. A large number of participants (158) mentioned improvements made to the downtown area. A few specifically mentioned the opening of the Master's Hands and the new Chamber of Commerce office. The public library was also mentioned (4). TIF funds (3) were mentioned too.

Another popular improvement was the new aquatic center and park improvements (64). Also mentioned was the construction of the trails in and around Newton (44) and cleanup (40). Sidewalks (22), roads (2), water and sewer plants (5), dependability of utilities (1), and infrastructure in general (23) were all mentioned.

In regards to where residents and visitors lay their heads, participants mentioned the new hotel and the Villas of Holly Brook (18), as well as the Five Aprils Crossing Subdivision (9). Also mentioned was the housing grant rehabilitation (2). Respondents also cited small businesses (3), tourism (3), new restaurant (2), schools (7), tourism (3), leadership (4), positive attitude (5), and the top-quality emergency services

(police, ambulance, fire) (2). Evapco, zoning, weather alerts, safety, community garden, increase in building projects, expanded civic opportunities, and good variety of restaurants (1 each) were also mentioned.

Some additional comments reported on the surveys included: aggressive approach to problems...keep aiming high, IGA is nice, trust the leadership, good job!, people are moving back, good community events, good new speed signs, drug houses are less obvious, and streets were cleaned well in winter.

Ways to Improve in Next 10 Years

Respondents and meeting participants discussed or reported the areas they felt the city needed to focus its efforts in order to improve over the next decade. These results were then ranked in order of importance based on the number of respondents/participants who mentioned them.

1. Engage in Economic Development (272) and add more businesses to the Industrial Park.

The questionnaire results for economic development priorities (highest priority #1, lowest #6) are as follows:

	ATTRACT NEW INDUSTRY	EXPAND EXISTING INDUSTRY	DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION	CREATE HOME- GROWN BUSINESS	EXPAND COMMUNITY SERVICES	ENCOURAGE TOURISM
1	312	50	29	43	33	26
2	37	189	25	69	38	21
3	19	72	50	152	78	32
4	21	40	69	36	122	49
5	11	30	126	81	90	76
6	26	22	100	22	38	195

Results	#1	Attract new industry
	#2	Expand existing industry
	#3	Create home-grown business
	#4	Expand community services
	#5	Downtown revitalization
	#6	Encourage tourism

2. Jobs (118).

Respondents agree that Newton needs better-paying, living-wage jobs. They believe the city needs (94) any/all businesses (48). Some specific responses include: industry/manufacturing plants (utilize trades) (166), science and engineering, encourage/develop entrepreneurial spirit and diversity, diversify business/employment, need job fairs (3), and more job opportunities for college educated citizens to return to after graduation.

In terms of retail establishments, respondents mentioned: identifying an Alco replacement (122), more consumable goods, more storage buildings, grocery store (50), farmers' market (2), specialty shops (16) - antique, hobby, quilt, café, bookshop, coffee shop open all week, crafts, and science store. Respondents also submitted a variety of suggestions for new businesses/services to be added: memory care unit, animal shelter, recycling including curbside, something besides church/alcohol on the square, competitive gas/food prices with other areas, massage therapy, bakery, tattoo parlors, vape store, adult store, Bass Pro, boat/motor repair, electric/small engine repair shop, processing plant, taxi, service station on the west end of town, tool/lawn rental business, resale shops, auto repair, truck stop, ice cream truck, babysitter/daycare provider, newspaper (3), hardware store, renewable energy, green companies, more leading edge technology, and solar business (5). Also mentioned were: restaurants/steakhouse (59), family-friendly venues [movie theater (6), laser tag, bounce house, golf, skating rink, indoor/larger pool, arcade (28)], medical services including a clinic/doctor providing services 24 hours a day/365 days a year (21), tourist attractions (5), ag-related business (5), biodiesel (5), event center/microbrewery (2), and health/fitness venues (2).

3. Decrease property taxes and fees (256).

Respondents felt strongly that property taxes should be reduced/frozen, but two felt that property taxes should be increased on agricultural land.

4. Provide positive alternatives for youth (232).

Respondents feel that youth need activities to keep them entertained and out of trouble. Some specific suggestions include: reduce drug use/help troubled youth (7) and increase activities/programs for youth (2).

5. Improve, maintain streets and ditches (211).

Respondents feel the city needs to focus attention on the city streets, ditches, and drainage (3). They also mentioned the following suggested improvements: improve traffic signs (23), need a stoplight at Casey's (2), paint yellow zones, paint stripes on Washington Street and parking spaces, and grind and resurface streets [not oil and chip] (2). Also mentioned was to improve railroad crossing on Liberty and Scott Streets and to build an overpass.

6. Improve sidewalks, walking paths (176-mostly sidewalks).

Respondents believe the city should focus on fixing sidewalks leading from the square to the south parts of town and to redo curbs to be accessible. Respondents also mentioned the need for sidewalks to be constructed along Scott Avenue. Both youth and adults walk on this hilly, busy

street on the road because there is no sidewalk. People are going to the ballpark and, in the summer, groups are walking to the pool/park.

7. Provide assistance to disabled, seniors (168).  
Respondents believe the city should address the older population in Newton. One specific response mentioned providing more for active seniors/Senior Citizens Center. One respondent cited that older residents don't use the schools, but most own their homes and pay property taxes to support them along with many other city services. Just the addition of sidewalks to and through the residential areas would give people a place to walk for both safety and exercise.
8. Provide more affordable and low-income housing (148).  
Respondents believe the city should continue to focus attention on affordable housing options. Many respondents mentioned building additional homes (34). In addition, respondents mentioned having the availability of low interest loans for home improvements.
9. Improve education (135).  
Respondents offered several suggestions for improving education in the community, such as providing vocational/trades training (8), parenting skills classes (1), and art classes (1). Also mentioned was improving the perception that the schools are important (1), more higher education opportunities (2), more community college collaboration (4), and providing Chromebooks to students.
10. Reduce budget, control spending (127).  
While no specific comments were mentioned within this topic, many felt the city should reduce its budget and control its spending.
11. Clean/beautify the community (125).  
Respondents mentioned specifically: clean up the entrances to the city (5) with a fence (1), plant more trees, and provide more curb appeal (3). Also stated was the City employees should clean their yards (2).
12. Enforce building codes (89).  
Respondents believe the city should focus on enforcing its current building codes, while one respondent believes the city should update building codes (1).
13. Improve upon and add park and recreation facilities (89).  
Respondents specifically mentioned that the city could improve mini-golf at Peterson Park, build an indoor pool, increase the size of the current pool, construct a small park/picnic area on the trail, develop the ballpark for more tournaments, provide more/safer parking at the ballpark, add a dog park, increase the seating on the courthouse lawn and install a larger water fountain. Two respondents mentioned the creation of a park district.
14. Change, improve government processes (84).  
While no specific comments were mentioned regarding how to change or improve these processes, citizens felt this is an area where attention should be focused.

15. Improve public transit (75).

Again, no specific comments were mentioned but respondents believe improvements to the public transportation system are needed.

16. Reduce building permit restrictions (74).

No specific comments were mentioned on this topic.

17. Redevelop downtown areas (68).

Although the city has made vast improvements in the downtown area, respondents believe they should continue to focus on the heart of the community.

18. Improve public safety (50).

Some specific comments made by respondents include: improve the Police Dept. (1), control speeding on city streets (especially Martin), be strict on crime, enforce housing ordinance regulations, reduce drug use, destroy drug houses, enforce drug control, back off social drinkers, clean up/improve/increase rental properties, enforce speed limit with youth, and no parking on Washington St. for high school students (2).

19. Increase multi-cultural activities (33).

Respondents believe the city would benefit by more diversity and providing more activities that lend to a mix of cultures.

20. Reduce traffic congestion (25).

Respondents believe the city should focus on reducing traffic congestion throughout the city. Unfortunately, most of this congestion takes place on state routes, where the city does not have control.

Other Responses Include:

- Improve internet (10), especially in remote areas.
- Limit growth and preserve open space (9).
- Improve infrastructure (7).
- Retain/promote current businesses/industry (7) and encourage succession (business) planning (2).
- Marketing (7) – advertising through many avenues, especially on social media and television. Unite with the county and local region in these efforts.
- Developing a legacy program – bring people back, stop the “brain drain” (7).
- Enforce zoning (3).
- Newton leaders do a community swap with another community (3).
- Continue with/encourage a positive attitude (3).
- Increase tourism (2). Some suggestions include: host more community events, and improve current festivals.
- Increase citizen involvement (1) and community outreach.
- Preserve historic buildings, rehabilitate the old hotel [perhaps with small office spaces, barber/beauty shops or other small businesses] (2).



- Develop more youth/school and adult partnerships. Some comments regarding this topic were: developing a Big Brother/Big Sister program and “The school in Flanagan, IL did many community activities/services – building benches for the park, senior citizens, etc.; planters, whatever was needed, and in return citizens went above and beyond supporting the school. They were competing with Bloomington for residents as we are competing with Effingham. What can we do to compete?”