

Danielle Delaney

From: Ellen Fisher <ellen@ellen-fisher.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 8, 2022 4:40 PM
To: andreae4newton@gmail.com; Christopher J. Markiewicz
Cc: Danielle Delaney; alicia@aliciabowman.org
Subject: Newton 2021 arrests by race pie chart

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Re: Newton 2021 arrests by race pie chart

Dear Councilor Andrea Downs, and Councilors Markiewicz, Oliver, Lucas, Malakie, Bowman, Grossman and Lipof,

I attended the Newton public safety committee meeting on January 5, but had to leave before the public comment period.

Several counselors commented about the 2021 arrest pie chart, with its oversized 18% slice for Blacks, who account for only 3% of our population. One councilor asked if it was possible to find out how many non-residents were represented in the arrest data, another asked if it could be determined how many employees in Newton are Black, to see if that could help account for the dramatic number. With those requests, the question was set aside.

I want to caution that it's very close to impossible for non-resident Blacks to be changing Newton's daily demographics enough to account for the oversized number of Black arrests. *Per Capita, the black arrest rate is 7.3 times the White arrest rate.*^[*1] (The chart's Hispanic arrest rate is also too high, 3.3x the White rate, but for the sake of clarity I'm only covering the black/white disparity in this letter.)

A set of job statistics for Newton is available on the city website's economic development pages, in the Camoin study.^[*2] The study reports 79,506 jobs in Newton, and it reports that 11% of them are filled by Newton residents, giving us 70,760 non-resident employees. This gives Newton a combined resident-plus-nonresident adult population of 140,387.^[*3]

For this combined population, an 18% demographic of black adults would need to equal 25,270. The *resident* Black adult population of Newton provides 2,089 of that number. The remaining 23,180 must be provided entirely by the *non-resident* population. It means 32.7% of that nonresident 70,760 person population would have to be Black — a staggering percentage in a state with a 9% black demographic. Still staggering, even if we only count the 3 eastern counties of Middlesex, Norfolk and Suffolk, with a combined 11% Black demographic.

The core point is; we would need an implausibly large number of black non-residents to balance this equation, not just a few hundred or even a few thousand. And that would need to be accompanied by an equally implausibly small number of white, Asian, Hispanic and other non-residents.

I think we need to quickly move to the conclusion that the chart documents a real problem. Regardless of whether we are arresting residents or non-residents, the evidence strongly suggests that Newton is stopping and arresting black individuals at many times the rate of white individuals, and lack of intention does not absolve us.

There are questions we should ask the NPD, in relation to each segment of this pie chart, to help understand what and how big the problem is. For starters, what crimes do the arrests represent, at what time of day, and, if these are traffic stops, what criteria are used to precipitate the stops. (It's not clear to me whether the chart represents only traffic stop arrests, or ALL arrests over the course of the year.) Also, we need to see a chart for stops that do not result in citations or arrests.

These requests to the department should not be seen as a search to place blame. They're a search to fully understand the numbers, to help us work around our innate biases through thoughtful policies.

Newton's residents, councilors and Police Department need to broadcast by our efforts, that our priority is to make Newton's increasingly diverse residents and visitors feel both safe and welcome.

Ellen Fisher
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Notes—

Except for job stats from the Camoin study, numbers are based on the 2020 census.

By presenting only adult population numbers, I am only “challenging” the nonresident population to try to bring our adult Black population up to 18%, not our entire Black population.

[*1] arrests per capita, for white, black, Hispanic and Asian residents.

Newton White population, 73.7% of 88,923 = 65,536
minus 21.7% for children = 51,315 adults,
divided by 128 arrests = 1 arrest for every 401 White adults.

Newton Black population, 3% of 88,923 = 2,668
minus 21.7% for children = 2,089 adults,
divided by 38 arrests = 1 arrest for every 55 Black adults.
7.3x the White rate.

Newton Hispanic population, 5% of 88,923 = 4,446
minus 21.7% for children = 3,481 adults,
divided by 29 arrests = 1 arrest for every 120 Hispanic adults.
3.3x the White rate.

Newton Asian population, 16.5 % of 88,923 = 14,672
minus 21.7% for children = 11,488 adults,
divided by 7 arrests = 1 arrest for every 1,641 Asian adults.
one quarter of the White rate.

[*2]

Economic development director Devra Bailin pointed me to the *Camoin Associates* study. She apologized that the stats are somewhat out of date (statistics are from 2015-19) and she hopes they'll be updated within the next few weeks. But even as-is, this resource provides good “ballpark” numbers to understand the issue.

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/33677/637276341841330000>

[*3]

The Camoin study actually uses 2 startlingly different stats for the number of jobs in newton. 56,718 based on 2015 census, vs 79,506 based on 2019 Bureau of Labor Statistics. When I asked about this 40% increase in 4 years, Ms Bailin wrote that the difference may reflect a different approach, for instance:

- The larger number may include home businesses.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics numbers “often includes job numbers for businesses headquartered in Newton which include their total work force, even if located outside the State.”

To be conservative, I'm using the larger jobs number:
the non-resident population derived from that larger number “only” needs to be 32.7% black to achieve an 18% black resident+nonresident population, as opposed to 37% for the non-residents derived from the smaller jobs number.

Newton total population = 88,923
minus 21.7% for children = 69,627 total adult population
79,506 jobs, minus 11% filled by Newtonites = 70,760 nonresidents.
combined resident+nonresident adult population =140,387

To be conservative, I'm using the larger jobs number:
the non-resident population derived from that larger number “only” needs to be 34.6% black to achieve an 18% black resident+nonresident population, as opposed to 37% for the non-residents derived from the smaller jobs number.

Newton total population = 88,923
minus 21.7% for children = 69,627 total adult population
79,506 jobs, minus 11% filled by Newtonites = 62,724 nonresidents.
combined resident+nonresident adult population =132,351