

Thursday, June 6, 2024

## Mayor's Newton Update

### Significant Upgrade to Newton 311

One of the easiest ways to have the City of Newton respond to your needs is to use Newton 311 on your computer or on your smartphone.

Through Newton 311, you can ask for a pothole to be filled, for an overflowing trash bin to be emptied, for a dead animal in a street to be picked up, for a damaged trash/recycling cart to be fixed, for a knocked down sign to be repaired, for a hornet nest in a city tree to be cleared, for a downed tree limb to be removed, for a catch basin to be cleaned, for a noisy manhole cover to be reset, and much more. In addition, Newton 311 is an access point for paying your bills to City of Newton.

We just swapped out our 12-year-old system for a new one from a company called GoGov that is easier to use and more responsive to residents and property owners. Plus, it tracks requests better.

Newton 311 is pretty simple to use.

On your cell phone, to get started download the free Newton 311 app, then set up an account and start using the app today. (Go ahead and delete the old app.)

For example, let's say you see a pothole on your street that you want to report. Open the Newton 311 app and tap START REQUEST. You can either scroll through the list of heavily used topics or just type POTHOLE into the search bar. Next, add a picture if want and use a pin to identify the location or enter the address in the location field. Newton 311 will alert you to other similar requests that have been entered for the address, so you can see if someone else has already reported the issue. If you still want to move forward, type your concern in the description field and then SUBMIT.

Once you've reported an issue, you'll be able to track your request and continue to communicate with the City throughout the resolution process.

Newton 311 also allows users to access other City functions including making a payment online or checking the Events Calendar. The new Newton 311 is much more of a one-stop resource than our previous version.

Unfortunately, requests that were entered into the former 311 system will no longer be able to be viewed under the old user's account in our new Newton 311 system. Don't worry if you still have open requests entered into the former system; all requests will continue to be worked on by our team.

Not a fan of mobile apps on a cell phone?

You can access Newton 311 on your computer by going to the City of Newton website at [newtonma.gov](http://newtonma.gov) and clicking on the Newton 311 tab on the opening page.

Our Newton Customer Service staff is also a phone call away and happy to answer questions and enter requests for you. They can be reached Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at 617-796-1000.

We look forward to hearing from you whether by a request on your cell phone, through your computer, or on the phone. Let us know how we can help.

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### **Bad News from Feds on Funding for the Newtonville Commuter Rail Station**

The MBTA did not receive federal funding through the All Station Accessibility Program (ASAP) for construction to make the Newtonville station accessible and to reconfigure the platforms for more frequent train service.

Instead, the MBTA is getting ASAP funds to upgrade and make accessible 14 stations along the Green Line's B and C branches, including Newton's Chestnut Hill stop. Congressman Jake Auchincloss, State Representative Kay Khan and I remain completely committed to securing the funding.

Congressman Auchincloss and I expect to meet with MBTA General Manager Phillip Eng soon to discuss next steps to secure funding for Newtonville and get this critically important station rebuilt.

In April, the MBTA committed to funding and proceeding with the full design (see the presentation [here](#)).

Sec. of Transportation Monica Tibbits-Nutt committed to funding the construction of the upgrades at a recent Charles River Chamber event in May. Responding to a question from City Councilor Susan Albright, Tibbits-Nutt said, "Once the design is finished, we're doing it. ... 100 percent, yes," she said. (Watch a video of the event [here](#). Sec. Tibbits-Nutt's comments on the Newtonville station begin at 27:50.)

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### **Green Light for Washington Street Pilot**

We're moving forward with a redesign of Washington Street between West Newton Square and Newtonville.

We're piloting a redesign to address a bunch of issues: speeding, poor visibility turning into/out of side streets, stretches of missing sidewalks, too few safe

pedestrian crosswalks, an inhospitable environment next to the MassPike, and limited bicycle paths.

The City Council approved the redesign between Chestnut Street in West Newton Square and Lowell Avenue in Newtonville for a pilot that will:

- Create a two-lane roadway (with left turn pockets at most intersections) to reduce speeds and conflicts along the roadway, therefore reducing the likelihood of fatal and serious injuries.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and comfort through a protected shared-use path along the south side of Washington Street.
- Retain a lot of the parking.
- Limit parking right by intersections to make it easier to turn onto Washington Street.
- Increase greenery and landscaping.

While the pilot is in place, we will be collecting data regularly on the traffic volumes, number of bicyclists and pedestrians, intersection queuing, diversion of traffic to other streets, bus ridership, and parking utilization. We will provide updates to the City Council and make tweaks as needed.

The pilot also lets us test the redesign along this portion of Washington street first before investing the resources into permanent improvements along the entire corridor.

We expect to install the pilot beginning next year. More information, including the roadway plans, can be found at [www.newtonma.gov/washingtonstreet](http://www.newtonma.gov/washingtonstreet).

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## **Gun Violence Awareness Weekend**

Tomorrow, Friday, June 7, and through Wear Orange National Gun Violence Awareness Weekend, we honor victims and survivors of gun violence and stand up for a better future.

In the United States, guns take the lives of approximately 120 people every day and, on average, another 327 people are shot.

Through the month of June, the water in the fountain in front of City Hall will be tinted orange as a call to action to curb the epidemic of gun violence.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

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P.S. Join the fun at **Newton Highlands Village Day**, this Sunday, June 9, with food, live music, kids activities and plenty of vendor booths. Festivities begin at 11:00 a.m. and continue through 4:00 p.m. on Lincoln Street between Walnut and Bowdoin.

P.P.S. *Strummin' Up to Boston* is partnering with the City of Newton to bring some of the finest and most fun-loving **ukulele groups to City Hall** for live musical performances this Sunday, June 9. Eight New England based ukulele ensembles, including Newton's own "[City Hall Strummers](#)" will perform from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at City Hall's War Memorial Auditorium, 1000 Commonwealth Ave. Enjoy food trucks and vendor booths selling unique musical gifts, and a group musical strum along led by local ukulele personality Danno Sullivan. It's free and all age friendly. Click [here](#) and scroll down for a list of performers.

P.P.P.S. Have extra plants, seeds or garden supplies? Bring them to **Historic Newton's Plant Swap** on Saturday, June 15. Trade with fellow garden enthusiasts, share gardening tips, and expand your indoor or outdoor collection. The swap begins at 11:00 a.m. and runs through 1:00 p.m. at the Durant-Kenrick House and Grounds, 286 Waverley Ave. Find more information [here](#).

P.P.P.P.S. The **Highland Glee Club** will close out its season with a community "love in" concert on Sunday, June 16. Hear rock and folk hits of the 60s and early 70s by artists including the Beatles, Bob Dylan, the Grateful Dead, Beach Boys, Simon & Garfunkel and more. The Glee Club will be accompanied by the musicians of Firefly. The concert begins at the 7:00 p.m. at the Hyde Bandstand, 90 Lincoln St. (Rain date is Monday, June 17.)

P.P.P.P.P.S. Ever wonder who Isaac Tucker Burr was, and why he has a Newton elementary school named after him? **Stroll through the Newton Cemetery with Historic Newton** on Thursday, June 20 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. and learn about the namesakes of many of our elementary and middle schools. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

P.P.P.P.P.P.S. A resident sent us this video of four **8-year-old students at the Newton England Conservatory** performing the Mozart string quartet, Opus 157 at Levingston Cove. Have a listen:



P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Game 1 of the NBA Finals is tonight. [Go Celtics!](#)

**Past P.S.s happening soon:**

P.S. **Newton Fire Firefighters** will hold their Memorial Service for members of the NFD family this Sunday, June 9. The Memorial Ceremony begins at 10:30 a.m. and will be held in front of Fire Headquarters, 1164 Centre Street. Prior to the ceremony, refreshments will be served inside Fire Station 3, around the corner at 31 Willow Street.

P.P.S. **Powwow and the People Who Bring It to Life**, an exhibit of photos by local photographers Scott Strong Hawk Foster and Dr. Rob Adelman, will be at the New Art Center at the Trio Corridor through Saturday, June 8. Click [here](#) for more information.

P.P.P.S. The Newton Cultural Alliance's **10<sup>th</sup> Annual Strawberry Festival** is Saturday, June 8. Festivities begin at 6:30 p.m. at The Allen Center, 35 Webster St. Click [here](#) for more information.



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