

Mayor's Update

Current Cases

There are 573 Newton residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 through Sunday evening, May 3. This is an increase of 14 people since we reported 559 cases on Friday with the data through Thursday evening, April 30. (In between, we had 575 for May 1 and 577 for May 2.)



Yes, our positive cases went down. A number of cases that were originally assigned to Newton but were actually residents of other towns were reassigned by the state to their actual city/town of residence. Thus, even with some new positive cases, we had even more reassigned so the total number of Newton cases decreased. Remember that our data reporting reflects what we know on any given day.

Cover Your Nose and Mouth

The requirement to wear face coverings in public places where physical distancing is not possible, whether indoors or outdoors, goes into effect this Wednesday, May 6, 2020 by Order of Governor Baker.

In particular, both customers and employees in grocery stores, pharmacies and other retail stores open to the public must wear a face covering at all times. These stores may decline entry to someone who refuses to wear a face covering (unless it is for a medical reason).

The Order includes important exceptions for children under the age of two and those unable to wear one due to a medical condition. Remember that a person who declines to wear a face covering because of a medical condition may do so and is not required to provide documentation verifying the condition. Please be kind in a grocery store or pharmacy to people not wearing a face covering; they may have a very good reason for not doing so.

It is advisable to always have a face covering handy when outside. Please put it on when close to others, whether walking, biking or jogging. People who are outside do not need to wear a face covering unless they are nearer than 6 feet to people not in their household. ...However, I continue to hear from residents, particularly those who are older or who have underlying medical conditions, that they are worried when outside as people without face coverings inadvertently come within a 6 foot range. Help all our residents feel safe and allow everyone to enjoy the warm weather outdoors by wearing a face covering when physical distancing isn't possible.

The Order also reminds all of us to not use healthcare worker masks, such as N95s, as those remain in short supply and should be preserved for use by healthcare workers.

Why did Governor Baker issue the Order? Public health experts figured out that an

infected person may transmit COVID-19 even when that person does not exhibit any symptoms of the virus and a face covering can help prevent that transmission.

Per the Governor's Order, Newton's Health and Human Services(HHS) are authorized to enforce the Order and may do so with the assistance of the police. Deborah Youngblood, Newton's Commissioner of Health and Human Services, is issuing an Emergency Order today to appoint the Newton Police Department as enforcement agents. This will stay in effect until further notice.

This is a period where we have seen high compliance in Newton with the advisory to wear face coverings. Thank you. This is also a period of anxiety and tension. The Newton Police Department will thoughtfully enforce this Order, providing education and encouragement (and a face covering) in most instances. The Newton Police Department do have the option of a civil fine of \$300 for the violation of this Order if necessary.

Construction Update

In anticipation of the day when we can resume all construction in Newton, we have developed Newton Covid-19 Safety Guidelines for Construction Sites that all contractors/homeowners will need to read, sign, and return to the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) before recommencing work.

If you have a project on hold, please review the attached guidance document [here](#), sign, and return to ISD so that when we do open for construction, you will be ready to go.

Any questions, please contact the Inspectional Services Department at 617-796-1061.

Fiscal Year 2021 Budget

Next Monday night, May 11, I will present the City of Newton's Fiscal Year 2021 Budget to the City Council during a virtual Zoom meeting.

This was not the budget I was preparing to present before the COVID-19 crisis began and the dire health and financial realities unfolded. As the budget presentation will show, dreams are being deferred and important initiatives postponed.

It is, however, a budget that reflects our values. Our essential services are protected now and for the coming years: Teachers will be teaching, police officers will be in their cruisers and fire fighters in their trucks, snow will be plowed, potholes fixed, and trash collected. Human services for our older and vulnerable residents will be provided.

While we have made unpleasant and difficult decisions as our revenues have taken a hit, make no mistake, Newton continues to be a good place to live and our City is rock solid. We will stay nimble, responding to changing economic conditions by either holding back on spending if need be or moving forward with important initiatives if possible.

I will present the intricacies of the budget on Monday night as well as an update on COVID-19. The Zoom City Council meeting begins at 7:45 p.m. Zoom in at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/905404917> (meeting ID: 905 404 917). You can also watch a live broadcast on NewTV's government channel (Comcast 9, RCN 13, 614(HD), Verizon 33), or view a livestream on NewTV's Vimeo channel [here](#).

Heat Pumps and HeatSmart

Heat pumps can make your home more efficient and more comfortable in both summer and winter.

Heat pumps are a cooling and heating technology, and can also be used for heating hot water. They are significantly more energy efficient than other heating and cooling systems.

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) has awarded a grant to the City of Newton for residents and businesses to participate in the 2020 HeatSmart Mass program.

The program, while managed by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) in partnership with the Department of Energy Resources (DOER), is powered by local volunteers and municipal staff. Here in Newton, our HeatSmart campaign is being coordinated by a team of volunteers from Green Newton, Newton Mothers Out Front, the 350 Mass Newton Node, and by Ann Berwick, the City's Co-Director of Sustainability.

Interested in learning more about heat pumps? Watch a HeatSmart Newton webinar [here](#) or check out the program web site [here](#).

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. The Newton Public Schools closed their doors on Friday, March 13 and our teachers started a journey from home reinventing their classrooms, pedagogy and syllabi online. During this unsettling period, our teachers are providing lessons in life, resiliency and academics in ways they couldn't have imagined when the school year started. We've also had a peek into their kitchens, living rooms and other creative home teaching spaces along the way. Tomorrow is National Teachers Day, a great opportunity for me to say thanks to our NPS teachers who are creatively helping our children be connected, healthy and learning.

P.P.S Even in the midst of COVID-19, we need to fill out our U.S. Census. We are way ahead of the country (56.6% response rate) and the Commonwealth (58.8%) as 71.9% have responded here in Newton. Let's keep up the momentum to make sure everyone is part of the count! Click [here](#) for more information and to take the census.



P.P.P.S. Tomorrow is also #GivingTuesdayNow, a worldwide day of giving and unity created in response to the unprecedented need caused by COVID-19. Whether your passion is children, music, the environment, animals, art, people with differences, food insecurity, health, education or something else, we have many wonderful non-profits in Newton. Many are struggling in the face of COVID-19. Consider giving on Tuesday.

P.P.P.P.S. The U.S. Air Force's jazz ensemble "Airmen of Note" led a collaboration of military musicians from around the world in a rendition of *I'll be Seeing You*, a song of hope popular during World War II. I watched this video last night and thought I'd share below.

