

## Mayor's Update



### “Use Less and Green the Rest” – The City of Newton’s 5-year Climate Action Plan

Climate change is a crisis. We can see the consequences already: more intense heat waves; polar ice melts; heavier downpours; devastating flooding; longer droughts; accelerating sea level rise; more intense hurricanes; and loss of native species.

The City of Newton is facing the challenge head on. Long-term success is a carbon-neutral Newton by 2050; that is our goal. To achieve that goal, we developed our first 5-Year Climate Action Plan, A Living Plan for 2020-2024. Written by City staff with assistance from City Councilors, residents, environmental groups and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. The plan commits the City to implementing strategies that will significantly

decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions over the next five years.

#### *Newton’s Greenhouse (GHG) Baseline*

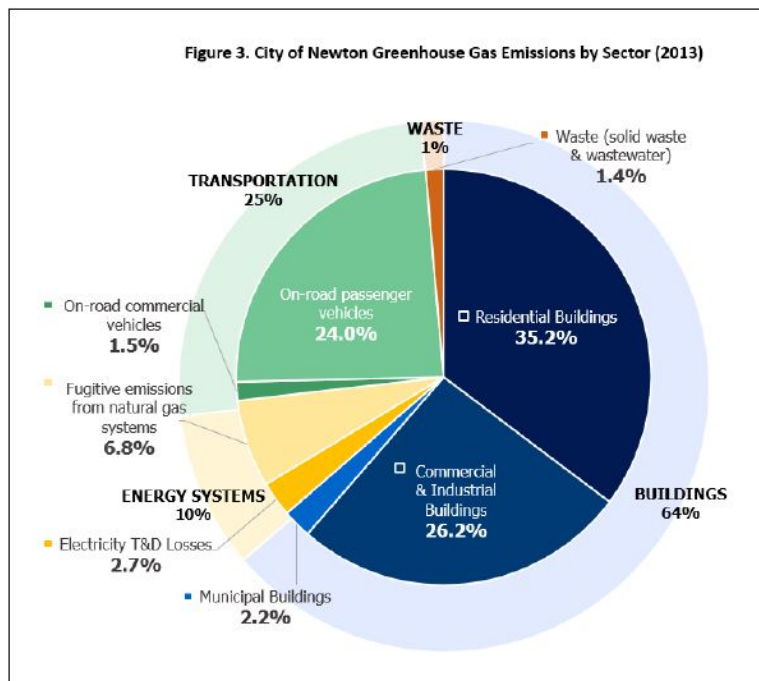
Newton emitted 785,068 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2013. Emissions from buildings accounted for 64% of Newton’s overall emissions, and emissions from transportation made up another 25%. These two sectors are therefore the main focus of this plan.

#### *What Success Looks Like for Newton and How to Get There*

The carbon-neutral Newton of 2050 will be and must be different from today. It will have an energy-efficient built environment; a transit-oriented emphasis; electrified vehicles and homes; significant use of solar panels; well-developed walking and biking opportunities; and a generous street tree canopy.

In the next five years, City Hall to step up to help educate, advocate, and promote meaningful change. But the City can not succeed alone.

Given the magnitude of the changes required, residents and business owners will need to be strong partners for the City as a whole to make meaningful reductions in



greenhouse gas emissions.

### *Use Less and Green the Rest*

The plan reflects the strategic mantra: “Use less and green the rest.”

“Using less” will require us to increase energy efficiency in all buildings through electrification and insulated building envelopes; develop walkable and transit-oriented neighborhoods and business districts; reduce reliance on single occupancy gas and diesel vehicles; increase our biking, walking, and use of shared rides and public transportation; and minimize our “embodied carbon” emissions (the greenhouse gas emissions associated with extracting, manufacturing, and transporting materials for buildings, vehicles, roads, etc.).

“Greening the rest” means using renewable energy sources (such as solar and wind) instead of fossil fuels such as coal, natural gas, and oil to generate clean electrical power; electrifying everything we can – building heating and cooling systems, vehicles and transportation systems; and capturing carbon from the atmosphere by expanding our street tree canopies and forested spaces.

### *Recommended Actions 2020-2024*

The plan lays out specific actions in six sectors:

- **Implementing Newton’s Climate Action Plan:** The City is committed to ensuring the success of this Climate Action Plan by changing internal operations and working closely with partners.
- **Promoting Clean and Renewable Energy:** “Greening” the sources supplying electricity to the City is vital to the pathway to carbon neutrality. The City will promote and expand Newton Power Choice, installing municipal solar arrays, and promote private solar installations.
- **Greening Newton’s Transportation and Streetscapes:** The second largest source of GHG emissions in Newton comes from cars and trucks. The City will support Newton’s residents, workforce, and visitors in switching to battery electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles; reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips; and increasing biking, walking, telecommuting, use of public transportation, and shared trips.
- **Improving New Construction and Major Renovations:** Energy use reduction and electrification are the backbones of any GHG emissions reduction plan. As new developments are built and renovations are undertaken, the choices made by developers and architects will have a significant impact on the City’s GHG emissions profile. To the extent legally permissible, the City will take steps to ensure that construction meets standards necessary to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.
- **Improving Existing Buildings:** Existing residential and commercial buildings in Newton are responsible for a majority of the City’s GHG emissions. The City will work with homeowners to increase energy efficiency and reduce reliance on natural gas and heating oil in the City’s existing building stock. Moving the needle for existing buildings will require the City to put in place “carrots and sticks” to incentivize significant action by the private sector.
- **Reducing Emissions associated with Consumption and Disposal:** The City will work to help Newtonians limit their consumption and related disposal.

Read the draft plan [here](#).

Learn more at a joint meeting of the City Council's Zoning and Planning and Public Facilities Standing Committees on Monday, Aug. 26, starting at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Ave., where both this five year plan and a longer term one developed by the Newton Citizens Commission on Energy will be discussed.



*(Photo: Architect's rendering of the proposed 40B project off California Street.)*

## **A Second 40B Housing Proposal**

A second 40B housing development proposal was submitted last week to MassHousing. Criterion Development Partners is proposing 204 units of rental housing, 17,782 square-feet of office/innovation space and 4,600 square-feet of retail space between Los Angeles Street and Riverdale Avenue. This is just off California Street in Nonantum along the Charles River next to Forte Park.



The project was filed at MassHousing under Chapter 40B, the state law enacted in 1969 which allows developments that include a

certain percentage of affordable housing units to bypass most local zoning restrictions in communities that do not meet the law's criteria. Newton has not yet met the threshold to bypass the law. The proposal includes 51 units of permanently affordable housing (at 80% of area median income), or 25% of the total number of units. Applying to MassHousing, the quasi-governmental agency created in 1966 that supports the development of affordable housing, is the first step in the 40B process.

This proposed project is on property that was once used by manufacturing businesses. The existing building on the property has been used by The Boston Globe for newspaper delivery.

The Planning Department, soon followed by Newton's Zoning Board of Appeals, is beginning the review process. Most likely the ZBA will vote on the proposal in mid-2020.

As with the 40B project proposed earlier this month on Washington Street, some aspects of the project initially look promising while there are still many issues and questions that we will be looking at closely.

The promising aspects include the 51 units of much-needed affordable housing and a new public walkway through the complex to a landscaped area along the Charles River; new retail and commercial space.

We'll be looking closely at whether the retail spaces are sized appropriately and rents

priced to attract small, local businesses. Will green energy building standards be used? How is the developer planning to address traffic impacts from the project? Are the number of units appropriate at this location? Are the heights of the two buildings, four and five stories, appropriate? Is there sufficient parking? What is the impact on Forte Park?

I would have preferred this project, like the Washington Street project, to come in through the special permit process so the City Council could have more input. But until Newton meets its affordability thresholds developers will continue to have this option to move forward with the 40B process.

*(Photo: A great welcome home to Cabot for Humpty Dumpty - all ready for the first day of school. Stay tuned for a date for the official ribbon cutting.)*

### **Regulating Vaping in Newton**

E-cigarettes – or vaping – is a growing epidemic. The numbers are staggering, and the ramifications alarming. Newton’s educators and parents are seeing more and more students vaping, and the users are getting younger and younger.

Superintendent David Fleishman held a parent forum on vaping this past winter and newly revised anti-tobacco and anti-vaping education programs will be introduced in the elementary schools next year, but we need to do more.

Health and Human Services Commissioner Deborah Youngblood has a draft regulation to make it more difficult for youngsters to have access to this addictive product in Newton. We are proposing to restrict e-cigarette sales in Newton to the two adult-only retail tobacco stores, e.g. Vape Daddy and Garden City Vape and Smoke. (Please note that we have already capped the number of adult-only retail tobacco stores to two.) This in effect means e-cigarettes and related products would no longer be available at gas stations or convenience stores.

Read the draft regulation and answers to frequently asked questions [here](#).

A public listening session on the regulation will be held Thursday, Oct. 3, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers on the second floor at City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Ave. Written comments about this regulation can be emailed to [health@newtonma.gov](mailto:health@newtonma.gov) before 5:00 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 4, 2019.

Questions? Call the Department of Health & Human Services at 617-796-1420.

**MBTA Bus Routes Change Sunday, Sept. 1**



The MBTA “Better Bus” changes to five routes in Newton will begin Sunday, Sept. 1. Route 59: This bus will travel on Elliot Street only during peak travel times in the peak direction. Between 7:30 and 8:45 a.m., service to Watertown Square will alternate between Needham Street and Elliot Street. Between 4:40 and 6:05 p.m., service to Needham Junction will alternate between Needham Street and Elliot Street. More information about these changes is [here](#).

Route 501, 502, 503 and 504: The 502 and 504 buses will no longer stop in Newton Corner on outbound trips during peak afternoon service between 3:25 and 7:06 p.m. Service will not change at other times of day. The 501 and 503 buses will stop at Newton Corner, at both Washington Street and Centre Ave, during all afternoon trips. More information about these changes is [here](#).

*(Photo: The Service Stars paid a visit to City Hall this week with their amazing Newton teachers Andy Comings and Sam Genier.)*



### **Free Emergency Training**

Join the Newton Police, Fire and Health and Human Services Departments to learn how to be the help until help arrives during an emergency.

This free training is offered:

Tuesdays, Sept. 10 and 17, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Newton Fire Headquarters. [Sign up here](#).

Session 1: Call 9-1-1, Stay Safe, Stop the Bleed, Position the Injured

Session 2: Make a Plan, Build a Kit, Be Prepared, Fire Extinguishers, Narcan, Perform CPR

Participants should commit to attending both sessions. Questions? Call Health & Human Services at 617-796-1420.

### **Help Us Plan Newton’s Celebration of Women’s Right to Vote**

2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, guaranteeing and protecting women's constitutional right to vote. We’re working together with Historic Newton, the League of Women Voters of Newton, the Newton Free Library, and other civic organizations to plan Newton’s commemorations of this important milestone. We’re also pleased to be collaborating with the Women’s Suffrage Celebration Coalition of MA.

Join us on Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in Room 204 at City Hall (1000 Commonwealth Ave.) to help us brainstorm. Please RSVP to Dana Hanson at [dhanson@newtonma.gov](mailto:dhanson@newtonma.gov). Contact Dana if you can’t make the meeting but would like to get involved.

## Missing Python

The Newton Police put out the following information:

“Missing Wildlife Advisory: At approximately 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 20<sup>th</sup>, a Burmese Python Snake escaped from a backyard on Jewett Street in Newton Corner.

The owner describes the snake as being black, gold and yellow, 6 to 8 feet in length and thick.

According to the Animal Rescue League, the snake will be out during the warmer periods but as it turns cooler, it will seek the warmth from home foundations, garages, etc.

Though the snake was living with a family, we’re advising as we do with any wildlife, to use caution, not approach it and call our dispatch directly at 617 796-2100 (Do Not call our Animal Control).”

Warmly,

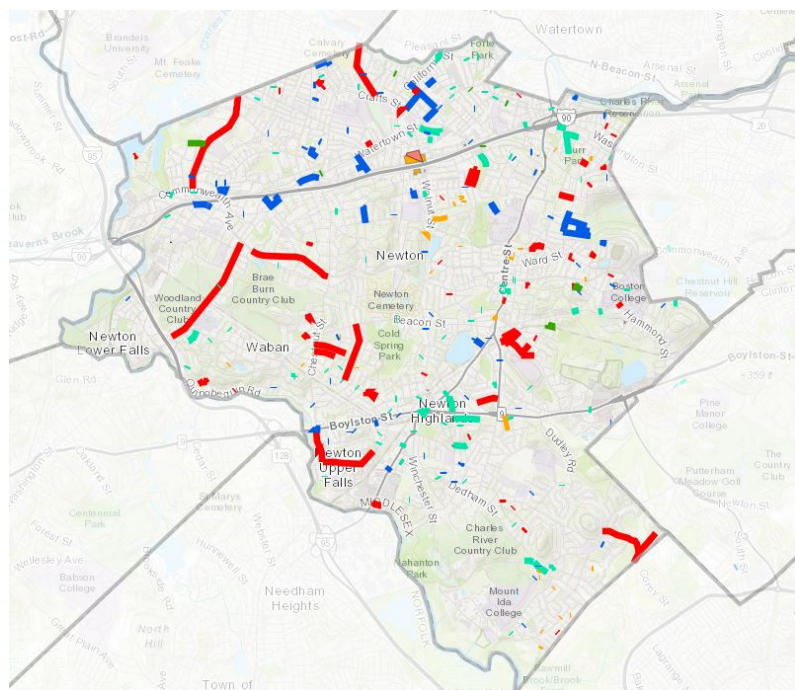
Ruthanne

P.S. School starts on Tuesday, Sept. 3. Please remember to leave extra time for your drive and slow down. Watch for students walking and biking to school.

P.P.S Bug spray should be on your “to-do” list when you head outdoors from now through the first frost. We know there are mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus in Newton, and it’s important to be vigilant about using bug spray and avoiding peak mosquito hours from dusk to dawn. There are currently no plans to spray for mosquitoes in Newton. For more information about mosquito repellants and other prevention tips, visit [www.newtonma.gov/health](http://www.newtonma.gov/health)

P.P.P.S Ever wonder why there’s a road closed in your neighborhood? Check out the Department of Public Works’ [Interactive Road Closure Map](#). Find out what roads are being worked on and when the job is expected to be completed

P.P.P.P.S.If you’re new, or newish, to Newton, join me in my office at City Hall (1000 Commonwealth Ave.) on Tuesday night, Aug. 27 from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Ask questions and give us your first impressions of your new community.



I’ll be joined by Newton residents Martha Heinemann Bixby and Caitlin Cusick of “Welcoming Newton,” (they’re online at [WelcomingNewton.org](http://WelcomingNewton.org)) a grassroots group

created to support newcomers to Newton and help them get involved in what's happening around the City.

