

## Mayor's Update

### Sad News

With a heavy heart, I mourn alongside all of Newton at the sudden passing of Councilor Allan L. “Jay” Ciccone, Jr. who died on Saturday, Nov. 7.

Jay was a dedicated public servant, serving his beloved Ward 1 in Nonantum as a City Councilor/Alderman since 2007. He followed the family tradition of being a first responder, having retired from the Sherborn Police Department after seventeen years of service.



Though he was a young man (55 years old), he loved tradition and served as a faithful steward of deep and abiding community connections while keeping an eye to the future. He loved being a City Councilor and speaking up for the people of Newton. He supported the people who served in Newton’s Police and Fire Departments. Jay served with integrity and authenticity. He was a man of the people; his feet were on the ground; he was plain spoken, genuine, and passionate; he was a man of his word.

Most of all, Jay loved his family—ever devoted to his late mother Patricia, his father and former Alderman and Newton police officer Allan Ciccone, Sr., his four children, two grandchildren and his beloved girlfriend Diane.

I will miss him as a colleague and a friend. I valued his advice and input (most recently on our Ambulance contract). I will remember how he positively beamed every time he shared his photos of his grandchildren with me. The City of Newton and Nonantum has lost a true champion of the people and a good, good man.

Information on services for Councilor Ciccone can be found [here](#).

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### Concerning MBTA Cuts Proposed

When the MBTA unveiled a proposed program of consequential service cuts yesterday to help close their budget shortfall of \$580 million, I instantly became concerned.

Newton is served by seven stops on the “D” branch of the Green Line and three stops on the commuter rail Framingham/Worcester line. The MBTA runs five local bus routes and nine express bus routes through the City.

The pandemic has created a double whammy for the MBTA. COVID-19 has dramatically impacted how many of us work, live and recreate and thus how much we are moving around Greater Boston. In addition, the challenges of being close together on public transit with a highly contagious disease are significant.

As a result, service levels for the Green Line, commuter rail and bus routes are at 24%, 13%, 41% respectively compared to pre-COVID levels. (Ferry ridership is at

12% of pre-COVID levels.)

The proposed cuts will definitely impact transit riders in Newton. While the MBTA expects to restore services eventually, in the meantime it will hurt employees, seniors, youngsters and those without access to cars. There will be a disproportionate impact on those with tight budgets. It will undermine our environmental goals, our ability to reduce congestion and the promise of transit oriented housing, retail, restaurants and offices. Without frequent public transit, reviving the economy becomes even more difficult. We need the MBTA to provide more service, not less.

The proposed cuts include ending all bus and subway service at midnight, reducing subway frequency by approximately 20% which would add a minute or two to wait times between trains, and eliminating weekend commuter rail service. The MBTA expects to implement the service cuts between January and June 2021.

In Newton, the proposal reduces bus service. Perhaps most concerning is the proposal to eliminate entirely Routes 52 and 505. Route 52 is the only bus that operates through the center of Newton - from Watertown Square to Dedham along Centre Street. Route 505 provides express bus service between Auburndale/West Newton and Boston via Lexington Street, Commonwealth Avenue, Washington Street and I-90. It also includes restructuring or shortening several bus routes, including Routes 553, 554, 556 and 558, as well as the continued consolidation of Routes 501, 502, 503 and 504.

I will strongly advocate that some service along Routes 52 and 505 be maintained during this period, and to ensure that service in Newton is fully restored once the pandemic is controlled and ridership returns.

Capital projects that have not yet begun are now on hold. We've reached out to MBTA officials to get definitive word on whether the accessibility work planned at our commuter rail stations and at the Newton Highlands Green Line Station is postponed. These are important projects that are desperately needed both for people with disabilities and those without. I will be advocating strenuously to get these projects moving forward as soon as possible.

There are only two positive things in the news from the MBTA. There are no fare hikes being proposed and work on the Green Line Track and Signal Improvements which has been ongoing will continue.

The MBTA will hold 11 virtual public meetings on the proposed schedule cuts before a final vote is planned on December 7. The November 17 virtual meeting will focus on communities in the Inner Core, including Newton. I will be testifying. Find out more about the proposal and join me in speaking out and giving your feedback [here](#).

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*Follow Gov. Baker's Executive Order. Always wear a mask when in public, indoors or outdoors.*



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## Representative-Elect Auchincloss

Our new Congressperson, Representative-Elect Jake Auchincloss resigned his seat on Newton's City Council effective at 12:01 a.m. this morning.

In making the announcement, Jake credited those he served with for helping him learn how to craft policy, debate effectively, build coalitions, run campaigns, and serve constituents. He wrote, "I'm forever proud to have been a city councilor."

I think I can speak for many of us in saying we were proud that Jake served the City of Newton in his first elected office and we look forward to him representing Newton and the 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District in Washington. (The three previous holders of this seat were also Newtonians: Robert Drinan, Barney Frank and Joe Kennedy.)

Check out Newton-Needham Chamber President Greg Reibman's [interview](#) with the Representative-Elect from earlier today.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

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P.S. Honor our veterans tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. on a livestream by NewTV on Vimeo at <https://vimeo.com/466305745> (Wednesday, Nov. 11, 11:00 a.m.)

P.P.S. What is the link between segregation in America and government policies at the local, state and federal levels? Join a virtual event on Tuesday, Nov. 17 with Richard Rothstein, author of *The Color of Law, A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* to learn more. Thanks go to Families Organizing for Racial Justice (FORJ) and the League of Women Voters Newton and the organizers of the series *Overdue: Confronting Race and Racism in Newton*. Register to

“attend” [here](#).

P.P.P.S. Pick up your pre-ordered and pre-paid items curbside from a variety of vendors at the Winter Farmer's Market at Cold Spring Park on Tuesdays, 3:00-5:00 p.m. The Winter Market will run through Dec. 29. Find a list of our vendors and place an order [here](#). Questions? Call 617-796-1506 or email [nscammon@newtonma.gov](mailto:nscammon@newtonma.gov).

## The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America

Tuesday, November 17, 2020, 6:30 pm



With Author Richard Rothstein

