

## Mayor's Update

### COVID-19 Test Site Opens at Riverside Today

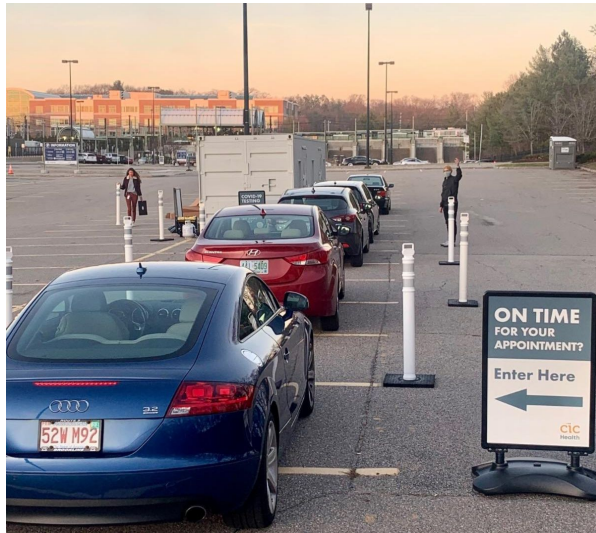
A new COVID-19, drive-through, quick, by appointment only testing site is now open at the Riverside MBTA station parking lot on Grove Street in Newton Lower Falls/Auburndale.

CIC Health is the operator. They are using the high-quality PCR tests. They will be processed at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. They are available to adults and children 2-years-old and older. People do not need a physician's referral.



I'm pleased to have a convenient, close to home option for people looking to book an appointment for a specific time. Test results are expected to be back within 24 to 36 hours, and often sooner.

Having a site close by is great as we continue to see escalating case numbers in Newton and Massachusetts; access to testing is another beneficial tool in breaking the chain of virus transmission.



Unfortunately, the cost of each \$80 test is not covered by insurance at this time. CIC Health is working to provide that option. The City of Newton Health and Human Service staff is working on an arrangement with CIC Health that will enable our HHS team to provide vulnerable clients working with city social workers access to necessary testing at the Riverside site.

Free tests are available without a physician's referral at state [Stop the Spread](#) sites. (Framingham is the closest Stop the Spread site to Newton at this time.) The Stop the Spread sites do not take appointments and lines can be long, although I'm told they move quickly.

The CIC Health testing site at Riverside will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., seven days a week. They are starting with 120 appointment slots daily, and will be adding more testing capacity in the coming weeks. We'll be keeping a close eye to make sure their plan to move cars quickly into the parking works well and does not create traffic issues on Grove Street and our neighborhoods.



CIC Health launched its first public testing site in late October in Kendall Square in Cambridge. Since then, CIC Health opened 13 sites in Vermont and one in Providence, RI, facilitating nearly 300,000 COVID-19 tests.

Thanks go to Tim Rowe and the team at CIC Health, Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack and the team at the MBTA, Mark Development and Newton Health and Human Services Commissioner Deb Youngblood and our team here in Newton for working together to get this site up and running.

CIC Health is also working with HHS and the Newton Public Schools on a voluntary testing program for teachers and staff working in-person in our school buildings.

Find more information about CIC Health and make an appointment to be tested at [cic-health.com](https://cic-health.com).

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## Denouncing Attacks on Our Health Care Professionals

The following is a Letter to the Editors of local newspapers that I signed, along with City Council President Susan Albright and Vice President Rick Lipof on behalf of the Council:

*Thank you for reporting on the outrageous attacks on Massachusetts infectious disease experts, including Dr. Ashish Jha, Dr. Michael Mina, and Dr. Sara Suliman. These individuals and many others are working around the clock to spare more lives being lost to Covid-19, and we owe them our deepest gratitude. All of us have a role to play in pushing back on repugnant and dangerous threats to people simply doing their jobs. Massachusetts is "the innovation state" and a sought after place to live or site a business because we champion knowledge, science, and open inquiry. Those who attack these health experts are attacking what actually makes our state and our country great.*

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## Snow Shoveling Season

It was a messy weekend with rain, wind, ice and an inch or so of wet snow.

The Department of Public Works had crews out over the weekend sanding, salting and clearing roads. All of us have to do our part as well. Please remember to clear the sidewalk in front of your home within 24 hours of when the snow stops falling after a storm.

Here's a reminder about the snow shoveling ordinance Under the ordinance passed by the City Council last year, property owners will receive one warning if their sidewalk is left uncleared and is reported into the City's 311 system. City employees will respond to the called-in complaints, take a photo of the violation, and issue warnings or fines. Fines are \$50 and will be repeated every 24 hours until the sidewalk is cleared.

This ordinance applies only to sidewalks that are paved or cement. If the sidewalk in

front of your property is grass or gravel, you don't need to shovel. Waivers to this ordinance are available from the [Newton Senior Center](#) for people who have a combination of health and financial duress, or because of religious circumstances.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

