



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

The department's overall mission is to:

- Serve as a resource to the City's elected and appointed officials and the community at large by conducting a technical review of development proposals;
- Promote and enhance neighborhood character and quality of life by conducting comprehensive planning, transportation planning, and economic development studies, and undertaking other problem-solving activities consistent with the City's goals; and
- Acquire and distribute federal housing and community development funds for programs, services, and neighborhood improvements that promote diversity and assist low- and moderate-income people.

The department is responsible for managing projects and programs in a variety of subject areas, including the following department priorities (*alphabetically ordered*):

Affordable Housing

Community Development

Community Preservation

Comprehensive Planning

Conservation, Floodplain and Wetlands

Economic Development

Historic Preservation

HOME Program

Housing Rehabilitation

Land Use/Development Review

Telecommunications

Transportation

Zoning Ordinance and Map Amendments

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Affordable Housing:

- Implemented a Fair Housing Initiatives Program grant for \$98,044 awarded to the City by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Sponsored 16 training sessions on fair housing to realtors, property managers, landlords, lenders and housing and social service agencies; developed and distributed more than 9,000 multi-lingual brochures addressing discrimination based on race, national origin, and source of income.
- Developed a Fair Housing Website and a Citywide housing discrimination complaint referral system.

Community Development:

- Expended more than \$1 million on human service, neighborhood improvement, economic development and accessibility improvement projects. Completed noteworthy neighborhood improvement projects include the Cheesecake Brook Greenway and Stearns Park tennis court.
- Expended more than \$98,000 in Emergency Shelter Grant funds to provide emergency shelter, transitional housing and needed services to people who are homeless and people at-risk of homelessness.

Community Preservation (CP):

- As of December 31, 2007, the CP Fund had a balance of \$2.58M available for appropriation, out of original funds of \$2.12M from the local tax surcharge, \$1.93M in state matching funds, and \$250,000 of investment income.
- As of February 2008, the Board of Aldermen had appropriated a total of \$1.63M in recommended FY'08

funding for two proposals and was considering \$2.47M in recommended fy08 funding for two other-proposals.

- Received eight (8) regular-round proposals, which requested total funding of \$1.36M.

Comprehensive Plan:

- Provided staff support to the Zoning and Planning Committee as they began their deliberations on the draft *Newton Comprehensive Plan*. The updated plan was subsequently adopted by the Board of Aldermen on November 19, 2007.

Conservation, Floodplains and Wetlands:

- Completed the Hammond Pond Stormwater Improvement project in June/July 2007, which will benefit water quality in the pond.
- Continued efforts to design a boardwalk between the Burr Elementary School and Flowed Meadow.
- Expect to complete the historic fencing at Houghton Garden.

Economic Development:

- Delivered the final report of the Newton Centre Task Force to the Mayor, a document concluding a three-year community planning process.
- Studied possible redevelopment of the MBTA Riverside (Green Line – “D” Branch) Station site.
- Conducted three successful WEI forums in support of women entrepreneurs.

Farm Commission:

- In partnership with the City’s Public Buildings Department and the Angino farm operator, completed improvements to the farmhouse such that it could be habitable for farm operator and his family.
- Assisted the Commission with their Business Plan for the farm and oversaw its successful implementation.

Historic Preservation:

- Provided staff support for and assisted the Newton Historical Commission (NHC) in their review of nearly 300 properties under the Demolition Delay Ordinance.
- Completed two nominations for local landmark designation and two nominations to establish National Register Districts for the Myrtle Baptist Church neighborhood (West Newton) and the Washington Park neighborhood (Newtonville).
- Provided staff support to the Chestnut Hill, Newtonville, Newton Upper Falls, and Auburndale Historic District Commissions in their review of approximately 100 applications for alterations to properties within these four local historic districts.

HOME Program:

- The twelve member communities of the WestMetro HOME Consortium have been active with seven (7) projects closed with total budgets of \$86 million and \$3.5 million in Consortium HOME funds that will generate 213 total new units and 42 new affordable HOME units. In addition, member communities closed on 18 homebuyer assistance cases.

Housing Rehabilitation:

- Provided homeownership assistance through the First-Time Homebuyer Program to one new household.
- Co-sponsored the pilot Accessory Apartment Incentive Program, along with Community Living Network, Inc. (CLN) and implemented needed program revisions to make program viable.
- Rehabilitated over 80 housing units through our Newton Housing Rehab Fund (NHRF) and Elder Grant programs.

Land Use/Development Review:

- Provided staff support to the Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen on more than 40 special permit applications and to the Zoning Board of Appeals on 10 applications for variances and comprehensive permits.
- Provided nearly 20 technical reviews of wireless, R.A.A.P., and Site Plan Review applications.

Telecommunications:

- Finalized negotiation with RCN for renewal of RCN's cable license.
- Finalized negotiation with Galaxy Wireless for a citywide municipal wireless network and developed process for approval and installation of equipment.
- Provided support to Mayor's Telecommunications Advisory Board and Newton Communications Access Center (NCAC/NewTV).
- Performed an assessment of citywide wireless coverage and needs and expect to release a RFP for leasing of city property for providers of cellular service.

Transportation, Traffic Management and Pedestrian Movement and Safety:

- Served as the Mayor's representative on the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).
- Served on the City's Traffic Council and provided support to the Public Safety and Transportation Committee of the Board of Aldermen.
- Completed work and obtained Board approval of the functional road classification system and prepared the design road classification system for review and approval.
- Assisted staff from the Boston MPO on a Phase 2 study of the Newton Corner rotary.

Zoning Ordinance and Map Amendments:

- Worked with the Zoning and Planning Committee to create a new Planned Multi-Use Business

Development zone to facilitate compatible commercial and residential development along commercial corridors on major arterials.

- Assisted the Planning and Development Board in completing a new draft Home Business Ordinance for consideration by the Zoning and Planning Committee.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Affordable Housing:

- Achieve stakeholder approval of the Fair Housing Task Force's Fair Housing Action Plan and begin implementing first year action steps.

Community Development:

- Work with CDBG advisory committees to conduct a needs assessment for the FY11-FY15 Consolidated Plan for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Create master plans for Charlesbank Park and Lowell Park and make improvements to Farlow and Chaffin Parks and Coletti-Magni Park.

Community Preservation:

- Work with the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to improve community understanding of the Community Preservation Act, update the annual Community Preservation Plan, and report cumulative and annual program results to the community at large.
- Assist the CPC and support relevant Board of Aldermen committees in reviewing proposals for community preservation funding and work with managers of projects for which the Board of Aldermen votes to appropriate funds, to report progress, solve problems, and publicize completion.

Comprehensive Plan:

- Identify early action items included in the *Newton Comprehensive Plan* and prepare scopes of work for high priority items.

Conservation, Floodplains and Wetlands:

- Identify two priority areas where kiosks and benches should be installed for visitors to larger conservation areas.
- Install signage at Flowed Meadow conservation area.
- Continue efforts to improve access between Flowed Meadow and adjacent neighborhoods, incorporating the newly acquired upland at 30 Wabasso Street.

Customer Service:

- Continue working to improve front counter service, improve procedures, and update and improve information provided on the department's website.

Economic Development:

- Consider next steps following completion of the Final Report of the Newton Centre Task Force.
- Continue to encourage responsible economic development projects in the City to enhance commercial tax base.

Farm Commission:

- Continue to assist Commission with the operation of Angino Farm and on development of a Master Plan.
- Strive to make the produce more widely available to the community and increase access to farm education programs.

Historic Preservation:

- Complete the citywide Preservation Plan.
- Continue to work on expanding the City's existing landmark program and inventory of National Register listed properties.

HOME Program:

- Work with Consortium to complete 20 homebuyer assistance cases and six affordable housing development projects with 43 new HOME-funded affordable housing units.

Housing Rehabilitation:

- Update and simplify grant and loan programs for elders and non-profits.

Land Use/Development Review:

- Develop new applications and brochures for Site Plan Review and the R.A.A.P.
- Work with the Commissioner of Inspectional Services to develop a filing checklist and brochure for comprehensive permit applications.

- Work with the Chairman of the Land Use Committee, Board President and other City Departments to try to streamline Special Permit process for minor projects.

Telecommunications:

- Monitor compliance of Verizon, ComCast and RCN with City cable licenses.
- Work with Public Works Department to finalize selection of a vendor for wireless automated meter reading project and deployment.
- Coordinate the deployment of a citywide WiFi network.
- Implement campaign to publicize the transition to all-digital TV broadcast and the availability of federally subsidized coupons.

Transportation, Traffic Management and Pedestrian Movement and Safety:

- Work with Boston MPO staff to complete Phase 2 of the Newton Corner study.
- Continue to work with other City departments and surrounding neighborhood to manage parking needs for Newton North High School through construction.

Zoning Ordinance and Map Amendments:

- Continue improving development and zoning mechanisms and facilitate changes to encourage and support development results consistent with the City's stated values pertaining to the character of its neighborhoods and quality of life.

DEPARTMENT:

114 - PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

**CITY OF NEWTON BUDGET
DEPARTMENT SUMMARY**

OBJECT SUMMARY	ACTUAL 2006	ACTUAL 2007	ORIGINAL	2008		RECOMMENDED 2009	APPROPRIATION CHANGE	
				ADJUSTMENTS	TOTAL		2008 To 2009	
51 - PERSONAL SERVICES	796,151	817,662	827,507	30,020	857,527	833,851	-23,676	-3%
52 - EXPENSES	49,049	19,776	29,072	0	29,072	29,132	60	0%
SUB-TOTALS:	845,200	837,437	856,579	30,020	886,599	862,983	-23,616	-3%
57 - FRINGE BENEFITS	91,362	102,629	126,492	0	126,492	126,215	-277	0%
SUB-TOTALS:	91,362	102,629	126,492	0	126,492	126,215	-277	0%
DEPARTMENT TOTALS:	936,562	940,067	983,071	30,020	1,013,091	989,198	-23,893	-2%

FUNCTIONAL ELEMENT SUMMARY	ACTUAL 2006	ACTUAL 2007	ORIGINAL	2008		RECOMMENDED 2009	APPROPRIATION CHANGE	
				ADJUSTMENTS	TOTAL		2008 To 2009	
0111401 PLANNING	795,651	777,186	813,705	35,536	849,241	834,503	-14,738	-2%
0111402 CONSERVATION	74,331	75,309	74,527	3,182	77,709	68,793	-8,916	-11%
0111403 HISTORICAL	66,580	87,572	94,839	-8,698	86,141	85,902	-239	0%
DEPARTMENT TOTALS:	936,562	940,067	983,071	30,020	1,013,091	989,198	-23,893	-2%

PLANNING	ACTUAL 2006	ACTUAL 2007	ORIGINAL	2008		RECOMMENDED 2009	APPROPRIATION CHANGE	
				ADJUSTMENTS	TOTAL		2008 To 2009	
51 - PERSONAL SERVICES	676,121	679,368	686,225	35,333	721,558	699,525	-22,033	-3%
52 - EXPENSES	45,428	13,670	20,807	0	20,807	20,932	125	1%
SUB-TOTALS:	721,549	693,038	707,032	35,333	742,365	720,457	-21,908	-3%
57 - FRINGE BENEFITS	74,102	84,148	106,673	203	106,876	114,046	7,170	7%
SUB-TOTALS:	74,102	84,148	106,673	203	106,876	114,046	7,170	7%
Element Totals:	795,651	777,186	813,705	35,536	849,241	834,503	-14,738	-2%

CONSERVATION	ACTUAL 2006	ACTUAL 2007	ORIGINAL	2008		RECOMMENDED 2009	APPROPRIATION CHANGE	
				ADJUSTMENTS	TOTAL		2008 To 2009	
51 - PERSONAL SERVICES	59,437	57,394	54,533	3,385	57,918	56,613	-1,305	-2%
52 - EXPENSES	2,019	4,661	6,285	0	6,285	6,220	-65	-1%
SUB-TOTALS:	61,456	62,054	60,818	3,385	64,203	62,833	-1,370	-2%
57 - FRINGE BENEFITS	12,875	13,254	13,709	-203	13,506	5,960	-7,546	-56%
SUB-TOTALS:	12,875	13,254	13,709	-203	13,506	5,960	-7,546	-56%
Element Totals:	74,331	75,309	74,527	3,182	77,709	68,793	-8,916	-11%

HISTORICAL	ACTUAL 2006	ACTUAL 2007	2008			RECOMMENDED 2009	APPROPRIATION CHANGE	
			ORIGINAL	ADJUSTMENTS	TOTAL		2008 To 2009	
51 - PERSONAL SERVICES	60,593	80,900	86,749	-8,698	78,051	77,713	-338	0%
52 - EXPENSES	1,603	1,445	1,980	0	1,980	1,980	0	0%
SUB-TOTALS:	62,196	82,344	88,729	-8,698	80,031	79,693	-338	0%
57 - FRINGE BENEFITS	4,384	5,227	6,110	0	6,110	6,209	99	2%
SUB-TOTALS:	4,384	5,227	6,110	0	6,110	6,209	99	2%
Element Totals:	66,580	87,572	94,839	-8,698	86,141	85,902	-239	0%

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**CITY OF NEWTON BUDGET
PERSONAL SERVICES SUMMARY**

ACCOUNT	POSITION TITLE	RANGE	2008 BUDGET		2009 RECOMMENDED	
			FTE	SALARY	FTE	SALARY
511001	Dir of Plan/Dev	H14	0.9	110,796	0.9	114,140
511001	Chf ZoningCode Official	H11	1	88,733	1	76,350
511001	Chief Planner	H11	1	82,358	1	86,119
511001	Transportation Coordin	H08	1	67,229	1	70,299
511001	Exec Asst/Dev Svc Supv	S08	1	56,455	1	58,159
511001	Dev Services Asst	S05	2	84,898	2	88,626
511001	Sr Environmental Plnr	S09	1	59,172	1	56,113
511001	Sr.Preservation Planner	S09	1	50,489	0.9	47,745
Account Totals:			8.9	600,130	8.8	597,551
511101	Econ Development Spec	H08	0.4	25,716	0	0
511101	Principal Planner	H21	0.4	22,781	0.4	24,703
511101	Account Specialist	H06	0.1	5,659	0.1	5,918
511101	Preservation Planner	S08	0.49	28,605	0.49	29,468
Account Totals:			1.39	82,761	0.99	60,089
511102	Senior Planner	S09	1	61,712	0.8	50,860
511102	Planner	S08	0.6	33,874	0.6	34,896
511102	Telecom Specialist	H08	0.6	41,559	0.6	43,590
511102	Dev Services Asst	S05	0.7	28,820	0.7	29,689
Account Totals:			2.9	165,964	2.7	159,036
Report Totals:			13.19	848,855	12.49	816,676