



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

Barney S. Heath  
Director  
Planning & Development  
Devra G. Bailin  
Director Economic  
Development

**Commissioners**  
Phil Plottel, Chair  
Jean Wood, Vice Chair  
Sarah Rahman, Secretary

Lisa Adams  
Eryn-Ashlei Bailey  
Robert Finkel  
Jeremy Freid  
Debora Jackson  
Jack Leader  
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## CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

### Economic Development Commission

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#### MEMORANDUM

**Date:** February 11, 2021

**To:** Honorable Mayor Ruthanne Fuller  
Honorable City Council

**From:** Philip Plottel, Chair, Economic Development  
Commission  
Barney Heath, Director of Planning & Development  
Devra G. Bailin, Economic Development Director

**Subject:** Economic Development Commission 2020 Annual Report

On behalf of the members of the Economic Development Commission,  
we are pleased to submit the 2020 Annual Report.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Submitted February 11, 2021**

## **I. Background: Role of the Economic Development Commission**

The Economic Development Commission (EDC) presently consisting of 15 members (currently there is one vacancy) appointed by the Mayor, was established under General Laws Chapter 40, Section 8A to promote and develop business and industry within the City of Newton. The Commission is charged with strengthening the local economy, leading to new job opportunities for residents and expansion of the City's tax base. City Ordinance Article V, Section 22.95 lays out the governing provisions as summarized below:

The Commission has the power and duty to:

1. Study, investigate and apprise economic conditions and trends
2. Promote, assist, and encourage the preservation, development and location of new and existing Newton industry, business and commerce
3. Investigate and assist in the establishment of commercial projects and identify appropriate commercial areas and zones for such establishment
4. Prepare and distribute informational publications
5. Cooperate with civic agencies/ commissions/ associations, state/federal agencies, municipal departments and officials, and business associations and organizations and
6. Advise and make recommendations to appropriate officials, agencies, boards, department, and commissions of the City.

This report is prepared and submitted to the City Council in compliance with City Ordinance Article V, Section 22.95 (g) (10).

## **II. 2020 in Review**

During 2020, the Economic Development Commission undertook the following activities:

### **A. Response to Covid 19 – Ideas and Recommendations**

2020 was the year of the pandemic. COVID 19 swept the City of Newton, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the nation, and the world. The EDC received a letter from Mayor Fuller dated April 1, 2020 in which the EDC was to provide “ideas on a recovery plan focusing particularly on steps that can be taken in Newton to assist Newton businesses in regaining their footing.” The Mayor further requested that the ideas and recommendations be submitted by mid-June.

In response to the Mayor’s letter, the EDC formed subgroups to focus attention quickly on several areas. A survey for businesses was developed, publicized, and ultimately filled out by 250 businesses. Commissioners and staff conducted over a hundred follow-up interviews. Priorities were placed on creating a private funding program to support small businesses, addressing changes to the zoning ordinance to promote growing sectors and ease of permitting, and marketing, mentoring, and partnering with the Newton Needham Regional Chamber. The result of these Subgroup efforts was a comprehensive report submitted to the Mayor dated June 9, 2020 that listed 52 recommendations and ideas. As of January 2021, 37 have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. A copy of the report is included as Appendix A. The January 2021 status report is included as Appendix B

### **B. Key Business Initiatives**

#### **1. Major Development Proposals**

At the beginning of 2020, the EDC spent considerable time in actively engaging in the review of developers’ projects with a focus on the potential increased commercial tax review, new business investment in Newton, and other economic development priorities. The EDC monthly meetings included updates from the City’s Planning Director on major pending or proposed projects so the Commissioners could be kept up to speed on developments. Much of the work of the EDC dealt with the Riverside project which represents one of two largest projects to come before the City in decades.

- a. **Riverside Development:** The EDC conducted multiple meetings with Mark Development about their proposal for the Riverside MBTA site and conducted extensive review of the project, especially in regard to the fiscal impacts and benefits of its varied iterations. A formal presentation of the project by Mark Development occurred after the City Council approved the zoning for the project in December of 2019. On March 11, 2020, the EDC wrote a letter of support for the project and participated in a public hearing before the Land Use Committee. A copy of the letter is attached as Appendix C. Of note it that the EDC has been involved in the redevelopment of Riverside since 2006.

## **2. Private Funding Program Use**

As a follow-up to the June 9, 2020 letter to the Mayor regarding ideas on how to assist businesses regain their footing through and post COVID, the EDC created a private funding subgroup to explore options to raise external funding in support of local small businesses negatively impacted by the COVID pandemic. The subgroup gained input from a series of individuals representing different perspectives and capacities in the community. The subgroup determined that mechanisms do not presently exist in Newton to readily raise external funding for small business. The next steps are to explore the possibility of having a community foundation that serves Newton. This is ongoing.

## **3. Clarifying Zoning for Research and Development uses**

As another follow-up to the June 9, 2020 letter to the Mayor, the EDC created a R&D zoning subgroup to identify specific clarification to the Newton Zoning code for uses related to research and development. The current zoning language is confusing, internally inconsistent and is silent on ancillary activities typically required in a research and development activities. Working with City staff, the R&D zoning subgroup reviewed relevant zoning language of neighboring communities and proposed changes. The EDC voted at the December 2020 meeting to docket to the City Council the following:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION requesting an amendment of Sections 4.4.1 (Business, Mixed Use & Manufacturing Districts), 6.4.28 (Research and

Development), and 6.5.9 (Laboratory and Research Facility) in order to clarify inconsistencies in the way Research and Development is treated in the use tables and definitions. Providing clarity in where Research and Development uses are allowed is necessary to diversify Newton's Economy, make Newton competitive with surrounding communities in attracting 21st century industries and jobs, and raise Newton's commercial tax revenue and implement recommendation from the 2019 Newton Strategic Plan (Camoin study).

The docket item #485-20 is now before the Zoning and Planning Committee and the EDC plans to continue to support its approval.

#### **4. Mentoring and Marketing**

As a follow-up to the June 9, 2020 letter to the Mayor, the EDC created a Mentoring and Marketing subgroup to assist Newton business during the COVID 19 crisis. Working with the Newton Needham Regional Chamber, the subgroup helped publicize the Newton Needham Dining collaborative, and create a "Love My Local" campaign with outreach to both businesses and the community.

#### **5. Covid-19 small business grant review committee**

During May, June, and July of 2020, two EDC commissioners were members of the committee tasked with reviewing grants to small businesses. As part of the City's federal CARES Act funding received in early May, \$300,000 was set aside to specifically assist in the economic recovery for Newton's small business brick and mortar establishments. Businesses were invited to submit grant applications for either microbusiness grants of \$10,000 (5 or fewer employees) or small business grants of \$15,000 (6- 20 employees). A total of 107 applications (71 microbusiness and 36 small business) were received by the application deadline on May 27th, and a total of twenty (20) microbusinesses and seven (7) small business grants, were able to be serviced with the \$300,000 available. The types of businesses awarded funding are consistent with the overall pool of applications and consciously weighted toward giving a boost to those brick and mortar personal service and food establishments that Newton residents have missed and look forward to their successful return.

#### **6. Outreach**

The EDC expanded outreach to the Mayor, City Council, the Newton Needham Regional Chamber. The Officers updated the Mayor monthly by letters following each EDC meeting and have arranged conversations to discuss important decisions. The Officers invited Councilors to EDC meetings (via Zoom) and obtained direct support from the President and Vice President of the City Council for zoning initiatives. Work with the Newton Needham Regional Chamber included Zoom presentation by the Officers of the recommendations letter to the Mayor and work with the Mentoring and Marketing Subgroup.

## **C. Ongoing EDC Projects**

### **1. Wells Ave**

Based on a Vision for Wells Ave prepared by the Planning Department and on-going work with the N<sup>2</sup> Innovation District, the EDC has participated in efforts to update the Wells Avenue Office Park, working with the various property owners there. Discussions have focused on such topics as an improved entranceway, new signage, infrastructure improvements (roads, sidewalks, and landscaping), second means of access/egress, additional transportation options such as shuttles and bike shares, and the introduction of food trucks. Work is underway to develop new signage at the entrance to the office park and on the electrical boxes, consistent with the N2 branding. Together with the City, the EDC is supportive of creating new shuttle service to Wells Avenue. The EDC also promoted the redesign of the Wells Ave/Nahanton Street intersection as well as improved pedestrian crossings.

### **2. Northland's Needham Street Project**

From 2017 to 2019, the EDC conducted multiple meetings about the project and provided extensive comments, feedback, analysis, and recommendations. The EDC provided specific comments both supporting the project and enumerating concerns. The EDC issued a formal letter in 2019 detailing its deliberations regarding the project, a copy of which is attached to this report. The zoning and special permit for the Northland project were approved by the City

Council in December of 2019. When challenged by referendum, the EDC continued its support for the project.

### **3. Zoning Redesign**

The EDC devoted several Commission meetings to working with the Planning Department to review the proposed zoning regulations and ensure that they contain meaningful improvements to support economic development and the business community. Major topics of discussion included reduced parking requirements, revised, and simplified signage requirements, more efficient and flexible permitting and review procedures, support for diverse housing options, improved manufacturing districts, clarification of research and development use and advocacy for such uses as co-working space and the arts.

## **D. Organizational**

### **1. EDC Officers**

- In February 2021 for a one-year term The Commission elected:
  - Mr. Philip Plottel, EDC Chair,
  - Dr. Jean Wood, PhD, Vice Chair,
  - Sarah Rahman, Secretary
- In February 2020, for a term starting February 10, 2020, The Commission elected:
  - Mr. Philip Plottel, EDC Chair,
  - Dr. Jean Wood, PhD, Vice Chair,
  - Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Secretary
- In February 2019 for a one-year term The Commission elected:
  - Ms. Joyce Plotkin, EDC Chair,
  - Mr. Philip Plottel, Vice Chair,
  - Dr. Jean Wood, PhD, Secretary



## **2. EDC Members**

In April 2020, Peter Kai Jung Lew passed away. Peter served as a commissioner from the early 2000's until his death. Born in New York City and trained as an architect, he made many contributions to the City of Newton and Greater Boston including being a community organizer, serving on the EDC, fundraising for cancer survivors, and founding the Boston Dragon Boat Festival. His presence is missed, and his spirit lives on.

Howard Barnstone and Stephen Feller's terms expired in late 2020. We thank them both for their service.

The EDC welcomed Lisa Adams and Eryn-Ashlei Bailey as newly appointed commissioners in December 2020.

The current diverse membership and background of commissioners will enable the EDC in 2021 to benefit from diverse experiences, ideas and strive to be a truly inclusive commission.

## **III. Priorities for 2021**

The Economic Development Commission has identified the following priorities for the upcoming year: -

1. Support women and minority owned businesses
2. Advocate for expanding the City's commercial tax base in the zoning redesign and land use process
3. Support the attraction of R&D companies to Newton
4. Support Newton's store front businesses
5. Continue to incubate the idea to create a community foundation serving Newton
6. Engage with the Mayor, City Councilors, the Chamber, local businesses, and each other to advocate for expanding the City's commercial tax base

#### **IV. Economic Development Commission Members for 2020**

Philip Plottel (Chair)

Jean Wood (Vice Chair)

Debra Jackson (Secretary)

Lisa Adams (term started Dec 2020)

Eryn-Ashlei Bailey (term started Dec 2020)

Howard Barnstone (term ended Fall 2020)

Stephen Feller (term ended Fall 2020)

Robert Finkel

Jeremy Freid

Jack Leader

Peter Kai Jung Lew (died April 2020)

Marcela Merino

Beth Nicklas

Joyce Plotkin

Sarah Rahman

Matt Segneri

Chuck Tanowitz

#### **V. Attachments**

Appendix A: June 9, 2020 report to the Mayor

Appendix B: January 2021 update on Implementation of Recommended Ideas

Appendix C: March 2020 Letter to the City Council in support of Riverside



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## CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

### Economic Development Commission

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Mayor Ruthanne Fuller  
City of Newton  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459

Re: Ideas for a Recovery Plan for Newton Businesses

June 9, 2020

Dear Mayor Fuller:

Pursuant to your letter of April 1, 2020 to the Economic Development Commission (EDC), the EDC is pleased to convey our ideas and recommendations for a local business recovery plan in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. These ideas and recommendations were approved at our June 9, 2020 meeting by a vote of 11-0 of the members present and are presented below along with the attached appendices.

The EDC recognizes the urgency of re-opening our local economy safely and appreciates the multiple pressures the City faces. We applaud the measures the City has already taken and continues to plan and take, including: the \$300,000 small business recovery grant program funded by the federal Community Development Block Grant; increased flexibility around certain local ordinances, taxes, and fees; clear and consistent communications; steps to re-open City Hall safely; safe construction; and the “Newton AI-Fresco” dining plans.

The additional recommendations presented here are specific to Newton’s local economy and businesses to support both their near-term recovery and longer term resiliency. EDC commissioners gathered information via survey and follow-up interviews; discussions with elected city officials and city staff; conversations with business leaders; literature and web searches; and reviews of past documents. Our research uncovered ideas to encourage customers, enable flexibility for business operations, design new funding mechanisms, connect to mentoring, and more. The EDC recognizes that some of these ideas may already be under consideration and/or implementation by the City.

This letter begins by presenting a summary of the Newton business survey conducted in late April/early May. It then proceeds to offer a menu of recommendations for business assistance and local economic recovery. These ideas may be pursued individually or combined together, and they may be phased in over a period of months.

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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Economic Development Commission

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The EDC recognizes the constraints on City finances at this time, and in our recommendations, we have attempted to balance the need for new resources with ideas for more efficient delivery of existing services and private funding. We urge you and the City Council to prioritize our local economy and identify available resources that can be targeted toward successful business recovery. Your efforts would benefit all of our village centers, corridors, and commercial areas, and thereby the quality of life expected by residents across all Newton neighborhoods. Without necessary action, we risk not only, the vibrancy of our local economy, but also the strength and mix of our tax base in the years ahead.

The EDC thanks you for your consideration of our letter. We stand ready to answer any questions, provide more specific information, and assist in further refining any of these recommendations and planning their implementation.

### **Business Survey Results**

To better understand how the City of Newton may be able to assist Newton's businesses, the EDC conducted a short 8 question web-based survey via Survey Monkey from Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> to Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. The survey was publicized via the City's Economic Development mailing list, the Mayor's COVID-19 update emails, the Newton-Needham Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Newton PTO community update weekly emails. The Survey generated 245 responses from a variety of businesses. Detailed survey results are included in Appendix A. In addition, as follow-up to the Survey, EDC Commissioners conducted 56 follow-up interviews to obtain additional perspectives from business owners. Key highlights are:

#### *Business Challenges*

*Survey Question: What challenges will you face as you resume regular business operations?*

For those businesses that responded to the question, the number one issue facing them as they open is attracting customers (55% of respondents), and to attract customers, many feel the need to reconfigure their spaces into a safer environment (e.g. social distancing). Hence, space reconfiguration showed up prominently (24%). Other responses with over 20% include marketing (23%), hiring (21%) and obtaining credit or capital (21%).

#### *City Assistance*

*Survey Question: How can the city of Newton assist you in solving your challenges as you resume regular business operations?*

Because attracting customers is considered the biggest challenge for businesses, 37% of businesses responded that they would like the City to take on a local marketing campaign. Going hand-in-hand with attracting customers is their ability to park and so we saw that 25% of businesses cite customer/employee parking as an area in which the City can assist.

Regulatory relief was cited by 22% of the businesses and the written comments as well as follow-up interviews indicated a variety of responses for suggestions in licensing/permitting. (These are included under Summary of Business Recovery Ideas.)

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## CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

### Economic Development Commission

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Another issue that was prominent in the written responses was the ability to access PPE—masks, gowns, sanitizer, etc. This was especially critical for dentists and was cited by many other businesses as well. Again, to attract customers, the customers need to feel that they are walking into a safe environment. Businesses are concerned that they may not have the ability to acquire all the PPE they will need and would appreciate assistance from the City in doing so. There were also financial comments that were written about how the City can assist businesses—from offering grants, to providing some relief in real estate taxes and rents for City owned buildings, and reducing the sales tax that businesses pay the City.

Finally, clarity of communication from the City to businesses was raised often. Businesses are looking for and want clear guidance on regulations for safety—including space configuration, people per square foot, PPE requirements, etc.

There was also an interest by 19% of respondents in becoming an approved vendor to provide goods/services to the City.

#### *Businesses Assisting other Newton Businesses*

*Survey Question: Can you or your business assist other Newton businesses in resuming business operations post COVID-19?*

Thirty-seven percent of businesses indicated that they could assist in some way and, out of those, about 80% indicated that they would like to be involved in partnering and/or mentoring—and provided contact information for follow up. Clearly, some businesses would like to interact in some ways with each other. In follow-up interviews, several landlords in the City have indicated that they have deferred rent payments.

#### *Early Education and Child Care Programs*

One group whose concerns need to be specifically addressed is the early education and childcare sector, especially in school after-school programs. Their responses in the survey and follow-up interviews indicated a need for collaboration with the City, Newton Schools and Health Department if these programs are to survive. This sector is critical for parents/guardians to be able to return to work.

### **Summary of Business Recovery Ideas**

#### **A. Support Businesses to Expand Outdoors**

- 1) Continue to support “Newton Al Fresco’s” range of outdoor dining and take-out activities to offset loss of internal restaurant seating.
  - a) Allow restaurants to expand service outdoors, close streets and/or parking lots in village centers/malls/commercial districts to vehicular traffic.
  - b) Establish and maintain designated picnic areas for take-out food consumption on closed streets, parks and/or parking lots.
  - c) Designate City-branded curbside pick-up zones reserved for take-out.
  - d) Continue to advocate that the State further ease regulations to allow for sale of cocktails by restaurants for take-out and consumption of alcohol on and beyond premises.

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## CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

### Economic Development Commission

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- 2) Coordinate and complement outdoor activities with the Newton Office of Cultural Affairs and other relevant City Departments using appropriate social distancing.
  - a) Support open-air market proposals (e.g., open-air restaurant walk, street fair).
  - b) Collaborate with local businesses to support a Newton Outdoor Concert Series.
  - c) Supplement the outdoor dining and picnic areas with musicians, craft tables, garden club flower arrangements, etc. to attract more pedestrian traffic.
- 3) Galvanize businesses to partner together to open and service a drive-in movie theater at “the Street” and/or other appropriate locations within the City. See example of Kowloon in Saugus: <https://www.boston.com/food/restaurants/2020/05/13/kowloon-carhop-movie-theater>.

#### **B. Modify Transportation/Parking Policy**

- 1) The City Council is encouraged to pass a two-year moratorium of enforcement of parking minimums under the zoning code to allow businesses to expand outdoors thereby conforming to social distancing requirements.
- 2) Add additional bicycle parking racks to village centers.
- 3) Support businesses with a parking strategy for employees and customers.
- 4) Facilitate the use of excess parking during the week/evening of parking lots used by houses of worship/private businesses to expand supply of parking near village centers.

#### **C. Promote, Mentor and Support Newton Businesses**

- 1) Develop a local Marketing Campaign to buy, dine and bank local.
  - a) The City to organize a steering committee of local business owners, government officials, business leaders and neighborhood residents across the City responsible for developing branding, messaging, collateral material and communications.
  - b) Launch a broad-based messaging campaign to market and support local businesses in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - c) Branding should extend as appropriate to all components of the City's efforts for local business recovery from COVID-19.
  - d) Leverage multiple government, business and community channels to broadcast messaging, such as City's Constant Contact email lists; Mayor's email newsletter; school Parent Teacher Organizations' (PTO) communication lists; Newton-Needham Regional Chamber email updates; City Councilors email distribution lists (per their approval); Next Door Digest; Village 14; Facebook page - City of Newton. Include a relevant insert in the next two quarterly tax bills to inform residents of the importance of buying and shopping local.
  - e) Encourage direct business with restaurants (i.e. contacting restaurants directly and picking up orders instead of using third party ordering and delivery services).
  - f) Encourage shopping in Newton businesses as opposed to e-commerce giants.
- 2) Facilitate and coordinate matching grants to groups of local businesses and non-profits for them to collaborate on technology, mobile ordering, contactless payment, marketing, placemaking, and other activities designed to attract and retain customers during the COVID-19 recovery period.
- 3) Schedule additional information sessions on becoming an approved vendor to the City focused on helping Newton businesses to do business with the City.

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## CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

### Economic Development Commission

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- 4) Assist in the launch and expansion of the newly created peer-to-peer mentoring program for Newton's business community to be managed by the Newton-Needham Regional Chamber (NNRC) with the program available free of charge to all Newton businesses, whether or not they are Chamber members. The City should promote the program and encourage EDC members and EDC survey respondents to participate if they have relevant professional advice and expertise and have expressed a desire to help.
- 5) Focus particular attention on minority-owned business.
  - a) Facilitate mentoring support for minority owned businesses that are in need of network resources.
  - b) Facilitate financial grants and loans for minority owned businesses, particularly those who have been unable to secure CARES act funding.
  - c) Explore setting-up convenient and targeted testing sites for people of color as COVID-19 infects black and brown communities at higher rates.
  - d) Schedule information sessions on obtaining women and minority owned business certification.
- 6) Strengthen and improve communication and information flow between local businesses and with the City.
  - a) Update and maintain Newton's Small Business Database.
  - b) Provide information on easily accessible programming and relevant resources available by other economic development organizations, including but not limited to: Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, Interise, NNRC, Black Economic Council of Massachusetts and SCORE.
  - c) Hold Village and sector based – interactive on-line information sessions to share resources; highlight success stories; discuss technology; mobile ordering; contactless payment; and share best practices in partnership with regional/neighborhood associations and business owners.
  - d) Expand the City's business communication channels to include greater use of social media, notably LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and other outlets.
- 7) See Appendix B for expanded details on Marketing and Matching Grants and Appendix C for expanded detail on Mentoring.

#### **D. Re-opening with Confidence**

- 1) Publicize clear, written guidelines for safety measures for restaurants and outdoor dining areas including: consistent signage; keeping benches far enough apart; locating hand washing and/or sanitizing stations; using disposable silverware; protective gear and enhanced cleanliness protocols for restaurant staff; and designating curbside pickup zones.
- 2) Publicize clear guidelines about changes that may need to occur in small retail stores, such as consistent signage; opening by appointment only; limitations on the number of customers at any one time; requirements for hand sanitizer dispensers; any other new guidelines that make customers and workers feel safe.
- 3) Coordinate discounted bulk purchasing of needed supplies for business re-opening, e.g., personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitizers dispensers, etc.
- 4) Advocate for the State to expand Coronavirus testing of residents and individuals working in Newton as part of a "Test, Trace and Isolate" strategy to minimize the impact of COVID 19 re-emergence.

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## CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

### Economic Development Commission

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#### **E. Regulations for Local Economic Recovery and Resilience Going Forward**

This section highlights proposed permanent changes to City regulations. Some items can be implemented quickly.

- 1) Perform virtual inspections when appropriate by inspectional services and other City agencies to increase efficiency, protect inspectors and reduce time required for an inspection.
- 2) Update Newton's zoning
  - a) To diversify Newton's economic base and maintain commercial tax revenue, the City should consider:
    - (1) Define and increase allowable R&D use in the City (currently primarily limited to Life Science and recreational marijuana).
    - (2) Update and allow 21<sup>st</sup> century manufacturing, including highly automated and small-scale manufacturing, such as "maker spaces" and life science pilot plants.
    - (3) Allow craft breweries, craft distilleries and wholesale bakeries to operate in Newton.
  - b) Amend the home business ordinance by allowing more than one per dwelling unit, recognizing the difference between businesses with onsite customers and not, relaxing regulations around type of employees, removing the parking requirement, and removing the requirement for a special permit for a home business in the Multi Residence districts.
  - c) Remove/relax parking minimums to allow businesses to expand outdoors thereby conforming to social distancing requirements.
  - d) Allow billboards on private and city owned property/buildings to advertise businesses and create new rules for temporary signs and sandwich boards.
- 3) Allow zoning uses under existing special permits to be changed without modifying the permit provided that the parking requirements are not increased, the changes are minor in nature, and/or new business owner proposes a similar use. The benefit will reduce expenses to the City and applicant and shorten time needed to open a business.
- 4) Grant City staff authority to allow for insignificant modifications to be made to existing special permits without need for significant effort by City Council.
- 5) Change the liquor license process to allow for quicker issuance of 1-day permits, especially now as many organizations have "paused" event planning. (Currently, 1-day liquor license in Newton requires an application often 3 months ahead of the event.)
- 6) Increase staff resources to support the implementation of the City's business recovery plans, either by hiring contractors and/or interns.
- 7) Refer to Appendix D for expanded detail on City Services.

#### **F. Support Newton's School-based Child Care Programs and Providers**

- 1) Although many of the childcare programs are State regulated, the City and the School Department need to take an active role in supporting the operations of the third-party after school programs housed primarily in the Elementary schools. Specifically, the City should provide assistance in safe operations, access to bulk PPE purchasing and flexibility in space allocations and rents.
- 2) Concerted efforts to support these programs as essential businesses would benefit, not only the childcare providers, but also the Newton parents that must rely on them to return to work.



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- 3) Covid regulations will likely result in the need for additional space to accommodate all families that need after school care within their existing schools. Schools must share and provide sufficient space to after school programs to enable Newton parents to return to work.
- 4) See Appendix E for expanded detail on Child Care.

### **G. Create Business Task Force to provide Financial and Implementation Support**

- 1) Members to be appointed by the Mayor with representation from public officials, business owners, restaurant business champions, arts and culture organization, local banks and relevant government officials, community leaders, and Newton Needham Regional Chamber to oversee financing and implementation of this recovery plan.
- 2) Obtain private funding to bring additional investment and resources to small businesses in the City and to help implement recommendation from the 2019 Economic Development Action Plan for the City of Newton, specifically Appendix F: Retail Strategy Research (Attached as Appendix F), and the Ideas presented in this letter.
- 3) Coordinate fundraising for a privately funded Newton Small Business Recovery Fund, See Appendix G for initial draft proposal.

### **Conclusion**

The EDC is very supportive of creating a business recovery plan for the City. The recommendations presented above represent our best guidance on elements to consider for such a plan. We are available to meet with you, members of the City Council and key stakeholders at any time to move any of these ideas forward.

Sincerely and on behalf of the EDC,

Phil Plottel  
Chair,  
Economic Development Commission

Copy to Susan Albright, President, City Council of the City of Newton  
Rick Lipof, Vice President, City Council of the City of Newton  
City Council

### Attachments:

- Appendix A - Survey results
- Appendix B – Marketing
- Appendix C – Mentoring
- Appendix D - City Services
- Appendix E – Child Care
- Appendix F - Appendix F: Retail Strategy Research from the 2019 Economic Development Action Plan for the City of Newton (Camoin Study)
- Appendix G – Proposal for a Newton Small Business Recovery Fund
- Appendix H – Mayor Fuller April 1 Letter to EDC

## **Appendix A: Survey results**

### Survey Working Group Members

Jean Wood (lead)

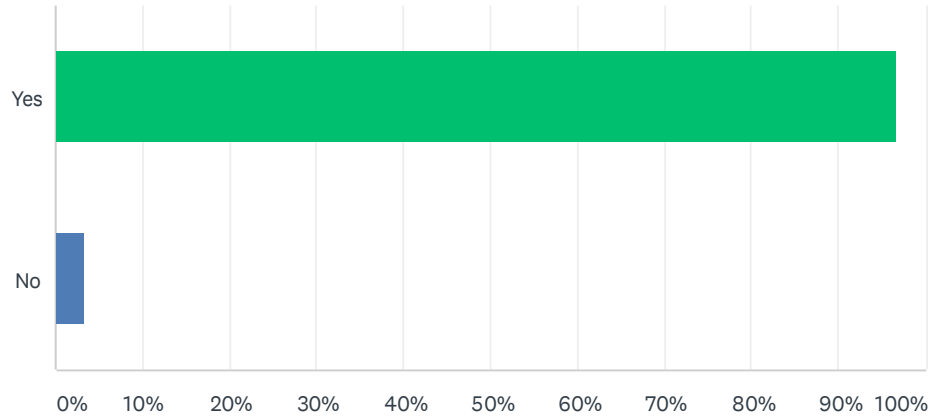
Phil Plottel

Beth Nicklas

Devra Bailin

# Q1 Does your business operate in the City of Newton?

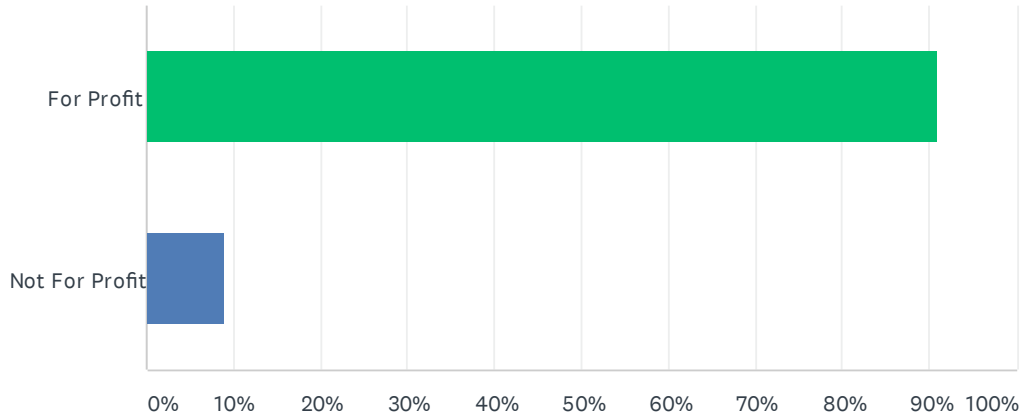
Answered: 245 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |     |
|----------------|-----------|-----|
| Yes            | 96.73%    | 237 |
| No             | 3.27%     | 8   |
| TOTAL          |           | 245 |

## Q2 Is your business for profit or not-for-profit?

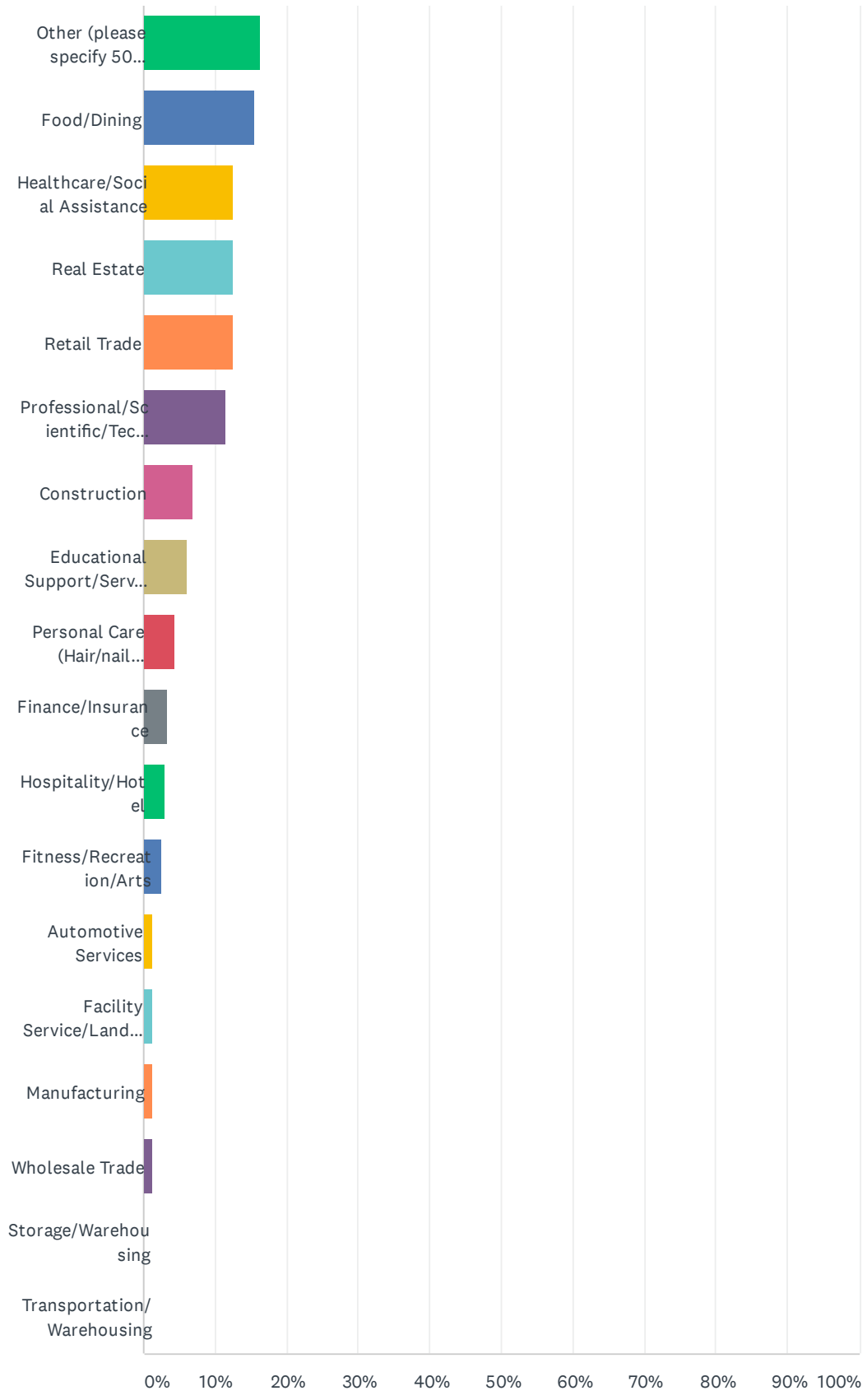
Answered: 245 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |     |
|----------------|-----------|-----|
| For Profit     | 91.02%    | 223 |
| Not For Profit | 8.98%     | 22  |
| TOTAL          |           | 245 |

### Q3 What type of business do you operate?

Answered: 245 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES                                | RESPONSES |    |
|---|-----------|----|
| Other (please specify 50 characters, max)     | 16.33%    | 40 |
| Food/Dining                                   | 15.51%    | 38 |
| Healthcare/Social Assistance                  | 12.65%    | 31 |
| Real Estate                                   | 12.65%    | 31 |
| Retail Trade                                  | 12.65%    | 31 |
| Professional/Scientific/Technical Services    | 11.43%    | 28 |
| Construction                                  | 6.94%     | 17 |
| Educational Support/Services                  | 6.12%     | 15 |
| Personal Care (Hair/nail salon, spa, massage) | 4.49%     | 11 |
| Finance/Insurance                             | 3.27%     | 8  |
| Hospitality/Hotel                             | 2.86%     | 7  |
| Fitness/Recreation/Arts                       | 2.45%     | 6  |
| Automotive Services                           | 1.22%     | 3  |
| Facility Service/Landscaping                  | 1.22%     | 3  |
| Manufacturing                                 | 1.22%     | 3  |
| Wholesale Trade                               | 1.22%     | 3  |
| Storage/Warehousing                           | 0.00%     | 0  |
| Transportation/Warehousing                    | 0.00%     | 0  |
| Total Respondents: 245                        |           |    |

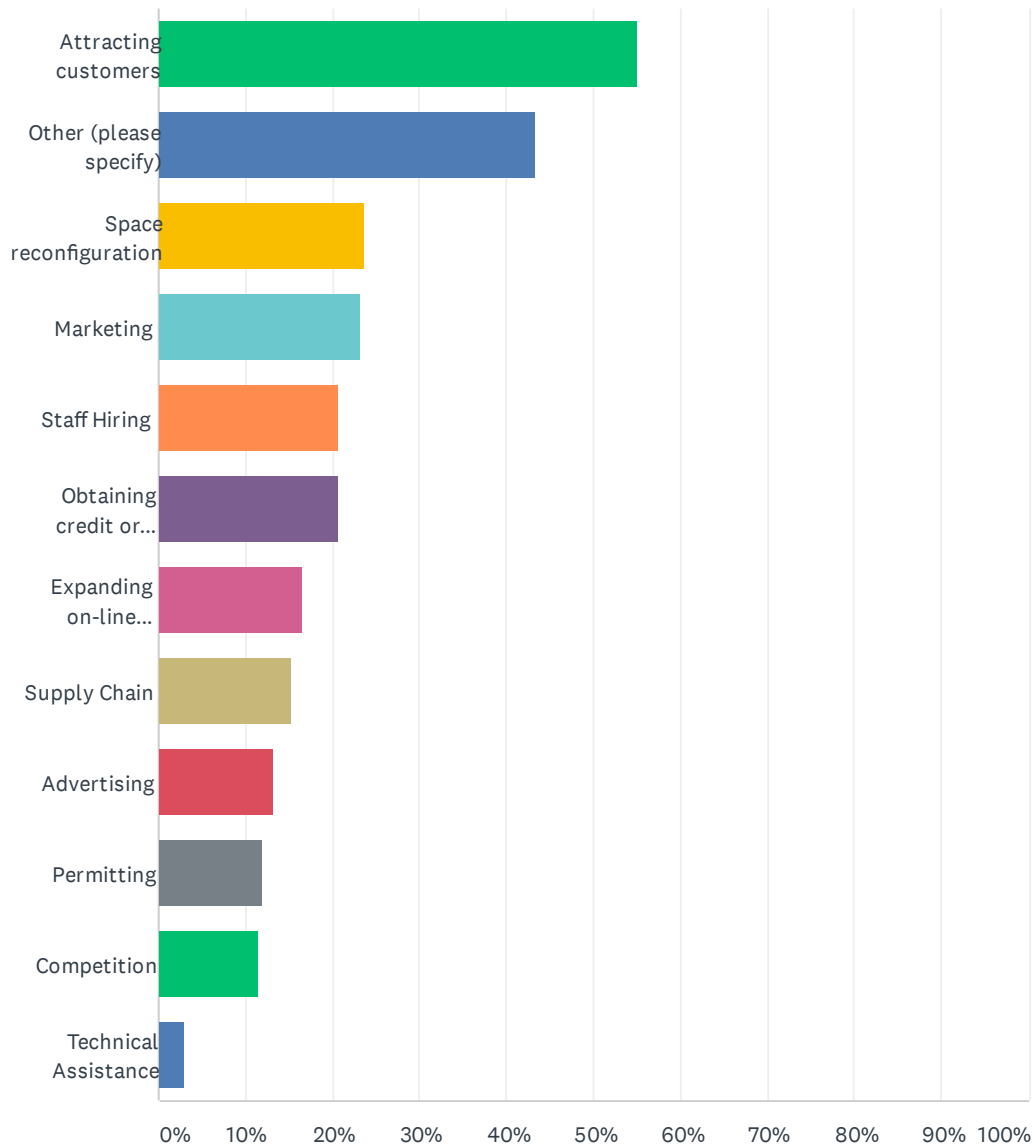
| #  | OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY 50 CHARACTERS, MAX)           | DATE               |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1  | TAILOR  | 5/5/2020 8:46 AM   |
| 2  | repairs and customizing handbags                    | 5/5/2020 6:33 AM   |
| 3  | interior design, art installations                  | 5/5/2020 6:17 AM   |
| 4  | Court Reporting & Video Conferencing                | 5/4/2020 6:39 PM   |
| 5  | Product development                                 | 5/4/2020 4:45 PM   |
| 6  | many  | 5/4/2020 2:00 PM   |
| 7  | Digital Marketing Consultancy                       | 5/4/2020 12:37 PM  |
| 8  | Pharmaceutical Drug Commercialization               | 5/4/2020 12:26 PM  |
| 9  | Photographer  | 5/4/2020 12:18 PM  |
| 10 | Interior Design                                     | 5/4/2020 12:06 PM  |
| 11 | Technology focused security                         | 5/4/2020 12:04 PM  |
| 12 | Mfg rep for toys to retail                          | 4/30/2020 1:41 PM  |
| 13 | COMPOUNDING PHARMACY                                | 4/30/2020 8:23 AM  |
| 14 | Family daycare                                      | 4/29/2020 10:56 PM |
| 15 | Travel agency                                       | 4/29/2020 10:31 PM |
| 16 | 35 suites where beauticians operate their own salon | 4/29/2020 10:07 PM |
| 17 | Video Production                                    | 4/29/2020 9:02 PM  |
| 18 | Audio Video Design and Installation                 | 4/29/2020 11:24 AM |
| 19 | Art Restoration, Conservation                       | 4/28/2020 4:00 PM  |
| 20 | A watch and clock store, sales and service          | 4/27/2020 4:32 PM  |
| 21 | non profit afterschool                              | 4/27/2020 12:09 PM |
| 22 | Architecture  | 4/26/2020 12:30 PM |
| 23 | Plowshares Early Education and School-age programs  | 4/25/2020 1:33 PM  |
| 24 | School-aged childcare                               | 4/25/2020 11:24 AM |
| 25 | Afterschool program at Peirce School                | 4/25/2020 10:05 AM |
| 26 | Daycare/Preschool                                   | 4/25/2020 8:15 AM  |
| 27 | All That Jazz Dance Studio                          | 4/25/2020 7:34 AM  |
| 28 | Vintage/antique/specialty foods                     | 4/24/2020 11:03 PM |
| 29 | Music   | 4/24/2020 9:37 PM  |
| 30 | Seamstress, tailoring                               | 4/24/2020 8:28 PM  |
| 31 | Personal concierge - errands shopping organizing    | 4/24/2020 5:39 PM  |
| 32 | dog wash services, grooming and retail supplies     | 4/24/2020 4:04 PM  |
| 33 | Charity 501c3                                       | 4/24/2020 2:54 PM  |
| 34 | Preschool   | 4/24/2020 2:31 PM  |
| 35 | Dog training  | 4/24/2020 2:30 PM  |
| 36 | Research & Development                              | 4/24/2020 2:29 PM  |
| 37 | beauty salon  | 4/24/2020 1:45 PM  |



|    |   |                    |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 38 | Painting at various Senior Living Communities | 4/24/2020 1:26 PM  |
| 39 | Video production and programming              | 4/24/2020 1:14 PM  |
| 40 | professional association                      | 4/24/2020 12:03 PM |

### Q4 What challenges will you face as you resume regular business operations? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 242 Skipped: 3



| ANSWER CHOICES              | RESPONSES |     |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Attracting customers        | 54.96%    | 133 |
| Other (please specify)      | 43.39%    | 105 |
| Space reconfiguration       | 23.55%    | 57  |
| Marketing                   | 23.14%    | 56  |
| Staff Hiring                | 20.66%    | 50  |
| Obtaining credit or capital | 20.66%    | 50  |
| Expanding on-line presence  | 16.53%    | 40  |
| Supply Chain                | 15.29%    | 37  |
| Advertising                 | 13.22%    | 32  |
| Permitting                  | 11.98%    | 29  |
| Competition                 | 11.57%    | 28  |
| Technical Assistance        | 2.89%     | 7   |
| Total Respondents: 242      |           |     |

| #  | OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)  | DATE              |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 1  | Not allowed to open by governor's demand. Secondly, customers taking precautions are staying at home.No need to open. I am obliged to stay home.  | 5/5/2020 8:46 AM  |
| 2  | foot traffic  | 5/5/2020 6:33 AM  |
| 3  | obtaining pp and desinfectants required   | 5/5/2020 6:17 AM  |
| 4  | Adjusting to yet unknown City of Newton and Commonwealth of MA requirements for safely reopening & customer expectations for this as well   | 5/4/2020 11:14 PM |
| 5  | We are a commercial real estate business that has been in continuous existence since 1926. Our tenants are closed--with the exception of a few takeout food businesses--and can not generate income. This fact limits our ability to collect rent and pay taxes to the City of Newton.  | 5/4/2020 8:40 PM  |
| 6  | New/temporary business model. We are a catering business that can no longer serve large groups. This is the very core of our business.  | 5/4/2020 8:27 PM  |
| 7  | Anxious to have clear guidelines about changes that may need to occur in a small retail store such as limitations on customer count in store at once, requirement of hand sanitizer for customers any other new guidelines that I have not thought of that makes customers and staff safe. Also not knowing what the store traffic will be like. Will have to open without bringing staff back on until I know there is enough income to pay them.          | 5/4/2020 4:29 PM  |
| 8  | Knowing if I should even accept guests into my homestay B & B (short term rental) If so, what cleaning routines should I maintain to keep myself and guests safe  | 5/4/2020 4:01 PM  |
| 9  | concern that typical sub contractors and consultants may not still be in business when the economy opens up again   | 5/4/2020 3:36 PM  |
| 10 | how to attract and meet with patients face to face using PPE and precautions as needed.   | 5/4/2020 2:09 PM  |
| 11 | many  | 5/4/2020 2:00 PM  |
| 12 | Commercial Landlords demanding 100% rent from their tenants with shuttered businesses and no income. The Landlords, Banks pushing them, and the City of Newton pushing both need to back off or prepare for a sea of closures... which will leave them with nothing. Genuine rent/mortgage relief is more than a pause on collecting 100%. Shared sacrifice going forward should include all...not just the tenants!  | 5/4/2020 1:17 PM  |
| 13 | financially issues, we are worrying about we can't make enough revenue to cover the high operation costs, such as payroll, utilities, rent and other costs.   | 5/4/2020 1:09 PM  |
| 14 | N/A   | 5/4/2020 1:04 PM  |
| 15 | We were about to launch a brand-new piano store, our first ever in Newton, just when the virus hit. We will need to announce our presence and reach our new Newton community and customers WITHOUT the grand-opening, concert/recitals, and other launch events we had planned, since large gatherings won't be allowed for some time. Any support from the City in our outreach and communication efforts to Newton residents would be extremely valuable. | 5/4/2020 12:27 PM |
| 16 | Access to various types of properties for inspection purposes.  | 5/4/2020 12:22 PM |
| 17 | Will continue to work remotely for much of our work   | 5/4/2020 12:16 PM |
| 18 | Working with our tenants to recover unpaid rents  | 5/4/2020 12:12 PM |
| 19 | going to vendors and getting work done or picking product that may not be available due to world wide slow down.  | 5/4/2020 12:06 PM |
| 20 | The horrible amount of rent that I am behind and the pressure from landlords  | 5/4/2020 12:06 PM |
| 21 | how to manage in-person meetings (staff and client)   | 5/4/2020 12:05 PM |
| 22 | Revenue reduction and impairment in value of companies we provide services to   | 5/4/2020 12:04 PM |
| 23 | Getting up to speed and the phasing in of staff. Will the businesses at the other end of the phone/email be open? Uncertainty is the enemy  | 5/4/2020 12:03 PM |
| 24 | Convincing potential clients that now is the right time to buy/sell property.   | 5/1/2020 2:56 AM  |

|    |  |                    |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 25 | Concerned many retail store customers, already battered by internet sellers, will not be able to continue in business. Two reasons: 1-Financial frailty; 2-Customers, especially older customers, have been introduced and more accustomed to online shopping because of current crisis.   | 4/30/2020 1:41 PM  |
| 26 | We need private medical practices to reopen. We also need the public to see their healthcare practitioners to make sure that they are continuing to take care of their everyday health issues.   | 4/30/2020 8:23 AM  |
| 27 | I teach classes for people to pass state licensing. Its for real estate licensing. One, we do not know when state testing will start up again? do you? plus I can not teach in small groups face to face so we have to go on line, by phone, or zoom. I have lost students in general also because people put off doing this and paying for classes since the economy has been impacted. But I do have a loyal core of students who have to take the Cont. Ed. courses every two years and they have stayed loyal to me. Bless them.   | 4/30/2020 12:46 AM |
| 28 | We have a small preschool- Obtaining disposable PPEs for adult teachers and children under 5 including disposable gowns masks, and gloves. Our preschool used newton parks for recess, now we do not have a safe place to take our children to play outside and we don't have the funds to make changes to our own property to make a safe closed off space for them to play in the back. Lack of necessities such as Lysol wipes, paper towels, toilet paper, hand soap, cost of food for children has increased and our food delivery service is inconsistent and unreliable making it difficult to feed the children. Still not sure how we will social distance toddlers. All of our children have unenrolled and we were a new school so refilling our client base will be difficult. | 4/30/2020 12:09 AM |
| 29 | The City of Newton has subtracted housing off the market that are total rehabs/additions or have been tear downs that can't achieve a certificate of occupancy. These projects are done by real estate developers and they are not going to be brought back to market in a timely fashion. We are paying real estate taxes on these projects. We are paying very high permit costs on these projects. When they are done and hopefully sold, we are raising the tax basis on these addresses for The City of Newton!!!! Open specific Real Estate Development in Newton!! Every other town around Newton is doing it!!! Thank you for your attention to this note. Chad Maguire, resident and Newton Developer.  | 4/29/2020 11:54 PM |
| 30 | Feeling comfortable about the new normal.  | 4/29/2020 11:04 PM |
| 31 | Unnecessary bureaucracy and incompetence at ISD  | 4/29/2020 10:58 PM |
| 32 | We were scheduled to open this week, but construction was stopped 4 weeks ago. Now we have 4 weeks of work to do before we can open, but we have to wait for construction to be allowed to resume. We cannot collect rent from our members until they can move in and begin working themselves, but we owe rent on our building beginning June 15. So we are going to have no income, yet we will have rent to pay. And all of this hinges on beauty professionals being allowed to go back to work. We are very concerned that beauty salons will not go back to work soon.   | 4/29/2020 10:07 PM |
| 33 | The amount of employees and clients allowed in the salon at one time. We are a small space. Our stations are also 3 ft apart so we may have to try to reconfigure.   | 4/29/2020 9:48 PM  |
| 34 | Being able to operate and be profitable under guidelines. We have had multiple locations closed since 3/16. We need to open and be profitable Starting 5/18.   | 4/29/2020 9:37 PM  |
| 35 | Ability to see clients face to face, without risk to provider or client.   | 4/29/2020 8:59 PM  |
| 36 | None we can comply. Just need to get back to work  | 4/29/2020 8:56 PM  |
| 37 | sign construction approval.  | 4/29/2020 8:54 PM  |
| 38 | We have a city permit to remodel the empty convent next to the former Catholic school that we lease. We need that project completed in order to have adequate space for our enrollment, especially with extra physical distancing that we anticipate needing to provide. We are eager to know when the Mayor will approve construction to begin, as this is a "Summer Slammer" for our contractor and a mid-May start would help ensure completion.  | 4/29/2020 5:01 PM  |
| 39 | Concerned patients will not be comfortable coming into the office  | 4/29/2020 7:42 AM  |
| 40 | Safety   | 4/28/2020 11:09 PM |
| 41 | Making deliveries and doing inspections/Estimates in our clients homes. and business We will no know exactly how exposed out employees will be in locations other than our building.   | 4/28/2020 4:00 PM  |

|    |   |                    |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 42 | Working with clients who don't have computers or Internet for virtual contact   | 4/28/2020 11:22 AM |
| 43 | Being solvent, especially if this virus returns.  | 4/27/2020 5:37 PM  |
| 44 | we have a special problem, we have lost our lease and have to relocate in August of 2020. It does not look like we will be able to stay within Newton and we are afraid that our customers will think we closed permanently and not simply relocated.   | 4/27/2020 4:32 PM  |
| 45 | Making sure people who are sick do not come into the store. It would be helpful if the City of Newton provided a poster to all retail stores etc. stating that customers should wear masks, social distance while inside and that they should not come in if they do not feel well.   | 4/27/2020 3:02 PM  |
| 46 | Governor has closed us down until June 29th   | 4/27/2020 12:09 PM |
| 47 | Construction is slowed or stopped. therefore, design has to stop because the client does not know when their project will be able to happen, or if they will have a need for it.  | 4/27/2020 8:25 AM  |
| 48 | Paying rent and bills while business is closed due to COVID-19  | 4/27/2020 12:15 AM |
| 49 | Getting people to realize that they have to Regularly PURCHASE and SUPPORT local family owned brick and mortars or any main street of the the Villages will be all empty store fronts. Residents need to THINK before Clicking on Amazon- "couldn't I get what I need locally and keep local entrepreneurs employed?? " Go ask Jeff Bezos and Amazon to support your school athletic teams, raffles, theater productions etc. You expect the local retailers to "support the Newton community" - well the community needs to REGULARLY support the small businesses in the Villages NOT Amazon!!! | 4/26/2020 6:59 PM  |
| 50 | Paying rent, utilities and taxes  | 4/26/2020 3:41 PM  |
| 51 | Going into my clients' homes, taking detailed measurements.   | 4/26/2020 12:30 PM |
| 52 | parking space for pickup food.  | 4/26/2020 10:22 AM |
| 53 | How to adapt the in-store shopping experience to include social distancing norms with the safety of the customers and staff being of primary concern yet still have a warm, enjoyable shopping experience.  | 4/26/2020 8:33 AM  |
| 54 | I don't see how my barbershop could possibly function in a safe environment while practicing social distancing  | 4/25/2020 10:38 AM |
| 55 | Likely changes in the way our children attend elementary school. Will they only go half days or part week to allow for smaller class sizes? We share space with the school so how will our program be affected?   | 4/25/2020 10:05 AM |
| 56 | Are landlord is doubling are rent. I don't think we can afford it. He recently bought the space. So we may need to move and reconfigure a new space. I don't know if we can afford to do that.  | 4/25/2020 9:34 AM  |
| 57 | in person treatment of patients due to covid19 transmission.  | 4/25/2020 9:18 AM  |
| 58 | just resuming routines; what works, what won't in the future.   | 4/25/2020 9:16 AM  |
| 59 | Residential renovation and remodel has been hard hit in newton by being forced to shutter jobs. We need to be able to reopen quickly and safely.  | 4/25/2020 8:46 AM  |
| 60 | Our concern is the duration of the mandatory closing of our business. For now, furloughed staff are expected to return, but the worry is that if this is of long duration, we may lose staff and have to hire. Secondly, with fears of putting children together and the potential spread of the virus (a second wave is anticipated) we worry about obtaining proper protective gear for our employees. Also, as the duration of the Stay at Home mandate continues, people are going to be more fearful to enroll their young children in preschool in general.                                 | 4/25/2020 8:15 AM  |
| 61 | How will I be able to keep the kids safe and how can they dance while still maintaining a social distance, if that is still necessary?  | 4/25/2020 7:34 AM  |
| 62 | Paying rent   | 4/25/2020 7:00 AM  |
| 63 | I am a solo family dentist in Newton Corner. With all of the new PPE, aerosol and infection control Equipment and supplies needed to reopen, my office will certainly face a financial crisis and supply/PPE shortage just to get up and running safely. We will need help obtaining, at a minimum, adequate amounts of N95 masks, face shields, gowns and then more funding for  | 4/25/2020 12:26 AM |

aerosol sterilization devices, plexiglass from desk barriers...etc all of which will be now necessary for any practice to remain in business.

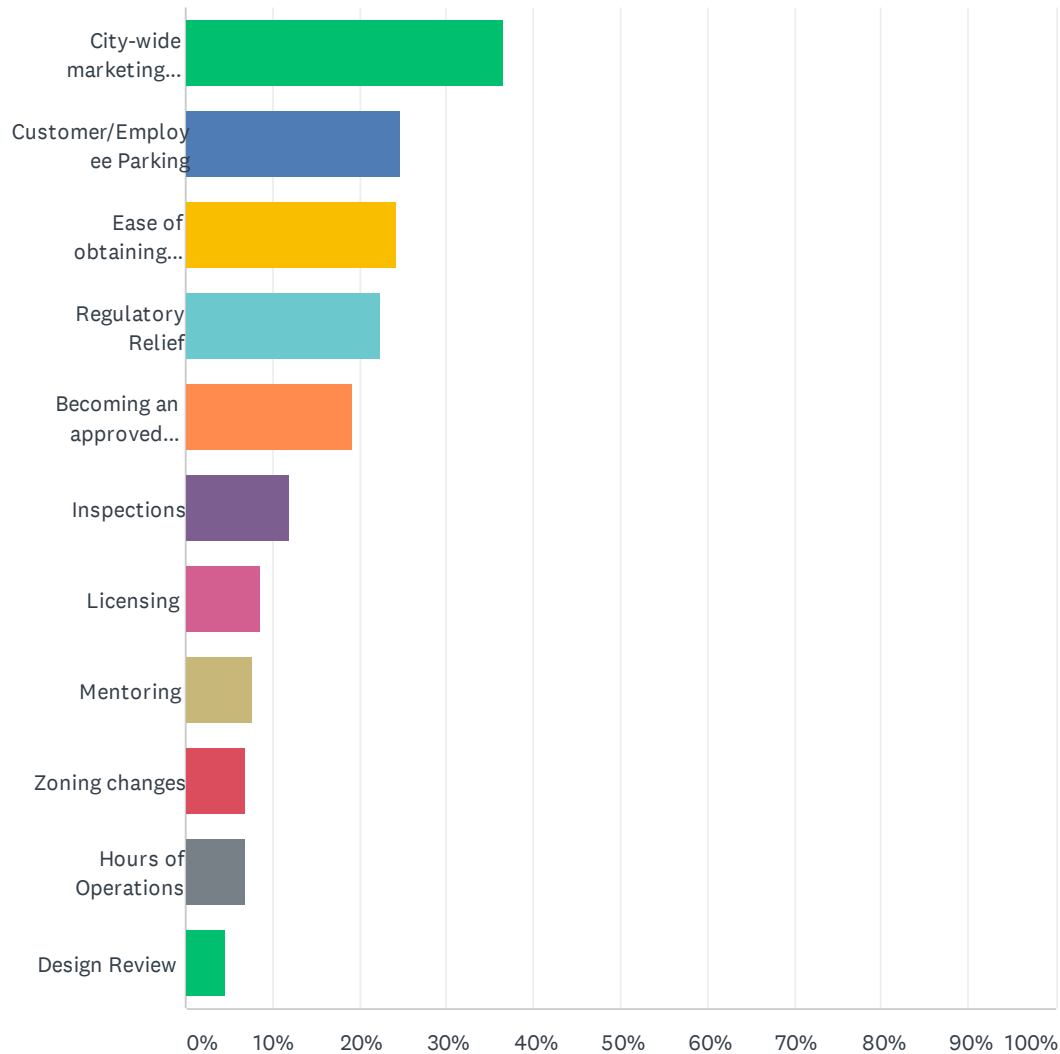
|    |  |                    |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 64 | I am a dentist in Newton Centre. We have no access to advanced PPE including masks and gowns. We donated 90%of ours to Newton Wellesley hospital. We have patients with immediate needs and we need desperate help acquiring masks and gowns. Dr Steve Bader, 1400 Centre Street. 6175120547   | 4/24/2020 11:22 PM |
| 65 | My actual shop is 180 square feet! I need to understand how to Operate safely within those restrictions As well I n d a way to advertise I'm not allowed certain signage as the building is in a historic district Thank you   | 4/24/2020 11:03 PM |
| 66 | Being able to afford hiring back our staff with the uncertainty of not having the income to pay them   | 4/24/2020 10:56 PM |
| 67 | Expect new regulations from the Dept. of Early Ed. on child care programs that may be hard to implement Concern that school day be modified thus affecting our business model Concern that school year may be in fits and starts, thus how to staff for a program like this  | 4/24/2020 9:49 PM  |
| 68 | teaching and performing  | 4/24/2020 9:37 PM  |
| 69 | I'm a Chinese American practicing acupuncture in newton. I'm afraid that people will be reluctant to come to me due to racism issue.   | 4/24/2020 9:17 PM  |
| 70 | Carrying costs of projects and mortgages. Loss of spring home buying market.   | 4/24/2020 8:51 PM  |
| 71 | Payment of commercial rent for period studio was closed.   | 4/24/2020 8:49 PM  |
| 72 | Paying back-rent from mid March due to total loss of income caused by government shutdown of businesses.   | 4/24/2020 8:28 PM  |
| 73 | Lose of revenue.   | 4/24/2020 7:25 PM  |
| 74 | the current limitation on new construction by the City of Newton is more stringent than other towns and does not seem to look at circumstances that seemingly meet the State criteria for continuing to work. A safe COVID compliant work environment on new housing should not be held up and it is   | 4/24/2020 6:14 PM  |
| 75 | Getting customers back in track after such a loss and business stoppage  | 4/24/2020 5:39 PM  |
| 76 | Change in demand as companies are focused on preserving cash, and moving forward very conservatively.  | 4/24/2020 4:33 PM  |
| 77 | financial recovery from loss of sales  | 4/24/2020 4:04 PM  |
| 78 | Paying bills rent, utilities   | 4/24/2020 3:51 PM  |
| 79 | Attracting guests  | 4/24/2020 3:51 PM  |
| 80 | parking  | 4/24/2020 3:39 PM  |
| 81 | worries about safe reopening   | 4/24/2020 3:06 PM  |
| 82 | As a real estate attorney I am expecting reduced activity and more stringent lending requirements for clients  | 4/24/2020 2:55 PM  |
| 83 | Meeting the need of the girls and young women we serve from low-income situations due to lack of donations and sponsorships. The cost of moving out of Northland office space on Needham Street, and finding a new office and warehouse, given current finances.   | 4/24/2020 2:54 PM  |
| 84 | People reconfiguration - business while continuing to socially distance ourselves.   | 4/24/2020 2:48 PM  |
| 85 | Finding Money in the form of grants or forgivable loans to pay back bills.   | 4/24/2020 2:31 PM  |
| 86 | Only the outstanding closure order for non-essential businesses. We had implemented strict distancing policies and limited access to each of our buildings to three employees at a time (keeping the majority at home at any given time) two weeks before the closure order was promulgated for the Commonwealth. We've fully closed each location since, though we continue to pay our landlords, our employees, and our contractors in full. As soon as the order is lifted, we will be able to slowly and safely allow some of our employees to return to access their work and make material progress. We are of course supportive of the public health response and proud to do our part, but it does seem an unnecessary restriction that we can't | 4/24/2020 2:29 PM  |

|     |   |                    |
|-----|---|--------------------|
|     | have even one employee (who can transport themselves in isolation from their home) alone in each building at a time to access our equipment and make progress on our stalled projects.        |                    |
| 87  | unknown % of business loss unknown regulations lease negotiations based on business loss potential of happening again end of year unknown future not being covered by business loss insurance | 4/24/2020 2:22 PM  |
| 88  | Development of a safe restaurant space  | 4/24/2020 2:15 PM  |
| 89  | None  | 4/24/2020 2:11 PM  |
| 90  | lack of travel, hard time getting safety equipment like Purell Stations   | 4/24/2020 2:06 PM  |
| 91  | getting staff to return to the office   | 4/24/2020 1:48 PM  |
| 92  | Renting Retail Space  | 4/24/2020 1:45 PM  |
| 93  | Financial Health of our mixed use retail / office tenants   | 4/24/2020 1:42 PM  |
| 94  | Not confident for health and safety.  | 4/24/2020 1:30 PM  |
| 95  | Hoping our West Newton Square Mom and Pop commercial tenants will survive   | 4/24/2020 1:29 PM  |
| 96  | Figuring out how to space patients apart and still be busy enough to make what I was before   | 4/24/2020 1:29 PM  |
| 97  | Please open day cares, summer camps, and schools in the fall. Without that, we will see economic carnage as half a couple cannot work. It's urgently time to end this lock-down.              | 4/24/2020 1:28 PM  |
| 98  | safety checks at senior citizens living in communities.   | 4/24/2020 1:26 PM  |
| 99  | Collecting receivables from struggling or out of business customers   | 4/24/2020 1:17 PM  |
| 100 | How to reopen to the general public with the necessary tools to keep everyone healthy.  | 4/24/2020 1:14 PM  |
| 101 | I cannot work due to lack of child care   | 4/24/2020 1:09 PM  |
| 102 | N   | 4/24/2020 1:08 PM  |
| 103 | Conducting meetings that were face to face - online, video, etc. Getting existing remote workers back to the office Keeping up with law changes   | 4/24/2020 1:00 PM  |
| 104 | Being able to show homes in person. If a sale occurs having inspections, walkthroughs   | 4/24/2020 12:58 PM |
| 105 | Making up lost revenue  | 4/24/2020 12:03 PM |



### Q5 How can the city of Newton assist you in solving your challenges as you resume regular business operations? (Check all that apply and provide detail in the comment field)

Answered: 219 Skipped: 26



| ANSWER CHOICES                        | RESPONSES |    |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|----|
| City-wide marketing campaign          | 36.53%    | 80 |
| Customer/Employee Parking             | 24.66%    | 54 |
| Ease of obtaining permits             | 24.20%    | 53 |
| Regulatory Relief                     | 22.37%    | 49 |
| Becoming an approved MA/Newton vendor | 19.18%    | 42 |
| Inspections                           | 11.87%    | 26 |
| Licensing                             | 8.68%     | 19 |
| Mentoring                             | 7.76%     | 17 |
| Zoning changes                        | 6.85%     | 15 |
| Hours of Operations                   | 6.85%     | 15 |
| Design Review                         | 4.57%     | 10 |
| Total Respondents: 219                |           |    |

| #  | COMMENTS INCLUDING OPTIONS NOT LISTED ABOVE  | DATE              |
|----|--|-------------------|
| 1  | If, the governor asks from landlords to drop rents to fifty percent through these difficult times would be great.  | 5/5/2020 8:46 AM  |
| 2  | We will continue wit keeping the waiting room empty . Will have patients wait in the car and let them in one by one . Continue with limited interaction with staff in the office and continue to have virtual visits for discussions . Continue to bring children in for vaccines in a very safe way. Cleaning between each patient which we did before . Keep infection control to the max . Continue locking the door and screening . Parking outside our office is essential. 33 Union st Newton. Specially new moms with babies would benefit from this .  | 5/5/2020 6:36 AM  |
| 3  | arranging for road work etc to minimally impact operations and access to our location by our customers   | 5/4/2020 11:14 PM |
| 4  | parking tickets  | 5/4/2020 5:30 PM  |
| 5  | Comments above regarding guidelines on opening safely.   | 5/4/2020 4:29 PM  |
| 6  | Protocols for short term rentals...  | 5/4/2020 4:01 PM  |
| 7  | additional staff needed at ISD to monitor, inspect and approve ongoing work and permits  | 5/4/2020 3:36 PM  |
| 8  | unknown  | 5/4/2020 2:09 PM  |
| 9  | all of the above   | 5/4/2020 2:00 PM  |
| 10 | Rent Reductions!!! Commercial Landlords demanding 100% rent from their tenants with shuttered businesses and no income is unfair. The Landlords, Banks pushing them, and the City of Newton pushing both need to back off or prepare for a sea of closures... which will leave them with nothing. Genuine rent/mortgage relief is more than a pause on collecting 100%. Shared sacrifice going forward should include all...not just the tenants! Deferring rent until re-opening only raises the height of the hurdles when trying to re-start...we've more than enough obstacles to overcome without that.   | 5/4/2020 1:17 PM  |
| 11 | provide relief of water and sewer charges and other utility costs if possible.   | 5/4/2020 1:09 PM  |
| 12 | N/A  | 5/4/2020 1:04 PM  |
| 13 | Free parking during shopping season thanksgiving -New year   | 5/4/2020 12:38 PM |
| 14 | Permitting is key. I'm a recent owner of a 2-family unoccupied. I need to make repairs & updates before it goes on the market. If I can't receive approval to start I will not be receiving any rent to cover the mortgage. Rental season is this summer. The bigger projects like Washington St are allowed to continue, while the smaller projects that will also contribute to the housing shortage have come to a full-stop. Not sure how that helps the cities overall economy.   | 5/4/2020 12:37 PM |
| 15 | As in previous question response - assistance from the City in communicating our NEW presence, of our NEW (yet-unopened) piano store, and piano-lessons (we offer online now, but are eager to get back into studios when safe) will be incredibly valuable, since we will not be able to hold the "grand opening" concerts and events we had planned, due to safety restrictions on large group gatherings. On the logistical side, we are in the process of navigating ISD permit application for signage (we are already approved by the UDC), and it's a bit challenging to do electronically. Being allowed to have a small (1 or 2-man) crew safely install the outdoor sign ASAP will be crucial for our business; but I just read in the Globe that Newton is banning small work projects like this, while allowing large development construction to continue. That doesn't seem to make any sense, for minor work that can be done with proper safety precautions. | 5/4/2020 12:27 PM |
| 16 | nothing  | 5/4/2020 12:16 PM |
| 17 | We are moving and we will have a smaller space. In Newton a big space to accommodate distance can cost a fortune. My landlord won't make any deals.  | 5/4/2020 12:06 PM |
| 18 | na   | 5/4/2020 12:05 PM |
| 19 | Rent abatement   | 5/4/2020 12:04 PM |
| 20 | The city staff has been outstanding during the past month. Wehat we don't know is what the backlog of work will be. And...we don't know the extent of issues that are not dealt with in The Age of Zoom  | 5/4/2020 12:03 PM |

|    |  |                    |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 21 | "Allowing us to do curbside pick up for books, puzzles etc. and allow employees in   | 5/1/2020 2:04 PM   |
| 22 | Many of my contractor clients are complaining that they are being prevented from working when their employees/subcontractors are already "socially distanced", and for those few that may have worked physically close to people, they would now certainly be paying special attention to how far they may be to anyone. Regulatory red-tape, from zoning issues to the Historic Commission's picayune requests are now even larger impediments than they may have been previously. Interest payments on unsold properties have increased for the time that they have sat idle.  | 5/1/2020 2:56 AM   |
| 23 | Provide technical support to help with ie 1. Cad cam software so I can learn how to offer floor plan designs 2. Video design supports so I can develop listing videos? 3. Quick book training Learning online can be tricky, having someone to talk with is very helpful. Thank you,   | 4/30/2020 3:14 PM  |
| 24 | Supporting retail establishments in any way possible.  | 4/30/2020 1:41 PM  |
| 25 | My business is a startup which has been seeking funds to develop a PPE medical device for healthcare workers. We are looking for angel investors, patent lawyer services, and/or mentor/advisors to guide us in this pursuit. We are happy to share specifics on the device with anyone interested in helping us.  | 4/30/2020 1:33 PM  |
| 26 | We will need close communication between NPS and the Newton After School Programs to have a coordinated approach to return to school in the fall. (space, schedules, social distancing, sanitizing shared space, etc).   | 4/30/2020 1:25 PM  |
| 27 | Nothing for me actually. I am more state regulated than city.  | 4/30/2020 12:46 AM |
| 28 | Family childcare preschool- Our State licensing body (EEC) will not License our property as a place for children to play because the property has a construction zone behind it for 2.5 years now that has not been fenced and our property is too close to Comm Ave. to not be fenced in as well. Because of these realities we have been operating using Newton parks for our recess space. We can no longer do that with playgrounds closed and our own property is not adequate enough without some changes that we can no longer afford to make ( retaining wall and fence) We will not be able to open when the rest of the preschools open and we will likely loose our client base. Because we were less than a year since we opened and understandably operating at a loss for our first year, it is doubtful we will be able to reopen without grants to make changes to our property. | 4/30/2020 12:09 AM |
| 29 | It would be great if salons can operate with 1 client and 1 service provider at a time. This would work for us because we only have 1 operator in each suite, unlike regular salons where there are many clients and service providers in the same room at the same time.  | 4/29/2020 10:07 PM |
| 30 | We have not received any rent relief, PPP or SBA relief even though we applied.  | 4/29/2020 9:37 PM  |
| 31 | Providing on going information about resources for businesses  | 4/29/2020 9:17 PM  |
| 32 | N/a  | 4/29/2020 8:59 PM  |
| 33 | Just open up construction. We can comply with the distancing and protection plans. Dont wait til may 18th. Not working is killing us.  | 4/29/2020 8:56 PM  |
| 34 | Construction start date ASAP -- contractor has a plan for no trades to overlap on site.  | 4/29/2020 5:01 PM  |
| 35 | Maybe a door sticker or LOGO proclaiming our space as clean and safe?  | 4/29/2020 7:42 AM  |
| 36 | Developing safety standards for post covid   | 4/28/2020 11:09 PM |
| 37 | Just would like to be able to at least partially open for business, doing a curbside service for our clients that have items ready to pick up. Since we are a non essential business, we are not allowed to. Our clients could also drop off items in a way we would have no contact.  | 4/28/2020 4:00 PM  |
| 38 | Would love to see an effort to expand outdoor dining options in and around Newton Center so people can feel comfortable ordering takeout from the various restaurants. We will likely see a significant reduction in seating capacity both from a new regulatory standpoint and customer comfort level.  | 4/28/2020 12:38 PM |
| 39 | just a comment, employee parking is a HUGE problem with many of the possible locations we are looking at. As I listen in on Zoning Board meetings, the developers may be offering retail space, but they are not offering parking for employees or even reasonable parking for customers. I have real fear that the village that I live in (West Newton) will loose its independent  | 4/27/2020 4:32 PM  |

|    |   |                    |
|----|---|--------------------|
|    | shops and corporations will simply eat up the space to the benefit of the building owner but loss to the residents.   |                    |
| 40 | It would be helpful if parking meters were not in effect for at least the first few months. Customers do not need further reasons to not visit the City of Newton.  | 4/27/2020 3:02 PM  |
| 41 | Leadership and guidance as to what some of the new suggestions from the CDC will be for retail businesses to open up and to offer a safe environment. Access to masks and hand sanitizer and to ensure that the Newton Centre streets and sidewalks are clean...  | 4/27/2020 2:39 PM  |
| 42 | As a lawyer, it is hard to know what the city can do to help me.  | 4/27/2020 10:54 AM |
| 43 | We may need help in interpreting language of new regulations  | 4/27/2020 10:05 AM |
| 44 | I hear that in New York State every business will be required to provide a Covid safe operation plan before it is allowed to reopen. Key elements of the plan will include: spacing, PPE, temperature testing, cleaning of workspaces and customer spaces, minimizing use of shared facilities etc. Not sure if MA is planning to go down the same road, but I think Newton absolutely should lead whether MA does or not. And a key part of the plan has to be a reasonable level of verification of business performance against the plan, backed up by mechanisms for withdrawal of operating permission if necessary, ie closedown until any issues have been addressed.  | 4/27/2020 9:14 AM  |
| 45 | Open up construction projects in Newton. there are ways of being safe and construction workers are smart enough to know how to avoid contact with others.   | 4/27/2020 8:25 AM  |
| 46 | Free Advertising campaigns to Shop the Lake! Feature brick and mortar retailers who are NOT backed by corporate titans. The villages can ONLY stay viable if people stop, come and Shop - Service - Dine !! If a person comes to one place, encourage them to visit and discover other shops. Tell their friends. Bring their Friends. LOCAL SMALL INDEPENDENTS give PERSONALIZED SERVICE, ADVICE and GUIDANCE. Bottom Line. BUY LOCAL or BYE BYE LOCAL !!!   | 4/26/2020 6:59 PM  |
| 47 | Have a building inspector available for discussion - via Zoom, Skype, or in the office - during business hours. Extend business hours so there are more opportunities to talk with inspectors - assuming that there are fewer in City Hall at a given time due to social distancing. Install glass sneeze-guards at public counters so in-person meetings can be held. PS - licensing. how can my fiance and I get married?   | 4/26/2020 12:30 PM |
| 48 | Specific info on safety recommendations/requirements, cleaning and sanitizing (leads on vendors for hand sanitizer stations etc.) , recommendations for safer check out procedures. Basically, assistance on standards for increasing safety and confidence in the shopping public--perhaps citywide recommendations so that all retailers/service providers can implement the same safety measures so that customers in our community can feel comfortable and confident in patronizing in-person once again.  | 4/26/2020 8:33 AM  |
| 49 | Small Business Relief Grants akin to what the City of Boston has done to assist small businesses make ends meet after losing business during the shut down.<br><a href="https://www.boston.gov/departments/economic-development/small-business-relief-fund">https://www.boston.gov/departments/economic-development/small-business-relief-fund</a>  | 4/25/2020 2:09 PM  |
| 50 | As an early education and care program located in three NPS schools, waiving building use fees for time closed would likely help a bit. Having more space in the schools for distancing requirements during this pandemic may be required by new EEC licensing regulations - but may also be needed just for our own safety practices. Also is there a place where the voice of early education programs in the city can be heard when planning and decisions are being made that impact our field and our programs? Perhaps guidance/help/training from health and education specialists when we reopen might be needed. Help accessing PPE and disinfectants when we reopen. Ways to share with our families important assistance information the city has compiled. Maybe access to mental health consultants and professionals at affordable rates will likely help us as well. Thanks for all you have done to date! | 4/25/2020 1:33 PM  |
| 51 | See comment to previous question  | 4/25/2020 10:38 AM |
| 52 | We are hoping to reopen as soon as it is safe to do so. However, our program is so dependent upon our space to operate in the school building. The AfterSchool programs need to be included in the planning for how and when the schools will reopen. Parents rely on us in order to be able to work.   | 4/25/2020 10:05 AM |
| 53 | Help finding a new space or help with are landlords unreasonable rent increase.   | 4/25/2020 9:34 AM  |

|    |  |                    |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 54 | Please consider revision of the regulation on residential renovation and remodel to allow companies resume operations in Un-occupied spaces and exterior work with COVID-19 safety plans and protocols.  | 4/25/2020 8:46 AM  |
| 55 | Help from the healthcare sector to train our staff in safe practices when we reopen would be helpful.  | 4/25/2020 8:15 AM  |
| 56 | Perhaps parking constraints could be lifted around Nonantum, so that if I need to stagger classes more, there is more parking available.   | 4/25/2020 7:34 AM  |
| 57 | Help dentists by obtaining the necessary PPE supply which cannot be purchased except from the black market and price gougers. Set up small (non-hospital) healthcare specific funding to assist us financially so that we purchase the CDC and MDS mandated air purification systems which will need to be installed in order for us to treat patients. Dentistry is a profession which is one of the top 3 with the highest risk of Covid-19 transmission. No one ever mentions us and we are still seeing urgent cases and emergencies daily.  | 4/25/2020 12:26 AM |
| 58 | Masks and gowns.   | 4/24/2020 11:22 PM |
| 59 | Temporary rescind sidewalk signage restrictions for a historical District so I can A. Let people know about specials B utilize sidewalk sandwich boards to this effect around sidewalk adjacent my store   | 4/24/2020 11:03 PM |
| 60 | Afterschool programs need more support and respect from NPS administration and the School Committee. Reduced or free rent for afterschool programs in the schools.   | 4/24/2020 9:49 PM  |
| 61 | I would like to see city of Newton showing more support to Asian American community at this historical moment publicly.  | 4/24/2020 9:17 PM  |
| 62 | Let us get back to residential home building as soon as possible. Doesn't make sense to allow large construction projects and landscapers to continue and shut down small residential home builders. Put limits as to how many workers can be on site at a time. Our small sites are safer than large ones. We need to work to get people back into their homes and relive the financial burden of carrying mortgages and constructions loans that can't be progressed and can't get draws from banks to pay my own bills.   | 4/24/2020 8:51 PM  |
| 63 | Commercial rent relief. I am a small business. 2 employees, plus myself. Rent is a much higher expense than payroll, yet without this relief there potentially is no business for the 3 of us to return to   | 4/24/2020 8:49 PM  |
| 64 | rent relief / reductions to offset losses due to the shutdown  | 4/24/2020 8:28 PM  |
| 65 | Since we are long term tenants in an office building, what guidance will the City of Newton be providing to commercial landlords to improve the safety of common and shared areas of our building: reception area, hallways, stairwells, elevator, copy machine rooms, lunch rooms, rest rooms, etc.? I know that we are all going to have to work together to make this work but if the City can contact landlords first and provide consistent guidance on how to manage workers from different companies/organizations that work in the same building, that would be very helpful.  | 4/24/2020 6:27 PM  |
| 66 | take a genuine look at each situation and assess them in a timely manner.  | 4/24/2020 6:14 PM  |
| 67 | I know that Mayer Fuller is in a difficult spot as she tries to balance taxes and city expenses. But what if all the small retail tenants did not return from being closed, and what if customers did not return due to fear? It is going to be a"NEW NORMAL" after the virus. There could be more online ordering, more home businesses, more retail services going to industrial areas and sharing space at a fraction of the cost of existing retail stores, and more large corporations closing stores and going bankrupt. Granted this is negative outlook, but there are real estate management companies that are attempting to prepare for this and other possibilities around the country. There are no easy answers as this is not a Newton problem only, but the issue should be discussed with open minds. | 4/24/2020 5:26 PM  |
| 68 | Facilitating ways to let businesses that are RIGHT HERE really know what resources are available within their communities. The Chamber doesn't really do this. It's focus is too small.  | 4/24/2020 4:33 PM  |
| 69 | Ease the parking meter enforcement for 6 months  | 4/24/2020 4:32 PM  |
| 70 | Tax relief   | 4/24/2020 3:51 PM  |
| 71 | What small, over the counter, businesses need is a Covid 19 vaccine implemented for heard  | 4/24/2020 3:13 PM  |

immunity, 100% Covid 19 testing, contact tracing for people who have come in contact with those who are infected, & treatment and isolation for the infected. Nothing else will allow the most vulnerable people to leave their houses, and everyone else to let their guard down and return to "normal". Without that, pretty much every small, over the counter, businesses that has to pay rent or a mortgage will go out of business if they haven't already.

|    |   |                   |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 72 | Refund rent already paid for days when the space at the city owned building was not open for use  | 4/24/2020 3:06 PM |
| 73 | Grants available to businesses and non-profits being displaced this summer, due to pre-approved construction projects in Newton, to help with moving and new office costs.  | 4/24/2020 2:54 PM |
| 74 | Announce which businesses are open and encourage the public to go to those businesses   | 4/24/2020 2:38 PM |
| 75 | We are having to wait to bring natural gas to our building (and using expensive propane instead) since apparently even small work on the road would require us to redo the entire road section which is very expensive. We have to wait for another year I guess (Bridge Street). It would be great if we could do this work, transition to gas, and remove the expensive propane tanks.  | 4/24/2020 2:32 PM |
| 76 | Reduction of personal property taxes for small independent businesses Review restaurant occupancy that is based on available parking. Less authoritative more business friendly ISD Festival supporting local businesses to support local   | 4/24/2020 2:29 PM |
| 77 | To the extent that rapid testing can be made available to private businesses, we would be very willing to pay to have that capability onsite (perhaps using the IDNOW platform?). As we understand it, only medical offices are allowed to have such testing equipment onsite. Access to rapid testing would allow us to allow more employees to return to work with confidence in their health and the public health, which would greatly help us to restore our productivity as a company. And, of course, while capacity for this testing remains scarce for both hospitals and first responders we would defer having our own access. But, it should be a priority to make testing available more broadly through the economy as capacity ramps --- and it should be a priority to drive the ramping in capacity. | 4/24/2020 2:29 PM |
| 78 | This applies to not just Newton but municipalities generally. Stop requiring hard copy responses to requests for proposals. Allow on line applications for regulatory permits with one hard copy Reduce the number of copies requested.   | 4/24/2020 2:27 PM |
| 79 | financial relief  | 4/24/2020 2:22 PM |
| 80 | Allowing business to reopen ASAP.   | 4/24/2020 2:11 PM |
| 81 | Guidance of how to best reopen our office....what protocol should be, etc.  | 4/24/2020 2:06 PM |
| 82 | We had to layoff 90% of our staff due to the CONVID situation. Our business depends a lot on other businesses and companies success for lunch catering and work parties. We love our location in Newton however our rent is \$6,300 a month and we can't afford it. The triple net taxes are too high and our landlord is not willing to spare us rent relief. If the City of Newton could offer us a loan or grant from community funds we would greatly appreciate it and will use it to rehire our staff and start our meal delivery service.  | 4/24/2020 1:45 PM |
| 83 | We will be fine. Thank you.   | 4/24/2020 1:44 PM |
| 84 | Get rid battery operated blowers. Causes hardship to the landscapers  | 4/24/2020 1:43 PM |
| 85 | Continuation of dialogue with respect to the development of the Cypress Street Municipal Parking Lot  | 4/24/2020 1:42 PM |
| 86 | Property tax relief   | 4/24/2020 1:39 PM |
| 87 | Since we are a small business And have a tiny space with limited seating, it will be great not to have indoor seating for a while but rather outdoor. There's enough room on the sidewalk and It would be great if the city would consider letting us use the outdoor space for a while. It will help us greatly.   | 4/24/2020 1:30 PM |
| 88 | Make sure people need to practice social distancing and have best understand about health and safety for themselves and other.  | 4/24/2020 1:30 PM |
| 89 | The main concern is how to remediate the lost education. Going back to work when you know your children just experienced 90 days of no metrics-oriented education is challenging. They  | 4/24/2020 1:28 PM |

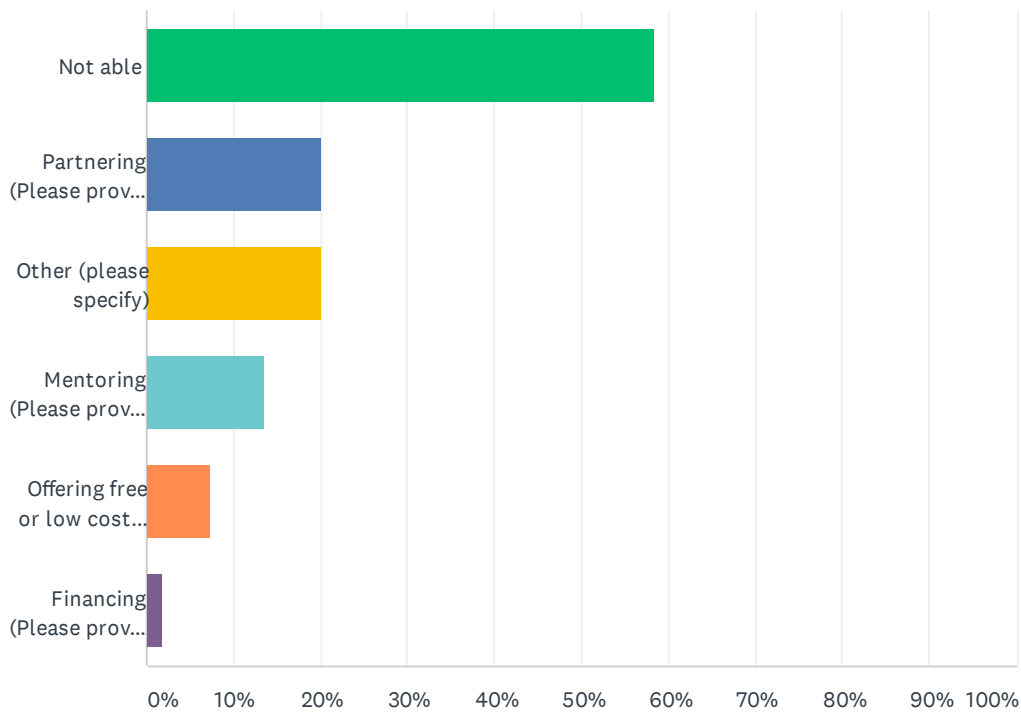
are now 90 days behind their better-supported peers. Who is going to remediate this? At present, the parents are through coordination with privately funded tutors. This effort takes time away from work, and money away from other consumption. The best thing the City of Newton can do is to present a plan to remediate the lost education so parents can go back to work with peace of mind. The school situation has been handled horribly and has done such damage to our city.

|     |  |                    |
|-----|--|--------------------|
| 90  | Safety checks on residents and staff. Possible need to use masks and gloves.   | 4/24/2020 1:26 PM  |
| 91  | Reduce sales tax to the city, so we still charge 7% from customers but let us pay 3.5% to the city for few months.   | 4/24/2020 1:23 PM  |
| 92  | Our special permit for a new tenant was denied right before the COVID pandemic. We would love an expedited hearing in order to get approved. We could really use the additional cash flow from a new tenant instead of having the space stay vacant  | 4/24/2020 1:17 PM  |
| 93  | Consider releasing more PEG funds now held by the city.  | 4/24/2020 1:14 PM  |
| 94  | I am a solo practitioner lawyer. When I do not work, my firm makes no money. I could use a loan, but cannot get the federal loan because I do not have payroll.  | 4/24/2020 1:09 PM  |
| 95  | N  | 4/24/2020 1:08 PM  |
| 96  | The primary question will be: are customers going to feel comfortable shopping in a retail setting. How can the City of Newton assist the merchant achieving that goal.  | 4/24/2020 1:07 PM  |
| 97  | Capital inflow. Ease of taxes. Partial refund of license fees. Reduction in cost of licensing. Newton is one of the most expensive licensing cities. Stop having meter maids pile on parking tickets to business owners who keep the Newton community alive. Treat us like valuable members of the community and provide capital aid as many cities are. | 4/24/2020 1:03 PM  |
| 98  | not sure we will need City help but thank you for asking   | 4/24/2020 1:00 PM  |
| 99  | Anything that can be done for rent for a space we can't use (our office) would help.   | 4/24/2020 12:59 PM |
| 100 | possibly enforcing specific rules regulations for Real Estate agents to follow so clients feel comfortable   | 4/24/2020 12:58 PM |
| 101 | none of above  | 4/24/2020 12:03 PM |



### Q6 Can you or your business assist other Newton businesses in resuming business operations post COVID-19? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 219 Skipped: 26



| ANSWER CHOICES  | RESPONSES |     |
|---|-----------|-----|
| Not able  | 58.45%    | 128 |
| Partnering (Please provide your contact information at the end of the survey)                           | 20.09%    | 44  |
| Other (please specify)  | 20.09%    | 44  |
| Mentoring (Please provide your contact information at the end of the survey)                            | 13.70%    | 30  |
| Offering free or low cost space/rent (Please provide your contact information at the end of the survey) | 7.31%     | 16  |
| Financing (Please provide your contact information at the end of the survey)                            | 1.83%     | 4   |
| Total Respondents: 219  |           |     |

| #  | OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)   | DATE               |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 1  | At least we can survive and keep our businesses . As you know everybody of us has other big expences. It will be trajedy if it goes longer.We have to be ready for non expected situations.<br>Thank you   | 5/5/2020 8:46 AM   |
| 2  | 16175640123  | 5/5/2020 6:36 AM   |
| 3  | We have a large commercial kitchen which we have previously shared with startups   | 5/4/2020 11:14 PM  |
| 4  | Not sure, but always happy to assist.  | 5/4/2020 8:27 PM   |
| 5  | I am not sure what this would look like for a my retail setting but I am open to helping one another get back to business  | 5/4/2020 4:29 PM   |
| 6  | Unsure due to nature of my business...if I do decide that people are safe once again to have in my homestay B & B, then I could possibly offer stays to those who need it for their employees, maybe give discount if Newton related...  | 5/4/2020 4:01 PM   |
| 7  | unknown  | 5/4/2020 2:09 PM   |
| 8  | all of the above   | 5/4/2020 2:00 PM   |
| 9  | Offering discount food service to other Newton businesses  | 5/4/2020 1:09 PM   |
| 10 | I do also run a Digital Marketing Consultancy. Would be happy to host a city-wide workshop to help small businesses expand their online presence.  | 5/4/2020 12:37 PM  |
| 11 | We would be thrilled to learn about any partnering or cross-promoting opportunities with other Newton businesses or organizations, particularly in music and the arts.   | 5/4/2020 12:27 PM  |
| 12 | marketing. outreach.   | 5/4/2020 12:05 PM  |
| 13 | I could sell a house quickly for a cash-strapped resident.   | 5/1/2020 2:56 AM   |
| 14 | Retraining people ( especially the older population ) will help them to continue their employment opportunities.   | 4/30/2020 3:14 PM  |
| 15 | Childcare for employees (assuming we are allowed to open)  | 4/30/2020 9:54 AM  |
| 16 | I can help people if they have real estate or leasing questions since I teach real estate law. Call me: Dr. Jack Porter, Director, The Spencer School of Real Estate School Lic. #1069 school and lic. #126126-RE-B my broker's license  | 4/30/2020 12:46 AM |
| 17 | I have some experience in both aseptic technique and childcare and could help childcare facilities or family childcare facilities as an advisor as they try to open more safely with toddler social distancing, how to get children 2-5 years old to wear PPEs, advice on toy selection, cleaning, room layout and changes to operation that could better protect our preschool children and teachers.   | 4/30/2020 12:09 AM |
| 18 | I would love to be able to help others as well but am forced to be homeless because a sole individual cannot work in my uninhabitable home in Newton while my family is not there. It makes it difficult to operate my business from newton (AirBnB) and teach my children at school. It also removes income from Newton as I won't be paying Newton home taxes while my home is not able to be worked on.   | 4/29/2020 8:59 PM  |
| 19 | Not sure what we can offer as we are non-profit  | 4/29/2020 5:01 PM  |
| 20 | ablebodiesphysicaltherapy@gmail.com  | 4/29/2020 7:42 AM  |
| 21 | Mentoring and networking   | 4/28/2020 11:22 AM |
| 22 | sharonburns@farmsteadtable.com   | 4/27/2020 10:05 AM |
| 23 | Would like to see an in store Counter Signage networking program either within a village or Village to village. So if a customer is one store, there is a store counter sign (obviously not a competitor like bakery to bakery) but an unrelated business. Example: at the Bakery - signage to the effect "treat your self to a manicure/pedicure at our Neighbor xxxxxx. or in Swartz's Hardware; Have you seen the "MOUSTACHE and BEARD CARE " section at our Neighbor across the street - "COLONIAL DRUG". or Lunch now being served at our neighbor XXXX. The more people coming into the villages to shop at many places, the better for all of us!!! | 4/26/2020 6:59 PM  |

## 3 Minute Survey of Businesses for COVID 19 Recovery

SurveyMonkey

|    |  |                    |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 24 | Anything we can do to help.  | 4/26/2020 6:20 PM  |
| 25 | Not sure but willing to assist if/where possible   | 4/26/2020 8:33 AM  |
| 26 | Keep opening my business to pay tax.   | 4/25/2020 4:32 PM  |
| 27 | We might be able to work with others at City Hall or NPS to direct families in need of resources and other necessary services. We might be able to direct families of low income to EEC childcare slots in the city or other help or contacts that might be required.  | 4/25/2020 1:33 PM  |
| 28 | We already partner with the other AfterSchool programs in Newton and serve as an important support system to each other. We may be able to help support similar programs in Newton.  | 4/25/2020 10:05 AM |
| 29 | If we can stay where we are we can rent a booth to one other hairdresser the cost would depend on our landlord   | 4/25/2020 9:34 AM  |
| 30 | I have space for professionals within my suite. Not sure how "working art home" will shrink the market for those wanting a "Newton Office".  | 4/25/2020 9:16 AM  |
| 31 | Happy to create a dialog on safe re-opening practices. Similar to home-made masks, can we learn and start a campaign on other home-made safety equipment: gowns? plastic coverings?  | 4/25/2020 8:15 AM  |
| 32 | technology services: marketing automation, custom software   | 4/25/2020 3:25 AM  |
| 33 | Dr. Brendon Chiou The Newton Dental Group  | 4/25/2020 12:26 AM |
| 34 | We can help parents get back to work if the restrictions on child care are reasonable ones, and if NPS allocates space for programs.   | 4/24/2020 9:49 PM  |
| 35 | We are happy to share peer-to-peer findings about how best operating practices, if that is helpful.  | 4/24/2020 7:25 PM  |
| 36 | Advisor on commercial space needs/deferral conversations w/ landlords  | 4/24/2020 5:07 PM  |
| 37 | When we can provide childcare safely, others can go back to work. Please spend money to hire professional cleaners to help us keep kids and adults safe. It has been years since this building has been cleaned well daily.  | 4/24/2020 3:06 PM  |
| 38 | Find a way to make our office safe and the people working their safe. Implement an everyone where's mask outside their homes like Brookline did until such time as we do feel safe leaving our homes to go to work. also, better educate folks about fear around mail. Just wash your hands after you open it. | 4/24/2020 2:27 PM  |
| 39 | We would be happy to offer vacant space at a very reduced or rate or at no charge for someone in dire need for as long as it takes us to find a permanent tenant.  | 4/24/2020 1:45 PM  |
| 40 | If we can provide any type of help, we will.   | 4/24/2020 1:44 PM  |
| 41 | Unfortunately, during this time we need to concentrate on putting out our own fires due to COVID-19; otherwise would be able to participate on many fronts   | 4/24/2020 1:42 PM  |
| 42 | We just support each other as always   | 4/24/2020 1:30 PM  |
| 43 | Creating videos to share online and via social media touting their product and service offerings.  | 4/24/2020 1:14 PM  |
| 44 | N  | 4/24/2020 1:08 PM  |

## Q7 Additional comments or information that you would like the EDC to consider or be aware of

Answered: 69 Skipped: 176

| #  | RESPONSES   | DATE               |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1  | It is very sad situation. Thanks to our government leaders. We hope they fulfill their work and promises.   | 5/5/2020 8:46 AM   |
| 2  | provide parking for business owners and employees   | 5/5/2020 6:33 AM   |
| 3  | Your efforts are appreciated  | 5/4/2020 8:27 PM   |
| 4  | Have a lot of marketing supporting the local customer facing businesses. Supply links for PPE vendors and or mail out PPE kits to the residence of Newton. Provide Short term tax burden relief for residents and business to help offset their losses.   | 5/4/2020 4:45 PM   |
| 5  | I am hopeful we will come back strong as a business of 38 years. We have secured some loan funding. Auburndale has felt a little bit sleepy even before Covid arrived with the Village Bank operations leaving, multiple projects that have been sitting for years as well as many empty or non-vital storefronts. I hope that the EDC will be able to work with the Auburndale businesses to get through this challenge because if others don't make it it will be harder for those of us left behind.   | 5/4/2020 4:29 PM   |
| 6  | Just a really scary time for us who rely on the short term rental income to keep our homes, property tax discount would be very helpful.  | 5/4/2020 4:01 PM   |
| 7  | In the spirit of shared sacrifice going forward, commercial Landlords should offer rent reductions to offset some of the loss of their tenants due to the Government shut down. (And the banks that push them!)   | 5/4/2020 1:17 PM   |
| 8  | Please also consider to provide relief of residence real estate taxes to Newton residence, so it can help to increase the Newton residence's spending.  | 5/4/2020 1:09 PM   |
| 9  | none  | 5/4/2020 1:04 PM   |
| 10 | Our business (piano store) is a perfect candidate for early "Phase 1" reopening. Our store is low-volume, so does not draw an unsafe number of customers at any time; and our space is easily monitored and controlled to maintain distancing and other safe health practices. Furthermore, bringing MUSIC to our Newton community will be hugely valuable for mental health benefits that are so important at this time, as well as the inherent cultural, artistic, and educational benefits to the community. For our customers, the process selecting an acoustic piano really must be done in person; while we offer online, virtual, and remote purchasing, the business model remains rooted in on-site selection of the specific instrument that is right for each player. We CAN safely re-open, with our safety policies strictly enforced; and we also MUST re-open, and soon, if we are to survive. | 5/4/2020 12:27 PM  |
| 11 | Take the time when traffic is light to OPTIMIZE all roads and traffic signals -- now is the time we can help the people who want to work optimize their commutes.   | 5/4/2020 12:26 PM  |
| 12 | None  | 5/4/2020 12:22 PM  |
| 13 | n/a   | 5/4/2020 12:18 PM  |
| 14 | The cost of rent here is sickening. Landlords would rather hold on to an empty space forever rather than have a good business paying reasonable rent. Times will change but most here don't care  | 5/4/2020 12:06 PM  |
| 15 | Thank you for thinking about this   | 5/4/2020 12:03 PM  |
| 16 | Many doctors and medical device developers have expressed a desire to see my medical device developed, especially now that we are faced with such great need for it during the current Covid Crisis and beyond.   | 4/30/2020 1:33 PM  |
| 17 | None, thank you. well, maybe one, go easy on parking tickets for people who park in the street they may be my students.   | 4/30/2020 12:46 AM |
| 18 | This is a crucial time for children under 5 to be missing school. Two year olds need to be exposed to different vocabulary building opportunities outside of their homes. If we keep them at home for a big chunk of their second year of life, it will have lasting effects throughout their entire academic careers. Three year olds are at the optimum age for learning conflict resolution and pretend play. As for Pre-K children, there has been many studies showing the disparities between children who received a preschool education and those who have not. I think it would be good for the city to take responsibility to educate parents on what they should be working on   | 4/30/2020 12:09 AM |

at home for their children's future. What might only be a three months hold to an adult is 1/4 of a two year old's language learning experience. It's a big deal.

|    |   |                    |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 19 | The City of Newton has subtracted housing off the market that are total rehabs/additions or have been tear downs that can't achieve a certificate of occupancy. These projects are done by real estate developers and they are not going to be brought back to market in a timely fashion. We are paying real estate taxes on these projects. We are paying very high permit costs on these projects. When they are done and hopefully sold, we are raising the tax basis on these addresses for The City of Newton!!!! Open specific Real Estate Development in Newton!! Every other town around Newton is doing it!!! Thank you for your attention to this note. Chad Maguire, resident and Newton Developer. | 4/29/2020 11:54 PM |
| 20 | small business making walking canes   | 4/29/2020 9:58 PM  |
| 21 | N/a   | 4/29/2020 8:59 PM  |
| 22 | The state has not mandated that construction is banned. Newton should not either. Please allow it.  | 4/29/2020 8:56 PM  |
| 23 | Thanks for asking!  | 4/29/2020 5:01 PM  |
| 24 | Just hoping that a company like ours, that can open up but limit all contact with the public, be allowed to before the State mandate is lifted. Like what restaurants are allowed to do.  | 4/28/2020 4:00 PM  |
| 25 | People will likely feel most comfortable outside as we re-emerge and we need to take advantage of that and help businesses. Having occasional musical performances in the center could be safely done in addition to expanding tables, chairs and benches to dine. We could also create a way to link businesses to increase consumer activity i.e. purchase at Newtonville books and get 10% off your order at Johnny's and a coupon for 10% off your next book purchase or something like that. Really important that we work to get through this together and enhance the community spirit that already exists!  | 4/28/2020 12:38 PM |
| 26 | small spaces reasonably priced for independent business would be lovely... but the City must require the rents and fees to be manageable. A penalty for leaving the space empty because they set the rent beyond what the small shops can pay may correct the problem.  | 4/27/2020 4:32 PM  |
| 27 | We need to ensure that we make Newton Centre safe and an enjoyable place to shop. I would suggest that parking for customers till the fall be free. Anything we can do to make the customers come out again would be welcome.   | 4/27/2020 2:39 PM  |
| 28 | Newton Residents: Keep your money closer so your Villages can go farther. Newton residents: SHOP LOCAL - EAT LOCAL - SPEND LOCAL - ENJOY LOCAL. It takes YOU to start the and maintain the trend. Please support the local businesses who support the area where you live, work and play! The Customer is the only local job creator. Use your Power! When you support a small business, you are supporting a dream! When you buy forms a small business, an actual person does a little happy dance!! THANK YOU!   | 4/26/2020 6:59 PM  |
| 29 | Please let us know if we can help in any way!   | 4/26/2020 6:20 PM  |
| 30 | Specific recommendations and requirements for business types i.e. retailers, salons, restaurants would be helpful--even if coming from the state but help navigating and implementing at the local, city level  | 4/26/2020 8:33 AM  |
| 31 | funding to recoup lost revenue will make a big difference. The CARES act has provided payroll support but leadership from local gov't is needed to help us weather the business disruption.   | 4/25/2020 2:09 PM  |
| 32 | Is there a voice for Early Education and Care and after-school programs on the EDC council?   | 4/25/2020 1:33 PM  |
| 33 | Support childcare providers dealing with how to reconfigure practices to comply with state requirements/ regulations and keep a small nonprofit afloat. Because our program is housed outside a school, transportation from the middle schools will be a big concern. We will also need help in providing scholarships and tuition reductions so working families recovering from this can afford to send children. Lastly, marketing the program and finding ways of letting the community know about our positive and important roll in helping working families.   | 4/25/2020 11:24 AM |
| 34 | Suggested guidelines for barber shops to safely operate, if that's even possible. I am the 88 yr old owner and I just can't envision that it's safe for me to cut hair even if my customer and I are both wearing masks. Thank you.   | 4/25/2020 10:38 AM |
| 35 | Can I have a new landlord double our rent right now. Our lease just ended   | 4/25/2020 9:34 AM  |

|    |   |                    |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 36 | Thank you for putting this survey out there   | 4/25/2020 8:46 AM  |
| 37 | Looking at the Scandinavian countries who are thoughtfully reopening and a good at self-discipline, I think we Newtonians can do something similar that would safely reopen businesses.   | 4/25/2020 8:15 AM  |
| 38 | Dentists are at an extreme high risk when it comes to virus transmission. Please keep us in mind when providing PPE supplies. Because of the lack of exposure, Amazon still refuses to allow dentists access to their supply of PPE. I think what we are doing is also essential for the health and well being of patients and the medical community as a whole of for no other reason than by keeping dental emergency patients out of the ERs and for being able to diagnosis possible Covid-19 cases and triaging them to the correct medical centers. | 4/25/2020 12:26 AM |
| 39 | N/A   | 4/25/2020 12:25 AM |
| 40 | Altho landlord has offered to stretch rental Payment times It would also be helpful if they were to forgive some or any monthly payments  | 4/24/2020 11:03 PM |
| 41 | Can help with anxiety   | 4/24/2020 9:17 PM  |
| 42 | Free meter parking parking would be huge, push marketing by the city to announce open stores, guidelines on how many people can be in at a time, help with obtaining cleaning supplies.   | 4/24/2020 8:53 PM  |
| 43 | Please consider allowing residential home construction to resume. This is taking a huge toll on small business contractors that are carrying huge financial burdens, trying to get homeowners back into their homes, and can't pay our own bills. We can be safe by having 3-5 to workers on site at a time remaining distance. Inspections can take place with no one on site. We need to get back to work as soon as possible.  | 4/24/2020 8:51 PM  |
| 44 | The failure of the SBA in helping small businesses is extraordinary. Large companies were favored, both by their banks and the fact that there was no cap on loan amounts. By definition, if a business is getting a \$10 mil loan under PPP, they are not "small." This has been described small business relief and is the opposite. Commercial rent relief is the only way to ensure we return to serve our clients and community.   | 4/24/2020 8:49 PM  |
| 45 | While my landlord is still expecting rent to be paid, I am not able to operate my business due to the shut down and therefore have absolutely no income or ability to pay the rent, nor will I be able to pay passed due rent if and when we are allowed to re-open   | 4/24/2020 8:28 PM  |
| 46 | Newton does a great job in general. These are unconventional times to say the least and putting the brakes on is a smart and safe initial response. Peeling back the restrictions should be done in a prudent and thoughtful manner and i am not seeing that in my industry.  | 4/24/2020 6:14 PM  |
| 47 | N/a   | 4/24/2020 5:39 PM  |
| 48 | Keep up the good work   | 4/24/2020 5:07 PM  |
| 49 | This experience has highlighted two things: in some ways, we have become more hyper-local, as we need to source from very near by to make sure we get what we intended to get. In other ways, distance doesn't matter, as we can get together 'virtually,' more easily than ever before.  | 4/24/2020 4:33 PM  |
| 50 | reducing Licensing fees, inspection fees such as fire and building  | 4/24/2020 3:51 PM  |
| 51 | Very tough on the home stay B and Bs who were just certified. That income was allowing some of us to stay in our homes and most of us are seniors do retired from other income sources. Relief from some of the costs of maintaining our homes is a real issue if the public doesn't come back willing to be guests in our homes. Our industry probably won't bound back quickly and it will be very rough going in the beginning.  | 4/24/2020 3:51 PM  |
| 52 | How do we prevent this from happening again? SARS, Bird Flu, Swine Flu, Covid19, and more. Shouldn't the UN/WHO be able to find hot spots and isolate them? And if not the UN/WHO, then the USA/CDC?  | 4/24/2020 3:13 PM  |
| 53 | None  | 4/24/2020 2:42 PM  |
| 54 | Thank you!  | 4/24/2020 2:32 PM  |
| 55 | My business will not survive this shut down unless I find funds that are forgivable. I have obtained the PPP loan money and will work to stick within the guidelines of making it forgivable,   | 4/24/2020 2:31 PM  |

but it is not enough and does not go long enough to help with the closure to my preschool through June 29

|    |  |                   |
|----|--|-------------------|
| 56 | Even before the pandemic, we have struggled with finding commercial and flex space within Newton. Landlords had been demanding exorbitant rent and long term leases with weighty deposits and/or personal guarantees. They have been idling many properties in order to prop up nominal rents --- they should be disincentivized from doing so with taxes or fees on idle commercial and industrial property that can not be passed along to tenants or new buyers. (Commercial real estate taxes are generally passed through to tenants as part of NNN, as are regulatory-driven operating expenses) Further, state and local building permitting requirements that are driven more by special interest groups than by common sense drive up both the expense and lead time for fitting up space for use in Newton. If we are allowed to safely resume operations soon, we'll anticipate scaling up our company in Q3. But, our ability to do so in Newton will be contingent on our ability to access and fit up space within the city. | 4/24/2020 2:29 PM |
| 57 | It is hard to get help when we are going to have to limit the numbers of clients in one day to pay the high rents in Newton Centre   | 4/24/2020 2:29 PM |
| 58 | We need a plan for what happens if two months of PPE is not enough to cover rent and staff, and if the real estate development world is still paralyzed. You could also look to hiring local firms for the cities needs. Such as, hiring my firm to help implement your rental assistance program.   | 4/24/2020 2:27 PM |
| 59 | We need to focus on the commercial sector in Newton or you will have empty retail / restaurants and a domino negative economic effect  | 4/24/2020 1:42 PM |
| 60 | helping small business obtain SBA relic funds, I have not receive PPA help and on the verge of closing   | 4/24/2020 1:31 PM |
| 61 | I think you are a great leadership and it's so heartwarming to know we have someone who only wants what's good for us. We will get stronger as a community, I have no doubt. Thank you so much for keeping us in mind!!!   | 4/24/2020 1:30 PM |
| 62 | Property taxes need to come down and city employment needs to be reduced. We can't keep spending at the city level as if this did not happen. The average taxpayer cannot bear this burden. Maintaining city employment while the private sector has seen devastation is not appropriate.  | 4/24/2020 1:28 PM |
| 63 | Thank you for reaching out to businesses. We appreciate your thoughts and efforts.   | 4/24/2020 1:19 PM |
| 64 | For 30 years we have provided essential and complimentary services to non profits, arts groups, seniors and youth. We will adjust how we deliver those services but we need city hall to be a trusted and supportive partner to make it work.  | 4/24/2020 1:14 PM |
| 65 | Parents of small children are in a particularly tough situation. No child care, so ability to work.  | 4/24/2020 1:09 PM |
| 66 | Maybe we should hold off on the ban on foam containers for another 6-12 months. That will save us some money in packing to go orders.  | 4/24/2020 1:08 PM |
| 67 | We will need clarity about what business activities are considered too risky, such as holding in-person group cooking classes  | 4/24/2020 1:08 PM |
| 68 | N  | 4/24/2020 1:08 PM |
| 69 | We need immediate relief. We should not be expected to pay rent/other costs that are not reasonable while we are shut. Opening up isn't the solution. Our businesses will be crippled for months to come.  | 4/24/2020 1:03 PM |



# **SURVEY SUMMARY**

## **Challenges and How City Can Assist (From Written Responses)**

### **CHALLENGES BUSINESSES WILL FACE WHEN OPENING**

Financial issues—sufficient revenues to cover costs? (Being profitable in new normal)  
Need clear guidelines about changes that may need to occur in a small retail store—e.g., limitations on customer count in store at once, requirement of hand sanitizer for customers, etc.  
Adjusting to yet unknown City of Newton and Commonwealth of MA requirements for safely reopening & customer expectations for this as well  
Attracting customers/Foot Business  
Getting staff to return to the office  
Hiring staff back with uncertainty of not having income to pay them  
Obtaining PPE and disinfectants—especially dentists  
Opening Construction/Development  
Feeling comfortable about the new normal  
Removing “unnecessary bureaucracy” at ISD  
Reconfiguring space  
Can’t work due to lack of child care  
Signage approval/limitations in historic districts  
Making sure customers are not sick when coming into stores  
Parking space for pick up orders  
Paying current and back rent  
Racism against Chinese Americans  
Ability to rent out retail space and collect rent from existing tenants  
Finding Money in the form of grants or forgivable loans to pay back bills  
Obtaining childcare so can go back to work  
Collecting receivables and rents from struggling or out of business customers  
Keeping up with new laws/regulations  
Being able to show homes/properties in person  
Convincing potential clients that now is the right time to buy/sell property.  
Knowing safety requirement in B&B/short term rentals

### **HOW CAN NEWTON HELP**

#### **Common Responses (not included in other sections)**

City-wide Advertising/Marketing Campaign--Bottom Line. BUY LOCAL or BYE BYE LOCAL!  
City provide posters for all retail stores RE: masks, social distancing, safety protocols, etc  
Allow outdoor restaurant seating--expand to sidewalks and parking lots  
Provide PPE/Assist businesses in obtaining PPE—masks, gowns, sanitizer, etc. (A critical issue for dentists)  
Temporarily rescind sidewalk signage restrictions for a historic district  
Allow construction to open up

#### **Parking**

Lack of employee parking  
Lack of adequate customer parking  
Review restaurant occupancy regulations

Moratorium on parking meters

### **Financial**

Provide small business relief grants

Facilitate access to capital and credit

Temporary reduction in sales taxes (allow vendor to keep half)

Refund rent already paid for days when space at a city owned building was not open for use

Assistance with rent relief in general and in city owned buildings

Provide relief of water and sewer charges and other utility costs

Provide grants to businesses and non-profits being displaced this summer, due to pre-approved construction projects to help with moving and new office costs.

Consider releasing more PEG funds now held by the city

Set up small (non-hospital) healthcare specific funding to assist dentists financially so that they can purchase the CDC and MDS mandated air purification systems which will need to be installed in order to treat patients

Defer or reduce Real Estate Taxes

Help small businesses obtain SBA relic funds

Reduce city employment

Offer loan to rehire staff and start meal delivery service

### **Permit/Licenses**

Have building inspectors be more accessible/Less authoritative

More business friendly ISD

Have a building inspector available for discussion—Zoom, Skype or in the office—during business hours so there are more opportunities to talk with inspectors

Simplify process of getting permits/licenses; expedite inspections

Allow on-line applications for regulatory permits and submission of online proposals in response to RFPs

Assistance navigating ISD permit applications for signage—a challenge to do electronically

Regulatory red-tape from zoning issues to the Historic Commission's requests are large impediments

Reduce expense and lead time for building permits

Expedite special permits in order to lease space to get cash flow

Reduce Licensing/Inspection Fees

### **After School Programs/Child Care (Important for Parents to Return to Work)**

Provide close communication between Newton Public Schools and Before/After School Programs (space, schedules, social distancing, sanitizing shared space, etc)

Waive building use fees/rent for programs located in public schools

Waive building use fees/rent for time closed

Include After School Programs in discussions of how schools will reopen

Access to mental health consultants at affordable rates

Assistance from healthcare sector to train staff in safe practices

Providing scholarships/tuition reduction to families who need after school program as families recover financially

### **Training/Technical Assistance**

Provide technical assistance/mentoring with online assistance (including videos/websites, CAD/CAM)

Help from the healthcare sector to train in safe practices  
Provide assistance with space reconfiguration—employee spacing, customer space, temperature testing, minimizing use of shared facilities (includes architectural assistance)

### **Clear Guidance/Communication**

Provide clear guidance and resources to all businesses re: cleaning, masks, social distancing, occupancy, etc.

Provide clear standards for increasing safety and confidence in the shopping public so that all retailers/service providers can implement standards consistently

Provide guidance to commercial landlords to improve the safety of common and shared area: reception area, hallways, stairwells, elevator, copy machine rooms, lunch rooms, rest rooms, etc.

Provide safety protocols for short term rentals

Provide assistance in interpreting new laws/regulations to operate in safe environment—including salons

Provide clarification on what business activities are considered too risky—e.g. holding group cooking classes

### **Other**

Provide rapid testing for all businesses

Re-purpose the Cypress Street parking lot

Help finding a new space or help with landlords who are unreasonable

Show more support for Asian community—combat racism

Assistance in becoming an approved Newton vendor

Arrange for road work/public projects, etc. to minimally impact business operations

Hold off ban on foam containers for 6-12 months

Require each business to have a Covid safe plan, including verification of business performance

Enforce regs for Real Estate agents to follow so clients feel comfortable

Present a plan to remediate lost education

Get rid of battery operated blowers. Cause hardship to landscapers

Hiring local firms for city needs

Waiting for natural gas in bldg. Propane very expensive

Institute a penalty on landlords for leaving space empty because of rent too high for small businesses

## **Appendix B: MARKETING WORKING DOCUMENT**

Prepared by the Marketing Subgroup:

- Marcela Merino, co-lead
- Joyce Plotkin
- Sarah Rahman
- Chuck Tanowitz, co-lead

### **General Recommendations for EDC on Recovery Plan**

- We recommend grouping action recommendations in three waves
  - Wave 1 (1 to 3 months): Immediate needs for small business recovery (i.e. health guidelines for operating, marketing, mentoring)
  - Wave 2 (3 to 12 months): Medium term needs for small business recovery (i.e. venture fund, trainings for small businesses)
  - Wave 3 (12 to 24 months): Longer term needs for small business recovery (i.e. new delivery business models, e-commerce)
- Phrase recommendations as an opportunity to help recover and support the resiliency of local businesses to face possible future waves of COVID-related closures, and re-boost business activity in Newton by helping to retain and attract new companies.
- Have a broadly inclusive message that the recovery plan supports all type of local businesses (i.e. locally owned business, restaurants, retail stores in malls, sole proprietors, product and service businesses). Programs should aim to be inclusive by benefiting as many different types of business as possible (i.e. minority, veteran and women owned)

### **Marketing Goal**

- Support local businesses by driving and re-incentivizing consumer demand in the face of Covid-19 pandemic

### **Target Companies**

- Local businesses across all thirteen villages, shopping malls, and commercial districts

### **Marketing Action Recommendations**

- 1. Expand range of outdoor activities (dining, others) during the Summer/early Fall**
  - **Goal:** Make it easier, safer, and more attractive for consumers to buy and eat local during the summer months
  - **Context:** The initial reopening of business will likely place some safety restrictions on restaurants (i.e. less seating/more spread apart) affecting the number of people restaurants can serve indoors. Consumers will also seek safer eating outdoor options during the summer. Restaurants are looking to additional outdoor seating to supplement revenue lost from restrictions on indoor seating.

- **Beneficiaries:** Retailers, local restaurants, and artists
- **Description of the Initiative**
  - Expand outdoor activities and open up streets and/or parking spaces in village centers for pedestrian-only walkways during certain day/times. Supplement that with musicians, garden club flower arrangements, craft tables, etc.
  - The Newton Office of Cultural Affairs has already started an open-air markets template and proposal. These open-air events will serve as pop-up markets for communities to gather. Each pop-up event is going to be different based on the preference and needs of each village (i.e. open-air restaurant walk, street fair).
  - We propose exploring an **ongoing weekend outdoor dining option (Sat and Sun from 11am to 10pm)** during the months of June through September in appropriate village centers/malls/commercial districts. Dining areas may be placed in parking lots that are not at full capacity. Ethnic restaurants can be featured each weekend.
  - **Safety:** Safety measures need to be in place for consumers and service providers to feel safe. This includes but not limited to:
    - Benches will be placed far enough apart that people would be comfortable and feel safe while eating
    - Hand washing and/or sanitizing stations would be available
    - Staff from restaurants would be responsible for cleaning the tables after each use and wear protective gear
    - Consider having attendees/diners sign up with the City for a slot in advance
    - Use of disposable plates, cups, utensils, etc.
  - **Attractions:**
    - To foster a calm and uplifting environment, we propose bringing local musicians to play music during outdoor dining times. Kiosks or tables can be placed for local artists or professionals to display their work. Vendors will be placed on a rotating basis.
    - Develop a Newton Outdoor Concert Series ("Newton Tanglewood"). A winners/finalist's concert for the youth piano competition nonprofit could be sponsored by M. Steinert & Sons and the Steinway Society of Massachusetts.
  - **Ease of access:** To further attract consumers, the City will close certain main streets to vehicular traffic to enhance safe outdoor walking and biking experiences. This will also ease the limitations on parking spots available and encourage people to walk/bike to the Villages and do more exercise.
  - **Other ideas** for supporting expanded, alternative ways of reaching customers
    - Incorporate a virtual component to events like village days
      - Especially important for retailers around big selling days (i.e. Labor Day/back to school)
    - City-designated curbside pickup zones
      - Businesses agree to being no-contact

- **Implementation Partners**
  - Communities/neighborhoods where “market” takes place
  - Government: Cultural Affairs Office, Newton Police, Newton Department of Public Works, Newton Human and Health Services, Newton Traffic Police, Emergency Responders
  - Restaurant owners: Identify 2 or 3 business champions that can help organize this effort (i.e. Johnny's Luncheonette)
  - Private companies: Local banks can provide sponsorship
  - Local artists and professional service providers
- **Funding Requirements**
  - Benches, hand washing and/or sanitizing stations (City of Newton)
  - Fees for artists (Local banks)
- **Intended Impact**
  - Drive consumer traffic and local spending in villages and other commercial areas
  - Boost local business activity and attractions
  - Provide safe outdoor options that will increase the well being of Newton residents

**2. Facilitate and coordinate matching grants to groups of local small businesses for marketing and placemaking activities, and other activities designed to attract and retain customers during this COVID-19 recovery period**

- **Award Amount:** \$1000 to \$2500 per grant
- **Matching Grant:** Some percentage of each grant will be matching. Matching funds either provided by the local businesses or through a fundraising partnership with Patronicity as part of a promotional effort that brings in community support.
- **Criteria for Grant**
  - Must be applied for by no fewer than 3 businesses with a Newton presence
  - At least 30% of the applying companies must be locally owned independent business
  - All businesses must have an interest in Newton. They must employ people in the City in one or more physical locations.
  - The grant should be used for placemaking activities, such as art projects, events, beautification; marketing/promotion; collaborative business initiatives (i.e. mobile ordering); or other such activities designed to attract foot traffic to a local area, and create safe, comfortable environments for customers to shop
  - Matching funds can include either cash or in-kind donations

**3. Develop a local Marketing Campaign to encourage customers back to local businesses**

- **Goal:** A broad-based messaging campaign to market and support local businesses in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic that is linked and aligned with other City-driven COVID-recovery efforts for small businesses.
- **Context:** Local business owners need support to encourage customers to return to their premises and village centers. A coordinated city-wide campaign could promote community pride for local businesses.
- **Intended Impact:** Encourage local purchasing and raise awareness of the benefits and importance of “going local”
- **Principles of a Marketing Campaign:**
  - Authentic to Newton and based on business owner interest and neighborhood buy-in
  - Diverse and inclusive participation that invites allies and finds roles for anyone interested (Chamber, universities/colleges, larger business)
  - Branding should extend as appropriate to all components of City’s efforts for small business recovery from COVID-19
    - For example: Small business collaboration grants, events, newsletter section from Mayor and ED Director, mentoring program, curbside pickup zones, etc, business re-opening guidelines from City
  - If the City initiates, it needs to figure out a handoff to another organization in the future. For Example of mature programs: Austin Independent Business Alliance, <https://ibuyaustin.com/> ; Belingham, WA Think Local First: <https://sustainableconnections.org/programs/think-local/>
- **Steps:**
  - Organize a steering committee of local business owners and neighborhood residents across the City. Include businesses, artists/makers, nonprofits, etc.
    - This can be led by Mayor’s office, Planning Dept, and Economic Development
    - This can involve neighborhood associations, EDC
  - Steering Committee develops branding under for supporting local businesses
    - Ideas to consider:
      - Local Now; Local Together, Go Local, Love Local,
      - Shop Local/Shop Safe
      - Branding taglines could further specify villages
    - Do not over-emphasize words like “shop” or “buy” that may feel exclusionary for certain businesses
  - Steering Committee Develops Messaging
    - Why, why now, benefits
    - Keep messaging high road – make doing business locally a point of pride
  - Develop marketing collateral including promotional material (decals, signs, pins, etc.), website, media release
    - Partnership between Steering Committee, City, High School, high school students and/or local college students

- Promote use of branding and collateral citywide in storefront windows, inside businesses, newsletters, at events, on websites, etc.
  - Partnership between Mayor's office, Planning and Economic Development, neighborhood associations
- Deploy some kind of measurement tool
  - Possibly piggyback on recent small business survey

**4. Strengthen and improve communication and information flow between local businesses and with the City**

- Update and maintain Newton's Small Business Database
- Leverage the use of multiple government and community channels (listed below) to inform about programs and resources available for small businesses
  - City's email lists through Constant Contact
  - Add a section highlighting a specific collaborative business effort in the Mayor's email
  - Parent/teacher organization group
  - Newton-Needham Regional Chamber
  - Zoom video info sessions to share resources, highlight success stories, best practices in partnership with regional/neighborhood associations and business owners (Village based)
  - City Councilors email distribution lists (per their approval)
  - Next Door Digest
  - Village 14
  - Facebook page - City of Newton

**5. Increase resources to support the implementation of the recovery plan in the City of Newton, either by hiring contractors and/or interns**

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**APPENDIX C**  
**MENTORING TO SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS AFFECTED BY COVID-19**

Prepared by the Mentoring Subgroup

Rob Finkel, lead  
Howard Barnstone  
Jeremy Freid  
Matt Segneri

### General Recommendations for EDC on Recovery Plan

- The EDC's business survey has shown that Newton's businesses have significant marketing, business, and regulatory challenges in connection with their Covid-19 recovery efforts. The survey also showed that Newton has many businesses and individuals willing to assist, partner or provide mentoring services to their fellow businesses seeking to navigate this new environment.
- In an effort to assist Newton businesses with their Covid-19 recovery efforts, Newton's EDC recommends that the City assist in expanding the newly created peer to peer mentoring program for Newton's business community that is managed by the Newton Needham Regional Chamber (NNRC). Newton should i) promote the program in Newton's Covid-19 communications and in other appropriate venues; and ii) encourage EDC mentors and EDC survey respondents that have relevant professional advice and expertise to participate in the program. The City should also promote other mentoring opportunities for businesses being offered by other private, public and non-profit organizations, including SCORE, which is a resource partner with the United State Small Business Administration that provide small business mentoring and training to entrepreneurs through local SBA offices.
- In promoting the NNRC mentoring program, the City should encourage Newton businesses in need of advice and assistance to sign up for and take advantage of the program. The EDC has arranged for the program to be free of charge to Newton businesses that have a need for post-Covid-19 advice and mentoring, whether or not they are a chamber member. As part of the program, the NNRC will endeavor to match businesses with a professional that can assist them in confronting a specific challenge facing their business during a one-hour free consultation.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Working Notes from the City Services subgroup**

Prepared by City Services Working Subgroup

Jack Leader, lead  
Steve Feller  
Debora Jackson  
Phil Plottel  
Jean Wood

#### **General Recommendations for EDC on Recovery Plan**

1. **Pursue virtual inspections** when appropriate by inspectional services and other City agencies to increase efficiency, protect inspectors and reduce time required for an inspection. Examples of communities in the Commonwealth across the US that are allowing remote inspections
  - a. Needham<sup>1</sup> for Bathroom/kitchen and small interior renovations, and nationally have instituted remote virtual inspections.
  - b. Wellesley<sup>2</sup> for all inspections
  - c. Arlington, Virginia<sup>3</sup> for all inspections
  - d. Hagerstown, Maryland<sup>4</sup>

Virtual inspections are a cost efficient ways to inspect (especially for interim and to document compliance with inspectors request) to allow inspectors to work efficiently, reduce carbon impact of inspection, minimize construction downtime and make it easier to conduct business. Some contractors report waiting up to 4 days for inspectors to arrive, creating a ripple effect delaying some projects for weeks. As an alternate, if Newton is unable to adopt to current trends and technology to assist in the inspection process, the budget process for this fiscal year should include 2 new positions for building inspectors.

2. **Update Newton's zoning.** The Newton Zoning ordinance is outdated and in desperate need for updates to reflect the greater Boston's strength in innovation. Specifically, the zoning code should be updated to allow the following:

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<sup>1</sup> See "Inspection Procedures, Needham Building Department during the COVID-19 Outbreak" retrieved from <https://www.needhamma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21069/Inspection-Requirements-COVID-19-Outbreak?bidId=> on 5/18/2020

<sup>2</sup> See "Town of Wellesley Building Department COVID 19 Inspection Protocol" retrieved from <https://wellesleyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/19678/Inspection-Protocol-Wellesley-Building-Department-on-5/18/2020>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://building.arlingtonva.us/inspections/virtual-inspections/> retrieved on 5/18/2020

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.hagerstownmd.org/1488/Virtual-Permit-Inspections> retrieved on 5/18/2020

- a. To make Newton Competitive in the post Covid environment, the Zoning code urgently need review and updated to broaden the allowed Research and Development (R&D) activities in Newton. Currently only life science and medical Marijuana research is allowed in only the MU3 district as of now. (sections 4.4.1 and 6.4.28), Research should be broadly allowed in most mixed used, business, manufacturing, and commercial districts.
  - b. R&D is not defined by the zoning ordinance. Other laboratory research activities including environmental, green energy, food, medical devices, technology, maker spaces and other innovative work should be allowed. etc. Specifically the following sections should be reviewed:
    - 6.4.29 Research and development
    - 6.5.9 “Laboratory and Research Facility”
    - 6.7.4 Scientific Research and Development Activities
    - 6.10,3 Marijuana Research Facility
  - c. Update and allow 21st century manufacturing including highly automated and small-scale manufacturing such as “maker spaces” and life science pilot plants. Currently Newton has a really antiquated manufacturing uses defined (and therefore allowed) in our ordinance – allowable manufacturing uses (and all uses) need to be updated to reflect current trends and needs. Generally, only allowed in Man and LM districts.
  - d. Allow wholesale and retail sales by bakery, breweries, and distilleries to diversify Newton’s economic base post-COVID-19 and maintain commercial tax revenue. Currently, Breweries and distilleries are not allowed uses in Newton. And if the primary bakery is a retail location, I believe they can do some wholesale business only as an accessory use
  - e. Review parking requirement for private surgical centers to diversify Newton’s economic base post COVID-19 and maintain commercial tax revenue. Currently the use is treated as an office per the use table and definitions, but the parking for medical offices is often prohibitive.
  - f. Make changes to facilitate the use of excess parking during the week/evening of parking lots used by houses of worships/private businesses to expand supply of parking near village centers, and explore removing minimum parking requirement for retail use in Village centers
  - g. Allow zoning uses under existing special permits to be changed without modifying the permit provided that the parking requirements are not increased, the changes are minor in nature, and/or new business owner proposes a similar use. The benefit will reduce expenses to the City and applicant and shorten time needed to open a business.
3. **Streamline the Permit Process.** The permit process in Newton can be cumbersome, expensive, and lengthy, especially when a special permit is needed. Since 2017, the City has embarked on a zoning redesign process, currently we understand that zoning for

business will be addressed later in 2021/2020. Some recommendations that can make the special permit process far more efficient include

- a. Making interim changes in line with results from the October 19, 2017 zoning redesign meeting with business stakeholders (see [www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/85950/11-13-17%20Zoning%20Redesign%20Update%20Memo.pdf](http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/85950/11-13-17%20Zoning%20Redesign%20Update%20Memo.pdf)) in summary, the proposed changes are in addition to the changes listed above, and include expediting changes to:
    - Make the Sign Ordinance more business friendly
    - Remove or relax minimum parking requirements in village centers and across the City
  - b. Either Grant City staff authority to allow for insignificant modification to be made to existing special permits without need for significant effort by City Council, or “Grandfather” these special permits to remove a burdensome requirement for renovation.
4. **Amend the home business ordinance** by allowing more than one per dwelling unit, recognizing difference between businesses with onsite customers and not, relaxing regulations around type of employees, and removing the parking requirement. Should also remove the requirement for a special permit for a home business in the Multi Residence districts
  5. **Support Day Care re-opening.** While the discussion and questions about day care centers re-opening is primarily a state licensing issue, however, for day care facilities with Kitchens, the Newton Health Dept should coordinate to minimize any additional downtime. In addition, many after school activities are housed in City owned facilities, the City should work collaboratively with these groups to ensure these organization will be able to re-open when safely to do so.
  6. **Simplify 1-day liquor Licenses.** Obtaining a 1-day liquor license in newton requires an application often 3 months ahead of the event. We recommend changes be made to the process to allow for quicker issuance of these 1-day permits. Especially now as many organizations have “paused” event planning.
  7. **Moratorium on requirement of Minimum Parking.** Parking and transportation are always a challenge within the City. To allow for restaurants and retail business to expand outdoors, we recommend the City Council impose a temporary moratorium on the minimum parking requirements for business.
  8. **Resources.** Increase staff resources by hiring staff, contractors and/or interns

## **APPENDIX E**

### **ISSUES FACING EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE**

The EDC recommends that the City collaborate with representatives of the Newton Coalition for Children and Families (NCCF). The NCCF is a collaboration of early education and care programs in the City of Newton and surrounding communities formed to help in the safe and purposeful re-opening of childcare programs, schools and youth serving agencies in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Collectively it represents more than 50 early education and care programs, including The Newton After School Association (NASA), the Newton Early Childhood Association (NECA), and Community Partnership for Children and Families (CPCF). Together it serves approximately 5,000 children and families.

A national survey of 6,000 providers shows that childcare as a field barely makes enough money when they are operating at full capacity to survive. Thirty percent indicate they would not survive a closure of more than two weeks without significant public investment and support that would allow them to compensate and retain staff, pay rent or mortgages, and cover other fixed costs.<sup>1</sup> Society cannot reopen effectively if childcare collapses.

Below is a list of issues/questions early education and care programs face concerning reopening their programs in the Fall of 2020 and beyond.

Is there a re-opening committee for Newton? How can early childhood get a seat at the table? How does NCCF work with the Mayor and other officials to help plan and coordinate for a safe and quality return?

What after school programs are already facing fiscal instability?

What are the fiscal issues and operational needs at hand and implications going forward?

How can children and staff be kept safe?

Can PPE and sanitizer be purchased in bulk by the City?

How can the programs ensure complete site cleaning?

How do the programs manage the business of monitoring children, staff, and families for COVID? What are the staffing and time restraints?

Can the City, NPS, Health Departments, business and banks, congregations and community at large help and/or team up to better serve the City?

How will mental health issues be managed?

How can the programs help everyone feel safe?

How can the programs help children with special needs, low income families, families struggling now without jobs, tuition issues, and help ensure diversity?

How will the programs be able to practice Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) with masks and distancing?

How can programs manage parent engagement? Drop-off and pick-up if they cannot come into the programs? Accessibility?

How can space be managed? Keep children apart? Access additional space and have access to isolation areas when someone is sick?

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<sup>1</sup> Child Care in Crisis, Understanding the Effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), March 17, 2020

What are the ramifications about reduced income? What do we do about staffing and getting people back to work? Ratios?

How do we create new policies and practices for enrolling and monitoring? What do we want parents to commit to re future shut downs?

What about indemnification? Can the City Solicitors Help programs if needed?

How do we see early education and care in the future? How do we coordinate with EEC and the state for re-imagining fiscal support?

Round-table discussions and support?

Child Care Commission?

Tax base support?

Business influx?

Rent?

Tuition Assistance?

## Appendix F

Retail Strategy Research from the 2019 Economic Development Action Plan  
for the City of Newton (Camoin Study)

# Appendix F: Retail Strategy Research

## City of Newton Retail Strategies

### The Challenge

Newton's thirteen villages each have their own unique mix of local businesses, historic assets, and public amenities. They are under increasing development pressure from the booming regional real estate market:

*The core retail markets inside and along Route 128 have seen record-setting rents as of late, and are expected to remain steady. In this area, average rents of \$50-\$55 per square foot NNN<sup>1</sup> for small shop space and \$25-\$30 per square foot NNN for larger spaces are common. For every operator that comes into this area aggressively but cannot sustain sales sufficient to cover high rents, there are strong tenants ready to backfill that space. Recent successful retail developments in Newton include The Street Chestnut Hill and Newton Nexus.*

While these trends are great for the tax base, property owners, and developers, the spike in commercial rents is outpacing sales growth for the city's small businesses. Combined with the need to adapt quickly to eCommerce trends in the industry, competition from national chains, and a limited supply of affordable space, Newton's long-established independent businesses are under threat; some have already shuttered their storefronts. As small local businesses are forced to leave, so goes Newton's sense of place and quality of life.

### Recommendations for Leveling the Playing-field

In cities across the U.S. and Canada, developers and funders are focused on catering to large chains who can afford high lease rates and easily cover their debt. Left untouched, city-scale real estate markets and access to capital is increasingly biased towards major retailers. Newton is experiencing these trends first-hand. The following recommendations are designed to address the imbalance of power and level the playing field so the city's otherwise healthy local retail businesses can compete.

#### Recognize Historic Businesses as Historic Assets

In 2015, faced with sky-rocketing commercial lease rates causing otherwise healthy businesses to shut down or relocate, the City of San Francisco decided to create a [historic registry](#) for their 30+ year old businesses and subsequently established the Legacy Business Historic Preservation Fund ([legacybusinesssf.com](http://legacybusinesssf.com)) to offer financial support:

- For Legacy Businesses, annual grant of \$500 per employee, with a cap of 100 employees.
- For Property owners who extend ten-year or longer leases to Legacy Businesses, annual grant of \$4.50 per square foot, with a cap of 5,000 square feet.

[The program](#) is open to 300 businesses and non-profits annually.

Independent retail business across the U.S. are facing similar challenges, and many cities are considering legacy business programs to help small businesses stay in-place in competitive real estate markets. [San Antonio](#) recently established a program and Seattle just completed an [exploratory study](#), which contains in-depth information on this type of program.

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<sup>1</sup> NNN, or "triple net," refers to a lease arrangement where the tenant is responsible for property taxes, maintenance, and insurance expenses, beyond the base rent amount



## Actions

- The City will create a registry for Newton's long-established small retail businesses. This information will be used to customize the following recommendations and strategies specifically to the needs of Newton businesses as well as better connect the small business community across the thirteen villages.
- As part of the registry, the City will collect information about:
  - Type of businesses (goods sold or services offered)
  - Age of business, brief history
  - Ownership structure and any succession plans
  - Size and type of space the business occupies
  - Lease rates and ownership status of space business occupies
- The City will use information collected when creating the registry to design a financial assistance program, including grants and tax credits, that will address high-rent blight. The program will support small retail businesses and/or property owners to offset rising rents and enable the businesses to remain in-place. This can be tied into the creation of tax increment financing districts.

## Employ Small Business Friendly Zoning

Spiking commercial retail real estate lease rates in cities across the U.S. is the result of developers focusing on the needs of large national chains. Cities can use their zoning code, one of their most powerful tools to guide development, to proactively preserve affordable retail space while still maintaining a friendly environment for large retailers.

Updating a zoning code can be a very time-intensive process. Cities like San Francisco and [New York City](#) use Special Purpose Districts to supplement their existing zoning code to respond to specific needs of individual neighborhoods.

## Possible Actions to Consider as Part of Ongoing Zoning Review Include:

- **Restrict chain stores in village centers.** Create districts with provisions for 'formula retail' to cap how much street-level retail can be chain stores in Newton's villages. Formula retail provisions can allow chain stores only by permit, not by right, and, by conducting outreach to residents when a project is proposed, can give the local residential community/consumer market the opportunity to be more engaged in the development process.
- **Use the city zoning code to preserve and increase the supply of smaller retail spaces.** Parameters might include a cap on storefront size, require mixed-use buildings to have a minimum number of storefronts, and put limits on when a retailer can knock down walls to create larger spaces.
- **Adopt a business diversity ordinance.** The ordinance can require businesses with many locations in the U.S. to apply for a special use permit in order to locate in one of Newton's villages. The permit can consider how many businesses of that type are already in the district, assess if the business is compatible with the neighborhood, and consider if the applicant would bring something to the district that does not currently exist.

## Create a "Buy Your Building" Plan

Businesses that own their own building have more control over their costs and are more resilient in a dynamic real estate market environment. Small business owners who own their own buildings build equity with their mortgage payments and build wealth that is more likely to stay locally in the community instead of out-of-town investors.

Many cities are in the process of designing programs and policies to help local small retail businesses owners purchase buildings. In [Austin](#) and [Salt Lake City](#), lease-to-own programs use a mix of federal grants and local lenders to help small businesses purchase buildings and in New York City, strategies are being proposed to encourage developers to sell retail spaces as condominiums. Other communities are getting creative and using



investment cooperatives and [commercial community land trusts](#), to help stabilize commercial rates for small businesses.

#### Actions

- The City will identify financial partners for the program, including a network of local and regional lending institutions as well as federal programs through HUD and SBA.
- The City will work with partners, as well as representatives from the business community interested in participating in the program, to design a program to help Newton's business owners purchase buildings.

### Create Opportunity for Local Businesses in Government Properties & Purchasing

Cities own and invest in real estate and can support local businesses by implementing policies that make city-owned properties more accessible for small businesses. This might be space in and around public transit, in city-owned buildings, and city-owned recreational amenities. Cities can control the rent in these spaces.

#### Actions

- The City will take an inventory of City-owned properties and public settings and identify space that local retailers and service providers might be able to capitalize on.
- This information will be used to write policies that encourage local businesses to bid on these opportunities.
- The City will conduct outreach to local businesses to promote the opportunities.
- As momentum for this project accelerates, the need for a digital solution will arise to efficiently connect businesses with available space. The City will explore creating a digital application to streamline this process and reduce staff-time necessary to run the program.

### Establish a Local Currency Program

Examples of local currency programs include:

**BerkShares** Redeemable at over 400 participating businesses in the Berkshires of Massachusetts, BerkShares are issued at multiple participating banks (15 branches at four local banks). They give the user a 5% discount, as they cost \$0.95 per Berkshare but can be used to purchase \$1 worth of goods and services at participating businesses. They are traded in at what they cost, \$0.95, providing an incentive for business owners to recirculate them to other participating businesses. Since 2006, 7.3 million Berkshares have been issued, and there are currently about 140,000 BerkShares in circulation.<sup>2</sup>

**BNotes** This Baltimore- based local currency started in 2011 and has grown to over 34,000 in circulation regularly. Started as a response to the economic crisis, the goal of BNotes was to address the growing wealth inequality in the region. Now, over 240 businesses accept BNote. BNotes are purchased at six participating retailers and cost \$10 for 11 BNotes and can be exchanged for the reverse rate (11 BNotes for \$10), incentivizing recirculation.<sup>3</sup>

**Brixton Pound** The Brixton Pound in the UK started off as a physical currency, when their 10 pound note featured David Bowie, a resident of Brixton. Later, an electronic pay-by-text platform was introduced. Started in 2009, around 250 businesses currently accept the paper currency and 200 use the pay-by-text platform. They also feature a cash machine that distributes paper Brixton Pounds, and a program where their local government employees can receive part of their paycheck in this local currency.

Local currency programs can have the following benefits:

- **Boosts the local multiplier effect.** As an economic development tool, local currencies keep money local and recirculating through the same community, therefore increasing the economic multiplier effect. Circulation encourages capital to remain in a specific geographic location, benefiting all participating

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<sup>2</sup> Active Local Currencies <http://www.centerforneweconomics.org/content/active-local-currencies>

<sup>3</sup> Where to get BNotes <http://baltimoregreencurrency.org/cambios>

business. When you spend locally, your dollar stays local up to three times longer than when it's spent with national chains.<sup>4</sup>

- **Promotes local economic development.** A local currency program is a great way to unite businesses around a common and ubiquitous desire: to increase sales. While it does require coordination, it can be a small-scale reminder that it not only serves a purpose in its own right, but supports existing local economic development initiatives.
- **Encourages social benefits.** Just like the feeling when you get your final punch in that coffee card being part of a local currency program builds social fabric and pride in one's community.
- **Increases customer loyalty.** As mentioned previously, Brixton's local government provides the option for employees to receive the Brixton Pound as a portion their salary. Employees who do so report changing spending habits, trying out participating businesses when they normally wouldn't.
- **Creates new business networks.** As a business who received a local currency there is also an incentive to spend it again with another participating business. This encourages new businesses-to-business relationships to develop, increasing the interconnectedness of a region's economy.<sup>5</sup>

Local currency programs work well in communities where there are already a number of small, independent merchants, strong community spirit, relative geographic isolation, and inflow of new residents (particularly artists and students). Except for geographic isolation, the City of Newton checks all of these boxes. A local currency program can

#### Actions

- The City will design a local currency program targeted at students (college and high school), and the service-industry workforce (individuals who work in local hospitals, retail stores, and service providers) using information available through the Schumacher Center for a New Economics: <http://www.centerforneweconomics.org/content/local-currencies>.
- Local technology experts will be recruited to help establish the digital structure for the currency (website, app, etc.)
- The City will launch a robust marketing campaign to recruit businesses and engage the targeted customers of students and employees in the service-sectors about the local currency.

#### Offer Technical Support for Retail Businesses

Newton's local retail and service businesses need innovation support so they can adapt and innovate within an industry that is evolving – fast. Many national retailers have their own internal innovation centers or 'innovation labs' that are focused on developing the company's next big idea. To compete, small independent retailers who want to stay in Newton need a community where they can go to test and refine their transformative ideas and receive technical support to enhance existing business operations. The Newton Innovation Center (NIC) can be the hub for this community.

Services and support accessed through the NIC to local retail businesses and enrapures will include:

- Education around transformation in the retail industry and the role of small businesses in the future of community-based retail and services when trends are driven by outside forces:
  - Rapid adoption of technology by consumers
  - New retail players like Amazon, Google, and Facebook
- Business succession planning
- Providing local market intelligence and consumer targeting recommendations

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<sup>4</sup> The Multiplier Effect of Local Independent Businesses <https://www.amiba.net/resources/multiplier-effect/>

<sup>5</sup> Money with a purpose Community currencies achieving social, environmental and economic impact [http://b.3cdn.net/nefoundation/ff0740cad32550d916\\_o1m6byac6.pdf](http://b.3cdn.net/nefoundation/ff0740cad32550d916_o1m6byac6.pdf)

- Digital programming and matching small business owners with local IT experts in the community to support (example: [Digital Main Street](#)):
  - Digital marketing
  - eCommerce systems
- Connect local retailers with other entrepreneurs in the community who want to test new ideas in Newton
- High-impact interior design support

It is critical that the programs and services offered avoid simple preservation tactics and instead foster a culture of creative thinking and taking disruptive actions.

#### Actions

- Through the process of developing the small business registry, the City will conduct a needs assessment to understand which resources and types of assistance are most in-demand by the local retail community.
- The City will work to identify partners for this project such as one of our many leading educational institutions and/or corporate partners.
- A business plan for the NIC will be created that re-focuses programming and assistance to support local small businesses and entrepreneurs who want to remain in the city.

#### Enhance the City's Commercial Real Estate Connection Services

As mentioned above, many Newton businesses struggle to remain in the city when their lease expires or they need to expand into a larger space. This is due to the limited supply of retail space at affordable rates. Existing businesses looking to stay in the city and businesses interested in locating to the city, need support in their search for space to understand the options that are available at different price points.

The [Commercial Real Estate Connection](#) page on the City's website currently offers a wordy, bureaucratic narrative, concluded with a non-hyperlinked web-address to a LoopNet page. This pushes business owners away from the City's website and creates the perception that the City is not the best place to look for help when trying to find commercial real estate. In comparison, the City of Detroit's [Motor City Match](#) website is an excellent example of a site designed to connect local business owners who need space and property owners with available space. It's designed to be inviting, emanating energy and excitement about retail opportunities in Detroit – not an easy feat! This program also offers grant awards to local businesses and building owners to help revitalize the city's neighborhoods.

#### Actions

- Utilize MLS listings like LoopNet as well as the data collected as part of the business registry (above) to create a current database of commercial space in the City.
- Develop a system to track available space and lease rates regularly.
- Communicate real estate availability to the business community regularly.
- Develop a web-based application to be housed on the City's website, that local businesses can use to search for space.
- Redesign the [Commercial Real Estate Connection](#) page to improve the user experience and messaging. It should provide live links to resources the city offers and be designed to encourage the visitor to contact the City for assistance finding a great property to meet their needs.

## **Appendix G**

### **Proposal for a Newton Small Business Covid 19 Recovery Fund**

**Synopsis:** Create a “Fund” to provide investments and grants to Newton small retail and storefront businesses that have been impacted by Covid 19. Funding will be raised from individuals and entities who primarily live or work in Newton and who seek to preserve and expand Newton store front businesses including professional services firm/medical firms such as dentists. The goal is to try to keep Newton small business as it was prior to Covid 19 and ideally expand.

**Size of fund:** Initial funding to be between \$1,000,000 to \$10,000,000 to be raised from individuals and entities. Additional funding rounds as needed. Investigate ability for funding via CRA by banks.

**Expected benefits:**

- Maintain a thriving small retail and business presence in Newton

**Management of fund:** to be determined, options include:

- New non-profit with an independent volunteer unpaid board of directors
- A non-profit subsidiary of an existing organization (either non-profit or otherwise)
- Managed by a bank or other Private entity on behalf of the fund
- A combination of the above

**Corporate structure:** To be determined, and could be multiple entities, while the fund will likely never generate a profit, need to investigate the legal and tax impacts of partnership, LLC, C Corp or B Corp structure. Some preliminary guidance suggests that a for-profit structure may provide better tax efficiency for investors given that the fund may not qualify for 501C3 status.

**Representative investments:**

- For existing business that have been impacted by COVID 19 to enable existing small viable Newton business to continue operation within the City mentoring, grants and business tools
- To fill existing and new empty storefronts in the City provide mentoring, grants and business tools to experienced entrepreneurs who are seeking to buy or open a business in Newton
- To expand the base of business owners, provide mentoring, business tools and grants to underrepresented minority or women entrepreneurs who are seeking to buy or open a business in Newton
- As appropriate consider use a combination of grants, loans or Equity investments instead of outright grants

## **Other activities**

- Assistance with developing, writing and updating business plans
- Provide Mentoring and guidance to portfolio companies
- Assist portfolio company with marketing and business services
- “Shark tank” type entrepreneurial competitions for backing
- Encourage collaboration between portfolio companies
- Provide access to technology tools
- Negotiations assistance
- Provide funding for outdoor seating areas used by multiple businesses

## **Funding criteria**

- Preference given to businesses where the landlord has provided/will provide a Rent reduction/lease concession as compared to market conditions prior to the Covid 19 pandemic
- Investments should return a positive return to the business
- These must be a written business plan and it must be viable
- Business location must be within Newton City limits
- Business should be a store front retail business such as restaurants, food stores, clothing, hair/nail salons, bars, bakeries, professional firms, fitness, cooking/art classes, etc... Anything that is sustainable and works in a storefront setting. Other small business that have been impacted by Covid 19 also would qualify. (need to develop a definition)
- Preference for Newton residents, women and the underrepresented
- Encourage creative entrepreneurs from whatever locality, color or gender

## **Benefits of Investing**

- Maintain Newton’s quality of life
- Keep existing business viable
- Maintain a retail presence in Newton
- Create economic opportunity for both new and existing residents

## **Composition of Board of Directors/ Investment committee**

- Investors
- Successful Entrepreneurs
- local banking representatives
- property owner/developers
- merchants
- Accountants/finance
- Attorney

## **Issues**

- Complexity of financial structure (annual cost of financial filing, K1, etc)

- Mechanism on how to handle exits

### **Other considerations**

- A good lawyer working largely pro bono/reduced fee to draft documents
- An accounting firm to provide accounting
- Fund in addition to the CDBG funding program

### **Next Steps**

- Appoint a task force comprised by representatives from the banking, commercial and government and community sectors living and/or working in Newton

## Appendix H

Mayor Fuller April 1, 2020 Letter to EDC





Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts  
Office of the Mayor

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April 1, 2020

Phil Plottel, Chair  
City of Newton Economic Development Commission  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459

Subject: Recovery Plan for Newton Businesses

Dear Mr. Plottel,

The COVID-19 crisis has had a devastating impact on Newton businesses, especially our small, locally operated concerns.

As stewards of the City's economic development efforts, the Economic Development Commission (EDC) is uniquely suited to help ascertain what may be required to assist businesses in getting back on their feet. For that reason, I am requesting that the EDC provide me with ideas on a recovery plan, focusing particularly on steps that can be taken in Newton to assist Newton businesses in regaining their footing. If possible, I would ask that these ideas be submitted by mid-June.

I thank you in advance for your help in this regard.

Warmly,

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

CC: Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Development  
Devra Bailin, Economic Development Director

|                | Item   | Responsibly | Status                        | Comments   |
|----------------|--|-------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>A.</b>      | Support Businesses to Expand Outdoors  |             |                               |  |
| <b>A.1</b>     | Continue to support “Newton Al Fresco’s” range of outdoor dining and take-out activities to offset loss of internal restaurant seating.                                    | Executive   |                               | See below  |
| <b>A.1 (a)</b> | Allow restaurants to expand service outdoors, close streets and/or parking lots in village centers/malls/commercial districts to vehicular traffic.                        | Executive   | Implemented                   | Restaurants allowed to use sidewalks, private land and parking lots; later extended to use of parking spaces in front or side of restaurant frontage. City also created map and list of restaurants offering takeout. City provided jersey barriers for parking space dining and initiated and coordinated painting of jersey barriers by artists. The City also allowed restaurants to borrow its flower pots which Newton volunteers planted. City approved without permit deck for Sycamore. City allowed all businesses to place sandwich signs in front of their businesses. <u>In December the City extended use of private outside dining, sidewalk dining and parking space dining to 60 days after the end of the State of Emergency. The City also applied for a Local Recovery State technical assistance grant to explore street closures on Union Street and other locations.</u> |
| <b>A.1 (b)</b> | Establish and maintain designated picnic areas for take-out food consumption on closed streets, parks and/or parking lots.   | Executive   | Implemented                   | City set up picnic tables at various locations in public parks and parking lots. <u>Although removed for the winter, the City is exploring ways to extend these uses and improve their aesthetics.</u>   |
| <b>A.1 (c)</b> | Designate City-branded curbside pick-up zones reserved for take-out.   | Executive   | <u>No-action_ Implemented</u> | <u>Determined to be to disruptive to adjacent businesses and to restaurants extended to parking spaces; In December the City authorized businesses to apply for curbside pickup/takeout spaces with the consent of their immediate abutters</u>  |
| <b>A.1 (d)</b> | Continue to advocate that the State further ease regulations to allow for sale of cocktails by restaurants for take-out and consumption of alcohol on and beyond premises. | Coordinated | Implemented                   | These restrictions have been eased   |

|                |  |           |                   |  |
|----------------|--|-----------|-------------------|--|
| <b>A.2</b>     | Coordinate and complement outdoor activities with the Newton Office of Cultural Affairs and other relevant City Departments using appropriate social distancing. | Executive | <u>In process</u> | Together with the Health Department City approved use of Marshall's Plaza for drive in movie and takeout food event. <u>The City continues to work on outdoor programming and events—Mayor's holiday gift collection event was modified as a drive-thru event with signage and T-shirt giveaways (Put your money where your heart is—Newton)</u> |
| <b>A.2 (a)</b> | Support open-air market proposals (e.g., open-air restaurant walk, street fair).   | Executive | In process        | City authorized outdoor display and sale of goods by businesses on the sidewalk. <u>See above.</u> Other events are in the works. <u>COVID-19 restrictions make these difficult at this time but Cultural Department is working on them.</u>   |

|                |  |                           |                 |  |
|----------------|--|---------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>A.2 (b)</b> | Collaborate with local businesses to support a Newton Outdoor Concert Series.  | Executive/<br>coordinated | In process      | These events are in the works— <a href="#">see above</a>   |
| <b>A.2 (c)</b> | Supplement the outdoor dining and picnic areas with musicians, craft tables, garden club flower arrangements, etc. to attract more pedestrian traffic.   | coordinated               | In process      | The City coordinated the planters and painted jersey barriers projects to beautify restaurant outdoor dining. See above <a href="#">The City has applied for a Local Recovery technical assistance grant to explore street closures in the spring especially at Union Street and potentially other village centers</a> |
| <b>A.3</b>     | Galvanize businesses to partner together to open and service a drive-in movie theater at “the Street” and/or other appropriate locations within the City. See example of Kowloon in Saugus:<br><a href="https://www.boston.com/food/restaurants/2020/05/13/kowloon-carhop-movie-theater">https://www.boston.com/food/restaurants/2020/05/13/kowloon-carhop-movie-theater</a> . | Legislative               | Implemented     | This has been done at the Street and Marshall’s Plaza  |
| <b>B.</b>      | Modify Transportation/Parking Policy   |                           |                 |  |
| <b>B.1</b>     | The City Council is encouraged to pass a two-year moratorium of enforcement of parking minimums under the zoning code to allow businesses to expand outdoors thereby conforming to social distancing requirements.   | Legislative               | No action taken | Prioritized next steps   |
| <b>B.2</b>     | Add additional bicycle parking racks to village centers.   | Executive                 | In process      | This is an ongoing initiative. <a href="#">Blue Bike stations have been established at several locations in the City and it is anticipated that additional funds may become available for extending the program.</a>   |
| <b>B.3</b>     | Support businesses with a parking strategy for employees and customers.  | Legislative               | No action taken | Prioritized next steps   |

|            |  |             |                 |                        |
|------------|--|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| <b>B.4</b> | Facilitate the use of excess parking during the week/evening of parking lots used by houses of worships/private businesses to expand supply of parking near village centers. | Coordinated | No action taken | Prioritized next steps |
| <b>C.</b>  | Promote, Mentor and Support Newton Businesses  |             |                 |                        |

|                |   |             |   |  |
|----------------|---|-------------|---|--|
| <b>C.1</b>     | Develop a local Marketing Campaign to buy, dine and bank local.   | Coordinated | <del>No action taken</del><br><u>In Process</u> | Prioritized next steps with NNRC <u>The EDC Marketing Subgroup worked with the NNRC and Cultural and Economic Development Departments to create a targeted campaign utilizing the State's shop/dine local campaign. Marketing information was sent to businesses and the campaign publicized to the public. Needs additional public outreach. The "Put your money where your heart is---Newton" needs to be sustained message by both the City and businesses.</u> |
| <b>C.1 (a)</b> | The City to organize a steering committee of local business owners, government officials, business leaders and neighborhood residents across the City responsible for developing branding, messaging, collateral material and communications. | Coordinated | No action taken                                 | Prioritized next steps with NNRC   |
| <b>C.1 (b)</b> | Launch a broad-based messaging campaign to market and support local businesses in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.  | Coordinated | In process (EDC Priority)                       | Prioritized next steps with NNRC in coordination with the State's shop local initiative. The <a href="https://www.findmylocalma.com">FindMyLocalMA.com</a> provides downloadable signage and information for businesses. <u>See above</u>  |
| <b>C.1 (c)</b> | Branding should extend as appropriate to all components of the City's efforts for local business recovery from COVID-19.  | Coordinated | No action taken                                 |  |

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|--------------------|--|-------------|---|------------------|
| <b>C.1<br/>(d)</b> | Leverage multiple government, business and community channels to broadcast messaging, such as City's Constant Contact email lists; Mayor's email newsletter; school Parent Teacher Organizations' (PTO) communication lists; Newton-Needham Regional Chamber email updates; City Councilors email distribution lists (per their approval); Next Door Digest; Village 14; Facebook page - City of Newton. Include a relevant insert in the next two quarterly tax bills to inform residents of the importance of buying and shopping local. | Coordinated | <del>No action taken</del><br><u>In Process</u> | <u>See above</u> |
|--------------------|--|-------------|---|------------------|

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| <b>C.1 (e)</b> | Encourage direct business with restaurants (i.e. contacting restaurants directly and picking up orders instead of using third party ordering and delivery services).   | Coordinated | In process                                      | Both the City (via emails) and NNRC have sent emails regarding this. Should be amplified.   |
| <b>C.1 (f)</b> | Encourage shopping in Newton businesses as opposed to e-commerce giants.   | Coordinated | <del>No action taken</del><br><u>In Process</u> |   |
| <b>C.2</b>     | Facilitate and coordinate matching grants to groups of local businesses and non-profits for them to collaborate on technology, mobile ordering, contactless payment, marketing, placemaking, and other activities designed to attract and retain customers during the COVID-19 recovery period.  | Coordinated | <del>No action taken</del><br><u>In Process</u> | <u>The EDC Subgroup on Funding is exploring ways to partner with existing 501(c)(3) organizations or creating a private foundation to provide additional funds for small business recovery grants, technical assistance, and/or loans to small businesses.</u>  |
| <b>C.3</b>     | Schedule additional information sessions on becoming an approved vendor to the City focused on helping Newton businesses to do business with the City.   | Executive   | <del>In process</del><br><u>Implemented</u>     | This program with the Operation Services Division <del>has been scheduled for</del> <u>was held on</u> September 21 <sup>st</sup> . <del>(Notices sent out through EconConstant Contact and NNRC.)</del> Individual appointments with OSD <del>can</del> <u>could</u> be scheduled by businesses on September 22. |
| <b>C.4</b>     | Assist in the launch and expansion of the newly created peer-to-peer mentoring program for Newton's business community to be managed by the Newton-Needham Regional Chamber (NNRC) with the program available free of charge to all Newton businesses, whether or not they are Chamber members. The City should promote the program and encourage EDC members and EDC survey respondents to participate if they have | Coordinated | In process (EDC Priority)                       | Prioritized next steps with NNRC. <u>EDC Mentoring Subgroup is working with the NNRC on promoting this program, especially targeting minority and women-owned businesses. Requires greater focus by NNRC.</u>   |



|                |   |             |  |  |
|----------------|---|-------------|--|--|
|                | relevant professional advice and expertise and have expressed a desire to help.   |             |  |  |
| <b>C.5</b>     | Focus particular attention on minority-owned business.  | Coordinated | In process   | Prioritized next steps with NNRC <a href="#">See above</a>   |
| <b>C.5 (a)</b> | Facilitate mentoring support for minority owned businesses that are in need of network resources.   | Coordinated | In process   | Prioritized next steps with NNRC <a href="#">See above</a>   |
| <b>C.5 (b)</b> | Facilitate financial grants and loans for minority owned businesses, particularly those who have been unable to secure CARES act funding.     | Coordinated | No action taken                                      |  |
| <b>C.5 (c)</b> | Explore setting-up convenient and targeted testing sites for people of color as COVID-19 infects black and brown communities at higher rates. | Coordinated | Implemented/<br>In process                           | The City of Newton and Newton-Wellesley Hospital (NWH) are now in partnership to provide safety net COVID-19 testing for school community members and vulnerable residents. <a href="#">CIC-Health has set up drive-thru testing at Riverside.</a> |
| <b>C.5 (d)</b> | Schedule information sessions on obtaining women and minority owned business certification.   | Executive   | <del>In process</del><br><a href="#">Implemented</a> | Also veterans/disadvantaged group <a href="#">State certification webinars in September.</a>   |
| <b>C.6</b>     | Strengthen and improve communication and information flow between local businesses and with the City.   | Executive   | In process   | Slow <a href="#">As with the Lovemylocal campaign, the City (through Mayor's emails and Economic Development constant contact), the NNRC and various civic organizations, progress is being made.</a>  |
| <b>C.6 (a)</b> | Update and maintain Newton's Small Business Database.   | Executive   | In process   | This is in process   |

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| <b>C.6 (b)</b> | Provide information on easily accessible programming and relevant resources available by other economic development organizations, including but not limited to: Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, Interise, NNRC, Black Economic Council of Massachusetts and SCORE.   | Executive | In process/no action | NNRC is doing this <u>and the EDC Mentoring and Marketing Subgroup is assisting, as is the Economic Development Department.</u>   |
| <b>C.6 (c)</b> | Hold Village and sector based – interactive on-line information sessions to share resources; highlight success stories; discuss technology; mobile ordering; contactless payment; and share best practices in partnership with regional/neighborhood associations and business owners.   | Executive | In process/no action | NNRC is doing this <u>—see above</u>  |
| <b>C.6 (d)</b> | Expand the City’s business communication channels to include greater use of social media, notably LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and other outlets.  | Executive | No action taken      | Resources <u>are</u> constrained  |
| <b>D.</b>      | Re-opening with Confidence   |           |                      | <u>Setbacks have occurred in the fall due to COVID-19 rates raising</u>   |
| <b>D.1</b>     | Publicize clear, written guidelines for safety measures for restaurants and outdoor dining areas including: consistent signage; keeping benches far enough apart; locating hand washing and/or sanitizing stations; using disposable silverware; protective gear and enhanced cleanliness protocols for restaurant staff; and designating curbside pickup zones. | Executive | Implemented          | These guidelines are provided by sector by the State <u>Additional restrictions to certain sectors were recently imposed by Newton for at least three weeks (fitness, entertainment, bars...)</u> |

|            |  |             |                 |  |
|------------|--|-------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>D.2</b> | Publicize clear guidelines about changes that may need to occur in small retail stores, such as consistent signage; opening by appointment only; limitations on the number of customers at any one time; requirements for hand sanitizer dispensers; any other new guidelines that make customers and workers feel safe. | Executive   | Implemented     | These guidelines are provided by sector by the State. State website also provides signage and other information for use by businesses        |
| <b>D.3</b> | Coordinate discounted bulk purchasing of needed supplies for business re-opening, e.g., personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitizers dispensers, etc.   | Coordinated | No action taken | Need is no longer acute, ample supplies available  |
| <b>D.4</b> | Advocate for the State to expand Coronavirus testing of residents and individuals working in Newton as part of a “Test, Trace and Isolate” strategy to minimize the impact of COVID 19 re-emergence.   | Coordinated | In Process      | Expanded via partnership with NWH and increased testing State-wide <a href="#">CIC-Health opened a drive-thru testing site at Riverside.</a> |
| <b>E.</b>  | Regulations for Local Economic Recovery and Resilience Going Forward (This section highlights proposed permanent changes to City regulations. Some items can be implemented quickly. )   |             |                 |  |
| <b>E.1</b> | Perform virtual inspections when appropriate by inspectional services and other City agencies to increase efficiency, protect inspectors and reduce time required for an inspection.   | Executive   | No action taken |  |
| <b>E.2</b> | Update Newton’s zoning   | Legislative |                 |  |

|                  |  |             |   |   |
|------------------|--|-------------|---|---|
| <b>E.2 (a)</b>   | To diversify Newton’s economic base and maintain commercial tax revenue, the City should consider:   | Legislative |   |   |
| <b>E.2 (a) 1</b> | Define and increase allowable R&D use in the City (currently primarily limited to Life Science and recreational marijuana).  | Legislative | In process (EDC Priority)   | <del>Prioritized next steps</del> <a href="#">The EDC has docketed before ZAP changes to correct and update R&amp;D and modern manufacturing; EDC Zoning Subgroup has proposed language for corrections and clarifications.</a> |
| <b>E.2 (a) 2</b> | Update and allow 21st century manufacturing, including highly automated and small-scale manufacturing, such as “maker spaces” and life science pilot plants.   | Legislative | In process (EDC Priority)   | <del>Prioritized next steps</del> <a href="#">The EDC has docketed before ZAP changes to correct and update R&amp;D and modern manufacturing; EDC Zoning Subgroup has proposed language for corrections and clarifications.</a> |
| <b>E.2 (a) 3</b> | Allow craft breweries, craft distilleries and wholesale bakeries to operate in Newton.   | Legislative | <del>No action taken</del><br><a href="#">Need for EDC action</a> |   |
| <b>E.2 (b)</b>   | Amend the home business ordinance by allowing more than one per dwelling unit, recognizing the difference between businesses with onsite customers and not, relaxing regulations around type of employees, removing the parking requirement, and removing the requirement for a special permit for a home business in the Multi Residence districts. | Legislative | <del>No action taken</del><br><a href="#">Need for EDC action</a> | Prioritized next steps  |
| <b>E.2 (c)</b>   | Remove/relax parking minimums to allow businesses to expand outdoors thereby conforming to social distancing requirements.   | Legislative | <del>No action taken</del><br><a href="#">Need for EDC action</a> | Prioritized next steps  |
| <b>E.2 (d)</b>   | Allow billboards on private and city owned property/buildings to advertise businesses and create new rules for temporary signs and sandwich boards.  | Legislative | Implemented   | Sandwich boards currently allowed via emergency order_ <a href="#">HHS Department has format for signage for use by businesses</a>  |

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| <b>E.3</b> | Allow zoning uses under existing special permits to be changed without modifying the permit provided that the parking requirements are not increased, the changes are minor in nature, and/or new business owner proposes a similar use. The benefit will reduce expenses to the City and applicant and shorten time needed to open a business. | Legislative | No action taken |   |
| <b>E.4</b> | Grant City staff authority to allow for insignificant modifications to be made to existing special permits without need for significant effort by City Council.   | Legislative | No action taken |   |
| <b>E.5</b> | Change the liquor license process to allow for quicker issuance of 1-day permits, especially now as many organizations have “paused” event planning. (Currently, 1-day liquor license in Newton requires an application often 3 months ahead of the event.)   | Executive   | No action taken | Premature due to limits on public gathering |
| <b>E.6</b> | Increase staff resources to support the implementation of the City’s business recovery plans, either by hiring contractors and/or interns.  | Legislative | No action taken | Difficult due to budget constraints         |
| <b>F.</b>  | Support Newton’s School-based Child Care Programs and Providers   |             |                 |   |

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| <b>F.1</b> | Although many of the childcare programs are State regulated, the City and the School Department need to take an active role in supporting the operations of the third-party after school programs housed primarily in the Elementary schools. Specifically, the City should provide assistance in safe operations, access to bulk PPE purchasing and flexibility in space allocations and rents. | Coordinated | In Process |  |
| <b>F.2</b> | Concerted efforts to support these programs as essential businesses would benefit, not only the childcare providers, but also the Newton parents that must rely on them to return to work.   | Coordinated | In Process |  |
| <b>F.3</b> | Covid regulations will likely result in the need for additional space to accommodate all families that need after school care within their existing schools. Schools must share and provide sufficient space to after school programs to enable Newton parents to return to work.  | Coordinated | In Process |  |
| <b>G.</b>  | Create Business Task Force to provide Financial and Implementation Support   |             |            |  |

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| <b>G.1</b> | Members to be appointed by the Mayor with representation from public officials, business owners, restaurant business champions, arts and culture organization, local banks and relevant government officials, community leaders, and Newton Needham Regional Chamber to oversee financing and implementation of this recovery plan. | Coordinated | No action taken           | Prioritized next steps   |
| <b>G.2</b> | Obtain private funding to bring additional investment and resources to small businesses in the City and to help implement recommendation from the 2019 Economic Development Action Plan for the City of Newton, specifically Appendix F: Retail Strategy Research (Attached as Appendix F), and the Ideas presented in this letter. | Coordinated | In process (EDC Priority) | Prioritized next steps <a href="#">EDC Subgroup on Private Funding is researching and exploring partnering with a 501(c)(3) organization to raise and gift funds to the City to allow the City to provide more grants. It is also exploring the creation of a private foundation to provide grants, technical assistance and/or loans to small businesses.</a> |
| <b>G.3</b> | Coordinate fundraising for a privately funded Newton Small Business Recovery Fund, See Appendix G for initial draft proposal.   | Coordinated | In process (EDC Priority) | Prioritized next steps. <a href="#">See above</a>  |

| <a href="#">Summary</a>           | <a href="#">Sept, 2020</a> | <a href="#">Jan 2021</a> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Items Implemented or "in process" | 30                         | <a href="#">35</a>       |
| Items with no activity            | 22                         | <a href="#">17</a>       |



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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Economic Development Commission

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Mayor

Barney S. Heath  
Director  
Planning & Development

Devra G. Bailin  
Director Economic  
Development

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Jean Wood, Vice Chair  
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Howard Barnstone  
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Newton City Council  
City of Newton  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459

Re: Riverside Project  
Petition #26-20  
Special Permit #27-20

March 11, 2020

Dear Honorable City Councilors:

The proposed Riverside development represents both an achievement and a lost opportunity for the City of Newton. Mark Development's current Riverside development plan does propose to successfully activate a vast underutilized stretch of land to the benefit of the City and its residents. For that reason, at the March 10, 2020 meeting by a vote of 12-0 of the members present, the Economic Development Commission (EDC) recommends that the City Council move forward with the developer as expeditiously as possible. At the same time, the EDC advises City Councilors to take note of the lost development potential of this major site and consider steps to safeguard opportunities for economic development at Riverside in the future.

### **Achievement**

The Newton Comprehensive Plan highlights the value of the land at Riverside, stressing that: "The notion that a major parcel of land at the intersection of the Massachusetts Turnpike and Route 95 should remain undeveloped (and untaxed) is fiscally irresponsible and physically illogical."<sup>1</sup> The Riverside plan before City Council today promises an economically positive, attractive, innovative and transit oriented project. It has housing and commercial development, both in the form of a single office building and ample retail space. It features a new hotel, bike access, open spaces, and community amenities. The neighbors have even endorsed the project.

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<sup>1</sup> Newton Comprehensive Plan, Adopted by the Newton Board of Aldermen, November 19, 2007, 3-31.



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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Economic Development Commission

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Getting to this point has been a very long road. The EDC's involvement in this development extends back to March 14, 2006 when we met with Mark Boyle of the MBTA. At that time we suggested that the MBTA come up with a mechanism for a long-term lease of the vast, empty parking lot to turn it into a vibrant area that would provide much needed tax revenue and housing to the city of Newton. We foresaw a transit-oriented development on one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in the Boston region. This is the only parcel in the western suburbs with both direct access to both I-95/128 and the MBTA. Neighbors like Waltham, Wellesley, and Needham have all used this 128 access as a way to bolster the commercial tax base, and with the added advantage of the adjacent MBTA, we saw a true opportunity for Newton. In the last 14 years, Mark Development's current plan is as close as the City has ever gotten to realizing the potential presented by Riverside.

### **Lost Opportunity**

The EDC appreciates the plan put forth by the developer, however, there is no doubt among EDC members that with the Riverside special permitting process, the City lost an opportunity to take full advantage of one of the most important pieces of buildable land that Newton has seen in a generation.

An earlier version of the developer's proposal included nearly 1.5 million sq. ft of equally balanced mixed-use development, and represented a leading-edge project for the City, where most developers continue to focus largely on residential construction. The proposal grew progressively smaller as Mark Development moved through negotiations with the Lower Falls Improvement Association/Right Size Riverside. In the resulting proposal, the total size of the proposed development dropped to 1.0 million square feet, and the mix leaned more heavily on new residential property (49.9% up to 63.8%) and less on commercial space (50.1% down to 36.2%).<sup>2</sup> This downsizing and usage shift concerns the EDC for the potential loss it represents to the City in terms of: (1) revenue; (2) tax base diversification; (3) business growth and job creation. These concerns are explained below.

#### **(1). Potential Revenue Loss**

The Riverside development plan currently in front of the City Council has approximately 325,000 square feet LESS of commercial property than what the developer had originally proposed back in March 2019.<sup>3</sup> The developer estimates that the lost commercial space could have benefitted the city an **additional \$2 million** per year in commercial tax revenue.<sup>4</sup> This is not a small loss for a city with aspirations to renovate public schools, protect open spaces, and

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<sup>2</sup> Riverside Station presentation to the Economic Development Commission by Mark Development. (December 10, 2019). Retrieved from <http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/101044>

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> City of Newton Economic Development Commission. (December 10, 2019). Meeting Minutes. Retrieved from <http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/101044>

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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Economic Development Commission

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upgrade streets and sewer, among other services. Moreover, the City does not have many alternatives to make up such a revenue difference. Other options, such as licensing new recreational marijuana stores or raising taxes or fees citywide would also involve difficult decisions and trade-offs.

### (2). Less Tax Base Diversification

Newton's tax base remains primarily supported by single-family homes. In fact, commercial taxes make up just 8.7% of total real property value, a number that has been flat since 2008. Neighboring Watertown, meanwhile, has an 18% share and Waltham's reaches 30%.<sup>5</sup> The City's own Economic Development Study, approved and adopted just a couple of years ago, noted that "If new residential development over the next ten years continues at the pace it has maintained over the last ten years, an additional development equivalent to Wells Avenue Business Park will be needed just to preserve the current commercial/ residential balance."<sup>6</sup> Riverside has the potential to add more to the City's commercial property tax base than is currently proposed.

### (3). Reduced Business Growth and Job Creation

Riverside's unique suburban location at the intersection of highway and public transportation is highly desirable to employers. The recently completed Riverside Development Peer Review, notes that Riverside has a "large opportunity" to capture high-wage industry job growth along Route 128. The Peer Review states: "If Mark Development completes pre-leasing and delivers a Class A office building, it is reasonable that the space will be absorbed by one or two sizable office tenants immediately" at top suburban market rents. By contrast, the Peer Review anticipates that it will take three to four years for the market-rate residential properties to be fully leased.<sup>7</sup>

The commercial market demand for Riverside's location is also acknowledged by the Riverside Vision Plan, which was finalized and approved by the City last year. The Vision Plan states: "The Riverside site offers a significant opportunity to provide highly desired commercial space in an accessible location. Commercial development at Riverside should strongly consider Class A office, lab, medical office, flex, and other commercial space types that are in high demand throughout the region."<sup>8</sup>

If Riverside's opportunity for Class A office and other commercial space is realized to the fullest extent possible, the City could be in a stronger position compared to neighboring towns and

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<sup>5</sup> Economic Development Action Plan for the City of Newton. Prepared for the City of Newton by Camoin Associates. Adopted by the City Council. January 2019, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Riverside Development Peer Review, HR&A Advisors, Inc. February 7, 2020, 8-9

<sup>8</sup> Riverside Vision Plan, CivicMoxie, LLC, , May 2019, 97.

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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Economic Development Commission

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cities to attract and retain more of the region's high-skill, high-wage, knowledge economy jobs.<sup>9</sup> The city has also recently seen industry movement to suggest growth opportunities for lab space in the growing life sciences industry.

### Recommendations

The EDC recommends that the City Council move forward to approve development at Riverside. At the same time, we urge City Councilors to revisit the question of zoning to allow for 1.5 million sq. ft. or larger of development at Riverside, even as the special permit maintains the currently proposed 1 million sq. ft. of development. This modification will leave the door open for future opportunities at Riverside that could help the City achieve its long-term economic development goals around tax revenue, the commercial property base, and business growth.

Sincerely and on behalf of the EDC



Phil Plottel,  
Chair,  
Economic Development Commission

Copy to: Mayor Ruthanne Fuller  
Planning and Development Board  
Mark Development

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<sup>9</sup> Over the last decade, the lack of large, suitable Class A office has led to several brand name companies moving out of Newton to neighboring cities and towns that could meet their real estate needs. These companies include Clarks Shoes, NBC Universal, SharkNinja and TripAdvisor. More recently local co-working company Workbar opted to locate in Needham due to lack of suitable office space in Newton.