

Mayor's Update



COVID-19 Update

We had 22 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Newton last week, a continuation of the positive trends. The number of new cases continues to fall from 53 during the last week of April to 38 new cases last week to only 22 this week.

Newton's cumulative total of cases since we began counting on April 1, 2020 is 4,352.

Over the two-week tracking period used by the State from April 25 to May 8, Newton had 86 new cases compared to 110 over the previous tracking period.

The average daily incidence rate is now 6.7 per 100,000 tests, down from 8.6% last week, and our positivity rate in Newton (which is the percentage of tests that come back positive) is now 0.40% (with 26,437 tests performed).

Cases among the Boston College community accounted for 21% of Newton's confirmed new cases during this two-week reporting period. Updated BC data can be found [here](#).

Losses

Most importantly, I am again heartened to report that had no one in Newton died with COVID-19 over the past seven days and during the past five weeks.

Newton Public School COVID-19 Data

Over the past two weeks, the Newton Public School community had 4 people test positive for COVID-19 (zero cases were reported within the past seven days), bringing the cumulative total to 415 people since September 14, 2020. The 4 new cases are among students learning in person.

The dashboard with week by week school data from the pooled testing program is available [here](#) and the overall school data is [here](#).

Vaccination Update

This week's State vaccination information shows that 65,610 Newtonians, or 72% of our population, have had at least one dose.

COVID-19 in Newton	
Total Cases	4,352
Total Deaths	214
*As of 5/12/21	

The state data also shows that 56% of Newton's population is now fully vaccinated with 16% partially vaccinated. (Two weeks ago, we were at 45% and 21% respectively.)

Newtonians who are partially or fully vaccinated include 95%+ of those who are 75 years old or more, 95%+ of those 65-74 years old, 95%+ who are 50-64 years old, 94% who are 30-49 years old, 64% that are 20-29 years old, and 18% who are 0-19 years old. To see the detailed vaccination information for each city and town in Massachusetts by age, sex, race and ethnicity, and zip code, click [here](#).

Starting today people who live or study in Massachusetts aged 12 to 17 are eligible to get a Pfizer vaccine. (Moderna and J&J vaccines are not yet approved for this age group.) Vaccine appointments are always tougher to get on the day a new group becomes eligible, so try to be patient, appointments open up daily and are available in our area. You can check the State [vaxfinder](#) site or our Newton Health and Human Services page [here](#) to find an appointment.

Gun Shop Update

I've been deeply concerned since I first learned during the week of March 29th that a proprietor had applied to the Police Department for a permit to open a gun store on Washington Street.

Since then, I and our entire City Council have been working expeditiously with our Law and Planning Departments. We are deliberately working to put in place regulations around firearm businesses that are strict, legally defensible, and appropriate.

The City Council's Zoning and Planning Committee gave input on the Zoning regulations last week. Residents gave input on Monday night at a public hearing. Tonight the recommended zoning amendment is before the Zoning and Planning Committee for discussion and possible action. Click here to watch tonight's meeting at vimeo.com/newtvgov.

The proposed zoning amendment would require a firearms business to first seek a discretionary Special Permit that requires a 2/3rds vote by the City Council to get an approval. At least 16 of the 24 City Councilors would need to find that the proposed site is appropriate, that the use would not adversely affect the neighborhood, and that the use will promote and not be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood and City, plus several other criteria.

In addition, the firearms sales and related uses would be only allowed to open if they met a list of conditions regulating security, signage, hours and lighting, among other things.

The zoning amendment also restricts firearms sales to very limited and specific locations. These include only locations away from residences and other sensitive uses (i.e. schools, child care, religious institutions, parks and playgrounds, nursing homes). The uses include sales of firearms, repairs and firing ranges.

The Law and Planning Department's recommendation includes three general locations where a gun store or related business could potentially seek a Special Permit: parts of The Street retail complex on Route 9 in Chestnut Hill, a portion of Rumford Avenue in Auburndale, and a location on North Street on the Waltham line that would require either a new building or a waiver to allow the use in a building which is now only partially outside of the recommended buffer zone (see [map](#)).

These three locations in Newton are the only places that meet the robust buffer zones recommended by the Planning Department: 1000-feet from schools and other sensitive locations and 150-feet from residential uses. The recommended ordinance would also prevent two stores from opening within 1,000 feet of each other.

Based on extensive analysis and consultation with experts in firearm regulation at both the state and federal level, the City's Law Department has concluded that a complete ban on the sale of guns in Newton would not withstand a legal challenge.

Read FAQs, updated information, the Planning Department's zoning recommendation presented Monday night and a letter for support for these zoning recommendations from the nationally recognized Giffords (Gabby) Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence [here](#).

The next Zoning and Planning Committee meeting to discuss the zoning amendment is tonight at 7 p.m. Zoom in at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87894766050> or call 1-646-558-8656 and use Meeting ID: 87894766050.

While this proposed zoning amendment is before the City Council's Zoning and Planning Committee, which could vote as early as tonight and send its recommendation to the full Council for a final vote, the proposed store on Washington Street is not yet open and has not applied for a building permit to do needed renovations at the store.

Why is this important?

On Tuesday, April 20, the Inspectional Services Department issued a stop work order at the Washington Street location because renovations were being done without the required building permit. Since that time, the proprietor has not applied for a building permit to resume work at this location.

Because the building permit was not issued before the public hearing on the proposed rezoning was advertised, the business would need to conform with the amended zoning for this location should it be passed by the City Council. Washington Street is not included in the three buffered locations under the proposed zoning amendment.

Please be assured that making Newton as safe and protected as it can be legally is at the top of my agenda and will remain so.

Library Lot Work Begins



Ameresco began work this week literally laying the foundation for a “greener” Newton by installing foundation footings to support the solar carports being added to the Newton Free Library Parking lot on Homer Street. The solar panels will provide 40% of the library’s electricity, and the new parking lot will include 21 more spaces including eight electric vehicle charging spots and will improve accessibility.

Remember the huge puddles in the library parking lot left after rain? The storm water drainage is also be improved so that won’t happen again.

Funding Human Services and Emergency Solutions

The City will allocate a total of \$449,083 in federal FY2022 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds to support vital services for our low- and moderate-income Newton residents and those experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in the Brookline-Newton-Waltham-Watertown area.

The City will support 13 organizations that address the most urgent needs of Newton’s low-to moderate-income residents with \$296,750 in federal FY2022 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, including the Price Center, the John M. Barry Boys and Girls Club of Newton, the West Suburban YMCA, Family ACCESS of Newton, the Horace Cousens Industrial Fund, Friends of 2Life Communities, Jewish Family and Children’s Service, Newton Community Development Foundation, Newton Housing Authority, Plowshares Education Development Center, Riverside Community Care, the Second Step, and the Newton Department of Parks, Recreation & Culture. (Find more info [here.](#))

The City will award ESG grants to three organizations who will provide emergency shelter services and case management services to support those at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Brookline, Newton, Waltham, and Watertown: Community Day Center of Waltham, REACH Beyond Domestic Violence, and Brookline Community Mental Health Center. (Find more info [here.](#))

Newton, Brookline, Waltham and Watertown are so well served by the good work of these organizations.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Say “Thank You” to a teacher or school staff member after an extremely unusual and challenging school year. Support exciting educational initiatives, professional development, and programs that address racial and income inequities with a donation to the Newton Schools Foundation’s **Honor Thy Teacher campaign**. NSF will notify the honorees of the gift, share the honoree names with the Superintendent and principals, and list all of these heroes on the NSF website. Find out more and donate on the [NSF website](#).



P.P.S. Newton South’s Speech & Debate Team made history! On April 10 and 11, the team swept the Massachusetts Speech & Debate League State tournament in both Speech and Debate. Doing what no school has ever done before in Massachusetts history, Newton South took first place in all three levels of Public Forum Debate -- Varsity, Junior Varsity and Novice. The Speech division finished tops in numerous categories including First Place for both DUO interpretation and a multiple speaker piece called “Selfie.” The Speech division placed fourth overall. Our DUO interpretations and Multiple Reading students won the State

Championship in their events. Bravo!! Complete results can be found [here](#).

(Top photo: June Kim, Rose Plottel, Ellen Yang, Matan Josephy. Bottom photo: Adele Fegley, Ellen Yang, Maya Zeldin, Shona Goodkin Stephanie Tian, Andrew Li, Anais Mobarak, Maya Makarovsk)

P.P.P.S. Join Mayor Fuller, Rabbi Wesley Gardenswartz and neighbors for music, gratitude, and reflection at the 47th Annual Theodore D. Mann Newton **Mayor’s Community Breakfast**: “Coming Together for Hope and Joy.” We’ll be together virtually on Wednesday, May 26, at 8:30 a.m. Register [here](#). There is no fee to attend, but please consider supporting our neighbors with donations to: [The Newton Food Pantry](#), [Centre Street Food Pantry](#), [The Arabic Baptist Food Pantry](#), or [The Newton Community Freedee](#).



P.P.P.P.S. This July marks the **50th anniversary of the 26th amendment** -- empowering 18-year-olds with the right to vote. Join a conversation on Tuesday, May 25 at 7:30 p.m. with Newton’s next generation to explore youth engagement in civic action. [Register in advance](#). Thanks go to Nickki Dawes, PhD Director of Center for Community-Based Learning & Associate Professor of Psychology at Lasell University for facilitating the conversation.

P.P.P.P.P.S. We’re trying to learn as much as we can about **Newtonians visions for their village centers** to inform our zoning decisions. Want to be heard? Ways you can participate will include a Vision Kit to explore your village center(s), an

interactive survey, and Focus Groups for equitable participation. Sign up for a Community Engagement Info Session on Thursday, May 20, from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. [here](#) and fill out this Focus Group Interest form [here](#) if you identify as a renter, younger person (age 15-35), BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color), someone with a disability, LGBTQ+, of the creative community, and older adults (65+). Learn more at newtonma.gov/zoningredesign.



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller | 1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459

[Unsubscribe {recipient's email}](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by rfuller@newtonma.gov powered by



Try email marketing for free today!