

Mayor's Update



NewMo 2.0

Any resident, anyone who works in Newton, and any visitor here will be able to book a \$2 on demand, shared ride to connect to a number of MBTA Green Line or Commuter Rail stations and two village centers - Newtonville and Newton Center - as well as to Needham Street and the Wells Avenue Office Park area.

NewMo 2.0 (Newton in Motion) will dramatically expand access to and from public transit for all residents who live in any village and neighborhood of the City as well as for visitors across Newton.

We had hoped to pilot NewMo 2.0 next week. But, the driver shortage we're seeing across the ride share industry (including at Uber and Lyft) are affecting our transportation partner, Via. Via is still in the process of vetting, hiring and training more drivers. Stay tuned; we'll let you know the start date which hopefully will be in the next few weeks.

Once we get going, NewMo 2.0 will operate Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Trips may begin or end anywhere in the City provided one leg begins or ends at a designated stop or service areas. These include:

- Newton Center Langley Lot/Newton Centre Green Line,
- Newtonville Commuter Rail Station,
- Chestnut Hill Green Line Station,
- Newton Highlands Green Line Station,
- Needham Street,
- Wells Avenue area (includes the Wells Avenue Office Park, UMass Mt Ida, JCC, Nahanton Woods Condominiums).
- Needham Heights Commuter Rail Station.

We hope the pilot brings a lot of riders so we can expand soon to more locations in Newton.

How does NewMo 2.0 work?

A Newton resident traveling back from Boston on the T could book a ride on NewMo 2.0 to get picked up at the Newton Centre Langley Lot/Green Line, Chestnut Hill Green Line or Newton Highlands Green Line stations and get a ride to their home anywhere in Newton. Likewise, they could be picked up at their home and taken to any one of the seven NewMo 2.0 stops.

Another example is an employee at a Newton restaurant or business who may live

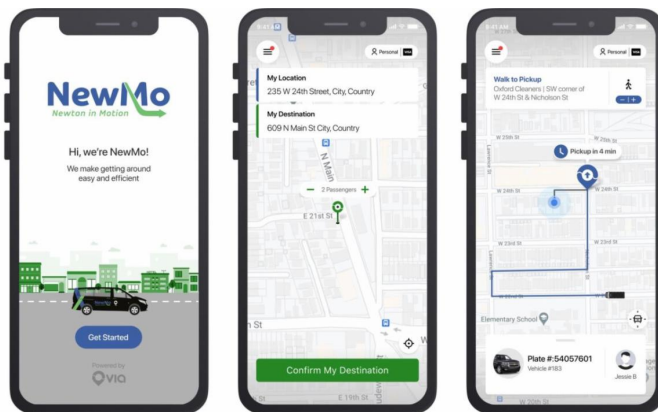
along the Green Line or Commuter Rail line will also be able to book a ride to get to and from their job in Newton to one of the designated MBTA Commuter Rail or T stations.

To be clear, while NewMo 2.0 will not do drop offs and pick ups at every commuter rail and T station, people anywhere in Newton can get a ride to and from the Green Line or to the Commuter Rail Framingham/Worcester line or the Needham line.

NewMo 2.0 builds on the excellent work of Newton's Senior Services staff and Transportation Planners who first piloted the NewMo 1.0 system for our older residents in 2019, providing more than 25,000 rides since inception. As these riders know, the driver shortage is also sometimes causing longer wait times for rides on the current service. Please bear with Via as it continues to hire more drivers.

The City of Newton's partner is Via, a leader in transit. Via's system rivals the convenience of a personal car with a reduced environmental impact. It's an "on demand" service with riders booking through a smartphone (or a phone call) in real time. It's also a "shared ride" service; Via's computer system optimizes the routes and directs the driver to pick up and drop off passengers along the way.

NewMo 2.0 helps reduce traffic congestion with shared rides, and importantly, provides a ride for that crucial "first and last mile" to public transit stations.



The Via vehicles will be hybrid to start, with an eye toward an electric fleet that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

All residents and visitors to Newton can start to sign-up on the NewMo 2.0 app starting this Friday, June 25. Download the NewMo app (search for NewMo Newton) on a smartphone or call

617-655-8019 to get started. Those without access to a smartphone can both sign-up and book a ride by calling 617-655-8019.

Rides will cost \$2 per trip and will be paid for directly through the app. Those without a smartphone can pay using a credit card when they call. (A credit card can be left on file.) The first five rides for each user will be free. Qualifying low-income residents can receive discounted rides for 50 cents. To see if you qualify for discounted rates, contact Nicole Freedman, at nfreedman@newtonma.gov.

The service will offer a wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

Are you already using NewMo? Our older residents will continue to receive the same service as they have previously.

NewMo offers local businesses and organizations the option to cover the cost of rides for their members (e.g. employees, students, staff, visitors, etc). Organizations can set parameters such as a custom geographical area or time of day. For more information on community partnerships, email to brian.kerrigan@ridewithvia.com.

This is an exciting, bold step forward. The City will review real-time data and rider

feedback to continually adjust the pilot program to meet the needs and travel patterns of Newton residents and visitors.

Funding for the first year of pilot operations totals \$475,000. It comes from MassDOT's Workforce Transportation Grant and the MPO's Community Connections Program. Our goal is to continue fundraising from businesses and organizations to sustain and expand NewMo 2.0. We hope to have additional service hours, additional destinations, and fully electric vehicles.

For more information or questions, visit newtonma.gov/Newmo, email NewMo customer support at newmo@ridewithvia.com, or call Via at 617-655-8019.

Spending Federal ARPA Dollars?

The City is due to receive approximately \$63 million dollars in American Recovery Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funding. There are some specific guidelines on how they can be used with the two key ones that the funds must be used to respond to the public health emergency and its negative economic impacts, and reflect revenue loss.

I have a number of goals for how we invest these one-time ARPA funds. We should seed those initiatives that will help Newtonians and our city not just stabilize and recover but permanently be more resilient, more livable, more vibrant, more inclusive, and more sustainable. We should invest the funds using the lens of equity, ensuring all geographic areas of Newton, all ages, all ethnicities, and all people are supported while we help those hurt by the pandemic. Our ARPA investments should be strategic so as to complement those of State and Federal programs.

We will continue to be transparent and open about the sources and uses of federal and state funds.

I want our investments to take into account your ideas for these federal dollars.

Let me hear from you at our community listening session on Zoom on Thursday, July 8, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. You can drop in at any time. If you're there before 8 p.m., I'll stay on as long as someone has a suggestion. Stay tuned for the logistics (probably everyone will have 3 or 4 minutes to speak) and the zoom link.

In addition, you're welcome to give me suggestions by email. Send along your ideas to ARPAinput@newtonma.gov. Please send your ideas along by the end of the day on Friday, July 9.

*Great to be in Nonantum
yesterday to check in with
our small businesses in
person, including
DePasquale's Sausage, the*

*Nonantum Boxing Club,
Icing on the Cake and
Antoine's.*



Unanimous Vote on City's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget

Just past midnight last Friday morning, the City Council unanimously passed the City's \$528 million [FY2022 Budget](#). The Councilors debated at length a number of issues, including the School Committee's inclusion of bus fees in the School Department Budget, before moving forward. I listened carefully and look forward to working with them.

Our City's finances are rock solid. We've weathered the financial storm of COVID-19. This Budget restores activities and services, repairs roads, supports the vulnerable, focuses on the academic, social and emotional needs of our 12,300 plus students, increases our investments in our fields and trees, school buildings and infrastructure and takes meaningful action in building a more equitable and inclusive community.

Parking: Good News and Bad

The good news is people are out and about again, going back to the office and shopping and dining in our village centers.

At the same time, we've all noticed the roads are more congested and our parking spaces and lots are filling up.

The reason we enforce parking restrictions is so there is turnover and spaces continually become available. During the pandemic, we suspended enforcement of parking violations, allowing cars to be parked as long as needed at metered spaces and in municipal parking lots. This was possible because so many people were staying home that there was plenty of parking available for those needing to park for a quick errand, to pick up takeout or go to work. That's no longer the case.

So, the bad news is that starting on Monday, July 12, Newton Parking Control

Officers will again be giving out parking tickets to cars at expired meters.

While we will all have to pay to park in metered spaces and municipal lots again in July, it will be easier.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) replaced 1,100 old and broken parking meters during the pandemic so every street space in the City now has a solar powered, brand new smart meter. This means no more worry about finding enough quarters to feed the meter. The new smart meters still take coins, but can also be paid with a credit or debit card or with the Parking Passport smartphone app. Find out more about Parking Passport [here](#).

DPW is also in the process of installing parking kiosks in all of the City's municipal parking lots so coins, credit cards and Parking Passport can be used there too. This work should be completed by the end of the summer.

Want to learn more about Newton's smart meters and kiosks? Click on the videos below.



Newton Power Choice: Consider Opting Up to 100% Renewables

Newton Power Choice is our City-vetted program that significantly reduces the entire community's carbon footprint by matching electricity used by Newton homes and businesses with electricity, 80% of which comes from local renewable sources such as wind and solar. This is 62% higher than the 18% currently mandated by state law.

Since starting this program back in March 2019, I am proud that Newton has been the State leader. Far and away, Newton has the highest percentage of additional local renewable electricity of any municipal aggregation program in Massachusetts.



We can thank Newton's Co-Director of Sustainability Ann Berwick for guiding us through the process of establishing Newton Power Choice and for continuing to be our in-house expert. As the former Undersecretary for Energy and then Chair of the Department of Public Utilities in

Massachusetts during the Gov. Patrick administration, she came to Newton with invaluable experience that has helped make her the go-to source for other communities looking to follow Newton's lead.

In the past few weeks alone, she's received calls from six other communities looking to pick her brain about Newton Power Choice, and she's fielded at least 20 such calls since our program began. She's happy to answer questions from residents

about Newton Power Choice as well. Email her at aberwick@newtonma.gov. You can also read more about the program [here](#).

What exactly are the electric resources that are in Newton Power Choice and New England's electricity grid? Click [here](#) to see the Newton Power Choice and the region's fuel mix for the first quarter of 2021. For that period, all Newton's renewable energy came from New England solar, wind, and small hydro resources (not Canadian hydro).

While Newton is leading the State, each of us can choose to do even better. Kudos to the approximately 7% of Newton electricity customers who have opted up to 100% local renewable energy sources through Newton Power Choice. To choose the 100% renewable option, first locate your Eversource account number and then call 866-968-8065 or click [here](#).

You can also choose to opt out of Newton Power Choice at any time, at no cost.

Newton Power Choice is the City-vetted program. Be careful as many electricity companies provide misleading information promising bargain pricing and renewable electricity. But many of their prices are no bargain, and many of their programs buy renewable from far outside the region. Many also charge high fees if you decide to end your contract. If you are interested in renewable electricity, participate in the well-vetted Newton Power Choice program.

Our new Energy Coach Liora Silkes and I discussed climate change with 5th grade environmentalists from Ms. Goldman's class at Ward Elementary School. Student Eric Stegmann organized the Zoom meeting and classmates Jack Monti Guarnieri, Maggie Apgar, Asher Finn,



Elliot Finn, Camilla Chen, Nicholas and Miles participated. Impressive doesn't begin to describe these students – if I didn't see their faces and hear their young voices, I would have thought these were people who had spent a long lifetime working on lowering greenhouse gas emissions. #thekidsarealright

Bluebikes Expansion

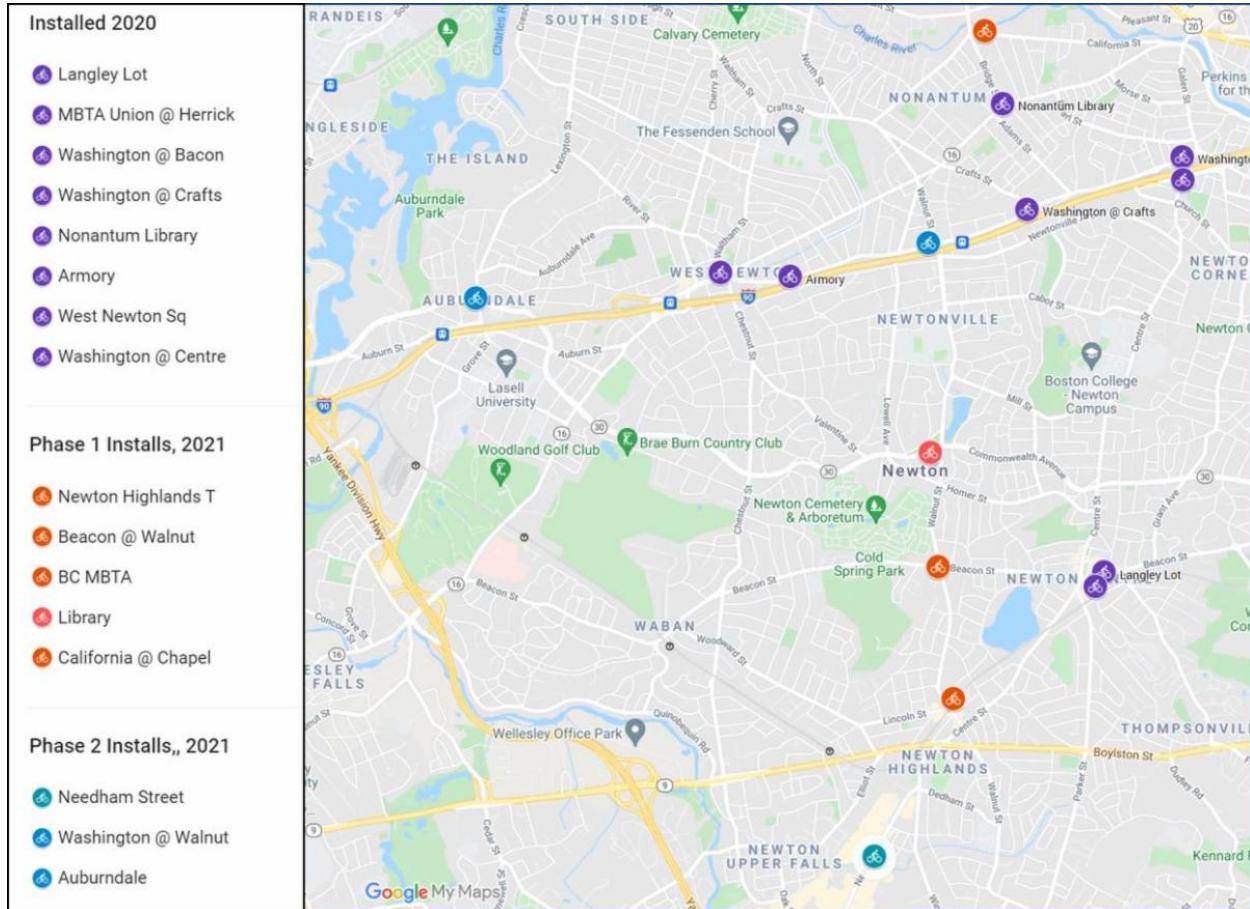
Good news for bike riders as Bluebikes this week added five new stations in Newton as part of a two-phase 2021 expansion.

The new locations are at:

- Newton Highlands MBTA station
- Beacon @ Walnut (near Whole Foods)
- Newton Free Library/City Hall
- Nonantum area at California @ Chapel (the entrance to Charles River Path)
- Boston College MBTA station.

The next round of installations will add two more new stations and one station move (from the Armory) to the following locations: Newtonville at Washington @ Walnut, in Auburndale by the Starbucks, and in Upper Falls at Nexus on Needham Street this summer.

These eight new stations bring the total number of stations in Newton to 15 as part of the system that includes Boston, Brookline and Watertown bordering our City as well as Arlington, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Revere, Salem and Somerville.



This expansion is part of our continued effort to have a healthy and fun way to get around Newton as well as to address climate change and traffic congestion by reducing the number of cars on the road.

Thanks go to MassDOT's Winter Shared Streets and Spaces grant, the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's Community Connections Program and Mark Development which will pay for the purchase and installation of these stations.

Find more information and map of the entire Bluebikes system [here](#). Remember to bring your own helmet.

Bravo to 15 year old violinist, Newton resident and Newton South High School student Keila Waka who won this year's Menuhin Competition, known as "the Olympics of the Violin." Watch Keila's spellbinding semi-final performance of Beethoven's Violin Sonata No. 1 in D Major, Op. 12 below:



COVID-19 Update

Great news again this week as we had just one new confirmed case, bringing our cumulative total in Newton over the course of the pandemic to 4,379.

The average daily incidence rate over the past two week state tracking period from June 6 –19 is 0.5 per 100,000, down from down from 0.6 last week, and the percent of tests performed on Newton residents that came back positive is now 0.1% of the 6,265 tests performed.

I can also report again the great news that for the twelfth week in a row no one who lives in Newton died with COVID-19.

Over the past seven days, from June 17 – 23, the Newton Public Schools reported no new cases of COVID-19. The chart with week by week school data from the pooled testing program is available [here](#) and overall school data dashboard is [here](#). As summer vacation is starting, we won't be reporting this data at least for the summer months.

Not vaccinated yet? Appointments are available and increasingly many clinics take walk-ins. Find locations at newtonma.gov/vaccines.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Check out more than 80 artists and artisans in their yards and on their porches at a fully outdoor event on Saturday. Explore, enjoy, browse, and buy art and beautifully crafted objects directly from local artists. **Newton Open Studios** is this Saturday, June 26 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Visit NewtonOpenStudios.org for information about

all the artists and a map of locations.



P.P.S. **Get connected!** In addition to offering at the Library public desktop computers and in-building laptop rentals, Newton Free Library now offers **laptops and hotspots for checkout.** (A hotspots is a portable device that connects you to the internet.) Access the internet from home or stay connected on the go by borrowing a laptop and WiFi kit. Visit the first floor Main Desk. You may borrow these items for 3 weeks at a time; sorry, they cannot be reserved or renewed. Learn more [here](#).

P.P.P.S. Fun, free, and all age friendly summer nights in the City! Head over to the Hyde Playground and bandstand on Lincoln Street in Newton Highlands for **Summer in the Highlands.** The free concert and movie series presented by the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Association, the Hyde Community Center and John Rice is back with a lineup that includes movies like Casablanca and It's a Wonderful Life, performances of Shakespeare, and rock, classic and big-band concerts. Find the full schedule [here](#).

(Photo: Having fun with Jade Kirschner and Katie Thatcher at Monday's Summer in the Highlands Beatle's concert.)

