

Thursday, Aug. 12, 2021

## Mayor's Update

We had 57 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Newton over the past seven days from Aug. 5 – 11. This compares to 62 new cases last week, and 47 during the seven days prior to that. These new cases bring our cumulative total in Newton to 4,602.

Of the 112 people who tested positive in Newton between July 25 and August 7, the age breakdown is:

- 14% were 60 years or older
- 37% were between 40 and 59 years old
- 29% were between 20 and 39 years old
- 8% were between 12 and 19 years old
- 13% were under 12 years old



As of Aug. 7, there were 4,321,931 fully vaccinated people in Massachusetts. Of those who were fully vaccinated, 9,969, or 0.23%, had breakthrough cases (i.e., tested positive after they were fully vaccinated more than 14 days after the final dose of vaccine); 445, or 0.01%, of those 9,969 cases resulted in hospitalization; and 106 people statewide who had a breakthrough case, or 0.002%, died.

COVID-19 in Newton
<b>Total Cases</b> 4,602
<b>Total Deaths</b> 215
<small>*As of 8/11/21</small>

The average daily incident rate in Newton over the past two-week state tracking period from July 25 – Aug. 7 is 8.7 cases per 100,000, up from last week's incidence rate of 7.1.

The percentage of tests performed on Newton residents that came back positive is now 1.4% of the 9,030 tests. Last week, Newton's positivity rate was 1.2% of the 8,079 tests performed, and the rate was 0.9% of 6,960 tests performed during the two-week state tracking period prior to that.

Thankfully, I can report that no one in Newton died over the past week with COVID-19.

This week's vaccination information from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health shows that more than 94% of Newton residents who are ages 30 and older are fully vaccinated and 95%+ are fully or partially vaccinated. To see more detailed vaccination information, click [here](#).

The vaccination rates for younger age groups in Newton who are fully or partially vaccinated are:

72% who are 20 – 29 years old (14% of Newton's population are in this age group)  
62% who are 16 – 19 years old (9% of Newton's population are in this age group)

95%+ who are 12 – 15 years old (5% of Newton’s population are in this age group)

(Note: 13% of Newton’s total population is under 12 years old and not yet eligible for a vaccine.)

Still not vaccinated? Find a vaccine site nearby at [vaxfinder.mass.gov](https://vaxfinder.mass.gov).

I’m continuing to closely follow the data and listen to the medical experts as we make decisions to help Newtonians and people who work and visit here be safe and healthy during this ever-changing pandemic.

Last week, Health and Human Services Commissioner Deborah Youngblood and I updated COVID-19 recommendations for the City of Newton. With Middlesex County in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “substantial” category for cases, we are strongly recommending that everyone, regardless of their vaccination status, wear face coverings when inside public spaces.

There is a place for mandates and we will continue to consider them for Newton. On Monday night, for example, the School Committee will be discussing the recommendations of our Medical Advisory Group on masks, vaccinations, testing and more as the Newton Public Schools ready to open in September. You can watch the meeting live at [NewTV.org](https://NewTV.org).

Newtonians have proven themselves to be well informed, caring and highly compliant with public health recommendations throughout this pandemic; this is also what I’ve seen as I’ve been out and about in Newton this week – we’re looking out for each other and many are wearing masks inside public places to do our part to stop the spread of COVID.

In addition to the mask recommendation, Commissioner Youngblood and I strongly encourage everyone in our community who is eligible to be vaccinated to get the vaccine, to stay home if not feeling well, and to get tested if experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.

Thankfully we’re in a far different situation at this moment than we were a year ago because we now have safe and effective vaccines.

I will continue to work closely with Commissioner Youngblood as we make our decisions even as COVID-19 in Newton, Greater Boston and the Commonwealth evolves.

## **Cooling Off in Newton**

It’s hot and humid. As the heat index rises, we want to make sure all of us have cool places to go for relief from the heat for our health and safety.

Options for cooling off include:

- The Newton Senior Center at 345 Walnut Street in Newtonville, will be open for anyone of any age who needs a place to be in air conditioning through Friday,

Aug. 13 from 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. For more information, call 617-796-1660 and select Option 9. (Additional weekend hours may be added depending on the need.)

- Newton Free Library, 330 Homer Street in Newton Centre is open the following hours: Monday - Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m., Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Movie Theaters: Showcase SuperLux, 55 Boylston St. and West Newton Cinema, 1296 Washington St.
- Shopping Malls: The Shops at Chestnut Hill, Monday – Saturday, 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. and Sunday noon to 6:00 p.m.

Newton residents over the age of 60 are eligible for rides to any of these locations. Please call 617-796-1660 for more information.

In addition, rides are available on NewMo for \$2 from anywhere in Newton to the Newtonville commuter rail stop which is a relatively short walk to the Newton Senior Center. Click [here](#) for more information on NewMo.



*(A perfectly steamy evening to join Athletes Unlimited at Crystal Lake on Wednesday – pictured clockwise from top left with current and former directors of Athletes Unlimited, Gwen Fineberg, a founder of Athletes Unlimited, and her son Adam, Lizzy, and wishing a happy 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday one day early to Forrest and Lincoln Beard with Crystal Lake Waterfront Director Carol Stapleton.)*



### Swimming Options

With the heat wave, we've made it free (subject to capacity limitations) at both

our swimming locations in Newton through Saturday. Please click on the links below for more information:

[Crystal Lake](#), Lake Avenue, Newton Highlands  
[Gath Pool](#), Albermarle Road, West Newton

### Social Services

Any Newton resident who needs assistance with a cooling plan should call one of the City of Newton social service professionals at 617-796-1420, Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. We are here to help.

#### Tips to stay cool and healthy:

- Drink cool, non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages such as water.
- Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.
- Seek an air-conditioned environment, if possible.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing.
- Remain indoors during the heat of the day.
- Do not engage in strenuous activities.

Remember also that the heat in cars rises rapidly. Never leave children or pets unattended in a vehicle.

Heat exhaustion can develop suddenly or over time for people of all ages. Signs include heavy sweating, cold/pale/clammy skin, fast/weak pulse, nausea or vomiting, muscle cramps, dizziness, headache, and fainting. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, move to a cool place, drink some water, and loosen your clothes. If possible, take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath. Seek medical attention immediately if your symptoms get worse or last longer than one hour.

#### Power Outages

If your power goes out, please contact Eversource at 800-592-2000 to report the outage.

#### **Two More Steps to Sustainability**

*It's the end of an era (in a very good way) as we removed the heating oil tank from the Auburndale Community Library this morning; we recently converted this wonderful Library into a fully electric, fossil-fuel-free building.*







*Crews are putting the finishing touches on our net-zero, fossil fuel free addition at the Oak Hill Middle School where we created three new classrooms and support spaces. Elm trees planted yesterday sit in front of our new bioswale, an environmentally friendly solution that naturally collects and filters stormwater to minimize demand on our stormwater system. Can you spot the new addition? Located on the left in this photo, the addition compliments the original school built in 1936.*

## **Voting Information for Tuesday, Sept. 14**

Here is some information from the Newton City Clerk's Office about voting in the Preliminary Election on Tuesday, Sept. 14 to select two candidates for Mayor who will appear on the ballot in the November 2 Municipal Election.

### Register to Vote

The voter registration deadline for the Preliminary is Wednesday, Aug. 25 at 8:00 p.m. You can register to vote online [here](#).

### Vote-By-Mail Application

State law now allows registered voters to vote by mail for all local and state elections through Dec. 15, 2021, with no excuses needed.

If you would like to vote by mail, you can find a Vote by Mail Application at [MailMyBallotMA.com](http://MailMyBallotMA.com). Print the application, fill it out and then either mail it to the City Clerk's Office, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459, or hand deliver it to one of the two secure ballot drop boxes at the bottom and top of the stairs at the main entrance to City Hall.

Please note that this application will sign you up to vote by mail for both the Preliminary Election on Sept. 14 and the Municipal Election on Nov. 2 which includes the election of the entire City Council and School Committee.

### Vote-By-Mail Deadlines

The *application* for the mail-in ballot must reach the Newton City Clerk's office by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 8.

Completed mail-in *ballots* must be received by Tuesday, Sept. 14 (Election Day) in the City Clerk's Office by the close of polls, 8:00 p.m., to be counted. The completed mail-in ballots can either be mailed to the City Clerk's Office, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459, or hand delivered to one of the two secure ballot drop boxes at the bottom and top of the stairs at the main entrance to City Hall. The Clerks will do a final collection of ballots from the drop boxes at 8:00 p.m. on election day, Sept. 14.

### In-Person Early Voting: Tentative Plans

The City Clerk's office is still in the process of finalizing the hours and dates for in-person early voting in the Preliminary Election which also will need to be approved with a vote of the City Council. *Tentative* plans are for polls to be open at City Hall from Tuesday, Sept. 7 through Friday, Sept. 10 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Monday Sept. 6 is Labor Day and City Hall will be closed.) Please check back for the final decision on these plans.

### Voting In-Person on Election Day

Polls will be open citywide from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. for the Preliminary Election on Tuesday, Sept. 14.

Due to the Yom Kippur Jewish holiday, voters in Ward 8, Precinct 2 who regularly vote at Temple Beth Avodah, 45 Puddingstone Lane, will vote at the Oak Hill Middle School, 130 Wheeler Road, for the Preliminary Election on September 14. (This is a temporary change for the Preliminary Election only. Temple Beth Avodah will resume as a polling location for the Nov. 2 Municipal Election.)

In addition, the City Council on Monday approved a new, permanent polling location for Ward 3, Precinct 1 in Newtonville. Voters who had cast ballots at the former Horace Mann School at 687 Watertown Street will now vote at the Scandinavian Living Center at 206 Waltham Street for all future elections, including the Sept. 14 Preliminary.

You can find your ward and precinct [here](#), and your polling location [here](#).

## **Newton's U.S. Census Data**

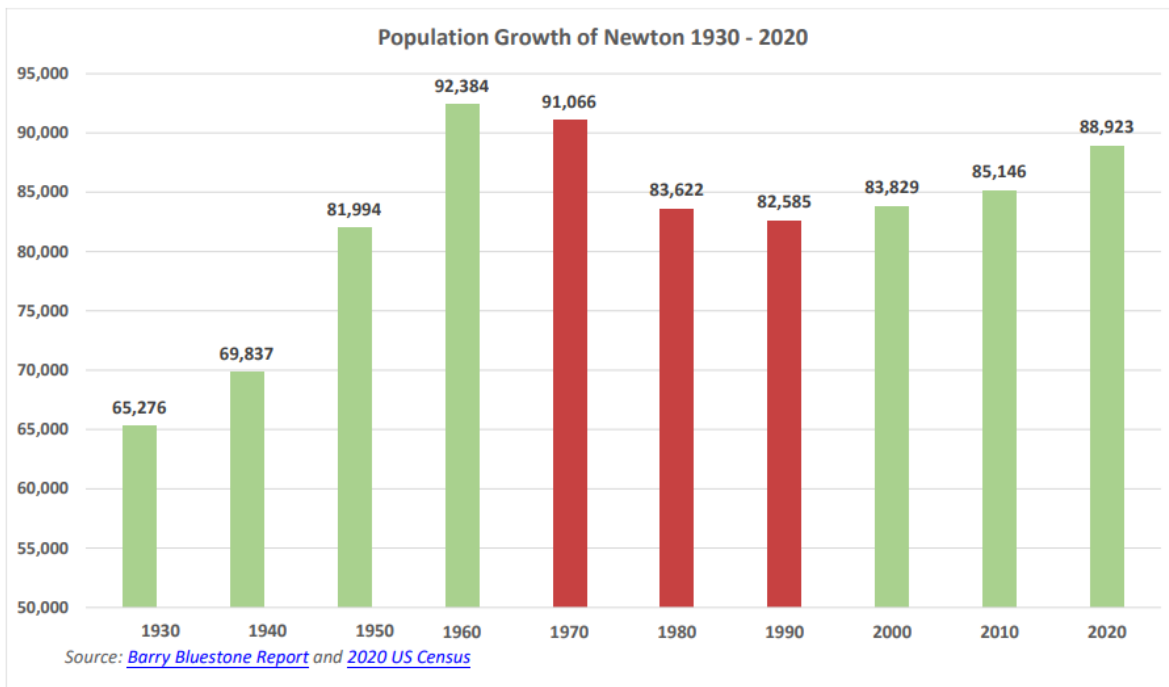
The 2020 U.S. Census data for cities and towns was just released a few hours ago.

Here's a quick snapshot of a little bit of the information. (We'll do a deeper dive in the coming days and provide more of the data and an analysis. We will also get the data up on our website so you can check it out for yourself.)

Newton's population grew by 3,777 residents over the past decade, going from 85,146 in the 2010 census to 88,923 today, an increase of 4.4%.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a whole grew by nearly 500,000 people in the past ten years, increasing from about 6.5 million to 7 million, a 7.4% increase. Our neighbors all grew more than we did; see the following percentages: Boston 9.5%, Brookline 7.6%, Needham 11.1%, Wellesley 5.6%, Weston 5.2%, Waltham 7.6%, and Watertown 10.7%.

To help put Newton's population in perspective, we had a population of 81,994 in 1950 and reached our highest population of 92,384 a decade later in 1960 before our population began to decline until 1990. We've been growing for the past three decades.



## Help for Renters and Small Landlords

Nineteen renters in Newton received “notices to quit” during the four months from Dec. 28, 2020 through April 26, 2021 according to the [2021 Greater Boston Housing Report Card](#). While protected by a moratorium on evictions, these notices still meant for these Newtonians deep uncertainty, potential court proceedings, and the unsettling prospect of losing their housing in the future.

Here in Newton and in the Commonwealth, there is help available for renters and landlords.

Are you a renter having difficulty paying your rent or are facing eviction? Click [here](#) for resources.

Are you a small landlord and want to help your tenants?

Small landlords who own fewer than 20 units of housing may apply directly for housing assistance on behalf of their tenants who are having trouble paying rent because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the rent payments will be sent directly to

the landlord. Metro Housing Boston administers these programs on behalf of the state— Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT), Emergency Rent and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA), and Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). Small landlords may also be eligible for mortgage assistance under the state’s RAFT or ERMA programs. More info is [here](#).

Additional resources are available to those landlords who own even smaller buildings (1-4 units). If you are a landlord that owns and lives in your property, the Volunteer Lawyers Project (<https://vlpnet.org/celhp/> ) may be able to provide legal advice if you are in court with a tenant, considering proceeding with an eviction, or dealing with foreclosure or other housing issues. Call them at 617-603-1700 or email at [celhp@vlpnet.org](mailto:celhp@vlpnet.org). The Massachusetts Community Mediation Centers ([resolutionma.org/](https://resolutionma.org/) ) are offering free pre-court mediation between landlords and tenants for COVID-19 related lease disputes in addition to the summary process cases referred through the district courts.

The CARES Act also provides protections for owner-occupants of 1-4 family properties with certain types of mortgages. Visit the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau [website](#) see if you qualify and to request mortgage relief. For additional help in understanding your options, contact a local HUD-approved housing counseling agency [here](#).

Not sure where to start? The City of Newton’s Social Services staff are available help and to work with either landlords or tenants on which resources may be the best fit. Call 617-796-1420 to work with City staff.

### **Catching Kids Doing Right**

When Newton Police Chief John Carmichael saw brothers Jack and Liam out walking their dog, he immediately pulled out his pad and wrote a ticket – a positive ticket - good for a free ice cream at Cabot’s.

*(Chief Carmicheal with Jack and Liam.)*

It’s not just Chief Carmichael writing positive tickets. Newton Police Officers are “citing” youngsters acting positively by wearing bike helmets, using crosswalks, doing chores, performing random acts of kindness, and more. The tickets come with special treats such as ice cream, pizza and other goodies provided by community partners. NPD is kicking off the program with Cabot’s Ice Cream; thank you Joe Prestejohn!



Initiated by Chief Carmichael, NPD’s Positive Tickets will help serve as an icebreaker to engage young people and police officers through positive interactions and to build lasting positive relationships.



So, kids, continue being safe, thoughtful and kind and Newton Police may “catch you” and issue a positive ticket.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Interested in learning more about **design concepts for NewCAL, our new center for Newton’s older residents** that will be built at the site of the current senior center in Newtonville? Join us on Zoom next Thursday, Aug. 19 at 6:30 p.m. for our next community meeting. We’ll be presenting a variety of different design options, a construction schedule (groundbreaking is planned for the summer of 2023, ribbon cutting in the summer of 2025), and continuing the conversation about where programs will be held during construction. We’ll also be listening intently as we continue to shape this exciting new facility together. Find more information about NewCAL and the link to join the meeting on Thursday [here](#).

P.P.S. This weekend, Saturday, Aug. 14 and Sunday, Aug. 15, is **tax free weekend** in Massachusetts and a great opportunity to shop local and support our stores right here in Newton. Items for personal use up to \$2,500 can be purchased in person or online without the added 6.5% sales tax.



P.P.P.S. Dust off your saddle shoes and join us at NewTV’s 1950s themed **Cones ‘n Cars ice cream social and classic car show** on Wednesday, Aug. 25, 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. at their studio, 23 Needham Street. Enjoy ice cream from Cabot’s or the RCN Ice Cream Truck and tasty treats from Bakers’ Best while checking

out 1950s hotrods provided by the Boston Cup Classic Car Show.

P.P.P.P.S. Interested in an evening of trickery, jealousy, deceit, witty banter and dastardly deception? Join the Brown Box Theatre Company’s presentation of **Shakespeare’s play *Much Ado About Nothing*** next Wednesday, Aug. 18 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. as part of the Hyde Community Center’s Summer in the Highlands, 90 Highland Street, Newton Highlands. Admission is always free. See the entire schedule [here](#).

P.P.P.P.P.S. Weigh-in with **your ideas and vision for our Village Centers** as we contemplate future zoning for them. Find about more at the [Zoning Redesign](#) page or submit your ideas or photos or check out what others have suggested by clicking on the [interactive forum](#).



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