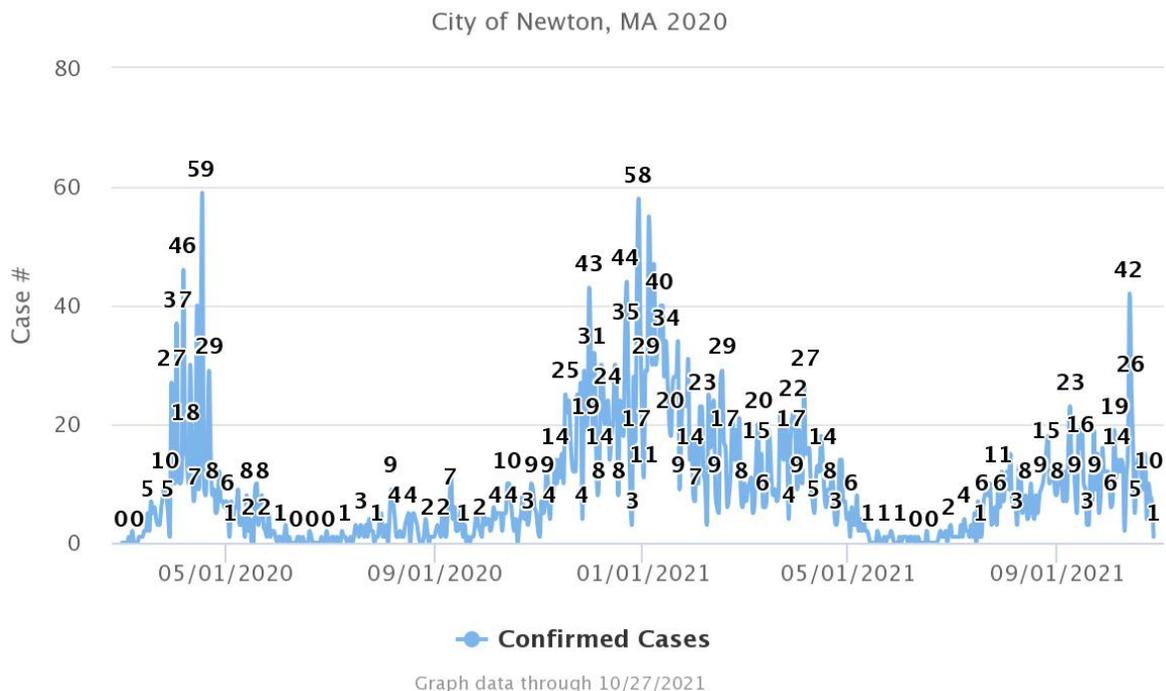


Mayor's Update



We had 69 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Newton over the past seven days from Oct. 21 to 28, which, coincidentally, is 69 fewer than over the previous week. After last week's noticeable increase associated with household groups, travel and clusters of cases linked to social gatherings, our numbers are back in line with the plateau we had seen previously.

Newton COVID-19 Cases



Newton's cumulative total of people who have had confirmed cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began is now 5,475. Thank goodness, no one in Newton died with COVID this week.

The average daily incidence rate in Newton over the State's two-week tracking period from Oct. 10 to 23 is 15.3, very slightly less than last week's 15.9.

Our positivity rate is 0.8% of the 27,225 tests performed, which is down very slightly from last week's 0.9% on 27,067 tests performed. (The positivity rate is the percentage of all the coronavirus tests performed that are actually positive.)

The ages of the 197 people who tested positive in Newton during this State tracking period are:

- 21% were under 12 years old
- 16% were between 12 and 19 years old
- 15% were between 20 and 39 years old
- 32% were between 40 and 59 years old
- 11% were between 60 and 79 years old
- 5% were 80 years or older

Eight percent (8%) of these cases were students at one of Newton's institutes of higher education.

As of Tuesday, Oct. 26, Newton-Wellesley Hospital is caring for a total of eight (8) patients with COVID-19, and one of these patients is critically ill. Over the past week, the number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 has ranged from five (5) patients to 10 patients, and the number of patients in the Intensive Care Unit with COVID-19 has ranged from one (1) to three (3) patients.

Newton Public School COVID-19 Data

There has been a total of 123 cases of COVID-19 in the Newton Public Schools reported to the Health and Human Services Department since school began on Sept. 2. This includes the 16 students who tested positive between Oct. 21 and 27. (As a reminder, when looking at NPS data, sometimes cases are added to previous weeks based on tests as they are reported/confirmed.)

The Newton Public Schools have a robust pooled testing program with 14,313 student tests conducted (with parent or guardian consent) between Sept. 20 and Oct. 18. Specimens from a group of students are combined and tested. If the results come back positive, all the students in the pool are tested individually. Sixteen (16) of the 1,738 pools tested between Sept. 20 and Oct. 18 were positive for COVID-19.

Find more information on school testing on the NPS Testing Data Dashboard [here](#), and case information on the Health and Human Services webpage [here](#).

COVID-19 Vaccine

Earlier this afternoon the FDA gave their approval for the Pfizer vaccine to be given to children ages 5 to 11. It looks hopeful the CDC will give their approval next week. Newton Health and Human Services and the Newton Public Schools are working together on plans to offer COVID-19 vaccine clinics in Newton for eligible children starting with the first dose in November.

The first Nor'easter of the season whipped through Newton over Tuesday night and into Wednesday this week, causing the loss of 16 City trees, and the downing of wires and tree limbs. Thankfully the heavy downpours didn't cause any significant flooding.

City Forester Marc Welch and the Newton Forestry Division staff and contractors had bucket, log and chip trucks out for 55 straight hours responding to more than 150 calls, including as many as 10 blocked streets.

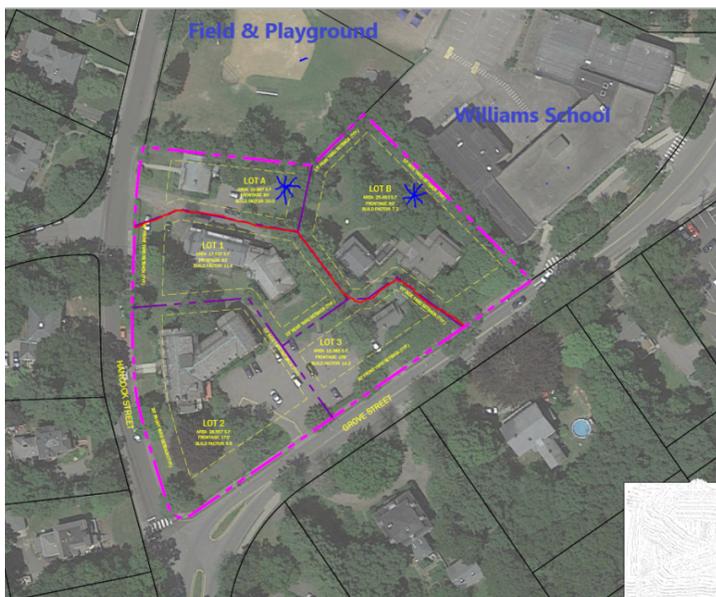
When a tree or large limb falls blocking a street, a limb is hanging precariously, or power lines are downed, Newton Police and Fire secure the scene. Wondering why a downed tree may not be getting cleared? Sometimes we have a lot of trees to attend to and it's in the queue. Other times, when power lines are involved, we report them quickly to Eversource and they have to respond to cut power to the electrical line before our tree clearing work can safely begin.



ARPA: \$2.45M for Land by Williams School and to Add Affordable Housing

I am pleased to submit a request to the City Council to purchase a portion of the Walker Center for Ecumenical Exchange (which went on the market in the spring of 2021).

Located at the intersection of Grove and Hancock Streets in Auburndale, it is directly adjacent to the Williams Elementary School and its playground/ballfield. The land will help us to expand the playground, have flexibility for future school renovations, and allow us to preserve four existing homes for affordable housing (after a City Council Real Property Reuse Committee process).



The Williams School and playground area sit on a constrained site making any future improvements challenging. With this acquisition of a portion of the Walker Center property (lots A and B on the map), we can increase the amount of City land next to the Williams to improve the playground in the near term and provide more options for renovations in the future.

This purchase also allows us to provide permanently affordable family-sized homes. The four houses (Howard, Hume, Harding West and Harding East) total about 7,400 square feet and currently

have 14 bedrooms. The affordable housing will be next to an elementary school and playground, in walking distance to three forms of mass transit, and nestled into a residential neighborhood. (Please note that the Walker Center property is located in the Auburndale Local Historic District.)

I will use \$2.45 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the acquisition.

Public Buildings Commissioner Josh Morse, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Director of Planning & Development Barney Heath and Newton Public Schools staff have been looking closely at the property. The purchase price resulted from a negotiation between the City and the Walker Center after examination of appraisals. The Newton Public Schools and School Committee leadership are very supportive of the acquisition. We kept the Ward 4 Councilors informed about the possible acquisition over the summer and fall during negotiations, and we also held a community meeting of neighbors to discuss the City's interests in the property.

We understand that the Walker Center is working with a team about the future of the remainder of the property; they expect to create a residential project that preserves the existing buildings and likely requires a special permit from the City Council in order to proceed.

ARPA: Help for Restaurants

Restaurants are critical to the vitality of our villages and provide so many of us with good food and good cheer. As many of our Newton restaurants look to rebound from the loss of customers during the pandemic, we are focused on what we can do to help them survive and thrive.

Over the last year and a half, we expedited licensing and permitting of outdoor dining with *Newton Al Fresco*, creating brightly decorated communal picnic areas in parking lots. Through *Newton Al Fresco*, we also helped over fifteen restaurants create on-street dining with free jersey barriers painted by Newton artists (thank you Newton Community Pride). We designated 15 minute parking spaces for take-out customers. We also provided twenty small business grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000 to help our restauranteurs survive.

With the Delta variant still impacting business, we are taking two additional steps right now to help our restaurants.

I am asking our Licensing Commission to reduce the cost of our restaurant liquor license fees by 50% for calendar year 2022. Specifically, in the case of a single restaurant, the full restaurant alcohol license fee would be reduced for the year from \$3,250 to \$1,625.

This winter we need to temporarily remove on-street dining so we can effectively and safely do our snow plowing operations. (We'll be removing the painted jersey barriers just after New Year's day (unless there's a huge storm coming before then) and will bring them back in April.)

So, I am directing the use of up to \$50,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to assist restaurants with breaking down, storing and reassembling their on-street dining equipment (platforms, lighting, heaters, planters, tables, chairs, etc.). We will provide a one-time payment of \$2,500 to restaurants if needed.

We love our restaurants so let's keep supporting them over the winter.



*The **Festival of Diwali** is celebrated by Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim neighbors on Nov. 4. Known as the festival of lights, the festival is widely associated with honoring Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity and good fortune, and symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness. We wish all those who celebrate Diwali happiness, prosperity and joy.*

Voting

Residents can vote for School Committee members, City Councilors and the Mayor in-person tomorrow, Saturday, October 30, at City Hall from 8:30 a.m. to noon.

You can also vote in-person on Tuesday, Nov. 2 from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Find your polling location [here](#).

Tuesday, Nov. 2, will be the fourth time during the pandemic that our elections have been held in our typical polling places, which include 13 of our schools. All of the previous elections ran smoothly and safely.

On election days, activities or classes typically held in a polling location at a school are moved to different parts of the building so that voters are not interacting with students and school staff.

Tuesday's Municipal Election also happens to fall on an early release day for our schools, which makes it a bit easier operationally.

As a reminder, voters must follow the mask mandate currently in place in buildings, including our school buildings. As always, the schools at which polling places are located coordinate with the Newton Police to ensure safety and security on election day.

Do you have a mail-in ballot? Acting City Clerk Christopher Sullivan suggests voters drop ballots off in a secure ballot box at City Hall rather than mailing them back to



City Hall. Ballots must be received by the City Clerk's Office by 8:00 p.m. on election day, Tuesday, Nov. 2 to be counted.

Happy Halloween

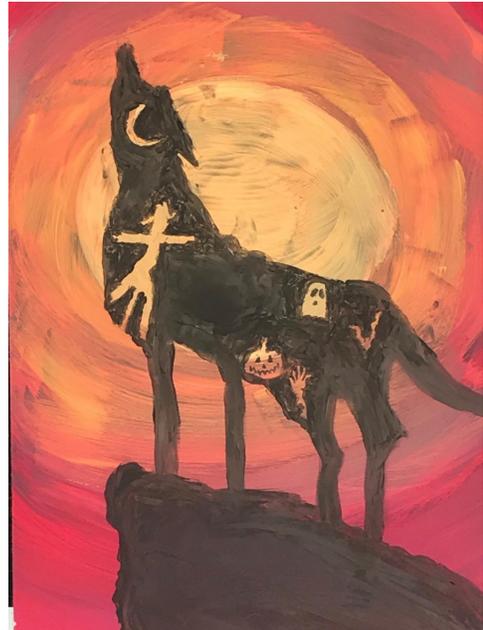
Sunday is Halloween and I can't wait.

Costumed children walking the sidewalks of our City and being out and about together, having fun, feels so darn good.

Here's to a happy, safe Halloween.

Warmly,

Ruthanne



P.S. Have you taken your first ride from anywhere, to anywhere in Newton on **NewMo**? Download the NewMo app (Search for NewMo Newton) and get started – the **first five rides are free** and then it's \$2 a ride. Find more information about NewMo [here](#).

P.P.S. **Bluebikes will be free on election day** next Tuesday, Nov. 2. Thanks to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, we can access a free, two-hour bike at any of the 15 Newton stations or in any of the 10 other Bluebike communities by downloading and opening the [Bluebikes app](#) and choosing "Get a Pass." Find a map of Bluebike stations [here](#).



P.P.P.S. Looking for a job? The **West Suburban YMCA is hosting two job fairs**. The first is tomorrow, Saturday, Oct. 30, from noon to 2:00 p.m. and the second is on Thursday, Nov. 4, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Both are at the YMCA, 276 Church Street. Learn about open positions and bring your resume and interview on the spot. New employees may be eligible to earn a \$1,000 signing bonus through NewtonHires. Learn more [here](#).

P.P.P.P.S. The **2021 Newton Turkey Trot** is back live and in person this year on Saturday, Nov. 20. Choose from a 1-mile fun run that begins at 8:30 a.m. at the Zervas Elementary School, 30 Beethoven Avenue or a USATF Certified 5k course starting at 9:00 a.m. Walk,



run or just donate to support the [Newton Food Pantry](#) and [Journey Forward](#). Sign up [here](#).

P.P.P.P.S. Time to get on the fence! **Submissions for FenceArt 2022** are due by Dec. 1. FenceArt is a year-round public art project sponsored by Newton Community Pride. Artists who live, work, volunteer, worship or participate in art classes in Newton are invited to submit work in any media for this juried program. The art will be converted to banners that will rotate in small groups to 5 fence locations in Newton for approximately 10 weeks at a time. Learn about the FenceArt program, submission format and eligibility [here](#).



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

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