

Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2022

Mayor's Update



C-19 Booster Clinics

With updated COVID-19 boosters now available to protect us against the newer Omicron variants, our partners at the Holtzman Medical Group will be providing five vaccine clinics in Newton.

Our Newton Health and Human Services staff is working with Holtzman on final details so stay tuned. I'll provide dates, location(s) and scheduling information as soon as it's available.

What are the updated booster vaccines?

On Sept. 1, the CDC issued [recommendations](#) for COVID-19 boosters after the FDA authorized [updated booster formulas](#) from both Pfizer and Moderna. These new boosters contain a formula that both boosts immunity against the original coronavirus strain and also protects against the newer Omicron variants that account for most of the current cases.

Why do I need a booster?

Staying up to date on vaccines, including boosters, is the most effective way to prevent serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. Vaccine protection decreases over time, so boosters restimulate the immune system and increase vaccine effectiveness. Boosters are an important defense, even if you've already had COVID.

Who should get the new booster?

Pfizer's updated booster shot is recommended for individuals 12 and older, and Moderna's updated booster shot is recommended for adults 18 and older. Everyone age 12 and older is eligible for an updated booster dose at least two (2) months after their last COVID-19 vaccine (either since their last booster dose, or since completing their primary series).

Dr. Ashish Jha said yesterday, "If you've had a recent infection or were recently vaccinated, it's reasonable to wait a few months."

People can get either the Pfizer or Moderna updated booster regardless of whether their primary series or most recent dose was with Pfizer, Moderna, Novavax, or the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Questions about which brand is right for you? Reach out to your healthcare provider.

Need to find out when you had your last booster or provide proof of vaccination?

Request, view, and print your vaccination records and your COVID-19 card from the official Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS) at myvaxrecords.mass.gov.

Where can I get vaccinated?

In addition to the Holtzman clinics being scheduled, boosters are available at many other locations in Newton and across the state. Check vaxfinder.mass.gov to find a clinic and schedule a vaccine or booster.

Where can I get more information?

Visit mass.gov/covidbooster for more information and answers to [frequently asked questions](#). COVID-19 vaccine and booster information is also available on the CDC's webpage [here](#).

Newton COVID-19 Case Update

We had 227 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Newton over the past three weeks since Aug. 18 when we last reported this data.

The latest incidence rate in Newton as of Aug. 31 is 14.6 cases per 100,000 population, up from 12.6 during the previous two-week State testing period. Our positivity rate is currently 6.2% of the 3,304 tests performed on Newton residents returning positive, up from the previous 5.0% (3,572 tests).

The number of family, friends and neighbors in Newton who have died with COVID-19 since the pandemic began remains at 206.

This week's MWRA wastewater data continues to show cases remaining level. See more MWRA data [here](#).

Interested in the proposed zoning changes for Newton's village centers? Newton's Planning Department staff assembled a tremendous amount of information which is on display at the Newton Free Library through Oct. 16. In addition, join the virtual information session tomorrow night (Thursday, Sept. 8) from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. by registering [here](#). (Photo: Checking out the information with City Councilor Pam Wright.)

NewCAL Fully Approved.... Newton Highlands Here We Come (Temporarily)!

Plans to build a senior center at the site of the current facility on Walnut Street in Newtonville received final approvals from the City Council in early August and

we're beyond thrilled to be moving forward towards a ribbon cutting in the Summer or Fall of 2024 for our new center.

We have been hard at work planning for an interim site for the senior center programs and services to move to during construction.

Newton Highlands will be our primary temporary home during construction of our new senior center.

(Photo: Brigham House, 20 Hartford St., where small and medium sized programs will be held.)

Staff will welcome you to small and medium sized programs at the Brigham House, 20 Hartford Street (next to the municipal parking lot), and larger ones at the Hyde Community Center gym, 90 Lincoln Street. The Hyde is familiar to many of us since the Senior Center has been offering programs there already through a generous partnership with the Hyde and its Executive Director John Rice and the Hyde Board of Directors.

We also will be using a few other space such as the War Memorial at City Hall, the Newton Free Library and Park, Recreation and Culture facilities for some programs.

We plan to close most of the programs at the current Senior Center at 345 Walnut Street on Thursday Nov. 10. We expect to reopen at the Brigham House and the Hyde a week later on Monday Nov. 28.

Click [here](#) keep up to date and to sign up for the senior center's weekly newsletter.

Newton's Economic Stability/Mobility Initiative

We are investing \$1.75 million of the City of Newton's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support the economic stability and mobility of individuals and families with limited resources who were hurt most by the pandemic, disproportionately people of color. The [Newton Community Needs Assessment](#), completed this past winter, identified this as a critical need.

Working with our Advisory Committee and our partners at UMass Donahue Institute (UMDI), we've reached another milestone in turning this plan into action.

Join us on Thursday, Sept. 15 at 6:00 p.m. for an Information Session led by Christina Citino, Senior Research Manager UMDI. Along with our Health & Human Services and Housing staff, Christina has helped lead this effort, guiding the Advisory Committee in its work defining the program and developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify partners in implementing this critical work.

At the meeting, Christina will share information about the process and the Advisory Committee's work to date. Following a short presentation about the status of the initiative and next steps, we'll be answering questions and listening to ideas and comments.

To join the Information Session on Thursday, Sept. 15 at 6:00 p.m., click the link below and enter your email address:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89551995488?pwd=TXRSQktDM0VsOVBIWUZZQkkwbFdBQT09>.

Thank You to Nicole Freedman

I have such a mix of emotions as I announce Newton's Director of Transportation Planning Nicole Freedman has accepted a new position as Executive Director of the New England Mountain Bike Association at the end of the month.

I am thrilled for Nicole as she embarks on a new professional adventure.

That said, we'll miss her a lot here in Newton.

(Photo: With Director of Planning and Development Barney Heath, Nicole Freedman and her daughter Ella.)

During her six years, Nicole helped improve transit for so many of us. She was a driving force behind Newton in Motion, NewMo, helping to conceive, secure funding and launch our successful on-demand ride share program that first served seniors and now is citywide for everyone of all ages. NewMo is averaging 1,200 rides per week.

Nicole envisioned a network of bikes for rent across the City. She helped secure the necessary grant funding to bring first LimeBikes and then Bluebikes to Newton. Newton now has 16 Bluebikes stations across our City. We've also installed another 32 bike racks in seven village centers and another 74 at 18 schools.

Nicole helped advance the concept and implementation of "complete street" designs. This means having streets that work for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists (and diners!). She most recently secured \$6 million in design and construction funding for a complete redesign of the Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway in Auburndale to create new linear parks and separated bike and pedestrian ways. She helped bring advance the bike friendly design and forthcoming construction improvements at Albemarle Park, the Washington Street Redesign Pilot, and shepherded the installation of nine miles of painted bike lanes across the City.

That's not all. During the pandemic, Nicole headed up the Newton Al Fresco dining and Project Pop Up initiatives.

Nicole has left an indelible mark on our City. For her vision, tenacity, grace, and enthusiasm, I am most grateful.

Affordable Housing Opportunity

The City of Newton is accepting applications for affordable homeownership for a 2-bedroom, 2-bath condominium (Apt. 106E) at 77 Court Street. Check it out at the open house this Sunday, Sept. 11, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Priced at \$273,390, the condo has an open floor plan with 1,280 sq. ft of living space. The condominium fee is \$154 per month, and the buyer will also pay \$10.52 per thousand or \$244 per month in property taxes.

The unit is deed restricted to ensure permanent affordability. It will be made available through an application and lottery process and sold to a household with an income at or below 80% of the Area Median Income. The City of Newton is also offering a [Down Payment/Closing Cost Assistance](#) grant of \$10,000 to eligible applicants for the purchase. (See the maximum household income limits below.)

MAXIMUM Household Income Limits:

1-Person Household: \$78,300

2-Person Household: \$89,500

3-Person Household: \$100,700

4-Person Household: \$111,850

The application deadline is 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 27. Find more information about this property and other affordable housing opportunities at newtonma.gov/housing.

Gathering Together on Sept. 11

Newtonians will gather together this Sunday to commemorate the lives lost in New York City, Washington, D.C. and Shanksville, Pennsylvania twenty-one years after a day of terror we must never forget.

We will gather with grateful hearts to thank the heroes of that day – the firefighters, police officers, emergency medical personnel *and* the ordinary people – who on Sept. 11, 2001 ran selflessly toward the crumbling towers, toward the flames, and toward the horror to save lives while risking their own.

We will gather, one community of neighbors, to hold close in our hearts the shattered families of those that were lost.

Thanks to Chair Sande Young and the Newton 9/11 Memorial Committee members for marking this solemn anniversary. Join us at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 11 at the 9/11 Memorial at 1164 Centre Street in front of Fire Headquarters in Newton Centre.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Summer may be over, but the Newton outdoor concert season continues. Newton Community Pride is hosting **free concerts in four village centers** starting in Newtonville this Sunday, Sept. 11, and continuing on consecutive Sunday afternoons in Newton Upper Falls, Newton Corner and Nonantum. Find more information [here](#).

P.P.S. Are you and your neighbors interested in having a group of trees planted along your street? The **Newton Tree Conservancy** is now accepting neighborhood applications for its Spring 2023 tree plantings. Find more info [here](#) on the application process which is open through Nov. 15.

P.P.P.S. **Help Family ACCESS celebrate** the grand opening of its two Little Free Libraries on Literacy Day, Saturday, Sept. 17 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at their 492 Waltham Street location in West Newton. The celebration is inspired by and dedicated to Audrey Cooper and Louise Hauser, two women who gave so much to Newton and Family ACCESS. All are welcome at the community book swap and to enjoy live music and family arts and crafts. Please RSVP [here](#).

P.P.P.P.S. Looking for a wonderful art & music program for toddlers? Newton Parks, Recreation and Culture Department's **Time for Partners art & music program** for children 18 months to 4 years (with an adult) begins on Tuesday, Sept. 13. Children make a new art project weekly, have play and snack time, and enjoy music & movement. Choose your day - Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays - at City Hall from 9:30 -11:15 a.m. Find more information at newtonma.gov/culture.

P.P.P.P.P.S. After 39 years serving our City, **Police Lt. Bruce Apotheker will retire** at the end of October after he turns 65, the mandatory retirement age for Newton Police. Last week, reporter Ted Wayman of News Center 5 did a wonderful story on the officer known widely simply as Bruce. Click on the photo to watch the clip of a good officer who has given his all to Newton.

P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Monday was Labor Day, the day we celebrated the incredible contributions of America's workers. It's also the symbolic end of summer, the start of a new school year and in Newton, the day the fall **leaf blower season begins**. Gas or electric leaf blowers that meet the decibel requirement (65 decibels or below) can be used Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and

Saturdays 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Residents can also use leaf blowers on their own property on Sundays from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Find more information [here](#).

P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Join **Scouting Day Newton** this Sunday, Sept. 11 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Newton Centre Green and learn what the cub scouts and scouts have to offer. Enjoy food and lots of games (e.g., a lego pinewood derby, a giant jenga, and a pioneering tower). Find more info [here](#).



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