

Friday, Dec. 9, 2022

Mayor's Update



Gath Pools & Splash Pad Design

The latest design of our new aquatics facility is incredibly family-friendly, universally accessible and welcoming for people of all abilities and interests.

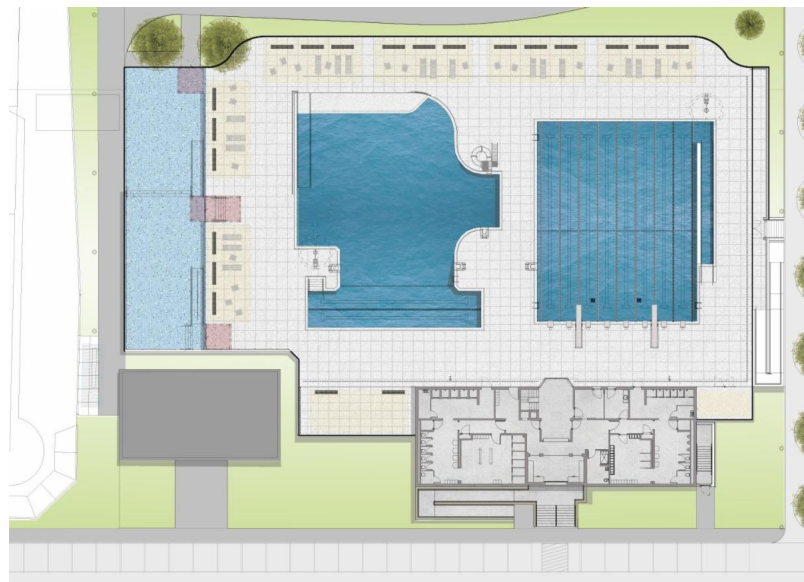
The two pool design allows for a zero-depth entry recreational pool with attached walking lanes for pool fitness, a fun slide, and varying depths for a pool experience for all ages and abilities.

Next to the recreational pool will be an 8-lane lap pool for our pool league, lap swimmers, divers, swim lessons and more.

(Photo: Gath Pools and Splash Pad design.)

The plan includes a large splash pad, ample deck space, seating, and shade opportunities.

The bathhouse will also get accessibility, restroom and changing room updates.



I'm grateful to all the dedicated groups and individuals who have been working for so long to design the Gath Pools & splash pad with a special thank you to Commissioner Nicole Banks & the Parks, Recreation and Culture team and Commissioner Josh Morse & the Public Buildings team.

Want to learn more? A great opportunity will be on Monday, Dec. 19 at the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting at 7 p.m. The zoom link is [here](#).

Newton Police Data

Newton continues to be a really safe City. While we have experienced increases in some areas and decreases in others, the level of crime is low for a community

of our size. The areas of highest concern are calls to 911 related to substance use disorder or mental health issues, traffic accidents.

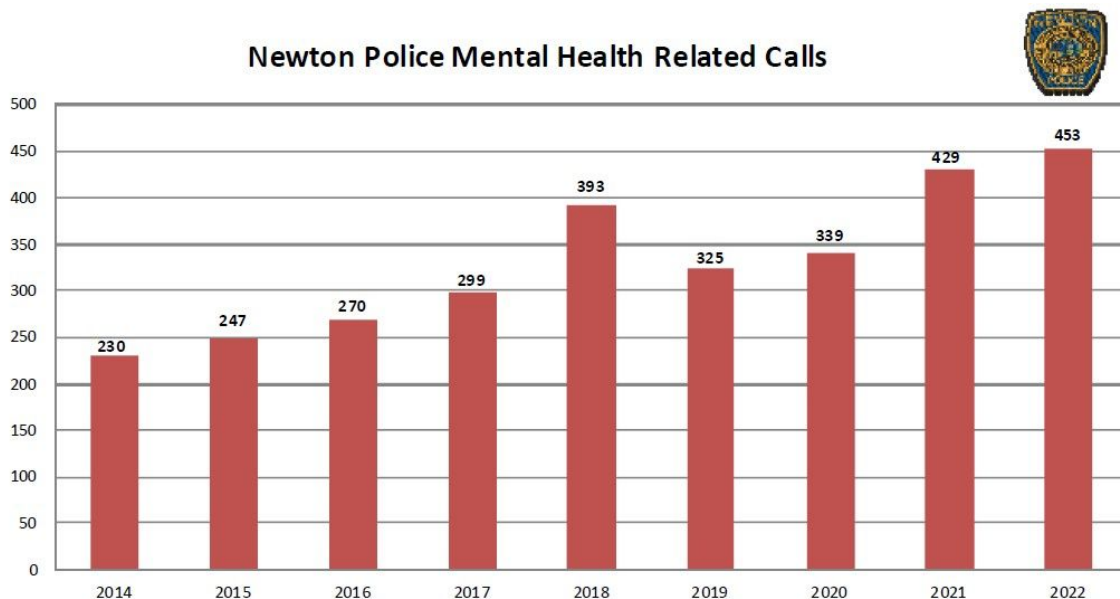
The Newton Police Department (with a thank you to NPD Crime Analyst Manager Michael Bozio) shared data through November 2022 compared to the same 11 months last year.

- Residential Burglary decreased from 57 in 2021 to 37 in 2022
- Total Burglaries decreased from 67 in 2021 to 53 in 2022
- Total Property Crimes increased from 451 in 2021 to 528 in 2022
- Total Violent Crimes increased from 44 in 2021 to 56 in 2022
- Car Breaks decreased from 135 in 2021 to 77 in 2022
- Shoplifting Larcenies increased from 37 in 2021 to 86 in 2022
- Total Larcenies increased from 366 in 2021 to 464 in 2022
- Total Arrests increased from 186 in 2021 to 197 in 2022

For clarification, burglaries are incidents where there is a physical break into a building and larcenies include thefts of packages at a doorstep, shop lifting, and car breaks.

Mental Health

Over the first 11 months of this year Newton Police responded to 453 mental health related calls, up from 429 for all 12 months of last year. The numbers are up significantly from five years earlier when Newton had 270 during the twelve months of 2016.



(The chart reflects data for 12 months from 2014 through 2021, but 11 months for 2022 through November 30.)

In the face of this expanding mental health challenge, Chief Carmichael and Director of Social Services Meghan Kennedy are emphasizing not just significantly increased training for officers in crisis intervention and emergency health crisis but also support for residents of all ages. For example, Chief Carmichael and Director Kennedy have stood up a Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT) which focuses on referrals and follow up care. It includes partners who serve the mental health needs of Newtonians. In addition to NPD, the HHS Social Work team, Newton Public Schools and Newton's EMS service are staff from the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, Riverside Community Care, Advocates Mental Health Services, Newton-Wellesley Hospital, and the Newton District Court.

Substance Use

In the first 11 months of 2022, Newton Police responded to 24 overdose calls, three of which resulted in fatalities, all of whom were Newton residents. In comparison, last year over the 12 months of 2021, Newton police responded to 20 overdose calls, four of which were fatal.

The social worker within the Newton Police Department follows up with every person who has overdosed in Newton, providing referrals, resources and support. NPD and the HHS Social Work staff are working on many fronts to help people and their families with substance abuse issues.

- NPD and HHS created our first Newton Alcohol & Drug Prevention Coalition with a focus on prevention, education, and harm reduction to help members of our community. Our Coalition members include residents and parents who have lived experience, experts in addiction medicine from Boston Medical Center, Newton Wellesley Hospital, Brigham & Women's Hospital, and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and the Newton Public Schools as well as other partners doing this critical work in the community.
- NPD joined the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PARRI) in April 2022, to work with multiple police agencies and large city departments to adopt community-based strategies to prevent drug overdoses. The goal with PARRI is to recommit to lessening the stigma associated with substance abuse disorder, providing resources for education, awareness, access to treatment and recovery, and continuing to create alternatives to arrest when appropriate through diversion.
- NPD and HHS are working together to determine the best investments for Newton's \$2.12 million share from the landmark opioid settlement. The goal is to deliver effective programs and services to help those in our community struggling with substance abuse disorder and to stand up new education and prevention initiatives.

- NPD participates in the Middlesex County Critical Incident Management System. This allows the NPD social worker to accompany officers on overdose calls and receive overdose notifications from other communities involving Newton residents so we can follow up with resources.
- Chief Carmichael chairs the Massachusetts Police Chiefs Substance Abuse Committee. He is also working with City and State elected leaders on Fentanyl Test Strip legislation which would allow distribution of narcotic testing products to help residents detect the presence of fentanyl.
- HHS provides free Narcan Nasal Spray and prevention resources to Newton residents.
- NPD is using multiple tactics to continue its two-pronged approach to addressing substance use issues in our City: (1) using awareness, education, prevention, intervention, and treatment access together with (2) enforcement emphasizing drug distribution and trafficking laws.

Traffic Incidents

We saw a significant increase in car crashes during the first 11 months of 2022 compared to the same period in 2021.

- Car Crashes increased from 984 last year to 1098 this year, a national trend after the pandemic
- Bicycle Crashes increased by 1 this year from 25 last year to 26
- Pedestrian Crashes increased by one, from 28 last year to 29.
- Arrests for Operating Under the Influence decreased from 23 for the first 11 months of 2021 to 22 for the same time period in 2022

Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents

After a relatively steady five years, there was a significant increase in reports of hate crimes and hate incidents over the past 23 months. Hate crimes are defined as crimes motivated by bias, while hate incidents are bias related incidents that are not associated with a crime.

2022 (through Nov.): 63

2021: 59

2020: 30

2019: 20

2018: 30

2017: 27

2016: 25

Officers in NPD's Community Services Bureau fully investigate all hate incidents and prosecute all hate crimes as well as underlying crimes associated with such incidents/crimes. Information on each incident/crime is shared with the Mayor's

Office, the Newton Human Rights Commission, the Anti-Defamation League, and Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan's Office.

One of these incidents resulted in criminal charges being filed at District Court during 2022.

The summary of reported hate incidents/crimes identified 20 as anti-Semitic; 16 as anti-Black; 6 anti-gay; 5 white power incidents; 4 "vaccine related," 3 anti-Asian; 3 anti-foreign national; 1 anti-Hispanic; 1 anti-police; 1 anti-Ukraine; 1 anti-White; 1 anti-Indian immigrant; 1 anti-Indian.

If you are a victim or a witness of a bias incident/crime or see something suspicious, please contact the Newton Police at 617-796-2100 or call 911 in case of an emergency.

Arrests by Race

Chief Carmichael and NPD pay close attention to the racial and ethnic makeup of NPD's statistics, including those who are arrested and cited for traffic violations. They have done extensive anti-bias training. They share the data as they continue to pay attention as Blacks and Hispanics are arrested and cited at higher levels than Newton's demographics.

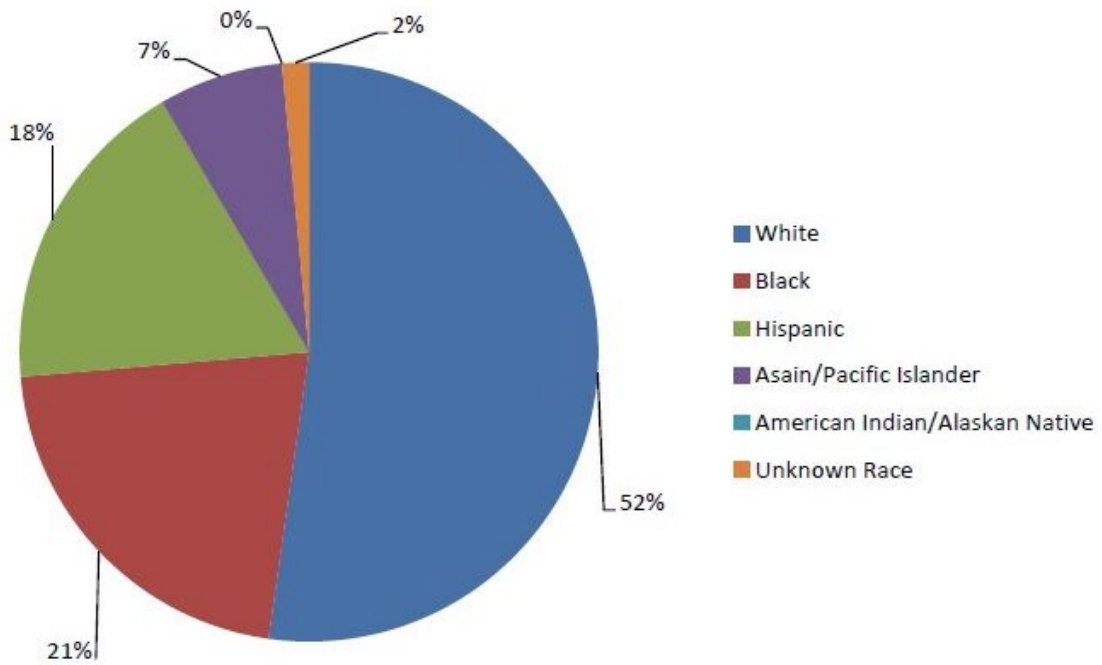
Arrests are when a person is physically taken into custody and charged with a crime.

During the first 11 months of 2022, 21% of those arrested in Newton were Black (43 total arrests, 10 of whom were Newton residents). Fourteen (14) of these arrests were people who had one or more outstanding court warrants.

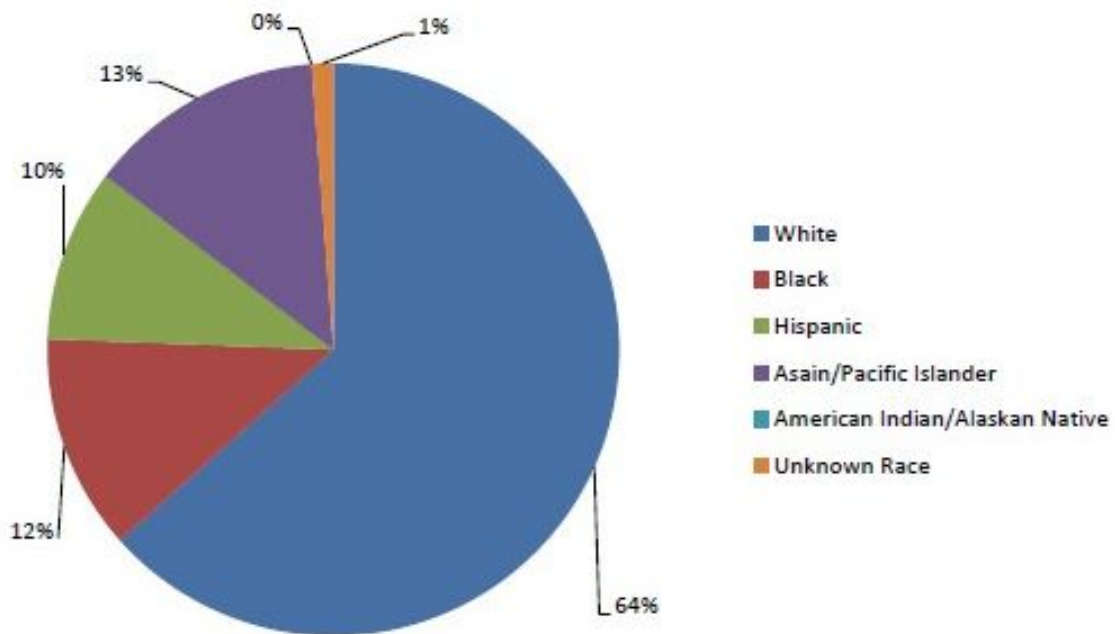
Eighteen percent were Hispanic (36 total arrests, 8 of whom were Newton residents).

Blacks make up 3% of Newton's total population, while Hispanics make up 4%.

Newton Police Arrests by Race (Jan. 1, 2022 to Nov. 30, 2022)



Newton Police Arrest by Race (Jan. 1, 2022 to Nov. 30, 2022)
City of Newton Residents

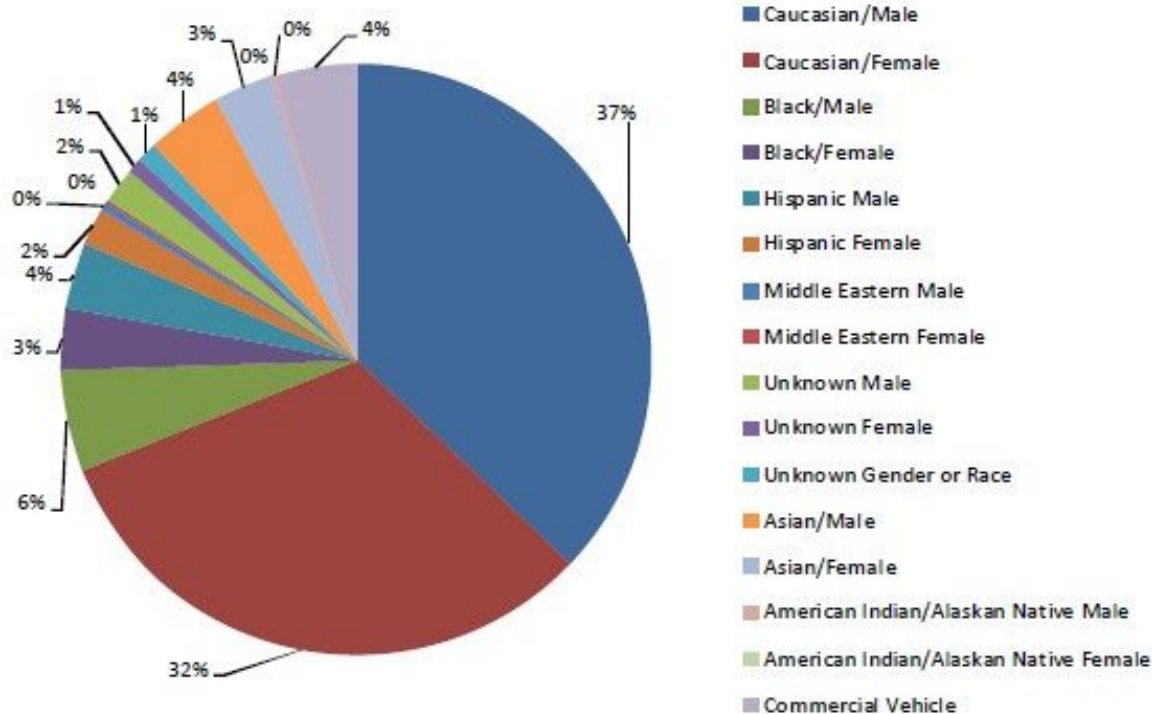


Traffic Citations by Race

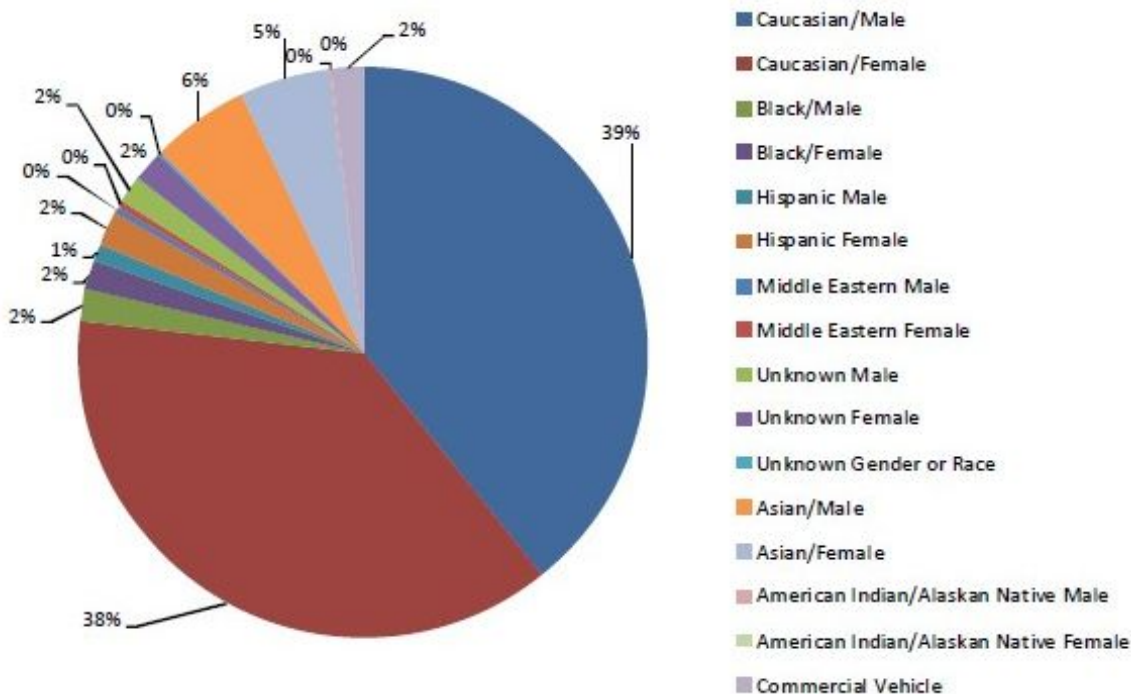
Citations are written for traffic violations.

Of the traffic citations in Newton, 9% were written to people who are Black and 6% to Hispanics. When the figures include only Newtonians, Blacks and Hispanics each make up 2% of the citations written.

Newton Police Arrests by Race (Jan. 1, 2022 to Nov. 30, 2022)



Newton Police Arrest by Race (Jan. 1, 2022 to Nov. 30, 2022)
City of Newton Residents



Find more crime data [here](#).

Construction of the new accessible platform for fishing along with recreational and ecological restoration at Levingston Cove on Crystal Lake is beginning. You may have already noticed construction fencing and sidewalk closure signage along Lake Avenue. Join us for the ground breaking on Tuesday, Dec. 13 at 2:00

p.m. We expect the work to be completed by next summer, weather and supply chains permitting. Questions? Please contact the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department at parks@newtonma.gov.



Surge in Respiratory Illness

Holiday gatherings and colder weather have more folks heading indoors, creating a perfect environment for respiratory viruses.

Newton Health & Human Services reports a high rate of respiratory illnesses, including the flu and RSV, circulating in Newton and across the Commonwealth. During the last two years, practices that slowed the spread of COVID-19 also prevented cases of flu and RSV from spreading. While these illnesses never left, they are now coming back in full force.

The difference this year is that the viruses are hitting earlier than usual, hitting in unison, and hitting hard. Flu season, which runs between October and May, normally peaks in December and January. This year's convergence of flu overlaps with COVID-19 along with early waves of RSV causing what some are calling a "triple-demic". In the past, we would typically see viruses hit more in succession with the impact more spread out.

If someone in your family is not feeling well, it can be difficult to figure out whether it is flu, COVID-19, RSV, or a cold. Keep an eye out for a fever and a sore throat or cough. Learn more [here](#). If you have symptoms, Newton HHS recommends you get tested for flu and COVID-19 and talk with your healthcare provider about treatment options. In any case, stay home if experiencing symptoms.

To prevent the spread of respiratory illness, take these steps:

- **Hand hygiene** remains the best tool to prevent all kinds of illness because not all respiratory viruses spread in the same way.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes** with a tissue, or if a tissue is not available, cover them with an elbow, not a hand.
- **Cleaning high-touch surfaces** – Flu, COVID-19 and RSV are spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes. They can also be spread by

touching a surface that has the virus on it and then touching your face. Disinfecting high-touch surfaces like doorknobs is crucial to prevent illness.

- **Wearing a face covering** protects against respiratory droplets and is effective in preventing respiratory illness.
- **Avoiding exposure** to people who are sick is one of the best ways to protect your family from illness.
- **Get vaccinated against the flu and get vaccinated & boosted against COVID-19.** Everyone ages 6 months and older should get the flu shot. More information, including flu shot locations around Newton, is available at newtonma.gov/flu. Everyone [ages 6 months and up](#) is now eligible for the bivalent COVID booster. More information, including COVID vaccine locations, is available at mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine.



Check out the new signs that Parks, Recreation and Culture crews just installed at the circle in Newton Corner welcoming people who are coming from the Mass Pike and Watertown.

New, Improved Big Belly Receptacles

Newly designed and much improved Big Belly trash receptacles with foot pedals for hands free opening, larger “hoppers” to make it easier to toss in bigger items, and better compacting capacity will soon replace the current models across Newton.

We made the decision to move forward with the improved Big Belly receptacles after a summer pilot of open style waste barrels resulted in cleanliness and odor concerns.

The new design will remedy key issues we’ve experienced with the current Big Belly units.



Problem	Solution Offered by Big Belly
Any items that are a little too big get jammed in the hopper, so the receptacle looks full although it is not.	New wider neck units allow larger items to drop into the unit easily, therefore they are less likely to get jammed.
City staff learn of a hopper door being stuck open only when it is reported, typically after an overflow issue has occurred.	New hopper sensors provide alerts to staff as soon as a hopper is jammed/left in the open position; staff can address this issue quickly and prevent overflows.
Squirrels/rodents occasionally get stuck inside units after learning how to open the hopper with the pulldown handles; squirrels cause damage inside the unit trying to get out.	New hopper knobs prevent animals from entering the units.
Trash bins inside units cannot be lifted with the trucks barrel tipper; required manual maneuvering of the bins, thus posing a safety risk for workers.	New telescopic trash bins with wheels can be wheeled to the truck and tipped with the barrel tipper on the truck.
People do not want to touch the handles on the hoppers, which can lead to littering instead of using the units or contamination in recycling if the recycling door has an opening without a handle.	Foot pedals are now standard on all units for touch-free use option. Knobs on all doors will also be standard.
Cleanliness inside of hoppers is difficult to maintain, sometimes leading to odors and unsightly appearance.	New replaceable hopper liners can be swapped out, cleaned, and replaced.

Read Park and Recreation Commissioner Nicole Banks' letter to the City Council with more details [here](#).



Wow! The amazing generosity of Newtonians was on full display at City Hall. Thank you to all the mini golfers and everyone else who supported the Annual Holiday Gift Drive last weekend. Thanks go also to the folks at Village Bank and the Rotary Club of Newton who, with the help from the City of Newton Social Services team, will provide gifts for 380 children from 220 families this holiday season.

Good News About Electric Vehicles (EVs)

Personal vehicles are one of the three major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) in Newton, responsible for 24% of the City's GHGs. One of the best ways to reduce vehicle emissions is by replacing a combustion engine vehicle with an electric vehicle.

[EVs on the Market](#): An electric version of whatever car you are looking for probably exists. Today's EV market features all sorts of models (sedans, crossovers, SUVs, and trucks) at comparable prices to their combustion engine vehicle equivalents—including used vehicles. Plus, EV ranges are increasing with even the lower-priced EVs going up to 250 miles on a full charge. This complete [list of EVs](#) has prices and battery ranges as of Fall 2022.

[EV Rebates and Incentives](#): Federal tax credits up to \$7500 and MA rebates up to \$2500 in 2022 and \$5000 in 2023 can significantly lower the purchase price of a new vehicle. In addition, 2023 federal tax credits up to \$4000 can lower the purchase price of a used vehicle. Pay attention to the restrictions on which cars and which buyers are eligible for these rebates, as detailed [here](#).

[EV Charging Availability](#): Many [charging stations are available nearby](#) including 19 that have been installed on City property by the City of Newton for public use. The federal infrastructure bill facilitates the use of electric vehicles with funding to create an 'alternative fuel corridor'— a nationwide network of 500,000 fast EV chargers. [The plan for Massachusetts](#) will also result in fast chargers with at least 4 ports on all major highways at 50-mile intervals and located no more than 1 mile from the highway.

[Learn More](#): The [Newton EV Task Force](#), a group of Newton volunteers, has been active for several years providing useful information about EVs and lobbying for more charging stations. They collaborate closely with the [Green Energy Consumers Alliance](#), which provides a wealth of information about EVs and offers [dealer discounts](#) over and above federal and MA financial incentives. Newton's Energy Coach, Liora Silkes, and Newton's amazing volunteer energy coaches can also answer questions about green transportation. Click [here](#) to schedule a consultation.

A wonderful discussion with thoughtful, probing questions last week with the Next Gen Voices students in the Civic Engagement class at Newton North High School.



(Photo: With, from left, Isabelle Sloan, Audrey Pozen, Audrey Sanger, Hannah Ireland, Haruka Nabeshima and Tenley Hanson.)

Dudley Road

Nine developers have expressed an interest in potentially working with the City of Newton to make a joint offer to purchase a 15-acre site located between Dudley and Brandeis Roads, adjacent to Newton South High School.

We received the nine proposals, [found here](#), in response to our call for [Expressions of Interest](#) which identified the specific property interests that the City is seeking in a potential partnership. This approach, successfully used here in Newton at Kessler Woods, could provide us with an opportunity both to achieve the City's desired outcomes for the property and at the same time partner with a developer to submit a competitive acquisition offer.

The responses to the EOI will be evaluated by a team of City officials, residents and staff including:

- City Council Vice-President and Ward 8 City Councilor Rick Lipof
- Newton resident and Parks and Recreation Commissioner Beth Wilkinson
- Newton Public Schools Asst. Superintendent/CFO Liam Hurley
- Planning Director Barney Health
- Chief Environmental Planner Jennifer Steel
- Community Preservation Program Manager Lara Kritzer
- Director of Housing and Community Development Amanda Berman
- Newton resident and Newton Affordable Housing Trust Chair Ann Houston

Questions? Email us at the project email address of dudleyroadstate@newtonma.gov.

Construction Set to Begin at Newton Highland T Station in 2023

Designs for the Newton Highlands MBTA Station accessibility improvements are now complete with the MBTA planning to award the construction contract in the spring of 2023.



The MBTA installed temporary accessibility improvements two years ago. The permanent improvements (which will take two years to complete) will include:

- Accessible ramps with canopies and access paths from Walnut Street, Hyde Street and Station Avenue
- A raised boarding platform with a tactile edge for inbound and outbound trains
- Multiple accessible pedestrian crossings connecting inbound and outbound platforms
- New heated shelters on the inbound platform
- New benches, bicycle shelters, signage, lighting and communication & security equipment

Newton's Commission on Disability noted, "... these improvements are both long overdue and absolutely necessary so that people with disabilities can fully and safely access the station."

Find more information on the project and sign up for email updates at mbta.com/highlands.

An Extraordinarily Difficult Situation

On the evening of Nov. 19, Fallon Ambulance Supervisor Alena Legros stationed here in Newton responded with two medic units via our mutual aid network to the crash of a Brandeis University student shuttle bus next door in Waltham. She arrived at a terrible accident with many people severely injured, including a Brandeis student riding the bus who died.

Supervisor Legros led the emergency medical operations. She triaged the multiple critical injuries, a heavy responsibility that requires rapid decision making based on deep experience, critical thinking and multi-tasking in a high stress environment, and extraordinary command presence and communication skills.

In the words of Newton Fire Deputy Chief Merrill, "I have no doubt that the injuries/casualties would have been worse without her knowledge, expertise and performance."

On behalf of myself, Newton Fire Chief Greg Gentile and all the residents of Newton, thank you Alena Legros.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. The Mass Department of Utilities approved the electric rates Eversource proposed, so **Newton Power Choice** will definitely save Newton residents enrolled in the program money. Basic service customers will save \$400 over six

months. Wondering if you're enrolled in Newton Power Choice? Check your Eversource bill. The supply line will should say, "Direct Energy Newton Power Choice" if you're enrolled. Questions? Reach out to Newton Co-Director of Sustainability Ann Berwick at aberwick@newtonma.gov. Learn more about Newton Power Choice at masspowerchoice.com/newton.

P.P.S. The West Suburban YMCA's new branch facility at 135 Wells Avenue in Newton is opening on Thursday, Dec. 15. Check out the new equipment, lap pool, fitness center and more at the **Wells Ave YMCA Grand Opening**. There will be tours and activities throughout the day. Find the day's schedule and info at wsymca/wells-ave.



P.P.P.S. We **extended yard waste collection** by one week. The last week of collection will start Monday, December 12. Set your yard waste at the curb by 7:00 a.m. on your usual trash/recycling collection day. You can also drop yard waste at the Resource Recovery Center, 115 Rumford Ave., next week Monday through Friday Dec. 12-16, 7:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

P.P.P.P.S. **Support Newton's women-owned small businesses** while helping others and the planet. All Over Newton's "Goods That Do Good" holiday shopping event is this Saturday, Dec. 10 and spotlights women-owned businesses that embrace "doing good" as part of their mission. Find more info and a list of participating businesswomen [here](#).

P.P.P.P.P.S. Want to trade a previously solved puzzle for a new one you haven't yet tackled? Bring a puzzle and take a new one home at the **Newton Free Library's Puzzle Swap** this Saturday, Dec. 10 between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. Find more info and register [here](#).

P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Join recent Newton South grads and the award-winning South jazz groups on Thursday, Dec. 22 at 7:00 p.m. for a festive evening of "swingin' holiday hits." The **Alumni Holiday Jazz Concert** is in Seasholes Auditorium at Newton South, 140 Lions Drive (formerly Brandeis Road) and the suggested \$10 contribution will support the school's music program.



P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Autism Unity is raising money to help Ukrainian children with autism. Donations and proceeds from the sale of artwork at **Colors of Peace** will go toward covering medical costs and medically necessary trauma services. Work by local and Ukrainian artists, including artists with autism, will be exhibited at the Wedeman Gallery on the campus of Lasell University, 47 Myrtle Avenue, Saturday and Sunday Dec. 17 and 18, noon to 5:00 pm.



P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Tried **pickleball** yet? Indoor court times are available for beginners and “beyond beginners” through the Newton Parks, Recreation and Culture Department. Get more info about indoor pickleball [here](#), and info about other classes and activities [here](#).

P.P.P.P.P.P.P.S. With energy costs rising, this is a good time to schedule a no-cost **Mass Save Home Energy Assessment**. Questions on how to get started? Our [Newton Energy Coach](#) can help. Ask a question online, browse previously asked questions, or make an appointment to speak with a coach to get free help navigating the process.

P.P.P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Interested in learning more about the **override** and debt exclusion questions voters will decide on March 14?

- [Virtual Roundtable on Parks, Athletic Fields, Courts & Playgrounds](#) - Tuesday, Dec. 13, at 6: p.m.
- [Virtual Chat with Commissioner Jim McGonagle on Streets & Sidewalks](#), Wednesday, Dec. 14, 9:00 a.m.
- [Virtual Town Hall](#), Thursday, Dec. 15, 7:00 p.m.

Find answers to frequently asked questions, an override calculator, a calendar of meeting and more information at newtonma.gov/override.

P.P.P.P.P.P.P.P.P.S. I know, I know. That's a lot of P.S.s!



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

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