

Thursday, March 9, 2023

## Mayor's Newton Update

### Newton High Schools College Admission Update

Counseling Department Chairs Dan Rubin from Newton South High School and Beth Swederskas from Newton North, along with college and career counselors, provided insights and data on the changing landscape of college admissions to the School Committee last week.

What does the data about Newton's students show?

- For Newton Public School seniors, 70% to 80% are accepted by one of their top three choices.
- Newton sees 90% of our graduates going on to post-secondary education, and 10% choosing other options, including entering the workforce, joining the military, pursuing a trade, or opting for a gap year (2% to 5% annually).
- The number of seniors applying via early applications is increasing.
- The total number of applications from Newton seniors are rising (with the exception of the Class of 2020 at the height of the pandemic).
  - Class of 2019: 8410
  - Class of 2020: 8048
  - Class of 2021: 8943
  - Class of 2022: 9690
- The top 10 school matriculations for both high schools in the last four years include UMass Amherst (which tops the list as the most popular destination at both high schools), Boston College, Boston University, UMass Lowell, UMass Boston, Northeastern University, Mass Bay Community College, Harvard, University of New Hampshire, Brandeis College, Tufts University and the University of Vermont.
- Using Ivy League admissions data to illustrate trends in acceptances at highly selective institutions, the number of applications has grown from 392 in 2012 to 769 in 2022; the number of acceptances have increased from 46 in 2012 to 65 in 2022.

What advise do the Counselors have for juniors?

Start with the questions, "Who am I? What am I looking for? Where can I grow and learn?"

Go on tours (in person and virtually), talk with college representatives when they visit Newton, and choose a “bell curve” of places to apply – two or three “reaches,” four or five “targets,” and two of three “likely” colleges and universities.

They advised that colleges are looking for authenticity – students who are able to communicate who they are, why they have used their time in their high school years well and what’s important to them in the years ahead. There is no one specific set of experiences or “magic activity” that is a guarantee to admission. Rather, colleges and universities are looking for engaged young people, genuinely interested in their community, and committed to building caring, curious college and university communities.

Watch the entire presentation from the March 1 School Committee on NewTV [here](#). The College and Career update begins at 1:29:30.

---

*One hundred and thirty (130) of Newton Community Pride’s banners are going up across our community to “Celebrate Newton” and brighten our streets. A jury of community leaders selected the three banner artists – Leah Kolidas, Adam Proia, Sarah Tomkins, and Sage Widder. The works celebrate Newton’s culture, history, values, diversity and beauty. Each of the six banners include the words “Celebrate Newton” in the eight most common languages spoken in Newton (English, Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin, Russian, Hebrew, Japanese and Italian). Thank you Newton Community Pride, the Newton Parks, Recreation and Culture Department, and sponsor The Village Bank. Interested in learning more about the artists? Click [here](#).*

---

## **Needham Street Construction**

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation, MassDOT, is gearing up to begin full depth roadway reconstruction and paving in Newton this spring as part of the \$31.1 million Needham Street improvement project.

MassDOT officials will provide an update on work completed thus far and on the upcoming work in Newton at a public information zoom meeting on Thursday, March 23 at 6:00 p.m. Preregister for the meeting [here](#).

Work is scheduled to begin by MassDOT contractors on Winchester Street from Curtis Street to Centre Street, and on Needham Street from Columbia Avenue to Winchester Street. They will start with the roadwork and then turn to sidewalk and curb restoration.

*(Photo: Top, Needham Street bridge over the Charles River prior to work. Bottom, rendering of what the bridge will look like after the project is complete.)*

This State project will bring much needed improvements along the 1.7 mile length of Needham Street for motorists, cyclists, public transit users and pedestrians.

The project includes better turn lanes, continuous sidewalks, new crosswalks, state of the art traffic signals, better bus stops, raised bus lanes, safer bicycle paths, and renovation and widening of the existing bridge over the Charles River to accommodate all modes travel. (Work on the bridge has already started and is expected to be completed by the end of this year.)

Road projects mean inconvenience. This next phase of the Needham Street improvements will continue to create traffic issues for people passing through the work areas in Newton.

MassDOT expects that the majority of the work will take place primarily during weekdays between 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., with no lane closures during peak traffic hours (6:00 to 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.). Pedestrian and bicycle access will be maintained throughout the duration of the project, meaning we will continue to have access to all stores, restaurants, and businesses along this busy street. MassDOT will do its best to maintain driveway access for businesses throughout the project; there may be short periods of time when the MassDOT contractors are working directly in front of a business driveway where access may not be possible.

There may also be some night work to minimize traffic impacts.

Questions or concerns? Email the MassDOT Project Team [here](#). Sign up for project updates [here](#), and get more information about the project [here](#).

---

### **Newton and the "Millionaires Tax"**

The Healy/Driscoll Administration recently released its budget proposal for the coming Fiscal Year 2024, including its intended use of funds from the "Fair Share" Amendment - the so-called "Millionaires Tax" - passed by voters in November that increases taxes on incomes over \$1 million.

The Fair Share funds will add an estimated \$1 billion in revenue to the FY2024 state budget. The Healy/Driscoll budget proposal invests \$510 million in education and \$490 million in transportation.

Unfortunately, the proposal does not include any funds in either category that could be used directly by the City of Newton or by the Newton Public Schools.

Included in the Healy/Driscoll Administration budget proposal:

#### Education

- \$140 million for child care grants to providers and Pre-K projects.
- \$360 million for higher education.

- \$10 million for summer early college, workforce, technical and innovation pathways.

### Transportation

- \$186 million for MBTA capital investments and means tested fares.
- \$100 million for highway bridge preservation.
- \$25 million for regional transit authority funding and grants.
- \$50 million for federal matching funds for state projects.
- \$14 million for state roadside maintenance and beautification.
- \$12.5 million for Palmer and Pittsfield rail projects.
- \$100 million for municipal partnership programs for projects on state Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) list.
- \$2.5 million for water transportation.

Also interesting to note is that Chapter 90 funds, the key municipal road paving funding from the State for local road repairs, is again level funded at \$200 million per year for next Fiscal Year 2024 and the following Fiscal Year 2025, as it has been since Fiscal Year 2012. The Massachusetts Municipal Association calculates that the program's purchasing power has decreased by 43% over the past 11 years as road construction costs have increased.

---

*The Newton Community Farm is going solar and the new panels on the barn will provide 99% of the electricity needed to operate the farm's agricultural operations. Kudos to NCF Executive Director Sue Bottino, the Board of Directors, City of Newton staff, and the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture for making the farm at 303 Nahanton Street even greener and more sustainable.*

---

### **Newton's Green Building Codes**

The City Council this week voted to adopt the State's new "Specialized" building code to ensure that new construction and renovations in Newton are built to updated energy efficiency standards.

A bit of background...

Massachusetts has three levels of building codes: the Base code; the Stretch code, which is somewhat more stringent in terms of energy efficiency requirements than the Base code; and the Specialized code, sometimes referred to as the "Stretchier" code.

In 2009, Newton was the first community to adopt the first iteration of the Stretch code. Now 300 cities and towns have adopted the Stretch code. The State updated the Stretch Code last year, and all Stretch code communities are automatically subject to the new version of that code.

By contrast, communities that want to adopt the Specialized code have to take action to do so, which is what Newton did on March 6 with the City Council vote.

This is important as the updated building code ensures that new construction and renovations are built to increasingly higher energy efficiency standards. Building codes are a significant tool for helping communities lower their greenhouse gas emissions and construct healthier and more comfortable buildings.

While the new Stretch and Specialized codes are highly technical, in general they prioritize greater insulation, as well as electrification (e.g., air source heat pumps) to replace fossil fuels. They do not *require* electrification, but buildings that use fossil fuels have stricter energy efficiency requirements and, in some instances, require either pre-wiring for electrification and solar panels, or actual installation of solar panels.

Interested in more specifics and details about the new codes? Click to learn more about the [residential](#) Stretch and Specialized codes, the [commercial](#) Stretch and Specialized codes, and [review slides](#) from the Specialized code City Council public hearing.

---

## **Last Chance to Vote**

Ballots in the March 14 Override election will start to be counted on Tuesday as soon as polls close at 8:00 p.m., and we'll know by 10:30 p.m. or so which direction our City is headed.

We'll be voting on three questions:

### Question 1

Shall the City of Newton be allowed to assess an additional \$9,175,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding Public Schools for student needs, street and sidewalk paving and safety improvements, tree planting and maintenance, park and recreational facility improvements and maintenance, improvements to Horace Mann Elementary School, sustainability and climate resiliency actions, and Senior Services programming and operations for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023?

### Question 2

Shall the City of Newton be allowed to exempt from the provisions of Proposition two and one-half, so called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued in order to renovate or replace the Countryside Elementary School?

### Question 3

Shall the City of Newton be allowed to exempt from the provisions of Proposition two and one-half, so called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued in order to renovate or replace the Franklin Elementary School?

It is now up to Newton voters to decide.

To see the financial impact for your address, please use the City's Override Calculator [here](#).

Polls will open for in-person voting on Tuesday at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. Mail-in ballots can be put into the secure drop boxes in front of City Hall until polls close on election day. (Ballots that arrive by mail or put into drop boxes after polls close at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday will not be counted; absentee ballots with *postmarks from outside the United States* will be counted for 10 additional days after the election.)

Not sure where you vote? Find your polling location [here](#). (Scroll down to the bottom of the page.)

We have held 25 in person and virtual meetings over the course of the past five months to explain the need for the override and answer questions.

Please go to the City website at [newtonma.gov](http://newtonma.gov) for accurate information and answers to frequently asked questions, or click [here](#), if you still have questions.

This is an important election. I will be at my polling location to cast my ballot first thing Tuesday morning. I'm asking all of us to consider the facts and vote.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

---

P.S. The Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture Department is looking for **lifeguards and swim instructors** for this summer at Gath Pool and Crystal Lake Beach. Starting pay for certified lifeguards is \$18 an hour. American Red Cross Lifeguard certification is required. Sign up [here](#) for a certification class at Newton North High School being held during public school vacation, April 18 to 21, or find another American Red Cross class [here](#). Already certified? Find more info [here](#).

P.P.S. Representatives from Newton Police, Fire and DPW, Mass General Brigham, Coastal EMS, Village Bank, Delta Airlines, School of Fashion Design, Sonesta Hotels, trades unions, and McGovern Auto Group among others will be at a **Career Pathways** event on Wednesday, March 15 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Newton South High School (140 Brandeis Road/1 Lions Drive) to share information and opportunities. Hosted by Newton Youth Services in partnership

with the Newton Public Schools and MassHire Metro South/West, young people in grades 7 to 12 and their families are invited. Click [here](#) for more information and a full list of participants.

P.P.P.S. Join a welcoming conversation for people with forgetfulness or other changes in their thinking and their friends and family at the **Memory Café** on Thursday, March 16 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. at the Newton Free Library, 330 Homer Street. The café, hosted by the Newton Department of Senior Services, is a place to talk with others who understand what you are going through, enjoy the company of others and explore something new. The Retro Polatin Duo will perform songs from the 1950s and social work intern Angela Panagopoulos will facilitate the conversation. Drop ins are welcome, but RSVP is requested. Please call the Senior Center at 617-796-1675 or stop by the front desk at 20 Hartford Street.

P.P.P.P.S. Newtonian Becky Baumwoll, who is now the Artistic Director of **Broken Box (BKBX) Mime** in New York City, is bringing two innovative performances of silent storytelling to her hometown. Destination: Everywhere, a family show, is on Saturday, March 25 at noon at the New Art Center, 61 Washington Park, Newtonville, and BKBX in Newton is on Monday, March 27, at 7:30 p.m. at the Newton Free Library, 330 Homer Street. Find a description of the performances [here](#), and reserve seats [here](#).



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

[Unsubscribe jmulvey@newtonma.gov](mailto:jmulvey@newtonma.gov)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by rfuller@newtonma.gov powered by



Try email marketing for free today!