

**Subject:** C-19, Armory, Green Line and More

**Date:** Thursday, December 16, 2021 at 8:24:26 PM Eastern Standard Time

**From:** Mayor Ruthanne Fuller

**To:** tbearden@civicdevelopment.com

Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021

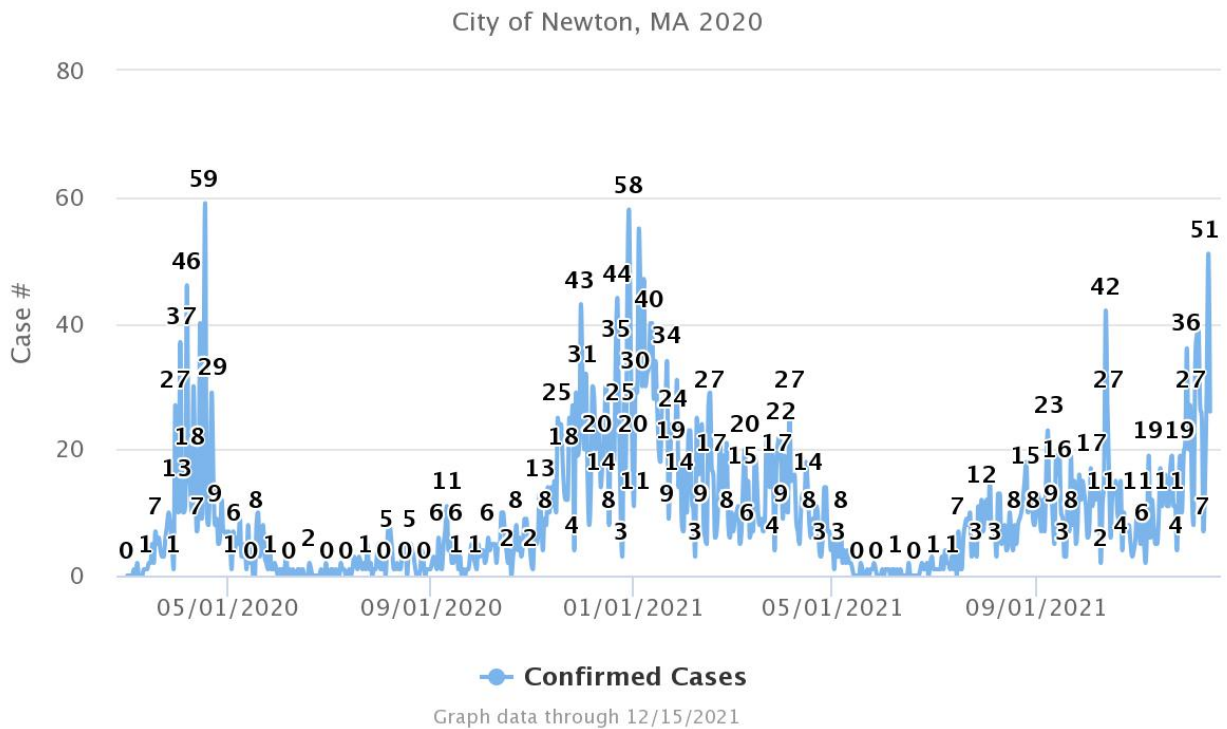
## Mayor's Update



COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Newton.

The graph below makes it clear that we are in our third surge. We had 215 new cases over the past seven days from Dec. 9 to 15, the first time we've topped 200 cases in a single week since the first week of January 2021. Our cumulative total of people who have had COVID in Newton is now 6,236 since the pandemic began.

### Newton COVID-19 Cases



For the third week in a row, the positivity rate in Newton has remained stable at 1.1%, with the number of tests performed rising to 31,446. Last week there were 23,166 tests performed on Newton residents and the week prior 18,315 tests. Statewide, the positivity rate rose this week to 4.97% from 4.5% last week.

The average daily incidence rate in Newton, which measures the number of cases per 100,000 population, is now 24, up from 18.9 last week. The statewide average daily incidence rate is 62.2, up from last week's rate of 47.7.

COVID-19 in Newton	
Total Cases	6,236
Total Deaths	220
*As of 12/15/21	

Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the 324 people who tested positive during the State's two-week tracking period from Nov. 28 to Dec. 11 were students at one of Newton's institutions of higher education, up from 13% over the previous tracking period.

Of those who tested positive, the age group with the highest percent of positive cases are again this week those between 20 and 39:

- 24% between 0 and 19 years old
- 42% between 20 and 39 years old
- 19% between 40 and 59 years old
- 11% between 60 and 79 years old
- 4% 80 years or older

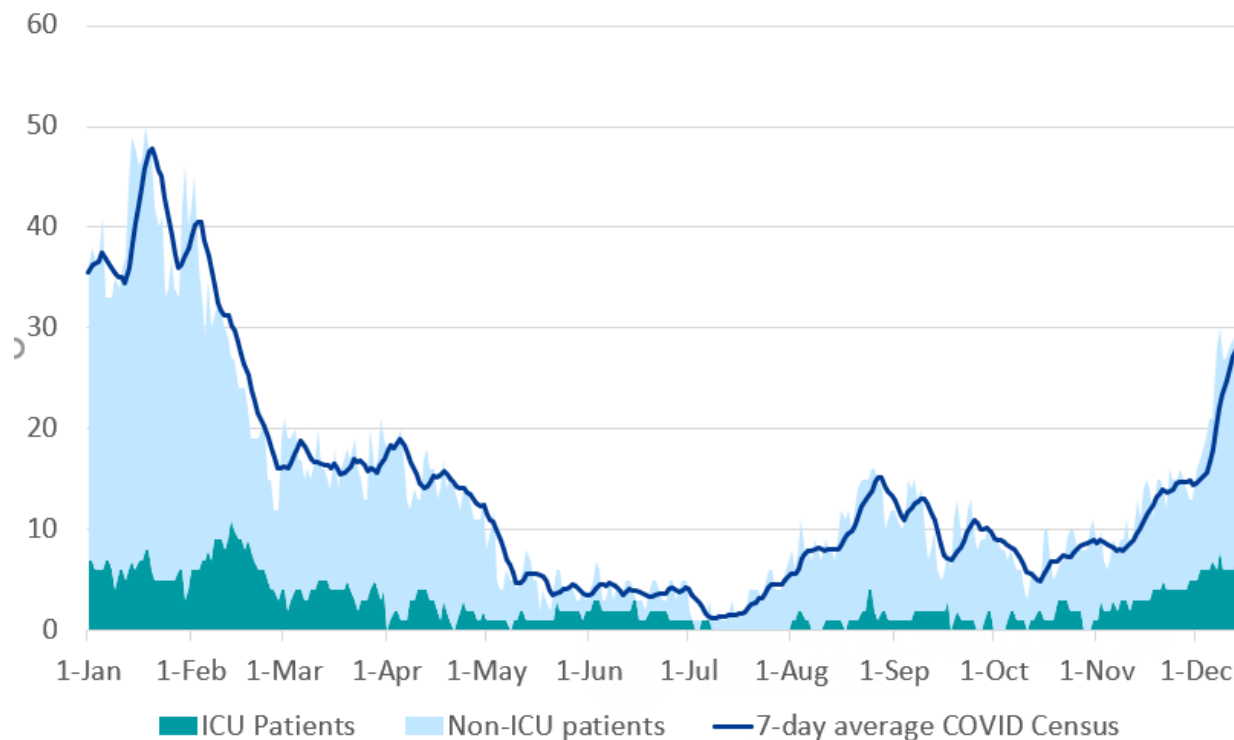
Newton-Wellesley Hospital, as of Tuesday, Dec. 14, reports they are caring for a total of 28 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 (the same as last week), eight (8) of whom are being cared for in the Intensive Care Unit.

The chart below tracking hospitalizations due to COVID-19 is different than the one above tracking positive cases. This third surge in hospitalizations is not nearly as high as the surge in overall cases. The hypothesis is that the vaccines plus the boosters are helping prevent severe illness and hospitalizations. (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends booster shots for everyone 18 and older. Read more from the CDC [here](#).)

Importantly, the hospital reports that approximately two thirds of the hospitalized patients with COVID-19 are unvaccinated (while in Massachusetts only 18% of the population is unvaccinated).

In addition, Newton-Wellesley Hospital reports that "the sickest patients with COVID-19 are in general middle aged or elderly, have medical comorbidities and are unvaccinated. Vaccinated patients who have been admitted to the hospital with COVID-19 tend to also be middle aged or elderly, have multiple medical morbidities, but in general have milder symptoms and lower supplemental oxygen needs."

## NWH COVID-19 Census 2021



The good news among all this discouraging data is that again this week no one in Newton died with COVID-19.

### Newton Public School COVID-19 Data

Twenty-eight (28) cases of COVID-19 among NPS students and eight (8) among staff members were reported to the Newton Health and Human Services Department between Dec. 9 and 15. (This compares to last week's positive cases of 16 students and nine (9) staff staff members.) This brings the cumulative total since school began on Sept. 2 to 270. (As a reminder, when looking at NPS data, sometimes cases are added to previous weeks based on tests as they are reported/confirmed.)

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

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### **Another Step Forward for Housing at the Armory**

The redevelopment of the West Newton Armory into 100% permanently affordable housing is taking another major step forward.

I have selected an experienced team, Metro West Collaborative Development/Civico Development, to partner with the City in the redevelopment of the Armory. Their proposal for the Armory includes 43 units available for intergenerational family housing. These apartments will be deeply affordable to individuals and families with incomes ranging between 30% and 60% of our area median income. (A family of

four earning 30% of the area median income is \$40,260, while a family of four earning 60% of the area median income is \$80,520.)

Support services will be available for the residents. The historic front of the building will be preserved with an addition built behind it. Parking will be provided underground. The building will be environmentally sensitive, built to “passive house” standards and an all electric building with solar on the roof. The team is committed to robust engagement with our community throughout the long design, permitting, and construction process and beyond when the residents move in.

We’re planning for a ribbon cutting in 2025.

I pulled together a nine-member Evaluation Committee to assess thoroughly the seven proposals which had a variety of types of tenants, designs, number of apartments and bedrooms, site plans and more. The Committee included Newton residents and staff with affordable housing development, design, and supportive services expertise. They spent the last two months analyzing each proposal, interviewing each proposer and reading the insightful public comments submitted by residents and community groups. They found the Metro West/Civico proposal to be the solid winner. (Complete information about the seven proposals that were evaluated can be found [here](#).)

Metro West Collaborative Development is a Newton-based non-profit affordable housing developer. They have a long and successful track record of creating, financing and managing affordable housing. Metro West recently partnered with us to deliver COVID-19 emergency rental housing assistance to over 250 low and moderate-income Newton households.) Civico Development is a for-profit housing developer that has built community-focused mixed-income housing throughout our region.

Please join us to meet the Metro West Collaborative Development and Civico Development teams and learn more about the vision for the Armory. This will be held via Zoom at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 26. (I will share the Zoom log-in details for this meeting closer to the date.)

In the meantime, please click [here](#) to view the Metro West/Civico Armory Proposal. Additional information can also be found on the City's Armory [webpage](#).

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*Newton Firefighters helped three residents to safety from a burning home on Jackson Road yesterday afternoon. Five engines, three ladders, rescue, medics and the training and safety division were at the scene of the 2-alarm blaze with one resident transported to the hospital. (Photo Courtesy of NFD: Truck 3 is positioned to access a straight line to the roof to fight the fire while avoiding wires and trees.)*



## **Green Line Transformation Project Complete**

After three years of closed stations, shuttles and many noisy nights, the MBTA announced this week that the Green Line Transformation Project is complete. We will have safer, faster and more reliable service.

The \$101.6 million project replaced 25,000 feet of track and 6.5 miles of signals from the Riverside Station in Auburndale/Lower Falls to the Beaconsfield Station in Brookline.

Read more about the project [here](#), or watch the video below.







*The City officially purchased four homes yesterday on property formerly serving as the Walker Center for Ecumenical Exchange in Auburndale. These homes are adjacent to the Williams Elementary School. The land will provide flexibility for future school renovations and the four homes will become permanently affordable family housing. More information can be found [here](#).*

*(Left to Right: School*

*Superintendent David Fleishman, Williams School Principal Tony Byers, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, Public Buildings Commissioner Josh Morse, Ward 4 School Committee Chair-Elect Tamika Olszewski, and Newton Director of Housing & Community Development Amanda Berman)*

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## **Countryside Plans Moving Forward**

Plans for a renovation/addition or a new Countryside School got a significant boost yesterday when the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) voted unanimously to invite the City of Newton to move forward into the next planning phase called "Feasibility Study." This is a major step in moving this critical project forward.

In the coming months we will begin meeting with the Countryside School Building Committee and school community as we begin the process of selecting design and project management teams. While we have much work ahead, I'm deeply appreciative for the hard work of the MSBA, NPS and City staff to get us to this milestone and all of us look forward to a collaborative process with our educators, parents, and neighbors.

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*What a wonderful sight to see - the generosity of so many Newtonians providing an abundance of toys and books to help brighten the holidays for children here in Newton. Thanks go to our partners from The Village Bank (President Joe DeVito and Susan Paley in the photo) and the Rotary Club of Newton for another holiday toy drive.*

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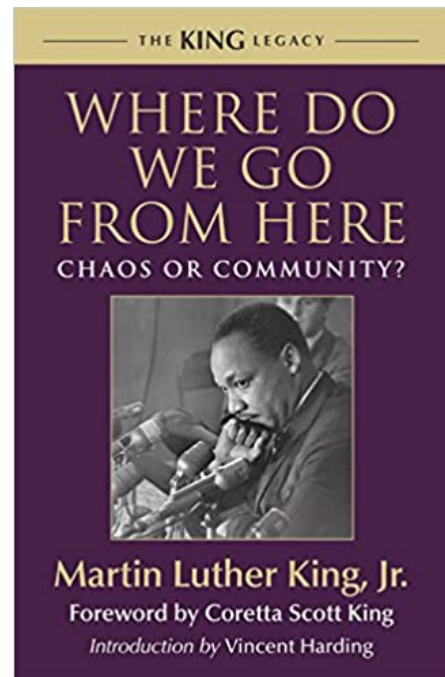
### Join a Community Book Read

As we look ahead to the new year, consider joining us in a community book read of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* This is the theme of Newton's 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Martin Luther King Day Celebration on Monday, Jan. 17 at 9:00 a.m. at Newton North High School. The book is available at the Newton Free Library or you can read the Guided Study [here](#).

We'll gather on Martin Luther King Day, planned at this moment as a hybrid event in person at Newton North High School Auditorium for those showing proof of vaccination and on zoom. Find more info about the MLK celebration and register to attend in person or virtually [here](#).

Warmly,

Ruthanne



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P.S. Good news: With Christmas and New Year both falling on Saturdays this year, there's **no impact on our trash/recycling collection schedule**. Please set your carts out on your regular trash collection day. The Resource Recovery Center on Rumford Avenue will be closed on both the Friday and Saturday this holiday season, Dec. 24 and 25, and Dec. 31 and Jan.1. **Christmas trees will be collected during the weeks of Jan. 3 and Jan. 10.** Place undecorated trees at the curb by 7:00 a.m. on your collection day during this two-week window (not in a plastic bag, please). Greens from wreaths can also be collected with the trees if the sprigs are pulled from the wire or plastic framing and placed in a neat pile or bundled with twine. (fyi:

The trees and greens will be chipped into mulch.)

P.P.S. Newton's Department of Senior Services offers Newton residents age 65 and older free parking in the City's municipal parking lots (with some restrictions). The current "blue" **Senior Parking Stickers** are set to expire at the end of the year. New stickers valid through June 30, 2023 are available to purchase for \$6 by mail or by dropping your information packet off at the Senior Center (please call 617-796-1675 to check drop-in hours each week). Click [here](#) for more information.

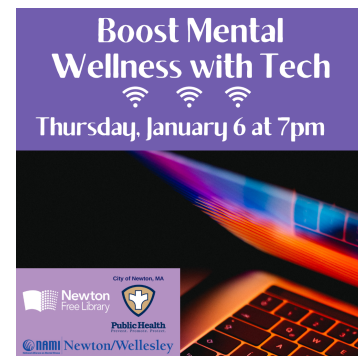


P.P.P.S. Have you been seeing more electric vehicles (EVs) around Newton? According to new data, sales of **EVs (including plug-in hybrids) reached a record-breaking 17% of all Newton vehicle sales in the third quarter of 2021.** That brings our total percentage of EVs in Newton to 3.6%. This helps with our progress toward our City's Climate Action Plan goal of 10% EVs by 2025 and Massachusetts' Climate Roadmap goal of 50% EV sales by 2030. Interested in driving electric and helping us meet our climate goals? Learn more on our [Newton EV Task Force](#) webpage or contact the Task Force at [evtaskforcenewton@gmail.com](mailto:evtaskforcenewton@gmail.com).



P.P.P.P.S. Join the holiday fun this Sunday, Dec. 19 at the **Shop & Stroll in Newton Centre** from noon to 4:00 p.m. There will be caroling, hot beverages served outside, and 12 new pop-up businesses adding to the array of shops.

P.P.P.P.P.S. Learn tips, tools and hacks using tech to get past overwhelming feelings in these times of uncertainty and change. This virtual presentation by classically trained actor Amber Knight focuses on how to thrive and her experiences living with Bipolar Disorder. The program, Boost Mental Wellness with Tech, is Thursday, Jan. 6 at 7:00 p.m. It's cosponsored by the Newton's Department of Health and Human Services and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Newton Wellesley. Register [here](#).







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