

Newton: Planning and Development



**PLAN
NEWTON**

**Monthly Newsletter
December 2025**

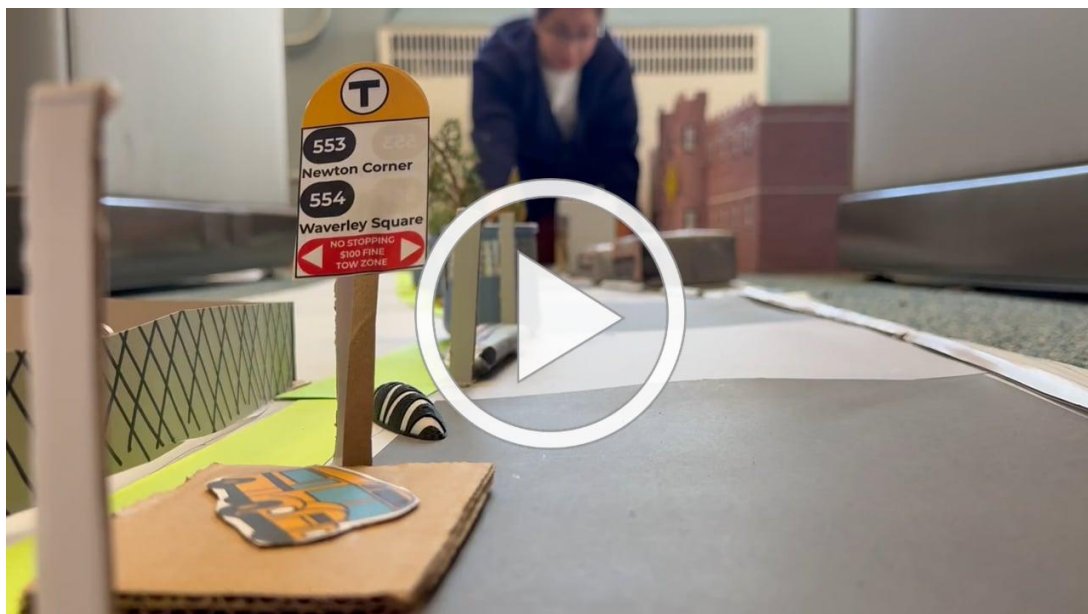
Dear Newtonians,

We are back with December's newsletter, updating you on all things Planning. We hope you are enjoying this new format packed with information.

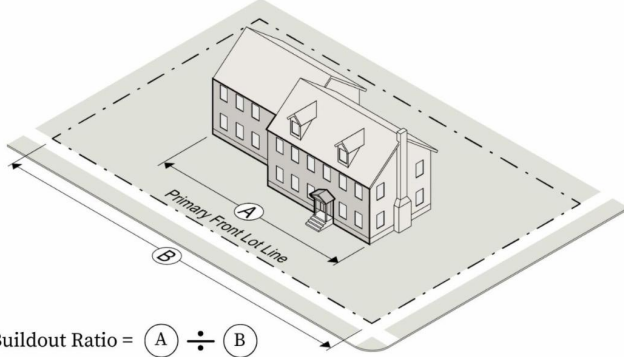
December has been a busy month for us in the department. Importantly, we tirelessly built one of the hardest par 4 mini golf courses for **Mayor Fuller's Holiday Mini Golf** tournament last week at City Hall. You may have recognized the courses from some of the projects we've been working on (the Plaza, Washington St, and the West Newton Armory).

Besides the fun of mini golf course construction, we've got important updates about Façade Ratios, the Newton Centre Plaza, MBTA service, Conservation's stream signs, and nominations for the Sheila Mondshein award. Keep reading for more!

Don't forget to follow us on Instagram: [@CityofNewtonPlanning](#) and like us on Facebook: [Newton Planning and Development](#).



Recent Zoning Changes



Dimensions	
Residential Facade Build Out Ratio (max.)	60%
A - Building Front Elevation	--
B - Lot Frontage	--

Diagram and chart showing how the facade ratio works

Facade Ratios

The City Council has adopted a new zoning update that introduces a façade ratio, which will take effect on *March 1, 2026*. The **façade ratio** compares the width of a building’s full residential front elevation (B in the diagram) to the lot frontage along the primary front lot line (A in the diagram). Under the new ordinance, the **residential front elevation may not exceed 60% of the lot’s frontage**.

This update is intended to limit overly wide building massing at the front of properties and to encourage designs that build back on the lot rather than across the frontage.

Click [HERE](#) for the full ordinance.

Commercial Parking

The City Council has also approved a zoning amendment that removes parking requirements for businesses in and around Newton’s village centers within the BU1 and BU2 zoning districts and reduces parking requirements for restaurant and retail uses in other zoning districts. Previously, new or expanding businesses were required to provide off-street parking, and if unavailable, had to go through the special permit process to waive the requirement, something the Council almost always approved anyway.

This change cuts unnecessary time and makes it easier and faster for businesses to open, grow, and fill vacant storefronts. It’s a simple step that supports a more vibrant and business-friendly Newton without affecting parking availability in practice.

Click [HERE](#) for the full ordinance.

[Click for List of Zoning Updates](#)

Department Projects and Updates

Newton Centre Plaza Trial Extension

The Planning Department is pleased to share that on **Thursday, November 20th**, the Traffic Council unanimously voted to extend the pilot of the Newton Centre Plaza through Fall 2026.

Why Extend?

Planning staff presented compelling data supporting the extension, including:

- Strong positive feedback from surveys, meetings, and community events
- Significant use of the Plaza and Green space alike
- Confirmed parking availability through counts and on-site observations
- Additional opportunities for seasonal adaptation and collaboration

Important note: While the Traffic Council approved the extension, an appeal from the City Council has been filed. The City Council will hear this appeal in their next term.

In the meantime, the Plaza will be refreshed with seasonal decor and improved lights for the winter and holiday season.

[View Traffic Council's Actions](#) | [Watch the meeting](#)

Outdoor Special Events

The Plaza is yours to use! We invite you to host community events in the space.

The Outdoor Special Event Permit fee remains **WAIVED** when applying to use the Plaza to encourage community gatherings.

[Apply for a permit here](#) - Have your event details ready when you apply.

Questions? Email: osepadmin@newtonma.gov



Click the image to see the PowerPoint presented by Planning staff to Traffic Council

Transportation Hub





Pedestrians and cyclists using the shared use path on Washington Street

GoGo

GoGo provides subsidized rides for people living in Newton -- older adults, lower income individuals, and people with disabilities.

Not yet registered? Click [HERE](#) to register, drop into the new Cooper Center, or call Older Adult Services at **617-796-4646** to make an appointment.

Registered and ready to ride? Call **1-855-605-8544** to either speak with an operator or use the automated selections to request or schedule a ride.

How much does it cost? The cost varies depending on your tier of service (Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3). For more specific information on pricing, [visit our website](#).

No matter the tier, rides to or from the Cooper Center anywhere in Newton cost just \$2!



GoGo Newton flyer

MBTA

Green Line Disruption:

Just like the green from nature's plants going into winter hibernation, from now until December 22nd, there will be **NO GREEN LINE TRAINS** between North Station and...

- Babcock St (B)
- Kenmore (C+D)
- Heath St (E)

As an alternative, the MBTA advises to use buses between Babcock, Kenmore, Heath St & Copley/Back Bay.

The 39 Bus, running parallel to the E branch, the 57 Bus, running parallel to the B branch, and the Framingham/Worcester commuter rail between Landsdowne, Back Bay, and South Station will be **FARE FREE**. Shuttle buses will also run along Green line routes. In addition, Orange line service will run as normal, providing an alternative between Back Bay & North Station.

Although inconvenient, the MBTA is continuing to do much needed maintenance and upgrade

Although inconvenient, the MBTA is continuing to do much needed maintenance and upgrade work on century old equipment. Please ensure you provide ample travel time for yourself during this disruption. For more information, visit the MBTA's website [HERE](#).

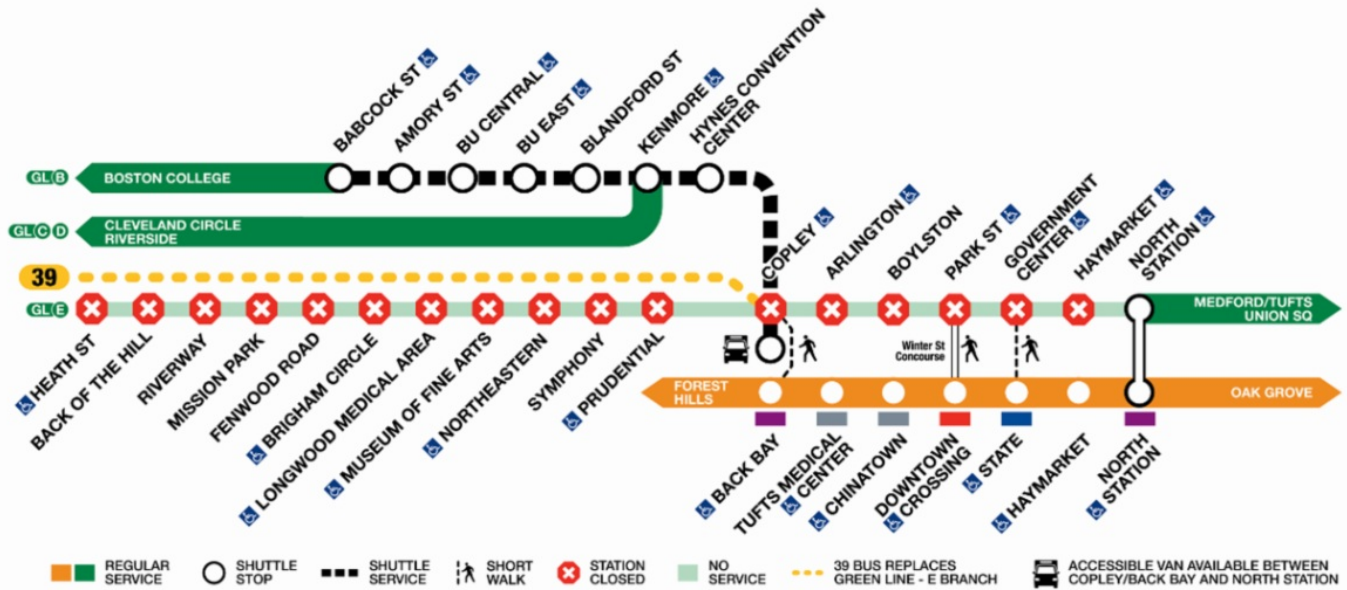


Image showing travel shut downs and alternative options

Winter 2026 Service Updates:

Not all MBTA news is bad news. The MBTA recently announced new service updates to their network that will take effect on Sunday, December 14th.

What service changes are affecting Newton? The 57 bus, which operates from Watertown Yard to Kenmore, will now be considered a “Frequent Bus Route” with more frequent service, coming every 15 minutes or better every day during most operating hours.



For more information on the MBTA's Winter Service Updates, visit their website by clicking [here](#).

BLUEbikes

For this winter season, BLUEbikes will be keeping all their stations across Newton open and active. Some BLUEbikes stations in other communities will be removed or relocated for the winter season. For a full list of winter station changes, click [HERE](#).

BLUEbike stations offer standard bike and e-bike options as a way to get around. Planning wants to see you on your BLUEbike! Send us your best BLUEbike photo to: bluebikes@newtonma.gov to get featured in next month's newsletter.

Would you like to see more BLUEbike stations? Let us know where you think they should go by [filling out this brief survey](#).

Conservation Corner



The Conservation office closed out 2025 with improvements at Martin, Old Deer Park, and Kessler Conservation Areas. These projects offer improved access, safety, and signage at some of our newest conservation lands. The image to the left shows recently installed stairs to improve accessibility.



The Conservation office also successfully installed stream name signs where roads cross open streams, to instill better understanding and stewardship of these important resources. Be on the lookout for metal blue signs with white letters indicating these streams.

Housing Spotlight: Affordable Housing Opportunities in Newton

Chase Street Apartments - [APPLICATION](#) (email to kriscosta@laassoc.com once completed)

Description: L.A. Associates is accepting applications for one 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom apartment.

Location: 47-49 Chase St, Newton Centre

Contact info: Kristen Costalkriscosta@laassoc.com | 617-244-7781

[Click for more information](#)

The deadline to apply for this unit is December 26th!

*This newsletter will be updated regularly with information about waitlists and availability for affordable housing opportunities. [Click HERE](#) to sign up for the Affordable Housing Availability Newsletter. For any questions, contact **Malcolm Lucas** at 617-796-1149 or mlucas@newtonma.gov.*

[Click for a full list of Affordable Housing Opportunities](#)

Housing Information & Resources

Sheila Mondshein Award Nomination

Each year, the **Sheila Mondshein Award** recognizes an individual or organization that exemplifies a strong commitment to promoting Fair Housing in Newton. Last year, Mayor Fuller received the award for



...her efforts in promoting and creating fair housing across the City, particularly with her work on the West Newton Armory.

This year, the City of Newton invites you to help nominate candidates for the Sheila Mondshein Award.

Click [HERE](#) to submit a nomination!

[MyMassHome](#)

[Newton Housing Authority](#)

[Housing Navigator MA](#)

The official online listing and search tool for accessible and affordable *homeownership* opportunities in Massachusetts

Provides housing assistance to low-income residents, and owns and manages units throughout the city.

The official online listing and search tool for accessible and affordable *rental*/homes in Massachusetts

[Click for a comprehensive list of Housing Resources](#)

Recent Development Proposals



Aerial rendering of potential Riverside project

Address: 335 Grove St and 399 Grove St, Auburndale (MBTA Riverside T Station)

Description: Develop a portion of an existing parking lot for mixed use including 753 units

Status: Special Permit **approved** by City Council 22-2

[Link to Permit Application](#)



Street view rendering of potential Dudley Rd project

Address: 85 Dudley Rd, Newton Centre

Description: 70 units in 26 townhouse style buildings

Status: Special Permit application **withdrawn**

Please note, this list is intended for informational sharing purposes only. The planning department does not endorse any private project.

[Comprehensive List of Development Projects](#)

P.S. check out our 2025 spotify wrapped. We listened to a lot of great music this year, and look forward to what kind of music we'll listen to in 2026!



Sincerely,

City of Newton
The Planning & Development Department



City of Newton - Planning & Development
newtonma.gov/planning



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