

Newton Conservators

2025 Newton Candidate Questionnaire

Respondent: Marc Laredo

Office Sought: Mayor

Question 1:

What are your top 2 or 3 goals and/or objectives from the Newton Open Space Plan:2020-2027 (see pages 147-150 for the Plan's Goals and Objectives) and what do you plan to do to promote them? (FYI, a priority of Newton Conservators, relating to Objective 6C on page 150, is to complete overdue and future Conservation Restrictions in a timely manner.) Are there items that you believe are missing from either the open space plan or conservation discussions in our community, and how would you address that? (400 words or less)

Response:

All of the goals and objectives in the Newton Open Space Plan:2020-2027 are important, but you ask for 2-3 so I will limit my answer:

1. Athletic fields. Newton has made progress in improving the quality of our fields, and I will build on this work. It is vital that we provide sufficient high quality athletic fields for student athletes and adult recreation leagues alike.
2. Identifying and implementing climate resilience and ecological improvement opportunities on municipal land. A good example is the work we are doing at Albemarle Field which will reduce risk of flooding but also improve habitat, biodiversity, and water quality in Cheesecake Brook.
- 3 Learning more about the Newton Conservators' recommendations for improving Newton's process for approving Conservation Restrictions. The OSP identifies numerous private parcels that represent high conservation value, and I would like to be more proactive in protecting them. Given our loss of many of our former wetlands, it is important to preserve the ecologically valuable undeveloped land that remains. In addition, Governor Healey's new Biodiversity Plan released in August 2025 promises local biodiversity grants, which I am excited to pursue in order to advance biodiversity as much as possible on both public and private lands.

Question 2:

The climate crisis is one of the biggest detrimental impacts on our open spaces. How would you accelerate or add to the actions recommended in both the Newton Climate Action Plan:A Living Plan for 2020-2025 (focused on reducing greenhouse gases) and the Newton Climate

Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan (focused on changes to protect natural resources and reduce effects of extreme weather events)? (400 words or less)

Response:

Newton is a leader in many ways when it comes to climate action, both in terms of mitigation and adaptation: Newton is powered by more clean energy than any other community in Massachusetts; we approved the stricter stretch energy code; we now require electric-only in new construction; approximately half of municipal electricity is powered by solar; and the City Council approved BERDO in 2024.

Here are some of the things I will do to continue to address climate change:

- (a) Work with our federal and state leaders and neighboring communities to restore the MBTA bus line frequency and upgrade our commuter rail stops, so that commuters and travelers have attractive alternatives to single use vehicles.
- (b) Continue to invest in the Energy Coaches and expand their reach to reduce barriers to people taking action on their own properties to reduce fossil fuel use.
- (c) Work with Eversource and NGRID to identify and implement geothermal neighborhood projects.
- (d) Focus on reducing our solid waste generation. I am pleased that so many Newton residents contract with Black Earth composting, but we need to have the city provide curbside pickup of organic waste for all residents.
- (e) Identify and implement opportunities on municipal land to invest in solutions to reduce flooding and improve biodiversity, along the lines of the Cheesecake Brook project at Albemarle Field.
- (f) Work with the City Council to update our stormwater rules such that new construction or major renovation projects will have to retain the volume of stormwater in a 100-year storm on site.

Question 3:

Do you believe current funding levels in the City budget are sufficient to maintain high quality open space and address growing climate mitigation needs? If not, what would you do about it? (400 words or less)

Response:

Newton's needs are great, and revenues are limited. Schools, road repair, open space, climate mitigation/resilience needs, and public safety are all important. Newton is highly reliant on residential property taxes, and we are addressing unfunded pension and retiree healthcare

liabilities. Therefore, it is important that we promote commercial development which brings in more proportionally more revenue than residential projects while requiring fewer city services. To be able to invest more in climate resilience and mitigation, it will be important for Newton residents to feel that it is a good investment and demonstrate support for increasing that level of investment. I look forward to working with the Newton Conservators to engage our residents about our collective vision for a more sustainable Newton.