



Bike Newton Candidate Questionnaire

Questionnaire Intro:

Bicycling concerns are inextricably linked to a number of issues, including transportation and recreation generally, but also to concerns of climate, housing, land use, health and wellness, healthy aging, affordability, commuting, and mobility justice. This Candidate Questionnaire, developed by the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition and Bike Newton, is designed to explore how candidates for public office view and approach these interconnected issues.

Candidate Name: Linda Swain

Office Sought in Election: School Committee, Ward 2 (elected citywide)

Campaign website: <https://www.swainforschools.com/>

Campaign social media accounts: SwainforSchools

Tell Us Your Story

1. Which of the following modes of transportation do you use regularly?

- Car
- Green Line
- Commuter Rail
- Bus
- Bike
- Mobility Device
- Walking
- Ride Share

- Moped/Motorcycle
- Scooter
- Carpool

2. Do you think Newton has sufficient safe cycling options in our city? If not, hat do you see as some of the biggest challenges related to safe bicycling in Newton?

As defined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Newton School Committee's role is to select and, if necessary, terminate the Superintendent; review and approve the NPS budget; and establish educational goals and policies consistent with state law and statewide standards. It's important to note the Committee does not set curriculum, but it can influence many aspects of NPS through the budget. I believe the Committee also has a vital responsibility to serve as a voice for parents, the community, and voters.

As such, much of this questionnaire, although very important, is outside the scope of the School Committee. In general, I support efforts to ensure all students can travel to school safely, including those who walk, bike, or rely on other means of transportation. It's important that we consider all students in our efforts to enhance safety traveling to/from school including those students with disabilities.

3. What specific actions will you take to address these challenges?

See response to #2.

4. Do you support the completion and implementation of Newton's Walk, Roll and Bike Network Plan? If so, how will you work to support the completion of this plan??

See response to #2.

5. If you could choose where to place protected bike lanes or separate trails, what would be your top priority locations?

See response to #2.

6. Bicycle infrastructure and safety improvements cannot be implemented without adequate funding. Would you support an annual allocation from the City of Newton budget of at least \$1 million per year dedicated towards implementation of the Walk, Roll, and Bicycle Network Plan?

See response to #2.

7. Emissions: Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Massachusetts (40%). At the same time, congestion rates have quickly returned to pre-

pandemic highs. Do you see the issues of climate and transportation as connected, and if so how would you work to align them?

See response to #2.

8. Resiliency: Infrastructure in Massachusetts needs to be built to withstand our climate future — our bridges and roads, as well as bus and transit service, are crucial in the event of climate emergencies and in meeting long term climate goals. What specific actions will your office take to influence local and state agencies to improve our climate resiliency and meet our climate goals?

See response to #2.

9. Access to Health and Wellness: Walking and biking improve mental and physical health; however many recreational destinations are out of reach for people with disabilities, or for people without a personal automobile. How will you work to provide access to recreation for all people?

See response to #2.

10. "Vision Zero" is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. Do you believe that Newton should adopt Vision Zero?

- Strongly Support
- Somewhat Support
- Neither Support nor Oppose
- Somewhat Oppose
- Strongly Oppose

Explanation:

See response to #2.

11. Automated Enforcement (i.e., speed cameras and red-light cameras) is one key strategy that has been proven to effectively reduce speeding, improve safety, and remove racial bias in traffic enforcement in other states. Would you support automated enforcement legislation that allows Newton to opt-in to a speed or red-light camera program?

- Strongly Support
- Somewhat Support
- Neither Support nor Oppose

- Somewhat Oppose
- Strongly Oppose

Explanation:

See response to #2.

12. The school trip by car in Newton contributes roughly thousands of trips per day to Newton's streets. This contributes to substantial auto congestion around drop-off and pick-up times. Is this an optimal configuration for our schools, roads and sidewalks? If not what would you propose?

The school trip to/from school by car in Newton is generally very congested. I would defer to transportation experts as to potential configuration solutions. Ideas to consider might include encouraging carpooling where applicable, enhancing the safety of sidewalks, and identifying additional drop-off/pick-up locations as appropriate.

13. Safety around schools has been a top priority for city transportation planners. Many of our new schools have been designed to protect children walking and biking to school, and additional changes have been made around existing schools--particularly eliminating drop-off loops for parent/guardian cars. Do you support these changes? If so, do you have any proposals to extend/improve these changes??

In general, I support efforts to ensure all students can travel to/from school safely, including those who walk, bike, or rely on other means of transportation. It's important that we consider all students in our efforts to enhance safety traveling to/from school including our disabled students. City transportation planners should continue to monitor the effectiveness of safety improvement measures and continue to seek opportunities for enhancement at both new and existing schools.

14. A significant safety concern is drivers of private vehicles who violate school campus rules or city and state traffic ordinances. Our police department is unable to enforce because officers are often covering crossing guard locations (hiring remains an issue). How can you as a member of the School Committee help to alleviate this issue?

I support efforts to ensure all students can travel to/from school safely, including those who walk, bike, or rely on other means of transportation. If elected, I would explore available data to identify where violations are occurring and any safety issues that have arisen. I would advocate for strong collaboration between city officials, school administrators and our police department to ensure that safety remains a shared priority. I would support efforts to expand crossing guard staffing – while identifying the *why* behind staffing issues – and address issues uncovered. Finally, I would encourage community outreach efforts to remind families and caregivers the importance of traffic safety on and around school grounds.

