



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: Alison Leary

Office Sought in Election: City Council at Large Ward 1

Campaign website:

Campaign social media accounts: <https://x.com/Environista> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/campaign.alisonlearyalderman>

Tell Us Your Story

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

I just bought a new EV and I have an ebike as well. I use the Express bus or Greenline to get in and out of Boston.

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

We do not have sufficient protected bike lanes but we are moving in the right direction. The Washington Street pilot is a big improvement. As well as the newly completed bike and pedestrian paths along Hammond Pond Parkway and bike lanes in process along Needham Street. We also the protected lanes on Commonwealth Ave which are very enjoyable. The biggest challenge is competing with parking spaces which sometimes need to be removed to make room for bike lanes. We also need a committed and involved city council to get these measures passed.

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

The adoption of the Walk, Roll and Bike Network Plan is an important action. Implementing those actions and funding the work. This work is part of our climate action plan as well.

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??

Absolutely I support the Plan! I am happy to see it posted to the city website. I will advocate and vote for adoption.

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

Include protected bike lanes along Washinton Street from Lowell Ave to Newton Corner. Complete the rail trail from St. Mary's Street in Upper Falls.

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?

I would if I thought that was feasible in the near future. I think a better approach at least for 2026-2028 would be dedicated funding as part of an override plan to better fund trails and open spaces. After we have fully funded to fully our pension liabilities by Fiscal Year 2032 that would free up more funds for the Walk, Roll, and Bicycle Network Plan.

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?

The issues of climate goals and transportation are clearly connected. The choices that we make to get around our city have impacts. Prioritizing public transit and safe options for bicyclists and pedestrians are key factors. Also, building more housing in village centers where residents are less car dependent

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?

Advocate, coordinate with our State Reps and Congressman Auchincloss.

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?

I think the city is sensitive to the needs of people with disabilities. We have GoGo Newton which provides subsidized car transportation, we have access to many recreational opportunities, including swimming, basketball and running tracks, as well as accessible outdoor trails. Of course, we can do better and we should be listening to suggestions and partnering with our Commission on disabilities.

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: Strongly support. We know that good street design, traffic calming and protected bike lanes make us safer. We need to continue our commitments to Vision Zero goals.

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: I strongly support. It works!

11. 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?

We should discourage parents driving students to school. But we need to offer options. Affordable bus service, safe sidewalks and protected bike lanes. I also support walkable neighborhood schools.

12. 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??

YES! Lets keep making improvements and include them in the budget.

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?

N/A