

**Candidate Name:** Christine Fisher

**Office Sought in Election:** Newton School Committee, Ward 2

**Campaign website:** [www.votechristinefisher.com](http://www.votechristinefisher.com)

**Campaign social media accounts:** <https://www.facebook.com/VoteFisher/>,  
<https://www.instagram.com/votechristinefisher/>

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## **Tell Us Your Story**

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

Car, Green Line, Walking, Ride Share

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### **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?**

Newton has made progress, but we still have work to do to make biking feel truly safe and practical for everyone. Both my kids bike to school (one to Cabot and one to Day), and while it's great to see students biking, there are sections of their routes that make me nervous as a parent. The biggest challenges are the gaps between bike-friendly routes, limited protection from traffic, and the fact that our infrastructure still prioritizes cars over people walking or biking.

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

As a School Committee member, I'll advocate for school transportation policies that make biking and walking realistic options for more families. That includes working with city staff to identify priority routes to each school, making sure bike parking is available and convenient, and keeping families informed about safe routes. I'll also push for close collaboration between the schools, city planners, and the community so we can build on-the-ground improvements that families will actually use.

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### **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?**

Yes, I strongly support it. The Walk, Roll and Bike Network Plan is essential to creating safer and more sustainable ways for students to get to school. As a parent who sees the benefits of kids biking every day, I'll advocate for the plan to be integrated into school facility

projects, like building renovations and site planning. Safe infrastructure should be part of how we think about student wellness and accessibility.

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

I would prioritize routes that connect schools to neighborhoods. Walnut Street is a key corridor that should feel safe for kids biking to school, and we need better connections to the Green Line and the Carriageway so that biking can link naturally with public transit.

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**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?**

Yes. Consistent, dedicated funding is how we turn plans into reality. A yearly commitment shows that the city is serious about building a connected network - one that families can count on year-round, not just in certain neighborhoods.

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**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?**

Transportation and climate are deeply connected. Every time one of my kids bikes to school instead of being driven, that's one small step toward lowering emissions and reducing congestion. I want Newton to be a city where that choice feels easy and safe for more families. I'll advocate for school policies and investments that align with the city's climate goals, such as encouraging active travel and making our bus systems more efficient.

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**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?**

We need to plan our infrastructure for the climate realities ahead - from flooding to heat to storm events. As a School Committee member, I'll advocate for school sites that incorporate climate-resilient design, including safe, accessible walking and biking routes that remain functional in bad weather. I'll also support coordination with city and state

agencies to make sure our schools and transportation networks can withstand future challenges.

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**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?**

Biking and walking to school have been great for my kids. They start their day more energized, and it's good for their independence and well-being. Every student should have that opportunity, regardless of where they live or whether their family owns a car. I'll advocate for school programs that support active travel and for ensuring that playgrounds, fields, and recreation areas are accessible to students of all abilities.

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**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**

**Explanation:** Every traffic injury or fatality is preventable, and Newton should commit to Vision Zero. We can start by focusing on areas around schools, where traffic calming, better signage, and protected crossings can make a big difference. Safe streets are an investment in our kids' freedom and independence.

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**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?**

**Somewhat Support**

**Explanation:** I support exploring automated enforcement as a way to reduce speeding and improve safety near schools. It's important that any program is implemented thoughtfully and equitably, but if done right, it can help create safer conditions without relying solely on police presence.

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**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?**

No. We need to make it easier for families to choose alternatives to driving. School traffic is one of the biggest contributors to congestion in Newton, and it affects everyone's safety. I'd

like to see us expand Safe Routes to School programs, promote walking school buses and bike trains, and work with parents to identify what would help them feel more comfortable letting their kids bike or walk.

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**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?**

Yes, I support the changes that prioritize safety for students walking and biking. Eliminating drop-off loops and calming traffic around schools helps everyone. I'd like to build on that progress by improving signage, adding more bike racks, and ensuring that safe routes are clearly marked and maintained so they're usable year-round. We also need to see how we can optimize pick up / drop off processes as it is still a needed option for many families.

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**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 would work to strengthen communication between schools, families, and the city about traffic expectations and safety. Education and consistency are key. We also need to make sure our crossing guard program is fully supported, and that school site designs make it harder for unsafe driving behavior to happen in the first place. The more we can create a culture of safety, led by example from parents and guardians, the better.