



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: Mali Brodt

Office Sought in Election: School Committee, Ward 6

Campaign website: <https://www.mali4newton.org>

Campaign social media accounts:

- Facebook – [Mali Brodt](#)
- Instagram – [@voteBrodt](#)

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?

No.

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

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.

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

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?

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?

Yes.

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?

n/a

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?

n/a

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:

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:

n/a

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 neighborhood school model serves our community to encourage developing closer bonds in and around schools. Ideally our schools wouldn't be located around main arteries, so that people cutting traffic wouldn't commute around schools. While a sizable part of the community in elementary schools can and chooses to walk to school, there is general lack of trust around the safety of bikers and pedestrians, which hinders the widespread adoption of walk, bike to school. To restore trust, we need more active participation of NPD. For middle- and high-school, busing becomes a necessity. Bus fees have skyrocketed, potentially discouraging kids from using transportation that would alleviate traffic. Late buses have also become scarce, prompting parents and students to use cars instead. Lastly, the use of private cars by kids shouldn't be incentivized. Parking for students should be discouraged by using a fee structure that better reflects these values.

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 walk my kids to school. The implementation of Blue Zones for drop-off/pick-up is a good step towards ensuring safe, orderly, and consistent traffic patterns around schools. As renovation of schools continues, new building designs have taken a more holistic and modern approach to ensuring safety and allowing kids and families to access school by different means. Education of parents remains a challenge to ensuring that loops are only used for school busses.

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?

With regards to schools, the 'Walk, Roll, and Bicycle Network Plan' only touches on two aspects: (a) awareness and education, and (b) snow removal pathways to schools. The plan does nothing to address insufficient traffic enforcement around schools. Speed violations and frequent incidents of drivers ignoring (and even endangering) crossing guards should be a concern. I've heard from volunteers with SRTS. They have relayed to me that they feel powerless and unable to guarantee kid's safety. While infrastructure changes are important, behavioral changes require the active enforcement by NPD. School personnel are stretched thin and cannot also be required to direct traffic. I

understand NPD is also understaffed but I would encourage NPD to prioritize operations that target enforcement at rush hour in the mornings at selected schools, so that drivers understand there is zero tolerance for traffic violations that endanger our children.