



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: Martha Bixby

Office Sought in Election: Ward 6 Ward Councilor

Campaign website: marthabixby.org

Campaign social media accounts: @marthabix on instagram

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

One of the main reasons we moved to Newton and one of the reasons we sought out the neighborhood in particular that we moved to, was because we would be able to walk, bike, and take transit for many of our daily “trips”. We have seen that to be the case - we can walk and bike the kids to school, for small grocery trips, to local soccer games, to the dentist, out to dinner, to the gym, and much more. I believe that more awareness of our existing bike and walking options, integrating bike and pedestrian safety into our decisions and infrastructure, and emphasizing the joy of being active and outside for those who are able, will make biking and walking for daily activities an option for even more Newton residents. I am grateful for Bike Newton’s advocacy on all these fronts and will continue to make safe biking and walking a focus of my work in the next term (as well as my daily life!)

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 have seen some progress in creating stretches of protected lanes and providing areas with safe options for cyclists. It would be good to see more of that and importantly to create connections between safer stretches to create longer route options, which would allow for more people to feel safe cycling.

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?

Routes to school!

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?

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?

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?

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:

I supported our recent adoption of legislation allowing Newton to adopt automated enforcement for vehicles that pass stopped school buses (with the stop sign out). This is an important safety step and it will be helpful to see how this goes in our city.

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?

I have been very active with Safe Routes to School and serve on the School Transportation Working Group. I strongly support any ways to help students and their families walk, bike, roll, or take the bus to school.

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??

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?