

## Bike Newton Candidate Questionnaire

**Name: James Cote, Candidate for Ward 3 Councilor**

### **Question 1)**

Improved bicycle infrastructure will increase bicycle use and increase safety. A proposal for a Bicycle Network Plan was developed in 2012, but Newton has yet to adopt or implement most of its recommendations. If you believe Newton should have an official Bicycle Plan, please list the concrete steps you will take to create one, or summarize why you do not think a plan is necessary.

*This is a very interesting question and brings up a great point of view. I do believe that after all these years of bicycle integration onto the city streets it is time to develop a Newton Bicycle Plan. My concrete steps are very simple. Upon entering office in January 2022, I will docket an item to the City Council on developing a plan. The docket item would establish a goal of developing a Bicycle Plan during calendar year 2022 and the item would also establish the requirement for forming a working group of experts to develop the plan. I would lean on experts in the field to establish the make-up of the working group.*

### **Question 2)**

Newton's Open Space and Recreation Plan, Climate Action Plan, Comprehensive Plan, I, Complete Streets Policy, Newton 2040: A Transportation Strategy, the Transportation Advisory Group, Safe Routes to Schools and Bike Newton all recommend providing mobility options that reduce dependency on motor vehicles. Do you agree with this recommendation? If so, please identify steps you would take to help make it happen, including criteria.

*I agree with the need to start the process of deemphasizing the use of automobiles on Newton Streets, with the particular target being the Village Centers and then working outwards to connect the Village Centers. To accomplish this, it seems like the time has come to bring individuals from each of the cited groups and establish a joint working group to provide advice and a timetable for this administration and future administrations to implement a standard policy. The working group would move towards becoming an actual city committee supported by ordinances directing implementation, membership, and reporting chain, and could report to either of the administration, the City Council, or both bodies.*

### **Question 3)**

Improving bicycle and pedestrian safety may involve streamlining roadways for automobiles so that bicyclists will be able to safely negotiate roads and intersections. Would you support compromises for bicycle infrastructure, even if that results in lower speeds for cars, reduced parking in certain locations and reduced auto lanes in some places? Please explain your rationale for this response.

*This is a question that I have answered while I was on the City Council. As an advocate and docket item writer, I worked to take these very actions in the rebuilding of West Newton Square.*

*The near completed projects does all of the items specified in question 3 to include bike lanes, reduced auto travel lanes, improved pedestrian safety, and eliminating and modifying bike lanes. I support this concept and know that it can work.*

**Question 4)**

Would you support multi-modal access to popular destinations within Newton, such as village centers, schools, shopping, transit and municipal buildings? If so, please suggest ways Newton could fund the implementation of contiguous infrastructure to access our city via walking, cycling, scooters, cars, and the like.

*I've long felt that for economic growth Newton should develop innovative ways to move people from the MBTA, to other cities such as Waltham, and the campuses in an integrated way. There are currently many bus/shuttle services operating in the city that could take people back and forth if centralized service was made mandatory in Public Safety.*

*To make it possible we need to develop mini multi-modal transportation hubs in strategic locations in the city, in business and on school campuses. This would enable people to store their own bikes, scooters, etc., while changing mode, going about their day, all while eliminating automobile transportation.*

**Question 5)**

In 2020 the Newton City Council unanimously passed a Vision Zero resolution which states that our city goal is to have no roadway deaths or injuries. Would you support this as a newly elected councilor, or continue to support if re-elected?

*Absolutely!! I had a lot of experience with this in another way while being a senior Marine. We worked hard to eliminate traffic deaths on/off base through education, training, awareness, and enforcement. We need to create this same awareness both regionally and in the city.*

**Question 6)**

Children in Newton walk, bike, take the bus, or use another form of non-auto transport such as scooters in order to get to school. Do you think the current balance is correct? If not, what do you think should be changed?

*By this question, I'm not sure what balance is being addressed. Educating parents as to how the safety of their child, can be proven and assured in these various travel modes, would add comfort to parents in allowing their children to avoid autos. One challenge is that many children go elsewhere after school and may not be realistic to expect they can be in a safe enough distance to make this work.*

**Question 7)**

Automated enforcement (using cameras) has reduced speeding and improved safety in states where it has been implemented, but there are privacy and constitutional concerns, as well as fears of inequitable ticketing and punishment. If the Commonwealth of MA passes automated

enforcement legislation that allows cities and towns to opt-in to a speed or red-light camera program, would you support doing this in Newton?

*This is a great question and would certainly trigger a classic Newton response that would be a great back and forth dialogue. Personally, I would not support a continuous program of camera enforcement but I may be open to spot enforcing for educational purposes. By this I would have the technology in place to turn on in troubled intersections, and then turn off when traffic compliance is in good shape. Also, we do need to address bicycle/pedestrian signal compliance now that complete streets such as Walnut, and West Newton square will only function safety if all modes of travel follow traffic and movement laws.*

Thank you.

James Cote