

Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety in Newton, MA

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TO MAYOR FULLER AND THE CITY COUNCIL:

More people are bicycling and walking these days for healthy, safe, outdoor exercise, recreation, fresh air and transportation. Encouraging these activities can improve the overall health of our community. Unfortunately, in many areas of Newton, our streets are unsafe for children, older adults, people with disabilities, whether as pedestrians or bicyclists. Making safe mobility a priority is a core way for Newton to be more sustainable and livable.

Newton residents have volunteered thousands of hours to help develop plans and policies that envision a livable, sustainable future with safer roads and less traffic where everyone can safely move around, especially those using active, non-motorized transportation including:

- Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Climate Action Plan
- Vision Zero
- Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)
- Comprehensive Plan
- Complete Streets Policy
- Newton 2040: A Transportation Strategy for Newton
- Several Bicycle Plans. We need to act now to achieve the mobility, livability and sustainability goals in those policies and plans.

We, the undersigned, ask the MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL to:

- Dedicate significant resources in the 2022 budget and beyond for rapid construction of proper bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that protects vulnerable road users, mitigates climate change, reduces congestion, and prevents traffic injuries and fatalities.
- Implement the recommendations in these plans relating to vehicle trip reduction and construction of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
 - Implement these specific Bike Newton recommendations in 2021:
 - Immediately use quick-build (barrels, flex-posts, planters) to establish temporary safety barriers while planning for permanent solutions.
- By May:
 - Implement pilot SRTS routes and integrate active transportation into NPS transportation plans.
 - Begin a pilot of protected bike lanes on each side of Washington St.
- By September: Improve safety on the school routes suggested by SRTS
- By December: create, adopt, fund and make a timeline with metrics for:
 - Implementing a Bicycle Network Plan connecting popular destinations such as schools, parks, public transportation, village centers and workplaces
 - Eliminating severe injury crashes and fatalities (Vision Zero).
 - Encouraging use of e-Bikes for short trips.