

*1. If elected, what would be your top priorities for improving safety and comfort for people walking and biking in Newburyport? Are there specific locations that you would like the City to focus on in the next few years? Are there specific initiatives or policies you would support?*

Once in office, one of my top priorities would be implementing more traffic calming measures across the City to improve safety for all road users. In Ward 3 specifically, I would like to see preliminary engineering work done to evaluate replacing several four-way stops with micro-roundabouts. Drivers frequently roll through or fail to stop completely at intersections along Munroe Street, particularly at Broad and Tyng Streets. These intersections appear to have sufficient space to accommodate roundabouts or similar calming structures, which could slow traffic and improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike.

Another critical area is the Kent Street and Merrimac Street intersection, which has long been recognized as problematic. The ability to drive directly into the gas station from Merrimac Street, or exit westbound onto Kent Street, creates dangerous conflict points. Vehicles traveling west on Merrimac often do not slow down before turning, making this a high-risk area that deserves renewed attention.

The stretch from Dove Street to the Cashman Park entrance also needs focused improvements. This section functions as an extended driveway apron with little definition between pedestrian and vehicle areas. The City may have an opportunity to construct sidewalks there given the wide setback from property lines, which would enhance access and safety for those walking or biking to the park. The opposite side of Merrimac Street, from Kent to Caldwell's Court, presents similar challenges.

Finally, the intersection of Low Street and Graf Road is in urgent need of attention. There is a preschool in that area with no sidewalks on Graf Road and no crosswalks connecting to Low Street. Families are forced to navigate through parking lots and driveways to reach the building, which is unacceptable. The City should prioritize pedestrian infrastructure here to ensure children and families have a safe route.

*2. What do you think the City is doing well in terms of bike and pedestrian facilities and infrastructure? What could be improved?*

Mayor Reardon's streets and sidewalks plan represents real progress after decades of deferred maintenance. While no infrastructure plan can ever move fast enough, this effort demonstrates a serious commitment to rebuilding our foundation.

I strongly support designing our streets and neighborhoods with people—not cars—at the center. We need to rethink car-centric development and shift focus toward walkability and

connectivity. For example, projects like Waterfront West in Ward 3 should emphasize pedestrian access and circulation rather than maximizing parking. A more walkable, accessible city benefits residents, visitors, and local businesses alike.

3. *Snow and ice can block sidewalks, curb ramps, bus stops, and bike lanes for days, making it difficult for people who walk, roll, bike, or rely on transit to travel safely. Clearing these areas quickly is essential for maintaining year-round accessibility. How do you envision improving accessibility for walkers and bikers during winter weather events?*

Current regulations require property owners to remove snow from sidewalks within a set timeframe after a storm, but enforcement is minimal and compliance is inconsistent. Some sidewalks downtown are cleared well, while others are narrowed to a shovel's width or left untreated except for a bit of snow melt.

The result is a patchwork of accessibility that limits safe travel for pedestrians, especially in the winter. The City should review and strengthen its snow removal ordinance to include clear standards and active enforcement. In addition, snowbanks piled at intersections by plows create serious visibility hazards. Corners along Merrimac and High Streets, in particular, often remain obstructed for days or even weeks after a storm. The City should allocate resources—whether through DPS or contracted services—to reduce and remove these piles as part of standard post-storm cleanup.

4. *Safe walking and biking routes to school help children have the freedom and independence to move around the community and reduce car trips for parents and guardians. Is there anything the City should do to promote safe options for kids walking and biking to school?*

The Newburyport Public Schools already do a commendable job promoting “Walk and Bike to School” days, particularly at the elementary level. However, sustained participation depends on families feeling confident that routes are safe and well-maintained.

The key to making walking and biking more appealing is traffic calming. Streets like High and Merrimac encourage high speeds due to long, uninterrupted stretches. The City should invest in more curb bumpouts, crossing islands, and other proven measures to slow vehicle traffic. Safer infrastructure not only protects our children but also fosters independence and builds a stronger sense of community.