

*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?*

My top priority is to move from scattered projects to coordinated corridor planning so we can fix streets as complete networks, not one intersection at a time. In Ward 5, Low Street should be a major focus. It is one of the city's busiest and fastest-growing corridors, connecting neighborhoods to the Bresnahan and Nock-Molin schools, the industrial park, Anna Jaques Hospital, the future recreation center, and the business district. A Low Street corridor plan would take a comprehensive look at sidewalks, crossings, lighting, and traffic calming so walking or biking along Low feels safe, direct, and connected to nearby streets.

The Safe Routes to School grant for Colby Farm/Low Street/North Atkinson is a good start and shows that the City is beginning to plan for safety and access together. That same coordinated approach should extend to other key west-end corridors like Hale Street, North Atkinson Street, and Storey Avenue, which also link neighborhoods to schools, parks, and local businesses but lack continuous sidewalks and safe crossings.

I also support developing a Complete Streets framework so safety and connectivity are built into every project from the beginning. As the City works on these corridors, we should also plan how they connect to the Clipper City Rail Trail to create a direct, safe link from the west end to downtown.

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

The City does well when projects are designed with purpose. The Clipper City Rail Trail is a strong example of how good design can encourage walking and biking for both recreation and daily trips. The Colby Farm and Low Street Safe Routes to School project is another step in the right direction because it focuses on connecting neighborhoods to schools with better sidewalks and crossings.

What we need is consistency. Too many sidewalks end mid-block or run directly beside fast traffic without a buffer. On corridors like Low, Hale, North Atkinson, and Storey, upcoming resurfacing and capital projects should add curb extensions, raised or textured crossings, and accessible ramps that match where people actually walk. Design should follow how residents use the streets, not just the existing pavement.

*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?*

The City has a snow and ice plan that prioritizes plowing roads and clearing key sidewalks downtown and near schools, while property owners are responsible for the rest. That structure makes sense, but in practice, there are still gaps where sidewalks stay blocked for days or where it is unclear who maintains them. Some residents, especially those who are older or have disabilities, are not physically able to clear their sidewalks, which leaves parts of the network inaccessible.

I think the City can build on what is already in place by communicating responsibilities more clearly, responding faster when issues are reported, and exploring an opt-in assistance program for people who cannot safely shovel. It may also make sense to identify a few priority walking, biking, and transit routes that receive more consistent attention during storms. The SeeClickFix portal is a helpful tool for flagging blocked areas, but those reports should feed into a more systematic process for follow-up and education. The goal should be steady improvement, with clearer expectations and a focus on keeping the routes people rely on most open and safe throughout the winter.

*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 bike buses at Bresnahan and Nock-Molin show what is possible when families, schools, and community partners work together. Newburyport Livable Streets organized those efforts, and they have shown that with the right support, kids can safely and confidently bike to school. Having a police detail at the High Street entrance during the Bres bike bus has helped calm traffic and improve driver awareness.

The North Atkinson entrance can feel congested and unpredictable during arrival. Design updates such as curb extensions, raised crosswalks, or clearer markings could help define where bikes, cars, and pedestrians should move. Even modest visibility and layout changes can slow traffic and make crossings safer. Consistent police presence during peak times, paired with those design updates, would help reinforce safe behavior and make the area more predictable for everyone.

The broader goal is to make walking and biking a safe, reliable choice for families every day. When routes are well designed, maintained, and supported through both education and enforcement, it builds confidence for parents and independence for kids, which benefits the entire community.