

2025 Cambridge Bike Safety School Committee Candidate Questionnaire

Cambridge's transportation choices shape public health, climate emissions, affordability, and mobility justice for students and guardians. Because road-space is finite, each mile of sidewalk, bike lane, or bus lane represents a deliberate policy trade-off, one that either widens or narrows opportunity for children and guardians walking and biking to school. This questionnaire, developed by Cambridge Bicycle Safety (CBS), lets voters see where you stand on those trade-offs. We appreciate you taking the time to share your views with potential voters.

- **Candidates must submit this form no later than Friday, August 22, 2025 (11:59 p.m. EDT).**
- Responses received by the deadline may be published and/or shared with our membership.
- Final endorsement decisions will be made shortly after the deadline based on questionnaire responses along with candidates' backgrounds, voting records (if applicable), advocacy work, platforms, and public statements.
- CBS will not coordinate election strategy or messaging with any School Committee candidate or committee, and endorsements will not be negotiated.
- For questions about this questionnaire or process, please contact us at info@cambridgebikesafety.org.

Section A – Candidate & Campaign Details

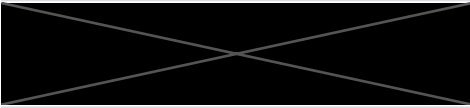
What is your full name as it appears on the ballot? *

Anne Mathilde Coburn

What is the URL of your official campaign website? (If applicable)

www.coburn-for-cambridge.com

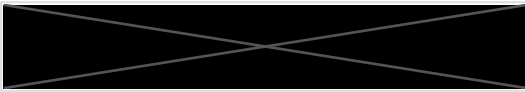
Please provide the name of your primary point of contact. (This information will be kept confidential and not published.) *

A black rectangular box with a white 'X' inside, indicating that the name of the primary point of contact has been redacted.

Please provide the email address of your primary point of contact. (This information will be kept confidential and not published.) *

A black rectangular box with a white 'X' inside, indicating that the email address of the primary point of contact has been redacted.

Please provide the phone number of your primary point of contact. (This information will be kept confidential and not published.) *

A black rectangular box with a white 'X' inside, indicating that the phone number of the primary point of contact has been redacted.

If offered, would you accept an endorsement from our organization? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

Section B – Background Questions

Use this section to share your personal travel experiences to school and, if applicable, how your children travel(ed) to school. **Please keep each response under 1,500 characters.**

How did you travel to and from school when you were growing up, and how did that affect your independence and which activities you participated in? *

I grew up in Cleveland Heights, OH in the '80s and '90s. I have a very clear memory of walking to kindergarten (half a mile away) by myself at the age of four, and being taught to ride my bike at the age of five by my uncle Miles. During middle school (1.8 miles away), I biked or walked, occasionally catching a ride with one of my parents. High school (1.1 miles away), was also a combo of biking, walking, and car rides.

In terms of independence, by the age of 10 or 11, I started camping out at the local library after school until it closed at 9 p.m. I first babysat by myself at the age of 13. My first regularly paid job was at 15 – also the year I attended the 4th U.N. Forum on Women in Beijing, China, with the Cleveland-based organization Women Speak Out for Peace and Justice (and without my family).

I didn't get my drivers' license until I was 20 years old, in part because I could get where I needed via bike. This attitude was influenced by my family. My grandfather biked to work every day until he retired. My uncles waited for my younger brother's birth before biking across the country. In 2008, right before I went to grad school, I biked 300 miles between Poughkeepsie, NY to Cape Cod with my husband and my father. A month after that, however, my uncle Miles, a biology professor at John Carroll University, was killed while he was biking on the outskirts of Cleveland.

It's fair to say that I think about the interplay of bicycles, safety, and independence quite a bit.

If you have kids, how do they travel to school and school activities (e.g. sports)? How has the city's street environment affected your choices for your kids? *

My husband Adam Zeller and I have two children, Zora (almost 12) and Harriet (5).

Zora was born in 2013, when we lived in the farthest northern neighborhood in Manhattan. Her daycare was a couple of blocks away from our home. Her pre-school was also walkable. She went to her first elementary school via subway.

When she was born, Adam worked for the New York City Office of Management and Budget. He then worked as the Executive Director of Budget at the NYC Department of Transportation. Each job was as far south in Manhattan as you could get. Ironically, while he worked on the creation of Vision Zero at his job, he rarely had the opportunity to commute to work by bike. Instead, he spent more than an hour on the subway each way every day. As a filmmaker, my own commute ranged project by project, but was also often over an hour away. The punishing toll of our commutes was a major factor in our decision to send Zora to Kennedy-Longfellow for elementary school when we moved to East Cambridge in September 2019.

Adam and our daughter Harriet now bike to her daycare in downtown Boston, located in the same building where he works for the MBTA. But in two weeks, Harriet will either walk or bike to kindergarten at King Open, and Zora will take the bus to Putnam Avenue Upper School. While Zora would like to bike to PAUS, I'm concerned that the bike ride would not be safe enough for her to take on by herself.

Section C – Questionnaire

For each question, select your position on a scale from **Yes, No, and Partial**.

You may also provide up to 700 characters to briefly explain your position or describe how you would implement or address each topic. **Explanations are optional, and you are welcome to share additional context or priorities that can help voters better understand your perspective.**

Do you support completing the [Cycling Safety Ordinance](#) projects scheduled for 2026? Among them, [Cambridge St.](#) and [Broadway](#) are major projects connecting directly to multiple schools (CRLS, Fletcher Maynard, King Open). *

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Partially

You may elaborate on your response (optional):

The process of turning cities into a mixed-transportation environment is both structural and cultural. Many drivers resent the presence of bikes on the road; many inexperienced cyclists unknowingly create hazards while biking. While the process of constructing separated bike lanes may be inconvenient for cars and parking in the short term, the realization of those plans will help to keep everyone safer in the long term.

As of 2019, over 40% of K-8 students walk or bike to school (data from [2020 Bike Plan](#)), and the city only [provides bus service](#) to those students PreK-5 living more than a mile away from school and grades 6-8 more than 1.5 miles from school. **Do you support ensuring that every school has a safe biking connection installed by 2030?** *

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Partially

You may elaborate on your response (optional):

At the moment, kids often spend more than an hour on a bus when they cross from one side of the city to the other. This is in a city that is only 7.1 miles across. At the same time, the FY2026 CPSD budget shows \$14.4M transportation spend — a 5% increase from FY2025. And the district negotiates their contracts with the bus companies at an extreme disadvantage, as the transportation companies hold a monopoly on those services. That means that there's no leverage to improve service or lower costs. Creating biking connections to schools may help to keep kids safe while also offering a way forward for more favorable future negotiating positions.

Do you support piloting [School Streets](#) (which close a block adjacent to the school to car traffic * during arrival and departure to [provide a safe space for students](#)) at all City schools?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Partially

You may elaborate on your response (optional):

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The City has a few [parent-organized Bike Buses](#), where [volunteers lead a group bike ride of students](#) to school. **Do you favor the City formally supporting bike buses and expanding the practice to all elementary schools?** If you have ideas for what formal support could look like, please include them. *

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Partially

You may elaborate on your response (optional):

Please sign me up – and could we also formally ask the Friends of groups for various schools (some of which are quite well off) to operate a kids' bike rental or cheap used bike purchase program for the school year?

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Do you support ensuring that all students have bike safety training at all levels of education (at least three times)? *

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Partially

You may elaborate on your response (optional):

Biking defensively is probably one of the easier ways to keep a cyclist safe. So it's logical to teach all kids how to safely ride a bike and it's fantastic to give kids enough security so they can actually have fun on a bike as well.

More personally, when Zora took her bike safety training in elementary school, it was the first time she ever felt good at anything in gym class. I believe that feeling taught her that trying hard and succeeding feels great. I also believe that those classes helped to set her up for a far better relationship with her education than she had previously had.

Please elaborate on any other ways that you, as a School Committee member, plan to enhance safety of students traveling to and from school and related activities and encourage more students to bike to school. *

I plan to push for a more robust transportation department within the district that sees its brief as encompassing transportation and related services of all kinds – from buses to parking to cycling. I'm looking forward to connecting with the city's newly revised transportation department to ensure more coordinated services moving forward.

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