

APPLICATION

1500 Warburton Avenue

Santa Clara, CA 95050

Tel: (408) 615-3023

Fax:(408) 985-7936

Email: MJohnson@santaclaraca.gov

(Any information provided will be public record)

Name: Elizabeth "Betsy" Megas

Address: Santa Clara 95050

Telephone: Work (____)_____ Home(____)_____

Email _____

Present employer: Arista Networks (Santa Clara 95054)

Job Title: Mechanical engineer

Please answer the following questions. If you need additional space, please attach additional sheets.

1. State reasons why you want to become a member of this Committee:

Please see additional sheets.

2. What specific objectives you would be working toward as a member of this Committee. Please see additional sheets.

3. Describe your bicycling history: _____
Please see additional sheets.

4. Describe your community involvement:
Please see additional sheets.

5. Special interests/hobbies/talents: Please see additional sheets.

6. Any other information that you feel would be useful to the Committee in reviewing your application

Please see additional sheets.

1. State reasons why you want to become a member of this Committee.

I never set out to become a bicycling, walking, or transit advocate. Rather, I tried to rely less on my car to move around the city where I live and work. I find the car-centric infrastructure and the culture are greater hindrances to car-free or car-light mobility, than anything under my own direct control, such as my physical fitness, attitude/motivation, or which bicycle I own.

I would like to apply my own experience bicycling and walking in and around the City of Santa Clara to make the city safer and more accessible for people of all ages and abilities, and to make bicycling and walking a more attractive and effective mode of transportation—not just something done occasionally for exercise, or an “alternative” for those who cannot or will not drive.

I also hope to help focus the bicycle and pedestrian committee on identifying and promoting efforts that will be both efficient and effective.

2. What specific objectives you would be working toward as a member of this Committee?

Our 2018 Bicycle Plan is a big improvement over the 2009 plan; our upcoming pedestrian and trails plan will be our first. However, our 2009 Bicycle Plan listed a number of streets that didn’t change, even though some of them got resurfaced and restriped in that decade.

I’d like to work with the BPAC along with consultants, staff, and council, to encourage the completion of the pedestrian and trail plans, and especially to implement the plans in a timely manner, with an emphasis on improving safety and connectivity. I hope to promote a future including Vision Zero (a stated goal to design and build for zero fatalities and major injuries on our roadways). I hope to see the plans implemented in the spirit of the city’s own complete streets policy and Climate Action Plan, and in keeping with 2016 Measure B complete streets requirements for paving maintenance.

At the same time, I see some opportunities we could start soon and complete quickly, with minimal cost and controversy, to improve bicycling in Santa Clara. The entire list of bicycle parking called out in the plan costs about the same as one car stall in a parking garage, and the vast majority is at parks, schools, and other public facilities. Why couldn’t it happen in the first year or two? I’d also like to work with the stadium traffic and safety teams to locate electronic signs so they don’t block bike lanes, or to mount signs on utility poles if there is no place to put trailers other than across a bicycle lane.

Promoting bicycling and walking requires more than safe infrastructure. It also requires a cultural shift. I’d like to see the BPAC become more active—and frankly, more creative—in programming, too. I’d like to see fun rides and walks start to happen around Santa Clara. The library has done a few tours of different branches. We could hold walking and bicycling tours either for practical, educational reasons (such as exploring options for a new and improved El Camino Real, or discovering and cataloging local nature) or for fun (such as touring public art or ice cream shops).

3. Describe your bicycling [and walking] history.

- Bicycling without training wheels since third grade. (Never thought I'd put that on a resume!)
- Started bicycling across Santa Clara to attend high school in 10th grade, when the school bus to my neighborhood was canceled. Most streets haven't changed that much, but there's more traffic.
- Attended University of California, Davis, likely the most bicycle-friendly city and campus in California and perhaps in the U.S. Earned my B.S. before reluctantly getting my driver's license.
- Currently bicycling more than 3000 miles per year in and around Santa Clara, primarily for transportation. I've traveled most of the San Tomas Aquino Creek Trail nearly every weekday for the past 6 years to commute to my current job.
- Shop at Costco by bicycle, using a trailer and the Santa Clara Transit Center undercrossing.
- Walk to nearby destinations (farmer's market, library, parks, transit, recreation).
- Walk to transit when bicycling is not the best option (e.g. weather, darkness, distance).

4. Describe your community involvement.

- Library Board of Trustees, City of Santa Clara, 2008-2016.
 - Suggested inserting a request slip into the cases of aging DVDs, so patrons could report those that skipped or failed to play, and staff could identify which to clean or replace.
 - Suggested placing some of the donated children's books from the library book sale, into waiting rooms throughout Kaiser Hospital. Over a thousand such books have since been sent.
 - Accepted the "Community Quarterback" award from the 49ers Foundation in 2016, including a \$1000 award to the library.
 - Referred a \$5000 grant opportunity to the Library Foundation, which they applied for and won.
- Member and volunteer of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition since 2012.
 - Volunteer bicycle valet at Levi's Stadium events.
- Spoke and wrote on behalf of bicycling, walking, and transit in several South Bay cities, Santa Clara County (VTA), and to the State of California.
- Read and commented the City of Santa Clara's Bicycle Plan and Pedestrian Plan drafts end to end; contributed many suggestions in both map surveys. Familiar with the VTA 2018 Bicycle Plan.
- Regularly report maintenance requests via the MySantaClara app and (through their respective channels) to the Water District, County Roads, VTA, Caltrans, and neighboring cities.
- Volunteer adult literacy tutor, Read Santa Clara, ~2002-2010.
- Remove litter (time, hygiene, and safety permitting) when I'm walking or biking.

5. Special interests/hobbies/talents.

- Volunteer writer, editor and administrator, Wiktionary (2003) and wikiHow (2006).
- Working to improve Santa Clara coverage in OpenStreetMap, with a focus on parks and sidewalks. Also extending trail imagery throughout Santa Clara County in Mapillary.
- Photographing local plants and animals, for identification in iNaturalist.

6. Any other information that you feel would be useful to the Committee in reviewing your application.

Bicycling, walking, and riding public transit are themselves community involvement. Riding a recumbent bicycle gets people's attention, and along with answering questions and letting children try out the seat, I get to talk to people about bicycling and walking in the city. No matter how crowded the freeway gets, I've never met anyone new while traveling that way.

By far, the greatest barrier to bicycling for most people is safety. I hope to speak both for those who already walk and ride bicycles in Santa Clara, and for the many more who would bike or walk more if it were safer, more accessible, and more inviting to do so.