

## 2020 Knox County Commission Candidate Survey Results

Bike Walk Knoxville conducted a survey on street safety for the 2020 Knox County Commission candidates. Below you will find the answers from each candidate who filled out the survey. Any candidate who wrote in a response will have their answer listed beside their name in quotations.

### We received responses from the following Knox County Commission candidates:

Dasha Lundy - District 1

Courtney Durrett - District 2

Grant Rosenberg - District 2

Kyle Ward - District 4

Todd Frommeyer - District 4

Scott Broyles - District 4

Clayton Wood - District 5

Kimberly Peterson - District 5

Terry Hill - District 6

1. In 2014 a Walk-to-School study was done for Knox County Schools. Were you aware of this study and if so, have you reviewed it and identified a school that you feel would benefit from the recommended projects?

<https://knoxtpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Walk-To-School-Prioritization-Analysis-Knox-County.pdf>

**Dasha Lundy:** "I was not aware of the study."

**Courtney Durrett:** "I was unaware of this study but have now reviewed it using the link provided. I feel that all schools would benefit from improved walk-to-school accommodations, but a great starting point would be elementary and middle schools since 100% of these students rely on others to transport them to and from school. I attended Belle Morris Elementary, one of the top five walking schools within Knox County according to this study and was fortunate to be able to walk home from school. I want my children to have that same opportunity. My family currently lives within the PRZ for our elementary school; however, in order to walk to school, we would have to cross Broadway, a major arterial. I am fearful of crossing Broadway as an adult. I would look at pedestrian accommodation improvements in school systems with major/minor arterials and major/minor collectors so walking to school could be a safe possibility."

**Grant Rosenberg:** "I am aware of this study and have reviewed it. My initial thought is that the Powell Community would be a good area to focus on, as it contains 2 of the top 5 schools listed. With that said, I would want to learn more about the specifics of each project before weighing a decision."

**Kyle Ward:** "I was not aware of the study. Thank you for bringing it to my attention and I will review it. Always like expanding my knowledge and hearing from the voters."

**Todd Frommeyer:** “Prior to this survey, I was not aware of this study. I have reviewed the study now at the link you provided. The obvious answer to the question posed is that improvements in pedestrian infrastructure should be focused near elementary schools, since they make up over half of the top 25 walking schools in Knox County. Specifically, from the examples included in the study, I think Cedar Bluff and Karns Elementary Schools could benefit most from walkability improvements based just on their high enrollment numbers. But, I actually think that money spent on pedestrian infrastructure improvements should be more general in nature. If you make it more walkable, it benefits people doing a number of different things, not just kids walking to school, as laudable as that might be by itself.”

**Scott Broyles:** “I am familiar with the study which was very well done. We have a prime opportunity to take advantage of its importance. At this moment, the County has underway the design of a new Lonsdale Elementary School, which will be located alongside the existing structure. It is imperative that the school’s design focus in the pedestrian infrastructure needed to provide safe and adequate access on, around and near the school. For this reason, I would move Lonsdale to the top of the priority list.”

**Clayton Wood:** “Yes, I am deeply connected to the walking school bus program at Lonsdale Elementary. In areas where children are able to safely walk to community schools, it reduces congestion, lowers parent pick up times and is great for health. The non profit I head up has worked with parental responsibility zones around schools and has used a hybrid walking and drop off method that mirrors what Lonsdale Elementary does.”

**Kimberly Peterson:** “I was not aware of the Walk-to-School study but using the link provided have read through it thoroughly. I believe it makes most sense to prioritize walkability projects in the elementary and middle schools since they are the highest ranking of the sample schools. It seems that investing in pedestrian infrastructure at Cedar Bluff would make sense as it would potentially benefit the greatest number of students. It would also make sense to consider Karns Elementary.

Though there are area high schools that have an equal or greater number of students, I think we must consider how many of those students are potential drivers. When one factors in that high school students have the ability to drive themselves, the number of students potentially served would be reduced. Overall, I believe investing in sidewalks surrounding schools is beneficial for many reasons - it fosters a greater sense of community, it cuts down on unnecessary car traffic around school zones and reduces carbon emissions which is better for the environment, and lastly, having the ability to walk to school is a potential draw for people looking to relocate to our area.”

**Terry Hill:** “Yes and yes.”

2. Since 2011, 17 people have been struck and killed by drivers while walking in Knox County. In years past the Knox County Budget did not contain any dedicated funding for sidewalks or pedestrian safety; do you feel there should be some amount of dedicated funding and where should that funding be spent?

**Dasha Lundy:** “I will like to know more details of the incident in order to accurately answer this question.”

**Courtney Durrett:** “I was a victim of a hit and run driver while walking in a neighborhood when I was 5 years old. Luckily, I survived with a broken leg and some bumps and bruises. Because of this experience and now that I have 2 small children, pedestrian safety is a great concern of mine. There is definitely a need for safe walkability and increasing sidewalks is a good starting point. As commissioner, I will investigate the ability to dedicate funding to pedestrian safety and increase walkability, especially around schools, libraries and parks, as well as support the greenway study that was recently approved by County Commission.”

**Grant Rosenberg:** “I think there should be dedicated funding for sidewalks and additional resources allocated towards connecting our greenway infrastructure. Especially in the unincorporated areas of the County, greenways can play an important (and perhaps more cost effective) role in bike/walk connectivity.”

**Kyle Ward:** “Anytime someone is killed while traveling, whether in a vehicle, walking, or biking, it is a travesty. At this time, the county has infrastructure needs that must be met including improving traffic flows, better managing waste water, and making sure our schools have the tools they need to serve our students. I will consider innovative ways we can include more sidewalks and bike lanes in Knox County. There could be opportunities in the future with the widening of roads. I primarily hear about this issue from city residents, and I will work with city officials to make sure they are aware of these safety needs.”

**Todd Frommeyer:** “In the recent past, the County Commission has voted on a couple of items which affect this issue, and walkability in general. I agreed with the Commission’s vote to adopt the Knox County Greenway Study. As Commissioner, I would support funding to bring the projects contemplated in that study to fruition. I disagreed with the Commission’s vote in favor of Mayor Jacob’s proposed change to lessen requirements on developers to put sidewalks into new developments. Right after they came into office, the Jacobs administration canceled a contract to develop a sidewalk master plan.

They said at the time that they “try to build about a mile of sidewalk annually” and that they “typically” budget about \$500,000 a year for sidewalk construction outside the city limits. I think that’s not enough of a focus on walkability in the county. I also think that type of budgeting lets the administration find reasons not to fully fund sidewalks in a given year. I would support dedicated funding for sidewalks and I would like to see those sidewalks built to connect to schools, parks, and other County public facilities, as well as to grocery stores, retail locations and neighborhoods.”

**Scott Broyles:** “I believe that there should be attention and funding focused on first identifying and ranking the most critical areas of need in the County. Based on the results, we should evaluate and address the best and most productive solution(s) to mitigate the associated dangers. Finally, we must also consider innovative potential funding mechanisms that could include for instance, public/private partnerships.”

**Clayton Wood:** “Knox County infrastructure needs are not going to be met without effective advocacy getting more state and federal dollars for it. Fortunately, walking and biking are attractive aspects of multimodal transportation plans that connect our greenways and improve walkability in our denser areas of development.”

**Kimberly Peterson:** “Ensuring dedicated funding for sidewalks and pedestrian safety will be a high priority for me if I am elected to County Commission. It seems we were going downstream on the right path to addressing this issue as the Metro Planning Commission had recommending mandatory sidewalk

provisions for new subdivision development and the County Commission had approved a contract for a master sidewalk plan.

However, Mayor Jacobs rescinded the sidewalk ordinance and the contract to develop a strategic sidewalk plan was cancelled. These actions have put more Knox County lives at stake. As the mother of a child in a wheelchair and someone who lives in a district with a high population of retired and senior citizens, I would advocate for more accessibility that sidewalks would provide. We must design, implement and fund a plan that would create walkways to not only schools, libraries, parks and other public places but also to retail outlets such as pharmacies and grocery stores.”

**Terry Hill:** “Yes.”

3. Speeding in Knox County is an issue concerning many residents. How would you address this problem other than more enforcement (which taxes Sheriff Deputies who are already stretched thin) i.e. red light cameras, traffic calming devices, redesigning roads, etc?

**Dasha Lundy:** “Lane narrowing, Median and Refuge islands, Planting Trees, Pinchpoints”

**Courtney Durrett:** “Speeding and increased traffic volume in my neighborhood are two main reasons I formed our neighborhood organization. The Office of Neighborhoods has created the Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program to evaluate speeding concerns in Knoxville’s neighborhoods and create plans to impede speeding, most of which include the use of traffic calming devices. Through this program, my neighborhood will be receiving speed humps this year to curtail the excessive speeding we experience daily. I believe creating a similar program for the county that evaluates areas of concern and uses traffic calming devices will help address speeding.”

**Grant Rosenberg:** “The best way to address speeding is through prevention. The best method of prevention is policy. I think our subdivision guidelines need to be revised, in particular our minimum street width. Nothing encourages speeding more than a 50 ft wide street that is straight. I think allowing developers to build more narrow streets that flow with the contours of the land creates a better environment for walking AND is often more cost effective to build. For roads that are already built, I support traffic calming measures such as speed humps, traffic circles (where appropriate) and am open to exploring other methods that have proven effective in other communities.”

**Kyle Ward:** “From talking with many residents in the 4 district, I know that traffic calming measures are desired in some locations, mostly subdivisions within the city limits. Again, I want to work with city officials to make sure they are wisely using their tax revenues to meet the needs of communities within the city limits. I share concerns with others that the city has wasteful spending which hurts their ability to meet the needs of residents. I do share the concerns with others that Northshore and Nubbin Ridge has dangerous curves and blind spots and improving those roads will be a priority for me.”

**Todd Frommeyer:** “I am against red light cameras. Such cameras can have the opposite of the intended effect. Redesign of existing roads can be expensive. In neighborhoods where speeding is an issue, traffic calming devices are the best option. They have a proven track record of working and are not as expensive as a complete road redesign.”

**Scott Broyles:** “As the only candidate with law enforcement experience, I am keenly aware of the dangers of speeding and strategies to address the issue. With the use of analytics, we can identify opportunities to better deploy law enforcement to problem areas through timing and saturation methods which create a force multiplier effect but require little or no additional staffing. It is also critical to include traffic calming devices such as speed humps where beneficial. Another potential benefit when designing or modifying roads is to add traffic circles, also known as a round-about, which serves to dramatically slow vehicular speeds.”

**Clayton Wood:** “Road design has a large impact on this issue. Hans Monderman has written extensively about improved design. Striped roads that mirror the look of county roads are dangerous in residential areas where the speed limit is much lower but all the visual cues are that the road is the same. Enforcement is important for areas where it occurs infrequently, and in residential communities traffic calming devices may be beneficial if the community desires it.”

**Kimberly Peterson:** “We can successfully address speeding in Knox County without burdening law enforcement. Red light cameras are not the solution as they have been controversial. Redesigning roads is cost prohibitive. There are many ways we can address slowing traffic down through traffic calming devices. According to Knox County's Department of Engineering and Public works, "speed humps can be placed in existing right-of-way at minimal cost to the County budget, and they are effective in helping drivers to change their behavior." Other methods which have proven successful are installing roundabouts and other layouts which shift the flow of traffic slowing it down. In the 5th district, we have had a number of roundabouts installed which has reduced the speed on Northshore, a high traffic and speeding area.”

**Terry Hill:** “Speed bumps work very well in my opinion.”

4. When neighborhoods are built near schools without connections between subdivisions, more households are eligible for school busing, which greatly increases transportation costs for Knox County Schools. If elected, would you seek to increase street connectivity around schools to save taxpayer money and give more families the opportunity to walk to school?

**Dasha Lundy:** “Although I do believe in connectivity. I will like to hear from the parents who have school age children regarding this issue before I would advocate for funding.”

**Courtney Durrett:** “Absolutely! Street connectivity around schools not only provides more opportunities for families to walk to school and saves taxpayer money, but it also increases safety and creates a stronger sense of community.”

**Grant Rosenberg:** “Yes, I think street connectivity is a very important factor when considering new developments and site selection for new schools, but also when we evaluate our needs for affordable housing, job centers and retail development.”

**Kyle Ward:** “The safety and education of our children is of the most importance to me. The potential cost of increasing connectivity is a concern, and I think we need more research on the most effective

method of achieving it but I am open to it especial if further research concludes a savings in tax payer money.”

**Todd Frommeyer:** “Yes.”

**Scott Broyles:** “If elected, I would be committed to increasing the walkability at and near schools to include connections between neighborhoods wherever possible. I would emphasize that points of connection should include a path from the front door of the school to the neighborhood, not just between neighborhoods.”

**Clayton Wood:** “Yes, as I said I think walkable schools make sense from a cost, time and health standpoint. Especially as we are creating new schools and new neighborhoods, designing for walkability is wise.”

**Kimberly Peterson:** “If I am elected, I will most definitely seek to increase street connectivity around schools so that more families could walk to school. We know that there has been an ongoing shortage of bus drivers and that the school busing situation is overburdened as it is. We must not continue to add more students who need bus service. As I mentioned before, giving more families the ability to walk to schools is a win-win situation. It fosters a sense of community as it brings neighbors out and interacting more. It also reduces school based traffic which is better for those who live and work around school zones. Reducing the number of cars driving to school is better for the environment. Lastly, having safe and accessible alternative forms of transportations is highly desirable for those looking to relocate to Knox County.”

**Terry Hill:** “One has nothing to do with the other. KCS has PRZ parent responsibility zones for bussing. Availability of sidewalks has nothing to do with increasing KCS transportation costs. However I absolutely support connectivity with development.”