

Candidate Questionnaire: People-centered Streets

Basic Information

If you would like to review a PDF of the entire questionnaire, you may find it here:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/livablestreetsalliance/pages/1689/attachments/original/1503520449/Candidate_Questionnaire_general_-_People-centered_streets.pdf?1503520449

Candidate name (first and last) *

Andreae Downs

Office that the candidate is seeking (include city/town and district/ward number if applicable) *

Newton City Council, Ward 5 At Large

Name of person completing the questionnaire (first and last) *

Andreae Downs

Name and EIN of the committee (if applicable)

n/a

Campaign email address *

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About You

1. Do you personally walk to destinations in your community? If yes, how often do you do so?

Yes

No

Comments

daily

2. Do you personally travel by/ use public transit to get around? If yes, which trains and buses do you routinely use?

Yes

No

Comments

Riverside Line (D-Green), Charlestown ferry, and connections

3. Do you personally bike in your community or commute by bike to other communities? If no, would you be willing to give it a try periodically, e.g. once or twice per month?

Yes

No

Comments

My usual mode of transportation is bike--within 10 miles

Policy proposals

Please articulate concrete and feasible policy and budgetary proposals to advance the following goals. If you would like to submit supporting materials, please submit them on page 6 at the end of the questionnaire or email your proposals to info@visionzerocoalition.org.

Note that there is a glossary available at www.visionzerocoalition.org/glossary_for_2017_candidate_questionnaire

*indicates a definition available in the glossary

1. How will you work to establish funding for the infrastructure changes needed to slow traffic on your community's streets, and improve crosswalks and intersections to make them safer for people who are walking and using mobility assistive devices?

Newton is currently using between \$3-9 million to repair roads, and as each road is fixed, I (and the Transportation Advisory Group, which I chair), advocates for Complete Streets Treatment. We have also requested an annual budget of \$350,000 for bike lanes and racks. In addition, as Newton repairs/replaces schools (one every two years), TAG is advocating for the best and safest treatments in the streets around each school--which is part of that building budget.

2. How will you improve the reach, frequency, and quality of public transit in your city/town?

TAG has been advocating for "last mile" improvements around all transit stations and stops. In addition, I would like to use signal priority for buses, and have advocated moving (and sheltering) bus stops to the far side of signals.

3. How will you ensure fast-tracked implementation of a city-/town-wide network of off-street paths and protected bike lanes* on major thoroughfares and connecting streets that are comfortable for people of all ages and abilities?

I helped create the Bicycle Network Plan, and for the last 7 years as chair of TAG have pushed for opportunistic striping of the plan (with repaving) as well as building the off-road paths and connections between these and useful destinations, like transit. In addition, TAG and I worked with a coalition of planning and Vision Zero organizations to persuade MassDOT to protect the bike lanes on Needham/Winchester/Highland, a project that should break ground next year.

4. How will you increase access to biking in every neighborhood equally? What do you see as the major obstacles to encouraging ridership, and how will you address them?

The perception that biking is not "safe" has been our major obstacle to biking. Those who live closest to bike infrastructure tend to bike more (the denser neighborhoods near the Charles River Paths, for instance, or those near the Beacon St. bike lanes). I have been one of the organizers of Bike Newton's annual Tour de Newton, which shows families how easy and safe it is to bike in Newton already, and where we are planning improvements.

5. How will you increase funding for biking infrastructure?

We just did. I want to be city councilor to ensure that funding is protected in future years.

Yes/no questions

Note that explanations for your responses are not required, but provide useful context and are strongly encouraged.

*indicates a definition available in the glossary (available here: http://www.visionzerocoalition.org/glossary_for_2017_candidate_questionnaire)

1. Do you support the adoption of Vision Zero* and funding for its rapid implementation? Vision Zero is an approach which aims to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030 and has been adopted by several communities, including Boston and Cambridge. *

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

Newton has already adopted Vision Zero in its Transportation Strategy (which built on TAG's work). Now we need to implement it!

2. Do you support lowering design speeds* through traffic calming measures* on downtown and neighborhood streets as a means of enhancing the safety of people walking, using mobility assistive devices, biking, and driving? This may involve the expansion and enhancement of programs like Neighborhood Slow Streets* (Boston) and Neighborways* (Somerville). *

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

I have been campaigning on "Slow Streets" or "Green/Neighborways" for Newton. City Council this year adopted the 25mph speed limit allowed by state law, and TAG asked that they start to also design to lower the actual speeds on Newton streets. Designs for West Newton Square and Newtonville, in which I and TAG took an active role, will be closer to Vision Zero than any village center designs Newton has adopted in recent memory. I am looking forward to seeing them built, and building upon our experience to build better village centers in the future.

3. One key strategy that has been proven to effectively reduce speeding, improve safety, and remove racial bias in traffic enforcement in other states and countries is automated enforcement (i.e. speed cameras and red light cameras). Do you support state legislation that authorizes the use of automated enforcement in Massachusetts, per the July 2017 recommendation of the National Transportation Safety Board*? *

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

I am a member of MassBike and Walk Boston and have lobbied for improvements to state law for walking & biking for the last 10 years.

4. Do you support redesigning space on the street in order to improve safety for people biking by creating protected bike lanes? *

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

see above

5. Do you support the increased use of curb extensions* to improve safety and visibility at intersections, even if it requires the removal of one to two parking spaces? *

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

I was actively involved in the redesign of Lowell Avenue after the new High School went in-- when I and Councilor Susan Albright pointed out to Newton's Transportation Director that cars were ALREADY parked in the crosswalk, and that corners were being rebuilt with the same unsafe curb radii, we got extensions in several areas. Not yet perfect, but better!

6. Do you support mandating side guards* for all large trucks operated or contracted by government agencies operating in your city/town? *

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

TAG's subcommittee, the Bicycle Advisory Committee had a presentation on side guards about 3 years ago. The City's DPW adopted side guards as a pilot. We need to extend this pilot to all our trucks.

7. Do you commit to implementation of improved bike facilities identified in your community's Bike Network Plan or do you commit to the creation of a Bike Network Plan if none already exists? *

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

see above

8. Will you address age-friendly walking in your community -- an issue raised by many seniors as critical to their ability to "age in community"? If yes, how? *

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

TAG has a member of the Council on Aging in the group, who has helped Newton become an official Age Friendly Community. We still have much work to do. With each signal change, and each intersection, we need to shorten crossing length and lengthen the time to cross. In addition, Newton has very poor crosswalk lighting and this needs to be addressed for the safety of all pedestrians. A final consideration is putting more small units of housing in village centers where seniors can live car-free and maintain independence.

9. Do you support the restriction of on-street parking during rush hour on major thoroughfares in order to provide lanes for the exclusive use of buses? *

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

In theory, yes. But Newton has few roads with good bus service that are big enough for both parking and bus traffic--the real issue is not parking, but too many people driving. The one exception, Washington Street, is a candidate for a road diet and parking protected bike lanes. Finding a balance between buses and good, protected bike lanes is going to be an interesting community discussion.

10. Do you support exploring new ways of raising revenue to provide your city/town with more tools to improve conditions for people walking, using mobility assistive devices, and biking (e.g. congestion pricing)? If yes, please give examples that interest you. *

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

You explore parking below--that would be one tool. Congestion pricing in a suburb may not yet be feasible, but I'd be willing to consider it if it were!

11. Do you support the rollout of dynamic parking meter pricing* (i.e. increasing meter rates during periods of increased demand) in business districts to free up on-street parking and reduce cars "cruising" for open spaces? *

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

I'm a Shoupista. Nuf said?

Supporting materials

If you would like to submit supporting materials, please include them in the answer field below or email them to info@visionzerocoalition.org

http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/lrplan/transportation_strategy.asp

This form was created inside of LivableStreets Alliance.

Google Forms