

# 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/1503520440/Candidate\\_Questionnaire\\_Cambridge\\_-\\_People-centered\\_streets.pdf?1503520440](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/livablestreetsalliance/pages/1689/attachments/original/1503520440/Candidate_Questionnaire_Cambridge_-_People-centered_streets.pdf?1503520440)

Candidate name (first and last) \*

Vatsady Sivongxay

Office that the candidate is seeking (include district number if applicable) \*

Cambridge City Council

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

Dawn Duncan

Name and EIN of the committee (if applicable)

Sivongxay Committee

### Campaign email address \*

[votevatsady@gmail.com](mailto:votevatsady@gmail.com)

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### Campaign address

59 Kirkland Street, Cambridge, MA 02138

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### Campaign phone number

617-299-0231

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### Campaign website

[www.vatsady.com](http://www.vatsady.com)

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### Campaign Twitter

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### Campaign Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/votevatsady/>

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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

I walk several times a day. I enjoy walking around our city and make it a personal practice to walk to as many destinations as possible. I walk to meetings, postal offices, grocery stores, to drop off/ pick up my son from childcare, events, visit with friends, and run errands when possible.

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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

I use the Red Line.

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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

I bike at least eight times a week around Cambridge/Somerville.

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## 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](mailto:info@visionzerocoalition.org).

Note that there is a glossary available at [www.visionzerocoalition.org/glossary\\_for\\_2017\\_candidate\\_questionnaire](http://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?**

As City Councilor, I would support an increase in city and state funding to ensure the implementation of our Vision Zero and Complete Streets goals. To ensure that sidewalks and intersections improve and are safer for pedestrians and users of mobility assistive devices, I would advocate for and request tracking and updates on the progress of the projects to ensure that planning and implementation results in planned improvements.

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## 2. How will you improve the reach, frequency, and quality of public transit in Cambridge?

I approach transit and access with an equity lens to ensure that everyone—including people with disabilities, seniors, youth, immigrants, people of color, and low-income populations—have affordable, reliable, and sustainable transportation options near their homes. To achieve this goal, Cambridge must be a leader in advocating for a better public transit system with an eye towards equity and environmental sustainability and ensure that our MBTA remains a public good. I would support initiatives that expand bus, bike sharing and train services—such as but not limited to the creation of a “Bus Rapid Transit” system, improvement of the Green Line Extension, and improving community outreach about the bike sharing program—particularly to underserved communities.

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## 3. How will you ensure fast-tracked implementation of a city-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 would advocate for continuous open communication, outreach and engagement among residents, businesses, institutions and neighboring cities and progress tracking of the Five-Year Sidewalk and Street Reconstruction Plan, Vision Zero and Complete Streets goals. If funding is an issue, then I would look at creative funding with institutional and nonprofit partnerships, as well as community benefits agreements and other potential creative funding strategies.

#### 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?

Going back to my core commitment to viewing transit and access through an equity lens, I would include access to biking as an important part of community planning throughout the city. Major obstacles to encouraging ridership, in my opinion, include, among others, financial challenges for those who are unable to afford the costs of bicycles and equipment, health challenges that may make it difficult to use bikes without adaptations, and concern for safety among residents who might be interested in riding but are afraid to ride. To address these challenges, I would look at ways to evaluate the challenges in communities, support education and access programs to engage community members and provide resources to increase the likelihood that they would become riders with accurate information that encourages ridership, explore expansion of the bike sharing program, and research alternative and new innovation for bike sharing to improve accessibility.

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#### 5. How will you increase funding for biking infrastructure?

I am in support of the Cambridge Bicycle Plan and its commitment to integrating increased bicycle use across many policy areas, including local policies such as the Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance (VTRO) to make more efficient use of mass transit, bicycling, walking, and other alternatives to drive-alone trips. I would explore the possibility of local mechanisms for increasing funding such as the 5-Year Capital Program that supports infrastructure renewal and other creative partnerships and sources of funding that the City may have not yet explored. I believe biking infrastructure should be part of an overall plan and in line with the goals of the Growth Policy Document to "Encourage all reasonable forms of non-automobile travel including, for example, making improvements to the city's infrastructure which would promote bicycling and walking."

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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](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

Vision Zero is consistent with a key aspect of my Transit and Access platform to ensure that we have safe streets, walkable neighborhoods, and a comprehensive bike and delivery network. Safety is a foundation of this plan and Vision Zero has such an approach.

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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 support such programs and am a proponent of working to build on best practices that have been adopted by other communities in the region to meet similar goals.

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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 support this type of policy as long as it meets the intended strategy and is not used for surveillance.

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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

I support the creation of more protected bike lanes. I'm happy to see the progress that Cambridge has made in installing more protected bike lanes. I'll continue to support these efforts and work with retail businesses and residents to advocate for the optimal comprehensive bike and delivery system.

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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

Safety and visibility at intersections is very important and I support curb extensions in areas where they will meet this goal.

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6. Do you support full implementation of the City's Bike Plan in all current and future road reconstruction projects, including but not limited to the five year street and sidewalk plan? \*

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

I support the City's Bike Plan. It is in alignment with my deep commitment to comprehensive community planning.

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7. Do you support the creation of the joint biking-pedestrian Grand Junction Path and Somerville Community Path through mandates, resolutions or zoning ordinances targeted at adjacent property owners? \*

Yes

No

## Please explain your choice

I support this project and commit to looking at the best ways to achieve the goals of the project with options such as mandates, resolutions or zoning ordinances as part of an overall planning process.

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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

Equitable access to opportunity throughout the lifespan is a foundation of my platform and one of the main reasons that I am running for city council. Age-friendly walking is a policy that is consistent with this and is part of my larger commitment to make walking a more viable form of transportation with safe sidewalks and open space. I will advocate for the inclusion of age-friendly walking as part of any discussion about pedestrian and transit options.

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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

With a comprehensive transit plan, this is a strategy that has the potential to address increased population and traffic congestion as part of an infrastructure plan to meet capacity needs, maintain safety for all commuters, and promote our sustainability goals for a more resilient, healthy, Net-Zero city.

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10. Do you support exploring new ways of raising revenue to provide the City of Cambridge 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

I would like to explore partnerships and community benefits models that make transit more accessible and improve conditions for all.

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11. Do you support raising the annual fee for residential parking permits? \*

Yes

No

## Please explain your choice

I would support this policy as part of an overall balanced plan to promote more walking and biking while increasing the fee in incremental amounts over time.

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12. 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

Dynamic parking meter pricing is a potential option for a key component of my platform to create an action plan to manage vehicular traffic, reduce congestion, support local businesses, and maintain safety through making short-, medium-, and long-term improvements.

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### 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](mailto:info@visionzerocoalition.org)

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