

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

Candidate name (first and last) *

Jan Devereux

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

Cambridge City Council (at-large)

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

Jan Devereux

Name and EIN of the committee (if applicable)

Devereux for Council, EIN: 47-2968949

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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 am fortunate to live within a short walk to Huron Village where I can buy groceries, pick up great pizza and visit my bank. My gym and the shopping centers near Fresh Pond area also an easy bike ride and I have baskets and a cargo bike if I need to carry bulky items. My commute to and from City Hall is mostly by bike. In really bad weather (rain and snow), I try to catch a bus to Harvard Sq to get the Red Line to Central. If none of these options is practical (these buses run pretty infrequently off-peak), I drive my Chevy Volt EV. Since acquiring it mid-Dec 2016 I have driven it only about 1100 miles (it charges with the help of solar panels on my roof.)

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

Yes, if it's not possible to bike or walk and my destination is near a T stop. I have a Charlie Card and regularly use the Red Line and buses (#72, 73 & 74 stop relatively near me but service is infrequent). I don't go to Boston very often but if I do I sometimes wind up on the Green Line.

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

Yes, I get around Cambridge almost exclusively by bike. I'm lucky to both live and work in the same city; my bike commute takes about 15-20 minutes.

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?

Even before formally committing to Vision Zero in 2016, Cambridge had begun using street reconstruction projects to create complete streets with curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, bike lanes (some protected, some painted with and without buffers, some with only sharrows) and more accessible sidewalks. Over the past two years, with the support of more effective grassroots advocacy and my leadership on this issue, Cambridge has significantly increased its budget for traffic calming infrastructure, traffic enforcement and education, and has improved bike facilities including adding parking-protected bike lanes in several areas as demonstration projects. The City Council also adopted a 25mph speed limit citywide and has authorized the traffic director to designate additional 20mph speed zones, as appropriate. We have installed a couple of HAWK crosswalk signals and when new crossing signals are installed they are replaced with ones that provide sound for the visually impaired.

With the design support of advocacy groups, the Council voted to increase budget for the redesign of the very dangerous Inman Square intersection from around \$4M to \$6M to completely configure it to include separated bike lanes to accommodate a high volume of cyclists, reduce distances and delays for pedestrian crossings, and improve access and efficiency for bus riders. The project also includes significant improvements to public open space in the square, which should encourage more visitors to come on foot and bike and to linger. I played a leadership role in ensuring that this project got the funding and the accelerated schedule it deserves.

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/~media/Files/publicworksdepartment/Engineering/cityprojects/inmansquare/inmansquarecommunitymeetingpresentationjuly252017.pdf>

I was a member of the stakeholder group that worked with consultants and state officials to study the dangerously congested Mount Auburn St/Fresh Pond Parkway corridor and develop a plan that, when funded by the state, will include traffic calming features, separated bike lanes, bus priority lanes, and much safer and shorter crossings for pedestrians as well as new public open space. I also sponsored a policy order to reduce the speed limit to 25mph on Fresh Pond Parkway, which DCR is currently considering.

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/conservation/planning-and-resource-protection/projects/mount-auburn-street-corridor-study.html>

I will continue to take the lead on remaking streets and intersections. As a first-term councillor I have established myself as the Council's strongest advocate for Vision Zero improvements, including having pressed to form a Vision Zero Advisory Group to work with staff and raise

public awareness. I was able to lead on this issue while not even having been named a member of the Transportation Committee (the mayor controls committee assignments; the chair of the committee has held only one hearing this term). If re-elected next term I will seek to chair this committee and to use that leverage to keep Vision Zero at the top of the agenda.

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

More frequent and comprehensive public transit is a critical need since much of Cambridge's rapid growth is premised on future residents and employees having convenient access to reliable public transit. However the Red Line is already at capacity, some neighborhoods are not well served by buses, and the MBTA is underfunded. I voted to support the city contributing \$12.5M toward the new Lechmere Station that will serve the North Point development. I also supported preserving late night T service, as many of the city's service workers need T access when their shifts end. I have supported more bike share (Hubway) locations to improve people's access to T stops ("the last mile") and local destinations not well-served by transit. Cambridge is working with the MBTA to install signal priority for the #1 bus route and is planning a bus priority lane on the part of Mount Auburn St where the 73 bus is most apt to get stuck in rush hour congestion. The Red Line is getting new trains and switching improvements that will increase its capacity and reduce headways within a couple of years, but without additional funding for the MBTA it's hard to know where the next-level transit improvements will come from. Cambridge could potentially develop partnerships with MIT and Harvard and major employers to allow residents access to their shuttle buses. We could explore creating a municipal fleet of electric vans and deploying medallion taxi drivers to serve local ride-sharing needs.

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?

The 2015 Cambridge Bicycle Plan lays out a vision for a citywide bike network with facilities at various levels of protection based on a level of comfort survey of all streets. Unfortunately there was no timeline for its full implementation, but over the past two years, spurred in part by several fatalities of vulnerable users, we are accelerating efforts to transform our most dangerous and congested streets. We will reconstruct Inman Sq in 2018 and are planning to make some improvements to Porter Sq next year as well. But our biggest challenge and opportunity lies in reconfiguring the entire Mass Ave corridor. Some of these improvements are being discussed in the context of the Envision Cambridge citywide planning process, which is likely to recommend allowing greater density and reduced built-parking requirements for transit corridors like Mass Ave. This year we have created several parking protected bike lanes as “demonstration projects”; there has been some pushback about parking loss, but I hope that the experience is showing that the safety benefits and increased bike usage are worth it. The City is also investing in completing a greenway connection to Watertown along a former rail spur, which will be constructed in 2018. Lighting will be included to enable people to use the path after dark, an important feature for evening commuters that is not typically part of DCR projects. We should also work closely with DCR to continue improving the path along the Charles River, sections of which need repaving and widening to better accommodate with fewer conflicts more people on foot and bike. I have also lobbied to extend the Sunday closings of Memorial Drive for more months of the year.

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Transportation/bikesincambridge/bicyclenetworkplan>

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?

Many neighborhoods in Cambridge are already quite bike-friendly as a result of traffic calming and bike infrastructure improvements made over the past several years. Relative to most older US cities we have a leg up in encouraging mode share by bike. We are expanding our bike share network and offer bike education workshops for adults and school children as part of their phys ed program. The biggest obstacle remains a devotion to the car culture among older people, which is enshrined by inexpensive on-street parking for residents (\$25/yr citywide). This term I suggested we consider increasing the resident parking fee and the order was sent to committee, where it was clear it did not have majority support. Many of our streets are too narrow to include protected bike lanes without removing most or all street parking, and many people still rely on owning and driving cars, and merchants insist they will not survive without on-street parking for their customers. I believe we are in the midst of a generational culture and technology change and that within a decade or so, fewer Cambridge residents will want to own and park cars. A shared autonomous vehicle fleet may provide a viable alternative to individual car ownership and driving. Another obstacle is the perception that biking is dangerous -- and it remains so on some of our busiest corridors -- but if we create more protected lanes and increase education and enforcement, more people will be willing to bike more places.

5. How will you increase funding for biking infrastructure?

The Council recently drafted a new set of policy goals, which include prioritizing the safety of sustainable transportation modes as well as increasing enforcement. These goals set the City's funding priorities, and I expect to see and will push for continued budget increases for bike facilities and enforcement, complemented by education and public awareness campaigns (like using the Dutch Reach). I will use my political capital to be a leader on this front and will continue to work closely with grassroots groups like Cambridge Bicycle Safety and nonprofits like Livable Streets Alliance and the Boston Cyclists Union to muster the political will and community buy-in to follow through on our goals.

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

I'm proud that Cambridge has already adopted Vision Zero, and I will continue to take a leadership role on fulfilling our commitment.

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 believe Cambridge should adopt its own version of the Neighborhood Slow Streets program to better support the many residents who come to the Council asking us to reduce speed and cut-through traffic in their neighborhoods. It is one of the top complaints I hear as a councillor: "everyone else is driving too fast through my neighborhood!" In my short time on the council, I have sponsored and co-sponsored several policy orders to reduce speed limits and make our streets safer for people using sustainable modes. I am working with staff to explore piloting a Neighborway and feel we should make it easy for residents to initiate and implement such projects. I have been an enthusiastic supporter of the city's annual Park(ing) Day, which helps people envision how to repurpose on-street parking spots.

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

Yes, I do. I attended three drafting sessions with state legislators and advocates that resulted in the proposed state omnibus bill, "An Act to Eliminate Traffic Fatalities," of which automated traffic enforcement is a component. I think this should be used on Rt 16 (Fresh Pond and Alewife Brook Parkway) where the state DCR asserts enforcement is too difficult because there is limited space for police to pull over motorists they want to cite for speeding.

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

Yes, I have been a leading voice in support of the new protected bike lanes in Cambridge despite quite a bit of pushback from entrenched interests, especially in Harvard Sq. I have also been engaged in the Inman Square redesign in order to make it much safer for cyclists and pedestrians. As someone who rides my bike daily, I am both personally and professionally invested in improving safety for people biking and in encouraging more people to consider biking for at least some of their trips. This June I attended the People for Bikes conference in Madison, WI, to learn and share best practices with the bike advocacy community. (See the op-ed I wrote following the conference:

<http://cambridge.wickedlocal.com/news/20170703/guest-column-must-reframe-narrative-of-cars-versus-bikes>) I also took my family on vacation to Copenhagen this summer to experience firsthand the city's bike network and bike-friendly culture.

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 support curb extensions even when parking is lost. However some cyclists say that "bump-outs" push them back into travel lanes at intersections, so curb extensions need to be designed to maintain safe bike travel as well as to make crossing distances shorter and safer.

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

Whenever streets are reconstructed we need to use the opportunity to improve bike safety. We missed an opportunity with the redesign of Huron Ave, which was planned in 2012 but not fully implemented until 2017. I feel that had the street been designed this year it could have included a parking protected bike lane. The current design with a 3' buffer between the bike lane and the door zone is a positive step in the right direction, and I hope that in time we will be able to build public support for creating parking protected lanes.

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

Yes, I think both paths are critically important to the continued growth of the region. With the Volpe rezoning, Cambridge should require MIT to commit to a timetable for completing its section of the Grand Junction Path.

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

My husband is over 70 and we are fortunate to live in a neighborhood that is quite walkable and which has a small shopping district nearby. As we plan our city's growth, we need to encourage and preserve mixed use districts, so that new residential development is close to neighborhood retail and health services, attractive public open spaces, and indoor places to gather (so-called "third places"), so that seniors aren't isolated. It's not enough to make sidewalks that are ADA accessible and crosswalks that are more pedestrian-friendly if there is nowhere interesting for people to go on foot. Access to shared cargo tricycles could also help seniors get around without cars and to age in place.

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

Yes, we could try this on parts of Mass Ave. and on Mt Auburn St.

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

congestion pricing should be considered for Rt 2/16 for commuters traveling through Alewife (some 80% of the traffic is not local). The additional revenue generated by dynamic pricing for parking meters could be dedicated to such improvements. If the state regulates TNCs (Uber & Lyft) the revenue should go toward sustainable transportation in the cities where TNCs are most used.

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

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

Yes, I sponsored a policy order to consider that. It was sent to the Transportation Committee where it got a tepid response. One concern raised is that any fee increase must reflect increased administrative costs, so significantly raising the fee might be subject to legal challenge. I think at minimum the fee should increase annually in line with other costs of living and that the fee for a second or third car per household should be significantly higher. Senior citizens could apply for a fee reduction or waiver, but it shouldn't be an automatic free parking pass for seniors of means.

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

Yes. We should deploy technology that facilitates demand-based pricing, more efficient use of metered spots, and better enforcement.

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

This form was created inside of LivableStreets Alliance.

Google Forms