

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) *

Dennis J. Carlone

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) *

Dennis Carlone

Name and EIN of the committee (if applicable)

Carlone Committee (15680)

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

I walk in my neighborhood (just off Mass Avenue, south of Porter Square) every day, and once to twice weekly to Harvard Square.

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

Primarily, I use the Red Line and when continuing on to Boston, I also use the Green Line or the Silver Line. The primary bus I use is the Number One out of Harvard Square.

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 do not bike regularly at this time. As safer, protected bicycle infrastructure is further expanded in Cambridge, I will enjoy biking beyond relatively safe neighborhood streets. At the age of 14, I was in a bicycle accident, which resulted in a serious concussion. I had three more concussions playing contact sports and was advised to avoid activities with any potential for further cranial contact. My campaign manager makes extensive use of Cambridge's existing bike lanes as he bikes everywhere he goes in Cambridge on a daily basis.

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?

As an urban designer/architect, I believe this policy is fundamental to improving quality of life and community desirability. All my professional work incorporates a similar approach, whether for the East Cambridge Riverfront Project (1976 – 2000), public housing, master plans for downtown Plymouth and Winchester, upgrading the Charles River Basin, or in neighborhoods.

I personally led efforts to lower the speed limit in Cambridge beginning in 2013. As Councillor, I have insisted that the city budget process include significantly expanded financing and planning for such improvements. Furthermore, I was one of the leaders in the neighborhood group to upgrade the pedestrian environment along Mass Avenue between Harvard and Porter Squares.

It seems to me an obvious objective for the city to do everything in its control (and it does own city streets and sidewalks) to balance transportation options in a fair, equitable, and safe manner. While I was the Chair of Transportation and Public Utilities Committee, I led such efforts in expanding the city's responsibility and strongly supported Community Development's efforts for Vision Zero and expanded infrastructure.

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

Public transit fundamentally falls under MBTA jurisdiction in Cambridge. Nevertheless, Cambridge and its significant commercial sector can play an active role in both guiding and supporting budgetary objectives. Fortunately, Kendall Square businesses recognize that their ongoing success relies on their employees' ability to get to work smoothly and without delay. The city has required that new development in Kendall Square must provide funding for transit studies and improvements. I firmly believe the city must also provide additional funding, much like they did for the new Green Line station at Lechmere.

Private shuttle bus routes have been provided to serve companies and have been a Special Permit condition for development. I was part of the urban design team that mandated the Galleria shopping center to provide, at no cost, a shuttle bus connection between the shopping complex and the Kendall Square Red Line station. Its success has been well beyond expectations with over 1 million people using the free service every year. On top of such an approach, I believe the city must seriously consider providing exclusive bus ways on major thoroughfares, such as Mass Avenue, between the Arlington city line and Harvard Square. This would mean one lane in each direction becomes a bus lane allowing buses greater movement and control of traffic in their lane. The city has just begun incorporating automatic traffic signal controls for buses that will augment their movement through intersections.

Additionally, the city should investigate city-run shuttle systems that provide connections between squares or neighborhoods that are not now properly represented. Furthermore, institutions of higher education now provide bus service connecting their facilities throughout the city and to greater Boston. These buses should be available to the public at no cost.

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?

Cambridge has recently been building protected bike lanes along Cambridge Street and partial, pilot study bike lanes along Mass Avenue. Unfortunately, the actual impetus for implementing these projects was the deaths of three bicyclists over the last few years. All new construction is painted on to the roads with flexible posts separating cars from bicycles. It is my hope that after studying the varied impacts block by block, a permanently built, refined solution incorporating curbs and buffer zones will more attractively and securely protect bicyclists and pedestrians.

Cambridge is now on a committed course to implement the proposed citywide bicycle plan in the years to come. The city has shown how dramatically the number of bicyclists has risen over the last few years. Furthermore, bicyclists have organized in a professional manner to convey their needs, desires, and concerns to all city officials. This has had a dramatic impact on the speed of the city moving forward in creating a safer transportation infrastructure for all concerned people.

The city's budget for such infrastructure will increase until the system is completely built out.

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 city's Hubway program has expanded over recent years. I have personally proposed subsidizing the participation cost for low-income families and individuals. Unfortunately, the city has not implemented such a program, but I intend to once again promote the approach as an integral part of bridging the social and economic gap in Cambridge.

5. How will you increase funding for biking infrastructure?

The city budget process has recently improved to more effectively match the City Council's wishes. I'm happy to share with you that I was one of the councillors who strongly advocated changing city goals to be more specific, including expanding bicycle infrastructure throughout the city. The next city budget will be based on the more specific 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 believe we have already started this process in Cambridge. There's no question it could be done faster, but even with other budgetary concerns, we have begun correcting the infrastructure negligence.

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 the principal advocate for lowering speed throughout the city over the last four years and demanded Cambridge do everything it could to gain state approval. This was accomplished last year. I'm very proud of this achievement.

Clearly there are other ways to reduce speed and lesson dangerous road conditions. All need to be incorporated into an overall strategy. For years, I have proposed a system of mews, where all traffic moves at 5 mph, and pedestrians and bicyclists are in control. The NeighborWays approach in Somerville is similar.

All the approaches mentioned basically lower the speed of traffic to a calm, more enjoyable pace. It generates a higher quality of life that people of all ages desire. These approaches are not focused on fast movement through the city, but rather to enjoy a sense of place and safety for a large community of people.

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 have been a major advocate for such equipment to be used to make our streets safer. Although I understand the public concern for the possible misuse of such observatory equipment, I strongly feel society, as a whole, would benefit from the resulting improved safety. Every day I see 1-3 cars or bicycles go through red lights or stop signs on every walk or trip I make. I firmly believe that speed cameras and red light cameras are absolutely necessary if we are going to calm our roadways and public spaces.

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

We all have to learn to share our public resources, including road width. Good urban/street design is one way to accomplish this goal.

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

This is an important tool in the urban designer's toolbox for making a safer and more attractive pedestrian domain. Since it is against the law to park within 20 feet of an intersection, most curb extensions do not take away from available legal parking. Some of the most creative and safe intersection designs, such as those from Scandinavia and Holland, creatively use curb extensions for bike safety as well.

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

Absolutely. No question.

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 have been the Council leader in promoting the Grand Junction Path and connecting it to the Somerville Community Path since 2013. As the former Chair of the Transportation and Public Utilities Committee, I held committee meetings that focused on freeing up any impediments to implementing the Grand Junction Pathway. At those meetings MIT specifically was requested to provide a clearer understanding of how they could participate in the project's implementation.

As the Chair of the Ordinance Committee, which oversees all new zoning, I have informed MIT that they must resolve any problems related to the pathway and work with the city to implement the pathway as soon as possible. I have said that I view this as one important condition needing resolution prior to approving MIT's zoning proposal for the Volpe site in Kendall Square. I believe I have full Council support for gaining this important condition as an integral part of MIT's rezoning.

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

I am already doing this with regard to safer pedestrian crossings at traffic light intersections where many elder and young pedestrians feel they are in danger with concurrent crossings. This is when a pedestrian begins crossing and cars have the right to turn into the pedestrian crossing path at the same time. We need to track and adjust traffic and walk signal timing across the city. I would be in favor of including a simultaneous "pedestrian only" phase in every direction, especially at our larger intersections.

Frankly, a number of pedestrians also complain of near misses with bicyclists going through red lights or stop signs. Most of these pedestrians are in their mid-70s to mid 80s. We will need to examine better enforcement of traffic laws with regard to bicycle traffic at intersections.

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

This would have to be studied, given the varied road networks in the city. Perhaps even going beyond the stated policy above is the notion of rebranding one lane of a multi-lane road as a bus-way with right-hand turn only for all vehicles. This approach has been used in other cities and is being considered for portions of Mass. Avenue. Given that half of the automotive traffic going through Cambridge does not originate or end in Cambridge, I see such an approach eventually winnowing out the pass-through traffic that crowds our roads without stopping to visit what Cambridge has to offer. Clearly, this latter proposal would need study and may (initially) receive a negative public response but I believe over time it will provide a more sane, balanced approach to our road design and infrastructure needs.

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 has been successful in other cities, particularly London. However, the Commonwealth does not allow such an effort in Massachusetts. Nevertheless, there is no doubt in my mind this approach is essential for an improved quality of life in the city. Even small, historic town centers like Carlisle have significant traffic back ups at peak hours. Congestion pricing would be a significant, early step leading to a more efficient transit ecosystem.

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

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

Annual parking permit fees should be prorated either based on family income or value of the automobile. Any family with more than one car should pay an increased fee for their additional cars.

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 has been tried in other communities. Many are in California and have shown to be very successful. One example I recall in Pasadena had a significantly different range of pricing over a two-block distance. This approach would reduce general parking congestion and allow for an individual tradeoff where people can park more cheaply, and possibly for a longer time, if they park further away from the main center of activity.

There is no question in my mind this will be successful in Cambridge. However like with any other change there will be push back. But other cities and towns have shown that this is a proactive, productive means to achieving a better balance of parking and, equally important, reducing circling car traffic in search of a nearby vacant parking space.

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

N/A

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Google Forms