

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) *

Alanna Mallon

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

Cambridge City Council

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

Alanna Mallon

Name and EIN of the committee (if applicable)

Campaign email address *

alanna@alannamallon.org

Campaign address

Campaign phone number

Campaign website

alannamallon.org

Campaign Twitter

@ammallon

Campaign Facebook

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

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 to and from my office, and many meetings, 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

I regularly use the red line, green line, and MBTA bus lines.

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 currently bike around my community. My family and I are avid bikers; my husband works at a bike start up in Kendall Square, and my son bikes daily to and from school from our home in mid Cambridge to his school at Vassal Lane. I am deeply invested in the safety of our biking community because it affects my family and every other family in Cambridge.

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?

In Cambridge, the City Council cannot establish funding, just set budget priorities. That being said, safe streets in our city are one of my foremost priorities. Cambridge has many plans both in review and in motion to improve the quality of our streets, and I am committed to ensuring these goals are met.

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

The red line is far too overcrowded, especially during peak commuting times on weekdays. Adding more frequent trains can help alleviate this stress and incentivize commuters to choose public transit if it is both more frequent, convenient, and comfortable. As City Councillor, I will look forward to working with our state legislature and surrounding communities to fix many of the inefficiencies and inequities in our public transit system.

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?

Plans such as the Inman Square redesign, which have had sufficient community dialogue and participation, should move forward on schedule and with as little delay as possible so that our city's streets can be efficiently improved. However, fast tracking implementation on existing streets is not the best policy solution. In order to pass the safest and most efficient solution without creating unnecessary divides, community input and residents' concerns must be taken into consideration. Once solutions are agreed upon, the lack of division resulting from a robust community dialogue will allow plans to move forward quickly.

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?

Socioeconomic divides between neighborhoods often lead to a gap in the quality of streets between these neighborhoods. Low income neighborhoods are often subject to neglect, whereas more affluent neighborhoods have their concerns, such as potholes and other impediments to walking and biking, addressed in a much timelier fashion. Cambridge does not currently have a Pave Smart Program, which would collect data to see which streets are the most utilized, but also the most neglected, and allow city officials to prioritize the neglected areas. Fixing the hazards in these neighborhoods and making them more accessible and friendly, as well as sending the message that the City is invested in these neighborhoods could go a long way to fostering new biking communities.

5. How will you increase funding for biking infrastructure?

I am fully supportive of the Vision Zero plan. Although Cambridge City Councillors cannot create funding, we can prioritize projects like these, and ensure that plans for safer streets are fully funded. As City Councillor, I will look forward to working with the CDD to accomplish this goal.

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

Adopting Vision Zero in a timely manner is essential for keeping our streets safe. The City needs to be proactive and prevent accidents (some of which are deadly) before they happen.

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

Cambridge has just lowered the speed limit to 25 miles per hour, and all new streets are designed with "bump outs", and I am in full support of both these policies. Our streets should absolutely use design to both slow and reduce traffic, making them safer for everyone - bikers, pedestrians, and drivers included. I think surrounding communities like Boston and Somerville have been working on solutions to their unsafe streets, such as the ones mentioned above, that Cambridge can easily adopt, implement, and modify to the needs of our community.

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

Replacing police officers with cameras does not eliminate racial bias from police forces. The Cambridge Police Department has a focus on ensuring that our force is well trained, and has a strong emphasis on community policing. We need to be addressing implicit bias at its roots and confronting the problem head on, not installing cameras and other automated devices, as these are only a temporary band-aid to a troubling and systemic problem.

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 do support protected bike lanes, as I think they greatly enhance the safety of our biking community, however, they need to be done in a thoughtful and efficient way. Cambridge should be studying the most used roadways and the frequency at which bikers are using these paths to get from point A to point B, and install protected bike lanes based on these results. Installing disruptive bike lanes on an ad hoc basis only furthers the divisions in our community and frustrates everyone, both bikers, business owners, and drivers alike. We need to make sure that bike lanes appear in the most highly used transportation corridors while still allowing drivers to patronize our valued small businesses.

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

Cambridge is already implementing a traffic calming program through the CDD, and as City Councillor I will work for its successful implementation. I think traffic calming through road designs is an example of an innovative and efficient way to significantly improve the safety of our streets. I do, however, think the program can be improved by having the city more involved, by taking an active approach in curb extension planning and installation. Right now, neighborhoods that receive these redesign treatments do so because residents request them, however, less affluent or knowledgeable areas (which may need the redesigns the most), may not make requests as frequently. I think all residents should be educated as to the safety resources this city has to offer, and Cambridge officials should be proactive in providing them.

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

Yes, I fully support all current plans to enhance bike, driver, and pedestrian safety in our city.

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

This is a project that has had sufficient study and community input, and will provide a valuable route connecting many of the Greater Boston communities. Bikers and pedestrians will be able to enjoy using the path to travel between cities, and this path for their exclusive use will greatly increase the safety of the roads.

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 have heard feedback from many of our seniors about the difficulties of navigating our sidewalks. I would also like to add that our disabled residents and parents with strollers are also affected by these difficulties, so this is truly a community wide issue. The City needs to take note of the sidewalks that pose the most obstacles to safe walking and repair them, ensuring that loose and uneven bricks, tree roots, or large cracks in the sidewalks aren't a hazard in our neighborhoods.

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

Our streets are already extremely narrow, and adding bus lanes, especially in some of the busiest parts of the city, is just not feasible. I am in favor of doing a better job of integrating buses into our traffic flow. I am in favor of innovative traffic control and coordination mechanisms, such as equipping buses with timers to ensure that lights at intersections stay green. This makes bus routes the most efficient (incentivizing their use), and optimizes traffic flow by reducing commute time for everyone.

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 think these types of policy questions are more about what we prioritize in our budget rather than how we raise revenue. Instead of imposing extra costs to try and change behavior, I would rather talk about creative solutions which also build community, and disincentivize automobiles by making community spaces. I elaborate on this in a subsequent question.

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

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

The current fee is \$25, and while I do not think it is currently prohibitive, raising it could be a hardship for some families in Cambridge. People who have cars in the city usually have a good reason for their use, such as families with small children, elderly, or disabled residents not old enough or unable to bike or walk on their own. For these groups, raising permit prices on them would not change behavior, just add cost, and perhaps add to existing inequities.

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

People are already nervous about small businesses’ relationship with the protected bike lanes, and I think reducing parking and increasing pricing at the same time will be met unnecessary animosity. We should be exploring more creative and innovative ways to reduce the demand for driving, instead of using blunt instruments like raising costs. Open Newbury Street in Boston, the closure of Memorial Drive on Sundays, and the Harvard Festivals are great examples of this. The prohibition on cars keeps them off the streets while providing a friendly atmosphere for residents to walk in new open spaces and patronize local businesses. These free events not only boost the patronage of our local businesses, but they also build community and reduce the demand for cars without creating division. We need to be exploring more options like this in the future.

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