

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) *

Gwen Volmar

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

Cambridge City Council

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

Gwen Volmar

Name and EIN of the committee (if applicable)

Campaign email address *

gwen@votegwen.org

Campaign address

Campaign phone number

Campaign website

votegwen.org

Campaign Twitter

@gwen_volmar

Campaign Facebook

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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

Everyday – walking is my primary method of travel

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

While walking is my primary method of travel, I also use the T, the 1 bus, the M2 bus

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 would be willing to give it a try, although I am not an expert rider.

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?

Our cross and sidewalks are in bad need of repair. In several locations near my home and work I have witnessed people in wheelchairs/on crutches walking in the street because the sidewalk is unpassable. This could be resolved with a simple audit of the city's sidewalks and intersections, instead of relying solely on resident reports submitted through Commonwealth Connect.

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

The MBTA bus and T service is prohibitively expensive for some commuters. Cambridge could implement a discounted MBTA pass/reimbursement program for residents making below 50% AMI. Increased ridership resulting from bus and T service being fully accessible to all income levels will encourage further investment in these services, and especially support Cambridge's effort to lobby for increased frequency and reach of MBTA services.

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 Vision Zero movement is attracting widespread attention in Cambridge, especially due to recent implementation of protected bike lanes on major thoroughfares. This will likely generate much discussion at city council meetings as residents come to report on how the city is adapting to the new traffic patterns. By fully supporting this discussion and being open to adjustments as residents get used to the new system will be crucial to fully implementing Vision Zero in a way that doesn't feel authoritarian.

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?

In an urban setting, learning to ride a bike is crucial. Schools should implement a safe ridership check for all students graduating into middle school, and offer classes to those students who haven't learned to ride.

5. How will you increase funding for biking infrastructure?

Protected bike lanes in Cambridge are designed to keep cyclists safe on the road, but they also force cyclists to ride on the extremes of the road, where trash, gravel, and other detritus can collect. We need to make sure that our roads are paved well, swept well, and maintained frequently to prevent against damaging bike tires. Fortunately, the system is already in place for keeping our roads maintained, but we need to prioritize keeping roads safe for all travelers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our sidewalks must be wide enough to support mobility assistive devices (such as wheelchairs and walkers) and must be maintained such that they are passable for seniors. The city needs to also take seriously its commitment to enforcing sidewalk shoveling laws so that sidewalks and streets are accessible during the wintertime.

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

Local businesses count on rush hour customers traveling by all methods, including disabled/elderly customers who must travel by car and/or can only walk short distances. I care deeply about supporting local businesses and keeping Cambridge communities rich with diverse commercial opportunities. I would be able to support this measure, however, if I could be certain that access to these businesses would be preserved in some other way.

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 support exploring new ways of raising revenue, especially through fees on new development that doesn't appropriately accommodate its residents with off-street parking.

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

Yes

No

Please explain your choice

I support a parking permit fee structure that is variable depending on whether residents have off-street parking available to them.

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

Local businesses count on rush hour customers traveling by all methods, including disabled/elderly customers who must travel by car and/or can only walk short distances. I care deeply about supporting local businesses and keeping Cambridge communities rich with diverse commercial opportunities. I would be able to support this measure, however, if I could be certain that access to these businesses would be preserved in some other way.

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