



2015 Walk Bike Nashville Vice-Mayoral/Council Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: Angie Henderson

Office Sought (Vice-Mayor, Metro-Council): Metro Council

District (if applicable): District 34

Website: angieforcouncil.org

Twitter: @angienashville

- 1. If (re)elected what would you do to promote walking and biking in Nashville and ensure all Nashvillians, regardless of who they are and where they are trying to go, have access to real transportation options?**

From a promotion standpoint, I will continue to walk and bike frequently and encourage my constituents and all Nashvillians to do the same, when and where it's safe for them to do so. I will share walking and biking opportunities in my district newsletter and continue the annual Walk Green Hills awareness event I have coordinated for 12 years. I have devoted many years to advocating for more walkable and bikeable communities, and I will continue to be a strong advocate for access to multi-modal transportation for all Nashvillians. The ability to safely walk where you need to go is fundamental, whether that's all the way to your destination or to a transit route that will get you the rest of the distance. Safely walkable communities are the foundation of a well functioning transportation system and a connected, healthy, and friendly city.

- 2. The [Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways](#), which prioritizes where to build new sidewalks and bikeways, was last updated in 2008- before Nashville began experiencing explosive growth. The plan was slated to be updated every 5 years, and thus is due for an update. What should our priorities for walking and biking be in the next version? How would you go about updating the plan?**

Metro needs to look at TDOT car counts and do additional car counts on any and all "collector" streets that don't already have permanent mechanisms. I think the volume of cars along a particular street should be a higher factor in the Sidewalk Priority Index (SPI) scoring.

Public Works needs input from advocates like the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advocacy Committee (BPAC) and Walk/Bike Nashville on how the scoring might

be improved, and I think that conversation has already started. We need to make sure those suggestions are implemented. For neighborhoods, proximity to a commercial district (retail/services) should be considered in addition to or just as highly as proximity to parks, schools (both public and private) & transit lines. There should also be a way to factor in a cost/benefit analysis. For example, there are areas that might not score as highly overall but do have a flat, easily-buildable area with plenty of right-of-way, no power poles, and willing partners/land-owners adjacent, etc. and the completion would make an important connection. A fair and uniform scoring system is important, but there are certain factors that are hard to quantify.

For those streets where sidewalks don't make mathematical sense, speed limits should be lowered and biking should be encouraged and supported.

- 3. In 2014, 18 pedestrians were killed, and many more injured, on the roads of Davidson County. Nashville is currently ranked the 15th most dangerous city in America for pedestrians, according to [Dangerous by Design](#) (Smart Growth America). [Vision Zero](#) is an international effort dedicated to the belief that even one preventable pedestrian injury or death is too many. Streets should be engineered to protect all road users – especially pedestrians, who are most exposed to dangerous conditions on the road. How can we apply Vision Zero policies in Nashville? What can we do as a city to increase safety for all road-users in Nashville?**

Education of drivers is a key piece in pedestrian and cycling safety. Pedestrians always have the right of way at a marked crosswalk, but not all drivers know this. Cars must maintain a 3-foot distance from cyclists, but not all drivers know this. Driver testing at the state level and thus education at the local level should incorporate more content and dialog about sharing the road safely. Roads do not belong solely to cars.

There needs to be a constant refrain about the safety of everyone on the road—this includes people walking, people biking and people driving. Consistent public service announcements with eye-catching graphics in NES and Water bills and at local schools, in parent newsletters would be helpful. Education and communication on this issue is extremely important and needs more attention and funding.

We also need to make crossings safer with improved striping (or an alternate material or slightly raised crosswalk), signage, pedestrian refuges on wider streets and curb extensions/neckdowns at corners.

4. Where do you think Metro should construct sidewalks first? How should Metro prioritize sidewalk projects?

I would answer this question the same as I answered question #2 above.

5. As part of the [Nashville Next](#) process, the Planning Department has collected public input to create a long-term transportation plan called [Access Nashville 2040](#). The plan recognizes that our citizens do not desire, nor can our city afford, expensive new roads. Rather than pursue costly widening projects that provide a temporary solution to congestion and a permanent maintenance burden, we must operate our existing street network more efficiently by expanding access to multimodal transportation. Do you support this conclusion? What would you do to ensure Nashvillians can use walking and biking as real transportation options, and not just forms of recreation?

I look forward to reading the Access Nashville 2040 plan in full, and I support the conclusion that widening roads is not a solution, and we need to operate our existing street network more efficiently. While there may be targeted places on major arteries to lengthen or add turn lanes to avoid bottlenecks, which often result in cut-through speeding in neighborhoods, roads should not be widened with additional travel lanes to address traffic. We need to make the bones that we already have stronger to support a more multi-modal "body" of options and also make complete greenway connections that are outside our existing network. While there are a few spots in certain business districts where additional short stretches of complete street connections would likely assist with traffic woes, in general, widening roads induces demand and increases traffic. Narrowing car travel lanes is proven to reduce speeding and adding sufficient width and buffers for bikes and pedestrians, rather than cars, will make our streets safer..

6. Studies consistently show that the greater the population density in a given neighborhood, the more walkable that neighborhood will be (e.g. walking to grocery store, work, transit). What are your thoughts about density in Nashville and how it relates to transportation challenges? Almost all neighborhoods are fundamentally "walkable" but in Nashville most are NOT safely or enjoyably walkable. Can you safely and enjoyably get to the nearby park on foot, probably not. Can you safely and enjoyably get to the major artery where a transit line runs on foot? Most of us, probably not. But if you can make it there, are you "rewarded" for your effort by standing in a ditch to wait for the bus? Probably. Nashville has an inappropriately low level of infrastructure investment in neighborhoods. We already have many neighborhoods that

are sufficiently dense, that are pleading (for many years) for sidewalks on their collectors to safely connect them to adjacent commercial areas, parks, schools, and transit. Those neighborhoods should be served whether or not they choose to become more dense. In District 34, neighbors with .45 acres or less are our “denser neighborhoods.” My neighborhood has 300+ households within a half mile of restaurants, shops, a major park, a major community/tourist destination, and a transit line, but ZERO walkable infrastructure except around one townhouse infill project built 8+ years ago. It is completely illogical. Saying that more density will bring more walkability is a backwards conversation. Let’s improve the SPI and sidewalk funding and make smart, targeted investments improving what we already have safely walkable and then build new mixed-use walkable areas and transit-oriented development in strategic locations all over Nashville. There are opportunities all over Nashville for strategic infill where neighbors support it closer to major arteries and commercial areas. That “density” should look different for every neighborhood. In some, density might be townhouses where there were formerly duplexes, in others that might mean 3 or 4 stories of senior living, in still others along our major pikes that might be 8 stories of apartments. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for absorbing the population increases coming to Nashville. We must be strategic about where we encourage density

- 7. There is clear support in the Nashville community for spending more money on sidewalks, but the source of funding is always the major question. Do you think the city should spend more, less or the same amount on sidewalks and bikeways? If more, what policies or initiatives would you propose to increase funding for sidewalks and other pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects? If less, what would you opt to not fund and why?**

The city should spend more on sidewalks and bikeways. I don’t think a special policy or initiative is needed it’s the will to make it a budgeting priority. Next year’s budget finally has more money for sidewalks, and that didn’t require a tax increase or a special program—the mayor just realized that his legacy and Nashville’s It City status were going to be irreparably tarnished if he maintained the same level of neglectful funding and didn’t put more of an appropriate level of funding towards sidewalks. The collective voice on this issue has been building over the years, and it has finally gotten louder especially with people moving here from other cities and being completely flabbergasted with how hard it is to walk and take transit in this city.

- 8. While our sidewalk, greenway and bikeway networks are expanding, there are still many gaps in connectivity that rule out biking and walking as real transportation options for many Nashvillians who would otherwise be interested in biking or**

walking to work, school, the grocery store or to community events. What initiatives or policies would you propose to bridge the gaps that separate walkable and bikeable areas from adjacent communities?

Again looking at updating the SPI to more highly prioritize these missing links and targeting funding to those areas that will make important and helpful connections. All neighborhoods know where these obvious missing links are. Public Works does not communicate and partner appropriately with neighborhoods and business stakeholders. This is not rocket science.

- 9. Everyone wants to be able to get across the city quickly, yet roads designed to carry cars as quickly as possible are usually the most dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists. Do you support adding traffic calming approaches (example: [bulb outs](#); [road diets](#); [slow zones](#)) along Nashville’s major pikes and arteries? When are these projects appropriate?**

I support the full “menu” of traffic calming approaches for pikes, arteries, collectors, and neighborhood streets. The pikes can reduce speed in certain areas and still increase flow with traffic light sequencing/optimization. Not all traffic calming approaches are appropriate for every location. These solutions must be tailored to the street and the larger area. Sidewalks and bike lanes need appropriate buffers when adjacent to cars or a greenway alternative that is completely off the street when the road can’t support all uses.

- 10. Nashville is currently a Bronze [Bicycle Friendly Community](#), as determined by the [League of American Bicyclists](#). What would you do to move us towards becoming a Silver Bicycle Friendly community?**

Encourage and fund more buffered bike lanes and greenways. Encourage more bike racks in business districts and at other destinations. Encourage shower and changing areas in office building restrooms. The education piece is important here again—awareness and support of bicycle riders and the rules of the road. Encouraging additional open streets events.

- 11. Are there any specific bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure projects or initiatives that you would work to complete during your term?**

I’d like to work to make sure our Complete Streets Executive Order becomes Public Works/Planning policy. I would like to work to advance the concept and planning for a possible southern greenway along the Little Harpeth that connects the Brentwood Arboretum to the Kellytown historic site and on to the Warner Parks. Burton Hills and the apartment communities along the west side of Hillsboro Pike need paths and sidewalks into the Green Hills Business District. The Dorcas Copeland neighborhood needs a sidewalk connection to existing Hobbs Rd. sidewalks. Both of those Green Hills projects

WALK BIKE NASHVILLE

are in the Green Hills Area Transportation Plan, for which I served on the advisory committee. The Highlands neighborhood needs a sidewalk connection to its adjacent commercial district and transit route. The Devon Close, Devon Valley & Devon Highlands neighborhoods need a safe connection to Warner Park. My list is long, as it no doubt is in other Council districts, because Nashville is decades behind on this work, but we must continue to bring attention to these needs and make sure they are on the priority list and getting into the plan. Lastly, I would like to see Nashville consider a speed limit of 25 rather than 30 on all neighborhood streets and 30 rather than 35 on neighborhood collectors, and we need strengthen that with a dedicated police team for traffic/speeding enforcement (which Nashville used to have but no longer has) that is consistent rather than spotty and occasional when neighbors ask and there happens to be flex time.