

# WALK BIKE QUESTIONNAIRE

## 2019 NASHVILLE MAYORAL CANDIDATES



In preparation for the 2019 Mayoral elections, Walk Bike Nashville distributed a Walking and Biking Candidate Questionnaire. This questionnaire is intended to help educate the public about the positions and ideas of each of the candidates. Walk Bike Nashville is a 501c3

non-profit, and as such we do not endorse or support any candidate.

These are the answers as we received them, unedited, from the candidates. We have rotated the order of the responses for fairness.

### GENERAL INTRO

1. Walking and biking are a critical parts of Nashville's transportation system. With increasing car traffic, 62 people killed while walking over the last 3 years, 37.4% of Nashvillians overweight, and 1 in 4 urban residents without access to a vehicle, it's never been more important to ensure all Nashvillians have safe and inviting places to walk and bike.

**What would you do as Mayor to promote walking and biking in Nashville?**

#### MAYOR DAVID BRILEY:

Nashville has a sidewalk deficit that results from years of neglecting pedestrian infrastructure. I see it firsthand when I walk to the office, as do members of my staff who ride WeGo every day. I want to change that. That's why I announced \$30 million for sidewalks last year, which was more than one out of every ten dollars recommended for general government needs. It's a smart step toward closing that multi-billion-dollar gap, and I will continue to make sure that pedestrian and bike infrastructure is prioritized.

#### REPRESENTATIVE JOHN RAY CLEMMONS:

As Nashville continues to grow, we must be thoughtful in our planning and create pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods so that residents of all ages and abilities feel safe traveling without a vehicle. We can start by building better sidewalks and bike lanes, ensure that all crosswalks are clearly designated, and increase streetlights throughout the city. We can also boost public awareness of pedestrian and cyclist right-of-way laws by better supporting local programs and organizations, such as Wike Bike University and Open Streets Nashville. We must also commit to expanding our sidewalks according to the priority network laid out in WalkNBike by 2029 - investing \$45 million per year for 10 years to complete the 71 miles. Finally, as mayor, I will lead by example and use my platform to highlight walk/bike to work days, lead walks through neighborhoods and on major thoroughfares, and ensure that Nashville is a city that values multi-modal transportation.

#### COUNCIL MEMBER JOHN COOPER:

The best, most beloved, and successful cities are walkable cities. As mayor, I will be committed to making Nashville more safely walkable and bikeable for all ages and abilities. Our next transportation plan -- we can't wait five more years -- should be a fundamentals-first plan, with dedicated funding for bus system improvements, safer intersections, sidewalks, and protected bikeways.

Sidewalk infrastructure has not kept up with our growth. Nashville is seventy years behind on building sidewalks because as residential development sprawled outwards post WWII, we designed for cars instead of people. As

**COUNCIL MEMBER JOHN COOPER, COUNTINUED**

a result, most of our suburban neighborhoods don't have walkable infrastructure. We will not have an effective transportation system without a network of sidewalks to promote connectivity and walkability to schools, parks, libraries, businesses, and bus stops. We need to focus on making arterial and collector streets safely walkable and make strategic investments to connect neighborhoods to adjacent suburban commercial centers.

Everyone paying attention to Metro's sidewalk program understands that our cost per linear foot and our time-to-build are too high. We have to do better and make sure we are getting the procurement process right. We could also speed up the process of sidewalk construction, if we expand our right-of-way acquisition capacity by bringing some of that work in-house at Public Works.

We should fully fund our network of bikeways, neighborways, and greenways, working from the inside out and the outside in. The core is key, but we should simultaneously provide safe infrastructure in suburban areas with ample right-of way where protected bikeways will not be contentious. As part of the WalkNBike strategic plan, we have already paid for and have a preliminary design and feasibility study for a core bikeable network; now we need to show the community how beneficial, safe and enjoyable this network will be and follow through.

Our greenways are among the jewels of the county, and it has been my pleasure to represent the Council on the Greenways & Open Space Commission. The recent "Plan to Play" Master Plan for Parks put special emphasis on greenways. All the citizen surveys in that planning process showed that residents really enjoy and support greenways and want more of them, not just for recreation but also for transportation. Currently, most residents drive to a park so that they can then walk or bike on our fantastic greenways, but we need to be intentional about better connecting our greenways to our neighborhood streets and providing safe crossings, so that more people can access greenways on foot and on bike.

**JON SEWELL**

Walking and Biking in Nashville should be a part of our custom and incorporated into habit-forming patterns that are facilitate by an expanded network of continuous bike lanes and walking paths, sidewalks, and trails. The current network is well known to be deficient and scattered and sporadic, even worse so in poorer neighborhoods. To engage the cultural fabric in regards to custom-forming habits, I would be down to show people how advocating for expanded networks is necessary, and use of the current network is possible now as well. Currently I walk that walk: from my house to a nearby park is only a few blocks and requires me to push a 2-kid stroller thru knee high grass where the sidewalk system is interrupted, but the end is arriving at a much desired open green space. Yeah the walk sucks but if leaders would make that journey and demonstrate their own commitment thru practice we can start to make the use habitually beneficial.

**DR. CAROL SWAIN**

I believe in leading by example, and as mayor I would work to participate in and promote many activities that aid in a healthy lifestyle. I want Nashvillians to be excited about everything from walking and biking to 5k races, Tough Mudder challengers, and the multitude of activities our city has to offer

## VISION ZERO

2. Vision Zero is an international effort to eliminate fatal and severe traffic crashes. Mayor Barry instituted a Vision Zero effort as part of her Moving Music City Action Agenda. But unfortunately the number of people killed walking in Nashville has steadily risen with 23 killed in both 2017 and 2018.

### What will you do as Mayor to reduce pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries in Nashville?

#### REPRESENTATIVE JOHN RAY CLEMMONS:

We should fully embrace the Vision Zero initiative and examine all potential areas of improvement because every street and intersection in Nashville should be as safe as possible. We can start by expanding sidewalks in the 7 miles proposed in the WalkNBike plan, and then use an objective model in the future expansion of sidewalks, prioritizing areas that score higher in categories such as recorded safety concerns (high number of crashes), benefits underserved communities, improves pedestrian access to transit network, adds pedestrian access where none currently exists, serves a school, is located in an area with high demand for walking, or is identified as a walkable corridor in the Major and Collector Street Plan. We should also need to prioritize clearly designated crosswalks, increased streetlights, building pedestrian refuge islands, and reviewing speed limits in neighborhoods across Nashville to calm traffic and increase pedestrian visibility. Furthermore, my administration would work to create an Office of Mobility within the Mayor's Office that would serve as a clearinghouse of policy experts whose sole job would be to analyze all available data to help other city departments execute their necessary improvements to our city's infrastructure.

#### COUNCIL MEMBER JOHN COOPER:

As Walk Bike Nashville has so valuably identified, many of our most dangerous pedestrian crossings coincide with bus stops. We choose where to locate bus stops, so we have a moral obligation to make sure that people riding buses aren't putting their lives on the line getting to and from those bus stops.

Metro needs to more meaningfully engage with the findings of your group's "Impossible Crossings" work. Metro Public Works identified the 50 most dangerous intersections back in 2014, and as you have tracked, only 4 of those 50 locations have seen meaningful improvements since then. We have to do better. Too many people feel like they aren't safe crossing the street and getting around without a car. Building safer crosswalks and making strategic sidewalk connections should work in concert with larger capital sidewalk projects. Traffic calming with actual physical measures: reduced lane widths, speed tables, raised crosswalks, roundabouts, chicanes, curb extensions, leading intervals, and better lighting are among the reasonable cost solutions and best practices. These are relatively low-cost, have a solid ROI, and can make a huge difference in safety.

In response to mounting community concern about cut-through speeding in neighborhoods and distracted driving, Walk Bike Nashville encouraged and Council passed a resolution this year to recommend 25 mph as the maximum speed for all neighborhood streets. As mayor, I will support the implementation of that plan in concert with physical traffic calming efforts to make sure everyone is safe on our neighborhood streets. And I will encourage continued work with TDOT to make state routes, our most deadly streets, more safe.

Traffic Calming is an important part of any Vision Zero Plan, and Metro's traffic calming program has been ineffective for far too long. Formerly hidden in the "roadways" section of the capital budget, this spending lacked accountability. Recently Council members pushed to make sure the program received itemized funding in the capital spending plan and will be administered internal to Public Works, rather than by a contractor. I think we should do the same for safe crossings in the capital spending plan, rather than having that work hidden in the "intersections" section of the capital budget. This transparency will help establish benchmarks towards the noble and attainable goal of zero deaths on Metro's streets.

**COUNCIL MEMBER JOHN COOPER, CONTINUED**

Traffic Calming and Vision Zero efforts will help make our neighborhoods and commercial corridors more walkable and bikeable--it's just a matter of implementing what we know works with more intention and urgency. We need to implement the many plans and studies that we have already conducted and paid for.

**JON SEWELL**

Lower speed limits all around. I am also an avid fan of a closed streets system, allowing congested areas downtown to incorporate pedestrian-only reclaimed streets would allow for easy use of resources in an area of critical mass. In that vein, let's take that spirit to these most problematic locations and look at the horrible anti-human car-first designs currently widely practiced. Downtown I would like to open a series of streets to pedestrian and human-powered transit only. Outside of the urban core, we need to look at vastly expanding our network of traffic-calming measures that incorporate smart tested design and let people cross the street without fear of death. We can dream about a car-free future while also advocating for coexistence in the meantime that still prioritizes people.

**DR. CAROL SWAIN**

First, it is a top priority to ensure the police force is fully staffed and equipped, not just to stop the crime wave, but also to enforce traffic laws and ensure special events are set up in a safe manner. Strengthening our first responder capabilities, including fire and EMS, is also important for responding to accidents, both securing the site to prevent further harm and aiding victims. We also need to do more to educate drivers, bikers, and scooter riders about the rules of the road so that all can safely share our transportation infrastructure.

**MAYOR DAVID BRILEY:**

According to our quarterly resident survey, we know that about one out of four people in Nashville commuted to work at some point in the last year by some other means than driving alone. We need to make sure that they can do so as safely as possible. I am well aware of the danger presented by Impossible Crossings and share Walk Bike Nashville's sense of urgency in addressing them. That's why I've pledged to invest a portion of the more than \$300 million we expect to get from modernizing our on-street parking system toward safety improvements that will help achieve the goals of Vision Zero.

Also, in response to increasing traffic, our Public Works department will be implementing eight traffic calming projects throughout Nashville this spring and summer. After reviewing applications, Public Works will be doing projects in these areas: Highland Heights, Tennessee State University/39th Ave N, Haywood South, Hillwood, Jones Avenue, Caldwell-Abbey Hall, Katie Hill, Belmont-Hillsboro West. These projects will ease traffic stress and help prevent pedestrian injuries and fatalities.

## BETTER BICYCLING

3. People for Bikes recently released the list of the top 50 most bicycle friendly cities. Nashville was not included. Metro's WalkNBike lays out a number of plans to make it easier to bike in the city, including a network of 61 miles protected/low-stress bikeways for the city, of which 54 miles still need to be completed. However, often increasing on-street bicycle infrastructure requires difficult decisions. A classic example is the tension between installing bike lanes, and maintaining on-street parking.

**What will you do as mayor to enact WalkNBike and expand low-stress bikeways? If a plan for new bikelanes came across your desk that you had the authority to approve and you thought it was the right thing to do, Metro staff agreed, but a vocal minority were strongly opposed, how would you move forward?**

### COUNCIL MEMBER JOHN COOPER:

We need protected and separated bikeways for safety reasons and also so that bike riders aren't put in conflict with car drivers and seen as adversaries for the same space -- both in the construction/planning phase and also in operation. I'm not aware of any political conflict between sidewalk advocates and motorists, and bikeways should be no different. I will certainly listen to all sides, however vocal or small a contingent they may be. I would be interested in bringing sides together to assuage concerns that investing in walk/bike infrastructure comes at the expense of the driving experience.

The work of the next mayor is to build on our core walkable/bikeable network and connect that to our suburban commercial centers, schools, parks and neighborhoods. As a side note, I'm frequently frustrated to see bikeways that are cluttered with debris that makes them unusable and dangerous. More thorough and consistent street-sweeping and added separation would help us improve and more fully utilize the bikeable infrastructure we already have. Paint is not infrastructure.

### JON SEWELL

Whew, this reads like a loaded question so I'll try to wade thru it carefully. Expanding the bikelanes is a must. In high-density areas closer to the core unfortunately a lot of those bikelanes will be in close proximity to roadways based on current ROW and easements- Can we look outside that parallelism? I am currently in a design project where I am advocating for a more terrain-friendly sidewalk and accompanying bikelane that still operates in the ROW but does not necessarily follow the road.

### DR. CAROL SWAIN

First, I want to recognize the importance of the city's limited parking capacity, and I think it would be misleading for other candidates to suggest that those spaces can simply be repurposed without harming the local economy and our residents. Instead, we must look at better using city property and also building walking and biking considerations in on the front end of development, so that purchaser/developer stakeholders share in the commitment--and cost--of providing more and better transportation options for Nashville. I also think it is crucial to secure the support of the neighborhoods that will be affected by changes. All leaders must make difficult choices on issues for which consensus cannot be reached, but I am committed to a transparent, inclusive process and I look forward to working with you to ensure the best future for Nashville we can achieve!

### **MAYOR DAVID BRILEY**

Everybody deserves a voice in important decisions about how we prioritize different modes of transport in our major corridors. I will strive for achieving consensus on any decision I'm faced with in that respect. That said, I support the goal of expanding low-stress bikeways in the city. Curb management will be the issue for urban planners in Nashville and other fast-growing cities in the coming years, and our on-street parking modernization proposal will not only generate more funding for pedestrian and bike infrastructure, but it will also give Metro—and alternative transportation advocates—access to real-time data to improve our decision-making about corridor improvements.

### **REPRESENTATIVE JOHN RAY CLEMMONS:**

To fully expand our network of low-stress bikeways, we need a dedicated revenue stream that would be earmarked for projects aimed at promoting pedestrian mobility. As Nashville continues to grow, we need to decide how best to increase the comfort of those riding on our streets. Major separated bikeways should be considered, as well as paying particular attention to problematic intersections in order to maintain an easy and enjoyable riding experience along key corridors.

My administration will collaborate with all stakeholders (residents, community leaders, the councilmember(s), Walk Bike Nashville, etc.) to make key decisions for the city. As with any policy proposal, we would bring together the greatest minds and listen to all sides before making any decision. To that end, it's a false choice to say we can't have both parking and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure throughout Nashville. We simply need the desire to enact innovative solutions that will meet the unique needs of residents in every neighborhood.

## **DOWNTOWN ACCESS**

4. There is currently office space for an additional 40,000 people slated to open up in downtown Nashville. Traffic is already choked by single-occupancy vehicles and there is a finite amount of street-space available.

**How can Metro Nashville reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips into downtown in order to ensure that new employees, Nashvillians, and visitors continue to have access to Nashville's urban core?**

### **JON SEWELL**

Park-n-Ride programs and rideshare programs seem like a practiced solution. I would love to learn more about other alternatives, including point-to-point bus programs from outside the city into town, and possibly re-striping road diets that allow for a more focused HOV lane a la BRT. One thing I've found good to remember is that a lot of people forced out of town into longer commutes were displaced by economic housing strains and do not desire that commute anymore than many in town begrudge them for it. While it may seem petty, I would enjoy a Use Fee applied to single-occupancy SUVs from Williamson County that seat 9.

### **DR. CAROL SWAIN**

Ridesharing services like Uber and Lyft have already dramatically changed the transportation dynamics of the city over the last couple of years, providing new solutions and also presenting new challenges. The introduction of "Uber-like" vans could be a great alternative to help ease congested roadways. Working with major companies to incentivize employees' use of rideshare apps and flex scheduling can also help make a dent in traffic. The experience of other major cities across the country are an important lesson that must guide our approach—there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution, and simply telling people not to drive will not work.

### **MAYOR DAVID BRILEY**

We can offer small incentives to people who want to carpool into downtown. We already have HOV lanes on our interstate, and we encourage people to use them to their benefit. We can also expand and improve our bus routes to encourage more downtown workers to take transit to and from work. I also think a part of this effort needs to come from the private sector. Large companies in downtown Nashville can incentivize carpooling, walking, biking, and transit options by making their employees pay for parking or offering small benefits for people who don't drive to work. But I know Metro also has to lead by example. Less than three percent of Metro employees uses WeGo to get to work. I'm actively exploring ways to incentivize Metro employees to choose alternative modes of transportation and look forward to launching a pilot program to test ideas in the near future.

### **REPRESENTATIVE JOHN RAY CLEMMONS:**

To reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips into downtown, we must have a comprehensive plan that addresses the needs of both residents and commuters. This multi-pronged approach will include:

- Collaborating with surrounding county leaders to encourage and facilitate less single- occupancy vehicle trips and the development of a forward-thinking regional mass transportation infrastructure system.
- Work with state officials to detour pass-through freight haulers and keep them out of our urban core.
- Encourage private employers to buy into a public transit ridership program and offer free or reduced pricing for their employees.
- Increase overall access to public transportation with more rapid and on-demand services to allow more flexibility for employees and their families.
- Increase carpool stations around the outer perimeter of the county.
- Create rideshare partnerships with private employers to encourage carpooling.
- Utilize and install smart technology to improve traffic flow, i.e. timed lights, lane shifts at rush hours, and, demand-responsive public parking.
- Redesign parking to incentivize non-auto travel.

Downtown is the epicenter of Nashville's growth, which means it's also the epicenter of our traffic and infrastructure issues. With tens of thousands of workers, residents, and visitors moving around downtown every day, we must be proactive about alleviating pressure on our city's infrastructure.

### **COUNCIL MEMBER JOHN COOPER**

Around 80% of downtown employees drive to work alone! The new Nashville Connector Transportation Demand Management (TDM) effort in our Planning Department is off to a good start and will need to have sustained funding to engage with Nashville's major employers. Corporations receiving incentives from the city should always have a TDM plan, and any major employer that invested in marketing the 2018 transit referendum would certainly find it worthy to have a TDM plan, which will provide their employees with helpful transportation alternatives to driving alone. We should be proactively working with all major employers to help them devise customized plans to fit their employees needs with car/vanpooling, transit ridership, smart garages, and parking cash-out programs.

Our downtown is built on a grid of very narrow streets, and there is not much changing that. Those narrow streets can only handle so many cars, so we should be thinking about ways to encourage bus ridership, carpooling, walking to work, etc. The growth in jobs downtown has also coincided with many more people living downtown, so the possibility of walking/biking to work is real for an increasing number of downtown residents.

To address commuter needs, we should also do more to connect protected bikeways & greenways into downtown. I will make sure we stop closing the greenways at the Ascend Amphitheater and the Nashville Sounds stadium for days at a time!

## SIDEWALKS

**5. The WalkNBike Plan states that only 19% of Nashville's streets have sidewalks. How can Metro expand our sidewalk network?**

### MAYOR DAVID BRILEY

We will continue to allocate money in our budget for sidewalk development and consult with members of Metro Council and residents to carefully study which neighborhoods and streets need them most urgently.

### REPRESENTATIVE JOHN RAY CLEMMONS:

The current allocation of \$30 million in 2018 for sidewalks was altogether inadequate for the goal of making Nashville a safer, more walkable city. At this rate, it will take us 23 years to fix our current system and implement an additional 71 miles of sidewalks, while still not taking into account the required long-term maintenance of our current system. There have been comprehensive expert reports completed that give extensive, specific recommendations on where sidewalks are needed to best benefit the community -- yet we have failed to heed this advice. Additionally, Metro has consistently allocated funds to create sidewalks but then has failed to actually spend the monies.

We should start by utilizing funding that already exists, and then create a consistent, dedicated revenue stream to prioritize sidewalk expansion by charging developers impact fees for the stress created on our already outdated and inadequate infrastructure. We need to prioritize sidewalk improvements and upgrades in high-density, high-traffic areas, and in neighborhoods where residents historically lack access to motorized vehicles. Metro departments and agencies should be empowered to efficiently implement the plans that already exist and coordinate with stakeholders across our community to help us reach our goal of becoming a more pedestrian-friendly city.

### COUNCIL MEMBER JOHN COOPER

Please refer to my answer to Question #1. Additionally: Given how far behind we are on sidewalk construction, I will add that one of the core challenges to constructing sidewalks in Nashville is right-of-way acquisition. This is an extremely time-consuming and expensive proposition. Another thing that makes sidewalk construction complex and costly is stormwater design. I think we need to look at bringing some of the sidewalk project work in-house because we know sidewalks are going to be a stable long-term capital spending need. Our next transportation plan should include dedicated funding for sidewalks because we can't have effective transportation system without them.

### JON SEWELL

Our current funding mechanism is obviously broken and we need massive investments to make up the time lost by previous administrations that showed up to the forums claiming their dedication and then just kind of pulling out empty pockets when it came time to discuss how to make it happen. One of the most serious problems may be a lack of communication and understanding. Most political candidates are in their position as a result of access to resources (either thru personal wealth or wealthy donors). As a result, their experiences with the poorer neighborhoods that disproportionately have the sidewalk infrastructure deficiencies are mostly study-based- not rooted in direct experience. Having a group of resource-privileged people discuss solutions to problems in poor neighborhoods may also be as insufficient in reaching innovative solutions as the sidewalk system itself.

### DR. CAROL SWAIN

I will engage with public works to identify high vehicle/foot traffic neighborhoods to prioritize additional sidewalk access. We need a city-wide audit so that, within our budget capabilities, we can work to meet this need as soon as possible.

## DEDICATED FUNDING

6. Transportation remains severely underfunded in Nashville and lacks a dedicated, consistent funding source. Which of the follow options would you support to secure dedicated transportation funding? Please explain.

1. Referendum to raise sales tax, business tax hotel/motel tax, and/or wheel tax
2. Increasing property taxes and using those funds for transportation
3. Bonds
4. Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. None of the above

Explanation:

### REPRESENTATIVE JOHN RAY CLEMMONS:

4 -- Other

No option can or should be taken off the table. It should be noted, however, that all the possibilities to fund our transportation system are presently unknown because the funding tools should evolve through the modernization of our state's transportation fund, the federal government's commitment to building infrastructure, and our residents' recognition of the serious challenges facing our city and region. Any transportation plan will be developed in harmony with regional leadership to ensure the buy-in of surrounding communities because everyone who places additional burdens on our transportation network should pay their fair share. Nashville must be a leader in this effort and work with all relevant parties to design and implement a comprehensive strategy that includes cutting excess costs, securing investment from public and private entities, and obtaining state and federal funds. Because our state's taxing system is so regressive, any funding plan will recognize and heavily weigh the additional burdens that a need for new revenues will place on Nashville residents. The staff of the Office of Mobility within the mayor's office will be focused on studying all possible alternatives so that we can make significant movement on this issue within the first term of my administration.

### COUNCIL MEMBER JOHN COOPER:

I'm open to any of the above if used appropriately for a fundamentals-first, cost-effective plan that helps people in every neighborhood get to work. I'd just point out that option C (bonds) would still require a funding mechanism for debt service payments on the bonds. When using regressive modes of taxation, it becomes incredibly important to make sure that the most vulnerable communities are benefiting.

### JON SEWELL

4 -- Other

the sales tax is a regressive tax and would not be applied fairly. Wheel taxes and similar use-based fees may be the answer. That and asking corporations moving here displacing people to help pony up to resolve some of the unintended negative consequences arising from their relocation?

### DR. CAROL SWAIN:

4 -- Other

We elect our leaders to make wise choices. Transportation is certainly a key need of city residents, but so are many other activities like public safety and education. I don't believe a budget full of firewalls to create "dedicated" funding streams can effectively keep up with the changing needs of a big, dynamic city like Nashville. It is the mayor's responsibility to work with stakeholders in prioritizing transportation projects alongside other spending proposals. You can rest assured that I will put significant focus on addressing the city's huge traffic challenge, including by considering all alternative means of transit. I look forward to partnering with organizations like this to develop solutions and put them into action.

**MAYOR DAVID BRILEY:**

Nashville's future economic competitiveness requires bold investments in multi-modal transportation solutions. I support all of the above funding options for local funding strategies, but we also need to do everything we can to maximize state and federal funding opportunities.

**OPEN STREETS NASHVILLE**

7. Nashville has hosted four Open Streets events (the fifth is this year). It is a program that temporarily closes iconic streets to cars to allow residents to walk, bike, or play in the street. Each year it has been co-hosted by the Mayor's office, which has helped pay for police support. You can see a video of last year's event at [www.openstreetsnashville.org](http://www.openstreetsnashville.org).

**Have you ever participated in an Open Streets Event? What is your vision for Open Streets Nashville and Metro's involvement in this program?**

**MAYOR DAVID BRILEY**

I enjoyed taking part in Open Streets last year, and I would like to do the same this year. I think Open Streets serves as an excellent event – not only to promote non-car uses for our streets but also to foster community bonds and relationships in various Nashville neighborhoods.

**REPRESENTATIVE JOHN RAY CLEMMONS:**

Yes. Open Streets on 12th Avenue South takes place in my neighborhood and partially in my current state house district, and my family and I look forward to this event every year. We must make it easier and more enjoyable for people to walk in their neighborhoods, and Open Streets Events are a great example of how to do this. These events are ideal opportunities to raise awareness of the need for more pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and increased access to public transportation. We should also encourage more public-private partnerships to help fund this family-friendly endeavor. Furthermore, Open Streets Events should be used to gauge public opinion on the possibility of closing certain corridors permanently to motorized vehicles. This is a decision that would not be made lightly and would require consultation with Metro planning experts, small businesses, and neighborhood leaders. Yet, as population density increases in Nashville, we must look at all available options to build safer, more pedestrian-friendly communities.

**COUNCIL MEMBER JOHN COOPER:**

We need to do more of them! The city should make it easier for non-profits and neighborhoods to put these together. The community loves them, and they're great for small businesses. And after all, we have no problem shutting down all of downtown to host events. Considering Metro spent \$1.4 million on hosting the NFL Draft, it seems that we can find the resources necessary to help put together more than one Open Streets event each year. We should be doing more community building events in our neighborhoods.

**JON SEWELL**

Yes, I have participated in a recent Open Streets event. More than that, I have thoroughly enjoyed similar programs internationally such as the "Ciclovía" in Bogota. You're definitely preaching to the choir, because I also practice this philosophy every First Saturday Art Crawl in Wedgewood-Houston at my commercial building, The Packing Plant, where I close down the side street next to my building and make it a car-free zone. Inside this Temporary Autonomous Zone a calmer yet more active scene has emerged. We park the cars elsewhere and Reclaim the Street for literary booths, small pop-ups, the occasional temporary exhibition, poetry Open Mic, and even interpretative dancing. When people aren't in constant fear of dying by car they tend to enjoy the experience a little more :)

**DR. CAROL SWAIN:**

I have lived in a neighborhood that hosted Open Streets. There are pros and cons to shutting down major streets and deploying our officers for any special event. I think the city's next mayor will need to take a close look at the many citywide events, performances, and construction projects to ensure there is neighborhood input and buy-in, as well as a well-thought out plan for safety and enjoyment specific to each function. Open Streets will certainly be a part of that effort.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

8. In Nashville, issues related to transportation are dispersed between several departments, including Planning, Public Works, the MTA and Parks. What are your thoughts on this structure? How would you improve staff capacity, as well as coordination and communication between the disparate offices that all address mobility in Nashville?

**REPRESENTATIVE JOHN RAY CLEMMONS:**

My administration will consistently look for ways to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability within Metro government. Right now, there are many Metro departments that play a role in improving our transportation infrastructure, yet they aren't able to properly coordinate to execute shared goals. That is why a new Office of Mobility with the mayor's office would focus on improving communications between departments, eliminating redundancies, and providing increased data analysis and policy expertise to make the best decisions possible for the greatest number of Nashvillians.

**COUNCIL MEMBER JOHN COOPER:**

I've mentioned above that I would support bringing some of our contracted work back into staff positions at Public Works, so that speaks to some of the staff capacity question. I can also say that I think Nashville would benefit from more transportation planners in the Planning Department. As for the overall structure and communication between the departments mentioned above, I'll look into the formation of a Transportation Department. That was one of the recommendations in the Nashville Community Transportation Platform, which I was the first mayoral candidate to endorse. I certainly appreciate the way the Planning Department, Public Works and MTA (now WeGo) are working more closely together than in the past, but we are still falling short of implementing our strategic plans. Perhaps a centralized Transportation Department would help that. Consolidation could potentially result in cost savings, which we could then direct into more planners, engineers and project managers. We've got talented Metro staff that care deeply about making Nashville more walkable and bikeable, and I'll be very interested to hear how they think we should organize to better deliver safe streets for people walking, biking and taking transit.

**JON SEWELL**

I can only imagine that one could easily suggest departmental synergy and the possibility of economic and human efficiency thru consolidation of some organizational redundancies. But then again I don't ever wear a suit and only have a minor in Economics. I still manage to run a campaign that plans to raise zero dollars by design, and spend even less by accident, while still trying to get the word out. We can definitely improve the coordination issue but then that would require an infinite amount of studies, meetings and ribbon-cuttings. In the meantime, Im personally pouring sidewalks and installing DIY traffic-calming measures with great success. Those fo us putting some skin in the game can lead by example when it comes to Metro departments and apathetic lip service. So, without kissing the curb, Id like to see some major reforms that have some teeth. Its possible, but Im not sure the will is there politically aside from endless jawing from those who should be sinking their teeth into the issue: people are literally dying trying to cross the damn road.

**DR. CAROL SWAIN:**

One of the reasons I am running for mayor is to bring a more business-like approach to city government. In particular, I plan to seek the advice of organizational management experts to review the city's efforts to maximize cost-effectiveness and performance. This is particularly important--as you note--in the transportation space, since these projects are so varied and widely dispersed.

**MAYOR DAVID BRILEY**

Metro staff in these departments are currently meeting on a regular basis to make sure that activity is coordinated efficiently. I support taking a serious look at formalizing this structure under a Metro Department of Transportation. But we also need to make sure that individual departments are getting the resources they need to perform effectively.