

WALK BIKE QUESTIONNAIRE

2019 NASHVILLE METRO COUNCIL CANDIDATES



In preparation for the 2019 Metropolitan General Elections, Walk Bike Nashville distributed a Walking and Biking Candidate Questionnaire to Metro Council candidates. 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.

1. What would you do as a council member to promote walking and biking in Nashville?

Erin Evans

My favorite cities are those where walking is incorporated as part of my day, instead of a special activity that I have to make time for due to a 40 minute commute to a sedentary job. I am one of the 37% of Nashvillians who is overweight, and it is becoming increasingly more important to think through how I can be more active. District 12 isn't considered a walkable part of Nashville, and our community is becoming increasingly concerned about the lack of sidewalks in our area, especially as new development comes our direction. As a council member I would promote walking and biking in Nashville through the conversations that need to take place about new development, and retrofitting existing streets. I would also promote both of these activities by doing them more frequently with my family to relieve stress and improve my fitness level.

Geric Smith

We would need to start ensuring walkers and bikers that they are safe not just from traffic but also a criminal element. Public safety begins with neighborhood watches and also make Metro Police aware of problems that persist on roadways, sidewalks, and trails. Start promoting health and benefits to our schools and educate them when and where to walk and bike safely.

2. What will you do as a Council Member to reduce pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries in your district and all of Nashville?

Erin Evans

The one small but critical project I pushed for and secured funding for is the sidewalk connection between Cottage Lane and the Lebanon Pk bus stop. Students were running across 4 lanes of Lebanon Pk after being dropped off by the bus, elderly and young's mothers carrying their children couldn't access the bus stop either. These short but meaningful projects must be identified and funded. They are the crucial "last mile" projects that ultimately will help drive ridership with mass transit.

Geric Smith

My district has some rural elements in it and very few sidewalks

and street lights. Adding sidewalks on the more heavily traveled roads and street lights to many of the more rural roads would help safety greatly. I do think there are some major roads in Nashville that walkers and bikers should be warned that they are just not safe to walk and bike due to traffic volume and the way these roads are engineered. I do think walkers and bikers should share in the responsibility of their safety by applying common sense when in heavily commercial area's and high volume traffic times. I would like to see better crosswalk identification by installing roadway reflectors on the pavement or blinking yellow lights where problems persist.

3. What will you do as a council member 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?

Erin Evans

The first thing I would do as a council member is to seek to understand the entirety of the WalkNBike plan and why a vocal minority could be opposed to such a plan (beyond the example provided). If there is a population of people who are strongly opposed I think it is important to be willing to listen to them in order to seek opportunities for consensus. My ability to move forward would really be situation dependent on the plan proposed and the rationale of the minority in opposition.

Geric Smith

I think it would depend on the road and the situation. Each road is unique and depending who the vocal minority is then each instance is different. If the vocal minority are the local residents and business owners then I would think they should be heard if the majority wanting this live or work in another part of town. I do believe the home owner's or property owners should have rights over a group imposing their will from far away where it does not directly effect them daily.

4. 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?

Erin Evans

We definitely need a strong transit plan in order to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips. In the Donelson/Hermitage communities if transit had passed we would've had the budget for positive train control which would've allowed the Music City Star to increase their trips to downtown Nashville. In addition, we would've been able to modify the WeGo Transit system to

	allow for better routes and timing. Since the transit plan didn't pass, we need to focus on engaging with Davidson County's employers to encourage alternative arrangements including car pooling and working from home.
Geric Smith	Directing new business to the outer portions of the county instead of the urban core is one way. Metro cannot dictate people's driving habits nor limit trips by those living outside the county. I do think rideshare companies like Uber and Lyft we help this in the long run.

5. The WalkNBike Plan states that only 19% of Nashville's streets have sidewalks. How can Metro expand our sidewalk network? As a council member, what would you do to support this?

Erin Evans	Nashville's sidewalk situation is very discouraging. We should start by either insourcing building sidewalks through Public Works or procure more contractors who can build sidewalks through the appropriate process. In my area, our neighborhood association was going to landscape a park area to make it more appealing. As we were going to sign the MOU we were asked to stop the process by the area's councilman because he had gotten a sidewalk approved. It was approved in November of 2017 and construction has yet to be started. I would support increasing our investment in sidewalk construction with unbridled enthusiasm.
Geric Smith	Make sidewalks part of our public safety plan. I would support adding them incrementally as funding will always take a backseat to schools and Metro employee wages.

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

A. Referendum to raise sales tax, business tax hotel/motel tax, and/or wheel tax

B. Increasing property taxes and using those funds for transportation

C. Bonds

D. Other _____

E. None of the above

Erin Evans	Referendum to raise sales tax, business tax hotel/motel tax,
-------------------	--

	and/or wheel tax, Bonds
Geric Smith	Referendum to raise sales tax, business tax hotel/motel tax, and/or wheel tax

6. b. Please explain your response to the options above.

Erin Evans	I believe visitors should help support our transit plan with an increase in the hotel/motel tax. I would be reluctant to support a property tax increase specifically for transit, because I believe we need to look at school funding first through that revenue stream.
Geric Smith	Sales tax is the most comprehensive because it will capture money from all residents and visitors and not just property owners with a property tax. I would support a wheel tax any day over having to pay for the emissions testing which was a money grab. Dedicate the wheel tax to traffic and sidewalks fund only. The amount of business moving here are doing so because of the tax rate compared to many other cities. I do think it should be fair but we probably are not taxing them enough.

7. What are your thoughts about the Metro Traffic Calming Program? Should speed-management (either lowering speed limits or adding physical traffic calming) be used to slow car speeds? If so on what type of streets?

Erin Evans	I would like to see the best traffic calming measures expanded across the city. I appreciate the work that the Nashville Civic Design Center has done to test out temporary traffic calming measures. My question is, what is working? Can we replicate it in other areas? I'd like to see more speed management efforts used on all streets in Nashville, including arterial roads like Andrew Jackson Parkway.
Geric Smith	I do think these methods are useful in residential neighborhoods.