

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?

Jeff Syracuse (incumbent)

Aside from having wonderful Greenways, Donelson's sidewalk investment is finally starting to gain momentum. In my first term, I was able to achieve funding for a number of sidewalk projects, including Donelson's first "complete streets" project with JB Estille Dr, a short but critical connector from Donelson Station to the new Donelson Library. I have made walkable infrastructure a priority with every development proposal that has come before me. I continue to push specific projects such as the re-engineering of Old Lebanon Pk / Lebanon Pk intersection, where a pedestrian was killed in 2010, as well as a wide multi-use path along Pennington Bend Rd as part of the 130-acre development being pursued by Ryman. Ensuring we plan for and enact connectivity with all development is key to consistent progress towards safer infrastructure. Other funded projects include, the Opry Mills Greenway Connector, sidewalks on Old Lebanon Pk, sidewalks connecting Cottage Ln to the bus stop on Lebanon Pk, the major project along Lebanon Pk from McGavock Pk to Old Lebanon Pk and Fairway Dr.

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

Jeff Syracuse (incumbent)

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.

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?

Jeff Syracuse (incumbent)

I'm an avid biker. I would indeed move forward and I absolutely do advocate for "complete streets" investment in our infrastructure with every development proposal that comes before me. As we look to build our Donelson Station into a walkable town center, I've consistently advocated for bike friendly infrastructure so that after Star riders get off the train with their bikes, they'll have easy access to get to the Greenway. Also as mentioned above, I have made bike friendly infrastructure a priority as I work with the development team on the 130-acre development along Pennington Bend. Currently, the shared bike route as part of Pennington Bend Rd is not safe at all and riders need a safer path to connect from Lock Two Park to Two Rivers Park and to downtown.

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?

Jeff Syracuse (incumbent)

I believe the smaller "last mile" projects that will give all of us better access to transit will help improve ridership. I'd like to see a prioritized list of these small projects in each district that will encourage folks to choose transit instead of their cars.

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?

Jeff Syracuse (incumbent)

Public Works needs to improve transparency on the sidewalk project selection and project management process. We also need to apply the alternative construction methods as described in the WalknBike plan that would facilitate less expensive and complex projects that would achieve walkable infrastructure more quickly.

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

Jeff Syracuse (incumbent)

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

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

Jeff Syracuse (incumbent)

We definitely need a dedicated source of funding. With the resounding defeat of the last transit referendum, we need to find a way to be more inclusive of everyone in the county and bring consensus to what methods are acceptable to everyone for funding. Funding specific projects in each district should be made a part of any future broad plan so we can ensure everyone feels they are receiving a return on their investment.

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?

Jeff Syracuse (incumbent)

I've been a strong advocate for growing our Traffic Calming Program and we definitely need more progressive tools in the toolbox. I do appreciate the tweaked submission process recently enacted by Public Works that allows them to focus their current resources more effectively. So far, I've added five neighborhoods to the program and it has helped some. There is not sufficient follow through and data collection after the initial install to ascertain if what was installed actually works. I co-sponsored the bill to study reducing speed limits in neighborhoods and am in favor of reducing them.