

# 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?

Chip Cruz

Each election cycle, sidewalks become a hot-button issue. I'll do everything I can to maintain that focus AFTER the election as well.

Jeremy Elrod (incumbent)

I would work to make all transportation options available to as many Nashville residents and visitors as possible, and to find specific solutions to specific problems in their specific areas. I would promote all transportation options, including making known and promoting those options that are less used to people in city government, the media, and my district. I would seek out and support funding increased for all transportation options, but particularly those that reduce traffic and are supported by those that could use it. A vital part would be community input and involvement as to what the needs are now and will be in the future. I would support funding to build more sidewalks and bike infrastructure, and I would support it in areas that currently have none and where it is needed for safety and according to the WalknBike Plan. I have supported dockless technology like scooters, but the companies need to pay more in fees to support enforcement, infrastructure, and parking areas. I have been an advocate for increased funding for neighborhood traffic calming to make neighborhood streets safer for everyone, especially pedestrians and cyclists. I will continue to fight for funding and resources for this program. We also need to do more to keep our sidewalks and bike lanes open, such as when construction projects close them or simply vehicles parked on sidewalks and in bike lanes. Also, the city should do more to educate people about the many options available to get around the city, and they should educate about how to respect and keep all users safe.

Courtney Johnston

### 2. What will you do as a Council Member to reduce pedestrian fatalities and

**severe injuries in your district and all of Nashville?**

Chip Cruz	Sidewalks will go a long way to reducing the number of pedestrians who have to walk along busy streets, but we also need more traffic-calming solutions so cars slow down and improve reaction time.
Jeremy Elrod (incumbent)	I would continue the work that I have done on the council and build upon it by first dealing with the most dangerous places for pedestrians, and then work for more overall funding for more improvements and sidewalks and bike lanes. During my first term, two areas in my district were very dangerous spots for pedestrians due to bus stops being across 5 lane highways. I fought for and got more infrastructure in place that has saved lives. This needs to be done more across the city. We also need to do more to keep our sidewalks and bike lanes open, such as when construction projects close them or simply vehicles parked on sidewalks and in bike lanes. I also support in concept the plan to reduce the neighborhood speed limit to 25 mph, but I need to study more closely how it would be implemented. Additionally, the city should do more to educate people about the many options available to get around the city, and they should educate about how to respect and keep all users safe.
Courtney Johnston	

**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?**

Chip Cruz	I would try to address the concerns of those in opposition, and ensure there was complete understanding of the plan before moving forward.
Jeremy Elrod (incumbent)	I would move forward. There has to be more infrastructure for bikes. I would pressure the administration to implement the current plans and to spend the money allocated on bike infrastructure. I would continue to support funding for bike lanes and sidewalks, and I would work to normalize the idea that bike lanes should just be a regular part of our transportation infrastructure. I would support more ways for people to use other modes of transportation. It has been a hope of mine that with more people riding and using scooters more people would understand the need for more bike infrastructure and in turn it would receive more public support.
Courtney Johnston	

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?

Chip Cruz	This has to be our #1 traffic priority. The interstate traffic is forcing drivers onto secondary streets, and through our neighborhoods making them part of the traffic problem, and less safe.
Jeremy Elrod (incumbent)	Investing in and optimizing our transit system, encourage telecommuting, modernize (but not privatize) our city's parking, incentivize companies to encourage their workers to ride transit or bike to work, build bike lanes, reduce urban sprawl, and nearly any other ideas that would help traffic congestion and safety.
Courtney Johnston	

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?

Chip Cruz	Maintain the profile of the issue after the election is over, and engage constituents in District 26 to ensure the dialog continues.
Jeremy Elrod (incumbent)	I have supported it and will continue to. This means maintaining or increasing the level of capital funding to sidewalks. It also includes working to bring down the cost of building sidewalks and lowering the time to delivery, two things that are greatly hampering getting more sidewalks built. I would continue to support the requirement for developers to build sidewalks, and I would support examining it to find where loopholes have been created.
Courtney Johnston	

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

Chip Cruz	
Jeremy Elrod (incumbent)	
Courtney Johnston	

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

Chip Cruz	We should review how funding sources are currently structured to ensure equitable distribution.
Jeremy Elrod (incumbent)	If this question is for what options I would consider for a dedicated funding source for transportation, I could not support property taxes for a dedicated funding source for transportation as they go to general fund and schools. Bonds shouldn't be a revenue source necessarily as they are one-time capital funds. I supported the transit referendum because I felt to make the significant investments in a transportation system for a city our size (and growing) needs requires dedicated funding. The city had a conversation about it and decided it wasn't need, so the either doesn't want this or wants a better plan than the one presented. To make significant strides in changing our city's transportation (in particular transit) system requires significant investment. Every transportation option – streets, sidewalks, buses, bike lanes, etc – is currently paid for by general fund revenue and fights for resources with other priorities. Some see an empty bus, an empty street, or an empty sidewalk as a waste of resources, but it all fits together in a larger transportation system. After the transit referendum and the significant growth we are having, the city needs a bigger conversation about what we want our transportation system to look like in 10-20 years to plan. We are having a hard time dealing with growth because we take projects or issues by looking at them individually without looking at an overall plan for the city. With more conversations about the overall transportation plan, people will be more comfortable about what their city government does with their tax dollars for new or increased resources for transportation.
Courtney Johnston	

**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?**

Chip Cruz	A variety of traffic calming solutions should be employed to ensure responsibility and safety on secondary and tertiary neighborhood streets.
Jeremy Elrod (incumbent)	There must be more funding, resources and priority given to this

program. If someone doesn't feel safe on their own street, they don't feel safe in their neighborhood or their city. This is an area where small investments can make a huge impact to quality of life. The program has been revamped to more aggressively deal with neighborhood streets becoming cut throughs because traffic congestion is so bad on main roads and streets. This program slows vehicles down, discourages commuters to use neighborhood streets, makes dangerous and busy neighborhood intersections safer, and overall improves safety for everyone – vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, pets, commuters, etc. This program should first deal with what should be quiet neighborhood streets. I'd like for it eventually to deal with collector streets if the funding can handle it.

Courtney Johnston