

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?

Terry Jo Bichell

As a councilmember, I would work hard to advocate for all the components of transportation and infrastructure that promote exercise, including sidewalks, bikeways, multimodal paths, greenways, and increased connectivity with mass transit. The structure of cities is a public health issue, and we must do all we can to remove barriers to including exercise as a normal part of daily life, to improve both the health of Nashvillians, and the health of the planet.

The failure of the Transit Referendum in 2018 was one of the issues that made me decide to run for office. It was not a perfect bill, but it would have given us a start in building a transportation infrastructure and turning the tide away from automobile travel. I think that the Transit bill failed because the community did not feel included in the planning process, and many felt that the benefits would only accrue to someone "else", some other neighborhood, some other demographic. Recently, a study on a potential multi-modal path failed in Oak Hill, with many residents walking away angry and disenfranchised. As a councilmember, I would work hard to prevent that scenario by including communities in providing input towards any future plans, so that they would feel like stakeholders in the plan's success. I would suggest and encourage studies of all the current infrastructure (including use of the CSX railways), such as is now occurring in the South Corridor Study. I would also advocate for creative ways to increase bus service and ridership, such as grants from the tourism industry, to decrease fares and improve technology and increase routes and hours of service.

In my district, there are many roadways that have lack both sidewalks and shoulders, so parents are forced to drive their children to school, even just a few blocks away. There is also no public transport south of Battery/Harding Road, and no nearby public parking adjacent to rapid bus routes. Residents in

	<p>my district have voiced the need for rapid bus lines to the Vanderbilt area and to downtown, if they could park and ride. Studies have shown that a driver who gets behind the wheel is likely to drive all the way to his destination, but the increased traffic and parking costs may change that incentive, if we could provide express bus service from free parking lots in or near my district.</p>
<p>Angie Henderson (incumbent)</p>	<p>Continue to elevate the importance of fundamentals-first capital spending with improved process and procurement to better deliver more sidewalks, more protected/separated bikeways, and more crosswalks & intersection improvements more quickly for people walking and biking. Transparent prioritization process, additional Public Works staffing, and consistent capital funding for all these programs is needed to meet annual, accountable goals. The oversight role of Council's Public Works Committee can and should be used more robustly.</p> <p>I will fight to uphold and improve the sidewalk legislation for which I was the lead sponsor in my first term on Council. I am proud of that complex policy work, which elevated and expanded the city's sidewalk requirements for development. Policy, departmental process improvements, community education, & funding for a more walkable and bikeable Nashville go hand in hand--we have to make sure Metro is intently focused on all these important pieces. Metro needs to focus more intention in the safe streets space, as people being able to walk where they need to go is a fundamental civic right. More people out walking and biking regularly benefits community safety, quality of life, and public health. A more walkable Nashville is my passion and has been my top priority as a council member.</p>

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

<p>Terry Jo Bichell</p>	<p>In my district, pedestrian fatalities could be reduced with decreased speed limits, especially in the Green Hills area on Hillsboro Road. Installation of clearly marked pedestrian crosswalks on dangerous corridors throughout the city should also be a priority, and likely could be achieved with public-private partnerships, and collaboration with state agencies.</p> <p>In addition, building and improving multi-modal paths for pedestrians, bikes and scooters will help keep pedestrians away from speeding cars. I think that Business Improvement Districts can provide funds to creating multi-modal paths in congested areas, as well as increased incentives to add sidewalks to any</p>
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	<p>new developments (in addition to the current ordinance which requires sidewalks).</p> <p>A focus on transportation options, with improvements in mass transit and incentives to ride, will also reduce the numbers of cars on the road, and will increase pedestrians and bicycle awareness. Mass transit will save lives.</p>
<p>Angie Henderson (incumbent)</p>	<p>Maintain a sense of URGENCY! People are dying and being injured on our streets, and we should not become inured to that. We need to address the most acute and dangerous areas and "impossible crossings" first with a very specific action and funding plan. We must also work closely with TDOT and our state legislators to support consistent funding and improved policy and design standards for the state routes/piques that are the most dangerous streets in Nashville—very often state policy/practice that prioritizes Level of Service (LOS) for cars is in conflict with local needs. Further, we must recognize and also plan for the immense latent demand to serve people who would and could walk and bike, if only they felt safe doing so. We can't just talk about Vision Zero without an actual strategy and measurable goals. We should join and participate actively in the national Vision Zero Network to help hold our city government accountable.</p> <p>We must fund more traffic calming with actual physical measures of reduced lane widths, removal of slip lanes, addition of speed tables, raised crosswalks, bulb outs at intersections, roundabouts, and chicanes. No more painting 30 mph on a road, putting a "traffic calming" sign in the ground and setting out the worthless speed trailer, we've been doing that for over a decade. I worked diligently over this council term to make sure that our anemic and ineffective traffic calming program, formerly administered by Collier Engineering, transitioned to internal management and coordination. The new approach is in its infancy, and I intend to remain closely engaged to make sure the program is well-funded, equitable, and effective.</p>

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?

<p>Terry Jo Bichell</p>	<p>The simple answer, is that I would approve the project. However, as a recent member of the Planning Commission, I was often faced with the scenario of well-meaning projects opposed by strident vocal minorities. Often, the way to move</p>
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	<p>forward was to take one step back, encouraging meetings between the opposing parties to allow each faction to describe their goals and objectives. Most of the time, there was a way for the opposing groups to come to a compromise that would help each achieve most of what they wanted. And, when that type of consensus occurred, it paved the way for other projects and future agreements. So, even if I felt the project was perfect, if I were faced with a vocal minority, I would likely do everything I could to get that minority group to find a way to come to the table and work on a solution. If no compromise could be reached, and the project fulfilled the goals of expanding low-stress bikeways, I would go ahead and approve it, but only after giving compromise its best shot.</p>
<p>Angie Henderson (incumbent)</p>	<p>Political will, courage of conviction, and good data are needed when a vocal minority opposes widely-beneficial, low-cost infrastructure. It is always important to genuinely listen to and address all concerns, but it is also okay to agree to disagree. We cannot keep fighting isolated battles and losing sight of the larger, shared community goal of safer streets for everyone. A connected and functional network of neighborways, bikeways, & greenways serves a wider variety of ages and abilities, not just the bravest male cyclists. I would move forward with an informational meeting for the community, but the meeting would not be about whether or not the project was being done, but why, when, and how.</p>

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?

<p>Terry Jo Bichell</p>	<p>I have discussed this issue frequently with voters in my district, which is a bedroom community for many of the business people who drive downtown to work every day. Many would be willing to take public transport, especially an express bus, if they could park for free at a peripheral lot. Others would prefer to drive downtown and park nearby, but would be happy to get around the downtown core by trolley, if there were frequent and free access to these types of circulating buses. These types of trolleys might be designed for tourists, and funded by the tourism bureau, but would likely be used by local residents as well.</p> <p>I think that the possibility of a pedestrian-only zone downtown should also be explored, or a combination of pedestrian-and-trolley-only zone, so that there is no vehicle on the roads except the frequent and accessible trolleys.</p> <p>Use of the CSX freight rail infrastructure needs to be</p>
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	<p>further explored, to find out the cost of providing an alternate route for freight traffic away from the south corridor, and allowing those railways to be used for commuter trains. Though this approach has failed in the past, it may prove to be cost-effective, as the population grows in that area.</p> <p>For any future project, we need data, lots of data, on what has worked in other cities, and on pilot projects in our own city. And we need to make sure that Nashvillians learn about this data and how they can be affected by transportation choices we make as a city, either positively or negatively. We need to include citizens in planning, and we need to make sure that they are educated by actual facts, not loud opinions, in the process.</p>
<p>Angie Henderson (incumbent)</p>	<p>A robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) effort will need to have sustained operational budget funding for consistent & effective programming and engagement with Nashville’s major employers. From a policy perspective, anyone receiving incentives from the city should be required to have a TDM plan filed with the NashvilleConnector group at Planning by a date certain. For the last two incentive deals before Council, Alliance Bernstein & Amazon, I have made sure that the firms committed on the public record and through a written letter to Council that they would work with NashvilleConnector to develop a customized TDM plan. I have been working through various contacts to advocate for the same with Bridgestone and downtown law and architecture firms. Any major employer that invested in the marketing and promotion effort of the transit referendum campaign should have a TDM plan for their employees. This is something I have stressed to the mayor’s office and the Chamber of Commerce for their ECD efforts and will continue to do. All parking garages built with public funds or in incentivized development should have the necessary technology for smart-parking/cash-out programs.</p>

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?

<p>Terry Jo Bichell</p>	<p>The new sidewalk ordinance is beginning to bear fruit, with new developments required to either build sidewalks or contribute to the sidewalk fund, but it does not go far enough, fast enough. Sidewalks are part of our transportation infrastructure and should be treated as a priority. There are some areas for which there is community opposition to sidewalks, such as along Franklin Road in Oak Hill, but the most common barrier is not community opposition, but is of course, money. We need to identify a funding stream which will pay for</p>
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	sidewalks along established areas and neighborhoods that are not experiencing new developments covered under the ordinance. We need to then prioritize sidewalks near schools and business districts, growing them outward into residential areas as quickly as we can pay for them.
Angie Henderson (incumbent)	Dedicated funding for sidewalks as part of a fundamentals-first transportation plan. We are over 70 years behind on walkable infrastructure. Because we did not have sidewalk requirements as Nashville grew, we are now retrofitting our streetscapes and often engaging storm-water infrastructure--working backwards costs more time and money to execute correctly. Even with our new sidewalk regulations, which are helpful and necessary, a consistent \$30 million in annual capital spending, and an ongoing effort to improve our procurement and delivery process, we will never catch up and be able to maintain what we have for a truly, safely connected community unless we have a dedicated revenue stream.

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

Terry Jo Bichell	Referendum to raise sales tax, business tax hotel/motel tax, and/or wheel tax, Increasing property taxes and using those funds for transportation, Bonds, Taxes on transit-related products
Angie Henderson (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.

Terry Jo Bichell	I would consider any of the choices described above. I think that providing more transportation options is one of the top priorities for our city at this particular moment in our urban
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	development. We must find a way to fund these efforts. Aside from a, b, and c, we could also consider taxes on specific products, such as gasoline, cars, parking or speeding tickets, which would go directly to transit priorities.
Angie Henderson (incumbent)	We should advance another plan and referendum for dedicated funding for sidewalks, greenways and bus-based transit--not yet sure of the best revenue source mix, which will depend on the goals set in the plan.

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?

Terry Jo Bichell	Speed management, especially via physical traffic calming elements should definitely be used, especially on transit corridors that pass through business districts, with a priority on the areas that have seen the most pedestrian fatalities and injuries.
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Angie Henderson (incumbent)	Please see my response to question #2 above also regarding traffic calming. I think we should lower speed limits AND have physical changes to both neighborhood and the collector streets, which are often the barrier to people moving between and out of neighborhoods on foot and by bike. I worked closely with Walk Bike and co-sponsored the legislation to begin the transition of all Nashville's neighborhood classified streets to a maximum of 25 mph. I think depending on the context--width of the right-of-way and the on-street conditions, more narrow or winding or with on-street parking, etc--20 mph is often an appropriate max. I think we have many collectors that would also work at 30 mph rather than 35 mph, and I have been before the Traffic & Parking Commission to lower a collector in my district to 30 mph, which was broadly supported by the community. I have advocated for many years to reduce speeding in my own suburban neighborhood, which has had a 25 mph speed limit for 12 years. We have worked to consistently communicate that driving the speed limit is a gift to your community. Neighborhood residents can be the pace cars, set the example, and hold each other accountable. Education about this is important. Enforcement is also important.
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