



2015 Walk Bike Nashville Metro Council Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: Colby Sledge

Office Sought (Vice-Mayor, Metro-Council): Metro Council

District (if applicable): District 17

Website: ColbySledge.com

Twitter: @Sledgefor17

1. If (re)elected what would you do to promote walking and biking in Nashville and ensure all Nashvillians, regardless of who they are and where they are trying to go, have access to real transportation options?

As a member of the Edgehill Bike Club and a bike commuter on my 60s-era Schwinn cruiser, I am a public proponent of biking as both transit and pleasure. For many residents in District 17, a bicycle means freedom, independence and self-reliance. A bicycle is often the only mode of transportation these residents can access readily and depend upon to get to work and family functions. As District 17 Councilmember, I will focus heavily on the opportunities available to residents to obtain and maintain bikes, while participating in bicycle safety sessions like those I have attended with the Metro Nashville Police Department.

All Nashvillians should have access to greenways that provide interconnectivity throughout the city. We need to start thinking of greenways as transit corridors, and not just channels for leisure (although they certainly serve that purpose well). I would be very willing to participate in and promote events that demonstrate the connectivity of our greenways throughout the city while advocating vocally for an expanded system.

2. The [Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways](#), which prioritizes where to build new sidewalks and bikeways, was last updated in 2008- before Nashville began experiencing explosive growth. The plan was slated to be updated every 5 years, and thus is due for an update. What should our priorities for walking and biking be in the next version? How would you go about updating the plan?

The Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways is one of the most mysterious documents in all of Metro Nashville. It appears to provide for a world-class system of bikeways and sidewalks, but finding out when and how those thoroughfares will be put in place can often be a guessing game. Our priorities in the next version should be a very clear implementation process that



emphasizes neighborhood interconnectivity and new sidewalks over repairs to existing sidewalks, save for extreme cases when existing sidewalks have become unusable.

3. In 2014, 18 pedestrians were killed, and many more injured, on the roads of Davidson County. Nashville is currently ranked the 15th most dangerous city in America for pedestrians, according to [Dangerous by Design](#) (Smart Growth America). [Vision Zero](#) is an international effort dedicated to the belief that even one preventable pedestrian injury or death is too many. Streets should be engineered to protect all road users – especially pedestrians, who are most exposed to dangerous conditions on the road. How can we apply Vision Zero policies in Nashville? What can we do as a city to increase safety for all road-users in Nashville?

Lighted pedestrian crosswalks (those that light the actual crosswalk, not just signals suspended from a pole) are an innovative way to ensure that pedestrians are seen and heeded on some of our busiest arteries, like District 17's 8th Avenue South. The amount of malfunctioning pedestrian crosswalk signals in the city must also be addressed – when someone presses a button to cross the street, the button should work and the signal should change almost immediately. Our state law gives preference to pedestrians; our roadways should put this preference into practice.

4. Where do you think Metro should construct sidewalks first? How should Metro prioritize sidewalk projects?

Metro should construct sidewalks first in areas that will connect residents to transit lines. All sidewalks should go somewhere, and the first place they should go is to a sheltered bus stop on a bus line that runs along a corridor designed to provide services to residents.

5. As part of the [Nashville Next](#) process, the Planning Department has collected public input to create a long-term transportation plan called [Access Nashville 2040](#). The plan recognizes that our citizens do not desire, nor can our city afford, expensive new roads. Rather than pursue costly widening projects that provide a temporary solution to congestion and a permanent maintenance burden, we must operate our existing street network more efficiently by expanding access to multimodal transportation. Do you support this conclusion? What would you do to ensure Nashvillians can use walking and biking as real transportation options, and not just forms of recreation?



As the lead community outreach consultant for NashvilleNext, I fully support this conclusion. One of our greatest opportunities to use biking as a real transportation options lies in our B-Cycle system, which should be expanded to connect neighborhoods and provide an option for the unbanked to participate in the system.

6. Studies consistently show that the greater the population density in a given neighborhood, the more walkable that neighborhood will be (e.g. walking to grocery store, work, transit). What are your thoughts about density in Nashville and how it relates to transportation challenges?

Neighborhood density should be focused on corridors that become centers of human activity. This model promotes walkability from within the neighborhood to these corridors, reduces the stress on our parking infrastructure and takes more short car trips (less than a mile) off the road.

7. There is clear support in the Nashville community for spending more money on sidewalks, but the source of funding is always the major question. Do you think the city should spend more, less or the same amount on sidewalks and bikeways? If more, what policies or initiatives would you propose to increase funding for sidewalks and other pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects? If less, what would you opt to not fund and why?

The city should absolutely spend more on sidewalks, but we should couple it with a shared sidewalks plan that encourages neighborhood nonprofits to invest in the sidewalk system and purchase a determined number of sidewalks each year, with an allotment distributed throughout the county, at the subsidized city cost. This will allow organized neighborhoods to seek grants and raise funds to obtain sidewalks faster, while moving neighborhoods who may not have the same means and/or organization to move up the sidewalks queue faster.

8. While our sidewalk, greenway and bikeway networks are expanding, there are still many gaps in connectivity that rule out biking and walking as real transportation options for many Nashvillians who would otherwise be interested in biking or walking to work, school, the grocery store or to community events. What initiatives or policies would you propose to bridge the gaps that separate walkable and bikeable areas from adjacent communities?

New sidewalks and greenways must connect to existing networks in order to ensure that every sidewalk and greenway goes somewhere – first to transit lines, which ideally would be set up along corridors that include the services and community centers mentioned in the question. City policies outlining these



requirements should occur quickly and be implemented for the next round of sidewalk and bike lane installation.

9. Everyone wants to be able to get across the city quickly, yet roads designed to carry cars as quickly as possible are usually the most dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists. Do you support adding traffic calming approaches (example: [bulb outs](#); [road diets](#); [slow zones](#)) along Nashville's major pikes and arteries? When are these projects appropriate?

I absolutely support traffic calming approaches that contribute to the model of Complete Streets for our major corridors.

10. Nashville is currently a Bronze [Bicycle Friendly Community](#), as determined by the [League of American Bicyclists](#). What would you do to move us towards becoming a Silver Bicycle Friendly community?

With all respect to our friends in Chattanooga, which obtained a Silver Bicycle Friendly Community designation, Nashville should lead the state and the nation in bicycle friendliness. We must make Complete Streets a requirement, not an out-of-reach ideal, in our future road planning. We also must design greenways to unite and connect neighborhoods to provide for alternate commute routes. We can also protect our cyclists by lowering speed limits in neighborhoods throughout our city to 20 miles per hour, much as Woodland-in-Waverly in District 17 has had for years.

11. Are there any specific bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure projects or initiatives that you would work to complete during your term?

A shared sidewalks program that encourages cross-sector investment.

Expansion of B-Cycle beyond a tourist novelty to become a viable transportation network among our neighborhoods.

Implementation of true protected bike lanes using street parking as the buffer between bike lanes and traffic.