



2015 Walk Bike Nashville Metro Council Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: Mina Johnson

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

District (if applicable): 23

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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?

Mayor Dean started 100 miles walk. I think the program was quite successful to promote walking and healthy living. We should certainly continue a similar program. We need comprehensive and easy to use interactive map to identify Bikeway/Walkway. Expand B-Cycle locations to outer area to encourage bicycling especially around biker friendly parks and greenways. We should establish B-Cycle locations at bus stops so the bus riders can bike home after using public transport.

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?

I participated in the 2008 Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways. It is definitely due for an update. We will need a map to compare before and after 2008 update. We also need a map to compare the 2008 plan and current status. To have accurate assessment of the plan and its implementation rate is the first step. It will need to include Resource Team which includes a representative from Public Works who is in charge of Sidewalks and Bikeways and a Community Engagement Team who is enthusiastic about bringing Sidewalks and Bikeways to each community. The 2008 Strategic Plan for



Sidewalks and Bikeways update process participants need to be contacted and also promote wide range of community involvement when we start the next updating process. Priorities will be decided by bringing different groups of people with various backgrounds.

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?

Early education is a good place to start. Before children become driving age, schools could have a Pedestrian/Bike/Automobile safety Class as well as bike riding classes in Kindergarten and elementary school. Nashville could consider attendance or online viewing of 60 minutes Driving Safety Class as prerequisite for Drivers License renewal.

Installing more pedestrian crossings with manual operation button where traffic is heavy and also better street light to increase visibility of pedestrians. More signs at crosswalks which state "Stop for Pedestrians – It's the Law" should be installed. These safety measures are very important where Hwy 70 & 100 split in District 23. The intersection is the most dangerous intersection considering there are neither traffic signals nor pedestrian crossing with one yield sign. This intersection needs to be redesigned to increase safety for all road-users.

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

The first priority should be around the schools where large volume of students uses city buses to attend class. Providing free bus fare to high school students, but not providing a safe place to walk does not make any sense. The next place should be where foot traffic is high, such as around shopping center. Also, any area where there are high numbers of bus riders, but no sidewalks to connect to bus stops.



Sidewalks should be constructed without disruption in the middle of walkways. The one we see on Franklin Rd with utility poles in the middle are very dangerous, especially for persons with disabilities.

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?

Preservation of Natural Environment is one of the Guiding principles of Nashville Next, which is one of my campaign priorities as well. As land is limited, we can't keep expanding and widening the road while trying to preserve Natural Environment. We need to plan an effective way to move people from point A to point B. We need to implement Sidewalk/bikeways plan to ensure pedestrian and cyclist safety. We need to improve existing bus system by making it more convenient and reliable, such as real time scheduling system, longer and frequent services, and providing better route which does not require going through downtown hub. We need to implement traffic signal optimization plan to improve traffic congestion. Having neighborhood grocery stores, coffee shops and restaurants close to where people live will encourage more walking and biking.

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?

The population and density pattern in Nashville is certainly challenging for any mass-transit system, which generally produces more walkability.

However we can be creative about how our public transportation system should operate, considering 68% of people who use public transportation are dependable riders. We need to provide a more convenient system for those who rely on our public transportation system, while finding the other ways to appeal to riders who have a choice.



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?

It will be ideal and desirable for the City to spend more money for Sidewalks and Bikeways. Unfortunately our foreseeable city budget does not have a significant increase in revenue. The construction of new sidewalks is heavily relied on new development by private sector under the current circumstances and I don't see that trend will change dramatically anytime soon. We will need to find creative ways to fund Sidewalks and Bikeway construction including Private public partnership option.

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?

I would propose development of comprehensive interactive map to identify connectivity gap and list available options such as Uber, Lift or any new technology driven options where we have connectivity issues in order to encourage potential walkers/bikers to use the walk/bike model. In addition, Council should analyze General Plan and Community Plan and identify where walkable grocery store might be needed in the food desert area and possibility of proposing incentive policy to bring such business into the community.

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 believe traffic calming measures are appropriate around neighborhood streets where there are more walkers and bikers. It will be counterproductive to place traffic calming on Arterial streets as its purpose is to move cars



quicker. I think we can explore safer sidewalks and bikeways design options along side of Arterial and Collector Street.

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?

The first step is to initiate 2008 Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways updating process as outlined in #2. All the parties involved in the updating process must be engaged throughout implementation phase and review semiannually at a minimum. Our city can start an education program as stated #3. Our city can expand B-Cycle program toward outer area conjunction with completion of sidewalks and bikeways. A comprehensive map stated #8 will help find alternative ways where connection gaps are. Examine existing bike crossings and make them more visible for safety.

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

I would like to create an engagement team consisting of representatives from Public Works, Planning Department, Council members and representative of Sidewalks/Bikeways organizations, concerned citizens to engage with the Mayor's office to follow through planning and implementation.