



2015 Walk Bike Nashville Metro Council Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: Russ Pulley

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

District (if applicable): District 25

Website: russpulley.com

Twitter: n/a

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? **In my district, we are sorely in need of infrastructure for walking and biking. I believe that we need to understand that biking is not only used for fitness and recreation, but many use bicycles as a means of transportation. That is only becoming more popular. It is my hope that with more people coming to this city who understand that, our city leaders will focus more money and attention on dealing with that issue. I have a vision for Green Hills that transforms our community from a community of disjointed sidewalks and very few bike paths to a community where pedestrian and bike traffic is common place.**
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 do not like the current PGI formula used by Public Works in making their determinations of sidewalk priorities. I would like to see many things considered before we prioritize. PGI does not take into account the fact that people don't walk in a certain area because it is unsafe to do so without appropriate sidewalks. In my district, many places where we have sidewalks are areas where the sidewalks are not up to code and force people to put themselves at risk by having to walk around obstacles. I do believe that our mayoral candidate recognize the fact that people in our communities have these things prioritized very high and there should be an increased focus on giving this more attention and money. I'd like to see significantly more money injected in to this process and significant attention given to this as a priority. I am on another committee in our district that is focusing on partnering with private stakeholders to supplement our city budget**



on this issue. I plan to hold developers accountable to doing their part in this as well.

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? I think this is an important issue. Although I do not have the silver bullet answer, I think that we have seen public relations campaigns work. We now have the means to reach out to our community and educate them on these matters. It is my desire to foster the relationships I currently have with members of Walk Bike Nashville, like my relationship with David Kleinfelter among others, to understand more of your concerns and how I can help address them.
4. Where do you think Metro should construct sidewalks first? How should Metro prioritize sidewalk projects? Connectivity is a big issue in my district. You are asking me, so I want to work on the sidewalks in my district that are incomplete. Green Hills as a community can be transformed into a walkable/ bikeable community if we only had the sidewalk and bike path infrastructure. We also need to be able to connect people to bus routes. There are many areas in my district where people will not take the bus because of the dangers associated with walking to the bus stop. There needs to be weight given to areas where people don't walk or bike because the opportunity is not there. As I understand the index currently, the areas where there is more foot traffic get priority. That is not fair. I would propose a formula that allows for more input from those areas.
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? I do not support that conclusion. Cost



is always a factor, but downtown is booming and revenue from property tax is increasing along with exponential increases in sales tax. We can make great strides in our community by taking roads like Hillsboro Road and getting our sidewalks back from the road with better streetscapes. Those things are worth the investment because they transform our communities. We are also having large numbers of the millennial demographic coming to our city. They are used to living in places where no vehicle is necessary and don't understand why we need one here. Many people today use bikes as a form of transportation, not simply for recreation. We need to recognize this and make the investment in the kinds of infrastructure that supports this.

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? **Density is coming whether we want it or not. If you look at my district as an example, I believe when you put people where they want to be, they don't need to drive. It is imperative that we then take a hard look at our infrastructure and make the necessary improvements to make this happen. I like density on the corridors and protect the green space in our neighborhoods. We need a serious investment in our sidewalk and bike path development. Our sidewalks don't connect and many are constructed poorly.**
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? **We should spend more. Significantly more. We are way behind in our sidewalk and bike path development and it is clear people want more. I would also seek to involve developers and landowners in this process. I will need to study this issue and the Metro budget process more to understand how we can extract money for this. I don't think it is responsible of me to pop off a popular answer if I can't stand behind it. I want people to understand that this is a big issue to me and my community and I will work to find a solution.**
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 give the same answer to this as I did in #7. I completely agree with you on your assessment of our connectivity issue. And I fully believe that with the proper infrastructure, it will transform our traffic issue and people do use biking and walking as means of transportation.*

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? *Yes*
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? *I would enlist the support of my friends in the biking community.*
11. Are there any specific bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure projects or initiatives that you would work to complete during your term? *Connecting our sidewalks in my district and connecting greenways.*