



## 2015 Walk Bike Nashville Vice-Mayoral/Council Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: Karen Y. Johnson

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

District (if applicable): District 29

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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? I will make sure to promote initiatives that advance walking and biking. I have been a long proponent of walk bike Nashville since my time on the school board when I pushed for the safe routes to school grant for our area, which is now taking shape. Also I proactively sought to help neighbors interested in transitioning a neighborhood street to become walkable bikeable which is in the final stages of the assessment. I also believe that transit initiatives are directly linked to helping to transition corridors and neighborhoods to walkable bikeable neighborhoods. The funding attached with transit is available to help with efforts to transition neighborhoods and business corridors to walkable bikeable communities.
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 strongly support this plan being updated. It's past time. I have been working with Metro Public Works Bicycle and Pedestrian coordinator and strongly expressing that my constituents and so many in our city want to be involved and want an update to help get projects moving that will transition our communities towards a higher quality of life. A higher quality of life is attained by walkable bikeable communities with options the community supports.

# WALK BIKE NASHVILLE

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? Having an open transparent process for the people of Nashville to provide input. Create pedestrian friendly streets with input from the very people who would benefit.
4. Where do you think Metro should construct sidewalks first? How should Metro prioritize sidewalk projects? Definitely in areas with high public community spaces such as schools, community centers, libraries, transit corridors and within our neighborhoods that link to public spaces and business corridors.
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? Some widening projects are necessary and those projects can provide walkable bikeable options that were not available on the road prior to the widening. The widening sometimes helps to advance these options. I currently have been appointed as Vice Chair of the National League of Cities Transportation and Infrastructure services committee and this experience will help in analyzing all options as well as advancing initiatives and funding that will produce positive outcomes for people and our communities.
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? We need better planning. We should not overdevelop and ensure green space is factored in every community in appropriate places with community buy in and input.



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 need to catch our city up with cities who lead with quality of life infrastructure like sidewalks. Many move to our city and are surprised at the lack of sidewalks. Our obesity rates are higher than average and we have to be serious about transitioning our city to one that works for communities and it's people instead of continuing on the path of being pro development. We need smart development that factors in sidewalks seriously and hold developers to this to reduce expenses that would pass on to the city to ultimately complete.
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 currently serve as one of the metro council representatives appointed to the greenways commission. We are doing very detailed work as it pertains to linking communities together and connectivity along our bikeway and greenway networks.
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 have worked with neighborhood associations in my district on many traffic calming applications submitted to public works and I do support traffic calming approaches that the neighborhood and community supports which do not create problems for our public safety most especially our police and firefighters ability to respond to people in our neighborhoods in need.
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? Continue to be a strong advocate but with research and community buy in as the guiding partners.



Follow through on the money allocated to improve pedestrian crossings at all of our intersections along Murfreesboro Road and Bell Road.

11. Are there any specific bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure projects or initiatives that you would work to complete during your term? Transitioning Smith Springs Road to a walkable bikeable corridor, continuing to create streetscape/transit opportunities to advance positive economic development and highly desirable communities among others. The people in Southeast Nashville want retail back, and working on infrastructure projects and initiatives that encourages an active living environment will help us to accomplish this and other goals for improving our area's quality of life.