



## 2015 Walk Bike Nashville Metro Council Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: Kevin Rhoten  
Office Sought: Metro-Council  
District (if applicable): 14  
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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 work to:

Dedicate a larger and consistent amount of funding to sidewalks and cycling infrastructure in the Metro budget

Pass a Complete Streets policy into Metro Code

Ensure continuation of the Mayor's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee by incorporating it in Metro Code

Ensure that all Metro agencies, to the extent possible, become Bicycle Friendly Businesses

Urge an immediate update of the Strategic Plan for Sidewalks & Bikeways

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?

See answer to 1. I believe that strengthening local neighborhoods is the most important element of dealing with the growth of Nashville and Davidson County. We need neighborhoods where children and families can walk or bike to local schools and businesses. I intend to work with the next Mayor to bring the Metro budget for Public Works in line with this vision. Nashville, and Tennessee, are included among the most obese areas in the nation. We need concrete quantitative goals to increase biking and walking as part of the plan.



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 will urge the next Mayor and Metro Council to create a cooperative effort among all Metro departments, including Metro Police, Public Works, Health and Planning, to create a Vision Zero policy for Nashville and then work to in Metro Council to implement the recommendations. We can and should strive to make Nashville a safer place for all legal road users. Bicyclists and pedestrians deserve the same safe transportation facilities as motorists. Infrastructure changes and stronger police enforcement of current laws should be an integral part of any plan.

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

The primary emphasis for any sidewalk program must be in our neighborhoods and local business districts. I believe that the emphasis for any update of the Strategic Plan should begin with this concept. Metro should do everything we can to make it possible for every child to walk or bike to school.

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?

A Complete Streets vision must inform all future Metro transportation efforts. Nashville is much more bicycle and pedestrian friendly due to the efforts of Mayors Bredesen, Purcell and Dean. However, we are falling behind cities such as Denver, Portland, Minneapolis and Chicago because we have failed to fully integrate specific bicycle infrastructure, such as cycle tracks, into our transportation planning. It is clear that protected and segregated bike lanes, as part of a traffic calming policy, will encourage more bicycle use. Biking and walking increase in communities where the infrastructure makes citizens feel safe.

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 should be careful to maintain the strengths of neighborhoods as they currently exist. I will support changes for greater density only when it does not affect the existing neighborhoods. All communities deserve equal access to different transportation modes including bus, auto, bicycling and walking.

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?

As I stated in the answer to question 1 I believe that we should increase dedicating funding for sidewalks and other infrastructure but any such increases should not impact necessary transportation projects. We must gradually move



our emphasis to a transportation effort that makes bicycling and walking as easy as other modes of transportation.

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?

Bicycle advocates have generated ideas for a "grid" connecting existing neighborhoods to each other and to downtown. I will urge the Mayor's office and the Planning and Public Works Departments to review these plans and incorporate this concept into a revised Strategic Plan. Our existing Greenways and bike lanes should be connected to strengthen the current network. Creating "bike boulevards" can increase bicycle usage for transportation and connect existing neighborhoods.

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?

Any Complete Streets Policy should require Public Works to incorporate all these approaches where appropriate to bring about greater safety.

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?

This year Chattanooga improved to become a Silver Bike Friendly Community. Nashville should lead the way in Tennessee with a bike friendly transportation system. I think the creation of a dedicated Bike/Ped Coordinator in the Mayor's Office should, along with the Mayor's BPAC, lead the effort to reach this goal. The policies I have listed in the other questions will help reach this goal but should also include the following:



Work to increase bicycle tourism

Expand the number of Open Street events to other neighborhoods

Work to insure that statistics related to biking and walking are collected by the appropriate Metro departments

Implement Vision Zero

Insure that Public Works follows national design guidelines

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

There are numerous streets in District 14 that are still nothing more than country roads with no sidewalks or dedicated bike lanes, yet they have large apartment and neighborhoods along the road. The area is becoming more densely populated and growth will continue. I would hope that many of the major arteries in my district will be viewed as essential for funding sidewalks and bike lanes. It is becoming essential that funding be provided for these streets so that future growth is possible in this area.