

**2022 Election Candidate Questionnaire for Montgomery County Council  
Kate Stewart, District 4**

Dear Candidate,

We ask that you complete our questionnaire so we understand your views on the pressing transportation issues facing Montgomery County. Your answers will be given to our membership for strictly education purposes only. Answers will also be posted on our website, shared on social media, listservs, and with our members in Montgomery County.

The questions are yes or no as well as questions that require you to elaborate for your response. We ask that you return the questionnaire by COB 4/2/22. Please email the questionnaire responses to me at [advocacy@waba.org](mailto:advocacy@waba.org). If you have any questions please email us. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to complete the questionnaire.

WABA **does not endorse** candidates for any political office.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Lowery  
Advocacy Director, WABA

**Bike Network**

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association is proposing that the County fund the construction of bikeable/walkable networks in four Equity Focus Areas of the County, in Wheaton, White Oak, Langley Park and Downtown Silver Spring. Do you support this \$110 million proposal which will also help achieve the County's Climate and Vision Zero goals over six years?

Yes  No

What else do you think the County Council can do in the next term to make walking and biking safer and to help increase the biking and walking and transit mode shares?

**Focus on Infrastructure.** Specifically, we need to focus on connectivity and the last mile. For the last mile, we need to look at how to get people safely to transit and to their destinations. We need protected bike lanes, bike lockers, and other changes to our infrastructure so people can get to work, home, school, doctors' appointments and other places without having to drive.

As WABA has been advocating for these decisions on where to put these resources, we should be focused on equity, safety, use, and connectivity to develop and build successful biking and walking infrastructure.

## **Police out of Traffic Enforcement**

Do you support removing police from all or some traffic enforcement?

Yes  No

How will you balance the need for traffic enforcement and equity while in office?

We can change the way we do traffic enforcement. I know we it's possible because we did it in Takoma Park, where I am Mayor, over the last few years.

Traffic stops are the most common form of interaction between MCPD and residents of Montgomery County: annually, more than 110,000 traffic stops have been reported in recent years.

In Montgomery County, traffic enforcement has become an end in itself rather than focusing on safety.

Because the vast majority of stops have been conducted by patrol officers in the course of their duties, rather than as part of a strategic effort to address safety, these stops are a major component of discretionary policing. We also know that this type of policing results in over-policing and the targeting of Black and Brown residents.

In 2018 in Takoma Park, we decided to reduce the number of traffic stops and focus our efforts more strategically on safety issues. Over the last few years, we have reduced the number of stops by declining to make stops for less serious violations and revamped the evaluation and reward system for police officers to promote community safety rather than quantity of enforcement. This has led to a significant reduction in the number of stops (80%) and at the same time accidents declined.

## **Trails - repaving**

Do you support fully funding the budget request of the Parks Department to include monies for repaving the Sligo, Rock Creek and Capital Crescent Trails?

Yes  No

## **Tunnel**

Do you support funding the \$55m project for this important regional trail connection through downtown Bethesda?

Yes  No

Do you support funding that will complete construction of the project within the current FY 23-28 CIP period or sooner/later?

Yes  No

## **270 widening**

Do you support or oppose the proposal to widen parts of I-495 and I-270 to add four express toll lanes?

Yes  No

Why or why not? And how would you show that support or opposition. Do you support other new highways or road expansions?

New roads or added lanes are rarely needed. (That is separate from those very limited areas where some road widening may be important - safety improvements at an intersection, for example – or to accommodate the installation of busways and protected bikeways.)

We need to move away from car-centric investments and look at other transportation options. As Mayor I have worked with my colleagues on the Council to pass resolutions opposing Beltway expansion and will continue to work with advocates and other elected officials to push for transit-oriented solutions.

## **Vision Zero**

Vision Zero - is it working and if not, what needs to be done by the County to achieve the goal of zero deaths due to traffic crashes? What would you do to work with the State Highway Administration to achieve true Vision Zero?

To make progress on our Vision Zero goals we need to do three things:

**First, we need greater accountability and more action.** Currently the Vision Zero coordinator is appointed by the County Executive and is not part formally part of Department of Transportation. Consequently, the coordinator's ability to make sure projects adhere to Vision Zero guidelines or work toward accomplishing goals is constrained. We need to create more accountability and give more authority to the Vision Zero coordinator to make sure change happens.

**Second, this is about changing the infrastructure.** In District 4, where I am running, whether in North Bethesda or Downtown Silver Spring, we have some of the busiest pedestrian intersections in all of Montgomery County. It is time local and state governments act like it. We need more protected bike lanes, crosswalks and to prioritize walking and biking.

**Third, we need the funding.** We need to make sure the funding is committed to get projects done that means the County budget, as well looking at sources of federal and state dollars.

**Advocate for changes at SHA.** As Mayor in Takoma Park I have worked closely with SHA. I have found individual SHA traffic engineers responsive to making changes. Unfortunately, many of the barriers to addressing roadway safety are built into how SHA is structured and conducts its work – which is too focused on moving cars, not people. We need state legislation such as the legislation proposed by Delegate Charkoudian this session to make the structural changes to how SHA operates.

## **Transportation Equity Pledge**

[Will you sign our transportation equity pledge?](#)

I would like to talk to folks at WABA about the pledge. The only reason I have not signed is that I hesitate to commit to moving traffic enforcement to the Department of Transportation. I would support and help move police from civil traffic enforcement, but I am not sure if the Department of Transportation is the correct agency to take this on. I would like to see us moving toward more holistic solutions and the creation of a department focused on community safety and violence protection similar to what they have done in Brooklyn Center, MN. More information can be found [here](#).

I agree with everything else in the pledge and look forward in additional conversations on next steps on traffic enforcement.

Link to sign: <https://waba.org/blog/2022/01/transportation-equity-pledge-for-2022-candidates/>