

Candidate Name (Affiliation): **Lisa Downing (D)**

District: **Chairperson**

1. Improving Public Transit

Public transit is the backbone of a sustainable, equitable transportation system and a thriving economy, and Fairfax County has admirable plans to expand its bus rapid transit (BRT) network to ensure fast, frequent, and reliable service for residents. While public transit ridership on some systems has been hit by the pandemic with reduced commute trips due to increased teleworking, transit remains key for essential workers, and for supporting compact, walkable communities.

Do you support increased funding for public transit to address budget shortfalls and make improvements to better serve riders?

Candidate's Response: **Yes**

What is your experience riding public transit? What ideas do you have to improve public transit in Fairfax County?

Candidate's Response: **Living near Tysons Corner I regularly ride both the metro and the Fairfax connector. I would like to see Fairfax Connector options expand, as well as the Metro.**

2. Active Transportation Funding

The ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan – the County's most significant overhaul of its bicycle, pedestrian, and trails plans – is expected to be finalized this year. The plan's recommendations address critical safety needs for residents who already walk and bike and also make improvements to allow more residents to walk and bike conveniently and safely for daily needs. Realizing the Plan's vision will require substantial, dedicated, and consistent funding.

Would you support Fairfax committing dedicated annual funding to support the ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan, even if that meant potentially delaying road expansion and interchange projects?

Candidate's Response: **Yes**

What is your personal experience dealing with or advocating for pedestrian or bicyclist safety issues?

Candidate's Response: **Living around the corner from the W&OD trail I interact with bicyclist commuters every day. The county should take every effort possible to getting commuters off the roads, and giving them more options to walk or bike to where they need to go.**

3. Low-Stress Bike Network

Fairfax County has committed to reducing the amount people have to drive and associated transportation-related carbon emissions. The County's climate plan calls for meeting a goal of 30% non-auto commuting trips by 2030. To make this shift, the County will need robust, accessible alternatives and bicycling is an ideal, low-cost, carbon-free alternative. But that mode shift requires dedicated infrastructure including an expanded network of trails and comfortable, protected, low-stress bicycle facilities – not just painted bike lanes or sharrows – to make bicycling meaningfully safer, more appealing, and more accessible and often requires roadway redesign that reduces parking and/or vehicle lanes.

Compared to the current prioritization, do you think greater priority should be given to the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians in the County's roadway designs?

Candidate's Response: **Yes**

How would you ensure that people of all ages and abilities have robust active transportation access to and along the County's major and most important thoroughfares and connecting streets?

Candidate's Response: **The county needs to undergo a comprehensive examination of how we can expand access to all residents.**

4. Safe Streets for All

On May 10, 2022, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously endorsed the Safe Streets for All Program, a comprehensive initiative to address systemic transportation safety issues for people walking, biking, taking transit, and driving. Included in the recommendations is

a call for roadway infrastructure changes to slow traffic on our community's streets. Unfortunately, the County has not yet dedicated staff or funding to begin executing the program. At the same time, Fairfax County experienced a troubling uptick in traffic-related pedestrian fatalities in 2022.

Do you support the full implementation of the Safe Streets for All Program in Fairfax County, including changes to roadway design guidelines and an expanded automated speed enforcement program?

Candidate's Response: **Yes**

What proven traffic safety improvement policies, programs, and/or technologies would you like to see implemented in your district and throughout the County? Given the lack of clarity around who has the legal and budgetary authority to make roadway safety improvements stemming from state ownership of County roads, what steps would you propose to ensure that these roadway safety improvements are implemented?

Candidate's Response: **I believe this is an issue for the General Assembly, but I would work closely with local members of both the House of Delegates and the State Senate to ensure we are receiving the proper funding necessary.**

5. Safe Routes to School

Trips to and from schools are among the best opportunities to reduce car trips in Fairfax County. A robust Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program can play a critical role in encouraging more families to walk and bicycle to school, which has been shown to increase confidence and sense of independence among children while also reducing pickup/dropoff vehicle congestion and associated carbon emissions. Unfortunately, the County's SRTS program includes just one dedicated staff position for a public school system that serves 185,000 students.

Would you support expanding the Safe Routes to School program, including additional staff capacity, to get more kids to walk and bike to school?

Candidate's Response: **No**

What other policies or budget items will you pursue to upgrade transportation infrastructure so kids can safely walk and bike to school?

Candidate's Response: **Given the current issues with the lack of safety for cyclists and pedestrians, I would not encourage more children to walk and bike to school, until the number of incidents dramatically decreases.**