

Candidate Name: Barry Jackson
Office Seeking: Rockville City Council

A little bit about me. I grew up on a bicycle. I was always riding everywhere as soon as I got the hang of a two-wheel bike without training wheels. I used my bike to ride around the neighborhood and to school. When I became older I got a multi-gear Schwinn bicycle and rode that all around rural Lubbock, TX and then around Collierville, TN. As I got older I branched out and purchased a mountain bike and a better road bicycle. I enjoyed the freedom of the open road on a bicycle and also the work of endlessly pedaling for mile after mile.

Eventually I moved to Washington, DC where I truly began to understand what urban bicycling really meant. Cars and pedestrians were a constant danger and I learned to be aware of my surroundings and find the bike-friendly paths around town. There were many of them but not enough.

I am a fan of racing and that means that I am a fan of the Tour de France. In the late 1990s through the first decade of the 2000s no one was bigger in American cycling than Lance Armstrong. I was fortunate enough to land a job working for his foundation. So I moved to Austin – which was decidedly not bike friendly. Although in my new neighborhood there was a veloway. I spent many hours riding around that veloway.

I also got to experience RAGBRAI (the Register's Annual Great Ride Across Iowa) with Lance and co for the first time. I saw the collaboration with organizers and city officials across the state to keep riders safe and entertained. It was an amazing experience.

I probably am one of only a few who has ridden RAGBRAI twice – once for different jobs. I went back and did it again for AARP on our Divided We Fail campaign tour.

When I moved back we decided on Rockville. I loved the Millennium Trail, the C&O Canal and the trails around Lake Needwood and of course the Rock Creek trail.

My daughters were born and we bought a little Burley bike trailer for me to pull them around. We enjoyed going to Carmen's and other places with them in the trailer.

As they became older they began to ride on their own. I was thankful that Rockville has a network of bike paths and quiet neighborhood streets to ride to school or around the community.

Around that time I had a stroke. One of my big worries was that I could never ride my bicycles again. I have to say that bicycling had been an important part of who I was – I could not imagine not riding. Fortunately after some time and with the aid of clip-in shoes and a modified gear system I learned to ride again. The first time I rode again was almost better than the first time I rode without training wheels. I realized that I could be free and independent and could enjoy the wind in my face again on a bike.

But the new normal came with its own set of issues. I rode slower. I had to watch out for pedestrians and cars and think about problems way in advance. I really had to pay attention. I don't think I could have ridden in a place that was not as bike friendly as Rockville.

So I say all of this to say – YES. I am a big supporter of bicycling and its place in our society. If I am fortunate enough to be elected to the City Council I will take every opportunity to advocate for bicyclists and bicycling.

Q1. Bicycling and bike infrastructure enhances quality of life and addresses issues such as affordability, equity, access, health, and the safety of our streets. What can the City of Rockville and you as an elected official do to actively encourage more people to ride their bikes?

A: It is a good question. As I lifelong lover of cycling – road cycling, mountain biking and city commuting I think the number one question is safety. Can recreational or commuters ride safely without fear of getting hit by a car or by a pedestrian? The question should not be what can we do to encourage people to ride but what impediments are there to riding? More bike racks. More connected bike ways. Protected lanes so that pedestrians do not have to compete with cyclists whenever possible.

Q2. People bike and walk when it's safe, comfortable, and connects to the places they need to go. Rockville's bike infrastructure is still disjointed. In your opinion, where are the most urgent gaps in our bike network and what steps do we need to take to close these gaps?

I think Rockville's bike network is pretty good but there are areas to be improved. The Millennium Trail from MD 355 to Norbeck Road is an area to focus on as it is only a sidewalk in that space and discourages people from riding on that section. Additionally, I would say that a gap exists between city and other bicycle routes that could be improved, specifically I am thinking of a connection to the Rock Creek trail – there is no good way to access that trail on bicycle from the Millennium Trail.

Q3. Cities across the country are installing protected bike lanes, bike lanes with physical separation between bike and automobile traffic, to encourage more people to ride and increase comfort for cyclists of all ages and abilities. Studies have shown that protected bike lanes increase roadway safety for everyone – people bicycling, walking, and driving. Do you support the installation of protected bike lanes on Rockville's streets? Do you support installing protected bicycle facilities if it requires replacing a motor vehicle travel lane and delays motorized vehicles by a few seconds? Please explain why.

A: Yes. There may be some roadways that are not good candidates for installation of protected lanes. But in general? I fully support separate bike lanes that separate bicyclists out from vehicular traffic and pedestrian traffic.

Most people are not aware but an average road cyclist can maintain 20mph or so. This speed is too fast for a sidewalk but too slow for vehicular travel. There should be a lane to accommodate cyclists.

Q4. Voters care about street safety, bicycling, transit, and walking issues. Why should these voters vote for you?

A: I have been a cyclist for as long as I can remember. I bought a mountain bike/hybrid when I moved to the city to get around. In King Farm I worked with the City to improve pedestrian safety and am still looking for ways to improve safety – including a proposal to take Redland Boulevard from two lanes down to one lane – thereby slowing traffic and making it safer for pedestrians.

Q5. The City of Rockville adopted a Vision Zero Plan in 2020, with the principle that transportation should focus on safety of all road users (cyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and motorists) as a foundation, and that the only acceptable number of deaths and serious injuries on the road is zero. How do you propose to advance Vision Zero in the city of Rockville?

A: I fully support VisionZero. I have worked with Bryan Barnett-Woods, the City's VisionZero Coordinator – he is a wonderful addition to our City's staff. In addition to working with him I would anticipate trying to tie in VisionZero efforts with neighboring municipalities, at the County level and at the state level. I think there are several things we can do to advocate with the state that will result in VisionZero improvements.

Q6. What neighborhood do you live in? Why? Where are your favorite places to spend time in our town?

A: King Farm. I like to spend time around home – so walking around King Farm or bicycling to Carmen's. We used to bike or walk to College Gardens Elementary when my children were little. I miss those days. Now we got to Lake Needwood to hike or bike. Occasionally we will bike to the Town Center. My daughter bikes regularly to her job as a lifeguard at the Rockville Swim Center.

Q7. Approximately 5% of the FY 23 Capital Improvement Program transportation program area budget is allocated for pedestrian and bicycle projects. Do you think that the capital budget allocation for bike infrastructure is too much, just right, or too little? Please explain your answer.

A: Here is what I know. It takes too long for something as simple as sidewalk construction alongside Gude Drive between MD-355 and Watkins Pond Boulevard. The Senaca (a retirement community) has been operating for nearly a year with no pedestrian access. We need to do more to identify priority needs and then move quickly to fund projects

Q8. Please explain your opinion of the proposed Bus Rapid Transit projects along MD 355 and MD 586, and how bicycling and walking fit into this picture.

In general we need to make sure that mass transit fits seamlessly with our pedestrian and bicycling. Rockville should ensure that pedestrian safety and bicycle lanes are included in any planning for rapid transit implementation. Connecting stations and trails should be utilized so that people who use transit can easily transition to their bicycles or walk to their destinations quickly and without impediments. From time to time I utilize the Capital Crescent Trail to go from Bethesda to downtown DC. I get on at Shady Grove Metro and off at Bethesda station. And then vice-versa on the ride back. I envision something similar for the transit system in Rockville where people can easily transition from rail to bus to bicycle and back quickly and easily. But it only happens if we take into account the entire picture rather than focusing on one or two aspects.

Q9. Do you have a biking related story you'd like to tell?

Many. How much time do you have?

A: I love cycling. I have ridden the Natchez Trace Parkway in TN when I lived in Nashville, the C&O Canal when I lived in DC, and when I moved to Austin, TX I biked the veloway and around the rural Texas routes and discovered mountain bike ranches around Austin. Why did I move to Austin? To

work with the Lance Armstrong Foundation. At the time he was the 5 time winner of the Tour de France and a cancer survivor. I got to staff him on his first RAGBRAI ride across Iowa – an experience I will never forget. Then I got to repeat that RAGBRAI ride with AARP. I am probably one of a very small number of people to actually get paid to enjoy RAGBRAI.

But here is an actual story about cycling in Rockville. In 2011 I had a stroke. I did not know if I could walk again let alone cycle. But 6 months later I was on my bike and going to the rehabilitation center at Shady Grove Hospital. I took the Millennium Trail to Falls Grove and then to the Hospital. It was challenging and still is. But the fact that a path existed and was easy to traverse meant that I could independently enjoy cycling again. I have been all over the world – but to be able to go those two miles and back was something I will never forget.