

Candidate Name: Izola Shaw
Office Seeking: Rockville City Council

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?

There are three major ways I will encourage more people to ride their bikes:

- 1.) Policy: I will continue to support and fund the implementation of our Bikeway Master Plan to increase our bicycle network. I will also listen to and consider the guidance/knowledge of the Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee to inform my decision-making as we implement the plan.
- 2.) Community engagement and education: Safety is the number one concern and reason people do not ride bicycles. I will work to address people's concerns through increased outreach and engagement, such as creating more city-wide bike safety outreach materials for distribution, expanding the Bikeshare program through more public and private partnerships, and encouraging more engagement with civic associations and community recreation centers.
- 3.) Incentives: I will build on the excellent work of local businesses to offer more options to their employees to ride their bike to work.

Q2. People bike and walk when it is safe, comfortable, and connected 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?

In addition to the priorities laid out in the Rockville Bikeway Master Plan, there are apartment building driveway entrances that are dangerous for people riding bikes. For example, the entrance into the apartment building on 1st Street and Veirs Mill is short and on a steep incline, where someone on their bike could ride directly into oncoming traffic. There have been car collisions there, particularly during the colder months. There is a ramp as a safer alternative, but it is not noticeable when exiting the building.

To ensure both people on bikes and pedestrians use the ramp instead of the driveway, the City could encourage the property to place wayfinding signs.

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.

Yes, I support the installation of protected bike lanes on Rockville streets to promote safety, increase ridership, increase accessibility to more types of commuters, and contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

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

As an equity practitioner, I will add value to the implementation of our Bikeway Master Plan by ensuring our approach is more equitable.

I serve as an appointee to advise our county government on how to advance equity for our policies, programs, and legislation. Additionally, I am employed on the federal level to advise NIH on how to advance equity and address health disparities. I have the expertise to apply an equity lens to the Bikeway Master Plan, policies, and outreach to ensure we go beyond just using the word equity, but in fact practicing it.

I am also the only candidate that worked on the state level for several years to advance Maryland's transportation equity legislation. My work experience moves beyond simply signing the 2022 Transportation Equity Pledge but acting on my commitment to change our systems of government and decision-making processes to address our community's transportation disparities.

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?

I support the current projects and Vision Zero plan for the City. However, there are more opportunities to increase engagement with communities. In addition to the survey, we could conduct a series of Vision Zero community conversations throughout the City and invest in hosting it in different languages. The community conversations could also be tailored based on the collision data from each respective area.

The Vision Zero plan acknowledges that underserved communities are disproportionately impacted by transportation challenges. We could advance the plan further by identifying gaps in representation from the survey respondents and be intentional about getting feedback from underrepresented communities that have been historically left out of transportation and planning conversations. Additionally, we could look at how the enforcement piece of Vision Zero may impact communities differently.

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

We recently moved to Town Center from Twinbrook. I enjoy spending my time in Town Center because of the walkability and being less dependent on a car.

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.

The five percent covers several projects and includes new appropriations that support the Vision Zero Action Plan. These projects include asphalt and concrete improvements and replacement, LED streetlight conversion, pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements to our sidewalks and roadways.

However, there are more measures we could invest in, such as data collection to better identify gaps and create additional metrics, increase and conduct better targeted community engagement (based on the gaps) and invest in programs for low-income residents to expand the Bikeshare program. More resources could also help to expedite the completion of certain bikeways.

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.

The Bus Rapid Transit project will better connect and increase economic growth at key activity centers throughout Bethesda, White Flint, Rockville, and Gaithersburg. This project will also help bring more people to Rockville Town Square to better support the businesses without relying on available parking and/or having a car. The planning of this project is a notable example of how the consideration and safety of all road users (cyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and motorists) can be incorporated into the project design.

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

I am currently the only candidate in the race that is a renter. I found that there either is not space for bike storage in many Rockville apartment buildings, or storage is equally as expensive if not more per month as a parking space - which can significantly increase a resident's cost of rent. Understanding issues and barriers to bike ownership and bike safety from the perspective of a renter (which is about 45% of the City population) or living in a building is important so that the City can best implement the Bikeway Master Plan and related policies with a greater understanding of its impact throughout our diverse communities.