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Office Seeking: Gaithersburg City Council  
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Q1. Bicycling and bike infrastructure enhance quality of life and address issues such as affordability, equity, access, health, and the safety of our streets. What can the City of Gaithersburg and you as an elected official do to actively encourage more people to bicycle for transportation and recreation?

A: We are active participants in Bike to Work day, which I personally participate in even though I work from home most of the time. We do not see significant demand in Gaithersburg for bicycling as a mode for work, given that most of our residents commute longer distances than practical for bicycles – we have 40,000 jobs in Gaithersburg and 30,000 workers who live here, and only 2,400 people live and work in our city. We would love for people to live and work here, but that does not seem to be the pattern.

Q2. People bike and walk when doing so is safe, comfortable, and connects to the places they need to go. Gaithersburg's bike infrastructure is incomplete and 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? Gaithersburg published a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in August 1999. Will you promote creation of a new, up-to-date Gaithersburg Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan?

A: Several years ago, I worked with the city's Transportation Committee to identify gaps in our low-stress bicycle network. We identified 10 gaps. The city has been going through the list and performing studies to find the best ways to connect our network. Typically, we budget for one study per year, then move the project into the CIP schedule.

Here is the list with the current status:

- Washingtonian Blvd. - Shared use path in design; construction in 2024; possible extensions in future phases
- Summit Hall Road / Industrial Drive / Gaither Road / King Farm      City was recently awarded a \$400K grant for the design of the Industrial Drive shared use path connection (from Industrial Drive to West Deer Park via Summit Hall Road); in CIP for construction in FY26.
- Lakelands / Washingtonian Woods Bicycle Connection. In CIP with design in FY25 and construction in FY26/27.
- Olde Towne - Connection from Railroad Street through Olde Towne to Bohrer Park. Olde Towne Bicycle Connection Feasibility Study (Olde Towne to Washington Grove) completed in FY23; grant application for design to be submitted August 2023. Connections to Bohrer Park need to be studied for feasibility.
- Conservation Lane: Framework for the network of connections between Conservation Lane and Malcolm King Park is in place, but could be improved. To be scheduled.

- Kentlands Blvd. - Longdraft Road - Bike Lane not started; 2023 Kentlands Blvd. identified opportunities to create a bike lane and possible travel lane reduction
- Downtown Crown / Rio Blvd. Connector. Fields Road has shared use path; other segments along Diamondback, Sam Eig, and Ellington are not fully improved with paths
- Saybrooke / Hidden Creek Connection. To be scheduled.
- West Side Drive to West Deer Park crossing 370. To be scheduled.
- West Deer Park Road - Protected Bike Lane. To be scheduled.

Q3. Cities across the country are installing protected bike lanes, with physical separation between bicycle and motor-vehicle 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 Gaithersburg’s streets? Do you support installing protected bicycle facilities even if they require replacing a motor vehicle travel lane and delay motorized vehicles by a few seconds? Please explain your thinking.

A: We have made several decisions to increase safety and to encourage ridership in Gaithersburg. I advocated successfully for updating our law which previously prohibited bicycling by adults on city sidewalks – now this is allowed unless prohibited in an area by the city manager (and no area has been prohibited to-date). The second is to greatly expand the shared-use paths in our city, making it even easier to bike around the city. These changes have been embraced by bicyclists in Gaithersburg and are making it safer to get around. This is a much more effective and practical solution in our city, compared to protected lanes which make more sense in a dense urban environment like Washington DC.

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

A: As a 9-year incumbent, I have a strong track record of actually doing the work to make good decisions on behalf of safety and bicycling. I own 2 ebikes and a road bike, and enjoy rides from Gaithersburg into the Ag Reserve or down to the towpath. I live in a neighborhood, Kentlands, designed for walkability, and enjoy our walking paths and hiking trails.

Q5. The City of Gaithersburg, unlike the State of Maryland, Montgomery County, and the City of Rockville, has not adopted a Vision Zero Plan. (Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.) Will you lead or support and fund efforts to put in place a Gaithersburg Vision Zero plan?

A: As a member of the Transportation Planning Board at COG, we had a presentation last September for a next-generation set of tactics, the Safe System Approach (the presentation is Item 9 here: <https://www.mwcog.org/events/2022/9/21/transportation-planning-board>), and I fully support them. Resources are here: <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/zerodeaths/> This goes beyond Vision Zero.

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

A: I live in Kentlands. I enjoy the city walking paths around 3 lakes near our home, and also the city and county portions of the Muddy Branch Trail. Seneca Creek State Park is nearby with more great hiking, especially the trail around Lake Seneca. Bohrer Park has a large water park, a skate park, and mini golf along with walking paths, and is adjacent to the facilities at Gaithersburg High School. I could go on and on about the city parks – no resident lives more than a quarter of a mile from a city park, and parks constitute 15% of the land area of the city.

Q7: Gaithersburg residents have identified routes including Goshen Road, Centerway Road, Woodfield Road/MD 124, Montgomery Village Ave, and parts of Snouffer School Road as “very hazardous to cyclists due to having no shoulder/bike lane with heavy and fast traffic. All these roads are major connectors between common areas to cycle.” How would you tackle safety on these roads and other Gaithersburg roads like them?

A: Goshen Road and Centerway Road are in the city, as is a small segment of Montgomery Village Avenue. The others are in unincorporated parts of the county, and outside our jurisdiction. As discussed in question 3 above, I would encourage bicyclists in areas like these where the roadway is high-stress to utilize sidewalks and shared-use paths.

Q8. What is your target for the proportion of Gaithersburg’s Capital Improvement Program transportation budget that should be allocated to pedestrian and bicycle improvements? How might the city better tap state and federal funding for projects?

A: We evaluate each CIP project based on its merits and on the availability of staff resources to manage any projects that are active. One important point is that the major roads in our city are state highways (355, 124, 28, 117, etc.) or county roads. We actively work with State Highway and with the county, and even with the Federal government, to partner with and fund projects. For example, the shared use path around NIST was a multilateral project with Federal, State, and City elements. Most of the studies for bicycle projects in question 2 were funded by grants, with the city providing capital funds.

Q9. How should Bus Rapid Transit on MD 355 mesh with bicycle and pedestrian improvements? How will you work with the Maryland State Highway Administration to promote bicycle and pedestrian improvements on Gaithersburg’s other state roads, MD 28, MD 117, MD 119, and MD 124?

The BRT project on 355 is a great opportunity in many ways. One that is less obvious is that the need to reconstruct the roadway enables us to guide the reconfiguration of the sidewalks and shared-use paths alongside the road. I have toured the sidewalks in that area and they are in dire need of upgrades – there are many utility poles directly in the roadway, there is a great lack of ADA compliance, etc. Those kinds of improvements are very difficult and expensive on their own, but can easily be baked into larger projects like the new BRT line.

Q10. Do you support bi-directional, full-day MARC Brunswick Line service? Do you support or oppose creation of the Midcounty Highway Extended (M-83)?

A: I fully, enthusiastically, support bi-directional, full-day MARC Brunswick Line service. MARC is a vital service to Gaithersburg, which has 2 MARC stations and 0 Metro stations. We have notified the State government of our city's support.

I support creation of the Midcounty Highway Extended (M-83). This route was designed as an alternate route, allowing movement when 355 and 270 are backed up due to accidents or construction. The road network in our region is desperately lacking in redundancy, which is just basic engineering – today, one accident at a key point can ruin the day for commuters and bicyclists alike.