

# 2017 League of Women Voters/Bike BloNo Bloomington Candidate Questionnaire - Jamie Mathy (candidate for Ward 1)

1. U.S. Census figures show that more than 10,000 of Bloomington-Normal's 97,000 workers 16 years or older did not use a car as their primary mode of transportation to work from 2011 to 2015. Which of the following methods have you or a member of your immediate family regularly used in the last six months to get to work or school? *(select all that apply)*

Car, truck, or van	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I do	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family member does
Public transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> I do	<input type="checkbox"/> Family member does
Taxicab	<input type="checkbox"/> I do	<input type="checkbox"/> Family member does
Motorcycle	<input type="checkbox"/> I do	<input type="checkbox"/> Family member does
Bicycle	<input type="checkbox"/> I do	<input type="checkbox"/> Family member does
Walked	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I do	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family member does
Other means	<input type="checkbox"/> I do	<input type="checkbox"/> Family member does
Worked at home	<input type="checkbox"/> I do	<input type="checkbox"/> Family member does

Comments: Kelly & I normally walk or drive to work. Getting bicycles is on our list of things to do for health and recreation, but we have not done it yet. Occasionally if I have been out with friends I will use Uber to get around town.

2. Both Bloomington and Normal voted in 2016 to adopt Complete Streets policies. These policies instruct engineering staff to consider all modes of transportation (i.e., ensuring that pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users of all ages and abilities feel safe and comfortable using the facility) when reconstructing or resurfacing streets. Would you have voted/did you vote to adopt a Complete Streets policy?

- Yes  
 No

Comments: We're building a plan for the next 25 years, and decisions we make now affect everything. I think that giving people the option to use any form of transportation they wish is important. Studies I have seen have shown the cost per square mile to be a fairly lower percentage.

3. Both Bloomington and Normal voted in 2016 to send a portion of revenue from a 1-percentage point increase in the sales tax to Connect Transit. From both communities that new funding totals \$1 million, which allowed Connect Transit to begin offering service on Sundays. In FY 2016, Connect Transit provided more than 2.5 million rides to passengers and about 75,000 rides on paratransit service for people with special needs. Would you have voted/did you vote to fund Connect Transit?

- Yes  
 No

Comments: Yes, but with qualifications. There may be information I don't currently have, but I feel like Connect Transit is not using busses appropriate to the size of the ridership in Bloomington-Normal. We upgraded to even larger busses than we had before that are never more than 25% full. These larger busses are causing issues in terms of where people can be picked up or dropped off. Why go bigger? Let's spend less money on smaller, more fuel efficient busses that can get in and out of neighborhoods and deliver better services to users.

So I would fund Connect Transit on a temporary basis while the board put together a plan to lower overall operating costs.

4. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in a report cited by the 2016 McLean County Community Health Needs Assessment, found that "Among other issues, use of cars contributes to low levels of physical activity in the US. In the last several decades car-reliance has increased. The percent of US workers driving to work rose from 64 to 88 percent from 1960 to 2000, while the share walking to work declined."

The report went on: "There is an increasing recognition of the need to focus on environmental factors—including the 'built environment'—that may help promote activity. The 'built environment' describes physical or man-made features such as sidewalks, bicycle trails, streetlights, traffic, safety from crime and parks that may promote or discourage activity."

In our community - and many others across the United States - the built environment took a dramatic shift starting in the 1960s away from compact, walkable, bikeable communities in favor of suburban sprawl. Do you think revitalizing our urban cores - specifically Downtown Bloomington and Uptown Normal - can help provide citizens with an option to live, work, and play in communities that enable healthy active transportation and recreation?

- Yes  
 No

Comments: Yes, I am a huge proponent of Downtown Bloomington as both an economic and cultural hub for Bloomington, and I would like it to be as walkable and bikeable as possible. Since Kelly & I opened the bakery in 2005, the number of residents living in the downtown area has at least quadrupled. Many of the residents that I have spoken with walk and bike a lot, however there still remains essential services missing from the downtown area that means they have to keep and worry about automobiles. The largest of these would be a grocery store in or near downtown.

I am also in favor of incentivizing redevelopment and rehabilitation of infill properties and neighborhoods. We can help revitalize historic neighborhoods with just a little TLC from public works, and our cost to deliver services to these interior neighborhoods is significantly lower than greenfield development.

5. In addition to the impact of the built environment on public health, sprawl tends to cost municipalities more than compact development; each additional foot of roadway, sewer, water main, and other infrastructure to serve large properties costs the municipality more, typically without an increase in tax revenue large enough to account for that increase in infrastructure costs. Large properties also mean it takes longer to walk or bike places, leading more people to choose other modes more often. Do you think it's important, all else being equal, to promote investment in our urban cores instead of encouraging more suburban sprawl?

Yes

No

Comments: Yes, I absolutely agree with this. In the business world you would calculate all actual costs to deliver services and set pricing accordingly before agreeing to take on new obligations for your business. As far as I know, the city does not calculate what that cost is before agreeing to new developments or annexations.

6. Bloomington's Public Works Department created an award-winning Sidewalk Master Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in October 2015. The plan outlines a few key investments to dramatically improve the walkability of the community, such as:

- \$7.4 million to make the entire network compliant with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act
- \$4.1 million to bring the most dangerous sidewalks up to a minimum pavement quality
- \$261,000 to fill in connectivity gaps in the sidewalk network, which are often very short segments that prevent people from walking at all or - even worse - end up in a collision because they walk in the street.

If elected, would you prioritize making all of these improvements over ten years, as the plan calls for?

Yes

No

Comments: I am answering no to this question because the city has some significant financial challenges coming up in the next 10-20 years, and most of them are legal obligations with little to no room for change.

Would I like to fix all of the sidewalks? Absolutely, but I won't commit to prioritizing \$1.2 million per year for sidewalks over other obligations the city needs to work on, like a sewer system from the 1860s - 1900s all throughout downtown and my ward.

I would like to see sidewalk repair and maintenance as a constant percentage of road work we are performing, especially as it pertains to Jim Karch's complete neighborhood plan of fixing the sewers, then the roads, gutters, and sidewalks and leave the neighborhood completely done.

7. Streets are expensive. Bigger streets are more expensive. Standard engineering doctrine over the last several decades has encouraged engineers to build streets to accommodate “peak hour traffic” - essentially building roads that are big enough to move the most cars that might be seen at the busiest time of day, with almost zero delay. That’s why we’ve seen Towanda Barnes Road balloon from two lanes to five; 95% of the time, a two-lane road in this location would be perfectly sufficient, but engineering doctrine requires that they build it wide enough to eliminate congestion for the busiest few minutes a day - even though it more than doubles the cost.

Not every community does it this way. Policymakers are free to instruct their engineers to allow congestion at certain times of day if it’ll save money. These decisions allow communities to repair more streets with the same amount of money, and they usually end up creating safer, more vibrant communities. The drawback, of course, is that commuters may experience some amount of congestion.

As part of the discussion surrounding Complete Streets, proponents argued that policies promoting sustainable transportation could save the community money in the long run by allowing people the choice to commute by bike, transit, or on foot - reducing the number of cars on the street and the associated congestion.

If elected, would you instruct engineers to focus on eliminating congestion or building safer, smaller, more efficient streets?

- Eliminate congestion with bigger streets
- Allow peak-hour congestion so more streets can be repaired

Comments: I'm sorry, I will need far more information before I am able to give an informed and educated opinion. I understand the concepts, but the devil is in the details. Is the option to increase the time to go from I55 to State Farm an extra 5 minutes and we can repair 1 more mile of road? Or is it 15 miles of road? Or is it 15 minutes to repair 2 miles of road?

The best I can say is I would be ok with shifting priorities if a little bit of congestion could have a significant difference.