

2017 League of Women Voters/Bike BloNo Normal Candidate Questionnaire - Chamberly Cummings (candidate for Town Council)

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 type="checkbox"/> I do	<input 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: Convenience sometimes make alternative methods of transportation difficult. Work from home is an option many employers are offering because not only does it impact ideals of alternative transportation, but also helps with work/life balance. There is not an option for work from home on a consistent basis (even for 1 or 2 days a week) for me or my household by our employer.

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: It is important to ensure safety of not only operators of motor vehicles, but cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users. It is evident in Normal, their awareness to create bicycle lanes are great for safety and ease of flow of traffic.

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: For many people Connect Transit is the primary mode of transportation. It is a benefit to our community to be able to provide people with transportation to work, to shop in our stores, to eat at our restaurants, or even be able to access hospitals. It is a mutual partnership, and a cost of doing business.

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: If the focus of the revitalization is focused on providing work, life, and play options to reduce vehicle traffic and increase alternative modes; I do believe the work aspect may be a difficult for Uptown Normal. This is only from the perspective of diversification of employment opportunities.

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: I don't believe we should promote investment in our urban core instead of encouraging more suburban sprawl. I think it must be a balanced approach. There are people who will desire to live, work, and play within the urban core. There are some who prefer the bedroom community and seek suburbia refuge. This is a balancing act not an either/or choice.

6. The Town of Normal is considering options to improve the Constitution Trail where it intersects with roadways, such as Vernon, Willow, and Raab. Improvements to favor pedestrians and remind motorists that pedestrians have the right of way could include signage in the middle of the crosswalk, crosswalk LEDs, and signs illuminated with LEDs to remind motorists of the need to stop to provide the pedestrian safe passage. Would you be in favor of such improvements?

Yes

No

Comments: In many places where the Trail intersects with traffic (that have not been designated to be an intersection) have been a problem. I walk the Constitution Trail. I have been a motor vehicle operator in the same areas. Signals and signs can be helpful for not only the motorist, but also those who are enjoying the Trail.

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 am not going to make a statement of choosing one or the other. There are streets that may need to be considered for street expansion and other streets that should be left alone. Bloomington and Normal are growing. As we continue to attract new residents we must constantly evaluate the need. I do believe main arteries of Bloomington-Normal should always be evaluated for accessibility & flow of traffic. We must constantly evaluate main streets that have not been already expanded.