

CITY OF NORTH CHARLESTON

MAYOR

1.) One of Charleston Moves' top priorities is our Ashley River Crossing — Bridge Package proposal, for which the City of Charleston, the City of North Charleston and Charleston County would commit to work together on a plan, along with other relevant agencies, to make the North Bridge, the Ashley River Bridge, the James Island Connector and the Wappoo Cut Bridge are safe for all modes of transportation. If elected, how will you support Charleston Moves' Bridge Package proposal, specifically as it relates to the North Bridge connection?

Thomas Dixon: It is imperative that we invest in making all three of these bridges safe for pedestrians and bicyclers, especially as we increase access for these same travelers on our streets and thoroughfares. As the next mayor of North Charleston, I will make getting this work that should have been already done a priority for my administration, especially the North Bridge connection.

Floyd Dotter: The North Bridge as well as the other bridges mentioned would require drastic measures to make them safe for all modes of traffic. Dedicated lanes would be needed as the bridges exist at the moment. Even four foot high concrete lane separators would have problems to make workable due to the nature of the high speed interchange with the interstate. A contest to search for a design would likely generate many novel ideas to add to the existing bridge structure to allow additional modes of transportation. Personally, I think we need a complete replacement and we should be looking forward to a perfectly designed replacement bridge.

Ashley Peele: I'm in favor of conducting the engineering study to determine how best to enable pedestrian and bike mobility at this connection - whether that's through retrofit, rebuild or a standalone connection. I also plan to make safe bike and pedestrian mobility across the entire city a key part of my platform. The Legare Bridge gets a lot of attention, but the North Bridge connection in my opinion is far more critical - without any designated crossing for non-autos. I'll make sure this gets a constant focus from the highest levels until resolved.

John Gilbert Singletary Jr.: I will participate by proposing SMART goals that will allow more efficient movement of people throughout the Tri-County Area.

Keith Summey (I): Safe and equitable multimodal connectivity between neighborhoods and cities, across highways and waterways is vital. Currently, the North Bridge connecting North Charleston to West Ashley is not only unsafe, it's dangerous for bikers and pedestrians. On many instances, I have cited the dangers to state officials in hopes of an eventual solution, as a key connecting thoroughfare in our community must be accessible to all modes of travel. The adjoining communities must work together with state officials, and organizations like Charleston Moves, to find an appropriate solution. A first step is looking at existing viable engineering and finding a viable way to fund the infrastructure work.

2.) Lowcountry Rapid Transit is planned to connect Summerville and downtown Charleston, via Rivers Avenue, by 2025. What do you think needs to happen during this planning phase to ensure the project's success?

Dixon: Since there is such a great dependence on privately owned vehicles (POV) for transportation in the Lowcountry and a skepticism by the general public over the efficiency of the current system, there needs to be an aggressive marketing plan that reaches our entire area that will begin to change the way the public views its transit system. Along with this, our current transit system must reinforce in the minds of its ridership and prospective riders that it is an efficient, reliable, viable and even enjoyable means by which to travel that is at least worthy of their support, and possibly even more desirable than traveling by POV.

Dotter: Continue to make it abundantly clear to Charleston County Council and the Charleston Delegates to state government that funds the voters agreed to for the Rapid Transit project will not go to (so-called) complete I-526 through JOHNS ISLAND. The biggest danger the rapid transit project has is with those who seek to find funds to finish the I-526 through John's Island to James Island.

Peele: Three key things need to be done during the current planning phase: 1) Engage the community, especially those without cars that would be the priority target group for the BRT. We need to make sure voices are heard regarding stop locations, frequencies and stop amenities. 2) Evaluate zoning and ordinances in affected areas to ensure we can capitalize on the growth the BRT will bring without displacing vulnerable residents. 3) Anticipate the multimodal transportation needs of the area and ensure those are accommodated in the plan.

Singletonary: Sufficient funding be appropriated from the beginning of the project as it is already available. The public only needs to know where to look.

Summey (I):

Lowcountry Rapid Transit will become the region's defining transit project, most of which runs through the city of North Charleston. During the planning process, North Charleston has been thoroughly engaged. Connecting existing and proposed transit facilities to an enhanced pedestrian and bicycle network can promote greater equity of transportation opportunities and increase transportation efficiency, safety among transit-dependent groups, and overall transit ridership. Safe connections to transit facilities benefit all users, enhance the desirability of residential communities close to transit corridors, and provide an alternative to the single occupancy vehicle mode of travel. The Complete Streets Initiative should and will be included in LCRT.

In addition to improvements along the line itself, the system's success depends upon the first-mile/last-mile connections and ensuring access to key destinations in close proximity to LCRT are accessible via multimodal travel. In addition, an uninterrupted pedestrian and biking experience will increase the willingness of travelers to utilize LCRT.

In concert with the development of LCRT, the City of North Charleston will be exploring and implementing new Transit Oriented Development zoning along the line, specifically near the transit nodes. The built-environment along Rivers Avenue must encourage ridership of LCRT, and it is imperative that the city's ordinances allow for appropriate development to promote its use. Appropriate TOD can enhance the LCRT system, while protecting existing neighborhoods, and limiting congestion as our region continues to grow.

3.) Please list your priority transportation projects and which modes each serve.

Dixon: I believe that every method of mass transportation available must be researched and those that best fit the needs of the Lowcountry at large must be put in place as soon as possible in order to decrease and ultimately eliminate our dependence of fossil fuels and the deadly effects that they are having on our planet. We don't have the option of delaying any longer. We've already waited too long.

Dotter: The highest priority is for mass transit. Everything should revolve around that priority. Well done mass transit system will spawn many new businesses along the route and will take pressure off our highway infrastructure. The only way to strike a balance between mass transit and privately owned vehicles is to allow the Charleston area mass transit systems to catch up. Mass transit has been ignored for far too long in the Charleston area.

Peele: Getting a top class public transit system in place is a top priority, which is why I support the BRT. This is the best way to encourage riders to give up their cars in favor of public transit for their daily commute. Ensuring new developments incorporate infrastructure needs is a core item as well. We can't continue to bring as many people to the area as we are without a plan for how they will get around safely. Supporting safe bike and pedestrian access with complete streets for city-owned roads is a top priority as well.

Singletary: My priority transportation needs will be North Charleston specifically, but North Charleston is apart of the Tri-County. North Charleston sits in all three counties therefore, transportation of nearly 800,000 citizens in nearly 36 cities must be considered. Planning for the entire Tri-County area will allow for more effective and efficient economies of scales to be realized and a successful outcome.

Summey (I):

Lowcountry Rapid Transit. A top priority that will serve all modes of travel. (detailed above)

Transfer of ownership of Spruill Avenue. Today, there are bike lanes and sidewalks connecting the Park Circle neighborhood to downtown Charleston, but I believe the community would be better served with local control of the roadway. If North Charleston receives ownership, our first priority is improving bike safety and enhancing the roadway for additional local business opportunities along the roadway.

Palmetto Commerce Parkway Phase III. While this roadway was originally envisioned to encourage commerce, an additional north-south connection in our community with appropriate Complete Streets would reduce congestion and better serve multimodal travel.

Palmetto Commerce Parkway Interchange. The construction of a new interchange between Hwy 78 and Ashley Phosphate Road would improve traffic flow, but more importantly, would decrease congestion along Ashley Phosphate Road, which has proved to be dangerous for pedestrians and bikers.

Sidewalk improvements. In our latest bond referendum, we earmarked significant funds for sidewalk improvements to ensure safe community connectivity and access to transit in neighborhoods without sidewalks. While all new development is required to construct sidewalks, many of our traditional neighborhoods were developed prior to my tenure. Over the last 25 years, we have methodically added hundreds of miles of sidewalks in neighborhoods without.

North Charleston Transit Center. Multimodal connection while traveling to and from our region is important. We proudly opened the new North Charleston Transit Center, giving an attractive and welcoming home to Amtrak, Southeastern Stages, and CARTA.

Improved streetscapes. We continue to work with existing industry and neighborhoods to improve our city's streetcapes within our business districts. Encouraging those living in close proximity to walk and bike decreases parking demands and vehicular movements. The final phase of the streetscape improvements is now underway in Park Circle. Next, we will look to bring an attract streetscape to the Reynolds Avenue Business District.

4.) Please explain your thoughts on the principle of induced demand.

Dixon: I fully believe that the principle of induced demand clearly demonstrates why those who tout highway widening and expansion in order to reduce traffic congestion are wrong. Although the concept of widening a roadway to reduce congestion sounds logical, the fact is that adding new roadway capacity also creates new demand for those lanes or roads. In other words, the more space that's made available for traffic, the more traffic will increase to fill that space. Instead of widening roads and causing more congestion and creating an even more adverse effect on the environment, we should be researching and investing in alternate methods of travel that are environmentally friendly, promote healthier lifestyles and move people from place to place swiftly, efficiently and at a reasonable cost.

Dotter: In the movie Field of Dreams it was said, "If we build it, they will come." It's the same thing with transportation. If we build more highways we will get more cars, but if we build more methods for alternative modes of transportation we will get more people using those alternative modes of transportation.

Peele: Widening roads is not a durable solution to traffic issues. Case studies from around the nation have confirmed time and again the phenomenon of induced demand. Whatever minimal initial benefit is seen will be diminished by more cars joining the road as people realize the traffic briefly improved. The net result is more cars and worse traffic than before the project. Rather than costly, time-consuming and wasteful widening projects, we should focus on ways to get people out of their cars and on building new roads to support the growth we are experiencing.

Singleary: While induced demand or latent demand relating to a positive correlation between supply and demand and consumption has become an issue the recent expansion of transportation systems argues against widening major commuter roads. The nub of the matter is whether there is a warranted cost benefit to widening roads due to the escalating cost of building roads. This phenomenon requires a case by case analysis of the area, traffic, funds available, patterns, and the culture of the people in the area. Widening some roads will bring about a successful outcome when the right of way space is available and the roads were under built from the start, but there are times when available alternatives can be utilized and a simple widening would prove to be detrimental. Each situation requires a needs analysis prior to any final decision because there are no cookie cut solutions.

Summey (I):

There is no doubt that the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 led to an economic boon for the country, building high capacity interstates that today traverse our nation. However, the unintended consequences led to divided communities, white flight, and suburbanism. Over 60 years later, infrastructure demands in South Carolina lean heavily on increased capacity of our roadways.

I believe a multi-pronged approach to infrastructure development can meet our vehicle demands and improve travel for our transit dependent and biking community. Ensuring all new projects include truly appropriate complete streets with transit in mind allows for better, safer access to alternate means of travel, and encourages commuters to get out of their cars. In turn, capacity remains on our highways for those who cannot or will not use alternate means of travel.

Our infrastructure needs in our region far exceed the funding from our state, so we must all continue to push our state legislators to keep infrastructure a top priority. Travel equity is achieved through equitable funding.

5.) What are your personal transportation values and how you would lead on transportation issues if elected?

Dixon: Again, I believe that every method of mass transportation available must be researched and those that best fit the needs of the Lowcountry at large must be put in place as soon as possible in order to decrease and ultimately eliminate our dependence of fossil fuels and the deadly effects that are having on our planet. We don't have the option of delaying any longer. We've already waited too long.

Dotter: When my circumstance has permitted I have opted to stop driving all together. I recognize that this will not be feasible for many people. Yet, I believe, that most people would walk to a grocery store if they could and would walk to work if they could. Likewise those same people would be more inclined to use mass transit. Just as you don't put the cart in front of the horse, we shouldn't put the car in front of our future course. There are too many things to mention here. One of those would be to have competitively priced items available in every neighborhood at a local store making it less likely that someone would drive somewhere else to purchase something like milk or or anything else.

Peele: I am the only candidate in the race that currently rides a bike when possible for commutes. I understand the safety issues that exist (I can't make the 2-mile commute to work on a bike because of safety issues) and can speak from experience when promoting safe access as a top issue. As a BLA grad, I am also a believer in walkable communities and form-based codes. North Charleston falls short on both of those, but we can be on the forefront of these issues with the right leadership.

Singletary: I value the freedom and opportunity to safely go across the Tri-County area and the option of driving or taking public transportation must be made available to all citizens.

Summey (I): North Charleston is the most diverse community in the State of South Carolina, racially and economically, and I have long led my administration to understand that in all projects, all needs must be considered and best met. Serving our traveling and commuting public is no different. Whether through different values, different desires, or different necessities, our transit system must take everyone into account, while encouraging more and more of the public to seek non-vehicular modes of transportation. This can be achieved through appropriate investment in our transit system and our built environment. I

will continue to push for the development of LCRT, Complete Streets, increased connectivity, and innovative solutions to make commutes as safe as possible for everyone.

6.) If elected, would you support a greater annual funding allocation from your municipality for bike, pedestrian and public transit infrastructure? And, will you lobby SCDOT to increase their spending on bike, pedestrian and public transit infrastructure as well?

Dixon: In answer to both questions: YES.

Dotter: Yes & Yes

Peele: Absolutely yes on both of these items.

Singletary: When elected I will add a permanent line item to the municipal budget for transportation, require corporations to pay their fair share of the economic impact fee to assist with increase transportation needs, and will continue to sit with the SCDOT Secretary Hall, as I have in the past, to fight for more efficient infrastructure appropriations from the state's SCDOT \$2million budget. which is 10% of the states total budget. My "Vision Booklet" previously completed and in circulation spells out some of the innovative step I feel will put North Charleston and the Tri-County area on the right track. Fortunately, I am aware of where sufficient funding already exist today to accomplish many of the transportation projects being considered, such as the \$350 million Light Rail project. I am also aware of innovative ways to lower the ongoing annual operating cost. The funding I speak of is available for such projects and if elected the project will begin within my first year in office.

Summey (I): Our upcoming transit projects and the public demand a greater investment in transit, one that must be met. I will continue to fight for safe roadways for all, and will assuredly continue to push SCDOT and our state lawmakers to appropriately fund infrastructure and transit.