

# CITY OF CHARLESTON

## MAYOR

**Sheri Irwin:** NO RESPONSES

**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 safe for all modes of transportation. If elected, how will you support Charleston Moves' Bridge Package proposal?**

**Michelle Renee Orth:** I fully support this initiative and believe we must make our streets safe for bicyclists and pedestrians. Our government will prioritize non-fossil fuel dependent transportation when a critical mass of us actively and boldly demand that our government serve the people - including future generations endangered by our elected leaders' refusal to acknowledge the existential threat posed by climate collapse and the concomitant need to shift to clean transportation.

**Mike Seekings:** The Ashley River Crossing has long been a top priority for me, and it will continue to be a top priority until it is completed. And, as mayor, I will ensure that it gets completed. Great cities possess a range of mobility options and offer equity in mobility. As chairman of CARTA, chairman of the BCDCOG's Bike/Ped Safety Committee and chairman of the City's Bike/Ped Advisory Committee, connectivity and safety are issues I have worked on for years. I will use the full power of the mayor's office to move the Bridge Package forward so that Charlestonians can move freely in the region via various forms of transportation. Importantly, my close working relationship with the BCDCOG and regional leaders will allow the City to identify and act quickly on key funding opportunities.

**John Tecklenburg (I):** I support the Ashley River Crossing--Bridge Package proposal. Specifically, I feel the first priority is to build the separate stand alone Ashley River Bridge. Under my leadership, we've now submitted for the third time -- each submittal improved -- for federal funding, and I feel this third time will be the charm. Once we get that accomplished, my second goal is to make the James Island Connector safer for all modes of transportation. We're already looking into this, and with funding, we believe we can get it back into bike and pedestrian use.

**Maurice G. Washington:** In South Carolina cycling is not only a legal form of transportation but is also one that is beneficial to the community as it reduces traffic and parking congestion, and leaves no harmful environmental footprint. Regrettably, there have been too many fatalities involving motor vehicles and cyclists. Obviously, it is not the cyclists who are injuring motorists rather it tends to be inattentive motorists (cell phones, texting) or those motorists who fail to appreciate the cyclists right to utilize the same roadways to which they also pay taxes. That said, as mayor I would lead from the front on those important safety projects.

**Gary White:** I have a very strong working relationship with the elected officials from the City of Charleston, the City of North Charleston and Charleston County, many of whom have endorsed my candidacy for Mayor. I am confident in my abilities to work with my colleagues to find appropriate solutions and funding to make each of these bridges safer for multi modal access.

## **2.) Do you support adding a multi-use path to the Limehouse Bridge between Johns Island and West Ashley, connecting to the West Ashley Greenway?**

**Orth:** Yes. We must make our roads safe for bicycles and pedestrians.

**Seekings:** Yes, the Main Road Corridor is located in a burgeoning area of the city and bike/ped connectivity is a must-have in this important, Charleston-County-led project that is critical from traffic, flooding and connectivity perspectives.

**Tecklenburg (I):** I support the multi-use path, and it makes so much sense because of the incredible connection it would make with the West Ashley Greenway. I believe we must continue to improve and connect the Greenway to as many neighborhoods as possible so more of our residents can experience and enjoy all that Charleston has to offer. We're already planning to extend the Greenway a short distance to the new Charleston County Stono River Park, and I'll continue to support efforts for further expansion, connectivity and use.

**Washington:** Yes, however, benefits cost analysis is an important step in the priority ranking of this project.

**White:** I have not seen any plans that show the location of where a multi-use path on the Limehouse Bridge would be located. However, presuming there is adequate space on the bridge to accommodate the path I think it would be a good addition.

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

**Orth:**

Charleston is not densely populated enough to support a conventional public transportation system that works well for the majority of its people, but we have a fleet of grossly underutilized publicly owned vehicles - they belong to us, the people of Charleston. A voluntary program that rewards citizens for car-pooling through an easy-to-use app would help the working poor (with and without cars), alleviate traffic, shrink our carbon footprint, help businesses get the workers they need to thrive and bring community together. Think: Uber but by the people, for the people - and affordable for all. A real ride share app. The technology already exists, we just need to find the best option, adapt it for our community and license it. Importantly, by using technology to leverage a resource we already have we preserve our scarce financial resources for the expensive public works projects needed to address the worst effects of climate crisis.

An app like this requires a critical number of active users to get going. Accordingly, we would need to activate the community powerfully and start in a concentrated area and work out from there - College of Charleston and its immediate vicinity is an excellent candidate. Getting institutional buy-in from MUSC and other large employers would be valuable.

We all learn in kindergarten the importance of sharing to a well functioning community - we can apply this lesson creatively to cultivate a vibrant and connected Charleston.

In addition, completing our streets in holistic systemic ways that prioritize safety, community prosperity and connection rather than ensuring maximum speed and volume of traffic must be a priority.

**Seekings:**

- Ashley River Bike/Ped Bridge: Bike/Ped
- Conversion of Ashley/Rutledge to two-way streets: Bike/Ped/Auto
- Ferry Service between the Peninsula and the surrounding communities (Daniel Island | Mt. Pleasant | West Ashley): Bike/Ped/Ferry
- Lowcountry Rapid Transit (Neck Area, Downtown, Medical District): Mass Transit
- US 17 & Main Road Flyover (West Ashley & Johns Island): Bike/Ped/Auto
- Southern Pitchfork (Johns Island): Bike/Ped/Auto
- James Island Connector Flyover at Folly Road (James Island): Auto
- Maybank Highway Improvements, including a smart light at Maybank and River Road (Johns Island): Bike/Ped/Auto
- Central Park Road Improvements (James Island): Bike/Ped/Auto
- Installation of advanced traffic management technology throughout the city: Bike/Ped/Auto
- Implementation of the Citywide Transportation Plan: Bike/Ped/Auto
- Adoption of a Complete Streets Ordinance in the City and Resolution of Support for the County: Bike/Ped/Auto

**Tecklenburg (I):** Under my leadership, the City of Charleston passed a comprehensive list of projects to service the influx of residents and businesses that have settled in our city. These 13 projects were approved in concert with the regional BCD COG. This collaboration provides access to State and Federal funding that wasn't being considered prior to my Administration. I will continue to seek this plan's implementation and recommendations, while advocating for the completion of 526 -- which includes pedestrian, bicycle and mass-transit facilities and access. Moreover, these 13 projects will help to increase safety and convenience for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers.

Those 13 improvement projects are located at; Rutledge Avenue; Clements Ferry Rd; Maybank Highway; Savannah Highway-Wappoo Road; Sam Rittenberg Boulevard and Orange Grove Road; Morrison Drive, Cooper Street and Lee Street; Lockwood Drive and Beaufain Street; Fishburne Street and Hagood Avenue; Folly Road Boulevard, Wesley Drive and West Ashley Greenway; Maybank Highway and Riverland Drive; St. Andrews Boulevard, Old Towne Road and Ashley River Road; Calhoun Street and East Bay Street; and, Main Road and River Road.

**Washington:** I strongly believe, it is best first to get the planning and zoning patterns right first, and then figure out the transportation.

**White:** The completion of I526 is an important transportation project to help not only improve traffic congestion but also to address safety concerns by providing Johns Island residents with additional evacuation routes. Reboot the Commute is a great opportunity for the business community in the Charleston Region to play a proactive role in improving transportation. The Lowcountry Bus Rapid Transit system has the potential to significantly improve transportation in our Region.

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

**Orth:** It is tempting to apply simple arithmetic to complex systems: Additional roads = less traffic. Unfortunately it's not so simple. We have decades of data demonstrating the phenomenon of induced demand: the more roads we build the more people use them. This is one reason why we must think outside the box when it comes to transportation. The "solution" will be many small steps requiring a shift in the way we all think about getting around our beautiful city - making biking and walking safer and easier; encouraging live-work developments; making carpooling fun and easy; changing attitudes about public transportation.

**Seekings:** We cannot simply pave our way out of congestion and mobility problems. We have to plan. When we put down more asphalt, only short-term relief will follow, and our roadways will invariably be filled with even more traffic. As I have stated before, I will not support any project that is not multi-modal and inclusive of all possible transit and mobility options.

**Tecklenburg (I):** I certainly acknowledge the principle of induced demand, that increasing our traffic infrastructure could be matched with increased traffic. However, in areas where roadway infrastructure did not keep up with development, we are behind, and sometimes adding can help satisfy over congestion that already exists while offering opportunities for bicyclists and pedestrians.

For example, the widening of Glenn McConnell Parkway. First, It's clear we're behind the demand, and increased capacity is necessary. Second, we're adding an extra lane that could become a dedicated lane for our Lowcountry Rapid Transit System. Third, we're adding a separate bike and pedestrian facility to accompany the project.

**Washington:** Honestly for me I am still working to find my comfort zone here. The idea of less roads may lead to less traffic congestions or building more roads doesn't make traffic worst; it just won't make it any better, or complications that I am still trying to wrap my thoughts around.

**White:** Given our waterways and marshes, widening roads is not going to solve all our transportation issues because at some point everything still funnels to a bridge. I believe the way to address transportation is to consider the root cause of traffic congestion then provide better alternatives to solve the problem.

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

**Orth:** Like many who care deeply about the environment and believe carbon emissions are a grave threat to our future I continually face a gap between my values and my actions. There is simply no reasonable responsible option for most of us. I currently share a 17 year old car with my partner - it's not especially fuel efficient but the carbon it took to make it is already out there so replacing it isn't a responsible option (these decisions are complicated!).

Regardless of who is elected I am committed to shifting the conversation from "what is our government going to do to fix this?" to "what can we do to fix this?" We have been hypnotized to be consumers - to buy goods and services, then demand they live up to our expectations. This includes our government. This mindset is part of what has landed us in the mess we're in. We the People must take responsibility

for creating better options for ourselves. I have no doubt that we have everything we need to solve our transportation issues, except possibly the will to do it - that is up to us.

**Seekings:** When elected, I will continue to be a leader in mobility and transportation and focus on multimodalism and common sense solutions to mobility issues. No matter the size of the project, all modes of mobility will be considered and accommodated.

**Tecklenburg (I):** Transportation needs to be cleaner, safer and easier to use, I've led that way as Mayor, and I'll continue to if reelected. We need to accommodate other modes of transportation instead of only focusing on the automobile. From a capacity point of view, we need other modes of transportation by adding and increasing access to quality public transit. From an environmental and lifestyle perspective, we need to make it easier and safer to walk or ride a bike. We also need to accommodate a transition from gas powered automobiles to electric powered vehicles. The City is currently looking to add more automobile charging stations for electric cars, and we're in the process of updating our fleet with more hybrid and electric vehicles -- including CARTA.

Moreover, I have been extremely happy with our City's Director of Traffic and Transportation, Keith Benjamin, who has a great understanding of access to multimodal transportation. He's been an outstanding hire and I hope to work with him four more years.

**Washington:** Planning and zoning will drive my transportation policy. For too long we have allowed development to drive transportation patterns, which has led to crazy traffic congestions, overdevelopment, and compromised our ability to design complete streets that works for everyone.

**White:** I believe people will choose the best transportation option based on their own personal circumstances. Additionally people will look for transportation alternatives that are the most efficient and effective for them. As Mayor, I will support transportation solutions that provide our citizens with options and that have a positive impact on community.

**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?**

**Orth:** Yes. Additionally, I support a serious look at making CARTA services free. Clemson and the surrounding area offers free public transportation. We must consider all options available for making the most responsible choice the most attractive choice.

**Seekings:** One hundred percent yes. I recently sat down one-on-one with SCDOT Sec. Christy Hall in her Columbia office to discuss Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT). She understands that mass transit and bike/ped infrastructure are vital to our region and has committed her support to LCRT.

**Tecklenburg (I):** Yes, I've been doing that as Mayor, and I'll continue to if reelected. Thankfully our Bike Ped Committee has approved a new master plan to make bike and pedestrian passages more numerous, better connected and safer. Not just on the Peninsula but West of the Ashley, and other parts of our city. We have been lobbying SCDOT already, and they've helped us identify five different corridors in Charleston that they'll help us fund projects next year.

**Washington:** Yes, State law requires that cyclists ride on the roadway and obey the same traffic laws as motorists. It is illegal for a cyclist to ride on the sidewalk. Elected officials at all levels of government, have a duty to protect the citizens of their communities, especially those who are engaged in both lawful and beneficial activity. It would be a failure of our moral responsibility as elected officials to turn a blind eye to this issue.

**White:** Given the current financial constraints that exist with the City of Charleston's budget the best option for funding bike, pedestrian and public transit infrastructure is going to be from our partners such as SCDOT. I will lobby SCDOT to help provide more funding for these infrastructure improvements.