

2012 LOCAL MOTION MAYORAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Question:	Answers from Wanda Hines:	Answers from Miro Weinberger:	Answers from Kurt Wright:
<p>1. In a recent filing with the Act 250 Commission concerning the Champlain Parkway, the City's attorneys repeatedly stated that the City is not required to follow the Transportation Plan and that the design guidelines contained within it are "merely design guidance for Burlington's streets." As a matter of policy (putting aside the legal standards under Act 250), do you agree or disagree with the City's position regarding the weight of the Transportation Plan?</p>	<p>I believe the city had the right to take the position they chose. Hence, I do not feel I need to agree or disagree. I do, however believe I need to accept the city's position and I do.</p>	<p>I disagree with the notion that the Transportation Plan should be viewed as "merely design guidance" with respect to future transportation decisions. It is an important document generated after much public input and analysis and the policies described in it should be understood as an important statement about the city's transportation future.</p> <p>I studied transportation economics as part of my Public Policy and Urban Planning degree and know that transportation solutions always need to be tailored to the conditions and facts of a particular place and issue. The vision and planning reflected in the Plan should provide strong direction for those decisions.</p>	<p>I believe we should follow the goals of the transportation plan whenever possible, though I do understand that the plan has goals and guidelines that do not necessarily have to be followed. We should strive to follow the plan as long as it does not conflict with a transportation project.</p>
<p>2. The Transportation Plan calls for the creation of a downtown transportation management association (TMA) to help businesses address the transportation needs of their employees and customers. Do you agree with this recommendation? If not, why not? If you agree, what specific steps will your administration take to help achieve the TMA's creation?</p>	<p>I agree. I will ensure via CEDO's economic specialist and the Legacy Plan indicators that the administration stays informed and progress is measured. Coupled with maintaining close working partnerships with existing transportation advocates and specialist.</p>	<p>I do agree with this recommendation. Burlington already has experience with several successful TMA's created by our institutions that have had positive impacts on the City's parking and traffic issues. We should explore expanding this progress to Burlington's business community by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reviewing best practices for private sector TMA's in other cities. 2) Convening representatives of CarShare Vermont, CCTA, the Burlington Department of Public Works, the BBA, the Chittenden County Chamber of Commerce, Dealer.com, other large Burlington employers and interested small employers to seek consensus on the creation of and priorities of a downtown TMA. 3) Seek initial planning funding for the TMA from the Chittenden County RPC. 	<p>I would support this as long as there is no cost or very little cost to the general fund. I will work with the different transportation agencies to help with this project.</p>
<p>3. If you had grant funding, and public opinion was not a factor, what would be your top priority project for making Burlington a better and safer place for walking and what would be your top priority project for making Burlington a better and safer place to ride a bike?</p>	<p>For walking: better lighting and increased education about civility at intersections. For biking: More community outreach and education in the socio-economically oppressed neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Despite improvements in recent years, there are still many streets in the City badly in need of sidewalk restoration. We have funding in place for several projects from the CCRPC that have not moved as quickly as they should and this lack of progress has threatened continued additional grant awards. The mayor's office needs to be focused on progress in this area.</p> <p>Restoring the Bike Path is my top priority for making Burlington a better and safer place to ride a bike. Not</p>	<p>I would replace sidewalks that are in poor shape, particularly near senior housing and senior centers. I would also push for more bike lanes wherever possible as long as it did not mean reduction of lanes on North Avenue or cause bottlenecks for traffic. We want to make Burlington as safe and friendly a city for bikers as possible, balancing that with the need to move traffic smoothly through our city so that we don't create traffic congestion and pollution.</p>

		<p>only is this a major priority for our bikers, it represents an important economic development investment for the city, generating millions of dollars of activity every year. A second important priority is creating continuous dedicated bike lanes through the city instead of the patchwork we have today. We know that ridership will increase dramatically with the implementation of continuous dedicated lanes.</p>	
<p><i>4. Will the Champlain Parkway, as currently proposed, improve pedestrian and bicycle safety through the corridor and throughout Burlington? What, if any, changes will you push to make to the current design to better improve pedestrian and bicycle safety through the corridor?</i></p>	<p>Yes, as currently proposed pedestrian and bicycle safety are improved. Changes...I'd not change anything, nor advocate change unless arrived at via community engagement and consensus.</p>	<p>The impact on pedestrian and bicycle safety of building out the Champlain Parkway as currently proposed will be mixed both throughout the South End of Burlington and within the corridor.</p> <p>If the Champlain Parkway is built as proposed the parts of the South End no longer experiencing cut-through traffic will see their bicycle and pedestrian safety improve. On the other hand it is possible that cut-through traffic will increase in other parts of the city, negatively impacting safety there.</p> <p>The Champlain Parkway will also generate mixed results within the corridor as Local Motion has pointed out. While the current plan includes features that "do in fact reduce danger and congestion for people on foot and on bike, the projected increase in vehicular traffic along the corridor requires that additional steps be taken to ensure that conditions remain reasonably safe." (Local Motion memo to District Four Commission, 8/31/11)</p> <p>However, as the rest of the memo points out, there are many areas of the current plan that should be improved as it moves forward. In particular the City should seek to find a way to avoid dangerous "Shared Use" auto/bike lanes and instead seek a design that includes continuous, dedicated bike lanes.</p>	<p>Overall safety should generally be better, with better signals and crossings. There will also be more traffic signals instead of signs on Maple Street which should improve safety. I will push for more shared use path space on Pine Street, as much as possible and safety issues will always be a top priority and consideration for my administration. I will consult with experts on these issues including working closely with Local motion.</p>
<p><i>5. Are you satisfied with the recent 4-lane to 3-lane reconfiguration of Colchester Avenue and the process by which it was implemented? Will your administration support the implementation of similar 'Complete Streets' redesign projects at appropriate locations in the future? As the City studies other streets for possible changes in lane configuration, do you think the process for making those changes should be modified?</i></p>	<p>Yes...the 'complete streets' are a win-win. Modified ...I would need to be further briefed around the details of any purposed modification.</p>	<p>Yes, I am pleased by both the results and the process of the demonstration project on Colchester Ave. and consider it a successful experiment to date. After a long planning process a thoughtful plan was developed and after a year of experimentation and substantial public outreach, public opinion was strongly in favor of the Complete Streets plan.</p> <p>I would support similar study, testing, analysis and implementation in other parts of the city at appropriate locations. The process for pursuing such</p>	<p>The Colchester Avenue change to 3 lanes seems to be working relatively well despite concerns. I do support the 'complete streets' concept wherever it makes sense. I will ensure that the process is open and transparent and that we listen to the public. If a proposed change does not have public support, we should not go forward with it.</p>

		changes should be similarly deliberate and inclusive.	
<i>6. The Department of Public Works has a policy to set aside 2% of the yearly street capital budget for use on bicycle-related projects. When the street capital budget was increased several years ago, the so-called "bicycle set-aside" did not increase. This means the bicycle set-aside is now receiving less than 2% of the streets budget despite DPW policy. Do you support restoring funding for the bicycle set-aside to the full 2% level?</i>	YES, I would support restoring funding. Healthy hearts, healthy communities. Definitely for many reasons....education being number one followed by needed bike path repair through out the city.	Yes.	I have checked with the director at the Department of Public Works and the "bicycle set-aside" will be increased to return it to the 2% level. The actual dollars will now be approximately 46,000, an increase of between nine and ten thousand dollars. There is other money in the budget that is used for bicycle issues as well.
<i>7. The siting and planning of a downtown transit center has been underway for many years, and many believe that this is a critical initial step to achieving many other smart mobility goals. What specific steps will your administration take to assist and support CCTA's efforts to make a downtown transit center a near-term reality?</i>	Meet periodically with the designated Transit Center oversight body and continue to measure progress to ensure the city of Burlington effectively connects people to opportunities and better health.	Yes, I support the creation of a downtown transit center and will support the CCTA's efforts to move the center forward by: 1) Actively engaging CCTA during their site selection process to make sure a site is chosen that my administration can enthusiastically support; 2) Assign a point person at CEDO to liaison between Administration and CCTA as project moves forward. 3) Collaborate with CCTA and use bully-pulpit of mayor's office to build public support for the change; 4) Support CCTA's effort to generate their matching funds to the \$8 million that has already been secured; 5) Enthusiastically turn a shovel at the groundbreaking – our transit riders and downtown retailers need this project.	I have met with CCTA officials as well as the director of the Church street marketplace and I support this goal. We must make it easier and more comfortable for the public, particularly our senior citizens, to use public transportation to access stores downtown as well as other areas of the city. Working together, I will provide the leadership needed to make this happen.
<i>8. It is widely believed that there is a lack of civility on Burlington's streets by all modes of transportation, (e.g. failure to abide by traffic lights and stop signs, failing to yield at crosswalks, jaywalking, wrong way riding on one way streets, speeding, etc.). What specific steps will you take to address this lack of civility?</i>	I would revisit existing transportation advocate groups and continue to support outreach and education initiatives which address civility head on. We should not have to run across an intersection when we are in the crosswalk...safety first.	Maintaining civility on Burlington's streets is challenging, as it is in all cities. The problem is most acute in the areas of the city where students and families live in close quarters. The upcoming negotiation with UVM is an opportunity for the mayor to push for 1) more housing on or near the campus, and 2) more resources from UVM for code enforcement and policing efforts to address the impact of students living in neighborhoods. Also, I do think the failure to yield at some crosswalks – like the one that crosses Main Street next to my house and is very rarely observed – may be an issue that can be improved through modest signage and subtle design changes. I would pursue regional planning funds to analyze these opportunities.	I will first lead an educational campaign on these safety issues and then, if that is unsuccessful, I will ask the Police Department to strongly enforce existing laws. I will start by reminding myself on all of these issues since the Mayor must lead by example.
<i>9. How will you encourage more City employees to commute by bike, on foot, in a carpool or on the bus?</i>	The city of Burlington has long supported and encourage walking and biking as an alternative mode of transportation for employees and will	I will review three policy areas with the goal of encouraging more City employees to commute by alterative forms of transportation: 1) Review the policy of free parking passes for	I will try to set my own example by walking or riding a bike when possible. (which would not be all the time) I would also try to offer an incentive program of some kind to encourage this behavior

	continue to do so under my administration.	some city employees to understand if is creating undue incentives to drive to work. 2) Review the city's policies regarding employee use of the hundreds of city-owned vehicles. 3) Explore creating a relationship with Carshare Vermont to encourage City employees too use the service for short trips within the business day instead of driving to and parking at work.	as well.
<i>10. The volunteer Bike Path Task Force is currently studying how best to comprehensively rehabilitate the 25-year-old waterfront bike path. While the task force and the City will be looking to secure as much non-city funding as possible, will you publicly support a ballot item to the Burlington voters in November 2012 that would raise local funds for this project?</i>	I would need to review details of the proposed ballot item first.	Yes, I do support a ballot item to comprehensively rehabilitate the bikepath. I do think that before going to the voters it is critical to reduce the costs as much as possible. Waterfront TIF funds should be invested in this public infrastructure to bring down the cost to the taxpayer. Private philanthropic funding should be sought as well (perhaps through the newly formed Burlington Parks Foundation which Steve Allen has been leading and which I served on the start-up committee of in 2011 as it began). If the project goes forward the mayor also has a responsibility to: 1) make sure that this project stays on budget, unlike too many public infrastructure projects, and 2) make sure that city budgets going forward have sufficient maintenance funds to properly protect and maintain the upgraded bike path as a valuable asset for years to come - part of the reason there is so much work to be done now is that annual maintenance investments have not been made regularly in the past.	I helped to create the Burlington Bike Path Task Force because I understand the importance of rehabilitating the path—it brings in millions of dollars in economic activity to Burlington every year, not to mention the transportation possibilities and pure enjoyment it provides. We must and will work to ratchet the total cost to taxpayers to as low a number as possible, exhausting every potential revenue source that we can tap into. However, if we must go to the taxpayers for any part of the funding I will publicly support that effort. It is essential that we restore the bike path to world class status and keep it as one of the crown jewels of our city.
<i>11. If elected, will you commute to work by foot, bike, or bus on a regular basis? If so, how often will you commit to commuting via bike, foot or bus? If not, why not?</i>	No, not at this time especially during the winter. However, in the spring and summer I can commit to walking to work 2 days a week. I value a healthy heart; especially at my age. I love to walk.	Yes, I intend to walk to work most days as I do today. We are a one-car family and my wife uses it to commute to work in Williston, so almost every day I walk, bike or use CarShare Vermont to get to where I need to go. As mayor I will continue to be a CarShare Vermont member and use that service to get to meetings/events outside of City Hall and the downtown as much as possible.	I will commit to do that whenever possible. I cannot give a percentage, but I will walk or bike whenever possible, especially during good weather. God knows I need the exercise and this will ensure that I get it!