

# **Bicycle and Pedestrian Issues for 2011 City Council Candidates Scott Wagner, 1<sup>st</sup> District At-Large**

**1. Bicycle Friendly Community.** In 2008 the Mayor and City Council adopted the goal of achieving the nationally-coveted Platinum Level Bicycle Friendly Community designation from the League of American Bicyclists by the year 2020. **Would you continue this goal, and if so, how would you achieve it?**

*I think this is a laudable goal. To me the key is creating good linkages between important destination nodes (which could be both recreational and consumer-related destinations). This is especially true in our urban core. There should be a commitment to provide bike lanes and other linkages from the River Market area to Waldo whether someone were to use Grand, Main or Broadway. From there we can move out into the Northland utilizing the Heart of America Bridge, as well as the East side of the city using the Paseo, Prospect and Troost and West sides.*

**2. Sidewalks.** The City has estimated it would take over \$1 billion to bring all sidewalks into a state of good repair and install sidewalks in neighborhoods that currently lack them. Current city ordinances place the burden of paying for sidewalks on the property owner, yet many neighborhoods with the greatest sidewalk needs are the least able to pay. **How would you work towards ensuring all residents have access to good sidewalks?**

*A few strategies I would use include stretching out the payment schedule for those who wish to pay for those sidewalks themselves and allow home owners who have trees in the right of way that are damaging their sidewalks to be allowed to deal with problem trees before the damage is too extensive. I would also work with our state representatives from Kansas City to pass a statute that would create Neighborhood Improvement Authorities (NIAs), like those in Michigan. This tool allows existing neighborhoods to take the increased value of their properties and apply them for needed infrastructure improvements, including sidewalks.*

**3. Funding.** Current bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure relies on PIAC funds and Federal grants like CMAQ and Transportation Enhancements. City staff estimate it will take decades to build out the Bike KC and Trails KC systems at the current rate of funding and construction. **Would you support a dedicated funding source, and/or suggest other ways to accelerate the pace of infrastructure investments?**

*I would be open to any dedicated funding source that can be found. I would further suggest that this could be a use for Neighborhood Improvement Authorities. Also, I believe if the city can help absorb the cost or create a revolving fund for those areas of the city that may wish to create Neighborhood Improvement Districts/Community Improvement Districts, this may also create opportunities to find needed funds for areas that wish to invest in these types of improvements.*

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**4. ADA.** The City is currently many years planning and achieving compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, including the lack of a full-time ADA Coordinator and significant deficits in sidewalks, crosswalks, and accessible traffic signals. **How would you improve both the city's infrastructure and policies to make the city fully accessible for all its citizens?**

*It will be very difficult to make up for the lack of funding we've given for these issues. To begin with I would put pressure on the City Manager to be sure that a full-time ADA Coordinator is hired. To begin dealing with the backlog I would identify our highest density locations and apply capital maintenance dollars towards those areas first. Also, I would make these improvements a condition of receiving TIF assistance and I would be sure the ADA Coordinator keeps oversight on these projects to make sure these improvements are constructed.*

**5. Bike KC.** The city's long-delayed Bike KC plan envisions a network of on-street bike lanes and other bike routes across the city. While recent years have brought good progress in including bike lanes on new streets in outlying neighborhoods, the city lacks a plan to retrofit existing streets with bike routes in urban core and other developed areas. **How would you improve the pace to bring bike routes to the heart of the city?**

*I think our best opportunity to work through this issue is through making this concern part of our overall Overflow Control Program. Over the next 25 years we will be reshaping our city. Although we will be focusing on the replacement and improvement of our sewer system this also allows us to address what is above our streets as well. As we go through the program I believe that we can address things above ground including issues of economic development as well as retrofitting our streets with bike lanes. It would be a wasted opportunity if we do not.*

**6. Your priorities.** How does walking and bicycling fit into your overall agenda and your plan for the future of Kansas City?

*As a neighborhood association president the livability of neighborhoods is always on my mind. As a past board member of the Cliff Drive Corridor Management Committee in the Northeast area I am keenly aware of how walking and bicycling and play a role in creating new amenities and in drawing people to an area. Moreover, the walkability of our older commercial corridors is important, too. Where we have good commercial corridors we have great neighborhoods. I have spent the last several years working to improve Independence Avenue and St. John Avenue. Improving their walkability will improve their viability and that goes for Troost, Prospect and other corridors in Kansas City.*

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**7. Yourself.** Feel free to tell us about your own history on bike/ped issues or your personal experiences bicycling/walking/running for transportation, recreation, or fitness.

*I've been involved in the Northeast community for eight years. In that time I've worked on a variety of projects with the Cliff Drive Corridor Management Committee to improve bike/ped issues. I've also been involved on the Steering Committee of the Northeast Community Center for the past five years. On the 11 acre grounds we have available to us we will be developing walking path that will go around the grounds to go with the three soccer fields we will be constructing. I'm also a member of the Parks Committee of the Northland Regional Chamber of Commerce. As a committee we have worked on improving our trail system in the Northland and I look forward to continuing that work as a member of the City Council.*