

# **Proposals for Bike & Pedestrian Safety**

## **Kristin Szakos and Dave Norris, Democratic nominees for City Council**

## **James Brown, Democratic nominee for Sheriff**

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The City of Charlottesville has taken significant steps to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian traffic within the city, but much remains to be done. We believe that the health, environmental and economic benefits of encouraging bike and pedestrian traffic will provide substantial pay-offs for further investments in these areas. While some proposals will require capital investments, other important steps can be taken with regard to education, city government structure and local ordinances to enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety without significant funding.

We'd like to thank the Alliance for Community Choice in Transportation, Community Bikes and other advocates in the community, particularly those who have given us ideas when we have come to their doors during this campaign. The people of Charlottesville are ready to commit to these ideas; it's time for the City government to join them.

We've made a great start – buses that carry bicycles, expanded recreational trails, Guaranteed Ride Home for people who commute to work without cars, and studies that show how we can make our community responsive to the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. But we must do more:

### **Simple fixes**

- Paint key bike lanes green, with directional arrows where appropriate.
- Improve signage to help drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists navigate shared roads and intersections.
- Encourage businesses to install bicycle racks for customers and employees by buying in bulk and providing them at cost.
- Pass an ordinance to require helmet use by children age 14 and younger riding bicycles on public roads and trails.

### **Near-term projects necessary for public safety**

- Institute a "Complete Streets" policy in Charlottesville to require that all construction and major street redesign projects include accommodation for all users – bikes, pedestrians and vehicles.
- Improve funding for sidewalk repair and maintenance throughout the city, to improve safety for all users, but particularly those with wheelchairs and strollers.

- Institute a universal bike safety program in all our elementary schools. Collaborate with existing bike advocacy groups in the city to provide bikes and instruction.
- Eliminate confusing ends to bike lanes to avoid having bicyclists merge into traffic in an unsafe way.
- Install bike sensors at intersections where traffic signals operate by sensors.
- Increase commitment to the Safe Walk to School program to ensure that children in all our neighborhoods can walk safely to school. Sidewalks, crosswalks, street lighting, crossing guards, and public education are all critical to this program. In the face of reduced state funding for this program, we need to encourage private funding sources to participate and collaborate with existing nonprofits in the community.
- Enforce existing regulations regarding bicycle and vehicle use of shared roads and provide additional training of police officers in handling bicycle and pedestrian accidents and violations.
- Require all city employees in city vehicles – except emergency vehicles responding to calls with lights and sirens – to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks, with penalties for non-compliance.

### **Other near-term proposals**

- Establish a Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee to research and advocate for needed projects. Continue to engage residents in all neighborhoods in identifying needed improvements.
- Recommit to the Charlottesville Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan of 2003.
- Explore the installation of low-cost shower rooms for bike and pedestrian commuters at the Downtown Transit Center.
- Close certain city streets for bike festivals and public awareness campaigns encouraging non-car transportation.

### **Construction to encourage non-car travel and improve safety**

The Charlottesville Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan was developed in 2003 and includes many of the suggestions we are making today. Some elements of the plan have been implemented – including parts of the Rivanna Trail and the trail along McIntire Road for recreational use, but less has been done for bicycle commuters. We need to revisit and recommit to other proposals in this plan:

- Off-road multi-purpose trails that connect residential and business areas of the city so people can commute to work by bike or on foot. Ideally, such trails can make biking to work faster than driving, and will encourage people to leave their cars at home.
- Complete the Rivanna Trail system around the city, with links from the trail to UVA, Fontaine Research Park and Downtown.
- Improve and expand construction and maintenance of sidewalks throughout the city.