

# STREET collective

## 2021 City Council Candidate Questionnaire

### INTRODUCTION

Just like in 2017 and 2019, the Street Collective wants to know where Des Moines City Council candidates stand on safe streets and active transportation issues. This questionnaire serves to educate and inform the Collective's members and the public. The Collective is an Iowa non-profit corporation and 501(c)(3) organization, so it does not endorse candidates for office. The Collective will, however, encourage all citizens to vote in the city elections held on November 2, 2021.

After the deadline below, the Collective will post these responses on its website ([www.dsmstreetcollective.org](http://www.dsmstreetcollective.org)), Facebook, Twitter, and other online platforms. All responses should be considered public, including a decision not to respond to a particular question or the questionnaire as a whole. We use the terms "walking" and "walkability" as inclusive of people who use mobility devices.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please submit your responses via email to Mike Armstrong at [Mike@dsmstreetcollective.org](mailto:Mike@dsmstreetcollective.org) by September 21, 2021.

### CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Name: Bill Gray

Pronouns:

Ward or At-Large seat: Ward 1

Website: [www.billgrayfordsmcitycouncil.com](http://www.billgrayfordsmcitycouncil.com)

Facebook: Bill Gray for City Council

Twitter: none

Instagram: none

## PRIORITIES

1. What are three transportation projects you want the City to complete during your term?
  - 1) Douglas Avenue Corridor
  - 2) 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor
  - 3) 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue reconstruction and bridge repair
2. Scenario: a proposed street project would add a bike lane, a wider sidewalk, or a bus-only lane, but would remove some on-street parking spaces or a car traffic lane. How would you decide whether to support that project?

Bike lanes and wider sidewalk is my choice. I have done that in the past along University Avenue and will be doing on Franklin Avenue.
3. Scenario: a developer proposes a project with affordable housing, but there are no transit lines, grocery stores, or sidewalks nearby. How would you decide whether to support that project?

Whew. That would not gather much support from me. Affordable housing must be close to transit lines and sidewalks and more importantly, a grocery store.
4. Scenario: a proposed street project would deviate from the MoveDSM and/or Connect Downtown plans for that street. (Note: both were unanimously approved by the City Council and aim to make Des Moines more walkable and bike-friendly.) How would you decide whether to support that project?

It would depend on the deviation. If the deviation made sense, it would be worth pursuing.

## WALKING

5. What investments, if any, do you support that would make sidewalks and crosswalks easier and safer to use for people with disabilities?

We are doing that now. Ramps at the corners is being done city wide. Crosswalks with some activated lights make sense.
6. In 1969, about 50% of American children walked or biked to school. Today, less than 10% do. What should the City do to reverse this trend?

I was in that 50% in 1969. Making sidewalks a priority near schools and bus stops (which we are already doing) and bicycle paths to get to school and more bike racks.

## BICYCLING

7. Many cities have significant public funding for bike share programs. Do you support increased City funding for the BCycle system? Why or why not?

We have supported BCycle while I was on the council. Drake is a prime example of the public/private partnership in that area.
8. Imagine a 10-year old and a 70-year old bicycling on a busy street. What kinds of infrastructure protections would you want in place to ensure their safety and

comfort? If there are budget constraints for a street like the one you described, at what point do finances rise above safety concerns for you?

Protected bike lanes should be installed. About the only financial concern I would have would be if we needed to buy ROW and it put the project out of budget.

## TRANSIT

9. How can the City help DART improve its bus system and attract more riders?  
Always a good question. We already have bike racks on busses to accommodate people who want to move about in the city.

10. We consistently see DART stops blocked by snow and unreachable by sidewalks. How can the City address this?

That is frustrating. We need to keep calling DART to let them know they are falling short of helping their ridership get access.

## EQUITY

11. What should the role of the police be in traffic enforcement? What is the best way to hold drivers accountable for speeding, blocking bike lanes and crosswalks, failing to stop or yield, etc.?

With regards to speeding, we have a policy in place to do a “traffic calming study” and when it is done, measures can be implemented to reduce speeding. With regards to parking issues, we need to have the public call them in whenever they observe violations.

12. Much of Des Moines is zoned for low-density uses like detached single-family homes and commercial properties that require many car parking spaces. What impacts, if any, does this have on the transportation system? What policies, if any, do you support to combat those impacts?

We need to get vehicles off the streets and onto parking spots that can accommodate the use in that area. If it is residential, provide some driveway or garage that will keep them off the street. Commercial properties need to provide enough parking to keep the streets clear for transportation purposes.

13. Neighborhoods where fewer people can afford a car (i.e., those that are poorer and have a higher proportion of people of color) are also those lacking good transit, safe walking and biking, and quality streetscapes (e.g., trees, benches, trash cans, public art, etc.). How would you address these inequities?

We are already installing sidewalks in high priority areas and plan to keep this program going until we have the city all sidewalk connected.

14. The largest source of climate change-causing greenhouse gases in America is from transportation. What role should the City have in cutting these pollutants? Pushing more bicycle friendly routes and turning to EV. The city is setting the example by purchasing more EV than ever before.

## YOU PERSONALLY

15. How often do you walk, ride a bike, or ride transit for your daily needs? Would you accept the Street Collective's challenge to live without driving for a week?

I walk every day that I can in my neighborhood – Beaverdale. I think I'll pass on the challenge. Too many places to go and too little time.

16. What is your favorite street to walk or bike on in Des Moines? Why do you like it?

Franklin Avenue and Beaver Avenue. Great tree canopy, friendly people to meet and usually great weather.