



Josh Mandelbaum (Ward 3) running unopposed for re-election
City Council Candidate Survey Responses

6. Street & Bridge Investments

Each year, millions in CIP funds are invested in street and bridge projects. Some of these improve safety and expand walking, biking, or transit options, while others primarily maintain car travel. Under what circumstances would you support pausing or canceling street and bridge projects that don't expand transportation choices beyond driving?

We should always evaluate the need and usefulness of street projects – up until the contract is bid. One of the first things that I did on Council was get the Southwest Connector removed from our transportation plan. This would have been a massive road cutting through the southside of Des Moines. Taking that out of our long term plan saved dollars, and it also allowed us to reenvision the area south of Grays Lake with a new master plan – instead of a four lane road we can have a dynamic and dense urban neighborhood. Beyond the southwest connector, I have pushed back on widening 2nd Ave and the reconstruction of Walnut St. bridge. Unfortunately, these projects went forward with millions of dollars that could have been better spent on other transportation priorities.

How should the City balance maintenance of existing roads and bridges with investments in other transportation options?

It is important that we keep existing roads well maintained. But that does not mean that we need to keep overbuilt roads overbuilt. When we reconstruct major corridors, we can use that as an opportunity to right size roads and save dollars for other priorities. In addition, we should be redesigning those roads with all users in mind and incorporate bike infrastructure, pedestrian crossings, and better designed transit stops.