



Montclair Bike Bus

May 14th Town Elections Candidate Questionnaire

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How safe do you feel in your neighborhood and in our community as a whole? When driving? When walking?

Renee Baskerville (mayoral candidate):

I feel relatively safe when I am walking and driving, but realize that we have so much more that we can and need to do, and will do under my leadership. I will not rest in terms of evaluating our streets for safety until we can celebrate our community for zero fatalities and for being a place where the majority of people feel safe walking, biking, rolling, skating and driving through our township. I have worked very closely with improving the safety of our streets since 2008. I served on our Safe Streets initiatives, worked closely with Bike Walk Montclair and then Bike Walk NJ and when we had an in-house engineer, Kim Craft, We hosted community meetings to suggest holistic approaches to make our streets safer. I participated with the Bike to School initiatives that we have had over the years when we received grants and when we put temporary Bike Lanes in to demonstrate the benefits of having designated safe areas for all...Bikes and Feet on Every Street was more than a slogan to me. Under the leadership of Mayor Jerry Freid with Laura Torchio and a host of amazing people, we began to bring awareness to the fact that everyone should feel safe and be safe in our streets, I learned a lot. I am excited now to see the work of the Vision Zero Team and if I am elected, I will definitely want to become a part of the Vision Zero Team. When I first began to see the children and families on the Bike Bus it warmed my heart for many reasons. The community building, exercise, benefits for the environment v. all of these cars traveling through our streets every day are just a few of the reasons that I love and wholeheartedly support the Bike Bus. We must continue to make street safety a priority for Montclair to encourage others to get on board the "Bike Bus"... bike to work or to other locations in town, bike for exercise and connecting with many people of all ages and backgrounds. One of the things that I love most about Montclair.

Chrissy Thomas (mayoral candidate):

When the sidewalk is not all lifted and scary, I'm not as afraid I am going to trip and fall and break my neck. When there is no sidewalk, I am annoyed and scared to cross the street to where there is a sidewalk, because people are going 100 miles an hour on Upper, and there is zero enforcement and very few crosswalks, and even when people see you standing there they do not stop. So when walking, not great, but bandit-wise, I don't typically feel endangered. When driving, I feel pretty

good. I get annoyed if I drive slowly (25, as is the speed limit), and people drive around me to pass. I also get pretty scared on Saturday and Sunday mornings when there are sports at Andersen Park, people are parked on both sides, and there are runners, bikers and jay walkers competing with cars and fighting for space in two way traffic. It seems pretty deadly. That is when it is most scary to drive. I love my neighborhood. We can ride down Brookfield Road and “the island” on Edgemont, and my daughter and her friends could “go to the island” by themselves when they were 7. I feel safe here. We know all our neighbors and watch out the window for each other.

Erik D’Amato (1st Ward candidate):

I am a low-anxiety person by nature, but even I feel unsafe when crossing some of our main arteries or tricky intersections, or thinking of my kids and their friends doing the same.

Shivaun Gaines (1st Ward candidate):

In May 2016, I was a pedestrian in the crosswalk and was struck by a vehicle on the corner of Valley Road and Wildwood. I was thrown 6 feet out of the crosswalk with severe consequences. It took many weeks to recover. When I walk in my neighborhood, I always proceed with caution. I believe drivers often speed in town and fail to pay attention to the road.

Ilmar Vanderer (2nd Ward candidate):

I feel generally safe both within my own neighborhood as well as in our community as a whole, equally when walking and while driving, but as both a pedestrian and a driver, I feel I must be exceedingly alert to feel safe.

Eileen Birmingham (2nd Ward candidate):

I love Montclair and do not generally have a sense of danger living here. However, when I walk, drive a car, and bike, I definitely have experiences where I feel unsafe. When walking, there are definitely points—especially when crossing streets and in crosswalks where I am concerned about cars potentially crashing into people. This is especially true at crosswalks where cars are making left turns, or when the crosswalks have poor visibility.

Roddy Moore (3rd Ward candidate):

All things considered, I feel incredibly safe in my neighborhood and in Montclair. It’s one of the many things that I love about raising a family here. Driving and walking are a different story, though, and there are many areas in which we can improve safety.

One of the biggest challenges to safety at many intersections around town is landscaping that prevents drivers from seeing a safe distance down the road. I’ve published a multi-part series on street safety on Facebook (Roddy for Montclair) and Instagram (@RoddyforMontclair) at #3rdWardSafety that explores this challenge and my proposed solution in detail. Landscaping that obstructs a safe viewing distance gives drivers no choice but to pull into crosswalks to see. Obviously, this creates unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. If elected, a key priority for me will be addressing this by quantifying in our municipal code what is a safe viewing distance.

Crossing the street on foot can feel very unsafe at times, as well. In addition to the issue that I mentioned above, a combination of insufficient signage and driver behavior; including speeding, distracted driving, and not respecting crosswalks, contribute to this feeling.

Rahum Williams (3rd Ward candidate):

Not as safe as I would like. Since the pandemic I have noticed that drivers have become a lot more lax with their adherence to stop signs and speed limits. I am a runner and I am not exaggerating when I say that I am almost hit by a distracted driver each time I run. Pedestrian and bicyclist safety is incredibly important to me.

Wendy Tiburcio (3rd Ward candidate): I feel generally safe, however, I do have concerns. I'm concerned about motorists' speed and distracted driving both while driving and walking. I've recently had two narrowly missed incidents (as a pedestrian), which have heightened my concern and my family's.

Aminah Toler (4th Ward candidate):

I feel uneasy in my neighborhood, especially while driving or walking, mainly because of the bustling street where I reside. Positioned across from a renovated park that attracts numerous visitors, I encounter difficulty crossing the street due to the heavy traffic flow from the park. The street where many vehicles turn onto my block often transforms into a speedway, posing a safety hazard for the neighborhood. Introducing an additional stop sign or a 4 way stop sign would potentially assist in slowing down drivers before they make a turn. I also understand that many streets in the 4th ward, especially mine, are known as "cut-through" streets since the next town is within a few blocks. Which often makes drivers speed down the street. It is crucial to maintain and trim township trees and residents' high hedges to ensure visibility of traffic signs. I have observed several accidents occurring on my block in recent years, all caused by speeding drivers. According to a OPRA MPD report on accidents and crashes from 2019 to 2022, the 4th ward seems to have the highest number of accidents in town. Despite feeling somewhat secure in my community overall, I frequently find myself pausing for long periods before entering a crosswalk to ensure all traffic has passed before crossing the street.

Zina Floyd (4th Ward candidate):

Several intersections and roadways, such as Orange Rd, pose significant safety risks. I'm especially concerned about four-way intersections with stop signs and one way streets being used incorrectly.

Carmel Loughman (Councilor-at-large candidate):

From a crime perspective, I am very security conscious, making sure to lock my car, all doors and first floor windows, and I observe closely what is going on in my neighborhood. If I hear any noises at night, I will generally check what's up to be sure all is well. But I do feel safe once I take these precautions. However, I will rarely walk at night and, if I do, I am very aware of my surroundings. If I am coming back from NYC, I will park my car at the train station even though it is only a 4 block walk

to my home just to feel safe. When driving? I think that since COVID drivers have lost civility and are lawless. The speed limit is routinely ignored, stop signs seem optional, and drivers can be aggressive and rude. I cede the road to drivers who are being obnoxious and disobeying the law. Or I just go at the speed limit and endure their honking, tailgating and dirty looks. When walking? I walk a lot. One must be careful of the lumpy, cracked sidewalks. But I became hyper alert after I was hit by a car. This happened at the intersection of Walnut St and Midland Ave a couple of years ago. A car ran a stop sign, T-boned another car which then jumped the curb and hit me. I was taken by ambulance to the hospital and received stitches on my legs. This had the psychological effect of me getting anxious when I was driving having experienced first-hand the power of a vehicle ramming into me. For months I was unable to drive for over an hour without being anxious and had to work back up to controlling this anxiety.

Bob Russo (Councilor-at-large candidate):

Montclair is not as safe as it should or can be while driving or walking.

Susan Shin Anderson (Councilor-at-large candidate):

I have lived in my neighborhood in Ward 3 in the Montclair Center area since 2009 and have overall felt safe walking and running, except for one or two incidents when I was followed by a stranger and harassed. Generally, I have felt safe. However, I have felt unsafe as a pedestrian crossing the street even where there are marked crosswalks and lights, almost being struck by cars on Claremont and Avenue. I have also felt unsafe pulling out of my driveway due to poor visibility from parked cars on both sides of my street and speeding.

Do you ride a bike?

If so, how often and for what reasons?

Renee Baskerville:

I ride a bike. I don't ride as often as I would like to. Mainly on a Saturday or Sunday AM now and mainly down Ridgewood Ave from Canterbury Park to Brookdale park, around Brookdale and back down Ridgewood to Canterbury Park. I do this route because for my level of biking it feels safe. I would like to make sure that we have areas all over town that feel safe for average bikers who are peddling for enjoyment and exercise. We have plans for "connector routes already drawn up if we choose to continue working in this direction. If I am elected, I certainly would like to encourage that.

Chrissy Thomas:

Yes, I bike, most often, for fun. I biked everywhere in Montclair when I was a kid. From 5-17, bikes was our primary mode of transportation everywhere, and even as a 5 year old, I felt safe riding the streets of Montclair. In the 70's and early 80's, we rode our banana seats from North Mountain to Lincoln Street (where my friend lived) almost daily, because my parents worked and my big sister and brother went away to college when I was about 7. We rode in groups or along, but from my

house across town, if something happened, there were signs of hands in the windows. This sign indicated that kids could stop safely if they needed help (it was basically the “Montclair network” of parents who wanted to be there if kids fell off their bikes or popped a tire.) Remember, cell phones did not exist until much later. I rode my bike to work as a lifeguard at Mountainside and at Glen Ridge Country Club. I used to go Mountain biking when I lived in DC and Charlottesville. I used to ride in the city on the path along the Hudson. I had a tandem for my daughter, and now we ride downtown and go for rides to the parks, but mostly just for light exercise. Never to commute. I cannot ride a bike from Montclair to any Courthouse in a dress suit with my hair done and in high heels. Carrying my files on a bicycle would also be challenging, depending on the size.

Erik D’Amato:

I ride occasionally, but walk tons – we live just a block from Upper Montclair center, and I am constantly walking to and from it, and nearby things.

Shivaun Gaines:

Unfortunately, I am unable to ride a bike due to complications from the May 2016 accident.

Ilmar Vanderer:

I used to bike recreationally very often for many years, but currently do not.

Eileen Birmingham:

Yes, I ride a bike. In the warm weather, I generally ride once or twice per week. My family likes to ride to the farmer’s market on Saturdays and have breakfast at Red Eye. We are able to ride on streets like Christopher which are generally quieter. I wish I felt more comfortable having my daughter ride her bike alone.

Ilmar Vanderer:

I used to bike recreationally very often for many years, but currently do not.

Roddy Moore:

My kids are early riders. So, while I plan to ride with them when they are able, I spend a fair amount of time on my electric scooter. I ride primarily because it’s a lot of fun, but it’s also a great way to cover a lot of ground while taking in the beauty of Montclair. I love to cruise around to look at the architecture and explore blocks that I don’t frequent otherwise. It’s also great for those quick trips that don’t require carrying much.

Rahum Williams:

I own two bikes, and an electric scooter. However, my scooter gets more use than my bikes as I use my scooter to commute to the Bay Street Station, then from NY Penn to my office on the East side of Manhattan. I also periodically use Citibike in the city rather than take the subway.

Wendy Tiburcio: I do not ride a bike, but I look forward to doing so in the future, especially as my 4-year-old son learns how to ride a bike. He is very excited and I look forward to sharing the experience with him.

Zina Floyd:

I do not ride a bike due to back concerns but I love to walk!

Aminah Toler:

I do ride a bike periodically for leisure however I haven't in quite some time.

Carmel Loughman:

When in high school and college in Jersey City a bike was my only mode of transportation as my family did not have a car. So, I rode my bike all over JC to get to school, friends' houses, and to New York City. My bike and I were inseparable. But since then, I do not ride a bike as quite honestly, I would always rather walk. I live where I do because it is in an extremely walkable area near to all the best features of Montclair.

Bob Russo:

I do not ride any longer.

Susan Shin Anderson:

I do enjoy riding my bike, but admittedly do not ride it as often as I would like. I ride my bike a handful of times a year around town, for exercise.

If elected, what would be your top priorities for improving safety on our streets?

Renee Baskerville:

Top priorities would be to join in with Vision Zero and continue with the holistic vision of safe streets. This would include creating areas to give our streets the illusion of being more narrow, we could consider bike /pedestrian lanes in areas where it made sense. These are relatively low budget starting points. We could also plant some tree "islands" on our very wide streets as a traffic calming measure and a contribution to improving our carbon footprint.

We have the experts right here in Montclair to help us with this. Deb Keagan, Laura Torchio, Jerry Freid and a host of others. We don't need to reinvent the wheel when we have folks who have been already working on this and could guide us and continue to bring people to the table until we get this right.

Chrissy Thomas:

I think that Vision Zero should not be a lofty ideal, it is totally achievable. I would like more crosswalks and flashing lights, especially at Edgemont Park near Valley, on Upper near Bradford, etc. I think all stop signs should be 4 way. I think there should be traffic circles at intersections that promote slow traffic. I think safety (biking, walking, running) needs to be revisited in our Master Plan and in our schools, so that on weekends, police officers train the children so they are safe and comfortable riding. I believe that every development must have a traffic study that is discussed and shared with all of the commissions, committees, task forces, and Boards from the get-go, so road safety is "built in" to everything the township does. We need to work with the County and the State to implement what we started. We used to be a bit ahead of the curve, but it seems mostly in word, not in deed.

Erik D'Amato:

I have actually had an epiphany of sorts recently regarding details of traffic safety, namely that it is an area in which technical expertise really counts, and I simply don't have anything approaching such mastery. What this means is that if elected I really expect to rely on the recommendations of the VZ task force and others who have a much better grasp of the issues than I do. And I don't say any of this lightly, as I am a person who likes to get into the weeds. But I'd be willing to commit resources and political capital to try to improve things, even while doing the work to get up to speed on the policy and technical nitty-gritty.

Shivaun Gaines:

Street safety is a priority, but changing the culture of driving and speeding is an even greater priority.

Ilmar Vanderer:

As a concerned community member, I have repeatedly advocated at Council meetings in support of hiring a specialized, in-house grant writer is for securing funding through local transportation improvement grants, recruiting an experienced, Montclair-based, CME as an in-house township engineer, and embracing enforcement including increased police visibility at collision prone corridors to reduce speeding and injuries. I am still advocating for all of these solutions as a candidate, and will continue to do so as a Councilor if elected.

Eileen Birmingham:

I think that a lot of planning/idea work has been done in terms of ideas around street safety—we have a Vision Zero Task Force, as well as a Safe Complete Streets Plan that was completed years ago. One of my first priorities will be to look at what has been done/planned and see what we can get implemented quickly. We have seen in nearby cities that implementing proven solutions without needing to spend years debating them has led to improvements in safety. We should be able to implement these, without waiting for crashes to happen in order to justify them. I would like to have an open community forum very shortly into the term that brings together all stakeholders around street safety, to frankly assess our current status, and develop both short-term and long-term goals for safer streets. I think traffic data tells us that to reduce serious injury on our

streets we must focus on pedestrian and bike safety.

Roddy Moore:

A top priority for me is addressing landscaping's obstruction of driver sightlines by quantifying in our municipal code what is a safe viewing distance down the road from the perspective of a vehicle sitting at a stop sign. See my advocacy on the issue in my multi-part series on street safety on Facebook (Roddy for Montclair) and Instagram (@RoddyforMontclair) at #3rdWardSafety. This is an impactful way to improve safety on our streets for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers at nominal cost to the township.

Another key priority will be expanding the implementation of proven safety measures like permanent signage and flashing beacons at our crosswalks. I want to take a data-driven approach to identifying and prioritizing the locations where we can make the most impact first, while working towards the goal of addressing every crossing in Montclair. I'd also like to explore the use of automated speeding enforcement.

While there have been improvements, we have a lot of work to do as a town. Some of the successes include lowering speed limits, adding signage and flashing beacons at certain crosswalks, and forming the Vision Zero Task Force.

An area where the town has fallen short is allocating proceeds from pedestrian safety grants to overtime hours for enforcement instead of investing in permanent safety measures like signage and flashing beacons at more crosswalks. Over 90% of 2022 pedestrian safety grant proceeds (the most recent publicly available data) were allocated this way. None of these proceeds went towards permanent safety measures.

Another area for improvement is the continued approval of development that doesn't adequately consider street safety. An example of this is 2 South Willow Street, whose design encourages both illegal parking close to Bloomfield Ave and driving into the oncoming traffic lane to avoid these illegally parked cars.

Rahum Williams:

I would like to see more traffic calming measures and stepped up traffic enforcement.

Wendy Tirbucio: My top priorities include ensuring the Vision Zero Task Force is fully funded, examining our infrastructure (consider implementation of speed bumps, stop signs, speed radars, etc.), and enhanced communications and signage for motorists and pedestrians.

Aminah Toler:

If elected, my top priorities for improving safety on our streets involves a multi-faceted approach that addresses various factors contributing to accidents and injuries. If elected, some of my top priorities for enhancing safety would include:

- Education and Awareness campaigns to educate drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians about traffic rules, safe behaviors, and the importance of mutual respect on the road
- Utilizing data analysis to identify high-risk areas and prioritize safety improvements where they are most needed.
- Strengthening enforcement of traffic laws to deter dangerous driving behaviors such as speeding, distracted driving, and driving under the influence.
- Infrastructure Improvements; investing in safer road designs and traffic calming measures roundabouts and speedbumps to help reduce the risk of accidents.
- Implementing measures to enhance pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

Zina Floyd:

Upgrade and maintain roadways, intersections, and pedestrian crossings, focusing on high-risk areas like Orange Rd and four-way intersections with stop signs.

Asses the current impact, usage and efficacy of traffic calming measures. Police presence is essential. Increase the presence of traffic officers to enforce speed limits, and compliance with traffic rules. Addtionally, Creating a safer paths for pedestrians and cyclists by expanding sidewalks, installing dedicated bike lanes, and improving lighting. I love the idea and fully support Bike Bus, but I believe we need additional safety measures in place as well.

Carmel Loughman:

I am curious about the Vision Zero plans and would support the efforts of this group to take measures to promote safety in town. I live near a senior home and feel that the town should be more mindful of making sure residents repair cracked sidewalks so seniors are safe from tripping and falling. I am supportive of community policing and most efforts by the police to ensure the safety of Montclair residents. The town speed limits should be lowered to 25 MPH throughout town and this law diligently enforced. I think the timing of traffic lights need to be adjusted in certain areas of town so they are rationally calibrated and not too long or short.

I like those freestanding notices that show how fast you are driving just as a reminder to slow down. I find 4-way stop signs to be useful.

Bob Russo:

Our streets must be reconfigured to make them safer, but immediately we must enforce the 25 mph speed limit throughout town, including all County roads, and reduce speeds to 10 or 15 mph on all streets near schools. "25 to Stay Alive" is my call to all drivers in our town, but there must be more signage and enforcement!

Susan Shin Anderson:

Gather information from other municipalities that have adopted and implemented Complete and Safe Streets policies. Support development and passage of an ordinance if not done by July 1st. Collaborate with fellow council members, stakeholder groups, experts, and the public to develop and execute an implementation strategy. I would like to see the town starting with strategic,

incremental steps and demonstration projects, such as enhanced crosswalks, traffic calming and slowing measures, and protected bike and pedestrian paths on key routes. I would also like to develop relationships with county, state, and federal officials to position Montclair to receive more funding. Finally, we need to bolster and improve the township communication system to help facilitate culture and behavior change, and educate the public on road safety.

How do you rate the town's current effort to promote and improve street safety? Where has it succeeded, and where has it fallen short?

Renee Baskerville:

Depending on the council members at any given time, I would rate the efforts from superb to poor. It is very important that residents take time to truly find out who they are electing and elect people who will represent and work for the things that they believe in. Look at the history of the people running. Do the folks who are the top people in the areas that are important to them know the candidates from seeing them out working with them and for them to bring about positive change in the areas that are important to them or are candidates just writing what they think will get them elected? The history of candidates prior to running often will tell you more about who they are than how they answer a written question.

Right now I think the township is moving in the right direction with the vision zero work and the Bike Bus. I think that we need to be more aggressive with getting county, state and federal dollars that are available to us. Especially grants. Recently Senator Cory Booker received 191 million dollars for our local municipalities ((Vital New Jersey Projects for transportation, infrastructure public safety, health initiatives water and some other things that would have helped Montclair to continue and improve our efforts). I was told that Montclair didn't apply for this money and that's why we didn't receive any of it. This could have gone for a lot of things, including infrastructure and safe streets initiatives. I have a long history of having good relationships with our County Commissioners, Senators, Assembly members in NJ and our Congress and Senators on the federal level. Relationships help to keep us informed and to get first options to know where the various pots of money are coming from and how to apply to be considered. As Mayor of Montclair I will be a huge asset in this regard.

Chrissy Thomas:

We have a few blinking pedestrian walkways and a few 4 way stops (success?). We have had several pedestrian deaths (unacceptable, epic fail).

LaPolla said "we knew about "the problem with the light at Park and Bellevue" for years. (I drive that every day, and I have no idea what that means - perhaps that there is not enough of a delay, or that it is so busy that we need more arrow lights, but to me, that sounded like another big "fail.") Perhaps the Town cares more when the mothers of famous people die, as opposed to less famous mothers, fathers or kids? (Seems like another failure).

I think our safe green streets got one street (South Park) done, but is South Park really great for biking? I hate to ever bike Bloomfield Ave. I don't even love driving it. We should have a bike path or a bike trail (we kind of knew all the little walkways and paths to avoid cars, but they could be "marked" like a hiking trail).

We seem to have lofty goals, but seem pretty slow to implement change. I am a little confused as to why we had to change the speed limit to 25 MPH TWICE, but I am guessing either the Council "forgot" about the earlier Ordinance, or because Sean Spiller wanted to make a "great" announcement to make it look as if we were doing great things with the Vision Zero task force (I am sorry for being snarky).

I think the community does the great work (success), and the Council and Mayor try to take credit (does it matter if the work gets done properly?).

The Council has to not only include the public and rely on them, but listen to their suggestions and work with them to get great outcomes. We have fallen short because there is not the government support there should be, and there is resistance to working with the police to make sure enforcement actually occurs, so people see police and slow down, because they are afraid that otherwise, they will get a ticket, or at least be pulled over. People do better when they know someone is making sure others are safe.

Erik D'Amato:

Again, since I don't have much confidence in my grasp of the technical/policy issues involved, it's hard for me to make an honest assessment of the town's efforts. That said, from reading the Complete Streets study and other materials, and hearing from VZ task force members privately, I get the sense that the current Council certainly doesn't deserve an "A" in this area. In terms of successes, the biggest was a simple vote to cap the speed on non-county roads to 25 miles per hour, which seemed to take all of five minutes.

Shivaun Gaines:

The town's current efforts to promote street safety are extremely lackluster overall. There needs to be a real focus on safety from a public health and community perspective, rather than solely relying on engineering solutions.

Ilmar Vanderer:

It is a good starting point in theory and on paper, but has fallen short because much time has been spent in planning, with little to show in terms of implementation, successful results, or improvement in safety statistics.

Eileen Birmingham:

I think that there has been effort put into planning and discussion of safe streets, using modern methodology like complete streets. I think the implementation of these ideas has been more difficult. I think the pandemic was a really difficult time, with an unprecedented crisis, and we must now move (hopefully) beyond the crisis period into a period of strategic planning. I don't think we have been great at securing outside grants for funding of safety improvement projects. I don't think we are great at making sure there is good visibility at intersections and crosswalks. I think there are streets and intersections in our town that are known to be high risk and we haven't been great at addressing these.

Roddy Moore:

While there have been improvements, we have a lot of work to do as a town. Some of the successes include lowering speed limits, adding signage and flashing beacons at certain crosswalks, and forming the Vision Zero Task Force.

An area where the town has fallen short is allocating proceeds from pedestrian safety grants to overtime hours for enforcement instead of investing in permanent safety measures like signage and flashing beacons at more crosswalks. Over 90% of 2022 pedestrian safety grant proceeds (the most recent publicly available data) were allocated this way. None of these proceeds went towards permanent safety measures.

Another area for improvement is the continued approval of development that doesn't adequately consider street safety. An example of this is 2 South Willow Street, whose design encourages both illegal parking close to Bloomfield Ave and driving into the oncoming traffic lane to avoid these illegally parked cars.

Rahum Williams:

I think that lowering the speed limit in certain problematic areas is a good start. However, as a runner and scooter rider, I still feel particularly vulnerable to distracted drivers.

Wendy Tiburcio: I feel the town is committed to improving street safety, especially by supporting the Vision Zero Task Force. However, I feel our street infrastructure and communications need work. I understand there are limitations and challenges, especially with town roads vs. county roads, but I look forward to exploring sustainable solutions together with elected councilors and any options we can easily implement now.

Aminah Toler:

I would give the town's current efforts to enhance street safety a three out of five-star rating. Enforcing rules is crucial to guarantee the safety of both drivers and pedestrians.

Zina Floyd:

With the introduction of Vision Zero and a strong emphasis on pedestrian safety, I feel the town has good intentions and are aligned with the community's concerns around traffic safety. The town has

made some progress through infrastructure upgrades, awareness initiatives, and traffic calming efforts. However, I would like to see improvements in planning for future traffic concerns, enhancing pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, and updating incident and traffic-related data to better inform safety measures. I believe that conducting an ongoing study of current traffic flow, in relation to the town's overall traffic patterns, would significantly improve the flow of traffic and the safety of pedestrians using the roads for cycling, jogging, and walking.

Carmel Loughman:

I don't think there has been any notable successes in this area. Early on during my 8 year tenure on the Planning Board we examined and adopted a safe street plan that included bike paths throughout town. But nothing has been done on this. The bike lane to nowhere on Glen Ridge Avenue really undermines the sincere and sustained effort to implement bike paths. I have no idea why a painted north/south bike lane cannot be installed. We need to plan for a safe and well-designed bike lane to the proposed Essex Hudson Greenway so we are ready to attract folks to town when the Greenway is operational. I think with residents' coming to Council meetings and highlighting the dangerous streets has made the town wake up and address the issues.

Bob Russo:

The Town government is not doing enough to improve street safety. There is a need for more signage and electronic message signs which warn of speeding and educate about the speed limits.....they have not purchased enough of this equipment.

Susan Shin Anderson:

I think the town could do better with a more unified and effective council in this area. There have been some piecemeal improvements that in my opinion, has been mainly in response to major incidents that resulted in death and serious injury. This is not to say that this is not important and I absolutely understand the reactiveness to loss of life. I simply hope that with the data gathered thus far, and the plans outlined through task forces and committees in years past, it would be good to see if there can be action taken in a strategic way going forward. Education to the public can also improve if a thorough organizational, personnel and resource review can be done.

What are the most important factors contributing to unsafe streets? How would you change them?

Renee Baskerville:

Please re-read my answers above. I have answered this. In addition to what I have already described, a lack of consistency from council to council often contributes to results that may not happen as quickly as they could. In 2008 we had so much energy and commitment to safe streets and shared streets and we were moving rapidly in a very positive direction. When others were elected and their priorities shifted, less was done. The Committees and Commissions that we have

and that we may form during any council term can serve a vital role in making sure that things that were identified as good for our health, safety, wellbeing and community continue to maintain momentum if we allow them to do this. I don't think that because a new council comes in and may prioritize other things that we should have to lose the great things that are working.

Streets are unsafe because of some of the people who are in the streets, behind the wheel, rolling or boarding. Streets are unsafe because of some infrastructure things that need to be addressed and maintained, not just paving, and flooding but again, considering changing the appearance of width on the wide streets, Enforcement plays a part as does education. Starting from our pre-K classes with street safety education will be a very positive effort, just like our students who have helped to move us forward with recycling efforts in town. Again, as mentioned this has to be a holistic approach. Just because we lowered the speed limit to 25 all over our municipal streets some years ago and recently on our county streets, that is not the end all. That is just one small thing in a plan that must include many things and must be enforced and the community must be educated.

Chrissy Thomas:

Speed. Lack of cross-walks. Narrow streets where you can park on both sides, and there is no division for bikers, joggers and walkers (who don't want to walk on the sidewalks because they are all lifted and uneven because of the tree growth). I think people are angry about the expense of fixing sidewalks that got messed up by the trees that the township planted I'm thinking there is probably some sort of grant or rebate program we can offer to homeowners who create great sidewalks.

I'm not 100% sure how to fix the issues, but I would want input from the community, because people around the block know what's dangerous and where lights or stop signs or walkways should be (like at Upper and Berkley, or Upper and Watchung or Upper and Van Vleck). Again, I emphasize communication and effective use of commissions, committees, task forces and Boards.

Erik D'Amato:

In my experience the most important factor contributing to unsafe streets in Montclair is unsafe drivers. This was certainly the case in the sole accident involving a family member of mine which resulted in injuries, which was the result of a driver running a stop sign at high speed. So here I think enforcement is crucial. Otherwise I again think we need to defer to the knowledge and wisdom of traffic engineers in terms of creating a built environment that is safer for pedestrians and riders.

Shivaun Gaines:

Speeding and distracted drivers are significant concerns. Promoting the "25 MPH Everywhere" campaign is critical to the safety of citizens.

Ilmar Vanderer:

Excessive speeding and red light as well as stop sign running. Police visibility at collision prone corridors has consistently been proven to be highly successful at reducing speeding and effective in curbing serious injuries.

Eileen Birmingham:

There are many factors involved in this, and I apologize because my answer must be fairly brief. I think a primary factor is that the overall thinking in our town/state/country is that a "successful street" is one where cars can flow quickly and smoothly without being slowed down much. Streets have been designed with cars in mind. Changing this mindset is difficult and will take time— the idea that streets should accommodate other forms of transportation and pedestrians. In a safer systems scenario, there are fewer cars/trucks on the street, and they are driving more carefully. This may require drivers to go slower, or wait more. People really need to understand this, because they often get upset when changes are made to slow cars down. There is generally an idea that "we need more enforcement." This can be a piece of the puzzle, but I believe we have data that shows that relying on enforcement doesn't fix the problem, and there are other things that need to be done, like engineering safer spaces. There is also the idea of "people need to be more careful," and this is true, but we must do this work with the idea that people will make mistakes, and how can we try and prevent these. Another thing that is definitely less safe is the number of SUVs that people are driving— SUVs are more dangerous to pedestrians if crashes happen. People need to understand this, and we also need to adapt the design of our streets with this in mind. I think being guided by the safe systems model to reduce serious crashes in our work will be very helpful.

Roddy Moore:

The most important factor contributing to unsafe streets is driver behavior. Whether it's speeding, distracted driving, or frankly not having adequate respect for crosswalks, driver behavior is the most detrimental factor to street safety. However, the police can't be everywhere at once. If elected, I want to explore the use of automated enforcement measures, particularly for speeding. Also contributing to unsafe streets is landscaping that obstructs a safe viewing distance. As previously mentioned I want to address this by quantifying in our municipal code what is a safe viewing distance down the road from the perspective of a vehicle sitting at a stop sign. See my advocacy on the issue in my multi-part series on street safety on Facebook (Roddy for Montclair) and Instagram (@RoddyforMontclair) at #3rdWardSafety.

Rahum Williams:

Distracted drivers and drivers failing to stop at Stop signs. I would look to collaborate with the Vision Zero Task Force and MPD to help establish short term and long term solutions.

Wendy Tiburcio:

Two of the contributing factors include, in my opinion, street design and speed. Design is a more complex issue to tackle and one we should address when discussing infrastructure. In regards to speed, I would like us to find funding for speed radars as a start, similar to other neighboring towns; look into how/where we can have more street calming solutions (i.e., speed bumps), and develop a

strategic communications plan/campaign to help motorists and pedestrians be a part of the solution.

Zina Floyd:

Speeding! Excessive speed increases the risk and severity of accidents. Implement stricter speed limits, traffic calming measures, and automated speed enforcement in high-risk areas. Inadequate pedestrian crossings, insufficient lighting, and unclear signage can contribute to accidents. Upgrade necessary infrastructure to include better-lit pedestrian crossings, improved signage, and repaint lane markings. Lack of Pedestrian and Cyclist Facilities Inadequate sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes make non-vehicular travel risky. By building more pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, such as wider sidewalks, more crosswalks, and dedicated bike lanes. Poor traffic flow and congestion can lead to risky driving behaviors. Improved signal timing and modern traffic management systems. The use of mobile devices while driving is a major ongoing concern.

Aminah Toler:

The primary factor leading to unsafe streets is the volume of vehicles in circulation. Montclair has evolved into a popular destination, drawing numerous visitors and subsequently increasing traffic. To address this issue, more traffic studies by the Township are essential to manage the growing demand from commuters and visitors alike.

Carmel Loughman:

Our city is designed for cars. As much as I love Amsterdam, Montclarians need to have cars to live our lives fully and safely and cannot rely on bikes. Our streets favor cars. I think we need to start favoring people rather over cars with enforced lower speed limits, heeding residents when they point out dangerous streets/intersections, design the streets to force slower speed limits, have a scheduled jitney with a regular circular route around town, particularly to help people living in the south end get to supermarkets. An electric jitney should reduce the number of cars on the roads. I also think that our streets are not prepared for the onslaught of delivery vehicles we now see – Door Dash, Amazon, UPS etc. These drivers just stop in the middle of the road without pulling into parking spots causing traffic disturbances. We need to assess the need to change our on street parking permissions/structure recognizing that these delivery trucks need to be accommodated. We also have issues with Uber drivers stopping and waiting in unapproved spots causing issues (see the south side of South Willow and Bloomfield Avenue to illustrate the problems/danger that both delivery vehicles and Ubers can cause.)

Bob Russo:

The lack of adequate lighting at night, the lack of signage, and the lack of enforcement.

Susan Shin Anderson:

Lack of attention and education by public for pedestrians, drivers, bikers, runners; problematic sight lines at intersections (such as hedges and shrubbery, cars parked too close impeding sight

lines), speeding on certain streets including County ones, poor or lack of street lights, lack of strategic enforcement efforts for road/speeding violations.

Do you believe speed limits in Montclair should be raised, lowered or left as they are?

Renee Baskerville:

I am OK with the 25 Mile speed limits except around schools, parks, hospitals, houses of worship and heavy density areas where there is likely to be a lot of pick-up and drop off.

Chrissy Thomas:

Stay the same at 25. Slow seems less dangerous, but I think enforcement is needed, because NOBODY actually drives 25. If you try to drive 25, people pass you. I think 25 MPH is ok, but without enforcement, it's sort of a joke.

Shivaun Gaines:

The "25 MPH Everywhere" campaign is essential.

Erik D'Amato:

I think the general 25 mph limit strikes a correct balance, though I'd like to see it lowered in select areas. I live a block from the only stretch of road with three schools on it (Buzz Aldrin Middle School, St. Cassian School, and Lacordaire Academy) and it seems bonkers to me that it's not 15 mph.

Ilmar Vanderer:

A holistic, comprehensive, townwide traffic study is needed to assess optimal speed limits, and based on such a study, I am open to changing, including raising and lowering, speed limits as needed, and where appropriate.

Eileen Birmingham:

I support the lowering of speed limits that has happened, and I think 25 MPH max is a good guide, although I think on roads like Grove it is hard for people to do this because of the wide road design and rapid flow of cars. We should engage with the county on these roads to make them as safe as possible. I think we could also look at areas around schools to see if 15 mph is more appropriate—that is what many zones in New York have.

Roddy Moore:

We know from the Vision Zero Task Force that driving speed is the critical factor in crash mortality rates. The max speed limit in Montclair should be 25 mph with variable speed limits in school zones.

Rahum Williams:

I would like to see more data on the impact that reduced speed limits are having before I render an opinion.

Wendy Tiburcio:

This depends on which road we're referencing. Overall, I think 25 mph on our roads is understandable, but we could enhance the enforcement of it. I'm in favor of lowering speed limits around schools.

Aminah Toler:

I firmly believe the speed limits should be lowered and enforced.

Zina Floyd:

Definitely lowered, especially on county roads.

Carol Loughman:

Lowered to 25 mph throughout town with dedicated enforcement.

Bob Russo:

As I have said before and advocated for many years, all streets need to be no more than 25 mph and near schools at 10 to 15 mph.

Susan Shin Anderson:

I think that 25 mph on most Montclair roads is appropriate and seems to be standard as compared to other municipalities. It is not clear to me whether lowering the speed limit would substantially improve street safety; I would need to see studies that would indicate such.

Do you believe the availability of public parking in Montclair should be made easier, more difficult, or left as it is?

Renee Baskerville:

If we utilize our parking decks and give incentives for utilizing the decks (perhaps having the closer metered parking more than the decks and offering free parking in the decks during evenings and other designated times, we can improve parking. Because of the vibrancy of our central business area and some other areas, parking is not easy. I would always like public parking to be made easier, for shure and certainly made easier for the residents who live here. We do a lot to cater to bringing folks into our township and I would like to make sure that we are meeting regularly with our neighbors and getting their input about parking. How we can make their lives more comfortable and safer in terms of parking and mobility. Let's start at home first and come up with a comprehensive plan, Yes! I know that we have one, but not everyone knows that because we go through times when we talk alot about it and involve the residents, and times when some residents say they woke up on

Haden Place and say No Parking Signs without notification. This should never be... Collaborative efforts with all is the only way to get the best results.

Chrissy Thomas:

I think parking should be much easier in Montclair. We are not New York. If you want people to shop and eat here, you have to make it easy to park, not difficult.

Perhaps I am odd, but I like it at Christmas, when parking is free. I have always been able to find a spot, and people don't seem to just park and leave their cars for hours. I like to park in front of where I am going (walking is difficult for me because of my back and leg). I also don't think I would mind if I had to pay more to park on the streets.

I also like the idea of 15 minute parking. I get annoyed that if my daughter wants Kung Fu tea, I have to drive and circle the block while she runs in and gets the drink. It used to take 3 of us, because she couldn't pay herself, so a parent had to go with her, while the other person drove around the block. It makes me really angry that some people want us to pay \$10 to park in what should be a public lot. I think the parking decks should be free, meters should cost more, and that there should be police patrolling the decks at night, because I don't feel safe in them. I don't know who parks in the Bay Street parking deck, but it seems inconvenient and far from almost everything. Plus, it seems to be our local homeless shelter.

Erik D'Amato:

I think we should be relaxing parking requirements for both residential and commercial buildings, and being smarter with how we allot on-street parking. It's ridiculous that a spot in a deck can cost more than a spot on the street.

Shivaun Gaines:

Parking in Montclair is sufficient; however, people tend to prefer on-street parking instead of utilizing the parking decks, especially those recently established, within town.

Ilmar Vanderer:

It goes without saying that public parking is vital to our business districts, which depend on transient visitors.

Eileen Birmingham:

I think that we have invested a lot in parking in Montclair. We should assess whether there is ongoing need to provide more. I think for sure we should adopt a more modern approach to parking, which does not give parking away for free. We should perhaps extend paid parking hours in commercial districts to raise revenue— this money can be spent on traffic improvements. Additionally, this may incentivize people to walk or bike downtown instead of always driving. There is a lot that we can do with parking. We could remove one-side of street parking on some streets to allow for bike lanes. I think there should be more bike parking— it should be easy to find and secure.

Roddy Moore:

As a matter of equity for seniors and the disabled, I do think that the availability of public parking should be made easier. While I understand not wanting to encourage the use of cars, I'm also concerned that making the availability of parking harder would encourage negative driver behaviors. If elected, studying parking related data will be a key focus.

Rahum Williams:

I think that parking downtown is problematic due to drivers primarily looking for street parking instead of using the parking decks. This situation is exacerbated by the lower cost to park on the street vs the parking deck. The town needs to make it easier for drivers to locate the parking decks and make street parking more expensive than the parking decks.

Wendy Tiburcio:

It should be made easier. There's a gap in communications we need to resolve as part of the equation. Not everyone, residents and visitors alike, know where all the parking decks are, and as a community, we don't make the signage/awareness easy. As someone whose career is in communications and marketing, there's a lot more we can do and I look forward to bringing my skills and insights to the table if elected.

Aminah Toler:

Determining the appropriate availability of public parking in Montclair depends on various factors such as population density, traffic flow, and development planning goals. If the current parking situation is causing congestion or inconvenience for residents and visitors, then making it easier to find parking might be beneficial. On the other hand, if there are concerns about overuse of parking spaces or if prioritizing alternative transportation methods aligns with the city's sustainability objectives, making parking more difficult could be considered. Ultimately, it's a balance between accessibility, environmental considerations, and the needs of the community.

Zina Floyd:

I believe that the availability of public parking in Montclair should be improved to make it easier for residents and visitors. I am forward thinking and I believe we need to upgrade our communication systems so visitors, particularly in the business district, can identify available parking garages and spaces more easily. This could include real-time parking availability apps, business district signage, and a user friendly method of payment. Additionally, I think introducing overnight parking with certain limitations could help alleviate some of the parking pressure, particularly for residents in areas with limited street parking. Incentivize parking permits.

Carmel Loughman:

It is fine as is but needs to be better managed. We are a built up city with no space for new public parking. I understand our parking decks are underutilized. The cost for on-street parking should be raised to force people to use the decks. (The decks need to feel safer with better lighting,

cleaner stair wells, policing to remove vagrants, etc. A woman traveling alone feels much safer parking on the street than in some of our dingy decks.) Also, better signage directing people to parking should be all over town so people aren't circling in residential areas looking for on-street parking. The meters should not be better maintained as so many are broken; and if a person parks at a broken meter they should not be given a parking ticket. We need to utilize modern technology to help manage the parking problem in town.

Bob Russo:

Public parking is a major problem, with more decks that are underutilized and meters that do not work or are not user-friendly. The Town must make it easier to park using technology but also the old fashioned basic coin-in-the meter must always work!

Susan Shin Anderson:

Through conversations and research, I believe public parking as far as covered parking lots is more than sufficient; they are not being utilized, however. It seems people prefer uncovered public parking or street parking. This is something that I would like to look into further. Overnight parking does seem to be an issue for residents.

Do you support installing more bike lanes? How much roadway is acceptable to designate solely for bicycles?

Renee Baskerville:

Yes in certain areas. We have plans on how to connect MSU with areas of town where it would be a good thing for them. We have plans on where to do this so that people who may be coming from neighboring towns to work in Montclair can have designated routes to safely bike to work. I have not had a chance to go back and look at the proposed studies that have already been done. Working collectively with the residents first, the experts, the committees who dedicate their time to looking into these things for us and respecting that I don't have to be the expert on all things, but I do know how to bring the right people to the table and engage communities of individuals on a regular basis to keep them informed and to let them know how much we value them. The delicate thing with these plans is not to lose the valuable and necessary parking to create these lanes. I think with the right collaborations and the right people at the table we can figure this out. We can start with the designs that are already done for these lanes, dust them off and let's revisit and continue the conversations.

Chrissy Thomas:

Do we actually have ANY dedicated bike lanes? It seems like we could do this, but I don't think it is necessary on every road. I think to do it properly; you would have to prevent cars from parking in the bike/running lane. We may have to make some streets one way, but I also think it is possible just to designate "bike trails" through Montclair.

Erik D'Amato:

I support installing bike lanes, though frankly I am a bit bewildered by the tradeoffs in which routes are best, especially when it comes to the First Ward, where I live and which I hope to represent on the Council. Most obvious is the question of whether leafy and broad Park Street would be the best choice for north-south bike "artery," or whether it should pass through Upper Montclair center, so riders can enjoy our wonderful commercial district.

Shivaun Gaines:

Implementing bike lanes would be necessary to change the mindset of people driving in Montclair. It would demonstrate a clear commitment to promoting street safety, protecting our environment, and improving public health.

Ilmar Vanderer:

Yes, definitely. Further, detailed study is needed to conclusively determine how much is necessary and optimal.

Eileen Birmingham:

I think it would be so great to install more bike lanes. The Complete Streets Plan for Montclair has some guidance for us. I think a major issue is getting buy-in to install bike lanes, because it means that cars need to share the road. I have seen dramatic changes to this in some parts of Europe that really encourage biking. There seems to be initial resistance, but ultimately it really improves quality of life. It would be so great if we could do more of that here.

Rahum Williams:

Absolutely! I would have to rely on the Vision Zero Task Force, MPD and the community for guidance on the acceptable amount of roadway that should be allocated to bicyclists.

Wendy Tiburcio:

I support installing more bike lanes. I would need to research the topic further to assess how much designated roadway is ideal, and to balance that with our current parking needs. Our cyclists, as well as pedestrians, should have dedicated space and should feel safe on our streets. I'd love for Montclair to become a more walkable/cycling community.

Roddy Moore:

I do support installing bike lanes. However, I think that the dimensions of any given street should influence decisions around their size.

Aminah Toler:

The support for installing more bikes lanes depends on various factors including local transportation infrastructure, development planning goals, and community preferences. Generally, increasing bike lanes can promote alternative transportation methods, reduce traffics congestion

and improve road safety for cyclists. The amount of roadway designated solely for bicycle depends on the specific context of each area. Factors such as volume of cyclists, available space and impact on vehicular traffic flow need to be considered.

Zina Floyd:

I support the installation of more bike lanes, they enhance safety for cyclists and encourage environmentally friendly transportation. However, the extent of roadway designated for bicycles should consider several factors such as the width of the road. On wider roads with less traffic congestion, dedicating a significant portion to bike lanes is feasible and beneficial. On narrower, high-traffic streets, bike lanes can still be added, but with careful planning to ensure the safety of everyone on the road. Areas with higher demand for cycling infrastructure should prioritize dedicated bike lanes to ensure cyclists have safe and accessible routes. Creating bike lanes should improve safety for cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists; This might involve separating bike lanes with physical barriers or adding lanes to less crowded roads. Ultimately, while I support expanding bike lanes, the decision on how much roadway to dedicate should be based on careful assessment of roads current design, safety, and demand.

Carmel Loughman:

I do think more bike lanes should be installed. A plan was already devised for this but needs to be implemented. The amount of roadway to dedicate to bike lanes is dependent on the type of road.

Bob Russo:

Yes, let's get more bike lanes and at least a third of the road should be designated solely for bike use!

Susan Shin Anderson:

I would support dedicated bike lanes and routes around town. As far as how much roadway, this is something I would want to look into before determining feasibility of installing more bike lanes. Can our streets as currently designed support bike and pedestrian lanes while also making the streets safe for drivers?

Do you believe a bicycle lane needs to be physically separated from cars?

Chrissy Thomas:

Mostly yes, but it depends on the road, the day of the week, the time of day and the speed and age of the biker(s). When I see adult groups that look like they are training for races, I think they can pretty much keep pace with 25 MPH, and may not need to be separated from cars. I think kids should be separated, and certainly permitted to ride on sidewalks and in parks until they reach a certain age. I think that bike lanes should be separated from parking lanes and jogging/walking

lanes, and that there probably should be a physical barrier to separate the bikes from the cars, because when there is no barrier, the bike/walk “lane” is full of parked cars.

Erik D’Amato:

No, but I have seen the data on how much protected lanes can spur people to ride, and found it very compelling. I’m also a big fan of experiments, meaning you start with lines and bollards before moving to hard barriers.

Shivaun Gaines:

In Montclair, bike lanes do not need to be physically separated from cars. Our streets are too narrow to accommodate such a configuration, but it helps to create cultural change within the community to drive slower to protect the safety of everyone on the road.

Ilmar Vanderer:

Physical separation of bikeways is preferable on wide or busy streets, on major bike routes, or along long, uninterrupted stretches. Separation can take the form of floating parking, a curb or raised median, or other vertical elements preventing motor vehicles from accessing the bikeway. Each street should be individually assessed with best practices criteria to determine its suitability, or unsuitability, for incorporating bicycle lanes.

Eileen Birmingham:

Ideally, yes, as this is safer and definitely makes people feel safer when they ride. This encourages more riding.

Rahum Williams:

That would be ideal. I ride my scooter or a Citibike in the bike lane up 6th Avenue in Manhattan several times a week. The bike lane on 6th Ave is physically separated from car traffic. I would like to see this happen in Montclair.

Wendy Tiburcio:

Based on my personal observations and from a safety perspective, I do.

Roddy Moore:

Ideally, bicycle lanes would be separated; however, the width of some streets may preclude this. Decisions around bicycle lanes should be made on a case-by-case basis.

Aminah Toler:

Physical separation between bicycle lanes and car traffic is crucial for enhancing cyclist safety. This separation can come in different forms, such as concrete barriers, bollards, or raised curbs, to prevent accidents caused by vehicles entering bike lanes and to clearly define space for cyclists and motorists. The necessity would depend on factors like traffic volume, vehicle speeds, and cyclists' comfort level. In busy or high-speed areas, physical separation is often essential to ensure

cyclists' safety and comfort. Conversely, on quieter streets with lower traffic and slower speeds, painted bike lanes may be sufficient.

Zina Floyd:

While I prefer for bicycle lanes to be physically separated from cars for maximum safety, it's not always necessary. The decision should depend on the amount of traffic flow and the surrounding areas.

Carmel Loughman:

Yes, I do as this is the best way to keep cyclists safe. But we need to analyze where such a lane may be successful as I don't see it applying to all streets.

Bob Russo:

Yes, as much as possible.

Susan Shin Anderson:

As an occasional biker and frequent runner and walker, I selfishly would like to have physical separate lanes from cars. I would need to see studies from experts though, on whether they are more/less effective in terms of improving safety.

What would you do as an elected official to improve transportation in our town?

Chrissy Thomas:

I want to work on restoring a bus line to the city, or get the trains to run on weekends. It is unacceptable that people in our "commuter town" cannot get to the city as easily on weekends. I want to look into running a train/trolley from MSU to the South End in a loop, and I would love for it to be free, "green," and constant, so people could travel safely across town without getting in a car and having to park. I like the idea of it being electric and trying to get a grant to create some type of "people mover" system like the monorail at Disney.

Erik D'Amato:

I would vote and advocate for policies adopted by the VZ task force and other improvements boosted by experts, as well as for what is turning out to be my signature issue apart from better governance: A hop-on-hop-off electric jitney service pilot project that links all of our neighborhoods.

Shivaun Gaines:

I believe Montclair has excellent transportation. NJ Transit operates four bus routes that run through Montclair, along with a rail system that provides services east and west of town, but there is always opportunity to improve.

Ilmar Vanderer:

I prefer comprehensive, holistic strategies rather than a fragmented, piecemeal approach, so I would advocate for commissioning a transportation study which ideally results in a municipal transportation plan which ensures that needs of bicycle, pedestrian, and nonmotorized vehicles and transit services are considered and addressed.

Eileen Birmingham:

Would be eager to see if we could get electric jitney to circulate through town— this is convenient, environmentally friendly and could reduce the number of cars on street. (modeled on Princeton). I think we should have a safe driving campaign, similar to Hoboken, where people pledge to drive at safe speed. Going forward, I would advocate for more public transportation options into the city, as we have lost options that people relied on.

Rahum Williams:

I think that community engagement is key to improve transportation in town. I of course would like to do certain things to improve transportation in town, but I prefer to get input from residents to shape my decisions.

Wendy Tiburcio:

I would advocate for the implementation of an electric town shuttle, which would help our seniors and many others make short and essential trips around town, while also helping the environment. We also need to look into more options for NYC commuters as our bus options are limited, which may require further discussions with NJ Transit and/or other alternatives. Overall, our solutions should be focused on improving quality of life for our Montclair residents.

Roddy Moore:

I want to make non-motor vehicle modes of transportation safer. To do so, I want to institute the previously mentioned changes regarding landscaping that obstructs a safe viewing distance, as well as exploring the use of automated speeding enforcement to influence driver behavior. A jitney service is also an idea that deserves study. Furthermore, existing data suggests that Montclair's parking decks are underutilized during peak hours. I want to study whether a peak-hour shuttle service is a viable solution for decreasing the volume of cars on the road, while increasing utilization of existing parking infrastructure. Additionally, I want to explore ways to improve the perception of safety in our parking decks to increase their utilization.

Aminah Toler:

Improving traffic safety requires collaboration beyond government efforts. Involving advocacy groups, businesses, educational institutions, other government entities, unions, and all

stakeholders is essential for enhancing community traffic safety. Enforcing regulations is a critical, efficient, and fair method to address hazardous traffic violations like speeding and running red lights. Increased police presence in high-risk areas has shown significant success in decreasing speeding and avoiding injuries. Although some accidents may be inevitable, efforts to reduce preventable incidents through strict measures should be a top priority, aiming to minimize them to zero.

Zina Floyd:

In addition to the safety efforts suggested such as real time traffic assessments, I would love to implement a service similar to "microtransit," using an Electric Microtransit Trolley(style) that operates without a fixed schedule, offering on-demand rides. Let's call it the Greenconnect. It highlights an eco-friendly transportation that is appealing for everyone in town.

Carmel Loughman:

Have an electric jitney with a circular route around the whole town; find out whether DeCamp intends to resume full service and, if not, does NJ Transit have any plan to take over these DeCamp routes; investigate whether the train service to NYC could be expanded to weekends (if the community wanted this) at least to Montclair State University station; make the Bay St. weekend train service more frequent than the current two hour schedule.

Bob Russo:

More mass transit and less cars.....I am working with the President of Montclair State University on a shuttle in coordination with MSU for commuters and seniors, to all 6 of our train stations.

Susan Shin Anderson:

I would seek to get consensus on alternative modes of transportation, such as a town jitney service, and see how this could be funded in the long term. I would like to also explore the possibility of expanding weekend NJT service from our train stations, the pros and cons.

How do you think the council and mayor can best work with town staff, including the manager, to implement safety changes?

Chrissy Thomas:

The failure to rely on committees, commissions, boards and task forces is unacceptable. I see the Council, the public, the CFO, the planner, and the Town Manager all working hand-in-hand to implement safety changes. I understand that the Council is not allowed to "interfere" with the municipal employees, but the employees are certainly able to provide input and serve. It seems inappropriate for Parks and Rec and/or the police to be excluded from any safety decisions. If we do not all work together well as a unit, the town cannot function properly. That is why I am running. I

am uniquely qualified to build consensus in a constructive and productive way. I believe that all of the people on the good government team and the independents all get along and could work.

Erik D'Amato:

I don't think the interaction between the council and staff would be any different than any other priority area (and the Faulkner act generally prohibits Council members from giving department staff instructions). We just need to mandate that things get done, and follow up to make sure it is happening.

Shivaun Gaines:

It is important to understand that the Council sets the mandate for the Town Manager and appropriate staff. Since the town has lacked leadership, the focus has been on the Town Manager. The Council sets the mandate.

Ilmar Vanderer:

An in-house township engineer is critical to facilitating council/mayor collaboration on implementing safety changes, and is preferable to a consulting firm because an in-house engineer ensures daily on-site presence, direct accountability to township officials as well as more effective cross-collaboration with related departments.

Eileen Birmingham:

I think we can work collaboratively with our staff to create a vision for a safer Montclair. I think looking at data, finding our critical problem spots where people are at risk of serious injury, and looking toward timely solutions is critical. This includes input from our police and engineers and other other stakeholders. I think we can look to what has been successful in other towns/cities to see how Montclair can learn from their experiences. We can also work together to pursue grant opportunities and external funding sources for road improvements.

Rahum Williams:

Communication is key. Putting a recurring meeting on the calendar to discuss topics always seems to work for me at work. I would take the same approach if I were on the Town Council.

Wendy Tiburcio:

First, a few Council members need to sit on the Vision Zero Task Force to ensure the group is moving forward and has the proper resources to do so. Frequent communications, updates and community engagement are key to keeping us all accountable. I would also support the implementation/reimplementation of a Transportation Advisory Committee, or explore it as a component of Vision Zero.

Roddy Moore:

I think that the council should be providing the vision and strategic direction to the town manager. As with any initiative, it should be a collaborative effort where decisions are data-driven and there

are regular, accountability checkpoints to identify inefficiencies and maintain progress towards results.

Aminah Toler:

Enhancing traffic safety involves more than just government efforts. Collaboration with advocacy groups, businesses, educational institutions, other government bodies, unions, and all stakeholders is crucial in striving for improved traffic safety within the community.

Zina Floyd:

The council and mayor can best work with town staff, including the manager, to implement safety changes by fostering a collaborative environment and ensuring everyone is aligned on key objectives. Ensure regular and transparent communication between the council, and Town Manager. Working together to allocate the necessary resources to prioritize safety improvements and regular monitoring. Implementing regular monitoring and assessment of safety initiatives to measure progress, identify problematic areas, and make adjustments accordingly. Having a town manager aligned with the importance of ensuring safety will ensure that all teams work cohesively to achieve safer streets and communities.

Carmel Loughman:

I begin with the premise that everyone wants safe streets. The town manager and appropriate department heads including the Police should have specific goals with respect to safety. Part of the town manager and chief of police performance reviews should be the effectiveness of each in driving down accidents and meeting preset safety goals. Salary increases should be tied to these goals.

Bob Russo:

The Manager works for the Council and the residents, but often seems to be an all powerful entity with a lack of good communication with the Council and community. All of the safety changes need to be implemented by the Manager, so the Council and manager must work together well to get anything done. I offered to serve on the Vision Zero Task Force. Still waiting to be officially appointed by the mayor and council. When I am finally on the task force, I will promote all of the BikeBus and Bike and Walk initiatives which I support!

Susan Shin Anderson:

We need a town manager that will make this a priority, a town manager and departments that are equipped to implement the changes, and a council that will make implementation - even incremental changes - part of its strategic plan. I think communication to the public is also key for change management and seeking input on proposals and changes.

Should Montclair devote a greater portion of its transportation funding to support bicycle lanes and other initiatives to improve street safety? Are there opportunities to leverage existing resources to improve street safety?

Chrissy Thomas:

I think so, but it is May 2024, and we still don't have a 2024 budget. I am an MBA and have a public policy degree and a law degree. I am not a magician. We need to look at the budget and make intelligent decisions that are great for Montclair in the long term. I think maybe throwing "transportation" money at biking may not be as useful as devoting money from public safety or parks and rec, etc. We need more information.

Are there opportunities to leverage existing resources to improve street safety?

Probably. See prior answers. There has been discussion about digging up the trolley/streetcar rails so people could ride up and down Bloomfield Ave.; there have been discussions about a bike path; we have a duty to seek grants and donations. With a smart, creative, dedicated group of community, council and municipal employee members, we can achieve amazing results. I think we just have to share one vision, be creative in planning, set clear goals establish a timeline and fix the budget.

Erik D'Amato:

Yes, by definition if we are creating bike lanes it would mean a rebalancing of budgets. And advocates of better traffic safety and biking should know that with so many calls on the budget, they will need to push hard to make sure that their priorities are actually executed on.

Shivaun Gaines:

There is always an opportunity to improve current conditions. The focus should be on examining how and where revenue is being used to enhance street safety.

Ilmar Vanderer:

Further, detailed study is needed to conclusively determine if this is necessary, optimal, and cost-effective.

Eileen Birmingham:

I would be in favor of this, yes. As above, I think we can leverage our parking system to increase revenue that can be put toward safer streets. There are many external grants available that we can use. We should also look at revenue coming from traffic/court fines to see if this is best used for safer streets.

Rahum Williams:

Yes. I wouldn't mind utilizing some of the budget that is allocated to Belgium block curbing to support transportation funding. The town should also pursue some of the transportation grants that are available from the state and federal government.

Wendy Tiburcio:

Yes, I think Montclair should devote more funding if we have the opportunity to do so. I would love to explore any opportunities there are to leverage existing resources to improve street safety. One that comes to mind is leveraging the town's communications department for communications/campaign needs. Let's start where we can and build from there. Given the constraints on our town budget, I would also advocate for us to explore and apply for additional street safety and/or cycling related grants to help speed up safety implementations. Together, we can become a more pedestrian and cyclist friendly town. Let's be the example we want to see and for other towns to emulate.

Roddy Moore:

I need to study existing transportation budget allocations to understand the current uses. However, street safety should be a budget priority. We as a town can't say that we support street safety measures unless that also includes financial support. Note that my proposal to address landscaping's obstruction of sightlines by quantifying what is a safe viewing distance is an effectively costless way to make a meaningful impact on street safety. Also, we need to ensure that proceeds from pedestrian and bicycle safety grants prioritize investments in permanent safety measures.

Aminah Toler:

Yes, I believe more funding should be devoted to transportation and other initiatives. Employing an in-house grant writer is vital for obtaining financial support from local transportation improvement grants provided by organizations like the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority.

Zina Floyd:

Montclair should consider devoting a greater portion of its transportation funding to support bicycle lanes and other initiatives to improve street safety, especially given the increasing emphasis on sustainable and active transportation. Encouraging safety for all road users, including cyclists and pedestrians, is crucial for a healthier and more connected community. I'm sure there are opportunities to leverage our existing resources and I look forward to the exchange of ideas with the future council.

Carmel Loughman:

I am waiting to study the new 2024 budget which should be introduced in mid-May and would prefer to think about this question once I have an idea of what is currently allocated for safety initiatives.

Bob Russo:

We as a town need to get more funding through State grants for transportation and bike and walk initiatives like Bike Bus. I just met with MSU Pres Koppell on the bus shuttle idea with the University applying for a Federal grant to work with Montclair to reduce use of cars on our streets. Once we get out of the driving solo vehicle habit, we can have much safer streets in Montclair. We must devote a greater portion of any transit funding we receive to support bike lanes and street safety initiatives.....this will be a big priority for me when re-elected!

Susan Shin Anderson:

Montclair should encourage multiple modalities of transportation, bike lanes being one of them. I think we need to look at improvement of street safety holistically, and make sure that the plans and implementation are inclusive. I would like to look at the municipal budget issues and transportation funding overall in making a definitive statement on this specific question.