

Response from David Warnock for Baltimore

Questionnaire from the Tuscany-Canterbury Neighborhood Association, Abell Improvement Association, Oakenshaw Improvement Association, Greenmount West Community Association, York Road Partnership, Harwood Community Association, Better Waverly Community Organization, Woodbourne-McCabe Neighborhood Association and Waverly Improvement Association

1. A public transportation system consisting mainly of a State-operated local bus service, which:

- is unreliable (buses late or no-show)**
- lacks real-time (next-bus) service information**
- is not welcoming, not customer-oriented**
- is currently subject to potential route changes that would eliminate or reduce service to corridors with particularly heavy ridership**

The State, through the Maryland Transit Administration, is directly responsible for bus operations inside the city of Baltimore. The state also bears a significant cost in the construction of large-scale transportation projects and bus equipment purchases, and as a result, the state has an outsized influence on bus routes, reliability, the availability of service information, and customer service.

The reason this is the case is in part because local leaders haven't been able to work with our leaders in Annapolis. That needs to change. Baltimore's leaders need to be at the table with our state leaders – the working families in our city who depend on public transit need a leader who can be an advocate for their needs. We need to build a culture of customer service within city government, changing the culture of low expectations so that families in Baltimore City can get to work and school on a public transportation system that works.

A connected transportation system is critical to creating jobs, connecting city residents to opportunity, and improving our city's environmental health. We have to understand that the quality of our city's transportation system, and the growth of our city are inextricably linked. As Mayor, I'd be Baltimore's primary advocate for a regional transportation system that works for the people of our city.

2. Streets and traffic operations designed to move automobiles rapidly through local neighborhoods without regard to the effect on residents.

Baltimore needs to make real investments in roads that make walking, and biking, safe in our city, especially in our residential neighborhoods. We need to take a "complete streets" approach, so that people on bikes and people walking are a part of, not an afterthought, in a city's transit system dominated by cars.

One thing is for certain: Other cities are leaving us in the dust when it comes to making these quality of life and safety improvements. It's not just Portland. Pittsburgh, Washington, DC – these cities are all ahead of us when it comes to implementing complete streets in their transit planning and improving infrastructure so that people on bikes, people walking, and children playing are safe on city streets and in our neighborhoods. Making the vision for complete streets a reality requires two things: vision, and courage. As mayor, I'd make sure we are keeping residents safe.

3. Aggressive and inattentive driving—speeding, failure to yield, texting while driving, etc. Year after year, Baltimore ranks nearly last for safe driving among the 200 largest US cities (AllState abd-report-2014). And an almost-complete lack of traffic enforcement:

- **Limited resources used for enforcement on interstate highways, when there is almost no enforcement in local neighborhoods.**
- **A failed speed / signal camera contract terminated and not replaced. (An RFP was recently issued for a new contract for a service that is to be significantly reduced in scale, from >160 cameras to 30 cameras per Baltimore Sun, 1/22/2016.)**

Aggressive and inattentive driving – combined with a lack of enforcement – is a dangerous combination. To solve this challenge, we'd need a three-part approach:

- First, traffic enforcement has to be a priority. We have to get the Baltimore Police Department working to enforce traffic violations again to keep our neighborhoods safe – in a city with approximately 700 pedestrians hit by vehicles in 2015, this has to be a priority.
- Second, we have to prioritize traffic-calming devices – not just reinstate the speed camera program, but plan our streets to utilize a “complete streets” approach that makes walking, bicycling and crossing streets safer. With simple improvements in design – smaller lane width, bicycle lanes, and berms along medians – we can make our streets safer for everyone.
- Third, we need to increase public awareness of this issue. Our city's major arteries, like North Charles Street, Calvert Street, and York Road, become virtual super-highways during certain times of day. We need to educate our city's drivers, and those visiting our city, about safe driving practices, and public awareness campaigns – sometimes as simple as signage, combined with targeted enforcement – can change behavior.

Lastly, better and more connected public transit will help limit driving altogether. As Baltimore grows, and more residents choose to use public transportation to get to work, school and recreation, our city's transportation system will become

less reliant on cars. That will not only mean an improvement in road safety for pedestrians, but also increased environmental benefits, improved economic activity, and improvements in public health.

5. The failure of Baltimore DOT to fill critical positions, such as Chief of Traffic Engineering.

There are deep, systemic challenges in Baltimore's Department of Transportation. As we learned from this year's audit of the department, it lacks accountability almost entirely. In that audit, DOT couldn't provide any documentation of how targets were set, or met, in any of the major audited categories – roads, lighting, bridges, traffic management, or paving. For example, DOT said that 59% of city roadways meet acceptable paving standards – but they could not provide any documentation that this was the case. What's worse, DOT could not provide any documentation that supported the information they reported to CitiStat, our city's accountability arm.

To keep the Department of Transportation accountable, as mayor, I'll develop a basic, public set of performance measures for the agency that the taxpayers of Baltimore can use to hold that agency accountable, and evaluate the performance and success of every department based on those measures. Ensuring critical positions, like the Chief of Engineering, are filled will be a part of those measures – I'll expect every agency in Baltimore City government to recruit, and retain, the best talent available.

With strong leadership in the mayor's office, who takes responsibility for outcomes and follow-up, we can make the changes necessary to improve the Department of Transportation.