



To: Candidates for City Council in the City of Chicago

From: W. Robert Schultz III, Campaign Organizer, Active Transportation NOW

Re: 2019 Aldermanic Candidate Questionnaire on Transportation

Active Transportation NOW is a non-profit organization working in metropolitan Chicago to promote better biking, walking and transit. As a 501 (c)(4), our mission is to educate voters and candidates about transportation issues.

We encourage you to complete the following questionnaire on transportation policy and funding in the City of Chicago. We will share your answers on [activetransnow.org](http://activetransnow.org) alongside our organization's policy positions.

Active Transportation NOW does not officially endorse candidates for elected office.

Please complete the attached questionnaire and email your responses to [robert@activetransnow.org](mailto:robert@activetransnow.org) by Friday February 1<sup>st</sup>.

If you have any questions, please contact W. Robert Schultz III at 312-216-0471. Thank you for your participation.

Thank you.

W. Robert Schultz, III, J.D.  
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## 2018 Chicago Aldermanic Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Alderman Deb Mell

Ward: 33

1. We live in an era when more Chicagoans from the ages of 8 to 80 are choosing to walk, bike and ride public transit. How do you incorporate walking, biking and public transit into your everyday life? **Do you, or a family member, routinely walk, bicycle or use transit for any of the trips listed below? If so, please circle.**

<b>Walk:</b>	Go to work	Bring child to school	Errands	<u>Recreation</u>	Other
<b>Bike:</b>	Go to work	Bring child to school	<u>Errands</u>	<u>Recreation</u>	Other
<b>Transit:</b>	<u>Go to work</u>	Bring child to school	Errands	<u>Recreation</u>	Other

*Comments:*

As an avid biker and runner, I incorporate active and public transportation into my daily life as much as possible. I make almost all my trips to City Hall via the Blue Line. I have an office Ventra card to encourage my staff to do the same. I make as many trips as possible on my bike during the warmer months. Biking is usually the most convenient mode travel when attending community meetings, block parties, and special events in the ward.

2. Currently there is no money in the Chicago Department of Transportation's (CDOT) annual capital budget set aside specifically for biking and walking projects. Funding for street safety projects like better-lit crosswalks and curb protected bike lanes instead comes from a patchwork of local, state and federal sources, including aldermanic menu money. **Do you support spending a fair share of city transportation dollars on a new, dedicated Bike Walk Fund of \$20 million annually, with funding prioritized for the city's highest-crash corridors on the South and West Sides?**

Yes  
 No

*Comments:*

The City needs to further commit to accomplishing the goals of Vision Zero, and a dedicated fund for improving bike and pedestrian infrastructure is an essential step forward. In the 33<sup>rd</sup> Ward, I've taken the initiative with the recently completed Manor Greenway, improving sidewalk connectivity within our neighborhoods, and working with CDOT and the community to design pedestrian safety improvements for our major streets especially near L stations and our schools.

3. For low-income families in Chicago, paying for transportation can leave little for food, housing, and other necessities. Residents of many Chicago communities must spend 10 percent or more of their income for a monthly Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) transit pass. In recent years Seattle, Denver, New York and other cities have established discounted transit fares for low-income riders. **Do you support establishing a 50 percent discounted CTA, Metra and Pace transit fare for low-income residents at or below the federal poverty line (approximately \$30,000 income annually for a family of 4)?**

Yes  
 No

*Comments:*

Access to reliable, convenient transit is important especially for low-income residents. I've personally seen the difference made by the free CTA fare card for seniors offered through the State of Illinois' Benefit Access Program. Creating a similar program for low-income residents would provide greater access to opportunities throughout the city and make transportation more reliable for those residents.

4. Bus ridership in Chicago has declined by 21 percent since 2012 as buses increasingly get stuck in traffic on congested city streets. Chicago has only 4.1 miles of dedicated bus lanes, far less than San Francisco (27 miles), Seattle (34.8 miles), Los Angeles (35.4 miles), Miami (39.8 miles), and New York City (82.8 miles). Bus lanes have proven to boost bus speed and reliability with minimal impact on travel times for cars. **Do you support developing and implementing a plan for establishing at least 50 miles of new transit priority streets with dedicated bus lanes and bus priority at traffic lights?**

Yes  
 No

*Comments:*

Chicago deserves a safe, convenient, and reliable transit network, and the City's bus routes are an essential component. By improving and incentivizing bus ridership, we will benefit everyone in city by reducing congestion and lowering per-person vehicle emissions.

As Active Transportation Alliance's recent bus report showed, bunching and slow travel speeds are a major issue for bus routes in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Ward. It also shows this is a citywide problem. I would support any efforts that would improve bus service especially on the routes with the highest ridership.

5. Surveys show that many people don't bike because they aren't comfortable riding amid cars and trucks. Chicago has installed more than 140 miles of bike lanes since 2011 to create safer conditions, and that has contributed to tremendous growth in cycling while reducing crash rates for everyone - not just cyclists. That's because bike lanes create more order on the street and calm traffic by minimizing speeding and weaving. Bike lanes lead to less conflict and more harmony. Still, most bike lanes in Chicago lack physical separation between people biking and moving car and truck traffic, and most streets lack any bike infrastructure. **Do you support building at least 100 miles of new on-street bikeways over the next four years, including at least 50 miles of protected bike lanes?**

- Yes  
 No

*Comments:*

A safe network of bike routes and bike lanes is needed to increase the number of trips made by bike which should reduce congestion, improve air quality, and provide public health benefits.

6. By the end of 2020, 17 of the 27 miles of property along the Chicago River will have trail infrastructure, strengthening an already popular transportation and recreation corridor. But major trail gaps still exist along the river, especially on the South Branch. **Do you support completing a nearly continuous Chicago River Trail system over the next four years on the North, Central and Southwest Sides – closing the gap from downtown to the North Branch Trail and extending on the South Side to city limits?**

- Yes  
 NO

*Comments:*

The Riverfront should be a continuous greenspace open to the public and connected by pedestrian and bike trails, and I have worked tirelessly to improve the riverfront in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Ward. When the Riverrun trail is complete, our community will enjoy a continuous trail that starts at Belmont, connects to the North Shore Channel trail, and runs through newly improved natural areas at Horner Park and River Park.

With this section complete or under construction, our next priority is filling the gaps and extending the trail network. We need to create a connection between River Park and Gompers Park so that this network also connects to the North Branch Trail, and we need to continue to extend the trail network towards downtown.

7. Forcing people to own a car to get around is fundamentally unfair and unjust, and many transportation and development decisions contribute to inequity by increasing the burden on the city's most vulnerable people. **Do you support developing a transportation and infrastructure equity plan for Chicago, based on input from a working group of community leaders, advocates, agency staff and elected officials?**

Yes  
 No

*Comments:*

Every Chicagoan should have access safe, convenient, and reliable transit options. While transit oriented development incentives have helped encourage ridership especially on some L lines, the current policies don't do enough to ensure housing in TOD areas stays affordable. I've strongly advocated for increasing ARO requirements and improving tenant protections, called for hearings and better oversight of the CHA, and worked with affordable developers and local communities groups to build and preserve affordable housing near transit stations.

TOD incentives should come with a requirement of on-site affordability. While these incentives are important to reducing our reliance on automobiles, we must also ensure that the areas near transit remain affordable for Chicago's working families.

8. During the morning and evening rush, many of the city's busiest corridors are clogged with cars and trucks carrying just one or two passengers – increasing travel times for everyone. Chicago can't build its way out of traffic congestion and, therefore, can't grow and thrive if more and more people drive cars. **Do you support reducing congestion and improving safety by adopting vehicle pricing policies that encourage multi-passenger trips and discourage drive-alone personal car trips, especially during rush hour (e.g. Uber/Lyft pay a higher city fee when driving in congested areas during rush hour with no or only one passenger)?**

Yes  
 No

*Comments:*

While congestion pricing can be an effective tool in central business districts, I would like see more details especially from New York's experience before making a decision on a similar policy. Outside of Singapore, congestion pricing is relatively new in urban centers.

9. Adding walking, biking and transit infrastructure to city streets has proven to contribute to safer, healthier, more sustainable and more equitable communities in Chicago and cities across the U.S. Cities can often add infrastructure like pedestrian refuge islands or protected bike lanes with a modest increase in travel times for cars and trucks – if any. **Do you support prioritizing safety, equity, public health and the environment above travel times when designing city streets?**



- Yes
- No

*Comments:*

Building a safe transportation network for all users should be the first priority when designing our city's streets. As Alderman, I designated Montrose, Kedzie, and Lawrence as Pedestrian Streets to ensure that new development encourages and supports pedestrian traffic instead of favoring automobile-oriented use. Working with CDOT, we've improved the sidewalk network near the Kimball brown line terminal and Roosevelt High School. When considering any changes to the public way, my first concern is how those changes will affect safety.