

Walking & Bicycling Questionnaire for Candidates

This Walking & Biking Questionnaire for State Candidates was developed by Hawaii Bicycling League, Kauai Path, Maui Bicycling League, and PATH - Peoples Advocacy for Trails Hawaii to address current state issues of importance for walking and bicycling. Your responses will be made available online and distributed to our organizations' email networks. Your response will NOT be used as the basis for any endorsements. Your response will be displayed verbatim as you provide. Please respond by July 11, 2018. Late responses will be accepted and will be posted as promptly as practical.

Thank you!

Hawaii Bicycling League

Kauai Path

Maui Bicycling League

PATH - Peoples Advocacy for Trails Hawaii

Name *

Nick Nikhilananda

Candidate for *

Hawai'i State House of Representatives, District 13

Email *

nikhilananda@hawaiiantel.net

1. I believe that walking and bicycling should be safe transportation options available to all and we need to drastically reduce injuries and deaths of people who walk and bike. (YES or NO, and any comments) *

Yes

No

Comments?

This question involves a few different specifics. Walking and bicycling are methods of transportation, recreation and exercise. Thus, we need to be aware that each have different needs. I grew up with a father who was a triple amputee from WWII, so I never was able to go for a walk, hike or bicycle ride with him. Nevertheless, at a young age we were given bicycles and living in a small New Jersey town in those days, I was able to ride my bike all over the community. It seemed safe and enjoyable. Yet over the years, we have seen as more and more people start using bicycles as a means of transportation, the number of injuries has increased. In Europe and many other Asian countries, from a young age, the people know that there will be many people using a bike as a method to get around. Not in the United States. We have developed our cities around the automobile and now we must play catch up. I have seen on Maui where neighborhoods are developed without any concern or thought toward providing safe walking and bicycling paths. This is criminal and I have been speaking out about this for years. As bicycle usage has entered our collective consciousness, we seem to finally be realizing the necessity for development to take into account the need for safe walking and bicycling roads and paths. Sadly, there are many pedestrians who are killed and injured by bicyclists! There are pedestrians killed and injured while crossing in and having the right of way in crosswalks! Plus over half of the injuries occur in areas where the speed limit is 25 mph or less! Therefore, this is not a one size fits all challenge.

2. Hawaii received \$178 million in federal transportation funds in 2018, while only 2% of this amount is reserved for walking and bicycling projects, the state Department of Transportation has the option to use larger portions of these funds for walking and bicycling projects. I support increased use of Hawaii's federal transportation funding allocations for bicycle and pedestrian projects to make walking and bicycling safer. (YES or No, and any comments) *

Yes

No

Comments

I definitely support using a greater share of federal dollars for bicycling and walking projects. I have seen the benefits on Maui, where safe, separate bicycle and walking trails have been constructed and are used by members of our community. I have also seen where they have not; e.g. with the downhill bicycle companies, and this has created anger and animosity between the local residents and the people who use this tourist attraction. If there was a separate bicycle lane, it would be safer for everyone. Plus the health gains for those able to safely walk and ride a bike. The long term positive effects are innumerable.

3. The state Department of Transportation's 2003 Bike Plan Hawaii provides a plan for development of a network of bicycle facilities to enable those of all ages to cycle for transportation. The plan has not been fully implemented. I support the immediate updating of this 15-year-old plan in order to integrate new bikeway planning practices and make it more applicable to current conditions. (YES or No, and any comments) *

Yes

No

Comments

This is typical of both the State of Hawai'i and Maui County. We are more than ten years overdue with our Community plans, even though it is demanded and required by our County Charter! By now, the Bike Plan is fifteen years overdue and most definitely needs updating and bringing it up to 21st Century standards, utilizing current and future technology. I will do whatever I am able to not only fully implement this outdated plan, but forcing the modernization of the proposal.

4. Eighty-one percent of Hawaii commuters drive as their primary way of getting to work and 12% walk, bike, or take public transportation. I support the establishment of specific targets to reduce dependence on private automobile transportation and increase bicycling, walking and transit use, as Kauai County has done. *

Yes

No

Comments

In 1998, on a dais during the campaign for the Maui County Council, my opponents, from the two major political parties, both expressed their opposition to Maui County devoting any funding nor resources to establishing a public transportation/bus system! I was overwhelmingly supportive of such a system, as I had been for years. Twenty years later and after finally introducing a rudimentary bus system, this past year, Maui had over 2.5 million riders! It has been a huge success, and we need to expand it and do more. This visionary outlook toward our future and community is sorely needed in government and of elected officials. What Kauai has done is a prime example of a County taking the lead in dealing with a local issue and setting goals for what is needed. This is good planning. The State needs to use this as a starting point for our overall needs into the foreseeable future. We must set a vision of numerous alternative methods for moving people around our islands and the State. We pay extortionist fares for airline travel, which is our local means of commuting between the islands. If some type of ferry system could be introduced which was not environmentally destructive as the most recent attempt, this may also be researched and investigated. Bike and electric car sharing are other innovative modes of transportation which needs to be incorporated in any overall proposal.

5. Vision Zero is a government commitment to achieve zero traffic fatalities tied with a comprehensive approach and specific actions in engineering, enforcement, and education. I support the adoption of a “Vision Zero” policy at the state level and development of a comprehensive plan with specific actions to achieve zero traffic fatalities. (YES or No, and any comments) *

Yes

No

Comments

The League of American Bicyclists had adopted and promoted a model law which felt that a 3 foot standard, while useful, can be improved. This law was recently passed by the Legislature. We must educate the entire community when anyone first obtains and/or renews a drivers license, that bicyclists are part of our community transportation and that they are the most vulnerable. The LAB further stated that “safe passing laws are not a replacement for investments in safe bicycle infrastructure, but they provide safety through education and enforcement where bicycle infrastructure is lacking.” When I first moved to Lahaina in the mid 80's, I got around town mostly on my yellow 10-speed, which I had for years and brought to Maui. Sadly it was stolen out of my garage when I moved to Kula, and I have not used a bicycle as much over these last years. LAB enumerated four important items as to the benefits of safe passing laws. These included: a method for education and high visibility enforcement to drivers about sharing the road with people on bicycles; an easy message for the public on how to safely pass a person on a bicycle; an effective method which responds to the highest percentage of deaths of persons on a bicycle which may impact public policy; and a way for law enforcement to hold accountable bad and unsafe behavior by vehicle operators. Nevertheless, I am a strong advocate for safe and supportive rules and laws for motorists and bicyclists. However, I grew up with a father who was a triple amputee from WWII, so I am aware that for some residents, such as those more elderly and with physical challenges, they will not be able to partake in the usage of bicycling for their personal transportation.

6. Red light and speed enforcement cameras have been proven to improve traffic safety for all roadway users (motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians) by reducing incidents of red light and speed violations. I support the implementation of red light and speed enforcement cameras at high injury intersections and corridors and in school zones. *

Yes

No

Comments

I would be willing to place red light and speed enforcement cameras at a select few high injury intersections and corridors and definitely in school zones. However, the most rudimentary research finds glaring problems with these systems. Law enforcement contracts these camera programs out to third-party companies. Some even are the ones who actually issue the tickets. These companies then have access to the data and cameras. When we introduce for-profit companies into this mix, it presents opportunity for corruption, fraud and abuse. Though these programs have mostly been able to pass constitutional muster, they are actually being used less around the country. Some of the reasons include the difficulty of paying for the programs, a reduction in actual camera citations and the growing community opposition to them. On a final note, numerous communities have been sued, which cost their citizens millions of dollars, for violations and various illegal activities surrounding the utilization of these systems. Thus, a warning to any government in the State which establishes a camera enforcement program.

7. Describe ways that you have supported safer walking and bicycling in your community. (short answer) *

I have been active in the community for a quarter of a century. I have stood for the Maui County Council , plus in 2016 for this same seat. For over nine years, I was the producer and host of a weekly, live, 90 minute, call-in public affairs talk show on our local public access television station. In each and ever venue, I have spoken passionately about walking, bicycling, equestrian trails and paths being incorporated in all developments and our overall planning. As previously mentioned, our Community, General and Maui Island plans are twenty years old! This is a stark case of malfeasance, misfeasance and nonfeasance by our elected officials.

8. The State has the Bike Plan Hawaii (2003) and the Statewide Pedestrian Master Plan (2013) for bicycle and pedestrian improvements. What will you do when elected to implement these plan? (short answer) *

I spoke about the Bike Plan above in question #3 and, along with the Pedestrian Plan of 2013, I will review their contents and support them. I will also form coalitions with other like minded legislators to make certain we get the legislation adopted. I will propose whatever additional amendments and updates are necessary and make certain that they are implement with utmost speed. Sadly, they probably both need some fine tuning.

This form was created inside of Hawaii Bicycling League.

Google Forms