

===== Candidate Survey =====

1. In 2016, The Woodlands Township Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan was unanimously adopted by the Board of Directors. What steps would you take to progress the plan? The complete plan is available here:
<https://www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/1212/PedestrianBicycle-Master-Plan>
2. A Complete Streets policy helps cities and towns plan safe, accessible and convenient use of streets by motorists, public transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Complete Streets has been adopted in 40 of the largest 50 cities, including Houston. If the The Woodlands Township incorporates, what approach would you take in regards to a Complete Streets policy? More information can be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/mission/health/complete-streets> .
3. What message would you most like to send to cyclists in The Woodlands about your candidacy in the upcoming Township election?

Position 5

Walter Cooke

1. In 2016, The Woodlands Township Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan was unanimously adopted by the Board of Directors. What steps would you take to progress the plan? I have reviewed the The Woodlands Township Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, but do not pretend to understand the plan in detail. To get the plan off dead center, Bike The Woodlands Coalition, working with the Township, should develop and implement a comprehensive public relations campaign to inform the residents of The Woodlands about the plan and garner support. Without public support, the plan will remain dead in the water. The PR plan should not be limited to just making presentations at the Township and at Village Association meetings, but must reach out into the community. After you have gathered public support, then go for the funding. Because of the constraints on the Township budget for the next few years, I doubt the Township will be a big funding source. The county is probably a waste of time. HG-AC is an obvious funding target, but from what I understand, there must be community support as well as the support of all other players such as the county. Mike Bass and Robert Heinemann are the most knowledgeable about the way HG-AC works and should be consulted. Another funding source might be foundation grants. Also, seems to me you would get a better reception if Bike The Woodlands Coalition raised a substantial amount on its own to finance the plan. Would demonstrate your group was willing to put its own money in the funding pot. I am sure I am telling you what you already know. But I have no silver bullets. It will take many months of very hard work and even then there is no guarantee of success.

2. A Complete Streets policy helps cities and towns plan safe, accessible and convenient use of streets by motorists, public transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Complete Streets has been adopted in 40 of the largest 50 cities, including Houston. If the The Woodlands Township incorporates, what approach would you take in regards to a Complete Streets policy? Although I am no fan of incorporation, I would certainly support a Complete Streets policy if the voters passed incorporation. But why wait for incorporation? No reason you could not advocate the policy right now.

3. What message would you most like to send to cyclists in The Woodlands about your candidacy in the upcoming Township election? I fully support all efforts to make The Woodlands more bicycle friendly. But I also recognize that we live in a car culture in this part of the country and the education curve to convince people that cars and bikes can coexist on the same streets is very sharp. It will take a concerted effort and a lot of grassroots work to make the case. Unfortunately, it takes time to change a culture. It certainly can be done if you can communicate the right message.

Rashmi Gupta

Thank you for the opportunity to share thoughts on this important issue.

1. Mobility is an issue in The Woodlands and I support viable, safe, affordable Pedestrian and bicycle traffic plans. Connecting existing paths within The Woodlands as well as to regional trails can assist traffic issues, facilitate recreation and general health as well as using this network for special events for our community that enriches our area and provides potential revenue.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your members to better understand your priorities.

2. Complete streets would be similar to the answer above as it relates directly with safe mobility, recreation and the environment.

3. I am running for office to be a voice for all residents in The Woodlands. I seek to represent and support the interests, concerns, issues and concerns of all residents for being the best community we can be.

Position 6

Ann Snyder

1. I was a strong advocate for passage of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, because it is important to have a system that meets the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and our entire community. The adopted planning focuses on a short 5-year term, with longer term projects being reserved for future consideration by The Township. Long term planning is necessary for budgeting and implementation purposes, so I would propose a system to work toward those considerations soon. Such considerations must include safety, awareness, enforcement and education, all of which are critical to the success of cycling programs. It is the responsibility of the Township to take an active role in each of these areas.
2. As I stated above, it is important to have a system that meets the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and our entire community. Whether or not the Township incorporates as a city, there must be planning. All potential solutions and resources available to the Township should be considered, including the Complete Streets policy if applicable, to enhance all forms of transportation and amenities.
3. My husband Jerry and I have long been bicyclists in The Woodlands, and my advocacy has been unwavering. When The Woodlands was designated "A Bicycle Friendly Community", "Le Tour d' Woodlands" was initiated under my leadership as a one-of-a-kind cycling event offering cycling opportunities for individuals and families.

As a Township Board member, I believe we must continually address: safety concerns for bicyclists, as well as pedestrians and car drivers; mobility and accessibility to help improve the cycling experience; enforcement to insure that everyone knows and follows the rules of the road; education for everyone, including bicyclists, pedestrians and drivers, as well as all residents; and exploration of funding sources for infrastructure without overburdening taxpayers.

Tom Chumbley

1. If I were on the board I would seek to reintroduce the plan before the board and the committee that looked into it. Some currently on the board voted to get rid of the committee. I consider the ability to bike for exercise or for transport to be an important part of what it means to have a "quality of life".

I looked at the cost, it is only less than \$4.7M. This would be in place essentially forever, and mean so much to many. We all should be walking or biking more. There are the elderly, in our community, who need to have paths for going shopping.

Some on the board favor an expensive Arts Center. Compared with the transportation plan, this is way down low on my list of things to fund.

2. I am not sure what you mean by "what approach would you take in regards to a Complete Streets policy?" It seems to me either you are for it or you are not. If you are for it, you make efforts to make it happen. These efforts are limited by funding options. We need to actively acquire funding opportunities like the U.S. DOT TIGER II Grant and H-GAC funds.

3. All the efforts put into the Transportation plan are currently gone. That is due largely, in part, to those who voted to get rid of the committee. For cyclist sakes vote for someone who cares about the paths.

For 7 years, from age 10 to 17 I grew up in England, in a community where you could get anywhere efficiently by bike and that was a very good thing. You can expect that I would seek to make paths a priority in our.

Alan Richel

1. I must confess that I have not read the entire plan, but have perused much of it.

I am a recreationalist bicyclist, at best, having used the trails here and elsewhere. I also have experience as a bicycle commuter, having biked from my home in Woodlands Hills, CA to my work in Van Nuys, CA, primarily on city streets. As you know, it is not easy, and can be extremely dangerous. So, my point is I have experience as a bicyclist, but not competitively and know the trials and tribulations that bicyclists face.

That said, the primary criteria for establishing bike paths, be they side path, shared-use, or bike lanes on shoulders, in my opinion, should be cost, usage, and safety. Given unlimited resources, I would clearly endorse separate right-of-ways for bicyclists, which we currently have, but clearly cannot support competitive cyclists who will put recreational bicyclists and pedestrians and runners at risk. Unfortunately, we do not have unlimited financial resources, so bike paths must compete with other services like flood mitigation, etc.

As for usage, I think it is important to have bike paths that will get significant usage. I can't see the point of building bike paths for less than 1500 in an area of over 120,000 people. I mention 1500, as less than that number responded to a questionnaire on bicycling in The Woodlands. As far as I know, we don't even have an inventory of how many bicycles are in The Woodlands. I'm going from memory, but I believe far less than 1500 appeared at a hearing on that subject.

A third criterion for bike path consideration should be safety, and may well be the most important criterion. I can speak from personal experience that it is not safe biking on the shoulder. Drivers are the problem. I have found myself in the right turn lane and other cars are to my right on the shoulder trying to outmaneuver me on the turn. Maybe I'm wrong, but I always considered shoulders as a last resort to drive on and that they primarily should serve for vehicles to make emergency stops. I have bicycled on shoulders, and I think you are taking a great risk doing so.

I believe The Woodlands Plan calls for \$1,650,000 to be spent and that almost half of that, \$750,000 for a shared use path, was tabled. The shared-use path is where flooding and drainage efforts are made, such as near FM 1488 and SH 242. In my opinion, building a joint use bike path in an area that consistently floods is not a good use of our tax monies.

\$560,000 was budget for new and existing shoulders. Again, I personally have a great fear of using shoulders as bike paths because of the lack of consideration of many drivers. I am concerned about your safety. I would like to see more information on safety statistics for bicyclists on shoulders before I would back that.

I have no problem with extending side paths for pedestrians, runners, and cyclists. I don't believe it poses a safety hazard. On the contrary, I believe filling in some of the gaps will increase safety.

In summary, I support the side paths for \$370,000, am against the shared-used path, and need to be shown statistics that show shoulder riding is safer than I imagine. In addition, I would like a better count of the usage we can expect by bicyclists (ie. a bicycle inventory).

2. I am against incorporation at this time, but the Complete Streets program does sound appealing. I would like to see sidewalks, which would probably be a huge expense, but could help improve safety for all concerns.

3. Bicycling for competitive recreation, more casual recreation, and commuting is something that should be encouraged and incorporated into our community as much as possible, while taking into account cost, projects usage, and safety.

Position 7

Bob Milner

1. I would ensure that we have the budget within our mobility planning to implement and complete the plan. I am a cyclist and believe the safety of cyclists and the opportunity for safe road work is one of the components of what is the culture of The Woodlands.

2. I would be in support of a reconfiguration of the current intersection curbing system that requires the cyclist to operate into traffic in some intersections to avoid the extension of the curbing into the side lanes. I would also advocate for a revised traffic plan that creates a "safe bike lane" on each road that would be used by cyclists to operate without having to impede the traffic lanes.

3. I believe that Mr. Mitchell's original belief of The Woodlands being a place where people can come to "Live, Work, Play and Pray" includes both walking paths (which there are several hundred miles of) and a safe avenue for experienced cyclists to operate on the roadways without being threatened by traffic or intersection curb impediments. I believe that these cycling lanes would be one of the best solutions. The walking paths are too confined, curvey at places and slick during certain times of the season. They also bring into contact walkers, runners, and people walking their pets with cyclists and that can create a congestive nightmare.

If I am elected I would be happy to meet with you and discuss how I could be a proponent for safe cycling in The Woodlands.

Walt Lisiewski

My name is Walt Lisiewski and I am a Candidate for Position 7. I would like to submit the following as my answers to the questions proposed in the Candidate Survey :

1. My first starting point would be to request that the 2016 Pedestrian and Bike Master Plan be place on the agenda of The Board of Directors Meeting for a revisit of the original proposal. I would request that funding be allowed to rehire the consultants, Jones and Carter or comparable suppliers so that we can get current 2019 dollar figures for propose projects and what projects are still viable. A lot has happen in the last three years both in The Woodlands and Springwood Village that will have an impact on the original plan. While requesting this I would have to see where and which fellow Directors I can gain support from and who I can get on Staff to support us. I would also work with our Chamber of Commerce and see where we can gain support from private business in both locations. The support I would look for would be both financial and encouraging of usage of the Bicycling in their Sustainability programs. We have to look for funding from a Federal, State and Local level. We can't just try and wait around to get grants we'll have to think outside the box to make this work sooner than later. I am committed to trying to get this moving and not just with the \$500,000 the Board set aside (removed from budget this year). The Resident Surveys always state that one of the major concerns of the Residents is Mobility. I want people to know that many cities in the world work on this issue not by building more roads or adding another lane but by looking at alternative ways of transportation like bicycling.

2. I used to have a second home in Palm Beach County, Florida and they had the Complete Street program since 2003. The city would require all developers to create projects with pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation users in mind. The city also set out a revamp program of improving pedestrians crossings and reducing the width of vehicle lanes to make room for bike lanes and to reduce the speed of cars. They also used where possible, separate roads for bicyclist. I don't think The Woodlands will Incorporate, there is no business reason to do so, but why we shouldn't look at adopting a Complete Street policy for our community.

3. I am a 30 year resident in The Woodlands, married 43 years with two adult children and 2 grandchildren. Spent 35 years in the Engineering/Construction Business responsible for multi million dollar projects and thousands of personnel world wide. I retired 10 years ago and have used my business knowledge to help our community retain the vision of George Mitchell. I preserve our covenants to keep our community attractive as Chair of the DSC, oversee water and drainage issues on MUD#1 and active on the Panther Creek Village Association and I participate in yearly events like the 4th of July parade, Flea Market, Insperity Golf Torment and Habitat for Humanity. But most important is the I AM NOT A POLITICIAN AND I DON'T REPORT TO POLITICIANS ! The only reason I am running is because I think I have the skills, experience, temperament and time to continue my service to our community as a Township Director. I will be that voice that is not beholden to political faction and is not conflicted. That is why I ask for your vote.

David Cassidy

1. I was delighted that the master plan was authorized and completed but have been disappointed that there has been no effort from township leadership to advance the plan. While I am not an avid cyclist, my wife and many of our friends are. Currently conditions are unsafe and inadequate for the needs of our residents. More and more people will be looking for cycling/pedestrian friendly neighborhoods. So, I believe advancing the plan is both good policy and a good investment. While one voice can not do much, I will be an advocate on the board and with resident backing maybe we can navigate our way through the complexities of the Township, county, developer and other bureaucracies. The starting point is to get a line item and a reserve in the parks and recreation budget
2. While I am not an expert on complete street surveys and how they work to access transportation dollars and ensure safe shared roads, I do believe the Township as a city or as a special purpose district should view cycling through the lens of safety, transportation and quality of life. The Woodlands purports to be a community where you can live, work, play and learn. That motto is better fulfilled with a complete street concept.
3. I previously lived in the Houston Heights. We were 2 blocks from a rail road track initially. It is now a rails to trails pathway that was transformative. Our community came together and worked hard for that to happen. We also had pathways on some of our major roads and they are continuing with buildouts throughout the bayou systems. The Woodlands community, for reasons I really do not understand, is not as supportive but there are many active advocates for the pedestrian and bicycle plan and I believe with some political leadership we can advance the plan. I would love for people to choose our community because it is easy to bike to work and to cycle recreationally in a safe setting. It will be hard and it will take time but I sure hope to see it.

Andy Dubois

1. In 2016, The Woodlands Township Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan was unanimously adopted by the Board of Directors. What steps would you take to progress the plan? The complete plan is available here:

I would work with local, regional and state leaders to continue the momentum and interest in providing expanded biking opportunities for recreational and avid cyclists. This involves working with the MUDs, the county and the regional planning and funding organizations in order to advance and improve financing options.

I favor the idea of using drainage and utility easements as connectors to other communities and local recreational destinations; as well as sub-regional and regional efforts and expansion of pathways in order to provide more biking options. This also provides more leverage in gaining funding at the regional and state levels, where multimodal transportation is gaining in interest and therefore planning. Even the ongoing Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) study being spearheaded by regional entities and supported by state and federal leaders includes much focus on multimodal transportation, such as bike lanes.

As a township board member, I will ensure that the focus of the transportation director is on public and recreational transportation – meaning bus/shuttle service for the commuters and biking for local recreational riders and professionals who work locally and want alternative transportation to vehicles.

Annual township budget efforts must not only include continuous capital commitment, but also “streetscaping” dollars ensuring regular upkeep of our existing pathways.

In addition, board members must work with the county to ensure improved shoulders where possible in order to provide safe riding along the streets where shoulders do exist but are deteriorating due to age.

This plan will not be successful without a collaborative effort of officials across the board.

2. A Complete Streets policy helps cities and towns plan safe, accessible and convenient use of streets by motorists, public transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Complete Streets has been adopted in 40 of the largest 50 cities, including Houston. If the The Woodlands Township incorporates, what approach would you take in regards to a Complete Streets policy?

Whether the township becomes a city or maintains its current form of government as a special-purpose district, a Complete Streets policy is an obtainable objective, as long as all parties can agree on what that entails for The Woodlands.

Again, The Woodlands cannot take on this challenge alone. It is going to involve the county, MUDs and regional planners.

My focus, incorporated or not, would be to ensure well-kept sidewalks/pathways, proper and visible signage, educated drivers, bicyclists and walkers/joggers regarding the rules of the road and proper/updated striping for safety purposes. Regarding mobility, we must work together to remove unnecessary curb extensions, enabling cyclists to ride through major intersections without having to shift over into lanes of traffic; and identify existing township property,

drainage channels, utility easements and right of way where hike and bike paths can be expanded.

The township also must be involved with regional planning for multimodal transportation that provides connectivity between adjacent communities, public transportation hubs and our many recreational destinations (pools, parks, pathways, creeks, nature preserves, etc).

And, as I have stated throughout the campaign, my goal is to focus on the services and amenities The Woodlands board is charged with funding and maintaining. That definitely includes the pathways – maintaining and expanding them – for all Woodlands residents and bikers to enjoy.

3. What message would you most like to send to cyclists in The Woodlands about your candidacy in the upcoming Township election?

I recognize the importance of hike and bike paths in The Woodlands. My focus is on maintaining and improving the services and amenities in which the township is responsible. That definitely includes hike and bike paths/trails.

I enjoy riding on the paths in The Woodlands. However, I do not believe it is a safe environment for avid/serious bicyclists to be on the paths, in their current conditions, at the same time with people hiking, walking their dogs, jogging or scootering. Overgrowth of vegetation is a problem on the pathways and must be addressed with the streetscape funding available. I mainly bike after dark, even late at night, to avoid other pedestrians on the paths because it's safer just to dodge the night creatures and crawlers.

We have a multimillion-contract for "streetscaping," and I believe the township needs to ensure that adequate resources are being used to maintain our pathways, keeping them clean and clear and providing enough room for two-way traffic as much as possible.

I also want to ensure that intersections and street crossings that connect pathways are as visible and safe as possible. I want drivers to be educated and accountable to the rules of the road and understand the rights of cyclists on our streets.