

## CHARLESTON COUNTY COUNCIL

### DISTRICT 7

#### **1.) What are your personal transportation values and how you would lead on transportation issues if elected?**

**Brantley Moody (I):** *I work on Daniel Island so my vehicle is my primary mode of transportation. I walk or bike daily for exercise.*

**Sean R. Thornton:** *Like most people I choose the transportation method that is most convenient, although I do prefer and use underground rail when I visit cities where that's available. As an engineer, however, it is in my nature to think outside the box to come up with innovative solutions to complex problems, and that is how I would lead on transportation.*

*Rather than trying the same approaches that have failed in city after city, I favor going back to the drawing board to uncover what actually causes transportation challenges and to completely reimagine how we approach them. Rather than continuing to spend more and more on expanding again and again, it's time to consider abandonment as a solution--surrendering control of the transportation grid directly to those who actually use it (the people). HOAs have already proven that this works on a small scale--neighbors in some areas already pool resources together to fund maintenance of their own roads--and the laws of economics give us no reason to suspect it wouldn't also work on a large scale. Business owners along a major road could pool resources this same way or, if they aren't interested in doing their own maintenance, sell or donate their part of the road to one of several competing transportation companies or charities which would no doubt spring up, who in turn could fund maintenance and expansion with user subscriptions, donations, or even tolls, which are incredibly easy to collect now in the modern internet-of-things world.*

*Instead of funding everything through mandatory taxation, the cost of each square inch of transportation infrastructure would now be voluntarily provided only by those who actually want and use it. If locals find roads too expensive or inconvenient, a competing transportation company will quickly step in to fill the void and provide an alternative method at a lower cost, be it bussing, rail, bike rental, you name it. As radical as this solution sounds, this is exactly what happens with all other goods and services, and it is guaranteed to check all the boxes for success--less traffic, less climate impact, lower taxes, more choices, more convenience, higher quality, lower overall cost, etc.*

**2.) Are there specific bicycle, pedestrian and/or public transit projects in your district that are priorities for you? If yes, please tell us about them and how you would lead to address them.**

**Moody (I):** *There are two projects in West Ashley that are of importance to my constituents who not only live near these assets but also travel through those areas.*

*The first is the Bikeway intersection with St. Andrews Blvd. Like the SCDOT and the surrounding neighborhood, I did not support a HAWK light at that crossing because the traffic on that state road is simply too heavy. However, I agree that safe passage needs to be developed. That is why I met stakeholders and County staff on site to walk the area and work on a solution. At my urging, County Staff agreed that widening the sidewalk to 8 feet from the bikeway to Sycamore Road, along with intersection enhancements, would allow for safe crossing and would fit within the budget County Council had set aside.*

*Second is the bikeway terminus at Wappoo Road. Linking the bikeway to the West Ashley Greenway is an important connection for constituents and was supported in the West Ashley Master Plan. I have directed County staff to develop a solution for this linkage as a part of the Savannah Highway capacity study, funded by the ½ cent sales tax. I am optimistic that safe crossings of Wappoo Road and Savannah Highway will lead to a widened sidewalk taking bike/ped traffic directly to the West Ashley Greenway.*

*I am hopeful that both projects will be completed during my second term.*

**Thornton:** *I am not interested in any of the current projects in District 7 because they are simply yet more cases of trying the same approaches which have failed over and over in city after city--ever-expanding infrastructure with ever-expanding costs, and yet congestion is never alleviated. I would instead support any abandonment project as described above that gives direct control over existing transportation routes to the individuals living and working along those routes.*

**3.) If elected, would you support greater annual funding allocations from the county for bike, pedestrian and public transit infrastructure? And, would you lobby the South Carolina Department of Transportation to increase the agency's spending on bike, pedestrian and public transit infrastructure?**

**Moody (I):** *Given the uncertainty around revenue sources the next few years, I cannot commit to increasing funding. As discussed in other sections, I have supported funding specific projects that benefit the community as a whole.*

**Thornton:** *The problem with ever greater funding is that it's never enough--there has never been a city with enough funding to provide the transportation it thinks its residents need. One can look at any city in the country and see that despite using these same methods, every one of them has a failing transportation budget while infrastructure is still critically strained.*

*There has also never been a city which accurately understood the transportation its residents need. This is the fundamental economic problem of any central planning--by eliminating competition on the open market and replacing it with a one-size-fits-all mandate, personal choice is eliminated, and without being able to see personal choice in action, there is no way to see what the people really want and need. The planner simply has to guess, and that guess is guaranteed to be less efficient, more costly, and less satisfactory as just leaving the decision up to private citizens interacting as they see fit. So I would instead pursue abandonment as described above. This leaves everything about transportation up to personal choice of the people who actually use each route and method.*

**4.) Charleston Moves is intensely focused on addressing the multiple Ashley River crossings, to make them safe and connected for people on bikes and foot. So far, the Ashley River Bike & Pedestrian Bridge is funded and should go out for a design-build contract bid in 2021; the North Bridge Bike/Ped Study is funded, with a design alternatives analysis to begin in late 2020; the James Island Connector retrofits have been assessed, but no action has been taken to move forward; and the Wappoo Cut Bridge (as an alternative to the Connector and a linkage to the Ashley River Bridge) has yet to be examined. How would you support advancing the North Bridge, James Island Connector and Wappoo Cut Bridge crossings?**

**Moody (I):** *I was proud to support County Council action that designated \$3 million to the Ashley River Bike and Pedestrian Bridge. Because of that action, when the federal grant was finally awarded the County money was sitting there allocated for construction.*

*The Northbridge and James Island crossings are a challenge. Closing a lane of traffic on either bridge likely yields failing transportation grades on both roads so SCDOT is unlikely to approve those. I was happy to put forward the \$85 thousand funding to*

study and develop options related to the Northbridge. I believe that eventually stand-alone structures will be needed at those crossings.

**Thornton:** I would start, again, with abandonment of surface roads in West Ashley, James Island, etc., and make substantial zoning reforms (see below) to allow a transportation market to develop. Once a marketplace exists, pedestrian travel over these bridges may no longer be necessary, but if it is, I would favor selling or abandoning these bridges to the most appropriate market participant at that time, whether that be an association of neighborhoods or a transportation company or charity. It would then be up to voluntary interaction and personal choice within that marketplace to determine the most efficient, affordable, and convenient means of transporting pedestrians across the Ashley River, whatever that means may be. If pedestrians want a massive conveyor belt and there's an organization able to provide it at a cost and quality the pedestrians are willing to support, who are we to get in the way and call that outlandish?

**5.) What is your vision for Lowcountry Rapid Transit? Would you support zoning changes to encourage transit-oriented development and a robust network of bicycle and pedestrian paths connecting to the system's stations?**

**Moody (I):** My simple vision is that LRT is efficient, cost effective, timely and alleviates traffic. The project is multi-jurisdictional so a collaborative effort will be needed by the Counties and Cities involved to drive this effort.

**Thornton:** Absolutely. Aside from the current one-size-fits-all approach of roads, roads, roads, zoning is, in fact, the other primary culprit behind our transportation challenges, as it is fundamentally an undermining of the maximal efficiency which occurs when development is allowed to grow naturally. By mandating a residential-only area here and a commercial-only area there, zoning creates a need for transportation between those two zones and eliminates any potential for walkability. Without the mandate created by zoning, those two areas wouldn't develop in separation but would grow up comingled according to whatever the preferences of the local residents would support. Zoning has never proven to be more efficient in laying out cities but always proven less efficient. This comes as no surprise, however, when we consider the racial segregationist origins of zoning. Feel free to visit my website [libertychs.com](http://libertychs.com) for more details.

**6.) Do you agree with the following statement (feel free to explain why or why not)?: All transportation projects (related to roads, streets, bridges and/or**

**commercial development) should include access for multiple modes of transportation.**

**Moody (I):** *Whether the County is constructing or reconfiguring road projects, then accommodations should be made for Bike/ Ped where it is safe to do so. This is the opportune time to include these enhancements. Recently I have supported these initiatives for the Glenn McConnell Parkway expansion, as well as the soon-to-be-released Olde Towne District Transportation Improvements plans.*

**Thornton:** *I do agree but would qualify it slightly--all transportation projects should include access for whatever modes of transportation the local marketplace supports. If transportation is, as I've described previously, left fully under the control of the individuals who use each route and method, their habits and preferences will dictate what modes are necessary. Gaps or shortfalls will not last long, as there will always be plenty of enterprising individuals more than willing to step in.*