

MOUNT PLEASANT TOWN COUNCIL

AT-LARGE

***(I):** Incumbent

Jason Daley: NO RESPONSES

Gary Davis: NO RESPONSES

Carl Ritchie: NO RESPONSES

Vicky Wynn: NO RESPONSES

Robert Yarbrough: NO RESPONSES

1.) What is your plan to support the funding and installation of Mount Pleasant Way?

Kevin Andrus: *This project will take years to come to fruition, in fact many small parts have been done or have been started. The town should fund portions that coincide with other improvement projects the town is doing or on schedule. A great deal could be funded by dedications to passed loved ones, memorializing their spirit for many to enjoy. Sections all the way down to benches or trees could be named for loved ones or sponsored by business.*

Lee Dittrich: *The Mount Pleasant Way is described as a means for our pedestrians and cyclists to be connected to activity areas. The benefits of this plan will reduce traffic congestion, introduce multi-modal and recreational facilities and address the physical barriers that prevent travel to specific locations. In order to support and justify the plan, a feasibility study and engineering analysis must be completed complimented by a public engagement program. We must reassure our residents that the creation of the Mount Pleasant Way will be coordinated with public and private entities that will support the funding. Developers of new projects along the proposed path should have requirements to include the Mount Pleasant Way as part of their overall design plan. In order to provide sustainable funding for the project and future maintenance, the town must be proactive in identifying future sources of revenue without implementing tax increases. These sustainable sources can be derived from incentivizing businesses to open and operate in Mount Pleasant by reducing impact fees and making it economical sense for them to choose Mount Pleasant as their home. In addition, since the Mount Pleasant Way will heavily rely on the town's Park & Recreation budget, we must find ways of boosting this specific portion of the budget by encouraging different events, such as sports leagues and festivals, to utilize these facilities which should be accompanied by usage fees. Additional focus should be placed on the slower times of the year, predominantly the winter season, by encouraging different events to utilize our parks to host their events further capitalizing on these town maintained properties at times when they are minimally utilized. Besides the direct fees collected by the town, there will be a byproduct of additional tax revenues that will come with the patronizing of local businesses (i.e. restaurants, hotels,*

entertainment, etc.). With a creative approach relying on various sustainable sources of income, the Mount Pleasant Way can become a reality for our community.

John Iacofano: Mount Pleasant Way cannot wait the 20 to 30 years that it is projected to take to complete. I believe the original budget was \$30M and the new budget is approximately \$60M. This project will have a positive effect on the decreasing of traffic, an increase in our quality of life and an increase to the safety and well being our our town. I believe that we can obtain support from businesses to sponsor pre-determined stretches of the project especially local hospitals and wellness centers. We will need to seek grants and other federal/state money to speed up the process. I will seek every avenue possible to speed up the process with as little impact to the tax payers as possible.

Myra Jones: There are both public and private sources available to fund Mount Pleasant Way. Federal funding could be provided through grants, the Bureau of Land Management, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Partnership for Sustainable Communities (EPA/HUD/USDOT), New Freedom Initiative, etc. State funding could be provided through SCDOT, the SC Transportation Infrastructure Bank and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. Additional funding could come from Charleston County through the Capital Improvement Plan, General Fund, Local Bond Measures, Stormwater Utility Fees, Utility Leases and other opportunities. Private sources of funding could include the Conservation Alliance, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Trust for Public Land, Bikes Belong Coalition, Kodak American Greenways Program, National Trails Foundation, Adopt a Trail Program, local fundraising and campaign drives, and sponsorships by individuals or businesses. The City of Columbia is incorporating a penny sales tax into it's "Walk Bike Columbia" program. This is something that could be considered, if necessary.

Gary Santos (I): There are multiple ways to support the funding and installation of Mount Pleasant Way. One of the ways is to allow organizations to name stretches of the Way after Citizens like what was done with the "Kenny Mile." Additionally, secure Greenbelt Funds and other public funding opportunities. As Mt. Pleasant Recreation Committee Chairman, I am currently working on bringing in more youth Soccer and Lacrosse Tournaments to Mt. Pleasant. Some of the revenue generated from these tournaments could help pay for more Recreation opportunities including, but not limited to, helping to support the installation of Mt. Pleasant Way.

Shari Sebuck: The Mount Pleasant Way is necessary and long overdue. I support the installation and I would have to look at the viable funding proposed already by Mount Pleasant.

G.M. Whitley (I): We have funding to acquire the land for the Mount Pleasant Way through the Greenbelt fund. We do not have funding to build the bike paths. I plan to propose a referendum to raise the necessary funds to complete the Mount Pleasant Way.

2.) The Mount Pleasant Transit Study has several "vision" recommendations that would facilitate greater transit ridership through targeted strategies, such as: increasing frequency on CARTA Route 40, express bus service on I-526, CARTA Express Route 2 improvements, a hospitality express service, and many others. Would you support the Town of Mount Pleasant investing in transit improvements, as recommended in this plan?

Kevin Andrus: *This is a big plan, and is bigger than Mt Pleasant Town Council. We would need to identify Mt Pleasant specific needs for the transportation and build upon those specifics.*

Lee Dittrich: *Mount Pleasant has seen unprecedented growth and traffic congestion has been a challenge associated with this growth. Many are disgusted with the thought of utilizing a public transit system because of inconvenient schedules, inaccessible locations and destinations that do not meet their needs. We can encourage an expansion of public transit in our community if we had predictable and reliable transportation services provided at convenient locations throughout the town. Shuttle services have been successful in other jurisdictions because users can predict with certainty when the next shuttle will depart. Locations must be accessible to all residents and the destinations must be practical and be logical. Many of our hospitality workers travel over the Ravenel Bridge to access downtown Charleston only to be met with lack of parking and parking facilities that come with significant costs. We must also recognize the off hours that many of these workers would need these services. If the basic needs are met with predictable, reliable, conveniently accessible transportation services, I believe that many would take advantage. I would invest in this plan upon receiving input from those that would use and benefit this type of transit improvement.*

John Iacofano: *Absolutely. I believe we need to reintroduce a park n ride system both in and out of Mount Pleasant. We must include business owners in the study to ensure that we are running the routes correctly and at the correct times. Many hospitality, hospital and other jobs run later into the evening so we must consider the employee making it to their destination.*

Myra Jones: *Yes, I would support this plan. With our Tri-County area expected to grow by 63% or more in the next 30 years, we must incorporate mass transit into our plans for the future. In my work over the last year to enhance access to our County's public beaches with the Charleston Beach Foundation, I promoted the Beach Shuttle from Mt. Pleasant to the Isle of Palms. The Shuttle provided access from the main line of CARTA to the beach, and allowed some who lived in the area but had never been to the beach due to lack of transportation to see the ocean for the first time. I hope that the Beach Shuttle will continue to provide access to the beaches, and add an additional stop on Sullivan's Island soon. Further improvements in transit to and from other areas such as North Charleston and Summerville would allow those who work or obtain medical services in Mt. Pleasant to travel more easily. Further, many who live elsewhere, but work in Mt. Pleasant could utilize mass transit for their travels, instead of relying on personal transportation to and from work.*

Gary Santos (I): Absolutely! I have always been a supporter of CARTA. As a Mt. Pleasant Town Council Member, I not only served on their Board but won the "Videographer Awards - Award of Excellence" for designing and acting in the award winning video "Be a Trendsetter - Ride CARTA!" I did this to promote taking the bus to work or play.

Shari Sebuck: Yes. I would need to see updated plans and see if they are aligned with continued input from residents. The residents have called for more Rapid Transit, Express Services, and Circulatory Services in communities. I just want our focus to remain on serving the needs of our residents, work force, students, and tourists instead of investing in a plan just to say we did. We need to stay in line with the rapid growth and changing needs of our community.

G.M. Whitley (I): Yes.

3.) Is there a bike/pedestrian improvement project about which you are particularly passionate? This could be a project in the works that is important to you, or something you believe the Town should take on.

Kevin Andrus: There was a recently finished path that connects Carolina Park with Darrell creek. the thing that I am noticing with walking paths is that quickly become golf cart paths. my thought would be to establish ways to inform correct golf cart usage on our streets and pathways, with an eye on safety for bikers and especially walkers or runners.

Lee Dittrich: Many of the private communities/HOAs in Mount Pleasant have incorporated a bicycle/pedestrian path as part of their infrastructure. Many of these paths are not connected to public paths and limit the ability for users to access other locations beyond their community. We can encourage builders of future developments to incorporate a connectivity to public pathways. As we improve on our highway designs, part of the redesign process must be inclusive of a bicycle lane. Besides building on our existing paths, this can be a work in progress to be included in all future rehabilitation or redesign planning. I am strong supporter of encouraging these paths as a means for our residents to enjoy the beauty of Mount Pleasant. It can also serve as a means of commuting for some and as a way of patronizing area businesses, a successful byproduct of increasing and improving upon our existing paths.

John Iacofano: Mathis Ferry road is of great concern. The sidewalk crosses back and forth twice, the sidewalk is uneven and dangerous, it is very difficult to see pedestrians crossing the road and there is only one signal to slow/stop traffic to cross the road. I know that Mount Pleasant Way will be used to revitalize the pedestrian walkways. I also know that some great ideas of utilizing a wider sidewalk to include bike, pedestrian and golf cart traffic is going to be tested and I believe this would be a great addition.

Myra Jones: In addition to Mount Pleasant's plans for Mount Pleasant Way which would "connect residential, commercial, recreational and culturally significant destinations throughout

the Town of Mount Pleasant” as presented in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan 2019-2029, I support Charleston County’s “People 2 Parks” Plan which would connect many areas of Charleston County, and install many safety features into the transportation network. This Plan would reduce vehicular traffic on our roadways, provide additional economic development, improve health and quality of life for our residents, protect and preserve our green space, connect residents to jobs and provide recreational opportunities.

Gary Santos (I): Yes. I worked closely with Katie at Charleston Moves, and Mt. Pleasant Town Engineer Brad Morrison, to get SCDOT Secretary of Transportation Christy Hall to put biking and walking lanes on the Isle of Palms Connector. This has made the connector much safer for our citizens to ride and walk to and from the beach.

Shari Sebuck: The conceptualization diagrams I have seen to provide bike/pedestrian paths along Rifle Range Rd and some of the more narrow corridors is where I would like to start. It is just downright dangerous for the biker or pedestrian to be out there - especially when a car is coming around a (blind) curve, in traffic and with oncoming traffic, and is suddenly upon someone on foot or bike. I would like to add some light fixtures on these two lane roads as well for everyone's safety. Some of these roads and viable modes of transportation have been the same for the last twenty years - when the population was less than half.

G.M. Whitley (I): The Mount Pleasant Way is a series of interconnected bike paths that will traverse the town. This project is a long-term vision for transport for our community and will be a beautiful and necessary amenity to our residents.

4.) South Carolina is one of the most dangerous states in the nation for people walking and biking, and Charleston County is leading the state in deaths and injuries to people walking and biking. If elected, how will you work to make the Town of Mount Pleasant safer for people on bikes and foot?

Kevin Andrus: I would love to look at hiring traffic enforcement officers. we need to focus driver attention back on the road and its surroundings. Priority for the town, should be to make our roads safer for bikers, pedestrians and other drivers. I would be engaged in anything that would help with this safety effort.

Lee Dittrich: My 25 year career in law enforcement exposed me to the tragedies that arise from poorly designed highways, pedestrian paths and bicycle lanes. Many of these tragedies could have been prevented if the design afforded some protections for the users of the pathways as well as the motorists. If elected, I would demand that all projects include a safety assessment to identify those areas of the proposed lanes that may present hazards. Simple modifications to proposed designs can include signage, pavement markings, lighting, barriers and other safeguards to prevent against unintended incidents. Safety must be the first priority and all proposed paths cannot overlook safety as part of the overall planning and design process. Besides the safeguards installed at the physical locations of these pathways, a

campaign can be launched for public awareness encouraging safe practices such as the use of protective equipment, equipping bicycles with lighting, reminding them of traffic laws and regulations as well as other safety tips that will promote a safer experience. These campaigns do not have to be complicated and can be launched with simple signage throughout these paths as simple reminders of safe practices to incorporate as part of their routine.

John Iacofano: Our focus needs to be on creating live, work, play areas in by each of our communities. To create these pockets we must reduce impact fees allowing quality small businesses & restaurants to be part of smaller communities in Mount Pleasant. We must have safe pedestrian bike and walking thoroughfares with proper crosswalks that create a safe environment to travel. Mount Pleasant Way is an important part of this transition. Please check my Facebook page for the map of Mount Pleasant Way.

Myra Jones: We should take additional safety measures, including the following actions:

- Include protected bike lanes on our roads for bicyclists.
- Add more signage regarding safety for bicyclists.
- Install "bike/pedestrian boxes" at heavy intersections to allow bicyclists & pedestrians to cross the intersection ahead of motorists
- Launch an education program within the Town addressed to drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians on State laws regarding these issues.
- Prosecute drivers who fail to obey bicycle safety lanes.
- Develop off-street trails or easement areas into bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Improve visibility at intersections.

Gary Santos (I): We need more dedicated Biking lanes for our bikers to utilize. I ride 4-5 times a week and have to do it in Snee Farm because there are no safe places around where I live, except for the Isle of Palms Connector, to ride. Highway 17, Rifle Range Road, Long Point Road and Mathis Ferry Road are dangerous and need to have Bike lanes. If re-elected, I will push for safer Biking lanes like we did with the Isle of Palms Connector.

Shari Sebuck: While in the process of completing Mount Pleasant Way, we need to provide shoulders on the sides of roads as well as sidewalks and bike lanes. There is little to no "margin for error" if a car breaks down, or runs out of gas, and a driver quickly becomes a pedestrian. We also have the system of service roads along Johnnie Dodds Blvd. that need connectivity for bikers and pedestrians to be safe - let alone cars trying to cross through intersections that aren't monitored with a traffic circle or stoplight.

G.M. Whitley (I): Clear signage and marked paths for people walking and biking are key. I think it would also be useful to have a public awareness campaign regarding traffic rules for cars, bikes, and pedestrians, as well as encouragement to vehicle drivers to stay alert and share the road.