

## B-TOP Candidate Guide

---

(<http://www.b-top.org/> Bloomington – **Transportation Opportunities for People**)

Susan Sandberg, Councilmember At-Large, Council President 2011

**1. What do you think is the most important transportation change Bloomington/Ellettsville can make over the coming decade and why?**

*I would promote additional public transportation options connecting Bloomington with popular destinations and institutions outside of the City borders such as Ivy Tech. That said, I will continue to prioritize urban densities in the development of new business ventures, amenities, and housing in order to contain the public transportation systems to where the majority of citizens reside and work. Connecting Bloomington with other cities such as Indianapolis, Louisville and Chicago through the State investment in light rail will also be a desired goal for Bloomington leaders to encourage. This is important in order to connect residents with broader urban opportunities with less reliance on their cars for leisure and cultural activities and business commuting. I am extremely concerned about the needs of low-income citizens who require public transportation to get and maintain employment. For these vulnerable individuals, I will advocate for longer bus operation hours and more convenient routes to ensure that those who cannot afford cars have the public support systems they need to make a living wage and manage their personal lives in a more convenient and affordable manner. In providing supports for low-income riders, of course, all residents of Bloomington who do not wish to rely on cars will have increased public transportation options as well. Those with fewer means require our utmost efforts in enhancing public transportation options. All efforts to increase and improve must also be contained within the realistic fiscal affordability of such expansions.*

**2. To this end, what are the concrete actions you will take during your term, if elected?**

*As members of the City Council we must all maintain a reasonable balance in all basic city services that consider the differing needs of low-income individuals, the elderly, children, the disabled, other vulnerable populations, and those transporting goods and passengers. We must determine the priorities of basic services through a transparent process with broad public input regarding all legislative initiatives. Those basic services include rate analysis and protections of our water utilities, public safety, infrastructure development and maintenance, land use and green space preservation, trash pick-up and recycling, the health and safety of our core neighborhoods, and intelligent transportation systems that meet current and future needs. We are mindful of public opinion and contemporary trends in considering all of these services and amenities for Bloomington citizens. As reducing the carbon footprint is an important ingredient in redefining*

*prosperity, I will continue to support and promote a responsible and comprehensive range of transportation options to encourage biking, walking, public transports and auto travel that is reasonable and responsible.*

- 3. For several years, a proposal to consolidate Bloomington Transit (BT) and IU Campus Bus has been discussed in our community. This move has the potential to bring additional funding on the order of approximately \$2 million per year to our community for transit. Do you think Bloomington should actively encourage the bus merger, and if so, what would you do to move it forward?**

*I support a BT/IU bus system merger. I have been keenly aware of these discussions since the beginning of my time on the Bloomington City Council, and I am also aware of the political challenges that are often beyond the immediate reach of local legislatures. We are informed that there is a finite amount of transportation funding for the entire State of Indiana. A BT/IU merger, while increasing dollars to support our bus transportation initiatives that would certainly benefit Bloomington riders, would also come at the expense of other transportation systems throughout the State. Our gain, their loss equals a political issue to negotiate. As we continue to make the case for additional funding for our combined systems, we must also be mindful of who governs the Statehouse and where their funding priorities lie. To the limited extent that I have to change the face of elected officials in other parts of the Hoosier State, I will certainly do that with energy and passion. We need a new, progressive Governor who values public transportation funding, and the majorities in the House and Senate of our General Assembly are currently not progressive allies with Bloomington in reaching this goal. All cities and towns deserve adequate public funding in order to have the best possible public transportation systems. Toward that end as a city official, I will continue to advocate on behalf of Bloomington. We have limited political influence in the State of Indiana on the whole. Bloomington is not an isolated island, and as with all things political we must work together, collaboratively and respectfully, to move meaningful public policy change forward. That requires a good deal of diplomacy, tenacity and patience, and when it comes to working toward the best possible outcomes for Bloomington, I utilize all of these important qualities as an elected official. The art of persuasion is a skill that requires listening to everyone, analyzing the challenges and sticking points and negotiating in good faith. That I can do!*

- 4. <http://www.b-top.org/> How can we accelerate implementation of alternative transportation projects that have been proposed, but not moved forward?**

*Again, with respect to my previous answers, the Bloomington City Council works in a methodical and financially prudent manner and not all good things are produced with immediate speed or dispatch when there are multiple public needs to consider and services to deliver. Plans are made with respect to possibilities, potential, and the collective political will of the community. Planning is an important function for city staff, the administration, Plan and Zoning Commissions, and of course, City Council. With*

*respect to execution of plans, there are due processes to work through, funding options to consider, and public opinion to consider in moving any initiative forward. Those of us who consider our important work to be multi-faceted in planning for today as well as the future take a measured approach to all forms of transportation, to public need and opinion, and to our fiscal ability to make things happen. While the speed of government may not move fast enough for some, I've learned in my time on council that the best legislation with the most lasting result is crafted thoughtfully, methodically, and with solid analysis of both intended and unintended consequences. I would respectfully differ with the premise of this question and assert that plans for alternative transportation are moving forward in a methodical and fiscally prudent manner. In my next term I would continue to support measures to expand transportation options in a deliberate and responsible time frame.*

**5. What's the next step to encourage bicycle use on a daily basis?**

*I support the ongoing bicycle and pedestrian funding initiatives that will move us toward platinum rating. Next steps are continually developing and unfolding with greater public awareness of the health and environmental benefits of riding and walking, and increasing amenities such as additional bike racks, more connected bike trails, public safety campaigns related to bike/pedestrian/car interactions, and other important measures to encourage increased ridership. The City of Bloomington has made a major commitment to increasing ridership through the Platinum Bicycle Task Force and our ambitious goals to become a top-rated bicycle friendly city. I strongly support these efforts and am confident we will see them develop methodically and incrementally over the coming months and years and beyond my time on the Council. While I wholeheartedly support these efforts, I remain constantly mindful of the many Bloomington residents who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to use bicycles for their daily commutes and personal travel. With all due respect for these individuals who require climate-controlled and convenient modes of transportation, we must also maintain a diverse continuum of energy efficient transportation options to meet the needs of all Bloomington travelers. It's all about balance and accommodation of a wide range of community need!*

**6. What mode(s) of transportation do you use for your daily or weekly routine? How often do you use modes other than a car?**

*I travel almost exclusively by car. My work schedule is extremely hectic going from early morning into the night on most days. My house in Matlock Heights is not conveniently located near public transit. I rarely have personal time to exercise, but when I can grab a few private moments for myself I walk in my neighborhood.*