

Melrose Voters for Street Safety

Candidate Questionnaire - Maria Berardi (Councilor at Large)

1. How do you primarily get around? Where do you walk in Melrose? When and where was the last time you biked, traveled with a person with mobility impairments, or took public transit? What is your evaluation of your own experiences traveling in Melrose outside of a car?

Candidate response: I primarily travel throughout Melrose with my car. I have not biked in many years. I do not feel it is safe for cyclists on many streets in Melrose. I have experience with people that have mobility impairments. Our sidewalks, alleyways, streets, and parking lots is a major challenge for people. It is unfortunate that citizens with mobility impairments are at risk of serious injury or worse trying to get to appointments; or, just trying to get around and enjoy their lives. Traveling on foot in Melrose also has its challenges. Crossing streets can be a risk on its own. Drivers have become very impatient and sometimes will speed, pass cars illegally, and run red lights.

2. Name at least one concrete action that you think Melrose can and should take within the next two years in order to improve the safety of streets and sidewalks for people not in cars—e.g., pedestrians, bicyclists, people with mobility assistance devices, people with disabilities, and children playing. Limit your answer to interventions which are possible entirely at the municipal level.

Candidate response: Streets, sidewalks, AND parking lots need to be repaired. I have experienced elderly citizens with walkers, strollers, and wheelchairs have a difficult time getting from handicapped parking to their destinations. Sometimes they must travel a much further route to navigate around uneven pavement and large potholes.

3. What, in your view, is the city's role in making Melrose a community where more people are encouraged to get around easily and conveniently by foot, on bicycles, and on public transit? Name at least one concrete action you would take to make Melrose a leader on this issue. Given that more than 40% of carbon emissions in Massachusetts are from transportation, how will your actions in this area support Melrose's sustainability and green energy goals?

Candidate response: Maybe an enclosed structure at some of the bus stops , to shelter people from inclement weather could encourage more people to consider taking public transportation. We have had such a roller coaster of storms lately. This structure could also double as shelter from people on foot, and cyclists.

4. Melrose families don't have the opportunity of relying on school buses. They also aren't guaranteed their closest neighborhood school, and school drop-off traffic is one of the most persistent congestion challenges in the city. How will you help families who want to get their kids to and from school without relying on a car?

Candidate response: Carpooling students could help cut down on school traffic and bring neighbors closer together. Melrose did have two school buses in the past. I know that the fee did get too expensive for some residents and it became the end of busing within our city. Maybe the city could find an affordable option for older students (that live in the Ripley, Mount Hood areas) to bus to the Middle and High School. Driving in the area of the Middle and High School is a nightmare the way it stands at this time. Trying to cross the Lynn Fells Parkway to Melrose Street is increasingly dangerous. Busing could cut down the number of cars.

5. Many communities in our area are investing in regionally interconnected paths and trails to create opportunities for both recreational and functional trips on foot or bike over larger distances. Where do you see opportunities to work with Melrose's neighbors on such projects?

Candidate response: I have seen bike trails in other cities and I am impressed. The trails are for walking and cycling only. It seems much safer than pedestrians weaving in and out of congested traffic. The trails also appear to be very peaceful and enlightening for some people.

6. What is one way that you think street design could help improve Melrose's business and retail districts? What kinds of access do you think are most needed to make Melrose a more attractive place for shopping and doing business?

Candidate response: Parking lots and alleyways need to be resurfaced for the physically impaired citizens. Handicapped parking should be closer to their destinations. Handicapped parking is great. But it could be greater if the citizens using these spots didn't have such a distance from the parking

spot to their destination. Sidewalks need to be clear of trash and have a smooth surface to insure citizens do not injure themselves while visiting our beautiful downtown or any area in Melrose.