

DAVID BLAIR - Democrat for County Executive: Questions for 2022 ACT Scorecard

Toll Lanes

1. Will you oppose all plans for toll lanes built by "public-private partnerships" on I-270, the Beltway, or the American Legion Bridge?

No. I believe we must work with MDOT to alleviate congestion here and Managed Lanes can be a solution while raising funds for much-needed transit infrastructure and providing space for new bus rapid transit service linking Montgomery and Fairfax Counties across the American Legion Bridge.

As County Executive, I would work with MDOT and the community to deliver a project that does four things:

- 1. Avoids private property takings and impacts;**
- 2. Establishes a public-private partnership agreement that doesn't leave taxpayers holding the bag for more public investment later;**
- 3. Sets toll rates that aren't inaccessible and inequitable; and**
- 4. Provides toll revenue to fund our other transit projects and establishes bus transit service in the Managed Lanes themselves (such as to and from Tysons).**

MARC

2. Should all-day two-way MARC service be the county's highest-priority goal for rail transit expansion in the I-270 corridor? Do you support a request for capital improvements to increase the number of trains per week as a high priority in the transportation priorities letter?

Yes. I strongly support making MARC service expansion our highest priority in the I-270 corridor and identifying it as such in state transportation priority letters. While others have pointed to extending the Metro Red Line north, they also acknowledge such a project would cost billions of dollars and take years or decades to even get in a position to begin.

MARC service expansion should be our priority. I'll work with MARC, the State, and CSX to secure funding and explore creative ways the County could help fund service in this corridor in the following ways:

- 1. Increase the number of trains and hours of service to include mid-day;**
- 2. Build the master-planned Shady Grove MARC Station at the Shady Grove Metro Station to provide the ability for a "Red Line Extended" commuter rail service to Germantown and easy transfer between MARC and Metrorail;**
- 3. Expand amenities and parking at the Germantown Metro Station; and**
- 4. Build the master-planned White Flint MARC Station to expand access from the rest of the I-270 corridor to this area that is so important to our County's economic growth.**

Halting construction of new state highways and arterials

3. Do you support removing new county and state highways and arterials from county plans, including M83, Observation Drive Extended, the Norbeck/Georgia grade-separated interchange, Montrose Parkway East, and the 355 Bypass in Clarksburg?

I will pursue solutions to state highways and arterials that address congestion and improve safety. I don't see this as a one-size-fits-all approach. For instance, I want to work with the State Highway Administration and accelerate the project to make Georgia Avenue near I-495 less like a highway and more into a walkable, bikeable, and modern boulevard with fewer lanes, fewer curb cuts, and protected bicycle lanes.

I support M-83. M-83 has been analyzed in-depth and in 2016, the County concluded that both the road and Bus Rapid Transit would be necessary to provide the Upcounty with the adequate transportation infrastructure promised to residents of these fast-growing communities.

Land Use

4. If your only choice was whether or not to approve Thrive 2050 as currently written, would you vote yes or no?

I support many aspects of Thrive 2050 as drafted - including the focus on addressing the affordable housing shortage, increasing homeownership, fixing dangerous-by-design arterial roadways, and pursuing "15-minute communities" where all amenities are within 15 minutes and easily walkable or bikeable.

I believe improvements must and can be made to ensure compatibility and adequate infrastructure when it comes to some of the housing recommendations. We must approve Thrive 2050 because it is the update to the County's General Plan and the last General Plan doesn't address many of our County's current challenges in affordable housing, leconomic growth, climate change, and equity.

Pedestrian Safety/balanced transportation/climate change

5. Do you support the reallocation of existing road space from cars to sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus-only lanes, even if it might cause vehicle delay and/or reduce parking?

I believe we can accomplish both the use of existing road space for dedicated bus-only lanes and protected bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure while not delaying vehicle travel times. We will invest in adaptive traffic signal technology, proven to help better manage traffic flow. This could enable us to convince State Highway and others to dedicate unneeded lanes to buses, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

I will pursue design changes to our roadways to make all road users safer in the short-term. These include:

- 1. Too many people in our County are killed or severely injured while trying to cross a street to catch a bus or after getting off a bus. This is because in many cases, the closest signaled crosswalk can be a quarter-mile, half-mile, or even farther away from the bus stop. We'll work with SHA and WMATA to eliminate dangerous mid-block crossings by building pedestrian-activated signals and moving bus stops to crosswalks;**
- 2. Convert “hot-right,” high-speed right turns into sidewalk and curb bump-outs. These turning movements, present at hundreds of County and SHA intersections, encourage drivers not to stop while merging into traffic, diverting their attention from pedestrians or bicyclists to their right. It’s a dangerous-by-design concept that we can eliminate;**
- 3. Adopt traffic engineering standards that prioritize safe design over vehicle throughput and encourage MCDOT traffic engineers to use the discretion available to them to recommend spot safety improvements; and**
- 4. Finally invest in sidewalk and bikeway projects around the County that have been repeatedly delayed or that have been consistently “under review” in the County’s six-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP).**

Marc Elrich - Questions for 2022 ACT Scorecard

Toll Lanes

1. Will you oppose all plans for toll lanes built by "public-private partnerships" on I-270, the Beltway, or the American Legion Bridge?

Yes, I do not support a "public-private partnership" and I don't believe that the improvements that could be made require tolling or a P3. From Frederick through the spur, between 1 and 2 lanes in each direction can be gained within pretty much the existing pavement. We know that the traffic is highly directional and AM and PM rushes are congested in the peak directions. Reversibles would work. The American Legion Bridge should be targeted for Federal Funding, as was done for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. There are ways to gain rush hour capacity without building expensive lanes that will each sit empty for 20 hours a day.

MARC

2. Should all-day two-way MARC service be the county's highest-priority goal for rail transit expansion in the I-270 corridor? Do you support a request for capital improvements to increase the number of trains per week as a high priority in the transportation priorities letter?

Yes, I support all-day two-way service as the top rail expansion project. It would have a major impact on reducing traffic that's generated from north of Clarksburg. I support requesting this as a high priority capital improvement and I worked with Delegate Jared Solomon and support the effort to get serious investment in this from the state. To make MARC a viable option that attracts riders, we need a faster link from Fredrick via a rapid express bus down to Germantown or Metropolitan Grove MARC station(s) because currently the train from Fredrick takes way too much time. A faster link would likely increase usage of MARC from Fredrick, Urbana and Clarksburg if we can provide a quick trip to Metropolitan Grove and/or Germantown.

Halting construction of new state highways and arterials

3. Do you support removing new county and state highways and arterials from county plans, including M83, Observation Drive Extended, the Norbeck/Georgia grade-separated interchange, Montrose Parkway East, and the 355 Bypass in Clarksburg?

In general I would support pulling new county and state highways from our plans. As someone who actually fought and worked against the ICC, M83 and Montrose Parkway, including Montrose East, I have a record on this. And as County Executive, we have had M83 removed from COG's "Visualize 2045" plan. (We also had the managed lanes project removed from Visualize 2045 but the County Council, led by CM Hans Riemer, undermined that effort and worked with the Governor to help reinstate support for the overly expensive, unnecessary Managed Lanes plan.) I also do not support the Clarksburg bypass, and it is not part of the Department of Transportation's plan going forward. I think there are a couple of fixes that we need to make because of how messed up we've allowed some parts of our county to become. The Norbeck/Georgia interchange is a problem and the traffic still piles up there, in part because of a huge development that was allowed to go in there, across from the entrance gates to Leisure World. It creates a major bottleneck and a real pedestrian hazard and I'm open to solutions, including a bridge, if nothing else works. The Observation Drive project is important to bringing BRT to Clarksburg because 355 is not proximate enough to the neighborhoods and commercial centers to adequately provide useful transit service; the Observation Drive project provides connectivity into the residential and commercial areas of Clarksburg and will enable us to increase transit accessibility and ridership. It is also quite small - 4500 feet. In modeling, a single route along 355 doesn't get the ridership that we would otherwise get from bringing ridership deeper into Clarksburg. This is a very small project, does not function as a highway or arterial and it improves mobility for transit.

Land Use

4. If your only choice was whether or not to approve Thrive 2050 as currently written, would you vote yes or no?

I'd vote no on Thrive as it's currently written. Putting more development in Potomac, Boyds and Poolesville is just encouraging sprawl which will only be car oriented. Our current Master Plans locate almost all the new housing, which is actually tens of thousands of more units than anticipated to be needed by 2050, at urban centers and activity centers, which were planned to accommodate this anticipated growth and they align with the Red Line and the BRT lines along 355, the CCT, Georgia Ave and RTE 29. All the projections of the population growth are based on the Park and Plannings estimates of the growth that will occur, in five year intervals, over the next 30 years. In short, we zoned for the growth and we're zoned in the right places for growth. All of these centers combine housing and jobs in centers linked to transit - TOD.

Thrive was found by OLO to not include input from low income residents and communities of color and not address historical racial inequities nor how to measure impacts going forward. Thrive takes a Kochian approach of assuming that simply building more housing will increase the number of affordable units - personally I don't believe in trickle down economics and it has been disproven

repeatedly. Just one small example of this, the projected growth between 2020 and 2030 was 40,000 households, of which, 3/4 will require subsidies and 1/4 could afford market rate. The county requires between 12 1/2 and 15% percent of a development to be affordable at MPDU units, and these would only serve about 10,000 households, and none of the rest. But, and this is the problem, requiring only 15% of 10,000 market units will only yield 1500 MPDUs leaving 28500 households who will need affordable housing without it.

Our policies are designed to fail because we don't require developers to build what we need - and we get only what we require. With well over 100,000 units yet to be built, and 45,000 of them ready to be built, we could change the outcomes by changing what's required to be built - both the affordability by widening the groups that have to be accommodated, and by increasing the percentage of affordable units required to be built.

Thrive, instead of requiring the mix of housing we need, resorts to magical thinking. They suggest that homeowners will sell their houses to be developed into duplexes, tri-plexes and occasional small apartments - but there are no requirements for affordability. Real estate people I've talked to have said repeatedly that they'd expect these units to match or exceed the price of existing neighborhood units and not produce affordable units. Essentially, Thrive abandons the tools we have to build the housing we need, and instead relies on homeowners to sell their properties to developers, without requirements, and hopes for affordable units (none are required for developments under 20 units).

Finally, since the housing numbers needed don't change, Thrive would shift development from the activity centers and urban centers that combine all the urban amenities that we need, to individual BRT stops along roads that are basically single family or mixed housing neighborhoods - actually removing them from proximity to the infrastructure they require. To explain further: centering development in a place like Wheaton where there is robust transit is better than dispersing development to an area on a road that may have only one BRT stop.

So, I can't support a plan that represents bad planning, ignores racial equity and has no plan to house the large and growing part of the population that needs housing. It doesn't even acknowledge the magnitude of the problem, contributes to sprawl and moves people away from activity centers.

Pedestrian Safety/balanced transportation/climate change

5. Do you support the reallocation of existing road space from cars to sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus-only lanes, even if it might cause vehicle delay and/or reduce parking?

I have long advocated for a bus rapid transit network (I first presented routes to the Planning Board chair in 2008), and we are working on making that reality. We need to be able to credibly tell employees and businesses that we will put in place

the transit system needed to bring employees to work while providing safe and efficient transportation, and we need to combine that with mode shares to limit parking and to drive people to transit and other forms of non-auto transportation. I support bus only lanes, and I favor building as much as we can using reversible lanes which, if done right, reduce impervious surfaces, and the need for property takings. I favor continuing to build out the bike network and support prioritizing projects that connect communities to downtowns, schools, and transportation first. I support improving the sidewalk infrastructure and would make pedestrian, bike and bus improvements even when they could cause some delays - particularly when it comes to signalized crossings that can't be successfully completed within the light cycle. I've been implementing a major increase in the use of flex poles and mobile curbs to narrow streets and square corners so drivers are forced to reduce speeds and to focus on who is entering, or in, an intersection.

Candidate Name:

Peter James

Questions for 2022 ACT Scorecard

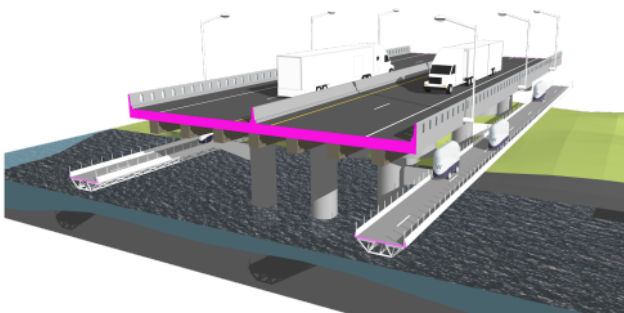
Toll Lanes

1. Will you oppose all plans for toll lanes built by "public-private partnerships" on I-270, the Beltway, or the American Legion Bridge?

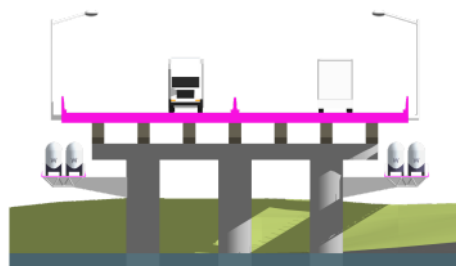
Charging fees for better transportation is in direct opposition of my goals to provide true transportation equity to MoCo residents.

I am 100% opposed to toll lanes or even more lanes on any MoCo roads. If elected will build personal rapid transit instead. PRTs can carry 10 times the traffic in the same space as one highway lane.

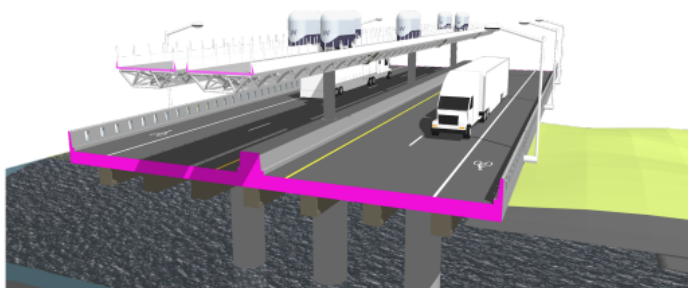
Here is a picture of what we should do to the American Legion Bridge



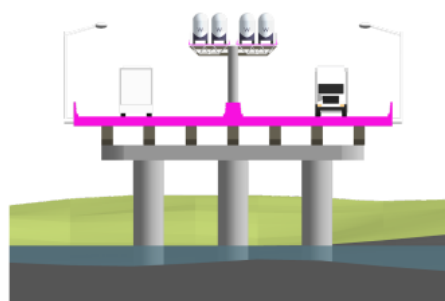
Column-supported below traffic level



Section



Center-supported above traffic



Section

This approach requires no re-enforcement to the bridge and will double the bridge's capacity for a very tiny fraction of the cost of a rebuild and be completed 2 years earlier than a new bridge.

MARC

2. Should all-day two-way MARC service be the county's highest-priority goal for rail transit expansion in the I-270 corridor? Do you support a request for capital improvements to increase the number of trains per week as a high priority in the transportation priorities letter?

I will first produce a Digital Twin simulation of all proposed transportation systems. By simulating each alternative under actual travel demand conditions we will “see” exactly what it will cost (both to build and maintain & operate), the impact on other infrastructure, land use, environmental impact, right-of-way cost and acquisition delays, etc.

It makes no rational sense to use 200 year old technologies, to solve our transportation needs of today.

I will certainly simulate proposed Marc expansion in the MoCo digital twin simulator using accurate travel demand models (they don't currently exist). We will see how marc expansion stack up to the other alternatives. I will in fact use a form of artificial intelligence call genetic algorithms and quantum computers to design MoCo optimal and best in the World transportation system.

I already have some of the best genetic algorithm and transportation scientist, a quantum computer company and a quantum programming company that have agreed to apply these technologies to optimize transportation.

Unlike, other candidates who tells us they will find “the experts”, I have the experts in hand ready to hit the ground running.

My transportation plan is a hybrid electric vehicle system of autonomous guideways and the ability drive the pods off the guideways to final destinations.

This plan will save us billions of dollars and take the best of both transit and highways to work for all MoCo residents.

Halting construction of new state highways and arterials

3. Do you support removing new county and state highways and arterials from county plans, including M83, Observation Drive Extended, the Norbeck/Georgia grade-separated interchange, Montrose Parkway East, and the 355 Bypass in Clarksburg?

With the exception of possible at grade alignments for low cost autonomous PRT guideway. Not only will I stop road expansion, but with implementation of PRT i'll be skinking the current land area used for cars ie. roads and surface parking.

Land Use

4. If your only choice was whether or not to approve Thrive 2050 as currently written, would you vote yes or no?

NO.

We need people oriented development not transportation oriented development. I am over a 15 minute walk away from MD355 transit. So my 15 minute neighbor has no amenities other then housing and very nice access to Senaca Creek park.

The entire County will be in 3D on your phone. You will be able to tap on your phone and

- Have a car delivered
- Have a pot hole fixed
- Find out exactly where your application is in the counties now transparent service processes
- See what exactly what that proposed development looks like

The PRT. I am proposing, will make half the county accessible to everyone in 15 minutes.

Not a single person I have asked knew what THrive2050 is. I propose a 3D digital twin that would provide 3D simulations of all propose general plan, zoning, development and transportation system. The digital twin would generate expected loads on infrastructure like ridership, parking area needed, utilities, roads, water & sewer, school enrollment, etc.

Pedestrian Safety/balanced transportation/climate change

5. Do you support the reallocation of existing road space from cars to sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus-only lanes, even if it might cause vehicle delay and/or reduce parking?

I intend to put the entire county on a road diet. Currently, 4.8% of the County's land area is dedicated to car movement and storage. More than land area used by buildings.

Yes this is the outcome of my personal rapid transit network plan. For instance, MD355 BRT is stalled because MoCo must acquire 12' set backs from Pike & Rose developers. Even if the County can pull off the ROW acquisition, this would push the cost of right-of-way beyond all other capital costs of a dedicated center lane the preferred alternative.

All other candidates support BRTs which aren't working on RT 29 ABC News 7 report - <https://wjla.com/news/local/montgomery-cos-new-rapid-bus-transit-line-is-up-running-so-where-are-the-riders>

By redirecting billions of BRT and other transportation boondoggles to PRT, the bulk of the saving can be directed to solving the county's other pressing needs, like truly affordable house, racial equity in education, etc.

The PRT in Morgantown achieved Vision Zero in 1975. The PRT in Morgantown has not had one crash that has caused a serious injury or death.

I have supplied the Council and county Executive with studies and articles on how articulating buses the type proposed for MoCo's BRT are involved in 3 to 5 times as many serious crashes as standard buses. I have also supplied studies that show, on a per passenger mile basis LRT and BRT are 8 times more likely to injure pedestrians than automobiles. Passengers on transit vehicles are definitely safer than occupants of cars. But the safety risks to pedestrians is too high and is an equity issue as the pedestrian being injured are typically of a lower social economic level than passengers.

My proposed PRT solution takes only 1% of the land area as dedicated center lane BRT. Cost 1/4 the capital cost and 1/10th the O&M costs. Not only does it eliminate the need to take 24' from property owners, PRTs will reduce traffic to the extent that 355 can be reduced by two lanes (6 to 4) and eliminate rush hour congestion on surface streets along 355.

My transportation plan will produce a net gain for 50' of road frontage for the most walkable streets in the world.

PRT are just bike paths and foot bridges and can be built much quicker than BRT, LRT or heavy rail. See this PRT, BRT & LRT comparison [study by UMD](#) for the Purple line alignment.

I am also the only candidate technically qualified to usher in the replacement of delivery trucks with delivery robots (passed MD legislature in 2021). This will also reclaim road and parking surfaces for pedestrian and bike use.

I am currently performing a smart crosswalk study for the SHA to determine which technologies can be used to mitigate pedestrian deaths and serious injuries at mid block and at night. This is where 75% of pedestrian involved crashes are happening.

Here is the MoCo's high injury roadway segments, real-time traffic cameras that can be used to collect road condition data and MoCo 19 smart intersection. Sha.ccaway.net

This web app also provides a glimpse at the tech I would employ to build a 3D digital twin simulation of the County.

Please watch the many videos on my proposed transportation solutions at pjames.us

Hans Riemer - Questions for 2022 ACT Scorecard

Toll Lanes

1. Will you oppose all plans for toll lanes built by "public-private partnerships" on I-270, the Beltway, or the American Legion Bridge?

I would prefer that toll lanes be built by the State of Maryland, like we have on the ICC. However, I do not oppose toll lanes built by public-private partnerships as Virginia has done. I oppose toll lanes of any kind on the Beltway through Silver Spring.

MARC

2. Should all-day two-way MARC service be the county's highest-priority goal for rail transit expansion in the I-270 corridor? Do you support a request for capital improvements to increase the number of trains per week as a high priority in the transportation priorities letter?

I strongly support all-day two-way MARC service, and I worked, in my capacity as a member of the T&E Committee, to strengthen the County's commitment to MARC improvements in the recently approved Corridor Forward: I-270 Transit Plan. I have also successfully advocated to include transformational MARC improvements, including all-day two-way service and thru-running to Virginia, included in the County's Transportation Priorities Letter.

The change of administration in Annapolis will give us a unique opportunity to pursue bold changes to MARC, and I intend on seizing that opportunity.

Halting construction of new state highways and arterials

3. Do you support removing new county and state highways and arterials from county plans, including M83, Observation Drive Extended, the Norbeck/Georgia grade-separated interchange, Montrose Parkway East, and the 355 Bypass in Clarksburg?

I oppose M-83 because I believe that BRT on 355 provides a reasonable alternative. I have supported phase 1 of Observation Drive Extended because it will serve as the route for BRT into Clarksburg and it provides needed pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure in the UpCounty with the proposed sidepath. Several years ago I worked to shift funding out of Montrose East, which I think is not necessary, into critical transit and bike projects. I support a Norbeck/Georgia grade-separated interchange although there are ways to minimize the design, as we identified for Randolph and Veirs Mill.

Land Use

4. If your only choice was whether or not to approve Thrive 2050 as currently written, would you vote yes or no?

Yes! I support Thrive as an action we can take to promote climate solutions, economic competitiveness and racial justice.

Pedestrian Safety/balanced transportation/climate change

5. Do you support the reallocation of existing road space from cars to sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus-only lanes, even if it might cause vehicle delay and/or reduce parking?

Yes. For the last 10+ years on the Council, I have led the County Government's shift in thinking—and funding—to moving people safely and efficiently, not just cars.

To that end, I have advocated for and supported dedicated bus lanes in our BRT projects, notably on US29, Veirs Mill Rd., and MD 355.

Creating safe and efficient routes for bicyclists and pedestrians to get where they are going has been a primary focus of my work on the Council. Encouraged by research on the ridership and safety benefits of safe bicycle infrastructure and steadfast advocacy from WABA, Sierra Club and others, I created the Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Areas (BiPPA) funds in 2014 to start building out networks in many of the County's growing urban areas. BiPPA has exceeded our expectations, serving as the main source of a) planning new bicycle and pedestrian projects and b) building those projects. The Silver Spring Loop, Bethesda Cycletrack Network, and the soon to come cycletrack in Wheaton are all the fruits of this labor.

My priorities on bicycle infrastructure going forward are the following:

- Finishing the dedicated bicycle lane networks in Silver Spring, Bethesda, and North Bethesda. We must finish what we started.
- Build the tunnel under MD 355 on the Capital Crescent Trail
- Include funding in the 6 year capital budget for all Tier 1 Bicycle Projects, as identified by the Bicycle Master Plan, with particular urgency for the projects located in the County's Equity Emphasis Areas.
- Build on our recent successful partnerships with SHA (Old Georgetown Rd. and University Blvd) to get more safe bicycle infrastructure on State Highways. State leadership on bicycle issues has been improving recently, and we need to hold their feet to the fire to continue.
- Strategically add new bicycle infrastructure when County roads are being repaved

My priorities on pedestrian infrastructure going forward are:

- Approve the pedestrian master plan and start programming funds to the most urgent recommendations
- Dedicate more funding to the sidewalk funds so that we can start building out more sidewalks in our neighborhoods

- Work closely with our disability community to incorporate the latest and best thinking in accessibility for pedestrian infrastructure

These priorities will require significant financial resources, and I will continue my work of strategically redirecting funds to bicycle and pedestrian projects. I will also work hard to secure state and federal grants for this critical infrastructure.

I believe that conditions of the street (geometry, sight lines, traffic conditions, speed, land use context etc) dictate the appropriate treatment. For instance, a breezeway on a narrow, tree-line neighborhood street is probably appropriate while a separated bike lane is needed on a street like Fenton. The infrastructure needs to be comfortable and safe for every bike rider, young, old, experienced, and inexperienced.