

**2015 Houston City Elections  
Transportation Issues Questionnaire  
Citizens' Transportation Coalition**

Return to in MS Word format to [chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org); by 25 Sept 2015; Answer at least one question per Topic Group  
DEXTER R. HANDY, Chair, Citizens' Transportation Coalition, phone: 832-724-8753 [email: chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org)



**Citizens' Transportation Coalition**

PO BOX 66532, HOUSTON TX 77266-6532

Candidate name: Chris Bell

Position sought: Mayor of Houston

List briefly what you consider to be the top 3 (or 4) obligations for your position or needs of your district (if applicable)

1. Manage the City's finances toward long-term stability, including pension obligations
2. Build and repair lasting infrastructure, including using fast and effective ways of repairing streets
3. Reduce traffic congestion with new and expanded public transportation options
4. Work with the City's school districts to improve early education and workforce education

**Topic A: Complete Streets Policy**

The Houston Complete Streets Coalition notes that "Streets are a vital part of livable, attractive communities. Everyone, regardless of age, ability, income, race, or ethnicity, ought to have safe, comfortable, and convenient access to community destinations and public places—whether walking, driving, bicycling, or taking public transportation. But too many of our streets are designed only for speeding cars or, worse, creeping traffic jams." Furthermore, the city policy currently does not adequately address safety.

**1.Question:** Please explain how you will support the City of Houston's goal to make the Complete Streets concepts a reality city wide, and particularly, in your specific district's neighborhoods.

**I absolutely support the expansion of Complete Streets throughout the city. The most effective way to 'complete' Complete Streets is to include the concept in the plans for new development. However, there are opportunities for building Complete Streets into existing neighborhoods where sidewalks are being repaired or replaced, or streets are being expanded to include bikepaths or pedestrian improvements.**

**I would especially advocate for creative additions, public art, sculpture and creative public space to always be a part of the Complete Streets concept.**

**2.Question:** How would you achieve the following safety features in Houston's Complete Street & Plan Zero policies?

**2015 Houston City Elections  
Transportation Issues Questionnaire  
Citizens' Transportation Coalition**

Return to in MS Word format to [chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org); by 25 Sept 2015; Answer at least one question per Topic Group  
DEXTER R. HANDY, Chair, Citizens' Transportation Coalition, phone: 832-724-8753 [email:chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org)

---

- a. Complete, Safe, and Maintained Sidewalk Networks?
- b. Bike Plan Implementation?
- c. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) federal compliance?
- d. Lower Speed Limits and/or Speed Calming Features?
- e. Reduction in Traffic Deaths?

**3.Question:** How will you pursue the Complete Streets & Transportation Plans to ensure a connected equitable safe multimodal system?

**4.Question:** Under what circumstances should a developer or utility be granted a variance from sidewalk construction and/or maintenance?

**5.Question:** Instead of allowing utility poles in the middle of a sidewalk, what other solution would you support to resolve this situation?—e.g. have sidewalk go around; have utility site pole to the side of the sidewalk; use of greenspace; underground utility; city regulations for pole placements, etc.

Preferences for mobility and reducing traffic congestion are rapidly changing.

The April 2015 Kinder Houston Area Study for reducing traffic congestion

[https://kinder.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Urban\\_Research\\_Center/News/2015%20Kinder%20Institute%20HAS\\_PDF\\_4by3-1.pdf](https://kinder.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Urban_Research_Center/News/2015%20Kinder%20Institute%20HAS_PDF_4by3-1.pdf)

lists the top 3 transportation modes as

- Roadways: 26% in 2015 (down from 33% in 2009)
- Urbanism: 27%
- Transit: 43%

**6. Question:** Focusing on urbanism and transit, how will you propose to upgrade infrastructure to facilitate citizens' increased preferences for urbanism and transit as noted in the Kinder/Klineberg study?

## **Topic B: Traffic Congestion, Streets, Parking, Signalization, Mobility Studies**

Traffic can flow more efficiently if signals are properly synchronized and can reset when they go out. This lessens the time spent in vehicles, reduces the space needed for cars queuing at intersections, and reduces fuel waste and air pollution. Science and modeling have improved since signal syncing was last a major initiative.

Poor signalization is especially a problem on major arterials and freeway access roads around commercial activity centers.

**7. Question:** Please explain your support (or non-support) for some form of rail, either commuter or light rail, to reduce traffic congestion on major arteries.

**8. Question:** What efforts should the city, in cooperation with other agencies, do to make computer controlled intelligent traffic light synchronization?

**2015 Houston City Elections  
Transportation Issues Questionnaire  
Citizens' Transportation Coalition**

Return to in MS Word format to [chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org); by 25 Sept 2015; Answer at least one question per Topic Group  
DEXTER R. HANDY, Chair, Citizens' Transportation Coalition, phone: 832-724-8753 [email:chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org)

---

**I included traffic light synchronization as a priority when I announced my candidacy in January. Our campaign policy staff has spent significant time reviewing what works and what doesn't work. The most impressive technology appears to be working in Los Angeles, a city with diverse topography, many streets that don't all run in straight lines, and many streets which serve as major thoroughfares as the topography limits options for new or expanded freeways.**

**In Los Angeles, the synchronization of traffic lights occurs in real-time, meaning that if a street becomes significantly congested, centralized software allows controllers to change the lights to relieve the congestion.**

**Simply timing the changing of the lights is not sufficient. So, I would advocate for a more technologically advanced system such as that in Los Angeles to keep traffic moving on our many predictably congested streets and thoroughfares.**

**As for working with other agencies, of course, agencies working through Houston Transtar would be involved. But I have also proposed moving Streets and Traffic Management from under the umbrella of Public Works and Engineering as a direct report to the Mayor department to increase accountability and efficiency.**

**9. Question:** Which measures will you encourage to minimize traffic congestion?

- a. Promotion of smaller vehicles
- b. Improved Mass Transit
- c. More vehicle lane miles
- d. More bicycle use
- e. Increased gas tax

**Topic C: Competing Vehicular Passenger Cars-Jitneys, Ride Share, and Others**

**10. Question:** Please express your views on ride share and jitney programs in Houston as substitutes for single passenger vehicles.

**I am an advocate for leaving all options open to reduce traffic and traffic emissions. If you're suggestion Uber-type systems, they appear to have become a reality not likely to wane any time soon, so we must work to ensure safety and accountability among such programs. The same for jitneys, though I would again advocate for safety and accountability, and perhaps consider some form of licensure for unregulated automobile transports.**

**Topic D: Bike Trails and Bayou Greenway Initiatives**

Bayou Greenways is an approximately \$480 million project that will be tackled by many public and private stakeholders in several phases over ten to fifteen years.

**2015 Houston City Elections  
Transportation Issues Questionnaire  
Citizens' Transportation Coalition**

Return to in MS Word format to [chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org); by 25 Sept 2015; Answer at least one question per Topic Group  
DEXTER R. HANDY, Chair, Citizens' Transportation Coalition, phone: 832-724-8753 [email:chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org)

---

When complete, the greater Houston area will have added 4,000 acres of new and equitably distributed green spaces that can also serve the function of flood control and storm water quality enhancement.

We will have also completed 300 miles of continuous all-weather hike and bike trails that will meander through those greenways — an amenity unparalleled in the nation.

(Source: <http://www.bayougreenways.org/bayou-greenway-initiative>)

**11. Question:** Please describe your position on integrating people, walking, hike, and bike pathways into our public transit system (i.e., Metro, Park & Ride, Transit Center, & Neighborhood connectivity).

**The city's walkability must be improved, and again, when I announced for mayor, I pledged to build or repair 200 miles of sidewalks in my first term, using the measure of just 76 miles having been built or repaired in Fiscal Year 2014.**

**I have committed my full support to Bike Houston, as far as the City's finances are able to commit to helping implement their plans, and I am firmly committed to keeping all options for improvements to mass transportation open to consideration. Any appointments to the Metro board I may have the opportunity to make as Mayor would reflect that commitment.**

**Topic E: Multi-modal Transit Alternatives (Bus, HOV/HOT, Light Rail, Bikes, Ride Share, Jitney, Park & Ride, Walking)**

One in five adult Texans cannot or does not drive.

Houston METRO comprehensively redesigned the city's transit system with implementation, and rolled out the new system in August 2015.

Hard choices were made about reducing expensive service to very small numbers of people, where ridership was low despite bus service being the only choice for transportation in these poor/minority communities.

The plan devotes 80% of Metro's resources to maximizing ridership, which all of these frequent lines do, and only 20% to providing access to people living in poor/low ridership areas of the city.

**12. Question:** Please express your views on the need for more transit for the Houston region to serve the one in five adults (plus children) that do not drive.

**While recent revisions to bus lines were made across the City, improvement planning must be ongoing. Improving bus service is likely the most accessible option, but we should look at bus rapid transit (fixed bus lines that are less expensive to build than light rail) and even commuter rail should remain as an option as our suburban areas grow and our traffic problems worsen.**

**2015 Houston City Elections  
Transportation Issues Questionnaire  
Citizens' Transportation Coalition**

Return to in MS Word format to [chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org); by 25 Sept 2015; Answer at least one question per Topic Group  
DEXTER R. HANDY, Chair, Citizens' Transportation Coalition, phone: 832-724-8753 [email:chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org)

**Topic F: Passenger Rail – High Speed Rail & Commuter Rail**

**13. Question:** What is your position on developing high-quality rail connections for passengers between Houston and other major Texas cities?

**14. Question:** How will you as a city official work with constituents to abate the impacts of commuter or High Speed Rail on neighborhoods?

**I will work with constituents to the fullest extent possible. As Mayor, I would insist that residents most closely impacted by High Speed Rail be at the table for discussions about related development and safety, and I would insist that city officials stay involved with neighborhoods as construction proceeds.**

**Topic G: Shipping - Freight Rail, Heavy Truck Traffic, Port Authority**

**15. Question:** How should the city and other governmental authorities, such as the Gulf Coast Freight Rail District, cooperate with the state legislature to enact statutes that preserve and allow for expansion of freight rail corridors?

**I am the only candidate to raise the issue of rail safety in this mayor's race. Please visit [bellformayor.com](http://bellformayor.com) to see a white paper on the safety risks of volatile crude oil trains.**

**As ground shipping increases with more ships coming through the Panama Canal, we need to keep congestion and safety high on our legislative agenda. I want to be involved in the planning of highway expansions through Houston and ensure they do not negatively impact neighborhoods.**

**Topic H: Public Infrastructure Ordinances and Policy**

**16. Question:** Should it be a protocol for the design manuals established by Public Works & Engineering (eg Chapter 9 Storm water Design) to be incorporated by reference into ordinances and integrated with other design standards to survive political administration turnovers?

**17. Question:** Does the city have an independent obligation to oversee compliance with planning requirements in order to avoid complaint driven enforcement (i.e., brought up from below by affected citizens who have the money and time to protest)?

**Yes, the City should be strict with enforcement as policy, and to avoid future legal challenges.**

**18. Question:** Do you support designating seats for representatives who are active in neighborhood organizations such as the SuperNeighborhood Alliance instead of having a significant number of planning commission seats filled by professionals in the building, real estate, and construction industry?

**2015 Houston City Elections  
Transportation Issues Questionnaire  
Citizens' Transportation Coalition**

Return to in MS Word format to [chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org); by 25 Sept 2015; Answer at least one question per Topic Group  
DEXTER R. HANDY, Chair, Citizens' Transportation Coalition, phone: 832-724-8753 [email: chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org)

---

**19. Question:** The Planning Commission and/or City Engineer can grant variances to almost any City Building/Construction Ordinance. How will you reduce the number of variances granted?

**20. Question:** How should the city handle the increased infrastructure demands and other cumulative impacts of Chapter 42?

---

**2015 Houston City Elections  
Transportation Issues Questionnaire  
Citizens' Transportation Coalition**

Return to in MS Word format to [chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org); by 25 Sept 2015; Answer at least one question per Topic Group  
DEXTER R. HANDY, Chair, Citizens' Transportation Coalition, phone: 832-724-8753 [email: chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org)

Here is an overview of the CTC transportation topics and questions.

Question #	Category	Questions for Candidates
<b>Topic A: Complete Streets Policy</b>		
1	Complete Streets Policy	Please explain how you will support the City of Houston's goal to make the Complete Streets concepts a reality city wide, and particularly, in your specific district's neighborhoods.
2	Complete Streets Policy	How would you achieve these safety features in Houston's Complete Street & Plan Zero policies?
		2a Complete, Safe, and Maintained Sidewalk Networks?
		2b Bike Plan Implementation?
		2c Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) federal compliance?
		2d Lower Speed Limits and/or Speed Calming Features?
		2e Reduction in Traffic Deaths?
3	Complete Streets Policy	How will you pursue the Complete Streets & Transportation Plans to ensure a connected equitable safe multimodal system?
4	Complete Streets Policy	Under what circumstances should a developer or utility be granted a variance from sidewalk construction and/or maintenance?
5	Complete Streets Policy	Instead of allowing utility poles in the middle of a sidewalk, what other solution would you support to resolve this situation?—e.g. have sidewalk go around; have utility site pole to the side of the sidewalk; use of greenspace; underground utility; city regulations for pole placements, etc.
6	Traffic Congestion, Streets, Parking, Signalization, Mobility Studies	Focusing on urbanism and transit, how will you propose to upgrade infrastructure to facilitate citizens' increased preferences for urbanism and transit as noted in the Kinder/Klineberg study?
<b>Topic B: Traffic Congestion, Streets, Parking</b>		
7	Traffic Congestion, Streets, Parking, Signalization, Mobility Studies	Please explain your support (or non-support) for some form of rail, either commuter or light rail, to reduce traffic congestion on major arteries.
8	Traffic Congestion, Streets, Parking, Signalization, Mobility Studies	What efforts should the city, in cooperation with other agencies, do to make computer controlled intelligent traffic light synchronization?
9	Traffic Congestion, Streets, Parking, Signalization, Mobility Studies	Which measures will you encourage to minimize traffic congestion?
		9a · Promotion of smaller vehicles
		9b · Improved Mass Transit

**2015 Houston City Elections  
Transportation Issues Questionnaire  
Citizens' Transportation Coalition**

Return to in MS Word format to [chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org); by 25 Sept 2015; Answer at least one question per Topic Group  
DEXTER R. HANDY, Chair, Citizens' Transportation Coalition, phone: 832-724-8753 [email: chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org)

		9c · More vehicle lane miles
		9d · More bicycle use
		9e · Increased gas tax
<b>Topic C: Competing Vehicular Passenger Cars - Jitneys, Ride Share, and Others</b>		
10	Competing vehicular passenger cars-Jitneys, Ride Share, & others	Please express your views on ride share and jitney programs in Houston as substitutes for single passenger vehicles.
<b>Topic D: Bike Trails and Bayou Greenway Initiatives</b>		
11	Bike Trails and Bayou Greenway Initiatives	Please describe your position on integrating people, walking, hike, and bike pathways into our public transit system (i.e., Metro, Park & Ride, Transit Center, & Neighborhood connectivity).
<b>Topic E: Multi-modal Transit Alternatives (bus, HOV/HOT, Light Rail, Bikes, Ride Share, Jitney, Park &amp; Ride, Walking)</b>		
12	Multi-modal Transit Alternatives (bus, HOV/HOT, light rail, bikes, ride share, jitney, park and ride, walking)	Please express your views on the need for more transit for the Houston region to serve the one in five adults (plus children) that do not drive.
<b>Topic F: Passenger Rail – High Speed Rail &amp; Commuter Rail</b>		
13	Passenger rail - HSR, commuter rail	What is your position on developing high-quality rail connections for passengers between Houston and other major Texas cities?
14	Passenger rail - HSR, commuter rail	How will you as a city official work with constituents to abate the impacts of commuter or High Speed Rail on neighborhoods?
<b>Topic G: Shipping, Freight Rail, Heavy Truck Traffic, Port Authority</b>		
15	Shipping - freight rail, heavy truck traffic, Port Authority	How should the city and other governmental authorities, such as the Gulf Coast Freight Rail District, cooperate to enact statutes that preserve and allows for expansion of freight rail corridors?
<b>Topic H: Public Infrastructure Ordinances and Policy</b>		
16	Public Infrastructure Ordinances and Policy	Should it be a protocol for the design manuals established by Public Works & Engineering (eg Chapter 9 Stormwater Design) to be incorporated by reference into ordinances and integrated with other design standards to survive political administration turnovers?
17	Public Infrastructure Ordinances and Policy	Does the city have an independent obligation to oversee compliance with planning requirements in order to avoid complaint driven enforcement (i.e., brought up from below by affected citizens who have the money and time to protest)?

**2015 Houston City Elections  
Transportation Issues Questionnaire  
Citizens' Transportation Coalition**

Return to in MS Word format to [chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org); by 25 Sept 2015; Answer at least one question per Topic Group  
DEXTER R. HANDY, Chair, Citizens' Transportation Coalition, phone: 832-724-8753 [email: chair@ctchouston.org](mailto:chair@ctchouston.org)

18	Public Infrastructure Ordinances and Policy	Do you support designating seats for representatives who are active in neighborhood organizations such as the Super Neighborhood Alliance instead of having a significant number of planning commission seats filled by professionals in the building, real estate, and construction industry?
19	Public Infrastructure Ordinances and Policy	The Planning Commission and/or City Engineer can grant variances to almost any City Building/Construction Ordinance. How will you reduce the number of variances granted?
20	Public Infrastructure Ordinances and Policy	How should the city handle the increased infrastructure demands and other cumulative impacts of Chapter 42?