



## 2018 State Assembly Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Bridget Fitzgerald

District: 41st State Senate

1. We live in an era when more Illinois residents from the ages of 8 to 80 are choosing to walk, bike and ride public transit. How do you incorporate walking, biking and public transit into your everyday life? **Do you, or a family member, routinely walk, bicycle or use transit for any of the trips listed below? If so, please circle.**

**Walk:**            Go to work            Bring child to school            Errands            Recreation            Other

**Bike:**            Go to work            Bring child to school            Errands            Recreation            Other

**Transit:**        Go to work            Bring child to school            Errands            Recreation            Other

*Comments:*

Active transportation is a natural part of life in many of Chicago's suburbs. However, in places where kids need to cross busy roads to get to school or there are no grocery stores in the neighborhoods (and no bike lanes connecting neighborhoods), active transportation isn't an option. I'm lucky enough to live in Western Springs, which is well connected via transit and a safe place to bike and walk, but this is not true throughout my district.

2. Chicagoland transit agencies face a \$19.4 billion need to maintain and modernize existing infrastructure, yet state operating and capital funds for public transit have been cut several times in recent years.

- a. **Do you support restoring transit operations funding that was cut in the 2018 budget agreement: reverse 5% cut in the Public Transportation Fund and eliminate 1.5% fee for local governments that cost Chicago-area transit agencies \$24 million annually?**

**Yes**

No

- b. **Do you support dedicating at least 40 percent of transportation spending in any capital legislation to public transit?**

Yes

**No**

*Comments:*

Yes, I support significantly increasing funding for public transportation. Once elected, I will carefully consider the legislation I'm presented and advocate for increased public transportation funding. I am dedicated to passing a balanced budget every year and I will consider specific numbers and legislation once elected.

The percentage of funding that should be dedicated to public transportation can vary. The exact percentage depends on the specifics of the project and if public transportation is a smart choice for the area that improves the public transportation connectivity of the community and region.

My district includes outer-ring suburbs that are very poorly connected to the region's public transportation network. The best projects to benefit these areas would connect them to existing public transportation infrastructure in a way that minimizes the number of transfers needed for residents to get to work, school, healthcare appointments and more. I will consider these factor among others when making funding decisions.

3. Unlike many of its state department of transportation peers, The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) currently sets aside very little state-generated funds in support of walking and bicycling. Nearly all funds for dedicated biking and walking facilities and programs are either federal or local. **Do you support establishing a bike-walk fund in the state capital budget with a target annual appropriation of \$50 million, approximately 2 percent of the overall annual IDOT budget.**

- Yes**
- No

*Comments:*

Yes, I support additional funding for walking and biking, and once I am in the legislature I will consider specific legislation and funding amounts. Active transportation funding is essential for quality of life across Illinois and in my district. I support projects that would be widely utilized by community members.

4. On state-controlled roads, Illinois policy frequently prioritizes the swift movement of cars above more efficient modes of transportation and the safety of all road users. **Do you support reforming IDOT policies to support building more and better biking and walking facilities on state routes?**

- Yes**
- No

*Comments:*

In the Southern and Western suburbs, there are areas with important transportation corridors, but lack safe biking and walking corridors altogether. Many subdivisions are not connected to commercial areas at all other than by unsafe main roads used by high speed traffic.

5. Planning for the state's reconstruction of North Lake Shore Drive in Chicago is currently underway. Bus riders, who account for one-third of users on the roadway, get stuck in traffic every day, particularly during the morning and evening rush. **Do you support creating a new transit corridor on North Lake Shore Drive with its own dedicated lanes?**

- Yes**  
 No

*Comments:*

Although this is not in my district, it is an excellent idea I fully support.

6. The Illinois Toll Highway Authority recently decided to expand the Tri-State Tollway at a cost of \$4 billion, and recently opened the new Elgin-O'Hare toll road. At the same time, IDOT plans to widen Interstate 290 and Interstate 55. Research and experience show that expanding roads in urban areas only makes traffic congestion as bad or worse in the long run by inducing more people to drive, while physically isolating and undermining low-income neighborhoods. **Do you support a state policy that prioritizes lasting, cost-effective congestion relief and alternatives to driving, including better public transportation and rush-hour demand management strategies, rather than highway expansion?**

- Yes**  
 No

*Comments:*

Yes. The Metra train connects my district to downtown and has shaped the growth of many towns and the lives of many of my constituents. Maintaining funding for this corridor is absolutely essential to serve my constituents and maintain economic prosperity in the region. The Metra is an alternative to Interstate 290 and reduces congestion there while improving air quality.

7. Mobility equity is fundamental to human and civil rights. Like most of the United States, Illinois is designed around using a personal automobile for transportation. However, many low-income residents cannot afford a car, and they lack access to safe and convenient transportation options to get to jobs, schools, healthcare, recreation and other critical services. **Do you support establishing a transportation equity working group at IDOT with a focus on increasing and improving transportation options in vulnerable communities?**

- Yes**  
 No

*Comments:*

Yes. As demographics shift because more low income people move out of the city, mobility inequality is widened because of the incomplete and inefficient public transportation network in the suburbs. As a suburban candidate, supporting infrastructure, including public transportation that connects people to jobs and services, is a priority of mine.