



**Candidate Name:** Aylwin Bridges

**Office Seeking:** Ward 1

**Q1. Bicycling/walking and bike/pedestrian infrastructure enhances quality of life and addresses issues such as affordability, equity, access, health, and the safety of our streets. What can the City of Cleveland and you as an elected official do to actively encourage more people to bike and walk?**

**A1.** I will continue to encourage all individuals within Ward 1 and the city of Cleveland, to either bike or walk in and around your neighborhoods and throughout the city. These two exercises can assist in improving your overall physical, (muscular and heart) and along with your mental health.

**Q2. People bike and walk when it's safe, comfortable, and connects to the places they need to go. Cleveland's bike infrastructure is still disjointed. In your opinion, where are the most urgent gaps in our bike network and what steps do we need to take to close these gaps?**

**A2.** One of the most important disconnects in making better use of the bike infrastructure is that there are safety vehicle traffic issues. While biking, there is a shared road with automobiles. Current traffic laws such as speeding, and ignoring traffic signals makes biking a dangerous effort. The City of Cleveland must have a stronger enforcement effort in protecting bike riders and walkers. Another issue to address is the city must provide fixed bike racks in communities so that bike riders can park and secure their bikes so that they can either dine or shop without some fear that their bikes will be stolen.

**Q3. Cities across the country are installing protected bike lanes, bike lanes with physical separation between bike and automobile traffic, to encourage more people to ride and make roadways safer for all users. Do you support the installation of protected bike lanes on Cleveland's streets? Please explain why.**

**A3.** Yes I do encourage, recommend and I will support the necessary and required city ordinances to ensure roadway/street safety for bikers. As a prospective Council member, I will encourage bike riding, referencing my response to an earlier question. With this encouragement comes an obligation to provide the protection of those riding bikes in and around the city. The protected bike lanes must be the result of a dedicated effort and funding of improving the infrastructure, the streets in the city. During these discussions, certain and/or specific streets that require physical barriers, based upon proven traffic studies and examples from other metropolitan cities should be presented. In some cases the physical barriers might occur during designated road improvements. In some instances, the barriers might occur during a phase 2, within a specific and ideally a short project window.

**Q4. People take public transit when it's frequent, fast, reliable, safe, clean, and comfortable. The NextGen bus system redesign goes a long way to improving on this, but there is still much to be done. In your opinion, what steps do we need to take to close these gaps?**

**A4.** The RTA NextGen redesign will address system access and bus routing. As the NextGen implementation proceeds, there might be some necessary and required changes. These changes might be required due to some demographic (aging population) shifts within certain communities, along with the consideration of the utilization of the RTA system by school age children from one side of the city to the other. There should be a very careful look and ongoing review regarding the safety of utilizing the RTA buses and rail systems. This ongoing and review process should not only include the passengers, it must entail the bus drivers and rapid drivers. Other considerations that we might consider are implementing an electronic fare card scan system, or possible discounts for frequent riders, etc. The public transit system as noted is going through an operational change. The operational changes need to go well beyond just schedule and/or route additions and deletions. There must be equipment reviews and changes. Tantamount to all the NextGen efforts, a better method of communication needs to occur with the general public, the ridership, the end users of the system.

**Q5. Public transportation riders want a safe and comfortable place to wait for their bus or train and easy access to get there. Yet, often a bus stop is little more than a sign and pole stuck in the middle of a treelawn. How would you work to improve bus shelters and train stations and the sidewalks and pathways to get there?**

**A5.**

**Q6. About 25 percent of Cleveland households have no access to an automobile, and are dependent on public transportation/biking/walking. Peer cities are advancing multimodal transportation to improve safety, access to jobs, community health, the environment, and attract population. Have you ever been transit-dependent or car-free? What's your vision for public transportation and increased active transportation in Cleveland, how will you advance it, and how will you keep it functional year around?**

**A6.** Early in my teenage years, pre-driving and post through college, I did not own a car. I was dependent upon RTA to transit to and from high-school, church and volunteer activities at the VA hospital. The RTA at that time was not dependable. There were infrequent bus schedules during the early morning week days. During the weekend, the bus and rail schedules were reduced. If Cleveland wants to continue to advance, there should be careful consideration of implementing express bus service on certain routes during the week and weekends. Rail service, especially on the weekends should be improved, since one of the thoughts is for the residents, including near suburban citizens to take advantage of the numerous activities occurring in the University circle and downtown areas. Additional consideration should be given to having a "West Side Market Express Service" from the SE area (Ward 1) to the market. The same might hold true for the far westside areas. Maintaining ridership at a high, significant and profitable level especially during the winter time can be accomplished with various

considerations ranging from, timely service, reduced fares, ensuring that the access points to the services have access for all possible riders, including those with physical issues. Ensure that the equipment is in safe and proper working order, such as ensuring that the heating systems are working, etc.

**Q7. Fare revenue makes up about 10% of all funding for GCRTA while the agency spends \$1.8 million on police fare enforcement. Meanwhile, agencies like LA Metro and Kansas City are exploring free fares and other systems such as in Pittsburgh have introduced low-income fare discount programs. How much would you personally pay to ride public transit to work? How fast would you expect the trip to be door-to-door?**

**A7.** Let me address this question with these parameters. If all were perfect, clean buses and rail cars, a safe environment, timely service, I would be willing to pay \$6.00/day during rush hour or peak service and \$5.00/day during off peak service hours. From a door-to-door from

Ward 1 to downtown Cleveland, I would expect that this bus service would last no longer that 45 minutes inclusive of having passenger drop-offs and pick-ups at every stop along the route. with reference to rail/rapid service, employing the same parameters, the same fare would apply, but the door-to-door trip would be no more that 35 minutes.

**Q8. Vision Zero is the principle that transportation should focus on safety of all road users (cyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and motorists) as a foundation, and that the only acceptable number of deaths on the road is zero. The City of Cleveland is in the process of creating a Vision Zero Action Plan and committing to eliminating all serious injury and fatal crashes in the City. Do you see Vision Zero as a priority and how will you advance it?**

**A8.** Vision Zero Action Plan is a priority and it must be implemented and enforced by and through the City Public Safety Division, and any other law enforcement entities within the city that have the required credentials of enforcement. I will support Vision Zero Action Plan by listening, developing and passing legislation to make Vision Zero viable. During the Vision Zero Action Plan Development, especially during the first year of implementation, monthly reporting and oversight must be a requirement to determine the effectiveness of the plan concept. Depending upon the first year monthly plan effectiveness, some changes may be required to better strengthen the the plan effectiveness.

**Q9. The HealthLine, as originally planned and operated, used what's called a "proof-of-payment" fare collection system, which GCRTA enforced with armed police until the practice was declared unconstitutional in 2017. In response, CPT has called for the creation of a transit ambassador program consisting of unarmed, non-deputized civilians to conduct fare enforcement but also to serve as another set of eyes on the ground and a smiling face to help guide riders, similar to the Downtown Cleveland Alliance Ambassadors. Do you support the creation of a transit ambassador program as CPT has proposed?**

**A9.** Yes

**Q10. Fare evasion is currently a 4th degree criminal misdemeanor, punishable up to 30 days in jail and up to \$250 fine while parking tickets are treated as civil offenses, not criminal offenses, with a small fee and no jail time. Do you support decriminalizing fare evasion?**

**A10.** Yes

**Q11. There was a racial reckoning in 2020. How do you envision working toward safe streets for biking, walking and public transportation users while also reducing the dependence on armed officers to enforce traffic laws?**

**A11.** Traffic enforcement goes well beyond writing parking tickets. Yes, there needs to be and should be a committed serious discussion on how traffic laws can and will be enforced within the City of Cleveland. Can a cadre of unarmed officers be developed and stationed throughout the city to enforce speeding and other traffic violations such as ignoring traffic signals and signs? Yes. This force should not be involved or initiate any form of pursuit activities. This force should be available to it all the best and latest technologies to capture video of the speeders in question. This force must have all the required training inclusive of but not limited to proper and professional citizen engagement, a complete understanding of the applicable local/state laws as it pertains to traffic violations, adequate and proper training within the CPD Police Academy, and complete knowledge of the CPD policies and procedures when and while interacting with the public.

**Q12. Do you oppose or support a property tax levy in Cuyahoga County to raise additional funding for GCRTA?**

**A12.** Support

**Q13. Do you oppose or support a sales tax levy in Cuyahoga County to raise additional funding for GCRTA?**

**A13.** Support

**Q14. What should GCRTA's top priority be with any additional funding secured?**

**A14.** The top priority for GCRTA when additional funding is secured should be to continue to improve the bus and rail equipment, noting that there is a move a foot to reduce the carbon footprint, the GCRTA should begin reviewing equipment enhancements towards E-vehicles, with the possibility of applying for and winning state and/or federal grants to address this issue. Additional priorities should include training and development programs for all bus/rail drivers, along with improving the GCRTA public communication and engagement processes.

**Q15. Suburban sprawl has been a major theme in greater Cleveland's decades of decline, and as the population spreads out, maintaining transit service becomes less efficient. How will you proactively integrate land use policies into your transportation agenda?**

**A15.** At some point and time, as with just about all organizations and systems, urban sprawl will reach a point of entropy. Until this point is reached, land use and public transportation requirements have to plan and work hand-in hand with a know policies and programs. For example, a given new and/or existing suburb might develop a ride on service through the neighborhoods to a connecting hub to RTA, which then transports these riders to downtown or other hub connecting locations. I think in some if not most cases, we see business and housing development occur then the request for public transportation follows. This is not an appropriate nor adequate process. Possibly, the developing entity might be required to support through funding public transportation coverage for that project.

**Q16. The current GCRTA board president and city of Cleveland appointee, Rev. Charles Lucas, is a regular paratransit rider and the newest member of the board and Cuyahoga County appointee, Roberta Duarte, is a regular bus rider. CPT believes it is important that these voices are represented on the board of trustees and would like to see more riders appointed to the board. The city of Cleveland has the largest share (4) of appointments to the 10-member board. Will you commit to appointing more riders to the GCRTA board?**

**A16.** Yes. More riders, more end users of RTA need to be on the board. Infrequent or non-riders, may not or truly do not have an idea of the impact of their decisions or non-decisions upon the frequent riders of the bus and rail systems. The composition of the GCRTA board should be balanced. This balance does not have to be equal of frequent riders and non-riders. I think the composition of the board should be diverse in the areas of gender, age, culture, geographical location, etc.

**Q17. People care about street safety and bicycling, transit and walking issues. Why should these voters vote for you?**

**A17.** I am a firm believer in street safety. I am a walker and a bike rider. I utilize public transportation the bus and rail systems whenever possible. People, all my neighbors across Ward 1, must listen, open their eyes, to what is occurring across the Ward and the city of Cleveland. Our greater neighborhood of Ward 1 is not progressing. We deserve more than bars and gas stations. We have been misled and not presented with truthful facts and information so we can make better informed decisions. We must understand that each one of us are the most valuable resources within Ward 1. The second most valuable resource are our homes, our properties. There must be a concerted, concentrated and direct investment into us and into our Ward. We must know that we are safe and can be healthy. I know and understand both of these very important issues. When you cast your vote for me,

Aylwin Bridges, you will be voting for an individual that knows how to listen, communicate and to serve you professionally. You will be voting for a person that is ethical. You will be voting for a person that knows what it means to be a veteran that served with honorably. When you cast your vote for me, regardless of what area of Ward 1 where you reside, we are and will always be Neighbors.

"Your vote matters. Make your vote count. Vote."