



I BIKE, I RIDE TRANSIT, I WALK, I VOTE.

CLEVELAND CANDIDATES AND MOBILITY



Candidate Name: Cecil Ekechukwu

Office Seeking: Ward 4

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. We need to ensure that we have an interrelated biking infrastructure to accommodate and emphasize the importance of biking and walking on both the health and the earth. As an environmental engineer and pharmacist, I understand the importance of biking and walking often and how it relates to human health and the health of the earth.

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. Some of the most urgent gaps includes areas on the east side that is still very far behind with the rest of the city in addressing the need for adequate biking and walking infrastructure. We need to actively earmark funds for the sole purpose of developing adequate side walks and bike lanes in those areas.

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! As cities very similar in size, such as Milwaukee has shown, these protected bike lanes are ways that can be used to encourage travelers to bike and use alternative modes of transport.

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.

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.

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.

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. Yes I do! I believe the most efficient way to advance this as most plans that involves the community, is education, awareness, and adequate funding.

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.

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. Ensuring that residents are informed on the need to expand our transit system as well as bike lanes and side walks, as well as its importance on economic stability and quality of life. Most residents are not well informed on these metrics, thus do not call on our elected officials to address these gaps as often as they should.

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.

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 i would

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

A17. I will be a candidate that will champion the fight to ensure that Cleveland becomes an eco friendly city, and the best way to signal this change is to ensure that we have accessible framework in place for biking, walking and transit; not just downtown but all around this great city.