



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

CLEVELAND CANDIDATES AND MOBILITY



Candidate Name: Deborah Gray

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 must ensure that our neighborhoods are bike/walk friendly. This must happen from a design function. We must have livable communities where it is reasonable to bike and walk to your destination. We can do that by ensuring policy encourages local businesses to coexist within our neighborhoods and not only in designated retail shopping strips far from where people live. But it must also be safe.

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. The biggest gaps in our bike network exist where there is competition for street space with a busy street and on street parking. We must make the hard decisions to ensure that the health of our community is also considered when making these decisions of how to prioritize the limited street space.

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. When possible, I do support the physical separation, because too often we have seen where even when dedicated lanes are striped for bikes, cars still use them, which creates an even more dangerous situation for all involved.

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. NextGen has decimated service to my community. We went from 80 plus buses passing down Buckeye Road daily to a handful. While the routes themselves were not eliminated, the frequency was

reduced to an unacceptable level. As elected officials, we MUST stand up and advocate for our residents to RTA, and RTA must provide equity to our neighborhoods on the southeast side of Cleveland.

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. We should explore more collaboration between RTA and the City of Cleveland on these issues, so there is a unified approach and not folks pointing fingers at each other for who is responsible for what. We should be working together, even if that means shared financing, to ensure that the overall goal is accomplished.

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. I've been here for decades, I raised by kids here, I bought my home here, I started my business here. I have served as a Buckeye Ambassador at Burton Bell Carr, a board member of the RAC Committee at St. Luke's & dedicated 25+ years to our community. So I know the transportation challenges that exist in my community, and I was also been transit dependent. I worked hard to successfully save the number 50 bus route in my community, and as Councilwoman will work hard to advocate for restoration of service cut by NextGen.

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. Equity! We speak it all the time, but rarely is it put into action. We MUST work to eliminate bus fares for City of Cleveland residents. We must also work to ensure the door to door time is reasonable.

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 is important. I will work with the next Mayor and their administration to advocate for it's implementation.

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. There are other ways of enforcing traffic laws than using brut force of armed officers. For example, proper design can eliminate some violations, as can technology, and passing legislation that empowers our unarmed parking agents to issue citations without the need for confrontation. Let's also remember, education goes a long way as well.

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. Oppose

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

A14. Equity and Design within the communities in Cleveland where disinvestment has been rampant. We need a collaborative approach where GSCRTA transportation is coupled with development.

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. We must not only try to make our transportation network and bus routes work for how we develop land, but rather we must work to have our transportation network baked into our development plans from the beginning.

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. Absolutely!

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

A17. These issues are no different than any other issue in our community. It requires a leader who listens to the concerns of the people, and works to advance them in partnership with engaged citizens. Citizen Participation is vital to our democracy. Many of the problems in our communities happen because citizens are not civically involved. Often because their voices in our government have been decimated in Ward 4 and throughout the City of Cleveland. I will change that by supporting public comment at Cleveland City Council Meetings & Committee Hearings, holding monthly public meetings in Ward 4, supporting participatory budgeting, & I will create a Ward 4 Community Board to direct how ward based funding is allocated – giving the power back to the people. When people have power they will have a reason to participate. Voting for Deborah Gray, will give voters the platform to more effectively engage about these issues, and moreover, the community will have a partner in me for issues involving safety & bicycling, transit and walking. I thank you for your time and hope to earn your vote.