



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

## **CLEVELAND CANDIDATES AND MOBILITY**



**Candidate Name:** Stephanie Howse

**Office Seeking:** Ward 7

**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.** To actively encourage more people to bike and walk in the City of Cleveland, I believe that we (as the Ward 7 - Councilwoman and the City of Cleveland) should host more children, adult and family bike clinics, host safe routes to school tours and host bike and walk challenges to encourage physical activity in our city.

**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.** I do not know where the most urgent gaps in our bike network are. What I can share with you, is that Cleveland's Ward 7 is not connected to our bike network, as you rarely see any community members biking in our neighborhood. To address this disconnect, we need to do a survey from Ward 7 residents to see what they want in regards to a bike network and build a plan from there.

**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.** I support protected bike lanes, as it creates a safer environment for everyone on the road.

**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 steps we need to take to close the gaps in our NextGen bus system redesign is to have elected officials and business leaders experience the public transit system of the residents they serve and the people they hire. This experience will give our community leaders a real understanding of the challenges

our community members experience and will help community leaders better prioritize the community members being better connected to life in our public transit 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.** I would work to improve waiting bus/train areas by advocating for an "adopt a bus/train waiting area", where our community requests community organizations to adopt an area to help make the space more safe and comfortable for community workers. This program will expand the government's capacity to meet the demand for more safe and comfortable waiting places and increase community partnerships in our public transit system.

**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 was transit-dependent and car-free, when I was a college student living in Tallahassee, Florida. In order to have a vision for public transportation and increased active transportation in Cleveland's Ward 7, we have to center requested needs/desires of the Ward 7 residents who are currently using our public transportation system. Based on their input, we will work to develop a plan, assess the costs and how to pay for it and create an implementation strategy in partnership with our residents.

**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.** I've never really thought about how much I would pay for public transit to work, I guess I would pay \$5. I would expect the trip to be 30 minutes from door-to-door. The current rate of GCRTA is \$2.50. Looking at an article it reported that 55% low-income residents are classified as super commuters spending over 90 minutes commuting work. I'm speechless.

**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.** I see Vision Zero as a priority because the majority of the deaths on our roads are preventable. I will advance the plan by hosting sessions about the plan and keeping Ward 7 residents on the data on how our community is performing in meeting the Vision Zero goal.

**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.** A part of my vision for Ward 7 is focused on Healing and Restoration where residents can identify the harm they have experienced, connect to community resources to heal from the harm experienced and contribute their talents for a thriving Ward 7 community. By helping our residents heal will lead to safer communities, which will reduce the need for armed officers overall.

**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 should be free rides for low-income residents and improved connectivity for commuters to get to destinations in more efficient times.

**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.** I will integrate and use policies into the Ward 7 transportation agenda by incorporating the history of race and class during land use policy discussion and advocating for the removal of financial incentives for sprawling.

**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

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

**A17.** The residents of Ward 7 should vote for me because I was raised in Ward 7 and have a lived experience (personally and professionally) that has prepared me to serve my community with love, understanding, empathy, honor, accountability, and transparency. For issues I don't fully understand, like street safety and bicycling, transit and walking issues, I'm not afraid to admit that I don't know everything, but I am committed to learning what I need to understand and will listen to experts to make informed decisions.