



Candidate Name: Ross DiBello

Office Seeking: Mayor

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. Fight against more and wider roads. Devote funding towards protected bike lanes to make this a bikeable city for anyone to get nearly anywhere. Do not cave to suburban political interests/pressure. Work with a feverish pace, get input from walkers/riders in the various neighborhoods if elected in November so that we can mandate the most vocal changes starting in January. Copy what other innovative cities have done worldwide. Lower car speed and create more traffic stops and better sidewalk lighting.

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 believe where I live in West Park has very weak bike infrastructure. I think probably all the places except the brand new trails could use updating or full blown additions, but I am not experienced enough (nor a bike rider) to speak on the east and south sides.

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. If we save one life with this, if we make the environment more liveable with this for future generations, it means we accomplished some of the most meaningful work ever. Its saving lives in 2 different ways without having to take a bullet and not at some insane price.

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. In my opinion, everyone should have a stop within no more than a 10 minute walk from their house, and a bus should come ideally within 7 minutes but certainly no more than 15 minutes. Same with the rapid. I have not taken the bus since covid, so I am unfamiliar with the new design. I will fight for funding and lobby the county and state thoroughly, while appointing 4 devout Cleveland-proper residents and transportation riders from the different parts of town. We are going to open up communication lines city wide and crush this information gap if I am elected and start finding out who needs what in as efficient a manner as possible.

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. Have a good cabinet interview process. Take input from CPT and other good-faith groups. Fight for funding to afford this including ending handouts or tax benefits to the donor-class. Look at the zoning code to see if that presents obstacles to this sort improvement.

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 at times not had a vehicle or depending on public transportation by choice for weeks on end. I have a 2004 Honda with no air conditioning or radio. I've taken the bus (the 55 mainly) to and from work for many years pre-covid. From West Park I did park and ride over by West Blvd. and Clifton. Before that I walked to the stop on 117th and Lake. I've taken the rapid hundreds of times in my life to work or downtown events or to the East Side.

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. As a county worker I got the unlimited monthly pass and they deducted approximately \$55 per month if I recall correctly. This was very affordable and of course outside the norm here in Northeast Ohio. I am for free fees, and in the absence of such a possibility I am in favor of income-based payment. My trip was very quick relatively speaking. For an 8 minute drive door-to-door I could get to work in about 15-20 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. Yes. Fight for protected and lighted sidewalks and bike lanes. More lights, stop signs, warning signs, speed bumps, roundabouts. Enforce texting while driving muni laws. No further freeways. Be lobbied by the correct people.

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. Talk to my 4 board appointees and the RTA and CPD and some of these other independent enforcement agencies and see what employees can take transfers or need to find new jobs. Or turn into unarmed ambassadors. Try and root out where we lack wellness/compassion in our employee roster and get people moved. Continue to educate myself and hear from CPT and riders throughout the city and county. Utilize camera technology and better methods of emergency communication/dispatch.

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. Additional routes

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. Eliminate parking minimums. Make sure our zoning code is inclusionary, including possibly completely overhauling the zoning code. Try and build public affordable housing near to public transportation. Try and partner and communicate with neighboring cities. Use the land banks to try and optimize the skeleton of our region better and for the public good. Fight private interests. Try and lobby the non-Cleveland RTA board members and the CEO to fight the fight how we best see whatever issues arise.

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, all 4.

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

A17. My priorities are extremely straight in my opinion. Saving lives comes before anything else. This means both now and as for future generations. My re-election is not a consideration for me (Term limits and campaign finance are in my platform to impose upon others who cater to outside and therefore selfish interests before the interests of the public good. Safety in transportation and transportation access for all would be a (true) priority to me. I don't believe other politicians personally.