



**Candidate Name:** Sandra Williams

**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.** As Mayor of Cleveland, I will actively encourage more people to walk and bike by hosting community/neighborhood events throughout the city. My administration will also utilize social media and ad campaigns to educate residents about the benefits of bicycling and walking. Furthermore, it will be a priority of my administration to close the connectivity gap and make bike lanes and sidewalks safer.

**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.** In my opinion, although there are urgent gaps all around the city, the East side seems the most disjointed from the existing infrastructure. The city needs to utilize local, state, and federal dollars to create a more robust, connected system.

**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 support protected bike lanes because safety on our roadways--whether biking or driving--should be a top priority. As we see and encourage more bikers, we have a duty to make sure the lanes are safer for them.

**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, I believe the NextGen bus system is a step in the right direction for public transit users however we need to dedicate more funding and strategic planning to make sure every user has

access to the system and there are more than enough stops and routes to serve the needs of every citizen.

**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.** My administration will work to make sure bus stops and train stop areas are well lit with seating and shelter. We will do this by prioritizing public transit dollars in the city budget and tapping into state and federal resources.

**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 have been transit-dependent before, so I understand the need for accessible, safe, user-friendly transit system. My vision for our transit system in Cleveland is just that. A sustainable and safe service that any citizen can access. Citizens need to be able to get to work, get to school, get to the doctor, get to the grocery store, and get back home. I will advance this vision and keep it functional all year by dedicating funding and working directly with RTA as well as state and federal officials to get the job done.

**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 would want my trip door-to-door to be the fastest and most efficient possible. I believe all citizens should have access to our public transportation-- I support working towards free and reduced cost rider fees. I believe low-income fare discount programs and student discount programs are a great way to move in that direction.

**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 do see Vision Zero as a priority and I will advance it by studying how other cities have successfully implemented the Action Plan as well as composing a team of transit experts to see it through.

**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.** As Mayor, I plan to fully implement an ambassador program where officers are there to assist riders navigate the bus and train system, while being present to keep everyone safe. I also plan to change the way we approach calls to 911, most calls could be handled by different entities other than uniform police, calling 911 is misdirecting our forces. We need uniform police to be working on reducing violent crimes instead of cases best rectified through an intervention team designed to deal with addiction & mental health issues. A team of intervention specialists made up of a social worker, mental health professional, and law enforcement working as a team to address the original emergency, calls are often dealing with mental health issues. The City currently has a part time team that fulfills this role. I want to make the program a full-time resource. I believe that these types of wrap around services are critical to freeing up law enforcement to pursue violent criminals.

**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 rider safety and adding more routes in neighborhoods that need services.

**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 land use policies into my transportation agenda by working with transit experts and city planning experts to make sure we are investing and paying careful attention to transit-oriented development that consists of land uses that are pedestrian-friendly. I will also work with interested parties, citizens groups, regular riders, and RTA officials to survey the best use options to better serve the community.

**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.** Voters who care about street safety, bicycling, transit, and walking issues should vote for me because I understand their need-- I've lived it. I've also been dedicated to expanding state resources for public transportation and passing legislation so the RTA has access to more funding. I understand and value the need for functional, safe, necessary public transportation access. I am committed to making Cleveland a model city for rider safety, accessibility, and cost efficiency.