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Office Seeking: County Council District 7

Biking and Walking in the County

Q1. The Cuyahoga Greenway Partners have been working to increase mobility options since 2014. In 2019, the County completed the Cuyahoga Greenways Plan, which envisioned a completed, county-wide network of off-road trails and on-road, low-stress pedestrian and bicycle facilities accessible for persons of all ages and abilities for transportation, exercise, and enjoyment. How do you plan to support and implement the Cuyahoga Greenways Plan? Read the plan here:
https://www.countyplanning.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CGW_Report_2020-0107_sm.pdf

A1. Cuyahoga County Council, supported this initiative since inception of new County government, we were major partners, which the department of Public Works oversaw design and construction of the various projects. I understood the importance of safer bike trails and establishing a family activity that would be economical for whoever, healthy exercise for all participants, and access to other communities. Giving choice to all who wanted to utilize different modes of transportation.

Q2. 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 our roadways safer for all users. Do you support the installation of protected bike lanes on county streets?

A2. Yes, when East 105th street was being discussed and funding sought to redo this street that had not been done since 1978. I was in discussions with Mayor Jackson and Councilmember Conwell to add this protective wall as the roadway was being done. Unfortunately I was unable to get this done for this project. I'm currently in conversations with the Director of Sustainability regarding federal dollars for these types of projects. So, I'm a proponent of having these features on major streets. There are some beautiful ones that can keep the pedestrian, the biker, and the automobiles apart and keep everyone safer.

Q3. Bike Cleveland believes that if a street is designed such that armed officers are required to monitor it for the safety of other drivers, pedestrians, and bike riders, then it is not a well-designed street. How do you envision working toward safe streets while also reducing the dependence on armed officers to enforce traffic laws?

A3. I believe there will always be someone not respecting the laws we have in place. So it is needed to have some form of monitoring from police, whose main objective is to keep citizens safe. I think that the

creation of protected bike trails and pedestrian walkways is needed, but it would not completely eradicate the need for some police or armed officers.

Q4. The county receives funds through the State Motor Fuel Tax, State Highway User Fees, Ohio General & Special Revenue allocations, federal programs, and other sources to support local infrastructure projects. Twelve percent of county residents do not have access to a private automobile. How would you access and use county, state, and federal transportation funds to complete the County Greenways Plan, support other active transportation projects, and improve mobility for the residents without a car?

A4. The County Department of Sustainability and the Department of Public Works work together with other partners (Federal and State) to complete this investment into Cuyahoga County. The final project to be completed is the Canal Basin Parkway.

Q5. The City of Cleveland is currently considering an updated Complete & Green Streets Ordinance which would alter the decision-making process and increase transparency around street design to improve the safety of all road users. Over 1,600 Complete Streets policies have been passed nationwide. Would you support a Complete & Green Streets ordinance at the county level? How would you implement this among the municipalities in the county? Read more about Complete Streets here: <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/>

A5. I wouldn't be opposed to a County Ordinance, but we do currently have a template of language for municipalities to look at when creating their ordinances. The County has been a partner, but the drafting of law would need to come directly from the municipalities.

Q6. Bike and scooter share services (Bird, Lime, etc.) are currently only available in a few cities in Cuyahoga County. Would you support the expansion of bike and scooter-share services across the county to improve access and mobility?

A6. Yes

Public Transit in the County

Q7. Transit service reduces emissions, lowers transportation costs, and improves street safety. Nonetheless, over the past 15 years, GCRTA service has been cut nearly 30% while fares have doubled. Cuyahoga County's 2019 Climate Action Plan states as a goal to "return public transit service and ridership to 2006 levels by 2025" but the county has not taken any action to achieve this. In your opinion, what actions are needed to increase public transit ridership in Cuyahoga County? Read the county 2019 Climate Action Plan here: <https://www.countyplanning.us/projects/climate-action-plan/>

A7. GCRTA needs more connectivity with bus stops and a more frequent pace for individuals that ride. It would also be more helpful for more state funds to assist our transit services at a better formula than it does. The creation of a better job hub closer to the city core. Most jobs are in outer suburbs, which puts stress on our transit system. There are a lot of factors to consider and a partnership from business,

hospitals, schools, and others are needed. I sat on the County sub-transportation committee that was started to address some of these concerns when citizens shared that prices were going up, but services provided were going down.

Q8. The HealthLine on Euclid Avenue is GCRTA's highest-ridership bus route. It is also the only Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route in Northeast Ohio. Opened in 2008, GCRTA originally promoted a 28-minute trip from Public Square to East Cleveland, through University Circle. Due to removal of its proof-of-payment fare system and traffic signal priority, trips now take up to 42 minutes—just as long as the regular bus route it replaced. Will you commit to appointing GCRTA board members to fix the HealthLine and expand faster BRT to more corridors throughout Cuyahoga County? Read more about BRT here:

<https://www.itdp.org/library/standards-and-guides/the-bus-rapid-transit-standard/what-is-brt/>

A8. Yes, I believe there will also need to be a conversation with the City of Cleveland to discuss the timing of the traffic signals, that could greatly improve the trip time.

Q9. Since 1980, Cuyahoga County has been losing population. Suburban sprawl to neighboring counties has eroded the tax base GCRTA needs in order to provide transit service. As the population spreads out, maintaining the same level of transit service becomes more costly and less productive. How will you proactively integrate land use policies into your transportation agenda and direct growth to places where public transit can be successful?

A9. The creation of a better job hub closer to the city core. Most jobs are in outer suburbs, which puts stress on our transit system as I stated in an earlier question. There are a lot of factors to consider and a partnership from business, hospitals, schools, and others are needed. I sat on the County sub-transportation committee in 2017 that was started to address some of these concerns when citizens shared that prices were going up, but services provided were going down. So as the development of new projects are underway, the consideration for development is to make sure they are on a bus line or they will be built on a bus line, with easy access for continued and future riders.

Q10. The current president of the GCRTA Board of Trustees, and City of Cleveland appointee, Rev. Charles Lucas is a regular paratransit rider and Cuyahoga County's latest appointee, Roberta Duarte, is a regular bus rider. Will you commit to appointing only public transit riders to the GCRTA board?

A10. I believe there is value in having others on the board that may not be a current rider, they may have even rode in the past, but I would commit to having the majority of current riders sit on the board.

Q11. The GCRTA Board of Trustees has the ability to go to the ballot for additional transit funding through an additional sales tax levy or a property tax levy. Do you oppose or support a property tax levy in Cuyahoga County to raise additional funding for GCRTA? Do you oppose or support a sales tax levy in Cuyahoga County to raise additional funding for GCRTA? What should GCRTA's top priority be with any additional funding secured?

A11. At this time I would oppose an increase in additional sales tax or property tax levy. I strongly believe that the State who provides this funding and receives the gas tax, should create a formula that is more equitable to urban Counties.

Q12. There are 940 million square feet of parking in Cuyahoga County, but only 680 million square feet of housing. Just as Cuyahoga County implemented a special sales tax on cigarettes and alcohol to fund sports stadiums and the arts, the county could enact a special property tax on parking lots. This tax could generate over \$60 million annually towards transportation alternatives, such as expanded public transit service, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and discounted transit fares for low-income county residents. Do you support a special tax on parking lots in Cuyahoga County?

A12. At this time I would not support. We are trying to come out of Pandemic, which everything has been impacted. Work Force, closing of businesses, health issues, mandates on vaccines, mask wearing, etc. There is a time and place for everything. I don't feel this is the right time to enact a penalty on existing businesses (which would be passed onto the customer).