



Candidate Name: Meredith Turner
Office Seeking: County Council District 9

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. As a member of the Cuyahoga County Council, and Vice-Chair of the Education, Environment and Sustainability Committee, I will follow this project closely and seek to work closely with Cuyahoga Greenway partners to implement the Cuyahoga Greenways Plan which will require a long-term commitment to regional coordination and collaboration. Non-profit groups, public and private entities, local municipalities will need to understand and work together on pooling resources to help achieve equitable outcomes.

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. According to a 2016 study reported in SAGE journals, about 51 percent of Americans in the country's major urban areas are "interested but concerned" about biking. It found that cyclists are curious about biking, but uncomfortable with riding alongside busy car traffic. Protected bike lanes increase their comfort level riding on city streets. Public safety is of the utmost importance. I would support efforts to create safe environments that encourages and increases ridership.

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. We can work to help reduce risks to cyclists by strategically designing bike lanes to incorporate greater distances from the street, and by monitoring the speed of the traveling vehicles with electronic

monitoring mechanisms. Other considerations: car-free zones, bike boulevards, barriers, mandatory helmets, reflective clothing, promotion of biking laws, policies that protect bikers.

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. Council could approve viable proposals and fund allocations submitted via the county executive to further intergovernmental projects.

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. Cuyahoga County has a Complete Street Toolkit to assist communities with implementation. The Department of Public Works and the County Planning Commission are willing to assist community leaders navigate and use the toolkit.

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. Bike and Scooter Sharing services are affordable, fosters connectivity, supports positive health outcomes, and decreases environmental pollution. I would support expansion of these services.

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. [No response provided]

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. I can commit to working with council and the executive to appoint forward thinking GCRTA board members that are willing to take a deep dive into the challenges currently plaguing the HealthLine and slow service of the BRT.

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. There are very serious variables at play here. I don't know enough about this issue just yet, but I am sure that in the very near future, I will make it a priority to learn more about integrated land use as it relates to council's transportation agenda. I'm not on this committee, however, I'm looking forward to gaining the perspective of Councilwoman Nan Baker, Chair, Intergovernmental Relations & Public Transportation.

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 will commit to appointing public transit riders to the GCRTA board. They have a unique perspective that can only be an asset given their first-hand experiences.

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. I don't know enough about this area to make such a significant decision just yet. I would be very interested to talk with the constituents in my district before I made a decision to raise taxes. GCRTA's priorities should continue to be providing safe, creative solutions and community connectivity.

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. I support exploring a special tax on parking as a solution.