

**Candidate Name: Kris Harsh**

**Ward: 4**

**1. In 2024, more than 600 people walking or biking in the city were struck by drivers. In 2022, the City adopted Vision Zero, committing to eliminate traffic fatalities by 2032—yet there is still no dedicated annual budget for traffic calming. During budget season, would you advocate for increased funding for street safety improvements?**

These projects seem to be incorporated into the streets budget and mocap, depending on the project. I have lamented the lack of identified funding for speed tables and the only response has been to take it out of the ward resurfacing budget. This is not an adequate answer. Identifying specific funding to augment resurfacing projects would be good, but I worry that setting aside funds for specific installations (stanchions, etc..) would just cause money to languish in side pots. The administration needs to build these costs into existing projects without requiring ward funds to cover them. so, in short... increased funding, yes. Separate funding, no.

**2. Last year, the City adopted Cleveland Moves (our city's new Mobility Plan) and, with that, committed to building 50 miles of low-stress bike facilities over the next 3 years. Protected bike lanes are a proven safety countermeasure for not just bike riders, but people walking and driving as well. Will you support upgrading existing bike lanes in your ward to be physically separated from car lanes?**

Yes! Old Brooklyn has a 3 mile role to play in this. First, the bike lanes along Broadview road could be dramatically improved. Considering their current placement, stanchions are most likely. The BIG opportunity is in reimagining Fulton rd. from Park Dr. to Pearl Rd. It's a 1.5 mile stretch of chaotic "4 lane" road. The most immediate solution is to shrink it to 3 clear lanes (1 north, 1 south and 1 turn) and dedicate the rest of the space to a separated multi-purpose track connecting Jack Frost dounts at the southern end all the way up to the Meadow Ridge picnic area at the norther end. I have identified this as my ONLY infrastructure request from the city of Cleveland. On top of singularly prioritizing it, I look forward to working with the new Councilwoman in Ward 11 to help realize the funding. Currently, all of Fulton road (south of the bridge) is in Ward 13. With the new split between 11 and 4 there will be two of us representing this stretch of road. I hope to parlay that into more money and focus from the city. Once completed, this can connect riders to the existing network of off-road lanes and safe riding conditions. This project is an absolute top priority for me.

**3. In 2022, City Council changed the name of its Transportation Committee to the Transportation and Mobility Committee. Still, the vast majority of legislation that this committee sees is related to the airports and the Port of Cleveland. What role do you see this committee playing going forward?**

I am not on that committee. I have trusted Chairman McCormack and Vice Chair Slife to shepherd legislation in that area. Council has a massive work load and we divide the responsibilities out of

necessity. I am not sure if I will be on that committee moving forward, but will need to be brought up to speed on a number of issues if I am.

**4. Last summer, the city upgraded coin-operated parking meters to accept online payments and has continued adding new on-street paid parking zones in Ohio City, Downtown, University Circle, and Detroit-Shoreway—creating a new revenue stream for the city. Surface parking lots in Downtown and other neighborhoods are also taxed, with much of that revenue currently directed toward stadium funding. Would you support dedicating this money to mobility and safety improvements instead? Why or why not?**

The stadium will be paid off in 3 years. In the next few years we need to start planing for where those funds go. It makes sense to keep parking revenue connected to street safety. At this time though, we don't know if we have to maintain a stadium or not. So it's hard to think too concretely about where to allocate current stadium spending.

**5. Historically, community engagement around street projects starts after design is well underway, leaving little room for meaningful feedback. Even now, public meetings often happen on short notice and promotion for these meetings is limited. How do you plan to collect feedback from constituents and ensure they know about opportunities for input on projects?**

I might be the only Council member with a standing, monthly ward meeting (12 per year, no exceptions). I am constantly asking for feedback both in person and online. I am happy to schedule separate meetings to address specific issues. There really is no way to do this job without public input. I'm not here to push all my personal ideas, I need to know what's on the community's mind so I can represent them thoughtfully.

**6. Cleveland's ability to deliver safer streets is limited by staffing levels that fall short of many peer cities. Would you commit to support funding additional mobility positions – including a dedicated crew for installing traffic-calming measures like speed tables and more engineers – to bring Cleveland in line with similar cities and accelerate street safety improvements?**

I think this is best housed in an existing department. City staff follows the lead of Directors. If they are told to put in calming measures, they will do that. We recently made Urban Forestry a stand-alone department and I think it will be a good test case for whether or not we should do that with more. We do run the risk of making collaboration harder when we silo the work.

**7. What is your experience with public transit? Do you ride the RTA?**

Not very often. I sometimes use RTA to go downtown for an event. I did spend some years where my primary transportation was a bike and RTA. I'm familiar with the system and its' use.

**8. The 2025 Cleveland Health Survey found that unreliable transportation prevented 20% of residents citywide from getting to medical appointments, work, or other essential needs over the past year –**

**with even higher rates in some wards. What role should public transit play in ensuring residents can meet their daily needs, and how would you support RTA in making that happen?**

RTA is not in the purview of Cleveland City Council. I have been working with them on a TOD project at Memphis/Pearl and following along with the proposed W 25th changes (which have very little impact in Old Brooklyn) but I have not received any requests for support from them. The city doesn't fund their efforts.

**9. GCRTA will be broke in a couple years once they run out of federal COVID relief dollars. If that happens without finding new sources of operating funds, the transit authority will be forced to drastically cut service and raise fares. We are already seeing this happen across the country. As a legislator in a city where 20% of the population doesn't have access to a car, how will you ensure we don't face the same fate? Do you support a countywide sales or property tax levy to fund public transit? What other local funding opportunities would you explore to fund transit?**

I worry about every county wide tax idea at the moment. The recent property tax appraisals have caused a small revolt among tax payers, some of whom are trying to eliminate property taxes entirely. Of course, this would be a disaster for far more than just public transportation. It's hard to believe that people will accept new taxes in this climate, but again... these issues are outside Cleveland City Council's control. I have supported MRDD and Metro Parks renewals and of course, CMSD's funding. I would not personally object to stand-alone transit funding and have said this for years. But if I can read the room (the room being voters) I don't think it's likely to pass in the near future. The most bold thing I can say about RTA is this; they need to shrink their service area. RTA providing bus lines to far out suburbs seems like a waste of time and money. Not the simple park & ride shuttles, but full line service. One reason a lot of people don't use RTA is the inconsistency of service. If they simply focused their resources on the dense, urban areas of Cleveland then they would not only incentivize development there, but they could provide the type of reliable, consistent service that riders want. Having to build your entire life around a bus route that only stops once every hour (if you're lucky - and then disappears in "off peak" hours) is not feasible to most people. In other words, why should a wealthy suburbanite have the same access to bus service that a working class person on Denison has? Instead of being a little bit of good to a lot of people, be really good to a smaller geography.

**10. Public transit infrastructure, from shelters to bus lanes, can conflict with the desires of motorists and real estate and business owners. How will you approach the needs of public transit riders to conveniently get where they need to go in the face of opposition to new or existing public transit infrastructure?**

I've been watching this conflict in Ohio City and I'm grateful that Old Brooklyn doesn't have the same issues. Our on-street parking is already enclosed in curb bump-outs. There's not much conflict there.

**11. What does being a good partner with GCRTA look like to you as a city councilor?**

Being present in their efforts and bringing them in on ours.

**12. How would you ensure that the needs of all citizens are represented on the city council?**

I think our current practices do this.

**13. How do you stay informed about current events and issues affecting the city?**

Local media; Cleveland dot com, Signal, WKSU, Crain's & some TV reporters. Facebook neighborhood groups are active with local happenings.

**14. What will you do to increase the availability of affordable, integrated, safe, and accessible housing for people with disabilities?**

There are 2 housing projects going on in Old Brooklyn; the Memphis/Pearl redevelopment and the bank building across the street from it. Both are on the bus line and both will feature at-grade units and elevators for higher floors.

**15. What do you know about the crisis facing the disabled community in regard to availability of transportation and employment opportunities? And what will you do to mitigate these barriers?**

I am not aware of any new developments in this area. The disabled community has always had challenges, by very nature of the community. If anything is needed from me, I am all ears. As it stands, nothing has been brought to me for support. I welcome all ideas.

**16. How do you see the impending changes to both State and Federal programs impacting your community? And what solutions can you offer in your community to combat the loss of these programs and funding?**

That's a very wide question! Which programs? What I can say for certain, is that city government is entirely incapable of replacing all state and federal programs. We are the smallest layer of government in America with the least amount of funding. We operate in close margins as is. I would encourage people to stop voting for state and federal representatives who slash funding for local services.

**17. Why does Cleveland not currently have contracts with Uber and Lyft to provide wheelchair accessible vans options at a fixed rate like larger cities such as Chicago and New York? Can you assist with this?**

I have no idea and I've never heard of this. I know RTA operates para-transit and in Old Brooklyn we have a shuttle service for senior citizens. I am not up to speed on Uber and Lyft contracts in other cities.

**18. Cleveland will be hosting the Special Olympics in 2030, bringing more than 5,500 athletes and coaches and over 125,000 fans and family members to our city. How will you work to ensure Cleveland is a welcoming, accessible place for people with diverse disabilities, not only through trained**

**volunteers, but also by encouraging accessibility across restaurants, stores, rideshares, museums, casinos, theaters, and other public spaces?**

This will be a wonderful and exciting event! I'm looking forward to it. I'll do whatever I can to help. Again, I will rely on the community of experts to let me know what we can do.