

ATX Safer Streets 2014 candidate questionnaire.

Responses are unedited and appear as submitted by the candidate, except as indicated by brackets [].

The percentage under each candidate's name is a score based on how frequently their responses mirrored our responses to each question.

The order the candidates are listed are the order in which they responded.

If you have questions please email outreach@atxsaferstreets.org.

ATX Safer Streets is a volunteer run, grassroots non profit.

MANDY DEALEY - DISTRICT 10

79%

How would you explain your understanding of ATX Safer Streets mission and principles?

I understand ATX Safer Streets goal is to keep people who have had too much to drink from driving.

What is your opinion on the state of transportation in Austin? (Please touch on CapMetro, taxis, TNCs as well as personally owned vehicles)

In some cases it is good, in other cases it has problems.

Do you believe Austin has a transit shortage? (Not enough taxis, buses, etc.) Why or why not?

Yes. People cannot get to where they need to be in an efficient and timely way.

Do you believe that Austin has enough "for hire" transportation options? (Taxis, pedi-cabs, TNCs, limousines) Why or why not?

Yes. There probably needs to be more, because the issuance of taxi licenses has not kept up with the growing population.

Do you support an expansion of our current transit system to accommodate daily commuters? Why or why not?

Yes. Many people spend too much on transportation, with it being the second highest household expense for too many families.

Do you support a more comprehensive late night service plan for downtown visitors, hospitality and graveyard shift employees? Why or why not?

Yes. I want citizens in Austin to have safe, affordable transportation when they need it.

Do you support the current urban rail initiative? Why or why not?

Yes. Although I have mixed feelings about the November rail bond proposal, we are not going to be able to solve our transportation problems with roads alone. Mass transportation must be a part of Austin's future planning. I do not see a way to mitigate our traffic woes without rail.

Would you support utilization of city owned parking lots and garages as overnight parking areas on weekends as a means to prevent drunk driving? Why or why not?

Yes. I think it is important for people who can't (shouldn't) drive home to have a place to store a car safely.

Do you support the legalization of regulated Transportation Network Companies (such as Uber and Lyft) in Austin? Why or why not?

Yes. I support the legalization of regulated Transportation Network Companies (such as Uber and Lyft) only if they are willing to meet the same requirements in place for taxi companies. There has to be a level playing field, and the long-term investment investments that Austin taxi companies have made must be respected.

Do you support increasing the number of permanent taxi permits in Austin?

Yes & no. I don't have enough information to know what is needed, other than anecdotal information, and that is not how I make decisions.

Do you support temporary "peak time" permits for special events to allow licensed out of town cabbies to meet increased demand?

Yes. This would give an unfair advantage to out-of-town drivers. I would be willing to investigate this further and look at the possibility of expanding opportunities for all private transportation entities.

Would you support using designated "cab stands" for downtown pick up as an alternative to "street hails"? Why or why not?

Yes. Knowing where to get a cab downtown would make it easier for passengers to find transportation.

Do you personally use public or alternative (taxis, TNCs, bicycle) transit? If yes, how frequently?

Yes. Infrequently.

Would you be willing to join other officials in going without personal vehicles for a week to study, first hand, what issues Austin commuters are facing?

Yes.

Why do you believe ATX Safer Streets should endorse you?

I strongly support having options for folks who have been drinking to get home without endangering themselves or others.

MARGIE BURCIAGA - DISTRICT 10

93%

How would you explain your understanding of ATX Safer Streets mission and principles?

I have read and understand ATX Safer Streets mission and principles. Many of the goals and principles are in agreement with my campaign issues and proposed solutions. I agree that an improved transportation

system will reduce traffic and DWIs. I also agree that all citizens and visitors to Austin will benefit from an improved transportation system. I am also a big proponent of competition.

What is your opinion on the state of transportation in Austin? (Please touch on CapMetro, taxis, TNCs as well as personally owned vehicles)

Traffic problems related to transportation issues is in the top three issues that the voters in District 10 have expressed to me. I agree with your mission and value the need to improve our transit options that are noted on my website and that I have blogged about.

Though Project Connect has a mass transit plan, it seems to leave holes in places that improvements are desperately needed. I have visited with Linda Watson of CapMetro, several times, Joe Black with Lone Star Rail and Scott Gross with Project Connect, and they all know I support mass transit yet I feel we need a plan that can be done now for far less debt, than the proposed current rail project. From the beginning I have voiced a need for comprehensive bus service and to improve upon the rail we already have in place, especially the red line, by adding more rail cars and more route times, especially nights and weekend. My children and I continue to experience the problems with our transportation system. My youngest daughter has an hour commute into Austin and back each day. She needs more options for getting to and from work. Contrast that with my oldest daughter who is a musician that lives in Boston. Boston has created an infrastructure that provides multiple transit options. She is able to live and work without having to drive a vehicle. When I visit we ride the rail and buses at all hours with no problem. The Boston system should be a goal of the Austin transportation system. My son was assaulted coming off of 6th street a couple years ago trying to catch a cab.

Two (2) years ago I went to Fayetteville, AR to see about franchising a green cab company, only to learn it would be a near impossible battle with current council and the city to get approved. The current cab companies do not want any competition.

I very much support TNC's like Uber. My daughter has been able to use Uber when she travels to other cities for work. We have both tried to use it here in Austin but they become unavailable when major special events are in town, showing the need for more options.

Voters in my district have little choice but to drive since their options are so limited. A simple ride to downtown takes me 1.5 hours using the current bus system. The bus stops have no covering, bench or trash bin, making it non user friendly.

I would like to see changes that improve the access, schedules and improves the rider's experience when using our transportation system. Adding kiosks for safety, shelter from the rain and they could offer products that that would provide income to the system. Maximizing stop locations that allow riders access to schools, grocery stores, dry cleaners, drug stores and post offices that could reduce multiple stops.

Do you believe Austin has a transit shortage? (Not enough taxis, buses, etc.) Why or why not?

Absolutely. Our red line is over capacity at peak hours, businesses suffer on the west side do to not enough bus routes and times. Graduation weekend could not get a cab or Uber since they were all booked. My son has had to walk to Northwest Hills from 6th street several times since he could not get a cab and didn't want to wake me or someone else which almost cost him his life once. And I have plenty of other examples, so yes.

Do you believe that Austin has enough "for hire" transportation options? (Taxis, pedi-cabs, TNCs, limousines) Why or why not?

No. Since I live in North Central Austin, many times I have been unable to get a taxi. They really don't want to drive up here or bring me back when they can make short trips all night around the downtown area. This

is especially true during special events. TNC's are becoming an option but we need more. Many times my only option is to try and find a friend that is willing to drive or driving my own vehicle, if that is possible.

Do you support an expansion of our current transit system to accommodate daily commuters? Why or why not?

Yes. I support adding more rail cars to the existing system and more bus routes.

Do you support a more comprehensive late night service plan for downtown visitors, hospitality and graveyard shift employees? Why or why not?

I am totally supportive of it. Austin promotes itself as a City with a downtown night life that offers late night drinking and entertainment. We need to offer transportation services that support the entertainment industry employees and patrons. An efficient transportation system will also help to keep people safe and reduce demands on our public safety services. This transportation system would also support industries with late night employees.

Do you support the current urban rail initiative? Why or why not?

No. I cannot support the current rail bond proposal because of the amount of debt required to build and the current design. District 10 taxpayers are paying a large percentage of the property and sales taxes and would not benefit from the current plan as presented. At least 1 out of 4 voters that I have talked with are considering moving due to their taxes and utility bills. They are against increasing their taxes to pay for a rail initiative that will have little to no affect on their transportation issues. A north to south plan would increase the number of voters "on board" with the plan. A more regional project would lower the cost to Austin taxpayers and would increase the chances of Federal transportation dollars and a bigger Federal share.

Would you support utilization of city owned parking lots and garages as overnight parking areas on weekends as a means to prevent drunk driving? Why or why not?

Absolutely! I was 1 of 2 women that took the challenge of implementing Safe Homes which is to raise the awareness of hosting underage parties where alcohol and drugs might be served along with bi-annual awareness programs open to the whole city. I spent many a night going downtown to pick up young adults so that they got home safely.

Do you support the legalization of regulated Transportation Network Companies (such as Uber and Lyft) in Austin? Why or why not?

Absolutely. The taxi industry model is an inefficient, expensive, and outdated transportation system. The taxi industry has been able to limit competition with City Hall's help. They see TNC's as a real threat to their monopoly. I want to see more TNC's and less of the taxi monopoly (Yellow Cab has 61% of the Austin taxi permits).

Do you support increasing the number of permanent taxi permits in Austin?

Yes. I think we should look at the current taxi permit system and see if increasing the number of permits meets our shared goals of more transportation options. Maybe increasing TNC's will meet this goal without expanding the taxi monopoly.

Do you support temporary "peak time" permits for special events to allow licensed out of town cabbies to meet increased demand?

Yes & no. I am for competition and access so this should be considered. But I would like to look at better options like TNC's to see if they would meet the need during special events. I am concerned about the liability of out of town cabs and need more information before I would support.

Would you support using designated “cab stands” for downtown pick up as an alternative to “street hails”? Why or why not?

Yes. Cab stands would be a more efficient system of hailing a cab and could provide some protection from the weather.

Do you personally use public or alternative (taxis, TNCs, bicycle) transit? If yes, how frequently?

Yes. Infrequently.

Would you be willing to join other officials in going without personal vehicles for a week to study, first hand, what issues Austin commuters are facing?

Yes.

Why do you believe ATX Safer Streets should endorse you?

I fully support the efforts of this organization from what little I know based on what I have read.

I don't have to go without a vehicle to know what issues Austin commuters are facing since I have already experienced many of the problems myself. I fully support the efforts of this organization, the mission behind the cause and due to personnel experiences of knowing firsthand the transportation issues, which have been part of my original platform.

Thank you all for what this organization is doing to create more awareness for transportation alternatives and needs

TINA CANNON - DISTRICT 10
93%

How would you explain your understanding of ATX Safer Streets mission and principles?

Very familiar, my partner is the owner of Sober Monkeys designated driving service.

What is your opinion on the state of transportation in Austin? (Please touch on CapMetro, taxis, TNCs as well as personally owned vehicles)

Austin is in dire need of a fully robust multi-modal transportation solution. We have a long way to go. I would like to see expanded and city-wide Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), a light rail solution that replaces cars and is regionally connected. We need to open the floodgates on cab permits, TNC's and other entrepreneur lead initiatives to solve our transportation issues.

Do you believe Austin has a transit shortage? (Not enough taxis, buses, etc.) Why or why not?

Yes. Call one... that's should do it for you. We hear from so many people as we campaign about the shortage of cabs, cabs not driving to Round Rock with patrons, asking patrons to not get in based on the route and certainly the special needs communities like ADAPT have been prolific in their disappointment in the cab service in Austin.

Do you believe that Austin has enough “for hire” transportation options? (Taxis, pedi-cabs, TNCs, limousines) Why or why not?

No. Go downtown at closing time and try to get home with a cab, bus, or rail. A difficult undertaking. Now amplify that same exercise during a festival or special event.

Do you support an expansion of our current transit system to accommodate daily commuters? Why or why not?

Yes. We cannot build roads to get us out of this bottleneck, the solutions involve expanded public mass transit.

Do you support a more comprehensive late night service plan for downtown visitors, hospitality and graveyard shift employees? Why or why not?

Not only late night but expanded weekend service as well. Why not take people downtown to daytime festivals, museums, tourist spots etc during the day as well?

Do you support the current urban rail initiative? Why or why not?

No. Don't get me wrong, I am for rail. I just am concerned that our first big step does not (1) take the max numbers of cars off the road (2) does not serve a large population of drivers (3) is not being well received even by those in the pro-rail camp. (4) I would love to see expanded BRT prior to fixed rail - we can do BRT for a fraction of the cost, it is more agile and can "train" the way Austinites use mass transit before committing to fixed rail lines. It is important the our first foray into rail be open, well received and supported by the community. See link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cU6lmWY4lBc>

Would you support utilization of city owned parking lots and garages as overnight parking areas on weekends as a means to prevent drunk driving? Why or why not?

Yes. Makes good sense - we would have to balance having the cars removed by owners to allow for regular day use.

Do you support the legalization of regulated Transportation Network Companies (such as Uber and Lyft) in Austin? Why or why not?

Yes. I am a past tech entrepreneur and believe that creative solutions should be deployed, the market will ultimately decide the success or failure of these private companies.

Do you support increasing the number of permanent taxi permits in Austin?

Yes. Answered in a prior question

Do you support temporary “peak time” permits for special events to allow licensed out of town cabbies to meet increased demand?

Yes. Makes perfect sense.

Would you support using designated “cab stands” for downtown pick up as an alternative to “street hails”? Why or why not?

Yes, this is another common complaint I hear. Folks can't hail a cab, it is dangerous to have people getting frustrated and jumping into the street to get a cab's attention. Safer and more accessible, perfect option.

Do you personally use public or alternative (taxis, TNCs, bicycle) transit? If yes, how frequently?

Yes. A couple times a week

Would you be willing to join other officials in going without personal vehicles for a week to study, first hand, what issues Austin commuters are facing?

Yes.

Why do you believe ATX Safer Streets should endorse you?

I have supported my partner's business, Sober Monkeys for sometime now. As a past EMT in Las Vegas, I have seen my fair share of accidents over the years. As someone who uses a bike to get around (in cooler months) and as a hopeful public official I will do everything possible to impact public transportation options.

BILL WORSHAM - DISTRICT 10
86%

[Editor's note: Worsham replied via emailed PDF instead of through the google form questionnaire. His response has been attached below, please scroll down to view]

09/14/2014

Bill Worsham

Austin City Council District 10

512-537-4928

info@billforaustin10.com

How would you explain your understanding of ATX Safer Streets mission and principles? *

I understand and appreciate your mission as working to provide safe alternatives to drunk driving, especially during late-night hours, as well as improving transportation options for creative and service industry employees.

What is your opinion on the state of transportation in Austin? (Please touch on CapMetro, taxis, TNCs as well as personally owned vehicles) *

Austin's transportation system is struggling to keep up with the demands of a growing population and in response to a history of resistance to expansion of our shared road system. Cap Metro consumes huge resources (1% of regional sales through the sales tax) while not serving the entire community by geography nor time of day. Taxi companies are an important part of a flexible transportation system. However, the capture of the city's regulatory process by taxi companies prevents competition and stifles innovation in the space they serve. Transportation network companies are having a positive impact on the transportation system and reducing drunk driving without consuming public resources (tax dollars). Personally-owned vehicles are used for the vast majority of commuting trips and overall trips and will continue to do so in the future. Our shared road system provides the infrastructure for each of these transportation modes in addition to providing access to the city for our public safety professionals and their gear (police, fire, EMS).

Do you believe Austin has a transit shortage? (Not enough taxis, buses, etc.) *

Yes

No

Why or why not? *

A shortage can only be maintained by government intervention, e.g., price controls or barriers to entry such as taxi badge limits. What I believe is not nearly as important as what market forces are signaling. However, government intervention at all levels distorts or stifles such signals, making it more difficult for

decision makers to determine the most efficient allocation of scarce transit resources, whether in the public or private sector. Judging from consumer comments, peak demand is not being met at certain times and in certain places such as during events and late-night. Regulation of private demand-response options and the inflexibility of public options seem to be at the root of the problem.

Do you believe that Austin has enough “for hire” transportation options? (Taxis, pedi-cabs, TNCs, limousines) *

Yes

No

Why or why not? *

At times, no, primarily because government agencies at all levels exert too much influence, require regulation (subject to capture by entrenched interests), and want to extract resources. Pedi-cabs and TNCs were born of unfilled demand left unfulfilled by existing options.

Do you support an expansion of our current transit system to accommodate daily commuters? *

Yes

No

Why or why not? *

I assume this question refers to public transit (CapMetro). Because transit resources (taken from sales taxes) are scarce and must be prioritized, the answer depends on the amount of tax subsidy needed per rider, what transportation mode is being replaced, and what other alternative use of resources must be foregone. Generally, commuter subsidies should go to workers with limited transportation options, e.g., low-income workers.

Do you support a more comprehensive late night service plan for downtown visitors, hospitality and graveyard industry employees? *

Yes

No

Why or why not? *

Yes, same as previous answer.

Do you support the current urban rail initiative? *

Yes

No

Why or why not? *

No, it is a spectacularly ineffective use of billions of tax dollars and tens of millions of dollars of annual operational subsidies. Even if we could afford the cost, there are legions of better uses of the funds within the transportation realm.

Would you support utilization of city owned parking lots and garages as overnight parking areas on weekends as a means to prevent drunk driving? *

Yes

No

Why or why not? *

Yes. Common sense.

Do you support the legalization of regulated Transportation Network Companies (such as Uber and Lyft) in Austin? *

Yes

No

Why or why not? *

Yes, there is no legitimate basis for their prohibition by city ordinance.

Do you support increasing the number of permanent taxi permits in Austin? *

Yes

No

Why or why not? *

Yes, I would need to see a compelling explanation for the need for any limit on the number of taxi permits.

Do you support temporary "peak time" permits for special events to allow licensed out of town cabbies to meet increased demand? *

Yes

No

Why or why not? *

Possibly, as one possible element of a broader response to constraints on meeting demand at peak times or during events.

Would you support using designated “cab stands” for downtown pick up as an alternative to “street hails”? *

Yes

No

Why or why not? *

Yes, but as one of a range of expanded options not as an exclusive alternative. My family and I are long-time members of St. David’s Episcopal Church at 7th & San Jacinto, which has a heavily-used parking garage for the 6th Street district and serves as a staging area for late-night rides home. I look forward to working on many other distributed, private transportation options to help meet your goals.

Do you personally use public or alternative (taxis, TNCs, bicycle) transit? *

Yes

No

If yes, how frequently? *

Yes, infrequently

It's my only means of conveyance

Workday commute

Weekend fun

Evening fun

A couple times a week

Infrequently

Would you be willing to join other officials in going without personal vehicles for a week to study, first hand, what issues Austin commuters are facing? *

Yes

No

No, that is not likely to be an efficient way to study the issue.

Why do you believe ATX Safer Streets should endorse you? *

There should be no question that of the District 10 candidates I am most on board with fostering innovation that will help you achieve your goals and objectives. My emphasis will be more on the private sector opportunities including but not limited to TNC's along with efficient use of public transit resources (mainly a better bus system). I would be happy to answer further specific questions about my background and interest in this issue.

Would you like to schedule a meeting with ATX Safer Streets?

Yes