

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.

MARIO CANTU - DISTRICT 3

71%

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

By looking at your website's information, I see that ATX Safer Streets is an organization that is working to ensure our city streets are safe for all, by promoting alternative ways to serve the transportation needs of the people who work at night and the needs of their patrons, and by urging the city to incorporate better transportation and mobility choices including safe overnight parking.

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

We are in a constant state of emergency due to our traffic congestion and mobility problems. It is made worse by the presence of drunken drivers who could choose to leave their cars parked overnight and take a taxi but can't afford the parking fines accrued while they get back to their cars the next day. Maybe Capital Metro could reinstitute the Dillo (free bus) routes to help people working or attending social affairs downtown to get to their destinations safely. Dillo routes coupled with "holding" parking areas outside the downtown area could allay the fear of vandalism or a pile of parking tickets. We need to stop adding transportation modalities and get back to basics, first with the re-evaluation of efficiency with our current transportation system, e.g., sidewalks, connecting trails, better roads, re-evaluate bus routes, bike routes, and sync traffic lights. Once these basics have been established then we can seek other modes of transportation and look at how other cities have resolved their transportation needs and unsafe streets.

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

Yes - I feel that we have a transit shortage and inefficacy when it comes to the current modes of transportation that we have. We could be doing a better job with our bus system by providing better ridership options, rider costs, accessibility, and efficiency.

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

No - During major entertainment and civic events it's my understanding that often we lack transportation options/needs such as limousines and special transportation services.

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

Yes - We need to evaluate the transportation needs in all areas of Austin first then figure a way to help commuters come into the city and leave safely. Leaving their cars at home is a bonus--toll roads are not the answer--let's look at the big picture.

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

Yes - We have thousands of employees working in the downtown core during the week and weekend night shifts. e.g, bartenders, waiters, servers, and chefs. We need to look at providing satellite designated parking areas outside of the downtown core for bus ridership into and out of the core, to facilitate parking and getting to and from work safely.

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

No - I'm for rail but not this type of rail. We need to be looking at other types of rail systems like Europe and Asia. I feel we need to dial down the basic modes of transportation first and then look at new innovative rail technology. We need to be visionary when addressing transportation by looking into the future, 50-200 years from now with our transportation needs.

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 - The city could use the additional revenue stream without resorting to parking violation ticketing.

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

No - I need to be proactive and look deeper into the providers of the services noted above, regarding the pros vs. cons.

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

No - I would say yes, as the population and the number of tourists coming into our city increases. I would have to meet with the current leaders of the taxi services for a full understanding of services that could be needed and the extent to which they can accommodate the need.

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

No - Although the added income to the city could be significant, I would rather consider the impact on the current system first before making a decision.

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

Yes - Having designated cab stands would help identify safe locations for pick up.

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 believe mass transit is a critical part of the solution to our transportation problems. I know the importance of transportation not just for now but for future needs. I'm willing to work with others to keep Austin safe when it comes to safe streets, mobility and transportation. I know the importance of clean and safe modes of transportation.

CHRISTOPHER HOERSTER - DISTRICT 3

79%

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

Formed as a group to solve problems and shortcomings in late night transportation after the death of a friend by a drunk driver.

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

Our transportation has not grow with the city. There has always been this mentality in Austin of "if we don't build it they will not come". Well they are here and we now find ourselves woefully behind the eight ball so to speak. We have encouraged a party and night life without giving people options to get around during these times. We are failing to provide transportation to those in need choosing instead to plan for wants instead. Capital Metro is afraid to make the hard choices of providing longer hours and more east/west transportation. They have also failed to move transportation to where it is needed. While many cannot afford the taxis and TNC's they

should be grown in the city. I believe the city should allow the TNC's but I was very disappointed in the steps the TNC's took upon the council wanting to study the issue.

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

Yes - Too much control by a few that own the taxi companies. I think we have reached a point where we issue single individual medallions to qualified individuals. Many taxi drivers are working too many hours to make too little money, and this raises some safety concerns.

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

No - We need to find solutions to providing peak hour and date transportation. Being that we are a city that has begun to rely so much on tourism and entertainment there are times that the need for transportation out weighs the supply that we have. Examples are SXSW, ACL, ROT rally, Auto races, sporting events and others.

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

Yes - There are many that need more transportation options and there are some that want more transportation options, we must fill both. I have always believed that public transportation should first be focused around those that need it. Our transportation system must begin reaching out further, later and with more frequency where needed. As a Housing Specialist working with some of Austin's neediest families it was often transportation that was a limitation to some families finding affordable housing.

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

Yes - We have really become a city that is based around alcohol and if this is the path we are taking as a city then we must provide transportation for those that we are striving to make money on. We must also provide transportation for service employees that are providing these services. Many of these employees cannot afford personal transportation or individual transportation options such as taxis. They need a way to get around. With affordability becoming impossible at the core of our city many of these employees live away from where they work.

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

No - While I believe in rail I cannot support this option. It is not affordable and the methods by which it was put together gives me pause for thought. It will also be 8 years before we see any benefit from it and transportation needs could be much different b then. I believe we should use more BRT systems to accomplish our goals sooner and which are liquid being able to relocate them as demographics change. I believe our transportation needs are two separate issues, congestion and public need. We have more options to solve our congestion needs. We need to

find a solution that involves the failed 130 toll way, we need to look at making 183 and 360 non-stop freeways and we need to synchronize our traffic light city wide.

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 - Why not, they are sitting there empty at night and on weekends. I do however would prefer to give people options to get downtown to have a good time. We all know that people do not always make good decisions when intoxicated, driving may be one of these.

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

Yes - I do support this but I am disappointed at the actions these companies have taken when the city ask them for more time. These will only provide transportation for those with money and will still leave many without transportation.

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

Yes - I think it is time to issue private medallions and give some of our taxi entrepreneurs a chance. We should also consider issuing licenses for certain hours of operation so that we can assure having taxis when needed.

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

No - But would be yes if we can assure who these other drivers are and that they are safe. I do not want to be an escape for bad drivers from other cities. It might help but is no guarantee since it would depend upon availability in these other cities.

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

No - I think it might complicate the situation, especially for those from out of town. I would be interested to hear what others say if they disagree though.

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

Yes - Weekend fun

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 been following ATX Safer Streets since it began and I applaud the rapid growth and progress you have had. So much in such a short time. I do find it disappointing that we, as a city, have only begun to realize what a problem we have after a series of sad events. I would

prefer to be finding our solutions because we want to help those that cannot help themselves instead of those that choose to need transportation because of the choices they have made but whatever the means to the end is. With me you will find a councilman that will listen to everyone and will not have hidden agendas. I will always tell you the truth whether it is what you want to hear or not. I will never claim to know all stuff and I will work outside of District 3 when needed to get things accomplished. My door will always be open and you will see me out in the district as much as my schedule allows. I am an idea guy and I get things done. I hope that I have answered all of your questions to your satisfaction and that you have been able to learn something about me. I would look forward to getting together in person to learn more about each other and discuss the opportunities for Austin further. Many thanks, Chris

SHAUN IRELAND - DISTRICT 3

93%

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

I was present at the Public Safety Commission meeting where ATX Safer Streets presented data in support of TNCs and reducing drunk driving through expanding transportation options. I am comfortable with the mission and principles as presented—and support ATX Safer Streets.

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

As a candidate, I have publicly advocated for a code re-write of the for hire transportation code. I support TNCs and support a code re-write similar to what the City of Dallas is currently undergoing: placing all for hire transportation under one code no matter whether it's a TNC, taxi, or limo/bus service.

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

Yes - Our campaign research has shown visitors to Austin sustain lengthy wait times for taxicabs. Additionally, residents of Austin also encounter difficulty traveling by bus because of scheduling and routing issues.

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

No - The City of Austin is the only city in the state to mandate additional requirements for those seeking a chauffeurs license. There is a great disparity with regard to applicants attempting to get a sponsorship through a for fire transportation company in Austin. I support a for hire code re-write to even out the playing field of transportation options.

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

Yes - I attended DePaul University in Chicago and graduated from NYU. I've utilized two of the best public transportation systems in the world. I strongly support an expansion of our current transit system. Further, if elected, I would seek a seat on The Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

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

Yes - Yes, this would reduce drunk driving and fatigued drivers. Our service industry employees have too many parking restrictions. We need to expand so-called night owl routes where possible even if just for Friday and Saturday nights.

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

Yes - I have advocated for urban rail from downtown to the airport through the Riverside corridor. If Proposition 1 passes in November, this project would not begin until 2020. We can anticipate that gasoline prices will not remain at \$3.25 into the next decade. As such, the city must build out high capacity public transit. Rail technology is changing each year and I am confident that our urban rail will be on budget and built on time if the proposition is passed.

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 support all efforts to reduce DWIs including the use of city-owned parking lots.

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

Yes - I am on record as supporting TNCs. My campaign material clearly states: "Rewrite city code to allow for more taxicabs and app-based alternatives such as Uber and Lyft."

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

No - No, I believe ultimately we may end up with a daily timetable and special event timetable that limits all for hire transportation regardless of whether it's a taxi or TNC.

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

Yes - You've got my support on this initiative.

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

Yes - This is a serious safety concern. We need more designated cab areas downtown. I would support cab stands along with a code rewrite to allow for TNCs.

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 am the only candidate in the District 3 race that supports both urban rail and a complete code rewrite on for hire transportation to include TNCs. I share ATX Safer Streets vision of creating a safer city through common-sense transportation options. If elected, I will work to get expanded night owl routes on weekends, holidays and for special events.

ERIC J. RANGEL - DISTRICT 3

100%

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

My understanding of the ATX Safer Streets mission and principles is good. Not great, but good. Especially since I just heard about the organization after I received the email.

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

The state of transportation in Austin is dire. If we continue down the path of previous years, we're doomed. We need to go ahead with Urban Rail and allow the trains to run later on weekend. We need to increase more buses that will run later, to more parts of Austin. We need to legalize the peer to peer driver programs (i.e. Uber and Lyft). We need to advocate overnight downtown parking by reducing or eliminating the penalties for those who choose to leave their car in lue of a more responsible option.

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

Yes - If you don't live, work, or play outside of the urban core, good luck. And Austin's transit shortage, in my opinion, is due to the stigma of public transit. Those times are changing.

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

No - If there wasn't a shortage, then we wouldn't be having the problems that we're facing now.

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

Yes - By expanding our current transit system to accommodate daily commuters, we will then make our city more affordable, more environmentally friendly, more sustainable, and more connected.

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

Yes - The more and more people come to Austin, the less it becomes an "8 to 5" type of city. Austin is quickly becoming a 24 hour city. And with that comes services that must be met at night, just as they are met during the day. The services at night are maybe not to the same extent as they are during the day, but to do nothing is quickly not becoming an option.

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

Yes - The more options one has to not use their personal vehicle, the better off we are. And the longer we wait for the "perfect" scenario, the more it will cost and the more difficult it becomes to build.

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 - As a councilmember, Public Safety is a major concern. And if we can assist in preventing individuals from getting into wrecks or getting a Ticket/jail time, the better off we are. I do not condone nor believe by doing this that it will eliminate drunk driving. However, I do believe that advocating for more responsible transportation options will save lives and improve the quality of life for all.

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

Yes - Like I've said before, I think the more options people have the better of they are. Free-market is something this city and country encourages; taxis should be no different.

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

Yes - As our population grows so will the need for taxis. So, since we need more taxis to fill the need, we will need to increase the number of permits.

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

Yes - Since it's just a temporary "peak time" permits specific to special events, I am for it. I don't want to flood the market and cause more of a problem.

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

Yes - I like the idea, but only for Special events or weekends. I think having it every day would seem counterproductive.

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

Yes - Weekend fun

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?

When it comes to the future of Austin, ATX Safer Streets and I see eye-to-eye on many issues. I think you're going to need someone who can not only win, but has the ability to work with others while on council. It's not just enough to be on council. The real struggle for the next council will be if the members can work with one another. If you have people on Council who are unwilling to work with others, the city will continue to struggle when it comes to transit. Since the ideas of ATX Safe Streets and I are connected in our views/ideology, I believe I can help carry the conversation and idea to City Hall.

RICARDO TURULLOLS-BONILLA - DISTRICT 3

79%

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

To understand the needs of passengers on off and regular business hours.

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

It could stand improvement.

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

Yes - I don't know about taxis, though I have heard that they don't always arrive. As for the buses, maybe during business hours they are frequent, but maybe not so much off hours. Also, they are very slow on account of having to share lanes with cars.

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

Yes, No - I don't know the stats.

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

Yes - The need exists, but the resources are limited, the question is who should pay for it, regarding the commuters from out of city limits.

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

Yes, No - Yes for visitors and hospitality, though I don't understand the meaning of the last one.

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

Yes, No - The good choices were twenty years ago and were not taken, now there's only bad and worse ones. The latter is doing nothing.

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 - Optimization of available resources.

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

Yes - If it's for the better and time proven; if it's legitimate, it should be legal as well!

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

Yes - If there's a need, yes, increase the number of permits, but not if there isn't. I don't know the stats.

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

Yes - Sounds good on the face of it, but consultation would be highly recommended with affected parties, and the general public as well.

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

Yes - Yes, because it is general practice to have 'cab stands' in cities.

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

No

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?

While it should be evidently based on the replies to the special interests of a ATX Safer Streets, it should also reflect the overall transportation issues that we have; but not only that, we need to look at the whole ball of wax. This takes us to address the need of having clearer ideas regarding what makes up a city, to begin with, for it is easy to say that the whole makes up the city, but what is the whole made up of, in the last instance? This is tricky and requires making a hypothesis based on research. For my view on the matter check out my latest e-book at Amazon entitled "Reconstitution, from brokenness to wholeness, by triads". But to whet your appetite, perhaps you should visit YouTube, access my channel by typing my name, and start off with a 9 minute long video "Ricardo for Austin 3", and check regularly for I'll be posting more in the weeks to come.

JOSE VALERA - DISTRICT 3

93%

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

I think I have very good understanding of ATX Streets mission and principles. I was raised on East 6th street and continue to live in the area. The way it has changed over the recent years makes it a prime area to institute many of the initiatives proposed by ATX Safer Streets.

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

CapMetro must improve it's bus service with respect to updating routes, improving frequency and run time, and providing sheltered stops. Taxi service in Austin is generally poor. It likely would improve with increased numbers of taxis and competition with TNCs. I support legalization of TNCs such as Uber and Lift. However, it is important that the TNCs operate on a level playing field with taxis with regard to permitting and regulation. Where possible, we should encourage less use of personally owned vehicles and encourage more use of public transportation, pedestrian and bikeways, and ride sharing.

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

Yes - Austin commuters are heavily dependent on privately owned vehicles. Part of this dependency is tied to the lack of a reliable and more broadly available, with respect to run time and routes, public transportation. Given personal experience with taxi wait times, it also seems there is a shortage of taxis.

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

No - Given the long wait times for taxis, it would appear that demand is greater than our supply. I would support an expansion of TNCs.

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

Yes - As described above, Austin is very dependent on personally owned vehicles. An expansion of the current transit system would provide a viable alternative. The greater reliance on public transportation would have positive impacts with respect to congestion, rising costs of living, and pollution.

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

Yes - As a small business owner in Austin's growing entertainment district east of IH35, I see late night service as absolutely necessary. Many folks simply do not use public transportation to get downtown because they know it won't be running when it is time to go home. Moreover, the late night service would provide a valuable resource for service industry workers at the end of their shifts.

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

No - I support urban rail as part of the overall solution for Austin's congestion problem. However, I disagree with the cost and proposed route of the current plan in light of the very real affordability problems within District 3. However, if I am elected and the bond passes, I will certainly work to implement the will of Austin's citizens to the best of my ability. Should the bond fail, I would work to implement a rail plan that is more in line with the needs and desires of Austin's citizens.

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 - This initiative must be properly regulated to ensure the parking lots are available for use come Monday morning.

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

Yes - I would support legalization of TNCs so long as they are on a level playing field with taxis.

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

Yes - The wait time for service in Austin incredibly long. If this is a result of a lack of available permits then increasing the number should help alleviate the problem.

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

Yes - With proper vetting and regulation, I would likely support this initiative. However, I think we should first try to meet our transportation needs internally through increased taxis, TNCs and public transportation.

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

Yes - I would support this if it is a more effective way to connect cabs and passengers. The location of these cab stands must also not intrude on local businesses.

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?

It's clear that my personal views and the goals of ATX Safer Streets align. We both recognize the importance of expanding access to public transportation. Moreover, my experience in the service industry as well as my experience in District 3 have given me a broad understanding of the need for reliable public transportation. Reliable and accessible public transportation is an absolute must for those residents in this district who rely on it to go to work, get their kids to school, or enjoy other parts of our city.

FRED MCGHEE - DISTRICT 3
50%

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



ATX Safer Streets 2014 City of Austin Elections Candidate Questionnaire.

Date: August 4, 2014
Name: Dr. Fred L. McGhee
Office Sought: Austin City Council, District 3
Campaign Phone: (512) 317-5717
Email: fred@fredmcghee.com

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

The "about" section of your web page makes your organization's mission and principles quite clear. I have read them and understand them.

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

You can find my position on the [issues page](#) of my website.

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

Not at this stage. Austin does have significant challenges with furnishing *high quality* transit options that are up to national and international standards. We don't necessarily need more (although that could most definitely change), but we *do* need to do it better.

4.) Do you believe that Austin has enough "for hire" transportation options? (Taxis, pedi-cabs, TNCs, limousines)

I am not happy with most if not all of the studies conducted to help answer this question (the 2010 URS Corp. Central Austin Transit Study is an example). We need both quantitative *and* qualitative data in order to help answer this question. My hunch is that at present we probably have enough options, but they are too loosely and haphazardly organized or coordinated. Again, before assuming that we need "more" options we should first be asking whether we can do it better.

5.) Do you support an expansion of our current transit system to accommodate daily commuters?

Commuters already utilize our existing system. District 3 has a large proportion of low-income workers relying on transit who work as cleaners or other service workers in other richer parts of Austin (or who use transit to go to school or appointments), and I would like to see an improved public transit system geared to their needs.

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

By this stage we should have initiated serious planning on this issue, but other priorities have unfortunately gotten in the way. We need good data on the demographics of late night traffic users. There are quantitative and qualitative differences between late night transit users who need to get to and from work and late night transit users who would like reliable transportation home after a night out on the town.

7.) Do you support the current urban rail initiative?

While I have serious problems with Project Connect, I think rail is a crucial component of improved public transportation in Austin. My objections have to do with implementation, not the concept in principle. I want maximum citizen buy-in and a planning process that is democratic and citizen driven, not consultant driven. I am paying close attention to the environmental review for this project which will necessitate an Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision under the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA.

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

Not at present, but I'm willing to have a conversation about it.

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

This issue is not about "legalization," it's about regulation. Seattle recently [reached an agreement](#) to properly regulate this transportation sector and it is worth a look for Austin.

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

Not at the present time.

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

Not at the present time.

12.) Would you support using designated "cab stands" for downtown pick up as an alternative to "street hails?"

If all of the stakeholders agree that it's a good idea and the policy is well crafted, yes.

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

Infrequently

14.) 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?

I would be willing, but I already have a good idea of the issues that Austin transit users, including commuters, are facing.

15.) Why do you believe ATX Safer Streets should endorse you?

a. I am the most qualified candidate. My educational and military credentials alone distinguish me in the District 3 race.

b. Money

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

I am always happy to meet.