

**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](mailto:outreach@atxsaferstreets.org).**

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

## **DAN BUDA - DISTRICT 5**

**93%**

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

My understanding of your mission and principles is to advocate for public policy which reduces the likelihood that any one person will choose to get in their car after drinking instead of opting for a safer option such as public transportation, cabs, TNCs, or other methods. I also understand that you advocate for increasing the reach and capacity of our current transportation system in order to move people toward increased use of public transportation options as a way to deal with increasing traffic congestion.

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

I believe CapMetro has come a long way since its legislative audit several years ago, but I believe there's still a lot of work to be done. I would like to see CapMetro focus on extending bus routes and times, especially during late hours when people are more likely to be intoxicated and need a better way to get home than to jump in their car. I would like to see progress made on the inclusion of Uber, Lyft and other TNCs into our transportation system not only as a way to expand transportation options, but also to provide competition for our taxi companies in order to spur better customer service and access throughout the city. And while we are still a car-centric city, we need to find creative solutions to incent people to leave their cars at home and take public transportation whenever possible.

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

Yes. I believe the entrance of TNCs like Uber and Lyft is evidence that there is a demand for transit that is not currently being met, and I believe we still need to improve access to buses and transportation solutions for those with disabilities.

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

No. I believe the entrance of TNCs like Uber and Lyft is evidence that there is a demand for transit that is not currently being met, and I believe we still need to improve access to buses and transportation solutions for those with disabilities.

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

Yes. I believe that part of getting people to leave their cars at home and use public transit is to make service as accessible and convenient as possible. I believe that expanding the current system will give people more options for using transit and will move people in a direction of feeling more comfortable using public transit, which I believe still has a negative stigma around it in Austin.

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

Yes. In order to keep our roads safe, as well as to allow those with late night work hours to utilize public transit, I believe that late night service is an important service we need to provide.

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

No. At a time in which we as a community are struggling with ways to keep our city affordable for so many, I can't support a proposal that is likely to increase the city property taxes of residents by a significant percentage.

**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 public safety measure that could have a real impact on drunk driving incidents, I would fully support this proposal.

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

Yes. I believe the demand exists for not only additional supplies of transit, but a demand exists for transit options due to a frustration with the level of service our local cab companies are providing, especially to those with disabilities.

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

(Please note that my answer to the above question Yes/No would more accurately be answered as "Open to consideration")

Yes. I believe increasing the number of taxi permits could allow for increased capacity of our taxi system, but we must also address problems with customer service and access to those with disabilities before we allow an increase in the number of taxis. I also believe we need to incorporate TNCs into the city and would want to see what the market looks like after their inclusion before opting to increase 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?**

(Please note that my answer to the above question Yes/No would more accurately be answered as "Open to consideration")

Yes. I would be supportive of temporary permits for special events from out of town cabbies as long as a quality standard of service is incorporated into any proposal.

**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 cab stands on the basis of being safer than street hails, but would need to make sure we don't negatively impact the available public street parking spaces to such a degree as to cause more problems with parking downtown.

**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?**

Absolutely, I believe I would gain valuable perspective from that.

## **DAVE FLOYD - DISTRICT 5**

### **93%**

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

Your group appears to want improved bus and taxi service, overnight parking options, and rail options for the purpose of reducing drunk driving. Reduced congestion would be a potential collateral benefit of some of the services you suggest.

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

CapMetro: we need more extensive bus routes with service later into the night (at least on Thurs-Sat). The MetroRail should also run later on weekend nights.

Taxis: we don't have enough taxis for peak times and special events. Furthermore, we need to do a better job of enforcing compliance such as problems of refusal of fares for trips drivers do not consider to be long enough.

TNCs: I like the concept, but they need to respect the law in the city and work with the city to find an acceptable regulatory plan.

POVs: It's difficult to drive around the core of the city and on MoPac and I-35 at peak traffic times. Unfortunately, peak times seem to be expanding. Improving road infrastructure, connecting road systems, and offering useful transit options can help with this.

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

Yes. See the answer above.

Additionally, we need a commuter rail service (i.e. one facilitated by Lone Star Rail) to get more people to/from suburban areas.

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

No. Austin does not have enough taxis, especially at peak times (e.g. weekend nights) and during special events. Taxis are one type of on-demand transportation services. TNCs such as Uber and Lyft could add to the capacity of on-demand transportation services, provided they are willing to submit to and comply with a reasonable regulatory system. I am not aware of pedi-cab or limousine shortages.

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

Yes. Giving commuters attractive transit options to driving can help reduce traffic congestion by reducing number of cars on the road. Furthermore, good transit options are part of the city's affordability matrix. Many people live in outlying areas of the city because of cost of housing in the urban core, and transit options can help these people get to employment areas without having to drive in traffic and incur vehicle expenses.

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

Yes. For visitors, it is important for them to have transit options so they can avoid driving after drinking, and/or to accommodate visitors staying in downtown without cars. For workers, we need to look for safe and affordable parking solutions or enhanced transit service in order to help the people who facilitate the vibrant hospitality and entertainment sectors of Austin's economy.

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

No. I support rail, but I don't think the current initiative is the best option. That's my personal option, which is moot as a candidate because in this situation I think a candidate should be committed to working on transit options available and supported by voters as indicated by the outcome of Prop 1. I am. If Prop 1 passes, I'll support making the proposed urban rail line work. If it doesn't, then I will support enhancing bus service (including a corridor for MetroRapid along the proposed rail route) as well as continuing to pursue commuter rail options in the form of Lone Star 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. One reason people risk driving drunk is the concern that their vehicles will be towed or subject to fines and high fees if left overnight.

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

Yes, provided they submit to a reasonable regulatory system and work to enforce compliance from their drivers. Uber and Lyft have both been very cavalier about operating in Austin without complying with existing

laws. Thus, if we allow them to operate in Austin there should be a probationary period in which they can demonstrate respect for this city and its rules.

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

Yes. I support increasing the number of permanent taxi permits to reflect the increase in local population. I also support an recurring peak time permit increase in order to accommodate weekend night demand.

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

Yes. It is my understanding that a program like this would help with taxi demand during SXSW, ACL, and Formula 1 events.

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

Yes, assuming this is a supplement to street hails. Cab stands could possibly be useful for drivers and riders in certain parts of downtown during peak times.

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

Yes. Evening 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 am a great choice for District 5. I am very supportive of live music, entertainment, and hospitality in Austin. I realize there is a disconnect and there are resulting problems when we as a city ask people to have fun downtown but then don't have options for them to get home safely. When it comes to the issue of drunk driving, I am convinced that preventative measures (which includes transit, taxis, and overnight parking) should be thought of first. Enforcement is obviously important against those who will never chose safe options, but preventing as many DWI's as possible from happening should be a goal for the city.

I support more a more robust mass transit system which expanded routes and later hours. I support improvements to taxi service, and the addition of TNCs provided they submit to regulation (which includes rules about safety and liability insurance, as protections for Austinites). I support commuter rail in general. If Prop 1 passes, then I will support implementing the rail plan as recently proposed by project connect. If it doesn't pass, then I want to take a return approach to rail that finds routes which will provide optimal service for transit users in dense and heavily trafficked corridors.

I imagine that I'm not the only candidate who likes increasing mass transit options and improving taxi service. What I believe is different about me is that I frequently go downtown to socialize, attend networking events, to see live music, and to attend festivals. I try to not have to drive my own car downtown at night when possible (using Car2Go or taxis instead). I have personal experience being refused taxi service, and having repeatedly talked friends into taking a chance on getting towed from overnight parking as opposed to risking DWI. I have been unable to find cabs during SXSW and been forced to walk home from downtown.

Furthermore, I know a few bar owners, bar managers, and many people in the service industry. Thus I am familiar with many of their concerns about parking and transportation. All of this context, I believe, gives me a personal interest in your group's mission.

## **MIKE RODRIGUEZ - DISTRICT 5**

### **71%**

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

Austin has a thriving music and entertainment scene. Alcohol is served at nearly all these nightlife entertainment venues, but taxis and public transit opportunities drop off significantly late at night. The result, not surprisingly, is an alarming rate of DWIs and hit and run incidents in Austin. Both of these are unacceptable, and sometimes lenient legal penalties have not helped deter reckless choices. No innocent person should be placed at risk, so ATX Safer Streets mission and principles are badly needed and only common sense.

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

Traffic congestion is clearly at the top of most residents list of our problem areas. However, for those reliant on public transportation, there can be a more pressing problem: availability. CapMetro is not coining its part in providing needed operating hours for late night workers, for example. In addition, we have an insufficient taxi fleet to cover the many surge demand events, such as South by Southwest. And, hours of coverage leave gaps for the late night entertainment crowd.

For personal vehicles, parking options are required overnight without the threat of towing, and the city should sponsor ride programs for anyone under the influence to make safe choices.

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

Yes. Taxi shortages are apparent during high demand events, e.g. South by Southwest. Also, taxi shortages are reported for late night periods. Bus hours could be extended or Uber or Lyft

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

No. If there was currently enough coverage, There would not be a public demand for Uber and Lyft.

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

Yes. Additional bus coverage in both hours and routes is needed.

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

Yes. Clearly, there is insufficient coverage in hours and safe transportation modes for this sector.

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

No. Buses accomplish the same thing at much less expense and with greater flexibility. "Urban" rail requires expensive installation of streetcar tracks, an electric grid and bridges or tunnels to create a dedicated route. This will also take away car lanes on Trinity and Riverside, where we are already short of auto capacity. Operating costs for just the first segment of urban rail are projected to be \$22 million annually, over 90% of which will be paid by taxpayers rather than fares. In short, rail is not needed on the proposed route, would result in an initial annual increase of 13% in city property taxes and would serve only the downtown area while all taxpayers would pay.

**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. Public safety needs should transcend the profit incentive. We should try this on a trial basis with safeguards to prevent abuse.

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

Yes. They fill a transportation need especially at times when there are likely to be passengers who should not be driving themselves, and for the late night workers potentially. Left without taxi availability or public transportation coverage.

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

No. If this is a question of peak shortages only vs. routine demand, then TNCs or temporary permits should be able to cover the problem.

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

Yes. Sounds like a good idea, but this should be regulated.

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

Yes. Not sure about the downside of this proposal as it seems that taxis might be stuck in line when they could be picking up fares elsewhere and be more efficiently utilized. However, as a supplement it seems that a stand provides a known source for those in need of a taxi. Still, TNCs are probably a needed supplement.

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

No. 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?**

No.

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

I believe in responsive government, and that includes addressing the needs of a substantial number of people who are employees requiring late night support within the control of the city, plus visitors who should be afforded safe transportation alternatives.

## **JASON DENNY - DISTRICT 5**

### **93%**

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

I have a full understanding of ATX Safer Streets mission and principles and am a staunch supporter.

#### **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 increased transportation options. Cap Metro services need to be expanded, taxi service needs to be improve, TNCs should be authorized to operate legally and safely and personal vehicles are too large a contributor to Austin's traffic congestion.

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

Yes. There are not enough options for people to utilize efficiently and effectively outside of personal vehicles.

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

No. The demand for "for hire" transportation exceeds the supply of current options. The addition of Uber and Lyft have provided for some of that demand but more must be done.

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

Yes. Bus Rapid Transit is an effective and implementable solution to serve current and future demand.

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

Yes. Service Industry Employees are as important if not more important than traditional "9-5" employees. Service should be available to all downtown workers.

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

No. The current initiative does not address the traffic concerns in my district. I think urban rail can be a viable solution but must be implemented correctly and effectively.

#### **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 am in favor of any solution to prevent drunk driving that makes practical sense. Cars should not be ticketed or towed when left overnight. Predatory towing must be stopped immediately.

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

Yes. Austin is an innovative city that is lagging behind on this issue. Free enterprise solutions to market gaps should be welcomed. TNCs should be legally allowed to operate safely.

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

Yes, Taxi permits should be commensurate with demand.

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

Yes. The transportation demand increases that accompany special events like SXSW and ACL must be met. Allowing “peak time” permits is a sensible solution.

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

Yes. Setting up cab stands will increase public safety in the following ways: decrease instances of “street hail” accidents, keep late night customers in well lit controlled environments while they wait, and make cab service first come/first served instead of the “hunger games” mentality that exists currently.

**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?**

ATX Safer Streets should endorse me because lack of public transportation options is one of the main reasons I entered this race (public safety and water crisis being the other 2). I am the only candidate in District 5 who is willing to work with all stakeholders to make Austin a transportation nirvana. I look forward to discussing my campaign with your board in the near future.

**ANN KITCHEN - DISTRICT 5**

**86%**

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

ATX Safer Streets is a ground up community response to the unsafe late night transportation conditions for residents, visitors and late night workers downtown - especially due to lack of options for responsibly dealing with alcohol related situations. ATX is trying to get the city, transportation companies and the public to understand the depth of the problem and take action.

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

Transportation has reached a state of gridlock. Austin has gone from a quiet medium sized city to the 11th largest in the country without an adequate expansion of transportation options.

In this era of tighter public budgets I believe we need lower cost, more immediate congestion relief while we tackle long-term issues. Because no single fix will address our mobility problems, we must focus on building a better-connected system of all options – including roads, buses, transit, and sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure. Short term options for South Austin include 1) redesigning streets and intersections to improve traffic flow through improved signal light management and turn lanes, 2) encouraging employers to avoid peak traffic for their employees with flexible hours, work days and telecommuting, 3) building sidewalks and protected bike lanes, 4) emphasizing maintaining and improving existing roads, 5) improving access to Metro Rapid and other buses, 6) stronger voice for South Austin in mobility planning

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

Yes, our high growth rate, 300 square mile city, and lack of accessible transportation options has made the available services inadequate especially during peak times downtown. It is also very difficult for lower wage workers to affordably travel from one part of the city to another especially during late night hours.

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

No. There is no question that our transportation capacity/options to allow accessibility across the community for people not using private automobiles has not kept up with the growth of the city, our entertainment industry and the fact that we are becoming a 24 hour city.

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

Yes. As I speak to people around South Austin in District Five a number of people have expressed the desire for an expanded bus service that operates more frequently and covers a greater area.

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

Yes. Absolutely, the city has a responsibility to proactively address this issue and develop/implement a plan that will meet the needs of residents, employees, and visitors.

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

No. While I believe rail transit is needed to address Austin’s transportation future, I cannot support the \$1 billion rail/road bond proposal as it has been conceived.

In a time of deep concern about affordability, the proposal does little to serve existing residents of South Austin. Additionally, the \$400 million road package should have been presented as a separate measure so it could have addressed critical transportation needs in South Austin, as well as across the city from redesigning chokepoints to building sidewalks.

**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, utilizing overnight parking seems like a simple solution that should be enacted.

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

Yes. Before Transportation Network Companies can begin operations, the city has a responsibility to develop a clear set of rules that applies equally to all companies that provide transportation services.

I consider it a basic responsibility of our city to provide for the health and safety of our residents and to ensure accessibility of services for all Austinites (including lower income and people with disabilities).

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

Yes, this is the clearest way to provide a long term solution for addressing the need for additional capacity. It is clear that at peak times there are not enough cabs for the demand which is contributing to an unsafe environment for Austinites and visitors.

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

No. I would prefer a more permanent approach by increasing the number of permanent taxi permits in Austin.

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

Yes. There are arguments for both approaches and I’ve seen both work in other cities. Cab stands may be helpful in entertainment districts and other high pedestrian traffic areas (University, Auditorium Shores, etc.) so people could know where they could find a ride. Outside of such areas street hails may work better. I am interested in discussing further with Safer Streets and whether the Transportation Network Companies Working Group will address this issue.

**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 offer my experience in working successfully through difficult public problems, as an Assistant Attorney General, a State Legislator, and a longtime advocate for health, environment and other critical community issues.

I understand equity issues and see the needs everyday and many nights. I support changing our approach to addressing transportation to shift some of the focus to lower cost, more immediate relief while we tackle long-term issues. Focusing on building a better-connected system of roads, buses, transit, and sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure will create options for downtown entertainment workers to get home safely. I would be happy to meet with ATX Safer Streets.