

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.

MACKENZIE KELLY - DISTRICT 6

93%

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

ATX Safer Streets is an organization that was created after the increase in drunk driving auto incidents involving cyclist and pedestrians. I remember hearing about your organization after the tragic SXSW drunk driving deaths in March. I believe the principals of your organization are to improve transportation options for Austin for everyone who travels in Austin no matter what the occasion is.

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

The transportation options in Austin have severely lagged Austin's population growth and changes in demographics around Central Texas. The users who need public transit services offered by Capital Metro the most are being sent away from Central Austin to outside the city limits. Capital Metro needs improvements to their services that ensure people in Central Texas have transit options which serve them in the best way possible.

Taxis and TNCs should be transit options for people who need that on demand travel. Taxis need to increase the number of available units and be able to serve peak demand events that are a regular occurrence in Austin. TNCs do need to be approved and regulated for use in Austin in order to be a safe option for transit users.

Personally owned vehicles need better incentives to car pool, have safe overnight parking, and improvements to the road infrastructure that doesn't include adding toll lanes for every project.

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

Yes. There is a transit shortage and problem with having services that meet the needs to the transit users of Austin. I would support studies and policy that would distribute transit to areas in Austin that are currently being underserved by transit.

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

No. There needs to be an increase in transportation options for services such as taxis and TNCs because these services reduce the drunk driving incidents.

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

Yes. Daily commuters still have a difficult time with getting to their workplace due to a bus service that can take upwards of two hours to get to their job

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

Yes. The current transit system needs to be expanded to accommodate the entire Austin workforce. This includes employees who don't work a regular daytime schedule and need similar transit options that are currently very limited for them.

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

No. I do not support the current proposed urban rail initiative because of how the current City Council selected a route that doesn't serve the current users of the public transit system. I support building an urban rail line serving the current high density corridors and has the best change of being successful.

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. Empty parking garages during the weekend are better used for serving as safe parking options for people who take part in overnight activities in Austin.

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

Yes. TNC services do need to follow regulation to ensure that passengers of these services are kept safe and are insured by the service. I also believe this helps with the providing healthy competition to the taxis who serve Austin.

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

Yes. The current number of taxi permits needs to be increased to accommodate the number of people who live in Austin.

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

Yes. The peak time events that happen in Austin throughout the year are the most critical times when demand causes 2-3 hour wait times for taxis. This is a safety risk for people who stay out too late and cause more drunk driving incidents that have occurred in Austin during these peak times.

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 helpful to create designated spots for passengers and cabs to meet. This would also prevent passengers from being passed up by taxi when they are trying to street hail them.

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 believe mission of ATX Safer Streets is going after the right transit issues with Austin. District 6 in Northwest Austin has a problem with having transit available for workers and people staying out late. I would support the recommendations proposed by ATX Safer Streets if I was elected to the Austin City Council.

JIMMY FLANNIGAN - DISTRICT 6

86%

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

My understanding of ATX Safer Streets mission and principles is that they involve Improving and expanding transportation options to provide alternatives to driving in order to reduce the rate of accidents and deaths related to drunk and unsafe driving.

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 gridlocked and need to expand all options to improve mobility and reduce traffic. There is no one solution that will have a major impact. We need to improve our road network (signal timing, intersection improvements, key arterial street upgrades), our bike network (improved safety on corridors, no more patchwork implementation), our pedestrian network (connected trails and sidewalks that compliment transit investments), and our private transportation options (expand access to taxis, increase competition through TNCs). This is in addition to developing a rail system that will provide long-term stable transportation alternatives, more targeted land use planning along "Connected Corridors", and working with the business community to implement flex time and telecommuting.

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

Yes. Austin has a shortage of all transportation options. But again there is no one way that shortage is felt. For example, in District 6 we are about to expand MetroRail service but have no plans to expand park and rides that support that investment. Nor has there been any appreciable transit oriented development around the Lakeline or Howard Lane stations. It's not always just about putting more busses on the road or trains on the track.

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

No. Just as we need to expand our public transit system and improve our road network, we need to see an expansion of private transportation options. This includes finding a solution to expand access to taxis and TNCs.

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

Yes. Living in District 6, I am on the front-lines of the daily commute nightmare. In fact, developing transit solutions for daily commuters is the best return on investment for major transportation investments.

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

Yes. In principle, yes. However, budgetary concerns will always play a role when balancing the needs of different types of transit users. Not every transit tool is the right solution for every transit problem.

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

Sadly no. While I have been present for the conception, planning, and vetting of this project, I have grave concerns about the first rail project's role in a future rail system. When the second likely project (according to Project Connect) duplicates much of the first project's route (specifically the parallel rail routes that would exist north of MLK), it further pushes out our ability to engage surrounding communities. My issue is not that Guadalupe/Lamar would be better than Highland/Riverside... but that in Project Connect's own map, the Highland/Riverside route is at best half duplicated by future plans.

I also cannot support the idea that of \$400 million in road spending, Austin taxpayers will spend more than half of that allocation improving roads that the state is responsible to support. Unfortunately we do need to see some road projects implemented, as intersection improvements and corridor design/engineering studies are both necessary to compliment the other transportation investments we will surely need to make. But it makes no sense to burden Austin taxpayers alone for improvements on state highways over which we have no ownership or control.

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 in principle... but I question the efficacy of such a measure. If we make it easier to bring your car when you're planning to drink, it could have the effect of discouraging people to take alternative means in the first place.

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

Yes. Our transportation problem will not be solved by eliminating possible solutions out of hand. However, we have to proceed with caution, as Uber and Lyft have already shown their cavalier attitude to following the law. How can we adjust or loosen the regulatory environment when there is no guarantee they will abide by any agreements reached to get there? We need transportation partners to solve this problem.

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

Yes. We need to also expand our thinking beyond the existing models. Austin's transportation problem requires creative solutions not limited to business-as-usual.

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

Yes. Increased and unmet transportation demand impacts the entire city, not just the attendees of a special event. We must expand our thinking to solve these problems.

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

Yes. I do not see compelling reason to limit any option when addressing the transportation problem.

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?

No.

Why do you believe ATX Safer Streets should endorse you?

I don't have to go without a car for a week to study the issue... I've lived it. I spent 2011 living in far East Austin without a car and experienced the challenges of inconsistent bus service, lack of available and affordable private options, and the danger of missing sidewalks and protected pedestrian pathways. I have also spent nearly my entire life in NW Austin; a part of town built out entirely based on car usage. There is no silver bullet solution to the problems we face in Austin. In fact, all of the “easy” solutions have been done. The bottom line is that I am the only candidate in District 6 with the experience and relationships to actually fix the problems we have in Austin.

JAY WILEY - DISTRICT 6
86%

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

The decrease of dangerous accidents on Austin roadways. I fully support your mission and hope to be an ally on Council.

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

Austin transportation is inadequate because growth has overtaken our infrastructure quickly. Local government has been hostile to TNCs and we need to change the culture at City Hall from one which relies on older, outdated models to one that embraces and encourages newer models. I support improving existing roadways with greater capacity and connectivity, expanding bus routes, TNCs, car-sharing and carpooling, expanded HOV lanes, and telecommuting, just to name a few.

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

Yes. The current political leadership at the City has a political preference for rail lines rather than expanded bus routes. Current taxi service is not serving Austin adequately as evidenced by the public support for TNCs like Uber and Lyft. We should embrace free market innovations that that work well and people want.

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

No. We should take an all-of-the-above approach to transportation. Public support for Uber and Lyft demonstrates the market need for new transportation options.

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

Yes. We should expand the current bus system with more routes, expand BRT, and incentivize car-sharing and carpooling programs because traffic in Austin has become untenable. We should recognize, however, that upwards of 3/4 of Austin commuters drive alone to work -- reasonable solutions should revolve around that central fact, not attempt to reengineer people out of their cars when there is not the market for those ideas.

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

Yes. We should encourage staggered shifts and flexible work hours to relieve congestion.

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

No. Prop 1 will cost, according to Project Connect, over \$400,000 per new rider, raise property taxes by hundreds of dollars a year, and be the largest bond/debt commitment in Austin history in order to move less than 10,000 people a day by 2030. It will severely strain our resources so we can't expand roadways and our bus system. As the Red Line from Leander demonstrates, there is not the market for urban rail. If there were, I would support it.

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 is the kind of solution government should be nimble and flexible enough to allow for.

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

Yes. TNCs are examples of free enterprise meeting a need. Austin is full of creative people but too often government gets in the way and stifles that creativity. I am a strong supporter of Lyft, Uber, and other innovations.

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

Yes. Government should not get in the way of transportation solutions that have a market demand. If there is a demonstrated need for more permits, I will support.

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

Yes. There is little downside from what I understand and it would meet a demand.

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 provided business owners affected by cab stand locations agree and it is not heavy handed. I want the input of stakeholders.

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?

No.

Why do you believe ATX Safer Streets should endorse you?

I welcome your endorsement because I bring a different, fresh perspective to Council that has been lacking from the downtown echo chamber -- that of an advocate for limited government and a focus on taxpayer advocacy. That perspective is exactly the point of 10-1. I have the political support, grassroots infrastructure, background, and resources to be successful in this race. On Council I will be an ally for the issues you care about.

LLOYD “PETE” PHILLIPS - DISTRICT 9
93%

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

I view ATX Safer Streets as a advocacy group focused fostering a safer Austin by working will interested parties in application of sound, reliable, sustainable, expandable and fiscally responsible transportation policy and resources.

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

CapMetro has done a good job of working within its limited budget and infrastructure to expand available options but we still have extremely limited alternatives. Current taxi and bus service doesn't provide adequate options during high demand periods associated with festivals, ACL, SXSW, F-1, UT Games and other conventions associated with the central Austin corridor. TNC's if officially sanctioned by the City Council offer alternatives but more must be done to overcome this deficit. We must also leverage the cities innovative environment to generate additional transportation alternatives.

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

Yes. During the numerous high-density events, transportation options are scarce at best. Taxi service is stressed to its limits, bus ridership increases but options to the outer regions of the city remain limited creating an insufficiency for a large percentage of the populous. The recent arrival of unsanctioned TNC's addresses this issue but not a level sufficient to service the current requirements.

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

No. Austin's lack of sufficient for hire transportation options is the result of inability to keep up with the rapid population growth and lack of sanctioned use of TNC's.

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

Yes. The expansion of current transit options in order to accommodate daily commuters is a great use of taxpayer funds. The current system doesn't sufficiently operate at a level that supports late commuters or those on extended hours, outside of the 8:00 – 5:00 but we must also examine innovative alternatives.

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

Yes. A dedicated late night service or expansion of current service that adequately cover those graveyard service industry employees and patrons could potentially reduce the number of intoxicated driver incidents thus creating a safer roadway.

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

No. I can't not support the current urban rail initiative, as proposed; because, it doesn't make good economical sense at a project \$1.2 Billion. The current proposal also fails to support the District 6 constituency in addition to numerous others within the city limits.

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 use of city owned parking garages along with a potential partnership with fee-for-service parking structures is a responsible means of reducing drunk driving incidents as it provides patrons the ability to leave their vehicle without the fear of towing and offer, in some locations, security/protection against theft.

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

Yes. The time to approve the use of TNC's is now but with this approval, we must ensure the people of Austin are afforded the same level of security and protections found with other means of for-hire service.

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

Yes. With the rapid growth in the Austin population and continued expansion of the tourist industry, expansion permanent taxi permits must be continually evaluated and increase to support that demand.

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

Yes. The use of temporary peak time permits during special events is a great stopgap measure as we explore the expansion of the current level of permanent taxi permits. This expansion should not be implemented at the expense of local for hire businesses when they have the ability to meet that demand for service.

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

Yes. Designated cab stands in the vicinity of or collocated with bus stops is a safer options and will assist in contributing to traffic congestion currently experienced in the street hails system currently utilized.

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?

My strategic, innovative approach to problem solving coupled with a comprehensive background addressing complex issues associated with multiple modes transportation issues is inline with the mission of ATX Safe Streets.