

**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.**

## **ED SCRUGGS - DISTRICT 8**

**93%**

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

It is very apparent that your organization is motivated first by a desire for improved public safety and next by a profound love of the city and an understanding of what makes this a unique place to live. Obviously, the failure to provide safe and available transit options to the entertainment district was a mistake - and repeated failures by our leaders to recognize this has contributed to an increasingly dangerous environment for patrons and employees that help drive a major segment of the local economy.

### **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 never caught up to the growth curve. Not enough roads in the right locations, insufficient and disconnected bus service, no wide-scale urban transit system, an out of date taxi fleet that fails to serve the urban core and a hostile environment to TNCs. Not a pretty picture.

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

Yes. The Taxi system has never expanded to fully serve our growing and changing population. I use cabs quite a bit in my profession, which requires travel around the country. Good systems can get you to and from the airport - as well as around town - in a reliable and efficient manner. Austin's system has never fully developed. It seems stuck on a "small city" model focused on business travel - without adjusting to the fact that thousands are now living and playing downtown at all hours of the day. It just does not serve this population at the hours that service is needed. Our bus service is in a state of adjustment - but much needs to be done to expand service hours and options. If we want the bus to be a true transit and commute alternative, it needs to get people to their destination without multiple transfer and long delays.

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

No. Obviously there are not enough cabs - or at least cabs in the right locations at the right times. Cabs must be part of not only the downtown mix as well as the airport / hotel mix. Pedi-Cabs and Limos are of course vital - but growth must be measured in order to control traffic flow downtown at critical hours. I support the arrival of TNCs in Austin and look forward to their expansion. They have the promise of filling a vital need in the market.

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

Yes. Due to the city's exploding growth, we have no choice but to expand all transit options. The difficulty is going to be doing this at a time of rising costs of daily living. I am confident we can accomplish this, but only with comprehensive planning and measured execution over the long-term.

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

Yes. This is vital. The city promotes the entertainment district around the nation. It is a major draw for tourism and a major economic engine throughout the year - but the support given to the industry, employees and patrons has been lacking for years.

Now that downtown is filling with thousands of full time residents, expanded service (to move people in, out and around) downtown is even more important.

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

No. I am a supporter of light, urban and commuter rail - although I do not support the current bond proposal, as it does not do much to improve commuter travel from the outlying areas. With the city facing a taxation and affordability crisis, voters must see a more complete transit plan before deciding whether to support these types of bond expenditures. Ultimately, we need a system that serves the urban core and expands outward to the suburbs - and serves the greatest numbers of existing residents. The plan that goes before voters must reflect this.

**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. Years ago, parking in city lots was free at night and on weekends. I recall many times parking in the old council chamber lot on the weekends to see shows at Liberty Lunch (on 2nd Street - near where City Hall is now located).

I would give priority to employees of the entertainment district, who could purchase low cost permits. This now only provides needed parking for employees - but opens up more of the public parking stock to patrons.

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

Yes. There is nothing to fear with the arrival of Uber and Lyft - as long as they operate in good faith and follow the rules set forth by the city. I do believe there is more than enough room for taxis and TNCs in our city - as TNCs cater to an underserved segment of the market.

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

Yes. The city is growing - and the cab fleet has no choice but to expand.

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

Yes and No. This is somewhat situational. We need to use caution in these circumstances to avoid a stampede of newcomers on our roads during some of our most congested weekends. The number allowed in should be tightly regulated. We might also wish to look at also expanding the number of petty cabs and eventual TNC permits during these periods to help take the pressure off.

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

Yes. This is long overdue and would improve general safety on weekends and during big events - but finding adequate curb space at enough locations could be an issue. I can envision this starting as a pilot program and then expanding outward once additional locations are secured.

**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?**

As a 23 year Austin resident and frequent live music patron, I have witnessed the evolution of our city and the entertainment district from somewhat sleepy college town to the large scale urban area it is today. Our city is a major booster of live entertainment and the arts, but our community is battling exponential growth in traffic congestion - while at the same time trying to manage what many recognize is a very serious problem with alcohol and drunk driving.

Part of building a compact and dense urban core is taking the responsibility for the safety of the people who work and play there. I am committed to doing this through working with the community, law enforcement and local business to improve transit options, increase event safety and tackle our drunk driving problem head on.

For example, we should look to establish a public / private partnership to improve community outreach and alcohol safety education. We must also work with the county to establish a fully functioning sobriety center near downtown. This will take some of the pressure off our over-stretched public safety units - but also provide a safe option for those who might otherwise drive while intoxicated.

Your organization is to be applauded - and certainly not judged. You give give voice to the concerns of many - and I look forward to working with you to make this a safer city.

**BECKY BRAY - DISTRICT 8**  
**79%**

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

ATX Safer Streets is striving to address a public transportation need that is currently un-met or under-met. From late-night transportation options and varied transportation options (Uber, Lyft, Public Transit, pedestrian/bike, etc), to overall safer transportation options, ATX Safer Streets is a coalition of community-wide citizens who are working toward providing more options.

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

I think the current transportation network is a patch-work of options that currently do not work well together. As a City, we have tried to improve the network, but have not really considered the ever changing user.

Personal vehicles – The option of the use of your personal vehicle needs to always be included. While this is the mode of choice for many individuals, it is becoming increasingly difficult. Any solution must include provisions for personal automobiles.

CapMetro –The current late night service is geared more toward the impaired individuals as opposed to the individuals who work and need late night service. A comprehensive review and re-do of the services being provided must be completed.

Taxis – I think if the City is not going to consider more taxi licenses, then they must allow TNC types of service to be provided. This is an on-going struggle between the City, taxi services and Transportation Network Companies (TNC). But given the limited transportation options, these all need to be part of the solution.

TNCs – I think is a city like Austin with such an active afterhours scene, we must find a way to allow TNCs to be part of the solution.

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

Yes. Our limited transit availability, to me, is because of the combination of licensing requirements - the fact that the City will only allow a specific number of licenses - as well as the extremely limited public transportation options. The options that are available are primarily designed for a 9 to 5 commuter city as opposed to the increasingly diverse work population.

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

Yes. I support the expansion of our current system. However, I think this must be done with all commuters in mind. We must take into account that Austin is not a 9 to 5 City. We have a thriving afterhour’s business and currently the vast majority of these individuals must utilize private automobiles and are not given other options.

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

Yes. I wholeheartedly support the expansion of our current system. However, I think this must be done with all commuters in mind. We must take into account that Austin is not a 9 to 5 City. We have a thriving afterhour’s business and currently the vast majority of these individuals must utilize private automobiles and are not given other options.

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

Yes. I am very supportive of a late night service plan and it should be high on the priority list. This could be something as simple as a shuttle providing transportation between off-site parking areas to employment locations or it could be expanding many of the routes already in place. But whatever is provided it must be safe for the users.

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

No. I think that the cost to provide this service far outweighs the service being provided. I think the City/CapMetro can provide the same service with buses at a far less cost (and even expand the system). In the meantime, we could preserve the right-of-way and once demand outpaces the bus system a rail option could be considered.

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

Yes. I think the combination of the threat of being towed or ticketed and the lack of transportation options leads many people to drive impaired. If individuals were made aware that they had until a certain time to remove their car, then more people might leave their car in place and utilize another form of transportation. Which would lead to safer streets. I also think the state owned lots should be included in these conversations.

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

Yes. I think these companies have to be allowed to provide a much needed service. The City could easily work with the taxi companies and implement a policy in which both systems could co-exist. Right now some of the taxi drivers do not want to pick up late night revelers and this only leads to people making risky decisions to drive. I think by allowing the TNCs we are only better serving the residents of Austin and our guests.

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

Yes. I support increasing the number of taxi permits but I do not think this is in lieu of providing late night transit options. While there is a need for more taxis, there is also a need for less expensive options.

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

Yes. I would be supportive of the licensing of out of town cabbies as long as they are under one of the current taxi providers. Unless there is a proven need, I do not think we should allow out of town companies to service the Austin area just for special events. This is where TNCs could be of benefit to the citizens.

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

As an alternative, no, but in addition to, yes. I say this because if a person had to choose between their car (a few blocks away) or finding a taxi stand, they might choose to go their vehicles. I think in more densely visited areas where vehicles are limited (Rainey Street); a taxi stand would be a good alternative and could easily be located.

**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?**

Given where I live, the riding of public transportation is very difficult. However, as an experiment I would welcome the opportunity to go between different areas of the City. I currently ride my bike on the weekends – grocery store, local errands and exercise – and if I have the opportunity I would love to be able to commute by bicycle.

## **ELLEN TROXCLAIR - DISTRICT 8**

### **86%**

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

We share a passion for making Austin a safer place to live by expanding late night transportation and parking options in an effort to reduce drunk driving. Drunk driving is a serious problem in our city that we all otherwise love, and it should be an absolute priority for the city council to enact policies that offer solutions, instead of exacerbating the problem. As a city council member, I will be a continual advocate for getting Austinites home safely. Thank you for devoting your time and energy to this critical issue, and I look forward to working together to enact ATX Safer Streets initiatives.

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

Transportation is severely lacking in Austin. From limited bus service and a lack of adequate or reliable taxi service, to restrictions on TNCs and a lack of road infrastructure that leads to gridlocked traffic. We must take action to expand transportation options to keep up with our continual growth.

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

Yes. Anyone who has tried to get home safely late at night can attest to how truly limited the options are. It is almost impossible to find an available taxi and the buses are no longer running, encouraging people to drive home when they shouldn't.

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

No. It is not usual to wait more than an hour for a taxi, especially during peak times, which is simply unacceptable. Although pedi-cabs may be helpful for small distances, they of course cannot provide service to suburban areas such as southwest Austin from downtown that are most severely lacking in public

transportation options. Limousines are expensive and must be booked in advance. Not being able to quickly and easily find transportation directly contributes to our city's drinking and driving problem.

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

Yes. As an example, there is only one bus route that serves a large commuter area of southwest Austin, and it only runs twice a day. This is not practical for many commuters who would otherwise commute on a bus but can't afford to be stuck if they need to come home early or have to stay at the office late. I have talked to many residents who have said they would take a bus to work if there were more workable options.

**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 a thriving nightlife in Austin, which is an important part of our economy and tourist industry. Yet, we offer almost no transportation options during the late night hours.

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

No. Although I strongly support increasing our public transportation network, the rail will serve such a limited amount of riders at an incredibly high cost. The estimated 9,000 round trips per day represent less than one half of one percent of the daily trips in the region, and it will never serve some of the largest commuter areas of the city, such as southwest Austin. At a minimum initial cost of \$600M, that same amount of money could hugely expand our current bus system, serving many more Austinites with many more routes, almost immediately. At a time when we are struggling with a skyrocketing cost of living and significant tax increases, I cannot in good faith say that I am concerned about affordability in Austin while supporting an initiative that will place significant additional financial strain on our residents for a project that is not expected to reduce traffic or substantially increase mobility.

**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. We must increase our overnight parking downtown. Not only do I support utilization of city owned parking lots and garages, but I also support returning to free meters on weekends as well. Having limited overnight parking options, combined with the lack of taxis or late night bus routes, means that people feel like they have no other choice but to drive their car home even if they've had too much to drink. This initiative is a perfect example of how a simple change in city policy could help to address this issue.

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

Absolutely! These companies fill a clear need in our community by offering a safe and reliable way for residents and visitors to travel in the city. Their business model allows them to be flexible and increase their services during peak demand (whether that's late night or special events). As a city that likes to think of itself as innovative and cutting-edge, I am disappointed at the city's inability to come up with a workable plan to accommodate both our existing taxi companies as well as much-needed new transportation providers.

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

Yes. The more transportation options, the better. I support a level playing field for the transportation industry, and if cab companies think that increasing the number of permanent taxis in Austin will allow them to provide more comprehensive service then I have no objection.

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

Yes & no. We need to make sure that the city is adequately serviced during peak times. Ideally, the increased business and jobs from special events would benefit cabbies and drivers from Austin. I adamantly support legalizing TNCs, allowing cab companies to expand their services as they see fit, and expanding bus service when necessary. It would be good to know how service improves after these changes are made. If there is still a shortage of transportation during special events, I would be open to allowing out of town cabbies to help us meet that need.

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

Yes. This one simple way to address part of our late night safety issues. Having designated cab stands would help to get people home safely in an organized manner. Now, those desperately seeking a cab will often dart across the street or walking endlessly for blocks trying to flag one down. We must create designated stands to keep people out of the streets and to give them assurance that they will be able to find a ride home, even if it takes longer than we would like.

**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?**

No.

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

(For the question above - I already know that it would be impossible! With almost no public transportation in the suburbs of southwest Austin, I unfortunately could not manage with no car.)

Safe late night transportation is an issue that I am passionate about regardless of my campaign for City Council. As a younger person who lives outside the city center, the lack of safe late night transportation has frequently affected my daily life. The city can and must easily enact policies that will reduce drunk driving, and I will be an advocate for a safer Austin. I have attended Safer Streets meetings, giving me an opportunity to meet many members and see first hand the passion that we share for better late night transportation. I hope I can continue to be a part of this group both as a city council member but also as an individual who cares deeply about this issue. I'm happy to meet and talk more about how we can work together on these issues anytime! Thank you for your time and your consideration of endorsing me in my campaign to bring common sense leadership to City Hall.