Macomb County Candidates on Transit

August 2020 Local Candidate Questionnaire

The Motor City Freedom Riders questionnaire was sent to candidates with public email addresses in Oakland County seeking the following offices:

- Representative in State Legislature
- County Commissioner
- Local city and township positions

Submitted responses are listed below. Positions which received no responses have been omitted.

Last updated July 27, 2020
Representative in State Legislature

Survey questions were as follows:

- **Transit Experience**
  What is your experience using public transportation in the greater Detroit region? (Examples include SMART, DDOT, FAST, TheRide, etc.)

- **Detroit Area Funding**
  The greater Detroit area currently funds transit at less than half the national average per capita. Do you believe the region needs to invest in improved public transportation? What are some specific improvements you would like to see in your community?

- **State Funding Limit**
  The State of Michigan currently limits state spending on public transit to less than 10% of the Michigan Transportation Fund. Do you believe this limit should be lifted? Why or why not?

- **“Fix-It-First”**
  Despite the poor state of Michigan’s existing roads and highways, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) continues to spend millions of dollars on adding new capacity to highways like I-94 and I-75. Do you believe the state should instead adopt a “fix-it-first” approach, focusing on the maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure? Why or why not?

- **Ride with Us?**
  If elected, once the threat of COVID-19 has receded, will you commit to spending an afternoon riding the bus with us to gain a better understanding of the needs of bus riders in our community?
18th District

Patrick Biange (D)

Transit Experience
Frequent passenger

Detroit Area Funding
Mass city and state transit.

State Funding Limit
Yes, mass transit is the future.

“Fix-It-First”
We need mass transit; not more highway lanes.

Ride with Us?
Yes, I will ride the bus with a mask during this crisis.

22nd District

Richard M. Steenland (D)

Transit Experience
I have not had to use it but I know many Roseville residents that rely on SMART bus to get to work and doctor/VA appointments. There is a strong need for public transit in my district.

Detroit Area Funding
I am supportive of investing in regional transit but we must make sure that any solution improves access to jobs, increases access and connections to major corridors in communities that will have to vote on such a proposal and provides an efficient and convenient connection to Metro Airport. In order to compete with other major regions for talent and investment, we must have a regional transit system that works and has regional buy-in. One of the biggest shortfall of the last mass transit plan that was offered was the lack of routes in the heart of heavily populated areas in Macomb County, such as the Van Dyke and Mound corridors. These roads go through some of the most populated cities such as Warren, Sterling Heights and Shelby Township and we need the voters in the city to see how the system would benefit them in order to get them to vote for an expansion of mass transit. These cities and townships also are home to some of the largest companies in the Midwest.
State Funding Limit
I would have to look at the inner details of the Michigan Transportation Fund more closely before I embark on making any changes in the formula. Politics and regionalism have played a significant factor in determining the formula used to distribute road funding dollars. I believe we need to invest more resources in public transit as well as in maintaining/fixing our existing roads by growing the pot. That is a more practical way to get more funding for mass transit.

To improve our roads, we must make tough decisions. First of all, we will need to make sure that we are doing things efficiently and effectively and that we maximize our road funding from the federal government. We also need to implement and utilize best practices and techniques when it comes to road construction projects with things like expanding road warranties, video conferencing when feasible, more competitive bidding and increased penalties for violating weight limits. In addition to taking advantage of the currently low interest rates and issuing bonds secured by future fuel and registration tax revenue, it is also very important that we have voter input in the process as any potential long-term solution and revenues for roads ultimately will come from the taxpayers’ pocket. As such, I would consider a sales tax increase dedicated strictly to roads and with voter approval as a potential revenue solution. It is the most equitable solution to resolve the issue and would not hurt the School Aid Fund. With a 1 cent or 2 cent increase, everyone pays the same rate for the same common purpose of improving our roads and bridges. It also would be transparent in that it is enshrined in the Michigan Constitution and could therefore not be diverted to other funding items. We can also look at raising the gas tax/user fees but changing the law to require all gas tax revenue to go towards roads would create a significant budget hole to local governments and in the School Aid Fund. If there is no legislative support for a sales tax, additional user fees, elimination of registration fee loopholes or other taxes, or some combination of each, should be looked at. I am open to consideration of all potential road funding options, which will also require bipartisan cooperation.

“Fix-It-First”
Yes. I believe we need to focus on the roads that we do have that are in need of maintenance and repair because there is not enough money to go around to meet the infrastructure needs we have. We need to efficient and effective in the use of existing funds and an important avenue to that is to maintain roads before they require more expensive repairs.

Ride with Us?
Absolutely. The best way for me to learn the issues that impact the needs of bus riders in Macomb County is to actually participate and meet with individuals who use it and need its services. It is important to listen and learn from others so that we can come up with better policies for everyone.
24th District

**Alex Bronson (D)**

**Transit Experience**
I've used public transportation my whole life. I did not have a car in college and relied heavily on it to get to school and work. When my car would break down after college, I would also use public transportation to make sure I could still get to work.

**Detroit Area Funding**
Yes, I definitely believe that we need to invest more money into public transit. I would like to see Macomb participate in regional transportation and would also like to see Hackel start promoting the use of transit, instead of abstaining from it.

**State Funding Limit**
Yes, it should be lifted. We cannot allow ourselves to be limited in how much money we want to dedicate to public transit. Public transit is used by majority working-class families to increase their economic opportunities and we should make sure we keep investing in it to help get more families into the middle class.

**“Fix-It-First”**
Yes, we should. If we don’t even have the money to maintain what is already there, then later down the road we aren’t going to have the money to maintain even more infrastructure. We need to rethink how we invest in and maintain our transportation infrastructure. We also need to look into building roads that last longer. European roads tend to last twice as long as American roads, due to better engineering and maintenance investment, and we should be able to get roads that are just as good and maintained.

**Ride with Us?**
Absolutely. I have no problem riding the bus and spent years of my life riding them. I’m a huge supporter of the Motor City Freedom Riders and have been a member since I went to a meeting of yours last fall.
36th District

Robert Murphy (D)
Transit Experience
Limited

I have never had the occasion of using it.

Detroit Area Funding
Redirect funds from special interest that have little or no importance to fleet and personnel

After the pandemic. Perhaps the biggest and best improvement would be smaller bus sizes for economics and fuel savings. That could allow for better scheduling and more frequent p/u’s.

State Funding Limit
Redirect funds from special interest,

Funding should be utilized more intelligently, no more pork spending. Real problems require real solutions without campaign contributions pay back.

“Fix-It-First”
Let’s dedicate road building funds to where they were approved for. Roads and bridges. Not beautification, replacing traffic lamps etc...

Doesn’t it seem the State keeps spending money on the same stretches of freeways in certain congressional districts. Constantly repairing the same roads, neglecting the bridges that were and are an embarrassment since Super Bowl 40

Ride with Us?
Absolutely

Certainly will, you have my word on it.
County Commissioner

Survey questions were as follows:

- **Transit Experience**
  What is your experience using public transportation in the greater Detroit region? (Examples include SMART, DDOT, FAST, TheRide, etc.)

- **Detroit Area Funding**
  The greater Detroit area currently funds transit at less than half the national average per capita. Do you believe the region needs to invest in improved public transportation? What are some specific improvements you would like to see in your community?

- **Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**
  Local governments often have authority over local roadways, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities. What is your experience with bicycle and pedestrian facilities in your community, and what are some improvements you would like to see?

- **Ride with Us?**
  If elected, once the threat of COVID-19 has receded, will you commit to spending an afternoon riding the bus with us to gain a better understanding of the needs of bus riders in our community?
District 2

**Perpetual Candidate (Libertarian)**

Transit Experience
Smart / Gratiot route

U-Turn at Macomb mall

Detroit Area Funding
Nope

Ridership, very low Does Not Warrant any more
Tax
Revenue
Or
Programs

Time to slice the spending / budget

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
No more bike lanes

The liability & exposure is NOT worth the dozen bikers

Ride With Us?
100%

**Danielle Paniccia (D)**

Transit Experience
I've never used public transportation in the metro Detroit area.

Detroit Area Funding
I would love to see the M1 rail extend a greater length of Woodward, and also see more passenger rail systems built.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
Bike lanes on more streets, or bike-specific pathways

Ride With Us?
Yes
Mai Xiong (D)
Transit Experience
When I was a student at the College for Creative Studies, I rode the SMART bus from Warren to Detroit everyday on my way to school.

Detroit Area Funding
Yes, I support the improvements to public transportation, specifically I would like to see a mass transit system connecting surrounding cities.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
In Warren, we do not have many walkable roadways to allow safe biking or walking. I would support a solution to improve our walkability score and to slow the speed of roads to make it safe for pedestrians.

Ride With Us?
Yes, I would be excited to be a bus rider again!

District 4
Carole Chi (D)
Transit Experience
I grew up in Detroit, west side, near Warren Ave. & Greenfield, in the 1950s-70s. I took the Crosstown bus--and more--to 2 high school(s), then to college (Wayne State University). I don't think it was called DDOT yet.

Detroit Area Funding
Absolutely, the greater Detroit area needs to invest in improved public transportation! I would like to see light rail, high speed trains, fast buses, the whole gamut. I'd like to see a fast bus on 15 Mile rd, from Macomb County all the way to Metro Airport and back, express buses to go downtown to restaurants, theaters, events, sports, etc., light rail from county to county--all the way to Ann Arbor. High speed trains to Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, NYC, Florida, Texas, everywhere! And of course we must continue Smart buses in local areas, for seniors often can’t drive in last 7 years of their lives, due to poor vision, slow response, other illnesses or disabilities. Students need public transport also, especially if arriving/attending from out of state, as they're not necessarily used to driving a car. The general public needs more and better public transport to get to available jobs in other counties; not everyone can afford a decent car/upkeep/insurance.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I wish we had more bicycle and pedestrian facilities in our city of Sterling Heights. I’d like to have a walk-able downtown area here also, but that’s not possible/feasible in the near future. We have a lot of walkers and some bicyclers in my neighborhood; lowering the speed limits and increasing enforcement would help us to remain safer and healthier. We need better roads, and much less weight on trucks, for they are constantly breaking our roadways no matter how often the road surfaces are repaired. The virtually unlimited weight of trucks is a ridiculous, unnecessary problem that we didn’t have before. It's time to regulate and severely enforce the truck weights.

MCFR August 2020 Candidate Questionnaire: Macomb County
motorcityfreedomriders.org
Ride With Us?
Absolutely! No problem at all doing that. I’ve ridden buses many many times in the past while growing up poor in Detroit, Michigan.

Tim Hamlin (D)
Transit Experience
I have taken SMART routes before

Detroit Area Funding
Yes I do, I would like to see a better information campaign first and foremost, because Macomb County voters voted against participating in regional mass transit repeatedly.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I believe there have been great improvements in bike and pedestrian paths. More needs to be done the farther west you go in the County.

Ride With Us?
Yes

District 6

Ken Reid (D)
Transit Experience
I have not used the Detroit Regional Public Transportation

Detroit Area Funding
Yes. More stops. Public parking at stops. I believe handicapped accessibility probably needs to be evaluated.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I have used the bike trails through Utica, Shelby Township, Yates Cider Mill, Rochester through to Lake Orion. I am pretty pleased with what I have experienced on the trails.

Ride With Us?
Yes.
District 9

**Ed Bruley (D)**

**Transit Experience**
As a young kid growing up in Detroit, the public bus system was my method of getting around. To get to high school my first two years, I took the DSR from Cadieux/Warren to St. Jean to catch the Clairmont through to the near west side. When we moved to the Mount Clemens area I learned about the lack of available transportation in comparison. As a Clinton Township resident for the past 30 years I have used the Gratiot bus near my home to go to events.

**Detroit Area Funding**
Yes, I have been committed to improved public transportation for a long time. I served on the SMART Board in 2006-07, worked on a project to improve bus stop streetscape amenities on the Gratiot line in Macomb County while a county commissioner from 2007-2010, and served on the non-profit Macomb Essential Transportation Service Board throughout its existence of over 25 years.

I would like to see a fully integrated system of multiple types of transportation that would enable a person to get from their home to their job or to an entertainment venue. The system would combine door to door service with line haul service that offers protection from the weather in the process.

**Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**
While working for Congressman David Bonior, we had some of the first bike paths in Macomb County built. I would like to see a more integrated approach for our roadways that take on a streetscape which enables safe transportation for multiple use – foot traffic, bikes and auto.

**Ride With Us?**
Yes

**Antoinette Wallace (D)**

**Transit Experience**
SMART, DDOT

**Detroit Area Funding**
Yes we need more funds invested in public transit. I would like to see a wider range of option as far as times and drop off and pick locations, so our local residence can get back and forth to work and appointments in a timely manner.

**Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**
I see very little bicycle and pedestrian facilities in my area. Because there are many student that are school of choice I see many of them walking down a busy road or riding their bikes down busy roads to get to and from school sometimes they need to ride in the streets in order to accomplish this goal. I would like to see a better path for them to use or if the public transportation options were extended they would be able to use public transportation as well.

**Ride With Us?**
Absolutely lets go!
District 12

**Julie Matuzak (D)**

**Transit Experience**
Almost none. I traveled from Mount Clemens to my office on E. Jefferson near downtown Detroit. I wanted to use public transportation but it would have taken 3 busses and way to much time. We need to do much better.

**Detroit Area Funding**
We do need to invest in a regional, coordinated system but it must meet the needs of the population and cannot be a one-size fits all approach for the entire region.

**Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**
Money was received and bike lane improvements were supposed to be made, but in many areas I saw the money used for curbs, but no resulting bike lanes.

**Ride With Us?**
Yes

District 13

**Nicholyn Brandenburg (R)**

**Transit Experience**
I have ridden on Smart once

**Detroit Area Funding**
I would like my seniors and handicapped people have more accessibility

**Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**
Our roads need to be addressed first in some instances we have no way for emergency vehicles to pass because of lack of roadway

**Ride With Us?**
Yes
Gary Lee Kimbel (D)
Transit Experience
Limited but it pains me to see people standing at bus stops throughout the year in the rain the heat and snow

Detroit Area Funding
Yes I believe in regional transportation and we need more buses to help eliminate Rider what time

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
Some of bicycle trails that are on the main roads are sometimes confusing for drivers. As far as pedestrian facilities there should be shelters at his bus stop

Ride With Us?
I wouldn’t have a problem with that

Kyle Simpson (D)
Transit Experience
First time candidate

Detroit Area Funding
I do believe that we should invest more as a region into public transportation. I would like to see a commuter rail line that ties the core of the metropolitan area together. The first leg would go from DTW airport to downtown Detroit. The second leg would travel up Gratiot from downtown to M-59. The third leg would travel across M-59 and terminate in Pontiac.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I am an avid biker. I would like to see our bike trail network strengthened so that the various trails are connected to form a metro wide bike grid.

Ride With Us?
Yes
Local city and township positions

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- **Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**
  Local governments often have authority over local roadways, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities. What is your experience with bicycle and pedestrian facilities in your community, and what are some improvements you would like to see?

- **Ride with Us?**
  If elected, once the threat of COVID-19 has receded, will you commit to spending an afternoon riding the bus with us to gain a better understanding of the needs of bus riders in our community?
City of Mount Clemens

City Commission Member

**Denise Pike Guzman**

Transit Experience
I do not have experience using public transportation in the greater Detroit region.

Detroit Area Funding
I believe that the region needs to invest in public transportation to ensure residents have access to employment, services, shopping and/or entertainment. Mount Clemens has provided transportation services within the City limits - and limited locations outside of the City - for decades. It is important to maintain these services and consider expansion as more services and shopping moves outside the City limits.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I enjoy using the paths along the Clinton River for walking and bicycling. I would, however, like to see bike lanes along the major thoroughfares in Mount Clemens to encourage safe cycling and reserve sidewalks for pedestrians. I would also like to see more bike racks in and around town to encourage riders to spend time in local businesses instead of passing through.

Ride with Us
If elected, I commit to spending an afternoon riding the bus to gain a better understanding of the needs of riders in our community.

Bruce Township

Township Trustee

**Edward Nightingale (R)**

Transit Experience
none

Detroit Area Funding
First I would need to know how many people in Bruce TWP use the service

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I use the bike trail often, some areas need improvement

Ride with Us?
i would
Michelle Merriwether (D)

Transit Experience
Although I have not had experience using the public transportation in Greater Detroit Region, I have always utilized public transportation in other cities of residence, Louisville, KY, Indianapolis, IN, Muncie, IN and New York, NY. I found the greater transportation offered for my area did not meet my needs.

Detroit Area Funding
In the region wants to grow it needs to stop fighting progress and allocate the appropriate funds as similar towns and cities have demonstrated across the world to public transportation which as led them to achieve significant economic growth and to cut back on pollutants to the environment.

By supporting public transit in our area, Chesterfield Township, The Township would see a financial benefit, reduction in air pollution, increased fuel efficiency, reduced traffic congestion, money savings, increased mobility, safety and overall public transportation is safer for residents.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
There are currently no outstanding bicycle and pedestrian facilities in our city. My family and I have to carry our bikes to an area of Mount Clemens or Metro Beach to ride our bikes safely with our family. We have a few pedestrian areas however, they are not conducive to the residents that reside near them.

My improvements would include the addition of bicycle paths, pedestrian walkways, electric car charging stations, bike and glider share stations. I have had the opportunity review many cities growing in this regard recently. I immediately thought this could work for Chesterfield easily.

Ride with Us?
I will most definitely ride the bus! I used to ride the bus on a daily basis while growing up in Louisville. In addition, I rode the bus quite frequently in Indiana. I am a true believer of public transportation.

Kathy Vosburg (R)

Transit Experience
I have used SMART, FAST, and QLINE and my local community transit through SMART.

Detroit Area Funding
I would like to see connectors from the main line to places of employment.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
We continue to add and improve non-motorized pathways. Especially needed are safe walkways across I-94.

Ride with Us?
yes
Clinton Township

Township Supervisor

James M. Davidson (D)

Transit Experience
I have used SMART, including FAST, and DDOT buses for personal trips to/from downtown.

Detroit Area Funding
We need a full system overhaul, including consolidation of multiple entities to create greater efficiency, improve services, and allow for more investment into more forms of transportation including rail for SE Michigan. I have visited Minneapolis many times and their system is amazing with buses and light rail that truly provides a public transportation system that benefits the community - residents & businesses.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
As a township, we don’t have authority over the roads, however, we do have some authority and ability to impact pedestrian/cyclists pathways. While we have the Metro Parkway path, it doesn’t connect to other areas of the township safely (i.e. along Groesbeck). While there are ways to navigate through other neighborhoods, we need to fill in the gaps to create an ability for non-motorized transportation throughout the township, including shopping, downtown Mt. Clemens, parks, and local medical facilities.

Ride with Us?
Yes.

Township Trustee

Jarod McGuffey (D)

Transit Experience
I have no experience on this matter, but very interested in learning more.

Detroit Area Funding
Yes, public transportation is not only a green investment but a financially beneficial one. If we invest in our citizens, they will be able to invest in their community. Besides, providing access to everyone is just the right thing to do. As for making improvements, I defer to the expert’s suggestions. I assume advancements in technology, traffic reductions, and equipment are key initiatives.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
This is an interesting topic for me as I am constantly having to step off the sidewalk to allow for bicycles to past. One thing we need for certain is clearly marked bicycle lanes and additional bike paths and sidewalks in communities who are neglected of equitable resources.

Ride with Us?
Absolutely!
Harrison Township

Township Clerk

Lisa Sinclair (R)

Transit Experience
I have never used public transportation in the greater Detroit region.

Detroit Area Funding
I would like to see improvements with the flooding issue we are having on our facilities in Harrison Township to improve safety in our community.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are one of the greatest part of Harrison Township. I want to see improvements in safety and work on a solution for the flooding on the facility on Jefferson Ave. My experience using these facilities has been very rewarding but safety and maintenance is always a huge concern for these facilities.

Ride with Us?
Yes

Township Trustee

Nicole Ward (R)

Transit Experience
I don't personally have experience with public transportation, but I know it's needed.

Detroit Area Funding
In most aspects yes. Mostly for reliability. I feel the need to focus on drivers and the skills. Accuracy, time management and safety.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
We have the bike path along Metro Parkway and Jefferson. We are always in need of upkeep on this path to make it safer for pedestrians. Fixing cracks, bumps, extending the sidewalk throughout the community.

Ride with Us?
I would love to do that.
Zachary Eineman (R)

Transit Experience
In all honesty I have never used it.

Detroit Area Funding
Our community has SMART buses, but we’re a little community (based on the Detroit area), so I don’t believe we have much of a need here.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I would like to see some improvements made to the surface of the bike path on South River and North River roads. I’d like to see the residential part of North River go down to a speed limit of 35. I believe the parks need better upkeep, and more items to use at them.

Ride with Us?
I would be willing to do so now honestly. I’m open to meeting with any group to grow understanding.

Macomb Township

Township Trustee

Linda Rose Clor (D)

Transit Experience
Smart

Detroit Area Funding
Yes, I do believe that the Detroit area needs to invest in improved public transportation. We need greater and easier access to advance and spontaneous transportation for all persons of Macomb Township.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
Safe roadways and usable bridges, level and connected sidewalks and bicycle trails which are wide and of extensive length are needed within the community. All of the above assets need to be easily accessible to all residents of all areas within Macomb Township. The development must also be closely supervised to meet the above requirements.

Ride with Us?
I have previously made a request to the SMART bus system to ride and learn how the system works within Macomb Township. Persons of all disabilities and age need to have access to time sensitive travel without stress and worry. People should be able to get assistance in transportation for work, medical, spiritual, social and recreational activities.