Washtenaw 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?
53rd District

Yousef Rabhi (D)

Transit Experience
I have always had a positive experience the many times that I have used both the Ride and the Michigan Flyer to get to work, shopping, the airport and other destinations. However, we must continue to invest in our public transit if we want to make our system better.

Detroit Area Funding
YES, we need regional transit. As a County Commissioner, I helped to form RPATH which was a regional collaborative that helped lead to the RTA. As the Chair of the Board of Commissioners, I was responsible for appointing an RTA Board Member in January of 2014. I was a supporter of the RTA millage which was placed before the voters in 2016 and continue to believe that we need to find a regional funding source for transit. I have also supported The Ride by supporting the millages that have been placed before the voters to fund our system. We need the resources to invest in more buses, going more places to serve more people. It is imperative to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to get to work or other basic services. As a SEMCOG executive board member I led the task force on Access to Core Services in SE Michigan. We were clearly able to demonstrate the gaps in our current transit system that leave communities of color and working families out. We must use our resources to better serve those in need and close the many system gaps across our region. I also believe that we must invest in the Ann Arbor to Detroit corridor as it serves as a vital connection.

State Funding Limit
YES, strongly agree. 10% is completely inadequate and is disproportionate to the incredible transit needs of our state.

“Fix-It-First”
YES, I am in full agreement with the “fix-it-first” approach. During my time as a County Commissioner, I was a vocal leader in the regional effort to defeat highway expansions. As a member of the SEMCOG executive board, I helped lead the effort opposing the inclusion of the I-94 and I-75 expansion projects in the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan. I proudly voted against both due to the inclusion of those projects. As a member of the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) policy committee, I also helped lead the efforts to oppose the US 23 highway expansion project. I voted against the US 23 expansion project along with many other committee members leading to it nearly being defeated, passing the WATS board by only a few votes. Through our efforts to oppose these projects, I was proud of the broad coalitions that were built bringing different perspectives to the same common cause. Michigan can’t maintain its current infrastructure properly. Every new lane mile added creates additional costs for repair, snow removal and other ongoing maintenance. Furthermore, arguments that highway expansions reduce congestion are laughable as they only induce demand later on, causing accelerated sprawl development and the associated destruction of habitat and farmland.

Ride with Us?
Absolutely, I have frequently used The Ride and would be glad to use it again.
54th District

**Martin Church (R)**

Transit Experience
have not used any of these, I have used AATA.

Detroit Area Funding
No we need to move to a new model. one involving private enterprise over government.

State Funding Limit
No. We need to find another way to fund mass transit. One that meets the support of the community and private enterprise.

“Fix-It-First”
we need a maintenance program which supports all roads, limit the number of transportation agencies and what each receives. right now most of the state funds go to state projects over the local community. It’s time to fix the Mix

Ride with Us?
already have.
**55th District**

**Felicia Brabec (D)**

**Transit Experience**
Throughout my life I have spent a lot of time riding public transportation (in Boston and Chicago), but because of the lack of access in Washtenaw County and the need to bring my kids to school and different activities I have not spent much time using TheRide.

**Detroit Area Funding**
As a County Commissioner I have fought for regional transit for almost the last decade. I believe that transit is a racial justice and an economic justice issue, as well as a necessity to bring our economy back to life. In an ideal world, we would build a light rail system connecting communities in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, and Washtenaw Counties. This would drastically reduce traffic on I94, I96, and I75 decreasing pollution and commute times. This infrastructure would also be key to recruiting businesses to locate here, and for our communities to be able to keep and recruit teachers, engineers, and many other professionals.

**State Funding Limit**
I believe a budget should reflect our values. Public transportation is one the the most important ways to build a community and an economy equitably; it is good for everyone. I believe we should lift that cap and choose to invest in public transit.

**“Fix-It-First”**
This challenge is overwhelming and will follow us for decades. I appreciate the importance of “fix-it-first”, but also recognize that new projects create hundreds of union jobs and also help to modernize and improve the safety of our roads and bridges. I believe we need a thorough re-evaluation of the MDOT budget and a New Deal-like infrastructure overhaul plan to move us forward.

**Ride with Us?**
Absolutely! I would love to.
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

Sue Shink (D)

Transit Experience
SMART, TheRide

Detroit Area Funding
Our region needs to invest in public transportation to expand economic opportunity and convenience for our residents. I would like to see more on-demand services in the rural area of the county and dedicated service from Superior Township to Ann Arbor.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I sit on the Parks and Recreation Commission where I support construction of non-motorized pathways to connect communities and allow for safe recreation. I frequently use non-motorized pathways.

Ride With Us?
I would appreciate that opportunity and will commit to that!

District 3

Jacob Ehrman (R)

Transit Experience
I have no experience using public transportation in the greater Detroit region. The homes I have lived in were never reached by public transit so a private car was necessary to travel anywhere.

Detroit Area Funding
I do not think that many public issues can be solved with more money. I believe we need to be smarter with how we invest our funds and make the most out of each dollar. Due to my inexperience with the subject I do not have any specific improvements in mind, however I am always open to hearing specific issues and ideas of how to fix them.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I also have little experience in this area as my current home does not have sidewalks or bike lanes nearby and my previous home only had an isolated loop of sidewalks inside the neighborhood. One particular issue which I have noticed about bike lanes as I drive in Ann Arbor is the unclear signage around intersections. Certain intersections have turns in the bike lanes that interfere with motor traffic and put bikers at risk. I would like to make these intersections more clear to minimize risk.

Ride With Us?
Absolutely. I look forward to meeting citizens of this great county.
Ken Siler (R)

Transit Experience
I have never not used public transportation in 60 years!

Detroit Area Funding
Expansion of "The Ride"

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I have no experience and all started projects should be finished.

Ride With Us?
Yes

District 5

Justin D. Hodge (D)

Transit Experience
I have used a variety of public transportation methods throughout the greater Detroit region, including the Detroit People Mover, TheRide, DDOT, and FAST.

Detroit Area Funding
The development of regional public transit is critical to the long-term economic success of our region. I will develop partnerships early on with the appropriate elected leaders across the region, as well as stakeholder groups, to create plans that will be acceptable for each county involved in the transit plan. Simultaneously, I will support concerted public awareness initiatives to provide education on regional public transit and why it is needed in an effort to solidify public support. This work will take time and will need to be completed in a deliberate manner with the support of stakeholders, experts, and elected leadership. Advocacy at the state level will also be necessary and should be done through an ongoing discussion throughout the entire process.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I have been working to improve infrastructure and pedestrian facilities in my community for years. As one of my latest initiatives, I have led efforts to address speeding and safety issues in my neighborhood, gathering dozens of signatures to get the County Roads Commission to take action. I have also been working to organize my neighbors and engaging with local governments to address the lack of sidewalks and curbs throughout my neighborhood as well as other areas throughout the community.

Ride With Us?
Absolutely. I am committed to improving public transportation for our region and will take every opportunity to learn.
Denise Kirchhoff (D)

Transit Experience
In Washtenaw County we have TheRide and public transit is essential for our community. As a mother of three we taught our children how to use public transit and heavily considered access to it when deciding where to raise our family.

We have expanded bus lines over the years increasing access, yet we have much to do. The extremely long route times and shortened operation hours are a barrier for my millennial children and many others in service industry jobs, our seniors, and our students. The crazy drop off and pick up routines my family has pulled off over the years often living just shy of the bus lines reach is comical. This is the reality for many families here not just mine, we are thankful for and utilize our public transit but we are hopeful and asking for more expansion and rider conscious practices.

Detroit Area Funding
I strongly believe we must invest much heavier in improving our public transit. I strongly support reopening inter county transit conversations. In regards to Washtenaw County there are three major focuses. First, implementation of a Community Oversight Board to represent the community in transit decisions. Secondly, connecting Augusta Township, the other half of Washtenaw County District 5, to the current public transit system. Thirdly, utilizing community surveys to gather input on specific needs, such as the shelters and benches.

We need to have better lines of communication to ensure our public transportation becomes more streamlined, rider conscious, and responsive to the needs of the community.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
In Washtenaw county we have heavy biker traffic and pedestrian traffic throughout the county, with the majority of designated bike lines appearing in Ann Arbor. We must aggressively work to expand the presence of these. I will look for community input via surveys and open discussions.

A few key areas I am interested in improving safety and access to are our universities (EMU and WCC), our main thorough fares entering and exiting our many countywide parks and recreational facilities, and our grocery centers and government centers. Reviewing these areas for both bike lane needs and increased pedestrian crossing safety, or sidewalk installment or repair. Additionally, I am interested in specifically surveying our rural county community to gather information on pedestrian and bike needs there.

Ride With Us?
Yes, I will commit to this and I look forward to it. I will be a commissioner that walks with my community side by side. I firmly believe too often our representatives are disconnected from every day life and that is a root of many problems. I look forward to meeting more members of your organization and working together.
District 7

Andy LaBarr (D)

Transit Experience
TheRide

Detroit Area Funding
Yes, I would like to see, and have advocated for, Washtenaw’s participation in the RTA and an RTA based structure of service.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
Washtenaw County jurisdictions do a great job providing bike and pedestrian facilities when given both the resources and political will needed. Without those things it is often left to staff and advocates to move these projects forward. More needs to be done. Part of the County’s role is inclusion of these options in our roads millage.

Ride With Us?
yes
Local city and township positions

Survey questions were as follows:

● **Transit Experience**
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● **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?
City of Ann Arbor

City Council Member

Erica Briggs (D)

Transit Experience
For the last six years, I have used AirRide for regional travel to get to and from East Lansing where I was pursuing my PhD in Political Science. I also occasionally ride the bus with my family to/from downtown, though generally we prefer riding our bikes in town. When I served as Director of the getDowntown program from 2004-2007, I worked closely with downtown commuters to advocate for greater transit usage, explain the system, and connect downtown businesses and their employees with subsidized bus passes so more would use our transit system.

Detroit Area Funding
Absolutely, I strongly believe we need to fund regional transit and have and would continue to support a regional transit millage. Within Ann Arbor, I think the City can be a stronger partner for transit by requiring that our roadway improvements prioritize transit first. For private developments, if a traffic study determines that a project will generate more traffic, any mitigation requirements should improve the transit/bike/ped system. We must work in partnership with AAATA to ensure that roadway, intersection, technology improvements advanced by the City make our transit system more efficient. Further, we need to make sure that our bicycle and pedestrian system are safe and convenient, so people can easily bike/walk the first/last mile.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I served on the board of the Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition from 2005-2019 and on the League of Michigan Bicyclists from 2012-2016. I have a long history of advocating for better non-motorized infrastructure and policies. One of the first actions I would take as Council person would be to support the recommendations of our transportation staff and empower them to implement our transportation plans. City Council recently changed the process so all roadway reconfigurations must be approved by Council and as a result almost every signal substantive non-motorized improvement has been voted down. I support returning to our previous process. I also support implementing neighborhood traffic calming program revisions recommended by staff. I support developing a traffic calming program for arterial roads and pursuing a city-wide speed limit of 25mph. I support the development of a low-stress bicycling network. I am supportive of efforts to expand our road and sidewalk millage to allow funds to be used to fill sidewalk gaps. Finally, we must ensure that our City’s non-motorized system is accessible year-round and support the City developing a winter sidewalk snow removal program.

Ride with Us?
Yes!

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motorcityfreedomriders.org
**Lisa Disch (D)**

**Transit Experience**

TheRide.

**Detroit Area Funding**

TheRide has been a great improvement for fast, efficient, economical transport between Ann Arbor and the airport. I would favor development of fast, efficient, economical commuter transit between Detroit and Ann Arbor to improve access to jobs for residents of both cities.

**Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**

Ann Arbor is seeing a lot of resistance from residents to development of continuous, protected bike lanes and to filling sidewalk gaps. There will likely be a millage on the November ballot to shift the financial burden of sidewalk gaps from individual property owners to the public, which I support to mitigate this resistance. I cycle and would like to see better connectivity of bike lanes and more bicycle parking.

**Ride with Us?**

I would be more than happy to.

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**Jen Eyer (D)**

**Transit Experience**

Having lived in Ann Arbor for the past twenty years, most of my public transportation experience has been with TheRide. When I worked downtown for several years, that was my daily mode of transportation to get to work. My children have also used TheRide over the years.

**Detroit Area Funding**

We absolutely need to invest in improved public transportation in Ann Arbor. More than 128,000 vehicles circulate on our roads every weekday as people commute to jobs, not to mention additional vehicle trips. As we work to meet our 2030 carbon neutral goal, and as we increase density downtown and along transit corridors, we must improve our public transit. I will lead local efforts to establish regional transit as well as improve our public transit options within the city.

**Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**

Having a complete sidewalk and bike lane network throughout the city is a high priority for me. It’s an equity issue. It’s a health issue. And it’s a climate action issue. Through first-hand experiences of riding my bike around town, and walking throughout ward 4, I recognize that it is critical we improve our pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. I recently went on a tour of some of the dangerous hot spots for bikers and pedestrians with residents in the Lansdowne neighborhood, in order to come up with suggestions to bring to our city engineers. Some ideas included buffered bike lanes, crosswalk improvements, speed bumps, road reconfigurations and filling sidewalk gaps. I support all of these tools.

**Ride with Us?**

Yes, I would both welcome and appreciate the opportunity. As a public servant, my focus as a city council member will be listening to and taking action on the needs and concerns of residents.
Travis Radina (D)

Transit Experience
My experience has been somewhat limited, due to limited route options, but I have utilized TheRide and the Detroit People Mover.

Detroit Area Funding
Yes. I have been very supportive of Washtenaw County Commissioner Jason Morgan’s work to expand public transit regionally and to invest in an expanded regional transit system. As a Council Member, I would only support appointees to the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority who are supportive of regional public transit expansion.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I’d like to see more consistency in our bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Different areas of the city have different styles of bicycle infrastructure -- from protected bicycle lanes and clear bright green lanes at intersections to too-narrow shoulder lanes that are often unkept/blocked or no bike lanes at all. Similarly, some areas of our city have well-maintained sidewalks and pedestrian facilities, and others have incomplete, spotty connectivity. Overall, our system is incomplete. If want to change our auto-culture and be serious about achieve our carbon-neutrality goals, we must invest in the bicycling & pedestrian infrastructure necessary to support a culture shift.

Ride with Us?
Yes.
Dexter Township
Township Trustee

**Laura L. Sanders (D)**

**Transit Experience**
I have used the public transit bus system in the Ann Arbor area.

**Detroit Area Funding**
Yes. Public transportation is critical to the infrastructure of Detroit and the Metro-Detroit area. In rural Dexter Township we need public transit options that reach to the outskirts of the Washtenaw County area to reduce isolation of people who live in rural communities, and link our various cities to our rural townships.

**Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**
Dexter township is rural and includes many lands and lakes for public and recreational enjoyment. I would like to see bike and pedestrian paths maintained and expanded on.

**Ride with Us?**
Yes. I would be interested in this activity.

Pittsfield Township
Township Supervisor

**Mandy Grewal (D)**

**Transit Experience**
The Ride, Air Ride, QLine, SMART

**Detroit Area Funding**
Our region - Southeast Michigan - needs to invest heavily in public transportation. In particular, there is an urgent need to leverage existing public transit services and inter-connect them to a cohesive regional rapid bus service, as first step. One strategy is to prioritize arterial corridors such as Woodward, Washtenaw, etc. and create TOD hubs along the transit routes to facilities public-private partnerships in building out a regional transit network for Southeast Michigan.

**Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**
Over the past decade, I have spearheaded the installation of a robust multi-modal network in Pittsfield Township that now provides for non-motorized inter-connectivity via greenways, sidewalk, and bike lanes - all supported by mid-block crossings. In addition, we have fully accessible transit services, including in the more rural and suburban areas of the Township through the FlexRide service.

**Ride with Us?**
Yes.
Christina Lirones (D)

Transit Experience
I used the Ann Arbor bus system when I lived in Ann Arbor. I used the U of M bus system multiple times per day when I was a student at U of M. My daughter has Special Needs. She is with the Young Adult Program in Saline, and they use different transit systems. She is 24 and, like her peers, does not drive. My sister is the most prolific user of public transit that I know, in California and in her visits home. I have learned a true appreciation of public transit from her. Right now, where I live in Pittsfield, a private vehicle is the only viable option.

Detroit Area Funding
Yes. We have very limited public transit in Pittsfield. The POSA plan was fine when we had a small population, but we outgrew it long ago. A Ride works fairly well, but I would like to see other options. I have not tried the Flex Ride, as it does not appear viable for my needs. As Supervisor, if I am elected, I would connect with the whole regional public transit system offered by AAATA, not just the boutique program offered now. The program now does not work well for people with cognitive impairments, especially, and in general does not serve the public in a deep and meaningful way. It seems set up as an alternative if a person can't get to a private car. It has not been woven into the fabric of the community. Climate change, an aging population, and active people with disabilities make public transit necessary, but I would like to see it as a desirable first choice for the able-bodied and for people who have the money for a private car. Right now, public transit is seen as a last resort, or as something that rich people can feel good about funding, but not something they would use. I would like to see a cultural shift for public transit. A Township Supervisor can make a difference in how the public perceives public transit, by modeling its use. Leadership matters.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I was in office from 2000 to 2008. We designed and had the Platt Road muti use path shovel ready, with grants to pay for it. We were then voted out of office. It was completed by the current administration. Since then, new paths have been installed, but never with community input. My neighbors and I have been sued for our property to be condemned for a poorly planned path. miles of heritage trees were destroyed. This is no way to build consensus and support for public transit and paths. I would return to designing context sensitive paths, especially in the underserved parts of the Township. I am saddened every time I see people walking on the shoulder of US-12 because there is no path, or walking in the road to the bus stop on Ellsworth at Carpenter because there is no sidewalk.In particular, the highly populated Ypsilanti address areas of the Township lack paths and walkways. Paths in Pittsfield seem to be for the wealthier residents, largely for recreation rather than transit, at the expense of those of us with moderate or low incomes.

Ride with Us?
Of course! I would love to do this! Thank you for offering!
Township Trustee

Jonas Berzanskis (D)

Transit Experience
The Ride, AATA

Detroit Area Funding
Yes expressway bus line from downtown Detroit to Ypsilanti Transit Center

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I ride to WCC and then to Rolling Hills and both Downtown Ypsi and Ann Arbor we need a clear bike lane to get back and forth over I-94 and to major centers

Ride with Us?
I have an AATA card and call it my limo service To Ypsi and Ann Arbor of course I will ride

Scio Township

Township Treasurer

Charles Nielsen (D)

Transit Experience
AAATA, The Wave, People’s Express

Detroit Area Funding
Continue to expand route, especially west, to accommodate population growth.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
Try to find a way to improve crossing at Jackson and Zeeb. Lobby MDOT to improve Zeeb Rd. overpass at I-94.

Ride with Us?
Yes
Township Trustee

Jacqueline Courteau (D)

Transit Experience
TheRide, Amtrak

Detroit Area Funding
Investment in public transportation makes sense to increase access, reduce traffic and pollution, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I support increased bus service along the Jackson Road corridor and funding non-motorized pathways to make it possible for more people to walk and cycle safely to work and play, for exercise, recreation, and nature enjoyment.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
The recent expansion of the B2B trail through Dexter-Huron Metropark and along Zeeb immediately attracted walkers and cyclists, and is a boon for Scio residents. I support continuing work on non-motorized pathways, and working toward completing the remaining B2B sections in Scio.

Ride with Us?
Yes

William Gordon (R)

Transit Experience
None.

Detroit Area Funding
Funding is an open question. I do not favor tax increases. I would favor transportation from mid and central Detroit to the suburbs to increase job opportunities.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
I enjoy the Border to Border trail system and would like to see it completed to Ann Arbor. I believe this would greatly increase safety on Huron River Drive.

Ride with Us?
Certainly.
Superior Township

Township Clerk

Meghan Winslow (D)

Transit Experience
While attending Western Michigan University, I used public transportation including the Bronco Transit. Also I have experience riding on the Detroit People Mover.

Detroit Area Funding
I strongly believe the region needs to invest in improved public transportation. The Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (TheRide), a not-for-profit unit of government, operates the local public transit system for the greater Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area. Specific improvements for improved public transportation in Superior Township include expanding senior and commuter services. Investments in public transportation have potential traffic safety, air quality, active transportation, and accessibility benefits, thus improving associated personal health outcomes.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
The Border-to-Border Trail (B2B) is a non-motorized pathway that connects cities, parks, and many destinations throughout Washtenaw County, Michigan. The Border-to-Border Trail is envisioned to be a continuous 35-mile shared-use paved path for non-motorized use traversing Washtenaw County, from Livingston County to Wayne County, along the Huron River. The trail is being completed in 13 segments over a ten-year period. The completed segment in Superior Township runs past Washtenaw Community College on Huron River Drive, and then wraps around the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital complex on McAuley Drive. It also includes an unpaved path with a scenic observation deck. If elected, I will continue to identify opportunities to enhance non-motorized transportation in Superior Township, MI.

Ride with Us?
If elected, I will commit to spending an afternoon riding the bus with Motor City Freedom Riders to gain a better understanding of the needs of bus riders in Superior Township, MI.
York Township

Township Clerk

**Mitch Gasche (R)**

**Transit Experience**
I have used mass transit primarily in downtown Detroit

**Detroit Area Funding**
Yes I do think we need to invest more in public transportation. Several residents in the greater Ann Arbor area do not own vehicles and Public transportation the only means they have to get to work, shop go to the doctor etc.

**Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**
As a member of the York Township planning commission we have suggested including bike and walking paths in proposed subdivision. We need to continue those efforts.

**Ride with Us?**
Sure I have done this with the Ann Arbor Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce Leadership training course in the past.
Ypsilanti Township

Township Trustee

John P Newman (D)

Transit Experience
Due to long work hours and possible emergency situations, I chose to commute via auto in lieu of utilizing public transportation. However, my neighbors, friends and relatives ride public transportation. Overall, their experiences have been positive with a few exceptions. One complaint is regarding the lack of bus stops in the community. Sometimes the stops are not close enough and create difficulty for a handicapped or elderly person to get to it. Also, the timeliness of buses can be improved upon.

Detroit Area Funding
Yes, most definitely the region needs to invest in improved public transportation. More money would allow more buses and drivers to improve service to the community. I would love to see transportation from my area in Ypsilanti Township to travel to the following destinations: Local Parks, Airport, Downtown Detroit, Eastern Market, Belle Isle, Zoo and other key areas in the region.

Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements
Over the years there have been a number of new bicycle and pedestrian trails which have added value to the community. There is always room for improvement to continue to keep these facilities clean and to create new trails. Overall, I am pleased with the areas I frequent and I am discovering new areas on a regular basis.

Ride with Us?
Yes, I commit to riding the bus and learning about the needs of bus riders in the community.
Debbie Swanson (D)

**Transit Experience**
I've used TheRide to travel to Michigan stadium to participate in volunteer work at the stadium.

**Detroit Area Funding**
Reliable public transportation is a vital part of our local community. Making sure people have routes to safely get them to work or other areas of need or recreation is a critical part of community infrastructure. In addition to making sure routes meet the needs in our community, I think it is important to make sure there are benches and covered areas for people as they wait for buses. It's not uncommon to see people waiting for buses in the rain or snow without a place to sit or having some protection from the elements. I think we need to look at walking patterns to and from bus stops to make sure there are safe walking paths connecting bus stops with areas people are going to and from when using public transportation.

**Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**
Serving as an elected park commissioner for the past 20 years, I have watched our trail system develop over time. I personally use trails in our community for walking. There is a need in our community to look at our existing trails to make sure they are repaired when bumps and cracks happen. There is also a great need to connect paths. We have areas where trails exist but end suddenly. Our community needs a safe non-motorized pathway crossing over the I-94 corridor. This area has been studied several times. It's time for this type of project to be completed.

**Ride with Us?**
Yes

Jimmie Wilson Jr. (D)

**Transit Experience**
In my early days of employment, I rode public transportation all the time.

**Detroit Area Funding**
Yes! I would also like to see more connected routes with The Washtenaw County Area.

**Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**
We have upgraded and installed many pedestrian and bicycle pathways in Ypsilanti Township and plan to do more in the coming years.

**Ride with Us?**
Yes! Would love to!
Park Commissioner

**Tajali Hodge (D)**

**Transit Experience**
I've used the Detroit People Mover and the QLine. I have not used TheRide.

**Detroit Area Funding**
Absolutely. Currently, I live in a food dessert which has been further exasperated by the reduction in routes during the pandemic. For someone in my neighborhood, it takes two buses and at least an hour to get to the nearest grocery store. I would like to see more regular routes in my area.

**Cycling and Pedestrian Improvements**
We have very few bike lanes near where I live and we're missing sidewalks in some areas. I believe the township plans to address some of that in their 2040 master plan. I would definitely like to see sidewalks where they are missing. I rarely see people biking, but that could be because bike lanes are lacking.

**Ride with Us?**
Definitely.