

City Council Candidate Transportation Questionnaire

Thank you for filling out the City Council Candidate Transportation Questionnaire, compiled by Althea Atherton.

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When you hear the phrase, "the future of transportation", what comes to mind?

I imagine a transportation future that has moved away from fossil fuels. We need to incentivize private electric vehicles but also to make our public transportation system clean, safe and attractive to all. We need to make our city friendlier to walking and cycling.

What are the biggest challenges facing ABQRide?

Inadequate staffing. Inadequate pay for transit staff. Security on buses and at bus stops. Cleanliness of bus stops. Unreliable bus schedules. Inadequate bus routes and service.

What improvements do you think could be made to ABQRide?

Our city transit employees deserve a raise. While city employees generally receive good benefits, they can't pay rent or utilities or buy groceries with a benefits package. We need a compensation study that includes input from city employees and considers our local economic pressures, such as rising rents and inflation.

If we want a world class city with safe, efficient public transportation we simply cannot do it without well paid, highly trained employees at ABQRide. Everyone deserves appreciation, and Albuquerque should have more than just a Ride Appreciation Day. We should consider Public Transit Month where everyone in the city is encouraged to ride the bus for free and then share their experiences.

Albuquerque needs to improve safety on buses by adding additional security personnel, cameras and lighting. Those who abuse the buses should be issued warnings and penalized up to suspension of privileges to ride for a time. Improving lighting at bus stops and terminals will improve safety and ridership as well.

Do you support the Zero-Fares program? Why or why not?

We need to know who is riding the bus, to what parts of the city and at what times. With data, we can make an informed decision about whether our buses should be free. We do know that the best public transportation is used by people of all income levels, and that transportation equity is critical for a city like ours.

What policies do you support to address drunk driving in Albuquerque?

Thinking of what City Council has jurisdiction over, one proven strategy is to reduce the density of outlets that sell alcohol in a given area. Often such establishments are "problem properties" that contribute to crime and violence. As a city we can enforce zoning laws to address these bad neighbors. As a city we can also direct police resources toward proven efforts to reduce and prevent drunk driving, such as publicized sobriety checkpoints. We also need to fund substance abuse and mental health programs because we know that a high percentage of drunk drivers have chronic alcohol use disorder.

What solutions do you support to reduce our pedestrian fatality rate?

It is imperative that we fully implement Vision Zero with its goal of zero fatalities from traffic violence. District 6 is home to the Lead and Coal corridors which continue to have some of the worst bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicle accidents in the city. Additionally, we have street racing on San Mateo, Gibson, and other streets in District 6 daily. This is unacceptable.

Vision Zero is a proven strategy for eliminating all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, increasing safety, public health, and equitable mobility. Vision Zero has proven successful across European countries and is now being implemented in many cities across America including Albuquerque. The Albuquerque City Council needs to ensure that Vision Zero is fully funded and that its implementation is monitored for success. We have a long way to go to improve traffic safety.

What are the biggest challenges facing cyclists in Albuquerque? What are some solutions to address them?

Safety remains a significant barrier to walking and cycling. Implementing traffic calming measures, enhancing street lighting, and creating separated bike lanes can enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists. A more robust public information campaign that

draws attention to our common responsibility to keep one another safe should also be launched because current efforts are simply not working.

Do you have other thoughts about transportation policy you would like to share?

District 6 is disproportionately affected, for better or worse, by the ART project. Rather than get rid of ART, which has cost enormous sums and would cost more to dismantle, I am in favor of maximizing its potential in cost-effective ways.