

Transportation Questionnaire for Bay Area Candidates

March 5th, 2024 Primary Election

Name: Buffy Wicks

Which office are you running for?: California State Assembly District 14

1. Which counties does the jurisdiction of the office cover?

Alameda, Contra Costa

2. Which forms of transit and active transportation (bicycling, walking, scooters, wheelchair) do you use on a regular basis and for what types of trips-- and why?

My family and I frequently walk, bike, and utilize active transportation opportunities throughout our neighborhood during our day-to-day lives to not only decrease our carbon footprint but also be a part of our community. Building equitable neighborhoods with more opportunities for active transportation is a priority in my legislative agenda, especially as we work to build new affordable housing. We need to ensure every Californian has access to walkable neighborhoods and opportunities to bike, scooter, and wheelchair safely in their communities.

3. Would you seek additional funding for Bay Area transit and what form of funding do you think makes sense?

Bay Area Transit needs to be fully funded to provide the critical infrastructure and services needed to serve our communities effectively and with excellent service. A lack of transit funding would not only affect the commuters and schoolkids who depend on public transportation to get around but could also affect our state's aggressive climate and housing goals that are intrinsically tied to our transit systems.

4. Public transit in the Bay Area is highly fragmented, with 27 transit agencies, each with different fares, schedules, branding, and customer information. Do you believe it should be a priority for the region to create a well-coordinated transit system? And as an elected leader or potential member of a local transit agency board, would you support state legislation that advances a more integrated, high ridership system, even if it diminishes local control?

The goal should be to have a well-coordinated and well-funded public transit system in the Bay Area that works for everyone. There needs to be a greater investment of resources to maintain our public transit system and ensure it is integrated and has the infrastructure needed for a high ridership system, even if that diminishes local control.

5. Transportation is the largest single source of carbon emissions in California, and in the Bay Area, and the largest share of transportation emissions come from single occupancy vehicles. What are your top priorities to achieve substantial reduction in transportation-related GHG emissions?

We know we need to reduce our use of transportation emissions in California, especially from single occupancy vehicles, that disproportionately impact our low-income communities and communities of color. Tackling this includes a multi-prong approach of promoting the construction of dense housing

around transit stations, strengthening our position on tailpipe emissions, accelerating production of lower emission and electric vehicles (EVs), prioritizing funding for infill-serving transportation investments over sprawl-inducing ones, and electrification of the heavy-duty sector, our state vehicle fleet, and Transportation Network Company fleet.

6. The Bay Area still has road projects under development that would increase Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), greenhouse gas emissions, and air pollution. What decisions would you make about projects that increase VMT and pollution?

Many of these projects are undermining the State's climate goals and using limited transportation resources that should be invested in projects that reduce VMT and emissions. Decision-wise, I would reevaluate VMT/GHG/AP-increasing elements before they can be considered for further state investment, continue the increase of public input, and ensure VMT/GHG/AP-reducing projects are getting the funding they need.

7. Transit priority improvements are proven to make taking the bus faster and more reliable, while also reducing operating costs. Should local governments be able to stop transit priority improvements on local roads?

As long as visible improvements are seen and continued, and the community as a whole is in agreement, I do not see a reason to enable local government authority to strike down on transit priority improvements. Though local governments have a huge hand in permitting, facilitating, and enabling these improvements, I believe the results speak for themselves. It is vital local governments continue or begin to foster strong partnerships with their local transportation agencies so transit priority improvements can continue statewide.

8. What do you think are the most important actions that can be taken to make public transit comfortable, accessible, and safe for all communities?

Our public transit systems need to be invested in to ensure that services are reliable, safe, and accessible for everyone. This includes increasing the frequency of services and ensuring that those who are older and have disabilities have access to wheelchair ramps.

9. Traffic violence and deaths in California are increasing annually; in 2021, 4,258 people died in vehicle crashes, a 10.7% increase from the prior year. If elected, what will you do to reverse the trend, increase street safety, save lives and reduce injuries in our community? What policies or specific projects would make the greatest impact?

There needs to be greater prioritization for the safety of pedestrians, which includes funding and building out projects such as expanding protected intersections and bikeways in our neighborhoods.

10. What do you think are the biggest access and mobility needs for disadvantaged populations in your district, and how would you propose to solve them?

Unfortunately, transportation services for our elders and people with disabilities are substandard, and our methods for services and network of transportation services have remained stagnant, resulting in inequitable access to transportation services. It's why I introduced AB 540 to improve access to transportation for older people and people with disabilities with the addition of a revenue stream, increased service requirements, coordination rather than consolidation of social service transportation services, and strengthening of county-wide networks of transportation services.

11. In what circumstances do you support removing parking or repurposing vehicle travel lanes to create safer and more efficient bus, biking, and walking options? How do you propose balancing the demands of different interest groups who may disagree on how streets should be

designed?

I support removal & repurposing for the sake of safer vehicle travel wherever it is deemed necessary. Prioritizing high transit frequency areas and high-injury areas would be ideal. For example, I applaud Contra Costa County for its leadership in this space and for kicking off its Vision Zero campaign in 2022. Vision Zero is a safety strategy with the fundamental concept that no one should be killed or seriously injured while using our roadways.

Grand ideas and initiatives are precisely the type of thinking we need, and I plan to approach interest groups with the same open mind, even if we differ on most or all ideas presented.

The "Transportation Questionnaire for Bay Area Candidates for Office" is sponsored by a coalition of partners- Transbay Coalition, SPUR, Seamless Bay Area, San Francisco Transit Riders, Silicon Valley Bike Coalition, and Bike East Bay to help educate the public on these important issues.

