

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### GREEN PARTY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY 2016 ENDORSEMENT DECISION

Please email your responses to: [GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com](mailto:GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com)  
In the subject line, please include "AC Transit" and your ward number.

If it is not possible for you to email, please mail your responses to:

AC Transit Board Questionnaire  
c/o Green Party of Alameda County,  
2022A Blake Street \* Berkeley, CA 94704

Please respond by Saturday, August 27, 2016.

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1. Why do you want to serve (or continue to serve) on the AC Transit Board?

As discussed in the response to the next question, I have served on the AC transit board for 18 years – successfully I believe. I am the board's foremost advocate for our zero – emission hydrogen fuel cell project. I am also the strongest supporter on the board for free or reduced price transportation for youth. The funding coming from Alameda measure BB will ensure that program continues and is expanded, but it will be helpful to have a strong advocate on the board. I have been willing to take on powerful elements, like Summit Bank who tried to block bus riders from their medical providers on pill hill. I also enjoy my role working with the advocacy community (such as Urban Habitat, the Sierra Club, AACE and Genesis), labor and other elected officials.

I have been riding AC Transit buses for almost 40 years. Sixteen years ago I gave up my car and now go everywhere by transit.

Basically, I enjoy what I have been doing, think I've been doing it well and think that it benefits our community.

2. (For incumbents:) What actions of yours during your term are you proudest of? What have you accomplished during your time on the board?

(For non--incumbents:) Which of your past experiences are valuable for serving on the board? Have you been following AC Transit's actions the last 5 years? If so, what changes have you noted?

**Service To Youth, Seniors And The Economically Vulnerable.** I have been a strong supporter of empathizing service to youth, seniors and the economically vulnerable from finding funds to keep fares low to developing service deployment policies that empathize service to people who need and use the bus. We have gotten grants to support all-night service for people who work at night. I worked with Peralta trustees Nicky González Yuen and Abel Guillen to set up an eco-pass program for full time Peralta Community College students.

About 15 years ago, I worked with supervisors Gioia and Carson, then Assemblymember Aroner and the number of people from UC Berkeley to establish a free bus pass for youth that qualified for free or reduced price lunch. Unfortunately, the MTC funding was inadequate and thus the program did not get a full test. The continuing interest in such a program, however, has led to a provision in the current one cent transportation sales tax in Alameda County (Measure BB) which would establish a free bus pass for all middle and senior high students in Alameda County. It will only be a test in selected school districts, but it is important test and if it succeeds there is funding to expand it.

In 2013, as part of the Sprouts development on Broadway, the City agreed to move the 51A bus stop (which had been there for more that 110 years) to the other side of 30<sup>th</sup> Street and Sprouts agreed to build a "bus bulb" and a shelter. Everything went along fine until Sprouts began surveying for the bus bulb. Summit bank (who had apparently not been paying attention during the eight year planning process) objected and used its clout at City Hall to block the move, leaving people who needed to get to medical appointments on pill hill with a several block walk. I joined with the AACE Bus Riders Union, Genesis, Transport Oakland and the Sierra Club and engaged in direct action (for which the Bank threatened to sue me and AC Transit for defamation), and lobbying. It took us about a year and a half, but we got the Oakland City Council to order the City Public Works Department to put the stop back.

**Clean Air.** Since I have been on the AC Board, diesel particulate emissions have been reduced by 98%. Oxides of nitrogen, major greenhouse gases, have been reduced by over 85%. Work on further reductions is underway.

AC Transit also has the largest and most advanced hydrogen fuel cell bus program in the country — grant funded so it does not impact service. We now have 13 buses that were operating on a daily basis in regular revenue service. We have gotten a grant from CARB (the California Air Resources Board) to purchase 10 new fuel cell buses – this time made in the U.S.A. by New Flyer. We are training our union employees in fuel cell green collar technology on-the-job and in our two state certified apprenticeship programs. Our program has garnered national and international acclaim and awards. I have been the board's foremost advocate for that program.

**Dealing With Outside Attacks.** I was a leader in fighting back attacks from the Bush and Schwarzenegger administrations. The Bush administration's attempt to prohibit transit agencies from providing supplemental school service is an example. (Oakland Unified estimated it would cost them "tens of millions of dollars" to replace AC's service—AC also serves 12 other districts.) Unfortunately, our current Democratic administrations at the state and federal level have not been much better in terms of funding, but many of the direct attacks have ended.

**Auto Independence.** In the core of our district, we enable people (the 61% of our riders who use us regularly, including the 51% who do not have a driver's licence, 31% who do not have a car in their household and all others) to be largely independent of their automobiles. For others, I lobbied thorough the most progressive park and ride policy in the country. Car users must pay all of the operating costs of the lots and, unless prohibited by some other funding source, pay the amortized capital costs of the lot(s) as well.

3. Do you ride AC Transit and, if so, how frequently?

As noted above, Sixteen years ago I gave up my car and now go everywhere by transit. I ride all the transit agencies in the Bay Area. I ride multiple times a day. I think my record was 12 A.C. Transit rides in one day.

4. People without access to cars are AC Transit's captive audience. What are your ideas for increasing ridership of those with cars, sometimes referred to as "choice riders?"

Our primary job is serving those people who do not have other access to transportation. It is basic social equity and good transportation policy. That being said, all of the study show that the way to attract people is have transit that is fast and frequent. We have tried to follow that principle with ACGo, which resulted from our planning process on how to spend the measure BB funding. The strongest example of that is that BRT on international which should start next year. It will provide 7 min. service throughout that entire corridor and will be considerably faster than buses that are stuck in traffic. We have an ongoing Major Corridors Study that is looking at other major corridor's in our District, we are trying to identify treatments that would speed up

corridor's such as Broadway, MacArthur, Adeline and San Pablo. We have also begun an experiment on how to better serve the more spread out parts of our district. This is something I've been working on for about 12 years. We are experimenting with "flex" service in Castro Valley and in Newark. These are smaller vehicles that will pick passengers up at any existing bus stop and go directly to another bus stop without following a fixed route. We are using software that was tested in Denver, seem to work well there, and we will see how it works here. If it is successful we may use it in the more spread out Hill areas from Richmond to Fremont.

Our largest group of more affluent riders are TransBay riders and that is addressed in the next question.

5. What are your thoughts on AC Transit's current Transbay service? How do you think its ridership can increase? Do you think the ten Double Decker buses ordered for this service is a good idea?

Our current TransBay service is inadequate, but is it is the best we can afford. However, it looks like we will get substantial new funding for TransBay service.

When I first moved to my current apartment 42 years ago the "C" bus ran every 8 min. during peak, every half-hour off-peak and ran until one o'clock in the morning. That was before we adjusted our schedules to account for BART. As funding declined for bus and is the region began to spend all that money on BART and riders began taking BART in large numbers we cut back on our TransBay service. In the early 90s MTC tried to get us to eliminate TransBay service because it was "duplicative." That was prevented by a lawsuit from People On The Bus, a group of our TransBay riders. I strongly supported that group, this spinoff Bus Riders Union and their lawsuit.

That situation has changed rather dramatically. With the huge increase in employment in San Francisco and San Francisco's refusal to build housing BART, which was designed to carry about 250,000 people a day is carrying 430,000. If you have tried to ride BART during peak, you know that there are times when people on the west side of the hills can't even get on a BART train. MTC has recognized this issue and has initiated the core capacity study, which should get us funding for substantially more TransBay service (along with funding for more ferry service).

The ridership is there, we just have to provide the service for people to take.

I think the double-deckers are very good idea, although we will have to be careful where we run them because of trees. They seek 80 people as opposed to our MCI's (the big green buses that look like Greyhounds) that seat 57 and the Gillig commuters that seat 36. The double-decker company loaned one to us for a month and it got overwhelmingly positive response from both writers and operators.

6. After years of purchasing diesel buses with a few Fuel Cell buses, AC Transit is ordering 10 new Fuel Cell buses and five of their first Battery Electric buses. Are you satisfied with that direction? Why or why not?

I have always been the board's strongest supporter of our zero emission program. CARB (the California Air Resources Board) has a proposed rule out for consideration that we require all the bus districts in California to be 100% zero emission by 2040. I support that rule and have testified in favor of it in Sacramento. (That may seem like a long time off, but under FTA (Federal Transit Administration) regulations we have to keep a bus for 12 years.)

We have the largest fuel-cell fleet in North America and the second largest in the world (after Homburg). Fuel-cell buses are electric buses. Our current fleet and the 10 buses we are going to get from new flyer use the Siemens ELFA drive. That is the same drive that will be used in our battery buses (both depot charging and on – route charging) and the same drive that is used on Muni's new electric trolleys. The difference between fuel-cell buses and battery buses is in how they store their electricity. The battery buses are more thermodynamically efficient, but the fuel-cell buses are vastly more operationally efficient.

Fuel-cell buses refill in about 6 min. and have about a 250 mile range. That means that they can be put on any route that previously used a diesel or CNG bus.

Battery buses come in two types – – depot charged and on – route charge. The depot charged buses, as their name implies, are charged at the depot at night. This charging takes between four and eight hours depending on the bus and the buses only have about 120 mile range (bus salesman will say lots of things and PR departments will put lots of things in press releases, but when the buses were tested at FTA's Altoona facility they came up with the hundred and 20 mile range estimate). This means that for every diesel bus you had your going to need to depot charged battery buses and you will always have to worry about the bus running out of "gas."

On-route charged buses can run all day, but they have to stop for roughly 10 min. every hour to "top off" their charge. The on–route chargers cost about \$1 million by the time you have run 50 amp 440 power to them, gotten them permitted etc. That million dollar charger will only charge six buses (we have 600 buses, so that would be \$100 million in chargers alone). On top of that, there is no standardization of the chargers, so, if you buy Proterra buses this year and next year the bid is one by New Flyer or Nova, you can't use any of the Proterra chargers to charge a new flyer bus or vice versa. There is an industry committee working on the standardization issue, but it is moving along slowly.

In addition, all of the current chargers are 12 to 13 feet off the ground. The trailer of an 18 wheeler is 14 feet off the ground and national standards for obstructions

over a roadway are 15 feet. This means with any of the current chargers the agency has to own or buy property on which to put the chargers.

With an on-route battery bus, the bus can only run on a route that has chargers. This creates severe problems with morning “pull out.” If a operator goes out to pick up his or her bus and for whatever reason it does not work, here she called the dispatcher, the dispatcher calls maintenance to pull the bus off the line in the operators instructed to take the next bus. If it’s a fuel cell bus – no problem, if it is a battery electric bus, it is a problem; either because of limited range or a limited number of routes on which an on – route charging bus can operate.

All that being said, I did support are getting five depot charged buses through the federal LowNo grant. Those should be coming in about a year. We also have grant application into BACCQMD (the Bay Area Air Quality Management District) for five – route charging buses. I have lobbied the BACCQMD board for that grant. This will give us a chance to evaluate all four technologies (diesel, fuel cell, depot charged electric and – route charging electric) in the same basic bus – – the New Flyer Excelsior.

We do use diesel buses, although all of our new ones have hybrid transmissions. I have not been supportive of CNG because of its inefficiency and engine problems with the CNG engines. It turns out that new science is telling us that CNG engines are considerably more damaging to the environment than diesel because of the “fugitive methane” problem. As noted above, in the long-term we will be transitioning to an entirely zero emission fleet.

7. Do you think AC Transit's marketing could be improved and, if so, how?

I think it has been improved, although it could be improved further. We have a new director of marketing, who is just finishing putting together her team. We have new PIO (Public Information Officer), who originally came from Channel 5 and was the number two at Muni’s public information office. He’s a very good writer and very well-connected with the transportation press both regionally and nationally.

We have new “social media” person, something that’s very important for our younger riders. That area seems to be coming much more active at AC Transit. I would like to see us doing much better job with signage, particularly at transit centers (BART stations etc.). There is some work being done on that, funded by MTC. We are beginning to try to use twitter to give people, particularly parents whose children are going to school, timely notification when a bus is late or missing. This is particularly critical for school service because they are generally not a lot of buses going to some of the more remote schools and people really need to know if that bus is coming or not.

8. How can AC Transit improve service for youth, seniors, disabled, and low-income riders?

We provide most of our service to youth, seniors and low – income riders. If you look at our route structure is overwhelmingly set up to serve those communities. When BRT starts next year on East 14<sup>th</sup>/International we will have bus every 7 min. moving quite rapidly because it is taken out of traffic. Currently on San Pablo we have a bus every 7½ minutes.

We are doing fairly well with disabled riders. We have very active Accessibility Advisory Committee that reviews all our new buses and all of our routes. One of the reasons why we are going to double-deckers is that they have low-floor ramp loading for wheelchairs whereas the MCI's had a very difficult and complicated lift the took a good deal of time and was a little bit scary because you ended up 6 feet off the ground on the lift before you rolled into the bus.

With all of those groups, it is primarily an issue of having more service out there.

9. What is your opinion of AC Go, the expanded and redesigned service that began this year on June 26?

I'm fairly pleased with it, particularly the process I which we got there, which was called the SEP (Service Expansion Plan). Are planning staff had numerous public meetings over almost a year where they went out with maps without a bus lines on them and gave people tape that represented 15 min. service. They then let the public make the trade-offs between various types and locations of service.

It ended up with a good plan. We have made many lines end up with common endpoints. That both makes it easier to transfer and makes it easier for us to provide appropriate restrooms for our operators. People generally made the choice to have the buses remain on the main streets and move along rapidly brother then wander around through neighborhoods. We also are getting rid of all the stupid clockwise and counterclockwise routes.

Another element that is part of AC Go is our flex service experiment. We have a number of areas in our district that are not dense enough to support a traditional bus route. I've been trying for number of years to find a supplier that can provide us with software that can do dynamic routing of the buses. We have located one in Denver has been using them for a while with some success. We are testing this system in Newark (hubbing at the Union City BART station) and in Castro Valley (hubbing at the Castro Valley BART station. The Castro Valley flex, in particular, has been extremely popular with seniors in Castro Valley because the Atken Senior Center is fairly far away from any major road or bus line.

10. What endorsements have you received thus far?

Peoples For AC Transit At-Large Director 2016  
List Of Endorsers (13 August 2016)

Groups

The Sierra Club  
The Alameda Building Trades Council  
Transport Oakland

Elected Officials

Congressperson Erick Swalwell  
Congressperson Mark DeSaulnier  
Senator Bob Wieckowski  
Assemblymember Rob Bonta  
Contra Costa Supervisor John Goia  
El Cerrito Mayor Greg Lyman  
El Cerrito Councilmember Gabe Quinto  
El Cerrito Councilmember Janet Abelson  
Fremont Mayor Bill Harrison  
Walnut Creek Mayor Bob Simmons  
Alameda Vice-Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft  
Oakland Councilmember Abel Gullen  
San Leandro Councilmember Corina N. Lopez  
BART Director Rebecca Saltzman  
BART Director Robert Raburn  
Democratic Party Comptroller Hilary Crosby  
AC Transit Director Rocky Fernandez (retired)  
Alameda Democratic Central Committee Member Michael Barnet  
Alameda Democratic Central Committee Member Cecilia (Ces) Rosiles

(I am way behind on soliciting endorsements. I expect to get, as usual, the entire state delegation, most of the mayors in the District and a number of Councilmembers.)

11. Please add anything more you wish to tell us so we can make a good decision.

I have held this office for 18 years and been elected five times.

I grew up in San Francisco, which has adequate transit service, but would visit my maternal grandparents in Paris which has real transit service. I became convinced quite early on that people should live in dense urban environments and that transit was necessary for that to be doable. I have always used transit



extensively and have written AC transit for about 45 years. I gave up my car 18 years ago and go everywhere via transit.

I was one of the founders of a RAFT (the Regional Alliance For Transit), a nine-county wide group of transit advocates. In 1994 we submitted an alternative RTP (regional transportation plan) to MTC (the Metropolitan transportation commission) and convince them to model it. The raft plan came out better than the MTC plan in almost all categories, but MTC claimed that it did not have the power to accomplish many elements of that plan, so made no changes. That plan, however, helped form some of the thinking behind the current SB 375.

Since I have been on the board, I have served numerous times as president and vice president of the board, chaired a number of committees and am currently the Board President. I also participate in local state and national transit and, transportation organizations and have led sessions at some of those organizations' meetings. I maintain close communication with the various transit advocacy groups such as Urban Habitat, Genesis, the ACCE Bus Riders Union, etc. I was called to the stand in the litigation by our amalgamated transit union and various community groups against MTC for under funding bus transit and testified for three days. My testimony ended up being quoted in the Trial Court's 99 page opinion. In response to a foundation objection by MTC's lawyer, the federal magistrate judge commented "he's been there forever and knows everything."

I attend the Transportation Research Board conference every year. (The transportation research board is the transportation part of the national academies, the equivalent to NIH or the National Science Foundation. Its conference is the largest and most prestigious transportation conference in the world every year.) I regularly attend APTA (American public transportation Association) conferences and workshops. I attend, moderate panels and lecture at conferences regarding hydrogen fuel-cell buses (including one at the U. C. Davis Institute for Transportation Studies. I have testified before CARB (the California Air Resources Board) and Assembly and Senate committees on transportation issues. I regularly lobby Congress on transportation issues, primarily Federal funding issues. I have met with the last five FTA (federal Transit Administration) Administrators. I have met with the last two federal Secretaries of Transportation and met Secretary Foxx on Friday.

I have worked on all 5 transportation sales tax measures in Alameda County (1986, 1998, 2000, 2014 and 2014). I have spent the last two years as a member of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority ("CCTA") representing all four bus agencies in Contra Costa County as CCTA tried to work out their TEP (Transportation Expenditure Plan) for their extension and expansion of their transportation sales tax. (I got them to double the amount of bus funding in West

County.) I have co-chaired each of the four AC Transit parcel tax campaigns (including C1 this election.)

Please respond by Saturday, August 27.