

Eric McClure  
*Treasurer*

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## 2013 Candidate Questionnaire

### *Advisory Board*

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Steve Vaccaro  
*General Counsel*

### OVERVIEW

For New York City to compete in the global economy and provide the safety and quality of life New Yorkers deserve, our leaders must embrace a 21st Century vision for our streets that puts well-being of people first. StreetsPAC supports candidates for public office who will champion safe, complete and livable streets.

**Safe Streets** are safe enough for children, seniors, and people of all abilities to travel without fear of death or injury. Despite recent gains, our streets remain unsafe:

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of preventable death in New York City; crash fatalities increased 12% in 2012 compared to 2011, and hit-and-run fatalities increased by 31% from 2010 to 2012.
- Although speeding is the top factor in NYC traffic deaths, police rarely enforce speeding laws on neighborhood streets, and prosecutors rarely pursue charges against sober drivers who kill.

To foster safe streets, StreetsPAC supports speed cameras and other enforcement strategies as well as changes in roadway design, which are proven to calm traffic.

**Complete Streets** encourage mobility and health by allocating space for walking, public transportation, bicycling and wheelchair access, and by prioritizing curbside access for taxis, delivery trucks and passenger loading over the underpriced curbside parking that now makes such uses difficult or impossible. For example:

- Select Bus Service using dedicated bus lanes has been an unqualified success, reducing travel times by 20% and increasing ridership.
- Increased bicycle lanes have made cycling for everyday transportation a viable option for thousands of New Yorkers. Protected lanes have been proven to reduce crash injuries among

bicyclists, walkers and drivers by approximately 40%.

- Countdown clocks, sidewalk extensions and landscaped pedestrian safety islands make walking more pleasant and efficient.

StreetsPAC supports improving the quality and variety of transportation choices to improve personal mobility and build a more sustainable transportation system of complete streets.

**Livable Streets** are comfortable and welcoming to local residents and visitors and attract patrons to shops, restaurants, hotels and other local businesses. New Yorkers want to live, work and shop on livable, economically vital streets. Research shows:

- Pedestrian plazas, bike lanes, play streets and other amenities dramatically increase retail property values, and significantly raise other commercial and residential property values.
- The reduction and elimination of motor vehicle traffic on Broadway from Columbus Circle to Union Square has created a mecca for tourists as well as internet-based and other new-economy businesses.

StreetsPAC supports repurposing street space for the use of people to promote livable streets where commerce and community life can thrive.

Process and Deadlines. StreetsPAC is a political action committee registered with the New York State and New York City Board of Elections. This questionnaire seeks to elicit your views on the important issues facing New York City's streets. Your answers will help inform StreetsPAC endorsement and donation policy in the 2013 election.

All responses should be considered public, although StreetsPAC may at its discretion choose to disclose some, all or none of your responses. Responses may be shortened for publication. StreetsPAC may also disclose which candidates do not respond to this questionnaire. If you refer in your response to a position paper or your Web site, please specify the exact text you are referencing. By responding to this questionnaire, you give your agreement to the foregoing uses of your responses.

The StreetsPAC Advisory Board may ask to interview candidates submitting questionnaire responses.

**Please submit questionnaire responses by May 24 via e-mail to: [info@StreetsPAC.org](mailto:info@StreetsPAC.org)**

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Please provide us with the following information:

Candidate Name: Andrea Veras

Campaign Manager: N/A

Press Secretary/Treasurer: Zlata Akilova

Name and EIN/TID of Committee: VERAS FOR COUNCIL 2013

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Campaign Twitter Username: AndreaVeras3

## **POLICY PROPOSALS**

**In a separate document, please articulate concrete and feasible policy and budgetary proposals to advance the following goals:**

### **Safe Streets**

1. Reducing the number of motor-vehicle crashes and conflicts among street users with appropriate infrastructure or roadway design changes, automated traffic law enforcement, or street- or neighborhood-specific changes in traffic rules
2. Ensuring thorough investigation of, and appropriate consequences for, drivers who commit traffic offenses that result in injury or death

### **Complete Streets**

3. Encouraging New Yorkers to use public transit, walk or bicycle within the city, instead of driving
4. Repurposing street space to better meet transportation needs (please specify particular streets)

### **Livable Streets**

5. Increasing the amount of public space for non-transportation use, such as plazas and street closure programs (e.g., Summer Streets and play streets.)
6. Harmonizing commercial and residential uses through licensing and regulation of trucking, deliveries, parking, street vending, greenmarkets, and other commercial activity affecting our streets

## **YES/NO QUESTIONS**

1. Do you believe speeding cars are a public safety problem in your district/borough?  
**Y / N**
2. Would you support enhancing penalties for aggressive, distracted and reckless driving under the New York City Administrative Code in order to deter such behavior? **Y / N**

3. Has the New York Police done enough to enforce the traffic laws?  
Y / N
4. Do you support expanding Bus Rapid Transit with dedicated bus lanes in your district/borough? Y / N
5. Should New York City government be providing economic support for ferry service as an extension of the public transit network? Y / N
6. Do you support continued expansion of the on-grid bike lane network in all five boroughs? Y / N
7. Do you approve of the way that the NYC Department of Transportation is working to manage traffic? Y / N
8. Do you approve of the process the NYC Department of Transportation and the Community Boards use to determine locations for bike-share facilities? Y / N
9. Do you support channeling buses and trucks to perimeter highways in order to reduce their presence on residential streets? Y / N
10. Do you support closing New York City's parks to cars? Y / N
11. Do you support pedestrianization of street space to encourage tourism? Y / N
12. Should the city make non-sensitive data concerning street use, street conditions and traffic crash investigations available in a timely, digital format to the public? Y / N
13. If elected, will you give your support to candidates for Council Speaker and/or Community Board who openly support safe, complete and livable streets? Y / N

### **PRIORITIES**

1. Rank the following measures that local government can take to discourage unnecessary motor vehicle trips to the most transit-rich and high-traffic areas of the city (1 = most important, 5 = least important):
  - A.   3   Remove financial incentives for "toll shopping" by equalizing or balancing tolls at different bridge and tunnel crossings

- B.   1   Use a system of dynamic pricing for access to the most congested areas
- C.   2   Give buses and vehicles-for-hire priority over private cars on city streets
- D.   1   Give delivery vehicles priority on city streets over private cars
- E.   1   Restrict commercial deliveries to late night and early morning hours, and ban the largest trucks from residential neighborhoods absent compliance with special permit and insurance requirements

Please state what other such measures you think are appropriate reduce unnecessary motor vehicle trips to the most transit-rich and high-traffic areas of the city:

Other measures would include local or state government regulations designed to encourage the use of transportation alternatives such as ridesharing, transit, bicycling, and walking.

2. Rank the following measures that local government can take to obtain community input concerning changes in the regulation or configuration of a street:

- A.   1   Holding a "Town Hall" or open forum for affected community members
- B.   1   Conducting a face-to-face canvass of residents and businesses on the affected street
- C.   1   Conducting an online poll of neighborhood residents regarding the change
- D.   1   Involving the community board and considering any resolutions it may pass on the subject
- E.   1   Responding to complaints that arise after changes have been implemented

**Please state what other such measures you think are appropriate in obtaining community input concerning such changes:**

Other measures would include the following considerations:

- a) Residential streets, what form these adaptations have taken, and their resulting performance.
  - b) To evaluate residential street performance as perceived by public and city officials.
  - c) To inquire about traffic problems associated with residential streets, their causes, and resulting mitigation programs.
  - d) To research current practices in neighborhood traffic management and control and to receive direct input on the success or failure of each traffic control measures.
3. Rank the traffic violations upon which NYPD resources should be focused (1 = most important, 5 = least important):
- A.   1   Operating motor vehicles in excess of the speed limit
  - B.   1   Double parking, standing, and blocking of loading zones or bicycle lanes
  - C.   2   Traffic violations by cyclists
  - D.   2   Traffic violations by vehicles weighing more than 5 tons
  - E.   1   Failure to yield to pedestrians

Please state which other traffic-related enforcement activities you believe deserves greater resources from the NYPD:

I believe that NYPD could use traffic law enforcement as an effective tool for increasing police visibility because people feel safe when police is patrolling the streets. Other measure would be the installation of high plots to reduce drivers' speed which is the leading cause of accidents.

**Thank you for completing the StreetsPAC 2013 Candidate Questionnaire.**

**We look forward to working with you to make our city a better place to live!**

### **Safe Streets**

- 14. **Reducing the number of motor-vehicle crashes and conflicts among street users with appropriate infrastructure or roadway design changes, automated traffic law enforcement, or street- or neighborhood-specific changes in traffic rules**

Traffic collisions may result in injury, death, vehicle damage, and property damage. A number of factors contribute to the risk of collision, including vehicle design, speed of operation, road design, road environment, driver skill and/or impairment, and driver behavior. Motor vehicle collisions lead to death and disability as well as financial costs to both society and the individuals involved.

According to a statement released by Jacqueline S. Gillan, President, for Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, “a major surface transportation authorization bill passed by Congress last summer and signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012 includes several important provisions to improve the safety of vehicles, drivers and roads.” It is concerning that preliminary figures for the first nine months of 2012 indicate a 7.1% increase in fatalities compared to 2011. Moreover, annual costs to society from motor vehicle crashes remain at more than \$230 billion. In 2011, 1,169 fatalities were reported in New York. The annual economic cost due to motor vehicle crashes is \$19.50 Billion

There are several policies that can be proposed to reduce the number of motor-vehicle crashes and conflicts among street users:

- a) **Ramp metering.** Controlling the access to congested streets and highways by letting automobiles in one at a time instead of in groups. The outcome is a lower disruption on traffic flows.
- b) **Traffic signal synchronization.** Tuning the traffic signals to the time and direction of traffic flows. This is particularly effective if the signals can be adjusted on an hourly basis to reflect changes in commuting patterns.
- c) **Incident management.** Making sure that vehicles involved in accidents or mechanical failures are removed as quickly as possible from the road. Since accident on average account between 20 and 30% of all the causes of congestion, this strategy is particularly important.
- d) Reducing exposure to risk through transport and land-use policies, shaping the road network for road injury prevention, improving visibility of road users.
- e) Installation of traffic enforcement cameras
- f) With regard to motorcycles riders, the cost of motorcycle crashes is not just measured in bodies, loss, and grief. They create a burden to society, consuming public funds for emergency response, emergency room costs, and insurance premiums. In terms of medical care costs and productivity losses... The economic burden from crash-related injuries and deaths in one year alone totaled \$12 billion.

**15. Ensuring thorough investigation of, and appropriate consequences for drivers who commit traffic offenses that result in injury or death.**

A collision should be properly investigated by a qualified officer; it is also important to file a standard accident report for every collision. These reports allow the federal and state governments and law enforcement agencies to compile statistics to assess objectively the effectiveness of police traffic enforcement. The concept of selective traffic law enforcement rests on data that shows the violations that actually cause serious crashes and the locations and times when they are most likely to occur. These statistics also help the police gauge the level of enforcement within each area of their jurisdictions, beef up high collision areas, and move units from one location to another as required. Insurance companies use these statistics to sort collisions by sex, age, location and demographics, to aid in setting rates.

As per data extracted from the National Safety Council 2011 report, the economic impact of these fatal and nonfatal unintentional injuries amounted to \$693.5 billion in 2009. This is equivalent to about \$2,300 per capita, or about \$5,900 per household. These are costs that every individual and household pays whether directly out of pocket, through higher prices for goods and services, or through higher taxes.

## **Complete Streets**

**16. Encouraging New Yorkers to use public transit, walk or bicycle within the city, instead of driving**

Bicycling is an integral part of life in New York; the first bike path in America opened in Brooklyn in 1894 and now over 200,000 New Yorkers are biking our streets every day. In any given month, more than 500,000 adult New Yorkers use their bicycles more than twice for exercise or transportation. None of these numbers come close to representing the latent demand for safer streets, and the many more New Yorkers who would bicycle regularly if it were made safer and easier.

According to the DOT's Pedestrian Safety Study and the most recent Sustainable Streets Index, streets with bike lanes have about 40 percent fewer crashes ending in death or serious injury, and that's for all street users: drivers and pedestrians included. For example, after a parking-protected bike lane was installed on Manhattan's Ninth Avenue, all traffic-related injuries dropped 50 percent. Injuries to pedestrians dropped 29 percent and injuries to cyclists dropped 57 percent.

There are three major reasons for residents to encourage residents to use their bikes instead of driving: a) The typical American family spends almost \$8,000 a year to own and operate a car, when you count the car payments, gas, oil, maintenance & repairs, licenses, parking, and insurance; b) it reduces pollution and energy use, and c) They will exercise in their way to their destination.

**17. Repurposing street space to better meet transportation needs (please specify particular streets)**

Transportation planners, street engineers, public health officers and elected officials are considering how to repurpose our city streets to allow everyone to get around safely and well, even if they're not traveling by car.

An article published in The New York Times on November 12, 2012 and written by Marina Kaneko, is one of the best examples of repurposing a New York City's streets and public spaces. She refers to the High Line, "a 1.45-mile long section of elevated railroad that stretches from Gansevoort Street to Manhattan's West Side, is perhaps the most unique. Built upon what used to be the lifeline of the meat-packing district from the 1930s, the tracks have since been re-commissioned as one of New York's most popular parks, with spectacular landscaping and open-air views of the city skyline."

**Livable Streets**

**18. Increasing the amount of public space for non-transportation use, such as plazas and street closure programs (e.g., Summer Streets and play streets.)**

Public spaces are an essential ingredient to the sustainability of cities for political, social, economic, public health and biodiversity reasons. In urban planning, public space has historically been described as "open space", meaning the streets, parks and recreation areas, plazas and other publicly owned and managed outdoor spaces, as opposed to the private domain of housing and work.

Through Mayor Bloomberg new initiatives such as Broadway Boulevard, the Public Plaza Program, Coordinated Street Furniture, and Summer Streets, New York City is finding creative new ways to make our streets more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists.

Plazas and street closure programs are essential for the improvement of quality of public life in the city because they connect people and communities, which is an important factor of the City's overall sustainability strategy. Quality of life policies will enable the City to continue to grow its economy and retain more residents. These will contribute that our residents spend more of the leisure time in the city. At the end, this will result in

economy growth because people will spend their money in the city. No less important is the fact that by retaining more residents, the City will also help fight climate change. Mass transit- and pedestrian-oriented cities like New York help reduce suburban sprawl and the higher levels of carbon emissions that come with it.

## **6. Harmonizing commercial and residential uses through licensing and regulation of trucking, deliveries, parking, street vending, greenmarkets, and other commercial activity affecting our streets.**

Cities are locations having a high level of accumulation and concentration of economic activities and are complex spatial structures that are supported by transport systems. Because our local government understands the relevance of harmonizing commercial and residential uses of commercial activities affecting our street, New York City's Economic Development Corporation has continued its efforts to restore and reenergize the City through tax incentives that encourage retail, commercial, and residential development. Minimum amounts of investment in property improvements, minimum lease lengths, and other criteria for participation in the Manhattan Revitalization Program ensure stability and commitment on the part of businesses and citizens alike.

**The Mayor's Street Activity Permit Office (SAPO)** issues permits for street fairs, festivals, block parties, green markets, commercial/promotional and other events on the City's streets and sidewalks. Vending is an essential part of urban life. It exists in cities around the world and takes many different forms, each of which complement and benefit the City and its population. Vending serves an important economic and social role; it provides jobs, stimulates commerce, and fulfills the needs of the population. There are flea markets in Brooklyn, for example, that provide an outlet for second-hand goods. Green Markets in Union Square connect customers to farmers of fresh, locally-grown produce

Trucks and commercial vehicles are essential to New York City, providing goods and services to millions of New Yorkers every day. The City's diverse mixture of land uses, dense urban environment and vast transportation infrastructure require a distinct set of rules and regulations to govern the operation of trucks and commercial vehicles. In order for this system to function efficiently, it is important that drivers observe these rules and regulations.

The most important recommendations to harmonize commercial and residential uses are:

1. Coordinate on- and off-street parking management and charging charge a price for on-street parking to ensure performance standards, including occupancy rates, are met.

2. Create parking benefit districts where the revenue is returned to the community;
3. Limit the hours of commercial trucks to deliver the goods to businesses in residential areas.
4. Establish specific places on our streets where street vendors and green markets can sell their products.
5. Incorporate parking policies into metropolitan transportation plans;