

# 2013 Candidate Questionnaire

## 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: Paul Graziano

Campaign Manager: Kimberley Francis

Press Secretary/Liaison: Christina Wilkinson

Name and EIN/TID of Committee: Paul Graziano 2013

Campaign Address: 146-24 32nd Avenue, Flushing, NY 11354

Campaign Phone: (718) 358-2535

Campaign Fax:

Campaign E-mail: [paulgraziano2013@gmail.com](mailto:paulgraziano2013@gmail.com)

Campaign Website: [www.paulgraziano.com](http://www.paulgraziano.com)

Campaign Twitter Username: PaulGraziano19

## **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 with conditions!
6. Do you support continued expansion of the on-grid bike lane network in all five boroughs? Y / N with conditions!
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 with conditions!
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. 4 Remove financial incentives for “toll shopping” by equalizing or balancing tolls at different bridge and tunnel crossings

- B.   5   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.   3   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:

Ranking each of these issues does a disservice to serious discussion about them.

A. *Equalizing tolls has already occurred at most major crossings within the city itself, with the exception of the bridges to the Rockaways and the Saw Mill River Parkway for obvious reasons; the cash toll for the crossings to New Jersey and Staten Island are only \$2 less than the other crossings.*

B. *Congestion pricing is a Manhattan-centric policy that unfairly targets those New York City residents who live in the other four boroughs, particularly commuters who do not live near easily accessible public transportation in the eastern Bronx, most of northeastern and southeastern Queens, parts of southern Brooklyn and most of Staten Island and are forced to drive to their jobs on a regular basis. This type of policy would have a terribly negative effect on working and middle-class residents of the city who are in this position.*

*A better solution would be to reinstate and increase the Commuter Tax - removed solely for political reasons after being in place for over 30 years - which previously affected workers who drove into New York City from Long Island, Westchester, New Jersey and Connecticut to discourage additional vehicles from outside of New York City. Additionally, the loss of this critical revenue - approximately \$400 to 500 million per year as of a decade ago, and significantly more if indexed for inflation - has created additional financial burden on the taxpayers and residents of our city.*

C. *Buses and taxis/livery cabs should have priority over private vehicles. More dedicated bus/taxi lanes are necessary throughout the city. However, taxi drivers in particular must be held to a higher standard of operating their vehicles.*

D. *Similarly, delivery vehicles should also have priority over private vehicles.*

E. *Illegal truck traffic is the bane of the existence of many neighborhoods, particularly outside of Manhattan. It is a top priority in the 19th Council District, in terms of needing additional enforcement on residential streets where they don't belong. Signage prohibiting trucks must also be posted; the current administration has refused to place "No Trucks Permitted Except Local Deliveries" in most locations around the city, as they consider this negative signage. I consider it critical to the safety and well-being of the streets of my district.*

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.   2   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.   4   Conducting an online poll of neighborhood residents regarding the change

D.   5   Involving the community board and considering any resolutions it may pass on the subject

E.   3   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:

A-E. *In the 19th Council District, direct contact with and canvassing of residents followed by Town Hall meetings is the most effective way of communicating and coming up with a representative position of constituents. A typical way of reaching out by elected officials to district residents is to send a mailing to affected property owners and the immediate surrounding community, with a tear off sheet for individual positions that can be sent return mail. This is followed by several town hall meetings in the affected neighborhoods and an online poll for those who wish to respond in that fashion. Unfortunately, much of the Community Board activity that*

*takes place in the 19th, particularly in CB7, is decided by the leadership without major consultation with those residents affected by a particular DOT action and therefore not representative of the actual neighborhood opinion. This is why it's critical to get the public position first.*

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.   1   Traffic violations by cyclists
  - D.   1   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:

*It's very difficult to rank the above list 1 through 5. Traffic violations for all of the above listed pertaining to vehicles are all important. However, the increase in advocacy for increased bicycle ridership in the city by this administration has had unforeseen consequences. As an avid cyclist who normally averages 50 to 100 miles a week from April to November, I am consistently outraged at the lack of interest by at least 50% of my fellow bike riders to follow basic traffic laws and safety, including red lights; stop signs; wrong direction riding; and countless other infractions that put cyclist, pedestrian and drivers at risk. As an advocate for alternative transportation, I feel that there has been a tremendous disconnect - as with much of this administration's policies - between implementation and regulation, and it has created significant and increasing problems that have not been resolved. As a Councilmember, I would continue to advocate for the rights of cyclists and better/safer transportation alternatives for them; however, I would also seek to pass legislation to increase fines and enforcement, as well as tighten up regulations that would ensure good and consistent behavior by cyclists because, frankly, like drivers, some are out of control and very dangerous.*



**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!**

## RESPONSES TO POLICY PROPOSALS

### Safe Streets

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

*One of the biggest hindrances to creating Safe Streets in New York City has been a top-down focus by the current and previous administrations, with imposition of policy rather than consultation with affected communities since Robert Moses' tenure. By focusing solely on traffic flow and increased capacity for vehicles for decades, alternative transportation strategies were continuously ignored or shortchanged. While the Bloomberg administration has paid more attention to these alternatives, they have not implemented them fairly or consistently, with decision-making once again imposed on communities, oftentimes against their will, with a tin ear for examining solutions from other cities across the United States and beyond.*

*For example, one of the best strategies to lower fatalities and accidents can be found in Seattle, Washington. In many parts of Seattle, intersections have had permanent traffic-calming through the use of miniature roundabouts, forcing cars to slow down significantly at dangerous intersections. This would work well in suburban parts of New York City where speeding on residential streets is epidemic and extremely dangerous for pedestrians.*

*Timing of traffic lights, outside of Manhattan in particular, should also be based not only on a staggered timer grid but, particularly at night, on sensors that will better reflect actual traffic flow as well. This will result in safer and more predictable vehicle activity throughout the city.*

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

*Many police officers are loathe to investigate the cause of traffic offenses, particularly if it's an accident. There have been numerous examples of police showing up to an accident site hours later, paperwork not being filed and general misreporting by officers reluctant to be bogged down by what they consider to be unimportant violations. The best way to change this is through legislation and implementation at the City Council and Mayoral level of government. Additionally, better enforcement of basic traffic rules by*

*the police - running stop signs and traffic lights, illegal turns and the like, is critical to instilling a sense of order and responsibility in drivers; otherwise, they will increasingly ignore the rules, potentially putting lives in jeopardy.*

## **Complete Streets**

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

*Increasing non-vehicle transit options, including public transit, walking and bicycling, is laudable and I wholeheartedly support it in principle. However, as stated previously, increased emphasis on cycling must be paired with enforcement of rogue cyclists, who unfortunately make up a significant portion of ridership presently. Public transit is also very important as an aspect to decrease car use; unfortunately, public transit does not reach many sections of the city and there are no plans to increase access. In fact, the administration and the MTA have continuously decreased bus service in the other boroughs, increasing reliance on cars. A commitment to public transportation by the incoming administration and the City Council are the only way to begin the conversation. Walking is also an excellent alternative, when one lives within proximity of schools, work, restaurants, shopping, etc. Unfortunately, there are large parts of the city where, again, development patterns have not created particularly walkable communities.*

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

*Numerous streets around the city would benefit from mixed use. Again, this administration has focused almost solely on experimenting on streets in Manhattan with little community input and mixed results. As for particular streets within the 19th Council District, here are a few: Francis Lewis Boulevard and Utopia Parkway are wide multi-lane roads that can be redesigned to rebuild the generous park medians that used to exist; increase bike lanes; widen sidewalks and curbs to allow for more pedestrian traffic and larger "aprons" with green space and trees; and a dedicated bus lane. Closing the 3rd Avenue exit of the Whitestone Expressway (just before the Whitestone Bridge) would forever remove the continuous and dangerous vehicular traffic that uses those blocks adjacent to it as high-speed shortcuts (it is currently closed due to construction and vehicles per hour down adjacent streets has decreased from 107 to 2). 20th Avenue, an 8-lane roadway between College Point and Whitestone, should also be*

*reconstructed to allow for more pedestrian/cycling (currently non-existent) and dedicated bus lanes. Finally, speed bumps are crucial on numerous streets to stop speeding as, in many cases, drivers ignore stop signs and/or red lights.*

## **Livable Streets**

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

*Street closures for Summer Streets, play streets and street festivals/block parties are an essential part of keeping New York City livable, and there is no question that these programs should be increased. Permanent public space can be tricky, although there are areas of the city where this can be achieved (i.e., recovering paved medians, undeveloped street beds, etc. for park/plaza use).*

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

*As mentioned previously, unwanted and illegal use of residential streets by commercial vehicles is rampant throughout New York City. More regulation, signage, fines and enforcement is necessary to rein in the constant abuse that is occurring on a daily basis.*