

Eric McClure
Treasurer

2013 Candidate Questionnaire

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Steve Vaccaro
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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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide us with the following information:

Candidate Name: Chrissy Voskerichian

Campaign Manager: John Mulvey

Press Secretary:

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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?
Yes
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? Yes

3. Has the New York Police done enough to enforce the traffic laws?
Yes
4. Do you support expanding Bus Rapid Transit with dedicated bus lanes in your district/borough? No
5. Should New York City government be providing economic support for ferry service as an extension of the public transit network? Yes
6. Do you support continued expansion of the on-grid bike lane network in all five boroughs? No
7. Do you approve of the way that the NYC Department of Transportation is working to manage traffic? Yes
8. Do you approve of the process the NYC Department of Transportation and the Community Boards use to determine locations for bike-share facilities? No
9. Do you support channeling buses and trucks to perimeter highways in order to reduce their presence on residential streets? Yes
10. Do you support closing New York City's parks to cars? Yes
11. Do you support pedestrianization of street space to encourage tourism? Yes
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? Yes
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? Yes

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. 2 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. 3 Give buses and vehicles-for-hire priority over private cars on city streets
- D. 4 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:

Additional express bus service from the outer boroughs into popular areas of the City.

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. 4 Holding a "Town Hall" or open forum for affected community members
- B. 5 Conducting a face-to-face canvass of residents and businesses on the affected street
- C. 3 Conducting an online poll of neighborhood residents regarding the change
- D. 2 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:

Consult elect officials and take their opinions into consideration before making a decision

3. Rank the traffic violations upon which NYPD resources should be focused (1 = most important, 5 = least important):
- A. 2 Operating motor vehicles in excess of the speed limit
 - B. 3 Double parking, standing, and blocking of loading zones or bicycle lanes
 - C. 5 Traffic violations by cyclists
 - D. 4 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:

The NYPD is down over 6,000 officers. In Northeast Queens the most prevalent traffic related problems stem from speeding, ignoring stop signs and illegal parking.

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!

- 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**

In Northeast Queens transportation by private vehicle is the most frequently used method of getting around. My experience with both the 109th Precinct Community Council and the New York City Council has shown me that

changes and improvements to traffic regulations and traffic patterns are extremely important to residents of this district. While working for the City Council our office received 2 or 3 constituent requests every week for new stop signs, changes to parking regulations or other transportation related improvements. I realize that in this area where just about everyone drives, traffic regulations are extremely crucial to both safety and community life.

The City should work to keep large traffic (trucks and buses) out of residential areas as much as possible by reviewing and updating bus and truck routes with input from the local Community Boards. I believe that the Department of Transportation should make greater use of inexpensive physical barriers to improve safety and prevent both vehicles and pedestrians from breaking the law. On Queens Boulevard, as well as several locations in Manhattan the DOT has installed pedestrian barriers to prevent pedestrians from crossing in the middle of dangerous blocks. The DOT should also make greater use of bollards to keep traffic in lanes at locations that are known for back ups and delays.

We have to realize that it is impossible for the police department to enforce every single traffic regulation on every street at all times. We also know that the average person will ignore a posted sign or pavement marking if it is convenient to do so. A few inexpensive barriers can make streets much safer for vehicles and pedestrians alike.

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

It has been my experience that all too often traffic accidents are not reported to the NYPD. This leads to inaccuracies in the statistics that the City keeps as to the number of accidents at any given intersection. In my work with the 109th Precinct I know that hit and runs are all too common, and often there is little evidence to use in an investigation.

After two hit and runs last summer with no evidence, the precinct's Commanding Officer placed large Variable-message Signs (VMS) at the intersection asking passing motorists who may have seen something to call the precinct. I know that if there is suitable evidence to conduct an investigation and make an arrest, the NYPD will do so.

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

As noted earlier, driving is the preferred mode of transportation in Northeast Queens. This mainly the result of few public transportation options. This district has no subways and only a few buses. We do however have 5 Long Island Rail Road stations that are extremely popular. Hundreds of residents from this district take the LIRR into the City every day. However, because there are limited options to get to the LIRR, many people drive their cars and park near the stations. This creates a major problem for residents who reside near the LIRR stations as there is then no available parking for them near their home. I would support mid day parking regulations in areas near the LIRR stations. Prohibiting parking on certain blocks from 12-1pm would make it impossible for people to park for the full day and would force them to find alternate ways to get to the train. Additionally, the City should look into building or leasing additional Muni- Meter parking lots in areas near the LIRR. The Muni-Meter parking facility in Bayside only accommodates about 30 vehicles and only 10 spots are for long term parking.

An additional idea that would need to be taken up in the state legislature, would be to require everyone to report their odometer mileage either during their registration or annual inspection. If drivers then went over some certain annual allowance, a small per mile tax (or flat fee) could be applied to their following registration, similar to when you return a car at the end of a lease.

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

The DOT recently installed several benches in College Point as part of its City Bench program. I am very supportive of other benches being installed throughout the remainder of Northeast Queens.

I think that the City could install a handful of its new Citi Bike racks at several strategic locations in Northeast Queens where people might be inclined to rent a bike, not for transportation but for recreation. Joe Michael's Mile and Fort Totten is an excellent recreational location where people go to walk, jog or bike ride along the water's edge. I believe that Citi Bike could be successful at either end, as well as in other areas near local parks.

I do strongly support green streets and other green traffic medians. As part of the Participatory Budgeting Program in District 19 my civic association recently proposed allocating funds to build a green island along Utopia Parkway between 35th Avenue and Northern Boulevard. The project made the final ballot, but unfortunately, the project was not selected. I also believe that the existing medians on Utopia Parkway between Francis Lewis Boulevard and the Cross Island Parkway, as well as the median on Francis Lewis Boulevard between the Cross Island Parkway and Utopia Parkway can be beautified. Each median has a handful of scattered trees, but very little actual green space. In addition to beautifying the neighborhood, a "green" median will also discourage people from illegally crossing the street mid block and will make the area safer.

There is no need for specific bus only lanes, bike lanes, or other similar regulations in Northeast Queens.

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.)

I love the idea of summer streets when kids are out of school to give them a safe place to go. I believe that the locations in Northeast Queens that would be best served by these programs are the streets adjacent to playground or schoolyards. Unlike parks, which tend to have a lot of space, some playgrounds in Northeast Queens are small and closing the street to allow more space could be very beneficial.

I am also a big supporter of block parties. My civic association hosts an annual block party and everyone from the neighborhood comes out to enjoy it. I believe that the permitting and approval process for block parties should be made easier.

Finally, I applaud Mayor Bloomberg's pedestrian plazas in Times Square, Herald Square and other tourist heavy locations around the district. Not only does it make it much easier and safer for pedestrians to walk, but it allows residents and tourists to relax, take photos and enjoy some of the most iconic locations in the City.

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

I am a huge supporter of green markets. While working for the City Council I helped negotiate a compromise that brought a green market to Douglaston

Commercial traffic and parking, both legal and illegal, is a major point of contention for Northeast Queens. While most business owners are considerate of their residential neighbors, the few who are not can cause major problems for a community.

This district has several auto dealers who park vehicles that are for sale on the sidewalk or in the street without license plates which prevents the NYPD from ticketing them. Even if the NYPD arrives to tow, they can usually only remove one illegally parked vehicle at a time. The City or State should consider legislation that will allow the NYPD to summons illegally parked vehicles that are not registered, by issuing a summons to the VIN number.