

# 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:

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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

Improving road and transportation safety is especially important in Northeast Queens, because while it is less congested than Manhattan streets, there are many senior living communities located in close proximity to schools and commercial shopping areas. Therefore, we must critically think about restructuring our streets with enforcement (cameras and police) and street sharing among all forms of transportation. Most important is a proactive approach to traffic signage that better takes into account the potential dangers for pedestrians, so adjustments to traffic patterns and signage can be made before potentially deadly accidents occur.

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

There is tremendous data on where fatalities and injuries occur, but it is not until a certain quota is met before the City's DOT does traffic mitigation studies. We must not allow deaths to dictate safety. And it's simple – if you go to the people, with Town Halls and forums, they will tell you very quickly where there are dangerous areas. If someone is killed due to a traffic fatality, it is up to the justice system to prosecute them according to the law, but we can ensure we cut down on these before they occur.

### **Complete Streets**

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

Northeast Queens is a public transit desert. We lack any subway lines, have only two LIRR stations, and local and Express Bus service is far too infrequent. The proposal to extend the 7 Line farther east is a worthy option to consider to alleviate traffic congestion and make travel into Manhattan easier and less costly. Public-operated ferry from one of Northeast

Queens' many waterway access points to Astoria or to the East Side of Manhattan would be a tremendous help in getting cars off of the streets of both Northeast Queens and of highly-congested Manhattan where many commuters go every day. The opening of East Side Access will be helpful if the project ever finishes. We must hold the MTA accountable for their proposals on ESA as it continues to go overtime and over budget.

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

Because the needs of our community are unique, I believe there should be strong and upfront input from the local community boards, businesses and transportation advocates to help chart out a plan that would make the best use of street space while keeping our neighborhoods safe for pedestrians and motorists.

### **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.)

Street congestion from traffic is not a major issue in Northeast Queens. In fact, with no real transportation alternatives to get to major shopping and commercial areas, an open flow of motor vehicle traffic is often times the only option for many residents, especially our large senior population.

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

Incentivizing off-hour delivery through traffic mitigation tax credits can help significantly reduce traffic congestion and increase productivity across our city.

### **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** – a significant issue in our district is an increasing amount of unreasonable tickets that hurt middle class families and local area businesses.
4. Do you support expanding Bus Rapid Transit with dedicated bus lanes in your district/borough? **Y / N** – however, dedicated bus lanes must have the approval of the local community, prior to their installation, or I would oppose the addition of any such lanes in our district.
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** – with input from the community BEFORE it is instituted
7. Do you approve of the way that the NYC Department of Transportation is working to manage traffic? **Y / N** – extensive traffic mitigation studies are being done, but they are not readily available to the community, and they do not respond to the community’s requests for studies at specific intersections, etc. in Queens
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** – this is an issue that must be left up to the absolute discretion of the local community and thus far, no proposals have been brought up for discussion at our local community boards.
9. Do you support channeling buses and trucks to perimeter highways in order to reduce their presence on residential streets? **Y / N**, additionally, an at-night drop off for some large commercial trucks would ease the traffic problem they present. In terms of city buses, removal from residential streets would render them useless.
10. Do you support closing New York City’s parks to cars? **Y / N** for any park that has major crossways or thoroughfares, such as Central Park, this would cause an undue burden on the neighboring streets, which would be entirely unsustainable. There are no parks in our district that permit driving however we need to be able to drive to parking lots to get to the park.
11. Do you support pedestrianization of street space to encourage tourism? **Y / N** – but not in the 19<sup>th</sup> Council District. The success of the closure of Broadway has been good for pedestrians and local businesses. It’s encouraged tourism while also better regulating traffic in the area.

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. **OPPOSE** 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. 4 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:

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:

There must be accountability. If a public forum is held, a survey done, any formula for finding out what the community wants and needs, it must actually be listened to. As Councilman, I would hold public forums and town halls on any proposals relating to transportation and make sure that the DOT, MTA and any other agency which may be tangentially involved, are accountable to what the community has to say. For too long we've seen public events held after the fact, paying lip service to those the projects directly affect. We've got to do better at this and we've got to do better now.

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. 5 Double parking, standing, and blocking of loading zones or bicycle lanes
- C. 2 Traffic violations by cyclists
- D. 3 Traffic violations by vehicles weighing more than 5 tons
- E. 2 Failure to yield to pedestrians

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

In my district in Northeast Queens, the NYPD boundaries are far too large – which causes a crime problem in all areas, which includes traffic-related enforcement. With so many seniors in Northeast Queens, speeding vehicles – and cyclists who do not have a designated bike lane – are a real problem for seniors walking on streets. If a senior citizen is hit by a bike, he or she could be killed. We must all work together to use our streets safely together and one of the important steps in that fight lies in enforcement.

**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!**