

Pahaham Streets PAC 2013 Questionnaire 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

Our city streets are shared public spaces that perform essential economic and social functions. To reduce motor vehicle crashes and conflicts among street users, I support implementing infrastructure and roadway design changes, automated traffic law enforcement, and street or neighborhood specific changes in traffic rules. In a dynamic city like ours, such changes are controversial and require community input and support.

To succeed, the changes must be preceded by an extensive public discussion in a series of public meetings where concerns of the community board members, residents, business owners, and other street users get reflected in an evolving design or reform plan. The municipal agencies involved must be committed to explaining the problem and how changes might benefit the community and New York City; bringing in technical experts to help inform and guide public debate and policy development; prioritizing and not dismissing unique neighborhood-specific needs and preferences; providing examples of possible solutions implemented elsewhere; and fully considering the needs of vulnerable populations, such as the disabled, the elderly, and the very young.

Below, I discuss a few examples of the kinds of reforms that I would support in northern Manhattan if I were elected. Before doing so, I will note in response to your request for “budgetary proposals,” that some of the programs and reforms I would support if elected could be funded with my allocation of capital discretionary funds, but subject to participatory budgeting processes that I would implement in my district if I were in fact elected. Other changes to roadway design or other infrastructure changes would have to be supported by the NYC Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and be funded with federal,

state and city capital allocations over which I would have no discretion if elected to the Council. I can have some influence, but certainly commit to building the necessary level of community consensus to address street safety and use to better and more fairly meet the needs of all. Other changes cost very little, such implementing play streets.

As you are aware, buses crawl along 125th Street. Recently, the New York City Department of Transportation found this street to be the slowest bus ride of all the city's major streets. Sadly, I felt vindicated reading that the department's own study confirmed that it was actually faster to walk across 125th Street than to ride the M60 bus. The slowness is caused partly by illegally parked cars and double-parking along 125th Street. Clearly, there is conflict between bus riders and car owners, with possibly too much priority given to car owners and not enough traffic enforcement to allow buses to be more timely. As a member of the Transit Riders Action Committee (organized by West Harlem Environmental Action, Incorporated or WeAct), I supported the introduction of select bus service, which will reduce bus travel times along 125th Street due to off-board payment of fares, limited stops, and multi-door boarding. The department has also proposed a number of changes to improve the flow of traffic along 125th Street that I also support, such as establishing metered parking and permit parking to stop the double-parking and bus bunching, and the use of cameras to enforce parking regulations. I would also support the use of cameras generally to reduce speeding and car crashes and to increase safety, such as near Lenox Avenue on 125th Street. But again, all of these kinds of proposals only succeed when consensus is built in the community, and not when people feel like a new tax is being proposed. And consensus-building does take time.

In Inwood, Dyckman Street west of Broadway features an emerging nightlife that attracts people from outside the community and brings excessive noise and traffic to what would otherwise be an unusually quiet nighttime neighborhood. Politicians generally have defended the restaurant owners and other than hosting community forums on rise in noise and traffic that comes with deliveries, double-parked cars and trucks and warm weather patrons of the Dyckman Street scene, have taken no formal action to address the critical public health and safety concerns. For

example, it should not take one hour to drive from Riverside Drive near Dyckman to 218th Street and Broadway, but stopped traffic and long delays have occurred regularly in the warm weather and could mean the difference between life and death in emergency situations.

To address these issues, I suggest that the department consider the feasibility of a pedestrian plaza along part of Dyckman and constructing new, additional access ramps to the Henry Hudson Parkway north and south. I would also support introducing cameras and regulating curbside access to stop double-parking and illegal parking along Dyckman west of Broadway. If elected, I will be committed to engaging the community in an open discussion about possible roadway design and automated traffic-enforcement changes.

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

I would support and introduce changes in law and regulation at the city or state level that would focus on driver responsibilities by clearly but fairly defining traffic offenses that result in injury or death and directing district attorneys to prosecute cases that conform to the statutory definition.

Complete Streets

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

To encourage New Yorkers to use public transit, we have to increase our investment in mass transit, and allocate our resources in ways that reflect the changing daily commutes and population growth in city neighborhoods. I would support improvements like the Select Bus Service wherever possible and increasing bus-only lanes along with automated traffic enforcement because this is an easy and cost-effective way to offer service enhancements to mass transit riders. I would also support investing in subway and commuter rail improvements and extensions, not just in midtown and lower Manhattan, but also to reduce travel times and increase options within the Bronx and from the Bronx to northern

Manhattan; within and to and from Queens and Brooklyn. For Staten Island, I would support investments in bus service and roadway design changes on the Verrazano to speed bus travel times. Obviously, changes that affect daily travel to and from work or school must involve considerable community input and consensus-building, in addition to expert research and guidance.

To encourage walking, I will work with and support community groups that are focused on public health and that engage the community in group activities to change behaviors, such as Hike the Heights and Vive Tu Vida. These kinds of organizations create a supportive and fun atmosphere in which people are more willing to walk rather than drive, and to exercise, rather than remain sedentary. I would also support research-driven street and traffic design changes to slow or calm traffic, such as expanded curbs, pedestrian islands, one-way or one-lane traffic on certain streets or limiting the direction of turns.

To encourage biking, I will rely on transportation advocates to help build neighborhood resident consensus on gradual changes to traffic enforcement, curbside access and roadway design and to ensure that cyclists and motor vehicle drivers alike follow the rules of the road. I support expanding bike lanes and bike-sharing, even though I have only ridden a bike twice on city streets in the Bronx in the past 20 years because I fear traffic and have no space for a bike.

Repurposing street space to better meet transportation needs

Along Broadway and St. Nicholas, from 165th Street to 170 Street and along parts of 125th Street, and on 9th and 10th Avenues from Dyckman to Isham, I would support changes to reduce or minimize parking, such as charging differential rates based on the time of day—when traffic was heavier or when deliveries were made, parking would be prohibited or charged at a higher metered rate. There is too much double-parking in these areas due to livery cabs, trucks making deliveries, on-street car repairs and so on. In other areas that are more residential, I would support more speed bumps, one-way streets, and changes to the design of parking spaces (such as the use of angled parking) to create more unmetered parking spaces for

residents, such as near Park Terrace West and East, and Seaman Avenue and on numerous numbered streets in Washington Heights that are primarily residential.

Livable Streets

Increasing the amount of public space for non-transportation use, such as plazas and street closure programs

I support increasing play streets, summer streets and plazas permanently and periodically so that children can play safely outside. I would rely on my community members to best identify locations and support them in their efforts to create motor vehicle-free public spaces.

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

I support data-driven, community consensus based reforms to harmonize commercial and residential uses of city streets, including licensing and regulation of trucking, deliveries, parking, street vending and green markets. Not every neighborhood has the same needs or preferences. I would rely on community members to identify spaces that could be changed, and on researchers, government and advocates to help design those changes.

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

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
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?
No
4. Do you support expanding Bus Rapid Transit with dedicated bus lanes in your district/borough? Yes
5. Should New York City government be providing economic support for ferry service as an extension of the public transit network? Yes. Current subsidy does not serve enough neighborhoods.
6. Do you support continued expansion of the on-grid bike lane network in all five boroughs? Yes, but gradually and with community buy-in
7. Do you approve of the way that the NYC Department of Transportation is working to manage traffic? Don't know
8. Do you approve of the process the NYC Department of Transportation and the Community Boards use to determine locations for bike-share facilities? Not sure
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, depending on their other political positions

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. 3 Use a system of dynamic pricing for access to the most congested areas
- C. 1 Give buses and vehicles-for-hire priority over private cars on city streets
- D. 5 Give delivery vehicles priority on city streets over private cars
- E. 4 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:

Funding more mass transit options for people commuting from less-traffic dense areas into high-traffic areas to reduce private car use

Higher rates for metered parking during high-traffic hours with exceptions for disabled people who must drive in private cars

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:

Being willing to make additional changes in response to complaints, or setting a standard at the outset that if proposed changes do not achieve objectives, additional changes would be considered – and following up by demonstrating the results to the community

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. 2 Double parking, standing, and blocking of loading zones or bicycle lanes
- C. 3 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:

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!