

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:

Candidate Name: **Micah Z. Kellner**

Campaign Manager: **Bessie Schachter**

Press Secretary: **Shelby Garner**

Name and EIN/TID of Committee: **Kellner 2013**

Campaign Address: **135 East 61st Street, #4C, New York, NY 10065**

Campaign Phone: **646-434-8495**

Campaign Fax: **N/A**

Campaign E-mail: **kellner2013@gmail.com**

Campaign Website: **www.kellner2013.com**

Campaign Twitter Username: **N/A**

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

I support numerous safety measures to increase public safety and achieve a better balance of priorities to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists alike. These include enforcement measures, like more red light cameras, speeding cameras, and bus-mounted cameras to deter motorists violating bus lanes, as well as stronger enforcement of the 30 M.P.H. speed limit prevalent in most of New York City; new laws like “Elle’s Law,” State legislation I authored that created new penalties for drivers who injure pedestrians while violating traffic laws; and traffic-calming measures where appropriate such as: bicycle lanes distinctly separated from motor vehicle traffic lanes and, where appropriate, shared pedestrian-bicycle “lanes” (like those on the East River Esplanade in Carl Schurz Park and across Central Park on 96th Street); countdown pedestrian crosswalk signals and audible crosswalk signals; more and better curb cuts for wheelchair and stroller users; pedestrian traffic islands and traffic neck-downs; speed humps and speed bumps; and many others.

I also support implementing initiatives as yet untested in our city, like a variant of Mayor Bloomberg’s congestion pricing proposal – the specifics of which I was the only State legislator representing the Upper East Side to support publicly, and which I publicly committed to voting for in the State Assembly. To improve the already remarkably successful Select Bus Service, I have introduced State legislation to restore the easily identifiable flashing lights to SBS buses (by making the flashing lights on SBS buses purple, and therefore not in conflict with any existing State laws). As a person born with cerebral palsy and a champion for people with disabilities in the New York State Legislature during the last six years, I view improving safety for pedestrians as more than political issue – it has always been of the utmost personal importance.

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

As a State legislator, I authored “Elle’s Law,” legislation signed into law in 2010 that was named after Elle Vandenberghe, a then-3-year-old girl on her way to school on the Upper East Side in September 2009 who was struck by a motorist backing around a corner against a red light to secure a parking space. After the incident, Elle lay in a coma for two weeks, suffered a stroke, lost two-thirds of the left side of her brain, and now remains in physical therapy; the motorist paid a small fine and continued to drive without undergoing a license suspension. Although the motorist displayed a blatant disregard for pedestrian safety and consequently left Elle permanently disabled, he was issued only a minor traffic infraction, paid a small fine and was free to get back behind the wheel, subject to no further penalty. Under the law that I wrote, any driver who causes serious physical injury to another person while committing a traffic violation will now have his or her license suspended for a period of six months, with drivers guilty of any similar acts within the previous five years having their licenses suspended for a full year. Elle’s Law is helping to improve safety for everyone by getting dangerous drivers off the road by creating new penalties for drivers whose violations result in pedestrian injuries (and is not confined only to the too-high bar of motorists responsible for fatal accidents). As a Member of the New York State Assembly, I have supported more red light cameras for New York City, speeding cameras, and mounting cameras on MTA buses in order to deter motorists from violating bus lane restrictions.

In my official capacity as an elected official, I have directly urged the NYPD’s 19th Precinct fight to conduct vigorous traffic enforcement on Manhattan’s Upper East Side, in particular better enforcement of speeding and red light violations by motorists, and, working with community organizations like the East 79th Street Neighborhood Association, have urged the NYC Department of Transportation to adjust light signalization at several intersections (such as the one at 79th Street and York Avenue) to make them more pedestrian-friendly.

As a City Council member, I will bring the same dedication to public safety and better transportation priorities, experience and effectiveness in public service to the residents of the 5th Council District.

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

I have encouraged New Yorkers to use mass transit, walk and bicycle in many ways. I was the only State legislator representing Manhattan's Upper East Side to publicly support Mayor Bloomberg's congestion pricing proposal, which I believe would have significantly boosted mass transit use; have been an advocate in the Legislature for increased government support for the MTA and especially New York City Transit; have worked with public and private sector players to bring ferry service to Roosevelt Island, and support increasing ferry service on Manhattan's East Side; have authored legislation to restore flashing lights to the extraordinarily successful Select Bus Service initiative (by making the lights purple and therefore not in conflict with existing State law); support the City's bicycle lane program, including the proposal to ease bicycle traffic in and around the 59th Street Bridge; and have been an outspoken advocate for people with mobility and/or hearing impairment on many transportation-related issues, in particular for fully accessible yellow cab service in New York City. On the micro-level, I also practice what I preach on both the personal and professional level: in addition to being an active and frequent pedestrian and a proud member of the Carl Schurz Park dog walkers' association, I allow a bicycle-commuting staff member to store a folding bicycle in my Assembly district office during business hours.

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

I support the sensible repurposing of city streets to better meet transportation needs. That is one of the reasons I was the only State legislator representing Manhattan’s Upper East Side to support Mayor Bloomberg’s congestion pricing proposal, which affected neighborhoods in the 5th Council District that I also currently represent in the Assembly, and which also included a controversial program to implement restricted residential parking in neighborhoods in the 5th Council District that I currently represent. I didn’t just support congestion pricing as a State legislator; I held a well-advertised and well-attended town hall forum on the proposal in July 2008 featuring a panel that included Ted Kheel of the Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, conducted a community survey, and issued a report offering recommendations to improve the Mayor’s proposal, and improve its chances of securing more political support. My advocacy for the sensible repurposing of city streets also includes supporting the city’s bicycle lane program, including specifically on 1st and 2nd Avenues and on East 90th and East 91st Streets. I am supportive of testing congestion parking pricing in the midtown Manhattan business district and other heavily commercial areas. I also support the City’s move to make street furniture less cluttered through initiatives like replacing individual parking meters with “pay-and-display” meters. I support daytime street closures where and when appropriate, such as providing outdoor recreational space for schoolchildren on E. 82nd Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues, and for greenmarkets like those in the 5th Council District, all of which I support. I am also in favor of many additional traffic-calming measures that reflect better transportation priorities, such as traffic islands and bicycles separated from motor vehicle traffic, as has been achieved on 1st and 2nd Avenues in the 5th Council District.

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.)

I support the use of public space for non-transportation use where appropriate, such as the part-time school-related street closure on East 82nd Street between 1st and 2nd Avenue and the around-the-clock traffic restriction on East 91st Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. I am supportive of the City's efforts to create more traffic-free open space where appropriate, for example at Pershing Square on Park Avenue at Grand Central Terminal (although this area does not lie in the 5th Council District).

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 support harmonizing commercial and residential uses through licensing and regulation of trucking and deliveries, including the use of congestion parking pricing for trucks in certain areas of the city and implementing a residential parking permit system. In addition, I have supported adding new greenmarkets to the neighborhoods I currently represent, and would continue to do so as a member of the City Council.

YES/NO QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe speeding cars are a public safety problem in your district/borough?

Yes, I believe that speeding cars are a public safety problem in New York County.

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, I would support enhancing penalties for aggressive, distracted, or reckless driving under the New York City Administrative Code in order to deter such behavior.

3. Has the New York Police done enough to enforce the traffic laws?

No, I do not believe that the NYPD has done enough to enforce traffic laws.

4. Do you support expanding Bus Rapid Transit with dedicated bus lanes in your district/borough?

Yes, I support expanding Bus Rapid Transit (Select Bus Service) with dedicated bus lanes in the 5th Council District and throughout New York County, and as an Assembly Member have introduced legislation to restore flashing lights to SBS buses.

5. Should New York City government be providing economic support for ferry service as an extension of the public transit network?

Yes, New York City government should be providing economic support for ferry service as an extension of the public transit network.

6. Do you support continued expansion of the on-grid bike lane network in all five boroughs?

Yes, I support continued expansion of the on-grid bike lane network in all five boroughs.

7. Do you approve of the way that the NYC Department of Transportation is working to manage traffic?

Yes, on balance I approve of the way the NYC Department of Transportation is working to manage traffic.

8. Do you approve of the process the NYC Department of Transportation and the Community Boards use to determine locations for bike-share facilities?

Yes, I approve of the process the NYC Department of Transportation and the Community Boards use to determine locations for bike-share facilities.

9. Do you support channeling buses and trucks to perimeter highways in order to reduce their presence on residential streets?

Yes, in general I support channeling buses and trucks to perimeter highways in order to reduce their presence on city streets.

10. Do you support closing New York City's parks to cars?

Yes, I support closing New York City's parks to cars.

11. Do you support pedestrianization of street space to encourage tourism?

Yes, in general, I support pedestrianization of street space to encourage tourism.

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, I believe the City should make non-sensitive data concerning street use, street conditions and traffic crash investigations available in a timely, digital format to the public.

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, if elected, I will support candidates for Council Speaker and Manhattan Community Boards 8 and 6 who openly support safe, complete and livable streets.

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. **1.** - 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. **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:

I support additional measures to improve traffic flow, such tolling of East River bridges, doing more to increase E-Z Pass usage by motorists, and implementing residential permit parking in many residential communities, including neighborhoods in the 5th Council 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. **1.** - Holding a "Town Hall" or open forum for affected community members
 - B. **2.** - Conducting a face-to-face canvass of residents and businesses on the affected street
 - C. **5.** - Conducting an online poll of neighborhood residents regarding the change
 - D. **4.** - 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

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

In addition, as a Member of the State Assembly, my staff, interns, and I have distributed community surveys, including surveys on congestion pricing, bus service and other transportation issues, by distributing survey cards to gauge community opinion and help assess mass transit needs. These surveys were distributed on the street and also at relevant community meetings, with an option for local residents and workers to fill them out and return them by hand, fax or mail. In addition, I regularly solicit on-line comments and opinions through my blog, MicahKellner.net. I would continue to solicit public opinion and input through a variety of communications methods as a member of the City Council.

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. **4.** - Double parking, standing, and blocking of loading zones or bicycle lanes
 - C. **5.** - 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:

Other traffic-related enforcement activities that I believe deserve greater resources from the NYPD include stronger enforcement of Elle's Law, legislation I wrote that penalizes drivers whose reckless actions result in injury to others, and of Hayley and Diego's Law, which imposes serious criminal penalties on drivers whose failure to exercise due care results in injury to pedestrians or bicyclists; and more DUI checkpoints in Manhattan.

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!