

# 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: **Todd Dobrin**

Campaign Manager: **Greg Esposito**

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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

**I wholeheartedly agree that New York City roadways have multiple issues that are in need of correction. There are professionals who spend careers studying traffic patterns, attempting to perfect complex roadway systems like ours. I will not be so arrogant as to make definitive statements here implying that I have the answers to our city's numerous traffic issues. I can commit to listening to suggestions from organizations like yours and consulting with the experts in planning and development, as well as the NYPD, in order to reduce incidents involving vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.**

**Traffic injuries or deaths due to negligent drivers are unacceptable. I will support appropriate investigation and prosecution of drivers who break the law in disregard of safety. If elected I will be diligent in researching recurring trouble spots and issues in my district to see if there are long term solutions that need to be implemented to assure public safety.**

### **Complete Streets**

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

**Whenever I am asked about this issue my mind immediately flashes to the scene in the movie "Singles", when the city planner is presenting his monorail design to the mayor of Seattle. As you may recall the mayor rejects his proposal with the statement "People love their cars." It's an unfortunate reality that makes our city difficult to**

navigate at times.

**There have been numerous campaigns to improve participation in public and alternative transportation options. I support these efforts, and as a city councilperson will participate in these campaigns and encourage residents in my district to use their vehicles less. I think the first step will be improving the safety of pedestrian realms and established bike paths. The second step will be to make sure our mass transit system is an attractive alternative. Achieving these goals may begin with firmer enforcement of current traffic and safety laws.**

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

**As I responded above I will not be so arrogant as to suggest that I have all the answers to our traffic system issues. However I am willing to work with citizen organizations and development agencies to create solutions that improve our roadways for everyone who uses them.**

### **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.)

**In the district I am hoping to represent Ocean Ave. is an example of mixing roadway with public use. The four center lanes keep traffic flowing. Then each side has a pedestrian realm for walking, bicycling or gathering, and the far lane is used for local access and parking. Once again I am not an expert in traffic patterns, but I can support the use of public space to improve the quality and livability of our neighborhoods.**

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

**This is a complicated issue that affects businesses, jobs, residents and roadway users. Drastic changes in any direction could negatively affect a large group of citizens. I would fully support programs that harmonize the commercial and residential uses of our right of ways if it can be shown that they do not adversely affect the economy or quality of life for nearby residents.**

## 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?  
**I don't criticize departments in the city; I work to create solutions when citizen groups bring issues to my attention.**
4. Do you support expanding Bus Rapid Transit with dedicated bus lanes in your district/borough? **Yes, when it is feasible.**
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? **Yes and I believe it should be modeled after the truck route program.**
7. Do you approve of the way that the NYC Department of Transportation is working to manage traffic? **They have a difficult job and we must make sure they have the tools to perform it well.**
8. Do you 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? **It is a suggestion that deserves research.**
10. Do you support closing New York City's parks to cars? **Yes, when it is feasible.**
11. Do you support pedestrianization of street space to encourage tourism? **Yes, when it is feasible.**
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? **This**

**is an excellent program that has been shown to reduce traffic fatalities in problem areas around the country.**

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? **It will be part of my decision process.**

### **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. \_\_\_\_ Remove financial incentives for “toll shopping” by equalizing or balancing tolls at different bridge and tunnel crossings
  - B. \_\_\_\_ Use a system of dynamic pricing for access to the most congested areas
  - C. \_\_\_\_ Give buses and vehicles-for-hire priority over private cars on city streets
  - D. \_\_\_\_ Give delivery vehicles priority on city streets over private cars
  - E. \_\_\_\_ 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:

**Some of the suggestions you have made above have implications that may be detrimental to other citizen groups. I can agree that “A” is a good step.**

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. \_\_5\_\_ Conducting an online poll of neighborhood residents regarding the change
- D. \_\_3\_\_ Involving the community board and considering any resolutions it may pass on the subject
- E. \_\_4\_\_ 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:

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. \_\_4\_\_ Traffic violations by cyclists
  - D. \_\_5\_\_ 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 issue of vehicles, especially taxis, stopping in drive lanes, often blocking lanes dedicated to mass or alternative transit, must be addressed. This practice causes restricted and often dangerous conditions. If elected I can commit to addressing this issue with 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!**