

## 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

*While the City has made progress in reducing deaths and injuries on our streets, the fact remains that in the past ten years, more people were killed in traffic than by gun-violence in New York City. Seniors are particularly vulnerable, accounting for 38% of pedestrian fatalities despite being only 12% of the City population.*

*To create a healthier, safer and more livable New York City, we must make a citywide commitment to eliminate, not just reduce, traffic deaths and serious injuries on our streets.*

*To that end, I am a staunch supporter of red light and speed cameras, neighborhood slow zones, increased enforcement of the city's traffic laws (including truck routes), and street calming devices (from leading pedestrian intervals to raised intersections).*

*My office has always taken an aggressive approach to making our streets as safe as possible, mostly by listening to constituents and exposing problems as they emerge. Some of the reports that my office has issued include:*

- *“Thinking Outside the Box: An Analysis of Manhattan Gridlock and Spillback Enforcement,” which showed more than 3,000 cars blocked intersections over a nine hour period, and not a single ticket was issued. NYPD added traffic enforcement agents in response.*
- *“Don’t Block the Bus” found hundreds of bus lane violations without enforcement.*
- *My office also successfully advocated for a new traffic light at Greenwich and Duane Streets and sent a letter to the federal and City DOT demanding that the Department provide street calming devices in this burgeoning residential neighborhood. Shortly thereafter, the DOT announced that it would install a stop light at this dangerous intersection.*
- *I, along with fellow local elected officials, have successfully advocated for a comprehensive redesign of the notoriously dangerous intersection at 71st and Broadway. The intersection was the site of over thirty accidents in 2009 and 2010.*
- *In a letter to officials my office called on the DOT to take steps to reduce congestion in SoHo. This action led to a quick response from DOT, which promised to institute many of our*

*recommendations, including installing “Block the Box” markings at the intersections of Broome Street with Greene Street, Wooster Street, Mercer Street and West Broadway, repairing a number of crosswalks on cobblestone streets in SoHo, and continuing to work with the State Legislature to approve additional red light cameras.*

- *I have supported the DOT’s pilot program to create “slow zones” in certain neighborhoods with high concentrations of children, seniors, hospitals, parks, and other facilities that draw significant numbers of pedestrians and cyclists*
- *Supported neighborhood-based transportation initiatives such as the Greater Gansevoort Urban Improvement Project and the 9th Avenue Renaissance Project.*
- *Testified before the City Council Transportation Committee in support of a pilot program that made car-free Central Park in the summer months.*
- *Been a leader in advocating for a new Moynihan Train Station to diminish crowding and lay the foundation for the comprehensive transportation planning New York City desperately needs.*

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

*I support the Crash Investigation Reform Act, which would create a traffic crash investigation task force to analyze traffic data, traffic laws, and traffic crash investigation policies and procedures.*

*As a result of the efforts of many advocates, community leaders, and elected officials, the NYPD recently increased the size of the investigation squad and began conducting robust investigations of traffic crashes that result in critical injuries but not certain or likely death. These changes will provide us with critical insight into the causes of crashes, giving planners the opportunity to shape our streets and prosecutors the ability to bring justice to the victims of reckless driving.*

*I was also a strong advocate of the Haley-Diego law and worked closely with advocates in drafting and passing the bill. The law, introduced by New York State Senator Daniel Squadron and New York State Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh following the tragic deaths of a 4 year old and 3 year old in Chinatown, cracks down on careless drivers who injure pedestrians and cyclists, for the first time making jail time a possible penalty.*

## **Complete Streets**

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

*New York City will not remain a global city unless it commits to building out a five-borough transportation system. Since taking office as Borough President, I have made addressing transportation issues a priority and have called for bold initiatives that will help New York thrive in an increasingly competitive global economy. In 2006, my office hosted a first of its kind conference called “Manhattan on the Move,” bringing together hundreds of policy makers, advocates, business and community leaders, and local residents to discuss the transportation challenges facing Manhattan and New York City. And in 2011, my office hosted a five borough transportation conference, “Transportation 2030,” a conference designed to generate new ideas for the future of NYC’s transportation system, with emphasis on improving connectivity between the five boroughs.*

*The transit system we’ve relied on for 100 years is increasingly strained and in desperate need of investment that connects people to where they live and work today. Despite the critical importance of transit to the daily lives of 8.3 million New Yorkers, the City, State, and Federal governments have systematically under-funded our transit network. As a result, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) suffers from significant financial issues—its budget held together with a combination of unprecedented borrowing and fare hikes.*

*Last year, I proposed an overhaul of the MTA’s funding mechanisms so that the MTA can afford to build innovative, disciplined projects that provide meaningful value to our City. My plan centers on the creation of a municipal infrastructure bank—the New York City Transit Trust—for capital projects tied to a dedicated revenue stream, the existing Mortgage Recording Tax. With dedicated funding for capital projects, we could leverage over \$10 billion in private investment and embark on a series of disciplined, efficient plans to improve connectivity throughout the five boroughs.*

*To responsibly transfer the Mortgage Recording Tax to the capital side of the ledger, however, it is essential to find a new revenue source for the MTA’s operating budget – including bringing back the commuter tax, a 0.45% surcharge on income earned in New York City by non-city residents that existed until 1999. But unlike the commuter tax of old, which went directly to the City budget, under my proposal, the surcharge would be dedicated to the MTA so that all New Yorkers, City residents and suburban commuters alike, will benefit.*

*Only by ensuring that our financial house is in order can we take the steps necessary to make our public transit network—a marvel of 20<sup>th</sup> century ingenuity—a model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century city.*

*Boosting public transit isn’t just about the big megaprojects, though. It is also about continuing to expand bike share and bike lanes where appropriate, ensuring that continuing bridge repair, including on the George Washington Bridge, takes into account the growing percentage of cyclists and pedestrians who use the spans, and keeping fares affordable relative to the cost of driving.*

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

*Light rail should be explored in neighborhoods far from the subway network, such as Red Hook, and in other areas where cross-town travel runs at a snail's pace. In addition, a truly world-class BRT system, with separated bus lanes and signal prioritization is within our grasp for a fraction of the cost of expanding our subway network.*

*We saw how separated lanes could effectively transport hundreds of thousands of passengers in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. We should also look to expand and improve bus service along new and emerging job centers.*

*Ultimately, our streets must be complete, which means that they must allow for all New Yorkers to move around the City safely and efficiently, while also adding to the vitality of street life in all five boroughs.*

### **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.)

*The proliferation of pedestrian plazas and other car-free zones has transformed the city's streetscape in profound ways. These efforts will continue to be controversial and as such, they require extensive community consultation. However, many planners and advocates are already drafting viable plans for additional areas where they may be of use.*

*Special closures or street diets around schools, community centers, and pedestrian hotspots should also be considered. In some places, closing the streets to auto traffic but maintaining bus service may provide the best of both worlds for commuters, shoppers, and business owners. In other neighborhoods, transforming underused pavement at intersections into inviting pedestrian refuges might be best.*

*Ultimately, the streetscape must be reviewed on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis, acknowledging the unique needs of New York's diverse communities.*

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

*DOT has taken part in several successful pilot projects designed to reduce congestion and improve efficiency for commercial and residential users alike. For instance, the Off-Hour Truck Delivery Pilot program in 2009-2010 was such a success among truckers, businesses, and residents, that DOT is now developing additional incentives for off-peak deliveries. Similarly, Brooklyn's Community Board 14 and the Church Avenue Business Improvement District worked*

*with DOT to create innovative delivery “windows” and special parking slots for commercial deliveries on Church Avenue.*

*These types of projects, where all parties come together to find innovative ways to share the street, are models for continued improvements in the future.*

*In addition, as the organizer of New York City’s first-ever nighttime greenmarket (in Harlem last October) and a supporter of the Summer Streets program, I am a staunch advocate for using our streets to bring together neighborhoods for healthy, fun activities.*

## **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?  
*The NYPD has suffered significant reductions in staffing over the past decade. Today, the Department has just over 33,000 officers, down from a high of 40,000 in 2004. With a Department already stretched so thin, it is imperative that we maintain our focus on community policing and rooting out violent crime. At the same time, we must ensure that traffic safety is a priority and that we embrace technology that can make our streets safer even in the absence of additional “boots on the ground,” including speed cameras and red light cameras.*
4. Do you support expanding Bus Rapid Transit with dedicated bus lanes in your district/borough? *YES, with community consultation.*
5. Should New York City government be providing economic support for ferry service as an extension of the public transit network? *YES. While ferry service must be economically viable, it need not be self-sustaining with fares alone. As with all mass transit, the benefits of greater ferry use are shared throughout the region—by drivers who commute on less crowded highways, children who breathe cleaner air, and waterfront businesses that are better able to reach customers.*
6. Do you support continued expansion of the on-grid bike lane network in all five boroughs? *YES*

7. Do you approve of the way that the NYC Department of Transportation is working to manage traffic? *YES. Once again, the use of technology and data, including DOT's "Midtown in Motion" initiative and real-time adjustments to reduce congestion via DOT's Long Island City Traffic Management Center are a critical part of this effort.*
8. Do you approve of the process the NYC Department of Transportation and the Community Boards use to determine locations for bike-share facilities? *I am excited about the potential of the bike share program to achieve transportation and public health goals in New York City. Changes to street space are always challenging and require extensive community consultation and planning. While we assume the majority of bike share locations will work well for communities and bike share users, it's important for the Department of Transportation to remain flexible and evaluate the success of the locations as the program expands, making adjustments if necessary.*
9. Do you support channeling buses and trucks to perimeter highways in order to reduce their presence on residential streets? *YES, though MTA buses, as a critical element of the City's accessible transit network, must continue to be routed through residential neighborhoods.*
10. Do you support closing New York City's parks to cars? *YES, where appropriate and with community consultation.*
11. Do you support pedestrianization of street space to encourage tourism? *YES, where appropriate and with community consultation.*
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. \_\_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:

*While a congestion pricing bill failed in the state legislature in 2008, the fact remains that a plan involving similar ideas, such as Sam Schwartz’ “Fair Plan” may have a dual positive effect: increasing funding for mass transit in the metropolitan area while reducing the costs of congestion to businesses and communities. But any such plan is doomed to fail again unless we first achieve buy-in from the communities outside of Manhattan that will very likely bear the brunt of any modified pricing system. That means truly delivering on promised mass transit improvements, in ways that meaningfully impact the ability of commuters and others to travel in and out of Manhattan. In addition, as discussed in my White Paper for Transportation 2030: A Five Borough Blueprint, a conference held in November 2011, parking reform (including dynamic pricing and use of modern technology to reduce “circling”) and improved enforcement of the City’s 1000 miles of truck routes will make the city a safer, healthier place to live.*

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. \_\_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:

*All of the measures above are critical to securing the buy-in of residents and business owners for any proposed change in the street design. We are New Yorkers—we spend our lives on the streets of our neighborhoods and we have strong opinions about how they should be used. The recent passage of the Complete Streets Act, which mandates that all transportation projects take into consideration the needs of drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and the elderly, recognizes that our streets must be shared and is a major step forward in ensuring that New York’s streets are designed with all constituencies in mind.*

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.   2   Traffic violations by vehicles weighing more than 5 tons
- E.   3   Failure to yield to pedestrians

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

*We know that speed kills. Statistics show that a pedestrian struck by a car going 40 mph has a 70 percent chance of dying, while a pedestrian struck by a car going 20 mph has a 95 percent chance of surviving. In addition, the majority of fatal traffic crashes are caused by drivers speeding, running red lights and failing to yield. Of fatal crashes with known causes, 69 percent are caused by such poor driver behavior.*

*Recent events—from the death of a six-year old boy in East Harlem, hit by a truck turning on to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue from a non-truck route, to the loss of a young family in Brooklyn on their way to the hospital and many others—have only reinforced the ongoing need for improved enforcement of our traffic laws.*

*Speed cameras are essential to that effort, especially at a time when NYPD resources are spread thin. I am proud to support neighborhood Slow Zones, including the Park Terrace North Block Association's successful effort to designate parts of Inwood as Manhattan's first "Neighborhood Slow Zone" last year.*

*Lastly, in an age of hyper-connectivity, we need to redouble our efforts at rooting out distracted driving, including texting while driving. The State Legislature recently created a minimum fine for texting while driving in the Empire State. We must now vigorously enforce the laws on the books.*

**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!**