

WARD A Council Candidate Survey Q&A



Pamela Nicole Johnson



Rick Johnson



Denise Ridley

Ward A Council Candidate Joe Conte did not respond to our survey

QUESTION #1

In 2016, JC Open Data shows that there were 585 pedestrians struck by vehicles, a 3% increase over 2015 and a 12% increase over 2014, and the problem is equally chronic in every part of the city. Traffic safety enforcement has long been inconsistent at best and not a true priority, and our roads have become dangerous speedways. What will you do, if elected, to make this public health crisis a top priority for improvement for the next administration? (Source: JC Open Data, tinyurl.com/peddashboard)

ANSWERS

Pamela Nicole Johnson - As with many issues the true answer lies in education. If we can get motorists to understand the importance of obeying posted speed limits, traffic signals and signs along with pedestrians to understand the importance of crossing at crosswalks and all bicyclists to obey the rules of the road we can reduce auto vs. pedestrian accidents by working together.

Rick Johnson - We will use city resources to make public awareness amongst drivers a priority. We need to work with the JCPD to patrol roadways where speeding and fatal accidents are a problem, like JFK, 440 and Grand Street. We should reestablish the motor cycle unit, which Mayor Fulop abolished and that police believe was a cause in the increase in fatalities.

Denise Ridley - I am aware from attending your organization's past meetings and from sitting on the Public Safety Review Board that there has been an increase in enforcement and summonses, as well as a JCPD unit formed to focus on traffic safety. I would recommend that the progress of the currently implemented changes be evaluated and continued or revamped as needed necessary.

QUESTION #2

In 2011, the Council adopted a "Complete Streets" policy, which calls for design improvements on our streets to more fully accommodate road users of all ages and abilities more safely and allow access by all modes of transport (including bicycles and pedestrians). Complete Streets policies reduce speeds to within safe, existing limits and can improve traffic flow. However, this policy has yet to be enacted, citizens continue to get hurt or killed, and our auto insurance rates keep rising. Will you commit to making the application of Complete Streets policy a priority during your term, if elected? How?

ANSWERS

Pamela Nicole Johnson - Jersey City established its Complete Streets policy in 2011. At the time, it was established the policy was non-binding and to be implemented whenever possible. Given the age of the program and potential state and federal funding opportunities we should re-visit the adopted policy, take advantage of outside funding opportunities and implement an up-to-date policy.

Rick Johnson - Team Matsikoudis FULLY supports the Complete Streets policy. Again, educating the public through meetings, social media and other media about the benefits of traffic calming measures and alternative means of egress like median crossing islands; audible cues for people with low vision, curb cuts; curb extensions, center medians, planter strips and protected bike lanes, greenways, and possibly bicycle lanes, neighborhood greenways, wide paved shoulders, and possibly Bus Rapid Transit.

Denise Ridley - Many roads in Jersey City tend to not be set up the best to allow for safe traveling of bike riders and cars for various reasons, particularly the age of the city and street usage in the past. I believe the Hudson Loop would offer bike riders and pedestrians miles of space to travel under less dangerous conditions. I also believe that we should incorporate any ideas into the upgrading of our streets that will increase safety for all.

QUESTION #3

The streets in Jersey City are generally not bike friendly and are dangerous to ride on. The bike lanes we do have are not connected in a network, nor are they enforced (often blocked by double parking, etc.). We have no protected bike lanes and lack sufficient racks at key transit and shopping hubs. What would you do to improve safety and access for bicycle riders throughout the entire city?

ANSWERS

Pamela Nicole Johnson - There are many potential opportunities offered by the Federal Highway Administration's Office of Planning, Environment & Realty. I would encourage the mayor to work with the Federal Government to secure funds to connect bike lanes in a network and potentially add bike racks where necessary.

Rick Johnson - We need more bike parking at transit hubs and we need a bike network of connected PROTECTED LANES and we need greenways to connect our two waterfronts.

Denise Ridley - There have been many bike lanes added to our streets in recent years and a protected bike lane is being added to Grand Street. I believe the city can work with transportation companies, such as NJ Transit, to make them aware of the interest in more bike racks at their stops. Businesses can also be contacted to express the desire for more bike racks as well.

QUESTION #4

“The truth about a city's aspirations isn't found in its vision. It's found in its budget” – Brent Toderian. As a councilperson, what would you do to fund an expansion of Complete Street improvements to make our roads safer for all users?

ANSWERS

Pamela Nicole Johnson - As I explained in a previous answer, the current policy is old and never fully implemented, as such, we need to re-visit the adopted policy, implement a policy that really works and take advantage of outside funding opportunities and implement an up-to-date policy.

Rick Johnson - Cut patronage, come up cost to implement top measures at needed street and timeline to implement it.

Denise Ridley - I believe great strides have been made over the last few years to increase access to alternate means of transportation. I would agree with continuing to fund what makes the best sense and has seen the most effective results with regards to keeping everyone on the road as safe as possible.

QUESTION #5

“If you plan cities for cars & traffic, you get cars & traffic. If you plan for people & places, you get people & places.” – Fred Kent. Reducing dependency on cars is important for the environment, for safer and more pleasant neighborhoods, and for residents who cannot or who choose not to have a car. As density continues to increase, how will you ensure that new development promotes multiple modes of transportation with better connectivity between neighborhoods and to the region?

ANSWERS

Pamela Nicole Johnson - The answer can be summed up with two words: Smart Development. The Urban Land Institute offers many good ideas. We need to bring all stakeholders, including those who live in affected communities to the table and work honestly to ensure projects are designed for all.

Rick Johnson - All buildings should have parking for bikes. Our focus should not be parking garages, but complete streets.

Denise Ridley - The city has taken steps in favor of less car use. One example is the bike share program. I believe that in order for there to be more widespread moves towards less cars, it will take more than one city's actions. Everyone who lives in Jersey City does not work in Jersey City or NYC; therefore, we need to incorporate plans from major transit companies that will increase transportation options/routes for our residents.

QUESTION #6

Illegal, dangerous parking is not adequately enforced and often contributes to crashes and injuries to pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers alike. Parking Enforcement does not have sufficient staffing, training, or technology to adequately address violations, including dangerous illegal parking (blocked crosswalks, double parking, blocked bus stops, impaired sight lines with cars parked too close to corners, etc.). If elected, what will you do to increase capacity within the Parking Enforcement Division?

ANSWERS

Pamela Nicole Johnson - I believe the folks working in Parking Enforcement are doing the best they can with what they have to work with. If we can find a funding source for additional staffing and better training, that would help, and I will work diligently to find that source of funding.

Rick Johnson - Illegal parking causes accidents. We need more parking enforcement on this violation and greater fines.

Denise Ridley - I have seen many streets with new poles installed at corners to help alleviate the illegal parking in those areas. I think more of these type of innovative ideas along with enforcing the laws currently on the books will help lessen the burden on the Parking Enforcement Division.

QUESTION #7

Grand St. is one of the most dangerous streets in the city, and it is also a key artery filled with dense residential developments, shopping, schools, and other community facilities. Do you support the Grand Street Vision proposal to redesign dangerous Grand Street, including elements such as a road diet, pedestrian safety improvements, and protected/separated bike lanes? What will you do to ensure that the city's eventual plan for Grand St. is swift, bold, and comprehensive—not a watered-down patchwork compromised by its loudest opponents?

ANSWERS

Pamela Nicole Johnson - The city of Philadelphia recently opened its first one-way protected bike lane and already the council member from the district it runs through is suggesting the issue of the lane should be re-visited after only three months. I'm running for council to represent all constituencies within my district not only proponents or opponents of any potential project. As such, I believe we need to get all sides to the table and come up with solutions that work for all, thus preventing issues like that in Philly.

Rick Johnson - YES! Again, educate, come up with plan, put it out to bid and get it done. Simple.

Denise Ridley - Improvement to our roads and an investment in our safety is a priority. As previously mentioned, a protected bike lane is in the works for Grand Street. I will support and push for the parts of the proposal that makes the most sense to the residents in the area of Grand Street, while at the same time make traffic and safety better for the City as a whole.