



2011 Candidate Questionnaire: Transportation and Land Use Policy

Organizational Overview:

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit organization working toward a more efficient, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Since the mid-nineties, the Campaign has played a critical watchdog role in the field of transportation policy, helping state transportation agencies reform their approach to solving transportation problems. Our work has increased funding for infrastructure maintenance and repair, created more effective road projects and led to millions of dollars in new funding for walking, cycling and mass transit projects.

Purpose and Process:

Transportation policies directly impact Long Island's citizens in a variety of ways. Elected officials influence the development of these policies and how certain transportation systems are funded and built, thereby impacting constituents' daily lives. This short questionnaire will be used to inform the public on the incumbents' or candidates' positions in key areas of transportation policy. The questionnaire will provide you with an opportunity to present your views and vision on how to address the transportation issues facing Long Islanders at the state and local levels. Please be as detailed as possible when describing your positions. **The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-partisan organization that neither supports nor opposes any political party or candidate for office.**

Questionnaire responses, however, will be posted on our blog at blog.tstc.org and in our newsletter, *Mobilizing the Region*.

In order for ample time to distribute the results of the questionnaire to the voting public, please return the completed questionnaire to Ryan Lynch, rylynch@tstc.org, or 350 West 31st Street, Suite 802, NY, NY 10001, no later than October 7, 2011.

Candidate/Elected Official's Name: Carrie Solages

District Represented: Legislative District 3

Contact Information: 516-640-6933

Primary Contact and Title: Lauren Corcoran-Doolin Campaign Manager

(over)

1. Please provide a brief overview of transportation initiatives that you have undertaken, or will undertake, as a Nassau County Legislator. If applicable, please list specific legislation, policies, or programs:

The 3rd Legislative District borders New York City and as a result transportation issues are very important. More than 40% of the residents in this district use mass public transportation. In the past several years, I have mobilized my community to be engaged, educated and compelled to demand more from local government when it comes to the issue of transportation.

The movement against the privatization of busing in Nassau County is important to me because I sincerely believe that public transportation is a responsibility of government that cannot be delegated to a private company. Because the current legislator and opponent has allowed LI Bus to be defunded and not given adequate support, we are forced into a situation where we must deal with a private company.

Because the process by which this happened did not afford any notice or hearings for the public to participate in the bidding process and transition from public to private systems of transportation in Nassau, we face a company that is looking to make a profit at the expense of reasonable fares and reliable service.

If that is the case, I am supporting the request for Veolia to pledge to maintain coverage and rates for the next 5 years. Unfortunately because of the decision by the County Executive to keep the contract negotiations with Veolia secret and I cannot be as involved on the issue as I would like.

It is important to note that the geography of the 3rd Legislative District has only 3 main north-south conduits—Franklin Avenue, Elmont Road and Meachem Avenue. With a cut in service, there will be significant areas of this district that will be limited from public transportation.

2. Public transportation service is an integral component of Nassau County's economic strength and environmental well being. According to *Newsday*^j reports and the MTAⁱⁱ, ridership on the Long Island Rail Road has increased by approximately .02% from 2005 to 2010, although ridership over 2009 is down as a result of the weak economy. According to the LI Indexⁱⁱⁱ, ridership on LI Bus increased by approximately 3.5% from 2000-2009, although ridership is down 6% over 2008 numbers because of the lagging economy. **Given these trends, how would you address increased ridership on public transportation across Long Island?**

With the continued uncertainty facing both the US and World economy, the County Legislature needs to ensure that the citizens of Nassau County have an efficient and reliable public transportation option to carry them to work, school, medical appointments and other important activities. Although ridership has increased, the most vulnerable portions of the population depend on public transportation.

Protecting and enhancing public transportation is specifically important in the 3rd District because the LIRR is too costly for many people who live in the district. Spending anywhere from \$14- \$20 is too high of a financial burden for many people who live in the district. The bus far now is more affordable and will allow residents to keep more spending money. The overall cost of living is increasing while job

growth and income continue to decrease. We cannot afford to cut from the bottom or from basic services in this tough economy.

3. The economic costs of traffic congestion in the New York metropolitan region was nearly \$11 million in 2009, and the cost to auto drivers was almost a \$1,000 per person over the same time period^{iv}. **What measures and/or projects would you promote to reduce congestion on Nassau County's roadways?**

In the short run, I would make a concentrated effort to encourage county employees to use public transportation to get to and from work. I would support or propose legislation or initiatives to encourage car pooling and other means to reduce congestion.

In the long run, I seek to plant the seeds to expand the tax base through commercial and residential development. I want residents to work in Nassau through by encourage companies to invest in the local area. This will create jobs and housing and allow people to live and work here in Nassau and not resort to commuting long distances.

4. According to the Fatality Analysis Reporting System^v, which is maintained by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 86 pedestrians were killed in Nassau County from 2007-2009. In addition, a Tri-State analysis found that 11 cyclists were killed over this same time period, the second highest number of fatalities outside of NYC. **In light of these statistics, what measures would you propose to reduce these preventable fatalities on Nassau County roads?**

This is a very important issue to me. I sit on the board of a community group, the Elmont Coalition for Sustainable Development which addresses: development, housing and transportation issues regarding the Hempstead Turnpike corridor in the 3rd Legislative District. Many local elected leaders, pass the buck when it comes to Hempstead Turnpike because it is a state road. Even though this road is not a county road, I will use my voice as a legislator to protect residents from the many fatalities that occur on this road. In fact, Hempstead Turnpike was deemed to be one of the most dangerous roads in New York State. As a legislator, I would ask police departments to dedicate attention to traffic enforcement and more dedicated bike lanes. I would also propose more pedestrian crossing lanes. I would also encourage enforcement of Jay walking laws to keep pedestrians in crossing areas where they are safer.

5. Do you support development near transit stations or in the downtown area of your town or village?
Why or why not?

Yes, absolutely.

I am the secretary of the Elmont Coalition for Sustainable Development. Several years ago, many stakeholders in the community came together to create a vision plan for the community that sought to address the growing problems of empty stores, poor zoning enforcement and lack of economic opportunity and affordable housing.

The Elmont Coalition for Sustainable Development addresses: development, housing and transportation issues regarding the Hempstead Turnpike corridor in the 3rd Legislative District.

As you may know, development at Belmont Race Track is an important opportunity for growth for the 3rd Legislative District and the greater Nassau Community. The Elmont Coalition for Sustainable Development and I are in support for this development because it is a chance for the community to gain jobs and offset the high cost of property taxes by having an additional revenue source. We must expand the tax base so that we can maintain the cost of living here in Nassau.

We don't want development to be limited to the Belmont site, we want development to occur all throughout the community. Many young people and the elderly cannot afford to remain in Nassau and affordable housing is solution that will allow them to stay here. We must change our zoning laws in order to keep our population from decreasing. As a Legislator, I will fight hard to make sure we can have ideas like the "cool downtown" that promote missed used housing and commercial spaces near train stations and in downtown areas.

6. Finally, please tell us whether you support or oppose the following transportation projects or policies:

Privatization of Long Island Bus

Support

Oppose

Don't Know

Additional comments:

I strongly oppose privatization because quality of service is directly tied to the owner's profit-oriented goal and not the needs of the riders. The privatization of Long Island Bus will lead to higher fares and a decrease of services. We cannot afford to place a higher financial burden upon the working residents of my district. I have taken many rides on local buses and have spoken to many riders and they do not want a reduction of services and cannot afford higher fares. They are over taxed and underprovided for with services.

LIRR East Side Access connection to Grand Central Terminal

- Support**
- Oppose**
- Don't Know**

Additional comments:

Though this does not directly affect my district and constituents it will help Long Islanders who commute to Manhattan for work and should allow for more employment opportunities for Long Island residents.

Third Track on the LIRR Main Line

- Support**
- Oppose**
- Don't Know**

Additional comments:

Intermodal Truck to Rail center at Pilgrim State Hospital site

- Support**

Oppose

Don't Know

Additional comments:

Mixed-Use Development Project at the Nassau HUB

Support

Oppose

Don't Know

Additional comments:

ⁱ "Ridership Drops in Weak Economy," *Newsday*, 1/27/2010, Alfonso Castillo.

ⁱⁱ "Metropolitan Transportation Authority Annual Report Narrative 2010," page 5, Operations Section, MTA.

ⁱⁱⁱ Long Island Index, Transportation Indicators, <http://www.longislandindex.org/Transit-Ridership.693.0.html>

^{iv} 2010 Urban Mobility Report, Texas Transportation Institute, http://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/congestion_data/tables/newyo.pdf

^v Fatality Analysis Reporting System, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, <http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/States/StatesPedestrians.aspx>