



2011 NJ Legislature Candidate Survey on Transportation and Land Use Policy

If you are a candidate for NJ State Legislature in the upcoming election, we hope you will take a few moments to answer this short, yet important, questionnaire regarding the transportation issues facing our state. Please feel free to attach sheets as needed.

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 Jersey, New York 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 approaches 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 New Jersey'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 New Jersey residents 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*.

Upon completion, the survey may be emailed to janna@tstc.org, or faxed to (212) 268-7333 attention Janna Chernetz. Or mailed to: Tri-State Transportation Campaign, attn: Janna Chernetz, 350 W. 31st Street #802, New York, NY 10001. **Please return the surveys no later than close of business October 19, 2011.**

Name: Joan D. Van Pelt

Party Affiliation: Republican

District Represented: 22nd

Contact Information: Joan D. Van Pelt jdvanpelt@gmail.com
908 753 1832

Primary Contact and Title: candidate

Questionnaire:

Transportation Funding:

New Jersey's Transportation Trust Fund relies upon substantial transfers from the state's general fund over the next five years – contributions from the general fund will be \$76 million in 2012, increasing to \$605 million in 2016¹ – and contributions from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. However, there is no indication as to how New Jersey plans to find this money year after year without indentifying new revenue. (This summer, NJ TRANSIT announced substantial fare and toll increases to meet budget demands.)

1. Do you believe New Jersey will be able to meet the general fund transfers over the next five years?
Y X N If "yes," where will this money come from? If "no," why?

Explain: Cost cutting at all levels of government
& elimination of waste at state level
should produce adequate resources to
fund this & other essential programs

2. Do you support increased funding for transportation? Y X N

Explain: If at all possible - I would
like to invest in our transportation
infrastructure

3. Through Local Aid, municipalities can apply for and receive funding for a variety of infrastructure and safety projects on a competitive basis. Local Aid has generally been funded at \$10 million annually. Do you believe this funding level to be adequate? Y N X

Explain: However, it is all we can
afford to allocate at present

Roads and Bridges:

New Jersey has made progress in reducing the backlog of deficient bridges since it mandated a "fix-it-first" policy in 2000. "Fix-it-first" means existing road and bridges are repaired before new ones are built. But as of 2010, over 100 of New Jersey's bridges and 50% of New Jersey's roads² remain in substantial need of repair. Spending on new roads and bridges has also increased in recent years.

1. How will you ensure that New Jersey is adhering to its "fix-it-first" policy?

I would call for hearings into the issue
and would not support any legislation
for new roads that diverts funds from repair

NJ Transit:

NJ Transit saw 247 million riders last year statewide, an increase of 10% since 2008, yet state support for the transit system has decreased.³ In 2004 nearly half, 49%, of the NJDOT Capital Construction Program was dedicated to NJ Transit.⁴ Since 2004, that amount has steadily decreased to a third, or 33%, in 2012.⁵

1. Do you ride trains or buses? Y ☒ N ☐ When and Where? I travel by

train to & from Newark & NYC whenever I can

2. What would you do to address the increasing demand for public transportation? Allocation

of resources needs to be addressed
with greater emphasis on public
transport

3. Do you think the current level of public transportation service in NJ is adequate? Y ☐ N ☒

Explain: we have allowed service to deteriorate
to the point where many are discourag
ed from using public transport -

¹ NJDOT Report on Roads <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/publicat/lmreports/pdf/pavementreport2010.pdf>

² <http://www.apta.com/resources/statistics/pages/ridershipreport.aspx>

³ NJDOT FY2004 Capital Program <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/capital/tcp04f/>

⁴ See footnote 4 above.

VJ Transit continued:

4. In 2010, Governor Christie cancelled the ARC project which would have doubled capacity across the Hudson River.⁶ The Lincoln Tunnel Exclusive Bus Lanes and the Port Authority bus terminal are at capacity.⁷ In addition, this past month, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey raised fares and tolls on PATH and Hudson River crossings.

Do you believe improvements to the cross-Hudson commute are necessary? Y X N

If yes, what measures and/or projects would you promote to improve the cross-Hudson commute?

Explain: I was disappointed that a project which
was already 30 years late was cancelled
As a Raritan Valley Rider - I saw the
need for increased capacity and was
looking forward to a one-seat ride

Traffic Safety:

1. In 2009, there were 549 fatal automobile crashes on New Jersey's roads: of these, more than 171 were with pedestrians or cyclists. The total death count was 589.⁸

Do you believe current traffic safety measures are adequate? Y X N

How will you address traffic safety in your district?

However, we need greater public education
about "rules of the road", in particular
yielding to pedestrians in cross walks

2. Do you regularly walk or ride a bicycle? Y X N Where? I regularly
walk my dog on neighborhood streets
and will walk to the train station if possible

Sustainable Communities:

Smart growth development policies (which encourage development around transit hubs and economic centers) and sustainable communities and increased public transportation are often more effective and fiscally sound methods of curbing traffic growth while bringing economic, environmental and health benefits to municipalities.⁹

1. Will you promote smart growth planning and development in your district?

Y X N Explain: LD 22 already has seen some
of this development & I look forward
to more.

NJ Transit's rail ridership has quadrupled since 1984 <http://www.arctunnel.com/about/>

Wall Street Journal article April 19, 2011 <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703916004576271150274132500.html>

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (FARS) <http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/States/StatesCrashesAndAllVictims.aspx>

US EPA <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/topics/eb.htm>

Sustainable Communities continued:

2. In 2012, the nationally recognized Transit Village program will be defunded. The program provides small grants to help towns promote development near train and bus stations. Previous funding levels were between \$1 and \$3 million annually.

Will you support the restoration of funding for the Transit Village program?

Y X N If so, at what level? Provided revenues
increase.

Above & Beyond:

Is there anything else we should know about your goals regarding transportation?

There is a delicate balance between
the need for more funds for transportation
& the ability to raise those funds. Possibilities
such as increasing tolls & fares have
already been employed. I would be
reluctant to increase other user fees such
as gasoline taxes or motor vehicle regist
but these need to be examined as we

Thank you for taking an interest in the future of New Jersey's infrastructure.

Joan D. Van Peer