

To: ALL 2017 CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE IN DOWNTOWN JERSEY CITY  
From: Downtown Coalition of Neighborhood Associations

Candidates for office have been asking “What are your community concerns?” So, we the members of the Downtown Coalition of Neighborhood Associations have compiled feedback from our neighbors. Below is a ***list of concerns*** that all the candidates running for office should be prepared to address, should they wish the privilege of serving Jersey City in public office.

### **What Our Communities Want. Tell Us How You Will Accomplish?**

- Urban Planner, Urban Designer, Arborist, Better Customer Service from City Agencies.
- Citizen participation in the earliest stages of land use planning, as it will save time and agony for officials and planners overall. The longer participation is put off, especially in major planning or development issues, the more likely that rumor and misinformation will spread. When this happens, officials spend more time explaining what is not true than reviewing the pros and cons of the project.
- Formalizing a citizen participation apparatus possibly through a citywide coalition of neighborhood association presidents.
- Downtown policing presence near pedestrian mall/parking areas; seasonal bicycle patrols; community policing

### **Taxes**

- Where are our tax dollars going? Specific % breakdown on funds received from property taxes and those received from developers receiving tax abatements
- What are the measures in place to multiply and leverage those monies?
- Tax abatements are no longer appropriate for downtown. What is a reasonable Return on Investment now for a developer in downtown JC? JC is typically 50% whereas Hoboken targets it at 10-15%. Homeowners should not be subsidizing private development.
- Are our governmental representatives executing programs that are required as per state or Federal guidelines? The re-evaluation is a prime example. If it were done when it was supposed to be conducted, we wouldn't be here, again....

## **Crime**

- Downtown policing presence near pedestrian mall/parking areas; seasonal bicycle patrols; restructuring patrol from emergency response-based system to emphasizing proactive techniques such as foot patrol.
- Reentry Programs
- Appropriate size of police force for our city
- Diversionary programs, drug court—initiatives that don't rely on prison as only punishment

## **Sidewalks/Roads**

- Enter into a cost-sharing partnership to fix sidewalks with property owners so sidewalks are safe and accessible to all consistently throughout city
- Schedule street paving better; so secondary crews are not digging trenches soon thereafter to lay additional fiber optics into freshly paved streets for example.
- Connect study findings from Grand Street bike lanes & Jersey Avenue Bridge with need for connected bike lanes and pedestrian safety throughout the city

## **Trees**

We have duplicate and conflicting focuses throughout the city. Where is the sustainable urban planning and maintenance of tree beds over time?

Example: PSEG has a program where they trim city trees. Can we agree that many trees are so abused by multiple causes that they are now becoming safety hazards and should be removed and replaced with appropriate trees? It's time we have an established realistic policy on trees that gives us as many as possible but with appropriate parameters. Where is the city arborist on these matters?

## **Parks and Recreation**

- Need for more frequent servicing of our parks by possibly bringing in seasonal labor that is good for the city and those doing the work
- Lack of Green Space in Emerson District and elsewhere will put further strain and traffic on parks and will diminish the quality of life for JC residents. Greenspace opportunities exist along wide sidewalks on Warren and Washington Streets, Greene, Pearl, and Hudson Streets to minimize storm runoff - City or property owner/developer responsible for park/greenery upkeep.
- And in lieu of no parks; Consider planting Trees, Hedges, Large potted greenery (volunteer garden club?), Bioswell plots, Benches
- Larger Lot Developments should create green open space ex. (Warren/Steuben/Morgan lot) to allow a taller building (same density)

- Recreation Center - large gym; after-school events; and outdoor public pool downtown; YMCA

### **Development**

- Traffic Study required and tied into public transportation as height and density increase throughout the city
- Infrastructure: Increasing wear and tear on our City's infrastructure as we add 37k new residential units in the pipeline etc.
- Affordable Housing
- More public parking garages

**Public Transportation** - consider increasing density. JC must work with Port Authority to keep JC sustainable. Adding 37k + units with no increased capacity for PATH is not sustainable. We need a viable solution or at least a step in the right direction.

Regarding Light Rail, we need to muster the support needed to add another stop (Where?), or we need to develop, research, and fund an intra-JC public transportation option that is not tied to an unaccountable bureaucracy outside of the city.

Expansion of NJ Transit bus service that travels within Jersey City.

**Public Schools** - If we want to Jersey City to be more than a transitory stop for people between NYC and the suburbs, we must ensure that residents have access to decent public schools.

### **New Developments:**

Require any new retail be in place and occupied under prescribed timelines.

### **Noise Pollution/Nuisance** - hours/enforcement

Lutze Beirgarten, Sidewalk seating, Outdoor Liquor License, Roof Top Entertainment

Putting aside the letter of the law- it seems that noise pollution should be treated as a neighborly thing, not a court case over an official calibrated recording device reading alone.

Review of the process to file noise complaints, to handle uptick of alleged noise violations, as well as staffing to handle such complaints. NYC has made huge changes – worth reviewing how they are handling it.

### **Overhaul the Division of Commerce**

- Licenses seem to be given out without public knowledge of requests.
- Update way to alert public
- Sunshine laws are out of date
- Inspection of sites for renewal are not held up to new standards and review
- Questions about licenses can go unanswered
- Inspectors need to be proactive, go after scofflaws and other blatant violations.

**JC Government Hires** -Inventory of government staff & positions. There seems to be a lack of personnel to inspect & enforce zoning, traffic/engineering, commerce division and public works as well as a lack of crews to maintain infrastructure.

### **Traffic/Engineering**

- Inspectors and installers
- Oversee work so it doesn't have to be done more than once.
- Remove sign clutter and place posts to current specs to optimize parking and sidewalks.
- Why do we repeatedly see police escort large trucks down Grand Street – a no-truck route?
- Target Intersections for 2012 parking enhancements per

*(May 25, 2012): There has been legislation adopted on a State level N.J.S.A. 39:4-138.6. Municipal authority to set certain permissible parking distances. A municipality may mandate by ordinance the permissible distance a person may park a motor vehicle from a crosswalk, side line of a street or intersecting highway, or "stop" sign. A municipality may not, however, permit parking within 25 feet of a crosswalk or side line of a street or intersecting highway or within 50 feet of a "stop" sign in a school zone during hours when school is in session.*

### **Sanitation Inspectors**

- Trash can overflow - add more routes, make more trash bins available
- High-rises create a huge amount of trash that needs a new and improved solution for removal
- Street cleaners drive too fast and do not pick up as much trash as they should. What can be done about this?

### **Zoning enforcement officers -**

- Make settling violation process easier
- End the need to go to court - enforce & fine, fine, fine until resolved.
- Remove all illegal and expired banners/advertisements from buildings

**Global Warming** – what should the city be doing to help slow down climate change, especially since the Trump administration has abandoned the Paris Climate Agreement?

Thank you for your time and attention to our concerns for a Jersey City that should marry intelligent planned growth with a sustainable quality of life for all its citizens. We look forward to your public comments on this ***list of concerns*** at the many forums all over the city created for the voters to hear from you.

Good Luck,

Downtown Coalition of Neighborhood Associations:  
Harsimus Cove Neighborhood Association  
Hamilton Park Neighborhood Association  
Paulus Hook Historic Neighborhood Association  
Powerhouse Arts District Neighborhood Association  
Van Vorst Park Association  
Village Neighborhood Association