

Emily Jabbour for Mayor

1- Public Safety & Transportation

What is your plan to improve auto safety and reduce vehicular incidents in Hoboken? How would you assess the effectiveness of the city's "Vision Zero" program, and what, if any, changes would you propose?

The Vision Zero Initiative has been effective and has made Hoboken a national model when it comes to pedestrian safety. The spirit of this initiative should continue in terms of the ongoing improvements to infrastructure; further, we should think about a safe routes approach to working with our community when it comes to how children get to school, how our senior citizens access services, etc. We should also use the crash data to allocate resources accordingly – including the need to improve conditions along upper Willow Avenue as the most dangerous stretch of roadway in the city.

What is your comprehensive vision for transportation that addresses the needs of both commuters and residents, including solutions for parking and the flow of bike messengers and pedestrians?

One of the best aspects of living in Hoboken is the accessibility of public transit options – the PATH, the bus, the light rail – but we need to actively advocate with NJ transit and the Port Authority when it comes to the quality of these services. The recent breakdowns of the PATH system in particular has been frustrating and erodes confidence in public transit. We need to further invest in the Hop Shuttle system – providing more frequent shuttle service and routes that provide more coverage. We need to prioritize our repairs to the Garden Street garage and the midtown garage because that puts additional pressure on our street parking with those not being accessible to the full capacity.

2- Fiscal Policy and Budget

Please outline your philosophy on tax policy and budget management. What specific areas of the city budget do you believe are in need of improvement or could be optimized for efficiency?

I think one of the biggest failures when it comes to the budget process is the lack of engagement and transparency with residents about how the budget is drafted and it lacks true participation that could be accomplished through tools like participatory budget making. My concern is also the fact that residents don't feel that there is value in how their tax dollars are being used – we need to do a better job explaining how tax dollars are put to work and address where there are not sufficient resources to keep up with the community need. As Mayor, I am also committed to developing performance metrics that can communicate the accomplishments of departments/city services so that residents can better understand goals and outputs.

3- Housing & Development

Given the challenges of urban density, what is your plan to manage financially responsible development and the use of PILOT agreements in a way that protects existing infrastructure and justifies their fiscal impact to Hoboken's taxpayers?

Smart development is the key to ensuring that all future development has the proper balance between bringing more housing stock to the community, while making the necessary investments in our infrastructure, including the pressure to the school system and attention to the community give back aspect of new developments. Ideally the allocation of density will be limited to the perimeter of the city, and PILOT agreements are only used when truly necessary.

What is your position on Hoboken's existing rent control ordinance? What changes if any would you wish to see?

I am proud to have both supported rent control and strengthened its provisions during my tenure on the City Council. I would like to invest more resources in education and outreach with respect to rent control, what it means for renters, what landlords should know, etc. Ideally that is one way to help get more units registered with the city.

4- Sanctuary City

Please define your position on Hoboken's status as a sanctuary city. Given a scenario where an undocumented person commits a crime, is found guilty, and prosecuted, what would your administration's policy be regarding cooperation with federal agencies such as ICE?

I support Hoboken's status as a fair and welcoming city. The provisions of the fair and welcoming city are consistent with Attorney General guidance as well. I have full confidence that Hoboken Police Department effectively enforces all relevant laws when it comes to crimes.

5- Homelessness

What is your approach to addressing homelessness in Hoboken, and what is your plan for providing services and shelter to the city's homeless population?

The city is not effectively addressing the needs of our homeless population at this moment – and we need to invest more resources to be able to effectively address this issue. While there are several incredible non-profit organizations that are working to address some of the needs related to homelessness, there is a lack of leadership from the city to better coordinate these services and identify gaps. I also feel that this is a regional issue and it is incumbent on the city to meaningfully engage with our colleagues in Jersey City and Hudson County when it comes to allocating resources and better coordinating when it comes to available housing options. I advocated for the city's hire of two social work professionals to assist our public safety teams with outreach to assist with connecting people with services - and that has been effective as a way to ensure that it isn't incumbent on our police officers alone to handle.

6- Public Education

What is your long-term vision for the future of public education? How would you make that vision a reality, and what role do you see charter schools playing in that plan?

During my tenure on the City Council, I have been diligent to attend and otherwise stay involved with monthly Board of Education meetings. I typically meet with the Superintendent on a quarterly basis to build open lines of communication across the city and the public school district. I have also built relationships with board members from each of the charter communities in order to discuss individual school needs, especially with respect to facilities. I think the entire community should be engaged in a larger conversation about the lack of infrastructure to keep up with the increasing student population in Hoboken – and the city could play a more active role in facilitating that.

Do you support school choice? If you do, would you support a voucher system?

I know that school choice has been a tool that Hoboken Public School District has used to ensure the success of our district. One of the best aspects of Hoboken is the ability to choose from so many incredible school communities – whether that's the district, the charters, private schools, or parochial. I don't believe a voucher system is needed in the current environment.

7- Governance & Trust

What specific steps would you take to establish and maintain transparency and accountability in your administration? What would be your policy on OPRA responsiveness? Exclusions?

As noted previously, as Mayor, I would implement performance metrics for all departments so we can more effectively communicate the city's goals and accomplishments. I am also committed to holding regular town hall style meetings throughout the city with different city professionals, expanding upon the very successful model of the Community and Public Safety (CAPS) meetings. I would ensure that all OPRE requests are responded to in a timely way.

What would be your hiring process for the city of Hoboken both for the mayor's office and the city at large?

I believe that given the caliber of Hoboken and the unique character of our city, we should demand only the most qualified professionals through a fully open and transparent hiring process, with engagement from all members of the City Council.

8- Non-Partisan Representation

Recognizing the November election is a non-partisan municipal race, how would you ensure that your administration represents the interests and concerns of all residents, regardless of political affiliation?

Having worked for multiple Administrations in my professional career, both Republican and Democratic, I am very committed to the notion of public service that meets the needs of all residents. We, as neighbors, can disagree without being disagreeable and ensure open dialogue

for the sake of coming to a better outcome that represents multiple points of view. I have a strong track record of engaging with all residents, in the spirit of problem solving – that will not change when I become Mayor.

9- City Focus

What would be the primary scope of your focus as mayor, and how would you balance addressing national issues like climate and immigration with the more immediate, localized needs of Hoboken residents?

My immediate priorities include operationalizing my responsiveness as a Councilmember through setting up a ticket-based system for identifying issues, immediately investing in the creation of a division of community policing through hiring the necessary additional officers, and evaluating all current construction/infrastructure projects happening throughout the city to determine timelines and necessity. The priority needs to be local needs, while keeping an eye to the context of national issues that may also impact our community.

Our community has a recognized need for more recreational opportunities, including the potential for a public swimming pool. What is your plan for evaluating and addressing this need?

There are two options for a community pool – I would like to ensure both move forward – the first is the City's acquisition of Hoboken Community Center (the former YMCA building), which has a beautiful indoor pool; and the second is the renovation of the Multi Service Center (124 Grand Street) with a rooftop pool added to a new, modernized recreation facility. There have been several meetings to inform the features needed in a new Multi Service Center – that project would ideally be conducted in phases to allow for a staged build so as not to displace the essential services provided by the day care program and Hoboken Family Planning Clinic located there.

Addressing the persistent problem of rodents is a top concern for many residents. What is your long-term plan to tackle this issue, and what metrics will you use to measure the success of city services?

I feel that the Health Department has been responsive and effective in managing this issue- the challenge comes from the churn that's created from so many construction projects happening throughout the city, which adds to the rodent issue. I think the city should be transparent about how we allocate resources to address rodent control by providing a map of where treatment is happening with respect to traps or bait, so residents can better understand how we are tackling this issue. I also feel that our changes with respect to trash collection have helped remove the food sources from our street scape.

10- Cannabis

What are your thoughts on the city's current plan for six cannabis dispensaries? How would you characterize the rollout process to date, and what is your position on public marijuana use within city limits?

I am supportive of the dispensaries in Hoboken. I think more can be done by the administration to explain how the cannabis industry works in Hoboken. The four dispensaries open to date have been good members of our business community and responsible with respect to our local ordinances.

11- Environment

The previous administration spent a significant amount of time and money on legal action against companies regarding environmental issues. Do you plan to follow in the same footsteps, and what is your overall approach to environmental policy for Hoboken?

Generally speaking, I think part of our fiduciary duty is to avoid unnecessary litigation. When it comes to environmental issues for Hoboken, my priority would be ensuring the completion of Rebuild by Design to protect us from future damage from incidents like Superstorm Sandy – and continuing to invest in resiliency infrastructure as part of municipal projects and new development. The city has fared rain events far better of late thanks to smart investments into flood pumps and resiliency infrastructure – continuing that investment should continue.

12- Commercial Revival

What is your strategy for promoting commercial revitalization and supporting local business throughout the city?

I continue to support the mission of the Hoboken Business Alliance (HBA) with respect to marketing our business community and positioning Hoboken as a destination for visitors. I think there are additional actions the city should consider to support the business community – additional investments in sanitation services and personnel to address the condition of Washington Street as our main commercial corridor, and continue thoughtful development of 15th Street west of Willow Avenue to create more opportunities for commercial businesses to locate here. I have also been working with colleagues on the City Council to review possible legislation to institute fines for long-term vacancies along Washington Street that detract from the beauty of our central commercial district.

Caitlin Layson for Council

1- Public Safety & Transportation

- a. Hoboken's has made great progress on traffic safety, but we can't become complacent. As a city, we've seen how well-designed infrastructure and consistent enforcement can save lives. I support the goals of Vision Zero, which has dramatically reduced serious*

crashes and injuries since its launch, but I also believe it's time to evolve from policy to action, focusing on accountability, fairness, and measurable results. If elected, I would:

- *Broaden the data we track, including “near-miss” incidents reported by residents, so we capture the full picture of street safety.*
- *Improve cross-department coordination between Transportation, Police, and Engineering to ensure design changes, enforcement, and education work hand in hand.*
- *Invest in traffic enforcement technology, but use it transparently, with public reporting and a focus on high-risk violations.*
- *Audit street redesigns annually to ensure they are reducing crashes and improving flow for all users — drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians alike.*

Vision Zero should continue its progress, but with even greater transparency and community input. Transportation safety is about making sure every resident, whether they drive, bike, or walk can move through our city safely.

- b. My vision is to create a transportation system that works for everyone who moves through Hoboken — drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and commuters alike. That means improving mobility while keeping our streets safe, efficient, and accessible. I support expanding and modernizing our HOP system to improve reliability, add weekend service, and better connect residents to transit hubs. Completing the Green Circuit protected bike loop and improving loading zones will make our streets safer for cyclists, pedestrians, and delivery drivers. To ease parking challenges, I would prioritize construction of two new municipal garages — at 13th and Adams and another site in the north end as part of a developer give-back. I'd also work to repair and reopen existing garages, like the midtown and Garden Street facilities, and reduce monthly garage rates for residents who store cars long-term. I'd explore flexible permit options, including pricing based on vehicle size or limited-use permits for occasional parkers, and a permit buyback program to encourage use of PATH, NJ Transit, NY Waterway, and CitiBike. Good transportation policy should make it easier to get around, safer to cross the street, and fairer for everyone who calls Hoboken home.*

2- Fiscal Policy and Budget

I believe city government has a responsibility to manage every tax dollar with transparency, discipline, and accountability. Hoboken residents already pay among the highest property taxes in the region, and we owe it to them to ensure every dollar is used efficiently and aligned with community priorities. My philosophy is rooted in fiscal transparency and long-term planning — budgeting should be proactive, not reactive. I support creating a real-time public dashboard that tracks city spending against the approved budget, so residents can see where their money goes. To improve efficiency, I would:

- *Start the budget process earlier, with the Finance Subcommittee meeting in January to avoid rushed amendments later in the year.*
- *Conduct a department-by-department performance review to identify redundancies and cost savings.*
- *Protect the city's AA+ credit rating by maintaining a healthy surplus, while finding smarter ways to fund capital projects over time.*
- *Improve interdepartmental coordination, especially on projects that overlap between Transportation, Engineering, and Public Safety, to avoid costly delays.*
- *Explore shared service agreements with the County to reduce administrative and operational costs.*

3- Housing & Development

- a. Ultimately, my goal is to make the city's finances more transparent, more predictable, and more accountable — so residents can trust that their tax dollars are being used wisely. Development in a city as dense and built-out as Hoboken must be carefully managed — growth should strengthen our infrastructure, not strain it. I believe in responsible, transparent redevelopment that supports long-term affordability, modern infrastructure, and fiscal sustainability. PILOT agreements can be useful tools, but only when they are used sparingly, transparently, and tied to measurable public benefits. As a Councilmember, I would ensure that any PILOT proposal:*
- *Includes clear fiscal impact analysis showing how it benefits taxpayers and the city budget over time.*
 - *Requires developer contributions to infrastructure upgrades — including stormwater, sewer, and transportation improvements — before approvals are granted.*
 - *Is paired with affordable housing commitments and strong local hiring or union labor requirements.*
 - *Undergoes a public review process so residents can understand how the deal affects their tax base.*
 - *Is limited to projects that serve a true public purpose, such as affordable housing or community-serving facilities — not luxury developments.*

I believe development should pay its fair share. We can welcome growth that adds value to Hoboken — but not at the expense of our infrastructure, affordability, or fiscal stability.

- b. Hoboken's rent control ordinance is one of the most important protections we have to keep the city livable for working families, seniors, and long-term residents. I fully*

support maintaining and strengthening rent control — it's what keeps Hoboken diverse and prevents displacement as housing costs rise. That said, rent control should also be administered transparently and fairly, with strong enforcement and clear communication between landlords and tenants. I would support:

- *Increasing resources for the Rent Leveling and Stabilization Office to improve outreach, compliance, and education.*
- *Requiring landlords to disclose legal rent calculations to tenants upon request to prevent overcharging.*
- *Defining “unconscionable rent increases” clearly at 10% to ensure consistency in enforcement citywide.*
- *Expanding tenant education programs in multiple languages so all residents understand their rights and how to access help.*

Rent control has kept Hoboken stable through decades of change. As the city continues to grow, we need to make sure these protections evolve with it — stronger enforcement, more transparency, and a system that works for both tenants and small property owners who maintain their buildings responsibly.

4- Sanctuary City

I support Hoboken's status as a Fair and Welcoming City. This policy reflects who we are: a diverse, compassionate community that believes in fairness, inclusion, and protecting the rights of all residents, regardless of immigration status. Our local police department's job is to keep people safe, not enforce federal immigration laws. I support maintaining the Hoboken Police Department's current policy of non-cooperation with ICE in civil immigration enforcement. That policy builds trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement, trust that is essential for reporting crimes, protecting victims, and ensuring public safety. In a case where an

undocumented person commits a crime, is found guilty, and serves their sentence, Hoboken would continue to follow the law. The city's responsibility is to uphold due process and ensure that justice is administered fairly. Any cooperation with federal agencies should occur only within the bounds of the law and through the proper legal channels, not through voluntary ICE coordination. Our approach must balance public safety, due process, and human dignity.

Hoboken's role is to protect residents, not to divide or target them based on immigration status.

6- Public Education

a. As a former special education teacher in Hoboken public schools, I believe that strong public education is the foundation of a thriving and equitable community. My long-term vision is for every child in Hoboken to have access to high-quality, inclusive, and well-resourced schools, regardless of where they live or their family's income. That means continuing to invest in our public school facilities, teachers, and student support services, while also deepening collaboration between the City and the Board of Education on shared priorities like mental health, after-school programs, and safe routes to school. I see charter schools as part of Hoboken's broader educational ecosystem, but they must operate transparently and equitably, with accountability to the same standards as district schools. The goal should always be collaboration, not competition — sharing best practices and ensuring that all students, regardless of school type, benefit from the city's resources and support.

To make this vision real, I would use the role of City Council to:

- *Advocate for increased state and county funding for Hoboken schools.*
- *Support partnerships between the City, Hoboken Public Schools, and local organizations to expand after-school and enrichment programs.*
- *Ensure new development contributes to education infrastructure, through impact fees or community benefit agreements.*
- *Champion inclusion, ensuring that every child — including those with special needs or learning differences — has access to the tools and opportunities they deserve.*

b. I support giving families meaningful choices in their children's education, but those choices must strengthen, not weaken, our public school system. In Hoboken, we already have a mix of district, charter, and private schools, and my focus is on ensuring quality and accountability across all options so every child receives an excellent education. I do not support a voucher system because it would divert critical public dollars away from Hoboken Public Schools and undermine the stability of our public education funding. Instead, I believe in building stronger collaboration between district and charter schools, sharing resources and best practices while keeping oversight and transparency in place.

Every student deserves access to great schools, but that access should come from

public investment and partnership, not privatization.

7- Governance & Trust

a. Transparency is the foundation of public trust. As a City Council member, I would take clear, measurable steps to ensure residents have access to information and understand how decisions are made. That begins with proactive communication, not just compliance. I would push for:

- *A real-time online dashboard showing City spending, project timelines, and progress toward department goals.*
- *Quarterly public reports that track performance metrics for each department. Regular town halls and open office hours in different neighborhoods to ensure two-way communication with residents.*
- *Public posting of City Council materials well in advance of meetings, with plain-language summaries to make government more accessible.*

On OPRA requests, I would set a clear standard for timely, complete, and good-faith responses. My policy would be to treat OPRA as a public right, not a burden. Exclusions should remain limited to legally protected categories such as personal privacy, security, ongoing investigations and never as a means to avoid accountability or political embarrassment.

b. As a City Council member, I believe hiring within the City of Hoboken must be guided by fairness, transparency, and a commitment to professional excellence. City jobs should always be awarded based on merit, qualifications, and community service values — never political connections. My approach would include:

- *Clear, public job postings for all open positions with detailed qualifications and salary ranges.*
- *Standardized interview and evaluation processes to ensure consistency and reduce bias.*
- *Expanded outreach to attract a diverse and qualified applicant pool, including local residents.*
- *Regular reporting from the City's Human Resources Department on hiring practices,*

vacancies, and diversity metrics.

- *Council oversight to confirm that key appointments align with the City's ethical standards and performance goals.*

Accountability starts with who we hire. Every employee represents Hoboken, and the process should reflect the integrity and inclusivity of our community.

8- Non-Partisan Representation

Hoboken's City Council is a nonpartisan body, and that's exactly how I intend to serve — by focusing on what unites us rather than what divides us. My responsibility is to represent every resident, regardless of political affiliation, background, or neighborhood. I will make decisions based on data, community input, and the best interests of Hoboken as a whole, not partisan talking points. That means keeping lines of communication open through regular town halls, open office hours, and transparent public updates so that every voice can be heard. I will also work to strengthen collaboration across the Council by finding common ground and maintaining respect, even in disagreement. Our residents expect teamwork, not politics, and that's the spirit I'll bring to the job.

9- City Focus

- a. As a City Council member, my primary focus will always be on the issues that most directly impact Hoboken residents — affordability, safety, infrastructure, and quality of life. These are the day-to-day challenges that shape how people live, work, and raise their families here. That said, I believe local leadership also plays a role in modeling our values on broader issues like climate and immigration. When we invest in sustainable infrastructure, expand flood protections, or support our immigrant neighbors, we're not engaging in national politics — we're improving lives right here in Hoboken. My approach is to ground every policy in local action: advancing climate resilience through projects like Rebuild by Design, and ensuring Hoboken remains a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community where every resident feels valued and protected.*
- b. Recreation is essential to Hoboken's quality of life, and I agree that expanding options — including the potential for a public swimming pool — deserves serious evaluation. As our population grows, so does the need for accessible, year-round recreation that serves families,*

seniors, and young people alike. I would start by directing the City to conduct a comprehensive recreation facilities study to assess current capacity, usage, and future needs. That includes identifying possible sites for a community pool — such as through public-private partnerships, redevelopment projects, or city-owned parcels — while ensuring it's financially sustainable and environmentally responsible. Just as important, this process should be driven by community input. Residents should help shape what kind of recreation investments matter most — whether it's a pool, additional turf space, or expanded indoor recreation — so that decisions reflect what people will actually use and enjoy.

c. Rodent control isn't just a nuisance issue — it's a public health and quality-of-life issue. The city has made progress, but the problem persists because we've often approached it reactively instead of strategically. My long-term plan would focus on three key areas:

1. *Infrastructure and Sanitation: Modernize waste management by expanding sealed, rat-proof trash bins citywide and working with the Hoboken Business Alliance to ensure commercial corridors like Washington Street receive overnight trash pickup and more frequent cleaning.*
2. *Coordination and Accountability: Require monthly interdepartmental coordination between Health, Environmental Services, and Code Enforcement to identify hotspots and track progress.*
3. *Community Education and Enforcement: Launch an outreach campaign to help residents and businesses understand proper waste disposal, paired with stronger enforcement for repeat violators.*

To measure success, I would use clear metrics — including a year-over-year reduction in rodent complaints to the Health Department, increased compliance with sanitation codes, and resident satisfaction surveys.

10- Cannabis

I support the legalization of cannabis and believe Hoboken has a responsibility to regulate it responsibly and transparently. Limiting the number of dispensaries to six was a sound decision

as it allows the city to capture economic benefits while preventing oversaturation and maintaining balance within our neighborhoods. Moving forward, I want to see greater transparency and community engagement in how dispensary locations are approved and monitored. Residents should be informed early, and decisions should reflect neighborhood feedback in addition to zoning compliance. As for public marijuana use, I support enforcing current state law, which prohibits consumption in public spaces. Just like alcohol, use should remain limited to private residences or licensed consumption areas if ever approved in the future.

The city's focus now should be on accountability, equitable access, and quality of life — ensuring dispensaries operate safely, respect surrounding communities, and contribute positively to Hoboken.

11- Environment

Protecting Hoboken's environment isn't optional — it's essential to our city's health, safety, and long-term resilience. I support holding polluters accountable when their actions harm our community, but I also believe litigation should be a last resort, not the first step. The goal must always be to achieve real environmental outcomes, not just rack up legal bills. My approach would focus on prevention, partnership, and performance. That means strengthening local enforcement to prevent contamination before it happens, working collaboratively with state and federal agencies, and ensuring developers meet the highest environmental standards from day one. I would also prioritize sustainable infrastructure, expanding green stormwater systems, renewable energy adoption, and incentives for flood-resilient building design. These are long-term investments that save taxpayers money and protect residents from future climate risks.

12- Commercial Revival

Hoboken's local businesses are the heartbeat of our community — they give our city character, create jobs, and keep our economy strong. My strategy for commercial revitalization focuses on reducing barriers, increasing visibility, and fostering collaboration. First, I would work with the Hoboken Business Alliance (HBA) to streamline the permitting and licensing process, making it

faster and more predictable for new businesses to open. This includes supporting the creation of a clear, public checklist of required steps and offering a “welcome kit” to guide entrepreneurs through the process. Second, I would support effort to revitalize Washington Street and expand commercial corridors by ensuring clean streets, attractive storefronts, and better lighting. I support expanding incentives for long-vacant storefronts and exploring temporary “pop-up” uses to fill empty spaces. Finally, would support seasonal and cultural programming — in partnership with local artists, schools, and nonprofits — to drive foot traffic citywide, not just downtown.

Joe Quintero for Council

1. Public Safety & Transportation

What is your plan to improve auto safety and reduce vehicular incidents in Hoboken?

How would you assess the effectiveness of the city’s “Vision Zero” program, and what, if any, changes would you propose?

Vision Zero has been incredibly effective at improving pedestrian safety in Hoboken. Efforts like infrastructure improvements work very well and we should continue them where possible. To further reduce auto safety, we should increase enforcement measures (such as camera assisted enforcement and increased police presence) in our high accident areas.

What is your comprehensive vision for transportation that addresses the needs of both commuters and residents, including solutions for parking and the flow of bike messengers and pedestrians?

The majority of Hoboken residents who commute to work do so using public transportation, so we should work to strengthen those options, including adding more bus routes. Regarding parking, we need to look at all options including adding more parking garages and fees associated with our permits.

2. Fiscal Policy and Budget

Please outline your philosophy on tax policy and budget management. What specific areas of the city budget do you believe are in need of improvement or could be optimized for efficiency?

I think our city employees are top notch – however, at times our services and departments are siloed. I would work to encourage the administration to break down some of those barriers to effect cross department decision making and promoting efficiency within City Hall.

3. Housing & Development

Given the challenges of urban density, what is your plan to manage financially responsible development and the use of PILOT agreements in a way that protects existing infrastructure and justifies their fiscal impact to Hoboken's taxpayers?

I support the use of PILOTs when they will secure some substantial community benefit, such as increased affordable housing. While density is an issue, I think the bigger problem would be if people wanted to stop coming to Hoboken to live here. Therefore, we need to manage our increasing population in as smart a way as possible. This includes density where we can handle it (e.g., in periphery) but also ensuring we appropriately scale up our resources such as public safety and sanitation.

What is your position on Hoboken's existing rent control ordinance? What changes if any would you wish to see?

I am supportive of rent control and would seek to continue trying to ensure that the power dynamics between landlord and tenant are as equitable as possible.

4. Sanctuary City

Please define your position on Hoboken's status as a sanctuary city. Given a scenario where an undocumented person commits a crime, is found guilty, and prosecuted, what

would your administration's policy be regarding cooperation with federal agencies such as ICE?

I fully support Hoboken's status as a Fair and Welcoming City and support codifying that status into law. With respect to an undocumented person committing a crime, I would expect our local police and administration to adhere to applicable laws regarding cooperation with federal authorities.

5. Homelessness

What is your approach to addressing homelessness in Hoboken, and what is your plan for providing services and shelter to the city's homeless population?

In the long term we need to work with the County and State governments to pool resources. This issue is bigger than Hoboken and can't be solved by just us alone. In the shorter term, establishing the Community Policing Bureau with help puts cops on the street and, hopefully, assist with at risk individuals sooner rather than later, and proactively direct them to services. Finally, we should implement services to relieve some of the symptoms residents experience as a result of homelessness – this includes more publicly available bathrooms, enhanced sanitation in higher density areas, and increase patrols in certain areas as well.

6. Public Education

What is your long-term vision for the future of public education? How would you make that vision a reality, and what role do you see charter schools playing in that plan?

Remembering that all four of our public school options in Hoboken are governed separately from the City I would continue to promote cooperation between the City and our school districts to make sure they have everything they need to continue succeeding.

Do you support school choice? If you do, would you support a voucher system?

I support parents having the ability to make whatever education choices they deem best for their families. Luckily in Hoboken we have four excellent public school options and many private options. With all these excellent public options I don't think there is a present need for any voucher system in Hoboken.

7. Governance & Trust

What specific steps would you take to establish and maintain transparency and accountability in your administration? What would be your policy on OPRA responsiveness? Exclusions?

I support establishing a dashboard, publicly available, where we can track the City's spending. As a government we are entrusted spending public funds and our residents deserve the ability to track those. With respect to OPRA, our City government should comply with all OPRA laws.

What would be your hiring process for the city of Hoboken both for the mayor's office and the city at large?

I believe in an open and transparent hiring process. As a City Councilmember, I would expect to be able to discuss any position and candidates who would require approval by the City Council.

8. Non-Partisan Representation

Recognizing the November election is a non-partisan municipal race, how would you ensure that your administration represents the interests and concerns of all residents, regardless of political affiliation?

I believe in equal protection under the law, regardless of any factor including political affiliation. I have many friends and family which cross the political spectrum and to me they are first and foremost human beings, deserving of respect. I bring that same ethos with me to the city council today and will do so as long as I have the pleasure to serve.

9. City Focus

What would be the primary scope of your focus as mayor, and how would you balance addressing national issues like climate and immigration with the more immediate, localized needs of Hoboken residents? N/A as is a mayoral question.

Our community has a recognized need for more recreational opportunities, including the potential for a public swimming pool. What is your plan for evaluating and addressing this need?

We have an excellent opportunity to improve our recreation, including a pool, by redeveloping the Multiservice Center. We should also ensure that Maritime Park and 800 Monroe come online as soon as possible.

Addressing the persistent problem of rodents is a top concern for many residents. What is your long-term plan to tackle this issue, and what metrics will you use to measure the success of city services?

We should continue our sanitation and communication efforts and step up enforcement where possible. Instituting containerized garbage has significantly improved the problem, we should continue to explore further options on this front. We also need to keep educating our neighbors as to what the City is doing and what their responsibilities are. Finally, when we have businesses or neighbors who don't abide by our sanitation laws, we need to identify them and fine them appropriately.

10. Cannabis

What are your thoughts on the city's current plan for six cannabis dispensaries? How would you characterize the rollout process to date, and what is your position on public marijuana use within city limits?

So far the cannabis businesses operating in Hoboken have been doing to successfully and with very little to no problems. I expect all operators to continue to do so and look forward to the final two dispensaries opening as soon as they are able to.

11. Environment

The previous administration spent a significant amount of time and money on legal action against companies regarding environmental issues. Do you plan to follow in the same footsteps, and what is your overall approach to environmental policy for Hoboken?

Whether an administration seeks to engage in legal action is very fact specific. Where I have been convinced that entering into such litigation is in the best interest of the city, I would support it. With respect to environmental policy, I would support any efforts within our power to continue to do our part to ensure a sustainable future for all of our residents.

12. Commercial Revival

What is your strategy for promoting commercial revitalization and supporting local business throughout the city?

Generally, I think Hoboken is an extremely positive place to live and work. We see this by people continuing to want to move here, visit here, and open businesses here – including some significant corporations (e.g., EY and Unilever). I do think we should continue to work with the HBA on continuing to evolve their efforts to support and promote businesses in Hoboken. With respect to empty storefronts on Washington Street, I do believe this is a function of landlords holding out for higher rents. Warehousing is prohibited for residential units; we should extend that to commercial units.

Steve Firestone for Council

1- Public Safety & Transportation

What is your plan to improve auto safety and reduce vehicular incidents in Hoboken?

How would you assess the effectiveness of the city's "Vision Zero" program, and what, if any, changes would you propose?

Hoboken is a place where we rely on multiple modes of transportation to get around and keeping residents safe is our number one priority. The Vision Zero program has been effective in terms of helping us as a city to avoid fatalities related to transportation. But we have a lot

more work to do. I have supported the redesign on Willow Street to try to make that area a safer place for pedestrians, cyclists, and others trying to navigate that stretch. But we also need to look at other high incident areas around Hoboken, such as the Observer and Henderson intersection, to make that area safer. Another aspect of the safety plan is with respect to e-bikes. While many people use them safely, there have been many complaints about delivery drivers on e-bikes running stop signs, going the wrong way on one-way streets, and other infractions. I live on Washington Street and have both experienced and witnessed many near-miss collisions as a result. This is simply unacceptable. I support revising the “test-and-vest” ordinance to make it more enforceable. In addition, we should work with companies that utilize e-bike delivery drivers heavily to ensure that they penalize them for traffic violations. If the right incentives are in place, e-bike delivery can be done in a safe and responsible way that provides a valuable service to the community.

What is your comprehensive vision for transportation that addresses the needs of both commuters and residents, including solutions for parking and the flow of bike messengers and pedestrians?

One of the needs we have as a community right now is better resident mobility. While many Hoboken residents walk or bike to their destinations, others need to get places more quickly or have to use cars or other public transit options to get to work. We need to expand and re-orient the Hop service for more north-south and east-west routes so that Hoboken residents have a greater ability to use public transportation on their trips within Hoboken. This will alleviate some of the traffic stress that private car use can place on our transportation infrastructure. We should also continue to work with NJ Transit to get service on the Madison/Monroe line, which would expand mobility in the western section of Hoboken.

2- Fiscal Policy and Budget

Please outline your philosophy on tax policy and budget management. What specific areas of the city budget do you believe are in need of improvement or could be optimized for efficiency?

As a fiscal conservative, my philosophy has always been to keep the size and scope of government to only essential areas that are needed. Public Safety accounts for the largest percentage of appropriations, which I think is appropriate for our needs in a city of over 60,000 residents that attracts lots of visitors each year. However, there are a number of other important

line items that should be re-evaluated. For example, we spend \$27 million a year on insurance, which is 18% of the General Budget. This is a reflection of a decision Hoboken made to self-insure. I believe that this approach costs us more in the long run, so we should explore whether we can realize additional cost savings from private insurance options. We also pay a lot in interest on our debt, which accounts for a substantial percentage of the budget. While the overall General Budget has risen by roughly 21% since 2021, the amounts we pay for debt service have almost doubled. Getting a second rating agency (we currently only have S&P) would allow our debt to be more marketable and therefore would lower the interest rates we have to pay. In addition, as interest rates come down with the Federal Reserve cutting short term rates, we should look for opportunities to refinance higher-cost debt.

3- Housing & Development

Given the challenges of urban density, what is your plan to manage financially responsible development and the use of PILOT agreements in a way that protects existing infrastructure and justifies their fiscal impact to Hoboken's taxpayers?

Hoboken regularly forgoes about \$30 million in tax revenue as a result of PILOT agreements. Most of these projects, like Marine View, Clock Towers, and Northvale, were originally negotiated in the 1970s and are still going. While most of these PILOT agreements are a result of appropriate affordable housing projects, some are related to commercial development. Hoboken is a very attractive place to work, live and do business, so I think that new PILOT programs should only apply in affordable housing situations. We still have an inventory of public land, some parcels which may eventually develop into affordable and workforce housing. In instances of new developments, whether on city-owned land or not, we should ensure that developers are bearing the costs to upgrade local infrastructure during construction. Greater density and use has to be accompanied by a greater responsibility in the development community to shoulder its fair share of the burden.

What is your position on Hoboken's existing rent control ordinance? What changes if any would you wish to see?

Hoboken's housing stock is approximately 2/3rds rental, so it is important that Hoboken tailor its rent control ordinances effectively to both protect residents and give landlords incentives to keep up their properties. I have supported Council leaders Cohen and Quintero's initiatives to ban rent algorithms. In addition, we should explore banning the use of AirBnB and other short-term rental sites to rent out entire units and strengthen tenants'

rights to counsel. I would also take steps to ensure that the majority of the members serving on the Rent Leveling Board are tenants themselves. However, I do think that landlords should not be penalized for keeping rents flat year-over-year because they are happy with the tenants in place. They should have the right to increase the rent by a small percentage each year, regardless of whether they forgo the increase in any one particular year.

4- Sanctuary City

Please define your position on Hoboken's status as a sanctuary city. Given a scenario where an undocumented person commits a crime, is found guilty, and prosecuted, what would your administration's policy be regarding cooperation with federal agencies such as ICE?

Upon taking office in 2018, Mayor Bhalla declared via executive order that Hoboken was a "fair and welcoming" city. This was recently codified in Hoboken's ordinances via the Hoboken Trust Act, which states that, "city employees cannot deny services or make access conditional on immigration status, limits sharing personal or immigration-related information with federal agencies unless legally required, and prohibits law enforcement from stopping or investigating based on perceived nationality, religion, or citizenship." I believe that this is consistent with the values of Hoboken residents, who believe firmly in the words inscribed on the Statue of Liberty which says, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." We are a nation of immigrants and we provide support to all members of our community, regardless of the documentation they possess. It is simply the most compassionate thing to do. The Trust Act also states that we will comply with all applicable federal statutes and comply with the enforcement of immigration law where required. However, Hoboken has limited public safety resources and we must ensure that those resources are solely being utilized for the benefit and protection of our residents.

5- Homelessness

What is your approach to addressing homelessness in Hoboken, and what is your plan for providing services and shelter to the city's homeless population?

Hoboken does have a population of residents that are unhoused or making transitions from temporary housing situations to more permanent ones. I would emphasize that anyone can be put in this situation, and many times it is a divorce, financial downturn, or other life event that causes people to be unhoused. I have supported the Hoboken Shelter's coordination with our faith communities to provide housing and necessary services to this population. As Chairman of Hoboken's

Zoning Board of Adjustment, I voted in favor of the 122 Adams Street application which established a food pantry for the Hoboken Community Center. It is important that we make

services we provide to this community accessible in multiple areas of Hoboken. Also, as we start to implement our multi-year plan to increase affordable housing in Hoboken, we will hopefully provide more spaces where these temporary residents can find permanent shelter. We can also do a better job as a City of coordinating the resources provided from the state, county, and faith-based institutions to provide mental health and other social services to this important population.

6- Public Education

What is your long-term vision for the future of public education? How would you make that vision a reality, and what role do you see charter schools playing in that plan?

Hoboken will continue to be an attractive place to live for families with school-aged children. Hoboken's Board of Education is responsible for directing most of the activity when it comes to public education in Hoboken. However, as we saw with the failure of the recent school bond referendum, there is still more that needs to be done in terms of coordination between City officials and the school system. The need for upgrading our existing schools and making space for new ones has not changed in the last several years. We are still on pace to outstrip our ability to provide public education to all residents. I would like to open up the dialogue between the Board of Education, the City Council, and interested stakeholders from the community so that we both can explain the needs more effectively and receive public input. Excellent public education is a commitment we make to all residents with school-aged children. We need to appropriately fund those commitments as Hoboken grows. Charter schools can be part of the solution to overcrowding in the schools and may offer new approaches that satisfy market demands in areas where our public schools cannot. We should be open to this dialogue and welcome competition in education.

Do you support school choice? If you do, would you support a voucher system?

Parents typically exercise their right to school choice by voting with their feet. Many Hoboken parents elect to send their children to schools in New York City, Jersey City, and other places to get a particular education for their children. At this time, I do not believe that a voucher system would be appropriate in Hoboken, unless there was a demonstrated financial need on the part of the family seeking it.

7- Governance & Trust

What specific steps would you take to establish and maintain transparency and

accountability in your administration? What would be your policy on OPRA responsiveness? Exclusions?

On Hoboken's Zoning Board of Adjustment, we are a quasi-judicial body that emphasizes a fair and transparent process for every applicant. Conversations are always on the record and we welcome members of the community who wish to provide their perspectives on applications. However, I see a number of areas in Hoboken that are not transparent and often lack community input. Many projects in Hoboken occur outside the Master Planning process using redevelopment. There are several specific criteria that allow a project to be considered for redevelopment, but I believe that it is overused in Hoboken. Redevelopment projects often do not go through a public vetting process and therefore result in poor outcomes for residents. The recent example of the failed hospital redevelopment plan, which would have increased the height of one of the buildings near the hospital to 10-stories, resulted in predictable public outcry. There are some areas in Hoboken which can handle increased height and density and some that cannot. This would have never happened if there was an open process for land use that involved the community. Bringing the same level of transparency that we have right now on the Zoning Board to the City Council will be one of my key priorities if I am elected to represent Hoboken as an At Large Candidate.

As a city council member, what would your hiring process be for positions within the city?

When I served in the U.S. Department of the Treasury, we had a very transparent hiring process where all roles had to be posted publicly for a minimum of two weeks before candidates could be interviewed and selected. We have a large number of highly talented people in Hoboken. We should give them the ability to apply for positions in City Hall in a process that is fair and open.

8- Non-Partisan Representation

Recognizing the November election is a non-partisan municipal race, how would you ensure that your administration represents the interests and concerns of all residents, regardless of political affiliation?

Elected officials represent the will of the people and should be good listeners. This should occur regardless of party affiliation. My commitment as a City Council At Large member would be to have an open door policy. We need leaders that will listen and take the best ideas for change, regardless of where they originate.

9- City Focus

What would be the primary scope of your focus as a council member, and how would you balance addressing national issues like climate and immigration with the more immediate, localized needs of Hoboken residents?

I know that Hoboken residents care deeply about national issues. They care about both their communities and the overall direction of the country in which they live. My charge as a City Council At Large member is to work primarily on local issues that impact the daily lives of Hoboken residents. There are some national issues that are particularly relevant to Hoboken's situation, such as climate change. Since I bought my first apartment in Hoboken in 1997, Hoboken has flooded during heavy storms. Superstorm Sandy also reminded us that we need to do more in both big and small ways to mitigate flooding and any potential changes that are due to long term changes in climate patterns. Hoboken has been on the right track in recent years, implementing onsite water retention facilities in new development, adding new pumps, and completing resiliency parks. This is one area where I would seek to balance both national and local concerns to the benefit of Hoboken's residents. But my focus as a City Council member is squarely on the needs of Hoboken and our residents.

Our community has a recognized need for more recreational opportunities, including the potential for a public swimming pool. What is your plan for evaluating and addressing this need?

I have heard the message from a number of Hoboken residents about the desire for a public swimming pool. My family used the Weehawken pool during the first summer when it opened to Hoboken residents, so I understand what a community asset a community pool can be. We need to balance that need against other priorities and ensure that any solution properly reflects our desire to keep taxes low. There may be options for a community pool at the current YMCA site. One of my first steps as a City Council At Large member will be to evaluate the options and try to arrive at a fiscally responsible solution that meets the community need.

Addressing the persistent problem of rodents is a top concern for many residents. What is your long-term plan to tackle this issue, and what metrics will you use to measure the success of city services?

Living on Washington Street for the last few years, I have seen this problem firsthand. We have to look first at some of the root causes and design more effective solutions. We know that we have some trash cans on Washington Street that are poorly functioning. We also know that many businesses and residents do not properly secure their trash, perhaps because they lack

adequate trash receptacles or are simply discarding things freely on the street. City Hall has taken some proactive steps in recent years to address the problem, such as limiting rat accessibility to natural habitats like sewers, implementing rodent control on construction sites, and encouraging residents to seal their properties so that rats cannot easily get in. We would further encourage residents to report instances where they see rats so that Hoboken can do more in those hotspots. While it may be hard to establish a dashboard of rat metrics, I would think that we will know when the problem has been effectively mitigated when the number of complaints goes down and when we can walk out on trash night in peace.

10- Cannabis

What are your thoughts on the city's current plan for six cannabis dispensaries? How would you characterize the rollout process to date, and what is your position on public marijuana use within city limits?

Recreational and medical cannabis is permitted in New Jersey under the 2021 Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization (CREAMM) Act. Hoboken has several dispensaries, which have been operating without incident. They are for adults 21-and-over and all have security onsite to check I.D.s and maintain order. The owners of these establishments are local business people and we should afford them the same protections and rights as anyone else starting a small business in Hoboken. They do not need to be threatened by frivolous litigation, and Hoboken's City Council has been active in passing legislation to support these businesses. In terms of public use, no one is allowed to publicly use cannabis in locations where cigarette use is also banned. This was codified in the New Jersey Smokefree Air Act. It is still illegal to publicly use cannabis in public parks, restaurants and bars, streets and sidewalks, and other high traffic locations. We should be active in enforcing these laws to ensure that cannabis users and non-users can safely co-exist in public places.

11- Environment

The previous administration spent a significant amount of time and money on legal action against companies regarding environmental issues. Do you plan to follow in the same footsteps, and what is your overall approach to environmental policy for Hoboken?

My approach to environmental policy emphasizes sustainability and resiliency. That has to happen at the local level, starting with efforts to mitigate the impact of any environmental changes on Hoboken's critical infrastructure. Hoboken has taken many proactive steps to secure its water supply. The lift is large because the issue of 100-year-old water pipes was ignored by

many previous administrations. I know that Hoboken has sued various large energy companies in recent years to try to recover the costs of rising sea levels and damage done by Superstorm Sandy. However, this is probably a bigger issue than Hoboken and I would prefer to see Hoboken work collaboratively with other impacted municipalities and our State Attorney General to determine the feasibility and desirability of this legal strategy. It is also important that others that are impacted share any costs of litigation. Hoboken should not have to go this alone.

12- Commercial Revival

What is your strategy for promoting commercial revitalization and supporting local business throughout the city?

Hoboken has always been a vibrant city. People from all walks of life call Hoboken home and many rely on our local businesses to keep Hoboken the unique place that it is. However, when I walk down Washington Street and other retail areas of Hoboken, I see too many vacant storefronts. As a City, we need to better engage the local business community to ensure that we are streamlining processes to ensure that we make Hoboken an attractive place to start or continue a business. We should also survey business owners that looked at Hoboken, but decided to locate in other places like Jersey City. We should implement more standardized checklist templates in City Hall so that businesses know what they need to do to get started here. We should also look for ways to reduce start-up costs.

13- Additional comments or anything that you would like to add.

Hoboken has been my home for years and like you, I have seen a lot of changes. Most have been for the better and Hoboken is now a better place to work, raise a family, and live your best life than when I first arrived in 1997. There are a lot of folks that want to see the progress we have made stop. Team Emily is committed to listening to you every day and taking steps to move Hoboken forward. We have the most responsive person in Hoboken running for Mayor in Emily Jabbour and a team with deep expertise in fiscal matters, public safety, education, and many other critical areas. We humbly ask for your support to make Hoboken even more amazing tomorrow than it is today!