

People beg Peebles: Please run against de Blasio!

By [Carl Campanile](#)

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Mayor Bill de Blasio could be facing off against Don Peebles (right) in 2017. Photo: AP; John Roca

Business mogul Don Peebles is eminently qualified to run for City Hall and could pose a serious challenge to Mayor Bill de Blasio's re-election bid in 2017, political activists said Wednesday.

"Peebles has what it takes to run for mayor. You don't get to where he is without being a proven leader. He's very qualified," said the Rev. Johnny Green, a Harlem pastor who is leading a group of black ministers trying to find an alternative to de Blasio.

"I'm very pleased Peebles is considering running. He would pose a serious threat to de Blasio's second term. He's got deep pockets and deep ties to the black community," added Green, pastor of Mount Neboh Baptist Church and president of Mobilizing Preachers and Communities.

Peebles's [harsh criticism of de Blasio in Wednesday's Post](#) was the buzz in Democratic Party circles.

In the interview, the real estate executive called the mayor a failure who was "anti-business," "anti-wealth" and "anti-accomplishment."

De Blasio, through a spokeswoman, declined to comment.

Peebles, one of the nation's wealthiest black entrepreneurs, said he received a blizzard of enthusiastic emails and phone calls from friends and residents encouraging him to run. A retired detective who read Wednesday's Post exclusive pleaded with Peebles by email, "Please run for mayor!"

A pal emailed him, "Nothing gave me more pleasure than seeing this article this morning. Let me know if there is anything I can do to assist."

Another wrote, "Read your article in the front page of The Post. You have my vote."

Said still another fan: "If you decide to run, you can count on me to galvanize support from young professionals. The city is desperate for stronger leadership."

Peebles said he's giving himself plenty of time before making a decision.

"While a number of people I respect have encouraged me to announce now, I plan to take the next several months to engage a broader dialog with New Yorkers and would expect to make a final decision sometime next year," he said.

Some political insiders were skeptical that Peebles would throw his hat in the ring. But one Democratic operative who knows him well said Peebles isn't playing political games. Peebles has been quietly building relationships across the city for five years, meeting with City Council members and state lawmakers, as well as the clergy, the operative said.