

How would you use this position to improve policing in New York? Do you support cutting NYPD funding in order to reallocate funds towards needed services and social programs? Where would you reallocate the funds, if so? What concrete policies would you advocate for to improve policing in NY? *

We need to fundamentally rethink the way police departments engage with the communities they serve. New York cannot claim to be a progressive state so long as we have a criminal justice system that disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, including LGBTQ New Yorkers and people of color.

I was proud to help pass a historic series of police reforms, including landmark legislation to repeal Section 50-a, which has unjustly shielded police personnel records from public scrutiny, as well as my legislation, the Police Statistics and Transparency (STAT) Act, which will require racial and other demographic data to be collected for low-level offenses and deaths in police custody. This type of data collection, which has been resisted by law enforcement for years, is key to devising metrics to combat systemic racism and police brutality.

While this was important progress, I know the Borough President plays a key role in protecting and supporting our most vulnerable residents and our communities who are most heavily policed. As Borough President, I will work to ensure we engage with community stakeholders and empower community members through my proposal for Community Board Budgeting, to ensure that our neighborhoods have adequate and equitable services, driven by the people who live there.

How would you go about creating more affordable housing in New York? What about permanent housing for New York's homeless population? Where would you put it? How would you make sure it's actually affordable and sustainable? Would you ever support upzoning in order to create it? Will you accept money from real estate interests? Please be specific on your proposals. *

I will not equivocate on my values when it comes to housing: we must treat our neighbors facing homelessness as human beings and New Yorkers, as people who deserve dignity, respect, and a right to self determination. We need to stop expecting that the market is going to solve the housing problem, and start using the government to aggressively intervene.

I have not taken real estate money in this campaign. One of the most destructive developments in Manhattan over the last two decades has been the overbuilding of so-called luxury housing, apartments that are often bought and warehoused by out-of-town investors who won't spend more than a few days in our neighborhoods. As the prime sponsor of the pied-a-terre tax in Albany, I've been fighting a long time to counter this.

I intend to use the Borough President's planning and zoning powers to push aggressively for the repeal of 421-a, to end the failed 80/20 mix of mandatory inclusionary housing, and to mandate the construction of limited equity complexes like Mitchell-Lamas, HDFCs, or Chelsea's Penn South in any future rezonings. And finally, the current shelter system fails to meet its goal in providing safe and clean housing for unhoused New Yorkers. Moreover, in the middle of this public health crisis, the current administration is greenlighting the arbitrary movement of unhoused men and women in emergency shelters based on nothing but political convenience. We have fallen into the trap of treating the unhoused as inhuman, a far cry from the City I know and love. My first goal would be to create stability in the shelter system. The unhoused need to stop being moved like pieces in a chess game. Next, we need to expand the Safe Haven model to every community we can and give the unhoused the resources they need to secure stable housing. Last, we need to build truly affordable housing that will give the homeless an actual path to stable housing. Unsafe shelters are just band aids to a symptom of a much greater systemic ill that we must address.

Do you support taxing the wealthy? What specific tax policy changes would you support in New York State and New York City to increase State and City revenue? How will you, at the same time, restore NYC's economic health, employment, tax base, and small businesses, both short-term and long? *

Yes, I absolutely support taxing the wealthy. I'm proud to be fighting for new legislation, including my pied-a-terre tax proposal and the ultra-millionaire's tax, that would ensure that wealthy New Yorkers are paying their fair share. We must aggressively tax the ultra-wealthy who live in New York, so we can restore our economic health. We also need to continue pushing through legislation that provides tax relief to our small businesses, which is why I introduced the Manhattan Mom & Pop Tax Relief Act.

Short term, a just COVID-19 recovery is going to require that the wealthy pay their fair share; we need the wealthiest New Yorkers to step up to help bring back the city we all love, as their civic duty as New Yorkers. And we need to create tax incentives for small businesses, and disincentives for landlords with vacant lots, to help save and expand small businesses and keep more New Yorkers employed. Long term, we need to build a sustainable tax plan that expands our tax base, protects the middle and working class and ensures long term economic health for our city. As Borough President, I will be an aggressive advocate for creating a more fair, economically healthy New York.

How should we desegregate our schools? Do you support eliminating the SHSAT? Do you support admissions screens? What concrete changes would you make to our public school system? *

New York City has the most segregated school system in the nation. It's a stain on our city, one that we need to acknowledge and fix. As Borough President, I will advocate to redraw district lines to ensure diversity is a consideration and to combat historical redlining. And I support reimagining the way we handle school admissions for public schools and moving away from standardized testing. It's the only way we can begin to tackle the inequalities in our schools. I do not support administration screens.

We should be using resources to make our public school enrollment process more transparent, and our services more accessible. As Borough President, I would create a Public School Parent Resource and Advocacy Center that helps parents in low-income Manhattan communities navigate the byzantine public school enrollment process while advancing strategies to integrate our public schools, and to have the city offer free dyslexia testing to every student.

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What is the path forward on corrections reform? Do you support closing Rikers? Do you support constructing new, borough-based jails? In all boroughs or just some of them? Do you support bail reform? Did you support the recent partial roll back of bail reform? *

I support a movement toward decarceration. The prospect of spending billions of dollars that the City doesn't have on new jails is an untenable solution. I was proud as a Senator to support comprehensive bail reform that was the result of years of activism by formerly incarcerated individuals and racial justice organizations in our community. Bail is a measure of wealth and not a determinant of guilt, and the rich shouldn't be able to pay their way out of jail while poor New Yorkers are unjustly jailed due to their financial status. I would use my platform in the Borough President's office to continue advocating for corrections reform, decarceration and a more just criminal justice system.

How can New York lead on climate change? Are there any green energy projects we can pursue? Do you support any of the existing pipeline proposals? How can we leverage our financial and economic power to encourage other jurisdictions to be better on the climate? *

The City has only marginally reduced its greenhouse gas emissions in the last 15 years, an unacceptable response to a climate crisis that will undoubtedly leave New York City one of the most vulnerable cities in the United States. I'm supportive of Local Law 97 and its goals of reducing GHG emissions by 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. The law needs to be enforced in-full, and I will continue to be a forceful advocate for aggressively reducing our city's carbon footprint.

As Borough President, I'd focus on small-scale and large-scale solutions to this problem. On day one, I will create a hub of resources for building owners, large and small, to make retrofitting cost effective and simple. Longer term, I offer a bold vision for a car-free Manhattan. This is a climate, safety and quality of life issue that is imperative for our borough. As Borough President, I would take aggressive steps to move toward that future by continuing my fight to improve and expand public transportation.

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Downtown Democrat Club Candidate Survey: Borough President <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/d/1d7LrjtYSqUk0F3itmdsz0...>

How will you improve procurement and contracting? How do we cut waste, and how do we make sure women- and minority-owned businesses get a fair shake in the procurement process? *

The cost of building in New York City is far greater in almost every metric compared to our equivalent international metropolises. We need to find ways, including in the design phase, to reduce costs without also cutting worker protections and quality. That doesn't mean the City shouldn't have flexibility in choosing vendors that offer unique services or have innovative ways to address problems the City is facing. I would not eliminate the "low-bid" procurement requirement but would add a layer of flexibility for the City to choose services that may not be the cheapest. The city needs to have the option to accept bids that are not the cheapest if it means diversifying the contracts that the city signs and ensuring the City can support women and minority owned businesses.

What is your plan to save small businesses? How do we make sure, when we come back from COVID, our local businesses are still here? And how do we make sure the enormous amount of commercial vacancies get filled, and not just by big chains snatching up cheap leases? *

At least one-third of our small businesses are not going to survive the pandemic; that is an absolute tragedy. I have a number of proposals that would help our small business owners survive until we can reopen fully again. Save Our Storefronts is legislation I currently sponsor that would provide small businesses assistance with their rent. I also recently introduced the Manhattan Mom and Pop Shop Act that would eliminate a state tax only levied on businesses south of 96th Street. I'm also supportive of a vacancy tax on large landlords to disincentivize keeping their properties unoccupied. Implementing this tax would punish landlords who keep storefronts vacant in the hopes of attracting large corporate chains. We need to give small businesses a leg up and make rents more affordable.

Just as important, we need to think about how to creatively reuse the nearly 100 million square feet in

office space that are currently vacant in Manhattan, not to mention the many other vacant spaces on Broadway and in our cultural institutions that we need to sustain. That's why I'm proposing to hire a new team solely dedicated to pursuing public-private partnerships in the Borough President's office, with the goal of securing a lot of that space for small business, for affordable housing, and for artists and community organizers to move here and get low-cost space in the heart of the city.

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How do you plan to use your office as more than just a bully pulpit? What are some concrete things you plan to do, other than vocally support and oppose policy decisions made by others? *

I have passed 79 bills in the Senate; I understand how to introduce successful legislation, and how to use creativity, coalition-building and perseverance to any office. As Borough President, I will use every tool at my disposal, not just the bully pulpit, to push forward my vision for Manhattan. Along with introducing legislation, I would create task forces and resources centers to tackle our most challenging problems, from public schools to social services. I would use the office's discretionary money to fund the creation of a new Public Health Advisory Group to be on call for elected officials and community organizations across Manhattan. I would hire a new team solely dedicated to pursuing public-private partnerships in the Borough President's office, with the goal of securing a lot of open office space for small business, for affordable housing, and for artists and community organizers to move here and get low-cost space in the heart of the city. And I would leverage the budget power to give Community Boards their own discretionary funds, as outlined below. These are a few examples of how I would leverage the office to make meaningful, structural change for our Borough.

How will you utilize and empower community boards to better serve their communities? *

The Borough President has a huge capital budget. I think it's more important than ever that our neighborhoods have a say in their needs, so I'm proposing what I call Community Board Budgeting. Let's divest the Borough President's broad discretion over capital dollars by delegating substantial authority for capital funding to local community boards.

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

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