



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2021 Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Kathryn Garcia

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Name of person filling out this questionnaire: Monika Hansen

Please answer each of the following questions to the best of your ability:

1) If elected, what would be your top priority in your first term?

As Mayor my top three priorities will be: a strong recovery, economic mobility and fighting climate change. We need to provide the necessary support and day to day quality of life investments—clean parks, safe transit, free childcare, access to fresh healthy foods—that allow all New Yorkers to thrive. That’s why the core of my COVID-19 recovery plan is to support the most vulnerable New Yorkers with meaningful economic relief: free childcare, support for small businesses, a jobs pipeline for CUNY and trades schools graduates, and universal broadband.

2) What personal and/or professional experiences do you believe make you uniquely qualified to run for New York City Mayor? Attach resume or CV if desired.

I have been accountable to 8.6M New Yorkers for 14 years as a public servant. If you don’t know my name, you know my work: I have been responsible for clean water and clean harbors; for trash collection and snow removal; for lead abatement; and, at the start of the crisis in NYC, ensuring food access for our most vulnerable neighbors throughout last spring and summer. I am the go to crisis manager – which is why I was named Food Czar during this Pandemic, and distributed 130 million meals to vulnerable New Yorkers. It’s why I served as the interim chair of NYCHA and Lead Czar, stepping in to overcome decades of disinvestment in public housing, years of neglect and childhood lead exposure. On my watch, the number of children with elevated blood lead levels dropped by more than 20%. During Superstorm Sandy, as Incident Commander I brought back 42 pumping stations and a water waste treatment plant in three days. Government is about improving the condition of people’s lives. Managers in government must hold themselves accountable to the highest standards to ensure that all communities receive the best quality services. I believe that government should be invisible if it works well—that we should get out of your way and do our jobs humbly, with no ego, and no expectation of praise for a job well done.

3) List all of your endorsements, including but not limited to elected officials, unions, political clubs and community-based organizations.

- **Uniformed Sanitationmen’s Association Teamsters Local 831**
- **Sanitation Officers Association SEIU Local 444**
- **SEIU Local 246**



- **Uniformed Sanitation Chiefs Association**

Together, these unions represent more than 10,000 essential City workers

4) What, if any, groups or industries will you not accept campaign contributions from? If any, please note specifically whose money you will not accept.

NYPD labor unions

5) How do you propose helping NYC recover from the COVID pandemic and resulting economic recession, particularly given the projected shortfall in city revenue?

The role of Mayor over the coming years is to rebuild our city. We need to provide the necessary support and day to day quality of life investments—clean parks, safe transit, reliable childcare, access to fresh healthy foods—that allow all New Yorkers to thrive. That’s why the core of my COVID-19 recovery plan is to support the most vulnerable New Yorkers with meaningful economic relief: free childcare, support for small businesses, a jobs pipeline for CUNY and trades schools graduates, and universal broadband.

6) What measures would you take to improve educational opportunities for all students in NYC? How do you plan to ensure that all NYC children are able to attend high-quality, integrated schools? Do you support D15’s integration plan as it has been implemented? What changes, if any, would you make to the current D15 integration plan?

We need structural change that will desegregate and incentivize better educational outcomes at every single school in the city, so that families feel confident that the closest school to their home will provide a quality education for their child. At the middle school level, that means building new high schools in every borough for the top 10% of 8th graders, and ending screens on a district by district level in consultation with parents. At the high school level, we also need to reward schools that demonstrate progress with students entering at lower proficiency levels and ensure students at all high schools have access to rigorous and specialized courses taught by teachers that are strongest at online learning -- one of the benefits of virtual learning that we can carry forward. At the elementary school level, we need to expand challenging offerings and enrichment opportunities at all schools and do a better job matching students of color with those opportunities. I would also accelerate our Universal Literacy goal to 2023. We can’t wait until after the end of my first administration to reach this goal; we know what works -- equipping teachers with science-backed curricula based in phonics -- to reach 100% of students reading on grade level by end of 2nd grade by 2023.

We have seen very promising results so far in District 15 in Brooklyn. However, we need to continue to engage underserved families to make sure they understand how to navigate the system. Parent buy-in is critical for a successful transition and phase out of exclusionary admission programs at the middle school level. I would end middle school screens on a district by district basis in consultation with parents--alongside commitments to build new high schools for the top 10% of 8th graders to



incentivize better educational outcomes at every middle school.

7) How would you have handled the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 academic year? How would you prepare for a second wave of this pandemic? How would you propose to ensure that the needs of highly vulnerable children with special needs, who are homeless, come from poor families, and/or live in households without adults who could aid their learning are not left further behind when remote learning has to be relied on?

Last year, the administration massively mismanaged the school reopening process. I saw this first hand in my role as Food Czar. I would have worked closely with public health guidance and kept school open for the youngest students—and then kept a consistent schedule for middle school students, and moved primarily to virtual learning for high school students.

We must implement universal broadband. Universal broadband will allow us to create a “Virtual Excellence” center at DOE—to expand access to AP for All more ambitiously than we have before and to ensure the best teachers are creating virtual content for all students. If kids can learn the latest hot dance moves on Tik Tok, we can teach them science, history, the arts and more too. We were not prepared to transition to virtual learning, but we have learned that we have an opportunity to build classrooms without walls so we can make the system more resilient and equitable.

There are 140 schools in NYC with more than 20% students who are homeless. We cannot blame teachers for low performance and behavioral problems in these schools, when we are not doing everything in our power to house and support our homeless students. We need to expand support for these schools by providing adequate support staff, and practical necessities, like installing a washer and dryer.

8) Do you support allowing non-citizen New York City residents to vote in City-based elections? Why or why not?

At this point, I do not support changes to the voting eligibility. However, as policy makers, we must hold ourselves accountable to serve all New Yorkers. Non citizen New Yorkers pay taxes and are invested in and contributing to the city.

9) Do you support any campaign finance reforms for NYC? If so, please describe.

As a current participant in the City’s campaign finance process and first time candidate, I will evaluate the process and propose reforms after the election.

10) Now that the State government has passed the Reproductive Health Act, what steps would you have the Council and City Hall take to increase reproductive healthcare access, including maternal healthcare, and to do so equitably?

Health is more than just the absence of illness--you can’t be healthy without stable housing or access to preventative care. As many have said, the pandemic simply exposed the underlying issues



of access. Our communities of color suffer from disproportionate historical injustice and the pandemic has highlighted significant healthcare disparities by income and race -- driven by lack of access to regular, affordable care. Some of NYC's lowest-income communities also have the fewest hospitals and healthcare facilities. And as of the last census, 600,000 New Yorkers lack health insurance. Kathryn supports more investment in H+H virtual care / telehealth services to improve access to mental health care services. We can adapt learnings from the successful Test and Trace models to send micro teams into communities for public health screenings and services, and connect people with virtual care and wraparound services.

11) The MTA is facing a significant revenue shortfall and many parts of the city lack access to reliable public transportation. What measures would you implement and/or enforce, to promote safe, efficient, and accessible transportation options for mass transit users, pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers in Brooklyn and in the City as a whole?

With my Complete Streets proposal, as we repurpose streets to prioritize public transportation, cycling, and pedestrian safety, we will make the city safer. We will speed up our buses by creating new dedicated busways and bus lanes, expanding offboard payment and all-door boarding, giving our buses priority at intersections, and growing the Express Bus network and Select Bus Service to cut down commuting times. We will expand the protected bike lane network by 250 miles, and better maintain the bike lanes we already have. We will better integrate CitiBike into the existing transit network, and subsidize expansion into communities that have been underserved by the existing program. As we create a more integrated infrastructure that makes it more appealing to New Yorkers to skip having a car, we can eliminate the factors that suggest a need to ban private cars. We must keep New Yorkers with mobility issues in mind as we design a comprehensive strategy for all of us to get around.

12) How would you ensure fairness in employment, salary, workplace conditions, and promotion? What is your position on strengthening and increasing access to union membership?

Union jobs are one of the quickest ways out of poverty. I testified in City Council for the Teamsters to make sure our largest city recycling plant is unionized - so I know we can't take it for granted that a job site will be union. I support increasing access to union membership and was proud to be the first candidate to announce a major union endorsement. Finally, I will take concrete steps to ensure that we are recruiting and promoting fairly At DSNY, I changed the promotion process to ensure a more level playing field.

13) How would you ensure that underserved communities receive fair and equitable treatment from city government? What policies do you support that would level the playing field for historically marginalized groups?

Racial equity must be a part of every single policy proposal--from education, police reform and housing to transportation, climate and even governance. My fundamental approach will be to dedicate resources equitably to ensure that all communities receive the best quality services--that means allocating resources to better serve neighborhoods that have been historically underserved.



As an adopted woman growing up in a multi-racial household, I didn't have to look farther than the dinner table to understand that diversity makes us stronger. I took that experience with me throughout my public service career. I was proud to fight for environmental justice solutions for waste infrastructure at DSNY and am committed to continuing to fight for and implement solutions that . It's about listening to and valuing the experiences of everyone at the table--and reflecting a commitment to racial equity in our budget.

14) What policy and practice changes are needed for NYC government to ensure sufficient quality housing that actually is affordable for existing residents in Brooklyn neighborhoods?

Kathryn will focus the City's housing agenda on outcomes: creating healthier residents and communities. Health and housing are linked. Residents who do not have stable or quality housing are less healthy. Safe, secure, affordable housing is a basic human right. We have added 500k New Yorkers over the last decade, but only 100k units of new housing - we cannot reduce the housing prices without increasing supply. We will also make it easier, faster, and legal for private partners to build more housing. We will end apartment bans and discriminatory zoning, and allow duplexes and triplexes to create more options for families. Finally, we will accelerate approvals for new housing construction, streamline the ULURP and environmental review process as well as permit applications and inspections at the Buildings Department and sister agencies.

15) What policies would you pass or enforce to ensure public housing/NYCHA repair, upkeep and security, and access to alternate housing and services when lacking essentials such as heat, gas and hot water? What is your position on "privatization" of public housing/NYCHA, and on City government sale of public housing "open areas" (outdoor seating & recreation plots) and air rights to private developers?

NYCHA doesn't need another plan - residents have seen plan after plan after plan, including 3 plans under the de Blasio administration. We know what needs to be done -- install new boilers, hire more plumbers, fix broken elevators, eliminate mold -- and our focus will be on executing the plan. Kathryn supports leveraging the substantial federal money available in Section 8 and other programs to fix units so NYCHA residents can be proud of their homes, including through the RAD program. As Interim Chair of NYCHA, Kathryn saw first hand the immediate benefits to tenants' homes—and how proud they were to show off their new kitchens and bathrooms.

16) Given the City's Covid and post-Covid economic crisis, how would you approach your role in addressing the city's carceral system, including the plan to close Rikers?

I fully support closing Rikers and would convert it into a renewable energy zone. It is the ideal location to harvest renewable energy with solar panels, large battery storage, composting sites, and electric charging stations for the City's fleet. I also support bail reform and believe in a strong focus on re-entry and removing barriers for workers to make sure people can successfully focus on safe employment.

16) Describe your vision for public safety in New York City? What, if any, functions would you like to see removed from the police department? What agencies assume the functions removed from the NYPD?



Kathryn is the only candidate that has both the commitment and the practical experience working with labor unions to reform the NYPD and keep our communities safe. As the leader of a uniform agency with a 98% male force and law enforcement division, she was tough but fair--and fired Sanitation Workers that crossed the line. That's what accountability looks like. Kathryn would appoint an NYPD Commissioner that believes in peaceful protest and protecting all New York City residents.

Specifically, Kathryn will take these steps:

- **Enforce clear and consistent consequences - Kathryn will hold police officers accountable for depraved acts, just like she held Sanitation Workers accountable for showing up on time to work--zero tolerance policy.**
- **Require NYC residency for new cops and increase community policing - It can't be an us vs. them mindset - we need every member of the NYPD to be fully bought into rebuilding the City and fully committed to the community they serve.**
- **Increase the recruitment age from 21 to 25--the age at which you can rent a car - Police officers face the most challenging moments of the human condition; we need to make sure new recruits have life and job experiences that bring a mature perspective.**
- **Ramp up training at all levels - More robust training for mid-level management (sergeants and lieutenants) is badly needed and will help shift the culture from a "warrior" to "guardian" mindset**

17) Do you support changes to the ULURP process and to other NYC zoning mechanisms? If so, what specific changes do you support?

The ULURP process is too long and cumbersome to meet our urgent housing needs, and it unnecessarily pits communities against desperately-needed affordable housing. It can take between 12-15 months to even start the ULURP process and then projects go through a seven month review with approvals at several levels of bureaucracy and elected officials. We will introduce reforms to streamline the ULURP and environmental review process. Affordable housing projects will have a shorter review to reflect the urgent need to build affordable housing. We will also streamline permit applications and inspections at the Buildings Department and sister agencies (DEP, FDNY, etc.) to reduce red tape and reduce the lead time from project initiation to occupancy.

18) Do you have a plan to reduce and prevent homelessness in Brooklyn and NYC? Explain your plan.

As Mayor, Kathryn is committing to build new 10,000 units of supportive housing to provide permanent shelter, services and support for people experiencing street homelessness and those most at risk. The key to ending street homelessness is convincing a person to accept services and connecting them to housing - we need to improve how we do both. Approximately one-third of households in New York City are single-adult households and single adults also comprise one-third of homeless New Yorkers. New SROs and Micro-Apartments can be a safe, sustainable and efficient means of providing housing to single New Yorkers. We will relax HPD restrictions on new SROs to



facilitate safe, responsible development.