



Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2021 Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

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questionnaire: Joycelyn Taylor

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

If elected, what would be your top priority in your first term? One of my top priorities for my administration will be creating affordable housing, eradicating homelessness, and repairing NYCHA. None of us are our best selves by ourselves. None of us are okay without a decent place to stay. That is a basic human right. I will review the capital budget to see where we can divert funds from projects that may be nice to have but are not necessary a need or do not pose a risk if not completed at this time.

I will utilize those funds to create permanent affordable housing and holistic housing developments for the homeless. We spend \$3.2 billion dollars a year on services for the homeless, much of which includes supporting shelters that people are afraid of going to. This does not make common sense. My goal is to address homelessness by providing homeless people with addresses.

In addition, my goal is to build housing that includes more ownership opportunities so that there are not the constant issues of individuals finding a reasonably priced apartment. \$15 an hour jobs and \$2,000 a month rents do not go, and we cannot continue to believe that this formula will ever work for every day working person in this city. We must invest in housing that is based upon what we know people can afford to pay.

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 included by resume for review. However, the personal and professional experience that make me qualified to run for NYC Mayor is my lived experience in this city.

As a single mom, I worked 12-14-hour days six days away to be able to afford my basic needs and be able to afford to send my son to day care. I went to school while working, taking care of my son and my nieces and nephews when my sister passed away. Then my mom became ill and I took care of her as well. I know what it is like to have to be solution based and figure things out.

In addition, I have run a business in this city and have actually worked for the City of New York. I know firsthand the policy and procedures that the city has implemented that do not work for the small and minority business community. How the projects are being built with funds and off of the credit of those who can afford it the least. How the city is culpable in putting businesses out of business due to its policies and procedures.

These experiences and work arounds I had to figure out in order to survive are part of the reason I am running for office.



I know that my experiences with education, the health care system, childcare, supportive services will lend a different perspective as it relates to how the city should operate. In addition, I know my experience as a business owner in this city will also lend a different perspective.

That is what this city needs. A Mayor who has the lived experience of this city, who is hard working, compassionate and will utilize common sense.

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

At the current time, I have not solicited or obtained any endorsements. My endorsements are from the people. There are several nonprofit organizations that while they are not allowed to get involved in politics do support my platform.

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.

I am not accepting funds from real estate developers, unions, or PACs.

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

As my mom always said, "It is not what you have but it is what you do with what you have." Given the current situation it is important that:

- 1) We obtain the necessary support we need from the federal government. We contribute more than we obtain back and now is the time in which we need to revisit that arrangement. We cannot give the federal government what we do not have.
- 2) In addition, as I mentioned previously it is going to be important that we assess all projects that have been planned and determine if given the current environment those projects make sense. Example, the new jail project. We should not be spending \$11 billion dollars to build 2,500 new jails at a time when we may have a short fall. Even if there was not a shortfall, spending \$4.4 million dollars on a jail cell does not make common sense. This is a project that should not have been approved. Nonetheless, given the current environment we must revisit these types of projects as well as others. If there is not an immediate risk, we must divert those funds to things that will actually assist people as well as small business owners who are struggling. People need housing, decent jobs so we can address food insecurity, technology for school. That is where we should be investing. If we want to see change, we have to change what we invest in. The reason why things are the way they are currently is because of the things we invest in. We are seeing the return on investment and it is not good. We have invested in people and communities and that is what we need to do.
- 3) Finally, the city spends \$22 billion dollars in the procurement of goods and services. If we want to see equity in the city and all communities are doing well, we must ensure that the diversity of the funds



going into the pot match how those funds are spent. My vision is to expand the number of firms that obtain contract with the city intentionally to ensure that there is diversity and equity across the board.

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?

In order to ensure that there is equity in education we cannot utilize the tax system to determine the amount of funding a school obtains. Schools should obtain the same funding across the board. The reality of the situation is that in schools that are in communities that have more access to capital they can fund raise and obtain additional funds if needed. The schools that are struggling those parents do not have extra to provide so we must ensure that they have the resources needed to be successful. If we want them to be successful, we must create the environment of success. That includes:

Ensuring that every child from the 1st grade to the 12th grade has access to technology. This is 2020 and we live in a technological world. My son when he went to school in 2008 obtained a laptop. Every NYC student should receive the same. If we can spend \$337,000 a year to house an inmate in Riker's we can afford to provide children with technology and WI-FI. I am proposing providing that as part of their toolkit for success every child obtain a piece of technology in the first grade. New piece of technology in middle school and another piece of technology in high school. We can work with providers to obtain leverage our buying power to obtain appropriate pricing.

Every school should be a high-quality school. Part of that also includes ensuring that one all students, parents and teachers are trained on remote learning so that if going forward we have to go to remote learning they know what it should look like and we can manage expectations. In addition, ensuring that we pay teacher appropriate salaries, so they are not driving Uber at night in order to be able to afford to live in this city.

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?

If I were Mayor, I would have ensured that prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year that the students all obtained technology needed to ensure a successful school year. In addition, I would have ensured that the students, parents, and teachers all obtained training on what remote learning was, what it should look like and how to manage it successfully as there had never been any previous training on remote learning.

In this moment given the pandemic, I would have re-allocated funds from either the City's rainy-day fund or various construction projects which were put on hold to ensure that everyone had access to technology. Emergency situations call for emergency measures.



In preparation for a second wave, I would look at what worked, what did not work and make the necessary adjustments. I believe that one of the challenges is that communities were not included in the decision making and we are working to manage a pandemic situation with a one size fits all mentality when it is not a one size fits all situation.

I would obtain more input and empower communities and schools to have more input. There are some communities that were safer than others and wanted to return and there were some that were not. In this instance we should have flexibility.

As someone who had my niece stay with me for a while doing home schooling, I know the challenges that exist. I would provide the additional training and provide additional resources for the special education children as well as those who are in homeless situation as well. There is also additional support needed for the teachers because due to remote learning they have been burdened with additional paperwork that was normally handled by the secretary. Many of them are not up to speed on technology and are struggling not just with managing remote learning but also managing taking care of their own children while trying to teach. We need to provide teachers with access to day care or assistance as well.

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

I do support allowing non-citizen residents to vote in the city-based elections because they are investing in the city with their tax dollars and they deserve to see a return on their investment. They deserve to have a say in who is in leadership in this city because the decisions made by those individuals impact their lives whether they are citizens or not. If we can take their tax dollars, we can take their votes.

9) Do you support any campaign finance reforms for NYC? If so, please describe. Yes, I do support campaign finance reform. I strongly support campaign finance reforms. As a grassroots candidate I see first-hand the challenges candidates have in competing with those who have access to capital from previous campaigns or from their own resources.

We need to take money out of politics. We also need to have caps on the amount of money that a candidate can spend. We need to review the minimum thresholds for the matches. We are at a place where people want to see everyday people they can relate to on the ballot and those candidates who do not have the benefit of a stockpile of money from previous campaigns or deep pockets should have a more equitable opportunity to compete.

So, I would:

Implement a cap on the campaign spend.
Adjust thresholds for access to the CFB match program.
Provide more education and resources for candidates.

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?



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?

While the MTA is a state-run agency, I would:

- Work closely with State to develop a plan to fully support an electrified bus network - this saves money in the long term and helps alleviate the public health risks to the majority POC communities that house bus depots. Adopt Columbia University Recommendations
- Advocate to fully fund the MTA and expand accessibility of all NYC subways.
- Expand the bike lane network throughout NYC and ensure safe infrastructure safety for cyclists with community input.
- Expand Car free streets to allow for bus only streets (or pedestrian/cyclist only streets) to decrease commute times and encourage mass transit.

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?

Fairness in employment in the workplace is important. As a woman of color, I myself have experienced being underpaid and devalued. While we can implement laws and policies in regard to this to monitor corporations, the city must lead by example and set the standard of what fairness looks like. The city cannot point the finger at others when many of their employees are some of the most underpaid employees there are in this city.

My goal is to review current salaries for positions within the city and see where we are falling short. By our making those adjustments and encouraging others to do the same we can create change.

While I want to strengthen the unions, we can no longer have unions whose sole purpose is to protect and support bad behavior. Besides the unions in the construction industry many of the other unions employees are underpaid and every contract it is about the employees making some type of concessions. The unions must step up the plate and set a standard for their employees so that they can demand more.

The teachers went without a raise for 10 years and when they obtained their lump sums the city obtained half of the money back through taxes. In addition, they charged them a check cashing fee for a direct deposit. It is those types of things that must be changed. It is time to strengthen unions and have them start truly support their employees who are doing the right thing instead of always coming out in support of those who are not. They have hard working members, and they need to work hard for them.

I will be a Mayor that supports unions.



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?

As Mayor, I will ensure that the diversity of the tax dollars that go into the pot match how those dollars are spent. Every day the residents of this city are investing in the City of New York. It is far past time that they start to see a return on that investment.

I support the re-investment of funds into NYCHA on the federal, state and city levels and creating ownership opportunities.

I support job creation that provides living wages comparable to what it cost to live in this city.

I support investment in new infrastructure with the understanding that not everyone is a carpenter who we must create all types of opportunities. Not just for employment but for entrepreneurship.

I support ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to work with the city and that the \$22 billion dollars that the city spends on the procurement of goods and services includes a diverse group of firms as we all know that when the city hires minority owned businesses, they will employ people from their communities, and it could change their lives dramatically.

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?

The policy we need is ensuring that the housing built is based upon what we know the median income is in those communities and not the overall median income which is not realistic. We cannot keep speaking about the median income being at approximately \$102,000 at the same time speak about trying to increase the minimum wage to \$15. That is illogical.

We have the data that provides us with the information on what households are making we must invest the city funds to build housing at those levels. This requires doing a deep dive into the city's finances to assess if the reason why this has not happened is because the city is utilizing the funds and credit of developers to build the housing. If so, we may need to change that model as it has not benefited the average resident of the city who cannot afford to pay \$2,000 a month rent.

The situation has become extremely dire in Brooklyn as cost have become exorbitantly high. When I moved to Bedford Stuyvesant 12 years ago rental and ownership cost were high, but I did not see the level of homelessness I see today. We have more and more new developments and more and more homeless people on the streets. The shelters are full. We are spending \$3.2B on homeless services with no clear path to eradicate homelessness in sight.

My goal is to utilize funds from other project to end this cycle. If we utilize \$2 billion dollars from other proposed projects, we can build 10,000-15,000 new units per year. If we permanently housed people, we could decrease our homeless services cost by \$500 million per year. The one thing homeless people or



people who are struggling to find affordable housing will not need once you provide it is another home. We must start looking at long term solutions and stop putting band aids on bullet wounds.

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?

We have examples of how to provide and maintain housing all over this city. The city of NY must get out of the business of managing public housing because it is not good at it and there is no accountability. As Mayor, I would assess each housing development and prioritize every building that had a heat gas and hot water issue.

We should not be pointing buildings on the outside when there is not heat on the inside. We have to work from the inside out. I would prioritize those developments where we know we have had the most complaints and then work to change out the systems in all of the developments so that they are up to date. We must be proactive as it relates to repairs. We cannot wait until something happens.

I am not for the privatization of NYCHA. As a former NYCHA resident I do not see the value add for long term tenants many of whom have had generations of family members investing in NYCHA. NYCHA developments do not only consist of people on public assistance. You have many working families living in NYCHA. My dad was a bus driver.

But many of these families because of the way the system is set up are caught in a vicious cycle. No matter how much they make NYCHA gets .30 cents on the dollar never allowing them the opportunity to save and possibly move out and purchase a home as many of the white residents of NYCHA who originally occupied the developments were able to do.

If we want to discuss equity, here is one area where we can be equitable. We need to make NYCHA co-ops and give the residents ownership opportunities and private management. We have a model of how this was done in Rochdale. This will allow tenants who otherwise would not be able to own the opportunity to do so. We know that the most valuable asset someone can have is home ownership. Having said that, rather than selling to private developers, and putting working families on section 8 so they can obtain market rent we must provide ownership and private management. That is my vision and my goal for NYCHA residents.

That is the least NYCHA can do after the many years of mismanagement. In addition, I am opposed to the sale of the parking lots, parks etc. because many of the tenants I have spoken to are opposed to it. They live there and should have a say in what happens in their community. NYCHA residents appear to be the residents the city wants to ignore and treat any way they want to. That is not acceptable and when I am Mayor that will change. People have a right to have a say in what transpires where they live.

16) Given the City’s COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 economic crisis, how would you approach your role in addressing the city’s carceral system, including the plan to close Rikers?

While I agree with closing Riker’s I do not agree with spending \$11 billion dollars on borough-based jails. That is \$4.4 million dollars per jail cell that even if we were not in a financial crisis would not make sense.



My plans to address this issue is to be proactive as it relates to why people end up incarcerated in the first place. If we take a proactive approach, which I will do, and provide jobs, and opportunity, a decent education and affordable housing, we will have less people to incarcerate.

I have said it before and I will say it again, "You know who is not out committing crimes? People who have a decent job and opportunity to get up in the morning and go to. People who have hope and purpose. When we under educate people and do not provide them with opportunity we create a society of hopeless individuals that have nothing to lose.

When we invest in policing and jails, we should anticipate we will see a return on investment from hopeless people who have nothing to lose. As Mayor, I will invest in and empower communities to change that dynamic.

I will create result driven programs that lead to actual opportunities, that change lives because that is what people want.

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?

You hit the nail on the head when you said NYC Safety department because that is what the department should be about. Keeping people safe not policing people. That is part of the change I want to implement. We must change the conversation and have more effective communication about what we want to see.

In addition, we must remove policing from mental health issues. If it is an issue wherein it may be potentially dangerous then we can have police, there to support but under my leadership police will not be the first line of defense for mental health issues.

As Mayor, I will also implement common sense policing. We must:

- Defund the police - Services for Schools, Mental Health, and Homelessness should be serviced by educators, mental health professionals, and social workers.
- Reallocate funds into education and youth services, homelessness, mental health, healthcare.
- End all broken windows and quality of life policing - End CompStat as the police tracking and metric system. Redefine methodologies utilized to determine success of the police department and promotions within.
- Make the CCRB an elected body that has the power to discipline police misconduct as opposed to having the police discipline themselves.
- Reduce the power of police unions and encourage the AFL-CIO and other labor groups to denounce police unions. As a candidate, I refuse to take police union money and encourage other candidates to do the same.



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

As Mayor, I would work to change the ULURP process. I believe a lot of these processes and hearings are just formalities that do not change the outcomes of proposals. I want to implement a more community controlled process and utilize technology to broaden the base of participation in the process. Let us empower people to take their communities back and ensure they represent what the community wants to see.

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

Let me be clear. We should not have a homelessness issue when we are spending \$3.2 billion dollars a year on homelessness. The biggest issue we must address and have a conversation about and create change around is the fact that homelessness, poverty, food insecurity and struggle have become big business.

Much like ending the cycle when it comes to mass incarceration, we must end the cycle of poverty being big business. My plan to end homelessness includes:

Utilizing funds from other projects to end this cycle. If we utilize \$2 billion dollars from other areas, we can build 10,000-15,000 new units per year. If we permanently housed people, we could decrease our homeless services cost by \$500 million per year. The one thing homeless people or people who are struggling to find affordable housing will not need once you provide it is another home. We must start looking at long term solutions and stop putting band aids on bullet wounds.

I will:

- Expand Affordable Housing (both rental and ownership) and make housing truly affordable for those that need it most by basing rentals on neighborhood median income (not greater metro area median income). Include affordable commercial space for small businesses.
- Provide stable housing for all homeless New Yorkers and include a variety of resources (employment help, mental health services etc.) within the housing facilities.
- Convert city office buildings and vacant real estate property into long term stable housing for homeless individuals.