

TRANSITION TEAM FINAL REPORT 2022



**ANTONIO
REYNOSO**
BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT



HELLO, BROOKLYN!

I am so excited to represent you as your next Borough President. Growing up on the Southside of Williamsburg, I never could have imagined that one day I would represent every resident of this great borough. I am honored that you put your faith in me.

I know that my term is beginning at a particularly challenging time. As we (hopefully) begin to emerge from the pandemic, its impacts are still very much with us. We've lost loved ones, we may be experiencing financial hardships, we're stressed out, and we've been separated from our friends and neighbors. Many of us have been missing our communities and our support systems.

Yet I remain hopeful that we can build together to recover from this crisis. I have big plans for this borough! We can come back stronger than we were before the pandemic. We can invest in our underserved communities. We can implement policies and programs that proactively address the racial disparities in our borough that the pandemic has laid bare. We can rebuild in a way that is resilient to climate change; that supports our youth, our small businesses, and our local entrepreneurs; and that celebrates the diversity and creativity that makes this borough so dynamic and exciting.

Of course, doing this takes all of us. And so, I pulled together a group of leaders who intersect with all aspects of life in this borough, who represent communities from Greenpoint to Bay Ridge to East New York. Organized into nine Committees, this Transition Team helped me create this document, which will serve as a guide for my work over the next four (or hopefully eight!) years. Their suggestions are organized into seven themes: **Green Brooklyn, Equitable Brooklyn, Working Brooklyn, Healthy Brooklyn, Creative and Cultural Brooklyn, Educated Brooklyn, and Civically Engaged Brooklyn.** I want to express my heartfelt thanks to all the Transition Team members for dedicating their time to this process. I couldn't be more excited to get to work!

Spread love, it's the Brooklyn way,

Antonio Reynoso
Brooklyn Borough President

LETTER FROM THE TRANSITION TEAM CO-CHAIRS

DEAR BROOKLYNITES,

We would like to start by saying thank you to Brooklyn Borough President Reynoso for convening this distinguished group, and to all the members for their participation.

Our goal with this process was to bring together local leadership to coalesce around a vision for the borough that will guide the work of BP Reynoso and his staff. We divided the Transition Team members into nine committees, eight of which focused specifically on priority issue areas for the BP. We held a series of four meetings for the full Transition Team, and each committee met separately multiple times to develop their recommendations. At the BP's request, to help shape their recommendations, we tasked each committee with asking the following questions:

1. Does this recommendation advance equity in the borough?
2. Does this recommendation advance racial justice in the borough?
3. Does this recommendation advance inclusive decision making in the borough?
4. Is this recommendation data driven?
5. How can Borough President Reynoso and his team implement this recommendation within the existing powers of the BP?

As two former elected officials and the current co-leader of a large non-profit organization, we are aware that the recommendations presented here are broad in scope and will at times be challenging to execute. We also know that priorities must shift with the times, and that flexibility and adaptability are crucial for effective governing. But we are excited about the ambitious agenda outlined here, and the Transition Team remains ready and willing to work in partnership with BP Reynoso, with each other, and with other Brooklynites to build a borough that is stronger and fairer for everyone.

Sincerely,



Dr. Una S.T. Clarke
Co-Chair

*Former New York City
Councilmember*



Marty Markowitz
Co-Chair

*Former Brooklyn
Borough President*



Arlenis Morel
Co-Chair

*Co-Executive Director,
Make the Road New York*

TRANSITION TEAM

CO-CHAIRS

Dr. Una Clarke, *Former City Councilmember*
Marty Markowitz, *Former Brooklyn Borough President*
Arlenis Morel, *Co-Executive Director, Make the Road New York*

CLIMATE RESILIENCY COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Eric Goldstein, *New York City Environment Director, Natural Resources Defense Council*

Eddie Bautista, *Executive Director, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance*
Teresa Gonzalez, *Board Member, '21 in '21*
Jonathan Westin, *Director, New York Communities for Change*

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Jocelynne Rainey, *President & CEO, Brooklyn Community Foundation*

Rabbi Moishe Indig
Coco Killingsworth, *Co-Interim President, Brooklyn Academy of Music*
Rabbi David Niederman, *Executive Director, United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg*
Anne Pasternak, *Director, Brooklyn Museum*

COVID-19 RECOVERY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Adam Friedman, *Chief Strategy Officer, Provost Office for Research and Strategic Partnerships, Pratt Institute*

Leah Archibald, *Executive Director, Evergreen*
Matt Chartrand, *Business Manager, Ironworkers Local 361*
Jamilah Edwards, *Associate Director, DC37*
Kevin Elkins, *Political Director, NYC District Council of Carpenters*
Colvin Grannum, *President & CEO, Bed Stuy Restoration*
Randy Peers, *President & CEO, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce*
Michael Rochford, *Executive Director, St. Nicks Alliance*
Dr. Melony Samuels, *Founder and Executive Director, The Campaign Against Hunger*
Bhav Tibrewal, *Political Director, Hotel Trades Council*

EDUCATION & YOUTH COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Zakiyah Shaakir-Ansari, *Advocacy Director, New York State Alliance for Quality Education*

Dr. Debbie Almontaser, *CEO & Founder, Bridging Cultures Group Inc.*
Michelle Anderson, *President, Brooklyn College*
Ahsan Chughtai, *Pakistani-American Youth Society*
Lorraine DeAngelis, *Antonio's 4th Grade Teacher*
Gabriel Gallucci, *National Director of Governmental & Political Affairs, American Federation of School Administrators*

ENDING MATERNAL MORTALITY & MORBIDITY COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIR: Dr. Una Clarke, *Former City Councilmember*
CO-CHAIR: Helena Grant, *Director of Midwifery Woodhull Hospital and Acting President, New York Midwives*

Gregory Calliste, *CEO, NYC Health + Hospitals/Woodhull*
Christina Sparrock, *Mental Health Advocate*

HOUSING, LAND USE, & PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Betsy MacLean, *Former Executive Director, Hester Street*

Michelle Neugebauer, *Executive Director, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation*
Scott Short, *CEO, RiseBoro Community Partnership*
Rob Solano, *Founder and Executive Director, Churches United for Fair Housing*

PROMOTING DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE

CHAIR: New York State Senator Zellnor Myrie

Noel Hidalgo, *Executive Director, BetaNYC*
Floyd Rumohr, *CEO, Brooklyn Community Pride Center*
Anthonine Pierre, *Executive Director, Brooklyn Movement Center*
Dorothy Siegel, *Treasurer, New York Working Families Party*
Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Ya-Ting Liu, *Director of Government Affairs and Policy, Via*

Regina Myer, *President, Downtown Brooklyn Partnership*
Reggie Nance, *Associate State Director – Multicultural Engagement, AARP*
Shabazz Stuart, *CEO, Oonee*

APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Arlenis Morel, *Co-Executive Director, Make the Road New York*

Amelia Adams, *Former Chair, '21 in '21*
Teresa Gonzalez, *Board Member, '21 in '21*
New York State Senator Andrew Gounardes
Carlo Scissura, *President & CEO, New York Building Congress*

Thank you to my staff,
Asher Freeman and Lacey Tauber,
for their work on this process and report,
Stephanie M. Guzmán and Sara Tan-Velez,
for communication and design of the report,
and to BetaNYC and Ben Matusow for
assistance with mapping and data.

TRANSITION TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS



GREEN BROOKLYN

CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE EXISTENTIAL THREAT OF OUR TIME.

The climate crisis is already having widespread adverse impacts around the world, across the country, and even right here Brooklyn. Worldwide temperatures have been hotter over the past seven years than at any time in recorded history. In Brooklyn, Hurricane Sandy’s impacts still linger in our coastal neighborhoods almost a decade later, while Hurricane Ida’s unprecedented flooding recently reminded us that more frequent and intense storms are already a reality. And we are painfully aware that the consequences of decades of industrial and automobile pollution impact residents of low-income communities hardest.

With Brooklyn’s miles of flood-vulnerable waterfront, history of local activism, and commitment to local innovation, the borough is positioned to become an international leader in climate resiliency, and in doing so can deliver environmental justice for our communities.

We envision a Brooklyn where residents, workers, and visitors can enjoy clean, open, green spaces; are protected from flooding and other impacts of climate change; live in energy-efficient homes; and are able to navigate the borough and the city safely and efficiently without relying on cars.

STRATEGIES

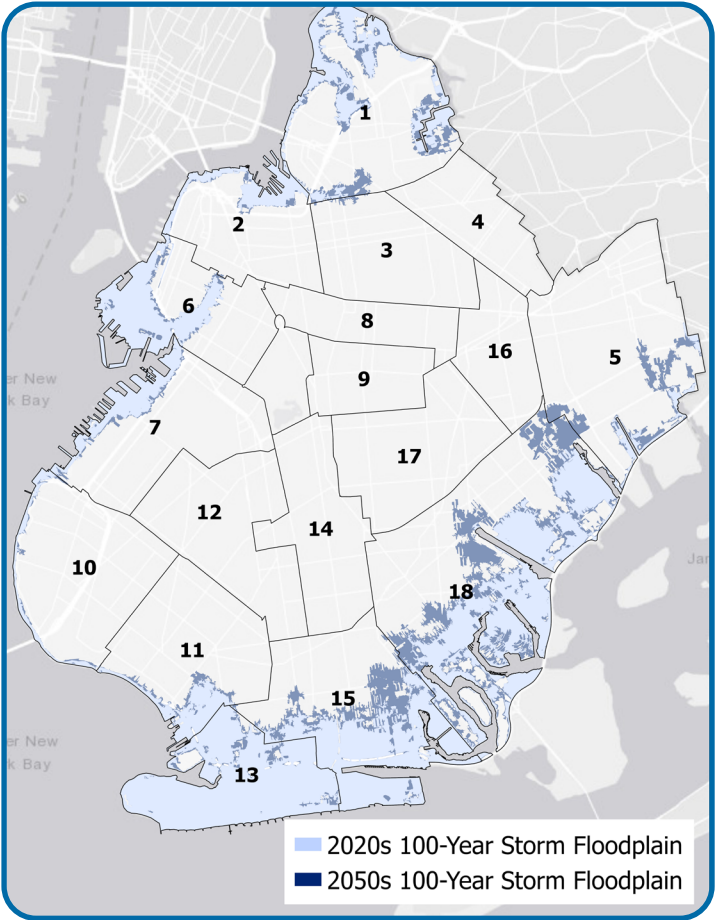
POLICY

Support policies that reduce the city’s carbon footprint and use of single-use plastics. Examples include supporting the proposed “Stop the Stuff” bill, which creates an opt-in requirement for receiving to-go plastics from restaurants; supporting universal curbside food waste collection; and upholding and strengthening Local Law 97 of 2019, which requires new energy efficiency standards and greenhouse gas emissions limits for buildings over 25,000 square feet.

BUDGET

Educate youth about sustainability. Support gardening programs and sustainability education in local schools.

Support the Parks Department in planting more trees. Brooklyn’s tree canopy is growing slowly but is still recovering from storm impacts.



(above) Brooklyn’s coastal neighborhoods remain vulnerable to flooding.

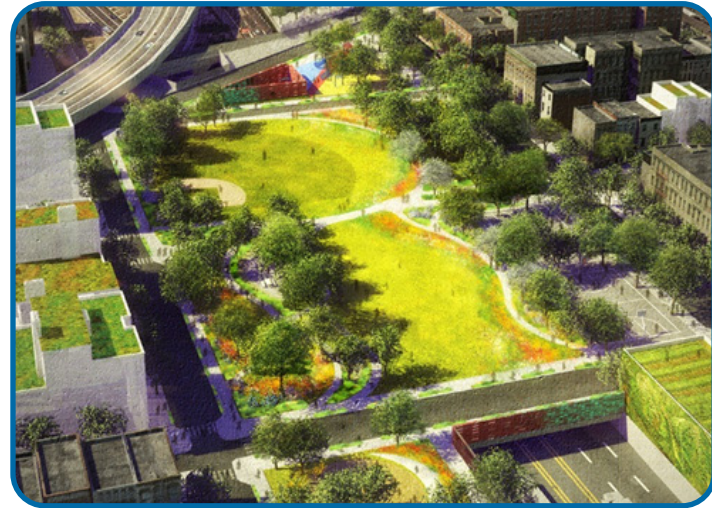
PROGRAMS

Create a borough-wide air quality monitoring network. Brooklyn contains numerous and diverse sources of air pollutants, such as industrial facilities, power plants, and especially traffic emissions. Yet the State’s air quality monitoring network has long had significant gaps and has often missed hotspots of localized emissions. Implementing a broader network of pollution monitors, in cooperation with local community organizations, will identify previously overlooked sources of air contaminants and secure the evidence needed to begin addressing the problems. Grassroots activists, local environmental groups, and community board representatives can play a major role in identifying hot spots for monitoring and can also assist with data collection.

Continue Borough Hall sustainability convenings and initiatives. Borough Hall should continue convening the Renewable and Sustainable Energy Task Force (ReSET), which brings together leaders in the field for education and information sharing about renewable energy; as well as its existing partnership with NYSERDA on the Heat/Cool Smart Brooklyn Initiative, which promotes the adoption of clean heating and cooling technologies in buildings across the borough.

Lead a community-based redesign of the most dangerous corridors in Brooklyn. Utilize the Complete Streets model, which prioritizes needs of pedestrians, cyclists, buses, and users of all ages and abilities, making it easier for younger and older residents alike to cross intersections; walk to shops, jobs, and schools; bicycle to work; and move actively with assistive devices.

GREEN BROOKLYN STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)



The Brooklyn-Queens Expressway today (left, via NYCDOT) and a rendering of BQGreen, a proposal for greening the highway where it bisects Williamsburg's Southside (right, via dlandstudio)

PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

Convene government, professionals, and community leaders around the Borough's transportation future. Focusing on large-scale projects, such as the future of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, use Borough Hall's convening powers to make sure diverse voices are at the table.

Create and award a "Greenest block in Brooklyn" prize. Engage high-profile Brooklynites to promote the contest to incentivize clean and green streets.

ADVOCACY

Build the green economy. Support the green building ecosystem of workforce programs, large and small contractors, architects/designers, labor, ConEdison, and local manufacturers of green building materials and technologies. Expand programs that identify emerging technologies and requisite skills for local training and manufacturers, and that provide M/WBE contractors with business and workforce training, certification assistance, and lending so that they can expand in this field.

Ensure regular trash pickup. Work with the NYC Department of Sanitation to make sure it is picking up garbage as scheduled and cleaning streets across the borough.

Reduce noise pollution. Support efforts to reduce noise from helicopters, truck routes, and highways.

Expand Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Select Bus Service (SBS). Manhattan's 14th Street is an example of what real BRT can look like. Brooklyn deserves similarly efficient public transit options.

Advocate for Brooklyn's fair share of capital investments in resiliency and transportation. New York City can expect an influx of funding from Federal, State, and local sources, and eventually from congestion pricing. Ensure that Borough Hall is tracking these investments and opportunities.

Encourage disaster preparedness by supporting local community organizations that provide tenant, senior, nutrition, youth, and other services during emergencies, such as delivering food and medicine, helping people leave flooded basements and blacked-out apartments to find safe shelter, assisting the elderly and disabled, and establishing communications networks that are more likely to function in a disaster.





EQUITABLE BROOKLYN

*BROOKLYN IS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE,
AND PEOPLE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY
AND THE WORLD KNOW IT!*

The borough is now home to approximately 2.7 million people, an increase of more than 231,000 over the last 10 years. Yet the demand for new housing has not been met with new housing creation, leading to increased rents in neighborhoods with good access to jobs and historically lower housing costs. This has left some tenants in fear of displacement and struggling to pay rent. Meanwhile, the ability for homeowners to maintain their homes, or for tenants to become homeowners, is increasingly out of reach for the average Brooklynite. Public housing residents are also facing difficulties due to decades of disinvestment leading to extreme capital repair needs.

Non-profit organizations also struggle to find and keep their spaces, which may impact their ability to deliver community services. The City does not have a robust financing infrastructure akin to its affordable housing programs for projects such as community centers, youth centers, and settlement houses. Because of this, the creation of new, standalone community facilities lags well behind the creation of new affordable housing. Additionally, much of the existing community facility stock in the borough is aging and in need of major capital investment. A large portion of this existing stock is located within NYCHA developments.

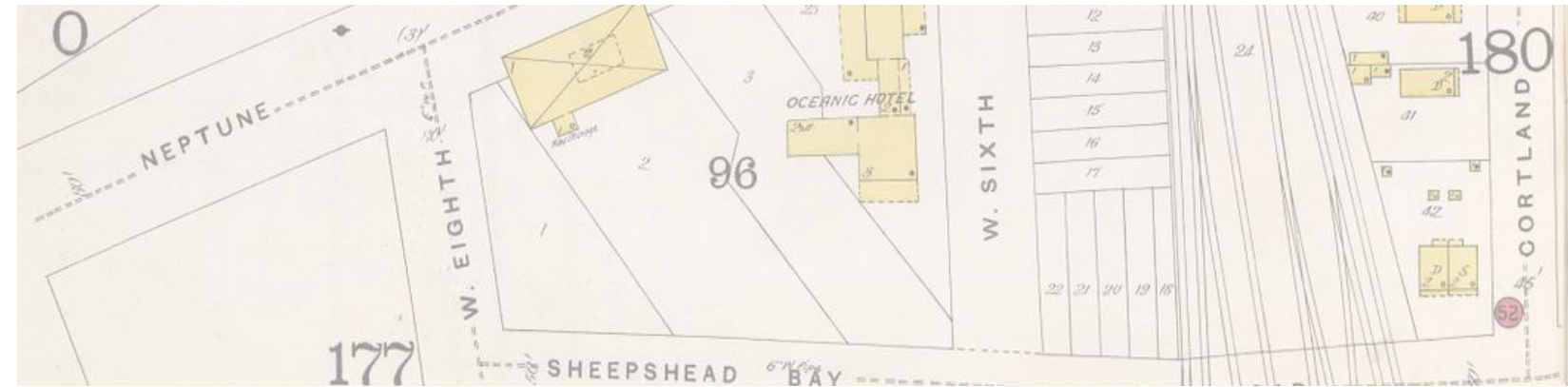
The fact that NYC's approach to planning is broken only exacerbates these issues. Planning is currently conducted in a piecemeal and transactional fashion that often pits the needs of neighborhoods against each other and opens the door for special interests to influence the process. This has resulted in glaring racial segregation and an inequitable distribution of resources across the city, including affordable housing, economic development opportunities, parkland, and transportation infrastructure. It also excludes NYCHA from meaningful consideration, even when NYCHA developments represent the most significant housing and open space resources in many communities (especially communities of color). Further, local voices are often ignored, and community-driven plans often discarded in the proposals brought forth by the City.

A more affordable borough means more development, and all our neighborhoods need to be part of the solution. We envision a more equitable Brooklyn, where rents are affordable, the most vulnerable populations are protected from displacement, home ownership is an option, and non-profit organizations are supported. We envision a new planning paradigm that centers local knowledge within a true boroughwide framework and addresses the city's need for sustainable growth holistically.

POLICY

Develop a Brooklyn-centric set of principles for development. Work with the Brooklyn Delegation of the City Council and Brooklyn communities to support policies that further affordability, local hiring and workforce commitments, community benefits, and accountability. Leverage the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) and support legislation to implement these principles. Examples may include:

- Require permanent affordability on all City-subsidized projects
- Where new housing is proposed on public land, require that it be 100% affordable in perpetuity
- Support models of collective ownership and shared equity such as Community Land Trusts
- Require climate resiliency measures for new construction, especially in areas with high flood risk
- Support manufacturing retention
- Legalize Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and ensure they become/ remain affordable
- Abolish parking minimums; increase secure bike parking minimums
- Implement the Complete Streets model and expand Open Streets
- Secure workforce commitments to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the trades and for commercial tenants
- Support legislation at City and State levels that protects low- to moderate-income homeowners (especially homeowners of color) and eliminates predatory speculation and house flipping
- Track ULURP applications and encourage developers to engage stakeholders
- Support the designation of all of Brooklyn as a Cease & Desist Zone, which would create a no-solicitation registry for homeowners, especially vulnerable seniors, to protect against speculation.



BUDGET

Create a capital fund for small non-profits in communities of color to acquire and renovate offices and community spaces. Use the Borough Hall's Reso A capital budget to catalyze investment in innovative community facility projects that maximize public benefit. Ensure that any commercial spaces in these projects support local entrepreneurs, targeted to key industries and committed to local employment.

Reform how Borough Hall allocates capital grants. Develop a new set of criteria to score potential projects for funding. This will also require advocacy for broader changes because the existing City rules around the capital budget process, and the way the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget interprets those rules, significantly disadvantages the types of community facility projects that we feel should be supported. Suggested criteria for evaluation/advocacy include:

- Nonprofit ownership and control
- Critical need for funding, i.e. the project's feasibility relies on BP support
- Community input in planning and design (for new projects)
- Demonstrated impact within community (for existing projects)
 - *people served*
 - *people employed*
 - *programs facilitated*
 - *grants leveraged*
 - *hours open to community*
 - *Meets an underserved need geographically.*

Create a publicly accessible database of funded capital projects. The public has a right to know how their money is being spent and developing such a site would demonstrate a commitment to transparency.

Support mission-driven and faith-based partnerships to further affordable housing development.



EQUITABLE BROOKLYN STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

PROGRAMS

Create a Comprehensive Plan for Brooklyn. The Comprehensive Plan should be data-driven, incorporate the Brooklyn-centric development principles noted above, and should ensure that the benefits and burdens of growth are distributed fairly and that resource allocation is based on need, rather than traded with communities in exchange for rezoning approvals. The north star of this plan should be equity, focusing on reducing the racial and economic disparities existing across the borough, especially in relation to public health and the related social determinants of health that impact Brooklynites’ day-to-day lives.

Rezoning proposals would be complementary to this goal; they would not be the primary focus. The process should include an intentional focus on underrepresented communities including public housing, especially with respect to resident engagement. By centering public health, the plan could begin to move the power dynamic away from real estate interests and towards communities. It is also an opportunity to conduct public education around land use.

Hire a staff person dedicated to public housing to ensure that Brooklyn’s most vulnerable communities are getting the attention they deserve.

ADVOCACY

Demand real affordability in new residential projects. The need in our communities goes beyond what can currently be provided through Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) and existing financing programs through the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

Advocate for full funding of NYCHA’s capital needs from government sources.

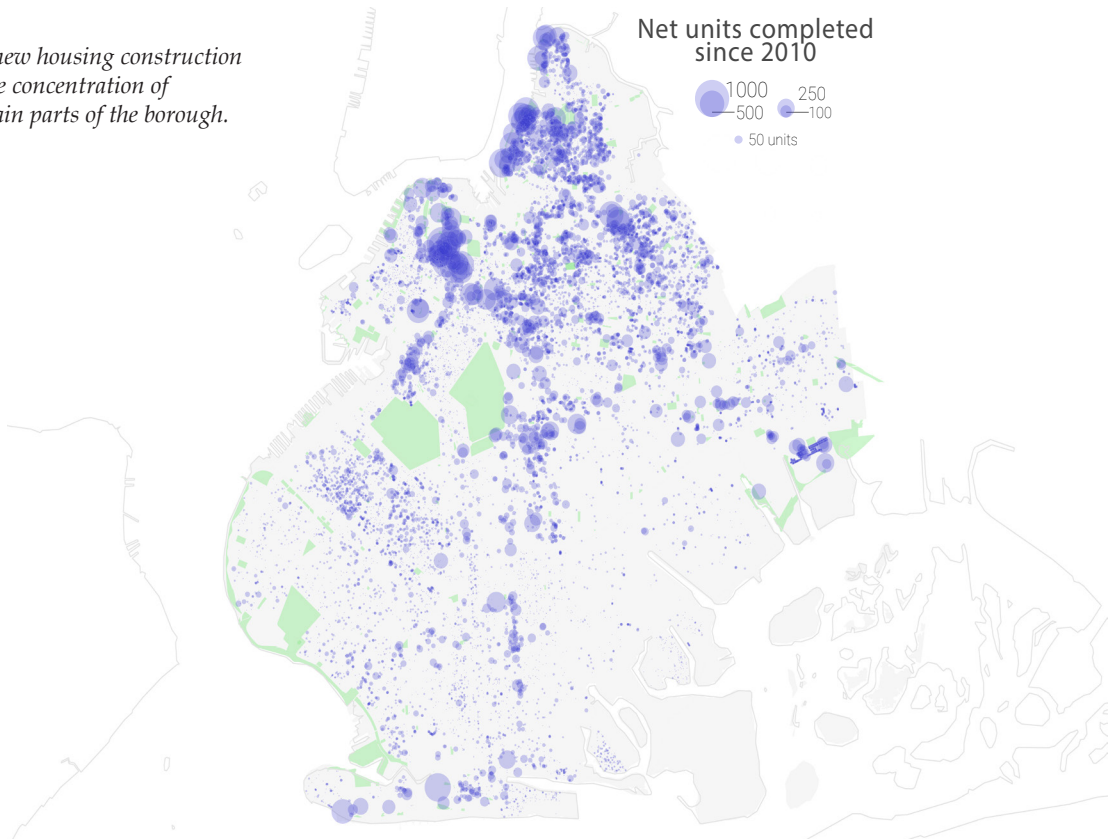
Advocate for City investment in housing counseling and legal services. With the expiration of the pandemic-related eviction moratorium, the need for tenant legal services is high.

Call for updated rules regarding City and non-City capital budget allocations. Decisions about what projects are and are not funded are usually made behind closed doors with little accountability. Advocate for a public and understandable metric for capital funding that prioritizes need, as well as community input and impact.

Advocate for more permanent housing with on-site supportive services for populations experiencing homelessness, including homeless youth, youth aging out of foster care, and people with disabilities, substance use disorders, mental health conditions, and chronic illness including HIV/AIDS.



This illustration of new housing construction since 2010 shows the concentration of development in certain parts of the borough.





WORKING BROOKLYN

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESSES ARE THE BACKBONE OF LOCAL ECONOMIES.

In addition to providing goods and services, neighborhood businesses hire local residents and support local civic and charitable activities. During the pandemic, our neighborhood shopping and business corridors faced multiple threats: neighbors and workers were afraid to shop, supply chains were disrupted, and the surge in online shopping siphoned consumer dollars out of already weakened neighborhood economies. Businesses still struggle to find workers in the face of high unemployment, particularly in communities of color.

We envision a Brooklyn with strong, grassroots Merchants Associations (MAs) and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) working to restore local businesses by creating a web of community groups, faith-based organizations, residents, and other local institutions that build vibrant communities. We also envision a Brooklyn with an inclusive, equitable economy that benefits all residents and capitalizes on public and private investments in green technologies and other emerging industries.

STRATEGIES

POLICY

Support Mayor Adams' effort to reduce fines on small businesses and increase opportunities to cure rather than pay for violations. Refocusing inspectors as educators charged with preventing violations can reduce the financial and even psychological stress on small business owners related to unnecessary fines.

Maintain manufacturing capacity in Brooklyn to protect good jobs with low barriers to entry, and to ensure availability of emergency supplies when supply chains are disrupted and prevent scarcity of the building materials and technologies that will be in growing demand as we adapt to climate change.

BUDGET

Support the creation of Neighborhood-Business Networks and increase funding for Merchant Association and BID operations. These networks can build community consciousness, reinforce buy-local programs, create youth employment and internship opportunities, host local job fairs, create senior discount/delivery programs, and implement other good-neighbor initiatives. Coordinate with existing programs including Avenue NYC, Open Streets, and Workforce Centers to support neighborhood buy-local marketing efforts, local branding, cross-marketing, and delivery.

PROGRAMS

Organize Industry Councils by convening the business, workforce, and educational leadership of key industries to develop and implement programs to ensure curriculum responds to industry needs, and create mentoring, internship, job placement, and other programs to close the gap between industry and residents. Potential industries for focus include food and urban agriculture, green buildings and building adaptation, design, and tech.

Support emergency response programs in which local business organizations that can knock on doors and call members to help businesses to survive, whether it is by accessing emergency relief programs or cleaning up after a storm.

ADVOCACY

Expand financing for small businesses. Encourage the Comptroller to explore how pension/other funds can be used to support small businesses.





HEALTHY BROOKLYN

*THE LAST TWO YEARS HAVE TAUGHT US
THAT PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH
IS CRUCIAL FOR A FUNCTIONING CITY.*

This means not only strengthening our health infrastructure related to the pandemic, but also giving our attention to health and mental health equity more generally as we shape what our post-pandemic healthcare system looks like.

Protecting the health of birthing people should be a top priority, as maternal mortality and morbidity have reached crisis levels in Brooklyn. Since 2001, Black mothers have, on average, been 9.4 times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white mothers. This is not only based in systemic racism, but on social determinants of health, including access to safe housing, a clean environment, healthy food, and regular affordable health care and behavioral health care.

With investments and programs dedicated to addressing these issues, we envision a Brooklyn that supports its public health infrastructure, addresses behavioral health needs for residents at all phases of life, and is the safest place in New York City and even the country to give birth.

STRATEGIES

POLICY

Increase postpartum care for birthing people. More than half of pregnancy-related deaths occur between 43 days and one year after the end of pregnancy. Support policies that increase the length of health insurance coverage for birthing people, and that classify postpartum home visiting services as essential benefits for the purposes of health insurance claims.

BUDGET

Support organizations that provide behavioral healthcare for all Brooklynites, with special attention to marginalized populations. Focus support on programs that provide behavioral health, substance use, and interpersonal violence support for birthing people. Behavioral health conditions are the top cause of pregnancy-associated deaths at a rate of 18%, of which with 75% are attributable to overdose and 25% are attributable to suicide. The majority of these deaths are preventable.

Create funding opportunities for pilot projects dedicated to the reduction of maternal mortality and morbidity. Facilitate partnerships between the City, State, and Federal governments, as well as private organizations. Develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for creative initiatives, and track outcomes of implementation.

HEALTHY BROOKLYN STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

PROGRAMS

Convene an Ending Maternal Mortality & Morbidity Task Force including representatives from hospitals in Brooklyn, as well as service providers and potential funders.

Increase access to midwifery care in all Brooklyn birthing facilities. Work with CUNY to support creation of a midwifery program at Brooklyn College. Increasing midwifery access promotes a shared decision-making model for birthing care and decreases unnecessary medical intervention and bodily manipulation of people in the labor and birthing process. This can lead to decreased cesarean rates, decreased maternal mortality and morbidity, and increased client satisfaction.

Promote health and behavioral health at Borough Hall. Host healthy living food seminars and a behavioral health fair day to connect Brooklynites with resources.

Create a public awareness campaign about postpartum warning signs, with a focus on postpartum depression and hypertensive disorders.



The NYC Health + Hospitals facilities in Brooklyn that saw the most births last year were Kings County (1,231), Woodhull (1,255), and Coney Island (1,069).

Map via NYC Health + Hospitals.



ADVOCACY

Advocate for safe housing options for pregnant people. Work with the NYC Department of Homeless Services to ensure that pregnant people and those who have recently given birth are placed in housing nearest to their care provider(s), and that they have access to behavioral health and other support services.

Support City efforts to create behavioral health resources for K-12 students tailored to both the in-person and remote educational learning environments and focused on trauma recovery in relation to the pandemic.

Support development of local food hubs that deliver local produce to local institutions and households thereby promoting sustainability, local economic development, and improved health outcomes



CREATIVE & CULTURAL BROOKLYN

**DIVERSITY IS BROOKLYN'S
GREATEST STRENGTH.
THE WORLD IS HERE.**

And at a time of so much divisiveness, including a disturbing rise in anti-Asian and anti-Semitic hate crimes across the city, Brooklyn can be a model for mutual understanding and cooperation. Brooklyn's motto, "Engraght Maeckt Maght" is Dutch for "unity makes strength." In a time where our communities have been separated from one another, causing sometimes longstanding tensions to boil over, we envision a Brooklyn that celebrates what makes us unique and what we have in common, and that promotes the vibrant communities of artists and makers who live and work here.

STRATEGIES

POLICY

Create programs at Borough Hall and in Brooklyn communities that celebrate the borough's history, arts, culture, and creativity to promote cross-cultural understanding, especially for youth and seniors. Work with the Center for Brooklyn History and other local organizations on strategies for honoring Brooklyn's diverse history, including contributions of Native Americans and immigrants, and the LGBTQ+ community through tours, plaques, and school programs.

Promote Brooklyn's West Indian culture with a safe celebration of J'ouvert. Work with the sponsoring organizations to enhance awareness of West Indian culture and its importance in Brooklyn. Encourage collaborations with cultural institutions, libraries, and others to celebrate West Indian heritage. Review areas of excessive policing of the parade and work with West Indian communities to identify non-policing solutions to violence. For example, violence interrupters from local cure violence groups could work the events, lessen police presence, and enhance safety.

Upgrade Eastern Parkway into a green, cultural corridor linking the Brooklyn Public Library, Prospect Park, Brooklyn Botanical Garden, and the Brooklyn Museum in ways that also support local artists and creative vendors for a new kind of outdoor market like nowhere else.

Convene cultural institutions, community leaders, and faith-based leaders in learning exchanges.

ADVOCACY

Support educational programs about religious diversity. Call on the New York City Department of Education to provide age-appropriate religious diversity curricula for all students, and to offer professional development for teachers in this area.

Support arts programs in schools and equitable distribution of arts funding.





EDUCATED BROOKLYN

OUR SCHOOLS HAVE STRUGGLED
OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS WITH
ADJUSTING TO VIRTUAL LEARNING
AND THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHING
AND LEARNING SAFELY DURING A PANDEMIC.

Black, Latino, and low-income students have experienced the highest levels of learning loss, particularly in math and reading. Meanwhile, enrollment in CUNY schools is down citywide due to the pandemic, as difficult economic times have forced many students or prospective students to choose between the need to work and the desire to further their education.

We envision a Brooklyn where, as we emerge from the pandemic era, our youth can learn successfully from before pre-K through high school, whether they are learning virtually or in-person; our DOE schools have the resources they need; our teachers feel supported; and all students have the resources they need to continue to college.

STRATEGIES

BUDGET

Prioritize school upgrades and repairs. Assess deferred maintenance and infrastructure needs at CUNY colleges and DOE schools. Prioritize needed air purification systems, bathroom renovations, and commercial kitchens. Assess and enhance access to arts, sports, music, and technology resources.

Support CUNY's childcare centers. These centers are crucial for parents who want to further their education and enhance their economic prospects. Assess and support capital needs at these centers.

Support youth literacy programs. While Universal Pre-K has helped address educational equity, a literacy gap remains for the youngest New Yorkers. Supporting programs such as the City Council's City's First Readers initiative can help get our children on an equal footing and prepare them for kindergarten.

PROGRAMS

Create a Youth and Young Adult Advisory Council. Host a regular convening of student and young community leaders at Borough Hall to get young people's perspective on current issues, including but not limited to educational equity, school funding, and civic engagement.

Create connections to support educational programs, including:

- Connect CUNY schools with industries that can provide vocational training.
- Connect corporations and philanthropic organizations with Brooklyn schools for funding opportunities.
- Match CUNY students with K-12 schools throughout the borough to help fill gaps, such as counselors and teaching assistants.

Hire a staff person dedicated to education to carry out these initiatives.

ADVOCACY

Support CUNY's teacher training and recruitment programs of diverse K-12 and Pre-K teachers to enhance educational equity.

Call for creation of a restorative justice training program for K-12 schools. Community-based organizations can be engaged in creation of these programs, which help to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline.

Support smaller class sizes. The maximum class sizes should be 22 students for kindergarten and 28 students for grades 1-5.



EDUCATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT GO HAND-IN-HAND.

As we watch our democratic institutions be threatened nationally, it reminds us of the importance of our local ones. The pandemic disconnected us from civic life in many ways, and now is a crucial time to ensure that all Brooklynites, including youth, have a seat at the table.

One of the Borough President’s most important roles is to oversee the borough’s 18 community boards, which perform a vital role in connecting residents to City government. The staff and membership of each board dedicates their time to addressing constituent concerns, liaising with City agencies and elected officials, informing the public about government programs and budget allocations, providing a platform for stakeholders to weigh in on land use decisions, and much more. Yet demographic studies have shown that board membership often does not reflect the diversity of our communities. And inconsistent training and participation standards, as well as lack of resources, has led to a large disparity in the boards’ ability to function efficiently.

We envision a Brooklyn where youth are engaged in leadership roles and democratic participation; where voting access is protected; and where our institutions reflect our borough’s diversity and inspire Brooklynites to get involved in their communities.

STRATEGIES

POLICY

Reform community boards to ensure a diverse membership that is informed, supported, and resourced, and that the process is transparent and accountable. This will be a large undertaking with many components:

- Provide uniform participation rules and expectations for all Brooklyn boards.
- Increase youth participation by educating youth about the opportunity to join their board and by appointing more young people to the boards.
- Use a data-driven approach to ensuring diversity and representation within board membership. Publish anonymized demographic data on the BP’s website.
- Provide boards with support and training. Suggested topics for trainings include but are not limited to:
 - Meeting decorum and process (virtual and in-person)
 - Conflict of interest
 - Land use, zoning, affordable housing, and the ULURP process
 - Open data
 - Robert Rules of Order
 - Implicit bias
 - The NYC agency capital planning process.
- Provide tech support so that hybrid meetings can take place efficiently and the public can participate virtually.
- Impose time limits on meetings and encourage more efficient facilitation.
- Remove barriers to participation for members and the public, for example:
 - Provide food and child care
 - Ensure language access and translation services are available
 - Make training materials accessible online.
- Avoid NIMBYism by involving community boards in the comprehensive planning process; use data to set a “fair share” approach to development, siting, etc.
- Whether through Borough Hall’s budget or other sources, work to provide community boards with resources to hire or tap into land use, urban planning, and transportation planning support.

CIVICALLY ENGAGED BROOKLYN — STRATEGIES (CONTINUED) —

BUDGET

Support participatory budgeting (PB) efforts in the borough. Both the City Council and the Mayor’s Office have PB initiatives that provide opportunities to engage more people, especially youth, in civics.

PROGRAMS

Partner with Brooklyn high schools on civic engagement initiatives. Host voter registration drives and train senior high school students on the importance of voting, serving on community boards, and becoming poll workers.

Promote Our City, Our Vote. In 2021, the City Council passed the largest expansion of voting rights in the United States in over 50 years, allowing non-citizens to vote in our municipal elections. Borough Hall can play a crucial role in promoting this new opportunity for Brooklyn immigrants.

Create a digital database of constituent issues to facilitate tracking trends and identifying needs. Share this data with community boards.



ADVOCACY

Support reforms to the Kings County Board of Elections. Support efforts to:

- Depoliticize the appointment of commissioners and create minimum qualification standards and conflict-of-interest rules
- Create a transparent hiring and appointment process for staff
- Remove the requirement that BOE employees represent both parties equally
- Improve standards for poll workers, expand recruitment, and improve their experience
- Improve the voter experience, whether voting in-person or absentee
- Remove unnecessary barriers to voting and continue to champion voter protections.

Convene the Brooklyn Borough Commissioners to discuss office operations, voter outreach, inter-agency coordination, and transparency in hiring.

Expand language access and interpretation services for voters. Ensure that relevant materials are translated and widely distributed in the months leading up to elections.



*“HERE IN BROOKLYN,
WE SUCCEED BY
NEVER GIVING UP
AND NEVER GIVING IN.”*

*Right now, we need to be tough
and pull together in the aftermath
of COVID-19 to finally address
our affordable housing shortage,
dismantle systemic racism, ensure
public health, save our small
businesses, fix our schools, and
inspire people to get involved
in their communities. Brooklyn
makes us all who we are; and
together, we'll make Brooklyn
stronger and fairer for everyone.*

*— Antonio Reynoso
Brooklyn Borough President*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF:

Reynoso Transition Team

Unsplash

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Jon Tyson

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NYC DOT

“BQE Alert Photo”

Wikimedia Commons

“Broadway Brooklyn”

“Inside Brooklyn Museum”

“362 Schermerhorn Street - 475 State Street”

“2008 voting line in Brooklyn”

Street Lab

“Foresthouses - NYCHA”

New York Public Library

*“Brooklyn Vol. B Plate No. 179 [Map bounded by Canal Ave.,
Coney Island Creek, Cortland St., Sheepshead Bay Road]”*



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