



**Waterfront Alliance Mayoral Candidates Survey
Submitted by Dianne Morales**



Question 1: As a coastal city, New York City will be hit by climate change especially hard (indeed, the effects have already started). What are your top priorities for adapting New York City (i.e. infrastructure, investments, ecology) to a future of extreme storms and sea level rise?

First, adaptive management through **a transformative climate governance strategy such as enhanced monitoring of climate threats, public open source smart city software, streamlining inter-agency communications, city-wide education campaigns, adapting maintenance systems, and internalizing climate change adaptation and justice into the public school system.**

Second, structural measures such as ecosystem based approaches using natural infrastructure like urban forestry, parks, and green spaces, and conventional infrastructure like sea-walls, circular economy and waste reduction systems, permeable paving surfaces, road compositions, a NYC public bank, a Green and Blue Municipal Bonds program, **and accelerated decarbonization and electrification of our existing infrastructure including our Green NYCHA policy program.** This strategy will be largely based on a fully resourced and supported partnership with CUNY which will function as a hub for research and pilot projects.

Question 2: New York City has 520 miles of waterfront. In the last 20-30 years, waterfronts have rapidly changed. Give one example of positive change you have seen along the waterfront



One positive change I have seen came last year in May when **Bronx Point became the first affordable housing project to be verified under their national Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines.** This was a positive step forward for deeper community engagement that will result in waterfronts increasingly informed through both a climate resilient and environmentally just lens.

Question 3: Give one example of a shortcoming or negative aspect of New York City's 520 miles of waterfront.

Waterfronts in New York City are divided and socially segregated through economic, spatial, and racial dynamics. Some areas are home to billions of dollars in real estate and private investments, while others have been totally neglected. There are many social and physical barriers to waterfront access, which results in disparities in public health benefits and vulnerability to climate change.

Question 4: Covid-19 has underscored the need for quality open space and outdoor recreation. Waterfront open space is unevenly available across the five boroughs. What are your concrete recommendations for addressing disparities in quality open space access across waterfront communities?

I would adequately fund NYC Parks and Recreation, **develop a thematic Green Participatory Budgeting Program to democratize the distribution and administration of public funds and program development;** improve government accessibility and accountability with public digital democracy platforms that facilitate direct feedback and participatory democracy; establish a public works program set on park maintenance and beautification, including fast tracked shovel ready jobs; restore seasonal staff; foster and support volunteer networks; and expand Green Zones and public EcoDistricts into historically abandoned waterfront communities.

Question 5: Historically, many neighborhoods have suffered from environmentally racist policies from power plant siting to housing in the floodplain to industrial waste in communities and waterways. What are your concrete recommendations for policies that will turn the tide and provide climate just solutions to our City's most vulnerable populations?

I would set up a racial and social justice review committee to evaluate city policy and legislation for their justice impact; **establish an environmental health commission to study and set recommendations on the impact of waste and pollution on marginalized communities in partnership with CUNY's school of medicine and environmental studies experts;** and conduct a comprehensive audit of municipal



practices such as hiring, leadership, budgets, and communications from within and outside of government to identify where the city is falling short or making disparities worse. I would also develop a justice framework ordinance to overhaul and improve city decision making and set the principles for governance and relationship building with communities. I would implement housing as a human right policy that prioritizes quality social housing equipped with retrofits and an expansion of cooperative management and land use models. My administration would prioritize food justice and a green jobs and public works agenda.

Question 6: How do you see the harbor and the maritime sector playing a central role in the City's economy and recovery in the years ahead?

My vision for New York City's recovery and economic development is premised on dignity, care, and solidarity. I believe we must shift away from the conventional model that only acknowledges value if there are private profits to be made. **We must reimagine and rebuild our public institutions to rise to the challenges of climate change and hundreds of years of environmental injustices. Major investments in the Blue economy are critical to addressing both of these challenges.** The harbor and maritime sector represent tremendous opportunities for public purpose and infrastructure that must be inclusive and participatory. A sustainable Blue economy in the 21st century must embrace the principles of qualitative growth, cooperation, adaptability and community well being.