



Waterfront Alliance Mayoral Candidates Survey Submitted by Kathryn Garcia



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?

Resiliency is about preparing for more than just the next storm. We will implement neighborhood-based resilience strategies to storms, flooding and heatwaves that adapt to the unique needs and risks of each neighborhood in New York City. **When it comes to storm surge, we will produce a real framework for all 520 miles of City coastline, with the same focus on the Rockaways and Red Hook as the southern tip of Manhattan.** We will dramatically expand our green infrastructure to absorb stormwater and cool our neighborhoods, with a focus on neighborhoods with the fewest parks and street trees. We will expand bluebelt stormwater management strategies to other flood-prone parts of the City, including Southeast Queens, and restore wetlands to serve as a natural buffer to protect our waterfront communities. In some neighborhoods, we don't need more planning, but we need to fully fund and execute plans that are already in place and work with our partners in state and federal government to eliminate bureaucratic barriers to a more resilient city.



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

For much of our City's history, our waterfront was a place of work, home to factories, docks and shipyards and teeming with industrial waste and raw sewage. In the last several decades, New Yorkers have embraced the waterfront as a place to live and play, as well as to work. The development waterfront parks in Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn have brought New Yorkers closer to our waterways and shorelines than ever before, and investments in wastewater treatment and green infrastructure have made the New York Harbor cleaner than at any point in the last century. We must continue to advance a multipurpose waterfront that serves as a place for recreation, transportation, housing and economic growth, allowing these uses to amplify each other, not compete with each other.

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

Too often, access to our waterfront is cut off from neighborhoods by highways. The FDR Drive, Major Deegan Expressway, Belt Parkway and other highways are legacies of the Robert Moses era and create impermeable barriers that can make access to the waterfront difficult or impossible. We should explore strategies to reduce these barriers both visually and geographically and improve connections between waterfront neighborhoods and the shoreline. **The project in the Bronx to tear down the Sheridan Expressway and rebuild it as a waterfront boulevard is a good case study for reestablishing these linkages.**

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?

As New Yorkers have embraced the waterfront, much of the emphasis has been on high-profile park projects like Hudson River, Domino, Hunterspoint and Brooklyn Bridge. These projects, and the billions in public and private investment that built them, have drawn luxury housing to our shorelines. We must ensure that our waterfront does not become just a playground for wealthy New Yorkers and remains open, accessible and welcoming to all New Yorkers. I support investments to create or reimagine waterfront open space in three areas: Staten Island's North Shore, the South Bronx and along the Harlem River in Upper Manhattan and the western Bronx. I will strengthen bus, bike and



pedestrian transportation networks to increase access to existing parkland along Jamaica Bay, including the new Shirley Chisholm State Park, to provide much needed open space access to residents of Central and eastern Brooklyn.

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 support investments to improve air quality by investing in clean freight solutions and electric trucks for last-mile delivery. I support the **Renewable Rikers** plan to develop infrastructure for renewable energy, composting and wastewater treatment, and investments in renewables will allow us to shutter dirty peaker plants in Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx.

We will focus investment in green job training and employment opportunities in the very neighborhoods who have borne the greatest environmental burden for decades, putting these communities at the vanguard of our fight against climate change and empowering people of color to benefit most from substantial public and private investment. Creating good jobs starts with investing in our communities. I will expand broadband internet access so it is available -- and affordable -- for all New Yorkers. We will also prepare our kids for success in the 21st century economy with a focus on youth talent development in high school, and create talent pipelines from our trade schools and community colleges to employment in modern industries like renewable energy and clean technology.

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?

Our ports should be the largest wind energy hub on the East Coast, with the facilities and people to build and maintain new wind farms off the coast. We should expand capacity to provide shore power -- and clean, renewable energy rather than dirty bunker fuel -- to ships of all types and impose clear financial penalties on polluters who do not plug in. As Sanitation Commissioner, I implemented the City's solid waste management plan, which shifted from truck export to more sustainable barge and rail export of the City's waste. **We will emphasize smart industrial growth that utilizes NYC's strong position in rail and maritime shipping, including growth of 21st century industries like renewable energy and green manufacturing, and protect and create good-paying manufacturing jobs in neighborhoods like Hunts Point, Williamsburg and Sunset Park.** We will leverage federal incentive programs to upgrade our City's short-



haul locomotives and tugboats to industry-leading emissions standards to reduce air pollutants and cut down on greenhouse gas emissions.