



STRATEGIC POLICY STATEMENT

OFFICE OF BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT ERIC L. ADAMS

JULY 2015



ERIC L. ADAMS
BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

For my entire professional career, I have served Brooklyn in one fashion or another. Starting out as an officer in the world's finest municipal police department, I learned quickly that public service was a calling that I was made to fulfill.

I began my career as a New York City Transit Police Officer in 1984 and rose to the rank of captain by the time I retired in 2006, after 22 years in New York's Finest. It was during my time as a police officer that I recognized the importance of policy reform as a means to improve people's lives. A direct result of this discovery was my role in co-founding 100 Cops in Law Enforcement Who Care, an advocacy group of officers dedicated to giving back to the communities that they patrolled.

Following my career in the police department, I continued my public service in the New York State Senate, representing the 20th Senatorial District for three terms. In Albany, I worked on reforming the usage of stop, question, and frisk, led in the fight to expand civil rights legislation to same-sex couples across New York State, and worked to bring needed resources to my constituents, including affordable housing, educational funding, and preventative health services.

It has been an honor and a privilege to continue my career in public service as Brooklyn's first African-American borough president, leading the fourth-most populous city in America, the borough of my youth and where my family and I have long called home.

Even before I took my first steps in Brooklyn Borough Hall as Borough President, I knew the future of Brooklyn was never brighter, thanks to the hard work of individual residents, community groups, and local elected officials, including my predecessors in this distinguished office. I have long said that Brooklyn is the center of the universe. It could not have been this way without the sturdy foundation, built by thousands of hard-working and dedicated public servants, which has shot our borough into the stratosphere and beyond. It is a legacy of which I am consciously aware and one that I deeply respect. I am very thankful to all of the Brooklynites who have entrusted me to build upon this progress.

Brooklyn is booming, from Greenpoint to Gerritsen Beach. Every neighborhood has become or is becoming an attractive place to live, as development plans seek to expand on the Brooklyn brand that has transformed into a worldwide symbol of trend and style. Our borough's creative class is at the front lines of this renaissance, innovating everything from dining to design. In turn, more businesses are seeking to make Brooklyn their home base to connect to this energy and capitalize on some of the borough's great resources, including our institutions of higher learning that are producing the next generation of leaders in a range of fields.

Brooklyn tourism, which was once thought to be a niche industry, has blossomed into one that supports thousands of jobs across our borough. New hotels are being conceived of every day, while visitors take advantage of our neighborhoods' top-rated restaurants and shopping experiences. Our entertainment offerings are now second-to-none, as Brooklyn will soon be able to boast professional franchises in four sports, including the NBA's Nets and NHL's Islanders, while also welcoming world-class and avant-garde talent alike to perform on our many stages.

Our borough's culture has always been most greatly fueled by the many cultures that comprise our rich and diverse communities. The phenomenon of Brooklyn fusion is an everyday practice, where Brooklynites actively seek to take part in the many rites and customs that make our neighborhoods so varied and vibrant; it is both a celebration of our immigrant roots and an achievement of blending traditions.

With all of the excitement, Brooklyn still works hard to maintain the foundations of a quality, middle-class lifestyle that have defined the borough for decades. From our award-winning schools, including public, private and parochial, to our state-of-the-art medical facilities, our borough makes it possible to raise healthy children and families.

Despite all the wonderful things that make Brooklyn the place to be, we still face significant challenges to ensure that the popularity of our brand translates into prosperity for every one of our residents.

The Strategic Policy Statement is issued every four years by Borough President's throughout New York City and its purpose is to highlight these challenges and the actions this office will take to address them. It is a New York City Charter mandated document that is intended to provide a summary of the most significant long-term issues facing the borough, outline the policy goals related to those issues, and the Borough President's proposed strategies for achieving those goals.

This Strategic Policy Statement, simply put, is a blueprint for what my office will work to advance over the course of my first term in the areas of:

Public Health	Youth Development
Education and Libraries	Aging
Housing	Transportation and Infrastructure
Economic Development	Parks, Environment, and Energy
Public Safety	Arts and Culture
Civil Rights	Community Development and Planning

Addressing the challenges in these issue areas is integral to advancing Brooklyn's economy, improving our environment, and protecting and enhancing our quality of life. Many of these issue areas were identified as priorities during Borough Hall's strategic planning sessions and all of these areas were highlighted as important during my Administration's transition team meetings.

But before outlining what we will accomplish over the remaining three years of my term, it is important to reflect upon the many achievements we have made during my first year and a half as Brooklyn Borough President. Together, with other elected officials, constituents, advocates, community based organizations, and businesses, we have made great strides towards making Brooklyn a better place to live, work, and recreate.

Public Health

The health and welfare of Brooklynites is of the utmost importance to my administration. This is why health care has been at the top of my agenda during my first year in office. Borough Hall allocated capital funds to support expanded health care facilities at hospitals across the borough as well as supported treatment and recovery centers in the Borough.

I also launched Safe Sleep Brooklyn to educate young parents about the importance of safe sleeping habits for newborns. Borough Hall also partnered with Delta Children to provide free cribs and play-yards to young single mothers, victims of domestic violence, undocumented immigrants, women in transitional housing, families in homeless shelters, and parents who are unemployed.

I have fought to prevent hospital closures and worked to protect residents from the loss of critical health care services, by calling upon the state and federal government to identify the resources necessary to address the ongoing health and community needs of neighborhoods. In fact, in my FY 2016 capital budget, I allocated \$6.5 million towards hospital and wellness organizations.

My office worked hard to provide preventative health services by holding an Ebola Town Hall meeting that convened leading health and emergency response experts from across New York City. The Town Hall helped assuage fears in the face of the Ebola scare of 2014 and assisted in the dissemination of important information to prevent the spread of Ebola. In addition, my office partnered with Walgreens to offer free flu vaccinations to Brooklynites across the borough regardless of ability to pay. Finally, I led anti-obesity campaigns to highlight the importance of healthy living, ranging from calling for the reduction in salt in our foods to hosting yoga exhibitions at Borough Hall.

Education and Libraries

Brooklyn's educational system faces significant challenges. From capital investments to improving graduation rates, to ensuring that education goes beyond just memorizing answers to a test and fostering increased parental engagement in their children's education, much remains to be done. That's why over the past year, Borough Hall has worked to ensure that our education system has the resources it needs to deliver quality education to our students. In September, my office announced a \$3.1 million investment towards education in the 2015 capital budget, funding that will go towards vital improvements to school libraries, technology programs, and needed infrastructure. I matched that number and more in the Fiscal Year 2016, dedicating over \$20 million to investments in STEAM infrastructure and integral improvements to libraries across Brooklyn. In addition, my office launched a public-private partnership between Borough Hall and Copia Interactive LLC to establish textbook-free classrooms in three Brooklyn schools this year – providing educational tablets for students at PS 196 Ten Eyck, MS 582 The Upper Academy, and Eagle Academy for Young Men II.

Borough Hall also supported the arts and arts education by launching the Lunchtime School Concert series where community members can come to Borough Hall and enjoy the arts performed by young people all across the borough.

My office will also reissue the annual “Brooklyn Parent Help Guide to New York City Public Education” in an effort to improve transparency at the Department of Education as well as increase parental involvement in their children’s education.

I also supported efforts to expand pre-K to college pipeline programs throughout Brooklyn that engage our young people early on and put them on track for college and career readiness.

My administration also invested in Brooklyn’s libraries in 2014, dedicating nearly \$2 million in funds to neighborhood libraries throughout the borough.

Housing

Affordable housing continues to be a challenge for all Brooklynites. My office has been at the forefront of trying to address this crisis, releasing a housing report that outlined potential affordable housing development sites as well as key policy reforms to preserve affordable housing in Brooklyn. Importantly, my office used the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) to advocate for 20 percent affordability in the Empire Boulevard rezoning request. In addition, my office increased capital funds dedicated to affordable housing by six percent in our first year in office, and supported innovative housing projects from Bedford-Stuyvesant to East New York.

I have also stood with tenants threatened by the deregulation of rent-stabilized apartments and partnered with local elected officials to call for the closing of loopholes in rent stabilization programs like the J-51 program. In advance of the 2015 rent stabilization law reauthorization, I called for reforms that would allow New York City to set its own regulations as well as to eliminate a rule that allows developers to de-regulate stabilized units when that unit becomes vacant.

My office also supported the “right-sizing” of tenants in New York City Housing Authority units because I believe as families age out of large units, it is important to let the next generation of families enjoy the same benefits as those before them.

In addition, I launched a faith-based housing initiative to advise faith-based institutions on ways to develop their land and provide affordable housing to communities throughout Brooklyn. I have also called for the creation of “Grandfamily” housing in Brooklyn, which would support grandparents raising their grandchildren. More must be done to overcome our housing crisis, but our first year has built a strong foundation for success in the years to come.

Economic Development

A strong economy in Brooklyn means a strong economy for New York City and the State. The underlying tenet of my economic strategy begins with ensuring that all who work here are able to afford to raise a family here. That is why I have stood in support of expanding and increasing New York City’s living wage. I recognize that this measure is integral to combatting the growing inequality facing many middle-class and lower-income Brooklynites, as is making certain that the small businesses that define Brooklyn can afford to remain open as the cost of doing business rises.

Our economic development strategy in our first year focused on inclusive growth in Brooklyn's economy. I made strategic capital investments in projects that support the preservation of industrial and manufacturing firms, as these companies provide quality jobs to our borough's most vulnerable populations. I also invested Borough Hall Capital Funding in technology infrastructure in the borough's K-16 educational system to ensure that our children and young adults are prepared for the technological demands of the modern day workforce and equipped with skills that will breed entrepreneurialism.

I actively supported the Borough's Industrial Business Zones (IBZ's), fighting against the encroachment on non-industrial uses in the IBZ's like a parole center in Gowanus, and called upon the de Blasio Administration to protect manufacturing zones as it strives to achieve its affordable housing goals.

I promoted local business by hosting a procurement fair for Brooklyn's Minority, Women and Locally Owned Business Enterprises that was attended by more than 250 participants. I also hosted international businesses interested in expanding into the United States market in the hopes that they will bring quality jobs to our residents. Lastly, I learned the needs of our business community, convening multiple industry roundtables and stakeholder meetings. The feedback and insight gained from these meetings led to many of the recommendations included in this report.

Public Safety

As a former law enforcement official of 22 years, and the only city elected official who has a policing background, I am intimately aware of the need to make sure our neighborhoods, public spaces, and families are safe. Securing this public safety is a fundamental requirement of good government.

During my tenure at Borough Hall, we have spearheaded efforts to improve NYPD-community relations, hosted a forum on emergency preparedness, and advocated for expanding subway wireless and Wi-Fi service based on public safety needs. I had legislation introduced on my behalf at the state level to enhance penalties for trespassing on critical infrastructure like the Brooklyn Bridge, increase penalties for ownership of an illegal firearm in homes where a child under the age of fourteen resides, and to expand the mandatory child abuse reporting requirements to subcontractors who work in venues in shelters.

In the wake of a child dying because a police officer did not know how to perform CPR, I led efforts to create continuing education programs for NYPD officers who have fallen out of compliance with CPR certification.

Civil Rights

This year was a difficult one for the protection of Brooklynites' civil rights. My office has repeatedly taken a stand when the rights of anyone have been violated. I organized rallies with local leaders in the wake of assaults on members of the Jewish community in Crown Heights, stood up to condemn vicious attacks on members of the LGBTQ community in Williamsburg and Bushwick as well as the Muslim community in Bay Ridge, and have been very vocal in calling for reconciliation and reform in the wake of tragedies befalling Eric Garner, Akai Gurley,

along with Detectives Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos. I worked to bring together fractured communities in the wake of the tragedies befalling Police Officers Liu and Ramos, while also championing important policy reforms to our criminal justice system, including the convening of special grand juries in cases involving police shootings as well as the greater use of open, preliminary hearings when these shootings occur.

I have also continued to call for reforms in policing for small amounts of marijuana, and supported the introduction of the Fairness and Equity Act this year. In addition, I continue to call for low-level summons reform to ensure that we are not erecting barriers to opportunity to otherwise law-abiding individuals.

To make certain that all New Yorkers can fully participate in our communities, I also committed to ensuring that Borough Hall serves as a processing center for New York City's new Municipal ID program. Finally, I fully supported President Obama's landmark executive order on immigration that will help millions of United States residents and thousands of Brooklynites come out of the shadows.

Youth

Making certain that our youth can be productively engaged in all facets of society is important to build their confidence, and put them on the path to becoming Brooklyn's future leaders. My office was proud to support and publicize the important legislation that allows young people aged 16-18 to serve on New York City's Community Boards. In addition, I also partnered with the Police Athletic League, Center for the Study and Practice of Social Studies, Association of Teachers of Social Studies, ATSS/ UFT, and Generation Citizen to support workshops that engage teens at Boys and Girls High School and other schools to become more active in their local communities and government.

Borough Hall held a youth forum in collaboration with Hot97 radio station to provide a venue for hundreds of Brooklyn's young people to discuss the issues facing them and their communities.

I also convened leaders in youth sports leagues to discuss how to further expand access to sports programs while also calling for additional funding to support youth involvement in sports leagues across the borough. Finally, we supported youth spaces through our capital budget allocations to Heckscher and McGolrick Playgrounds.

Aging

Ensuring that Brooklyn's seniors are able to age in the communities in which they were born, grew up, and raised a family is an important vision of my administration. That's why my office has raised awareness and fought to protect senior services throughout the borough. For example, we partnered with local elected officials and advocates to help support the preservation of the Swinging 60's Senior Center at 211 Ainslie Street, a center which has served the youth, seniors, and greater community of Williamsburg for over 40 years. My office invested \$1,000,000 in capital funds to support the purchase of this senior center to ensure that it remained a vital community resource to the North Brooklyn community.

Seniors face unique challenges in navigating communities as they get older. My office launched the inaugural “Senior Day Celebration” at which I called for additional safety measures to protect seniors on Brooklyn’s streets, including the utilization of school crossing guards to help seniors safely move about the borough. I have also supported the redesign of our most dangerous roadways. Both of these measures are integral to allowing seniors to live in age-friendly communities.

My office also conducts extensive outreach to senior centers and adult day cares. We organized a touring lecture series at these locations to educate seniors on fall prevention, access to eye care services, and accessing over-the-counter medicines.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Brooklyn’s transit system and the infrastructure we depend on allow 2.6 million people to live and work in such a small space of land. My office believes that a balanced, affordable, and safe transportation system is integral to the economic development of the borough, the protection of our environment, the safety of our citizens, and the quality of life of all residents. That’s why I was an early backer of Mayor de Blasio’s Vision Zero initiative and hosted a community forum on the plan. I was also a supporter of the effort to reduce New York City’s speed limit to 25 miles per hour, a move that will save lives in Brooklyn and New York City. I also opposed fare and toll hikes on New Yorkers.

In 2014, I used this office’s capital budget to increase mobility by investing in bus access to Brooklyn Bridge Park and worked to allow Brooklynites to better plan their day by investing in bus countdown clocks. I have also partnered with advocates in calling for the MTA and NYCT to protect core transit services while also expanding 21st century bus rapid transit throughout the Borough and fast-track ADA accessibility projects at subway stations.

Parks, Environment, and Energy

Without a clean environment, our communities would not be the great places they are to live, work, and recreate. Not only has my office continued the great tradition of identifying the “Greenest Block in Brooklyn”, we have also made critical infrastructure investments to parks across the borough. My office allocated nearly \$17 million in new parks, playgrounds, skateboard parks, ball fields, botanic gardens, and horse-riding facilities over the first year and a half of my term. Some of this funding helped to jumpstart the repair of Borough Hall’s bluestone plaza, a project that had been held up for years. I also helped foster environmental education by investing in the Wildlife Conservation Society’s New York Aquarium Sea Cliffs Exhibit.

My office has served as the conduit for state funds to help advance the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative, a partnership that has yielded important infrastructure design guidelines that can potentially be replicated throughout New York City, the state, and the country. I have also supported the further investigation into closing the Prospect Park drives to automobiles.

In addition, I convened a Renewable and Sustainable Energy Task Force (ReSET) to identify how to connect our clean energy programs to every day Brooklynites. But in order to practice what we preach, I commissioned the first-ever Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

(LEED) survey of Borough Hall with the intent to start fixing our own backyard and advocate for more efficient government building stock.

Arts and Culture

My office firmly believes that arts and cultural programming not only help develop the full person, but also our communities. That's why, during my first year in office, I committed to highlighting the diverse array of arts and cultural programming in Brooklyn by launching "Art of the 5 Brooklyn", organizing the first ever International Day of Friendship in Brooklyn and utilizing Borough Hall's Capital budget to support important arts and cultural projects like BAM's Cinema and Archives Center, the Brooklyn Museum, the Itafayo Cultural Arts Academy, and the Gallim Dance Company. I also supported Sunset Park's 8th Avenue Chinatown Archway.

Borough Hall was also honored to be able to display thirteen medieval manuscripts from the Sacred Convent of St. Francis in Assisi. Borough Hall served as the only public venue to host this exhibit which attracted thousands of visitors from Brooklyn, broader New York, and the United States.

To help support cross-cultural understanding, my office also brokered three sister-city agreements in 2014. In May, I worked to secure agreements with Yiwu and the Chaoyang district of Beijing, and in the latter part of 2014 I signed an agreement with the Sabail district of Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan.

Community Development and Planning

For too long, local community planning has been looked upon as a nuisance and something to be overcome rather than as a process to achieve multiple goals and successful outcomes. Communities must have a say in how they are developed, and planning must be done comprehensively. We cannot plan our communities in silos and must invest in schools, infrastructure, housing, parks, and the social services that make our communities livable.

Borough Hall's capital investment strategy in 2014 reflects this philosophy. A balanced funding allocation to schools and libraries, parks, infrastructure, the arts, affordable housing, and health care, as well as investments to create beautiful community spaces like the Bedford Armory, the Young Women's Christian Association of Brooklyn, and BQ Green were all included in our 2014 capital grants disbursements. A comprehensive funding strategy is something that my office will continue to pursue in the future to ensure that we link housing, jobs, and schools in order to build stronger communities.

One source of these good jobs in Brooklyn and New York City is in manufacturing and industry. My office has been a leading voice to ensure that funding for the City's Industrial Business Zones is protected and that policies are enacted to prevent the further loss of industrial space to high-end development or inappropriate land uses.

Moving Forward Towards One Brooklyn

While we have accomplished a great deal in the first year of my administration, much more remains to be done. For example, greater attention needs to be paid to enhancing equality in society and under the eyes of the law. We need to advance policy reforms that more strategically

invest resources in our parks and infrastructure. We face significant challenges to our creaking transportation system and the need to fast-track recovery from Sandy remains, while also recognizing that rebuilding must be done more resiliently.

The issues, goals, and actions outlined in this document are by no means exhaustive and the challenges that they seek to address are certainly not insurmountable. I look forward to continuing conversations with community leaders, city, state, and federal elected officials, as well as advocates and other stakeholders to identify additional areas of need and the resources necessary to address them.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the many successes we have achieved during my first year, there are many challenges that remain. In order to identify these challenges, as well as potential solutions, my office organized a series of issue-based transition teams in the nascent days of my administration. These teams were made up of leading experts in their respective fields who identified strategies to address the challenges facing Brooklynites across the borough. The work created as a result of these teams of experts heavily influenced the creation of this document and we thank them for their input and time.

In addition, my office relied upon input gleaned from the Community Board's District Needs Assessments. The input generated from our most local government voices is integral to identifying the areas where we as a borough must move forward.

Much of the power of Borough Hall lies in the ability to convene hearings, issue reports, allocate capital funding, and support legislation in partnership with our elected officials at the state and city levels. My administration plans to utilize every tool in our toolbox to improve the quality of life of Brooklynites and New York City residents. What follows are tangible actions that my office will take to address the twelve issue areas outlined.

Public Health

The public health of our populace is of the utmost importance to Borough Hall. Yet, Brooklyn faces an ongoing health care crisis. Hospitals continue to close, or are at risk of shutting down, cutting off access to critical health care to thousands of Brooklynites. Brooklyn remains home to high rates of preventable diseases like HIV/AIDS and heart disease, while policies that help ensure that all children start off on an equal playing field remain lacking. In order to improve public health for all Brooklynites, Borough President Adams will work to:

- Cut health care costs and improve Brooklyn's health care infrastructure
- Support parental and newborn health
- Educate about the need for preventative, public, and mental health efforts
- Target at risk populations for education of specific diseases
- Prevent domestic violence and child abuse

Education and Libraries

Schools and libraries are vital community centers for both parents and students. Education is the key to Brooklyn's future economic growth, its environmental sustainability, and is the cornerstone of a just and equal society. To bolster our education system and ensure that our libraries are meeting the challenges of the 21st century, Borough President Adams will work to:

- Support struggling schools
- Help improve educational infrastructure
- Support increased transparency and access to information for parents
- Support S.T.E.A.M education efforts
- Promote and expand access to early childhood education
- Support efforts to ensure college and career readiness

- Support the Brooklyn Public Library system
- Expand library outreach efforts

Housing

Securing affordable housing in New York City continues to be a tremendous challenge for both new residents and those who have lived in New York their entire lives. This challenge is particularly pronounced in Brooklyn where recent studies have given Brooklyn the dubious honor of being the least affordable place to buy a home. To support the creation and preservation of affordable housing, as well as the protection of tenant rights, Borough President Adams will work to:

- Build additional units of affordable housing
- Preserve existing units of affordable housing and prevent displacement of tenants
- Provide supportive housing opportunities for Brooklynites
- Enhance financial literacy for Brooklynites to access affordable housing
- Prevent homelessness and assist in efforts to transition the homeless population to permanent housing

Economic Development

While Brooklyn's economy is booming, it is imperative that we make sure these benefits reach all Brooklynites. Ensuring that industries with high wage growth potential are locating in Brooklyn and our longtime neighborhood businesses are able to continue to operate in an increasingly competitive marketplace are the current and future challenges facing our borough. To address these challenges, Borough President Adams will work to:

- Expand and grow creative and innovation economies
- Support the maker movement and traditional manufacturing
- Support local hiring and procurement efforts
- Advocate for neighborhood businesses
- Expand and grow healthcare employment in Brooklyn

Public Safety

Everyone has a right to live in a safe and secure environment. The combined efforts of the New York Police Department (NYPD), the New York Fire Department (FDNY), the District Attorney's Office (DA), and engaged community groups has made New York one of the safest large cities in the country. But more work remains to ensure the criminal justice system works for everyone. To continue to advance policy reforms and improve safety, Borough President Adams will work to:

- Engage law enforcement and support effective policing strategies
- Support efforts to prevent gun violence
- Reform the criminal justice system
- Reduce the prevalence of hate crimes in Brooklyn
- Ensure Brooklynites are prepared for future emergencies and storms

Civil Rights

Brooklyn is first and foremost a borough built on diversity. It is that diversity that helps make the Brooklyn brand so popular the world over and we should celebrate and encourage it. Because this multi-culturalism is at the heart of our borough, we need to vigilantly protect the civil rights of all our residents and ensure that we are as inclusionary of all Brooklynites as possible. To do so, Brooklyn Borough President Adams will:

- Fight to expand civil rights and equality across Brooklyn
- Promote diversity and cross-cultural understanding in Brooklyn

Youth Development

Borough Hall is primed to be an important ally in improving the lives of Brooklyn's youth population and supporting programs that empower young people to grow up to become our Borough's next great leaders. Any youth policy coming from my office will be driven by the Borough's youth, largely through providing them a platform to share their experiences, their voices, and to shape the solutions to the unique challenges they face. To do so, Borough President Adams will work to:

- Support youth organizations and activities
- Improve opportunities for youth employment
- Improve youth and NYPD engagement
- Focus on youth related health issues
- Protect marginalized youth groups

Aging

Brooklyn's seniors are our living history. They are the institutional knowledge of the borough. Seniors face similar challenges to their younger counterparts, but the hurdles to overcome them are often higher. As seniors live longer, these challenges become even greater. In order to provide seniors with age-friendly communities Borough President Adams will work to:

- Support senior health and safety
- Improve senior technology access and literacy
- Support senior centers, organizations and activities
- Improve communities so seniors can age-in-place
- Promote senior employment efforts

Transportation and Infrastructure

Brooklyn's healthy economy, clean environment and quality of life are intrinsically linked to the availability of a good transportation system that keeps Brooklyn's over 2.6 million residents and visitors safely moving. But many challenges remain to ensuring that we repair and maintain our existing infrastructure and make strategic investments to bring our infrastructure into the 21st century, and able to weather the challenges of a changing climate. In order to do so, Borough President Adams will work to:

- Help identify ways to fund transportation
- Improve accessibility and mobility in our transportation system

- Improve street and transportation safety
- Identify ways to address parking issues
- Invest in resiliency

Parks, Environment, and Energy

The protection of our environment is integral to ensuring that Brooklyn’s economy will prosper and our quality of life will thrive. Without the clean air to breath, clean water to drink, and open space to recreate, Brooklyn would not be such a desirable place to live and work. As the home of 2.6 million residents, Brooklyn faces many environmental challenges, from air and water quality to climate change and funding for green spaces. All of these issues are linked to each other and our efforts need to be broad and comprehensive. To protect our environment, Borough President Adams will work to:

- Protect our air and water quality
- Advance climate change policies and improve resiliency efforts
- Support parks and protect open space
- Improve energy efficiency efforts
- Improve Brooklyn’s solid waste management system

Arts and Culture

From the studio artist to the young chamber musician, the high school steppers to established dance troupes or from community theater stage to cinema to festivals that draw thousands, Brooklyn is an epicenter of creativity and culture. But arts and culture communities face distinct challenges ranging from a lack of funding for programs to unavailability of arts and cultural spaces. In order to address these challenges, Borough President Adams will work to:

- Unify the arts in Brooklyn
- Support arts funding
- Work to address Brooklyn’s affordable work space crisis
- Support arts led community development initiatives

Community Development and Planning

Community engagement and participation is integral to manage neighborhood change and to help guide development and plan our communities. Brooklyn has become a hotbed for development over the past two decades, and the only way the borough can adapt to and mitigate the impacts of this development is through community advocacy and planning. For years this challenge has fallen to our 18 local community boards and numerous community based organizations to advocate for the interests of existing communities while also preparing those same communities for change. To support these efforts, Borough President Adams will:

- Support additional resources and training for community boards
- Support community based planning efforts
- Support community manufacturing efforts and community economies
- Support neighborhood institutions like community gardens

PUBLIC HEALTH

Brooklyn faces an ongoing health care crisis. Hospitals continue to close, or are at risk of shutting down, cutting off access to critical health care to thousands of Brooklynites. While the Affordable Care Act has helped decrease the percentage of Brooklynites who are uninsured, many citizens remain uninsured in the borough. When Brooklynites are uninsured, emergency rooms become both an option of last resort and centers for primary health care services; both of which increases cost to hospitals and taxpayers.

New York City has made significant strides in recent years to promote healthy work environments by enacting and expanding paid sick leave for employees. Unfortunately, neither New York State nor New York City has shown similar urgency in advocating for new families to have time to care for their children in the immediate aftermath of birth or adoption. New York State has fallen behind other states like California and Rhode Island who have already adopted paid primary caregiver leave and New York City trails other cities like Chicago, Illinois or Austin, Texas, both of which provide paid leave for city employees for up to six weeks.

According to the American Public Health Association (APHA), paid parental leave brings significant benefits to young families, including decreased infant mortality rates, improved mental health of new mothers and longer periods of breastfeeding.¹ In addition, paid parental leave also benefit partners through increased involvement in children's lives over the long term. While many employers like Ernst & Young or Google provide paid parental leave, parents in lower wage jobs do not have access to similar benefits. Paid parental leave will assist in efforts to address these inequities and help all of Brooklyn's children start off on more equal footing.

When new mothers do go back to work, they are put in an untenable position of discontinuing breastfeeding if employers have not created a private space for them to do express milk through pumping. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), breastfeeding has been shown to reduce the likelihood of Type 2 diabetes, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), gastroenteritis, and ear and respiratory infections among other diseases.

While New York City has made strides over the past decade to improve the health of its residents by banning smoking indoors and in parks, requiring calorie counts on menus and creating a safer environment on our streets and in our parks for people to pursue active lifestyles, much work remains to be done to reduce obesity, heart disease and address other diseases that continue to affect our City's population. For example, over a quarter of Brooklyn residents are obese, and according to a report by the Independent Democratic Conference, nearly 30 percent of high school students in Brooklyn were overweight or obese in 2011.²

¹ American Public Health Association, *Support for Paid Sick Leave and Family Leave* (Nov. 2013), APHA.org. <http://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2014/07/16/11/05/support-for-paid-sick-leave-and-family-leave-policies>.

² Independent Democratic Conference, *Childhood Obesity: Mitigation and Prevention in the State of New York*, 5 (Sept. 2013) http://www.nysenate.gov/files/pdfs/IDC_Childhood%20Obesity%20Report%20FINAL_9.13.2013.pdf.

Communities of color in Brooklyn are disproportionately impacted by preventable diseases. According to Brooklyn Insights:

communities of color have much higher rates of asthma, diabetes, obesity and other diseases that result from pollution, poor access to good food, distance from medical resources...³

In addition, SUNY Downstate Medical Center found that nearly 29,000 Brooklynites were living with HIV/AIDS as of June 30, 2014 and during the first half of 2013, Brooklyn had the unfortunate honor of being home to New York City's largest population of new AIDS diagnoses and deaths.⁴

Other sexually transmitted infections are common in Brooklyn as well. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted virus in the United States, and one that often leads to cervical, anal, vulvar and throat and mouth cancers, among others.⁵

Unfortunately, New Yorkers, and particularly Brooklynites living in communities of color, have not taken advantage of the HPV vaccination, in all likelihood because discussing the vaccine remains taboo, even here in New York. According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, only 22 and 40 percent of boys and girls aged 13-17, respectively, have received all three doses of the HPV vaccine. In some parts of Brooklyn those numbers are even lower. In Central and Southern Brooklyn, as well as Greenpoint and Williamsburg, just 5.8% to 25.1% of girls aged 13-17 and 0% to 5.9% of boys aged 13-17 received all three doses of the vaccine.⁶

Brooklynites are also affected greatly by mental health issues. According to a 2007 survey from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, nearly 650,000 New Yorkers are affected by depression or anxiety, with North and Central Brooklyn identified as communities with higher rates of mental distress.⁷ The same survey found that nearly half of all depressed adult New Yorkers are undiagnosed. In many communities, discussing mental health issues remains taboo and more must be done to normalize the discussion of mental health issues.

One issue that must never be normalized is domestic violence and child abuse. Domestic violence and child abuse are not only public safety issues, they are public health issues.

³ Brooklyn Community Foundation, *Brooklyn Insights: Final Report*, 27 (Oct. 2014).
<http://www.brooklyncommunityfoundation.org/brooklyn-insights>.

⁴ SUNY Downstate Medical Center, *HIV Center for Women and Children: HIV/AIDS in Brooklyn*, Downstate.edu.
<http://www.downstate.edu/hiv/>.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Human Papillomavirus: What is HPV?*, cdc.gov.
<http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/>.

⁶ NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, *Health Department Launches New Ad Campaign Highlighting Cancer-Prevention Benefits of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine*, Press Release (Aug. 11, 2014).
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/pr2014/pr026-14.shtml>.

⁷ NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene *430,000 New Yorkers Suffer from Depression: Nearly Half of Depressed Adults are Undiagnosed*, Press Release (Mar. 12, 2007).
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/pr2007/pr014-07.shtml>.

According to the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, there were 26 family related homicides in 2013 in Brooklyn, representing nearly 42 percent of all family related homicides citywide.⁸ City-wide, only 26 percent of these homicides had prior police contact. At the same time, NYPD responded to over 280,000 domestic violence incidents across the city in 2013.⁹

According to Safe Horizons, one in ten children is victims of child maltreatment and one in sixteen suffers from sexual abuse.¹⁰ In 2013, Safe Horizons' four Child Advocacy Centers alone served 6,622 child survivors of sexual and severe physical abuse.¹¹

LGBTQ children are at particular risk for maltreatment. According to New York City's Administration for Children's Services, 26 percent of LGBTQ children are kicked out of their homes because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and 74.1 percent of LGBT students were verbally harassed (e.g., called names or threatened) in the past year because of their sexual orientation and 55.2 percent because of their gender expression. .¹²¹³

Issue 1: PREVENTATIVE, PUBLIC, AND MENTAL HEALTH

Goal: Promote wellness and health literacy through outreach and educational initiatives

The Borough President will:

- Work with health care partners to identify sustained community outreach strategies to improve education, understanding, and access to health care for all Brooklynites
- Engage and empower community partners to take an active role in health and education of their communities by collaborating with the existing health care network in Brooklyn
- Call attention to the need for HIV/AIDS screenings and host an annual testing day each year at Borough Hall
- De-stigmatize HPV vaccinations through education and by holding vaccination days at Borough Hall
- Continue to hold flu vaccinations at Borough Hall and expand vaccination programs to include senior pneumonia and shingles vaccination days
- Partner with sports-related businesses in Brooklyn to encourage physical activity among children
- Promote culturally appropriate and linguistically diverse health literacy fairs at Borough Hall and in neighborhood town halls
- Increase attention to the need for family mental health services, particularly for adolescents in crisis; partner with practitioners to de-stigmatize mental illness; and increase access to services

⁸ Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, *Domestic Violence Annual Fact Sheet, 2013*.

http://www.nyc.gov/html/ocdv/downloads/pdf/Statistics_Annual_Fact_Sheet_2013.pdf.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Safe Horizons, *Maltreatment and Sexual Abuse*, Infographic.

http://www.safehorizon.org/uploads/publications/1414526290_Child%20Abuse%20Infographic2.png.

¹¹ Safe Horizons, *Annual Report 2013*, 11.

http://www.safehorizon.org/uploads/pdfs/1410541019_FY2013%20Annual%20Report.pdf.

¹² National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth – An Epidemic of Homelessness*. http://www.thetaskforce.org/static_html/downloads/HomelessYouth.pdf, 2006

¹³ Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, *The 2013 National School Climate Survey, 2014*

- Ensure mental health crisis hotlines and other available resources are prominently displayed on Borough Hall’s website
- Support efforts to educate parents about childhood mental health issues and available services

Issue 2: PARENTAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH

Goal: Support healthy mothers, caregivers, and young families

The Borough President will:

- Support enacting paid parental leave for the City of New York
- Work to expand programs such as the Brooklyn Breastfeeding Empowerment Zone to educate families about the health benefits of breastfeeding and educate employers on federal laws requiring them to provide private lactation rooms
- Call for increased city and state funding to support post-partum home visits
- Host educational forums for new fathers
- Raise awareness about family planning services across New York City

Issue 3: CUT HEALTH CARE COSTS AND IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal: Help facilitate behavior change at the local level to reduce the cost burden on health care facilities and strengthen current infrastructure

The Borough President will:

- Coordinate a borough wide initiative with healthcare institutions, community based organizations, and primary care networks to educate Brooklynites on the proper use of emergency rooms and existing primary care services
- Support increased research and dialogue around evidence based transition care interventions to prevent hospital readmissions
- Work with healthcare stakeholders to advocate for proper and continued funding of hospitals, health care institutions, and primary care physician networks
- Advocate and utilize the ULURP process to advance medical facilities in high-need communities
- Call for regulated urgent care facilities to be established in high-need areas
- Ensure that Brooklyn hospitals are more financially sustainable and that residents have access to high-quality hospitals regardless of where they live
- Identify ways to improve mobile health outreach
- Continue to publicize the New York State of Health exchanges to connect uninsured Brooklynites to affordable health care

Issue 4: PROMOTE EDUCATION TO AT RISK POPULATIONS FOR DISEASES

Goal: Work with existing health partners to identify outreach strategies to reach at risk populations

The Borough President will:

- Hold forums on HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C prevention, education, and treatment
- Partner with sports organizations, businesses, and others to support active lifestyles to combat obesity and heart disease
- Partner with community-based groups to hold town halls on diabetes in high risk communities

Issue 5: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE

Goal: Prevent domestic violence and child abuse and make the system work for survivors, not abusers

The Borough President will:

- Advocate for the passage of all ten components of the Women’s Equality Act and its increased focus on domestic violence
- Work to reform laws that allow discrimination based on domestic abuse victim status
- Host “Healthy Relationship Training Academy” workshop at Borough Hall
- Ensure child abuse and domestic violence crisis hotlines are prominently displayed on Borough Hall’s website
- Ensure Public School Athletic League Coaches are trained on signs of domestic violence and child abuse
- Host a forum on identifying the signs of and preventing child abuse during Child Abuse Awareness month

EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES

Schools and libraries are vital community centers for both parents and students. Education is the key to Brooklyn's future economic growth, its environmental sustainability, and is the cornerstone of a just and equal society. With over 1.1 million students, nearly 135,000 employees, and a budget of \$27.6 billion, New York City has the largest public education system in the United States.¹⁴ Brooklyn makes up approximately 30% of that system.¹⁵ Despite its importance to our community, our education system faces immense challenges that will require every available resource to ensure that our children have access to the highest quality schools and that they are prepared to become the next generation of leaders in the borough.

Across Brooklyn, there are too many schools where students are not reading at grade level¹⁶ and there are too many schools categorized as dangerous schools.¹⁷ These are untenable situations that need our immediate attention. Brooklyn schools should be effective and safe learning environments for all students regardless of economic background.

Overcrowding, poor maintenance, and lack of technology hinder educational development and increase costs over the long term. Our challenge is to balance immediate needs with long-term vision so students will have modern schools conducive to learning the skills necessary to be successful in the 21st century and beyond. Today's students require a welcoming and dynamic environment and our efforts should be aimed at creating that space.

Parental and community engagement is also necessary for a successful education system. Schools should be in tune with the communities they serve and must reach out so that parents are receiving up to date, useful information with as much transparency as possible. The Community Schools Program and other comprehensive outreach efforts will help combat chronic absenteeism, which has a negative effect throughout schools, as teachers and students lack the stability necessary to implement a full curriculum.¹⁸

¹⁴ See New York City Department of Education, *Demographic Snapshots 2010/11 through 2014/15*, available at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/default.htm>; New York City Department of Education, *Statistical Summaries (as of 6/30/2014)*, available at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/stats/default.htm>. The budget number represents the 2014-15 budget and provides annual funding per student of \$20,226. See New York City Department of Education, *DOE Overview*, at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/funding/overview/default.htm>; see also The Washington Post, *The Dramatic Inequality of Public-School Spending in America* (May 23, 2014). <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2014/05/23/the-dramatic-inequality-of-public-school-spending-in-america/>.

¹⁵ Brooklyn has a current total of 478 public schools, 82 charter schools, and 340 private schools. See New York City Department of Education, *School Quality Reports*, available at: http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/14B7086D-9EE8-42FB-9D10-2160BE72C1EA/0/2013_2014_All_Schools_SQR_Results_2014_11_18.xlsx.

¹⁶ New York State Education Department, *Kings County Public School 3-8 Assessments, 2013-14*, available at: <http://data.nysed.gov/assessment.php?year=2014&county=33>.

¹⁷ New York State Education Department, *Violent and Disruptive Incident Report*, available at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/ssae/schoolsafety/vadir/>.

¹⁸ See generally Kim Nauer, et al., *A Better Picture of Poverty: What Chronic Absenteeism and Risk Load Reveal About NYC's Lowest-Income Elementary Schools*, The New School Center for New York City Affairs (Nov. 2014). <http://www.newschool.edu/milano/nycaffairs/ABetterPictureofPoverty.aspx>.

Future challenges will require better knowledge of science and technology, as well as better understanding and communication among our diverse, multicultural population.¹⁹ Students need the opportunity to learn the necessary science, math, and technology skills, while maintaining access to the arts and cultural programs that foster better understanding, cooperation, and creative thinking.

Preparing students for the future starts with vigorous early education programs and continues through access to higher education. We have to move beyond high-stakes testing and towards real world experiences that truly prepare students for college and the demanding 21st century job market.

Expansion of Universal Pre-K was an important first step towards preparing students, but studies show that children who grow up in poverty fall behind their peers well before Pre-K and the gap continues to expand throughout their school career.²⁰ Early intervention before Pre-K is a proven difference maker and expanding these programs will help Brooklyn families break the cycle of poverty and better prepare children for their first formal entrance into New York City's education system.

This type of effort should continue in all stages of school. Too many Brooklyn students are not prepared for college,²¹ or trained to enter into a good-paying vocation. The High School graduation rate in Brooklyn is 66.2%, meaning over one-third of students fail to make it through high-school.²² We need to improve that graduation rate, but we also need to be sure those that graduate are prepared for the rigors of college and to enter the economy.

A child's education cannot begin and end at the schoolhouse door, which is why Brooklyn's public libraries are so important. The Brooklyn public library system complements and enhances our education system while also providing integral educational and community services to the broader population. Like schools, libraries need to be a place where all people can access useful information and up-to-date technology so that everyone has a chance to prepare themselves for an ever-evolving job market.

Unfortunately, our libraries are in dire need of infrastructure repairs to ensure that Brooklynites, young and old, can continue to have a place to explore and learn.²³ According to The Center for an Urban Future, in 2013, Brooklynites lost 540 hours of library service as a result of unplanned

¹⁹ The Brooklyn student ethnic breakdown is 40.2% Black, 27.8% Hispanic, 15.9% White, and 14.8% Asian, *see* New York City Department of Education, *Graduation Rates Class of 2013* (2009 Cohort). <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/723B1E9A-B35E-4C25-9D48-4E18E0BA90A5/0/2013GraduationRatesPublicWebsite.pdf>.

²⁰ *See generally* Parent-Child Home Program, *Research-Based Model*, Parent-child.org. www.parent-child.org/our-program/research-based-model. The research shows that 3 year olds living in poverty have heard 30 million fewer words than a middle income student.

²¹ *See* New York City Department of Education, *supra* note 18. <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/723B1E9A-B35E-4C25-9D48-4E18E0BA90A5/0/2013GraduationRatesPublicWebsite.pdf>.

²² *Id.* For the 2013 graduating class (2009 Cohort) based upon graduation rates after 4 years (including August graduation).

²³ *See generally* Brooklyn Public Library, *Strategic Plan* (Jan. 2013). http://www.bklynlibrary.org/sites/default/files/files/pdf/about/strategic-plan-brand/strategic_plan.pdf.

closures. In all, 16 branches in Brooklyn have \$5 million or more in state of good repair needs.²⁴ Furthermore, the current method of funding branch library repairs in an ad hoc, piecemeal approach is insufficient to address the chronic challenges facing libraries. More must be done to invest in libraries strategically.

Library operations also need to be increased to bolster staff and increase library hours. Since 2008, despite a \$2.8 million increase in New York City's FY2015 budget, the operating budget of Brooklyn libraries has been cut by over 15 percent.²⁵ Adequate staffing levels and expanded hours are integral to ensuring libraries maintain their important community role.

EDUCATION:

Issue 1: SUPPORT FOR STRUGGLING SCHOOLS

Goal: Improve outcomes for students in the lowest performing schools

The Borough President will:

- Convene a working group to address violence in our schools, comprised of students, parents, community leaders, and elected officials
- Assist in the creation of Parent Associations or Parent-Teacher Associations in underserved schools
- Launch the "PTA Partnership" linking PTA's from high-performing schools to those at low-performing schools to improve outcomes, opportunities and, enhance diversity and exchange

Goal: Reduce chronic absenteeism across Brooklyn

The Borough President will:

- Work with schools to identify and address the risk factors of chronic absenteeism
- Identify principals who have reduced absenteeism and use them as role models
- Promote data sharing across agencies who work with at-risk students and families
- Support and expand the Community Schools program to strengthen the bond between schools and their communities.

Goal: Reform the use of high stakes testing in public schools.

The Borough President will:

- Urge the removal of the high stakes from the standardized testing to allow schools to put more focus and resources into core curriculum instruction and use of the arts

²⁴ Center for an Urban Future, *Re-envisioning New York's Branch Libraries*, 5 (Sept. 2014).
<https://nycfuture.org/pdf/Re-Envisioning-New-Yorks-Branch-Libraries.pdf>.

²⁵ Tatiana Schlossberg, *Libraries in Brooklyn Add Hours and Staff*, NY Times (Sept. 8, 2014).
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/08/nyregion/libraries-in-brooklyn-add-hours-and-staff.html?_r=0.

Issue 2: EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal: Improve infrastructure and technology in our schools

The Borough President will:

- Work to expand Borough Hall’s public-private educational tablet program to other schools in Brooklyn
- Advocate for more equitable distribution of capital funding to improve the state of good repair in our schools
- Advocate for increased funding for technology upgrades in all Brooklyn schools

Issue 3: TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Goal: Strengthen the Community Education Councils (CECs)

The Borough President will:

- Actively engage the CECs and provide them accurate, up-to-date information
- Provide opportunities for CECs to hold educational forums at Borough Hall and hold an annual Education Summit for Brooklyn CECs

Goal: Improve school choice through better community access to information

The Borough President will:

- Launch a Borough-wide “Parent Panel” to host conversations around education issues facing parents across Brooklyn
- Work to educate parents about school choice options and help to guide them through the process with a panel discussion at Borough Hall

Issue 4: S.T.E.A.M. EDUCATION (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts/Culture, Math-oriented instruction)

Goal: Cement Brooklyn’s role in emerging discussions about S.T.E.A.M. education

The Borough President will:

- Organize a borough-wide science fair that features Brooklyn S.T.E.A.M. successes, shares best practices, highlights exemplary student work, and enhances the borough’s reputation as an innovator in S.T.E.A.M. education

Goal: Help educators celebrate and incorporate the different cultures in their community

The Borough President will:

- Moderate a panel with the borough’s education leaders on school successes with cultural literacy
- Continue to highlight cultural literacy at Borough Hall

Issue 5: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Goal: Facilitate access to Universal Pre-K

The Borough President will:

- Champion the idea of the toddler to college pipeline
- Make sure the most vulnerable residents have access to local programs
- Lead the conversation to provide supplemental learning programs to fill the gap after 3:00 pm for children attending Pre-K programs
- Organize events at Borough Hall to educate parents on available Pre-K programs
- Advocate for parity in salaries between community-based Pre-Ks and DOE run programs, as 60% of Pre-Ks are run by community-based organizations
- Advocate for and utilize the ULURP process to secure space for high quality day care and pre-K schools

Goal: Engage parents and children in wellness campaigns as early as possible

The Borough President will:

- Advocate for increased at-home access for parents with children between 16 months and 4 years old, so that parents can best engage with the DOE and its resources
- Lead a discussion about healthy foods beginning at birth, including breast-feeding
- Spearhead partnerships between community-based organizations and hospitals to provide outreach to mothers-to-be about pre-natal care, healthy eating, exercise, and overall wellness from infancy
- Connect Pre-K programs and parents to student, rooftop, community gardens, and healthy eating programs

Issue 6: COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Goal: Expand parent and student access to information about college and career readiness

The Borough President will:

- Highlight the importance of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, like the Culinary Institute in Coney Island, and vocational education for non-college bound students
- Support efforts to establish a CTE school in Central Brooklyn
- Advocate for principals to help close the achievement gap with budget management, expanded Saturday programs emphasizing S.T.E.A.M., and professional development resources.
- Conduct a financial literacy workshop with college admissions offices to demystify the application process for schools, financial aid, and scholarships
- Coordinate access to resources for college preparedness, such as Graduate NYC
- Encourage training in business and social etiquette
- Conduct youth seminars and workshops to develop “soft skills” in communication, problem solving, teamwork, conflict resolution, and leadership

- Encourage and facilitate relationships with higher education institutions and technology companies who can sponsor programs, contests, and mentorships
- Investigate the potential to re-establish free tuition programs for CUNY community colleges
- Support efforts to create pre-K to college pipeline programs at CUNY institutions in Brooklyn

LIBRARIES:

Issue 1: MODERNIZE BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Goal: Update library infrastructure

The Borough President will:

- Partner with Brooklyn Public Library to prioritize capital needs and investment to critical infrastructure and technology in underserved communities
- Continue to provide Borough Hall capital funding for infrastructure improvements, new e-book technology, and other technology upgrades
- Advocate and use the ULURP process to incorporate branch libraries needs into land use decision-making process
- Advocate to coordinate discretionary funding investments from Council members, Borough Hall, and City Hall
- Advocate for continued upgrades to the Brooklyn Public Library website

Issue 2: UNDERFUNDING OF LIBRARIES

Goal: Ensure adequate operating resources for Brooklyn's library system

The Borough President will:

- Advocate for increasing the operating budget for Brooklyn's library system to 2008 levels by the end 2015
- Advocate for library funding to be included in the Department of Education budget

Issue 3: HELP EXPAND BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTREACH EFFORTS

Goal: Use innovative outreach programs to reach all Brooklynites

The Borough President will:

- Help secure funding for a StreetBooks program that uses bicycle delivery of books to youth living on the streets
- Partner with groups like The Uni Project to expand efforts to bring pop-up libraries to various corners of the borough

HOUSING

Securing affordable housing in New York City continues to be a tremendous challenge for both new residents and those who have lived in New York their entire lives. This challenge is particularly pronounced in Brooklyn. According to a recent report from New York City Comptroller Scott Stinger, average rents in Brooklyn skyrocketed by 77 percent from 2000-2012. At the same time, Brooklyn lost 14 percent of its rent stabilized apartments.²⁶ And according to RealtyTrac, the nation's leading source for comprehensive housing data, as of December 2014, Brooklyn is now the most unaffordable place in the United States to buy a home.²⁷

In early 2014, Mayor Bill de Blasio outlined a 10-year plan to build and preserve 200,000 units of affordable housing across New York City. In order to achieve this goal, Brooklyn must be at the decision-making table. Our population from 2000 to mid-2013 grew by 3.5 percent—the equivalent of nearly 90,000 new residents—far surpassing the population growth of any of the other four boroughs in New York City. These new residents, coupled with the destabilization of rent-regulated apartments, have put pressure on the affordability of neighborhoods throughout the Borough. Simply put, we don't have enough units of housing to create homes for everyone that wants to live here and the policies that protect those that live here already are under attack.

The New York City Housing Authority is the largest public housing program in North America and with 100 campuses and 58,698 apartments; Brooklyn is home to the largest percentage of these developments in New York City.²⁸ Unfortunately, federal and state funding for NYCHA programs has been under attack in recent years. According to NYCHA officials, the 2015 operating budget has a \$77 million deficit and unfunded capital needs of up to \$18 billion. All the while, nearly 250,000 remain on the wait list for NYCHA housing.

The Mitchell-Lama program for moderate and middle income New Yorkers is widely regarded as one of the most successful affordable housing programs in the history of New York City. According to the New York City Affordable Housing Resource Center, there are 132 city sponsored cooperative developments comprising roughly 54,000 housing units.²⁹ Twenty five of the developments are housed in Brooklyn, comprising almost 13,000 housing units.³⁰ Despite the size of this program, demand for units is high, with many developments having waiting lists and others with waiting lists that have been closed due to an oversubscription of applicants.

Unfortunately, in recent years, these apartments have become a target for developers and landlords who are interested in converting units from moderate and middle income regulated

²⁶ Office of New York City Comptroller Scott Stinger, *The Growing Gap: New York City's Affordability Challenge*, 5 (Apr. 2014). http://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/Growing_Gap.pdf.

²⁷ RealtyTrac, *Twenty-One Percent of U.S. Housing Markets are Now Less Affordable than their Historical Averages*, Realtytrac.com (Dec. 4, 2014). <http://www.realtytrac.com/content/foreclosure-market-report/home-price-bubble-early-warning-signs-report-december-2014-8196>.

²⁸ New York City Housing Authority, *Fact Sheet*, nyc.gov. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/about/factsheet.shtml>.

²⁹ New York City Rent Guidelines Board. <http://www.nycrgb.org/html/resources/mitchell/mitchell.html>.

³⁰ The City of New York Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Office of Asset and Property Management, Division of Housing Supervision, *Mitchell-Lama List*, available at: <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdf/renters-mitchell-lama/MLLIST.pdf>.

apartments to market rate. In addition, Mitchell-Lama co-op boards and their residents have pursued privatization. Most recently, residents in the Southbridge Towers Mitchell-Lama co-op voted to privatize the building, effectively taking over 1,500 units of affordable housing off the market.

The New York State rent stabilization law was recently renewed in June 2015 with little of the reforms included that advocates have demanded. For at least 35 years those seeking to deregulate affordable housing units and increase landlord and developer profits have attacked this law.³¹ Landlords have been aggressive in the pursuit of Major Capital Improvements increases as a means to legally deregulate such units, and landlords of rent stabilized units often look to opt out when programs like J-51, 421-a, loans, bonds or tax credit financing obligations expire, increasingly putting existing affordable housing at risk as units are vacated.

The homeless crisis continues in Brooklyn and throughout New York City. According to the Coalition for the Homeless, almost 60,000 people slept in a homeless shelter each night in October 2014. Compared to October 2011, the last year this office issued a Strategic Policy Statement, this represents a 46 percent increase in the shelter population. Of these 60,000 people, over 25,000 were children in families and nearly 22,000 were adults in families.³²

And despite a 24 percent drop in the unsheltered homeless street population since 2005, nearly 3,400 New Yorkers are still sleeping on the streets in 2014.³³

Some studies find that over 3,800 of the total homeless population are runaway youth.³⁴ Of this group, up to 40 percent are estimated to identify as LGBTQ.³⁵ Many of these youth are homeless because they have aged out of the foster care system or have runaway as a result of home abuse resulting from their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and need specific services tailored to their needs.

Addressing the homeless crisis in New York City must entail a two-pronged approach of successfully transitioning individuals and families out of shelters and foster care as well as preventing homelessness in the first place.

³¹ Lee Daniels, *Rent Stabilization Attacked by 2 Sides as State Legislation Nears Proposed Rent Increases*, NY Times (June 3, 1981). <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/06/23/nyregion/rent-stabilization-attacked-2-sides-state-legislation-nears-proposed-rent.html>.

³² Coalition for the Homeless, *Number of Homeless People in NYC Shelters Each Night*, Data. <http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/the-catastrophe-of-homelessness/facts-about-homelessness/>.

³³ New York City Department of Homeless Services, *HOPE 2014: The NYC Street Survey*, HOPE Statistics. <https://a071-hope.nyc.gov/hope/statistics.aspx>.

³⁴ NYC Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Runaway and Homeless Youth, *All Our Children: Strategies to Prevent Homelessness, Strengthen Services and Build Support for LGBTQ Youth*, 13 (Jun. 2010). http://www.nyc.gov/html/om/pdf/2010/pr267_10_report.pdf.

³⁵ *Id.*

Issue 1: BUILDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Goals: Identify existing sites and undeveloped land for new affordable housing

The Borough President will:

- Support Mayor de Blasio’s mandatory inclusionary zoning efforts
- Work with HPD to map out available city-owned sites to be developed into affordable housing
- Advocate for rezoning initiatives that allows for increased affordable housing stock in appropriate areas
- Support permanent affordability policies to ensure that affordable housing stock isn’t lost in the future
- Use Borough Hall’s Capital Program to support the creation of affordable housing across the borough
- Support multiple tiers of affordability in projects
- Work with faith-based institutions to provide them with financial and technical expertise to make the best use of their potential development rights that could be used for affordable housing
- Advocate for right-sizing parking in transit-rich neighborhoods to support additional affordable housing development
- Work with HPD to ease the affordable housing lottery threshold and to expand the locally based preference boundaries
- Support a “Public Service Housing” program to provide affordable housing for teachers, police officers, firefighters, and other service providers in New York City

Issue 2: PRESERVING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Goals: Protect existing affordable housing stock in perpetuity

The Borough President will:

- Continue to support advocacy outreach and the work of Borough Hall’s Mitchell Lama Task Force
- Advocate for new Mitchell-Lama development
- Advocate the better coordination of regulations to take advantage of inclusionary zoning’s preservations based affordable housing options
- Advocate the repeal of the Urstadt Law by lobbying the state legislature to amend the Local Emergency Housing Rent Control Act
- Continue to work with HPD and the New York State HCR to ensure that compliance is maintained with building owners in regards to code and enforcement regulations
- Partner with the HCR and the Tenant Protection Unit to educate tenants about their rights and curtail actions of bad landlords
- Partner with the District Attorney’s to hold bad landlords criminally accountable for their actions

Issue 3: SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Goals: Work with supportive housing agencies and non-profits to create supportive housing

The Borough President will:

- Partner with supportive housing agencies and non-profits to work on plans to expand supportive housing supply where appropriate
- Work with faith-based institutions to provide them with financial and technical expertise to make the best use of their potential development rights that could be used for supportive housing
- Lobby to receive city and state support to help finance more development of supportive housing units
- Use the Borough President's Capital Program to create additional supportive housing across the borough
- Achieve the Mayor's affordable housing initiatives by advocating for the blending of supportive housing units in the same buildings as affordable housing units

Issue 4: FINANCIAL LITERACY

Goals: Advance financial literacy education as it relates to home buying and rental applications

The Borough President will:

- Work with financial institutions and credit agencies, HPD, a network of housing non-profits, faith based institutions, and other stakeholders to provide educational workshops for those seeking their first home mortgage or applying for an apartment.
- Partner with local, state, and federal regulators to help eliminate the predatory lending practices that are still an issue in Brooklyn
- Partner with groups like the Center for New York City Neighborhoods to assist constituents in securing mortgage modifications

Issue 5: HOMELESSNESS

Goals: To prevent families and individuals from becoming homeless and sustainably transition those living in shelters into permanent housing

The Borough President will:

- Work with Department of Homeless Services (DHS) to decrease reliance on the shelter system and support the creation of permanent supportive housing
- Partner with DHS to educate landlords on the Living in Communities (LinC) program to help shelter residents transition to permanent housing
- Hold a resource fair to highlight DHS' Homebase program
- Work with the Administration for Children's Services to ensure that children aging out of the foster care system are prepared to enter permanent housing instead of heading directly to the streets and shelters

- Hold a hearing on the crisis of runaway and homeless youth in Brooklyn
- Advocate for free MetroCards and additional funding for runaway and homeless youth programs

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In Brooklyn's economic landscape, one thing is clear: business is booming. A report published by Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli in May of 2014 highlighted this trend stating:

Over the past decade, Brooklyn has expanded at a rapid pace by attracting new businesses and residents. Downtown Brooklyn is New York City's largest business district outside of Manhattan, and there are a number of other important economic centers in the borough, including the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Sunset Park, Williamsburg and Greenpoint. Since 2003, the number of businesses in Brooklyn has grown by 21 percent, a much faster rate of growth than in the rest of the City. Job growth has also been strong (19.8 percent), nearly twice as fast as in the rest of New York City.

In just the past four years, Brooklyn has seen an 11 percent increase in the number of businesses, a 9 percent increase in the number of jobs, and a nearly 10 percent growth in total wages.³⁶ At the same time, Brooklyn witnessed its unemployment rate drop from a peak of 11.1 percent in January of 2010, to 7.5 percent as of August of 2014.³⁷ Simply put, more jobs are being located in Brooklyn and more Brooklynites are working.

While the Borough has consistently added jobs at a steady rate, salary growth has not kept pace. Average wages across all industries in Brooklyn grew just 0.76 percent between 2010 and 2014.³⁸ In addition, over 23 percent of Brooklynites are living below the poverty level, almost 8 points higher than the rest of New York.³⁹ Given the high cost of living in Brooklyn—especially in housing—these statistics are particularly troublesome.

Thankfully, however, Brooklyn is experiencing wage growth in sectors that also demonstrate potential for expansion. Wage growth is also being witnessed in industries that are accessible to individuals with a diverse array of educational background and workforce experience. In short, Brooklynites have a greater chance of gaining employment than they did in 2010, yet many of those employment opportunities are not guaranteed to offer significant prospects for economic mobility.

The City of New York must bolster its efforts to ensure these positive trends continue, while at the same time develop programs and policies that ensure that Brooklyn's economic success is inclusive for all.

³⁶ NYS Department of Labor, *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*, available at: <http://www.labor.ny.gov/stats/lscqew.shtm>.

³⁷ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (via Google), *Brooklyn Unemployment Rate*, available at: <https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=brooklyn%20unemployment%20rate>.

³⁸ See NYS Department of Labor, *supra* note 35.

³⁹ United States Census Bureau, *Kings County QuickFacts*, available at: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/36047.html>.

A key focus of these efforts should be in the creative and innovation economies. This sector is believed to have good potential for growth and is broadly defined as industries at the intersection of entrepreneurship, creativity and technology.

For example, while the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector – which includes a large portion of Brooklyn’s creative and innovation economy jobs – account for just over 7 percent of the borough’s companies and 3.5 percent of the borough’s total employment, the sector is one of the fastest growing in the borough.⁴⁰ Additionally, this sector exhibits the second highest rate of average wage growth and one of the highest overall average wages among all economic subdivisions in the borough.

Ensuring that growth in this sector benefits all Brooklynites remains a challenge despite the fact that many of these jobs do not require a college or advanced degree. That’s because employment in the creative and innovation economy often requires a technical, yet teachable skill set.

Closely related to the innovation and creative economies is the borough’s manufacturing sector. The skills that will make job candidates competitive in a modernized manufacturing sector are similar to those needed to excel in the creative and innovation economies. The City of New York can take advantage of this overlap to support initiatives and investments that will advance inclusive growth of these industries, especially in the area of workforce development.

Employment numbers in the manufacturing sector – a traditional source of quality jobs for individuals with limited education backgrounds – have risen slightly since 2010 but still lag far behind historic averages. In 2000, Brooklyn was home to more than 43,000 manufacturing jobs but in 2010, that total had declined more than 50 percent to approximately 19,500.⁴¹ In the first quarter of 2014, there were approximately 20,500 manufacturing jobs in the borough. The manufacturing firms of today are on average, smaller than those of the past, but also pay better wages.⁴² Between 2000 and 2014, the average size of manufacturing firms in Brooklyn decreased by 30 percent, yet, during that same period average wages grew by more than 40 percent.

While the manufacturing sector presents a significant opportunity for low-skilled Brooklynites to earn solid wages, the industry still only accounts for approximately 4 percent of the borough’s non-governmental workforce, and unmet demand for employment still exists. As a result, tens of thousands of eligible Brooklynites still do not participate in the borough’s workforce.

The sectors of Educational Services; Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; as well as Accommodation and Food Services have all experienced significant growth since 2010 and account for more than 13 percent of the borough’s total private employment opportunities.⁴³ Additionally, while average wages often lag behind wages in other employment fields, average

⁴⁰ See NYS Department of Labor, *supra* note 35.

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ *Id.*

wages have grown by 10 percent since 2010 - far exceeding the borough average of just 0.76 percent.⁴⁴

Just as it is important for the City of New York to advance strategies to encourage private employers to hire from their surrounding communities, it is also important to advance strategies that encourage private businesses to procure from local providers and vendors – especially with Minority, Women and Locally Owned Business Enterprises (MWLBES). While the City has laws governing procurement goals for city agencies and city-subsidized projects, procurement agents consistently fail to meet those goals. Facilitating opportunities for procurement agents and MWLBES to connect and conduct business, while also creating opportunities for MWLBES to obtain technical assistance, is an important step in promoting local procurement.

Supporting local business also necessitates addressing neighborhood economic activity. So often, neighborhood business is characterized by small retail, food service, and drinking establishments that line commercial districts throughout Brooklyn’s diverse neighborhoods. These businesses do not just represent a significant portion of the borough’s economy, they also embody the borough’s culture and soul, making Brooklyn a unique and desirable place to live. The Retail Trade and Food Services and Drinking Establishment sectors have both experienced remarkable growth in the borough. In fact, between 2010 and 2014, employment in these sectors has grown by 15 percent and 36 percent, respectively.⁴⁵

However, neighborhood businesses also face significant pressures as a result of rising real estate costs and overall increases in the cost of doing business. The City of New York must streamline its often burdensome regulatory and permitting processes to ensure that neighborhood businesses are able to operate.

One of Brooklyn’s greatest economic challenges may exist in its largest sector: healthcare. Policy reforms at the federal level, including the Affordable Care Act, are transforming the way that healthcare is delivered in Brooklyn. As the single largest employment sector in the borough – representing 33 percent of the borough’s total private employment – the healthcare sector must be supported by forward-thinking policy and investment.⁴⁶

According to an analysis by Headwaters Economics, in 2014 more than 198,000 Brooklyn residents were employed in the healthcare and social assistance sector.⁴⁷ Since 2008, job growth in this sector has grown by nearly 14 percent, according to NYS Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli. More than 80 percent of that growth has been in ambulatory health services, including home health care, doctor’s offices, and outpatient clinical services.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ Headwaters Economics, A Profile of Socioeconomic Measure: Selected Geographies: Kings County, NY, 8 (Jan. 20, 2014). http://headwaterseconomics.org/wphw/wp-content/uploads/print-ready-measures-pdfs/36047_Kings-County_NY_Measures.pdf.

⁴⁷ *Id.*

⁴⁸ Office of New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, *An Economic Snapshot of Brooklyn, Report 4-2015*, 2 (May 2014). <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/osdc/rpt4-2015.pdf>.

This growth is significant in the face of recent pressures put on hospital care networks across Brooklyn. It is no secret that the existing hospital network is facing incredible strain as delivery service models are adapted to reflect a 21st century approach to healthcare. The future of healthcare in Brooklyn is one driven largely by strong primary care service delivery across the entire borough, supported by comprehensive specialty care and in-patient hospital services. As Brooklyn's healthcare landscape continues to evolve, there will be significant opportunity for growth of economic and employment opportunities for the borough's residents.

Issue 1: GROWING CREATIVE AND INNOVATION ECONOMIES

Goal: Sustain growth in innovation economy sectors and increase opportunities for participation in underserved communities

The Borough President will:

- Convene private sector firms, community based organizations, and educational institutions to develop training and employment opportunities that prepare Brooklynites for careers in the innovation and creative economies
- Advocate for the expansion of high-capacity broadband infrastructure throughout the Borough, especially in underserved areas
- Invest capital dollars in technology infrastructure in schools across the Borough

Goal: Lower barriers to entry to entrepreneurial activity and foster a diverse economy in the Borough

The Borough President will:

- Invest capital dollars in new business incubators as well as micro-enterprise facilities that cater to underserved and immigrant communities
- Advocate for the streamlining of government regulations, permitting processes and enforcement procedures, and provide technical assistance to businesses experiencing difficulty with City government
- Advocate zoning text changes and use the ULURP process to incentivize the creation of innovative pop-up markets and affordable commercial and light-industrial space
- Advocate for a commercial modernization incentive program to encourage the activation of underutilized commercial space to accommodate the needs of small- to mid-sized businesses

Issue 2: THE MAKER MOVEMENT AND TRADITIONAL MANUFACTURING

Goal: Preserve traditional manufacturing firms and promote the growth of contemporary manufacturing uses

The Borough President will:

- Support the restoration of funding for Industrial Business Zone Providers to 2006 levels
- Call for the reactivation of an independent Office of Industrial and Manufacturing Business

- Advocate for increased and consolidated city and state incentives to preserve existing manufacturing firms and encourage growth
- Advocate for increased opportunities for Industrial Business Service Providers to strengthen technical assistance and business services in the industrial business community
- Invest capital dollars in projects that promote the preservation of manufacturing uses and the modernization of building stock for use by contemporary manufacturing firms
- Support the creation of Industrial Business Improvement Districts as appropriate

Issue 3: LOCAL HIRING AND PROCUREMENT

Goal: Encourage inclusivity in economic growth by expanding workforce development and local-hiring initiatives

The Borough President will:

- Convene and promote employment fairs for businesses that have employment needs
- Facilitate connections between private employers, workforce development organizations and community based organizations so that employment needs can be met locally
- Advocate for the expansion of on-the-job training grants for local businesses to facilitate local hiring

Goal: Facilitate increased opportunities for Brooklyn-based certified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (“MWBEs”)

The Borough President will:

- Convene procurement agents in the public and private sectors with Brooklyn-based MWBEs to facilitate relationship building and business development opportunities
- Host technical assistance and business development training seminars that address hurdles for MWBEs, such as access to capital, bonding requirements, bid development, and marketing, etc.

Issue 4: NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESSES

Goal: Support small local businesses by streamlining city interactions

The Borough President will:

- Advocate for the consolidation, streamlining, and simplifying of permitting processes and regulations
- Call for the City agencies to better utilize technology in permitting processes and regulatory actions

Goal: Strengthen neighborhood-based economic development

The Borough President will:

- Convene the borough's Business Improvement Districts regularly to ensure that a healthy dialogue continues between BIDs and the City of New York
- Support the formation of new Business Improvement Districts and Local Development Corporations in developing commercial districts throughout the borough
- Invest capital dollars in projects that strengthen walkable retail corridors
- Support efforts to expand tourism's economic impact footprint in the borough, especially in neighborhoods beyond the downtown core
- Connect local businesses to technology services to expand their economic catchment area

Issue 5: HEALTHCARE AND THE ECONOMY

Goal: Increase employment opportunities for Brooklyn residents in healthcare related fields

The Borough President will:

- Partner with medical and health institutions to map current workforce skills across the borough and identify key areas for improvement for the next five and ten years
- Advocate for increased certificate and degree offerings by colleges and medical schools to meet the education requirements of "in demand" healthcare professions
- Support workforce development grants administered by New York State's Delivery System Reform Incentive Program that focus on Brooklyn residents
- Partner with community based organizations and workforce development institutions to improve service capacity and maximize impact in targeted workforce populations
- Support efforts to connect tuition assistance to qualified medical and health personnel who provide services in underserved Brooklyn neighborhoods
- Promote partnerships that would develop a strong career pipeline for lower-skilled healthcare workers to advance into higher-skilled positions
- Call for improved educational and experiential requirements for healthcare workers, especially home healthcare and nursing home workers
- Work together with organized labor and medical administration to develop a comprehensive plan for saving, creating, and expanding job opportunities throughout Brooklyn's major medical institutions
- Seek out philanthropic support to help develop and sustain further investment in Brooklyn's healthcare economy
- Support specialized high schools like Canarsie Medical Professional School

PUBLIC SAFETY

Everyone has a right to live in a safe and secure environment. The combined efforts of the New York Police Department (NYPD), the New York Fire Department (FDNY), the District Attorney's Office (DA), and engaged community groups has made New York one of the safest large cities in the country. However, there is still work to do and we need continued effort from all stakeholders so we can make all of Brooklyn a safe place to live and work.

Despite recent policy changes to Stop, Question, and Frisk, and the creation of the NYPD's Inspector General, there remains a gap in trust between the NYPD and the citizens they serve. A positive relationship, based on mutual respect, between the police and the communities is vital for effective policing. Community policing issues also impact local businesses. Both the NYPD and local business leaders must create a better working relationship that balances enforcement with community concerns.

Gang activity remains an issue for Brooklyn, but the old gang model of large gangs like the Bloods and the Crips is no longer as relevant. Today, kids are more likely to join gangs formed right on their own block.⁴⁹ We need to reach these kids before the gangs do. Outreach by a combination of actors will be needed to create and educate alternatives to gang culture.

The disparity between the investment made in solving homicides in Manhattan and Brooklyn is unsustainable. The average homicide investigation in Manhattan receives many more detectives assigned than the average homicide in Brooklyn.⁵⁰ In addition, there are too many misdemeanor arrests that are thrown out on arraignment, resulting in a gross misplacement of energy and resources. We can utilize more efficient measures to address lesser crimes and keep them from clogging up the system.

Guns remain a problem despite New York's tougher gun laws. Brooklyn has seen too many young people lost to gun violence and irresponsible gun ownership and there are too many stories about negligent gun ownership causing the death or serious injury of innocent children.⁵¹ New York must take stronger measures to get illegal guns off the street and prevent gun violence.

Unfortunately, hate crimes still exist in New York City in the 21st century. In fact, there has been an increase of violent attacks on members of the LGBTQ community in Brooklyn in recent

⁴⁹ CBS News, *Teen Gangs Linked to 40 Percent of New York City Shootings* (May 1, 2014).

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/teen-gangs-linked-to-40-percent-of-new-york-city-shootings/>.

⁵⁰ New York Daily News, *Tale of Two Cities: Even as Murders Hit Record Low in NYC, a Mountain of Cases Languishes in Outer Boroughs as Cops Focus More Manpower on Manhattan Cases* (Jan. 5, 2014).

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/forgotten-record-murder-rate-cases-unsolved-article-1.1566572>.

⁵¹ See CBS New York, *9 Month Old Child Shot in Brooklyn, Police Say* (Nov. 22, 2014).

<http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2014/11/22/9-month-old-child-shot-in-brooklyn-police-say/>; Ashley Edwards and Dan Mannarino, *12 Year Old Boy Shot on His Way Home from School in Brownsville*, PIX11.com (Sept. 22, 2014).

<http://pix11.com/2014/09/22/child-shot-in-leg-in-brooklyn/>.

months.⁵² The Borough President condemns all hate crimes, whether based on race, religion, sexual identity, or gender identification and more must be done to end these horrific crimes. Increasing the number of police on patrol is only part of the solution. Communities must also raise awareness and work together to provide safe spaces for all Brooklynites.

Responding to emergencies, whether natural disasters like Superstorm Sandy or man-made like the September 11th terrorist attacks, requires coordinated efforts from agencies and community leaders both public and private. Responding is easier when the community is prepared and has life-saving information available before emergencies hit.

Issue 1: LAW ENFORCEMENT AND EFFECTIVE POLICING

Goal: Improve relations between the NYPD and residents/small businesses

The Borough President will:

- Encourage top brass to visit high crime areas like East New York and East Flatbush
- Urge law enforcement to work closely with community groups to stop violence
- Call for an increase in the number of Community Affairs Officers in Brooklyn
- Urge NYPD to promote from within and allow officers to move up in rank and stay in the communities where they have built relationships
- Call for reforms to the NYPD's hiring process that include waiving the college education requirement for School Safety Agents, Health and Hospitals Corporation Officers, Department of Homeless Services Police, City of New York (CUNY) Public Safety Officers and Traffic Safety Agents who have served honorably for more than two years
- Advocate for the hiring of more police officers
- Encourage the creation of more Precinct Clergy Councils, which can be effective at de-escalating tensions between police and residents
- Support better training for school safety officers to identify early warning signs of trouble and foster positive interaction with kids
- Work with the NYPD and schools to address gang activity and support the creation of programs specifically reaching out to kids who are at risk for joining gangs
- Host forums with community members and the NYPD to create an open dialogue and foster improved NYPD-community relations

Issue 2: REFORMING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Goal: Address disparities in the criminal justice system and expand mediation programs designed to help keep youth and those who commit lesser crimes out of the system

The Borough President will:

- Call for more mediation rather than putting minor violations into the system

⁵² Jay Michaelson, *Is Brooklyn Becoming Unsafe for Gays? It Depends on Which Ones*, The Daily Beast (Oct. 18, 2014). <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/10/18/is-brooklyn-becoming-unsafe-for-queers-it-depends-on-which-ones.html>.

- Advocate for the expansion of Youth Courts throughout the borough
- Support placing ADAs in precincts to act as mediators for lesser crimes
- Call for DOE, job placement agencies, and Workforce1 representatives to be in courts to provide youth services
- Explore the idea of community restitution panels which can come up with solutions before the incident gets to the court system
- Call for reforms to be made to the grand jury process in police related shootings or assaults

Issue 3: PREVENTING GUN VIOLENCE

Goal: Eliminate gun violence and irresponsible gun ownership

The Borough President will:

- Advocate for additional gun laws and policies that make irresponsible owners responsible for their actions
- Support camera technology on guns

Issue 4: HATE CRIMES

Goal: Raise awareness of hate crimes and work to eliminate them altogether

The Borough President will:

- Call for increasing police presence in neighborhoods with high rates of hate crimes
- Support the expansion of community-based policing
- Support educational efforts to raise awareness of hate crimes and promote tolerance

Issue 5: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Goal: Make sure all Brooklynites are prepared for emergencies

The Borough President will:

- Hold emergency preparedness forums and information sessions at Borough Hall
- Work with the NYPD and FDNY to expand outreach to schools and community boards, so students and residents are prepared in the face of emergencies
- Partner with the Office of Emergency Management and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services to identify additional ways Borough Hall can serve as a focal point in the event of emergencies
- Call for the creation of a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in every community district

CIVIL RIGHTS

According to the Brooklyn Community Foundation, as many as 200 different languages are spoken in Brooklyn and nearly 40 percent of residents are foreign-born.⁵³ The diversity within these 950,000 foreign-born immigrants, rivals that of neighboring Queens which has the highest population of immigrants in the City.⁵⁴

It is this diversity that helps make the Brooklyn brand so popular all over the world, attracting immigrants and those before them, and is something to be celebrated. Because this multiculturalism is at the heart of our borough, we must vigilantly protect the civil rights of all our residents and ensure that we are as inclusionary of all Brooklynites as possible.

While this melting pot adds to the vibrancy of Kings County and makes Brooklyn an attractive destination to all, newly arrived immigrants face significant challenges. According to the Department of City Planning's *Newest New Yorkers* report, on average, roughly 25 percent of New York City is not proficient in English. In several neighborhoods in southern Brooklyn and in Sunset Park, that percentage jumps to 40 percent and higher.⁵⁵ The lack of English proficiency often makes it difficult for newly arrived immigrants to access employment opportunities, official information or the social services that they or their families may need.

Threats to our civil rights come in many different forms, from the erosion of access to safe reproductive health services and law enforcement policies that disproportionately affect people of color, to hate crimes based on sexual preference, gender identity, and religion.

In part, protecting civil rights requires a good working relationship between the community and the men and women who are there to serve them. Recent events in New York City and across the nation have caused damage to that relationship and repairing that damage is of paramount importance to the lives of everyone in Brooklyn and is integral to the ability of law enforcement to do their job properly.

The failure of the State Legislature to pass the Women's Equality Act was a missed opportunity to address several key civil rights issues head-on, including equal pay, pregnancy discrimination, violence against women, and an affirmative right to abortion and reproductive healthcare.⁵⁶

April 8, 2014 was the date when the average woman's salary finally equaled the 2013 pay of the average man.⁵⁷ That this pay disparity still exists in 2014 is unconscionable and it is well past the time to demand equal pay for equal work.

⁵³ Brooklyn Community Foundation, *Brooklyn Insights: Final Report*, 22 (Oct. 2014).

<http://www.brooklyncommunityfoundation.org/brooklyn-insights>.

⁵⁴ New York City Department of City Planning, *The Newest New Yorkers: Characteristics of the City's Foreign Born Population*, 235 (2013). http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/census/mny2013/mny_2013.pdf.

⁵⁵ *Id.* at 102.

⁵⁶ See New York Women's Equality Coalition, *10-Point Plan*, NYwomensequality.org.

<http://nywomensequality.org/10-point-plan/>.

⁵⁷ See Brooklyn-Queens National Organization of Women, *Action Alerts*, Brooklynqueensnow.org. <http://brooklynqueensnow.org/alerts.html#equalpay2014>.

No one should live in fear of violence. Victims of domestic violence are not only living in fear, they are also being discriminated against in housing and face protection laws that can be used against them.⁵⁸ Additionally, members of the LGBTQ community have faced a recent increase in physical attacks in Brooklyn.⁵⁹ We cannot let these attacks on civil rights go unchallenged.

Raising the minimum wage in New York City is a positive move in the right direction towards creating a mandatory living wage. The idea that a person can work full time at a job and still not be able to afford the basic necessities of life should be a foreign one in the world's most developed economy. Multi-billion dollar corporations cannot continue to rely on government to supplement their low wages while they reap record profits. Supporting workers' rights to organize is integral to ensuring that a robust economy benefits all.

Issue 1: CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUALITY

Goal: Ensure that all Brooklynites receive fair and equal treatment from the government and employers

The Borough President will:

- Borough Hall will prominently display New York City's non-discriminatory clause and call for other government buildings to do so as well
- Support efforts to incorporate non-discrimination compliance training and cultural competency training in annual community board trainings
- Continue to encourage better NYPD-community dialogue that must be built in the aftermath of stop-and-frisk, police shootings, and other events that strain community-NYPD relations
- Work to expand the use of alternative approaches to offenses like minor marijuana possession charges, avoiding unnecessarily harsh treatment
- Work with LGBTQ support groups to help LGBTQ youth in their schools and beyond.
- Encourage greater understanding and prevent hate crimes against the LGBTQ community
- Appoint a Borough Hall LGBTQ liaison to work closely with the LGBTQ community in identifying areas of concern
- Support efforts to ensure passage of GENDA in New York State
- Help ensure that all women have access to necessary reproductive medical care
- Oppose any attempt to limit access to reproductive healthcare
- Support legislation at all levels of government that helps to reduce the pay disparity between men and women
- Support the expansion of a living wage
- Call on large corporations to pay all their workers a living wage and provide sufficient benefits in regards to healthcare and retirement planning
- Support tax incentives and fee reductions for start-ups and small businesses based on their commitment to paying a living wage
- Support the rights of workers to unionize and shine a light on businesses who use anti-union tactics

⁵⁸ See New York Women's Equality Coalition, *supra* note 55.

⁵⁹ See Michaelson, *supra* note 51.

- Support efforts to make all buildings in New York City accessible for those with mobility impairments
- Enhance Borough Hall's multi-lingual communications strategy through improved website and social media functions, as well as translation partnerships with local institutions
- Identify cultural ambassadors and liaisons to Borough Hall in new and long-standing immigrant communities
- Support outreach efforts for distribution of municipal ID cards

YOUTH

Borough Hall is primed to be an important ally in improving the lives of Brooklyn's youth population and supporting programs that empower young people to grow up to become our borough's next great leaders. Any youth policy coming from my office will be driven by the borough's youth, largely by providing them a platform to share their experiences, voices, and shape the solutions to the unique challenges they face.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, almost 603,000 people under the age of 18 were living in Brooklyn in 2012 and there are currently over 310,000 students enrolled in the 562 public schools and 75 charter schools in Brooklyn.⁶⁰ Brooklyn's youth population alone is roughly equivalent to the population of Las Vegas, Nevada, and the number of students enrolled in Brooklyn schools surpasses the populations of cities like Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Cincinnati, Ohio.

So it is no surprise that this sizeable population has unique needs and faces distinctive challenges as they navigate childhood, adolescence, and their teen years *en route* to becoming productive and well-adjusted adults.

While there are numerous existing programs that serve the educational, psychological, recreational, career, or professional needs of Brooklyn's young people, these programs often operate on shoestring budgets. In recent years, funding for the Department of Youth and Community Development has come under attack, threatening homeless youth programs, community centers, and after school programs that provide resources and support to the most vulnerable youth among us.⁶¹ During the first year of the de Blasio Administration funding has stabilized, but the need for additional support for these programs remains. If we do not address this need, we create few alternatives for young people to productively engage in their communities and broader society.

Brooklyn has made gains in reducing youth unemployment and absenteeism in recent years, but the BK Bureau still estimates that 19 percent of young people between the ages of 16 and 21 were unemployed in New York City in 2013. For young people of color, the unemployment rate is 26 percent.⁶² The Brooklyn Community Foundation found that nearly 30 percent of 16-24 year olds in Brownsville are not currently in school or employed.⁶³

Brooklyn's young people also face specific health challenges and early intervention to encourage healthy habits is imperative to fostering healthy habits over the long term. According to the

⁶⁰ United States Census Bureau, *supra* note 38.

⁶¹ See Department of Youth and Community Development *Finance Division Briefing Paper on FY2014 New York City Budget* (May 2013). <http://council.nyc.gov/downloads/pdf/budget/2014/execbudget/comm.pdf>.

⁶² Leah Robinson, *Brooklyn Youth Mobilize to Expand Jobs Program*, CityLimits.org (June 28, 2013). <http://bkbureau.org/2013/06/28/brooklyn-youth-mobilize-to-expand-jobs-program/>.

⁶³ See Brooklyn Community Foundation, *supra* note 3, at 17. <http://www.brooklyncommunityfoundation.org/brooklyn-insights>.

Centers for Disease Control, “the transition from childhood to adulthood...establish[es] patterns of behavior, [that] make lifestyle choices that affect both their current and future health.”⁶⁴ Nearly 32 percent of Brooklyn’s high school students self-reported being sexually active but 31 percent did not report using a condom to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and over 17 percent did not use any form of contraception to prevent pregnancy.⁶⁵ While teenage pregnancy in New York City has dropped by 27 percent from 2001 to 2013, almost 20,000 teenage pregnancies still occur each year.⁶⁶ Brooklyn’s teen pregnancy rate is the second highest in the City, with the teenage pregnancy rate particularly high among young African-American women.⁶⁷

Obesity remains a chronic issue for Brooklyn’s youth as well. Almost 30 percent of Brooklyn high school students are obese or overweight, according to a report by the Independent Democratic Conference.⁶⁸ Yet there are only 40 Greenmarkets and 30 Grow NYC community gardens in a borough of 2.6 million people. More must be done to expand access to healthy foods in our schools and our communities.

Borough Hall intends to not only promote healthy habits for the body, but also for the mind. Bullying in New York City schools continues to be a concern for all of the borough’s youth population, but particularly for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth and students with disabilities. Those that are bullied often suffer from mental health issues like depression and anxiety and changes in sleep or eating patterns. Those that bully also tend to engage in more at risk behavior like abusing alcohol and drugs or engaging in violent behavior.⁶⁹

Unfortunately, fewer and fewer resource centers and programs are available to ensure that youth are engaged when not in school, which in turn means they are more likely to be on the streets where they are heavily monitored by police. Bridge-building programs between youth and the New York Police Department are necessary to ensure positive relationships and interactions with the NYPD early in a young person’s life.

Despite great challenges facing the youth of Brooklyn, the future is bright. That’s because Brooklyn’s youth are up to the task of overcoming those challenges.

Issue 1: YOUTH ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES

Goal: Increase access and participation in youth organizations and foster more positive activities for youth

⁶⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Adolescent Health: Overview*, available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/adolescenthealth/index.htm>.

⁶⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *New York, High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013*. <http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Results.aspx?LID=NY>.

⁶⁶ Erin Durkin, *Teen Pregnancy Down 27% in New York City Over Last Decade*: Report, NY Daily News (Feb. 3, 2013). <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/teen-pregnancy-27-nyc-report-article-1.1253933>.

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ Independent Democratic Conference, *supra* note 2, at 5.

⁶⁹ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, *Effects of Bullying*, available at: <http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/effects/>.

The Borough President will:

- Create a Brooklyn Multi-Cultural Youth Task Force to increase cross-cultural understanding, foster peer-to-peer learning, conduct sensitivity training on LGBTQ youth and sexual orientation and gender identity issues and provide opportunities to comprehensively discuss issues facing Brooklyn's youth
- Call for increased city and private funding for youth sports
- Increase awareness of free arts programs borough-wide
- Publicize the new law that allows 16 and 17 year-olds to serve on community boards and commit to appointing one youth member to each community board by 2017
- Call for the creation of youth committees on every community board
- Support youth centers with Borough Hall funding
- Advocate for increased access to Department of Education buildings to community groups
- Advocate for the expansion of after-school programs and locations
- Publish a youth directory resource that connects the borough's youth with programs

Issue 2: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Goal: Improve job training and job prospects for Brooklyn youth

The Borough President will:

- Work with the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) to protect funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program
 - Work with Business Improvement District's to connect with DYCD to identify potential employer partners for the Youth Employment Program
- Partner with the Junior League of Brooklyn to conduct a two-week youth employment training program for enrollees in the Summer Youth Employment Program
- Establish a government internship program for high school students

Issue 3: YOUTH AND POLICE INTERACTION

Goal: Keep young people safe and improve relationships between youth and NYPD

The Borough President will:

- Engage community boards to conduct youth anti-violence workshops
- Call for the expansion of the NYPD's Law Enforcement Explorer program
- Encourage NYPD Community Affairs to establish a youth liaison and a youth officer in each precinct
- Hold a hearing on culturally competent ways to ensure LGBTQ youth and young women are respected in the criminal justice system

Issue 4: YOUTH RELATED HEALTH ISSUES

Goal: Ensure youth have access to programs that support healthy living initiatives early in life

The Borough President will:

- Support the expansion of school breakfast and lunch service
- Establish healthy food pantries, greenmarkets, and community gardens at schools in low income neighborhoods
- Publicize the New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s NYC Teen resource app
- Advocate for improved access to contraception in schools, particularly Intra-Uterine Devices⁷⁰ and condoms
- Advocate for all homeless programs to have a properly funded health component
- Support efforts to establish school based health clinics

Issue 5: PROTECT MARGINALIZED YOUTH

Goal: Support young people who are at risk for bullying

The Borough President will:

- Launch an “I’m My Classmate’s Keeper” program to help prevent bullying and encourage peer protection in schools
- Convene a forum to foster dialogue between LGBTQ elders and LGBTQ youth
- Host a hearing on bullying and cyber-bullying in Brooklyn schools
- Promote educational outreach to kids in NYCHA housing about violence prevention

⁷⁰ See American Academy of Pediatrics, *AAP Updates Recommendations on Teen Pregnancy Prevention* (Sept. 2014). <http://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/AAP-Updates-Recommendations-on-Teen-Pregnancy-Prevention.aspx>.

AGING

As of 2013, there were over 311,000 people 65 years and older living in Brooklyn or about 12 percent of the total population.⁷¹ That figure is expected to increase by roughly 100,000 in the next decade and a half, reaching 410,000 by 2030 according to SUNY Downstate Medical Center's *Report on the Elderly*.⁷² Brooklyn and Queens have the largest senior populations in the City, and 67 percent of the City's senior immigrants live in Brooklyn and Queens.⁷³

Brooklyn's seniors face similar challenges to their younger counterparts, but the hurdles to overcome them are often higher. Issues like access to affordable housing, transportation and health care affect all Brooklynites, but with many seniors living on fixed-incomes and almost 60,000 Brooklyn seniors living below the poverty level, accessing these vital services becomes more difficult.⁷⁴

Proper nutrition and access to healthy food are also a concern to Brooklyn's seniors. According to "Just Getting By: New York City Nutrition Services for Seniors," over 30,000 of Brooklyn's seniors are homebound, but only 16 percent have access to "Meals on Wheels" programs.⁷⁵

Seniors are also at greater risk during crises as well. Superstorm Sandy proved that while a program for emergency preparedness needs to be in place for all Brooklynites, an emergency plan tailored to seniors and those that are homebound is particularly critical. The frail and housebound elderly are a different demographic than the larger senior demographic and have unique needs not only in time of crisis, but every day.

Brooklynites 65 and older are not only growing as a demographic, they are also living longer. According to a study conducted by University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, since 1985, life expectancy in Brooklyn has grown by 6 and 10 years for women and men, respectively.⁷⁶ This means that in addition to facing the traditional challenges of growing older, seniors are facing those challenges much later into life.

Ideally, Brooklyn can create the communities needed to allow these seniors to age in place. Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) and Aging Improvement Districts (AIDs) need to be more prevalent in our borough. Currently Community Board 2 is exploring the creation of a new NORC, the Myrtle Avenue BID has partnered with NY Academy of Medicine to create an "Age Friendly" business corridor and a consortium of service providers are

⁷¹ See United States Census Bureau, *supra* note 38.

⁷² SUNY Downstate Medical Center, *Brooklyn Community Health: Report on the Elderly* (2008), 1. <http://www.downstate.edu/bhr/reports/Elderly-Report.pdf>.

⁷³ Center for an Urban Future, *The New Face of New York's Seniors* (July 2013). <https://nycfuture.org/pdf/The-New-Face-of-New-Yorks-Seniors.pdf>.

⁷⁴ See SUNY Downstate Medical Center, *supra* note 71, at 2.

⁷⁵ Office of the Public Advocate, *Just Getting By: New York City Nutrition Services for Seniors*, 2. http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/pdf/govpub/2651just_getting_by_senior_hunger.pdf.

⁷⁶ See University of Washington Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, *The State of US Health: Innovations, Insights, and Recommendations from the Global Burden of Disease Study* (July 2013). <http://www.healthdata.org/policy-report/state-us-health-innovations-insights-and-recommendations-global-burden-disease-study>.

exploring making Bay Ridge more age friendly, but our communities must do more to allow our seniors to live in age friendly communities.

Senior programs and centers that continue to engage an aging populace are integral to complement efforts to create friendlier communities for the aging public by ensuring that as seniors age, they do so with dignity.

Brooklyn's senior centers provide people over 65 with a variety of services during the day including meals, recreation, health screenings and fairs, educational workshops, fitness programs, continuing education, and computer classes. At the typical NYC senior center, there are approximately 80 seniors per caseworker. Routinely threatened with budget cuts, many senior centers find it hard to increase the number of caseworkers per senior, which often results in fewer recreational activities and cultural programs being offered, both of which are critical for cognitive therapy and overall health.

Unfortunately, the fact that Brooklyn has long received less than its fair share of the important discretionary funding exacerbates this challenge.⁷⁷ The inadequate funding balance across the five boroughs makes it harder for Brooklyn's seniors to access services they need.

LGBTQ seniors face unique challenges as they grow older. While the broader senior population is impacted by increasing isolation, LGBTQ seniors are particularly affected. It is important to engage these seniors with their younger LGBTQ counterparts as a way for seniors to remain engaged in community discussion, but also to assist the younger LGBTQ community navigate what is often a difficult time in their life. In addition, addressing LGBTQ discrimination that may take place in nursing homes and senior centers is important to allow all of our seniors to age with dignity.⁷⁸

Senior health and safety issues also continue to grow as Brooklyn's population ages. Elder abuse, the maltreatment and physical and sexual abuse of seniors, is a growing concern for our aging populace. According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, roughly five million Americans are victims of elder abuse across the country.⁷⁹ A report by the New York State Coalition on Elder Abuse found that in New York, rates of elder abuse are likely underreported to the authorities. The study estimated that the rate of elder abuse is roughly 24 times higher than what is indicated by reports to law enforcement or social service agencies.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Dennis Slattery, Lisa Colangelo, and Reuven Blau, *Queens Borough President Melinda Katz got more money for seniors than her beep colleagues under a decades old arrangement*, NY Daily News (July 16, 2014). <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/queens-borough-president-1-6-million-seniors-double-beeps-article-1.1869735>.

⁷⁸ SAGE, *Aging Programs and Services*, available at: <http://www.sageusa.org/issues/aging.cfm>.

⁷⁹ Alzheimer's Association, *2014 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures*, 22 (2014). http://www.alz.org/downloads/Facts_Figures_2014.pdf.

⁸⁰ New York State Elder Abuse Coalition, *Under the Radar: New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study* (May 2011). <http://www.nyselderabuse.org/prevalence-study.html>.

In addition, Alzheimer's disease continues to debilitate a growing population of seniors. The number of people living with Alzheimer's is expected to grow by over 21 percent from 2014 to 2025.⁸¹

Finally, preventative safety measures to curtail falls and injury remain needed. Other issues that impact the safety of our elder residents are identity theft, predatory lending, crime and emergency preparedness.

Issue 1: SENIOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

Goal: Ensure Seniors have access to programs that support healthy-living initiatives and improved safety

The Borough President will:

- Investigate ways to improve outreach for seniors who are homebound
- Advocate for Brooklyn buildings to be more accessible, starting with an "Accessible Borough Hall" audit
- Call for reforms to advocate for more oversight on patient discharges
- Partner with health care educational institutions to promote skilled care degrees in subject areas like Gerontology Nursing programs
- Promote continuing education for those already providing skilled care
- Partner with Alzheimer's Association and other nonprofits and agencies to expand support, outreach, and education for people with Alzheimer's and dementia and their families and caregiver(s)
- Partner with groups like SAGE to conduct LGBTQ cultural competence trainings for senior service providers
- Educate seniors and families on how to make homes safer for seniors
- Hold a forum on elder abuse to increase the awareness and educate seniors of their rights
- Work to make sidewalks safer
- Educate seniors, caregivers, and families on identifying and preventing senior scams
- Partner with OEM, Department for the Aging and other agencies to develop senior appropriate disaster plans

Issue 2: SENIORS AND TECHNOLOGY

Goal: Make seniors more computer literate

The Borough President will:

- Engage organizations like Older Adult Technology Services to organize periodic peer-to-peer training for less tech-savvy seniors
- Expand the training sessions from Borough Hall into each community district by partnering with community boards, educational facilities, libraries and senior centers

⁸¹ See Alzheimer's Association, *supra* note 78, at 22.

- Use Borough Hall resources and connections with Brooklyn’s technology industry to teach seniors how to use tablets
- Use technology to keep seniors safe by helping them sign-up for Notify NYC, Weather Alerts, Safety Apps, First Alert etc.
- Support multi-pronged efforts to help seniors access information (technology, DFTA web site, education/resources at senior centers)
- Engage young people to teach seniors about technology

Issue 3: SENIOR CENTERS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND ACTIVITIES

Goal: Ensure the survival of Community Senior Centers and organizations that support senior activities

The Borough President will:

- Advocate for Brooklyn to receive its fair share of senior funding from DFTA
- Continue Borough Hall’s “Lecture Series for Seniors” at senior centers and adult day cares
- Launch a benefits “check-up” day in Borough Hall to address the approximately \$2,300 in benefits that many seniors do not collect
- Increase awareness of free arts programs for seniors across the borough
- Call for the creation of aging committee’s on every community board
- Publish a directory resource that connects Brooklyn’s seniors with social programs
- Advocate for more caseworkers within senior centers
- Advocate for more neighborhood-based senior centers
- Increase outreach to encourage more seniors to utilize centers
- Encourage more intergenerational youth and baby boomer volunteerism, including a mentorship program for LGBTQ elders and youth
- Explore ways to reach “invisible” seniors in homes
- Advocate to change regulations at centers to allow for meals to be taken home
- Advocate distribution of funds on evidenced-based research

Issue 4: NORCs (Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities) and AIDs (Aging Improving Districts)

Goal: Increase NORCs/AIDs throughout Brooklyn

The Borough President will:

- Advocate for Brooklyn business corridors to be more age friendly and community boards to explore creating NORCs in areas that are densely populated by seniors
- Educate Brooklyn on the importance of NORCs and AIDs
- Provide assistance and resources to assist organizations and agencies to make communities in Brooklyn more age friendly

Issue 5: SENIOR EMPLOYMENT

Goal: Improve job training outreach and job prospects for Brooklyn seniors

The Borough President will:

- Work with DFTA, non-profits, and BIDs to promote DFTA's Senior Community Services Employment Program
- Call for the expansion of DFTA's Partnership with ReServe
- Establish a Borough Hall internship program for seniors
- Hold a job fair for Seniors 55+ in Borough Hall and/or communities
- Connect senior craft-making groups to Brooklyn-based businesses like Etsy

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Quality transportation services are vital to the economic growth of Brooklyn and New York City, providing residents with access to jobs, schools, shops, entertainment, and medical care. Transportation must be accessible, provided at a reasonable cost and most importantly be safe for all users; particularly those that are most vulnerable like our seniors and children.

Brooklyn's transportation network is in need of additional investment. Brooklyn's population has grown by 3.5 percent from 2010-2013⁸² yet a comparable level of investment has not been made in our infrastructure. According to data collected by the Center for Urban Future,⁸³ nearly 30 percent of Brooklyn's roadways are in 'fair' or 'poor' condition and three of the top 5 most congested subway stations in the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) system can be found in Brooklyn.⁸⁴ At the same time, subway ridership is the highest it has been since 1949⁸⁵ yet the MTA's proposed Capital Program for 2015-2019 has a \$15 billion gap.⁸⁶

In addition, Brooklyn's roadways need significant safety upgrades. According to analysis by the non-profit group, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, Brooklyn had the highest number of pedestrian fatalities in the five boroughs.⁸⁷ And, according to Governor Andrew Cuomo's Traffic Safety Committee,⁸⁸ from 2010-2012 alone there were over 15,000 crashes involving pedestrians and motorists and cyclists and motorists in Brooklyn. As a result of these crashes—as well as the over 60,000 crashes involving a single vehicle or multiple vehicles—126 pedestrians, 26 cyclists and 82 motorists and passengers were killed on Brooklyn's roadways while over 15,000 pedestrians and cyclists and almost 54,000 motorists and passengers were injured during the same time period.⁸⁹ Many of these crashes occur on Brooklyn's dangerous arterial roadways like Atlantic Avenue, Flatbush Avenue, and Ocean Parkway. Over half of all pedestrian and cyclist fatalities occur on these roads, yet these roads make up only 10 percent of roadway miles in New York City.⁹⁰

Vision Zero has made important strides towards safer streets in New York, but all modes of transportation from buses to subways to ports must be made safer as well. Assaults on MTA employees, especially bus drivers are up. The placement of wireless and Wi-Fi services is not just an issue of convenience, but an issue of public safety. Determining which stations get services should in part be based upon the current and potential security risks at those stations.

⁸² Department of City Planning, *Current Estimates of New York City's Population for July 2013*.

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/popcur.shtml>.

⁸³ Center for an Urban Future, *Caution Ahead: Overdue Investments for New York's Aging Infrastructure*, 13 (Mar. 2014). <https://nycfuture.org/pdf/Caution-Ahead.pdf>.

⁸⁴ *Id.* at 19.

⁸⁵ Office of the New York State Comptroller, Thomas P. DiNapoli, *Financial Outlook for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority*, 1 (Oct. 2014). <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/osdc/rpt10-2015.pdf>.

⁸⁶ *Id.*

⁸⁷ Tri-State Transportation Campaign, *The Region's Most Dangerous Roads for Walking* (Feb. 2014). <http://tstc.org/reports/danger14/index.php>.

⁸⁸ Institute for Traffic Safety Management and Research, *Kings County Traffic Safety Data* (Feb. 2014). <http://www.safeny.ny.gov/12data/Kings-12.pdf>.

⁸⁹ *Id.*

⁹⁰ Brian Zumhagen, *2013 Crash Stats Show Arterial Streets Must Be Priority for Vision Zero*, Transportation Alternatives (Feb. 4, 2014). <http://transalt.org/news/releases/7346#sthash.1X227TAj.dpuf>.

The need for a more multi-modal transportation network and increased transportation options could not have been made clearer than in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. The MTA deserves praise for getting the transit network up and running quickly in the face of long odds—closed subway tunnels between Brooklyn and the Central Business District ground New York City to a halt, and the closure of the A line in Far Rockaway stranded residents for months. But making the existing subway system more resilient, while also expanding mobility options to ensure redundancy in the transportation system is integral as we continue to rebuild and move to protect Brooklyn’s economy, environment, and quality of life in the 21st century.

Within that 21st century transportation system will be new technologies and tools to access transportation services. Not only do Brooklynites now have access to MTA’s BusTime, which lets us know when our buses are coming, we also have mobile apps like Uber and Lyft to access on demand taxi services if those buses are running late. But as our transportation network innovates, fair regulations to monitor and protect the safety of consumers, as well as mitigate potential for increased congestion on our roadways must be developed.

Transportation infrastructure is only one area in our city’s ecosystem that has been exposed in recent years. Continued attention to our sewer and flood zone infrastructure is also needed as even moderate rainstorms often overwhelm communities’ aging sewer systems. According to New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer’s CLAIMSTAT report,⁹¹ Community Districts 18, 15, and 13, representing the neighborhoods of Canarsie, Gerritsen Beach, Sheepshead Bay and Coney Island respectively, were home to some of the highest number of Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) sewer overflow complaints from 2012 to 2013. Community District 18 alone accounted for nearly 30 percent of the complaints over the time period.

According to the Center for an Urban Future,⁹² DEP has made significant strides in recent years to incorporate green infrastructure into its storm-water management practices and has committed \$2.4 billion in public and private funding over the next 18 years to expand these programs. But more should and must be done to reduce the 27 billion gallons of combined sewer overflows in New York City each year⁹³ as a way to protect our rivers, our resident’s property, and quality of life.

Issue 1: FINANCING TRANSPORTATION

Goals: Protect transit riders from fare increases and identify innovative funding mechanisms to support mass transit

The Borough President will:

- Oppose unfair fare hikes on subway and bus riders
- Support ideas like “Value Capture” in appropriate areas to recoup the cost of building and providing transit service

⁹¹ Office of the New York City Comptroller, Scott Stringer, *Claimstat: Protecting Citizens and Saving Taxpayer Dollars*, 12 (July 2014). <http://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ClaimStat.pdf>.

⁹² See Center for an Urban Future, *supra* note 82, at 30.

⁹³ Riverkeeper, *Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs)*, Riverkeeper.org. <http://www.riverkeeper.org/campaigns/stop-polluters/sewage-contamination/cso/>.

- Support an increase in the state and federal gas tax to generate additional funding for transit service in the metropolitan region
- Advocate for the New York State’s surplus to be dedicated to improving our infrastructure
- Urge the use of less debt to fund our 2015-2019 transportation capital programs

Issue 2: TRANSIT OPTIONS AND ACCESSIBILITY

Goals: Improve and expand transportation options for Brooklynites, especially for seniors, those with mobility limitations and in economic development zones with limited transit

The Borough President will:

- Advocate for increased accessibility to transit and for hire car service for seniors and people with mobility limitations
 - Call for fast-tracking the construction of Americans with Disabilities Act compliant subway stations
 - Call for more robust local bus service
 - Fight to ensure more taxis, green taxis and livery cars are wheel-chair accessible
- Advocate for the expansion of Select Bus Service and full-build Bus Rapid Transit in appropriate corridors
- Support the expansion of MTA’s City Ticket availability from weekends to seven days a week
- Support expansion of Citi Bike to communities like Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, Park Slope, Sunset Park, Prospect Heights and beyond
- Lead discussions on how to develop a balanced regulatory framework for ‘disruptive transportation’ technologies
- Support a more efficient delivery of service to ensure ferry operations are affordable and available as a viable transit option for waterfront communities
- Support efforts to create hydrogen infrastructure to make hydrogen vehicles a real transportation alternative

Issue 3: STREET AND TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Goal: Support Mayor de Blasio’s effort to reduce crashes that result in fatal and serious injury to motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists

The Borough President will:

- Support efforts to redesign dangerous major arterial roadways into complete streets
- Advocate for the expansion of pedestrian plazas, landscaped medians, and other pedestrian safety infrastructure
- Support the creation of protected and non-separated bicycle lanes in appropriate corridors
- Support increased enforcement of reckless driving, including the expansion of camera technology to reduce speeding, red light running, and bus lane encroachment

Goal: Improve safety for transit riders and workers

The Borough President will:

- Promote public awareness regarding the severity of punishment for those who assault MTA employees
- Support efforts to enhance penalties for unwanted contact on subways and buses

Issue 4: PARKING

Goal: Identify innovative means of increasing parking availability for businesses, neighborhood residents and deliveries

The Borough President will:

- Advocate for fairly regulated ‘car-sharing’ programs to reduce need for personal automobile ownership and demand for on-street parking
- Support the expansion of New York City Department of Transportation’s PARKsmart program to areas with high need for parking turnover
- Call for the expansion of the New York City Department of Transportation’s “Off Hour Truck Delivery Program” to Brooklyn
- Call for the creation of at least one bicycle corral in each Community Board

Issue 5: INVESTING IN RESILIENCY

Goal: Prepare for future storms and invest in water management infrastructure

The Borough President will:

- Launch a Brooklyn Resiliency Task Force to ensure federal and state funds are being directed efficiently and effectively as we rebuild from Super Storm Sandy and prepare for future storms
- Advocate expanding the New York City Department of Environmental Protection Green Infrastructure Grant Program to help mitigate future floods and better manage storm water
- Advocate and utilize the ULURP process to encourage bio-swales, green and blue roofs in certain development projects, and zoning text and mapping actions
- Call for increased federal and state funding to support the ‘wet-proofing’ of subway infrastructure

PARKS, ENVIRONMENT, AND ENERGY

The protection of our environment is integral to ensuring that Brooklyn's economy will prosper and our quality of life will thrive. Without the clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and open space to recreate, Brooklyn would not be such a desirable place to live and work. As the home of 2.6 million residents, Brooklyn faces many environmental challenges, from air and water quality to climate change and funding for green spaces. All of these issues are linked to each other and our efforts to address them must be broad and comprehensive.

Too many existing buildings in Brooklyn are still using heavy oils for heating purposes. The effects on our air quality have direct and devastating results. Over 300,000 children in New York City have been diagnosed with asthma. While programs like NYC Clean Heat have made significant strides to draw attention to the need to reduce the number buildings using these types of fuel, this is an effort that must spread to the entire Borough and include efforts to reduce automobile traffic, plant more trees along our streets, and combat the urban heat effect.

Like our air quality, water resources must be protected to ensure our future, with water pollution an issue that needs continued attention. As a coastal city with 500 miles of waterfront, New York City is at particular risk due to climate change and rising sea levels. Residential properties and businesses in communities like Coney Island, Canarsie, Sheepshead Bay, Sea Gate, and Red Hook were devastated during Superstorm Sandy, and remain at risk for future storms unless additional measures to rebuild more resiliently are incorporated into our infrastructure are pursued.

Not only should we build more resiliently to weather future storms, but Brooklyn must do its part to address the causes of climate change, like unhealthy levels of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. In addition to reducing reliance on dirty fossil fuels throughout the borough, preserving open spaces and our parks can go a long way to help clean up the air as well.

Brooklyn parks are an important component of our personal health, the health of our neighborhoods, and the health of the borough as a whole. Brooklyn's parks cover nearly 4,500 acres of our borough, from the 798 acres of Marine Park to the tiny tracts of land that make up Brooklyn's smallest public parks.⁹⁴ All are important and need to be protected as resources for all Brooklynites.

Larger parks in the borough like Marine Park, Prospect Park, Brooklyn Bridge Park, and Sunset Park often receive the lion's share of attention because of their sheer size and borough-wide appeal, but smaller neighborhood parks are equally important to provide a safe place for children to play and exercise as well as allow our seniors to sit and reflect.

Mayor de Blasio's Community Parks Initiative is an important step towards addressing the underfunding of community parks throughout New York City. This \$130 million investment will bring much needed maintenance to our parks, but is not enough to fill the broader capital needs of parks across the borough. While important investments will take place in Jesse Owens, Stockton, the Stroud and Ten Eyck playgrounds, Thomas Boyland Park, and the Saratoga

⁹⁴ See New York City, *Parks by Total Acreage*, at: http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/downloads/pdf/dpr_park_list.pdf.

Ballfields, much remains to be done. In fact, according to the Center for an Urban Future, the capital funding deficit to ensure our parks are in a state of good repair approaches \$400 million.⁹⁵

Even as adequate funding remains an issue for parks, the funding that does exist is not utilized quickly enough. Projects take too long to complete and the Department of Parks and Recreation's capital budget allocation process often trails behind other government agencies project delivery schedule.⁹⁶

One of the most effective ways we can improve our environment in Brooklyn and New York City is to increase the energy efficiency of our buildings. According to the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability, nearly 75 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in New York City come from energy inefficient buildings.⁹⁷ Inefficient buildings are not sustainable and they cost far more in the long-term in heating and cooling costs as well as repairs.

Brooklyn should lead the effort to change our building stock and we should start in our own backyard with Borough Hall. Built in 1848, Borough Hall is an historic, landmarked building, but what it possesses in beauty and history it lacks in 21st century energy efficiency. We can make Borough Hall more energy efficient and present it as a model for others to follow.

Another component of efficiency is improving recycling throughout Brooklyn. According to PlaNYC, New York City generates 14 million tons of waste and recyclables every year at a cost to taxpayers of \$300 million annually.⁹⁸ New York has implemented new recycling and composting initiatives recently and Brooklyn is home to state of the art recycling facilities like the SIMS Municipal Recycling Facility that is creating jobs and creating a cleaner environment. We will build on those programs so Brooklynites are leading the charge in reducing our solid waste flow.

Issue 1: AIR QUALITY AND WATER RESOURCES

Goal: Protect Brooklyn's air quality and combat pollution and its effects

The Borough President will:

- Support efforts to increase street tree plantings
- Advertise NYC's Clean Heat Program and educate remaining Brooklyn building owners about the need to convert from heavy heating oil's 4 and 6 to cleaner fuels
- Hold a forum on identifying strategies to combat the urban heat effect in Brooklyn
- Support transportation policies that reduce the number of vehicles on our roadways

Goal: Protect Brooklyn's water resources from future pollution and help remediate existing trouble spots

⁹⁵ Center for an Urban Future, *supra* note 82.

⁹⁶ New Yorkers for Parks, *A Survey of Capital Projects Management Among New York City Government Agencies* (June 4, 2014). <http://www.ny4p.org/research/other-reports/Capital%20Projects%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability, *One City: Built to Last* (Sept. 21, 2014). <http://www.nyc.gov/html/builttolast/assets/downloads/pdf/OneCity.pdf>.

⁹⁸ Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability, *PlaNYC: Waste and Recycling*, nyc.gov. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/planyc/html/sustainability/waste-recycling.shtml>.

The Borough President will:

- Support education programs like the Billion Oyster Project that include environmental remediation in their CTE and STEM curricula
- Support efforts to fully implement New York City’s Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, Vision 2020

Issue 2: CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCY

Goal: Support initiatives that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve our air quality

The Borough President will:

- Use the Renewable and Sustainable Energy Task Force (ReSET) to advance resiliency discussions
- Partner with Mayor’s Office of Recovery and Resiliency and the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery to advance resiliency initiatives
- Hold an “Act Local” summit to identify community measures to support local sustainability initiatives
- Highlight Borough Hall’s contribution to support innovative waterfront storm water design guidelines
- Support replenishment of wetlands in Jamaica Bay

Issue 3: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Goal: Identify additional and more effective funding opportunities for Brooklyn parks

The Borough President will:

- Advocate for a greater share of park funding for Brooklyn
- Lead discussions among Brooklyn’s council members to coordinate park investment across the Borough

Issue 4: ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Goal: Make our buildings infrastructure more energy efficient

The Borough President will:

- Utilize ReSET to improve access to energy efficiency technologies and increase energy literacy
- Work with the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), and the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) to make Brooklyn Borough Hall LEED certified
- Advocate for greater use of technology to monitor inefficient heating of buildings and hold bad landlords accountable to New York City heating violations
- Support innovative building concepts like Passive House building
- Advocate and utilize the ULURP process to incentivize green and blue roofs in final projects

Issue 5: SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Goal: Increase recycling rates, reduce solid waste and support composting expansion effort

The Borough President will:

- Partner with groups to train community based organizations on effective composting techniques
- Support the implementation of the Solid Waste Management Plan

ARTS AND CULTURE

One way Brooklyn's cultural mosaic is most prominently highlighted is through the diversity of Brooklyn's arts community. From the studio artist to the young chamber musician, the high school steppers to the established dance troupes or from community theater to festivals that draw thousands, Brooklyn is an epicenter of creativity and culture.

The arts boom is not a new phenomenon in Brooklyn. Arts and culture have always thrived here. The Brooklyn Arts Council was founded back in 1966⁹⁹ and when Weeksville was founded in 1838 by free African Americans, many craftspeople were among the residents who flocked there.

Along with enlightening, educating, empowering and entertaining us, the arts are a critical part of Brooklyn's economic engine. Brooklyn's critically acclaimed art exhibits, theatrical productions, music festivals, and artisanal craft marketplaces fuel tourism to the borough from other boroughs, the nation and beyond.

However, the arts movement in Brooklyn faces distinct challenges in the years to come. The affordable housing crisis in Brooklyn has hit the art community particularly hard, straining artists' ability to afford to live and work in the borough.

In addition, the lack of funding for the arts is reaching a critical impasse. Whether the lack of funding sources is for operating expenses, capacity building, or singular projects, more funding from existing opportunities, as well as new and innovative funding mechanisms to support the arts, is needed.

Finally, the need to promote the arts communities of Brooklyn to the broader public remains a challenge and need. Brooklyn is the epicenter of 'cool' largely because of the vibrant music scene, forward thinking art exhibitions, and our diversity of cultures. Promoting these assets is integral to ensuring that Brooklyn remains at the forefront of the arts world and creative Brooklynites continue to push the envelope.

Issue 1: UNIFY THE ARTS IN BROOKLYN

Goal: Connect residents and arts communities in the Borough and support neighborhood arts communities

The Borough President will:

- Establish an Arts Task Force that will serve as a hub of information for artists as well as a venue for arts organizations to discuss cross-sector issues impacting the arts communities throughout Brooklyn
- Open Borough Hall to artists across Brooklyn as a venue for exhibiting their artwork
- Launch an "Arts Week" that features arts organizations across the Borough
- Use Borough Hall's new website to highlight Brooklyn's diversity of arts and culture, including neighborhood arts groups and institutions

⁹⁹ Brooklyn Arts Council, *About*. Available at: <http://www.brooklynartscouncil.org/about>.

Issue 2: ARTS FUNDING

Goal: Identify innovative means of funding arts programming throughout the Borough

The Borough President will:

- Support an increase of 1 percent to the expense and capital budgets of the Department of Cultural Affairs which based on FY2014 funding levels, would result in roughly \$10 million more funding for arts and culture projects across the city
- Utilize the Arts Task Force to foment partnerships between neighborhood arts communities and the corporate world
- Hold hearings at Borough Hall to educate artists on how to utilize crowd-funding technology to raise money to support arts and culture work

Issue 3: AFFORDABLE STUDIO AND CULTURAL SPACE CRISIS

Goal: Support the growth of, and increase options for, affordable artists' workspace

The Borough President will:

- Utilize the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) to secure affordable cultural and studio spaces for artisans and artists in certain development projects and zoning text and mapping actions
- Advocate for the City to earmark certain vacant or underutilized city-owned land for affordable cultural and/or studio space, where appropriate
- Support the use of non-traditional venues for studio or work space, including spiritual institutions, schools, libraries, waterfronts, and parks

Issue 4: SUPPORT ARTS-LED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Goal: Use arts and culture organizations to promote economic development and strengthen and build community pride

The Borough President will:

- Use the Arts Task Force to help facilitate partnerships between Business Improvement Districts (BIDS), community boards, and local community arts and cultural organizations
- Use Capital Budget allocations to create cultural hubs and community centers in neighborhoods throughout Brooklyn
- Leverage arts, culture, and tourism for economic development benefits by using capital dollar investment in arts, culture, and entertainment institutions in underserved communities

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Community engagement and participation is integral to manage neighborhood change and to help guide development and plan our communities. Brooklyn has become a hotbed for development over the past two decades, and the only way the borough can adapt to and mitigate the impacts of this development is through community advocacy and planning. For years this challenge has fallen to our 18 local community boards and numerous community based organizations.

While most of these community representatives are volunteers, in contrast, the developers, commercial interests, and others seeking to enter the community are well financed and have access to lawyers and experts that can overwhelm even the most engaged and self-taught community activist.

Community boards play a New York City Charter-mandated role in the land use and community advocacy process. Therefore, it is important for boards to have the resources they need to effectively plan for challenges they face as well as to address the steady stream of everyday issues they work on. Yet, Community Board's budgets have not been increased in over a decade and until recently were routinely at risk of being cut year in and year out.¹⁰⁰

Community boards are also supposed to be reflective of the communities they serve, but too often the demographic make-up of boards does not match the population of the communities as a whole. This can lead to fewer voices and experiences influencing the community planning process at a time when a more diverse array of voices is needed and should be included.

As Brooklyn has boomed, land has become more and more expensive, resulting in not only residents, but also long time neighborhood businesses becoming priced out. One business sector that has been hit particularly hard is fresh grocers and supermarket stores in Brooklyn. Recent up-zonings in neighborhoods have placed some supermarkets at risk and have sometimes led to grocery stores failing to be replaced when redevelopment occurs. According to a study conducted by New York City Departments of City Planning, Health and the Economic Development Corporation, 15 of 18 community districts in Brooklyn fall below the City Average Ratio for grocery stores and no community district meets the City Planning Standard Ratio for these stores. The gaps in coverage are particularly large in central and east Brooklyn, as well as in denser neighborhoods like Sunset Park.¹⁰¹

As neighborhoods face development pressures, industrial business zones (IBZ), areas that create good paying manufacturing jobs for New Yorkers, are also under increasing threat. Developers routinely seek to convert these zones into high-end housing or allow non-manufacturing uses to take hold, like the parole center in Gowanus.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Helen Klein, *Community Boards Face Lean Times-Budget Cuts Hit Home Hard*, New York Post (Jan. 6, 2009). <http://nypost.com/2009/01/06/community-boards-face-lean-times-budget-cuts-hit-home-hard/>.

¹⁰¹ NYC Department of City Planning, NYC Department of Health, and NYC Economic Development Corporation, *Going to Market: New York City's Neighborhood Grocery Store and Supermarket Shortage*, available at: http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/pdf/going_to_market.pdf.

¹⁰² Noah Hurowitz, *Beep: Revoke Gowanus Parole Plan*, Brooklyn Paper (Oct. 8, 2014). http://www.brooklynpaper.com/stories/37/41/dtg-adams-no-parole-gowanus-2014-10-10-bk_37_41.html.

In addition, community resources like community gardens that serve as open spaces and sources of fresh food in underserved communities often become victims of their own success. When groups like the Green Guerrillas in the 1970's first formed community gardens as a way to reclaim urban space, vacant lots were ubiquitous throughout the Borough.¹⁰³ Now, as these very same neighborhoods become more attractive to more people – increasing property values by approximately 9.4 percent according to a 2006 study conducted by the current commissioner for Housing, Preservation and Development – these gardens have become threatened when other uses, like housing, become more preferable uses for developers and New York City. In addition, the operation of these gardens and urban farms are often dependent upon volunteers who donate time and money and limited grant opportunities from non-profits.

Finally, community-based organizations need additional support. Many 501 (c) 3 organizations lack financial capacity to carry out their missions. For example, many groups are prohibited from accessing New York City capital funds without a track record of city contracts. For these groups, just becoming eligible for city funding can be a difficult hurdle to clear.

Issue 1: COMMUNITY BOARDS

Goal: Empower community boards with resources to more effectively advocate for neighborhoods

The Borough President will:

- Advocate for additional resources for community boards to hire community planners and update board web-presences and communications
- Continue to provide technical assistance to boards as needed
- Partner with community boards on issue area trainings for committee chairs and members
- Hold a forum on how to access data from NYC agencies
- Partner with community boards to shape Borough Hall's policy agenda

Goal: Ensure community boards accurately reflect the community they serve

The Borough President will:

- Issue a report on demographic make-up of community boards
- Assist community boards outreach efforts to ensure diversity of geography and professional background for members
- Create a standardized online application for community board membership and recommended bylaws
- Publicize the new law that allows 16 and 17 year-olds to serve on community boards and commit to appointing one youth member to each community board by 2017
- Partner with community based organizations to encourage additional community board reforms and diversified membership

¹⁰³ NYC Parks, *The Community Garden Movement: Green Guerillas Gain Ground*, available at: <http://www.nycgovparks.org/about/history/community-gardens/movement>.

Issue 2: COMMUNITY BASED PLANNING

Goal: Support neighborhood based plans and assets that protect neighborhood character and manage future growth

The Borough President will:

- Support communities interested in neighborhood-wide re-zonings to preserve existing communities, support business growth, and channel new growth to targeted areas
- Work with partners to develop a “Best Practices” manual for resolving historic district concerns
- Advocate for zoning text changes and use the ULURP process to ensure integral neighborhood amenities like supermarkets and grocery stores are protected as communities change
- Advocate for community centers and community spaces as well as other important neighborhood assets
- Advocate for zoning text changes that support community centers and spaces as part of affordable housing developments
- Hold community information sessions on variety of topics related to community-based planning
- Support efforts to encourage long-term planning projects like the Gowanus Tunnel and the Cross Harbor Freight Tunnel

Issue 3: COMMUNITY MANUFACTURING AND ECONOMIES

Goal: Foster and create communities that offer good jobs and strong local economies

The Borough President will:

- Initiate zoning map changes to protect industrial space from currently allowed uses like storage facilities
- Provide technical support as needed to community boards and others to protect manufacturing space and update industrial business zone boundaries
- Advocate for zoning text changes and use the ULURP process to mandate ground floor retail space in appropriate retail corridors

Issue 4: COMMUNITY GARDENS

Goal: Identify a strategy to ensure valued community spaces are protected

The Borough President will:

- Establish a Community Gardens Task Force to coordinate different garden groups and advocate for additional city resources to support community gardens
- Partner community garden groups with local schools to educate about urban agriculture and local health care institutions to educate about obesity
- Partner with established community garden groups to develop a strategic plan for the creation of gardens elsewhere in underserved parts of Brooklyn

- Support a community gardens to bodega partnership as part of the “Shop Healthy Brooklyn” initiative
- Investigate innovative ways to fund community resources like community gardens

Issue 5: SUPPORT 501 (c) 3 AND COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Goal: Educate organizations on how to access city funds and additional resources

The Borough President will:

- Introduce state legislation to support tax credits for volunteers who donate time to established non-profit groups
- Work to reform New York City’s capital funding requirements for community-based 501 (c) 3 organizations
- Hold a workshop with community-based organizations to educate them on capital, discretionary funding processes, and best practices in non-profit management

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