



## **DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN ISSUES**

### **Housing**

Lower Manhattan's affordable and accessible housing supply remains constrained and is an example of a housing crisis across the US. I plan on making a national housing agenda a priority. While I am encouraged by the Biden Administration laying out some key areas they will focus on, we need to put heavy capital investment in housing preservation and generation efforts.

Particular to downtown is the opportunity to adapt commercial buildings to residential use. Many Class B and C office buildings are targets for this approach. I would seek to have the federal government develop a dedicated central business revitalization plan that includes capital for residential conversion and federal incentives to states that encourage or mandate affordability. We must also expand federal subsidy programs like Section 8 that can be held by individual tenants or applied to several or all units of a building. And finally, a real capital investment in public housing is a must. Public housing needs to be viewed as part of our national infrastructure, just as we view bridges and rail. I will work to get the Green New Deal for Public Housing and the Public Housing Emergency Response Acts passed.

I was a housing organizer and was witness to how federal housing support can guarantee longer-term affordability and stability - my own family benefited from public and Section 8 housing. From my time on the SPURA task force that created hundreds of affordable units at Essex Crossing to my time in the Council, where I financed the creation of deeply affordable units, the preservation of low- and middle-income cooperatives and rentals, and championed the budget initiative to expand the Community Land Trust model across New York City, I'll continue to fight for housing generation, preservation, and justice.

### **Climate Change and Resiliency**

There are still gaps in resiliency measures along many of New York City's waterfronts. Specifically in Lower Manhattan, the gap at the Historic Seaport and Wall Street has a proposal but no financing. I believe the federal government should pay for large-scale resiliency infrastructure projects that protect communities from sea level rise and storm surge, especially in areas that will diversify more towards residential uses in the coming years, like Wall Street. The effects of climate change are already here, and action to defend against the cannot wait. I will fight for direct funding for our city waterfront communities to be protected, as well as frontline communities nationwide.

Furthermore, to prevent the climate crisis from getting worse, we must do everything in our power to eliminate the use of fossil fuels and immediately ramp up renewable energy generation. Federal investment and incentives are key to getting us to aggressive targets. Just as New York City is leading on initiatives I have championed such as the Climate Mobilization Act, we need to ramp up federal support for lowering emissions, zero waste initiatives, vehicle electrification, and investments in mass transit. Having led volunteers to help seniors and families after flooding during Superstorm Sandy, I will convey our experience and urge action.

### **Small Business Survival**

COVID decimated our small businesses. While the federal government provided billions in relief, for many business owners, it was not enough. More importantly, the reduction to in-person office work prolonged the effects on those businesses located in our commercial centers, like the Financial District.

I believe we can start by seeking loan forgiveness on federal assistance provided during the pandemic. We should also focus on a central business district revitalization program that includes additional grants to those struggling with revenue. Additionally, a national housing program that includes incentives and capital investment for conversion of appropriate office buildings to residential use, in order to further diversify the consumer bases of downtowns, is a prime example of where the federal government can help cities, residents, and small businesses alike in the pandemic's aftermath. Further, with many small business owners being met with lawsuits regarding accessibility, I would seek to leverage federal resources for innovative partnerships that I developed together with disability rights advocates and small business groups which would assist owners with proactive inspections, guidance and certifications.

Finally, just as I have done during my Council tenure since even before the pandemic, we can leverage and fund our national CDFI network to further assist small business owners on adapting business plans and securing funds for capital improvements, since CDFIs are experts in their localities and the cultural and language needs of mom-and-pop owners.

### **Hate Crimes**

Though not unique to Downtown Manhattan, the rise in hate crimes is something that we need to eradicate here and across the country. Our neighbors in Chinatown are particularly fearful, after high profile hate attacks in the neighborhood and against AAPI individuals across the country. But this rise in violence has also affected Jewish, Muslim, Black, immigrant communities, and we have seen recently how, once again, our LGBTQ+ siblings, especially trans individuals, remain targets.

Here in New York City, I championed the AAPI Support Initiative which provides millions for groups supporting individuals and families on basic needs and to combat and report these incidents. I support expanding federal efforts on anti-AAPI violence, such as Rep. Grace Meng's initiative, which similarly works on reporting campaigns and community-based intervention. Through federal education funding, we need to ensure that school curricula across the country are including the contributions of all communities to our history, in order to foster understanding and combat hate from an early age. And just as I worked with New York's public hospitals to expand culturally-appropriate services in various languages and specific health services for all members of the LGBTQ+ community, I hope to have the federal government prioritize health service delivery that focuses on the individual's needs. Finally, we need to invest on a federal level in mental health services and supportive housing, since health and housing stability are key to safe and thriving communities.

### **Transportation Infrastructure**

New York City has an extensive mass transit system, but we need to bring it back to world class status. It also needs to meet the needs of all people in this city. As Downtown sees an increase in its senior population and to better serve people with disabilities, we must invest in mass transit that is fully accessible. We need a transportation network that is seamlessly interconnected, reduces congestion, and prioritizes riders, pedestrians, and cyclists.

I have fought for greater pedestrian and bicycle safety and passed legislation to promote shared streets for passive recreation and activation. I have rallied with advocates and won funding and commitments for elevators along downtown train routes. I believe with safety, health, and climate as rationale, we can win more direct funding for our subways and streets.