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## 2021 Environmental Questionnaire for New York City Candidates

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the New York League of Conservation Voters Questionnaire.

To ensure your responses address the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please consult [NYLCV's 2021 New York City Policy Agenda](#) when answering the questions.

The New York League of Conservation Voters is the only non-partisan, statewide environmental organization in New York that fights for clean water, clean air, renewable energy, and open space through political action. This questionnaire is designed to elicit your views regarding what environmental, public health, clean energy and transit, and environmental justice groups consider to be the most important issues of the day. Responses may inform NYLCV's educational and legislative programs and actions NYLCV takes in the election cycle.

Responses should be considered public. Although NYLCV may choose not to publicize the responses to every question, verbatim responses may be reproduced and distributed publicly. If so, your responses may be shortened, if necessary, but will not be edited in substantive ways. If you choose to refer us to a position paper or website, please indicate exactly what text you would like us to cite. For candidates choosing not to respond to the questionnaire, NYLCV will note as much in its public materials.

NYLCV and its partners in the environmental policy arena believe that New York's voters are determined to make the environment a voting issue this year. Candidate positions on issues such as protecting public health, building a clean energy future, and mitigating climate change will help voters decide how to cast their ballots this election cycle. This questionnaire is one of the primary ways the public will get this information.

Here are a few guidelines:

- Questionnaires are due **Friday, February 26, 2021**.
- The completed questionnaire is mandatory for endorsement consideration and must be submitted via e-mail as a Microsoft Word file to: [politics@nylcv.org](mailto:politics@nylcv.org)
- Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg ([jklainberg@nylcv.org](mailto:jklainberg@nylcv.org))
- After receipt of the completed questionnaire, candidates will be invited to participate in a formal interview with a local Chapter Board.
- Candidate endorsements will be made by the NYLCV State Board on April 29, 2021.

## CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION

Candidate name: Carmen De La Rosa

Office sought & district number: NYC Council District 10

Campaign e-mail: Carmen@carmenfornyc.com

Campaign phone:917-202-7486

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Campaign manager's name and email: James Burke / James@carmenfornyc.com

Press Secretary's name and email: Luis Perez/ Luis@carmenfornyc.com

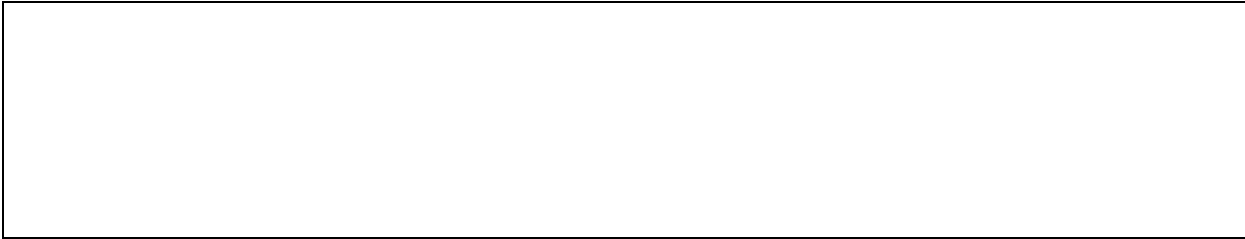
Scheduler's name and email: James Burke / James@carmenfornyc.com

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Please share your accomplishments or experiences that indicate your commitment to advancing a pro-environment agenda. These experiences may be professional or personal.

As a New York State legislator I have been a champion for environmental justice especially in communities of color. I voted for the Climate and Community Protection Act; the Plastic Bag Ban; and been vocal around issues of pollution and car dependency including making our streets more livable and walkable. I also advocated for Green Infrastructure in NYCHA and advocated for a ban around toxic chemicals in beauty products. Locally, I have been a champion for green infrastructure and environmental plans that benefit my community like access to green spaces and more accessible transportation options.

Northern Manhattan is fortunate to have WE ACT for Environmental Justice, a local, national, and international environmental justice leader based in D10. If elected to the city council, I commit to partner with the NYLCV, WE ACT and others to develop a local and city-wide environmental justice vision to protect our most vulnerable communities from environmental racism.



## ISSUES

Each year, NYLCV works closely with New York’s leading environmental, public health, conservation, energy, environmental justice, and transportation organizations to identify the most pressing priorities on fighting climate change, conserving land and water, and protecting public health. These issues drive NYLCV’s advocacy work throughout the legislative session, influence the bills we select for NYLCV’s Environmental Scorecards, and informs the decision on the candidates we choose to endorse. To ensure your responses are in alignment with the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please review [NYLCV’s 2021 New York City Policy Agenda](#) when formulating your responses.

Please indicate your level of commitment to, and if applicable your recent personal and professional activity concerning, all the policy priorities of our partners per the following issues:

### Top Priorities

Transportation isn’t only the number one source of greenhouse gas emissions in our state—it is also a major source of air pollution, causing respiratory and other public health issues. This is particularly the case near New York City’s many major highways where too often, these communities are low-income and communities of color.

#### 2. Encouraging the Shift to High Efficiency, Low Emission Forms of Transportation (p. 3)

As a former staffer in the City Council I know intimately the issues of investing in our streets and infrastructure, and as a legislator in Albany I have been vocal about alternative transportation sources, like e-scooters and improving the Cross Bronx Expressway. I believe any improvements in our transportation resources must include the planning, oversight, and interests of the communities that live around and rely on them. Additionally, I support reduced car dependency through congestion pricing, and the expansion of sidewalks & streets to pedestrians and local restaurants under the new Open Streets program. Moreover, the prioritization of green recreational spaces, especially in BIPOC communities, along with access to additional MTA services and lines, remain priorities should I win the District 10 City Council seat.

The next administration and council needs to transition all of its fleet to zero-emission vehicles. With the emissions in my community from the George Washington Bridge and other car centric infrastructure, it is imperative from a public health, climate, and quality of life perspective that we transition away from fossil fuels in our vehicles as well as other sources of pollution.

More than ever, New Yorkers realized the value of our parks and open spaces in 2020 as our cultural institutions were closed and we had to practice social distancing. Open green space is one of the City’s

most valuable environmental assets but also contributes to the well-being of our residents and our economy.

3. Conserving New York City’s Parks and Natural Areas (p. 3)

I support the fortification of the Harlem River Esplanade in our district, along with the fortification of all other vulnerable waterfronts throughout the five boroughs. In addition, I believe making the language around the Climate Justice movement more accessible to all -- including keeping New York’s immigrant communities in mind -- goes a long way to our shared vision of maintaining open, green canopy spaces for all. I believe programming around our parks is also a matter of improving local economies, including access to quality concessions. The Nature Center in my district comes to mind. Shuttered since Hurricane Sandy this educational and economic development opportunity had laid closed since, denying my district access to a gem. It has not been prioritized and as such, I welcome a reassessment of all parks, especially those in low-income communities, regarding their proper use and management.

Reaching the City’s Zero Waste goal by 2030 will require work from all New Yorkers—cooperation of city officials and private industry, and buy-in from the public. Stimulating behavioral change is critical to meeting this goal, as is ensuring the City has programs in place that promote waste reduction, diversion, and sustainable waste management.

4. Common Sense Waste Management (p. 3)

I believe in an equitable budget process that allows us to have real impact and input into the services carried out within our communities. These include sanitation and environmental services, like clean-up, recycling and organics, and waste management, that speak to the diversity and tenor of the people that live within those communities. Currently, many waste management systems reside in communities of color, creating health and environmental disparities that overwhelmingly burden low and underprivileged communities. On the Council I will work to diversify this so that all communities play a role in our improved environmental mission.

As we have seen during and prior to the pandemic not all communities are equally served with regards to sanitation. We need to advance towards a zero waste future for NYC. Reducing waste, expanding composting, improving recycling and transforming the consumer economy need to occur to reduce our environmental footprint while also improving the health of environmental justice communities like D10 and beyond.

Combating Climate Change



The time to act on climate is now. The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report makes it clear that we must make radical changes in short order to avoid catastrophic climate change. We will work to advance policies that decrease emissions from all sectors, prepare us to meet the unavoidable impacts of climate change, reduce waste, and foster a strong green economy. We must also ensure the changes we make to tackle climate change benefit disadvantaged communities and provide for a just transition.

5. Energy and Infrastructure (p. 5)

We should eliminate mandatory parking minimums, especially in already transit rich districts. New York should become a leader in advancing all things electric, including charging stations, electrifying the City’s vehicle fleet, upgrading our grid particularly in light of Texas, and creating renewable Rikers. Several journals have highlighted the dearth of charging stations within New York City compared to the number of electric vehicles on the road, for example. New York must lead in this technology along w/other renewable and environmentally-conscious sectors.

Buildings account for the majority of NYC’s GHG emissions. I support the Green New Deal for NYC and Green New Deal for NYCHA plans to transform our building and energy sectors. We also need to ensure that as we transition to a green economy that workers traditionally left out of the labor force are prioritized for training and hiring. Using the CO-OP model led by WE ACT, we need to ensure that frontline communities are getting the benefits of a clean energy future as we improve our environment and also expand access to jobs.

I also support the Renewable Rikers vision and the creation of microgrids. We need to transform our energy sector while simultaneously addressing the historic struggles of environmental and systemic racism. NYC needs to dramatically improve the OneNYC vision and hold the next administration accountable to ensure NYC is the leading city in the world in the fight against climate change. We will need to develop a Just Transition for our communities and we need to set the example for municipalities and EJ communities around the state, country, and world.

With the UN a few short miles from D10 we need to leverage the unique position of NYC as a global powercenter to demand that we also strengthen the Paris agreement. Working with our federal representatives I will work to ensure that NYC and the U.S. rejoin the nation of the world in the fight to protect our planet and our people.

6. Transportation (p. 5)

I fully support the expansion of shared bike or e-scooter services and the subsidization of these programs by the City, particularly within transit deserts or low-income communities. With that, I support the Five Borough Bikeway Initiative, and initiatives around express bus services including more street and local infrastructure to improve the reliability of these services.

We also need to fully fund our transit system. Federal, state, and local resources need to be increased to modernize and improve the conditions of all transportation infrastructure in NYC. In particular we need a fully funded MTA that only focuses on wealthier neighborhood and transit hubs most used by commuters and tourists but also ensure budget equity for local residents who

rely on mass transportation to get to where they live, work, pray, and play. Funding and planning needs to be tied to the needs of our communities and we need to develop better processes for community input in our transportation and planning processes. I also believe strongly in the need to allocate funds to expand the accessibility to all New Yorkers regardless of their ability.

If we do not focus on transportation funding we will not be able to have a just recovery for our city. We cannot go back to “normal” but build a city that has a state of the art, safe, clean, affordable, and accessible transit system that makes all New Yorkers proud regardless of their zip code.

#### 7. Resiliency (p. 6)

During Hurricane Sandy my community faced major flooding. Yet, much of the attention around flooding was reserved for Lower Manhattan and areas that had faced significant damage. This lack of focus was likely led by the perception of the Heights as being the highest point of Manhattan and thus ‘safe’. Future resiliency plans must be built into our local infrastructure, and discussions around floodplains must acknowledge adjacent and higher communities that can be negatively yet equally impacted by global climate events.

If elected, I will meet with WE ACT, and help implement their Northern Manhattan Climate Resiliency plan which was developed with the input of many grassroots leaders in D10, in particular from Dyckman Houses. As we have seen with the pandemic, if we are not prepared we will be more vulnerable to the risk of crisis present and future. Along with the experts at NYLCV and other organizations, I would root our resiliency planning and implementation work in community-based participatory research to ensure community buy-in, social cohesion, and climate resilience

#### 8. Solid Waste (p. 7)

I support the NYLCV platform for solid waste. In particular we need to transform the all sanitation trucks public and private to electric or clean-fuel powered green trucks

Composting is an important part of the zero waste vision. Immigrant communities often have the ancestral and first hand experience of composting and we need to prioritize this practice city-wide. Culturally appropriate language, education and enforcement need to be integrated into public policy to ensure the adoption of these important practices.

Zero waste must be a top priority for the council and next administration. As we have seen during the pandemic the conditions of our buildings, streets, and other public spaces are in desperate need of attention. Cleaning our streets must be equitable and occur regardless of socio-economic status.

Zero Waste Design Guidelines in buildings, planning for separation, movement, and storage of waste in a way that maximizes waste diversion and minimizes the use of space is also essential. Healthy homes are a priority for me in city hall and we need to ensure the health and proper maintenance of our home and buildings for our environment and our residents.

### Protecting People and Natural Resources

All New Yorkers deserve indoor and outdoor environments that are free of contamination and pollution. We will promote policies that provide access to healthy air and water, protect our open spaces, and improve the well-being of all New Yorkers.

#### 9. Parks, Natural Areas, and Active Waterfronts (p. 9)

As we have witnessed by the devastating effects of COVID-19, public parks and open spaces are essential to the well-being and health of our communities. D10 has tremendous parks, plazas, and open spaces and we need the resources necessary to properly care for and improve the quality of our natural spaces. Communities of color and low-income many of whom have risked their lives in this pandemic as essential workers cannot often afford the luxury of going to their homes upstate, or on Long Island, or elsewhere. Essential workers and communities of color now more than ever deserve and need proper green spaces for recreation, family activities, and socialization. Budget equity for parks and all city services will be a priority for me in the council and my experience as a chief of staff enable me on Day 1 to move forward on budgetary and policy goals.

#### 10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

Lead in NYCHA has been a huge issue for years which is why I remain a proud supporter of a Green New Deal for NYCHA, helping to usher in not only renewable jobs and opportunities but a renewable living standard for residents and tenants of NYCHA facilities. We need to address this along w/recent reports of highly elevated and toxic levels of lead in local schools. The complete removal of lead from communities and educational places is the only goal, as we are dealing with the health and safety of our children, and I welcome the opportunity to work w/the school's new Chancellor to make this a priority for all families, especially those in underserved communities.

#### 11. Reduce and Mitigate Heat Vulnerability (p. 9 – 10)

I support the expansion and investment in programs such as Cool Neighborhood Program. I look forward to expanding initiatives such as the cool roofs throughout D10. We must also continue to invest in green infrastructure.

As climate change increases the temperature we need to have mitigation and adaptation strategies for our communities. Climate related temperature change is a serious threat to communities like Northern Manhattan. We need to prepare our most vulnerable residents in particular seniors, those with health and respiratory issues, and those living in NYCHA. The next council needs to do a full Environmental Justice analysis to determine the needs of our communities to best enact policies and budgets to ensure that programs such as the cool neighborhoods are successful and community-driven.

12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

All communities have the right to clean air for all. In communities like mine where we have intersectional issues such as access to dignified housing and the need for investment in our infrastructure, we see that this right to clean air is not always granted.

Poor housing conditions such as persistent violations by negligent landlords has made the existence of mold and pest a common condition for tenants of Northern Manhattan. These conditions have led to alarming asthma rates in Washington Heights.

As a child growing up in Washington Heights, both my brother and I grew up with asthma. My brother's asthma was severe. Unfortunately, this is a common diagnosis for the children in my district. Clearly, in the age of COVID-19 these historic issues have proved fatal for vulnerable communities of color.

It is no coincidence that in Manhattan the neighborhoods with the highest Asthma rates are still the neighborhoods above 110th Street in Northern Manhattan. As a City Council Member I look forward to taking proactive measures to hold negligent landlords accountable and eliminate pollution across our city. In Washington Heights we have a residential community that sits atop of the Cross Bronx and Major Deegan Expressways. pollution and exhaust have exacerbated the increasing asthma rates in my community. In addition to champion policy like the Green New Deal. I will also look to create sustainable solutions to reducing dependency and emissions from vehicles. I will also continue to champion investment into funding mass transit in our city.

13. Clean Water for All (p.11)



In the state legislature we recently passed a constitutional amendment to require Clean Air & Water for all New Yorkers. Measures like these must be the core of our work as we reimagine bold and dynamic policies for improving environmental standards for all New Yorkers.

#### 14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

While in the Legislature I supported the expansion of Health Bucks and partnerships w/farmers to ensure that local communities had a connection to fresh, organic, affordable, homegrown foods. COVID-19 showed the immense dichotomy of waste of having upstate farmers throw away vast amounts of produce and perishable goods because restaurants and local eateries were shut down, while simultaneously hundreds of New Yorkers were forced to stand in breadlines and go hungry. In addition, I support efforts to teach agricultural techniques to residents and community members in BIPOC neighborhoods, giving locals an intimate understanding of how to grow and sustain vegetables and crops and lessons in healthy eating and proper food sourcing.

We need to ensure that our children are also getting local, organic, and nutritious. Free school food for our children is essential but we also need to ensure our children get access to healthy food and access to food education. The tale of two cities shouldn't be the tale of two plates. To address the obesity and health challenges in our city we need to become a national leader in ensuring access to all for healthy food in our schools, our supermarkets, bodega's, 99cents stores and other places where food is purchased.

We need to develop an Uptown CO-OP that is rooted in the community and culturally appropriate. The Park Slope CO-OP is a national treasure and example of what is possible but we need a Food Justice Vision for NYC that ensures that all communities have such opportunities to live a healthy life.

The next administration and council will need to develop strategies to end the food lines that wrap around the corners of our communities. We need to re-imagine our entire food systems and also incorporate local businesses and community leaders to address this public health crisis. A full frontal policy agenda to address cycles of poverty needs to include our food systems.