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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
- ☒ Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg (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: [Jenny L. Low](#)

Office sought & district number: [City Council District 01](#)

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Campaign manager's name and email: [Kristen Chang](#) kristen@jennylow.nyc

Press Secretary's name and email: [Hayley Brundige](#)

Scheduler's name and email: hayley@redhorsestrategies.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.

I am a strong advocate for recycling, composting, green roofs and elimination of paper products. And recently with my volunteer work with ReThink, I'm now advocating for more ways to eliminate food waste and repurposing scraps to create meals for food insecure families. I volunteered with the Chinatown Big Sweep Team during the summer months to clean the streets of Chinatown and rid them of stench and fifth on Saturdays before outdoor dining commenced. I also volunteered for numerous clean-up campaigns to pick up garbage and beautify local parks. When the City banned single use plastic bags, I organized volunteers to help distribute reusable bags and encouraged seniors to have the bags at hand for their daily shopping. As Councilmember I will continue to advance a pro-environment agenda and push the need to urgently cut greenhouse gas emissions to combat our climate emergency.

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)

Transportation sector accounts for 30% of NYC greenhouse gas emissions. We must create cleaner, more effective transportation options to address the increasing risk of climate change. As Council Member, I will expand on Speaker Corey Johnson’s Master Streets plan to have a future where walking, cycling, and shared transport are how the majority of New Yorkers move around our City. Community supported bike lanes and pedestrian plazas will add towards zero emission mobility, resulting in less congestion and less pollution. I will call on the MTA to transition its fleet to zero-emission buses.

We need to widely expand our public transportation system so that it becomes the preferred option over personal vehicles, as well as enact a comprehensive congestion pricing plan to reduce traffic and effectively reduce our emissions from personal vehicles. Many people decide to rely on personal vehicles because they run into the issue of transit deserts, where the nearest form of public transportation is around 30 minutes away. As Council Member I will support the Better Bus Action Plan which focuses on improving bus transit in the five boroughs. Alternatively, other forms of transportation should be implemented as well, such as bike infrastructures, scooters, light rails, and ferries.

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)



New York City has fewer acres of green space per person than almost any other major city in the US. As the City's population grows, the need for creating and maintaining green space must be a priority. These open spaces contribute to the City's existing physical assets and quality of life across the City. We learned the value of open spaces in the last year during the pandemic. With access to parks, and open spaces, New Yorkers were able to enjoy the outdoors to escape the isolation indoors. The pandemic has reinforced the positive impact open space provides. There are many locations in Lower Manhattan where added green space would be beneficial. In the SoHo/NoHo neighborhoods, children and families have been advocating for more open green space. There's been demands from local residents to conserve Elizabeth Street Garden as an open green space for visitors to enjoy instead of approved plans to build affordable housing. We should not have to make the false choices of maintaining a beloved garden and building affordable senior housing. As Council Member, I will collaborate with neighboring Council Members and residents to find alternative space for the senior housing and keep Elizabeth Garden as is for the community to enjoy.

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)

New Yorkers can help reduce greenhouse gasses by switching to more efficient light bulbs, adjusting their thermostats, unplugging their chargers and electronics when not in use, and purchasing more energy efficient appliances, and I plan to make education around how to live a more environmentally friendly life a focus for my Council office. I will rigorously implement NYC's new Commercial Waste Zones law; expand recycling and composting in all residences, including NYCHA houses.

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)

Resiliency is a priority in District 1, where rising sea level, based on current projections, will submerge parts of Lower Manhattan on a regular basis and put critical infrastructure and jobs serving all of New York City and the region at risk. This plan will include creating new infrastructure as well as retrofitting existing infrastructure to better handle the coming effects of climate change. We also need a Green New Deal to create jobs through reducing greenhouse gas emissions and developing new sources of clean renewable energy. We need to increase building efficiency, invest in and improve mass transit, and encourage less vehicle use. All of this will

mean constant work, construction, collaboration and renovation in order to meet our goals and be prepared for the future. Organized Labor will be extremely important in order to get those goals accomplished, as labor will be building the infrastructure, working in renewable clean energy jobs, operating our public transportation services and more.

I believe that the Climate Mobilization Act which the City Council enacted is an important step to combating climate change.

While I agree reducing emissions from buildings is a significant action we can take, we must also prioritize building resiliency in Lower Manhattan, getting the City to be carbon neutral and ending our dependence on fossil fuels. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions would improve the City's energy efficiency. We should replace the City's gas-fired power plants with battery storage powered by renewable energy sources and generate green roofs for residential buildings. New Yorkers can help reduce greenhouse gasses by switching to more efficient light bulbs, adjusting their thermostats, unplugging their chargers and electronics when not in use, and purchasing more energy efficient appliances, and I plan to make education around how to live a more environmentally friendly life a focus for my Council office.

As a legislator I would oppose this type of privatization and demand that any new major transit infrastructure project be owned and operated by a public entity.

6. Transportation (p. 5)

We need to increase building efficiency, invest in and improve mass transit, and encourage less vehicle use. All of this will mean constant work, construction, collaboration and renovation in order to meet our goals and be prepared for the future. Organized Labor will be extremely important in order to get those goals accomplished, as labor will be building the infrastructure, working in renewable clean energy jobs, operating our public transportation services and more. Without organized labor our goals to help mitigate climate change and stop future changes would be upended.

I support increased funding for and access to public transportation so that all people can access health care and other critical services. Transit is a public responsibility, and public transportation helps to reduce road congestion and travel times, air pollution, and energy and oil consumption, all of which benefit both riders and non-riders alike. I fully support expanding mass transit options but would not support this type of privately owned transit system. A monorail which would connect all five boroughs and go through my district would honestly be a dream come true. NYC residents continue to pay more for transit and get far less in return when you think of fewer service hours and longer waits between trains. So a monorail connecting the city would please many transportation and environmental activists as well as many of my constituents.

7. Resiliency (p. 6)

There is a climate crisis and anyone who says otherwise is rejecting science and facts. We need to completely prepare our City for the worst effects of climate change, including creating a resiliency plan for all five boroughs and the hundreds of miles of coastline that we have. Resiliency is a priority in District 1, where rising sea level, based on current projections, will submerge parts of Lower Manhattan on a regular basis and put critical infrastructure and jobs serving all of New York City and the region at risk. This plan will include creating new

infrastructure as well as retrofitting existing infrastructure to better handle the coming effects of climate change. We also need a Green New Deal to create jobs through reducing greenhouse gas emissions and developing new sources of clean renewable energy.

As Council Member, I will support investing in coastal resiliency that prioritizes nature-based solutions to provide Black, Brown and immigrant communities with the added benefits of green infrastructure.

Renewable energy is the future. We need to begin transitioning to renewable energy now, as it will both save us money -- and save our planet. The climate crisis threatens our entire way of life, if we don't change how we power our city, if we don't lower our emissions, and if we don't update our infrastructure to aid us in this struggle as well as prepare our resiliency efforts, then we will lose the city that we love. What we need to do is build green infrastructure such as green roofs. Solar roofs for example will help us create new energy sources or assist us in reducing our carbon footprint.

While I agree reducing emissions from buildings is a significant action we can take, we must also prioritize building resiliency in Lower Manhattan, getting the City to be carbon neutral and ending our dependence on fossil fuels. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions would improve the City's energy efficiency.

We should replace the City's gas-fired power plants with battery storage powered by renewable energy sources and generate green roofs for residential buildings. Some simple actions that can help reduce greenhouse gasses are switching to more efficient light bulbs, adjusting thermostats, unplugging chargers and electronics when not in use, and purchasing more energy efficient appliances. As for me, I plan to incorporate more environment issues into education.

8. Solid Waste (p. 7)

As Council Member, I will support commitment to send zero waste to landfills by 2030 and rigorously implement NYC's new Commercial Waste Zones law; expand recycling and composting in all residences, including NYCHA houses; and take other actions to tackle emissions from waste that are tied to high rates of asthma and other respiratory diseases in local neighborhoods.

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)



I will push for community supported bike lanes and pedestrian plazas will add towards zero emission mobility, resulting in less congestion and less pollution. I will also rally and work with park advocates, workers, labor unions and other stakeholders in order for Parks Department Staff funding to be reinstated for the FY 22 city budget. These positions help maintain the high quality of our parks by ensuring safety, cleanliness, and maintenance standards that we rely on.

10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

I wholeheartedly support NYLCV's recommendation in lead poisoning prevention: adopt legislation that (1) increases collaboration between City agencies in the construction and renovation of residential buildings to prevent exposing children to construction dust that may contain lead paint; (2) requires thorough investigations by the City DOH in any report of elevated blood lead level in a minor. (3) improve notification of tenants, interagency cooperation with respect to inspections and issuance of stop-work orders associated with lead paint.

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

In order to reduce and mitigate urban heat, we need to continue to implement and expand the Cool Neighborhood program. As children spending more time at home due to remote learning, we must find ways to mitigate the risk extreme heat exposure. I support protecting and expanding the City's urban forest to reduce urban heat island effect, especially in environmental justice neighborhoods across the City.

12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

In our continued efforts to reduce emissions from vehicles, I will work with City Council colleagues to (1) hold the City accountable to completely electrify its fleet by 2040; (2) demand the same for school buses; (3) advocate for the MTA to bring more electric buses on line and fully electrify its fleet of buses by 2040. Similar efforts must be supported to reduce emission from delivery trucks by offering incentive for them to deliver during off peak hours and more efficient unloading/loading spaces. In addition, I will advocate for continued efforts to transition from oil heat to renewable biofuels in buildings.

13. Clean Water for All (p.11)

Clean water is a right, not a privilege and we must ensure that all New Yorkers have access to clean water. I support adopting legislation that ensures clean water for all.

Push for NYC's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to implement a formal, transparent reporting process on the progress of the Long Term Control Plans for the city's waterways. The process should include a public comment period with an opportunity for community engagement.

Expand New York City's Green Infrastructure program with a more robust grant or other incentive programs to catalyze installation on private property in targeted communities where benefits can be maximized.

Encourage more collaboration between city agencies to increase the adoption of green infrastructure in projects beyond DEP, including urging the Departments of Transportation and Parks and Recreation to use pervious pavement and installation of bioswales and rain gardens wherever possible.

Urge DEP to conduct a study and develop recommendations on water rate restructuring that promotes the equitable generation of needed revenues, water conservation, and widespread use of green infrastructure. The process should include a robust public engagement component.

14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

We must ensure that food systems become more sustainable as the time to make change is now. We can listen to scientists and research to create sustainable food systems which is also why I would like to expand recycling and composting in all residences. Recently with my volunteer work with ReThink, I'm now advocating for more ways to eliminate food waste and repurpose for meals for food insecure families. ReThinkFood began taking excess food scraps from high end restaurants like Eleven Madison Park, to make meals for the homeless. During the pandemic, ReThink raised private donations to partner with local restaurants to provide free culturally sensitive meals for seniors and families in need. Since April, ReThink has given out over 2 Million free meals across the City.