

30 Broad Street – 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
212-361-6350

[politics@nylcv.org](mailto:politics@nylcv.org) / [www.nylcv.org](http://www.nylcv.org)

**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: Julie Menin

Office sought & district number: City Council District 5

Campaign e-mail: juliefornyc@gmail.com

Campaign phone: 862-268-6399

Website: JulieforNYC.com

Facebook page: /juliemenin

Twitter handle: <https://twitter.com/JulieMenin>

Campaign manager's name and email: Ben Silva, ben.silva1996@gmail.com

Press Secretary's name and email: Ben Silva, ben.silva1996@gmail.com

Scheduler's name and email: Ben Silva, ben.silva1996@gmail.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 running for City Council because in a moment of crisis, we need proven and bold local leadership that is ready on day one to advocate for a more equitable and sustainable New York. I have served as Commissioner of three NYC agencies and have a two decade proven track record as an environmental champion.

As the seven year Chair of CB1, in the wake of 9/11, I led the charge for the construction of the city's first Green School, PS 276, which has since set the standard for environmentally-focused educational building design. I cracked down on idling tour buses and successfully negotiated the deal to have Silverstein Properties green retrofit construction vehicles and championed a coordinated command center which became an agency called Lower Manhattan Command Center, monitoring and publishing air quality reports during the significant reconstruction of Lower Manhattan in the aftermath of September 11th. I was honored to receive the League of Conservation Voters Public Service Award for my work as an environmental champion. I also led the effort to transition Broad Street in the Financial District into a pedestrian only plaza.

As the Commissioner of The Department of Consumer Affairs, I implemented the Commuter Benefits Law which incentivized commuters to use mass transit over private cars. I also cracked down on toxic toys that had dangerous chemicals for children. As Commissioner of Media and Entertainment, I launched the nation's first municipal green sustainability initiative for the film and TV industry called Film Green that encourages film and TV productions in the city to ensure that they are using sustainable practices that protect the environment. As Director of NYC Census 2020, I worked to make sure our city got its fair share of federal environmentally-related funding.

I bring a lifetime of experience as a watchdog for New Yorkers and a track record as an innovative coalition builder to the tall task of representing District 5 in the fight against climate change. I was an outspoken critic of last year's city budget, which included \$106 million in cuts to sanitation and recycling and composting. As council member for District 5, I will prioritize restoring these cuts, and advocate to make our streets livable and our communities sustainable. I am a third generation resident and this is my beloved home. I know that I can lend my energy and talent to it in this particular role, building on decades of public service in New York City.

Due to my extensive track record, I am honored to have the endorsement in my race of the UFT, SEIU 32BJ, DC 37, Hotel Trades Council, Central Labor Council, Sanitation Union, Freelancers Union, CWA, NYSNA (Nurses Union), Local 1, Local 802, Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, former Governor David Paterson, former Comptroller Carl McCall, former Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Assemblymember Robert Rodriguez, Councilmember Carlina Rivera, Councilmember Diana Ayala, Mark Green, The Lexington Democratic Club and dozens of community, NYCHA, and other leaders in District 5. I would be honored to receive the endorsement of NYLCV, an organization I have worked with and partnered with for years.

## 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.

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

As mentioned above, as Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Affairs, I launched and implemented the Commuter Benefits Law to encourage the use of mass transit as opposed to private cars. We must not only meet this critical moment on transportation but must lead it with a bold transition to clean energy and a green economy in New York's transportation system. The long term costs of inaction here is much higher than this vital investment in our infrastructure and the lifetime savings of a smarter, sustainable transit fabric.

Following the example of the 14th Street Busway, with dedicated right of way, ADA accessible loading zones and faster routes, we need to create these kinds of efficient, electrified bus corridors throughout the district and the borough. We should install Transit Signal Priority on every line, increase enforcement of bus lanes and decrease wait times and our carbon emissions in the process.

As councilwoman, I will use my platform to tirelessly advocate for the subway system. Priority number one will be the restoration of 24-hour service. I will also fight to make subways more accessible, prioritizing the installation of elevators across the system, and explore innovative new ways to expand usage of the current system, such as integrating segments of the Long Island Rail Road and Metro North within city limits into the subway system.

Today, our bike lanes exist in isolation from our transit grid and without substantial safety measures protecting them. We must create a cohesive network of bike lanes, with hundreds of miles of new protected pathways, facilitating ease of movement throughout the city. We must expand access to Citi Bike with a similar Fair Fares model we use in the subway system, especially around schools and commuter hubs, and integrate it into that larger bike and bus transit system in the process. Where practical, we must make sure our bridges have dedicated bike lanes. This includes Roosevelt Island Bridge in District 5. We must also increase our bicycle parking, working with the City and developers to build larger bicycle garages in high density destinations.

I will work towards making all trips with Access-A-Ride timely, efficient, comfortable, and affordable, which means fighting fare increases and service cuts. I will push for new mandates and incentives for ride share companies such as Uber and Lyft to increase the proportion of their cars that are wheelchair accessible.

This equitable investment in our public transit - rapid electrified busses, ADA accessible subways and miles of protected, integrated bike lanes - is a vital part of our fight against climate change and our fight for a more equitable City.

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.

#### 1. Conserving New York City's Parks and Natural Areas (p. 3)

We have a dearth of open space on the East Side. As Chair of CB1, I led the charge on constructing numerous new parks and increasing funding for existing ones, including the East River Esplanade, Pier 26 and Hudson River Park. As a board member of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, I helped secure \$275 million to revitalize Manhattan's waterfront.

If elected, I will push for a massive expansion of greenspace throughout the city, with an emphasis on currently underserved areas. We will accomplish this through the re-purposing of currently car dominated streets into pedestrian plazas, expanded sidewalks and linear parks that provide a place for communal gathering, escape from the chaotic city-scape, space for walking and biking, and promote biodiversity. Increased plantings on the ground and through green

roofing we can help improve air quality, reduce temperature and absorb rainwater during storms.

Within our district, we must invest in reinvigorating and connecting our Esplanade, something I have been a champion of for decades. East 90th Street stands out as another prime candidate for conversion into contiguous green space. At its East End sits the East River Promenade, Asphalt Green, the 90th Street Ferry Station, and Carl Schurz Park. Moving west, it runs through Ruppert Park, and (just outside of the district) the expansive Cooper-Hewitt courtyard, and ends at the grand entrance to the Central Park Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Reservoir. Linking these green spaces together into one continuous park would create a priceless escape for residents.

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.

#### 1. Common Sense Waste Management (p. 3)

I have been an outspoken advocate against the cuts to sanitation, recycling, and composting found in the most recent budget and have been a lifelong proponent of more sustainable city infrastructure. I have spent decades working alongside community stakeholders and organized labor to achieve that goal within waste management. I am so proud to have the endorsement of New York's Sanitation Union in this race.

As a City Council Member, I will push to restore those cuts, realize the goal of containerized waste management and green fleets, construct a grid of loading and unloading zones and expand the municipal composting program to include every home, office, school, and building.

## **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.

#### 1. Energy and Infrastructure (p. 5)

The transition to a renewable clean energy economy for New York City is vital in the fight against climate change and the policies and practices we move forward with must align with evidence-based climate solutions. We need expertise and review of processes as we make buildings and their practices more efficient, with high performance solutions and quality construction as a baseline standard in our retrofitting and in our new construction. We need partnerships between environmental experts, city planners, architects, engineers, civic leaders and community members to bring it all to life and to create a resilient green infrastructure and job economy in the process. We also need to focus on NYCHA and ensure that we create green new jobs with a priority given to NYCHA residents.

We have an ambitious plan on the table through the Climate Mobilization Act that, if effectively enforced, can help us meet the moment. We need compliance and the pathways towards it for a diverse array of buildings in our district or our necessary efforts at decarbonization will fall far short. There must be fines for violation of these new requirements in performance and compliance deadlines associated. We should consider the findings of the study the city has recommended for this upcoming year, examining deductions, carbon trading, renewable energy certificates and credits so that we understand the full marketplace. We have to also ensure a smoother procurement of energy efficient products for unique building envelopes and capacities, with the necessary technical assistance and training and with the opportunity for the proper financing required to put it all to use.

A potentially missing area in the discussion of climate justice lies at the gritty local level within land use zoning. I believe that at the local level, the ULURP process must be reformed. This current process, which I have spoken about for years, leads to inequitable results with some communities negotiating more school seats, more affordable housing, more parks and other communities left wanting. We must also reform ULURP to ensure land use policies truly work for our neighborhoods.

#### 1. Transportation (p. 5)

I have spent a lifetime of public service advocating for sustainable transportation in our City. As Commissioner of Consumer Affairs, I instituted the Commuter Benefits Law that incentivizes workers to use public transportation over private cars.

We must make bold investments in our transportation system in order to meet the moment in the fight against climate change and for a more sustainable

equitable city. As mentioned earlier, this means prioritization on ADA accessible subway infrastructure, rapid electrified bus fleets using the model of 14th Street across the City with right of way and loading zones, miles of integrated protected bike lanes and access to Citi Bike network and a commitment to complete street design in all of our retrofitting and our new construction (details in above section). This means we must be in conversation across departments, not working block by block to fix a patchwork of transit that doesn't relate to the larger story of access and sustainability in New York City.

It is vital that this transformed sustainable transit infrastructure should be focused on safety and on rolling out in currently underserved areas. Everyone in New York should have access to reliable and affordable public transportation.

In this effort, it is time we make Vision Zero a reality and finally make our streets safe for everyone. We need to get reckless drivers off the road with speed cameras with more automated traffic enforcement.

The events of the past few years have demonstrated the dangers of allowing police departments to handle routine, low level street rules. We should transfer responsibilities for traffic enforcement out of the NYPD and into the Department of Transportation. We should decriminalize minor pedestrian and cycling infractions, such as jaywalking, for which summonses are overwhelmingly targeted at people of color and low-income communities.

#### 1. Resiliency (p. 6)

As chair of Community Board 1 in Lower Manhattan, during Hurricane Sandy, I am well aware of both our city's resiliency shortcomings and the high price of inaction. We must expedite approval and construction of the OneNYC plan, and we must go further. We must adapt our city to live with flooding, rather than fight it. That means replacing hard, impermeable surfaces across New York with absorptive ones.

The Climate Mobilization Act is a great first step, requiring green roofs or solar panels on all new construction. Next we should push to provide funds and incentives for the retrofitting of older buildings. We should also pilot road construction with permeable materials, with the goal of incorporating such material into all repavings in the near future. Asphalt and sidewalks, where possible, should be torn out and replaced with water-intensive plantings — something my plan for new linear parks and pedestrian plazas across the city will help accomplish.

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



We must restore the cuts to municipal recycling and composting, and go much further. Compost collection should have the same reach as trash collection: every address in the city. Businesses should be required to compost organic waste.

I also support the full implementation of the 2019 revamp of the City Commercial Waste Zone program, which will significantly increase efficiency of garbage collection. I will push for containerized garbage, which will increase efficiency even further, and reduce the blight of trash along our streets.

### 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.

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

Our streets, green spaces and commons are where our community is formed - where we walk, gather, exercise, shop, dine and commute. The way we choose to design our commons and our green space has significant impacts on both individual neighborhoods and the city at large. Through re-balancing investment and access to our parks, natural areas and active waterfronts, we can better serve all New Yorkers, we can make our city more livable, more sustainable and more equitable.

This work goes beyond urban planning - it is deeply tied to broader climate justice and racial justice goals. Reducing the number of cars on the road will decrease pollution, which disproportionately affects lower income neighborhoods. These neighborhoods also are the victims of the incredibly unequal distribution of greenspace in our city. The creation of new pedestrian plazas and linear parks will go a long way towards closing that gap. People of color are far more likely to be the victims of vehicular collisions, underlining the importance of improving street safety.

As mentioned above, I have decades of experience building new parks, improving existing parks and investing in our waterfront in a way that is accessible to all members of the community and their access to green space. I would continue that work as a priority in my time on City Council and prioritize the restoration and maintenance of the East River Esplanade.

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

It is unacceptable that in 2021, lead poisoning affects thousands of families across our city. This is an environmental justice issue as it primarily affects lower income communities and communities of color.

Through my long standing relationship with NYCHA and with leadership in New York City and Upstate, I will work hard to ensure NYCHA finally gets the funding it needs and deserves to address these kinds of inequitable exposures that put communities of color in harmful living environments. I also took the lead as Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Affairs to crack down on toxic toys.

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

Heat vulnerability is a growing issue in New York that will only get worse as climate change progresses. We must get ahead of it by mandating all new constructions incorporate increased insulation and passive cooling methods. All public schools should be equipped with air conditioners to ensure they remain a conducive environment for learning even in the height of summer.

As mentioned above, I will push for both compliance of the Climate Mobilization Act, which mandates new developments have either solar panels or green roofs, and for new money for retrofitting existing buildings with insulating green roofs. I will also push for new trees, plantings, and parks around the city, which help reduce the “Heat Island” effect.

#### 1. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

The best thing our city can do to improve air quality is reduce the number of cars on the road. My transportation plan will do just that. Through dramatically expanding our biking infrastructure, improving our bus network, and pedestrianizing streets, we will shift our city towards more sustainable forms of transportation.

I will also push to electrify and shrink the city’s transportation fleet. Doing so will require a significant expansion of the city’s charging infrastructure.

I support the 2019 sanitation collection revamp, which significantly increases the efficiency of garbage collection, improving air quality.

I also believe we must install new trees and plantings across the city and convert existing streets into new parks, both of which will improve air quality.

1. Clean Water for All (p.11)

The city should accelerate testing for lead and other pollutants and provide funding to replace pipes and install filters where appropriate. This is work I have experience in. As mentioned, I negotiated the deal to have Silverstein Properties green retrofit construction vehicles and championed a coordinated command center which became an agency called Lower Manhattan Command Center, monitoring and publishing air quality reports during the significant reconstruction of lower Manhattan in the aftermath of September 11th. It was vital that in the rebuilding of our District, that we keep every New Yorker safe.

1. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

Food deserts are not accidental. They are a part of our broader lack of investment in marginalized communities and an extension of the way persons of color are on the front lines of the fight for a more sustainable and equitable future for New York.

As part of my plan to build a more sustainable city, I want to fund the construction of new community growing gardens. Every neighborhood, especially lower income neighborhoods, should have a community garden that provides a venue for community gathering and a source of cheap, healthy, and fresh food. These opportunities should be funded and fast tracked so that local community groups and activists can continue the hard and vital work of bringing local agriculture and nutrition into the community.

We must also make sure that our institutional investments in food for our governmental and school system contracts choose sustainable food options with local growers and certified sustainable growing practices as a priority.