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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: Kenya Handy-Hilliard

Office sought & district number: City Council District 40

Campaign e-mail: kenyaforthethepeople@gmail.com

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Twitter handle: <https://twitter.com/Kenya4ThePeople>

Campaign manager's name and email: Nikiesha Hamilton. nikiesha@kenyaforthethepeople2021.com

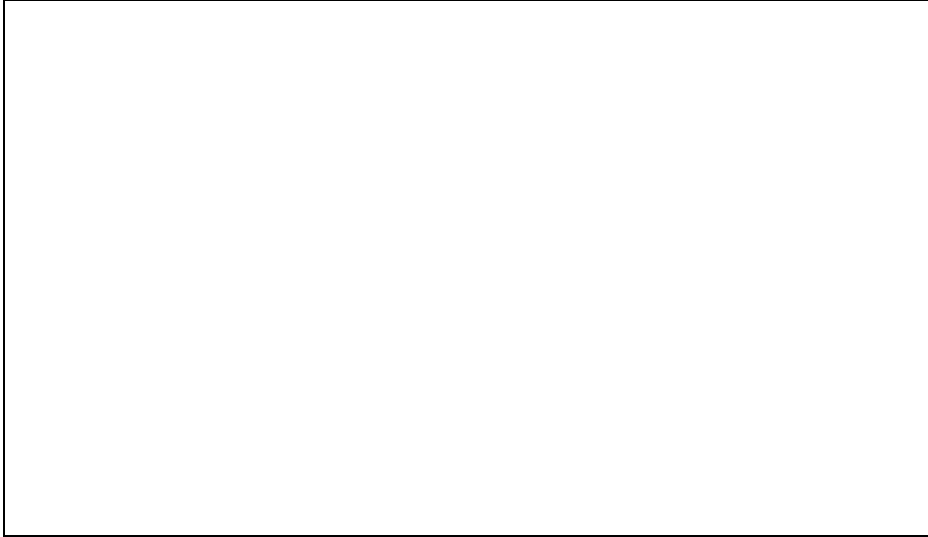
Press Secretary's name and email: Imani Dawson, imani@kenyaforthethepeople2021.com

Scheduler's name and email: Nikiesha Hamilton. nikiesha@kenyaforthethepeople2021.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've long been a proponent of a pro-environment agenda for New York City. When I was young, my sister and I started a group called "The Neighborhood Kids" that collected and recycled bottles, then donated the proceeds to charity. While working on Capitol Hill, I advised Congresswoman Clarke and encouraged her to support notable environmentally friendly legislative measures like Cap and Trade and Cash for Clunkers bills. My campaign and I have also sponsored and participated in numerous neighborhood clean-ups to compensate for the program's Sanitation cuts to Eliminate the Gap. Lastly, in my household, we reduce our carbon footprint by shopping locally, especially at the Grand Army Plaza Farmers Market, conserving our water usage, and reducing our red meat intake.



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 just the number one source of greenhouse gas emissions in our state—it is also responsible for significant air pollution, causing respiratory and other public health issues. The problem is acute near New York City’s major highways, often located near low-income POC communities.

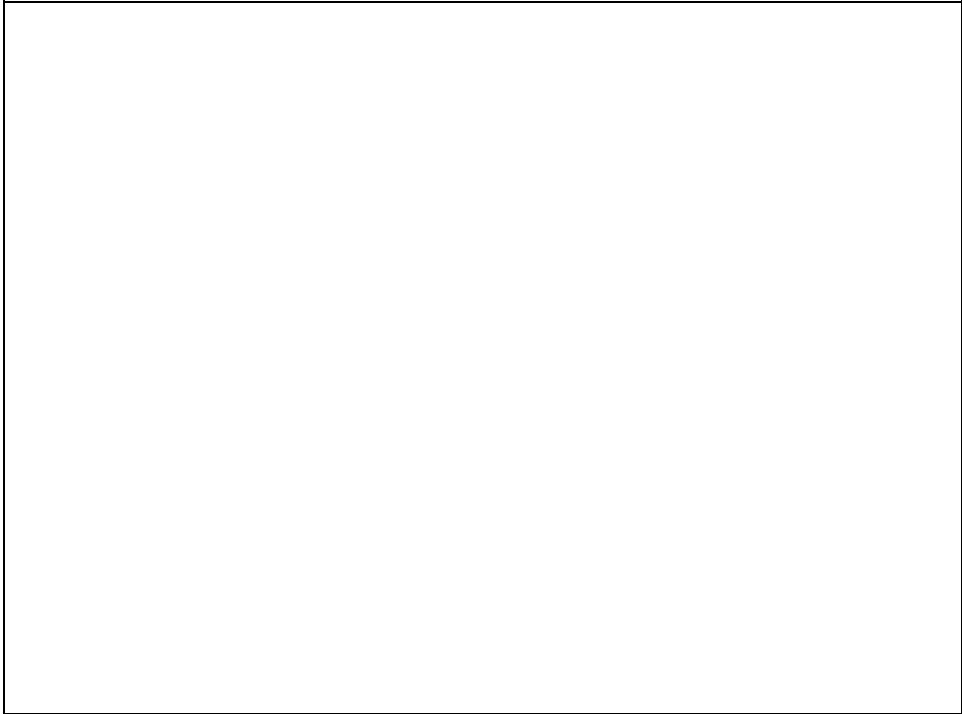
2. Encouraging the Shift to High Efficiency, Low Emission Forms of Transportation (p. 3)

I am committed to shifting to high-efficiency and low-emission forms of transportation. I noticed how the reduction of traffic over the past year due to COVID-19 has positively impacted air quality. I want to ensure that we continue to reduce air pollution and mitigate respiratory issues in vulnerable communities. I will reduce the usage of single-occupancy vehicles, promote sustainable and environmentally-friendly public transportation, and allocate resources to educate local communities about the importance of reducing harmful emissions.

Given the COVID-19 trauma that our community experienced, I plan to restore the community's trust in public transportation because people are afraid to use it and provide educational programs on green transportation. We may expand into transportation desert areas and ensure that any transit extensions employ zero-emissions vehicles and promote green transportation. We need to build private and public partnerships with food delivery and transportation companies (i.e., Lyft, Uber, Via, etc.) to support drivers and delivery workers and make efficient, accessible, and sustainable modes of transportation industry standards.

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

I'm committed to the conservation and expansion of our parks and natural areas. In my district, Prospect Park and other community greenspaces became vital to our residents' well-being and fostered community amidst the global pandemic. Parks and natural areas are critical to fighting climate change, providing us clean air, and serving as a habitat for local animals and vegetation. We need to prioritize care and access to natural areas to tackle climate change and increase park equity in our city. Investing resources into greenspaces gives us more opportunity to reimagine City living and try new approaches to chronic challenges, like using urban farming in parks to fight food insecurity and teach vulnerable communities to grow their food. Increasing natural spaces will also expand the local economy as we create good-paying green jobs and offer job training to fill those positions.



4. Common Sense Waste Management (p. 3)

I am proud that groups in my neighborhood, such as Nature BK and Q Gardens, are leading local, sustainable waste management efforts, but they need more support to expand. I aim to amplify non-profit groups and community organizations' work and partner with them to provide our community with better waste management resources. I plan to educate our district and city about waste reduction and diversion and work with landlords to provide tenants with sustainable waste disposal systems. I will also partner with private property owners, small businesses, and the Department of Sanitation to keep our streets clean.

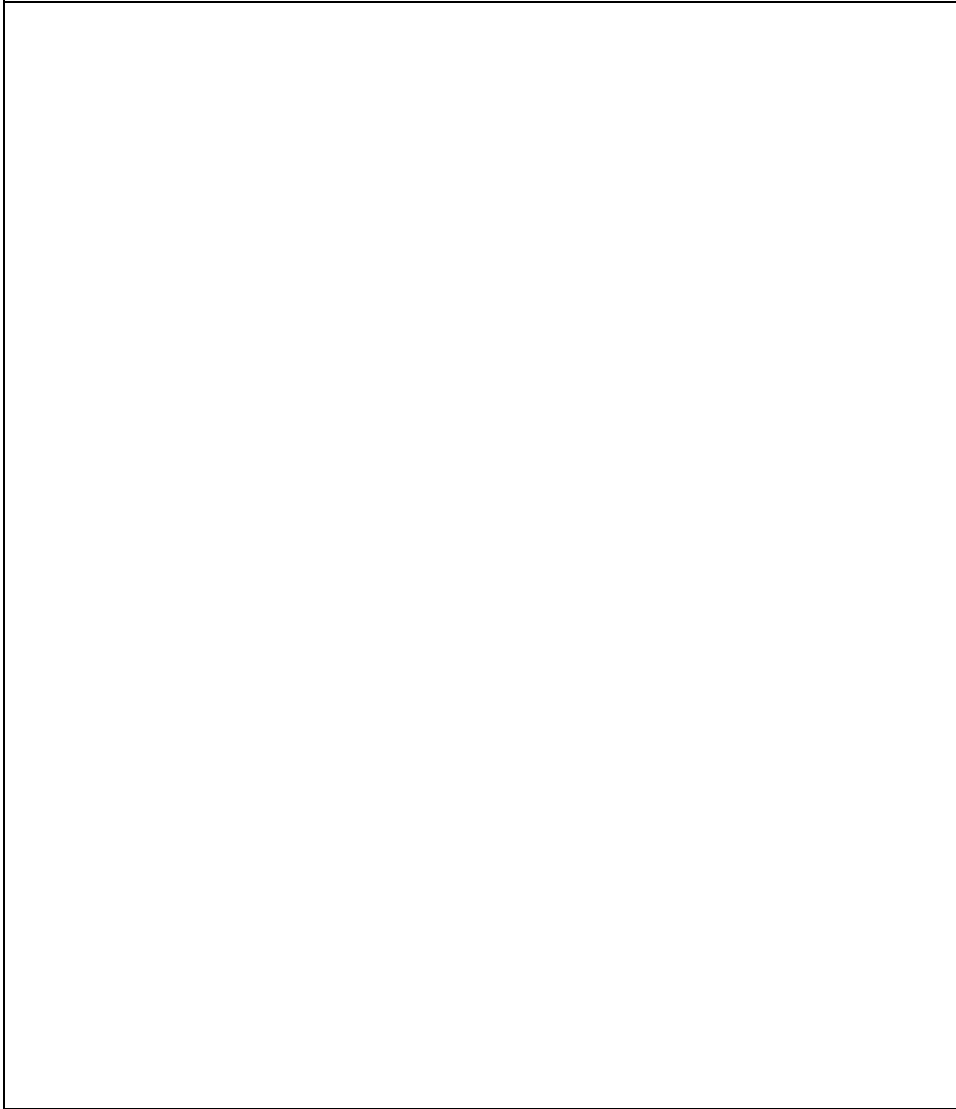
The time to act on climate is now. The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report makes it clear that we must make radical changes in short order to avoid catastrophic climate change. We will work to advance policies that decrease emissions from all sectors, prepare us to meet the unavoidable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

5. Energy and Infrastructure (p. 5)

I want to work with my colleagues in City Council, the Mayor, and City agencies to improve and expand the legislative gains of the City's commitment to a local Green New Deal. We need to support more education programs and projects to reduce emissions and fix any policy loopholes that waste money to allocate proper funding to energy retrofits, wastewater management, renewable energy projects, and more. I will provide homeowners and building owners with information and workshops on Federal, State, and City subsidies for environmental upgrades and ways to utilize clean energy like solar panels.

I will support the City's transition to a green economy. By bringing sustainable and green jobs and programs to provide education and training on environmental justice to my district and collaborate with the community on local solutions, we can broaden our economic base and boost our neighborhoods' sustainability. I'll work with unions to generate green jobs and ensure they have a stake in the City's green economy expansion. Union participation will provide a strong foundation for diverse and equitable access to the emerging green economy. We must remove any barriers for M/WBE to access renewable energy citywide projects and any other emerging green technology programs developed from new technology policies.

In our district, we have wastewater and sewage issues. I agree with NYLCV that we need to upgrade the City's "wastewater treatment plants to process organic waste into renewable energy." We need to develop more funding for community-led projects for sustainable energy renewal and innovation projects and invest



6. Transportation (p. 5)

The most challenging aspect of the City's transportation is the glaring lack of access for vulnerable New Yorkers, those facing financial barriers, and people with disabilities. We also have transportation deserts and must expand our public transit system to impacted residents' travel around NYC. I believe that we can fix our transportation problems using an environmental justice lens and also reduce emissions. For example, we need to increase Citi Bike access in my district, especially since there are just a handful of docking stations. We can support more cost-effective bikes, electric scooters, and ferries systems. We can create more dedicated and safe lanes for buses and transportation modes and expand Open Streets programs with the community leading those discussions. Finally, we need to make sure the Move NY State plan's implementation improves our transit system, roads, and bridges and through an environmental and economic justice lens.

Additionally, we should utilize PARK Smart more to reduce congestion and bolster off-peak travel. We must also evaluate street space in residential neighborhoods. We need to examine how to administer better parking permit systems and roadblock issues with delivery trucks, buses, and other vehicles. I want us to make the proper assessments on using spaces in the district to build green infrastructure.

7. Resiliency (p. 6)

I will generate a neighborhood resiliency plan that protects our communities when facing climate emergencies, including natural disasters, heat waves, and other extreme weather events. We must improve and build upon the Mayor's Climate Resiliency Design and invest in strategies to address rising sea levels, protect coastal areas and wetlands, deal with heatwaves, floodplains, and more. I want to invest in renewable energy and green resilient infrastructure and center at-risk communities to ensure they have the resources and funding needed to protect them from power outages, storm surges, and other environmental issues. I aim to work with my district and the larger NYC community to propose legislation that educates and supports ways to determine exclusionary zones, strategic retreats, and retrofit incentive programs that centers the people's voice.

8. Solid Waste (p. 7)

I know that multiple organizations are working on solid waste issues, and I am ready to support them as a Councilmember. We need legislation to construct effective residential organic waste recycling. We have a huge garbage problem here in District 40 and must reinstate and expand the curbside collection program. I want to invest in more organizations like Nurture BK Compost and Q Gardens to ensure that they are receiving the funding needed to continue serving as drop-off centers, handling local organic waste carting and management. Community organizations can partner to host solid waste education sessions and help guide residents about working together to create effective recycling, compost, and waste diversion systems in District 40. I want more waste management trucks that clean-fuel powered trucks that collect different types of solid waste and take them to the proper site for processing. We should also explore ways for the City to recycle and reuse trash. I want to help small businesses access cost-effective ways to transition away from single-use plastics. I want District 40 to have a collective consciousness about reducing unnecessary waste.

Finally, fashion waste dramatically impacts the environment, and NYC is one of the world's fashion capitals. Here in District 40, we have many fashionable boutiques that might be unsure how to discard outdated clothes and fabric properly. I want to start a District 40 fashion program in partnership with organizations like Wearable Collections, Sustainable BK, and Department of Sanitation's ReFashion Week to support clothing stores in the district to dispose of, recycle, and rebrand their clothes. We can create community fashion repurpose programs and exhibitions that attract diverse participants and expand the creative economy.

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 all New Yorkers' well-being.

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

We need to increase support for parks, natural areas, wetlands, and active waterfronts through smart policy. We need to restore the Parks budget and increase the budget baseline from .6% to 1% to accomplish this goal, especially since NYC spends less on parks than most major cities. We must restore Parks seasonal staff plans to ensure parks remain open, clean, and safe and prevent further staff cuts, developing more ways to expand and create permanent green jobs instead. We should ensure that NYC Parks volunteer networks have the resources they need to support cleaning the park and recruit people to join their efforts. I'll support community gardens and other non-profit organizations and help them gain resources and funding for community education and innovative uses of local greenspace. Most importantly, I will improve the capital process to make it faster and less costly to build and repair decaying parks infrastructure. I'll work with my colleagues to create a cross-agency Open Space vision, build new parks and playgrounds in areas that need them most, like District 40, and increase access to our natural areas.

10. Lead Poisoning Prevention (p. 9)

We must find ways to incentivize construction and renovation companies to use sustainable materials to eliminate contact with harmful toxic materials, including lead. I agree with NYCLV that we must investigate any reports from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene revealing elevated blood lead in children under 18 and pledge to eliminate environmentally unsafe housing conditions in the district through services and legislation.

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

Our district has a lot of asphalt and concrete, and we need green spaces to reduce the urban island effect. It is acute, causing high rates of heatwaves in our district. Heat-related deaths in New York are projected to grow to more than 3,000 annually by 2080, which means we must expand the Cool Neighborhoods program to protect New Yorkers against extreme heat. We must evaluate parks, playgrounds, and homes to mitigate our children's increased heat exposure.

12. Clean Air for All (p. 10)

We have to reduce gas emissions throughout the District by implementing cleaner vehicle and housing technology that does not put the cost burden on low-income and middle-class people. We must also ensure that homeowners have access to the support needed to transition from heating oils to sustainable sources such as electric heat pumps and renewable biofuels. We need more electric schools and green public buses.

The City must build accountability, streamline funding, and provide incentives to transportation, building owners, homeowners, and other local stakeholders to make the changes necessary for cleaner air in our communities.

13. Clean Water for All (p.11)

I would like to work with NYCLV on its Clean Water For All plan. My district needs to learn about NYC Clean water. All reporting must be accessible and multilingual. DEP should release studies and policy recommendations for water rate restructuring and work with District 40 to develop a sensible structure. I want to collaborate across agencies like Parks and Transportation to construct green infrastructure and prioritize clean water in future projects. I want to make sure the community understands all water-related environmental concerns.

14. Sustainable Food Systems (p. 11)

We must work with the community to review and rethink local food systems because we currently waste tons of food while many of our neighbors struggle to feed themselves. This imbalance makes no sense. I plan to partner with supermarkets, restaurants, fruit markets, and other related businesses around the district to create a sustainable food system that reduces waste, combats climate change, and feeds our district. I plan to activate vacant lots to serve as local green spaces such as community gardens, farmer's markets, and passive open spaces. I will work with the community to amend the zoning code to better support urban farming. I will increase urban farming opportunities to tackle local food insecurity, teach the community how to grow food, and work to expand SNAP, FRESH, GrowNYC, and other programs to allow folks to purchase healthy and affordable produce at farmers markets. Education programs must be part of all initiatives.