



**THE VILLAGE REFORM
DEMOCRATIC CLUB**

Questions for 2021 Mayor Candidates

Responses from Candidate: _____ Shaun Donovan _____

GENERAL

1. Why are you running for Mayor?

I am running to be Mayor of New York City to rebuild, repair, and reimagine this city as one that works for everyone.

2. What experience do you have that has prepared you to become Mayor?

I believe I am the most qualified, experienced candidate in this field because I was the Secretary for Housing and Urban Development in the Obama-Biden Administration, and subsequently served as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, managing the \$4 trillion federal budget.

My past service taught me what it means to lead in moments of crisis, much like the one New York is facing today. I became Housing Commissioner here in New York City and helped to rebuild our City. Early in my career and then during my tenure as Housing Commissioner, I helped the Brownsville, East New York and South Bronx communities build Nehemiah housing, one of the most successful housing efforts in the nation that created more than 5,000 affordable homes.

I also created the Center for NYC Neighborhoods, the nation's first response of its kind to the foreclosure crisis to save New Yorker's homes and preserve Black and Brown wealth. President Obama asked me to be Housing Secretary in the midst of the worst housing crisis of our lifetime and then tasked me with leading this city back after Hurricane Sandy hit our shores. As HUD Secretary, I helped families across the country rent or buy affordable homes, revitalized distressed communities, fought discrimination and dramatically reduced homelessness.

Three weeks into my time as Director of the Office of Management of Budget, Ebola hit the US. And we worked to make sure that a global threat did not become a pandemic that would cost hundreds of thousands of American lives. And during my time managing the federal budget we invested in a broad range of progressive priorities, like the Affordable Care Act, while still bringing down our budget faster than at any time since World War 2.

3. What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of the Mayor?

The role of the Mayor is to lead the City and ensure that it is working efficiently for every resident. Given the multiple crises currently facing our City, our next mayor will need to be an exceedingly capable crisis manager and administrator.

I deeply believe that in order to properly serve and lift up all New Yorkers, my Administration must not only apply a lens of equity to all of our policies, but also create a structure of accountability where we consistently engage with communities and measure our progress.

And this is how I have led in my entire career in public service. While I was President Obama's Secretary of HUD, I took the lead in advancing two key principles central to promoting racial justice through enforcement of the Fair Housing Act. The first principal is disparate impact which makes clear that policies or practices that discriminate against people of color or other protected groups are illegal even without proof they are intentional. The second is a mandate that communities "affirmatively further fair housing," which requires government to promote greater opportunity and integration as well as fight discrimination.

Furthermore, I was the first cabinet secretary in the history of this country to endorse marriage equality and we made landmark progress on civil rights for transgender people through the Equal Access rule that I put in place at HUD.

One of my principle policies aimed at achieving this is the designation of our City's first Chief Equity Officer, at the cabinet level, to set goals, keep track of our progress, and coordinate across all NYC agencies to ensure progressive achievements.

At the individual issue level, my campaign has committed to including equity-focused recommendations within each one of our comprehensive policy platforms, from establishing a School Diversity and Integration Office within the Department of Education and applying an equity review to short-term budgetary and staffing reductions and adjustments within schools to ensure each New York City student has a chance at a good education, to launching Equity Corporate Commitments meant to drive substantially higher Black, Latinx, and Asian job participation in high-wage and middle-income work.

Underlying all of these efforts is a deep belief that collaboration and open conversation are vital to helping a community thrive. I look forward to discussing specific policy questions and partnering with you to address your community's most pressing challenges.

4. Would you seek to change the current Land Use system, including CEQR, the ULURP process and the use of current Mandatory Inclusionary Housing to create affordable housing?

Simply put, existing land use policies do not serve the best interests of New Yorkers. At both the local and state level, many of these regulations were enacted to address fundamentally different problems from the ones we face now; at their worst, they deepen our City's affordable housing crisis and make solving it more difficult. The past decade has seen the City's population and job growth significantly outpace housing stock, leading to a shortage of units and far too many New Yorkers struggling to pay rent. Further, efforts at building and preserving affordable units have not been equitable, with high-opportunity neighborhoods in the City not asked to provide their fair share.

A Donovan administration will enact land use reforms to update outdated zoning regulations, encourage inexpensive housing development on an expansive and equitable basis, and expedite processes that impede affordability.

To get there, we are committing to the following policies and programs:

- **Streamline ULURP for 100% affordable housing development**
- **Adopt citywide inclusionary zoning, to ensure that every neighborhood contributes to a citywide solution for affordable housing**
- **Eliminate outdated and unnecessary parking requirements in transit-rich areas**
- **Upzone high-opportunity areas**
- **Amend the zoning text and Building Code to facilitate conversions of underutilized commercial and manufacturing sites to supportive and affordable units, and to legalize below-grade accessory units that are safe and inexpensive**
- **Require the City to consider housing impacts of historic district designation in collaboration with the community**

- **Work with the City Council and Borough Presidents to ensure that Community Boards are representative of their communities**
- **Support state legislation to raise the 12.0 FAR cap as applied to affordable units, and to curb exclusionary zoning in NYC suburbs**

EDUCATION

1. New York City's public school students are not academically competitive with other major industrialized nations in math and science (STEM). How do you plan to address this disparity?

We live in a world in which every student needs a grounding in math and science, and many students' careers will depend on having access to advanced math and science courses and excellent teaching. As a city, we must ensure that students get a world-class education that prepares them for this future. This will also pay dividends for New York City in the long-run, as a well-educated and well-prepared STEM workforce will make the city more attractive and competitive: many STEM-related jobs pay 25% more than other jobs requiring comparable education. This means addressing multiple priorities at the same time. My administration will invest in high-quality STEM curriculum and courses, and support teachers with professional learning opportunities that help them shift their practice to meet changing needs. I also hope that one positive thing that can come from this remote teaching experiment is an ability to use remote instruction to provide students with more access to STEM courses they would not otherwise be able to access, taught to students across schools by some of the city's best teachers.

Students also need more opportunities to connect STEM learning to their daily lives, and to explore careers in STEM fields that will provide good jobs in the decades to come. I have committed that by 2026, every high schooler will have access to a high-quality, relevant job, internship or apprenticeship opportunity, and we will call on public and private employers in STEM fields to open their doors to our city's students. We will also expand access to advanced coursework in high school and close the equity gap in access to these courses, to ensure more students can access advanced STEM learning -- especially those who have been marginalized.

Alongside ensuring that students have equitable access to STEM courses, and that they exist in every school, we will make investments in diversifying the teaching workforce, including our STEM educators, so they reflect the diversity of our students. Students must see themselves in subjects that have historically been exclusive.

2. How do you plan to implement high speed internet access to all school children throughout NYC?

This pandemic has shown New Yorkers that universal high-speed internet is as important a public utility as is water, heat or electricity. My administration plans to provide high speed internet to every New York City student--and every New Yorker--by fulfilling the long-deferred promise to bring affordable, high-speed internet access to every neighborhood, every retail corridor, and every household in New York City.

Communities have come together to facilitate remote schooling, converting parts of residential buildings into virtual learning centers, and we owe it to our families to make it easier for students to receive a good education from wherever they are.

It's also important that we ensure businesses in neighborhood districts have access to affordable high-speed internet, and that we collaborate with community groups and business associations to support business owners with the skills they need to take advantage of online services and opportunities.

As we rebuild our city and reimagine it as one where everyone has ample opportunity to succeed, making sure everyone is connected is a key priority.

3. Less than half of the budget for New York City's public schools reaches the classrooms, while more goes to administrative costs. If you believe this is a problem, how will you correct it?

As we overcome this crisis and help our students overcome the disruptions in their learning that it has caused, we must ensure that our classrooms receive the appropriate resources. This involves closing the digital divide and investing in education technology and support that students deserve, as well as developing and executing on high-quality, culturally competent curricula that truly prepares our students for successful and family-supporting careers, taught by teachers that look like the communities that they're serving.

This can only happen if the appropriate funding reaches our classrooms. We will closely review the City's budget for public schools and engage closely with educators and families—including launching a listening tour for the mayor and chancellor—to identify and remedy issues. We will also add an equity review process for all short-term budgetary and staffing reductions and adjustments to ensure that these would not disproportionately impact typically underserved students and contributed to further disparity in educational resources and quality.

4. There are 50+ school districts in the five boroughs, with large staffs, performing largely the same administrative functions. How would you address this in your administration?

Running the nation's largest school system, supporting teachers and school leaders, and providing wraparound services to students and families requires thousands of people to support our students and educators. Some needs are the same across communities, and some are not; some are best met with staff close to students and communities, while some functions can -- and even should -- be shared across schools or districts. In each case, efficiency must be weighed against local needs and responsiveness.

More important than how many people are employed in each school district is whether the staff and administration at the school, district and central levels enable us to achieve our aspiration for a consistently excellent and equitable school system. Too often this is not the case.

Students' success cannot depend on their ZIP code or their school's district, which means that all DOE staff functions must have common professional expectations and ways of working, minimize duplicative effort, and support collaboration across the DOE. Currently, there are too many barriers to this type of collaboration, and we pay for it with a school system that doesn't work as well as it can. The past year has demonstrated the result of unclear guidance and idiosyncratic practice around the pandemic: basic information like which students have access to computers is unavailable, educators report too little support for delivering quality remote instruction, and deep frustration and distrust exists among education stakeholders.

We will carefully review the responsibilities and expectations of each part of our school system and build alignment around critical priorities that students and families and educators identify, support people and systems so they more effectively meet our school system's needs, take every opportunity for efficiency in providing back-office and administrative services, and then hold ourselves accountable for sustained improvement in equity and outcomes over time.

5. Many larger city schools have been broken up into smaller schools, each with its own principal and staff, often in one building sharing a cafeteria, gym, library, auditorium, etc. Do you believe smaller schools can provide the kinds of services available in one larger school, such as sports, art and music, foreign languages, drama and theater, etc.?

Every student deserves to attend a school that offers a rich academic program, engaging extracurricular activities, and a warm and supportive environment. The small schools movement in New York City has been remarkably successful in many ways, transforming many schools that were impersonal and that did not support the success of most students. Students who attend small

schools graduate at higher rates and are likelier to succeed in college; these benefits are largest for students of color and low-income students, especially Black boys, whom our schools have never served equitably. This success was not only because the schools were small, but also because they were intentionally designed to better meet the needs of their students.

However, there have been challenges as multiple schools learn to share spaces that were built for much larger schools, and are unable to ensure that every student can access an array of rich academic and extracurricular supports. Collaboration among school leaders and school communities to share coursework opportunities could help, but it is complicated. My administration would elevate successful examples of this type of collaboration as models for the system and help schools or campuses that need it to ensure that students benefit from the intimacy of a small school and the rich opportunities that they deserve. In addition, as noted above, I also hope that we can take at least some lessons from this remote learning experiment, and use high-quality remote learning, taught by some of the city's best teachers, to expand coursework opportunities in all schools.

6. What are your feelings about the current state of racial equality for teachers? What, if anything, would you do differently from current policy and practice?

As we work to recover from COVID-19, we must rebuild and reimagine our educational system, tackling long-standing inequities to create real pathways to economic opportunity for all public school students; valuing NYC's diversity by creating integrated and inclusive opportunities for all students; carefully rebuilding trust and partnering with families and educators to reimagine together, and creating pathways to economic opportunity, from early childhood through postsecondary. As mayor, I would make permanent each of the changes the current administration is proposing, but go further to put in place admissions policies that foster integration; reinvest in the community integration planning process, ensuring all families are at those tables, to support the best ideas for diverse schools and classrooms that roll up from local communities; and ensure our efforts to build integrated and inclusive schools don't stop with demographic diversity, to ensure more students are learning in integrated and inclusive schools and classrooms from educators who reflect their backgrounds.

We would do this by improving educator diversity; promoting and providing leadership for integration and inclusion across the system; expanding the number of seats in high-performing, integrated schools and support community-driven integration plans; rethinking school admissions policies; tapping into and celebrating NYC's linguistic and cultural diversity; and utilize high-quality, culturally responsive materials, curated and developed by NYC's best educators.

7. Would you expand specialized schools like Stuyvesant, Bronx Science, and Brooklyn Tech, to open more of these programs throughout the city?

What we are doing now with the specialized high schools just isn't working, specialized high schools include some of the least racially diverse student bodies of any of the City's ~400 high schools. Only 10 black students were admitted to Stuyvesant this year (out of 760 freshman) - up from 7 in 2019.

We must change this. We should start with the five schools where we have the power to act as the city. We should work with their principals, as well as families, communities, students and alumni to look at ways to address the gap that has left so many of our Black and Latinx students out of specialized high schools. There are various ideas out there -- adding additional factors to the SHSAT, like grades; or looking at the top X% from each middle school, as the Mayor proposed and as Texas has done at the postsecondary level. But we need to do this hand in hand with families and educators.

An overhaul of the admissions process for the specialized high schools should be part of a larger, Citywide effort to desegregate our schools. While there has been a real emphasis on these specialized high schools, however, we need to keep in mind they represent just 8 of ~400 public high schools; a comprehensive approach to integrate our high schools must include addressing the drivers of segregation across all high schools, like geographic preferences and creating affirmative policies to integrate high schools citywide.

In addition to these changes I also support recent decisions by the city to eliminate geographic preferences for high schools and suspend screens for our middle schools, and as mayor I would go further by eliminating middle school admissions screens while taking a hard look at the SHSAT and how admissions criteria for specialized high schools can be revised to improve school diversity and provide opportunity to a broader group of students.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

1. What solutions do you propose for the increasing number of homeless people in our city?

We must fundamentally alter the City's homeless strategy to reimagine the right to shelter as a right to housing. Building on my record of dramatically reducing homelessness nationally and completely eliminating veteran homelessness in 80 cities and states as Housing Secretary, I will expand upon past collaborations between city and state governments that have housed thousands of individuals in supportive housing. I will also ensure every New Yorker leaving incarceration or mental health facilities is matched with housing and services through comprehensive discharge planning and better interagency coordinating and data-sharing.

In the short-run, to provide decent living conditions for the homeless on the streets or in shelters, the city must provide more smaller, low barrier shelters like Safe Havens that provide private rooms. These have been effective at getting people, especially single adults, into more permanent housing. Additionally, many shelters are in old buildings that have been repurposed - these buildings are in need of serious capital improvements like internet access, heating and cooling, and roof repairs. Safety goes beyond physical design and we must hire professional staff that are trained in trauma-informed care as well as offer services on nights and weekends at shelters.

2. "Affordable housing" especially in Manhattan is becoming exceedingly rare. How would your administration address this?

- What is your opinion on adaptive reuse of commercial buildings to create affordable housing?
- What is your position on rezoning in historic districts?

Increasing density needs to be a shared action across all neighborhoods. Whether by increasing allowable zoning or allowing homeowners to build accessory dwelling units, New York City needs to find equitable and inclusive ways to meet our housing needs because population growth is critical to a strong city. Housing policy cannot focus only on production and must enhance affordability for more than those chosen by the lottery. We plan on advocating for an expansion of the housing choice voucher program, expanding access to rental assistance for very low income NYers, and aligning our housing and homeless strategies to provide a path to permanent housing for those experiencing homelessness.

My Administration is committed to helping people stay in their homes and stabilizing the buildings and neighborhoods where they live. We will create an improved system of emergency rental assistance to help people stay housed when facing economic setbacks, protect tenants from harassment and evictions, stabilize buildings and keep New Yorkers safe and secure in their homes, and support existing homeowners and protect them from fraud and displacement.

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the City's economy, impacting commercial real estate and bringing tourism and the hotel industry to a halt. This economic tragedy presents an opportunity to strategically acquire distressed properties that can be converted to affordable housing. That being said, we support converting unused commercial space for affordable housing.

In regards to rezoning of historic districts, we would seek legislation to require the City Planning Commission and/or the City Council to estimate the loss of buildable square footage resulting from new district designations and expansions, and to consider this factor in its approval of such designations. We are not going to do anything to undermine the regulations in existing historic districts. Going forward, the city needs to consider loss of potential new housing when designating new districts.

3. Landlords cannot currently evict tenants for non-payment of rent due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are still required to pay real estate taxes, sewer and water fees to the city. What are your thoughts on this?

We need support for landlords, especially small landlords, but new federal rental assistance will hopefully go a long way towards addressing arrears and helping landlords manage their own expenses and commitments. We will also work with landlords through a landlord ambassador program and a new financial assistance program to help owners make needed repairs, meet climate goals, and help keep residents safe

4. Do you have specific plans to make NYCHA housing more habitable, efficient, and accountable to its tenants and the city? What is your position on NYCHA infill?

The capital needs of NYCHA's public housing portfolio are now estimated to total over \$30 billion. Preserving these developments is critical to the health and safety of the more than 170,000 New Yorkers who live in these developments and essential to ensuring that New York City and its neighborhoods remain diverse and inclusive. I would advocate on a state and federal level the need for this funding to make capital improvements.

I would adopt RAD 2.0, which improves physical and financial conditions that better incorporates resident needs, recognize NYCHA as asset manager rather than a property manager by outsourcing property management and day-to-day operations, decentralize property management to be more responsive to residents and the unique needs of each campus, accelerate energy-efficiency and resiliency investments through use of an energy performance contract, and incorporate community and resident input.

As of now, I do not have a position on overall NYCHA infill. That said, infill makes sense in some cases and not in others. In ALL cases, development opportunities should be analyzed, and decisions made in a transparent and collaborative way with residents.

CRIME/NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT

1. What are your thoughts on the current number of police officers on the street, and how would you address crime prevention going forward?

The criminal legal system in New York City needs massive reform that includes a new approach to public safety and puts racial justice as a guiding principle of every policy area.

First, we must reimagine and look at the entire criminal justice system, not just policing. Public safety should be community-driven and public safety institutions must be accountable and transparent.

Second, we must reduce what is asked from police officers so that they can focus on getting guns off our streets and reducing violent crimes. We should be shifting responsibility for mental health

crises, schools, homeless outreach, and traffic to other agencies that are better equipped to deal with these types of challenges. Lastly, we must reinvest in the well-being of marginalized communities and critical services that secure the streets for every New Yorker, this includes expanding restorative justice programs and increasing investments in non-profit service providers.

One thing we know: police officers do not solve the root causes of crime. My immediate priorities are reducing what is asked from police officers so that they can focus on getting guns off our streets and reducing violent crimes. We will shift the responsibility of handling mental health crises, schools, homeless outreach, and traffic to other agencies that are better suited to deal with these issues.

These priorities will determine reductions to the NYPD's budget - in other words, budget cuts will be driven by new policy, rather than continuing the practice of simply adding to the budget by force of habit. We must empower impacted communities by giving them a decision-making role in the reinvestment of savings from reduced law enforcement budgets in their communities and establish mechanisms for identifying communities with the most needs and/or most impacted by incarceration, identifying and capturing savings from reduced law enforcement budgets, and establishing decision-making process for reinvesting those savings to address community needs.

2. How would you deal with Black and Hispanic communities being subjected to allegedly unnecessary and/or illegal police arrests and try to change the culture of our police force?

The NYPD faces a crisis of legitimacy triggered by brutality and over-policing, primarily in communities of color.

This crisis is not just an issue of police accountability. It is also a problem of public safety, because police cannot do their job effectively when they lack the trust of victims, witnesses, and whole communities.

To truly solve this crisis, we have to recognize that today's broken relationship between communities and the police occurs in the context of more than a half century of abandonment of many communities, primarily communities of color. For decades, when there was instability and crime in these neighborhoods, the City called in the police, instead of answering their real needs. To get at the root of the problem, my Administration will prioritize community investment as the best solution for instability and crime, rather than turning to the police as the default answer to every problem.

While reforms to the structure and culture of the police department alone cannot solve the challenges we face today, they are crucial.

To build trust and legitimacy between the NYPD and our communities, I will:

- **Appoint a commissioner who shares my vision for public safety that is community focused and racially just, and hold him or her accountable for the results.**
- **Build a leadership team at the police department that represents the City's diversity and understands the imperative for culture change.**
- **Hold precinct commanders accountable for misconduct by officers under their command—officer behavior that threatens public safety or disrespects the communities they serve (including placard abuse) must be corrected, and if not, leadership must be replaced.**
- **Ensure that individual officers are held responsible for bad acts that too often go unpunished today, including by following the determinations of the Civilian Complaint Review Board and by enforcing a clear, publicly-available set of disciplinary standards.**

- **Implement the recommendations set forth in the Department of Investigation’s report on the police department’s flawed response in response to the protests following the killing of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.**

3. The NYPD seems top heavy with highly paid personnel and extensive administrative redundancies. Will you attempt to resolve this, and, if so, how?

In this budget crisis – and afterwards – my administration will regularly review all City agencies, including the NYPD, to identify inefficiencies where resources can be put to better use. More broadly, as described in the answer above, I will prioritize community investment as the best solution for instability and crime, rather than turning to the police as the default answer to every problem.

4. Is it legally possible and reasonable to require all members of the NYPD to be legal residents of NYC?

Most City employees are required to live in New York City for the first two years of their employment. State law currently exempts the NYPD from this requirement.

As Mayor, I would support changing state law so that the standard two-year residency requirement for all other City employees can be applied to the NYPD, as part of the broader imperative to ensure that the police force represents and upholds the values of our city.

But importantly, a residency requirement for police would not in itself guarantee a shift in police-community relations without a deeper change in how City government and the police operate, particularly in our most underserved and disadvantaged communities (see the answers above).

THE ECONOMY

1. Due to the pandemic, more than a half million people have moved out of NYC. Many corporations that maintained large office spaces are operating remotely all or in part. How will your administration deal with this? Do you plan to attract new residents and if so, how? How would you entice companies and professionals to lease commercial space in the city?

We must recognize that quality of life is a main driver of economic development and recovery, and that getting people to spend money at our businesses will require investments in the surrounding communities.

Equally, we must improve the quality of employment opportunities for all New Yorkers, ensuring that many more New Yorkers are able to secure family-sustaining jobs and that all new New Yorkers can see a way to grow their skills, income, and financial security.

These twin goals—getting New Yorkers to work and improving skills, job quality and compensation—anchor our jobs policy.

My Administration will build clear paths for New Yorkers to enter into middle-income work and leverage the investment that the COVID emergency will demand to bring New Yorkers together to build the infrastructure that will support the long-term growth and prosperity of the City as a whole.

To do this, restructuring regulations governing small business in this City must be a priority - that means making our regulations the most thoughtful, consistent, and accessible regulations in the country.

As part of my “15 Minute Neighborhood” plan, we will invest in building vibrant, relevant, and up-to-date neighborhood business centers--in every neighborhood across the five boroughs of New York City--to support widespread job creation and at-home workers.

We want to build back what we have lost to COVID while expanding in creative ways. Our Administration will drive large-scale investments in expanding the life sciences sector in New York City, emphasizing primary research and product innovation (labs, aligned with universities), early- and growth-stage companies, and executive offices.

2. Do you expect to raise taxes? If so, on who/what? If not, how will you make up the pandemic shortfall?

Finding effective, sustainable solutions to our City’s economic and budgetary crisis will be a key priority for our next mayor. Based on my decades of public service experience, including my two and a half as Director of the Office of Management and Budget, I strongly believe that a balanced approach to lowering expenses and increasing revenues is necessary.

As OMB Director, I worked to make the tax code more progressive, and I will continue these efforts as Mayor. This means collaborating with my colleagues in the federal government to end the Trump tax cuts and asking the wealthy to pay a fairer share.

My Administration will also consider tax cuts for lower-income taxpayers; such cuts stimulate job creation as lower-income New Yorkers will spend these tax savings. Importantly, this adds an economic argument--job creation--to the calls for rationalizing property tax collections, which fall more heavily on lower-income taxpayers (as a substantial component of the rent that they pay) than on the highest-income taxpayers (especially single-family homeowners).

At the same time, we must recognize that businesses in New York City bear the highest corporate taxes in the United States, and that we cannot simply tax our way out of this crisis. We must look to attract businesses back to the City, and ensure those businesses are providing good, sustainable jobs with a living wage.

Businesses can expect to benefit from lower commercial real estate costs in New York City as a result of the COVID pandemic. My Administration will consider imposing a higher transaction tax on new real estate purchase and lease transactions for a two-year period to allow the City to reap a small portion of the financial benefit that will accrue to businesses from lower real estate costs.

We will explicitly connect taxes to growth-supporting investments and job creation. Very specific investments--in transit and housing especially--are proven drivers of economic growth. We will make growth-focused capital investments and set standards for the management of costs as these are built.

We are not starting with assumptions that solving the budget will require a general increase in property or income taxes. Any tax proposals will be viewed through the lenses of equity and the short- and long-term needs of the City, in particular looking to protect working people and small businesses.

And we cannot borrow our way out of this crisis. This will take collaboration and a commitment to smart investments that give everyone a fair shot at economic opportunity and security, while driving down the deficit. Instead of posing a choice between borrowing or 22,000 layoffs, we should propose smarter options, such as attrition and a real hiring freeze, reducing prescription drug costs by increasing city bargaining power with insurers and pharmacy benefit providers, improving health-care quality and lowering costs through delivery system reform with strategies we used in the Affordable Care Act.

3. What kinds of businesses and commercial activities do you expect to attract to the city? How?

Due in large part to the pandemic, New Yorkers are confronting unemployment at unprecedented levels. Jobs in tourism, accommodation, restaurants, retail, culture and the arts have been decimated. The first priority has to be supporting job creation and a return to full employment. Job creation and full employment are fully predicated on the return of people--visitors, employees, and residents.

Therefore, we must focus on revitalizing the nightlife and tourism industries that nourish so many other sectors of our city's economy. This will involve supporting restaurants, arts and culture, rethinking our use of public space, improving transportation, and making sure that every feels safe and healthy while visiting our city.

Looking toward the future, we must invest in the important, innovative, and growing sectors. We will drive large-scale investments in expanding the life sciences sector in New York City, including the establishment of a free-standing, fully-endowed research center in Upper Manhattan and a life sciences hub in the Bronx anchored in robust job training and clear pathways to employment for residents. We will also lead in climate adaptation and jobs through alignment of workforce training with skills required for the Clean Buildings Transformation, clarification of regulatory frameworks for buildings' climate adaptation investments, and incentivization of private investment in the wind power generation sector.

My Administration will work hand in hand with public health experts, leading with science, to ensure our recovery is aligned with coronavirus-safety protocols. In order to get visitors back and residents outside again as soon as possible, we cannot cut corners.

4. Do you expect your administration to rely more on virtual (remote) activity that could lower or eliminate the need for the city to rent and maintain large office spaces. For example, adjudicating Traffic Court summonses remotely to reduce the need for courtrooms.

My administration will be committed to ensuring that New Yorkers have easy access to necessary city services, and that means rethinking how we deliver some of these digitally. That said, we recognize that there is a digital divide and that many people do not have the resources to interface with the city government virtually, so we will consider this when thinking about how to best serve New Yorkers.

We are also planning on housing some city agency offices in libraries, which would provide additional revenue to libraries while providing centralized hubs for accessing government services like those provided by the Department of the Aging and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

TRANSPORTATION

1. How will you address the issues of MTA cost overruns, inflated overtime, and inefficiencies?

As the MTA is experiencing a major financial deficit, aid from the federal government is more important than ever. Downstate New York accounts for 8% of the country's GDP, which translates to great bargaining power. We can use that power to bring funding to the MTA by lobbying for federal tax dollars and ensuring that the sources of funding are dedicated to City priorities. I am the only candidate who has worked with both the incoming President and Vice President as well as the Senate Majority Leader and will be able to use those relationships to ensure NYC gets the money it needs to save the MTA.

Although ridership has plummeted during the pandemic, millions of New Yorkers still rely on transit every day. 55% of all frontline workers use the subways as the primary mode of transportation for New Yorkers. A robust system is critical to the recovery of New York. The MTA's \$51.5 billion Capital Plan is estimated to generate 350,000 jobs total for the five years with close to 80% of the jobs in New York City. My team will partner with the MTA on key priorities, collaborate on bringing new financing, and install more effective and high-level communication channels. We need to be at the table as it comes to decision-making at the MTA.

The mayor has the opportunity to use their bully pulpit to encourage collaboration between the city, state, and federal governments. As the MTA is experiencing a major financial deficit, aid from the federal government is more important than ever. Downstate New York accounts for 8% of the country's GDP, which translates to great bargaining power. We can use that power to bring funding to the MTA by lobbying for federal tax dollars and ensuring that the sources of funding are dedicated to City priorities.

We must come up and explore new ways to increase funding. Some examples include value capture, the Transportation and Climate Initiative, and a Marijuana Tax. State law allows for value capture but we will recommend that every future expansion project use value capture as part of its funding.

2. Do you have any plans for changes to the current transit system, roadways, parking, bike lanes, etc.?

As mayor, I will make the Open Streets program permanent. I will take a holistic and justice-driven approach to Open Streets, including meaningful and sustained community engagement instead of the current police oversight of the vast majority of Open Streets. The goal is to make the program more equitable, especially in lower-income neighborhoods, communities of color, and neighborhoods hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. Open Streets cannot be a fad; they are a pathway to a more equitable transportation infrastructure in the city because all New Yorkers deserve the social, economic and environmental benefits of permanent open streets.

I will lead the effort to reimagine the New York City streetscape for the 21st century, reduce the city's reliance on cars, expand bus and bike lanes, and end traffic violence. We need to put people, not cars, at the center of all transportation conversations and projects. Specifically, I have worked extensively to do this using "Complete Streets" models at the neighborhood and regional scale as HPD Commissioner and HUD Secretary, and will get reckless, unsafe drivers off our streets and reduce illegal speeding by cars and trucks. With more strategic and consistent enforcement, and improved street design, we can make streets safer and stop traffic violence in New York City. So far this year more than 210 people have been killed in traffic in New York City. As a parent, policymaker and architect I refuse to tolerate people dying in the crosswalk as an unavoidable part of city living. The evidence is overwhelming: two of the biggest contributors to unsafe streets are speeding and unsafe drivers, and that's where I will focus to start. Change on our streets is a matter of leadership and commitment and as Mayor I will prioritize and sustain this effort.

To read more about my transportation plan, please go to shaunfornyc.com/priorities/transportation.

CAMPAIGN CONTACT

If our members have any additional questions or wish to get involved, what is your campaign contact information?

Please contact Aicha Bamba at aicha@shaunfornyc.com

THE VRDC THANKS YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES.