



THE VILLAGE REFORM DEMOCRATIC CLUB

Questions for 2021 City Council District 1 Candidates

Responses for Candidate (name): Tiffany Winbush

1. Why are you running for City Council and what experience prepares you for this job? **I'm running represent District 1 on the New York City Council in order to serve as a voice for all residents within the district. I have a unique perspective as I moved to the district 15 years ago, but I quickly knew that this community would be my forever home. There's a need for someone who can bridge the communication gap between long-times residents, residents who may live in the district for a period of time and those who like me move to the district and know this is a community that they'll always call home.**
2. What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of a Councilmember? **The most important responsibilities of a City Councilmember include creating legislation that positively impacts the district, ensures the Mayor's annual budget funds the city's needs, monitor how the individual city agencies are managing their role in the city and also ensuring the city is effectively making land use a priority.**
3. What are the major issues facing this district and how would you address them? **The major issues facing District 1 includes Affordable Housing, Providing a lifeline for small business owners and Addressing the educational needs of families because of hybrid learning due to COVID-19. This district was one of the fastest growing communities pre-COVID. Because of that, many long-term residents were being pushed out. We need to ensure that we have permanent, affordable housing, so that a changing community doesn't impact long-time residents. Small business owners are the backbone of so many of our communities. We need to commit to no strings attached grants in order to ensure that businesses are still here and operating once we're on the other side of COVID. Finally, many families have had their lives interrupted due to the lack of in-person school. We need to make sure teachers and staff are a priority to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, so that we can safely return to school. Put upon returning, we also have to make smaller class sizes a priority to ensure continued safety from COVID and allow an opportunity for teachers to reengage students in their learning.**
4. What policies do you support to increase the supply of truly affordable housing in the district?
- What are your thoughts about changing the zoning in historic districts? **Changing the zoning in historic district should be consider, especially is that rezoning will result in permanent, affordable housing. With that being said, historic districts are historic for a purpose. We have to ensure that any zoning changes in historic communities reflect the community. Over up building historic communities without considering how it will impact the community is simply unacceptable.**

- Do you support adaptive reuse/conversion of existing offices and hotels (all or in part) to achieve affordable housing? If so, how would you implement and fund this? **I fully support the idea of reusing existing spaces to achieve affordable housing. This option is preferable over developers building new developments. I propose we purchase distressed hotel properties. Due to the lack of tourism to the city, there are a number of hotels that could be ripe for purchasing. There are several ways we could accomplish this goal. While taxing the wealthy isn't the only solution, it is one solution to help fund these conversions. We also know that the city spends hundreds of thousands of dollars on hotel rooms for the city's unsheltered. That money would be better funneled into purchasing distressed hotel properties, converting them to long-term or permanent afford housing and relocate the unsheltered that are in traditional hotel rooms to these new homes.**

- Do you support using MIH with FAR incentives to create affordable housing stock? If so, where and how would this be implemented? **The opportunity to obtain new units of affordable housing is a priority. While MIH is a good start, we need to ensure that a much higher percent of MIH is required. FAR is a good starting point to help control the size of buildings. The height, size, etc. of buildings should not be so out of scale to what's currently in the community.**

- How would you determine affordability, AMI bands, etc.? **It's imperative to repurpose the AMI bands, so that more deeply low-income individuals qualify for affordable housing. We do need to adjust the bands and I would not establish them based on the AMI of the neighborhood as the makeup of neighborhoods change. Let's take TriBeCa for instance. AT one time, it was a deeply affordable community and home to artists who could not afford to live in other parts of Manhattan. That neighborhood has changed drastically over the last several decades. This change could happen to any community. AMI should be based on the collective cost of living in NYC, not just one particular community.**

- What is your position on the City Planning proposal for SoHo/NoHo? **I believe that each community across NYC should take on the responsibility of having affordable housing in its community. Considering the historic nature of SoHo/NoHo, community input should be part of the conversation with rezoning and we should ensure the historic nature of these communities aren't overshadowed by glass mega towers. Additionally, before introducing more housing, due to the city's economic downturn, we should consider converting underused buildings into new housing vs. starting from the bottom up.**

5. Will you support Community Board recommendations on land use, licensing, etc.?
Community Board members tend to be the most engaged members of a community. They've committed to a volunteer community that involves many hours of commitment. I would surely support recommendations from CB members on land use, licensing and other issues that would impact the community.

6. What is your position on the new environmental plan to build a sea wall along the east side of Manhattan extending from Montgomery Street to East 25th Street to offset flooding threats? Do you feel this plan will adequately protect your district and the services citizens rely upon, including the Battery and Wall Street areas and East Side hospitals?
The Lower Manhattan coastal line has to be protected. We know the next Hurricane Sandy will happen. It's not if, but when it will occur. While the sea wall along the east side of

Manhattan is necessary, it's unimaginable that we'll destroy outdoor space that has become so valuable for New Yorkers since the onset of COVID. We should not destroy this vital neighborhood amenity, but instead should go back to the drawing board and from the beginning incorporate community feedback to coincide with the experts who developed the plan for the sea wall. But even more concerning is the recent realization that the city administration did not go through the proper steps when developing how to develop the sea wall. These issues can not be overlooked and we must work out any issues before moving forward with the building of a sea wall.

7. Would you change anything about public schools in the district? What are your thoughts on charter and private options, including funding, co-location, etc.? New York City public schools need attention and are ripe for a major overhaul. I am not a strong supporter of charter schools as it takes much needed funding and resources away from schools when we should be focusing on ensuring all schools are well-funded and well resourced. If a family commits to a private schools option, that's a decision that was made within their family and I'm assuming it was the best decision for the family. Ideally, each school would have its own location, so that they can build up school spirit among student, staff, parents and guardians without an element of another school in its vicinity. Co-located schools might work if we can ensure that schools are receiving the same funding and one school isn't getting more resources than the other.

But we also must come to terms with the fact that NYC public schools are the most segregated in the country. Considering NYC's strong diversity, that is unacceptable. In District 1 alone, you see schools that have an abundance of resources, while other schools are lacking. We as a community should not be okay with this. While school choice is an option to bridge this gap, our messages to students should not be that they have to leave their communities in order to receive a quality and equitable education. Resources would be distributed

8. Would you expand services for seniors? If so, what services would you expand, how would you fund them and who would provide the services? Yes, I would expand services for seniors. I believe in elders being able to age in place. Seniors, who've contributed so much to NYC, should not be forced to move to places such as Georgia, etc. in order to survive on their retirement funds. Food insecurity has become a major challenge for New Yorkers. We must continue and expand programs that provide food for seniors. While Access-a-Ride has its challenges, seniors deserve the ability to get around their community and beyond. We must also expand this program, continue to make it affordable for seniors and allow Access-a-Ride vehicles the same privilege as bus lanes. Additionally, freezing a senior's rent at a rate affordable to them during their retirement. I've mentioned previously that we should ensure all New Yorkers pay their fare share, and that includes taxing those who are independently wealthy beyond what every day New Yorkers can image. In addition to paying for these programs with additional tax revenue, it is important that we audit programs geared towards seniors to ensure efficiency in spending practices.

9. While recognizing the needs of bicyclists, what will you do to help ensure the safety of the public? Would you be in favor of a licensing and insurance requirement for electric bicycles that can exceed NYC speed limits and why/why not?

Bicyclist should be required to wear helmets, not only for their safety, but for the safety of others. We need more dedicated bike lanes, which would ultimately help with the safety of the public. You are correct, e-bikes can exceed NYC speed limits. Should the Council implement licensing and insurance requirements, these fees should not be passed on to delivery drivers. Any business who uses e-bikes should be required to pick-up the cost, so that it's not a burden to those who are already making just enough to get by.

10. The next few years may see a drastic decrease in the amount of funds which the City Council will have to allocate. How will you ensure that constituent needs are met?

We have to tax the wealthy. The city needs more revenue and there's just no way around making the extremely independently wealthy pay more of its fare share. In addition, a deep audit of each and every program needs to take place to ensure the city is spending it's money the most efficiently.

11. What are your positions on rent relief and considerations for landlords who are still paying the full amount of taxes owed during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Rent relief is necessary. The possibility of people paying back thousands and thousands of dollars in back rent is extremely unlikely, especially with many people still not fully employed. In addition to rolling out rent relief, we also have to consider small property owner landlords. These are landlords who don't have a large corporation to fall back on. There are proposals currently at the state level that address these complex needs of renters and landlords. Everyone must be made whole in this situation, whether you're a renter or small landlord. Additionally, although the city is suffering, it's only the right thing to do to evaluate how much each business will pay in taxes. An adjustment is warranted due to COVID-19.

THE VRDC THANKS YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES.