

AIA New York 2021 Voter Guide

The June 22, 2021 Democratic Primary, during which most races will be decided in our heavily Democratic city, will be pivotal for the future of New York City. Term limits are forcing most elected officials out of office, including council members, borough presidents, the comptroller, and the mayor. We have compiled the below list of “Highly Rated” candidates to assist our members with voting for candidates who are the strongest supporters of architectural issues.

Candidates were evaluated based on their policy positions, the strengths of their campaigns, and responses to [AIA New York's candidate questionnaire](#). As these races will be decided with [ranked-choice voting](#), we have “Highly Rated” multiple candidates in some races, encouraging our members to vote for both candidates in the order they see fit. Before the election, make sure you confirm which [council district you live in](#) and your [voter registration status](#), as only registered Democrats can vote in the primary.

MAYOR

Shaun Donovan

Shaun Donovan’s architecture training taught him to be creative in developing solutions to complex problems. This has guided his belief that government is not “the art of the possible,” but “the art of the nearly-impossible.” Donovan has been driven by this passion for innovative design throughout his career. While serving as HPD Commissioner, he oversaw the first design competition for sustainable affordable housing of its kind in New York. Via Verde boasts a building-integrated photo-voltaic system, rainwater harvest and drought tolerant vegetation, vegetable gardens, a supermarket, and community spaces for the economically-diverse residents of the 151 rental apartments and 71 co-ops. More than an example of what housing could be in New York and beyond, this project is a case study on the power of effective public-private partnership. It brought agencies like HPD and NYCHA together with developers and architects with areas of expertise ranging from sustainability to zoning. When President Obama asked Donovan to lead the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force, they took the idea of private-public partnership and competition even further, tapping into global knowledge and ingenuity to produce one-of-a-kind solutions that now serve as models for future sustainability projects.

Kathryn Garcia

Kathryn Garcia is a lifelong New Yorker and former Commissioner of the NYC Department of Sanitation, where she led the world's largest municipal waste management, recycling, street cleaning, and snow response agency. A former interim chair and CEO of NYCHA and COO of the NYC Department of Environmental Protection, Garcia has overseen some of the most ambitious projects and reforms in New York. Garcia is running for mayor of New York City to bring the experience and leadership necessary to deliver strong services that improve the everyday lives of New Yorkers and build a more sustainable, equitable city for our future.

COMPTROLLER

Brad Lander

As Comptroller, Brad Lander will take on the major crises facing the city today—and tomorrow—by supporting investments in infrastructure, job creation, and small businesses that ensure a just, equitable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Lander has been a champion for reforming the City's capital projects management and has made investing in infrastructure, including his plan for a new generation of social housing, central to his plan for our city's short-term recovery and long-term sustainability. As a leader in the push for comprehensive planning, Lander is deeply committed to overhauling New York City's planning process to assess citywide needs with respect to housing, transit, open space, and other critical infrastructure, as well as to ensure that development is responsive to local community priorities and addresses historical disinvestment in communities of color. Lander's background in community planning and affordable housing advocacy informs his commitment to making government work better. Prior to his decade serving in the City Council, Lander spent 15 years in the nonprofit sector as the director of two organizations: the Pratt Center for Community Development and the Fifth Avenue Committee.

MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

Ben Kallos

A lifelong tenant, Ben Kallos grew up with a single mom, living with his grandparents who fled anti-Semitism. As Co-Chair of the City Council Progressive Caucus, he has fought corruption, authoring laws to get big money out of politics, put thousands of affordable homes back on the market, and help house our City's homeless. He's funded over 1,600 new school seats, \$874 million for resilient parks, and new trash cans to clean up New York City. As a lead sponsor on the Climate Mobilization Act, he is working to use buildings as a key weapon in the fight against climate change. Kallos is proud to have partnered with AIANY and is working to introduce legislation to replace "low-bid" procurement for contracts, including design work, to place greater weight on qualifications and other performance metrics. Endorsed by the *New York Times* in 2013 for his "fresh ideas," he has plans for an equitable recovery to win a Manhattan for all of us. He has won more than 80 endorsements, including from Congresswoman Maloney, Carpenters, Bus Drivers, and Nurses, and is extremely honored to be endorsed by AIANY.

Mark Levine

Mark Levine has been at the forefront of advocating for healthy, equitable, and resilient communities for over 22 years. A bilingual former public school teacher in the South Bronx and founder of the Neighborhood Trust Federal Credit Union, Levine was elected to the New York City Council in 2013 and has served as the Chair of the Council's public health committee and parks committees. He introduced and passed the transformative Right to Counsel legislation, guaranteeing individuals who face eviction and cannot

afford a lawyer the right to an attorney, and co-sponsored the Climate Mobilization Act, which mandated dramatic reductions in fossil fuel consumption by large buildings. As Borough President, Levine will push hard to de-mall Manhattan, build more quality affordable housing and supportive housing, reduce the reliance on private cars and invest in bike and pedestrian infrastructure, protect open green space for communities, ensure that Community Boards have access to urban planners so that they have the expertise they need to make important decisions for our communities, and push the City and developers to meet the challenges of climate change head-on by reducing reliance on fossil fuels and lowering emissions.

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

Erik Bottcher Council District 3

Erik Bottcher is a dedicated public servant and activist who has devoted his life to progressive causes and to the betterment of the community he loves. Bottcher believes that if we come together and rise to this moment, New York City's best days are still ahead. Growing up in a small town in the Adirondack Mountains as the only gay person he knew, Bottcher's personal struggles with depression sparked in him a lifelong dedication to helping the most marginalized members of our society. Bottcher's career in public service began in 2009 as the LGBTQ & HIV/AIDS Community Liaison at the New York City Council, where he organized grassroots campaigns on issues including transgender rights, hate crimes, housing for people with HIV/AIDS, and marriage equality. In 2011, newly elected Governor Andrew M. Cuomo hired Bottcher to help lead his team fighting for marriage equality in New York State. In 2015, he joined Corey Johnson's office as his Chief of Staff. Since then, Bottcher has worked tirelessly for the residents of Council District 3, fighting for more green space, better schools, affordable housing, senior services, and more.

Julie Menin Council District 5

Kim Moscaritolo Council District 5

Kim Moscaritolo is a journalist and a longtime community advocate. She was a founding board member of the White Roof Project and has served as Democratic District Leader for the past five years. Moscaritolo is fighting for a just COVID-19 recovery, for our local small businesses, and for investments in our public infrastructure. She believes we need accountability, transparency, and independent leadership to fight for the brighter future we know is possible. Moscaritolo is ready to bring a journalist's eye to the New York City Council, and she's excited to re-imagine our city together, with a focus on sustainability, resiliency, and justice.

Gale Brewer
Council District 6

Gale Brewer has spent her entire career fighting for better healthcare, equitable schools, environmental justice, and saner development. She has served as Manhattan Borough President since 2014, where she's led community planning initiatives neighborhoods across the island to thoughtfully address development and zoning issues. Prior to serving as Manhattan Borough President, Brewer served on the New York City Council for 12 years. While on the Council, she passed legislation guaranteeing paid sick leave for most hourly employees, requiring all City data be published online, and protecting domestic workers from abusive practices. Brewer is deeply committed to the fight for affordable housing and sensible development. As Borough President, she created the Affordable Housing Task Force and has overseen the preservation and creation of new affordable housing across Manhattan. She believes that we must engage architects as problem solvers to address the complex problems of community health and wellbeing that the pandemic has exposed, utilizing their expertise beyond development sites through holistic planning to build stronger neighborhoods for all. She has collaborated with AIANY to recruit architects to serve on the Manhattan's Community Boards. As City Councilor for District 6, Brewer will bring her expertise and insight to help the Upper West Side rebound stronger from COVID-19.

Dan Cohen
Council District 7

Dan Cohen is a candidate for City Council, aiming to succeed Mark Levine in the 7th district of Manhattan. He is a native New Yorker and an affordable housing advocate with deep roots in the community. For the past decade, Cohen has worked at affordable housing nonprofits, including the last seven years at Housing Partnership, where he has helped to create and preserve thousands of affordable housing units in NYC each year. Elected in 2010, Cohen is the Democratic State Committeeman for the 69th Assembly District. He is a member of Community Board 9, President of the Valley Restoration Local Development Corporation, and serves on the board of Friends of Morningside Park. Cohen is a proud public school graduate, as well as current public school parent, and serves on the school PTA. Cohen and his family are members of Congregation Rodeph Sholom. Cohen was raised in rent-regulated housing on Manhattan's Upper West Side, in the same neighborhood where he lives with his wife and eight-year-old son today. In a real-estate focused city like New York, where the design element can be lost, Frank Lloyd Wright said it best: "Architecture is the...triumph of imagination over materials, methods, and [humanity]."

Angela Fernandez
Council District 10

Angela Fernandez is a single mother, lawyer, and human rights activist who has worked for decades at the grassroots, co-leading movements that have led to transformational changes and have become models for cities across the country. She served for ten years as the Executive Director of the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant

Rights, where she prevented thousands of deportations and co-developed the nation's first universal court-appointed legal representation program for detained immigrants. Most recently, she was the NYS Commissioner of Human Rights, where she won millions of dollars in settlements for those discriminated against in housing, employment, and more. Fernandez is ready and eager to champion architects in NYC and take their ideas for housing, economic and environmental justice to City Hall. For District 10 and New York City in general, architectural partners are pivotal in building truly affordable housing, retrofitting our housing stock, and expanding green and equitable spaces that bring environmental justice to our working-class communities. Fernandez has a vision to work with the architectural community to achieve an equitable and thriving local economy through efforts such as eliminating the "low-bid" procurement and improving our M/WBE program.

Jessica Haller
Council District 11

Jessica Haller, a climate activist, tech entrepreneur, and working mom of four, is running a grassroots campaign to represent and unite the 11th District in the New York City Council, which includes the Bronx neighborhoods of Bedford Park, Kingsbridge, Norwood, Riverdale, Van Cortlandt Village, Wakefield, and Woodlawn. Haller has leadership experience in the private, not-for-profit, and government sectors. She co-founded two start-ups, helped grow Hazon into a \$9M organization, and mentored socially responsible entrepreneurs to scale their ideas. Using her technical skills and ability to forge solutions, Haller developed a custom system for the NYC Comptroller's Office to improve the communications and response of the office to constituents. Haller earned her master's degree in environmental science and policy from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and the Earth Institute. She also is a LEED-accredited professional with the U.S. Green Building Council. Haller is running on a platform of equity, resilience, and sustainability. She knows these goals are connected, and the policies to develop an economy for the future, fight the climate crisis, and build healthy communities are all related. She's excited to work with AIANY to achieve these goals.

Pierina Sanchez
Council District 14

Pierina Sanchez is an activist and public servant born and raised in the Northwest Bronx by a resilient family of Dominican immigrants. Sanchez has dedicated her life to working for her community. She has worked in the Obama White House and as an urban planner at Regional Plan Association, and was most recently a Senior Advisor for Housing, Economic Development and Labor in City Hall, all while serving with local institutions and community boards. Communities like hers have survived decades of criminal levels of disinvestment, and her top priorities as Council Member would be to approach housing as a human right, broaden access to economic opportunity, and ensure fully funded public education. Architects are a key part of this vision: the new spaces that her district needs for community building and healing must be designed by social-justice oriented architects who will uplift the dignity of all community members. Great

architecture can contribute to vibrant community character and help keep density at a human scale. As a pro-equitable development Council Member, Sanchez will enthusiastically support more high-quality development in her district, especially homes affordable to her district, which has a median income of \$21,000.

John Sanchez
Council District 15

John Sanchez is a lifelong Bronx resident, the District Manager for Bronx Community Board 6, and a candidate for New York City Council in the 15th District in the Bronx, which includes the neighborhoods of Belmont, East Tremont, and West Farms. Throughout his career, Sanchez has secured a \$200,000 grant for Bronx small businesses, sponsored free open gyms for youth, and developed the New York City's first year-round paid Community Board internship program. Sanchez previously served as New York City Advocacy Manager for the Northeast Charter Schools Network, helping advocate for increased charter school funding. He also served in the New York State Assembly as Deputy Chief of Staff for a Bronx Assembly member. Sanchez serves on the nonprofit boards of Housing Rights Initiative, Legacy College Prep Charter School, and Immaculate Conception School. He is a graduate of New York University's Stern School of Business.

Althea Stevens
Council District 16

Althea Stevens is a proud New York native and a respected community advocate for the Bronx. As a dedicated single mother, she works hard to create a sustainable future for her child and for all children and families who live in under-resourced neighborhoods. Stevens began her career in civic service more than 15 years ago, working for non-profit agencies and community centers that focus on giving a voice to the most vulnerable populations. She organized voting rights information sessions, led strategy workshops to address gang policing, and created annual youth forums and community celebrations to bridge relationships between residents and neighborhood partners. Her dedication and passion to serve others has earned Stevens seats on a number of advisory committees, including the NYC Mayor's Office of Community Affairs, the New York City Housing Authority Tenants Association, and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF) Inc. Stevens is dedicated to working with the architectural community to support the development of new affordable housing and will fight to emphasize green building practices for all new developments.

Jesse Laymon
Council District 26

Born and raised in NYC, Jesse Laymon and his wife Vicki have lived in the Ravenswood/Dutch Kills neighborhood of Long Island City since 2004. Until the COVID-19 pandemic, he was responsible for representing the city's nonprofit job training programs and advocating for greater public investment in equitable employment. During

the pandemic, Laymon left his job to full time parent his daughter Roosevelt after her daycare center closed, as his wife leads the family empowerment program at an educational nonprofit. Prior to his work on equitable employment, Laymon spent years as an organizer and leader of New York progressive coalitions. In that time, he organized to save afterschool programs, to levy a millionaires tax, to transform campaign finance, and to fight pollution from coal power plants. In recent years he's been a leader in an anti-racist organization, fighting to close Rikers Island, end cash bail, and defund the NYPD. In addition to leading issue campaigns, Laymon has worked on several electoral campaigns. He worked for MoveOn.org to elect a Democratic Congress and end the war in Iraq, then on Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential campaign, and in 2020 he was the Pennsylvania state director of the VoteBlue campaign to defeat Donald Trump.

David Aronov
Council District 29

David Aronov is a first-generation American, non-profit founder, proud public school graduate, and community activist running for New York City Council to tackle today's challenges and build a stronger tomorrow. Aronov will work to reform how New York City utilizes design-build, push for the elimination of low-bid procurement, expand Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and increase marketing and communications to MWBEs in the design and construction of public works to advocate for a more equitable and fair New York City. With nearly a decade of experience in city government, Aronov will be ready on day one to continue fighting for District 29.

Juan Ardila
Council District 30

Juan Ardila is a Working Families Democrat and the first Latino to run for New York City Council in District 30, Queens. Ardila mentored at risk students at the International Rescue Committee and supported refugees and asylees in obtaining residency and citizenship. He also worked for Councilmember Brad Lander and as a consultant for the NYC Department of Education's initiative to expand 3-K and pre-K for all. Currently, Ardila works at a legal service nonprofit where he supports New Yorkers with legal representation and accessibility to benefits. He has been a leading voice on legalizing and enabling Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in New York, putting the issue at the center of his housing platform alongside an evidenced-based Housing First model to address homelessness, while also addressing the lack of public transportation in District 30. Ardila's leadership would play a critical role in advancing a more conducive approach to ensuring all New Yorkers have a stable place to live and expand public transit options. He believes that architects are imperative in doing design work and planning when it comes to the future of our city and will ensure they are at the forefront of this movement. Ardila graduated from NYU Wagner with a Master's Degree in Public Policy Analytics.

Felicia Singh
Council District 32

Felicia Singh is an educator, the proud daughter of working-class immigrants, and a lifelong resident of District 32. Singh is running for New York City Council on a platform of education and environmental justice, supporting taxi drivers and small businesses, transportation accessibility, and community building. She is actively promoting the removal of architectural and environmental barriers, along with the incorporation of Universal Design in order to improve accessibility for some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. Singh believes that architecture can play a role in social justice and end the investment and creation of harmful spaces. This means influencing architecture organizations to refrain from building hostile and harmful spaces. Currently, District 32 is the last remaining Republican-held seat in Queens, despite being a majority Democratic district. This is why Singh is running a campaign rooted in organizing and committed to centering the most marginalized voices in the district. With the highest overall fundraising haul and the most endorsements in the race, Singh is the progressive front-runner to flip District 32 from red to blue.

Lincoln Restler
Council District 33

Lincoln Restler is running for City Council in District 33 to address the affordability crisis that makes it harder and harder for Brooklynites to stay in their homes and communities, confront the climate crisis facing our waterfront and the planet, and return the streets to the people by innovating our streetscapes and expanding dynamic spaces for pedestrians, cyclists, mass, transit, restaurants, and retailers. He'll demand that development meets the needs of our communities and reset dynamics between developers and communities to yield the affordable housing we desperately need. He'll also prioritize investments to address crumbling infrastructure from the BQE to NYCHA. Restler believes that our goal should be to create a built environment that is sustainable, beautiful, and enhances the dynamism of our neighborhoods. He has lived in the district his whole life and has deep experience across 10 years in city government, spearheading implementation of IDNYC and a number of anti-poverty initiatives. He has also served as Executive Director of the NYC Employment and Training Coalition, which supports job training efforts across the city. Deeply rooted in his community, Restler most recently worked at St. Nick's Alliance, the largest youth and senior services provider in North Brooklyn.

Justin Krebs
Council District 39

Justin Krebs is a longtime progressive organizer, parent leader, and author who has brought folks together locally and nationally to make change and get things done. For the past few years, he was the National Campaigns Director at MoveOn, fighting to defeat Donald Trump's divisive and dangerous rhetoric on health care, immigration, taxation, impeachment, reproductive justice, climate, and more. He's the founder of The Tank, a nonprofit theater that premieres more new work by emerging artists than any

other venue in New York City. He's also the creator of the Living Liberally national network of social communities, which cultivates and deepens progressive community ties across the country. He and his wife Casey, a midwife and birth educator who owns her own small business in the district, are raising their three girls in Park Slope. Krebs is involved in the school leadership of PS 39 and the leadership of the School District 15 Presidents Council. During the pandemic, he has worked as part of the leadership team to establish the Camp Friendship Food Pantry. His campaign will focus on schools, climate, our vibrant main streets—small businesses, safe streets, vibrant livable built environments, culture and open space—and an ambitious, equitable COVID-19 recovery.

Rita Joseph
Council District 40

Rita Joseph is a mom, educator, and community activist. After emigrating to the US from Haiti in her youth, Joseph began her life of advocacy work. At just 19 years old, she organized her first rally after founding Haitian Enforcement Against Racism, which protested the FDA's discriminatory "bad blood" rules that prevented people of Haitian descent from donating blood. The rally, which gathered more than 150,000 people, succeeded in its mission and the FDA rescinded the racist rule. Since then, Joseph hasn't looked back with her community advocacy. As a teen mom who got a full college scholarship, she knows what it means to have to work for what you have. Joseph spent her twenties raising two kids while organizing protests against cuts to student MetroCards and police brutality, all on top having a full-time job. She organized not because it was easy, but because it was necessary for her community. Since then, she hasn't stopped working for her neighbors, both as a public school teacher and as a community activist. Joseph is focused on increasing access to public space, especially public parks, fighting for truly affordable housing, and ensuring that our public schools, public housing, and mass transit systems have the funding that they deserve.

Edwin Raymond
Council District 40

Edwin Raymond is a local of District 40, living in East Flatbush. He entered the police department to remedy some of the injustices that he faced as a young man. Raymond has been an activist for police reform and criminal justice reform, advocating for the Raise the Age initiative and co-founding the non-profit PLOT, a mentor program for at-risk youth. As a NYPD Police Lieutenant, his vision for District 40 is to divest from over-bloated budgets and invest them into the needs of the city. Raymond has been fighting for communities to have better public safety without over-policing, quality education, healthcare for all, and affordable housing. He is fighting for justice-minded infrastructure that engages our communities and lifts their voices to move towards a more cohesive and greener city.