



2025 Primary Candidate Questionnaire – Borough President

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name	Brad Hoylman-Sigal
Seeking office:	Manhattan Borough President
In which primary	Democratic
Education	J.D., Harvard Law School; MPhil, Politics, Oxford University (Rhodes scholar); B.A., English Literature & Political Science, West Virginia University
Current job, position, or occupation	State Senator, 47th District, Manhattan (Christopher to 103rd St)
Other positions or offices	Member of the LGBTQ synagogue, Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, along with my husband and two young daughters.
Previous jobs or positions	Former Executive Vice President, Partnership for New York City; Former Trustee of the Community Service Society; former board member of the Empire State Pride Agenda; Tenants & Neighbors; Class Size Matters and Citizen Action. Past-president of the Gay & Lesbian Independent Democrats

Contact Information

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INTRODUCTION

1. What are your top three campaign promises or goals, and what action will you take to achieve them if elected?

Campaign Promise 1: Help build more housing. New York City has some of the lowest housing production per capita of major American cities and homelessness at levels not seen since the Great Depression. As Borough President, I will support the creation of all types of housing to help remake Manhattan a place where working people can afford to live.

First, I would build on current Borough President Mark Levine's Housing Manhattanites plan, which identified 171 sites where more housing could be built, resulting in at least 70,000 new units.

Second, I would advocate for the City and State to use its bonding authority to build more housing as is being done in Montgomery County, Maryland; and use a nonprofit model for housing development, similar to that used by the NYC Housing Partnership, where I used to work.

Third, I would appoint community board members who understand, appreciate and have a stake in solving our current housing crisis, including members of organized labor, NYCHA residents, and young professionals (allowing hybrid Zoom meetings would help in this regard, see below).

Fourth, I would advocate the creation of SROs for both recent arrivals to New York City and safer spaces for unhoused people. This is a good model for supportive housing, too, an effort that I've helped lead on. I would also support flexible co-living arrangements; municipal regulations must be reformed to make this feasible, including eliminating the requirement that windows in modern buildings be open-able, letting SROs count as affordable housing under the city's Zoning Resolution, urging HPD to create a new Small Unit New Construction Program, and by amending the Housing Maintenance Code to permit the construction of Market Rate SROs.

Fifth, I would push for quicker conversion of commercial to residential buildings by streamlining and updating the outdated zoning laws and regulations — some of which date to the 1870s — that create unnecessary barriers, such as the onerous window standards that have been reformed in cities like Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia. I'm also supportive of the city's Midtown South Mixed-Use plan to facilitate the production of 9,700 homes, 2,800 of which would be permanently affordable, as well as exploring the creation of housing in the neighborhood surrounding Penn Station, the busiest transit hub in the Western Hemisphere, which had formerly been slated nearly exclusively for commercial development.

Sixth, I plan to advocate for the preservation of existing affordable housing, including by continuing to advocate for protect rent-stabilized tenants (including rent controlled tenants) and market-rate tenants who are protected under New York's new Good Cause Eviction protections by establishing a Manhattan Tenants Union within my office. I would also continue to advocate for reforms in NYC Housing Court, which suffers from enormous backlogs and lack of counsel for tenants, which hurts both tenants and small landlords. Finally, I am supportive of efforts, with the support of tenant leadership, to pursue private-public partnerships on NYCHA property to both rehabilitate existing housing and create new affordable housing.

Campaign Promise 2: Improve quality of life, with a focus on public safety and transit. I've passed over 370 bills in Albany as a State Senator, many on this topic. On fighting crime, I passed legislation to outlaw ghost guns, make fencing of stolen goods online a crime, cracked down on hate speech on social media platforms, and expanded the number of hate crimes by 23 new offenses. I passed legislation that will require the relocation of the helipad currently located in the Hudson River Park to a more appropriate location to help limit chopper noise and free up needed open space.

I'm also proud to have helped lead the charge on e-bike safety. I passed legislation requiring the DMV registration of scooters at the point of sale, ensuring they have license plates and are more easily identifiable by law enforcement. I'm currently working on passing my legislation requiring insurance and licenses for commercial e-bikes, which I would continue to advocate in Albany and City Hall as MBP. I was the lead sponsor of Sammy's Law, named after a young man struck and killed by a speeding motorist, which finally gave NYC home rule to lower its speed limits to help reduce crashes.

I would build on my record to address quality of life concerns at the borough level. I plan to continue my efforts to highlight specific longstanding scaffolding that harms local businesses and creates a public safety hazard, and have it removed, in addition to introducing and supporting reforms to crack down on negligent landlords.

I hope to create a dashboard on the Borough President's website to collect data of 311 complaints and their outcome, as an advocacy tool to highlight disparities of city services across the borough and a practical measure to assist constituents who aren't getting satisfactory responses.

I will continue my fight to end the punitive Manhattan Commercial Rent Tax, which unfairly taxes small businesses only south of 96th and above Reade Street.

I will continue to serve as a resource to combat illegal cannabis shops and double-down on my ongoing efforts to end the sale of flavored tobacco products that hook teens into a lifetime of nicotine abuse.

Finally, I would work closely with the Manhattan colleagues and the MTA to continue to champion capital improvements for mass transit, including expansion of the Second Avenue Subway, increased bus service and specific improvements at subway stations, including lighting, cameras, platform safety improvements and accessibility. As the first elected official to support the 14th Street busway, I envision supporting additional busways across the borough, including possibly at 34th, 42nd, 72nd, 110th and 145th streets. I will continue my advocacy for congestion pricing, as well, including exploring an expanded northern boundary, which I have shown in a recent report helps reduce response times for emergency personnel and law enforcement.

In conjunction with this, I would study the potential for residential parking permits, an effort that will require approval from Albany which I am well-prepared to undertake. At the same time, I will support efforts to limit fare evasion, which costs the MTA nearly \$700 million a year, on both subways and buses.

Campaign Promise 3: Return integrity to City Hall, fight Trump and help organize local democracy. It's important at this time of growing government cynicism that the next borough president be part of bringing honesty, integrity and openness to City Hall.

I would aim to share my government schedule online to aid in transparency and accountability.

I wish to hold more public hearings to review the provision of city services throughout the borough, a purview of the Borough President, which have been under-utilized in recent years, as well as use the BP's office as a convening power to assemble elected officials, community boards and other stakeholders on ULURP applications and other issues of mutual concern.

I would undertake voter registration drives in NYCHA, which suffers from underfunding largely due to its low-voter turnout of residents.

My legislative record is a good launching point for this work. I passed the first bill in Albany to bring transparency to LLCs, end the so-called "LLC loophole" in our campaign finance laws, and passed and/or sponsoring legislation to provide greater accountability from judges and legislators alike by expanding FOIA laws and increasing penalties for corruption.

Finally, I'm often asked by constituents during this difficult time "what can I do to help?" The Volunteer Corps organized under current Borough President Mark Levine is one way that I'd hope to continue to strengthen our communities and organize locally, especially among young New Yorkers and retirees.

2. What experience have you had with good government and reform issues? (e.g., voting and election reform, campaign finance, ethics, police accountability, government transparency). If you've worked to advance these goals, we'd love to hear about it.

I've been a longtime supporter of strengthening our Freedom Of Information Laws (FOIL) in New York. I'm currently sponsoring legislation in the State Senate, Senate Bill S5000, that requires entities that submit records to state agencies that are excepted from FOIL disclosure to periodically re-apply for that exception. It's clear from the unchecked power of government organizations like DOGE that increasing

government transparency is more important than ever.

I am proud to have sponsored legislation in Albany to strengthen the State Commission on Judicial Conduct’s power and authority as a watchdog over state judicial misconduct to ensure increased transparency and accountability. As Chair of the Judiciary Committee, I successfully initiated the disbarment of Rudy Giuliani, and earlier this year, I initiated a similar complaint regarding Emil Bove, the Acting Deputy Attorney General, for the apparent quid pro quo between the Trump administration and Mayor Adams.

I’ve long been a champion of strengthening and protecting voting rights and expanding mail-in ballot accessibility. In 2023, Governor Kathy Hochul signed my bill authorizing local boards of elections to create absentee ballot drop-off ballot boxes in New York state (S610). In this session of the State Senate, I sponsored a bill to strengthen that access for absentee and early vote ballots, which was just signed into law by Governor Hochul (S752). I am also proud to have helped lead the fight for comprehensive campaign finance reform in Albany resulting in the launch of New York State’s Public Campaign Finance Program in 2022. I was an original cosponsor of legislation banning the so-called LLC Loophole that facilitated virtually unlimited campaign donations from multiple LLC entities.

I have advocated for reforms in Family Court and Housing Court. I have passed legislation lifting the cap on the number of Supreme Court Justices. I passed the LLC Transparency Act, allowing the State and law enforcement access for the first time to the names of the beneficiary owners of LLCs. I have reformed our laws around statutes of limitation to enable the adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and adult sexual abuse seek Justice through the Child Victims Act and the Adult Survivors Act.

I passed landmark legislation called the Police Stat Act to require the state to collect and report data on arrests and deaths while in the custody of law enforcement. I also passed the Hate Crimes Analysis and Review Act, to require data collection on hate crimes and the so-called ban on “walking while trans” which prohibits law enforcement from profiling and ticketing individuals based on their appearance, which had disproportionately impacted transgender women of color.

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

3. Do you support moving New York City's elections from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years, and will you publicly support efforts in Albany to implement this reform?

Yes

Comments (optional)

I believe in the two-party system as a way for candidates to organize, help voters identify with a party, and add clarity to local elections. I am concerned about suppression of minority viewpoints, erosion of party infrastructure, and the redundancy of a general election in an open primary system, all of which have been associated with open primaries. That said, while I would need to study the specifics of any such proposal, I’m compelled by arguments that open primaries could increase voter participation (which is at a dismal 15% in New York) and help reduce polarization by facilitating the election of less extreme candidates.

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve elections and voting in New York City.**

I worked on legislation expanding absentee ballot access, as discussed above.

ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT

5. The recent indictments and resignations surrounding City Hall have exposed serious ethical

problems in City Government. Borough Presidents are involved in land use projects, where the nexus of money and lobbying is most apparent. Given that role, please describe how you will maintain the highest ethical standards in office.

Maintaining high ethical standards is very important to me — it's why I'm a member of the New York Senate's Ethics and Internal Governance Committee. I have fought for increased transparency and ethical standards in the Senate and will continue to do so as Borough President.

Having served for a decade on Community Board 2, Manhattan, and as its chair for three terms, I know from personal experience that community boards are an essential part of local governance. Because their authority is solely advisory, the integrity of their selection process, membership and decision-making is paramount if their opinions are to be valued by other levels of government and the public at large. I was part of an organizational effort over a decade ago to reform the community board selection process that should be revisited. Our recommendations included requiring a standardized written application, an interview process and the use of an independent screening panel to review candidates composed of civic and community groups to help avoid any appearance of heavy-handedness in the selection process.

Applications, biographical information and other general relevant details, including organizational affiliations, should be made available to the public, generally speaking. Sensitive personal information could be released by applicants with their consent, perhaps through a check-off system. There must be zero tolerance for conflicts of interest on community boards and I'd work closely with the NYC Conflicts of Interest Board to ensure that board members are adequately educated of their responsibilities in this regard. I would consider working with the Conflicts of Interest Board and the community boards themselves to create a short-form financial disclosure for community board members, while understanding that lengthier disclosures could discourage qualified members of the community from applying.

I would consider restricting registered lobbyists and the staff members of government officials from serving on community boards, because of the potential for conflicts of interest or, at least, of divided loyalty, on votes on a board.

I would hope to engage a real estate financial analyst in the BP's office to help review land use applications on day one. That analyst will help to answer the age-old question that I remember from when I served on a community board: How much profit is a developer reaping from a deal? By making improvements to the community board selection process and employing an independent real estate financial analyst, we can strengthen the transparency and ethical standards when it comes to land-use decisions.

6. Borough Presidents allocate funding for capital projects in their borough and provide grants to nonprofits. For incumbents: are the projects and organizations receiving such funding made public and are accessible on your website every year? For non-incumbents: How would you ensure transparency of capital and discretionary funding as Borough President?

I would of course make the projects and organizations receiving such funding accessible on the Borough President's website. I would also hold public hearings on the funding my office provides to these projects so that constituents could make their voices heard and transparency would be increased.

*** In the box below, you may provide additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve ethics and accountability in New York City government.**

Since being elected to the State Senate in 2012, I have been an outspoken advocate for increased accountability and ethics in government, and I would take that same energy to city government.

I am also proud to have passed the Child Victims Act and Adult Survivors Act, both of which are groundbreaking pieces of legislation that ensure accountability in both the private and public sectors.

PLANNING AND LAND USE

7. Please describe the most pressing land use issues in your borough and what would you do, or have done, as borough president to address them?

I'm proud to have helped lead the effort to lift the FAR cap in Manhattan to allow greater density. I also sponsor legislation to override local prohibitive zoning laws to allow for transit oriented development and the creation of affordable housing on the property of religious institutions.

One of the biggest barriers to the creation of affordable housing in Manhattan is the scarcity of City- and State-owned land, which is why it is important to maximize housing opportunities like at 5 WTC and the former Bayview Women's Correctional Facility in my Senate district in Chelsea, both of which are increasingly rare and extremely important. Regarding the former, I supported the 100% approach, even though it was outside my Senate district, and am grateful to the advocacy coalition and local elected officials for the historic accomplishment they achieved. On the latter, I was proud to help lead efforts for converting this former prison into a 100% supportive housing site, completely funded by state resources with the strong support of the local community board, which will provide wraparound services for the incoming residents.

One idea I'd support as Borough President is allowing the issuance of government bonds to build affordable "social" or "workforce" housing, as is being done in municipalities like Montgomery County, Maryland. If we issue bonds to build football stadiums (and for the record, I voted against this in Albany), shouldn't we do the same to build workforce housing?

8. Do you believe the borough president's role in land use and zoning processes should change? If so, what role do you believe the Borough President should have?

I think proposals to change the Borough President's authority from advisory to determinative in the ULURP process should be considered in the upcoming Charter revision discussions. Arguably, because of the wider constituency they represent, Borough Presidents are not driven by parochial concerns as much as city council members, which is a good argument for them to have decision-making authority in the land use review process.

9. As Borough President, how would you balance the interests of specific community boards and the borough-wide housing needs in your land use recommendations?

For starters, it's important to have a good working relationship with the local council member and try to be on the same page regarding land use proposals. I'm fortunate to have the support of over a dozen elected officials in Manhattan, which I think represents the collaborative working style required to achieve this. I also think that a wider lens on housing to prioritize the borough's housing needs over more narrow concerns. That said, I believe that meaningful community engagement is not mutually exclusive with addressing the critical borough-wide housing crisis. As Borough President, I would convene community boards and elected officials to understand any local concerns and attempt to reach compromise.

COMMUNITY BOARD AND APPOINTMENTS

10. Borough presidents are charged with making hundreds of appointments. What criteria would you use for appointments to positions appointed by the borough president (the Panel on Educational Policy, City Planning Commission, community boards, etc.)? What processes would you put in place for advertising open positions and recruiting qualified candidates, and how would you assure that appointments represent the diversity of the borough's neighborhoods?

The Borough President has responsibility for nearly 1,000 appointments. Among the most consequential are the appointments to the 12 community boards in Manhattan which are vital to our borough and a key partner in policy formulation. I would attempt to ensure community boards have the representation of members of organized labor and public housing residents. Gale Brewer did some excellent work on this front, and I'd want to build upon her success. In terms of promoting open positions, I would continue what

Mark Levine has done with advertising them on the LinkNYC units in Manhattan, but also through community newspapers, websites, social media and mailings to constituents.

Speaking of local news, in last year's budget, I authored legislation in Albany creating a \$90 million fund to support local publications. This year, I am helping lead an effort to provide NPR with an \$8 million boost.

The appointments to the CECs and PEP are also very important. Regarding specific criteria, I'd like to emphasize a diversity of personal qualities and experience, professional expertise, and excellence, in making appointments to these bodies. Public education is the foundation of our deliberative form of democracy, so I think all Manhattanites have a stake in it. Thus, while the Borough President's PEP appointees are required to be parents of public school students, as Borough President I wouldn't limit my criteria solely to parents for my CEC appointments. I think an open application process combined with informational outreach is essential to ensure appointees represent the diverse needs of students and families, particularly in underserved neighborhoods. Also, I would use a panel comprised of independent representatives to screen and rank prospective candidates.

11. Borough presidents are charged with providing training and assistance to community boards on land use issues. How would you use the office to help community boards fulfill their charter mandated responsibilities to provide feedback on land use proposals, while enabling the boards to make decisions independent of the borough president's office?

As a ten-year veteran of a community board, three years of which I served as chair, I have good insight into this topic. I would seek to hire a real estate financial analyst to collaborate with community boards to help demystify the housing developers' intentions, processes, and desired outcomes. Also, I would launch community board continuing education trainings (something I initiated on my own board when I was chair of CB2) on issues such as writing resolutions/letters, Robert's Rules, bylaw drafting, and housing vs. historic preservation. Finally, I would continue to provide a city planner for each board to help them navigate the particulars of land use.

*** In the box below, you may provide any additional information on any actions that you have taken or plan to take to improve the work of community boards in New York City government.**

I passed legislation in Albany loosening the in-person quorum requirements using Zoom for community boards during the pandemic. Currently, I'm seeking to extend a version of these rules in order to allow more people to serve, including young people, professionals, seniors and individuals with disabilities. Second, I would seek to align police districts more logically with district service lines (there are multiple precincts serving a single community board which is confusing and inefficient). Third, I would use my office to secure appropriate meeting space for community boards. Fourth, I would appear regularly at community board meetings to answer questions and familiarize myself with any concerns.

ADDITIONAL INFO

12. Please provide any other info you would like us to know about you and your candidacy.

I have been endorsed by the following elected officials, unions, and political clubs:

Congressmember Jerry Nadler;

Congressmember Dan Goldman;

Former Borough Presidents Gale Brewer, Ruth Messinger, and C. Virginia Fields;

State Senators Cordell Cleare, Robert Jackson, and Brian Kavanagh;

Assemblymembers Micah Lasher, Linda Rosenthal, Deborah Glick, Grace Lee, Al Taylor and Tony Simone;

City Councilmember Erik Bottcher;

Former Assemblymember Richard Gottfried;

Audubon Reform Democratic Club, Broadway Democrats, Chelsea Reform Democratic Club, Downtown

Independent Democrats, Grand Street Democrats, Hell's Kitchen Democrats, Jim Owles Liberal Democratic

Club, Three Bridges Democratic Club, Three Parks Independent Democrats, United Democratic

Organization, Village Independent Democrats and West Side Democrats;

The One Harlem Coalition;

LGBTQ+ Victory Fund;

Communication Workers of America;

CSEA