



Responses from Anthony Miranda for Queens Borough President 2020

QCDC Candidate Questionnaire 2020

Thank you for applying for the Queens Central Democratic Club (QCDC) endorsement. If you have any questions about this document or the endorsement process feel free to email us at qdcny@gmail.com. Please email us the completed questionnaire by **Friday January 30, 2020**.

Full Name: Anthony Miranda

Position: Queens Borough President

The Candidate

1. Do you identify as progressive? **Yes**
2. Why do you identify as a progressive? I have actively worked to move our city in a progressive way since my days in the NYPD. I have used every means available to citizens to not only highlight needed changes but to advocate and actively push for them. I am looking to take this same mission into our Borough President's office in order to open it up and welcome all the people of Queens into the fold.
3. What is the single most important issue to you as a candidate for elected office and why? At this time it is the rampant large development and rezoning that is transforming our borough in ways that benefit billionaire developers rather than the people of Queens. I will propose a moratorium on all large development and rezoning until a comprehensive community and environmental impact review is completed and recommendations plans developed that build to benefit the residents of Queens.
4. What endorsements do you have from elected officials, political organizations, unions and community leaders?

The Grand Council of Guardians
NYC Sheriff's Department Union
100 Hispanic Men
Nelson Denise, Author, Lecturer of War Against All Puerto Ricans
East Elmhurst Corona Democratic Club
Queens Clergy Leadership Group





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Pledges

1. Will you pledge not to take any campaign contributions from for-profit corporations, for-profit corporate PACs, real estate developers, corporate lobbyists, and professional landlords? **Yes**, I do so pledge.
2. Are you willing to sign the QCC4All Accountability Pledge? **Yes**, I have signed it. I have one area of concern and that is the need to educate voters about signing petitions and being able to help those who are new to the process. That said I whole-heartedly believe we need to invite more people to the party, encourage them to be active participants, and have transparent, democratic, and involved processes.

Housing

1. Do you believe housing is a human right? **Yes**
2. What do you believe are the causes of the housing crisis in New York? There are a number of causes from wages not going up with inflation, rezonings and up-zonings without consideration to building for those who live here now, to the loss of rent-stabilized stock in the city, a lack of investment and proper oversight for the maintenance and up-keep of our NYCHA housing stock.
3. What is your vision for addressing the housing crisis in Queens? First off a moratorium on all luxury development in the borough. Then an actual urban planned underpinned study and actual plan that looks at what our community needs and how we best go about establishing it at all levels of needed infrastructure. Advocacy for programs that keep people in their homes, and ones that rehouse, with proper support those who have been made homeless.

Labor

1. What is your relationship with the union movement in New York State? I am a member of a union as are a number of my family members. In addition, I have actively supported unions and their members when they have needed to navigate situations with law enforcement, plus have been out on the picket lines with unions, most recently the action by workers at LGA.
2. What would you do to support the rights of workers to form unions, and to expand unionization in Queens County? In addition to sharing information on the importance of unions and of workers unionizing I would have the QBP office provide space





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for organizing, plus be a source for tracking complaints of anti-union activities so that we could call them out to the public and take whatever legal steps are available.

3. If elected Queens Borough President what would you do to ensure union labor is used in all building projects? As part of the contract oversight responsibility of the office, we would review the contracts taking place in the borough to make sure they included said provisions. We would also follow-up with the proper city organizations that can enforce such provisions. At the minimum, we could use the bully pulpit of the office to call out any contracts that get through without said provisions.

Education and Higher Education

1. Do you believe that Central Queens should have more public K-12 schools?

We believe Queens students shouldn't have to leave the borough for high-quality education. Our education plan includes support for efforts to expand the criteria used for access to specialized schools and to move away from a need for said schools by expanding offerings within Queens. This plan may include increasing the number of public K-12 schools if necessary.

2. What is your K-12 vision for public education in Central Queens?

Specialized Schools - support efforts to expand the criteria used for access and to move away from a need for said schools by expanding offerings within Queens

Student Hunger and Homelessness - advocate for funding for more social workers and guidance counselors that can guide and support students through DHS bureaucracy, along with opening food pantries at all schools in the NYC area. Coordinate efforts with federal Queens electeds to fight against the attacks against the Free School Lunch Program, and instead ensure the program is available all year round

Ending the School to Prison Pipeline - support divestment from this system by reducing and possibly eliminating reducing if not eliminating the sense that students are walking in to a prison like environment, increase support for mental health conflict resolution and learning. Support efforts to ban all suspensions and expulsions for students below the Third Grade. Invest in a universal youth jobs program, college access programs reduced-fare



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MetroCards/ free unlimited MetroCards for students to open opportunities for them at every corner of the city

Advocate expanding Before and Afterschool Childcare to support parents working long hours and to ensure their children are in a safe and stimulating environment

Getting more Teachers of color in Queens schools to reflect our diverse environment and ensure students have more positive perceptions of school

3. What is your view on the lack of diversity in public schools? Do you believe the DOE's approach, particularly regarding D28, is the current one? If not, how would yours differ?
Although the DOE's diversity approach is a step in the right direction, it is not enough to ensure all Queens students are guaranteed a proper education. Instead of just diversifying higher-performing schools, there should be resources and time invested in improving lower-performing schools and meeting the needs of their student bodies. Our plan is listed above under our K-12 vision for public education.
4. Do you believe there should be more CUNY or SUNY schools in Central Queens?
We believe every Queens student and resident should have access to our public higher education systems. This plan should include adding more CUNYs and SUNYs to Queens as a whole.
5. What is your vision to have more access to public higher education in Central Queens?

CUNY's underfunding is allowing for dilapidated infrastructure, reductions in faculty hiring, and limiting student resources. Our long term goal will be to make all CUNY and technical schools free and tuition-less, as it was before 1976, to make it accessible for all. We will become a voice for CUNY, technical schools, and its students and faculty and fight to increase funding from the city and state to ensure that a high-quality college and technical education is available for Queens and NYC residents.

The Environment

1. Central Queens is home to some of the largest parks in Queens; from Forest Park to Flushing Meadows Corona Park. What is your vision to invest in our parks? Do you support the QueensWay plan?





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We have to not only investing in our parks we also need to protect them from being handed over to entities that build on them and make money off of our public spaces.

When it comes to the Queens Way plan we believe we need a comprehensive borough wide urban plan for transportation, infrastructure, green spaces, housing, and business spaces. We believe that communities directly impacted by any changes need to be productively and actively engaged in the process of planning.

2. What are your views on vertical farming & having more locally grown foods in Queens?

Urban farming Anything that has us planning for the city, the borough of our future is something we definitely need to not only explore, but plan, fund, and develop. "To help ensure both the economic and environmental sustainability of New York City's growing vertical farms...the city needs to see and recognize them...as crucial nodes in the design of the city's emerging circular economy." We need to include them in our urban planning and design.

3. What is your environmental plan for Queens?

OneNYC 2050 - We will use the office of the Queens Borough President to ensure this the rollout of NYC's Green New Deal reaches every Queens resident and makes our borough more equitable socially, economically, and in its quality of life.

Investing in Climate-Resilient Infrastructure - New York City is planning to invest \$20 billion in a resiliency plan to address the growing threats of climate change. We must ensure that the city equitably invests in climate-resilient infrastructure and has an equitable emergency plan that looks for and helps those in the greatest need first. We will use the Borough President's office to ensure that this plan is executed equitably, to guarantee that working and middle-class neighborhoods have their homes, public spaces, and nearby public transportation made climate-resilient.

Transforming Public Utilities - Transitioning to 100% clean electricity must also begin the process of making public utilities publicly owned. If taxpayers are paying to update our energy infrastructure and system (as they already are), then we should have ownership of those structures. Making our utilities



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public will reduce their cost, and leave more money in the pockets of New Yorkers, rather than lining the pockets of private investors.

Transportation

1. Many parts of Queens are a virtual Transit Desert, and even those areas with good mass transit options are experiencing regular delays and overcrowding, particularly in areas seeing significant development - including here in Central Queens. What is your vision for expanding and improving Transit services for the residents of Queens?
Our goal will be to decrease car use in the city by creating a more reliable and affordable transit system. We will advocate reducing fares back to their original prices (adjusted for inflation) and expanding eligibility for NYC's Fair Fares program. The many corporations in New York City greatly benefit from the existence of the MTA as it attracts a young and diverse talent pool and has helped these businesses to grow. In the long term, we will push for MTA rides to be fare-less and free, and tax businesses that monetarily benefit from it. We will advocate for more train and bus lines connecting the boroughs directly and Queens internally, along with bringing funding from both the city and state to update our transit system.
2. Does your vision for improving transportation options in Queens include making the use of bicycles more practical and safer? How, if at all, would you work to improve and expand Queens' bike lane network and how might we make our streets safer for cyclists and pedestrians. I would look to have the development of ways to best serve a 21st century city in green modes of transportation be a cornerstone of any plan and design for our borough. This will include the network of bike lanes, in addition to adopting the best practices from cities that have successfully transitioned to greater bike usage. We have public transportation deserts, and weather concerns, plus a populous that has been reared on the importance of cars in our culture. We are also looking at a cultural reframing as part of this effort. We likely need to educate drivers and cyclists on the best ways to be good neighbors to each other until such time as the transition is further along. At this point, based on data we likely have more work with our drivers.
3. Access-A-Ride provides a critical service to those of us with mobility issues, but it is a source of many complaints. What, if any, reforms and changes would you advocate for the Access-A-Ride



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system and how would you work to make existing Transit, particularly subways, more accessible for those facing mobility challenges? As the Queens Borough President we can track such complaints from our borough and raise up the issue through the cities systems. We can also hold public hearings on the issues related to it and use the bully-pulpit of the office to raise not only awareness but a concerted call to action from residents and elected officials regardless of their own need to use the service.

Rikers and the Kew Gardens Mega-Jail

1. What was your position on the plan to close Rikers & create the Kew Gardens mega-jail?
Closing Rikers Island is long overdue. The ground upon which the jails are built are contaminated and no-one should be living or working there until they are able to clean it up. That said spending \$11 billion dollars to build new jails is not the best use of those funds. We would do better to allocate the resources to assist those impacted by poverty and trauma. We need a greater focus on mental health responses and wrap around services. With the changes in the bail laws there will be less people warehoused on Rikers. We need to provide ways for people to be sure to be able to get back to court. These decisions have already been made with a resolution passed that no more jails will be built on Rikers Island. There are also ongoing conversations on the development of the land, of which we spoke about publicly at several forums and now the mayor has made public.
2. How will you use the land use process to put forward your vision of the future of Rikers and the new jail in Kew Gardens? It is not just the ULURP process, as the QBP we can hold public hearings about the plans that are being developed so the public has a direct voice in what is planned. As the QBP I will fully champion the fact that the people have a right to not only be heard but to be headed in regards to what is done.
We will ask for a complete environmental study of the land. Once we have confirmed that the land has been contaminated for all these years we will advocate for a public health fund that will cover all the employees and detainees.





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3. A new city council and mayor in 2021 could change the outlook of the Kew Gardens mega-jail and Rikers. What would be your vision of Rikers and the mega-jail in Kew Gardens as Queens Borough President from 2021 and beyond? Before we can layout a final vision we need to insure we have the community's input, the environmental study, and an urban plan for our borough in terms of needs.

Community Boards and Land Trusts

1. Do you have any plans to increase the voice of community boards in Queens? First off we would look to make sure the community boards reflect the communities they represent as much as possible. We would look to have open, transparent applications, and move away from a well these few folks are known so that is who we appoint. We are in favor of term limits, even if these are of the rotating like serve four years, rest for two sort. We also believe that community boards and their recommendations, especially once they are representative of their communities, rather than developers, or those in elected office, must be taken seriously and adhered to whenever possible.

2. If elected, do you envision your relationship with community boards being different or like any of your predecessors?

My relationships with the community boards will likely differ as I will use the QBP's office as a tool for advocacy. My experience differs from my predecessors, as many of them were career politicians, who worked within the limits of the office. As a seasoned community advocate, I can use this position to reach to non-profit organizations, elected officials and the community as a whole be creative ways in finding solutions for the CBs problems, wants and needs.

3. Will you use Community Land Trusts as a tool to give communities a stronger voice in community developments?

Yes, community land trusts give the people of Queen's community control and ownership of affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces, and other community assets. This nonprofit structure of ownership will help ensure that rents and housing will remain permanently affordable and accessible for the Queens community.