



2020 City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Completed questionnaires will be public documents available on our website, so put your best foot forward. If we ultimately hold an endorsement vote in your race, your questionnaire will be circulated to our membership before the vote.

Contact with questions: Jessica Thurston, NKD's VP of Political Affairs, politics@newkingsdemocrats.com

Name	Sandy Nurse
Council District number and neighborhoods represented	District 37 represents Bushwick, Cypress Hills, Brownsville, East NY and City Line.
How long have you lived in the above district?	I have lived in Bushwick since 2009 and have since moved a couple of times. I have lived in the district since the later end of the summer. Prior to that I lived one block from the district.
Why do you want to serve as a member of the NYC Council?	<p>I am running to represent District 37 (Bushwick, Cypress Hills, Brownsville, East NY and City Line) because my community is in crisis and we lack adequate representation to fight for the solutions we so desperately need. The compounding pressures of housing instability, racialized displacement, a lack of access to clean healthy food, a lack of high quality public transit, and inequities in economic opportunities all call for highly motivated, proactive leadership in local government. I am running to fight for housing for every person in my community; to ensure our youth are nurtured, protected and engaged; to make sure our Seniors are live with dignity; to fight for all people in New York have access to safe, dignified work with living wages; and that we have a livable future in the face of climate change.</p> <p>As a movement leader and community organizer for the last ten years, I have worked tirelessly at the grassroots level for positive social transformation. I have been fighting for solutions that are not band-aids, but that model the world we want to live in: creating jobs that lift up the most vulnerable, developing climate mitigation systems that help us deal with waste, successfully opening public space for community gardens, building neighborhood based alternative political institutions where movements can organize for power, and ensuring a sanctuary space for our immigrant neighbors. As a direct action trainer, I have spent a decade helping groups confront power and running actions in the streets calling that demand more democracy, more equality, more equity, and the</p>

end of capitalism and white supremacy. While doing this work, I developed deep relationships with young people and their families across the district who faced housing insecurity, threats of deportation, and food scarcity. These are daily realities, and our elected representatives aren't doing enough - if anything - to change things.

The statistics of District 37 paint a grim picture: We have the highest number of young people in high school that are homeless, we send them most people from NYC to prisons, we have some of the highest rates of people going to shelters because of domestic violence, we have some of the highest rates of home foreclosures, we have high rates of childhood asthma, we lack sufficient access to clean, health foods, and we have incredibly low voter participation.

However, my experience living and working in this community has been overwhelmingly hopeful, inspiring, and motivating. Our community has phenomenal projects and organizers who are working daily to address these crisis. District 37 has phenomenal youth programs, farms and gardens that are providing nutrient rich foods to residents, a strengthening housing movement composed of small homeowners of color and tenants that won concrete wins last legislative session. On any given day you might hear about a meeting where people are discussing community land trusts, launching a new political club, or see a parade celebrating ancestral saints. There is an incredible amount of positive work happening in my community and I am running to fight for those long term visions.

Although I was originally asked to run by local tenant organizers and attorneys in the housing movement, it has been clear to me for years that the city and state representatives in District 37 are focused on securing their futures and not working for the wider community. We have a male District Leader who also is the State Assembly person, and now the female District Leader also wants to serve as City Council Member. This type of power consolidation does nothing to improve our corrupt and unaccountable Democratic party.

District 37's voter turnout is very low. Even with recent changes regarding changing party affiliation and registration, we need to be doing more to encourage people to directly partake in our electoral process. I have spent nearly a decade creating convening space and gatherings for people from all walks of life to come and break bread, discuss the issues, and

	<p>collectively envision a path forward. I am bringing that same spirit into my campaign. We are planning a Youth Town Hall, where youth will be creating my youth policy platform, a Caring for Our Seniors Town Hall, a Housing Town Hall, and a Green New Deal for District 37 Community Visioning Session to discuss how a GND can make sense for people in my district. Across all these issues and groups, women and families are always impacted disproportionately. This is an opportunity for them to shape where we are going.</p> <p>Additionally, I plan to start a District 37 Communities Council, where reps from the different communities within the district can have a regular monthly space to share about hyper local issues that are happening with each other and find strategies to support one another on big issues that impact the entire district. I want to find an office where I can offer a lot of constituent services, as well as invite organizations to have staff run services out of the office, such as tenant support.</p> <p>I have a lot of ideas about how to pull people into the process, starting with simply creating space for listening, for my community to have direct input into where we are going and how things are being handled. I'm excited to build a bigger table that can help problem solve and start to create that transparency.</p>
<p>What civic and political organizations are you involved with in the district?</p>	<p>From 2016-2017 I was on Community Board 4 and participated in the Parks & Rec and Land Use Committees.</p> <p>Additionally, I am a co-founder of the Mayday Space, a political institution that is a home for grassroots social justice movements. Mayday Space has become a place where groups have access to a physical facility that explicitly welcomes them and where they can build power for their movements. Mayday opened in 2014. In a city where space is at a premium, a space like Mayday is a critical infrastructure that expands access to civic and political work. Each year Mayday hosts over 200 movement and community groups working to build power at a local, national, and global scale.</p> <p>Although not explicitly civic or political to most, I founded BK ROT, which is physically located one block from the district line. The composting operation has hired dozens of young people from the Bushwick Campus Academy School for Environmental Leadership, and many youth from District 37. It serves hundreds of households and businesses from the district that continue to be underserved by the city for organic waste recycling.</p>

<p>What have you accomplished in public life that you are most proud of?</p>	<p>I have not been elected before, but I was appointed to Brooklyn Community Board 4 in 2016.</p>
<p>What are the greatest strengths and struggles of your Council district?</p>	<p>One of the greatest strengths of District 37 is its cultural diversity and plurality of backgrounds. Yet gun violence, underfunded public schools and lack of affordable housing is a huge struggle for its residents. At the same time gentrification is starting to take over many communities pushing out tenants that are unable to afford new developments and rent hikes. Hence homelessness is on the rise and working families are living precariously.</p>
<p>Why do you want New Kings Democrats' endorsement?</p>	<p>New Kings Democrats is a group that I've watched over the years through the meetings and events held at Mayday. I appreciate and value the work NKD is doing to try to remake the Brooklyn Democratic Party into a more reflective, participatory party. My experience with NKD has largely been through building relationships with individuals in the group. Most recently the #RepYourBlock initiative was something I was tracking and I think it's a critical project for increasing civic engagement at a hyper local level.</p> <p>In the Assembly race which NKD endorse our campaign, I felt very supported and was excited to be able to refer people we were meeting on the doors to #RepYourBlock.</p>
<p>If elected, what will your top three legislative and budgetary priorities be while in office?</p>	<p>I am running to ensure everyone has a safe home, people in our community can live without fear, and that we have a livable future. Specifically, I will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure housing for all through fighting for more funding for public housing, social housing, and dignified youth and family shelters. We have some of the highest rates of young people that are homeless in District 37 and we send some of the highest rates of families to shelters because of domestic violence. We need housing solutions that are respected within the community, not just beds in a facility, but specialized staff like mental health practitioners and restorative justice experts who can adequately support individuals and families through a vulnerable time in their life. We also need to ensure our Seniors are cared for by making sure as many Seniors as possible are enrolled in supportive programs that can help with rent, home repairs required for their mobility, and that residential buildings are dignified.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. I will be working to stop the expansion of charter schools in our public education facilities while fighting to fully fund our public schools and community school programming. 3. Support our immigrant neighbors by fighting to extend healthcare and access to other social services to our immigrant community; support stronger worker protections that fight against wage theft and abuse; and work to extend voting rights to green card holders in municipal elections. 4. Develop, in community, a Green New Deal for District 37, that is tailored to the specific needs and concerns of my community. Creating plans for climate change mitigation and resilience planning programs such as workforce development programs, support for localized food growing and retail distribution systems and funding for increasing the efficiency and consistency of public transportation.
<p>What is one thing you would do while in office to make New York City government more transparent, accountable, or inclusive?</p>	<p>NYC agencies need to foster open data and make information as free and as accessible. This means agency budgets need to be made available online, hearings for public comments should be in the evening when the majority of New Yorkers can attend and provide testimony. Hearings should be scheduled at least two weeks in advance and never over holiday breaks. This would allow for as many people as possible to show up and give their input on the direction of our city.</p>
<p>Please review NKD's voting rights platform: https://www.newkingsdemocrats.com/voting_rights. In what ways would you like to expand voting access, and how can you do this as a member of the NYC Council?</p>	<p>I am in support of extending voting rights to green card holders in municipal elections as well as winning the right to vote for formerly incarcerated people and non-citizens. I also want to explore ranked choice voting when and where appropriate. Additionally, as part of my work around addressing climate change and working with the youth who will face the worst impacts of the crisis, I would push for enfranchising 16 year olds.</p>
<p>What criminal justice reforms would you like to see the Council implement?</p>	<p>I am fully committed to ending mass incarceration in New York City, ensuring Rikers actually closes, and diverting an over bloated law enforcement budget into social and mental health services that builds communities.</p> <p>I would like to collaborate with NKD in fighting police violence and abuses of police power across New YorkCity. I am in full support of CPR's legislative platform and stand in solidarity with the families of police violence victims. I have worked with</p>

	<p>many groups over the last eight years to carry out actions that amplify the stories of the murders that NYPD officers have done with impunity. I was a lead organizer for the Millions March in 2014 that turned out over 50,000 people in the streets. I also have been a lead organizer on actions against the Police Benevolent Association (which Dilan takes money from). At the peak of Black Lives Matter, I supported organizers who were working with families who have lost loved ones to police violence. I will fight alongside all families affected by police violence to push for a repeal of code 50a, even though this will be done at the state level.</p>
<p>What will you do to help reach more gender equity within the NYC Council?</p>	<p>I will support other women running for the NYC Council by amplifying their voices, campaigning for them, and activating my network on their behalf . I believe we all must work together to achieve gender equity.</p>
<p>What is your vision for the Brooklyn Democratic Party?</p>	<p>I would like to collaborate with NKD on making the issues with the Brooklyn Democratic Party visible to a wider audience. Most people, even those that are very active in following local politics, do not understand why the Brooklyn Democratic Party is relevant to their broader work and how it impacts their civic lives. I think there are opportunities during the campaign to raise the issues within the party through lifting up District Leaders working to reform it. We have been flyering with the #RepYourBlock material as we door knock and encouraging people to be more involved in the process County Committee.</p>
<p>Would you consider leaving office before your term ends for any reason other than personal, health, or family reasons? Put another way, would you resign your office to pursue another elected office or another job opportunity?</p>	<p>I am committed to serving the people of my district for the duration of my term.</p>
<p>What funds have you raised for this campaign? What are the major sources of your campaign funds?</p>	<p>I am not taking funds from real estate or corporations. My campaign is funded by grassroots donations.</p> <p>To date we have raised over 8k for our campaign. There is an addition ~28,000 from my Assembly race that is being transferred over to the council race. I expect to qualify for matching funds by the next filing deadline.</p> <p>This campaign will revolve around the field and the ground game. I personally will knock 100 hundred doors each week. Already we have a consistent volunteer base that shows up for weekly canvassing. We continue to build on this base by emphasizing that we are a people powered campaign that needs everyone to get involved. Our petitioning efforts for the special garnered us over 1500 signatures in a few weeks, all of</p>

	<p>this was done by over 30 committed volunteers. In addition, we will have a robust texting operation.</p> <p>I will largely depend on calling in the local, citywide, and national network I have built over the last ten years to host fundraisers and parties. Since December 14th, 2019, we have hit over 1500 doors, raised \$33,000 without public matching funds, and have built a robust volunteer operation.</p>
<p>What endorsements have you received from publications, electeds, community leaders, or political organizations?</p>	<p>I have received an endorsement from: NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer, Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, State Senator Julia Salazar, City Council Member Antonio Reynoso, City Council Member Carlos Menchaca, District Leader Anthony Jones, Make the Road New York, New York Communities for Change, The Working Families Party, Our Progressive Future, 21 in 21 (and a few others that are not public yet).</p>
<p>Of the elected officials in the NYC Council, who do you admire most and why?</p>	<p>I admire the many hardworking NYC Council staffers who have done some incredible work this year in fighting for a union, in working to end sexual harassment and other forms of gender based violence in the Council workplace. I'm excited by their work and am looking forward to being an ally.</p>
<p>What are some of the best ways you think New York City residents can best participate in civic life?</p>	<p>One of the best ways a resident can participate in civic life is by being able to vote! Getting involved in deciding who represents them is a huge deal.</p> <p>As a co-founder of the Mayday Collective, which manages Mayday Space, a hub and home for grassroots social justice movement groups, I worked with our team to build an alternative political community institution. Mayday Space has become a place where progressive and radical groups have access to a physical facility where they can build power for their movements. It is a collectively managed institution where anyone who is committed to positive social transformation can participate in the daily and long term development of the space. Individuals and groups engage in everything from how our programs run to what a future permanent home for Mayday could be.</p> <p>As the founder and Executive Director of BK ROT, I partnered with a team of individuals and organizations working to transform our food and waste systems and positively improve the health of our community and ecosystem. We collaborated to build a replicable model of a new kind of waste system, one that uses food waste as the foundation for a healthy urban ecosystem, that offers those harmed by the exploitation and extraction of our environment an opportunity to be experts in a regenerative economy, and that uplifts the people and places</p>

	responsible for managing waste. These are examples of building alternative institutions and systems that challenge our existing ways of being governed, of producing, of where to invest, and how social life is experienced.
What is one fun fact about you?	I built my own house! I am a carpenter and was lucky enough to do a job that allowed me access to a little bit of land upstate. I designed my cabin on notebook paper and framed it out in less than a month. I also teach carpentry classes for women and Black, Indigenous, People of Color in the city and upstate throughout the year.

I have reviewed this questionnaire and agree that the responses set forth in this document are accurate:

Candidate Signature: Sandy Nurse Date: February 28, 2020

You must sign this questionnaire! When complete, please e-mail your signed and scanned questionnaire to politics@newkingsdemocrats.com