



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, we will circulate your questionnaire to our members before the vote.

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

Name	Crystal Hudson
Council District number and neighborhoods represented	35th Council District, representing the neighborhoods of Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, and parts of Bedford-Stuyvesant.
How long have you lived in the above district?	I have lived in the 35th District my entire life. My family immigrated to the United States from Jamaica and Honduras 70+ years ago and settled in Prospect Heights.
Why do you want to serve as a member of the NYC Council?	<p>In 2013, I was a young professional working and living in Washington, D.C. when my mother first started exhibiting signs of Alzheimer's disease. As the only child of a single mother, I spent an entire year traveling back and forth every weekend to tend to my mother's needs, until I was finally able to return home to Brooklyn to care for her full-time. It was through this caregiving experience that I was called to public service, knowing that working families like mine shouldn't have to struggle as much as we have to ensure that our loved ones can age in place.</p> <p>I am running for New York City Council because people like me - lifelong New Yorkers, queer people, Black people, people fighting day and in and day out to ensure that their loved ones can age with dignity and grace in their own homes, should have a seat at the governing table to represent our communities, and so many others who see versions of themselves through our lived experiences. I am running in the 35th District because my family has been in this community for three generations, and I want to ensure that families like mine can raise a family, have a good job with good wages, and age in place. As the next New York City Council Member representing the neighborhoods of Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and Bed-Stuy,, I will fight for truly affordable housing; community safety led by those most impacted by</p>

	<p>over-policing and harm; a world class education for every child; and a safe, secure place to live. Most of all, I am running to give back to a community that has given so much to me.</p> <p>My mother served as a registered nurse for over 40 years across New York City and her unwavering compassion has always been my inspiration. I have long advocated for the rights of women, communities of color, immigrants, seniors, and the LGBTQ community, and I will carry that commitment to equity and justice with me as a Council Member. My 15 years of experience in public service, the private sector, community organizing, and as an entrepreneur have proven my ability to work hard, build consensus, and get things done.</p> <p>With an unrelenting housing crisis, over-policing of communities of color, and a struggling economy compounded by a global pandemic that has disproportionately impacted Black and Latinx communities, our City is facing challenges never seen before. And although we have not seen much leadership from those in charge, we know that leadership exists. Just as we did in the face of 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy, community has stepped in when our city's leadership has not. As a City Council Member, I will forge progressive solutions to meet our urgent needs and will continue to follow the leadership in my community. We cannot afford anything less.</p> <p>I have no doubt that we are resilient enough to get through the difficult months and years ahead. As the founder of Greater Prospect Heights Mutual Aid (GPHMA), I have seen firsthand the generosity of my neighbors amidst the COVID-19 crisis. But this is not surprising, because it is exactly the same compassion and love for neighbors I have witnessed in this community my entire life. The same neighbors who once kept an eye on me as a kid and have looked out for my mother since her Alzheimer's diagnosis, are now among the folks we have been arranging grocery deliveries and wellness calls for.</p> <p>This moment calls for us to envision and create pathways for stronger and more equitable communities for generations to come. It calls for us to be bold and reimagine what this city can be for the most marginalized New Yorkers. I am committed to being courageous to speak truth to power, remaining unwavering in my values, to thinking big and being bold, and to re-envisioning a New York City that works for all of us, not just the privileged few.</p>
<p>What civic and political organizations are you involved</p>	<p>I am proud to have served as a member of Brooklyn Community Board 8 for two years, and currently serve as a</p>

<p>with in the district?</p>	<p>Kings County Democratic County Committee member representing my electoral district. I am also on the Board of Lambda Independent Democrats of Brooklyn, and I have been a member of the North Prospect Heights Association since 2018.</p> <p>In the wake of COVID-19, I founded Greater Prospect Heights Mutual Aid (GPHMA), a grassroots mutual aid organization that works to meet the needs of our community in the face of this pandemic and beyond. GPHMA is now a network of over 500 neighbors who are committed to providing groceries, friendly wellness calls, and other support to those in need.</p>
<p>What have you accomplished in public life that you are most proud of?</p>	<p>One of the accomplishments I am most proud of was in my role as First Deputy Public Advocate for Community Engagement under New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams. In this role, I built a team of community organizers who were prepared to execute the Public Advocate’s vision for a nimble office that had the pulse of the community and advocates, ready to lead on a progressive agenda. It was the first time I had ever seen community organizers playing an integral role in a government agency, and I am proud to have spearheaded that approach.</p>
<p>What are the greatest opportunities and challenges facing the district?</p>	<p>Some of the greatest struggles of the district are the lack of truly affordable housing for those most in need; employment opportunities, particularly for people experiencing multiple barriers to employment; and early education, daycare, and childcare options that are accessible to all families. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has left working families and small business owners struggling to stay afloat.</p> <p>Our greatest opportunities are the incredible diversity of our district - the communities that live and work here; the fact that we are home to Brooklyn’s cultural district; and that we have an incredibly engaged electorate with some of the highest turnout rates in the five boroughs. People are activated to make change, and it's on us to create even more seats at our tables for all of the voices in our community.</p>

<p>Why do you want New Kings Democrats' endorsement?</p>	<p>New Kings Democrats has, for years, established itself as the progressive voice of the Democratic Party in Brooklyn. As someone entering politics upon making a career change, NKD served as a welcoming landing place that helped me find my path to advocate on behalf of the community I am from, with a focus on reforming the existing party system. I am thankful for the opportunity I had to run for County Committee with Rep Your Block, and I would be honored to receive the endorsement of the grassroots organizers who have made NKD a force to be reckoned with in Brooklyn.</p>
<p>If elected, what will your top three legislative and budgetary priorities be while in office?</p>	<p>My top three issues are based on the idea that everyone in the 35th District from birth to death is able to not just survive, but thrive with the dignity and respect that we all deserve. The diversity of the 35th District and the richness of our local history reminds us that there is a place for all of us in the neighborhoods of Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Prospect Heights, Crown Heights and Bed-Stuy. To that end, my top three priorities are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Affordable housing: There is likely no greater issue that unites most New Yorkers than access to affordable housing. A central reason I am running for City Council is because I believe that everyone deserves a truly affordable and safe place to live. Over the last several years, we have seen the abysmal lack of moral courage by our City's leadership to build truly affordable housing for New Yorkers experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness. The numbers don't lie: over 60,000 New Yorkers sleep in shelters per night, and the economic impact of the current pandemic has only exacerbated housing insecurity. And yet, this administration has spent the last several years focused on building and preserving housing that has never been accessible to people experiencing homelessness. Land use and zoning are among the Council's most important powers. New York City's Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) is intentionally opaque, leaving it almost impossible for anyone other than private developers and lobbyists to intervene. Rezoning in our City have decimated communities across the boroughs with little to no meaningful input from residents. As Council Member for the 35th District, first, I will work to dismantle ULURP as we know it; ensure the Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) subsidizes deeply affordable housing (0-80% AMI); and expand the right to counsel to all tenants in New York City who seek representation in housing court.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education: Every young person in our City deserves access to a high-quality, comprehensive education that meets their needs - yet, we know that Black and Latinx children are more likely than their white counterparts to attend under-resourced schools and receive a sub-par education. As Council Member for the 35th District, first, I will work with my colleagues in the State legislature to ensure our schools are fully funded. At the city level, I will work to eliminate punitive forms of punishment from our schools that disproportionately impact students of color, particularly Black girls; remove cops from our schools; and eliminate gifted and talented programs that favor so few at the expense of the many. ● Shifting away from punitive justice and towards true community accountability: My long term vision for the criminal justice system in New York City is for one treats those interacting with the system as humans worthy of care and compassion; centers the experiences and leadership of survivors of violence, including police violence and their families; and keeps police as far away from our youth as possible. As Council Member for the 35th District, I will make sure we defund the NYPD by at least \$1 billion; decriminalize low-level offenses and ensure fewer people interact with the system to begin with; address gun violence as the public health crisis that it is; and scale the impact of cure violence groups and similar community-based programs focused on violence interruption.
<p>What is one thing you would do to make New York City government more transparent, accountable, or inclusive?</p>	<p>Inclusive government means not only that queer Black women like myself see themselves represented in government, but that elected officials govern embracing an inside-outside strategy, advancing the issues that are of and from people closest to lived experiences of oppression. One thing to usher this process along would be to create workforce development and fellowship programs in city government for New Yorkers experiencing multiple barriers to employment, including Black trans women and those who have been incarcerated.</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>Given the jurisdiction of the City Council, there are several key reforms that I would champion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand municipal voting to non-citizens: All New York City residents should be eligible to vote in municipal elections. I would work closely with immigrant rights organizations and community members, as well as with voting rights and good government groups to expand the right to vote to non-citizens in New York City. 2. Advocate for ease of voter registration, expansion of voting rights to people who have history with the

	<p>criminal legal system, and lowering the voting age at the state and federal level: While the jurisdiction for these reforms lie at the state and federal level, I will be a staunch advocate for these reforms locally.</p> <p>3. Aggressively support the outreach, community engagement, and oversight of the New York City Board of Elections and NYC Votes: Year after year, the New York City Board of Elections (BOE) demonstrates its inability to deliver for New York City. The logistical implementation of Ranked Choice Voting will truly put the New York City BOE to the test. After every election, the New York City Council holds an oversight hearing of the BOE’s performance, and issues faced by New York City voters. I will use the full force of the Council’s oversight authority to serve as an advocate of unfettered access to voting in New York City, as well as use the platform of my office to amplify voter education and community engagement efforts to ensure that all New York City voters have the information they need to cast their ballots.</p>
<p>What criminal justice reforms would you like to see the Council implement?</p>	<p>My long term vision for the criminal justice system in New York City is one that treats those interacting with the system as people deserving of care and compassion; centers the experiences and leadership of survivors of violence, including police violence, and their families; and keeps police as far away from our youth as possible. In order to execute this vision, I will work with fellow Council Members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to decriminalize low-level offenses and ensure fewer people interact with the system to begin with; ● Push for demilitarization and defunding of the NYPD, and stricter oversight of law enforcement; ● Support the legalization of recreational marijuana, tied to a community-informed system for using revenue to support communities historically impacted by over policing and generations of the “war on drugs”; ● Address gun violence as the public health crisis it is, and secure funding for cure violence groups and community-based programs; ● Center the experiences and leadership of victims of domestic violence to strengthen the fabric of our services and further educate the public to ensure responsiveness; and ● Ensure that police are out of New York City schools, hospitals, and homeless shelters. <p>When it comes to our City’s jail and probation systems, I will work to ensure that we continue to maintain strong oversight of</p>

	<p>the reduction of the population of people who remain under criminal surveillance, and we ensure that conditions are reflective of the dignity, humanity and respect that any other New Yorker would be due.</p>
<p>What specific racial justice issues are impacting the district and how would you address them as a Council Member?</p>	<p>So many ills faced by communities of color - lack of access to housing or the ability to stay in one's home; punitive discipline experienced by students; overwhelming exposure to hazardous living conditions and decay of infrastructure; and so many more - are magnified in the 35th District because of the speed at which gentrification has transformed our neighborhoods.</p> <p>Race is the prism through which I view injustice, and I am a deep believer in an equity-centered approach to lawmaking and governance. Every issue that my platform is centered on - from educational justice and desegregating schools, to ending racist policing that locks up Black youth while white kids rarely interact with a police officer, to expanding accessibility at subway stations in the majority-Black parts of my district - are centered on the idea that when we target our interventions where disparities are the greatest, we can make the most collective progress. In short, when Black New Yorkers fare well, all of us fare well.</p>
<p>What is your perspective on, and what would be your plan regarding, the funding of the NYPD?</p>	<p>I support reducing the NYPD budget by at least \$1 billion because the advocates who have been doing this work for years, along with families directly impacted by police violence, have determined this as the most important first step in the fight for a more just system.</p> <p>As documented by advocates like Communities United for Police Reform, the true size of the NYPD budget is close to \$12 billion, which accounts for the tentacles of the agency that permeate so many others. There is no role for the NYPD in agencies like the New York City Department of Education, Administration for Children's Services, or Department of Homeless Services. The dollars allocated to NYPD surveillance within each of these agencies should be reallocated to much needed social services and service-focused positions that allow New Yorkers a pathway to good-paying, unionized city jobs. Overall, the size of the NYPD must shrink and our investment in social services, youth services, education, and public hospitals must scale to meet the urgent needs of a post-pandemic city.</p>
<p>What housing issues specific to your council district concern you most, and how would you address them if elected?</p>	<p>Housing is a driving issue of my campaign. In addition to the zoning and land use issues that I have detailed, the biggest housing issues specific to my district are evictions and loss of homes due to tax lien sales and deed theft, all</p>

	<p>disproportionately experienced by Black residents of the 35th District.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eviction prevention and expansion of rental assistance: Especially in light of COVID-19, in addition to calling for a moratorium on rent and mortgages at the state level, we must expand the City’s Office of Civil Justice and the right to counsel for all tenants in New York City. There is abundant evidence to demonstrate that when tenants have an attorney, they are able to beat cases against them in housing court. In light of the pandemic, thousands of New Yorkers simply cannot afford to make ends meet. We must expand rental assistance in New York City in ways that do not require landlords and tenants to appear in housing court whatsoever. ● End the tax lien sale and Third Party Transfer (TPT) program: We must end the tax lien sale and TPT program in New York City, which have clearly demonstrated a disproportionate target on Black and Brown homeowners in central Brooklyn. Instead, the City - Department of Finance and Housing Preservation & Development in particular - must proactively work to keep homeowners in their homes, providing assistance for navigating the city’s deeply bureaucratic systems and bill payments for basic municipal services. ● Cracking down on deed theft: The issue of deed theft hits particularly close to home for me, as someone living with my 79-year old mother living with Alzheimer’s disease. As a Black homeowner in Brooklyn, my mother receives endless phone calls, mailers, and other forms of unwanted solicitation from all sorts of private interests claiming to “help” her by selling her home for cash, refinancing her home, or other predatory practices; and I know if I wasn’t here to intercept those offers, our home would be gone. We must regulate deed theft schemes that are disproportionately targeting Black and Latinx homeowners in New York City so longtime residents can stay in their homes, all the while helping folks on a fixed income pay for basic home expenses so they can remain in place.
<p>Do you support cancelling rent for tenants and small business owners during the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>What will you do to help reach more gender equity within the NYC Council?</p>	<p>I am proud to have been endorsed by 21 in ‘21, as well as by Women of Color for Progress and Lambda Independent Democrats of Brooklyn, and unapologetically champion a</p>

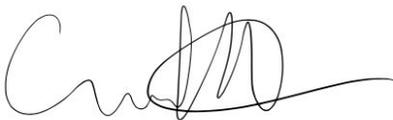
	<p>vision for a New York City that centers women, LGBTQ identified, and TGNC folks. Gender equity in the Council means that we advance issues that center a broad, inclusive, anti-racist, feminist agenda. Similar to my volunteer base and campaign staff, I look forward to staffing my City Council office with feminists who unapologetically champion gender equity.</p>
<p>In reviewing the NYC Budget, what specific categories do you think should be either cut or increased to help the city's current economic predicament?</p>	<p>First and foremost, we will not balance our budget on the backs of New Yorkers who have had to bear the brunt of COVID-19.</p> <p>While I would advocate that we cut the budget of the New York Police Department by at least \$1 billion, we must reinvest in the communities that have been systematically left behind. We must ensure our public hospitals remain open and fully equipped with personal protective equipment and the resources needed to keep essential workers and patients safe. And we must invest in social services - human services, senior services, youth services, etc. - as well as small business services and workforce development to help the city climb out of its current economic predicament.</p>
<p>What are your recovery priorities for the district related to the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>	<p>As the City plans for a just recovery in response to COVID-19, we know that going "back to normal" will not be good enough, particularly for communities of color who have had to bear the brunt of the pandemic. COVID has exposed the greatest inequities in our city that so many communities - and in particular, communities of color - have long been experiencing. My platform champions the following issues to ensure that communities hit hardest by the pandemic can see a truly just recovery:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Partnering with my newly elected colleagues in State government to ensure a moratorium on evictions and mortgages; 2) Protecting renters, especially those in my District, who are at the mercy of predatory landlords through city enforcement of State law and the expansion of the Office of Civil Justice, providing counsel for tenants facing eviction; 3) Ensuring that those experiencing housing insecurity or are currently living in shelter and seeking long-term permanent housing, have a real path to safe, deeply affordable housing that are environmentally sound and

	<p>free from pollution, mold & other hazardous conditions that disproportionately impact communities of color;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4) Build an education & training ecosystem for the displaced workforce & marginalized communities; 5) Focus on employment programs that meet immediate relief efforts fit for a 21st century green workforce, meeting unemployed and underemployed New Yorkers where they are with jobs in trades like community solar, home retrofitting, and wind turbine assembly; 6) A Green New Deal for New York: Invest in accelerated public projects focused on the green economy of our city's future that rebuilds our city's public infrastructure, and hiring New Yorkers to get the job done; 7) Focus recovery efforts on local small businesses & nonprofits and support for new business development; and 8) Ensure that small businesses can both reopen and hire locally by reducing red tape in navigating the city's bureaucracy, and ensure that our workforce system creates a clear pathway to local hiring.
<p>What would you do to reform the Land Use process to promote racial and social equity?</p>	<p>The Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) is intentionally opaque, leaving it almost impossible for anyone other than private developers and lobbyists to intervene. Rezoning in our City have decimated communities across the boroughs, and have ignored meaningful input from local residents.</p> <p>I unequivocally support redesigning ULURP to balance local and citywide needs, including measures to better incorporate data, context, and citywide planning goals, as well as require processes that engage and bind proposals to community input -- all of which are tools to help move us towards racially equitable comprehensive planning that aims to prevent displacement and gentrification.</p> <p>When it comes to racial equity through the City Council's land use authority, I will work to ensure that we require racial equity impact studies as part of our reform so that Council Members take votes on land use decisions based on their potential for detrimental impact to communities of color.</p>
<p>What is your vision for the Brooklyn Democratic Party?</p>	<p>As demonstrated time and time again, the Brooklyn Democratic party continues to skirt democratic processes and hoard power. My vision for the Party is one where real</p>

	<p>democratic control can take hold by leaders elected at every level of governance, from County Committee to District Leader and so on. The Party must also proactively seek to diversify its ranks, ensuring that community members of TGNC experience, across race and immigration status, and in multiple languages, have the ability to represent a borough as diverse as Brooklyn.</p>
<p>New Kings Democrats has proposed several <u>rules changes</u> to be considered by the County Committee. Do you support the proposals? If elected, will you advocate for these and other reforms that democratize power within the County Committee?</p>	<p>Yes, I support NKD's proposed rules changes, and if elected I would unapologetically advocate for these and other reforms that democratize power within the County Committee.</p>
<p>How much money have you raised for this campaign? What are the major sources?</p>	<p>As of December 1, 2020, I have raised just over \$85,000 from friends, neighbors, and New Yorkers who believe in my vision for a just NYC. I am not taking money from developers, real estate interests or police unions, and I am confirmed to qualify for New York City's matching funds program.</p>
<p>Are you accepting campaign contributions from law enforcement unions?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>What endorsements have you received from publications, electeds, community leaders, or political organizations?</p>	<p>I am proud that my first endorsement was from NYCHA Tenant Leaders in my district, and to have also been in the first slate of candidates to be endorsed by the NYC Road to Justice Coalition, made up of Make the Road Action, Community Voices Heard (CVH) Power and 1199-SEIU. I have also received the endorsements of LGBTQ+ Brooklyn political club, Lambda Independent Democrats (LID); Women of Color for Progress; and 21 in '21, which is an initiative to get at least 21 women elected to the New York City Council in 2021.</p>
<p>Of the elected officials in the NYC Council, who do you admire most and why?</p>	<p>I admire Inez Barron. She demonstrates what it means to be unbought and unbossed. Perhaps the greatest example of her leadership was when Council Members applauded her leadership in voting against all past budgets because they increased funding for policing. Council Member Barron has been right on so many issues far before it was popular; and while I don't always agree with her strategies, she is unapologetically dedicated to Black folks as I am.</p>
<p>What are some of the best ways you think New York City residents can best participate in civic life?</p>	<p>Residents in New York City can participate in civic life by voting in every single election, speaking with neighbors and community members about issues that impact them, organizing at the block and building level, and helping translate opaque information about the political process to friends and</p>

	neighbors so that democracy is truly accessible to everyone.
What is one fun fact about you?	There is an illustration of me on the cover of a children's book.

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

Candidate Signature: 

Date: 12/07/20

You must sign this questionnaire! When complete, please email your signed and scanned questionnaire as a PDF to politics@newkingsdemocrats.com