



A Memorandum for District 4
Prepared by Vanessa Aronson
Candidate for New York City Council

18 SOLUTIONS FOR 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Throughout my career, I have consistently put public service over politics, and I am running for the New York City Council to stand up for New York and the East Side. I bring to this position three distinct perspectives: as a New York City public school teacher; as a diplomat in the Foreign Service with the U.S. Department of State; and as a policy expert and graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. From my professional experience, I have learned three essential tenets to lasting, positive change in the community:

1. All relevant stakeholders must be included in the process;
2. Policy discussions must analyze both the benefits and the costs; and
3. New ideas must have identified resources.

This memorandum is a response to the hundreds of conversations I have had with District 4 residents regarding their concerns about the community and the city as a whole. In it, I apply the three essential tenets of good policy to propose solutions to 10 issues directly impacting Council District 4 and eight city-wide challenges that have been most often expressed by community members.

10 Local Issues in District 4

1. **Affordable Housing Crisis** – NYC elected officials must fight to protect every existing affordable unit, audit the current inventory of affordable housing stock, build a coalition to repeal the Urstadt Law, and include community needs in holistic development planning.
2. **Overcrowded Schools** – NYC should apply predictive analytics using updated census and demographic data to better plan for the future.
3. **Vacant Storefronts** – The City should repeal the Commercial Rent Tax, pass the Small Business Job Survival Act, and adopt policies, like those of San Francisco, that incentivize landlords to fill their vacant retail spaces.
4. **Impending L Train Shutdown** – NYC needs a comprehensive plan that limits private vehicular traffic on 14th Street and takes into account the needs of local residents and businesses to accommodate the 400,000 L Train riders who will be left without crosstown transportation options.
5. **Trump Tower Security Costs** – New Yorkers should not be burdened with the extra costs that result from the President and Mrs. Trump's choice to maintain multiple residences while in office.

6. **Unsafe Bike Lanes** – Bicyclists need to be educated about and held accountable for not following traffic safety laws in NYC and the City should engage in better planning and follow-through when developing bike lanes.
7. **Illegally Parked Tour Buses in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza** – Traffic Enforcement Agents must crack down on illegal bus parking and idling in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza.
8. **Proposed Brookdale Sanitation Garage** – Alternative plans must be considered that will better serve the community.
9. **Incomplete East Side Coastal Resiliency Plan** – Community input must be taken into account to ensure NYC is protected from future natural disasters without disrupting our current quality of life.
10. **Pedestrian Ramps in Disrepair** – The City must proactively maintain ramps and hold private businesses accountable when they fail to meet their responsibilities so that sidewalks are accessible for all New Yorkers.

8 Urgent City-Wide Challenges

1. **Crumbling Transit Infrastructure and Inaccessibility** – NYC must demand that the MTA prioritize infrastructure maintenance and ADA compliance to ensure safe, reliable, and accessible transportation options for all New Yorkers.
2. **Homelessness** – The City should focus on long-term permanent housing solutions through Housing First policies without preconditions.
3. **Shortage of Special Education Services** – The Department of Education’s budget should reflect the needs of the student population and ensure that students are receiving the services to which they are entitled by Federal Law.
4. **Low Rate of Residential Recycling and Composting** – The City must develop a comprehensive plan to incentivize residential recycling and composting and reduce the amount of residential solid waste.
5. **Anti-immigrant Federal Practices** – NYC must ensure that immigrant New Yorkers have access to legal representation in the future and require the NYPD to develop impact studies and use policies about its surveillance technology.
6. **Big Money Controlling Politics** – City candidates should be able to use matching funds to fully fund their campaigns, and there should be more transparency regarding the work of lobbyists in policymaking.
7. **Lack of Planning for an Aging Population** – NYC must prepare for the needs of a growing senior population by planning alongside seniors to implement age-smart employment practices, ensure aging in place is possible, expand home health services, and update the accessibility of city infrastructure.
8. **Inequitable Access to Reproductive Health Care** – The City must ensure that all women have access to the family planning and reproductive health care services they need, develop a comprehensive sex ed curriculum for schools, and provide sanitary products to all public school students, not just high schoolers.