The Plan for the City of New York

Shaun Donovan for NYC Mayor 2021
“Secretary Donovan helped lead our country out of the 2008 housing crisis, and later, as the director of O.M.B., he steered top policy priorities like health care access, climate change, inequality and public health, including pandemic preparedness and response.”

— Katie Hill, Spokesperson for President Obama

“We need a strong partner in government who can help lead us to a bright and promising future and restore the city as a place where people want to live, work, and visit. I firmly believe that Shaun Donovan has the experience, relationships, and personal traits that our city needs at this perilous time. He has innovative as well as practical ideas on how the city can recover and be a dynamic, thriving place that truly works for everyone, as exemplified by this strikingly comprehensive plan. Shaun is strong, but kind; he can manage as well as lead. I’ve been deeply impressed not only by the unparalleled experience he would bring to the job but by his vision for the future of New York City.”

— Jonathan Tisch, Co-Chairman of the Board of Loews Corporation, and Chairman and CEO of Loews Hotels & Co

“Throughout the years I’ve known and worked with Shaun Donovan, he has always dedicated himself to finding new and innovative ways to not just rebuild communities, but to make them stronger and more resilient than ever before. It’s a commitment I witnessed firsthand as we partnered to rebuild New York City in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, and it’s what makes him precisely the leader the city needs in this critical moment. This amazing plan demonstrates an understanding of New York City that the next mayor must have, while offering a glimpse of the kind of dedicated, equity-focused, ambitious mayor that Shaun will be.”

— Judith Rodin, former President of the Rockefeller Foundation and President Emerita of the University of Pennsylvania

“Shaun’s focus on using technology to make city government more efficient and responsive is on target and can be accomplished, as he proposes, through effective public-private partnerships.”

— Kathryn Wylde, CEO of the Partnership for New York City

“New York has long been a mecca of innovation, with many of the world’s leading companies, academic institutions, and nonprofit organizations establishing themselves here in a spirit of collaboration to solve pressing challenges. Shaun understands that this activity can power our city’s economy and help us achieve his ambitious goals for recovery. Shaun is determined to promote true partnership between the city’s government and the experts that are willing and excited to help tackle our most pressing issues. His Economic Development and Education platforms have made clear this is a campaign where big ideas are paired with the know-how to execute. I believe that powerful combination can make possible a New York where every resident lives a comfortable life in a quality neighborhood with their family.”

— Chris Hughes, Co-founder of Facebook and the Economic Security Project
“Shaun’s Equity Bonds plan would guarantee every newborn public school child in New York City a chance at upward mobility and asset security, and help close our unjust racial wealth gap. The next mayor must have the vision, boldness, expertise, and leadership to reimagine a more equitable New York City that works for everyone, and Shaun is showing us how it can be done.”

—Darrick Hamilton, Director of the Institute on Race and Political Economy, University Professor at the New School, and developer of the “Baby Bonds” concept

“Shaun is a deeply knowledgeable and dedicated public servant, always thinking about how he can make the lives of others better. I saw this firsthand when we worked together in the Obama Administration. This is not just words on a paper for him, but this is who he is. He is committed and truly believes that we can come together to make change. That is what this book is about—change and how to deliver it. Shaun has put forth an incredibly detailed and ambitious plan for New York City, a plan the city desperately needs as we come out of this crisis. I have no doubt that Shaun will deliver on these bold ideas for the residents of New York City.”

—Sonal Shah, former Director of the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation and founding Executive Director of the Beeck Center for Social Impact & Innovation at Georgetown University

“Shaun’s health plan shows he understands and values the difference between public health and public health care delivery. His plan for 15 minute neighborhoods stands out for prioritizing a holistic approach to strengthening health and promoting communities, which will be critical as the city rebounds from its worst health crisis in a century.”

—Oxiris Barbot, former Commissioner of Health of the City of New York

“I’ve known Shaun Donovan for nearly three decades, and have always been motivated by his commitment and capacity for service. It has been a blessing to our city and our nation that Shaun has had the opportunity to continuously elevate his platform, from the Nehemiah houses we built together to the halls of the Obama White House itself. Now, as our city faces a historic struggle, Shaun offers us a path, through this humanity and love for this city, to a better future for all.”

—Bishop Johnny Ray Youngblood

Praise continued at the end of the book
Message to Our City

My fellow New Yorkers,

There’s a specific trait that we all share, even in the most diverse place on earth. It is a confidence ingrained in us to believe that our New York City, uniquely and without fail, can overcome any challenge set before it. We’ve forged this belief in fires set by anger, frustration, and attack—and then worked together to put out the flames, rebuild, and reimagine our city time and again.

So when we face a moment like this—still amidst the smoldering fire of disease, disinvestment, and devastation—we know that we will once again emerge stronger and faithful to our unique confidence.

But we won’t do it without a plan of action. And we won’t do it without leadership.
Our city is suffering through an unprecedented moment of crisis, and the upcoming mayoral election will be one of the most significant and consequential in our city's history. By the time this is published, we may have reached the unthinkable milestone of 30,000 New York City lives claimed by COVID-19. Those left are struggling to pay their rent and feed their families, with over half a million of the city's jobs disappearing in 2020. Family-owned and small businesses are having to shutter their doors, and tragically, some may never return.

There is a fear that the New York we love won't exist after this crisis, that the damage will be too much to overcome, and that New Yorkers themselves won't be able to recover. But I know that, together, we will come back stronger and build a better, fairer city. We've done it before.

Growing up in the 1970s and 1980s, I watched our city suffer through a different time of crisis, with homelessness exploding and entire neighborhoods burning to the ground. Starting with the Community Preservation Corporation after I finished school, I witnessed the resilience of New Yorkers determined to rebuild those very same neighborhoods and create opportunity from the ashes.

Like many of you, I looked on in shock and horror as the World Trade Center was destroyed. But shortly after, as our city's Housing Commissioner, I joined my fellow New Yorkers in proclaiming that we weren't going anywhere.

When the financial crisis and Hurricane Sandy hit within short years of each other and threatened to rob New Yorkers of their homes, livelihoods, and savings, I was once again struck, this time as President Obama's Housing Secretary, by the unwavering grit of our people.

Indeed, we've rebuilt before, and we'll rebuild again. But what if we could do more than that? What if, instead of rebuilding our city as it was, we took this opportunity to reimagine it as it could be—a city that works for everyone.

We can create an inclusive economy and a progressive educational system that together provide every New Yorker with a pathway to secure, family-sustaining work. We can provide every New Yorker with affordable, accessible, and sustainable housing and transportation, and keep all New Yorkers safe anywhere in our city—while preserving their rights. We can finally provide our residents the resources to live happily, healthily, and actively through all stages of life, and we can be leaders in climate adaptation so future generations can do the same. And we can apply a lens of equity to every single one of our policies to ensure we become a city where you can no longer predict someone's life expectancy or chances of success based on who they are or where they live.

We can be a beacon of progress, a shining example to cities across the globe, but this will take more than rhetoric—it'll take real, comprehensive, concrete plans. That's where this book comes in.
We have spent over a year partnering with some of the city's most passionate activists and community advocates, as well as some of the nation's most accomplished scholars and business leaders, to craft the policies you'll read here. This is a living, evolving document, co-authored by New Yorkers just like you. It's a promise that if elected mayor, I will lead this city out of crisis and into a much brighter future.

Let this be a glimpse into that future, and join us as we build upon these ideas. Wherever you are in this great city, I invite you to read more about our campaign on our website, and to reach out to me if you'd like to get involved as we write the next chapter in our city's history.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Shaun Donovan
Candidate for Mayor of New York City
Former New York City Commissioner of Housing Preservation and Development
Former United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
Former Director of the Federal Office of Management and Budget
Executive Summary

In preparing this plan, we took as a starting point the simple notion that as we rebuilt from this crisis, we couldn’t settle for what New York City was before. We believe that New York can come back as a stronger, fairer, more equitable, more innovative city that works for everyone and gives each resident a chance to build a healthy, happy life. The plan elements included in this book are meant to provide a holistic, detailed picture of that New York—not the one we had before, but the one we should strive to create.

The policies outlined below and across this book are the result of a year-long effort to combine Shaun’s decades of government experience and policy knowledge with the guidance of over a hundred community advocates, scholars, business leaders, and policy experts from across the city and country. This edition of The Plan for the City of New York is organized by issue area—including Racial Equity, Health, Neighborhoods, Transportation, Jobs, Education, Criminal Justice, Housing, Aging, Climate, and Innovation—with a number of platforms still in development, including Arts & Culture, Immigration, Food Security, and LGBTQ issues.

The topic areas often refer to one another, forming bridges between sometimes seemingly disparate issues and calling attention to the cohesion that our city’s efforts must display if we hope to truly solve the problems that plague so many of our communities. In this way, they should be viewed not as separate pieces in a puzzle, but rather voices in conversation, responding to, commenting on, and building upon one another. They are a reflection of the ongoing discussion we aim to have with the people of this city.

Racial Equity

At the center of this conversation is racial equity. Our city and nation have long histories of discrimination and barriers to opportunity for entire communities, barriers that in many cases still exist. In order to address this history and its impact today, and to lead us toward a better future for all New Yorkers, we have deliberately applied a lens of equity to every platform—as will be the case with any policy produced during a Donovan administration. Achieving our vision for this city requires us to reach a point where who one is, where one lives, or how one looks can no longer predict one’s trajectory.

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Our plan opens with a truth that has become even more evident over the course of this city’s troubled vaccine distribution effort: the next mayor’s first priority will need to be swiftly and decisively ending the COVID crisis. And, unlike our current administration, we must ensure that our recovery efforts are equitable, properly orienting vaccination campaigns around hard-hit communities and using these to lay the groundwork to address long-term health issues.

Informed by Shaun’s decades-long commitment to racial justice and record of real progress on racial equity at the highest levels of government, our Racial Equity Platform seeks early on to establish a bold new role in our city’s government: the Chief Equity Officer. This first-of-its-kind official will report directly to the mayor, have the important responsibilities of coordinating across agencies, setting measurable goals for program design and implementation, and holding our administration accountable for achieving these goals, and will be given the resources needed to carry out these responsibilities.

The platform also addresses the undeniable impact that gaps in wealth and opportunity play in achieving true racial equity. In response, Shaun puts forth his Equity Bonds plan, a bold proposal to provide every child in our city with $1,000, with up to an additional $2,000 provided each year, scaled based on family income. This money—approximately $50,000 for an 18-year-old born into poverty—can change the economic trajectory of an entire family over generations by creating pathways for college education, home ownership, opening a business, and erasing debt.

Similarly, having services and resources nearby and easily accessible is noted as an important consideration for closing racial wealth and quality of life gaps. To address this, Shaun will pursue one of his landmark policy proposals: making every New York City neighborhood a 15 minute neighborhood—where a great public school, fresh food, rapid transportation, a beautiful park, and a chance to get ahead can all be found within 15 minutes of one’s front door.

**Health**

To see plans like Equity Bonds and 15 minute neighborhoods have a real impact over time, we need to ensure that our city is healthy in the long run. But we want to go further—in our Health Platform, we commit to making New York the healthiest city in the world.

This begins, with bringing an end to the COVID crisis in our city quickly and equitably. To date, despite our efforts, the City’s current response has been haphazard and uneven, in large part due to a lack of coordination and communication between a number of government agencies.
responsible for handling our public health response to this crisis, while also due to the lack of support we received from the Trump administration.

We will unite the city’s disparate activities into one unified response under the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and work closely with colleagues in the Biden administration to ensure the city gets the vaccines, protective equipment, funding, and other resources that it deserves.

It is critical that we direct the proper resources toward our vaccination efforts by repurposing contact tracing funding, enhancing the effectiveness and transparency of our data systems, and reaching those most harmed by the pandemic more effectively, and partnering actively with primary care physicians and organizations. And, because we must never be caught off guard again, we will train a reserve of medical and public health professionals to be mobilized during a pandemic and plan for an annual vaccination campaign in each neighborhood.

Our approach to health must prioritize, but not focus solely on, halting the spread of COVID-19. We must provide quality and affordable health care for every New Yorker who needs it by launching a New York City public option, prioritizing primary care and closing the gap in access to health insurance for the 600,000 adult New Yorkers currently without coverage—regardless of people’s immigration status.

In addition to tackling affordability of care, we must address the lack of its accessibility for many of our residents. Every New Yorker should have access to high-quality health care in their neighborhood, and as such we will incorporate primary care into our 15 minute neighborhood model and build a robust public health workforce pipeline.

To reach our vulnerable communities, we must ensure that we’re meeting the needs of all New Yorkers, including our homeless and previously incarcerated neighbors, and we must tackle unjust and unacceptable trends like our maternal mortality crisis.

And, we must recognize that many health crises existed prior to the pandemic. Tackling these issues requires reimagining our approaches to mental health, opioid use, the AIDS/HIV epidemic, gun violence, and a “second pandemic” of untreated chronic disease. Equally important is recognizing and addressing the environmental determinants of health—often linked to New Yorkers’ access to fresh food, safe and open streets, and public spaces like parks—in allowing everyone a chance to live healthily and actively.

**Climate**

As we look not just toward supporting the health of today’s population but that of the future, we must make the necessary sustainability investments to ensure that all people in New York City are able to live comfortably for generations to come. This is the goal that powered the development of our Climate Platform.
Shaun recognizes that climate change is an existential crisis, and that although it is a global issue, cities are at the frontline of its impacts and the response. New Yorkers are all too familiar with the devastating effects of climate disasters, with the impact of Hurricane Sandy fresh on many people’s minds. Shaun played a key role in the entire region’s recovery as the head of President Obama’s Hurricane Sandy Recovery Task Force, and understands the urgency with which we need to address these issues.

The Donovan administration will have a laser-focus on achieving net-zero emissions by mid-century and protecting New Yorkers from climate threats like flooding, severe storms, and heatwaves, with an emphasis on environmental justice—focusing our efforts on communities that have historically experienced the greatest harm from and lack or investment against climate change, and that are at greatest risk of future damage.

Climate policy can have direct and immediate impacts on the health and wellbeing of our communities. We will look to achieve these by working with and supporting local community-based organizations and elected officials to expedite the closure of all “peaker plants” currently located in all five boroughs, and mitigate the impacts of extreme heat through expanding the city’s CoolRoofs program and subsidizing air conditioners in marginalized communities.

The green economy, as highlighted earlier, will also play an instrumental role in the next phases of our city’s economic development, and with that will come unprecedented opportunities to provide secure, family-sustaining work for so many of our residents. We will establish a new NYC Climate Corps, a citywide initiative building on local service and educational programs to prepare New Yorkers for careers in climate resilience. Additionally, we must make sustainability education a hallmark of K-12 public education and partner with community environmental science and advocacy groups and a new CUNY Opportunity Lab Task Force to prepare students from an early age to be climate-conscious citizens and potential members of the climate workforce.

A critical part of addressing climate change is reducing our city’s role in emitting greenhouse gases. We must revise our building codes, incentivize efficiency measures, and make it easier for people to understand and meet climate adaptation standards across the city’s buildings. As mentioned previously, we must also address the role that transportation plays in contributing to climate change and work to create more energy-efficient modes of public transportation, expand bicycle infrastructure, reallocate street space for pedestrians, and increase availability of electric vehicle charging stations.
Jobs

Rebuilding our city also means creating an economy where everyone has a chance to succeed, where the many that have fallen on hard times can chart paths toward security and comfort. Our Jobs Platform sets the ambitious goal of creating 500,000 jobs for New Yorkers by the end of Shaun’s first term, all within an equitable economy where all New Yorkers have the opportunity to build the skills they need to secure good, family-sustaining jobs.

We will launch the largest comprehensive skills-based training program in the United States, linked to workplace training and aligned around the sectors where middle-income job growth will be strongest: life sciences, health, information technology, design, and finance. We will establish 10,000 apprenticeship placements by 2025 and guarantee at least one paid job, apprenticeship, or internship opportunity connected to a meaningful career pathway to every high school student. The NYC Jobs Corps will put young people to work and create opportunities for shut-out workers, providing immediate relief from the economic strain of the pandemic.

All of these initiatives will be conducted in close partnership with our city’s employers and labor unions to identify the best opportunities and draw from our collective knowledge and experience. They will also be part of a broader effort, overseen by our Chief Equity Officer, to invest in diversity and inclusion in our economy. This includes the launch of Equity Corporate Commitments to drive substantially greater Black, Latinx, and Asian job participation in high-wage and middle-income work, and partnership with the business community on a broad-based public-private initiative to upskill New Yorkers and reduce economic inequality.

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We must also **make investments in the industries that have been hit hardest by the pandemic, and those that will power our city’s economy in the decades to come.** We will work hand-in-hand with industry partners and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to rebuild our tourism and nightlife sectors and, once it is safe, we will attract visitors through a campaign promoting New York City’s commitments to health and safety. Looking to the future, we will continue to grow key sectors like technology and media, while investing in becoming a world leader in the fields of life sciences and climate adaptation.

**Neighborhoods**

The goal of giving every New Yorker fair access to opportunity extends beyond health care and economic opportunity—it is a central pillar of Shaun’s overall vision for a city that works for everyone. **It starts with a simple but profound idea of making every neighborhood in our city a 15 minute neighborhood**, as described previously and outlined in our platform for Neighborhoods. Many New Yorkers have never known a city where all they needed wasn’t within reach, and now it’s time we make that the reality for all of our residents.

Our plan also recognizes the potential for neighborhoods to power our city’s economic recovery. We will support small businesses and New York entrepreneurs, especially minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBEs) and immigrant, Black, and Latinx entrepreneurs through greater access to funding, stronger networks of support, and more thoughtful regulation. We also recognize the role that a thriving neighborhood business district plays in preserving the wellbeing of a community, and will take a cross-agency approach to supporting our neighborhood commercial corridors.

In order for this plan to succeed, we need to make it easier for every New Yorker to quickly access the city as a whole and the world beyond it. To bridge gaps that directly impact people’s educational, professional, and social lives, we will **ensure that every household in our city has access to affordable, high-speed internet.**

**Criminal Justice**

It is also critical that we keep our residents safe through an approach to Criminal Justice built on the principles of **reimagining a public safety system that is accountable and community-driven, reducing over-policing and over-incarceration, and reinvesting in services that provide safe and healthy communities for all New Yorkers.** We believe that New York City’s justice system
must work for everyone by prioritizing safety, inclusion, and racial equity. Criminal justice policy should advance justice, promote civic engagement and transparency, and emphasize data and technology innovation in a manner that uses public resources wisely and fairly.

This begins with focusing law enforcement resources on guns and serious crime, rather than health and social challenges that police are not equipped to solve. Through his decades in public service, including his years managing the federal government’s $4 trillion budget, Shaun has come to understand how to distribute resources in a way in which they’ll have the greatest impact. In New York City, this means replacing police in situations like mental health crises and school safety with professionals better equipped to address these challenges, freeing up police time and resources to more effectively address violent crime and the out-of-state gun pipeline.

In order for the police to effectively carry out these responsibilities, it is critical that we remake the police department as an institution that is accountable, transparent, and responsive to community needs. It begins at the top through the appointment of a commissioner who shares Shaun’s view of public safety and a leadership team that represents the city’s diversity and understands the imperative for culture change. We must hold precinct commanders accountable for misconduct by officers, and hold individual officers responsible for bad acts that too often go unpunished today. We will more effectively track and publicize data on police interactions and public perceptions of safety and misconduct, and ensure that the police department’s use of surveillance technology is responsible, transparent, and consistent with our values. And, we will focus on ensuring that jail is used as a last resort while removing all incarcerated people from Rikers Island by the end of 2027.

We are also committed to promoting community-focused public safety and racial justice initiatives that take a public health approach to reducing violence by addressing cycles of trauma and absence of opportunity. And we will invest properly in these efforts to the tune of $500 million annually, reaching $3 billion or 20% of the city’s public safety budget by the end of Shaun’s first term—with resources directed to neighborhoods with the greatest needs, guided by community input, and focused on issues such as job training, health care, and affordable housing.

**Education**

To provide New Yorkers with skills and opportunities, we must ensure that every single person in our city has access to a high-quality, equitable Education.

The current crisis has only exacerbated long-standing shortcomings of our city’s education system. It is critical that we rebuild trust with our families and communities and establish formal, culturally-appropriate systems to facilitate
family and student input. We must respect and empower our educators, and work to ensure that those leading our classrooms and the content covered in them reflect the communities that they serve. We can achieve this goal by recruiting, training, and elevating educators of color and applying a culturally inclusive, academically-rigorous, and supportive vision for schools and classrooms.

We need to help students and educators recover from the academic and social-emotional impact of COVID through additional mental health services and counseling and by providing supplemental learning through an Education Recovery Corps. This group would offer immediate employment in their own communities to CUNY students and graduates, many of whom have faced economic hardship as a result of the pandemic. We must also work to close the digital divide by investing in the education technology and support that students deserve, and equip students and families with the skills needed to succeed in a digital classroom and economy.

An equity lens should extend beyond our recovery to our long-term approach to meeting the educational needs of our young people. We will rethink school admissions policies by making permanent the current administration's temporary elimination of screens and going further to put in place affirmative policies that expand opportunity and reduce segregation. We will also apply an equity review to all short-term budgetary and staffing reductions and adjustments to ensure that they will not disproportionally impact typically underserved students.

It is important that we expand learning opportunities for New Yorkers of all ages within their communities by opening all libraries, in all neighborhoods, seven days a week. We will leverage these as catalysts for social and economic infrastructure within communities, beginning by supporting libraries in NYCHA communities, immigrant neighborhoods, and other historically underserved areas through strong neighborhood partnerships to ensure they have the capacity to respond to community priorities.

And we will reimagine pathways from birth through post-secondary education that open doors to economic opportunity. We must build on the success of Universal Pre-K, ensure students achieve early literacy, and support secondary students as they choose and prepare for their next steps to ensure students are on pathways to family-sustaining jobs. We will also leverage CUNY as an engine for economic opportunity by helping our students stay in and finish school, and establishing a new CUNY Learning Center for 21st Century Skills that brings together students including adult learners, professors, and employers with talent needs to create opportunities for applied learning through micro-internships, capstones, skill badging programs, and consulting projects in high-growth fields where skilled employees are needed.

It is important to recognize that a healthy learning environment is a safe one, and that many of our students, particularly students of color, are made unsafe and fall into the school-to-prison pipeline because of our current approach to school
safety. We will remove police from schools and reinvest in Positivity, Prevention, Relationships, and Response Coordinators trained in child development, de-escalation, and understanding how trauma and life experience impact behavior. We will also remove all vestiges of prison culture from our schools, including metal detectors, on-campus arrests and handcuffing (except in extremely limited circumstances where student and educator safety is actually and immediately in danger), and incident reporting.

**Housing**

Affordable housing continues to be one of the biggest challenges for our city, and one of the greatest obstacles to providing safety and opportunity to our residents. Shaun, a nationally renowned housing expert who led us out of the national housing crisis, is committed to reimagining the right to shelter in our city as a right to housing, and to addressing homelessness with more than just homeless programs, as outlined in our Housing Platform. We need to help New Yorkers stay in their homes through an improved system of emergency rental assistance that will count on $330 million saved by reducing reliance on shelters, with additional support from the state and federal governments. We must also defend tenants from harassment and eviction, support existing homeowners by protecting them from fraud and displacement, and help those experiencing homelessness acquire safe, affordable permanent housing with access to service-enriched aftercare.

We must finally invest adequately in NYCHA, not just revitalizing public housing, but preparing it for the future through efficiency and climate resiliency efforts. To accomplish this, we will make a historic commitment of up to $2 billion per year toward accelerating repairs across NYCHA’s portfolio, reducing operating costs through energy-efficiency and resiliency investments, and overhauling NYCHA’s governance structure to improve performance and resident engagement. We will couple this with an additional $2 billion per year to create new affordable housing programs and expand existing ones through the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, with the goal of producing over 30,000 units per year.

These efforts will require an all hands on deck approach from all communities, including through citywide inclusionary zoning that will ensure every neighborhood contributes to a comprehensive solution to affordable housing. We will see combined efforts to increase representative community input by working with City Council and borough presidents to reform the community board appointment process and ensure community board meetings accurately reflect the opinions of the community.

And we recognize the opportunity that housing provides to power the economic recovery of our city—we will create well-paying jobs for hardworking New Yorkers, establishing a minimum construction wage so that people who build our housing.
can build stable lives in our city, and implementing a comprehensive resident hiring and training program.

In order to ensure that these initiatives are driving results, we will not only invest in real-time, individual data across all city agencies, we will **update the metrics by which we measure our success to focus less on units built and more on our ultimate goals**: number of New Yorkers helped, with an understanding of their situations and their backgrounds.

**Transportation**

At the same time, New Yorkers will be able to access more of the city through a robust plan to revitalize and reimagine our city's **Transportation system**. We need a 21st century approach that improves transit service for everyone, prioritizes mobility expansion in underserved areas, makes the streets safe for everyone who uses them, combats climate change, and reverses the legacy of racism within the city's current transportation network.

We will get there by **launching true Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**, embracing cycling and micromobility as viable modes of transportation that reduce emissions, making the Open Streets Program accessible, equitable, and responsive, strengthening partnerships with and creating pathways for increased oversight of the MTA, and responding to community needs—including those of the disability community.

**Aging**

Through many of the policies mentioned so far, we are focusing on meeting the long-overlooked needs of many of our city's communities. One such community is New York's aging population, which we address specifically in our **Aging Platform**.

Older residents have given so much of their lives in the service of building our city and our communities. And yet, they are so often marginalized, lacking meaningful political power. **A first step in advocating for and supporting this community is establishing a Bill of Rights for Aging New Yorkers**, which include the establishment of a Director of Aging Advocacy in the mayor's office, access to high-quality, age-accessible health care in every neighborhood, the ability to move across the entire city easily, and freedom from discrimination in all of its forms. By extending deliberate consideration of our aging New Yorkers to policies outlined so far across housing, health care, safety, and transportation, among others, we will better track and meet the needs of older residents.

**Accessibility will be a priority**, with the incorporation of universal design principles that go beyond the Americans with Disabilities Act in senior housing and the full funding of capital improvements to bring MTA subway stations into Americans with Disabilities Act compliance—prioritizing neighborhoods with large concentrations of
people with ambulatory difficulty. The same extends to New York City neighborhoods, where we will identify priority areas for sidewalk repairs and better lighting.

We will make it easier for our aging population to participate in our economic recovery, if they choose to, by hiring older New Yorkers in city roles, making age-friendly adjustments to the built environment, publicizing these initiatives, and working to reduce the stigma of older workers staying in the workforce.

As with other issue areas, we will improve the collection and use of data to inform our decisions. We will invest in data collection broken up by five- or 10-year cohorts to make it easier for the city to understand and meet the varying needs of people at different stages of life.

**Innovation**

As has been outlined through a variety of our platforms, and specifically in our Innovation Platform, Shaun’s administration will deliberately prioritize innovative models for meeting the needs of New Yorkers and partnering with organizations to spur economic development.

We will invest in updating legacy operating models and data infrastructure, while maintaining people’s privacy, communicating transparently, preserving principles of equity, and actively engaging with our communities for feedback. By bringing all stakeholders to the table, we will create community-specific solutions to the digital divide and bring quality, high-speed broadband into every single residence in New York City.

More active and consistent private sector partnership will allow us to incentivize greater innovation that will improve the quality of life of New Yorkers, while powering our city’s economic recovery and helping us reclaim the spirit of innovation that made New York City the capital of the world. And, a culture in government that incentivizes and rewards innovative thinking and the testing, refining, and scaling of ideas will allow New York City to come up with creative solutions to some of its most pressing issues.

All of this possible with a leader at the helm that understands the value of innovation, and how to create an environment where it can thrive. Shaun Donovan has done that throughout his career, and would do so as mayor.

**Bold Ideas in a Time of Financial Crisis**

New York City is in the midst of a historic financial crisis, and it is reasonable to wonder how the next mayor will be able to achieve the truly sweeping and progressive changes that our city and our residents need. Real change is within reach, but only if we’re led by someone with the knowledge and experience needed to follow through
on three key budget principles: advocate for New Yorkers to ensure we get the critical financial partnership we need and deserve from Washington and Albany, (2) deliver government services and programs in a way that maximizes efficiency and reduces duplicative costs, and (3) increase revenue in ways that grow the economy, are focused on equity, and don’t hinder our city’s recovery.

Shaun Donovan, with decades of experience in every level of government—including several years overseeing the $4 trillion federal budget as President Obama’s Budget Director—is the only candidate who knows how to make a vision this ambitious a reality.

By combining his deep understanding of city and federal government, Shaun will work closely with colleagues in the Biden/Harris administration, many of whom he worked shoulder-to-shoulder with under President Obama, to get New Yorkers the immediate support they were cruelly denied under President Trump. He will also work with the administration and Congress to roll back the Trump tax cuts, ensure the wealthy pay their fair share, and advocate for New York—which normally contributes over $20 billion more to the federal government than it gets back each year—to get more substantial federal support in the long run.

Shaun also understands how to utilize temporary tax measures to address current budget shortfalls while preserving and strengthening progressive aspects of New York State’s and New York City’s tax structure. To that end, Shaun will seek a temporary surcharge for high-earners to help stimulate our economy in the short-run, and permanently expand earned income tax credits for low-earners to stimulate spending and job creation in the long-run.

We also have an opportunity to make our property tax system less regressive by lowering taxes on rentals and certain homeowners, and joining New York State in advocating for the elimination of the federal tax deduction cap of $10,000 for State and Local Tax (SALT). Shaun believes that comprehensive strategies like these will be more effective than piece-meal approaches like a pied-à-terre tax.

But Shaun also believes that we can’t simply tax our way out of this crisis. We need to identify other generators of revenue, find savings through smarter investments, and manage our city’s finances more responsibly. Congestion pricing has the potential to support critical transportation improvements for our residents and the environment, and there are opportunities to leverage value capture tools more effectively through careful management of development projects and use of dormant real estate currently owned but not used by the public sector.

Throughout this plan, we outline a number of policies that would save the city substantial amounts of money, including decreasing dependence on the homeless shelter system, making efficiency and climate resilience investments in NYCHA developments, and refocusing the responsibilities of our law enforcement officers. Reforming our city’s approach to health alone can yield substantial savings though
reducing prescription drug costs by increasing city bargaining power with insurers and pharmacy benefit providers, improving health-care quality, and lowering costs through delivery system reform with strategies we used in the Affordable Care Act.

We can also save while avoiding layoffs by establishing a general hiring freeze—excluding teachers and essential public safety positions—as well as a general wage freeze, and consolidating pension and benefit funds, starting with all non-uniform and non-UFT funds.

And, we can do a better job of making fiscal responsibility and efficiency part of city government’s culture by requiring agencies to regularly find savings and be disciplined in their spending even in a strong economy, establishing a “rainy day fund” for future downturns while discouraging the raiding of reserves built up in prior years, and using innovation and technology to reduce the costs of operations over time.

We invite you to read through each of the policies in this platform, and to continue to engage with our campaign as more policies are released. Like New York City’s turnaround, this plan is just beginning. We will continue to look to the people of New York to help us craft a vision for a city that truly works for everyone.
Racial Equity

Prioritizing Racial Equity to Ensure the Success of All New Yorkers

Racial Equity has been front and center of every platform in our Campaign of Ideas because our campaign is on that is built on the notion that we must reimagine our city as a place that truly works for everyone, where everyone has a fair chance at creating a healthy, secure, sustainable life for themself and their family. Through the work of our city’s first Chief Equity Officer, we will be able to set clear goals, track our progress, and hold every city agency and department accountable to these efforts. Only then can we aspire to effectively roll out innovative policies, like my Equity Bonds and 15 minute neighborhoods, that have the potential to completely transform the way this city supports its residents. The steps in this plan are long overdue, and following through on them will be my first priority as mayor.
New York City’s greatness comes from our range of people from all corners of the globe and walks of life that make this city their home, bringing together cultures, traditions, and ideas that have formed the base of our collective New York identity. Our racial and cultural diversity make New York City a unique place to live, work, and play—and yet, race and culture have long been used to deny entire communities in our city the resources and opportunities needed to thrive, or even to receive basic services.

Shaun Donovan believes that who you are, how you look, your level of ability, whom you love, and where you live should not predict your chances for success or your life expectancy. That is why our campaign is built on the notion that we must reimagine our city as a place that truly works for everyone, where everyone has a fair chance at creating a healthy, secure, sustainable life for themself and their family.

We are focusing attention and action toward turning racial inequity on its head—reaching a point where race does not determine or predict the distribution of resources, opportunities, and burdens among members of a society—because we recognize that the creation and perpetuation of racial inequities has been baked into American culture and government, and that racial inequities across all indicators for success are deep and pervasive. At the same time, we acknowledge the broad range of identities used to marginalize people, helping us take a more intersectional approach while always naming the role that race plays in people’s experiences and outcomes.

Shaun is the only candidate who combines decades-long commitment to racial justice with a record of real progress on racial equity at the highest levels of government. Helping build over 5,000 affordable Nehemiah homes as a means of attaining home ownership and building wealth, and then helping New Yorkers protect that wealth by creating the Center for New York City Neighborhoods, the nation’s first response of its kind to the foreclosure crisis and predatory lending that
stole two thirds of our country’s Black wealth and half of Latinx wealth, are just a few examples of how Shaun has worked to close the racial gaps in opportunity that have persisted in our city.

After this work caught President Obama’s attention, he asked Shaun to serve in his cabinet as Housing Secretary and then Budget Director, where Shaun worked to advance fair housing all the way to the Supreme Court and make investments at the federal level to ensure everyone would have a chance at a good education, secure housing, high-quality health care, and a clean environment.

As mayor, Shaun will combine his experience, the perspectives of the city’s residents, and the lessons learned from activists and allies from across the nation and the globe to ensure that racial equity is embedded in City policies, programs, and services. This work will make tangible differences in people’s lives through the application and integration of best practices, training of City staff, development of equity tools and action plans, and tracking and measuring of our progress along the way. Through these efforts, we will work toward a future where a child born in any zip code can have the same great school, hospital, park, and prospects as any other child in our city.

Our plan will focus on:

- Ensuring an Equitable COVID Recovery
- Applying an Equity Lens to the Way the City is Governed, and Establishing the Infrastructure to Set and Meet Goals
- Pursuing Equity-focused Policies as Part of Every Platform
Ensuring an Equitable COVID Recovery

Throughout his 30-year career in public service, Shaun has learned that the communities that are most vulnerable before a crisis are the hardest hit during and after that crisis, and as such, we must measure the success of our recovery based on our ability to support those most in need. That has entirely been the case when it comes to COVID-19 and our city’s most vulnerable communities. This pandemic has ravaged our Black and Brown communities, and our City’s response has been inadequate and at times, shameful.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Reorient the City’s vaccination campaign towards hard hit communities of color

At the height of the pandemic, New York City and State implemented contact tracing to better track transmission of the virus. These efforts were flawed, but still helpful in containing the pandemic and keeping New Yorkers safe.

However, as we shift our focus from containment to inoculation, it is critical that we stand up vaccination efforts with as much funding as possible. With community spread already taking place in all five boroughs, the priority must be getting more shots into New Yorkers’ arms, especially in communities that have been left behind in the efforts so far. This will only become more critical once the next mayor takes office. As such, a Donovan administration will immediately begin to repurpose contact tracing funding and transition towards robust vaccine distribution.

We must also make sure that our city is receiving the adequate amount of vaccines to meet the needs of its residents. Shaun will work closely with members of the Biden administration, many of whom he already has a strong working relationship with, to ensure that our city gets the vaccines—as well as protective equipment, funding, and other resources—that it deserves.

As mayor, Shaun will focus our vaccination efforts toward the communities that need them most.

As mayor, Shaun will focus our vaccination efforts towards the communities that need them most. This means using a neighborhood approach and leveraging the power of trusted voices in those neighborhoods to help educate New Yorkers about the importance of getting vaccinated, while also listening to these communities about their reasonable concerns and fears. Doing this will help to build trust between these communities and the public health institutions that have historically overlooked them and even at times exploited them.

We also need to meet people where they are. Vaccination sites, although important, are not serving the communities that need them most. Part of this is because
of a lack of meaningful outreach to these communities, but also because those who are in most need of the vaccine often do not have the time required to get vaccinated. That's why Shaun’s administration will bring vaccines directly to the people who need them most by holding education and vaccination events at NYCHA developments, naturally occurring retirement communities, and senior centers, leveraging in-language communication and partnering with local community-based organizations to find the best ways to reach people.

Meeting New Yorkers where they are also requires that the next mayor do a better job of reaching non-english speakers when it comes to educating New Yorkers about the importance of getting vaccinated. As mayor, Shaun will ensure that we are using in-language messaging when educating New Yorkers about the vaccine and other public health issues. These are crucial steps to ensuring that our response to COVID is not leaving behind any New Yorker who cannot reasonably access our city’s services, particularly our aging population and New Yorkers living with disabilities.

**Improve the long-term health of communities through the COVID response**

The pandemic has presented us with an opportunity to get more New Yorkers the care they need. As such, a Donovan administration will use vaccine distribution to sign people up for health insurance and connect people to primary care for underlying conditions—services that will be more accessible to New Yorkers through Shaun’s efforts to expand health insurance at the federal and state level and supplement coverage with a city-level public option, and through expanded access to primary care in the 15 minute neighborhoods model, respectively.

Read more about our efforts to strengthen and preserve the wellbeing of our communities in our [Health Platform](#).

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**Applying an Equity Lens to the Way the City is Governed, and Establishing the Infrastructure to Set and Meet Goals**

In order to properly address the racial inequities that persist in our city, it is crucial that the next mayor not just pursue policies that promote equity, but pursue equity as a policy itself. Using an equity lens means that our policymaking, service delivery,
and distribution of resources will account for the different histories, challenges, and needs of the people of New York City.

A Donovan administration will be committed to setting goals for increased equity and opportunity across all facets of New York City life, tracking our progress and holding ourselves accountable. And we will work to normalize concepts of social and racial justice within City government, organize all staff, from the mayor and commissioners to entry level, around advancing equity in their agencies and departments, and operationalize equitable policies, programs, and procedures within city government.

**We are committing to the following policies and programs:**

**Designate the City’s first Chief Equity Officer**

A critical step in truly addressing issues of equity in our city and understanding how effective our efforts are is to set proper commitments and develop a strategy for measuring progress. To this end, we will establish an Equity Office that reports directly to the mayor, composed of a Chief Equity Officer and a team responsible for integrating racial equity principles into all operations, projects, and services of the city, and collaborating with all agencies in the City of New York to ensure progressive achievement. The goal of this office is not to take the onus of advancing equity away from individual agencies, but rather to apply a centralized and coordinated approach that adds cohesion and accountability to otherwise disparate equity efforts.

The Chief Equity Officer, a cross-agency leader, collaborator, and ultimate responsible stakeholder, will work to achieve a set of specific, measurable targets in program design and implementation, as well as structural policy-making, to ensure that we are turning the lens on ourselves—on our own actions and behaviors—to critically evaluate our decisions, and will be both accountable to the mayor for progress on these targets and equipped with the authority to ensure they are met. The Chief Equity Officer will be tasked with taking a data-driven approach to understanding which strategies are going well, how our policies can be refined, and how we can most effectively scale successful initiatives—and will have the authority to conduct data audits of agencies in alignment with these responsibilities. By actively participating in decision-making at the highest levels with other members of the mayor’s cabinet, the Chief Equity Officer will set the tone for bringing more New Yorkers to the table and leveraging city funding to bridge the racial wealth gap.

Through the role of the Chief Equity Officer and the larger equity team, we will commit to a breadth and depth of institutional transformation that prioritizes engagement, partnership, and learning from communities to achieve meaningful, and sustainable results. Read more about the responsibilities and targets of the Chief Equity Officer in the Economic Development Platform.
Properly invest in the tools and strategies required to address inequity, drawing input from the communities most directly affected

Tackling racial inequity requires more than individual actions—it requires planning and executing a coordinated response, informed by the experiences of those who live the consequences of inequity every day. Shaun began his career helping rebuild the same communities that he saw struggle in the 1970s and 1980s, and understands what it means to listen to and act on the voices of those who best understand our city’s challenges.

This begins with investment in inclusive engagement and community capacity building, particularly around efforts to ensure that every New Yorker has equitable access to the job, housing, health, and education opportunities needed to thrive in our city. The goal is to establish continuous channels of communication and input so that communities not only inform the administration’s policies, but hold it accountable through ongoing feedback, whether it’s more effectively meeting the learning needs of local students, expanding or repairing affordable housing, or ensuring everyone in the community has access to necessary health care.

Based on community input, and led by the Chief Equity Officer, we must develop a citywide equity plan that serves as a roadmap for action and change and prioritizes strategies that are targeted toward specific issues and communities.

This plan will go hand in hand with an increased focus on data as a tool to understand inquiry as it exists and identify the metrics that need to be measured to have real, substantive change. The City has already taken a big step in this direction with the launch of the EquityNYC online platform, and we must work to expand these efforts to all City agencies. At the same time, we must be critical of the potential biases in the data gathered through service delivery tools like 311, and work to address these.

Read more about our plans to leverage the latest tools and build robust systems to support New Yorkers while maintaining transparency, privacy, accountability, and equity in our Innovation Platform.

Then, we must put our money where our mouth is. As Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Shaun learned that a budget is more than a ledger of dollars and cents—it’s a statement of values—and he acted on this understanding by investing in critical issues like climate resilience, high quality public education, accessible health care, and affordable housing. He will take a similar approach in New York, investing in equitable change through a city budget which reflects our values as New Yorkers and applying a racial equity lens to designing, planning, and delivering equitable resources allocations that alleviate burdens on communities of color.

The City also has the opportunity through procurement, contracting, and employment practices to address racial and economic disparities and expand
opportunities. Read our Economic Development platform to learn more about how Shaun would leverage City processes to uplift Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs), empower entrepreneurs of color, and create pathways to family-sustaining jobs for all New Yorkers.

By combining constant community engagement, robust data analysis, and a commitment to apply a lens of equity to all government decisions, we will be able to track, assess, and continuously improve the investments being made in equity.

**Pursuing Equity-focused Policies as Part of Every Platform**

Shaun has developed a set of comprehensive, detailed policy platforms across the city’s most pressing issues, informed by community advocates, policy experts, and business leaders from every part of the city. We aim to close the gap in racial equity through targeted policies that address key factors including: opportunity, accessibility, safety, and health.

We encourage you to browse all of Shaun’s platforms here, and have summarized some of his principle equity-focused policies in the following section.

**We are committing to the following policies and programs:**

**Build wealth and economic opportunity**

Generational wealth disparities play a fundamental role in systemic inequality, and as such, any efforts to mitigate those inequalities need to focus on closing the gap in wealth. Shaun has put forth an ambitious plan to do this at a massive scale through his Equity Bonds Plan, which would provide $1,000 to every child in New York City, followed by up to an annual $2,000 for each year until they turn 18, with payments scaled based on family income.

What this means is that a child born in poverty under this program will have roughly $50,000 waiting for them when they graduate high school. We know that this money can change the economic trajectory of an entire family over generations—a college education, home ownership, opening a business, erasing debt—and that can transform our children’s lives and turbo charge the recovery and development of our city. Read more about Equity Bonds on our website.

We also cannot address issues of economic opportunity without considering the pathways to family-sustaining careers that begin in our schools. We have laid out extensive plans to not only better acknowledge and serve our diverse student population, but recognize that diversity for the asset that it is. Our policies are geared toward training, hiring, and promoting a more diverse teacher workforce.
so those leading our classrooms look more like the communities they serve, rethinking school admission policies to address persistent school segregation, tapping into our city’s linguistic and cultural diversity and bringing this into the classroom, and creating a School Diversity and Integration office within the Department of Education to create a comprehensive integration approach, with public goals and accountability.

It is also crucial that we address racial disparities in special education screenings, which both over-identify Black and Latinx students for certain disability classifications and under-identify Black and Latinx students for other classifications, all without effectively addressing their needs of helping them achieve academically before these identifications. And this must be paired with research-based, tested programs that meet the needs of students with disabilities, and quality special education that begins as early as possible.

Our plans for education must also tie directly to professional opportunity for our children, which is why we’ve committed to providing every public school student at least one paid career opportunity during high school, creating stronger pathways to post-secondary education and tools for CUNY students to succeed, and establishing partnerships with leading employers in growing, innovative fields to help high school and CUNY students prepare for and connect with the jobs of the future. Read more about these policies in our Education Platform.

Recovering quickly and effectively from this pandemic means not just restarting our economy, but making sure it addresses historical lack of investment in our people and our communities. In addition to creating 500,000 jobs for New Yorkers by the end of Shaun’s first term, the administration will create the largest comprehensive skills-based training program in the country, including the establishment of 10,000 apprenticeship placements. We will give every New Yorker the opportunity to build skills toward secure, family-sustaining jobs, with Shaun’s Equity Bonds plan would guarantee every newborn public school child in New York City a chance at upward mobility and asset security, and help close our unjust racial wealth gap. The next mayor must have the vision, boldness, expertise, and leadership to reimagine a more equitable New York City that works for everyone, and Shaun is showing us how it can be done.

Darrick Hamilton
Director of the Institute on Race and Political Economy and University Professor at the New School and developer of the “Baby Bonds” concept
support from the Chief Equity Officer to ensure that these opportunities reach those who have been historically denied them.

We will also invest in our neighborhoods as engines for economic recovery, again targeting equitable investment and development where it has historically lagged. We will **nurture entrepreneurship, especially among immigrants and Black and Latinx New Yorkers**, support small business and MWBEs, and make capital **more readily available to those who have historically lacked access to it.** And we will **protect and support our neighborhood business districts** to ensure that every community and every New Yorker has access to economic opportunity nearby. Read more about these policies in our [Jobs and Neighborhoods Platforms](#).

Lack of secure housing can be an overwhelming obstacle to taking advantage of all of these educational and professional opportunities. As he has done throughout his career, Shaun will **work toward ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to affordable, accessible, high quality housing.** He has committed to **reimagining the right to shelter in our city as a right to housing**, investing in revitalizing and expanding affordable housing in every borough, and **supporting those who have fallen on hard times**, whether it's through finding a new home or staying in the one they're in. Read more about Shaun's plan to help all New Yorkers get—and stay—housed in our [Housing Platform](#).

### Make all of New York City accessible

Well before the pandemic, many New Yorkers struggled to access basic necessities near their homes. Many in our city have to travel long distances for work, for their children's education, or simply for food. But it doesn't have to be that way—many New Yorkers have never known a city where what one needs isn't just around the corner, and leading planners across the globe are already innovating in ways that make the benefits of cities accessible to all of their residents.

That is why one of Shaun's key campaign commitments is to **make every New York City neighborhood a 15 minute neighborhood**, where every New Yorker has access to a great public school, fresh food, rapid transportation, a beautiful park, and a chance to get ahead within 15 minutes of their front door. These investments will also be **focused first on neighborhoods where the need is greatest**, and will aim to close gaps in access to opportunity and resources that exacerbate racial inequity.

A vital part of this effort is **building a more robust public transit system** that acknowledges and addresses the legacy of racism in transportation decision-making that has made New York significantly less accessible to many. We will **deploy data and tools** to make sure often ignored communities get real transportation benefits and services. We must also ensure that these communities are not overlooked during the development of innovative transportation developments, like our commitment to **create a smarter and**
faster Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network. And, we must ensure that these and other improvements are made with accessibility in all of its forms as a guide principle, so we are not excluding our aging neighborhoods and those with disabilities from the benefits of our investments. Read more about all of these policies in our Jobs, Neighborhoods, and Transportation platforms.

Ensure safety and security in and out of one’s home

New York City has long struggled to balance issues of public safety like investigating serious crime and reducing gun violence with preserving the rights and wellbeing of communities of color. As we reimagine New York as a city that works for everyone, we must ensure that we are meeting the safety needs of all New Yorkers equitably and effectively.

The way forward is to reimagine a public safety system that is accountable and community-driven, reduce over-policing and over-incarceration, and reinvest in services that provide safe and healthy communities for all New Yorkers. New York City's justice system has to work for everyone by prioritizing safety, inclusion, and racial equity. Criminal justice policy should advance justice, promote civic engagement and transparency, and emphasize data and technology innovation in a manner that uses public resources wisely and fairly.

But it isn’t enough to outline bold policies. Our next mayor must have a plan for getting them done—and paid for. By the end of his second year in office, Shaun Donovan will invest $500 million annually in community-focused public safety and racial justice initiatives, primarily by redirecting funds currently allocated to law enforcement and corrections. He will dedicate roughly $3 billion or 20% of the city’s public safety budget for these efforts by the end of his first term, directed to the neighborhoods with the greatest needs and guided by community input.

Crime and violence are caused primarily by cycles of trauma, systemic absence of opportunity, and lack of legitimacy of governing institutions. Too often, responses have revolved solely around law enforcement, ignored these driving forces, and made matters worse with heavy-handed, racially-disproportionate enforcement. Too often, we have asked police and public safety personnel to address social and community issues they are not equipped to handle, such as mental health, homelessness, and school safety.

We will reduce over-policing and over-incarceration, close the Rikers jails, and ensure that individuals have access to affordable housing, health care, job development, and critical social services to help prevent contact with the criminal legal system and cycles of incarceration. We will also establish a comprehensive,
citywide response system for mental health emergencies so that police are not asked to assume the role of a mental health professional or social worker.

Read more about these and other policies in our [Criminal Justice Platform](#).

Provide access to the resources and services needed to live a healthy, active life

Black and Latinx New Yorkers have accounted for more COVID hospitalizations and deaths in each individual borough than any other group, with a date rate per 100,000 people nearly twice as high as White New Yorkers. At the same time, COVID-19 has masked a “second pandemic” of untreated chronic disease, which will impact health well into the future. Both of these trends are in large part due to the relative lack of access to health care and resources for living a healthy life available in marginalized neighborhoods.

We outlined above Shaun’s central 15 minute neighborhoods policy, which aims to provide every New Yorker with access to everything they need within 15 minutes of their front door. High-quality health care must be part of every resident’s neighborhood, and as such, a primary health facility will also be included within 15 minutes of every New Yorker’s home, addressing the unacceptable lack of health care options in many New York City communities.

For those that do not have equitable access to fresh food in their neighborhoods, we will also work to close that gap through our 15 minute neighborhoods. Over one million New Yorkers face hunger every year, including one in five children. The needs for food are mounting in the wake of the pandemic, as millions are pushed in poverty. Additionally, we will increase funding for community-based organizations to identify and enroll low-income families and seniors in critical benefits including SNAP. We will also increase funding for emergency food providers, including food pantries and soup kitchens as well as call on the federal government to boost SNAP benefits and extend eligibility.

More than half of adults in New York City are overweight or obese, and the rate of childhood obesity is rising. We will work with schools to coordinate healthy meal standards and ensure that the food being provided encourages healthy eating habits. We will also strengthen the New York City Food Standards and encourage further adoption among private employers. As we’ve committed in

Having implemented a racial equity strategy inside of city government in New Orleans, I’ve seen the impact it can have. It has to be a whole-of-government approach. Shaun has said since Day 1 that he would apply a lens of equity to every policy put forth by his campaign and his administration, and he has followed through with that commitment every week.

Mitch Landrieu
Former mayor of New Orleans

Mitch Landrieu
Former mayor of New Orleans
our Transportation Platform, we will bolster Open Streets to provide more areas for New Yorkers to get outside to walk, play, and exercise.

Climate is also a major contributing factor to overall health by increasing chances of suffering from asthma or heat-related health issues, based on the neighborhood in which one resides and with communities of color at increased risk. We will work with and support local community-based organizations and elected officials advocating for the expedited closure of all “peaker plants” currently located in all five boroughs, empower neighborhoods to reimagine their communities, and target investments for climate adaptation and quality of life improvements to environmental justice communities currently most at risk of feeling the impact of climate change. Read more in our Climate Platform.

And it is important that we recognize the challenges faced by aging New Yorkers—and how they’re exacerbated by racial inequities—and take a targeted approach to addressing these. This includes identifying resources and services that are currently less prevalent or absent in marginalized communities, and addressing these gaps. One example are the “Senior Pedestrian Focus Areas” where crossing times at crosswalks are extended, curbs and medians are widened, and new stop controls and signals can be found, but almost none of which are located in neighborhoods with high concentrations of Black residents. Read more about our policies advocating for the wellbeing of our older residents, including through the establishment of a Bill of Rights for Aging New Yorkers, in our Aging Platform.
Health

*Recover, Refocus, Reimagine: Coming Back Strong and Making New York the Healthiest City in the World*

The next mayor’s first priority must be overcoming the COVID crisis, making New Yorkers healthy, and getting our city working again. The mismanagement of our city’s response to this pandemic has led to so much unnecessary suffering, and we must make sure that, in addition to preventing any further harm to our residents, we take the steps to keep this from ever happening again. But beyond COVID, making New York the healthiest city in the world and using this goal to help drive our city’s broader recovery requires a recognition of the wide-ranging health challenges our city faces, as well as the many tools we have available to address them. It begins with accessibility — whether it’s a vaccine, primary care, health insurance, or a park to exercise in, as part of my 15 Minute Neighborhoods plan we need to give New Yorkers the resources within 15 minutes of their home to live a healthy life, and we must prioritize helping communities that have historically received the least support and have endured the greatest harm.
In addition to claiming the lives of over half a million Americans—among them over 30,000 New Yorkers—the pandemic and its associated economic crisis are causing health needs of all kinds to pile up across the city. The impact has been particularly severe for lower-income individuals and people of color. The unprecedented effort to distribute a vaccine has been plagued by inequity and inefficiency, and refocusing it to fairly protect all New Yorkers is the first and most important step in a lengthy recovery.

Our health impacts every facet of our lives and our livelihoods—housing, jobs, mental health, safety, food insecurity, and education—which is why repairing and reimagining New York City’s health systems will be a top priority in a Donovan administration.

New York City was caught unprepared for the pandemic, and it cannot happen again. We must strengthen our emergency response channels and boost our resources. It is the responsibility of city officials to work with experts, community organizations, health care providers, and private organizations to formulate a rebuilding strategy that will have the most wide-ranging and long-lasting impact on the health of our communities. We cannot simply aspire to bring back what we had; we must create a new system that is more accessible, efficient, and prepared to meet our health needs now and for years to come.

The City’s clear first priority must continue to be halting the spread of COVID-19, but we can’t stop there. We must learn from this experience and make sure we create a more resilient health care system that works for everyone.

Rebuilding our public health is critical, which is why we will work to provide quality and affordable health care for every New Yorker who needs it and wants it. This includes working with the Biden administration and our state government to insure every New Yorker, but not waiting on Washington or Albany by launching a three-tiered New York City public option focused on giving every New Yorker access to quality primary care.

These policies tie directly to what we take steps to make our neighborhoods healthier and address environmental determinants of health. One major obstacle to accessing care is simply having a health center nearby, and through Shaun’s 15 minute neighborhoods, we will ensure that a high-quality health center can be found within minutes of any New Yorker’s front door. New Yorkers will also have access
to fresh food, parks, and safe, open streets that will together make it easier for residents of our city to enjoy healthy and active lives.

We will also strengthen health care services for immigrants, individuals in the criminal justice system, and individuals experiencing homelessness. Loss, social isolation, and fear have magnified mental health challenges, so a coordinated strategy to address these challenges is a key part of our plan to help New Yorkers.

Our city needs leadership that will take bold steps to repair our broken health care system and reimagine how we bring quality care to every New Yorker, creating healthier communities across the boroughs.

Our plan will focus on:

- Ending the COVID Crisis
- Ensuring Every New Yorker has Access to Adequate Health Coverage
- Investing in Health Equity and Access to Public Health
- Addressing Parallel Health Crises and working toward Long-term Health and Wellness

Ending the COVID Crisis

New York City was the early epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, overwhelming our hospitals, shuttering our businesses, and taking the lives of nearly 30,000 of our fellow New Yorkers. We know now that much of this suffering was preventable. But, due to an insufficient response at the federal level, our city and our country were caught flat-footed, and by the time we started taking the virus seriously, it was too late.

During Shaun’s time as Director of the Office of Management and Budget under President Obama, he worked alongside Dr. Anthony Fauci and other medical experts to contain the Ebola and Zika epidemics, and helped to prevent them from becoming pandemics like the one we are currently living through. The Obama-Biden administration literally wrote a pandemic playbook for the incoming Trump administration. However, the warnings were tragically ignored and President Trump bungled the federal response, resulting in needless and preventable suffering.

At the same time, New York City and State—despite their best efforts to contain this virus—also took many missteps in their management of this pandemic. In particular, the City’s current response has been haphazard and uneven, in large part
due to a lack of coordination and communication between a number of government agencies responsible for handling our public health response to this crisis.

Additionally, we have seen a dearth of culturally-specific and in-language public health messaging, a gross lack of transparency at all levels, and the uneven and unequal distribution of vaccines—with Black and Brown communities not receiving their fair share of shots.

Although we are hopeful that this pandemic will be behind us by the time the next mayor takes office, it is critical that the next administration is ready on day one to continue containing this virus and ensuring that we are adequately prepared for any future outbreaks.

**We are committing to the following policies and programs:**

**Unite the City’s disparate activities into one unified response**

The City’s current response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been inconsistent and disorganized, primarily due to a lack of coordination between various government agencies.

There are a number of agencies, hospitals, academic medical centers, researchers, health centers, and pharmacies that are all doing their best to contain this pandemic, but by doing so separately, absent unified leadership, the result has been many New Yorkers feeling confused and overwhelmed. By bringing these various groups together, we will greatly benefit all New Yorkers and ensure a streamlined and efficient response to this pandemic.

In order to cut through the confusion and unify our response to COVID-19, and any future public health threats, we are proposing that all COVID-19 emergency response and preparedness measures be led by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). Currently, the responsibilities for managing this crisis are bifurcated between DOHMH and Health + Hospitals (H+H)—leading to confusion and mismanagement. Moreover, H+H has other critical priorities. By diverting their precious resources toward COVID-19 management and tracing efforts, we are diluting their primary services and core mission. In order to enhance our response to COVID-19, the leadership of our response should rest with one agency, not two.
To that end, a Donovan administration will reestablish all public health messaging, data collection and analysis, and vaccine distribution under the leadership of DOHMH.

By uniting the city’s disparate activities into one unified response, regardless of the funding source, we can more adequately manage this virus, communicate to New Yorkers with one voice, and streamline our efforts in order to provide fuller transparency.

**Repurpose contact tracing funding and activities for vaccine distribution**

At the height of the pandemic, New York City and State implemented a robust contact tracing program to better track transmission of the virus. These efforts were helpful in containing the pandemic and keeping New Yorkers safe.

However, as we shift our focus from containment to inoculation, it is critical that we stand up vaccination efforts with as much funding as possible. With community spread already taking place in all five boroughs, the priority must be getting more shots into New Yorkers’ arms. This will only become more critical once the next mayor takes office. **As such, a Donovan administration will immediately begin to repurpose contact tracing funding and transition towards robust vaccine distribution.**

At the same time, we must ensure that we have contact tracers and other medical professionals ready for future outbreaks and other potential pandemics. **Therefore, the Donovan administration will build and train a reserve of medical and public health professionals to be mobilized during pandemics**, including volunteer clinicians as well as individuals prepared to serve as contact tracers.

**Reorient the City’s vaccination campaign towards hard hit communities of color**

Throughout his 30-year career in public service, Shaun has learned that the communities that are vulnerable before a crisis are the hardest hit during and after that crisis. That has entirely been the case when it comes to COVID-19 and our city’s most vulnerable communities. This pandemic has ravaged our Black and Brown communities, and our City’s response has been inadequate and at times, shameful.

As mayor, Shaun will **focus our vaccination efforts towards the communities that need them most.** This means using a neighborhood approach and getting trusted voices into those neighborhoods to help educate New Yorkers about the importance of getting vaccinated, while also listening to these communities about their reasonable concerns and fears. Doing this will help to build trust between these communities and the public health institutions that have historically overlooked them and even at times exploited them.

We also need to meet people where they are. Vaccination sites, although important, are not serving the communities that need them most. Part of this is because of
a lack of meaningful outreach to these communities, but also because those who are in most need of the vaccine often do not have the time or the required to get vaccinated. That’s why Shaun’s administration will bring vaccines directly to the people who need them most by holding education and vaccination events at New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments, naturally occurring retirement communities, and senior centers.

Meeting New Yorkers where they are also requires that the next mayor do a better job of reaching non-english speakers when it comes to educating New Yorkers about the importance of getting vaccinated. As mayor, Shaun will ensure that we are using in-language messaging when educating New Yorkers about the vaccine and other public health issues.

President Obama would often tell his team to not let a crisis go to waste. In that spirit, Shaun believes this pandemic has presented us with an opportunity to get more New Yorkers the care they need. As such, a Donovan administration will use vaccine distribution to sign people up for health insurance and connect people to primary care for underlying conditions—services that will be more accessible to New Yorkers through Shaun’s efforts to expand health insurance at the federal and state level and supplement coverage with a city-level public option, and through expanded access to primary care in the 15 minute neighborhoods model, respectively.

For all of this to take place, we need to make sure that our city is receiving the adequate amount of vaccines to meet the needs of its residents. Shaun will work closely with colleagues in the Biden administration, many of whom he already has a strong working relationship with, to ensure that our city gets the vaccines—as well as protective equipment, funding, and other resources—that it deserves.

By focusing our vaccination efforts on the demand side instead of the supply side—while still bolstering our supply by working closely with Washington—and meeting residents where they are, we can better serve the communities that have been hardest hit by this pandemic and ensure that all New Yorkers, regardless of their zip code, are able to protect themselves from this virus.

**Enhance data systems and increasing transparency**

The devil is the details, and the details are in the data. If we are going to properly prepare for the next public health crisis, we need to enhance our data systems, including syndromic surveillance and interoperability between health information exchanges and DOHMH.

One of the biggest challenges we faced during the COVID-19 pandemic was trying to predict when and where outbreaks might occur. Leveraging our data with approaches like syndromic surveillance—which allows public health officials to monitor disease indicators and detect outbreaks in real-time—will help our pandemic preparedness and keep our city safer in the event of any potential future outbreaks.
We must also ensure that we are being as transparent as possible in all government decisions, but particularly when it comes to our pandemic response. Currently, some government officials have not provided the public with the information they need and deserve—this leads to a lack of trust between our city’s residents and the health care system, which can impede other efforts like contact tracing and inoculation. As such, the Donovan administration will enhance public data dashboards so that New Yorkers are able to get the information they need in real time and have increased confidence in our health care system.

**Engage primary care in both planning and emergency activation**

Primary care is the first line of defense when it comes to protecting our health, and regular visits with a primary care doctor can help identify health problems early on so they don’t become health emergencies later in life.

The Donovan administration will partner with primary care physicians and organizations to not only plan for the next pandemic, but also engage them when it comes to emergency preparedness and activation. By doing so, we can get out in front of the next pandemic and develop strategies with organizations and physicians that are closest to the people. This type of planning and engagement will become even more meaningful once we begin to implement our other plans, including 15 minute neighborhoods, which will ensure that every New Yorker has access to primary care, among other services, within 15 minutes of their front door.

Primary care facilities have also been underutilized in terms of vaccine distribution. The Donovan administration will partner with primary care providers in order to make the COVID-19 vaccine more accessible to New Yorkers and help build trust with those folks who may be skeptical of inoculation.

**Plan for an annual vaccination campaign**

Although we are hopeful that the COVID-19 pandemic will be behind us by the time the next mayor takes office, there is a very real possibility that COVID-19 could threaten public health every year. Therefore, we will partner with primary care providers and community-based organizations in each 15 minute neighborhood to ensure that if needed, getting a COVID-19 vaccine is as easy as getting a flu shot. The Donovan administration will dedicate the necessary resources to ensure we are prepared for a COVID-19 vaccination booster campaign to increase overall immunity.
Ensuring Every New Yorker has Access to Adequate Health Coverage

About 600,000 adult New Yorkers currently lack access to health insurance, about half of which are undocumented. Many of these individuals are on the frontline of the fight against COVID, keeping our businesses running; taking care of our old or homebound; working to provide some semblance of normalcy and comfort for those who are lucky enough to be sheltered from these risks. This pandemic has further demonstrated the need for us to protect our own and provide the basic right of health care to all.

We believe that a true public option should exist at the federal level with state-level support—and Shaun is committed to working with colleagues in the Biden administration to make sure New Yorkers and all other residents of our country are covered. However, where other levels of government fall short, the City must stand in to preserve the health and wellbeing of its citizens.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Work with the federal and state government to expand health coverage

New York State has long been a national leader in expanding access to health care. Most of this progress has been through expansions of the state’s Medicaid program. In the 1980s, New York expanded Medicaid to cover undocumented pregnant women. In 1990, New York created the Child Health Plus program to provide coverage to children not eligible for Medicaid, including the undocumented. In 2001, in accordance with the Aliessa decision, the State expanded Medicaid coverage to immigrants permanently residing under color of law (PRUCOL) such as individuals granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or stays of deportation. In 2007, the State expanded the benefits provided through the Emergency Medicaid program—the only source of coverage for many low-income New Yorkers—to provide for end-stage renal disease and cancer treatment.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) offered New York State additional opportunities to lower the uninsured rate. Pursuant to the law, the State expanded Medicaid in 2013, providing an additional 2 million New Yorkers with coverage. That same year, the State launched its health insurance marketplace, known as NY State of Health. Today, more than one in four New Yorkers are enrolled. In New York City alone, 1.7 million residents are enrolled in Medicaid, 500,000 in the State’s Essential Plan, 160,000 in Child Health Plus, and 110,000 in Qualified Health Plans. Through these efforts, the state’s uninsured rate has been cut by more than half—down to 5%.

Still, we must ensure that every single New Yorker has the coverage they need to access high-quality health care, and this requires more action at the federal and state levels.
As President Obama’s Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Shaun Donovan helped implement the Affordable Care Act. As mayor, he will work closely with colleagues now in the Biden administration to scale national efforts to provide coverage through the Affordable Care Act and Medicare. Additionally, Shaun will work with New York State to expand eligibility for the Essential Plan to all low-income New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status.

**Establish a three-tiered public option in New York City, prioritizing universal access to primary care**

Well-funded primary care has been found to lead to high-quality care and better health outcomes for patients and improved experience for clinicians, at lower costs. Because of its potential benefits, primary care continues to be one of the main drivers of health inequity in our city—people of color have less access to primary care and have more preventable hospitalizations and emergency department visits than other New Yorkers.

Not only is addressing the issue of inequitable access to care a responsibility our city has toward its most vulnerable, it is a necessary step toward rebuilding our economy and strengthening our city. By ensuring that all New Yorkers are healthy—particularly those that put themselves at risk every day to carry out essential tasks—we can truly commit to the all-hands-on-deck approach to recovery that this crisis demands.

To this end, we will fill in any gaps in federal- and state-level coverage through a New York City public option that prioritizes providing access to high-quality primary care. Every member will be assigned a primary care doctor who will manage their care, including prevention, chronic disease management, behavioral health, and referral for care. The program will offer a three-tiered system of primary care physicians on a sliding fee scale based on network chosen, and members will enroll in a specific institution within their network. The three networks are:

- **Health + Hospitals:** in addition to primary care, members will receive full service, including pharmacy, specialty care, imaging, inpatient care, and others, for additional co-pay
- **Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs):** in addition to primary care, members will have access to a wide range of services, including dental and behavioral health, while referral to specialists, imaging, inpatient care and others will not be covered in the program
- **Community Doctors:** members will have access to services offered by their local primary care physician

Networks of FQHCs and community doctors will be established through agreement to set criteria including managing care and referring patients as needed, and will receive annual grants to do so.
In order to supplement the services available through FQHCs and community doctors, specialist visits and hospitalizations for all New Yorkers in the program will take place through Health + Hospitals. Voluntary hospitals will also have the option to be enrolled through agreement to provide secondary and tertiary services, including imagining, specialty care, emergency care, and inpatient care for enrollees.

The program will have no additive cost to the City, with investment continuing through the $100 million annually spent on NYC Care. After the establishment of philanthropic partnerships with the City to launch the program, costs should be offset by savings to Health + Hospitals due to increased primary care access—including reduction of uncompensated preventable hospitalizations and emergency department visits.

Investing in Health Equity and Access to Public Health

In addition to ensuring every New Yorker can pay for health care, we must identify and remove the other obstacles that prevent our residents from getting the care they need. Whether it’s increasing physical proximity to health centers, refining our use of data to improve health outcomes, or taking aggressive approaches to ending longstanding and worsening mental health and opioid use crises, we must make the necessary investments—prioritizing communities that have historically received the least investment—to ensure nothing stands between New Yorkers and healthy, comfortable lives.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Provide primary care options near each New Yorker’s home

Shaun Donovan’s campaign is focused on making all of the services and opportunities that New York has to offer as readily accessible for all New Yorkers as they have historically been to those most well off. This is the motivation behind Shaun’s central 15 minute neighborhoods policy, which commits to providing each New Yorker a great public school, rapid transportation, fresh food, a good park, and a chance to get ahead within 15 minutes of their front door.

High-quality health care must be part of every resident’s neighborhood, and as such, a primary health facility will also be included within 15 minutes of every New Yorker’s home, addressing the unacceptable lack of health care options in many New York City communities.

We will further identify areas where even more substantial investments in health care infrastructure are long overdue and work to remedy these oversights. One area of focus is Staten Island, which currently lacks a public hospital. In Shaun’s first
six months, he will ask his Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services and commissioners—along with input from Staten Islanders and elected officials—to provide recommendations on what additional health care resources, including a possible Health + Hospitals expansion, are needed.

**Address the gaps in the maternal mortality crisis and reproductive health**

New York City faces stark inequities in maternal health outcomes, and the issue has been front and center for advocates and communities of color. Black and Latinx women are more likely to die and more likely to experience severe complications related to pregnancy and childbirth than White women, even when they deliver at the same hospital, controlling for socioeconomic and insurance status.

To address this crisis, we pledge to create a major initiative to eliminate maternal mortality disparities. We will:

- Expand access to high-quality prenatal care for women in the shelter system, justice system, and public schools
- Promote and invest in quality improvement programs, cultural competency, and simulation training for providers
- Expand access to doulas and community health workers in underserved areas
- Ensure that every New Yorker who visits NYC Health + Hospitals for prenatal care is screened by a social worker to identify needs and address social determinants of health
- Expand group prenatal care programming to all NYC Health + Hospitals locations
- Expand prenatal outreach programs to at-risk mothers, linking with existing programs like Growing Up NYC and Healthy Start, and build local outreach workforce of community health workers, linked to H+H sites, to follow at-risk mothers throughout pregnancy and pre- and post-partum monitoring
- Promote workforce development particularly in communities of color to build a health care workforce that is representative

We also need to support residents in their reproductive health. For those who are choosing to not get pregnant, especially those still in school, we will expand access to contraception, including long-acting reversible contraception (LARC), in settings including school-based health centers. We will also strengthen education about sex and healthy relationships in schools so students are equipped with the necessary information to keep themselves safe. For those who are trying to get pregnant, we will expand access to pre-conception care and fertility treatment services at NYC Health + Hospitals.

Sexual health also extends into the trans community as they are often at risk of lacking treatment. To close this gap, we will strengthen health care services for
transgender New Yorkers through DOHMH and NYC Health + Hospitals clinics as well as in the primary care safety net, and call on the federal government to safeguard protections against discrimination for transgender people.

Build a robust public health workforce pipeline

Improving access to and delivery of health care services will require bolstering our health workforce pipeline. In our EJobs Platform, we make a commitment to create the largest comprehensive skills-based training program in the US for thousands of students in secondary (DOE) and post-secondary (CUNY) education, purposefully linked to workplace training and tightly aligned around the sectors where middle-income job growth will be strongest, including life sciences and health.

We also highlight the importance of—beyond repairing our economy and getting New Yorkers back to work quickly—looking to the future by investing in life sciences innovation. This includes engaging residents in the Bronx and Harlem in a comprehensive planning effort to collaboratively shape a vision for a dual uptown life-sciences hub that is anchored on robust job training, clear pathways to employment for residents, and a twenty-year development cycle.

We will align NYC Apprenticeship, CUNY science and health education, and the “Corporate 100,000 Jobs Commitment” to guide New York City students and workers to life sciences jobs across the educational spectrum.

One focus will be on developing lab technician apprenticeship programs that can provide a means of upward mobility and a path to PhD programs or other specialized training for any New Yorker, particularly those from disadvantaged communities and backgrounds, through practical lab and research experience.

Provide seamless access to health care for the homeless population and people leaving jail

As highlighted across this plan, we must make sure that members of our most vulnerable populations have adequate access to health care, and this includes our homeless and previously incarcerated neighbors. Inefficiencies in the delivery of health services to these groups and overreliance on incarceration as a response to homelessness, mental illness, substance use and poverty costs the city more in the long run and prevents people from receiving the services they need.
Addressing Parallel Health Crises and working toward Long-term Health and Wellness

As we overcome the pandemic, we must stay focused on addressing the other health crises that already existed throughout our city. From the opioid epidemic to maternal mortality to diabetes and obesity, the City should be working toward investments in public health that create long-lasting, healthy communities.

An important part of this effort is recognizing and addressing the environmental determinants of health—often linked to New Yorkers’ access to fresh food, safe streets and open streets, and public spaces like parks—in order to ensure everyone has the chance to live a healthy and active life. All of these and other positive factors will be prioritized in the design of 15 minute neighborhoods.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Tackle the growing mental health crisis**

Prior to the pandemic, our city was already grappling with a growing mental health crisis, with the number of mental-health-related 911 calls increasing by 23% from 2015 to 2018 and nearly one in ten New Yorkers reporting having depression. The last year has only exacerbated the situation: nearly half of adults reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety related to coronavirus; over a third reported that they may suffer from depression and a similar number observed a negative impact on their children’s emotional and behavioral health.

In order to ensure that New Yorkers are getting the help they need in moments of crisis, we must move mental health response entirely into the domain of public health and away from law enforcement, and adjust City resources accordingly.

In order to carry out a comprehensive and aggressive response to this crisis, the Donovan administration will create a mental health interagency council, led by commissioners of key agencies such as the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Education, the Administration for Children’s Services, and the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services.

Our three-step approach will focus on identifying and preventing mental illness, strengthening treatment, and improving crisis interventions.

Almost one in ten public high school students in New York report attempting suicide. We need to expand school-based mental health services and early interventions to better identify and manage illness and improve outcomes. This...
includes increasing the number of social workers and psychologists in schools, as well as in shelters housing the 10% of New York City students that are homeless. It also includes expanding support for screening and early identification of mental health issues in college-age students—with a focus on CUNY and CCNY— especially those experiencing first- or early-episode signs of more serious mental illness and at risk of dropping out. Read more about our plans to support New York City students in our Education Platform.

We must also expand support for training, capacity-building, and implementation support for routine mental health screening in primary care and other frontline care settings, including congregate care services for the elderly, and we must strengthen our system of surveillance by investing in improved survey and data collection.

Going beyond early intervention and prevention of mental illness, we must improve its treatment for all New Yorkers by ensuring our community providers have more resources, and establishing access to mental health treatment as a priority within the city's public option plan. This goes hand-in-hand with the 15 minute neighborhoods vision, which will ensure that mental health resources within primary care settings are available near each New Yorker's home.

We must expand integrated, community-based services, particularly through investments in job training and improved workforce participation, telemedicine, and stronger hospital-based mental health services for those who need them—including by improving connections to care and other support services for individuals with mental health needs discharged from emergency departments.

We must also invest in a middle level of care between clinics and hospitals that includes partial hospital or day treatment as well as intensive outpatient programs, and we must ensure that our caregivers are receiving the appropriate support they need to stay healthy and effective in their work. This latter point is particularly salient given the toll that the COVID pandemic has taken on the mental health of our health care workers.

These investments must also include an approach to homelessness that reimagines the right to shelter as a right to housing and incorporates supportive services. A full 35% of individuals in homeless shelters suffer from serious mental illness, meaning that by quickly providing permanent housing and access to social services, improving the delivery of those services, and placing high value on community integration, we can help one of our city's most vulnerable populations address both housing and health issues simultaneously. Read more about our plan to affordably and securely house all New Yorkers in our Housing Platform.

And we must recognize our failure in responding to mental health crises. As of 2014, there were about as many individuals with mental illness in Rikers as all 24 psychiatric hospitals in New York State combined. People with mental illness are 16
times more likely to die in a police encounter, and in New York City at least 16 people with mental illness have been killed by the police in the last five years alone.

In order to ensure that mental health crises receive the appropriate response, led by trained professionals, we will create a dedicated mental health crisis hotline to divert calls from 911 and invest in frontline mental health crisis resources, including social workers, counselors, and emergency medical technicians. We will also train all police and enforce their use of de-escalation techniques in situations where they may be present.

We must also invest in community-based housing and support programs to build on crisis response. People in crisis often need transitional and supportive housing programs, primary health care, community-based mental health and social services like Fountain House, and help with substance use challenges as a next step to help stabilize during and after a crisis, and to create on-ramps to longer-term recovery. These programs must focus on those too often unheard and unseen, like the elderly, who have specific mental health needs.

We also will expand funding for mental health and addiction Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) programs and pre-trial diversion programs, and commit to priority decarceration of Riker’s Island for people with mental health conditions, especially serious mental illness.

The Donovan administration will address the failures of the federal government to provide federal funds for needed inpatient psychiatric treatment, which is only one part of the needed multifaceted response to people in crisis. In the meantime, we will work with the State to establish a Mental Health Care Crisis Response Fund to cover this inpatient psychiatric care deficit as we advocate for federal reform. Read more about our plans to improve mental health crisis response in our Criminal Justice Platform.

We must properly support those with mental illness who have been incarcerated by improving delivery of services in our jails and prison, and by creating a specific program for people leaving our jails who have a mental health diagnosis and lack health insurance. These should be paired with targeted reentry low-threshold services that can effectively support individuals as they reestablish themselves.

Address the opioid epidemic

More New Yorkers die of drug overdoses than homicides, suicides, and motor vehicle crashes combined. After seven consecutive years of increases, the number and rate of overdose deaths in New York City finally declined in 2018. Despite that, data show that these decreases are not evenly distributed across neighborhoods, and that gains are not uniform across race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.
While much progress has been made, we need to go further and focus especially on neighborhoods where treatment has been limited. Through a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach, we will focus on prevention, treatment, and recovery.

The goal is not to shame anyone into not seeking treatment and help for their addiction but rather give them the tools they need in a harm-reduction approach to support recovery and reduce relapse. Our goal is to prevent opioid misuse and to do that we will invest in evidence-based prevention programs in schools, hospitals, and in partnership with communities. In coordination with our 15 minute neighborhoods, we will make connections to our health care services, including primary care physicians, to help residents sustain their recovery.

We will also aim to develop multilingual and culturally competent education campaigns so that the necessary information reaches the greatest number of people.

We must work on reducing inappropriate opioid prescribing, and that takes coordination with our health system. Through improved data sharing, education, and guidelines, we can change prescribing practices. This will encourage evidence-based alternatives that will lead to fewer people having their first exposure to opioids be through legal means.

The next step in assisting those struggling with opioid addiction is working toward preventing overdose deaths. With a focus on high-need communities, we will put Naloxone, an overdose-reversal medication, in the hands of everyone who needs it. We will provide training on how to administer this medicine so that those who are in dire need can be saved.

In the communities hit hardest by the opioid crisis, we must start by establishing the city’s first Safe Use Community Centers, taking substance use off the streets and making treatment options more accessible. Similar centers outside the US have been shown to lower drug-related deaths, ambulance calls, and HIV infections, all without increasing crime, injection drug use, or return to use.

We also need to reconsider who is responding to these overdose incidents. To reduce avoidable arrests and hospitalizations, we will strengthen the emergency response to crisis events by trained clinicians and peers, and keep the police focused on the most violent crimes.

Lastly, for those residents that are on the path to recovery, we need to offer support to help them get over the finish line and stay addiction free. To do this, we will expand access to medication-assisted treatment services.

For those who are both homeless and suffering from addiction, we will work toward housing them by investing in supportive housing units with high-quality, on-site services that are targeted toward those in recovery. We will also invest in street outreach service programs.
End the AIDS/HIV epidemic

New York City has long been a leader in combating HIV/AIDS, most recently meeting the UN milestone of having 90%+ of New Yorkers with HIV know their status, 90%+ of New Yorkers diagnosed with HIV on treatment, and 90%+ of New Yorkers diagnosed with HIV on treatment virally suppressed. In 2018, the number of people newly diagnosed with HIV in the city fell below 2,000 for the first time since annual HIV reporting began. That said, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities persist, with much higher rates of new HIV diagnoses for individuals in high poverty neighborhoods.

First, we will enhance community-based education and outreach programs. These will be focused on the highest-need communities that are without other forms of support and where the disease is prevalent. We will also expand access to PrEP and PEP to reduce the spread of new infections.

Treat public safety and gun violence as health issues

As we work to keep New Yorkers healthy, their safety must be a priority. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) describes a public health approach to violence reduction that focuses on identifying and addressing the root causes of violence in a long-term and sustainable way. This is in contrast with an approach that is focused on responding to crime and violence solely via arrest and prosecution, but does not seek to understand and deal with their causes.

In order to ensure safety while reducing the NYPD footprint and over-incarceration, we will implement a citywide, cohesive public health approach to violence through community-led public safety and racial justice initiatives, prioritizing targeted investments in the communities that have been most harmed by violence.

Another related public health and safety issue in our city is the prevalence of gun violence. By refocusing police resources away from issues like mental health crises and school safety, we will be able to better orient these toward closing the out-of-state gun pipeline and preventing or investigating serious crime. Further, given the lack of action by the federal government in this regard, City agencies will initiate and fund research on the causes and prevention of gun violence through a public health lens. Read more about our public safety proposals within our Criminal Justice Platform.

Prevent chronic disease

COVID-19 masked a “second pandemic” of untreated chronic disease, which will impact health well into the future. By prioritizing access to primary care, we will ensure that New Yorkers can constantly monitor their health and identify and treat chronic disease proactively.
More than half of adults in New York City are overweight or obese, and the rate of childhood obesity is rising. We will work with schools to coordinate healthy meal standards and ensure that the food being provided encourages healthy eating habits. We will also strengthen the New York City Food Standards and encourage further adoption among private employers. As we’ve committed in our Transportation Platform, we will bolster Open Streets to provide more areas for New Yorkers to get outside to walk, play, and exercise.

For those that do not have equitable access to fresh food in their neighborhoods, we will work to close that gap through our 15 minute neighborhoods. Over one million New Yorkers face hunger every year, including one in five children. The needs for food are mounting in the wake of the pandemic, as millions are pushed in poverty. Additionally, we will increase funding for community-based organizations to identify and enroll low-income families and seniors in critical benefits including SNAP. We will also increase funding for emergency food providers, including food pantries and soup kitchens as well as call on the Federal government to boost SNAP benefits and extend eligibility.

Climate is also a major contributing factor to overall health by increasing chances of suffering from asthma or heat-related health issues. Please see our Climate Platform to learn how we will work to close peaker plants and increase green space that will benefit overall public health.

**Promote “NYC Healthiest City” commitments to revitalize our economy**

The economic pressure related to the collapse in tourism has been immense—the hospitality industry alone provided as many as 400,000 jobs to our city before last March’s shutdown. Coming out of the COVID pandemic, New York City will again be one of the top tourism destinations in the world and we will work vigorously to extend the prosperity that tourism brings to all parts of New York City—and we will do so by not only making New York City healthier, but by communicating to all who would visit that New York is open for business.

Our campaign is committed to partnering with NYC & Company to publicize our “NYC Healthiest City” commitments, first aimed at getting locals to go out again, then to attract regional, international, and business visitors. Leveraging our city’s resources to let the world know we’re open again will help speed up recovery across a broad range of sectors. Read more about our plans to revitalize New York City’s economy in our Jobs and Neighborhoods Platforms.
Your zip code should not determine your quality of life, the surrounding environment, or your chances for economic advancement. That is why I am committed to an equitable climate plan that prioritizes overburdened neighborhoods that have historically suffered the worst impacts of pollution, and are suffering most acutely from climate change. These are the same communities with the greatest death toll from the coronavirus. This plan puts these neighborhoods first, while promoting equal access to healthy air, permanent Open Streets, and holding our government accountable as we drive towards a just transition to net-zero emissions.
Climate change is a global issue, but cities are on the frontline of its impacts—and the response. The Donovan administration will have a laser-focus on achieving net-zero emissions by mid-century and protecting New Yorkers from climate threats like flooding, severe storms, and heatwaves. This shift to a green economy is an unprecedented opportunity to support longer-term growth and jobs for all New Yorkers—prioritizing the communities left behind. And throughout all of this is the prioritization of New York neighborhoods that have always borne the brunt of climate change, and its contributing pollutants, because of a history of discriminatory policies and practices.

Shaun is a visionary who understands the climate emergency, but will also act. He will match urgency with a deep focus on implementation and competent management to follow through on ambitious emissions goals and policies. Shaun will work with community leaders, local environmental groups, and the people of New York City to ensure that his climate policy will be just and effective in mitigating the impacts of climate change. He will work with those outside the city—with the Biden administration, Congress, the Cuomo administration, and State Legislators—because the solutions require collaboration by all levels of government. And he will embed climate into every single decision made by the city. He has been a public servant and leader on these issues for decades. In his home town, President Obama asked him to lead the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force, leaving a stronger, more resilient region than before the storm hit. He knows how to bring together community leaders and experts from around the world to build a New York for everyone.

For too long, underserved communities have dealt with disproportionate levels of pollution, poor housing quality, and a lack of access to clean air and clean water, leading to adverse health effects—and they’ve been further devastated by COVID-19. Climate change compounds injustice amongst historically disadvantaged and at-risk communities. Shaun will prioritize these communities in both preparing
for the impacts of climate change and developing solutions to catalyzing the clean energy revolution in New York City.

Building upon the legacy of former Mayor Michael Bloomberg, New York City will return to the global stage in 2022 as a leading example of how to mitigate, adapt to, and prepare for climate change. The next mayor’s term is critical to saving the planet and staying on a path to net-zero emissions by 2050, a target scientists say we cannot miss. Shaun is the only candidate with the vision, skills, and determination to get us there, with justice leading the way. No other candidate has the track record and management competence to tackle the challenges of a pandemic, economic recovery, and the climate crisis.

Our plan will focus on:

- Centering Environmental Justice
- Alleviating Public Health Disparities
- Establishing Permanent and Equitable Public Space
- Building a Green Economy for Everyone
- Taking Real Steps to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Empowering and Preparing the Next Generation
- Strengthening Climate Resilience and Disaster Response
- Achieving Zero Waste

**Centering Environmental Justice**

The Donovan administration will work to eliminate the legacy of environmental racism across the five boroughs through community- and data-driven policy. In order to reinforce and elevate this work, we will —within the first 100 days of taking office—issue an all-of-government Environmental Justice Executive Order. Shaun will then expand and complete the audit of city policies, including OneNYC 2050, through a climate and equity lens, begin a collaborative process with the city’s Environmental Justice interagency working group to define climate equity checklists and scorecards, and ensure key mayoral appointments have climate justice expertise.

Your zip code should not determine the quality of your life and its surrounding environment. It is imperative to restore, strengthen, and protect all communities, prioritizing historically underserved communities, as we combat the climate crisis. Climate change and equity are inseparable. These issues must be thought of in an integrated manner so that New York supports long-term health and sustainability in an equitable way—one that strives to redress past harms to our communities and
creates new power structures accountable to their future, committing us irreversibly to a just transition. And that is what the Donovan administration will do.

From pollution exposure, to public land access, to training for clean good jobs of the future, Black and Brown communities are often left out of both the policy discussions and the very rooms they are being discussed in. For example, using EPA data and local mortality figures, researchers ranked the Bronx as the worst for COVID-19 death rates and respiratory hazards compared to the more than 3,100 other counties in the country. Yet, targeted efforts to address the borough’s plight have not been made. We will work tirelessly to correct decades of inequity that have seen low-income and communities of color disproportionately impacted by environmental issues that arose from a broad spectrum of private sector and public policy decisions.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Empower neighborhoods to reimagine their communities and hold government accountable

Change should occur with and for the community—not to the community. That is why we are committed to working with local leaders and their residents to reimagine their own communities—because community issues are best understood by those who experience their burdens on a day-to-day basis. Following the issuance of the Mayoral Environmental Justice Executive Order, Shaun will work to implement the following priorities:

- Expand the use of physical and social vulnerability screening and mapping to better identify these environmental justice communities—neighborhoods that have historically and are presently bearing the brunt of climate change and its contributing pollutants—taking lessons learned from California’s CalEnviroScreen, working with the Biden administration as they improve EPA’s EJScreen, and making sure these tools are complementary to those being developed by New York State as they implement the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

- Create a climate equity scorecard and public-facing transparency platforms for all policies and projects, including setting agency-by-agency environmental justice goals, tying metrics to measure success, and presenting these results on a regular basis to the public and the communities affected. Read more about our plans to improve our use of data in our Innovation Platform, and about our plans to promote equity, including the naming of the city’s first Chief Equity Officer, in our Racial Equity Platform.
• **Rigorously review all existing policies** to better understand the systemic blindspots in low-income and historically disadvantaged communities and address them thoughtfully, quickly, and competently—and work with key community leaders on how to improve and hold ourselves accountable.

• **Listen to and partner as equal collaborators with local residents** to identify environmental priorities in those communities and offer resources and the power of City government to improve quality of life and opportunity.

• **Hold Albany accountable for the environmental justice goals set by New York State as part of the landmark CLCPA.** This includes that disadvantaged communities receive 35-40% of overall benefits of spending on clean energy and energy efficiency programs, projects, or investments, with the goal of achieving 40%. Many of these communities are in New York City, and we will work with the state legislature, the New York State Public Utility Commission, the Governor’s office, and the federal government—as the Biden administration may have a similar goal in place—to ensure that our communities receive their fair share and are involved in the allocation process.

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**Turn Rikers Island into a physical manifestation of environmental justice**

The closure of the notorious Rikers jail complex is a much-needed and long-awaited step towards a more fair and equitable city. As the jails close, it is time to plan for the island’s future as a resource for public good, particularly to benefit communities that have been most impacted by mass incarceration. Shaun believes New York City’s new green economy must not replicate the low-wage, low-benefit, low-vized, discriminatory past, and he is committed to turning the island into a physical manifestation of environmental justice. The Donovan administration will work with stakeholders citywide to ensure it becomes a cornerstone of community development and Just Transition for uses like green energy, a 21st century wastewater treatment facility to clean our water, composting, and possibly even new public space. Achieving this could help find creative, win-win-win solutions for communities, the economy, and the environment in places where it facilitates permanently dismantling carbon or waste infrastructure. Read more about our plans to close Rikers in our Criminal Justice Platform.

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**Shaun Donovan just gets it.**

Shaun understands that making the Big Apple green will lead to a more equitable city across all five boroughs for all New Yorkers. New York needs to be a global leader again, and with this plan Shaun is showing us the way.

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**Vishaan Chakrabarti**

Architect and Dean, College of Environmental Design, UC Berkeley
Alleviating Public Health Disparities

These past several years, we have seen just how “public” public health is. What affects one of us can quickly affect all of us. Public health is largely influenced by environmental factors, and climate mitigation and adaptation is intimately tied to public health. Public health disparities in New York City are divided along racial, neighborhood, and income levels. The Donovan administration will ensure that public health disparities in New York City will be reduced with the goal that no New Yorker faces disproportionate health burden as a result of environmental factors, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or zipcode.

We will work to address the underlying causes of health disparities and ensure that these causes are front of mind when fighting climate change. Reducing air pollution and mitigating the impacts of extreme heat are examples of strategies a Donovan administration will take in the battle for our climate that have immense public health benefits. These public health disparities and how they will be measured and addressed by the Donovan administration will be part of the environmental justice scorecard and planning process outlined above.

Reducing air pollution from peaker plants

Over 1.2 million New Yorkers live within a one-mile radius of a fossil-fuel powered “peaker” plant, or power plant that only runs for a few days per year to meet periods of high electricity demand. These plants emit exhaust and pollution that can lead to illnesses and poor health outcomes, such as asthma and heart conditions. This problem is now even more urgent, as asthma, hypertension, and other air pollution-induced health conditions are associated with more severe cases of COVID-19. Historically disadvantaged communities often bear the brunt of these conditions, including the South Bronx—which is referred to as “asthma alley,” and whose rate is 8-12 times higher than the national average.

We will work with and support local community-based organizations and elected officials advocating for the expedited closure of all “peaker plants” currently located in all five boroughs. The steps taken by the New York Power Authority (NYPA) and key environmental justice groups to study the replacement of NYPA’s natural gas peaker plants are a needed and important step to do so. Additionally we will work in close collaboration with state policymakers in Albany to achieve this. This strategy will leverage the legal grounds of state policy including New York State’s CLCPA, DEC’s new and updated nitrogen oxide (NOx) regulations, and Title V air permits to replace fossil fuels.

Mitigating the impacts of extreme heat

Our city’s inequality is exacerbated during the hottest days of the year, because extreme heat disproportionally impacts the same communities that have been
most affected by the pandemic: the economically disadvantaged, people of color, and the elderly. We will invest in more green infrastructure like parks, green roofs, and street trees to tackle the health effects of extreme heat. This includes:

- **Expanding New York City’s current CoolRoofs program**, which coats building rooftops with light-colored and reflective materials.
- Working with the Departments of Parks, Transportation, and other land use agencies to **increase green space, green infrastructure, and cool roads, and make a joint effort to reduce the urban heat island effect**. More of our equitable public space policies are detailed below.
- **Subsidizing air conditioners to environmental justice communities** to prevent heat-related illnesses. We will establish an air conditioner rebate program that allows people to trade-in old air conditioners for new, efficient models.

Read more about our plans to address environmental determinants of health in our Health Platform.

**Establishing Permanent and Equitable Public Space**

New York City has the **least amount of green space** per person of any city in the United States, and the pandemic has laid bare the equity dimensions of public space access. A Donovan administration will protect and maintain existing green space, while continuing to support the development of new green space in disadvantaged and high-density neighborhoods. Looking beyond what New Yorkers might be familiar with in terms of traditional green space and public space, a Donovan administration will take action to create new open space by establishing permanent, long-term Open Streets that put people, and not cars, first.

Public spaces are critical for sustainability and resilience, and have been proven to be crucial to public health, safety, and improved quality of life. Investing in new public space has great value but is harder to accomplish given the high density of New York City’s built environment, so we must look for new solutions. A permanent Open Streets policy presents the opportunity to transform our streets and sidewalks into livable public spaces, with places to sit, play, and gather. We must rethink how we approach public spaces, not as just an amenity, but as a necessity to address historical environmental inequities. To create a healthy and safe New York for all, we must strive to improve the accessibility, availability, and quality of public spaces.

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Kate Orff  
Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes, Columbia University
We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Create a permanent Open Streets policy that is centered around environmental justice and equity**

Streets and sidewalks make up more than **80%** of a city’s public space. They provide opportunities for business activity, serve as a gathering space, and provide a space for people to safely commute and move about the city. They are the embodiment of the complex web of economic and social relationships that is a city. Although Mayor de Blasio’s COVID-19 Open Streets initiative has been executed imperfectly, it has shown potential to foster a new urban space policy that is centered around environmental justice and equity, and creates a strong sense of community, aids the service industry, and brings new purpose to the streets of New York. Already, the Department of Transportation is working to make **34th Avenue in Jackson Heights and Corona** a permanent Open Street, a decision that was encouraged by local residents. We will commit to **expanding permanent Open Streets that reflect input from residents and maintain the unique character of each neighborhood across all of New York City**.

Using a framework rooted in data, we will **work with agencies, small business owners, and community leaders to evaluate where Open Streets need to be prioritized**, to develop Open Streets and to help community leaders and organizations manage this new public space. We will **develop strong grassroots efforts and public-private partnerships** to coordinate the creation, development, and maintenance of such a network.

**Use short-term solutions to create long-term Open Streets**

We will **develop interim-use projects and pilot programs** to allow communities to visualize and actively participate in changes that take shape in their neighborhood before they become long term. This also ensures that a space is not left unusable or empty during maintenance periods.

Additionally, we will **look to make quick fixes** (such as signage improvements or streetlight repairs), providing valuable change alongside more extensive upgrades. And, we will **develop outdoor toolkits and other resources to assist the service industry**, to create a more sustainable and long-term development of Open Streets.

**Develop economic and educational programs that coincide with a broader Open Streets policy**

We will couple permanent Open Streets with educational, stewardship, and job-creation programs:
• **We will establish a Youth Horticulture Corps**—inspired by the Civilian Conservation Corps—that will help to maintain public spaces while serving as a jobs creation and education program for young people. This Corps was inspired by the New Deal, and may also be revived by the incoming Biden administration—we will look to partner with them, or stand up New York City’s own program.

• **We will also partner with New York City public schools, to incorporate an environmentally-focused curriculum** within the existing policy of outdoor learning, which will also contribute to stewardship and educational opportunities.

**Increase connectivity and accessibility to public spaces by expanding corridors and connections**

New York City has approximately 2,300 parks; yet, 1.1 million New Yorkers are not within a 10 minute walk. We will develop permanent Open Streets to ensure safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists alike while simultaneously creating new public spaces and new corridors to access the city’s parks. Our Open Streets policies will connect neighborhoods, parks, and plazas to create a network of corridors that serve pedestrians and micromobility users. Equity and accessibility will underlie all funding and development decisions, which will be made with the consensus of community members, partners, and city agencies.

Read more about our plans for Open Streets in our Transportation Platform.

**Expand funding and staffing for public space maintenance and capital projects**

In New York, the Department of Parks and Recreation maintains 14% of the city’s land, and their services have been undeniable for physical, mental, and social health during this pandemic. However, parks receive less than 0.5% of the city’s total budget every year despite seeing their highest usage in decades during COVID-19. This is unacceptable, and we plan to make New York City Parks an essential service in order to safeguard a minimum level of public funding. This includes:

• **Restructuring funding** to ensure equitable quality, maintenance, and access to open spaces across all five boroughs

• **Decentralizing private funding pools** by distributing funds raised through parks conservancies and foundations (with funds specifically targeting

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**Shaun Donovan’s platform addresses the effects of climate change that hit working people and communities of color first and worst. Shaun has the experience to solve complex issues like climate change, and he is a natural connector who can bring together community leaders, unions and experts from around the world to build a better New York for everyone.**

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**Mike Fishman**
Climate Activist, Former SEIU Secretary-Treasurer and Campaign Chair
neglected parks and spaces)—while prioritizing environmental justice communities first

- **Prioritizing funding for neighborhoods and spaces** that have less open space, fewer investment opportunities, and that face disproportionately negative impacts of environmental and public health conditions
- **Initiating direct stewardship of spaces**, which will lead to the creation of new jobs
- **Fostering strong public-private partnerships** within public spaces in order to localize stewardship.

### Building a Green Economy for Everyone

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented job loss in the city. The pandemic came at a time when we were already facing a growing chasm in income inequality, housing uncertainty, and skill gaps in our city’s economy. While the first priority is putting New Yorkers back to work, our efforts will also focus on supporting longer-term job growth for New Yorkers.

We see potential in the issues New York City faces and the local workforce that can be employed to remedy them. New York is on a pathway to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions citywide by 2050. This requires making all sectors of our economy cleaner, from increasing energy efficiency in buildings, to shifting our industrial facility practices, to making our public transit more sustainable and accessible. We will need New Yorkers to achieve these goals.

This shift to a green economy presents an unprecedented economic opportunity for New York City workers to lead the world in building a clean energy future. The workers creating and maintaining our buildings will need to be equipped with new design and construction techniques; the operators of our public transportation system will need to be thinking about sustainability; and those generating the energy that fuels our homes will be using renewable energy sources, including wind, solar, and geothermal. This transition will require careful attention and investment, while positioning New Yorkers for stable, good jobs of the future.

### We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Prepare New York City**

We will prepare New York City residents for our net zero economy, with a focus on the skills required for building retrofits and offshore wind production.

We will **spearhead a new New York City Climate Corps**, a citywide initiative built off the Clean Energy Service Corps program, an AmeriCorps program initially set up under President Obama to employ young Americans on clean energy and resilience
projects through nonprofit and local government grants. This will build on local service and educational programs, such as the CUNY Service Corps and CUNY’s existing, high-quality environmental, sustainability, and energy management degree and credentialing programs. Adequate funding and thoughtful program design will ensure that the Corps can fully include and support diverse participants who reflect the communities they serve.

Additionally, we will **conduct a full audit on the jobs required for Local Law 97 compliance**. We will partner with external stakeholders to publish an understanding of the jobs most needed, so that training programs can be developed accordingly. City Hall will look to replicate successful programs, like the “1,000 Green Supers Program,” in the context of critical roles needed for this transition to a green economy.

**Ensure that the jobs are good-quality**

Building on the successful process to increase the minimum wage in New York State, this administration will **explore establishing a wage board to set fair terms for compensation for climate adaptation workers**, integrating rates of pay, work rules, and scope regarding private and public projects. We must make sure that our clean economy jobs are well-paying and accessible, while maintaining an eye towards keeping costs down.

**Work to make New York City the center of clean tech innovation**

This will include efforts like **creating a Clean Power Generator Jobs Accelerator** that can align zoning, regulatory, and tax incentives to support private investments in the wind-power generation sector and create jobs in areas such as harbor services, information technology, and power transmission. Read more about our plans to create pathways toward opportunity for all New Yorkers in our [Jobs and Neighborhood Platforms](#).

**Taking Real Steps to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Despite sizable reductions to New York City's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions since 2005, there have been more recent emissions spikes. The city must focus on policy implementation to reach the current greenhouse gas mitigation goal of a 40% reduction by 2030 and an 80% reduction by 2050, as well as achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. We will rigorously and transparently track progress toward this goal and further make up for lost ground with even deeper reductions.

Since the **majority** of New York City's greenhouse gas emissions can be sourced to buildings and transportation, our strategies lead with these sectors. We will work closely with the state to create optimal conditions for clean energy development.
locally, including offshore wind and solar energy, to generate maximum renewable power feeding into the state’s grid, and ensure disadvantaged communities are not disproportionately burdened with the costs of transitioning to a clean economy.

**We are committing to the following policies and programs:**

**Leverage our buildings as tools to reduce GHG emissions**

We envision a future where all public and private buildings in New York City run on pollution-free electricity, phasing out the use of fossil fuels, including gas and oil, in all buildings. This transition must be paired with policies and programs to make sure the poorest communities aren't the last to transition off fossil fuel systems.

In a post-COVID NYC, there will be a potential shift in commercial real estate away from office space; the need to repurpose buildings given this reality presents additional opportunity to ensure sustainability and affordability. Both our residential and commercial buildings can make measurable progress toward New York City’s emissions reduction goals.

To get there, we will work with building owners, experts, and solution providers to **further refine and implement New York City’s landmark existing building emissions law**. Local Law 97 of 2019. A part of the Climate Mobilization Act, this is one of the most **ambitious** local policies to cut greenhouse gas emissions globally, requiring the city’s largest buildings to meet increasingly stringent carbon reduction standards over the next decade. As one strategy, City Hall can **help building owners comply through full implementation of the city’s new Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program** in partnership with lenders, owners, and mortgage insurers, and accompanied by industry-wide education.

We will plan to **enact a zero-carbon building code for new buildings by 2030 and eliminate fossil fuels from new building construction and operation even sooner.** More than 50,000 buildings are built or renovated annually. Without more stringent codes, emissions from new buildings will be “locked in” for decades.

Additionally, we must lead by example by **ensuring all of New York City’s public buildings, including New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) buildings, are healthy and pollution-free**, through energy audits or retrofits, as fast as possible. These efforts will improve health outcomes for residents and occupants; research shows that cooking with gas stoves **pollutes** indoor air and **increases** the risks of asthma, especially among children and disadvantaged populations. Given that the city’s public housing residents may have higher asthma **rates** than other New Yorkers, environmental justice demands we center a sustainable NYCHA in our climate strategy. Read more about our plans to make public housing greener in our **Housing Platform**.
The City will incentivize efficiency measures for smaller buildings that are not currently required to meet the carbon performance standards of Local Law 97 through policies like time-of-sale transparency requirements. Additionally, we will collaborate with industry leaders to accommodate energy storage in the building code in a way that both streamlines installation and fire safety concerns. This will help expedite the replacement of New York City’s remaining fossil-fired “peaker” power plants, which disproportionately burden low-income communities and people of color, with cleaner energy.

And, we must support stronger building code enforcement by investing in the enforcement workforce, training them to enforce an advanced energy code, and expanding the use of new code checking technologies. In New York City, energy code compliance failures were previously found to occur in 20% of projects, and staffing levels were deemed inadequate to fully enforce the energy code in new buildings and some alterations. Research suggests that each $1 spent on code enforcement can yield $6 in energy savings. Read more in our Jobs ad Neighborhoods Platforms.

**Invest in more efficient transportation**

Vehicle congestion is expensive, dangerous, and polluting, and is estimated to cost New York City up to $15 billion annually. Our goal to create safer, more equitable, and more just open streets for pedestrians and bikers will not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers. While ambitious and challenging, we hope to significantly reduce GHG emissions in NYC’s transportation sector and facilitate the use of sustainable modes by all New Yorkers to truly deliver on the current administration’s goal that 80% of trips be made using sustainable modes by 2050. We will implement efficient, equitable, safe, and clean mobility policies and programs and ensure that the MTA bus system is entirely electric by 2040. Our commitment to implement this includes:

- Expanding bicycle infrastructure and creating connected, protected bike lanes and pedestrian corridors across all boroughs. By reallocating street space to pedestrians, we can create safer streets and reduce the need for privately owned vehicles.

- Expanding bus service in New York City to reach traditionally underserved neighborhoods by launching true Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) with fully separated and dedicated busways, platform-grade “stations,” and intelligent technology—with a goal of an eventual all-electric fleet. Separately, when we work to speed up regular bus service and expand bus lanes in transit deserts, we will provide New Yorkers with additional and quicker options to travel without a personal automobile. On-road emissions account for almost all greenhouse gas emissions from transportation in New York City; national averages show that public transit including buses produces fewer emissions than do private vehicles.
Increasing the availability of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations to ensure that all residents, in every borough and neighborhood, live within a quick drive of on-street EV charging stations or fast-charging EV stations. Since many New Yorkers still may need access to a car, the city should do everything in its power to support pollution-free options, while also working with the state to ensure that electric vehicles are accessible across all income levels.

Facilitating partnerships between New York City’s public school districts and utilities to convert a portion of yellow diesel buses to electric models, starting with pilot programs and prioritizing buses serving environmental justice communities. With the ultimate goal of electrifying the city’s school buses by 2040, this will both help reduce neighborhood pollution, which disproportionately harms historically disadvantaged communities, and send stored electricity back to the grid (V2G).

Supporting implementation of congestion pricing for Manhattan’s central business district, while insisting on transit improvements first. This will reduce both traffic and air pollution, increase public safety, and generate revenue that can then be reinvested into clean transportation alternatives.

Read more about these efforts in our Transportation Platform.

Empowering and Preparing the Next Generation

Sustainability education will be a hallmark of K-12 public education, and young New Yorkers—beginning in high school and continuing through post-secondary opportunities—will have accessible and robust pathways to careers in the environmental and clean energy fields.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Take a comprehensive approach to educating and training our young people

The Donovan administration will improve K-12 public education by including instruction about the climate crisis and environmental justice across content areas, and will pair this with expanded community-based sustainability projects, such as school gardens, green roofs, and environmental restoration.

We will incentivize partnerships among community environmental science and advocacy groups and schools to create long-term education programs that integrate key science, technology, engineering, math, and social studies, and we will establish New York City’s K-12 teachers as climate ambassadors for their students, families, and communities. We can accomplish the latter through incentives and partnerships with schools of teacher education, the teachers’ union, and other stakeholders to support a robust and high-level teacher education
program emphasizing climate education strategies across all disciplines and with real-world applications.

Additionally, we will institute rigorous high school coursework, internship experience, and certification programs in partnership with relevant industries, nonprofits, and community-based organizations, and establish a larger cohort of new, focused high-schools—building off the model of Energy Tech—in the city’s most environmentally burdened communities.

At the post-secondary level, we will form a CUNY Opportunity Lab Task Force with faculty and key outside partners to identify and rapidly develop new short-term credentials and new or modified degree programs with a required work-based learning component to prepare for a range of environmental sustainability occupations. By expanding the model provided by the Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay, housed at Brooklyn College and founded in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, working to create real-time solutions for communities most at risk from climate change. Read more about our plans to empower New York City students in our Education Platform.

Strengthening Climate Resilience and Disaster Response

New Yorkers have experienced firsthand the type of devastation that climate change can cause. When Hurricane Sandy swept the region in 2012, it killed 44 New Yorkers, destroyed approximately 300 homes, left hundreds of thousands of residents without power, and cost the city $19 billion in direct damages and lost economic activity.

The mayor’s responsibility is to prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change—which we already experience today. Sea level rise, extreme heat, coastal flooding, and severe storms endanger our city’s health, security, and economic well-being. As with COVID-19, these hazards disproportionally affect historically disadvantaged communities.

The next administration must take a proactive approach to climate resilience that prioritizes equitable, community-based, and innovative solutions. While cultivating a world-class city of opportunity for all New Yorkers, we will promote an inclusive and just adaptation strategy and enhance social and economic resilience in the face of climate change.
We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Properly invest in understanding, tracking, and planning for resilience**

We must begin by developing a dynamic, comprehensive five borough resilience plan that considers cross-boundary impacts across the region, responds to real-time data and climate science, and is rooted in community-driven engagement. Our approach will give special attention to frontline and environmental justice communities and promote cooperation with New York State, New Jersey, and Connecticut to strengthen regional resilience.

This will require expanding the use of physical and social vulnerability mapping to better identify and protect at-risk communities. We recognize that numerous social factors—such as income, age, race, health care, access and functional needs, documentation status, and education level—may influence an individual’s ability to prepare for and recover from climate impacts. By overlaying physical climate projection models with advanced socio-economic and demographic data, we can improve our understanding of risk and make informed investment decisions.

**Properly invest in the efforts and individuals that will help the city achieve its resilience goals**

We will rethink traditionally-used cost-benefit analysis to prioritize investment in historically disadvantaged communities and those most at risk from climate change, and take into account the long-term benefits and cost savings associated with resilience and risk reduction, which are often left out of this analysis. At the same time, we will evaluate city investments through a resilience lens and ensure that city officials working on climate resilience have the operational, budgetary, decision-making, and convening authority to move projects quickly and effectively.

We must establish a resilience commission composed of community, business, and civic leaders focused on making visionary, achievable, and pragmatic recommendations to improve resilience in New York City. This advisory group, modeled off of Boston’s Green Ribbon Commission, will foster partnership across sectors and provide an avenue for sharing best practices.
And, we will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the city’s ability to respond to and recover from climate-related disasters, such as major flooding events and severe storms, to minimize disruption to essential services like public transport, the power grid, food distribution, drinking water, health care, and educational and cultural institutions. Read more about our plans to improve our tracking and use of data in our Innovation Platform.

It is vital that the city protect public housing residents and their homes from the impacts of climate change by taking necessary and important measures to enhance resilience and proper maintenance. In doing so, we will create jobs for tenants by hiring from within NYCHA and from minority- and women-owned business enterprises, and will include robust community outreach to ensure that tenant voices are not only heard but are a driving force behind this work. Read more in our Housing Platform.

Achieving Zero Waste

While Mayor de Blasio committed New York City to an important zero waste by 2030 goal, we are not on track to meet this target. The city recycles less than one-fifth of its garbage, placing it behind other major cities like San Francisco and Seattle, which recycle at approximately three times that rate. New York City trucks the waste we do not recycle outside of the five boroughs to methane-producing landfills and toxin-emitting incinerators as far away as South Carolina and Ohio, costing over $400 million per year and undermining the city’s carbon-reduction goals.

A Donovan administration believes that New York City can not only get its trash problem under control but emerge as a global leader in waste management. We will make meaningful progress toward the city’s zero waste goal, reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste transport and processing, and advance equitable waste practices that alleviate trash and health disparities in overburdened communities.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Restore, expand, and improve upon New York City’s curbside organics program**

The de Blasio administration suspended the curbside organics program due to COVID-19 budget cuts. Organics, like food scraps and yard waste, make up about...
one-third of the city’s waste stream and present profitable opportunities to convert trash into compost and clean energy. By extending organics recycling to all residents, mandating waste separation for homes and schools, and supporting community compost programs, we can divert waste from landfills while saving taxpayer dollars over the long-term.

Address waste at school, in housing, and at businesses

We will enhance recycling education programs within New York City schools and support the development of related curriculum. By doing so, we can help our children form strong recycling habits and invest in a zero waste future. We must also improve waste and recycling infrastructure in public housing. For too long, NYCHA residents have lacked adequate and convenient access to waste and recycling bins. By investing in equipment and outreach, we can provide residents with equitable recycling opportunities.

A Donovan administration will introduce recycling requirements for construction and demolition materials, which account for nearly half of all waste generated in the city. By working with City Council and local businesses, we can advance the city’s earlier, unfulfilled promises to tackle this important source of waste. And, we can reduce single-use plastic by requiring restaurants and food vendors to offer plastic utensils to takeout customers only when specially requested. This policy, which recognizes that many New Yorkers who order delivery already have utensils at home, aims to cut back on unnecessary waste and serve as a model for other cities.
New Yorkers have faced immense economic hardship as a result of the COVID pandemic, and the next mayor will need a bold vision for getting folks back to work and restarting our economy. But even before the pandemic, most New Yorkers did not have access to all of the benefits of the strongest economy in the world. As we recover from this crisis, we must ensure that our new economy has a higher standard for helping all New Yorkers get ahead. We need a city committed to using its power and resources to ensure a fair playing field for everyone; where everyone has a fair chance at a life of dignity; where everyone can earn a decent living, build a business, and test their talents and ambitions; and where businesses thrive—in every neighborhood and every borough. With this plan we can make that happen, and happen quickly.
Shaun Donovan will work relentlessly to get New Yorkers back to work, committing to creating 500,000 jobs for New Yorkers by the end of his first term. The Donovan administration will prioritize building an equitable economy where all New Yorkers have the opportunity to build the skills they need to secure good jobs, grow professionally, and make a good living.

The devastation wrought in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic and the national reckoning on race that followed the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others have only made it clearer that we cannot simply work toward a return to normal. We must hold ourselves and our economy to a much higher standard. We need a city committed to using its power and resources to ensure a fair playing field for everyone; where everyone has a fair chance at a life of dignity; where everyone can earn a decent living, build a business, and test their talents and ambitions; and where businesses thrive—in every neighborhood and every borough.

We need a city focused not only on the problems of today, but the opportunities of tomorrow: with Shaun’s plan, we will build the industries that will drive long-term growth and create good jobs for years to come.

In rebuilding our city, we need to start where job loss and economic decline have been most sharp and consequential. Our plan for New York’s economic recovery is anchored in six key principles of equitable development:

• Grow the economy to create opportunities for all New Yorkers
• Build a path for every New Yorker to develop skills that are directly tied to jobs
• Invest in neighborhoods, beginning with those that have endured the greatest disinvestment
• See, understand, and address racial inequalities explicitly, and measure progress
• Address inequalities head-on in partnership with community and business leaders
• Prioritize racial equity through strategic leadership and key appointments
Our plan will focus on:

- **Getting New Yorkers to Work**
- **Investing in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
- **Leading in Innovation**

**Getting New Yorkers to Work**

New Yorkers are confronting unemployment at unprecedented levels. Jobs in tourism, accommodation, restaurants, retail, culture, and the arts have been decimated and small businesses have shuttered.

Our first step will be supporting the creation of 500,000 jobs for New Yorkers by the end of Shaun's first term. Equally, we must improve the quality of employment opportunities for all New Yorkers, ensuring that many more New Yorkers are able to secure middle-income jobs and that all New Yorkers can see a way to grow their skills, income, and financial security. We will build clear paths for New Yorkers to enter middle-income work. We will also leverage our investments in infrastructure to support the long-term growth and prosperity of the entire city.

Reversing the current trend, the Donovan administration will utilize the full scope of the City’s capital budget and increase long-term, capital investment. We will work closely and collaboratively with state leaders to align state capital investments with those of the City, ensuring the greatest impact with respect to employment and long-term economic value. Shaun will work tirelessly with colleagues in the Biden administration and on Capitol Hill to secure substantial federal investments in strengthening New York’s economy and building the infrastructure that will put New Yorkers to work and drive growth for decades to come.

In the Donovan administration, these large-scale investments will be targeted at the projects which will have the most durable impact on the growth of our economy. We will expand our transit system, especially in underserved transit-deserts. We will increase the supply of affordable housing in every borough of New York City and build adequate permanent housing for people who have experienced homelessness. We will invest fully in the infrastructure we need to improve our economy and be ready to meet the changing climate.

Shaun Donovan’s plan for getting New Yorkers back to work and reviving our economy really goes directly to the heart of the multiple challenges that New Yorkers currently and historically have faced. Focused on the present, as well as the future, in my view, Shaun has put together a comprehensive platform that prioritizes giving people the skills to enter quality paying jobs today while simultaneously strengthening key NYC industries for the future.

**Lloyd Williams**
President and CEO of The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce
Building on Shaun’s successful work with labor, including the historic agreement he worked to forge with 32BJ that raised wages for building workers in affordable housing, the Donovan administration will ensure competitive wages for all New Yorkers.

Our investments in infrastructure will strengthen our neighborhoods, position us to thrive in the face of climate change, and get New Yorkers to work.

**We are committing to the following policies and programs:**

**Rebuild our tourism & nightlife industry**

The economic pressure related to the collapse in tourism has been immense. Coming out of the COVID pandemic, New York City will again be one of the top tourism destinations in the world and we will work vigorously to extend the prosperity that tourism brings to all parts of New York City. To speed along our recovery in the critical tourism industry—the hospitality industry alone provided as many as 400,000 jobs before the March shutdown—we will work hand-in-hand with industry partners and the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). Before full-scale international and business travel has returned in full, we will drive visitor activation with a campaign to encourage locals to go out again. As the COVID pandemic wanes, the City must also promote regional visitors and eventually the essential international and business travelers.

Working to sustain the rich cultural life of our city and support the tourism industry, the Donovan administration will make sustained investments in arts and culture and will work closely with philanthropy to galvanize private contributions to this essential sector to the New York City economy. Another key piece in attracting visitors will be publicizing our “NYC Safest City Commitments,” a comprehensive set of policies geared toward fostering safer streets while growing local economies.

**Ensure public transit can get people to work**

The Donovan administration will be fully focused on building back the New York City transit system. We will collaborate with the State of New York to ensure that the public transportation needs of New Yorkers are met, and with Federal colleagues to direct proper funding for the MTA.

Deeply in debt and facing a collapse in farebox and tax revenue, the MTA has contemplated cuts as high as 40% to commuter and subway service. Such cuts would cause immense damage to the Manhattan business center, where the pre-COVID employment density simply cannot be supported without public transit operating at full daytime service. They would also disproportionately impact individuals with fewer alternative transportation options, either because of cost barriers or the public transit options near their home.
See our entire Transportation Platform, including our plans for launching true Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), embracing cycling and micromobility, and creating pathways for increased City oversight of the MTA.

Establish a comprehensive citywide apprenticeship program

We will create the largest comprehensive skills-based training program in the US for thousands of students in secondary (DOE) and post-secondary (CUNY) education, purposefully linked to workplace training and tightly aligned around the sectors where middle-income job growth will be strongest: life sciences, health, information technology, design, and finance. We will ensure access for adults seeking skills training and professional advancement, as well as secure and enshrine pay thresholds so that the program does not widen the pay gap.

As part of these efforts, we are committed to investing in the establishment of 10,000 apprenticeship placements by 2025.

A key step will be to guarantee at least one paid job, apprenticeship, or internship opportunity that connects to a meaningful career pathway to every high school student, helping students identify and develop interests along with skills. Read more about this and other commitments to preparing our young people for family-sustaining employment opportunities in our Education Platform.

Our plan will establish intermediaries to deliver the services required for a large-scale, citywide program implementation. Building on the remarkable success of New York’s labor unions in delivering apprenticeships and training at scale, we will invest in intermediary partners to recruit and manage the employer relationships which are critical to our success, manage training slots, and deliver a high-quality experience for employers and trainees who participate, similar to the NYC Job Corps (see next section). These intermediaries will design workplace training programs in collaboration with employers, and coordinate apprenticeship assignments with employers, aligned with skills assessments and interests. We will also charge the City’s education system to fully integrate workplace learning into their educational pathways, and engage and hold corporate partners accountable.

At the Department of Education and CUNY, we will illuminate paths for students that connect learning with work by establishing firm curricular links such as credits for workplace training and alignment of classroom lessons with workplace experience.

Shaun Donovan and I have worked together at the city and national level to craft deals and policies that really helped workers. Every time, Shaun displayed an unerring dedication to the people on the ground making things run—and with this plan, he’s done it again. Shaun knows how to not only create jobs, but to advocate for workers and make sure their jobs are stable, pay well, and lead to even greater opportunity. He has shown both in the past and through this plan that he intends on learning from the efforts of labor organizations and bringing all interests to the table to craft the strongest plan for the future. I trust him to look out for all New Yorkers.

Mike Fishman
Climate Activist, Former SEIU Secretary-Treasurer and Campaign Chair
activities. Additionally, we must **accommodate workplace training in the school day schedule.**

New York City employers—in the building trades, in health care, in tech and elsewhere—have rich experience to bring to our apprenticeship program. We **will galvanize this experience and their commitment**; employers will establish suitable supervision for the apprenticeship roles they create, ensuring these roles add value to the companies. We will **expand the City’s collaboration with New York’s unions**, helping to extend the impact of the tens of millions of dollars that the unions have invested in apprenticeships and training programs.

### Launch an NYC Jobs Corps

The Donovan administration will **establish an NYC Job Corps which will put young people to work and create opportunities for shut-out workers.** Among many others, the NYC Jobs Corps will engage justice-involved individuals in work and skills-training.

NYC Job Corps will **provide customized, on-the-job experience** to get participants workforce-ready. The Jobs Corps will target industries that are critical to the City’s long-term success, including our infrastructure needs, to identify jobs and employers that are ready to accept a cadre of City-trained professionals.

Despite an abundance of quality jobs in various industries across NYC, there are groups of New Yorkers who face significant challenges accessing these employment opportunities, and this population has grown because of the pandemic. At the same time, employers struggle to find candidates with the requisite skills and diverse backgrounds. The Job Corps will **address a misalignment among job seekers’ experiences, the skills that training and education providers teach, and the needs and requirements of employers.**

The NYC Jobs Corps will be an extension of the more specialized NYC Climate Corps, announced within our **Climate Platform.** Based on the Clean Energy Service Corps program, an AmeriCorps program established under President Obama to employ young Americans on clean energy and resilience projects through nonprofit and local government grants, the Climate Corps will **build on local efforts like the CUNY Service Corps** to create strong financial and educational opportunities for New Yorkers. The Jobs Corps would take a similar approach, **bringing together the public, private, philanthropic, and academic sectors** to identify training and work opportunities for our residents.

### Capitalize on successful models

We will capitalize on existing, successful models so as not to reinvent the wheel. When an existing model is working, like labor union apprenticeships and training,
we will take notice and focus on transferability to other industries. We will collaborate with NGOs and social entrepreneurs to build on successful private models that deliver rapid, focused, and high-quality training in order to expand access to skilled, middle-income jobs for low-income New Yorkers, building on the examples of Catalyte, Year Up, and Pursuit.

Create a “CUNY Center for the Future of Work”

As the COVID crisis eases, there will be important lessons learned and opportunities for students to hone skills relevant to new working and learning environments. With its unmatched ecosystem of public and private schools, universities and research institutions, and powerful corporate and entrepreneurial entities, New York City will be well positioned to seize on this learning opportunity.

By establishing a virtual space open to any CUNY student and faculty member who wish to engage with employers on applied learning, micro-internships, capstones, and skill badging programs in STEM, humanities, and liberal arts areas, we empower students to adapt to changing realities.

The Center will work with member employers who have talent needs and are willing to invest in a set of programs and opportunities for students and faculty to engage in applied learning projects and student- and faculty-led consulting engagements. This program idea is based on successful employer and university collaborations in Washington, California, and Maryland that engage students in real-life problem solving.

Enable distance learning for key high-growth sectors

We will create a “Workforce Innovation Lab” that is tasked with curriculum and program development in health care, IT, and sustainability and climate management areas that is fully available online. We can integrate certificates and programs in partnership with employers who have training needs based on the changing nature of work and technological advancements. The Lab will create programs to be implemented throughout the learning and workforce ecosystems of New York City.

Partner with the corporate community

In addition to the previously mentioned private-public efforts to upskill New Yorkers and combat racial economic inequality, our administration will develop new ways to introduce talent to employers throughout the training process to ensure strong rapport between parties before hiring decisions are made.

We know through our early conversations with large employers and professional associations that a clear explanation of the value proposition will provide employers with a deeper understanding of the depth and potential of a partnership convened
by the City. Employers best understand their needs and forthcoming industry trends; they want to ensure that their investment in time, resources, and capacity yield high-quality talent and results. We will work to develop a value-add holistic employer engagement system through enhancing our intermediary capacity and prioritizing mutually beneficial relationships.

**Investing in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Too many New Yorkers have been shut out of a pathway to economic security, even at times when the city’s economy has grown rapidly. Black and Brown New Yorkers earn less than White New Yorkers in many sectors of the New York City economy and are underrepresented in middle-income jobs. Latinx business ownership is lower than five years ago and Black ownership is too low. Half of all working New Yorkers labor in the service sector, earning wages that average $40,000 per year. Women especially are heavily overrepresented in lower-paid service jobs.

Not only is it our responsibility to help build up communities that have often missed out on the benefits of our city’s growth, doing so would translate to a stronger economy and greater opportunity for all New Yorkers. The pathway to a more equitable economy cannot be imposed: the Donovan administration will work hand-in-hand with every community to understand how to best meet its needs and help ensure economic prosperity for its residents.

**We are committing to the following policies and programs:**

**Make commitments and measure progress**

We will designate a Chief Equity Officer in the mayor’s cabinet to set goals, measure progress, and collaborate with all agencies of the City of New York to ensure progressive achievement. Two primary pillars of our equity work include:

- Refocusing the New York City Economic Development Corporation around driving economic growth that is tied to economic equity for all New Yorkers
- Strengthening the minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBE) network and infrastructure to ensure we are making the most equity-minded decisions when determining and awarding contracting opportunities

We will launch Equity Corporate Commitments to drive substantially greater Black, Latinx, and Asian job participation in high-wage and middle-income work. We will convene the top 100 largest employers in New York City to engage their support in achieving employment and compensation equity across racial, ethnic, and gender groups. The corporate community alone cannot carry the burden of building a better, more fair economy: we will engage their expertise and work with the business community collaboratively and creatively to put in place pragmatic, far-reaching solutions.
Most importantly, we will **partner with the business community on a broad-based public-private initiative to upskill New Yorkers and significantly reduce racial economic inequality in NYC.** We will establish a City-led program, in partnership with employers and non-profit leaders, to recruit and train candidates across New York City and match them to jobs in high-skilled industries where economic growth, incomes, and future opportunities are greatest. Building on past successes, the Donovan administration will bring apprenticeship, job, training opportunities to scale, making them available to many more New Yorkers in every borough.

The Chief Equity Officer, a cross-agency advocate, collaborator, and ultimate responsible stakeholder, will work to achieve a set of specific, measurable targets in program design and implementation, as well as structural policy-making, to ensure that we are turning the lens on ourselves—on our own actions and behaviors—to critically evaluate our decisions.

These equity targets include, but will not be limited to:

- An orientation, in all aspects related to the equity and inclusion, that seeks to acknowledge, understand, and elevate the lived experiences of all people, especially people of color; to achieve this, the Donovan administration will take a data-driven and collaborative approach to identify and catalog inequities
- Fair and transparent hiring practices, including transparency around promotions
- Increased, concrete targets for the contracting of City business with MWBE-certified companies—with strict standards for the attainment of these targets
- The creation and implementation of a systematic rubric to evaluate equitable service delivery across neighborhoods
- Increased outreach and public engagement with communities of color, including community-based organizations and equity-focused think tanks
- Increased access to City services for communities of color, immigrant communities, and marginalized communities, especially in the wake of a public health crisis
- Internal advocacy to support or change existing services using a disparity reduction framework
- Increased facilitation and collaboration between communities and institutions to eliminate inequity in all areas of government, with a particular focus on education, criminal justice, environmental justice, housing, and economic development

Through the role of the Chief Equity Officer and the larger equity team, we will commit to a breadth and depth of institutional transformation that prioritizes engagement, partnership, and learning from communities to achieve meaningful, and sustainable results.
Leading in Innovation

Over four centuries, New York City has been at the forefront of economic and commercial innovation in the United States. With unmatched human talent, a conglomerate of businesses and research centers, and financial muscle, New York remains exceptionally well positioned to lead in the development of new industries that will propel job growth and prosperity.

New York’s top position as a hub of economic activity in the technology industry remains unchanged. Industry leaders have redoubled their investments in the city even during the COVID pandemic, and media giants are investing heavily in expanding their operations in New York City. In addition to continued growth in technology and media, New York can support the development of two new, important sectors: life sciences and climate adaptation.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Invest in life sciences innovation

Our administration will drive large-scale investments in expanding the life sciences sector in New York City, emphasizing primary research and product innovation, early- and growth-stage companies, and executive offices.

We will improve and build upon existing collaborative efforts with life sciences industry leaders, major universities, and New York State, capturing a growing wave of investment and job creation. We will use our convening power to align private investments with regulatory actions and encourage private investment to build lab space while land costs and construction costs are lower.

The Donovan administration will work with communities to identify areas to nurture hubs for the life sciences industry and the creation of strong employment centers beyond the existing midtown commercial core. Building on existing developments, we will engage residents in the Bronx and Harlem in a comprehensive planning effort to collaboratively shape a vision for a dual uptown life-sciences hub that is anchored in robust job training, clear pathways to employment for residents, and a twenty-year development cycle.

Additionally, we will update the zoning requirements for lab space to spur the development of a new life sciences lab hub in the Bronx and ensure adequate capacity at existing First Avenue and West Harlem hubs. We must simplify lab building requirements by aligning the building code with national standards.

In addition to good jobs, our focus on building the life sciences industry in New York City will have a strong impact on public health in New York—bringing cutting edge research to the city hospitals, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the private medical centers.
**Attract top life sciences talent**

The Donovan administration will work to cement New York City’s leadership role in primary research. We will leverage the combined power of the mayor and universities to recruit top research talent. Our office will develop a free-standing, fully endowed research center for life scientists in Upper Manhattan, building on the model of the Broad Center in Cambridge and leveraging the resources of City College, Columbia University, the West Harlem life sciences hub, and the future hub in the South Bronx.

We will also build a “Grad-School-to-Enterprise” Training Pathway for PhD students in the life sciences, accelerating the transition from doctoral research to high-skill work at life sciences businesses for the roughly 80% of doctoral students at New York City university programs who are likely to choose industry work rather than a career at a university research career. Such a kickstart to the industrial workforce will draw still more investment in life sciences businesses in New York.

**Establish a clear path for clinical trials**

We will convene a panel of experts to leverage New York City’s abundance of hospitals, patient data, and drug firms to propose citywide changes to boost clinical trial speed and ease of operability. This will not only benefit health outcomes, but will also make our city a more attractive place for biotech and pharmaceutical firms to operate. City area hospitals such as NYU Langone, New York Presbyterian, Mount Sinai, and Hackensack have taken the lead in accelerated COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials. The City has an important opportunity to learn from these experiences and implement an improved, citywide clinical trial process for future treatments and drugs, further cementing our city’s leadership in this fast-paced field.

**Provide life sciences job readiness at all levels**

We will align NYC Apprenticeship, CUNY science and health education, and the “Corporate 100,000 Jobs Commitment” to guide New York City students and workers to life sciences jobs across the educational spectrum.

One focus will be on developing lab technician apprenticeship programs that can provide a means of upward mobility and a path to PhD programs or other specialized training for any New Yorker, particularly those from disadvantaged communities and backgrounds, through practical lab and research experience.

**Lead the world in climate adaptation and jobs**

New York City was an early leader in affirmatively planning for climate change through PlaNYC, as well as in setting rigorous, ambitious regulatory standards, such
as the City's Climate Mobilization Act. It will be up to the Donovan administration to
demonstrate that New York City can deliver on these aspirations. Doing so would
propel the growth of an immense number of local jobs. Indeed, the United States
Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that employment in this sector is projected to be
among the fastest growing in the country.

As mentioned above, a key effort will be the development of the NYC Climate Corps.
Additionally, we will work to align our workforce training with the skills required
for the Clean Buildings Transformation, in trades including electrical, plumbing, and
façade adaptation. We will center these efforts on New York City Housing Authority
(NYCHA) rehabilitation by supporting workforce development objectives and a
pathway to convert 1,000,000 units to clean power.

In keeping with the spirit of public-private partnership necessary to solve the issues facing
our city, we will support private sector innovations for “Finance & Install” offerings for
small residential building owners seeking to make clean energy investments.

Our administration will establish greater certainty about the regulatory
framework and requirements for buildings’ climate adaptation investments,
with an eye toward managing costs. Building on the successful process to increase
the minimum wage in New York State, we will establish a wage board to set fair
terms for compensation for climate adaptation workers, integrating rates of pay,
work rules, and scope regarding private and public projects.

We will align zoning, regulatory, and tax incentives to support private investments
in the wind power generation sector, creating jobs in such areas as harbor
services, information technology, and power transmission and storage facilities.
Neighborhoods

A ‘15 Minute Neighborhoods’ Plan for a Brighter, More Equitable Future

If you’ve lived in a wealthy neighborhood, you may never have known a New York where anything you wanted was not immediately accessible to you. We must have a city where the same benefits of New York life are available to all. We need a city committed to investing in neighborhoods and communities, and the small businesses and entrepreneurs that power them, and to driving job growth, stimulating entrepreneurship, sustaining the environment, enhancing the quality of life of all New Yorkers. Every family should have the opportunity to live in a 15 minute neighborhood, where a great public school, fresh food, access to rapid transportation, a park, and a chance to get ahead can all be found within 15 minutes of their front door. With this plan, the policies I’ve introduced so far, and the many still to come, we can make this vision a reality.
Well before the pandemic, many New Yorkers struggled to access basic necessities near their homes. Many in our city have to travel long distances for work, for their children's education, or simply for food. But it doesn't have to be that way—many New Yorkers have never known a city where what one needs isn't just around the corner, and leading planners across the globe are already innovating in ways that make the benefits of cities accessible to all of their residents.

We need a city committed to investing in neighborhoods and communities, and the small businesses and entrepreneurs that power them, and to driving job growth, stimulating entrepreneurship, sustaining the environment, and enhancing the quality of life of all New Yorkers.

That is why one of Shaun’s key campaign commitments is to make every New York City neighborhood a 15 minute neighborhood, where every New Yorker has access to a great public school, fresh food, rapid transportation, a beautiful park, and a chance to get ahead within 15 minutes of their front door. These investments will also be focused first on neighborhoods where the need is greatest, and will aim to close gaps in access to opportunity and resources that exacerbate racial inequity.

Our plan will focus on:

- Building Thriving Neighborhoods and a Thriving Economy
- Committing to Making New York the Safest, Most Connected City

Building Thriving Neighborhoods and a Thriving Economy

Neighborhood commercial corridors are the heartbeat of New York City's economy, and will be vital as we create 15 minute neighborhoods throughout the city. Half of private sector employment occurs outside of the Manhattan commercial core and over the past five years, job growth has been fastest in the boroughs outside of Manhattan.
Our quality of life is greatly enhanced by access to abundant goods and services in our neighborhoods. With working habits evolving in response to COVID, more and more New Yorkers are working from home—further rooting their lives in their neighborhoods.

Yet neighborhood businesses have taken enormous hits: the growth of online shopping not only hurt local retailers but also caused increased congestion and emissions from freight movement, too often in disadvantaged communities. The COVID pandemic and the imperative for social distancing decimated already struggling retailers and neighborhood restaurants and bars.

Investing in the economic hubs of New York’s neighborhoods—beginning with the neighborhoods which have received the least investment to date—will drive job growth, stimulate entrepreneurship, sustain the environment, and enhance the quality of life of all New Yorkers. Importantly, the investments and programs which support neighborhood hubs will also be useful for driving the revival of New York’s commercial core.

We will target investment in programs, supports, and resources, like MWBE mentorship, that have been lagging or failing for the past 10 years. In addition, we will prioritize the one thing small businesses—all small businesses—need most, capital. We will deploy the convening power of the mayor to establish the NYC Entrepreneurship Financing Fund and leverage public, private and philanthropic investments to fund it. By meeting and exceeding the needs of small businesses, we work from the ground-up to create livable and enjoyable neighborhoods that are designed to accentuate New York’s streetscape and spur greater economic activity.

**We are committing to the following policies and programs:**

**Target investment where it has historically lagged**

Our first neighborhood-based investments will be in communities where public and private investments have lagged. By strengthening transit, affordable housing, and neighborhood business districts, we will get New Yorkers back to work, propel the growth of small businesses, and drive equitable, sustainable economic growth for years to come.

In a Donovan administration, residential tenants, property owners, and business owners will participate in decision-making about investments, capital projects, and changes in zoning and regulations—working closely with other elected officials. Local residents will be involved in decision-making in thoughtful and new ways, engaging the full range of diverse opinions of a neighborhood. Because neighborhoods differ greatly, investments and regulations will be designed to be flexible. We will find ways to advance stewardship—emphasizing both local control and local responsibility, especially to advance education and youth engagement.
Our neighborhoods must be designed to welcome, value and support diversity for residents, visitors, and workers.

**Support small businesses and New York entrepreneurs**

Great neighborhoods have a thriving, vibrant local economy driven by a diverse group of businesses and entrepreneurs. The Donovan administration will **nurture entrepreneurship, especially among immigrants and Black and Latinx New Yorkers**, providing technical assistance that is anchored in proven approaches. We must also **strengthen the minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBE) network and infrastructure** to ensure we are making the most equity-minded decisions when determining and awarding contracting opportunities. The City’s Chief Equity Officer will drive efforts across City agencies and be responsible for ensuring that we achieve concrete and ambitious benchmarks.

We will center entrepreneurship as a strategy for increasing family wealth-building and leverage city investments with community development corporations and community development financial institutions to deliver evidence-based strategies to support entrepreneurs.

We will deploy the convening power of the mayor to **establish the NYC Entrepreneurship Financing Fund** and leverage public, private and philanthropic investments to fund it. We will deploy capital to small businesses in neighborhood commercial areas, **dispersing small loans to viable retail businesses** to help them retool and expand as New York City emerges from the pandemic-driven recession. And we will do so at scale, directing unprecedented levels of financing to underinvested communities.

The Donovan administration will galvanize business formation, investment, and job growth in New York’s neighborhoods by **creating the most thoughtful, consistent regulatory environment for small businesses in the United States**. We will build on New York’s progressive regulatory achievements by making these rules visible, comprehensible, and achievable; we will enforce these regulations consistently and fairly. We will reinvent small business regulation—from fines to licensure—and rationalize regulations with an eye to utility, equity, public benefit, clarity, and the costs imposed on businesses.

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**Where you can afford to live has historically dictated how much of New York City is accessible to you, how much opportunity the city provides, and how comfortably you live. That disparity is one of the main barriers to equity and fairness among New Yorkers, and Shaun Donovan has done a fantastic job of not only recognizing that, but coming up with real solutions. There’s no reason why, in the richest city in the world, anyone should be living in a food desert, have to travel long distances to reach their school or their office, or not have good health facilities nearby. Shaun’s 15 Minute Neighborhoods are what every community in our city should look like—healthy, safe, and full of opportunity for everyone.**

*Reverend Patricia Malcolm*
We will **invest in up-to-date information systems** that support business licensure and regulation, using common, shared data across all agencies involved. We will **set customer-oriented standards for the delivery of services to small businesses**, including bonding requirements and on-time payments, and hold our agencies to account in meeting these standards for all matters irrespective of agency. The Donovan administration will **cease to drive business fines as a source of revenue** and the City’s Chief Equity Officer will monitor the enforcement of business regulations to ensure the fair and consistent enforcement of these rules across all of New York’s communities.

**Protect our neighborhood business districts**

The pandemic has hit our neighborhood business districts in unexpected ways. Businesses are struggling to survive, and many haven’t. In many New York City neighborhoods, the demand for ground-floor retail space has softened and the rules regarding ground-floor uses are rigid and impractical. We will work to **encourage the concentration of retail offerings in neighborhood retail districts**. Citywide, we will **dramatically increase flexibility, allowing for a wider range of ground floor uses** that reflect a twenty-first century understanding of what makes for great retail environments, and we will better address retail oversupply by **reducing requirements for retail in new construction outside of neighborhood retail districts** and by **incorporating retail demand into neighborhood planning**.

15 minute neighborhoods are anchored by great neighborhood business districts. To achieve high quality public space in business districts and neighborhood commercial areas, the Donovan administration will **establish a cross-agency coordination office to deliver comprehensive, coordinated management of public space** in the commercial corridors of New York’s neighborhoods, with jurisdiction across the city’s many agencies to address the intersecting regulation of streets, sidewalks and plazas, scaffolding, vending, and sidewalk cafes. We will **prepare a single set of city rules**—irrespective of the agency that originates the rule—for public space in commercial districts, **establish data management practices** to anchor decisions by the agencies (regarding pedestrian flow, auto flow, environmental protection, state of good repair, etc.), and **clarify lines of responsibility across agencies** and ensure consistent accountability for the fulfillment of these. These changes will encourage innovative uses of our shared space, improve residents’ experience, ease mobility, and make life substantially easier for small business owners.

We will **knit the BIDs into this coordinated public space management effort** and leverage their local area expertise and delivery capacity.

The coordinated public space management program is also essential for the continued success of the Manhattan commercial core, as a tool for ensuring that this remains the best place to work, do business, and invest in the United States.
Help people get around in a New York minute

15 minute neighborhoods are great places to be, are easy to move around in, and are ones from which residents can quickly and easily access the jobs, services, and activities that make New York City the greatest city in the world.

The Donovan administration will **invest in enhanced public space and transportation** to enable more resilient local business corridors that are safe, walkable, and convenient to local residents, including sidewalk improvements, high-quality transit facilities (e.g. bus shelters, up-to-the-minute trip information) and safe bike and scooter lanes. We will commit affirmatively to a standard of universal accessibility in local transit improvements.

For the neighborhoods that are most isolated from high-speed subway connections, the Donovan administration will **promptly implement high-speed bus service**, connecting residents to the commercial core in every borough. We will further work closely with the MTA—and make full use of the city’s power through board membership and direct fiscal contributions—to **ensure that investments are directed to neighborhoods**, not solely to the commercial core and other parts of Manhattan.

The Donovan administration will **introduce a comprehensive approach to managing the impacts of the “last mile” for at-home delivery services**.

Read more about our plans to revitalize and strengthen New York City’s transportation options within our **Transportation Platform**.

Committing to Making New York the Safest, Most Connected City

Communities thrive when everyone in them feels safe and healthy. As we recover, we must make sure that every neighborhood is a great place to live in, visit, or own a business in. To jumpstart growth, the Donovan administration will launch a comprehensive program to deliver on the promise that all neighborhoods are safe and welcoming, called the **“NYC Safest City Commitment.”** We will work closely with travel industry partners to knit the NYC Safest City Commitment into promotions so that everyone around the world knows that New York City—and our exceptional neighborhoods—are safe, spotless, open for business and ready to welcome visitors.

Most importantly, we will restore New Yorkers’ trust in their neighborhoods, and particularly in neighborhoods where trust has long been declining. Yes, New York City is the most diverse place on the planet—but we all want the same three simple things—safe, clean streets, good schools for our children, and equal access to opportunity. Achieving that last human right—for equal opportunity—starts in the
neighborhood. It starts with accessible high-speed internet, it starts with strong transit, and it starts with an affordable health care system. And it starts with a real commitment to New Yorkers.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Support neighborhoods in staying safe and clean

To ensure that everyone feels safe in all of our neighborhoods, the Donovan administration will implement community-driven, community-specific public safety programs to address crime in commercial areas (e.g. vandalism, shoplifting, robbery) and leverage the NYC Jobs Corps to divert offenders from the criminal justice system and deliver community clean-up as restitution.

As we rebuild, everyone wants to feel that their neighborhood is clean, comfortable, and cared for. The Donovan administration will set standards for trash removal, street cleaning, and graffiti removal and work in close collaboration with the Department of Sanitation, the BIDs and neighborhood groups to ensure a high level of delivery to these standards. We will work carefully to make sure that business owners and residents know what is expected of them and what the new standards are, and enlist their support in meeting these standards. Read more about our plans to partner with communities to keep our neighborhoods safe and clean in our Criminal Justice Platform.

Keep our neighborhoods healthy

Everyone deserves access to great health care, close at hand. The Donovan administration will work with the NYC Health & Hospitals Corporation, Federal Qualified Health Centers, and other health care providers to leverage our robust public health system and expand health care service delivery directly in 15 minute neighborhoods, introducing state-of-the-art neighborhood health clinics that are integrated in neighborhood retail corridors. Modeled on the service-intensive private offerings, these neighborhood clinics will substantially improve public health monitoring and the delivery of routine health care services.

We will work to close the gap in primary care access by providing alternatives to high-cost emergency department care, improving the overall health of communities. We will do this by assessing each neighborhoods’ needs, and providing necessary public-private partnerships to drive community planning and investment. Read more about these efforts in our Health Platform.
Focus on making office buildings safe

As New Yorkers return to work, we will all want to know that the buildings where we do business are clean and safe. The Donovan administration will work with health experts and property owners to establish a scoring system for office buildings, measuring their delivery of healthy workspaces (considering, for example, fresh air flow; contactless navigation through public spaces, cleaning commitments, and effectiveness of contact tracing and notification for tenants). We will publish these scores, allowing everyone to understand that New York City is the Safest City in the world.

Ensure all neighborhoods have internet connection

In 2020 New Yorkers learned that universal high-speed internet is as important a public utility as is water, heat or electricity. The Donovan administration will fulfill the long-deferred promise to bring affordable, high-speed internet access to every neighborhood, every retail corridor, and every household in New York City. We will ensure that businesses in neighborhood districts have access to affordable high-speed internet and collaborate with community groups and business associations to support business owners with the skills they need to take advantage of online services and opportunities. Read more about our plans to bring high-quality, affordable internet to every home in the city in our Innovation Platform.
For too long we’ve relied on over-policing and over-incarceration instead of addressing cycles of mental health problems, underemployment and unemployment and poverty, that have thwarted generations of New Yorkers, particularly our Black and Latinx neighbors. We’ve also made very little effort to support the stabilization and reintegration of the formerly incarcerated. My plan focuses on tackling these issues by reimagining a public safety system that is accountable and community-driven, and reinvesting in services to build safe and healthy communities.
New Yorkers deserve to live in a city that is safe, inclusive, and equitable for everyone. Over the last decade, we have consistently ranked as the safest large city in the United States. And yet, protests against racial injustice, repeated instances of unjustified police force, tragic increases in gun violence, and the longstanding over-representation of people of color and individuals with mental health challenges in our courts and jails demonstrate that the current system is not working as it should.

The way forward is to reimagine a public safety system that is accountable and community-driven, reduce over-policing and over-incarceration, and reinvest in services that provide safe and healthy communities for all New Yorkers. New York City’s justice system has to work for everyone by prioritizing safety, inclusion, and racial equity. Criminal justice policy should advance justice, promote civic engagement and transparency, and emphasize data and technology innovation in a manner that uses public resources wisely and fairly.

But it isn’t enough to outline bold policies. Our next mayor must have a plan for getting them done—and paid for. By the end of his second year in office, Shaun Donovan will invest $500 million annually in community-focused public safety and racial justice initiatives, primarily by redirecting funds currently allocated to law enforcement and corrections. He will also dedicate roughly $3 billion or 20% of the city’s public safety budget for these efforts by the end of his first term, directed to the neighborhoods with the greatest needs and guided by community input.

Crime and violence are caused primarily by cycles of trauma, systemic absence of opportunity, and lack of legitimacy of governing institutions. Too often, responses have revolved solely around law enforcement, ignored these driving forces, and made matters worse with heavy-handed, racially-disproportionate enforcement. Too often, we have asked police and public safety personnel to address social and community issues they are not equipped to handle, such as mental health, homelessness, and school safety.
We will reduce over-policing and over-incarceration, close the Rikers jails, and ensure that individuals have access to affordable housing, health care, job development, and critical social services to help prevent contact with the criminal legal system and cycles of incarceration in the first place. We will also establish a comprehensive, citywide response system for mental health emergencies so that police are not asked to assume the role of a mental health professional or social worker.

Our plan will focus on:

- **Focusing Law Enforcement Resources on Guns and Serious Crime, Rather than Health and Social Challenges that Police are not Equipped to Solve**
- **Prioritizing Community-driven, Health-focused Approaches to Public Safety**
- **Rebuilding Accountable, Credible, Effective Public Safety Institutions**
- **Investing in the Well-being of Returning Community Members to Stop Cycles of Arrest, Prosecution, and Incarceration**
- **Reinvesting Savings from Right-sizing Criminal Justice Institutions**

**Focusing Law Enforcement Resources on Guns and Serious Crime, Rather than Health and Social Challenges that Police are not Equipped to Solve**

Recent incidents of police violence in New York City and across the country have put a spotlight on the wide-ranging tasks we ask police officers to carry out, and have left many questioning whether the police are suited to handle some of these situations. As mayor, Shaun will facilitate a wholesale evaluation of the policing within our city to identify circumstances where truly dangerous conditions exist that warrant armed police response.

By focusing their efforts on those problems and reallocating resources for issues like mental health response and school safety toward social services professionals with more appropriate skill sets, we can ensure that police officers have the tools they need to do their jobs well and that all New Yorkers are getting the support they need from those best equipped to help them.
We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Targeting the out-of-state gun pipeline, working with other mayors, governors, and the Biden administration**

New York City has some of the strongest gun laws in the nation—but most of the guns in our city are trafficked here from other states. To reduce the prevalence of illegal guns on our streets, the Donovan administration will make closing the out-of-state gun pipeline a top priority and target police resources accordingly.

We will **work closely with the Biden administration and mayors, governors, and law enforcement officials in other states** to disrupt and restrict out-of-state guns from illegally entering our city.

**Fast-tracking gun cases**

Felony cases in New York City generally take twice as long as cases in the rest of the state, and COVID-19 has only slowed the process. Quick and certain resolution of prosecutions are a powerful deterrent, so there is a clear incentive to ensure that gun cases are resolved efficiently and without delay.

To this end, a Donovan administration will **emphasize effective collaboration** between police, the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), courts, and district attorneys to ensure that gun cases are resolved rapidly and fairly.

**Establish a non-police mental health first responder system**

People with mental illness are **16 times more likely** to die in a police encounter, and in New York City, **at least 16 people** with mental illness have been killed by the police in the last five years alone. More than half of the people jailed at Rikers have a mental health treatment need, and nearly 20% have a serious mental illness.

In order to ensure that New Yorkers are getting the help they need in moments of crisis, we must move mental health response entirely into the domain of public health and away from law enforcement, and we must adjust City resources accordingly.

This means **creating a dedicated mental health crisis hotline to divert calls from 911 and investing in frontline mental health crisis resources to respond to these emergencies**, including social workers, counselors, and emergency medical technicians. This effort would follow the example of successful, decades-old models like CAHOOTS in Oregon, where in ~25,000 mental health crisis calls in 2019, only 150 (0.6%) required law enforcement back up. This approach would expand and improve the city’s mobile crisis teams as first steps toward a longer-term and holistic approach that goes beyond traditional crisis intervention. By the end of Shaun’s first term, police will no longer be the default response to mental health emergencies.
We must also **invest in community-based housing and support programs to build on crisis response**. People in crisis often need transitional and supportive housing programs, primary health care, community-based mental health and social services like **Fountain House**, help with substance abuse challenges as a next step to help stabilize during and after a crisis, and the creation of on-ramps to longer-term recovery. These programs must be sure to focus on those too often unheard and unseen, like the elderly, who have specific mental health needs.

We also will **expand funding for mental health and addiction Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) programs and pre-trial diversion programs**, and **commit to priority decarceration of Riker's Island** for people with mental health conditions, especially serious mental illness.

A Donovan administration will address the failures of the federal government to provide federal funds for needed inpatient psychiatric treatment, which is only one part of the needed multifaceted response to people in crisis. In the meantime, we will work with the State to **establish a Mental Health Care Crisis Response Fund** to cover this inpatient psychiatric care deficit as we advocate for federal reform.

**Remove police from schools and provide resources for transition**

In order to ensure the best possible academic outcomes for our students, we must dismantle practices that focus on policing and disciplining students and make schools unsafe for many students of color—contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline. We must **remove police from schools, starting with schools that employ multiple School Resource Officers (SROs)**, following the example of cities like Minneapolis, Oakland, Denver, and Portland.

Some of the savings should be **reinvested in Positivity, Prevention, and Relationship Response Coordinators**, trained in child development, de-escalation, and understanding how trauma and life experiences impact behavior, to create a positive learning environment. Current **SROs will be supported in transitioning** to these new roles if they are interested and ready to participate in the necessary training, or in being absorbed into the New York Police Department if they prefer to remain in law enforcement.

Removing police officers from schools is just the start; we must also remove all vestiges of prison culture by **eliminating metal detectors, on-campus arrests, and handcuffing** (except in the extremely limited circumstances where student and educator safety is actually and immediately in danger), and **incident reporting** for routine student behavior that leads to police intervention and police records. These practices create a hostile climate instead of a supportive learning environment and lead to police records that launch students—especially students of color—into the school-to-prison pipeline.
Create a task force to identify additional areas better served by non-police responses

In addition to building a mental health first responder system and removing police from schools, a Donovan administration will immediately convene a task force dedicated to identifying additional areas in which non-police responders—such as trained mediators or other social services professionals—might achieve better outcomes. Areas for investigation will include substance use issues, noise complaints, traffic enforcement, and situations involving unhoused persons, and will extend to dispatch procedures and requirements for follow-on services in addition to initial responses.

The task force will be composed of community and social services representatives, public health providers, and directly-impacted people, as well as representatives of City agencies. Its work will be informed by an extensive data analysis of 911 calls and emergency responses, as well as by stakeholder and community engagement and best practices from other jurisdictions. The task force will be charged with releasing a blueprint for action by the end of 2022, including strategies for shifting agency resources and responsibilities and piloting novel approaches.

Stop crackdowns on immigrant New Yorkers

Immigrants have historically been the lifeblood of our city, and today, that is just as true as it has ever been. As we work to rebuild following this crisis, we must make sure we’re supporting our immigrants, rather than putting them at risk or standing in the way of their success. In that spirit—and the spirit of directing resources toward causes that will actually help our city—a Donovan administration will stop police crackdowns that disproportionately impact immigrant New Yorkers trying to make a living, like delivery workers and street vendors. We will also prioritize protecting New Yorkers from federal immigration enforcement as they seek to access critical services at hospitals, courts, and other government buildings.

Prioritizing Community-driven, Health-focused Approaches to Public Safety

As we reimagine New York as a city that works for everyone, reduce barriers to equal opportunity, and reinvest in initiatives that are truly constructive, the safety and stability of our neighborhoods has to be a top priority. This begins with actively involving our neighborhoods in creating real public safety, as well as focusing on long-term solutions to the underlying causes of violence.
The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) describes a public health approach to violence reduction that focuses on identifying and addressing the root causes of violence in a long-term and sustainable way. This is in contrast with an approach that is focused on responding to crime and violence solely via arrest and prosecution, but does not seek to understand and deal with their causes.

In order to ensure safety while reducing the NYPD footprint and over-incarceration, we will implement a citywide, cohesive public health approach to violence.

A Donovan administration will use police and incarceration as last resorts and will focus on solutions that get at the heart of New Yorkers’ needs, empowering our residents instead of obstructing their paths toward better lives.

As a starting point, we will invest at least $500 million annually in these solutions, including community- and health-based anti-violence efforts, reentry and supportive housing programs, and other initiatives aimed at providing communities with the resources to build safe neighborhoods. These investments will be funded primarily through savings from reduced corrections and police spending.

These initial commitments will set the floor for a broader effort to direct roughly $3 billion—at least 20% of our City’s public safety budget—to community-focused initiatives that advance public safety and racial justice, guided by a process of public input and an advisory committee that will include directly impacted people and community representatives. These investments are only part of the administration’s overall vision for a safe and equitable city, and are part of the broader citywide agenda for public health, housing, education, and economic opportunity.

**We are committing to the following policies and programs:**

**Invest in community-based anti-violence programs**

There is strong evidence that existing community-led approaches to safety are producing results. And yet, New York City currently invests between $25 million and $35 million in these programs, less than one-third of one percent of the $10 billion that we spend on police. The City should begin by tripling its investment in community-led approaches to violence reduction, expanding current programs and developing new ones modeled after successful initiatives and directed toward neighborhoods where violence is most prevalent.

One effective model is Cure Violence, which aims to prevent violent behavior before it occurs, utilizing “violence interrupters” as alternatives to law enforcements. A recent John Jay study of South Bronx and East New York neighborhoods with Cure Violence programs demonstrated positive impact of the program as these communities experienced statistically significant reductions in gun injuries and shooting victimization.
In another recent example, the NYPD Precinct in Brownsville recently “withdrew officers” from regular patrols in a high traffic and crime section of Mother Gaston Blvd. Instead of police, community-based violence prevention groups were tasked with managing public safety in the area, and non-profit and City entities set up sidewalk tents to deliver educational, job, and housing services to residents. The NYPD credited this approach with significantly reducing crime in the area during the one-week trial and providing a framework for reimagining public safety.

We will also expand hospital-based violence intervention programs, which seek to engage with victims of violence in the hospital, offering long-term programming and support services to prevent retaliation.

By combining a number of successful community-led violence prevention programs, our city can more effectively reduce and prevent crime while decreasing our reliance on the police.

Provide better and more accessible services for victims and communities

The program models discussed above are strategies to respond to and reduce crime and violence without exclusively relying on law enforcement. They are important components of a public health strategy to violence reduction.

However, these programs do not necessarily address the root causes of violence, which can often be found in structural inequality across our various systems including health care, education, housing, and the economy. By making targeted investments into the communities that have been most harmed by violence, New York City can begin to address some of these systemic harms.

These efforts will go hand-in-hand with initiatives outlined in Shaun’s Transportation, Education, Housing, Jobs, and Neighborhoods platforms aimed at improving opportunities and quality of life for all New Yorkers, in recognition of the basic fact that thriving neighborhoods are safe neighborhoods.

Other cities already are beginning to move in this direction: Los Angeles recently passed Measure J, which requires allocation of 10% of unrestricted county funds to non-law enforcement initiatives for racial justice and community development. Los Angeles also committed to reinvesting $150 million of savings from the LAPD towards Black communities. Asheville, NC, passed a reparations bill focused on increasing minority homeownership, growing generational wealth, and closing gaps in other areas. And, in Colorado, state and community-based organizations have taken money out of the corrections system and invested it into local communities.
Focus resources on meeting resident’s needs in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments

Established in 2014, the Mayor’s Action Plan is an approach to violence reduction focused on the 15 public housing complexes where violent crime is highest. It creates an NYPD-resident-agency collaboration aimed at addressing underlying causes of crime and actively engaging the community on public safety needs. These efforts can include physical investments in public spaces and infrastructure, as well as investment in opportunities for employment, mentorship, and healthy lifestyles.

A Donovan administration will expand and prioritize these efforts, investing more heavily in the current programs and extending them to additional developments.

Conduct more thorough public health studies on gun violence at the city level

For decades, Congress has restricted CDC research on gun violence. In 2019, Congress appropriated $25 million to gun violence research, a pittance compared with the number of gun deaths in the United States.

New York City can step in where the federal government is falling short. In a Donovan administration, City agencies will initiate and fund research on the causes and prevention of gun violence through a public health lens. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will collaborate with researchers, non-profits, and other relevant City agencies—including the Department of Social Services and the Department of Education—to study and report on the causes of gun violence. We will invest in and prioritize community-led and community-centered research as part of these efforts, recognizing that those closest to the problem are closest to the solutions.

Through this effort, New York City can serve as an example to cities across the country, collaborating with other mayors to mobilize resources and pool efforts to better understand and address gun violence as a serious public health problem.

Rebuilding Accountable, Credible, Effective Public Safety Institutions

Safety and justice can only be achieved when communities trust the public institutions that are charged with protecting them, and when these institutions are accountable, credible, effective, and racially-just.

Today, New York City is grappling with a crisis of legitimacy in our police department, including the decades-long legacy of over-policing in neighborhoods of color and the harsh police response to this summer’s protests against racial injustice.

Enormous racial disparities are evident throughout our law enforcement system, from the rates at which people are subject to police stops to the rate at which they are
arrested to the rate at which they are incarcerated. Spend an hour in a city arraignment court and you will see that the system almost exclusively impacts people of color.

The City’s main jail complex on Rikers Island is a sprawling 400-acre penal colony that has become synonymous with brutality. Whether from the threat of violence, COVID-19, punitive segregation, or isolation from family and other visitors, people leave these jails worse off than when they entered.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Remake a police department that is accountable, transparent, and responsive to community needs

The NYPD faces a crisis of legitimacy triggered by brutality and over-policing, primarily in communities of color.

This crisis is not just an issue of police accountability. It is also a problem of public safety, because police cannot do their job effectively when they lack the trust of victims, witnesses, and whole communities.

To truly solve this crisis, we have to recognize that today’s broken relationship between communities and the police occurs in the context of more than a half century of abandonment of many communities, primarily communities of color. For decades, when there was instability and crime in these neighborhoods, the City called in the police, instead of answering their real needs. To get at the root of the problem, Shaun’s administration will prioritize community investment as the best solution for instability and crime, rather than turning to the police as the default answer to every problem—as described in the policy principles above.

While reforms to the structure and culture of the police department alone cannot solve the challenges we face today, they are crucial.

Organizational culture is set at the top. In order to ensure that the New York Police Department’s approach is fully aligned with the values of a Donovan administration, Shaun will:

- appoint a commissioner who shares his vision for public safety—one that is community-focused and racially just—and hold this individual accountable for the results;
- build a leadership team at the police department that represents the city’s diversity and understands the imperative for cultural change;
- hold precinct commanders accountable for misconduct by officers under their command and replace leadership when necessary—officer behavior that threatens public safety or disrespects the communities they serve must be corrected, and if not, leadership must be replaced;
• **hold individual officers responsible for bad acts** that too often go unpunished today, including by following the determinations of the Civilian Complaint Review Board and by enforcing a clear, publicly-available set of disciplinary standards;

• **adopt the recommendations set forth in the Department of Investigation’s report** on the police department’s disproportionate and violent response to the protests against racial injustice following the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor; and

• **consent to the appointment of a federal monitor** to oversee the police department’s practices with respect to public protests to ensure that these unacceptable responses to New Yorkers exercising their First Amendment rights are never repeated.

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**Ensure any surveillance technology is used responsibly and transparently**

In addition to these policies, Shaun’s administration will also **focus on ensuring that the police department’s use of surveillance technology is responsible, transparent, and consistent with democratic values**. While advanced technology can help deter and prevent the real threats from organized crime and terrorism that we face in New York City, it can also pose serious risks—as in recent cases where facial recognition technology has led to false accusations against Black men.

To balance the need for security against the risk for abuse, advanced technologies have to be limited to uses that are truly needed for public safety, and they must always be deployed in ways that align with our values as a democratic city and our rights as New Yorkers. The police department cannot be the sole arbiter of these issues. The [POST Act](https://www.nycllcoalitionnc.org/postact), passed last year, is a good start.

To protect all New Yorkers, a Donovan administration will **be transparent about the use of surveillance technologies, establish a civilian oversight panel to ensure that these technologies are used properly, and disclose instances when they are misused**.

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**Track and publicize data on racial disparities, policing, and public perceptions of safety**

To do their job effectively, the police department has to understand how officers are interacting with community members, the racial impact and distribution of these interactions, and how community members perceive the police and their own safety. New Yorkers should also have this data, so they can exercise their rights as informed citizens.

Historically, however, the police department has narrowly focused data gathering on enforcement actions and crime reporting.
New York City can and should be a national model for police transparency. A Donovan administration will collect and track data on police interactions and public perceptions of safety and policing, including calls for service, police stops, use of force, officer misconduct and discipline, and racial disparities. We will use surveys to examine how perceptions of public safety vary by demographics and neighborhoods. We will use this data to guide our actions regarding training, deployment, and allocation of resources.

We will also publicize this data, so that New Yorkers can hold the administration and the police department fully accountable for the results we deliver.

**Close the Rikers Island jails**

A Donovan administration’s approach to incarceration will be based on two premises. First, the system of incarceration that we have is closely linked to racial injustice in our society, including the decades-long legacy of disinvestment and discrimination in these same neighborhoods. The numbers are shameful and staggering: 90% of the people at Rikers today are Black or Latinx.

Second, incarceration should be reserved only for the most necessary cases. Putting people in jail can do serious harm to them, their families, and communities, and is often counterproductive. Removing people from their lives, work, educational opportunities, and family, and subjecting them to the chaos and brutality of Rikers, usually only worsens the problems that led them into trouble in the first place.

Shaun’s administration will focus on ensuring that jail is used only as a last resort, in situations where there are no other alternatives. We know from experience over the past two decades that we can do this and keep the City safe. We will invest in communities and programs to prevent violence and instability, work with the DAs and courts so that only the most serious cases result in incarceration, and build mental health resources and capacity so that we stop using our jails as a warehouse for impoverished people with mental illness. We will advocate for policies in Albany that advance these priorities, including parole reform so that people are no longer jailed for allegations of non-criminal, technical violations of parole rules.

For those who are incarcerated, a Donovan administration will recognize that nearly everyone who is locked up, even those accused of the most serious charges, will ultimately return to their communities. To this end, we will stop solitary confinement and reorient the culture and operations of our jails. We will be committed to the safety, health, and welfare of the staff and people who are confined in jail.

Removing all incarcerated people from Rikers Island before the end of 2027 will be a high priority because the location and condition of the jails there contribute to the dysfunction, inhumanity, and incredible costs to the City—nearly $500,000 per incarcerated person per year. Closing Rikers is the only acceptable path forward for our city and a smaller, more humane, more accessible, more accountable jail system...
will ultimately save lives, as well as hundreds of millions of dollars each year, if not more, that will be reinvested in communities.

**Investing in the Well-being of Returning Community Members to Stopping Cycles of Arrest, Prosecution, and Incarceration**

In order to make New York City safer for everyone and reduce incarceration, the Donovan administration will reimagine how to help people who are coming home, so that they succeed in our communities rather than end up returning to jail and prison.

The best way to accomplish this goal is to invest in the programs and services that build stability, address health needs, and provide opportunity to these returning community members.

When people continually cycle through arrest, prosecution, and jail, the justice system is not working as it should, and we all are worse off for it. The enormous costs of justice involvement, from policing to the courts to jail and prison, fall on city taxpayers.

A Donovan administration will prioritize long-term solutions that provide stability and pathways to success for people who are leaving jail and prison, so that rather than wasting our City’s resources on cycles of incarceration, we are using those resources to help build safe and healthy communities. We will advocate in Albany for legislation to advance these priorities, including reforms to establish automatic expungement after a certain period for most convictions.

**We are committed to the following actions:**

**Provide access to housing, including Section 8 vouchers, to end the prison-shelter pipeline**

People returning from jail and prison consistently report housing as their number one need. Without stable housing, it is difficult to reacclimate to society, gain employment, access health care, and reconnect with family or build support networks.

As one measure of the problem, in 2017, 54% of the people who were paroled to New York City from state prisons went directly to the shelter system. These shelters are often insecure and chaotic. For all returning community members, secure housing is particularly crucial if they are to reach and maintain stability.

Rather than funneling people who are returning from jail and prison into the shelter system, providing stable housing (and comprehensive services when needed) will reduce harmful contact with the justice system, incarceration, and the public health system, resulting in significant cost savings over the long run.
Building on a program that Shaun piloted as Commissioner of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, the Donovan administration will provide Section 8 vouchers to people leaving jail and prison to ensure that they can access housing, thus providing a platform for success in the community. We will also work with NYCHA so that people returning from prisons or jails can more easily access public housing.

In addition, a Donovan administration will invest at least $30 million annually in new funding to establish 600 additional supportive and transitional housing beds to help provide stable housing for people with a history of homelessness and people with mental health needs. These investments will supplement the City’s existing commitment, as part of the Close Rikers plan, to expand the Justice Involved Supportive Housing program.

Establish an office responsible for improving outcomes for people leaving jail and prison

In New York City, no single agency or point of responsibility exists to help people leaving jail and prison succeed, to assist them in navigating the many government and non-profit resources that may be available, or to help ensure that they do not return to confinement. Instead, without a dedicated stakeholder responsible for returning community members, there is little accountability for delivering success.

A Donovan administration will establish a dedicated reentry office to coordinate housing and services for people leaving jail and prison. This office will be responsible for working with New York City, State, and nonprofit agencies to marshal and provide resources and assistance to help people succeed.

Reinvesting Savings from Right-sizing Criminal Justice Institutions

The initiatives outlined above—from refocusing police resources and taking more community-led approaches to safety, to closing Rikers and reforming the NYPD—will result in significant annual savings that can and should be directed toward marginalized communities to address long-term needs. As a starting point, a Donovan administration will utilize these savings to invest $500 million in community-focused public safety and racial justice initiatives annually by the end of our second year in office, setting up a broader effort to invest roughly $3 billion by the end of our first term.

It is our responsibility to direct these resources toward improving the opportunities available to and the quality of life within communities most impacted by historical divestment and mass incarceration. By working closely with communities, we can ensure that savings are reinvested to address the specific needs of each community.
COVID-19 exposed deep rooted injustices in our public school system and it also demonstrated the incredible resilience of our dedicated educators, students and families who continue to persevere during these tough unprecedented times, which is why as we recover from this pandemic, we must rebuild our educational system in order to tackle long-standing inequities and to create real pathways to economic opportunity for every student. This plan builds a seamless cradle to career continuum, celebrates diversity, creates safe and inclusive learning environments and prepares the next generation of New Yorkers for family-sustaining jobs.
The dual pandemics of COVID-19 and ongoing systemic racism exposed deep-rooted injustices in New York City’s education systems. They have also highlighted the strength and resilience of families, students, and educators to innovate and persevere through unprecedented times. As we work to recover from COVID-19, we must rebuild and reimagine our educational system, tackling long-standing inequities to create real pathways to economic opportunity for all public school students; valuing New York City’s diversity by creating integrated and inclusive opportunities for all students; and carefully rebuilding trust and partnering with families and educators to reimagine together.

For too long, generations of NYC students have faced tremendous equity barriers – from access to quality early childhood education, to integrated and inclusive K-12 classrooms, to pathways to CUNY and good jobs. These challenges have only been exacerbated by the pandemic. Shaun’s plan rightly puts equity at the center, focusing on historically marginalized groups, like students experiencing homelessness, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities; and aiming to elevate educator voice, and rebuild their trust in the system. It includes a comprehensive, concrete, and thoughtful approach to finally integrate NYC’s schools and classrooms, which are amongst the most segregated in the nation. Shaun’s vision and leadership can help NYC schools, students, families, and educators rebuild in a more equitable way – and this plan shows how this can be achieved.

John King
Former NYS Education Commissioner and U.S. Secretary of Education

To do so will require us to draw not just on the traditional resources of our public schools but on all of New York City’s enormous assets, bringing all sectors to the table to support our children’s future: challenging our business leaders to help our students and schools recover, and define the needs of the future economy and ensure
equitable access to relevant apprenticeships, jobs and internships that put every student on track to a family-sustaining job; better utilizing our cultural resources—our arts, our museums, our libraries, our parks—to enhance and extend the educational opportunities of our students, families, and educators; and improving coordination with nonprofit and community-based organizations that can better engage historically underserved communities, and nimbly address short-term recovery needs and long-term capacity challenges.

Prior to the pandemic, the public high school graduation rate in New York approached a historic 80%. And yet substantial gaps still existed, with students from low-income households, students of color, multilingual students, students in temporary housing, and students with disabilities too often left behind. At the college level, the CUNY system is a jewel that will be central to New York City’s recovery, and they have rightfully received national recognition for their groundbreaking work to improve completion rates. But there is work to be done to scale CUNY’s effective programs, improve completion rates and set students up for career success. At both the high school and college level, opportunity gaps mean that students from low income households and students of color complete their educations at lower than average rates and are less likely to enter family-sustaining careers.

We must have the vision to reimagine an educational system that values and supports the remarkable diversity of New York City’s students, families and educators, providing every student equitable access to critical resources and support structures they deserve. We must provide meaningful pathways within and beyond the classroom, birth through career, that open doors to economic opportunity. We must close longstanding resource and outcome gaps, provide safe, engaging, culturally responsive and inclusive learning environments, draw from both the innovations of New York City’s educators and existing evidence about what works, and prepare all of our city’s students for family-sustaining jobs for decades to come. And we must have the focus to carry that vision through and make it real.

Our plan will focus on:

- **Repairing the Systemic Damage from COVID, while Tackling Pre-existing Inequities to Better Serve All Students**
- **Applying a System-wide Focus on Diversity, Integration and Inclusion for Students and Educators**
- **Reimagining Pathways from Birth through Post-secondary that Open Doors to Economic Opportunity**
- **Investing in New York City Libraries as Neighborhood Learning Assets**
Repairing the Systemic Damage from COVID, while Tackling Pre-existing Inequities to Better Serve All Students

The current crisis has only exacerbated long-standing shortcomings of the city’s educational system. Students who are from low-income households, of color, multilingual, and those with disabilities have historically faced systemic barriers to obtaining the same educational experiences and outcomes as some of their peers. As we focus on both recovering from COVID-19 and eliminating longstanding barriers to all students’ success, we must rebuild trust with families, students and educators; lead with a vision for equitable schools that dismantles historical inequities and fosters holistic skills and development; learn and apply lessons from the pandemic; and better serve students most at risk of falling through the cracks. Each of these actions must incorporate a lens of equity and inclusivity to ensure that the benefits of new initiatives make their way to all students, particularly those who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and historically left behind.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Rebuild trust with families and communities**

The pandemic has both revealed and intensified the lack of trust between families and the school system; little will be accomplished without re-earning that trust. On
day one, we will partner with existing community-based organizations and faith-based organizations to **launch a listening tour for the mayor and chancellor with families across the city**, aimed at understanding the specific challenges facing each community—particularly Black, Latinx, and immigrant communities, families in temporary housing, and families of students with disabilities—both during and following COVID-19. From there, we must **establish stronger formal systems to facilitate family and student input in school and district priorities**, through enhanced student and family advisory councils and more diverse Community Education Councils, in ways that intentionally empower families whose voices are traditionally marginalized. This will include partnerships with community-based and advocacy organizations to identify issues and opportunities, and be more proactive about incorporating these perspectives into policy, planning and implementation. **All channels for ongoing family and community engagement must be in the languages spoken by families and must use multiple modes of communication (phone, online/virtual, in-person, small focus groups and larger community meetings)** in order to better reach all families. COVID-19 has forced many educators to get creative and innovative in how they engage and communicate with students and families, in ways that can make schools more accessible if done right; we need to leverage and build on these approaches as we recover and rebuild.

### Respect and empower educators

Throughout the pandemic, teachers, principals, and other school staff demonstrated time and again their commitment to their students and their craft. Faced with the need to figure out remote learning during a health crisis with extremely limited central support, they took on new roles, reinvented how they engaged with students and families, and shared their innovations with others in unprecedented ways. All of this came on top of their own challenges as parents, children, partners, and New Yorkers, as ordinary life was upended.

And yet time and again, the city’s lack of planning has made their already hard jobs close to impossible. Their perspectives have been devalued, their contributions given lip service without meaningful support. We must regain their trust. **We will start a new competitive fellowship program recognizing a diverse group of innovative teachers, principals and counselors.** Fellows will be released from some duties for a year to work at central DOE, conduct outreach to colleagues and provide formal input into policy priorities for the Chancellor and leadership team. Modeled on an existing U.S. Department of Education program, the fellows will advocate for the best ideas from their peers, challenge district practices and policies that make it harder for them to do right by their students, and aid the mayor in building more inclusive schools for educators and students of all backgrounds.

In addition, we must **identify, recognize, and scale the innovative practices and materials of our best educators** and **provide expanded options for teacher leadership pathways** that allow our best educators to keep working with students in the classroom, while taking on additional leadership opportunities.
Help students and educators recover from the academic and social-emotional impact of COVID

COVID-19 is exacerbating and creating new academic, social-emotional and mental health needs for our city’s children, educators and families. Reopening schools for more students, in a way their families trust is safe, is just the beginning; a generation of students are facing unprecedented challenges in terms of widening opportunity gaps, as well as growing social-emotional needs after the trauma of the pandemic and social isolation. When it comes to supporting learning recovery, students need both content-specific academic supports and ongoing social-emotional and mental health supports. We must commit to a multi-year comprehensive approach that provides targeted support to help our students and educators recover, but goes beyond—reimagining an education system that creates equitable environments that propel all students, particularly those historically marginalized, on a path of opportunity and success.

We must invest in additional mental health services, response to trauma, and other supports, both within and beyond school premises, building on the city’s previous investment in counselors and support staff. This includes building a Mental Health Continuum, as advocates and the City Council have called for, that provides mental health care for students and families in and outside of schools so that they receive coordinated mental health services needed, especially if they are in crisis, rather than relying on 911. Additionally, all educators should receive mental health and self-care support for themselves, alongside mental health and social-emotional learning training to better address their students’ needs in the classroom.

Despite heroic efforts on the part of educators and school leaders, most students experienced sporadic instruction after the abrupt shift to remote learning in the spring of 2020; and the majority of our city’s students are still in remote classes. As our schools and communities recover and rebuild, students will need additional time to address this unparalleled social-emotional, mental health, and academic disruption in a thoughtful, research-based manner. Through initiatives like extended day and year, summer programming, year-round schooling, and intensive tutoring, we need to provide additional core academic, enrichment (e.g. visual and performing arts, sports, health and wellness, etc.) and social-emotional opportunities for our students as well as planning and collaboration time for our educators. The right approach will differ by school and community; it should be co-planned with local educators and families to meet the needs of local school communities.

An Education Recovery Corps could utilize the strength of our CUNY students and graduates, and other young people, to partner with educators to support the academic and social-emotional recovery of our elementary and secondary school students. Partially funded through federal AmeriCorps dollars and modeled after existing initiatives like the CUNY Tutor Corps, the College Bridge Program, and City Year, but with a more meaningful living allowance to ensure corps members
are fairly paid for their service, an Education Recovery Corps could provide supplemental learning and social-emotional support for younger students, while offering immediate employment in their own communities for CUNY students and graduates, many of whom have faced economic hardship as a result of the pandemic.

This learning disruption is also disproportionately hurting children and students in key transitions—for example, those entering kindergarten and transitioning to post-secondary. Overall, enrollment is down, with this year's decline as substantial as the previous 12 years' decline, with those drops focused in the early grades. CUNY has seen unprecedented drops in enrollment, especially among first-time first-year students in fall 2020, and trends like FAFSA completion for 2021 do not bode well. In partnership with community-based organizations, families, and schools, we need a city-wide effort to communicate and re-engage these families and students and double down on our support for those entering key transitions in the next year, with a parallel effort at the CUNY level.

An all hands on deck Investing in Student Success program would pair public dollars with those raised from philanthropists and private sector partners with a shared interest in bringing New York City's students back. Such a program would provide grants to schools, working with outside partners such as nonprofits or CUNY to accelerate learning for all students, with a focus on students who have been left furthest behind: students with disabilities, homeless students, multilingual students, and students of color. Educators would propose strategies with a strong or encouraging evidence base, such as high-dosage tutoring, family engagement, bridge programs to help with key transitions (e.g., K, 9th grade, college) and other efforts likely to make a difference for New York City's students. Proposals serving the most vulnerable communities, and those with the strongest evidence base, would be prioritized for funding; there would be an expectation that successful efforts would share best practices with other schools.

**Promote a culturally inclusive, academically rigorous, and supportive vision for schools and classrooms**

Reimagining means not just reverting to our pre-COVID normal, but creating schools that center the needs and experiences of students historically marginalized and underserved and foster holistic skills and development for all students. We must work with educators, families, experts in the field of equity and the science of learning, and community-based organizations to lead with a vision for schools that cultivates students’ multiple identities, fosters physical and mental wellness, supports social and emotional development, and develops their cognitive and academic skills. This framework will ensure that students’ identities are supported through culturally responsive practices, that social and emotional development is integrated into every facet of the school environment and instruction, and that a continuum of mental health care for students inside
and outside of schools is well articulated. The framework will help all stakeholders understand a complete and integrated vision for school culture, climate, and instruction, and end the confusion over multiple guides, frameworks, and approaches or competing priorities imposed upon school leaders and educators. It will be supported with guidance, protocols, and ongoing professional development so that all school leaders, educators, and staff are equipped to implement it.

In order for this new vision for schools to be successful, we must first dismantle practices that focus on policing and disciplining students and make schools unsafe for many students of color—contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline. We must remove police from schools, starting with schools that employ multiple School Resource Officers (SROs), following the example of cities like Minneapolis, Oakland, Denver, and Portland. Some of the savings should be reinvested in Positivity, Prevention, Relationships, and Response (PPARR) Coordinators, trained in child development, de-escalation, and understanding how trauma and life experiences impact behavior, to create a positive learning environment. Current SROs will be supported in transitioning to these new roles if they are interested and ready to participate in the necessary training, or in being absorbed into the New York Police Department if they prefer to remain in law enforcement.

Removing police officers from schools is just a start; we must remove all vestiges of prison culture: eliminating metal detectors, on-campus arrests and handcuffing (except in the extremely limited circumstances where student and educator safety is actually and immediately in danger), and incident reporting for routine student behavior that leads to police intervention and police records. These practices create a hostile climate instead of a supportive learning environment, and lead to police records that launch students—especially students of color—into the school-to-prison pipeline.

Finally, we must tackle unfair disciplinary practices that disproportionately impact students of color and students with disabilities—and support educators to make these critical shifts. Although suspensions have decreased in the past couple of years, the overall number of suspended students remains far too high, with disproportionate numbers of students of color and students with disabilities receiving punishments that exclude them from the classroom. Educators must receive robust training on alternatives to traditional disciplinary actions like suspension that deprive children of opportunities to learn.

Prioritize the needs of students in temporary housing

One in ten New York City students are homeless, including more than 32,000 students living in City shelters and approximately 73,000 students doubled up in temporary shared housing situations in 2019-2020. Yet the system systematically
fails to provide them with the education and services they need—a reality only exacerbated during the pandemic, when too many students in temporary housing were left to learn without devices, wifi or cell service in some shelters, or even a safe and quiet space to learn.

To address this, we must start at the top with senior leadership positions within the Mayor’s Office and the Department of Education dedicated to overseeing these students’ needs. Such officials would develop and oversee a comprehensive support plan for students in temporary housing, working across agencies to expedite initiatives and ensuring agencies are working together and being held accountable for supporting these students, with clear measures to ensure each student has access to the help they need, including social-emotional, mental health, and academic support.

Given the frequency of transitions within the shelter system, we must also improve continuity in education for students in temporary housing. While federal law requires families to be placed in a shelter close to their youngest child's school, in New York City this only occurs 50% of the time, even when “close” is defined as “within the same borough.” Even as we move to a housing—rather than shelter-based—system for addressing homelessness, schooling must be consistently considered in shelter placements, through both an Education Support Center within the Department of Homeless Services intake placement center, and required re-evaluation of placements when families are placed in shelters far from their youngest child’s school.

Schools and shelters should be refocused as opportunities for interventions for these students. Schools serving high numbers of students in temporary housing need resources and support to serve them well, including prioritization for Community Schools efforts or other wraparound models which offer accelerated learning programs, targeted literacy interventions, social-emotional supports and other community-based services. Students in temporary housing should have access to trained staff in shelters and schools, equipped to meet their educational needs.

While the current administration made progress by adding social work staff to shelters, these staff must be trained on educational needs of students and the Department of Education must hire 150 new social workers to work in schools with large numbers of students in temporary housing. The Department of Education must also develop a multi-tiered support system in schools for foster, homeless and system-involved youth, in which schools and districts create problem-solving teams that use existing data to provide timely support and interventions for students’ academic, health, and social-emotional needs before they are in crisis. Finally, given the impact that students’ mobility can have on their opportunity to attend high-performing schools, such schools should prioritize seats in their classes for students in temporary housing and be prepared with the training, staff and resources needed to ensure they can be successful.
**Improve screening, programming and opportunities for students with disabilities**

Students with disabilities must be front-and-center in all of our broader reform efforts, not segregated off to the side; and we must provide more high-quality and inclusive programs to meet their needs, especially as these students have faced increased obstacles to appropriate services and programs during the pandemic. We must address racial disparities in special education screening, which both over-identify Black and Latinx students for certain disability classifications and under-identify Black and Latinx students for other classifications, all without effectively addressing their needs or helping them achieve academically before these identifications. This starts with more effective reporting on referrals, identification, and program recommendations broken down by race, ethnicity, and gender, with thresholds that trigger disproportionality reviews. Additionally, current screening tests should be reviewed for any potential sources of bias, and implicit bias training highlighting the impact of inappropriate special education referrals should be required for all staff involved in the identification process.

We must provide New York City’s students with disabilities access to research-based, tested programs that meet their needs in inclusive environments, by learning from and expanding existing programs like ASD Nest and Horizon, targeting new program placement in high-need parts of the city. The City must also replicate effective programs from traditional public, charter, and private school systems and establish more specialized programs within neighborhood schools. This includes engaging and working with families to ensure more students with complex disabilities, including those currently in D75 programs, are served in inclusive settings and neighborhood schools.

Quality special education should begin as early as possible to mitigate the impact of developmental delays and prevent the need for more intensive services later on. Currently, students receiving Early Intervention services from the Department of Health (DOH) face challenges when they shift to DOE special education programs, in part because the DOE does not have enough preschool programs for students with disabilities. While the current administration has made progress in including students with disabilities in 3K and PK programs, this must remain a focus, with improved coordination between these agencies and community-based institutions to make sure these students are supported in the transition to preschool.

**Leverage the assets and meet the diverse needs of our multilingual learners**

More than 40% of New York City public school children speak a language other than English at home. For the students who are learning English at school, called multilingual learners, they or their families come from over 190 different countries around the world and communicate in over 150 different languages. In addition to their ethnic and linguistic diversity, they are a diverse set of learners with diverse
needs and supports. Addressing their needs starts with **ensuring all families have language access**, and receive communication from schools and the education system in their preferred language, using multiple modes of communication to ensure families with limited digital access can communicate with their children's educators and system leaders. We must **invest in more high-quality English as a New Language and Bilingual programs**, particularly by dramatically increasing the number of bilingual programs available in the city and ensuring such programs provide continuity across elementary, middle and high schools. This will take **leveraging the strength of our linguistically diverse city to create pipelines for more bilingual New Yorkers and bilingual high school graduates to become teachers and school leaders**.

Multilingual learners are not a monolith; they have unique experiences both in this country and, for those born abroad, in their home countries. We must **increase the number of programs and services for students with interrupted formal education, older immigrant youth, and multilingual learners with disabilities**.

**Apply an equity review to any budget cuts or additional resources**

Over the next few years, COVID-related budget cuts have the potential to exacerbate existing resource inequities between wealthier schools and schools in low-income communities and communities of color that are often understaffed, underfunded, and physically falling apart. As we adjust to meet current financial strains, **all short-term budgetary and staffing reductions and adjustments must go through an equity review** to ensure that they will not disproportionately impact typically underserved students and contribute to furthering the disparity in educational resources and quality. Any additional federal funds from the state or federal government must undergo a similar review, to ensure they are being spent in equitable ways. Read more about our plans to promote equity in our [Racial Equity Platform](#).

**Closing the digital divide**

Even as New York City has become a growing tech hub, our students have not benefited from this asset, especially our students who are historically underserved by the system. The pandemic exposed the deep equity gaps in students' access to the basic connectivity and devices that are needed for remote learning—as well as so many services, opportunities and jobs of the future. As we return to "normal," technology will be the new normal; it can provide opportunities for students to access more course opportunities and learn side-by-side with students beyond their school walls; and for families, it will continue to be a critical point of access for services and opportunities within and beyond education. And yet, if we don't close the digital divide, these advances will continue to exacerbate inequities.

While the city accelerated efforts to provide internet connections and devices to **the thousands of families** who needed them for remote learning, ten months in, **this**
job is still unfinished. We must finally close the digital use divide and invest in the education technology and support for its use that our students deserve. This means re-positioning connectivity as a basic right to ensure education and workforce opportunities, and working with providers to accelerate the timetable for universal access, prioritizing public housing, shelters, and buildings with affordable housing units or those accepting housing vouchers. We will elevate the Mayor’s Office of Chief Technology Officer to be accountable to organize and reform Federal, state and city efforts, and advocate at the federal level to expand the E-rate program so that it can fund students’ homes as well as at schools, and the Lifeline program (which supports communication services for low-income families).

To learn more about our plans for closing the digital divide, please see our Innovation Plan.

But closing the digital divide so that students can thrive is about more than devices and connectivity. As we ask educators to change their jobs, we must support them with state of the art digital pedagogical and technical skills and knowledge to advance student learning, and ensure they uniformly have access to high-quality, culturally relevant, online instructional materials. Time and again, teachers have said they did not receive enough training to adapt their instruction to the online context. As we ask families to support students learning in new ways, we must support them by ensuring modes of communication are as accessible as possible, and training is provided to families who want to better support their students. We will partner with providers of digital services and tap community-based organizations to better reach immigrant and low-income families who may need extra support to afford, navigate, and access new tools.

A more thoughtful use of remote learning can and should emerge from the crisis of COVID-driven full-time remote instruction. In many schools across the city, course offerings are limited and students do not have access to educators who can offer specialized tutoring and instruction, advanced learning, and enrichment opportunities. Similarly, many of the city’s finest out-of-school offerings are beyond the reach of too many students because they are geographically inaccessible, or limited in size. Carefully curated and expertly constructed remote instruction can engage many more students in enrichment classes (such as arts, sports, health and wellness, etc.), accelerated learning opportunities, and Advanced Placement courses, while also allowing students to learn in integrated learning environments that go beyond their school buildings. The DOE and community school districts must work together to ensure that schools and afterschool programs that do not currently provide these opportunities are prioritized for remote access to such courses, facilitated by school staff and classroom teachers. As we strengthen our basic technological readiness, we can also leverage the city’s technology sector, working closely with our educators, to help innovate around educational equity, while preparing more students for technology careers. We propose that New York City partner with established and emerging Tech companies, educators and a range of city agencies to pilot and scale up
new tools and practices that serve students, families and educators in ways that enhance equity. Depending on the needs that educators, students and families identify, these could include tools that connect families, educators and learning resources across the city, new platforms for parent and community engagement and communications, or efforts to create new learning experiences for students. This partnership could also focus on the DOE system issues, closing the digital divide at the DOE through modernizing schools’ technology and data and reporting infrastructures, upgrading the DOE's aging learning management, data, and reporting systems to facilitate better tracking of student progress and enabling effective collaboration within and across schools. The DOE is far behind other large systems in these digital basics.

Applying a System-wide Focus on Diversity, Integration and Inclusion for Students and Educators

New York City's diversity is one of our greatest assets, but our education and housing policies all but ensure that our students don’t benefit from that asset; instead too many students are relegated to schools that are among the most segregated in the nation, teaching them from a young age that segregation is the norm. The diversity of our student body has the potential to contribute to more culturally responsive, diverse, and well-rounded learning experiences for all—with intentional changes to policy and practice. And while our educator workforce is among the most diverse in the state, it does not nearly match the diversity of our student body, leaving too many students of color without regular access to educators who look like them.

The current administration is finally making some progress on this front. As mayor, Shaun would make permanent each of the changes the current administration is proposing, but go further to put in place admissions policies that foster integration; reinvest in the community integration planning process, ensuring all families are at those tables, to support the best ideas for diverse schools and classrooms that roll up from local communities; and ensure our efforts to build integrated and inclusive schools don’t stop with demographic diversity, to ensure more students are learning in integrated and inclusive schools and classrooms from educators who reflect their backgrounds.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Improve educator diversity

We know that having educators who reflect our students makes a difference; research shows that having a Black teacher by third grade increases a Black
student’s likelihood to graduate high school by 7% and to enroll in college by 13%; with two Black teachers, that shoots up to 32%. Yet in New York City, fewer than 44% of our teachers and 47% of our school leaders are people of color compared to 85% of our students. This reality is most stark in communities that the city has underinvested in for too long—in the Bronx for instance, 62% of students are Latinx but only 27% of educators are. **We must aim to increase the number of educators and school leaders who identify as people of color to at least 65% of all teachers and 70% of all school leaders over the next ten years,** by investing in hiring, preparing and retaining diverse educators, building on the success of programs like NYC Men Teach, to develop additional pipelines and ensure that our educators reflect the diversity of the young people they serve as well as the languages they speak; and ensuring a systemwide focus on and transparency around educator diversity. This is important for our students, but also for economic empowerment in our communities; educator jobs are strong pathways to the middle class.

In terms of preparation, we should work with high schools and CUNY to create early exposure programs and scaffolded pathways to teaching for high school and college students, particularly those interested in working in their own communities; and to build more pathways for diverse educators, including pathways for other educators who are more likely to be of color to become classroom teachers, like paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, after school program employees, and staff in community-based organizations. Critically, both of these pipelines are more likely to include many educators who are bilingual and have special education experience, which would help develop a stronger pipeline of bilingual educators and bilingual special education teachers for our students. We could learn from the High School to Teacher program in Boston Public Schools and the Scaling Education Pathways in Illinois program as models for building strong pipelines of young people already in the city’s schools to become the future educators of color.

But preparation is just the start; **schools must be supportive environments for all educators, especially educators of color,** that lead to long-term retention, promotion, and diversity at all levels of instruction and administration. Data show that across the city, Latinx teachers have spent an average of 1.2 years less in their current school than White teachers—7.3 years for Latinx teachers vs. 8.5 years on average for White teachers. We must establish systems to retain, support, and elevate diverse educators in schools, including

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**Shaun Donovan’s education plan represents the most comprehensive set of policies proposed to date by any candidate in the race to address the issue of segregation in New York City, linking common sense policies such as revamping admissions processes with innovative ideas around expanding seats in diverse, high-quality settings. It also attends to the all-important issues of teacher representation, community input, and resource allocation that are so often left out of the integration conversation. The boldness, breadth, and practicability of this plan to promote integration all receive high marks in my book.**

*Stefan Lallinger*

Former Special Assistant to the NYC Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza
pathways to school leadership; and value the assets in our communities, including community-based leaders, educators of color, and local civil rights leaders, to design high-quality training programs for educators, such as anti-bias training, as well as curricula that increase the cultural responsiveness of education.

Finally, we must build on the work the City Council has done to make data available on teacher diversity, to facilitate focus and transparency. We must hold ourselves accountable for progress through more accessible, actionable data on educator diversity at every level, including data on how educators of color experience the workplace. We should make public longitudinal data on demographics and rates of turnover at the school, district, and borough level.

**Promote and provide leadership for integration and inclusion across the system**

In order to effectively reflect our city’s diversity across our student bodies, curricula, teaching staff, and administrators, in both vision and action, we must stop relying solely on targeted integration and inclusion initiatives and apply a rigorous standard of equity and inclusion to all decisions the city makes. The City should establish a School Diversity and Integration Office within the Department of Education focused on developing, supporting, and implementing a comprehensive integration approach, with public goals and accountability. To better understand where we are and track progress in a public and accountable way, we must add diversity, integration, and inclusion metrics to school quality reports issued annually by the Department of Education and create a new publicly available equity report card for the city and each community school district, empowering families and advocates to hold the system accountable and identify potential gaps in our efforts. This should include equity and opportunity factors such as clear per-pupil funding information, progress towards integration and inclusion goals for all students, and curricular rigor, cultural responsiveness, and alignment of teaching and learning.

**Expand the number of seats in high-performing, integrated schools and support community-driven integration plans**

An early effort would be to expand the number of seats for students in intentionally diverse, inclusive, and high-quality schools. We will achieve this by replicating popular, successful schools that meet the bar for diversity, supporting the creation of new schools that are strategically placed and designed to attract a diverse population of students in ways that do not further segregate other surrounding schools. Families must play a major role in the establishment of new schools in areas with current or projected rapid population change. The city should engage equally with communities that have lived in those areas for years as well as families new to the area, in terms of school location and school programming, and work to develop schools that have a diverse population without further segregating nearby schools.
The most successful integration efforts in New York City have been driven by and with community members. And yet, many districts' integration plans were interrupted by the pandemic, and many more have not been supported to succeed. The city should **invest in getting community-level plans back on track and fund additional community integration planning** with the goal of making the incoming elementary, middle, and high school classes across all New York City districts representative of their districts' populations by 2025. Community integration processes must engage all families in communities, including those who the system has historically underserved.

**Rethink school admissions policies**

While residential housing patterns substantially contribute to segregation, the assignment and screening practices of New York City’s elementary, middle, and high schools exacerbate the challenges. We must rethink school admissions policies at all levels, starting by making permanent each of the changes the current administration has proposed, but also going further to put in place affirmative policies.

At the middle school level, we would **make permanent the current administration’s temporary elimination of screens**, but eliminating screens is just a first step—an open lottery alone will not lead to more diverse schools without intentional efforts to integrate middle schools. We would **also work hand in hand with communities to put in place affirmative, pro-equity, district-wide policies at the middle school level like the weighted lottery approach** already yielding positive results in **District 15**. A weighted lottery model can promote more representative distributions of students from low-income households, multilingual learners, students in temporary housing, and students with disabilities in all the schools in a district. In addition, as with high school enrollment, we would encourage districts to ensure middle school enrollment is not limited by residential segregation by limiting seats reserved for students within zones, and opening up more seats for other students in the district and from historically underrepresented groups in neighboring districts through a weighted lottery.

At the high school level, we support and will ensure that **the elimination of geographic priorities recently announced by the de Blasio administration are continued**. But that is not enough to tackle the systemic segregation of our high schools. We will work to **reform and improve the high school admissions system so that entrance criteria are fair and transparent and include specific mechanisms, such as weighted lotteries, to ensure all high schools, and especially our highest performing high schools, are more representative of students from all demographic groups**. This will include examining screens, academic and otherwise, to revise the ones that have discriminatory impact on low-
income students, students of color, multilingual learners, and students in temporary housing; utilizing weighted lotteries or other approaches that provide additional weight in admissions for students from low-income households, multilingual learners, students in temporary housing, and/or students with disabilities; ensuring more transparency and uniformity in the use of academic screens, where they exist, so families do not have to sift through a confusing hodgepodge of individualized rubrics for every high school they are interested in; and reviewing admissions policies to make sure multilingual learners are given proper supports and accommodations on admissions tests and auditions so that language is not a barrier to admissions to high school.

**Go beyond demographic diversity to inclusion for new and expanding diverse schools**

Changing admissions policies is only one step in developing truly integrated schools. In addition, we must ensure newly diverse schools are able to support all students’ successes, and ensure students’ multiple identities are respected, reflected, and fostered in the school community; and support educators to further develop their teaching practices to support the goal of an inclusive and affirming school environment for all students. We will do this by creating communities of practice for diverse schools to share best practices, problem solve, and develop new approaches to meet the academic, social, and community needs of their diverse student body, learning from those educators who have been leading in this work for years. **Diversifying the educator workforce**, as described above, will also be a critical step.

Finally, we must ensure segregation isn’t recreated at the classroom level. Across our schools, we have examples of within-school segregation—the student body might be diverse, but advanced courses or other opportunities continue to be provided disproportionately to White students.

**Tap into and celebrate New York City’s linguistic cultural diversity**

In an increasingly interconnected world and diverse city, bilingualism is one of the most valuable skills a person can have—and yet we don’t do nearly enough to cultivate this or leverage the fact that **over 40% of students speak one of over 150 languages other than English at home**. As such, we must **invest in increasing the number of high-quality bilingual programs city-wide with a focus on equitable access** so that programs reflect the racial, socio-economic, disability, and linguistic
diversity of the city. This includes opening 450 new bilingual programs over four years in elementary, middle, and high schools, to ensure that an additional 28,000 students are served in those programs, raising the number of multilinguals served in bilingual education to over 30% as well as expanding world language courses and opportunities for monolingual English-speakers. Community engagement in designing and placing new programs is crucial, as programs should provide opportunities for developing the languages that students speak as well as those that families want their children to learn.

Expanding the number of bilingual programs requires new pathways to identify and train bilingual students interested in teaching, including ensuring more students can earn the NYS Seal of Biliteracy on their diplomas and early exposure to teaching programs for high school and college students to prepare to teach in their communities; and pathways for other educators, like paraprofessionals, to teaching (more on this above). The development of rigorous standards for instruction is needed from elementary to high school to ensure that all programs are well-staffed and of high-quality.

**Utilize high-quality, culturally responsive materials, curated and developed by New York City’s best educators**

New York City students and educators deserve to be learning and teaching from the best materials: high-quality, rigorous, standards-aligned and culturally responsive. Asset-based, culturally responsive learning means drawing upon the scholarship and traditions of diverse communities, in collaboration with a panel of our best educators, to curate these curricula and corresponding instructional materials, provide them to all educators, and make it as easy as possible for them to be used and used well. We will partner with local assets such as the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library, and partner with—and pay—our best teachers in order to accelerate the development of instructional materials. Materials should be provided in physical and digital form, with aligned professional development, to any schools and educators interested in using them.

**Reimagining Pathways from Birth through Post-secondary that Open Doors to Economic Opportunity**

Our siloed K-12 system is a relic of the past. The educational and economic inequities that COVID has exacerbated require that we create coherent pathways to opportunity, beginning in early childhood and continuing through high school and beyond to set all students on a pathway to economic opportunity. We must build on the success of Universal Pre-K, ensure students achieve early literacy, support secondary students as they choose and prepare for their next steps, and partner with CUNY in high school and beyond to ensure students are on pathways to family-sustaining jobs.
We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Start strong**

High-quality early childhood education is central to building a strong foundation for students’ futures and to enabling our economy to recover and thrive after the pandemic. New York City has made substantial progress in access to Pre-K, but with childcare deserts, under-valued staff, and the childcare sector among those hardest hit by pandemic-induced closures, we are far from meeting all families’ needs. This is a national problem that will take action from the federal government and states, and we will advocate strongly at both levels for additional resources for providers and families. But our city can do more to serve families better.

We must begin by strengthening coordination across the Department of Education, Department of Health, and community-based organizations (CBOs) to identify the most critical geographic gaps in 3K and Pre-K programs, and to better match family needs to specific program offerings. Placement decisions between CBO- or DOE-run 3K/Pre-K programs do not consistently fully consider which programs best meet a family’s needs—for example, for extended day and year coverage. Improved outreach to immigrant, multi-lingual, and other low-income families is needed to better support them through the application process, including through CBOs with pre-existing connections to these families. This is particularly challenging for families of children with disabilities, as they navigate multiple city agencies through the transitions from Early Intervention to 3K and Pre-K, and for whom there are too few high-quality options in these critical early years. Finally, conflicting Department of Health and Department of Education rules can cause confusion within community-based organizations, impacting their ability to focus on providing care and education.

Early childhood classrooms are among the most segregated educational spaces in the city and country, due to a mix of residential segregation, family preference, and the fragmented early education landscape, with its mix of longstanding, targeted public programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start, newer universal and targeted programs, and private programs that are frequently unaffordable for working families. The city should work with DOE and CBO child care provider centers to find creative ways to encourage more integration of programs and classrooms through subsidies and technical assistance to providers to blend public (Head Start, state, city) and private funding sources.

To allow more early childhood leaders to focus on quality, city technical assistance could be provided to lower administrative burdens and improve center financial sustainability so that center directors and educators can focus on serving children. For example, we could follow the example of cities like Richmond, VA in establishing shared services organizations that provide administrative and other professional support to networks of smaller centers. These organizations would handle non-instructional operations, enrollment management, and grant and
contract acquisition and compliance while allowing center heads and staff to spend more time focusing on teaching and supporting children’s development.

Finally, we must invest in our early childhood workforce through new pathways, increased salaries and training efforts. Early childhood workers are predominantly women of color; and as we have seen throughout the pandemic, they are both critical to our city’s economy and systematically undervalued by the system. We can learn from Children’s Aid, which recruits parents to volunteer on center committees, and offers tuition assistance and guidance to support them in becoming substitute staff, teaching assistants, and eventually teachers and even center heads. Another model is the CUNY Early Childhood Workforce Scholarship, which offers financial assistance for pursuing higher education to employees of licensed early childhood programs in New York City who work at least 20 hours per week. Meanwhile, CUNY’s Early Childhood Professional Development Institute is working with New York State’s New York Works for Children initiative to revise a career ladder for early childhood educators including their required skills, credentials, responsibilities, and salary ranges, offering a potential framework for improved quality and equity across all ECE providers.

Ensure early literacy

Literacy is a critical gateway skill; but even before the pandemic, the system was not bringing every student up to grade level, with massive disparities by race, socioeconomic status, disability, and multilingual status. In 2019, roughly half of New York City’s 3rd grade students were on grade level on their language Arts assessments, with an over 27% achievement gap between Black and Latinx students and their White peers. The disrupted and lost learning time caused by COVID is likely to leave more of our most vulnerable students further behind. In elementary schools, we should focus on supporting research-based, culturally responsive literacy instruction, curated or developed by New York City teachers and grounded in the science of reading, including ensuring students and educators have access to high-quality instructional materials and providing professional development for all PK-3 educators, including special education, English as a New Language and Bilingual teachers. We should also build on the current administration’s Universal Literacy Initiative by maintaining and expanding school-embedded early literacy coaches to support classroom educators.

In secondary schools, we must provide targeted professional development to equip teachers with the tools to deliver evidence-based specialized instruction aimed at helping diverse groups of students like those with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and students who were never properly taught to read. Acknowledging that the literacy gap is likely widening due to the pandemic, we must commit to providing targeted acceleration support for secondary school students whose literacy skills have fallen further behind.
Create pathways to postsecondary opportunities and careers, including one paid, relevant career experience during high school

A high school diploma increasingly is insufficient to secure a good job and a choice-filled future; most growth in good jobs is in jobs that require a postsecondary degree or training. It’s critical to shift our city’s paradigm from viewing high school graduation as an endpoint, to high school graduation as a milestone leading to future education and training opportunities. Read more about our plans to help New Yorkers secure family-sustaining jobs in our Jobs Platform.

Conversations with students suggest that in high schools that serve higher-income communities, this shift is already well underway. These schools frame graduation as a necessary but partial measure of success; students understand that they are on a path that extends beyond high school, and high schools provide opportunities to their students that help them figure out where they’re going. Students that attend high schools that serve lower-income communities, on the other hand, report a narrower focus on graduation, and opportunities for broader exposure that are targeted rather than universal.

Ensuring that every student has these opportunities embedded in the high school experience, and intentionally supported by their school, sits at the center of our agenda for high school. New York City should guarantee at least one paid job, apprenticeship, or internship opportunity that connects to a meaningful career pathway to every high school student by 2026, expand opportunities for early career exploration and more intensive opportunities like internships and apprenticeships generally, working with employers, and ensure at least 60% of students are able to obtain college credit while in high school, with a focus on expanding opportunities for historically underserved populations and neighborhoods. These opportunities can help students identify and develop their interests while increasing the relevance of high school.

But the city can’t do this alone. We must establish and empower an intermediary to partner with the DOE, CUNY, workforce programs and employers, and students and families to identify and expand existing high-quality programs; identify high-growth sectors and work with programs and employers to provide new opportunities in those areas; and align program participation and outcomes with a common framework such as the existing Center for Youth Employment’s CareerReady Framework. And we must partner with employers across high growth sectors and pool public and private funding to dramatically increase these paid, relevant internships, apprenticeships and other meaningful career experiences at the secondary and postsecondary level. There are a number of model programs in New York City, such as the Brooklyn STEAM Center, that already offer training, mentorship, and employment opportunities for high school and college students. But these programs must be expanded to ensure more students can benefit.
A key strategy is doubling the size of the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) over the next five years from 75,000 to 150,000 participants per year, focusing on neighborhoods and student groups who have been historically underrepresented. In addition to providing job skills and much needed financial support, research shows the program improves school attendance and performance and reduces incarceration and mortality rates; these benefits increase with additional participation in the program.

In addition, by 2026, **60% of New York City high school graduates should earn college credit while in high school.** Students who begin post-secondary studies in high school are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, and complete their college degrees on time. These expansions must prioritize students of color, low-income students and other historically underserved populations, achieving equitable access to these opportunities. **Doubling enrollment in CUNY’s College Now program**, the nation’s largest dual enrollment program currently serving 22,000 New York City high school students each year and engaging 17 CUNY campuses, should be central to expanding opportunity. In addition, **we would add 15 new schools to the 20 existing early college high schools, locating them across the city in areas of highest need, especially in community school districts where there isn’t already an early college high school.**

A strong start to high school has repeatedly been identified as a key indicator of student graduation, successful transition to postsecondary pathways, and postsecondary success. From the start, each ninth grader should have a high school graduation plan with their initial post-secondary aspirations. Underlying these plans must be a clear understanding of the knowledge, skills, and experiences required for different post-secondary education or training pathways, which will take deeper partnership between the DOE, CUNY, the Department of Youth and Community Development, and employers. These plans help students and families understand how their high school course choices, extracurriculars, and career exploration can open doors to different pathways; and families also can get financial planning help that illuminates post-secondary education costs and opportunities for financial aid.

**Leverage CUNY as an engine of economic opportunity**

Just as after the Great Depression, CUNY is going to be critical to the city’s rebuilding. **The most reliable path to the middle class remains a college degree, especially a four-year bachelor’s:** most family-sustaining jobs and good job growth are in sectors that require some post-secondary education, such as technology, business, health care, and environmental sustainability. The CUNY system is a jewel that has rightfully received national recognition for its groundbreaking work improving completion rates, serves a diverse set of New Yorkers of all ages, and is a proven engine of economic opportunity.
And yet, in 2018-19, just 25% of first-time full-time students entering CUNY's community colleges completed a two-year associate's degree within three years; and only 52% of those entering CUNY's four-year bachelors' programs graduated in six years. There is work to be done to scale CUNY's effective programs, improve completion rates, and set students up for career success, working closely with the P-12 system to power students toward their career aspirations, and with employers to ensure they are prepared for and placed in family-sustaining jobs. **Degree completion at CUNY's community and senior colleges should be accelerated by expanding proven student success programs** like co-requisite remediation (allowing students to earn college credit while catching up on key skills that previously would have delayed college enrollment), ASAP (comprehensive advising, financial, and social supports for community college students), and ACE (the 4-year adaptation of ASAP), and extending the lessons to part-time and adult students.

CUNY's most successful completion efforts have been for full-time students; but CUNY's 78,783 part-time students (33% of total enrollment) are much less likely to complete a degree and are disproportionately older and students of color. **Even in tough budget times, the city and state should invest in scaling-up these programs with a proven track record to dramatically reduce equity gaps in degree attainment between student groups.**

CUNY has **seen enrollment declines**, increased rates of course withdrawal, and other signs that the pandemic is slowing students' progress to degrees. Several sources show this is part of a broader trend for low-income students and students of color to cancel or delay their plans for higher education, especially in community colleges. We should work with philanthropy, employers, and CUNY to reach out to students who stopped out or delayed enrollment in CUNY during the pandemic, especially community college students, and encourage them to restart their educational plans, based on lessons learned from previous efforts. Continuing College Bridge programs that were philanthropically funded during COVID could reduce “summer melt” before rising first-year students matriculate.

Finally, as at the high school level, the city is in the position to help CUNY build out stronger career exploration and opportunities to put students on a path to a family-sustaining career. College students with internships and entry-level job opportunities are better prepared for the workforce and likely to find employment after graduation, aligned with the high school work and through the same intermediary. College-level model internship programs that could be expanded include CUNY Service Corps and the TechTalent Pipeline. The recently announced CEO Jobs Council promises new training and job opportunities.

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*Shaun Donovan’s education agenda is designed to open doors to meaningful economic opportunity for NYC’s students, and makes it clear that this mission begins at birth and doesn’t stop until every student is launched on the career path of their choice. Besides scaling up proven academic and support programs in the DOE and CUNY, he will make sure that high school and college students have many more ways to learn about and participate in the world of work, so they can choose and prepare for the pathway of their choice.**

*Shaun Donovan*  
Former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development  
Former Commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Former Member of the New York City Council

*Amy McIntosh*  
Former Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Strategy at CUNY
In addition, a new CUNY Learning Center for 21st Century Skills could bring together students including adult learners, professors, and employers with talent needs to create opportunities for applied learning through micro-internships, capstones, skill badging programs, and consulting projects, all in high-growth fields where New York City needs more skilled employees. The Center’s efforts could be supplemented with the wealth of professional experience among the city’s retirees. The City should establish a program that enlists retired professionals to mentor high school and college students, providing guidance on entering high-demand, stable job sectors.

**Investing in New York City Libraries as Neighborhood Learning Assets**

With 214 libraries across New York City, there is a library building in every neighborhood. Moreover, they provide a deep and rich set of needed services for New Yorkers of all ages and backgrounds, but they do not all provide the same benefits to their surrounding area. **Opening all libraries, in all neighborhoods, seven days a week** will allow libraries to serve as catalysts for social and economic infrastructure within our communities for New Yorkers of all ages, and, in particular, provide greater access for early learning, digital learning, workforce development, and emergency preparedness training.

We must begin by supporting libraries in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) communities, immigrant neighborhoods, communities of color, and other historically underserved areas and establish strong neighborhood partnerships, to ensure they have the capacity to respond to community priorities. This could involve partnering with community leadership to identify priority services to invest in, aligning open hours to community needs, or expanding online programs for extended usage. Libraries could also be supported to join forces with local schools and non-profit organizations to share resources and expand impact, following models like MyLibraryNYC, which allows teachers to access library books for classes instead of relying solely on in-school libraries, or the Flushing Library’s participation in the Flushing Mobility Project, a consortium of neighborhood non-profits pooling services to fight poverty.

Libraries can play a leadership role in developing and resourcing culturally responsive learning materials and opportunities to support schools and communities, but must be supported to work with the DOE on this. Exemplary libraries such as the Schomburg Center and the Flushing Library build local, national, and international cultural resources, rooted in NYC’s diverse population; local New York City educators and students should be benefiting.

We will expand all libraries’ capacities as resources for early and family learning, such as the national Family Learning Place and the Queens Public Library Kick off to Kindergarten models, and complement this role with centralized
information on other neighborhood family and children’s support services that are proven contributors to healthy starts.

Libraries can also serve as **engines for economic and infrastructural development by providing lifelong learning opportunities for New Yorkers**. Expanding investment in the following areas will build on libraries’ existing best practices, particularly as we face high unemployment rates and the need for a citywide recovery: on-site and online free skills-building for adults in English-language fluency; computer and job skills; on-site and online job and career fairs with industry experts; and family digital use skill building to accelerate access to all educational resources. In addition, **through innovative revenue and partnership models, efficiencies and new revenues streams can be found to sustain these and other services**. One model to consider could include reserving library space for commercial use as long as it doesn’t intrude on libraries’ community building and educational functions. Housing City agency offices in libraries would also provide additional revenue to libraries while providing centralized hubs for accessing government services like those provided by the Department for the Aging and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
Fully realizing the right to affordable housing in New York City is a massive challenge in the best of times; in the midst of this pandemic, we are at a crisis moment. We need an all hands on deck approach from everyone — city, state, and federal governments, private companies, advocates, and New Yorkers in every neighborhood — to tackle this crisis. I have dedicated my entire career to issues of housing, motivated by the suffering and struggle that I witnessed New Yorkers experiencing through the 1970s and 1980s. The solutions to our housing problems are within reach, but we need to be willing to rethink how we tackle them. We cannot solve homelessness with homeless programs alone. We need to finally invest adequately in NYCHA and HPD, not just revitalizing public housing, but preparing it for the future through efficiency and climate resiliency efforts. We need to make it easier for New Yorkers to become homeowners and build their wealth. These are all necessary steps, and I’m confident that I’m the only candidate who can get us to where we need to go.
Today, an average of 60,000 people stay in shelters each night, 28% of New York’s renters are severely rent burdened (as are 72% of those earning less than $15,000), our public housing is crumbling, and because our supply of housing is not keeping up with demand, New Yorkers are choosing to leave the city to find better and more affordable housing options elsewhere. It is time to move beyond a single-minded focus on big unit production goals. We cannot accept an expensive emergency shelter system that temporarily boards tens of thousands, public housing buildings that are deteriorating, or outdated and arcane land use regulations that prevent us from providing families with affordable housing across the city.

We can and will do better. We will move our city from a haphazard, piecemeal approach to a comprehensive plan to establish New York’s place as a progressive housing beacon.

“Affordable housing is at the nexus of creating an equitable and diverse New York City—a city that serves all its citizens. Our next mayor must be someone who deeply understands the individual complex challenges that our city’s housing and neighborhoods face, and who has concrete, practical ideas about how to solve them. Shaun Donovan is the clear choice. At a moment when New York City is facing a growing housing crisis with—in the wake of the pandemic—the potential of getting much, much worse, we must take a comprehensive approach to addressing our city’s affordable housing and community development needs. Any credible plan must address the New York City Housing Authority’s profound challenges, housing for the homeless, keeping New Yorkers in their homes, and ensuring that every New Yorker’s housing is safe, clean, and affordable. Donovan’s plan addresses all of these issues effectively, in addition to promoting homeownership, viewing housing as an opportunity to support our economy, contributing to the “greening” of the city, and, crucially, asking all neighborhoods to contribute to the fair and accessible housing of New Yorkers. I fully support this plan and look forward to seeing it in action.”

Marc Jahr
Former President of the New York City Housing Development Corporation
Homelessness is a solvable problem. We cannot accept the status quo nor solve homelessness with homeless programs alone. We will move our city from a right to shelter towards a right to housing, ensuring that all New Yorkers have the access to the housing support they need.

We can do this by creating an improved system of emergency rental assistance to help people stay housed when facing economic setbacks to avoid homelessness altogether. We can do this by coordinating better across our own City agencies to ensure that people do not fall through the cracks but instead receive the support they need. We can do this by operating a well-run homeless system that efficiently gets people into permanent housing as quickly as possible so they can rebuild their lives in the community. And we can do this by maximizing all resources available from all levels of government, especially the Biden/Harris administration and Congress.

Homelessness and affordable housing are complex issues that require a multi-layered and comprehensive response. Shaun Donovan is the person with unique experience and relationships to finally make New York a city that works for everyone.

Our plan will focus on:

- Keeping New Yorkers Safe and Secure in Their Homes and Communities
- Investing in and Preserving our Public Housing
- Expanding Housing Choice for All New Yorkers
- Addressing Homelessness through Housing
- Reforming Land Use Policy to Be More Equitable, Inclusive, and Sustainable
- Producing More Housing Affordably and Equitably Across all Five Boroughs
- Investing in Improved Data and Analysis

Keeping New Yorkers Safe and Secure in Their Homes and Communities

The Donovan administration will help New Yorkers stay in their homes, and stabilize the buildings and neighborhoods where they live. Every New Yorker deserves a safe and stable place to call home—free from hazardous conditions, harassment, or the threat of eviction. Having led the Obama administration’s housing efforts during the last housing crisis, Shaun Donovan understands the urgency of preventing evictions and foreclosures.
To make sure home is a safe haven for New York City tenants, we will create new and improved emergency rental assistance and foreclosure prevention programs to help people weather economic setbacks, and develop more effective and proactive code enforcement mechanisms that help ensure decent and habitable housing for all. We will expand access to counsel so that tenants can enforce their rights in court. And we will partner with landlords to maintain and rehabilitate affordable housing, while collaborating to reach New York’s climate goals.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Create an improved system of emergency rental assistance to help people stay housed when facing economic setbacks

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed how limited the current programs are in supporting our communities in times of crisis. The Donovan administration will work collaboratively with the state to increase annual spending on emergency rental assistance to $500 million and increase the amount of arrears covered to $5,000 per household. This program will provide support before renters get to housing court and certainly before emergency shelter. This emergency support will reach some 100,000 New Yorkers struggling or unable to pay rent due to economic setbacks.

In addition, the Donovan administration will create a domestic-violence-focused flexible funding reserve that addresses problems and expenses before they lead to rent arrears and the possibility of homelessness, helping domestic violence survivors and their children remain housed after a case of domestic violence. The administration will work with and listen to domestic violence survivors to determine which pathways are appropriate.

Protect tenants from harassment and eviction

The pandemic has pushed New York City’s affordable housing crisis to a breaking point, placing thousands more residents at risk of eviction. Research shows that being evicted—a trauma in and of itself—puts households at a greater risk of long-term housing instability, homelessness, and future hospitalization. People of color, who have borne the brunt of COVID-19’s devastating health and economic effects, are disproportionately evicted.

In order to protect tenants from harassment and eviction, we must ensure citywide expansion of NYC’s Universal Access to Counsel (UAC) program to provide free
legal services for income-qualified tenants facing eviction in housing court. Lawyers are vital to helping tenants navigate the procedural hurdles of housing court, mount effective defenses, and enforce New York City and State tenant protection laws. Expanding access to counsel can also deter harassment by ensuring that landlords know that they will face a true adversarial process in court. Recognizing that access to justice matters in many spheres of vulnerable tenants' lives, we will expand UAC to cover administrative hearings and higher courts.

We must also work to move eviction interventions further upstream and provide landlords and tenants with meaningful alternatives to the eviction process.

**Support existing homeowners and protect them from fraud and displacement**

The percentage of loans that are 90 days or more past due or in the process of foreclosure is now above 5%, the highest rate since the fourth quarter of 2013. These homeowners are at great risk of con artists and fraudsters making false promises to cure the delinquency, often for a sizable fee. The Donovan administration will bring lessons from the last crisis to craft an effective set of policies to protect homeowners and allow them to stay in their homes.

In order to protect homeowners, the City must expand the capacity of legitimate foreclosure assistance organizations to conduct outreach to homeowners to encourage them to turn to trustworthy resources and ensure homeowners at risk of delinquency or foreclosure know about available help.

The Donovan administration will also partner with the state and federal government to develop a flexible mortgage assistance program, modeled after best practices identified by the US Treasury's Hardest Hit Funds program. Such a program would be combined with housing counseling and legal services and offer support for a variety of tools including principal reduction, down payment assistance, mortgage payment assistance, and transition assistance.

We will develop a home repair program for seniors to fund necessary repairs and home modifications to maintain their independence. New York City has over 1 million seniors and the population is growing. At the same time, New York City has one of the oldest housing stocks in the nation, with the median age of a residential building currently at 90 years old.

A home repair program for seniors, with a combination of grants and loans repayable upon resale, could help seniors retain their independence in a safe environment. The program would provide up to $10,000 in assistance to 2,000 homeowners per year. Similarly, the City must reduce the cost of home improvement by streamlining permits and fees for routine improvements. Read more about our plans to support older New Yorkers in our Aging Platform.
Establishing flexible funds for acquisition of distressed, single-family homes can help stabilize them and keep them affordable. A small government investment could leverage private capital to help responsible players acquire distressed single family homes, rehabilitate them, and sell them to responsible owner-occupants.

Launch an awareness campaign targeted to renters and owners who are facing challenges in light of COVID

Too often, homeowners and renters lose their homes because they don’t know about available resources. The Donovan administration will train 311 and a network of housing providers to ensure households know about available resources and to address common concerns about eviction, foreclosure, forbearance, and housing alternatives.

Stabilize buildings and keep New Yorkers safe and secure in their homes

Effective and collaborative code enforcement matters more than ever. Too many tenants have had to weather the pandemic while living with mold, pest, leaks, and other hazards. Meanwhile, small building owners have struggled to maintain their properties in the face of reduced rental incomes and decreased incentives for investment. The Donovan administration will move from reactive and punitive code enforcement to a more collaborative approach, balancing safety and equity with the need to maintain the city’s affordable housing stock. This shift will benefit a wide range of New Yorkers, from lower-income tenants who stand to benefit from reduced bias and an improved affordable housing stock, to small landlords—many of whom are immigrants—who will benefit from lower administrative costs and a more effective compliance regime.

To get there, we will move to a more proactive and collaborative code enforcement regime. Equitable code enforcement is essential to New York City’s efforts to ensure that dwellings are available and habitable for all residents. But under a reactive code enforcement regime like the one currently in place in New York, the loudest voices get attention, while too often, those who are wary of involving the government or fear retribution get none. The Donovan administration will shift to a more proactive approach, using predictive analytics to identify problem buildings and implement randomized inspections.

The City must provide technical and financial assistance through initiatives like its Landlord Ambassador Program to help landlords keep their properties safe and viable and using proactive “nudges” to improve compliance.

Revamping the Multifamily Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program (formerly known as the 8a loan program) and J-51 preservation incentive will help responsible building owners improve their buildings and meet climate goals. Additionally, we will expand the New York City Energy Efficiency Corporation’s...
Green Predevelopment Loan Fund to make more capital available to affordable housing providers to fund energy conservation measures.

And we will step up enforcement of annual required rental building registration so City officials can build an accurate registry of rental buildings, identify owners of buildings, and inspect full portfolios.

Investing in and Preserving our Public Housing

With more than 2,300 residential buildings and over 173,000 units, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is the single largest provider of deeply affordable, low-income housing in the city. More than 400,000 of our most vulnerable New Yorkers call NYCHA home, and its aging and deteriorating properties are woven into the fabric of communities in every borough. As the health and stability of NYCHA declines, so too does that of many of our neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, over the years we have watched as Congress has cut billions of dollars from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) budget, and by extension, slowly starved the nation’s public housing system and our own Housing Authority. As of early 2020, NYCHA has a roughly $40 billion capital needs gap. And that number will grow further if NYCHA does not make repairs that its residents need.

It is time for New York City to take the lead and to treat our public housing as a priority, an irreplaceable asset, and as one of the long-term keys to the success of our recovery. Shaun Donovan will ensure that we no longer operate NYCHA as if it is a separate city within our city. For NYCHA to thrive and for New York to thrive, our public housing must be part of a comprehensive plan that spans housing and community development, climate change and resiliency, and so much more.

To achieve this goal, the Donovan administration will fully adopt and aggressively implement the NYCHA Blueprint for Change and the recommended policy goals of the “From the Ground Up 2021” plan from United for Housing.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Establish a Preservation Trust to empower NYCHA residents

The Donovan administration will immediately introduce legislation in partnership with the state to establish a New York State Public Housing Preservation Trust, a key element of both the NYCHA Blueprint and United for Housing’s plan. This new nonprofit entity would meaningfully engage residents in oversight, provide the
means to leverage multiple funding sources, access Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs), and ensure that we can make repairs to every apartment. As former HUD Secretary, Shaun Donovan has the unique expertise to navigate both the state and federal processes needed to make the Trust a reality.

**Commit to making meaningful investments in housing**

The NYCHA Blueprint proposes to use federal funding via TPVs to leverage dollars for capital repairs for the roughly 110,000 apartments not covered through Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) conversion projects. Even if successful, this would still leave a significant shortfall of $6 billion.

As mayor, Shaun Donovan will **make a historic commitment of up to $2 billion per year in City capital dollars to accelerate repairs across NYCHA’s portfolio** to ensure that tenants have safe homes they can be proud of.

Committing up to $2 billion per year in City capital funding would help fill gaps and speed the process of making critical repairs and upgrades to tenants’ homes as we continue to work with our federal partners.

**Reduce costs by prioritizing efficiency goals**

According to 2017 Census data, NYCHA’s public housing accounts for nearly 8% of the city’s rental housing. Given its sheer size, the greening of NYCHA's housing will undoubtedly have a positive impact in the communities where it is located. This is an opportunity for NYCHA to show that public housing can lead the way in helping the City achieve its carbon reduction goals, while improving the health of residents by eliminating environmental injustices. Through resident apprenticeships, training, and jobs placements programs, established in collaboration with unions, we could also provide well-paying, secure employment to NYCHA residents.

Shaun Donovan will **commit to reducing operating costs across NYCHA’s developments** by accelerating energy-efficiency and resiliency investments through the use of energy performance contracts or other mechanisms to capture significant savings upfront. Achieving significant energy efficiency across NYCHA’s portfolio represents a historic opportunity to improve the quality and resilience of its housing stock, lower operating expenses, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions while providing tenants with a healthier and more comfortable living experience. Learn more in our [Climate Platform](#).

**Address persistent issues caused by NYCHA governance**

Long-standing systemic issues within NYCHA’s management structure have led to years of roadblocks and dysfunction. If significant reforms are not made—from the
ground up—to the fundamental way NYCHA does business, no mayor will be able to bring about the real change that its nearly half million tenants deserve.

As mayor, Shaun Donovan will **overhaul NYCHA’s governance structure** to improve performance, drive decision-making closer to residents, and improve resident engagement and communications.

Starting at the top, NYCHA should be led by an expanded board of directors that includes tenant representatives and people with expertise in fields such as property management, housing finance, and social services administration that would normally be required to run an organization that oversees what would qualify as the 32nd largest city in the nation by population. Currently all seven board members, including the Chair, are appointed by the mayor, with the Chair also serving as NYCHA’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Under the new governance structure, the board would select NYCHA’s CEO, separating it from the Chair position and freeing it from political wrangling. Additionally, a new Chief Operating Officer position would be created to oversee management and operations.

In order to drive efficiencies and address the emerging needs of NYCHA’s residents, a **neighborhood-based management structure and development-based budgeting system will be created**. This will give NYCHA property managers more control over their budgets, as well as the ability to respond quickly and efficiently to maintenance and operations issues.

**Advocate for greater support at the state and federal levels**

While our nation’s public housing stock is managed locally by public housing authorities (PHA) like NYCHA, it is primarily overseen by HUD and its management is largely beholden to federal laws and regulations. However, decades of disinvestment at the federal level by Congress has left this aging housing stock without the resources it desperately needs to make critical upgrades and repairs. The ability to run the country’s largest PHA efficiently, and to enact the innovations and changes needed to reform NYCHA depends on **developing a clear and consistent federal advocacy strategy**.

NYCHA must **be aggressive in its requests to federal and state lawmakers**, and stress the importance of increased funding in rehabilitating NYCHA properties. NYCHA should **directly engage the New York congressional delegation and push NYCHA funding as a top priority** of any housing- or infrastructure-related policy. Advocacy efforts should focus on:

- **Increased appropriations for Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs)** for tenants in developments transitioning to Section 8, including in RAD conversions
- **Regulatory flexibilities** to allow NYCHA to better serve its residents.

We cannot accept the status quo nor solve homelessness with homeless programs alone.
• Allowing NYCHA to access recycled tax-exempt bond capital or unused bond capital from other states
• Increased annual appropriations for NYCHA’s capital fund

Expanding Housing Choice for All New Yorkers

One of New York City’s key strengths is its diversity and inclusion. Yet many residents still face barriers in reaching the city’s neighborhoods. Further, disparities in homeownership rates among communities of color continue to plague neighborhoods across New York City. This imbalance perpetuates the racial wealth gap and prevents many families from achieving the long-term economic stability that often results from becoming a homeowner. The Donovan administration will invest in new policies and programs to open up neighborhoods and ensure that all residents have a rich set of choices of where to live.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Make it easier for New Yorkers to afford homes**

The Donovan administration will launch a downpayment assistance program that will offer prospective homebuyers financial assistance to purchase a home. The program will be targeted to formerly redlined areas in New York City where incomes remain low. The program will offer low- and zero-interest loans for up to 5% of a home’s value. For low- and moderate-income families, the loans will be zero-interest and forgivable if the buyer remains in the home for a period of 10 years.

To implement the program, we will partner with a group of responsible lenders who agree to programmatic goals and terms. We will also capitalize community land trusts so they can jointly purchase homes with first-time homebuyers receiving down payment assistance.

Since security deposits are often the final hurdle tenants face in obtaining affordable housing, the City must create a security deposit guarantee program for low-income New Yorkers to use in resource-rich neighborhoods. For a relatively small investment, the City can help to clear away that barrier.

Another key step in helping New Yorkers build wealth that can be put toward homeownership is Shaun Donovan’s Equity Bonds proposal, whereby each child in New York City would receive $1,000, deposited into a city-administered savings account, with up to $2,000 added each subsequent year. Learn more about the Equity Bonds plan here.
## Strengthen and expand Fair Housing Protections

Housing segregation remains a crisis in New York City. Far too many people of color are unable to find sustainable, affordable housing because of a long and painful history of discriminatory practices with which the city is still reckoning. The Donovan administration will take the following steps to move us closer to the day when every New Yorker, regardless of identity, can find housing in our community without fear of prejudice:

- **Support local legislation to address discrimination based on past involvement with the criminal justice system**, since a criminal record—even for a minor offense—is often an insurmountable obstacle to obtaining housing. Obtaining housing is a vital part of reacclimating to society, gaining employment, accessing health care, and reintegrating with family or support networks. Read more about these and other efforts in our [Criminal Justice Platform](#).

- **Identify and encourage the use of alternative and less exclusionary tenant screening practices**, including in public housing, to remedy the disproportionate impact that screening has on communities of color.

- **Expand the use of “paired testing” to enforce the strong fair housing protections we already have enshrined in law**. Paired testing, in which multiple applicants who are similar except for a relevant characteristic (like race) apply for the same housing, is one of the most effective tools we have to root out discrimination.

## Improve the City’s voucher program

The Donovan administration will **advocate for universal vouchers at the federal level, coupled with a city-level shift from funding shelters to providing rental assistance for lower-income households**.

We will **enforce the city’s source of income discrimination laws and break down barriers** to make the voucher program easier to use for both tenants and landlords.

We must also **support housing navigators**—trained professionals who can provide information about neighborhoods around the city as well as the process of obtaining housing—to help housing voucher holders secure homes in a wider range of neighborhoods, promoting greater upward mobility.

## Addressing Homelessness through Housing

Homelessness is a solvable problem. We cannot accept the status quo nor solve homelessness with homeless programs alone. An emergency shelter system is essential for families and individuals in crisis, but the focus of past administrations has been to build a larger and larger system, draining money from permanent
housing. The Donovan administration will spend smarter, moving our city from a right to shelter towards a right to housing, ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to the housing support they need.

We can do this by creating an improved system of emergency rental assistance and other services to help people stay housed when facing economic setbacks to avoid homelessness altogether.

We can do this by coordinating better across our own City agencies to ensure that people do not fall through the cracks but instead receive the support they need.

We can do this by operating a well-run homeless system that efficiently gets people into permanent housing as quickly as possible so they can rebuild their lives.

And we can do this by maximizing all resources available from all levels of government.

**We are committing to the following policies and programs:**

**Invest in keeping people in their homes**

In order to help prevent families from becoming homeless in the first place, we must create a new, flexible rental assistance program that could serve 200,000 low-income households per year when the program fully ramps up. The administration will commit $330 million from reducing reliance on shelter, with an additional $500 million coming from state matching funds, and $1 billion from the federal government.

**Provide appropriate housing and services**

The Donovan administration will create and fully implement a simple, client-focused process of placement of individuals and families who are homeless into safe, affordable permanent housing. Increasing the speed from which people move from homeless into permanent housing will relieve pressure on the homeless system. This streamlined system will build upon the Coordinated Assessment and Placement System (CAPS) model which focuses on getting the right person into the right housing as quickly as possible, based on the individual or family needs. Managing housing placement across systems will allow the city to hold itself and the landlords accountable for timely placements and housing stability.

We must make sure to expand the creation of permanent supportive housing units for those who need the more intensive support provided by this form of housing. The administration will aim to create 2,000 supportive housing units annually for individuals and families living with a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or other disability, and young adults.
In parallel, we must expand models of shelter that have very easy access, such as safe havens and stabilization beds, recognizing that some people, particularly those living on the streets, do not want to enter the shelter system.

And, we will fund a service-enriched model of aftercare for formerly homeless New Yorkers, to ensure that formerly homeless people are supported in their new homes. The program will be administered through neighborhood-based centers that provide holistic aftercare and “poverty alleviation” services to local communities.

**Increase accountability and improve citywide coordination**

Homelessness is not caused by one issue or touches one group of people. It touches many people and has its roots in many things. What we do know is that many individuals and families leaving systems end up homeless. Each system requires a different yet coordinated response.

In order to link historically distinct City departments under singular leadership for greater accountability and consistency, the Donovan administration will empower a single Deputy Mayor for Housing Opportunity & Economic Development to assert clear goals and demand progress in addressing New York City’s homeless crisis across agencies including the Department of Education, Administration for Children’s Services, Department of Homelessness Services, Department of Housing Preservation and Development, and NYCHA. We will also improve targeting of homeless services by creating a 21st Century integrated data system, improving data sharing and communications across agencies, and enhancing the use of predictive analytics while ensuring racial equity. Read more about these efforts in our Innovation Platform.

It is also important that we hold systems and institutions accountable and give them the tools needed for effective discharge plans to end prisons, hospitals, foster care, and other institutional endings as the beginnings of or returning to homelessness.

In the case of hospitals, we must create medical respite programs with pathways to permanent housing to reduce the revolving door between hospitals and homelessness for people experiencing homelessness who have complex medical needs. We will develop and implement a city-level legal framework and programmatic approach to provide medical respite care for vulnerable populations that ultimately leads them to housing. Also, the City should provide funding of hospital-based housing specialists and develop a formal protocol on how hospitals and street outreach teams should communicate and collaborate. And, we will work with health providers, including hospitals, to prioritize available land for senior or homeless housing and explore how health care payers might directly invest in affordable senior and homeless housing with services.

In 2017, 54% of people released from state prisons to New York City went to a city homeless shelter. We will partner with the State and City correction departments
to ensure housing placements for individuals exiting New York State and New York City jails & prisons while ensuring it does not impact parole prospects and public safety. We will work to break down barriers so that justice-involved people can access housing and jobs, and reunite with their families to get the support they need to thrive in their communities. Read more in our Criminal Justice Platform.

Investing in initiatives for families to end the cycle of generational homelessness will also be critical in the coming years. We will identify families, especially pregnant mothers, that are at-risk of homelessness through thoughtful screening and connect them to housing resources that will prevent shelter entry and promote the well-being of the family. Almost 25% of child-welfare-involved families experience homelessness; therefore the Donovan administration will work closely with the Agency for Children’s Services to ensure that housing placement and wrap-around services are provided to mitigate impact on the children, including young adults aging out of foster care.

And, it is important to recognize that one of New York’s most vulnerable populations is our aging seniors. It is our priority to find housing for all seniors residing in the shelter system, and provide needed supportive geriatric services. In addition, low-income people living in affordable housing and supportive housing are aging in place. The Donovan administration will establish enhanced geriatric services and building modifications to allow these seniors to avoid nursing homes and stay in their homes. Read more in our Aging Platform.

**Protect domestic violence survivors**

The Donovan administration will create a domestic-violence-focused flexible funding reserve that addresses problems and expenses before they lead to rent arrears and the possibility of homelessness, helping domestic violence survivors and their children remain housed after a case of domestic violence. The administration will work with and listen to domestic violence survivors to determine which pathways are appropriate.

**Reforming Land Use Policy to Be More Equitable, Inclusive, and Sustainable**

Simply put, existing land use policies do not serve the best interests of New Yorkers. At both the local and state level, many of these regulations were enacted to address fundamentally different problems from the ones we face now; at their worst, they deepen our city’s affordable housing crisis and make solving it more difficult. The past decade has seen the city’s population and job growth significantly outpace housing stock, leading to a shortage of units and far too many New Yorkers struggling to pay rent. Further, efforts at building and preserving affordable units
have not been equitable, with high-opportunity neighborhoods in the city not asked to provide their fair share.

A Donovan administration will enact land use reforms to update outdated zoning regulations, encourage inexpensive housing development on an expansive and equitable basis, and expedite processes to increase affordability. These efforts will be carried out in parallel to other land use reforms aimed at supporting local business growth, improving mobility across the city, and ensuring each neighborhood is a “15 minute neighborhood”—where a good school, fresh food, rapid transportation, a park, and opportunities to get ahead can all be found within 15 minutes of one’s front door.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Streamline ULURP for 100% affordable housing development**

Discretionary land use approvals of all types—from a parking waiver for a luxury condo development to a neighborhood rezoning, to a special permit for a single affordable apartment building—require several layers of review, public hearings, and extensive documentation under the City Charter. It is extremely rare that an application under the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) can be approved in less than a year, and often the process stretches to three or four years. A Donovan administration would seek legislation to significantly shorten ULURP and expedite environmental review for any project comprising 100% affordable housing.

**Adopt citywide inclusionary zoning, to ensure that every neighborhood contributes to a citywide solution for affordable housing**

The original Inclusionary Housing program was designed to create an incentive for developers to build affordable units in exchange for bonus floor area. However, both this program and the more recent Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program have been applied inequitably, targeting low-income or quickly gentrifying areas while leaving out high-opportunity neighborhoods across the city. A Donovan administration would seek zoning text changes to apply an Inclusionary Housing program on a citywide basis, creating an evenly-applied standard and set of robust incentives that would encourage new production of affordable homes in every neighborhood.

**Eliminate outdated and unnecessary parking requirements in transit-rich areas**

New housing is typically required to include off-street parking spaces, even in areas where car ownership rates are low or there is excellent access to public transit, or both. Encouraging unnecessary automobile dependence isn’t just harmful environmental
policy; it’s also an expensive housing regulation which raises the cost of new development. A Donovan administration would eliminate parking requirements in transit-rich areas of the City, and would consider other targeted reforms to loosen parking regulations in connection with affordable housing development.

**Zoning to accommodate appropriate density levels in all neighborhoods**

As President Obama’s Housing and Urban Development Secretary, Shaun enacted one of the most significant fair housing regulations of the last fifty years, to “affirmatively further fair housing”—a fact highlighted by Donald Trump’s shamelessly racist attacks against these regulations during the 2020 presidential campaign. As mayor, Shaun will apply these fair housing principles to New York City, seeking an equitable allocation of affordable units, particularly by providing new opportunities for families to live in affluent neighborhoods which have been off-limits to low-income families for too long. Rezoning efforts such as those in SoHo, NoHo, and Gowanus are a good first step; a Donovan administration would seek to identify other high-opportunity areas across the city where bulk and use restrictions can be modified to stimulate new affordable housing production.

**Amend the zoning text and Building Code to facilitate conversions of underutilized commercial and manufacturing sites to supportive and affordable units, and to legalize below-grade accessory units that are safe and inexpensive**

The city’s housing affordability crisis, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, demands a reimagining of traditional zoning concepts—including the prohibition on residential uses within certain areas of the city that were zoned decades ago for exclusively commercial or manufacturing uses. A Donovan administration would seek zoning text amendments to ensure that these millions of square feet of office and hotel space can be repurposed for residential use, along with changes to the Building Code and state law that date to the tenements of the early 1900s. A Donovan administration would also seek to legalize existing below-grade units, and to facilitate new development of such units, through local legislation and possibly state law changes. With these outdated restrictions eliminated, New Yorkers would have access to a wave of new, inexpensive, and safe apartments.

**Require the City to consider housing impacts of historic district designation**

Stemming from the tragic demolition of the original Penn Station, the city’s Landmarks Law has been a vital tool in our historic preservation efforts. However, designation or expansion of historic districts can have unintended consequences—among them, the long-term suppression of new construction, which can drive up housing costs. A Donovan administration would seek legislation to require the City Planning Commission or the City Council to estimate the loss of buildable
square footage resulting from new district designations and expansions, and to consider this factor in its approval of such designations.

**Work with the City Council and borough presidents to ensure that community boards are representative of their communities**

Community boards are a crucial part of local democracy as a voice on a range of issues—perhaps most prominently on land use policy. However, in many cases the makeup of community boards are not representative of the community districts that they represent, including with respect to age, race, ethnicity, and gender identity. Community board meetings and hearings also favor those with the time and savvy to attend during the workweek, often after little effective public notice. A Donovan administration would work with the City Council and borough presidents to reform the appointment process and ensure that community board meetings represent an accurate reflection of the opinions of the community.

**Support state legislation to raise the 12.0 floor area ratio (FAR) cap as applied to affordable units, and to curb exclusionary zoning in New York City suburbs**

A Mayor Donovan would work closely with Governor Cuomo and legislators in Albany to modify at least two critical aspects of state law which affect the city. First, the state Multiple Dwelling Law imposes a universal prohibition on any zoning lot containing a residential floor area ratio of more than 12.0—essentially a hard cap on housing development that overrides our local zoning. A Donovan administration would seek to eliminate or at least raise this cap with respect to affordable units, allowing New York City the freedom to update its own zoning in the wake of COVID-19 and boost affordability.

Second, we must recognize that affordability is a crisis which does not follow the boundaries of the five boroughs. New York City’s suburbs, including those in New York State, have some of the most exclusionary land use policies in the country, often preventing all but the most affluent from owning or renting. Shaun Donovan will advocate for reform of these policies, bringing his experience as President Obama’s cabinet secretary overseeing housing in crafting policies to ensure that all communities do their fair share to support low- and moderate-income housing.

"I have had the good fortune of knowing Shaun since his days at the Community Preservation Corporation, and I had the opportunity of working with him when he was HPD Commissioner. As a developer of affordable housing in New York City for the past 33 years, I have witnessed many challenges and nuances in our industry, and I truly believe that the current economic and financial crisis is by far the most daunting challenge facing our great city. Shaun has the experience and understanding of our industry to be able to lead us as our mayor, and to take the hard steps to help stabilize our industry.

Robert Ezrapour
Member of the Advisory Board of the Furman Center and Principal at Artimus Construction"
Producing More Housing Affordably and Equitably Across all Five Boroughs

The Donovan administration will make an unprecedented investment in New York City neighborhoods by increasing the supply of affordable housing, equitably and inclusively, across all five boroughs.

As commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), Shaun Donovan crafted and carried out the largest and most ambitious affordable housing plan in the nation. He boosted the housing plan from a 65,000-unit program to 165,000 units and spurred the revitalization of neighborhoods that had long struggled to recover from the blight and abandonment of the 1970s and 1980s.

Today, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated an affordable housing crisis in our city that primarily impacts low-income, underserved communities of color. Prior to the pandemic, these communities were already facing systemic disparities that affected their opportunities for fair and affordable housing and economic growth and prosperity. The economic impacts of COVID-19 are serving to destabilize an already at-risk population, and have shown the need for prioritization to ensure these New Yorkers don’t fall through the cracks.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Expand capital funding for affordable housing**

In order to begin making necessary and long-overdue investments in affordable housing, we will adopt United for Housing’s call for $4 billion per year in capital funding for affordable housing production and preservation.

This involves making a historic commitment of up to $2 billion per year in City capital dollars to accelerate repairs across NYCHA’s portfolio to ensure that tenants have safe homes they can be proud of. NYCHA’s housing represents the single largest portion of our city’s deeply affordable housing stock that cannot be replaced, and which currently serves over 400,000 low-income New Yorkers. This funding will help fill gaps and speed the process of making critical repairs and upgrades to tenants’ homes as we continue to work with our federal partners.

The other $2 billion annual investment would provide the resources for HPD to create new affordable housing programs and to expand existing programs. While production has been at peak levels over the last several years, in order to meet demand and address the need for deeply affordable housing, overall production goals should be 30,000+ units per year with a focus on:
• **Mixed income housing with deep affordability**: The mixed income model is the gold standard in affordable housing that allows the City to stretch its subsidy dollars. By leveraging our historic commitment to rental assistance for severely rent-burdened households, we will **create a new mixed-income model** that includes deeply affordable units and provides housing options for all in communities across the city.

• **Preserving existing affordable housing with expiring regulatory agreements**: Investing in the preservation of existing affordable housing has been a critical piece of past administrations’ housing plans, and will be a pillar of the Donovan administration’s plan. In addition to improving the conditions of the existing housing stock, preservation also keeps existing low-income tenants in their homes, preventing displacement and providing stability to the community.

• **Homeownership**: Owning an affordable home, condo or co-op can give people a chance to put down roots and build equity in their communities. Affordable homeownership not only provides a stable housing option for households but it also promotes equity and inclusion by allowing households to build wealth. Increasing homeownership can be done by **increasing affordable housing production, expanding access to down payment assistance, and creating new mechanisms for tenant and community-based ownership of rental buildings**.

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**Ensure regulatory agreements match the public investment and need**

We must make sure that our public investments match the benefit that is being generated through new affordable housing. To achieve this, we will **conduct a comprehensive review of the regulatory framework and establish a sliding scale for public financial support**—by way of subsidy, tax abatement or exemption, land, or other methods—**that matches the amount of support to the amount of affordable housing being produced**. Over time, the stock of affordable housing can be considerable and a durable contribution to community and public equity, similarly to parks or open space, and we should incentivize its production. The City should also commit to permanent affordability on City land, along with substantial public investment.

**Adopt United for Housing’s recommendation to implement a city-state housing partnership for affordable and supportive housing**

Both New York City and State have separately committed to historic levels of investment in our communities through the creation and preservation of affordable and supportive housing. As mayor, Shaun Donovan will work to **create a partnership that coordinates and leverages each other’s work** to ensure resources are constant and delivered seamlessly. We will build upon past collaborations between City and State governments that have housed thousands of individuals in supportive housing.
Create good-paying jobs for hardworking New Yorkers

The Donovan administration will create good-paying jobs for hardworking New Yorkers, including the creation of a minimum construction wage so that the people who build our housing can build stable lives in our city. Job creation will focus on leveling the playing field and erasing the systemic barriers that communities of color have faced in the development sector. In past administrations and in past crises, whether it’s the blight and abandonment of the 1970s and 80s, the tragedy of September 11th, or the Great Recession, the City has invested in the production of affordable housing to help lead the economic recovery of our communities. In the Donovan administration, affordable housing will play a critical role in our recovery from the fallout of COVID-19, and as mayor, Shaun Donovan will ensure that our economic recovery will be equitable and sustainable. Read more about our plans to power our economy’s recovery in our Jobs and Neighborhoods Platforms.

In order to promote local hiring, Shaun Donovan will implement a comprehensive resident hiring and training program, based on the Building Skills NY model of job placement assistance, across all HPD-funded new construction.

It is also critical that we ensure our workers are paid reasonably. On projects receiving HPD funding or city-owned land, the City will set a minimum wage rate over and above the prevailing wage rate required by the state for construction. The City should also convene a coalition of private developers and contractors to set a minimum construction wage across the industry on projects not receiving City funding.

Recognizing the historic barriers to success faced by minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBEs), the Donovan administration will put programs and systems in place that require the city to partner with minority developers as the primary entity, while also streamlining the certification process for MWBEs.

Convert distressed properties into affordable housing

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the city’s economy, impacting commercial real estate and bringing tourism and the hotel industry to a halt. This economic tragedy presents an opportunity to strategically acquire distressed properties that can be converted to affordable housing. Specifically, we will:

- Convert underutilized hotels into supportive housing with onsite social services: The conversion of hotels into single-occupancy units for permanent supportive housing has been part of New York City’s housing plans for decades. We have the experience, infrastructure, and capacity to make this a part of our city’s economic recovery. Additionally, supportive housing is one of the most
effective pathways to addressing the ongoing homelessness crisis. Tenants who were served by supportive housing spent fewer days in jail, homeless shelters, and State-sponsored psychiatric facilities, than those who were not. While there are many supportive housing developments across the city, perhaps the most visible example is the Times Square Hotel, a former grand hotel that was converted into a 652-unit permanent supportive housing development for formerly homeless adults. The project, which is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is credited with developing a new approach to ending long-term homelessness and helping to stabilize the Times Square neighborhood.

- **Convert vacant office space into housing**: After the September 11th terrorist attacks, the conversion of office space to residential housing using the Liberty Bond program and the 421-g tax abatement were critical in the revitalization of Lower Manhattan. Today, we can use the lessons learned from that effort to craft a comprehensive plan to revitalize our city's commercial and business districts while focusing on inclusivity, diversity, and affordability. And while Midtown East is the most obvious candidate, any solution must be scalable for smaller business districts facing similar issues across the five boroughs.

**Implement United for Housing’s recommendation to lead an inter-agency effort to innovate new models, create efficiencies in process, modernize building codes, and streamline approval processes**

The financing and construction of new affordable housing and the preservation of existing affordable housing can require the work of multiple city agencies, including the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, the Housing Development Corporation, the Department of Buildings, the Economic Development Corporation, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Homeless Services, etc., and some one may not consider but may be required for permitting, like the Department of Transportation, the Fire Department of New York, the Department of Environmental Protection, and others. The Donovan administration will engage stakeholders to develop a strategy to streamline approvals and interactions between agencies, with the goal of reducing the average affordable housing construction timeline by 20% while maintaining all necessary safety standards.

We will also reduce hard costs in affordable housing construction by 20% while maintaining all necessary safety standards, by allowing innovative forms of project delivery, expanding allowed materials in construction, and reviewing labor requirements. By reviewing ballooning site insurance costs and other insurance costs, reviewing HDC financing fees for possible savings, and applying other similar strategies, we will identify extraordinary soft costs that can be reduced through exemptions or alternatives.
Investing in Improved Data and Analysis

New York City officials are limited in responses due to inadequate information and outmoded data systems. The Donovan administration will invest in 21st century data infrastructure that city agencies can use to better assess needs, design effective policies, target assistance equitably and efficiently, monitor outcomes, and effectively asset-manage city investments.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Adopt a data-driven approach to help coordinate the city’s response to homelessness**

The Donovan administration will invest in real-time, individual data across all city agencies (including the City’s public hospital, child welfare, youth, homelessness, and criminal justice systems) that allows for recognizing the needs of people currently or at risk of experiencing homelessness and delivering services in a targeted way. We will also expand the Bronx Frequent Users System Engagement (FUSE) data sharing system—which identifies frequent users of jails, shelters, and hospitals and connects them with supportive housing and other services—to the other four boroughs. Read more in our Innovation Platform.

**Improve tracking of city rental buildings and establish better metrics for measuring success in housing**

We can better enforce the city’s annual building registration requirement in order to create a more robust and up-to-date directory of rental buildings and ownership that the city can use to target both inspections and assistance.

And, the City must change its affordable housing tracking systems to count people assisted rather than units built. We will develop more nuanced metrics that will include the incomes and racial backgrounds of households assisted, progress on NYCHA renovations and repairs, the number of days it takes to re-rent housing units set aside for households experience homelessness, the number of people released from prisons, jails, or hospitals that go to city homeless shelters, and building energy use.
Transportation

A Revitalized Transportation Network that Makes the City Work for Everyone

Transportation is the central nervous system of New York City and if people are not connected, they are fundamentally excluded from opportunity. We need a 21st Century transportation system that improves transit service for everyone and prioritizes mobility expansion and public health in underserved areas, making our city’s streets safe for everyone who uses them while combating climate change. This plan puts people first, helping to eliminate traffic fatalities and injuries. I am committed to collaborate with leaders from around the nation and globe to implement real innovative transportation solutions to make New York City a leader in mobility.
Transportation is the central nervous system of the city, connecting people to housing, jobs, education, health care, and recreation. It can rectify inequities and help the city recover from the impacts of COVID-19, as more transportation options help communities of color, the disabled community, and low-income neighborhoods. We need a 21st century transportation system that improves transit service for everyone, prioritizes mobility expansion in underserved areas, makes the streets safe for everyone who uses them, combats climate change, and reverses the legacy of racism within the city’s current transportation network.

The roadway is a public space and the way it is designed and used reflects the city’s priorities—from commuting to recreation to economic connection for industries. While cycling and micromobility are important and growing modes of transportation, the city lacks the infrastructure to support these alternatives as true choices for many drivers. Buses can be a reliable, efficient mode of mass transit and new routes can be planned and built quickly, helping to meet the needs of residents in transit deserts, yet we have not done everything possible to move buses faster.

New York City’s reliance on cars erodes the quality of life in the city, but alternative transportation options must be viable for New Yorkers. Troubling trends are emerging in the wake of COVID-19. Bridge and tunnel crossings have already returned to pre-COVID levels by June, outpacing ridership gains on the subway and buses. Without a bold commitment to manage traffic volumes, post-COVID New York City will negate gains to pedestrian safety, pollution and transportation alternatives.

Our plan will focus on:

- Innovating Transportation to Promote Safety and Efficiency
- Strengthening Partnerships with MTA

Innovating Transportation to Promote Safety and Efficiency

Our transportation system is more than a tool for residents to get around our city, it’s a gateway to economic opportunity, a cleaner climate, and safer streets—but only if we are willing to seek out creative solutions.
We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Launch true Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for a faster and smarter bus network that reflects today’s needs of passengers**

Subways do not adequately serve the full population of New York City ([more than ⅓ of New Yorkers do not live within walking distance of a Subway station](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/22/nyregion/new-york-city-subway-reach.html)) and buses do not currently provide a reliable, far-reaching complement. Buses in New York are slow and unreliable for those who need them the most, and the City has not worked aggressively enough to prioritize bus transit systems. Because transportation inequalities impact a neighborhood's average income, employment level and overall economic mobility, the city should **prioritize investment in a true Bus Rapid Transit System** in key corridors with dedicated right of ways, intersection treatments, and stations while also improving regular bus service. This is a cost-effective, low-carbon method of improving mass transit that also begins to reverse the inequity of previous MTA capital expenditures.

In the immediate term, as we deal with the COVID-19 crisis, the MTA has called for **an expansion of 60 miles of bus lanes and busways**. MTA listed a number of busy corridors for expansion and the first step is to fulfill this request based on need and prioritize shorter commutes for essential workers. Improving regular bus service is critical. More bus lanes must be built in transit deserts and communities of color, not just busy corridors. We would also support All-Door Boarding to get people on buses faster by leveraging the new OMNY payment system.

Blocked bus lanes hurt essential workers, neighbors with errands to run, and caregivers with childcare needs. Bus drivers continually are frustrated by cars and delivery trucks impeding their movement. Making sure the new bus lanes and busways are serving residents efficiently requires enforcement, but we must commit to doing this fairly. **Expansion of automated camera enforcement** would not single out any one particular corridor and can ensure busways are not blocked.

Technology can also be used to speed up regular bus service by installing more **Traffic Signal Priority** (TSP) throughout the city. [One study found an 18% reduction in bus travel times when using TSP](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/22/nyregion/new-york-city-subway-reach.html). According to NYCDOT, all buses in the fleet are equipped with the technology, but every intersection needs TSP technology installed to “talk” with the bus. There is TSP currently active at 260 intersections on five out of 326 bus routes. By prioritizing the intersections with bus routes, we can speed up the average bus travel time.

**Drive equity and innovation in our transportation system**

There are many more ways to connect people through our transportation network. The behind the scenes transportation work is often siloed and continues inequities among our neighborhoods. We plan to support cohesive planning, from co-building bus and bike infrastructure and networks, to ensuring that anyone
can use MTA's new MetroCard—OMNY—no matter how they get around, to a continued commitment to Fair Fares. We will create a One City approach to New York's transportation system. But we cannot be one city without acknowledging and understanding how many communities suffer from the legacy of racism in transportation decision-making. From underinvestment to lack of more inclusive community processes, we commit to rethinking investment decisions by deploying data and tools to make sure often ignored communities get real transportation benefits and services. Read more about our broader plans to promote equity in our Racial Equity Platform.

**Embrace cycling and micromobility as viable modes of transportation**

Cycling is a great way to get around the city, especially as an alternative to the subway during the COVID-19 pandemic. While more people are choosing to use bikes, the current infrastructure is insufficient and unsafe. Though there are more than 1,200 miles of bike lanes currently across the five boroughs, only 480 miles of them are protected. Furthermore, in 2020, more people were killed in traffic than in 2019—people dying in the crosswalk is not an unavoidable part of city living. **Two-thirds of commuters who don't bike cite safety concerns** as their primary reason for not biking. We must prioritize the connectivity of the current fragmented network of bike lanes while at the same time making many of these new connections protected to make it safe for bikers to travel about the city. Envisioning new street design delivered in a more cost-effective way can promote safe cycling will be a boon to the city as we make our way towards recovery.

Today in New York, **90% of traffic sector emissions come from private vehicles.** We must get people out of their cars and into other modes of transportation that will improve the health and resilience of the city. **By connecting bike lanes with current transportation hubs with secure bike parking,** we can reduce our reliance on cars and work to lower the emissions coming from private vehicles.

To read more about our other climate mitigation plans, please refer to our Climate Platform.

Many cities around the world are seeing a boom of e-scooter options as a new form of transportation. New York City must be prepared to launch a similar program and is mandated to launch a pilot program in 2021. To best support e-scooter expansion, the city must ensure that safety, choice, equity, and transparency are key pillars of any introduction of private sector operators. E-scooter companies operating in the outer boroughs should be **responsive to community needs, including those of the disability community.**

Other measures must be taken to make the pilot program successful—focusing on technology like geofencing can keep scooters out of high-traffic pedestrian areas and alleviate sidewalk congestion while promoting accessibility and safety. The
providers must also agree to a set of **good data management practices** that keep the consumer safe.

**Focus on street safety**

We need to put people, not cars, at the center of all transportation conversations and projects. A Donovan administration will work to improve street design, get reckless, unsafe drivers off our streets, and reduce illegal speeding by cars and trucks. With more strategic and consistent automated enforcement, we can make streets safer and stop traffic violence in New York City. **Vision Zero only scratches the surface of what is needed—a comprehensive plan with a series of policy changes that is laser-focused on all New Yorkers’ safety and security and an overhaul of the program is critical.** We are committed to lead the effort to reimagine the city’s streetscape, reduce the city’s reliance on cars, expand bus and bike lanes, and end traffic violence.

**Properly create and maintain Open Streets**

COVID-19 has shown us that our streets can be used for so much more than vehicles and parking. We can use streets as parks, expanded dining seating, and gathering places. By speaking with communities and gathering their input, we can make the **Open Streets Program accessible, equitable and responsive** to the needs of each neighborhood, and revitalize small businesses throughout the city, given that research shows cycling and foot track improve business income.

**Seek congestion pricing while making transit improvements**

To successfully implement congestion pricing, the city must make the transition easy for New Yorkers. While congestion pricing is expected to reduce car use, alternatives must be created to keep people moving efficiently. We need to **insist on transit improvements** prior to the deployment of congestion pricing so that residents can have other ways to get around the city.

**Reallocate curb space**

We are seeing new, innovative ways our curbs can be used for things other than parking. We want to think creatively about other ways **our curbs can serve residents** like allowing schools and camps to use the space for outdoor activities, more efficient delivery of goods, and potentially new approaches to trash collection. We can use data and technology to understand the use of the curb today and see how residents can benefit more from this public space. As more people are spending time outside to gather, the curb space is becoming a precious entity and giving that space to residents instead of cars can support New York’s recovery.
Strengthen Partnerships with MTA

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is in crisis and the transit system is falling apart. Although ridership has plummeted during the pandemic, millions of New Yorkers still rely on transit every day. 55% of all frontline workers use the subways as the primary mode of transportation for New Yorkers. A robust system is critical to the recovery of New York. The MTA’s $51.5 billion Capital Plan is estimated to generate 350,000 jobs total for the five years with close to 80% of the jobs in New York City. We will partner with the MTA on key priorities, collaborate on bringing new financing, and install more effective and high-level communication channels. We need to be at the table as it comes to decision-making at the MTA.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Create pathways for increased city oversight of the MTA

Currently, the mayor has limited power with the MTA, holding only four board seats. By creating a stronger partnership with the MTA, we can ensure ridership on the subways, buses, and paratransit is supported. We must increase oversight on MTA capital plan prioritization, operations planning, and work to increase governance authority through the addition of Board seats.

New Yorkers are the main customers of the MTA subways and bus system; the City government must play a larger role to ensure that new and ongoing projects are delivered for New York City residents. We are proposing formal mayoral meetings with the head of New York City Transit to discuss key priorities and operational issues, especially in historically underserved areas, and partnering with Senate and Assembly Chairs of Corporations, Commissions and Authorities to discuss City priorities and get updates on the current projects. We would establish strong relationships with state and local elected officials representing New York City districts to ensure they hold the MTA accountable at the state level.

Bring financing to the table

The mayor has the opportunity to use their bully pulpit to encourage collaboration between the city, state, and federal governments. As the MTA is experiencing a major financial deficit, aid from the federal government is more important than
ever. **Downstate New York accounts for 8% of the country's GDP**, which translates to great bargaining power. We can use that power to **bring funding to the MTA** by lobbying for federal tax dollars and ensuring that the sources of funding are dedicated to City priorities.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must come up with new ways to increase funding. Some examples worth considering include **value capture and a Marijuana Tax**. State law allows for value capture but we will recommend that every future expansion project use value capture as part of its funding.

If the state were to legalize recreational marijuana and place a tax on those sales, the revenue could be $500-$750 million annually. A portion of that money could be set aside for public transit improvements and this could be bonded to support capital expenditures. Given other states’ movements towards legalization of marijuana, New York should go next.
Older residents have given so much of their lives building our city and our communities. And yet, they are so often marginalized, lacking meaningful political power. It is our responsibility to listen to, understand, and advocate for this vital group of New Yorkers, and actively consider them across all of the City’s decisions. Doing so is not only the right thing to do; it would provide social, economic, and health benefits that would be critical as we overcome this pandemic. This plan ensures that the needs of our aging population are consistently and comprehensively met at the highest standard possible, whether it’s health and safety in and out of one’s home, getting around the city easily and affordably, or simply knowing that your perspectives are being considered in all of the City’s decisions.
We live in an aging city. Almost 1.2 million New Yorkers are ages 65 and older, making up about 14% of the city’s population. But the number of older adults living in New York City is projected to grow from 1 million in 2010 to 1.4 million by 2040. We should be proud that, with a life expectancy of 81.2 years, New York City residents live 2.5 years longer than the national average. But we can do better. Shaun has spent his entire career working to strengthen and support communities in our city that have faced adversity. Now, as a candidate for mayor, Shaun is committed to establishing bold policy goals that address the challenges faced by all New Yorkers, tackling issues of accessibility, equity, and fairness.

According to New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) data from 2017, Latinx New Yorkers have the highest life expectancy among racial and ethnic groups, at 82.4 years, while non-Hispanic Black New Yorkers have the lowest, at 77.3 years—the same as the overall New York City life expectancy in 1998. The highly segregated nature of New York City neighborhoods results in an astounding gap in life expectancy of almost 19 years between East Harlem residents (71.2 years) and people living on the Upper East Side (89.9 years), as reported in a 2019 analysis by NYU School of Medicine.

Older residents have given so much of their lives in the service of building our city and our communities. And yet, they are so often marginalized, lacking meaningful political power. It is our responsibility to listen to, understand, and advocate for this vital group of New Yorkers, and ensure that we consider them across all of the City’s decisions. This will be clearly outlined in the Donovan administration’s Bill of Rights for Aging New Yorkers, which will include:

- The right to political power with representation in the Mayor’s Office through a Director of Aging Advocacy;
- The right to high-quality, age-accessible health care in every neighborhood for all New Yorkers;
- The right to live in a neighborhood anywhere in New York City that is both safe and upholds fair policing;
- The right to a healthy life, supported by city government through good food and accessible recreational and social spaces;
- The right to affordable and accessible housing with place-based services that meet the full range of older New Yorkers’ needs;
• The right to safe, comfortable, and well-lit outdoor settings in every neighborhood;

• The right to live free of discrimination by age, race, religion, functional ability, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, or gender identity;

• The right to services specific to our older population’s needs through better data collection by five- or 10-year cohorts; and

• The right to free movement across the entire city through high-quality, accessible transportation options.

The demographic shift in age across the five boroughs, which mirrors a global trend, has the potential to yield tremendous social, economic, and health benefits for current and future generations of New Yorkers. Older adults can stimulate economic growth via spending and employment, and they offer additional social and financial capital to their communities and institutions through caregiving, volunteerism, and philanthropy.

These benefits will only be accessible, however, if our city adapts and improves its outdated social systems, infrastructure, institutions, and attitudes to promote healthy aging and maximize older adults' health, well-being, and full participation in public life, while addressing deeply rooted health inequities and ageism.

Our plan will focus on:

• Investing in the Health and Wellbeing of People in Later Life
• Cultivating and Retaining a Multigenerational Workforce
• Providing Older People with Affordable, Safe, and Accessible Housing with Services
• Making Transit Work for Everyone

Investing in the Health and Wellbeing of People in Later Life

According to data from the NYC DOHMH 2017 Community Health Survey, 57% of older city residents rated their own health as “good,” “very good,” or “excellent,” compared to nearly 75% of older New Yorkers statewide. Positive perceptions of health vary even more significantly by race and ethnicity with only one third of Latinx and Asian/Pacific Islander older adults in New York City rating their health so highly, as compared to two-thirds of their White and Black counterparts.

With respect to specific health indicators, less than half of older New Yorkers participate in the recommended amount of physical activity, and more than 60% are overweight or obese. More than a quarter have diabetes and more than two thirds
have hypertension, both of which are preventable conditions that are significantly more prevalent among Black, Latinx, and Asian older New Yorkers and those who live below the federal poverty level and often face barriers to accessing health-promoting resources and care. Half of older New Yorkers have arthritis and 10% report having experienced a heart attack.

Older people are particularly vulnerable to communicable diseases due to increased prevalence of underlying health problems and are overrepresented in the number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. Additionally, physical distancing restrictions have resulted in increased food insecurity, social isolation, and the delay of preventive health care services that can facilitate early detection and treatment of serious conditions.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Embed health and age in all policies within city government

Throughout our lives, an estimated 80% of our health is determined by social and economic factors, and as a result, policies to impact health must go beyond the provision of health care. We believe that healthy aging is also a function of the person-environment relationship. Our policies to promote healthy aging will address the social, physical, and economic environments older people inhabit, and work to rectify decades of exposure to structural inequities experienced by underserved communities. A Donovan administration will elevate the issue of aging, make improvements to publicly controlled services, and help galvanize private sector investment and innovation.

Our policies to promote healthy aging will address the social, physical, and economic environments older people inhabit

Health in All Policies (HiAP) is an evidence-based model that has been increasingly embraced by states and municipalities to leverage policies across sectors to improve population health and advance health equity. New York State’s approach is unique in that it emphasizes both health and age. In 2018, Governor Cuomo passed Executive Order 190, which requires all state entities to consider health and age in all planning, policymaking, regulation, and procurement activities. Though still early in its implementation, this initiative has already increased the number of age-friendly communities in New York State and has resulted in more efficient use of public funding streams. For example, the Request for Applications (RFA) for Downtown Revitalization Initiative grants now requires applicants to articulate how their projects will improve health and promote healthy aging and has correspondingly weighted scoring for awards totaling $100 million annually.

We are committed to pursuing a similar strategy to facilitate the spread, scale, and sustainability of the Age-Friendly NYC initiative, and to ensure aging does
not continue to be exclusively relegated to the Department for the Aging (DFTA), an agency that serves a small fraction of the older population. To achieve these goals, we will:

- Appoint a person in the Mayor’s Office to oversee the implementation of Age-friendly NYC;
- Pass an Executive Order requiring all city entities to consider health and aging in their planning, policymaking and regulation, and procurement activities;
- Require all city agencies to conduct an annual self-assessment of how their initiatives are improving health and wellbeing and promoting healthy aging;
- Instruct the DOHMH to develop metrics to track progress on priority areas and report on those metrics annually in the Mayor’s Management Report; and
- Provide seed funding to groups of older people and community-based organizations working to drive local age-friendly neighborhood initiatives.

Regularly collect and report on data related to older people

Older people are often excluded from data collection and reporting, which both reflects and reinforces their exclusion in society. Accurate and nuanced data are required to identify and address inequities and optimize our health and wellbeing as we age. While data on younger people are traditionally disaggregated into five or 10-year cohorts, data on older adults are often reported for all people over age 65.

We must ensure that data collection and reporting on older people reflects their diversity in age, race, ethnicity, gender, functional ability, socio-economic status, and other factors that influence health across the lifespan. For example, the City’s COVID-19 surveillance data is currently available by age (65-74 and 75+), sex, or race/ethnicity, but data have not been cross-tabulated to highlight the interplay between these variables.

In addition, because older people are significantly influenced by neighborhood characteristics that can facilitate or limit health-promoting behaviors, we will prioritize aggregating data, where feasible and valid, to the Department of City Planning’s Neighborhood Tabulation Areas rather than Boroughs, Community Districts, Council Districts, or census tracts.

In the interest of improving data collection on older adults in New York City, we will:

- Promote the disaggregation of data by age into 5 and 10-year cohorts;
- Promote the disaggregation of data by Neighborhood Tabulation Area; and
Publish an annual report on the health status of older people by neighborhood leveraging quantitative data and soliciting feedback directly from older people about their quality of life.

Prioritize prevention

About 80% of heart disease and stroke, 90% of type 2 diabetes, and 40% of cancer incidents are preventable. Healthy eating, smoking cessation, and physical activity can lead to reductions in morbidity and mortality and can generate cost savings to health care and social insurance programs. For older people, studies have also indicated that physical activity is correlated with increased longevity, prevention of certain chronic diseases, reduced risk of functional limitations, and greater opportunities for social connection. We must make it easier for our older residents to access opportunities for physical activity.

Our focus on prevention must also help to identify and address social isolation among older people, which has recently been found to be as dangerous to public health as smoking, obesity, and lack of exercise. It predicts morbidity and mortality from cancer and cardiovascular disease and is a risk factor for cognitive impairment, depression, elder abuse, and vulnerability during disasters. Older people in New York City may be at greater risk of isolation due to higher rates of living alone (32%), poverty (21%), mobility impairment (29%), and lack of English proficiency (34%). Physical distancing restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19, while essential, have significantly increased social isolation among older people, particularly those who are not connected to the internet and live alone and those who are not connected to the internet and don’t speak English.

To prioritize prevention for older New Yorkers, a Donovan administration will:

- Appoint a DOHMH Commissioner who will implement Age-Friendly Public Health principles, promote person-centered Age-Friendly Primary Care, elevate physical activity and immunizations among older people, and track appropriate metrics in the Take Care NY plan;

- Fund and widely promote programming in multigenerational spaces such as parks, community and recreation centers, and libraries (Learn more about our libraries plan in our full Education Platform);

- Increase walkability and pedestrian safety, prioritizing neighborhoods with large concentrations of older people (Learn more in our full Transportation Platform); and

- Invest in connectivity (infrastructure and hardware), technology training, and technical support for older people to prevent and reduce social isolation.
Ensure equitable access to health care and social services by making —
health care settings more age-friendly using evidence, design, and training

Age discrimination is also a barrier to quality care, with systematic bias against older patients manifesting in such ways as a lack of training among health care professionals in geriatrics and older adults being less likely to receive preventive care or testing/screening for diseases and other health problems. Ageism, whether explicit or implicit, can also result in under- or over-treatment. Health care providers may mistakenly dismiss symptoms of disease as “just part of aging” and to avoid difficult conversations around substance abuse and safe sex, even though sexually transmitted infections are increasing, and older people represented nearly 30% of opioid deaths in New York City2018. Consequently, older people are often unaware of and do not receive reimbursable preventive services including vaccinations, cognitive screening, depression screening, and end-of-life planning. In 2016, only 20% of Medicare beneficiaries received their Annual Wellness Visit with a primary care doctor to develop a personalized prevention plan.

Moreover, many older adults have complex medical needs—due to multiple chronic conditions and the multiple medications they may take—that may compromise their valued independence and autonomy if not treated properly. They are at particular risk of complications during and after hospitalization, leading to high rates of hospital readmission.

The Donovan administration is committed to ensuring that, when older adults require care, it is provided without discrimination, concordant with their goals, promotes their physical function, involves the appropriate prescription of medication, addresses common syndromes like falls and delirium, recognizes the needs of family caregivers, and provides seamless coordination between settings and providers.

We can deliver this kind of care in inpatient and outpatient health settings by adopting the 4Ms Framework, an initiative of the John A. Hartford Foundation and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). The 4Ms Framework is a set of evidence-based practices that addresses what “Matters” to patients, their “Medications,” their “Mentation” (or cognitive and mental health), and their “Mobility.” Health systems that assess older adults based on these four areas of concern and develop corresponding individualized care plans can work towards becoming officially designated “Age-Friendly.”

It is also important that we help hospitals make specific changes to their emergency department (ED) procedures, staffing, transitions, and physical environment to improve health outcomes for older adults. Older adults are likelier to use EDs and are at greater risk for serious complications in that setting compared to younger people. The environment itself—characterized by bright lights, fast pace of activity, and loud noise—can be disorienting to older adults and potentially interfere with the effectiveness of care. EDs that qualify for certification under the
American College of Emergency Physicians’ Geriatric ED program offer the staffing, training, policies, quality improvement and evaluation procedures, equipment, and physical environment that meet older adults’ unique needs. Specific criteria for the highest level of accreditation includes having an Emergency Medicine Boarded physician champion provide training on subjects like transition of care, processes like screening patients for delirium, and access to mobility aids and free food and drink around the clock. While the scientific evidence of program effectiveness is limited so far, a 2018 prospective observational cohort study suggests that targeted evaluation by geriatric ED transitions of care staff may reduce inpatient admissions. There are currently at least four accredited geriatric EDs in New York City, including one at Mount Sinai and three at Northwell hospitals in Manhattan and Staten Island.

We will partner with hospitals to make a more concerted effort to screen for elder abuse, which can manifest in physical, sexual, emotional, and financial forms, and impacts approximately 1 in 10 Americans ages 60 and older. This can be achieved by creating multi-disciplinary response teams (MDTs) to help older adults in crisis; MDTs focus on complex cases that require coordination among different systems and professionals and involve more than one kind of abuse.

To make health care settings more age-friendly, Shaun will nominate a candidate for appointment as president and CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H) who is committed to steering the nation’s largest public health care delivery system toward:

"Shaun’s plan really demonstrates the thoughtfulness and commitment to bold, inclusive, and effective policies that I’ve seen in him for as long as we’ve known each other. The truth of the matter is that there is a considerable gap between what the aging population in New York needs and what is being done to help them, and they lack the political power to bring attention to their most pressing issues. Shaun understands that ensuring that older persons age successfully goes far beyond just providing Medicare—it includes providing other needed services and a safe, supportive environment. He also understands that lifting up New York City and overcoming this pandemic means lifting up all New Yorkers, and he’s proven that by putting forth a really smart, comprehensive plan directed toward this critical population. His ideas will make our city’s older residents healthier, safer, and happier, and will make it easier for them to move around the city, work with dignity, and meet their needs wherever they are. I couldn’t commend Shaun more for the work that he and his team have put into these ideas."

Dr. John Rowe
Julius B. Richmond Professor of Health Policy and Aging at the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health
• Joining the New York State Action Community supporting hospitals and health systems across the state as they work to implement the 4Ms;

• Directing NYC H+H acute care hospitals to apply to the Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation Program and work toward improving their ED services for older adults;

• Training ED staff to identify and respond to signs of elder abuse;

• Hiring and training staff who specialize in geriatrics, including doctors, nurses and social workers; and

• Replicating the NYC Elder Abuse Center and Weinberg Center multidisciplinary team model to identify and address elder abuse in H+H hospitals.

Ensure equitable access to health care and social services—advertise and increase the utilization of preventive services that minimize older adults’ time in acute care settings

Older New Yorkers can avoid hospitalization altogether if they can access the services and resources they need in their own communities. These include regular primary care appointments, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), mental health counseling, and dental care.

Older Americans use preventive care services, which can help delay the onset or progression of disease, at half the recommended rate. The typical primary care office visit is too short to accommodate conversations about preventative care, so Medicare began annual wellness visits (AWV) as a preventative care service under the Affordable Care Act in 2011. The purpose of an AWV, which does not include a traditional physical exam, is to develop or update a “personalized prevention plan” for patients' future medical issues based on their health and risk factors. AWVs collect information on a patient’s demographics and their assessment of their own health status. At an AWV, physicians also establish the patient's medical and family history, a list of current providers, detect any cognitive impairment, review risk factors for depression, assess fall risk and hearing impairment, develop screening schedules, provide referrals to community-based lifestyle interventions, and, if the patient wishes, provide advance care planning services. A 2018 study of Medicare claims from 2009-2014 showed that patients participating in AWVs are more likely to seek preventative services within a year. Utilization rates are generally low, however, and they vary by race, income, and education, with utilization significantly lower among non-Hispanic, non-White Medicare beneficiaries. The City must encourage its older residents to participate in annual wellness visits and make these more accessible.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides a median benefit of $101 in financial assistance for the purchase of groceries among one-person elderly households, is another federal program underutilized by older adults, who participate at about half the rates of all eligible populations. Underutilization
may help explain why almost 11% of all older adults in New York City suffered from food insecurity in 2015-2017. Barriers to the program include low awareness, inability to navigate the application process, low benefit levels, and a sense of embarrassment about the need to rely on an assistance program. In places like California and New York City, high proportions of low-income older people who have limited English proficiency are particularly at risk. Outreach should be targeted to areas where SNAP is underutilized by older adults and where language barriers can pose additional challenges. Another potential solution to address food insecurity among these groups is to scale up and advertise programs like Fresh Food for Seniors, which allows older adults to buy fresh, regionally grown fruit and vegetables for just $8 a bag and pick it up from their local senior center.

Limited use of mental health services is a fourth concern impacting older New Yorkers. Out of the 85,000 older adults who would suffer from depression, only one percent are currently benefiting from an initiative to place clinicians at senior centers across the city. One barrier to access is that many older adults do not and/or cannot participate in senior center congregate meals or programming because they are homebound, speak limited English, or actively avoid age-segregated spaces. Today, only three programs citywide provide in-home psychotherapy services. City officials should explore opportunities to expand city mental health services into the home, actively recruit culturally and linguistically competent mental health providers, and facilitate access in other places where older adults congregate.

Additionally, many older adults also lack access to affordable dental care, the absence of which can lead to tooth decay, poor nutrition, and low self-esteem. Deterioration in oral health is also associated with premature mortality and cognitive impairment. Program models that offer some solutions include the NYU Dental Van Senior Citizen Initiative, which provides free screenings, emergency and comprehensive examinations with necessary X-rays, oral cancer exams, oral health education, oral hygiene instruction and nutritional counseling, cleanings, dental restorations, removable and complete dentures, simple tooth extractions, and simple denture repairs. Another model is ElderSmile, an oral health educational outreach initiative launched by the College of Dental Medicine at Columbia University in Northern Manhattan in 2006. ElderSmile similarly offers prevention, education, screening, treatment, and referral services for older adults in northern Manhattan through mobile van visits to senior centers. Ideally, a city-funded oral health program would generate referrals to federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) that provide dental care at a low cost. About 76% of federally qualified health centers provide such care, but less than four percent of the 65-and-older population in the U.S. used the safety net health care providers’ services in 2014.

Home-based long-term care services and supports (LTSS) provide people with physical and cognitive impairments with assistance in accomplishing activities of daily living (e.g., bathing, dressing, eating, toileting, and shopping) for an extended period of time. Of people turning age 65 now, 70% will need assistance with activities of daily living for an average of three years (3.7 for women and 2.2 for men) and 90%
of people prefer to receive services at home. Chronic conditions and associated functional limitations increase with age, and as the demand for caregiving exceeds the supply of family caregivers, the need for paid direct care workers will increase.

Over the next decade, the New York City direct care industry (including home health aides, personal care attendants, and certified nursing assistants) will provide the most numerous job opportunities. However, these jobs are among the lowest paid and least respected. We must invest in these progressions to stave off an imminent shortage of home care workers which will threaten the health, safety, and wellbeing of older New Yorkers and their families and result in higher health care costs and lower quality of care.

While most direct care work is funded by Medicaid, a small but important segment of the direct care workforce is contracted by New York City through the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and the DFTA. HRA administers the Home Care Services Program (HCSP), a Medicaid-funded fee-for-service program to provide long-term care to people exempt from mandatory managed long-term care enrollment. HRA serves 5,050 people through 28 contracts. DFTA-funded providers serve 3,600 people who are ineligible for Medicaid through 28 contracts under the Expanded In-home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP). We must look into leveraging these to improve job quality for direct care workers.

Under a Donovan administration, City agencies will work to:

- Create an outreach campaign to educate seniors and health care providers about the importance of annual wellness screenings (and how they differ from annual physical exams), using the existing network of senior-focused service providers;
- Increase SNAP utilization among eligible older people, targeting outreach beyond senior centers in places where people naturally congregate such as libraries, recreation centers, grocery stores, and pharmacies;
- Scale up the Fresh Food for Seniors program as a citywide program in partnership with GrowNYC, rather than in local partnerships with individual council members;
- Launch in-home mental health services with culturally and linguistically competent clinicians;
- Create a resource for older adults identifying FQHCs providing dental care and scale the ElderSmile program across its network of senior centers; and
- Leverage contracts with employers of direct care workers to increase wages and improve job quality.

Help older adults plan to meet their end-of-life needs

Research shows that advance care planning (ACP)—the process of planning for future medical care under circumstances of impaired decisional capacity—is
associated with improved quality of care at the end of life, including increased use of hospice and fewer in-hospital deaths. Early studies also show a decrease in inpatient hospital costs for patients who have ACPs. Yet, only one third of New York City senior center participants in a 2004 study had completed a health care proxy form. The low uptake of ACP across New York State is reflected in its extremely low hospice utilization rates—ranking 48th out of 50 in the US in 2015.

We will work with the NYC DOHMH and NYC H+H to launch an educational campaign on advance care planning to encourage New Yorkers and their health care providers to have conversations about end-of-life care preferences, which can now be billed for under Medicare, and to guide people on how to utilize advance care directives, such as Health Care Proxies, Living Wills, Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders, and Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (MOLST).

We are also committed to exploring the creation and evaluation of a citywide advanced care planning registry, which would interface with multiple electronic health records systems and increase the likelihood that individuals’ end-of-life wishes are respected under any medical circumstance. Such registries have been authorized by statute in a dozen states as of 2016 since Louisiana became the first to establish one in 1991. Studies of the population penetration and efficacy of ACP registries are non-existent, so a citywide evaluation of the program would benefit not only older New Yorkers, but older adults across the country.

In the interest of helping New Yorkers plan their end-of-life care, the Donovan administration will support DOHMH and NYC H+H in the launch of an educational campaign on advance care planning and the pilot of a citywide advanced care planning registry.

Cultivating and Retaining a Multigenerational Workforce

The aging workforce is a global phenomenon. As advancements in public health and medicine enable us to live longer, more active lives, the age of the workforce continues to trend upwards. Nationally, the number of workers aged 55+ is expected to grow from 35.7 million in 2016 to 42.1 million by 2026. Older workers secured 49% of all available jobs in 2018, with New York City mirroring this trend with over 700,000 older adult workers (17% of the workforce) identified in 2015. Older New Yorkers are choosing to remain in the workforce for two primary reasons: (1) financial necessity and (2) maintenance of purpose and identity through the social experience of employment.
Understanding the specific challenges that are faced by New York City’s older workers is critical to creating a landscape that promotes their continued engagement in the workforce. Older workers are uniquely positioned to play a key role in filling the burgeoning talent shortage that is unfolding across many sectors. Additionally, COVID-19 has led to an as-of-yet unmeasured exodus of younger New Yorkers, leaving an even greater need for skilled and unskilled labor. The immediacy of creating a multigenerational workforce requires short and long-term planning to address the challenges that are already present in our city and to prepare for the effects of an ever-growing older adult demographic.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

**Capitalize on the experience, institutional knowledge, and dedication of older adult workers**

Engaging the older adult workforce has documented positive effects on both individual health and business performance and is rich with social and economic potential. Maintaining a multigenerational workforce creates opportunities for “reverse mentoring”, scenarios where different generations learn from each other and share varied perspectives on problems that arise on the job. This diversity of views and experience allows for older workers to share their valued institutional knowledge with younger workers and helps companies to secure the intellectual capital that typically leaves with retiring workers. Furthermore, from a productivity perspective, older workers tend to be more engaged, more motivated, and less likely to unexpectedly leave their positions. To build on this potential, a Donovan administration will:

- Demonstrate a commitment to these values by hiring older New Yorkers in city roles, making age-friendly adjustments to the built environment, publicizing these initiatives, and working to reduce the stigma of older workers staying in the workforce;
- Foster connections between New York City community-based nonprofits and national programs like Encore.org, ReServe, and Center for Workforce Inclusion that place older adult workers in part-time, flexible jobs or roles that contribute to social causes;
- Advocate for flexibility in working hours and phased half-retirement options for individuals looking to transition more slowly into full retirement; and
- Hire older mental health specialists to deliver mental health services through the Mental Health Corps—seventeen areas in NYC’s five boroughs qualify as “mental health provider shortage areas.”
Provide job training and increased access to employment and volunteer opportunities for older New Yorkers

Contemporary career recruitment strategies reflect the technological developments of our time (web-based, social media, etc.). Increasingly, older workers are left out of these processes. Access to a quality internet connection, the complexities of modern technology, and the need for high-tech devices have stranded many older adults that are seeking work. We understand that it is in our city’s best interest to break down these barriers to gainful employment and provide a portfolio of support for those interested in attaining employment. Existing city-based programmatic support for older adult job seekers does not go far enough in preparing interested workers for a modern employment landscape. Under a Donovan administration, the City will implement and improve upon a variety of programs to better the prospects for these workers by:

- Enhancing DFTA’s Senior Employment Services (SESU) program by integrating “skills based” job placement and post-placement mentoring to ensure that older adults obtain and retain employment;
- Providing socioemotional support for older adults navigating the challenges of the job search, and creating opportunities for peer-to-peer networking;
- Promoting CSSNY’s Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in libraries, senior centers, transit, etc. to continue growing community service-oriented volunteerism (Learn more about our libraries plan in our full Education Platform);
- Increasing the number of potential employers participating in the annual DFTA job fair to 50 from <30;
- Partnering with Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) to design accessible and affordable technology training to better prepare older workers for an increasingly tech-based work environment; and
- Expanding the NYC Tech Talent Pipeline’s “Bridge-To-Tech” program from exclusively 18-24 to include the 55+ members of our community.

Continue developing access points for financial planning education, savings opportunities, and protections from fraud and abuse

Nearly one-third (29%) of 55+ U.S. households lack any form of retirement savings or pension plan. Many factors have led to this situation, among them the 2008 Great Recession, escalating costs of health care, stagnated wages, older adults saddled with student loan debt (their own or as cosigner for children/grandchildren), and the unprecedented financial strains associated with having had to care for one’s parents and one’s children simultaneously. Building retirement savings is a critical public policy concern as its effects are felt within various parts of our society, from the
allocation of city funds to address financial insecurity, down to the lived experience of struggling older adults.

To prepare for and manage these present and future challenges, we will implement a mandatory, default opt-in Retirement Savings Program for private sector employees to encourage prioritization of long-term savings, and continue developing partnerships with libraries, CUNY branches, senior centers, etc. to provide accessible financial planning support and scam/fraud awareness to interested older adults (Learn more about our libraries plan in our full Education Platform).

Elevate awareness of ageism in the workplace and educate on methods of addressing these biases in public and private sectors

As the share of older adults in the workforce continues growing, so too does the incidence of ageism on the job. Age discrimination is present throughout the arc of employment from the hiring process to decisions made about termination. Among workers aged 45-73, two out of three have reported experiencing some form of discrimination in their workplace. Workplace ageism can take many forms, from overt disparaging remarks about age to more subtle forms, such as being passed over for promotions. Despite its pervasiveness, only 3% of older workers have filed formal complaints of their experiences. To address these issues, a Donovan administration will:

- Engage the New York City Commission on Human Rights (NYCCHR) in developing training/educational materials on identifying and preventing ageism in the workplace;
- Institute a work group populated by ageism experts, private sector employers, and older adult workers to better understand the incidence and effects of workplace ageism in New York City; and
- Educate the city population through PSAs explaining the nature of ageism in the workplace and steps to formally address instances of ageism.

Providing Older People with Affordable, Safe, and Accessible Housing with Services

Nearly 1.2 million older adults live in New York City. They are geographically dispersed, with the largest concentrations in Brooklyn and Queens. The vast majority (96%) are growing older at home—also known as aging-in-place—and they are more likely to rent (56%) than own (44%). Older renters typically have lower
incomes than older owners, and as a result, the majority of older renters rely on subsidies to afford their housing. Conditions are more difficult for the many older New Yorkers who live alone.

As of 2016, 60% of senior renter households in New York City were rent burdened, and the following year, it was reported that those who were trying to move into affordable senior housing had to wait an average of 7 years. On top of that, older New Yorkers face a range of challenges to receiving equitable and fair consideration when looking for housing. For example, one in eight older LGBTQ New Yorkers report facing discrimination in housing, with many hiding their identities for fear of prejudice.

Accessibility within buildings also continues to be a significant challenge, with 45% of all rental units found in buildings that do not have an elevator and only 49% of buildings with elevators that are fully accessible. Once inside these units, older adults may find physical challenges such as bathtubs or poor lighting.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Grow and improve existing programs that ensure that housing is financially affordable

New York City has a number of programs that make housing more affordable for older adults, and yet, they are sorely underutilized. Nearly 323,000 households are owned by adults aged 65+, and the Senior Citizen Homeowners’ Exemption (SCHE) and the Disabled Homeowners Exemption (DHE) provide tax breaks to homeowners with a combined annual income of $58,399 or less. Yet, in 2017, only 57,000 New Yorkers were enrolled in both programs. The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) and the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) programs, also known as the New York Rent Freeze program, freezes rents for adults aged 62+ and people with disabilities who live in rent-regulated apartments. Yet only 43% eligible older adults are enrolled in the program and 4 out of 10 older New Yorkers report not even knowing about the program. Furthermore, SCRIE freezes the rent at the price at the time of enrollment, which does not account for any future income changes. In turn, nearly one-third of SCRIE participants are now paying over 70% of their income on rent. A Donovan administration is committed to reforming city programs to make them more accessible and affordable for our older residents.

Two existing place-based programs offer innovative models of providing affordable housing and intergenerational connections. The Home Sharing program run by the New York Foundation for Senior Citizens (NYFSC) matches “hosts” age 60+ who have extra private space in their homes with “guests” to share their space and pay a portion of the rent. And in July 2020, Governor Cuomo unveiled plans for a 291-unit affordable and supportive housing site called Clarkson Estates in Flatbush, Brooklyn. This site will have specified units for families, formerly incarcerated
individuals, youth aging out of the foster care system, and formerly homeless young adults. The site will also be home to a multi-service, multigenerational “HUB” that will be available for residents and the public.

There is an opportunity to **partner with developers to ensure that our city’s affordable housing has space for residents of all ages.**

By growing these programs or replicating them throughout the city, housing can become affordable for New Yorkers of all ages and all incomes. In order to do this, we are committed to the following:

- Establishing SCRIE/DRIE as an opt-out program rather than an opt-in program for all eligible renters who live in rent-regulated units;
- Capping rents for SCRIE/DRIE beneficiaries at 33% of their income;
- Expanding SCRIE/DRIE eligibility requirements to include income-qualified renters in market-rate housing;
- Incentivizing developers to create multigenerational affordable housing sites; and
- Increasing the amount of aid for summer utility bills.

**Partner with local developers, contractors, property managers, and allied health care professionals to make new and existing buildings easy to access and navigate**

As people age, they become predisposed to chronic physical and cognitive conditions that can diminish functional capacity. In order for older New Yorkers to age in place, their homes must be able to accommodate their occupants’ current level of ability. First and foremost, we must **ensure that older adults are able to enter and exit their homes safely.** Many rental units are in buildings that do not have an elevator, and many buildings with elevators are not fully accessible. We must also **make the necessary investments within units** to ensure that potential hazards, including kitchen items placed in high cupboards and missing grab bars in bathrooms, do not lead to serious falls and worse.

Falls are the **leading cause** of injuries among older adults in NYC. In 2016, over 47,000 falls led to ER visits, hospitalizations, or deaths. Furthermore, hospitalizations from these falls **cost approximately** $722 million per year, or $40,600 per fall-related hospitalization, in New York City alone.

**Many studies** have shown that relatively simple and low-cost home assessments and modifications can greatly reduce falls. One successful model is DC Safe at Home, where an occupational therapist (OT) performs a home safety assessment. The OT then orders the necessary equipment and works with a local contractor to make home modifications such as grab bars, tub cuts, and ramps. In NYC, this
Aging

Program can be funded through grants, tax credits, and/or a revolving loan fund. A Donovan administration will incorporate universal design principles that go beyond the Americans with Disabilities Act in new senior housing construction and conduct occupational therapist assessments and low-cost home modifications to low and middle-income households to reduce in-home falls.

Provide place-based services and programs in new and existing housing sites

New York City has been the site for multiple pilot programs that link housing sites with health care and support services. One successful model is the NORC (naturally occurring retirement community), which is one or more apartment buildings with a large number of older tenants. There are currently 35 NORCs in NYC, and a majority of them have on-site supportive services to help older New Yorkers age in place. We must identify and expand models like the NORC using a data-driven approach.

Early studies have shown promising results that place-based services reduce health issues and health care costs. On a national scale, the LeadingAge Center for Affordable Housing Plus Services studied health outcomes for older adults living in HUD-assisted properties that provided on-site services such as physical exercise, health education, primary care, behavioral health care, and medication management, as well as a Resident Services Coordinator who connected tenants with services. Compared with older adults living in HUD properties without services, residents had a lower likelihood of hospital admissions. These partnerships also benefit these service agencies because they now have a built-in clientele and can eliminate travel time when making home visits.

One encouraging model in NYC is SHASAM (Selfhelp Active Services for Aging Model), run by Selfhelp Community Services, Inc., which provides a comprehensive set of supports that address social determinants of health and is available to residents in affordable senior housing buildings throughout one’s tenancy. A recent study by Rutgers University found that residents from six Selfhelp buildings in Queens had a lower utilization rate of hospitals and emergency rooms, and a lower rate of spending from Medicare and Medicaid, than their counterparts in buildings without supportive services. Additional studies on similar models have shown that the provision of health care and services in housing sites has influenced the health outcomes of older people.

Place-based services can go beyond the basic physical, medical, and behavioral health needs of older adults. There is significant evidence that social connectedness is critical to one’s emotional and physical wellbeing in later life. Since 30% of New Yorkers age 65+ live alone, it is imperative to create social opportunities when possible, especially among older adults that lack relatives or spouses to provide care and look out for their interests. This is a particular issue among older LGBTQ New Yorkers who maintained strong networks of chosen family.
through life but may lack the same familial support networks that non-LGBT older adults may have.

One way to do this is to **utilize housing sites for educational programs such as early childhood centers or after school high school programs**. One example is HANAC Corona Senior Residence, a 68-unit affordable housing building for low-income older adults in Corona, Queens, with an early childhood education facility on the ground floor. We will work to:

- **Utilize local data to determine where new NORCs will be created and fund supportive services;**
- **Significantly expand the availability of place-based services to meet the full range of older New Yorkers’ needs;**
- **Work with Resident Service Coordinators in affordable housing sites to use an existing online referral system to both make and track referrals for residents in need of services; and**
- **Create shared-space intergenerational sites in nontraditional locations for organizations and schools and create intergenerational social opportunities and connections for older adults.**

**Create a coordinated and age-specific network to address housing insecurity**

While there are many ways to make homes safer, more accessible, more affordable, and more service-oriented, shelters in New York City see 2,000 older adults on an average night who don’t have a place to call home. In addition, 15% of all evictions are of low-income older tenants. With COVID-19 disproportionately impacting older adults, evictions and homelessness only compound the threat of infection and death.

We must **ensure that older New Yorkers who require shelter and/or supportive housing have access to services that are age-specific and can address their basic housing needs as well as any chronic health conditions**. We will emulate nonprofit organizations like Hearth, Inc., which provides supportive housing to homeless older adults and provides case management and homelessness prevention services to those who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Ideally, older New Yorkers under a Donovan administration will **not have to go to any type of shelter if a social service network can prevent homelessness in the first place**. New York City has seen successful models such as the Bronx Health and Housing Consortium, which utilizes a multisectoral alliance of 70 member organizations to provide research and advocacy, technical assistance, and training in the areas of eviction prevention, permanent supportive housing, and homeless services and referrals. This model, and others like it, shows that with data collection, planning, interagency collaboration, and robust referral networks, people of all ages can find housing or avoid homelessness in the first place. In order to implement this, we will:
• Prioritize rapid housing to older adults who are homeless;
• Initiate age-appropriate supportive housing services co-located in shelters, temporary housing, and single-room occupancy (SRO) sites; and
• Expand the Bronx FUSE (Frequent Users System Engagement) data sharing system, which identifies frequent users of jails, shelters, and hospitals and connects them with supportive housing and other services, to the other four boroughs.

Making Transit Work for Everyone
Transportation is essential to older adults’ quality of life, health, independence, social interaction, and ability to contribute to their communities, including as consumers and workers in the local economy. Since one in three older New Yorkers are living with a disability, or three times as many as the general population, accessibility is paramount to ensuring that older adults are able to participate in public life.

The Donovan Aging plan is another clear example of how Shaun’s campaign is really focused on tying accessibility to every one of their policy ideas. Whether it’s getting from point A to point B or being safe in one’s home, issues of disability are a fact of life for countless New Yorkers of all ages. I think it would have been impressive if Shaun had just put out an Aging plan focused on issues affecting every single older New Yorker. The fact that he and his team actually zeroed in on the particular challenges of the disabled aging population and are calling on the City to go even further than what’s required by the Americans with Disabilities Act—that really shows that Shaun gets it! He knows what it means to support all New Yorkers, and I’m proud to support him back.

Dustin Jones
Disability Rights Advocate and President & Founder of United for Equal Access NY
But New York City’s transportation system woefully underserves its customers with limited mobility. The city has one of the lowest percentages of accessible subway stations of any major world city. As such, older people tend to rely on surface-level transportation.

Transit access must be treated as a fundamental human right. New York City’s transit system must work for everyone, not just those with the privilege to adapt when faced with irregular routes, downed trains, or broken elevators.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Focus on surface-level transportation

For the many New Yorkers with ambulatory difficulty, improving the surface-level transportation experience is essential. Nearly half of all falls among older adults occur outdoors, and environmental factors—such as uneven surfaces and objects that can be tripped on—account for many of the falls among older people worldwide. We are committed to investing in well-maintained sidewalks, outdoor lighting, bus stops that include shelters and seating, and public benches that can significantly improve an older person’s ability to get around safely and comfortably.

There has been a concerted effort to improve pedestrian safety among older New Yorkers. The Department of Transportation’s Safe Streets for Seniors program has reduced senior pedestrian fatalities by **17% citywide** by implementing pedestrian safety measures in areas with high rates of senior pedestrian crashes resulting in fatalities or serious injuries. Since launching the program, DOT has extended crossing times at crosswalks to accommodate slower walking speeds, constructed pedestrian safety islands, widened curbs and medians, narrowed roadways, and installed new stop controls and signals at 41 “Senior Pedestrian Focus Areas” (SPFAs) across the five boroughs. **While this program should be expanded, it should alter its methodology to ensure new SPFAs are identified using a racial equity lens.** Almost none of the current SPFAs are located in neighborhoods with high concentrations of Black residents, while neighborhoods with higher concentrations of White residents are more likely to have an SPFA.

A survey conducted by the New York Academy of Medicine in 2019 found that one of the most common complaints among older people referred to the city’s cyclists, often referencing fears or experiences of being hit by cyclists while walking. Street design, public information campaigns, and increased enforcement can help to alleviate these complaints. Steps that a Donovan administration will take include:

- Identifying priority areas for sidewalk repair and better lighting informed by age-friendly neighborhood consultations and socio-demographic...
data (e.g. large concentrations of older people, people with mobility impairment, and falls prevalence);

- Increasing public seating, including bus shelters with seating and prioritizing neighborhoods with large concentrations of people with ambulatory difficulty;

- Assessing disparities in implementation of Safe Streets for Seniors and expanding the number of Senior Pedestrian Focus Areas; and

- Resolve conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists through street design, public information campaigns regarding etiquette and laws, and increased enforcement, while recognizing equity implications of greater enforcement.

Invest in accessibility

New Yorkers are accustomed to a certain level of unpredictability when it comes to the city’s transportation system. But what is an inconvenience for some riders—like a downed elevator or escalator—has, over the years, left other riders totally stranded. The lack of accessibility throughout the system has put the MTA up against a series of lawsuits over the years.

While the MTA has pledged to improve accessibility through its MTA Fast Forward Plan, further investment is needed to make the system truly accessible. There are 124 stations in compliance with disability laws, with 24 being added in the last capital plan and 70 included in the current 2020-2024 budget, which would push the number of handicap-accessible stations closer to 50%. Current timelines that the former New York City Transit Chief previously established aim to have the system fully accessible by 2035, a move which some transit accessibility advocates agree is a reasonable timeline. Yet none of this can move forward without funding.

The Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities Commissioner and others have called for the federal government to protect the MTA’s 2020-2024 capital plan, which is currently in danger of being shelved due to revenue loss associated with COVID-19. Access-A-Ride, the city’s paratransit network, is often referred to as the main alternative to subway travel for riders in wheelchairs or those with limited mobility. Over 150,000 registrants use the service for an estimated 7.1 million rides per year, and 71% of riders of over age 65. In practice, however, this service fails to serve as a viable transit option for many users. For example, an audit conducted in 2017 by the Comptroller’s office found that 43% of Access-A-Ride complaints, from safety issues to lateness, remained unresolved past the MTA’s own deadlines. Another audit showed that an Access-A-Ride vehicle failed to arrive for a scheduled trip more than 31,000 times in a year-long time period. In recent years, New York City Transit (NYCT) has attempted to improve Access-A-Ride through piloting on-demand rides (previously rides needed to be booked 24 hours in advance) and introducing an app. A Donovan administration will expand and improve upon NYCT innovations, while continuing to improve its overall service delivery.
At the same time, we will **partner with the private sector to provide an alternative for riders who use wheelchairs.** The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) has been increasing the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in its fleet, with a goal to reach 50% of accessible yellow taxis. To increase accessibility in the for-hire vehicle sector, the TLC recently enacted rules that require that companies dispatch a minimum percentage of their annual trips, increasing each year, to wheelchair accessible vehicles. As of 2019, there were 500 accessible for-hire vehicles in New York City. This number will be monitored and the minimum percentage of required accessible vehicles will be increased. A Donovan administration will:

- Fully fund capital improvements to bring MTA subway stations into Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, prioritizing neighborhoods with large concentrations of people with ambulatory difficulty;
- Improve accessibility by investing in braille signage, auto-gates (instead of heavy, hand-operated emergency exit gates), and tactile strips at platform edge, and by replacing faulty elevators;
- Increase required minimum percentage of accessible vehicles for on-demand ride hailing services;
- Create flexible transit services that can accommodate some mobility-impaired riders at less cost than paratransit (including “feeder” paratransit, on-demand services and route deviation); and
- Reform Access-a-Ride by expanding or improving on-demand pilots and introducing contract incentives for improved performance.
As Mayor, I will use technology to make our city more accessible to all New Yorkers, be it at home, on the street, or in the classroom. A Donovan administration will use data- and evidence-based decision-making to more effectively and efficiently deliver for New Yorkers. Moreover, we will partner with innovative organizations across the private, non-profit, philanthropic, and academic sectors to pool our city’s resources and put them to work for the people of all five boroughs. By leveraging innovation across all government sectors, I am confident that we can rebuild and reimagine our city as one that works for everyone and reclaim the spirit of innovation that made New York City the capital of the world.
As a city built by people coming from all over the world in search of opportunity, New York has long been a hub for innovation and a beacon of progress for the rest of the world. And our city remains a wellspring of innovation and data that is home to a growing tech sector.

However, as other cities across the globe have prioritized innovation in the public and private sectors, it has become increasingly clear that our city is not reaching its full innovative potential. From the struggle to teach our children remotely and vaccinate all New Yorkers fairly, COVID has exposed the gaps and underlying inequity in our data and innovation infrastructure.

As we rebuild and reimagine our city as one that works for everyone, we must reclaim the spirit of innovation that made New York City the capital of the world, and this requires a mayor who views innovation across all sectors of government and the private sector as a necessary part of meeting the needs and building the future for the city’s residents. With Shaun Donovan as mayor, New York City will make a more concerted effort to develop its culture of innovation and address fragmented implementation across agencies, putting the wellbeing of New Yorkers at the center of the ways we remake how people live and work in our city.

Shaun has been a leader in applying innovative approaches to solving community issues throughout his career. From his automation of the City’s antiquated housing code inspection system using 311 to the dramatic reduction of veteran homelessness using HUDStat, he has made New Yorkers’ lives better through better data and information. And as a trained architect who uses design thinking to reimagine solutions to big challenges, Shaun has always viewed government not as “the art of the possible,” but “the art of the nearly-impossible.” In that spirit, he partnered with community residents and leaders to launch worldwide design competitions that led to Via Verde, the most healthy, sustainable affordable housing in the city, and Rebuild by Design, to build path-breaking parks and infrastructure that would protect communities in the wake of Hurricane Sandy while improving quality of life and creating new jobs along our waterfront.

Shaun’s campaign is based on the notion that through creative, inclusive ideas, New York City can come back stronger from this crisis as well. We will use technology to make all of New York City—and the world—more accessible to New Yorkers, be it at home, on the street, or in the classroom. We will use data- and evidence-based decision-making to more effectively and efficiently deliver outcome-focused,
resident-centered government services to New Yorkers, measure our performance, and constantly improve. We will partner with innovative organizations across the private, non-profit, philanthropic, and academic sectors to pool our city’s resources and put them to work for New Yorkers.

As mayor, Shaun Donovan will establish City Hall as a portal to and an example for New York City’s innovation ecosystem, guided by a set of key principles:

- Every New Yorker can be an innovator
- City employees must be equipped with the right tools and resources to incubate new ideas, quickly identify areas for improvement, and pilot solutions
- Innovative and data-driven approaches must be encouraged and rewarded
- Data must be seen as an essential tool of governance
- All New Yorkers must be able to participate, access, and collaborate to help New York recover and rebuild
- Privacy, security, and transparency must always be conserved
- Equity must be a key consideration in all innovation

We must be bold and ambitious in our plans to rebuild our city. The best ideas are out there, but we need to be willing to look for them, test them, and learn from them.

**Our plan will focus on:**

- **Investing in Updating Legacy Operating Models and Improving Innovation and Data Infrastructure**
- **Bringing Quality and High-speed Broadband into Every Single Residence in New York City**
- **Ensuring that New Yorkers have Access to the Future of Digital Transformation and Emerging Technology**
- **Pursuing Private Sector Partnership as a Tool for Economic Development**

**Investing in Updating Legacy Operating Models and Improving the City’s Data and Delivery Infrastructure**

The first step to truly creating the environment for innovation in our city is ensuring that the technology, data infrastructure, and operating models used by our city are up-to-date and effective. Deferring these investments not only prevents us from
meeting the needs of our residents today—it makes it even harder to close these gaps in the future.

That is why the Donovan administration will immediately take stock of the city’s current tools and processes and identify opportunities to use data more effectively, efficiently, and equitably.

**We are committing to the following policies and programs:**

**Lead with a comprehensive data, innovation, technology, and digital strategy that is rooted in principles of equity**

In the last decade, cities globally have been developing innovation, delivery, and data strategies. These strategies provide clear definitions, goals, and methodologies and aim to set both annual and long-term goals and strategy for innovation, as well as the approaches the city can use to innovate within the administration. Examples include the [City of San Jose’s Innovation Roadmap](https://www.sanjose.gov/innovation/strategy) and the City of London’s [Smarter London Together roadmap](https://www.london.gov.uk/city策略/innovation-strategy). And yet, New York City has yet to publish comprehensive formal strategies for data or innovation. While we have the Open Data Plan and the Internet Master Plan, they do not connect to or build off of one another, so a unified strategy is needed.

> New York has long been a mecca of innovation, with many of the world’s leading companies, academic institutions, and nonprofit organizations establishing themselves here in a spirit of collaboration to solve pressing challenges. Shaun understands that this activity can power our city’s economy and help us achieve his ambitious goals for recovery. Shaun is determined to promote true partnership between the city’s government and the experts that are willing and excited to help tackle our most pressing issues. His Economic Development and Education platforms have made clear this is a campaign where big ideas are paired with the know-how to execute. I believe that powerful combination can make possible a New York where every resident lives a comfortable life in a quality neighborhood with their family.

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**Chris Hughes**

Co-founder of Facebook who now directs the Economic Security Project
New York City will lead with a comprehensive data, innovation, technology, and digital strategy that is rooted in the principles of equity. This strategy will be enterprise-wide, holding agencies to a higher standard of excellence. It should also be co-designed by residents, community partners, and academia, bringing together an interdisciplinary team to develop and execute on this plan. The strategy should also include clear metrics, measurable goals, and an accountability mechanism so that we can make sure our city’s agencies are meeting their set goals.

Avoiding fragmentation and silos will also be a priority for our city. Especially as we recover from the financial distress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, data and innovation should be leveraged to improve business processes, remove duplication, identify cost-savings, and ensure that the city’s neighborhoods and residents hit hardest economically—and historically—get the services necessary for an equitable recovery.

Restructure City roles to facilitate innovation

In most cities, data, delivery, and innovation teams sit under the Mayor’s Office, such as the Los Angeles Innovation and Data Teams and Boston’s New Urban Mechanics. There are several teams across New York City’s government both within the Mayor’s office and in agencies.

However, there still exists a serious need for building data capacity across all of our agencies, and for creating a team dedicated to overseeing enterprise data management and governance. Aligning data governance and management will open opportunities for resident empowerment, radical transparency, economic development, and more effective data-driven problem solving, program delivery and decision-making.

We must identify and elevate the right people into both data and non-data positions, especially commissioners and deputy mayors. Deputy mayors will be critical hires and must be people who understand the value of data and evidence, but more importantly, carry out the mayor’s commitment to innovation and data while being responsive to the needs of the community—shifting government performance, data, and innovation from back office functions to critical functions of New York.

The Donovan cabinet will oversee interagency and interdisciplinary collaboration, data-sharing, research and development, evaluations, and data and innovation public-private partnerships. Other responsibilities include:

- Enterprise data governance and management, including data warehouses, inventory, and integrated systems
- Continuity of operations and disaster recovery
• Protection of data privacy and confidentiality
• Enterprise evaluations, including randomized control trials
• Human-centered design and innovation strategies

To ensure that our talent draws from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, we will also attract non-public sector experience into government through a Mayoral Innovation Fellowship program, adapted from the Presidential Innovation Fellowship model and the FUSE Corp model, which bring mid- to senior-level leaders from other sectors into the public sector.

**Build a culture of risk-taking, innovation, and data-driven decision-making**

The most important factor in building a successful innovative and data-driven culture is commitment and support from the top. Shaun Donovan and his executive-level leaders will elevate innovation and data by setting clear expectations that these teams will have enterprise authority to develop and implement strategies, providing adequate funding, and encouraging risk-taking and an environment to pilot new ideas.

The mayor must also provide teams with the political power to cut through bureaucracy, and will have a critical role in establishing a culture that learns from experience, particularly from mistakes, as a way to reinforce a problem-solving culture. Incentive is a tool which the Mayor should leverage to reward and recognize agencies, senior leaders, middle managers, and staff broadly, including through citywide innovation awards and funding for innovative ideas.

A culture of innovation needs to continue to be cultivated inside the city. To do this, we will encourage city staff to participate in a wide variety of trainings that help civil servants learn new methodologies and adopt an innovative, data-centric, and digital mindset, and we will look to hire people with these skills as well as advance current employees throughout city government who may have these skills but not have the opportunities to fully utilize them. We will also offer training opportunities to community partners and residents to better access and leverage city-owned information and data. Having the data accessible is only half of the battle; we will empower residents to understand what the data says so that we can be held accountable.

“Shaun's focus on using technology to make city government more efficient and responsive is on target and can be accomplished, as he proposes, through effective public-private partnerships.”

**Kathryn Wylde**
CEO of the Partnership for New York City
Use City funding to incentivize innovation and promote the most successful programs

To build a culture of data and innovation, the City will need to dedicate funding and resources to develop and scale innovation, program delivery, and data capacities. These capabilities will be focused on the City's top priorities, whether that be COVID-19 recovery, or reimagining New York City as a place where a secure, healthy life is available to everyone. We will continue to build innovation opportunities by leveraging the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York, which takes donations for Civic Innovation to support the priority needs of the Mayor’s Fund through staff, technology, evaluations, partnerships, and other resources.

And, we will create an internal innovation fund for employees to spur innovation and new solutions. Agencies and employees will be able to submit proposals for new solutions and projects, and we will award access to pilot- and seed-funding on a routine basis. This recommendation could also be externally funded through the Mayor’s Fund.

It is vital that we leverage effective data analysis, results from evaluations, and resident feedback when making decisions about new and renewed funding. Through the Office of Management and Budget, we will dramatically change how data and evidence are leveraged for budgeting purposes, by making a commitment to identifying programs that are not meeting the desired goals and needs of the community, and directing funding toward those that are yielding positive results.

Rethink how the City of New York buys things

Although the city was at the forefront of transparency in the early 2000s, the City has deprioritized the data and technology infrastructure advancements it needed to ensure that residents can access the necessary services to increase quality of life for all New Yorkers. We need to invest in updating legacy operating models and improve outdated business processes to help New Yorkers more easily access information about City services and open the doors for communities to partner with the City to solve pressing challenges.

Our current antiquated systems and layers of bureaucracy result in inefficient, lengthy, and unfair practices that fail to deliver the best value to residents of the city. In order to bring our City's procurement practices into the 21st century, we need to assess and update the current system.

The first step to updating the City's procurement would be a review of contract and approval policy and process. The process takes too long with too many offices and agencies involved. The City needs to review both policies and processes to identify where cost and time can be saved.
A diverse city needs a diverse pool of products and services. This would require an assessment of the amount of contracted dollars going to local minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBEs) to ensure fairness. Read more about our plans to support MWBEs in our Economic Development Platform.

All City contracts, especially human service contracts, should be tied to strategic outcomes and vendor performance, and grounded in true partnership with our human services providers. This ensures that every dollar the City spends is used to support citywide priorities and meet the needs of New Yorkers, and that we are being good partners and working to achieve shared outcomes. This also holds the City accountable for the contracts that we sign.

Agencies should continue to have a designated Agency Chief Contracting Officers (ACCOs), but the responsibilities of the Department of Consumer Affairs should be increased to ensure that the development and review of solicitations and bids along with the issuing of contracts is housed within a central enterprise procurement office.

Bringing Quality and High-speed Broadband into Every Single Residence in New York City

The COVID-19 pandemic has propelled an already necessary national dialogue on the digital divide and the racial inequities in accessing the internet. Our students are attending class through online platforms and many residents are working from home. Access to high-speed internet can no longer be seen as a privilege, but a right that every New York resident should have.

The de Blasio Administration has started the process of building a digital infrastructure for New York; however, the approach being taken does not tackle the underlying issues that have forced the digital divide into existence. To bring quality and high-speed broadband into every single residence in New York City, the City will need to rebrand broadband as an essential utility and effectively bring together the city's stakeholders to make this a reality.

We are committing to the following policies and programs:

Assess and revise the City's Internet Master Plan

The first step to identifying and remedying the gaps in internet connectivity is to conduct a broadband needs assessment across the city. This would be done in tandem with internet service providers to identify broadband and technological deserts.
To ensure equity, we would focus on poorly connected areas first by collecting and analyzing neighborhood-level data to identify the lowest broadband connectivity, affordability, and choice of internet service providers.

**Tackle the regulatory landscape**

In order to increase connectivity throughout the city, we need to work with the state government to pass a Universal Broadband For All bill which will enshrine grantmaking to increase competition as well as provide grants and incentives to internet service providers who invest in broadband deserts, and enshrines net neutrality principles into services offered.

**Increase partnership to meet the needs of each community**

We understand that the current process for a small number of providers to service large portions of the city has not effectively supported the needs of either residents or businesses. To address this, we will more effectively bring all stakeholders to the table, from the large telecommunications companies to community-level enterprises, to understand how we can better bridge gaps in service and empower New Yorkers through community-specific solutions.

**Explicitly identify potential equity outcomes in the procurement process**

To make sure we are offering the best, most equitable option to both providers and consumers, transparency has to be at the forefront of our plan. To do this, we plan to look for ways to integrate local MWBEs to the process of connecting New Yorkers.

We will also set equitable construction standards to ensure minimal disruption across all areas of the city and to prevent certain neighborhoods from being disproportionately affected.

**Address the short- and long-term digital divide challenges**

As more New Yorkers are getting online, it is important to know that they know how to access the internet and all of the resources available to them. Through CBOs, neighborhood groups, libraries, and
other resources, we would encourage and support that internet education trainings become available to all residents.

While connectivity is the first step, we also need to make sure that New Yorkers have the hardware they need to access the internet. We will continue our existing partnerships and forge new public-private partnerships to increase the number of devices distributed to communities most in need.

**Ensuring that New Yorkers have Access to the Future of Digital Transformation and Emerging Technology**

The City must ensure that all New Yorkers are able to participate in the future of digital transformation and emerging technology. Donovan's New York will lead in the movement from “smart” to “automated and algorithmic” technologies by setting the standard in tandem with the Chief Equity Officer for how emerging technology can be leveraged to deliver better services, strengthen communities, and solve the city’s most pressing challenges, while prioritizing equity and New Yorkers’ rights every step of the way.

**We are committing to the following policies and programs:**

**Partner with providers to ensure that technology does not get too far ahead of the city**

While cities welcome new technology and services, they continue to fall into the data trap with vendors. New York needs smart data-sharing agreements to access machine-readable data from private sector corporations, as well as to make certain that all New Yorkers have equitable access to services and that essential data can be available for comprehensive decision-making.

We must also invest in emerging technology entrepreneurs, especially women and BIPOC by leveraging private partnership and provide trainings, networks, and capital to invest in new emerging tech grown in NYC. Part of this effort involves establishing a NYC Entrepreneurship Fund, leveraging public, private, philanthropic investments to fund it, and focusing on communities that have not had historically equitable access to capital. Read more in our Economic Development Platform.

**Safely leverage artificial intelligence and machine learning**

Artificial intelligence and machine learning have the potential to be more powerful tools in the effective and equitable delivery of city services, but without a concerted effort to prioritize equity and accountability, these algorithms often amplify harm.
We must develop strong procedures and a strategic plan—including resident engagement strategies—to launch and widen the use of emerging technology to remain up to date with technology’s progress and increase avenues to access city hall, while developing systems that work for every New Yorker.

Additionally, we will reconvene a better, more transparent Automated Decision Systems (ADS) Task Force to revise the recommendations in the official ADS Task Force report from November 2019. One of the goals will be to identify opportunities to test artificial intelligence where it can enhance policy and outcomes and make transparent where artificial intelligence is used for policy decisions.

**Reinvent the direct-to-resident model by creating new interfaces for government**

A significant barrier to meeting the needs of our residents is making our government digitally accessible to New Yorkers. To address this, we will enable “Ask City of New York” on personal smart devices to increase access to city services while also holding companies to respecting all New Yorkers’ right to privacy. Residents can ask their device questions from when street-side parking goes into effect to marriage license requirements.

In order to improve the user experience on our platforms, we will build a bot that will make navigating nyc.gov easier, and we will look to make quick and significant improvements to our system by scaling programs like the MOCTO Innovation Fellows and the New York City and US Digital Response Tech Swat team.

**Ensure that with the increase in technology, we are keeping New Yorkers safe**

Some of the most pressing issues of living in New York will be solved through new ways of using and leveraging data, innovation, and private sector partnerships. However, the use of smart city technology can cause communities to be reasonably concerned about the dangers of cyber attacks, security, privacy, and transparency around the collection and use of personal data, and targeted disinformation attacks.

New York City has the responsibility to communicate and engage residents, educating them on how the city intends to introduce and use smart technology and any data it collects. The City also needs to clearly articulate the benefits of smart technology and how the data collected will benefit the lives of residents and community wellbeing and make critical decisions about what the trade-offs are when deploying these technologies.

Part of building a strong data foundation is formalizing processes to reduce the possibility of inadvertently releasing private or confidential data. We will also equip every NYC employee with enterprise-wide trainings and the
**tools** necessary to assess and reduce security risk associated with data and information technology.

To do this, we will:

- **Expand NYC Secure**, protecting New Yorkers and scaling trainings to students, neighborhood associations, and CBOs
- **Expand and elevate NYC Cyber Command (NYC3)**, collaborating with non-governmental sectors and other government entities to make sure relevant and up-to-date information is shared and leveraged
- **Develop cyber resiliency plans** to ensure information technology systems continue delivering services in the event of a cyber incident and we can be prepared for when an attack occurs
- **Conduct risk assessments and risk simulations** to center the impact of New Yorkers when it comes to their privacy, the potential harms that can occur with a new technology, and the use case of these technologies
- **Diversify the procurement of technologies** to ensure no back-end access to data or scope creep

**Private Sector Partnership as a Tool for Economic Development**

As we rebuild and expand our city’s economy to provide a chance to get ahead to all New Yorkers, private sector innovators will be critical partners in developing the tools and creating the opportunities that will improve the lives of all of our residents. It is important that we create an environment that both attracts innovative companies to our city and facilitates collaboration between the private and public sectors, with a commitment to equity.

**We are committing to the following policies and programs:**

**Prioritize earlier and continuous partnership with and investment in private sector innovators**

Much of the time, private sector partners are engaged as vendors or solution providers and not as true collaborators, when in fact we’re focused on many of the same problems. At the same time, private sector leaders may not always have a clear picture of how the public sector operates. We believe that a key step to developing innovative solutions to the city’s problems and attracting companies to New York is **prioritizing collaboration with private sector leaders and improving communication on key public issues.**
To this end, the Donovan administration will launch an upgraded version of the Executive Blueprint Series—closed-door sessions bringing the mayor, deputy mayors, commissioner and senior aids together with the sharpest leaders in academia and the private sector to discuss multiple managerial and leadership challenges of implementing large-scale initiatives. Going beyond what was accomplished in the past, these sessions will focus on not only discussing complex cross-cutting issues and large-scale programs, but also laying out a blueprint for the future, including setting goals, identifying needs, and brainstorming sources of funding.

We will create effective partnerships that allow the private sector to take some early risk to test co-created solutions and identify those that work in ways that the public sector can benefit from and scale. These partnerships will involve leveraging the wealth of experience and knowledge in New York City academic institutions in general, and CUNY specifically.

The City can also play a key role in supporting successful and innovative ventures that are geared toward solving critical problems in our city. Partnership and the Mayor’s Fund are tools through which the City can support and award contracts to companies that display the capacity to solve key challenges. We can create or partner with innovation hubs, competitions, and challenges to help build solutions, integrating resident input throughout the process to ensure that their needs are truly being met. In supporting these growing businesses, we will look to strengthen minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBEs) and make it easier for these often overlooked organizations to access capital and partnership opportunities.

The Donovan administration is also committed to expanding innovative sectors of our city’s economy. We will make investments in infrastructure, training, and regulation that will help New York City become the life sciences capital of the world, and we will lead in terms of climate adaptation and jobs by promoting green technology and workforce training, making it easier for buildings to meet climate adaptation goals, and incentivizing investment in our wind power generation sector.

Read more about our plans to support equitable and long-term growth of our economy in our Economic Development Platform.
Create a strong skilled workforce pipeline

The Donovan administration will **be committed to preparing all New Yorkers for secure, family-sustaining jobs.** These efforts include ensuring that all New York City public school students are taught the skills necessary to succeed in a digital economy, and providing every single student the chance to gain hands-on work experience through at least one guaranteed paid career opportunity while in high school.

CUNY is a jewel among our nation's public university systems, and it is important that we properly leverage it as an engine for economic opportunity. By **launching a CUNY Learning Center for 21st Century Skills**, the City will bring together students including adult learners, professors, and employers to create opportunities for applied learning through micro-internships, capstones, skills badging programs, and consulting projects, all in high-growth fields.

These efforts will be part of our broader commitment to **create the largest comprehensive skills-based training program in the US**, and will ensure that companies have access to the most prepared workforce in the world.

Read more about these and other policies in our [Education Platform](#) and [Economic Development Platform](#).
Praise for Shaun Donovan’s Plan for the City of New York (continued)

“By launching a Racial Equity Platform, Shaun Donovan has demonstrated that he not only wants to be a mayor for every New Yorker, he understands what that means. Through this set of ideas, Shaun has laid out plans to tackle injustices from the more recent, like disparities in COVID vaccine distribution, to historical trends across housing, education, transportation, and every other issue he has already released comprehensive plans to address. It’s an impressive feat, and it complements his broader efforts to be detailed and ambitious in his plans to guide the city through and beyond this crisis.”

—Rev. Kevin McCall, Founder of the Crisis Action Center

“Our City’s pandemic response has unfortunately followed a longstanding trend: the most vulnerable and hardest hit are once again receiving the least support. Our city can’t properly begin to heal until we’ve all overcome this crisis, and I’m happy to see that this Equity platform emphasizes the urgent need for an effective and equitable recovery,”

—Fatoumata Waggeh, Founder of the Smiling Coast Women Empowerment Network (SCWEN)

“Having implemented a racial equity strategy inside of city government in New Orleans, I’ve seen the impact it can have. It has to be a whole-of-government approach. Shaun has said since Day 1 that he would apply a lens of equity to every policy put forth by his campaign and his administration, and he has followed through with that commitment every week.”

—Mitch Landrieu, former Mayor of New Orleans

“Where you can afford to live has historically dictated how much of New York City is accessible to you, how much opportunity the city provides, and how comfortably you live. That disparity is one of the main barriers to equity and fairness among New Yorkers, and Shaun Donovan has done a fantastic job of not only recognizing that, but coming up with real solutions. There’s no reason why, in the richest city in the world, anyone should be living in a food desert, have to travel long distances to reach their school or their office, or not have good health facilities nearby. Shaun’s 15 Minute Neighborhoods are what every community in our city should look like—healthy, safe, and full of opportunity for everyone.”

—Rev. Patricia Malcolm

“Shaun Donovan’s plan for getting New Yorkers back to work and reviving our economy really goes directly to the heart of the multiple challenges that New Yorkers currently and historically have faced. Focused on the present, as well as the future, in my view, Shaun has put together a comprehensive platform that prioritizes giving people the skills to enter quality paying jobs today while simultaneously strengthening key NYC industries for the future.”

—Lloyd Williams, President and CEO of The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce
“Shaun Donovan and I have worked together at the city and national level to craft deals and policies that really helped workers. Every time, Shaun displayed an unerring dedication to the people on the ground making things run—and with this plan, he’s done it again. Shaun knows how to not only create jobs, but to advocate for workers and make sure their jobs are stable, pay well, and lead to even greater opportunity. He has shown both in the past and through this plan that he intends on learning from the efforts of labor organizations and bringing all interests to the table to craft the strongest plan for the future. I trust him to look out for all New Yorkers.”

—Mike Fishman, Climate Activist, Former SEIU Secretary-Treasurer and Campaign Chair

“For too long, generations of NYC students have faced tremendous equity barriers—from access to quality early childhood education, to integrated and inclusive K-12 classrooms, to pathways to CUNY and good jobs. These challenges have only been exacerbated by the pandemic. Shaun’s plan rightly puts equity at the center, focusing on historically marginalized groups, like students experiencing homelessness, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities; and aiming to elevate educator voice, and rebuild their trust in the system. It includes a comprehensive, concrete, and thoughtful approach to finally integrate NYC’s schools and classrooms, which are amongst the most segregated in the nation. Shaun’s vision and leadership can help NYC schools, students, families, and educators rebuild in a more equitable way—and this plan shows how this can be achieved.”

—John King, former NYS Education Commissioner and former U.S. Secretary of Education

“Shaun’s plan reflects the leadership I saw from him in Washington: bold vision, smart ideas, and a focus on following through for the most vulnerable populations. Like children around the nation, NYC’s children are facing an unprecedented crisis, and it will take creative ideas, and a willingness to make hard decisions and challenge folks across the public and private sectors to not just help students and educators recover, but tackle the inequities, achievement gaps and segregation that have festered for years. This plan does that. From expanding support for students experiencing homelessness, to ensuring a more diverse educator workforce and more high-quality, inclusive educational experiences for all, to expanding college and career pathways for all high school students and building on CUNY’s success, this plan is a bold and comprehensive roadmap for NYC’s students and educators.”

—Arne Duncan, former U.S. Secretary of Education

“It’s important that NYC act to integrate schools but do so in a way that really puts educators at the table, and supports them through this work. As an educator, parent and former Principal Ambassador Fellow at the US Department of Education, I believe we, need bold ideas and concrete action to integrate our middle and high schools, as this plan proposes. I also believe from my experience that we must bring in Educator Fellows from diverse backgrounds and schools to shape policy in a meaningful, ongoing way.”

“Shaun Donovan's education plan represents the most comprehensive set of policies proposed to date by any candidate in the race to address the issue of segregation in New York City, linking common sense policies such as revamping admissions processes with innovative ideas around expanding seats in diverse, high-quality settings. It also attends to the all-important issues of teacher representation, community input, and resource allocation that are so often left out of the integration conversation. The boldness, breadth, and practicability of this plan to promote integration all receive high marks in my book.”

—Stefan Lallinger, former Special Assistant to the NYC Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza

“Shaun Donovan's education agenda is designed to open doors to meaningful economic opportunity for NYC's students, and makes it clear that this mission begins at birth and doesn't stop until every student is launched on the career path of their choice. Besides scaling up proven academic and support programs in the DOE and CUNY, he will make sure that high school and college students have many more ways to learn about and participate in the world of work, so they can choose and prepare for the pathway of their choice.”

—Amy McIntosh, former Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Strategy at CUNY

“Affordable housing is at the nexus of creating an equitable and diverse New York City—a city that serves all its citizens. Our next mayor must be someone who deeply understands the individual complex challenges that our city’s housing and neighborhoods face, and who has concrete, practical ideas about how to solve them. Shaun Donovan is the clear choice. At a moment when New York City is facing a growing housing crisis with—in the wake of the pandemic—the potential of getting much, much worse, we must take a comprehensive approach to addressing our city's affordable housing and community development needs. Any credible plan must address the New York City Housing Authority's profound challenges, housing for the homeless, keeping New Yorkers in their homes, and ensuring that every New Yorker's housing is safe, clean, and affordable. Donovan's plan addresses all of these issues effectively, in addition to promoting homeownership, viewing housing as an opportunity to support our economy, contributing to the "greening" of the city, and, crucially, asking all neighborhoods to contribute to the fair and accessible housing of New Yorkers. I fully support this plan and look forward to seeing it in action.”

—Marc Jabr, former President of the New York City Housing Development Corporation

“I have had the good fortune of knowing Shaun since his days at the Community Preservation Corporation, and I had the opportunity of working with him when he was HPD Commissioner. As a developer of affordable housing in New York City for the past 33 years, I have witnessed many challenges and nuances in our industry, and I truly believe that the current economic and financial crisis is by far the most daunting challenge facing our great city. Shaun has the experience and understanding of our industry to be able to lead us as our mayor, and to take the hard steps to help stabilize our industry.”

—Robert Ezrapour, Member of the Advisory Board of the Furman Center and Principal at Artimus Construction
“Shaun's plan really demonstrates the thoughtfulness and commitment to bold, inclusive, and effective policies that I've seen in him for as long as we've known each other. The truth of the matter is that there is a considerable gap between what the aging population in New York needs and what is being done to help them, and they lack the political power to bring attention to their most pressing issues. Shaun understands that ensuring that older persons age successfully goes far beyond just providing Medicare—it includes providing other needed services and a safe, supportive environment. He also understands that lifting up New York City and overcoming this pandemic means lifting up all New Yorkers, and he’s proven that by putting forth a really smart, comprehensive plan directed toward this critical population. His ideas will make our city’s older residents healthier, safer, and happier, and will make it easier for them to move around the city, work with dignity, and meet their needs wherever they are. I couldn’t commend Shaun more for the work that he and his team have put into these ideas.”

—Dr. John Rowe, Julius B. Richmond Professor of Health Policy and Aging at the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health

“The Donovan Aging plan is another clear example of how Shaun's campaign is really focused on tying accessibility to every one of their policy ideas. Whether it’s getting from point A to point B or being safe in one’s home, issues of disability are a fact of life for countless New Yorkers of all ages. I think it would have been impressive if Shaun had just put out an Aging plan focused on issues affecting every single older New Yorker. The fact that he and his team actually zeroed in on the particular challenges of the disabled aging population and are calling on the City to go even further than what’s required by the Americans with Disabilities Act—that really shows that Shaun gets it! He knows what it means to support all New Yorkers, and I'm proud to support him back.”

—Dustin Jones, Disability Rights Advocate and President & Founder of United for Equal Access NY

“As Shaun Donovan’s climate plan demonstrates, he has the vision and foresight to turn the climate crisis into actions that not only make sense for the planet, they make sense for all the millions of people who call NYC home.”

—Gina McCarthy, former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator for President Barack Obama

“The next administration must take bold steps to make climate change a priority. By bringing experts to the table and developing a detailed plan this early on in the race, Shaun exhibits a strong commitment to leading this work. His plan puts a critical emphasis on protecting underserved communities and empowering local residents to steer the changes made in their neighborhoods. By implementing his vision for public space, green infrastructure, and an inclusive, green economy, we can envision a resilient and thriving city.”

—Kate Orff, Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes, Columbia University
“Shaun Donovan just gets it. Shaun understands that making the Big Apple green will lead to a more equitable city across all five boroughs for all New Yorkers. New York needs to be a global leader again, and with this plan Shaun is showing us the way.”

—Visbaan Chakrabarti, Architect and Dean, College of Environmental Design, UC Berkeley

“Shaun's plan involves every New Yorker, from our youngest learners engaging in sustainable, locally grown gardens, to our youth gaining education and experience in green jobs and community-based resilience projects, ensuring that climate education is an essential part of building the citizens of New York’s future.”

—Ruth Cohen, former Senior Director in education at American Museum of Natural History

“Shaun Donovan has experience working to make sure public institutions serve the public. His policies released today demonstrate a commitment to test, refine, and scale new models of public problem solving and improve the delivery of services for all New Yorkers. And, by grounding these policies squarely in principles of equity, he has demonstrated an understanding of how previous attempts at innovation have left out vulnerable communities.”

—Tara McGuinness, author of Power to the Public and former Obama senior White House official

“New York City has made great strides in finding creative ways to use data and technology to better meet the needs of its residents. Yet, there is still ample opportunity to more actively seek out and encourage innovation and to make the application of technology across agencies more efficient, transparent, and equitable. New York will only get there with a platform that actually puts innovation at the center of its strategy—Shaun Donovan's policy proposals do exactly that. The proposals chart a plan to improve the quality of life of all New Yorkers and make the city work for everyone by looking for and refining truly innovative ideas.”

—Neil Kleiman, New York University Urban Policy Professor