

VILLAGE PRESERVATION

GREENWICH
VILLAGE SOCIETY
FOR HISTORIC
PRESERVATION

2026 3rd Council Candidate Questionnaire

Respondents: Leslie Boghosian Murphy · Lindsey Boylan · Layla Law-Gisiko · Carl Wilson

Question 1

Tell us about your track record on preservation — what are some preservation efforts you've supported or been involved with? What specifically did you do? What were you trying to save or stop?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

I have long been engaged in preservation efforts in Council District 3. Most notably, I worked with neighbors to advocate for the preservation and restoration of the Windermere at 57th Street and 9th Avenue, one of New York City's first apartment buildings, built in 1881. After decades of tenant harassment, vacancy, and neglect, the landmarked building sat in disrepair. I joined community members in monitoring ownership changes, reviewing redevelopment plans, and pushing for a restoration that respected the building's historic character rather than allowing further deterioration or inappropriate redevelopment.

Most recently, I have voiced my strong support for landmark status for St. Benedict the Moor church in Hell's Kitchen. Originally the first Black Roman Catholic church north of the Mason Dixon line and evolving to serve local immigrant populations, it is important we keep historical beacons such as this one to tell our stories through time.

I have also opposed large-scale, out-of-context rezonings that would incentivize demolition of historic buildings and replacement with oversized market rate towers. We have to understand the importance of protecting neighborhood character, preventing displacement and prioritizing adaptive reuse instead of demolition.

Lindsey Boylan

I went into urban planning in part because I read Jane Jacobs' seminal work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in college. Preservation of our neighborhoods is a huge part of that book and her life's work. My first Community Board service was on the Parks and Preservation Committee, and it shaped how I view what contributes to our city's quality of life. And when I worked for Bryant Park, I also managed many projects that had to respond to the landmark nature of Bryant's Park status as we continued to grow over time. I think it's a great model for preservation while allowing for continued community- and mission-driven change.

Layla Law-Gisiko

For more than a decade, I chaired the Landmarks Committee of Community Board 5, where I helped shape the preservation and thoughtful evolution of some of Manhattan's most significant historic sites. In that role, I worked extensively on the designation of Tin Pan Alley, reviewed and made recommendations on countless proposed alterations to

landmarked buildings, and evaluated numerous 74-711 transfers of development rights to ensure preservation goals were met responsibly. I was also deeply engaged in the Midtown East rezoning, advocating for the designation of important historic buildings amid large-scale redevelopment pressures. As President of The City Club of New York, I have continued this work citywide, advancing sound urban policy that respects both our architectural heritage and the public interest.

Carl Wilson

Preservation is about protecting the stories and culture of communities that define our neighborhoods.

In Chelsea, I worked alongside neighbors and preservation advocates to help save the historic Colored School No. 4. Through sustained advocacy, the building ultimately achieved landmark designation, ensuring its long-term protection. I also helped secure more than \$4 million for restoration work and worked with the New York City Department of Sanitation to establish a preservation inventory of historic elements inside the building, helping guarantee that important architectural features would be protected as the building is restored and adapted for future use. The goal was clear: preserve both the structure and the legacy it represents as one of the few remaining sites tied to 19th-century Black education in Manhattan.

I was also involved in efforts to ensure that the historic Chelsea Theological Seminary campus remained in the hands of an institution that would respect its historic presence in Chelsea. Working with community stakeholders, I supported advocacy to prevent inappropriate redevelopment and ensure the site would continue to be used in a way that honors its architectural and cultural significance. Today the campus is occupied by Vanderbilt University and is undergoing a thoughtful restoration project that preserves the historic buildings while giving them new life.

During my work on the Midtown South rezoning, I also helped identify and advance landmark protections for a collection of historic buildings, ensuring that key architectural resources in the district will continue standing for generations to come even as the neighborhood evolves and grows.

In the West Village, I helped author letters and organize groups of elected officials to advocate on behalf of the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center. Working alongside community advocates, the goal was to prevent the loss of an important public facility and neighborhood institution that has served generations of New Yorkers.

More recently, I formally called on the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to pursue landmark designation for St. Benedict the Moor Church following the demolition of its rectory. I submitted a letter urging immediate action, worked with community members to raise awareness, and made clear that this church is a cornerstone of Black Catholic history on the West Side. What we were trying to stop was the piecemeal loss of a historic campus that cannot be replaced once it's gone.

In each of these cases, and in many others, my role has been to organize, advocate, and bring together community voices and elected leaders to ensure that historically and culturally significant places are not overlooked or erased. Preservation is not just about buildings it is about protecting the living history and identity of our neighborhoods.

Question 2

What are some policies that impact preservation that you have supported or opposed? How and why?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

I have opposed large rezonings that dramatically increase building height and density in historic neighborhoods without guaranteeing deeply affordable housing. I opposed the SoHo/NoHo rezoning and similar proposals because they encourage the demolition of older buildings, many of which contain rent regulated or naturally affordable housing, and replace them with oversized, primarily market rate towers. I also oppose citywide plans that raise height and bulk limits across neighborhoods without strong affordability requirements or meaningful community input. In my view, these policies often trade long term neighborhood character and existing affordable housing for short term speculative development.

At the same time, I support contextual rezonings that keep new development in scale with the surrounding neighborhood. I strongly support adaptive reuse, converting existing buildings to new uses rather than demolishing them, as a more sustainable and preservation-minded way to create housing. I also support expanding landmark designations, especially for historically significant sites and underrepresented communities, and strengthening enforcement against developers who damage or neglect older and landmarked buildings. My goal is not to stop growth, but to ensure that growth protects affordability, respects neighborhood character, and prevents displacement.

Lindsey Boylan

I support preservation policies that protect historic buildings and neighborhood character while ensuring that preservation is paired with affordability and community stability. In District 3, preservation is not just about architecture, it is about protecting cultural history, longstanding institutions, and the social fabric that makes neighborhoods like the West Village and the Meatpacking District unique.

I support expanding landmark designations and historic district protections for sites with cultural and historical significance, including places tied to Black history, LGBTQ history, and the arts. For example, I support pursuing landmark protections for historic sites like St. Benedict the Moor, which represents an important part of the District's Black history.

I am for preserving the Keith Herring mural and the Tony Dappolito Center as a whole. I also pushed for greater accountability, small business protections, and affordability requirements in the NoHo rezoning because it favored big box retailers over the small businesses that make the historic neighborhood what it is.

Layla Law-Gisiko

I opposed the "City of Yes for Housing Opportunity" because, as drafted, it relied on broad, citywide zoning changes that risked undermining contextual planning and weakening the practical protections that safeguard historic buildings. While I strongly support increasing housing supply, preservation cannot be treated as an afterthought or overridden through one-size-fits-all zoning tools. Growth must be deliberate and respect designated landmarks and historic districts.

I also opposed the recent Charter Revision ballot measures where I believed they reduced public oversight and meaningful community input in land use decisions. Preservation depends on transparency, robust review, and checks and balances. When processes are shortened or centralized, preservation concerns are too easily sidelined.

At the same time, I have supported proactive preservation policies. I have advocated for strategic landmark designations, including the designation of Tin Pan Alley and additional historic structures in Midtown East, and for contextual rezonings that align new development with neighborhood character. Landmarking and zoning must work together to protect what is irreplaceable while guiding thoughtful growth.

I have also supported the responsible use of Section 74-711 transfers of development rights, provided they are rigorously reviewed and tied to real, enforceable restoration commitments. When done properly, 74-711 creates a viable financial tool to preserve historic buildings, balancing economic realities with preservation goals.

My approach is consistent: preservation is sound urban policy grounded in transparency, accountability, and respect for New York's architectural and cultural heritage.

Carl Wilson

I support strengthening and fully funding the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission so it can proactively designate culturally significant sites, especially those tied to Black, LGBTQ+, immigrant, and working-class history. I also support faster calendaring and greater transparency to prevent demolition by delay.

We must expand landmark protections where they guard against the destruction of significant historic fabric. Additionally, I've supported stronger tenant protections, because preservation must be paired with affordability.

I reject the false choice between housing and preservation. We can build deeply affordable housing while protecting the historic and cultural sites that define District 3.

Question 3

How would you describe the role you think preservation should play in our city and our neighborhoods? How does it fit into the broader picture of your vision for New York and the 3rd Council District?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

Preservation should play a central role in shaping a sustainable and equitable New York City. It is not about freezing neighborhoods in time, but about guiding growth responsibly. Preservation protects architectural and cultural history, helps prevent demolition driven displacement, supports small businesses by maintaining neighborhood character, and advances climate goals through adaptive reuse rather than carbon-intensive demolition and new construction. The neighborhoods in City Council District 3 are recognized because of their history and character. My vision is a city that grows thoughtfully, prioritizes affordability, and strengthens communities while preserving the unique identity that makes them special.

Lindsey Boylan

I see the role of preservation as a tool to reclaim public spaces and historic sites for community use. Although Washington Square Park sits right outside of the District, its history is of deep importance to urban planning and the preservation practice. Jane Jacobs successfully thwarted Robert Moses' plans to bifurcate and destroy the park and inspired a vision for urban planning that centers community rather than leaving destruction and displacement in its wake. That means an approach to planning and preservation that focuses on pedestrianization, creating new green spaces and plazas, and building community-stewarded cooperatives and social housing.

Layla Law-Gisiko

Historic preservation plays a central role in my vision for New York and for the 3rd Council District. We are home to some of the most significant landmarks in the city. They include the Empire State Building, the New York Public Library Main Branch, the Starrett–Lehigh Building, and the Isaacs-Hendricks House, as well as numerous historic districts that define the character of our neighborhoods. These buildings are not museum pieces. They are the backbone of our urban fabric.

Preservation allows us to adapt and reuse the existing built environment so the city can evolve while retaining its identity. The most sustainable building is the one that already exists. Through adaptive reuse, we support housing, commerce, small businesses, and cultural life without erasing the layers of history that make our neighborhoods meaningful. Preservation is how a living city grows intelligently rather than carelessly.

Many of the largest technology companies have chosen historic buildings for their headquarters and offices, including Google, Facebook (now Meta), Apple, and Mastercard, many of them located in or near our district. Historic buildings are engines of economic growth. They attract talent, foster innovation, and anchor investment. Authenticity is not an obstacle to prosperity; it is one of its drivers.

Preservation is also a vital housing policy. Protecting existing buildings whether through landmark designation, contextual zoning, or careful reuse stabilizes communities and protects rent-regulated and long-standing housing stock from demolition and speculative displacement. In a district under constant development pressure, preservation is a tool for continuity and housing stability.

In my broader vision for New York, preservation is not about freezing the city in time. It is about stewarding what we have so that growth is balanced, sustainable, and rooted in place. In District 3, that means honoring our architectural heritage while ensuring our neighborhoods remain vibrant, livable, and economically strong for the next generation.

Carl Wilson

Preservation should be a tool for protecting communities and their culture. In District 3, preservation plays a critical role in safeguarding the layered history of the West Side: Black history, LGBTQ+ history, immigrant history, and the working-class institutions that give our neighborhoods character. When we protect culturally significant sites and historic blocks, we protect the stories and identities that make this district more than just valuable real estate.

But preservation cannot exist in isolation. In my broader vision for New York, it must be paired with affordability, tenant protections, and smart housing growth. Landmarking a building means little if long-time residents, small businesses, and houses of worship are priced out. That's why I see preservation as one piece of a larger strategy: protect what matters, prevent displacement, and build many types of housing in ways that respect neighborhood context.

For District 3, that means honoring our historic fabric while ensuring the West Side remains livable for working people. My goal is a city where growth does not erase history and where preservation serves the people who live here.

Question 4

How would you compare the kind of city Councilmember you would be on preservation and development issues as compared to the most recent 3rd Council District representative, Erik Bottcher? Be specific about policies or approaches you agreed with or would continue, as well as those you disagreed with or would handle differently. Feel free to also make similar comparisons to prior occupants of this position, like Corey Johnson, Christine Quinn, or Tom Duane.

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

Acknowledging the need for affordable housing, I also recognize there are many effective tools to accomplish this.

I would take a different approach to preservation by first and foremost highlighting its value. The narrative for years has pitted preservation versus development and has recently grown more contentious. I reject this. As the Chair of Manhattan Community Board 4, we have fought to preserve our historic districts while at the same time delivering one of the largest influxes of affordable units in New York City. In fact, as we recently wrote, “preservation and dense development are complementary strategies that can both maintain communities while developing market-rate and affordable housing.”

In contrast to my predecessors, I would elevate our negotiating power in Land Use and ULURP actions by:

1. Creating more affordable family units in both repurposed and new builds. Currently most all new affordable housing created are studios and one-bedrooms.
2. Mandatory CBAs (Community Benefit Agreements) elevating surrounding neighborhood services (i.e. schools/EMS stations/open spaces)
3. Incorporate long-term environmental, sustainable building requirements such as net-zero energy, renewable build materials, rain water harvesting and advanced waste disposal systems (containerization, inside storage, compactors, pneumatic tubes, etc.). This can be done at both the ULURP level and by expanding the local law requirements at the City Council level.

I also do not agree with upzoning without mandatory affordability requirements and the elements listed above. Broad, one size fits all rezonings risk encouraging out of context development and weakening neighborhood protections. As a Councilmember, I would prioritize contextual planning, meaningful community input and stronger safeguards to protect historic character and existing affordable housing.

Lindsey Boylan

I am focused on building my own vision and mold of city Councilmember.

Layla Law-Gisiko

On preservation and development, I would bring a more rigorous, preservation-forward lens, grounded in technical land-use experience and a willingness to say no when the urban fabric is at risk.

Where I would differ from Erik Bottcher is on several major neighborhood issues. I support preserving the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center and believe it should be restored and reinvested in as a public asset, not lost through demolition or neglect. I also strongly oppose

the proposed demolition of the Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea NYCHA campuses. In particular, Elliott-Chelsea is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and demolition would permanently erase an important chapter of mid-20th-century public housing and social history. Preservation and rehabilitation, not wholesale teardown, should be the starting point.

I also opposed the massing of the proposed Gansevoort Square tower, which in my view was out of scale with the surrounding historic district and waterfront context. Context matters. Height, bulk, and shadow impacts must be evaluated not just as zoning abstractions but as lived urban experience.

At the same time, there are areas of agreement. Like Councilmember Bottcher, I supported the designation of Colored School No. 4, recognizing its profound cultural and civil rights significance. I also supported the reconstruction of the Cathedral of St. Sava on West 26th Street following the devastating fire, a restoration that respects its landmark status and architectural integrity.

I would emphasize deeper technical scrutiny of land-use mechanisms, including special permits, 74-711 transfers, zoning text amendments, and environmental review. My background chairing the CB5 Landmarks Committee for over a decade means I approach development proposals with a detailed understanding of how policy tools translate into physical form.

Carl Wilson

I served as Chief of Staff to State Senator Erik Bottcher and as Community Board 4 liaison to former Council Speaker Corey Johnson, and I am proud of the work we did to preserve landmarks in our community while also encouraging responsible development. I am honored to have their endorsements, along with former Speaker Christine Quinn. I believe preservation and development must serve our communities, not just real estate interests.

Each of these Council Members presided over significant expansions of landmark protections. I would continue the strong commitment these leaders showed to protecting neighborhood character, expanding landmark districts, and pushing for affordable housing. District 3 has benefited from elected officials who understand that preservation is not an obstacle to progress but an essential part of maintaining what makes our neighborhoods unique.

Where I would place additional emphasis is on proactive preservation. That means moving more quickly to identify and protect culturally significant sites, particularly those tied to Black history and LGBTQ+ history that have historically been overlooked in traditional preservation efforts. It also means recognizing the importance of protecting the small-scale commercial corridors and historic streetscapes that define neighborhoods like the Village, Chelsea, and Hell's Kitchen.

I would also work to formally recognize the long-identified Paddy's Market Historic District in Hell's Kitchen, which has been a priority of Manhattan Community Board 4 for many years. Protecting this area would help preserve an important piece of Hell's Kitchen's immigrant and working-class history while ensuring that the neighborhood's architectural character is maintained.

Question 5

Under previous Mayors, the landmarked Tony Dapolito Recreation Center was closed for five years without repairs, with Mayor Adams then proposing to demolish rather than repair it as had been promised. Would you pledge to oppose any plan to demolish the center, including opposing City funding to do so which the City Council would have to approve in its budget? Would you pledge to fight to see the center repaired, restored, modernized, and reopened, and to secure funding if needed to ensure this takes place, and to do so in a way consistent with preserving the landmarked building?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

Yes, I would oppose any plan to demolish the landmarked Tony Dapolito Recreation Center and would oppose City funding for demolition. Too many times landlords and building owners get away with demolishing by neglect; I will not let the City be one of them. I would fight to see the building repaired, restored, modernized and reopened in a manner consistent with its landmark status.

Lindsey Boylan

Yes and yes.

Layla Law-Gisiko

Yes. I unequivocally oppose any plan to demolish the landmarked Tony Dapolito Recreation Center, and I would oppose City funding for demolition in the Council budget.

The Tony Dapolito Recreation Center is a designated landmark and a vital public asset. It has served generations of New Yorkers, first as the Carmine Street Baths and later as a recreation center that anchored community life in the Village. Allowing a landmarked public building to sit closed for years and then using deferred maintenance as a pretext for demolition sets a dangerous precedent. Neglect cannot become policy.

I would actively fight to see the center repaired, restored, modernized, and reopened. That means:

Insisting on a transparent, independent structural assessment.

Securing capital funding in the City budget specifically for restoration.

Working with preservation architects and engineers to ensure repairs are consistent with landmark standards.

Exploring state, federal, and private funding sources where appropriate.

Ensuring community input throughout the process.

Restoration is not only possible, it is responsible. Landmark designation carries obligations. If we allow the City to demolish a landmarked public building because it is inconvenient or expensive to repair, we weaken the entire preservation framework.

The Dapolito Center can and should be restored in a way that respects its historic character while upgrading it for modern accessibility, safety, and energy efficiency. Preservation and modernization are not mutually exclusive. In fact, adaptive reuse is one of the most sustainable forms of development.

I will fight to ensure this building reopens as a living, working community center, and that it is preserved in accordance with its landmark status for future generations. I recently wrote about the Dapolito Center and the high cost of demolition.
<https://villagestar-revue.com/the-high-cost-of-the-wrecking-ball/>

Carl Wilson

The Tony Dapolito Recreation Center is a landmarked public facility and a vital community resource. Allowing it to sit closed for years without repairs is unacceptable. I support a solution that preserves the historic character of the building while restoring it to active use, and I would oppose City funding for demolition.

I share the position of Congressman Dan Goldman, State Senator Brian Kavanagh, former Council Member and current State Senator Erik Bottcher, and Assemblymember Deborah Glick who have called, at a minimum, for retaining the visible façade while creating modernized recreation space within. It is clear that the current facility does not fully meet the needs of the local community, and the building must be revamped. That work can and should be done in a way that respects its landmark status.

This means working closely with the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to ensure any rehabilitation preserves the historic structure while bringing the building up to modern standards for safety, accessibility, and sustainability.

As Council Member, I would push to secure the capital funding needed to restore and reopen the center, and I would use the Council's oversight authority to demand transparency, clear timelines, and accountability from the administration so the community finally gets the recreation center it deserves.

Question 6

The plan to develop 388 Hudson Street is an enormous tower in a woefully out-of-context design, sitting on top of a huge base that's intended to replace the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center. The number one piece of feedback about the proposed project during the "public engagement" process was to keep the planned building low and squat, step it back from JJ Walker Park to preserve light, and keep the scale and design contextual. Mayor Adams' chosen design ignored all this input. Would you pledge to demand changes to the proposed project along these lines as a condition of your support for the required rezoning and other approvals? Would you also pledge to condition your support on ironclad mechanisms for ensuring the housing remains affordable in perpetuity, which so far have not been offered?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

Yes, I would demand significant changes to the proposal at 388 Hudson before offering my support. The height and bulk should be reduced and the overall design made contextual with the surrounding neighborhood. I would also require enforceable guarantees that the housing remains permanently and deeply affordable including family-sized and working class units. Without those changes, I would not support the rezoning or required approvals.

Lindsey Boylan

If we're getting 100% permanently affordable housing it's hard to say no. Loss of light and visibility is a concern and does decrease quality of life and should be considered in land use decision-making but there are other important issues that shouldn't be downplayed—like the need for affordable housing. That being said I will always pledge to condition my support for projects on public land or receiving public subsidy on ironclad permanent affordability requirements.

Layla Law-Gisiko

Yes.

If elected, I would not support the proposed rezoning or related approvals for 388 Hudson Street unless substantial changes are made.

The current proposal, a tall, out-of-context tower rising from a massive base intended to replace the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center, is out of character with the surrounding neighborhood and inconsistent with the overwhelming feedback provided during the public engagement process. The community was clear: keep the building lower and more compact, step it back from JJ Walker Park to preserve light and air, and design something contextual in scale and materials. When the number one piece of feedback is ignored, that is not meaningful engagement.

I would demand:

A significant reduction in height and bulk.

A stepped-back massing that protects light and open sky from JJ Walker Park.

A contextual architectural approach consistent with the Village and surrounding historic fabric.

Full transparency regarding shadow studies and environmental impacts.

Rezoning is not automatic. It is discretionary. My vote would reflect whether the project respects neighborhood scale, landmark context, and public space.

In addition, I would condition any support on ironclad, legally enforceable mechanisms ensuring permanent affordability. “Affordable” cannot mean temporary affordability that expires in 30 or 60 years. We need deed restrictions or other binding structures that guarantee affordability in perpetuity. Without those protections (written into the approvals and enforceable), I would not support the project.

Carl Wilson

The proposal for 388 Hudson Street presents a rare opportunity to deliver 100% affordable housing in the West Village, one of the most expensive neighborhoods in the country that is in desperate need of more affordable housing. Opportunities to build deeply affordable housing in this part of Manhattan are extraordinarily limited, and any proposal that advances that goal is critical. Ensuring that affordability remains the central priority of this project must guide the process.

At the same time, design matters. Major projects should respect the surrounding neighborhood and public realm. I would work with stakeholders — including Manhattan Community Board 2, local residents, and city agencies — to demand a design that makes the building better relate to the Village context and JJ Walker Park. Thoughtful changes to massing, step-backs, or façade treatment could help the project feel more rooted in the neighborhood rather than overly futuristic or out of place.

Equally important, any project of this scale must include ironclad guarantees that the housing remains affordable in perpetuity. If we are creating new housing on a public site in the West Village, it should remain permanently affordable for the New Yorkers who need it most. It must also have AMIs that accommodate a range of low and moderate income levels.

My goal would be to ensure the project succeeds on both fronts: delivering desperately needed affordable housing while producing a building that contributes positively to the neighborhood and reflects meaningful community engagement.

Question 7

Mayor ADAMS' plan for "Gansevoort Square" also ignored community input, choosing a 600-ft.-tall tower that would include super-luxury housing. Village Preservation and hundreds of residents have called for reducing the height of the building by 50-75%, and eliminating all market-rate housing from the project. Would you pledge to demand the same as condition for your support for the required rezoning and other approvals?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

This was a rushed plan without adequate community input and I would ask for a Master Plan of the full site. The current plan proposes a woeful amount of affordable housing that does not provide the level of public benefit for a project of this scale on city-owned land.

I would need the elimination of super luxury components and meaningful, enforceable affordability requirements as conditions of my support. Development in this district must respect neighborhood scale and character. Projects that prioritize luxury housing while disregarding community input undermine trust in the planning process and are not a formula for housing success.

Lindsey Boylan

Community input is deeply important and necessary in the planning process. We need thousands more deeply affordable housing units and planning cannot be based on wonky and technocratic AMI formulas and developer math. I'm for eliminating market-rate housing for truly and permanently affordable housing but I do not support building height restrictions solely for the sake of reducing the building height. Building the amount of affordable housing this district and city needs, requires increasing density, and sometimes that means building vertically.

Layla Law-Gisiko

I would not support the Gansevoort Square proposal as currently designed. A 600-foot tower in that location is wildly out of scale and ignores clear community input calling for a 50–75% reduction in height. I would demand a substantial reduction in height and bulk as a condition of any rezoning or approvals.

I also would not support a project that includes super-luxury housing without delivering real public benefit. Any approval must prioritize deeply affordable housing, not market-rate luxury units.

Support should stem from contextual scale and affordability.

Carl Wilson

The Gansevoort Square site offers an important opportunity to create new housing in the West Village and Meatpacking District, two neighborhoods where new residential development is extremely rare. At a time when affordability is the defining challenge facing New York City, we should be looking carefully at how publicly controlled sites like this can help deliver housing that working New Yorkers can actually afford.

At the same time, I believe there were legitimate concerns raised about the scale and height of the proposed 600-foot tower. Many residents and preservation advocates felt the proposal did not adequately reflect the surrounding neighborhood context or the feedback that

emerged during the public engagement process. With a new mayor taking office and new leadership expected at the New York City Economic Development Corporation, we have an opportunity to reevaluate this project and ensure that community input is taken seriously.

I would support revisiting the height, massing, and overall program of the project to determine whether a more contextual design could still deliver significant public benefits. At the same time, I believe the City should be doing everything possible to maximize permanently affordable housing on publicly owned land. If the public is contributing land or other resources, the outcome should prioritize affordability for the long term.

My goal would be to strike a responsible balance: advancing the city's housing and affordability goals while ensuring that development at Gansevoort Square respects the surrounding neighborhood and reflects a more thoughtful planning process than what has occurred so far.

Question 8

Village Preservation is fighting for landmark designation of the endangered original Our Lady of Guadalupe Church at 229 West 14th Street, which was NYC's very first Spanish-language church. Would you support this effort and call on the Landmarks Preservation Commission to landmark the building?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

Yes. Preservation must recognize and protect the diverse histories that shaped our city, including important cultural and religious landmarks serving immigrant and Latino communities. I believe it's important, especially in the political climate today, to honor and commemorate our remarkable and proud immigrant history.

Lindsey Boylan

Yes.

Layla Law-Gisiko

I strongly support Village Preservation's effort to secure landmark designation for the original Our Lady of Guadalupe Church at 229 West 14th Street. It was New York City's first Spanish-language church and reflects the deep and historic Spanish cultural presence along West 14th Street and in the surrounding neighborhood.

This building is a symbol of immigrant faith, and community formation in our city. Too often, sites connected to immigrant communities are lost before they are properly recognized and protected.

I would call on the Landmarks Preservation Commission to calendar and designate the building. Preserving Our Lady of Guadalupe means preserving the cultural history that helped shape West 14th Street

Carl Wilson

Yes. I would support landmark designation of the original Our Lady of Guadalupe Church at 229 West 14th Street and would call on the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to calendar and designate the building.

As New York City's first Spanish-language church, it represents an essential chapter of Latino and immigrant history in our city. Sites like this tell the story of who built our neighborhoods and how communities of faith created support systems for newly arrived New Yorkers. Once they are gone, that history cannot be replaced.

If elected, I would advocate directly with the Mayor Mamdani and the LPC for landmark designation and work with preservation groups, faith leaders, and local residents to elevate the urgency of protecting the building. Preservation must reflect the full diversity of our city's history — and safeguarding this church is part of that responsibility.

Question 9

There has been an appalling lack of accountability by either city agencies or developers for severe damage to landmarked buildings in the 3rd Council District, including 14-18 Gay Street, 16-20 Christopher Street, 10 Fifth Avenue, and 44-54 Ninth Avenue and 351-355 West 14th Street, all of which have resulted in rent-regulated tenants, many of whom were elderly, being displaced. What would you do about the increasingly common problem of developers being allowed to damage or destroy older or landmarked buildings in violation of existing rules and regulations, often destroying rent-regulated housing and displacing long-term tenants, and the City doing little or nothing about it?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

This behavior is unacceptable and I would push for stronger penalties, automatic stop work orders in serious cases, and better coordination between city agencies to ensure enforcement. Demolition by neglect has become a sinister practice to sidestep landmark regulations and clear land for new development. To me, this is the most egregious violation of ordinance and the penalties must be harsh. I would also support protections such as relocation assistance for displaced tenants. Preservation laws must be backed by real accountability.

Lindsey Boylan

We need to do a better job of preserving our rent-regulated apartments across the city, holding landlords and developers accountable to their obligations under our rent stabilization, tenant protection, and landmark preservation laws. And I will work to bring back the Council's subpoena power to hold landlords and developers accountable to their obligations to their communities, tenants, and the law.

Layla Law-Gisiko

The pattern of severe damage to older and landmarked buildings followed by the displacement of rent-regulated tenants reflects a failure of enforcement. When developers face minor fines and tenants lose their homes, accountability is clearly inadequate.

I would push for significantly stronger penalties tied to project value, not token fines treated as a cost of doing business. Repeat offenders should face permit suspensions and heightened scrutiny. Developers undertaking risky excavation near landmarked or vulnerable buildings should be required to post substantial bonds before work begins to cover full restoration and tenant relocation if damage occurs.

Tenant protections must also be automatic and enforceable. If construction forces rent-regulated tenants out, the right to return must be guaranteed, with relocation costs paid upfront by the developer.

In District 3, preservation and housing stability are intertwined. Enforcement must be strong enough to deter misconduct.

Carl Wilson

What's happened at these sites is unacceptable. When developers damage landmarked or older buildings and displace rent-regulated tenants with minimal consequences, it undermines both preservation and housing stability.

I will demand significantly stronger enforcement and penalties, real fines, automatic stop-work orders for serious violations, and public reporting when landmarked properties are compromised. Demolition by neglect or reckless construction cannot be tolerated.

We need stronger tenant protections: criminal penalties for landlords who harass tenants, guaranteed right of return at the same regulated rent, full temporary relocation assistance if needed, and strict oversight. I will use the Council's oversight authority to hold agencies like the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission and DOB accountable for enforcement failures.

Preservation without enforcement is meaningless, and developers who displace tenants through damage must face real consequences.

Question 10

What is your position on “City of Yes” and policies like it, which increase the allowable height and bulk of very expensive market rate development with no affordability requirements?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

My main concern with “City of Yes,” as it effects our district, is that heights would be increased throughout neighborhoods without including any affordable units. Affordability is the biggest issue we are facing right now and to enact a city-wide rezoning without exclusive affordable housing requirements is a giant missed opportunity. Through this plan, well meaning programs are now susceptible to greedy developers.

I do think the “City of Yes” hits differently in different neighborhoods and boroughs. Other areas in the city have long fought any additional housing and that is not practical nor is it a healthy approach to create affordability. But we are not Queens or Brooklyn and a one-size-fits-all approach is rarely successful.

As Council Member, I would have highlighted protecting our special districts which, unfortunately, did not happen.

Lindsey Boylan

We do not need more luxury housing, we need deeply affordable housing and social housing. The state needs to revive programs like Mitchell-Lama that brought us the West Village Houses and tens of thousands of affordable rentals and cooperatives across the city. We need to update it for the 21st Century and remove the loopholes that have allowed developers and management companies to skirt permanent affordability requirements.

Layla Law-Gisiko

I opposed the “City of Yes for Housing Opportunity,” and I oppose policies like it that rely on broad deregulation — increasing allowable height and bulk for predominantly market-rate development without guaranteed, deeply affordable housing.

I attended every single City of Yes hearing at both the City Planning Commission and the City Council. I testified, studied the zoning text, and wrote extensively about why I believe it was the wrong policy. My concern is practical: zoning is a land-use tool. It regulates form and density. It does not, by itself, produce affordability.

The City is misguided in using sweeping zoning deregulation as its primary housing strategy. Increasing height and bulk across neighborhoods without mandatory, meaningful affordability requirements largely fuels high-end market-rate development. That approach mirrors the broader deregulation agenda, but it does not solve the affordability crisis facing working families, seniors, and long-term tenants.

Council Member Christopher Marte was the only Council member to vote against the rezoning. I respect that principled stand, and I am proud to have his endorsement in this race.

We need housing policy that directly funds, preserves, and protects affordable housing.

Carl Wilson

I support the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity because New York City’s housing shortage is driven in part by zoning rules that make it impossible to add new homes in many parts of the city. For decades, large areas outside Manhattan have been limited to suburban style

housing. Allowing modestly more housing in appropriate places is an important step toward addressing the broader housing crisis and reducing pressure on rents citywide.

At the same time, expanding housing opportunities must be done thoughtfully and with respect for neighborhood character and historic resources. Preservation and growth are not mutually exclusive. New housing can and should be added in ways that protect landmarked buildings, respect historic districts, and maintain the qualities that make our neighborhoods special.

City of Yes is ultimately a framework. In districts like ours, the Council Member will continue to play a major role through the land use process and through negotiations with the administration to ensure that new development meets community needs. That includes advocating for stronger affordability commitments, thoughtful design, and projects that contribute positively to the surrounding neighborhood.

As Council Member, I would work to ensure the goals of City of Yes are realized responsibly. New York needs more housing, but it must be housing that serves New Yorkers across a range of incomes while protecting the historic and cultural fabric that defines our communities.

Question 11

What was your position on ballot measures 2-4, which were voted upon in 2025, and which gave the Mayor vastly increased power to make unilateral decisions about development in NYC neighborhoods, including largely unaffordable market-rate development?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

Over the past 10 years, 12 community districts, including ours, have added as much affordable housing as the other 47 combined. This is a problem. Our district is among the highest producers of housing in all of New York City with a proposal for another 23,000 new, largely affordable homes. We cannot continue to carry the burden for other council districts. Fair share must be realized. Opponents argued measure #2 would weaken community input, which is not the case. It is framed to create a three-step process - for publicly financed affordable housing projects to seek approval from a Board confirmed by City Council, go to local Community Boards for review and then to a full public hearing, which I support.

Many of our smaller-scale affordable housing projects are produced by non-profits who may not have the resources as the larger developers to manage the cost and process our current system requires. And as one who is deeply involved in environmental and resiliency projects throughout the district, #3 will reduce procedural delays resulting in greener projects moving forward more efficiently without weakening environmental oversight or public scrutiny, which I support.

Council members know their districts. Though there are cases where representatives oppose certain thoughtful and productive housing plans, there ultimately has to be accountability to one's constituents. Without member deference, outside interests would play a dangerously, bigger role influencing other representatives with no ties to a certain project or district, which I do not support.

Lindsey Boylan

I voted yes on 2-4 because for far too long the city has abdicated its responsibility to build affordable housing. The ballot measures did not give the mayor unilateral authority to expedite market-rate housing and I certainly do not support the fast tracking of luxury housing that no one can afford in District 3. We are in a housing crisis with soaring rents and need to fast-track real, affordable housing. And as a City Councilmember, it will be my job to fight for the needs of our community. The passage of these ballot measures will in no way prevent that.

Layla Law-Gisiko

I opposed ballot measures 2–4 in 2025.

I believed they significantly expanded mayoral authority over land-use decisions while diminishing the role of the City Council and weakening meaningful community input. Land use in New York City is one of the most consequential powers government exercises. Shifting that authority in ways that reduce oversight and concentrate decision-making in the executive branch is not good governance — it is an erosion of democratic checks and balances.

I did not just oppose the measures rhetorically. I joined a lawsuit challenging the proposals. I campaigned actively against them. I also wrote a guest essay in The New York Times

explaining why these ballot measures were deeply problematic for transparency and democratic accountability.

The measures would have reduced the role and voice of communities and their elected Council members in shaping development decisions — including projects that could bring largely unaffordable market-rate development into neighborhoods without sufficient local input.

Development policy must be transparent, deliberative, and accountable. When you sideline the Council and the public, you sideline democracy itself.

Carl Wilson

Like the majority of New Yorkers, I supported ballot measures 2–4 in 2025. For too long, our land use system has allowed individual Council Members like Vicky Paladino to effectively veto all new housing in their districts. That dynamic has made it far too easy for a small number of elected officials to block new homes, even as the city faces a severe housing shortage. I agree with Mayor Zohran Mamdani and others who believe the system cannot continue to function that way. One Council Member should not be able to stop nearly all housing construction in their district while the rest of the city struggles with rising rents and limited supply.

At the same time, stronger planning authority must still include meaningful community input and a clear role for the City Council in shaping land use decisions. As a Council Member, I would work to ensure these powers are used responsibly so that new development improves affordability and fits thoughtfully within neighborhood contexts.

Question 12

What is your position on the city’s current “Mandatory Inclusionary Housing” program, which allows for massive increases in the allowable size of primarily market-rate developments in exchange for setting aside a fraction of the development (a much smaller fraction than the increase in the allowable size of development) at below market rate, though those units will still, overall, be unaffordable to the majority of NYC renters and about half of NYC residents? Do you think this is a worthwhile tradeoff, given that the large increases in allowable size of development encourage the demolition of existing older housing stock, which often contains more affordable housing than the new development?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) is an example of good idea/bad practice. MIH was created with good intentions, but in practice it hasn’t delivered the level of affordability our neighborhoods need. The program allows very large increases in the size of primarily market-rate developments, while the affordable units produced are often priced far above what most New Yorkers — including many long-term residents in our district — can realistically afford.

I’m concerned about that imbalance. When a development becomes dramatically larger in exchange for a relatively small number of below-market units, and those units still don’t reach the incomes of the people most at risk of displacement, it raises real questions about whether the tradeoff is working.

There’s also the issue of what we lose. In many cases, the older buildings being demolished to make way for MIH projects contain more naturally affordable housing than the new development will ever replace. Those older units are the backbone of affordability in neighborhoods like ours — they’re rent-stabilized, they’re home to long-term residents, and once they’re gone, they’re gone for good.

So my position is this: we absolutely need more housing, but we need housing that is genuinely affordable and doesn’t come at the cost of the affordability we already have. MIH, as currently structured, doesn’t always strike that balance. I want to see a framework where new development supports deeper affordability, protects existing housing stock, and aligns with community-driven planning rather than overwhelming it.

Growth is important — but it has to be growth that strengthens neighborhoods instead of displacing the people who built them.

Lindsey Boylan

The minimum income requirements to qualify for the most affordable bracket of MIH are too high as they are currently slated. They might be below market-rate but they certainly aren’t affordable apartments by any reasonable definition. Similarly, 421a was a handout for developers that failed to produce the affordable housing we need. So while I believe in rezoning underutilized office space and empty lots for new housing, approvals must be conditioned on true affordability. And not only should we not be encouraging the demolition of older rent-regulated housing stock to build luxury towers, we need to crack down on the trend of West Village townhomes being bought and rolled up into mega-mansion

ped-a-terres by and for billionaires or private equity. I support a pied-a-terre tax and a vacancy tax to curb the real estate speculation that is crushing New Yorkers.

Layla Law-Gisiko

I have concerns about the current structure of Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH), particularly as applied in high-density areas like MSMX.

In theory, MIH seeks to leverage additional allowable floor area in exchange for below-market units. In practice, the tradeoff is often uneven. The increase in allowable bulk can be substantial, while the required affordability set-aside represents a smaller share of the total project. The income bands frequently remain out of reach for a large portion of New Yorkers.

In districts like MSMX, where the base FAR is very high (15 to 18), layering MIH incentives on top can overstimulate demolition. When the zoning envelope becomes dramatically more valuable than the existing building, older housing stock, including rent-regulated or naturally more affordable units, becomes vulnerable. The bonus may not be large in percentage terms, but in high-FAR districts the economic incentive to tear down and build bigger can be powerful.

I do not believe we should encourage policies that risk accelerating demolition of existing housing that is often more affordable than what replaces it. Preservation of existing housing stock must be treated as a core affordability strategy.

MIH, as currently structured, can have negative impacts if not carefully calibrated. We need affordability mechanisms that are deeper, more targeted, and less likely to incentivize displacement. Growth should not come at the expense of housing stability.

Carl Wilson

The Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program is currently one of the only tools the city has to require permanently affordable housing as part of new development. At a time when New York is facing a severe housing shortage, we have to use every available tool to create more affordable homes.

We must also recognize concerns about the potential loss of older housing stock and historic fabric that can accompany rezonings. Older buildings often contain naturally occurring affordable housing and contribute to the architectural character that makes neighborhoods like the Village, Chelsea, and Hell's Kitchen so distinctive. Recognizing the importance of those assets should remain an important part of our planning process.

I would support efforts to strengthen the program so it produces more deeply affordable housing and a larger share of affordable units within new developments. The goal should be to ensure that when additional development rights are granted, the public receives meaningful and lasting affordability in return.

Ultimately, addressing the housing crisis requires a balanced approach: preserving important historic and existing housing where appropriate while also allowing thoughtful growth that produces permanently affordable homes for New Yorkers.

Question 13

What was your position on the state legislature allowing the lifting of the floor area ratio cap for residential development in NYC, which enabled the possibility of developments like the planned 600-ft.-tall tower on Little West 12th and West Street at “Gansevoort Square,” and will allow much additional ultra-tall, ultra-dense development in residential neighborhoods?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

I had serious concerns about lifting the FAR cap, largely because of how it was done and what it enables. Removing the FAR cap bypasses public review and blanket upzoning without community input undermines years of careful local planning. That change opened the door to ultra-tall, ultra-dense towers like the proposed 600-foot building at Little West 12th and West Street — a project that would fundamentally alter the character of Gansevoort Square and surrounding neighborhoods. A change of that scale affects every neighborhood in the city, and I believe decisions like this work best when they’re shaped with meaningful community input and a clear plan for infrastructure, affordability, and neighborhood character.

The Gansevoort Square project highlights why people are uneasy. When development becomes dramatically taller or denser without a framework that guarantees affordability or supports transit, schools and basic services, it can create real pressure on the surrounding community. We need a master plan.

My position has been that growth is important — we absolutely need more housing — but it has to be thoughtful growth, aligned with local planning efforts and responsive to the needs of the people who already live here. I share the concerns raised by Manhattan Community Board 4 questioning this top-down approach. We need targeted rezonings shaped by neighborhood voices and ensuring that any new development tools are used in a way that strengthens neighborhoods rather than overwhelming them.

Lindsey Boylan

The lifting of the FAR cap was a significant structural change to New York City’s planning framework, and I believe it requires careful implementation to ensure that growth does not come at the expense of neighborhood character or community input. For decades, the cap limited the city’s ability to plan holistically, but removing it should not automatically translate into unlimited height or density in residential neighborhoods. My view is that decisions about scale and density must be made thoughtfully through the land use process and with strong community engagement and input. Neighborhoods like the West Village and the Meatpacking District have a distinct historic character and new development should be sensitive to surrounding context, infrastructure capacity, and the quality of life of current residents.

As a Councilmember, I would approach proposals like Gansevoort Square by carefully evaluating their impacts on neighborhood scale, historic context, public space, and affordability. My priority would be ensuring that any development provides clear public benefit, respects the unique character of the area, and reflects the voices of the community rather than being driven solely by speculative development pressures.

Layla Law-Gisiko

I opposed lifting the residential FAR cap.

Removing the cap allows ultra-tall, ultra-dense development in residential neighborhoods without guaranteeing meaningful affordability. MSMX is the first neighborhood to see FAR levels in the 15–18 range, a dramatic escalation in scale. Without mandatory, deeply affordable housing requirements, that kind of density incentivizes speculation and demolition while primarily producing high-end market-rate units.

I am not opposed to density. But density must be tied to real public benefit. Lifting the FAR cap without embedding affordability and quality standards risks out-of-scale development with little return for working New Yorkers.

Carl Wilson

I supported lifting the residential FAR cap in New York State. At a time when we are facing the worst housing shortage in decades, maintaining an arbitrary citywide limit on residential floor area does not make sense.

There are many areas where additional residential density is appropriate and necessary, particularly in places like Hudson Yards and other high-density corridors where infrastructure can support it. Lifting the cap allows the City to plan for housing growth more rationally rather than being constrained by an outdated blanket restriction.

At the same time, individual projects should still be evaluated through the land use process to ensure they are appropriate for their context and contribute to the city's housing and affordability goals.

Question 14

In recent years, the number of new landmark designations in NYC has dropped precipitously, to unprecedented levels in the history of the landmarks law. The few designations taking place are rarely endangered buildings or neighborhoods facing immediate threats, but often honorifics for sites already landmarked, otherwise protected, or facing no foreseeable or even possible threat. Do you think the city is doing enough to recognize and protect our history, especially the diverse histories of underrepresented groups which current preservation efforts particularly focus upon? If you don't think the City is doing enough, what would you do to try to effect change?

Leslie Boghosian Murphy

I share the concern that New York City is not doing enough to recognize and protect its history — especially the histories of communities and cultures that have been overlooked for far too long. The dramatic drop in landmark designations in recent years is troubling and as Village Preservation accurately observes, not only because fewer sites are being protected, but because the designations that are happening often focus on places that are already safe, already celebrated or already protected through other mechanisms.

Meanwhile, the buildings and neighborhoods that are actually at risk — the ones facing demolition pressures from speculative development — are too often left without meaningful protection. That includes older housing stock that provides naturally occurring affordability, as well as sites tied to the lived experiences of working-class, immigrant, LGBTQ+, and other underrepresented communities. When those buildings disappear, we lose both our history and the affordability that keeps neighborhoods diverse and livable.

So no — I don't believe the City is doing enough. And I think we need a more proactive, community-driven approach.

If elected, I would push for:

1. A stronger, more transparent pipeline for landmark consideration, especially for sites identified by community boards, preservation groups and local historians.
2. Prioritizing endangered buildings, not just symbolic or honorific designations.

Better integration of preservation and housing policy so that protecting historic buildings also supports affordability and prevents displacement.

3. More resources for surveying and documenting the histories of underrepresented communities, so that preservation decisions reflect the full story of our city.
4. Clear timelines and accountability for LPC action, so that legitimate preservation requests don't languish for years.

Preservation isn't about freezing neighborhoods in time — it's about making sure that growth doesn't erase the people, cultures and histories that make our communities worth living in. I want a city that builds for the future while honoring and protecting the stories that brought us here.

Lindsey Boylan

No, particularly in an era where we have broadened our view of what is culturally significant to communities that have been historically excluded.

I look forward to meetings with Village Preservation, other community groups, and constituents to discuss which sites in our district should be considered for landmark preservation and restoration.

Layla Law-Gisiko

I do not believe the City is doing enough.

The steep drop in new landmark designations — especially for truly endangered buildings and neighborhoods — is troubling. Preservation is not just symbolic; it is an anti-displacement tool. When we fail to designate vulnerable sites in time, we risk losing both historic fabric and naturally affordable housing.

I strongly support recognizing the histories of underrepresented communities, but that recognition must be proactive and protective. I would push for faster calendaring of endangered sites, greater transparency at the Landmarks Preservation Commission, and stronger coordination between preservation and anti-displacement policy.

Preservation and housing stability go hand in hand. Protecting our history also protects the communities who made it.

Carl Wilson

No, I do not believe the City is doing enough. When the number of new landmark designations drops to historic lows, and the few that move forward are largely symbolic or non-endangered sites, it signals a system that is reactive at best. Preservation should not be limited to honorific recognitions after the threat has passed, it should be a proactive tool to protect buildings and neighborhoods facing real development pressure.

This is especially urgent when it comes to the histories of underrepresented communities, Black, Latino, Asian, immigrant, and LGBTQ+ New Yorkers, whose cultural sites have too often been lost before they were ever formally recognized.

If elected, I will push for reforms at the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to increase transparency around calendaring decisions, establish clearer timelines for evaluating eligible sites, and prioritize endangered properties. I will also advocate for dedicated funding and staff to proactively survey and document culturally significant sites before they are threatened.

I will use the Council's oversight authority to hold hearings on the decline in landmark designations and demand accountability for delays. Preservation should reflect the full, diverse history of our city. It should function as real protection, not just recognition after the fact.