



Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Citizens Union 2021 Candidate Questionnaire - Comptroller

Dear Candidate,

Congratulations on your decision to run to be the next New York City Comptroller! Citizens Union appreciates your commitment to serve the public.

In the following pages, you will find open-ended questions regarding your positions on various reform issues and your plans for office. The form includes sections on the public pension funds, the comptroller's auditing powers, budget, fiscal oversight and the economy, and the comptroller's role and work realtions.

Responses to these questions will be one of several factors Citizens Union uses to evaluate candidates running for city offices, and to issue our preference for the June primary. Read more about the method, principles, and criteria of the candidate evalatuion process [here](#).

**

If you wish to be considered, please submit the questionnaire by April 17 and no later than 48 before your interview.

If you seek our support, we will also need to schedule an interview with you as part of the evaluation process.

**

If you cannot complete the questionnaire in one sitting, you can click Save and Continue Later at the bottom of every page.

Once you submit the questionnaire, you will receive a confirmation email with a PDF file containing your responses. Citizens Union will not be able to see your answers unless you submit the form. We plan to make responses to this questionnaire public on our website, printed voters directory, and other appropriate venues (your contact information will not be published).

For any questions, please email candidates@citizensunion.org

We thank you very much for your response.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Your Info

Name

Brad Lander

Running in what primary

Democratic

Age

51

Education

I am a graduate of the University of Chicago, and earned Masters degrees in social anthropology from University College London and in city planning from Pratt Institute.

Occupation/Employer

New York City Councilmember, 39th District

Previous Offices, Campaigns and Community/Civic Involvement

I am currently a member of the New York City Council, where I represent the 39th District (which includes the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Gowanus, Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Kensington and Borough Park) and serve as the Council's Deputy Leader for Policy. Before serving in the City Council, I worked for 15 years in community development as Executive Director of the Fifth Avenue Committee and the Pratt Center for Neighborhood Development.

Throughout my career, I've been a partner in organizing, movement-building, and "co-governance" work, helping to launch the New York City Council's Progressive Caucus, Get Organized BK (a grassroots network of thousands of Brooklynites working to defend democracy during the Trump era), and Local Progress (a network of over 1000 local elected officials across the country advancing a racial and economic justice agenda through all levels of local government).

Website

<https://www.landerfornyc.com>

Twitter

@bradlander

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/bradlander>

Affirmations

Have you completed the required campaign finance filings?

Yes

Have you qualified to receive matching campaign finance funds from the CFB?

Yes

Are you willing to be interviewed by Citizens Union's Local Candidates Committee?

Yes

(Please note: interviews are prerequisites for Citizens Union's endorsements)

Signature



PUBLIC PENSION FUNDS

1. How will you select managers to manage various parts of the pension plans?

In the selection of managers and consultants to the pension funds, it is critical to take a competitive, merit-based approach that is transparent and free from conflicts, while making room for an increasingly diverse set of professionals that better reflect our M/WBE goals. Managers are not selected directly by the Comptroller, but instead by the trustees of each fund (the Comptroller is a trustee of 4 of the 5 funds, but a majority vote requires winning the support of the union trustees). Through the Bureau of Asset Management, the Comptroller's office provides critical guidance and training in the decision-making process, and helps to insure a strong approach to governance, and a fiduciary approach to investing, which under my leadership will include a transparent, rules-bound, competitive, merit-based approach to searching for and selecting asset managers, while continuing to make progress in efforts to hire more people-of-color and women managers, as part of our M/WBE efforts.

As part of these efforts, my team will guide the trustees to look at a wide range of relevant data in

making their selections, including assets under management over time, number and breadth of clients (including clients gained and lost over the prior three years), performance metrics for the trailing 3-year, 5-year, and 10-year periods for the firm, investment philosophy and strategies (including any asset class focus, and with particular reference to investment strategies of the relevant pension fund), fee structures, trading process and costs, risk management safeguards, workforce and board diversity, pending litigation or SEC violations, compliance with applicable codes of ethics, approach to ESG and responsible investing (with particular reference to ESG strategies undertaken by the relevant pension funds), and other relevant factors.

At the beginning of my term, and every two years, I will engage the trustees to develop a Strategic Plan for Responsible Fiduciary Investing, which will commence with audits of investment decisions and processes over the past five years. Through this process, we will build consensus on investment processes, including manager selection.

One key element of this process must be to close the disparity that asset managers of color and women face. To achieve this, while maintaining a fiduciary approach, I will work with the trustees to publicly publish the percentage of assets under management by race and gender, and work with industry experts, asset managers, and other internal personnel to increase private equity investments with M/WBE managers, hedge funds, and consultants.

2. How would you work to reduce the appearance of or actual conflicts of interest that can arise from investment firms seeking pension business?

I am not accepting contributions from individuals at investment firms who might seek to do business with the pension funds, so I will not bring any personal conflicts-of-interest into the office. As I have done throughout my time in both public office and the nonprofit sector, I will insist on the highest levels of ethics and integrity as we build out a first-rate team in the Bureau of Asset Management, including new rules on post-employment conflicts. I will continue the current comptroller's practice of banning placement agents, which were one

significant source of conflict, and appearance-of-conflict, in prior years. Through the Strategic Plan for Responsible Fiduciary Investing that I have proposed, the Bureau of Asset Management will work closely with the trustees on a process that brings additional transparency into the setting of investment strategy, including the selection of investment firms and consultants, helping both to prevent actual conflicts, and to build broader trust among stakeholders and the public.

3. What would you do as comptroller to improve pension investment returns? How would you limit or reduce costs associated with pension investment fees and consultants?

As fiduciary to the City's pension fund, the Comptroller must work diligently to generate strong and consistent, risk-adjusted market returns by setting an investment strategy that balances asset classes, manages risk, holds down fees to outside investment managers, and delivers returns for the long term. That is essential both to the workers and retirees who are relying on the pension funds for their retirement security, and to taxpayers so that rising pension contribution costs don't erode the resources we need to fund our schools, keep our streets clean and our communities safe.

Reducing fees paid to Wall Street investment managers, where those firms cannot demonstrate returns that exceed and justify them, is one significant place to reduce costs and improve returns. Last year, the pension funds paid over three-quarters of a billion dollars in fees. As Comptroller, I am committed to transparently reporting on returns net of fees, so we can make a clear comparison. Where managers can show that they are achieving returns that are above market rate, adjusted for risk, and net of their fees, they are worth consideration. But where they cannot, we would do better to invest in index funds that achieve market returns, often with lower risk tolerance, and with much lower fees.

The process to develop our Strategic Plan for Responsible Fiduciary Investing will commence with audits of investment decisions over the past five years. These audits will review financial performance (net of fees), evaluate ESG strategies, and include an audit of the Bureau of Asset Management itself. Through this process, we will establish a plan to improve performance, reduce fees, and make our approach to ESG investing

more strategic.

4. Comptroller Stringer pushed pension funds to begin divesting from the fossil fuel industry. Do you agree with that approach, and how do you propose to balance the need to maximize investment returns with the pressure to meet broader social responsibility goals?

New York City's five pension systems fund the retirement security of more than half-a-million public sector workers – the teachers, health care workers, firefighters, police officers, payroll administrators, and other retirees who have served our city for decades. The City's pension funds are among the largest in the country (collectively worth \$251 billion as of February 2021), which affords them power and potential to influence today's capital markets, and by extension, the broader economy. As a fiduciary for these funds, the New York City Comptroller plays a critical role in overseeing the city's investment portfolios to ensure they are invested responsibly, so our public sector workers and their communities can have the secure future they deserve.

Modern Portfolio Theory looks at the risks of each investment in the context of an overall diversified portfolio, but does not traditionally consider the broader systemic risks facing even – or perhaps especially – the most diversified portfolios. Leading economists, investors, and analysts increasingly recognize that highly-diversified funds can manage the risk facing individual companies or sectors, but are still highly exposed to systemic risks facing the economy as a whole. Serving as a fiduciary for these funds must therefore include strong attention to those core systemic risks, including the climate crisis and racial inequality.

Only by actively working to address these broader risks can asset managers genuinely help to provide a more stable long-term future for those they serve as fiduciary. This requires active leadership and new thinking: where large institutional investors like the City's pension funds cannot avoid systemic risks and structural challenges, they have to take them on. In the interest of these workers and community-members, the public pension funds have the responsibility and opportunity, consistent with their fiduciary duties, to lead efforts for transformational change in our financial system.

Too often, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) concerns are put forward one-at-a-time, in a

manner that is reactive and disconnected from overall strategic decision-making about an investment portfolio. This lack of ESG integration makes it more difficult to set priorities, manage risk and add value (to the funds, as well as to ESG efforts).

To achieve better ESG integration and adopt more coherent and effective strategies, I will work with fund trustees to undertake a proactive and strategic process to produce a Strategic Plan for Responsible Fiduciary Investing, to be reviewed once every two years. Trustees will work with their members to engage other stakeholders including workers and consumers of companies that the pension funds are invested in, investors, businesspeople, issue activists, and community leaders.

Through this strategic planning process, each fund will develop a fiduciary blueprint, which would be finalized and adopted by its trustees. These blueprints would then be utilized by the Comptroller's Bureau of Asset Management in its investment research and advice to the funds, and also as a platform for working with other ESG investors on coordinated strategies.

In this context, I support the responsible divestment of \$4 billion of New York City's pension funds from fossil fuels, and commit to achieving this by the targeted timeline of 2025. But divestment is not our only ESG strategy to confront climate change. I will join and lead strategic alliances of shareholders to push for bold climate action by publicly-traded corporations (utilities, banks, car, and technology companies) in our portfolio. The recent action by General Motors to commit to cease making gasoline-powered cars by 2035 shows the promise here. Through responsible investing and corporate governance, we can promote the transition we urgently need to a clean energy economy.

Through the Strategic Plan for Responsible Fiduciary Investing, I will work with the pension fund trustees to develop responsible plans, consistent with fiduciary obligations, for expanded shareholder action not only on climate, but also on race and gender equity, corporate governance, workers rights, worker representation on boards, and targeted (but market-rate) investments in New York City communities in affordable housing and sustainable innovation.

5. Is there anything else you would do to change how the pension funds are managed?

As noted above, I will begin my tenure with audits of investment decisions over the past five years. These audits will review financial performance (net of fees), evaluate ESG strategies, and include an audit of the Bureau of Asset Management itself. Through this process, we will establish a plan to improve performance, reduce fees, and make our approach to ESG investing more strategic. Through these audits, we will likely find areas to improve pension fund management.

With respect to boardroom diversity, I will build on the work of the Boardroom Accountability Project, including the newest initiative to apply the “Rooney Rule” to require that women and people of color are welcomed in the door and considered for every open director seat as well as for the job of CEO. I will also consider helping investee companies recruit BIPOC and women board members, so many of whom are New York City residents. Given NYC pension funds represent the money of union workers, it is especially appropriate to hold companies accountable for the way they treat their workforce. As Comptroller, I will fight for workers’ rights and for the inclusion of workers’ representation in boardrooms, which has been shown to increase responsible capital formation. Finally, I will explore funds’ requirements to report corporate political spending to shareholders.

AUDITING

6. How would you utilize the comptroller’s auditing power to ensure government agencies and the contracts they engage in result in cost-effective quality delivery of services? What priorities will you have to audit city departments?

Bold government action will be needed in the daunting years ahead, to end the Covid crisis, restore our economy, address the housing crisis, transform how we achieve public safety, and confront rising seas and temperatures. But our city government can’t meet any of those obligations when city agencies are run poorly, when money is wasted, when the results aren’t clear, when projects aren’t completed on time, when there’s no accountability for mismanagement, when corruption goes unchecked.

The Comptroller is NYC’s “chief accountability

officer,” and I have laid out an ambitious, strategic plan to overhaul the Audit Bureau, in order to hold city government accountable to our values and goals, increase transparency, and include New Yorkers from all communities in the work to make city government work better. That plan includes:

Stronger use of data analytics: The Comptroller’s office has been conducting audits for over 200 years, but the power of data analytics to do it well has only been around for a small fraction of that. Making better use of data analytics upfront—to identify those areas that need the deeper dive of an audit—will go a long way to making better use of scarce resources. In addition to strengthening the data analytics team in the Comptroller’s office, he will work closely with the civic tech community to help analyze a far broader range of the City’s open data than the office could get to alone (and consider establishing prizes and rewards, as appropriate, for to civic technologists who identify problems that lead to savings and improvements). Establish new audit teams for equity, sustainability, and accessibility to make sure we are “accounting for our values.” I will restructure the Audit Bureau to include teams that focus strategically on racial and gender equity, sustainability and resilience, and accessibility for people with disabilities and speakers of languages other than English. More strategic audits will also enable agency leaders to focus on improving their performance in key areas.

Demand reforms based on claims against the City: In recent years, New York City has paid out approximately \$1 billion annually in taxpayer dollars in settlements for claims against the City. The Comptroller settles claims against the City where there is a monetary component, so the office has a responsibility to identify recurring problems and demanding reforms. The largest areas of preventable claims are police misconduct, traffic crashes caused by City drivers, and medical malpractice suits. I will audit each of these areas aggressively, combining data from claims with agency auditing to win reforms that save lives and money.

People-powered audits that produce real change: Building on the model of participatory budgeting, I will involve a diverse array of New Yorkers, including community residents and workers, in the work of the Comptroller’s audits, from housing to transportation to sanitation to social services, to identify what isn’t working in those agencies, and which communities aren’t being served, and then fight together to change it.

7. As part of your auditing responsibilities, what would your approach be to the NYC Board of Elections? How do you propose to increase its operations and accountability to the city and its voters?

I have been a longtime proponent of common-sense reforms to the NYC Board of Elections so that we can move away from the current opaque, overly partisan, often nepotistic structure of administration and towards greater professionalization, transparency and efficiency.

As Chair of the Rules Committee in the City Council from 2014 to 2017, and a member of the Government Operations Committee, I worked with colleagues to hold hearings on the investigations into the Board of Elections conducted by the NYC Department of Investigation. Coming out of those investigations, I overhauled the process for City Council review of nominees to the NYC Board of Elections. We held those hearings in public session, took public testimony, and voted in public. As a result, nominees made commitments to post BOE positions publicly, establish an anti-nepotism policy, and one agreed to give up her lobbying practice.

Unfortunately, those reforms were reversed under current Speaker Corey Johnson, and the Council reverted to its prior practice of approving the nominations of County bosses without a public hearing.

As Comptroller, I would build on the audit work of the NYC Department of Investigation, as well as prior Comptroller reports, to shine a light on both structural and operational issues. While the structural issues will require State legislation, it is worth continuing to reveal how the structural issues of a 10-person board, where each member is appointed by a County Party Leader and the executive director lacks meaningful managerial authority, hobbles the Board's ability to do its job in a transparent, efficient, ethical fashion, with the goal of ultimately achieving structural change. On operational issues, audits can push the Board forward on wide range of important steps, including language access, placement of poll sites, hiring and training of poll workers, and timely reporting of results.

8. How would you create greater disclosure

around city-affiliated nonprofits that are increasingly supplementing the work of city agencies?

In the wake of the scandal around contributions to the “Campaign for One New York,” in which Mayor de Blasio’s team solicited large contributions from individuals and organizations doing business with the city (who would not have been allowed to contribute significantly to his campaign), I helped to lead the effort to draft and pass Local Law 181.

That law prohibits donations above \$400 per year from people who are lobbyists, have city contracts, or who otherwise do business with the city to non-governmental entities controlled by a local elected official or their agents. The law also requires donor disclosure (to the Conflicts of Interest Board) for all non-governmental entities controlled or recently created by a local elected official or their agents, whether or not they engage in public-facing communications that feature the name or picture of the elected official who controls them.

As Comptroller, I will audit compliance with Local Law 181, and conduct a broader review of the practices of city-affiliated nonprofit organizations. As part of that audit, I will make recommendations to COIB, the City Council, and the Administration to strengthen disclosure, ethics, and good government requirements in this area.

BUDGET, FISCAL OVERSIGHT, AND ECONOMY

9. How would you utilize the authority of the comptroller’s office to ensure the fiscal health and integrity of city spending, especially in this moment of economic crisis?

The job of the Comptroller is to take the long-term view, to ensure we’re spending wisely, to invest in ways that stimulate recovery, to hold our city accountable to our shared goals, and to prepare better for future crises.

The City is set to receive \$6 billion in direct federal aid, nearly \$7 billion for our public schools, and over \$1 billion more through 100% FEMA reimbursement. Together with hiring attrition, that means our budget will be balanced the coming fiscal year, but projected gaps of nearly \$4 billion

remain after that (closer to \$5 billion if \$1 billion in labor savings are not realized).

So we need to make sure this one-time influx of funds is used smartly while not creating recurring spending obligations. That's why I wrote an op-ed in the Daily News last week about establishing an ARP Spending Tracker, similar to the Sandy Recovery tracker the Bloomberg Administration set up, to provide clear goals, track spending, and measure progress

We must also take smart steps at the City level to confront budget deficits in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis, in a way that achieve budget balance without shredding the social safety net, and while continuing to invest strongly in our city's future, and more equal, thriving:

Continue to push for property tax reform, including the end 421-a: New York City is currently giving away \$1.7 billion annually to for-profit, private developers for a 35-year property tax break that produces overwhelmingly market-rate housing, and requires no units cheap enough to help homeless New Yorkers get off the streets. It's time to end it. Use "focused attrition" to thoughtfully phase out programs: In the current fiscal year, the City will rightly only replace 1 City worker for every 3 who leave, outside of core health and essential services. In future years, we should use "focused attrition" through which Commissioners would identify programs that can be phased out, in order to invest in more strategic areas.

Reform economic development programs to end outdated tax breaks and instead grow the economy through sustainable innovation.

Reduce NYPD spending, from the \$11 billion we currently spend, as well as the Department of Corrections budget, where spending per detainee is now a half-million dollars per year, more than double what we spent in 2015.

Reduce settlement payouts through systemic reform: The City pays out tens of millions of dollars each year for police misconduct and traffic crashes caused by City drivers. Through transparency and systemic reform, we can prevent future harms and reduce payouts.

Improve capital projects management: 50% of the City's capital projects go over budget, some by hundreds of millions of dollars. I've outlined a plan to spend smarter on infrastructure here:

<https://www.landerfornyc.com/infrastructure>

Rainy Day Fund: I am proposing legislation that would require the City to begin putting money in a Rainy Day Fund as the economy improves, that could only be used in future downturns.

10. In FY 2021, New York City spent \$20.5 billion on pensions and fringe benefits for City employees out of a total net budget of \$88.2 billion. What would you do to address the growing pension and health care costs borne by the city and New York City tax payers?

The most significant way to get a handle on growing OTPS costs, including pension and health care, is to keep control of headcount. During the de Blasio Administration prior to the pandemic, headcount grew significantly. Some of this was in good areas for expansion, such as universal pre-K, but it was not matched with any effort to phase out older programs. Furthermore, the current "Citywide Savings Program" does not account for pension, health care, or other fringe benefits. As a result, there is no incentive for commissioners to control headcount. I am therefore proposing that we blend future PEG programs (Program to Eliminate the Gap) with a "focused attrition" program, in which commissioners identify positions which could be phased out through attrition, and/or get credit (or lack thereof) for cuts that achieve OTPS savings.

We can also find some appropriate areas for savings in OPEB, Other Post-Employment Benefits. One place that I believe we should take a closer look is at the expansion of disability pensions for police and fire employees, which in recent years have grown to cover a much broader group of retirees than those injured in the line of duty, at a cost of hundreds of millions annually.

The growth in outstanding pension and fringe benefits yet another reason why a true Rainy Day Fund is so critically important. For years the City has used the Retiree Health Benefits Fund as an emergency rainy day fund, but as a result it has been emptied during crises. We need to fund a real Rainy Day Fund, starting with \$1 billion this year, setting aside a large percent of growth above 3% and growing it to between 12-15% of tax revenues. At the same time we should also continue to fund the Retiree Health Benefits Fund to help us cover the growing costs of retiree health benefits and

other OPEB costs (which currently total over \$105 billion).

11. If elected, you will start your term as New York City (hopefully) begins to reopen its businesses, offices, and institutions. How will you utilize the comptroller's office to help rebuild the economic base of NYC?

More than half a million New Yorkers are out of work, twice that many are worried about making rent or mortgage payments, and we can't even count the families standing in relief lines. The pandemic has thrown our city's crisis of inequality into sharp relief: nearly 70% of those who lost their job since the beginning of COVID-19 are people of color. Small businesses owned by people of color have had far less access to federal aid, while nearly 1.2 million immigrants, formerly incarcerated, and self-employed New Yorkers have been excluded from any unemployment or relief payments at all. We literally cannot afford to address this crisis with the tools and perspectives of yesterday. After the fiscal crises of the 1970s, 9/11, and the Great Recession, New York's leaders handed over public land, tax breaks, and other subsidies to corporate interests for too little in return. These deals have added to the tax burdens of local residents and resulted in vacant megaprojects while shortchanging the M/WBEs, immigrant-owned small businesses, and local residents of color upon whom New York's recovery and prosperity depend. As Comptroller, I will take a different approach to jumpstart our recovery and lay the foundation for a thriving, resilient, and more equitable city. Instead of wastefully giving away billions to corporations whose promises of jobs and increased tax revenue regularly fall short, we must make strategic economic development and pension investments that support sustainable innovation and opportunity in the fields of the future -- technology, clean energy, green manufacturing, arts and culture, and the care economy. Instead of selling off vacant city land to for-profit developers, we must turn this land into vibrant hubs of small business and cooperative enterprise under the stewardship of community land trusts and nonprofit organizations. Instead of sacrificing equity to growth, we must unlock the full economic potential of all our citizens by using the city's power as an institutional investor to encourage progressive worker representation, climate equity, and racial justice in our business

deals.

A few key focus areas would be:

Rooting out waste: ineffective programs and corporate giveaways: Three billion dollars in tax exemptions and direct subsidies was spent on behalf of economic development in New York City in 2018, without reliable data on how many jobs those economic development dollars are creating, let alone for whom. I will publish analyses of where those tax dollars could have been better spent to meet New Yorkers' needs with respect to public education, public health, and infrastructure; and advocate for the creation of a "database of deals" to provide public accountability and standards around the City's economic development programs.

Strengthen Local Hire and Procurement

Requirements: As Comptroller, I will continue to fight alongside Jobs to Move America for the White House's repeal of the local hire ban. In the interim, I will continue to support efforts to prioritize New Yorkers in low-income zip codes and public housing residents for construction jobs through Project Labor Agreements; and fight to improve and expand the City's HireNYC program and eliminate the arbitrary and onerous restrictions that prevent M/WBE's from competing for and receiving city contracts.

Green economy: While previous administrations have seen environmental sustainability as incompatible with economic growth, I see the potential to achieve growth through sustainability and environmental justice by leveraging urban density, optimizing "green-collar" infrastructure projects, and encouraging circular and "closed loop" economies in city enterprises. I will advocate for the creation of a climate corps to perform energy retrofits on all public and private buildings to help the city achieve its 40 percent emission reduction targets by 2030. I will also advocate for investments in urban carbon farming, on-site farms on NYCHA properties to be cultivated and used by residents, and the creation of "ecohubs" of green manufacturing and service provision in low-income communities of color.

Land bank & City Capital Dollars to expand affordable space and promote social ownership: I will fight to ensure that New York keeps its publicly-owned land permanently affordable for working and middle-class businesses and residents. I will make a case for the implementation of a land bank for New York City to purchase and transfer distressed, vacant, and in-rem properties – properties that undermine community health and cost the city thousands in lost tax revenue and direct service costs – to CLTs and nonprofit entrepreneurial hubs

like the Brooklyn Navy Yard and Brooklyn Army Terminal. I will continue to fight for the elimination of the City's inefficient and wasteful tax lien sales which cost the city millions in interest rates and legal fees.

Funding for effective workforce development: I will audit the comparative effectiveness of New York's workplace development programs, and then advocate to implement reforms and fully fund the training programs proven to best connect local residents to high-paying jobs and career pathways. I will also fight to expand the city's successful Apprentice NYC initiative linking job-seeking New Yorkers with intensive mentorship and training in the city's growing industrial, health, "green collar" and tech sectors, in addition to funding of bridge programs to provide in-depth job training and further education for workers with educational or linguistic barriers to employment. Finally, I will boost the city's workforce of the future by fighting to fully fund CUNY, increase STEM graduation rates, and launch new mentorship programs for black, hispanic, women, and immigrant students.

MISCELLANEOUS

12. Do you believe there needs to be improvements to the comptroller's role and practices? What changes would you make to the structure or functions of the office?

New York City has had some excellent Comptrollers, on whose work I would build. Here are several areas where I would look to strengthen and improve the practices of the office:

More strategic and values-driven audits: I'll make New York City government work better through more strategic use of the Comptroller's Audit Bureau, using first-rate data analytics, stakeholder engagement, whistleblower reports, in-depth auditing, and research to identify shortcomings and solutions. I won't shy away from asking tough questions about our City's operations that we need to answer in order to improve them, from the NYPD to NYCHA to the Department of Homeless Services. I've set out plans to audit for waste and fraud, performance, equity, sustainability, and accessibility. And I won't let the audits sit on shelves (or websites) gathering (virtual) dust. Through strategic action, by involving New Yorkers in the audit work, by partnering with stakeholders working for change, I will fight to make sure that City Hall makes the changes needed. I have

released a comprehensive platform on my plans to use the audit powers of the Comptroller's office, which can be found at <https://www.landerfornyc.com/audits>

Equity audits: As outlined above, I will establish an "equity audit" team within the comptroller's Audit Bureau to analyze race and gender disparities within agencies, not only including pay equity and M/WBEs, but within service disparities and outcomes as well.

Strategic Plan for Responsible Fiduciary Investing: As outlined above, I will implement a Strategic Plan for Responsible Fiduciary Investing, to better align ESG investing and adopt more coherent and effective strategies. Through this strategic planning process, each fund will develop a fiduciary blueprint, which would be finalized and adopted by its trustees. These blueprints would then be utilized by the Comptroller's Bureau of Asset Management in its investment research and advice to the funds, and also as a platform for working with other ESG investors on coordinated strategies.

Raising the floor for NYC's workers: I will expand the Comptroller's Bureau of Labor Law to ensure companies pay workers a living wage, raise the floor for workers in the gig economy, establish protections for essential workers, and support apprenticeship and job training programs, especially for young people of color who have lost jobs at high rates during the pandemic. As part of this effort, I will publish an annual "Exploitative Employers Wall of Shame," modeled on the Public Advocate's "Worst Landlords List," to shine a spotlight on employers who abuse their workers through wage theft, dangerous working conditions, abusive scheduling, and unfair labor practices, to make sure we use all our tools to win better conditions for New York City's workers: <http://bit.ly/worstemployers>.

Accounting for our future/confronting the climate crisis: I will make the Comptroller's office a hub for focusing the attention of New Yorkers on the climate crisis – divesting from fossil fuels & investing in renewable energy, building resilient infrastructure, doing more to reduce emissions, tackling health care and environmental justice disparities, and transitioning to clean energy with good jobs for New Yorkers. The 8 years that the

next round of elected officials will serve will be the critical ones. The mayoral candidates will all talk about the threat of the climate crisis – but on most days, other issues will seem more pressing – so we need a Comptroller who will hold us accountable to our climate goals.

13. What experience have you had, if any, with good government and reform issues? (e.g. voting and elections, campaign finance, ethics, police accountability, government transparency and oversight). If you've worked to advance these goals, we'd love to hear about it.

Throughout my career, I have fought on a wide range of good government and reform issues:

As Rules Committee Chair of the City Council from 2014-2017, I led successful efforts to ban outside income, ban lulus, and dramatically reform discretionary funding.

Together with Jumaane Williams, I passed legislation creating the Office of the NYPD Inspector General, to provide civil rights and good government oversight of the NYPD.

I passed the Independent Expenditure Disclosure Act, giving NYC the most aggressive SuperPAC disclosure requirements in the country.

I helped bring participatory budgeting to New York City, giving millions of New Yorkers, regardless of youth or immigration status, a chance to be part of the process of deciding how to invest public funds in their neighborhoods.

Working with a dozen city agencies, I established a taskforce to create an online, public Capital Projects Tracker to help monitor capital spending, check in on progress for projects, and identify patterns to improve efficiency and accountability.

As the sponsor of the City Council legislation to bring Ranked Choice Voting to NYC, I helped lead the successful advocacy effort across two NYC Charter Revision Commissions to transform our election system to increase participation and democracy.

14. What are the top three campaign promises or goals, and what action will you take to achieve them if elected? Feel free to reference an answer above rather than restate it.

First: Serving as a budget watchdog to ensure thoughtful spending of the ARP money

Second: I want to reform capital projects management to save money and prepare for the future through better infrastructure investment.

Third: I want to focus on getting New York City more ready for future crises than we were for this one

15. If you have not addressed this already, in what major ways would your priorities as comptroller differ from the incumbent?

See #12 above

16. In light of everything we have discussed above, why do you want to be mayor?

I want to be Comptroller (not sure whether “mayor” in the sentence is a trick question :-)) because the City needs leaders who are prepared to use the tools and resources of government to fight for an equitable recovery from the Covid 19 crisis.

In my decade in the City Council representing the 39th District and serving as the Council’s Deputy Leader for Policy, and in 15 years leading nonprofit organizations before that, I’ve made government work better by listening to the voices of New York City’s communities, demanding that we live up to our values, understanding that budgets are moral documents, taking a good hard look at the data, understanding how systems work and fail, and building lasting partnerships for meaningful change.

I have led innovative work to intervene in the city’s economy in ways that have delivered for working New Yorkers and expanded democracy and transparency in city government. My work to raise the floor in the gig- and contingent-work economy has delivered for Uber and Lyft drivers (who are now earning on average \$5000/year more thanks to the living wage law I passed), fast-food workers (who have stable schedules and a path to full-time jobs), and freelancers (who have the strongest protections in the country against wage theft). I understand how to make the economy work for working people, in ways that strengthen our city’s ability to flourish for all New Yorkers.

Please feel free to attach any additional information such as resume, campaign brochures, or issues statements.

Please review your answers by clicking PREVIEW ANSWERS below. You can submit the questionnaire at the bottom of the preview page by clicking SUBMIT.

Once you click SUBMIT, you will receive a confirmation email with a PDF file containing your responses. If you don't see the email, please check your spam box.

If you have any further questions, you may contact us at candidates@citizensunion.org.