



FOR THE FUTURE RISK, RESILIENCE, & LONG-TERM THINKING



a plan by

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for NYC Comptroller



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INTRODUCTION

Brad is running for Comptroller to help build a more equitable City and secure a better future for all New Yorkers by budgeting wisely and investing strategically—not just to confront the long-term challenges we already face, like climate change, housing affordability, and racial injustice—but to better prepare our City for the crises that will face generations to come.

New York City was not adequately prepared for the COVID-19 crisis and tens of thousands of people died as a result. The lives of families and children have been impacted for an entire generation, and too many of our elderly and vulnerable are no longer with us. At the same time COVID exposed the weaknesses of our health and human service systems, it reminded us of the ways we are responsible for and committed to our neighbors. We came together to find and serve those in need, we celebrated the sacrifice of our frontline workers, and we were reminded that our future depends on our ability to respond quickly, together. We saw a similar response when Hurricane Sandy struck our shores—New Yorkers coming together to overcome a disaster we weren't prepared for. But this storm, and this pandemic, were anticipated—why weren't we ready? And what was the cost of not being prepared?

Brad believes that we do not have to wait for the next crisis to prepare for the events we anticipate and to create the future we want. Whether it is weather related crises such as large-scale power outages like we recently witnessed in Texas, heatwaves, or water shortages, or the social stress caused by growing inequality, unaffordable housing, or social isolation, we know that our city government must be, and can be, ready to respond to future crises.

To achieve that goal, Brad will help New York City prepare for the future in three key ways:

RISK ASSESSMENTS & PERFORMANCE AUDITS THAT ACCOUNT FOR FORESIGHT & ADAPTABILITY

The New York City budget reflects our values as a community, as do the ways we hold government agencies, contractors, and partners accountable. Brad understands that the Comptroller's office is uniquely positioned to take the long-term view to ensure we're not solely basing assessments of our City's programs and service delivery based on economic effectiveness and short-term results. While ensuring our City government fulfills New Yorkers' immediate needs at a reasonable cost is critical, we must also ensure that our City is sufficiently preparing for the crises of future generations and laying the groundwork for the transformational changes needed to build a more just and equitable City. As Comptroller, Brad will help define, visualize, and hold ourselves accountable to the kind of society we are shaping for the next generation through risk assessments and performance audits that prioritize:

Foresight: are our City agencies using disciplined long-term thinking to proactively address the major social, technological, economic, and environmental risks they foresee for the next generation?

Resiliency: how can our City agencies, programs, and services overcome the current limitations and failures of our economy and governmental systems to better meet communities' needs? Are City agencies able to nimbly adapt to be more responsive to the emerging needs of residents and businesses or are they locked into bureaucratic systems that undermine public trust and government efficacy?

Generational outcomes: what are the costs and impacts of our City's current and future programs and policies on future generations? Are our City's programs producing the outcomes that will strengthen the City's social safety net, environment, and human service ecosystem in the long-term?

ANTICIPATORY GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

In order to ensure the long-term vitality of New York City, Brad understands that our City agencies must build-in the anticipation of long-term change and development of creative, testable solutions into its traditionally bureaucratic and static policies and procedures. New Yorkers see the failures of static government systems everyday—whether they are navigating the City’s arcane contracts process, getting the permits they need to install a solar panel on their roof, accessing critical social services and support, or opening a small business, outdated City bureaucracy often stands in New Yorkers’ way.

Anticipatory governance is a data-driven, flexible decision-making framework that governments and New Yorkers can use not just to evaluate the outcomes of our current programs but to implement management, policymaking, and course-correction processes in real-time that are responsive to the successes and failures New Yorkers see and experience on the ground. As Comptroller, Brad will explore the use of first-rate data analytics to help map the City’s long-term trends and develop scenarios of multiple possible futures to better identify strategies for adaptability and resiliency today (in line with similar work completed in the [Netherlands](#) and [Wales](#)). Brad will advocate for the City’s embrace of anticipatory government infrastructure in ways that protects New Yorkers’ data privacy and empowers more constituencies by helping our City better understand what programs fail, what works well, and which should be expanded. By creating innovative new portfolios of government programs, services, and partnerships, we can test new creative solutions that will better anticipate the needs of New Yorkers today and tomorrow.

INVESTMENT IN SOCIAL COHESION AND PARTICIPATORY GOVERNMENT AS STRATEGIES FOR RESILIENCE

Brad understands that when New Yorkers come together, share information, express their needs, and map shared resources, our tight knit, connected communities can overcome even the most devastating disasters. Deepening the participation of our citizens in addressing our greatest risks is one of the best ways to help the government focus less on short-term wins that make headlines and more on meaningful long-term results. Brad has long-fought for investments in the kind of social infrastructure and participatory processes that build a more equitable and just City.

As a City Council Member, Brad led the way in bringing “participatory budgeting” to the City and understands that New Yorkers who engage on a daily basis with the systems of municipal government are best positioned to know what needs to be fixed.

As Comptroller, Brad will build on this work to fight for the dramatic expansion of participatory budgeting citywide and bring “participatory auditing” to the Comptroller’s office. Models of “participatory auditing” that Brad hopes to deploy include involving parents and community members in identifying audits, conducting surveys of citizen satisfaction alongside them, participatory action research, involving people in reviewing results, and the creation of Citizens’ Assemblies. A more participatory Comptroller’s office will be one that is better prepared to help New York manage long-term risks and prepare for a more resilient future. Brad will also use the powers of the Comptroller’s office to support long-term investments that increase transparency, cultivate strong community connections, produce trust among community leadership, and demonstrate that city government can, and will respond to community needs -- like investments in our parks, libraries, technology, arts and culture, social housing and cooperative economics can all help our City mitigate risks and better prepare for our future.

CONCLUSION

In the words of [OPSI](#), the time to act was yesterday—governments have less time than they think to prepare for revolutionary and disruptive change. By orienting the Comptroller’s office to take the long-term view, Brad will help build a just and durable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, better hold New York City’s government accountable to its promises, and invest in a more equitable, resilient, and innovative future that can mitigate the risks that future generations will face.

This platform was researched by Joe Waters and Grady Powell, Team Lander Volunteers