

The Bronx-wide People's Platform

Fighting Forward for Racial Justice and Economic Democracy

Our Collective Vision

The process of creating a **Bronx-wide People's Platform** is the result of years of Bronx residents building power together -- across neighborhoods, across generations, across lines of race, gender, class, ethnicity, immigration status, and faith. Over the course of nearly a year, thousands of Bronxites engaged in a participatory process to develop the Bronx-wide People's Platform because we were clear that we needed to craft a collective vision for the Bronx that would unite our organizing efforts across the entire borough. No more will we be organizing in our silos pushing back against bad policies, bad development and bad actors. Instead, we stand together united with one vision for an equitable, sustainable and just Bronx for our communities and families.

We are saying loud and clear with this platform that this is the beginning of a new day for the Bronx, where our agenda and our plans set the path forward. We will use our collective process of building solidarity with one another and creating a shared platform as the foundation for the development of a cross institutional leadership council and a Bronx-wide plan. Together, we intend to use the tenets of our platform, and our shared set of values and principles to shape the narrative of our community, hold current and future elected officials accountable and bring our vision to fruition through directed policy and investment into our borough.

Our Principles and Values

- **Systemic lens:** Rather than responding to individual issues, we understand that we must look at the root causes of inequalities and work towards transforming systems.
- **Racial justice lens:** Given the historic disinvestment in communities of color, especially within the Bronx, we understand that we must have a clear racial justice lens that puts people of color and our experiences at the center.
- **Intergenerational lens:** We understand that all voices are important across generations and therefore will work to be inclusive of youth voices and other voices that might be missing from our spaces.
- **Gender justice lens:** We know everyone has valuable contributions regardless of their gender identity and want to ensure that we center the voices of women and gender nonconforming people that have often been left on the margins.
- **Environmental sustainability lens:** We know that taking care of the earth is essential for the survival of all of humanity and that because communities of color are most impacted by climate change, we must embed environmental sustainability and resilience within our solutions and strategies.
- **Economic democracy lens:** Fighting against bad landlords, bad development and bad policies have not been sufficient to help address generational poverty in our borough or address the deep rooted inequality we experience here in the Bronx. So, creating shared wealth, community control and ownership over our community assets is critical for us to have a long lasting impact for our communities.

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Our Framework

The Bronx-wide People's Platform is meant to advance systemic solutions to systemic inequality. For our platform, we have grounded our systemic solutions in a framework of **economic democracy, building shared ownership and democratic governance over our communities and the resources we need to live with dignity and self-determination.**

Economic democracy is a part of our history in the Bronx. Our people have taken control of our housing, our workplaces, our blocks, and our neighborhoods. We have built, rebuilt, and sustained neighborhoods when the private and public sectors walked away, birthing community organizations and institutions that have been critical to our livelihoods. Now is the time for the Bronx to come together to ensure that those who helped build the Bronx not only get to stay but will lead the future of our borough.

While “fighting back” against bad development, policies and actors has reactively protected and defended our people over the last several decades, economic democracy means “fighting forward” with strategies that build long-term shared ownership and collective governance over the assets within our community. What if we could win not just a rent and mortgage freeze now during our current pandemic but collective ownership of our homes over the long haul? What if instead of fighting against predatory development, we were visioning and planning around development on land we collectively owned? What if workers didn't have to organize against poor working conditions and poverty wages and instead sat together at the decision-making table of their workplaces? For decades our communities have fought back against the literal and metaphorical fires that are continuously lit in our neighborhoods. Although still necessary, we know that these fight back strategies are no longer sufficient given rising displacement pressures, a housing crisis, our current health pandemic, and an economic downturn that is going to devastate our communities in ways we have not experienced in our lifetimes. We must employ new fight forward strategies that work towards racial justice and economic democracy and transform the Bronx into a borough that works for all.

Fight back Strategies

- Temporarily or conditionally stops harm from systems/structures.
- Meets individual human needs created by oppressive systems.
- Provides transparency and information to the public about the activities of powerful entities.
- Taxes or limits profits of wealthy or powerful interests.

Fight forward Strategies

- Transfers or creates economic power and resources for shared community ownership.
- Creates, embeds or transfers cooperative governing partnerships (political/social power) for economic democracy.
- Creates, embeds, or transfers resources for education and knowledge, leadership development, and skills and capacity building for shared ownership.
- Connects or promotes interconnection among efforts advancing the above demands and strategies.