



COUNCILWOMAN

CARLINA RIVERA

EAST VILLAGE • FLATIRON • GRAMERCY PARK • ROSE HILL  
KIPS BAY • MURRAY HILL • LOWER EAST SIDE

## Dear Neighbors,

I decided to run for office because I care deeply about the neighborhood that I grew up and have lived in for over 30 years. I care about my neighbors who I grew up next to in Section 8 housing that did not receive the education and job skills that kids just blocks away did. I care about all the lifelong New Yorkers who have made these beautiful and historic neighborhoods their home and who helped shape me into the person that I am today.

From my time working in housing organizing to being a representative on Community Board 3, to being your Council Member, I have always fought for equality and the values of our district. That is why, from the moment I won my election in November, I started meeting with organizations and agencies to discuss the “Union Square Tech Hub” planned for land on 14th Street and Irving Place.

In talks with NYC Economic Development Corporation, the City Planning Commission, the Mayor’s Office, and the Landmarks Preservation Commission, my focus came down to two things: 1) ensuring that the building’s benefits and workforce development services would reach the communities that need them most and 2) protections for the neighborhoods south of the site I have had a personal connection to my entire life.

Using the robust list of requested benefits in Community Board 3’s unanimous resolution in support of the Tech Hub, feedback from local community-based organizations, and input from constituents, I was confident that my negotiations

for the Tech Hub space had the backing of a diverse range of community perspectives.

I spent months negotiating with the City and the development team to secure entrepreneurial and training opportunities for everyone, including women, minorities, and the low-income individuals that find it difficult – and often times impossible – to access careers in tech. This project will help give communities who are extremely underrepresented in the tech industry a once-in-a-lifetime chance to help close the tech education and hiring divide.

We owe it to our neighbors and our youth who face challenges accessing high-quality education and workforce development in a 21st century economy that demands digital skills and a comprehensive STEM education. As someone who got the opportunity to attend great schools on St. Mark's and Washington Square Park, I experienced the difference that a comprehensive education can make in a child's life. I knew we had a rare opportunity to bring new pathways to success to the neighborhoods near Avenue D where I grew up, while also providing us leverage to fight for neighborhood protections that have gone ignored by two Mayors.

When it came to neighborhood protections, it seemed that conversations between my team and the City were stalled from the beginning, even as we negotiated back and forth over our many proposals with support from the Council's Land Use staff and preservationist partners. There were many times we said "no" to City Hall despite knowing what was at stake.

We were frequently reminded by the City that sweeping changes to neighboring areas are not typically included for the rezoning of a single property such as this. But we refused to give up and continued to win commitments from the City for a variety of protections and an on-going dialogue of how to preserve the neighborhood.

In the end, I recognized that walking away would not only leave our community without a top-flight tech training center, but also without a single neighborhood protection. Voting no meant we would still get a tall, glass office building and the same threats of overdevelopment.

Instead, I can report that we are moving forward with strong results that include:

- the recognition of the Broadway corridor's history and character by placing seven properties on the Landmarks Preservation Commission calendar;
- commencing the process of establishing a protective zoning measure in neighborhoods south of 14th Street that has proven to regulate commercial development;
- a tenant-protection campaign headed by HPD in communities south of the project to ensure that tenants in rent-stabilized buildings know their rights and spot the signs of tenant harassment. This will include community-wide forums, door-knocking campaigns, and priority status for Council District 2 residents who need assistance from the City's new Tenant Protection Unit;
- commit the resources of the Mayor's Office, the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the Department of Buildings to protect Merchants House, one of our most important historic landmarks, from the effects of any development on the property next door, even in an as-of-right scenario;
- a standing monthly meeting with the Landmarks Preservation Commission team to further discuss preservation targets and landmarks issues in Council District 2;

And for the Tech Training Center:

- An upfront contribution from the Tech Training Center's developer of \$200,000 and an ongoing \$200,000 annual contribution to a scholarship and grant fund that will provide provide additional support for training, bootcamp, and certificate opportunities for trainees;
- the creation of over 1,400 jobs, with an estimated 811 good construction jobs and 615 permanent jobs. In addition, a local nonprofit employment services partner will assist the development team to promote local hiring;
- companies renting space within the building are subject to the City's living wage requirements and will participate in the HireNYC program which connects low-income job seekers to employment opportunities in City developments;
- participation by innovative partners like Civic Hall, Per Scholas, CUNY, Mouse, FedCap and others that will develop curricula tailored to specific populations including underserved youth, seniors, and people with physical barriers;
- a retail marketplace where 25% of booth space will be reserved for start-up vendors and whose operator, Urbanspace, has a proven track record in

- attracting and fostering MWBEs to its markets;
- meeting space that will be offered to the community for free for 52 times a year;
  - additional floors for incubator programs and growing companies with a focus on small start-ups. Additionally, the development team is committed to finding M/WBE tenancies for this space;
  - a commitment from the workforce development providers to set a goal of 25 percent of trainees at the Tech Training Center will be District 2 residents who meet certain criteria such as income threshold, employment status, public housing residency, and more. This will encourage the onsite partners to target those in the surrounding community that truly need retraining and career advancement; and
  - a Community Advisory Board (CAB) with members appointed by my office, other officials, and the community board that will provide oversight of programming and goals, monitor implementation of the scholarship fund, ensure that the Tech Training Center is being a good neighbor, and monitoring that the various facets of the Tech Training Center's mission are fulfilled.

I am proud to represent this diverse district and work for the needs of every resident. I will keep fighting against out-of-scale development, against tenant displacement, and for community-based planning for our neighborhoods. I will continue to press this Administration to preserve and protect our neighborhoods, fighting for sensible zoning for livable streets, the landmarking of precious historical sites, and standing up for the small businesses we cherish. And I hope you will join me as we build on these victories towards a fairer and more livable community.

I look forward to sharing more with you in the weeks and months to come, and please reach out to my office at any time if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carlina Rivera". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carlina Rivera