



# NYC Civics Pilot

How To be an Informed Local Citizen: Local  
News, Misinformation

# NYC Civics Pilot Program

01

## LOCAL GOV 101

Understand local government positions and how to influence decisions made by local government.

02

## HOUSING

Understand why housing costs are rising and how residents can shape housing policy and advocate for their interests.

03

## MEDIA LITERACY

Learn how to navigate local news in the age of AI and social media, identify credible information, and avoid misinformation.

04

## CAMPAIGNS & ADVOCACY

Learn how issue campaigns, primaries, and elections work and how to effectively mobilize voters and participate in campaigns.

05

## POLICING

What authority does NYC have over policing and when do they change their approach?

06

## NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Learn how services – from libraries and sanitation to parks – are funded and how residents can advocate for improvements.

# Goals of the NYC Civics Pilot Program

1. Show that local government affects our lives in many ways that make it relevant in a context of national focus.
2. Provide a tour of local government and how you can engage in acts of civic engagement to solve problems, advocate for your interests, protect your rights, and increase your level of civic action.
3. Provide new skills in navigating a complex information environment and using your voice in ways that can have a real impact.
4. Build community and develop a civic-education model that can be used in other neighborhoods.

# How to be an Informed Local Resident



# Goals

1. Explain the capacity of local news ecosystem in NYC
2. Provide an overview of a range of local news sources outside of newspapers and network TV.
3. Explain the role, benefits, and costs of social media dominance in news on the local news and what you are likely to see in your feed.
4. Explain how AI can shape information on local government – and how to evaluate the credibility of the information you get from AI platforms.

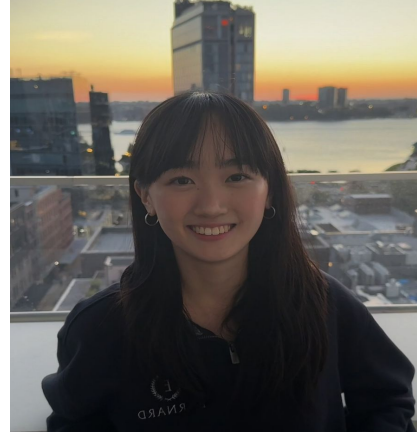
# The Research Assistant Team



**JOSEPHINE  
BAIGNERES**



**ISABELLA  
DENG**



**JIA  
LUAN**



**MADELINE  
SENATE**

# Special Guests:

## Part 1: Local News and Accountability Reporting



[Norman Oder](#), Independent Journalist, *Atlantic Yards/Pacific Park Report*.



[Peter Stern](#), News and Opinion Editor, *City and State*.



[Gabriele Holtermann](#), Photojournalist, *The Brooklyn Paper*, *Schneps Media*



[Hannah Frishberg](#), Culture & Arts Reporter, *WNYC/Gothamist*.



## Part 1: Local News and Credible Information

*Where should I look for trustworthy information about my neighborhood and city government?*

# What are the Functions of Local News?

- Cover city and state government, local businesses, local impacts of policies and development, and problems report on problems impacts local residents.
- Amplify critical information from credible sources (e.g., evacuation orders).
- Sound the alarm on local harms that local papers may miss -- particularly in smaller areas where national reporters are lack visibility (e.g., Flint, MI water crisis).
- Play a role in building community cohesion.



# NYC Civics: Local News Mythbusters

Thumbs up = True 

Thumbs down = False 

1. NYC can have local-news deserts despite having many major media outlets.
2. Major newspapers routinely cover every NYC neighborhood and community board.
3. Neighborhood newsletters sometimes cover stories that major newspapers miss.
4. Social-media posts can provide useful leads—but their claims should be verified.
5. Crime is at an all-time high in NYC.
6. A professional-looking local-news website must be legitimate.
7. Several websites or Facebook pages may repeat the same claim without independently verifying it.
8. More crime stories mean crime is increasing.
9. Reddit comments are a good way to gauge public opinion on a local issue.

# Traditional Local News Models are under Pressure

FIGURE 1  
U.S. NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION (PRINT AND DIGITAL)

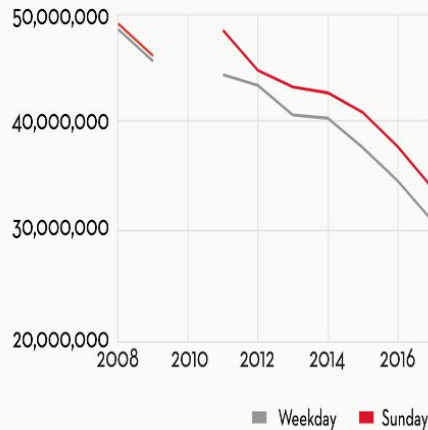
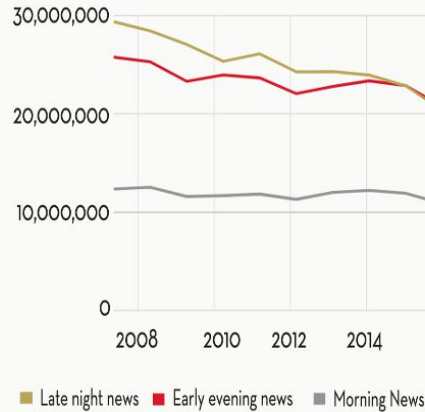
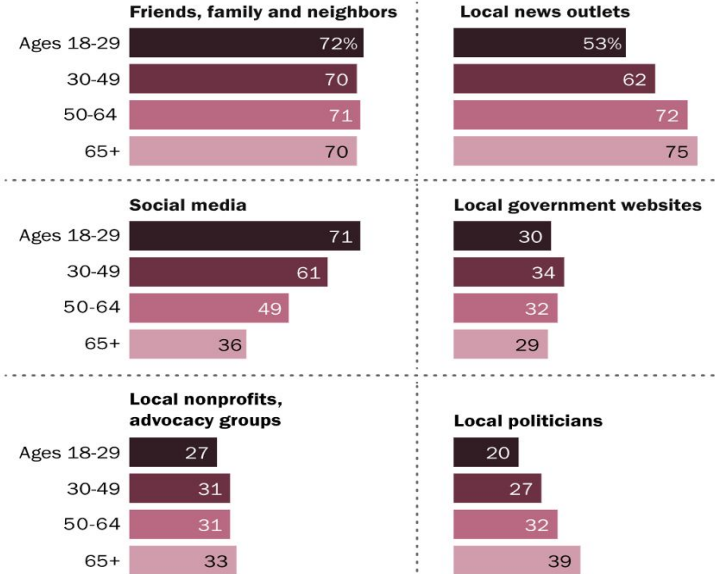


FIGURE 2  
LOCAL TV NEWS VIEWERSHIP (2007-2016)



## Higher shares of young adults than older Americans get local political news from social media

% of U.S. adults who *often/sometimes* get local political news from ...



Source: Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 22-28, 2024.  
"How Americans Get Local Political News"

PEW-KNIGHT INITIATIVE

# The Capacity for Local Reporting in Newsrooms is at an All Time Low

- Newsroom layoffs are widespread when it comes to local coverage.
- WSJ and NYT local coverage has seen sharp cuts or worse.
- Coverage has moved away from locations and toward themes – which can lead to less coverage in particular neighborhoods.
- Many local papers sold their office space and are fully remote.

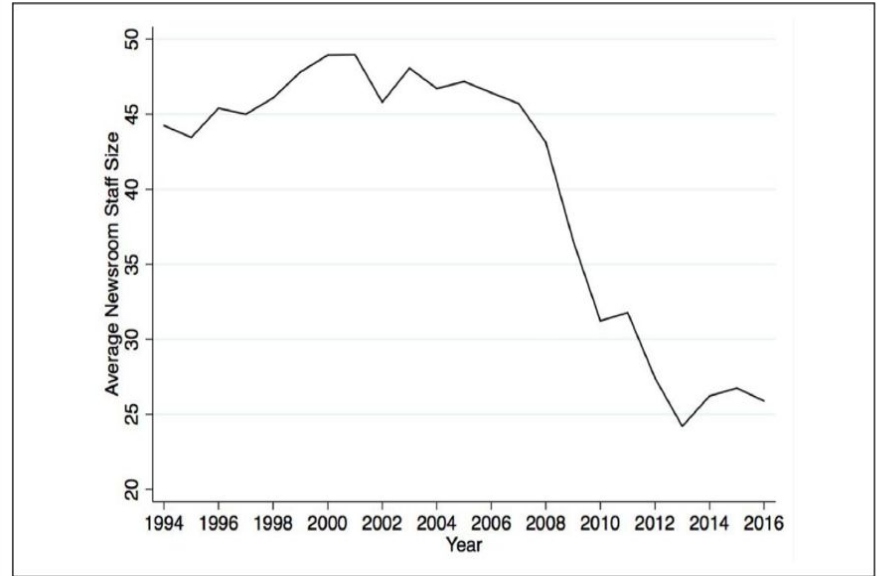


**Figure 1.** Mean staff of newsrooms surveyed by ASNE.

Note. ASNE = American Society of News Editors.

# Impacts on Local Coverage in NYC Neighborhoods

- **The Daily News** closed bureaus in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx in 2015, eliminating reporters assigned exclusively to individual boroughs.
  - In 2018, the Daily News eliminated roughly half its editorial staff.
  - The Hedge Fund that owns The Daily News continued layoffs through 2026
- The **NY Times** moved away from NYC local reporting toward national coverage or nationally relevant NYC coverage.
- Neighborhood papers have been absorbed by larger organizations like [Schneps Media](#) – sharing reporters across neighborhoods.
  - In 2026, Schneps had only about 30 editorial employees shared across amNewYork, Brooklyn Paper, Brownstoner, QNS, Bronx Times, Caribbean Life and numerous other NYC and Long Island publications.
- THE CITY, Gothamist/WNYC, City Limits, Hell Gate, Streetsblog, Documented, and others employ locally focused NYC reporters, but cannot reproduce the extent of in-depth local coverage of earlier years.

# NYC has an Eclectic Local News Ecosystem

## **National Paper: The New York Times**

(<https://www.nytimes.com/section/nyregion>)

NYC coverage and investigative reporting on city politics and government decisions with a national audience.

## **Citywide**

Gothamist/WNYC ([gothamist.com](http://gothamist.com))

City and State ([cityandstatenyc.com](http://cityandstatenyc.com))

NY Focus (<https://nysfocus.com/>)

Reports on NYC and State government news with broad city coverage

## **Non-Profit**

The City Reporter ([thecity.nyc](http://thecity.nyc))

City Limits (<https://citylimits.org/>)

Nonprofit news reporting on NYC government, housing, schools, and municipal issues with a focus on accountability

## **Brooklyn Reporting**

Brooklyn Reader (<https://www.bkreader.com/>)

Brooklyn Paper (<https://www.brooklynpaper.com/>)

Brooklyn Eagle) (<https://brooklyneagle.com/>)

Smaller, borough- and neighborhood-focused news outlets with a focus on community and neighborhood news

## **Tabloids:**

NY Post (<https://nypost.com/>)

NY Daily News (<https://www.nydailynews.com/>)

Coverage of crime, politics, and city controversies. Useful for identifying stories, but verify sensational or politically framed claims.

# Brooklyn Hyper-Local Publications and Newsletters

Red Hook Star-Review (<https://www.star-revue.com/>)

Independent monthly newspaper covering Red Hook and nearby southwest Brooklyn.

Greenpointers (<https://greenpointers.com/>)

Digital publication covering news, politics, businesses, arts and events in Greenpoint and Williamsburg

Our Time Press (<https://ourtimepress.com/>)

Black-owned weekly newspaper covering central Brooklyn, with a focus on issues affecting Brooklyn's Black communities.

[The Carroll Gardens Times](#) – New hyperlocal publication covering Carroll Gardens.

[Court Street Journal](#) – Local reporting and community coverage across Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Boerum Hill and West Brooklyn.

Independent Local Newsletters:

[Grand Army Gazette](#) – Prospect Heights, Crown Heights and North Slope.

[WARD 6](#) – Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens and Red Hook.

# Getting Information from Your Reps and Local Officials: Follow on Social Media and Sign Up for Newsletters

## Mayor

IG & Twitter: @NYCMayor  
YouTube: @NYCMayorsOffice

## City Council

IG & Twitter: @nycouncil  
Newsletter [here](#).

## City Council Member (Park Slope)

Shahana Hanif (39th district)  
IG & Twitter: @shahanafrombk  
Newsletter [here](#).

## Governor

IG & Twitter: @govkathyhochul  
(for NYC issues)  
Newsletter [here](#).

## State Assembly

IG & Twitter: @nysa\_majority  
(for NYC issues)

## Senator & Assembly Rep

Assembly member: Robert C. Carroll  
(@am\_robert.carroll)  
Newsletter [here](#).

State Senators: Andrew Gounardes (District  
26 @agounardes), Newsletter [here](#)  
and  
Zellnor Myrie (District 20 @zellnormyrie),  
Newsletter [here](#).

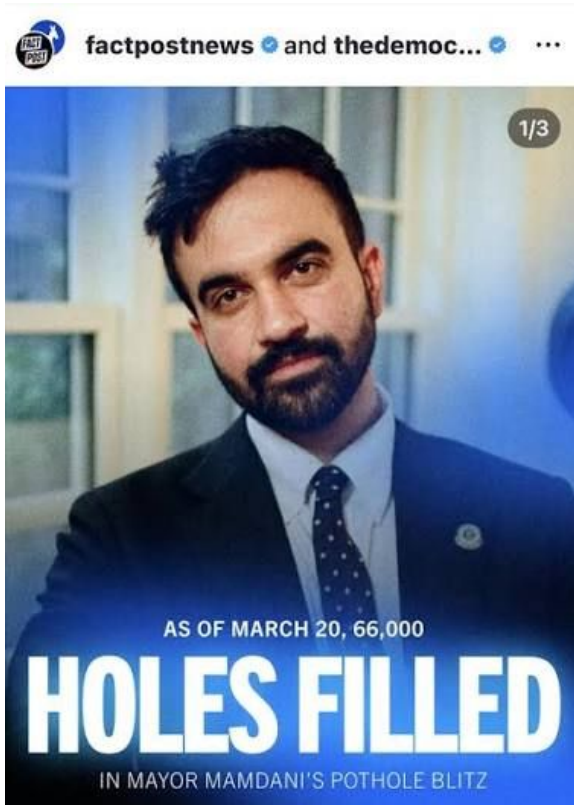
## Community Board 6

Newsletter [here](#).

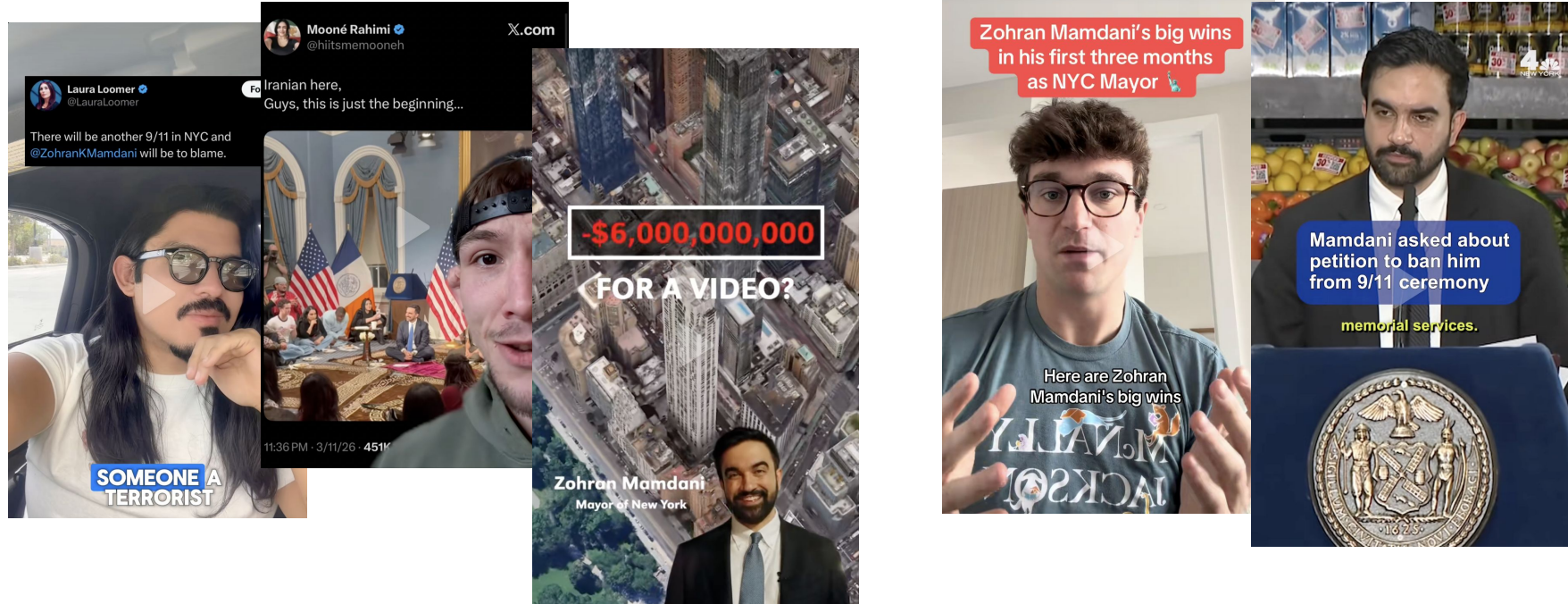
## HPD

Newsletter [here](#).

# Is Mamdani's TikTok a Boost for Local Civics?

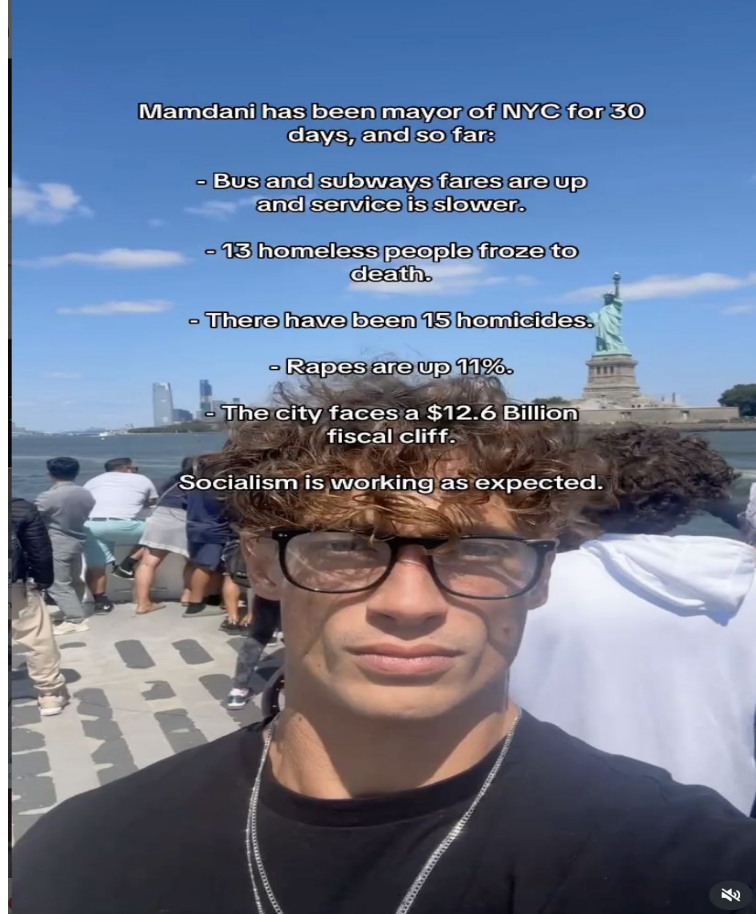


# But TikTok is a Mixed Bag



A range of smaller content creators and mainstream news sources like NBC New York.

# MisInformation Post Example - Instagram Reels



**Why is this misinformation/biased information taken out of context?**

- 1. The MTA sets subway and bus fares, not the mayor. Fare increases are generally approved months in advance through the MTA's budget process.**
- 2. NYC has homicides every single month regardless of Mayor**
- 3. There are no statistics to back up his claim on rape cases**
- 4. NYC has long-term budget challenges that far predate Mamdani. Fiscal cliff is the result of years of spending.**

# Match Your Question to the Right Sources

New York City Council Legislation → [Legistar](#)

Zoning → [NYC Zoning Resolution](#), [ZOLA](#), [Zoning Application Portal](#).

Development Projects and Housing: [Housing Preservation and Development](#), [Dep of City Planning](#)

Public Safety → [CompState](#), [Open Data](#), [NYPD](#), [NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice](#), [NYS Criminal Justice](#)

Landlord and Building Complaints → [HPD Online](#), [NYC 311](#), [NYC Open Data](#)

Homelessness and public housing: [Department of Homeless Services](#) · [DHS Reports](#) · [NYCHA](#) · [NYC Open Data](#)

Agency funding: [OMB Budget Publications](#) · [City Council Budget Documents](#) · [Checkbook NYC](#) · [Independent Budget Office](#)

# How to be Informed: Public Safety

Question: Is anti-semitic violence increasing in Park Slope and the surrounding areas?

- Check the local news
  - Search Gothamist, Brooklyn Eagle, News 12, NY1 and major city outlets for specific incidents.
- Check newsletters from the local precinct and city council member Hanif on reported incidents and public complaints
- Check official data
  - Use the [NYPD Hate Crimes Dashboard](#) to compare anti-Jewish incidents by precinct and year. Park Slope is primarily in the 78th Precinct
- Attend the public meeting of the local precinct or meetings with city council or CB 6 on public safety.
- Check how the data is defined and what types of incidents it's based on.

# What Not to Do

- Rely on NextDoor and Reddit to gauge crime trends.
- Base your judgement on if crimes seem to be reported in the TV news – which often over-reports on crime.
- Ask ChatGPT without checking other sources.

# How to be Informed: What happens when a landlord repeatedly fails to correct serious housing violations?

Question: What happens when a landlord repeatedly fails to correct serious housing violations?

- Start with reporting about housing enforcement (City and State).
- Examine 311 complaint records:
  - Use [NYC Open Data](#) or the building's complaint history in [HPD Online](#)
- Look up a building's violations and whether they were addressed through HPD Online.
  - Distinguish complaints from inspected violations.
- Follow social media and updates from the Mayor's office and HPD on enforcement.
- Identify enforcement tools such as fines, Housing Court cases, emergency repairs, and HPD's Alternative Enforcement Program.
- Attend a rental ripoff hearing and other public hearings.

# How to Be Informed: Atlantic Yards Development

*Question: Did Atlantic Yards/Pacific Park deliver the affordable housing, open space and project timetable originally promised?*



## Atlantic Yards/ Pacific Park Scale

2003: Atlantic Yards announced, with ten-year buildout  
2006: first approval  
2009: second approval  
2010: New York State allows buildout to 2035  
2014: Affordable housing gets 2025 deadline  
2014: Project renamed Pacific Park  
2025-26: Pending plan to revise project

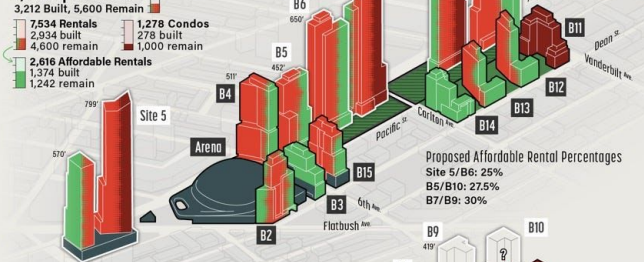
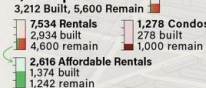
### Building Type



07.02.2026 | Published on Atlantic Yards/Pacific Park Report  
Design by Ben Keel (benkeel.github.io)  
Editing by Norman Oder (normanoder.substack.com)

### Proposed Plans, 2025-26

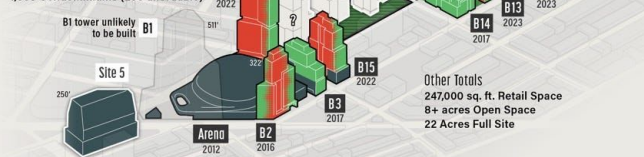
8,812 Apartments



### Approved Plans, 2006

6,430 Apartments

4,500 Rentals (2,250 affordable)  
1,930 Condominiums (200 affordable)



A close-up, dimly lit photograph of two hands holding a smartphone. The phone's screen is the primary light source, casting a soft glow on the fingers. Three semi-transparent, orange-brown speech bubble icons float above the phone. The top bubble contains a heart icon and the number '120'. The middle bubble contains a speech bubble icon and the number '30'. The bottom bubble contains a person icon and the number '13'.

# Part 2

## Social Media and Sources of Misinformation

# The Role of Technology in Finding Information on Local Government

- Social media has changed local news in ways that can be harmful, while giving a platform to a wider range of voices.
- AI has changed how people get information – and we often don't know the sources of information of AI output – is it credible?
- AI can scale up our ability to track local meetings, local policies, and even to complete complicated forms.
- But AI is not ground truth or a great source for making voting decisions (unless we understand its biases).

# Special Guests in Part 2: Social Media, Technology, and AI



**Swapneel Mehta, AI expert  
and Founder, SimPPL**



**Vikram Oberoi, creator  
of [citymeetings.nyc](https://citymeetings.nyc)**

# **Tech and the News: How Algorithms Shape What We Know and Care About**

A social media algorithm is a complex set of rules and calculations used by social media platforms to prioritize the content that users see in their feeds. Past user behavior, content relevance, and the popularity of posts are some of the vital algorithm factors taken into account by different social media platforms.

# Common Sources of NYC Misinformation

- National political influencers
- Social media posts
- Old or out-of-context photos and videos presented as current NYC events
- Local political actors and advocacy groups
- Neighborhood rumor networks
- Misread city data and government policies
- Sensational media



# Why Do People Believe Misinformation?

- **Heuristics:** People use information about party endorsement of particular attitudes, beliefs, or policies as cues that guide their own position either directly through low-effort strategies.
- **Social Identity Protection:** Making judgments that are aligned with one's political identity is more important than achieving accuracy



# How to Avoid Being Deceived by Misinformation

- Read past the headline!
- Who is the original source?
- Who is the author?
- What evidence is provided?
- What is the date and does it make sense?
- Can another credible source confirm it?
- Is the image, quotation or statistic presented in context?
- Are your political or other biases making you believe it too fast?

## How to Spot DISINFORMATION

|                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p><b>READ BEYOND</b><br/>Headlines can be clickbait. What's the whole story? Is there missing context?</p>          |  <p><b>CONSIDER THE SOURCE</b><br/>Navigate away from the story to investigate the site, its mission, and contact info.</p> |
|  <p><b>CHECK THE AUTHOR</b><br/>Do a quick search on the author. Are they real and credible?</p>                      |  <p><b>FIND SOURCES</b><br/>Dig deeper and look for primary sources and verified facts that support the story.</p>          |
|  <p><b>CHECK THE DATE</b><br/>Reposting old photos, videos, or stories may not be relevant to current events.</p>     |  <p><b>IS IT SATIRE?</b><br/>If it's too outlandish, it might be satire or a joke. Check the site and author.</p>           |
|  <p><b>CHECK YOUR BIASES</b><br/>Consider if your own beliefs could influence your reaction or choice of sources.</p> |  <p><b>ASK THE EXPERTS</b><br/>Still unsure? Consult a fact-checking site or ask a librarian!</p>                           |

alphapark.org

# Examples of Misinformation in NYC

Claim: Charges against Jhoan Boada were dropped because he was a migrant

Correction: Actually dismissed because he had been misidentified.

Claim: AI video claimed NYPD arrested ICE agents

Correction: No arrest.

Claim: DA Alvin Bragg wrongly prosecuted a parking attendant who shot an alleged armed robber

Correction: Police initially arrested the attendant, but Bragg's office dropped the charges the next day.

Claim: Migrants received unrestricted prepaid cards worth up to \$10,000

Correction: Misleading claim about a limited food-assistance pilot.

Claim: FEMA sent disaster-relief money to luxury NYC migrant hotels

Correction: Funds came from a separate congressionally funded migrant-shelter program, not disaster relief. NYC never paid luxury rates for hotels

Claim: NYC ballots listing candidates twice proves election fraud

Correction: Votes are not double-counted.

# Using AI to Navigate Local Meetings



Vikram Oberoi

Creator of [citymeetings.nyc](https://citymeetings.nyc)



**citymeetings.nyc** turns NYC Council meetings into short, quick-to-skim, easy-to-share segments same-day using **AI and human oversight**.

It's the easiest way to find and share the 3-minute Q&A or testimony you care about in a 12-hour hearing.

AS SEEN IN



RELIED ON BY NEW YORKERS

**Widely-used** by  
10,000+ monthly  
visitors, 100s of daily  
users.

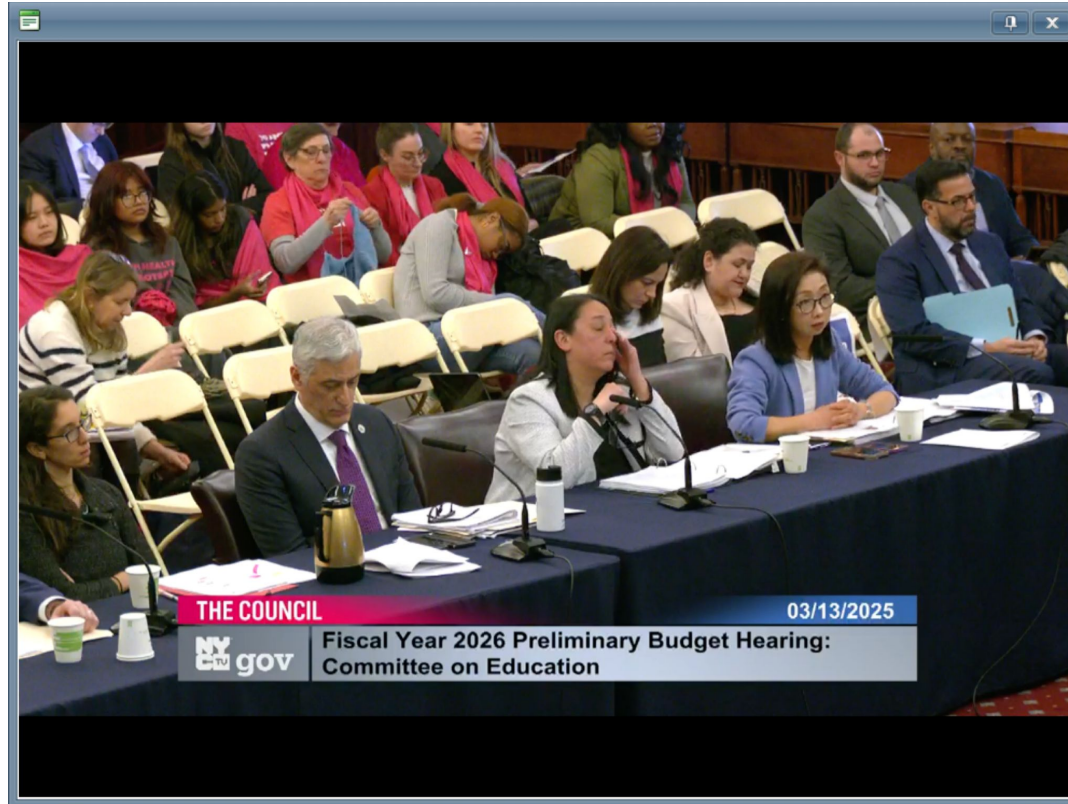
**Highly trusted** by  
government, media,  
advocacy, and  
engaged citizens.

**Frequently shared** as  
a primary source  
across social media,  
advocacy, and press.

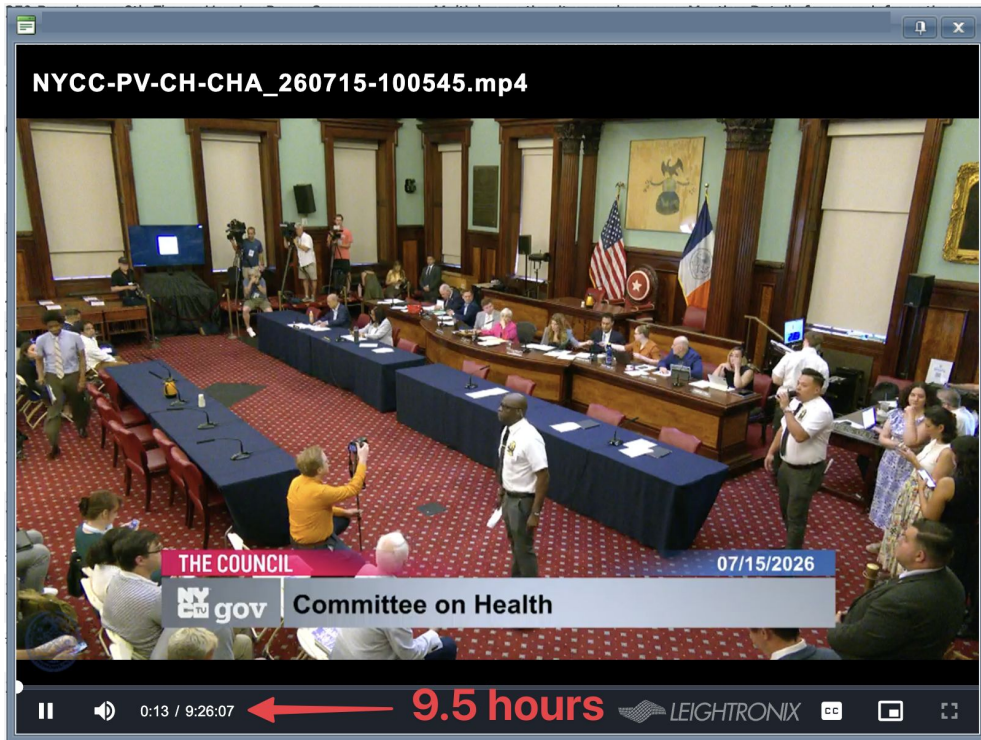
# What I'll talk about

- **How citymeetings.nyc uses AI to make it easier to navigate meetings**
- How to use ChatGPT-and-similar-services to navigate a meeting yourself
- What kind of information you can get from municipal meetings

# Government meetings are long.



# It is hard to find what you care about.



Transcript unavailable as of this morning, ~2 weeks later.

It may be ~1,000 pages for a 9-hour hearing.



## New York City Council

### Committee on Finance

May 27, 2025 · 10:00 AM

🕒 7 hr 13 min

### Summary

A hearing on the FY2026 executive budget for the Department of Corrections (DOC) and Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA).

For DOC, discussions focused on the \$1.21 billion proposed budget, high overtime spending, capital projects at Rikers Island, delays in new therapeutic bed facilities, and ongoing staffing challenges.

For MOIA, the \$29.6 million proposed budget was examined, with emphasis on new immigration legal support centers, funding cuts to existing programs, and the agency's response to increased federal immigration enforcement.

Features testimony from DOC, MOIA, and the public.

### Meeting chapters

Read summaries and watch videos for short segments that matter to you.

- ✓ AGENCY TESTIMONY (19)
- ✓ PUBLIC TESTIMONY (48)
- ✓ Q&A (71)
- ✓ REMARKS (10)

Deselect All

#### REMARKS

##### Council Member Justin Brannan's opening remarks for FY2026 budget hearing on Department of Corrections

Council Member Justin Brannan opens the eleventh day of FY2026 executive budget hearings, focusing on the Department of Corrections (DOC) and Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. He provides an overview ...

0:00:27 · 🕒 117 sec

#### REMARKS

##### Council Member Sandy Nurse outlines focus for Department of Corrections budget hearing

Council Member Sandy Nurse opens the hearing by thanking the DOC leadership and outlining her focus for the session, which includes the plan to close Rikers Island, the transition to ...

0:02:29 · 🕒 95 sec

#### AGENCY TESTIMONY

## Q&A

### Impact of federal reconciliation bill on healthcare for undocumented immigrants

3:56:44 · 92 sec



Summary

Transcript

Council Member Alexa Avilés raises concerns about provisions in the federal reconciliation bill that could penalize states providing healthcare to undocumented immigrants. Commissioner Manuel Castro discusses potential impacts and the city's stance on healthcare access.

- The bill proposes cutting federal Medicaid funding for states using state-only funds to provide healthcare to undocumented immigrants.
- Castro mentions that Health and Hospitals leadership is concerned about potential impacts on communities.
- The commissioner states that the city has been a strong advocate for expanding healthcare access to all residents, regardless of immigration status.

[Report an issue](#) [About transcription errors](#)

## PUBLIC TESTIMONY

### Testimony by Luis Mancheno, Supervising Attorney of New York Immigrant Family Unity Project at The Legal Aid Society

4:48:50 · 134 sec



Summary

Transcript

Luis Mancheno, representing The Legal Aid Society, testifies about the dire situation facing immigrant communities in New York City and the urgent need for increased funding for legal services. He emphasizes the worsening conditions for immigrants and the challenges faced by legal service providers due to underfunding.

- Highlights recent incidents of immigrants being detained when attending immigration proceedings
- States that IOI (Immigrant Opportunities Initiative) is underfunded by about \$12,500,000, with providers funding 50% of their work from other sources
- Urges the council to advocate for additional funding to maintain vital legal representation for New Yorkers

[Report an issue](#) [About transcription errors](#)

## AGENCY TESTIMONY

### Immigration legal services and MOIA Immigration Legal Support Centers

2:23:26 · 85 sec



Summary

Transcript

Commissioner Castro outlines MOIA's plans for immigration legal services in fiscal year 2026, focusing on the establishment of new MOIA Immigration Legal Support Centers and the extension of existing legal service contracts.

- MOIA is launching a \$6.4 million annually funded program supporting 25 immigrant-serving non-profit contractors
- The new MOIA Centers model represents an evolution of the Action NYC program
- MOIA will continue to operate its immigration legal hotline in partnership with Catholic Charities, which received over 64,000 calls in 2024

[Report an issue](#) [About transcription errors](#)

My goals with citymeetings.nyc are:

1. Same-day-availability
2. Accuracy
3. Verifiability



Mount Sinai Eye & Ear Nurses Rally for Layoff Plan as Beth Israel Shutdown Looms

Gothamist

Can the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and proposed high-rise housing next door coexist?



Inside the Campaign to Close the Floyd Bennett Field Migrant Shelter Before Trump Takes Office

DAILY  NEWS

Build for America: The whole country needs more housing

The article above is paywalled. Here is a [free syndicated link](#).

VITAL CITY

The Local Government Staffers We Need and Deserve

CITYLIMITS

Resurrected Tax Break for Renovations Will Help Landlords Comply With Building Emissions Law, Officials Say



Queens BP Says 'Yes' to Adams Zoning Plan, But 'No' to Ending Costly Parking Mandates

citymeetings.nyc is only possible with AI & tools  
for human verification.

# Learn more

- Visit **citymeetings.nyc**
- Talks:
  - How I use AI to Make it Easy to Navigate City Council Meetings, School of Data 2024  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjDQu2IbC1M>
  - A year of using AI @ citymeetings.nyc: what it took, how it works, and the impact it has had, School of Data 2025: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9ZpuLJgyeU>
- Read about it:
  - “Why Vikram Oberoi is Every NYC Journalist’s Favorite New Yorker”  
<https://hellgatenyc.com/vikram-oberoi-rules/>
  - “New Website Uses AI to Monitor City Hall Meetings”  
[https://ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/CTV/2024/10/12/new-website-uses-ai-to-monitor-city-hall-meeting\\_s](https://ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/CTV/2024/10/12/new-website-uses-ai-to-monitor-city-hall-meeting_s)
  - “Anatomy of an AI-Driven Civic Tech Product”  
<https://www.maximumnewyork.com/p/citymeetings-interview>

citymeetings.nyc will be back under a new brand  
~September/October

It will cover city and state.

# What I'll talk about

- How citymeetings.nyc uses AI to make it easier to navigate meetings
- **How to use ChatGPT-and-similar-services to navigate a meeting yourself**
- What kind of information you can get from municipal meetings

# What you will need

- A transcript of the meeting you are trying to follow
- An account with an AI chat subscription:
  - ChatGPT
  - Claude
  - Microsoft Copilot
  - ... many others

# Where to get transcripts

- For NYC council, on Legistar (may be posted late):  
<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/Calendar.aspx>
- Almost all other hearings are posted on YouTube, which can provide transcripts



Premium

community board



## CB3 - Transportation, Public Safety, Sanitation & Environment Committee (7/14/26)



Manhattan Community Board 3 NYC  
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community board



### CB3 - Transportation, Public Safety, Sanitation & Environment Committee (7/14/26)



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50 views Jul 15, 2026

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## Ask

Get answers, explore topics, and more

◆ Ask questions

## Transcript

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📘 Facebook

Show less



CB3 - Transportation, Public Safety, Sanitation & Environment Committee (7/14/26)

## Transcript

Q Search in video

- 2:17** members must be in person in order to be present? Yes. Uh, I'll remind our committee
- 2:22** members in email already, but yeah, this is a hybrid meeting and just so everyone is aware when a hybrid meeting you still
- 2:28** need to be in person to be recorded uh at New York uh and to be able to vote if
- 2:34** we were actually doing resolutions. So, just a reminder of that. Francisco's online and I was trying to talk
- 2:46** about promoting the panel so we can participate so
- 2:54** okay uh so I'll just say we have two agenda
- 2:59** items three actually three agenda items tonight um we have EDC uh here uh
- 3:05** presenting Chinatown connections it's informational presentation from EDC. So, we appreciate you guys coming back out
- 3:11** again. Um, and we'll have them come up here in a minute. Uh, and after that, we have Clinton Street Neighborhoods, uh,
- 3:17** anformational presentation on safety concerns on Clinton Street. And then, uh, after we're going to be finalizing
- 3:23** our district needs, uh, for this committee. So, that is our three items.

English (auto-generated)

0:00 Hi, welcome everyone to the community board 3 of Manhattan's uh transportation public safety uh and environment 0:08 committee here. Uh we're ...

PASTED

Can you provide minutes for this Manhattan Community Board 3 Transportation, Public Safety, & Environment Committee meeting?

The minutes should be chronological and use timestamps from the transcript.

The URL of the meeting is here, and it should link to the correct moment on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MjDGCMOJgo>

And then can you provide a breakdown of the meeting with summaries of the discussion and any testimony?

Read the output in a  
Google Doc here:



## Meeting Breakdown & Analysis

### At a glance

| Agenda item                                         | Type          | Outcome                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chinatown Connections<br>(EDC/DOT/Marvel/artist)    | Informational | No vote; team returns in the fall with conceptual design              |
| Clinton Street safety (Clinton Street<br>Neighbors) | Informational | No vote; DOT to evaluate; item<br>expected to return for a resolution |
| District Needs Statement                            | Discussion    | Not finalized; vote scheduled for<br>October with budget priorities   |

### Item 1 — Chinatown Connections

**What it is.** A roughly \$55.8 million package with three parts: a redesign of Kimlau Square, a \$2.5 million Welcome Gateway public artwork, and \$4 million of Park Row beautification. The money traces to a \$20 million New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative award to Chinatown, of which \$11.5 million went to these three projects, with the City adding the balance. The projects were nominated through a community Local Planning Committee process, a point both EDC and the State representative pressed hard.

**The design case.** DOT's argument rested on a single asymmetry: about 80% of people in Kimlau Square are on foot, but 66% of the square's area is roadway. The proposal moves the plaza from the south side to the north, squares up the intersection, and raises the pedestrian

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rcsqQOPUUr353HgIiphQAa7VXAJepWlvGTIL1Gns-bw/edit?usp=sharing>

**Read the output in a  
Google Doc here:**



**Do this:**

- Provide context when you talk to AI (meeting name, date, link, anything you want to know in particular)
- Give AI some means to make it easier to verify (links to YouTube, pull-quotes that you can find)
- Subscribe to get access to better models (\$20/mo+)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rcsqQOPUUr353HgIphQAa7VXAJepWlvGTIL1Gns-bw/edit?usp=sharing>

**Read the output in a  
Google Doc here:**



**Don't do this:**

- Ask AI “what happened at the Manhattan CB3 meeting on July 14th?” without any additional context

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rcsqQOPUUr353HgIphQAa7VXAJepWlvGTIL1Gns-bw/edit?usp=sharing>

**Read the output in a  
Google Doc here:**



**Can I trust this output?**

- When you provide context, like a transcript, AI can give answers grounded in it
- In 2023, AI was bad at giving grounded answers.
- In 2026, AI is exceptional at giving grounded answers.
- Make things easy to verify, and verify them if they're important to you (watch/read the pertinent part of the video/transcript)

# What I'll talk about

- How citymeetings.nyc uses AI to make it easier to navigate meetings
- How to use ChatGPT-and-similar-services to navigate a meeting yourself
- **What kind of information you can get from municipal meetings**

# Things you can learn from meetings

- Officials' positions in their own words.
- Commitments and admissions made under questioning.
- Positions of organizations & private citizens from public testimony.
- For land use – project modifications, community conditions, developer concessions, etc.

**Meetings are generally statements of record, not where decisions are made or work is done.**

**Officials say things to put them on the record. Officials ask questions to force other parties to get things on the record. The public shows up to get their opinion on the record.**

# Things you (generally) cannot learn from meetings

- Everything that happens behind-the-scenes – deal-making, other controversy, etc.
- Everything that happens after the meeting – the outcome of a bill's passage or failure, the impact of a new development, etc.
- Broader public opinion (public testimony is a small slice of the public)
- Why decisions were made – meetings are largely planned-and-prepared-for in advance

**Many things impact us that do not get discussed in public meetings.**

**And, often, NYC electeds don't have the authority to do things you care about.**

## Legislative

- NYC Council — stated meetings, plus ~35 committees and subcommittees (Finance, Land Use, Housing, etc.), each holding hearings

## Episodic

- Charter Revision Commissions

## Community-level

- 59 Community Boards — full board meetings plus committee meetings (land use, transportation, liquor licenses...), so hundreds of meetings a month citywide
- 5 Borough Boards (borough president + council members + CB chairs)
- NYPD Precinct Community Councils (one per precinct)

## Land use & built environment

- City Planning Commission (public hearings and review sessions on ULURP items)
- Landmarks Preservation Commission
- Board of Standards and Appeals (variances, special permits)
- Public Design Commission
- Franchise and Concession Review Committee
- Loft Board

## Education

- Panel for Educational Policy (the DOE's governing board)
- 32 Community Education Councils plus citywide councils (high schools, special education, D75, English language learners)

## Oversight & accountability

- Civilian Complaint Review Board
- Board of Correction
- Campaign Finance Board
- Conflicts of Interest Board
- Commission on Human Rights (hearings)
- Equal Employment Practices Commission

## Boards of authorities & agencies

- Rent Guidelines Board (the annual rent-increase votes)
- NYCHA Board
- NYC Health + Hospitals Board
- Board of Health
- Taxi & Limousine Commission
- Economic Development Corporation / Build NYC / IDA boards
- Water Board
- Pension boards (NYCERS, TRS, etc.)

## Legislative

- \* NYC Council — stated meetings, plus ~35 committees and subcommittees (Finance, Land Use, Housing, etc.), each holding hearings **\*hearings you care about**

## Episodic **COGE**

- Charter Revision Commissions

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# Tips & resources

- Find your community board (and other districts): <https://boundaries.beta.nyc/>
- NYC Council Legistar: <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov>
- It helps to build some technical understanding of how our government works.
  - This is an exceptional class: <https://www.maximumnewyork.com/p/school>
  - If you want to closely follow housing & development in NYC, learn about ULURP: <https://www.nyc.gov/content/planning/pages/planning/public-review#ulurp>
- It is often easier to get involved in some basic capacity and surround yourself with folks in your community who are in the know
  - (e.g. I volunteer for Vanderbilt Open Streets, which keeps me in touch with folks who know and follow way more than I do about things I care about re: transit, housing, and hyperlocal happenings)
- Meetings are not a substitute for news.



Swapneel Mehta  
Founder, SimPPL

For Slides:

<https://mehtaver.se/slides/nyc-civics-ai-2026.html>