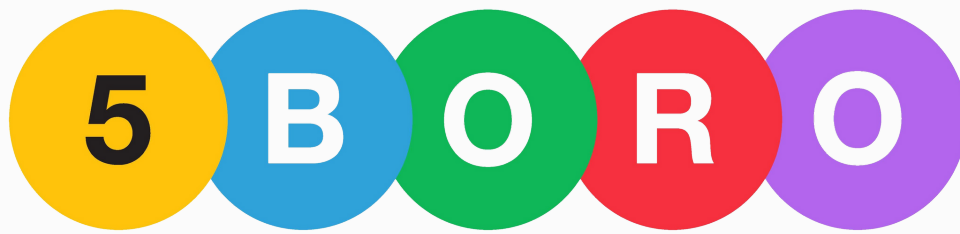


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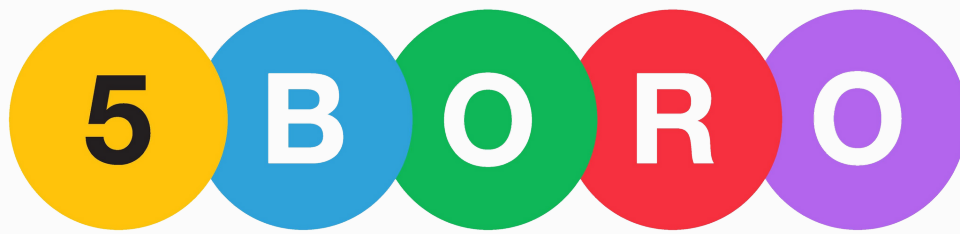
POLICY CHALLENGES

- **JOB, THE ECONOMY,
& WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**
- **EDUCATION & EQUITY**
- **BUDGET &
GOVERNMENT
EFFICACY**
- **TRANSPORTATION,
WATERWAYS, &
QUALITY OF LIFE**

WHO WE ARE

The Five Borough Institute (5BORO) is a timely, cutting-edge policy incubator to help guide our city and decision makers through this period of immense transition, revived hope, and new beginnings. We're bringing together the brightest and most innovative minds to address our city's unprecedented challenges.

We will convene leaders from New York City's labor, business, arts and culture, real estate, academic, tech, and finance communities and develop these ideas to tangible policy solutions. With our growing technology community, 5BORO will develop cutting-edge innovations for government services that will transform New York into an innovative global leader.



THE GOAL

As our city emerges from the pandemic and enters a new era of rebirth, the 5BORO Institute aims to emerge as a flexible, cutting-edge policy incubator to help guide the city and its leaders through this period of immense transition and immense possibilities.

THE STRATEGY

The issues that 5BORO intends to tackle are intense and complex. In order for people to listen and learn, we need to make our research digestible and, most importantly, feasible for implementation. We aim to propose solutions via policy reports and white papers, sponsored events, podcasts and videos, newsletters, press outreach, and social media engagement with an emphasis on funding and execution of new programs.

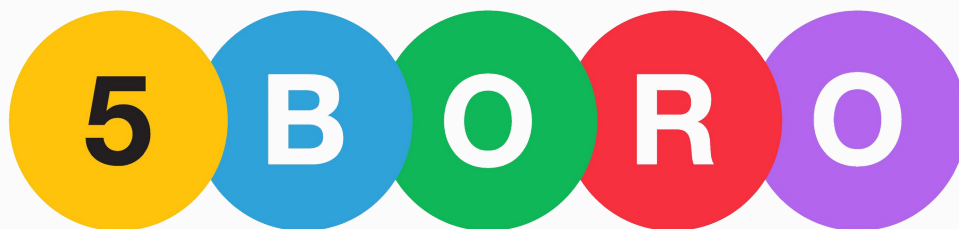
The 5BORO Institute will work with Hunter College as our lead academic partner. Together, we will collaborate with our city's top academic institutions including NYU, Fordham, Cooper Union, and Pace University, among others. 5BORO will build on the ideas proposed during Mayor Eric Adams' campaign by putting them through a rigorous academic analysis to test their financial viability and ability to implement.

We aim to see the process through from start to finish – from rigorous academic testing to campaigns to build public support around key proposals.

Join us as we create the Five Borough Institute, a place where *real* issues will meet *real* solutions to advance every corner of our city.

FOUNDER: TOM ALLON

Allon is the founder and publisher of the respected media company City & State. Allon ran for NYC Mayor in 2013. In 2019-2021, he was the creator and principal of Mayor Eric Adams "Mayor School," which conducted more than 100 rigorous policy discussions with leading experts in different industries in NY.



WAYS TO GIVE

Help us make NYC better

ONLINE

<https://fiveboro.nyc/>



CHECK

Checks should be made payable to the Fund for the City of New York (FCNY).

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121 Avenue of the Americas

6th Floor

New York, NY 10013

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POLITICO

Adams ally to launch municipal think tank

BY SALLY GOLDENBERG, AMANDA EISENBERG | 03/28/2022 03:23 PM EDT



Despite his pledge of objectivity, Tom Allon's (not shown) ties to Mayor Eric Adams run deep. | Astrid Stawiarz/Getty Images for Brooklyn Academy of Music

NEW YORK — New York City mayors have long had outside operations to boost their platforms: The conservative think tank Manhattan Institute [readily supported Rudy Giuliani's Republican policies](#). Mike Bloomberg [used his personal wealth](#) to spread his agenda beyond the confines of his office. Bill de Blasio [established the Campaign for One New York](#), followed by embattled spinoffs, to bankroll his policy priorities locally and nationally.



Now an ally of Mayor Eric Adams is launching a similar organization connected to City Hall's new leader.

Tom Allon, publisher of local political website City & State, is raising money for a think tank that will align with the centrist agenda of a Democratic politician Allon counts as a longtime friend — though he vowed independence from the mayor.

[A memo to potential donors](#), obtained by POLITICO, said the organization “anticipates evaluating a number of concrete policy ideas that were part of incoming NYC Mayor Eric Adams campaign platform and putting them through a rigorous academic analysis to assess their financial viability and ability to implement.”

Despite his pledge of objectivity, Allon's ties to Adams run deep: A one-time mayoral candidate himself, [the publisher spearheaded](#) Adams' “mayor school” for several years to connect the former Brooklyn borough president to policy leaders and others interested in showing him the ropes. His son Jonah Allon is a deputy press secretary for Adams and previously worked as a press secretary in the City Council. He [had a hand in arranging for Adams to dine with former Gov. Andrew Cuomo](#) at Osteria La Baia earlier this year, according to someone familiar with the meeting. And just this month, [Adams appointed Allon to the Panel for Educational Policy](#).

The think tank, which Allon named Five Boros Institute, is being established as a “non-profit, non-partisan clearinghouse for great urban policy ideas and pragmatic solutions to chronic problems,” according to a four-page memo.

“After the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic, New York City needs a forward-thinking, nimble and experienced think-tank that is able to convene major stakeholders from business, government, academia and to generate the most cutting-edge and practicable ideas available,” reads the memo, which refers to the group's original title, the Five Boroughs Ideas Lab.

In an interview, Allon said he has raised \$250,000 so far, and hopes to amass up to \$1.5 million from private funders for the outfit's annual budget. He said he plans to release the names of donors once the organization launches.

“We're hoping that no more than 20 percent of our annual spend comes from any individual industry,” Allon said, adding that he wants to avoid any perception that the venture operates as “a tool” for any particular sector.

Allon said he has received help from government fixture Dick Ravitch, who held the role of lieutenant governor and chaired the MTA and the Empire State Development Corporation. Ravitch has put up some of his own money for the venture and will co-chair the board with Allon. The publisher declined to name any other board members.



The think tank will be formally announced during a fundraiser planned for May 3 at the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College, Allon said.

He also received help on the written proposal from an employee at consulting firm Tusk Strategies, which ran an opposing mayoral campaign for Andrew Yang last year. Two people familiar with the arrangement described the employee's role as unpaid and voluntary.

But some of the ideas included in the memo ring a familiar tone.

The think tank floated policy ideas in the areas of workforce development, education and budget efficacy. One proposal — developing a city-run system of "portable benefits" including health care coverage for gig workers and freelancers — was [touted by Yang on the campaign trail](#).

The nascent group also suggested City Hall hire a chief revenue officer to "monetize the city's considerable assets" like parks and municipal buildings, revamp the city's gifted and talented programs, and turn New York into "the beacon of training the next generation of digital security warriors," according to the memo.

It also showed alignment with the new mayor's early interest in cryptocurrency, following his decision to convert his first three paychecks to Bitcoin. "How do we leverage our growing tech sector to innovate our city government through blockchain and other technologies?" the memo reads.

Tusk has a burgeoning cryptocurrency practice.

Nevertheless, Allon said the organization would rigorously evaluate City Hall's agenda.

"I don't think it will be closely tied at all [to the Adams administration]. I happen to have a personal relationship with Eric," Allon said. "We're not going to be an arm of the administration, but we hope because of the relationship and because of the good ideas we put out there [to influence city policies.]"

Government reform advocate John Kaehny of the group Reinvent Albany said nothing in this arrangement raises red flags.

"There's hundreds and hundreds of groups trying to influence the mayor," Kaehny added.



DAILY NEWS

Needed: New ideas to revitalize New York

By Tom Allon
New York Daily News

The warm spring air, busier streets and lower COVID hospitalization rate have given New Yorkers a new sense of hope that the worst of the horrific last two years is squarely behind us.

But let's be realistic: New York isn't going back to the status quo ante of early 2020. Our society and the challenges we face have been laid bare in the wake of the jarring disruptions of the pandemic. The future of work, commercial real estate, health-care delivery, public school education and so many other issues require a fresh take given the rapidly evolving pace of change.

We have a relatively new mayor and governor, both of whom have stepped into cascading problems that are not going away in the short term. Our elected leaders are rushing from crisis to crisis, trying to calm a worried populace about public safety, the subways, inflation, street homelessness, housing affordability and many other chronic issues that have plagued big cities like ours for decades.



Providing options for the new mayor. (Michael M Santiago/GettyImages/Getty Images)

Into this maelstrom, I am working with a group of more than a dozen concerned and thoughtful New Yorkers to create a think tank — the 5 Boro Institute — that will bring together our city's best minds to offer pragmatic, implementable solutions to some of these problems.

I count Mayor Adams as a friend, but this isn't an influence operation. The 5 Boro Institute will be an independent, non-partisan ideas lab whose sole mission will be to advance creative public policy ideas to improve our city. We plan to collaborate with many great New York organizations — from academic institutions like NYU and Hunter College to non-profits like Fountain House to put together plans to tackle society's toughest problems, including some of its newest ones.

For example, one of our first collaborations will look at the future of commercial real estate and underutilized hotels in New York and what can be done to turn an eroding set of assets into potentially productive solutions to affordable housing, life sciences and biotech opportunities.

While we explore ways to make lemonade out of commercial real estate's class B and C property lemons, we will also look at the budgetary and financial implications of this shift in our built spaces.

Can city and state government financially incentivize property owners to quickly retrofit hotels and commercial property into affordable housing or mixed-use properties? Can we use tax incentives or other new ideas to lure new enterprises to rent our unused commercial space, which is [now at a 13% vacancy rate in Manhattan](#).

On health care, how can our public high schools and public universities help train a well-educated 21st-century workforce? For years, Hunter College has been ready to build a desperately needed nursing school, only to be thwarted by bureaucratic red tape. Let's untie this Gordian knot, and dramatically increase our nursing workforce, which has been [dangerously thinning out in recent years](#), leading to [unsafe staffing](#) at many local hospitals.

Relatedly, how do we find the necessary budget dollars and the highly trained workforce to increase nursing and psychological counseling in our schools, a growing crisis made worse by the social isolation of our public school students the last two years of Zoom instruction?

Another health care crisis that is playing out on our streets and subway stations every day is the scarcity of psychiatric hospital beds in the city. The

last gubernatorial administration continued the short-sighted de-institutionalization begun in the 1970s and [between 2014-18 eliminated 15% of the state psychiatric hospital beds in the city](#). Hospitals have gone along willingly with this failed policy because there's so much more money to be made in knee replacements than psychiatric care for the indigent. Local and federal government leaders have stood by passively watching this slow-motion crisis spill out all over our streets and subway cars. In a state budget exceeding \$220 billion and a city budget of more than \$100 billion, we can find the necessary funding to reinstate the 2,000-4,000 beds necessary to help our extremely mentally ill neighbors suffering right in front of our eyes each day.

New York has faced numerous crises over the last century — from the pandemic of 1918 to the crippling fiscal crisis in the 1970s to 9/11 at the turn of this century to the financial collapse of 2008. Each time, our elected leaders as well as civic giants like Dick Ravitch — my co-chair of the 5 Boro Institute — rescued our city and put us back on the course of growth and prosperity.

This can and must happen again in the coming years. The 5 Boro Institute will join other civic groups in the city to assist our elected leaders in reviving our metropolis from the darkest days of our pandemic.

Allon, the publisher of City & State, is the co-founder of the [5 Boro Institute](https://fiveboro.nyc/)



Adams' ally to launch think tank and announce board. Here's who is on it.

By Amanda Eisenberg

05/02/2022 04:13 PM EDT

NEW YORK — Tom Allon, an ally to Mayor Eric Adams who is [launching a municipal think tank](#), will introduce the venture's board members and an education-related project at a launch party Tuesday evening.

Meet the board: The think tank, Five Boros Institute, will be co-chaired by Allon and former Lt. Gov. Dick Ravitch, with Tusk Strategies senior vice president Erika Tannor serving as vice chair.

Other board members include Charles O'Byrne, once a top aide to former Gov. David Paterson; political strategists Basil Smikle and Brian Ellner; Bolton-St. Johns partner Teresa Gonzalez; Tech:NYC founder Julie Samuels; entrepreneur Andrew Rasiej; former ABNY executive director Angela Pinsky; Mount Sinai's Erik Blutinger; crypto content creator Jessica Walker; and consultant Neal Kwatra.

Milton Tingling, a former justice for the New York County Supreme Court, and Hal Fetner, president and CEO of Fetner Properties, round out the board. Allon said he hopes to fill a few more board positions in the coming months.

The details: [Among the think tank's first projects](#) will be a research proposal aimed at fixing New York City's gifted and talented programs, which Adams said he will overhaul by adding more seats [and permanently eliminating admissions tests](#). Critics of the program, which provides accelerated learning for public school students, say the existing program shortchanges students of color.

"The mayor, the DOE, the various agencies can put out proposals or put out policy ideas," Allon said. "We see our role as helping them come up with financial models and budgetary models to figure out how to finance these initiatives, and with actionable items on how to execute them."

The proposal, which Allon hopes will roll out in September at an event with Hunter College focused on improving public school education, will also include research aimed at starting the school day for high schoolers [an hour later than normal](#).



Allon said Schools Chancellor David Banks approached him about discussing the education ideas “sooner rather than later.” He also hopes to partner with institutions like Fountain House, a nonprofit formerly run by city Health Commissioner Ashwin Vasan.

What’s next: First Deputy Mayor Lorraine Grillo will give the keynote speech at Tuesday’s launch party, which will take place at the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College.

Vasan, Attorney General Tish James and former Adams campaign spokesperson Evan Thies are expected to be in attendance, among a host of city and state officials, Allon said.