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[Varun Sanyal: 40 Under 40 2026](#)

Raina Lipsitz, 7.27.26

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Varun Sanyal, 38

Vice President, Government Relations and Policy

Gotham Organization

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Varun Sanyal's first job out of college was for the Assistant Deputy Majority Leader of the New York City Council in charge of land use and legislation. He learned a great deal about real estate development. "I was privy to a lot of the large scale rezonings that were occurring throughout the city," he said. That job also taught him early on that "community engagement and information was key"—knowledge that has come in handy in his current role as vice president of government relations and policy at Gotham Organization, which develops and builds mixed-use projects across New York City.

Biggest Challenge



"There's always community pushback to large-scale development. That's why I really focus on communication as being such a strong skill in this role — it breaks down barriers and engenders trust, and trust is important to any project you try to accomplish in New York City."

Gotham Organization has a "rich track record of delivering housing for low-, moderate-, and middle-income New Yorkers," Sanyal said. His role is to ensure robust communication between Gotham and the communities where it aspires to build. Helping to provide affordable housing is meaningful to him as a native New Yorker — he was born in Brooklyn and raised in Staten Island — and the son of a

public school teacher. “Shelter is not a luxury; it’s a necessity,” he said.

Given the city’s “acute” housing crisis, Sanyal is especially proud to work for an organization that is “playing our part in terms of trying to provide thousands of units of housing.” He has seen how many people the housing crisis has affected, he added, citing homeowners who almost lost their homes during the Great Recession and young people who can’t afford to live in the New York City neighborhoods where they were raised.

When he’s not working, Sanyal loves traveling and spending time with his 3-year-old daughter. One of their favorite places is Jennifer’s Playground in Staten Island’s Graniteville Park. “It was my neighborhood playground,” Sanyal said. “I came of age there...it’s special and it means a lot, just sharing the things that mean a lot to me...passing [them] down to the next generation.”