

THE NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS EDUCATION FUND
WE ACT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
SOUTH BRONX UNITE

GREEN PACT



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Dear New York City Council Members,

The Green Our City Now Coalition has been assembled to remedy the negative cumulative impacts of unjust environmental policies that have plagued communities of color for decades. However, we cannot accomplish this on our own. We need elected officials, like you, to help us fight environmental racism—racial discrimination in environmental policy making, as well as the enforcement of environmental laws and regulations that disproportionately impact low-income communities and communities of color

We will offer new and re-elected Council Members information and guidance on environmental policy priorities, document elected leaders’ environmental commitments, and hold elected leaders accountable for their “green promises.”

In order for our work to continue successfully and collaboratively, we are asking Council Members to sign and commit to our **Green Pact**. Whereas our Green Promises document briefly highlighted vital climate and environmental justice issues that newly elected Council Members discussed on their campaign platform, the Green Pact builds on that agenda, expanding the scope and depth of environmental work undertaken by elected leaders, connecting them with information and resources, and holding them accountable.

The Green Pact elaborates on the policies that our coalition and communities believe are important for City Council Members to prioritize while they are in office. We hope that Council Members ensure that the health and safety of our communities are prioritized by working on legislation and policy that advances equity, justice, and community engagement. Essentially, this is an agreement between you, as a City Council Member, and the community that elected you. Green Our City Now wants you to succeed in keeping your green promises. To that end, our coalition will host roundtables to continue the discussion on how we can work together to address past environmental harms and develop solutions for an equitable future.

By signing on to the Green Pact, you will show your constituents that you are ready to work with and fight for them in addressing climate and environmental justice in our communities.

Sincerely,

The New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund

WE ACT For Environmental Justice

South Bronx Unite



I, Council Member _____, commit to actively and meaningfully work on the environmental issues I have checked below. This commitment includes: centering the priorities of frontline and under-resourced communities; supporting public policy that produces measurable and tangible benefits for frontline communities and for the environment; speaking publicly in support of these issues, including with the media, at public hearings and community meetings; raising awareness about these issues with both the public and fellow Council Members; working with community groups to coordinate campaigns to advance the checked issues; and participating in roundtables held by the Green Our City Now Coalition.

I commit to work on the following issues (please check as many as you would like, keeping in mind the definition of commitment described above):

- Equity and Environmental Justice:** Ensure equity and justice are integrated into all conversations and solutions
- Parks and Open Spaces:** Expand access to parks and open spaces and improve park maintenance and safety
- Coastal Resiliency:** Increase natural barriers to combat sea level rise and coastal flooding
- Solid Waste Management:** Improve recycling, composting, and siting of waste facilities
- Green Infrastructure:** Update and modernize the City's sewage and wastewater infrastructure, mitigate the urban heat island effect, and reduce inland flooding
- Lead Poisoning:** End lead poisoning through testing, remediation, and protection
- Public Transportation:** Improve access, service, and safety for subway and bus riders
- Micromobility:** Expand access to and improve safety for micromobility users
- Reclaim Car Space:** Adopt policies and legislation to reclaim 25% of our street space from cars by 2025
- Building Emissions:** Decarbonize the City's buildings
- Vehicle Emissions:** Electrify the City's fleet and school buses
- Renewable Energy:** Support green energy projects by removing permitting barriers
- Green Jobs:** Strengthen access to training programs and green jobs

NAME (PRINT)

SIGNATURE

DATE



PRIORITY ISSUES

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

Our Green Pact, in accordance with our Green Our City Now campaign, prioritizes and centers environmental justice, equity, and meaningful community engagement. Guided by [environmental justice principles](#), our Coalition recognizes that certain communities disproportionately bear unequal environmental and economic burdens due to compounding racial and economic discrimination in environmental policy making and enforcement of regulations and laws. We understand and advocate for all communities in New York City to have [the right to equal environmental protection under the law, and the right to live, work and play in communities that are safe, healthy and free of life-threatening conditions](#). A first step in making this happen is to ensure communities have the information they need to meaningfully participate and advocate in decision making processes, [hold decision makers accountable, and create change for their communities](#).

New York City has long been a center of environmental, health, and climate injustices due to the unequal distribution of environmental hazards such as the siting of toxic waste facilities, structural racism in housing such as residential redlining, poor working conditions, and historic disinvestments in low-income communities and communities of color. While everyone should have access to [clean air](#) and [water](#), affordable and safe [housing](#) and [transportation](#), and access to [public spaces](#) and [good jobs](#), for too many communities [throughout New York City](#) these necessities remain out of reach. Additionally, [climate change exacerbates](#) existing inequities in these already overburdened communities as the frequency of extreme heat waves, flooding, and other destructive weather events increase. [Climate justice](#) recognizes that it is these same historically overburdened communities that are most vulnerable to a rapidly changing climate.

There are many positive signs from all levels of government, such as the Biden Administration's [Justice40 Initiative](#), the U.S. Department of Justice's establishment of an [Office of Environmental Justice](#), and [New York State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act](#), which specifies that disadvantaged communities must

receive at least 35-40% of the total statewide spending on clean energy and energy efficiency programs.

We created this campaign to increase transparency and accountability, and we do this by identifying the environmental and climate change issues plaguing our communities, tracking the promises elected officials make to fix them, and listening to the solutions proposed by New York City-based grassroots organizations and their leadership. We seek to elevate and support the concerns—and proposed solutions—from communities throughout our City, prioritizing low-income communities and communities of color that are disproportionately impacted by environmental burdens. These environmental and climate justice and equity principles are integrated into our Coalition's recommendations below.

We must ensure that elected officials and City government leaders do their part by incorporating these principles in their decision-making processes, community engagement, policies, proposed legislation, and programs. This begins by appropriating adequate funding for staffing and the full implementation of the City's [Environmental Justice for All laws](#), which includes Local Law 60 of 2017, which requires a citywide environmental justice study, and Local Law 64, which requires the establishment of an Advisory Board to work with the City on developing a comprehensive citywide environmental justice plan. Additionally, robust community engagement should be an integral part of the City's planning and policy making. As New York City is home to one of the oldest environmental justice movements, we must keep fighting to make our City healthy, equitable, and sustainable for all communities for generations to come.



PRIORITY ISSUES

A GREEN CITY

Parks and green spaces are some of New York City's most valuable environmental assets. Trees, grass, and vegetation combat [the urban heat island effect](#), which is caused by structures such as buildings, roads, and other hard infrastructure in urban areas that trap heat in warm months, creating "islands" of higher temperatures compared with outlying areas. [Urban heat islands](#) also intensify extreme heat waves, harming more people in cities than any other weather-related events. Furthermore, [studies show](#) formerly redlined neighborhoods are today an average of five degrees hotter in the summer than non-redlined areas due to less tree coverage and access to parks.

Trees and plants [lower surface and air temperatures](#) by providing shade and through evapotranspiration. Trees in cities also [prevent approximately 1,200 heat-related deaths](#) and countless heat-related illnesses each year. They also clean our air and act as a carbon sink, fighting climate change and filtering out harmful pollutants by

[removing an estimated 711,000 metric tons of air pollution annually and absorbing more than 90 million metric tons of carbon.](#)

Additionally, as hurricanes, severe rainfall, and inland and coastal flooding become more extreme and frequent due to climate change, our parks, open spaces, and wetlands have a vital role to play in stormwater absorption. By capturing stormwater, [parks can reduce runoff by 90% and filter out as much as 95% of major pollutants from water.](#) Even beyond immediate physical health benefits, access to parks and green spaces benefits our mental state, reduces stress, and has even shown to improve blood pressure.

Unfortunately, due to historic disinvestment and structural racism, such as redlining, our parks, green spaces, and access to the City's waterfront are not equitably distributed. Access to green spaces is on average much [lower](#) in environmental justice neighborhoods that are

already plagued by adverse health problems and high levels of pollution. Moreover, city agencies such as the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Department of City Planning (DCP), and Mayor’s Office of Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ) do not have the resources they need to provide access to quality green spaces and infrastructure in every neighborhood. To counteract this, investments must be made equitably in the planning, maintaining, and building out of our parks, open space, and coastal resiliency.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Parks and Open Spaces

■ Invest at least 1% of the City’s operating budget in parks: Currently, **parks only receive 0.5% of the City budget, despite making up 14% of all City land.** As advocated by **the Play Fair Coalition**, increasing the City’s parks budget would help invest in maintenance and operations, restore worker and ranger employment, and increase access to forests, wetlands, and trails to preserve our parks and ensure they last for generations.

- Implement City Council bills **Intros 173** and **174** of 2022, which concern park inspections, equity, and DPR’s web-based capital projects tracker.
- Build out our urban forests: Planting more trees lowers temperatures, reduces carbon emissions by storing carbon and removing pollutants from the atmosphere, and improves public health by reducing heat-related illnesses. As emphasized by the **Forest for All NYC Coalition**, the City must protect, maintain, expand, and promote the New York City urban forest to benefit all New Yorkers in a way that is just and equitable.
 - In accordance with the **NYC Urban Forest Agenda**, the City should pass legislation to implement goals such as achieving 30% canopy cover by 2035 and establishing a New York City urban forest master plan.
- Ensure that all New Yorkers live within walking distance of a park¹: Since parks provide many environmental and social benefits (e.g. reduce air and noise pollution, decrease temperatures during extreme heat, improve mental health and air quality, and provide a public space for communities to gather), we should ensure everyone has access, not just people in affluent neighborhoods.



OneNYC 2050 set a target of 85% of New Yorkers living within walking distance of a park by 2030.

However, as of 2022, only **83.6%** of New Yorkers do.

- Activate pedestrian plazas and streets with a focus on neighborhoods with limited open space.
- Expand public access to the waterfront, especially for historically underserved neighborhoods, as explored in the City’s **Comprehensive Waterfront Plan**.
- Combat extreme heat: **Increase the amount of green space and cooling centers** throughout the City and the amount of cooling features available to the public during heat emergencies, **particularly in neighborhoods that face the dangers of extreme heat**.
 - Invest in **Cool It! NYC**, a citywide plan run by DPR to increase the amount of cooling features available to the public during heat emergencies, particularly in neighborhoods with a high heat vulnerability index (**HVI**). This includes park elements such as water features, drinking fountains, and tree coverage.
 - Implement **Intro 680 of 2022**, which would study the feasibility of installing micro parks and green spaces on vacant city-owned land, such as highways and dead ends, with environmental justice communities as a priority. This includes the planting of trees, bioswales, and other vegetation types.
 - Expand the City’s **Cool Streets** program during heat waves by prioritizing communities that lack access to parks, safe pedestrian spaces, and bike infrastructure.
 - Improve and fund the City’s Cooling Center program, prioritizing heat vulnerable communities by developing and strengthening neighborhood-specific communication plans that promote the use of cooling centers; improve cooling center services to create a safer and more enjoyable environment; and install and upgrade cooling systems in public school buildings throughout the City.

Coastal Resiliency

- Invest in coastal resilience: The City should invest in natural and **nature-based solutions**, such as wetlands restoration, oyster reefs, dunes, maritime forests, bluebelts, and other living shoreline approaches that could protect residents from coastal and inland flooding.



This includes exploring opportunities to enlist communities on these projects to educate and engage local residents and implement comprehensive plans such as the Wetlands Management Framework.

- The City should leverage the funds from the New York State Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022. **There is \$1.1 billion in the Bond Act for restoration and flood risk reduction, including \$100 million for coastal rehabilitation and shoreline protection and \$100 million for inland flooding and local waterfront revitalization**. Prioritizing natural and nature-based solutions will also spur green jobs. Additionally, the City should leverage federal funding from the bipartisan **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**.
- Develop **adaptation and resiliency plans**: Adaptation strategies that are science-based and involve meaningful community input need to be put in place to protect all of the City’s residents, especially those that are most vulnerable.
 - The City must fully implement **Local Law 122 of 2021**, which requires the Mayor’s Office of Climate and Environmental Justice to develop and implement a citywide climate adaptation plan.
 - Implement the City’s **Comprehensive Waterfront Plan**.
- Improve **climate resiliency and adaptation for NYCHA residents**: Due to historic neglect and underfunding, NYCHA residents are disproportionately impacted by disasters—whether hurricanes, extreme heat, or the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the City must work with

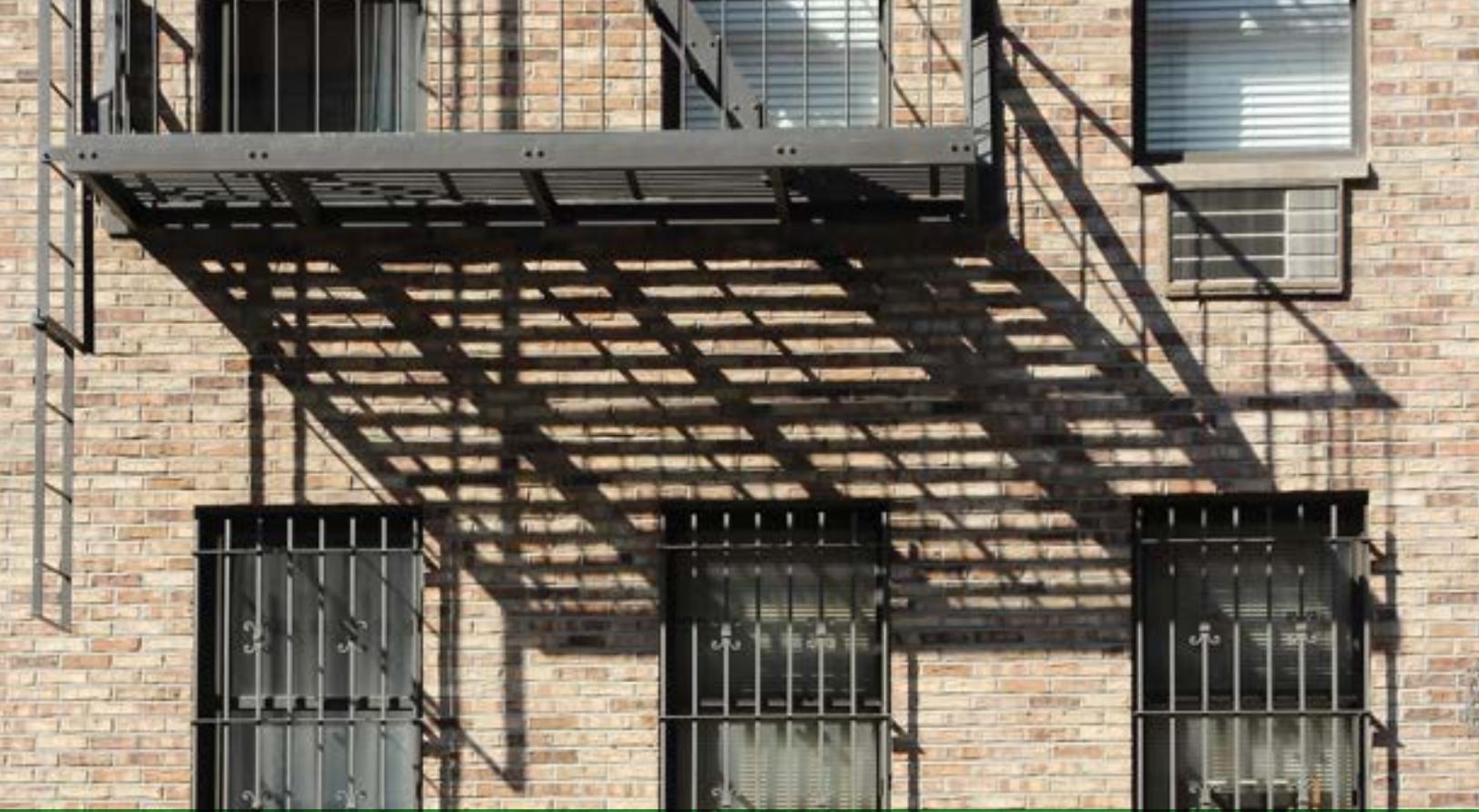


State and Federal agencies to prioritize making NYCHA campuses and residents **resilient** to climate hazards by identifying vulnerabilities and integrating resiliency and sustainability measures in the planning process.

- In accordance with the **Rise to Resilience** Goals, the City should commit to investing \$2 billion annually in NYCHA capital repairs. Closing this critical funding gap will create green jobs and improve NYCHA's resiliency.
- The City must work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), as well as Federal and State agencies, to equitably develop and implement the **USACE's New York and New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Study** (NYNJHATS). This includes deliberative community engagement through the establishment of an Environment and Climate Justice Work Group; a multi-hazard and phased approach; a holistic lens of racial, economic, and ecological impact and equity; and increased consideration of nonstructural, natural, and nature-based solutions.

If we want a greener city, action needs to be taken to protect, preserve, restore, and improve the resiliency of the City's parks, green spaces, urban forests, and coastal areas.

¹ *Walking Distance to a Park* measures the percentage of New Yorkers who live within a quarter-mile walk of a small park (under 6 acres) or a half-mile walk of a larger park (over 6 acres).



PRIORITY ISSUES

A HEALTHY CITY



All New Yorkers deserve indoor and outdoor environments that are free of contamination and pollution.

Trash plagues our streets, piling high on our sidewalks and attracting pests such as rats and roaches. New York City residents produce nearly **12,000 tons of waste every day** and **recycle only about 17% of their total waste**—half of what they could be recycling under the current program. Most trash ends up in landfills, where it releases methane, a greenhouse gas thirty times more potent than carbon dioxide. On top of this, the multitude of garbage trucks picking up trash increases air pollution and congestion as well as risks to pedestrians and cyclists. While we have been aware of these prevalent issues in our communities, they have been allowed to persist. The City’s **composting program has been piecemeal** at best. Moreover, despite plastics taking upwards of 450 years to decompose, single-use plastics are still pervasively used in New York City. In addition to waste diversion, the waste handling process is also inefficient and unhygienic. In particular, **low-income communities and communities of color handle a disproportionate amount of our City’s trash**. This means that these communities face additional air pollution from diesel trucks, as well as more traffic accidents, street damage, noise, pest problems, and persistent smells.

Our outdated sewer systems are easily overwhelmed by heavy rains and storms, resulting in frequent overflows into our waterways and worsening pollution. Due to combined sewer overflows (CSOs), **more than 27 billion gallons of raw sewage and polluted stormwater** are discharged into the Hudson River, Long Island Sound, Jamaica Bay and New York Harbor each year. These overflows can contain untreated human waste, pesticides, petroleum products, and other toxins that are harmful to our communities and environment. This is especially concerning considering that **our sewer infrastructure is outdated**, and even more so in the face of increased flooding from climate change.

In our own homes, **lead poisoning** continues to cause permanent health issues affecting the brain, nervous, and reproductive systems. Despite passing Local Law 1 of 2004, the most ambitious lead poisoning prevention law

in the country, with the stated goal of ending childhood lead poisoning by 2010, lead poisoning is still a major concern as no level of exposure is safe. Furthermore, lead exposure disproportionately affects children in low-income communities and communities of color, and it will continue to do so until we take the necessary steps to ensure it ends.

Achieving zero waste, investing in green infrastructure, and ending lead poisoning will greatly improve our environment and our public health, and it will be a positive step toward addressing environmental and racial justice.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Solid Waste Management

- Meet our City’s zero waste goals: Expanding and improving our recycling and organic waste systems are necessary for the **City to achieve its goal of eliminating all waste sent to landfills by 2030**. In order to do this we need to reduce single-use materials consumption and increase producer accountability.
 - Pass **Intro 275 of 2022**, which would require the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) to report on the City’s progress toward sending zero waste to landfills by 2030.
 - Pass **Intro 280 of 2022**, which would mandate that DSNY establish and operate at least one community recycling center in each community district.
 - Implement “Skip the Stuff” (**Intro 559-A of 2022**), reducing single-use plastic items in take-out and delivery orders. Ensure that enforcement of these policies are carried out and participating businesses comply.
 - Enact City Council legislation to establish a safe recycling program for rechargeable lithium ion batteries, particularly e-bike and e-scooter batteries.
- Expand paper, metal, glass, plastic, and organic waste recycling to all NYCHA developments by 2026.
- Ensure adequate funding is allocated for the recently-announced citywide curbside composting program. Pass **Intro 244**, requiring a mandatory, citywide curbside composting system that is reliable and accessible. It would also require DSNY to develop outreach and education materials to inform residents about the



program and instruct residents on how to properly separate organic waste. Make organic waste recycling mandatory no later than 2030.

- Pass [Intro 281 of 2022](#), which would mandate DSNY establish and operate at least three drop-off sites for organics in each community district.
- Decrease siting of waste facilities in marginalized communities: Low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately located near polluting facilities, like waste transfer stations and incinerators, whose emissions are exacerbated with increased waste.
 - Continue to implement [Local Law 152 of 2018, the City's Waste Equity Law](#), requiring the Department of Sanitation to reduce the permitted capacity of putrescible and non-putrescible transfer stations in four designated community districts.
- Improve overall waste management:
 - Implement the City's Commercial Waste Zones law (Local Law 199 of 2019), which will [reduce emissions from garbage collection](#) and [decrease vehicle miles traveled by waste haulers](#). The program would divide the city into 20 zones, each of which may only have up to three hauling services contracted. These haulers, once approved, will be under contract for ten years. This law will decrease the number of haulers on the streets, improving air quality and public health, and allowing for greater consistency. It will also increase diversion rates from landfills and limit the environmental and public health toll from vehicle transportation, especially in environmental justice communities.

- Adopt waste design guidelines for buildings: Buildings produce more waste than can fit in their waste rooms, which results in overflow garbage blocking access to service areas and exits, or on sidewalks. Setting size requirements for waste storage areas in buildings, and requiring a waste management plan be submitted before building approval would increase recycling accessibility.
- Implement a permanent citywide waste containerization program on our streets to streamline waste and prevent buildup on sidewalks and waste rooms. **Currently, only 10% of the City's trash is in containers.** While the DSNY's **Clean Curbs Pilot Program** is a step in the right direction, providing permanent, sealed containers throughout the City to hold trash bags prior to collection can mitigate the issue of the bags being opened by rodents and will help create a cleaner city.

Green Infrastructure

- Expand and fund green infrastructure throughout the City: **Green infrastructure** projects, such as rain gardens, bioswales, water squares, green and blue roofs, **daylighting** rivers, and permeable pavements help absorb stormwater, purify the air, and mitigate the urban heat island effect. This would maximize environmental benefits to all communities, especially in underserved communities and areas that have underutilized spaces.
- Pass **Intro 37 of 2022** which would require the Department of Environmental Protection to apportion resources for the implementation of green infrastructure in each borough proportionately based on their populations.
- Pass **Intro 102 of 2022**, which would create an online map of green roofs to help increase awareness and incentivize further development of green roofs. As of now, NYC is only using 60 acres of the 40,000 acres of rooftop space available. **Green roofs** provide shade, remove heat from the air, and reduce temperatures of the roof surface and surrounding air, which reduces the heat island effect.
- Pass **Intro 233 of 2022**, which would require the DOE to conduct a study on the feasibility of installing green roofs on schools.
- Improve and expand the City's **cloudburst infrastructure**, prioritizing vulnerable communities and holistic solutions. A “cloudburst” is a sudden, heavy downpour where a lot of rain falls in a short amount of time. Cloudburst infrastructure involves both grey infrastructure (such as sewer pipes and underground storage tanks) and green infrastructure.
- The City should continue implementing the **Stormwater Resiliency Plan** and improving emergency management for storm-related extreme weather, as detailed in **The New Normal: Combating Storm-Related Extreme Weather in New York City.**
- Improve sewage and wastewater infrastructure: In addition to the implementation of citywide green infrastructure, as noted above, to reduce pressure on the sewer system from stormwater, actions must be taken to update the City's sewage and wastewater infrastructure. An updated and modernized sewer system and wastewater treatment process would prevent CSOs from dumping unregulated contaminants in our waterways.
- The City must significantly increase investments and prioritize both green and grey infrastructure to prevent CSOs.
 - Grey infrastructure includes increasing the capacity to collect, store and treat combined sewage, as well as increase the lifespan and efficiency of aging facilities and equipment. **Examples** of grey infrastructure include upgrading and increasing capacity of treatment plants or creating large storage tanks or tunnels to hold CSOs during rain events.
 - Green infrastructure involves capturing rain water through natural systems before it enters and overwhelms the combined sewer system.
- Pass **Intro 533** of 2022, which would require DEP to report on their progress in decreasing the presence of sewage and stormwater contaminants in the City's waterways and implement various strategies to achieve those goals.
- The City should upgrade and improve the system of biodigesters that handle the sewage sludge to reduce local pollution and help to address food waste.

Lead Poisoning

- As stated in the New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP)'s [2022 Lead Agenda](#), there are five concrete steps New York City can take to reduce and end lead exposure in the City:
 - Conduct a multi-agency hearing on the state of lead poisoning in New York City with the ultimate goal of determining what actions are necessary to eliminate lead exposure in children.
 - Pass City Council legislation that would enhance early identification of lead exposure, boost prevention, and create better enforcement of existing laws meant to eliminate lead poisoning. This includes:
 - [Intro 5 of 2022](#): requiring property owners to produce records of self-inspections conducted as well as records of any measures taken to abate lead-based paint hazards.
 - [Intro 6 of 2022](#): requiring lead-based paint hazards and lead-based paint on the “friction surfaces” of doors and windows be addressed at the turnover of vacant apartments be performed on all pre-1960 dwelling units with children under age 6 by July of 2023.
 - [Intro 143 of 2022](#): requiring all schools in the City to maintain lead levels below a water lead action level to be established by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) in all drinking water or water used for cooking.
 - [Intro 193 of 2022](#): extend the LL1’s prohibition of peeling lead-based paint to the common areas of pre-1960 residential dwellings where children under six reside.
 - [Intro 200 of 2022](#): requiring DOHMH to submit and make publicly available a quarterly report of the number of objections filed for abatement or remediation of lead conditions.
 - [Intro 396 of 2022](#): requiring all preschools and nursery schools in the city to maintain lead levels below a water lead action level to be established by DOHMH in all drinking water or water used for cooking, in addition to reporting these numbers to parents.
 - [Intro 432 of 2022](#): requiring owners of multiple dwellings to annually inspect soil in areas on the premises of a multiple dwelling, partially or wholly covered in soil and accessible to persons other than those employed to maintain such premises in order to help with remediating lead soil hazards in dwellings.
- [Intro 750 of 2022](#): requiring proactive identification and inspection of dwellings where children are at risk of lead poisoning.
- Invest in programs and interventions that protect children from lead poisoning through the use of the City’s 2023-24 budget process. This includes measures funding proactive inspections and notification for tenants exposed to lead hazards.
 - Replace lead service lines (LSLs): The City should apply for [funding from the recently-approved New York State Environmental Bond Act for LSL replacement](#), with a focus on disadvantaged communities.
 - The City should also use its current inventory and map of LSLs in order to take responsibility for privately owned LSLs and to use further funding to identify potential hazards from materials “unknown” by the City.
 - Strengthen the enforcement of existing City, State, and Federal lead poisoning prevention laws. Among other things, this would further educate residents about the threats of lead poisoning and increase responsiveness to those directly affected by lead hazards.

In order to have a clean and healthy city, we need to implement a more comprehensive, efficient, equitable waste reduction and management plan that will not only move New York City to our goal of zero waste by 2030, but also reduce garbage collection costs, increase street hygiene and attractiveness, and benefit the health of our planet and community. Additionally, the City needs to protect people from environmental hazards and invest in healthy living infrastructure through better wastewater treatment and lead poisoning prevention.



PRIORITY ISSUES

AN ACCESSIBLE CITY

Transportation is one of the leading sources of emissions in New York State, currently producing approximately 29% of emissions. Because we live in a culture where private automobiles rule the roads, 75% of our street space is devoted to driving and private car storage even though car drivers are a small minority of commuters in New York City. Mid-century highways and public spaces were often intentionally built at the expense of Black, Latino and other communities of color. Today, these roads continue to impact the same frontline communities that have been most impacted by fossil fuel pollution, as they often lack reliable public transit and the infrastructure that supports alternative transportation modes such as e-bikes and e-scooters. Congested streets exacerbate inequities in low-income communities and communities of color by causing longer commutes, hotter neighborhoods, worse air pollution, higher asthma rates, and premature deaths. Vehicle pollution claims as many as 1,400 lives every year in New York City, and in the City's poorest neighborhoods,

asthma is a leading cause of emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and school absences. This is even starker in the Bronx, where the childhood asthma rate is closer to one in five.

Electing to take public transportation like buses, subways, and trains, or micromobility options such as bicycles, e-bikes, or e-scooters, have many benefits, such as improved air quality and reduced emissions, pedestrian safety, and decreased congestion. Despite this, our City's subways and buses are dreadfully underfunded, unreliable, and, with the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in more remote work, underutilized. Slow post-pandemic public transit ridership, stalled revenue growth, and concerns about safety have contributed to the MTA's current budget gaps, which are forecast at \$2.5 billion in 2025 and 2026. The City must find sustainable revenue sources for the MTA, including through new initiatives, while also reducing emissions and vehicle congestion.

Moreover, our City still lacks safe and accessible micromobility options and street infrastructure that protects and prioritizes cyclists and pedestrians. All of these problems are only magnified in “[transit deserts](#),” which already lack access to reliable subways and buses, bike lanes, and walkable neighborhoods. Through an expansion of transportation alternatives, open streets, and continuous open spaces, the City can finally prioritize pedestrians and cyclists by adopting policies and legislation to [reclaim 25% of our street space from cars by 2025](#).

New York City must take the lead in equitably reimagining our transportation system, reducing vehicle usage, and, finally, centering justice by prioritizing and investing in historically marginalized communities.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Public Transportation

- Improve public transportation access, service, and safety: The City should build more protected bus lanes and increase the amount of bus stops, as well as ensure rapid bus and subway service to increase the efficiency and reliability of our public transportation system.
 - Embrace multimodal strategies to bolster the public transportation system in New York City, including support for bike-share programs and bike infrastructure, scooters, light rails and ferries, with prioritization of low-income and transit desert communities.
 - Support the continued rollout of the [Better Bus Action Plan](#) with a focus on transit deserts and busy routes within the five boroughs for bus rapid transit technology, such as transit signal priority, busways, dedicated bus lanes, and all-door boarding.
 - The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) must continue to implement and fund the [NYC Streets Plan](#), a five-year transportation master plan to improve the safety, accessibility, and quality of the City’s streets for all New Yorkers. The plan was developed in response to Local Law 195 enacted in December 2019, which directed DOT to issue and implement a transportation master plan every five years and issue annual status reports beginning in 2023.

- Increase the affordability of public transportation:
 - Conduct a public education campaign and expand the [Fair Fares NYC program](#)—which helps New Yorkers with low incomes manage their transportation costs—to help increase public transportation affordability for many residents.
 - To keep fares as low as possible, increase financial support for the MTA, along with increased support from the State.
 - With the implementation of congestion pricing, the City and State must work together to ensure the lowest possible amount of traffic diversion and largest possible total reduction in traffic volume and emission reductions in environmental justice communities. The City and State must guarantee that any potential negative impacts of congestion pricing in environmental justice communities are mitigated, such as by capping the Cross-Bronx, Bruckner, and Deegan Expressways, planting more trees along congested roadways, increasing open green space (more green parks and community gardens), establishing a marine freight terminal at Hunts Point to reduce truck traffic, prioritizing the retirement of New York Power Authority peak power plants in the South Bronx as soon as possible, and expediting the transition to clean truck fleets, among other measures. Additional and new mitigation strategies should also be pursued and funded adequately, including to address *existing* disproportionate pollution burdens in environmental justice communities.

Micromobility

- Expand safe infrastructure for micromobility options: Currently, lack of safe biking infrastructure is a major barrier to accessing clean transportation alternatives. As we expand bike, e-bike, and e-scooter shares we must also build safe infrastructure to use them on.
 - Increase enforcement of dedicated micromobility lanes and assess stricter penalties for violations to ensure that micromobility is safe. Ensure that New Yorkers are fully educated about road safety and enforcement rules to ensure effective progress towards safety and reliability.



- Build upon [Mayor Adams' commitment to 300 new miles of bike lanes](#) by establishing a comprehensive citywide bike network that provides infrastructure for protected, continuous, high-capacity, priority bikeways and bike paths to ensure cyclists can travel safely through and between all five boroughs.
 - Pass [Intro 289 of 2022](#) which would require the DOT to develop a map of current bicycle infrastructure conditions.
 - Increase access to affordable micromobility programs such as e-scooters and e-bikes, especially in low-income neighborhoods and transit deserts.
 - Continue equitably expanding and funding the [DOT's shared e-scooter pilot program](#), originally started in the East Bronx, by prioritizing transit desert areas throughout New York City.
 - Support electrification of Citibike stations to enhance accessibility of shared e-bikes, as well as provide more charging stations for private e-bikes, like the newly-proposed [Street Deliveristas Hubs](#).
- ## Reclaim Car Space
- Adopt and implement 25x25: Enact policies and legislation to reclaim [25% of our street space from cars by 2025](#) (25x25) through an expansion of transportation alternatives, open streets, and continuous open spaces. The 25x25 plan would do this by expanding park access and making streets more accessible, which would reduce vehicle emissions and the public health burden.
 - Implement and fund [Intro 291 of 2022](#) which requires DOT, DPR, and other City agencies to develop a citywide greenway master plan. This law will ensure that the City prioritizes outdoor green spaces for active recreation and non-motorized transportation, which will ultimately improve air quality. The City should ensure the plan is developed with adequate community input and is equitably implemented.
 - Equitably expand, connect, and fund the City's car-free [Open Streets](#) program and [Cool Streets](#) program during heat waves by prioritizing communities that lack access to parks, safe pedestrian spaces, and bike infrastructure. The City should work in partnership with communities to identify a neighborhood's needs and develop comprehensive solutions to ensure safety and access to Open Streets.
 - Implement alternative policies for residential and commercial deliveries: Support efforts to mitigate traffic and reduce emissions from trucks by piloting alternative policies for residential and commercial deliveries, including off-peak hour incentives, green loading zones, e-cargo bikes, water freight transportation, neighborhood distribution centers, and a low carbon fuel standard for heavy duty vehicles.
 - Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the use of street space, particularly for parking in predominantly residential neighborhoods. This will study the feasibility of a residential parking permit system and assess common road blockage issues like those caused by delivery trucks and vehicles. The study should also examine how we can reform the placard system and improve enforcement around placard abuse.
 - Eliminate mandatory parking minimums for new developments in transit-rich neighborhoods. Consider replacing parking space requirements



with electric vehicle charging stations and shared bike or scooter opportunities in other neighborhoods, with a prioritization on transit deserts and low-income communities.

- Promote transit-oriented, affordable development in transit-rich neighborhoods that can incorporate more density in order to encourage alternative forms of transportation and reduce air pollution.
- Equitably reconnect communities impacted by historically racist transportation policies: [Tear down or repurpose aging highways instead of repairing or replacing them with new infrastructure designed for cars.](#)
 - The City should continue identifying funding opportunities to explore the feasibility of capping aging highways and reconnecting divided communities, such as the [“Reimagining the Cross-Bronx Expressway” study](#), a \$2 million federal grant in which the City will develop a community-driven plan to study strategies to deck sections of the expressway. This would create new public open space

with pedestrian and bike connections, reduce vehicle emissions, and address inequitable public health outcomes. Additionally, the City should work with frontline communities as well as State and Federal agencies to ensure the [Brooklyn-Queens Expressway](#) is creatively reimagined to ensure air pollution is minimized, and health, safety, and environmental justice are centered.

Moving New Yorkers out of single-occupancy vehicles via improved and efficient public transit and micromobility programs is necessary for greening the transportation sector and creating a healthier, more environmentally just and accessible city.



PRIORITY ISSUES

A ZERO EMISSION CITY

Burning fossil fuels creates harmful air pollution and perpetuates climate change. The City has a multitude of laws, plans, and commitments in place to encourage a transition to net zero emissions. This includes New York City's 80x50 plan to reduce GHG emissions 80% by 2050, Local Law 97 to reduce building emissions, the Gas Ban Bill to eliminate natural gas in the construction of new buildings, and commitments to electrify the City's vehicle fleet and school buses. [These strategies have the ability to remove 10 million tons of carbon dioxide by 2020 and 500,000 pounds of fine particulate matter by 2030, preventing approximately 40 deaths and 100 hospital visits every single year.](#)

These plans should not be the end of electrification and lowering emissions in the City, but just the beginning. High fossil fuel-emitting buildings, highways, buses, power plants, waste transfer stations, and other polluting facilities not only increase emission rates but also exacerbate inequities. Vehicles with diesel engines continue to [emit many](#)

[harmful pollutants](#), such as nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and carbon monoxide, effects of which are only exacerbated when communities live near a highway. New York City's peak power plants, although regulated by New York State, are [emitting](#) twice as much carbon dioxide and twenty times more nitrogen oxides than regular power plants, and are overwhelmingly located in environmental justice communities. They have also been running on a regular basis since the retirement of the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant. [Additionally, over 75% of the City's solid waste is processed in waste transfer stations located in environmental justice communities in the City.](#) Due to all of this, coupled with transportation pollution, New York City has [one of the country's highest rates of asthma hospitalizations and deaths](#) among children and young adults, with Black and Latino patients accounting for more than 80% of the cases. Additionally, people living in high-poverty neighborhoods in the City are [four times more likely](#) to be admitted to the hospital for ozone-attributable asthma.

As we continue to move towards decarbonizing our City, we have the opportunity to grow our green job sector as well. These jobs, which will be essential in a green transition, should be **sustainable, union jobs that offer a living wage and prioritize employing frontline communities in the transition to a greener economy.** In New York State, green jobs are a **smaller** share of employment than the national average, even falling behind neighboring states. In order to be truly **equitable**, these jobs need to benefit and employ the communities most impacted by environmental racism, disinvestment, climate change, and the fossil fuel industry.

As we decarbonize our City’s buildings and vehicles and deploy more renewable energy projects and battery storage to enable the closure of dirty peaker plants, it is essential to identify and push for pathways that will help those in traditionally underserved communities have access to training, support, and opportunities in the green job sector.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Building Emissions

- Decarbonize the City’s buildings: Reducing buildings’ permitted CO₂ emissions limit would reduce fossil fuel usage and decrease overall pollution.
 - Ensure the equitable implementation of New York City’s nation-leading buildings emissions law, **Local Law 97 of 2019**, which will reduce the emissions produced by the City’s largest buildings 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. Bolster the law with increased funding for the rollout and expansion of supporting programs such as property assessed clean energy (PACE) financing options, the Retrofit Accelerator, and green jobs training programs. Additionally, the City should explore the use of alternative compliance mechanisms for buildings that cannot meet the emission cap, such as an **Equitable Buildings Fund**. This fund would go towards energy efficiency and electrification upgrades to designated affordable housing.
 - Retrofit schools: Continue implementing the City’s school electrification effort, “**Leading the Charge**,” which calls for the construction of all new city schools



- to be all-electric and the conversion of 100 existing schools to all-electric heating by 2030. Utilize green technology such as solar panels and green roofs and upgrade current systems to be more energy efficient so that the City’s schools can reduce emissions and improve air quality for our City’s children.
 - Retrofit NYCHA: Continue implementing and increase funding for **NYCHA’s Sustainability Agenda** to ensure that NYCHA buildings are on track to meet emissions reduction targets and procurement commitments for renewable energy.
- Utilize cleaner energy sources and bolster energy efficiency programs:
 - Transition from heating oils to cleaner heat sources such as electric heat pumps or renewable biofuels, prioritizing buildings in communities with high pollution and emission rates.
 - Implement **Intro 470 of 2022**, which phases out the use of fuel oil grade no. 4. This fuel, which emits harmful amounts of CO₂, fine particulate matter,

nitrous oxide, and sulfur dioxide into the air, is disproportionately used in low-income communities and communities of color.

- ▣ Ensure **Local Law 154 of 2021 is implemented** in a timely fashion. This law prohibits the combustion of substances with certain emissions profiles in buildings within the City. This law would also direct the NYC Department of Buildings to deny construction documents and permits in connection with a building that would require the combustion of these substances, with some exceptions. This law also requires the Mayor’s Office to conduct two studies: (1) a study regarding the use of heat pump technology; and (2) a study of the impact of this bill on the City’s electrical grid.
- ▣ Pass City Council bills that will work towards decarbonizing the City’s building stock through supporting the use of energy efficiency programs:
 - ▣ Pass **Intro 237 of 2022**, which would require buildings to be benchmarked for their energy and water efficiency.
 - ▣ Pass **Intro 615 of 2022**, which would create an energy efficiency program for multiple dwellings.
 - ▣ Reinroduce and pass **Intro 2091 of 2020**, which would require a study of building electrification in

New York City, including regulatory barriers, as well as costs, access and equity for property owners and tenants.

- ▣ The City should leverage federal infrastructure and climate funds to help low- and middle-income earners to retrofit their homes covering 50-100% of the cost depending on income. This amounts to \$1,600 for insulation, air sealing and ventilation, and \$2,500 for electric wiring.

Vehicle Emissions

- ▣ Electrify the City’s vehicle fleet: The City must continue to aggressively transition its fleet to zero-emission vehicles by leveraging funds from New York State and federal agencies.
 - ▣ Implement and **fund Local Law 120 of 2021**, requiring the City to ensure that all school buses in use by September 1, 2035, will be all-electric zero emission school buses.
 - ▣ Electrify the City’s light-duty vehicle fleet by 2035 (per Executive Order 90)
 - ▣ Electrify the City’s medium- and heavy-duty vehicle fleet by 2040 (per Executive Order 90)
 - ▣ The City should advocate for the MTA to introduce and operate more electric buses on New York



City's streets, focusing first on depots and buses in environmental justice communities with historically bad air quality, and urge the MTA to stay on track to transition to a fully electric fleet no later than 2040.

- Provide cleaner vehicle technology: This should be prioritized for vehicles with the highest average miles traveled and highest emissions, and those that largely operate in environmental justice communities.
- Pass City Council bills that will cut down on vehicle emissions and air pollution.
 - Pass Intros [606](#) and [684](#) of 2022, which would reduce vehicular idling.
 - Pass Intros [707](#) and [708](#) of 2022, which would improve safety and reduce traffic congestion and emissions.
- Increase funding for and expand the [NYC Clean Trucks Voucher Program](#), which would remove the dirtiest polluting trucks from our roadways
- Invest in electric truck charging infrastructure.

Renewable Energy

- Rollout more green energy projects, battery storage, and technology: New York City's progress toward its clean energy goals will be dependent on advancing clean energy and electrification in a timely manner, removing barriers for permitting renewable energy projects, and encouraging the growth and implementation of emerging green technologies.
 - Ensure the timely and equitable implementation of the City's [Renewable Rikers Act](#) (Local Laws 16, 17, and 31 of 2021), which could [pave the way](#) for installing a wastewater treatment facility and a solar farm on the island, potentially generating as much as 14 megawatts of renewable energy. This includes the renewable energy and wastewater treatment studies to be published in spring 2023.
 - Enact legislation establishing a goal for New York City to have at least 2 gigawatts of battery storage capacity by 2030. The City must also work with FDNY, utility companies, and State agencies to address barriers to battery storage siting.
 - Although the City does not have jurisdictional authority over its peaker plants, it should work with New York State to reduce the City's reliance on fossil



fuel peaker plants in order to improve air quality and public health, especially when so many are sited in low-income communities and communities of color. The City should work with environmental justice communities and advocate for the phasing out of peaker plants.

- Pass the [NYC Department of City Planning's City of Yes Carbon Neutrality](#) zoning proposal, which will update the City's Zoning Resolution to ensure New York City and the State's climate goals are met by removing zoning restrictions that limits the placement of EV charging infrastructure, installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems and energy storage systems, energy efficient building facade retrofits, and more.
- Remove barriers to siting and permitting renewable energy projects citywide, including for transmission, by working with utility companies and City and State agencies.
- Support offshore wind development, including opportunities for supply chain manufacturing and use of port facilities.
- Spur clean energy innovation and investment by implementing programs like Community Choice Aggregation, a shared purchasing model that can serve as a vehicle for increased procurement of renewables as the City's energy source.
- Develop a dedicated funding stream to support targeted, community-led, residential solar and energy efficiency retrofit campaigns to spur the growth of renewable energy projects in low-income communities across the city.
- In the transition to renewable energy, ensure that frontline communities do not take on a disproportionate burden of hosting new renewable energy infrastructure.

Green Jobs

- Expand workforce training and development programs and make them accessible to frontline communities: The City should work with schools and trade unions to develop curricula and training programs. If we are to create well-paying, career-oriented, and green union jobs, there needs to be significant expansion of these programs, otherwise workers will not have the necessary skills and experience.
 - Increase access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs across schools and certification programs.
 - Increase union-linked pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and direct-entry programs.
 - Expand City public training programs to include skills for green jobs.
- Remove financial barriers to job opportunities: Another crucial aspect of ensuring equitable employment will be increasing access to job opportunities by making it easier for one to afford going to work. This will support an incoming workforce that has potentially not had the opportunities of related work experience, connections, or access needed to enter the industry.
 - Increase paid on-the-job training opportunities that might not be affordable to get beforehand, which allows for fairer hiring practices.
 - Subsidize related fees such as OSHA training cards and transportation costs as these fees disincentivize lower-income job seekers from applying.
- Increase hiring of frontline community members: The City should require community hiring to ensure this program benefits the communities that have been most impacted by climate change. This will expand job opportunities in green industries for traditionally underrepresented New Yorkers.
 - Connect environmental justice communities with companies by coordinating green job fairs to bring employers to job seekers that traditionally don't have access to the industry.
 - Create mentoring programs where those interested in green jobs can be connected to others in the industry.
 - Fund targeted local outreach in different languages to help spread awareness about these job opportunities.

For a zero emission city, we need to continue working on decarbonizing New York City's buildings, limiting vehicular emissions to improve air quality and public health, and investing in renewable energy in order to curb pollution from power plants. Investing in clean energy infrastructure will create green jobs with family-sustaining wages, grow our local economy, reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, make green energy more affordable, and cut harmful air pollution.





- Bioswales:** Landscape features that collect polluted stormwater runoff, soak it into the ground, and filter out pollution. Bioswales are similar to rain gardens but are designed to capture much more runoff coming from larger areas of impervious surfaces like streets and parking lots. Like rain gardens, they use native plants to help absorb more water and prevent erosion. (Source: Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, “[What are Bioswales?](#)”)
-
- Carbon Sink:** A reservoir, natural or artificial, that absorbs and stores more carbon from the atmosphere than it releases—for example, plants, the ocean, and soil.
-
- Climate Resiliency:** The ability of a system to anticipate, prepare for, absorb, respond to, and recover from the impacts of climate change, which involves public policy, urban planning, infrastructure and transportation management, public services, communications channels, and emergency preparedness, among other measures.
-
- Climate Justice:** Creating solutions addressing the fact that Climate change will have an unequal impact on communities of color because it is a threat multiplier, meaning it will layer upon existing public health, economic, and racial injustices in the United States and around the world.
-
- Combined Sewer Overflows:** A combined sewer system (CSS) collects rainwater runoff, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater into one pipe. Under normal conditions, it transports all of the wastewater it collects to a sewage treatment plant, then discharges to a water body. The volume of wastewater can sometimes exceed the capacity of the CSS or treatment plant (e.g., during heavy rainfall events or snowmelt). When this occurs, untreated stormwater and wastewater discharges directly to nearby streams, rivers, and other water bodies—this is referred to as Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs). CSOs contain untreated or partially treated human and industrial waste, toxic materials, and debris as well as stormwater. (Source: EPA, “[Combined Sewer Overflows](#)”)
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- Cumulative Impacts:** The combined and incremental impacts of past and present public policies, development projects, programs, and other activities. In under-resourced communities, the cumulative impacts of redlining, disinvestment, failed “urban renewal” programs, and the inordinate siting of polluting facilities and infrastructure have created generational poverty and a host of injustices and inequalities.

Electrification: The process of replacing technologies that use fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) with technologies that use electricity as a source of energy. Depending on the resources used to generate electricity, electrification can potentially reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the transportation, building, and industrial sectors, which account for 65 percent of all US greenhouse gas emissions. (Source: Resources for the Future, “[Electrification 101](#)”)

Environmental Justice: Environmental justice is based on the reality that certain groups in society bear unequal environmental and economic burdens like poor air and water quality, as well as unhealthy living conditions resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations and/or federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies. It is the idea that all people and communities have the right to equal environmental protection under the law, and the right to live, work and play in communities that are safe, healthy and free of life-threatening conditions. Environmental justice is made possible when all communities have access to information and decision-makers that enable them to take action and create positive change for themselves. (Source: Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice, “[What is Environmental Justice?](#)”)

Environmental Justice Communities: Communities that are most impacted by environmental harms and risks and that have experienced and continue to experience disproportionate environmental burdens.

Environmental Racism: Racial discrimination in environmental policy-making, enforcement of regulations and laws, and targeting communities of color for toxic waste disposal and siting of polluting facilities. Racial discrimination can be intentional or unintentional, and is often a manifestation of “systemic racism.” This term acknowledges the political reality that created and continues to perpetuate environmental inequity and injustice.

Green Infrastructure: A network that provides the “ingredients” for solving urban and climatic challenges by building with nature. The main components of this approach include stormwater management, climate adaptation, the reduction of heat stress, increasing biodiversity, food production, better air quality, sustainable energy production, clean water, and healthy soils, as well as more anthropocentric functions, such as increased quality of life through recreation and the provision of shade and shelter. (Source: Wikipedia, “[Green Infrastructure](#)”)

Just Transition: A vision-led, unifying and place-based set of principles, processes, and practices that build economic and political power to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy. This means approaching production and consumption cycles holistically and waste-free. The transition itself must be just and equitable, redressing past harms and creating new relationships of power for the future through reparations. (Source: Climate Justice Alliance, "[What Do We Mean By Just Transition?](#)")

Micromobility: A range of small, lightweight vehicles operating at speeds typically below 15 mph and driven by individual users without passengers. Micromobility devices include bicycles, e-bikes, electric scooters, electric skateboards, shared bicycles, and electric pedal assisted (pedelec) bicycles. (Source: Wikipedia, "[Micromobility](#)")

Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM 2.5): Tiny particles or droplets in the air that reduce visibility and cause the air to appear hazy when levels are elevated. Considered an air pollutant that is a concern for people's health when levels in the air are high. Outdoor PM 2.5 levels are most likely to be elevated on days with little or no wind or air mixing. (Source: NYS Department of Health, "[Fine Particles \(PM 2.5\) Questions and Answers](#)")

Peak Power Plants ("Peakers"): Power plants that are activated during peak energy demand (e.g., the hottest days of the summer). However, many peakers in NYC now run much more frequently and nearly all peakers are located in under-resourced communities with high rates of air pollution.

Urban Heat Island Effect: Heat islands are urbanized areas that experience higher temperatures than outlying areas. Structures such as buildings, roads, and other infrastructure absorb and re-emit the sun's heat more than natural landscapes such as forests and water bodies. Urban areas, where these structures are highly concentrated and greenery is limited, become "islands" of higher temperatures relative to outlying areas. (Source: EPA, "[Heat Island Effect](#)")

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Elizabeth Adams

Senior Director for Advocacy
and Organizing
Transportation Alternatives
415-747-4584
elizabeth.adams@transalt.org

Victoria Adler

Steering Committee member
Queens Climate Project
646-709-3125
vadler4444@gmail.com

Ryan Brenner

Policy Analyst
NYC H₂O
781-635-0576
ryan@nych2o.org

Jackson Chabot

Director of Advocacy and Organizing
Open Plans
513-315-5599
jacksonchabot@openplans.org

Amy Chester

Managing Director
Rebuild by Design
917-804-3470
achester@rebuildbydesign.org

Willis Elkins

Executive Director
Newtown Creek Alliance
347-504-6701
welkins@newtowncreekalliance.org

Tonya Gayle

Executive Director
Green City Force
917-355-3495
Tonya@greencityforce.org

Sherrise Palomino

Director of Advocacy and Parks
New Yorkers for Parks
347-670-9326
spalomino@ny4p.org

Sarah Charlop-Powers

Executive Director
Natural Areas Conservancy
718-578-7768
Sarah.Charlop-powers@naturalareasnyc.org

Emily Nobel Maxwell

Director, Cities Program, New York
The Nature Conservancy
212-381-2185
emaxwell@tnc.org

Irene V. Scheid

Executive Director
Alley Pond Environmental Center, Inc.
718-229-4000
ischeid@alleypond.org

Carter Strickland

VP, Mid-Atlantic and
New York State Director
Trust for Public Land
718-938-3907
carter.strickland@tpl.org

Rev. Gabriella Velardi-Ward

Co-Founder and Coordinator
The Coalition for Wetlands and Forests
646-515-7402
SICWF2017@gmail.com

Sarah Williams

Executive Director
Green Guerillas
212-594-2155
sarah@greenguerillas.org

COASTAL RESILIENCY

Elizabeth Adams

Senior Director for Advocacy
and Organizing
Transportation Alternatives
415-747-4584
elizabeth.adams@transalt.org

Ryan Brenner

Policy Analyst
NYC H₂O
781-635-0576
ryan@nych2o.org

Sarah Charlop-Powers

Executive Director
Natural Areas Conservancy
718-578-7768
Sarah.Charlop-powers@naturalareasnyc.org

Amy Chester

Managing Director
Rebuild by Design
917-804-3470
achester@rebuildbydesign.org

Jeanne DuPont

Founder & Executive Director
RISE (Rockaway Initiative for
Sustainability & Equity)
718-327-5919
jdupont@riserockaway.org

Willis Elkins

Executive Director
Newtown Creek Alliance
347-504-6701
welkins@newtowncreekalliance.org

Tonya Gayle

Executive Director
Green City Force
917-355-3495
Tonya@greencityforce.org

Eric A. Goldstein

New York City Environment Director
Natural Resources Defense Council
646-299-4102
egoldstein@nrdc.org

Matt Gove

Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation
952-250-4545
mgove@surfrider.org

COASTAL RESILIENCY

Brandon Kielbasa

Director of Policy & Organizing
Cooper Square Committee
212-228-8210
bkielbasa@coopersquare.org

Sherrise Palomino

Director of Advocacy and Parks
New Yorkers for Parks
347-670-9326
spalomino@ny4p.org

Carter Strickland

*VP, Mid-Atlantic and
New York State Director*
Trust for Public Land
718-938-3907
carter.strickland@tpl.org

Tyler Taba

Senior Manager for Climate Policy
Waterfront Alliance
212-935-9831 (x102)
ttaba@waterfrontalliance.org

Rev. Gabriella Velardi-Ward

Co-Founder and Coordinator
The Coalition for Wetlands and Forests
646-515-7402
SICWF2017@gmail.com

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Elizabeth Adams

*Senior Director for Advocacy
and Organizing*
Transportation Alternatives
415-747-4584
elizabeth.adams@transalt.org

Victoria Adler

Steering Committee member
Queens Climate Project
646-709-3125
vadler4444@gmail.com

Ryan Brenner

Policy Analyst
NYC H₂O
781-635-0576
ryan@nych2o.org

Jackson Chabot

Director of Advocacy and Organizing
Open Plans
513-315-5599
jacksonchabot@openplans.org

Debby Lee Cohen

Executive Director
Cafeteria Culture
917-282-0253
DL@cafeteriaculture.org

Erin Covey-Smith

Communications Coordinator
Upstream
813-445-8981
erin@upstreamsolutions.org

Marisa DeDominicis

Executive Director
Earth Matter NY Inc.
917-447-7256
marisa@earthmatter.org

Willis Elkins

Executive Director
Newtown Creek Alliance
347-504-6701
welkins@newtowncreekalliance.org

Tonya Gayle

Executive Director
Green City Force
917-355-3495
Tonya@greencityforce.org

Eric A. Goldstein

New York City Environment Director
Natural Resources Defense Council
646-299-4102
egoldstein@nrdc.org

Matt Gove

Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation
952-250-4545
mgove@surfrider.org

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Elizabeth Adams

*Senior Director for Advocacy
and Organizing*
Transportation Alternatives
415-747-4584
elizabeth.adams@transalt.org

Victoria Adler

Steering Committee member
Queens Climate Project
646-709-3125
vadler4444@gmail.com

Ryan Brenner

Policy Analyst
NYC H₂O
781-635-0576
ryan@nych2o.org

Jackson Chabot

Director of Advocacy and Organizing
Open Plans
513-315-5599
jacksonchabot@openplans.org

Amy Chester

Managing Director
Rebuild by Design
917-804-3470
achester@rebuildbydesign.org

Marisa DeDominicis

Executive Director
Earth Matter NY Inc.
917-447-7256
marisa@earthmatter.org

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Willis Elkins

Executive Director
Newtown Creek Alliance
347-504-6701
welkins@newtowncreekalliance.org

Tonya Gayle

Executive Director
Green City Force
917-355-3495
Tonya@greencityforce.org

Eric A. Goldstein

New York City Environment Director
Natural Resources Defense Council
646-299-4102
egoldstein@nrdc.org

Matt Gove

Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation
952-250-4545
mgove@surfrider.org

Sherrise Palomino

Director of Advocacy and Parks
New Yorkers for Parks
347-670-9326
spalomino@ny4p.org

Daphny Rose Sanchez

Executive Director
Kinetic Communities Consulting
347-404-8391
daphany@kc3.nyc

Carter Strickland

*VP, Mid-Atlantic and
New York State Director*
Trust for Public Land
718-938-3907
carter.strickland@tpl.org

Tyler Taba

Senior Manager for Climate Policy
Waterfront Alliance
212-935-9831 (x102)
ttaba@waterfrontalliance.org

Rev. Gabriella Velardi-Ward

Co-Founder and Coordinator
The Coalition for Wetlands and Forests
646-515-7402
SICWF2017@gmail.com

LEAD POISONING

Brandon Kielbasa

Director of Policy & Organizing
Cooper Square Committee
212-228-8210
bkielbasa@coopersquare.org

Michael McKee

Treasurer
Tenants Political Action Committee
917-669-2977
mmckee@tenantspac.org

Jill Samuels

Program Administrator
Montefiore Medical Center Lead Program
718-54702789 x216
jjsamuel@montefiore.org

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Elizabeth Adams

*Senior Director for Advocacy
and Organizing*
Transportation Alternatives
415-747-4584
elizabeth.adams@transalt.org

Jackson Chabot

Director of Advocacy and Organizing
Open Plans
513-315-5599
jacksonchabot@openplans.org

Danny Pearlstein

Policy & Communications Director
Riders Alliance
917-862-0211
danny@ridersalliance.org

MICROMOBILITY

Elizabeth Adams

*Senior Director for Advocacy
and Organizing*
Transportation Alternatives
415-747-4584
elizabeth.adams@transalt.org

Jackson Chabot

Director of Advocacy and Organizing
Open Plans
513-315-5599
jacksonchabot@openplans.org

RECLAIM CAR SPACE

Elizabeth Adams

*Senior Director for Advocacy
and Organizing*
Transportation Alternatives
415-747-4584
elizabeth.adams@transalt.org

Jackson Chabot

Director of Advocacy and Organizing
Open Plans
513-315-5599
jacksonchabot@openplans.org

VEHICLE ELECTRIFICATION

Jackson Chabot

Director of Advocacy and Organizing
Open Plans
513-315-5599
jacksonchabot@openplans.org

Tonya Gayle

Executive Director
Green City Force
917-355-3495
Tonya@greencityforce.org

BUILDING EMISSIONS

Victoria Adler

Steering Committee member
Queens Climate Project
646-709-3125
vadler4444@gmail.com

BUILDING EMISSIONS

Brandon Kielbasa

Director of Policy & Organizing
Cooper Square Committee
212-228-8210
bkielbasa@coopersquare.org

Michael McKee

Treasurer
Tenants Political Action Committee
917-669-2977
mmckee@tenantspac.org

Daphany Rose Sanchez

Executive Director
Kinetic Communities Consulting
347-404-8391
daphany@kc3.nyc

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Victoria Adler

Steering Committee member
Queens Climate Project
646-709-3125
vadler4444@gmail.com

Tonya Gayle

Executive Director
Green City Force
917-355-3495
Tonya@greencityforce.org

Matt Gove

Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation
952-250-4545
mgove@surfrider.org

Michael McKee

Treasurer
Tenants Political Action Committee
917-669-2977
mmckee@tenantspac.org

Daphany Rose Sanchez

Executive Director
Kinetic Communities Consulting
347-404-8391
daphany@kc3.nyc

GREEN JOBS

Victoria Adler

Steering Committee member
Queens Climate Project
646-709-3125
vadler4444@gmail.com

Marisa DeDominicis

Executive Director
Earth Matter NY Inc.
917-447-7256
marisa@earthmatter.org

Tonya Gayle

Executive Director
Green City Force
917-355-3495
Tonya@greencityforce.org

Sherrise Palomino

Director of Advocacy and Parks
New Yorkers for Parks
347-670-9326
spalomino@ny4p.org

Daphany Rose Sanchez

Executive Director
Kinetic Communities Consulting
347-404-8391
daphany@kc3.nyc

ABOUT THE GREEN PACT:

With funding provided by the New York Community Trust, the Green Pact was developed by the Green Our City Now Coalition, which includes the New York League of Conservation Voters, WE ACT for Environmental Justice, and South Bronx Unite. The purpose of the Green Pact is to expand the scope and depth of environmental justice work undertaken by New York City's elected officials, provide them with the requisite information and resources, and hold them accountable.

