



**RISE TO
RESILIENCE**

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

**RESILIENCY STARTS TODAY: A PLAN TO LEVERAGE THE HARBOR
AND WATERFRONTS FOR THE CITY'S RECOVERY
THE FIRST 100 DAY PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT MAYORAL
ADMINISTRATION**

Waterfront Alliance and the Rise to Resilience coalition are calling on the next Mayor to begin to make good on pledges to advance policies with an emphasis on climate resilience; prepare the City for a future of rising tides and extreme storms, especially in vulnerable communities; provide high-quality public access to green space; increase waterfront transportation; and grow the BlueTech sector.

Recent storms, in 2021 alone, have claimed lives, wrought damage, flooded homes and apartments, and shut down mass transit. We only have to look here and across the globe to see we are entering a new time in the history of the world.

The time to prepare for climate change is now. Adapting to extreme weather and storms must go hand in hand with climate mitigation.

We know that many of the most vulnerable waterfront neighborhoods are also those that have large numbers of racial and ethnic minority groups, as well as low income and immigrant residents (e.g., Far Rockaway, Lower East Side, Hunts Point, Red Hook, Coney Island, etc.). We must ensure New York City's new mayor is visionary and prioritizes creating an equitable green city, starting in the first 100 days of the administration.

The concrete recommendations outlined below fall into the following four themes:

- Embrace New York Harbor and the waterfront as central to the economic recovery and well-being of New Yorkers
- Better prepare for climate risks and impacts on the City
- Commit to providing more public access to the waterfront, especially where social and physical barriers exist
- Embrace the maritime and port sectors as major economic drivers and key to regional decarbonization

The Waterfront Alliance released the [Waterfront and Resilience Platform for the Next Mayor of New York City](#) in March 2021 after months of input and collaboration with Waterfront Alliance partners, the Rise to Resilience Coalition, and stakeholders.



RISE TO RESILIENCE

The following concrete steps will help continue progress towards a New York City - and its 520 miles of waterfront - that is committed to resiliency, equity, recreation and opportunity for all New Yorkers. The next mayor must ensure that coastal and harbor-related initiatives focus on community resilience and community adaptation, especially among vulnerable New Yorkers, in the face of global environmental change. Policies should be informed by New Yorkers and be transparent, expedient, effective and financially robust, as well as help cut through regulatory roadblocks, during these times of recovery and transformation after the pandemic.

The Climate is Changing and so Should Our Waterfronts

- Immediately expedite the **Mayor's Office of Climate Resiliency's (MOCR) Climate Adaptation Roadmap as part of a Citywide comprehensive resilience plan**, which will incorporate the successes and lessons learned from the post-Sandy recovery and rebuilding period, while also planning for the next generation of climate hazards. A project-based, reactive process, in absence of a roadmap, is not up to the sustained challenge that the coming decades present. A unifying 520-mile climate blueprint is essential before making decisions about density or resiliency investments. This Roadmap will identify the greatest climate-related threats facing New York City, and **recommend a prioritized sequence** of climate adaptation measures for the short, medium, and long-term across different communities, with a particular focus on climate justice and the most vulnerable residents and neighborhoods.
- **Commit to the NYC Comprehensive Waterfront Plan (CWP)** as a guiding vision for the first term, and develop an action agenda in conjunction with the NYC Waterfront Management Advisory Board that includes metrics, timelines and milestones for CWP implementation.
- Provide staff, attention and visibility to the **US Army Corps New York New Jersey Harbor and tributaries (NYNJHAT) study** making the City a partner in that process and through public engagement.
- **Effectively position City projects for Federal and State funding.** Using input from the Climate Adaptation Roadmap, commit municipal capital investments to projects in FY23 and beyond which help secure federal funding. Expediently appoint a significantly resourced Mayoral team in Washington, D.C. to mobilize efforts to secure climate resilience, maritime, environmental justice and open space funding from Congress and the Biden Administration and to coordinate with federal agencies.
- **In the first year in office, create a public information campaign on flood insurance enrollment.** Using resources such as FloodHelpNY, expand communications to New Yorkers about flood insurance through advertising on subway, bus and ferry. In addition to the threat of hurricanes, there's also the fact that insurance rates are likely to go up once FEMA updates their currently out-of-date flood maps. As FEMA updates the maps, they are likely to include more homes in high-risk



RISE TO RESILIENCE

areas, meaning that an increased number of New Yorkers will be facing these higher costs for flood insurance.

Increase Investment and Infrastructure in Frontline Communities at Risk of Climate Threats

- **Immediately commit to investing \$2 billion annually in NYCHA capital repairs underscoring climate risk and resiliency needs.** Closing this critical funding gap will create jobs and support these developments to serve New Yorkers 365 days of the year, preventing the disproportionate impacts of disasters on NYCHA residents.
- Immediately commit resources to New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to ensure not one more New Yorker is caught and killed by floodwaters in their own home. Prioritize funding for a **comprehensive citywide initiative to expand drain capacity throughout the city to prevent flooding, starting with building out stormwater sewers or retention tanks in vulnerable areas with limited drainage systems.** Further, more immediate actions on implementing city infrastructure for greener and more sustainable solutions, such as Bluebelt systems, is essential. Ensure that DEP and OEM are funded in the FY23 budget with resources and staffing, including more robust systems that communicate directly with residents who are at greatest risk in advance of large storms.
- Develop a plan to launch, within the first year of the administration, a **climate resilience retrofit incentive program** that builds off successful City-funded initiatives such as NYC Accelerator and helps to advance retrofits passed in Zoning for Coastal Flood Resilience. A climate resilience package of programs must incentivize and provide grants for building retrofits to match the efforts already underway on sustainability and energy retrofits. This is not only sound climate adaptation policy but would provide new green construction jobs and workforce opportunities.
- **Clear roadblocks to implementing major resiliency infrastructure projects and expedite stalled neighborhood-based resiliency strategies** for storms, flooding, and heatwaves, with a focus on environmental justice communities. Assess resiliency projects that are already approved and funded but that have been delayed including the Red Hook Coastal Resiliency Project, as well as attention to South Brooklyn and Hunts Point and lack of resiliency infrastructure.
- Resiliency work transcends city boundaries and silos and regulatory roadblocks are frequent. Decisions often get stalled and permitting is complex. **Within the first six months in office, establish an interagency coordinated body for waterfront governance and permitting.** Bring together different Deputy Mayors and Commissioners on climate resiliency planning to make timely and efficient decisions on climate adaptation and to build greater capacity, as well as call on State and Federal authorities to take ownership of regulatory roadblocks.



RISE TO RESILIENCE

- Advance provisions passed in the **Renewable Rikers Act** to begin to transfer the land, buildings and facilities from the Department of Correction (DOC) to the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS).

Unlock the Transformative Power of Waterways

- **Commit to piloting an electric ferry** (or ferries) in the first term in office. Assess routes where this would be feasible.
- Commit to **long-term dedicated funding for ferries and continued system expansion**. Develop a plan within the first 100 days, and implement within the first year of the administration, **a new ticketing revenue structure, as well as concessions agreements**, for NYC Ferry so that the system is generating revenue, while keeping it affordable for low-income New Yorkers.
- **Create a plan to ensure a viable and green future for cruise tourism in New York City**. In the first year in office, form a Mayoral task force with cruise ship heads and the local utility **to mitigate current and future cruise ship pollution** with the goal to transition to electrification at NYC's Cruise Terminals in the first term (Alternative Maritime Power).
- Adopt policies that activate waterways for more commercial uses by committing to infrastructure for waterborne commerce. **Commit to both maintaining a state of good repair for existing working maritime sites and to the development of new waterfront sites across the City for smaller freight movement throughout the harbor by the end of 2023**. Give particular attention to rehabilitating dilapidated piers and adapting existing ones to accommodate new marine highway ports with a focus on reducing truck trips generated by e-commerce fulfillment centers.

Prime New York City for a BlueTech Boom

- In the City's FY23 budget, **pledge a Capital commitment to offshore wind infrastructure**, as well as workforce development and worker retraining through CUNY, to meet the needs of this burgeoning industry.
- Within the first year in office, **spearhead a new effort within NYCEDC focused on the BlueTech industry**. Convene in the first 100 days a BlueTech Blue Ribbon task force that will launch a start-up innovation challenge to spur new innovations and economic growth in the water, climate, and maritime sectors.



RISE TO RESILIENCE

Protect and Expand New York City's Greenspace, Water Quality and Wilderness

- **Commit to 1% of city budget for Parks in FY23 Budget.** Top U.S. cities dedicate 1-2% of their city budget to parks - NYC has been stuck at less than 0.6% for decades. Put these values into policy.
- Commit to capital funding in the FY23 budget to **open more waterfront access at City-owned waterfront sites** with a focus on communities which suffer from limited waterfront access and where there is already community activism and interest in these spaces.
- Within the first 100 days, commit to implementing the remaining 100 miles of **NYC's 5-Borough 400-mile greenway network** to increase public access to waterfronts, decarbonize surface transportation, and connect communities throughout the city.
- **As a first term priority, commit to the continued protection, restoration and care of the City's last remaining wetlands. Two particular initiatives: (1) adopt the Wetlands Management Framework for NYC.** More specifically, within the first 100 days to implement the proposal within the Framework to **transfer 93 acres of publicly owned property** to the jurisdiction of NYC Parks and acquire 50 additional acres of privately-owned land to be managed as wetlands. (2) Building on the success of the Saw Mill Creek Wetland Mitigation Bank, commit to developing an **"umbrella mitigation bank"** in your first term. These are sponsored by a single entity to establish and operate a regional banking program with multiple sites. Although significant wetlands are preserved within the city parks system as well as on state and federal lands, many coastal and freshwater wetlands throughout the city are still in private hands or on land under the jurisdiction of other agencies.
- Take immediate steps to petition the State to **prevent the development of the Graniteville Wetlands in Staten Island** to permanently protect vulnerable, environmental justice communities from flooding, protect open space, and protect the ecology of this sensitive area, as well as begin to prioritize sites to protect wetlands and wetland migration pathways. Request that the State update Staten Island's wetlands maps which are more than 40 years old.
- Immediately implement the **plan to execute and fully fund planned Clean Water Act compliance projects for the city's sewer system**, some of which were suspended or delayed in 2020. Existing sewage control plans must be strengthened to meet primary contact recreation standards in all city waters.
- Develop within the first 100 days the administration's plan to **improve the city's water quality monitoring practices**, as well as to provide and publish real-time data about sewage discharges. The City does not currently alert water recreators in real time when it discharges raw sewage, putting human health in jeopardy. Commit to implementation of the plan before the end of the first year of the administration.