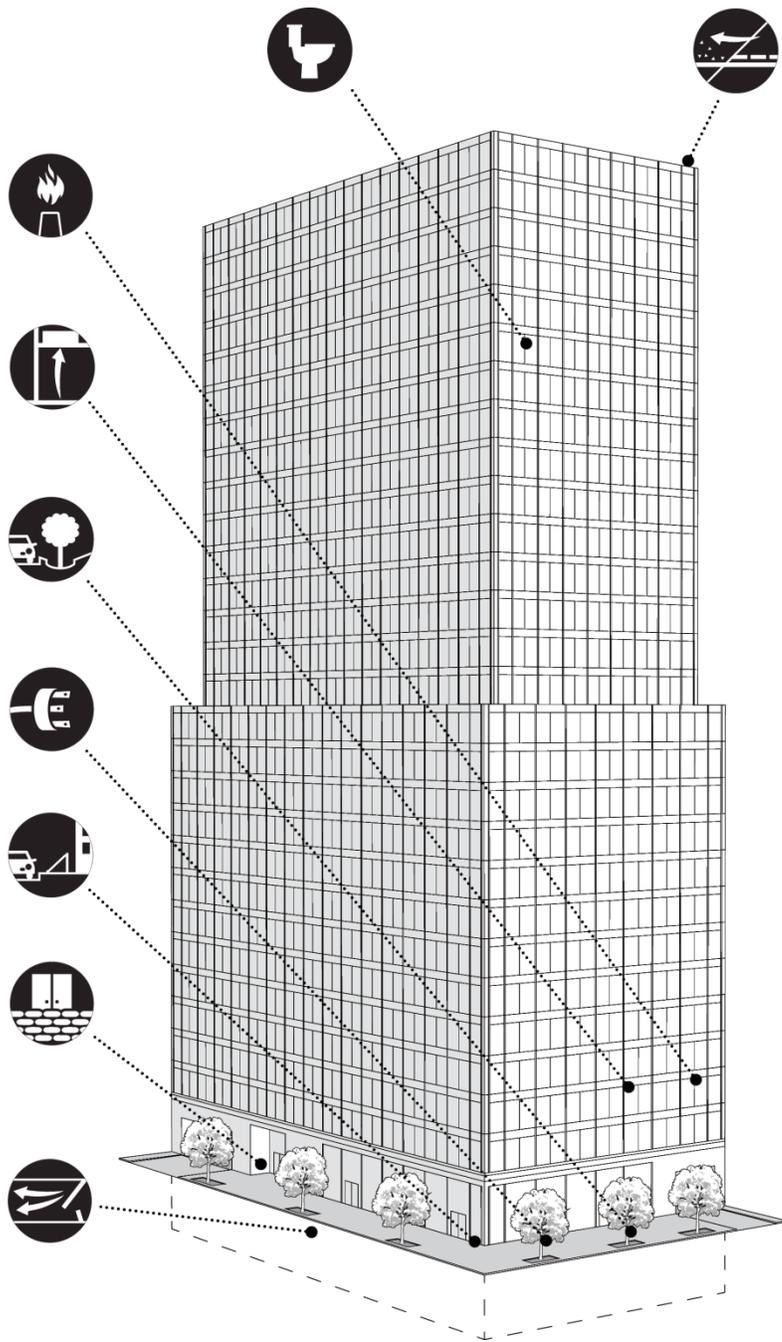


# COMPREHENSIVE PLATFORM TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE



**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL**  
SPEAKER MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO

SEPTEMBER 19, 2014



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## COMPREHENSIVE PLATFORM TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

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### ***Global climate change is a clear threat to our planet.***

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Science, the impacts of a global temperature increase of more than 2 degrees Celsius are not “manageable.” To keep temperature increases below this threshold, the international community must undertake a coordinated effort to radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The United Nations Climate Summit on September 23 is an opportunity for world leaders to commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in advance of a hoped-for international agreement on climate change in 2015.

### ***New York City has been a pioneer in the effort to combat climate change.***

Over the past few years, the City Council passed over 100 pieces of legislation reducing the City’s carbon emissions, improving our air and water quality, making the City more resilient in the face of climate change, and ensuring there is a living plan in place to achieve our sustainability goals. Today, the City Council reaffirms our commitment to combatting global climate change.

### ***In advance of the UN Climate Summit, this comprehensive package of legislation and policy initiatives will address key areas in the fight against global climate change.***

This agenda includes:

- ***Setting a bold, new target of reducing our citywide greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050***
- ***Connecting the unemployed to green jobs***
- ***Reducing the carbon footprint of municipal operations***
- ***Making buildings more energy efficient***
- ***Promoting low-carbon transportation***
- ***Planning for a more equitable, greener city***
- ***Passing legislation to make New York City’s air even cleaner***

## **Reduce the City's Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 80%**

### ***Reduce carbon emissions 80% by 2050***

#### ***(Int. 378-2014 by CM Constantinides)***

Thanks to legislation passed by the Council in 2008 and a sustained commitment from New Yorkers in and out of government, the City is on track to meet its goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 30% by 2030. Recent scientific consensus indicates that keeping the effects of climate change in a manageable range requires keeping average planetary temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius. Numerous scientific and government bodies have said that to meet this target, we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050 and eliminate them almost entirely by the end of the century.

To meet this imperative, the Council will hear and pass Int. 378 by Council Member Constantinides, which will commit the City to reducing emissions 80% by 2050 from a 2005 baseline through its long-term sustainability plan. This is in line with goals set by both the State of New York and President Obama. By establishing the strategies necessary for meeting this goal through the legislative and PlaNYC processes, New York City will continue to lead cities across the world in the fight to prevent climate change.

## **Reduce the Footprint of Municipal Operations**

### ***Reduce the City's purchases of fossil fuels***

The City's operations have a large carbon footprint — from fossil fuel burned in municipal vehicles and vessels, to emissions generated from electricity used by the City, to vast amounts of energy needed to heat and cool public buildings — accounting for 7% of all greenhouse gas emissions in New York City. The City is two-thirds of the way to its goal of 30% emissions reductions by 2017, but we can set a more ambitious long-term goal for municipal operations. Because reducing fossil fuel consumption would have one of the highest impacts on the City's greenhouse gas emissions, and is one of the most direct steps the City can take to meet our overall goal of reducing emissions citywide 80% by 2050, the Council will pursue legislation setting targets to reduce municipal fossil fuel purchases.

### ***Require new and renovated City buildings to use less energy & Build zero-carbon City buildings***

In order to meet these ambitious emissions reduction goals, the City can and should be far more aggressive in reducing greenhouse gases from new and renovated municipal buildings. The City's Green Buildings Law (Local Law 86 of 2005) currently requires the use of green building standards for projects funded substantially by City capital dollars. The Council will update this law by raising the standards for the City's capital investments and requiring greater energy efficiency.

The Council will also pass legislation to require the City to build “zero carbon” or “net zero energy” buildings. New York must continue to be a leader in advanced building technology. By proving that ambitious green building goals are possible, even in a dense environment, the City will set an example for both the private sector here and in other cities around the globe.

### ***Promote innovative solutions to sustainability in public housing***

The New York City Housing Authority represents an enormous opportunity for reducing New York City's carbon footprint, with more than 400,000 residents spread throughout 2,563 buildings. Although NYCHA has established green programs in the recent past, it has yet to make a sustained commitment reflected in its capital budget and long-term planning.

A commitment to sustainability means placing energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste reduction, and tenant engagement at the heart of all of NYCHA's activities. Specifically, we should:

1. **Invest in more efficient and greener buildings** by installing more efficient facades, identifying ways to reduce energy use, and upgrading heating and electrical systems in NYCHA developments.
2. **Reduce waste by making a real commitment to recycling at NYCHA facilities** and piloting organic and textile collections that are happening in other multifamily buildings in the City.
3. **Engage residents through grassroots education and employment opportunities** when implementing these initiatives.

## **Make Buildings Energy Efficient Citywide**

Buildings are responsible for 75% of the City's greenhouse gas emissions. Large buildings over 50,000 square feet are responsible for 45% of emissions despite comprising just 2% of the City's total building stock. Many of these emissions come from inefficient building operation and could be reduced at no cost to building owners or tenants.

The Council enacted the landmark Greater, Greener Buildings Plan (Local Laws 84, 85, 87 and 88) in 2009. These laws require owners of buildings over 50,000 sq. ft. to annually benchmark their energy use and water use (Local Law 84), and to audit their energy use and "retrocommission" their buildings once per decade (Local Law 87). The following proposals will help extend the effect of these laws and help smaller buildings not covered by the law to lower their energy use.

### ***Require operators of larger buildings to receive energy efficiency training (Int. 13-2014 by Council Member Koslowitz)***

To ensure large buildings citywide have good energy conservation practices in place, the Council will pass Int. 13 by Council Member Koslowitz, which will require operators of key systems in large buildings to complete a training course in the energy efficient operation of those systems. This alone could reduce greenhouse gas emissions citywide by close to 3%.

### ***Create a grassroots outreach program for green smaller buildings***

While they are not covered by the Greater, Greener Buildings Plan, smaller residential buildings are an easy target for energy efficient retrofits. The Pratt Center for Community Development estimates that retrofitting just half of the City's 650,000 small homes could save \$255 million per year in energy costs and could create 1,500 jobs.

The solution is for the City to create a straightforward set of low-cost, standardized retrofit packages that are proven to save energy in specific types and ages of buildings. To keep costs down and to ensure wide participation in the program, grassroots outreach teams should engage building owners and residents to enroll a number of nearby buildings in joint projects executed by a single retrofit contractor. This initiative is modeled on programs piloted by the Pratt Center and funded in part by the City Council.

## **Connect the Unemployed to Green Jobs**

The City should leverage its sustainability efforts to help put unemployed New Yorkers back to work and address inequality. Energy efficiency projects, creating public spaces, and other City programs have job-creating potential that we should harness in order to provide additional economic opportunities for disadvantaged residents.

## ***Create the New York City Green Jobs Corps***

The New York City Green Corps would be a six-month to one-year transitional jobs program that would train members in performing energy audits, implementing retrofits, maintaining green infrastructure and public plazas, and leading neighborhood greening, beautification, and environmental education projects. The program would be based on the successful models of the Parks Opportunity Program and the Green City Force Clean Energy Corps. This program could be funded by redirecting TANF and other State and Federal funds away from retraining and work skills programs that are not currently performing, among other sources of funding.

## ***Prepare New York City's Workforce for New, Green Jobs***

The City's efforts in combatting global climate change have created demand for green jobs through laws that require benchmarking, auditing, and certification for certain environmental work. Demand for additional workers will continue to increase as the City works toward reducing carbon emissions 80% by 2050, requires building operators to be trained in energy efficiency, and creates a technical assistance program for energy efficiency work in buildings. In order to ensure that the City's workforce benefits from these jobs, the Council will work to ensure there are training programs for the most commonly-accepted green job certification programs and recruit economically-disadvantaged New Yorkers into them. The Council will also pass legislation to require the City to conduct an assessment of job creation potential and training needs that flow from sustainability legislation and municipal programs.

## **Promote Low-Carbon Transportation**

In order to reduce our greenhouse gas impacts, we must invest in low-carbon transportation — public transit, bicycle infrastructure, greening the City vehicle fleet — and other policies that encourage sustainable transportation. The following proposals help transit commuters and encourage ridership, reduce the impact of the City fleet through car sharing, and help lay the framework for an expanded citywide Bus Rapid Transit network.

### ***Require employers to offer pre-tax transit benefits (Int. 295-2014 by Council Member Garodnick)***

The Council will pass Int. 295, sponsored by Council Member Garodnick, to require that entities with twenty or more full-time employees offer pre-tax commuter transit benefits to their workers. Currently, only a third of New York City workers use this program.

Passing this bill will make mass transit more attractive to more commuters, bring more revenue into the system at no cost to the City or the MTA, and will help more New Yorkers save money on transit costs that have skyrocketed in recent years.

### ***Require the expansion of a car-share program for City-owned vehicles***

New York City owns and operates nearly 27,000 vehicles as part of its municipal fleet, costing an estimated \$700 million annually. The City launched a car share pilot program in October 2010 for the City's non-emergency light-duty vehicles and since 2012 has allowed municipal employees to use Zipcar for official City business. Currently, car share technology has been installed on 15% of the City's non-emergency light duty fleet.

The Council will pass a bill that goes even further, requiring the use of car share technology on more of the City fleet, thereby significantly reducing the number of City-owned vehicles on the road over the next five years.

### ***Create a citywide plan for a Bus Rapid Transit network and advocate for changes in State law that support additional lines (Int. 211-2014 by Council Member Lander)***

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) has been used in cities across the world to affordably expand mass transit. In New York City, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has studied and implemented (along with the MTA) eight "Select Bus Service" (SBS) lines that have sped up travel times along heavily-used existing bus lines. Several more are in planning stages.

Int. 211-2014, sponsored by Council Member Lander, would direct the DOT, in consultation with the MTA, to adopt a citywide BRT network plan with public input. This would set the stage for the construction of a real citywide BRT system that is potentially competitive with subway and car commuting when traveling between boroughs outside Manhattan. A citywide BRT system could increase ridership and reduce the commutes of residents from boroughs outside Manhattan in a more cost-effective way and with a shorter timeline than other large capital projects, such as extending subway lines.

## Plan for a More Equitable, Greener City

***Promote an equitable, inclusive vision for PlaNYC revision that advances jobs, engages communities and promotes broadly-shared prosperity.***

PlaNYC set visionary goals for sustainability in the City and led to numerous successful programs. However, the formation and implementation of the Plan has not deeply engaged local communities or harnessed local civic capacity to achieve its goals. The City is required to update the plan in April 2015, providing an opportunity to bring new and overlooked stakeholders into the planning process.

The Council will advocate for a vision of PlaNYC that **better engages local communities in developing goals and implementing projects**. The Plan made nods to employment in green industries in the past, but should embrace **investing in jobs** for the future. The Plan should **also prioritize investment in environmental justice communities**, with neighborhood-level target goals including reductions in traffic and waste, improvements in air quality, more green space, and resiliency measures. The City could also use this moment to **build local civic capacity**, investing in community-based organizations that can help implement key PlaNYC goals such as energy efficiency and creating open spaces, as well as act as first responders during crises, such as heat waves.

## Cleaner Air

***Strengthen the NYC Clean Air Act  
(Int. 271-2014 by Council Member Richards)***

The New York City Air Pollution Control Code was first passed in the 1970s and has not been significantly amended since its enactment. In order to improve air quality citywide this bill will update the Air Code to strengthen existing standards and regulate new sources of air pollution.

This bill will make necessary amendments to the Air Code in the following ways: eliminate obsolete and outdated provisions and conform the Air Code to developments in State and Federal law and regulation; add greater flexibility for the Department of Environmental Protection to use rulemaking authority to update requirements and standards to account for on-going developments in technology and fuels; and introduce new requirements to limit emissions from certain unregulated sectors, while promoting the adoption of cost-effective air pollution controls.

This bill regulates emissions from certain previously unregulated sources including commercial char broilers and cook stoves that use wood or coal, fireplaces that burn wood, and outdoor wood boilers. It tightens the emissions requirements that apply to non-road diesel vehicles owned by or contracting with the City. It also expands the number of boilers that require registration and certification, which will improve the enforcement of boiler maintenance requirements.

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