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**May 8, 2018: the Waterfront Alliance Presents the Waterfront Conference**

**CITIES ON THE EDGE**

***As Resilience Challenges Loom Large in an Era of Coastal Risk and Political Denial, Leaders from the Metropolitan Region and Around the Country Gather to Take Action***

New York, NY— Katrina. Harvey. Maria. Sandy. Irma. Ike. Weather events may have friendly names, but these recent Atlantic hurricanes have been the most disastrous in history, pounding coastal cities and causing thousands of deaths and more than \$500 billion in damages. At **Cities on the Edge**, this year's [Waterfront Conference](#), leaders from the metropolitan area and around the country will discuss how coastal cities—whose populations continue to expand—are more at risk than ever before, and how these cities can best meet resilience challenges via science, technology, education, and communications, while transcending politics.

The Waterfront Alliance's annual Waterfront Conference is the region's premier forum addressing our shared waterways. It takes place this year on **Tuesday, May 8** aboard the *Hornblower Infinity*, dockside at Hudson River Park, Pier 40, in the morning, and cruising New York Harbor throughout the afternoon. More than 500 waterfront advocates, policy-makers, and professionals are expected to attend this day-long series of panels, workshops, and presentations.

After welcoming remarks by Manhattan Borough President **Gale A. Brewer**, WE ACT for Environmental Justice executive director **Peggy Shepard**, and Waterfront Alliance president and CEO **Roland Lewis**, a plenary panel, facilitated by **Kate Sinding**, executive director of the Dan and Sheryl Tishman Family Foundation, will examine resilience efforts by state and local leaders that counter climate change denial at the federal level. Speakers **Thaddeus Pawlowski**, managing director for the Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes at Columbia University; **Otis Rolley**, regional director for 100 Resilient Cities in North America; **Rich Sorkin**, CEO and co-founder of Jupiter Intelligence; and **Chris Ward**, executive VP, chief executive Metro NY, AECOM, and chairman of the Waterfront Alliance Board of Trustees, will explore the prospects for and obstacles to implementing resilience projects.

Following the plenary, conference sessions include the following:

- What Have Scientists Learned about Flood Risk and Climate Change?
- Chasing Dry Ground: Breaking the Cycle of Repeated Flooding
- Planning to 2050: Reshaping Coastal Development in New Jersey
- Beyond 2050: Long-term Adaptation in Boston and New York
- Damage Control: New York City's Interim Flood Protection Measures

- Three Rivers: Restoration and Reclamation on the Upper Hudson, Harlem, and Bronx
- Ready for Liftoff: Ports Driving Innovation
- Calling All Boats: Communication on Our Shared Waterways
- If They Can Make It There: Urban Stormwater Management around the U.S.

[View the full list of conference sessions and speakers.](#)

For the third year, the Waterfront Scholars program, this year sponsored by the New York City Economic Development Corporation, invited 60 college and graduate students to attend the conference and contribute their perspectives on climate change and resiliency. Another cohort of participating students are involved with The City College of New York chapter of American Society for Landscape Architects; these CUNY students will offer an interactive workshop throughout the day that will guide conference attendees on identifying and addressing socio-economic disparities in coastal resiliency.

“New York’s history as a port city is deeply intertwined with our city’s cultural and economic development, and made our city what it is today. That heritage means we must be on the front line fighting climate change and making bold, innovative investments in resiliency,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “The Waterfront Alliance’s work to protect and revitalize our harbors and waterfronts is vital to our city. I welcome this conference and look forward to participating.”

“Our very lives depend on adapting to the impacts of climate change, and nowhere is this more crucial than in coastal cities,” **Otis Rolley**, regional director for **100 Resilient Cities** in North America, said. “As climate change gives rise to more extreme weather and storm surges lap at our city sidewalks, we must prepare our urban waterfronts to be more resilient. I look forward to robust discussions about cutting-edge resilience work in cities across the country at this year’s Waterfront Conference.”

“As more and more people enjoy and use our busy waterways, we have to make sure that safety is the top priority, and that starts with communication,” said **Captain Jason Tama**, Deputy Sector Commander, **Coast Guard Sector New York**. “The Waterfront Conference presents a unique opportunity to discuss the shared responsibilities that all users have to keep our waterways safe.”

“We need deeper and broader collaboration across disciplines and historic social and political divisions in order to meet the challenges ahead for our coastal neighborhoods,” said **Thaddeus Pawlowski**, managing director for the **Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes at Columbia University**. “We can’t wait for the next disaster to implement change. We need to make resilience our policy for growth today.”

“Is it possible to strengthen the health and vitality of the oceans, and at the same time sustainably develop coastal and offshore projects? I say yes, and I’ll be at the Waterfront Conference to talk about how to do this,” said **Sandra Whitehouse**, chief scientific officer for **AltaSea**.

“We are rethinking the way we develop the waterfront, and the Waterfront Conference is an important opportunity for us to connect with each other,” said engineer **Guy Nordenson**, partner at **Guy Nordenson and Associates**, professor at Princeton University, and lead engineer for *Day’s End*, a public art project proposed by the Whitney Museum of American Art for installation in the Hudson River. “I have no doubt that great, new ideas will percolate throughout the conference as we consider the challenges together.”

“Philadelphia has been dealing with complex water control issues for many years,” said **Howard Neukrug**, professor of professional practice in the Earth and Environmental Sciences Department and the founding director of the **Water Center at the University of Pennsylvania**. “I’ll be at the Waterfront Conference to present what we’ve learned about managing water resources, and to learn about the best practices and outside-the-box innovations from my colleagues around the country.”

“Climate science is one of several critical dimensions of coastal planning,” said **Radley Horton**, Lamont associate research professor at **Columbia University**. “Thanks to the Waterfront Alliance for providing this forum, where we can present—in clear, plain language—how flood hazards are growing.”

“Healthy harbors mean healthy cities,” said **Laurie Schwartz**, president of the **Waterfront Partnership** in Baltimore. “Coastal cities in the United States and around the world need to plan for a future that accepts rising waters and meets the needs of inhabitants. I look forward to exchanging ideas at the Waterfront Conference.”

“Cities on the edge demand 21st-century solutions to the challenges created by manmade climate change,” said **Waterfront Alliance** president and CEO **Roland Lewis**. “It is an election year, but remember: Mother Nature will have the last vote. Join the dialogue to listen, learn, inform, argue, and then be better armed to act.”

[Learn more about the Waterfront Conference and purchase tickets](#) (\$150 regular ticket; \$75 government agencies and nonprofits; \$50 students). Registration and breakfast is 8am to 8:40am; the boat is dockside at Pier 40, Hudson River Park until 1pm; the afternoon harbor cruise returns at 5pm. Continuing education credits will be offered (AIA CES; APA AICP CM, and LA CES).

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The [Waterfront Alliance](#) works to protect, transform, and revitalize our harbor and waterfront.