



**Waterfront Alliance Mayoral Candidates Survey
Submitted by Andrew Yang**



Question 1: As a coastal city, New York City will be hit by climate change especially hard (indeed, the effects have already started). What are your top priorities for adapting New York City (i.e. infrastructure, investments, ecology) to a future of extreme storms and sea level rise?

I am committed to working with federal and state agencies to advance climate resiliency infrastructure projects on public lands. As mayor, I will invest in the building of new flood protection projects along the city's waterfront, as well as supporting the rapid completion of existing efforts like the construction of dunes in the Far Rockaways. **In addition to flooding, I will help address the dangers of "heat islands" in New York, for example by improving accessibility of the city's cooling centers and ensuring that NYCHA residents have access to air conditioners.** Additionally, I will mandate new building code regulations, such as requiring window screens in high rise buildings to make sure that families can stay cool even if electricity goes out. I will also explore buyout programs for homeowners who live in at-risk areas and financial incentives for lower-income renters in NYC to migrate out of 100-year flood plains to higher ground.

Further, I will take simple steps to strengthen resilience, such as painting streets bright colors, expanding the CoolRoofs program and investing in more green spaces that will increase rain absorption and help mitigate extreme heat.

Question 2: New York City has 520 miles of waterfront. In the last 20-30 years, waterfronts have rapidly changed. Give one example of positive change you have seen along the waterfront.



There are a number of open green space projects, such as the West Harlem Piers Park built in 2009, which transformed a parking lot into a beautiful park. Further, the ample biking lanes and walking paths are a vision for what we can provide to the entire city in time with respect to alternative transportation.

Question 3: Give one example of a shortcoming or negative aspect of New York City's 520 miles of waterfront.

Waterfronts should provide recreational and green spaces to neighborhoods across the city. Unfortunately today, those benefits are often limited to higher income neighborhoods. As mayor, **I will prioritize converting unused waterfront space more equitably across New York City. The highest-need and historically marginalized communities will have a voice to engage with waterfront development processes.**

Question 4: Covid-19 has underscored the need for quality open space and outdoor recreation. Waterfront open space is unevenly available across the five boroughs. What are your concrete recommendations for addressing disparities in quality open space access across waterfront communities?

The first step is to make sure that the City is more equitably allocating the capital budget for parks and open spaces to make sure we build parks in all neighborhoods. Environmental justice should be at the center of our planning and investment strategy. As mayor, I will make sure that city agencies adhere to the requirements of the Environmental Justice Policy Bill as we plan for and deploy capital for parks, recreational facilities, transportation facilities, and other environmental projects.

But we also need to mobilize additional capital from outside New York City. As a former Presidential candidate, I have close ties to President Biden and the Administration. I will push aggressively to secure federal funding for waterfront improvements, especially as they relate to equitable resilience.

Question 5: Historically, many neighborhoods have suffered from environmentally racist policies from power plant siting to housing in the floodplain to industrial waste in communities and waterways. What are your concrete recommendations for policies that will turn the tide and provide climate just solutions to our City's most vulnerable populations?

New York City faces interlocking environmental, environmental justice and economic challenges. In Hunts Point in the Bronx, emergency room visits for children with asthma are double the citywide rate. **The City's vast coastal area makes New York one of the most susceptible cities in the world to climate change. At the same time, too many people are unemployed or underemployed. These challenges also present**



opportunities for major public investments in green infrastructure and job creation.

As mayor, I will adhere to the current emissions reductions targets as established in Local Law 97, which will require building retrofits across New York City. These retrofits - like switching from steam heat to electric heat pumps - will create thousands of jobs. My administration will work with federal and state partners, city institutions like CUNY, nonprofits like Green City Force, partners in the labor movement, developers and workforce training programs to make sure that New Yorkers fill the demand for these new professional opportunities. I will also take common sense steps to reduce carbon emissions and improve quality of life, like expanding the NYC CoolRoofs program as mentioned above. As with building retrofits, these kinds of initiatives will create and sustain jobs. I also support the creation of a Climate and Community Development Fund (CCDF) that subsidize wages and fund apprenticeship programs for workers from low-income communities and communities of color, as has been championed by organizations like the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance.

My administration will also be committed to fighting for environmental justice for low-income communities. As mayor, I will:

- Ensure that low-income communities and communities of color no longer bear more than their fair share of environmentally harmful activities, like waste processing;
- Establish a standard of review for “environmental justice burden” (i.e., disproportionate impact on disadvantaged communities) for all new developments;
- Pilot “green zones,” building on the example of Los Angeles. Green zones are designated for improved public health and economic development through the prevention and reduction of existing burdens (i.e., heightened pollution regulations beyond baseline city requirements), targeting investments (e.g., more explicit targeting of the city’s green infrastructure investments), and the engagement of neighborhood residents.

Question 6: How do you see the harbor and the maritime sector playing a central role in the City’s economy and recovery in the years ahead?

From its earliest days, New York City was defined by its harbor and rivers. The city rose to prominence as a global shipping center, connecting the American continent to Europe, Asia and beyond. Today, the Port of New York and New Jersey remains among the most important ports in the United States. As Mayor, **I will support the important work of the Waterfront Alliance with respect to investing in offshore wind facilities, including lobbying state and federal agencies for critical funding.** I will also invest in the resilience and sustainability of ports and maritime infrastructure.



Finally, I will make sure that maritime workers and industry are at the heart of the city's long-term planning for our ports.