



**Waterfront Alliance Mayoral Candidates Survey  
Submitted by Maya Wiley**



**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?**

My approach to adaptation is made up of the following five priority areas:

- Resilient waterfronts and built infrastructure: New Deal New York commits \$3 billion dollars toward a climate-resilient NYC. This will fund development such as [Renewable Rikers](#), developing solar and wind power generation, implementing resilient energy grid infrastructure, energy storage systems, conversion to permeable surfaces, coastal resiliency, and water infrastructure.
- Resilient social infrastructure: Fund the transition of City-owned social infrastructure to become climate-ready, by investing in infrastructure to allow public schools, libraries, hospitals and Community Care Centers to act as climate-ready community hubs. These facilities will serve as cooling centers, and generate renewable energy on site, to ensure continued functionality during extreme weather events.
- Resilient energy grid management: Support a transformation of utilities, including public accountability for long-deregulated investor-owned companies like ConEd, and advocate before the New York State Public Utilities Commission, including in rate cases, to make resilience-building a state priority.
- **Disaster response mechanisms: Build a network of community-driven mutual aid organizations that the City can work with to provide timely relief and urgent communication in the wake of climate disasters.** Activate and partner with existing networks to add social check-ins for seniors and other



vulnerable groups after short-lived or extended shocks. Assess vulnerabilities in NYC's food supply and work with communities to develop access strategies.

- Daylighting: Organize a mapping of opportunities to 'daylight' underground streams in the five boroughs. With a map of daylighting options, neighborhoods, community boards, and other stakeholders would engage in democratic dialogue about the kind of project they would like as a permanent feature of their neighborhood, with potential benefits including combined sewer overflow reduction and improved stormwater management.

**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**

The transformation of Brooklyn Bridge Park over the last 30 years has been a model of climate-ready design that combines waterfront access for communities with resiliency planning. The park was designed to withstand rising sea levels, with elevation, soil, vegetation, and edge design choices that allow the park to be able to withstand the impact of extreme weather events. The park's resiliency was tested during Hurricane Sandy, which it was able to weather with only minor damage.

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

The City is undertaking a number of visionary resiliency plans along its waterfront, however climate-resilient infrastructure investment decisions have often been overly focused on wealthy neighborhoods, while lower-income communities of color have not been similarly prioritized. The East Side Coastal Resiliency Project, for example, protects a portion of lower Manhattan from flooding at an estimated cost of \$1.45 billion, but **East Harlem and Hunts Point, both major flood zones, have seen almost no investment in flood protection. In order to protect our communities equitably, we must fund resiliency projects fairly.**

In addition, six of NYC's seven Significant Maritime and Industrial Areas (SMIAs), clusters of industry and polluting infrastructure, are primarily located in communities of color - Sunset Park, Red Hook, Brooklyn Navy Yard, Newtown Creek, the South Bronx, and Staten Island's North Shore. The City must partner with the Environmental Justice Alliance, UPROSE, and other Environmental Justice organizations to increase climate resiliency in these areas, while supporting the working waterfront.



**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?**

**As Mayor, I will expand the City’s greenspace, including parks, community gardens and waterfront areas, focusing on the Bronx and Queens. I will ensure agencies are working together to create and maintain these spaces, and that every neighborhood has clean, uncontaminated natural areas within accessible distance. As part of this initiative, I will explore the expansion of waterfront access and recreation in historically marginalized communities, and will ensure that these parks are appropriately funded.**

I will look to partner with the Waterfront Alliance’s [Access for All Task Force](#) to ensure that investment in waterfront parks, development, and resilience are made equitably, and prioritize vulnerable communities in the floodplain, and substantially increase funding to maintenance and operations for parks on or near the waterfront.

**New Deal New York, my economic recovery plan, sets aside \$3 billion in new and accelerated spending toward building a climate resilient New York City.** This funding stream includes fully funding the Department of Parks and Recreation’s capital budget.

**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?**

One of the many results of environmental racism is unequal health outcomes. As Mayor, I will Create a citywide Asthma Action Plan to address the public health emergency facing communities like Mott Haven in the South Bronx and Sunset Park in Brooklyn. As part of the plan I will:

- Expand the Asthma-Free Bronx program to public hospitals across the city



- Increase regulation and enforcement of the Asthma-Free Housing Act, which requires NYC landlords to annually inspect and correct indoor allergen hazards in the homes of residents diagnosed with asthma, COPD, or lung cancer, and expand the law to apply to the homes of all New Yorkers
- Support the rapid implementation of Local Law 199, the establishment of Commercial Waste Zones, to reduce excess air pollution
- Invest in building electrification efforts, replacing boilers and furnaces with high-efficiency heating systems that run on affordable electricity powered by renewable energy to reduce indoor air pollution

Moreover, NYC's climate footprint is inextricably tied to our building stock. I will commit to the decarbonization of all existing housing, including public housing, through retrofits and efficiency upgrades. My economic recovery plan New Deal New York calls for investing \$2billion toward building a climate-resilient NYCHA, which will fundamentally improve the health and living quality, including the indoor air quality, of some of our most marginalized residents. This will include a mandate that resulting energy savings are passed on to residents. In addition, conducting moderate retrofits to the city's affordable and public housing, and small low-income residential buildings will create 42,210 local green jobs over 3 years.

Finally, I will advocate for including the right to a healthy environment and other environmental doctrines in the New York Constitution, as proposed by S528 and A1368.

**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?**

The harbors and maritime sectors of the City are critical engines of our economy, and are not only critical targets for emission mitigation and climate adaption, they moreover offer a myriad of opportunities to bolster the green economy city-wide.

Opportunities that my administration will pursue include:

- Upgrading ports to allow for offshore wind manufacturing industry located in NYC
  - More generally, providing industrial spaces to house new climate jobs in order to support industrial port infrastructure upgrades and renewable energy and energy storage development



- Wind and solar installation, operations, and maintenance can be housed at port facilities
- Committing to exploring the feasibility of wind turbines in New York Harbor, the Rockaways and other coastal locations, which will allow us to generate more of our own clean energy within City limits
- Moving toward port electrification to help reduce shipping emissions and expand opportunities for NYC to play a larger role in the maritime industry and global trade
- Increasing public transit opportunities on the waterways with expansion of ferry services
- Ensuring that every borough has a working pier that can accommodate last-mile package delivery, which reduces the volume of trucks on residential roads
- Implementing recommendations of upcoming research from the Waterfront Justice Project of the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance