WATERFRONT ALLIANCE LAUNCHES “RESILIENCY STARTS TODAY”
A PLAN TO LEVERAGE THE HARBOR AND WATERFRONTS FOR THE CITY’S RECOVERY; SEEKS COMMITMENTS IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE NEXT MAYORAL ADMINISTRATION

If events of the last several years have taught us anything, it’s that New York Harbor and the 520 miles of coastline that make up New York City are central to every facet of life. The lifelines of global shipping and supply chains, waterfront parks that bring escape from heat and stress, water-based transportation connecting every borough, and the profound threats of sea level rise and storms mean that New York City must be more committed than ever to its harbor, coastline and waterfronts.

From flood gates to ferries and retrofits to roadmaps and much more, Waterfront Alliance is proud to share a “how to guide” for the next mayor which proposes immediate actions in the first 100 days of the incoming administration.

How do we strike the balance to meet the varied needs and pressures across 520 miles while providing greater climate resilience as sea levels rise and storms intensify? How can we support equity in waterfront parks and open space? And how does New York City continue to cultivate a viable and green maritime sector providing a range of local jobs? Finally, how do we remove the regulatory roadblocks that impact every decision related to waterfront infrastructure?

These are all essential questions for the next Mayor of New York City. Comprehensive commitment to the harbor, the maritime industry, climate resilience, climate innovation, and to protecting the most vulnerable New Yorkers in the face of extreme storms and sea level rise is only the start.

Highlights include:

A focus on climate resilience as robust as the City’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions: a climate adaptation roadmap that prioritizes communities with multiple hazards and which lays out a menu of options that meets local needs; innovation and excellence through codified climate design guidelines for public and private projects; and empowering homeowners and building owners through retrofit technical assistance, incentives, and flood insurance resources.
A focus on working ports as sustainable economic engines for the City: support decarbonization efforts at cruise terminals and in the ferry system; invest in offshore wind capital infrastructure and workforce development; and invest in maintaining a state of good repair for waterfront infrastructure that supports moving more freight by barge to decrease congestion on local roadways.

A focus on nature-based solutions and open space at the water’s edge: commit to one percent of the City budget for Parks; implement programs to protect the few remaining wetlands in New York City which include zoning changes, mitigation banks and purchasing parcels; and open more waterfront access at City-owned waterfront sites with a focus on communities which suffer from limited waterfront access.

A focus on removing regulatory roadblocks that set New York City up for success: 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, and make New York City a leading voice that will push the state and federal government to provide the tools and resources necessary to make sustainable and resilient development the norm.

“The climate crisis continues to drive a changing physical landscape in New York City and demands urgent action. There is no silver bullet, but a menu of adaptation solutions and innovations across neighborhoods is essential to protecting communities, coastlines and the economy. The next mayor of New York City must put New York on solid footing for a greener, safer and more prosperous future,” said Cortney Koenig Worrall, CEO and President, Waterfront Alliance.

“Across local waterways, former working piers and docks have been transformed into non-maritime uses or left in a poor state of repair. We call on the next administration to prioritize the future of the working waterfront by limiting displacement of existing water-dependent uses and preserving opportunities for future water-dependent development, including opportunities for offshore wind growth and moving more freight by barge,” said Michael Stamatis, President, Red Hook Terminal.

“As Ida made clear, we must build a better City if we are to meet this awesome challenge. And, by building a better City - wholly reimagining our waterfront in every community, undertaking the massive infrastructure agenda to protect our city, New Yorkers can build a foundation of resiliency and true economic opportunity,” said Chris Ward, Board of Trustees Chair, Waterfront Alliance. “A focus on a zero-carbon, equitable, resilient and healthy built environment must be a central focus for the incoming administration.”

“The social and environmental consequences of the climate crisis become more apparent every day, especially across the City’s most vulnerable communities. From Sandy to Ida, New Yorkers increasingly seek community-centered solutions to protecting neighborhoods from disaster, while calling for a sustainable future that includes pathways of opportunity to green and blue jobs and new open spaces. We implore the new administration to adopt a worldview of social and environmental justice on day one,” said Pamela Pettyjohn, President, Coney Island Beautification Project.