

2022

WATERFRONT CONFERENCE

**MEET THE MOMENT:
Building a Livable Future**

May 24, 2022 | Program

Communities across the country are increasingly preparing for the new age of weather due to human-caused climate change. Infusions of federal and state funding for our region offer chances for major change unlike any other in recent times. We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure we prepare for the climate future, invest in vital infrastructure, and support the needs of the most vulnerable.

Join the Waterfront Alliance and hundreds of other professionals and stakeholders throughout the region on May 24, 2022 to explore the planning, priorities, and policies needed at this moment to take advantage of unprecedented opportunities toward a better future.

The Waterfront Alliance's annual Waterfront Conference — now in its 15th year — is the region's premier forum exploring the challenges of and solutions to climate change, sustaining a strong maritime industry and regional economy, equitable access at our waterfronts and to our shared waterways, and a healthier open-space environment.

In keynote addresses and panel discussions, the 2022 Waterfront Conference — Meet the Moment: Building a Livable Future — will examine in-depth our mandate to solve complex challenges, innovate, overcome hurdles, and work together for the benefit of our shared future and shared harbor. Hundreds of civic and business leaders, planners, engineers, architects, designers, activists, professors, and students will participate.

Topics Include:

- **Climate-Resilient Strategies and Standards**
- **Offshore Wind and the Harbor**
- **Social Justice and Civic Engagement**
- **Climate Design Innovation & Public Access**
- **Modernizing and Greening Infrastructure for the Climate Crisis**

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES & MAINSTAGE CONVERSATIONS

Opportunity Now: Responding to the Climate Emergency

Countries have come forward with ambitious pledges to tackle the climate crisis, from sustainability commitments to resilient infrastructure investments. A critical part of the United States' agenda will be a whole-of-government approach. The opening keynote address explores how the federal government is using every tool available in the executive branch to stop the climate crisis and how states and local governments are essential partners in this climate leadership effort.

Climate Resilience for the Most Vulnerable Communities

Studies increasingly show that the most severe repercussions from the climate crisis fall disproportionately upon underserved communities that are the least able to prepare for, and recover from, heat waves, poor air quality, flooding, and other impacts. The opening program continues with a consideration of the intersection of policies, infrastructure, and governance with disproportionate impacts and equitable solutions across vulnerable populations.

A Blueprint to Rebuild America: Adaptation, Infrastructure, and Spending

The infrastructure bill, executive orders, and legislation passed since President Biden took office signals the federal government's commitment to addressing the climate crisis as a systemic threat to the entire economy. More than 20 federal agencies published climate adaptation plans in 2021 revealing the threats climate change poses to their operations and facilities and how they plan to handle them. Our panel explores equity-centered infrastructure planning and the commitment to put environmental justice communities front and center through the Justice40 Initiative.

The Heather M. Morgan Climate Risk Adaptation Lecture

The inaugural lecture to honor Heather M. Morgan, the noted climate design expert who passed away last year, and her contributions to the field of climate design. The lecture reflects her redefining the relationship between the human built environment and natural systems utilizing a transdisciplinary approach.

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TRACK: MODERNIZING & GREENING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE CLIMATE CRISIS

What It Will Take to Decarbonize the Maritime Industry: Navigating to Zero Carbon

Curbing shipping and onshore emissions was a hot topic at COP26 in Glasgow, with 14 nations signing a declaration to bring shipping emissions down to net zero by 2050. Getting the industry to zero emissions will require the sector to move away from fossil fuel-based marine fuels and toward more expensive, zero-carbon alternatives. Market-based incentives, major investments, data tracking, and R&D will be critical to move the industry to meet aggressive emissions goals. This panel discusses the steps already being taken by North American ports and the steps needed.

Public Housing on a Precipice and a Bellwether for Multi-Family Housing

Public housing faces staggering maintenance backlogs made even more serious because of climate change. The climate hazards that public housing must prepare for in the future are an indicator of what multi-family buildings, public and private, also face. This panel explores the current climate resilience of public housing; the planning, programs, funding, and infrastructure needed to protect public housing from the effects of climate change; and how multi-family buildings in our region, especially aging ones, must prioritize the resiliency needed in a hotter, wetter, and more storm-intensive future.

Port Facilities Running Out of Space: The Need for a Greater Operational Footprint

Increased growth in e-commerce, supply chain challenges related to the pandemic, and the growth of the offshore wind industry require increased room for operations and warehousing at ports in our region. Pressure on port facilities to maximize efficiency and increase their footprint will become an ever-greater challenge in the years to come while aging infrastructure and land use policies threaten to limit growth. This panel defines the need for ports to expand and improve productivity, and discusses the means to realize opportunities for funding capital improvements and expansion, and the effect of limited growth on local economies, communities, and offshore wind.

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TRACK: OFFSHORE WIND & THE HARBOR

The Onshore Challenge for Offshore Wind: Vital Land-Based Infrastructure Required for Offshore Wind Growth

The development of industrial maritime infrastructure capable of meeting offshore wind's logistical demands is a critical factor in this sector's growth. This includes wharfs and piers that can handle heavy-lift equipment, upland acreage for marshalling equipment and component manufacturing, heavy-haul road connections, and substations needed for transmission cables. As offshore wind becomes more of a part of our economy and harbor, this panel explores the onshore components that make offshore wind possible.

Sharing Waterways for a Renewable Energy Future: Best Practices for Co-Existence in a Congested Harbor

As states look to meet their renewable energy goals, many are turning to their harbors and coastal areas to fill the growing energy gap. At the same time, these waterways experience growing pressures from the shipping industry, fisheries, and coastal communities. This panel looks at the range of roles and responsibilities for co-existence of these stakeholders. Representatives from wind developers, fisheries, and the maritime industries discuss current approaches to cooperation that bring together the government, offshore wind, fishing, and academic communities to study impacts before the first major projects are constructed.

Labor for Offshore Wind: How Will There Be Enough Skilled Workers?

Recognizing the anticipated growth in the offshore wind and renewable energy sectors, academic institutions and workforce organizations are creating programs to prepare for jobs in this emerging industry. But will these efforts be enough? What strategies are they taking? This panel uncovers labor market challenges specific to the needs of the offshore wind industry focusing on the size of workforce, and discusses training in technical and transferrable skills, and the needed commitments from trade schools and academia.

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TRACK: SOCIAL JUSTICE & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Pressures on the Youth Climate Movement: Do We Expect Youth to Do It All?

From participation at COP26 in Glasgow to local activists who have changed the outcomes of congressional elections, the youth climate movement's motivation and power gives many hope in the fight against the climate crisis. It is common to hear those outside the movement express trust that the new generation will save the planet. This panel explores the great expectations that Americans place in the youth movement to make the necessary strides in combating the climate crisis. The discussion focuses on youth activist voices and the ways we can work together for major change for the future.

Climate Grief and Climate Anxiety: What Is It and How to Cope with It?

Publicly unspoken but easily understood, more people are dealing with grief and anxiety related to the realities of the climate crisis. This panel explores the current research and recommendations for how to talk about and communicate the personal experience of climate change, and how supportive efforts—from climate art to therapy—are a growing field.

Defining Infrastructure and Systemic Bias: Making Equity-Informed Decisions in the Built Environment

Growing research points to how historic bias in infrastructure spending can lead to poorer outcomes and inequalities for under-resourced communities and non-white Americans. Centuries of displacement have destabilized Black communities and undermined their access to opportunity. Learn from panelists about the recent research and current efforts for better outcomes from infrastructure spending through the Justice40 initiative, as well as through equity-informed infrastructure construction, replacement, and rehabilitation decision-making tools.

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TRACK: CLIMATE DESIGN INNOVATION & PUBLIC ACCESS

Swimming and Public Access for the 21st-Century Urban Waterfront: Reclaiming Waterfronts for Recreation

Innovative design, masterful engineering, and improved water quality are driving interest in floating structures and urban renewal projects that increase waterfront access. Paris launched a floating pool in the Seine and eco-friendly floating homes dot the waterfront in Amsterdam, yet limits to local access still persist in our region and innovative projects are largely driven by private development. This panel discusses the trend, with leaders in design and community development who envision active places of nature, recreation, and play along waterfronts.

Public Participation: How to Do It Right

The public engagement process to inform community designs often leads to a depletion of goodwill on all sides. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process. Program design, technology, and language matter—as does acknowledging different kinds of expertise, and where that expertise can be found. The discussion will focus on experiences and outcomes in public participation processes.

Climate Shoreline Design for All Communities: The Edge Beyond Manhattan

The future is already here in climate design and capabilities, but how is it being put into practice? This panel provides a view of promising waterfront developments and restoration initiatives in New York and New Jersey from the private and public sectors, focusing on the shoreline beyond Manhattan. Speakers will explore how nature-based approaches and designs to rehabilitate natural systems represent a new tide of innovation for coastal resilience to protect nature, communities, and boost the economy.

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TRACK: CLIMATE-RESILIENT STRATEGIES AND STANDARDS

Expanding ESG and Impact Investing for Physical Assets

Physical assets ranging from real estate to infrastructure to renewable energy are built to last and expected to provide ongoing value or services to society over several decades. However, climate change increasingly affects all physical assets and sectors and as such, it will impact the portfolio returns and asset valuations on these facilities. Expected returns on sectors such as energy, utilities, and telecoms will be significantly impacted. Governance, environmental, and social factors can drive investment value over time and asset valuations will be affected by how corporations choose to respond to climate issues. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the integration of ESG factors, this discussion considers strategies to incorporate a climate change response into investment processes.

Wildlife Spotted! Marine Life Coming Back and Moving North

Improvements in water quality, habitat restoration, and land conservation are bringing back whales, seals, fish, and other wildlife to the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary. At the same time our region is experiencing warming that continues to invite to our harbor and coastal edge species that normally inhabit only southern ranges. This panel looks at these shifts and explores questions about the current outlook for species, along with what new species we could expect more of in the coming years. Defining what constitutes an invasive species will also be considered.

New Jersey's National Leadership in Climate Resilience Planning: What are the Next Steps and What Resources are Needed?

New Jersey is one of the states leading the nation in municipal-level planning for climate resilience. Just as severe storms and flooding have become more commonplace across New Jersey due to the impact of climate change, amendments to New Jersey's Municipal Land Use Law now require municipalities to incorporate a climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment into any master plan. This panel explores the specific steps municipalities must take; challenges in compliance, resources, and funding needed; the role of local communities in shaping these plans; and opportunities for New Jersey's law to serve as a model for other states.

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