

**A REVISED
ENVIRONMENTAL
GRANTMAKING
STRATEGY
FOR NEW YORK CITY**

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THE NEW YORK
COMMUNITY TRUST **NY
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INTRODUCTION

The Trust launched a small environmental internship program in 1979, setting the stage for creating an urban environment grantmaking program in 1986.

The Trust made 136 grants, totaling \$4.6 million, between 1986 and 2003. The grants promoted public awareness and participation in water supply, air quality, solid waste, and land use planning issues; and supported innovative solutions and better planning around them.

In 2003, the Board approved a revised environmental grantmaking strategy for New York City focused on:

- Promoting a more effective solid waste management system;
- Expanding open space and park resources;
- Reclaiming the waterfront and brownfields; and
- Reducing air pollutants and other environmental toxins.

Many of the issues important in the mid-1980s remain important today—solid waste, drinking water, open space, environmentally sensitive development.

This review was informed by discussions with grantees and environmental leaders, interviews with other funders, a literature review, and an analysis of the Trust's environmental grantmaking in New York City over the last 11 years. It:

- Analyzes current trends, critical issues, major challenges, and opportunities in the field.
- Examines other foundations' and The Trust's grants in New York City.
- Recommends a revised grant strategy.

NEW YORK CITY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND TRENDS

Solid Waste

From ocean dumping to incineration, the City has struggled with how to dispose of millions of tons of garbage it generates every year— safely and cost effectively.

- New York City creates more than 14 million tons of waste every year, roughly half of which is recycled. Through the 1980s, the City relied on thousands of apartment building and municipal incinerators as well as City-owned landfills to dispose of the residential waste. Commercial carters manage waste from businesses.
 - In 2001, the City closed Fresh Kills on Staten Island and began an expensive process of sending the majority of City-collected waste out of state through a network of private transfer stations concentrated in a handful of neighborhoods in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn. Environmental justice groups and elected officials have pushed for a more equitable approach to handling the City’s waste.
 - In 2006, the City worked with the City Council, environmental organizations, and community groups to develop a new Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP—pronounced “swamp”) designed to share the burdens of managing waste more equitably across the boroughs by establishing marine transfer stations and sending the waste out via barge. The SWMP has been mired in controversy and lawsuits, particularly over a proposed siting of a marine transfer station on East 91st Street in Manhattan.
- Beginning in 2015, disposing of electronic waste or “e-waste,” which contains lead and other toxic substances, in the general waste stream will become illegal. A new state “producer responsibility” law requires manufacturers to collect and recycle or reuse e-waste.
- Food makes up about 35 percent of all City waste. A bill passed in 2013 mandated that restaurants generating more than a ton of food waste per week send their scraps to a City-run composting facility, eliminating 250,000 tons a year from the waste stream.

Open Space, Waterfront Access, and Community Greening

One of the City’s primary land use challenges is to make the most of the 469 square miles of land and water it occupies, which often means trade-offs involving the design of mixed-use developments, the siting of critical infrastructure, and the preservation of open space.

- Even though New York City has the largest municipal park system in the United States, it does not meet its own or national standards on parks and open space. We have less open space per person than almost any other major American city.
 - Since 2007, the number of New Yorkers living within a 10-minute walk of a park increased by more than a quarter million as a result of the implementation of PlaNYC. The City has added more than 300 acres of new parkland in the last five years.
 - New York City has historically provided relatively little funding for park maintenance and acquisition.
- More than 600 community gardens, typically cared for by volunteers, have transformed empty lots across the five boroughs. The Bloomberg administration adopted new rules governing community gardens in 2010 that made them easier to remove.
- There are several greenways being developed along the Brooklyn waterfront, the Harlem River, and the Bronx River, dedicated to walking and biking.
- In 2011, the Bloomberg administration released a waterfront plan that included more than 50 acres of new waterfront parks and the creation of 14 new waterfront esplanades. These projects will revitalize the City’s economy and enhance quality of life.
- Major “green infrastructure” initiatives designed to slow stormwater, including enhanced tree pits, landscaped medians, and bioswales (small patches of plants and rocks) also help to “green” neighborhoods and cool City streets.

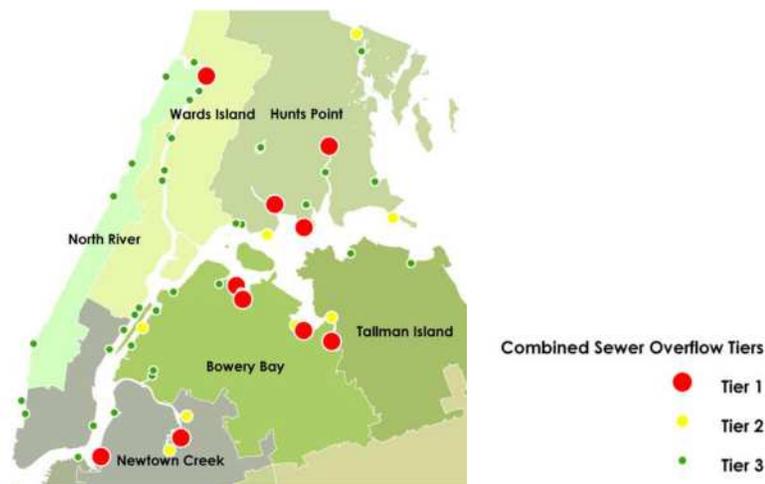
Water Quality and Watershed Management

New York City's drinking water system is the envy of the world's "global cities" and one reason for the City's prosperity.

- 19 reservoirs in three watersheds (Delaware, Catskill, and Croton) provide 1.5 billion gallons of clean, unfiltered drinking water through a gravity-fed web of aqueducts to 10 million residents in Westchester and the City.
- The safety of this drinking water depends on the sustainable management of the watersheds under a "filtration avoidance determination" from the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Water from the Croton system meets all health-based water standards, but regularly fails color-based aesthetic standards. The City is building a \$3 billion filtration plant in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx to comply with these standards.

On the other hand, the design of the City's sanitary and storm sewer system continue to erode water quality across the City.

- More than 27 billion gallons of diluted raw sewage and polluted stormwater discharge out of 460 combined sewer overflows (CSOs) into New York Harbor each year. The Tier 1 CSOs, marked in red below, release the greatest amount of untreated sewage into NYC's waterways.
- These discharges are threatening the ecological viability of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge and disproportionately affect low-income communities.



Legacy Pollution (left over from past activities with no responsible party to clean it up)

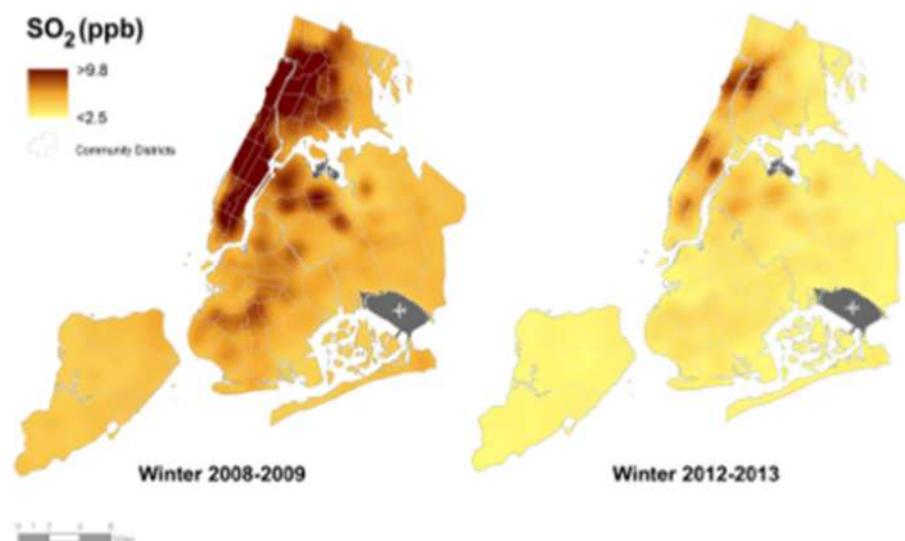
Reducing the risk of toxic exposure from legacy pollution is necessary.

- Thousands of pre-1970 New York City buildings were constructed with lead paint, asbestos, and window caulking containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).
- There are more than 6,000 brownfield sites across the five boroughs.

Air Quality

While New York City's air quality has improved dramatically in recent years, it is still among the worst in the nation.

- Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx are in the top ten counties with the greatest cancer risk associated with air-borne toxins and chemicals. Traffic congestion in the City's business districts and along truck routes cause high levels of diesel particulates.
- The phase-out of the dirtiest fuel oil (No. 6) has reduced sulfur dioxide emissions by 69 percent and soot by 23 percent from 2007 levels. But continued use of No. 4 fuel oil permitted until 2030 is creating air pollution "hot spots" in Northern Manhattan and the Bronx.



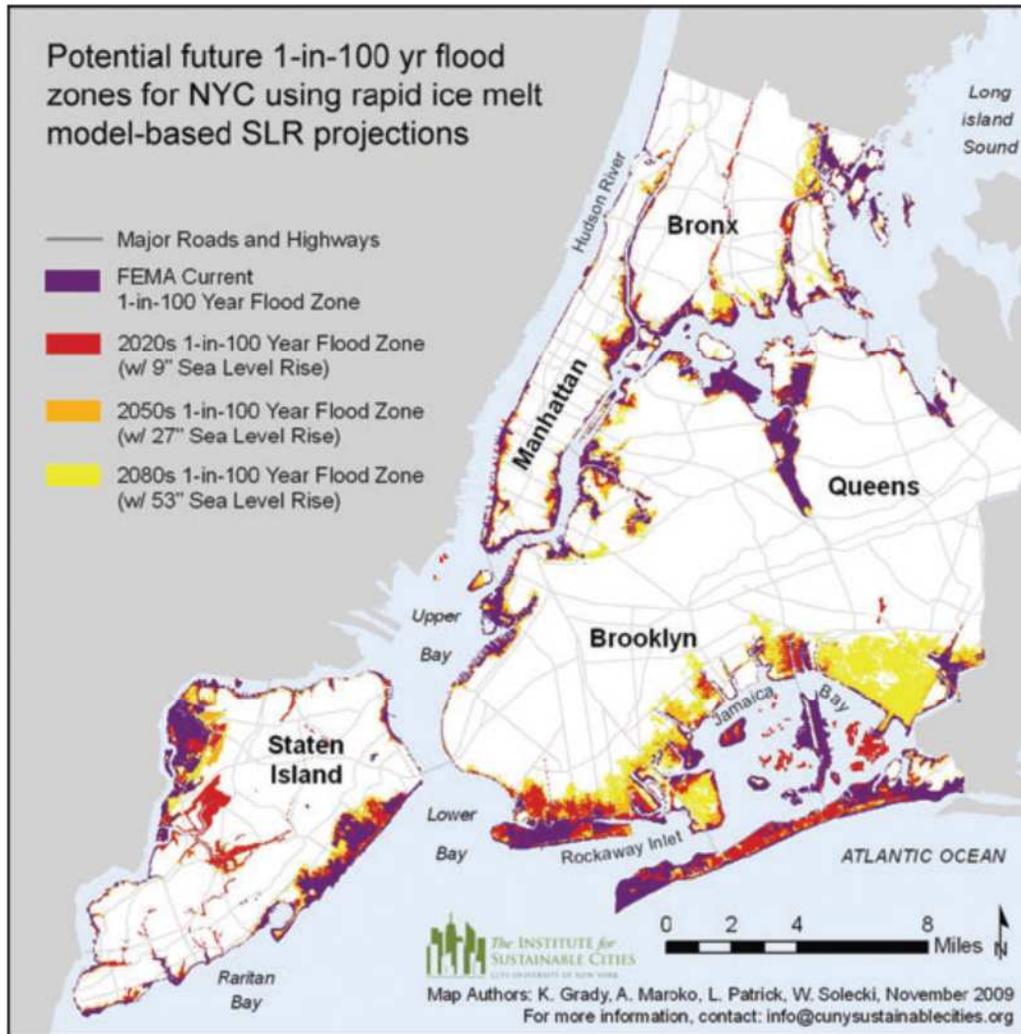
Climate and Energy

With dense development along the 520 miles of waterfront, aging infrastructure, and old buildings, New York City faces dire consequences from a changing climate.

- Even as the City becomes more sustainable and emits fewer greenhouse gases, the gases already in the atmosphere will continue to cause climate change.
- Climate models project an increase in the number of heat waves from two to three or four per year by the 2020s, and five to seven by the 2050s. (A heat wave is three consecutive days at or above 90 degrees F)
- Annual precipitation will likely increase between five and ten percent by 2050, causing more floods.
- Sea levels will rise between 11 and 30 inches by 2050.

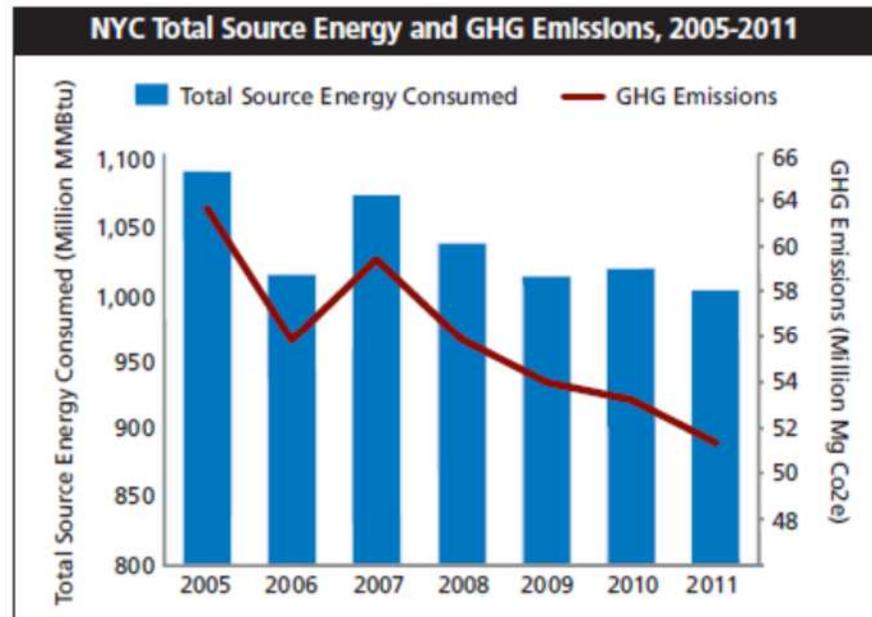
Superstorm Sandy illustrated the deadly consequences of tidal surges and stronger storms for New York City. It flooded roads, subways, electric power facilities, and neighborhoods, killing 43 people.

This map shows potential flood zones from sea level rise (SLR) projections through the 2080s.



New York City is much more energy efficient on a per capita basis than the U.S. as a whole and all other American cities.

- The average New Yorker consumes less than half the national average of energy because he lives in far less space and takes more mass transit instead of driving.
- Recent policy changes and investments in energy efficiency have led to a 7.9 percent decline in energy consumption from 2005 to 2011, and greenhouse gas emissions decline of 16 percent.



Source: NYC Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability

KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING OUR GRANTMAKING

New York City developed a bold approach to environmental sustainability under Mayor Bloomberg called PlaNYC.

- Released in 2007, PlaNYC is an ambitious development framework designed to accommodate up to one million more residents by 2030, while reducing the City' greenhouse gas emissions. More than 25 City agencies participated.
 - It contained 127 initiatives focused on a range of issues, including brownfields, solid waste, and green buildings.
 - At the required update in 2011, more than 97 percent of the initiatives and almost two-thirds of the 2009 milestones had been achieved. The city had:
 - Started the nation's first municipal brownfields clean-up program.
 - Developed a green infrastructure program to manage stormwater.
 - Planted more than 730,000 trees.
 - Installed 300 miles of bike lanes.
 - Reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 16 percent over 2005 levels.
 - Put in place energy efficiency standards for new and existing buildings over 50,000 square feet.
- Many PlaNYC elements have been codified into law by the City Council, including the Mayor's Office of Long-term Planning and Sustainability, and the New York City Panel on Climate Change.

There also are state and federal programs that provide opportunities to address the City's environmental issues.

- The damage caused by three storms (Irene, Lee, and Sandy) has prompted several State initiatives, funded in part by greater-than-expected revenues from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative cap-and-trade program.
 - The New York State Green Bank is a State-sponsored investment fund for clean energy initiatives, with an initial capitalization of more than \$218 million.
 - Through the State's Regional Economic Development Councils program, the City's strategic plan calls for a green manufacturing center in the Brooklyn Navy Yard and a green zone on Staten Island. Approximately \$40 million is identified for these efforts.
- Various State and City agencies have billions of federal dollars for approved plans to rebuild and recover from Sandy.
 - The New York City Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency is a \$19 billion plan to improve infrastructure and build resilience, and rebuild Sandy-affected neighborhoods.
 - New York Rising is a State program that has allocated \$157 million to 10 City neighborhoods for the development of recovery plans that will allow access to \$1.7 billion in additional funding.
 - Rebuild by Design is a unique competition sponsored by the federal Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force through which design professionals envision solutions that increase resilience across the Sandy-affected region.

OTHER PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITY

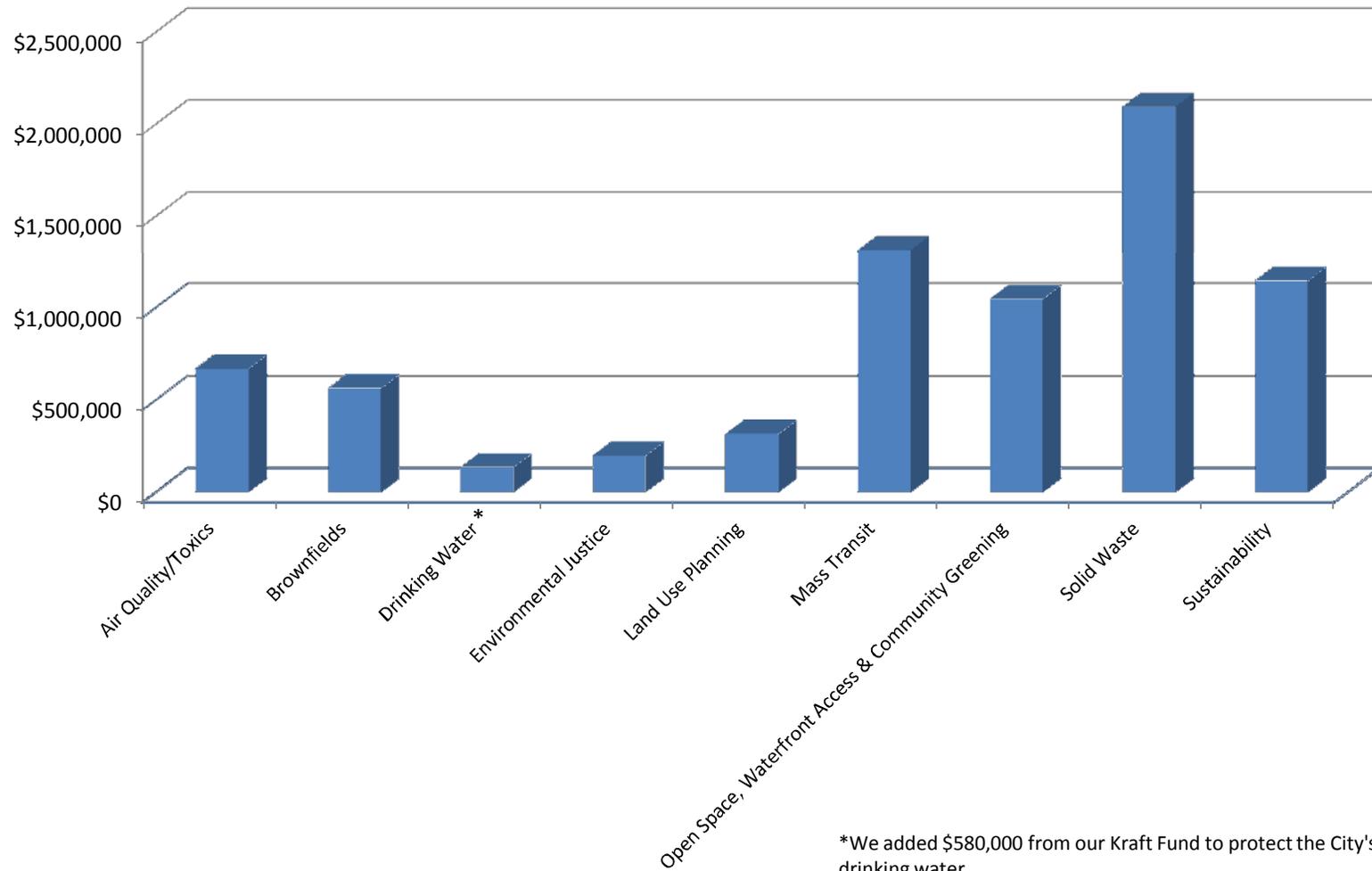
The Trust is consistently one of the top funders of environmental protection and urban sustainability efforts in the City.

Top Ten New York City Environmental Grantmakers in 2011

	Organization	Total \$ Granted
1)	Rockefeller Foundation	1,675,000
2)	New York Community Trust	835,000
3)	Ford Foundation	500,000
4)	JM Kaplan Fund	440,000
5)	Rockefeller Brothers Fund	400,000
6)	Overbrook Foundation	360,000
7)	Tiffany & Co. Foundation	170,000
8)	Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation	105,000
9)	Nathan Cummings Foundation	100,000
10)	Surdna Foundation	90,000

OUR NEW YORK CITY ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTMAKING 2003 - 2013

We made 175 grants totaling \$7,485,500 from 2003 to 2013 in the following areas.



Some of the accomplishments of our grants are listed below.

Climate change and energy

- Revised the City's building codes for the first time in 40 years to incorporate energy efficiency and other sustainability measures.
- Strengthened a local "green" economy based on sustainable manufacturing and energy efficient production practices.
- Increased resilience of City neighborhoods to coastal storms.

Air and Water Quality

- Began conversion of garbage trucks to natural gas to improve air quality in New York City.
- Reduced children's exposure to diesel exhaust inside school buses.
- Protected New York City's watershed and drinking water from the negative effects of natural gas extraction, agricultural run-off, and uncontrolled development upstate.

Brownfields

- Developed the nation's first municipal program for redeveloping brownfields across the City.
- Supported the development of innovative new approaches to remediate brownfields with native plants.

Environmental Justice

- Supported the establishment of new parks in low-income communities across the City.
- Supported a successful effort to advocate for the redesign of the one-mile long Sheridan Expressway in the South Bronx.
- Ensured the interests of low-income communities were incorporated into PlaNYC.

Solid Waste

- Established neighborhood food-waste recycling and composting programs.
- Opened a computer re-use and recycling center in Brooklyn.
- Promoted sustainable and equitable waste management practices in New York City.
- Supported community recycling and waste prevention drive.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Climate change has become the most pressing environmental issue. A comprehensive sustainability and resiliency agenda for the City is the most promising approach for addressing this challenge.

- New York City has become a global leader among cities on these issues; maintaining this momentum is important.
- Financial incentives and building codes have already proven to be effective tools for increasing the energy efficiency of City buildings.
- Green building technologies and practices are fast becoming the norm in the City, especially for new construction.
- There has been some progress on replacing gasoline-powered taxis with hybrids, low-emission, and electric vehicles.
- The blackouts after Sandy illustrated the need to make the electricity grid more resilient.

Protecting the public health and quality of life of New Yorkers requires continuing efforts to improve air and water quality, eliminate the risk of toxic exposures, reduce solid waste, create open space, and redevelop brownfields.

- The recent strides the City has made in reducing air pollution have not benefited all neighborhoods equally. Significant pockets of dirtier air remain in several areas.
- Continued work to address legacy pollution, such as heavy metals, PCBs, and other toxic substance in buildings, waterways, groundwater, and land (brownfields) is necessary.
- Implementation of the SWMP will reduce the amount of garbage being processed in low-income neighborhoods and the costs of managing this waste. Expanded composting of food waste and the mandatory recycling of electronic waste will reduce the amount and toxicity of waste being shipped to out-of-state landfills and incinerators.
- The redevelopment of Governors Island and the completion of other new parks and open spaces such as Brooklyn Bridge Park, the East River Esplanade, and various greenways will continue reconnecting New Yorkers to the waterfront.

Preserving the beauty and health of our urban ecologies, including waterways, watersheds, wetlands, urban tree cover, and forested areas is one of the central challenges of urban sustainability.

- Monitoring the City's management of the watersheds crucial to New Yorkers' drinking water remains critical.
- The City has begun to experiment with green infrastructure as a way to control combined sewer overflow. Not only do these measures reduce pollution of waterways, they cool streets and beautify neighborhoods.
- The use of native species in parks, green roofs, and greenways helps to support wildlife including migratory birds and pollinators.
- Protecting or expanding existing wetlands and creating new ones can protect our shorelines from storm surges and erosion while providing critical habitat to many species.

A REVISED GRANTMAKING STRATEGY

New York City can be the living laboratory of the Trust's national goal to create environmentally sustainable, resilient, and just communities. We propose a revised environmental grantmaking strategy for New York City that supports efforts around three broad themes.

Becoming a Climate-Smart Metropolis by:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Improving the energy efficiency of buildings and various industries.
- Increasing the amount of electricity generated by renewable energy resources.
- Supporting distributed (on-site) generation, establishing microgrids, and modernizing the grid.
- Encouraging climate resilience and adaptation to climate change.

Creating Healthier, More Livable Communities by:

- Creating, improving, and enhancing open space and improving use and access to the City's waterfronts.
- Preventing air pollution.
- Reducing the risk of exposure to toxic substances.
- Reclaiming and redeveloping brownfields.
- Ensuring that environmental benefits and burdens are shared equitably.

Protecting Urban Ecologies by:

- Safeguarding the City's critical watersheds.
- Preventing pollution of the waterways.
- Preserving and enhancing wetlands, urban tree cover, and wildlife habitat.

We also will encourage cross-cutting initiatives that accomplish a combination of climate, health, or ecological objectives. Some examples are:

- Green buildings or green infrastructure that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prevent toxic exposures, and protect waterways.
- Promoting sustainable transportation practices that clean the air, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and increase quality of life.
- Ensuring access to healthy food grown in the metro region to reduce greenhouse gases and protect public health.
- Building leadership for broad sustainability goals among new constituencies.
- Ensuring meaningful participation by disadvantaged groups in environmental and land use decision-making.