

# Public Engagement



**INITIATIVES** **Housing and Neighborhoods** • Foster the creation of Greener, Greater Communities • Increase the sustainability of City-financed and public housing | **Parks and Public Space** • Open underutilized spaces as playgrounds or part time public spaces • Facilitate urban agriculture and community gardening • Plant one million trees • Support and encourage stewardship | **Brownfields** • Support community-led planning efforts • Support local and area-wide community brownfield planning efforts • Increase the transparency and accessibility of brownfield cleanup plans | **Waterways** • Engage and enlist communities in sustainable stormwater management | **Energy** • Improve energy efficiency in smaller buildings • Expand the Mayor's Carbon Challenge to new sectors • Foster the market for renewable energy in New York City | **Air Quality** • Facilitate the adoption of electric vehicles • Reduce illegal idling • Promote the use of cleaner-burning fuels | **Solid Waste** • Promote waste prevention opportunities • Increase the reuse of materials • Incentivize recycling • Improve the convenience and ease of recycling • Create additional opportunities to recover organic material | **Climate Change** • Integrate climate change projections into emergency management and preparedness • Work with communities to increase their climate resilience

PlaNYC describes a comprehensive list of initiatives the City government will undertake to create a greener, greater New York over the next 20 years. But our plan is also intended to enable individuals and civic organizations to take initiative as well.

The City plays many key roles: managing streets and water pipes, operating services such as solid waste collection and recycling, and enforcing regulations like the Building Code. While the City is making big choices about funding subway lines or improving parks, the countless choices that over 8 million New Yorkers make every day will determine whether New York truly becomes a greener and greater place. Individuals make decisions, large and small, that add up to big impacts: what type of car we drive; what we throw out or recycle; what appliances we purchase; and what types of fuels heat our homes. Just as New York's past success has been the product largely of a combination of individual action, civic stewardship, and government programs, a greener, greater New York will be realized both by decisions in City Hall and by the ingenuity and commitment of the people who live throughout the city. New Yorkers recognize this shared responsibility. When asked in a recent survey to identify who has the most potential for improving the city's environment, the top two responses were "local government" and "people like me / ordinary residents."

This response reinforces our commitment to educate, empower, and engage New Yorkers, support neighborhood-based sustainability efforts, link New Yorkers with volunteer opportunities, and integrate sustainability lessons into our public schools.

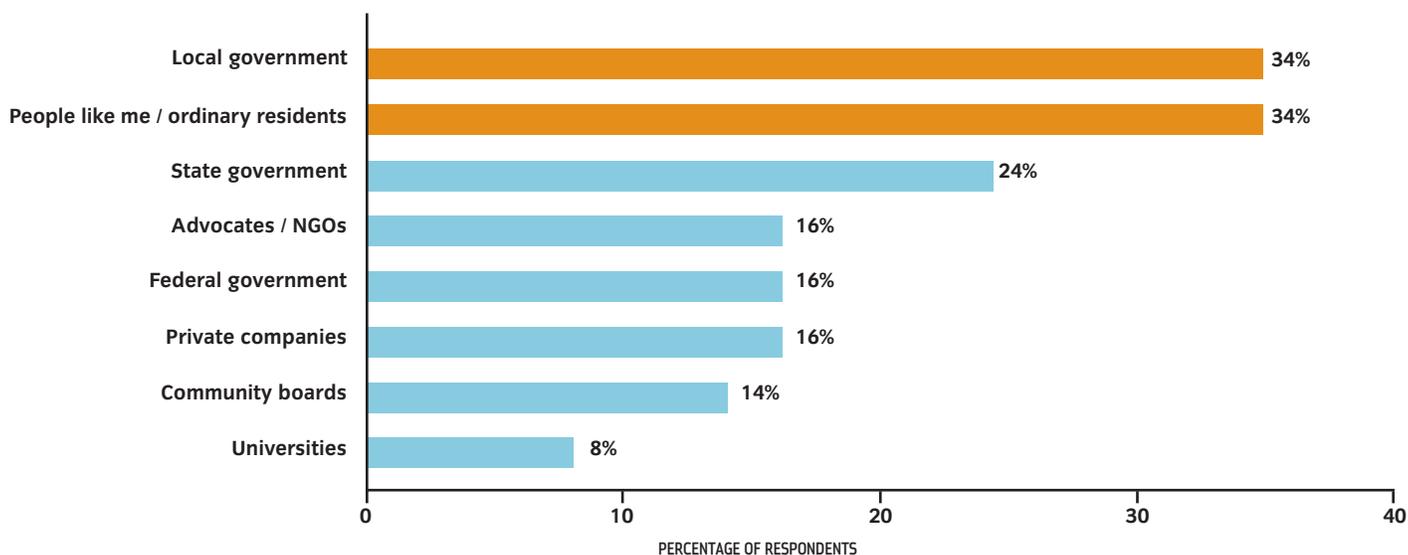
## GreenNYC

Individual New Yorkers will be provided with information on how to lead more sustainable lifestyles through GreenNYC, our public education program which informs New Yorkers about what they can do to make New York a greener and greater place. GreenNYC's informational material provides compelling facts and easy actions that New Yorkers can take to make a difference. To generate recognition and consistency, GreenNYC has created its own brand, fronted by the recognizable 'Birdie' mascot. Birdie accompanies all of the messaging in GreenNYC's media campaigns and appears at events throughout the city. GreenNYC appeals to New Yorkers with several motivators like the potential to save money, help the environment, or improve personal health. Encouraging people to make good choices of their own accord is a necessary supplement to conventional government action.



### Top Agents of Environmental Change as Seen by New Yorkers

Responses to the question: *Which of the following have the most potential to help improve the overall quality of the environment in New York City?*



Source: NYC Mayor's Office

A recent GreenNYC study of New Yorkers' attitudes toward sustainability and the likelihood of changing their behaviors found that individual actions like purchasing a hybrid or electric vehicle, acting on the recommendations of a home energy audit, or switching to energy-efficient lighting could result in a 9% drop in our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This reduction, the potential sum total of millions of individuals' actions, is a larger percentage reduction than any single public policy action or proposal included in this Plan.

We will continue to engage with New Yorkers through GreenNYC about how they can reduce their GHG emissions in meaningful, measurable ways. Many of these are related directly to the policy goals put forward in PlaNYC. The behavioral impact study we conducted in 2010 showed that energy, air quality, and solid waste are the sectors where education campaigns can have the most impact. We will be guided by that data.

Because energy use in buildings is responsible for almost 80% of our GHG emissions, we will concentrate on energy efficiency. To reduce energy consumed in residential buildings, GreenNYC efforts will encourage owners of one-to-two family homes to weatherize their buildings by insulating walls and sealing windows, install monitoring systems and programmable thermostats, and act on the recommendations of home energy audits. We will promote using appliances more efficiently, switching to energy-efficient lighting, and adjusting thermostats to consume less energy to all New Yorkers, regardless of the type of dwelling they live in. To help clean the energy supply, we will educate New Yorkers about their options for purchasing renewable energy with their utility provider.

GreenNYC not only focuses on reducing GHG emissions but also improving our environmental quality, including reducing tonnage of solid waste. To make meaningful reductions in solid



waste, we will promote paper recycling, provide individuals with tools to eliminate unsolicited junk mail, offer resources for donating used goods, and encourage New Yorkers to reduce plastic bottle waste by drinking tap water.

### **Greener, Greater Communities**

While we are working to provide useful information to individuals, we will increase our efforts to work with community-based groups as well. New York has always been blessed with residents who are willing to act to make the world a better place, often starting with their own block. Today, they are banding together in community-based organizations to plant trees, manage local compost centers, create community gathering places, or organize residents to weatherize their homes. The City already works directly with many of these local initiatives, through programs like the Weekend Walks, Safe Routes to School, or green infrastructure grants.

To accelerate those partnerships between the City and local neighborhood efforts, we will take a Greener, Greater Communities approach to supporting community-based efforts that improve our neighborhoods in ways consistent with our PlaNYC goals. We will provide community groups with technical assistance, tools, and grants to clean up contaminated land, consistent with local vision for the intended outcomes.

We will expand opportunities for park stewardship and the creation of new public spaces. And we will invite local and private property-owner participation in community-planned green infrastructure projects through a competitive grant program. We will also partner with building owners and privately-owned utilities to accelerate the early phase out of dirty Number 4 and 6 heating oils and conversion to cleaner-burning fuels.

### **NYC Service**

Many New Yorkers are also working to create a greener, greater New York through NYC Service, the Mayor's initiative to facilitate volunteer action and address the city's greatest needs. NYC Service connects volunteers to thousands of environmental projects run by hundreds of neighborhood-based organizations.

To support PlaNYC, NYC Service will continue recruiting volunteers for MillionTreesNYC, a program that is crucial to our meeting our Parks and Public Space and Waterways goals. To date, more than one third of the 430,000 trees planted as part of this campaign have been planted by more than 8,000 volunteers. NYC Service has also provided more than 120 grants to neighborhood-based "Love Your Block" cleanup programs.

We will also expand the NYC °CoolRoofs program, which uses volunteers to coat rooftops with a reflective coating to reduce the urban heat island effect and energy use. More than one million square feet of roofs have been coated through this program, which leveraged 1,600 volunteers and corporate donations.



### Sustainability in Schools

PlaNYC will help ensure that the next generations of New Yorkers live in an even greener, greater city than we have today. But that generation is already here and ready to make that city now, rather than just inheriting it when they grow up. Over one million students in City schools are being educated in and out of the classroom. Many efforts are already underway to incorporate sustainability into the classroom. The Department of Education (DOE) joined the Green Cup Challenge, an international competition among schools to achieve the greatest energy conservation improvements. The leading City school in 2010 reduced their energy use by 35% during the competition. The DOE is also partnering with several non-profits, including SolarOne, to incorporate sustainability into classroom curriculum.

Enhancing these efforts is critical to our success. We will ensure that every school has a sustainability coordinator, who will lead recycling efforts, educate teachers, and ensure that students grow up with the ethic of recycling. Our children will learn about how food grows through our Grow to Learn program. We will register 25 new school gardens per year and retain at least 75% of registered school gardens year to year.

The promise of a greener, greater New York belongs to every New Yorker—and it will be achieved only if we work together. PlaNYC is ambitious. And it should be, because New York is the most ambitious city in the world. But we're not just aspirational about what we are going to do—adapt to new technology, build new infrastructure, plant trees, and clean the water and air—we are also ambitious about how we are going to do it. We're going to create a greener, greater New York through a combination of strong municipal leadership and inventive, committed residents throughout the five boroughs.