

Creative Climate Cities Profile  
NEW YORK



GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

790 sq. km



POPULATION

8,622,698



GDP

US \$678,300  
(PPP) million

CITY STRATEGY LINKS

New York City's Green New Deal: OneNYC 2050

New York City's Roadmap to 80 x 50

1.5°C: Aligning New York City with the Paris Climate Agreement

CreateNYC: a cultural plan for all New Yorkers



# Welcome to New York



## Culture Fact

Over the past decade, encouraged by policy incentives and investment from the Mayor's office, employment in New York City's performing arts has increased by 26% and in film and television by 53%<sup>1</sup>.



## Climate Fact

In 2016, New York City emitted 52 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions, with buildings accounting for 66%<sup>2</sup>. New York City is divesting pension funds from fossil fuel interests, joining New York State, other U.S. cities and private universities who are removing investments from companies that extract coal, gas and oil.

## Introduction

New York has more nicknames than almost any other city on earth. The Big Apple (or Fun City, Gotham, the Empire City, the City that Never Sleeps, and the City So Nice they named it Twice) looks east to the Atlantic and west to the huge continent of North America. Its charismatic character is a mixture of histories and cultures which generates an energy unique to the city. With a GDP of around \$1.5 trillion, New York is a major media and financial centre and is among the world's twenty largest national economies<sup>3</sup>. With three million foreign-born residents and over 200 languages spoken<sup>4</sup>, New York's economy is determined by the extraordinary flow of diverse people, cultures, enterprise and ideas. Its high-density population – concentrated around a natural harbour – means that climate risks from storms, floods, and extreme temperatures remain high. In 2012, New York experienced the catastrophic impacts of a changing climate as Hurricane Sandy swept through the city, causing flooding, widespread destruction, blackouts, and evacuations.

## Environmental Ambition

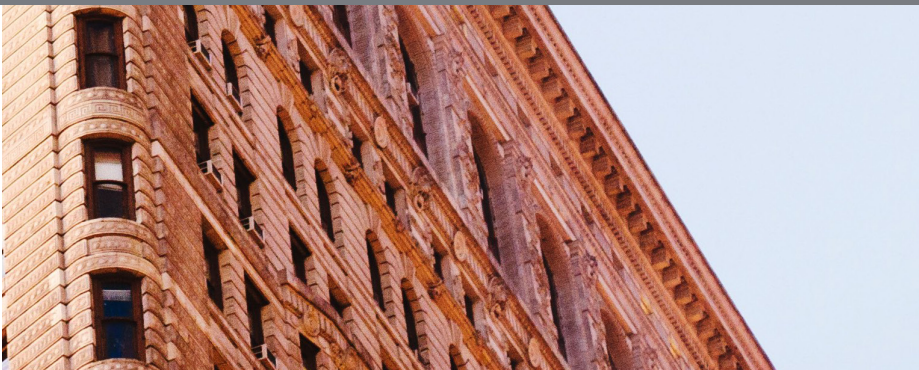
New York City was the first city to publish a strategy aligning its emission reduction targets to the Paris Agreement and the ambition of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C. The city's financial, political and cultural power, reinforced by its civic identity, provides the leverage to lead action on climate and the environment. This is demonstrated by initiatives such as OneNYC and the decision to divest its pension funds from fossil fuels. In April 2019, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced **NYC's Green New Deal**, through which the City will target the largest source of emissions in New York by mandating all large existing buildings cut their emissions - a global first. The city now has the opportunity to position its world-famous arts and culture community as leaders for the transition towards sustainability.

<sup>1</sup>World Cities Culture Forum. <http://www.worldcitiescultureforum.com/cities/new-york>

<sup>2</sup>Inventory of New York City Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2016. Appendix III of 1.5°C: Aligning New York City with the Paris Climate Agreement: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/sustainability/codes/1.5-climate-action-plan.page>

<sup>3</sup>City Lab: The Economic Power of Cities Compared to Nations (2017). <https://www.citylab.com/life/2017/03/the-economic-power-of-global-cities-compared-to-nations/519294/>

<sup>4</sup>NYC Planning. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/data-maps/nyc-population/population-facts.page>





# Highlights

1

## Creative Programmes & Campaigns

Public Artists in Residence (PAIR) places artists in specific City Agencies to creatively address civic challenges. Past PAIRS have included artist Mary Miss, who worked in the Department of Design and Construction to reimagine cities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, covering social, cultural and environmental sustainability.

2

## Resources & Support

As part of its CreateNYC strategy, the city created a position to work specifically with cultural organisations to help them reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and create a more sustainable city. This role will support the Department of Cultural Affairs' Projects Unit to invest in energy reductions and other sustainability projects.

3

## Partnerships & Innovation

The NYC Compost Project is an education and outreach project on composting for residents and businesses. Founded in 1993, it runs workshops, drop-off sites for food waste, provides technical assistance and volunteer coordination.

4

## Policy & Strategy

The CreateNYC cultural strategy explicitly connects culture and environmental sustainability in the city, including: 'Make the case for arts, culture and science as essential components of a resilient and sustainable city'.

# Creative & Climate Action in New York

## 1. Creative Programmes & Campaigns

### Creative content and activities that engage audiences on themes of climate and the environment

The City of New York has funded and delivered a range of public art and engagement projects on environmental themes, directly or through partnerships, including:

- Education programmes across science-based organisations overseen by the Department of Cultural Affairs e.g. American Museum of Natural History, Wildlife Conservation Society, Bronx Zoo, Brooklyn Botanic Garden and New York Botanical Garden. Themes included urban ecology, gardening, environmental science and poetry.
- **Public Artists in Residence (PAIR)**, which places artists in City Agencies to creatively address civic challenges, overseen by the Department of Cultural Affairs (part-funded by the City of New York). Past PAIRs have included artist Mary Miss, who worked in the Department of Design and Construction to reimagine cities for the 21st century covering social, cultural and environmental sustainability.
- **Red Hook Public Art Project on Climate Change: Ark for the Arts** by Jeanine Bardo and Isabelle Garbani (2017-2018). This public art and community engagement project was funded through NYC Emergency Management, facilitated by the Percent

for Art programme and delivered in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency. It commemorated the fourth anniversary of Hurricane Sandy and drew attention to climate change and rising sea levels.

- **The Climate Museum**, which presented – in partnership with the Mayor's Office (Climate Policy and Programs) – Climate Signals, a multi-site outdoor installation by artist Justin Brice Guariglia. Climate Signals promoted understanding of the local impacts of climate change, their intersection with other urban challenges, the importance of climate action by cities and the roles we all can play.
- **Swale**, project by artist Mary Mattingly used a boat to create a public food garden and educational space, asking questions about how New York will feed itself in the future, how access to fresh food can be improved in the South Bronx and how the City can make better use of its public land. The project works closely with the New York City Parks Department.
- The global annual **Daylight Hour** campaign which the Department of Cultural Affairs and a number of cultural institutions on city-owned property participate in. The campaign highlights ongoing investment into energy efficiency in New York's cultural institutions and encourages the use of daylight instead of electric light.
- The Department of Cultural Affairs' annual #PoetweetNYC Twitter poetry contest held during National Poetry Month. The 2018 theme was environmental sustainability in honour of Earth Day and the 40th anniversary of the City's Materials for the Arts program.

## 2. Resources & Support

### Investment, training and materials that support environmental knowledge and practical action

- **Materials for the Arts** is a partnership between the departments of Cultural Affairs, Education, and Sanitation, promoting upcycling and reuse of materials. So far it has diverted nearly 1,000 tonnes of materials from landfill every year. Materials for the Arts collects materials and objects from businesses and makes them freely available to non-profit cultural organisations, other government agencies and schools through a warehouse space and online platform. In 2017, it redistributed nearly \$10 million worth of materials. It also runs educational workshops on creativity and re-use.
- The Department of City Wide Administrative Services distributes funding for energy efficiency projects on city property – a proportion of which is diverted by the Department of Cultural Affairs to arts and culture. Through this collaboration, cultural institutions have achieved significant improvements in energy management. The funding enabled the Metropolitan Museum of Art to convert over 4,000 light fixtures to LED lamps, leading to an estimated 876,829 kWh reduction in annual energy use, saving \$91,230. The New York Botanical Garden reduced energy use by 21% and emissions by 53% (per sq. ft.) over the last decade, saving approximately \$300,000 per year. Initiatives included: upgrades to lighting and HVAC systems, clean fuel upgrades for fleet vehicles, and carbon sequestration through organic gardening practices and land management.
- The City of New York has created a new position to work specifically with cultural organisations to help them to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and create a more sustainable city. This role will support the Department of Cultural Affairs' Capital Projects Unit so that capital budgets are directed towards energy reductions and other environmentally-focused projects.

## 3. Partnerships & Innovation

### Diverse disciplines and communities sharing and co-developing ideas and resources that accelerate environmental action

- The **NYC Compost Project** is an education and outreach project on composting for residents and businesses. Founded in 1993, it runs workshops, drop-off sites for food waste, provides technical assistance and volunteer coordination. Staff are funded through the Department of Sanitation and hosted by seven partner organisations including Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Queens Botanical Garden.
- **Solar1** is a Green Energy Education Centre that manages Stuyvesant Cove Park as a haven for biodiversity and community events; runs education, workforce training, and public engagement programmes on energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies; and supports building owners and community energy groups to install solar power. It receives funding from a range of sources: the Cultural Development Fund (Department of Cultural Affairs), the NY Power Authority, the Governor's Office for Storm Recovery and the NYC Department of Education.



## Spotlight

### MATERIALS FOR THE ARTS

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## 4. Policy & Strategy

Guiding policy and strategy frameworks that drive climate and environmental action, investment and accountability

- The **CreateNYC** cultural strategy explicitly connects culture and environmental sustainability, further supported by the Department of Cultural Affairs' remit to include science as a part of the city's cultural life. Objective 4, within 'Social and Economic Impact' is: 'Make the case for arts, culture, and science as essential components of a resilient and sustainable city'. This will be delivered through the following strategies:
  - » Include arts and culture in resilience planning and preparedness; designate a City liaison to help coordinate the participation of artists and arts, cultural, and science communities in disaster preparation and response.
  - » Hire an energy specialist who will work with cultural organisations to help them decrease their energy use and lower their environmental impact.
- **CreateNYC's** implementation strategy refers to the **OneNYC** goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, committing to: 'Work with cultural organisations to achieve the City's sustainability goals'

# What Next?

A number of opportunities have been identified:

1. **Share good practice**

Research creative and cultural initiatives across the city which engage with environmental themes and practices, making them publicly available through an online resource. This will encourage new collaborations and good practice exchange and help build environmental knowledge, awareness and inspiration within the sector.

2. **Connect environmental and cultural strategy**

Connect cultural and environmental policy and strategy so that they are aligned and mutually-reinforcing; this will support a resilient and efficient cultural infrastructure which can publicly champion climate and environmental action. For example, link the CreateNYC strategy to other NYC commitments such as 80 x 50 (the Paris Agreement roadmap) and the campaign for divestment.

3. **Collaborate**

Organise a regular meeting – or working group – to support ongoing collaboration between cultural and environmental departments and implementation of city strategy. Meeting topics could include: environmental management advice for cultural buildings and events; public art commissions and artist advocacy; and citizen outreach and engagement activities. Connecting with local creative and environmental businesses, academics, community leaders and other city stakeholders could produce new knowledge, partnerships and resource.

4. **Invest in energy efficiency and clean energy**

Continue focusing capital investment on energy efficiency projects and energy management training for cultural institutions, ensuring that financial and environmental paybacks are accurately monitored and reported to make the case for continued investment.

5. **Develop environmental indicators**

Develop and include KPIs in the [OneNYC Culture indicators](#) which recognise art and culture's environmental impact as well as its opportunity to influence the sustainability agenda e.g. through engagement and education.

With special thanks to:

Ryan Max, External Affairs Director, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs  
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Julie's Bicycle  
SUSTAINING CREATIVITY

—  
BOP  
Consulting