

Recommendations at a Glance

Based on the report *Catalyzing Green Infrastructure on Private Property: Recommendations for a Green Equitable and Sustainable New York City* (August 2017), Natural Resources Defense Council and New York University Stern Center for Sustainable Business.

1. Make water and sewer rates more fair and equitable by restructuring them to include a separate stormwater fee, and create a strong stormwater management rule that requires the use of green infrastructure in development projects:

- Base property owners' stormwater-related fees on the amount of stormwater their property creates, rather than, as currently done, on the potable water they use, which bears no relation to stormwater costs. This fee re-alignment can not only create a more fair and practical water rate structure, but can also improve the affordability of water and sewer service for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers.
- Adopt on-site stormwater retention rules for new and redevelopment projects, so that additional development does not increase the City's existing stormwater burdens.

2. Commit decisively to make green infrastructure on private property a core component of the City's green infrastructure and sustainability efforts:

Clear indications of DEP's commitment such as public statements, long-term budgets, and timelines are needed to spur the private sector and community actors to invest the time and effort to become the strong partners that DEP requires to make its program a success. Additional steps that help demonstrate commitment include:

- Use capital dollars to enable the new private grant program to scale and to ensure long-term funding.
- Develop a plan for long-term operation, maintenance, and monitoring of private green infrastructure.
- Make publicly available the full cost of building *public* green infrastructure to use as a ceiling for what DEP should offer to pay for *private* green infrastructure.

3. Create a new grant program, which works in combination with a new stormwater fee, to motivate private property owners to retrofit existing properties with green infrastructure:

More than 50 percent of the land targeted for green infrastructure is privately owned, and DEP has recognized that it cannot reach its mandated green infrastructure goals by focusing only on the public right-of-way. To reach those goals, the City needs to motivate private property owners to install green infrastructure on existing development. DEP can achieve this by doing the following:

- a) Provide grants to pay for the construction of cost-effective green infrastructure on private land, learning from DEP's existing, small-scale grant program and the experiences of other cities. To successfully attract property owners citywide, a new

program should provide a direct financial benefit to property owners—beyond reimbursing the direct costs for green infrastructure.

- b) Design the program to be as transparent, simple and flexible as possible for property owners.
 - Encourage project bundlers to bring multiple green infrastructure projects to DEP.
 - Guarantee payments for pre-development costs and facilitate project financing, so property owners are not burdened with out-of-pocket costs.
- c) Engage a third-party to administer the new program by hiring a professional program manager, partnering with another city agency or quasi-public agency, or creating a new not-for-profit organization. Contract with the third-party on a pay-for-performance basis to help ensure effective use of DEP funds and ensure that the third-party takes on some of the risk of program execution.
- d) Bring community-based organizations (CBOs) into the program as important partners to help the program succeed and help achieve OneNYC goals.
 - Partner with CBOs from program design through implementation, and institutionalize their role through a new formal advisory body.
 - Integrate equity metrics, environmental justice considerations, and climate change vulnerability indicators when prioritizing where DEP grant funds are spent.
 - Ensure that CBOs have the support they need to play diverse roles in the new grant program.
- e) Look to affordable housing as an opportunity for green infrastructure to support both clean water goals and broader OneNYC goals.
 - Partner with HPD in the near-term and use DEP capital funds to build GI on affordable housing at a large scale.
 - Leverage state and federal programs that promote sustainable and green housing.
 - Consider marketing to Housing Development Fund Corporation co-ops, which offer opportunities for green infrastructure.

4. DEP cannot do this alone. The City should integrate green stormwater infrastructure throughout all relevant city agencies, programs, and policies.

- Integrate green infrastructure into all OneNYC building initiatives, taking advantage of the capacities of existing city-supported entities focused on making energy-related improvements in buildings.
- Enhance the Cool Neighborhoods NYC Initiative by including green infrastructure installations with new DEP support.
- Bundle green roofs with solar power.