PlaNYC as a Whole-of-Government Effort: Policy, Politics, and Management in the Bloomberg Administration, 2005–2007

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DRAFT

PlaNYC was a massive undertaking. It led directly to significant changes in New York City's buildings, transportation, and environmental landscape, and set the city on the path to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change. It reshaped the policies and focus of the Bloomberg Administration, which was already in year six when it was launched. It made Michael R. Bloomberg a global leader on climate change. It set the standard for ambition, scope, and style among urban climate action plans around the world.

On one level, PlaNYC was a strategic plan. It spanned 21 months and involved the creation of a new mayoral office, the contributions of roughly 200 people from more than 20 agencies and more than a dozen civic organizations, and the support of key academic experts and consultants. In that, it was similar to countless strategies produced by many governments on any number of topics. But few of these actually get implemented at all, let alone leave a twenty-year legacy and influence work in cities around the world.

PlaNYC succeeded more than most because it was more than a strategic plan or a climate action plan: it was, in fact, an actual whole-of-government effort. It was written by a small office, but it was shaped by the agencies that would have to carry it out, by the budget office that would have to pay for it, by the political staff who would have to defend it, and by the advocates and experts whose support it would need. As a result, when the Mayor endorsed it, the entire government turned to implementing it. Unlike most plans, it arrived with full funding: four days after the plan was released, the Mayor's Executive Budget committed nearly $3 billion to it: $1.3 billion in new expense funding over the four years of the city's financial plan, and $1.6 billion in capital

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funding over ten years.[1] Internal disagreements about the plan had largely been hammered out before it was released. The plan contained its own timeline for what had to be implemented when. And, finally, the plan was managed as a campaign and a massive political push from the beginning, in large part because everyone involved knew that proposing congestion pricing was a massive change that would require state legislation and face organized opposition.

That kind of effort was possible because of the unusually healthy and mature management environment that Mayor Bloomberg himself had created. Typified by his creation of an open bullpen for himself and his deputy mayors, the Mayor gave his staff significant authority, while insisting on transparency, data, and measurable results. He did not shy away from difficult discussions and was willing to take political risks once the analysis supported them. He was also a talented manager who encouraged ambition on his team but also required accountability; disagreements were neither allowed to fester nor ignored, but were forced into discussion; and agencies and individuals who disagreed could not simply choose not to engage as a way to prevent progress. This made the planning effort intense, rancorous, and sometimes disappointing, but ultimately produced a coordinated change-management effort that is often discussed but rarely achieved.[2]

Two other factors made PlaNYC succeed. One was Daniel L. Doctoroff, the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding, who was the main sponsor of the plan. Without Dan's ambition – for himself and for New York City – the plan would never have been attempted. But his greatest contribution to its success was maintaining tremendously high standards for analytical rigor in the plan, and ensuring that the effort had the staff and the resources it needed. He enforced the balanced standard of "ambitious but achievable," a concept that shaped many of

[1]City of New York, Office of Management and Budget, The City of New York Executive Budget, Fiscal Year 2008: Message of the Mayor (New York, April 2007), 8 (plaNYC 2030 expenses totaling $1.32 billion in fiscal years 2008–2011); City of New York, Office of Management and Budget, Ten-Year Capital Strategy, Fiscal Years 2008–2017 (New York, April 2007), viii (plaNYC 2030 capital investments of $1.623 billion). The expense total includes $805 million in City contributions to the SMART Fund, which were to match contributions by the State; expense funding was not projected beyond fiscal year 2011. Unless otherwise noted, emails and documents referenced are in the author's possession.

[2] On the concept, see Tom Christensen and Per Lægreid, "The Whole-of-Government Approach to Public Sector Reform," *Public Administration Review* 67, no. 6 (2007): 1059–66; Christopher Pollitt, "Joined-up Government: A Survey," *Political Studies Review* 1, no. 1 (2003): 34–49; and Management Advisory Committee, *Connecting Government: Whole of Government Responses to Australia's Priority Challenges* (Canberra: Australian Public Service Commission, 2004).

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the plan's contents. And he did so with tremendous personal effort, including countless evenings and weekends working with the staff.

Finally, PlaNYC appealed to a broad audience. While it has become known as a climate action plan, it did not start out that way, and it retained and advanced an integrated approach that advanced economic development, quality of life, and sustainability in each initiative. This meant that it did not only appeal to those who already cared about climate.

I. Origins: A Climate Plan That Did Not Start Out That Way

PlaNYC is remembered as an environmental plan, but it did not start out that way. It began as a plan to accommodate a million more New Yorkers. Dan initially engaged with sustainability as a concept for political reasons, because he was advised that the state legislature – which had to approve congestion pricing – would not do so only to fund long-term infrastructure investment. Sustainability moved from being an add-on to the genuine core of the plan in large part because Dan came to see sustainability as a concept that genuinely tied together many of New York City's challenges, and was the best way to explain and solve them. The economic and quality of life impetus to the plan remained, which is one reason it gained such broad and deep support among a variety of constituents who would never have rallied intensely around a plan solely focused on climate action.

Making space for nine million

PlaNYC grew out of the aftermath of the failed attempt to bring the Olympics to New York. Dan had been campaigning to bring the 2012 Games to New York since 1994, and that effort had already produced the template: a comprehensive vision organized around a single theme, with a target date, delivered in an illustrated report. Above all, it was a vision that focused on the side benefits of a project as much as the core benefits. The idea that the Olympics were good in and of themselves but could also create housing, parks, and transportation over the long term directly informed PlaNYC's assertion that climate action and quality of life were two sides of the same coin. The bid also forced Dan and his team to look closely at New York in comparison to other cities, most notably London, which ultimately won the Games. And the defeat in Albany of the bid's centerpiece, a stadium on Manhattan's West Side, at the hands of Assembly Speaker

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Sheldon Silver[3] ensured that nobody on the team underestimated Albany as they developed PlaNYC.[4]

The stadium was voted down in June 2005, and the bid lost to London at the International Olympic Committee's meeting in Singapore on July 6, in the midst of the Mayor's re-election campaign. Dan took time off to reset and returned with several big ideas, one of which was a strategic land use plan to accommodate population growth.[5] He had already been presented with population projections made by the Department of City Planning's Joseph Salvo, which predicted the city would grow from 8.2 million to 9.1 million residents in 2030. That growth captured Dan's attention. In July 2005, it was the subject of an interagency discussion at Gracie Mansion, and by November 17, a transportation subcommittee was organizing its work around the question "Can NYC Accommodate 9.1 Million New Yorkers?"[6]

Dan believed that growth was not only good for a city, but necessary for it. He believed it was a solution to the city's longstanding budget problems as well, because well-managed growth would pay for itself: each additional New Yorker would pay more in taxes than the city would spend on services for him or her. Our staff later spent a lot of time trying to prove the proposition empirically, without much success, but it remained the bedrock belief behind the entire effort.[7]

By spring 2006 the Long-Term Strategic Plan, or "LTSP," was a substantial enterprise run out of Dan's office by a small staff — Joe Chan, Sophia Hollander, and Angela Sung — with interagency project teams covering housing, employment, parks, energy, water, and

[3]The state Public Authorities Control Board, on which Silver and Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno each held a veto, declined to approve the stadium's financing on June 6, 2005; the International Olympic Committee chose London on July 6. Andrea Bernstein, "Stadium Ruling a Blow to New York's Olympic Bid," Morning Edition, NPR, June 7, 2005.

[4] On the Olympic bid and its role as a template, see Daniel L. Doctoroff, *Greater Than Ever: New York's Big Comeback* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2017); and Andrew Winters, "An Urbanist's Olympic Vision," and "The Olympic X Plan and Legacy," in *The Urbanist: Dan Doctoroff and the Rise of New York*, ed. Sophia Hollander and Marc Ricks (New York: Monacelli Press, 2024), 48–53, 54–60.

[5] Doctoroff, *Greater Than Ever*, chap. 19.

[6]Dan Doctoroff to agency commissioners, "Long Term Strategic Plan," June 9, 2006 ("Last December we discussed the implications of the population growth across several agencies and development areas"); "LTSPIpresent_11-17.ppt," November 17, 2005. In 2005–2006 usage "LTSP" stood for Long-Term Strategic Plan.

[7]Angela Sung to Jeffrey Kay and Rohit Aggarwala, "Growth is good," September 26, 2006, and Kay's reply of the same day ("Just don't tell dan you are doing it until there is progress!!").

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transportation, and key leadership and inspiration from Sandy Hornick and Eric Kober at the Department of City Planning.[8] Its work was driven by the agencies and by a practical question: how could New York City's infrastructure serve a city of nine million? Dan brought in Alex Garvin, a Yale urban planner with extensive city government experience who had advised on the Olympic bid, to do a land-use study; it identified capacity for hundreds of thousands of housing units, including on platforms over rail yards and highways.[9] Parsons Brinckerhoff's draft regional transportation plan projected that without new capacity, about 275,000 potential jobs would go unfilled by 2030, and laid out a program that would need roughly $44 billion and new sources of revenue.[10] This program included congestion pricing for the Manhattan core. The LTSP was organized around three themes – Community, Efficiency, and Mobility – across 188 neighborhoods.[11] Many of the ideas that PlaNYC would incorporate were already discussed across different city agencies: congestion pricing to fund rail and transit, 256,000 new housing units, 6,600 megawatts of new electricity supply, and opening schoolyards to the public after hours.[12] Not all of these were new; the schoolyards idea, for example, had been proposed by Councilmember Gale Brewer in 2004, but the LTSP brought them together and gave them momentum.

Learning sustainability

At this point, the LTSP incorporated some environmental initiatives, such as air and water quality, coming from the agencies, but it was not shaped by sustainability or climate. Neither was something Dan or his economic development team had focused on, and neither was a mainstream issue. The New York City Council had passed its first sustainability legislation in

[8]"Project Teams 06-14-06.xls," attachment to Angela Sung, "contact list," June 14, 2006.

[9]Alex Garvin & Associates, report for the Economic Development Corporation, May 26, 2006. Joan Byron of the Pratt Center described it to advocates as "the report Alex Garvin did for Doctoroff on where to put 300,000+ units of housing": Eddie Bautista to Jeffrey Kay and Rohit Aggarwala, "FW: Garvin report," August 18, 2006.

[10]Parsons Brinckerhoff, draft briefing book and slides for the long-term transportation plan, May 12–13, 2006.

[11]"outline 5.1.doc," attachment to Sophia Hollander, "community," June 15, 2006.

[12]Sophia Hollander to Rohit Aggarwala, "RE: Hello," May 8, 2006; Angela Sung to Dan Doctoroff, "LTSP for Mayor's Senior Staff Meeting," June 5, 2006, with attachment "Dan's Senior Staff 06-05-06.pdf." Not all of these were new ideas or originated as part of this process; many were existing ideas that were incorporated and given impetus by it. For example, the idea that became schoolyards-to-playgrounds had already been proposed by Councilmember Gale Brewer in 2004; see New York City Council, Resolution 0652-2004, October 27, 2004.

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2005, Local Law 86, which required LEED certification for new City-owned buildings.[13] It was a narrow mandate that reflected both how pioneering such requirements were at the time and how limited most sustainability efforts still were.

By February 2006, Dan and Chan were recognizing that the LTSP was becoming a much bigger effort than could be handled as a side project of some of his core economic development staff. Dan's portfolio as Deputy Mayor was already expanding; on February 6, 2006, he officially took over responsibility for several new agencies. Two were critically important to the development of the plan. One, the Mayor's Office of Operations, was a longstanding office whose main traditional task was publishing the annual Mayor's Management Report on agency performance. Dan's interest in Operations was twofold: one, it would become a team dedicated to improving operating performance across multiple city agencies, and two, it could be a home for the staff Dan increasingly planned on hiring to undertake the strategic plan. At the same time, Dan hired Jeff Kay, then a Deputy Budget Director at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) who had previously served on the City's Albany staff, to lead it. The other was the Office of Environmental Coordination (OEC) , led by Dr. Robert Kulikowski.[14]

A few weeks later, on March 1, 2006, Dan wrote to more than fifteen commissioners proposing to combine the LTSP with the Mayor's Task Force on Sustainability:

> Creating environmentally sustainable practices is a critical part of this initiative, to protect our natural resources and promote healthy neighborhoods for current and future generations of New Yorkers. Therefore, I would like to bring together the agencies participating in the Long Term Strategic Planning and those who have worked on the Mayor's Sustainability Task Force. I would like to create a single entity charged with

[13] New York City Local Law 86 of 2005 (Int. No. 324-A), passed by the Council on September 15, 2005, and approved by the Mayor on October 3, 2005; it took effect on January 1, 2007.

[14]City of New York, Office of the Mayor, Executive Order No. 85, "Deputy Mayors," February 6, 2006, § 6(f), which placed the Office of Operations, the Office of Environmental Coordination, and the Departments of Buildings, Transportation, Environmental Protection, Finance, Housing Preservation and Development, Small Business Services, and Information Technology and Telecommunications under the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding, and repealed Executive Order No. 2 of January 1, 2002, under which the Office of Operations and the Office of Environmental Coordination had reported to the Deputy Mayor for Operations. Kay had succeeded Susan L. Kupferman as Director of Operations by April 28, 2006, when he signed the author's offer letter (cited below); Kupferman is still listed as Director in City of New York, *Mayor's Management Report: Preliminary Fiscal 2006* (New York, February 2006).

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> identifying sustainable development policies that can both inform our planning initiative and also shape the Mayor's Environmental Agenda.[15]

This was the first mention both of fully integrating sustainability into the LTSP, and the first mention of the creation of a dedicated office.

The Mayor's Sustainability Task Force had been convened in November 2004 through the Office of Environmental Coordination under Kulikowski. It included several people who would shape PlaNYC: Ariella Rosenberg (now Ariella Maron) at the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), Laurie Kerr at the Department of Design and Construction, and Jonathan Dickinson at OEC, who was building a municipal greenhouse gas inventory.[16] In early 2005, the group had already sketched out an Office of Sustainability within the Mayor's Office to coordinate teams across the major agencies; it is possible that Kulikowski mentioned this to Dan in their initial meeting.[17] But by early 2006 it lacked a champion, resources, and direction, and had had no discernable impact on policy.

Memories diverge on how and why Dan sent the March 1 email. It seems likely that it was a combination of two things: the political power of sustainability was increasingly clear, and either Dan or Jeff probably had an initial briefing with Kulikowski as OEC moved under Dan's purview. Either way, Dan's email did not mean that he had yet fully embraced sustainability as a core concept. It was in its infancy, only a few cities had even done sustainability plans, and many of those were focused either on gestures or on small-scale initiatives like making city-owned buildings more efficient. Neither of these approaches would appeal to Dan, especially when compared to critical, long-term projects such as funding transit infrastructure.

Nonetheless, after the March 1 email, he and Jeff were working to lay the groundwork for the new entity he wanted to create, within the Office of Operations. The interagency meeting Dan

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[15]Dan Doctoroff to agency commissioners, copying Robert Kulikowski and others, "Mayor's Task Force on Sustainability Meeting," March 1, 2006.

[16]Draft letter, Dan Doctoroff to Task Force members, December 2006, noting the appointment of "three Task Force participants – Ariella Rosenberg, Laurie Kerr, and Jon Dickinson– as Senior Policy Advisors on Sustainability within the office."

[17]"050316_ESTABLISHINGASMARTNETWORK.doc," March 16, 2005.

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proposed in that email seems never to have happened,[18] but took on greater urgency when Chan accepted a job running the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership during this period (he would be leaving that summer).[19] By early April, the search was underway for someone to lead the new office. Marc Ricks, Dan's deputy chief of staff, whom I knew from McKinsey, called me in early April; I forwarded him my resume on April 11, and just a few days later I was surprised to receive a call from Dan, who was celebrating Passover in Israel. We spoke at length, and I went in for an interview the subsequent week, meeting jointly with Dan, Jeff, and Josh Sirefman, then Dan's chief of staff. The focus then was clearly on growth and infrastructure, especially transportation, but he also mentioned sustainability and green buildings. I was offered the job of leading the new office that evening, which was followed up with an offer letter dated April 28. I accepted the next week. I had to wind down a project I was doing at McKinsey, so I could not start at City Hall until June 12, 2006, but I started engaging with the team by email and attended at least one weekend working session at City Hall.[20]

Significantly, while my offer letter mentioned that sustainability would be one of the topics my new office would cover, the title I was offered was "Director of Long-Term Strategic Planning."

This was because Dan was still learning about sustainability, and he pursued that investigation with characteristic curiosity and intensity. As he did, his thinking was shaped largely by three people who believed in sustainability and could make the case for it in terms he cared about.

The first was Ariella, then a fairly junior member of EDC's energy office. She had taken part in LTSP working sessions, and she saw in its agenda a match with the task force's sustainability vision. She convinced her manager, Kate Ascher, then an executive vice president at EDC, to get her a meeting with Dan, on March 22. In that meeting, she made the case for sustainability as a framework for the entire LTSP. Her follow-up memo summarized the sustainability plans of

[18]On June 21, 2006, Laurel Blatchford of HPD asked Joe Chan and Angela Sung "to check in on where things were with this group"; Sung replied that the new office would "pick up where we left off on coordinating internally between agencies." Angela Sung to Laurel Blatchford et al., "RE: Mayor's Task Force on Sustainability Meeting," June 21, 2006.

[19] Joe Chan, "Downtown Brooklyn Partership--New Hires," July 26, 2006.

[20]Author's recollection. Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala, offer letter, April 28, 2006.

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Chicago, Portland, Seattle, Santa Monica, Toronto, and London, distinguishing cities whose plans had produced measurable results from those whose progress was of "unclear attribution."[21]

The second was Nicky Gavron, deputy mayor of London. She and Mayor Ken Livingstone had convened the World Cities Leadership Summit in October 2005, the founding meeting of what became the C40. The meeting fell on Yom Kippur, so Dan did not attend, but Ascher did, and agreed that New York would host the next meeting in 2007. In the spring of 2006, Michael Northrop of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, a climate grantmaker who described himself as "a messenger" on the issue, introduced Gavron to Dan, and she visited City Hall on a weekend in May 2006. A scheduled thirty-minute meeting lasted two hours, as Gavron made the case that the London Plan delivered climate benefits and economic development together. She also had the credibility that came from London's victory over New York's Olympic bid.[22]

The third was Douglas Foy. Foy had spent twenty-five years as president of the Conservation Law Foundation, and then served as the first secretary of Massachusetts's Office for Commonwealth Development under Governor Mitt Romney, a super-secretariat combining transportation, environmental affairs, housing, and energy that was essentially the same as Dan's portfolio in New York. Northrop introduced him as well. After a first visit on May 4, Foy came back on May 16 with a presentation titled "Cities are the Answer: What was the question?" He proposed that New York become "the Most Sustainable City in the World," and set out the areas in which that would have to be shown, from energy and transit to housing and parks.

Two things in his framing appealed directly to Dan. The first was that density and growth were the answer to environmental problems rather than their cause, which meant that Dan's growth plan and an environmental agenda could be the same document. The second was that he demonstrated how you could use greenhouse gas emissions as a management metric — to "prove success" — which answered the weakness Ariella's benchmarking had identified.[23] Foy and

[21]Ariella Rosenberg to Deputy Mayor Doctoroff et al., cover memo and "Summary of Municipal Sustainability Plans," March 31, 2006.

[22] Recollection of Michael Northrop, relayed to the author on October 16, 2026; Nicky Gavron, "London to New York: How PlaNYC Became the First Urban 'Greenprint,'" in Hollander and Ricks, *The Urbanist*, 264–65.

[23]"NYC 5.15.06.ppt," attachment to Douglas Foy to Dan Doctoroff, "Agenda," May 17, 2006.

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Gavron had not yet met; when they did, later that year, Gavron wrote of him: "finally an American who gets it."[24]

While this was going on, Jeff had already been discussing the incorporation of sustainability into the plan with Marcia Bystryn, New York League of Conservation Voters' executive director, who had spoken to the Mayor in the past about climate change.[25] At the LCV's dinner on May 18, the Mayor announced a task force "that will help us frame the city's environmental agenda for the years to come" and a new "Division of Sustainability" in the Mayor's Office of Operations.[26] As a result, the week after I arrived, Jeff told me the name of the office had been changed to "Long-Term Planning and Sustainability" – along with my title. By June 30, my presentation introduced the "Office of Long-term Planning and Sustainability," and argued that "smart long-term planning and sustainability are really one and the same issue."[27]

The fact that PlaNYC didn't start out as a climate action plan proved, in the end, one of its key strengths. Because the founding impulse wasn't just reducing carbon emissions but facilitating economic growth and improving the quality of life in New York City, each measure we considered had to serve multiple purposes. Business, real estate, and labor cared about growth; neighborhoods and activists cared about housing, parks, and air quality; environmental groups cared about energy and carbon. Ultimately, when PlaNYC was published, the document's initiatives led with housing and open space, moved through water, transportation, and energy, and ended with air quality and climate change. Along the way, some of the advocates pushed to make climate more prominent, and in fact, I pushed back.[28] I wrote internally right before the plan was published that we were going to be able to tell the story in two ways: "either we plan for efficient growth, and carbon is the happy byproduct . . . or we attack climate change and,

[24]Michael Allegretti (Partnership for New York City) to Douglas Foy, August 24, 2006.

[25] Recollection of Marcia Bystryn, relayed to the author on October 28, 2026.

[26]The speech text as quoted by press secretary Jennifer Falk to Erik Engquist of Crain's, June 19, 2006, forwarded in Angela Sung, "RE: Sustainability office and the C20 conference," June 19, 2006.

[27]Rohit Aggarwala to Joe Chan, Angela Sung, and Sophia Hollander, "My draft presentation – in progress," June 28, 2006, with the attached draft presentation.

[28]Michael Northrop to Rohit Aggarwala and Douglas Foy, "List of Ten," November 29, 2006 ("It should be flipped. Number 10 should go first."), and Rohit Aggarwala's reply, December 2, 2006.

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because that's about efficiency and growth, we wind up with better air, open space, etc."[29] I made the same point more than once during the rollout: someone who did not believe climate change was a problem could read the first nine sections of the plan and agree with all of it. Read front to back, it was an infrastructure and quality-of-life plan with a climate payoff; read backward, from goal ten to goal one, it was a climate action plan.[30] What this meant, in the end, was that the plan's eventual coalition could include the Partnership for New York City and the Teamsters as well as the environmental groups, and it is a large part of why so much of PlaNYC survived the politics that followed. A plan that began with climate might have been more ambitious on greenhouse gas reduction – as were some of the subsequent versions of PlaNYC – but those versions have increasingly spoken mainly to environmentalists.

II. Building OLTPS

That same intermingling of political calculus, ambitious idealism, and rigorous analysis characterized the team that made PlaNYC as well, and was another aspect of its success. The plan was created by a staff that never exceeded a dozen people, but it drew on more than two hundred, across City Hall, more than twenty agencies, academic and consulting advisors, and advocacy organizations whose support we could not take for granted. At no point did any one of those groups take full control, a balance that was enforced by Dan, Jeff, and me. That produced some major internal fights, but it also produced a stronger plan that was ready for implementation, because the internal disagreements had largely been ironed out in advance, rather than left to fester.

OLTPS took shape over the summer of 2006. On June 30, we held a big daylong meeting with all of the agencies to have them present their work to date. Dan positioned it as the handoff from Chan's leadership of the plan to mine; it also marked the real introduction of sustainability as a new integrated theme for the plan. Between June and late August we built the team, recruited external advisors, and appointed the sustainability advisory board. The office and the board were announced on September 21, when the Mayor appeared with Governor Schwarzenegger in

[29]Rohit Aggarwala to Marc Ricks, Sophia Hollander, and Jeffrey Kay, "Re: Speech feedback," April 6, 2007.
[30] Author's recollection.

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California.[31] The announcement taking place there reflected the political calculation that sustainability was a growing political issue; Schwarzenegger, a Republican as the Mayor then was, had just claimed national prominence by striking a deal with the Democratic legislature on AB32, California's first climate legislation, which he signed the following week.[32]

Creating OLTPS

In a very real way, Dan himself was the head of the core team; during the 21 months of PlaNYC's development he devoted a remarkable amount of time to it, meeting almost daily with the core team, often on nights and weekends, and alongside a long list of other projects he was leading. With a background in finance and private equity, he was a believer in numbers, in analysis, and in thinking through how a plan would play out – a set of standards that made planning take longer and require more work, but produced a strong plan. At the same time, Dan was a deal guy; despite tremendous intellectual curiosity, he valued analysis as a way to get to action, not as an end in itself. [33]

As director of the Mayor's Office of Operations, Jeff brought a radically different background. He had served in the City's Albany office as head of State Legislative Affairs before becoming Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget in 2001,[34] and he brought political judgment, budget knowledge, and personal credibility with OMB and many others throughout city government. Highly sensitive to the interpersonal politics of government, he brought tremendous intuition about how messages should be delivered, who should deliver them, and where unspoken agendas or interests were at play. When I once emailed the other deputy mayors' chiefs of staff directly, he wrote back that night that I was "opening a big can of worms," and told me: "Let me deal with city hall. My relationships with all of them predate

[31]Press Release No. 335-06, "Mayor Bloomberg Announces Creation of Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability," September 21, 2006. A sustainability office and planning cycle were codified in local law only in 2008, after the plan's publication.

[32]Associated Press, "Schwarzenegger, Bloomberg Tackle Warming," September 21, 2006; Natural Resources Defense Council, "California Governor Signs Historic Global Warming Law," press release, September 27, 2006. Bloomberg left the Republican Party in June 2007.

[33]On Doctoroff's background and approach, see Doctoroff, *Greater Than Ever*; and Paul Goldberger, "The Urbanist," in Hollander and Ricks, *The Urbanist*, 6–15.

[34]Author's recollection. Press Release No. 335-06, September 21, 2006, identifies him as Director of the Mayor's Office of Operations.

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Dan."[35] He was also the team's resident skeptic, cultivating an image as a curmudgeon who disbelieved in the sustainability agenda: reading a final draft of the plan, he wrote "It actually made me believe some of this enviro stuff. At least maybe for today anyway," and promised, "I will be back to my grumpy, pessimistic self tomorrow."[36]

Angela and Sophia had both been part of the planning project from the start. Sophia was Dan's speechwriter and had come from journalism; she had drafted the plan's early outlines and would become the principal author of PlaNYC's text. Dan had literary ambitions for the document: he did not want it to read like a standard government report, but as a book with one voice that told a story and placed the plan among the milestones of the city's history. Sophia worked more closely with Dan than anyone, and was the keeper of the fact that both Dan, and the public, needed a narrative as much as a set of analysis. Angela was on Dan's core economic development team and wound up being the only person other than Dan who was deeply involved in the plan's infrastructure origins to remain through the launch; in addition to managing the parks and eventually the brownfields sections, she also helped ensure that we never lost sight of infrastructure.[37]

My first senior hires brought on board the idealism and vision we would need to turn the infrastructure plan into a sustainability plan. Ariella, who had first made the case for sustainability to Dan, became our first Senior Policy Advisor; quickly, she became my deputy and managed most of the environmental initiatives.[38] Laurie, an architect who was DDC's chief of sustainable research, was the first person to explain to me that existing buildings mattered far more for climate than new green ones – a critical insight that differentiated PlaNYC from contemporary sustainability initiatives and one that I embraced immediately. Laurie not only shaped most of what the plan said about buildings, but also conceptualized the way we talked

[35]Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala, "Re: Sustainability," September 21, 2006.

[36]Jeffrey Kay to Sophia Hollander, Rohit Aggarwala, Marc Ricks, and Dan Doctoroff, "Chapters," April 14, 2007.

[37]On the LTSP's origins, see Joe Chan and Angela Sung Pinsky, "The 'Smart Growth' Origins of PlaNYC," in Hollander and Ricks, *The Urbanist*, 230–33.

[38]Ariella Rosenberg to Rohit Aggarwala, "Re: NY Mag," July 18, 2006 (proposing August 2 as her first day in the Office of Operations); on her later title, Rohit Aggarwala to Janette Sadik-Khan et al., no subject, November 6, 2007 ("Ariella is my deputy director").

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about carbon reductions.[39] Rachel Weinberger, a transportation scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, expanded the plan's previous thinking on transportation – which was mainly focused on transit infrastructure – to include the beginnings of a systems approach to the problem of rebalancing urban mobility away from the private automobile.[40] She also turned DOT's modeling into the plan's case for congestion pricing and wrote the technical report that accompanied it.[41] Quickly, I identified the need to develop a citywide greenhouse gas inventory, something few other cities had but one that was critical to connecting the idea of metrics to sustainability; for that, I asked Jeff to transfer Jonathan, deputy director of the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination who had been working on a city-operations inventory, to OLTPS.[42] [43] We were lucky also to have a number of talented junior staffers and interns, including Holly Ensign-Barstow, Brianna Wolf, Tres Watson, and Neel Gandhi.[44] Asheet Mehta, a partner I had worked with at McKinsey, confirmed that the Firm would do the work on a pro bono basis, and right after Labor Day a McKinsey team arrived, led by Anish Melwani with Sanjay Kalavar, Samantha Test, and Nicholas Ma, supporting our analytical work, organizing some of our many meetings and presentations, and particularly leading on the complex work on electricity supply.[45]

[39]Kerr's first day in the office was September 7, 2006: Rohit Aggarwala, "Re: who is beginning today Laurie or Rachel?," September 6, 2006.

[40]Jean Morton to Rohit Aggarwala, "Rachel Weinberger," September 5, 2006 ("starting tomorrow"). Weinberger was then an assistant professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania.

[41]Rachel Weinberger to Dan Doctoroff, Jeffrey Kay, and Rohit Aggarwala, "congestion section," April 22, 2007, and Doctoroff's reply, "Re: congestion low resolution," April 22, 2007 ("I think it is fabulous, but my instinct is to release the whole report tomorrow").

[42]"Dickinsonbio.doc," attachment to Jonathan Dickinson, "RE: Bios for GreenBuild Submission," January 12, 2007.

[43]Rohit Aggarwala to Jonathan Dickinson and Laurie Kerr, "Carbon," March 15, 2007, with attachment "Carbon plan rta 031407.xls"; Jonathan Dickinson to Sophia Hollander et al., "Re: Energy," April 25, 2007 (reductions of 10.6 million metric tons from clean power, 16.4 from efficient buildings, and 6.1 from transportation, bringing a business-as-usual projection of 73.9 million metric tons down to 40.8 by 2030 — 30 percent below the 2005 level of 58.3).

[44]Holly Ensign-Barstow, an analyst in the Office of Operations, was assigned to the author in Jeffrey Kay, "Organizational Announcement," June 13, 2006; Brianna Wolf received her offer on June 15, 2006; Tres Watson was already an intern in Doctoroff's office; and Neel Gandhi, a McKinsey summer associate, offered to help during the school year.

[45]Rohit Aggarwala to Dan Doctoroff, "Pro-bono consulting help on sustainability?," July 14, 2006 (Doctoroff: "Go for it – aggressively"); Rohit Aggarwala to Dan Doctoroff, "Re: Laurie & McK," August 10, 2006 ("Asheet called today to confirm that they're in… Target is to start right after Labor Day").

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The extended team

A few people outside of OLTPS were such ongoing participants that their influence was felt weekly if not daily. From City Planning, Hornick and Kober continued to be deeply involved in multiple topic areas. Steve Weber at DOT did much of the congestion pricing analysis, and Eric Rothman of HR&A, although a consultant, worked on transportation finance from beginning to end. Others were similarly involved, such as Gil Quiniones of EDC on energy, and Seth Pinsky and Matthew Pecori of EDC on the SMART Fund.[46]

We quickly built a group of external advisors. Foy came on board as a retained advisor and was invaluable not only in training us and helping us form the plan in our first weeks, but also introducing us to a variety of experts around the country and lending us his credibility. I relied on my own longstanding ties with Columbia University to seek the help of Steve Cohen at Columbia's Earth Institute, who connected us to a number of Columbia faculty who gave significant input, including Jeffrey Sachs, Cynthia Rosenzweig, Radley Horton, and Patrick Kinney.[47]

Agency partners

Most of the plan's content came from the agencies. One of Dan's great strengths was to listen to experts – as he had done with Ariella, Gavron, and Foy – and put their thinking into action. He did the same with experts with the City's agencies, and the plan had started out not as a set of City Hall-driven initiatives, but as the response from multiple agencies to his original challenge of "what will we need to do to accommodate population growth." While DCP and DOT were involved in more areas of the plan, more than twenty agencies contributed and were deeply involved in the evolution of their ideas through to April.[48]

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[46]Gil Quiniones to Rohit Aggarwala and Jeffrey Kay, "Kevin Burke," March 8, 2007; Matthew Pecori to Rohit Aggarwala, copying Seth Pinsky, "FW: Updated Graphs LTSP:," March 2, 2007 (SMART Fund scenarios prepared with Goldman Sachs); Matthew Pecori to Ariella Rosenberg, "RE: Milestones Final-except for copy edits," April 20, 2007 ("The numbers match the budget").

[47]Kenneth Kaplan to Rohit Aggarwala, Jeffrey Sachs, Steven Cohen, et al., "Earth Institute/Urban Design Lab engagement with NYC Mayor's Office - follow up," September 5, 2006.

[48] On Doctoroff's practice of listening to longtime civil servants, see Sam Roberts, "The Listener," in Hollander and Ricks, *The Urbanist*, 28–29; and, for the early days of PlaNYC, Joe Chan and Angela Sung Pinsky, "The 'Smart Growth' Origins of PlaNYC," in Hollander and Ricks, *The Urbanist*, 230–33.

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The Office of Management and Budget was one more agency partner, and one of the most important, because the plan's initiatives would require funding and staff that OMB would have to allocate. As a former deputy director at OMB, Jeff managed that relationship from the start, and through the winter he walked OMB's analysts through each part of the plan as it developed.[49] OMB's views shaped the plan in real ways, and there were some things it was violently against, but it was not given a veto. When Jeff disagreed with OMB staff, he made the case to Budget Director Mark Page directly.[50]

The advisory board

Since the Mayor had promised to establish a task force on sustainability in his LCV speech, appointing this was one of the first things we had to do. As I was new to the team and had the opportunity to ask dumb questions, I started out on a consulting tour to meet the people we thought we'd want to appoint. This served several functions: I learned from them, I could assess whether they'd be constructive members of the board we wanted to create, and – even if it went nowhere else – I had consulted them in my first weeks as the new head of the plan.[51]

We knew from the start that we needed the board both to get the plan right and to give it external legitimacy.[52] The Bloomberg Administration had a great track record on many things, but during the post-9/11 budget crisis he had suspended the city's recycling program; as a result, some environmentalists viewed us with suspicion.[53] Some of those also likely expected that someone from an environmental organization would have been chosen for my job; both Foy and Advisory Board member Ashok Gupta, from the Natural Resources Defense Council, vouched for me.[54]

The seventeen members we appointed – all of whom Dan chose to call personally with the invitation in September -- came from environmental groups, business, architecture and design,

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[49]Michael Dardia (OMB) to Rohit Aggarwala, Jeffrey Kay, et al., "Re: Revenues of growth," January 4, 2007.

[50]Jeffrey Kay to Steven Weber and Rohit Aggarwala, no subject, April 14, 2007.

[51]Calendar entries for meetings with Marcia Bystryn (June 2006) and Kathryn Wylde (July 12, 2006); "Pre-InterviewsSAB-Notes.doc," September 26, 2006. The rest of the tour is from the author's recollection.

[52]Rohit Aggarwala to Ariella Rosenberg, "Advisory board," July 19, 2006.

[53]The administration suspended plastic recycling for one year and glass recycling for two in July 2002; New York Public Interest Research Group called it "unprecedented." Associated Press, "NYC Recycling Rollback May Have National Repercussions," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 2, 2002.

[54]Author's recollection.

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labor, environmental justice organizations, academia, philanthropy, and the City Council, including Speaker Christine Quinn.[5556] Several represented organizations that had opposed us, most notably Bob Yaro, whose Regional Plan Association had fought the West Side Stadium. Jeff's assessment was candid: "Although Yaro hasn't always been the best with us. He is a great choice for this."[57] RPA became one of the plan's strongest supporters.

We chose the name "Sustainability Advisory Board" deliberately, to emphasize that we wanted their input but they did not have a veto. "Although the Mayor mentioned a task force," I explained, "we are going to call this an advisory board because it will be asked to comment on internal city operations and the sense I've gotten is we don't like to put someone else's logo on a document stating how we're going to run the municipal government."[58] Given subsequent events, this was ironic.

Despite its advisory capacity, we took the SAB very seriously, sharing our true, inchoate thinking with a level of transparency that was in some ways quite risky. After a formal first meeting in the Blue Room on September 27, 2006, the board moved quickly to working sessions. The full board met five times, but most of the work was done in eight working groups, on topics from green buildings and energy supply to land use and brownfields, transportation, and climate adaptation. Each member could send someone from their organization who knew the subject, and many did.[59] As a result, the heads of these organizations were then hearing about the plan from their own staff, who had worked through the analysis themselves and engaged on the details with relevant OLTPS staff. By April, we counted "over 76 hours of group meetings as well as

[55]Press Release No. 335-06, September 21, 2006, lists the sixteen members first announced; Steven Spinola joined by the September 27 kickoff, bringing the roster to seventeen. Environmental Defense's seat, announced for Peter Goldmark, was filled from October by Andy Darrell.

[56]Marcia Bystryn to Rohit Aggarwala, "September 18th," September 12, 2006 ("I look forward to that call from Dan!").

[57]Jeffrey Kay to Dan Doctoroff, Rohit Aggarwala, and Sophia Hollander, "Sustainability update," December 1, 2006.

[58]Rohit Aggarwala to Ariella Rosenberg, "RE: sustainability announcement," August 14, 2006.

[59]Ariella Rosenberg to Patricia Harris, memorandum on the Sustainability Advisory Board, October 3, 2006 (fourteen of seventeen members at the kickoff). Full-board meetings followed on October 18, November 8, and November 29, 2006, and February 13, 2007, with working groups between.

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countless smaller meetings and phone calls."[60] The sessions were closed, and over seven months almost nothing discussed with the SAB reached the press.[61]

We used the board to test virtually everything. Despite having told the board's members that they did not control the plan, we acted as if they did; while Dan was the decider on everything we would take to the Mayor, we very much treated the SAB as a steering committee. While the ideas that the city agencies had been working on for months formed the bulk of what eventually went into the plan, we let the board revisit nearly all of it, and only what survived went forward. We also took up ideas that members brought to us, analyzed them, and brought the results back, and not every idea survived. (For example, Andy Darrell of Environmental Defense proposed giving hybrid cars free or dedicated parking, as some California cities had done. We took the idea seriously, analyzed it, and reported back the risk that in a low-auto-ownership, high-parking-cost city, such an incentive would likely increase auto ownership. He accepted that, and credited us with taking his idea seriously.) By November we had crystallized the plan into ten goals, which were still being refined but had taken the shape they would be in in April. But they genuinely emerged out of the back and forth between OLTPS, city agency staff, and the SAB members and their teams; I reported to Eddie Bautista, the Mayor's Director of City Legislative Affairs, in November that "Most of the goals came out of the AB's various meetings; they've been discussed extensively with the board at both working groups and in full AB meetings."[62]

Political Advisors

Key to the plan's success was the way we integrated political strategy into the content development. Jeff was always going to be key to that, but we both relied on and had the support of many others. Eddie – a key leader before and after in New York City's environmental justice movement – was an ongoing, deeply involved advisor. Jeff trusted him, and Eddie offered me hours of both political and EJ advice. Eddie's perspective helped ensure that our technocratic

[60]Draft letter, Dan Doctoroff to advisory board members, drafted by Amy Chester, April 25, 2007.

[61]Rohit Aggarwala to Bruce Cory, "RE: sustainability advisory board meeting this week," September 26, 2006 ("It will be a closed session with no uninvited observers… we do want to set the expectation that members should no go running to the press"). Looking back the following September, the author wrote that "the reason that the SAB has worked well – and thus the reason we have an effective coalition – is that we have never used them and we have worked with them quietly." Rohit Aggarwala, "RE: advisory board," September 7, 2007.

[62]Rohit Aggarwala to Eddie Bautista, "Re: Sustainability brochure's goals," November 20, 2006.

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team always had an EJ perspective. When the Garvin land-use study leaked in August 2006, Eddie complained that it looked like we were seeking to "displace manufacturing or low income residents in my old neighborhood."[63] In October, Amy Chester joined to handle outreach; with a background in campaigns and as a former staffer to City Councilmember David Yassky, she was the team's internal connection to the world of advocates and local politics. While Ariella, Laurie, Rachel and I engaged with the advocacy organizations on the advisory board (and beyond) on content issues, Amy was working with them to develop a strategy to mobilize their support and many others' to get the plan implemented after its launch. This turned into the Campaign for New York's Future, which she orchestrated with Dan, Jeff, and Kevin Sheekey.[64]

Above all, we relied on Kevin, the Deputy Mayor for Government Affairs and the Mayor's key strategist. It was he who saw the broad political benefit of embracing sustainability, and the fact that he saw the plan's success as strategic for the Mayor politically meant that we had his attention and support – and on more than one occasion, his intervention. The press office – led by Stu Loeser at the time, and with John Gallagher as the deputy press secretary covering OLTPS – played a huge role as we got closer to the rollout, and after.

Planning the Roll-out

Like much about PlaNYC, the decision to embrace a two-part rollout was driven by multiple factors. First, Dan had a tremendous sense of urgency to get the plan out; when I started in June 2006, we were still imagining that we would roll out the entire plan in November.[65] Second, we knew that New York State would have a new governor on January 1, and we would risk making him an opponent if we released a plan with multiple requests to Albany before he had even started.[66] Jeff and I prompted a discussion with the political and press staff at City Hall, and in late July made a proposal to Dan to split the rollout into two parts. In the first, planned for November, the Mayor would describe the challenges the city faced, a million more people, aging

[63]Eddie Bautista to Jeffrey Kay and Rohit Aggarwala, "FW: Garvin report," August 18, 2006.

[64]Anne Michaud, "Selling Bloomberg's Vision: Administration Mobilizes Allies to Generate Support in Albany," *Crain's New York Business*, April 30, 2007.

[65]Sophia Hollander, "LTSP meeting," June 30, 2006 (talking points for the June 30 agency review: "we're now thinking about releasing the plan in late fall – November/December").

[66]Rohit Aggarwala to Dan Doctoroff and Jeffrey Kay, "Roll-out of LTSP," July 28, 2006.

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infrastructure, and a changing environment, and set goals for meeting them, without proposing specific solutions. In the second, starting in February, the Mayor would release the plan's initiatives in a series of speeches.[67] [68] A key idea was "a brochure of some sort would accompany the November speech," which by September had become a 20-page insert to be distributed in the Sunday editions of the Times, the Daily News, and the Post the weekend after the speech.[69] In September Sophia and Doug Bernstein – who was behind many of the most creative events of the Bloomberg years, including the Mayor's lavish skits at the Inner Circle Dinner -- gave the effort its name, PlaNYC, "pronounced: plan-y-c NOT Plan-ic."[70]

III. Ambitious but Achievable in Practice

From the very beginning of my discussions with Dan, he used the concept of setting "ambitious but achievable" goals for the plan.[71] What that meant in practice was that every goal and every initiative had to meet four standards: it had to be ambitious enough to be transformative, it had to be measurable enough to be managed, it had to rest on thorough analysis and a realistic understanding of how change would actually happen, and it had to be politically feasible. These standards often were in tension, and reflected different audiences. Ambition usually came from experts and advocates, but sometimes also from longtime city staff who had been waiting years for a chance to do something; limits came from the agencies that would have to carry out and fund the work, and from our collective assessment of the political realities. The standards for analysis and a theory of change were enforced by Dan himself.

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[67]Rohit Aggarwala to Sophia Hollander and Jeffrey Kay, "Re: SSK," August 3, 2006.

[68]Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala, "RE: Page you requested," August 1, 2006 ("I am leaning more of the reverse……1 speech in november…..three in Feb with a document").

[69]Sophia Hollander, "RE: LTSP roll-out options," July 27, 2006 ("only a brochure of some sort would accompany the November speech"); Brianna Wolf, "Design concepts for the November LTSP document," September 21, 2006 ("we are planning a 20 page brochure that will be inserted in the Sunday edition of the 3 major NYC newspapers (the Times, Daily News and Post) on the weekend following the Mayor's speech").

[70]Sophia Hollander to Sandy Hornick, Eric Kober, Rohit Aggarwala, and Angela Sung, "november outline," September 25, 2006; Sophia Hollander to Rohit Aggarwala and Jeffrey Kay, "words," October 10, 2006.

[71]The earliest use of this phrase the author has found was in an engagement letter he drafted in his first week to bring Doug Foy on as a consultant. It asks for his help in "crafting a succinct and ambitious, but achievable, set of sustainability goals for New York." Draft engagement letter, June 14, 2006. This was his second day officially on the job, and he recalls clearly that it was a phrase he had picked up from Dan. OLTPS continued to use it, first with the advisory board, and then publicly.

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The task of OLTPS – and the actual process of developing the plan -- was to balance all of these competing objectives, and figure out what was worth fighting for and what wasn't. There were many decisions we made – I made – without involving Dan. Other times we brought an issue to him because we could not settle it, or felt it needed his approval, and sometimes an agency appealed our decision to him. As we shall see later, only a handful went to the Mayor. Four cases show how this took place in practice.

Carbon targets: balancing ambition and achievability

The carbon target itself was one of the areas where the balance of ambition and achievability played out most clearly. At the time, some environmentalists were advocating for commitments that no one knew how to achieve, arguing that it was important to get a commitment and then the policymaking would follow. But that would not be a Bloomberg approach. Foy had guessed to Dan that the city could achieve at least 30% without too much trouble, but he acknowledged it was only a guess.[72] Jonathan spent the fall of 2006 and the winter of 2007 building the first citywide inventory, and as we worked, each initiative was analyzed for how much it would reduce the city's GHG emissions in 2030. In September 2006 the working figure for the target was 20 percent, which Jonathan pointed out was simply "ICLEI's standard recommendation, we can set it wherever we'd like." My response was that "we should probably aim a little higher, given how much opportunity there remains out there."[73] The advocates on the board pushed us even farther than we could justify.

However, we were adamant that we would set a target we knew how to reach. It came down to the wire; as late as November, we were telling the SAB that we were aiming for 25%; this was not because we were setting up a surprise but because we genuinely weren't convinced we could hit 30%.[74] Northrop reacted negatively, telling me that "an accelerated target of 25 percent by

[72]Author's recollection. The first written citywide 30 percent target appears in a status deck that followed the August 28, 2006 energy meeting with Foy: "Need to tie overall energy plan to CO2 reductions. If we aim for a 30% reduction by 2030 . . ." Ariella Rosenberg to Rohit Aggarwala and Douglas Foy, "Follow-up from 8/28 energy meeting," September 1, 2006.

[73]Jonathan Dickinson to Rohit Aggarwala and Robert Kulikowski, "RE: Draft GHG presentation for Dan," September 24, 2006 (quoting Aggarwala's message of the same evening).

[74]The Advisory Board deck for November 8, 2006 asked, "What would be required to reduce NYC emissions 25% by 2030?" When Sophia Hollander asked of the draft goals, "why did we lower the number?," Sanjay Kalavar of

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2020 and 50 percent by 2030" might be necessary, and that "even these targets would be conservative."[75] Only with Ariella's work in the last weeks of November on the potential for building-scale solar and combined heat and power, were we able to commit to 30 percent; we set the 30% goal on November 29.[76] Even then, Northrop warned that "even moderate folks will find a 30 percent goal by itself lacking."[77] The "by itself" is telling; at this point, it would not have been clear even to someone as deeply involved as Northrop that we were not just setting a goal but developing a change-management effort. In retrospect, a more modest goal with aggressive implementation was more than enough to energize advocates because of the progress we could show.

Measurability: air quality

Throughout, we also had very high standards for measurability; Mayor Bloomberg had long adhered to the dictum that "if you can't measure it, you can't manage it." On air quality, the problem was that the city had no good way to measure either the local sources of pollution (which the City had some control over, unlike pollution that blew in from elsewhere), or the actual levels of pollution at street level in various parts of the city.[78] Thinking about options for an air quality goal, Dan wanted to reflect the Mayor's pride in becoming "the safest big city in America." When Sophia passed along that Dan's new preferred goal was "having the cleanest air among big US cities - if it's possible," my reply was "Is it possible?"[79] Ariella replied that she thought so, "but of course we have to check with experts."

We resolved this with a two-step process. We settled on the metric of locally generated fine particulate emissions per square mile, and the goal of reducing that enough to put New York

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McKinsey replied that "even getting to a 25% decrease from today's base will be very challenging," and the author answered, "Let's stick with 'at least 25.'" "RE: goals.PPT," November 9, 2006.

[75]Michael Northrop to Rohit Aggarwala et al., "Thoughts on NYC GHG Reduction Targets," November 10, 2006.

[76]Ariella Rosenberg to Rohit Aggarwala and Douglas Foy, "Follow-up from 11/21 Call," November 22, 2006; Ariella Rosenberg to Sophia Hollander, "Goals 11.29.06," November 29, 2006.

[77]Michael Northrop to Rohit Aggarwala and Douglas Foy, "List of Ten," November 29, 2006.

[78]"Draft outline november rta 090806 829pm.doc," attachment to Rohit Aggarwala, "Outline for Monday morning working session," September 8, 2006.

[79]Sophia Hollander to Ariella Rosenberg, copying Rohit Aggarwala, "Re: video experts," October 23, 2006, and Rohit Aggarwala's reply of the same day.

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below Philadelphia, the cleanest big city on that measure.[80] But, we wrote, "we cannot focus our reduction efforts on the areas of greatest need – or track our successes with any precision" because the only existing air quality monitors were at rooftop levels, and there were very few of them.[81] So the plan included a study to measure air quality at street level. That became the New York City Community Air Survey.[82]

Theory of change: climate adaptation

Climate adaptation was the area where we experienced the biggest challenges with both measurability and setting a goal. My first storyline in June 2006 said that we "must plan to adapt to a potentially changing environment." The problem was that in 2006 we didn't really know what the goal was, since we didn't fully understand either the changes the city would face or what it would take to adapt to them; the draft goal in September read, honestly, "Reduce our exposure to climate risk – ???"[83] While some were already advocating massive sea walls, two things were true.[84] First, we needed to understand what climate change would do to specific neighborhoods in New York City, but DEP told us that its maps were "at a city-wide scale" because the global climate models "are not at a resolution that allow us to map the data at a neighborhood scale (yet)."[85] Second, we needed to understand how that might affect specific

[80]City of New York, *PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater New York (New York: City of New York, 2007)*, Air Quality chapter. The final draft of the chapter set the target at a 39 percent reduction: "we will need to reduce our locally generated PM 2.5 by 39% to achieve the cleanest air of any big city in America." Brianna Wolf, "RE: Checking in," April 12, 2007, attachment "Air Quality draft 2 final 041207.doc."

[81]"DRAFT Air Quality 3.15.doc," transmitted by Sophia Hollander, March 16, 2007. The draft said there were "only 11 monitors for the entire city"; a later draft said 20, and the basis for neither figure is documented.

[82]On the design of the survey, which was meant to "complement but not supplant" the State's compliance monitors, see the Queens College design document of November 20, 2007. The first results were published as New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, The New York City Community Air Survey: Results from Winter Monitoring 2008–2009 (New York, 2009). The rule phasing out No. 6 and No. 4 heating oil was announced with the PlaNYC update: Press Release No. 129-11, April 21, 2011.

[83]"Draft outline november rta 090806 829pm.doc," attachment to Rohit Aggarwala, "Outline for Monday morning work," September 8, 2006.

[84]Malcolm Bowman of Stony Brook, who led its Storm Surge Research Group, was promoting storm-surge barriers for New York Harbor; a member of his group, Douglas Hill, had edited *The Baked Apple? Metropolitan New York in the Greenhouse, Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 790* (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1996). See Lane Smith, "Closing the Doors on Storm Surges," New York Sea Grant, *Currents* 34, no. 1 (Spring 2005).

[85]Constance Vavilis to Ariella Rosenberg, Rohit Aggarwala, and Cynthia Rosenzweig, "Climate Change information as per yesterday's meeting," October 4, 2006.

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infrastructure, and the only detailed work that had been done on that front was for DEP's wastewater treatment plants.[86]

Without this understanding, we could not meet the standard of having a goal that was measurable, or even one that was based on rigorous, comprehensive analysis; and any plan would have had a very suspect theory of change. As a result, we dropped adaptation from the list of goals by October. It wound up being included in the climate change chapter, with three initiatives and an admission of what we did not know: "there are no certainties, only probabilities. As a result, a step-by-step approach, with decision points along the way, will be necessary."[87]

Politically feasible: trees

Political feasibility had two parts. One was whether a concept would survive neighborhood reactions, the City Council, Albany, and the press. The other, less often stated, was whether it fit within the worldview of the Mayor and Dan.

The tree initiative started with the Parks Department's preferred goal of achieving a 30 percent canopy cover. The problem was that even if we covered city-owned land with as much canopy as possible, we would max out at 27 percent.[88] We had two choices: we could pay landowners to preserve their own trees, or we could impose restrictions on when people could cut down trees on their own land. Angela's analysis for OMB showed that paying for trees on private property was "too much to overcome with city funds."[89] Hornick at City Planning was firmly opposed to requiring private owners to preserve or plant trees, a rule that would likely be imposed through

[86]City Planning had mapped projected 2050 flood zones citywide from the same DEP and Columbia projections, but its analysis did not assess the risks to specific facilities: NYC Department of City Planning, "Climate Change: Flood Safety in NYC," presentation, August 9, 2006. Rosenzweig had also led the Metropolitan East Coast Assessment of climate impacts on the New York region a few years earlier: Cynthia Rosenzweig and William D. Solecki, eds., Climate Change and a Global City: The Potential Consequences of Climate Variability and Change – Metro East Coast (New York: Columbia Earth Institute, 2001).

[87] City of New York, PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater New York (New York: City of New York, 2007), 132–40.

[88]The 27 percent figure assumed planting 120,000 trees a year on public land, streets and parks, through 2030. Comment in a draft air quality chapter attached to Marc Ricks, "Air quality - for Sophia," April 8, 2007 ("Any chance you would consider splitting the difference on the canopy goal, i.e. saying we could achieve 27% canopy by 2030 by planting 120,000 trees a year on public (street and park) lands").

[89]Angela Sung to Rohit Aggarwala, "RE: Trees," November 3, 2006.

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zoning. Ultimately, I made the decision not to fight for such a rule. Instead, we found a Parks presentation in January that had noted, almost in passing, that reaching 30 percent canopy would require a net increase of about one million trees. Ariella put the outcome plainly in March: "I know we can't say 30%, so we propose 1 million trees."[90] Within a week the New York Restoration Project had approached us about a partnership.[91] The politics and the budget narrowed what the experts wanted, and a partner from outside government then helped turn the narrower version into MillionTreesNYC.

Congestion pricing showed a similar evolution. When I arrived, it was being studied mainly as a way to raise money. In a July 12 memo on the transportation storyline I argued that we had to "make it clear that value pricing is first a congestion tool and only secondarily a revenue source."[92] By the final weeks the principle had become simple enough to put in a sentence: "Funding should be a happy by-product, not a reason."[93]

When agencies had other priorities: water

Another dynamic was when agencies' other priorities and constraints were in conflict with the ambitions and goals of the plan. In 2006, New York Harbor was still severely polluted, and advocates, including those on the SAB, were adamant that the plan had to include ambitious goals for reducing combined sewer outfalls. In the fall of 2006, we kept pushing the staff at DEP to be more ambitious; they kept scaling it back to what they had already committed to.[94] The issue was that DEP did not only answer to City Hall; it was regulated by both the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and New York State. DEP had already negotiated a Long Term Control Plan – its own capital improvement agenda for reducing CSOs – which was a legally enforceable document. Further, DEP was not convinced either that green infrastructure would work at the scale the advocates claimed, or that the Federal and State governments would

[90]Ariella Rosenberg to Angela Sung and Rohit Aggarwala, "RE: tomorrow's agenda with DCP," March 15, 2007.

[91]Ariella Rosenberg to Rohit Aggarwala and Angela Sung, "RE: NY Restoration Project," March 23, 2007.

[92]Rohit Aggarwala to Eric Rothman (HR&A), Steven Weber (DOT), Sandy Hornick (DCP), and others, "Potential approaches to Transportation storyline," July 12, 2006.

[93]Rohit Aggarwala to Sophia Hollander, "Re: Text for appendicies," April 15, 2007.

[94]Rohit Aggarwala to Jeffrey Kay, "OEC," August 28, 2006 ("our mtg with DEP not so good -- they've backpedaled again and scaled ambition way back").

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allow DEP to substitute green infrastructure for more traditional pipe-and-sewer "gray" infrastructure; DEP's Kathryn Garcia wrote in February, "One of my biggest concerns revolves around paying for BMPs beyond pilots."[95] Riverkeeper published an op-ed in the New York Times accusing us of retreating from the goal of a swimmable harbor; Riverkeeper's Alex Matthiessen then explained to Amy that it "was, in part, meant to give the Mayor the support he needs to overcome the intransigency of this agency."[96]

The solution we created got around this in a creative way, by accepting a stated target that would not exceed what DEP had already agreed to with its regulators, and moving innovation in green infrastructure out of DEP to OLTPS. In place of a higher capture target, the plan created an interagency task force on stormwater best management practices, coordinated by OLTPS and kept outside the Long Term Control Plan, which would pilot the techniques, publish its results, and produce a plan for using them at scale within eighteen months. NRDC's Brad Sewell called it a "plan for a plan" that "greatly increases uncertainty about the outcome."[97] Sewell was not wrong; a less-ambitious administration might not have followed through. Happily, this effort – which was implemented by Carter Strickland, who joined OLTPS in the fall of 2007 and eventually became DEP Commissioner – was implemented fully. It led to the city's stormwater plan, made a legal requirement by Local Law 5 of 2008, to DEP's Green Infrastructure Plan of 2010, and to the 2012 consent order with the State that incorporated it.[98]

Paying for it

The most important contribution to making the plan achievable was one I was barely involved in and is the most distinctive and under-appreciated aspect of PlaNYC. While we were working out what the plan should say, Jeff, with Dan's support and clearly with the Mayor's backing, was

[95]Kathryn Garcia, "Re: Moving the Long-Term Sustainability Plan Forward," February 17, 2007.

[96]Alex Matthiessen, in Amy Chester, "FW: your oped," March 19, 2007.

[97]NRDC testimony to the City Council, February 14, 2007, forwarded in Ariella Rosenberg, "FW: NRDC's testimony at today's City Council hearing," February 14, 2007.

[98]City of New York, *PlaNYC*, Water Quality chapter and implementation table; New York City Local Law 5 of 2008; City of New York, PlaNYC Sustainable Stormwater Management Plan 2008 (New York, December 2008); New York City Department of Environmental Protection, NYC Green Infrastructure Plan (New York, September 2010); New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Order on Consent (CSO Order Modification to C02-20000107-8), DEC Case No. C02-20110512-25 (2012). Strickland joined the office on October 4, 2007.

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working with OMB to make room in the budget to pay for it, months before the plan was final or the Mayor had signed off on it. Jeff also controlled when and how OMB learned about it. In August, Angela noted that he had "a master plan on approaching OMB," and in September, when I proposed that Dan formally ask OMB and two other agencies to join our sustainability effort, Jeff told me I was "opening a big can of worms" and that OMB "will seek to kill this before going forqward [sic]."[99] He brought OMB in on his own terms. In October 2006 Jeff told me, in confidence, that OMB would "issue a capital reduction memo tomorrow."[100] That fall, OMB put every agency with a capital budget through what it called "the stretch," in which the four-year capital program was spread over five years.[101] Only dimly aware of how the city's budget worked, I had no idea what was driving this, and publicly it was attributed to increasing capital project costs.[102] Later that winter, Angela told me that the cuts were there to free up money for PlaNYC, and I was absolutely shocked. If so, the stretch mattered more than anything else OMB did for the plan, because most of PlaNYC's money was capital.[103]

Where we were involved was in providing Jeff the analysis and rationale he needed to work through each item we wanted in the plan with OMB staff. It intensified from mid-March, when OMB was writing the Executive Budget; in the last five weeks before the launch he was working

[99]Angela Sung to Rohit Aggarwala, "RE: Agenda for Dan mtg tomorrow," August 31, 2006 ("I know that Jeff has a master plan on approaching OMB"); Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala, "Re: Sustainability," September 21, 2006.

[100]Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala, "city Capital," October 11, 2006. The full message reads, in part, "OMB will issue a capital reduction memo tomorrow. It will not mention energy projects…However, I am told that there will be a follow up memo sometime next week that might ask agencies to submit a list of energy saving projects that OMB will review over and above their target….BUT THIS IS INTERNAL AND CONFIDENTIAL for the moment."

[101]Angela Sung, "next week's meetings," November 1, 2006 ("Agency budget exercise for OMB (for agencies with capital budgets)"); Michael Dardia, reply to Marc Ricks, "Staff meeting tomorrow - 8:30am," November 1, 2006 ("Actually it is 37,500 after the stretch-out exercise"). It has also been suggested that OMB had already been building up a reserve of expense funding, but the author has not yet confirmed this.

[102] Office of the Comptroller, City of New York, The Comptroller's Comments on the Preliminary Budget for FY08 and the Financial Plan for FYs 2007–2011 (New York, March 2007), vii.

[103]*Executive Budget, Fiscal Year 2008: Message of the Mayor*, 8; *Ten-Year Capital Strategy, Fiscal Years 2008–2017*, viii. The plan's $1.62 billion in capital was all for projects such as parks, schoolyards, street trees, and school boiler replacements; none of it was for the SMART Fund. The four-year expense total of $1.32 billion included $805 million in City contributions to the SMART Fund, which depended on congestion pricing; when the State Legislature failed to act on congestion pricing in April 2008, the fund was never created. Of the roughly $2.1 billion that remained, about three-quarters was capital. On the expense side, the Executive Budget's "Agency Programs to Reduce the Gap" ($472 million in fiscal 2008) was tied to the plan explicitly: "We are using the savings generated from our Agency Programs to fund new initiatives and our plaNYC 2030 program in FY 2008."

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through individual items with OMB several times a week.[104] Knowing OMB as well as he did, he kept the policy staff out of the most intense arguments. His process achieved tremendous results, but also required concessions: in the last weeks OMB insisted that the plan make no specific funding commitment to ferry service, because as Jeff put it, "Omb [sic] wants it out."[105]

The impact of OMB's involvement, and Jeff's stewardship of our relationship with them, was that PlaNYC was unusual in that a policy was not worked out first and then left to fight for its funding. The Mayor understood that any major effort had to be paid for, and the work of paying for it began while the plan was still being written. I can only assume that the Mayor had made clear that he wanted Dan to succeed, and Page knew enough to know that the instruction to find the money would come eventually, so that when it did, he was ready. That work, and Jeff's painstaking labors to convince a skeptical OMB staff of the merits of most of what we proposed, was what truly made PlaNYC an integrated, whole-of-government effort.[106]

IV. Creating Demand for a Solution

The rollout followed the two-part plan we had made in July, although the second part came later, and in a different form, than we had expected. On December 12, 2006, in a speech, Mayor Bloomberg made the case for the challenges the city faced and laid out ten ambitious goals. Then we undertook a listening exercise, consulting groups and elected officials and holding one public listening session in each borough. Only then, on April 22, was the final plan released – all at once, rather than in the series of speeches beginning in February that we had first imagined.

This approach was shaped by the fact that we were solving a problem that was huge to us, but not to the average New Yorker. Although former Vice President Al Gore released his movie, An Inconvenient Truth, in the summer of 2006, climate change was not a top issue for most New Yorkers. Nor was the city's long-term growth and its infrastructure challenges. We were

[104]Jeffrey Kay, "Re: Budget," March 15, 2007 ("Omb is preparing there budget now and we need to get things in there"); Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala, "Re: Ferries and PlaNYC," April 13, 2007 ("Omb is now telling me they have a problem with the additional lane miles in the smart fund").

[105]Jed Howbert to Jeffrey Kay and Dan Doctoroff, "Ferries and PlaNYC," April 11, 2007 ("OMB strongly wants to remove specific City funding commitments to ferry service from the long term plan"); Jeffrey Kay, "Re: Ferries and PlaNYC," April 12, 2007.

[106]Jeff described OMB's test in October 2006: "Omb will agree to fund a project if someone says that there will be energy savings." Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala, "Re: ENCORE Memo," October 13, 2006.

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addressing a problem that was real and significant, but not obvious. Had the Mayor released a plan full of new projects, new initiatives, and requests – especially ones as significant as congestion pricing -- without first convincing people that there was a problem, it would be judged on its costs alone.

Further, we had the challenge of ensuring that we had not hugely misjudged any issues. We had listened closely to a wide group of experts and advocates, and done so with a key awareness of neighborhood dynamics and often-neglected groups thanks to our political advisors and the two environmental justice members of the SAB, Peggy Shepard of WE ACT for Environmental Justice and Elizabeth Yeampierre of UPROSE. So we had confidence in our content – not that it was only the most popular ideas, but that it met most of the concerns that would emerge. But we still needed, and wanted, to ensure we were well calibrated. At the same time, by December 2006 the plan had been underway for a year and a half; we did not need to spend many months on public outreach.

Finally, we had to have credibility. We were asking New Yorkers to take multiple intellectual leaps: to think about the problems of the future as much as the immediate challenges of the day, to accept new concepts such as congestion pricing, energy efficiency standards, and climate adaptation planning. Mayor Bloomberg was, arguably, at the zenith of his credibility and popularity, but even he knew that this big a leap required as much credibility as possible – especially if it was going to involve the State Legislature. That recognition changed the plan in key ways.

In the end, the roll out largely worked; the Mayor's celebrity status got significant press attention to the topics he raised, and allowed a public discussion to emerge about what those solutions should be. The outreach that followed mostly (but not fully) confirmed the work we had done. Some critics have taken that to mean that the outreach was performative, but they assume that outreach is only genuine if it is the first step. In fact, we were listening closely, but had done our homework well.

The brochure and the December launch

As the work on defining the goals proceeded, we were laying out the brochure that we intended to distribute in newspapers. Work started on the brochure – to get agreement from Dan on the

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tone, basic things to include, and the like – in August, and then proceeded alongside the SAB's evolution of the ten goals and their feasibility. The purpose of the brochure, like the December speech itself, was not to share solutions, but to explain the challenges and establish goals. But, as described above, the "ambitious but achievable" standard meant that we were testing every goal with the solutions we thought most likely to succeed. The goals began to take firm shape in October, and we started putting a draft brochure together in earnest.

On November 9, as I was leaving for a much-needed short vacation over Veterans' Day weekend, we received approval from the Mayor. To that point, the brochure had been drafted as a letter from him. Sophia emailed me and the design team with "Great news!," saying that "The brochure was approved. We are on for a newspaper insert." But there was a catch: "don't buy paper quite yet," she wrote, "because the brochure is no longer coming from the Mayor . . . it needs to come from our Sustainability Advisory Board. And they have not seen this yet . . ."[107]

This was one of the more consequential decisions of the plan's development. We had engaged deeply and earnestly with the board and developed strong relationships with everyone on it; but it was a significant change in the terms that we had established at the beginning. Asking them to sign individually meant that they were endorsing not just the pieces they had contributed, but the entire set of challenges and the way they were defined and characterized. The extraordinary public step we were imagining, publishing a document with their names that would be distributed to more than 2 million newspaper readers, made this a serious step, far different from adding a quote to a press release or appearing at an event.

As a result, the subsequent three weeks involved a level of negotiations with each SAB member that was far more intense than had occurred before. Speaker Quinn, who had left it to Councilmember James Gennaro to attend SAB meetings without her, now wanted a meeting; they told us "they hear its an Environmental Plan from Kevin, and a sustainability plan from Eddie and they haven't been consulted on what the overall plan is," Amy wrote.[108] Elizabeth

[107]Sophia Hollander to Peyton Sise (EDC), the Two Twelve team, Brianna Wolf, Rohit Aggarwala, and Doug Bernstein, "Great news!," November 9, 2006.

[108]Amy Chester to Rohit Aggarwala, reporting the November 17, 2006 meeting with Maura Keaney of the Speaker's office.

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Girardi-Schoen, Pfizer's sustainability director, now had to review it with corporate colleagues; while she might sign in an individual capacity, she would now be implicating her company.[109]

Advocates such as Northrop, Yeampierre, and Shepard could now insist on additions that previously they had only suggested.[110] [111] At Northrop's insistence, the carbon target was placed first among the environmental goals and embedded in the longer-term scientific context; environmental justice references were added, including a paragraph on the injustices of the 1970s reworked with Yeampierre directly; and the housing goal acquired its sustainability clause. Still, it was a negotiation; as I explained when sharing the final version for approval on December 2, "seeking consensus from 17 Board members, roughly 15 agencies, several parts of the Mayor's office, and several Deputy Mayors means that we cannot incorporate every single piece of advice."[112] But the goodwill we had built up paid off, and not only did each member approve, but they did so with enthusiasm. "I'd be honored to have my name included," wrote Yaro. "I fully appreciate the difficulty of getting consensus from this disparate group — I've been there many times," he added. Shepard wrote, "You may use my name in the brochure. Good Luck on all this".[113]

The switch from advisory board to co-authors was difficult, but ultimately shaped and generally improved the plan. It became much more of a consensus document, and this shaped the way these disparate individuals and their organizations – labor, real estate, corporate, community activists, and environmentalists – embraced the plan when it came out in April. It could be that we should have set out with the goal of co-authorship from the start, but in retrospect, I am not sure we would have succeeded. The first two months, where we were only seeking advice but clearly integrating them and taking them seriously, built credibility and relationships in a way

[109]Elizabeth Girardi Schoen (Pfizer) to Ariella Rosenberg and Rohit Aggarwala, November 30, 2006.

[110]Michael Northrop to Rohit Aggarwala and Douglas Foy, "List of Ten," November 29, 2006 ("the list of ten doesn't work well enough").

[111]Elizabeth Yeampierre to Rohit Aggarwala, "Re: Brochure and speech," December 2, 2006; on Northrop's condition, Rohit Aggarwala to Michael Northrop, "RE: List of Ten," December 2, 2006 ("I hope that we still have your approval to use your name").

[112]Rohit Aggarwala to advisory board members (individually addressed), "Brochure and speech" and variants, December 2, 2006.

[113]Robert Yaro to Rohit Aggarwala, "Re: Brochure and Mayor's Speech," December 3, 2006.

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that was not fraught with the expectation of achieving consensus; that, in turn, made consensus easier to achieve when the Mayor asked for it.

Launch and listening

At the same time, the combined forces of OLTPS, Dan's staff, and the Mayor's speechwriters and press team were working to design the launch event and draft the speech. The speech was designed to present these as challenges that must be solved, not ones that we could decide to leave unaddressed because the price was too high, and to establish goals that defined what "solved" meant. We wanted to fend off partial solutions. The speech reflected the early stage of all of our thinking on sustainability. Reviewing a line that said greenhouse gas emissions "may also be contributing to our rising sea level," I asked for it to be changed to "is causing," but ultimately the "may" stayed in the speech.[114]

A key goal was to get people talking about potential solutions. As a result, we designed an event that was more than just a speech. To introduce the three core themes of capacity and space for growth ("OpeNYC"), infrastructure investment and maintenance ("MaintaiNYC"), and sustainability ("GreeNYC"), Bernstein's team produced a series of introductory videos. And we recruited NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw to lead a panel discussion with Majora Carter of Sustainable South Bronx, Diana Fortuna of the Citizens Budget Commission, Ed Ott of the New York City Central Labor Council, Rosenzweig, and Yaro. The goal, as I explained to him, was quite literally to "start the conversation we hope to encourage city-wide on the solutions to these challenges right there."[115]

The event took place on December 12, 2006, at the Queens Museum, home to the model of New York City created for the 1939 World's Fair. The Mayor promised that "three months from now we'll present New Yorkers with specific proposals for reaching each of our goals."[116] He then sat

[114]Rohit Aggarwala to Sophia Hollander and Doug Bernstein, copying Frank Barry, "RE: PlanYC script," December 10, 2006 ("I'd advocate that we take out the 'may be causing' and state that it 'is causing'"); Francis Barry to Rohit Aggarwala, "RE: PlanYC script," December 10, 2006 ("we win nothing by having the mayor step into the middle of an argument; it only weakens our case with our opponents"); final speech text, December 12, 2006 ("it may also be contributing to our rising sea level").

[115]Rohit Aggarwala to Robert Yaro, "Brochure and Mayor's Speech," December 2, 2006, quoted in Yaro's reply, December 3, 2006.

[116]Final speech text, "New York City 2030: Accepting the Challenge," December 12, 2006.

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on stage and listened to the panel discussion. A week later the advisory board's brochure was inserted into 1.1 million copies of five daily newspapers, with a separate Spanish-language distribution, and a new website invited New Yorkers to tell us what they thought.[117] Together, the speech, the panel, the films, the insert, and the website were an attempt to do on a citywide scale what we had done with the advisory board: to get people to wrestle with the challenge of how to meet these goals. My email to the staff the evening of the launch ended: "Now we have to see what the rest of the City thinks! And write the plan. Let's not forget to write the plan."[118]

Listening

Over the next two months, while tremendous work was going on within OLTPS and its agency partners, with the SAB, and with our experts and consultants to write the plan, Amy ran a listening effort to see what New Yorkers would say in response to the challenges. The listening did not start from a blank sheet of paper, and it was never meant to. By December we had spent six months analyzing the issues with the agencies and working through them with the advisory board and with more than 150 advocacy organizations we had met with or briefed. Our goal was not to generate ideas because we didn't have any; rather, it was to see whether our ideas were shared more broadly, and whether we were missing any.

In January, invitations over the Mayor's signature brought more than 300 community and civic leaders to six evening meetings across the five boroughs, and over the following two months there were town halls in each borough, a forum for immigrant leaders, events for young people, and issue panels on transit finance and energy. A website – a relatively early use of the web to seek public input -- drew more than 3,000 comments.[119]

In general, what we heard confirmed that our work to date was sound, and that the people who came to the borough meetings and filled in the website forms were concerned about the same

[117]Rohit Aggarwala to the advisory board, "Sustainability Advisory Board – outreach update," January 14, 2007 ("On December 19th, five daily newspapers inserted our brochure in 1.1 [million] newspapers"); Peyton Sise to Sophia Hollander, Rohit Aggarwala, and Jeffrey Kay, "Hoy - last call," December 11, 2006 (a 48,000-copy Spanish-language distribution).

[118]Rohit Aggarwala to the OLTPS staff, "Great job!" December 12, 2006, 8:27 p.m.

[119]Press Release No. 043-07, "Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability Completes Phase Two of Outreach Campaign," February 6, 2007; Sophia Hollander's summary of April 4, 2007 ("More than 3,000 comments"), in Doug Bernstein, "RE: list of issues," April 9, 2007.

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things as the organizations we had been working with for months. When Amy put together a presentation in late February on "what we heard," nearly everything on it was already in the draft plan; she sent it to me asking, "am i giving away too much?"[120]

But the listening also changed the plan. We significantly underestimated the public resonance of green roofs. These had not been in our December working list of initiatives, and in January the water chapter treated them only as something to study, because DEP doubted they could do much for sewer overflows at a reasonable cost.[121] They came up again and again in the website comments and the borough meetings, and by February the draft chapter included an incentive for green roofs, which the published plan kept.[122] When the advisory board's working groups met for the last time at the end of February, Ariella told them that, "given your input, the input from our outreach process, and additional analysis," some of the initiatives would differ from what they had seen two weeks earlier.[123]

Not every advocate saw the value of this phase. After the first community leader meeting in Brooklyn, Kate Slevin of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign wrote that "the PlanYC effort seems too focused on ideas, and not as focused on actual implementation of solutions… We have ideas, we just need someone to take a leadership role and help us get them implemented."[124] Tri-State was not on the advisory board, and its view reflected a sense that the answers were already clear. The board's members knew that we were working through how those answers could actually be implemented. We also needed to understand where the public stood, both so that we could design a launch that would succeed and so that the Mayor would know what he was

[120]Amy Chester to Rohit Aggarwala, "Town Hall presentation - what we heard.ppt," February 25, 2007 ("I choose the ones I thought were interesting to average new yorkers- am i giving away too much?").

[121]"LTSP initiative list 121006-as.xls," attachment to Angela Sung to Rohit Aggarwala, "RE: The Plan," December 15, 2006, in which neither "green roof" nor "greenroof" appears; draft water quality presentation, attachment to Holly Ensign-Barstow, "water quality - reworked," January 31, 2007.

[122]Website response memoranda, attachment to Amy Chester, "PlaNYC Feedback and Town Hall Schedule," February 15, 2007, with the summary of the six borough community-leader meetings of January 18–30, 2007; draft water quality chapter, attachment to Ariella Rosenberg to Kathryn Garcia et al., "RE: Moving the Long-Term Sustainability Plan Forward," February 19, 2007.

[123]Ariella Rosenberg to advisory board members and agency staff, "Final Round of Working Group Meetings," February 28, 2007.

[124]Kate Slevin (Tri-State Transportation Campaign), January 19, 2007, forwarded in Amy Chester to Rohit Aggarwala, "FW: thoughts on meeting last night," January 19, 2007.

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getting into. What was obvious to an advocate was not necessarily something the Mayor was ready to embrace, and creating the conditions for him to embrace it was much of what the listening phase was for.

V. Bringing the Plan to the Mayor

The Mayor had publicly committed to the ten goals in December, but he had not yet signed off on how we proposed to meet them. We did not have a blank check from him, and we did not have his guaranteed approval that he would support either the funding we would ask for or the plan's most daring recommendation, congestion pricing. What we had was his permission, and a mandate, to make the case. In a very real way, all of the work described so far was the building of that case: that the plan was necessary, that it was feasible, that we understood the public battle we were asking him to undertake, and that it had a reasonable chance of success. By design, his decision came late in the process.

The decision meetings

By late February, Jeff began to believe both that we were far enough along to seek the Mayor's approval, and that the timeline required it. "Are we going to be ready next week?" Dan asked. He thought we needed another week, but agreed that by then we would be, and had his scheduler ask for two one-hour meetings. When the Mayor's scheduler confirmed it, he let us know: "Showtime!" [125]

The plan was presented to the Mayor in a series of seven meetings over five weeks, from March 6 to April 4, most of which took place at the informal meeting tables on the stage in the bullpen where the Mayor and the senior staff had their desks.[126] The first two were working reviews with a small group: the Mayor, Dan, Kevin, Jeff, Deputy Mayor Ed Skyler, and me.

[125]Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala, "FW: Meeting with mayor," February 20, 2007, containing the Kay–Doctoroff exchange (Kay: "Give our timing, can I ask marla to schedule 2 one hour meetings with the mayor for next week???"; Doctoroff: "Are we going to be ready next week? I would probably say 2 one-hour meetings the week after next."); Dan Doctoroff to Jeffrey Kay and Rohit Aggarwala, "Fw: Meeting with mayor," February 22, 2007 ("Showtime!").

[126]The scheduling notices place the March 14, March 15, and April 4 meetings in the bullpen and the March 30 meeting in the Committee of the Whole room; those for March 6, 7, and 19 say only "City Hall." Cathy Luong, "RE:

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The first meeting, on transportation, was the one we worried about most, because of the massive political challenge that was congestion pricing. As I told the staff beforehand, "Dan is quite nervous about this presentation," and the goal was simply "to make sure the mayor still agrees."[127] Kevin was out of town, so it was clear at the beginning of the meeting that we were not going to get a firm decision right away. At the end of the presentation, Dan told the Mayor that even if congestion pricing failed in Albany, he would "look great" for having tried. Later in the series, when someone at the table raised the Mayor's political future as a reason for caution, the Mayor cut him off: we were not going to make this decision based on his political future or anyone else's, he said, only on what was right for the city.[128]

The Mayor's approval of the congestion pricing – or the plan itself -- was never announced in a single moment; it accumulated over the meetings. After the first meeting, I reported to the staff: "The meeting with the mayor was very good; as Kevin Sheekey was out of town, the mayor did not want to make a decision today, but he was very engaged and Dan, Jeff, and others were all optimistic. For now, we are all systems go."[129] Given the political explosiveness of the congestion pricing decision, we maintained – even to close allies – that the Mayor had not made a final decision on it until just before the announcement.[130] Internally, however, by late March we were no longer talking about it in the conditional; on March 23, I reported to Dan that an advocate who said he knew him had asked me about congestion pricing and "I told him that we had been assessing CP and that it was, of course, a decision that the Mayor would be involved in making personally. Standard disclaimer, these days."[131] On April 9, he asked Dan to consider starting congestion pricing in lower Manhattan and moving uptown later. When I raised the risk that this would complicate things with Speaker Silver, the answer came back that "having the

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Sustainability 2030," March 14, 2007 ("Change of venue. Both meetings will be in the bullpen"); Irene Pistorino, "RE: Sustainability 2030," March 28, 2007 ("in the COW"). The stage is the author's recollection.

[127]Rohit Aggarwala to the transportation team, "Doc for Mayor," March 4, 2007.

[128]Author's recollection. No minutes were kept of the Mayor's meetings.

[129]Rohit Aggarwala to the OLTPS staff, "Mayor mtg," March 6, 2007, 5:45 p.m.

[130]Before a Queens briefing six days before the launch, the author asked Kay and Chester whether to say "The Mayor hasn't made a decision yet; he will before Sunday." Kay replied: "Stick to message on CP…mayor has not made a decision yet but is considering…will know by sunday." Rohit Aggarwala to Jeffrey Kay and Amy Chester, and Kay's reply, "RE: we need to talk about the queens briefing asap," April 16, 2007.

[131]Rohit Aggarwala to Dan Doctoroff, "FW: rohit: followup to chat yest on congestion pricing at nrdc. roger / 1," March 23, 2007.

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mayor's full buy-in was more important than anything else."[132] Ultimately, on April 18, four days before the launch, Dan and Kevin convinced the Mayor to propose the full congestion pricing zone, but make it a three year pilot.[133]

The second meeting was on energy, which was largely delivered by Melwani, given that his McKinsey team had done much of the modeling about energy capacity. The remaining chapters were split across three sessions on March 14, 15, and 19, covering housing, water quality, waterways, and air quality; parks and carbon; and brownfields and the budget, respectively.[134]

As these progressed, attendance widened, reflecting the shift from a policy decision to implementation planning. Budget Director Page was added to the invitations on March 14, for that day's session and the parks session the next day; parks was the largest single area of new City capital spending.[135] When First Deputy Mayor Patti Harris was added to the invitation for the budget session of March 19, I wrote Jeff: "Sounds momentous".[136] The Mayor's office cancelled his daily senior staff meeting on March 30 to replace it with a meeting that added press secretary Loeser and communications director James Anderson. At that point, we had clearly shifted from "if" to "when" with the Mayor's support and involvement.

Find him the money

The plan was expensive. Funding everything in the plan – which included a new rail tunnel under the Hudson River and other massive transit infrastructure projects – was expected to cost more than $60 billion, of which roughly $12 billion would need to come from the City; much of the rest from congestion pricing revenues. The near-term City investment was nearly $2 billion

[132]Rohit Aggarwala, "CP lower Manhattan start?," April 9, 2007.

[133]Rohit Aggarwala to Rachel Weinberger, "Fyi," April 18, 2007 ("Sheekey and Dan just decided they will try to get the mayor not to do the Houston St idea but rather propose the whole cp zone as a 3 year pilot"); Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala, "Re: Spitzer and cp," April 19, 2007 ("Mayor in on 3 year pilot. I belive. Check with dan").

[134]Angela Sung to Jeffrey Kay and Rohit Aggarwala, "patti wants the agenda for the meeting," March 14, 2007 (March 14: "Housing, Water Quality, Waterways, Air Quality"; March 15: "Brownfields, Open Space, Carbon Target"), and Rohit Aggarwala's reply of the same day ("Add 'budget' to tomorrow's, please"); Irene Pistorino, "RE: Sustainability 2030," March 16, 2007 ("The topics are the budget and brownfields").

[135]Cathy Luong to Dan Doctoroff, Kevin Sheekey, Jeffrey Kay, Ed Skyler, Rohit Aggarwala, and Mark Page, "RE: Sustainability 2030," March 14, 2007. Page was not on the March 8 notice.

[136]Irene Pistorino, "RE: Sustainability 2030," March 16, 2007 (adding Patti Harris), and March 28, 2007 (adding Stu Loeser and James Anderson); Rohit Aggarwala, "FW: Sustainability 2030," March 28, 2007 ("Sounds momentous. Anything I need to prepare?").

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in new capital over ten years, the largest pieces of which were about $780 million for parks and trees and a $500 million energy efficiency fund for city buildings that we believed would pay for itself with savings.[137]

With the Mayor's executive budget due in only a few weeks, Jeff was getting anxious. "I am concerned about timing," he wrote the morning of March 15. "Omb is preparing there [sic] budget now and we need to get things in there." Later that day, the meeting with the Mayor on parks took place, the second to which Budget Director Page had been invited. Looking at the final page, which showed $1.5 billion in total new parks investment through 2030 (and $867 million that would be needed in the next ten years), the Mayor turned to Page and said, "find him the money." The Mayor, Page, and the others left. I looked at Jeff and said, "what do we do now?" "You do nothing," he said. "The mayor just told the budget director to find you a billion dollars. You won." [138]

It wasn't that simple, but that was the closest thing to a green light the Mayor ever gave me. While Jeff told me to do nothing more, during the next several weeks, he worked through each budget ask with OMB staff. In late March, he asked us for a list of initiatives in three categories: those already in an agency's budget, those that needed new money from OMB, and those that needed legislation or other action by the state or federal government, so that he could "get the legislation drafted and the money funded from OMB." As he put it, "The window for which to do this is very small."[139] By early April, referring to the energy efficiency fund, Jeff reported that "Mark is definitely ok . . . to spend money on city capital for retrofits."[140] OMB built the plan's initiatives into the Executive Budget it was preparing, and City Hall's legislative staff began to

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[137]"Budget 031007 v6.xls," attachment to Matthew Pecori, "RE: Do we have a recent updated," April 9, 2007, sheet "OMB Capital" (incremental impact on the ten-year capital plan, FY08–FY17: $1.93 billion, including $780 million for parks, $500 million for the city buildings energy fund, $452 million for transportation, and $191 million for air quality).

[138]Author's recollection. No email records the instruction; the corroborating documents are these: Jeffrey Kay, "Re: Budget," March 15, 2007 ("I am concerned about timing"); "Open space strategies," final page of the open-space section of the March 15 deck (capital cost $867 million for 2008–17 and $1.55 billion through 2030; annual operating cost $24.9 million); Rohit Aggarwala to Seth Pinsky, no subject, March 19, 2007 ("Large numbers, reaction from Mark Page as expected").

[139]Jeffrey Kay to the OLTPS staff, copying Amy Chester, "budget and legislation," March 25, 2007.

[140]Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala et al., "Mayor meeting," April 3, 2007 ("Mark is definitely ok with spending money and making it a priority to spend money on city capital for retrofits. The key is the structure").

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draft bills the plan would need; one of those sessions, on April 18, changed the form of the green roof incentive four days before the plan was published.[141]

Between early March and April 20, PlaNYC went from an internal proposal to a massive, serious change effort poised for implementation. It did so for two reasons: one, that the Mayor had created a process by which all the tools he needed – the policy content, the implementation capability, the political strategy – would be ready if and when he decided to move forward. The second was that the process itself had been executed well: the content triangulation with the agencies and the advocates, the budget discussions with OMB, and, above all else, the interaction of political and policy strategy that was the interplay between Dan and Kevin.

VI. The Rollout

The rollout of PlaNYC in April 2007 was a huge effort, and its purpose was to keep every party on board: the agencies, the advisory board, the Council, the state, other elected officials, the advocates, and the press. It required turning 127 initiatives into a finished book in a few weeks, briefing everyone whose support mattered before they read about the plan in a newspaper, and building a coalition that would be ready to argue for the plan the morning after it was released.

Finishing "the book"

As the mayoral briefings proceeded and planning for the rollout started in earnest, the challenge of getting the book itself across the finish line became real. Sophia worked closely with Ariella, Dan, and me on the introductions to the overall document and to each section, and Dan edited them significantly. The agencies and OLTPS drafted the first descriptions of the 127 initiatives, which Sophia then largely rewrote to keep them in a single voice.[142] At Dan's encouragement she had studied the city's 1969 plan, much of which William H. Whyte had written, and PlaNYC followed it in opening its chapters with stories and in being frank about where the city had fallen short. As the deadline neared, parts of City Hall grew nervous about that candor, and Dan

[141]Ariella Rosenberg to Marc Ricks, copying Rohit Aggarwala, "Solar and Green Roofs incentive," April 18, 2007 ("Due to this afternoon's State Legislation meeting… please take out the 35% reference"). The published plan nonetheless states the abatement at 35 percent.

[142]Marc Ricks to Jeffrey Kay, Rohit Aggarwala, Sophia Hollander, and others, "RE: PlaNYC - check-in," April 11, 2007 ("Housing (Was Sophia but Marc now taking back to incorporate HPD edits)… Open space (Sophia)").

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defended most of it. Dan realized that we at OLTPS would be both too busy and too in the weeds to ensure the book happened, so he brought in Marc, who was stepping down as chief of staff to start a career in finance, to manage it. "This has to be in one voice," he wrote in late March. "I think it makes sense for Marc to do it."[143] Some of Marc's job was to manage consistency; but a lot of it was to make decisions about specific wording where different members of the broad PlaNYC team disagreed. Some of these he made, and in other cases he was a single conduit to Dan, who edited the chapters himself, sometimes in tracked changes and sometimes by hand on printed copies left on his desk.[144]

With a massive document (which extended to more than 150 pages in the end), and a large and highly opinionated team to coordinate, Marc wielded this authority firmly. He identified who could be making edits on a given document at a given time, ("nobody other than the person listed should be doing electronic edits," he told us on April 11), and every change went to the designers at Two Twelve through him, Sophia, or Brianna. He also rationed what could change: "Since it is crunch time, we don't really have room for edits of taste," he wrote on April 9, and two days later he warned that "unless your title begins with 'Deputy Mayor' at this stage 'last edits' should be limited to fairly minor corrections." When EDC objected (as did I) to starting the energy chapter talking about the 2006 Long Island City blackout, Marc wrote back firmly: "The blackout stays in. Full stop. If you feel otherwise email Dan directly. It was his call… repeatedly."[145] For the last week Marc, Sophia, Brianna, and I worked out of the design firm's studio on Broadway; Ariella was at our OLTPS office coordinating many of the content decisions as well.[146]

[143]Dan Doctoroff to Rohit Aggarwala, no subject, and replies, March 26, 2007 ("The transportation section is a mess… This has to be in one voice, but there may be any intermediate step which is for someone else to do the heavy editing. The question is who?… I think it makes sense for Marc to do it").

[144]Dan Doctoroff to Rohit Aggarwala and Sophia Hollander, "transportation 040707 7pm rta-sh.doc," April 8, 2007.

[145]Marc Ricks to EDC energy staff, copying the plan team, "RE: Intro," April 15, 2007; Marc Ricks, "Re: carbon," April 9, 2007 ("since it is crunch time, we don't really have room for edits of taste"); Ricks, "RE: PlaNYC - check-in," April 11, 2007 ("nobody other than the person listed should be doing electronic edits"); Ricks, "RE: Transportation chapter," April 11, 2007 ("unless your title begins with 'Deputy Mayor'"). The published plan runs to 158 pages including covers.

[146]Marc Ricks to Dan Doctoroff and others, "Check-in," April 15, 2007 ("Sophia, Brianna Rit, and I aim to relocate to 212 midday tomorrow, for the next several days").

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A critical decision left to the last minute was the subtitle. While "PlaNYC" had been established months earlier, the book needed more, something to explain what it was. Starting in late March, we began using "PlaNYC: Transforming New York's Urban Environment" as the working title, which went so far as going into one of TwoTwelve's first layouts of the book. On April 4, Marc sent a draft cover to the communications team, asking them to pay particular attention to the subtitle; in response, Anderson expressed concern that "transformation" might be frightening to some. Dan liked it, and we struggled to come up with an alternative. As late as April 15, Marc reported that the decision had been "punted" and Dan still liked "Transforming," but he was not sure that Frank Barry, the Mayor's lead speechwriter, and Anderson were comfortable with it. By the night of April 17 – one of our first late nights on-site at TwoTwelve – someone came up with "A Greener, Greater New York."[147] We all immediately agreed, and it became one of our most re-used phrases.[148]

One other last minute change to the book had long-term, important consequences. Lots of plans get released with vague timelines and unclear accountability. In January we had undertaken an exercise around who was responsible for leading various initiatives and what milestones might be. On our regular Sunday meeting with Dan on April 1, he mentioned the need for an appendix showing what had to be accomplished when; top of mind was what we had to get done by the end of the Bloomberg Administration on December 31, 2009. A few days later I emailed the team saying this was "a little bit deja vu [sic]" and asking each initiative team to identify "one milestone we can realistically achieve before Dec 31, 2009," with further milestones for 2015 and 2020. Ariella spent the next two weeks building the grid with the agencies and fitting Jeff's budget numbers into it, and, as I predicted on April 15, "given the ongoing conversations with OMB, this will probably have to be the last item put to bed." On April 20, two days before the launch, the grid was being proofread, the agencies had signed off, and Jeff was reviewing. The

[147]The author has not yet been able to determine precisely who, as memories differ.

[148]Tyler Jaeckel, "Funders Presentation," March 29, 2007 (cover: "Transforming New York's Urban Environment"); James Anderson, "RE: PlaNYC Cover," April 4, 2007 ("it is important, in my opinion, to avoid titles that suggest this plan equals great transformation or change. It'll frighten people"); Marc Ricks, "Speech title," April 5, 2007 ("transforming" "suggests dislocation, change for the sake of change and the loss of what we already have"); Marc Ricks, "RE: planyc stage manager," April 15, 2007 ("we had punted on the issue of the book title… Dan likes Transforming New York's Urban Environment. I'm not sure if Frank and Jim where comfortable"); Michelle Cates (Two Twelve), "plaNYC cover document," April 18, 2007, 1:26 a.m.

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implementation grid became the backbone of the annual progress updates, and one of the things that made PlaNYC unusual among strategic plans.[149]

Building the coalition

The final weeks were also a briefing campaign, designed so that nobody whose support mattered would learn about the plan from a newspaper. While the members of the advisory board had a lot of insight into our thinking, they did not know what had been approved; significantly, they also did not appreciate how much funding would be allocated. The final full meeting of the SAB before the plan was released was on February 13. There, in addition to presenting what we had heard at the listening sessions and from the public via the website, we laid out "findings" and "potential solutions." It was the plan that we would soon start briefing the Mayor on; virtually all the key initiatives were there. I remember being concerned that we were giving too much away, even to our trusted partners, before the Mayor had reviewed it. My fears were unfounded: when the meeting was finished, Bystryn asked, "when are you going to tell us what's really going into the plan?"

As a result, a key task once the Mayor had moved us into implementation was to brief everyone. We were very intentional; especially with an announcement as politically explosive as congestion pricing, leaks would cause problems. But, at the same time, it was vital that no one be surprised and feel slighted. Further, as Amy pointed out, the level of specificity, commitment, and funding was important to convey: "I feel like overal [sic] most will be impressed if they understand the details," she explained.[150]

We began with Dan briefing Speaker Quinn on April 6, early enough that her requests could still be reflected in the plan. (The highlight for me was Dan explaining to her about our plan to foster mussels and oysters as a way to clean the water; "Bet you never thought You'd hear Dan

[149]Rohit Aggarwala to the OLTPS staff, "Milestones," April 4, 2007 ("Dan wants to include in the plan a set of milestones for each initiative"); Rohit Aggarwala to Jeffrey Kay and Ariella Rosenberg, "Re: initiative list," April 20, 2007 ("Agencies have signed off"). The April 1 Sunday meeting is the author's recollection.

[150]Amy Chester to Jeffrey Kay and Jim Whelan, copying Rohit Aggarwala, "Post-Speech," April 4, 2007. Chester was proposing briefings for the wider advocacy community on the Monday after the speech; Kay replied that "all teir 1 coalition members will bebriefed ahead of time as early as next week." Jeffrey Kay, "Re: Post-Speech," April 5, 2007.

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Doctoroff giving Chris Quinn a presentation on mollusks," I wrote Eddie and Jeff, who were in the meeting with me.[151]) We briefed state officials on April 13, and Governor Spitzer's office agreed on language so that the Governor could welcome the plan publicly.[152] On April 20, two days before the launch, Dan briefed all agency heads together in the City Council's Committee of the Whole room about the plan.[153] On April 21, the day before the release, I led a multi-hour briefing for press on the plan, embargoed until the next day.[154] The morning of the release, we did a final briefing for advocates in the museum's Linder Theater.[155]

At the same time, Jeff, Amy, and Patrick Brennan, Commissioner of the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, were working to create a coalition of allies that would come to be known as the Campaign for New York's Future. The coalition to support the plan took shape in February 2007.[156] Dan met with Stephen Heintz, the president of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, on February 6; Northrop – who had been instrumental in introducing Dan to both Gavron and Foy – was at RBF and attended. At that meeting, Heintz agreed in principle to contribute to an effort to support the plan.[157] On April 9 Jeff convened the advocates who would form its core, including RPA, NYPIRG, WE ACT, UPROSE, Environmental Defense, the Partnership for New York

[151]Rohit Aggarwala to Jeffrey Kay and Eddie Bautista, "Bet you never thought," April 6, 2007.

[152]Calendar entries: "Speaker Quinn/Sustainability," April 6, 2007; "State 2030 Plan Briefing," April 13, 2007; "Briefing to A Few Advisory Board Members," April 18, 2007; "Press Briefing - All SPA needed," April 21, 2007. On the Governor's language, Dan Doctoroff to Rohit Aggarwala, Jeffrey Kay, Patrick Brennan, and Kevin Sheekey, "Re: Are you reachable?," April 18, 2007.

[153]Dan Doctoroff, "Updated: PlaNYC Briefing w/Commissioners," April 18, 2007 (moved to 3:00 p.m. on Friday, April 20, "City Hall, COW").

[154]John Gallagher to Amy Chester, Rohit Aggarwala, and agency staff, "tomorrow briefing," April 20, 2007 ("The briefing is for our daily beat reporters (aka Room 9) and selected other reporters from City and National outlets"). That the author led it is his recollection.

[155]Amy Chester, "PlaNYC Briefing this Sunday Before Museum Event," April 18, 2007 ("a technical briefing for organizations on Sunday- the same day as the speech - at 11:00AM at the Linder Theater at the museum").

[156]Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala, "RE: Patrick," February 16, 2007; Bob Yaro to Rohit Aggarwala, "Re: Tomorrow," February 20, 2007 ("We've also got a number of thoughts on ways to procced witht the civic coalition idea").

[157]Dan Doctoroff, calendar notice, "Stephen Heintz/Rockefeller Brothers Fund," February 6, 2007; Rohit Aggarwala to Dan Doctoroff and Jeffrey Kay, no subject, February 14, 2007 ("We'd discussed with him putting together the meeting of SAB members to organize potential funders for the campaign"); Jay Kriegel to Dan Doctoroff et al., "Fw: Important Note on Mayor's presentation," March 22, 2007 ("Stephen Heintz asked me to consult Northrup, who is supposed to be scheduling the Foundation fund-raising luncheon"). Heintz's agreement in principle is the author's recollection.

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City, NRDC, and the League of Conservation Voters.[158] Jim Whelan, a senior advisor to Dan, led the outreach to organized labor, and Jay Kriegel of the Abernathy MacGregor Group contacted foundations and civic leaders on Dan's behalf.[159] The final days before the launch were a recruiting drive aimed at the groups we had briefed over the winter. It reached well beyond the usual allies. On the Friday before the launch, Amy reported that the unions had signed on, including the Teamsters: "Its been an amazing effort to turn our assumed enemies, to be our friends virtually overnight."[160]

Earth Day

As the briefings with the Mayor proceeded in March, another practical reality turned to where and how to have the Mayor announce the plan. On March 19, Amy asked if we had a date; "Earth Day is April 22. Kevin has already said he likes that date, even though it's a Sunday," I replied. But many thought a Sunday speech a bad idea, and Eddie reserved the City Council chamber for April 23. On April 4, Marc – already in the throes of getting the plan finished – wrote "So I am told we just LOST a day – that speech will be Sunday, April 22nd." The venue was moved to the American Museum of Natural History on April 6, and invitations went to the printer on April 10, to arrive on April 12. At that point, there was no turning back.[161]

The extensive briefings ensured lots of support and lots of presence at the event, but almost inevitably led to a leak. On Thursday evening, April 19, Loeser sent an email to the Mayor and senior staff with the text of an article to run in the New York Times the next morning under the headline "Bloomberg to Announce Long-Term Vision for City." The article laid out the breadth and ambition of the plan, and highlighted congestion pricing as the most contentious issue in the

[158]Jeffrey Kay to advocates from RPA, NYPIRG, WE ACT, UPROSE, Environmental Defense, the Partnership for New York City, NRDC, and the League of Conservation Voters, "Sustainability Campaign," April 9, 2007.

[159]Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala, "RE: Patrick," February 16, 2007 ("I have Kriegel on his own"); James Whelan, "Agenda for Today's 9:30 Call," May 14, 2007 (assignments for outreach to the Teamsters, the building trades, and other unions).

[160]Amy Chester to Patrick Brennan, Rohit Aggarwala, and others, "Coalition Update," April 20, 2007.

[161]Rohit Aggarwala to Amy Chester, "RE: Conference on logistics and sustainable transportation/mobility," March 19, 2007; Jeffrey Kay to Rohit Aggarwala, "Re: Date and MTA," March 22, 2007 ("We are not doing a sunday and we might as well stick with monday"); Eddie Bautista to Jeffrey Kay, no subject, March 22, 2007 ("Room's reserved for the 23rd"), forwarded in Eddie Bautista, "Fw: Sustainability update," March 23, 2007; Marc Ricks to Peyton Sise, Rohit Aggarwala, and others, no subject, April 4, 2007; Brianna Wolf, "Invitation," April 10, 2007 ("The invitation went to press this afternoon. It will arrive in mailboxes on Thursday").

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plan. "I hope we do as well on monday morning," Gallagher wrote as he forwarded it to Whelan.[162]

The article, which ran on page 1 the next morning (in a period when most people still read their news in print), gave the plan enhanced stature. The staff handling RSVPs to the Sunday speech passed along at least one change of heart; referring to the former mayor, David Dinkins, one told me "FYI- dinkin's rsvp has changed from a no to a yes." The attention was, it turned out, a version of Dan's virtuous cycle. "I'm told that because we've placed this level of importance on it, the speech got more attention in today's Times than it may have otherwise," Gallagher told me on Friday.[163]

VII. Implementation

The Mayor presented PlaNYC on Sunday, April 22, 2007, Earth Day, in the Hall of Ocean Life at the American Museum of Natural History, with Governor Schwarzenegger in attendance.[164] I went with a few of the OLTPS staff afterwards to a restaurant downtown that had the television news playing, to watch the coverage and celebrate. The next morning, I went to work. At 8:04 a.m. I was walking up the stairs out of the subway at Park Place when my Blackberry buzzed. Dan had written an email to me, Jeff, Marc, and Whelan, with the subject line "Implementation." "Now that we have had time to rest," he wrote, "we need to start talking about mechanisms for forcing everything in the plan to get done."[165]

Dan's email set in motion an implementation, which – like the development of the plan itself – had political, bureaucratic, and fiscal aspects. This is where the all-of-government aspect of

[162]Stu Loeser to Michael Bloomberg, Dan Doctoroff, and others, "Tomorrow's Times Story," April 19, 2007, 9:33 p.m., and John Gallagher's forward to James Whelan, 9:42 p.m.; Diane Cardwell and Charles V. Bagli, "Bloomberg to Announce Long-Term Vision for City," *New York Times*, April 20, 2007.

[163]Rohit Aggarwala, "Times," April 20, 2007 ("Page 1!"); Jennifer Brown, "RE: planyc salutations at top," April 20, 2007; John Gallagher to Amy Chester, Rohit Aggarwala, and agency staff, "tomorrow briefing," April 20, 2007.

[164]Amy Chester, "PlaNYC Announcement Sunday, April 22," April 14, 2007; M. Tres Watson to Rohit Aggarwala, "RE: Thanks," April 23, 2007 ("The Museum of Natural History was a splendid location choice, by the way. I like the Arnold spin.").

[165]Dan Doctoroff to Jeffrey Kay, Rohit Aggarwala, Marc Ricks, Jim Whelan, and Marla Pardee, "Implementation," April 23, 2007.

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PlaNYC made such a huge difference, and why, within a short period of time, PlaNYC had had a major impact.

The political aspect became apparent later that morning, when about fifty organizations stood with the coalition at its first press conference at City Hall, and by June the Campaign for New York's Future had ninety-four members.[166] I think I knew it was going on but I had been so focused on briefings that I did not even attend. Just as Gallagher had said about the press coverage, the work with advocates had created a virtuous cycle. In late March, Darrell, an SAB member with Environmental Defense, wrote to me: "Had a productive meeting with Dan, Jay Kriegel and Fred Krupp (my boss) yesterday afternoon. Sounds like this current phase will be a walk in the park compared to what comes next -- and we're gearing up to help on the media and Albany fronts."[167]

Four days later came an announcement that few remember but which was equally critical to PlaNYC. On April 26, the Mayor released the Executive Budget. It contained a whopping $2.9 billion for investments and expenditures related to PlaNYC. The capital plan included $386 million to complete eight regional parks, $285 million to replace old fuel burners in the city's public schools, $247 million to plant 15,500 street trees a year, $134 million for the Town Square initiative, $125 million for congested corridors, $111 million to open schoolyards as public playgrounds, and $119 million to plant saplings in parks.[168] On the expense side, the budget committed $50 million in the first year to the SMART Fund, rising to $275 million a year by 2011 as a match for state contributions; $81 million a year for energy conservation in City government; and $25 million for a new brownfields fund. It also incorporated the plan's tax incentives, including property tax abatements for solar panels and green roofs and a sales tax exemption for hybrid cars.[169]

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[166]Patrick Brennan to the coalition list, no subject, April 22, 2007; Campaign for New York's Future press release, June 3, 2007 ("an unprecedented coalition of 94 environmental, public health, civic, labor, community and business organizations").

[167]Andy Darrell to Rohit Aggarwala, "Looking forward," March 27, 2007.

[168] City of New York, Office of Management and Budget, Ten-Year Capital Strategy, Fiscal Years 2008–2017 (New York, April 2007), viii ("Capital Investments for plaNYC 2030").

[169] City of New York, Office of Management and Budget, The City of New York Executive Budget, Fiscal Year 2008: Message of the Mayor (New York, April 2007), 3, 8, 16–17.

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The funding meant that all relevant agencies, not just OLTPS, could shift into implementation seriously. Over the next several weeks, Dan pressed me to outline a staffing vision for the office; he rejected my first as too timid, and sent me back to do one showing a large enough staff that I really began to worry people would not have enough to do. My proposal in response to that was for a staff of about 36; we wound up moving towards 20 quite quickly. [170] Over the following months we hired staff to oversee all the key chapters of the plan, turning a strategy team into a project management office.[171] The funding also meant the agencies could staff up similarly, so they were not forced to ask people to work on new initiatives in addition to existing priorities.

The Mayor's time

Finally, a key factor was the Mayor's own time. With the support and enthusiasm of Dan, Kevin, and Loeser, Mayor Bloomberg seemed to be doing an event or speech about some aspect of PlaNYC virtually every day. After the launch, City Hall ran a daily PlaNYC call, chaired by Whelan, to plan events, press, and outreach. The agenda for one day in mid-May shows the Mayor making a trip to Albany, addressing the C40 summit, and making an announcement with former President Clinton, with coalition members visiting Albany the same week and op-eds by supporters submitted to three newspapers.[172] Each of those events told New Yorkers that the plan was real, and each told the agencies that the Mayor was taking this effort seriously.

The way I recall it, PlaNYC fully shifted from planning to implementation with the summit of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, which took place in Midtown from May 14 to 17, 2007, three weeks after the launch.[173] The event – with former president Bill Clinton playing a prominent role and mayors from around the world in attendance – catapulted Mayor Bloomberg into his role as a global climate champion and further enhanced the priority that his administration would give climate work in future years. One image from the event stood out,

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[170]"ORGCHART.ppt," attachment to Ariella Rosenberg, "ORG CHART.ppt," June 21, 2007 ("9 Existing OLTPS staff members, 14 Proposed new hires, 23 Total (13 less than originally proposed)"). The earlier proposal does not survive.

[171]Start dates: Andrew Brent (May 17, 2007), Carter Strickland (October 4, 2007), Neil Parikh (December 5, 2007), Kizzy Charles-Guzman (December 19, 2007), among others.

[172]James Whelan, "Agenda for Today's 9:30 Call," May 14, 2007.

[173]Michael Allegretti (Partnership for New York City) to Rohit Aggarwala and Patricia Noonan, "C20 Conference Future Steps," July 12, 2006 (summit dates May 14–17, 2007).

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which was also described in the New York Times: "Mr. Bloomberg crossed the street to Central Park for a news conference with a phalanx of mayors behind him, like a bureaucrat's version of 'The Warriors.'"[174]

Conclusion

PlaNYC was the product of a whole-of-government effort. The plan began as a plan for growth, so it spoke from the start to audiences that a climate plan alone would not have reached. Its team brought together experts, city staff, OMB, and advocates without giving any of them control, and the fights that followed made the plan stronger. The Mayor created an environment in which an ambitious effort could be hammered out, while retaining the ultimate decision about whether to proceed or not. That he decided to proceed – and especially to take the risky step of proposing congestion pricing at the height of his popularity – was a testament to Dan Doctoroff's vision, high standards, and personal investment. Dan's standard of "ambitious but achievable" meant that every initiative had been tested against what could actually be enacted and implemented before it was included. Its public rollout asked New Yorkers to discuss the solutions while we tested our hypotheses against what they told us and what the press wrote. The immediate availability of funding – the product of the mayor's direction to the budget director as well as Jeff Kay's painstaking work with OMB staff – allowed it to get to work. And, while congestion pricing failed, the effort put into organizing advocacy partners in favor of the plan made it as much a movement as it was a government document.

[174]Diane Cardwell, "At Mayors' Summit, Bloomberg Campaigns for Clean Air," *New York Times*, May 16, 2007. Ariella Rosenberg wrote to the team that day that "although the picture was an odd choice, the message in the NY Times article on C40 (and our joining the Climate Group) was great!" Ariella Rosenberg, "2 additional press opportunities related to PlaNYC," May 16, 2007.

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DISCLOSURE ON AI USAGE

This paper is largely based on my own recollection and a set of emails and documents that I retained from the 2006-2008 period. Starting in early 2026, I used several Claude.ai tools, most recently Opus 5.5, to organize, analyze, and search this dataset, allowing me to reconstruct in detail sequences and decisionmaking processes that I remembered, as well as to test hypotheses and recollections about this period against the evidence in the archive. Because work on this predated Columbia University's Claude contract, I used a personal account with training turned off. I conducted a search to find any personally identifying information in the dataset and walled off from the dataset three instances when someone had emailed a social security number, as well as emails that were labeled as privileged or that related to human resources issues. I also used Claude extensively in the drafting of this document. I assembled a set of outlines and asked Claude for several versions of an initial draft. I used this as inspiration and rewrote the body extensively, including the structure, theses, and most of the words. I used Claude to explore secondary literature on related topics and uncover sources for items that were not documented in my archive, and to test whether I had overstated or understated the role of any individual, including myself. I relied heavily on Claude for the drafting and formatting of footnotes. I have reviewed all cited sources and am solely responsible for the paper's content, interpretations, and any errors.

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