"Heat Crises and New York City Government, 1995-2025"

Kara Schlichting and Avraham Zion Kuighadush
Queens College, CUNY

Abstract New Yorkers have long recognized that urban form magnifies the experience of hot summer weather. New York has one of the nation's most extreme urban heat islands (UHI), the phenomenon of significantly higher temperatures in metropolitan areas compared to nearby suburban and rural districts. The UHI exacerbates climate change impacts. This paper historicizes the city government's approach to intensifying summer weather after its first "Beat the Heat" emergency plan (1996). This plan identified the key issues at the center of New York's heat response: the built environment and UHI make heat a unique threat in cities; heat, as a public health threat, was unequally distributed across the city; and the importance of community mobilization and outreach to reach vulnerable populations. In the coming decades, heat awareness and strategies in city government and PlaNYC/OneNYC evolved from "emergency" to "adaptation and mitigation" to "justice" paradigms. In the 21st century, vanguard local climate change projections of the worsening heat impacts likely by the 2080s gave further impetus to such work. Environmental justice campaigns on inequitable heat exposure further embedded equity concerns into the City's planning efforts, leading to vanguard "right to cooling" legislation by the 2020s.

In July 1995, a heat wave hit Chicago. From the 12th to the 16th, temperatures in the 90s and low 100s pummeled the city. Thursday, July 13th broke temperature records. The day's high of 106°F combined with high humidity to push the heat index above 120°F. The extreme weather took more than 700 lives.[1]

Chicago's tragedy sent shockwaves nationwide. In New York City, municipal officials were determined to avoid a similar tragedy. In January 1996, Rudolph Giuliani announced a New Mayor's Office of Emergency Management (OEM).[2] The office immediately began a heat emergency plan, publishing "Beat the Heat" that July. In adding heat emergency planning to city governance the plan identified the key issues that would drive heat planning for the coming decades. First, the gulf between public officials' enthusiasm for cooling centers and the public's lack of enthusiasm–or ability–to patronize them emerged as a key frustration for both city officials and community members. Second, "Beat the Heat" framed extreme temperatures as a community health threat. Community mobilization and social networks would be key public health resources during heat events. Third, the plan underscored the unique urban threats of heat when exacerbated by the UHI. Finally, the plan recognized that New York needed ways to reach heat-vulnerable populations at home.

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[1] Jim Angel, "The 1995 Heat Wave in Chicago, Illinois," State Climatologist Office for Illinois, https://www.isws.illinois.edu/statecli/general/1995chicago.html.

[2] "Rudolph W. Giuliani to Fellow New Yorkers, June 1996," in Jerome M. Hauer, "Beat the Heat" Plan New York City's Heat Emergency Contingency Plan, [n.p.], Giuliani Collection, Office of Communications subgroup, Box 100265888, Giuliani mayoral papers.

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In the decades that followed, municipal framing of heat as a public health threat evolved alongside the frequency, duration and extremes of heat events.. By 2020, the number of extreme heat days in New York City had been increasing for five decades–days above 86°F had more than doubled from an average of fourteen to thirty two.[3] During this measurable and significant rise, city officials, planners, and activists reframed heat not just as an infrequent natural disaster but as an endemic feature of climate change that required comprehensive municipal research and intervention.[4] In addition to emergency planning, the layering of "adaptation and mitigation" and "justice" paradigms reconfigured what government owed citizens in the face of extreme heat.

New York summers are hot, and getting hotter. In the twentieth century, the city warmed about 2°F, double the mean worldwide increase. By 2020, the number of extreme heat days in New York had been increasing for five decades. In this half century, days above 86°F had more than doubled from an average of 14 to 32. By the early 2020s, the city averaged seventeen days per year with temperatures above 90°F.[5] Climate change is heating our planet at an alarming rate, making heat waves hotter, longer, and more frequent. Heat waves in the New York City area are projected to increase from a baseline of two per year to approximately nine by 2050. And the city's urban form exacerbates the feel of this extreme heat.[6]

New York City's design creates the meteorological effect known as the urban heat island (UHI). Landscapes dominated by stone, brick, and concrete absorb heat faster and store it in higher quantities than landscapes dominated plants, soil, and water. Urban surfaces have high thermal admittances, meaning they can absorb heat at high levels. But the city doesn't store heat permanently; radiation withdraws solar heat from urban material, sending it into the air. Streets lined with tall structures, structures that are larger, relatively, than the width of the street, trap radiating and reflecting heat. Although plants and water absorb solar heat during the day, much of that energy is expended in evaporation and transpiration—resulting in heat loss rather than gain. The magnitude of the temperature differential between a city and its surrounding countryside is greatest during dry, clear,

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[3] *2026 NYC Heat-Related Mortality Report,* Environment and Health Data Portal, nyc.gov, https://a816-dohbesp.nyc.gov/IndicatorPublic/data-features/heat-report/.

[4] Daniel Cusick & E&E News, "Chicago Learned Climate Lessons from Its Deadly 1995 Heat Wave," Scientific American July 16, 2020, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/chicago-learned-climate-lessons-from-its-deadly-1995-heat-wave1/, *2026 NYC Heat-Related Mortality Report,* Environment and Health Data Portal, nyc.gov, https://a816-dohbesp.nyc.gov/IndicatorPublic/data-features/heat-report/.

[5] Luis Ortiz et al., "NPCC4: Tail risk, climate drivers of extreme heat, and new methods for extreme event projections," *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 1539, iss. 1 (September 2024): 49–76, https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.15180, and Christian Braneon et al., "NPCC4: New York City climate risk information 2022—observations and projections," *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 1539, iss. 1 (September 2024): 13-48, https://nyaspubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/nyas.15116.

[6] *Con Edison Climate Change Vulnerability Study* (September 2023), 4, https://www.coned.com/-/media/files/coned/documents/our-energy-future/our-energy-vision/storm-hardening-enhancement-plan/climate-change-vulnerability-study.pdf.

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low-wind nights, as city surfaces retain and re-radiate more heat into the air at night than vegetation and nonurbanized land cover. The UHI creates hyper-local climate impacts of increased surface air temperature, based on vegetation cover, building geometry and material.[7]

Due to the UHI effect, New York City has an average ambient temperature between 6°F-13°F higher than the surrounding suburbs. The city's UHI, however, is not uniform. Some neighborhoods experience surface air temperatures as much as 20°F hotter than others.[8] Some New Yorkers live and work in well-tempered homes and workplaces, and their bodies experience extreme heat as relatively brief interludes—walking outside, waiting for the subway—between hours spent in climate-controlled spaces. For others, air conditioning is an expensive commodity. Indoor temperatures can become dangerous in high UHI districts.[9] Temperatures indoors can be 20°F higher than outdoor temperatures, and remain high even when outdoor temperatures drop overnight. Warmer night time temperatures make it even more challenging for vulnerable populations to cool off because there is no relief overnight.[10] Most heat deaths occur within uncooled homes, and the lack of an operable air-conditioning is the greatest risk factor for heat mortality. In the 21st century, the majority of New Yorkers who died from heat stress died in un-air-conditioned spaces (homes in which there was no air-conditioning or units were not in use). Of these victims, some had used fans for cooling, but merely circulating air was not enough to save their lives.[11] As summers heat up, homes in the city can become deadly.

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[7] Stanley David Gedzelman et al., "Mesoscale Aspects of the Urban Heat Island around New York City," *Theoretical and Applied Climatology* 75 (2003): 29-42, and Gaffin et al., "Variations in New York City's Urban Heat Island Strength over Time and Space," *Theoretical and Applied Climatology,* 94, no. 1-2 (2008): 3. In the twenty-first century, urban planners and climatologists identify a difference of at least 1.8ºF between the mean temperature at Central Park's Meteorological Observatory and the city's its rural environs at the beginning of the twentieth century. See Joyce Klein Rosenthal, "Evaluating the impact of the urban heat island on public health: Spatial and social determinants of heat-related mortality in New York City" (PhD Diss) Columbia University, 2010, and Cynthia Rosenzweig et al., "Mitigating New York City's Urban Heat Island: Integrating Stakeholder Perspectives and Scientific Evaluation," *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* (September 2009): 1297-1312.

[8] Caroline Lewis, "The 'urban heat island' effect is making New Yorkers hotter, study finds," *Gothamist*, July 13, 2024, https://gothamist.com/news/the-urban-heat-island-effect-is-making-new-yorkers-hotter-study-finds. See also Ortiz et al. and Braneon et al..

[9] Kizzy Charles-Guzman, "Cool Neighborhoods NYC: Protecting NYC from the Impacts of Extreme Heat," November 8, 2021, 3, Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact, https://southeastfloridaclimatecompact.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Cool-Neighborhoods-NYC.pdf, and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, *2025 NYC Heat-Related Mortality Report*, Environment & Health Data Portal, nyc.gov, accessed 8 April, 2026, https://a816-dohbesp.nyc.gov/IndicatorPublic/data-features/heat-report/.

[10] Thomas Matte et al., "NPCC4: Climate change and New York City's health risk," *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 1539, iss. 1 (September 2024): 197.

[11] From 2008-2011, none of the New Yorkers who died of heat-related stress deaths had a working AC; 17% had used fans for cooling, but fans had not been enough to save their lives. From 2010-2019, 71% of New Yorkers who died of heat stress died in un-air-conditioned homes. See Charles-Guzman, 12, and Kathryn Lane, Lauren Smalls-Mantey, and Diana Hernández et al., "Extreme Heat and COVID-19 in New

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Extreme heat brings profound health risks. During extreme heat events, workplace injuries increase by 7-8%.[12] Vigorous work or exercise outdoors in extreme heat also raise the likelihood of heat-induced illness.[13] Heat health risks are unevenly distributed across society. Seniors and people with chronic physical conditions such as cardiovascular, respiratory, or renal diseases, obesity, and diabetes are particularly vulnerable to heat. So are people who take medications that disrupt the regulation of body temperature, or misuse alcohol or drugs. Extreme heat may cause an increased risk for pre-term births, low birthweights, and still-births, especially when heat exposure occurs during the third trimester of pregnancy. Social isolation and mental health conditions also increase risk.[14] Today, more than 500 New Yorkers die prematurely each summer due to heat-related causes. Black New Yorkers died from heat stress at double the rate of white New Yorkers in the last decade, and today, have a higher risk of heat-exacerbated mortality.[15] Low-income communities of color bear disproportionate heat burdens in neighborhoods undermined by historical disinvestment and environmental injustice. Such neighborhoods often have higher rates of impervious surfaces and less investment in green space, which can lead to a higher risk of heat-related injury.[16] Excess summer heat is a public health crisis.

Municipal-level heat governance in the United States has lagged behind other climate change hazards in mitigation and adaptation plans.[17] Urban heat mitigation requires a long-

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York City: An Evaluation of a Large Air Conditioner Distribution Program to Address Compounded Public Health Risks in Summer 2020," *Journal of Urban Health,* 100, no. 2 (2023): 290.

From 2018-2022, of the New Yorkers who died from heat stress in homes, for whom there was information regarding air conditioning, none had or were using it. See New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, *2025 NYC Heat-Related Mortality Report*.

On energy insecurity in New York City, see Luis Ortiz, Harold Gamarro, Jorge E. González, and Timon P. McPhearson, "Energy burden and air conditioning adoption in New York City under a warming climate," *Sustainable Cities and Society,* 76, 103465 (January 2022); Thomas Matte et al., "NPCC4: Climate change and New York City's health risk," *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 1539, iss. 1 (September 2024): 185-240, and Liv Yoon et al., " NPCC4: Climate change, energy, and energy insecurity in New York City," *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 1539, iss. 1 (September 2024): 241-276.

[12] Samantha Maldano and Suhail Bhat, "Extreme Heat Increases Workplace Injuries, But New York Lacks Safety Standards," *The City* Aug. 31, 2023, Updated Aug. 31, 2023, https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/08/31/extreme-heat-workplace-injury-safety-standards/.

[13] New York City Emergency Management, "Extreme Heat," New York City Hazard Mitigation Plan, February 1, 2026, https://nychazardmitigation.com/documentation/hazard-profiles/extreme-heat/. On the role of social isolation and the lack of air conditioning's impact on the mortality rates of specific heat waves, see Klinenberg and Keller.

[14] Patrick L. Kinney et al., "New York City Panel on Climate Change 2015 Report Chapter 5: Public Health Impacts and Resiliency," *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 1336, iss. 1 (January 2015), 75-6.

[15] New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, *2025 NYC Heat-Related Mortality Report*.

[16] Shelia R. Foster et al., "NPCC4: Advancing climate justice in climate adaptation strategies for New York City," *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 1539, iss. 1 (September 2024): 77-126.

[17] V. Kelly Turner et al., "How are cities planning for heat? Analysis of United States municipal plans,'

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term regulatory framework to ensure built environment modifications that lower UHI higher temperatures. Urban heat adaptation requires rapid response during extreme heat events and coordination across public health, energy, transportation departments.[18] New York's response to heat crises captures this historic pattern, but also reveals a way forward, as the city's heat response evolved as the threat of climate change, and its attendant public health risks, crystallized, in the 21st century. This paper explores how New York city climate researchers, health experts, activists, and government officials, came to recognize heat as a climate risk and cooling as a public health good and environmental justice issue in New York City. The city's recognition of and response to extreme heat evolved across four key eras following the city's first heat emergency plan: the early years of PlaNYC 2007-2014, the pivotal year 2015, the formalization of heat planning from 2017-2023, and the "right to cooling" advocacy and legislation of the mid-2020s.

Mayor Giuliani's 1996 emergency heat plan was reactive, not proactive, an outcome of short-term emergency programming. It addressed neither everyday summer weather exposure nor long-term climate change. In the early 2000s, the creation of PlaNYC and New York City Panel on Climate Change (NPCC) eventually led to a new era of heat research and city response. The city developed its climate forecasting and risk assessment concerning heat with the establishment of NPCC in 2009. While early PlaNYC volumes (2007, 2011, and 2013) contained few mentions of extreme heat and little on the equity dimensions of climate risk (beyond impacts to seniors). By the mid 2010s, however, city climate research and plans began grappling with inequity. NPCC3, the third NPCC report (published in 2019), was the first to include an equity framework outlining distributive, procedural, and contextual equity.

Climate planning achieved critical mass in the mid-2010s due to greater municipal attention to resilience planning, increasingly clear climate threats, and environmental justice organizing. In the 2010s, Columbia University researchers and The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene created a Heat Vulnerability Index (HVI), a statistical model that estimates heat risks based on social and environmental factors, a snapshot of the unequal distribution of heat threats in the city. HVI data captured, albeit in somewhat coarse detail, what communities had long known from experience: surface temperatures and heat-related mortality were higher in neighborhoods that were low-income, predominantly Black, and had fewer air-conditioners.[19] Heat inequities mapped alongside deeply rooted patterns of segregation and discrimination. As a result, the City expanded its heat planning. Its 2015 Urban Heat Island working group addressed equity issues alongside

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Environmental Research Letters 17, no. 6 (2022), 064054, https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/ac73a9.

[18] Haijing Liu, Mehdi Heris, Peter Marcotullio, and Travis Floh, "Urban Heat Advocacy and Planning in New York City," Unpublished manuscript, October 6, 2026.

[19] Jaime Madrigano, Kazuhiko Ito, Sarah Johnson, Patrick L. Kinney, and Thomas Matte, "Case-Only Study of Vulnerability to Heat Wave-Related Mortality in New York City (2000-2011)," *Environmental Health Perspectives* 123, no. 7 (July 2015), 672.

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heat's health and infrastructure risks. *OneNYC* (2015) framed heat, for the first time in PlaNYC's history, as a comprehensive concern. And two key heat plans were still to come. In 2017, the City published its first full strategic plan for heat. Five years later *Getting Sustainability Done* (2023), became the first strategic plan to include a full extreme heat plan, incorporating an environmental justice framework on thermal inequality and air-conditioning access.

In the 2020s, nearly thirty years of heat risk research and planning and growing heat exposure campaigns culminated in vanguard heat legislation from the City Council. The council's public health legislation began addressing the public realm and shared issues of extreme heat and air-conditioning access, focusing on the public at large or targeting specific communities and workplaces–such as construction site heat emergency programs. In the 2010s, City Council legislation had looked to help individual people or individual households; at times it worked at both community and individual scales simultaneously. Some of this legislation was not explicitly designed to save lives during heat emergencies. Instead, the bills and resolutions that addressed heat risk increasingly addressed it as a climate change issue and considered multiple scales of intervention, from individual apartments to mitigating global greenhouse gas emissions (See Appendix).[20] This legislative work led to the 2025 "Tenant's Right to Cooling" bill package, a landmark reconfiguration of municipal responsibility to protect New Yorkers from the century's longer, hotter, more dangerous summers.

Part I: PlaNYC, the Bloomberg Administration, and Early Climate Response Plans

In the 1990s New York officials had not yet conceptualized heat as a climate change issue. Instead, city leaders framed extreme temperatures as discrete events. Even so, in the next two decades, following Chicago's deadly heat wave and New York's "Beat the Heat Plan," city administrators and planners broadened their view regarding heat's myriad risks. New York's twenty-first century strategic plan captured this evolution. Established by Mayor Michael Bloomberg in 2007, *PlaNYC: A Greater Greener New York* was meant to prepare the city for population growth, strengthen the economy, respond to climate change, and enhance daily life. From the plan's inception, the Bloomberg administration recognized that planning for a million more inhabitants in the city required preparing for climate change. The city would change, and PlaNYC needed to incorporate science, calculate the changes to come, and use that science as the baseline of policy. Following the

[20] From the perspective of public health risk prevention, this council work fell into three categories of intervention: upstream, midstream, and downstream prevention. See Amanda Merck, "The Upstream-Downstream Parable for Health Equity," October 8, 2018, SaludAmerica.org, https://salud-america.org/the-upstream-downstream-parable-for-health-equity/ and David R. Williams, Manuela V. Costa, Adebola O. Odunlami, and Selina A. Mohammed, "Moving Upstream: How Interventions That Address the Social Determinants of Health Can Improve Health and Reduce Disparities," *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice* 14, Supplement 6 (November 2008): S8-S17.

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first PlaNYC, the plan and city agencies gradually broadened their recognition of climate threats in general and of heat's myriad risks in particular. Extreme heat was not, however, part of the original scope of local climate planning, as heat was still seen as a crisis event rather than an ongoing disaster.

The term "extreme heat" did not appear in the 2007 *PlaNYC*, and only once did the plan reference the UHI. In this report, and the vision it represented, heat remained under the purview of emergency management.[21] In *PlaNYC* heat's foremost threat was framed in relation to energy loads and the stability of the electric grid. The report focused on new, clean energy supplies to meet the growing energy demands forecasted with hotter summer. As the fifth edition of PlaNYC later reflected, at the time of the first edition's publication, "there was resistance to climate action and a general sense that climate adaptation was not an urgent need."[22]

When the Bloomberg administration created the New York City Panel on Climate Change (NPCC), modeled on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it signaled a growing recognition of the scope of the climate crisis.[23] NPCC projections would enable future PlaNYC reports to more fully engage with the scale of the crisis. Mayor Bloomberg had hoped to position the city at the vanguard of municipal-level climate change research when he convened the panel in August 2008. Existing climate models revealed global trends; national data was also available, but it was still too coarse for site-specific planning. The panel created the first local climate projection for New York–Bloomberg boasted the work marked "the most detailed climate risk information for any major city in the world."[24]

When the first NPCC report was published, it positioned New York as a forerunner in municipal-level climate modeling. NPCC experts synthesized contemporary climate change scientific research for practical application. The panel projected that, by 2050, the city was likely to see rising temperatures, declining air quality, and more frequent and intense heat waves, flooding, and extreme precipitation events.[25] At just a mid-range estimate, New York City could see significant warming. By the 2080s, the mean temperatures for a typical year could bear similarities to Raleigh, North Carolina, or Norfolk, Virginia.[26] New York, the NPCC announced, needed to take action "today." The

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[21] New York (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater New York* (The City of New York, New York, 2007), 8.

[22] New York (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater New York*, 102, and New York (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done* (The City of New York, New York, 2023), 12.

[23] Wyman and Spiegel-Feld, 75.

[24] Michael R. Bloomberg, "Forewords to Climate Change Adaptation in New York City: Building a Risk Management Response," in Michael R. Bloomberg, Jeffrey D. Sachs, Gillian M. Small, "Climate Change Adaptation in New York City: Building a Risk Management Response New York City Panel on Climate Change 2010 Report," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1196, iss. 1-3 (May 2010): 1. See also Cynthia Rosenzweig, Bill Solecki, and Maria Dombrov, Embedding Risks of Climate Change into the Sustainability Plan for New York City: The Role of the NPCC in PlaNYC," in this volume.

[25] Bloomberg, Sachs, Small, "Climate Change Adaptation in New York City."

[26] PlaNYC, New York, (N.Y.), and Michael Bloomberg, *A Stronger, More Resilient New York* (The City of

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city needed mitigation plans to address the long-term risks of climate change through greenhouse gas emission reduction. It needed adaptation plans to respond to the risks, short-term and long-term, of coming precipitation, temperature, and sea level change.[27] Local government needed NPCC data to do this work.

Municipal climate data also inspired the City Council to advocate for planetary protections, with the goal of improving local public health and quality of life as the world warmed. In the mid-2010s, parallel to PlaNYC advances, the council looked to improve energy and heat conservation by updating building and administrative codes to align with state standards.[28] Its large-scale climate change mitigation goals, however, were some of the most challenging to implement, as they often required longer-term and larger investments, or needed legislative coordination at the state and sometimes federal levels.[29] From City Council meetings to PlaNYC reports, a new framework of "resilience" in the face of accelerating climate change became the refrain of 2010s climate work.

In 2012 Superstorm Sandy brought the climate risks of the 21st century into stark relief.[30] The 2013 PlaNYC, *A Stronger, More Resilient New York*, reflected how Sandy catalyzed the Bloomberg administration to more aggressively address the climate crisis. From 2000 through 2012 city policymakers had been gathering information about climate change risks in the city, but had largely not begun to translate this research into plans; Sandy was stark proof of the need for adaptation and mitigation action.[31] The city had pledged, in 2011, to integrate climate change protections into half-a-dozen emergency management plans, including the Heat Emergency Plan.[32] The 2013 PlaNYC responded both to Sandy and the second NPCC report from the same year. New York's buildings,

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New York, 2013), 27, and Radley Horton, Vivien Gornitz, Malcolm Bowman, and Reginald Blake, "Chapter 3: Climate observations and projections," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1196 (2010), 53, 55.

[27] "Executive Summary of *Climate Change Adaptation in New York City: Building a Risk Management Response*," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1196 (2010): 7-12, and "Glossary," in Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 ºC* (IPCC, 2018), https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/glossary/.

[28] This legislation also aligned city and state building codes and energy conservation codes. See Appendix.

[29] NYC Buildings, "LL97 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction," nyc.gov, April 3, 2026, https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3995448&GUID=87CA3AFF-038B-4ADF-A6F2-5CC758A20F6C; and New York City Council, *Local Law 97 To amend the New York city charter and the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the commitment to achieve certain reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050* Local Laws of the City of New York For the Year 2019, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/buildings/local_laws/ll97of2019.pdf.

[30] PlaNYC, New York, (N.Y.), and Bloomberg, *A Stronger, More Resilient New York*, 10, 13.

[31] Wyman and Spiegel-Feld, 74. The development of the post-Sandy postmortem NYC Special Initiative for Rebuilding & Resiliency (2012) and *A Stronger, More Resilient New York* were closely integrated. The city commissioned new NPCC projections to be the baseline for the latter.

[32] New York (N.Y.), *PlaNYC Update April 2011: A Greener, Greater New York* (The City of New York, 2011), 159.

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aging infrastructure of underground power cables, and its wastewater treatment and sewerage system had been built for environmental conditions that would likely change.

Direct attention to heat, especially around UHI issues, expanded in the 2010s strategic plans in the second half of the Bloomberg administration. Under Bloomberg, the 2011 and 2013 strategic plans addressed heat-related health risks directly and indirectly. A consistent, if indirect, approach, was through utilities and the power grid.[33] Another indirect approach appeared in strategies to lessen heat absorption and cool the city. Black tar roofs worsened the UHI and covered almost 20% of the city's area. Green roofs or cool roofs–reflective, light-colored roofs that absorbed less solar energy–could lessen this heat burden. Well-designed sidewalks could also improve tree longevity, create a healthier tree canopy, and reduce UHI effects.[34] Adaptations could lessen heat absorption.[35]

The city's post-Sandy, 2013 updated strategic plan also acknowledged more directly that "climate change poses risks beyond…infrastructure and buildings": people were at risk. "[R]ising temperatures and declining air quality" could have significant impacts on New Yorkers' health. The city needed to better understand the health risks to come, especially for residents already made vulnerable by illness, age, or immobility, demographic groups that disproportionately bore heat risks. As soon as the 2020s, the health department predicted, the city could see a 30%-70% increase in heat-related deaths, an additional 110-260 lives annually lost to heat compared to 1998–2002. *A Stronger, More Resilient New York* included new climate resiliency health care initiatives such as more air-conditioning and backup generators at both nursing homes and adult care facilities to prevent air-conditioning loss triggered by power loss.[36] To reduce the risks of heat exposure during heat waves, the city assigned itself homework. PlaNYC would study extreme events impacts on buildings and work directly with communities. Municipal researchers pledged to focus on communities identified as disproportionately exposed to heat.[37]

A key feature of heat planning during the second half of the Bloomberg administration was the expanded role public health research would play as the city initiated a variety of heat interventions. This included landscape-based strategies to lower UHI temperatures, community and city agency engagement to improve heat warning communications, and an expanded cooling center program during heat waves.[38] Superstorm Sandy may have

[33] PlaNYC, New York, (N.Y.), and Bloomberg, *A Stronger, More Resilient New York*, 169, 27.

[34] PlaNYC, New York, (N.Y.), and Bloomberg, *PlaNYC Update April 2011,* 28, 44-45, 69, 151, 158.

[35] PlaNYC, New York, (N.Y.), and Bloomberg, *A Stronger, More Resilient New York*, 198, 200-201.

[36] PlaNYC, New York, (N.Y.), and Bloomberg, *A Stronger, More Resilient New York*, 31, 151, 155, 262, 292.

[37] *PlaNYC Update April 2011: A Greener, Greater New York,* 151, 155, 158, and 163.

[38] PlaNYC, New York, (N.Y.), and Bloomberg, *A Stronger, More Resilient New York*, 32.

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galvanized local climate planning, but storms were but one climate hazard for which the city needed to prepare.[39]

Part II: Heat Plans Post-2015: An Expanding Approach Under de Blasio and Adams

The early years of Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration (2014-2021) proved a turning point in extreme heat research and planning in New York. Climate researchers, legislators, and planners widened their scope as to what parts of city government could and should address this risk. It would take the city less than a decade to expand the city's heat response from an "emergency" paradigm of event-specific interventions to an "adaptation and mitigation" approach based on long-term investment and changes to urban form. New research in local climate change projections and heat health vulnerabilities made possible new data-driven plans, policies, and programs that balanced social indicators, environmental factors, and community engagement.

In 2015, the NPCC released its third report, NPCC3, with updated climate projections for 2050. The data was sobering, even scary. Without meaningful intervention, mean annual temperatures in the city would increase by 4.1°F to 5.7°F. Whereas the first NPCC report had projected the 2050s would see 29–45 days annually at or above 90°F, the third increased this projection for the 2050s to 39–52 days.[40] That same year, the de Blasio administration also published a new PlaNYC that expanded the scope of the City's approach to climate change.[41] *OneNYC* was the first edition to, as authors claimed, transform sustainability planning into a more expansive strategic plan for "the entirety of City government."[42] It was also the first to center the concept of equity. The administration set a goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, to be achieved with "justice" and "equity" in mind.[43] Justice activism needed to be part of environmental decision-making generally and climate decision-making in particular. *OneNYC* recommended the city incorporate justice into climate change responses in three ways. First, it needed to consider "distributional equity," the uneven environmental burdens and benefits across communities and places. Second, it needed to consider "contextual equity," the recognition of the existing socioeconomic conditions and injustices, including historic imbalances of power and

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[39] Charles-Guzman.

[40] Horton, Gornitz, Bowman, and Blake, 55; Mayor's Office of Sustainability, *One New York: The Plan for a Strong and Just City* (The City of New York, New York, 2015), 219.

[41] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done* (The City of New York, 2023), 12; and Jonathan D. Haskett, "U.S. Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement: Process and Potential Effects," Congressional Research Service Library of Congress, April 14, 2025, https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48504.

[42] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done*, 12.

[43] New York, N.Y., Mayor's Office of Sustainability, *OneNYC 2050: Building a Strong and Fair City* vol. 7: A Livable Climate (The City of New York, 2019), 6, 10.

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access due to discrimination and bias that can hamper community participation in decision-making or limit resources. Third, the city needed to ensure "procedural equity," the representation and inclusion of all affected groups in climate related decision making. This justice framework would, hopefully, safeguard vulnerable communities and fairly distribute both environmental burdens and benefits in the city.[44]

Heat vulnerability had long been uneven in the city, and by mid-decade new public health research foregrounded how heat, as an aspect of climate change, was a public health issue. In the early 2010s, Columbia University environmental epidemiologists had partnered with the city Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to identify the city's most heat-vulnerable neighborhoods. The research resulted in the City's Heat Vulnerability Index (HVI). Analyzing over a decade of mortality data from 2000-2011, the HVI crystalized the link between neighborhood poverty, heat-related deaths, hospital visits, and emergency department visits (researchers later updated the index to include the percentage of residents without air-conditioning, a refinement that reaffirmed their first results, as socio-economic status correlated with air-conditioning access).[45] The index was a way to make legible the UHI's geographically uneven health threats. Historic discriminatory policies in the city had resulted in differences in housing, neighborhood environments, green space distribution and environmental burdens as well as differences in economic opportunity among communities of color and low-income residents.[46] Heat wave deaths were more likely to occur at home in Black (non-Hispanic) individuals and more likely in census tracts with high rates of public assistance.[47] Geography also mattered. Heat wave deaths "were more likely among residents in areas of the city with higher relative daytime summer surface temperature and less likely among residents living in areas with more green space."[48] While the HVI's authors published the index in 2015, the city had begun using the data earlier when siting cooling centers. The "mayoral charge" to "mitigate heat citywide" at mid-decade proved more than rhetorical.[49]

The third PlaNYC, *OneNYC* (2015), was the first strategic climate plan to incorporate a "heat vulnerability index" and use it to set environmental justice goals focused on heat and air-conditioning access. The report recognized what the DEM had deemed an essential contributor to excess heat deaths nearly twenty years earlier. "How New Yorkers interact

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[44] Sheila Foster et al., "New York City Panel on Climate Change 2019 Report Chapter 6: Community-Based Assessments of Adaptation and Equity," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1439, iss. 1, Special Issue: Advancing Tools and Methods for Flexible Adaptation Pathways and Science Policy Integration: New York City Panel on Climate Change 2019 Report (March 2019): 126-173.

[45] See also Mayor's Office of Sustainability, *One New York*, 228.

[46] Matte et al., 193.

[47] Madrigano et al., 672.

[48] Madrigano et al., 672.

[49] New York, N.Y., and Bill de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhood NYC: A Comprehensive Approach to Keep Communities Safe in Extreme Heat* (The City of New York, 2017), 7, and [Forthcoming personal communication citation].

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with one another can be an important factor in guarding against many risks…As we learned during the Chicago heat wave of 1995, neighborhoods with more robust social infrastructure, such as community centers, safe streets, and schools had better health outcomes than those without."[50] First, the city needed the state to ensure energy-efficient air-conditioners for low-income, vulnerable populations. Second, it needed more funds from the state via the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) program to assist with air-conditioner purchase and installation, and utility costs. Third, it needed to consider local health code amendments "to establish maximum allowable temperatures in residential facilities and supportive housing for vulnerable people to protect against heat-related illness."[51]

And it was not just PlaNYC researchers who were paying more attention to heat protection considerations by mid-decade. In 2015 the mayor's office also established a first-of-its-kind Urban Heat Island Working Group to gather data and plan capital investment and operational strategies to adapt New York to warmer weather.[52] The working group, first organized in 2015, was a collaboration between Mayor de Blasio's Office of Recovery and Resiliency, representatives from research universities, city government, community-advocacy nonprofits, and environmental organizations like the Nature Conservancy, which had originally launched the group. Advocacy based in a "shared vision of delivering inclusive climate action and sustainability and resiliency benefits to all New Yorkers, but especially to those who are most vulnerable to heat-related health risks" guided the collaboration.[53] The city legislature also turned its attention to extreme heat that year, considering the first bill to specifically address heat as a public health issue.[54] The bill to codify the cooling center program, and the council discussion and expert testimony on it, acknowledged the growing health risk of heat. After debate about the difficulties in getting residents to utilize cooling centers, how to improve communications about the centers during heat waves, and the staffing and budgeting challenges of requiring, rather than requesting, centers stay open, the bill's sponsors ultimately agreed to refine the bill before updating city law. Cooling centers would remain under the Department of Emergency Management (DEM, formerly OEM). While the city was not ready to update its heat emergency plans, the bill was but one exploration of how the government could better address community experiences of extreme heat.[55]

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[50] Mayor's Office of Sustainability, *One New York*, 216.

[51] Mayor's Office of Sustainability, *One New York*, 229.

[52] Mayor's Office of Sustainability, *One New York: The Plan for a Strong and Just City* (The City of New York, 2015), 228.

[53] New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhoods NYC*, 36.

[54] Int 0703-2015, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to cooling centers.

[55] City of New York City Council, *Transcript of the Minutes of the Committee on Health June 24, 2015,* 6, https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2240471&GUID=FD08A06C-BF3F-401A-

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City-level leadership in response to climate change became even more important in the late-2010s, following the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Administrative change at the nation's highest level of government ushered in an anti-climate change agenda. As president, Donald J. Trump withdrew the nation from the Paris Climate Agreement, a global commitment among nations to fight climate change. That year was the hottest in recorded global history, and "the third consecutive year of record-high global average surface temperatures."[56] The de Blasio administration declared that the city, and the U.S. as a whole, faced a "national emergency without a national policy."[57] "When it comes to climate change," the mayor said, "it is crucial to have partners at all levels of government and New Yorkers were shocked when the President pulled out of the Paris Accord." Lives were on the line and time was "not on" the city's side.[58]

Part III: Extreme Heat Plans for New York City

How could an old city like New York, with substantial legacy infrastructure and buildings–a city that would be difficult to modify wholesale–creatively reduce exposure, overcome inequity, reduce heat's dangerous impacts, and better prepare New Yorkers for a hotter future?[59] By 2017, the city's Urban Heat Island Working Group had been investigating this question for two years. The work led to the city's first comprehensive non-emergency heat strategy—*Cool Neighborhoods NYC*: *A Comprehensive Approach to Keep Communities Safe in Extreme Heat*—a three-year pilot program to protect residents from extreme heat and temper the local drivers of the UHI effect.[60]

Cool Neighborhoods NYC represented a shift in the city's approach to heat as an issue of emergency management to heat as a broader issue of community health and equity. It made space for community engagement, economic development and jobs training, architectural interventions, and nature-based solutions. The researchers behind *Cool Neighborhoods NYC* hoped to move the city towards a finer-grained neighborhoods-based analysis of climate change risk. The plan focused on the South Bronx and later expanded to Harlem and Central Brooklyn. With environmental justice in mind, it targeted neighborhoods with high Heat Vulnerability Index scores of 4 and 5 and where residents

B316-ABC56D4E078C&Options=&Search=.

[56] New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhoods NYC*, 6; "NASA, NOAA Data Show 2016 Warmest Year on Record Globally," Nasa.gov Jan. 18, 2017, https://www.nasa.gov/news-release/nasa-noaa-data-show-2016-warmest-year-on-record-globally/; and NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, "Monthly Global Climate Report for Annual 2016," January 2017, accessed September 1, 2026 from https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/monitoring/monthly-report/global/201613.

[57] New York, N.Y., Mayor's Office of Sustainability, *OneNYC 2050,* vol. 7, 5.

[58] New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhoods NYC,* 5.

[59] Elie Boud-Zeid (Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering) in discussion with the author Kar Murphy Schlichting, March 2026.

[60] New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhoods NYC*, 8.

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already suffered high rates of heat illness and mortality.[61]

In August 2022 Comptroller Mark Levine's office published a report *Overheated, Underserved: Expanding Cooling Center Access*, drawing on Cool Neighborhoods NYC research and WE ACT's brand-new 2022 Extreme Heat Policy Agenda for inspiration– many of these ideas would be repeated in 2023's PlaNYC, *Getting Sustainability Done*. The Comptroller's report made two core recommendations. The first focused on individual buildings: New York City needed to transition to more sustainable cooling. Building-level improvements such as efficiency retrofits could align with city and state climate and decarbonization goals. At the scale of the city, the UHI also needed cooling. The argument was, at this point in the century, familiar. New York needed more green spaces—street trees, community gardens—as well as more cool pavements and cool roofs. Building on *Cool Neighborhoods NYC,* the Comptroller's office called on city officials to "go even further by installing cool pavements on city streets."[62] In a now common refrain, the report urged that heat-vulnerable communities receive priority interventions. *Getting Sustainability Done,* in turn, built on these reports and further expanded the scope of municipal heat response. Equity principles were, by the fifth PlaNYC, part of climate planning, paralleling the city government's broadening recognition of institutional and structural racism as factors driving patterns of inequities and limiting hazard mitigation.[63]

As the first of the city's strategic plans to include a heat plan in its climate threats chapter, Mayor Eric Adams' *Getting Sustainability Done* reflected the thinking of *Cool Neighborhoods NYC* and *Overheated, Underserved*.[64] Heat plans had come to articulate the related, but distinct needs of outdoor cooling strategies that addressed the UHI effect—cooling the public realm—as well as strategies to combat extreme heat indoors. The city needed to lessen the UHI to protect public health. It also needed adaptation strategies that addressed overheating households, the site of excess deaths in hot weather. *Cool Neighborhoods NYC* had mapped a two-pronged approach: the report looked to alleviate heat where it could but also looked to adapt to hotter summers. *Getting Sustainability Done* incorporated this comprehensive approach.

The 2023 PlaNYC announced three initiatives to address heat vulnerability. It proposed cooling the built environment, expanding the tree canopy cover from 22% to 30% of city territory, and maximizing access to indoor cooling. The initiatives addressed overlapping issues: the city's physical environment raised local surface temperatures as well as indoor temperatures.

Cool Neighborhoods NYC had proposed strategies to cool the built environment including trees, cool roofs, and cool pavement. *Getting Sustainability Done* included both

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[61] New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhood NYC*, 37.

[62] New York City Office of the Comptroller Mark Levine Bureau of Policy Research, 15.

[63] Foster et al., (2024), 81.

[64] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done*, 29.

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approaches and added a third: water, via pools. The city had launched NYC CoolRoofs in 2009 to reduce outdoor ambient air temperatures and indoor temperatures. Reflective, light-colored roofs transfer less heat into buildings so that tenants need less AC, which lessens energy use.[65] The city's dark, heat absorbing roofs and pavement trapped heat. New York needed to better target roof coatings in neighbors that needed it most, and to convince the private sector to embrace cool roofs. "Cooling" surfaces had limited application and untapped potential.[66] Cool pavements might further reduce heat in the built environment; building on Department of Transportation work, the plan recommended the city develop more cool pavement projects and pilot four "Cool Corridors" projects in high-heat areas.[67] Not only would the city try to reduce heat absorption by roofs and pavements, and cool ambient temperatures, the 2023 plan also looked to improve access to cooling water that provided individual, bodily relief from the heat. It called for the repair of existing pools and construction of new facilities, especially in "pool deserts." The plan also proposed swim safety programming in environmental justice communities. This pairing of infrastructure and drowning prevention could improve quality of life and safety while the city continued long-term investments in "infrastructure and systems to create a more heat-resilient" New York.[68]

Tree experts, citizens, and city leaders had known for over a century that trees cool cities, but the effects were unevenly distributed in New York. Million Trees NYC, a landmark greening initiative by the Bloomberg administration, had overseen the planting of one million trees between 2007 and 2015.[69] Yet areas of the city still had "low levels of tree canopy cover and open space; limited shade; and building and landscape characteristics that contribute to heat stress."[70] In 2021, the Forest For All NYC coalition had identified the goal of 30% forestation for the city in its first comprehensive strategic plan "to protect, maintain, expand, and promote the urban forest."[71] The Adams'

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[65] New York, N.Y., Mayor's Office of Sustainability, *OneNYC 2050,* vol. 7, 26, and New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhood NYC*, 14. See also Cyntha Rosenzweig et al., "Mitigating New York City's heat island: Integrating stakeholder perspectives and scientific evaluation," *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 90 (September, 2009): 1297-1312.

[66] New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhood NYC*, 18.

[67] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done*, 29; on Department of Transportation cool pavement work, see New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhoods NYC,* 16-17.

[68] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done,* 34.

[69] "MillionTreesNYC," New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, https://www.nycgovparks.org/trees/milliontreesnyc, and Lindsay K. Campbell et al., *Million Trees NYC: the integration of research and practice.* (New York City, Parks and Recreation. 2014).

[70] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done,* 29.

[71] "Major Accomplishments" Forest for All NYC https://forestforall.nyc/accomplishments/, and "New Coalition 'Forest for All NYC' Releases NYC Urban Forest Agenda" press release June 9, 2021, Forest for All NYC, https://forestforall.nyc/new-coalition-forest-for-all-nyc-releases-nyc-urban-forest-agenda, and Forest for All NYC, *NYC Urban Forest Agenda: Toward a Healthy, Resilient, Equitable and Just New York City* (2021) https://forestforall.nyc/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NYC-Urban-Forest-Agenda-.pdf.

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administration incorporated this goal into its first strategic climate plan. To achieve 30% forestation, the city needed to maintain existing trees and plant an additional 15,388 acres of tree canopy, with an eye to expanded coverage along bike lanes and "major pedestrian routes to subway stations, cooling centers." By 2035, planners also hoped to see better enforcement of street tree planting requirements for real estate developers.[72]

To expand access to indoor cooling, *Getting Sustainability Done* recommended the development of a maximum summer indoor temperature policy by 2030, cooling requirements for new construction by 2025, and reform of the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) to expand access to cooling assistance and cover not just equipment costs but energy bills for cooling.[73] *Cool Neighborhoods NYC* had identified air-conditioning as a "critical climate adaptation strategy," but unit and installation costs remained perennial barriers to cooling. In 2014, 94% of city households in low-poverty neighborhoods had home air conditioning, compared with only 82% of households in high-poverty neighborhoods. And within these averages there were larger discrepancies: only 70% of households in low-income areas had air-conditioning compared to 99% in the city's wealthiest neighborhoods.[74]

Even when households had air conditioning, low-income New Yorkers reported that they might turn air conditioners off because of utility cost concerns.[75] Between 2015 and 2022, the municipal government distributed more than 22,000 air conditioners through HEAP, the state's energy assistance program designed to administer the federal government's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).[76] HEAP provides a one-time federal subsidy to assist households with the purchase of an air conditioner or fan, but it does not help with bills. In 2016, the majority of state funding, 65%, was allocated in winter months for heating assistance; only 1% went to cooling assistance. The numbers remained similar into the 2020s.[77] Another limitation of HEAP assistance was that it applied only to air conditioner purchase and installation for means-

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[72] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done,* 35.

[73] New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhood NYC*, 9. See also Caleb Smith, Annie Carforo, and Juanita Constible, *LIHEAP Needs a Lifeline: A Call to Strengthen the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program in a Changing Climate* (WE ACT for Environmental Justice and National Resources Defense Council, 2024), https://weact.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/LIHEAP-Report.pdf. Since 2016, New York State has tried to fill this gap with its Energy Affordability Program, which provides credits for HEAP recipients through utility providers. See New York State, Department of Public Service, "Energy Affordability Program: Goals of EAP," ny.gov website, accessed 9 April, 2026, https://dps.ny.gov/energy-affordability-program

[74] New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhood NYC*, 27.

[75] W. Victoria Lee and Jeffrey Shaman, "Heat-coping strategies and bedroom thermal satisfaction in New York City," *Science of the Total Environment* 574 (January 2017), 1217, and Kathryn Lane, Katherine Wheeler, Kizzy Charles-Guzman, et al., "Extreme heat awareness and protective behaviors in New York City," *Journal of Urban Health* 91, 3 (June 2014): 403-14.

[76] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done,* 32.

[77] Smith, Carforo, and Constible, *LIHEAP Needs a Lifeline.*

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tested low-income residents with documented medical need.[78] *Cool Neighborhoods NYC* deemed HEAP "underfunded" and "ineffective at meeting the needs of the most heat-vulnerable communities."[79] PlaNYC called for HEAP reforms to cover not just equipment but energy costs for cooling in its 2023 extreme heat adaptation goals.[80] To "maximize cooling benefits for the most vulnerable New Yorkers," the plan summarized, "increasing access to home cooling must be paired with utility bill subsidies."[81]

By the early 2020s, heat was no longer siloed as either an energy issue or emergency event.[82] Heat plans looked to service the city's most vulnerable populations first and to reframe access to thermal comfort as a right, not an amenity. The work needed to achieve these goals was diverse and the to-do list was long. Tasks were small and long-term, hyper-local and broad. For example, *Getting Sustainability Done* looked to reach 3,000 students at ten locations in swim safety programs. It also looked to maximize access to indoor cooling, which would require that the City Council pass local laws and change building codes. "Protection from extreme heat in our streets, buildings, and open spaces," the 2023 PlaNYC declared, required holistic change: "a greener city for all with improved air quality, more places to relax, increased social resilience, and other public health benefits."[83] *Overheated, Underserved, Cool Neighborhoods NYC* and *Getting Sustainability Done* expanded New York's heat response beyond the "emergency" paradigm of event-specific interventions to an "adaptation and mitigation" approach that required long-term investment and changes to the city's urban form. The importance of equity and an emphasis on lessening heat exposure in environmental justice communities ran through all three reports. Due to the work of community activists, principles of environmental justice and health equity were also increasingly central to the conversation. A parallel evolution towards justice-framed extreme heat action was also underway in the City Council.

Part IV: From Emergency Cooling Centers to "Right to Cooling" Legislation

[78] NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Environmental & Health Data Portal: Climate, Households Reporting Air Conditioning (2014), 27. New York State Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance, *Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Model Plan* (2016), https://liheapch.acf.gov/stplans/2016/NY_STPLAN_2016.pdf, cited in New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhood NYC*, 27. See also New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, "Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)," ny.gov website, accessed 8 April, 2026, https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/.

[79] New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhood NYC*, 28.

[80] New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. (n.d.). Home Energy Assistance Program. https://otda.ny.gov/pro-grams/heap/#cooling-assistance.

[81] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done,* 29.

[82] Charles-Guzman.

[83] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done,* 29.

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Across three decades, planners, researchers, and activists mobilized to understand heat threats and address the inequity of heat exposure in New York City. In the late 2010s and early 2020s, increasing extreme heat and a desire to rethink the city's approach to thermal equity, a desire evident in planning, government, and activist communities alike, coalesced, and the city incorporated environmental justice frameworks into both climate planning and legislation. In 2017, the City Council had passed Local Laws 60 and 64, which led to the creation of a city Environmental Justice Advisory Board. The 2019 NPCC3 had included a climate equity working group and recommendations on how the City could "incorporate all forms of climate equity—distributional, contextual, and procedural—into its adaptation efforts, particularly if those efforts are focused at the neighborhood level."[84] Subsequent climate-related municipal governance focused more explicitly on racial disparities alongside greater governmental engagement, via laws, policies, and institutional reforms, with socio-economic and racial inequality in areas such as housing, policing, and public health.[85] In 2021, the council passed Local Law 78, which required a citywide equitable development data tool and racial equity reports for land use applications. These requirements led the Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice to further engage local stakeholders to bolster neighborhood-based resiliency and sustainability planning. Due to the work of the Environmental Justice Advisory Board, the Adams administration published the city's first EJNYC report, mapping tool, and comprehensive plan in 2024. The city's equity approach broadened from its initial focus on environmental justice to include numerous initiatives to assess hyperlocal climate risks, such as heat and flooding, as well as institutional foundations "for advancing social and racial equity, starting with an explicit recognition of the legacy and persistent effects of structural racism on health, income, and access to services as a first step to operationalizing racial equity and social justice."[86]

Cooling centers remained central to the city's heat mitigation work. The City Council had first considered, but tabled, a bill to codify and expand the cooling center program in 2014. Despite limited funding, the centers had multiplied over the decades, from around 200 in the late 1990s, between 400 and 500 in the 2010s and early 2020s, and more than 600 in 2024. Yet heat waves continued to reveal the uneven distribution of the centers and insufficient communication regarding site availability.[87] The centerpiece of New York

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[84] https://nyaspubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/nyas.15150
NPCC4: Climate risk and equity—advancing knowledge toward a sustainable future | Conclusions
Joel Towers, Robin Leichenko, Christian Braneon, Deborah Balk, Liv Yoon, Gernot Wagner, Jennifer Ventrella, John Kuo Wei Tchen, Bernice Rosenzweig, Philip Orton, Luis Ortiz….et al, Foster et al., (2004).

[85] Foster et al., (2024), 81, and New York City Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice, *EJNYC: A Study of Environmental Justice Issues in New York City (*April 2024) https://www.nyc.gov/assets/climate/downloads/pdfs/EJNYC_Report.pdf.

[86] Foster et al., (2024), 87.

[87] Douglas Martin, "At 200 New York City Sites, Shelter for the Overheated," *New York Times,* July 7, 1999, B5; Patrick McGeehan, "Con Ed Nerve Center Fights to Keep the Lights On," *New York Times,* July

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City's emergency heat response plan since the 1990s, cooling centers were not, however, a perfect solution. Nearly thirty years into the program's history, the network still needed expansion in underserved, heat-vulnerable neighborhoods. The sites themselves needed to be open longer, on the weekends, and more accessible, and New Yorkers remained disinclined to use them. As the Deputy Director for Cool Neighborhoods NYC reported in 2021, half of all "vulnerable" New Yorkers preferred to stay home, even if they could not stay cool.[88]

Despite the shortcomings of the city's cooling centers, community organizations still found value in the social justice implications of the program. When the City Council met in April 2025 to discuss a bill to update the program, environmental justice and community development organizations, from the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, Nos Quedamos (We Stay), UPROSE, El Puente, The Point CDC, United Neighborhood Houses, the Natural Resource Defense Council, and WE ACT sent representatives in support.[89] Dr. Rex Tai, a resident of central Harlem and member of WE ACT, testified about his experiences working in a hospital in a high-HVI area. Tai called on healthcare professionals to take climate change more seriously and called on the city to "proactively and comprehensively prepare for extreme heat." To not do so, he said, would only further stretch the city's health care infrastructure. The political and budgetary decisions of the city, Tai challenged, were effectively "decisions about how sick [the city] chooses for its residents to be." The doctor urged the Council to support the bill and "enable cooling centers to be widely available, accessible, and operated...to a high standard" and urged close collaboration with environmental justice organizations to make cooling centers more effective and equitable.[90] China Copperstone of the South Bronx community development corporation Nos Quedamos also underscored environmental justice issues: "the current cooling center resources are insufficiently accessible and inadequately equitable from [sic] alleviating environmental justice areas from the increased harms of climate and structural exacerbated extreme heat events."[91]

8, 2010, A1; and Kaminer. See also New York City Office of the Comptroller Mark Levine Bureau of Policy Research, *Overheated and Underserved: Expanding Cooling Center Access* (Office of the Comptroller, 2022) https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/overheated-underserved/; and Transcript of the Minutes of the Committee of Health City, Council City of New York April 8, 2025, https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6788501&GUID=11C62CCD-11B9-4BC1-8C5A-58D2331B869B.

[88] Neil Singh Bedi, Quinn H. Adams, Jeremy J. Hess and Gregory A. Wellenius, "The Role of Cooling Centers in Protecting Vulnerable Individuals from Extreme Heat," *Epidemiology* 35, iss. 2 (June 2022): 611–615; and Charles-Guzman, 12.

[89] *Transcript of the Minutes of the Committee of Health City, Council City of New York April 8, 2025*, https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6788501&GUID=11C62CCD-11B9-4BC1-8C5A-58D2331B869B.

[90] *Transcript of the Minutes of the Committee of Health City, Council City of New York April 8, 2025,* 97.

[91] *Transcript of the Minutes of the Committee of Health City, Council City of New York April 8, 2025,* 74. https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6788501&GUID=11C62CCD-11B9-4BC1-8C5A-58D2331B869B

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Yet even an improved emergency cooling center program would not be sufficient to address the threat of extreme heat in the city. The city needed to protect New Yorkers from extreme heat in their own homes. In the mid-2010s the city's Urban Heat Island Working Group had studied, but ultimately tabled, 2015's *OneNYC*'s proposed maximum allowable indoor temperature standard.[92] This early consideration focused specifically on temperature extremes in residential facilities and supportive housing for vulnerable populations. But "interviews with providers, survey feedback from community members, and brainstorming with sister cities facing similar climate risks" had "revealed that the establishment of a maximum indoor temperature would pose significant challenges and require further examination."[93] The years following the working group, *OneNYC,* and *Cool Neighborhoods NYC*, however, saw increased social awareness of heat threats, extreme heat events, the shift away from "sustainability" goals towards more expansive equity principles. And national policy trends were leading the way towards maximum indoor temperature protections. The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration had set maximum indoor air temperature recommendations in early 2003. As the century unfolded and the ramifications of increasing heat became increasingly clear, US governmental bodies, both city (Dallas, Texas) and county (Montgomery County, Maryland), and the international World Health Organization had spearheaded heat equity recommendations.[94]

The 2023 PlaNYC embraced maximum indoor air temperature reforms, and city government followed suit. It proposed that the city develop "an equitable pathway to a maximum indoor temperature policy will need to consider the percentage of household income spent on energy costs, also known as energy burden, as well as safeguards for the most vulnerable New Yorkers from heat-related illnesses and deaths."[95] *Getting Sustainability Done* advocated for codifying cooling to make indoor cooling part of the city's "new baseline for quality living." This codification of access to air conditioning was already underway in other city administrative contexts. For example, NYC Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD's) had recently updated its Design Guidelines to include cooling.[96] With the passage of the Right to Cooling bill package, the City finally established a maximum indoor temperature policy for tenant occupied dwellings during the "cooling season" (June 15 through September 15). Beginning in June 2030, building owners will be required to provide cooling systems that maintain an indoor temperature no

[92] New York, NY, and Bill de Blasio, *OneNYC 2016 Progress Report* (New York, NY, 2016), 250, accessed 4 March 2026, https://www.nyc.gov/html/onenyc/downloads/pdf/publications/OneNYC-2016-Progress-Report.pdf, and Housing Maintenance Code. New York City, New York. § 27–2017.6, cited in New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done*, 31.

[93] New York, N.Y., and de Blasio, *Cool Neighborhoods NYC*, 21.

[94] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done*, 31.

[95] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done*, 31.

[96] New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done*, 31.

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greater than 78°F when outdoor air temperatures surpassed 82°F.[97] In late 2025, the City Council passed a landmark "Right to Cooling" bill package. The slate of bills included both home- and community-focused protections from extreme heat. It included the Tenant's Right to Cooling bill (Int. 0994), the Codification of Cooling Centers bill (Int. 0998), and a cool pavement pilot bill. In proposing Int. 0994, Councilman Lincoln Restler of Brooklyn looked to update the housing code so that building owners were just as responsible for keeping people cool in the summer as they were for keeping them warm in the winter. Residential temperature maximums, Restler told the *New York Times,* would "save lives as we reckon with the challenges of the climate crisis."[98]

Conclusion

New York City's 1996 "Beat the Heat" plan had identified the key threats of heat and the governance challenges posed by hot summer weather. While this early response to climate change was innovative in measuring urban "vital signs" during extreme heat, in pairing human and meteorological metrics of risk, it was ultimately limited by an "emergency paradigm" that did not link heat to the ongoing disaster of climate change. By the twenty-first century, extreme heat was the deadliest climate change threat in the U.S., responsible for more deaths than all other annual natural disasters combined.[99] In New York, as in many urban areas, heat acted as a "threat multiplier for [the city's] most vulnerable residents."[100] Due to growing awareness of climate risk, heat adaptation and mitigation became important in municipal-level climate planning and PlaNYC. Climate change and heat waves collided with New York's UHI: the challenge was how to best get cooling to the city's most vulnerable populations.

PlaNYC negotiated between multiple scales of intervention, addressing the local, national, and global parameters of the accelerating climate crisis. While the City Council legislated only in the five boroughs, council members also recognized the state, national,

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[97] "Major Extreme Heat Related Legislative Wins", *2025 At A Glance NYC-EJA Newsletter* 16, December 29, 2025.

[98] Hilary Howard, "New York City Bill Would Mandate Air-Conditioning for Tenants," *New York Times* July 17, 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/nyregion/new-york-city-air-conditioners.html.

[99] George Luber and Michael McGeehin, "Climate Change and Extreme Heat Events," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 35, iss. 5 (November 2008), 429-435, and "Excessive heat, a 'silent killer,'" National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website, July 19, 2023 https://www.noaa.gov/stories/excessive-heat-silent-killer.

[100] "Excessive heat, a 'silent killer'" and WE ACT, "TOO DAMN HOT: NEW YORKERS HAVE A RIGHT TO BE COOL!" Petition, ActionNetwork.org, accessed 4 March 2026, https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/nycrightstocooling. WE ACT made the same argument in April 2025 testimony before the City Council. See Caleb Smith, "Testimony of Caleb Smith, Resiliency Coordinator at WE ACT for Environmental Justice to the New York City Council Committee on Health regarding Introduction 998-2024" (testimony, Committee of Health, New York City Council, New York, N.Y., April 8, 2025), [1-3], https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6788501&GUID=11C62CCD-11B9-4BC1-8C5A-58D2331B869B. See also Somini Sengupta, "As Earth Heats Up, Inequity Boils Over," *New York Times*, August 8, 2020, A14.

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and global context of New York's climate change challenges. Even as Donald J. Trump's 2024 reelection restored anti-climate governance to the federal government, climate equity legislation remained possible at the state level in New York.[101] The council lobbied for continued state action on extreme heat. In September 2024, the council had passed a resolution calling on Governor Hochul to sign a law to streamline elderly New Yorkers' enrollment in HEAP. After record-setting summer temperatures, city officials evidenced renewed interest in cooling seniors' homes to avoid the "ill health effects or fatalities caused by extreme heat or cold." HEAP was under-enrolled, especially by older adults.[102] An early 2026 resolution continued the campaign. It advocated for the creation of the "State Office of the Utility Consumer Advocate," which would empower the state to negotiate with utility companies to reduce the costs of their services.[103] Energy affordability was, and remains, a climate equity issue.[104]

Efforts to improve HEAP and reduce the cost of energy bills speak to the paradox that runs through New York City's heat mitigation work: air conditioning, a life-saving technology, runs on an energy grid dependent on non-renewable fossil fuels. The home is the site of greatest heat vulnerability, and more affordable energy bills and AC units, along with maximum indoor temperature standards, will likely save lives. But expanding access to cooling will increase energy use. High electricity usage often occurs during heat waves, when households run their ACs to stave off the heat. But widespread AC use can strain the electricity grid, leading to brownouts and blackouts. Without power, ACs can't run. Blackouts, especially during extreme heat events, increase the risk of heat-related illness and death.[105] And expanding energy use will also increase greenhouse gas emissions, exacerbating the underlying problem heat plans work to solve. Most energy consumed in the city comes from non-renewable fossil fuels, a mix of gas and oil. Decarbonizing the energy grid will be key to resilience strategies that seek to prevent future global warming.[106]

New York was at the vanguard of municipal level climate action in that it moved from

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101 Lisa Friedman, "America Officially Leaves the Paris Climate Agreement," *New York Times,* January 27, 2026, https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/27/climate/paris-climate-agreement-withdrawal.html.

102 New York City Council, *Resolution calling on the New York State Governor to sign S.8760-A/A.9369-A, an act to amend the elder law, in relation to the automatic identification and enrollment of elderly pharmaceutical insurance coverage program (EPIC) enrollees in the home energy assistance program (HEAP)*, Res 0564-2024, introduced by council September 12, 2024, https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6860239&GUID=78118014-D3EE-459B-B530-6CB851A3BE4B&Options=&Search=.

103 New York City Council, *Resolution calling on the New York State Governor to sign S.6277/A.2468, which would create the State Office of the Utility Consumer Advocate to represent the interests of residential utility customers,* Res 0106-2026, introduced by council January 29, 2026, https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7862378&GUID=D6FFEED4-4446-4AA3-B00F-0077987ED01B&Options=&Search=.

104 New York City Council, *Resolution calling on the New York State Governor to sign S.6277/A.2468.*

105 Kinney et al.

106 New York, (N.Y.), *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done.*

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planning to actual implementation in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. City officials and environmental justice advocates recognized that extreme heat required both short-term emergency measures to protect residents during heat waves and long-term strategies to cool a city. Beginning in the early 2000s, the City Council discussed heat risk via climate change, health, and air conditioning in approximately 170 oversight topics, resolution considerations, and bill debates (see Appendix). PlaNYC grew into a key forum for heat work. Various city agencies also responded individually to heat risk. As of 2025, over thirty specific heat-related programs across ten municipal departments and agencies under four deputy mayors.[107] Yet even as a pioneer in climate plan execution, New York's work was, ultimately, "slow and halting, and thus far inadequate given the scale of the climate risks" the city faces.[108]

Formal, direct, comprehensive urban heat planning remains a nascent field of government work. Of extant heat plans in the US in the early 2020s, most approached heat as either a hazard or as a type of land-planning, especially around urban greening and capital improvements, separating out the acute and chronic impacts of urban heat and often considering heat but generally. Most heat mitigation policies still need to better target cities' highest heat risk areas.[109] Few cities have plans that explicitly focus on heat and, of those that do, few have plans have been around long enough for evaluation, although Phoenix, AZ, which has the US's oldest Office of Heat Response and Mitigation (est. 2021), saw its first ever reduction in heat mortality in 2024 and 2025, after nearly a decade of exponentially rising heat-related deaths.[110] Evaluating whether existing heat plans are effective, especially efforts to identify direct causal pathways between plans and health outcomes, remains difficult. As *Cool Neighborhoods NYC* and *Getting Sustainability Done* reveal, heat plans are incredibly complex, incorporating physical design and capital improvement work, policy design, community programming, and individual behaviors.[111]

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[107] Kara Murphy Schlichting and Selassie Mawuko, "Opinion: It's Time for NYC to Appoint a Heat Czar," *City Limits,* July 8, 2025, https://citylimits.org/opinion-its-time-for-nyc-to-appoint-a-heat-czar/

[108] Wyman and Spiegel-Feld, 73.

[109] Turner et al.; Ladd Keith, Sara Meerow, and Tess Wagner, "Planning for extreme heat: a review," *Journal of Extreme Event*s, 6, nos. 3&4 (2019), 2050003; Ladd Keith and Sara Merrow, *Planning for Urban Heat Resilience. Planning Advisory Services (PAS) Report 600* (American Planning Association), https://www.planning.org/publications/report/9245695/; and Ladd Keith, Sara Meerow, et al., "Evaluating Urban Heat Mitigation across Networks of Plans," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 45, no. 2 (2025): 427-440.

[110] Keenan Gibbons, "We've Been Looking at Heat Wrong and It's Killing Us," May 26, 2026, The Dirt, American Society of Landscape Architects, https://www.asla.org/news-insights/dirt/we%E2%80%99ve-been-looking-at-heat-wrong-and-it%E2%80%99s-killing-us, and Stephanie Le, "How Phoenix Reduced Extreme Heat Mortality," April 14, 2026, Data-Smart City Solutions Harvard Kennedy School, https://datasmart.hks.harvard.edu/phoenix-reduced-heat-mortality.

[111] Ladd Keith, Sara Meerow, et al., "Evaluating Urban Heat Mitigation across Networks of Plans," Journal of Planning Education and Research 45, no. 2 (2025): 427-440.; Turner et al.

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New York City's heat response first evolved from emergency planning to long-term adaptation and mitigation strategies–via both community and programming goals and physical changes to the city. In the same years that the city built out UHI mitigation plans, it also recognized the climate inequalities that marginalized communities faced. HVI research and Cool Neighborhoods NYC centered the place-based thermal injustice of extreme heat and approached heat through individual bodily exposures and public health imperatives. In the 2020s formal recognition of extreme heat in PlaNYC and the influence of environmental justice campaigns coincided with, and bolstered, city legislation on heat equity. Elected officials and policy experts responded through legislation and strategic plans. Community and environmental justice advocates lobbied for heat equity policies. Heat justice policies recognized the social inequities in exposure, made rights-based claims for public health, mobilized local-state-federal resources, knitted together mitigation and adaptation strategies, and attempted to cool both individual homes and the city's UHI at large, while also positioning the municipality as a pioneer in multi-agency, community-engaged climate justice work.[112] Rooted in local political will and community needs, this justice paradigm of heat planning framed daily relief from dangerous heat as a "right" New Yorkers could and should demand from their government. The city's extreme heat responses must include neighborhood-specific knowledge, input, and solutions. The coming years will be a test of whether the city will effectively address both individual and neighborhood level extreme heat risk.

Appendix 1: Key New York City Council records related to extreme heat, health, and cooling

The following appendix of New York City Council documents (https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/Legislation.aspx) records the key council work related to "cooling." As of April 2026, there were 163 introductions, Oversights, and Resolutions related to "cooling," 75 of which related to extreme heat, health, and cooling. This appendix includes the 24 most relevant documents to extreme heat, health, and cooling, including the title, year introduced, year passed and Local Law number, and public health intervention level. Downstream interventions aim to help individuals already suffering due to heat by relieving the heat they immediately face. Midstream interventions aim to prevent suffering in groups, neighborhoods, and cities by implementing programs that reduce heat or provide places people can go during extreme heat events. Upstream interventions aim to improve a city and state's resilience to extreme heat by reducing the harmful effects of climate change.

[112] Lucien Georgeson, Mark Maslin, Martyn Poessinouw, and Steve Howard, "Adaptation responses to climate change differ between global megacities," *Nature Climate Change* 6 (February 29, 2016): 584–588, cited in Katrina M. Wyman and Danielle Spiegel-Feld, *Local Greens: Cities and Twenty-first Century Environmental Problems* (Cambridge University Press, 2025), 73, and Rae Zimmerman et al., "New York City Panel on Climate Change 2019 Report Chapter 7: Resilience Strategies for Critical Infrastructures and Their Interdependencies," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1439, Iss.1 Advancing Tools and Methods for Flexible Adaptation Pathways and Science Policy Integration (March, 2019), 205.

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Definitions:
Introductions (Int) are when a council member or members introduce a new bill to the council, which then determines whether it will move forward as a possible new law.

Oversights (T) are meetings council members have with the public or private entities to ensure funds are correctly allocated and that what the council paid for is being done.

Resolutions (Res) are the "collective voice" of the council and help it build on public policies and create new laws.[113]

Title of Bill, Oversight, and/or Resolution	Year Introduced	Year Passed into Law/ Year Resolution Adopted	Local Law (LL) #, if Passed into Law	Level of intervention: Midstream, downstream, upstream
Int 0382-2004, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the creation of a program regarding building commissioning and energy efficiency and conservation training.	2004	Filed (2005)	N/A	Up
Int 0703-2015, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to cooling centers.	2015	Filed (2017) but 998 built on it and the latter was later passed	N/A	Mid
Int 1277-2016, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to conforming the New York city energy conservation code to recent amendments to the 2016 New York state energy code.	2016	2016 (Signed by mayor)	2016/125	Up
Int 1032-2018, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York and the New York city building code, in relation to requiring that the roofs of certain	2018	2019 (approved by council, not signed	2019/094	Up

[113] New York City Council, "Legislation," New York City Council website (2026), https://council.nyc.gov/legislation/.

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buildings be covered in green roofs or solar photovoltaic electricity generating systems.		by mayor)		
Int 1816-2019, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to conforming the New York city energy conservation code to the New York state energy code with amendments unique to construction in the city and incorporate therein provisions of the NYStretch energy code-2020, and to repeal section 28-1001.2 of such administrative code relating to such conforming amendments.	2019	2020 (approved by council, not signed by mayor)	2020/048	Up
Res 1145-2019 Resolution calling on the New York City Department of Education to install air conditioning or cooling systems in kitchens in New York City public schools.	2019	Filed	N/A	Down
Int 1563-2019, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to cooling centers.	2019	Filed (2021), but 998 built on it and the latter was later was passed	N/A	Mid
T2020-6167, Oversight - Consolidated Edison's Summer Preparations and the City's Cooling Needs.	2020	Hearing held 5/26/20	N/A	Mid
T2020-6168, Oversight - Consolidated Edison's Summer Preparations and the City's Cooling Needs.	2020	Hearing held 5/26/20	N/A	Mid
T2020-6169, Oversight - Consolidated Edison's Summer Preparations and the City's Cooling Needs.	2020	Hearing held 5/26/20	N/A	Mid
Int 2086-2020, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the office of emergency management to consider certain factors when determining the circumstances warranting the opening of cooling centers	2020	Filed (2021)	N/A	Mid
Int 2478-2021, A Local Law to amend the New York city charter and the administrative	2021	Filed (2021)	N/A	Mid

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code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing an office of climate resiliency.				
Int 0151-2022, A Local Law to amend the New York city charter and the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing an office of climate resiliency.	2022	Filed (2022)	N/A	Mid
Int 0547-2024, A Local Law to amend the New York city charter and the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing an office of climate resiliency.	2024	Filed (2024)	N/A	Mid
Int 0994-2024, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York and the New York City building code, in relation to cooling systems in tenant-occupied dwellings	2024	2026 (approved by council, not signed by mayor)	2026/023	Down
Res 0564-2024, Resolution calling on the New York State Governor to sign S.8760-A/A.9369-A, an act to amend the elder law, in relation to the automatic identification and enrollment of elderly pharmaceutical insurance coverage program (EPIC) enrollees in the home energy assistance program (HEAP).	2024	Filed (2025)	N/A	Down
Res 0364-2024, Resolution calling on the State Legislature to introduce and pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation that would establish a tax incentive program to encourage developers to plant new trees in development sites.	2024	Filed (2024)	N/A	Mid/Up
Int 0998-2024, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to cooling centers.	2024	2025 (approved by council, not signed by mayor)	2025/128	Mid
Int 1490-2025, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to conforming the New York city energy conservation code to the New York state energy code with amendments unique to construction in the city, and to repeal	2025	2026 (approved by council, not signed by mayor)	2026/047	Up

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section 28-1001.2 of such administrative code relating to such conforming amendments.				
Int 1387-2025, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to including geothermal piping systems in the scope of plumbing work and reporting on recommendations to incorporate geothermal systems into the construction codes.	2025	Filed (2025)	N/A	Up
Int 1377-2025, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York and the New York city building code, in relation to protections for construction workers from extreme heat.	2025	Filed (2025)	N/A	Mid
Int 0154-2026, A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York and the New York city building code, in relation to protections for construction workers from extreme heat.	2026	Referred to Comm by Council - 1/29/26	N/A	Mid
Res 0106-2026, Resolution calling on the New York State Governor to sign S.6277/A.2468, which would create the State Office of the Utility Consumer Advocate to represent the interests of residential utility customers.	2026	Referred to Comm by Council - 1/29/26	N/A	Down
Res 0042-2026, Resolution calling on the State Legislature to introduce and pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation that would establish a tax incentive program to encourage developers to plant new trees in development sites.	2026	Committee - 1/29/26	N/A	Mid/Up

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