



*** PLANNING FOR ALL NEW YORKERS ***

“The premise is that the people who live in a neighborhood or care personally about its destiny are in the best position to identify a neighborhood’s needs and plan for its future.”

Charles Graves III, Director, Baltimore City Planning Department

Platform for Community-Based Planning in New York City

In this new millennium, New Yorker can join cities such as Seattle, Minneapolis, Houston, Washington DC, Baltimore, Rochester and others in realizing that livable communities make a city livable. As a representative group of community organizations, community boards, environmental justice organizations, planning professionals, and civic groups, the Community-Based Planning Task Force calls on New York City to take a bold new approach to planning by adopting the following policies and principles:

1) Planning in New York City should be based on partnerships, and be “community-based” rather than “top down”

- The Mayor, Borough Presidents, and City Council should appoint commissioners and other staff who are committed to a “community-based” planning process. City Planning Commissioners should reflect the city’s diversity.
- The Mayor should direct the Chairman of the City Planning Commission, in consultation with the commissioners of operating agencies, to institutionalize a primary role for community-based planning and plans.
- Where common goals and concerns are identified in several community-based plans, the City should use them to establish comprehensive city policy and in the development of operational, budget, and land use policy and programs.

2) The City must view communities as partners, not as adversaries.

- The Mayor should direct that adequate numbers of planners from the Department of City Planning and from operational agencies work with communities in researching and developing plans.
- The City should provide communities with needed data and other information readily and without charge.
- The City should provide adequate funds to communities for the development of community-based plans.
- The City should provide planning training to community organizations and community boards.



3) Community-based planning activities must be inclusive.

- Community boards should include representatives from all interested community organizations, businesses and institutions that play an active role in the community and must reflect the demographics of the community.
- Community organizations, coalitions of community organizations, as well as community boards should be recognized as legitimate planning partners.
- The City should recognize that community-based plans include 197-a plans, land –use and zoning recommendations, small community generated plans, open space plans, housing plans, etc.

4) The City should commit to the implementation of completed and/or adopted plans.

- The City should allocate capital and expense budget funds and obtain State, Federal, and private commitments and resources to implement community plan recommendations.
- City agency operations should be redesigned in response to the goals and recommendations of community plans.
- An adopted 197-a plan should be the recognized standard for all subsequent land use actions.

5) Reflecting the common goals of existing community based plans, the City should adopt the following principles:

- ***In meeting Citywide needs, burdens must be distributed equitably*** with no community being forced to accept a disproportionate concentration of noxious and environmentally damaging uses relating to solid waste, sewage, energy and transportation, regardless of existing zoning. For areas already disproportionately burdened a comprehensive and cumulative impact CEQR analysis that considers equity and environmental justice must be incorporated in the planning and siting process, including mitigation strategies and pollution offset programs. Demand reduction and conservation strategies must be explored before new facilities are proposed.
- ***Benefits must also be equitably distributed*** with all communities receiving funding for local improvements identified in community based plans, such as waterfront access, public open space, community facilities, economic development, and affordable housing.
- ***New developments should reflect the existing community context*** in terms of built form and character and should provide protections against displacement pressures.
- ***Traffic impacts on local communities must be minimized*** by increasing public transportation opportunities including ferries, implementing traffic calming, evaluating truck routes, siting



high traffic generators along mass transit corridors, creating mixed use developments, providing for greater bicycle and pedestrian opportunities, investing in alternative fuels, and retrofitting the City's fleets with pollution control devices.

- ***A commitment must be made to improved quality of life in communities*** by adequately funding enforcement of environmental and other performance standards for both private and public activities and adequately funding staff and infrastructure relating to quality of life indices, such as noise, odors and maintenance of public spaces.
- ***The status of public health in a community must be incorporated into planning and environmental assessment*** with a commitment to concrete steps for remedying and preventing health problems, such as asthma, respiratory problems, lead poisoning, and elevated cancer rates.
- ***The City must make it possible for communities to have both jobs and a clean environment*** by supporting economic development in all sectors and all areas of the five boroughs, particularly for local residents. Also funds must be made available to businesses and industries to ensure the use of the cleanest technologies and the minimization of noise, water, air pollution.
- ***In meeting its infrastructure needs, the City must be guided by principles of sustainability*** by giving priority to strategies that maximize utilization of existing infrastructures such as retrofits of sanitation department marine transfer stations and re-powering of power plants. The City must work with community groups to identify those capital infrastructure investments that reduce local air emissions.