



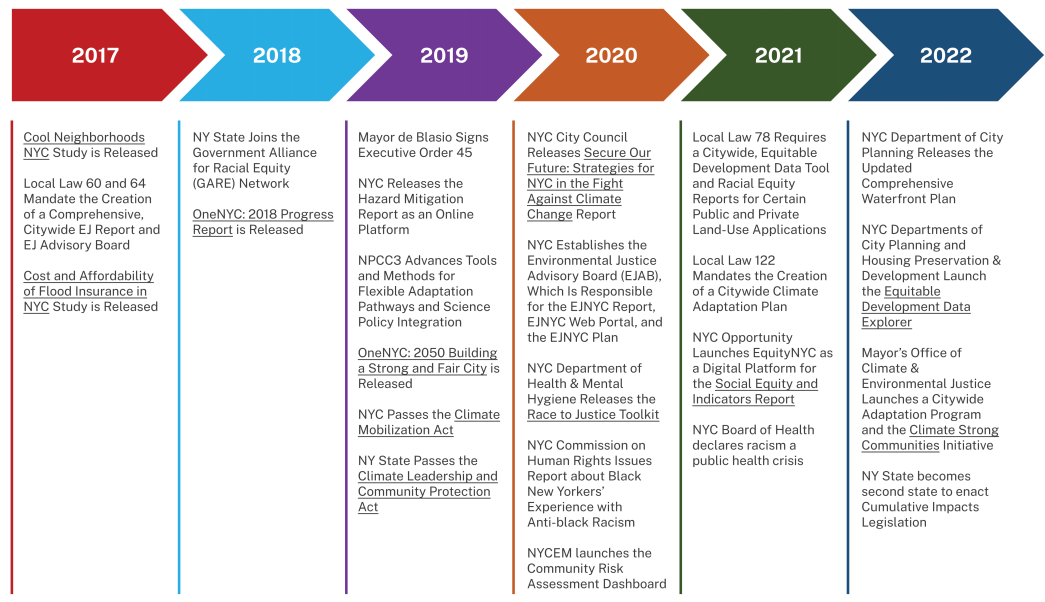
# Advancing Climate Justice in Climate Adaptation Strategies for New York City - Summary

This chapter offers an overview of New York City's efforts to advance climate justice since the 2019 NPCC Special Report, including how local communities continue to address multifaceted climate stressors. The chapter also links New York City's climate challenges to the region's history of colonization, land dispossession, and slavery. The chapter builds on emerging evidence demonstrating how historical and contemporary land use patterns and decisions influence climate risks and social vulnerability, including climate displacement.

Highlights from this chapter include:

1. **Since 2019, the city's climate-related equity work has more explicitly focused on remedying environmental injustice and racial disparities through the adoption of laws and programs, provision of more city services, creation of public dashboards to track and share city progress, and integration of equity approaches with climate risk assessments and sustainability and resilience planning.** Since the publication of the 2019 NPCC report, the City's framing of equity has broadened from initially focusing on environmental justice to later including racial justice and climate justice. The City's efforts have aimed to address the institutional foundation 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 operationalize racial equity and social justice.

2. **The City's climate-related justice work would benefit from more comprehensive data on disaggregated climate risks at the local level and tracking City-sponsored climate adaptation projects and resilience investments.** There is limited understanding of climate change impacts and adaptation needs at the community or neighborhood level and limited data on City-sponsored adaptation projects and resilience investments. More localized climate risk data and systematic tracking of City-sponsored climate investments would help inform city residents about climate change impacts and adaptation needs in their neighborhoods and communities.



Timeline of the City's climate-related equity actions. Courtesy of the authors

3. **Some of New York City's most marginalized communities have implemented dynamic approaches to combat a variety of environmental, climate, and social risks while providing multiple benefits to their communities.** These benefits include expanding access to solar energy and providing cooling to homes with high heat and air pollution exposure.

4. **New York City's climate challenges are inextricably linked to the region's history, including slavery and land dispossession.** Understanding the impacts of this history is vital to formulate effective policies and strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate impacts. A recognition of the historical legacy of climate impacts on the region, and on certain communities, points to a need for reparations and restorative justice. By recognizing Indigenous knowledge, and reconceptualizing its relationship to land, the city can forge a future that respects the environment, promotes social and racial justice, and ensures the well-being of all communities.



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5. **New York City should promote racial equity outcomes and procedures in climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience strategies to address inequitable land use and market patterns that heighten or perpetuate climate risks and social vulnerability.** Although the relationships between historical land use and climate risk are complex and context-dependent, they often have similar underlying correlations such as past discriminatory land use and siting decisions, redlining and disinvestment, and lower land costs in hazard-prone areas. Many land use issues—past and present—reinforce one another and create future risks and vulnerabilities.
6. **New York City should measure climate displacement and gentrification—an important dimension of social vulnerability to climate change—through a recommended combined climate displacement and social vulnerability (CDSV) score to help inform efforts to mitigate the risk of displacement.** The City's ability to measure the risks of climate displacement at the neighborhood level could help determine whether and how new infrastructure and investments designed to help the city adapt to climate impacts might cause displacement of people.
7. **Without anti-displacement strategies in place, resilience-promoting investments can have unjust outcomes.** Key to achieving equitable climate adaptation is prioritizing community-driven climate resilience approaches by: (1) incorporating contextual equity and understanding the history of places down to the neighborhood level; (2) taking a holistic approach to reducing racialized vulnerability to climate shocks, including issues that intersect with climate impacts such as housing and transit access; and, (3) recognizing that the cost burdens of climate adaptation (e.g., higher energy costs, insurance premiums, relocation) affect people differently—particularly when considered in light of homeownership and wealth gaps—and can result in increased displacement risks.
8. **Best practices from around New York City and the world highlight the importance of integrated, affirmatively anti-racist, equitable, and just approaches to tackling climate risks.** The three broad categories of best practices identified for more equitable and racially just climate adaptation approaches are: (1) integrative approaches to climate resilience that seek out opportunities to advance just transitions and adaptive economies; (2) community-led planning processes that make adaptation plans more successful in the face of intersecting housing and climate displacement risks; and, (3) collaborative development of goals, programs, policies through leveraging relationships between communities, civic organizations, and state and local government offices and programs.

### Summary

*Advancing Climate Justice in Climate Adaptation Strategies for New York City* provides an overview of New York City's efforts to address climate justice, building on the findings and recommendations from NPCC3. This chapter assesses the City's efforts to integrate equity and justice into climate adaptation since 2019 and highlights how New York City communities have implemented innovative approaches to address intersecting and ongoing climate and social stressors. This chapter outlines how the region's history of colonization and land dispossession, and past and present land use patterns and decisions, impact ongoing climate risks and social vulnerability, like displacement. One of the recommendations is a New York City-focused metric to create a combined climate displacement and social vulnerability (CDSV) score. This metric is designed to identify areas of the city most vulnerable to climate hazards, socio-economic disparities, and displacement. The recommended scoring method could be calculated at the neighborhood level to highlight the vulnerabilities of certain populations with intersecting climate risks. The chapter includes best practices drawn from local, national, and international contexts that prioritize community-driven, climate resilience approaches that are more integrated, equitable, and racially just.

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