

1. Our idea is to duplicate the [Percent for Art](#) program, creating a **Percent for Climate** program, which would utilize NYC's tremendous cultural base for climate education.
2. The goal is to help New Yorkers understand and join in achieving the Paris Agreement timeline, reducing emissions by half every ten years, as shown by the [C40 Cities "Deadline 2020" report](#).
3. This new funding mechanism can create **public outreach at scale**. Deliberative workshops for New Yorkers about the future of the city are one type of program that could be piloted and scaled up. Parallels are discussed below:
 - [Scotland provides an example for national public workshops on climate change.](#)
 - [Read a new research paper describing Scotland's pilot for national workshops \(case study shown on page 9 of this paper\).](#)
 - [The University of California includes the creation of new public venues among their ten proposed solutions to climate change, and will soon embark on a statewide program of climate education.](#)
 - [Read a new report from the University of California detailing methods to achieve success in curbing emissions, including "coordinated public communication and education."](#)
4. Cultural and educational institutions in New York can partner with Percent for Climate to share the message about our transition to a low carbon city. The future of the institutions within the city is tied to the health of the city itself.
5. We think this could be a powerful step towards addressing climate change through citizen education, which will begin to give politicians social permission for greater action.

New York City has a \$1.3 trillion economy, and a population almost as large as Sweden.

As New Yorkers become global leaders in shifting to low carbon lifestyles, the benefits will be felt by people **everywhere on the planet**, because New York is one of the most financially and culturally influential cities in the world. New York can be a crucial global leader, simply by meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement as shown by the C40 Cities group.

Compared to a ‘business as usual’ scenario, expanding communications, and achieving low emission policies, are far **less costly choices** and much **more realistic** than attempts at adapting to impacts from a high emission pathway.

One small step, **creating a Percent for Climate program in New York City**, could be a game changer, one that triggers a broader push to decarbonize the world at the rates necessary to achieve the Paris Agreement. The global benefits for people at risk around the world are enormous. **Protecting New York simultaneously protects billions of people in vulnerable nations.**

6. We are gathering support from climate experts who would like to participate:

[Eric Holthaus, the widely-followed writer and meteorologist, says:](#)

“I'd *love* to be involved in something like this. For NYC, or for anywhere.”

7. In conclusion: Percent for Climate would structurally guide the City to providing climate information, education and workshops, in proportion to the size of the city itself, in the same way [Percent for Art](#) provides ongoing public art funding. Social stability improves when people have a place to bring their fears and address them as a group, seeking the most rational solutions from among our options. **The training from workshops would also provide preparation in advance of extreme events, allowing for a safer and more coordinated response.**

Let's take this step, and help New York City, full of some of the brightest, most vibrant people on the planet, begin to teach itself about climate change, the challenge that matters most to our future.

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why we need citywide climate education

As a coastal city, New York is highly vulnerable to storm surge and sea level rise due to climate change.

In order to meet the 2020 Deadline¹ laid out by the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, and to keep global warming within the levels established in the Paris Agreement, we must cut global carbon emissions by half each decade² with the aim of achieving zero emissions by 2050³.

Resiliency and Sustainability are already acknowledged as priorities in the Mayor's OneNYC Plan⁴.

New York City, with high visibility and even higher stakes, must do our part to achieve rapid decarbonization. If we do not mitigate our climate impact, our resiliency and adaptation efforts will fail.

Public education about climate change will be vital to promoting greater civic participation in climate resiliency efforts, which will in turn provide for more creative, equitable and effective climate policy that will serve communities and protect the city for future generations.

why we need to engage the cultural sector

Climate change poses a challenge to some of the priorities the cultural plan seeks to address. Extreme weather events and sea level rise due to climate change may cause coastal areas to become uninhabitable, which would increase demands on available living, work and presentation spaces. It would also threaten the preservation of valued cultural institutions and public artworks.

It has been proposed that the cultural plan integrate arts and culture in resiliency planning. However, there is not a proposal for how the cultural sector will be engaged in climate mitigation efforts.

New York City's vibrant cultural sector has the capacity to create a shift in our cultural understanding of what it means to live low carbon lifestyles; and to integrate dialogue about climate change into our daily environment and common cultural awareness.

If New York became a global leader -- culturally, economically, and socially -- in shifting to low carbon lifestyles, we have the capacity to influence climate-conscious cultural policy in other major cities.

a proposal for engaging arts & culture in timely climate education

A comprehensive cultural plan that aims to sustain and support arts & culture in New York City would need to address the timely issue of climate mitigation.

The goal would be to channel the city's cultural resources towards helping more people understand the issue of climate change and provide them with actionable steps for mitigating their carbon footprint.

¹ <http://www.c40.org/researches/deadline-2020>

² <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/355/6331/1269.full>

³ https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/23/opinion/why-the-world-economy-has-to-be-carbon-free-by-2050.html?_r=0

⁴ <https://onenyc.cityofnewyork.us/>

We believe that the city should create a Percent for Climate program, modeled off of the Percent for Art law⁵ which requires that one percent of the budget from eligible City-funded construction projects be dedicated to creating permanent public art installations.

A Percent for Climate law would provide funding for cultural organizations that are engaged or interested in promoting climate awareness; it would increase dialogue about climate change in the city's cultural institutions which would serve to inform local and international audiences; and it would help ensure the sustainability of the city's cultural assets for current and future generations.

**City Atlas is a research and communications project about the future of New York, based at the CUNY Institute for Sustainable Cities.*

⁵ <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcla/html/panyc/percent-for-art.shtml>