



NEW YORK
BUILDING
CONGRESS



NEW YORK BUILDING CONGRESS

2020 POLICY AGENDA

Message from the Chair and President & CEO



The New York Building Congress, a broad-based membership association dedicated to promoting the growth and success of the construction industry in New York, is pleased to present its policy priorities for 2020.

Now in its 99th year, the Building Congress works to advance an industry-wide agenda focusing on economic and infrastructure investment, job creation and professional exchange. We operate in close coordination with our more than 570 member organizations, comprising more than 250,000 skilled tradespeople and professionals working in all industry sectors. We look forward to elevating all their accomplishments and leading this esteemed organization to new heights through a member and policy-driven agenda focused on growth and service.

The Building Congress is enormously proud to be a leading voice of our industry, and we work tirelessly to ensure that the building industry's achievements and contributions to the success of New York are fully appreciated. We've maintained a strong tradition of supporting sound public policy, promoting productive capital spending, encouraging public/private partnerships and evaluating the implementation of major government projects. The Building Congress has promoted competence and productivity in the workplace with special emphasis on public service, teamwork and partnership with government.

The 2020 Policy Agenda reflects a focus on all five boroughs of New York City, the broader metropolitan region and the country at large. As we execute our priorities, the Building Congress will work to gather input from industry, business and civic organizations, as well as community leaders to encourage broad consensus on infrastructure investment, public policy initiatives and related issues affecting the building industry.

Please visit www.buildingcongress.com for updates on the Policy Agenda throughout the year.

Very truly yours,

Elizabeth Velez
Chair
New York Building Congress
President
Velez Organization

Carlo A. Scissura, Esq.
President and CEO
New York Building Congress



FEDERAL POLICY

ENACT A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The American Society of Civil Engineers has graded American bridges a D+ and roads a D-, demonstrating the extent to which our country's infrastructure is deteriorating. Fixing America's ailing infrastructure will require the investment of more than \$3 trillion, to both bring systems up to a state of good repair and accommodate population growth.

This initiative should complement and strengthen existing tools, such as municipal bonds, to successfully deliver infrastructure investments at the federal, state and local levels. Legislation should also facilitate opportunities for private investment in U.S. infrastructure and create efficiencies by accelerating the federal permitting process.

A successful infrastructure package will require bipartisan compromises and a renewed commitment by the federal government to provide the foundational support necessary to bring American infrastructure into the 21st century.



Advance New and Existing Funding Mechanisms

The Building Congress believes that any path forward on this issue must increase direct federal investments in a broad range of infrastructure sectors over the next 10 years in order to achieve a \$1 trillion federal investment. To attain that level of funding, an array of mechanisms will need to be in place.

These include, but are not limited to the following...

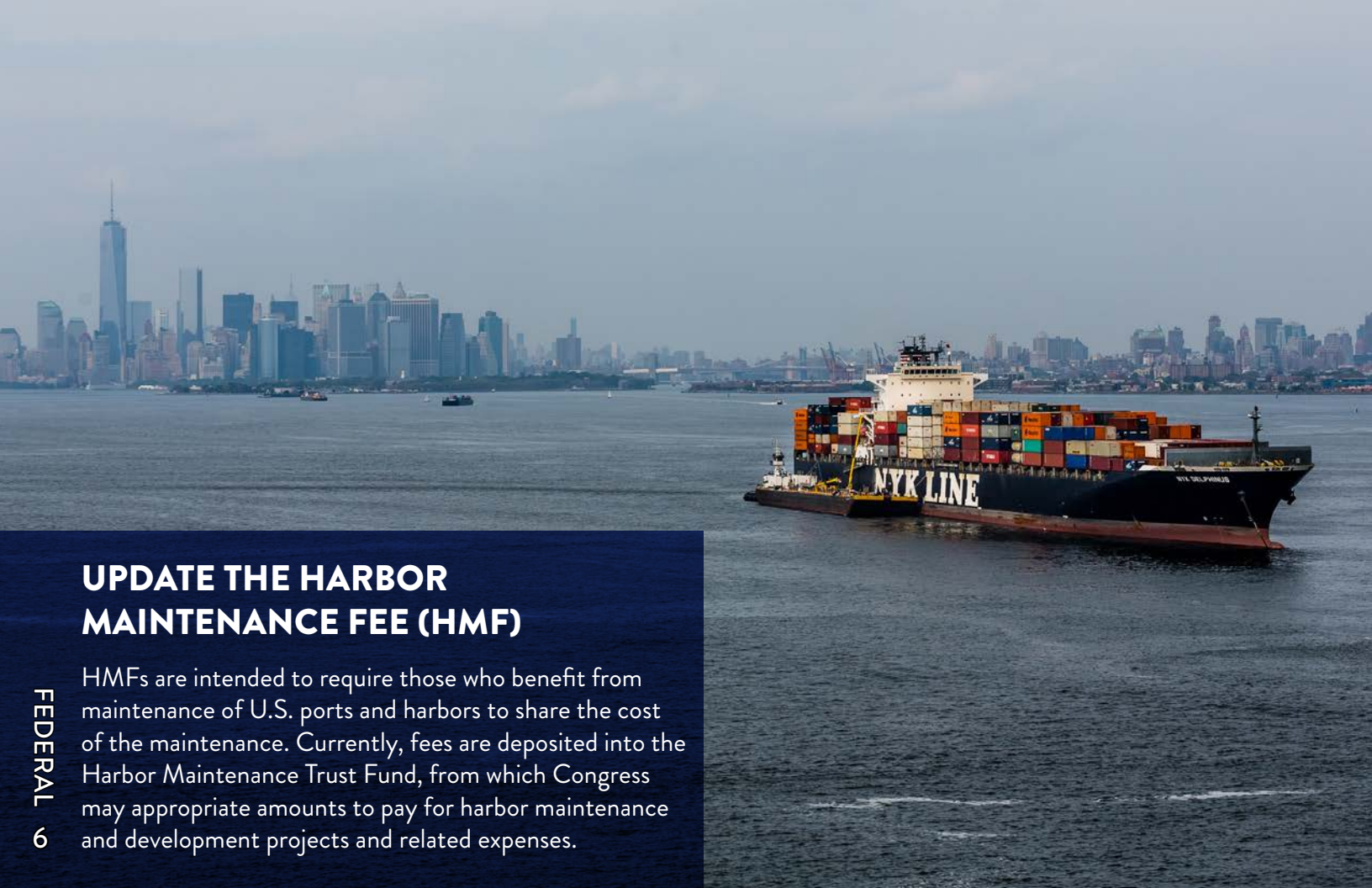
RAISE THE GAS TAX

This is the leading and most likely solution for funding any infrastructure plan. Most elected officials agree that the time has come to increase the gas tax in order to keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent and provide revenue for new transportation projects.



NEW AND EXPANDED FEDERAL LOAN PROGRAMS

The federal government can expand programs like the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act and Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing and make new money available through federal loans for infrastructure improvement.



UPDATE THE HARBOR MAINTENANCE FEE (HMF)

HMFs are intended to require those who benefit from maintenance of U.S. ports and harbors to share the cost of the maintenance. Currently, fees are deposited into the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, from which Congress may appropriate amounts to pay for harbor maintenance and development projects and related expenses.



ISSUE INFRASTRUCTURE BONDS

As the push for infrastructure investment takes shape, there will be many long-term funding solutions put in place (gas tax, user fees, tolls, etc.). These long-term funding streams will need to be leveraged in the short term to provide the capital needed to get large infrastructure projects underway. By issuing bonds backed by the projected revenue of long-term solutions, the federal government will deliver the vital capital needed to jump start infrastructure revitalization across the country.



PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (P3s)

In order to encourage expanded private investment into infrastructure projects, the federal government could remove statutory and regulatory barriers to P3s, create competitive programs designed to leverage public dollars and expand the use of private activity bonds.

EXPAND USER FEES AND CONGESTION PRICING PROGRAMS

The federal government can fortify and expand existing programs that support user fees and congestion pricing on streets and highways, including the Value Pricing Pilot Program, the High Occupancy Vehicle Facilities Program and the Express Lanes Demonstration Program.



INTRODUCE A RAIL PASSENGER CHARGE

Similar to the HMF and PFC, revenue generated by a new Rail Passenger Charge could be used towards capital improvements at AMTRAK stations and railways across the country.

UPDATE THE AIRLINE PASSENGER FACILITY CHARGE (PFC)

Since 2001, the fee has been capped at \$4.50 per boarding. The generated revenue from any increase could be put toward capital improvements at the airport where the fee is collected.



CHANGES TO THE TAX CODE

These could include rolling back tax loopholes, fixing parts of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act or implementing new taxes in order to use the revenue for infrastructure investment.

NEW YORK STATE POLICY

DEVELOP NEW YORK STATE'S INFRASTRUCTURE AGENDA

Governor Andrew Cuomo has made major infrastructure investment a central focus of his administration through several key agencies and projects. The Building Congress will closely monitor progress on these projects throughout the year, urging full funding during budget season and the proper implementation, construction and completion of critical elements throughout project delivery. This includes protecting funding and advancing implementation of the MTA's new \$51.5 billion, 2020-2024 five-year capital plan. The Building Congress supports the Governor's efforts to modernize existing facilities and build new ones across the state, including bridges, airports and train stations.





AUTHORIZE ALTERNATIVE PROJECT DELIVERY METHODS

In 2019, the City of New York was given broad authority to use design-build after successful advocacy efforts from the New York Building Congress, additional stakeholders and organizations. New York State law now allows the City to use the streamlined process through several agencies on a variety of projects.

Beyond design-build, the Building Congress seeks to expand the use of P3s in order to modernize New York's public procurement construction laws. This would provide public owners with a wider variety of procurement and delivery modes, as necessary and appropriate, to reduce costs, speed up delivery and improve quality and safety. While it may not be suitable universally, there are many critical projects that would benefit substantially from alternative delivery methods.

PASS THE EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT

State legislation protecting members of the building industry from liability when they respond to a declared emergency is a matter of public safety. Without such protection, firms may be rendered unable to provide timely and adequate emergency support services. A strong liability protection law will allow the industry to respond decisively during catastrophic events like Superstorm Sandy, terrorist attacks or other emergencies that fall outside normal procurement. The Building Congress will lead efforts to finally pass legislation that will permit the building industry to play an essential role on behalf of government during times of crisis.



INSTITUTE A STATEWIDE RESILIENCY FUND

As climate change continues to exacerbate the frequency and intensity of disruptive events like severe flooding, a dedicated resiliency fund would provide municipalities the financial security to collaborate with the state's most vulnerable populations and invest in long-term, regional solutions. A lockbox fund would also support the scaling of resilient infrastructure innovations that might offer 21st century solutions. To encourage the creation of such a fund, the Building Congress will continue to collaborate with relevant public offices and community groups.





ENSURE CLEAN & AFFORDABLE POWER FOR NEW YORK

The closure of the Indian Point Energy Center, which provides over 2,000 megawatts of clean energy for New York, poses significant risks to the state's energy consumers unless new, clean, affordable sources of energy are established. The Building Congress' Energy Outlook report anticipated a growing demand for energy, driven by the tremendous development underway in all boroughs of New York City. The Building Congress will closely monitor New York State's progress on the closure of Indian Point and ensure that a clean and affordable plan to replace the energy loss is met.



ADVANCE SUCCESSFUL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

After legislation is passed, it is equally critical that the new laws be implemented appropriately; ensuring proper communication to relevant groups, providing opportunities for input on unresolved issues and avoiding unnecessary disruptions for impacted industries. The Building Congress is focused on the entire policy cycle -- from development to implementation. As such, the Building Congress will monitor the implementation of several major policies passed last year, including the congestion pricing program, authority for NYC to conduct design-build procurement, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act and the expansion and renewal of the state's MWBE Program.



INVEST IN STEAM EDUCATION

The building industry is facing a shortage of design and construction professionals. A variety of excellent project-based STEAM learning programs supported by the New York Building Foundation, the charitable arm of the Building Congress, are educating and training the next generation of design and construction professionals throughout New York State. The Building Congress and Building Foundation are working to expand access to these programs, encourage systematizing them as a single “pipeline” from early childhood up to entry in the workforce and seeking more consistent funding for industry-focused education in New York State schools.

Photocourtesy of Salvadori Center.

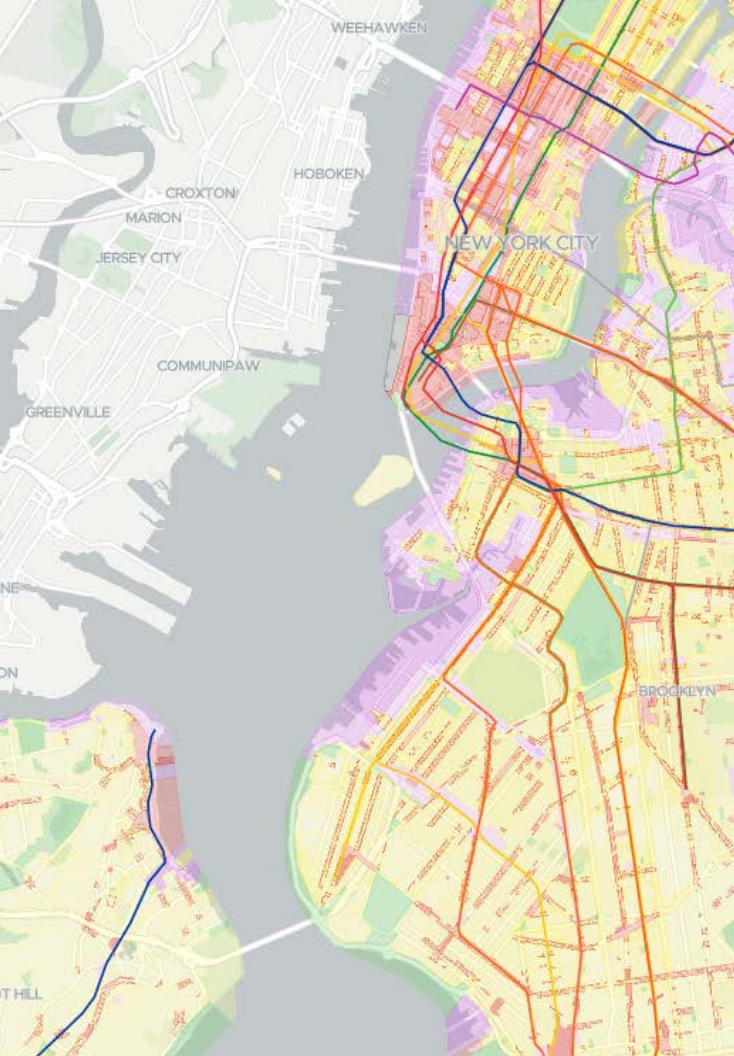
NEW YORK CITY POLICY

PROMOTE ROBUST CAPITAL SPENDING BY THE CITY OF NEW YORK

In recent years, the City has made unprecedented levels of investment to protect, maintain and expand its network of schools, libraries, hospitals, parks, roads and bridges, water and sewer systems and other core components that ensure the quality of life of all residents. It is critical the City continue to make similar levels of investment in 2020 and demonstrate a longer-term commitment in its 10-Year Strategy, as the population continues to grow and the economy expands.

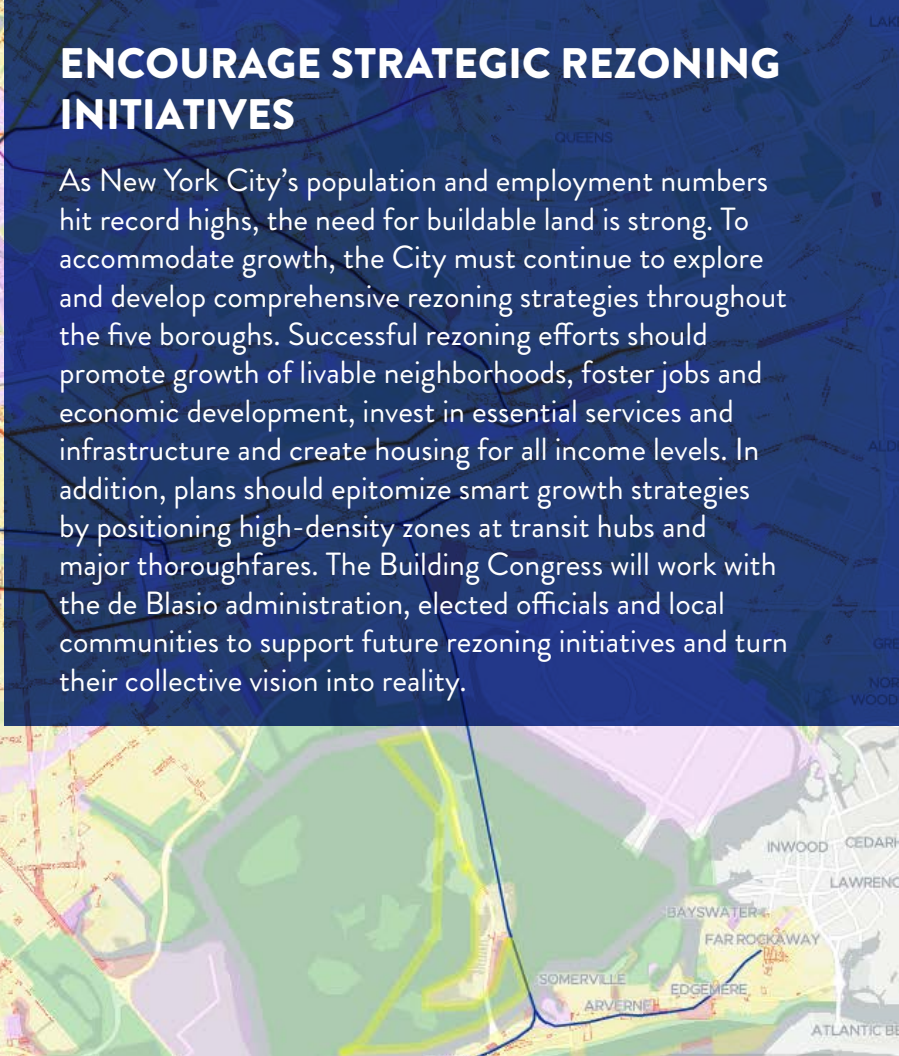
The Building Congress will promote ambitious projects that improve mobility, economic opportunity and growth throughout New York City. With local stakeholders and industry experts, the Building Congress will work to define neighborhood, industry and infrastructure needs that have been overlooked and recommend opportunities for investment. To achieve a five-borough strategy, we call on Mayor Bill de Blasio to establish a city-wide infrastructure council to coordinate among citizens, elected officials and government agencies on our most critical needs.





ENCOURAGE STRATEGIC REZONING INITIATIVES

As New York City’s population and employment numbers hit record highs, the need for buildable land is strong. To accommodate growth, the City must continue to explore and develop comprehensive rezoning strategies throughout the five boroughs. Successful rezoning efforts should promote growth of livable neighborhoods, foster jobs and economic development, invest in essential services and infrastructure and create housing for all income levels. In addition, plans should epitomize smart growth strategies by positioning high-density zones at transit hubs and major thoroughfares. The Building Congress will work with the de Blasio administration, elected officials and local communities to support future rezoning initiatives and turn their collective vision into reality.



ENHANCE THE CITY’S MWBE PROGRAM

The Building Congress supports both the full engagement of emerging businesses in the City’s capital program and the de Blasio administration’s goals for participation of minority- and women-owned firms in their capital construction program. The City must improve MWBE capacity-building programs and provide additional resources to ensure meaningful inclusion and development of MWBE firms can take place. The Building Congress will work with our partners to look closely at the City’s programs and practices, suggest areas for improvement and seek their implementation.



ADVANCE NEW YORK CITY'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVE

Mayor de Blasio has taken significant steps to address New York City's housing crisis. With the expanded goal to build and preserve 300,000 affordable units by 2026, it is critical the City continue to make the necessary levels of investment in 2020 and build a pipeline of housing for all income levels.

The Building Congress supports further legislation and enhancement of incentive programs designed to spur the construction and rehabilitation of housing affordable to New Yorkers of all income levels. The Building Congress will monitor the City's investment levels for new and preserved housing programs to ensure that spending continues to reach these critical projects.

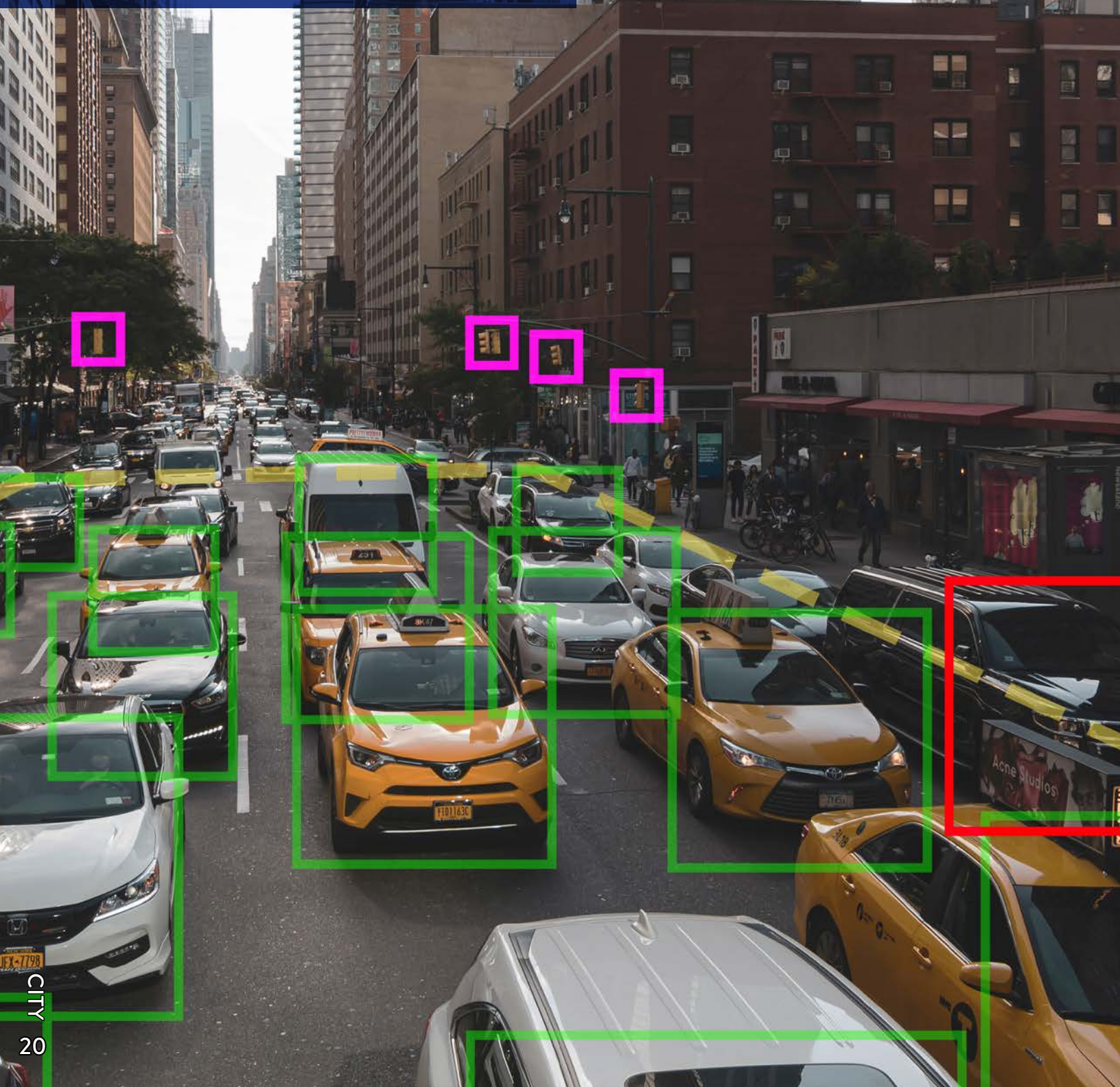
SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Tasked with lowering emissions and our reliance on fossil fuels, New York City serves as a national leader in combating climate change through our built environment. The City has made enormous efforts to implement long-term carbon reductions in emissions produced by the energy supply, buildings, transportation and solid waste. The Building Congress support efforts that incentivize energy-efficient, resilient and healthy buildings, such as the Building Emissions Law of 2019. In addition, the Building Congress will work to make sure our workforce is prepared, through expanded training for operators, property managers, architects, engineers and developers on emerging strategies for cost-effective, hyper-efficient buildings.



IMPLEMENT SMART CITY TECHNOLOGIES

To build for the future, the City must embrace the potential of new technologies, such as building sensors, modular construction and 3D printing, to increase productivity and efficiency. The integration of smart city technologies can help monitor roadway and building conditions, predict problems before they arise, decrease material waste, reduce carbon emissions and speed up project delivery. The Building Congress will monitor the City's exploration and adoption of new technologies.



ADVANCE DRONE LEGALIZATION

Drones—unmanned aerial vehicles—offer a 21st-century solution to reduce inspection time and cut construction costs. On sites around the country, drones equipped with sophisticated sensors and cameras fly around and above buildings to generate 3-D models and high-quality images. As it stands, all drone use within the five boroughs, including for commercial construction purposes, is illegal under a 1948 local law, despite the Federal Aviation Administration’s legalization of commercial drones in 2016.

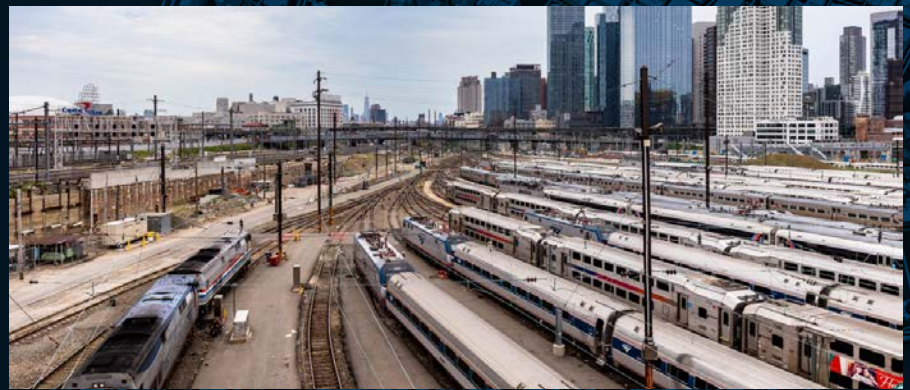
Together with our partners in government and the industry, it’s time we create a safe and sensible system that allows for commercial drone use.



Projects Critical to the Future of Our Region

The City, State and federal government must be a major force in the investment in and advancement of major new expansion projects that will enable our region to thrive in the next century. The Building Congress will publicly urge advancement of ongoing and new projects, as well as innovative funding proposals to ensure they move forward. These projects include, but are not limited to:

- **The Gateway Program**, the most critical infrastructure program in the nation, will improve rail services by adding resiliency and creating new capacity at the most active section of the Northeast Corridor.
- **New York City Housing Authority** facilities must continue being repaired at an increased rate to bring the nation's largest public housing system to a state of good repair.
- **The new Port Authority Bus Terminal** will replace the current 60-year-old facility with a terminal built for increased capacity, ultimately ensuring reliable trans-Hudson travel critical to the New York-New Jersey Metropolitan Region.
- **The Empire Station Complex** will build a new 21st century business-transit development district and link a new terminal at Penn Station South with Moynihan Train Hall, Penn Station and the surrounding area.
- **Sunnyside Yard** will deck over the current rail yard, which covers over a mile and a half of western Queens, and create a new neighborhood above.
- **Borough-Based Jails** will replace Rikers Island with a smaller network for four, community-based jails and allow the island to be reinvented.
- **The Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE)**, from Staten Island to Queens, must be rehabilitated and reinvented after decades of heavy use to maintain safe and efficient regional and local connectivity.
- **The new Outerbridge Crossing** will replace the 90-year-old bridge between Staten Island and New Jersey, which has lasted long past its initial projected life span.



AIRPORT REDEVELOPMENT

- **The new LaGuardia Airport**, the most significant airport project in the United States in more than 20 years, is constructing an entirely new airport on top of an existing one while keeping it fully operational, as well as building an airtrain.
- **John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK)** will completely redevelop, modify and expand existing facilities and infrastructure to accommodate the dramatic expected growth.
- **Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR)** will redevelop Terminal 1 and replace the EWR AirTrain with a new system.



SUBWAY EXPANSION

- **Second Avenue Subway**, Phases 2 and 3 will build upon Phase 1's extension of the Q from 63rd Street to 96th Street by adding 13 new stations from 125th Street in Harlem to Hanover Square in Lower Manhattan.
- **Utica Avenue Line** will extend the existing subway on Eastern Parkway or Fulton Street and provide a more convenient alternative to Brooklyn's busiest bus routes.
- **Extending the 1 train into Brooklyn**, with stops at Governors Island, the Columbia Street Waterfront and Red Hook, vastly improving transit access in a subway desert and offering opportunities for increased storm resiliency and affordable housing.



LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD (LIRR) EXPANSION

- **East Side Access** will connect the LIRR to Grand Central Terminal, reducing congestion at Penn Station and adding new regional transportation options.
- **The LIRR Expansion Project** will construct a third track along the Main Line corridor from Floral Park to Hicksville, allowing for increased service during peak hours.



METRO NORTH EXPANSION

- **Four New Bronx Metro North Stations** will connect Bronx residents with service along the existing rail line to central business and cultural districts that are not currently accessible.

LIGHT RAIL EXPANSION

- **The Brooklyn Queens Connector** will link neighborhoods from Astoria to Red Hook and support equitable growth along the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront.
- **North Shore Light Rail** will activate Staten Island's waterfront and add transit options in car-centric neighborhoods.





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