

New York

On April 22, 2007 Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg announced PlaNYC: A Greener Greater New York. PlaNYC consists of 127 separate initiatives to make New York City an even more sustainable city. The initiatives ranged from creating long-term funding sources for plans that have been in the works for decades, but were previously unfunded, to new ideas that provided solutions to old problems. Each of the 127 initiatives has an assigned timeline and funding source to ensure completion. PlaNYC initiatives are intended to upgrade and modernize the City of New York's infrastructure in order to improve the City's quality of life, and support its environmental and economic sustainability.

The following is part of Mayor Bloomberg's plan for New York City.....

We will encourage the installation of green roofs through a new incentive program. A green roof partially or completely covers a building roof with plants. It can be a tended roof garden or a more self-maintaining ecology. Similar to swales and tree pits, green roofs can reduce the volume of runoff by absorbing or storing water, and other natural processes, in addition to cooling the air. **According to a recent study by Riverkeeper, a 40-square-foot green roof could result in 810 gallons of storm water captured per roof per year. If each installation cost \$1,000 then a \$100,000 dollar investment could lead to over 81,000 gallons of stormwater captured.**

The City is developing four residential and two commercial pilots to analyze the potential cumulative benefits of green roofs on the city's combined sewer system. The expected cost for each is \$100,000 for design and \$1.3 million for construction and equipment.

In order to achieve direct CSO benefits, a large number of green roofs would be required within a concentrated area-an expensive undertaking. Therefore, incentives are necessary to off-set some of these costs. **Starting in 2007, the City will begin providing incentives for green roofs, as well. New York City will support the installation of extensive green roofs by enacting a property tax abatement to off-set 35% of the installation cost of a green roof.** The pilot incentive will sunset in five years, when it will be reassessed for extension and inclusion of other technologies.

Progress (as of 4/22/08):

The City is working with members of both the State Assembly and Senate to introduce legislation incentivizing the installation of green roofs in New York City. Once the legislation is introduced the City will encourage the legislature to pass the legislation in a timely fashion with hopes that Governor Patterson will sign it in to law.

Tax Credit Promotes Green Roofs in NYC

By Michael Wilmeth

State legislation passed in June 2008 allows New York City building owners who install vegetation on at least half their buildings' available rooftop space to offset \$4.50 in property taxes for each square foot of green roof they install, for one year. The credit covers about a quarter of the cost of installation and is capped at \$100,000.

The tax credit was designed to encourage property owners to contribute to the public benefits of green roofs, such as increased rainwater storage and reduced sewer overflows. As little as 1/10" of rain can overwhelm the capacity of the city's combined sewers, contributing to the 2 billion gallons of raw sewage released into waterways annually. **According to New York City Soil & Water Conservation District board member Paul Mankiewicz, 10,000 ft² of vegetated roof can capture 6,000–12,000 gallons of water during a storm.**

Building owners can apply for the credit as of January 1, 2009; the program is authorized through March 2013.