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DEPUTY MAYOR GOLDSMITH LAUNCHES *CHANGE BY US NYC*, A NEW SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM THAT WILL ENABLE NEW YORKERS TO SUBMIT IDEAS FOR IMPROVING THE CITY, THEN TAKE ACTION AND CONNECT TO CITY RESOURCES

Site Will First Ask New Yorkers for Ideas on How to Make the City More Environmentally Sustainable, as Part of PlaNYC

Submitted Ideas and Projects Will Lead to Collaboration with City Agencies and Community-Based Organizations

Deputy Mayor for Operations Stephen Goldsmith today launched Change by Us NYC, a new website that enables New Yorkers to connect with City government and each other online, share their ideas, and create project teams for improving the City. Created by New York-based design firm Local Projects and administered by the Mayor's Office with support from non-profit partners, Change by Us NYC (nyc.changeby.us) is initially focused on ways to make the City more environmentally sustainable. Change by Us NYC allows participants to start meet-up groups, raise funds, and work with community-based organizations and City agencies to develop projects that will have a lasting impact. Deputy Mayor Goldsmith was joined at the announcement at the Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew in Brooklyn by Chief Digital Officer Rachel Sterne; David Bragdon, Director of the Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability; Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway; Nazli Parvizi, Commissioner of the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit; Council Member Letitia James; the founder and principal of Local Projects, Jake Barton; CEO of Citizens Committee for New York City Peter Kostmayer; Erin Barnes, co-founder of ioby.org; founder of Brooklyn Greenway Initiative, Milton Puryear; and Reverend Michael Sniffen of the Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew. Mayor Bloomberg first announced the development of Change by Us NYC when he presented an update to *PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater New York* in April.

"Change by Us NYC will be a social network for grassroots leaders," said Deputy Mayor Goldsmith. "New Yorkers have long been active in greening our City and improving our quality of life, and thanks to this new website, volunteers, professionals, and City agencies will have the opportunity to collaborate on issues like sustainability like never before."

(more)

“The promise of the digital world is that great ideas from everywhere can be turned to action anywhere,” said Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications Commissioner Carole Post. “By ensuring an inclusive process from concept to completion, Change by Us NYC will keep the talents and energy of New Yorkers – as well as their environment – sustainable for years to come.”

“Change by Us NYC is another example of New York being a leading digital City,” said Chief Digital Officer Sterne. “We hope that New Yorkers take full advantage of this collaborative platform, which gives community members another place to come together and share ideas for making New York City even better.”

“To create the greener, greater New York described in PlaNYC, every neighborhood across the city deserves the opportunity to become greener and greater,” said David Bragdon, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability. “Change by Us NYC enables New Yorkers across the city to become stewards of their own local communities, and team up with the city government and other neighbors to make good things happen.”

“Change By Us NYC is a great opportunity for New Yorkers to more easily come together to solve local problems,” said Environmental Protection Commissioner Holloway. “To support this effort, DEP will be making \$4 million available for the second round of our popular community-based green infrastructure awards program, and promoting it through Change By Us NYC. This new initiative will help communities organize to find the resources and partners they need to develop even stronger proposals to beautify neighborhoods and improve New York Harbor.”

“New York’s vibrant civic life is a testament to the pride and passion its residents feel for this great city,” said Nazli Parvizi, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit. “Through active participation in their neighborhoods, New Yorkers have shown the power and lasting effects of civic engagement. I am excited that Change by Us NYC will provide communities in all five boroughs another way to connect and work together to make this a better, greener and more livable City.”

“We’ve seen the dramatic impact that volunteerism and civic engagement can have to help solve local issues”, said Chief Service Officer Diahann Billings-Burford. “With the launch of Change By Us NYC, New Yorkers now have a tool to build upon the grassroots spirit that already exists to effect change in their own neighborhoods. I have no doubt that by connecting people to project ideas and the resources they need to complete them, Change By Us NYC will elevate community-based efforts to a whole new level.”

“In my early days as a tenant rights advocate, community organizing required door-to-door and face-to-face interaction, but thanks to today’s social media, starting a grassroots movement is just a mouse click away,” said Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz. “Kudos to Mayor Bloomberg, Deputy Mayor Goldsmith and Local Projects for launching Change by Us NYC, another tool for Brooklynites and New Yorkers to communicate with their neighbors and help make our city a better place to live, work and play.”

“We congratulate Mayor Bloomberg on today's launch of Change by Us NYC, a new website which will allow New Yorkers to work together to form on-line communities to make their neighborhoods greener and more sustainable,” said Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn. “Change by Us NYC is exactly the kind of tool government should be creating for its citizens. It allows people to connect to other already-existing resources, such as agency or not-for-profit programs, to help them help themselves. It creates efficiencies and transparency, two things everybody wants more of. It also takes our City’s sustainability efforts to the next level and further addresses the growing concerns about the ways climate change will affect the five boroughs. Every citizen has a role to play and Change by Us NYC makes it more accessible for everyone to get involved.”

“Following impressive technological advancements such as the 311 application for iPhone, the administration moves forward in their efforts to expand organizational and community outreach with the development of the social media website, Change by Us NYC,” said Council Member James. “Through the use of social media, the City will be able to work with communities to increase community service and environmental stewardship, helping us get closer to the goal of a greener New York.”

“I look forward to Change by Us NYC revolutionizing the way New York residents, community groups, environmental advocates and public officials work together to create a ‘greener’ city,” said City Council Environmental Chair James F. Gennaro. “Bravo to the mayor and his world-class environmental and ‘digital’ teams for their innovative work in creating this Web site.”

“Today’s Change by Us NYC launch is another important step on the road to creating a stronger partnership between City Hall and local communities,” said Council Member Fernando Cabrera.

“Change by Us NYC is a great example of how New Yorkers and government can work together to share best practices online,” said Council Member Gale A. Brewer. “This project combines two of my favorite goals: opening up government and supporting smart development. I look forward to using this website to communicate with my active constituents who will enjoy discussing hydrofracking, conversion of #6 oil to greener fuel, and any number of other topics.”

“Change By Us is a moment of transition when residents move from customers to partners,” said Jake Barton, founder of Local Projects. “It’s a way of reinventing public participation. Cities are about shared goals and common interests, and we have created a platform around that concept, creating a social networking platform for civic activity.”

“Citizens Committee for New York City is very excited to partner with the City of New York on Change By Us NYC,” said Peter Kostmayer, CEO of Citizens Committee for New York City. “Citizens Committee for New York City operates on a simple but powerful philosophy: anyone with an idea to change their neighborhood can come to us and we’ll help them make it a reality. With the new Change By Us NYC website, volunteer-led community groups all over the city will be able to apply to us for a grant and project-planning assistance and take the first step to improving the environmental quality of life of their neighborhoods.”

New Yorkers can visit nyc.changeby.us and log in with their name, email address, and password. Once participants verify their Change by Us NYC accounts by email, they can begin posting ideas and joining or creating projects on the site. An “idea” on Change by Us NYC is any solution, insight, or question about a local or citywide issue. A “project” is any specific action that helps achieve the goal or mission. For instance, projects to make the City greener might include park stewardship, neighborhood tree planting, the creation of new open spaces, community composting, or energy efficiency initiatives. A “resource” is a link to helpful information or tools from City agencies or community-based organizations for use by project creators and contributors. Participants can select resources to add to a project based on their potential benefit to help accomplish the goals of the project.

In conjunction with the launch of Change by Us NYC, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) also announced the second round of the Green Infrastructure Grants program. DEP will be using Change by Us to identify and provide guidance to projects with the potential to receive one of these important awards. In 2011, DEP received 52 applications for the 2011 Green Infrastructure Grant program and selected 15 winners who will share approximately \$3.8 million of funds to build green infrastructure projects that will reduce combined sewer overflows and improve water quality in the New York Harbor.

In partnership with Citizens Committee for New York City, the City will be offering a limited number of grants between \$500 and \$1,000 each – totaling \$20,000 – to support select projects on Change by Us NYC focused on neighborhood gardening and agriculture, tree- and park-stewardship, and composting. Awardees will receive grant money in addition to technical assistance from Citizens Committee for New York City.

Change By Us NYC is supported by the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and grants from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation and the Case Foundation. The project has the potential to become a long-term tool for not only communicating with New Yorkers and collecting their ideas and concerns, but also shifting focus toward collaboration among residents, City government, and non-profit organizations. The site is the latest initiative of *NYC Simplicity*, the Administration's vision for modernizing City government and making it more customer-focused, innovative, and efficient. Through new technologies, including social networking sites like Change by Us NYC, residents, local community groups, and elected officials can work together on solving challenges in their neighborhoods and across the City.

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Contact: Julie Wood (212) 788-2958

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