

NYC Summer Town Hall on Environmental Justice  
NYC Mayor's Office  
Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Adriana Espinoza: Good evening everyone, we'll start in just a moment.

Thanks for joining everyone, we'll wait just a minute or two then get started. We appreciate you being here.

Good evening everyone, we'll wait just one more minute for folks to join and then we'll get started. Thank you.

Okay, welcome everyone. I appreciate you being here. Good evening. We're here today to talk about NYC environmental justice laws and discuss the ways for you to be involved in developing the environmental justice for all report. I am Adriana Espinoza, the senior advisor for environmental justice. I am joined tonight by several members of the environmental justice advisory board. I would invite all the board members to turn on their cameras. I will go first to the chair, Peggy Shepard.

Peggy, you're on mute.

Peggy Shepard: Good evening everyone, I'm Chair of the Mayor's office and director based in Harlem. Welcome to you all tonight.

Rebecca: Good evening, I am a professor at CUNY Law for environmental justice.

Shoshanah Brown: Good evening, I'm a member of the advisory board and CEO of a company based in the South Bronx.

Marco Carrion: I am Marco, I am executive director, we have offices in Bushwick.

Luz Claudio: Good evening, I'm professor of Environmental Medicine at Mt. Sinai.

Omar Freilla: Hi everyone, I am Omar, longtime environmental justice organizer for cooperatives, a Bronx resident working with folks launching environmentally friendly businesses.

Anththu Huoang: I am an advocate and resident for environmental justice working in NYC.

Tina Johnson: Hi, I'm Tina Johnson. I'm a lifelong resident of NYCHA and an environmental justice community activist. Thank you.

Beryl Thurman: I'm executive director of the Conservancy in Staten island.

Adriana Espinoza: Thank you so much to everyone and for everyone joining. Let's go to the next slide please.

Before we get started, I want to take a moment to cover some important Zoom functions. If I'm talking too fast or low and you can't hear, notify us in the chat section so we can address.

The chat feature is on the bottom of the screen, it's a pink bubble that says "chat." If joining from your smart device, same button on the bottom.

We have different accessible services and languages available. We have live language interpretation in Bengali, Mandarin, Cantonese and Spanish. We also have American sign language and captioning. To access the interpretation feature, it's bottom right, you will see an interpretation button. Click that and choose your language. Next to that is the closed caption button. For a smartphone, you choose the bottom right "more" button and choose language from there.

If you are having technical difficulties with sound or captions, please send a direct message so we can help you address. Next slide please.

Here's some instructions for how to join while I wait for folks to join their respective channels. We will have a discussion section afterwards where we will take questions and comments. We would like you to use the Q&A feature at the bottom. You can also send us a message in the chat. We'll try to take as many questions and comments live, if you would like to respond live use the "Raise hand" function and a member of my team will get in contact with you for how to take your question live.

With that, next slide. I'm glad to turn it over to Peggy Shepard, our Chair.

Peggy Shepard: Good evening once again. I'm going to begin with some key definitions so we're all on the same page. What's environmental justice?

For us, it means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all persons regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to development and distribution of

environmental benefits. So many environmental communities are targeted for pollution that are disproportionate.

We are talking about working to address environmental racism by ensuring that we have access to inclusion for people at every level of planning and decision making. It also means people protection from hazards, this includes implementing policies designed to close the gap on environmental health disparities, which are escalating.

Climate justice affects disparities that are social and experience the effects in a way that is exacerbated. It means holding those most responsible for the climate crisis accountable.

How do we do this in real life? We have a video we've made to explain how this works. In the words of many of our members. Next slide.

So again, our video is What is Environmental Justice and it's in the words of New Yorkers. Let's start the video.

Adriana Espinoza: Please bear with us one moment while the video loads.

Peggy Shepard: As we wait for the video to begin, we need to think about environmental conditions and extreme weather in this country and city in the past year. We understand the wildfires in California.

We understand the extreme heat right here in NYC. We know more people will die of extreme heat than other extreme weather events in this city.

Our New York City Mayor's Office has developed a task force that works with communities around New York City to ensure impacts of extreme weather are being addressed here in New York City.

We'd like to hear more about that from you later on this program so we hear how you're experiencing those extreme weather events, and how your community is or is not resilient.

Are we ready or should we move on?

Speaker: We're ready.

[Video captioned]

Adriana Espinoza; Sorry for the delay, I'm getting the video up and the presentation will continue.

[Video]

Peggy Shepard: We're about to get restarted and share our screen.

Alright.

We certainly want to talk about how this EJ program got started, and what we're here to do.

Next slide please.

Again, what is New York City's environmental justice program? That's what we want to present to you over the next couple minutes. Next slide.

In 2017, several years ago, Mayor Bill de Blasio signed laws 60 and 64 to codify environmental justice into city decision making, to make an Advisory Board permanent in New York City to address a variety of environmental justice laws.

To address and develop a plan to address the concerns we've been hearing from so many environmental justice communities over the decades.

These laws were passed after years, decades of grassroots organizing. Including many groups on the Advisory Board. And through the leadership of several city council members. Including Charles, Inez Barron, and Constantinides.

Next slide.

In thinking of the environmental justice laws, let me give you a quick overview of what they've mandated. The law established an Advisory Board of local leaders and experts. Convenes local agencies. Works to identify the environmental justice areas in New York City and outline those concerns through a study or report.

We also seek to publish a web portal which is up with environmental justice maps.

We're about to develop a city wide environmental justice plan to incorporate environmental justice concerns into city decision making. To identify key city initiatives for promoting environmental justice.

This is a roadmap for the city to meet its environmental justice mandate. Assembling the team and working to address the issues. The partnership delivers on 3 main products. Including a report, a map, and a plan.

Next slide please.

Local law 60 requires city wide study of environmental justice issues. Which we name environmental justice for all report. This is the main focus of our town hall as Adriana Espinoza will detail. This includes how this impacts New Yorkers like yrsves and particularly low income communities.

The data will make a public data mapping tool. It will include facilities and infrastructure in your neighborhood. This leads to the creation of New York City's environmental justice plan. City agencies will work with Advisory Boards to address injustice in communities of color and in consultation with impacted communities.

The plan identifies initiatives for promoting environmental justice and outlines a set of recommendations for how agencies should consider equity and decision making processes in program development and policy making.

This work is an ongoing commitment into future administrations. The process of updating the report, web portal, and plan must be reported every five years. Let's talk about the environmental justice team.

We have a diverse team of professionals responsible for implementing 60 and 64. Many of the professionals are here today on the Zoom.

Local law 64 established an independent Advisory Board composed of external leaders. An independent board of academics, public health experts. We are here to advise the city as it implements the laws.

And bring the work to New Yorkers and ensure the work is grounded in lived experiences of New Yorkers living in environmental justice communities. In addition to the Advisory Board board there's an interagency group made of city agencies responsible for delivering on requirements of the environmental justice laws.

The work of the board and the interagency working group is coordinated by the mayor's office of sustainability. Adriana Espinoza will talk now about the environmental justice report.

Adriana.

Adriana Espinoza: Thank you Peggy. Next slide. As Peggy mentioned, the Mayor's Office of climate and sustainability where I work, and the interagency working group is working on the first comprehensive study in New York City. Known as the environmental justice for all report.

The report will study the city's environmental justice areas. Analyze environmental, and climate issues. Identify which communities in New York City are disproportionately impacted by burdens. The report issues city wide. With a focus on how environmental issues impact environmental justice areas. If you're interested in seeing a preliminary map, we'll put a link in the chat so you can see the map.

Next slide.

We're seeking feedback on the draft scope of the EJ for all report. What the scope lays out is, in the environmental justice concerns we'll study, and our proposed approach for analyzing the issues. In the draft scope we propose 3 main objectives the report should meet. Summarized in 3 tasks. Task 1. Assessing the environmental and climate outcomes. Task 2, reviewing city programs and policies impacting environmental justice.

And task 3 is examining how city agencies engage communities on environmental decision making. I'll go into each of these in detail in the following slides.

Prior to the development of the draft scope, the Advisory Board board with the city held a community engagement process to hear from New Yorkers what issues they want to see in the report so it addresses real life issues. This targeted low income and communities of color. We had a 90 day period earlier this year and a Town Hall this year. If you want to see what we heard, we'll send a link in the chat with a summary of what we heard.

We used the feedback in the first comment period to develop a draft scope. Now we're in a comment period in the draft scope. Next slide.

Task 1. Analyzing environmental and climate vulnerabilities. Goal of task 1 is identifying how environmental burdens are distributed in the city. We'll identify the environmental justice concerns we'll study. We'll identify the concerns in a moment. We'll use data from the state and federal level. Look at complaints by New Yorkers and violations of regulations. And look at climate change projections where environmental justice concerns are most severe. We'll estimate the investment in key programs and projects that advance environmental justice.

We'll look at investments and incentives that support renewable energy, parks, publicly owned space, climate change adaptation, and mitigation.

There's a lot more detail about our approach to task 1 in the full draft scope. I encourage you to give it a read. For all the environmental justice concerns, we'll attempt to identify the locations of where the issues are happening.

Try to understand both the physical presence of that issue overload with social and economic vulnerability. If we don't have sufficient data to understand the issue the report includes a data report agencies can take up. So we can understand how it impacts New Yorkers.

Details of task 1, we hope to have a priority populations or areas of action to address concerns based on findings of the report, based on need, vulnerability, disparity. Next slide.

Before I lay out concerns we propose to study in the report I want to give insight on how we decided what issues to include. The foundation was formed from the public comment period. For a full report, read the full scope at [nyc.gov/ejstudy](http://nyc.gov/ejstudy)

The interagency working group, taking what we learned from the comment period, took a broad approach. We looked for environmental issues with direct link to poor environmental and health outcomes. We considered a broader set of issues looking at quality of life. Border set of issues contributing to quality of life. Based on the principle we deserve to live, work and play in communities free of harmful conditions.

It looks like it's not loading. One second to load the next slide.

Are we able to go to slide 16?

There we go.

Sorry about the delay. There are 16 proposed environmental justice concerns in the draft scope. We'll go through each of them. First, exposure to hazardous materials. This means exposure to lead, including in private housing, public housing, in your workplace or public spaces like schools, community gardens, parks.

Exposure to hazardous materials also means how close are you to toxic sites like superfund sites, toxic release inventory sites, remedial sites like ground fill sites and restoration sites. And proximity to open petroleum spills.

Adriana Espinoza: We are also going to look at exposure to indoor environmental pollutants like asbestos and particulates. The energy cost burden and how much of New Yorkers income is being spent on utilities. I'm turning it over to Tina, do you want to weigh in on how these issues show up for New Yorkers?

Tina Johnson: For many New Yorkers, the disabled, the elderly, environmental justice begins at home. Some of these environmental justice conditions I have experienced and some I have not, I am concerned with how you are living.

Accessibility issues related to getting in and out of the building, chronic exposure to debris and asbestos in stairways, lack of elevator service, poor oversight of these conditions, peeling paint, chronic lack of heat in the winter, unaffordable utilities in the winter, no water, no hot water, poor sanitation, overexposure to debris, or lack of access to green space or green common spaces, composting, pest management to create a pest free building and last of all noise pollution.

These are lots of different categories that flesh out the three topics of environmental justice concerns.

I'm ready for the next slide and will pass to Omar.

Adriana Espinoza: Thank you Tina. A lot of the others, I saw a question in the chat about this, are these issues in order of priority? No they are not. I'm just going through as it flows. Many of the issues on this slide will be familiar to the activists on this call. Proximity to transfer stations, the smell of having waste facilities nearby, outdoor air quality and exposure to air pollution, noise which is something Tina mentioned. By noise we're talking about construction and heavy infrastructure.

We also have land use issues and decisions being made by the city, whether they contribute to other issues listed in the report. Traffic and congestion, traffic safety, the access you have to alternative modes of transportation. Are you able to take the bus,



the subway, ride a bike? Can you easily have access to get around the city without having a car? These are the next couple of issues, I'd like to ask Omar if he wants to weigh in about how these things show up.

Omar: I live in West Farms in the Bronx. Right next to where I live is two blocks from the Crossbronx Expressway, I've always lived within a few blocks of a highway in the Bronx. It's full of truck traffic, always packed. This highway like many others is one that was built without regard to the communities that were here and because this is an area that had become racially mixed.

The communities that have been here longer than the industries that have come in later have been dumping grounds. The trucks come through, go to Hunts Point nearby, we have power plants in the district, lots of industries take advantage of the fact that we are used for the things that the rest of the city doesn't want to take on.

All these issues are interconnected. The land use, the outdoor air quality, this is known as asthma alley because of the heavy concentration of trucks and vehicles and industries that have come in and used the area as a dumping ground.

Adriana Espinoza: Thank you Omar. Next slide. To go through the rest of the issues we're also including drinking water quality, proximity to impaired water bodies. What I mean by impaired is illegal sewer connections, illegal discharges. Facilities that are permitted by the state, where there is overflow, a sewer system outfall.

Fertilizer and other types of runoff impair water bodies because of trash and other impairments. Also, sewer infrastructure quality and management is not limited to street flooding, drainage issues and smells. We're also going to look at non-park green resources as well as the quality and maintenance of these spaces. We'll also look at fresh food options in the neighborhood.

I'll ask Beryl to weigh in.

Beryl Thurman: I'd like to weigh in on green spaces. In Staten Island we have very little green space, especially considering the size. The majority of the population is on the North Shore. Development has eliminated green space and continues to do so. We fought to keep freshwater wetlands, we have more than any other borough and we're losing all of them one by one each time a developer purchases.

They are not protected by the city or state. They are vital in reducing the floodwaters when we have downpours. The water starts at the top, makes its way down and makes

its way into our basements which then causes people to have to deal with mold issues and having to run various salt pumps and dehumidifiers year round, so damages the foundation of the house.

This ends up being money we pay out of pocket for repairs whereas if we had the right type of infrastructure, the right sewers, that would be storm drains, catch basins, rain guards, if we used the freshwater wetlands as areas of water retention, this would all help reduce the cost of living in NYC by not having to have these extraordinary electrical bills because we're trying to substitute for not having good infrastructure.

In terms of a good sewer treatment plan, it has stunk since the moment it was help. The only time we have had DEP own the problems was when the DEC came in and gave them a summons, that was one time. We spent years to get agencies to be responsive and responsible for what they do and don't do in our communities.

Adriana Espinoza: Thank you Beryl. We would be remiss if we looked at all these issues but did not also look at the reality of the climate crisis and how they exacerbate these issues. We'll review climate risk and vulnerability, especially those that have a focus on human health and social vulnerability.

The NYC panel for climate change serves as the basis for understanding, we'll look at and synthesize a broad range of reports, literature and community based adaptation plans. Our hope is that wherever we have geographic data, the report will include the cities and the impacts being experienced. Extreme heat, heavy rains, coastal flooding, droughts, etc. Next slide.

Moving on to task 2, this part of the reports will analyze the city's contribution to environmental justice. The goal is to evaluate and identify how city government plays a role towards environmental justice and injustice.

While most of this work focuses on current programs, we're also proposing to provide a historical perspective. Governments have played a role in environmental inequality and racism.

We'll review academic scholarship and legal analysis. What we expect to come out of task 2 in the report is an analysis that includes a list of current city programs that help advance environmental justice and a description of how those programs were designed and executed as well as how they contribute to concerns and how they contribute to those concerns.

Finally, we will have a list of ways that other cities and states have chosen to advance environmental justice goals.

Something we're looking for some feedback on is if we are going to come up with a list of programs that advance environmental justice we have to say what does it mean for a city program to advance this? The criteria on this slide will identify what the report will evaluate. The programs that fit this criteria will be evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively.

We're proposing that a city program will reduce environmental programs or if it was designed to improve the quality of life, or bolster resilience hazards, advances environmental justice but only if that program is a citywide program that can have a positive impact or the program is a target neighborhood specific program based on vulnerability, need or historic inequality.

We propose that in order for a city program to advance environmental justice it must allow for public participation in decision making on the development of that program.

If you have thoughts about our proposed criteria, we would love to hear. Next slide.

Okay, finally we have task 3 of the report. Task 3 will be reviewing public engagement and how the city engages with you all in environmental decision making. We want to analyze how the city treats New Yorkers in decision making. We are doing that to identify opportunities for improving the engagement processes and finding better ways to incorporate principles in engagement.

Our approach is to identify the types of public engagement, what is legally required for engagement like processes such as zoning with formal public engagement. We also want to look at informal engagement. Things that aren't legally required, like the creation of task forces and stakeholder groups. How and who does the city engage on these issues? We're going to evaluate these different processes to see whether they meet the standard of fair treatment and meaningful involvement.

We want to push beyond what the federal government deems fair and meaningful. We're in the report proposing principles, racial justice and social justice movements to see if there are opportunities to push beyond federal guidance. We hope to then outline how we can change our processes to have better participation by populations in environmental justice areas.

What we hope to come out of this section of the report is our own principles and values on meaningful involvement that we can give as a guide to city agencies.

Maybe also a toolkit showcasing examples of meaningful participation for city agencies to consult and one thing I would like to reiterate is that we want to learn from principles and values from the environmental justice movement. Looking at things like the 17 Principles of environmental justice. There's lots of playbooks so to speak on how to treat people and we want the city to take a deep look at those types of values to see if we can adopt them ourselves. Next slide please.

That was a lot of information. I encourage you to read the full draft scope. I want to talk about how you can get involved. I'll switch it. Marco.

Marco Carrion: Thank you Adriana. Next slide. This Advisory Board is committed to this being driven by community priorities. We want to hear from you to root environmental justice in real life issues New York City residents are facing. Over 1000 New Yorkers share health issues. Those stories and comments shape the job scope.

We are gathering feedback on the current draft scope. Looking at this slide in front of you, we mapped out the entire process. And the future comment period includes feedback on the environmental justice for all draft report. Including EJ plans and commenting on the draft EJ plan. We've pushed to build community partnership at every phase and ask you to stay involved. The dates are in front of you. Let's move on to the next slide.

We need to hear from you.

The next step is how to share. You can submit online. [Nyc.gov/ejstudy](https://nyc.gov/ejstudy). Or you can email us at [ej@climate.nyc.gov](mailto:ej@climate.nyc.gov)

Or by leaving a voicemail message at 212-788-4144

Once again, 212-788-4144

Very important. All comments must be received by September 5 2021. Regardless of the method used we have to receive your comment by September 5 2021.

The EJ Advisory Board boards are doing extensive outreach. We need your help spreading to your networks. If you're on this Zoom today you're part of this process. We expect you to give us feedback. Share with your neighbors, synagogues, churches,

mosques, tenants. We want a representative voice of all EJ communities. For that we rely on you. Thank you for being our partner in this process. We turn it over to Rebecca.

Thank you Marco. Next slide please.

After the comment period ends there are many ways to make your voice heard. Please register to vote. There are ballot items on adding EJ to the constitution. Regardless of if you're registered, get to know the elected officials. Call them. Make sure your concerns are part of their agenda. They know what the people they represent are about. Join an organization in your neighborhood.

There are many and your community probably has one. Make your voice heard. We'll send information in the chat on opportunities available to you. Next slide.

We are eager to hear your thoughts on the draft scope of this report. Your comments are what will help us ensure that the report is rooted in the real lives, lived experiences of New Yorkers. Please share your thoughts. We'd love your thoughts on any part of the presentation.

A couple questions. Are the environmental justice concerns representative of your priorities? Are we missing it? Can you give specific examples of programs or activities that have improved your neighborhood that you want to do elsewhere? Can you tell ways they negatively contributed? We want to hear that as well.

Finally, what does meaningful involvement look like? What makes meaningful involvement? What paths ensure your voice is heard in the process? We'll open the floor. Please use the Zoom Q&A function rather than chat. Use the raise hand function if you want to share thoughts on Zoom.

Our team will message you on Zoom to share your questions live. Thank you Adriana.

Adriana Espinoza: Thank you Rebecca and board members for participating. I'm going to put up a quick reminder. If you can go to the next slide please.

We'll circle back to the questions. I want to provide information on how to leave a public comment. We want to answer questions and respond to feedback for the next 20-25 minutes but won't be able to get to everyone. Leave your feedback on the website, via email, or voicemail. Can you go back to the previous slide with questions?

I'll leave these up a moment. We're going to take these questions and put them in the Q&A section of Zoom. You can type your responses in the Q&A function. We'll have an opportunity to bring you to the floor to join the discussion. If you're interested in asking the question live, use the raise hand feature. A team member will reach out and get you set up to make your comment live on the air.

I'm going to get right into it. And start with the first question.

Are the environmental justice concerns that we've proposed in task 1 representative of your priorities and lived experiences? Are we missing any major environmental justice issues? If we are, what are they? Start putting your responses.

Into the chat and Q&A. I'll start responding to those momentarily.

One question I have is are the concerns in order of priority or all equal weight?

They're not in order of priority. They're all equal weight. We did have in the scope, we tried to consider issues that can have the maximum impact on environmental justice. Issues that haven't been studied and don't have a lot of data and reports on them. We hope to focus on those issues to contribute to the knowledge base out there.

I also want to invite our board members to rejoin us at this time.

Please bear with me while I go through and try to start responding to some of your comments. There are a lot of them, thank you this is great.

We can go ahead and stop sharing the slides now.

Again we'll copy and paste all the questions and put them in the Q&A so you can see all the questions. I have one question here.

Let's see.

There's questions about Staten Island. To the points made earlier, what can be done right now by the board about egregious land use decisions currently being implemented? Will you support a call for the attorney general to launch an investigation into the land use decision about the wetland.

This question was to board members. Our work is focused on completing the report, completing the plan, delivering what we're required under local law. The Advisory

Board advises a city on those issues. They're an independent board and advocate to the city as they see fit. Anyone on the board want to respond to any part of that question?

Peggy Shepard: That's exactly right Adriana and that's been happening.

Adriana Espinoza: OK. Thank you.

Here's a thought from a member of the audience. About environmental justice concerns. An emerging concern is the rapid construction of last mile [sp?] warehouses. They're encouraging a city wide analysis of environmental e-commerce. That issue isn't mentioned in the report, in the draft scope. Appreciate you raising that issue. Thoughts from the board on that topic?

Rebecca Bratspies: It's important and should be included in one of the categories. I'm not sure which one. The city should be looking at it in this report.

Peggy Shepard: It also goes to the issue of how complete our EJ mapping will be. Will we look at certain kinds of land use?

Will we be noting certain grocery stores. Or no grocery stores. It really goes to how comprehensive our mapping should be.

Beryl Thurman; We should also look at storage facilities and what abundance they pop up. It's said storage facilities are placemarkers for proposed development once an EJ community goes to being the next hipster location. For gentrification purposes. We need to look at where the storage facilities are taking place in our communities. That can be part of the mapping too.

Adriana Espinoza: one thing I'll encourage the audience to take a look at, in the draft scope we list every type of infrastructure we propose to analyze in the report.

I don't recall that e-commerce warehouses were on the list but we can take a look to see if it's covered there. Thank you for the thoughtful feedback.

What about criteria such as access to good healthcare, good education. What about access to clean energy sources?

That also wasn't in the draft scope, board members?

Shoshana Brown: It'd be good to include health studies. We talked about asthma, it'd be good to figure out which ones to include and include health equity in the work.

Tina Johnson: We need to also plan for public health emergencies. Incorporate some of our urban planning, our mtgtn and planning for the environment with those things in mind.

Adriana Espinoza: I had a really good question. I'd put it mostly to the board. About the role of the report and its impact. Question from the audience, do you have any stats or anecdotes regarding how much of the report is going to be adapted or implemented or has led to a lasting change.

How do you make sure the report isn't ignored with real impact?

Rebecca Bratspies: What's important is that the Advisory Board is not writing the report. The city is writing the report. We were constituted to advise the city, with your feedback. It's on all of us to make this report something the city not only writes and puts on a shelf. But writes and uses to transform what it's doing so our neighborhoods have cleaner air, cleaner housing, more greenhouses.

Peggy Shepard: I'd also say that it's important for all of you on this call today to read that report and to begin to hold the city accountable for key areas of that report relevant to your community. It's really you responding, letting the mayor and city council and others know your concern. And this is what the city report says.

You got to work to hold everyone's feet to the fire. It takes all of us in EJ communities and allies to support and push to ensure the plan is implemented. And make sure we have a robust EJ administration.

Omar Freilla: This is particularly critical now in this stage and year ahead. This was begun in the DeBlasio administration and now a new administration. There's no stated commitment to the process. To the extent there's a commitment to environmental justice and making sure we have a high quality report. To get to what's on the city's plate and what can they do better. Then to take it even further. We're in New York.

To take it further and find solutions to move the city in a new direction requires organizing and continued movement and pressure on the city.

Luz Claudio: With the infrastructure package that has been approved moving forward, it's not only about looking back for things that exist in our environment that impact our



health, but also moving forward on those problems and seeing how environmental justice might be applied in the infrastructure for change moving forward. I think the timeliness of it is important for our impetus in driving us forward as well. Thank you Omar for that.

Tina Johnson: I think this will also bring some concrete focus on the issue of climate change and the environment in general. We've spent a few weeks on red alert, the end of the world, but we all have some control over the situation and this is a huge opportunity we can use or lose.

It's an opportunity for us to move forward in the future, not just correct the building envelope but correct the environment as a whole. At one time, in an efficient way, so that people can not just live and survive but thrive. The environmental justice report is about helping people live in a good environment but I want to see people thrive in an environment! And I don't think that's unfair to ask for a city like New York.

Adriana Espinoza: Thank you everyone. If you would like to make a comment live, raise your hand and someone will message you and get you set up, please respond to that message so we can speak directly to you. In the meantime, I wanted to move on to another question which is about city versus regional environmental justice issues.

It says, "will you be examining how policies impact outside of the city, such as our garbage being incinerated in Pennsylvania? Or builds on indigenous lands in Canada?" The draft scope does not look outside of the five boroughs, if you would like to push for that expansion, please send your feedback in the comments that says as much. Any board member want to add to that?

Peggy Shepard: It's an important issue to consider because NYC's environment isn't in a world of it's own, there are state and tristate issues that impact on some of the issues of our environment and access to certain services and obviously it will be more comprehensive to understand those impacts and influences and to see if there's a way to collaborate.

Adriana Espinoza: Thank you Peggy. We're almost out of time, I see someone named Tanya from Inwood that wants to make a comment live. Whenever you're ready Tanya.

Tanya: Thank you so much for this wonderful program. I chair a taskforce, a community led effort to address excessive noise pollution. I've found it an uphill battle. We're talking about noise from illegal fireworks, dirtbikes, open restaurants blasting

music so loud outside that you can hear it ten blocks away, illegal unpermitted parties. These are the problems we're dealing with.

There's not a lot of urgency when dealing with city agencies in thinking this is important but it's proven that it's a public health issue. I'm wondering what this effort will do for improving the credibility of these things aside from things like construction?

Our community has been in the news for these problems, we've been trying as community residents to do something about it, we've found it's very difficult to address because it becomes dismissed or political or accusations of gentrification, we're just caring about people who just moved here but that's not true at all, many taskforce members have lived here for generations. So that's my question, how will it improve the credibility of the noise issues I mentioned?

Adriana Espinoza: To be transparent, we had our own internal debate about the issue of noise pollution. Right now it is in the scope, we plan on analyzing noise pollution in the city. We outline construction, proximity to airports, things like that but, maybe the environmental justice report can provide the assessment that your taskforce is looking for.

I don't want to misspeak but I don't know how many assessments there are citywide for noise pollution. Part of it is that it's difficult to address, I appreciate the comment. Any board members want to say something about noise pollution? Otherwise, we have one more person for a live comment.

Great, now I want to turn it over to Sally Fisher who wanted to ask a question about water quality.

Sally: I've looked quickly at the draft scope and I had a couple comments. I guess you address water quality as number ten. I guess my comment would be that you should look not just at drinking water but quality of water in our rivers, streams, etc. and I test water in Northern Manhattan.

I test for how much crap is in the water because of all the overflow, but I think it needs to be measured. We can look at our waters to determine other things. I think it makes it stronger, take the word "drinking" out of it and make it water quality in general. That would include water testing with the NY Water Channel Association.

Some of the work is being done on the shorelines so the water is better. Just quickly, when I was reading through, the noise issue was significant. On page 17, task 2.3

where you say "worsens quality of life not limited to mobility, accessibility." It's a public health and safety issue, I'm particularly concerned in Northern Manhattan for failure to address water quality issues.

Adriana Espinoza: Thank you Sally. We are out of time, to quickly respond, the decision to separate those out was to make clarity for the reader, looking at drinking water and water bodies, but your point is well taken. There are many great unanswered comments and questions and we will save all of them, but we encourage you to save them. Before we close, I have one more question. How can local groups connect to engage in this process in a more organized and connected way? I would encourage you to sign up for email updates on our websites, [nyc.gov/environmentaljustice](http://nyc.gov/environmentaljustice)

We send out emails when we have events, the next thing after this Townhall is getting on the People's Bus to take a bus to every borough to promote this draft, we'd love to have you stay involved. I'll turn it over to Peggy.

Peggy Shepard: Good evening, once again great discussion and so great hearing from our fellow New Yorkers about the concerns you have in your neighborhoods. Thank you for those comments, please talk to your neighbors and friends who might not have had an opportunity this evening. Is there a deadline Adriana?

Adriana Espinoza: September 5th.

Peggy Shepard: You have another several weeks to mail in your comments. We really need to hear from you because your comments help shape the report as we begin to finalize the data and the study. Again, I want to say that the Mayor says this is a priority for his administration and it's obviously also in step with the efforts towards climate change at the state and federal level with Biden distributing energy benefits to frontline communities.

Identifying environmental justice concerns and becoming aware of where our communities are becomes more and more important each month and gives a window of opportunity for more investment. This environmental justice report is only the beginning. Once we have a plan together we will then be able to roll that out and begin to see some of these concrete issues addressed.

Again, there will be a plan for all of you to hold the city accountable. We have to ensure our next administration understands these issues and makes a commitment to make sure our city is an environmental justice champion.

Thank you so much and Goodnight, thank you to all of our advisory members and Goodnight!

Tina Johnson: Goodnight New York City!

Adriana Espinoza: Goodnight!

End of town hall.

\*\*\*This transcript provides a meaning-for-meaning summary to facilitate communication access. TypeWell speech-to-text service may not be a fully verbatim record of the proceedings.

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