

NYC

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Buildings

Robert D. LiMandri
Commissioner

2010-2013 Strategic Plan





Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Buildings

Robert D. Ullmann
Commissioner

Table of Contents

Agency Overview and History	3
Significant Achievements During the Previous Term (2006-2009)	4
External Changes Impacting Agency Mission	17
Strategic Areas	18
Preface: Innovation and Strategic Planning	19
Major Initiatives: Overview Schedule	20
Major Initiatives: Facilitating Development	21
Major Initiatives: Commitment to Safety	33
Major Initiatives: Community Partnerships	40



Agency Overview and History

The New York City Department of Buildings ensures the safe and lawful use of more than 975,000 buildings and properties by enforcing the City's Construction Codes, the Zoning Resolution, the New York State Labor Law and the New York State Multiple Dwelling Law. Our primary operations include performing plan examinations, inspecting properties, issuing construction permits and licensing trades. We also issue Certificates of Occupancy and Place of Assembly permits.

The Department of Buildings first operated as an independent agency in 1862 when the city formed the "Department for the Survey and Inspection of Buildings." As New York City has grown and evolved, so has the government's structure. Throughout the past 150 years, the Department survived government reorganizations under many different names either as an independent agency or as a part of another agency.

In 1977, the City divided the Department of Housing and Buildings into two agencies – the Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the Department of Buildings – leading to today's modernized agency.

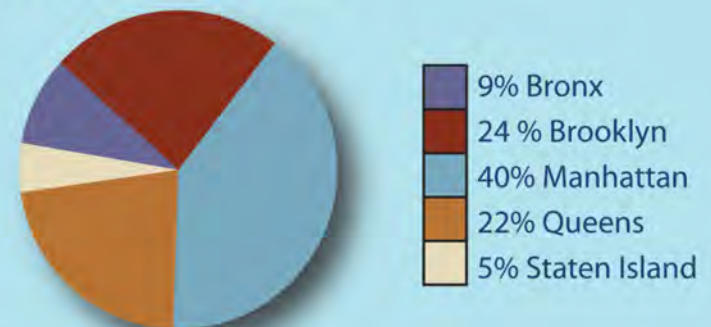
BUILDINGS BY THE NUMBERS

Buildings	975,000
Employees	1,159
Inspectors	366
Plan Examiners	190
Borough Offices	5

2009 AT A GLANCE

311 Calls	492,200
Plan Reviews	440,110
Inspections	413,981
Construction Permits	113,566
Violations	63,624
Licenses & Registrations	16,445
Stop Work Orders	10,009
Certificates of Occupancy	8,394
New Building Applications	2,404

2009 PERMITS ISSUED



Areas of Significant Achievements During the Previous Term (2006 – 2009)

SAFETY



The Department is dedicated to increasing building and construction safety through new regulations, increased enforcement, industry outreach and accountability.

SAFETY

DEVELOPMENT



The Department is committed to facilitating safe and compliant development across the City. Throughout the last term, the Department continued to work towards transforming into a modernized municipal institution.

SERVICE

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



The Department's determination to become a premier government agency has meant engaging in community affairs and becoming a leader in public service beyond the Department's traditional roles and functions.

INTEGRITY

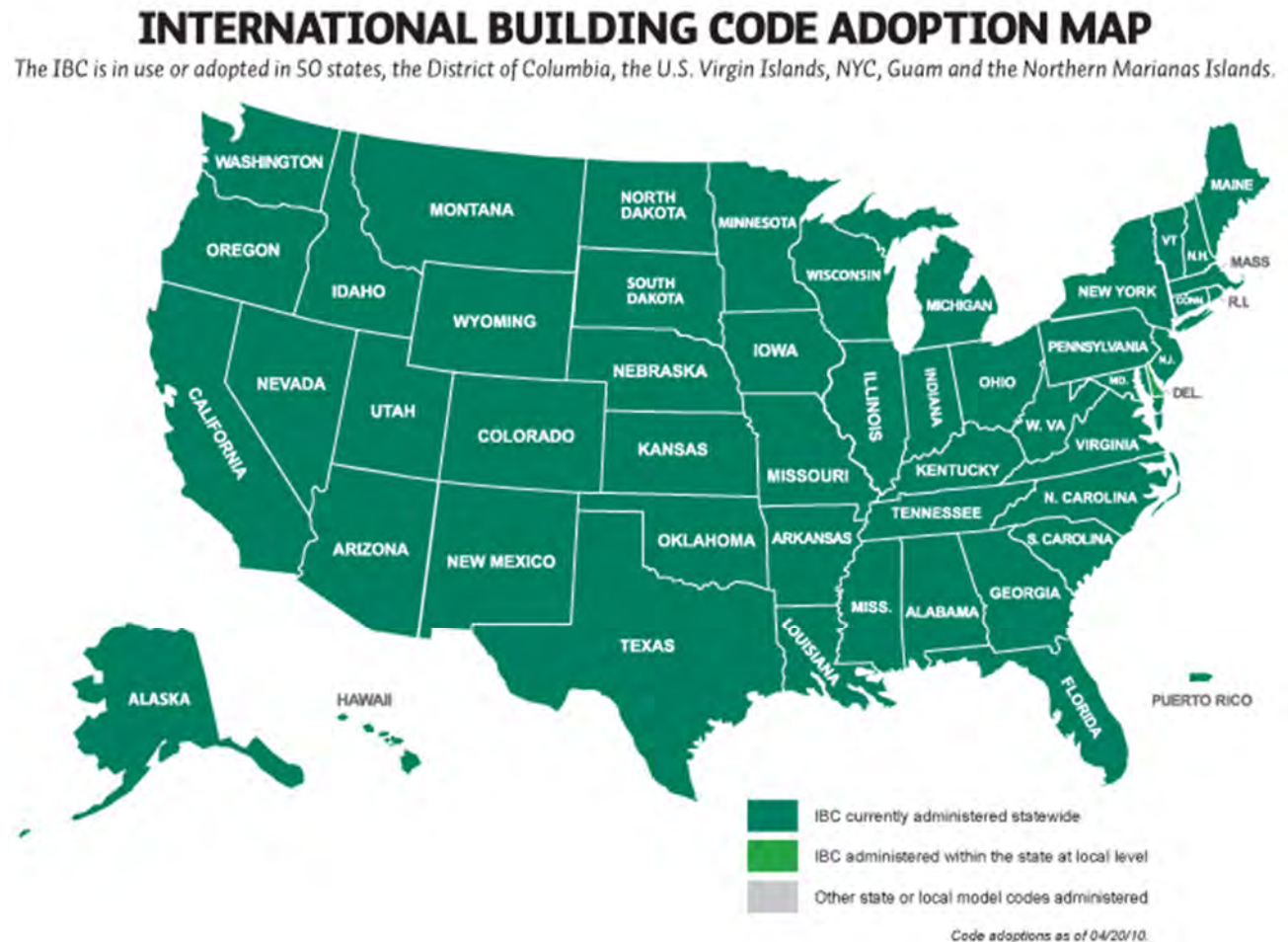
Safety Achievement:

2008 NYC Construction Codes

More than 400 experts from the construction, real estate and labor industries, government agencies and academia volunteered to amend the 1968 Building Code incorporating new technologies and building practices. The new NYC Construction Codes were signed into law by Mayor Bloomberg in July 2007 and took effect in July 2008 representing the first major overhaul in more than 40 years.

The implementation of the new Codes fulfills Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's commitment to overhaul the City's construction codes. Modeled after the International Building Code, the new NYC Construction Codes meet the needs of the City's dense urban environment. Benefits include:

- New Violation Classification System
- New Safeguards Required During Construction
- Special Inspections to Monitor for Compliance as Construction Proceeds
- Expanded Structural Safety
- Enhanced Emergency Systems
- Sprinklers Required in More Buildings



Safety Achievement:

41 Local Laws Enhancing Construction Safety



Safer construction means a safer New York City. While many contractors are prioritizing safety, others need stronger laws and stricter enforcement to comply. With new safety regulations and new enforcement programs, the Department is improving construction safety and New Yorkers' quality of life.

With support from Mayor Bloomberg, City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn and Housing and Buildings Committee Chairman Erik Martin Dilan, the Department has been able to enhance its oversight and enforcement power to meet today's safety concerns. With these new laws, the Department has increased construction safety throughout the City.

- 47/06 Demolition Work without a Permit Penalty Increases
- 48/06 Stop Work Order Violations Penalty Increases
- 03/07 Heightens Oversight of State-Disciplined Professionals
- 04/07 Mandates Sanctions for Professional Certification Abuse
- 16/07 Mandates Daily Suspended Scaffold Inspections
- 17/07 Mandates Suspended Scaffold Notice
- 18/07 Increases Rigger Safety Violation Penalties
- 24/07 Alteration Permits
- 33/07 New 2008 NYC Construction Codes
- 36/07 Mandates 1-,2-,3-Family Home Contractor Registration
- 37/07 Increases Illegal Conversion Penalties
- 38/07 Improves Façade Inspection Timing
- 65/07 Increases Blasting Safety; Blasting Notice
- 24/08 Heightens Scaffold Safety Training
- 27/08 Formalizes State Notice of Professionals' Disciplinary Action
- 29/08 Formalizes Department Accident Reporting
- 33/08 Requires Structurally Compromised Building Inspections
- 34/08 Increases Penalties
- 37/08 Requires Retaining Wall Inspections
- 40/08 Mandates Concrete Site Safety Managers
- 41/08 Enhances Site Safety Plans
- 44/08 Strengthens Training Requirements
- 45/08 Limits Tower Crane Nylon Sling Use
- 46/08 Mandates Tower Crane Safety Meetings
- 06/09 Project Site Safety Monitors
- 08/09 Safety Registration Numbers
- 27/09 Brownfield Remediation
- 35/09 Asbestos Abatement Smoking Prohibition
- 36/09 Construction & Demolition Smoking Prohibition
- 37/09 Asbestos Abatement Permitting
- 38/09 Egress Enhancements
- 39/09 Abatement Notification & Data Sharing
- 57/09 Handheld Tool Demolition
- 58/09 Standpipe/Sprinkler Color Coding
- 59/09 Standpipe Inspection
- 60/09 Standpipe/Sprinkler Cutting & Capping
- 63/09 Standpipe/Sprinkler Pressure Testing
- 64/09 Standpipe Pressurized Alarms
- 70/09 Stalled Sites Safety Program
- 71/09 Vent Piping
- 77/09 Asbestos Abatement & Demolition

Safety Achievement:

Construction, Demolition & Abatement (CDA)

Following the tragic fire in 2007 at 130 Liberty that led to the death of 2 firefighters, Former Deputy Mayor Edward Skyler convened the Construction, Demolition & Abatement Working Group (CDA) to improve safety, enhance coordination, strengthen standpipe and sprinkler safety and increase oversight at construction, demolition, and asbestos abatement sites throughout New York City.

Representatives from the Department of Buildings, Department of Environmental Protection, Fire Department, and the Mayor's Office of Operations, developed **33 recommendations** focusing on:

- Inspection processes
- General oversight
- Field operations and
- Data sharing

As of June 2010, **27 out of those 33 recommendations** have been implemented.



Safety Achievement:

Reduction in Construction Fatalities

To increase construction safety and quality of life, the Department launched new programs to emphasize the importance of safety on the job site and at home. This strategy led to an **84% decline in construction fatalities** and has enabled our staff to interact with New Yorkers in more ways than ever before. Additionally, the Department has also successfully worked with the industry to increase their reporting of incidents and accidents.

Living Safely Campaign (2009-2010)

Following a tragic Brooklyn fire in November 2009 that killed three people, inspectors and community liaisons raised awareness about the typical signs of an illegal conversion and the potential consequences of living in such a dwelling. **More than 65,000 flyers have been distributed in 11 languages.**

Safety Harness Campaign (2009)

Citywide advertising campaign that tells workers they have a right to a safety harness and reminds them of the importance of using this safety equipment properly. **More than 20,000 pamphlets have been distributed in 7 languages.**

Annual Construction Safety Week

An annual series of events where the Department joins with other City agencies and organizations to reinforce safe construction practices on job sites, review new requirements and meet with industry members and the public to identify building trends citywide.

Annual Retaining Wall Program

Annual Inspection Program that allows property owners to call 311 for inspections of their retaining walls without the threat of violations.



Safety Achievement:

High-Risk Construction Oversight Study

An increase in construction accidents and deaths, and two midtown Manhattan crane collapses brought widespread focus on the dangers in high-rise construction in densely packed cities.

With \$4 million of funding dedicated the Mayor, the Department of Buildings launched the **High-Risk Construction Oversight** (HRCO) initiative, an intensive study and gap analysis of the three highest risk construction operations:

1. Cranes and Hoists
2. Excavations
3. Concrete

A team of over 30 HRCO consultant experts identified areas of interest for construction operations and regulatory procedures, **visited 636 construction sites**, and drafted **66 safety recommendations**.

As of June 2010, **10 out of those 66 recommendations have been implemented**.



Safety Achievement: Crane Safety Initiatives

The Department implemented a number of initiatives to improve crane safety, including:

Tower Crane Safety Laws

Requiring detailed plans to erect and dismantle a tower crane, a 30-hour safety training course for tower crane workers, inspections and certifications by an engineer of record, and prohibiting the use of nylon strings except where recommended by the crane manufacturer.

Tower Crane Requirements

Third party inspections of tower cranes are required prior to permit issuance and a five-year repair history must be maintained.

Additional Training for Crane Inspectors

The Department's crane inspectors now receive an average of 206 hours of training, including training with FDNY and the Crane Institute of America.

Inspection Checklists

Crane inspectors now examine more than 200 items on an inspection – nearly 6 times the items inspected previously.

Crane Tracking Agreements with other Cities

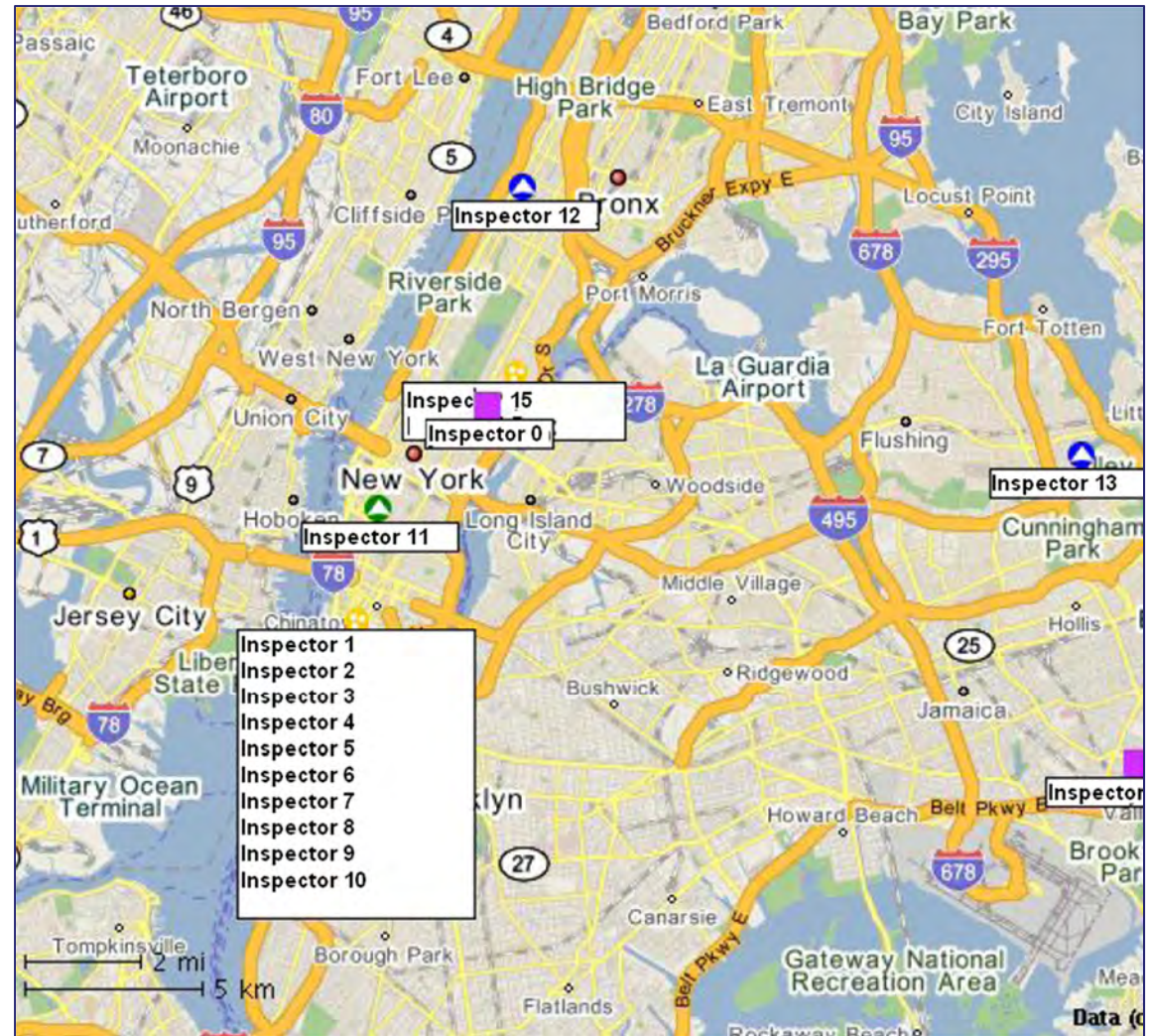
The Department has put into place agreements with both Chicago and Philadelphia to share tower crane information.



Safety Achievement: Inspector GPS Tracking

In August of 2009, the Department announced the use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) to increase the integrity, efficiency and safety of all inspections. The new GPS-tracking system was a simple, innovative way to ensure inspectors reach their assigned locations and are held accountable for their important work. Using a web-based system inspection unit heads can monitor the real time movements of their inspectors.

The technology also allows inspectors to respond to an emergency faster than ever before and provides greater safety when working in the field.



Development Achievement: eFiling Initial Phases

The Department of Buildings launched eFiling for Electrical Work Permits in 2006, allowing licensed electricians registered with the Department to apply for electrical permits online. Subsequently, the Department launched eFiling and eSubmit in 2008 for construction applications, giving applicants the ability to electronically file construction work applications and submit required documents.

Phase 1: eFiling – Electrical Work Permits *(82% of permits filed online in 2009)*

Registered electrician can file electrical permit applications via the Internet, pay by credit card, and immediately print the permit from a computer.

Phase 2: eFiling – Prepare Job Applications *(83% of jobs prepared online in 2009)*

Applications can be prepared on a web-based interface that provides automatic error checking and information validation using real-time data to assist applicants. An enhanced feature allows for frequently-typed information to be pre-populated to save time. A user-friendly navigation bar makes it easy to complete applications in any order.

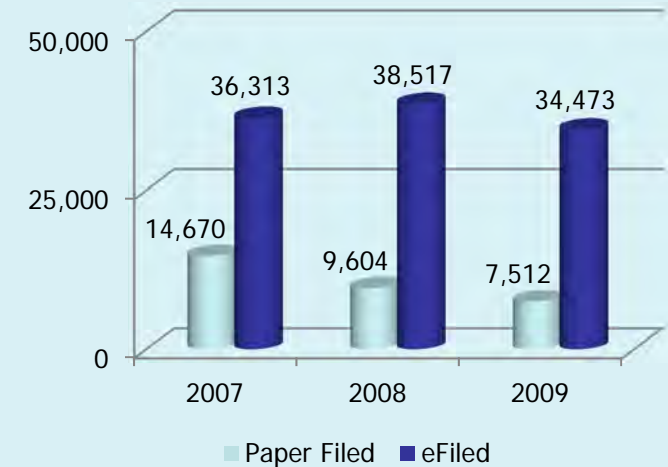
Phase 3: eSubmit for Required Items *(Applicants can submit over 200 different items since September 2009)*

Using eSubmit, many documents to satisfy Required Items can be uploaded remotely from home or office rather than bringing them to the borough offices for scanning. Once documents are reviewed for accuracy and completion, an email notification is sent to the applicant. Approved documents then become accessible to the public on the Department's website.

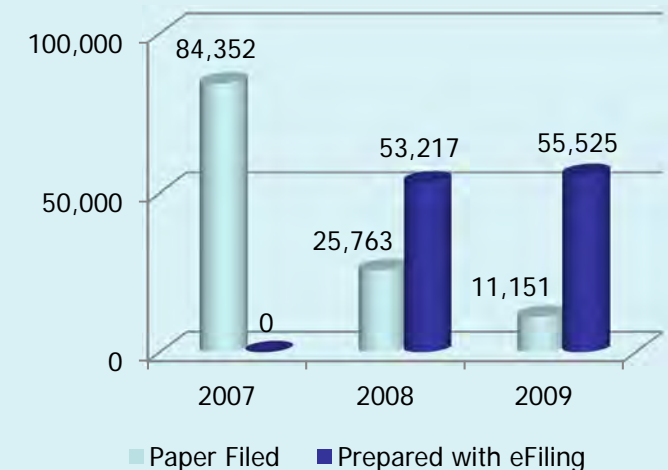
Phase 4: eFiling expansion - LAAs, Permit Renewals, PAAs, and other disciplines

These phases are to be planned and implemented over the coming years. See page 22 for the eFiling expansion plan.

Electrical Permits



Job Applications



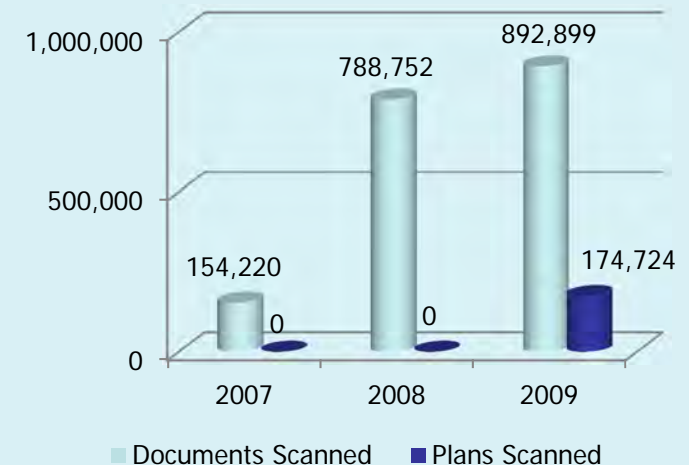
Development Achievement: Electronic Document Management

Buildings Scan and Capture Network (BSCAN) – is a document management system whereby the contents of job folders are scanned to enable electronic process, storage and online retrieval of documents associated with New Building and Alteration filing applications.

Phase 1 (2007): paper documents associated with construction permit applications. Anyone can retrieve via BISWeb.

Phase 2 (2009): storage and internal online retrieval of approved plans including the scanning of architectural plans.

BSCAN Documents Processed

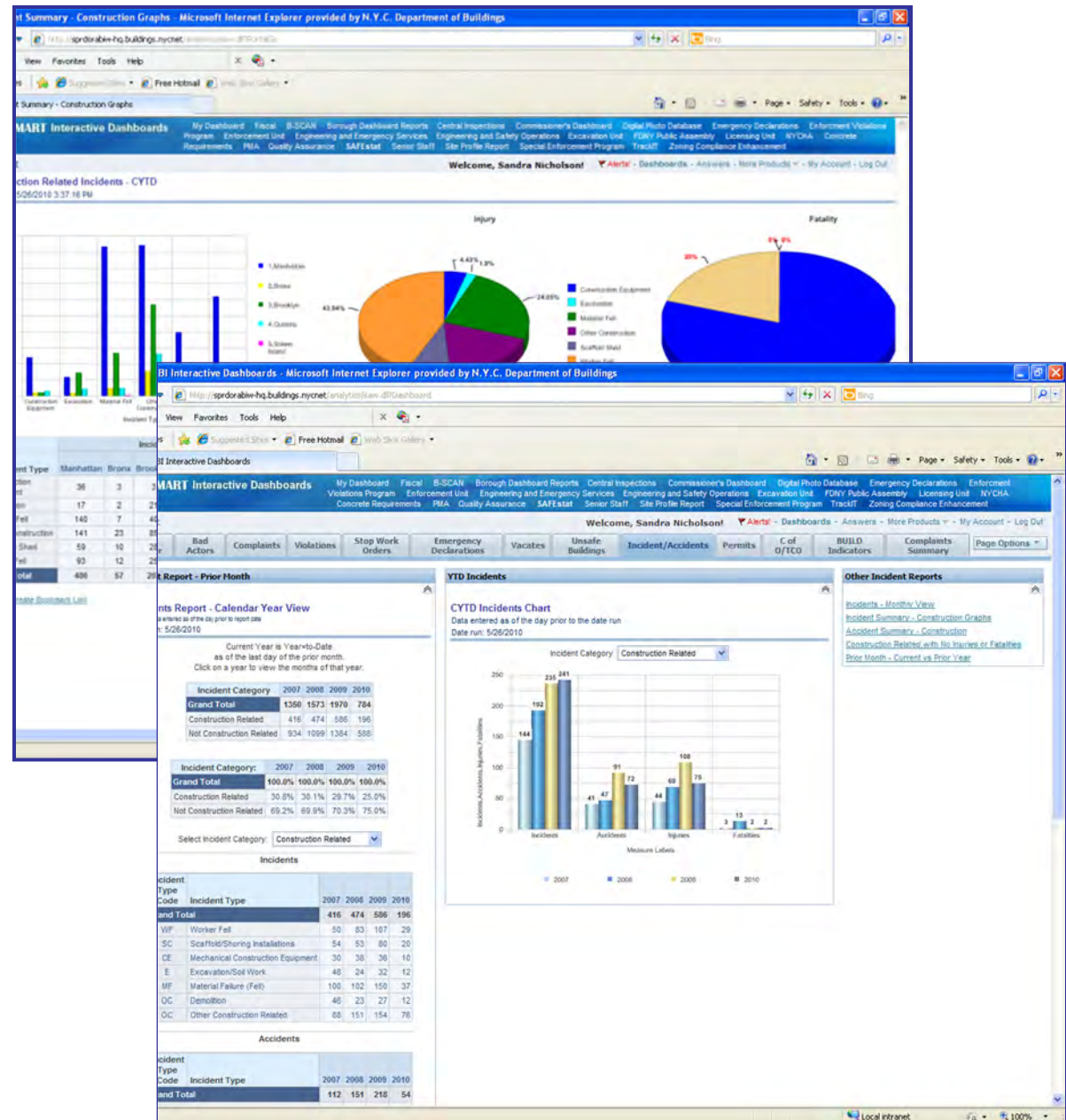


Development Achievement: Business Intelligence Reporting

Buildings' Strategic Metrics and Reporting Technology (B-SMART) is a web-based business tool allowing data stored across several platforms (mainframe, Oracle, MS SQL and MS Access) to be integrated. Implemented in 2007, B-SMART is a central element of the Department's strategic effort to become a transparent organization.

Executive Staff uses B-SMART an interactive reporting tool to monitor unit performance and productivity, providing reliable and accurate information. With this enhanced data analysis access, it has transformed how the Agency:

- Analyzes and interprets its data
- Delivers timely data
- Shares information with other agencies
- Manages resources based upon risk analysis



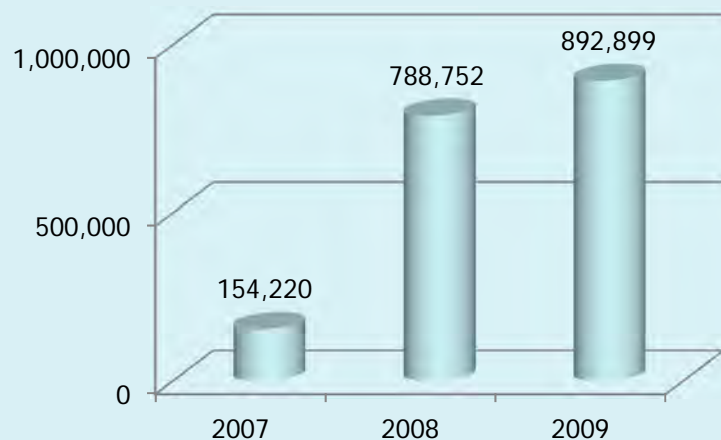
Community Partnerships Achievement: My Community

My Community allows members of the public to access online lists of construction activity specific to their neighborhood.

My Community is an extension of the **Department's Building Information System (BISWeb)**, a database of over 975,000 properties located throughout the five boroughs. This user-friendly search feature was launched to provide users an easy mechanism to search for new building permits, major alterations and full demolitions permitted in various community boards.

My Community has had 268,652 hits since its 2007 launch through the end of 2009.

My Community Hits



The screenshot shows the 'My Community' website in a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The address bar shows 'http://a810-bisweb.nyc.gov/bisweb/my_community.jsp'. The page features the 'NYC BUILDINGS My Community .gov' logo at the top, with a banner image including a 'BRONX ZOO' sign. Below the logo, the page is divided into two main steps. Step 1, 'Identify Your Community Board', offers two options: 'Choose one...' with a dropdown menu showing '...from this list', and 'Type Your Address Below' with a 'Boro...' dropdown and a text input field. Step 2, 'What are you looking for in Your Community?', lists four categories with radio buttons: 'New Buildings', 'Major Alterations and Enlargements', 'Minor Enlargements', and 'Full Demolitions'. A large yellow 'GO >>' button is at the bottom right. The browser's status bar at the bottom shows 'Done' and 'Trusted sites'.

Community Partnerships Achievement: Online Zoning Diagrams

AXONOMETRIC DIAGRAM

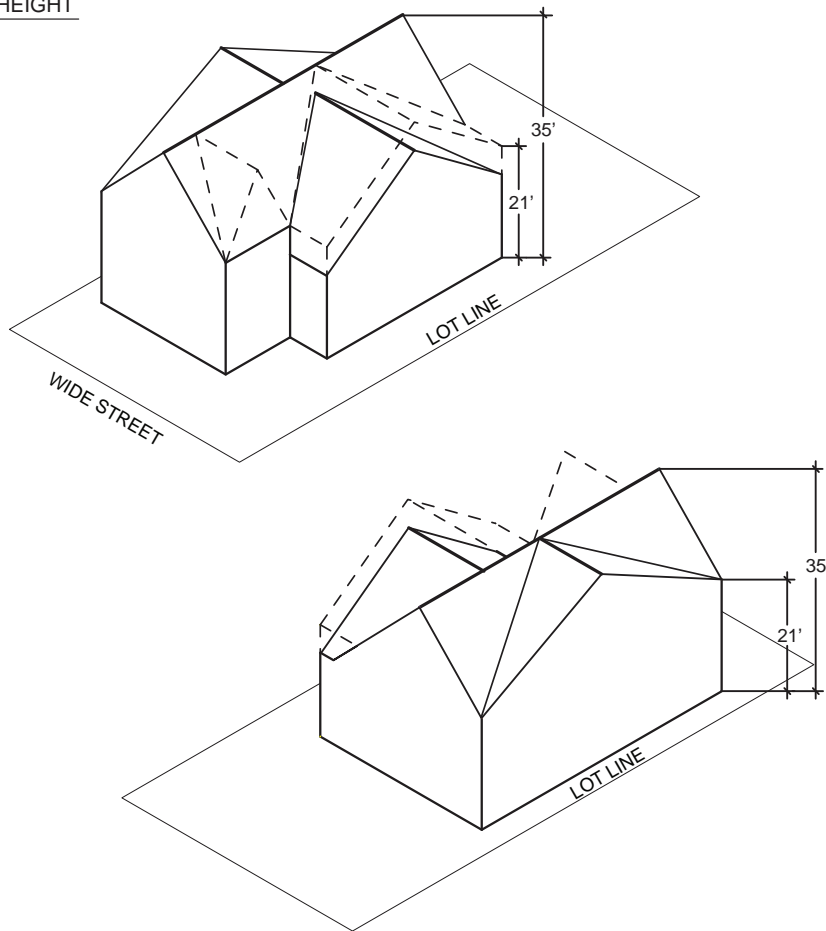
NOT TO SCALE

MAXIMUM BULK

PROPOSED BULK

35' MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT

AS PER ZR XX-XX



The Department became the first city in the nation to put zoning diagrams online.

Architects and engineers are required to submit drawn-to-scale diagrams of any new buildings, new proposed buildings, or major enlargements so the public can view the size and scale of any proposed development online before construction begins.

In 2009, more than 400 projects were made available for public review. These diagrams are posted online once the Department determines that an application for a new building or major enlargement complies with zoning regulations.

If anyone in the public believes the Department's approval to be incorrect, they can challenge it using the Department's **Development Challenge Process** while projects are still just lines on paper – not half-built buildings.

External Changes Impacting Agency Mission



Within the last few years, external changes have greatly impacted the agency by affecting new development, procedures, safety, laws and regulations, transparency and integrity.

Economic Impact

The severe downturn in construction has reduced applications by 19%, resulting in reduction of staff and funding.

Aging Buildings

The department has focused on scaffolds (2006), cranes (2008) and now balconies (2010), but as the city's building stock continues to age, at-risk buildings have become a central concern. There are approximately 375,000 aging buildings in the city.

Legislation and External Requirements

New requirements are continuously being developed that the Department must enforce, such as those established through new laws or by City agencies.

Innovations in Construction

Constant advances, from custom designed equipment to engineered systems, makes it more important than ever for the Department to keep pace with innovations in use in construction.

Increasing Pressure to Cut Red Tape

A rising need to find ways to make every process move faster while ensuring oversight, safety, compliant buildings, and enforcing requirements from other agencies.

Major Projects

The Department has played key roles in several projects that require significant resources, such as: Javits Center, Madison Square Garden, Atlantic Yards, Hudson Yards, 2nd Avenue Subway, Coney Island Redevelopment, the Columbia and New York University Expansions, 130 Liberty, Shea Stadium and Yankee Stadium.

Strategic Areas



Facilitating Development

Pages 21 to 32



Commitment to Safety

Pages 33 to 39



Community Partnerships

Pages 40 to 45

Preface: Innovation and Strategic Planning

CREATING A STRATEGIC PLAN IS ONLY THE FIRST STEP to effect meaningful changes that benefit all New Yorkers. The Department's Strategic Planning team is the machine that drives the successful implementation of Strategic Plan initiatives.

In addition, Strategic Planning maintains an Agency-wide portfolio of all projects that are underway or being planned for as a result of legislation, mayoral initiatives, interagency collaboration and internal Departmental pushes to improve policies and processes.

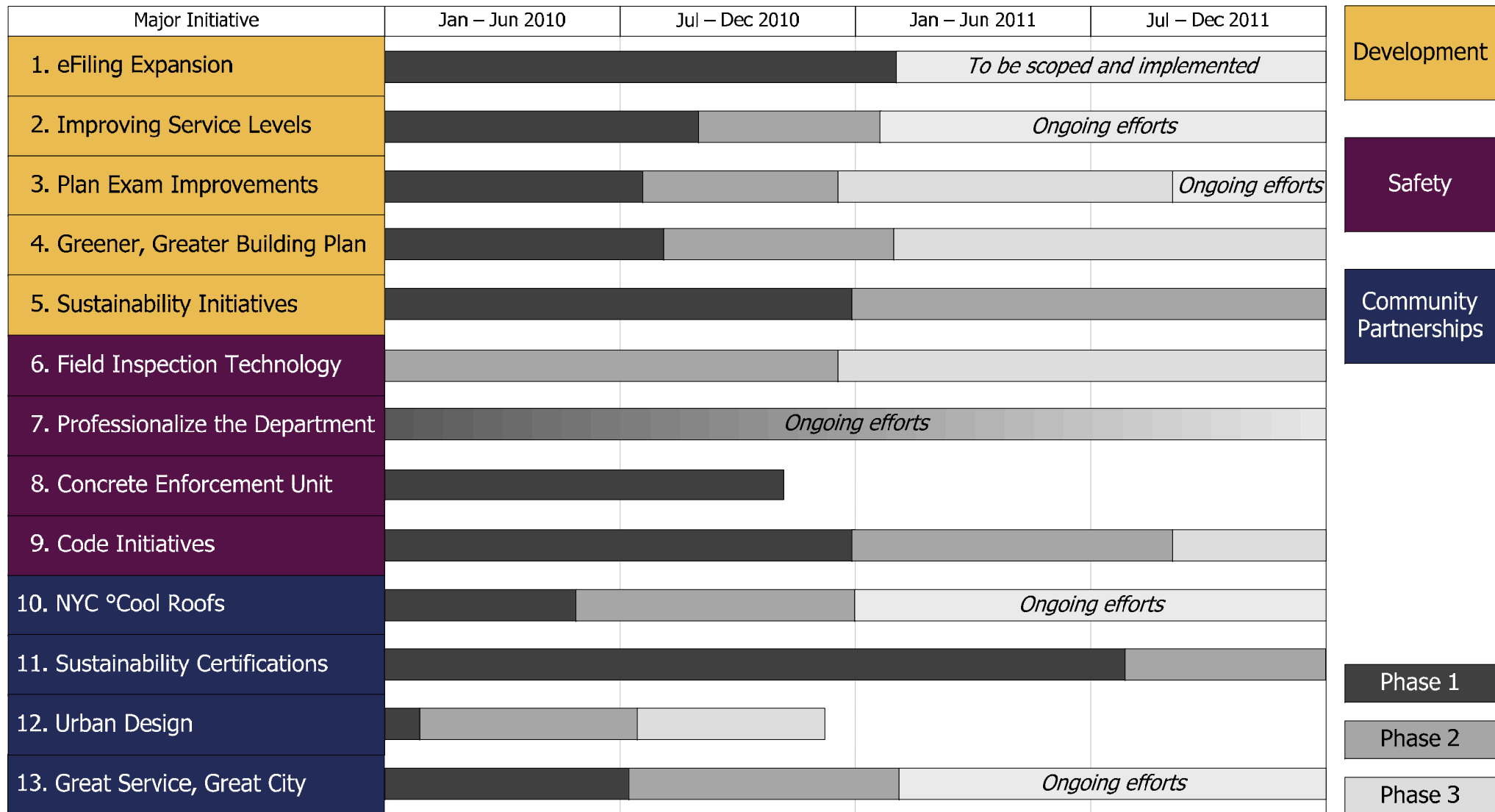
In order to prioritize efforts and make the most efficient use of resources, Strategic Planning regularly convenes a Steering Committee, chaired by Commissioner LiMandri. The Steering Committee sets project priorities and monitors ongoing project efforts, providing guidance as needed.

Strategic Planning's Operations Redesign team is a group of project managers dedicated solely to project planning and implementing change within the Agency.

Operations Redesign forms cross-functional teams of subject matter experts throughout the Department in order to effectively facilitate the implementation of initiatives. These teams are led by hands-on project managers who ensure streamlined and effective change implementation and most importantly form trusted and productive relationships with staff at all levels within the Agency.



Major Initiatives: Overview Schedule



Facilitating Development

FACILITATING DEVELOPMENT BY PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY, EXPEDITED SERVICES WHILE ENSURING SAFETY IS A TOP PRIORITY. The Department is taking on initiatives that increase the use of technology and electronic processes, increase staff training and improve service levels.

Major Initiatives:

- eFiling Expansion
- Improving Service Levels
- Plan Exam Improvements
- Greener, Greater Building Plan
- Sustainability Initiatives



Major Initiative: eFiling Expansion

Description of Initiative

Significantly expand the Department's existing eFiling application to incorporate more features and functions in order to improve and make more comprehensive the online experience of filers with the Department, to eventually create a truly paperless process.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

While the Department currently offers eFiling to renew certain permits, obtain electrical permits online and to prepare job applications, many other transactions are currently not available for eFiling. By expanding eFiling to as many of these other manual transactions as possible, the Department will be able to significantly reduce the processing time for applications and permits as well as significantly reduce the need for filers to make in-person visits to Department offices.

eFiling also saves time by allowing filers to validate data provided on applications remotely before they are submitted to the Department thus eliminating the need to revise or resubmit information.

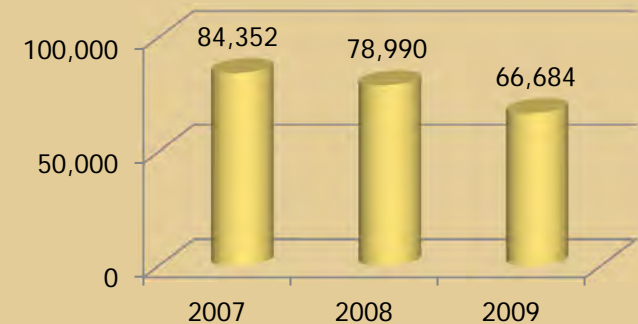
Plan to Accomplish

Using the infrastructure established in previous phases of eFiling, the Department will look to expand eFiling functionality for several areas including those listed below.

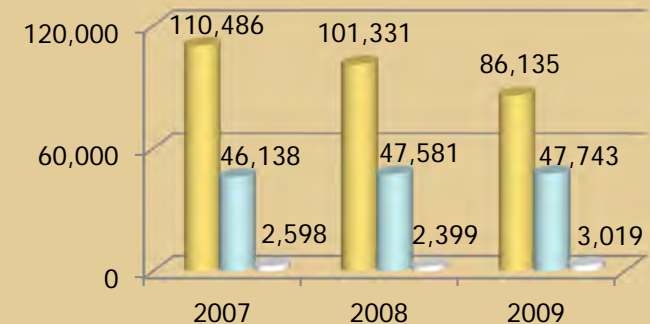
Construction Job Applications – the Department will expand eFiling to allow applicants to complete as much as the process as possible online, including:

- **Job Application Process** (*230,026 applications filed from 2007-2009*) – electronic submission of required documents and plans including receiving and responding to plan objections online
- **Permits** (*447,430 permits issued or renewed from 2007-2009*) – the ability to apply for and obtain initial and renewal permits online
- **Industry Certified Inspections** (*1,063,778 industry certified inspections from 2007-2009*) – the ability for the industry to certify inspections, such as special and progress inspections online

Job Applications



Permits



■ Initial ■ Renewed ■ eRenewed

Industry Certified Inspections



Major Initiative: eFiling Expansion

Plan to Accomplish (continued)

Limited Alteration Applications (LAA) (31,365 LAA filings from 2007-2009) – the Department will implement a solution that allows licensees to complete, certify, and submit LAA forms online as well as pay fees online. The Department's eFiling system will then automatically validate the information and provide LAA approval online.

After Hours Variances (298,213 applications for an after hours variance submitted from 2007-2009) – the Department will look to implement a solution that allows licensees and contractors to obtain after hours variances online.

Place of Assembly Filings (6,151 place of assembly filings from 2007-2009) – the Department plans to expand its current eFiling system to allow applicants to apply for Place of Assembly permits online.

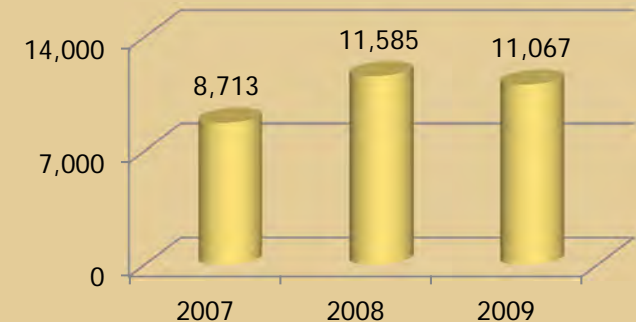
Challenges to Overcome

- The Department faces the challenge of funding the development of these expanded functionalities.
- Additionally, the Department must conduct extensive outreach to the public, establish secure online processes, and develop processes to submit required supporting documentation, such as large scale construction plans - which currently is a challenge to review electronically.

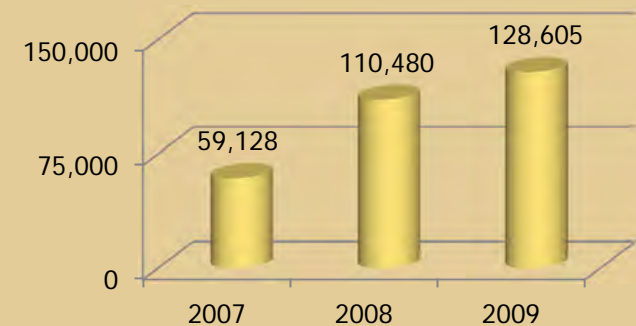
Impact on the City

By providing more services online, the Department can significantly reduce the need for in-person visits to Department offices and the time it takes to obtain approvals and permits.

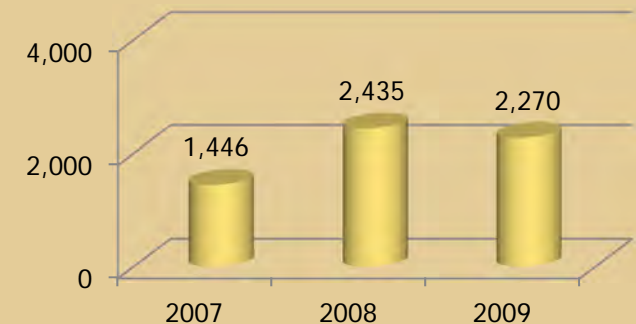
Limited Alteration Applications



After Hours Variances



Place of Assembly



Major Initiative: Improving Service Levels

Description of Initiative

This initiative is designed to create predictable service level commitments for all transactions and develop tracking methods for key milestones in units including plan examination and inspections. The Department plans to use innovative technologies to further improve service levels, thus facilitating safe and compliant development.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

Existing service levels, especially for plan examination and inspections, can vary widely based on volume of workload and use of plan exam and inspector staff. Unpredictable service levels affect everyone – applicants, builders and owners by making overall project scheduling difficult.

Plan to Accomplish

The Department will develop a series of pilot programs designed to improve:

- Appointment scheduling
- Plan Examiner Assignment and Tracking
- Inspection routing
- Workload management

The initial focus will be on inspections and plan examination.

Challenges to Overcome

The Department has to overcome an increasing volume of regulations associated with everyday tasks, with limited resources and budget, while working to improve service levels.

Impact on the City

More predictable and reliable service levels will help design professionals, builders and owners plan their construction projects more efficiently, saving time and money.



Major Initiative: Plan Exam Improvements – Plan Examination Guidelines

Description of Initiative

The department plans to develop a series of guidelines to identify the steps of plan examination, standardize plan examination objections, and create a repository of objections. This will increase the consistency of reviews helping make it easier to obtain plan approval.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

While the Department provides regular training for plan examiners, inconsistent plan review and decision making from examiner-to-examiner has not been eliminated.

Plan to Accomplish

Phase 1: Guidelines will be published in a format for both plan examiners and filers, helping establish a standard that will encourage better decisions, promote public safety, and foster professionalism in the dialogue and interaction between examiners and the filing community.

Phase 2: The Department will introduce a database to capture all objections issued by plan examiners. Managers and technical experts will review and analyze the information, establishing standardized objections within the database for plan examiner use.

Challenges to Overcome

The level of knowledge and expertise of plan examiners varies greatly, and is dependent on professional experience, education, and familiarity with department procedures. Additionally, each project is different; the private sector is able to spend hundreds of hours on projects where the Department is not able to spend this much time.

Impact on the City

Providing plan examiners and the applicant community with guidance and tools of how to use the Zoning Resolution, Building Code and Multiple Dwelling Law will increase the consistency of plan examination and facilitate safe and compliant development.



Major Initiative: Plan Exam Improvements – Drawing Standards

Description of Initiative

Checklists of drawing standards for job applications will be provided to applicants to make clear the Department's expectations for plan submissions. Development of these standards will facilitate the implementation of electronic submission of plans.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

The Department regularly receives plan submissions with incomplete or missing details, which costs the Department and applicants additional time for review. Establishing basic drawing standards helps save time by ensuring the Department only accepts complete plan submissions.

Plan to Accomplish

Phase 1: The Department will release to the filing community a series of drawing standards designed to provide absolute transparency of the requirements for the Department to conduct a comprehensive plan review of any given plan submission. Additionally, the Department will consult the filing community, and refine the standards as needed to increase effectiveness.

Phase 2: The Department plans to develop a process via which the industry can electronically submit plans that contain multiple layers and show compliance with different regulations.

Challenges to Overcome

Some applicants and design firms may resist conforming to Department drawing standards as they may favor their own approach for plan submissions. Outreach will be required to demonstrate the benefits of drawing standards in creating more efficient, faster plan examination.

Impact on the City

Consistent drawing standards make it easier for both plan examiners and inspectors to review plans both in the office and on-site. Making reviews more effective and reducing the number of issues that increase cost and decrease safety.



Major Initiative: Greener, Greater Building Plan – NYC Energy Conservation Code

Description of Initiative

This initiative will help ensure over **10x** more applications comply with the New York City Energy Conservation Code (NYCECC), effective July 1, 2010.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

The electricity and fuels consumed in buildings account for 75% of NYC's greenhouse gas footprint. The NYCECC will regulate roughly 50,000 alteration applications annually that would be exempt under the Energy Conservation Construction Code of New York State (ECCCNYS) and would otherwise contribute to that footprint.

Plan to Accomplish

- Performance of Energy Code Compliance Study will identify the knowledge and performance gaps with NYCECC by both industry and Department staff
- Formation of a Green Buildings Advisory Committee (GreenBAC) will assist in NYCECC interpretations, vet proposed Rules, and propose appropriate Code amendments
- Development of performance indicators to monitor NYCECC compliance

Challenges to Overcome

- Limited resources to monitor NYCECC compliance while maintaining service levels
- Department staff and the industry require extensive NYCECC outreach and training
- Enhancing the Buildings Information System (BIS) to capture and track NYCECC compliance and performance

Impact on the City

The NYCECC will result in significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in the City, savings in energy usage and operational cost to building owners, and additional employment opportunities as this urban green revolution continues.



Major Initiative: Greener, Greater Building Plan – Energy Benchmarking

Description of Initiative

This initiative will help ensure compliance with the annual assessment of energy (includes electric, gas, oil) and water efficiency for buildings greater than 50,000 sq. ft. in area, and city owned buildings greater than 10,000 square feet as required by the Energy Benchmarking Law passed in 2009.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

The City's largest buildings – over 50,000 square feet – comprise 2% of buildings, but account for 45% of the city's total energy consumption. Benchmarking is a tool to compare a building's energy consumption with similar buildings nationwide and will encourage energy efficiency.

Plan to Accomplish

- Develop a **Sustainability Green Card** to track progress and publish online
- Coordinate with the Department of Finance, who will be collecting benchmarking information from affected building owners and posting the results online
- Conduct outreach and coordination with building owners, train staff and industry

Challenges to Overcome

- Allocating resources to support benchmarking efforts while maintaining service levels
- Establishing means to help ensure benchmarking is done properly every year

Impact on the City

Energy benchmarking will help to reshape the real estate market by bringing to the table a level of transparency regarding building energy usage not now available. This information will become invaluable for prospective tenants who will be provided a better understanding of likely energy costs in a given building, encouraging building owners to make their buildings more energy efficient.



Major Initiative: Greener, Greater Building Plan – Energy Audits & Retro-Commissioning

Description of Initiative

This initiative will help ensure compliance with the Audits and Retro-Commissioning Law, passed in 2009, that requires owners of buildings greater than 50,000 square feet to perform an energy audit and retro-commissioning every 10 years. Building owners must submit an Energy Efficiency Report (EER) to the Department with each cycle.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

As buildings age, their energy systems fall out of adjustment and drop in performance. This law requires the owner to learn how his or her building's performance might be improved, and how much it would cost. At the same time, it requires that existing systems be brought to their optimum performance every 10 years.

Plan to Accomplish

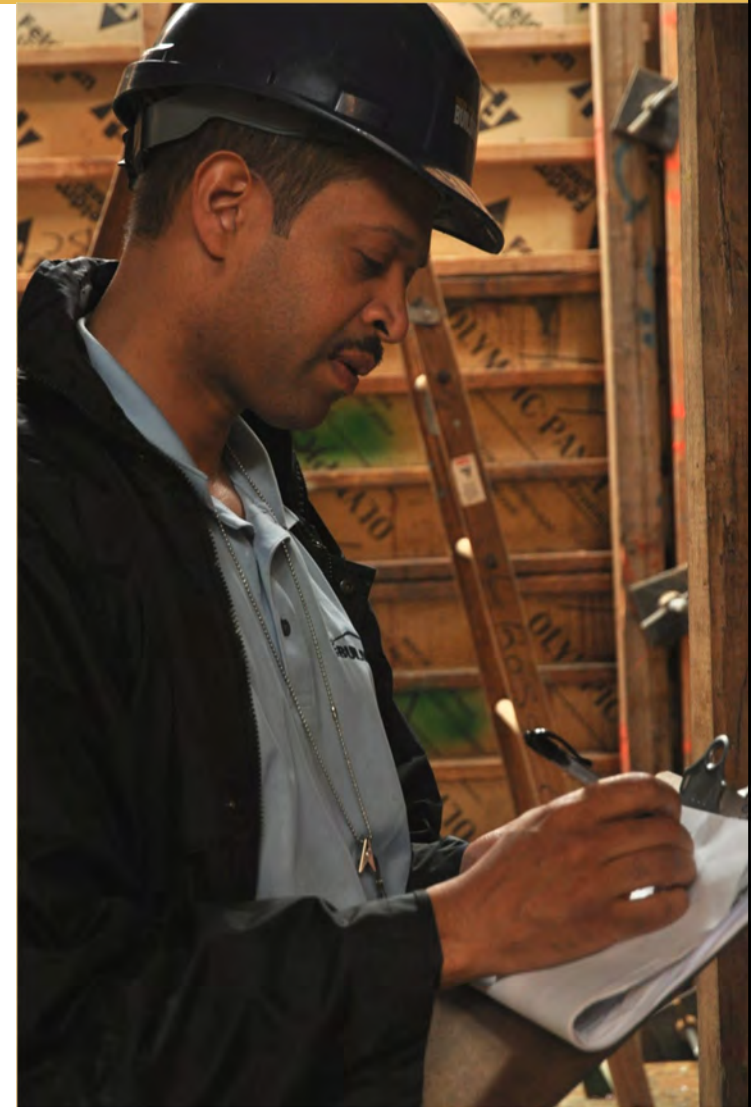
- Coordinate with external stakeholders to develop requirements and audit protocols
- Determine staffing needs and coordinate with external stakeholders
- Conduct outreach, train staff and industry

Challenges to Overcome

- Resources: obtaining knowledgeable and experienced technical staff to audit reports
- Enhancing the Buildings Information System (BIS) to process the reports

Impact on the City

As building owners learn how they can cost-effectively reduce their energy costs they will make selected system improvements which will result in reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in the City. Additionally, employment opportunities for workers trained in energy efficient systems should increase.



Major Initiative: Greener, Greater Building Plan – Lighting Upgrades and Sub-Metering

Description of Initiative

This initiative will help ensure compliance with the Lighting Upgrades and Sub-Metering Law requiring all lighting to be upgraded to comply with the NYC Energy Code and large tenant spaces of commercial buildings to be sub-metered by January 1, 2025.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

Not all large commercial buildings in New York City are sub-metered, therefore most large tenants are paying flat rates for energy consumption (of which lighting is a major component) based on the entire building regardless of their individual usage. This law will force large tenants to account for their specific energy usage as an important business expense.

Plan to Accomplish

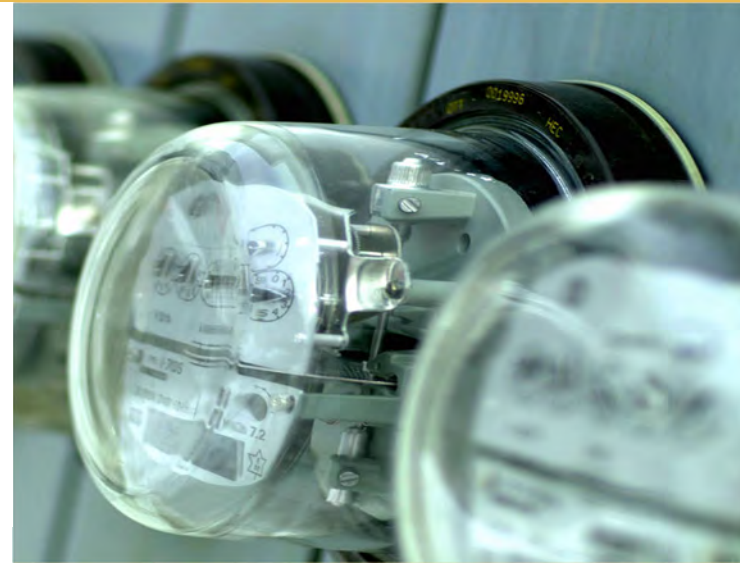
- Coordinate with affected design, construction and property management entities
- Identify operational requirements for implementation, including enhancements to BIS
- Promulgate rules necessary to create specific filing and technical requirements

Challenges to Overcome

- Resources: identifying staff resources to process and review reports
- Enhancing BIS to track information regarding energy audits and retro-commissioning
- Training: staff and industry need extensive training to understand all the impacts

Impact on the City

Both lighting upgrades and the impact of tenant knowledge of their energy costs will reduce energy consumption in important areas of waste in buildings, thereby contributing to energy and carbon reductions.



Major Initiative: Sustainability Initiatives

Description of Initiative

The Department plans to review and implement or continue to implement other Sustainability Initiatives including two State laws that allow New York City to grant real estate tax abatements for construction of green roofs and installation of solar electric generating systems, 111 proposals prepared by the Green Codes Task Force (GCTF) to codify strategic sustainable design and construction practice, and the creation of the Buildings Sustainability Board

Problem this Initiative Addresses

These initiatives will address several problems including:

- Difficulty promoting widespread adoption of newer green technology due to its costs
- Environmental issues impacting the quality of life of New Yorkers, such as the reduction in quality of New York's drinking water sources
- Challenge to use new products/systems in construction due to slow regulatory agencies

Plan to Accomplish

- Conduct outreach and training to inform stakeholders of code and programmatic requirements
- Coordinate with other affected agencies as required
- Draft bulletins and other technical materials to assist compliance with new initiatives
- Perform extensive outreach and staff training
- Prioritize GCTF proposals with the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability (OLTPS) and form Green Buildings Advisory Committee to vet proposed regulations
- Dedicate technical staff to develop recommendations for Buildings Sustainability Board



Major Initiative: Sustainability Initiatives

Challenges to Overcome

- Develop training programs to establish and maintain a pool of knowledgeable staff, including plan reviewers and inspectors
- Continuously enforce regulations and ensure filing community is aware of requirements
- Identifying resources to effectively implement projects while maintaining service levels
- Continue to incorporate sustainability initiatives in Code development efforts

Impact on the City

These initiatives will foster more rapid adoption of green technologies that provide environmental benefits for all New Yorkers, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions from buildings. As these initiatives will also involve a learning curve by owners, developers, professionals, etc., costs will likely increase in the short term.



Commitment to Safety

DEVELOPING NEW PROGRAMS TO HELP KEEP NEW YORKERS SAFE IS CRITICAL. The Department is taking on new initiatives to improve quality and safety, by improving inspections, creating specialized units, and updating regulations.

Major Initiatives:

- Field Inspection Technology
- Professionalizing the Department
- Concrete Enforcement Unit
- Code Updates



Major Initiative: Field Inspection Technology

Description of Initiative

Building on our success with Plumbing inspections, the B-FIRST (Buildings Field Inspection Reporting System) program will automate the inspection process for all inspection units. Inspectors will be provided handheld computers that will allow inspection results to be entered from the field and wirelessly transmitted back to Department offices, eliminating the need for inspectors to physically drop off inspection results.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

A large volume of inspections are managed manually and are not recorded in the Buildings Information System (BIS). As a result, monitoring and effectively managing of inspectors workload, productivity and performance is a challenging task for borough and central offices.

Plan to Accomplish

The Department is deploying B-FIRST to inspection units in three steps:

- **Step 1 (complete):** standardized paper-based inspection checklists – by introducing structured inspection checklists, the process of conducting inspections and capturing results has been largely standardized
- **Step 2 (2010):** deploy wirelessly-enabled handheld computers – equipping inspectors with wireless technology allows them real-time access to BISWeb from the field, to complete electronic PDF versions of inspection checklists, and allows them to become comfortable or adept at using technology in the field
- **Step 3 (2010-2013):** deploy B-FIRST inspection software – the B-FIRST software itself will streamline and automate much of the inspection process when loaded onto the inspectors' wireless-enabled handheld computers



Major Initiative: Field Inspection Technology

Challenges to Overcome

- Effectively addressing equipment failures: sunlight, dust, water, etc.
- Reengineering processes to be paperless in the field
- Training inspectors in the use of technology and overcoming any concerns from paper-based inspections

Impact on the City

B-FIRST will improve the quality of inspections and streamline the inspection process, saving time and therefore reducing wait times for an inspection. Uniformity of inspection methods will provide the public with expectations they will receive uniform service from all inspection units. B-FIRST will also make more inspection information available to the public over the Internet through BISWeb.



Major Initiative:

Continue to Professionalizing the Department

Description of Initiative

Training and professionalizing the Department continues to be essential at the Department of Buildings. Staff provided feedback on various priority efforts including professional development and employee motivation. The Department plans to launch various new initiatives based on this feedback.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

In tough economic climates, when employees are needed to work more efficiently, training and professional development are critical to making sure needed tasks get done while ensuring safety.

Plan to Accomplish

The Department plans to develop several new programs to continue to enhance training and professionalize the Department including:

- **Buildings Exchange Program** – this will present an opportunity for staff to apply to work on strategic projects, providing an opportunity to develop professional skills
- **Annual Commissioner's Awards for Excellence** – the awards honor outstanding staff members in several categories including advancement of public safety, improving New Yorker's quality of life, and innovation in borough operations
- **Inspector Training Academy** – the Buildings University team will develop, refine, and rollout this program in phases targeting most critical inspector training needs first

Challenges to Overcome

Maintaining service levels across the agency (inspections during training, other staff during awards ceremony, etc.) while developing these programs. Additionally there is a lack of funding for the training academy.

Impact on the City

Creating fully qualified, professional, and knowledgeable staff makes the Department both transparent and accountable.



Major Initiative: Concrete Enforcement Unit

Description of Initiative

The Concrete Enforcement Unit will focus on concrete-placement and concrete-testing operations at high-rise and low-rise construction sites throughout the five boroughs.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

Reliable concrete is vital to a building's safety. The Manhattan District Attorney's recent conviction of a major concrete testing firm raised serious questions about the safety of concrete at dozens of New York City buildings.

Plan to Accomplish

The Department will reallocate and hire new resources to create the unit, including licensed DOB engineers and construction inspectors, all certified by ACI as field testing technicians. The unit's duties will include using inspection checklists to perform spot checks of concrete testing procedures at construction sites. If any wrongdoing is suspected, the Concrete Unit will notify the Department of Investigation and work with its investigators on any subsequent investigation.

Challenges to Overcome

To effectively evaluate concrete samples obtained from construction sites, the unit needs access to its own concrete laboratory to compare the results with those of the private testing firms. The Department of Design and Construction is working to establish its own laboratory for this purpose, and until that happens the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has agreed to allow DOB to use its testing laboratory to audit the work of private firms.

Impact on the City

Implementing enhanced oversight will ensure that materials used in buildings throughout the City are built to the highest standards and that those who conduct testing and monitoring of these materials are held accountable for their work.



Major Initiative: Code Updates – NYC Construction Codes Revision

Description of Initiative

The Department is required to submit to the City Council, every three years, updates to the New York City Construction Codes.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

If the New York City Construction Codes are not updated to reflect the latest national standards, technology, engineering and safety practices, they will become outdated and a result unduly expensive, cumbersome, and restrictive.

Plan to Accomplish

Similar to the development process of the New York City Construction Codes, the Department will convene committees made up both of Department staff and industry members who will identify portions of code that require modification as well as assist in the drafting and vetting of proposed code updates. The Department will conduct extensive outreach with the industry, other government agencies and City Council to ensure a successful revision effort.

Challenges to Overcome

- Substantial staff time and technical expertise resources required for the revision process
- Disagreements between stakeholders which could derail key revisions
- Maintaining a balance in code requirements concerning safety, sustainability and cost
- Implementing new requirements into the operations of the Department
- Keeping staff and industry updated and familiar with new code requirements

Impact on the City

Each code revision cycle helps ensure New York City to remain at the forefront of international construction practices, with modifications such as the inclusion of sustainability, energy efficiency and newly developed green technologies into the City's construction standards, benefiting all New Yorkers.



Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

Major Initiative: Code Updates – Existing Building Code

Description of Initiative

The adoption of the Existing Building Code will reform outdated and obsolete practices to ensure safety and improve quality of life for all New Yorkers.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

With the implementation of the NYC Construction Codes in July 2009, a sense of modernity was returned to construction practices and technology for new developments; however, over 950,000 buildings are in existence under a myriad of codes and regulations: a regulatory environment that is unnecessarily challenging to navigate and inefficient for both the industry and Department staff.

Plan to Accomplish

The Existing Building Code will be modeled after the International Existing Building Code and will consolidate and update the 1938 Building Code, the 1968 Building Code, and all other legacy practices into one volume, resulting in eventual compliance of all buildings with the most up-to-date construction codes. Both Department staff and members of the industry will be convinced in working groups to create the Existing Building Code through a consensus method similar to the development of the 2008 NYC Construction Codes.

Challenges to Overcome

Coordinating subject matter experts, both internal personnel and those in the industry, to meet and draft both revisions and the existing building code will be the greatest challenge for the initiative.

Impact on the City

Streamlining the Codes regulating existing buildings will make it easier for the Department to ensure the safety of the City's aging existing building population.



Facilitating Community Partnerships

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMUNITY'S ROLE IN BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT, in 2010 the Department created the Community Partnerships unit, designed to engage New York City on a broader scale with innovative programs that are proactive to community needs. Through this unit, the Department will invite communities to provide input and participate in improvements and initiatives occurring Citywide.

Major Initiatives:

- NYC °Cool Roofs
- Sustainability Certifications
- Urban Design (urbanSHED and urbancanvas)
- Great Service, Great City



Major Initiative: NYC °Cool Roofs

Description of Initiative

NYC °Cool Roofs is an initiative to mobilize volunteers to coat the rooftops of buildings with reflective, white coating. NYC has committed to coating 1 million square feet of roofs in 2010.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

Traditional dark roofs absorb significant amounts of heat from the sun, requiring buildings to use more energy, therefore increasing energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

Plan to Accomplish

The Department's Community Partnerships unit will lead the NYC °Cool Roofs effort in partnership with NYC Service, Community Environmental Center (CEC), Green City Force (GCF), and others.

Challenges to Overcome

- Outreach and getting enough volunteers to participate
- Identifying roofs eligible for the program (pitched and gravel roofs cannot be coated)
- Getting owners to participate and realize the benefits they could incur from the program

Impact on the City

NYC °Cool Roofs will help reduce the "urban heat island effect", a phenomenon where the city can be 6 to 8 degrees warmer than surrounding suburban areas. As described by PlaNYC, coating all eligible dark rooftops in New York City could result in up to a 1 degree reduction of New York City's ambient air temperature.



Major Initiative: Sustainability Certifications

Description of the Initiative

A designation strategy for contractors and professionals who meet certain qualifications and agree to practice and promote the use of green practices and technologies.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

Many contractors in New York City have yet to fully embrace green construction products and practices. Sustainability certifications help contractors adopt green practices by making them more competitive in an growing market of green-conscious potential clients.

Plan to Accomplish

The Department will establish a sustainability certification program, initially focused on providing certification in the areas of sustainable energy generation, such as solar, hydro and wind, as well as energy conservation, such as cool roofs, green roofs, and combined heat and power. Two certification levels are envisioned:

- **Level 1** – Contractors who demonstrate knowledge in sustainable practices
- **Level 2** – Contractors who in addition agree to promote sustainable solutions to their clients and agree to report on those activities to the Department

Challenges to Overcome

Resources are required to implement and maintain the certification program.

Impact on the City

As with the property tax abatement initiatives, this initiative will contribute to developing an identifiable supply of service providers, reducing costs and encouraging market consumers to make the investment in sustainable construction.



Major Initiative: Urban Design – urbanSHED

Description of Initiative

This initiative will support the development of the UrbanUmbrella, the winning design of the urbanSHED International Design Competition which challenged the global design community to re-think the current sidewalk shed standard to protect pedestrians.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

More than 6,000 sidewalk sheds flank New York City's buildings and construction sites. They span more than 1,000,000 linear feet and typically remain in place for nearly a year. While these sheds protect pedestrians from construction debris and support other construction structures, they undermine the beauty of New York City's architecture.

Plan to Accomplish

The Department will work with the winning team to test the structure, develop a prototype and issue a technical bulletin to allow adoption of the shed citywide.

Challenges to Overcome

- Development of the UrbanUmbrella to a level that meets the capacity of today's standard shed
- Overcoming industry reluctance to adopting the new shed which will initially be less cost effective to install than the current sidewalk shed design.

Impact on the City

The new shed design will improve the pedestrian experience and make New York City even more attractive for generations to come.



Major Initiative: Urban Design – urbancanvas

Description of Initiative

The Department is piloting the urbancanvas Design Competition to allow public art on temporary construction structures located on city owned sidewalks and streets. Property owners and developers will be permitted to install winning designs on construction structures.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

Thousands of sidewalk sheds, scaffolds, and construction fences flank New York City's buildings and construction sites. While these temporary installations protect pedestrians, they create a 'blank' presence on the streets. Urbancanvas will help of enliven and beautify the City's streetscape while encouraging better maintenance of the temporary construction structures.

Plan to Accomplish

The urbancanvas Design competition will use a jury and public selection process to identify four winning art palettes. The Department will then establish necessary operational and technical requirements for the use of the winning palettes on temporary structures on City property throughout New York City. Each palette will contain coordinated, complementary art work for the different types of temporary construction structures. Art placement will be encouraged through sponsorship opportunities that meet certain size specifications.

Challenges to Overcome

The Department will have to convince business owners it is a good idea to adopt the art (including Business Improvement Districts).

Impact on the City

Like urbanSHED, urbancanvas will also improve the pedestrian experience and make New York City even more attractive for generations to come.



Major Initiative: Great Service, Great City

Description of Initiative

The "Great Service, Great City" training initiative is a first-of-its kind citywide customer service program for all City agencies.

Problem this Initiative Addresses

The Department is committed to ensuring that every person who interacts with Buildings' staff members receives the best customer service possible.

Plan to Accomplish

The Department's Customer Service unit will begin implementing the training program to all DOB staff members, including inspectors, plan examiners, front-line staff members, supervisors and managers. Initial training will be completed by the end of 2010.

Challenges to Overcome

- Staffing to implement the initiative and to ensure the training is successful once completed.
- Scheduling staff for training in a manner that minimizes disruptions to day-to-day operations and maintains service levels

Impact on the City

Mayor Bloomberg's "Great City, Great Service" Citywide training initiative, now in its second year, aims to make New York City government world class in customer service.

**GREAT
SERVICE.
GREAT
CITY.**

Pride. Professionalism. Expertise.
It's how we communicate with the public, every day.
It's how we keep New York City the greatest city in the world.

NYC

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor



NYC

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Buildings

Robert D. LiMandri
Commissioner

Photography by:
Samantha Modell
Sy Bram
Rachel Blandi