

Rebooting NYC: An Urban Tech Agenda for the Next Administration – Draft for Discussion

Summary of Recommendations | May 2021

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Recommendations	Rationale	Initiatives	Responsibility
1. Foundations: Privacy and administration			
1.1 Enact a law regulating how City agencies and private entities gather and share data from the public realm	<i>Because City agencies have significant leeway in how they use data collected in the public realm, many New Yorkers are concerned that more data-gathering will lead to privacy invasions.</i>	Enact rules that govern how City agencies use and share data, with the objective of facilitating data use and sharing that conforms to the principles of contextual integrity	City Council
		Establish an oversight process for agencies that seek to deploy new data-gathering capabilities or combine datasets in new ways	City Council, Public Advocate
		Enact transparency requirements for how private entities gather, share, and use data collected in the public realm, and limits on how they may use or sell data collected without consent	City Council
1.2 Make the City an effective purchaser, developer and manager of technology projects	<i>The City is not as well organized or staffed as it should be to purchase and manage technology well</i>	Create a New York City Digital Service to inject new technology talent into City government	Mayor, City Council
		Use these additional staff to shift to a co-development model of working with vendors	Mayor, Comptroller
		Break up DoITT and place its components and other technology agencies under a new Deputy Mayor for Technology	Mayor, City Council
		Conduct a broad inventory of the City's technology, and update it regularly	Mayor
1.3 Additional concepts under consideration	<i>Many New Yorkers are concerned that NYPD's surveillance technology has evolved without sufficient oversight</i>	Address the problem of evaluating and regulating police technology	tbd
2. Technology equity: Include everyone in the digital economy			
2.1 Create a Broadband Development Corporation to bring the internet to all New Yorkers	<i>Too many New Yorkers lack access to broadband internet</i>	Establish a Broadband Development Corporation tasked with the creation of a citywide open-access fiber network and utility corridor network	Mayor, City Council
		Ensure the BDC can coordinate the activities of other city agencies	Mayor
		Ensure that Empire City Subway is executing its franchise in the best interests of the City	Comptroller, Mayor
		Institute two approaches to gather data on broadband access: annual reporting from building owners, and including broadband questions in the Housing and Vacancy Survey	City Council, Mayor
2.2 Additional concepts under consideration	<i>Too many New Yorkers do not have a bank account and thus cannot participate in online transactions</i>	Address the problem of electronic payments	tbd
		<i>Too many New Yorkers have difficulty receiving deliveries</i>	Address the problem of package deliveries

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3. Optimized systems: Use technology to improve the management of our built environment			
3.1 Bring safety and order to our streets through digital management and enforcement	<i>Our streets and curbs are too dangerous and disorderly because traditional management and enforcement practices are ineffective</i>	Build out a complete network of enforcement cameras immediately, and use them to the fullest extent of City authority, including data-gathering and TLC enforcement	Mayor
		Obtain authority from the State Legislature to use technology to enforce all traffic violations	Mayor, City Council
		Explore ways to ensure that low-income violators are not unduly burdened by fines	Mayor
		Implement a curbside management system allowing parking reservations	Mayor, City Council
		Explore requiring speed limiters on TLC-licensed vehicles	Mayor (TLC)
3.2 Convert and expand bike lanes into a network that accommodates a variety of new mobility vehicles	<i>Many new urban-friendly vehicle technologies are emerging, but these have no place to travel on NYC streets</i>	Redesign NYC bike lanes to be wider New Mobility Lanes, and build out the network	Mayor (DOT)
		Obtain Authority from the State Legislature allowing the City to determine what vehicles are allowed in the New Mobility Lanes	Mayor, City Council
		Establish vehicle standards for use of the New Mobility Lanes	Mayor (DOT)
		Institute comprehensive enforcement for New Mobility Lanes	Mayor (DOT)
3.3 Propel New York City's design and construction industry into the digital age by moving to automated code review	<i>NYC's design and construction industry does not use technology as much as it could, and too few permit applications are reviewed in detail by the City</i>	Enact into law a specific date, perhaps 2032, by which all permit applications will need to be submitted in a new standard Building Information Modelling (BIM) format.	Mayor (DOB), City Council
		Launch a working group to develop a set of universal standards and application programming interfaces (APIs) for BIM files that DOB will accept	Mayor (DOB)
		Begin to translate NYC's codes from legal text into computable, machine-readable logic	Mayor (DOB)
		Launch an effort to train the entire architecture and engineering industry on BIM	Mayor (DOB)
3.4 Reduce sidewalk sheds by thoroughly testing how drones can evaluate the safety of building facades	<i>Drones have the potential to conduct facade inspections and thus reduce the prevalence of sidewalk sheds, but evaluating their potential fully will require a rigorous evaluation including the consideration of new approaches to meeting inspection requirements</i>	Issue an RFP to see what the private sector proposes as a drone-based solution to facade inspection requirements	Mayor (DOB)
		Conduct a thorough side-by-side test of human and drone-based inspections using a sizable sample of buildings up for facade inspection in 2023	Mayor (DOB)
		Incorporate the results of the aforementioned test into a revised approach to facade inspection starting in 2025	Mayor (DOB), City Council
3.5 Additional concepts under consideration	<i>New technologies will make NYC's buildings greener, but many buildings do not have the electrical capacity to accommodate new equipment</i>	Address the problem of electrifying buildings	tbd

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4. Always open: Make it easier to engage with the City				
4.1 Make it easier for New Yorkers to obtain social services through the creation of a data locker and interagency verifications	<i>Applying for benefits is difficult, and requires significant documentation that is often already held by a different City agency</i>	Create secure and easy-to-use personal data lockers to store eligibility-related documentation	Mayor	
		Streamline benefits applications across City agencies beginning with the user interface of online applications	Mayor	
		Add a feature to ACCESS NYC that allows New Yorkers to keep track of their City provided benefits and when they need to reapply	Mayor	
4.2 Make Community Boards more representative by keeping meetings virtual	<i>In-person Community Board meetings were often unrepresentative because meetings are difficult to attend in person; technology offers ways to broaden participation and accessibility.</i>	Advocate for Albany to amend the Open Meetings Law to allow continued virtual public meetings after the pandemic	Mayor, City Council	
		Provide Community Boards with user-friendly, standardized webcasting kits	Mayor, Borough Presidents	
		Upgrade meetings with automatic transcriptions, captions, and translation to improve accessibility	Mayor, Borough Presidents	
		Create an interest-based alerts service for New Yorkers	Mayor, Borough Presidents	
4.3 Additional concepts under consideration	<i>The Mayor's Management Report could be updated to make use of new forms of data</i>	Address the problem of accountability	tbd	
		<i>311 and nyc.gov could be updated and integrated</i>	Address the problem of multi-channel interaction with the City	tbd
		<i>An increased investment in digital outreach tools risks leaving behind those New Yorkers who cannot, or do not want to, use technology</i>	Address the problem of ensuring those who do not use digital channels are not left behind	tbd
		<i>Technology should broaden democratic participation</i>	Address the problem of digitizing democracy	tbd
5. Futureproofing: Position NYC to shape the urban technology of the future				
5.1 Develop rules that shape and encourage emerging technologies in advance of their arrival	<i>New technology and tech-driven business models have often caught New York City without an effective regulatory regime that can both protect the public's interest while also encouraging fast adoption</i>	Commission one or more external entities to lead an accelerated process to develop regulatory guidance to address emerging technologies and their impact on the city	Mayor	
		Create a permanent, independent Emerging Technology Advisory Panel to issue biennial reports to the City on emerging technologies and their implications	City Council	

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Short form: Aggarwala et al., *Rebooting NYC, Draft for Discussion*.

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