



## **Addressing energy challenges with on-site renewable energy**

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Eight months after Hurricane Sandy, N.Y.C. beaches are reopening, homes are being rebuilt, and long-term strategic plans are under revision to reflect our latest experience. Remaining cognizant of the fact that with changes in climate, rising sea levels and more extreme weather events will continue to challenge coastal cities like New York, the need for more resilient and reliable energy infrastructure is more evident than ever.

Hurricane Sandy and other major storms repeatedly demonstrate the vulnerability of New Yorkers to power disruptions when the grid goes down, as well as our continued reliance on gasoline-fueled backup generators. Long lines and rationing at gas stations across the city illustrated our unwavering reliance on fossil fuels - at any price.

The real estate industry has a significant role to play, both in recognizing our current vulnerabilities, as well as developing innovative solutions and alternative pathways for moving forward. When it comes to energy use in the built environment, decisions often take place at the nexus of security, cost, and sustainability. Within this framework, on-site renewable energy systems offer a multitude of benefits:

**Security** - Whether its meeting critical needs for public safety, maintaining home comfort, or keeping your business open, on-site renewable energy systems allow the lights to stay on, even when the grid goes down. Hospitals will remain fully functional. A homeowner's kitchen appliances will operate. A gas station will avoid millions of dollars in lost revenue since the pumps and stores will remain open.

**Cost** - Wind and solar technologies have improved dramatically in recent years and are increasingly cost-competitive. Particularly in areas with high electricity prices and strong incentive programs, like New York, on-site energy systems can sometimes pay for themselves in two years or less. By offsetting grid-tied energy use, individuals and organizations reduce reliance on utility companies and eliminate exposure to volatile energy prices. Further, numerous financing tools offer customers access to the benefits of on-site renewable energy, without a large upfront capital expenditure.

**Sustainability** Green building is a hot market and interest in LEED and net zero buildings continues to grow. On-site renewable energy systems offer points toward LEED certification and have reduced the carbon footprint of buildings in all shapes and sizes, from rural off-grid cabins to skyscrapers in lower Manhattan.

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