

## The politics and practices of 'actually existing sustainabilities': Urban forestry and urban agriculture in New York City

My dissertation examines how the politics and practices of urban forestry and urban agriculture in New York City are negotiated. It centers on the municipal long term sustainability plan, PlaNYC2030, which was created in 2007 and updated in 2011. From this entry point, it pivots to examine the network of actors, institutions, discourses, and socio-natural environments that constitute urban forestry and urban agriculture as natural resource use systems. It asks: what actors via what institutions make what claims (resting on which assumptions) in order to shape the goals that are set within the plan? What accounts for the varied treatment of urban forestry and agriculture in a single city within a single sustainability planning process? And, in turn, how do the goals of the plan alter resource management practices going forward? The primary research methods will be semi-structured interviews with key policymakers and natural resource managers, and discourse analysis of plans, reports, and documents associated with PlaNYC, MillionTreesNYC, and food policy in New York. These approaches will be supplemented by the secondary method of participant observation and fieldwork intended to ground the research in material practices, thereby developing new insights and hypotheses that might not be revealed through interview and textual analysis alone. Overall, this study builds upon prior work that examines the political and discursive dimension of natural resource management, extending it to the recent empirical phenomena of urban sustainability planning and large-scale green infrastructure campaigns in global cities. Second, it continues the project of 're-naturing urban theory' by bringing a concern with materiality into the study of urban politics and policymaking. Finally, it brings concepts of urban political theory and networked governance into nature-society geography.



*Image courtesy of the City of New York*