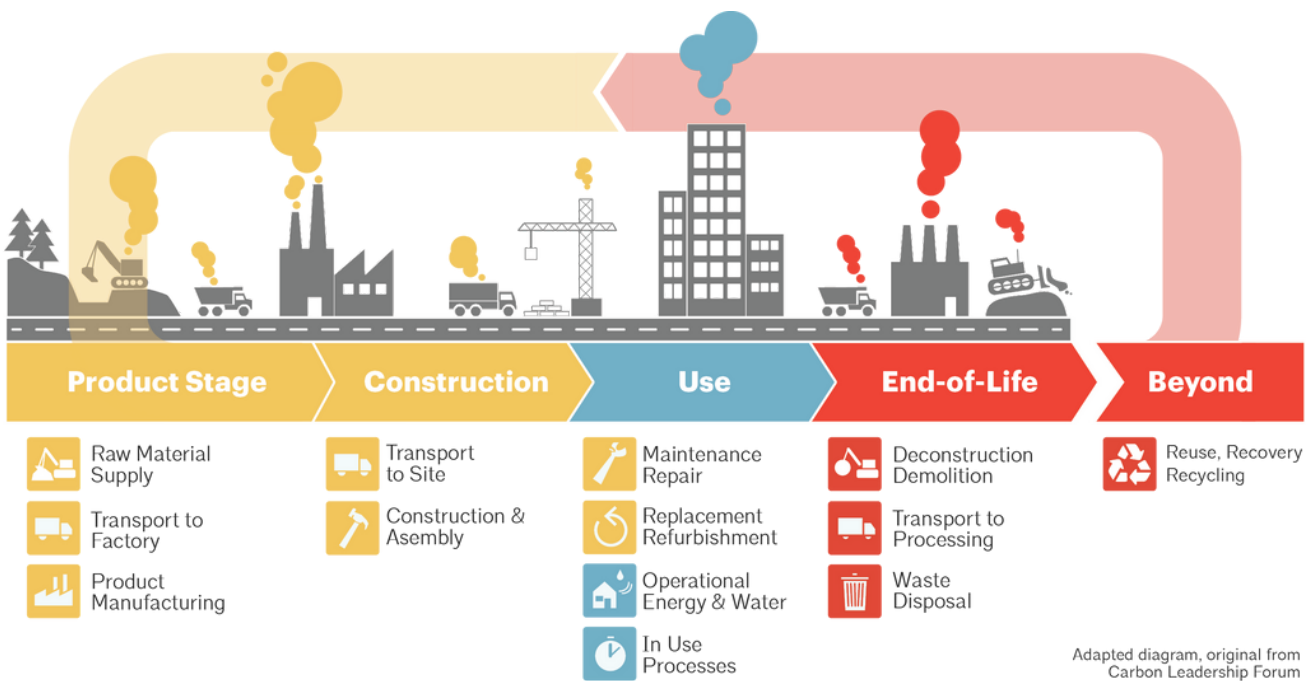


AIA New York's Decarbonization Policy Vision

As New York City charts a bold course towards a carbon neutral future, the next four years present a critical window to accelerate progress towards its greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction goals. Central to this vision must be a comprehensive decarbonization agenda for the built environment that addresses the climate crisis while also building green economies, fostering new markets that support deconstruction and reuse, and investing in clean construction. AIANY has a vision to meet our city's climate goals by tackling carbon through the full life cycle of carbon in buildings: Embodied Carbon, Operational Carbon, and Circularity.



To shape this vision, American Institute of Architects New York Committee on the Environment (AIANY COTE) convened industry leaders in design, construction, finance, and real estate for a series of stakeholder engagement sessions to examine the future of decarbonization policy. AIANY COTE works to advance, disseminate, and advocate building design practices that enhance design quality, decarbonization, resilience, environmental justice, and ecology.

Reduce Embodied Carbon Emissions via Incentives and Requirements

Embodied carbon refers to the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated by the manufacturing, transportation, installation, maintenance, and disposal of construction materials used in building and infrastructure projects. 17% of global GHG emissions come from the manufacturing of construction materials. Given the urgency of the climate crisis, emissions released now are more critical than emissions released later, and reducing embodied carbon must be addressed in tandem with reducing operational carbon. To tackle this key contributor of GHG emissions, the City needs to

- Incentivize the use of low-carbon construction materials (including but not limited to concrete, steel, asphalt, timber, and glass)
- Define embodied carbon requirements for procurement of materials in building design and construction
- Expand technical and financial support for manufacturers to develop environmental product declarations (EPDs)
- Establish whole building embodied carbon requirements in the building code

Meet Existing Operational Carbon Reduction Targets to Enable Grid Decarbonization

Operational carbon refers to the GHG emissions generated by the use of building systems, such as lighting, heating, or cooling, and are responsible for approximately two-thirds of all carbon emissions within NYC. New York has passed numerous policies in recent years seeking to meaningfully reduce operational carbon emissions, namely Local Law 97, which sets GHG emission limits for buildings over 25,000 square feet. To strengthen and streamline existing policies around energy-related emission and enabling a net-zero carbon future, the City needs to

- Expand financial and technical support for energy efficient retrofits (especially for residential buildings)
- Create better data transparency on energy efficiency to support quantifying retrofit payback periods
- Evaluate and expand regulatory, zoning, permitting, and financial incentives for high performance buildings that support the next generation of electrified and grid-interactive buildings and districts
- Expand performance based energy code requirements towards more energy efficient, healthy, and safe buildings

Promote Innovation in Deconstruction, Material Reuse, and Circularity

Building off NYC Economic Development Corporation's (NYCEDC) Circular Design and Construction Guidelines released in 2024 and following the example of large cities around the world, NYC needs innovative policy solutions to spur an industry for deconstruction and waste diversion, reimagine the design process to factor in deconstruction, and establish a marketplace to facilitate circularity. Construction and demolition material accounts for 60% of the City's annual waste stream. Thinking creatively about mechanisms to emphasize circularity of materials and buildings at their perceived end of life, the City needs to

- Establish pilot programs for the physical and digital infrastructure to recycle and reuse materials/existing building stock, working closely with industry partners to enhance marketplace development
- Expand requirements for deconstruction plans and reuse assessments for existing buildings and large renovation projects
- Provide financial incentives for the research and development of specific diversion goals, deconstruction ordinances, and approaches to design for deconstruction
- Evaluate the economic and regulatory barriers to adaptive reuse in compliance with zoning, energy codes, and landmarks requirements

New York City requires a visionary decarbonization policy plan for the next four years that sets ambitious goals and implements realistic pathways to achieve our climate targets, building on PlaNYC, C40 Cities, and the 2019 Climate Act. AIANY challenges the next administration to implement a suite of policies aimed at addressing carbon holistically to ensure the successful achievement of reducing NYC's carbon footprint and progressing towards a healthier and more resilient future.