



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
ONE ROOSEVELT SQUARE
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JAMES RAUSSE, FAICP, WEDG
COMMISSIONER

May 20, 2025

VIA EMAIL:

Honorable City Council Members
City of Mount Vernon
1 Roosevelt Square
Mount Vernon, New York 10550

RE: Request for the City Council to enact legislation to authorize the Mayor to execute a Letter of Commitment with ARUP, to collaborate on a Natural Carbon Solutions Innovation Challenge sponsored by NYSERDA. For consideration on the agenda at the May 28th, 2025 City Council meeting.

Re: Authorization for the Mayor to Sign a Letter of Commitment with ARUP for Urban Heat Island Mitigation Study.

Honorable City Council Members:

I am writing to respectfully request that the City Council enact legislation authorizing the Mayor to sign a Letter of Commitment with ARUP, an international environmental and engineering consulting firm, to support their submission of a grant application focused on mitigating the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect in urban communities.

ARUP is pursuing funding to develop a web-based application designed to conduct cost-benefit analyses for infrastructure investments aimed at reducing the impacts of Urban Heat Island conditions. As part of this study, the City of Mount Vernon would serve as a partner community, providing data and participating in project workshops to ensure the model reflects local conditions and needs. The platform would enable municipalities like Mount Vernon to make informed decisions about environmental investments, such as tree planting, green infrastructure, and cool roofing.

This project aligns closely with Mount Vernon's ongoing efforts to improve climate resilience, particularly in areas most affected by rising temperatures and limited access to green space. The Departments of Planning and Community Development and Public Works have reviewed ARUP's proposed approach and support the City's participation in this effort. We believe this collaboration offers substantial community benefits, including access to technical expertise, tools to prioritize equitable investments, and insights that can be incorporated into our ongoing Comprehensive Plan update and capital planning efforts.

We respectfully request that the City Council adopt legislation authorizing the Mayor to sign the necessary Letter of Commitment, which does not impose any financial obligation on the City but affirms our interest in participating in this innovative research partnership.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and stand ready to provide additional information or respond to any questions you may have.





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Sincerely,

JAMES RAUSSE, FAICP, WEDG

cc: Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard
Comptroller Darren M. Morton
Malcolm Clark, Chief of Staff

