

Title: New York After Sandy: New and Old Challenges to Urban Sustainability

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Abstract: In addition to the horrific loss of life, Hurricane Sandy caused extensive damage to physical infrastructure throughout the New York metropolitan area, particularly along the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut coasts. Serious infrastructure damage was sustained in the form of buckled and undermined roadways, contaminated water systems, flooded subways and construction sites, and corroded electrical networks, among other systems. Hurricane Sandy has revealed the vulnerability of the region's built environment to both natural and synthetic disasters. The damage sustained by Sandy illustrates starkly the vulnerability of the region's infrastructure as well as the urgency of reassessing its design, construction, and operation. It may also offer a unique opportunity to adopt smarter, more sustainable infrastructure in which private partners can play a larger role.

Cornell University is uniquely positioned to provide a comprehensive, multidisciplinary response to the array of challenges presented by the need to re-think and rebuild those sections of the area's infrastructure most damaged by the storm. The purpose of this Topical Lunch is to gather members of the Cornell community who share an interest in applying their expertise in addressing the engineering, materials, operational, policy and financing issues generated by Hurricane Sandy's impact on infrastructure. This may include faculty and students in a variety of fields and departments, including Civil and Environmental Engineering, Materials Science, City and Regional Planning, Policy Analysis and Management. The provision of both scientific foundations and practical guidance in responding to the hurricane are consistent with Cornell University's mission as New York State's land grant university. We hope that this Topical Lunch will help identify those faculty committed to providing such a response, and that it will result in follow-up efforts, such as advice to state and local government, as well as expert panel discussions in New York City.