CLIMATE: The largest landfill solar project in North America, which is expected to provide more than 4,000 homes with clean energy, recently went online in Mount Olive, N.J.

The solar farm covers a closed dump site, one of more than 10,000 closed landfills in the U.S., according to the New York Times report. There has been an 80% increase in the number of U.S. landfill solar projects over the past five years, the piece notes.

Actions: New York passed a $4.2 billion environmental bond act in November, the largest environmental bond in the state's history, according to the Environmental Defense Fund.

HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL WELL-BEING: Nearly three years after the COVID-19 pandemic began, labor shortages and lack of childcare remain top challenges, according to a Federal Reserve System community survey released last month.

The survey, which the New York Fed helped field, found that almost half of respondents continued to face significant disruptions in housing stability, due to high housing costs and insufficient affordable housing.

Actions: Work finished last month on the conversion of 90 Sands, a former Jehovah’s Witness residential hotel in Brooklyn, into 491 affordable and supportive housing units, according to the New York Fed. With 305 units for formerly homeless individuals, the building will be part of a pilot program in which homeless clients are directly referred from street outreach and transitional housing programs to the building’s supportive apartments.

HEALTH: A recent New York Times piece about farming in Puerto Rico asks, "Can an island feed itself?"

It used to. In the late 1930s, Puerto Rico grew 65 percent of the food it consumed. But more recently, it has imported more than 80 percent of what it needs. The piece profiles aspiring farmer Alfredo Aponte Zayas, tracking his uphill battle to build his own farm and change the island’s dependency on imports.

Ideas: The Urban Institute recently released a framework to help park system leaders use public health data to measure the health outcomes of their parks and estimate the economic benefits. Quantifying the economic value of a park’s health contributions requires closely examining local health data, understanding how the features of the local park system connect to local communities, measuring actual and potential health-related benefits to those communities, and translating those benefits into economic measurements, according to the framework.

Coming up: On January 12, 2023, the New York Fed and the Puerto Rico Public Health Trust will hold an in-person only event on how investments that address the social factors affecting health, such as access to parks and green space, could improve public health in Puerto Rico. Read more...