

Green Task Force Sustainable City Plan

The NOLA Hospitality Community visualizes the future economic growth to include the creation of environmental policies and to adopt environmental responsibility at every level through daily management.

The NOLA Hospitality Community recognizes that the lack of sustainability efforts for the City of New Orleans' resident and tourism industry is slowing the growth of the New Orleans tourism and convention industry. The lack of sustainability efforts is losing business for our city every day. Developing an environmentally-friendly environment is not only a growth opportunity but is quickly becoming a necessity to remain competitive.

WHAT IS A GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE CITY?

Sustainability addresses our needs concerning the environment, changing economies, and rising energy costs.

It encompasses the management, usage, and disposal/re-use of resources in a manner that reduces the impact on our environment. Fortunately, the momentum of the sustainability movement also provides rewards beyond the ethereal concept of "doing good for mankind."

One of the economic benefits of a green-empowered city includes an increase in business from organizations that favor eco-friendly environments. Many, if not most, organizations are adopting charters and best practices that demand an infrastructure of sustainability. Cities unwilling or unable to meet those demands lose business.

Many of the green practices and technologies implemented also provide long-term profit incentives. Climate control features can help reduce electrical bills for individual entities while reducing system strain for entire communities. Solar power reduced reliance on outside power sources. Jobs are created when new technologies are studied, developed, and applied. Many of the costs associated with the integration of green technologies are repaid many-fold over time.

However, this does require taking sustainability in strategic planning and policy development, how the City delivers core services, as well as the day-to-day decisions and actions of individuals into consideration.

The most widely known definition of sustainable development comes from the Brundtland Commission, which defined sustainable development as **"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."**

WHY SHOULD NEW ORLEANS BECOME A GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE CITY?

Developing a sustainable community will allow NOLA to improve the lives of its residents and visitors in the immediate future. It will do so in a way that can be built upon and expanded in the future, always taking advantage of new practices and technologies that continue to benefit our city.

We need a vision that will improve all key sectors of society; it will create a cooperative partnership between the residents, local economy, environments and the millions of visitors we serve.

Most meeting and convention businesses (associations and corporations) give preference to cities that have active and ongoing sustainability program and policies. This trend can be expected to grow in the future. Specifically, preference is given to designations and facilities with the following minimum requirements:

- A comprehensive sustainability plan;
- Programs to recycle and otherwise reduce solid waste;
- Programs for conservation of energy and waters;
- Environmentally responsible systems to handle the treatment of solid and liquid waste; and
- Environmental initiatives above and beyond those listed here.

HOW WILL NEW ORLEANS BECOME A GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE CITY?

Create and adopt a Green City Action Plan and yearly indicator reports;

Adopt an Air Quality and Transportation program to include: bus, trolley, bicycle and pedestrian program, transit/commute solutions, and traffic/alternative fuel vehicles;

Adoption of an Environmental Charter that clearly states our desire to be a leader and advocate;

Endorsement of the United Nations Green Cities Declaration and Urban Environmental Accords; <http://www.wed2005.org/3.1.php>;

Endorsement of the US Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement; <http://www.seattle.gov/major/climate/>;

Adoption of ordinance creating an Environmental Advisory Commission;

Solid Waste and Recycling to include:

- Ideally a “single source” recycle service where bottles, cans, paper and glass can all be placed in the same recycle container and sorted at the recycling plant. This method is preferred because it is “easy” for participants to make use of. It also reduces labor costs for sorting and collecting the recycled materials.

Current technology uses laser guided optical sorters and can produce extremely accurate reports on everything recycled. (Important data for further improvements to the system and provides great PR material for attracting new business.)

At a bare minimum, traditional recycling operations must be implemented. Providing recycling is the first green indicator for a community and other green efforts may be overlooked if this basic option isn't available.

- A program for composting food waste materials, at least in the hospitality and food service industry would save millions of tons of waste from the landfills and create usable compost in less than a year.
- Plastic Bag Program;

Adoption of a water and wastewater program to include:

- Coastal Restoration;
- Lake Ponchartrain Basin
- Mississippi River
- Waterfront Revitalization Plan;

Certified Green Business Program to include a Green Hotel and Lodging Certification Program;

Adoption of Urban Greening/Habitats to include:

- Green Space Programs/Streetscapes;
- Parks/Recreation Areas;
- Infill and Reinvestment, Not Urban Sprawl;
- Green Roof Project;;
- Green Building (Commercial and Residential);

Adoption of energy efficient initiatives through a variety of clean and renewable energy resources:

- increasing efficiencies in new homes and commercial buildings;
- expansion of wind and solar energy;
- refined coal;
- biomass facilities;
- marine renewables.

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