



**The Honorable Mayor-elect Mitch Landrieu
Sustainable Energy and Environment Task Force Final Report**

Table of Contents

- Acknowledgements
- Executive Summary
- Mission and Process of Task Force
- Assessment of Current State of Sustainable Energy and Environment Issues in New Orleans
- Recommendations

Section I: Acknowledgments

Transition New Orleans thanks the Co-chairs, each Task Force member and all the citizens who participated in the Sustainable Energy and Environment Task Force.

Co-chairs

Beth Galante, Global Green USA

Beverly Wright, Dillard University

Members

Commissioner Lambert Boissiere, Louisiana Public Service Commission

Forest Bradley-Wright, Alliance for Affordable Energy

Will Bradshaw, Green Coast Enterprises

Susan Brennan, Second Line Stages

Wade Byrd, Byrd Energy

Daphne Derven, New Orleans Food and Farm Network

Allen Eskew, Eskew+Dumez+Ripple

Paul Flower, Carl E. Woodward Construction

Steve Gleason, Shaw Group - Cleantech Division

Phyllis Jordan, The Green Project

Vance Levesque, LA Green Corp of the Arc of Greater New Orleans

Calvin Mackie, Channel Zero Group

Darrell Malek-Wiley, NOLA recycles

Ray Manning, Manning Architects

Angela O'Byrne, Perez APC

Steve Picou, LSU Ag Center

Felicia Rabito, Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine

Diego Rose, Tulane University

Lonnie Schaffer, Strike it Green

Joseph Sherman, Hollygrove Market

Flo Schornstein, Parkway Partners

Melissa Urcan, AIA New Orleans

Mary-Jo Webster, EcoPark

Diane Wheeler, Second Line Stages

John Williams, Williams Architects

Lynda Woolard, Woolard Family Foundation

Technical Advisors

Matt Fraser, Office of Councilperson-elect Susan Guidry

Transition New Orleans Staff

Sam Joel, Policy and Research

Seung Hong, Senior Staff Director

Laura Shapiro, Staff Director

Section II: Executive Summary

Summary of Transition New Orleans Task Forces

Mayor-elect Mitch Landrieu launched Transition New Orleans on February 7, 2010. Transition New Orleans is designed to engage citizens in the transition process for the new administration of the City of New Orleans. It is led by Co-Chairs, Doug Thornton, Senior Vice President of SMG and Judy Reese Morse, Chief of Staff in the Office of the Lt. Governor.

Transition New Orleans launched seventeen Task Forces to solicit ideas and recommendations from experts and citizens in order to maximize widespread community involvement. Each Task Force is led by two Co-Chairs who are experts in their field and leaders in the community. The mayor-elect is requesting that each Task Force make recommendations on specific areas of priority and interest to the public. All Task Forces are asked to consider the following framework for recommendations:

- Identify the biggest opportunities/challenges for New Orleans that should be acted on in the first 100 days;
- Identify the mid-long term policy priorities that the administration should consider in the first 6 months and beyond;
- Recommend how to measure success in order for the City to track progress going forward.

Sustainable Energy and Environment Task Force Assessment

New Orleans is blessed with an environment of remarkable natural beauty and resources. The Sustainable Energy and Environment Task Force seeks to provide Mayor-elect Landrieu with recommendations that will protect the environment, promote smart and sustainable energy practices, support innovation, promote Green building practices, manage energy costs, and support Green economic development and governance.

Sustainable Energy and Environment Task Force Key Recommendations

The Sustainable Energy and Environment Task Force coalesced around a list of key recommendations. They identified quick wins for the mayor that could be acted on in the first 100 days of the administration and also made recommendations to be enacted in six-months and longer. Almost all of the Task Force's first 100 day recommendations require no or very low additional costs, identify funds already available for use, and several would actually save the city money.

While some recommendations are specific in nature (e.g., the creation of an Office of Sustainability and Resiliency; Coastal Cities Climate Summit), all of the recommendations speak to a greater cause: to preserve and protect our city for generations to come. Themes emerged from the multiple subcommittee meetings and all Task Force members agreed that substantial change is, indeed possible and definitely necessary. Members brought their personal experiences and professional expertise to each discussion with thoughtful, sometimes unconventional, suggestions for sustainable change in the City.

These suggestions include: broad-based support for Green building and business practices, energy use reduction by the City and its citizens, creating an eco-friendly transportation culture, support for recycling and waste management initiatives, implementation of progressive storm water management and a commitment from the city to make healthy foods and practices available to every New Orleanian. There were also substantial and important discussions that framed recommendations to rebuild our coasts and wetlands and a proactive approach to hurricane evacuations. The Task Force

understands that to fully implement the changes they suggest, the mayor and city council will have to work together.

These environmental issues that the City faces are immense, but not insurmountable. The Sustainability and Environment Task Force is wholly committed aiding in the creation of an environmentally just, equitable and healthy city.

Section III: Overview of Mission and Process

Scope and Mission of Task Force

The Sustainable Energy and Environment Task Force focused on identifying opportunities, hurdles, low hanging fruit, and long-term policy reforms that Mayor-elect Landrieu could enact.

The Task Force sought to:

- Assess and evaluate the city's current energy and environmental policies
- Assess and evaluate existing local, state, and national clean energy programs as well as opportunities for greening and leveraging current city programs with other city, state, and federal programs
- Explore the reconstitution of a city recycling program as a limited pilot or full citywide level
- Develop recommendations for a city government energy conservation program
- Consider green resources of city government
- Consider the city's waste disposal program and explore possibilities for reducing landfill waste
- Identify opportunities for leveraging local green initiatives with strategic green job creation and economic development

To accomplish these goals the Task Force was divided into subcommittees based on different energy and environment policy areas including: the environment, energy, green economic development, and green government. Each subcommittee focused on a specific area and reported recommendations back to the rest of the Task Force. The entire Task Force then reconvened, considered each subcommittee's conversations and arrived at a final set of recommendations.

Louisiana and New Orleans have been blessed with abundant natural resources and a remarkably beautiful and enduring ecosystem. Because New Orleans is at the mouth of the Mississippi and rests primarily on low-lying land, the City has always had a dependent relationship with the environment. It is important now to reach a balance between the wants of New Orleans² residents and the need for sustainability. All cities, but especially New Orleans, are being challenged because more than ever before. The environment needs to be considered in shaping policy for future development and energy use.

Many cities are pivoting on rising energy costs and increasing environmental degradation to create new cutting edge industries. Historically, oil and gas exploration and chemical refinement has been an integral part of the local economy; today the sector employs thousands of people. However, environmentally unfriendly practices, arguably common to this industry, are compromising Louisiana's coasts and cannot provide enough new jobs necessary to build a 21st century New Orleans.

The green economy is projected to grow nationwide, which has created intense competition between municipalities to attract industry and investment dollars. This fact is especially poignant, given the fragile state of the economy and the significant job losses created by the global economic downturn. New Orleans has an opportunity to expand and capture incentives for green businesses in both the public and private sector.

Another major and long-term issue facing New Orleans is environmental contamination. The floods and subsequent standing water that followed Hurricane Katrina, illegal dumping, and generations of poorly controlled industrial activity have created an environmental crisis for many New Orleans residents, especially those living in low income predominantly minority neighborhoods. Respiratory illness, poisoning, and other problems relating to a poor environment have been prevalent throughout the City. Many of these issues are related to the release of heavy metals from local industrial sites as well as unsafe renovation, rehabilitation and demolition practices.

Finally, like many cities, New Orleans is facing a financial crisis. It is becoming clear that in order to lower the deficit new ideas and policies need to be implemented to cut costs. Every year the City spends millions of dollars on energy use alone. City Hall has fallen short managing energy consumption, initiating energy reduction initiatives, or embracing innovative green practices. Now with both a tight budget and increasingly negative signs of climate change New Orleans can move to the forefront of cities with proactive energy efficiency and renewable energy policies.

Leadership will be the deciding factor in whether or not New Orleans will be able to adjust to the new environmental circumstances. In many ways, New Orleans's civic, business, and political leaders have only recently started to consider the environment to be an issue of concern. Too often poor planning, and pressure from specific interest groups has resulted in negative environmental outcomes. The challenge now is to move forward, recognize the need for new solutions to problems that have been building for generations.

Public Comments

On Wednesday, March 31, 2010, the Sustainability and Environmental Justice Task Force held a meeting designed to encourage and promote public input. Over 100 people attended the meeting and more than half offered suggestions. Some of these suggestions included:

Make the reestablishment of recycling a top priority

Make the roads bike safe

Support the Lafitte Greenway Project

Support the Hollygrove Market and its expansion

Consolidate waste/recycling services

Consider the roof of the convention center for a green project

Only use local flora in city projects

Support Green deconstruction and reconstruction

Ensure ADA compliance on sidewalks and crosswalks

Support city-wide composting

Consider models like the Dutch Dialogs to deal with stormwater

Streamline permitting processes for builders

Build up, not out

Make accessing the superdome easier by creating park and ride systems

Support LEED requirements

Section V: Recommendations by Task Force

The Sustainable Energy and Environment Task Force encourages City Hall to become a more efficient energy user and effective steward of New Orleans' environment.

Within the first 100 days the Task Force recommends:

- **Create an Office of Sustainability and Resiliency empowered to act on environmental and energy issues concerning the City.** This new office can be the new home of existing environmental, energy, permitting, waste management, hazard mitigation and other functions. To ensure competent and aggressive advancement of Mayor Landrieu's sustainability initiatives it is critical that the Office of Sustainability and Resiliency have adequate authority and that the staff meet minimum education and experience requirements for green building, sustainable waste and water management, and/or resiliency policy. Environmental justice should be a priority for all efforts in this office.
- **Mandate 30% energy use reduction in all municipal buildings by 2020.** The City of New Orleans is responsible for a large portion of the city's overall energy use, with annual energy costs of over \$11 million. A large percentage of this cost is municipal buildings. Mayor Landrieu can ensure significant cost savings by requiring all city buildings reduce their energy use by 30% over the next decade through a combination of weatherization improvements, renewable energy, behavior changes, and building performance standards. New York and numerous other cities have set similar goals and have experienced significant success and cost savings. The objective is both to reduce energy costs, but also set a goal that will capture engage city employees, residents, and the media. An incentive program for city departments or buildings to return some of the energy cost savings to the staff responsible for improvements can help ensure success and empower city employees to lower energy costs in their own workplaces.
- **Re-sign the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.** Mayor Nagin signed this important climate protection initiative, but to reinforce a commitment to the environment Mayor Landrieu should also sign thereby joining more than 1000 mayors nationwide who are working to address climate threats in their cities.
- **Re-establish recycling at City Hall** as a first step towards a larger recycling program for all of New Orleans. Re-establishing recycling was the most requested action at this Task Force's public hearing. Mayor Landrieu can make an outstanding public statement at very little cost by immediately re-establishing a recycling program in City Hall, while also announcing his intention to re-instate city-wide recycling within his first two years in office.
- **Coordinate energy and environment agenda with City Council.** This is especially important in regards to the City's federal and state environmental agenda. Everyone at City Hall needs to be on the same page.
- **Mandate and enforce a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver level requirement for all new and major renovations of city buildings that cost more than \$100,000.** A requirement currently exists for new city buildings to incorporate green building practices. However, this requirement is consistently either ignored by builders

or is not included in contracts to developers. LEED Silver is the current standard being used by most federal agencies and by the Recovery School District for all new and majorly renovated public schools in New Orleans. It is a cost-effective, achievable, and exciting goal for Mayor Landrieu to embrace. This standard would lower the city's utility costs, improve the health and productivity of city employees, and lower building insurance and maintenance costs, and strengthen our local green economy.

- **Join efforts with non-profits and community groups to coordinate a Coastal Cities Climate Summit near the 5th anniversary of Katrina to showcase New Orleans's leadership in coastal resiliency and environmental justice.** There is significant national and international attention focused on New Orleans for this major milestone. Mayor Landrieu should capitalize on the opportunity to showcase the city's outstanding progress towards becoming a sustainable and resilient coastal city. At this summit the Mayor would have the prime opportunity to highlight lessons learned, environmental and social justice challenges, major sustainability projects to date, and launch new administration initiatives. This summit should also include federal officials and Mayors from across the United States as well as international officials who are grappling with issues of coastal erosion, rising sea levels and increasingly severe weather events.
- **Identify and apply for federal funds and technical assistance to support sustainable energy and environmental initiatives.** Historically, New Orleans has not secured federal funds because local government has not effectively inquired. There is a great opportunity over the next several years to obtain significant federal funding and technical assistance for climate change adaptation and mitigation, public transportation, storm water management, energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, as well as health and food initiatives, lead abatement, environmental education, green jobs training and brownfields remediation. Mayor Landrieu can help ensure major advancements in New Orleans' sustainability and resiliency by making a commitment early in his administration to dedicate staff and resources to identifying and applying for federal funding.
- **Establish phased-in minimum energy efficiency and alternate fuel standards for taxis and the city's vehicle fleet.** New Orleans spends millions per year on fuel for the City's fleet of vehicles. By replacing older, expensive vehicles with fuel efficient vehicles, the City can save millions of dollars in fuel costs and significantly lower the city's carbon emissions. Various options exist including hybrid, natural gas, biofuels and electric powered vehicles that can produce even greater savings and carbon reductions in the long term. Similarly, more fuel efficient taxis send a visible message to all visitors that New Orleans is embracing sustainability. A phased-in conversion to highly efficient taxis would also establish New Orleans as a leader in this climate mitigation measure among Gulf coast states and cities that are most threatened by climate change.
- **Re-award the Lafitte Corridor Greenway design contract.** This large public park project offers an outstanding opportunity to provide biking, walking and green recreational space to numerous neighborhoods throughout the city and should be supported and reapproved by Mayor Landrieu.

- **Enact a Green Bikes Initiative to establish the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP 2030) bicycle network map as a planning goal, promote bicycle safety, and ensure all street projects maximize bicycle access.** Mayor Landrieu can position New Orleans as city focused on enhancing quality of life by encouraging progressive bicycle initiatives. These measures include general bicycle use in the city which could significantly lowering transportation costs and improve the health of bicyclists, while easing traffic congestion and reducing carbon emissions. The federal Department of Transportation recently announced its intent to provide strong support to municipalities working to advance bicycle use. This resource could offer both financial and technical assistance to enable the new administration to achieve progress for New Orleans.
- **Implement and publicly support the already approved and funded Urban Food Gardens, Community Markets and Fresh Food Retail Initiatives.** "Food Deserts" are scattered across much of New Orleans. These are areas where grocery stores with fresh fruits and vegetables are unavailable. The Fresh Food Retail and healthy corner market initiatives can help bring food security back to many neighborhoods in the city. Urban gardens and community markets have a wonderful, similar ability to provide food and create commercial opportunities in New Orleans.
- **Publicly support the Mary Queen of Vietnam and other communities in their efforts to create a large urban garden in New Orleans East.** Currently the Mary Queen urban garden is not proceeding because they report consistently facing insurmountable fees. By removing the challenges presented in the federal bureaucracy, urban gardens would be to improve its food security and create employment with healthy and local produce.
- **Create an anti-dumping commission** to advise the Mayor on how to tackle the huge problem of illegal dumping and ensure that a representative of the commission has regular access to the sanitation department to track progress.
- **Order enforcement of existing ordinances on deconstruction, lead paint dry-sanding, green building, and impose a ban on cypress mulch landscaping for all city properties and permits.** Mayor-elect Landrieu can achieve enormous health, safety and environmental benefits for New Orleans by simply ensuring that existing laws are aggressively enforced throughout the city.
- **Commit funding to support budding green industries such as green building and development, coastal protection, building material recycling, and renewable energy.** There is intense competition among cities concerning who will be the center for green industries, and New Orleans has an opportunity to become the leader in this area for the Southeast region between Austin and Atlanta. The mayor can rally public support behind these projects, and help steer stimulus funds and disaster Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) from the federal and state governments. These funds are one of the deciding factors regarding whether or not a project can proceed.
- **Create a Green Products Districts initiative** that provides tax incentives for the development of green buildings and sales tax relief for the sale of environmentally preferable products within the district.

- **Commit to support hazard mitigation as a growing green industry in New Orleans** by making public statements relating to hazard mitigation, setting goals for hazard mitigation, and initiating a public education campaign about mitigation options.
- **Appoint a hazard mitigation director** to manage city-wide mitigation efforts.
- **Facilitate coordination with the Greater New Orleans Foundation to compile and publicize additional energy and environment data.** One extremely effective tool for measuring progress in sustainable energy and environment initiatives is to compile annual statistics to track relevant objectives. For example, East Baton Rouge, with the assistance of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, tracks numerous indicators of quality of life in its annual CityStats report, including recycling achieved, miles of biking and walking paths installed, volunteering numbers, and air quality. Mayor Landrieu can ensure that his efforts to create a truly sustainable and resilient city are identified and measured by supporting a similar program for New Orleans.

In the first six months and beyond the Task Force recommends:

- **Re-establish city wide recycling.** This was the most referenced issue at the Task Force's public hearing and is one of the most important recommendations put forth by the Task Force. To successfully reestablish recycling throughout New Orleans, the Director of Sanitation must have the skill set and commitment to deliver a cost-effective recycling program. All city refuse contracts should be reviewed for the potential to renegotiate those contracts to reduce general garbage pickup and enable regular recycling pickup.
- **Create and implement a comprehensive hurricane debris recycling and hazardous waste disposal plan.** FEMA will fund debris recycling and hazardous waste disposal, but only if a debris recycling and hazardous waste policy exists before a storm occurs. Mayor-elect Landrieu can ensure that future hurricane cleanup includes significant recycling by creating a New Orleans hurricane debris removal and recycling plan, thus saving landfill space, preserving building materials, and reducing disposal costs. Similarly, ensuring that the debris removal and recycling plan speaks explicitly to hazardous waste disposal will help ensure that landfills in disadvantaged communities are not contaminated by toxic chemicals and debris, protecting public health and the environment.
- **Implement Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing** to help support green building projects. A PACE bond is a mechanism by which proceeds are lent to commercial and residential property owners to finance energy efficiency measures and renewable energy systems. The property owners then repay their loans over time via an annual assessment on their property tax bill. The state has already passed the necessary enabling legislation. At minimal cost to the city, property owners would be empowered to finance their own energy saving upgrades.

- **Propose a solar leasing program for the City of New Orleans that will place solar panels on all City owned buildings.** The City is responsible for a huge portion of all energy use in New Orleans, and can single-handedly provide major energy savings and carbon reduction at virtually no cost by contracting with a solar provider to lease solar panels at a fixed rate, lower cost than current energy rates. Entergy New Orleans can help the City achieve its goal of embracing renewable energy by encouraging and authorizing the mayor to enter into these contracts.
- **Create a ‘Green Lane’ to expedite permit applications and help identify incentives for projects meeting LEED or IGCC standards.** Projects that use green practices should be incentivized in some way. This approach could include various process incentives offered to green projects such as fast-track permitting and scaled back parking requirements.
- **Identify and remove permitting obstacles for green buildings, storm water management systems, and food production.** Numerous obstacles to sustainable building in New Orleans exist in the permitting process, from outdated prohibitions on the use of rainwater and grey water in building systems to extremely high meter installation charges for community garden water access. Mayor-elect Landrieu can lead New Orleans out of this archaic and counter-productive system by ensuring that all city officials aggressively embrace reformation of city permitting and processes, utilizing best practices from around the world.
- **Generate a plan to preserve and modernize historic buildings using green building technology.** All over the world older, historic buildings are treasured, but can be a burden because of outdated and sometimes dangerous design or construction. New Orleans could become a center for innovative renovations of historic structures to include modern green technologies. Historic preservation is center to the City’s revitalization, economic development, small business incubation, housing, and tourism. New Orleans’ incredible stock of historic buildings could be the basis for an innovative green industry.
- **Facilitate public/private partnerships to maximize available resources that promote energy and environmental initiatives, including storm water management, environmental education, environmental data evaluation, and green economic development.** The public and private spheres consistently overlap concerning energy and environment issues. The City should facilitate the creation of public private partnerships that are designed to unburden city government and help manage the pressing environmental and energy issues facing New Orleans. Private resources currently exist that can help the new administration rapidly advance storm water management, environmental education, environmental data evaluation and green economic development in the city.
- **Create and implement a comprehensive storm water management plan.** New Orleans has a severe problem with flooding and due to climate change faces increased flooding risks in the decades to come. Pumping stations and engineered infrastructure will remain vital tools to manage storm water, but numerous additional measures must be embraced to help protect our citizens and property (e.g., raingardens/bioswales, green roofs, permeable pavement, and cisterns). Mayor-elect Landrieu can help New Orleans become a world

leader in progressive water management strategies by ensuring that city officials proactively identify, and eliminate institutional barriers to, best water management practices and aggressively seek funding and technical support to implement those practices.

- **Identify a high visibility water management / renewable energy project** that could serve as an example to the world of innovation in New Orleans and concern about the environment. New Orleans can position itself as a world leader in creating a sustainable coastal city by utilizing our unparalleled water resources to generate renewable energy while protecting and improving quality of life in our communities. Mayor Landrieu should utilize federal support and mobilize public/private partnerships to identify and implement a showcase project in a high visibility area that demonstrates New Orleans' emerging leadership in smarter energy and water-focused resiliency planning.
- **Appoint a member of each of the following: the Planning Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, and S&WB with experience in matters of environmental sustainability and energy efficiency.** Far too often these powerful committees, commissions, and boards do not consider the environmental consequences of their actions or lack of action. There need to be more green voices in leadership positions throughout the City.
- **Publicly prioritize green jobs and green building technology.** Mayor-elect Landrieu can accomplish much by using his bully pulpit and city contracting authority to encourage green innovation. He should talk often about green technology and its benefits, and ensure that all city projects make such technology and the jobs they create a priority from the design phase forward.
- **Utilize the valuable human capital and experience of neighborhood organizations and nonprofits to advance environmental and energy initiatives, including composting, environmental education, environmental justice, green building education, healthy food access, environmental health and quality of life.** Significant gaps in public knowledge exist surrounding current environmental issues facing New Orleans. There are already various entities educating the public about these issues, but they lack coordination and a broad platform to reach others.
- **Create and implement a shelter in place plan to provide physical security to New Orleans residents who are unable to leave during a storm.** New Orleans has always faced, and will continue to face, periodic threats from hurricanes. Public safety is a vital concern, but the reality is that many citizens do not have the financial or physical resources to evacuate for every storm. Requiring those to do so can result in devastating financial and health hardships. Mayor-elect Landrieu should acknowledge this, and create safe shelter facilities during lower threat hurricane events to ensure maximum protection of all citizens.
- **Broaden the variety of stake holders engaged in hazard mitigation** to include philanthropic foundations, NGOs, universities, professional associations, and cities with similar coastal topography (i.e., Rotterdam, Netherlands has a strong track record of hazard mitigation).

- **Set annual funding targets to maximize the flow of hazard mitigation funds from all sources**, including both disaster-based and non-disaster based sources.