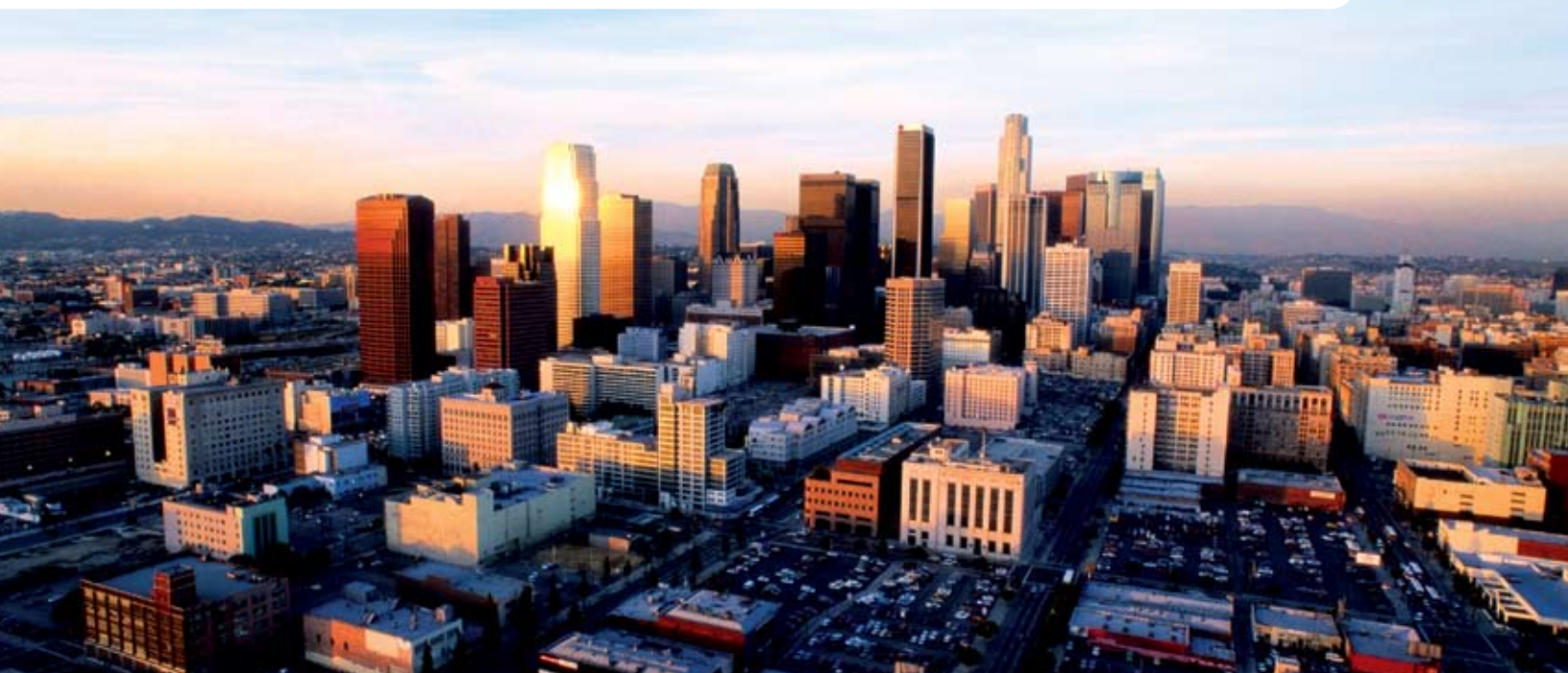


A GREEN LOS ANGELES

Recommendations to the City of Los Angeles
from **GREEN LA**, a Working Group for a Just and Sustainable Future
Fall 2006



"Let's dare to imagine Los Angeles as the cleanest and greenest big city in America...The great cities of the 21st Century will not be famous for their factories or have smokestacks in their skylines. They won't be the traditional homes of polluting or extractive industries. They'll be places where residents are at home in vibrant, clean, and sustainable communities."

— Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, "City of Dreams" Remarks, November 9, 2005

**The City of Los Angeles
has an historic opportunity
to become a national leader for
environmental health, justice and sustainability.**

**Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has proposed
a bold Green Vision for Los Angeles that is shared
by GREEN LA, a network of L.A.'s environmental
and community-based organizations that have
each worked for many years to make Los Angeles
more livable, healthy, equitable and sustainable.**

**We are committed to working with
the Mayor, City Council, the City's General
Managers and others to implement
the Mayor's visionary Green agenda
and the recommendations in this document.**

GREEN LA: FOR A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



GREEN LA's recommendations for the City of Los Angeles will lead us towards environmental and economic justice by embracing the following set of deeply held values. These should be the guiding principles for all city agencies and departments.

GREEN LA has worked closely with an advisory committee of new mayoral appointees to the Harbor, Department of Water & Power, Environmental Affairs, Planning, Transportation and Public Works Commissions to develop a set of specific recommendations to be implemented, the highlights of which are included in this report. A report fully documenting all of the recommendations will soon be available.

GREEN LA is uniquely qualified to provide environmental guidance and expertise to the City of Los Angeles in an exciting model of collaboration between decision-makers and advocates, helping to inform City policies and programs.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

GREEN LA's environmental and environmental justice recommendations for the City of Los Angeles are founded upon a set of deeply held principles and values:

Do No Harm

The "precautionary principle" asserts that where threats of serious or irreversible damage to human health and ecosystems exist, lack of scientific certainty relating to cause and effect shall not postpone measures to prevent further harm to human health and the environment.

Count All Costs

The integration of new accounting practices that consider the full costs of an activity or investment – including resource, labor, and disposal – to better understand the long-term and social impacts of decisions.

Value Natural Systems

An accounting practice that measures the vital contribution to human health provided by nature and ecosystem functions, so they can be maintained and enhanced through policy.

Strong Green Economy

A "green" approach to economic development and job creation based on protecting and restoring ecosystems, producing useful goods and services, and reducing transportation and distribution networks.

Social Equity

The elimination of disparity and promotion of full social, economic, and geographic equality as intrinsic to environmental sustainability.

Open Government

Decision-making processes centered on community needs and global interconnectedness, and which are transparent, democratic, and accountable.



Photo by Sarah Wauters

PROTECT THE GLOBAL CLIMATE

In the face of the projected devastating effects of global warming, Los Angeles has many opportunities to become a global leader by becoming “carbon neutral”—not adding any heat-trapping gases to the atmosphere. These actions will provide measurable, positive outcomes for Los Angeles, and show the world that conserving resources and using renewable energy is good for public health, the environment and the bottom line.

Recommendation: City agencies become carbon neutral

By 2007, inventory and report the climate change emissions for City agencies and set an aggressive timetable to stop adding to global warming, including accelerated retirement of fossil-fuel generation.

Recommendation: Increase energy efficiency throughout the City

Complete comprehensive energy audits of all City buildings, departments and agencies by the end of 2007, and immediately begin implementing a plan that achieves the maximum load reductions in those facilities by 2013.

Recommendation: Integrate climate impact into all City planning and development

By expanding transit, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly development and addressing the urban heat-island effect, we can improve the quality of life for all residents and sharply reduce energy use and climate impact.

Energy Work Group Co-Chairs:

Rhonda Mills, Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies
Jim Stewart, People for Parks

Advisor: **Mary Nichols**, President, Board of Water and Power Commissioners



“Let’s show the nation that we can light a city with green power.”

— Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Inaugural Address, July 1, 2005



Photograph courtesy of Metro. ©2006 LACMTA

MOVING FROM CARS TO CLEAN, GREEN AND ACCESSIBLE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Los Angeles should move toward eliminating auto dependency and making Los Angeles transit-, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly. By focusing on improving the experience for pedestrians, bicyclists and mass transit users, the City can make these modes more attractive to more people, and thus increase their share relative to automobile travel. Effective public transit and pedestrian and bicycle safety should be a right for all residents.

Recommendation: Create Pedestrian Master Plan

Create and implement a Pedestrian Master Plan to improve safety, access and comfort for pedestrians, and public open spaces.

Recommendation: Use City parking policy to reduce car dependency

Require employers to pay “travel” subsidies to employees who ride transit, bike, or walk to work. Increase parking charges at meters and City-owned lots and increase City parking taxes on privately-owned lots, using the increased revenues to fund improved transit services and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Recommendation: Increase bus-only lanes

Immediately begin planning implementation of more peak-hour bus-only lanes.

Public Transportation Work Group Co-Chairs:

Terry O’Day, Environment Now
Manuel Criollo, Labor/Community Strategy Center/Bus Riders Union

Advisor: **Malcolm Carson**, Board of Transportation Commissioners

ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE WATER

Los Angeles should have the highest-quality, most sustainable supply of water to serve the people and economy of Los Angeles, while enhancing the environment and creating local jobs. To meet this goal, City agencies and people from the community must work together to save large amounts of water, create new local groundwater and surface water supplies, improve drinking water quality, and protect the environment in L.A. and our northern watershed — Inyo and Mono Counties in the Eastern Sierra.

Recommendation: Secure water independence from Northern California

Set L.A. on a 10-year path toward independence by promoting the wise use of the local watershed and an increased use of new, local supplies of high-quality water from storm water capture and state-of-the-art treated recycled water.

Recommendation: Become recognized leader for safe drinking water

Require that City tap water must exceed current standards when there are significant benefits to human health. Supplemental benefits include environmental and economic savings from reduced use of bottled water.

Recommendation: Partner with water-supplying counties

By July 2007 establish a process for the City and Inyo and Mono Counties to resolve common issues and to explore opportunities to work together. A long-term, sustainable water supply will result for Los Angeles, as well as improved air quality and restored ecosystems in the Eastern Sierra, permanent protection of DWP land, and outdoor experience programs for Los Angeles youth.

Water Work Group Co-Chairs:

Fran Spivy-Weber, Mono Lake Committee
Jonathan Parfrey, Physicians for Social Responsibility-LA

Advisors:

Paula Daniels, Board of Public Works
Mary Nichols, President, Board of Water and Power Commissioners

“ . . . improving our quality of life means protecting
the quality of the water we drink. . . ”

— Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Inaugural Address, July 1, 2005



Photo by David Bacon



IMPROVING HEALTH IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

The areas of Los Angeles that suffer a disproportionate health impact from environmental hazards share two important characteristics – they are generally poor and working poor, and they are communities of color. Cumulative impacts are linked to high rates of asthma, respiratory illness, and cancer, as well as above-average incidence of low birth weights and miscarriages. A cumulative impact policy would allow the City to move beyond reactive facility-by-facility and single pollutant strategies. Adopting a more comprehensive approach addresses multiple hazardous exposures and incorporates socioeconomic differences to better understand community susceptibility to environmental pollutants.

Recommendation: Measure all impacts on public health

The City should examine how environmental and socioeconomic stressors in low-income communities of color, such as poverty and inequitable political influence, amplify the potential relationship to adverse environmental health impacts.

Recommendation: Establish healthy baseline standards

The City should establish baseline standards of community environmental health, air quality and other environmental quality measures based on levels suggested by public health experts and measures from the cleanest areas of the City. City land-use decisions must avoid creating negative impacts on residents of Los Angeles as well as other cities.

Recommendation: Designate “Priority Zones” to address cumulative impact

Priority Zones would define and target critical neighborhood areas for remediation based on cumulative impact analyses. Within zones, permits would be denied to new facilities with pollution exceeding established threshold levels. They would also require mitigation measures at existing facilities, reducing toxic emissions to meet the baseline standards.

Cumulative Impacts Work Group Co-Chairs:

Bill Gallegos, Communities for a Better Environment
Martha Arguello, Physicians for Social Responsibility/L.A.-Californians for Pesticide Reform

Advisors:

Regina Freer, City Planning Commission
Misty Sanford, Environmental Affairs Commission

GREENING THE PORT OF L.A.

The City should be committed to creating a healthful environment and sustainable quality of life for both residents and workers in and around the Port of Los Angeles and along trade and goods movement corridors. To meet this goal, L.A. must adopt aggressive plans to protect public health, reduce pollution and restore environmental quality in the Harbor area, as well as in the many other communities throughout the region impacted by international trade, the Port, and the goods movement industry.

Recommendation: Dramatically reduce air and water pollution

The City should adopt, implement and enforce a comprehensive plan for the Port and related “goods movement system” to reduce emissions to the most health-protective levels technologically feasible, with an initial goal of reaching 2001 air pollution levels by 2010, while working toward an 85% reduction of 2001 air pollution levels by 2020.

Recommendation: Ensure that the benefits of goods movement outweigh costs

Conduct independent cost-benefit analyses that build on recent state and local health, economic and planning studies (and that does not delay immediate implementation of other recommendations) to inform Port decision-making for a sustainable future. This analysis should require consideration of beneficiary fees. Container fees to fund air quality improvement and port security should be instituted.

Recommendation: Adopt healthy land-use policies

The City should prevent or fully mitigate off-port community impacts by adopting land-use policies that protect public health, including existing guidelines for facility siting; standards that promote the use of new and emerging non-polluting technologies; and relocating port-related industrial uses away from residential neighborhoods by use of on-dock rail.

Port Work Group Co-Chairs:

Angelo Logan, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice

Jesse Marquez, Coalition for a Safe Environment

Advisor: Jerilyn López Mendoza, Vice President, Board of Harbor Commissioners



“... I have pushed the Port of L.A. to be the greenest port in the country—a port of the 21st century.”

— Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Goods Movement Summit, January 31, 2006



Adan Arreola, North East Trees

USING NATURAL PROCESSES TO IMPROVE THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

An urban ecosystem approach recognizes and accounts for the intrinsic ability of ecosystems – through biological processes – to improve environmental quality and livability. These processes are diverse and interconnected, touching on all aspects of the City’s infrastructure and its patterns of growth. For example, soil and vegetation infrastructure improves air quality, water supply and quality, and public health. Approaches that enable ecosystems to function in the urban environment should be institutionalized in the planning process. Neighborhoods and streets should include bioswales for stormwater purification and shade trees to reduce the urban heat-island. Energy and water efficient construction techniques should be required.

Recommendation: Implement Watershed Management Plans and practices

Prioritize a natural, green approach to stormwater management. Direct all departments to reduce citywide impervious surface cover by 15% by 2020. Provide resources and staff support to implement existing Watershed Management Plans and identify the resources and partnerships necessary to develop comprehensive plans for all subwatersheds within the City.

Recommendation: Resolve impediments to adopting ecosystems approach

Resolve structural, procedural, and financial impediments to achieving urban ecosystem goals, including revising all policies, ordinances, building codes and city department procedures identified by the IRP Policy subcommittee as obstacles to implementation of Leadership Projects. Partner with stakeholders to implement Leadership Projects by 2015 and fulfill the Million Trees Initiative.

Recommendation: Increase access to, and natural benefits of, open and green space

Create and implement a strategic plan to ensure that by 2015 all residents live within a half-mile walk of a multi-benefit park, school, open space and/or community garden (quarter-mile by 2020). All open spaces must incorporate stormwater Best Management Practices including use of native plants and features that capture/filter stormwater through soil. Ensure all residents can use school recreation facilities after hours and on weekends.

Urban Ecosystems Work Group Co-Chairs:

Andy Lipkis, TreePeople

Stephanie Pincetl, UCLA Institute on the Environment

Advisors:

Paula Daniels, Board of Public Works

Mary Nichols, President, Board of Water and Power Commissioners

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

LAWGE's shared vision with the Mayor for a Green L.A. will be based on two fundamental premises:

1. City government processes that are transparent, democratic and defined by community needs.
2. Investment in economic development and job creation to fuel a growing Green Economy.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & DECISION MAKING

Recognizing that everyone has the right to live in a livable community, a Green Los Angeles will only be achieved with the knowledge, cooperation and commitment of all residents. The City must adopt and implement the following recommendations for public participation and decision making that is open, inclusive and democratic.

Recommendation: Provide opportunities for participation to all

All City departments, agencies, boards, commissions and other bodies involved in decisions that may affect environmental quality and public health must provide meaningful opportunities for involvement to Los Angeles' diverse population. The City should make ordinances, resolutions and initiatives easily accessible via the Internet, and provide funding to disadvantaged communities, allowing residents a voice on projects that impact their environmental health.

Recommendation: Allow public to review policies

Plans, programs and policies to protect and promote protection of human health and the environment must be reviewed periodically and with meaningful public involvement. This will ensure that the implementation of plans and programs and the dissemination of information meet the needs of L.A. residents and impacted communities, and addresses disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards. Opportunities for the public to provide input must be incorporated into any planning process.

Recommendation: Communicate to communities in their language

The City should communicate significant public health and environmental information in the City's other major languages besides English – Spanish, Armenian, Korean, Chinese, Tagalog, etc. The City's website should also include information in these languages. Simultaneous translation should be provided at hearings and meetings.



Photo courtesy of Communities for a Better Environment



BUILDING A NEW GREEN ECONOMY IN L.A.

By taking leadership in building a Green Economy, the City can expand economic development while improving public health, social equity and environmental conditions. Green economic development approaches embrace the cleanest, most efficient technologies and must ensure living wages, guarantee local hiring and workforce development, and identify long-term funding streams to promote economic and employment development in low-income, communities of color.

Recommendation: Stimulate a regional Green economy

The City should direct public interventions (subsidies, incentives, brokering) toward Green building, generating construction and maintenance jobs and stimulating growth in local manufacturing of Green building-related materials. Short-term action should:

- Focus on increased investment in new construction of Green buildings through policy measures, innovative financing, improving energy efficiency standards and retrofitting of existing buildings.
- Require Project Labor Agreements and Community Benefits Agreements that ensure public investment benefits local communities and regional and state economies.
- Direct City investment portfolios and financial reserves to be invested in projects that encourage the Green economy.

Recommendation: Develop a Green workforce strategy

Develop and oversee a Citywide workforce strategy linked to Green economic development initiatives that:

- Ensures that jobs pay family-sustaining wages and provide worker benefits and protection.
- Supports job training and basic education programs preparing job seekers for clean energy industries.
- Requires developers and contractors to utilize skilled, trained workers from the construction trade unions and to connect low-income job seekers to their apprenticeship programs.
- Increases the environmental skill sets across a wide range of City jobs. Such skills would include urban ecosystem management, ecosystem valuation, landscaping with native plants and climate-appropriate watershed management.
- Utilizes existing water conservation and watershed programs to create jobs in community-based organizations. These groups could also conduct home, business, and institutional audits for water and energy efficiency, providing information on City conservation programs.

Recommendation: Increase public involvement in shaping Green initiatives in the City

Create a Task Force comprised of unions, local nonprofit organizations and others involved in job creation and workforce development to coordinate and collaborate on existing and future Green economic development and workforce development activities in the City.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(All advisors serve on City of Los Angeles commissions)

Maria Armoudian	Environmental Affairs Commission
Malcolm Carson	Board of Transportation Commissioners
Paula Daniels	Board of Public Works
Regina Freer	City Planning Commission
Jerilyn López Mendoza	Vice President, Board of Harbor Commissioners
Mary Nichols	President, Board of Water and Power Commissioners
Misty Sanford	Environmental Affairs Commission



Photo by Alex Schoenfeldt

GREEN LA FOR A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Participating Organizations

(partial listing)


GREEN LA is a unique collaboration in Los Angeles. Composed of both environmental and community-based organizations, the group's collective expertise in building healthy communities is vast. Some of the achievements of the group's individual members include reducing air and water pollution, instituting pesticide-free schools, planting trees and growing community gardens, and ensuring clean-up of lead from low-income neighborhoods. The visionary and dedicated people that lead these organizations have been making L.A. a better place to live for everyone, for years.

ACORN	Environment Now *	National Environmental Trust
American Lung Association of California	Environmental Defense	Natural Resources Defense Council
ARTSCorps L.A.	Friends of the Los Angeles River	Northeast Trees
Ballona Wetlands Land Trust	Global Green USA	Olive Branches
California Climate Action Registry	Harbor Watts Economic	Pacoima Beautiful
Californians for Pesticide Reform	Development Corporation	People for Parks *
California Safe Schools	Heal the Bay	Physicians for Social Responsibility – L.A. *
Center for Energy Efficiency	Healthy Homes Collaborative	The River Project
and Renewable Technologies *	Interfaith Environmental Council	SCOPE/L.A. Apollo Alliance
Center for Law in the Public Interest	Labor/Community Strategy Center/	Sierra Club
Coalition for Community Change	Bus Riders Union	South Central Farmers
Coalition for a Safe Environment	Latino Urban Forum	Strategic Actions for a Just Economy
Coalition for Clean Air	Legal Aid Foundation of L.A. *	TreePeople *
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life	Liberty Hill Foundation *	Trust for Public Land
Communities for a Better Environment *	L.A. Community Garden Council	UCLA, Labor & Occupational Safety
Community Partners Council	L.A. Conservation Corps	& Health Program
Del Amo Action Committee	L.A. County Bicycle Coalition	Union de Vecinos
Desal Response Group	L.A. League of Conservation Voters	Urban & Environmental Policy Institute,
EarthDay Los Angeles	L.A. Neighborhood Land Trust	Occidental College
Earth Resource Foundation	Long Beach Alliance for Children With Asthma	
East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice *	Mono Lake Committee *	

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Jim Sadd	Occidental College

* Signifies service on the GREEN LA Steering Committee

 Printed on recycled paper with soy ink

This publication and the meetings of GREEN LA have been generously supported by the **Liberty Hill Foundation** and **Environment Now**.

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