



Net Zero by 2050:

A Priority List for Climate Action in New Orleans

December 2022

Introduction

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a collection of climate scientists assembled by the United Nations, released a report in 2021 detailing the “unprecedented” pace of climate change. The report outlined the catastrophic impacts that lie ahead unless humans quickly cut greenhouse gas emissions. The IPCC report called for a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions globally of at least 45% by 2030, and to achieve net-zero emission by 2050.

In response to this crisis, the City of New Orleans has joined the State of Louisiana, the Biden-Harris administration, and thousands of cities worldwide to set a science-based target to reduce climate pollution. Climate action planning is an iterative process in which we plan, implement, monitor, and adjust continuously as we learn. It is led by the City but not done solely by government. Collaboration with residents, businesses, non-profits, and advocacy groups is critical to implementing meaningful change.

This plan refreshes our priorities and provides an update since the City’s first Climate Action Plan was released in 2017. A draft of this plan was shared with stakeholders in 2022. The Office of Resilience and Sustainability reviewed and incorporated that feedback into this final plan you are reading now.

Thank you for your time.



Setting Priorities: A Statement from Mayor LaToya Cantrell

As we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis and work to heal our community and rebuild our economy, we are returning our attention to another global crisis that disproportionately threatens our city.

New Orleans is on the frontlines of climate change. The devastation from Hurricane Ida last year reminded us of the risks of an increasingly volatile climate and the need to build strong and lasting infrastructure that can adapt. We have a momentous opportunity before us now as we ramp up our economic recovery to make climate change central to our considerations. By integrating initiatives that reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and help the City adapt to climate change into our economic agenda, we can create new, environmentally-friendly economic opportunities that reduce our risk and improve the long-term health and vitality of our city.

We are building upon our previous work and further defining our priorities. We launched the world's first comprehensive city resilience strategy in 2015 to confront our most urgent threats, adapt our city to our changing natural environment, invest in equity, create flexible and reliable systems, and prepare for future shocks. We built upon this strategy to release the City's first climate action plan in 2017, joining cities around the world in a commitment to uphold the goals of the Paris Agreement and do our part to limit global warming to 1.5 °C (2.7°F) above pre-industrial levels. In that plan, we focused on how the City could reduce its contribution to climate change with targeted actions in the areas of energy, transportation, waste, and cultural awareness and action.

In 2018, my administration — in partnership with the Greater New Orleans Foundation — expanded community participation with the Climate Action

Equity Working Group (CAEWG) to explore how the challenges of climate change are heightened by social inequity. The CAEWG led a series of public meetings and provided recommendations on how to implement climate action in New Orleans more equitably, and those recommendations are reflected in this updated plan.

Now in 2022, this Climate Action update affirms our goals and provides a refresh of our strategic priorities. In the context of a renewed national focus to catalyze action on the climate crisis and the creation of the first climate plan for the State of Louisiana, this update keeps us focused on reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change.

With this update, I establish the City's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 and adjust our interim goal to reduce emissions 50% by 2035 to align with key national targets and planned actions related to decarbonizing the grid, electrifying transportation, and reducing energy use.

We are a community like no other with a unique culture and a vibrant heritage, and we have the privilege and responsibility to sustain and preserve one of the most important, beautiful and dynamic places in the United States. We all want a safer city, with affordable and renewable energy, reliable and efficient transportation, healthy air, and green jobs that create opportunities for our residents. Making New Orleans a vibrant and thriving city — that's what we're about.

To our future,

Mayor LaToya Cantrell



Background

In this 2022 Climate Action update, we have honed our goals and selected strategies to focus attention and resources to where we have the most opportunity for impact, either directly within the City's jurisdiction or by working with partners. Coming out of the COVID-19 crisis, we must rebuild our community and diversify our economy, and these climate action strategies provide clear opportunities to transform our city for a more sustainable future.

This is a pivotal moment for climate action in the United States and Louisiana and much is still unfolding. In 2021, the Biden-Harris administration announced the nation's new commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 50% from 2005 levels by 2030. This was followed by two ambitious federal bills designed to

upgrade our nation's infrastructure and combat the climate crisis. In January 2022, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards' Climate Initiatives Task Force approved the state's first ever Climate Action Plan and set Louisiana's goal for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. When the City wrote the 2017 Climate Action Plan, there were no similar state and national actions upon which to rely for support and leadership. Moreover, private sector action on climate change has accelerated in the last few years as well, with more corporations committing to reducing emissions and creating products and services that help all of us combat climate change. **Now is the time for New Orleans to accelerate our action on the climate crisis and create opportunities in the new economy for our city.**



City Context

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY SNAPSHOT 2019	NEW ORLEANS	LOUISIANA	UNITED STATES
Population			
Total Population	390,144	4,648,794	328,239,523
Population Growth: April 1, 2010–July 1, 2019	13.50%	2.50%	6.30%
Households: 2015–2019	153,819	1,739,497	120,756,048
Characteristics			
Persons Under 18	20.10%	23.40%	22.30%
Persons 65 years and over	14.10%	15.90%	16.50%
Female Persons	52.50%	51.20%	50.80%
Foreign Born Persons: 2015–2019	5.50%	4.20%	13.60%
With a disability, under age 65 years, 2015–2019	10.50%	11.10%	8.60%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65	10.60%	10.50%	9.50%
Race			
Black	59.50%	32.80%	13.40%
White	33.90%	62.80%	76.30%
Hispanic or Latino	5.50%	5.30%	18.50%
Asian	2.90%	1.80%	5.90%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.20%	0.80%	1.30%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.00%	0.10%	0.20%
Two or more races	1.90%	1.80%	2.80%
Families and Living Arrangements			
Owner Occupied housing unit rate, 2015–2019	48.30%	65.60%	64.00%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2015–2019	8.30%	8%	21.60%
Households with a computer, 2015–2019	85.10%	85.60%	90.30%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, 2015–2019	73.40%	75.50%	82.70%
Education			
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2015–2019	86.50%	85.20%	88.00%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2015–2019	37.60%	24.10%	32.10%
Income and Economy			
Median household income (in 2019 dollars), 2015–2019	\$41,604	\$49,469	\$62,843
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2019 dollars), 2015–2019	\$31,385	\$27,923	\$34,103
In civilian labor force, population age 16 years+, 2015–2019	61.70%	59.10%	63%
Persons in poverty	23.70%	19%	10.50%
Geography and Transportation			
Population per square mile, 2010	2,029.40	104.9	87.4
Land area in square miles	169.42	43,203.90	3,531,905.43
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+	24.2	25.7	26.9



Climate Risks and Hazards

The City recently adopted its updated [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) in September 2021, which outlines the city's climate and associated infrastructure risks in great detail. That plan should be read in conjunction with this update. A few key elements of risk specifically related to climate change from the 2017 Climate Action Plan are highlighted here as well.

For New Orleans, climate change is not a future scenario, but a current reality. South Louisiana is already facing many challenges caused or worsened by climate change due to our unique geography. Sea level rise and a projected increase in the intensity of weather events are expected to accelerate coastal land loss—increasing storm surge exposure while adding greater stresses to our levee and flood protection systems. While the state of Louisiana's 2017 Coastal Master Plan from the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) set an ambitious path to respond to changes in our coastal system, it also acknowledged that we cannot sustain a goal of “no net loss” of our coastal wetlands with updated projections of much higher sea level rise than previously anticipated resulting from climate change.

Climate change is projected to cause greater intensity in storm events, including hurricanes and severe storms, that can cause flood and wind damage. Flooding due to intense rainfall and the limited capacity of pipes and pumps causes direct damage to roadways, homes, businesses, and infrastructure, and can hamper both emergency response and recovery efforts. As the city's soft soils become saturated and the drainage

network reaches capacity during severe storms, the interdependencies of the City's utilities mean that effects can spread across multiple systems. Waterlogged soils, in conjunction with high winds, often result in downed trees and power lines, leading to outages that compromise the City's energy-dependent stormwater and wastewater pumping facilities and significantly increase the period of power interruption. Changing rainfall patterns may also result in longer dry stretches, which could exacerbate problems with shallow subsidence that reduce the longevity of infrastructure.

Meanwhile, more extreme heat episodes will directly threaten the health of our residents and the reliability of infrastructure systems that supply us with energy and water. The record heat we have experienced over the past few years causes higher concentrations of air pollutants and greater amounts of ozone in our urban areas and accelerates the spread of allergens, exacerbating respiratory illnesses and allergy problems alongside the increased threat of heat stroke. A [study](#) from Climate Central further showed that some areas of the city act as “heat islands”, sometimes up to eight degrees hotter than other areas of the city due to a lack of green space and shade. These areas of sparse green space are generally our socially vulnerable neighborhoods. A sustained warmer climate also increases the risk of vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, and Zika virus. Additionally, we have experienced increased cold snaps and volatility in winter weather in the last few years, putting more stress on our aging infrastructure.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) are the primary cause of global warming and climate change. These emissions largely derive from burning fossil fuels for energy and transportation and the decomposition of our waste. The City completed inventories of community-wide emissions for

the years 2014 and 2017. The 2014 inventory estimated 3.6 million metric tons of CO₂e and the 2017 indicated a small reduction to 3.5 million metric tons of CO₂e. The refreshed priority list and goals laid out in this document are based on the 2017 inventory as it is more recent.

The City is actively compiling its 2021 inventory and will be releasing a progress report on it in early 2023.

The inventories were assembled according to the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories (GPC), a reporting standard developed for cities by the World Resources Institute (WRI), C40 Cities and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI). The inventory summarizes community-scale greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that result from processes and activities occurring within the boundaries of Orleans Parish as

organized in three sectors: stationary energy, transportation, and waste. This inventory does not include emissions as a result of industrial processes, agriculture and forestry, aviation, and off-road transportation. The City uses emissions reporting to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality for some information, but cannot rely only on a direct measurement of GHG emissions at their source; therefore, this inventory employs a calculation-based methodology that involves the conversion of GHG-inducing activities into emissions based on specific emissions factors.

Climate Goals

50% by 2035 | Net-Zero by 2050

The City of New Orleans aims to achieve net zero GHG emissions by 2050. By net zero, the City means it aims to reduce emissions as much as it can, and “zero out” any remaining emissions with reductions elsewhere, thereby achieving zero emissions with both of those calculations. Net zero emissions is also referred to as carbon neutrality. Emissions that remain after the City’s actions are implemented are residual emissions. The City will continue to update its plans and seek new ways to reduce these residual emissions directly. This may include continued use of offsets representing commensurate emissions reductions elsewhere and negative emissions approaches such as natural carbon sequestration through tree plantings and expanded green space. In June 2022, the City Council passed Resolution R-22-219 to prohibit the development of carbon capture and sequestration facilities and pipelines within the City.

In the 2017 Climate Action Plan, the City set a goal to reduce GHG emissions 50% by 2030. In this update, we establish the 2050 goal and revise the City’s interim goal to reduce emissions 50% by 2035. This shift to 2035 enables the City to align with critically important national actions and market trends such as the Biden-Harris administration goal to clean the nation’s electricity grid by 2035, and related goals to accelerate energy efficiency and renewable energy deployment, transition to low- and no-emission vehicles, and generally invest in climate-forward infrastructure and technologies.

This revised interim goal of a 50% emissions reduction by 2035 is based on modeling climate actions which are within the City’s control, but also considers the barriers the City faces to achieve the previous goal of a 50% emissions reduction by 2030. The City also modeled an

extended scenario that does achieve the 50% reduction by 2030 if those barriers, such as EV adoption or grid cleaning rates, were removed. While we believe the 2035 target is more feasible at this moment, we will continue to lead by example and facilitate others to take actions to achieve the original 2030 goal. **When the City releases its GHG progress report in early 2023, we will include information on this extended scenario model as well as the barrier analysis we conducted.**

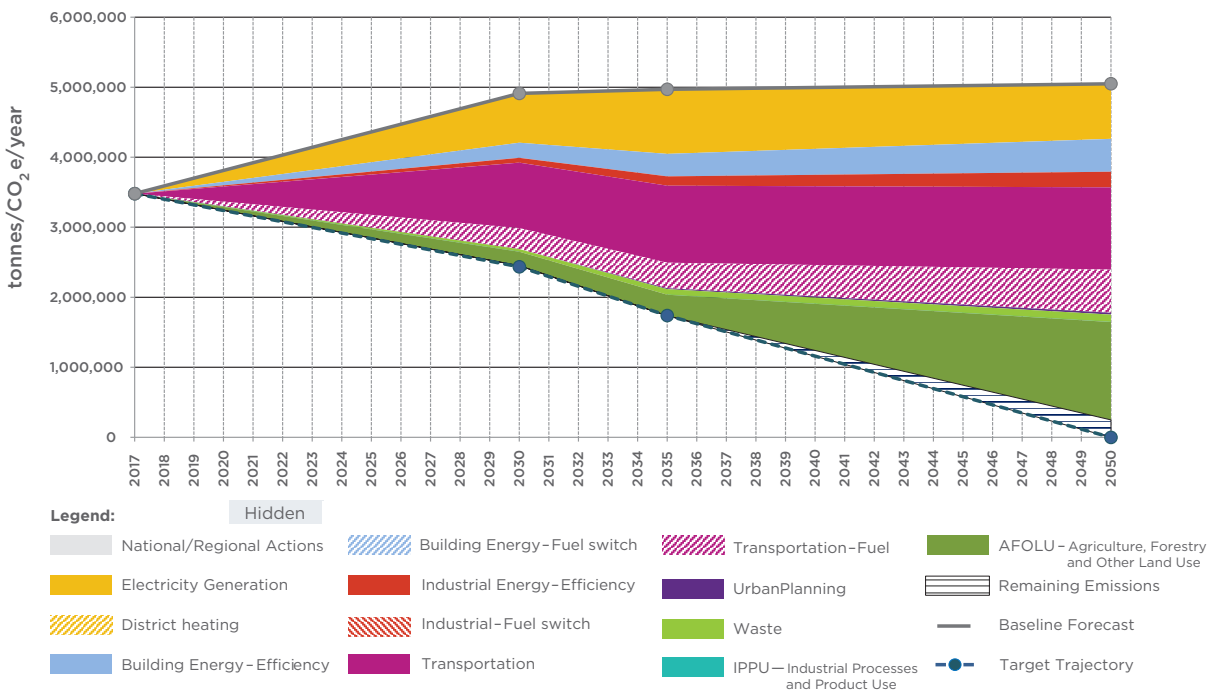
A carbon-free grid and use of carbon-free energy in our buildings and transportation are the most critical actions we can take to substantially reduce emissions in the time frame necessary to do our part to avert the worst effects of the climate crisis. The goal in our 2017 plan depended on a carbon-free grid by 2030, but subsequent City Council efforts to enact necessary regulatory policies determined that 2040 was the earliest it could be achieved with local action alone. Thus, President Biden’s goal to decarbonize the national grid by 2035 supports the City and we will continue to look to additional federal and new state actions from Governor Edwards’ Climate Initiatives Task Force. We will update our climate action planning every five years, and will update our goals and trajectories accordingly and more frequently as we are able.

Our goals for net zero by 2050 and 50% reduction by 2035 are set on a 2017 baseline. This is important to consider when comparing the City’s goal to the national goal and target setting based on scientific work from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). For example, the recent U.S. national declaration to reduce emissions by 50–52% is aligned to a 2005 baseline, while the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C (SR15) outlines the need for a 45% reduction in global

emissions by 2030 on a 2010 baseline. Due to significant population decrease following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the City's GHG emissions in 2005 and earlier were much higher than they are today and that reduction, along with these goals, aligns the City with the overall U.S. goal. In 2010, while the city was still in recovery, the City population was about 13% less than it is today. In recent years, the City population has stabilized and economic activity reflects a more sustained local economy not driven by re-building and other recovery stabilization. These goals are ambitious for the City given local resources and constraints.

The City's refreshed climate action priorities are outlined in this update. Related estimated reductions for core strategies have been modeled in the chart below, showing which strategies are expected to drive what share of reductions by 2035 and 2050. Strategies have not been prioritized solely based on emissions reductions. While that is a key consideration, we have also continued to factor the "resilience value" for each strategy as discussed in the 2017 Climate Action Plan. These values are the co-benefits the strategy provides beyond climate action such as economic opportunity, public health (e.g. cleaner air), and equity.

Emission reduction potential of selected actions



Reduction Trajectory: 2035 and 2050

Estimated Reduction Potential from Key Actions to Meet the 2035 and 2050 Goals		
STRATEGY	2017-2035 REDUCTIONS	2035-2050 REDUCTIONS
Energy	43%	29%
Transportation	45%	36%
Waste	3%	2%
Trees/Offsets	9%	33%
TOTAL	100%	100%

Emissions reductions scenarios were calculated using the C40 Pathways tool, which uses the City's GHG inventory and the selected local strategies to forecast emissions reductions into the future. The

adjacent chart shows the relative reduction share for each sector for each time period and it should be noted that they are connected, as cleaning the grid unlocks reductions in both energy and transportation. Summary information about these reductions scenarios will be made available for analysis as a part of our climate action dashboard by the end of 2023.

The City calculated estimates for carbon sequestration potential related to its tree-planting goals, which addressed 9% of emissions in 2035 and 28% in 2050, leaving about 5% residual emissions in 2050. Calculating emissions reduction values for trees can be challenging because a tree's ability to sequester carbon can increase substantially over time as trees grow,

but also varies substantially with the type and health of the tree. Estimates must calculate these various specific tree details as well as consider potential loss rates and other dynamic factors. As outlined in this update, the City is beginning more comprehensive work to understand the value of trees in this capacity and increase the

community-wide tree canopy. Therefore, we have categorized the tree-related estimates and offsets together in one category, and will continue to refine our work in this area and our reduction strategies and estimates overall, and provide future updates with more refined data as we have it.

City Powers and Barriers

The city has assorted powers over many aspects of city life in which climate action can happen. In some instances the Mayor has stronger powers, such as over the City budget or infrastructure, and in other cases City Council has stronger powers, such as over the energy supply and regulating Entergy New Orleans (ENO), our local utility, and in many cases they must work jointly together. A few key areas for local climate action are not directly controlled, led, or regulated by the City and the Mayor and City Council must

work from positions of influence to advance the City’s goals and vision. These include regional transportation planning and transit led by the Regional Planning Commission and Regional Transit Authority, drainage, drinking water and wastewater infrastructure under management at the Sewerage and Water Board (SWB), and waste management and recycling for businesses and large buildings. The chart below outlines areas of City power related to climate action.

	OWN & OPERATE	SET & ENFORCE POLICIES	BUDGETARY CONTROL	SET VISION	INFLUENCE
Private Buildings					
Public Buildings					
Energy Supply					
Finance & Economy					
City Budget					
Public Transport					
Private Vehicles					
City Roads					
State Roads					
Urban Land Use					
Parks & Public Spaces					
Waste					
Drinking Water					
Drainage					

Mayor Function	Council Function	City Function (Mayor, City Departments, and City Council)	Shared Function (City and Non-City)	Non-City Function
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Related to its powers, the City must contend with various barriers to its ability to act that can preclude it from reducing emissions. These barriers include influence but not direct control over the City’s public transit fleet, and influence but not control over private vehicles or travel modes and therefore few opportunities to directly limit emissions. Additionally, the City has influence but lacks authority on business waste management decisions and an inability to eliminate the use of natural gas due to a state

law passed in 2020. Other more general and equally important barriers include lack of funds to resource certain necessary actions. The City’s ability to accelerate climate action is dependent on leadership and funding from the national and state government and coordination with various regional and City agencies, as well as the interest and action of residents and businesses to make climate change a central consideration in various decision-making.

SETTING PRIORITIES: A SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

The following is a brief description and summary chart of key climate action priorities for the City going forward. These include specific sector areas for reductions — energy, transportation and waste — and two cross-cutting areas related to economic development as well as adaptation and nature-based solutions. These priorities represent climate actions which have proven emissions reductions results and were selected by key City staff, in consultation with our implementation partners and climate policy experts over the last year. A draft of this plan was circulated widely among local climate action non-governmental organizations, key governmental and utility agencies and internal City staff for feedback. The plan was updated in late 2022 to reflect that feedback. Beneath each priority, we list the co-benefits the strategy provides beyond climate action such as economic opportunity, public health, and equity. The key climate action priorities, all of equal importance, are:

- Ramp Up the Local Climate Action Economy
- Waste
- Energy
- Adaptation & Nature-Based Solutions
- Transportation

RAMP UP THE LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION ECONOMY

Global attention is increasingly being paid to the climate crisis with more than 400 of the world's largest companies committing to net zero emissions by 2050 and more ambitious goals from nations leading up to the most recent global climate meeting, COP27, held in November 2022. China recently proposed to reduce its nationwide emissions to net zero by 2060, and President Biden has committed the U.S. to a 50–52% reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2050, with Congress passing the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) that will accelerate climate action with historic federal investments. Now is the time to build local capacity for climate-forward businesses, jobs, and projects so that New Orleans can be well-positioned to take part in this generational economic transformation. The City has several key strategies to ramp up investment in the local climate action economy and unlock more opportunities as related sectors grow.

■ DIVEST CITY'S INVESTMENTS IN FOSSIL FUELS AND INVEST IN CLEAN ENERGY AND CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Economic Opportunity

In September 2020, Mayor Cantrell coordinated with C40 Cities and twelve other mayors from cities around the world including New York, London, Capetown, Pittsburgh, Seattle, and Milan to declare a commitment to divest from fossil fuels and invest in a sustainable future. With this commitment to leverage the City's financial resources for a more equitable and

sustainable economy, the City will prioritize investments in clean energy and other climate solutions. To accomplish this, **the City will present divestment and investment policy recommendations to the New Orleans Municipal Employee's Retirement System board in 2023**, with the hopes that the board will adopt a policy mandate with a goal of full divestiture by 2025.

■ ESTABLISH A REGIONAL GREEN BANK WITH FINANCE NEW ORLEANS (FNO)

Economic Opportunity Equity

Green Banks are mission-driven institutions that use innovative financing to accelerate the transition to clean energy and fight climate change. By leveraging public investment and resources, green banks help communities overcome barriers and attract private capital to increase investment in green projects such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, water

management and green infrastructure. These institutions have been successful throughout the United States at the city, regional, and state level. Here in New Orleans, we are exploring how the City can work with Finance New Orleans (FNO) to coordinate similar investments with regional agencies and support local businesses.

FNO has been working since 2018 to expand its mission from a sole focus on affordable housing to coordinate with the City and other agencies to “improve the quality of life in the City of New Orleans by investing in affordable housing, economic development, and climate resilience projects that produce quality jobs and wealth for residents.” With this expansion of vision, FNO has added green mortgages to its portfolio of offerings, increased focus on supporting affordable housing developers, and started the Resilient New Orleans Finance Working Group, a collaboration with multiple regional agencies to identify and finance projects with climate benefits, such as solar development, energy efficiency and green infrastructure. In

2020, FNO joined the American Green Bank Consortium, which seeks to connect similar efforts nationwide to accelerate innovative clean energy investment across the United States. Additional investments for these initiatives will be funded from a portion of the Inflation Reduction Act, which includes a \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund that will support national and local green banks.

FNO has a \$1 billion economic impact goal by 2030 alongside the City’s net zero goals. This figure includes all of the public and private investment related to sustainable housing and infrastructure projects. More info about FNO and their green bank plans can be found [here](#).

■ PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES AND JOBS

Economic Opportunity Equity

Adapting our infrastructure to our changing climate not only offers greater resilience to storms and flooding, but also is a key opportunity to expand our local economy. By promoting the engagement of local businesses in our blue and green economy, our city becomes more sustainable—environmentally and economically. In 2015, the City launched BuildNOLA to help train and build capacity for small and disadvantaged businesses and ensure that our local blue and green economy is equitable and accessible to our local businesses. In its review of the City’s 2017 Climate Action Plan, the Climate Action Equity Working Group (CAEWG) recommended that the City pay additional attention to encouraging more DBE participation in climate action work and to attracting more African-American residents to jobs and businesses in the climate action economy.

The City has worked with partners to address this recommendation, collaborating with the Greater New Orleans Foundation on a report that explores opportunities and barriers for more equitable access to green infrastructure jobs created by the City’s major resilience projects, *Economic Opportunity through Green Infrastructure: Equitable Access to Jobs and Contracts in Greater New Orleans*.

Additionally in November 2020, the City, along with the New Orleans Business Alliance (NOLABA), a local economic and workforce development organization, and YouthForce NOLA, a local non-profit focused on career pathways for high school students, was selected to participate in JP Morgan Chase’s *AdvancingCities* Challenge. *AdvancingCities* is a 3-year, \$5M grant that the City is using



to develop a robust blue/green infrastructure workforce training pipeline that prepares high school youth, opportunity youth, people of color, and low-income residents for high-wage jobs in the City’s growing water management sector, *AdvancingCities* also provides small business support and policy and systems change.

The Cantrell administration is also working with our partners to make more opportunities available for our local contractors. The City, led by the Parks & Parkways, Workforce Development, Economic Development departments, as well as NOLABA and community workforce development groups, is creating a green infrastructure maintenance plan that includes our contract “debundling” process, where we identify projects where it is possible to create smaller-value projects. For instance, issuing

Adapting our infrastructure to our changing climate not only offers greater resilience to storms and flooding, **but also is a key opportunity to expand our local economy.**

maintenance contracts for just bioswales or rain gardens within a larger project that includes multiple types of green infrastructure. By creating smaller contracts, it gives our small and often minority-owned businesses opportunities to win City contracts, helping those firms build expertise and grow their operations.

One of the first projects the city has used this “debundling” method with is the Community Adaptation Program (CAP), in partnership with the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA).

The Community Adaptation Program provided a \$5 million investment in residential stormwater management improvements to owner-occupied single family homes with household incomes at or below 80% of area median income located within the Gentilly Resilience District, a section of the City with historically African-American-owned residences. The program diverts and detains stormwater runoff on over 200 properties with an average grant award between \$10,000 and \$25,000. The improvements are designed and installed at no cost to the homeowner. Small contractors are often retained for these contracts.

The City and partners will also establish coordinated technical assistance, training, incubation, acceleration, capital access, and talent development programs for small and disadvantaged businesses to position firms led by people of color to benefit from procurement opportunities in the water management sector and beyond. As a part of the Gentilly Resilience District, the City secured \$3M to train local residents in green infrastructure and water management. The City’s Office of Workforce Development is partnering with Parks & Parkways and Delgado Community College to train individuals for horticulture certificates, as

well as additional partnerships with Thrive New Orleans and LA Green Corps on a Climate Corps green job training program.

The City is also focused on making our economy ready for the clean energy transition. Recently, GNO Inc., southeast Louisiana’s economic development agency, developed H2theFuture, a transformative energy cluster strategy based on green hydrogen, to assist with decarbonizing the South Louisiana industrial corridor. With our region’s historical background in oil and gas, focusing on green hydrogen and offshore wind energy can ensure that our City gains new jobs from the coming energy transition.

Additionally, the University of New Orleans created the Louisiana Wind Energy Hub at UNO with the goal of accelerating the growth of the state’s wind energy ecosystem. The Hub will support emerging wind energy companies, spur the development of new technologies, and supply trained professionals to the field. New Orleans and its regional and federal partners are charting a new path in the development, storage, and transmission of offshore wind energy, which is poised to become an important economic driver for our region.

As part of its effort to grow the local climate action economy, the City will make climate impacts a consideration in its purchasing decisions to prioritize products and services that reduce the City’s impact. These may include preferencing recycled paper, low-flow fixtures and LED light bulbs and will also extend to larger procurement decisions such as computers and other equipment. **The City will evaluate its current purchasing practices and develop guidelines for sustainable purchasing and centralized processes and tracking by the end of 2024.**

■ MAKE CLIMATE ACTION DATA AVAILABLE FOR ANALYSIS AND ACTION

Economic Opportunity Equity

Climate change presents challenges for New Orleans that can only be overcome by cooperation and common goals. In order to provide more consistent and accurate updates regarding climate action in New Orleans, the

City will establish a climate action dashboard on the City’s website by the end of 2023, so progress can be tracked annually and information about climate action will be centralized.



ENERGY

More than half (51%) of the greenhouse gas emissions in New Orleans are derived from how we produce, distribute, and use energy. The City is uniquely well-positioned to address these emissions because the City Council regulates Entergy New Orleans (ENO) and can align the utility's goals with those of the City. This situation is very different from many cities that do not have regulatory jurisdiction over their energy use and must rely on state regulation, but some barriers still exist to City action. Our three core strategies on energy are:

■ CLEAN OUR GRID

Equity Public Health

The 2017 Climate Action Plan called for the City Council to establish a local clean energy standard to reduce carbon pollution from our energy supply over time. In 2019, the City Council established a rulemaking process to develop this standard for a clean electricity grid. The Renewable and Clean Portfolio Standard (RCPS) passed by the Council is a mandate that the electricity grid go net-zero by 2040 (90% clean power) and 100% clean power by 2050. It was determined in stakeholder negotiations that this could not occur by 2030 as the 2017 climate plan had called for, but could be put in place by 2040. At the conclusion of the rulemaking in 2021, the Council issued a resolution that included rules for the RCPS. The rules define the sources of clean energy as including renewables, zero carbon emissions resources such as nuclear, energy efficiency, and other qualified measures. In addition, the Council has opened

another regulatory docket to require the City to purchase 100% clean power for municipal operations.

More recently, the Biden-Harris administration has set an ambitious national goal—100% clean electricity by 2035. **This plan adopts the more accelerated 2035 goal** as this action drives the biggest segment of carbon pollution reduction for the City over the next thirteen years and is critical to the City's ability to meet its carbon reduction goals. The Office of Management and Budget [estimates](#) that the newly signed Inflation Reduction Act's investments in clean energy put the nation on track for a 40% reduction in overall emissions by 2030. With additional national regulatory actions and local clean energy plans, the City is poised to meet this accelerated goal.

■ GENERATE MORE CLEAN ENERGY LOCALLY

Economic Opportunity

New Orleans has a great deal of residential rooftop solar, with photovoltaic panels on approximately 9,000 properties around the City. The 2017 Climate Action Plan established a **goal for 255 MW of solar by 2030**, based on the idea of harnessing just 20% of the City's rooftop solar capacity. Since that goal was established, the City Council has worked with Entergy New Orleans (ENO) to establish solar goals for the utility's portfolio, approving 20 MW of ground-mounted solar installed at the NASA Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans East, and agreements to purchase energy from two projects totaling 70 MW in surrounding parishes, as well as 5 MW of rooftop solar in city limits.

In 2020, the City launched *Solar for All NOLA* with local installers Posigen and Solar Alternatives to encourage homeowners and businesses to get solar assessments and add more solar rooftops to our region. The program has facilitated 75 new solar installations since 2020, with a cumulative capacity of approximately 610 kW, with current customers saving hundreds of dollars on their energy costs annually. The City continues discussing ways to ramp up this program with local companies in light of the enhanced solar tax credits for businesses and non-profits under the Inflation Reduction Act and **is setting a goal for 1,400 installations and 10MW capacity in both residential and commercial installations by 2030.**

In 2019, the New Orleans City Council issued a resolution finalizing the rules for a community solar program, making solar accessible to renters and others who may not have a suitable rooftop of their own. This program provides

the opportunity for people to subscribe to solar projects up to the amount of energy they currently buy from Entergy and get credited on their bill. As of October 2022, there is an open docket to revise some of these community solar rules to make projects more feasible and the City is eager to finalize that so some of its planned solar projects can participate. With a very specific allocation reserved and preferred rates for low-income customers, this program supports the call by the Climate Action Equity Working Group to help residents to reduce the cost of electric bills while also providing them access to renewable energy.

The City is supporting the local solar economy by continuing to stay current on best practices with permitting and is working to improve its process. The City has also evaluated much of its property for solar potential and has identified eight buildings on which it plans to install solar by 2024. In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency has conducted a feasibility study for a 6.4MW solar farm at the former Agriculture Street landfill, which the City plans to install by 2025.

Besides solar, offshore wind energy is emerging as another important local power source. In September 2022, ENO, along with Entergy Louisiana, announced they had entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Diamond Offshore Wind regarding the evaluation and potential early development of wind power generation in the Gulf of Mexico. The agreement could lay the groundwork for another source of clean power while also strengthening the region's economic development, particularly with the establishment of the Louisiana Wind Energy Hub at UNO.

■ USE LESS ENERGY IN OUR BUILDINGS

Equity Environment Economic Opportunity

Residents and businesses can also reduce their emissions and save money by improving their building's energy efficiency. The New Orleans City Council established the EnergySmart program in 2010, directing ENO to provide incentives for residents and businesses to save energy and money on their utility bills. Examples of this include LED lighting replacements, HVAC upgrades and the installation of building

automation control systems to relax HVAC settings during unoccupied hours. Since 2011, EnergySmart has distributed more than \$39 million in incentives to almost 100,000 customers saving 325 million kilowatt-hours and about 230 thousand metric tons of CO₂e. In 2015, the Council set a goal for the program to ramp up its annual savings to equal 2% of electricity sold by ENO each year, and the 2017

Since 2010, EnergySmart has distributed more than **\$39 million in incentives to almost 100,000 customers**, saving 214 million kilowatt-hours and about 230 million metric tons of CO₂e.

Climate Action Plan encouraged Council to take that goal even further over time to seek savings of more than 3% annually. In 2022, the Council opened a rulemaking to consider a savings goal to take effect once the 2% goal is achieved. ENO files semi-annual reports with Council about the progress of EnergySmart.

Some of the most energy-consuming structures in New Orleans are large commercial buildings. In 2018, the City launched a Downtown Energy Challenge with the Downtown Development District to encourage large buildings to track their energy use, known as “benchmarking,” and take steps to reduce it. Related to this, the City Council established rules for ENO to disclose building energy use to owners and tenants.

By 2024, the City will work with the City Council to approve a benchmarking ordinance for commercial and multi-family building energy use and set building performance standards for those same buildings.

Our 2017 Climate Action Plan included a goal for City buildings to reduce energy use by 15% by 2020. The City’s Department of Property Management achieved that goal with a comprehensive energy efficiency initiative started in 2018. Between 2018 and 2021, the City decreased overall energy use in buildings by 23%. The City Council also recently passed an ordinance requiring that certain new or substantially renovated City facilities be built to LEED Gold standards. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a widely used green building rating system which provides a framework for healthy, efficient green buildings. LEED certification is a globally recognized symbol of sustainability achievement and leadership. This mandate, coupled with good energy management, will ensure the City continues to be an energy efficiency leader. To build on our progress, **the City is setting a new goal to achieve an additional 17% reduction (40% cumulative) in energy use in City buildings by 2030.** In

addition, one of the largest energy users in New Orleans is the SWB, who estimates that they will reduce plant emissions by approximately 36,650 metric tons per year by purchasing utility power from ENO in lieu of self-generation via diesel turbines.

While the City is making good headway in reducing use of electricity, use of natural gas in our buildings is responsible for 33% of energy-related and 17% of total GHG emissions in our 2017 inventory. In March 2020, the Louisiana state legislature passed SB 492 that prohibits any parish or municipality from restricting use of natural gas to support its climate goals or any other reason. Due to this restriction, the City cannot take any regulatory action to reduce use of natural gas and its related emissions. This type of state legislation to reduce cities’ regulatory abilities is an increasingly popular tactic supported by the natural gas industry and these types of laws are now in effect in eight states. However, the City can still lead by example by electrifying its own buildings and encourage others to follow suit by sharing the economic and health benefits to ending fossil fuel use in buildings.





Resilience Spotlight: Greenlight New Orleans

Since its founding in 2006, Greenlight New Orleans has led efforts to reduce carbon emissions in our city. Starting by replacing old incandescent light bulbs with more efficient CFL and LED light bulbs, Greenlight has grown its operation to include other sustainability initiatives such as backyard vegetable gardens and rain barrels. “We tend to disconnect these things,” explained Greenlight founder Andreas Hoffmann, “but eventually everything comes to point to climate change, and CO2 reductions, and becoming carbon neutral.”

Greenlight has offset more than 272 million pounds of CO2 emissions through installation of energy efficient light bulbs, which also resulted in \$28M in energy cost savings. Greenlight’s healthy food initiative has built over 600 community gardens, increasing access to fresh, locally-sourced produce for more than 1,200 individuals. Greenlight’s most recent initiative, focused on capturing stormwater through rain

gardens and over one thousand rain barrels, has retained a total of over 2 million gallons of water since implementation. Retaining stormwater can reduce the energy used by drainage pumps, which helps decrease CO2 emissions in the city.

Greenlight’s work to reduce CO2 emissions has not stopped despite the challenges presented by COVID-19. In fact, New Orleanians began participating in their program in greater numbers during the pandemic, due in part to safety measures taken by Greenlight. “We set it up in an extremely safe way. So now we have a lot of volunteers, and they’re all local.” As the number of volunteers increased, so too did requests for rain barrel installations. “I think it created something that was helpful for people’s mental health. Maybe that’s a switch that happened during COVID, you become a little more aware of what’s here, what’s in front of your door.”

Greenlight New Orleans has offset more than **272 million pounds of CO2** emissions through installation of energy efficient light bulbs, which also resulted in **\$28M in energy cost savings.**



Resilience Spotlight: The Alliance for Affordable Energy

The Alliance for Affordable Energy (AAE) is a consumer and environmental advocate that is focused on the power sector in Louisiana. “We don’t think of affordability as just the bill that folks receive at the end of the month. We think of affordability in terms of the whole person,” explains Logan Burke, Executive Director of the Alliance. “AAE advocates for affordable, equitable, and environmentally responsible energy, from the way energy is produced to the rates paid by consumers. What does it cost to have a dirty energy system, what does it cost Louisiana to be contributing so heavily to climate change? On the other side, what are the benefits of investing in energy efficiency to our health, to our safety?”

Since its founding in 1985, AAE has successfully led countless initiatives on behalf of Louisiana residents, such as fighting for New Orleans City Council to have regulatory authority over public utilities in the city. Currently, AAE is part of a collaborative of organizations called the Energy Future New Orleans Coalition, which

worked for the adoption of the Renewable and Clean Portfolio Standard (RCPS) approved by the City Council in 2021. The RCPS requires utility companies to generate an increasing percentage of their energy from renewable and clean resources, until ultimately reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2040 and zero carbon emissions by 2050. AAE has also been instrumental in advocating for the Community Solar program, working alongside the Climate Action Equity Project and the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice to make solar accessible for all New Orleanians.

By thinking systemically about the kinds of energy solutions that can not only reduce emissions, but can also make us more resilient to climate change, AAE continues to change the relationship Louisianans have with energy. “We do this work because we know that we in Louisiana have a lot of challenges, and we also have everything to fight for. This place is really special, and the people here are worth defending in every way we can.” said Burke.

By thinking systemically about the kinds of energy solutions that can not only reduce emissions, but can also make us more resilient to climate change,
**AAE continues to change the relationship
Louisianans have with energy.**

TRANSPORTATION

Combustion of petroleum gas and diesel in cars, trucks, and buses on our roads accounts for nearly 43% of the City's total GHG emissions. Famously, the City once had a large network of streetcars and, as one of the first American cities to use electric trolleys, New Orleans has historically embraced innovative public transportation. As we consider how to reduce our transportation emissions, we celebrate those roots with a new era of reimagining the way New Orleanians move with two core strategies:

■ DIVERSIFY OUR TRAVEL CHOICES TO INCREASE NON-AUTO TRIPS

Equity **Public Health** **Economic Opportunity**

New Orleans is a city that has historically embraced public transportation and walkable communities, which is still seen today in the layout of the City. We can make better use of bicycling, walking, and public transportation to increase the number of non-single occupant vehicle (SOV) trips, which creates traffic and pollution.

The 2017 Climate Action Plan set a goal of 50% non-automobile trips by 2030. **We keep that goal in this update** and we are aiming to make improvements to our infrastructure and public transit to encourage this mode shift. According to travel activity data from the Google Environmental Insights Explorer, automobile trips were about 68% of all trips in 2018 and walking was about 27%, with transit and bicycling together contributing about 5%. We will be looking at this data closely as we work to encourage more trips through walking, bicycling, and transit to meet our 2030 goal.

We have started with a commitment to increasing bicycling with the development and planned extension of the Lafitte Greenway, the Mississippi River Trail, progress on installing 75 miles of low-stress bikeways by 2025 through Moving New Orleans Bikes, and the rebirth of a bike share program with 600 new electric-pedal-assist bikes in partnership with a local nonprofit Blue Krewe in 2021. **Working in partnership with Blue Krewe, the City is setting a goal to expand the bike share fleet to 2,000 by 2025.** To assist the 20% of New Orleanians who do not have access to a car, the bike share program offers reduced fares to qualifying lower income residents. Walking and bicycling are both aided by our Complete Streets initiative that prioritizes street design that benefits all users with a focus on people walking, bicycling, and riding transit.

We have also made strides in transit in the last few years. In December 2018, the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Board of Commissioners

unanimously adopted the Strategic Mobility Plan, setting an ambitious agenda for transit in New Orleans. RTA is in the process of updating this plan to include a Bus Rapid Transit system and several actions to significantly increase transit-priority infrastructure on City streets, including at least six miles of dedicated transit lanes on City streets by 2027 to improve transit times along key corridors. Faster and more reliable services is proven to increase ridership and support mode shift. In March 2021, the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and RTA released New Links, a comprehensive network redesign of our regional public transportation system to better serve riders and make riding transit more useful and attractive. Implementation of the New Links system redesign launched in September 2022. To complement these route changes, the City is starting work on developing Transit Oriented Communities, walkable neighborhoods with equitable housing options that will be connected to effective and convenient transit options.

Improvements in transit and more options for walking and cycling support equity and economic opportunity in New Orleans, making jobs more accessible to people without a car. In its Strategic Mobility Plan, RTA set a goal for making 65% of jobs in Orleans and Jefferson parishes reachable within 60 minutes by transit during peak periods by 2027. Continued work by RTA and the City will continue to respond to the CAEWG recommendation to improve public transport in underserved communities for faster and more reliable service. One CAEWG recommendation where RTA and the City will collaborate is around the improvement of bus shelters, including adding roofing, lighting, and other amenities.

The City recognizes that to achieve this plan's mode share goals, street infrastructure must be safe and accessible for people so they can choose to walk, bicycle, ride transit or drive based on the needs of a particular trip. Since 2003, the City has been actively tracking accessibility improvements.

The Department of Public Works has recently launched an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) dashboard that monitors the quality and quantity of curb ramps and pedestrian signals in the City. The Health Department is also working to promote transportation mode shifts through their chronic disease and transportation safety programming.

■ INCREASE SHARE OF ZERO-EMISSIONS VEHICLES ON OUR ROADS

Economic Opportunity **Public Health**

The automobile industry has gotten serious about cleaner cars, with electric vehicle (EV) sales accounting for 5.6% of the total auto market in Q2 of 2022, up from 2.7% at the same point in 2021, and automakers such as General Motors, Volvo and Audi among others who have recently announced they will make only electric vehicles from 2035 onward, at the latest. In its Electric Vehicle Outlook 2020 report, Bloomberg New Energy Finance predicts that electric cars will be nearly 30% of global passenger vehicle sales by 2030 and nearly 60% by 2040. New incentives from the Inflation Reduction Act, including tax credits for purchases of domestically produced electric vehicles, could make sales exceed those figures. The rate at which people replace cars varies around the world and estimates vary widely about the potential number of electric cars on the U.S. roads by 2035 from 13% to well over half.

Considering the renewed interest from the federal government in supporting the transition to electrified transportation, along with the associated benefits electric vehicles can provide, ranging from cleaner air to electric grid support, **the City is setting a goal of 40% of passenger and light-duty vehicles being electric by 2035**, so it is important that the infrastructure for these vehicles is accessible and equitable. That's why the City and ENO have partnered to install 31 free EV charging stations at 25 publicly chosen sites throughout the city. Additionally, RTA committed to a goal of 75% low or no emissions vehicles in its fleet by 2030 in its Strategic Mobility Plan, and is working closely with ENO to evaluate electric grid impacts and potential charging locations for their fleet electrification plans.

The 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides historic public investments in EV chargers through the National Electric Vehicle



Infrastructure (NEVI) program to install DC fast chargers within one mile of designated transportation corridors. DC fast chargers are significantly faster than regular AC charging stations, taking between 15 to 45 minutes to charge most passenger electric vehicles up to 80 percent—making it quick and easy to charge during a trip. New programs from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Transit Administration aimed at helping local public transit organizations and public schools transition their fleet to low and no-emission vehicles could offer major financial support towards clean fleet transition goals. The City will work with RTA, the Orleans Parish School Board, charter school systems and school bus operators to access these funding streams.

The City will lead by example by transitioning its own fleet of vehicles and developing a citywide EV strategic plan to set a direction for all of these electrification efforts. In 2022, the City Council passed a law which prohibits the City from purchasing fossil fuel powered vehicles after 2025 as well as requiring a fleet transition plan by November 2023. **The City is setting a goal of 75% of its fleet being low- or no-emission vehicles by 2035.** In addition, the City will be installing EV charging stations at two City facilities in 2023 as a pilot to inform the fleet transition plan.

The combination of more transit-oriented communities and increased transit ridership with more electric buses and a clean local grid together are the most impactful opportunities for reducing the City's transportation GHG emissions long-term.

WASTE

Organic waste in our trash and sewage is the source of about 6% of the community-wide GHG emissions. Reducing these emissions substantially will require a significant investment of resources in the City's waste and wastewater management infrastructure and potentially a substantial overhaul in how waste is managed in the city to make these investments cost effective.

While waste is a small portion of the City's overall emissions, the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, or IIJA, includes some transformative funding opportunities for the construction of local waste facilities needed to improve the City's recycling diversion rates. Additionally, the SWB is taking their emissions into account as they undertake a master planning process to pursue the replacement of the City's Eastbank wastewater treatment plant, which was heavily damaged during Hurricane Ida. In developing the 2017 Climate Action Plan, the City learned that the landfill in Jefferson Parish that receives the City's trash, River Birch, has a comprehensive methane capture system and creates about 20,000 gallons of biogenic renewable fuel daily. It sells credits for this fuel into the California renewable fuel market and injects the biogenic gas into the local fuel supply. In order to tackle these emissions more directly in the future, the City must analyze its waste and recycling approach compared to other cities and related barriers and opportunities. This will be the focus of near-term action.



Resilience Spotlight: Compost NOW

Compost NOW is a local community organization with a mission: to empower local residents to take collective action on the issue of food waste. Compost NOW meets the demand for a free, easy, convenient, and reliable composting service for New Orleanians. Since its founding in January 2017, Compost NOW has diverted over 400,000 pounds of food waste from landfills, thanks to local organizations and individuals putting their food waste to good use.

Before COVID-19, Compost NOW was collecting nearly 4,000 pounds of food scraps every week, hosting free weekly drop-offs at eleven sites. Despite the immense obstacles presented by the pandemic, Compost NOW continued to offer four drop-off sites throughout the Spring, and created a "DIY" composting program, distributing over 150 backyard compost bins. Currently, Compost NOW operates 3-6 drop-off sites daily, on both sides of the river. Lynne Serpe, founder of Compost NOW, said "thanks to thousands of New Orleanians, we are so pleased to have been able to keep going, and keep growing."

Composted material can be used to organically enrich soil, feed farm animals, and more. Additionally, compost-enriched soil has better water retention qualities, making it a valuable asset in efforts to slow & store stormwater to reduce flooding. By diverting food waste from landfills, composting helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions by preventing the release of methane, a greenhouse gas released by rotting food, as well as by reducing the distance the waste is transported.

Food waste, when properly handled, is a valuable, versatile resource. Compost NOW continues to do critical work to keep local resources local, for the benefit of New Orleanians and our environment.

Resilience Spotlight: Glass Half Full

Glass Half Full is a local L3C which diverts used glass products from landfills and converts them into sand and cullet. These products are then used for disaster relief efforts, creating new glass products, and more. “We really want to be able to make recycling as a whole much more accessible to New Orleans residents and to be able to collect and divert as much glass as possible from landfills,” said co-founder Franziska Trautmann.

With overwhelming support and encouragement from New Orleans residents, Glass Half Full has diverted over 800,000 pounds of glass from landfills since 2020, their first year of operation. Glass Half Full’s approach has been focused on the collective efforts of individuals, both in glass collection and fundraising. Glass Half Full currently offers a pickup service to residents, as well as a drop off location operating on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. “We love having the drop off at our place, because we get to meet all these people, all the recyclers, all the donors.” Glass Half Full has also recently expanded their operation to include commercial pickup at local bars.

The possible uses for recycled glass are virtually limitless, ranging from eco-construction to coastal restoration, as well as supporting New Orleans’ local artists and unique culture. “NOLA Alchemy” is the collaboration between Glass Half Full and Liquid Art Glass, which uses recycled glass to create colorful jewelry. “We’re starting in New Orleans, because that’s where we live, that’s where our heart is,” explained Franziska, “I think expansion is definitely in our future, for the rest of Louisiana. There shouldn’t be any barriers to recycling.”



■ IMPROVE RECYCLING RATES THROUGH EDUCATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Economic Opportunity

Public Health

Global recycling markets were shaken up over the last few years with China’s changes in policies on what materials it would accept, and COVID-19 reduced or ended recycling and food waste programs in several cities temporarily or permanently. The waste management sector is evolving rapidly in response to these effects, and also to new interest at the national level in extended producer responsibility and other efforts to manage and reduce waste more effectively in the U.S. New Orleans worked diligently to revive its recycling programs after Hurricane Katrina and the overall structure of how the City manages waste has not been substantially changed since then.

The City charges a flat rate for residential and small business waste curbside collection (<4 units) and requires its waste contractors to

also pick up recycling also for those that put out a recycling cart, which is available via request through an opt-in process. The contractors assume ownership and are responsible for all processing fees, taking advantage of any upside or potential earnings that may be available in the recycling market. The City does not engage in the waste management market for commercial businesses or larger buildings and does not currently require recycling or composting for restaurants or other businesses, but this is something the City is eager to study in the near future. However, these factors contribute to the City’s current low diversion rate, which typically is below 5% when recycling is available citywide.

Hurricane Ida dealt the City’s sanitation services a severe blow, with the City’s contractors failing

to provide trash pickups in the wake of the storm. Long-standing resource issues were further exacerbated, causing the suspension of the City's recycling program for half the City for over a year. However, new curbside collection contracts brought recycling back city-wide in November 2022. With changes in the overall market making recycling more attractive recently, now is an opportune time for the City to review its current processes, costs and benefits in comparison to best practices in other places and determine if other approaches might better enable the City to increase recycling and reduce waste and waste-related emissions. **Over the next two years, the City will commission a solid waste master plan to evaluate waste management opportunities.** One area the City is working on is to pursue an EPA grant through IJA to pursue universal recycling carts for all residents as well as the construction of a new

Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) located in the New Orleans area to expand the region's limited recycling processing capacity. The City was also recently awarded a grant through the Recycling Partnership to provide educational materials and additional recycling carts as a part of the rebirth of the City's recycling program. The City looks to build on these efforts and is setting a **new goal of increasing our recycling diversion rates to 25% by 2030.**

Waste management may provide a major opportunity for New Orleans to create value and economic activity that is currently not being captured. The City could divert more waste from the landfill and possibly develop markets for recyclable goods and local opportunities for businesses focused on the circular economy. Several local businesses are already addressing key areas of opportunity—from glass recycling to composting.



ADAPTATION & NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

The City has identified a number of climate change-related hazards in the 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan, including regional sea level rise, storm surge, coastal land loss, flooding, extreme heat and cold, and increased tropical cyclones. These echo similar previous discussions of climate hazards as outlined in the 2015 resilience strategy and 2017 Climate Action Plan and assess their current status and the need for actions that help the City to adapt infrastructure and processes to the changing climate. We have identified two areas of strategic focus for adaptation and nature-based solutions:

■ BUILD ADDITIONAL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Economic Opportunity **Equity** **Public Health**

Traditionally, the City has used “gray infrastructure”—systems of gutters, pipes, and pumps—to move stormwater out of the city. Green infrastructure systems naturally hold and retain stormwater. Examples include

rain barrels, a row of trees along the neutral ground, or replacing impermeable surfaces with greenspace or permeable materials. These strategies not only aid climate change adaptation, but also can contribute to GHG

emissions reductions. Trees consume carbon dioxide, so increasing the number of healthy, long-living trees in the city can help reduce our net GHG emissions. Green infrastructure reduces storm runoff by retaining water, reducing the amount that must be pumped out of the city and decreasing related energy use.

Since the Dutch Dialogues and development of the Greater New Orleans Water Plan started in 2010, various practitioners in the city have focused attention on “living with water,” and utilizing green infrastructure to improve the City’s resilience. Development of the Gentilly Resilience District, a \$141M HUD grant comprised of 7 projects and 3 programs that are primarily green-infrastructure focused, builds upon this work. So does the SWB’s \$2.5M in ratepayer-funded green infrastructure projects and support for community-based green infrastructure organizations like WaterWise Gulf South and Urban Conservancy’s Front Yard Initiative. Coordinated citywide efforts continue to explore how green infrastructure can reduce flooding risk in the city over time, such as the October 2020 report commissioned by the Greater New Orleans Foundation, *Stormwater Opportunities: Spirit of Charity, Lafitte Greenway, Armstrong Park*. Since 2018, the City has completed or begun implementation on six green infrastructure projects that will divert approximately 11.8M gallons of water from the City’s stormwater system. To expand these efforts, including in parts of the areas envisioned in this report, **the City is setting a goal to complete at least 15 additional green infrastructure projects by 2035 that will divert an additional 80M gallons.**

Trees are green infrastructure too, and our trees work overtime in New Orleans—helping with water retention, slowing subsidence, removing carbon emissions, reducing heat islands, providing shade and fresh air, as well as adding natural beauty. The city **lost** more 9.6% of the tree canopy coverage from 2005 to 2009, primarily due to Hurricane Katrina. The 2017 Climate Action Plan included a community tree survey and **set a community-wide goal to plant 40,000 trees by 2030**. In October 2019, the Department of Parks and Parkways completed the tree **survey** on public property and in November 2020, the City Planning Commission released a tree preservation study to inform potential new strategies and regulations for the preservation and planting of trees on both public and private property to help the City meet the tree goals in the City’s master plan. By December 2021, the City estimated it had planted 12,519 trees since 2017 towards the 40,000 tree goal for forest restoration.

Additionally, the City is working with SOUL (Sustaining Our Urban Landscape) to develop a reforestation master plan, which will guide best practices and investment in our urban reforestation efforts. **The plan calls for 10% canopy coverage in 10 years in all neighborhoods to ensure equity and this plan shares that goal.**

In 2021, the City Council approved \$4 million in bond funding for Parks and Parkways for tree plantings and greenspace improvements. Tree plantings from this fund began in the Fall of 2022 and will continue over the next three years. In addition, the City Council allocated an additional \$250,000 to Parks & Parkways in 2022 to fund tree-plantings by non-profit planting partners as well.

■ INCREASE RESILIENCE OF OUR ENERGY AND WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Equity **Public Health** **Economic Opportunity**

As extreme weather events become more frequent, the need to strengthen our energy and water infrastructure becomes increasingly more essential. Hurricane Ida, which rendered most of the City without power for over a week and caused several heat-related deaths, made clear the need to invest in grid resilience, including microgrids, which are small networks of electricity users with a local source of supply that is often connected to the grid, but can also operate independently. In 2022, the City was awarded technical assistance as a part of the Department of Energy’s Communities-LEAP program to study potential microgrid locations, building off a previous DOE study completed

in 2019. **The City intends to pilot a microgrid at one of the sites identified by this process by 2025.** In addition, the City has committed funds to Together New Orleans’ Community Lighthouse project, which will create 16 solar and battery-powered resilience hubs at churches and community centers across the City. Community groups such as the Get Lit, Stay Lit initiative, led by the Feed the Second Line group, are also working to install solar and battery systems at local restaurants to create additional resilience hubs as well as reduce the amount of food waste from extended outages and the City is actively exploring ways to partner with this initiative to increase its impact. Work continues with the

SWB and ENO to improve the capacity of critical energy and water infrastructure through the construction of the new Sullivan substation that will serve transmission voltage electricity to SWB's Carrollton facility. When complete, this substation is estimated to reduce SWB's emissions at the plant by one-third. As more distributed energy generation and battery storage is deployed in the city, it can reduce the reliance on fossil-fuel-powered generators, as well as support a more resilient grid. Since the 2017 Climate Action Plan, ENO has deployed smart meters throughout the city enabling the utility to have a better sense of where and when energy is being used, and creating the opportunity to innovate demand-side management and smart grid upgrades. Beginning in 2023, SWB will also install smart meters over the next three years across the City, creating similar opportunities around managing water demand and the impact it has on energy use.



▲ President Biden and Mayor Cantrell touring a SWB facility in 2020

Resilience Spotlight: The Water Collaborative

The Water Collaborative is the regional umbrella organization for urban water management & urban water climate adaptation in southeast Louisiana. “The work we do is systematic,” explained Jessica Dandridge, Executive Director. The Water Collaborative primarily focuses on three areas: public education, water policy, and ensuring that the water sector is more equitable throughout Louisiana.

The work of the Water Collaborative found a new urgency at the outset of COVID-19, particularly the importance of ensuring equitable access to water and advocating for a shutoff moratorium in the face of the pandemic. The Water Collaborative helped create a coalition known as the People’s Water Project, to ensure affordable, equitable access to clean water for people across the country.

Key to the success of the Water Collaborative’s mission is changing the way society discusses issues surrounding water and water management. “Past trauma informs how residents deal with water, how they respond to water, and how politicians respond to them responding to water,” explained Jessica. “We are not having dynamic enough conversations about why New Orleans is really flooding.”

The Water Collaborative is currently working on various initiatives focused on securing funding to update the aging water systems of southeast Louisiana in order to address the cost and

quality of water. To make southeast Louisiana more resilient to flooding, green infrastructure installed in every home and business will help to slow and store water before it overwhelms drainage systems. These goals require increased participation in the water management sector, and the Water Collaborative seeks to do this equitably. “We want the workforce to be diverse and look like the communities that are impacted. The communities that are most at risk for flooding have the most underfunded, divested infrastructure. All communities matter. No community should be swept away or dismantled because they’re more at risk for flooding.” To support all of these goals and create a culture of water awareness, the Water Collaborative also advocates for comprehensive climate and water education throughout Louisiana.



Key Climate Action Priorities Summary Chart

Strategies	Actions	Target/KPI	Lead (1st listed) and Partners	Status 2022	Funding Source	Public Health	Equity/Social	Economic/Jobs
RAMP UP THE LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION ECONOMY								
	Divest the City's investments in fossil fuels and invest in clean energy and climate solutions	Full divestiture by 2025			Existing; self-funding with savings			
	Prioritize city investments in clean energy and other climate solutions whenever possible		ORS, Dept. of Finance	New				●●
	Present divestment and investment policy recommendations to NOMERS board	By end of 2023	ORS	New				●●
	Establish regional green bank with FNO	\$1B invested by 2035			Varied TBD			
	Green Mortgages		FNO	New		●●	●●●	●●●
	Public Infrastructure Resilient Finance Working Group		FNO, CNO, NORA, SWB, HANO, RTA, OPSB, GNOF, Aviation Board, NOLABA	New				●●
	Promote sustainable business practices and jobs	Sustainable contracting policy by 2024			JPMChase \$5M and other			
	Promote local business engagement in low-carbon, climate action economy		NOLABA	Underway			●●	●●●
	CAEG: Increase participation of DBE in city projects		Mayor, City Council	Underway			●●●	
	CAEG: Increase opportunities in environmentally sustainable sectors for African-American residents		Mayor, City Council	Underway			●●●	●●●
	City Focus: Implement sustainable contracting and procurement policies and processes	New policy by 2024	CAO, ORS	New			●●	●●
	Make climate action data available for analysis and action	Dashboard on website by end of 2023			General fund/existing			
	CITY FOCUS: Add climate action data dashboard to city website and track progress annually		ORS, ITI	New				

Key Climate Action Priorities Summary Chart

Strategies	Actions	Target/KPI	Lead (1st listed) and Partners	Status 2022	Funding Source	Public Health	Equity/Social	Economic/Jobs
ENERGY — 51% OF GHG EMISSIONS								
Clean our grid		100% by 2035			Ratepayers and Federal			
	100% clean electricity by 2035 (national goal—local commitment by 2040)		City Council, Federal Government, Energy	Underway		●●●	●●	●●
Generate more clean energy locally		255 MW by 2035			Ratepayers and Federal			
	Increase local solar and regional wind energy development	255 MW by 2035	Mayor's Office, ORS	Underway		●●		●●
	Launch community solar	55 MW by 2025	City Council, ORS, Energy	New		●●	●●●	●●
	Increase Solar for All installations	1,400 installs and 10 MW by 2030	ORS, Posigen, Solar Alternatives	New		●●	●●●	●●
	CITY FOCUS: Install solar on city property	Solar on city property by end of 2024	ORS, Capital Projects, Property Management	New				●●
	CAEG: Help residents to reduce the cost of electric bills by generating their own electricity		Mayor, City Council	Underway			●●●	●●
Use less energy in our buildings		2% annual savings by 2024—3% by 2030			Ratepayers, Federal Grants, Bonds			
	Benchmarking and building performance standards ordinance for multi-family and commercial buildings	Ordinance approval by end of 2024	City Council, ORS, Energy	Proposed		●●		●●
	Increase annual energy savings for Energy Smart 0.2% per year to reach 2% annual savings goal set in 2015		City Council, Energy	Underway		●●	●●	●●
	Continue to increase energy savings goal 0.2% beyond 2% to achieve 3% or more annual savings		City Council, Energy	Proposed		●●	●●	●●
	CITY FOCUS: Reduce energy use in City buildings by an additional 17% by 2030		Property Management	Underway		●●		●●

Key Climate Action Priorities Summary Chart

Strategies	Actions	Target/KPI	Lead (1st listed) and Partners	Status 2022	Funding Source	Public Health	Equity/Social	Economic/Jobs
TRANSPORTATION — 43% OF GHG EMISSIONS								
Diversify our travel choices to increase non-auto trips		Non-auto: 50% by 2030			Federal, Grants, Fares, Existing			
	Implement "Complete Streets" policy to design streets for all users (walkers, cyclists, transit users, drivers)		DPW, City Council, ORS	Underway		●●	●●	
	Develop robust Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC)		ORS, CPC, RTA	In development		●●	●●●	●●
	Invest in 6 miles of transit-only infrastructure by 2027		RTA, DPW, City Council, ORS	Proposed			●●	●●
	Redesign the regional public transportation system to increase access, capacity, and efficiency	September 2022	RTA, ORS	Complete		●●	●●●	●●●
	Increase transit ridership	20% of trips by 2030	RTA, ORS	Underway			●●	
	Invest in safe, low-stress, and comprehensive bicycle infrastructure	75 miles low-stress bikeways by 2025	DPW, ORS	Underway		●●	●●	
	Expand bike share system	2,000 e-bikes by 2025	ORS, BlueKrewe	Underway		●●	●●	●
	CAEG: Improve public transport in underserved communities for faster and more reliable service		RTA, ORS	Underway		●●	●●●	●●
Zero emissions vehicles to reduce air pollution					Existing funds, Grants, Leases			
	75% of RTA's fleet will be low or no-emissions vehicles by 2030 (from Strategic Mobility Plan)	75% by 2030; 100% by 2050	RTA, ORS, Federal Transit Administration	In development		●●●		●
	Increase ZEV use and facilitate the development of electric vehicle charging stations throughout the city	40% EVs by 2035; 100% by 2050	ORS, DPW, CPC, Entergy	Underway		●●	●	●
	CITY FOCUS: Increase ZEV use in City fleet	75% by 2035	CAO, ORS	New		●	●	●●
	CAEG: Increase accessibility of electric vehicles		ORS	Proposed		●	●●	
	CAEG: Place bike share locations in underserved neighborhoods		BlueKrewe, ORS	Proposed			●●●	

Key Climate Action Priorities Summary Chart

Strategies	Actions	Target/KPI	Lead (1st listed) and Partners	Status 2022	Funding Source	Public Health	Equity/Social	Economic/Jobs
WASTE — 6% OF GHG EMISSIONS								
Increase recycling rates through infrastructure and education		25% diversion rate by 2030	CAO, Sanitation, Advisory Committee, Economic Development	Proposed				
	Commission a solid waste master plan to evaluate waste management opportunities	by 2024	Sanitation, ORS	Proposed			●●	●●
	Secure funding for universal recycling and the construction of a local MRF		Sanitation, ORS	New	Grants	●●		
	CITY FOCUS: Increase recycling at City facilities and reduce organic waste where possible		CAO, Property Management, Sanitation, Parks and Parkways	New		●●		●●
ADAPTATION AND NATURE								
Increase green infrastructure and trees throughout the city over time					Existing, Grants			
	Complete at least 15 green infrastructure projects by 2035 to divert an additional 80M gallons from stormwater system		DPW, SWB, ORS	Underway		●●	●●	●●
	Conduct citywide tree survey and canopy analysis	50% tree canopy by 2030	Parks and Parkways, SOUL, NOLA Tree project	Complete		●●●	●●	
	Plant 40,000 trees by 2030	40,000 new trees citywide by 2030	Parks and Parkways	Underway		●●●	●●	●
	10% canopy coverage in all neighborhoods		Parks and Parkways	New		●●●	●●●	●
Increase resilience of our energy and water infrastructure					Existing, grants, bonds			
	Conduct energy resilience study, map community energy assets, and develop recommendations		City Council, ORS	In development		●●	●●	●●
	Implement microgrid pilot(s) for energy resilience		ORS	Underway			●●	●●●
	Make resilience improvements to critical water and drainage infrastructure		SWB, DPW	Underway		●●●	●●●	●●●
	CAEG: Establish equity framework for energy decisions in order to address the needs of all New Orleanians		Mayor, City Council	Proposed			●●●	

Monitoring and Reporting

The City continues to work on our climate action priorities and will continue to update these strategies as needed. With membership in C40, the City has committed to updating the communitywide GHG inventory every two years and to always have an inventory that is no more than three years old, so an update is due later this year. Additionally, we commit to updating the climate action plan every five years or less.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are the critical (key) indicators of progress toward an intended result. Our KPIs include measurement of the target milestones in the action summary chart and overall progress towards reductions. As one of the actions of this update, the City will add a climate action dashboard to the City’s website to have a centralized, public place available for interested stakeholders to check the City’s progress.

Actions	Target	KPI	Frequency
Divest the City’s investments in fossil fuels and invest in clean energy and climate solutions	Full divestiture by 2025	% of city investments in fossil fuels	annual
Establish regional green bank with FNO	\$1B invested by 2035	dollars in investments	annual
Promote sustainable business practices and jobs	Sustainable contracting policy by 2024	a sustainable contracting policy in place; % of sustainable goals	annual
Make climate action data available for analysis and action	Dashboard on website by end of 2023	dashboard on website and minimum annual updates	annual
100% clean electricity by 2035	100% by 2035	power mix for energy generation supplied to local grid	annual
Increase local renewable energy development	255 MW by 2035	KW installed by customer type (utility-scale, residential, commercial, industrial)	annual
Launch community solar	55 MW by 2025	# of subscribers/projects and KW installed	annual
City Focus: Install solar on city property	Solar on city property by end of 2024	KW of solar installed	annual
Use less energy in our buildings	2% annual savings by 2024	EnergySmart annual performance	annual
Diversify travel to increase non-auto trips	Reduce auto trips to <50% by 2030	travel activity by mode share	annual
Increase transit ridership to 20% of trips by 2030	Make transit >20% of trips by 2030	ridership data from RTA and mode share	annual
Invest in safe, low-stress bicycle infrastructure	75 miles low-stress bikeways by 2025	low-stress bikeways by mile	annual
Expand bike share system	2,000 e-assist bikes by 2025	number of shared bikes in service	annual
75% of RTA’s fleet will be low or no-emissions by 2030	75% by 2030; 100% by 2050	% of fleet low/no emissions	annual
Invest in transit-priority infrastructure	6 miles of transit-only infrastructure by 2027	Number of transit-only lanes in service	annual
Complete 15 green infrastructure projects by 2035	Divert 80M gallons from stormwater system	gallons diverted	annual
City Focus: Increase ZEV use in fleet	75% low/no emissions by 2035	% of fleet low/no emissions	annual
Citywide tree and canopy survey	50% tree canopy by 2030	% of tree canopy in city boundary	5 years
Plant 40,000 trees by 2030	40,000 new trees citywide	number of trees planted	annual
Implement microgrid pilot(s) for energy resilience	A pilot microgrid in the City by 2025	yes/no microgrid	N/A
Increase recycling rates	25% diversion rate by 2030	% of waste sent to recycling facilities	N/A

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