

# **Green Task Force Interim Report**

Detroit City Council

Presided By

Kenneth V. Cockrel Jr.  
Detroit City Council President



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## ***Introduction***

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This Interim Report is an on-going, working document and is meant to serve as an update to Council of what the Green Task Force is and where it is going. As the Green Task Force reaches more of its goals, this report will be issued again, highlighting such achievements.

The City of Detroit has always been about innovation, and my initiative for the Green Task Force has created one more facet of how Detroit can innovate through the growing industry of green construction, building re-use, and alternative energy.

It is time for Detroit citizens, along with the rest of the country, to realize the impact of being environmentally responsible; our children deserve the brightest future we can provide. I would like to make Detroit one of the greenest cities in America, while strengthening our economy.

Thank you for supporting the Green Task Force.

Kenneth V. Cockrel, Jr.  
Council President

## ***Executive Summary***

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### **Speramus Meliora; Resurget Cineribus**

"We Hope For Better Things; It Shall Rise From the Ashes"

The people of Detroit are resilient, passionate, creative, hard-working, and deeply dedicated to their community. Detroit is fortunate to have such a bond; we will need all of our communal strength to overcome the challenges facing our city.

The effects of climate change are increasing the strains on our economy, our environment, and our social relationships. It is apparent that climate change is linked to our existing challenges, and that in fact, climate change is both complicating these challenges and creating new concerns for Detroit.

We are already experiencing the effects of these complications. Fuel and energy prices are rising, food costs are rising, employment is down, healthcare costs are increasing, and our environment is failing. These problems cross borders and touch everyone; they influence every aspect of our livelihood.

Detroit needs to respond to these challenges appropriately if the city and its people wish to prosper. Employing sustainable practices as a guiding philosophy is one proven solution to these problems.

Cities across the nation have embraced sustainability as part of their core social, economic, and environmental policies because of the positive, effective, and proven long-term solutions it provides. Sustainable practices have succeeded in attracting new residents and businesses, adapting to the profound changes sweeping our planet, and are helping cities move forward in the new economy.

The plan for Detroit to adopt and implement principles of sustainability is part of the solution for the challenges facing our city. It is one of the best ways to revitalize the city, prepare for future challenges, and assure the city's ability to meet those challenges.

The Green Task Force recommends the City of Detroit and its people embrace a sustainable and green philosophy for the city's economic, social, and environmental systems as the best solution to the challenges facing our community. Following in this report are recommendations of the Green Task Force and a summary of progress towards this goal.

## ***Creation of the Green Task Force***

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On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007 the Detroit City Council approved a resolution to create the Green Task Force to advise the council on green principles and practices to better serve the City of Detroit. Council President Kenneth Cockrel was the author of the resolution creating the Green Task Force and became its chair.

The Green Task Force recognized that implementing sustainable environmental practices in Detroit would have positive long-term economic, social, and environmental impacts on the city. The mission statement and guiding principles of the Green Task Force incorporate this philosophy towards change.

Economic development is a core focus of the Green Task Force. Green principles and sustainability are proving to be a driving force behind economic revitalization. Applying these principles creates jobs, supports investment in renewable resources, saves energy, and promotes equitable and clean economic development. In addition, these principles strengthen the social bonds within communities, restore the natural environment, and provide long-term solutions and growth.

Gathering community leaders and environmental experts from a cross section of business, city government, universities, and nonprofit organizations, the Green Task Force formed three subcommittees to begin framing a plan for the City of Detroit.

The City Operations Subcommittee began looking within the City government to explore areas where green practices could be applied. The subcommittee hopes to encourage the City of Detroit to become a leader in green principles and an example for the community and nation.

The Policy Subcommittee seeks to inspire businesses and residents of the Detroit community to pursue green practices. The subcommittee facilitates the adoption of green practices through policy changes that will break down barriers to implementation.

The Communications Subcommittee will keep the Detroit community informed on the Green Task Force's goals, accomplishments, and recommendations. Together these subcommittees are working towards an economic, social, and environmentally sustainable Detroit.

## ***Mission Statement and Guiding Principles***

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### **Mission Statement:**

To educate the Detroit community on green principles and encourage the implementation of green practices in new construction, existing buildings, neighborhood communities, and government operations.

### **Guiding Principles:**

1. Reduce the City of Detroit's energy consumption, pollution generation, and contribution to climate change.
2. Implement methods for waste reduction and environmentally friendly waste management to meet these reduction goals for the City.
3. Incorporate pollution prevention strategies in all City operations to meet reduction goals for the city.
4. Create incentives for existing industries to adopt green principles and create green collar jobs.
5. Attract new sustainable industries and green collar jobs with incentives and programs.
6. Educate the Detroit community and city staff about energy efficiency, green principles, green practices, and sustainability.
7. Establish partnerships and facilitate collaborations around a green agenda.
8. Institute planning, land use and redevelopment policies, and standards and incentives that support a green agenda.
9. Determine how the City will institute green building standards.
10. Develop a green procurement policy for the City.
11. Effectively implement all of these guiding principles with measurable outcomes for the Detroit community.

## Background

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### **What Are Green Principles, Green Practices, and Sustainability?**

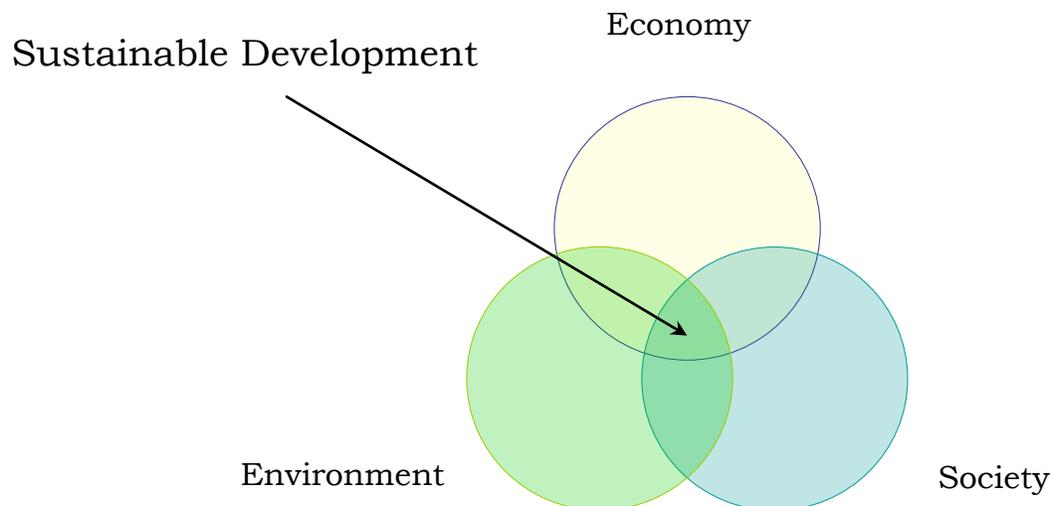
Green principles incorporate a number of elements, but their central focus surrounds the strength of communities, their environment, and social equity. Clean air and water, safe and healthy homes, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable economic growth available to everyone across socio-economic lines are all green principles.

Green practices are the measures taken to implement green principles. Green practices range from using renewable energy sources to turning off the unused lights in one's home.

Green Building is one example of the many green practices already developed. It incorporates energy and water efficiency, good indoor air quality, and sustainable building materials and site selection processes into design and construction to create a healthy living environment.

Sustainability is a principle best defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>1</sup> This philosophy ties green principles together around a central reference point.

A core component of sustainability is the triple bottom line. The triple bottom line measures activities by their contribution to economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social equity. It recognizes that environmental, social, and economic concerns impact each other, and realistically, are connected to one another. Honoring this connection is essential to creating a truly sustainable community.



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<sup>1</sup>United Nations, "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development." General Assembly Resolution 42/187, 11 December 1987. Retrieved 9 June 2008.

## ***Why Are Sustainable Principles and Practices Important for Detroit?***

Climate change, pollution, poor health, poverty, habitat destruction and threats to indigenous plants and wildlife, food and water shortages, and energy dependence on fossil fuels are a few of the most challenging problems facing our world and community.

Recognizing that these problems are connected is an important step towards solving them. These challenges demand a unified response, focusing on one while ignoring the others will not realize lasting solutions.

The economic reasons for embracing sustainable green practices as solutions are as important as the environmental concerns. From a business and social standpoint sustainability makes sense for Detroit. For example, the cost of constructing and maintaining buildings is increasing as energy prices rise. Buildings are currently responsible for:

- 39% of total energy use in the U.S.
- 70% of electricity consumption in the U.S.
- 39% of total carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions in the U.S.
- 40% of raw materials use globally
- 30% of waste output in the U.S.
- 12% of potable water consumption in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

These figures contribute to climate change as well as the problems connected to climate change and thus they contribute to the challenges facing businesses today. Fortunately, many businesses and cities have already recognized this connection and are responding appropriately by transitioning to green building standards.

Green buildings are preferable to traditional standards because they use renewable resources, are energy efficient, cost less to operate and maintain, produce less waste, and create a healthy working environment for employees. With proper planning and design there is little to no significant increased cost to building green compared to traditional methods, and any additional costs are outweighed by the social, economic, and environmental benefits.<sup>3</sup>

Transitioning to green buildings is a sustainable response that will give Detroit residents and businesses a powerful protection against rising energy prices, reduce the city's impact on the environment, improve the living conditions of its people, and generate funds for future investment. Green buildings are one example of how to use a sustainable philosophy to incorporate green principles into existing systems.

There are a number of social benefits to green practices; one of the greatest is job creation and protection. Renewable energy is a growing industry which promises to create new quality jobs and sustainable energy sources. Solar, wind, and geothermal

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<sup>2</sup> United States Green Building Council, "Green Building by the Numbers." June 2008. p. 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Davis Langdon, "Cost of Green Revisited: Reexamining the Feasibility and Cost Impact of Sustainable Design in the Light of Increased Market Adoption." July 2007.

systems require engineering, business, manufacturing, installation, and maintenance positions. These industries are sustainable, which means the jobs are long-term.

Other examples of sustainable industries which promise similar job creation include green building, home deconstruction, recycling, and urban agriculture. Detroit already has a number of organizations working in these areas. With help and support they can continue to grow.

Cities across the nation are embracing sustainability by investing in renewable energy, updating and expanding their recycling programs, transitioning their vehicles to electric and bio- fuel sources, purchasing green products, creating green spaces, and transitioning to local and organic food sources. These investments allow cities to remain competitive in a global market, protect their environments, and strengthen their communities.

Finally, in a recent speech former Vice President Al Gore addressed climate change, his words emphasize the importance of rapidly embracing sustainable principles in Detroit.

"There are times in the history of our nation when our very way of life depends upon dispelling illusions and awakening to the challenge of a present danger. In such moments, we are called upon to move quickly and boldly to shake off complacency, throw aside old habits and rise, clear-eyed and alert, to the necessity of big changes. Those who, for whatever reason, refuse to do their part must either be persuaded to join the effort or asked to step aside. This is such a moment. The survival of the United States of America as we know it is at risk. And even more - if more should be required - the future of human civilization is at stake. ... Our entire civilization depends upon us now embarking on a new journey of exploration and discovery."

- Former US Vice President Al Gore, July 17, 2008

## ***Progress to Date and Goals for the Future***

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### **City Operations Subcommittee**

- The Subcommittee organized and presented an introduction to sustainability and green principles training session for City of Detroit staff and department heads. The training introduced staff to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building guidelines and gave an overview of green policies.
  - **Goal:** Organize more training sessions for city staff.

The subcommittee is currently organizing another session for August 2008. It is also working towards making these sessions available to the public.

- The Subcommittee is working with the Rebuild Michigan program to perform an energy audit on City buildings. The audit assesses the energy usage of City buildings and recommends changes for saving energy. A variety of buildings were proposed to maximize the effectiveness of the audit.
  - The buildings proposed for the audit are:
    - Williams Center – 8431 Rosa Parks Blvd.
    - Lipke Center – 19320 Van Dyke
    - Coleman A. Young Recreation Center – 2751 Bradby
    - Adams Butzel Center - 10536 Lyndon
    - Butzel Recreation Center – 7737 Kercheval
    - Detroit Police Department – 12000 Livernois
    - Davison Yard - 8121 Division
    - Water Board Building – 735 Randolph
  - **Goal:** Implement the changes recommended in the audit and perform further audits on City buildings to identify energy usage figures and areas of improvement.
- The Subcommittee helped the City of Detroit join the U.S. Green Building Council (U.S.G.B.C) and chose 12 members to represent the City. The U.S.G.B.C. is a national non-profit organization specializing in green building. It developed the LEED standard for green buildings and offers members resources, workshops, and access to events.
  - **Goal:** Use membership benefits and resources of the U.S.G.B.C to help the City of Detroit incorporate green building practices.

Potential Members:

Kenneth V. Cockrel Jr.  
Amru Meah  
Gregg McDuffee

Jill Bryant  
Ken Gripper  
Medina Noor  
Richard Schleyer  
Dr. Vincent Nathan  
Charles Beckham  
Kathryn Underwood  
Rick Bowers  
Diane Manderachia

### **Policy Subcommittee**

- The Subcommittee is researching and advising revisions to the purchasing ordinance for the City of Detroit. The recommendations include green purchasing requirements, preferences, and guidelines for acquiring environmentally friendly products based upon national standards. Safer products can also improve indoor air quality and increase employee productivity.
  - **Goal:** Increase savings for the city by purchasing products that are both effective and safe to reduce the city's impact on the environment.
- The Subcommittee is researching and providing recommendations for an Anti-Idling Ordinance in the City of Detroit.
  - **Goal:** Reduce pollution caused by vehicle exhaust, reduce noise pollution, and save fuel.
- The Subcommittee recommends that the mayor join the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Joining this agreement commits the City of Detroit to the Kyoto Protocol. 850 mayors have already committed to this agreement including 23 mayors in Michigan.
  - **Goal:** Commit the City of Detroit to the goals of the Kyoto Protocol to reduce the City's impact on climate change and prepare the City for future carbon regulations.
- The Subcommittee is researching policy changes to recommend incentives and programs for attracting new green industry and transitioning existing industry to operate in a more sustainable manner.
  - **Goal:** Create new green collar jobs in the region by bringing green industries to metro-Detroit and facilitating the transition of existing industries to sustainable practices.

## Communication Subcommittee

- The Subcommittee is working to include a broad cross section of the greater Detroit metropolitan community in a long-term, interactive process of developing a vision for the greening of Detroit.
  - **Goal:** Develop, adopt and implement a widely accepted vision statement for the greening of Detroit.
- The Subcommittee is raising awareness of events happening in the City of Detroit and surrounding regions through the Sustainable Detroit website ([www.sustainabledetroit.org](http://www.sustainabledetroit.org))
  - **Goal:** Raise consciousness of green events happening in the area and promote connections and networking between green organizations and the community.
- The Subcommittee created and maintains the Interim Report to update the Detroit City Council on the actions of the Green Task Force.
  - **Goal:** Facilitate understanding of the Green Task Force's goals and progress with the release of additional Interim Reports to the Detroit City Council.
- Increase and promote awareness of the Green Task Force's goals and recommendations to the City of Detroit.
  - **Goal:** Increase awareness through press releases, reports, and events.

## ***Green Achievements in Detroit***

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Below are just a few of the many organizations helping transform Detroit into a sustainable city.

- The Coleman A. Young Municipal Center instituted a number of low-cost and no-cost changes to earn Energy Star certification for the building in 2006. These changes saved an estimated \$1.5 million over 15 months through reduced energy consumption and will continue to save money. The building is currently pursuing LEED certification.
- WARM Training Center, a local non-profit, promotes the development of resource efficient, affordable, healthy homes and sustainable communities through education, training and technical assistance. It has been working towards this mission since 1981.
- The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan created the GreenWays Initiative in 2001 to connect Southeast Michigan communities and create green infrastructure such as biking and hiking paths, conservation corridors, and habitats. The initiative invested \$75 million into the region to achieve this goal.
- The Detroit Regional Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council educates Southeastern Michigan about sustainable building practices and works to incorporate these practices into the design and construction industries in the region.
- Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision is a non-profit coalition educating citizens of Southwest Detroit about environmental issues and improving the environmental and economic development of the region. Their focus includes air quality, contaminated sites, land use, abandoned buildings and illegal dumping.
- The Southeast Michigan Sustainable Business Forum is a resource for business leaders in the community. It promotes sustainable business practices by informing business leaders about global trends and best environmental practices.
- NextEnergy is a non-profit organization and facility implementing an economic development strategy for the State of Michigan through research, development, and manufacturing of alternative energy technologies.
- The Garden Resource Program Collaborative provides homes, schools, and community gardens in Detroit with the resources and information to help Detroit residents grow, harvest, prepare, and preserve food. The collaborative assisted 115 community gardens, 220 family gardens, and 20 school gardens in 2007 and continues to expand its support.

- Detroit's Eastern Market is the largest historic public market district in the United States. More than 150 farmers and vendors provide fresh produce, flowers, and goods to more than 26,000 people each Saturday, creating a thriving meeting place for the community.
- The Greening of Detroit is a local non-profit creating a greener Detroit by planting thousands of trees, providing educational programs and environmental leadership, advocacy, and by building community capacity. Greening of Detroit organizes over 1,500 volunteers each year to participate in planting projects.
- The Architectural Salvage Warehouse of Detroit is a local non-profit working to conserve historic architectural elements and artifacts and keep building resources out of landfills by salvaging and reusing building materials. It also provides training and career paths for Detroit residents.
- Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice is protecting and improving the Detroit community with green jobs training programs that provide the necessary skills, knowledge, and support for career training and placement. DWEJ trains community leaders and supports a number of programs aimed at improving the environmental, economic, and social condition in Detroit.

## ***Green Task Force Members***

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Kenneth V. Cockrel, Jr. - Chair  
Detroit City Council President

Richard J. Bowers, Jr.  
Attorney for President Kenneth V. Cockrel Jr.

### **Green Task Force**

Mitch Alexander  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation

Rhonda Anderson  
Sierra Club

Leor Barak  
Community Legal Resources

Charles Beckham  
Director, Public Lighting Department

Duane Belin  
DTC- People Mover

Jill Bryant  
General Services Department

Janese Chapman  
City Planning Commission

Bob Chapman  
WARM Training Center

Scott Clein  
Giffels-Webster Engineers, Inc.

Jacob Corvidae  
WARM Training Center

Sarah Cubik  
Recycle Detroit

Roshani Dantas  
Detroiters Working for Environmental  
Justice

Brad Dick  
General Services

Michael DiRamio  
City Connect Detroit

Graig Donnelly  
Woodbridge Neighborhood Development  
Corporation

Darryl Dugans  
Buildings and Safety Engineering  
Department

David Everest  
Siemens

Tom Friesen  
Architectural Salvage Warehouse of Detroit

Lee Gaddis  
Bagley Community Counseling

Omar George  
Waste One

Paul Goldsmith  
Harley Ellis Devereaux Green Works Studio

Deborah Goldstein  
City Planning Commission

Lisa Goldstein  
Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision

Valerie Graham  
Detroiters Working for Environmental  
Justice

Kenneth Gripper  
General Services Department, Fleet

Lynnette Hill  
COBO

Leslie Horn  
The Power of Green Housing

Patrick Horn  
The Power of Green Housing

Colin Hubbell  
Hubbell Group & WARM Training Center

Erin Irwin  
Wayne County Department of Economic  
Development

Diane Van Buren Jones  
WARM Training Center & Rebuild Michigan

Verne Kanoyton  
Renaissance Community Development  
Corporation

Michael Kennedy  
Hines Corporation

Christina Ladson  
City of Detroit

Norris Louie  
Detroit Wayne Joint Building Authority

Diane Manderachia  
General Services Department, Forestry

Michelle Martinez  
Greening of Detroit

Gregg McDuffee  
Detroit Wayne Joint Building Authority

Stephanie Milledge  
Policy Analyst, President Cockrel

Greg Moots  
City of Detroit

Vincent Nathan  
Director, Environmental Affairs Department

Luanne Nelson  
The Power of Green Housing

Medina Noor  
Director, Purchasing Division

Art Pappapanous  
DEGC  
DDA

Charles Poat  
U.S.G.B.C. Local Chapter President

Analine Powers  
Research and Analysis Division, Detroit  
City Council

Lauryl Prena  
Siemens

Kenn Rickman  
U.S.G.B.C. Local Chapter

Richard Schleyer  
Detroit Public Schools

Raymond Scott  
Environmental Affairs Department

Regina Scott  
Environmental Affairs Department

Todd Scott  
Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance

Patrick Smithbauer  
BEI Associates Inc. & U.S.G.B.C. Local  
Chapter

Donna Stallings  
SYNC Technologies Inc.

Tom Stephens  
Research and Analysis Division, Detroit  
City Council

Carter Stevenson  
Finance Department, Purchasing

Bill Swanson  
Villages CDC and USNAPBAC

Nate Taylor  
Detroit Public Schools

Sandra Turner-Handy  
Michigan Environmental Council

Tom Tuskey  
Director, COBO

Natalie Zapella  
Detroitters Working for Environmental  
Justice

Kathryn Underwood  
City Planning Commission

Denise Vaughn  
COBO

Greg Vendena  
Co-Lab Studio

Carmen Violich  
Detroitters Working for Environmental  
Justice

Steve Vogel  
Dean, University of Detroit School of  
Architecture

Carla Walker Miller  
Miller Energy Services, LLC

Margaret Weber  
Rosedale Recycling

Susanna Weckerle  
Community Foundation for Southeast  
Michigan

Donele Wilkins  
Detroitters Working for Environmental  
Justice

Guy Williams  
Southeast Michigan Sustainable Business  
Forum

Jeff Williams  
WARM Training Center

Willa Williams  
General Manager, Environmental Affairs

Thomas Woiwode  
Community Foundation for Southeast  
Michigan

Min Yang  
Environmental Affairs Department

Sandra Yu  
Detroitters Working for Environmental  
Justice