

Green Economy

Community Input by Formal Submission
Ideas and Recommendations for Moving Forward

The following information is a collection of formally submitted recommendations to the District Department of the Environment and the Office of Planning by local organizations. The information was reviewed and pertinent comments, suggestions and ideas for the green economy working group are included in this document. Much effort by concerned citizens went into the creation of those documents and a lot of relevant material has been compiled. Please review these ideas and concerns to enhance participation in the working group process.

1. Becoming Greenest

Recommendations for a More Sustainable Washington, D.C. Submitted by the American Society of Landscape Architects

With the District's unemployment rate stuck at 10.8 percent, the impact of bicycle and pedestrian projects on job creation must be underscored. According to a [recent Political Economy Research Institute study](#), bicycle and pedestrian projects create about 11.4 jobs for every \$1 million spent compared to 7.8 jobs created through road projects.

Washington D.C. should continue to invest in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvement projects to boost job growth.

Green economy jobs can come from a variety of sources. Green infrastructure is infrastructure so needs to be designed, installed, and maintained – and is then a source of jobs. Green roofs, for example, are highly labor intensive, and these jobs can't be exported.

At a [recent conference](#), Steven Peck, Honorary ASLA, head of Green Roofs for Healthy Cities, said that adding green roofs to 1 percent of U.S. buildings would cost \$9 billion and create 190,000 jobs. For 5 percent of buildings, the cost would rise to \$48 billion and create almost a million jobs. Finally, if 10 percent of all buildings had these green infrastructure systems, the cost would be \$96 billion but almost 2 million jobs would be created. Locally, Washington, D.C., would be expected to increase the number of green infrastructure-related jobs as it rolls out requirements for new buildings and introduces stormwater runoff fees.

Use green infrastructure systems, including green roofs, to increase number of local, non-exportable "green" jobs.

In a [recent talk at the National Building Museum](#), Majora Carter, founder of Sustainable South Bronx and MacArthur "Genius" grant winner, called for a boost in local green job training programs, which are crucial to creating and maintaining the community infrastructure needed for more sustainable inner-city communities. A key part of building healthy, more sustainable inner-city communities is training inner-city residents for green jobs, which "can't be outsourced" and provide new skills and a way out of poverty or prison.

One ASLA member argued that park maintenance is lagging within the District. More could be employed in ensuring parks are clean and healthy. Washington, D.C.'s many brownfields present job opportunities through bio-remediation and redevelopment. The city's budding green roof industry also presents opportunities. It's important that local skilled, certified labor is available to do this work.

Launch a comprehensive green jobs program, training chronically unemployed and former convicts in park maintenance, brownfield remediation, green roof installation, and other tasks.

Lastly, it's important that the city become better known as a top green city. Currently, there is little awareness about all the great things the District is doing. If the District successfully promotes itself as a leading green city in North America, it will also in turn attract green talent who can open sustainable businesses, using sustainable business practices, creating a virtuous cycle. Other cities are competing for the same talent.

Washington, D.C., political leaders should be out at conferences, visiting other green cities, and finding national press opportunities to speak about the District's achievements. A new Web site and other materials can be developed to attract green entrepreneurial talent.

Washington, D.C., should launch a national campaign in an effort to lure the best green talent to the District.

2. Sustainability Recommendations Submitted by DC Sierra Club

ACTION ITEM	PURPOSE	RESPONSIBILITY
(1) Foster green jobs in DC by (a) offering incentives to local green entrepreneurs; (b) favoring long-term local employment results over short-term mega projects; (c) encouraging green jobs; (d) purchasing more renewable energy for city operations; (e) promoting private property weatherization and transition to renewable energy; (f) launching government-wide advertisement and outreach campaign to promote sustainability and local green jobs; (g) increasing city contract procurement points for green business bidders; and (h) sponsoring annual green job fair.	Grow a sustainable economy, increase number of green jobs and overall employment rate, transition city agencies to have greener supplies and contractors.	Mayor, city agencies, City Council, SEU.
(2) Divert juvenile offenders into green community service with job training.	Channel youth into sectors that benefits themselves and benefit society.	DYRS, DC judiciary.

3. Sustainable DC Submitted by Just Economics

There are economic incentives that discourage sustainability. These “upside-down” incentives can be turned “right-side-up” so that they encourage sustainability. Here are some examples:

Performance-based parking pricing. This reduces traffic congestion and enhances transit use. It has been implemented as a pilot program in a few neighborhoods. It should be expanded citywide.

Mileage-based congestion pricing for roads. This encourages transit use. It also encourages more compact land use decisions as individuals can reduce roadway charges by locating homes and businesses closer to the destinations that they frequent. DC cannot implement this alone for two reasons.

1. Create a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis the suburbs
2. Likely Congressional interference.

Need to work through the Council of Governments to implement this on a regional basis to avoid both these problems.

Clean Air Compliance Fee Act. Collects a fee from commuters who park for free and who do not pay the existing DC parking sales & use tax. DC enacted this legislation in the 1990s but Congress repealed it as part of the financial bailout. DC Government was not in a position to oppose this action. DC is in a better position to fight for this legislation today.

Transform the property tax into a “value-capture user fee.” This would entail a lower tax rate on building values and a higher tax rate on land values. Sustainability results would include:

- More affordable housing. (Cheaper to construct, improve and maintain buildings.)
- More affordable business rents. (Same reason as above.) Result is more robust small business economy.
- More affordable land. (Higher taxes on land discourage speculation & reduce land prices.)
- Induces infill development.
- Reduces cost of weatherization & other energy-efficient retrofits to buildings.
- Job creation from more building improvements and weatherization activities. Also, lower business rents frees up funds for enhanced production & employment.
- Helps make transportation infrastructure financially self-sustaining.

4. UDC Ward 3 Input

Submitted by the **University of the District of Columbia**

(Only items relevant for review by the green economy working group are listed)

On 28 September, UDC held a meeting as part of ‘Start in September’ under Mayor Gray’s [Sustainable DC](#) initiative. Office of Planning staff, UDC staff, and concerned citizens gathered to discuss ideas about the attributes of a sustainable city in an effort to break down high-level concepts and bring them into our local context.

This open discussion at UDC allowed participants to share their own visions and aspirations for the city and gave them an opportunity to listen to other residents with different perspectives. In small tables of 4-5 people, we discussed three guiding questions:

- 1) What are the attributes of a sustainable city?
- 2) How does DC measure up to that vision of a sustainable city?
- 3) How can we engage and energize the whole city around this sustainability plan?

Question 1: What are the attributes of a sustainable city?

The city is in sync with natural systems and all resources are valued.

- Design is informed by nature/works with nature
- Holistic thinking is present in all planning
- People are connected to nature

Question 2: How does DC measure up to that vision of a sustainable city?

Strengths

- We promote green buildings
- Local farm produce/farmers markets
- Grassroots action - more and more NGOs and businesses are involved in sustainability

Weaknesses

- Scale of social disparities – state scale problems/city funding
- Segregation is still a problem
- City systems are not in sync with natural systems

From the conversation came the following suggestions for building on our strengths and addressing our weaknesses:

Local Goals –

- Closed loop design
- Respect for natural cycles
- More green jobs and opportunities across the city
- Sufficient training programs to prepare workforce
- Fiscal cooperation/funding for sustainability efforts
- Tax base supports these efforts

Potential Action –

- Use a holistic infrastructure design process
- Strengthen sustainability education as preparation for jobs
- Leverage participation to benefit local economy
- Make sure leadership is invested in sustainability and willing to innovate/take risks

Question 3: How can we engage and energize the whole city around this sustainability plan?

Social Media Strategy

- Twitter meetings – Q&A between city officials and Tweeps
- Tweet ups
- Sustainable DC Foursquare Badge

Collect ideas outside of meetings

- Collect ideas on napkins, used envelopes, things with blank surface areas like toilet paper
- Suggestion boxes for sustainable DC at local businesses – maybe through Think Local First
- Collect ideas via text

Mobile meetings

- Bike rides
- Experimental circulator bus routes

Paid/incentivized participation

- Give rebate for bottle recycling (5-10 cents)
- Make it FUN
- iPod giveaway at planning meetings
- Take the money we would have used to hire a consultant and instead pay businesses directly to participate.

Go to existing meetings and groups

- Churches/Religious networks/GWIPL/Creation Care
- ANC meetings – Mobilize the ANCs
- Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts
- Unions
- Rotary Club
- Lions Club
- Business orgs like AOBA
- Parents at playgrounds on Saturday mornings

Go to existing events

- Local sports venues
- Music/concerts
- Comedy shows

Get schools engaged

- Universities
- Clubs (UDC Sustainability Club, UDC Garden Club)
- Put in school curriculum /better education on environmental issues

Showcase and encourage good examples

- Create competitions between schools
- Incentivize local business participation by holding competitions, giving awards for green practices
- Competitions between employees of small/large firms
- Action is motivating – bring the results of your own actions to the next meeting to share back with the group
- Shame bad behavior
- Lead by example, especially for city leadership

Reach all community members

- Have meetings whenever it makes sense in your community. Don't rush it based on this planning process.
- Switch target demographic and recognize that kids are change agents
- Reach pockets, but also have a central place to bring ideas back together/find out about new events
- Everybody must bring 2 new people to next meeting – if we keep doing this, we'll eventually reach a critical mass