



**MAYOR'S GREEN RIBBON COMMITTEE**

**MEETING 1**

**Monday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012**

**Mayor's Ceremonial Office, Room 509**

**John A. Wilson Building**

**Meeting Notes**

***Attendance:***

Mayor Vincent C. Gray  
Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development Victor Hoskins  
Director of the Office of Planning Harriet Tregoning  
Director of the District Department of the Environment Christophe A.G. Tulou  
A. Cornelius Baker, AED Center on AIDS & Community Health  
David Bowers, Enterprise Community Partners  
Richard Bradley, Downtown DC Business Improvement District  
Lynn Brantley, Capital Area Food Bank  
Mark Busciano, Casey Trees  
Dennis Chestnut, Groundwork Anacostia River DC  
Pertula George, Common Good City Farm  
Greg Kats, Good Energies  
Steven Knapp, The George Washington University  
Tamara Lucas Copeland, Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers  
Deborah Ratner Salzberg, Forest City  
Walter Smith, DC Appleseed  
Chris Weiss, DC Environmental Network  
Dan Winters, Evolution Partners Real Estate Advisors

***Meeting Summary:***

**A. Mayor Gray remarks**

- Mayor Gray welcomed the members of the Green Ribbon Committee (GRC) and emphasized the unique opportunity the city has to be a national and international leader, and to set ambitious goals to create a healthy and prosperous future for the city and its residents.
- The Mayor asked members of the Committee:
  1. to ensure that the plans are inclusive and to communicate with and represent those communities that haven't traditionally been involved in sustainability issues;
  2. to bring to bear their considerable knowledge of the community and of national and international best practices; and
  3. to help engage their constituencies and bring new perspectives to the effort to develop a comprehensive sustainability plan.

- The Mayor reiterated that a goal of being the most sustainable city in the United States is intended not only to improve the quality of life, but is key to motivating investment, creating jobs, and instilling the pride that we all want and need for our city.

#### **B. Directors Tregoning and Tulou remarks**

- The directors presented an overview of the Sustainable DC planning process to date and the city's significant track record of leadership on a range of sustainability issues from transportation to green building. The PowerPoint presentation is available for download at <http://sustainable.dc.gov>.
- They reviewed the role of the GRC, which is to provide high level input on the direction of the process and the recommendations developed during the public engagement process. GRC members were asked to apply their considerable experience and understanding of the District to help deliver a visionary plan for the city.
- The directors emphasized that Sustainable DC is not just about the environment and is, in fact, as much about creating economic development and strengthening communities in ways that ensure the long-term health and viability of the city. The goal is a city that is resilient and can react to a changing regional and global environment for decades—and generations—to come. This requires that the city tackle not just environmental issues, but focus on economic prosperity and eliminating disparities among District residents.
- They asked GRC members to solicit ideas for the plan from a wide range of stakeholders and to research leadership models from other cities.

#### **C. Review of Draft Working Group Vision Statements**

- GRC members then reviewed the Sustainable DC working groups' draft vision statements.
- Among other feedback and suggestions, members commented that the vision statements varied widely in style and scope and would benefit from using a single voice and a common set of elements. They also recommended that an overall vision statement for the plan be developed, which Directors Tregoning and Tulou agreed to create. More questions related to the draft working group vision statements are included in the section below.

#### **D. Questions and Answers**

*Q: Are there quantitative targets that go along with these goals?*

A: Yes, quantitative targets will be incorporated into the goals and actions, which the working groups are developing now.

*Q: What is the time frame for these vision statements?*

A: Working groups were instructed to develop vision statements that looked out 20 to 25 years. While the plan will ultimately include goals and actions for the short, medium, and long-term, the working groups have been using 2030 or 2035 as the conceptual timeframe for their overall vision.

*Q: How confidential is this conversation? Can we use our resources to help analyze and digest these vision statements?*

A: Like all of Sustainable DC, the Green Ribbon Committee is meant to be open and transparent. Our goal is to grow the conversation and share information. GRC members are encouraged to reach out to staff, colleagues and others. The more people involved to provide input the better.

*Q: Regarding the individual working group vision statements, there is a range in the level of aspiration. Is the goal to have one voice with the vision statements? Will there be “one author” to the plan?*

A: Yes, the goal is to have one voice and common level of aspiration. Mayor Gray will set that vision and voice.

*Q: Many of the vision statements are about “catching up” rather than leading; how can we advance beyond that? We should shoot for not just being good, but being the best.*

A: Agreed. That is good input for the working groups, which we will share with them.

*Q: How can we ensure that the process moves beyond one mayor’s administration? A suggestion would be to include a legislative requirement for updating documents on a regular basis.*

A: We have not yet thought about specific legislative actions, but we absolutely want this plan to last far into the future. It is important to keep longevity in mind and to address how best to embed change into both government and the private/non-profit sectors to create a new, sustainable paradigm for the city.

*Q: What types of partnerships do you envision with the federal government?*

A: The Obama administration has been a great partner to the city, but that could change in the future. Recent executive actions such as [Executive Order 13514](#) create a framework for agency sustainability, which benefits the District. We need to make sure there is widespread investment in the success of the plan, beyond District Government and including private and public partners and the federal government.

*Q: How are we benchmarking our current status from which to measure progress towards the vision later in the process?*

A: The plan will establish indicators and baselines for each target. The working group report that is scheduled to come out in April will include baselines and discuss where we are now and where our peer cities are now.

*Q: The District has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rate of poverty in the country and the 9<sup>th</sup> highest rate of childhood obesity. Are we collaborating with other agencies to work on that?*

A: Yes, we are coordinating with other agencies on this type of initiative as part of the Green Cabinet. Sustainable DC is about doing what is best for the city as a whole—not just environmentally, but also with respect to economic prosperity and community equity. We will be working hard to ensure the Sustainable DC plan helps address issues like health and poverty.

*Q: It might be good to have topics such as health, job growth, and reducing disparities addressed in the working groups' vision statements or maybe an overarching vision statement for the plan to help us systematize these changes.*

A: That's a great idea. We will pass on that info to the working groups and will create an overall vision statement that could cover topics such as those you mentioned.

*Q: Shouldn't the scope of the plan go beyond government operations to include actions the whole community can take to make the District more sustainable?*

A: Absolutely. This plan is intended to go far beyond just District government operations. In fact, the plan is intended to serve as a call to action for community-wide behavior change. For example, with respect to energy and water usage, the plan must go beyond improvements to buildings and infrastructure to focus on community-wide behavioral change and engaging residents and businesses to save money, protect our environment, and improve quality of life for everyone.

*Q: Food security is a serious concern for the District and is closely related to high unemployment. Food banks are seeing dramatic increases in demand. How do we build a sustainable food system that provides supplies of healthy and affordable food?*

A: We are in many ways a small city and have the ability to pilot projects and test ideas to develop innovative solutions before scaling up. Food quality and urban agriculture are a central focus of the planning process and we expect to develop a range of possible solutions.

*Q: The plan seems like it could use an overall vision—why this is good for you, your family, and your friends, and here is what you can do to help out. People need to see how this affects them and what they can DO.*

A: This is a good point and as we develop the overall vision and visions for each working group, we need to ensure it is clear why we are doing this and why it is important to each resident.

*Q: Is there information about adjoining jurisdictions in the region and what they are doing in terms of sustainability? We need to consider how we interact with our neighbors.*

A: Yes, we have some information from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, which has shown strong leadership through efforts such as the Region Forward plan. We will send out this information to the group.

*Q: Can you identify the scope of the sustainability plan? It seems to be about a sustainable future—not just a green future. The overall vision should make that clear.*

A: That's a good point that should be reflected in the overall vision statement. We have considered changing the word "sustainability" as a key word in the title to better reflect the broad potential impact of the plan. Our consultants should be helpful in that area.

*Q: The plan should include specific reduction targets. Do we have information on other jurisdictions that have been successful and the costs involved? How will we pay for these ideas?*

A: We do have information on targets and successes from other jurisdictions. Our consultant team will be tasked with examining costs and benefits of the proposals. As an initial step to help promote new initiatives under the plan, we're proposing targeted funding for pilots and feasibility studies in Fiscal Year 2013.

*Q: I'm encouraged by the metrics and dedicated staff mentioned in the presentation. How do we institutionalize the project and tie it into the budget cycle? Can we tie it to performance evaluations of government employees? After the Mayoral transition, who will keep coordination going for public, private, and community process? It is important to understand the people or office that is tracking information and ensuring progress is being made.*

A: The District currently has a performance tracking system called DC Stat and a range of Key Performance Indicators that are tracked by the Office of the City Administrator. We will likely use existing mechanisms like these instead of creating a new tracking system, but how best to track performance will be one of the topics addressed in the final plan.

*Q: Communication is key. Plan NYC does this well so it draws a lot of positive press and exposure for the city. In some ways, NYC is actually not doing as much as other cities, but they communicate what they ARE doing well so they get a lot of credit. Communication could be a role of the Green Ribbon Committee. What is the communication strategy for the plan?*

A: Branding and communications will be critical to the success of this plan and will be one of the major tasks of the consultant team. We look forward to input from the GRC and working groups on the questions of communication, branding, and engagement as well. In order to create a cultural change in the city, we will need a strong message and brand.

*Q: We need to work sustainability into a larger citywide strategy, such as at the One City Summit.*

A: The Mayor has identified sustainability as one of his strategic priorities and it does need to be integrated with other citywide efforts. We look forward to input from the GRC on how best to promote the inclusion of sustainability in efforts across the city.