

NEW ORLEANS GROUP PROJECT 1

NEW ORLEANS

GROUP MEMO

December 6, 2019

CYPLAN 119 PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

PROFESSOR CHARISMA ACEY

MEMORANDUM

TO: CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

FROM: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS - UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

SUBJECT: SUSTAINABILITY/CLIMATE ACTION PLANS – REPORT CARD

DATE: DECEMBER 6, 2019

Background:

New Orleans has long been dotted with substandard and dilapidated housing, poor infrastructure with millions of residents living generation after generation below the poverty line. The devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina gave the city and national leaders a golden opportunity to improve the conditions and to change the course of residents' lives, but their shortsightedness instead exacerbated the hopelessness and deeply entrenched poverty. How New Orleans moves forward is a problem that seems devoid of a solution, as the leadership vacuum continues.

Context: Transit currently connects to just 30% of the region's jobs via a 30-minute commute, so fuel-intensive and expensive driving is the preferred mode of travel. Alternative modes of travel lack infrastructure and are considered unsafe in some areas. Access to affordable housing, an increase in home and rent prices has further exacerbated the housing crisis post Katrina.

Sectors:

The sectors we focused on and sustainability/climate actions plans we used were:

- **Water:** The Greater New Orleans Urban Water Plan (September 2013)
- **Green Space:** *Adopted Master Plan* (2018) Action Plan for New Orleans: The New American City (January 2006)
- **Housing:** Housing for a Resilient New Orleans – A Five Year Strategy June 2016
- **Transportation:** *Adopted Master Plan* (2018), *Strategic Mobility Plan* (2018, March)

Conclusion and Recommendations:

By evaluating the above plans, each of the sectors above produced the following strengths and weaknesses as well as creating recommendations to further strengthen each plan::

- **Water:** Based on the GNO Urban Water Plan, the planned projects to prevent flooding and subsidence has huge strengths in creating spaces meant to store water and creating job opportunities to create these spaces, as well as encouraging community involvement in stormwater management. However, the implementation of these projects is lacking in the sense that progress is very slow. Thus, we recommend creating a clear timeline with set dates for each task as well as allowing the public to become stakeholders in

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stormwater management practices, and creating education programs to teach water literacy.

GRADE: 3

- **Green Space:** Efforts related to both the master plan and the Action Plan set forth by the Bring New Orleans Back Commission focus integration on revitalizing the landscape with the development of services, amenities and tree replenishment tied to Green Spaces. Progress is limited in a need to integrate communities most vulnerable through a complete park system and revisioning the scene with tied social and environmental assessment to produce qualitative change to the equitable distribution of this framework.
- **Housing:** Based on the evaluation of the five-year housing strategy, we found that New Orleans has made progress and is doing a commendable job in collaborating with small-property rental owners and low-income property owners in repairing their properties. However, in increasing the number of new affordable housing units through new partnerships, and providing access to those units to the low-income, New Orleans performance is unsatisfactory.

GRADE: 2

- **Transportation:** Referring to progress made between the master plan and the strategic mobility plan, transportation has laid out clear targets for increasing transit linkages, strengthening bicycle infrastructure, renovating streets, and deploying fuel-efficient vehicles. However, we recommend that the city report on equity for housing-transit development, delegate with bike-sharing services to track their expansion, communicate effectively with the public the state of sidewalk repairs, and develop a strategy for implementing large-scale EV adoption.

GRADE: 3

Based on these findings above, New Orleans has laid an impressive foundation with its planning documents, but so far lacks in both specifying action timeframes and implementation. It recognizes relevant stakeholders present in each of its sectors, but it has yet to establish long-term relationships with them, therefore solidifying its stance in its oversight, which suggests that the city is still studying its own changing landscape.

FINAL GRADE: 3