

# City of San Antonio: Mission Verde Sustainability Plan

## Introduction

We live in a world of volatile energy prices, increasingly scarce resources, vigorous world competition and technological innovation. Such rapid changes touch the lives of every San Antonian. How we respond to these changes will define us as a city and determine the quality of our lives and our economic fate. They represent perhaps the greatest challenge facing our city.

This plan, Mission Verde, speaks to this challenge. It is based on a simple principle: in meeting our needs today we cannot compromise the ability of future generations of San Antonians to meet their needs. This is sustainability. It is more than an environmental policy; it is an economic one. Saving energy saves money. Renewable energy creates economic self-reliance. Fewer cars on the road mean less pollution, which carries its own economic costs. A green infrastructure, powered by green technology, creates jobs.

This economic approach runs deep. It is being embraced around the world, from the European Union to China, from Singapore to Dubai. It is driving new technologies, new opportunities, and new jobs. It is expressed in the writings of the best-selling author and columnist Thomas Friedman and the noted economist Jeremy Rifkin, who both see this change as nothing less than the beginning of the Third Industrial Revolution and the future of the U.S. economy. It will be one of the most dramatic economic changes in world history.

San Antonio cannot afford to be left behind. We must invest in green technology, energy conservation, renewable energy, efficient transportation, and smarter buildings. We must build a new energy infrastructure that transforms our city from reliance on centralized power to distributed power. We must create a multi-modal transportation system that is integrated and efficient. We must bring venture capital to invest in new green businesses and technology. We must conserve, create, and grow.

With Mission Verde, San Antonio has a plan to do this. This plan not only allows San Antonio to participate in this new economy, but sets an example for others to follow. We can bring unique and innovative approaches to green infrastructure, green retrofitting, green jobs programs, and green venture capital. We can position ourselves to compete successfully in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century global economy. We can transform our city and improve the lives of all San Antonians. With Mission Verde, we control our destiny.

## The Plan—A Summary

Mission Verde was drawn up after close study of the economic conditions in San Antonio and pays careful attention to the city's assets and challenges in building a sustainable economy. The intent of the plan, as shown by Appendix One (Initial Estimates: the Scope of Mission Verde's Benefits), was to invest in energy saving initiatives that would save the

consumer and the community money, and serve as a catalyst for job creation and innovation. The plan is comprised of interlocking parts that successfully work in harmony. For example, the plan calls for the creation of a multi-tech venture capital fund. This is needed to help seed businesses that will drive new green and clean tech technology and business models. A Green Jobs program, also recommended in the plan, is designed so that those businesses will not falter due to lack of workers. As the City leads by example, another initiative of the plan, the City's policy choices will also create and test the market for green businesses. The plan is mindful of San Antonio resources ranging from its people to natural resources and financial building blocks, and it builds on those strengths in logical, achievable steps. It is designed not to be static, but to contain elements, such as the city's Office of Environmental Policy and the Green One-Stop Center, that can respond to changing conditions in San Antonio.

While the focus of this plan is energy, this is not to diminish the importance of other parts of a sustainable economy, such as water and open spaces. San Antonio has made great strides in both areas. In water, San Antonio is a national leader in conservation, thanks to the efforts of the San Antonio Water System (SAWS). San Antonio uses the same amount of water today as it did 20 years ago, even though the population of San Antonio has increased by 50%. Because of this, SAWS has saved \$550 million by not having to acquire new water resources. This has helped keep our water rates low and our conservation programs funded. In open spaces, San Antonio is developing an extensive linear park system, anchored by the 13-mile San Antonio River Improvement Project. San Antonio uses part of its sales tax for an innovative program to preserve sensitive aquifer features, which serves the dual purpose of creating parkland and preserving our aquifer. San Antonio also is developing a world-class park in Voelcker Park, a new 311-acre park that creates precious green space in a heavily developed part of town.

But it is energy that drives our economy, our foreign policy, and our environmental future. It is why President Obama said during the presidential campaign that energy was the number one domestic issue facing our country. It is why energy—how we create, move, manage, and use it—is at the heart of Mission Verde.

The table below is a graphic summary of the initiatives in Mission Verde.

## Mission Verde Initiatives, Overview

Initiative		Description	Near Term Action Steps	
Energy Infrastructure	<b>#1: Build a 21<sup>st</sup> Century urban energy infrastructure in San Antonio with distributed energy</b>	Generate energy from renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, biomass and geothermal, originated from buildings and homes, stored until needed and connected with a multi-directional grid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Dec 08 <input type="checkbox"/> Feb 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Mar 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Apr 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Apr 09	Conference call with lead consultant Hire Jeremy Rifkin & his team Bring consultant team to SA Receive plan from team Begin implementation
Clean and Green Technology	<b>#2: Create a multi-tech venture capital fund in San Antonio</b>	Build a regional fund headquartered in San Antonio, capitalized at \$100 million and managed by Brooke Private Equity Advisors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nov 08 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dec 08 <input type="checkbox"/> May 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Fall 09	Feasibility study Commission Market Assessment Complete Market Assess. report Capitalization
	<b>#3: Create a Green Jobs Program in San Antonio</b>	Collaborate with employers and educators to match training for existing and emerging green and clean jobs with employer needs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nov 08 <input type="checkbox"/> Feb 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Apr 09	Assessment of needs Hire consultant Implement program
	<b>#4: Use the City's economic development strategies to foster development of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century sustainable economy</b>	Use tax abatements, cluster development strategies, business attraction and retention programs focused on clean and green tech companies.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nov 08 <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing	Target the clean/green tech industry Pursue clean/green tech businesses
	<b>#5: Adopt a green, high-performance building code for new residential and commercial construction</b>	Move in phases toward building codes that produce zero carbon by 2030	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jul 08 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jan 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Mar 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan 10	Task Force Recommend new code Adopt Recommendations New Code effective
Sustainable Buildings	<b>#6: Build a Green Retrofit Program for existing homes and buildings</b>	Expand free weatherization program combined with retrofit program paid for by a "Pay As You Save"® surcharge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jan 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Mar 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Spring 09	Green Retrofit report completed Design & implement pilot program Consolidate/expand programs

Initiative		Description	Near Term Action Steps	
Transportation and Land Use	#7: Create an integrated, efficient multi-modal transportation system for San Antonio	Pursue and fund light rail, high capacity rail and multiple transportation options	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> July 08 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Feb 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Feb 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Mar 09 <input type="checkbox"/> May 09	Convene Task Force Recommendations Begin regional planning Pursue Austin-SA rail funding Combine RMA & VIA Secure local option funding
	#8: Create new sustainable real estate development that is mixed-use, mixed income, walkable and transit-oriented	Utilize real estate investment funds to advance walkable, infill neighborhoods	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> July 08	Invite Star Fund
Community Outreach	#9: Create a Green One-Stop Center to coordinate sustainability efforts and to provide information to residents and businesses	Centralize sustainability groups, facilitate their efforts, demonstrate sustainability, and offer one source of information to residents and businesses	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/> Apr 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Jul 09	Stakeholder planning sessions Programmatic design finalization Finalize conceptual plan
City of San Antonio: Leading by Example	#10: Address sustainability and resource efficiency across City departments	The Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability Task Force will facilitate energy efficiency, waste reduction and vehicular emission improvements	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Mar 09 <input type="checkbox"/> Apr 09	Expand OEP capacity Launch website Issue sustainability directive
	#11: Maximize the Energy Efficiency of all City Facilities	Audit and implement lighting, HVAC, energy and water improvements at city facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Jan-Apr <input type="checkbox"/> Feb 09 <input type="checkbox"/> May 09	Audit and Assess Implement Phase 1 – internal funds Implement Phase 2 – external funds