



Cleaner, Greener LoDa Committee – Strategic Plan

Rationale: In the summer of 2012, the Cleaner, Greener LoDa Committee was formed when the Downtown Mobile Alliance brought together the following organizations to develop ways for the Downtown area to be more sustainable: City of Mobile (Neighborhood & Community Services, Environmental Services, Public Works) Keep Mobile Beautiful, Mobile Baykeeper, Alabama Coastal Foundation, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, BayFest Inc., Green Solutions, Mobile Carnival Museum, and the Mobile County Health Department. The greatest impact the group felt it could make was to help downtown events to be cleaner. The committee decided to focus in on the largest downtown events: BayFest Music Festival and Mardi Gras, and develop efforts to lessen the environmental impacts from these events. One of the main focuses is how waste and recycling are considered and handled for two major Mobile events. The committee decided to create an “Eco-Team” to be a volunteer base for recycling at these events. Eco-team successfully recycled plastics and aluminum during BayFest 2012 and Mardi Gras 2013 with over 50 volunteers participating during each event. For BayFest, plastics were collected for the first time in the festival’s existence and the amount was unknown since the materials were picked up by a local elementary school; 675 lbs. of aluminum were collected and for Mardi Gras nearly 100 lbs. of aluminum and 12 bags of plastics were collected. As the committee progressed, it became clear that if these efforts are to remain and expand, then a strategic plan is essential. Strategic planning of some scale will give the committee structure and clear goals, and will allow the work and mission of the committee to continue beyond the individuals who started it.

Additionally, we will be successful when we are able to instill proper waste disposal and recycling as habitual behaviors, not event-specific behaviors. This includes smaller events such as Art Walk, as well as encouraging recycling and proper waste disposal on a daily basis through constant reinforcement and increasing the ease of these positive behaviors.

SMART Criteria – the building blocks of strategic planning

S - Specific

December 2013

M - Measurable
A - Attainable
R - Relevant
T - Time-bound

Original Problem: Large trash-producing events with minimum to no recycling options. Recycling is not integrated into Mardi Gras or BayFest which both produce a lot of waste and trash.

Larger Problem: Waste disposal/litter problem. Mobile does not offer recycling options in many places throughout the city. There are not enough trashcans on streets ordinarily, and at events there are not enough waste receptacles provided. Many people believe it is acceptable to litter. In the absence of adequate waste containers, even those who would like to dispose of trash or recyclables cannot. There is a dual problem: Lack of awareness (thinking it's okay to litter) and lack of ability (no trash/recycling cans).

Related Problems: Stormwater runoff; Stormwater maintenance; Water pollution; Water quality; Recycling; Social norms; Lack of Environmental Awareness.

Goals

- 1) Reduce everyday litter in Downtown Mobile (BID) by 25% by 2015.
 - a. Increase public awareness of litter problem.
- 2) Increase recycling collection by 15% in Downtown Mobile (BID) by 2015.
- 3) Reduce litter at Bayfest by 25% by 2015.
 - a. Increase recycling collection at Bayfest by 50% by 2015.
 - b. Receive eco/green award for BayFest.
- 4) Reduce litter at Mardi Gras by 25% by 2015.
 - a. Increase recycling collection at Mardi Gras by 15% by 2015.
- 5) Secure grant funding to achieve the above goals focusing on recycling and green initiatives (transportation, composting, energy efficiency, materials used, etc.)

Objectives, Strategies, & Tactics

- 1) *Reduce everyday litter in Downtown Mobile (BID) by 25% by 2015.*
 - Research: Document litter situation, identify most trashed places.
 - Research: Consult Regents/Stewards: how much litter do they observe/collect?
 - How many trashcans does Downtown Mobile currently have? Where?

- Analysis: Target priority areas for increased trashcans (parks, pedestrian corridors, restaurants).
- Increase public trashcans on streets in Downtown Mobile by 15% by 2014, 25% by 2015.
- Ensure the additional trash cans will be maintained by City of Mobile and emptied regularly to encourage use of trashcans.
- Research: Examine other cities policies related to trash collection. Consider charging residents and businesses for trash bags or trash cans to make it more expensive to throw away large amounts of waste.

Performance Indicators:

- Trash cans are being maintained and less litter is being found on the streets. Through the measurement of the regents and stewards we will be able to capture the decrease.
- An ordinance is passed that charges residents and businesses for trash bags and/or trash cans.

1a) Increase public awareness of litter problem.

- Research partner communication efforts in educating and raising awareness among the citizens of Mobile related to litter and a clean environment. Pick specific efforts for the committee to support and expand on to achieve mutual goals.
 - Research the traditional advertising efforts of partner organizations related to advertising. (print, radio, TV, and social media) Work together to increase advertising related to a clean environment. Increase advertising sponsorships if needed.
 - Support and promote the CAST (Coastal Alabama Stormwater Team) Clean Water Future Campaign: <http://www.cleanwaterfuture.com/>
 - Support and promote the Alabama Coastal Foundation Bay Buddy Program which addresses litter.
- In 2014, dedicate one month of Art Walk to center on a clean/healthy environment, sustainability/green practices, and the local ecosystem. Work with Downtown galleries to bring the Cleaner, Greener LoDa ArtWalk to life.
- Consider applying for a grant to conduct a social marketing campaign to change the behavior of those who litter and don't recycle. Consider tying the grant into existing campaigns such as CAST.
- Work with the Mobile Film Office and the Mobile Bay Film Scramble group to organize a film contest for students. Elementary students will create a short film centered on the question, "If you were Mayor of Mobile, what would you do to help Mobile be cleaner?" For high school students they will have the theme of the natural Mobile Bay area and the importance of a healthy environment; recycling/litter can be addressed.

Performance Indicators:

- Awareness doesn't always lead to behavior change. If we do experience a decrease in litter, it is probable the awareness is increased. However, it's important to measure awareness itself by conducting surveys. Have people seen/heard advertisements? Did the individuals who attended the themed Art Walk learn new information? The student project in itself increases awareness through the activity.

2) *Increase recycling collection by 15% in Downtown Mobile (BID) by 2015.*

- Research: The DMA will conduct a survey on surveymonkey to poll Downtown businesses and residents to determine the amount of recycling collected.
- Research: Determine which government buildings, if any, collect recycling for pick-up.
- Research: Determine how many recycling bins are currently available in Downtown Mobile.
- Research: Talk with the Downtown Council Representative regarding procuring additional recycling bins in Downtown Mobile.
- Research: Document recycling situation, identify places with the most recycling in trashcans or discarded on the ground.
- Analysis: Target priority areas for increased recycling bins (bars and restaurants, especially with the passage of the entertainment district). Ultimate goal: recycling bins by each trashcan (by each stormdrain in Downtown Mobile).
- Current Efforts: KMB has wire recycle bins in Spanish Plaza, Cathedral Square (there is a Waste Management bin for recycling here), and Bienville Square for aluminum. The homeless collect the cans in the bins and throughout the downtown area.
- Current Efforts: Valerie Longa of the Downtown Mobile Alliance is researching other cities policies for trash collection. The creation of an ordinance that charges businesses/residents for trash cans and/or bags will be considered. Once the ordinance is passed, residents and businesses will be provided options for recycling companies in the area. A pilot program for collecting plastics and paper can be set up and as it is successful, it can be expanded to the entire Business Improvement District.
- The Cleaner Greener Events Partnership will highlight and further promote businesses and restaurants that recycle or use compostable products. This will provide an added incentive for businesses to change.
- Research: Determine how many tons of recyclable materials (of each glass, aluminum, plastics, paper/cardboard) are produced by Downtown Mobile businesses.
- Research: In consultation with recycling services that collect in Downtown Mobile, determine discounted/group rates for neighboring restaurants and businesses that sign-up to recycle.
- Create, distribute, and implement an Event Sustainability Guide that can be used for all types of events held in the Mobile area.

Performance Indicators:

- Companies collecting recyclables will measure and report amounts. We'll be able to see an increase in the amount of recycling as more residents and employees begin to recycle. Once recycling is 100% in the Downtown area we can expect a capacity amount to be reached and even decreased as the population produces less waste due to consciousness of their actions.
- As the Event Sustainability Guide is used by the community, the amount of events in Downtown conducting recycling will increase.

3) *Reduce litter at Bayfest by 25% by 2015.*

- Add a clause in the festival's Vending Agreement to ban the use of Styrofoam. Alternative, work with the Health Dept. to ban Styrofoam.
- Work with BayFest Inc.'s Board of Directors to update the Vending Agreement to include rules that require recyclable and compostable products.
- Implement composting at BayFest by the year 2016.
- Research: Consult with public works the number of trash cans used. Determine strategies for increasing the number of trash cans.
- Increase the number of trash cans and ensure regular collection by Public Works to encourage proper use.

Performance Indicators:

- As vendors switch to compostable/recyclable products, less litter will go into the waste stream. Keep records of these numbers, comments, and experiences to gauge lessons learned and begin a best practices document to aid with strategy for Bayfest 2014.
- Public Works measures trash amounts and will report the amount. We'll be able to see a decrease in litter via their measurements.

3a) *Increase recycling collection at Bayfest by 50% by 2015.*

- Increase the number of Eco-Team volunteers for 2014 and continue to increase based on the need, each year.
- Increase the number of recycle containers for festival attendees to use. Have volunteers stand by each bin to inform festival attendees about recycling.
- Promote recycling and green efforts in BayFest advertising. Work with local media to highlight efforts.
- Volunteers will sweep stage areas at the end of each BayFest night.

Performance Indicators:

- Eco-Team volunteer numbers will be measured and compared each year. Focusing on number of volunteers will reflect an increased level of awareness and education for the general public and for the volunteers as well.
- Green Solutions will measure plastic and aluminum amounts. The amounts will be communicated to the committee and public.

3b) *Receive eco/green award for BayFest.*

- Research options for eco/green awards to apply for.
- Select at least two to apply for and begin planning activities to implement that would qualify BayFest to secure an award. These awards assess all aspects of the event to see green practices are an integrated part of the entire event. Looking at things like transportation, composting, energy efficiency, materials used, etc.
- Once activities are ready to be implemented, apply for the awards.

Performance Indicators:

- The award is the indicator. It demonstrates that (a) Bayfest is an event that cares about its community by its actions, (b) people care about the town they party in, (c) there is a tourism advantage to hosting cleaner, greener (award winning!) events.

4) *Reduce litter at Mardi Gras by 25% by 2015.*

- Work with the City of Mobile to update the Vending Agreement to include rules requiring recyclable and/or compostable products. Add a clause in Mardi Gras Vending Agreement to ban the use of Styrofoam. Alternative, work with the Health Dept. to ban Styrofoam.
- Implement composting at Mardi Gras by the year 2016.
- Research: Consult with public works the number of trash cans used. Determine strategies for increasing the number of trash cans.
- Increase the number of trash cans and ensure regular collection by Public Works to encourage proper use.
- Work with the Mobile Carnival Museum to find a Krewe willing to do a Green Mardi Gras parade in the year 2015 or 2016.

Performance Indicators:

- Trash cans are being maintained and less litter is being found on the streets. Through the measurement of Public Works, regents, and stewards we will be able to capture the decrease.

4a) *Increase recycling collection at Mardi Gras by 15% by 2015.*

- Work with Police Department and Mobile Carnival Museum to have recycle carts included with vendors before parades. During parades, the Eco-Team volunteers will walk the routes to collect plastics and aluminum materials.
- Place recycle bins next to every trash can starting in 2014 and continuing each year.
- Increase the number of Eco-Team volunteers for 2014 and continue to increase based on the need, each year.
- Have volunteers stand by each bin to inform Mardi Gras attendees about recycling.

- Promote recycling and green efforts in advertising. Work with local media to highlight efforts.

Performance Indicators:

- Eco-Team volunteer numbers will be measured and compared each year.
- Green Solutions will measure plastic and aluminum amounts. The amounts will be communicated to the committee and public.

6) *Secure grant funding to achieve the above goals focusing on recycling and green initiatives (transportation, composting, energy efficiency, materials used, etc.)*

- Research grant opportunities that match the proposed efforts of the committee.
- Apply for at least two in 2014, and continue to apply for as many grants as applicable each year.

Performance Indicators:

- Receiving and implementing the grants is the performance indicator.

Timeline:

- **July 2013- Focus on Bayfest**
 - Begin volunteer recruitment for Eco-Team.
 - Work to identify green product alternatives.
 - Begin thinking about processes for Mardi Gras.
- **August 2013- Focus on Bayfest**
 - Continue recruitment.
 - Identify key groups to involve: KMB, MBK, ACF, USA, SHC, etc.
 - Meet with representatives for alternative green products.
 - Make an option for this year, but enforce that policy change will happen for vendors.
 - Start conversations about composting once green products become a possibility.
 - Continue thinking about Mardi Gras.
- **September 2013- Focus on Bayfest**
 - Major outreach campaigning by key groups to recruit desired number of Eco-Team volunteers and fill all shifts.
 - Solidify responsibilities and processes for onsite Eco-Team administrators.
 - Identify number of and who will be an onsite administrators.
 - Have a volunteer cutoff date on Friday, September 20 in order to successfully have T-Shirts created.
 - Solidify alternative product availability for vendors.
 - Try to get a head count of vendors by Friday, September 20 to ensure enough is available on site.
- **October 2013- Focus on MardiGras**

- Run BayFest!
- Develop feasible, low hanging fruit for Mardi Gras 2014. Outreach to krewes and the city to identify easy systemic changes.
 - We have experience on all sides of the barricade, except on the floats. Discuss their experience of Mardi Gras to better identify solutions.
- Begin identifying funders and grants Eco-Team can apply for to use in 2014 events.
- **November 2013- Focus on Mardi Gras**
 - Compare outreach notes and link problems and solutions to grants available and potential funding opportunities.
 - Reach out to recycling companies to see if any will aid in collection at Mardi Gras.
- **December 2013-January 2014 Focus MardiGras**
 - Finalize logistics for Mardi Gras volunteers for 2014
 - Develop outreach materials and strategy for after the holidays.
 - Continue searching for grants and funding opportunities.
- **February 2014-Mardi Gras**
 - Launch Mardi Gras Eco-Team

The calendar will be a living resource that the committee continues to update quarterly. For general actions in the coming years, see below.

2014

- Add a clause in BayFest's vending agreement to ban Styrofoam.
- Additional public trash cans will be placed in the Downtown area.
- An ordinance is presented to the City Council that requires a change in trash collection to incentivize recycling; cost for trash cans and/or bags.
- Dedicate one month of Art Walk to center on a clean/healthy environment, sustainability/green practices, and the local ecosystem.

2015

- Add a clause in the vending agreement during Mardi Gras to ban Styrofoam.
- Add a clause to the City of Mobile's event agreement for public parks (Bienville & Cathedral Squares) to have a recycling plan in place.
- A minimum of one Mardi Gras Krewe will host a Green Mardi Gras parade.
- Apply for BayFest Eco Award.