



## **Toni Harp 2013 Green Economy Position Paper**

Not long ago, New Haven was widely recognized as a major manufacturing and distribution center in the Northeast. Our city led the nation not only in defense manufacturing and scientific research, but also as a regional transportation hub and national headquarters for several major corporations.

New Haven can be an economic leader once again, as a hub for sustainable practices and “green” business innovation. We have a great location, outstanding universities, productive businesses, and a history of community involvement and activism.

By creating incentives for green business, improving the efficiency and sustainability of our public infrastructure, focusing on our food systems, and retooling our public transit, we can build a “green economy” in New Haven that attracts innovators from around the country and creates good-paying jobs for our residents. As Mayor, I will ensure that we work together to make our city more sustainable, address climate change, and create solid, good-paying jobs.

My “green economy” strategy has four parts:

### **1. Reduce traffic congestion and emissions by improving our public transit system.**

The traffic that floods our streets at certain times of the day not only causes stress and diminishes the time we have to spend at work or with family, but also can be dangerous to our residents and our environment. As Mayor, I will work to implement common-sense and cutting-edge solutions that will make commuting in New Haven simpler and safer, and give us more options to travel without getting behind the wheel.

First, I will make our bus system more attractive and reliable by improving its accessibility and efficiency. Given our society’s significant investments in Internet and WiFi technology over the past few decades, we should follow the lead of other major cities to upgrade our bus network’s convenience. I will work with our state and federal governmental partners to convert our bus stops into more substantial structures that provide more shelter and LED screens to highlight upcoming arrivals and schedule changes. These changes will increase ridership, help tourists to get around the city more easily, and increase street activity for local of business owners and restaurateurs.

Second, I will partner with local entities to create greater buy-in for our bus system. Our college students all should have bus passes and, if our businesses provide passes to their employees, everyone will spend less money on parking. Since having more stakeholders in the success of our public bus system will enable it to truly serve all sectors of our community, I will also work to integrate the Yale shuttles into our municipal bus system.

Third, I will improve our ability to get around by biking to or from home, work, or shopping, dining, and recreational activities. Traveling in New Haven needs to be efficient and safe for all our residents – whether or not they drive a car. The best way to reduce congestion and its side effects is to ensure that the alternatives to getting behind the wheel are viable for all New Haven residents and visitors.

By promoting safety, economic activity, and healthier lifestyles, biking bolsters my vision of a more livable city. Specifically, I will work with local environmental groups to reduce speed limits near schools and hospitals. I also will complete and connect bike routes to key business, transportation, and recreational locations around town (e.g., downtown, Union Station, Long Wharf, Lighthouse Park), and introduce improvements such as bike corrals and protected bike lanes in and around neighborhood retail areas.

Finally, I will establish a bike-share program in New Haven and fight to make sure all of our streets are safe for cyclists. Many cities and universities throughout the country have developed public-private partnerships that enable residents to check out and return bicycles throughout the city for a small daily or monthly fee.

## **2. Create a “Green Revolving Loan Fund” to finance improvements in the efficiency and sustainability of city buildings and infrastructure.**

Designing buildings, transportation, and public infrastructure to use less energy not only creates a healthier, more sustainable city – it saves taxpayer money. As Mayor, I will establish a “Green Revolving Loan Fund,” initially supported through grants and donations, to finance energy saving investments in public works and buildings.

This fund will serve a number of different functions in the city’s green economy. First, it will catalyze the establishment and growth of green companies in industries such as energy-efficiency retrofitting.

Second, the savings that these improvements generate will flow back into the fund to finance future efficiency projects, costing taxpayers nothing.

Third, the reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that these projects create will attract investment from firms and institutions seeking to shrink their own carbon footprint. A growing number of companies and universities are seeking to invest in green public projects whose energy savings will help offset their environmental impact. This investment will mean jobs with living wages for residents of the Elm City.

### **3. Transform Long Wharf into a “green energy” mixed-use development.**

Anyone coming to New Haven for the first time immediately recognizes that Long Wharf is our greatest underutilized asset. Cities from Boston to Baltimore have seen the benefits of reconnecting to the shoreline. New Haven began as a community tied to Long Island Sound, and I will re-establish our relationship with Long Island Sound.

I envision transforming Long Wharf into a multipurpose community that integrates port and ferry operations with residential, retail, office, recreational, and hotel space. Models, such as New York City’s Chelsea Piers and South Street Seaport, to Stamford’s Harbor Point, show how to do it. With the completion of I-95’s expansion and renovation in the next few years, now is the time to bring together urban planners, builders, developers, and community organizations to capitalize on this tremendous treasure in an environmentally sensitive manner. This effort will increase our tax base, but more importantly, stimulate the creation of thousands of new jobs.

Finally, as part of a larger effort to position New Haven as a “green” leader, I will make this development part of an integrated plan to make our city a statewide model for renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies. I believe that “greening” our local economy is one of the quickest and surest paths to distinguishing ourselves competitively and promoting economic growth because renewable energy companies create good-paying jobs with long-term career potential: they hire people who come from the communities that they wish to serve, they train people who lack the requisite education or skills, and they often pay well.

### **4. Leverage our city’s competitive advantages to develop “green” jobs and companies.**

To help people to become more self-sufficient, we need to support entrepreneurs and small businesses that can create good-paying jobs with career potential. “Green” companies that assemble and install solar panels and retrofit buildings to make them more energy-efficient offer the modern version of blue-collar jobs – they hire lower-skilled people, including at-risk youth, from underserved communities, offer long-term advancement opportunities, often pay higher-than-average wages, and perform services that are hard to ship out-of-state.

To promote green job development, I will ensure that City contracts encourage sustainable procurement strategies that will stimulate green business at all stages in the supply chain. I will ensure that city government must lead by example in its contracts.

Second, I will ensure that the City’s Office of Economic and Business Development focuses on attracting and growing green businesses through job training, business assistance, and economic development programs that give workers and business owners the tools they need to succeed in the green economy. As Mayor, I will appoint someone in my administration to focus on creating a fertile environment for green start-ups – many

of which will be founded by graduates of the cutting edge programs at universities in our city – and on helping existing businesses to pursue new lines of green development.

Third, I will foster consumer awareness through public outreach campaigns. While city government and business leaders have much work to do to establish New Haven as a green business hub, just as important as a driver of economic growth are the purchasing habits of consumers. By educating residents on the benefits of sustainable consumption and highlighting local green businesses, we can both create a permanent market for green goods and create a hospitable climate for environmentally conscious business owners and residents.

Fourth, I also will look to implement an innovative Florida program called PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) to stimulate our local green economy. PACE is a non-taxpayer-funded, completely voluntary loan program that helps cities to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy and create jobs. Under this program, a city issues municipal bonds to finance energy-improvement loans on the properties of owners who repay those loans through their taxes.

With our set of exceptional universities, our location at the intersection of two interstate highways, and our port and rail hubs, New Haven is positioned to be a great launching point for green business and industry. What we need now are the right policies and leadership to create and stimulate this sector of our economy.