Taking Local Action

Mayors and Climate Protection

Best Practices

June 2009
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DO YOUR PART! PLEASE RECYCLE!
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Q & A with First Place Large City Winner

Denver, CO Mayor John Hickenlooper

FasTracks

Describe your program:

FasTracks is the most ambitious transit initiative in U.S. history, creating an opportunity to connect smart growth, housing choices and expanded transportation options. Voters in the eight-county Denver region approved FasTracks in 2004, authorizing a sales tax to help fund the Regional Transportation District’s 12-year expansion plan that includes 119 miles of light- and commuter rail, 31 park-n-rides, 57 transit stations, expanded bus service, and redevelopment of a downtown multimodal center. This initiative provides the opportunity for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at 51 of the system’s 57 new transit stations. TODs reduce sprawl, and provide pedestrian- and bike-friendly environments that encourage residents to live, work, shop, and play in close proximity to transit thus reducing their carbon footprint.

Why did your city identify the need for this program?

There are 2.6 million people living in the Denver region with another one million expected to move here by 2025. Carbon emissions have historically increased in almost direct proportion to population growth, with roughly a third coming from the transportation sector. Denver recognized the need for infrastructure that would support economic and population growth while protecting the environment and our quality of life.

What where the challenges you faced and overcome to implement it?

The challenge of passing a large transit initiative in an ideologically diverse region was met by bringing together the environmental and businesses communities and all Metro Denver Mayors in a regional bipartisan coalition. Escalating construction costs, inflation, and increasing oil prices present the greatest implementation challenge. While these trends are clearly beyond our control, we are managing them, and FasTracks is being delivered within the same general scope, timeframe and financial capacity approved by voters.

How has the program reduced greenhouse gas emissions in your community?

With three rail corridors completed, ridership reached an average of 62,000 daily passenger trips in the fourth quarter of 2007, compared with 44,240 average trips for the fourth quarter of 2006. In one segment alone there were 36,000 weekday passengers, with 32 percent of these riders never having used alternative transit before the opening if this line. 11,520 new transit trips converted from auto traffic equates to approximately 60,249 less metric tons of carbon dioxide emitted in one year. The average passenger vehicle emits approximately 5.23 metric tons of CO2 (EPA).
How is your program outstanding or innovative?

FasTracks includes an unprecedented concentration of transit-oriented development opportunities. Regionwide, 51 of the 57 new stations will have TOD potential, making this initiative a national model of regional cooperation.

How was the program financed?

FasTracks is a $6.1 billion initiative funded through a combination of sources: • Voter-approved sales tax increase of 0.4 percent = $1.976B (32.4%) • Pay-as-you-go Cash = $1.415B (23.2%) • Federal New Start Grants = $1.262B (20.7%) • Public-Private Partnerships = $0.548B (9.0%) • Certificate of Participation Proceeds = $0.380B (6.2%) • Transportation Infrastructure Finance Loan Proceeds = $0.212B (3.5%) • Other Federal Grants = $0.164B (2.7%) • Local Funding = $0.126B (2.1%) • Additional Funding/Third-Party = $0.030B (0.5%)

How has your program improved the quality of life of your community?

FasTracks is already having an impact by reducing vehicle miles traveled and traffic congestion, leading to cleaner air. Transit riders and highway drivers alike, benefit from reduced commute times and are able to spend more time at work or home. As gasoline prices continue to rise, the transit options represented by FasTracks are becoming increasingly appealing to families seeking to save money at the pump.

Additional Information:

Aside from the FasTracks program, when Denver was selected to host the 2008 Democratic National Convention, Mayor John Hickenlooper publicly challenged the Denver community asking “How do we make this the greenest convention in history?” The City embarked on this project to demonstrate environmental leadership in local Convention planning and operations, and to build an enduring green legacy that would thrive.
Q & A with First Place Small City Winner

Wilkes-Barre, PA Mayor Thomas Leighton

Efficient Energy Service Program

Describe your program:
The City of Wilkes-Barre administration held internal meetings to discuss how the city could become more environmentally friendly and lessen our impact on the climate. Also, as part of these meetings was how to start evaluating various methods to cut overall costs and have the numerous city departments and systems run more efficiently. After review of the operating costs for Wilkes-Barre city hall, police headquarters, 3 Fire stations, Department of public works building, 3 public parking garages, Public Square and all traffic signalization throughout the city, a determination was made to examine how these costs could be reduced. The city publicly advertised for and then hired an Energy Services Contracting Organization (ESCO) for the purpose of providing a performance-based energy/operating reduction program under the guideline of the Pennsylvania Guaranteed Energy Saving Act. The energy improvements included new compact fluorescent lamps, in a variety of sizes, for all of the above mentioned buildings. Also, the overhead lighting in the public parking garages and on Public Square was replaced with Lowbay Pyramid style lighting. Additionally, all traffic signalization lamps were replaced LED lamps throughout the city. Lastly, a new HVAC system was installed in Wilkes-Barre city hall replacing an old boiler steam heating system and individual window mounted air conditioner units.

Why did your city identify the need for this program?
The need for the city’s efficient energy service program was two-fold. First, the Mayor and the city administration had set a goal to make the City of Wilkes-Barre a more eco-friendly place. Therefore, the city advertised for and then hired, a third party, Energy Services Contracting Organization (ESCO) to provide a performance-based energy/operating reduction program under the guideline of the Pennsylvania Guaranteed Energy Saving Act. The ESCO conducted site visits, preliminary engineering analyses and evaluations of the city’s existing energy systems. Then, the ESCO was tasked with improving the city’s existing energy systems with a more eco-friendly approach. The second need for this program was to identify the substantial cost savings the city would receive on its operating expenses by switching to a more climate friendly system.

What where the challenges you faced and overcame to implement it?
The greatest challenge was the conversion of the Wilkes-Barre city hall building, which was built between 1893-1894, to accommodate a new HVAC system which took approximately 6 months to install. The existing heating system was an old boiler steam system for the winter months and individual window mounted air conditioner units for the summer months. Wilkes-Barre city hall is listed as a historic building in the Luzerne County directory and is eligible to be named on the Pennsylvania historic preservation building list. City hall is a 4 story brick structure and many of interior/exterior walls and flooring are between 1-3 feet thick. Therefore, cutting through the walls and floors in order to run the HVAC duct work throughout the building was extremely time consuming, dusty and loud. To complicate matters, some of HVAC engineering/design plans needed to be altered after construction was started because the blueprint drawings of city hall were not accurate due to the age of the building.
How has the program reduced greenhouse gas emissions in your community?

The City of Wilkes-Barre has directly and indirectly reduced greenhouse gas emissions through our program. The installation of the new HVAC in city hall has resulted in less direct pollutant entering the environment compared to our previous steam boiler heating system. Indirectly, the city has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by purchasing new compact fluorescent lamps for all city buildings, buying Lowbay Pyramid style lighting for public parking garages and replacing old traffic signalization lamps with LED lamps.

How is your program outstanding or innovative?

One of the innovative features of the city’s efficient energy service program was the trial use of Lowbay Pyramid style lighting in our 3 public parking garages. These lights illuminate brighter, the bulbs last longer, virtually are maintenance free and their power consumption is minimal compared to standard lighting of this nature. The Lowbay Pyramid lighting has been so successful for the City of Wilkes-Barre, other municipalities who are considering changing their parking garage lighting, have contacted us for information and we have even given tours of our parking garages. Some other interesting features about are efficient energy service program are as follows: Energy conservation and/or operating cost reduction, facility modernization and technology utilization improvements, occupancy comfort improvements, and preventative maintenance improvements.

How was the program financed?

This project was 100% financed through a 15 year bank loan to the City of Wilkes-Barre. Many municipalities are unwilling to borrow money for energy efficient improvement projects because of the risk to find the revenue to repay the loan. The City of Wilkes-Barre working with our contracted Energy Services Contracting Organization (ESCO) were able to project out the cost savings related to the city’s efficient energy service program in order to determine feasibility. Not surprisingly, after 15 years the annual energy saving to the City of Wilkes-Barre will be able to pay off the original loan amount plus interest in full for this project.

How has your program improved the quality of life of your community?

The quality of life for all people who work or visit the following Wilkes-Barre locations has improved due to city’s efficient energy service program throughout the city. The City of Wilkes-Barre was a community that was thriving during the early 1900’s anthracite period in history. Many residents’ great grandparents, grandparents and relatives were coal miners and made a comfortable living during the era when “coal was king”. Those days are long gone and the City of Wilkes-Barre has struggled to regain its economic stability. Fortunately, during the past 10 years there has tremendous community revitalization and economic growth in the City of Wilkes-Barre. The city believes by taking on important public projects, such as our efficient energy service program, it can be the catalyst to encourage other businesses and communities to do the same.
Large City Best Practice Models

Population Over 100,000

Boston, MA Mayor Thomas M. Menino
Charleston, SC Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
Chattanooga, TN Mayor Ron Littlefield
Colorado Springs, CO Mayor Lionel Rivera
Frisco, TX Maher Maso
Honolulu, HI Mayor Mufi Hannemann
Houston, TX Mayor Mayor Bill White
Louisville, KY Mayor Jerry Abramson
San Francisco, CA Mayor Gavin Newsom
Seattle, WA Mayor Greg Nickels
Stamford, CT Mayor Dannel P. Malloy
Tallahassee, FL Mayor John Marks
Boston, MA Mayor Thomas M. Menino

Local Solar Energy Program

In April 2008, Mayor Thomas M. Menino announced Solar Boston, a two-year initiative to promote solar energy throughout Boston to achieve his goal of 25 megawatts of solar energy in Boston by 2015. Solar Boston is a part of the Solar America Initiative, a campaign launched by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Solar Boston is focusing on mapping, marketing, and procuring solar energy systems citywide. Boston is using GIS server technology to map current solar installations, track progress towards the Mayor’s goal, and allow Bostonians to analyze their rooftop solar energy potential. For more information, visit: Solar Boston GIS Map: http://gis.cityofboston.gov/solarboston/#

Charleston, SC Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.

Comprehensive Building Energy & Water Efficiency Plan

Since Charleston’s Mayor, Joseph R. Riley, Jr., became one of the first mayors to sign The U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement, the City has moved aggressively toward achieving reduction goals, especially by implementing a comprehensive building energy and water efficiency plan. Perhaps the most significant part of their efforts involve engaging and training a diverse workforce to provide “green collar” jobs that will lead the City into a sustainable future.

Chattanooga, TN Mayor Ron Littlefield

Establishing a Local Climate Action Plan

In 2006 Mayor Littlefield signed The U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. In April 2008, over 500 citizens gathered to answer the question “what will make Chattanooga a more ‘green’, sustainable community?” Ten months later, Chattanooga’s Climate Action Plan was formally adopted by the City Council, setting this community on its way to the next phase: turning the Plan and its 47 recommendations into a reality.
Colorado Springs, CO Mayor Lionel Rivera

Greenback Education Campaign

In 2007, Colorado Springs Utilities launched their Get the Greenback education campaign and new portal Web site, www.getthegreenback.net. The meaning of the campaign slogan allows for direct communication about saving money while protecting the environment. Goals include: 1) increasing the level of understanding of Springs Utilities’ role in protecting the environment; 2) more effectively communicate energy and water conservation information to their customers; and 3) meet consumption savings goals for water and energy services. Messages were placed in local news stories and paid media was used to reinforce these messages, using print, electronic and non-traditional media. Point-of-purchase displays at large big-box retailers, major building-supply retailers, local garden center, nurseries and supply yards informed their customers about energy and water conservation and efficiency rebates.

Frisco, TX Maher Maso

Updating Residential Green Building Program

In May 2001, Frisco became the first city in the United States to adopt a mandatory Residential Green Building Program. After more than five years of experience, the City decided to update and improve the Program. The revised program is enforced for all homes receiving a building permit on, or after, July 1, 2007. The Green Building Program focuses on several areas including: waste reduction, pollution reduction, water conservation, energy conservation, and sustainable development. Frisco’s Residential Green Building Program standards include: • EPA’s ENERGY STAR Program as the minimum standard • Test every home • Programmable thermostats on every story • Return air paths where pressurization occurs • HVAC joints sealed with duct mastic • Screened air intakes located under soffits away from roofing materials • Supply & return side plenums constructed of sheet metal and insulated and • Carpet & Rug Institute Green Label carpets, cushions, and adhesives.

Honolulu, HI Mayor Mufi Hannemann

Sustainable Actions tied to Local Culture

The 21st Century Ahupua’a is their “umbrella” brand for the city’s sustainability and climate protection effort. By incorporating the Hawaiian cultural perspective they are able to reach a much larger and more receptive audience for this important message. “Ahupua’a” is the term Hawaiians gave to their sustainable resource management system that enabled them to live in balance with their environment for over 1,800 years. They’ve taken actions to benefit from the wisdom of their Polynesian ancestors, combined with the technological innovations of today, to make their island home sustainable and self-sufficient for future generations. The city’s 21st Century Ahupua’a has accomplished several major milestones: 1. Establishment of a Multi-departmental task force to set sustainability goals, conduct research and direct pilot projects. 2. Drafted the city’s first formal sustainability plan. 3. Establish greenhouse gas inventory processes for city operations. 4. Authored public awareness programs and established private sector and University partnerships to further sustainability and climate protection practices.
Houston, TX Mayor Mayor Bill White

Comprehensive Renewable Energy Program

The Comprehensive Renewable Energy Program gives the City of Houston the contractual ability to bring in up to 80 megawatts, or 700,800,000 kilowatt-hours, of renewable power, which represents 50% of the City’s total power. The design of the contract includes a negotiated structure that comprises third party wholesalers, Reliant Energy, the Government Land Office, and City of Houston to transact long-term wind power. The strategy is to purchase wind power in 10-megawatt increments for 5-year terms at competitive prices. Currently the City has purchased 30-megawatts, and was recognized by the EPA as Green Power leader, ranking second in the nation in the amount of renewable energy purchased among municipal governments.

Louisville, KY Mayor Jerry Abramson

Challenge to Engage Commercial Building Owners in Energy Efficiency Improvements

The Louisville Kilowatt Crackdown is a challenge to engage commercial building owners and managers in energy efficiency improvements through a year-long competition featuring ENERGY STAR tools and resources. It is the signature initiative in Mayor Jerry Abramson’s Public-Private Partnership to promote energy efficiency and ENERGY STAR, and a key tool for reaching a goal of The U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Benefits to participants include increased energy efficiency; reduced or controlled operating costs; reduced greenhouse gas emissions; demonstrated commitment to sustainability; and community recognition through promotion of participants by Louisville Metro Government and the Louisville Energy Alliance (LEA). The major benefit to the community is a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions generated by commercial buildings, which represent a significant portion of Louisville’s emissions. Participants benchmarked their buildings’ 2008 energy use in ENERGY STAR’s Portfolio Manager online software tool.

San Francisco, CA Mayor Gavin Newsom

Recycling Restaurant Grease into Fuel Source

“SFGreasecycle” is a citywide program that recycles restaurant grease into a fuel source for San Francisco’s entire 1,500 city-owned buses and trucks that use diesel fuel. Their municipal utility collects grease waste from restaurants for free, which is then processed into biodiesel fuel by a third party. This organic content is mixed with convention diesel fuel to create a B-20 biodiesel blend (20% organic content) used by their city fleet. In the first three months since the launch of SF Greasecycle in November 2007, restaurants have allowed for pick-up of over 30,000 gallons of waste cooking oil, displacing the equivalent amount of conventional diesel. Based on EPA calculations, this action equates to diverting 665,000 pounds of carbon dioxide from their climate in just three months. In just three months, they have partnered with over 250 restaurants to redirect used cooking oil into their biofuel program with a projected volume of 50,000 gallons/mo by 2009. This annual volume equates to 13.3 million pounds of carbon dioxide diverted from the skies each year.
Seattle, WA Mayor Greg Nickels

Agreement with Seattle-Area Employers to Assess Carbon Footprint

The Seattle Climate Partnership is a voluntary agreement among Seattle-area employers to assess and reduce their carbon footprint, and to work together to help meet community-wide goals for reducing climate pollution. http://www.seattle.gov/climate/partnership.htm The Partnership’s 12 Founding Partners govern the Partnership, guide the development of tools and services, and plan for the future of the program. There are now 60 organizations participating in the program, representing sectors including health care, financial, engineering, industrial/manufacturing, development, and education. These organizations have committed to: 1) assess and reduce their carbon footprint, 2) consider the strategic impacts of climate change on their organization, and 3) help forward the community reduction goal (7% below 1990), and support the Partnership. In 2008, the Partnership has launched a recruitment effort aimed at the largest employers and fleet owners/shippers, will expand its technical assistance program, develop a strategy to assist partners in reducing emissions related to fleets (owned and contracted) and fuels, and create a networking and recognition program.

Stamford, CT Mayor Dannel P. Malloy

City Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In 2003, the City of Stamford prepared the “Local Action Plan: Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions” with the assistance of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability. The City set an emissions reduction target of 20% below the 1998 emission level, the year chosen as the baseline. The target year is 2018. The municipal measures chosen for emissions reduction include: energy performance contracts with schools, a solar energy system at the recycling center, LED traffic lights, and renovation of streetlights with energy efficient fixtures. The community measures chosen for emissions reduction include: Stamford Urban Transitway, construction of multi-use trails, and promotion of transit oriented development.

Tallahassee, FL Mayor John Marks

Downtown Commercial Recycling Pilot Program

The City of Tallahassee was presented with an opportunity to develop a downtown commercial recycling pilot program for businesses with limited space for recycling containers. A partnership was formed between the Chamber of Commerce and the City to develop the pilot commercial recycling program. The program’s goal: Encourage downtown businesses to recycle with the added incentive of potential reductions in their garbage collection fees.
Small City Best Practice Models

Population Under 100,000

Carmel, IN Mayor James Brainard
Chapel Hill, NC Mayor Kevin C. Foy
Columbia, MO Mayor Darwin Hindman
Highland Park, IL Mayor Michael Belsky
Manhattan Beach, CA Mayor Portia P. Cohen
North Miami Beach, FL Mayor Kevin Burns
Pleasanton, CA Mayor Jennifer Hosterman
Carmel, IN Mayor James Brainard

**Walkable Community**

Mayor Jim Brainard has placed great emphasis on reducing dependence on the automobile by incorporating traditional neighborhood planning principles in order to make Carmel a more “walkable community.” New developments in Carmel are asked to implement these pedestrian-friendly design practices by increasing residential density, improving connectivity with the addition of sidewalks and paths, and building close to the street, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Chapel Hill, NC Mayor Kevin C. Foy

**Green Skills-to-Service Youth Program**

The Mayor’s Youth for a Sustainable Future Initiative is a “Green” skills-to-service program that aims to provide the youth of Chapel Hill with knowledge and skills to address the economic, environmental and social changes facing their community. The program provides local high school students with the opportunity to engage with professionals in the new “green” economy to learn the necessary skills that will enable them to design and implement their own community service project to improve environmental protection in the local community.

Columbia, MO Mayor Darwin Hindman

**Recycling Model: Trash to Electricity**

Columbia, Missouri’s landfill has received 2.8 million tons of trash since it opened in 1986. Biogas, or landfill gas, is created when waste decomposes. Columbia’s landfill now generates sufficient quantities of gas to make it feasible to produce electricity. On December 18, 2007, Columbia dedicated the Biogas Energy Plant at the City’s landfill. Thanks to the biogas plant, the trash citizens leave at the curb can now be returned to them in the form of electricity, completing the recycling loop.

Highland Park, IL Mayor Michael Belsky

**Green Initiatives Alliance: Community-Wide Sustainability Projects**

The Highland Park Green Initiatives Alliance is a collaboration of the six governmental agencies within the geographic borders of the City of Highland Park, Illinois that have joined together in a commitment to working collectively to accomplish goals of sustainability. The members of the Alliance are the Park District of Highland Park; two school districts; the Highland Park Library; Moraine Township; the business community; and members of the community who are interested in green initiatives. The Alliance has met regularly since October 2007 and is used to develop and implement community-wide sustainability projects.
Manhattan Beach, CA Mayor Portia P. Cohen

Community Engagement: Citizens Environmental Task Force

The City of Manhattan Beach has a long history of proactive environmental action by community groups and the local government. However, in the past two years the community has expressed a renewed interest in environmental initiatives and taken great strides to become the “greenest” City possible. One outcome has been the formation of a citizens’ Environmental Task Force. The City government and community have come together to take on some of the most challenging environmental problems of our time. The idea for the Task Force was generated through the City’s 2007 Green Report. This report is a comprehensive assessment of current environmentally friendly City programs and a list of best practices, programs and policies for future consideration (available at www.citymb.info). The Mayor and City Council recognized that in order to make significant “green” progress, they need to involve and engage the community. To that end, the City Council appointed a 19-member citizens’ Environmental Task Force to advise Council on environmental policies and programs.

North Miami Beach, FL Mayor Kevin Burns

Green Housing Rehabilitation Guidelines

Recognizing that federal and state housing programs provide a unique opportunity to promote education and outreach on actions to address the problem of climate change, the Mayor initiated the adoption of the City’s Green Housing Rehabilitation Guidelines, the first in the State of Florida. The Guidelines require that one hundred percent (100%) of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Ownership Opportunities Program (HOME) funds and Florida’s State Housing Initiatives Program (SHIP) funds must be used for rehabilitation, redevelopment and construction projects that contributes to the “greening” of the City. Specifically, the guidelines require that all funds spent in these programs be used in a sustainable manner to promote energy efficiency. Incandescent bulbs must be replaced with Energy Star florescent bulbs, for example, and only “green” products may be used.

Pleasanton, CA Mayor Jennifer Hosterman

Solar Cities Project: Energy Providers Educating the Public on Energy Efficient Systems

The Cities of Pleasanton, Livermore and Dublin formed a partnership to bring the sun to their communities. This joint venture, known as “Solar Cities”, included Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) as educating the public on the benefits of solar energy was key to the informational workshops. The workshops explained the various incentive and rebate programs available. Residents had the opportunity to meet with 10 – 15 solar installers in an informal setting. The Project created a website with essential information related to a homeowner’s decision to invest in a photovoltaic system, and provided links to solar calculators and background information on solar installers.