



## **MOVING FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION: GETTING CITIES TO PUT GLOBAL WARMING SOLUTIONS TO WORK**

The Cool Cities campaign is focused on getting communities around the country to make commitments to curb global warming and then follow through by putting smart energy solutions to work to meet these goals.

Getting a city to sign the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement is an important first step in the campaign. However, making this commitment is just the beginning to becoming a Cool City. This fact sheet is intended to help local Cool Cities campaigns get their communities to take the next steps.

While each city's path will be unique, there are general steps that any Cool Cities campaign can follow to move a city in the right direction. The following three steps provide a general outline for how to move your city from a commitment to reduce global warming emissions to actually adopting a comprehensive plan to reach its goal.

### **✓ GETTING STARTED**

Once a city has signed the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement, it is important to recognize the steps that the city has already taken to lower global warming emissions, and propose easy first steps that the city can take to cut energy use, lower energy bills, and curb global warming emissions.

#### **STEP 1: IDENTIFY POLICIES THAT THE CITY HAS ALREADY ADOPTED**

When many cities decide to make an effort to reduce global warming emissions, they often find that the city has already adopted some policies that reduce global warming emissions and save taxpayer dollars through reduced energy use. For instance, the city may already have purchased some hybrid vehicles for the city fleet or installed energy-efficient lighting in a city building.

#### **STEP 2: IDENTIFY & RECOMMEND INITIAL ACTION ITEMS**

There are a range of policies that can be adopted by the city as initial action items. These "low hanging fruit" represent easy to achieve policies that have clear cost savings to the city in addition to global warming benefits. In general, initial action items involve city buildings and operations.

For instance, cities can move forward by installing energy efficient lighting in city buildings, installing LED lights in traffic signals, purchasing hybrids and other fuel efficient vehicles to replace outdated fleet vehicles, implementing anti-idling policies for city fleet vehicles, and having a policy to purchase energy-efficient electronics and appliances that have the federal

government's Energy Star label . By focusing on steps that the city can take in its own operations, you will demonstrate to city officials that reducing global warming emissions is relatively easy and cost-effective. These initial successes will help build enthusiasm and support for future decisions to adopt more far-reaching policies to reduce emissions.

### ✓ **PREPARE A CITYWIDE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS INVENTORY**

The next step is to get the city to conduct a city wide greenhouse gas emissions inventory. Getting your city to undertake a greenhouse gas emissions inventory is an excellent way to deepen the city's commitment to meeting the goals of the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement because it forces the city to identify the source and quantity of its emissions as well as the likely areas where emissions can be reduced.

### **STEP 1: GET YOUR CITY TO BECOME A MEMBER OF ICLEI OR STAPPA/ALAPCO**

The Sierra Club does not currently have the technical resources to conduct a greenhouse gas emissions inventory for individual cities. As a result, a local Cool Cities campaign will need to get the city government to access those resources from other organizations. One organization that we recommend is the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), which provides technical assistance and support for local governments in the implementation of sustainable development – <http://www.iclei.org/us>. Due to staff limitations, the Sierra Club has a standing agreement with ICLEI that Sierra Club representatives will not contact them directly, but rather that we will encourage city governments to contact ICLEI directly. ICLEI does require cities to pay a relatively inexpensive membership fee. Information on how to become a member of ICLEI is available online, including membership fees, at – <http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=422>

In addition to ICLEI, the State and Territorial Air Pollution Program Administrators and the Association of Local Air Pollution Control Officials (STAPPA/ALAPCO), promotes communication between local, state, and federal agencies in the efficient management of air resources - <http://www.4cleanair.org/>. STAPPA/ALAPCO provides assistance in some instances to help cities conduct a greenhouse gas emissions inventory.

### **STEP 2: CITY OFFICIALS SHOULD DOWNLOAD THE ICLEI AND STAPPA/ALAPCO SUPPORTED CLEAN AIR AND CLIMATE PROTECTION SOFTWARE (CACP)**

CACP software helps cities compute their baseline carbon emission rates and organize the data needed to create a Greenhouse Gas Inventory and, consequently, a Local Action Plan. ICLEI and STAPPA/ALAPCO will work with city officials as they learn to navigate this program. See - [www.cacpsoftware.org](http://www.cacpsoftware.org) - for more information on this software product

### ✓ **CREATE A LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION PLAN**

In order to insure that the city maintains its commitment to reducing global warming emissions over the long-term, it is critical that the city create an action plan that lays out concrete steps and policies that will result in sufficient greenhouse gas reductions to meet the goals laid out in the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement. Creating an action plan also allows for consistent planning and continuity when a new mayor takes office.

## **STEP 1: FORM A CITY COMMISSION TO DEVELOP THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN**

Establishing a city commission tasked with developing a climate action plan is the best way to build support from city officials and the public. Creating an official commission also lends legitimacy to the process and makes it easier to hold the city accountable to its commitment in the future. A commission should be comprised of representatives from relevant city agencies as well as stakeholders from the community. For instance the commission could be comprised of city officials from the city environmental agency, fleet management, city operations, and other relevant departments. In addition, the commission should include a local Sierra Club leader, representatives from the business, faith, labor, health, and academic communities and other organizations from the local Cool Cities coalition.

Once convened, the commission should meet regularly to develop the proposed climate action plan for the community. At the beginning of the process, a firm deadline should be set for publishing and publicizing the plan. This ensures that the commission's work results in the release of an actual climate action plan and that the process does not get sidelined. The commission's final report should provide specific policies for the city to adopt that will meet the city's global warming emissions reduction goals in the most cost-effective manner.

For guidance, here are links to climate action plans that have been adopted by communities around the country.

Seattle: <http://www.seattle.gov/climate/report.htm>

Keene, NH: <http://www.ci.keene.nh.us/planning/climateprotection.htm>

Fort Collins, CO: <http://fcgov.com/airquality/lap.php>

Austin: <http://www.austinenergy.com/About%20Us/Newsroom/Reports/strategicPlan.pdf>

Charleston, SC: [http://www.cofc.edu/ghgas/Charleston\\_SC\\_%20LAP.pdf](http://www.cofc.edu/ghgas/Charleston_SC_%20LAP.pdf)

Los Angeles, CA: <http://www.lacity.org/ead/EADWeb-AQD/ClimateActionPlan.pdf>

Portland, OR: <http://egov.oregon.gov/ENERGY/GBLWRM/Strategy.shtml>

San Francisco, CA: [http://sfwater.org/detail.cfm/C\\_ID/2137](http://sfwater.org/detail.cfm/C_ID/2137)

Somerville, MA: <http://massclimateaction.org/pdf/MedfordPlan2001.pdf>

San Diego: [http://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/sustainable/pdf/climate\\_prot\\_05.pdf](http://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/sustainable/pdf/climate_prot_05.pdf)

King County, WA: <http://www.metrokc.gov/globalwarming/>

Sonoma County, CA: <http://www.climateprotectioncampaign.org/sonomaccp/2002accomplishments.php>

## **STEP 2: PROMOTE THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN AND REPORT ON ITS PROGRESS**

Once the climate action plan is finalized, it is important that it become public. Holding a press conference with the mayor and the commission is an excellent way to generate local media coverage. Publicizing the plan will not only help solidify the city's commitment, it will also help educate citizens about the opportunities that they can take to reducing global warming emissions in their own lives.

Finally, it is critical that the climate action plan include regular reporting requirements. The climate action plan should require that a relevant city department be responsible for tracking the city's performance to carry out its plan. These regular reports (either annual or more often as needed) should detail the progress the city has made in implementing the policy recommendations, the global warming emissions that have been reduced, the energy and cost savings realized, and the progress made towards reaching the city's global warming emissions reduction targets.