

# Right Here, Right Now



Getting Local Energy, Climate or Sustainability Initiatives Started  
Pinecrest "Going Green" Workshop, January 29, 2010  
Presented by: Cyrus Bhedwar, Southeast Regional Manager

Good afternoon, my name is Cyrus Bhedwar and I am the Southeast Regional Manager for ICLEI USA. I want to start by thanking Mayor Lerner and Yocelyn Galiano-Gomez for their kind invitation to be here today. I'm excited that Pinecrest is among the newest members of the ICLEI network, joining an incredibly strong community here in south Florida.

I also want to commend you for being here today. Your participation today is a strong signal. You're committed to seeking the best for your communities and you're interested in learning more about the topic of sustainability and what it might mean for your community.

You've already heard from Mayor Lerner about the aspirations of a small community and Susannah Tronner about Dade County's leadership in the area of sustainability. Hopefully that's whet your appetite to get started on a sustainability program of your own.

I'm going to spend a few minutes talking about why there's a growing interest in local sustainability and what you can do if you decide this issue is important to your community.

## Across the country, communities are facing increasing pressures



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The southeast has been and remains attractive to individuals, families and businesses seeking a high quality of life.

However as the population in this part of the country grows, so do the demands on our natural and built infrastructure as well as on local government services.

Growing mountains of waste become more expensive to transport and difficult to manage.

Emissions from the power production needed to serve our homes and businesses result in health effects that impact our most vulnerable – our children and our elderly.

Traffic congestion reflects our dependence on fossil fuel resources that are burdened with environmental, economic and political costs.

These are just some of the consequences of our current mode of living that may not have been foreseen when we adopted these practices but have emerged and can pose undesirable risks to our communities.

## Local governments are once again in the spotlight



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For twenty years ICLEI has been working with local governments committed to creating prosperity that does not sacrifice human or environmental health.

For too long however, many viewed local governments as part of the problem or as too small to make a meaningful impact on issues such as climate change or sustainability.

Thanks to the persistence and commitment of hundreds of local government pioneers, that view has changed. This decade heralds the greatest recognition of urban centers as economic engines, as problem solving institutions and as dynamic laboratories of innovation that we've seen in a generation.

From improving education outcomes to battling obesity to creating next generation jobs today, families, employers and others are looking to local governments to tackle the challenges we face in the twenty first century.

## You're interested in "going green" but don't know where to start



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Even when you isolate sustainability from all the other issues that you face on a daily basis, it can be an overwhelming issue to wrap your head around. Sustainability means many things to different people. Land use and energy efficiency, water resources and quality, wildlife protection and renewable energy, transportation, livability, public health, air quality – the list of possible areas of interest goes on and on.

And if you're like many other ICLEI members, your residents, businesses and community organizations are likely approaching you with a broad array of ideas, suggestions and requests.

"Provide incentives and we'll create green jobs," an entrepreneur tells you.

"Create a mandate so developers have to do it this way," an activist suggests.

"Don't change the way we do things around here too much," a long time resident requests.

You want a healthy, vibrant,  
community with a high quality of life



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So how do you make the best decisions for your community? How do you sort through the deluge of information and opportunities and invest where it makes sense while avoiding commitments that don't fit with your community? How do you nurture small businesses while protecting a first grader's lungs? How do you integrate transportation alternatives with existing infrastructure? How do you know the difference between preservation that creates prosperity and preservation that entrenches business as usual.

In the best of times, it would be reasonable to shrink from such a vast and complex a challenge. Add to it the most significant economic recession in decades and it would be understandable if you closed your eyes, braced yourself and simply hung on till this passes.

You haven't done that. You're here.

But you have questions. And you're looking for answers.

## Learn from the largest network of local governments that are “going green”



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ICLEI USA is the oldest and largest network of local governments committed to improving their communities' quality of life through concrete actions that save money, create jobs, support human health and respect our natural resources.

As I'll show you later ICLEI members are leading the way in a variety of ways. From recycling to green building to managing development, ICLEI members like Oak Ridge, TN, Epping NH and Fairview TX have created local solutions that work for their communities.

ICLEI is a membership association created in 1990 by more than 200 local governments from around the world to build, serve and drive a network that currently numbers over 620 cities and counties in the United States.

ICLEI's true strength lies in the power of its network. Local governments innovate, collaborate and share with one another the solutions that work, as well the lessons from initiatives that did not succeed. As a network facilitator, ICLEI captures these stories and distills them into guidance and technical assistance designed to help these members set and achieve meaningful goals in the areas of climate protection and sustainability. We spread best practices faster than they would normally, we help separate the wheat from the chaff and we're constantly on the look out for the next generation of sustainability innovations to help accelerate our members' efforts.

## Start with where you are and what you've got



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I've been asked to speak to you today about how to get a sustainability effort started in your community. For the purposes of today's presentation I'm going to refer to "sustainability" as a catch-all term for a variety of programs including energy efficiency, climate protection and similar types of environmental programs.

I'll also focus primarily on internal government operations as this is where many of our members begin. Ultimately you'll engage the broader community since that's where most of the impact can be made.

So where do you start?

From our work with hundreds of local governments over the years we've learned that if you've expressed interest by attending a forum like this, you probably have all the ingredients you need to start a sustainability program.

"Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good." I'm sure you've all heard that hat mantra before. Well, it applies to getting started in sustainability. With that, let's take a look at getting started from where you already are.



## Take stock of what you are already doing



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“We been doing a lot of this stuff already, we just haven’t called it sustainability.”

“We’ve been at this for years.”

“We were green before green was cool.”

These are some of the most common things I hear during our new member welcome calls.

At ICLEI we know that local governments have been, and continue to be, leaders in sustainability. In most cases, local governments have made commitments and achievements that have not been matched at the state and national level. If you’re interested in learning more, I’d encourage you to take a look at our recently released annual report, *Measuring Up*.

A great way to get a sustainability program started is to conduct a inventory of all of your community’s activities, programs and policies that fall under the broad umbrella of sustainability.

Start with what you as a local government are doing. Engage department heads and their staff. Get them to share their efforts. Either they’ll be surprised at what they know or they’ll be grateful for the opportunity to finally talk about their work.

This effort can be both incredibly motivating and rewarding as it brings together in a coherent and understandable manner your sustainability efforts and can be used as a launching pad to demonstrate your local government’s leadership by example when you begin to engage your community.



## Coordinate your efforts for maximum impact



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Once you have a basic understanding of the variety of measures, programs and policies already underway, build upon those efforts by more consistently and regularly coordinating your efforts.

Start simply, by having key decision makers meet regularly to update one another on their activities. This helps:

- 1) Share best practices and problems solve more quickly
- 2) Ensure that one department's efforts aren't being undone by another
- 3) Generate new and more ambitious ideas about what can be accomplished

This communication will establish a strong foundation upon which a formal sustainability division or program can be later built.

It often helps to have a high level administration official chair the group to ensure participation, accountability and to address any issues that may arise, but this could also be done in the context of a high level staff meeting such as a cabinet meeting.

Seek recognition and celebrate  
success



Local Governments



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If you need help understanding what it means to be sustainable, look for awards and recognition programs that require you to submit an application describing what you've accomplished.

Through this process you'll really dig into your community's existing efforts and gain a much clearer understanding of where you stand. You may even be able to compare yourself with peers that have participated in the same program.

If you've truly achieved a significant amount of progress, complete and submit the application. If you're just getting started, you can use the application to help clarify the areas in which you might wish to focus.

In fact, while we're talking about it...

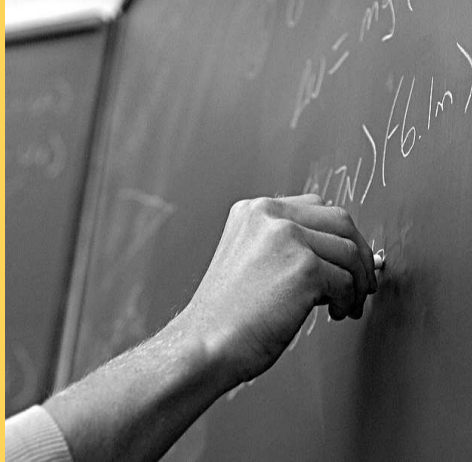


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I'm pleased today to take this opportunity to recognize the City of Key West for successfully completing the first three of ICLEI's Five Milestones. Since joining ICLEI, Key West has conducted both a local government operations and a community wide greenhouse gas inventory, established a reduction target and created a climate action plan that includes measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as to respond to the impacts this vulnerable part of the state is already experiencing.

In particular I'd like to recognize Annalise Mannix for her tireless efforts to drive change in her community. She's among the most dedicated of ICLEI members and a wealth of information about the impacts climate change is having on her community.

## Educate decision makers and community stakeholders



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A second key approach we've seen work well is simply to get more informed about the subjects you're interested in addressing. Education serves a variety of purposes that are particularly important when you're just starting out.

First, it enables individuals and organizations with diverse backgrounds to develop a shared understanding of the subjects with which they're dealing.

Second, educational opportunities serve as community engagement, both by attracting audience members and showcasing experts.

Third, the process of education generates informed ideas that you will later draw upon during the action planning process.

## Engage experts to paint a picture for your community



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More likely than not, and particularly in this part of the country, there are local or regional experts on a variety of topics related to sustainability. From experts at local universities and state agencies to businesspeople and non-profits, there are an increasing number of individuals who can shed some light on these subjects.

Invite these speakers to council meetings or congregations; collaborate with a community organization to put together a few seminars; hold a brown bag lunch for city or county employees. All of these forums enable a focused opportunity to engage in conversation and build a shared understanding of the conditions your particular community faces.

Within the ICLEI network we of course are happy to recommend your peers who have a strong record of achievement behind them. In fact during this week's ICLEI Florida state network call, we heard about Broward County's initiative to share its experience developing their greenhouse gas inventories with all the cities within its borders. South Florida is demonstrating it possesses an enthusiastic spirit of cooperation and collaboration within the Southeast.

## Convene an event to spark interest and raise awareness



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Just like applying to an awards program is a way to really focus your attention on your current sustainability efforts, planning and hosting an event is a means to force you to clarify what you're interested in. The deliberate act of designing an agenda or organizing an event causes you to ask specific questions and engage with individuals and organizations working on these issues in your community.

Today's event is a great example of addressing two sectors within the community – government officials and residents. Green fairs, film screenings and trade shows are other examples.

Greening an existing event is a powerful way to leverage what's already going on in your community and get people talking about the issues. It can be relatively easy to talk about sustainability; to ensure that there are recycling and composting bins, environmentally friendly or local products at your next event is a potent way to communicate your commitment to sustainability. The key is to be extremely transparent and explain what you're doing and why.

## Gather public input to inform decisions and maximize support



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Gathering public input about what your community should actually implement comes a little later in the process according to the way ICLEI works with its members but I put it here because I've learned that this part of the process can seem daunting to local government officials before they try it.

I've been asked the question, "how do we know what we should put in our action plan?" "where do we get ideas?" As a veteran of a statewide public input process for Georgia's energy plan, and after having watched many local governments go through the process, I assure you, there are no shortage of ideas out there. About this time last year I attended my first community input forum for our member city Oak Ridge, Tennessee, a town of 27,000. In less than four hours, the participants generated over five hundred ideas in several categories that constituted the basis for their climate action plan.

The process of gathering public input in an open and transparent manner also has a way of revealing both priorities and honing in on the most feasible ideas.



## Decide on a goal(s) and consistently pursue it



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All the awards certificates or community meetings in the world will not make your city or county any more sustainable than it is. At some point you're going to have to decide that you are committed to making a difference and act.

Like many endeavors, sustainability efforts are aided by establishing goals.

As we heard today from Nicole Hefty, Miami Dade County is about to establish its sustainability goals in accordance with the second of ICLEI's Five Milestones for Sustainability.

More commonly, ICLEI members will set greenhouse gas reduction targets, a single measurable goal that has broad impacts when pursued. These can later be expanded as your community grows more confident in its efforts.

Setting both short and long term goals ensure that you have both sufficient motivation to spur immediate action and an eye on the horizon that sustains your efforts.

## Make a clear and public commitment to “going green”

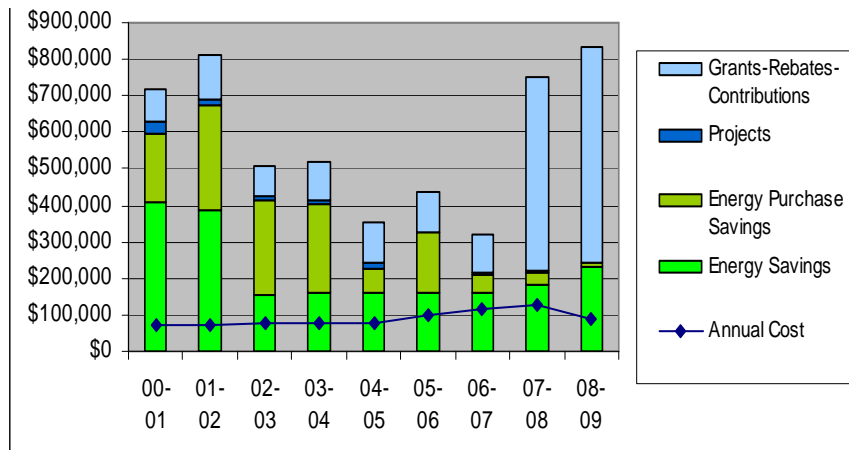


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On February 16, 2005 the Kyoto Protocol, the international agreement to address climate disruption, became law for the 141 countries that have ratified it to date. On that day, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels launched the U.S. Conference of Mayor's Climate Protection agreement to advance climate protection through leadership and action by at least 141 American cities. The agreement asks its signatories to pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the targets set in the international agreement 7% below 1990 levels by 2012. Since its launch over 1000 mayors have signed on to the agreement which has served as the catalyst for many to join ICLEI as they seek assistance in meeting this reduction target.

In 2007, the World Mayor's and Local Government Climate Protection Agreement was launched as the successor to Mayor Nickel's initiative. It sets targets through the year 2050 and is available at [www.icleiusa.org](http://www.icleiusa.org) for your consideration..

## Devote appropriate resources to your green goals



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Sustainability, like any local government initiative does require an appropriate investment of resources to achieve its community's goals. However unlike many local government initiatives, sustainability efforts can pay for themselves through cost savings, avoided expenses and grant funding. Creating a local energy office is a great way to begin to institutionalize these practices and to establish leadership and credibility.

Local energy offices begin with a focus on saving energy and money within the local government, soon generating enough in savings to pay for the staff salaries and other costs. After about two years the office will be ready to expand its reach and address other areas, pursuing grants and securing other revenues to maintain its financial self sufficiency.

ICLEI drew upon the 20 year experience of Ann Arbor's former energy office director to develop a variety of resources that assist local governments create their own.

The chart above illustrates the manner in which an energy office can be self-financing. The solid bar across the bottom illustrates the costs of the energy office while the multi-colored bars reflect the revenue or savings it was able to generate.

However financial resources alone are not enough. Leadership commitment is an absolutely essential ingredient to a successful sustainability program. When a local government joins ICLEI, we ask them to assign a primary elected and primary staff liaison because we've recognized the importance of effective engagement at each of those levels.

## Integrate your green efforts with existing practices

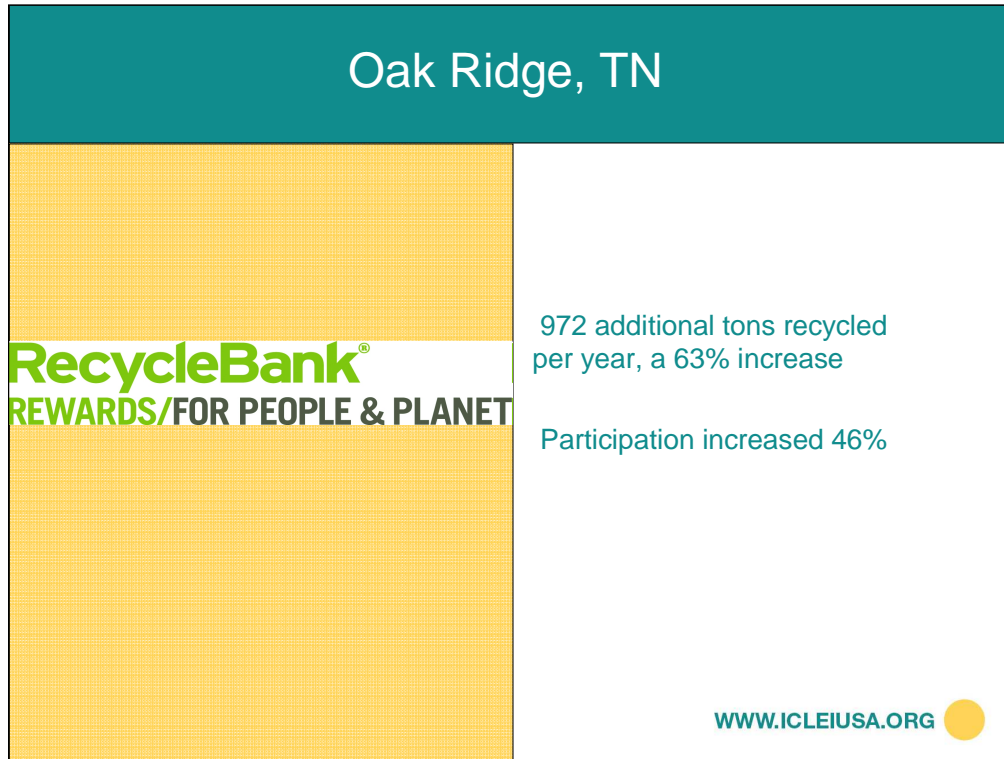


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Make sustainability part of everyone's business in your local government. It's likely that every department will have something to contribute to the overall effort whether its turning off their computers in the evening or examining the feasibility of alternative transportation in your community's comprehensive plan.

Incorporating specific metrics and providing consistent feedback by division or department enable them to figure out the best way to meet targets and desired outcomes while maintaining a sense of ownership and allowing for innovation and creativity.

Ensuring employees stay involved and engaged through periodically soliciting their opinions and ideas, recognizing outstanding efforts or advancing their professional development are also great ways to weave sustainability in to the fabric of your organization.



Oak Ridge boosted recycling collection significantly by offering incentives to residents based on how much cans, bottles, and paper they put on the curb each month. They offered this program through partnership with a private company called RecycleBank. The program works by attaching an electronic identification tag to each household's recycling bin. The collection truck weighs the bin and reads the tag to assign the weight to the resident's account. The resident gets points for each pound of recycling collected and can redeem those points for coupons offered by local and national businesses.

Monthly curbside collection increased from 134 tons to 219 tons, while collection at the convenience center stayed roughly even at 38 tons after compared to 42 before. Overall, this equals 972 additional tons each year diverted from the landfill. The number of residents setting out recycling at least once a month increased from 37 percent to 83 percent. Oak Ridge has also tracked where participants are redeeming their points. In June, Oak Ridge residents traded in their points for 1562 reward coupons, 36 percent of which were with local businesses.

## Epping, NH



### Resulted in:

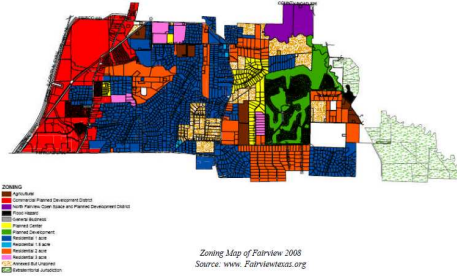
- 10 kW solar array
- 4 kW combined heat and power unit at Town Hall
- Heating costs reduced >50%

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Motivated by the New Hampshire Carbon Coalition's Climate Change resolution, Epping joined ICLEI— Local Governments for Sustainability USA (ICLEI) in 2007. The Town agreed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by the year 2025. In New Hampshire, buildings are a greater source of greenhouse gas emissions than the transportation sector due to the large stock of older buildings and high seasonal temperature fluctuations. The Town Planning Board examined its role and asked what effect they could have to aid this commitment. As a result, Epping decided to draft a new ordinance that would require all new buildings to implement energy efficiency, conservation and sustainable design principles in its construction, called Article 22— Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Design.

The Epping Planning Board, led by Town Planner Clay Mitchell, conducted extensive research on existing green building ordinances to find out what other communities were doing and what was possible. They also consulted with Steve Winter (Steve Winter Associates), past chairman of the U.S. Green Building Council, in writing the new ordinance. Article 22 is designed similarly to LEED certification with points being awarded based on number and types of energy efficiencies and encourages the use of on-site renewable energy. There is a graduated compliance system meaning that the square footage of the building dictates number of minimum points required and therefore, the larger the building, the more points are required. This was included to address the concerns of small business owners. Regardless of the size of the new building or development, each structure must meet requirements for energy production and/or sustainable design.

# Fairview, TX



Green Building Program  
Dark Sky Ordinance  
Organic Landscaping  
80% recycling rate  
Ten Principles of  
Development Excellence

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Since the 1990s, developers have been trying to bring in the common development approach of building a large number of houses and commercial buildings in open space, which would substantially change the original environment of the area. In order to preserve the rural character and quality of life, the Town of Fairview took a more sustainable approach to small town expansion.

Highly aware of the potential impacts new development has on the local environment, the town government, led by the Town Manager, has implemented a series of environmental policies. Some of the policies include:

A Dark Skies Ordinance that requires new outdoor lighting installations to ensure adequate lighting only where it is needed.

A Green Building Ordinance that sets minimum standards on energy efficiency, conservation of water, indoor air quality, and recycling for all single family residential buildings.

Organic Landscape Standards for town parks and municipal facilities that include water conservation and use of non-toxic fertilizers and pest control products.

A Comprehensive Environmental Plan called “Green Fairview” that covers programs related to water conservation, water quality, energy conservation, sustainable development, less intrusive development, air quality, and solid waste management.

In addition to adopting these policies, the Town is preserving the rural character of Fairview by developing 80 percent of its residential area as a large single-family lots, and 20 percent as a high density multi-family housing that is within the new commercial development area north of Fairview. The town has also adopted Ten Principles of Development Excellence that emphasize mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly design, transit-oriented development and infill, and other principles to encourage development options in the Town of Fairview that are balanced and diverse.



# Thank you!



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