

CHAPTER 7: **COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EMPOWERMENT**

A. BUILDING A CLIMATE ACTION MOVEMENT

From the beginning, implementing Measure G has been about more than just developing a Climate Action Plan. It has been about building a climate action *movement*.

A movement starts with leading edge, early adopters and builds toward a critical mass. As a result of ongoing outreach efforts by community-based organizations, City staff and elected officials, and powerful forces outside our community such as Mr. Gore's *Inconvenient Truth*, more and more residents in Berkeley and beyond are beginning to heed the call to action.

Because Berkeley is a diverse community it is important to involve all sectors in the local climate protection effort in a meaningful way, including those who may be historically left out or less oriented to action. Berkeley will achieve its GHG reduction goals only when the entire community plays a role.

B. COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EMPOWERMENT ACTIONS

The actions proposed in this section largely build on existing outreach, education, and empowerment efforts in the community. Their goal is to contribute to building a critical mass of Berkeley citizens and businesses engaged in a achieving a community-wide goal.

1. *Goal: Mobilize the community at large to turn the climate plan into climate action*

Significant ongoing outreach efforts are already underway in Berkeley. The City government, in cooperation with local residents, business leaders, and regional and local agencies, should work to enhance these efforts and further align them with the voter-mandated goal of achieving aggressive greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

- a. Policy: Establish an implementation framework that enables the City to more efficiently and effectively distribute information and resources to a wide range of community partners and to report progress on achieving the goals outlined in this plan**

Implementing Actions:

- *Design a climate action "stakeholder database" that identifies the many stakeholders that are playing or will play a role in implementing local climate protection strategies.* Essentially serving as a contacts management database, the application will be searchable and include given stakeholders' contact information and areas of focus or expertise (e.g., green jobs development, energy services, recycling, economic development, etc.). The main goal of the database is to enable the efficient distribution of information and resources to a wide range of entities. For example, the database could be queried to consolidate the contact information of organizations that have expertise in water resource management. Such information would be useful when designing a community outreach effort to conserve water. The City will take the lead on developing the database, with the goal of eventually making it available on-line so as to be utilized by the broader community.

- *Establish community working groups that take ownership for mobilizing a given group of individuals or sector of the community or for promoting a given climate protection program.* One example may be a “Low Carbon Diet” working group, composed of various community members that take responsibility for building participation in the Low Carbon Diet (LCD) program. The Low Carbon Diet is a program based on a workbook that walks people through simple steps for reducing household GHG emissions (see more on the LCD program below).
- *Launch and maintain a web-based portal that enables:*
 - *Community members, including individuals, households, and businesses, to quantify their own emissions baseline, pledge to achieve GHG emissions reductions, report actions taken to reduce GHG emissions, and report progress toward individual goals; and*
 - *The City to track and report progress toward achieving the goals outlined in the Climate Action Plan in a transparent and engaging way*
- *Provide an annual report to City Council that highlights community climate protection actions and progress toward the Measure G goals.*

b. Policy: Launch a coordinated outreach and education campaign, utilizing a range of tools, programs and partnerships, to mobilize and educate residents

A climate action outreach and education campaign must be designed to effectively communicate the urgency of addressing the climate crisis while also empowering individuals, businesses, and institutions to be a part of the solution. An effective outreach campaign will benefit from the perspectives of many City departments and community agencies with expertise in community engagement. For example, the City’s Public Health Division is in regular contact with several types of community groups that will be impacted by climate change but that may not list the environment as their main focus. Such groups include youth and youth organizations; faith-based organizations; food, nutrition, and cultural organizations; and advocacy groups for low-income and other vulnerable populations. Such groups must be included in community outreach efforts to ensure broad input and participation in turning the plan into action.

Implementing Actions:

- *Promote the Berkeley Climate Action Pledge as a means by which individuals can commit to reducing their own emissions.* Approximately 1,000 people signed the Berkeley Climate Action Pledge since May 2007 (see Appendix to read the pledge). The pledge is a non-binding means of securing individual commitments to achieving a collective goal. Individuals who sign the pledge periodically receive helpful action ideas for how to fulfill their commitment. The City and its community partners should continue to promote the pledge and work to enhance the climate-related resources and information that individuals have access to once they have made their commitment.
- *Support local efforts to launch a "local carbon offset" project.* The project would include a web-based carbon calculator that would enable local businesses and residents to track their GHG emissions over time and contribute to local carbon reduction projects (e.g., solar in schools) in order to “offset” those emissions.
- *In collaboration with community partners, develop and implement a public information strategy that serves to highlight climate-related information and resources in multiple mailings, newsletters and local media outlets, including radio, television and news publications.* Examples include placing notices of upcoming events and climate action-related resources in local publications such as UC Berkeley’s *CalNeighbors* newsletter, the City of Berkeley’s Annual Report, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory’s *Science on the Hill* newsletter and others. A public information strategy

would also include partnering with local radio stations and newspapers to spotlight local community leadership and highlight opportunities for action.

- *Partner with Berkeley's network of neighborhood associations to hold various community workshops and events focused on reducing GHG emissions at the neighborhood level.*
- *Partner with the Ecology Center and others to promote the Low Carbon Diet program as means for helping households reduce their GHG emissions.* The Low Carbon Diet is a “30-day program to lose 5,000 pounds” of CO₂. The foundation of the program is a workbook that walks individuals through a step-by-step process, from calculating one’s current carbon footprint, to implementing emissions saving measures, to tracking one’s progress along the way. The City is partnering with a number of community-based organizations to find ways to generate participation in this program community-wide.
- *In collaboration with community partners, launch a “Green Neighborhood Challenge” and “Green Star Household” program.* The challenge would utilize friendly competition and recognition as motivators for action. The Low Carbon Diet program could serve as the guide for neighborhood-level climate protection activities. The neighborhood that collectively reduces the most emissions through the Low Carbon Diet program wins. In combination with the “Green Neighborhood Challenge,” households that have significantly reduced their GHG emissions could be recognized as “Green Star Households.” Such recognition could serve as a source of pride for households that have made a conscious effort to achieve GHG reductions and contribute to a community-wide effort. Neighborhoods and households could track their progress on the web-based climate action portal outlined above.
- *Partner with PG&E to provide residents with monthly personalized energy consumption reports.* The reports would include an analysis of a given household or business’s energy consumption patterns over time and resources and ideas for consuming less. Such “energy monitoring” reports have the potential to enhance the long-term value of the energy services outlined in the Building Energy Use chapter.
- *In partnership with the Berkeley Board of Realtors, design a "welcome package" for new homeowners and business owners that includes resources related to energy use, transportation choices, and waste diversion and reduction.*
- *Hold speaker series' and other educational events at the Berkeley Public Library.* Given its educational mission and high volume of foot traffic, the library is an important resource for raising awareness about the climate issue and empowering community members to take action.
- *Partner with the Civic Arts Commission to encourage and fund art projects that serve to heighten awareness of the climate issue.* One example may be a GHG emissions reduction thermometer that tracks community progress toward achieving the emissions reduction goal. Another potential project is commissioning local artists to design “artful bike racks” – bike racks that are painted or designed to serve as public art.
- *Partner with biologists, botanists, and other scientists to raise awareness regarding the impact of climate change on local ecosystems.*

2. Goal: Enhance outreach and incentives to the business community

Actions by Berkeley’s business community are already showing results: The GHG emissions that result from energy consumption in the commercial sector decreased by 13 percent between 2000 and 2005. Maintaining and building on this remarkable trend requires ongoing, collaborative efforts to showcase effective climate action and to engage additional local businesses in the climate protection effort.

The Berkeley Chamber of Commerce, the Sustainable Business Alliance, local business improvement districts, the emerging Green Chamber of Commerce and others are leading the way at engaging local businesses in an effort to reduce GHG emissions and increase overall sustainability. The City and other organizations should continue to look to local business associations for ongoing leadership in the effort to achieve the Berkeley GHG reduction goal.

a. Policy: Continue to showcase effective climate protection efforts in the business community and to engage additional businesses in the local climate protection effort

Implementing Actions:

- *Continue to promote participation in the Alameda County Green Business Program and enhance the program's ability to efficiently administer the green business certification process and track GHG-related metrics.* The Green Business Program exists to provide recognition and assistance for local businesses that operate in an environmentally friendly manner. The program provides a checklist and inspections to verify that local businesses meet higher standards of environmental performance. The Berkeley community boasts a large number of businesses (over 100), including the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce, that are certified as green. The City is working with local business associations to promote participation in the program and to increase the efficiency of the certification process. Starting in 2009, the Green Business Program will provide guidance and metrics to assist businesses to measure GHG emissions reductions achieved by the measures they implement. Since program requires that businesses get re-certified every three years, this is an excellent way for businesses to monitor their emissions and set goals for reductions into the future.
- *Expand the local green economy through the East Bay Green Corridor Partnership.* In January 2008, the Cities of Berkeley, Emeryville, Richmond and Oakland joined with leaders from UC Berkeley and LBNL to launch a cooperative effort to lead the world in environmental innovation, emerging green business and industry, green jobs, and renewable energy. The partnership is serving as a conduit for sharing and implementing climate protection, economic development, and workforce development strategies on a regional scale.
- *In collaboration with local business associations and merchants, continue to expand and promote the Buy Local Berkeley Campaign.* The goal of the campaign is to build a vibrant local economy by encouraging consumers and businesses to buy local. Shifting more consumer purchases to local businesses has the potential to increase tax revenue for the City, expand local investments in non-profits and local businesses, and create more local jobs while simultaneously reducing vehicle miles traveled.
- *Recognize and celebrate the environmental leadership of local businesses, business associations, and community groups.* Examples of local existing efforts to recognize environmental leadership in the business community include the Green Gathering, Sustainability Summit, and Champions of Sustainability Awards. These three events have recently been integrated to focus community awareness on efforts to make Berkeley a world leader in building a sustainable community.

3. Goal: Enhance climate change-related education at local schools

Representatives from the City, the Berkeley Unified School District, UC Berkeley, Lawrence Berkeley National Labs, and local museums, among others, should identify opportunities for sharing resources that will help to increase climate awareness and education in local K – 12 schools.

- a. **Policy:** Continue to showcase existing climate protection efforts in our schools and to expand opportunities students have to learn and take action on climate change

Implementing Actions:

- *Integrate climate-related activities and education into existing after-school programs such as Berkeley LEARNS (Links Enrichment, Academics, and Recreational Needs to Students).*
- *Partner with Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) to promote programs such as the Low Carbon Diet and to integrate climate-related information into school gatherings and fairs.*
- *In collaboration with community partners, support Berkeley High School's School of Social Justice and Ecology by providing internship opportunities and climate-related resources to integrate into its curriculum.*
- *In collaboration with UC Berkeley, provide internships and educational programs to K – 12 students on topics related to climate science and on impacts of climate change on the community and local ecosystems.*

4. **Goal: Increase awareness in the City government**

The City government accounts for only one percent of our community's total greenhouse gas emissions. As a minor contributor to total emissions, actions in the City government will have a limited impact on Berkeley's overall emissions levels. However, actions by City government officials have symbolic value and demonstrate leadership that extends beyond the magnitude of actual emissions reduced.

- a. **Policy:** Launch a sustained effort to increase awareness in the City government regarding the climate issue and to provide training on how to achieve increased sustainability at home and in the workplace

Implementing Actions:

- *Hold regular "brown bag" events for each City department on various topics related to the climate change issue and on actions employees can take to reduce their own GHG emissions.*
- *Establish a "Sustainability at Work and at Home" class as part of the required City of Berkeley Core Courses for City employees. The class will cover existing sustainability related policies affecting employee duties, as well as training on how to increase resource efficiency throughout City operations and at home.*
- *Establish energy consumption reduction targets for each City department and provide assistance in achieving those targets.*
- *Establish recycling and composting systems in each City building and recycling training for employees and maintenance staff.*