

TIPS FOR MAIN STREETS + DOWNTOWNS

TO SAVE ENERGY, AND MONEY

[#1] GETTING STARTED: CREATE A GOOD FOUNDATION

- Identify community stakeholders
- Think Broadly: schools, neighborhood institutions, hospitals, farmers market managers and vendors, social services, ethnic media, libraries, arts organizations, etc.
- Prioritize community inclusion: social + economic + environmental
- Identify a strong project lead to manage the local effort: main street manager, community advocate, business owner, student, etc.

[#2] IDENTIFY EXISTING PROGRAMS + INCENTIVES

- Utility offered incentives + rebates: usually lighting or HVAC
- Other local energy efficiency programs designed for small businesses and nonprofits
- PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy)
- REAP (Rural Energy Assistance Program)
- SparkFund
- DSIRE (Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency)

[#3] WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY WANT?

- Develop a sustainability and community survey
- Organize brainstorming sessions and town hall meetings
- Early involvement achieves dual purposes: identifying needs + creating excitement
- Reinforce community buy-in through regular updates and communication

[#4] CREATE A SUSTAINABILITY PLAN + VISION

- Start with a community vision
- Co-develop a project wishlist with stakeholder input
- Answer: What can we do in one year? What can we do in five years?
- Identify long-term projects that support the community vision
- Assign roles through working groups
- Plan for short-term and long-term projects
- Establish timelines and deadlines to maintain momentum

[#5] IMPLEMENTATION

- Plan a kick-off event: don't miss the chance to generate excitement around sustainability
- Prioritize the quick and easy win, short-term, projects first
- Excite community members
- Attract attention and potential investment
- Develop incremental and achievable goals for long-term projects: i.e. all small businesses signup for rebate programs, 100% recycling participation, etc.
- After each event or project, evaluate what worked and what didn't
- Adjust the plan accordingly

