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

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